



MINNESOTA MARSGRAM



Information for Minnesota Navy-Marine Corps. MARS Members

September, 2005

Volume 9, Number 9

NNN0ALL Minnesota

by NNN0GAZ Tim

Greetings, As I write this month, SHARES and the National Communications Center is operating 24/7, as they have been since August 30th, in support of the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. While the MARS frequencies seem to be quiet, rest assured the SHARES frequencies, net control stations and participants – particularly in the south, are busy. As time goes on it is entirely possible that we will begin to see traffic moving on MARS frequencies.

Many of you, I am sure have been watching the drama unfold in the Gulf States in the days since Hurricane Katrina left her path of destruction. The power of Mother Nature is truly humbling as we watch the TV cameras pan across the flooding and destruction of a once thriving metropolitan area and other major ports across the south.

At the same time I am embarrassed by the almost instantaneous blame game and finger pointing that has monopolized the media. Hurricane Katrina and her aftermath are a natural disaster of unprecedented proportion in our lifetime. While some argue that the response was too slow and too little too late, can we kindly put off partisan politics, grand standing, etc. and spend

our time and resources more wisely – mainly on the response and recovery efforts – because in the end what matters is attending to the needs of those affected. I'm sure in the months ahead money, resources and time will be spent on a congressional inquest now is not the time or the place for petty bickering. Should congress or an independent panel investigate the response to Hurricane Katrina, my personal preference would be to focus on what went right, learn from what went wrong or didn't work and improve our response system. A "heads will roll" approach isn't going to solve anything.

For those of you who wonder what you should be prepared for in a disaster, I urge you – if you have not already, visit <http://www.ready.gov>. This site provides information on the preparation of shelter-in-place kits, what to have in a kit if you are told to evacuate, and other information on how to be prepared for natural and man-made disasters. As a rule in emergency management, we instruct people that one can expect that there will be a period of

72 hours or more before outside assistance reaches the affected area. As emergency communicators many of us know that if we respond to the scene of a disaster – especially one of any proportion our "jump" kit needs to sustain us for 72 hours at a minimum. This isn't "red-tape" time, this is the time needed to assess, gather, and mobilize the manpower, machinery and supplies necessary to respond and recover.

Much of the ready.gov information was gathered, organized and published in preparation for Y2K. Many people shrugged off the Y2K preparations; a year later the lessons were driven home on September 11, 2001. The Boy Scout motto is "Be Prepared" for good reason. I truly believe that some of the pain and suffering as a result of Hurricane Katrina could have been reduced had people taken heed of the calls for preparation – for anything at any time and anywhere.

Amazing how the world and the way we live have changed in the past five years. I anticipate that as the September 11 anniversary draws closer security will

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EDITOR: Bob Reid NNN0XYA / NNN0GAZ3

Snail Mail: 13600 Princeton Circle
Savage, MN. 55378-2625

E-Mail: n0bhc@aol.com
Minnesota State Coordinator:

Tim Isom NNN0XEE / NNN0GAZ

Content Contributions Welcomed and Encouraged

MINNESOTA TRAFFIC NETS

Designator	Frequency	Local Times
5G1B	Pri. NCE Sec. NBG Ter. NAR	18:30 Daily

MINNESOTA ADMIN. NET

5G4A	Pri. NCE	19:00 2nd Sunday
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MARS DATA SYSTEM

	Frequency
NN0DVD	NCO AFSK/USB
Intranet site	http://www.communityzero.com/mnmars

FCC ISSUES REVISED FORM 605

Courtesy of *QST* September 2005

A revised FCC Form 605, "Quick-form Application for Authorization in the Ship, Aircraft, Amateur, Restricted and commercial Operator, and General Mobile Radio Services," went into effect and must be used for all receipts as of July 18, 2005.

"Applicants can avoid filing outdated editions by submitting their applications through the Universal Licensing System (ULS), given that changes to the paper forms will be incorporated into the system automatically," the FCC said. The new Form 605 is available online from the FCC Web site, www.fcc.gov/Forms/Form605/605.html.

The revised form includes a new Question 13 (subsequent questions have been appropriately renumbered) that will affect amateurs applying for an administrative update (AU) to reflect a change in licensee name. Question 13 now asks: "If the licensee name is being updated, is the update a result from the sale (or transfer of control) of the license(s) to another party and for which proper Commission approval has not been received or proper notification not provided?" Amateur Radio Service Applicants should always answer "no" to Question 13.

Not answering a question – which has nothing to do with the Amateur Radio Service – could result in dismissal of an application.

For additional information or assistance, visit the FCC Help and Support page, esupport.fcc.gov/index.htm. The FCC form change does not affect the NCVEC Form 605 that VECs and VE teams use.

- BT OVER

MN Navy-Marine Corps MARS Staff

Minnesota State Director

NNN0GAZ - Tim Isom - NNN0XEE

Assistant to the State Director

NNN0GAZ ONE

Al Doree - NNN0KZC

Assistant to the State Director: Em. Comm.

