

U.S. AIR FORCE MILITARY AUXILIARY RADIO SYSTEM



Northeast Area Public Information Officer / AFE3PI
Region III Public Information Officer / AFF3PI

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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AIR FORCE MARS OPERATORS SUPPORT HAITI EARTHQUAKE RELIEF EFFORTS

BURKE, VA, January 25, 2010 – Amateur radio operators with the U.S. Air Force Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) have been actively supporting the Air Force's efforts to bring relief to the earthquake-stricken country of Haiti. The Air Force MARS Phone Patch network in particular has been providing communications support to air crews flying equipment and supplies to the devastated nation. Numerous phone patches have been facilitated by Air Force MARS members, connecting in-flight military aircraft en route to and from Haiti and elsewhere with stations on the ground back in the United States. In one instance, Air Force MARS operators ran a phone patch for a transport aircraft returning from the Caribbean area with a group of foreign nationals on board.

"The volunteer service our MARS operators provide is greatly appreciated by the air crews who rely on us to get the job done," said Barry Priddy, an Air Force MARS phone patch operator in Chesapeake, VA. "Sophisticated on-board communications equipment sometimes fails, but they know we are here 24/7 to help," he said.

The Air Force MARS Phone Patch net is available for worldwide official patches and has sponsored phone lines for morale patches. It is one of several MARS networks that use high-frequency (HF) radio to relay communications worldwide, around the clock and in real time. With member stations coast-to-coast, reliable communications links can be established between military aircraft and ground stations anytime day or night. The use of multiple radio frequencies also facilitates point-to-point communications regardless of atmospheric propagation conditions.

More information on the Air Force MARS Phone Patch net can be found at: <http://afmarsphonepatch.net/>.

ABOUT THE MILITARY AUXILIARY RADIO SYSTEM (MARS)

The Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) is a Department of Defense sponsored program, established as separately managed and operated programs by the Army, Navy-Marine Corps and Air Force. MARS members are volunteer licensed civilian amateur radio operators who serve as an organized military auxiliary and provide contingency radio communications support to the Department of Defense and to civil authorities at all levels. MARS operators assist in effecting normal communications under emergency conditions, or when conventional means of communications are unavailable, or are likely to become unavailable. They also provide health, morale and welfare radio communications support to members of the Armed Forces, civilian employees and contractors of the Department of Defense, as well as to civil agency employees and contractors, when in remote and isolated areas, in contingencies or whenever appropriate.

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