



● ● Roly Rigual, Executive Vice President of Business Development and Sales, Comtech

Satellite Evolution Global

Q&A

## Comtech doubles down ● ●

Comtech is further enhancing its leadership position in the satellite and space communications sector. In addition to moving its headquarters to Chandler, Arizona to accelerate innovation, the company recently launched a new Digital Common Ground modem product line for DoD and coalition customers with additional mission critical solutions soon to be introduced. We sat down with Roly Rigual, Comtech's Executive Vice President of Business Development and Sales, to find out more about emerging industry initiatives and Comtech's strategy to align with those priorities.

*Crispin Littlehales, Executive Editor, Satellite Evolution Group*

**Question: You have a strong background in the satellite industry. Can you tell us a bit about your previous experience and what drew you to your current role with Comtech?**

**Roly Rigual:** I got into this industry in 2005 when I took a sales position at iDirect Government. That's where I first met John Ratigan, Comtech's CEO. Back then there were just a handful of people on the iDirect federal sales team and over the course of the next two decades we were able to build iDirect Government into the US\$100 million market player it is today. Prior to that, I was a sales engineer and technical leader in the terrestrial world. I worked at Sprint/Alcatel Networks for 12 years deploying a lot of the early frame relay, ATM, and IP networks. I also worked for Nortel Networks and Net2000 Communications. I also served in the Marine Reserve in the 1980s as a ground support electrician.

I was drawn to Comtech for several reasons. The company has strong core technologies, smart people, and a long history. John Ratigan has a tremendous reputation across the industry as an incredible trusted leader. With him at the helm and Comtech's diverse portfolio of solutions, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to become part of such a capable,



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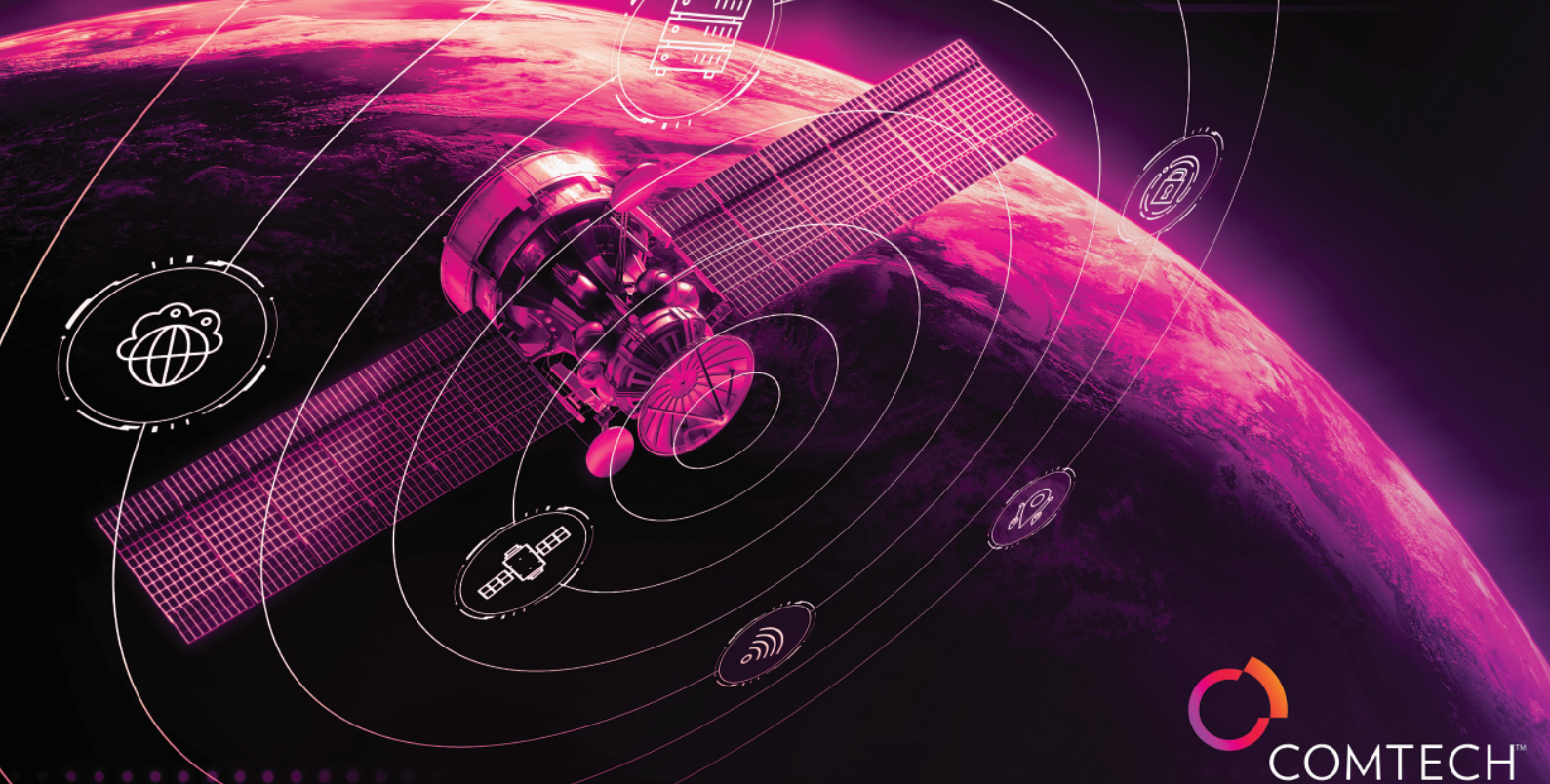


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experienced team. Our industry is going through a transformation and a bit of turmoil right now and I believe that Comtech is uniquely positioned to come out of this disruptive phase stronger than ever before.

