NATIONAL GUARD PLAYS VITAL ROLE

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National Guard Space Support Elements face unique challenges which are often misunderstood by our Active Duty peers. Nearly half of the Space Support Element Functional Area 40 (FA40) positions in the Army are in the National Guard yet less than 20 percent of the National Guard Space Support Element billets are manned by qualified FA40s. By comparison, nearly 100 percent of the Active Duty Element billets are manned by qualified FA40s. This shortage of National Guard FA40s appears to be the result of a focus on the imminent needs of the relatively new Army Space Community and the lack of a long term integrated strategy of the National Guard Elements into the Army Space community. The problems with the National Guard Space Support Elements community are unlikely to be resolved without the personal attention of the leaders within the Army Space Community, the National Guard, and Congress as well as the development and implementation of a clear strategy by the military of integrating Space into Homeland Security missions.

BACKGROUND

The Army National Guard is one component of the Total Army. The other components are the Active Army and the Army Reserve. The Army National Guard is composed primarily of traditional Guardsmen and Guardswomen civilians who serve their country, state, and community on a part time basis (usually one weekend each month and two weeks during the summer). Each state, American territory (Guam, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico), and the District of Columbia has its own National Guard (consisting of both the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard). The National Guard is specifically provided for by the Constitution of the United States. Currently, there are 54 National Guard entities which are coordinated by a four-star National Guard general who runs the National Guard Bureau. The Army National Guard predates the founding of the nation and a standing national military by almost 150 years. America's first permanent militia regiments, among the oldest still-serving units in the world, were organized by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636. Since that time, the Guard has participated in every major conflict from the Pequot War of 1637 to Operation Iraqi Freedom today.

Unlike the other components of the American Military, the National Guard has a unique dual mission that consists of both a Federal and a State role. Many Active Duty personnel are unaware about the dual role of the National Guard. Simply, National Guard personnel can be activated in three different ways depending on the mission they are assigned.

The first is a "federal" activation under Title 10 of the United States Code. In Title 10 status, National Guard personnel are the exact same as our Active Duty

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brethren in every respect. The second is a "state" activation under Title 32 of the United States Code. In Title 32 status (which is more than 90 percent of the time for typical national guard personnel), National Guard personnel answer to their governor who is the commander in chief of the state's National Guard and not the president of the United States. While in Title 32 status, National Guard personnel are paid by the federal government, can use federal equipment, but generally (the 100th Missile Defense Brigade is one exception) can't exercise command and control over Title 10 Soldiers (Active Duty personnel) and Title 32 personnel are not generally subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice but are subject to State Military Laws (many dating back to the early 1800s) pertaining to military discipline. The third way to be activated in the National Guard is "state Active Duty" under applicable state laws. While on state Active Duty, National Guard personnel are paid by the state and the federal government has no liability for the actions of the personnel on State Active Duty. State Active Duty personnel are often used to quell prison riots, end civil disobedience, and to this day serve as armed augmentees to law enforcement agencies that are either understaffed or that want the calming presence of uniformed members of the military to be seen by the public.

Just like the active Army, the National Guards priority is the fight against terrorism and traditional combat operations. But the National Guard also has several unique missions that Space or Special Technical Operations could be involved in:

1. Counterdrug mission: The National Guard Counterdrug Program conducts a full spectrum campaign that bridges the gap between and among Department of Defense and Non-Department of Defense institutions in the fight against illicit drugs and transnational threats to the Homeland. The National Guard supports military, law enforcement, and community based counterdrug operations at all levels of government to anticipate, deter, and defeat these threats in order to enhance national security and protect our society. The use of military assets to support a Continental United States counterdrug effort is supported by statute (32 USC 112) and military instructions (CJCSI 3710.01A, dated 30 March 2004 authorizes the use of National Assets for Continental United States Counterdrug missions if conducted pursuant to a U.S. Northern Command proper use memorandum).

2. Defense Support for Civil Authorities mission: The Guard provides support to civil authorities both as a Federal entity and more often as a state entity (a unique mission of the National Guard). These missions routinely involve responding to floods, hurricanes and blizzards in our communities. The National Guard is also involved in Military Support to Civilian Law Enforcement Agencies and Military Assistance for Civil Disturbance. The National Guard maintains several unique missions such as providing a National Guard Reaction Force, Critical Infrastructure Protection — Mission Assurance Assessments, and Joint Continental United States Communications Support Environment.

3. Weapons of Mass Destruction Operations mission: The National Guard has a unique statutory mission to field full time Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams whose mission is to assist local first responders in determining the nature of a terrorist attack, provide medical and technical advice, and pave the way for identification and arrival of follow on assets. In addition to the Civil Support Teams, the National Guard fields a Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear, and Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package.

The National Guard is vital to the total force package in the Global War on Terrorism. Over 250,000 National Guard personnel have deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan, and many more have served in Cuba, Africa, and elsewhere in support of the war against terror.

