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Audit Report



Marine Corps Use of the Deployed Theater Accountability System

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N2009-0032
4 June 2009

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NAVAL AUDIT SERVICE
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MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

Subj: DEPLOYED THEATER ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM (AUDIT REPORT N2009-0032)

Ref: (a) NAVAUDSVC memo N2008-NFO000-0025, dated 29 Nov 06
(b) SECNAV Instruction 7510.7F, "Department of the Navy Internal Audit"

Encl: (1) Methodology
(2) Activities Visited or Contacted

1. Introduction.

a. We have completed the subject audit announced in reference (a). We found that by using the Department of the Army's Deployed Theater Accountability System (DTAS), the Marine Corps would not be able to meet the Department of Defense (DoD) requirement of being able to track the daily worldwide locations of all deployed Marines by August 2009. The Marine Corps also recognized that utilizing DTAS would not allow it to satisfy DoD requirements, and because of this, it awarded a contract to develop its own tracking system to satisfy the DoD requirements. The new system is called the Secure Personnel Accountability (SPA) system, under the Total Force Administration System (TFAS) family of systems.¹ The roll out of the SPA program began in February 2009, and the Marine Corps SPA Project Manager expects to have the SPA system fully operational worldwide by November 2009; this is 3 months after the DoD implementation deadline, but is significantly earlier than the 2012 Marine Corps expected date for DTAS to be operational.

b. Because of the initiatives undertaken by the Marine Corps to satisfy the DoD requirement, and because of SPA's planned operational date, we have not made recommendations in this report, and no management response is required. Paragraph 5 summarizes our audit results. Throughout the audit, the team maintained regular contact with the Marine Corps' DTAS/SPA Program Managers, who provided us with timely updates of the SPA development process. Issues of interest were discussed as they arose.

¹ TFAS is a Marine Corps enterprise-wide initiative to move Marine Corps pay and personnel administration to a single sign-on, predominantly self-service, virtually paperless, web-based environment.

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2. Objective.

a. The objective of the audit was to verify the effectiveness of DTAS as a Marine Corps tool for tracking in-theater service members.

b. The audit was requested by former Assistant Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) and addresses concerns about the Marine Corps' use of the Army's DTAS. We tracked the development of the Marine Corps' SPA system progress through April 2009.

3. Background.

a. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 1998 (Public Law 105-85, Section 767) required the Secretary of Defense to submit a plan to Congress by March 2008 for collecting and maintaining information regarding the daily location of units of the Armed Forces, and, to the extent practicable, individual members of such units, serving in a theater of operations during a contingency operation or combat operation. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2005 (Public Law 108-375, section 734) required that the Secretary of Defense evaluate the system for the medical tracking and health surveillance of members of the Armed Forces in theaters of operations, and take such actions as may be necessary to improve medical tracking and health surveillance. In August 2006, Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6490.03, "Deployment Health," was issued. It requires the Secretaries of the military departments to plan, program, and implement a system to ensure once-daily location recording for all deployed personnel assigned, attached, on temporary duty, or temporary additional duty to deployed units. Data is to be reported electronically to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) via the service-specific system of record, at least weekly. The Secretaries were required to fully implement this capability within 3 years of the publication date of the instruction (by August 2009).

b. To satisfy the requirements of DoDI 6490.03, the Army is developing DTAS to track the location of deployed service members, civilians, contractors, and foreign national personnel from the time they arrive in theater. The Marine Corps had initially planned to use Army's DTAS to satisfy the DoD requirement, but, for reasons detailed in the Summary section of this report, later decided to develop its own system. DTAS sends information² to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), which is responsible for compiling data received from all services. DoD uses DMDC data when determining a member's individual and family medical benefits, and to support health surveillance activities during and post deployment. The Army is responsible for the overall development, procurement, and maintenance of the DTAS enterprise and theater systems. On 12 October 2007, the Marine Corps contracted to build SPA because the Army stated

² The information collected includes Social Security number, name, location, unit, and date.

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that DTAS would not be fully operational until 2012, which is 3 years after the August 2009 deadline.

4. Scope and Methodology.

a. We began our audit work in January 2007 and periodically tracked the Marine Corps' progress toward meeting the August 2009 DoD requirement to have an operational tracking system. We made our last inquiries into the status of the Marine Corps' tracking system in April 2009. Our audit work was conducted between 18 January 2007 and 9 May 2009.

b. The audit team obtained and reviewed applicable guidance and documents pertaining to the Marine Corps' involvement with the Army's DTAS program and the initiation and evolution of its own contract for SPA. The auditors also interviewed individuals from the Marine Corps and Army. Enclosure 1 contains a detailed account of our methodology.

c. We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. There were no previous audits of the DTAS during the last 5 years by the Naval Audit Service, DoD Inspector General, Government Accountability Office, or Army Audit Agency, so there was no need to perform audit followup.

d. The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) of 1982, as codified in Title 31, United States Code, requires each Federal agency head to annually certify the effectiveness of the agency's internal and accounting system controls. In our opinion, the conditions noted in this report do not warrant reporting in the Auditor General's annual FMFIA memorandum identifying management control weaknesses to the Secretary of the Navy.

5. Summary of Audit Results.

a. We found that DTAS was not yet effective for tracking deployed Marines in the Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR), and will not be fully deployed until Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, about 3 years after the August 2009 requirement to have an operational tracking system. We compared DTAS data with CENTCOM AOR deployment data in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS).³ Our audit showed

³ We compared DTAS to MCTFS because the DTAS Program Manager informed us that since there was no centralized support documentation available to verify the DTAS location of a deployed Marine, MCTFS was the most reliable source to verify the general location of a deployed Marine.

