**ARRL National Traffic System (NTS) Guidelines for the exercise**

**Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) Communications Exercise 20-4**

**first week of October and concluding on October 26**

***“MARS Communications Exercise to Involve Amateur Radio Community***

Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS) volunteers will take part in the Department of Defense (DOD) Communications Exercise 20-4, starting first week of October and concluding on October 26. The MARS focus is interoperability with ARRL and the amateur radio community.

"Throughout the month of October, MARS members will interoperate with various amateur radio organizations that will be conducting their annual simulated emergency tests with state, county, and local emergency management personnel," said MARS Chief Paul English, WD8DBY. "MARS members will send a DOD-approved message to the amateur radio organizations recognizing this cooperative interoperability effort."

"This exercise will culminate with MARS Auxiliarists sending a number of summary messages in support of a larger DOD communications exercise taking place in October," English added. Throughout the month of October, MARS stations will operate on 60 meters, and ham bands and WWV/WWVH will broadcast messages to the amateur radio community. English assures no disruption to communications throughout the month-long series of training events.”

***Guidelines for NTS participation in the exercise.***

* Messages will be transferred from MARS to NTS participants by one of these methods:
  + Via a NTS affiliated or amateur radio related traffic net by a MARS member using their ham call by voice, cw or digital methods.
  + On one of the 60M frequencies using voice by prearranged schedule by a MARS member to a ham operator.
* MARS will be converting ICS213 messages to ARRL Radiograms ***before*** they are passed to NTS members participants or other hams.
* The NTS and ham members then relay the messages normally to the recipient.
* The recipient will call by phone Paul English, Chief Army MARS to acknowledge receipt of the message.
* MARS will begin sending the messages after the first week of October and will inject 90 messages into the systems.
* A PDF is available to review the various processes for the exercise.
* Questions concerning the exercise can be addressed to Paul Gilbert, KE5ZW, Director, Department of Emergency Management at 512-940-0441 or ke5zw@arrl.org.