



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MILITARY AFFILIATE RADIO SYSTEM (MARS)
MIGRATION PLAN AND REPORT

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A plan for the process of migration from the current, USAF MARS structure and organization, to a FEMA Region aligned configuration, with a report on administrative and organizational changes.

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INTRODUCTION

The basic framework for a FEMA compliant Region Structure was developed by the Realignment / Migration Committee. The ten FEMA aligned regions were then grouped into six Operational Areas. Three of the Area / Regions share the same boundaries, and three Areas contain two or more Regions. The resultant structure is very close to the current six Air Force MARS Regions we are now under. The structure was tentatively approved by Chief Air Force MARS. This allowed the committee to proceed with organizational changes and development to support the new structure.

Given the similarity we might simply apply an administrative migration solution, read “paperwork”, change some call signs, and be done. However, consider the following. The reorganization of Air Force MARS was undertaken to facilitate interoperability with the other MARS services, and selected federal agencies. Sharing common areas of operation in the FEMA aligned regions is only a first step. Given the scope and direction by several federal agencies, developing new requirements for the support of disaster response and recovery, it rapidly became apparent that we also examine, and change as necessary, our operating directives to best support our mission in this new environment.

The following document is the result of the input of many individuals in the Air Force MARS program. From Affiliates to the Office of the Chief, comments and suggestions were solicited, received, and reviewed.

John S. Ferguson AFF1C
Chair – Realignment / Migration Committee
13 August 2008

STRUCTURE

STATE

The basic building block of Air Force MARS is the State Program. This is the initial point of administrative contact and management for the individual Affiliate member. This is also the most effective venue for recruiting the individual member Affiliate. The State program structure should provide the support and encouragement to assist a new Affiliate/Trainee through the process of becoming an Affiliate member. The State program should also facilitate development of relations with the state and local emergency management agencies, and state and local amateur radio emergency communication groups. This “Grass Roots” contact is invaluable in generating the “Ground Truth” reports so vital to the Disaster Response and Recovery process.

REGION

The new FEMA Aligned Regions is where the focus on interoperability and federal agency client service should be the primary mission of the Region management. Sharing the same area of operation, the development of intra region operation and support in the Tri-service environment, is of primary importance. Activities should foster inter-operation and familiarity with the other services, groups, and agencies involved in emergency communication. The region management should also make contact, and develop familiarity with those DoD installations and selected federal agencies that have MOU's with The Tri-Service MARS.

AREA

The focus of the Area Staff should be on inter- region operation and support; particularly in those Areas consisting of two or more Regions. Here is where the support of the Area staff and utilization of resources across the Area is mission critical. Where the Area and the Region are the same, the Area / Region interaction is not as critical, but the two divergent areas of focus, should be considered. In the three Areas with only one FEMA Region, the individual staff member may be “wearing two hats”, one Region and one Area. The strength of the Air Force MARS support to emergency communication has been its wide area, region operation and coverage. The present Region structure and resource allows the support of Emcomm activity from stations outside the affected area, yet under the same management, resulting in an effective use of frequency and traffic movement. This has been frequently observed in joint service exercises in Region One. The new Area entity will replace in many ways the old MARS Region.

NATIONAL / Headquarters

Under the direction of the Chief, Air Force MARS, a staff of National Coordinators, provide direction and support in all areas of the Air Force MARS program. These national positions are in essence, the “Headquarters Staff”. The positions are operational and administrative.

STAFFING

It is reasonable to assume, the present State and Region staff will be retained in the realignment process. Where duplication of position occurs in a newly created Area or Region, the AMD/RMD will be responsible for resolving the issue. Even though staff is retained, a review of position and responsibility must be done to assure compliance with new position descriptions, and the standardization of positions. We need to assure a management structure that is similar in all States, Regions and Areas, and one that will support the mission objectives in the new environment.

STATE

The State program is managed by a State Director, assisted by a Deputy State Director, and a staff with specific areas of responsibility. In a small state, a minimum staff might include an Emergency Coordinator, who could also serve as a Liaison Officer, and a Training Coordinator. The appointment of a Technical Coordinator, to identify and organize available resources, could be of value. Larger states, with a pool of talent, might identify other areas that could be served. The focus of the state program is the service and support of the Affiliate member, and development of local contact. The development of staffing should reflect these priorities.

REGION

The Region program is managed by a Region Director, and Deputy Region Director, with a staff capable of providing support to the state programs in the region, fostering interoperability, and providing client service to selected federal agencies. For the smaller Regions, staffing to fill all positions will be difficult. This is where the support from the Area staff may be necessary and vital. In the larger Area/Regions (IV, VI, IX), the staff may be the same.

AREA

The Area program is managed by an Area Director and Deputy Director, with a staff capable of providing support to the contained Region(s) and fostering inter-region operation. The larger Area/Regions (IV, VI, IX) may share the same staff positions.

