

Navy Transfer of Space Operations to U.S. Space Force Still Up in the Air

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy’s shift of its assets in space to the U.S. Space Force is still to be determined, a Navy spokesman said.

The U.S. Space Force was established on Dec. 20 as the Defense Department’s fifth armed service and eventually will absorb the space activities of the other services. The Navy and U.S. Marine Corps are users of many space-based sensors and communications systems, but the Navy only owns and controls the Narrowband communications satellites (Multiple User Objective System and legacy satellites).

“Transfer of Navy Space Operations Mission to the Space Force is still TBD and will depend on congressional authorization,” said Joseph F. Gradisher, a spokesman for the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare.

“The Navy is supporting the standup of the Office of the Chief of Space Operations with manpower designated in the [fiscal year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act]. [The fiscal 2020] NDAA does not provide authority to involuntarily transfer Army or Navy forces into the Space Force. The Navy has acknowledged the [defense secretary’s] long-term vision to

consolidate space forces and is planning for a future conditions-based transfer of Space operations mission.”

Gradisher said the secretary “laid out the vision to transfer Air Force space missions and forces to the Space Force in FY 2021, and, if authorized, to transfer appropriate Army, Navy and other [Defense Department] space-related missions and forces to the Space Force beginning in [fiscal] 2022.”

“Ongoing analysis of the specific units, missions and billets from across the Army, Navy and other DoD elements that should be formally transferred into the Space Force, if authorized, continues,” he added.

The spokesman also said that “the Space Force will work diligently to codify processes by which it will ensure the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps space-related support requirements are fully satisfied and the emerging needs of multidomain operations are met.”