NNN0GAZ TWO

Al Doree - NNN0KZC

Assistant to the State Director: Net Ops/Rpts

NNN0GAZ THREE

Bob Reid - NNN0XYA

Assistant to the State Director: Training

NNN0GAZ FOUR

Robert King - NNN0SXU

The Future of MARS

Robert Sutton, *AA4A* (N7UZ), Chief, Army Military Affiliate Radio System WorldRadio, July 2005

Bob Hollister, Eastern Area Coordinator and I were discussing the future of MARS when Bob mentioned that he had recently read an interesting article in *WorldRadio* titled "The future of ARES." We noted that there were a number of areas that parallel MARS as well. For an example, the article refers to a posting on the QRZ website suggesting that we are approaching a point where Amateur Radio would no longer have a role in emergency or disaster communications. The author's point of view opposes that premise. He questions not whether Amateur Radio would be needed, but rather if Amateur Radio will be prepared to provide the level of service and connectivity expected by our customers during a major disaster.

All of us here at MARS HQ, as well as a good share of our Membership, will agree that MARS will be needed (as it has been) and that being prepared to meet customer expectations is the driving force for training and exercises. In this day and age of high tech cell phones, WiFi networks, FRS radios and handheld "blackberry" devices, there is a level of expectation of our customers that may be difficult to achieve.

Let's face it -- much of the senior leadership of those that we are prepared to support have the opinion that HF radio is 'outdated' and no longer a viable means of communications. Why? Because they don't use it in their day-to-day activities and they have no recent experience of its capabilities, especially if they have not yet experienced a loss of the normal communications infrastructure under adverse emergency conditions. I would venture to say that in most cases, HF Radio, or even any type of emergency communications, is not part of most agencies' "emergency contingency plans."

Future of MARS *cont'd* pg. 4

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increase, military, law enforcement and a host of other agencies will step up their vigilance, silently hoping that no one attempts an attack while we are in the midst of recovering from a disaster.

Finally, as the days get shorter and the evening temperatures are a little colder, remember the 5G1B meets every evening at 2330Z. Don't miss the opportunity to participate in an evening net, an ecom exercise, or just a friendly round of comments and conversation with your fellow MARS members.

Enjoy this issue of the Minnesota MARSGRAM.

BT OVER

Third Quarter Exercise, 2005

By: AI, NNNØGAZ TWO

The third quarter exercise will be a combination frequency drill, propagation study, station capability and training exercise. The exercise will take place on Tuesday, September 20, 2005 through Saturday, September 24, 2005 following the 5G1B traffic net which starts at 2330Z daily. The net designator will be 5G2B training net. The purpose of the net will be for all members to check their capability to tune and transmit on one or all of the following frequencies:

- Sep. 20, NBD, MN Secondary frequency
- Sep. 21, NAC, MN Tertiary frequency
- Sep. 22, NCP, MN Additional Authorized frequency
- Sep. 23, NCL, Reg. 5 and National calling frequency
- Sep. 24, NFK, National calling and SHARES frequency

All members should be prepared for this exercise by tuning your transmitters, antennas and tuners to these frequencies before hand and recording the settings so that changing frequencies from NCE can be accomplished in a short period of time.

The exercise will start immediately after the 5G1B traffic net is secured. The NECOS will call the 5G2B training net on NCE following the secure of the 5G1B net and instruct stations to QSY to the appropriate frequency for that evenings drill frequency. All stations are then asked to check in and send a signal report to the NECOS. The exercise should be concluded in the time allotted for the 5G1B net, 2330Z to 0030Z. All stations participating in the exercise will send a message listing frequencies and nets checked into along with a signal report and propagation numbers SFI, A index and K index (if available) to NNNØGAZ and NNNØGAZ TWO at the conclusion of the exercise. NNNØGA TWO will obtain permission to use these frequencies.

All Minnesota MARS members are asked to fill out and send a Station Capability form to NNNØGAZ, info to NNNØGAZ TWO following the exercise even if you were unable to participate in the exercise. The Station Capability forms are available on www.communityzero.com/mnmars by clicking on explorer, than mars forms. The forms on hand are at least two years old.

September 17, 2005, September 2005 QST page 49
This is the date set by the ARRL as Public Awareness Day, an Emergency Power Operating Event. After seeing the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, Minnesota winters seem like a walk in the park. However, we do get severe storms and blizzards in Minnesota. Power loss is quite

common in some areas, so this would be a great time to check those generators and make sure they are ready for emergency use. This would be a good time for the NECOS to call the net on emergency power and MARS members to check into the net on emergency power.

October 1-2, 2005, September QST page 48
This is the date for the ARRL 2005 Simulated Emergency Test (SET). While this date is set aside for Amateurs to practice emergency operations and conduct Simulated Emergency Tests, This would be a good time for all our MARS members to review their station capabilities to access the switch and ability to operate on one or more of the digital modes.

1. Review your training requirements and equipment needs to access the MDS switch.
2. Review your station to see what equipment and training required to operate at least one of the common digital modes, such as PSK 31, MT63, Amtor, Pactor, RTTY or others.

