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The (Un)Common Operational Picture

Dr. Mike Prevous, SKS (Contractor) and Mr. Keith Hibner, KMA (Contractor)

The Division Commander walks into his Joint Operations Center (JOC) wanting to know if the conditions are met to begin the next phase of the operation. He glances at the big screen at the front of the room that displays maps charts and matrices making up the JOC's Common Operational Picture (COP). Looking at the COP, the Commander asks himself, "How does any of this information help me understand what the division must do and what decisions are needed? Most of this is just information without analysis. Where's the linkage to our decisions?"

One of the biggest challenges a knowledge manager in an Army operational unit faces is helping his command an-

swer the question, "What should the COP look like?" FM 3.0 defines the COP as "a single display of relevant information within a commander's area of interest tailored to the user's requirements and based on common data and information shared by more than one command." Let's break this down.

A single display of relevant information... What is relevant and how does each piece of information on the COP lead to a knowledgeable decision? For the information to be relevant it must be useful, timely, and in most cases, linked to a decision. It is common to see charts and data fields from every staff section just so they do not feel left out. Everyone has access and can see the same

information... or can they? What if you are working with NATO allies or other JIIM partners, and they do not have Command Post of the Future (CPOF) or the same SharePoint portal access levels?

...within a commander's area of interest... Usually this is the easy part, expressed by a map and graphics using CPOF or another Army Battle Command tool. This map provides dynamic information about troop locations, boundaries, and recent events. Examples include IED activities, troop locations fed from blue force tracker, etc.

...tailored to the user's requirement... If tailored,
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AOKM Proponent - Update on ATTP 6-01.1 Revision

The revision of KM doctrine, transforming the 2008 FM into an ATTP, was opened to the KM Community of Practice in 1st Quarter 2011, with the invitation to every KM professional to participate in revising KM doctrine through the wiki process. The revision strategy (as modified Dec 2010) is an incremental

approach; quarterly windows for KM professionals contribute their proposed modifications via milWiki followed by quarterly formal staffing across the doctrine community. In a follow up note to the field dated January 27, 2010, LTC Andy Mortensen, Chief, AOKM-P, expressed, "...the modified strategy still

leverages the qualities of the informal wiki process (i.e., interactive operational force collaboration) but also leverages the qualities (i.e. scrutiny) that the formal doctrine revision process provides." As the milWiki revision of Army Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (ATTP) 6-

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The (Un)Common Operational Picture

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what parts are common? During a recent exercise we walked the JOC floor and noticed the majority of officers and senior NCOs in the JOC had constructed their own COP of what was relevant to them. The Civil Affairs officer was tracking different data than the Medical Officer or the Fire Support Officer. What must be common about individual operational pictures so staff members maintain situational awareness and understand what they do and how the analysis they provide affects the organization as a whole?

...based on common data and information shared by more than one command. This comes back to the question of what MUST be common and visible to all, versus what must be readily available and how are we sharing across commands as well as within. Is the COP for 1BCT operating in the eastern mountains of Kost Province the same as the COP for the Allied Brigade Combat Team operating in Helmand Province or that of the USMC unit operating in Oruzgen? How does the Division HQ maintain situational understanding of all three simultaneously? One thing we have noticed during many command post exercises is only one BCT is providing inputs to the JOC. Will this be the norm or will there be many operations ongoing simultaneously that the division JOC must manage? Does this warrant a different operating picture for each Brigade, and if so, what is common about what is on the Division COP?

According to FM 6-01.1, the Knowledge Management Officer (KMO) is responsible for “coordinating and integrating the creation and organization of the COP.” Note it says, “coordinate and integrate the creation and organization.” It does not say “decide what information is on the COP,” which is usually the responsibility of the G3 or the Chief of Staff (CoS) responsible for the JOC operations. The KMO’s job is to help them understand what information is needed and to make that critical decision-linked information visible. Secondary information supporting the conditions for decisions should be

available within a few mouse clicks. The KMO must help to organize both the COP’s information and its layout. The most successful way we have seen this

awareness, which is often static and passive.

	CDR	ADC	G3	CHOPS	JOC	Others
DSM	V	V	V	V	V	V
CCIR/Intent	V	V	V	V	V	V
Map/Graphics	V	V	V	V	V	A
CUB (Cdrs Update Brief)	A	A	A	A	V	V
Execution Checklist(Excheck)	V	V	V	V	V	V
Unit locations	V	V	V	V	V	V
Announcements (FLASH)	V	V	V	V	V	V
Key Leader Engagements	V	V	V	V	V	A
Chat program/multi channel	V	V	V	V	V	V
JOC Layout			A	A	V	A
SIGACTS	A	A	V	V	A	A
Mission Tracker	A	A	V	V	V	A
Aviation/Air Availability	A			A	V	
Running Estimates	A	A	A	A	V	V
Battle Rhythm (meetings)	A	A	V	V	A	A
JOC SOP			A	A	A	A
Battle Drills	A	A	A	A	A	A
System Training				A	A	A

Figure 1: An Example of a Matrix of COP Information

accomplished is by taking the division leadership through a short drill to determine what is relevant. Note that we said the division leadership, not the JOC floor staff. In our experience, we have found that if you ask the JOC floor members, who are usually less experienced in division operations, they recommend information they can provide and monitor rather than taking a proactive approach that orients on decisions, conditions, and information requirements that indicate whether certain conditions are being met.

By gathering the division leaders or talking with them individually for about 30 minutes, the KMO can facilitate the right information on the COP and improve situational understanding (SU) across the command. We strive for SU, which is action oriented, rather than just situational

We start this short session with a series of questions, capture the results on a whiteboard or butcher chart, and develop a matrix (shown in figure 1).

What is the command’s area of interest? Usually, a map and boundaries depict the area of interest, but it could include key leaders and events occurring in the area. How much of the area of operations and area of interest must be visible at any one time? If there are multiple ongoing BCT operations, do we have a division view or do we zoom in on the BCT in contact? Much of this will depend on how dynamic the tool is that is generating the map graphic.

What decisions will be made in this operation and who is empowered to make

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these decisions? Planners should develop the decisions and build a decision support template or matrix. They should be sure to focus on the appropriate level of decisions; division, not BCT, decisions.

What conditions must exist if we are to make those decisions? Planners usually have this information and go through it during wargaming, but often the staff on the JOC floor is not exposed to the conditions or the specific Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs).

What information do we need to know to know if these conditions are set? These will most likely be the CCIRs.

