

ARRL Delaware Section Manager

Newsletter – May 2026

Greetings from Sussex County

Welcome to this month's edition of our amateur radio newsletter—your hub for everything happening across our vibrant Delaware Section ham radio community.

As I write this month's Section Newsletter, I am just finishing up with the Delaware QSO Party. Saturday saw several portable activations for the DE QSO party. One activation in Redden State Forest and another in Assawoman Wildlife Area. The DE QSO Party not only get us as a section on the air but also helps the many radio operators who need a Delaware confirmed QSO's for awards.

One of the most popular seminars at the Hamfest was the POTA seminar. This seminar highlighted not only the fun it can be setting up a portable station in the park making contacts with other hams but also the skillset it requires making us ready for emergency communications. Warmer weather is..well..just about here. The start of POTA season for many. So grab a friend or two and hit a park and get on the air.

Our new Atlantic Division Director, Marty Newingham, AG3I, joined us via Zoom for an informative talk during another forum. Marty answered questions from the group and provided insight into his goals and objectives as our new Division Director.

ARRL Delaware Section W1AW/3 Operation for April Update

The ARRL Delaware Section's first activation of W1AW/3 completed on Tuesday, April 21. Chris, KE5NJ had the bus running both Phone and CW at the hamfest. With the help of Ray, N3RG and Scott, AA2SD, the bus racked up 48 contacts. The other operators listed below racked up the balance of the 2,588 Q's for Delaware.

Chet, WA3I 301

Ken, NU3A 286

Jay, N3RT 766

Jon, AA1K 373

Susan, KC3YXP 81

Jerry, KB2GCG 350

Steven, KC3DSO 383

Thanks to all who participated. The Section will again run W1AW/3 starting on December 2 and will cover Delaware Day on December 7. A Special Event Station is planned for an activation on December 7 on "The Green" in Dover. The Ham-QTV.com site worked very well for scheduling so we will again use it for the December activation. Delaware will also be using the Ham-QTV.com site for our activation of K2E, The 13 Colonies event.

New Forums on the horizon for the ARRL Delaware Section groups.io Page In the works are possibly several new groups.io forums under the [ARRLDelawareSection.group.io](https://groups.io/g/ARRLDelawareSection) main forum. There are current forums for Delaware NTS, Mid-Atlantic ARESMAT and Sussex County ARES. There appears to be interest in a Delaware POTA forum and some others. This is a place where we will be able to share a calendar for events, post locations you set up at parks given GPS coordinates, list your favorite 2fer and 3fers, and other tips and tricks. Maps, documents, etc. can also be posted. Keep an eye out for some new forum announcements.

2026 Field Day is next month! June 27-28, 2026

Field Day is the most popular on-the-air event for amateur radio operators in the United States and Canada. It takes place on the fourth full weekend of June every year. Over 31,000 radio amateurs gather with their clubs, groups, or friends to set up temporary transmitting stations in various locations including parks, schools, and remote locations. The primary goal is to make as many contacts as possible while demonstrating the capabilities of amateur radio in emergency situations. Its time to start planning for this huge event. The ARRL has decided the motto for this year's Field Day is "Amateur Radio – A National Resource." Ham radio saves the country millions by using volunteer ham radio operators to provide emergency communications in time of need. Gather your teams, reserve your operating locations, and have fun. Remember to post your site on the ARRL Field Day site locator page. Get more information at www.arrl.org/fieldDay.

Amateur Radio to Participate in DoD Armed Forces Day Crossband Test – May 9, 2026

Amateur radio operators will participate in the Department of Defense's Armed Forces Day (AFD) Crossband Test on May 9, 2026. The annual event will not impact any public or private communications.

For more than 50 years, military and amateur stations have participated in this interoperability exercise between the amateur and government radio services. The AFD Crossband Test provides a unique opportunity to conduct two-way communication between military communicators and stations in the Amateur Radio Service (ARS), as authorized in 47 CFR 97.111. These tests present both opportunities and challenges for radio operators to demonstrate individual technical skills in a tightly controlled exercise scenario.

ARRL, The National Association for Amateur Radio® hails the Armed Forces Day Crossband Test as an example of the core principles of the US Amateur Radio Service, with its volunteers contributing technical proficiency and readiness in support of public service and national needs. Military stations will transmit on selected military frequencies and will announce the specific ARS frequencies they are monitoring. All times are ZULU (Z), and all frequencies are upper sideband (USB) unless otherwise noted. An AFD message will be transmitted using the Military Standard (MIL-STD) Serial PSK waveform (M110), followed by MIL-STD Wide Shift FSK (850 Hz RTTY), as described in MIL-STD 188-110A/B. Technical information regarding these waveforms is available at drive.google.com/drive/folders/1pYDj7kQbm-QAyY4RPtx0dOXKohjaEjq9?usp=sharing.

