WINLINK PRIMER

What is Winlink?

- Global email by radio, in concert with the Internet, or entirely by RF
- Not intended to replace other email methods except…
    - On the high seas
    - During emergencies
- Packet Radio-based
- Famous for disaster and emergency relief e.g. The Caribbean 2017
- Widely used for EmComm by EOCs, FEMA, Homeland Security, Government Agencies
- Built and maintained entirely by volunteers
- Twenty years old - original creation of Victor Poor W5SSM (SK) who lived in Melbourne Fla
- Supported by Amateur Radio Safety Foundation Inc. (ARSFI)
- Radio access to host of services especially weather (Winlink Catalog Requests)
- Location reporting (See https://winlink.org/userPositions)
- Free but a donation to ARSFI appropriate, and also nice to use Amazon Smile
- Much more at winlink.org

Why Winlink?

- Email when all else fails
- Complete and documented reports, in lieu of sketchy phone messages
- Send and receive clear, and reference-able, information
- Communicate *specific* information e.g. medical support, supplies, health and welfare messages, utility outages
- "If it isn't documented, it didn't happen"

How to Use Winlink?

- VHF / UHF / HF / Telnet all possible
- Choosing a mode
    - VHF best for a local network or ARES activation (UHF is rare)
    - HF likely to fly over close stations - yet, required for a longhaul
    - "Ideal" station has both
- For the first message leg or all of them
    - RF to Radio Message Server (RMS)
    - Internet from RMS for delivery worldwide
    - Relay backup function if Internet is down
    - RF Peer to Peer between two-parties
    - Local Winlink networks by radio e.g. hurricane activation
    - Use Internet for higher speed while it is available (Telnet)
    - Digipeaters extend range

Getting Started and Going - See How to Join Winlink Part 1