Who uses each piece of information? Different leaders will require different information and they may need the same information in a different format based on how they acquire and process knowledge.

Who is responsible for updating and maintaining each piece of information? Every piece of information on the COP, as well as every CCIR, should have someone or something (like UAV-X/X CAV)

responsible so everyone knows who to turn to for what.

How is the information organized and displayed? This often depends on who is using the information. The CG may need to look at the information differently than the Chief of Staff (CoS) or Chief of Operations (CHOPS). Discuss how you might tailor the view so each key leader sees the information in a way that fits the way they think and make decisions. Many of our current tools allow for tailoring individual views.

How is the common data and information shared? Now that we have an idea of what's on the COP and who is using it, how do we share it with the entire staff, not just those in the JOC, and our JIIM partners? What can be shared and what is restricted? This is an issue of both access and architecture. One method we saw, where not everyone had a CPOF, was for the Battle Captain to grab a static screenshot of the CPOF map every 30 minutes and post it to the CENTRIX SharePoint COP site so allies could stay abreast of the operation. It was not dynamic when

copied as a screenshot but it was a reasonable workaround given the system and security limitations.

By answering these questions, the KMO coordinates and integrates "the creation and organization of the common operational picture."

As a KMO, a method for determining the best way to portray information in the COP is through the KM Working Group (KMWG). The KMWG, which includes representatives from Plans, Operations, and the other staff sections, can help determine the information requirements and how this is portrayed in a COP. A good question to ask in this process is whether the COP will remain static throughout the mission or if there is a need for the COP to be dynamic. For example, the COP view that helps the Commander determine if assault fires should commence or if the conditions have been met for the assault on the objective is probably different than the view for the next phase of the operation, consolidation and transition to build up of forces. One size probably does not fit all.

After you have a whiteboard full of requirements from the session, organize those topics in a way that allows you to show who is using what information. For example, what the commander uses for decisions may be different than what a staff section consumes. Figure 1 shows a matrix that we developed to highlight the users of specific types of information on the COP. The "V" or "A" indicates whether the input needs to be Visible or Available (1-2 clicks away) to the user. If the information is not critical or used we left the box blank. This type of matrix can be extended to the right to include each section or subordinate organization. We found different people use different information to "see the battlefield." No surprise there. The trick is to design a tailorable approach that allows the JOC to show one COP and while also allowing the desktop display of each staff officer to show what they need for SU in their bat-

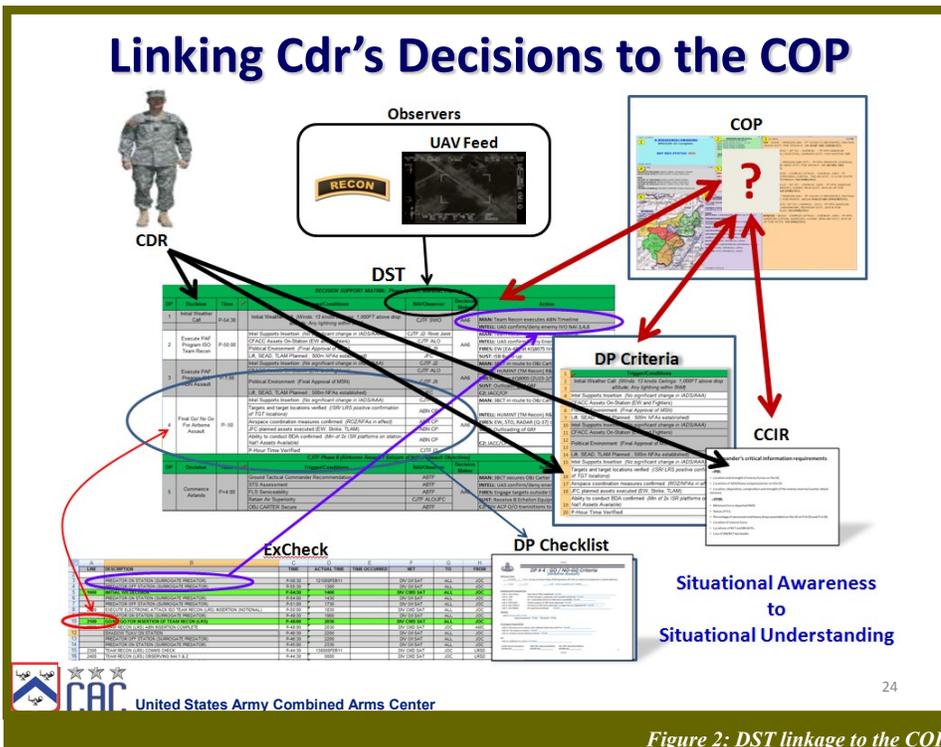


Figure 2: DST linkage to the COP

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tlefield functional area, while still maintaining SA of the bigger picture.

After the table is constructed, find those things common to all, or deemed so important that every COP view MUST display them. In this example, we have highlighted eight information topics that the command group thinks important enough that everyone should have it “visible” on their COP (bold text in figure 1). Two items, the map and graphics and chat program (mIRC chat) are required, but which sector shown on the map and which chat channels displayed will vary by function or mission orientation.

Figure 2 represents how the Decision Support Template (DST) could be used as a major component of the COP. Linking the DST to Decision Point criteria, CCIRs, and sources of information can make the JOC and other C2 nodes more proactive as they look to answer the question: What information do I gather, analyze, or recommend to help the commander answer the questions related to upcoming decisions? It moves the C2 node personnel from situational awareness (what is happening and why?) to situational understanding (what’s next and how do I contribute to ensure conditions are set?).

