



August 2005

What a great team!

We had a great turn out for the drill held in Menard County, on Saturday, July 30, 2005.

This is the first time we have held an exercise in Menard County and it gave us a chance to learn more about the area.

Twenty-five members of the team showed up to participate in a picture perfect operation.

The scenario had a tornado strike Petersburg and some areas North. We set up our net control at the Menard County ESDA office and had shelters at the community park in Athens and the visitor's center at New Salem State Park.

We stretched the envelope on technology and it all worked. We had VHF voice, packet, ARPS, HF voice and HF digital (Pactor). This was the first exercise where everything worked!

The drill manager had set up scenarios where the operators at the shelters had to make decisions on their own, such as how to transmit certain messages. We don't mention names over the air, so some messages were transmitted via packet.

The HF station made several contacts around the country on voice, just to test the setup, and then sent a FEMA message through the MARS network, using Pactor. We also sent an Internet message through Winlink (simulating a failure of the local internet system). That message was put into the Internet at a mailbox in Canada. This system also uses Pactor.

When our damage inspection teams became temporarily disoriented (hams don't get lost!), Steve (K9WAV) was able to guide them back as he was watching them (on his computer) and communicating with them on APRS.

The exercise coordinators, John and Tim, set up several "gotchas", such as routing the damage assessment teams out of repeater range to see what they would do. In all cases the teams figured out how to respond and did so in great fashion.

The exercise started at 9:00 AM and wrapped up about 11:30. The group reformed at a local establishment in Petersburg for lunch and adult beverages.

We need to give a very big **Thanks** to John Anderson (W9TRC) and Tim McDonough (N9PUZ) who developed this exercise, for a tremendous effort. This was a complicated exercise that really tested the ability of the team. John and Tim put many hours into preparing and we owe them a big thanks for all they did. It would never have come off so well without all their hard work.

The members who participated were;

Ed Metzger W9PRN
Jim Dunn, K9CNP
Tim McDonough, N9PUZ
John Anderson, W9TRC
Steve Upchurch, K9WAV
John Sams, WA9KRL
John Swartz, WA9AQN
Ken Litchfield, KB9ZIU
Curt Barmes, N9CEB
Karen Barmes, K9KMB
Bill Spindell, KB9OVM
Don O'Connor, K9YXX
Dan Butzirus, KD4DLL
Ed Skube, WD9AQL
Pam Scott, KB9KZW
Bob McNeil, K9KGO
John Ransdell, KA9HLZ
Phil, Moore, KC9BVH
Merle King, N9ZTK
Kevin Gaul, AB9HN
Dwayne Terry, KA9KQH
Dick Drew, K0HMO

If you had a chance to notice today, there were several interesting solutions being used. Tim has made a small 2 meter wire j pole that goes up 30 feet on a fiberglass push up pole. It is small light and works well. Steve has developed an impressive antenna support system for the back of his truck. His system also goes up about 30 feet and can support just about anything. John Swartz bought a new antenna at Dayton this year. It is an HF diamond antenna that covers 10 to 40 meters. It takes up little room, goes up in a few minutes and really put out a signal. These are just a few of the ideas our members have come up with. They make a big difference when we need to be able to set up communications in a hurry.

We would also like to offer a special “thanks”, also to Ken Yokom, the ESDA director for Menard County. Ken was kind enough to let us invade his office and set up our

equipment for the morning. There must have had close to a dozen of us wandering in and out of his office so we appreciate his understanding.

I hope everyone on our team is as proud of our efforts as I am. You have spent a lot of time and effort in training, building equipment, preparing “to go” kits and learning how to work together. Most especially rewarding is your willingness to give of your valuable time to help in our efforts.

Thanks, again to all who responded.

For the committee;

Dick Drew, K0HMO