The National Guard tactical Space elements consists of eight Division Space Support Elements with two FA40s assigned to each and seven Fires Brigade Space Support Elements with one FA40 assigned to each for a total of 23 FA40s. At the time this article was written, only four of those 23 positions have qualified National Guard FA40s in them. This less than 20 percent fill rate will decrease slightly with the graduation of three new National Guard FA40s from the Space Operations Officer Qualification Course 08-02, and who are slated for National Guard Space Support Element assignments.

This article focuses on the National Guard Space Support Element FA40s not facing an imminent combat mission and not on the National Guard FA40s involved in the ground based missile defense mission or other non Space Support Element Space

missions (i.e. National Guard Army Space Support Teams). (Note: The 34th Infantry Division from the Minnesota National Guard has a full Space Support Element and is being deployed shortly to Iraq. It goes without saying that National Guard Space Support Elements about to go into combat are not faced with many of the issues discussed below.)

PERSONNEL PROPONENCY

A dramatic difference between the National Guard and the Active Army is how personnel are managed. National Guard personnel are not managed by a proponency office but by each of the 54 National Guard commands. Generally, the eight Division and seven Fires Brigade Commanders select who they want to be their FA40 with little review as long as the person selected meets the minimum qualifications to attend the Army Space Operations Officer Qualification Course.

Another dramatic difference between the National Guard and the Active Army is how personnel are promoted. National Guard personnel may be promoted to a higher rank if they are billeted in such a position and if they meet the minimum requirements for promotion to that rank (military education, branch/functional area qualified, time in grade, etc). What that means is a major in a lieutenant colonel billeted position can be promoted to lieutenant colonel if they meet the minimum requirements for promotion. This is called a "unit vacancy" promotion.

Unit vacancy promotions allow top performing officers to move quickly through the ranks. Unfortunately, it also causes a great deal of competition for branch immaterial positions. If a position is branch immaterial it removes one of the minimum requirements for promotion. For example, if you have a high speed Infantry major who you want to make a lieutenant colonel, you can either place him in an FA40 position where he will need to enroll in and graduate from the Space Operations Officer Qualification Course to be promoted to lieutenant colonel because being branch or functional area qualified is a requirement for promotion. (Remember this course is only held twice a year and is typically full, so getting qualified may take a year to three years, and the National Guard personnel must balance his/her civilian work schedule with an extended Active Duty for training period needed to attend the course.) They can also place them in a branch immaterial position, promote them to lieutenant colonel, and then lateral them into the FA40 position to free up the branch immaterial position for another promotion. Nothing is improper about doing this as long as that now lieutenant colonel is willing to attend the Space Operations Officer Qualification Course at a convenient time.

As commanders at all levels are aware, priority fill positions are those that will give the command the biggest bang for the buck. The Division and Fires Brigade commanders need to determine what value does an FA40 provide to the unit in a non combat situation (obviously when you are going to war you want to ensure you have every asset at your disposal to kill the enemy and/or protect your personnel). As I will discuss later on, it is clear that FA40s for a multitude of reasons currently provide minimum value to National Guard units in a non combat mission scenario, and unless they start providing value to homeland security/defense missions not much is likely to change with time.

The lack of qualified and technically proficient National Guard FA40s also creates an unnecessary burden on the Active Army. In almost every other career field, large percentages of National Guard personnel are on Active Duty. These mobilizations of National Guard personnel serve a multitude of purposes, for the Guard it allows us the opportunity to become proficient in our given duties, and for the Active Duty, it allows the filling of vacant assignments with qualified personnel.

It is critical for the future success and technical competency of National Guard FA40s to be afforded the opportunity to serve on Active Duty as an FA40 not just in a tactical Space Support Element setting but in one of the many other vacant FA40 billets that will help make a National Guardsmen FA40 well rounded — similar to how Active Duty FA40 careers are managed by rotating personnel between joint assignments, tactical assignments and the Space Brigade. Continued failure to afford National Guard FA40s non-tactical Active Duty assignments will further erode the career potential and retention of qualified National Guard FA40s. Given the already small number of National Guard FA40s, the loss of just one qualified Guardsman to another career path will have a significant impact on the National Guard Space community.

TRAINING READINESS ISSUES

The fundamental tenets of a quality reserve force is that they are technically and tactically proficient so that on relatively short notice they can perform their duties at a level equal to or better than their Active Duty brethren. Currently, the training of FA40s in National Guard Space Support Elements is extremely limited to say it in the most favorable terms. This is due in large part to a failure to properly resource National Guard Space Support Elements with the basic equipment needed to perform their duties (i.e. the Space Operations System). This failure to properly resource the National Guard Space Support Elements is further evidence of a systemic failure to properly utilize the National Guard within the Space Community.

Even assuming that the National Guard Space Support Element was properly resourced with qualified personnel — personnel who had the opportunity for short term Active Duty assignments to become more proficient in their duties or to get greater exposure to the Space community — and had the proper equipment, the use of the National Guard Space Support Element in homeland security/defense is unnecessarily restricted by inadequate training exercises and real world application.