This leads to another critical point of knowing why particular information is monitored as part of the COP, how the information being monitored is communicated to everyone else, and the effects of sharing that information. For example, during a Command Post Exercise, the Space Operations Section staff observed an increased occurrence of solar flares but never included this information as part of the COP. At the same time, the G6 advised the commander of the proper time to hand off satellite communications to the Jump Command Post. By failing to have proper situational understanding of the linkage between decisions, criteria, and critical information requirements, the information was never disseminated. Re-

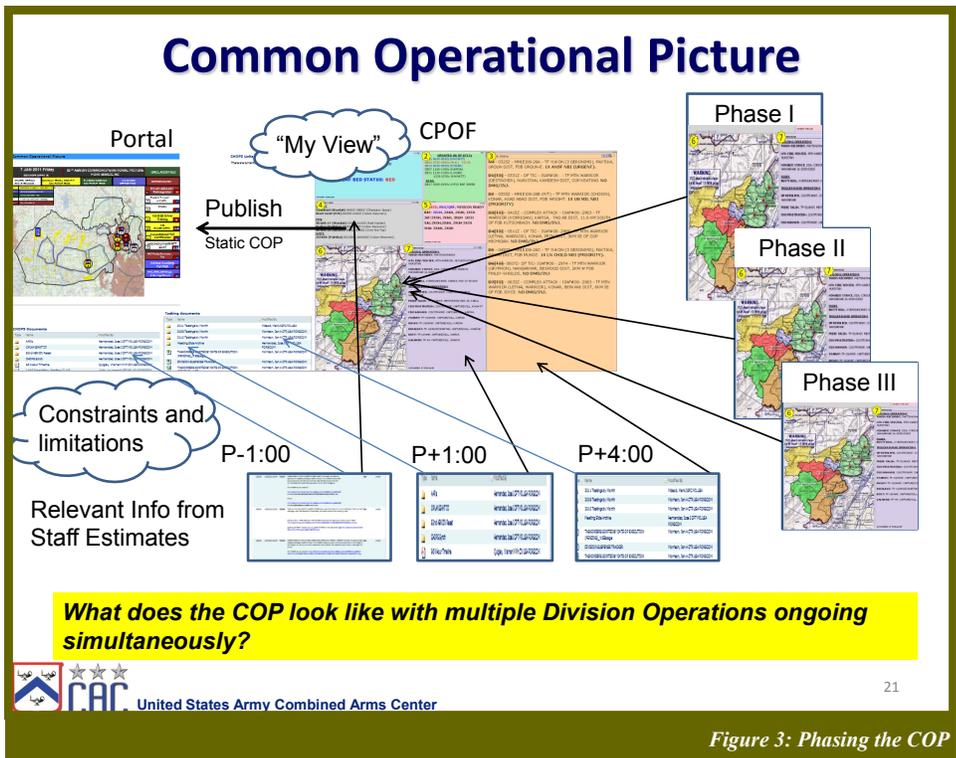


Figure 3: Phasing the COP

sult: the satellite communications failed at the same time the hand-off occurred. To prevent such an occurrence, situational awareness must increase to situational understanding by first understanding the linkage, and then building the means to disseminate information effectively. The COP with staff section input is one method. Changing the COP when a phase or decision point changes and using rehearsals or battle drills built around the COP so participants understand why and when their input is necessary should be important parts of the JOC’s daily activities.

Figure 3 depicts factors for consideration on whether to change the COP view and how running staff estimates will support the understanding of the conditions and criteria for action. We have observed in a number of operations that the COP itself rarely changes. That is to say the information pods rarely change. The data contained in these information pods does change, but we must ask if each pod of information is relevant in each phase of the operation or in each subordinate operation being monitored by the HQ.

Take a look at the COP in your organization. How do different leaders use this information? Does your unit’s COP support decision making and action or is it merely a tool for managing data and information? Is your staff proactively helping identify and gather critical information required for decisions? Do the Division Commander, Assistant Commanders, and Chief of Staff use the COP or do they get their SU from other sources?

Knowledge superiority on the battlefield begins with understanding how we achieve decision superiority in the operations centers and C2 nodes. Building a dynamic COP that is tailorable and fluid contributes to situational understanding and making informed decisions. The flexibility technology provides, combined with well-defined and understood KM processes, make the right knowledge visible and available through the COP. When all is said and done, the real acid test is whether or not the COP you build and organize supports the Commander’s ability to make decisions.

AOKM Proponent - Update on ATTP 6-01.1 Revision

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01.1, Knowledge Management Section, approaches its first formal staffing process, AOKM-P noted that up to mid-February, most contributions from the field to the milWiki revision thus far were “definitional” in nature; including discussion of the nature of knowledge management and its components, knowledge itself, knowledge transfer, and other fundamental KM issues primarily in Chapter 1. The KM proponent has considered these and more recent proposed changes to the wiki revision. The formal doctrine revision process will provide further scrutiny.

Several members of KMNet Professional Forum have stepped forward to take on the challenge of revising the ATTP, bringing their experience in the field to bear with thoughtful contributions and excellent discussion. But, much remains to be done and many KM professionals

have yet to weigh in on this important project. All KM professionals, particularly those who have supported operations as knowledge managers, have valuable insights to share that will make this manual better. All contributions are welcome, but particularly needed are those that address the critical KM challenges Army units and leaders face in executing full spectrum operations.

As encouragement for participation, AOKM-P will award “points” for contributors to the manual. Accumulation of points will be linked to ladderred incentive awards including:

- AOKM representational item (coin, coffee mug)
- 3-star letter of appreciation from CG, Combined Arms Center
- Co-author credit or acknowledgement

in front piece of new AOKM doctrinal publication

The most insightful or prolific contributors will be offered the opportunity to be guest speakers or panel members at the next KM conference.

Success of this effort hinges on quality input (actual revisions accompanied by rationale) to the ATTP posted on milWiki by operational force KM professionals.

The result will be a KM Section ATTP manual that is updated and published in six month intervals through a series of focused, quick-turn alterations. The desired endstate of this combination of informal and formal processes is a relevant, living, and operationally focused manual which truly prescribes the “how” of effectively integrating KM into full spectrum operations.

KMO Letter from the Field

MAJ Hill, Outgoing USF-I KM FWD/KMO

As I prepared to write this article, I found myself faced with a very interesting dilemma. Do I write an informative article, or do I invoke a knowledge-based essay and expound on the merits of transforming information into knowledge? How do I differentiate between the two: information versus knowledge? I further challenged myself by considering the following: if the article is purely informative, does it defeat the purpose of the article and its value to the readers? And if it is to be focused on the management of knowledge, how do I pinpoint the informational requirements of the reader? My dilemma became more convoluted as I continued to add more information. Then I realized that I was replicating and exacerbating the exact problem that Knowledge Management (KM) was intended to solve. I decided to focus on the merits of turning information into knowledge.

Arriving at Fort Hood in August of 2009, I was immediately immersed into the

Corps’ preparation for an upcoming rotation to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, which would eventually transform to



Operation New Dawn. As a FA 53, Information Systems Manager, I was assigned to the Corps KM section. I had no previous experience, nor exposure, to KM principles as a recognized discipline,

although I had practiced the concepts throughout my career.

