

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR JOHN MARRS



John MARRS retired from civil service after 29 years on Aug. 22. His wife Sharon placed his retirement pin on him during the ceremony. Photo by Roberta McDonald

John MARRS was born Jul. 14, 1950 in Monahans, Texas, and lived there until going to Texas A&M University in the fall of 1968 where he majored in physics, was a member of the Corps of Cadets, and played cornet in the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band. He graduated in 1972 and was the U.S. Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Honor Graduate.

After training as a weather officer, 2LT MARRS was assigned to U.S. Air Force Global Weather Central in August 1974 at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., where he fell in love with severe weather forecasting, became a storm chaser, and decided to pursue a meteorological career. In 1978 he went to work for a private weather forecast company and finished his Masters of Meteorology remotely in 1979.

In 1979, MARRS began his civil servant career at the U.S. Army Atmospheric Science Laboratory (ASL) at White Sand Missile Range, N.M. Professionally, he found his niche at ASL creating a concept called Tactical Weather Intelligence — taking weather data and forecasts and automatically translating them into effects on Army or Threat equipment and operations. This concept evolved and became the basis for the weather system called Integrated Meteorological System. From 1986-1988, MARRS went on a developmental assignment as the Army Materiel Command Science Advisor at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., where among other things, he oversaw (with the help of ASL) the installation of a local area network of meteorological stations which led to better forecasts for helicopter flight planning and an average of three additional aviation training days per month during January, February and March.

In 1988, MARRS changed paths to Space full-time, working for COL Ronan Ellis at the U.S. Army Space Institute (ASI) at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. While there, he focused on weather, terrain, navigation, and theater missile warning aspects of using Space to support Army operations. He was instrumental in developing the Army Space Demonstration Program

approved by GEN Maxwell Thurman. His biggest contribution was guiding the creation of the Small, Light-weight GPS Receiver (SLGR) which facilitated the movement of Army forces across the desert during Desert Storm. In 1990, Marrs joined Army Space Command as the principal architect and developer of the Army Space Exploitation and Demonstration Program. Over the next 17 years, he assisted in all sorts of functions to include acting as the technical interface to the Air Force, Navy, NASA, and commercial Space communities. Marrs had a major part or led the development of: Training and Doctrine Command recognizing the command as its surrogate for Space-related combat developments; creation of the Space and Missile Defense Battle Lab; creation of Space area as an Army Proponency; and the design and creation of Army Space Support Teams, the 1st Space Battalion and the 1st Space Brigade. He was a driving force in early development of all sorts of new capabilities, e.g., blue force tracking and commercial imagery exploitation.

In 2003, he joined the Office of the Secretary of Defense-chartered Joint Space Control Operations — Negation Joint Test & Evaluation as the Technical Director. This effort resulted in major improvements in Space control tactics, techniques and procedures and command and control processes at the Air and Space Operations Center, Joint Task Force and Combatant Command levels of operations. In 2007, his work was recognized with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Civilian Exceptional Service Award.

Last year, Michael Schexnayder, deputy for Research, Development and Acquisition, and Dr. Mark Swinson, the command chief scientist, asked Marrs to be the Command's liaison to the U.S. Strategic Command J8 at Offutt Air Force Base. His career has gone full circle ... closing where it began — at Offutt. 

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