Signal career opportunities stretch from foxholes to the White House

By LTC Mark Rosenstein

A veritable world of opportunities exists for Signal Soldiers to expand their technical and leadership abilities.

As a result of improved communications technology and information services fielded by the U.S. Army over the past decade, Signal Corps enlisted Soldiers are now encouraged to take an increased role in managing their career and developing their technical aptitude.

The proliferation of advanced technology that warfighters now depend on dictates that Soldiers must gain credentials such as the Cisco Certified Network Associate or the Certified Information Systems Security Professional certification among others.

It is important for enlisted Soldiers and leaders to periodically engage their mentors and career managers to improve their awareness of career opportunities.

From a technological perspective, think about Voice over Internet Protocol/Voice over Broadband or Internet Protocol Telephony/Internet Telephony. Although slightly different, these capabilities are now commonly employed across the Department of Defense to synchronize operations and maintain mission control. It is hard to believe that in 2003 when the U.S. Army crossed the berms of Kuwait into Iraq it still employed area Signal battalions that operated Mobile Subscriber Equipment. It was a challenging time for these units. However they went on to lay the foundation that eventually established the largest tactical network in U.S. Army history. This was made possible, in large part, as a result of emerging technology that included IP-based advancements that enabled the U.S. Army Signal Corps to stitch together what became the operating bases of Iraq.

The technological "pace-of-change" over the past decade has touched all facets of military maneuvers and operations leading to the "network" being thought of as an enabler to other more lethal weapon systems and eventually leading to the establishment of a new sub-unified command, U.S. Cyber Command. The U.S. Army Signal Center of Excellence has also embraced technology that has revolutionized how DoD synchronizes and prosecutes missions with its "µCyber / Micro-Cyber" initiative that is transforming the U.S. Army Signal Corps, its equipment, and the 17 different Military Occupational Specialties that comprise the 25-series Career Management Field.

Given this high and seemingly continuous pace-of-change, Signal Soldiers and leaders are encouraged to seek out opportunities to refine their leadership and individual technical abilities. The organizations highlighted below provide these type opportunities which will help Soldiers and leaders develop the sophisticated operational technical leadership and skills that will propel their careers, enhance the capabilities

Photo by Rick Maupin

JCSE trains to support airborne, maritime, and airmobile insertion operations such as this operation by SGT Garrett Barton, 2nd Joint Communications Squadron.

SGT Ryan Pierson and SSG Luis Gonzalez, install the X-Band MicroSat, the 1.2m Inflatable x/Ku Band SHF Antenna and the Special Operations Integrated Communications Vehicle "Panther."

of the Army and can ultimately take them from the "Foxhole to the White House."

•***Expeditionary Signal Battalion and Corps/Division G6/S6/Signal Company – ESBs and Corps/Division Signal Elements*** are designed to support the modular employment of a tactical "theater-centric" network capability. Currently, the U.S. Army employs 24 ESBs spread across the Active, Reserve and National Guard force as well as supporting G6/S6/Signal Company elements. Enlisted Signal Branch is always seeking enthusiastic Soldiers and NCOs interested in serving at the ESB/Corps/Division-level. Interested Soldiers and NCOs can learn more about ESB, Corps, and Division-level assignments by contacting their career manager at https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/protect/Active/epsig/sigdir.htm.

•***Joint Communications Support Element*** headquartered at McDill Air Force Base, Fla., provides enroute, initial entry/early entry communications support for Joint Task Force elements in support of permissive and non-permissive environments. Assigned personnel receive military and commercial training supporting cutting-edge and Information Technology and may have opportunities to meet representatives from many of the world's leading communications vendors. To meet its global mission, JCSE maintains a professional force of trained, rapidly deployable communications experts who possess exceptional network and telecommunications skills. JCSE is a diverse and flexible organization that comprises both active and reserve component forces. JCSE is always seeking qualified active and reserve Soldiers. If you have what it takes to join this team visit http://www.jcse.mil/live09/JCSE_DJC2.htm or call (813) 828-0628 or DSN 968-828-0628.