You may find you need a computer, TNC, sound card and connections to your radio. Computers required for these modes are now mostly give away types or can be had for very little money. Most of the software is free for downloading. There are also several MN MARS members that are more than willing to help you out with either of these. Our goal is for 100 % digital capability at some point. In real emergencies, digital modes may be the fastest and most accurate method to pass traffic.

BT OVER



New Orleans, La. (Aug 31, 2005) – A National Guard multi-purpose utility truck brings supplies to the Super Dome in downtown New Orleans. Tens of thousands of displaced citizens sought shelter at the dome, before, during and after Hurricane Katrina, but have been forced to evacuate as floodwaters continue to rise throughout the area. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Jeremy L. Grisham

The Future of MARS *cont'd from pg. 2*

Therefore MARS becomes a “hard sell” to those who are not aware of MARS capabilities and the advances that have been made over the years. It seems no matter how hard we try to get the message out; MARS is still viewed as a “morale & welfare” program that has outlived its usefulness. Yet those of us who are in MARS believe that a smart terrorist could render a wide variety of normal communications capabilities inoperative over a significant area, waging a well focused attack on the communications infrastructure.

On the other hand, the decentralized and survivable nature of MARS and its radio network is still one of its greatest values in a worst-case scenario. But as the infrastructure improves, and it is improving, many of our lower stress and public service training opportunities are disappearing. If we expect our MARS volunteers to be available and both properly equipped and trained to respond, disaster relief agencies need to know we exist and what capabilities we can provide for them.

So what is the answer? Do emergency managers recruit cell phone operators to use in times of emergency? I don't think so. We must face some basic realities:

- 1) Mere possession of a two-way radio in itself is no longer of significant value.
- 2) An untrained radio operator is of little value.
- 3) MARS members must not only be familiar with who the emergency agencies are, how they work, and what support they would need but they must also be familiar with how they communicate. Casual operating does not train one on how to communicate efficiently.
- 4) MARS must diversify its capabilities beyond an occasional exercise and must include our existing and potential customers in our exercises as well as participating in theirs.

So what do we do? Here are some thoughts.

- 1) Are you taking time to identify our customers at the local and state level where the majority of the actual support will be provided?
- 2) Can you identify what their emergency communications requirements will be after a disaster?
- 3) Are you including them in your exercises?
- 4) When was the last time you asked your local or state disaster relief agencies to take advantage of one of our MARS exercise opportunities or participated in their exercises?
- 5) When was the last time you assisted at a public service event?

- 6) When was the last time you asked to participate in their Homeland Defense exercises?
- 7) Have you tried understanding many of the procedures and specialized language of our emergency response customers?
- 8) Are you actually learning skills that will help you during critical incidents?
- 9) Have you explained to our customers the value added of EEI reporting and how it may be of interest to them during times of an emergency?
- 10) Have you suggested that you can assist them in installing an HF Radio station?

The bottom line here is that MARS members in states that have become directly involved with the local and state agencies have transitioned these efforts into formal MOUs. This has led to participation in emergency communications exercises and thereby preparing for a major disaster event. There lies the success story for MARS.

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Test Your MARS skills

Create a properly formatted EEI message using the following scenario:

Your town or locality is hit by a massive, F5 tornado. Damage is heavy with several dozen homes and businesses destroyed. The electric utility lines all over town are destroyed, along with the telephone lines. Drinking water is available, but at reduced capacity, as there are many fires in the damaged sections of your town and the fire department is using almost all of the town's water supply to fight the fires. Your only hospital was damaged, but the doctors and other health care providers are operating a triage center on the front lawn. You have tried to obtain information from your television, but the local station is off the air. The local AM radio station, WJBD, is operating and you just heard the police chief say that 25 people are known dead and at least 200 more are injured. You have monitored the local fire department's communications using a VHF scanner and you have heard them say that 15 buildings are now burning. Cellular telephone service is inoperative. You have a generator and enough fuel to provide you with power to operate your MARS station for 24 hours.

August MARS Skill Test Solution

D. Only the Area Director and, then, only if he/she is located within your State.

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Your Role in Ecomm.

by: Bob NNN0GAZ FOUR

There are several possible roles for Navy-Marine Corps Mars stations in emergencies. Perhaps because of the nature of exercises we find our roles to be limited as compared to possible roles in an actual emergency. This article will address the first two possible roles from a chronological standpoint. The first role in an actual emergency is reporting the nature of the emergency to DOM and the MARS hierarchy. The report is in the form of an EEI (Essential Elements of Information) message.

An EEI message is to be originated and sent by a Mars member at any time he/she has knowledge of a local disaster or situation in which the DOD (Dept. of Defense) might be interested. Broadly interpreted by most, the topics of actual event EEI messages have generally dealt with weather related phenomena, including the extent of damage caused by severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, floods, snow and ice storms, and the like. Other situations that have resulted in actual event EEI submissions from the Central Area membership have included hazardous material spills, propagation of hazardous/explosive materials within a State or town, and wide-spread power or telecommunications circuit failures. It is not necessary to implement a State (or, the Region, Area or National) ECOM plan in order for a MARS member to send an EEI message. All Mars members are encouraged to send EEI messages at any time an event occurs in their geographic area when; a) they have knowledge and information, and b) the member believes the DOD could find useful.