As a very young Field Artillery lieutenant, I can recall being charged with running my first M16 qualification range. I had to coordinate with range control to acquire the use of the range, and also get the necessary briefings, standard operating procedures and documentation needed to execute the range safely, properly and, most importantly, effectively. My leadership instructed me to write the OPORD for the range, gather resources and rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.

The mission of executing a successful M16 qualification range required the utmost attention to detail and meticulous planning. I was inundated with information. The S3 provided maps, routes, equipment needed, safety considerations, TTPs and a list of objectives. The S4 chimed in with the logistical require-

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ments: medics, fuel, mechanics, extra parts, targets, flags, food and, of course, ammunition. Several sections within the battalion anted up their particular section's unique informational resources and/or support.

My mission was to ingest the information and bring everything together coherently to present it to the leaders, the range support personnel and qualifiers of the unit. No one needed to know how I staffed the requirement, collected the assets or re-sourced the mission; they had little to no concern for what range control briefed me on the days prior to setting up the range for execution. The concerns were mainly, "When do we leave? How do we get there? What's the firing order? How will my scores be tracked and reported?" Leaders and Soldiers required the critical information that would allow them to execute their decision-making process. The information I provided in the OPORD had to be understandable and executable.

Fast forward 20 years later, and I am still doing the same thing. The difference is the level at which I operate, the mission being executed, and my role as a facilitator to the mission executor(s). Staff sections within the Corps still perform stove-piped operations to a degree. Commanders are still in dire need of knowledge extracted from staff products to make precise and timely decisions. Although staff sections operate independently of one another when building products for mission analysis, there is the need to ensure that the products reach across boundaries to other sections to support collaborative and unified resolution at the end state.

At any point in time, the S-3 shop should be fully aware, or have the ability to access the progress of the S-2 shop. KM is the solution. People, processes, and technology are tools used by KM personnel to flatten the informational stove pipes. A flattened data structure provides visibility

across the command and staff, and it guides efforts and activities toward a Common Operational Picture (COP). The drivers of that COP are the requirements identified by the commander in the form of, but not limited to, Critical Informational Requirements (CIR), Commanders Intent and Commanders Guidance. From these, we can extract the knowledge from the information produced by the individual staff sections and begin the process of knowledge presentation to the commander.

The KM Officer's (KMO) tools of the trade (people, processes and technology) are thoroughly examined for the best means of presenting the harvested knowledge in such a manner that the commander has reliable, accurate and timely data accessible within a single click of a mouse button, dashboard view, CPOF/CIDNE feed or phone call. It's strictly based on how the commander prefers to receive and process the knowledge presented. The SharePoint (SP) portal was the tool I employed most. The Deputy Commanding General, Advising and Training (DCG A&T) extracted knowledge and information mainly from this tool. The staff collaborated within the portal to meet the DCG's CIR. Calendars were synchronized on the portal, meetings were scheduled, tasks were tracked and documents were shared. I placed heavy emphasis on training for all sections, and moved a large population of shared drive users to portal operations. SP training was the window of opportunity to showcase the many advantages of collaborative processes. The benefits of using SharePoint versus the use of shared drives became evident during the training session. In response to the CIR, the staff knew where to place certain information, mainly in the "watering hole" as it was called. This was a single-click location for knowledge used by the DCG. Staff sections were given workspace within the portal to perform analytical work. At any time, one staff section could see the working progress of another section, as

products were maintained in shared document folders for collaborative purposes.

KM success relies on command emphasis, training and effective results. If a KM solution happens to be the portal, the command has to emphasize its use for it to be effective. To gain the trust of users, they must be trained, retrained and eagerly supported. The system employed must prove better than the one being replaced and the delta gained has to be large. Happy to glad changes will not gain favor over a staff section that's efficient with an outdated mode of staffing.

I learned many lessons during my tour. The KM field has many branches, and one could write endlessly on people, processes and technological solutions for the many different commanders and command types that exist. No two things are the same, and there is no one-over-the-world solution that applies to every situation. Each change in mission, personnel, or technology requires a new look at how we can best support the commander.

As my tour winds down and we prepare to transfer our KM TTPs to the incoming unit, I am once again feeling the urge to have the internal argument. Am I delivering the typical, left seat-right seat informational dump, or am I providing my successors with knowledgeable data that will support their KM efforts, or both? As KM practitioners, we may support the efforts of the lieutenant charged with running the M16 qualification range or the General who is in charge of advising and training a country to provide for its own security. Regardless of the mission, KM provides the smarts to present the knowledge used to make the critical decisions accurately, timely and precisely. The commander executes more proficiently when he receives knowledge versus information. Therefore, transforming information into knowledge is essential for supporting commanders at all levels in order to achieve mission success. KM enables that requirement.

Eating the KM Elephant at the Brigade and Battalion Level

LTC Scott Mueller

The battalion executive officer and the battalion S3 (operations officer) are sitting in their battalion command post in the middle of the U.S. Army's Joint Readiness Training Center. After three days of "the worst week in Iraq," the two field grade officers conclude that not all the stress and pain, currently in their lives, is caused by the vaunted Opposing Force, but by their very own higher headquarters. They compare the unread emails stacking up in their respective inboxes from the small army of majors on the brigade staff, each one demanding action. There are the stacks of sticky notes, phone messages received by the battalion's battle captain, each from the same myriad of demanding brigade staff primaries requiring emails be answered. Our XO and S3, having slept 10 hours in the last 72 while subsisting on a diet of beef jerky, coffee, and chewing tobacco, are at their collective wits end. They barely have enough time to wrap their heads around their own battalion's problem set let alone the incessant demands for information from the brigade staff. They hear the radio chatter across the room as their battalion commander makes his own demands for information. The two majors rapidly conclude that they are the primary repositories of knowledge within their unit, and something has to change.

"Ok," says the XO to the staff, "how are we going to get all of this done? Whom do we answer first? I am open to suggestions."

After a few thoughtful moments punctuated by coffee swills and tobacco spits, the S3 smiles as the epiphany solidifies inside his brain housing group. Through a tobacco-stained grin, our S3 quips, "We don't answer any of them yet. The first one of them that threatens to go to the brigade commander gets answered first!"

What brought our battalion XO and S3 to this point? To be fair, they probably failed at some point to establish a plan for managing information in their battalion to

ensure they were not the only ones capable of answering the mail to their commander as well as the brigade staff. However, any information system that they develop for the battalion must still be nested with their brigade's information system. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the higher headquarters to develop business processes, train people, put in place the organizational structures, and develop a content management plan that facilitates the flow of knowledge, not just data and information. Knowledge flow is not something that can be overlooked at the brigade level and below. Staffs exist to manage information to create situational understanding across their units and to assist commanders in making effective decisions. But, if staffs and commanders are drowning in data and information, they may never see the right pieces of the puzzle that give them the knowledge that facilitates effective decision making.