•***Joint Communications Unit***, headquartered at Fort Bragg, N.C., has earned the reputation as "DoD's Finest Communicators" and pride themselves on their ability to execute a wide range of challenging missions with their professionally trained and expert communicators. Personnel selected for JCU attend the Special Operations Radio Operators Course, JCU's six month training pipeline that prepares each member to serve as a JCU communicator. Candidates receive training in advanced tactics, marksmanship and driving before being immersed in rigorous technical training that earns them their SEC+, NET+, and CCNA and provides the requisite knowledge to serve in JCU. Upon completion of SOROC, JCU personnel continue the military and civilian education that will make them the foremost experts in the communications field. If not airborne qualified, personnel will have the opportunity to attend airborne training and other

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military schools to enhance their professional development. JCU recruits the most highly qualified personnel who demonstrate a superior aptitude in the communications field and the commitment and maturity to serve in an elite organization. All assigned personnel are given a high-level of responsibility and are expected to maintain the highest of standards. The members of JCU receive Special Duty Assignment Pay and a Civilian Clothing Allowance. JCU is currently looking for all CMF 25 specialties. To receive more information or to apply call (910) 243-0203, DSN 312-383-0203, e-mail jcurecruiting@jdi.socom.mil or visit the web site at http://www.jcuonline.org/airborne/Recruiting/CurrentNews.aspx.

Photo by CPT Spencer Calder

SFC Richard Hodges explains Defense Information Systems Agency's relationship with American Telephone and Telegraph Company's Joint Hawaii Information Transfer System network to Air Force 1LT Curtis Floyd and IT2 Frederick Marcaida.

•***Defense Information Systems Agency***, headquartered at Fort Meade, Md., with assignments worldwide, employs both military and civilian members. Working at DISA is exciting, important and highly satisfying. The capabilities and services needed to share information and enable joint warfighting across DoD is based on an enterprise infrastructure that is controlled by DISA. The enterprise is based on standards and common approaches; a seamless blend of communications, computing, services and information assurance, including seamless transport, gateways, wireless and satellite communications; and a focus on internet protocol and standard computing platforms. Assigned personnel can expect to receive technical training and certification supporting the world's leading IT equipment as well as emerging technology. DISA recruits new members in all communications and IT specialties. To apply visit http://www.disa.mil/Careers/New-Employees or call (301) 225-1390, DSN 312-375-1390.

•***The White House Communications Agency***, headquartered at Anacostia Navy Yard, Md., selects only the best communicators from across all services to support the Office of the President of the United States. Soldiers selected to serve with WHCA can expect to receive technical training on advanced communications and networking equipment as well as other equipment and tactics supporting operational requirements. WHCA is looking for self-motivated and mature IT professionals who aspire to be part of this renowned organization. Soldiers assigned

SGT Brandon Boyd, Visual Information Command performs his duties with the White House Communications Agency.

to WHCA receive Special Duty Assignment Pay and a Civilian Clothing Allowance. WHCA is currently looking for all CMF 25 specialties. To apply visit http://www.disa.mil/Careers/WHCA/How-to-Apply or call (202) 757-5150, DSN 312-284-2000.

As emerging technology and changing information services and processes continue to reshape the communications environment our Army operates in, Signal Soldiers and leaders can, and should, take an increased role in managing their career and developing their technical leadership and aptitude. The cited organizations will challenge Signal professionals to achieve their highest potential.

LTC Rosenstein ***joined the U.S. Army Signal Corps after serving as a field artillery officer. Over his career he has held a variety of leadership and staff assignments including: battalion commander, corps and division G-6 plans officer, brigade and group S-3, battalion executive officer and company commander among others. He deployed to Iraq twice with V Corps and the 22nd Signal Brigade for Operation Iraqi Freedom and later with the NATO Training Mission – Iraq as an advisor/mentor. He also deployed to Haiti with the 10th Signal Battalion, 10th Mountain Division for Operation Uphold Democracy. He is currently serving as chief, Enlisted Signal Branch, Human Resources Command.***

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Acronym QuickScan

AT&T - American Telephone and Telegraph Company
CCA - Civilian Clothing Allowance
CCNA - Cisco Certified Network Associate
CISSP - Certified Information Systems Security Professional
CMF - Career Management Field
DISA – Defense Information Systems Agency
DoD – Department of Defense
ESB - Expeditionary Signal Battalion
IP - Internet Protocol
IT - Information Technology
JCSE – Joint Communications Support Element
JCU - Joint Communications Unit
JHITS - Joint Hawaii Information Transfer System
MOS - Military Occupational Specialties
MSE - Mobile Subscriber Equipment
SDAP - Special Duty Assignment Pay
SOROC - Special Operations Radio Operators Course
TACLANE - Tactical Local Area Network Encryption
TPN - Tactical Packet Networks
VoIP - Voice over Internet Protocol
VoBB - Voice over Broadband
WHCA - White House Communications Agency
WHASA - White House Army Signal Agency
WHSD - White House Signal Detachment