

SMDC sees many changes during Cosumano's time as commander

By Debra Valine

Editor's Note: At a date to be determined, LTG Joseph M. Cosumano Jr. will relinquish command of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command and Army Strategic Command. Army Space Journal's Debra Valine sat down with LTG Cosumano to get his thoughts. (Some information contained in this article appeared previously in *The Eagle*.)

When he assumed command in April 2001, Cosumano had a vision. He wanted the command to normalize Space, provide layered force protection for commanders in chief throughout the world, and develop soldiers and civilians with technical and leadership skills to support the Objective Force of the 21st Century.

"Our challenge is to continue providing the expertise, research and work that will move the nation closer to the ability to field a missile defense capable of protecting American citizens and deployed forces against missile attacks," Cosumano said in his column in *The Eagle* in June 2001.

In just two years, SMDC has made great progress in fulfilling that vision.

"I wanted to make the command more operationally focused," Cosumano said.

"And I wanted to improve the command's team relationship. I wanted the operational and materiel development sides to work more closely together."

SMDC reorganized in mid-2003 from having separate staffs in three locations to a single staff to support the command.

In 2001, the United States did not have a single system that would protect deployed warfighters, allies and coalition partners, and citizens. The Administration made a commitment to missile defense, looking to a multi-layered architecture to counter threats in all phases of their flight: boost, mid-course and terminal. Cosumano predicted at that time that the Army would be responsible for the ground-based portion of the mid-course segment.

Work on a ground-based midcourse defense test bed at Fort Greely, Alaska, started in June 2002. Later, in December 2002, the test bed overview was changed and the command was directed to have an Initial Deployment Operational (IDO) capability in October 2004.

"The deployment of the ground-based midcourse defense is timely," Cosumano said.

"Years ago when we thought about building a system to protect the United States, we had projected an uncertain world. We had the foresight to predict the world we are in today — certainly not to the scale of 9-11, but in the

circumstances we are in today. We are threatened by non-nation states such as Al Qaeda and nation states that do not agree with our ideas of democracy and freedom.

"The ground-based midcourse defense program is on schedule with operations and training to become operational in 2004," Cosumano said.

"It is the first step of a global integrated missile defense system that will allow seamless protection from region to homeland. It is a joint system in that the Army is just one of the participants. The Navy will provide early warning and the Air Force will provide satellite- and ground-based early warning."

To help meet the manpower requirement, SMDC stood up the first ever Ground-based Midcourse Defense Brigade, part of the Colorado Army National Guard, Oct. 16.

Work on ground-based midcourse defense is just one area where SMDC has been transforming into a command that can support the modern day warfighter with Space-based products and the Army go-to command for the U.S. Strategic Command.

When SMDC was named the Army Service Component Command for STRATCOM in January 2003, its mission areas grew in scope and depth from three mission areas to five, taking on a global nature. SMDC's mission areas include global strike, Space operations, integrated missile defense, and strategic information operations, with Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) as the enabler.

"The greatest honor the command has been bestowed is being named the Army Service Component Command for STRATCOM," Cosumano said.

"SMDC was selected based upon performance in current and past operations and its ability to not only develop but field and support high-tech equipment. We are appropriately recognized to be the service component command to STRATCOM."

Taking on the increased responsibility meant that technologies needed to be developed and put into the hands of the warfighters, and people needed to be trained to use them.

Many technologies have been transferred from SMDC to the Program Executive Office for Air, Space and Missile Defense. "Hit to kill" technology used in current anti-tactical ballistic missiles was originated in Huntsville's Technical Center to include the Patriot (PAC3), which saw significant action in the war with Iraq. Another capabil-



ity being developed — and used in the Afghanistan theater of operations — is ZEUS, a laser mounted on a HUMVEE that detonates unexploded surface ordnances.

Others include the Tactical High Energy Laser /Mobile Tactical High Energy Laser, the Medium Extended Area Defense System, Theater High Altitude Area Defense, Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor System, TES, and Grenadier BRAT, along with the Army Space Program Office.

“Transferring technologies and capabilities to PEO-ASMD allows those technologies to soon be in the hands of the service members to enhance their warfighting ability,” Cosumano said.

“Our units are becoming smaller but more agile and lethal through the technologies being developed in Huntsville.”

In addition to developing the Space-based technologies and capabilities, SMDC stood up three Space battalions: 1st Space Battalion, 1st Satellite Control Battalion and the 193rd Space Support Battalion, and developed a program to train Space officers. Army Space officers are a key asset to the ground forces. To date, four classes of Space officers have graduated and been assigned to duty supporting combatant commanders worldwide. They support commanders to leverage Space for ground warfighters around the world.

“Ground warfighters must be able to see first, understand first and then finish decisively,” Cosumano said.

“Space will enable this by providing near real-

time navigation, communication, weather, imagery, missile warning and intelligence.

“The Space operators are being received as members of the combined arms teams to which they are assigned,” he said.

“Space operators are deployed with division and corps teams in the areas of operations. They are becoming key members of the teams that are providing key capabilities that enable the current forces. I think Space operators will become more important as the years go on.”

Looking back over his tenure as commander of SMDC, Cosumano said he is most proud of the performance by the command’s soldiers, civilians and contractors in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq.

“The team came together to support these operations and made a huge difference in the fight. We deployed and supported every operational element of the command, to include our reserve components,” he said.

“The time has just flown by,” Cosumano said, not only of his time with SMDC, but of his 35 years in the Army.

“It has been a great opportunity to serve with some of the finest people I have ever met at every assignment along the way,” Cosumano said.

“At each assignment, I am sure I have gained more than I gave. Each one has its own special memories for my wife, our children, and me. We are honored to have served for all these years.”