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THE HOUSE ARMED
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STATEMENT OF

BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN R. THOMAS

DIRECTOR FOR COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS, AND COMPUTERS

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

CONCERNING

SPACE CADRE AND

SPACE PROFESSIONALS IN THE MILITARY

ON

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Brigadier General
John R. Thomas
Director for Command, Control, Communications, and Computers (C4), and Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Marine Corps

Brigadier General Thomas is the Director for Command, Control, Communications, and Computers (C4) for the United States Marine Corps, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Marine Corps and Commander of the Marine Corps component to the Joint Task Force for Computer Network Operations.

Brigadier General Thomas was commissioned a second lieutenant in May 1973. He is a graduate of Appalachian State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree, Prairie View A&M University with a Master in Business Administration, and Naval War College with a Master of Science in National Security and Strategic Studies. His military schools include the Basic School, Advanced Communications Officer School, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the College of Naval Warfare.

His previous command assignments include:

- Commanding Officer, 1st Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Intelligence Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force
- Commanding Officer, 7th Communications Battalion, III Marine Expeditionary Force
- Commanding Officer, Communications Company, 3d Force Service Support Group
- Platoon Commander

His previous staff assignments include:

- Deputy Director, Command, Control, Communications, and Computers HQMC
- Director, Programs Division, Programs and Resources Department HQMC
- Assistant Chief of Staff G-6, Marine Forces Pacific
- Assistant Chief of Staff G-6, First Marine Expeditionary Force
- Chief, Command Centers Support Division, Command, Control, Communications & Computers Directorate (J6), Joint Staff
- Communications Support Officer, National Military Command Center
- Program Coordinator, Space, Command and Control Directorate, Chief of Naval Operations
- Marine Officer Instructor, Prairie View A&M University

Brigadier General Thomas' awards include: Legion of Merit, Defense Superior Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with gold star, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with gold star, National Defense Service Medal with two bronze stars, and Humanitarian Service Medal

Chairman Everett, Congressman Reyes, distinguished members of the Committee; it is my honor to present you with an overview of the Marine Corps' space cadre efforts and a brief summary of the manner in which this cadre supports our warfighting mission. During the past year, the Marine Corps has made a significant effort to develop a space cadre consisting of Marines who are not only "space smart", but well grounded in our warrior ethos. The Marine Corps recognizes the significant contribution National Security Space makes to our warfighting mission as well as our national security and is pleased with the progress we have made in the development of our space cadre. We also appreciate the sustained interest and commitment of this committee to the continued development of our space forces and respective space cadres.

I. INTRODUCTION

From its inception, the Marine Corps has modeled itself as an expeditionary force. Marines have maintained this expeditionary ethos by focusing on our people, and acquiring systems that can function in an expeditionary environment, allowing us to maintain a high "tooth to tail" ratio. As such, we have and will continue to leverage the capabilities provided by National Security Space systems, relying on their unique attributes to support our forces at the furthest reaches of the globe. The Marine Corps has developed its space cadre around Marines who are first and foremost professionals in their military occupational specialty, but who are also well versed in the capabilities provided by National Security Space.

II. BACKGROUND

Title 10 of the United States Code dictates that the Marine Corps *"shall be organized, trained, and equipped to provide Fleet Marine Forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign"*. Further, DoD Directive tasks the Navy and Marine Corps *"to organize, train, equip, and provide Navy and Marine Corps forces for the conduct of prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea, including operations of sea-based aircraft and land-based naval air components... and to conduct such land, air, and space operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign"*.

Accordingly, the Marine Corps organizes to fight as a Marine Air-Ground Task Force, or MAGTF. The MAGTF is a combined arms force that brings together aviation, ground forces, combat service support, and a command element to execute missions. Increasing the combat effectiveness and combat power of our MAGTFs requires us to continually evaluate our capabilities. In doing so, we need to ask ourselves "what is the next step?" and focus our effort on the enablers that will ensure that the Marine Corps maintains its expeditionary edge and culture. As a major user of space-based systems, the Marine Corps continues to integrate space-based capabilities into Marine Corps concepts of operation.

III. MARINE CORPS' SPACE CADRE – GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Marine Corps' focal point for the development and implementation of the Marine Corps Space Cadre is the Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations in his role as the Marine Corps' focal point for space planning, programming, and policy. He is assisted in the development of the space cadre by the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development, the Director of the Command Control, Communications, and Computers Department, and the Director of the Intelligence Department.

The Marine Corps' ability to fully leverage space-based capabilities and to integrate space operations in support of our core missions requires the creation of a Marine Corps cadre of space professionals capable of supporting MAGTF operations. We have established the following goals and strategic objectives for our cadre of space professionals:

Goals

The Marine Corps' goal is to produce and maintain a cadre of Marines (active duty, reserve, and civilian) with a diverse set of primary Military Occupational Specialties (including Ground, Aviation, Combat Support, and Command and Control) who are:

- Trained in joint space operations planning;
- Educated in National Security Space (NSS) activities; and
- Experienced in space requirements generation, concept development, planning, programming, acquisition, and/or operations.

This combination of NSS experience, when coupled with a firm grounding in Marine Corps doctrine and operational experience, ensures we will have "space smart MAGTF officers" capable of blending the unique attributes of space with the needs of our operational units.

Strategic Objectives

Additionally, the Marine Corps' strategic objectives are:

- To support the vision and goals of Marine Corps Strategy 21 by creating a cadre of Marines who understand both the capabilities of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force and the unique advantages to be gained by fully exploiting current and future space-based systems.