To document your contacts with a QSL, visit:

www.usarmymars.org/events-and-announcements and complete the request form.

The US Naval Academy Amateur Radio Club, W3ADO, will activate the historic NSS call sign during the Crossband Test. Several Naval Academy midshipmen and members of the Potomac Valley Radio Club (PVRC), including team leader Frank Donovan, W3LPL, will be operating on the grounds of the former US Navy radio transmitting facility in Annapolis, Maryland. PVRC is an ARRL Affiliated Club.

Delaware Simulated Emergency Test Date Announced – Saturday, October 24, 2026

The Delaware Section will be participating in the ARRL's Simulated Emergency Test (SET) on Saturday, October 24, 2026. The prior date had conflicts which resulted in the change. The SET is a nationwide exercise to test your personal emergency-operating skills and the readiness of your communications equipment and accessories in a simulated emergency-like deployment. Mark your calendars for this important event. Contact your county ARES Emergency Coordinators for more information.

Delaware's Randall Carlson Delaware Youth Radio Memorial Fund Update

The Delaware Section's Youth Initiative was renamed a couple of months ago to the Randall Carlson Delaware Youth Radio Memorial Fund. This fund continues to support the licensing within our section providing not only testing study materials but also free radios to new licensees. Through the ARRL kids under 21 get a reduced fee, only \$5, to test at ARRL Testing sessions and get a free student membership. On April 23, a new group of students were tested at Poly Technical High School in Woodside. This group of students were the first group to receive both Technician and General licensing books to study for the exams. The Sussex Amateur Radio Testing Team did the testing. We ended up with 6 new technicians and 7 new Generals! Congrats to all the new licensees! We issued new programmed radios to the new Techs courtesy of the program.

ARRL Opt In for Publications

For those of you that are ARRL Members, remember to check your account for your 'opt-in' newsletters and documents. Unless you select Opt In you will not get many valuable items from your ARRL representatives.

This includes the Atlantic Division Director's Newsletter, Section Manager Newsletters via the ARRL site, and other member news. Take a look at your online ARRL account and make sure you are getting the information you want.

Sussex County ARES

Sussex ARES has had a full month. ARES has their 2Q Hospital Drill on April 4. The results of this drill will lead us into the 3Q Drill on Saturday, July 11, 2026. This 3Q Drill will see ARES include online training introduced during the drill. On April 25 Sussex ARES again supported the 2026 Ocean to Bay Bike Tour which started in Bethany Beach running to Dewey Beach, Millville, Ocean View, Frankford, Selbyville, Isle of Wight and back to Bethany Beach for the finish. 14 ARES members staffed positions along the route and provided valuable information to NCS. In May Sussex ARES will be an exhibitor at the Lewes Maritime Day on May 16. ARES will be demonstrating basic radio operations such as VHF and HF. We will take the opportunity to educate the public not only on the Amateur Radio Emergency Service but also the Amateur Radio Service as a whole. Stop by to say Hi.

ARES Upcoming events...

May 6 – Sussex ARES 2m Training Net, 7pm, 147.090 Millsboro Repeater – Pat, KW3Z is NCS

May 9 – DoD Crossband Test with Amateur Radio Operators – See above article

May 16 – Lewes Maritime Day, 9am Setup, day runs to 3pm. Demos and education. Contact Steven, KC3DSO via kc3dso@gmail.com if you want to come out and join the fun. LARS will also be setting up a booth next to us.

May 20 – Sussex ARES Online Zoom Training, 7pm, Zoom Link is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82847787995?pwd=EYx2MsT3OT104YptLMhtoTBEE5Abcs.1>

June 3 – Sussex ARES 2m Training Net, 7pm, 147.090 Millsboro Repeater – Mike, N3MRM is NCS

June 10 – Sussex ARES Hybrid Meeting, Arena's in Georgetown, 5:30pm Dinner, Meeting is 6:30pm.

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85452310210?pwd=vE4OqJvTOhyyZ4yatJA2fge5RAX0wU.1>

June 17 – Sussex ARES 2m Training Net, 7pm, 147.090 Millsboro Repeater -Steven, KC3DSO is NCS

June 27 & 28 – ARRL Field Day. ARES members are encouraged to attend a Field Day Site to see the operations of portable HF/VHF stations. Visit the ARRL website and search "Field Day Locator" to see maps of Field Day Sites.

