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Recognizing Enlisted Space Professionals

In mid-September, USASMDC/ARSTRAT hosted a training conference in Huntsville, Ala. The theme for the conference was “Growth in Our Mission Areas - Space, Missile Defense, and Cyberspace; Posturing for the Future to Better Support the Warfighter.” Over the course of four days, we examined all the command’s mission areas and heard from Army experts in the areas of training and exercise.

We also had an opportunity to hear from members of the FA40 career field – from members currently embedded with Army Divisions both within the Central Command area of responsibility, and those assigned to Divisions who have returned and are resetting. One discussion area was the lack of and need for an enlisted Space professional identifier.

Within the Army, there is no “career path” or Military Occupational Specialty for enlisted Space professionals. We’re often assigned Soldiers who may not have a Space operations background. We then invest a tremendous amount of time and effort into training and certifying them for highly specialized mission areas, only to lose some of them back to assignments in their base Military Occupational Specialty or career field at the end of their tour of duty.

However, Soldiers can now be awarded a Space-related Additional Skill Identifier such as 3Y (Space Enabler), 1C (Satellite Systems/Network Coordinator), Q4 (JTAGs Operator), or T3 (GMD System Operator). The addition of the 3Y ASI was recently approved by Headquarters Department of Army

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G1 and is managed by the Army Space Cadre Office in the Army Space Personnel Development Office. This Additional Skill Identifier allows a method to identify and track Soldiers with Space-related training and experience. This also allows a method for U.S. Army Human Resources Command to identify experienced Space Soldiers for repetitive assignments to Space cadre billets.

In the future, as we continue to grow our enlisted Space professionals, we may want to consider the way the Air Force grows its enlisted Space professionals from the ground up, assigning them the 1C6X1 – Space Systems Operations Air Force Specialty Code, and manages their career as they grow in experience and rank. As 1C6X1s, the Air Force enlisted Space professional has clearly defined duties and responsibilities, and specialty qualifications which focus upon:

Knowledge

It is mandatory to possess knowledge of: Satellite command and control, Space warning and control systems, and Space launch processes; orbital mechanics; data analysis procedures; sensor theory; data transmission theory; principles of satellite and ground systems; receiving, recording, and relaying operational data; and administrative practices.

Education

For entry into this specialty, completion of high school with courses in physics, geometry, trigonometry, algebra, or computer science is desirable.

Training

For award of the Air Force Specialty Code 1C631, completion of a basic Space systems operator course is mandatory.

Experience

The following experience is mandatory for award of the Air Force Specialty Code indicated:

- 1C651 – Qualification in and possession of Air Force Space Code 1C631. Also, experience in functions such as spacelift command and control systems, telemetry processing, ground systems configuration, mission planning, anomaly resolution, and launch operations.
- 1C671 – Qualification in and possession of Air Force Space Code 1C651. Also, experience performing or supervising Space systems operations functions and activities.
- 1C691 – Qualification in and possession of Air Force Space Code 1C671. Also, experience managing Space systems operations activities.

The focus of this issue of the Army Space Journal is “Tapping into Space: A How-To Guide.”

While I am not advocating the Army mimic the Air Force system for training, certifying and managing its enlisted Space professionals, I am suggesting that as the number of enlisted Space professionals continues to grow, we’ll need to reexamine our use of enlisted personnel within the Space operations arena and to develop a method for growing and managing our enlisted Space professionals. Establishing an Additional Skill Identifier is a great step in the right direction.

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