

Marine Air Battle Management Officers-7206: Combining the 7208 and 7210 MOSs in the
Advent of Aviation Command and Control Transformation

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to

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INTRODUCTION

The combination of the air support control officer (7208) and air defense control officer (7210) MOSs is a vital part of aviation command and control (AC2) transformation due to the capabilities created by the convergence of new aviation command and control systems, sensors, and weapons (AC2 family of systems(FoS)) that will be fielded during the 2005-2008 timeframe. The future concepts of employment and changes in organization and structure necessitate the merging of these two officer MOSs. This MOS merger will result in an elimination of the legacy mindset and the transformation of the occupational field to match the emerging technologies and capabilities.

LEGACY MACCS

The legacy Marine air command and control system (MACCS) is an organization of agencies, systems, and personnel that enable the aviation combat element (ACE) commander to plan, execute, command and control his/her forces in order to best support the MAGTF commander. The MACCS is provided by units from the Marine air control group (MACG). The agencies that comprise the MACCS are the tactical air command center (TACC), direct air support center (DASC), tactical air operations center (TAOC), Marine air traffic control detachment (MATCD), low altitude air defense (LAAD) command operations center (COC), Marine fixed wing unmanned aerial vehicle (VMU) squadron, and the Marine wing

communications squadron (MWCS).¹ Each of these agencies has specific missions, tasks, unique equipment, and specialized personnel associated with them. The legacy MACCS is "employed as single purpose hardware systems and manned with single-skilled personnel."² The current MOS structure for 7208s and 7210s represent the legacy systems and agencies that they work in.

The agency where the 7208 is found is the DASC, which is provided by the Marine air support squadron (MASS) of the MACG. The DASC is a task organized element of the MACCS "responsible for the direction of air operations that directly support ground forces....It processes immediate air support requests, coordinates aircraft employment with other supporting arms, manages terminal control assets that support ground combat and combat service support forces, and controls assigned aircraft transiting its area of responsibility."³ A 7208's responsibilities in the DASC are "to direct and coordinate air support missions and advise commanders on matters pertaining to

¹ United States Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-25.3: Marine Air Command and Control System Handbook*, 1997 (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 1997), 2-1 - 2-25.

² Aviation C2 Transformation Task Force Quickplace, *Aviation Command and Control (AC2) Family of Systems (FoS) Concept of Employment (COE) Version 1.0, Coordinating Draft*, 2004, https://www.quickplace.marcorsyscom.usmc.mil/QuickPlace/bmads_set/PageLibrary85256EE80055C89E.nsf/h_Index/64619F18585BD12E85256F8200595743/?OpenDocument, 5.

³ United States Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-25.3: Marine Air Command and Control System Handbook*, 2-7.

the employment and control of air support.”⁴ A 7208 officer does this by performing the duties of helicopter director (HD), tactical air director (TAD), and senior air director (SAD).⁵

A 7210 is found in the TAOC, which is provided by the Marine air control squadron (MACS) of the MACG. The TAOC “detects, identifies, and controls the intercept of hostile aircraft and missiles and provides navigational assistance to friendly aircraft.”⁶ The mission of the 7210 is to “direct and coordinate fighter aircraft in the interception of hostile aircraft and coordinate employment of surface-to-air missiles.”⁷ Within the TAOC, the 7210 performs the crew positions of senior traffic director (STD), tactical air traffic controller (TATC), surveillance identification director (SID), missile controller (MC), air intercept controller (AIC), senior weapons director (SWD), and senior air director (SAD).⁸

⁴ United States Marine Corps, *MCO P1200.7Z: Military Occupational Specialties Manual*, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Marine Corps, 2004), 1-85.

⁵ United States Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-25.5: Direct Air Support Center Handbook*, 2001 (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 2001), 1-5 - 1-7.

⁶ United States Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-25.3: Marine Air Command and Control System Handbook*, 2-16.

⁷ United States Marine Corps, *MCO P1200.7Z: Military Occupational Specialties Manual*, 1-86.

⁸ United States Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-25.7: Tactical Air Operations Center Handbook*, 1996 (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 1996), 1-4 - 1-8.

AC2 FOS

The transformation of the legacy MACCS into the aviation command and control family of systems (AC2 FoS) is on the horizon. The AC2 FoS is a gathering of equipment, facilities, and personnel that will replace the legacy MACCS. The AC2 FoS will have common equipment, hardware, software, and facilities which will allow the ACE commander greater flexibility and survivability in the employment of AC2. The AC2 FoS will employ two types of operations centers: the expeditionary air command center (EACC) and the expeditionary air operations center (EAOC). The ACE commander will fight from the EACC.⁹ The EAOC will be capable of "provid[ing] continuous and voiceless control of aircraft from take-off to target and return."¹⁰ No matter the mission of the aircraft, offensive air support or anti-air warfare, the personnel within the EAOCs will be capable of handling each mission. Unlike the legacy MACCS with their single scope agencies and personnel, the AC2 operations centers and their universal personnel will be able to provide dispersed multi-functional nodes capable of performing a multitude of tasks within single facilities. These multifunctional nodes allow for flexibility, redundancy, and survivability in that

⁹ Aviation C2 Transformation Task Force Quickplace, *Aviation Command and Control (AC2) Family of Systems (FoS) Concept of Employment (COE) Version 1.0, Coordinating Draft*, 5-6.

