

In this Winlink Thursday Exercise for April 28th, 2022, you will:

- Read all of the instructions in this Exercise Scenario.
- Create a GPS / Position Report message in Winlink Express, edit that message to include your Clearinghouse Address in the CC field, and Send the message.
- Check on an APRS Map Web Site (as suggested below) to see your QTH posted in the APRS system.
- Your position will also be mapped, as usual, on our Winlink Thursdays page.

Some reminders, especially for New Arrivals to ETO:

- Read and Follow the Instructions Precisely. Details are sometimes missed in the reading, and some of our assignments can be tricky! **Double-check before sending!**
- Make Sure you Address the Correct Clearinghouse for Your Geographic Location (especially if you're temporarily in a different region)
 - Our Tactical Addresses are all formatted as "ETO-nn", where nn is *always* either a 2-digit number ("01", "03", ..., "10") or "DX".
 - Make sure you type the number ZERO, not the letter "O", in the 2-digit number.
 - If you don't know your Clearinghouse's Tactical Address, use this web page to look it up:
https://emcomm-training.org/More_Info.html#Maps
- For our exercises, we recommend that you always check the "Request message receipt" box in your message before you Post it to your OutBox.
- Another suggestion from our Gurus: put your own "normal" Email Address in the CC box, so that you receive a copy in your non-Winlink Email, as another confirmation that your Winlink message was sent out correctly.
- **IMPORTANT! Just because you receive a CC of your own Winlink submission, and/or receive an ACK from your Clearinghouse, doesn't guarantee that your position will be shown on the Results Map. Your message needs to follow the exercise instructions 100% correctly, for your QTH to be plotted.**
- **IMPORTANT! Always accept form updates (if offered, when starting up Winlink Express) before starting an exercise. Always accept updates to the Winlink Express executable (if offered) before starting an exercise.**
- **ETO exercises are designed to be fulfilled using Winlink Express, in a Windows environment. If you choose to use any other Winlink Client Program, your mileage may vary, and your response may not be mapped or graded as Correct.**

Winlink Position Reports sent to APRS map web sites

Many Hams use RF beacons in their HT's, or Vehicle Radios, to automatically report their positions in Real Time on the APRS system; this is highly useful, especially during Public Service Events, and Exercises, so that Net Control doesn't have to keep asking their Operators, "Where Are You??"

[APRS: Automatic Packet/Position Reporting System: www.aprs.org]

Winlink Express can also create a GPS Position Report, and, when sent out as a Winlink message, this report causes your position to be plotted on all APRS system map web sites, such as APRS.fi, and APRSdirect.com.

This week, we'd like you to try this feature out, in Winlink Express, especially if you've never used it.

- In Winlink Express, click on "Settings", and you'll see "GPS / Position Reports"...
- click on "GPS / Position Reports", and you'll see:

GPS / Position Report

GPS Serial Port

GPS Serial Port: GPS Baud Rate:

GPS Status

GPS Latitude: GPS Longitude:

GPS Speed: Knots GPS Course: True

Automatically update grid square from GPS position:

Position Report

Your last position report was posted at 2021/09/16 00:31:44 UTC

Report Date/Time: UTC

(Latitude/longitude may be entered as decimal degrees, DD-MM.MMx, or DD-MM-SSx)

Latitude: Longitude:

Speed: Knots Course: True

MGRS coordinates:

Comment - 148 Characters Maximum:

There are TWO different ways to use this dialog box, depending on whether you have a GPS device connected to (or installed in) your computer, or not.

If you DON'T have a GPS connected, you can manually insert your Latitude and Longitude in the boxes marked below, in one of 3 different acceptable formats:

Here I've marked which fields you need to fill in:

GPS / Position Report

GPS Serial Port

GPS Serial Port: GPS Baud Rate:

GPS Status

GPS Latitude: GPS Longitude:

GPS Speed: Knots GPS Course: True

Automatically update grid square from GPS position:

Position Report

Your last position report was posted at 2021/09/16 00:31:44 UTC

UTC

(Latitude/longitude may be entered as decimal degrees, DD-MM.MMx, or DD-MM-SSx)

Speed: Knots Course: True

MGRS coordinates:

Comment - 148 Characters Maximum:

The "Report Date/Time" is easy: just click the button that says "Use Current Time", and the form will get the current UTC date & time from your computer.

For the Latitude and Longitude, you can use an App on your phone or device, or if you have a GPS handheld, whatever device that works for you, is fine.

[Note: just above the Latitude and Longitude boxes, the 3 allowable formats are described.]

No GPS device? for Decimal Latitude & Longitude, I used the web site "LevineCentral.com", which has a nice gadget to find your current Lat/Long and Grid Square from any street address, ZIP Code, or even a business or location name:

- At LevineCentral.com, click on "Ham Radio Tools & Blog", then click on "Maidenhead Grid Locator Lookup Map"
- Enter your street address, intersection, whatever you know, and click "Submit", and it will give you great useful information:

Amateur Radio Ham Radio Maidenhead Grid Square Locator Map

Enter any address, city & state or zip:
or Enter any call sign: Data provided by QRZ.com
or Enter any a 4 or 6 character grid square:
[?? How does this work? Why doesn't this work? ??](#)

Latitude: / 47° 34' 13" N Longitude: / 122° 8' 56" W

Grid: **CN87wn**



- Copy-and-paste the Decimal Latitude and Longitude numbers, into the GPS / Position Reports form.
- Don't forget to click the "Use Current Time", to insert the UTC Date and Time.
- Then, just click the "Post Report" button.

