

Advancement of the Space Tribe Personnel Command Seeks to Assign “Right Officer to Right Job”

By Maj. John McDaniel

Hello from the Functional Area 40 desk at the Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM)! As the Space Operations Career Manager and Assignment Officer, I want to share some useful information about your career, this functional area, and present and future opportunities in Space operations.

First let me say, I remain totally dedicated to the notion of placing the “right officer” in the “right job” at the “right time” and for the “right reason.”

Population Statistics

Because Officer Personnel Management System XXI is working, the officer corps is closing in on achieving the condition known as “steady state.” Since the last publication of this journal, our Army completed the career field designation (CFD) process for both 1975-79 and 1984-85 year group officers. With the addition of these officers, we have strengthened our Space forces considerably and provided many new opportunities for FA 40 officers.

Keep in mind that many of the newly designated Career Field 40 officers are currently not working in Space or Space related assignments (about 25 percent of the force). This is due to basic branch commitments. My daily battle rhythm includes efforts to realign the FA 40 force in an attempt to reach a condition of “full employment” in order to optimize the training, development, and utilization of our human resources.

For the purposes of this article, full employment is defined as having 90 percent of the entire FA 40 population working in Space or Space-related assignments. The remaining 10 percent of the officers are either mal-assigned (because of a recent CFD) or, in a few cases, working in nominative assignments not related to Space

operations.

There are 14 colonels, 61 lieutenant colonels and 69 majors in FA 40. If this information were in the shape of a pyramid, its shape would be atypical if compared to force structure models.

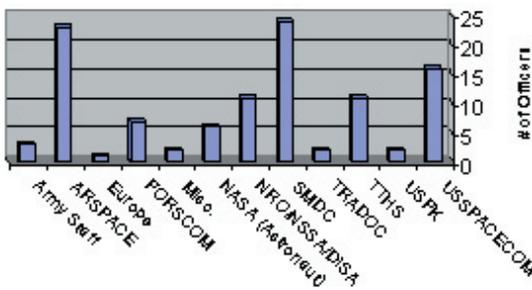
The primary manning and authorization documents suggest an optimal pyramid ratio of 1 to 2.9 to 4.1 — colonel through major respectively. A “surplus” exists of about 20 lieutenant colonels, given the target ratios above. This surplus is due to recent accessions of the year groups 1975-79 and 1984-85 officers. Attrition resulting from retirements and promotion rates will “smooth” this anomaly.

In the past, I have suggested that thinking about the FA 40 population in terms of employment statistics may seem a bit strange, but it serves as a good yardstick to gauge whether or not we have truly optimized our force. The current employment rates for the entire FA 40 community shows 67 percent are in a Space related job, 25 percent are not, and eight percent fall into the training, transient, hospital and schools (TTHS) category.

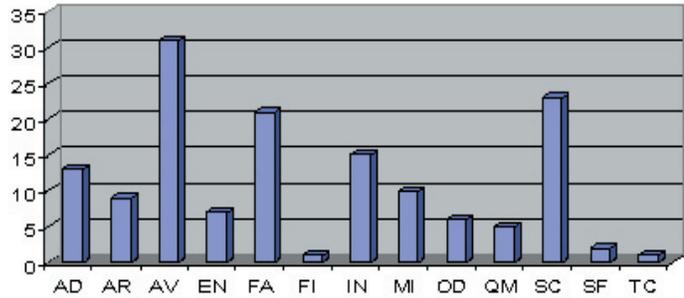
TTHS is a natural occurrence that routinely accounts for approximately 6-to-7 percent of our Army’s work force. Our current TTHS account stands at 8 percent, slightly above the Department of the Army average. When this figure (8 percent) is combined with the officers currently working in Space or Space-related assignments (67 percent), we conclude that 75 percent of our work force is properly employed. The remaining 25 percent of the FA 40 officer corps are currently working in other-than-Space operational assignments. This seemingly large percentage is due to the recent CFD additions to our population.

Footprint: FA 40 Duty Locations by Organization (MAJCOL)*

*Figure does not include the mal-assigned officers



Basic Branch Distribution



Basic Branch Distribution Statistics

The graph above (Basic Branch Distribution) depicts the current demographics of the entire FA 40 population. The FA 40 population is represented by a total of 13 different branches. The top three branches donating the largest density of officers are Aviation, Signal Corps, and Field Artillery. When these branches are combined, they constitute 52 percent of the entire population.

Advanced Civil Schooling

A look at advanced schooling shows that 65 percent of the FA 40 population have earned a post-graduate degree with one percent earning doctorates. Although obtaining an advanced degree is currently not a requirement for FA 40s, officers who do not have advanced degrees are strongly encouraged to pursue that objective.

Consider obtaining an advanced degree as part of your professional development and growth as an officer.

FA 40 Footprint

The graph above (Footprint) indicates how FA 40s are distributed throughout the Army and DoD community. Keep in mind that we are operating in a very fluid and dynamic environment. As Army and DoD missions change, often so do our requirements. Our proponent office is working with various DoD agencies in the recoding effort; PERSCOM supports and augments that important mission.

Space operations are a boom industry; as our missions, roles, and objectives expand — expect and anticipate changes in force structure to occur as we pursue new targets of opportunity.

Next Assignment

I often field the question, “Which jobs are the best?” That is a difficult question to answer accurately. The facts are that it depends on whom you ask. Many of the Space operations jobs are relatively new. The best advice I can give you is simple: “Blossom where you’re planted.” I have heard senior leaders say words to the effect of “seek the hard jobs, do the right thing, and let the chips fall where they may.”

I still think that is sage advice, no matter where you are, no matter what you are doing. There is an element of timing to the assignment process that is beyond any one person’s control. I believe if you asked 10 different Space operators to identify the “top three” assignments by each grade plate, you would get 10 different answers. It is mission first, Space operators always!

Again, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the officers I have assigned and worked with during my tour at PERSCOM. To an officer, each of you have been extremely professional, courteous, and a pleasure to work with. Your sense of commitment and selfless service have been inspiring.

Your feedback and comments are of great interest to me. If you have any thoughts on future topics, areas of concern or interest, I would appreciate your input. I will do my best in addressing those areas in future publications. Seize the Ultimate High Ground!

Thank you for your time, energy, and service. For additional information, please visit my website at http://www-perscom.army.mil/opfamio/FA_40.htm or email me at john.mcdaniel@hoffman.army.mil.