It is no secret that our modern information technologies have exponentially increased our ability to collect and disseminate information. These same technologies have also increased our hunger and demand for information. As a result, the knowledge management and information management systems at the brigade and battalion level are even more crucial. No longer can KM/IM only reside in the upper echelons of the Army; brigade and battalion staffs will drown in an information ocean if they do not build the systems that keep them afloat. In fact, recent trends at our training centers bear out that lack of KM/IM systems slows the operations process at the brigade and battalion level. Brigade and battalion executive officers who dedicate time and resources to developing these systems (and ruthlessly enforcing the SOPs that govern them) will find greater efficiencies in their staff processes, and will be able to improve problem solving and time management skills.

Before we go further, let me describe what I mean by a knowledge system. It is not IT! Information technology is surely a

part of it, but it is an enabler and, used incorrectly or not to its full capacity, will end up costing us time, energy and even lives. An effective knowledge system links decisions to information requirements so that we know when conditions exist to make decisions. A good knowledge system has a lot of functions; it supports the business processes of the unit, it enables collaboration (not just communication) and it connects people both synchronously and asynchronously so we can share what we know, increase understanding and learn more quickly. It provides a place to organize and store our documents, it helps us find expertise, and it links to critical information. It should also provide the tools to work effectively and manage time, people and resources.

Developing an effective knowledge system is akin to eating an elephant; it is exceedingly large, daunting, and seemingly impossible. However, there is only one way to eat an elephant and that is one bite at a time. There are three areas/components of the knowledge system where field grade officers at the brigade and battalion level can get a quick win before tackling the bigger issues and systems: email, tracking tools, and meetings.

Email: Your best friend and worst enemy.

How much time do you spend looking at your email? Do you leave it up on your computer all day, answering every message that populates your inbox the moment it arrives? Is writing email how you define "work?" How much of that email actually contains something that even remotely pertains to you or your unit? These are critical questions to ask yourself as you evaluate how you and your unit use email. Email can be either your best friend or a huge time burglar. The reality is that most of us probably get excessively too much email that does not pertain to us and is, therefore, relegated to the "just noise" category. If you open your inbox in the morning and have 50

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Eating the KM Elephant at the Brigade and Battalion Level

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messages, and only 10 of those messages contain anything actionable or useful, you still have wasted precious time by having to go through the other 40 just to assess their worthlessness. Even the 10 messages of value can be a huge time drain if they are poorly crafted and require the reader to wade through a dissertation just to get to the point. However, with a good email SOP and a little discipline, brigades and battalions can create a culture that maximizes email's efficiencies while minimizing time thievery.

In his article "E-mail Rules of Engagement: A Modest Proposal" in the November-December 2000 issue of *Armor Magazine*, Joseph McLamb offers the following proposals for utilizing email:

1. Be clear and be brief. If you cannot do both, then be clear.
2. Don't forward guidance from higher to a subordinate without comment.
3. Don't forward a subordinate's response to a higher headquarters.

4. Don't use email to admonish a subordinate.

These are very good starting principles. Units must establish rules that focus on getting the bottom line up front in every email. This allows recipients to quickly assess what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and clearly defines any suspenses. Additionally, units should also ensure judicious use of the Carbon Copy feature. Do not expect anyone on the CC line to take action on what you sent, and be sure to evaluate their "need to know" lest you clutter their inbox and impose time theft upon them. Hand-in-hand with this is the dreaded Reply All feature; if this is used too often, it is probably a good indicator that a meeting or conference call is in order. Finally, any action requiring a quick turn-around time should never go in an email and should always be transmitted via phone to ensure mission receipt.

Brigade and battalion XOs should develop email SOPs with the purpose of making efficient use of this great tool. I

have only scratched the surface here, but developing a unit culture that takes a disciplined approach to email will save staffs and commanders significant amounts of time that can actually be put to better use than sifting through email. Dr. Mike Prevou provides a set of useful email Rules of Engagement in this journal that provides a good line of departure for a unit email SOP.

(The conclusion of LTC Mueller's article, in which he discusses tracking tools and meeting management, will be published in the summer edition of *Connected*.)

LTC Scott Mueller is an armor officer who has served in armor and cavalry units, staff positions at the brigade and corps levels, and two tours in Iraq. He recently served as the executive officer for 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment in the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team during OIF 09-10 and is currently a tactics instructor at the United States Army Command and General Staff College.

Army's Operational Knowledge Management Proponent to Host April Course

Bruce Verde, SAIC (Contractor)

In an effort to reorient the focus of Knowledge Management (KM) instruction towards KM sections within Operational Army units, the Army Operational Knowledge Management Proponent (AOKM-P) will host a Knowledge Management Qualification Course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 18 April to 6 May. The goal of AOKM is to connect those who know with those who need to know, creating the condition where ideas are valued and shared throughout the Army community. The pilot course will include a mixture of attendees currently working in Army operational units as members of Knowledge Management sections. The Army is in the process of establishing 125 KM positions across the Army in 76 separate units. Approximately 15 personnel from those operational units will attend the three-week course.

The course will focus on knowledge man-

agement's three pillars - people, process, and technology - and their application within Army operational units. Upon graduation, soldiers will become Army KM professionals and receive an additional skill identifier of 1E.

The course instruction will facilitate the identification and application of processes, enabled by technology, critical to timely and informed command decisions. Participants will focus on real-world KM issues using small group discussions and problem solving exercises to develop solutions for relevant operational force challenges. Instructors will employ blended learning and peer-based learning methodologies throughout the course to facilitate learning and comprehension.

Following the April course, student and instructor feedback combined with the findings of a KM subject-matter-expert-

led Critical Task and Site Selection Board (held in June 2011), will inform refinements of the program of instruction for the next course scheduled for late July 2011. Enrollment in the July course will be available through the Army Training Requirements and Resource System (ATRRS).

The Proponent is working with the Army Training Support Center (ATSC) to develop a Qualification Course distributed Phase I learning module. When complete, the module will allow a student to complete initial course requirements and pre-tests at their home station prior to attending the Phase II resident portion. Deploying units may also request a Mobile Training Team (MTT) course starting in late summer 2011. The MTT will provide the same content as the 15-day resident course and award the ASI 1E upon completion.

