

Public Service

ARRL Partner Roundup: The Salvation Army and SATERN

Much of the public service (disaster response, emergency communications and events) performed by the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) is greatly facilitated by the existence of ARRL's formal agreements with other similar-minded organizations. These groups can be government, non-government, private, or faith-based, all of which can serve as resources, offering services that can help radio amateurs in their missions and responses.

The ARRL HQ staff maintains administrative contact with their counterparts in the entities that enter into memoranda of understanding (MOU) with ARRL, providing a framework for cooperation and coordination of our radio communication services. Local MOUs (under the umbrella of the national-level MOU) between ARES groups and regional or local chapters can result in symbiotic relationships.

ARRL and The Salvation Army (SATERN) Renew MOU

A longstanding MOU between The Salvation Army, including its Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN), and ARRL was recently renewed at a ceremony at Hamvention®. SATERN National Liaison Bill Feist, WB8BZH, represented his organization at the signing. ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, K11U, also present, said ARRL and SATERN have enjoyed a formal working relationship since 1976. By renewing the MOU, SATERN, The Salvation Army, and ARRL have recommitted to working together in disaster response and identifying and recruiting volunteers.



“Net controls are always in need,” Corey said, adding, “We had an effective and coordinated Amateur Radio response in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands last fall.” SATERN meets regularly on 14.265 MHz SSB, and the net is activated for extended periods during disaster and emergency response activities.

The Salvation Army is a faith-based organization, founded in England in 1865 for education, the relief of poverty, and other charitable objectives. It also has a long history of setting up canteens in disaster areas. They work

alongside the American Red Cross, public safety and emergency management at all levels, and, of course, ARRL and its volunteers. The Salvation Army is organized in four territories across the US, each having its own headquarters and corporate structure. Nine to 11 administrative centers report to each territorial office.

The Salvation Army is particularly active in the recovery stage of disasters and has communications needs, often filled by ARRL volunteers. ARRL staff meets with Salvation Army representatives each year at the annual National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) meeting in Washington.

SATERN Origins

SATERN is celebrating 30 years of service in emergency and disaster responses. The network's radio amateurs have helped save lives and property, reunited families, and relayed vital information in times when regular telecommunications were out. Sometimes they have been the only link to the outside world during a disaster.

The original name of the net was the Salvationist Amateur Radio Operator's Fellowship. Years later, it was changed to the Salvation Army Radio Operator's Fellowship (SAROF). The Amateur Radio connection with the Salvation Army came from Colonel Carl Lindstrom, W9JSF. As the Community Relations and Development Director for the Central Territory, part of Lindstrom's responsibility was disaster services, and so he founded and coordinated SAROF services.



ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, K11U, and SATERN National Liaison Bill Feist, WB8BZH, at Hamvention's ceremony for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.

In December 1959, the net was involved in humanitarian efforts. At Christmas, then-Major Lindstrom received a phone call from the father of a missionary stationed in Peru. His daughter had been on mission for 6 years, not seeing her parents during that period. While she was visiting an operator in Lima on Christmas Eve, Lindstrom invited the missionary's parents to his home, and called "CQ, Lima, Peru," on 10 meters. He was

answered by a Lima station operator, who said "I have Miss Malmstrom here. Do you have her parents there?" Parents and daughter spoke to each other for more than half an hour.

When a deadly tornado struck Wisconsin, Major Lindstrom organized communications for Salvation Army personnel working in disaster relief in the affected area. More than 150 Wisconsin radio amateurs took part, handling health-and-welfare mes-

sages and relaying reports and instructions from the divisional Salvation Army office in Milwaukee.

The early SATERN nets were adjuncts to SAROF. Canadians Harold Gibson, VE3NKU, and Ernie Reid, VE3BIX (SK), met after the SAROF Net with Art Evans, N9KQ, the first National Net Director of SATERN, and Major Pat McPherson, WW9E (SK), for the first SATERN net. SAROF was active until late 2016, when it was discontinued and the SATERN International SSB Net extended its schedule to include a less formal Saturday session.

SATERN was the brainchild of Major McPherson, the Emergency Disaster Services (EDS) Coordinator for the Army's Heartland Division, who became a Silent Key in 2016. With the convening of that first net, the possibility that it could support international emergencies and disaster relief began to dawn on its founders (see the sidebar, "Timeline of 30 Years of SATERN Disaster Responses").

In 2016, Bill Feist, WB8BZH, was named the National SATERN Liaison, and he immediately appointed a working National SATERN Committee that then drafted and submitted a new strategic plan for SATERN. The plan was approved by The Salvation Army's National Headquarters, which now holds the call sign WW9E, after being requested in memory of Major McPherson.

ARRL, the Salvation Army, and SATERN renewed its longstanding MOU in May 2018. SATERN continues to provide emergency communications via VHF/UHF nets to support the Salvation Army's on-site team, for the local level. During widespread emergencies and disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, forest fires, etc., the 14.265 MHz net handles emergency and disaster traffic and health-and-welfare messages. It also provides tactical support to those personnel in the disaster areas. For more information, visit www.satern.org.

Timeline of 30 Years of SATERN Disaster Responses

1988 — Deadly Caribbean Hurricane Gilbert marks SATERN's first international response.

1990 — An F5 tornado hits Plainfield, Illinois, killing 29 people. SATERN requires 64 operators daily for 11 days.

1993 — A thousand miles of Mississippi River flooding requires a multi-state SATERN network.

1994 — SATERN responds to the American Eagle airline crash in Indiana; 68 lives are claimed.

1995 — A SATERN operator and canteen are sent to earthquake-stricken Kobe, Japan. Measuring 6.9, the quake is among Japan's most devastating — 5,500 are dead, 26,000 injured.

1997 — The Salvation Army, assisted by SATERN, aids recovery of flood victims in the Grand Forks, North Dakota, flood disaster.

1998 — During Hurricane Mitch, the FCC designates SATERN's radio frequency for official emergency use. SATERN is named an official Salvation Army program and receives funding. Major McPherson is officially appointed National Director.

1999 — A quake measuring 7.9 strikes Turkey, with 14,000 dead and 200,000 homeless. Operator Dick Montgomery asks SATERN if he can help relay information. Dick later joins SATERN and becomes its Eastern Territory Coordinator.

2000 — Much of Belize was declared a disaster area following Hurricane Keith. At the request of the Hurricane Watch Net, SATERN's net handled all relief and health-and-welfare traffic.

9/11/2001 — SATERN personnel provides radio communications among rescue workers, school personnel, and the Salvation Army canteen. Operators coordinate emergency responses, including linking a California blood bank to one near Ground Zero. A SATERN North America Command is set up at Central Territorial Headquarters.

2004 — Four hurricanes blast Florida and the Bahamas. SATERN is nationally heralded for its missing persons operations, handling over 1,000 requests.

2005 — Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast leaving 1,800 dead. International SATERN runs for 20 days. Over 61,000 missing persons requests come in at a rate of 20 per second; SATERN locates 25,508 people.

2018 — ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, K11U, credits SATERN with mutual assistance in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricane season in the Caribbean basin. The International SATERN SSB Net is on the air for 22 days following Hurricane Maria.