

ARMY SPACE OPERATIONS:

a Path into the Future

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Since its inception with OPMS XXI, Functional Area 40 (FA40) has expanded its functions, population and authorizations across the Total Army and Joint force. However, the understanding of FA40 roles and functions throughout the Army remains a challenge we must address. FA40 force management, talent development and strategic communication provide the avenues to resolve significant shortfalls and serve as the foundation for continuing to mature the career field.

Background

In 1999, Year Group 1980 and 1986 officers were notified of the first Career Field Designation Board results. These results included 20 individuals who would serve as the Army's initial FA40 Space Operations officers. Since then, FA40 has kept growing to its current 250-plus officers who fill billets from Fires Brigades to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Although there is increased awareness in how space-based assets support the Warfighter and the value added of FA40 officers, there is an identifiable requirement to better articulate and develop the Space mission area throughout the Army. The responsibility to successfully accomplish this task rests squarely within Functional Area 40.

Since its beginning, FA40 has been very successful in developing billets and attracting technically qualified individuals to fill those billets. What is missing is a clearly defined vision of how and where officers, with the unique mission sets that FA40's have would best serve the Army. This shortcoming has led to a horizontal expansion of the functional area without consideration for the required vertical growth needed to mature as a career field while meeting the ever-changing needs of the Army.

This article is the initial step to developing and executing a path forward. Its foundation comes from a May 2010 meeting where individuals with specific FA40 and space-related interests met to discuss, express, debate and define where things have been, but more importantly, where they should be going.

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Our Nation's success across the full spectrum of military operations in the 21st century requires officers and leaders who understand the application of Space-based capabilities to warfare. Senior leaders must understand what Space Operations officers do and why they are critical to Army and Joint operations. Space Operations officers are trained to educate those leaders and their staffs on all aspects of Space operations.

BG (R) Richard V. Geraci
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Force Structure

FA40-coded positions are generally in organizations and locations where the assigned officer can leverage and shape the Nation's investments in Space. As defined by LTG Kevin Campbell, FA40 billets are either shaping or operational in nature. Officers serving in operational billets specialize in integrating Space Operations into the military decision-making process. They synchronize, optimize and deconflict employment of space resources with the commander's staff and across the warfighting functions. FA40s serving in shaping positions have the unique ability to impact the future of Army Space through research and development, acquisition, policy development, instruction and personnel management. Many of these billets offer the assigned officers the opportunity to utilize their training, security clearance, education and experience to expand their influence into other space related/restricted access areas. By following recommended career paths, FA40 officers may serve in a wide variety of key and developmental assignments at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. Individual career management will insure a balance of assignments that include the operating force, generating force and broadening experiences.

Although a significant growth of FA40 billets is unlikely, the FA40 Personnel Development Office will continue supporting organizations willing to re-code an existing billet to FA40. The Personnel Development Office will also prioritize the manning of vacant billets based on published Army guidance and senior leader direction. In doing so, the risks associated with not filling a billet or filling it with an officer junior in rank must be fully understood and the decision to do so must be made with full consciousness. Assigning an officer outside of the FA40 career field must also face additional scrutiny. The Human Resource Command's FA40 Assignments Manager will follow the recently signed Army Space Personnel Development Office Policy #1 – Assignment of FA40, Space Operations Officers in determining assignments.

While the FA40 Personnel Development Office strives to place FA40s in appropriate billets, commanders throughout history have identified quality Soldiers and, without concern for

their rank, military occupation or assigned billet, have moved them to positions to best serve their organization. In these cases, the fact that FA40 officers are being selected to fill critical positions outside of their career field is a testament to the quality of the career field, not an indication that the space mission is unimportant. Normally, the Personnel Development Office supports this experience broadening of FA40s to achieve operational success.

Talent Management

Many aspects of an officer's career are included within talent management. The ultimate goal is to provide an array of opportunities to develop a well-rounded officer at each grade and throughout an officer's Space Operations career. In meeting its AR 600-3 Life-Cycle management requirements, the FA40 Personnel Development Office, in conjunction with the Human Resources Command FA40 Assignments Manager, the U. S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command's (USASMDC/ARSTRAT) Future Warfare Center and Directorate of Combat Development will insure sequential assignments, training and education that let Space Operations Officers build on their experiences and knowledge while developing into successful Army senior leaders. FA40 career tracks, normally beginning within the 1st Space Brigade, will provide each individual officer a common foundation of understanding Army Space. Following their initial FA40 assignment, officers must focus on filling a Key and Developmental position at each rank and becoming Joint qualified.

