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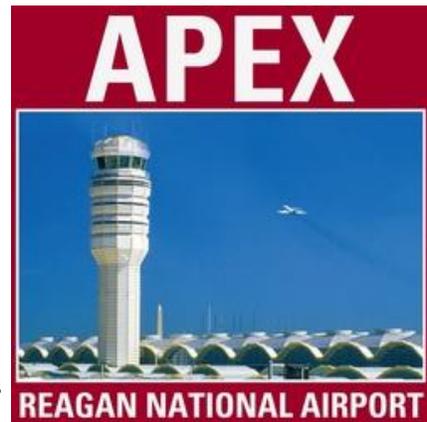
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ARES Supports Washington National Airport Mass Casualty Incident Exercise

Arlington County, Virginia (across the Potomac River from Washington, DC) ARES provided communications support during a recent Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) emergency preparedness exercise. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) mandates a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) Airport Exercise (APEX), every third year in order to exercise, test, and improve plans, systems, and skills.

The exercise, APEX 19, was held on Saturday, April 27, 2019 and involved Arlington ARES members from the Arlington Amateur Radio Club and Pentagon Amateur Radio Club along with members of the Alexandria Radio Club and Mount Vernon Amateur Radio Club. Amateur Radio operators were stationed at the airport and at area hospitals to track exercise victims as they were triaged and transported from the airport for treatment. A total of 22 Amateur Radio operators participated in the exercise.



The exercise scenario involved 120 volunteer role players, moulaged to simulate injuries sustained during a plane crash, participating in the exercise along with airport emergency response teams, area hospitals, and mutual aid responders from surrounding communities. Specific Victim Actor situations provided realistic stress to First Responder plans, systems and skills, testing them in preparation for an airport disaster. The Arlington Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) provided the victim actors with moulage, costuming, and briefings on their role playing duties. Volunteers were advised before signing up that participating in emergency response exercises such as APEX19 can be emotionally and physically challenging. Joe Cigan, exercise director and airport operations manager at DCA, commended exercise participants for an outstanding job. -- Gary Sessums, KC5QCN, Arlington County (Virginia) ARES Emergency Coordinator



Arlington ARES members Sammi Branker, KN4DXY, and Michael Callahan, NW3V, operating radios at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport emergency preparedness exercise, APEX-19. (photo courtesy KC5QCN)