

# Military Auxiliary Radio System





# What is MARS?

- ◆ The Military Auxiliary Radio System is a Department of Defense sponsored program established as individual programs separately managed by the Secretaries of the Army & Air Force.



# MARS History

- ◇ The Army Amateur Radio System (AARS) was founded in 1925 by the U.S. Army Signal Corps, based on the need for a pool of trained radio operators in time of mobilization.
- ◇ This organization was the forerunner of today's Army MARS. AARS was deactivated on December 7<sup>th</sup> 1941 with the outbreak of World War II.
- ◇ The Military Amateur Radio System was established on November 26<sup>th</sup> 1948 by authority of the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force.





# MARS History

- ◇ It was renamed Military Affiliate Radio System on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1952 to more accurately describe its nature.
- ◇ In 2009, MARS name was changed again when it was upgraded to a Military Auxiliary.
- ◇ The MARS program operates under Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 4650.02 as of December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.



# Who are MARS members?

- ◆ MARS is a military auxiliary made up of licensed Amateur Radio operators.
- ◆ These members have an interest in Military & Disaster communications, and wish to contribute to the MARS mission.
- ◆ Members also include active duty, reserve and National Guard units, as well as individual club stations.



# MARS Mission

- ◇ To support a Global HF Enterprise in cyber impaired or denied environments on behalf of the Department of the Army, and Department of Defense, in order to support the objectives of the United States.
  - ◇ Provide auxiliary communications for military, civil, and/or disaster officials during periods of emergency.
  - ◇ Assist in effecting normal communications under emergency conditions.
  - ◇ Create interest and furnish a means of training members in military communications
  - ◇ Provide a reserve of trained communications personnel
  - ◇ Conduct an Amateur Radio Cross-Band Test annually as a part of Armed Forces Day.





# MARS vs. Amateur Radio

- ◇ MARS members are granted a special government authorization to operate issued by the service branch to which they belong:
  - ◇ Rules/regulations are governed by the National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA), not the FCC.
  - ◇ Rules such as bandwidth, symbol rate, and power output are different than those imposed under amateur radio licenses.
  - ◇ MARS frequencies are outside of the Amateur Radio Bands, and therefore require members to modify their equipment to operate on these frequencies.
- ◇ Heavy emphasis is placed on proficiency in digital communications. The majority of traffic passed is done digitally, therefore all members are required to have digital capability.
  - ◇ MARS stations are permitted and required to use encryption techniques.