The key to success at each rank is being able to build on set core competencies, for example;

- Captains must "Demonstrate effectiveness and competency in assigned space responsibilities"
- Majors must "Demonstrate understanding and application of capabilities across multiple space mission areas"
- Lieutenant Colonels must "Demonstrate breadth of experience and competency across multiple space mission areas"

- Colonels must “Set the conditions to optimize the employment of current capabilities and shape the direction of future capabilities to enhance service, joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational operations”

Although only a snapshot, these examples provide insight into how defining expectations at each level solidifies the foundation of knowledge and experience that an officer needs to achieve to succeed. The FA40 Personnel Development Office will lead the effort in refining FA40 Core Competencies and ensure they are used as the basis for the professional development of Army Space Operations Officers.

Another aspect of a talent development is skill-related training. In addition to set Army and Joint Professional Military Education requirements and opportunities, the Space Operations Officer Qualification Course is mandatory for all FA40As. This Directorate of Combat Development taught training (supported by the National Security Space Institute) provides instruction of critical tasks each officer must master to serve effectively in the Army’s Space community.

Following the Space Operations Officer Qualification Course and initial space assignments, officers should attend Space 300 and the FA40 Senior Leader Course that is currently being developed. As senior-level courses they build upon an officer’s previous training and experience to provide the necessary information to excel in any senior-level FA40 coded position. Additionally, Training with Industry or assignment specific training such as Director of Space Forces/Deputy Director of Space Forces, Tactical Space Operations Course and the Army Force Management School, are available.

Select officers will also have the opportunity to participate in the Army’s Advanced Civil Schooling program. Managed by the FA40 Personnel Development Office, this program lets officers attend an accredited civilian institution of higher education to pursue a space-related course of study. As a funded Advanced Civil Schooling student, an officer can complete a graduate degree or PhD program followed by a utilization assignment that capitalizes on the degree earned. Although not all officers will qualify for the Advanced Civil Schooling program, more than 70 percent of FA40s hold at least a masters degree. Therefore, all FA40 officers should seek to complete an advanced degree to stay competitive for promotions and critical assignments.

The final issues of talent management focus on the transparency of assignments and matching skills to positions. In order to mature as a career field and to compete with other, more established branches, FA40s must take the appropriate actions to select the 1st Space Brigade and 1st Space Battalion commanders through the established Centralized Selection List process. Identifying these positions as a Centralized Selection List provides credibility and visibility throughout the Army and insures that those individuals selected to command will be similarly managed as other Centralized Selection List post-commanders. Additional positions available to FA40s must also be

acknowledged as equal in stature to battalion and brigade command positions include implementing specific instructions to selection/promotion boards. The Chief, Space Support Element at the corps level must be viewed in the same manner as the battalion commander with the individual selected to fill such a position scrutinized to the same standard. Similarly, the FA40 colonel selected to fill the Department of the Army G3/5/7 Chief of Space and Missile Defense Division must meet the same standards as the 1st Space Brigade commander.

The Army Space Personnel Development Office Space Cadre Tracking Tool will be enhanced to accurately track the space experience of all Space Cadre members, including FA40s. Although maintaining the information is ultimately the individual’s responsibility, the Army Space Personnel Development Office will provide reminders and opportunities for individuals to update their information. The use of this tool can assist the Senior Leader Division, FA40 Human Resources Command assignments manager and the Army Space Personnel Development Office in the selection of individuals to fill positions requiring specific experience, training or education.

Communications: Space Superiority = Mission Success

The benefits of space-based capabilities have become ubiquitous and commonplace for most societies. Financial transactions, communications, weather forecasting and precise navigation are just a few examples of the daily services that benefit heavily from space-related capabilities and technologies. The ubiquity of these services and the reality that they generally are available without “touching” their on-orbit satellites seem to have led to the people who benefit from them realizing that space is important while concurrently perceiving that it does not really require their active engagement to benefit them. This perception has promoted many in the Army to question the Army’s need for space and the Army’s need for the associated roles and benefits of having an organic cadre of FA40s. Overcoming these perceptions is the challenge facing the Army Space community and one that must start with a Strategic Communications Plan that incorporates a common message, appropriate themes and identifies specific tactics that are synchronized with key external and internal audiences.

