

“AIR FORCE MARS: TODAY AND TOMORROW”

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TO THE REGION 4 MARS CONFERENCE



**ARNOLD AFB, TN
12-13 AUGUST 2011**

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

- THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO OFFER A FEW THOUGHTS ON AIR FORCE MARS -- WHERE WE ARE HEADED AND HOW WE WILL GET THERE
 - I REGRET NOT BEING ABLE TO DELIVER THESE REMARKS IN PERSON, BUT BUDGET TIGHTENING HAS CURTAILED ALL NON-MISSION-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL, INCLUDING CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

- ALTHOUGH I HAVE HELD THE AGA5C POSITION NOW FOR ONLY ABOUT 9 MONTHS, AND I CONTINUE TO FAMILIARIZE MYSELF WITH THE DETAILS OF RUNNING THE AIR FORCE MARS PROGRAM, I HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY IMPRESSED WITH THE WORK OF THE VOLUNTEER MEMBERS AND THE SUPPORT I HAVE RECEIVED FROM MANY QUARTERS WITHIN AIR FORCE MARS

- THERE IS AN OLD SAYING THAT IN THIS WORLD “CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT” -- THIS SEEMS TO APPLY TO THE MARS PROGRAM IN GENERAL AND AIR FORCE MARS IN PARTICULAR
 - FOR EXAMPLE, JUST OVER 2 YEARS AGO AIR FORCE MARS REALIGNED ITS REGIONS TO CONFORM TO FEMA’S REGIONAL STRUCTURE IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE OUR ABILITY TO WORK SEAMLESSLY WITH EMERGENCY RESPONDERS
 - A YEAR AND A HALF AGO MARS WAS “UPGRADED” FROM AN “AFFILIATE” ORGANIZATION TO A MILITARY “AUXILIARY” -- OUR NAME WAS CHANGED TO REFLECT THIS UPGRADE, OUR AUTHORITIES WERE REVALIDATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE -- OUR PARENT ORGANIZATION, AND OUR MISSION WAS EXPANDED
 - IN THE MIDST OF THESE CHANGES, LAST YEAR ALONE SAW 3 DIFFERENT CHIEFS OF AIR FORCE MARS -- ONE OUTGOING, ONE INTERIM, AND ONE “PERMANENT”...ME

- YES, THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF CHANGES -- CHANGE IS OFTEN DIFFICULT...BUT IT IS ALSO OFTEN NECESSARY

STATE OF AIR FORCE MARS TODAY

- **BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT:** AIR FORCE MARS IS STRONG, RESILIENT, AND ADAPTING TO THE EVOLVING MARS MISSION -- REFLECTED IN DoD INSTRUCTION (DoDI) 4650.02 -- TO PROVIDE “CONTINGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT TO U.S. GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS”
 - THERE ARE MORE THAN 1,100 VOLUNTEER AIR FORCE MARS MEMBERS NATIONWIDE
 - THIS COMPARES TO APPROXIMATELY 2,900 IN ARMY MARS AND ABOUT 1,600 IN NAVY-MARINE CORPS MARS
 - WE MAY BE SMALL IN SIZE BY COMPARISON TO OUR SISTER MARS SERVICES, BUT WE ARE BIG IN DEDICATION AND ENTHUSIASM

 - MEMBERSHIP IS ACTIVE AND ENGAGED
 - I HEAR FROM MEMBERS ALL THE TIME WITH IDEAS FOR STRENGTHENING THE PROGRAM

- OUR MISSION HAS EVOLVED OVER TIME -- THE PASSING OF MORALE TRAFFIC TO AND FROM MILITARY FORCES DEPLOYED OVERSEAS REMAINS AN AUTHORIZED MARS MISSION; BUT THIS ACTIVITY HAS DECLINED MARKEDLY IN RECENT YEARS WITH THE ADVENT OF THE CELL PHONE, INTERNET, E-MAIL, AND SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS
 - AS A CONSEQUENCE OF DELIBERATE THREATS TO OUR SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS, DOD'S ROLE IN ENSURING NATIONAL SECURITY HAS ALSO EVOLVED
 - CONSEQUENTLY, THE MARS MISSION TODAY PLACES GREATER EMPHASIS ON SUPPORTING DOD'S HOMELAND DEFENSE MISSION AND ITS ROLE IN PROVIDING DEFENSE SUPPORT TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES AND AGENCIES WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING HOMELAND SECURITY IN THE EVENT OF NATURAL OR MAN-MADE DISASTERS