EEI messages follow a strict format. The term that best describes the format is 'pro forma', i.e., the message format is a template, a fill-in-the-blanks-with-the-requested-information type of message. See the Minnesota Area Emergency Communications Plan for details. It is necessary to send the ACTUAL EVENT EEI message by the fastest possible means. There could be considerable delay in getting the EEI message on the switch. We have been authorized, for that reason, to submit actual event EEI messages to the Director of Military Support at the Pentagon (DOMS), FEMA and Chief MARS, using electronic mail (e-mail). The specific instructions for e-mail submission of ACTUAL EVENT EEI messages is contained in CHNAVVMARCORMARS BCST 05-05 (replacing CMB 14-03).

It is easy to submit an EEI on line at www.navymars.org. The addresses should be updated – NNN0AS5 and NNN0AS5 TWO are, as you know, Minnesota stations. The same corrections should be made in the form contained in the Minnesota Ecom Plan plus a correction to NNN0ASG TWO, which is now an Alabama station. Mars ecom exercise EEI messages **are not to be sent by e-mail**. DOMS and

FEMA do not want to see copies of our practice messages. The actual event EEI sent by e-mail must be followed up by entry into MDS as an IMMEDIATE message.

The next possible early role for a Mars station is implementing the MARS ECOM system. Any Mars member can implement the MARS ECOM system. We are not required to request permission from the State Director or other staff members but if possible we should contact them first. In order to implement MARS ECOM activities, one simply has to send an ECOM implementation message. This message may be originated by the station or member who has received a request for communications assistance from a government or civilian disaster relief agency, or who is near the site of a disaster and it is suspected that Mars resources will be requested. The implementation message sets the 'wheels in motion' and provides the following information to its addressees:

- A. Lets three levels of Mars management know that an emergency situation exists.
- B. Informs those three levels of MARS management that Mars communications assistance was requested (or is anticipated to be requested).
- C. Outlines, in broad terms, what communications assistance and support at the three levels of the Mars chain of command are required.

Here's a step-by-step guide to how the MARS ECOM implementation system works:

1. A member receives a request for communications assistance from a 'served' agency (see NTP-8(C) Annex D for a list of authorized agencies or groups). This information is formatted into an ECOM implementation message (using the format and content described in the Minnesota Ecom Plan). The implementation message is sent to all addressees by the fastest possible means. Presumably by this time the State Staff has been notified of the action taken and the succeeding steps will be taken by one of the staff members.

2. Mars members are alerted to the need for their services. Minnesota has a telephone 'calling tree' for notifying members of ECOM activities.

3. A State ECOM net is established for the purpose of handling emergency communications for the duration of the need for Mars communications resources.

4. Optionally, depending upon the scope of the disaster, other nets may be established. These nets might be Region-level nets (if the disaster is beyond the scope of a single State), other 'tactical' State nets, say, for the purpose of handling large volumes of health and welfare traffic by digital or other

Accountability systems

Jerry Boyd, N7WR

A reader suggested that a discussion of “accountability systems” would be appropriate, and I agree. It is a subject rarely if ever discussed in relation to Amateur Radio emergency communications. However, it is a topic professional emergency responders are quite familiar with. A strong case can be made that it is very much the time for the emergency communications community to adopt and use accountability systems. An accountability system provides a means of tracking the status of emergency communications operators during times they are deployed. There are several reasons why tracking personnel is important. The first, and foremost, relates to the safety of the operator. Other reasons, such as knowing the status of personnel at all times in case redeployment or withdrawal become necessary, are also important.

The fire service in many, but not all, places has been using an accountability (sometimes called “Passport”) system for many years. Describing how such a system works in the fire service will make it easier to understand its application to Amateur Radio emergency communications.

Let’s use the example of a working structure fire to which multiple fire units respond. The Incident Commander (IC) will deploy his/her resources to attack the fire just as an emergency communications group leader will deploy amateurs in response to a major incident. For the fire IC it is important to know how many firefighters are deployed, who they are, and where on the fire ground they are assigned. It is especially critical to know which fire personnel are assigned to the most dangerous activities such as interior attack, rescue, or rooftop ventilation. By using an accountability or passport system, the IC (or his safety officer or operations chief) can tell at a glance who is assigned and to what function.

Here’s one example of how the system works at a fire scene. Each responder carries a small plastic nametag attached by Velcro on the inside of his/her fire helmet. These plastic nametags are about ½ inch by 1 ½ inch in size. As the firefighter is assigned on scene the nametag is removed from the helmet and placed on the accountability board. This tells, at a glance, that firefighter Smith is actually working the fire and is no longer in the staging or recovery area. As that firefighter comes off the fire line the, accountability tag is removed from the active assignment board, given back to the firefighter, and placed back inside the helmet. There are variations of this scheme which rely on cards with firefighters’ name cards being placed in slots on a status board.