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If you *DO* have a GPS connected to, or installed in, your computer, you'll see something like this, when you open "GPS / Position Reports":

GPS / Position Report

GPS Serial Port

GPS Serial Port: GPS Baud Rate:

GPS Status

Last fix at 2021-09-16 00:31:53 UTC

GPS Latitude: GPS Longitude:

GPS Speed: Knots GPS Course: True

Automatically update grid square from GPS position:

Position Report

Your last position report was posted at 2021/09/15 00:43:59 UTC

Report Date/Time: UTC

(Latitude/longitude may be entered as decimal degrees, DD-MM.MMx, or DD-MM-SSx)

Latitude: Longitude:

Speed: Knots Course: True

MGRS coordinates:

Comment - 148 Characters Maximum:

All the work is already done for you!

- **IMPORTANT: Be sure to click the "Use GPS Position" button, and the "Use Current Time" button, so that the data from the top of the dialog box, gets copied into the fields in the lower half of the form.**
- Enter any comments you'd like, in the Comment box.
- After you click "Post Report", inspect the message in your Outbox, and you'll see that it's a very simple Winlink Express message, directed to the address of "QTH":

IMPORTANT: Whichever way you created your outgoing Position Report, **add your Regional Clearinghouse address to the CC: box**, then Post to Outbox, send it via your RF of choice, and then look for your "icon" on one of the APRS web sites:

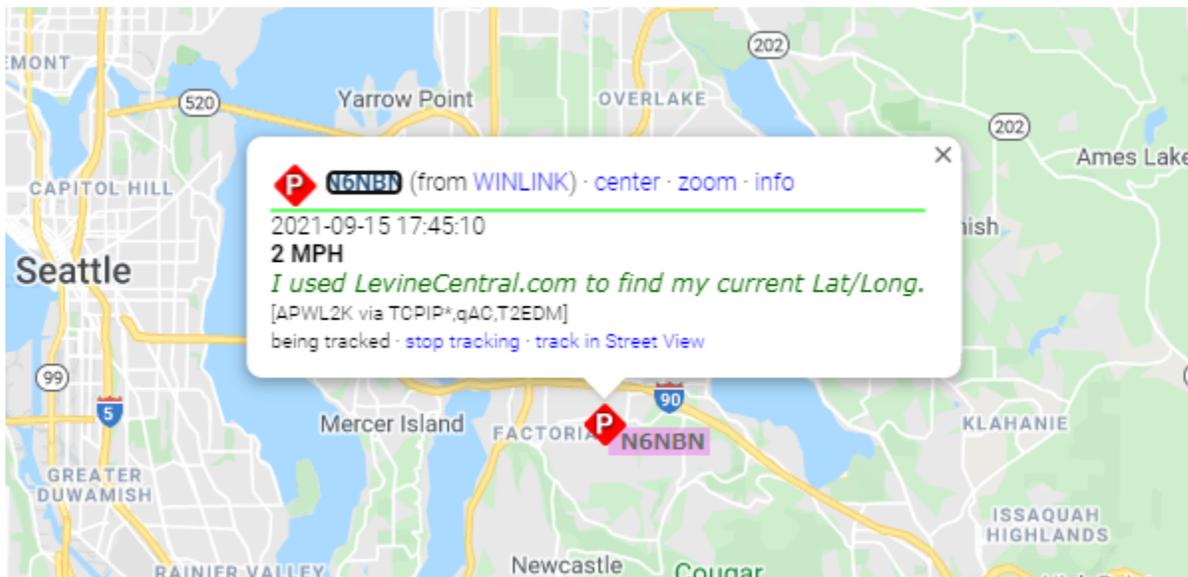
Your ready-to-post-to-OutBox message should look something like this:

Send your Winlink message out over-the-air (ideally), to your favorite Winlink Gateway station, and then you can check online, to see if your new Position Report is displayed on one of the APRS mapping web sites.

If your GPS/Position Report was successfully received by the Winlink system, you will receive an ACK from them in just a few minutes, which you will receive when you again connect with a Winlink Gateway.

Here I am on APRS.fi, after posting my GPS / Position Report :

[in the address bar of my web browser, I simply typed "aprs.fi/n6nbn" and pressed Enter...]



If you use other APRS beacons or devices, as I do, you may have to use a "wildcard" request of APRS.fi:

`aprs.fi/N6NBN*`

That line, in any Web Browser, will show a list of ALL of the N6NBN APRS SSID's, and when they were last heard from.



Normally I would click the first 2 boxes, then click "Show selected", and the APRS.fi map will show the last few hours of travel, if any, of those two reporting devices: "N6NBN" and "N6NBN-7"

So, after you've sent your Winlink Position Report, try out APRS.fi, and find your Callsign(s) on the map.

If you click on your "P" icon, you'll get the pop-up with information from the Winlink Position Report, including any Comments that you included.

Here I am on APRSdirect.com:



So, why is this useful? Why did the Amateur Radio Safety Foundation go to the work of connecting the Winlink System to the APRS system??

Let's say you're on your sailboat, way out there on the Big Water, with no VHF/UHF/Cellular capability, and you forgot your Sat Phone.

But, you've got your trusty HF radio on-board, and it's hooked up to a good antenna.

You can send out Position Reports, so your family/friends/coworkers can check on you.

Since you can insert ANY comments into the Position Reports, up to approximately 140 characters, any status messages can be included, such as "we expect to reach Tahiti by Friday, woo hoo, Pina Coladas for everyone!"

Have Fun!

The ETO Team