- AS A CONTINGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PROVIDER, OUR CORE MISSION IS ECOM.
 - NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES CAN AND OFTEN DO OCCUR WITH LITTLE OR NO WARNING – THEY CAN RESULT FROM EARTHQUAKES, TERRORIST ATTACKS OR THE USE OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION
 - IN SUCH CASES, WIDESPREAD DAMAGE TO COMMERCIAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES IS LIKELY
 - AS MARS OPERATORS, OUR SERVICES MAY BE REQUIRED TO SAVE LIVES

- MANY MEMBERS HAVE TAKEN TO HEART THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/DISASTER RESPONSE MISSION
 - THEY HAVE EQUIPPED THEIR STATIONS TO OPERATE ON EMERGENCY POWER, THEY PARTICIPATE IN MARS ECOM EXERCISES, THEY PROVIDE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION (EEI) REPORTS, SPOT REPORTS, AND SITREPS TO MILITARY AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES, AND THEY CHECK-IN TO OTHER SERVICE MARS NETS, DEMONSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEROPERABILITY
 - I ENCOURAGE CONTINUED MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION BY ALL MEMBERS

RECENT AIR FORCE MARS HQ ACTIVITIES

- LET ME SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN KEEPING ME BUSY AT HQ

- LAST YEAR I PROMULGATED OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE-1, WHICH ESTABLISHED A NEW “MISSION SUPPORT NET” TO SUPERCEDE THE TRANSCON SPACE SUPPORT NET
 - THE PURPOSE OF THIS NEW NET IS TO IMPROVE THE FLEXIBILITY OF AIR FORCE MARS TO SUPPORT U.S. GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MARS MISSION OUTLINED IN THE DoDI

- I AM IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING BILLET ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKING SOME PERSONNEL CHANGES TO ALLOW MEMBERS TO INCREASE THEIR LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM
 - I APPLAUD YOUR REGION LEADERSHIP FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND ROLE IN PLANNING AND ORGANIZING THIS CONFERENCE -- AND I APPLAUD ALL OF YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

- I HAVE ALSO AUTHORIZED RESUMPTION OF WORK ON REVISING AND UPDATING THE

MOI

- MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE THE MOI WAS ISSUED IN JAN 2009 AND I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR OPERATING PROCEDURES DOVETAIL WITH OUR MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDANCE LAID OUT IN THE DODI
- AND SPEAKING OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MARS MISSION, LET ME MENTION THAT THE ARRL IS PRODUCING A NEW “PUBLIC SERVICE AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK,” WHICH WILL INCLUDE A SEPARATE CHAPTER ON MARS, DETAILING THE MARS HISTORY, THE EVOLUTION OF OUR MISSION, AND OUR CURRENT ROLE IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
 - MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE THE ARRL RELEASED ITS LAST “EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK” IN 2005, WHICH CONTAINED ONLY PASSING REFERENCES TO MARS
 - THE MARS CHAPTER IN THE NEW HANDBOOK WILL INCLUDE EXAMPLES OF HOW MARS HAS RESPONDED TO REAL-WORLD EVENTS, INCLUDING THE ROLE AIR FORCE MARS PLAYS FROM DAY-TO-DAY MILITARY PHONE PATCHES TO THE HUMANITARIAN RELIEF OPERATION FACILITATED BY AIR FORCE MARS VOLUNTEERS AFTER THE HAITI EARTHQUAKE LAST YEAR
 - THE CHAPTER HAS BEEN PRODUCED WITH INPUTS FROM, AND THE CONCURRENCE OF, ALL 3 MARS BRANCHES, AND I THINK IT WILL PRESENT A POSITIVE PICTURE OF OUR ORGANIZATION
- FINALLY, LET ME MENTION THE SURPLUS EQUIPMENT INVENTORY REVIEW THAT OCCURRED RECENTLY
 - THIS WAS AN AIR FORCE MANDATE THAT AFFECTED AFNIC AND WAS NOT MARS-SPECIFIC
 - WHILE I UNDERSTAND THIS WAS A PAINFUL EXERCISE FOR SOME STATIONS, I APPRECIATE EVERYONE’S CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THIS EFFORT, WHICH WAS CHALLENGING, BUT NECESSARY