Taming the Dragon: Rules of Engagement for Using Email More Effectively

Dr. Mike Prevou, Strategic Knowledge Solutions (Contractor)

Are you overwhelmed by email to the point that it is adversely affecting your ability to perform work, or do any reflective thinking? We thought email would help keep us connected and allow us to do more with less. We do not hate email; we actually love it. We recognize all the good ways it has affected our lives and work and we want use email more effectively. A number of studies tell us that an average office worker in the US spends more than 50% of their day on email (and that data is nearly three years old).

Email places all the work on the receiver. Ever get one of those emails at 4:58 on Friday that requires information on Monday morning, the long diatribe sent to dozens of people, or the Reply All, congratulating John on his 40th birthday, 80 times...? While it may take me a few minutes to write the email, it will take EVERYONE I send it to a few minutes to read and decide what must be done, unless I follow a few simple rules. The other time bandit is how we manage our email in our inboxes and folders. I will go into a few simple rules you can apply immediately. Do not worry about trying to get everyone in the world to follow your rules; just get those in your organization using email more effectively. Then others will wonder where you are getting all that extra time for golf, fishing or time with the family, and probably ask for your email Rules of Engagement (ROE).

Let us start with 16 simple rules any organization can put into effect today. I would suggest you print and tape a copy at your desk so you are ever mindful of the ROE. Once you have these committed to habit, go on to other rules and work on managing your inbox more effectively. A good goal is to reduce time spent on email by 25% within 30-days and by 50% within 6 months.

I have broken down the list into two parts: Part 1 is ROE for your team or organization. Part 2 is rules you can follow to manage your inbox and folders more effectively. We could write a book on

this subject as we have coached a number of organizations through email ROE seminars. This is just a jumpstart. There are a number of self-help websites that offer productivity tips. After you get your email under control, use that extra time to find other ways to be more efficient.

The best way to acculturate your organization is to talk about the email ROE and make them part of your in-processing or on-boarding program as well as ruthlessly enforcing the ROE by picking up the phone and calling violators. People who email out the ROE to everyone in the organization seem to have a less positive affect, go figure.

Part 1: 16 simple rules of engagement for your organization:

1. Do Not hit **"Reply All"** when there is no need for everyone to be involved. Cc only those who need to stay informed.
2. One topic or question per email. Do not change topics when replying. Start another email with the appropriate title when you want to talk about something else.
3. Keep emails short. Make them readable within 1 minute. If it must be longer, ask yourself if it should be an attachment or provide a summary. If there is an attachment, tell me why I am receiving it, and what I should read. Put the BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front) at the top, using a top line in the email to denote action required. **What is the reader to do with this email?** Make it clear why everyone is getting this email. If there are multiple recipients, tell each one what you need.
4. Summarize in **5-7 lines**. If the subject is important or detailed enough to require more than five lines, pick up the phone and call. When a long email is required, a summary up front saves everyone time and helps you organize your email.

5. An action emailed is not an action completed. If the email requires action or a response within 24 hours, call or go see the parties involved. Do not assume everyone else lives at their desk to do email. It is OK to call someone and tell them you emailed them a very short suspense item.

6. If someone did not follow Rule 2 above, answer emails with multiple questions with in-line responses.

The Ins and Outs of an Email

To: I want you to do something with this email

Cc: I want to keep you in the loop and do not expect you to do anything in response to this email

Bcc: I want you to know and I DO NOT want the others to know that I want you to know. Handle Bcc: with extreme care! Moreover, NEVER reply unless you see your name on the "To" or "Cc" lines.

Forward: I want you to know and I may want to add something to the original message and I may not want the others to know that I want you to know and if it so happens I don't want them to know I want you to know, I want to take no chances that they will accidentally find out due to a Reply All slip-up.

The Ins and Outs of an Email

7. Make a clear subject line related to the project or issue so finding saved emails in the future is easier. Remember not to change topics, see Rule 2.

8. No return receipts and read receipts unless necessary. This may add another bureaucratic step to pass an action. If you need to know they received it, call or ask them to acknowledge receipt.

9. When emailing multiple people, be clear on why they are all included and what is expected. Research shows that you get a 95% response rate when you email one person and a 5% response rate

(Continued on page 10)

Taming the Dragon: Rules of Engagement for Using Email More Effectively

when you email 10 or more because it's usually unclear what each is required to do.

10. Set up a rule about who should email whom; email is not an open door policy.

11. Set up a priority system. What does "Urgent" mean? What does the "!" mean in terms of action required? When do I *call* or come see you rather than email?

12. Do not send emails thanking people for sending you stuff or for replying to an email. That is just another email that must be read/deleted.

13. Do not acknowledge receipt of an email. If the sender wants to know if you have received it, they will set up delivery and read receipts in Outlook. Decide when that is appropriate, and when it is not.

14. Do not send attachments; send links. Reduce attachments by placing documents on team room sites or in a knowledge center and sending a link and brief summary.

15. Digitally sign only encrypted emails. Do not set it as a default.

16. Place your phone number and email address in ALL your signature blocks, new and replies. This will save everyone the time of looking up your number or email (if you are not working within the same exchange server your name may appear on the "from line" without an email address).

Now that we have the organization practicing an effective email ROE, let us focus on some things you can do to manage your work environment more effectively. Some of these recommendations are VERY hard to do...at first. Once you get used to a new system you may be amazed at the time you save.

Part 2: 10 simple email rules you can practice to be more efficient with Outlook:

1. Do email at designated times each day. Do not react to every incoming email.
2. Limit the number of folders you create

and use the search index tools. All emails can fit into five categories: Action, Hold, Reference, Archive, and Trash.

Action: Must be acted upon

Hold: Waiting for someone else to act or provide me information so I can act

Reference: You will refer to this often or use during the course of a project

Archive: You might need it someday

Trash: Do not need it.

The goal is to clean out your inbox daily (I know it is hard). Triage your email first thing and remove everything that goes in **Trash** or into **Archive**. Emails that require Action go on the **Calendar** or **To Do List** for action at a designated time.

Those that are awaiting action by others go to the **Hold** file. Emails you keep for reference or action later can go in a **Projects** folder (have a non-project related Reference Material folder also). **Archive** a file for safekeeping just in case you need it later, or put the email in the **Trash** as appropriate. A "CC" folder can be used for emails you do not need to read now.