No matter which system is used, the approach selected will show quickly who is in harm’s way, and what their specific assignment is. If, God forbid, a roof collapses on the burning structure it will quickly be known how many personnel were inside and who they are. This will greatly assist the “Ric Team” (Rapid Intervention Crew) as they attempt rescue of potentially injured or trapped personnel.

The advent of the accountability/ passport system traces back to too many tragic instances of firefighters being in peril (roof collapse, backdraft, etc) and ICs or Operations Chiefs not knowing who was deployed where. While implemented for safety reasons, it quickly became apparent that such systems had other benefits as well. It gave ICs a better clue as to when to relieve personnel in need of a rest. It lets the IC, Ops Chief or staging area manager know, quickly, how many resources are in reserve and available for instant deployment.

So successful has the passport/ accountability system proven itself that other non-fire agencies are beginning to

Accountability *cont'd pg. 7*

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means, or inter-Region/Area nets (if the disaster extends beyond the Regions/Area boundaries).

In the event that Mars communications has not been formally requested, an ECOM implementation message may still be sent, indicating that Mars support has not been requested. Such ECOM implementation messages may be advisable as a heads-up for management when communications support may reasonably be expected to be needed (i.e., requested) by disaster relief agencies, FEMA, state or local emergency management (EMS’s), or the like. In such circumstances, the MARS ECOM net(s) for the affected state could be activated, but no ‘served agency’ traffic would be handled until such time that a formal request was made of a Mars member and communicated to the chain of command via an ECOM implementation message. Any member may activate an emergency net if he/she is unable to contact a State Staff member.

When an emergency net has been activated members will continue to prepare and send EEIs as well as SITREPs as the need for updating information occurs.

The subjects of this article are covered in detail in NTP8C annex D, Region Five Operational Guide Annex C, Minnesota Area Emergency Communications Plan, and the Central Area New Member Notebook.

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Accountability *cont'd from pg. 6*

use it as well. SWAT units, SAR teams, and others who perform specialized and often risky missions have seen the advantages and have adopted the concept themselves.

You may, at this point, wonder about the application to Amateur Radio emergency communications. Keep in mind that amateurs have been killed, and others injured, during emergency communications assignments. Admittedly, and fortunately, this is rare. However, amateurs are sometimes placed in positions of risk. The application of accountability systems in such cases is obvious. Even absent the risk factor, there are other reasons why such a system ought to be considered by emergency communications leaders. It is a ready means of determining who is assigned and to what position, whether it is a risky assignment or not. Further, it can assist the emergency communications leader in determining who is due for relief and who is not. It can tell the leader who is "in reserve" in a staging area available for assignment if the need arises. If you agree that such a system may be advantageous for emergency communications the question becomes one of how to implement it.

In the fire service, in most cases all resources respond to a staging or assignment area prior to actual deployment. This makes it convenient to turn in the accountability tag to the appropriate person. And, firefighters generally wear helmets inside which the tag can be kept when not in use. Amateur Radio emergency communications responders may or may not respond to a central staging area, and they generally do not wear helmets. So, how do we implement such a system?

First, I would make the argument that all emergency communications responders should report to a central staging area prior to deployment.

Why? Face-to-face briefings prior to deployment (which occur at staging areas) are usually more effective than those done in some other fashion. Second, it gives the leader an opportunity to see resources s/he may not know personally. Sometimes physical stature and condition are related to certain types of assignments. Unless the person being considered for such an assignment is seen, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to determine fitness for the assignment envisioned. Finally, reporting to a staging area will make use of an accountability system easier.

What type of accountability system can Amateur Radio emergency communications use effectively? If all Amateur Radio emergency communications folks wore helmets of some type the-fire system would work. But they don't! The card in the slot approach could work, but that requires (depending on the number of operators) what might prove a bulky slot board, a supply of cards to fit in it, marking pens,

and the time it takes to compete cards for each responder.

Another possibility is to use either a laptop or PDA device to electronically account for responders. That might also provide a permanent "time stamped" record of who was where and when. There are some public safety agencies which have elected to implement this type of system. However, the nametag on a board with Velcro' approach remains the most popular.

One reason for the nametag approach is that when a single engine company responds to a fire they can account for all personnel on the engine with a small accountability board carried with the engine. Much easier and quicker to use than having to carry a laptop, turn it on, wait for it to boot, and then enter data. Remember, in an emergency time is of the essence.

Here's a suggestion regarding Amateur Radio emergency communications group accountability systems. Almost every amateur brings a handheld radio to every callout. Even the smallest HT can accommodate an accountability tag. A plastic strip with printed name and call with Velcro on the back and the opposing Velcro glued to the radio will get the job done. Simply pull the tag off the radio and hand it to the emergency communications leader for placement on the accountability board that s/he carries to the incident. The accountability board can be a simple 8 1/2 by 11 inch clip board with Velcro strips glued to it. The board can be divided into sections such as: deployed (with sub categories indicating type/location of assignment); in staging; rest/recovery, etc. Having both name and callsign on the tag is important for identification reasons. Especially in mutual aid situations not all emergency communications responders will be known by their callsign, and having current callbook access in the field is not likely.

