# Region 9 Army MARS Training Topics for "phone bridge" use

**\*\*\* ATTEND - PARTICIPATE – ASK QUESTIONS -  WE ALL NEED TO GET INVOLVED \*\*\***

**TRAINING TOPIC  –** NCS & ANCS Responsibilities

**SESSION INTENT –**  The intent of this lesson is to review the duties and responsibilities of the Net Control Station (NCS) and the Alternate NCS (ANCS).

**REFERENCE –**  ACP-125

**EXPECTED TIME TO DELIVER –** 45 min.

**CONTENT OUTLINE & KEY POINTS –**

Army MARS scheduled or emergency nets are directed by a Net Control Station.
The NCS may be assigned or may be drawn from the net participants in the absence of the assigned NCS or ANCS.

Army MARS NCS direct all net operations; this includes opening a net, ensuring operation in accordance with Army MARS policy and procedure, directing message traffic relay, directing net activities to relocate or extend to alternate assigned frequencies, ensuring that appropriate training is conducted in accordance with their state/command training program, and other appropriate network activities.

As Army MARS members we are all required to understand basic Net Control Station functions and responsibilities, and be prepared to assume duties as either as a NCS or as an ANCS as required.

Net Control Stations direct and control the operation of all our nets, both on the radiotelephone and digital modes; they are responsible for circuit discipline within a net.

The authority of the NCS extends only to the operation of the net and does not allow jurisdiction over local administration of individual stations within the net.  What does this mean in practice?

> For example, in extreme cases, an NCS may direct a difficult station to close or refuse them entry into a net.  Any recommendation for disciplinary or administrative action must come from the SMD.  Example, a station attempts to check-in with an invalid or otherwise questionable callsign.  The NCS could refuse to allow them to enter the net and direct the station to leave the frequency.  Any follow up action would come from the SMD.  Another way to look at it is that even if the NCS is wrong, he is right for that net.  He may be told never to do that again by RD or the SMD, but the NCS rules for that net only.

Decisions made by the NCS are final within their scope of authority.

NCS assignments and location will be based on operational requirements, and the willigness for qualified members to step up and volunteer.

Only Army MARS members are authorized to act as Primary and Alternate Net Control stations on Army MARS networks.

State Directors are responsible for providing standardized training to all members designated as an NCS within their state, thus ensuring all network operations are conducted within approved MARS guidelines and procedures.

**The NCS is responsible for:**

1. Opening and closing the net at the scheduled times.

2. Directing network activities in accordance with published Army MARS operational requirements.

3. On voice networks, the NCS will identify the network, and query for additional check-ins using standard MARS net procedures.

4. If the siisgned NCS does not identify the net within 2 minutes past the hour, any member monitoring the net ***should*** assume the duties of the NCS and operate the net until relieved by the regular NCS.

5. Think of how many times you've sat and listened to the "painful silence" beginning at one minute past the hour, and finally feeling relief when someone else steps up to the plate.

### 6. What if you had to do it for real?

- Initiating and terminating radio silence as required. Recall from our proword training the proper way to initiate and lift radio silence is by the use of the prowords "SILENCE" and "SILENCE LIFTED".

- Limiting transmissions to essential length.

- Expeditiously clearing all traffic on the net. We've talked a little about message precedence .

- Conducting MARS training.

- Resolving disputes incident to traffic handling and net procedure.

- Correcting procedural discrepancies.

**Question**. **Think about this:**

1. How does a good NCS handle a situation where someone makes an obvious procedural error?

2. Ensuring that activation and deactivation reports are prepared and submitted.

3. Ensuring all members checking into the net are authorized users of the frequency.

4. Maintaining a master station log more commonly referred to as a radio station log, for each net. The radio station log is used to record MARS operational information and to provide data for the monthly MARS participation report. Radio station logs will be retained a minimum of one calendar year.

**The minimum information a radio station log will record is as follows:**

–DATE TIME.  Time of opening the net or station in DTG format.

–STATION CALLED.  Call sign of the station called.

–CALLED BY.  Call sign of the station calling.

–FREQUENCY.  The frequency used in KHz for HF and MHz for VHF.

–MESSAGES SENT.  The number of messages sent.

–MESSAGES RECEIVED.  The number of messages received.

–TIME END OF CONTACT.  Time of closing the net or station.

–REMARKS.  Any remarks or notes.

–OPERATOR INITIALS.  Operators should initial the log to authenticate the log entries.

**Finally, what are the duties and responsibilities of the ANCS?  Well that's pretty easy; they're exactly the same as those of the NCS.**

1. To ensure continuity of control, an Alternate Net Control Station is appointed.

2. The ANCS aids the NCS in the operation of the net, reporting any errors or omissions in the callup or traffic reports, acting as a relay station, noting inaccurate net procedures, and aiding the NCS in procedural training discussions.

3. The ANCS is expected to shadow the actions of the NCS.  Bottom line is that the ANCS must be prepared to assume the duties of the NCS at anytime and that transition must be seamless, i.e. the power goes out at the NCS location and the ANCS immediately steps in and continues net operations.

**In a past Training Session we discussed network procedures are to be practiced until they become second nature to us.  These procedures provide the framework within which we accomplish our mission that is to provide <u>reliable,</u> <u>secure,</u> <u>speedy</u> communications support to the agencies we are called upon to support.**

**THE WAY AHEAD –**   Additional Functions of Station Manager