NATIONAL

The national staff consists of National Coordinators, responsible for specific areas of operation and program management. They are appointed as need and technology dictates. They function as the Chief's staff in both administrative and operational areas. Appointment and tenure is at the pleasure of the Chief, Air Force MARS

OPERATION

The United States Air Force MARS Service is a High Frequency (HF) Communication service. As such, it's primary mission and purpose is to provide alternative HF communication support as identified by Headquarters, United States Air Force, and the Department of Defense (DoD). To support this mission and maximize its effectiveness, operational nets are organized on an Area and TRANSCON (inter Area) basis. Where available, VHF assets in state programs may be employed for "Last Mile" connectivity. Every Affiliate should have a primary assignment to an appropriate Area HF net. Assignment to specialty nets is a secondary assignment. The individual assets in a region must be familiar with each other. This can only occur if they meet regularly in some common venue.

The federal response to, and recovery from, major disaster is directed by DHS/FEMA. The DoD and NORTHCOM are the involved in this responsibility. Federal Agency clients identified by DoD may require the support of Air Force MARS. In order to meet this mission effectively, the Air Force MARS program must develop, and adopt, digital modes that will accommodate client needs, interoperate with other services, and provide for end user familiarity with the format.

In the National Response Framework (NRF), and most state plans, communication assets and resources are utilized and directed in Emergency Support Function Two (ESF - 2). Communication support to response and recovery is in the Logistics Section / Service Branch, of the Incident Command System (ICS), the operational template for all response and recovery operations. As a communication service in disaster response and recovery, all Affiliates need to be familiar with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Framework (NRF). It is of critical importance that all personnel engaged in disaster response and recovery are conversant with both plans.

The scope of the impact on the Air Force MARS program reorganization of a recently released document, the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), is being evaluated.

MIGRATION

An orderly, prioritized, process to move the Air Force MARS program from its current structure and Operating Directives (MOI), to the new ten Region, six Area, structure with new directives; must be developed, implemented and managed. The target date to complete the process is 1 January, 2009.

Points to be considered:

1. Administrative and Operational aspects of the USAF MARS Program will continue under the current directives (MOI), staff and structure, until superseded by new directives and appointments. The Chief, Air Force MARS will exercise his authority to direct specific activities and appointments, not currently provided for in the MOI.
2. Following the approval of the Region Realignment and Migration Plan, by the Chief Air Force MARS, every effort should be made to disseminate the plan to all Affiliates in the Air Force MARS program.

To be directed by the order of Chief Air Force MARS:

1. By the direction of the Chief USAF MARS, a National Coordinator of Records, should be appointed and a National Standard for Record Management be established. This individual, and a Deputy National Records Coordinator, should be brought on board as soon as practical, and a National Records Management Program, be developed and implemented, to assist with the migration process. It is highly recommended that the data base be in EXCEL and/or ACCESS.
2. The Chief Air Force MARS shall appoint Ed Cienki AFF1D/AFF1NJ/AFA1EC as Chairperson for the MOI Rewrite Committee. The Realignment/Migration Committee Chairperson, John Ferguson, AFA1SQ/AFF1DE/AFF1C is a member of this committee, as is National Digital Manager, George Stickler, AFA4CU/AFN4DM. Others may be appointed as the Chief, Air Force MARS, suggests; or the Chair deems necessary.
3. By direction of the Chief, Air Force MARS, the following new entities are to be established, creating ten FEMA aligned regions.
 - a. Region X comprised of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington .
 - b. Region IX comprised of Arizona, California, Nevada, Hawaii, and Guam.
 - c. Region VIII comprised of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Utah.
 - d. Region VII comprised of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska
 - e. Region VI comprised of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.
 - f. Region V comprised of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.
 - g. Region IV comprised of Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. (See Note 4)