Whatever accountability/passport system you choose, I urge you to adopt one. It is an important safety step, looks and is professional, and will leave served agencies with a very positive impression.

GAZ note: Department of Defense Identification Cards (DoD green cards) can be issued by the Central Area Director at the request of the state director. The DoD ID card allows you access to disaster sites where they are recognized.

To obtain a DoD ID card you must furnish a 1 inch by 1 inch photo – black and white or color – to the state director. You may take a digital photo and print it or forward the image to the state director by email. Once the state director receives the photos, they will be forwarded to the Central Area Director.

The Central Area Director will prepare the DoD ID card, complet-

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Is Your Shack Safe?

Jerry Wellman, W7SAR
WorldRadio August 2005

Fixing the shack

It's been almost 15 years since I built my "home" shack. That was when we moved into the house and I fixed up one basement room just as my radio den. I was careful to route all the coax and wires above a suspended ceiling and then bring the wires down some plastic wire chases to the operating tables.

Most of my gear operates on 12 volts DC so I have some giant power cables coming inside from a 1,250 amp/hour array under the back porch. Some old (and solid) conference tables make an ideal operating station, along with various phones, phone patches, lights, etc.

Over the past 15 years, the shack has grown - not physically, but I've added network connections, additional antennas, a phone patch, a couple of computers, a refrigerator, and other nifty goodies too numerous to mention. These additions have taken a toll on the room, and left me with some unsafe conditions.

It's frightening to bring some hefty wires in from a large battery array, and then splice, add, and modify the power distribution as radios and scanners are added. So, in an insane moment, Janet and I decided the house must be repainted and recarpeted (all so I could get the radio den fixed as well). Of course the radio room was the last room to be painted and carpeted in the deal, but it was worth it. It was also the most challenging of the house upgrade endeavor!

I've just moved back into the shack after a THREE week upgrade. It took two days just to disconnect everything, dust

it, clean it up, and then stack it all up in the family room. Then my son Adam and I stripped out the carpet, repainted, replaced the ceiling, installed new carpet, and moved everything back in.

The upgrade included a new power distribution plan using three 12 outlet RigRunner boxes from West Mountain Radio. This gives me 36 12 VDC outlets, all fused! (And all PowerPole.) This arrangement is much safer than all of those splices, wire nuts, mixed connectors, and "unknown if fused" wires. I was also able to fix all the messy phone connections I'd added over the years and also put some nice network connectors on the work tables.

One big improvement was the dejunking. There was a lot of stuff that didn't get reinstalled including a white board, some wall maps, a lot of radios, and simply lots of collected junk. When I first built the room, the expectations and needs were different. I also did a lot more construction and repair. Accurate and high quality maps were not on a computer. Today I plan on doing more operating and less fixing. Having less "eye catching junk" makes it easier to operate and find stuff. In past months, I would set something down on a table and it could be lost for days or months. I cannot believe all the lost items that were found during the process.

Why did I tell you about my own project? Because you may be in the same condition I was in - junked and messy. You too may have gathered years and years of stuff that no longer works, is no longer needed, or that you will never repair. You may have also expanded and added connections and wires that render your shack unsafe. The latter point is what concerned me. I had been talking with my insurance agent and he had concerns about the safety of my shack. He asked if I'd made a reasonable effort to prevent disaster, primarily fire and injury. In looking at the previous mess, I couldn't have answered in the affirmative. Now I can. With today's insurance companies trying to avoid payment for any reason they can find, it's critical you protect your family and your investment by ensuring the insurance covers your shack.

Once I've put everything back and it's all fused, cleaned, and safe my stress level will decrease and I can sit, back to enjoy Amateur Radio with less broken things to ponder fixing, fewer wires, lots less dust, and an overall better operating environment. You can do it too! You might have to "bribe" the spouse by painting and carpeting the rest of the house, but it will be worth it!

Accountability *cont'd from pg. 7*

ing portions of the card which are applicable. The Central Area Director will mail the card to the applicant for a signature. The applicant must sign the card and return it to the Central Area Director. The Central Area Director will then enter the accountability number on the card, laminate it and return it to the applicant.

DoD ID cards do have a fixed expiration date at which time the process must be repeated.

Those members interested in obtaining a DoD ID card, please forward the necessary photo or image to the state director for processing. The deadline for photo submission will be October 1, 2005 - members who have their photos to the state director by this date will have their request processed.

If you have any questions, please contact the Minnesota State Director.