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that in FY 2005, 14,103 of the 31,803 personnel reported in MCTFS as being deployed, were not recorded in DTAS, and in FY 2006, 7,292 of the 25,316 personnel were not recorded in DTAS. The Marine Corps properly recognized that DTAS was not likely to be available when required, and the system could not be relied on to establish complete and accurate deployment location records for deployed Marines—potentially impacting the provision of health benefits and entitlements.

b. The Marine Corps DTAS Program Manager noted that one of the reasons for incomplete data was that DTAS was newly implemented in FY 2005, and not all deployed Marine personnel were input into DTAS. He explained the proactive action taken by the Marine Corps to attempt to rectify DTAS system deficiencies. The Marine Corps issued a Marine Corps administration message, dated 28 June 2005, which stressed the importance of using DTAS for personnel accountability. Another policy letter was issued by the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force on 5 November 2006, which stated that the purpose of DTAS was for health surveillance.⁴ The Marine Corps also submitted several engineering change proposals to the Army requesting worldwide implementation of DTAS for the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps DTAS Program Manager had initially thought these changes would allow the Marine Corps to use DTAS to satisfy DoDI 6490.03's requirement to track and record the daily locations of all deployed personnel worldwide by August 2009. However, the Army did not accept the Marine Corps' proposed engineering changes, and according to the Marine Corps DTAS Program Manager, the Army informed them that DTAS would not be fully implemented worldwide until 2012.

c. Because the Marine Corps concluded that using DTAS would not allow it to satisfy DoD reporting requirements, the Marine Corps took the initiative to contract for SPA. According to the statement of work for the SPA system, this new system will allow accountability for all deployed Marine Corps service members and their locations worldwide by October 2009. The roll out of the SPA program began in February 2009 as troops were being deployed, and the Marine Corps SPA Project Manager expects to have the SPA system fully operational to all operating forces world wide by November 2009. Although this is 3 months beyond the DoD requirement to have a system implemented, the Marine Corps believes SPA will allow it to fully satisfy the DoD reporting requirement 2 to 3 years earlier than would have been possible had it stayed with DTAS, given the Army's revised implementation date of 2012.

d. As of April 2009 the SPA system implementation was behind schedule due to requirement changes of the Marine Corps Personnel Status (PERSTAT) and the Joint Personnel Status (JPERSTAT) reports, which had a schedule impact on the design and development of the reports in the SPA system. According to the SPA system Program Manager, the Marine Corps still intends to have the SPA system fully operational

⁴ The Marine Corps Administrative Message was sent to all Marines, and the policy letter was addressed to the Marine Expeditionary Force.

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worldwide to all operating forces by November 2009. After review of the statement of work and the awarded contract, we determined that if the contract is executed as written, the new SPA system should be in compliance with DoDI 6490.03 requirements. Once SPA is fully implemented, it will allow accountability for all deployed service members and civilians under administrative and operational control of Marine Corps Commanders.

6. This report is releasable outside the Department of the Navy only on approval of the Auditor General of the Navy. Any requests for this report under the Freedom of Information Act must be approved by the Auditor General of the Navy, as required in reference (b).

7. We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies extended to our auditors.



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Assistant Auditor General
Manpower and Reserve Affairs Audits

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Enclosure 1:

Methodology

The audit team obtained and reviewed applicable guidance regarding military services being required to account for deployed personnel worldwide. We reviewed the Department of the Army's Deployed Theater Accountability System (DTAS) Memorandum of Agreement between the Marine Corps and the Army, and DTAS's Initial Capabilities Document from the Army, to understand the specific purpose and needs for DTAS. We obtained the Marine Corps' Urgent Universal Need Statement to understand the Marine Corps requirements for personnel accountability. In order to verify what system updates were requested by the Marine Corps to the Army, we obtained and reviewed all engineering change proposals.

We interviewed individuals from the Marine Corps to gather a better understanding of their personnel accountability processes and procedures. We also interviewed individuals from the Marine Corps and the Army regarding DTAS's capabilities.

During a visit to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters in Camp Pendleton, CA, the team received a DTAS users training class from the Marine Corps' Manpower Information Systems Support Office – 03. In order to learn how the other military services account for their personnel, we interviewed the Air Force Deliberate Crisis Action Planning and Execution System (DCAPES) personnel and compared the capabilities of their system to DTAS.

We compared DTAS data to the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) to determine DTAS completeness. We used MCTFS as the authoritative source, as we were advised by the Marine Corps that there was no other centralized support documentation available to verify the location of the deployed Marines reported in DTAS. We obtained DTAS and MCTFS data for the period of Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 from the Marine Corps Office of Manpower Information, and compared the list of locations and social security numbers of deployed Marines in DTAS to MCTFS. We did not test the reliability of MCTFS data because it would have required a separate and significant audit effort.

Enclosure 2:

Activities Visited and/or Contacted

- Marine Corps Manpower Information Division, Quantico, VA.
- Marine Corps 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters, Camp Pendleton, CA
- Department of the Army Acquisition Management Directorate Program Executive Office, Enterprise Information Systems, Ft. Belvoir, VA
- Commander Joint Chiefs of Staff (J-1), Arlington, VA
- Air Force Deliberate Crisis Action Planning and Execution System, San Antonio, TX and Arlington, VA
- Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Policy Integration and Analysis Division, Arlington, VA