

MT HELP DESK

SPECIFIC FREQUENCY AND EQUIPMENT QUESTIONS

Larry Van Horn, N5FPW

larryvanhorn@monitoringtimes.com

Q. I understand that the CAP-Flight callsign is used by the Civil Air Patrol. Do you have any additional information on how this callsign is used and why? (Several readers via email)

A. The CAP-assigned aircraft callsign CAPFlight XXXX is considered an air carrier callsign by the FAA. It may, if conditions permit, be transmitted using the FAA-prescribed group form described below. Only the CAP-Flight callsign may be transmitted in this way, and CAP flight crews can use a digit-by-digit pronunciation when required by conditions.

The group form of this callsign is the pronunciation of a series of numbers as the whole number, or pairs of numbers they represent rather than pronouncing each separate digit. Note that "zero" is pronounced "ze-ro," not "oh" and that 4-digit numbers are always pronounced as two pairs.

For example: CAPFlight forty-two twenty seven, CAPFlight two thirty-two, CAPFlight seventeen zero six, CAPFlight nine eleven, and CAPFlight ninety-nine zero one.

The first two digits of the CAPFlight callsign indicate the unit the aircraft is assigned to. Here is the last known public list of those first two digits and the Region/Wings with which they are associated.

CAP Flight 01##	Alabama
CAP Flight 02##	Arizona
CAP Flight 03##	Arkansas
CAP Flight 04##	California
CAP Flight 05##	Colorado
CAP Flight 06##	Connecticut
CAP Flight 07##	Delaware
CAP Flight 08##	Florida
CAP Flight 09##	Georgia
CAP Flight 10##	Idaho
CAP Flight 11##	Illinois
CAP Flight 12##	Indiana
CAP Flight 13##	Iowa
CAP Flight 14##	Kansas
CAP Flight 15##	Kentucky
CAP Flight 16##	Louisiana
CAP Flight 17##	Maine
CAP Flight 18##	Maryland
CAP Flight 19##	Massachusetts
CAP Flight 20##	Michigan
CAP Flight 21##	Minnesota
CAP Flight 22##	Mississippi
CAP Flight 23##	Missouri
CAP Flight 24##	Montana
CAP Flight 25##	National Capital
CAP Flight 26##	Nebraska
CAP Flight 27##	Nevada
CAP Flight 28##	New Hampshire
CAP Flight 29##	New Jersey
CAP Flight 30##	New Mexico
CAP Flight 31##	New York
CAP Flight 32##	North Carolina
CAP Flight 33##	North Dakota
CAP Flight 34##	Ohio
CAP Flight 35##	Oklahoma
CAP Flight 36##	Oregon

CAP Flight 37##	Pennsylvania
CAP Flight 38##	Rhode Island
CAP Flight 39##	South Carolina
CAP Flight 40##	South Dakota
CAP Flight 41##	Tennessee
CAP Flight 42##	Texas
CAP Flight 43##	Utah
CAP Flight 44##	Vermont
CAP Flight 45##	Virginia
CAP Flight 46##	Washington
CAP Flight 47##	West Virginia
CAP Flight 48##	Wisconsin
CAP Flight 49##	Wyoming
CAP Flight 50##	Alaska
CAP Flight 51##	Hawaii
CAP Flight 52##	Puerto Rico
CAP Flight 60##	California
CAP Flight 61##	Alaska
CAP Flight 91##	Northeast Region
CAP Flight 92##	Middle East Region
CAP Flight 93##	Great Lakes Region
CAP Flight 94##	Southeast Region
CAP Flight 95##	North Central Region
CAP Flight 96##	Southwest Region
CAP Flight 97##	Rocky Mountain Region
CAP Flight 98##	Pacific Region
CAP Flight 99##	Congressional Squadron
CAP Flight 99##	National Commanders Squadron

The last two digits of these callsigns are assigned to a specific aircraft, and the whole callsign is, for the most part, a static callsign. The list below of Mississippi Wing CAP aircraft illustrates this concept.

CAPFlight Callsign	Aircraft Type	Aircraft Home Base
CAP Flight 2219	Cessna 172R	Golden Triangle Regional/Columbus
CAP Flight 2222	Cessna 172N	Tupelo Regional Airport
CAP Flight 2231	Cessna 182R	Trent Lott International Airport, Pascagoula
CAP Flight 2237	Cessna 182T	Olivia Regional Airport
CAP Flight 2242	Cessna 172P	Unknown airport
CAP Flight 2253	Cessna 172P	Ripley Airport
CAP Flight 2264	Cessna 172S	Hattiesburg Muni Airport
CAP Flight 2275	Cessna 182R	Olivia Regional Airport
CAP Flight 2286	Cessna 172P	Key Field Airport
CAP Flight 2292	Cessna 172S	Hawkins Field

Q. Do you have any frequency information on the new Skynet 5A military communications recently launched into geostationary orbit? (Anonymous in Europe via email)

A. Skynet 5A is the first of the new generation of British military communications satellites. It was launched on March 11, 2007, by Ariane Space. Skynet 5A was initially placed into the geostationary Clarke Belt at about 177 degrees West, where it underwent testing by the U.S. Air Force Satellite Control Facility. It was then relocated to its operational slot at 1 degree West, where it will be commanded by RAF Oakingham.

The following UHF frequencies have been recently reported for this satellite:

245.800 MHz	25 kHz bandwidth
249.480 MHz	10 kHz bandwidth
249.530 MHz	10 kHz bandwidth
249.850 MHz	10 kHz bandwidth
250.130 MHz	10 kHz bandwidth
250.200 MHz	10 kHz bandwidth
257.700 MHz	25 kHz bandwidth
261.200 MHz	25 kHz bandwidth

You can find the latest frequency information including S-band TT&C and SHF satcom frequencies at www.uhf-satcom.com:80/skynet5a/. Thanks to Mr. Paul J. Marsh and all the gang at UHF-satcon.com for the heads up on this new military satellite.

Q. Many years ago (approximately 10+), I often used to hear U.S. Military MARS stations and was able to QSL a number of them. An enforced absence from the DXing scene meant that I lost track of current frequencies, etc. My question, is there a list (or lists) of MARS stations and frequencies that I could obtain in order to pick up this side of my hobby again? (Fr. Jim, New Zealand via email)

A. In short, I am afraid the answer is "no," Jim. All three MARS services now protect their frequencies, their callsigns, and members' identities under the For Official Use Only (FOUO) umbrella. All three services (Air Force, Army, Navy/Marine Corps/Coast Guard) have strict no QSL policies.

In the ten years you have been gone, MARS has pretty much lost their military support missions, and so they keep their service alive by aligning their communications capability with the Department of Homeland Security and SHARES, to name a couple of services. There is next to no formal traffic passed on any of their frequencies these days, so you will pretty much hear mostly ragchewing during most of their HF radio nets.

In the case of Navy MARS, I can't remember the last time I heard or saw a ship reported on any of their MARS nets other than digital traffic. The major exception to this rule is the US Air Force MARS phone patch nets. They do handle quite a few patches daily for Air Force aircraft. The primary frequency to monitor is 13927.1 kHz in upper sideband.

Bottom line is, it looks like best days of the three MARS services are behind them, from a monitor's point of view, I am sorry to say.