



SATCOM

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The U. S. Army Satellite Communications (SATCOM) Agency, commanded by Colonel Mitchel Goldenthal, is the Army's focal point for satellite communications research and development. The SATCOM Agency Commander is also the Army Project Manager for Satellite Communications exercising the full responsibility and authority of the Commanding General of the Army Materiel Command in all planning, direction and control of tasks and resources involved in providing ground systems and equipments for satellite communications.

The SATCOM Agency was established 15 August 1962 as a reorganization of the U. S. Army ADVENT Management Agency. The Agency has an authorized strength of approximately 260, a civilian-military "mix" which includes a U. S. Naval officer and a Canadian Air Force officer, both integrated into the staff, and the Defense Communications Agency Satellite Communications Field Office headed by a U. S. Air Force officer.

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Many of the SATCOM Agency personnel are pioneers in space research and development having participated in early experiments such as SCORE in 1958, the world's first communications satellite; in 1960, TIROS, the world's first weather satellite, and COURIER, an advanced communications satellite; and in 1960-1962, management of the ADVENT satellite communications program.

The Agency participates in five major tri-service programs: first, the SYNCOM Satellite Communications System; second, the Defense Communications Satellite Program consisting of the first phase called the Initial Defense Communications Satellite Program (IDCSP) to be followed by an advanced phase operational system; third, the Tactical Satellite Communications Program (TACSATCOM), fourth, the DOD Gravity Gradient Experiment, Multipurpose (DODGE-M); and fifth, Exploratory Development.

Satellite Communications ground terminals developed by the SATCOM Agency are now in use in both the SYNCOM Satellite Communications System and the Initial Defense Communications Satellite Program (IDCSP). SYNCOM terminals are located in Vietnam and the Philippines, in Hawaii, in Thailand and in Ethiopia. This network provides a limited alternate route in the Pacific/Asia area for passing Defense Communications System traffic.

The Defense Communications Satellite Program, designed to fulfill military needs for global strategic communications, is in its first phase--the IDCSP or Initial Defense Communications Satellite Program. To date, there have been two successful IDCSP launches, with a third projected for later this year. On 16 June 1966, a TITAN IIC launched eight satellites (7 communications satellites, one gravity gradient) in one payload and on 18 January 1967, eight additional satellites were boosted into orbit.

For the IDCSP, the Army, with the SATCOM Agency Commander also as Project Manager, develops the ground terminals and conducts the communications test program.

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The IDCSP surface complex is a mix of fixed and transportable terminals with planned future augmentation by a new, smaller transportable design. Included are the AN/FSC-9 fixed stations at Fort Dix, New Jersey and Camp Roberts, California, the air-transportable AN/MSC-46 and the AN/TSC-54 which will join the network later in 1967.

Fort Dix and Camp Roberts are the principal entry points for the satellite communications links from the Pacific and Europe. Originally built for the ADVENT program, they were modified first for SYNCOM and again for the IDCSP. The most recent modification by Radiation Incorporated, under contract to the SATCOM Agency, insures compatibility with the AN/MSC-46 and enables operation in the IDCSP mode while retaining a SYNCOM capability.

The air-transportable AN/MSC-46, developed for the SATCOM Agency by the Hughes Aircraft Company, Fullerton, California, is the first terminal to be specifically designed for military satellite communications. AN/MSC-46 IDCSP installations are now located in Hawaii, Philippines, Vietnam, Ethiopia, and Germany. A terminal for personnel training has been assigned to the Signal School at Fort Monmouth.

The new family of terminals, the AN/TSC-54, is being built for the SATCOM Agency by Radiation Incorporated, Melbourne, Florida. This terminal with its six-man crew can be carried by one C-130E aircraft and can be set up for communications via satellite within two hours after unloading.

An essential portion of the overall IDCSP is the Satellite Communications Control Facility (SCCF), which schedules and allocates satellite time for use by the ground terminals located across the globe. Developed by the SATCOM Agency in cooperation with Philco and Mellonics System Development, the SCCF is installed in the Defense Communications Agency.

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An extensive IDCSP test program is in operation with the Agency Satellite Communications Test Operations Center--SCTOC--as the focal point. SCTOC is linked by conventional communications to specially constructed DAPS (Data Acquisition and Processing System) facilities located at each of the terminals. The DAPS equipment, built in-house by the SATCOM Agency, is manned by Agency personnel who are stationed at the terminals in addition to the normal operating crews supplied by STRATCOM, the U. S. Army Strategic Communications Command.

The SATCOM Agency has the Army's action responsibility for the TACSATCOM Program which was established to provide reliable, flexible communications for combat forces. Current SATCOM Agency activity involves an Army in-house terminal construction effort utilizing an existing Air Force satellite program and a second phase that encompasses participation with the Air Force and Navy in the development of an advanced TACSATCOM system.

Under the Army in-house program--"Quick Fix"--experimental tactical terminals were designed by modifying existing equipment and vehicles. Already completed are 1/4 ton vehicle installations and 3/4 ton trucks. These test terminals will be operated in the experimental tactical system with the Air Force UHF tactical satellites LES-5.

SATCOM Agency is also in the initial stages of the new Department of Defense Synchronous Altitude Multipurpose Satellite Experiment. This too, is a tri-service effort and SATCOM is again the Army's agent, responsible for the design, development and construction of mobile, earth-based data readout terminals.

As the Army's source for systems engineering in the field of satellite communications, SATCOM Agency has the task of continually advancing the design of the ground environment. With the ever-increasing technological progress, the studies and experiments now being carried out and planned for the future can be expected to exploit the potential of military space communications to the fullest.