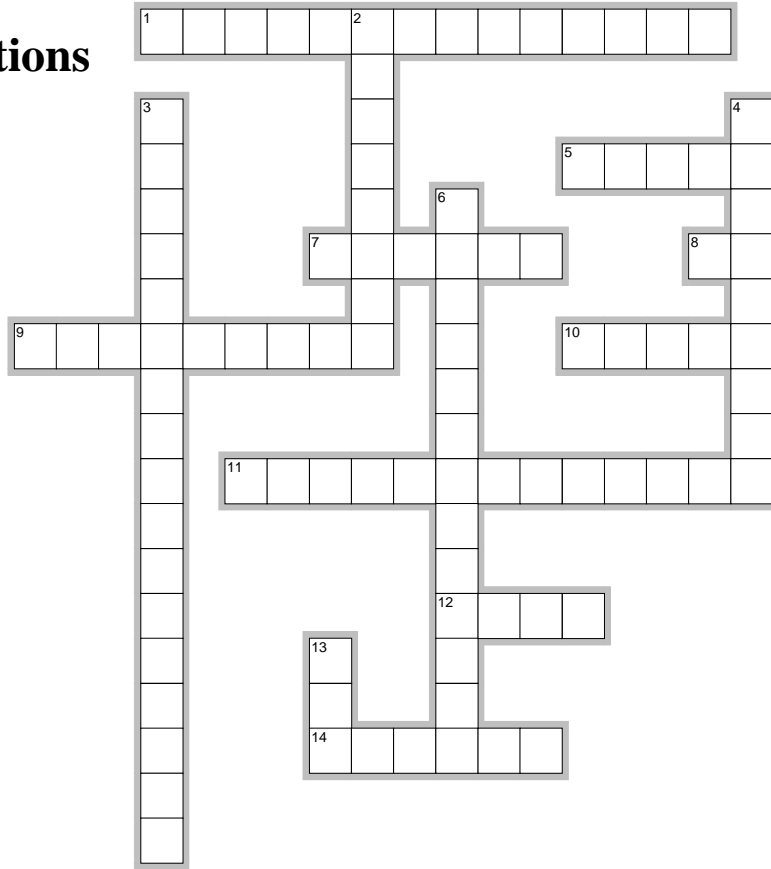
BT OVER

Shack Safety cont'd pg. 10

Emergency Communications

Across

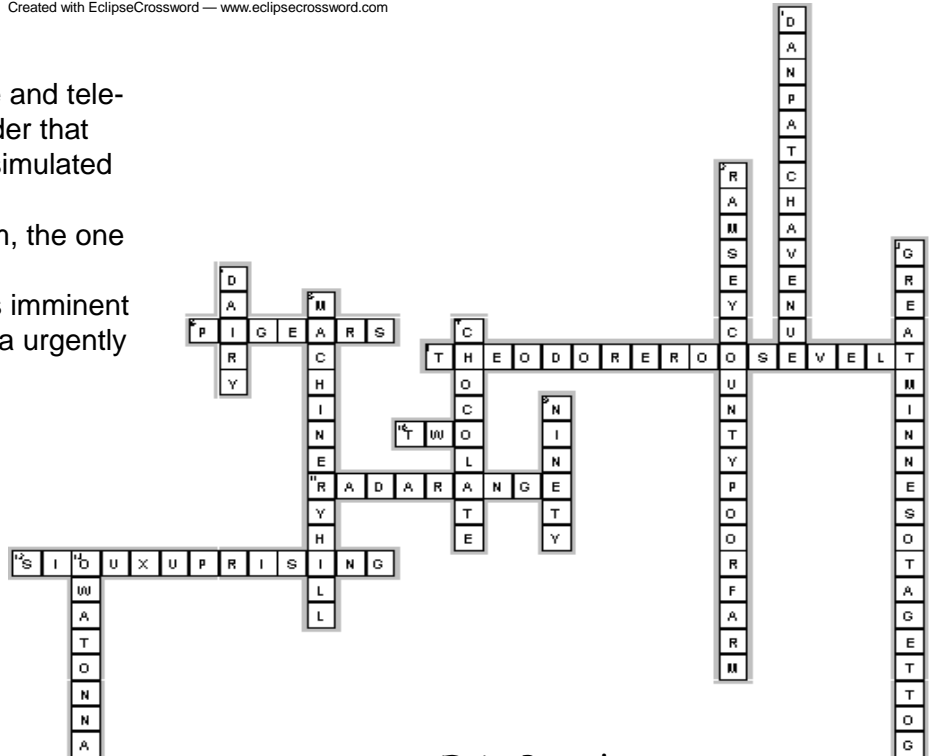
- 1. First message to be sent during an ecom situation
- 5. A phased communications readiness condition to prepare stations for an emergency condition
- 7. Situation Report
- 8. A model tool for the command, control, and coordination of resources and personnel at the scene of an emergency.
- 9. Message precedence reserved for very important messages
- 10. In the ICS, the section responsible for information gathering and dissemination and working out the details of each agency's response.
- 11. EEI identifier for Earthquake
- 12. Federal Emergency Management Agency
- 14. Shared Resources High Frequency Radio Pro-



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com

Down

- 2. A condition wherein normal message and telephone traffic is drastically reduced in order that messages connected with an actual or simulated emergency shall not be delayed
- 3. Under the Incident Command System, the one person in charge.
- 4. An emergency or disaster situation is imminent
- 6. Evacuation of residents from this area urgently needed. Advise plans for help.
- 13. National Communication System



State Fair Puzzle Solution

5G1B Net Schedule

6:30PM 4007 kHz USB

Day	NECOS	Tfc Rep
Sun.	XYA	XEE
Mon.	XEE	XEE
Tue.	KZC	KZC
Wed.	BQH	BQH
Thu.	SXU	SXU
Fri.	ACY	OCF
Sat.	Rotating Duty (see below)	

Don't be bashful, if the net has not been called by the net control station within 2 minutes, jump in and start things rolling.