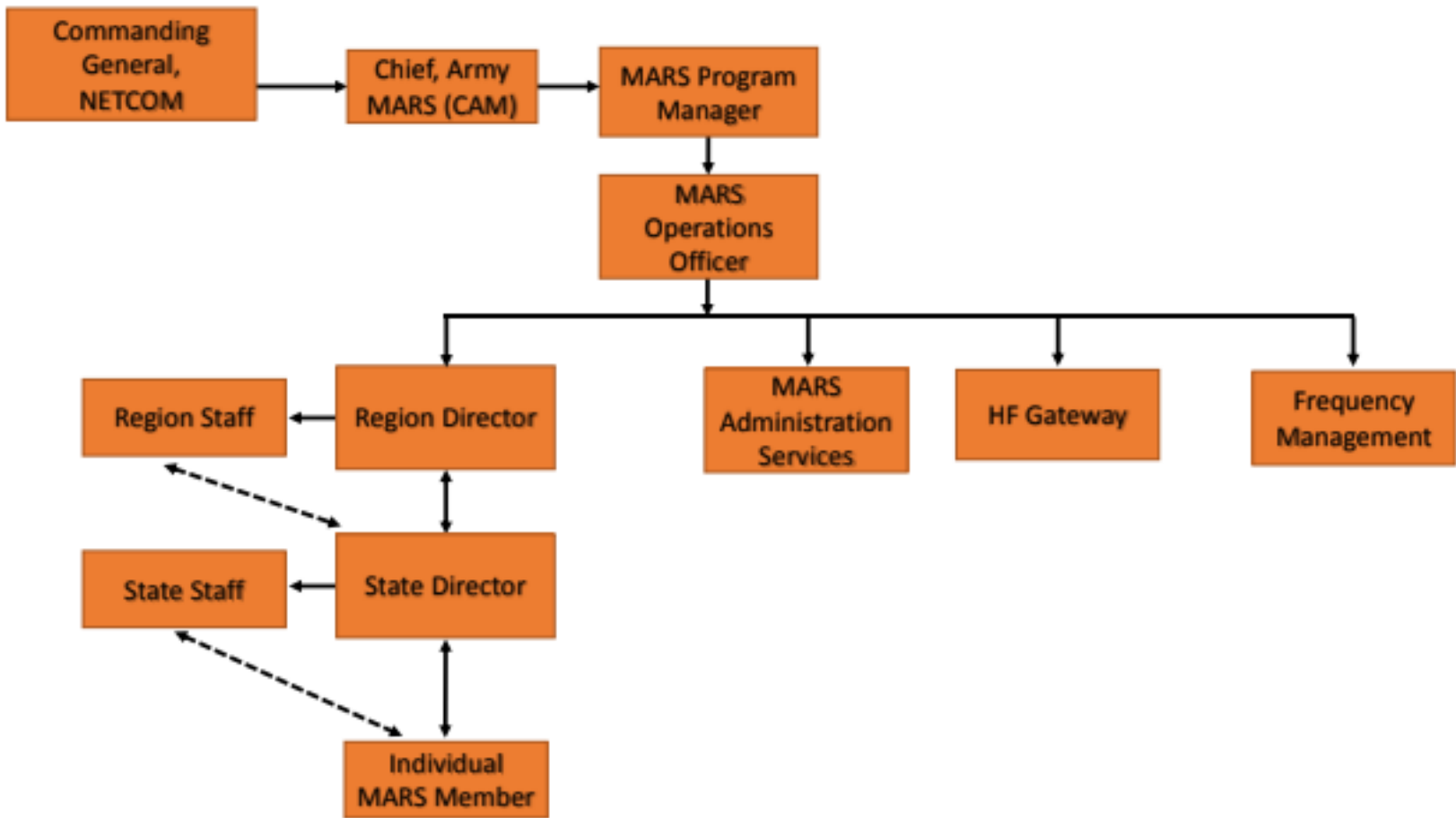
# MARS Organization







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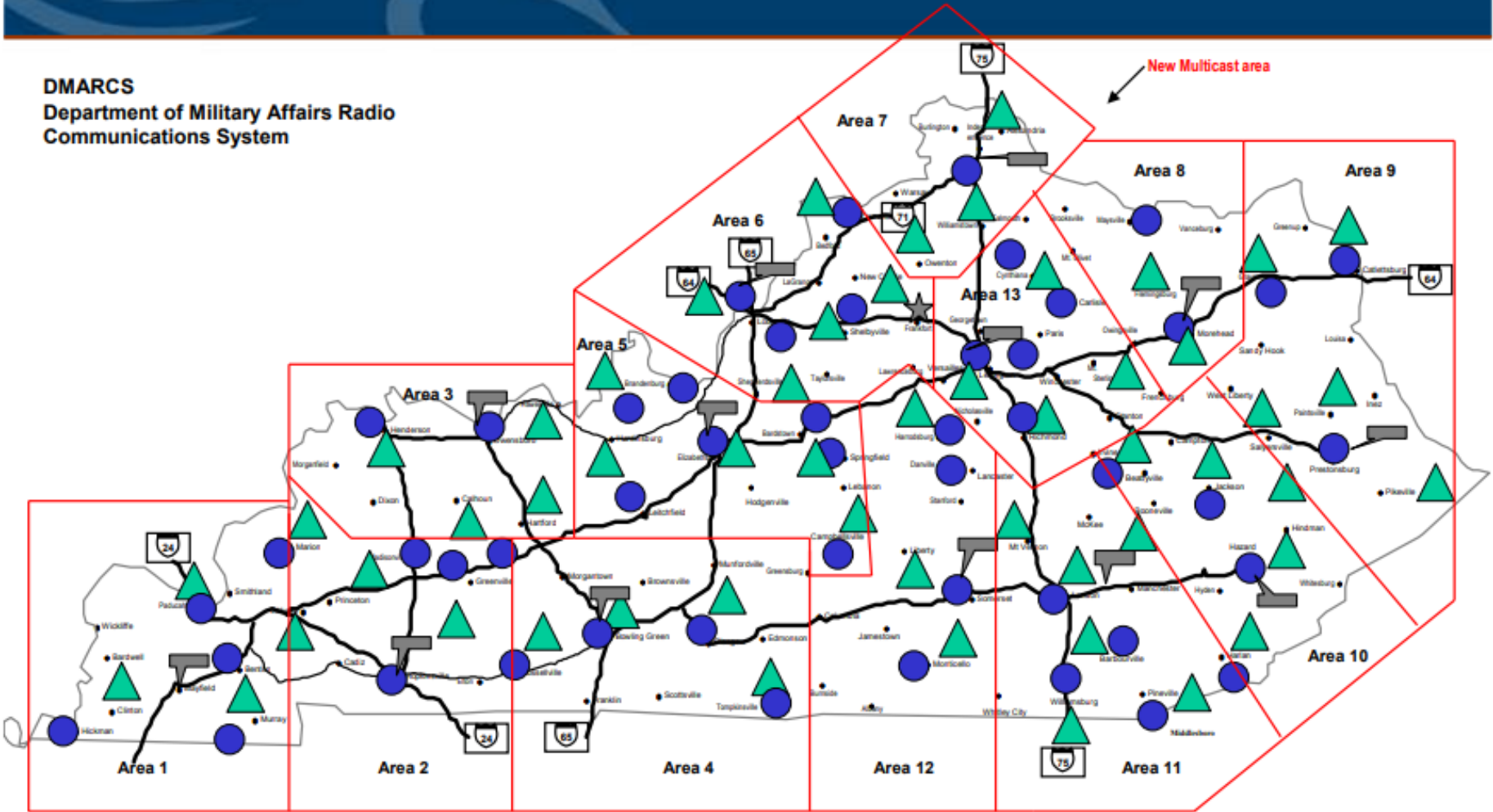





# Benefits of MARS Membership

- ◇ Add to the enjoyment of the ham radio hobby
- ◇ Become part of a world-wide system
- ◇ Increase your communication/operating skills in a structured and disciplined environment
- ◇ Operate on special military frequencies



**DMARCS**  
**Department of Military Affairs Radio**  
**Communications System**



-  Armories 52 radios
-  VHF high-band repeater sites 53
-  KyEM Area Offices







# Eligibility to Join MARS

- ◇ Be at least 18 years of age (17 with parental consent)
- ◇ Be a U.S. Citizen or resident alien
- ◇ Possess a valid Amateur Radio License issued by the FCC or other competent U.S. authority.
  - ◇ Army MARS requires individuals to possess a General Class license within 1 year of being granted membership.
  - ◇ Air Force MARS has no requirements as to license class.
- ◇ Possess a radio station capable of operating both voice and digital on MARS frequencies (2-30 MHz)
- ◇ Valid e-mail address is required



**MARS IS NOT FOR EVERYONE...**



# Applicant Agreement

- ◇ MARS members must agree to operate in accordance with rules and regulations governing MARS as managed by the parent service.
- ◇ Each service requires a minimum participation of its members
  - ◇ 15 Hours of participation in Regional MARS activities in each calendar quarter
    - ◇ 9 of these hours must be on-the-air (HF) participation in State/Regional nets
  - ◇ Participate in at least 1 Communications Exercise (COMEX) annually
  - ◇ Monthly participation report must be submitted through chain of command
- ◇ Each service requires a “probationary” period (up to 6 months) that includes mandatory basic training which must be completed during this time.
  - ◇ Complete Basic Training Course
  - ◇ Participate in 10 hours of State/Regional Nets
  - ◇ Participate as a NCS station on a regularly scheduled net
  - ◇ Complete ICS Course IS-100



# How to Join MARS

- ◇ For more information, or to join MARS:
  - ◇ <http://www.usarmymars.org>
  - ◇ <https://afmars-msn.org/joinmars.php>