EFFORTS FROM THE FIELD BY OUR VOLUNTEER AUXILIARISTS

- OF COURSE, NOT ALL ACTIVITY OCCURS AT HQ -- MOST OF THE DAY-TO-DAY WORK OF AIR FORCE MARS IS CONDUCTED BY YOU, OUR VOLUNTEER AUXILIARISTS...AND YOU ARE THE ONES WHO DESERVE THE CREDIT
- FOR EXAMPLE, THE AIR FORCE MARS PHONE PATCH NET CONTINUES TO SUPPORT OUR MILITARY AIRCRAFT, FACILITATING MORE THAN 200 PHONE PATCHES A MONTH ON AVERAGE
 - RECENTLY OUR PHONE PATCH OPERATION FACILITATED THE SAFE LANDING OF A COMMERCIAL PASSENGER AIRCRAFT OVER SOUTH AMERICA THAT HAD LOST REGULAR COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY IN SEVERE WEATHER
 - FORTUNATELY THE PILOT, A FORMER AIR FORCE OFFICER, RECALLED THE AIR FORCE MARS PHONE PATCH FREQUENCY AND MADE HF RADIO CONTACT WITH OUR OPERATORS, WHO SUCCESSFULLY ASSISTED
- AIR FORCE MARS MEMBERS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN REACHING OUT TO THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU AND RECEIVED AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE FOR THE

FIRST TIME IN THE GUARD'S ANNUAL DOMESTIC OPERATIONS (DOMOPS)
CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

- THE DOMOPS EVENT WAS HELD EARLIER THIS YEAR IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AND ALLOWED US TO DEMONSTRATE OUR VOICE AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES TO AN AUDIENCE OF MORE THAN 1,600 NATIONAL GUARD PERSONNEL WITH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND DISASTER RESPONSE RESPONSIBILITIES FROM HAWAII TO CONUS TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
- THIS ORGANIZATION WOULD NOT RUN AS EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY WERE IT NOT FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AT THE NATIONAL, AREA, REGIONAL, AND STATE LEVELS -- YOUR HELP HAS MADE MY JOB EASIER
- AND LET'S NOT FORGET THAT THOSE OF YOU WHO CHECK-IN REGULARLY ON YOUR AREA, REGION, AND STATE NETS ARE THE BACKBONE OF A CADRE OF AIR FORCE MARS RESOURCES WHO PREPARE AND TRAIN TO BE AVAILABLE WHEN CALLED UPON TO SERVE OUR COUNTRY -- FOR WHICH YOU HAVE MY HEARTFELT THANKS

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- MY VISION FOR THE FUTURE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING "TOP TEN PLUS" LIST, IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OF PRIORITY:

ENHANCE OUR DIGITAL CAPABILITIES

-- DIGITAL MODES ARE USED BY MANY ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING OUR ARMY AND NAVY-MARINE CORPS MARS COUNTERPARTS...AIR FORCE MARS MAKES LESS EXTENSIVE USE OF THESE CAPABILITIES, BUT IT'S TIME TO REINVIGORATE OUR DIGITAL EFFORTS

MAKE NETS MORE RELEVANT TO THE MARS MISSION

-- THE LACK OF TRAFFIC ON OUR NETS MEANS THAT OUR TRAFFIC-HANDLING SKILLS ARE GETTING RUSTY... WE NEED TO BETTER PREPARE FOR THE DAY WHEN OUR CONTINGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY ARE CALLED UPON...OUR NETS SHOULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO HONE OUR COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS AND PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH

INCREASE RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AND BUILD MEMBERSHIP

-- LIKE THE AMATEUR RADIO COMMUNITY IN GENERAL, OUR MEMBERSHIP IS AGING... WE NEED NEW BLOOD, NEW IDEAS, AND TO FOSTER A NEW GENERATION OF VOLUNTEER AIR FORCE MARS OPERATORS EAGER TO HELP US FULFILL OUR MISSION

IMPROVE INTEROPERABILITY WITH OUR ARMY AND NAVY-MARINE CORPS MARS BROTHERS AS WELL AS WITH POTENTIAL USERS OF THE SYSTEM

-- THE USE OF DIGITAL CAPABILITIES IS NOT STANDARDIZED WITHIN THE MARS PROGRAM...MOREOVER, MANY OF THESE DIGITAL MODES ARE USED BY AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS BUT NOT BY THE ORGANIZATIONS WE MAY NEED TO SUPPORT IN EMERGENCIES

ENHANCE VISIBILITY OF AIR FORCE MARS INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

-- IT'S TIME TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF AIR FORCE MARS ACROSS THE BOARD...WITHIN DoD, THE MEDIA, DECISION-MAKERS, AND THE USER COMMUNITY...FROM THE SENIOR-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS TO THE INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATORS ON THE GROUND

INTEGRATE AIR FORCE MARS MORE ACTIVELY INTO THE NATIONAL COMMAND AUTHORITY'S COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

-- SOME OF OUR AIR FORCE MARS OPERATORS AT THE PENTAGON ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN COMMUNICATIONS EXERCISES WITH THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER AND DoD AIRBORNE ASSETS...THIS IS HELPING TO DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF MARS AS A CONTINGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE MILITARY