**Question: Can you provide a bit of detail regarding your role as Executive Vice President of Business Development and Sales?**

**Roly Rigual:** My main job here is to provide a path for growth for the company and to lead the sales and business development team through a period of transformation for the company. The experience that I've gained not only in the satellite industry but also in the terrestrial world is particularly useful at present. Economic factors and large technology disruptions that were affecting the terrestrial world years ago are similar to what's happening now in the satellite industry. During the advent of the internet, the development and deployment of fiber optic backbones and large data networks, coupled with massive regulatory changes, fostered major transformations in the traditional business models of the existing telecommunications carriers. Today we're grappling with similar factors with the proliferation of new innovative constellations as well as technological advances on the satellites themselves. Our industry needs to adapt to this new environment and my job is to help Comtech navigate through those waters.

**Question: What are some of the broader initiatives in the industry you're paying attention to at the moment and how does Comtech's strategy align with those priorities?**

**Roly Rigual:** Comtech is paying close attention to what the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Space Force are doing in relation to their commercial space and hybrid communication strategies. We are well aligned to support these initiatives because our emerging digitization technologies can bridge the gap between bespoke military and government networks and commercial networks.

Again, we saw a similar cycle on the terrestrial side

when there were large analog backbone systems and telephone switches. The digitization of the telecommunications industry delivered large cost savings. We'll see the same thing happening with satellite communications where companies will integrate vertically to save costs and compete with some of the new entrants that are disrupting the status quo. Comtech's Digital Common Ground Architecture will enable the traditional satellite players to more readily compete in both the commercial and defense arenas. For example, the DoD will be able to execute on their desire to be more agile, to deploy new technology more rapidly, and to have interconnectivity.

Being able to digitize large analog chunks of bandwidth delivers a physical advantage as well. You can eliminate some of the existing large L band infrastructure. This not only saves space, but also saves power and that translates to lower operating costs. There is a lot of cost associated with the current legacy infrastructure. Once these analog signals are digitized, data become IP streams that can be moved around. It is then possible to deploy services more rapidly and with fewer people involved.

Of course, the technology behind digital transformation is just part of the picture. In order to fulfill this vision, we need to move towards standardization instead of these bespoke systems. Comtech supports and participates in standards bodies like DIFI and the WAVE consortium. Our work on next-generation technology and on the standards bodies will go a long way towards aligning our solutions with many of the broader initiatives in the industry like digitalization and virtualization.

For example, today if you want to deliver satellite services and capabilities that cover the globe, you have to pre-position hardware and bandwidth which is both costly and time-consuming. With digital architecture in place, you can quickly spin up services in areas of interest. From a defense standpoint, this means that if something were to happen in the South Pacific or in the Middle East or Europe,

demodulators could be spun up as a service and bandwidth rapidly delivered where it is needed most. That's something Comtech believes our customers want. Making that happen will require not only product R&D but also the adoption of standards and Comtech is poised to do just that.

**Question: Comtech recently announced the relocation of its headquarters from Melville, NY to Chandler, AZ. What makes this move so important?**

**Roly Rigual:** Chandler, Arizona has been the heart of the company for some time. We have a 150,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art and innovation facility there which, in addition to supporting engineering and manufacturing, will now serve as an office to anchor key satellite operations. We already employ several hundred people in Chandler and have deep roots in the community. The area is robust from an economic standpoint and many of our suppliers, particularly semiconductor manufacturers, are in close proximity. What's more, we have many customers in the area including the DoD, satellite service providers, humanitarian agencies, emergency response agencies, satellite service providers, cruise lines, and some of the largest cellular carriers in the country.

**Question: What are some of Comtech's new product offerings?**

**Roly Rigual:** Comtech has been working on new technologies and new products to support many of the initiatives that we've touched upon. For instance, we recently launched our new Digital Common Ground (DCG) modem product line. Built on the proven success of Comtech's extensive SATCOM modem portfolio, our DCG modems are designed and built to support commercial and government satellite operations on a single common platform that can be reconfigured rapidly to address changing operational needs. Comtech's DCG portfolio is also designed to evolve over time to incorporate new capabilities and keep pace with the upgrade cycle of new innovative satellite constellations, significantly reducing overall lifecycle costs for customers while also delivering

industry leading performance and efficiency.

**Question: What customer challenges are these products addressing?**

**Roly Rigual:** As I mentioned previously, traditional satellite operators are encountering strong economic challenges from disruptors like SpaceX and others. All of a sudden there are lots of satellites in LEO providing tons of bandwidth and challenging current business models with aggressive pricing enabled by vertically integrated companies. That's why I believe we are seeing – and will continue to see - industry consolidation as companies prepare to compete with new entrants by capturing some economies of scale through vertical integration. Then too, those proprietary bespoke systems require equipment support from multiple vendors and can be technically complicated and expensive. Comtech's role is to find ways to enable those operators to further reduce costs by speeding up deployment and improving efficiency. Standardized platforms will make it easier for them not only to deploy their terminals but also to reduce the expenses associated with support.

On the user side, the challenges are similar, yet different. Now that we are in the era of peer adversaries, assured communications become a much bigger factor when it comes to defense. There are global actors who could, if they desired, do a lot of disruption to satellite communications, which we all know are an integral part of the US and its allies' defense strategy. Cyber security is also vital for critical economic infrastructure such as banking, utilities, commerce and more.

Today, users need multi-orbit resiliency because sometimes the best way to avoid interference is to change satellites and orbits. While that's easy to say, it is quite complex to execute from a technical perspective and that's where Comtech fits in. We can provide multiple pieces of the puzzle. We have the digital modem side of our business, and we also have the RF side. Our aim is to link them together to offer our customers efficient solutions and bridge that gap from what they have now to where they're going in the future. ●



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