- To increase the integration of current and future space-based capabilities into Marine Corps systems to support the Corps' Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare capstone concept and to enable FORCEnet and the transformational naval operational concepts of Sea Strike, Sea Basing and Sea Shield.

- To shape the development of future space systems to meet Marine Corps warfighting needs through increased collaboration with all National Security Space (NSS) partners.

- To increase the effectiveness of our operating forces through effective planning, integration and coordination of space-based capabilities and assigned space forces.

- To increase the distribution of Marines with space training and experience not only throughout the NSS community, but also more importantly throughout the operating forces to inject space-knowledge at the individual unit level.

IV. STATUS OF THE MARINE CORPS SPACE CADRE

In order to develop personnel with the requisite background in space and space systems, the Marine Corps has, for a number of years sent officers to the Naval Postgraduate School to undertake advanced education leading to a Master's Degree in Space Systems Operations. Upon graduation these officers are assigned the Military Occupational Specialty "Space Operations Officer". These officers comprise the nucleus of the Marine Corps space cadre, and they fill key

space billets within the Marine Corps and throughout the National Security Space arena. Currently there are 21 of these officers on active duty with an additional 6 students currently at the Naval Postgraduate School. These officers, upon completion of their degree program, are immediately ordered to a National Security Space billets. Following completion of this tour in a National Security Space billet, they will return to their primary MOS, which serves a dual purpose and is in keeping with our goal of developing "space smart MAGTF officers". First, these officers bring advanced education and space operations experience to the operating forces, thereby ensuring an infusion of space expertise in the MAGTF. Second, by returning to their primary MOS, these officers maintain their operational relevance, which keeps them current in Marine Corps doctrine and operations. Following this tour in their primary MOS, the officer may then return to a National Security Space billet, bringing a wealth of current operational experience to the NSS community. It is this experience that will ensure our investment in National Security Space supports the forward-deployed warfighter.

Our graduates from the Naval Postgraduate School undergo a rigorous 2-year technical curriculum that is neither required nor appropriate for all of our personnel serving in space related billets. Hence, last year the Marine Corps created a new skill designator Military Occupational Specialty, the Space Operations Staff Officer. The purpose of creating this skill designator was twofold:

- First, it serves to identify those officers with space education and experience. These officers are Marines who have attended an approved course in space operations and have served in a space-related billet for a minimum of 6 months. These officers make up the majority of our space cadre, and are the officers that provide space experience to the MAGTF. In a manner similar to our Space Operations Officers, these officers are experienced in both Marine Corps operations and space operations, and play a key role in integrating space capabilities into our doctrine and planning process. Since its inception in June of last year, the Marine Corps has awarded this MOS to 40 officers who possess the requisite skills and training.

- Second, the MOS serves to identify billets in which space operations training and experience are required. During the past year, the Marine Corps initiated a study to ascertain which existing billets required the addition of the Space Operations Staff Officer MOS and what new structure should be considered. The Marine Corps identified 62 billets within both the

Marine Corps and the National Security Space community that require the unique skill sets and training provided by Space Operations Staff Officers.

V. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

As mentioned previously, the Marine Corps' primary focal point for space education has and will continue to be the Naval Postgraduate School. The Naval Postgraduate School enjoys an outstanding reputation and has proven its ability to prepare our officers for challenging follow-on assignments in National Security Space. We have worked in concert with the Naval Postgraduate School to develop tailored curricula to support our officers, and feel that we have developed specific tracks that will not only better prepare our personnel for their follow on assignment, but also provides for meaningful research supporting the Marine Corps' objectives in National Security Space. The Naval Postgraduate School has been very receptive to our ideas and initiatives, and we have been very pleased with the education that our officers receive and the contribution they make to the Marine Corps operations and our efforts in National Security Space.

The Marine Corps is also working closely with the U. S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, and Air Force Space Command to develop courses that will support the development of the Marine Corps space cadre. In support of this effort, the Marine Corps has assigned a reserve Marine officer to Air Force Space Command's Space Operations School, and has provided the school detailed educational skill requirements for the training of our Space Operations Staff Officers. The Space Operations School, in turn, is working to assess these requirements and recommend courses to support Marine Corps needs. Many Marines have completed space operations training courses, and during the past year, our Marines have attended both the Army's FA-40 Space Operations Officer Qualification Course as well as the Space Operations School Space 200 course. The Marine Corps plans to continue to send personnel to space training courses, not only to provide them with the space training they need, but just as importantly, to interact with personnel from our sister Services. This interaction in the classroom will help foster the understanding between the Services, ultimately leading to a more capable joint force. We look forward to continuing to work with the Space Operations School and the NSS community to develop relevant, rigorous joint courses that will meet the warfighters' needs.

Finally, we have worked at length to bring space education to all our Marines through our resident and non-resident professional military education (PME) programs. We have recently provided detailed course outlines and video instruction as part of our intermediate level school distance education program. This course of instruction reaches thousands of officers throughout the Marine Corps, presenting them with an overview of space capabilities, limitations, and planning considerations. Additionally, we have integrated space education into our resident PME courses, providing blocks of instruction that provide overviews of space capabilities as well as current lessons learned.

VI CONCLUSION

Looking to the future, the Marine Corps will continue to ensure that all levels of command understand the benefits of space-based capabilities, and increase the number of space trained personnel. Additionally, we will continue to evaluate the training, assignment, and status of our space cadre.

We are pleased with the significant progress we have made thus far in the development of our space cadre, and we firmly believe that the development of operationally relevant, space smart MAGTF officers will make a significant contribution to the National Security Space community, the Joint Force, and our operating forces. Your Marine Corps stands ready to meet the challenges of the 21st Century on land, sea, air, and space – now and in the future.