3. Use the Search tool at the top of the folder by clicking **Try searching again in ALL Mail Items** to search all Outlook folders.

4. Use **Rules and Alerts** to help manage the inbox.

5. Use the "flags" to designate key leaders and visually organize your email. The Boss is always red flag; direct reports are blue flags. Making this consistent will create continuity for the organization.

6. Automatically direct "Cc" to a separate folder. Read when you have time/need.

7. Use a daily "huddle" to avoid some emails; 5-10 minute meetings.

8. Use Outlook for scheduling all meet-

ings. Use Scheduler to see when people are available to reduce back and forth email exchanges. Send meeting reminders not dozens of emails.

9. If you have a hot action or need to pass on critical information quickly *call* or *go see* people who need to be contacted. Interrupt individuals in a meeting if it is that important. Do not be the person that sends out the building emergency evacuation notice via email!

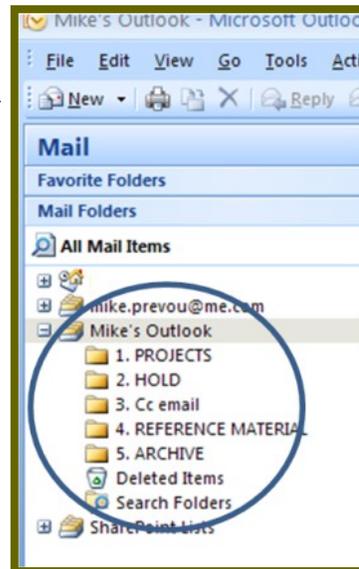
10. Review your emails and see who seems to be the biggest violator of the email ROE above. Talk with them one-on-one about how you manage email, what they can expect from you, and how you would appreciate them applying a few rules that might make both your lives

easier. OK, so you might not do this with the boss, but if you get everyone else to change, think of the time you will save.

Feel free to add additional rules, but keep the list short so it is easy to refer to when needed. Remember to reinforce the rules and train new people about the organizational expectations; never publicly attack occasional violators. I have seen organizations take the computers away from continuous viola-

tors or publicly admonish them on email. This is probably bad for morale. Make sure you have a process in place to acculturate new people and help them understand what is expected. In order to change behaviors, police your email exchanges and remind the team of the agreed upon operating procedures. Include the email ROE SOP in organizational in-processing and on-boarding. Happy emailing!

Dr. Mike Prevou has worked in knowledge management and effective team building for nearly a decade and is a recovering email addict.



Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) - Learn More

Information from Defense Information Systems Agency Net-Centric Enterprise Services, compiled by Lee Finch (Contractor)

The DoD is transitioning its web services and enterprise content management to a service oriented architecture, or SOA. Stated simply, a SOA is an architecture that is built primarily with network-available services, such as on-demand Web Services. Participants in a service oriented architecture make their resources available by publishing information in structured formats that describe their capabilities and how to access them. Other participants can discover and request those services on demand, but have no power to modify their makeup (other than by feeding back suggestions), ensuring their capabilities always remain available to other participants. This loosely coupled, on-demand assembly of resources has the advantage of being highly adaptable to change. Implications: User populations may expand dramatically to include rapid incorporation of unforeseen applications and data sources. This affects the nature, timing, and planning of upgrades .

Net-Centric Enterprise Services (NCES) is the DoD program that provides a clearinghouse for SOA services meeting DoD net-centric standards. NCES “enables information sharing by connecting people and systems that have information (data and services) with those who need information. NCES is a set of loosely coupled net-centric services on SIPRNet and NI-

PRNet that facilitate information sharing and interoperability within and across the Warfighter, Business, and Intelligence Mission Areas.” It sounds very much like the goal of the Army operational knowledge management program.

The DoD NCES program is operated by the Defense Information Services Agency (DISA), that provides a repository of content on DKO. They sponsor two major sites on DKO that cover most aspects of NCES.

The first site is the [NCES users site](#), that provides links to all the services available to the DoD, such as Service Discovery, the Metadata Registry (MDR) and Enterprise Search.

The second site is for [NCES developers](#).

Additional open source software can be found on [Forge.mil](#) in the [Projects](#) and [Software](#) Communities and in the [Pilots community on Intelink](#).

In addition, here are a couple of enterprise resources you should use for finding content or people. Both of these search engines only allow access with a CAC certificate.

To find content, use the [federated search tool](#) provided by DISA. This may not point to everything, but it is a solid start. It searches AKO/DKO and other repositories.

To find people, use [the JEDS search tool](#). To learn more about SOA and the DoD, go to the [Business Transformation Agency Training page](#) and view the four lessons, or navigate to each from this table:

Lesson	Time	Title
One	13 min	Background and Challenge
Two	14 min	Definitions
Three	14 min	Benefits of SOA
Four	14 min	Common vocabulary, primitives, and design patterns

You will learn that SOA is more about business process management (BPM) than technology.

A step-by-step guide to getting started using the NCES products is the [NCES User and Integration Process Guide](#). This is a valuable resource to learn more about SOA and NCES.

So, you’re on your way to the future of SOA. Enjoy and remember to share what you find with others on either milBook or Army Professional Forums.

Index of Links from the SOA Article (above)

NCES users site. <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/463866>

NCES developers. <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/384284>

Forge.mil. <https://forge.mil> ... Projects. <https://projects.forge.mil> ... Software. <https://software.forge.mil>

Pilots community on Intelink. https://www.intelink.gov/wiki/Intelligence_Community_Pilots

Federated Search Tool. <https://search2.ces.mil>

JEDS Search Tool. <https://jeds.gds.disa.mil>

Business Transformation Agency Training Page. <http://www.bta.mil/products/training/SOA/index.html>

Lsn1. <http://www.bta.mil/products/training/SOA/SOA-1/index.htm> Lsn2. <http://www.bta.mil/products/training/SOA/SOA-2/index.htm> Lsn3. <http://www.bta.mil/products/training/SOA/SOA-3/index.htm> Lsn4. <http://www.bta.mil/products/training/SOA/SOA-4/index.htm>

NCES User and Integration Process Guide. <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/20560513>

What's Hot in the Army Professional Forums?

Robert Fox, Knowledge Networks (Contractor)

Protection Net

On 21 January 2011, an Aviation Captain needed assistance updating an Aviation Brigade TACSOP. In a very short period of time, recommendations and examples began to populate the discussion area. The information provided enabled this officer to accomplish his mission in record time. This is one example of what this forum is for; serving day-to-day, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, social learn-

ing, and social networking needs of the U.S. Army.

