



USAF MARS NE Area Newsletter  
Newsletter 2011-7  
June 7, 2011

There are three (3) items for this edition:

- 1 - New National Operations Officer
- 2 - Hurricane Season
- 3 - Congressional Outreach

1. New National Operations Officer: Chief Jenson has appointed former Deputy NE Area MARS Director Ed Cienki to be the USAF MARS National Operations Officer with the billet call sign AFN2NO. In this capacity, Ed will coordinate an update to the 1 Jan 09 MARS Operating Instruction (MOI). A revision to the MOI was developed last year with inputs from members of the National Staff, but the retirement of Al Eiremann as Chief, USAF MARS, and an Air Force hold on updating Air Force Instruction (AFI) 33-106, prevented the document from being finalized and approved for issuance. The new MOI is expected to be completed later this year or early next year. Congratulations to Ed on his new responsibilities.

2. Hurricane Season: I received a communication the other day from the Region 3 Army MARS Director, AAA3RD, noting that the 2011 hurricane season has begun and reminding all stations of the importance of emergency preparedness. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is predicting higher than normal hurricane activity this year with anywhere from 12 to 18 named storms -- up to 10 of which could become hurricanes with winds of 74 mph or greater. Up to half a dozen major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5) with winds in excess of 111 mph are also predicted. This past April there were 875 tornadoes, a new monthly record far exceeding the previous record for April of 267 tornadoes in 1974 and the previous monthly tornado record of 542 in May 2003. Hundreds of people have died in the recent string of tornadoes that have stretched from the midwest to the northeast; some of those severe storms have occurred in areas that had not previously experienced tornadoes. This should be a good reminder of the need for all stations to be prepared in the event disaster strikes. Having the ability to operate on emergency power can be essential and is strongly encouraged. Basic information on emergency supply kits can be found at <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/index.html>.

3. Congressional Outreach: Working with longtime Navy-Marine Corps MARS member Peter Kean, NNN0INR, I have had an opportunity recently to meet with several congressional staffers on Capitol Hill as part of a public outreach effort to explain the MARS program. Offices that have expressed interest in MARS include the

offices of Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC); Rep. Randy Forbes (R-VA), Chairman of the HASC Subcommittee on Readiness; Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC); and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT), Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. So far the reaction on the part of those staffers we have met has been uniformly positive. From time to time, congressional attention to MARS and its mission has waxed and waned -- in the late 1990s the HASC expressed strong support for the program in its annual national defense authorization bills; this led to a Secretary of Defense Report to Congress noting that using MARS assets in lieu of DoD or commercial resources saved DoD \$11-27 million annually. Several years ago Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) introduced the "Military Affiliate Radio System Emergency Communication Act of 2007" to recognize the valuable contribution of MARS in providing "a worldwide backup emergency communication system." Providing information on MARS to those who have responsibility for helping to ensure our nation's emergency preparedness should enhance the visibility of the MARS program to a broader constituency.

Signed

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