



Summer is a time of renewal in the Army. Cul-de-sacs are lined with moving vans loading or unloading household goods, which generate an excitement in the air mixed with a bit of nervousness. New schools, new bosses, new friends, new neighbors, and all this coupled with new additions to the "old-friends" Christmas list. Our command has similar movements this summer with similar mixed emotions – bidding farewell to old friends while welcoming new ones.

The former director of the Technical Center, Dr. Rodney L. Robertson departed USASMDC/ARSTRAT June 25, after 30 years of government service to take over as the executive director of the Auburn Research Office in Huntsville. As the director of the USASMDC/ARSTRAT Tech Center, he was responsible for managing the research, development, test and evaluation activities for the Army's space and missile defense programs which include the U.S. Army Kwajalein Atoll/Reagan Test Site in the Marshall Islands and the High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility located at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. Dr. Robertson's leadership and engineering acumen will be sorely missed.

The 1st Space Brigade changed command June 29, between COL Jeffrey A. Farnsworth and COL Eric P. Henderson. COL Farnsworth has done a superb job the last two years commanding one of the most unique organizations in the Army's inventory – the 1st Space Brigade. COL Farnsworth heads off to Washington to work in DOD's Space Policy office. Taking command of 1st Space Brigade is COL Eric Henderson, an accomplished artilleryman. He has served in command and staff assignments within Field Artillery and is no stranger to space operations, having been one of the first twelve Space Operations Officers (Functional Area 40) selected in 1999 as well as serving as the executive officer of 1st Space Brigade.

Next, the United States Army Kwajalein Atoll (USAKA) changed commanders July 7, between COL Frederick S. Clarke and COL Joseph N. Gaines. COL Clarke commanded USAKA, one of our nation's strategic test sites, since July 2008. COL Clarke served as the command's direct link to the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. His leadership and plain hard work contributed immeasurably to the quality of life on Kwajalein Atoll and numerous successful flight tests. Taking over is COL Gaines, who is an experienced Air Defense Artillery officer who has influenced many young Soldiers. If you were to ask COL Gaines what he considers the best experience so far in the Army, he would tell you without hesitation – commanding a battalion of 1,200 trainees, most of them 17-20 years old – keeping up with them during PT.....working with them everyday – turning them into Soldiers. We are lucky to have COL Gaines at the helm at USAKA.

In the USASMDC/ARSTRAT command group there were two changes this summer: the Command Sergeant Major and the Chief of Staff.

CSM Ralph C. Borja and CSM Larry S. Turner changed responsibilities June 30. CSM Borja retires after 30 years of dedicated service to our nation. He will leave behind a great many people that have been touched and enriched by his professionalism and by his passion for Soldiers. We will miss him and his wife Nguyet as they begin the next chapter of their lives in retirement. Replacing him is CSM Turner, who also has impressive credentials of leadership, courage and a legacy of taking care of Soldiers and their families. He spent the last 32 years at the tip of the spear in light Infantry and Airborne units. His last assignment was in Afghanistan so he brings with him a very current point of reference in what our Warfighters need in this ever-changing strategic environment.

And, lastly, our Chief of Staff changed responsibility July 16, between COL Kendal W. Cunningham and COL Daniel J. Shanahan. COL Cunningham will retire after 29 years of service. His contributions to the Air Defense Artillery field and to USASMDC/ARSTRAT have been remarkable. Fortunately, he is retiring in the Huntsville area so we hope to see him around Redstone Arsenal. COL Shanahan arrives after serving as the director of Army Leader Development at Fort Leavenworth. He is a former commander of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division and has served two tours in Iraq. I look forward to COL Shanahan's insight and advice as we work through the many transitions taking place inside and outside of SMDC/ARSTRAT, not the least of which is standing up the new ARFORCYBER command.

I wish there was time and space to mention all who have changed jobs, departed, or retired that were not mentioned in this column. Bottom line: We welcome all the new Soldiers, Civilians, Families, and contractors who joined SMDC/ARSTRAT this summer and bid a fond farewell to our friends and colleagues who depart for other assignments or retirement.