

## **JAMAICA AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY CORPS (JAREC)**

### **Introduction**

History have revealed that during the later part of 1937, there was a labour dispute in Jamaica, amateur radio operators and technicians volunteered their services to the Government of Jamaica to assist with what was then, preparation for an anticipated breakdown in the Post Office telegraphic services. Historic records illustrate there were nine amateur radio operators trained in Post Office telegraphic procedures, of these few persons there is to my knowledge one (1) surviving member Lloyd Alberga **6Y5LA**.

It is with this commitment and history that in 1981 Roland Lewis 6Y5RL formalised Emergency Response Procedures which is adaptable to any emergency situation. The Jamaica Amateur Radio Association received financial assistance from Alcoa Jamaica Ltd. This assistance was used to upgrade deteriorating HF equipment; in addition, we also received financial assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (**CIDA**). The value of funding provided for five complete VHF repeaters that were strategically placed across the Island to achieve approximately 80% coverage.

### **Formation of JAREC**

During this period of upgrading the Jamaica Amateur Radio Emergency Corps **JAREC** was organised. This dedicated team was organised to offer specific service to the Jamaica Red Cross, ODPEM, and the Salvation Army. Some of those persons who offered their time, talent and equipment were 6Y5AG, 6Y5CP, 6YCW, 6Y5DL, 6Y5HN, 6Y5HG, 6Y5KM, 6Y5KC, 6Y5MC, 6Y5RL and 6Y5WC among others.

### **Hurricane Gilbert**

The training we received was tested in 1988 during the passing of Hurricane Gilbert; JAREC members were the first to communicate internationally, communicating situation reports to the Miami Hurricane Centre, and the Jamaican Ambassador in Washington, in addition to health and welfare messages to concerned relatives.

### **Hurricane Hugo**

In 1989 when Hurricane Hugo passed through the Islands of the Lesser Antilles members of the JAREC were airlifted to the affected areas, and working along with the military provided additional communications.

### **Conclusion**

In recent times the team have been asked to provide communications for special community events such as Triathlons, Marathon, Road Races, Bikeathon and Motor Rally where communication is vital for the success of these events.