¹⁰ Ibid. 31.

each operations center is capable of performing each others' duties if needed. The common equipment, tasks and training ensure this. The multi-skilled and versatile personnel that will man these operations centers are vital to the success of these new agencies.¹¹

AIR BATTLE MANAGEMENT OFFICER (7206)

Due to the generality of the systems and tasks resident in the AC2 FoS, a universal air control officer MOS is needed. The air battle management officer (7206) is this new MOS. The creation of the 7206 MOS will negate the need for separate 7208 and 7210 MOSs in that the 7206 MOS will combine the tasks and missions of each legacy MOS. This merger of the legacy MOSs into one new MOS is needed due to the capabilities that the AC2 FoS provides - one common hardware/software system, common operations centers, flexibility, and redundancy/survivability.¹²

The proposed crew organization of the EAOB presents the need for a merged MOS. The EAOB will have officers in roles and responsibilities similar to those held in the legacy agencies. The major difference is that the new roles and responsibilities will be housed in a single multifunctional node vice separate single function nodes. The proposed crew positions in the EAOB include at least two and a maximum of four of the following:

¹¹ Ibid. 28-32.

¹² Ibid. 28-32.

fixed wing supervisor, rotary wing supervisor, weapons supervisor, surveillance supervisor, air support supervisor, air defense supervisor, close battle supervisor, and deep battle supervisor. The fixed wing supervisor position is an example of why cross-pollination of MOSs is required for the new AC2 FOS. A 7206 filling that crew position will manage and oversee the control of fixed wing aircraft conducting close air support, deep air support, anti-air warfare, refueling, and air interception missions.¹³ In the legacy MACCS these duties are supervised by the senior air director in the DASC and the senior traffic, senior weapons and senior air directors in the TAOC.

TRAINING AND READINESS

The new MOS training and structure will produce officers capable of filling any of the proposed crew positions in the EAOC. These officers will be trained in planning and conducting air support, air defense, and airspace control. The mission of the 7206 will be to direct and coordinate air support missions, air interception of hostile aircraft, employment of surface-to-air missiles, and navigational assistance to friendly aircraft.

¹³ Aviation C2 Transformation Task Force Quickplace, *Recommendations on Training Investments and Force Structure (Organization and Manpower) for the Marine Aviation Command and Control Family of Systems (AC2 FOS)*, 2004, https://www.quickplace.marcorsyscom.usmc.mil/QuickPlace/bmads_set/PageLibrary85256EE80055C89E.nsf/h_Index/12BE5306F60227E085256F7A00474402/?OpenDocument, 44-49.

They will also advise commanders on matters pertaining to the employment and control of aircraft and missiles.

In order for the MOSs to be merged, changes in and consolidation of current entry level and career level training will need to occur. A modification of the entry level training syllabi reflecting the future roles and tasks to be performed by the 7206 is needed. Within the new MOS structure the training and readiness (T&R) standards and qualifications will need to be updated to match the duties and career progression brought about by the unit and agency restructure. Some steps towards this goal have been proposed.

One such action is the proposed consolidation of the entry level 7208 and 7210 curriculums. During the summer of 2005, Air Schools, located at the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School will teach newly assigned second lieutenants both curriculums. Second lieutenants assigned the primary MOS of 7208 out of the Basic School (TBS) will also earn a secondary MOS of 7210. The second lieutenant assigned primary MOS of 7210 will earn the 7208 MOS as a secondary.¹⁴ The officers produced by this consolidated program will have the ability to function as air controllers in the DASC and the TAOC. This consolidation in

¹⁴ Dennis C. Teitzel, MCCES Air Schools Proposal for Combining 7208/7210 Curriculums, briefed to the Aviation C2 Transformation Task Force, Stafford, VA, October 2004.

entry level training will aid in establishing the ground work needed in merging the two MOSs.

In order for the consolidated entry level training to be retained, a cross training or time sharing of personnel must occur during the dual MOS trained officers' first tour. The MASS and MACS resident weapons and tactics instructors (WTI) will need to develop a training plan that incorporates the current training and readiness manuals for the DASC and TAOC. The WTIs will also need to supervise a program that enables the officers who have been trained in both the 7208 and 7210 MOSs to earn crew position qualifications/designations in both the DASC and TAOC. This program will make the officers well rounded air controllers and directors. The program will also prepare them for the duties of a 7202 air command and control officer when redesignated upon promotion to major. These actions will also set the stage in creating the training and readiness manuals and career progression for the 7206.

The consolidation of current entry and career level training will greatly support the testing and experimentation of the new equipment and proposed concepts of employment of the AC2 FoS. The consolidated training will give flexibility to commanders who may face personnel shortfalls during exercises and operations by allowing the commander to plug in a dual trained officer into the legacy DASC or TAOC. The consolidated

training will also ease the transformation from the legacy MACCS to the AC2 FoS by proving that an officer can be trained and employed in a multifunctional role.

COUNTERARGUMENTS

Some Marines in the air command and control community disagree with the need to merge the 7208 and 7210 MOSs. They refer to the exploits and successes of the MACCS in operations from the past fifteen years: Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Others say that no change is needed since the system and the quality of officers are successfully meeting the needs of the MAGTF commander. They point out that the officer would be over tasked with both MOS responsibilities. The legacy MACCS and its 7208 and 7210 officers has been successful in supporting the MAGTF commander the past fifteen years. However, with the creation of technologies that aid in efficiency and multitasking, emerging threats, and innovative war fighting concepts, a transformation is needed to meet the needs of the MAGTF commander of the future.

CONCLUSION

The merging of the 7208 and 7210 MOSs to create the 7206 MOS is needed for the successful transformation from the legacy MACCS to the AC2 FoS. The new roles, tasks, capabilities, flexibility, and survivability that the AC2 FoS provides justify

the necessity of integrating the two MOSs. In order for the successful merger and adoption of the new MOS created by the transformation of AC2 to occur, Marines still advocating the continuation of the current system need to embrace the emergence of the AC2 FoS and advocate for the departure of the legacy MACCS.

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