TIE AIR FORCE MARS MORE CLOSELY TO ACTIVE AND RESERVE AIR FORCE INSTALLATIONS AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD UNITS NATIONWIDE

-- MANY MILITARY FACILITIES NO LONGER HAVE MARS STATIONS ON BASE...BUT WITH THE RISE IN INTEREST IN HF RADIO AS A BACK-UP TO NORMAL COMMUNICATIONS -- ESPECIALLY BY THE NATIONAL GUARD -- WE SHOULD SEEK GREATER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MILITARY FACILITIES IN OUR LOCAL AREAS...THEY MAY BE THE NATION'S FIRST "FIRST RESPONDERS" WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

ADOPT A "BEST PRACTICES" APPROACH FOR AIR FORCE MARS OPERATIONS, DRAWING FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF THE OTHER MARS SERVICES

-- THERE IS MUCH WE CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER, INCLUDING WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T

PRESERVE THE UNIQUE AIR FORCE MARS CULTURE WHILE MAKING "JOINTNESS" WORK

-- AIR FORCE MARS IS DIFFERENT THAN ARMY AND NAVY-MARINE CORPS MARS...OUR MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS ARE DIFFERENT, BUT THAT IS NO IMPEDIMENT TO OPERATING JOINTLY WHENEVER POSSIBLE

IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS FROM HQ AND AMONG THE MEMBERSHIP

-- IMPORTANT DECISIONS BY HQ WILL BE COMMUNICATED IN A TIMELY MANNER FOR RELAY DOWN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND...SEVERAL REGIONS CIRCULATE NEWSLETTERS TO THEIR MEMBERSHIP...THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO GET THE MESSAGE OUT -- AND I WANT TO ESPECIALLY RECOGNIZE THE GREAT EFFORTS OF BRUCE, AFN4RD, TO KEEP THE REGION 4 MEMBERSHIP INFORMED THROUGH REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE

ESTABLISH MORE REGULAR COMMUNICATIONS WITH ARMY AND NAVY-MARINE CORPS MARS HQS

-- ANNUAL CHIEFS' MEETINGS (E.G., DAYTON) ARE INSUFFICIENT TO UNDERSTAND EMERGING ISSUES AND TO FORGE CONSENSUS...OPENING UP THE CHANNELS BETWEEN MARS HQS WILL FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT OF "BEST PRACTICES" AND SOLUTIONS TO COMMON CHALLENGES

EXPAND BENEFITS FOR AIR FORCE MARS MEMBERS

-- THE DoDI REFERNCES A NUMBER OF BENEFITS THAT CAN ACCRUE TO MARS MEMBERS...I WANT TO WORK TO CLARIFY AND INSTITUTE THESE BENEFITS BOTH TO REWARD OUR LOYAL MEMBERS AND TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

CONCLUSION

- AIR FORCE MARS HAS A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD OF IT
- THE GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION PROVIDED BY THE DoDI -- THE FIRST MAJOR REVISION TO THE MARS MISSION SINCE 1998 -- GIVES US WHAT WE NEED TO MOVE THE PROGRAM FORWARD
 - THE DoDI:
 - REAFFIRMS THE VALUE OF THE MARS PROGRAM TO OUR DOD SPONSOR;
 - INTEGRATES MARS MORE TIGHTLY TO THE DoD COMPONENTS;
 - REFOCUSSES THE MARS MISSION TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE EMPHASIS ON CONTINGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT TO DoD AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES AT ALL LEVELS IN SUPPORT OF HOMELAND SECURITY REQUIREMENTS;
 - INVESTS A GREATER NUMBER OF OSD-LEVEL ENTITIES WITH EQUITIES IN THE PROGRAM;
 - MANDATES AN ANNUAL REPORTING MECHANISM AS A METRIC FOR FOCUSING ATTENTION ON MARS ISSUES;
 - ELEVATES MARS TO THE STATUS OF AN ORGANIZED AUXILIARY; AND
 - AUTHORIZES ADDITIONAL BENEFITS THAT CAN ACCRUE TO MARS MEMBERS
- YOUR SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN INVALUABLE AND I AM TRULY HONORED TO LEAD SUCH AN ORGANIZATION OF DEDICATED AND CAPABLE MILITARY AUXILIARISTS
- ALTHOUGH WE ARE CALLED “AMATEURS,” THERE IS NOTHING AMATEURISH ABOUT THE JOB WE DO OR THE WAY WE DO IT
 - WE ARE VOLUNTEER PROFESSIONALS AND I AM PROUD OF YOUR EFFORTS
- I WISH YOU A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE AND CONTINUED SUCCESS IN ALL YOUR EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF AIR FORCE MARS AND THE NATION AND PEOPLE WE SERVE
- THANK YOU