

MERT



Marion County Emergency Radio Team

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

December 2021

MERT November Meeting

Our monthly meeting for November was cancelled due to Thanksgiving and travel by several Members. See you at 10 am on Saturday, December 18th.

MERT Members Attend North Florida Regional Workshop

Preston Bowlin, Director of Emergency Management requested two MERT Members represent Marion County at a Florida Dept. of Emergency Management SERT (State Emergency Response Team) regional AUXCOMM training class in Nassau County, FL.

The workshop is designed for amateur radio/auxiliary communicators providing emergency communications support to State/Territory, Tribal, regional, or local governments. Training focused on State inter-operational cross-disciplinary emergency response activities enhancing accurate and timely communications. Assistant MERT Coordinator Bill Gillespie (KW5BG) and Harlan Cook, (KN4VRM) participated.

Bill shared the following update: "During the weekend of Nov 21-22, Harlan Cook and I attended AUXCOMM training, held at the Nassau County EOC. The training was conducted by two terrific instructors from Kentucky and Texas. Both have extensive experience in different aspects of AUXCOMM and emergency responses.

So, what is AUXCOMM? In the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) 2014, it's referred to as "Volunteer organizations such as community emergency



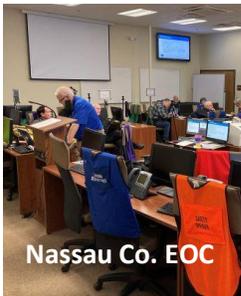
Bill Gillespie, Assistant MERT Coordinator (KW5BG)

MERT - Amateur Radio Volunteers assisting Marion Co. Emergency Management during emergencies!



(L-R) Instructors
Brett Shryock &
Charlie O'Neal

response teams and auxiliary communications volunteers (e.g., amateur radio operators; also called Hams) play key roles...Today, nearly all the States and territories have incorporated some level of participation by amateur radio auxiliary communication operators into their TICPs and SCIPs; this allows them to quickly integrate the operators into response efforts, which can strengthen communications and operations during incidents of any scale.”



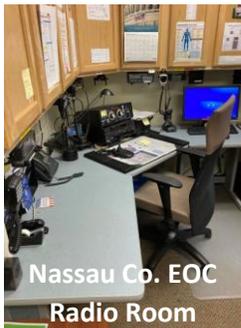
Nassau Co. EOC

Auxiliary Communicators are one of many Technical Specialists that may be called upon to support the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The Incident Commander has the final authority as to where the auxiliary communications (AUXCOMM) personnel will reside within their command.



Nassau Co. EOC

Goal: The goal of this 20-hour course was to provide instruction to AUXCOMM volunteers so that their individual and organizational efforts/expertise are appropriately integrated into the public safety/service communications support environment in the Auxiliary Communicator role:



Nassau Co. EOC
Radio Room

- ✓ Provide alternate communications in cases where local services have failed
- ✓ At emergency incidents/planned events/training exercises
- ✓ Within the emergency management structure (Emergency Operations Center (EOCs), etc.)
- ✓ Supporting communications with other organizations (Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.)
- ✓ Enable an AUXCOMM volunteer to fill the role of an Auxiliary Communicator
- ✓ Educate the Auxiliary Communicator on how to work in a NIMS/ICS environment under the direction of the Communications Unit Leader (COML) or at an EOC under the direction of the EMA Director or designee
- ✓ Standardize basic AUXCOMM procedures that can be used either within a state or between states
- ✓ Educate volunteers on how to work closely with the public safety community so that communications between the two will be interoperable



Nassau Co. EOC
Director Thomas
Kelly

Much of the course was working exercises that required developing action plans based upon the scenarios provided. Most of those entailed building ICS Form 205's. The importance of the ICS Form 217 was readily apparent in developing those 205's. It was interesting to see how the 205 is used for preplanned events as well as developed "on the fly" for events that pop up. Additionally, the importance of the Activity Log, ICS Form 214 was stressed by each student maintaining one throughout both days." Bill ends his update with... "If you get the opportunity, it is a worthwhile course to attend."

New Shelter Updates - North Marion High School and South Ocala Elementary



MERT radio facilities will be in the Managers Office with the antenna mounted on the North exterior wall.



(L-R) Brady Nettina (Emergency Mgt. Coordinator) and Heidi Van Vilet (Cafeteria Manager) with the Marion Co. School Dist.

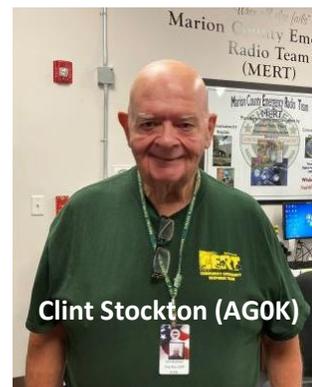
Last month, **MERT** was requested to design and assist in setting up a new radio communications facility at the Marion County School Districts North Marion High School. This month, EM Director Preston Bowlin requested **MERT** complete the same assignment at the South Ocala Elementary School.

Harlan Cook, Member (KN4VRM) was asked to organize and visit South Ocala to determine the feasibility and design options. After a site visit was conducted on Nov. 10th with Brady Nettina, Emergency Management Coordinator (MCSO), it was recommended establishing a new radio connection in the Cafeteria Managers Office with the mast and antenna mounted on the North wall. A materials and equipment list is being ordered with installations scheduled in Spring 2022.

New Member Update – William “Clint” Stockton (AGOK)

MERT welcomes William “Clint” Stockton as a new Member! Clint brings a wealth of practical experience to our group along with many DX'ing awards while enjoying HAM radio.

Clint has enjoyed Amateur radio since a very young age when he received his Novice License in 1964 (WN4UZY) and



then a year later passed his Technician License (call changed to WB4FXD). In the 70's, he obtained his General License (WB0MSY). Like most of us, life took him to new destinations in 1979 (like the island of Anguilla, BMI), where Clint secured another new call sign (VP2EFF) but then passed his Amateur Extra License and received another new call sign (AG0K). After moving back to the states, his call was changed yet again (NC5H). When the FCC passed the Vanity call sign ruling, he requested and received his former call sign AG0K which he uses today.

In 1983, Clint enlisted in the Coast Guard Reserve as a Radio Man (RM) and in 1987 received the US Coast Guard Speed Key Certificate allowing him to use a Vibroplex on CG Frequencies. [Note: Anyone remember what "ZUT" stands for?] Clint shares that he is very proud that his father was also a HAM (WB4CQW).



Clint is also a CERT member of the Pine Run community along with being a retired ordained minister in the Pee Dee Presbytery, PCA. Clint and his wife, Esther (who also volunteers as a CERT assistant at the Marion County Dept. of Emergency Management), live in Ocala, Fla.

Clint, Welcome to MERT!

MERT Supports all HAM's

New HAM Licensee Dee Seagraves stopped by **MERT** to get assistance with programming her portable radio. Bill Gillespie completed the "tune up" for her. Thanks for visiting us, Dee!

Note to all HAM's: MERT is happy to assist any Licensee with programming their radio. Visit us at the Marion County EOC (692 NW 30th Ave, Ocala, FL) any Wednesday from 9:00 to 11:00 am and ask for MERT.



(L-R) Dee Seagraves, Marion Oaks (KO4TMZ) and Bill Gillespie (KW5BG) MERT Assistant Coordinator.

**Interested in learning more..... or becoming a MERT member?
Visit <https://kg4nxo.com/> and click the "Contact Us" tab!**