The effects of Combat Arms branches are easily understood, and the Army Space Cadre must strive to have the benefits of space as readily and easily understood by their fellow Soldiers. Long-term success in this endeavor - to create the environment, in which the warfighter understands that in order to shoot, move and communicate more adroitly and effectively than an adversary in the 21st century requires the inclusion of space-enabled capabilities and technologies, must begin at multiple levels and venues. At the unit level, Space Operations Officers must have a broad comprehension of the difference they make to the Soldier and the value of FA40 senior-level positions. They must effectively articulate their worth in a manner that it is clearly understood at the lowest common domina-

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tor and does not hide behind security classifications or technical obfuscation. During Professional Military Education attendance, FA40s should take every opportunity to enlighten their peers on all aspects of the warfighting benefits of space-based capabilities. Examples of such opportunities are: the inclusion of space in exercises, drills, presentations, papers and discussions. Senior leaders must be provided talking points highlighting specific examples of where and how space has positively impacted or could have impacted operations. The eventual goal is to have the newly graduated Space Operations Officer Qualification Course FA40, the commander, USASMDC/ARSTRAT and every other member of the Army Space Cadre providing a version of the same message, tailored to their venue. Whether at a national-level conference, a senior service college, captains' career course, an officer professional development session or a pre-commissioning event at the U.S. Military Academy or Reserve Officer Training Corps, every opportunity must be exploited and harnessed to educate the audience at such forums about the value that space-based capabilities bring to the Army.

The bumper sticker "Space Superiority = Mission Success" may not be the primary theme eventually agreed upon, but it does provide an example of the type of phrase that is easily understood and once one is adopted, can and should routinely be used by the FA40 community to convey and reinforce that space power has become essential to land warfare in the 21st century just as air power became essential in the 20th century.

The Army Space Personnel Development Office will work with the USASMDC/ARSTRAT Public Affairs Office and Space Operations Officers from across the career field to formulate and implement a Strategic Communication Plan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The current health of the Army's FA40 community, although not without concerns, is strong. The number of officers making FA40 their first choice on the recent 4-year and 7-year Career Field Designation Board, the number selecting FA40 through the Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program, the numbers inquiring about recall to active duty and the interest from Air Force Officers in inter-service transfers all lead to the Functional Area's ability to recruit qualified and technically competent officers. However, as highlighted throughout this article, there are numerous issues that must be addressed with a responsible organization assigned to each.

It is recommended that the initiation of the following tasks be accomplished, by the assigned organization, within the next twelve months.

- Develop and publish a vision for the future of Functional Area 40 (ASPDO)
- Formulate and implement a FA40 Strategic Communication Plan (ASPDO/PAO)
- Define Internal and External audience(s)
- Common Theme
- Consistent Messages
- Talking Points (Developed and coordinated as each event merits)
- Packaged material (e.g., multi-media; instances/situations/vignettes illustrating the relevance of space and/or the Army Space Cadre to the Army) upon which all FA40s can draw when asked to present a briefing whether to an Officer Professional Development session, a public trade show, a local chamber of commerce, a youth group or others.
- Specific tactics (synchronized with USASMDC/ARSTRAT and 1st Space Brigade strategic communication plans)
- Define core competencies (ASPDO/DCD/FA40s)
- Select 1st Space Brigade and 1st Space Battalion commanders through Centralized Selection List process (ASPDO/HRC)
- Expand/increase FA40 billets (ASPDO/HRC)
- Manage officers assignments, training and education opportunities to insure successful Army senior leaders (HRC/Individual FA40)
- Develop the FA40 Senior Leader Course (DCD)
- Enhance use and capability of the Space Cadre Tracking Tool to accurately track experience of all Space Cadre Members (ASPDO/SLD/HRC/Individual Space Cadre members)
- Develop and administer exit surveys for FA40s leaving the Army at the 20-year point of their career (ASPDO/HRC)

Collectively as a team, all members of the FA40 community need to contribute to our overall career field success. Through these contributions, our Army and its key senior leaders may continue to learn about the effects we bring to the table and acknowledge the absolute importance and crucial role that space support plays in enabling our warfighters so that they remain Army Strong in the theater of combat today and in the future.