- h. Region III, comprised of Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia
 - i. Region II comprised of New Jersey, and New York.
 - j. Region I comprised of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
4. By Direction of the Chief, Air Force MARS, the following Areas are to be established, creating six new operational Areas.
- a. Area North East (NE) comprised of Regions I, II, III.
 - b. Area South East (SE) comprised of Region IV.
 - c. Area North Central (NC) comprised of Regions V, VII.
 - d. Area South Central (SC) comprised of Region VI
 - e. Area North West (NW) comprised of Regions VIII, X.
 - f. Area South West (SW) comprised of Region IX.
5. The Chief, Air Force MARS, should confirm the appointment of the following Area MARS Directors (AMD), who will be managing the program under the new structure and directives:
- John Ferguson, Area MARS Director (AMD) Northeast Area, AFN3NE
 - Phil Salley, Area MARS Director (AMD) Southeast Area, AFN4SE
 - Frank Miller, Area MARS Director (AMD) North Central Area, AFN7NC
 - George Dykes, Area MARS Director (AMD) South Central Area, AFN6SC
 - Tom Evans, Area MARS Director (AMD) Northwest Area, AFN8NW
 - Ken Mulkey, Area MARS Director (AMD) Southwest Area, AFN9SW
6. The Chief, Air Force MARS, should confirm the appointment of the following Region MARS Directors (RMD), who will be managing the program under the new structure and directives:
- Cal Calvitto, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region I, AFN1RD
 - Ed Cienki, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region II, AFN2RD
 - John Ferguson, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region III, AFN3RD
 - Phil Salley, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region IV, AFN4RD
 - Bob Ehrman, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region V, AFN5RD
 - George Dykes, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region VI, AFN6RD
 - Frank Miller, Region MARS director (RMD) Region VII, AFN7RD
 - Tom Evans, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region VIII, AFN8RD
 - Ken Mulkey, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region IX, AFN9RD
 - Don Faquhar, Region MARS Director (RMD) Region X, AFN0RD

These individuals should be appointed and empowered, with the temporary authority necessary to begin the process of becoming familiar with, and setting up, their respective areas of responsibility. Those incumbent RMD's will need access to the records of states they may acquire; those new RMD's will need access to the records of the states they will direct. These conditions would apply to the position of Area Director also.

7. Assignment of Call Signs:

Recommended Call Sign Generation Guidelines

A. National, Area, Region, State and Affiliate.

National Billet: AFN#xx

National Level Deputy Billets: AFN#Dxx

Area Director: AFN#aa (NE, SE, NC, SC, NW, SW) (See Note 1)

Area Deputy Director: AFN#Daa (NE, SE, NC, SC, NW, SW)

Area Billet: AFF#aax (NE, SE, NC, SC, NW, SW)

Region MARS Director: AFN#RD (See Note 1)

Deputy Region MARS Director Billets: AFN#DRD (See Note 1)

Region Staff Billet: AFF#xx Change each Region Staff Billet to the Two Letter Suffix

State MARS Director Billets: AFN#xx (See Note 1).

State Staff Billets: AFF#ssx Add Additional State Level Billets in large or high population states as needed.

Affiliate Member Call Sign Prefixes: AFA #xx. (See Note 2)

Affiliate Trainees: AFA#xx/T (See Note 3)

B. Other Call Sign Prefixes:

Air Force Bases: AGA#xx

Civil Air Patrol Liaison Offices: AGC#xx (May No Longer Be Used)

AFB Reserved for future use

AFT Reserved for future use

AF MARS PMBO/RMS Station Prefixes: AFD#xx No Change (xx denotes USPS State Digraph for first AFMARS PMBO in the state)

AFC#xx No Change (xx denotes USPS State Digraph for second AFMARS PMBO in the state)

TRANSCON Pactor BBS (Legacy): AFD#MC For the first TRANSCON Pactor Network Primary Message Center in the region

AFC#MC for the Second TRANSCON Pactor Network Primary Message Center in the region

Special Event Station Prefixes:

AFS#xx (As requested for the Special Event Station)

AFS#xxx (As requested for the Special Event Station) (See Note 6)

6. Staff Positions

The following are proposed function/position designations. Some position description/responsibilities will change from present assignments. It is not expected that all entities will need, let alone be able to fill, all the designations.

A, AA	Administrative assistant, performing clerical, data entry, type functions.
C, RD, xx	Director (NE, SE, NC, SC, NW, SW)
D, Dxx	Deputy Director (NE, SE, NC, SC, NW, SW)
E, EC	Emergency Coordinator/Manager
I, IT	IT Manager
K, DM	Digital Manager/Coordinator
L, LO	Liaison Officer
M,	Technical Coordinator/Manager
N,	Net Manager
O, OP	Operations Officer: Works with the Liaison Officer, Exercise Coordinator, and Emergency Coordinator to develop and direct the communications response plan
P, PIO	Public Relations, Public Information Officer
R, RM	Records Manager (formerly Operations Analysis Manager)
T, TO	Training Officer
V, VF	VHF Coordinator
W, WM	Webmaster
X, XC	Exercise Coordinator

PROCESS, RESPONSIBILITY, AND TIMETABLE

1. A formal plan is prepared and presented to Chief Air Force MARS for approval. NLT 15 August 2008.
2. On approval of the plan, Chief, Air Force MARS, orders distribution of the plan to all Affiliates, orders the creation of new entities to proceed, makes plan recommended appointments, and sets timelines for submissions.
3. On notice to proceed with the migration, all current RMD's and SMD's will immediately review their records of Affiliates in their jurisdiction for participation, correct personal information, contact data, validity of amateur license, expiration of amateur license, then correcting and updating the records; or purging and terminating as appropriate. Carrying inactive, non-performing Affiliates with invalid data, or expired licenses, is counter to present and future directives.
3. The RMD for Region X in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region X, assigning new AFA0xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager, and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)
4. The RMD for Region IX in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region IX, assigning new AFA9xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager, and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)
5. The RMD for Region VIII in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region VIII, assigning new AFA8xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager, and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by

SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)

6. The RMD for Region VII in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region VII, assigning new AFA7xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager, and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)

7. The RMD for Region VI in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region VI, assigning new AFA6xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. It is with this, and subsequent iterations, that possible call sign conflicts can occur, and should be avoided. Only verified, unassigned, call signs should be reassigned. It might be more practical to reassign those Affiliates in New Mexico, rather than cause a call sign conflict. The New Mexico Affiliates should go through the review process, regardless. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager, and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)

8. The RMD for Region V in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region V, assigning new AFA5xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. Only verified, unassigned, call signs should be reassigned, although with this iteration the chance of a call sign conflict is minimal. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)

9. The RMD for Region IV in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region IV, assigning new AFA4xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. Only verified, unassigned, call signs should be reassigned. It might be more practical to reassign those

Affiliates in Mississippi, rather than cause a call sign conflict. The Mississippi Affiliates should go through the review process, regardless. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)

10. The RMD for Region III in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region III, assigning new AFA3xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. Only verified, unassigned, call signs should be reassigned, although with this iteration the chance of a call sign conflict is minimal. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager, and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)

11. The RMD for Region II in cooperation with the National Records Manager reviews all records of Affiliates in Region II, assigning new AFA2xx call signs to those with correct personal data, and current participation or approved inactive status. Only verified, unassigned, call signs should be reassigned, although with this iteration the chance of a call sign conflict is minimal. For each Affiliate an AF Form 3661, shall be generated with the new call sign assignment, and a primary assignment of a Region Voice Net. The completed Form 3661's shall be distributed to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager, and the Chief. The Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members. The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the SMD's new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)

12. Although by default, Region I does not have to go through call sign reassignment, it is suggested that they do. Regardless, it is mandatory that a thorough review of the Affiliate records and generation of new AF 3661's be done, with distribution of the completed Form 3661's to the Affiliate, the SMD, the RMD and AMD, the National Records Manager, and the Chief. Chief Air Force MARS or his designee, approved by SHARES, shall generate a new Form 1 for SHARES Affiliate members, ensuring updated and correct information for the SHARES Data Base, The Chief shall also issue new AF 3661's for the SMD's in the Region, upon receiving the new Affiliate call sign from the RMD. (See Note 5)

13. The Form 3661 can be used as authority to operate until such time as Air Force MARS licenses, can be generated, signed by the Chief, Air Force MARS, and distributed.

It is hoped through creative effort, this repetitive process of 3661's , Form 1's and licenses can be automated in as much as practical.

14. Billet call signs, not assigned by the Chief, Air Force MARS, can be assigned by the appropriate, National Coordinator, AMD, RMD, or SMD; assigning the call sign and position with an AF 3661. Distribution of copies is to the Affiliate, SMD, RMD, AMD, The National Records Manager and the Chief. (See Note 5)

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NOTES

Note 1: Assigning National Billet Prefixes to Area, Region, and State MARS Directors will put them on the same Hierarchical Level as their Army MARS counterparts (all who have AAA Prefixed call signs).

Note 2: The fifty six state and territory 2 letter designations (USPS state diagraphs) should not be used for Affiliate call signs, to prevent confusion with SMD call signs.

Note 3: This method is currently used by Army and NMC MARS for trainees. The slant T (slant Tango) is dropped on completion of training.

Note 4: Although PR and VI are in FEMA II, proximity, propagation, and current practice, by Army and Air Force MARS, place them administratively under the SMD FL.

Note 5: The current MOI gives authority to the Chief, Air Force MARS, the appointment of State MARS Directors, (SMD). For expediency and to stay within present directives, this should continue for the migration process. It is a general consensus that the SMD should be appointed by, and responsible to a more local authority, as in an Area Director. Area Directors, and Region Directors, should be appointed by the Chief, Air Force MARS. Area Directors, Region Directors, and State Directors, should appoint, and have authority over their respective staff.

Note 6: The use of 3X 3 call signs for individual or official call signs should not be encouraged. The 3 X 3 call signs, used by the Army for some official call signs and by the Navy Marine Corps for all members can/do create problems. The AX-25 protocol which is built into all Packet TNC's limits the number of characters in a call sign to six characters plus a binary number from 0000 to 1111 (0 to 15 decimal) for a SSID. When trying to use a 7 character call sign on Packet, one of the characters must be dropped which frequently gives a call sign which is assigned to an amateur or a prefix belonging to another country resulting in an improperly identified transmission.



Air Force MARS Realignment