NNN0BQH	Bruce Meyer	9/17
NNN0PLH	Larry Groom	9/21
NNN0EMO	John Oehlenschlager	9/28

Shack Safety *cont'd from pg. 8*

Along the Way

This is a great time of the year to check your antenna and power connections. Be sure you measure the power at the radio and under load (I use an old headlight for a load and measure the delivered voltage. You would be surprised at how power leads seem to get corroded over the winter and deliver low voltage.) Tighten the coax fittings and antenna mounts. Use cable ties to neaten up your gear. Check all the ground connections. Having stuff bounce around for a year while you're mobile takes a toll on installation -fittings loosen, wires move around, nuts and bolts jiggle loose, etc.

Take a good look around your vehicle as well. I like to look at the brakes, the tires, see if some new leak has developed, and especially if a tail lamp has burned out.

BT OVER

Saturday NECOS / TREP Schedule

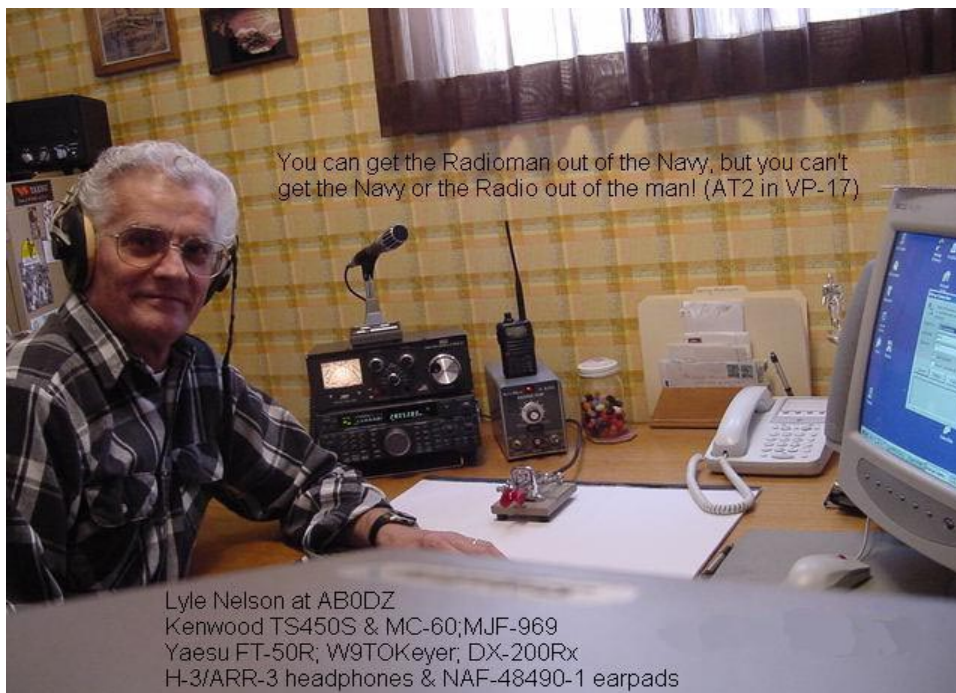
NECOS TREP

Sep 3	BQH	BQH
Sep 10	SXU	SXU
Sep 17	ACY	OCF
Sep 24	XYA	XEE
Oct 1	XEE	XEE
Oct 8	KZC	KZC

The Ham Shack - NNN0APL



An irregular feature highlighting the operating positions of our members. Send your pictures and description to Bob at n0bhc@aol.com.



You can get the Radioman out of the Navy, but you can't get the Navy or the Radio out of the man! (AT2 in VP-17)

Lyle Nelson at AB0DZ
Kenwood TS450S & MC-60; MJF-969
Yaesu FT-50R; W9TOKeyer; DX-200Rx
H-3/ARR-3 headphones & NAF-48490-1 earpads

Test Your Analytical Skills

Downloading

The new software can be downloaded immediately, but it's an 8 Mbyte file. Can you get the job done before you have to leave for work in 20 minutes? Your modem usually connects at 44 kbps and the software protocol generally transfers bytes at one-tenth the bit rate.

Answer in the next of the Minnesota MARSGRAM

August Test Solution

Courtesy of *The Electron*, Cleveland Institute of Electronics

Let's start with a simple one: a father is 50 years older than his son. Their combined age is 60. How old is the father?

Answer: 55