Grid Down, Mic Up – EmComm Topics

Using Voice Tactical Callsigns Effectively During Ham Radio Events

In organized amateur radio operations—whether public service events, emergency drills, or large-scale community activities—clear and efficient communication is critical. One of the most practical tools for achieving this clarity is the use of voice tactical callsigns. When used correctly, they streamline coordination, reduce confusion, and help operators focus on the task rather than the mechanics of identification.

What Are Tactical Callsigns?

A tactical callsign is a functional identifier that describes a station's role or location rather than the operator's FCC-issued callsign.

Examples include:

- “Net Control”
- “Aid Station 3”
- “Water Stop 5”
- “Logistics”
- “Shadow 1”

These names instantly convey purpose, making communication more intuitive—especially for teams that include non-ham participants such as event staff or emergency responders.

Why Use Tactical Callsigns?

During a busy event, remembering or recognizing individual FCC callsigns can be inefficient. Tactical callsigns solve this by:

- Improving clarity: Operators know immediately who they are speaking to.
- Enhancing efficiency: Messages are routed faster to the correct station.
- Supporting interoperability: Non-licensed personnel can follow conversations more easily.
- Reducing errors: Less chance of misidentifying stations in high-traffic nets.

FCC Compliance: Don't Skip Your Legal ID

While tactical callsigns are useful, they do not replace your FCC-issued callsign. Regulations from the Federal Communications Commission require that operators identify with their assigned callsign:

- At least every 10 minutes during a communication
- At the end of a transmission or series of transmissions

A common best practice is to combine both:

“Aid Station 3, this is Net Control, K1ABC.”

Or periodically:

“Aid Station 3, K1ABC.”

This keeps communication efficient while remaining compliant.

Best Practices for Event Operations

To get the most out of tactical callsigns, event coordinators and operators should follow a few key guidelines:

1. Assign Callsigns clearly before the event begins, distribute a list of tactical callsigns tied to locations or roles. Ensure every operator knows their assignment.
2. Use Plain Language, Don't use jargon or Q-codes as our served agency most likely will not know their meaning. Tactical nets prioritize clarity over tradition.
3. Maintain Net Discipline

Follow the direction of Net Control. Wait for pauses, avoid doubling, and keep transmissions concise.

4. Train Ahead of Time Brief operators—especially newcomers—on how tactical callsigns work and when to use their FCC callsign. This is best done by getting new operators on the air during local and statewide drills.

5. Log with Both Identifiers If logging traffic, include both the tactical and FCC callsigns for accuracy and traceability.

Example Exchange

A typical, well-structured exchange might sound like:

“Net Control, this is Water Stop 2.”

“Water Stop 2, go ahead.”

“We need additional supplies at our location.”

“Copy that. Logistics, please respond.”

“Logistics here, K2XYZ. En route.”

Note how tactical callsigns keep the exchange smooth, while FCC callsigns are inserted periodically.

Final Thoughts

Voice tactical callsigns are a simple but powerful technique that elevate the professionalism and effectiveness of amateur radio operations. By combining them with proper FCC identification and disciplined net procedures, operators can deliver reliable, organized communication in even the most demanding event environments. Whether you're supporting a marathon, coordinating disaster response, or participating in a training exercise, mastering tactical callsigns is a step toward more capable and confident radio operation.

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest & Upgrading Members

Join me in welcoming the latest additions to the Amateur Radio Service in our vibrant community.

KB3NTI Ioannis V. Wilson
KD3CZS Russel A. Kuchera
KD3CZW Richard A. Coats
KD3DAW David W. Yarnal
KD3DBD Frank J. D'Amato
KD3DCJ Jeffrey D. Jurczak
KD3DCN Yongwhan Chung
KD3DCW Lawrence Garrison III
KD3DDC Gage O. Redick
KD3DDD Walter Shine
KD3DDE Emaurie A. Caldwell-Seth
KD3DDF Naeem A. Cannon
KD3DDG Tyler Hill

Time of year to shine...

As summer arrives, the Amateur Radio Service steps into one of its most visible and impactful seasons. Community events, outdoor activities, and seasonal weather challenges create ideal opportunities for operators to demonstrate the reliability, adaptability, and professionalism that define our service. Guided by standards set forth by the Federal Communications Commission, amateur radio operators showcase not only technical skill, but a commitment to public service and community resilience. Whether supporting a local event or standing ready during severe weather, the summer months highlight the unique value of amateur radio—and the dedicated individuals who keep it thriving.

Feel free to reach out at any time.

73,

Steven Keller

Delaware Section Manager

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- Office: 302.604.7470

Useful Links:

- ARRL Sections – Delaware (<https://www.arrl.org/Groups/view/Delaware>)
- ARRL Delaware Section Groups.io Reflector (<https://groups.io/g/ARRLDelawareSection>)