Some place the training readiness problem on the National Guard Space Support Element chief (all three of them). This is a naive approach to a complex problem; it is the equivalent of a battalion commander claiming that a squad is untrained because the squad leader failed to conduct proper hip pocket training during down time. Proper utilization of a National Guard

Space Support Element in a training exercise requires the involvement of U.S. Northern Command on down. One of the most glaring problems with training National Guard Space Support Elements is that U.S. Northern Command has not exercised their subordinate National Guard Space Support Elements in a significant manner. Complex, realistic, and frequent joint training exercises are not being conducted on a regular basis involving U.S. Northern Command, National Guard Space Support Elements, Department of Homeland Security, and Army Space Support Teams due to manpower and financial limitations. This failure to train as you will fight (or defend the homeland as the case maybe) has resulted in repeated After Action Report comments asking for better joint training by the Space community after actual U.S. Northern Command missions yet little has been done to implement a comprehensive Space training exercise based on likely future U.S. Northern Command Space missions. Sole responsibility for joint National Guard exercises can't be placed with U.S. Northern Command. Joint Forces Command is charged with Joint Exercises (J7) and Joint experimentation (J9) yet they don't have a single FA40 working on joint Space training or experimentation for the Active, Reserve or National Guard Space community.

It cannot be overstated that training National Guard personnel has very unique challenges. Unlike Active Duty personnel, National Guard personnel generally do not place their military commitment over everything else. National Guard personnel are part time members of the military and as such they generally have priorities higher than the military such as family, civilian employment and religion. If they did not place these other priorities higher then military service they likely would be on Active Duty. Often in non combat or Sept. 11, 2001-type situations, weddings, family reunions, and civilian employment commitments take priority over National Guard training. Even when a member of the National Guard is able to balance all of the requirements placed on them, training in a specialty like Space Operations is limited. Like our Active Duty brethren, National Guard personnel must take an Army Physical Fitness Test, perform warrior tasks, qualify on their weapon, write evaluation reports, counsel subordinates, plan training events, attend division staff meetings, participate in mandatory training briefings on safety, sexual harassment, equal opportunity, etc. These mandatory events, especially at the major and lieutenant colonel level, dramatically reduce the amount of available time to train on Space Operations. Assuming the most ideal conditions, it is likely that only two drill weekends and eight days at annual training would be available to perform Space Support Element duties. To put that into perspective, ask yourself how proficient would you be if you only trained on Space missions for the first two weeks in January without the equipment you would need to perform your duty (i.e. the lack of the Space operating system within the National Guard Space Support Element units), without a realistic training exercise that would allow you to exercise real world Space Support Element functions both in collection management and adequate staff decision making, and then decide how much value you bring to your unit.

To adequately utilize/exercise National Guard Space Support Elements, it is vital to exercise them as often as possible and preferably in real world situations. It is critical that U.S. Northern Command and Joint Forces Command do a much better job at utilizing the small number of highly skilled personnel who make up the National Guard Space Support Elements. No better training opportunities exist in the short term then domestic emergencies (hurricanes, blizzards, forest fires, etc) that arise several times a year. In the longer term, it is critical that U.S. Northern Command and Joint Forces Command conduct a joint training exercise involving collection of imagery over the Continental United States with National Guard, Homeland Security and state/local first responders.

Finally, National Guard Space Support Elements must figure out a way to train on Special Technical Operations. Training on this poses numerous complex logistical and practical problems that will not be resolved in the near term and may never be resolved without General Officer level planning beginning in the near term. If, as expected, Special Technical Operations becomes an official function of the Active Duty Space Support Element, then it is vital that the Space community determine how they will train National Guard Space Support Elements on this critical mission.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The first step to solving any problem is identifying the problem. This article clearly identifies numerous problems facing the National Guard Space Support Element FA40s and the Space community. These problems (staffing, resourcing and training) will not resolve themselves. These problems will only be resolved with the personal attention of senior military and civilian leaders. The road ahead will be bumpy and long but it is vital to treat National Guard personnel as valued members of the Space Community with real missions. When the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan come to an end, I can think of a no more vital mission for the Space community than to defend/protect our homeland in accordance with our constitution and laws. The National Guard is the tip of the sphere for future applications for Space in that respect. Neglecting the National Guard Space Support Element (and its homeland defense/protection mission) is short sighted and will result in five, 10 or 15 years from now a significantly harder effort to fix. It is vital that the leaders of the Space community realize today that neglecting the National Guard Space community is hurting not only the National Guard but the entire Army. With proper command emphasis and the right selection of people on a small "tiger team" it should not be hard for U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command, Joint Forces Command, and U.S. Northern Command to develop policies, procedures, and mechanisms to fix the current neglect of the National Guard FA40 Space Support Element community.