Leader Net

January 2011 marked the beginning of the year-long Profession of Arms and the Professional Soldier campaign, as directed by the Secretary of the Army, the Army Chief of Staff, and CG TRADOC. Although all of the Army Professional Forums have combined collaborative efforts in executing the campaign, Leader Net has acted as the springboard. One of the first questions addressed was "As a profession, it's now essential that we take a hard look at ourselves to ensure we understand what we have been through over the past nine years, how we have changed, and how we must adapt to succeed in an era of persistent conflict. That being said, what has nine, almost ten years of conflict done to weaken us as a profession?" To date, this question

raised 38 comments alone, and spurred several similar discussions throughout the community.

THE PROFESSION OF ARMS



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wants to hear about your KM Best Practices

In a world where knowledge is the key to learning, growth, innovation and effectiveness, KM provides a hotbed of new approaches and new issues. Let us highlight your organization's KM Best Practices. We invite you to tell us about your KM programs by contacting AOKMWebmaster@conus.army.mil by 15 May. Our staff will conduct an interview to help you tell your organization's story.

Links to KM Sites and Products

Key Discussions on KM Net

- KM METL Task Lists: <https://forums.bcks.army.mil/secure/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1392373&lang=en-US>
- Division KMO/DKMO Interaction with the Proponent: <https://forums.bcks.army.mil/secure/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1333096&lang=en-US>
- Where has the Leadership gone? A hunt for KM Guidance: <https://forums.bcks.army.mil/secure/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1310095&lang=en-US>
- Possible AOKM Conference topics for 2011: <https://forums.bcks.army.mil/secure/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1250987&lang=en-US>

Others Sites of Interest

- Knowledge Transfer for Military Leaders (eBook by R.A Dalton): <https://forums.bcks.army.mil/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1266561>
- Air Force Knowledge Now: <https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil>
- Navy Knowledge Online: <https://www.nko.navy.mil/portal/home/>
- Systems Thinker: <http://www.thesystemsthinker.com/>
- Army Knowledge Management Principles: www.army.mil/ciog6/docs/AKMPrinciples.pdf
- Army Knowledge Online/Defense Knowledge Online: <https://www.us.army.mil/>

Winning the Knowledge Superiority Battle - A Knowledge Road-To-War Model

Steve Parsons (Contractor)

General Petraeus' insight into the imperatives for winning the knowledge superiority battle has at its core the need for continuity, because winning the knowledge superiority fight requires continuity in the flow of knowledge and expertise. In other words, winning the knowledge superiority battle requires knowledge management (KM) teams and battle staffs trained and ready to assume the knowledge superiority fight at the point of Relief in Place (RIP)/Transfer of Authority (TOA).

A successful transition of KM responsibility at RIP/TOA requires that the KM team assuming the mission understands the operational environment of the battle space in which they will be operating, as well as the KM environment they will assume responsibility for. They must use this understanding of the mission as the basis for their KM team organization and training as they go through the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process. This mission focus becomes the template for their individual, collective and battle staff training throughout the mission assumption process. Additionally, the unit to be relieved at RIP/TOA must understand their responsibility to ensure that sufficient knowledge flows to the unit assuming the mission throughout the ARFORGEN process in order to produce operational understanding and the required KM expertise at RIP/TOA.

KM success at RIP/TOA begins with detailed mission analysis as early as possible in the ARFORGEN process. By the time the KM team begins reset, it must have collected sufficient information about the mission, operational environment, and the KM team they are to replace in order to begin the mission analysis process that will result in a KM road-to-war. One of the main reasons KM teams arrive in theater unprepared at RIP/TOA is that the team is not assembled until just prior to the Mission Readiness

Exercise (MRX). As a consequence, the unit prepares to deploy with an organic KM organization of 2 to 5 persons only to discover, through discussions with theater Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) during the MRX, that they are replacing a much larger KM team. An indispensable resource in the mission preparation process is the

sisting the rear detachment task force. KM activities should include sharing information on the AOR and mission of the deployed KM team with the KMA and KM team that will replace them. In all likelihood, the KMA supporting the redeploying unit has participated in the after-action process throughout the deployment

Knowledge superiority is the dominance in the flow of knowledge and expertise through personalization and codification of one side over the other sufficient to win the learning competition in counterinsurgency and persistent conflict.

GEN. David H. Petraeus

and has served as a conduit of the operational OIL to the KMAs at the other divisions and corps. The KMA is a source of continuity for the returning KM team and the natural person

Knowledge Management Advisor (KMA) assigned to each division and corps. Because KMAs do not deploy, they are available to provide reach back to the unit's home station. They provide continuity of KM activities that may include information on the AOR and mission that the KM team will train to assume at reset.

The flow of knowledge to support mission analysis should begin as soon as possible after the most recent RIP/TOA. During RIP/TOA the unit who is being relieved should provide the incoming unit with their after action reports and all the relevant information and recommendations for mission preparation. In other words, the unit who has most recently been replaced should have a US Forces Command (USFORSCOM) directed mission to share their Observations, Insights, and Lessons Learned (OIL) with the unit beginning reset in order to ensure that there is continuity of understanding about the AOR and the mission they are about to prepare for. The OIL should include information on the use and effectiveness of previous KM Pre-deployment Site Surveys (PDSS), virtual right-seat rides, or KM staff embeds.

The KMAs assigned to each division and corps are valuable resources in this KM mission transfer process. They are available to provide reach back for the deployed KM team while advising and as-

to serve as a forcing agent in the transfer of knowledge to the unit that is preparing to assume the KM mission at the next RIP/TOA.

KM mission analysis should include a clear understanding of the current KM requirements in theater and how they are expected to change going forward. Each KM section should cross-walk the current and emerging KM tasks with the expected KM manning for deployment to identify manpower short-falls. Early identification of shortages will allow filling vacancies with enough time available for training new personnel and integrating them into the KM team. Mission analysis should produce a list of required tasks which can be used as a baseline for measuring and communicating KM readiness for deployment. Units need to communicate personnel and training shortfalls to FORSCOM, the Army Operational Knowledge Management (AOKM) Proponent office, and Human Resources Command (HRC) for potential resolution. As the headquarters responsible for the sourcing of mission requirements and the synchronization of the ARFORGEN process, FORSCOM, the supported Army Command (ACOM), should act as the forcing agent, with the other ACOMs and HRC providing support and resources as supporting ACOMs.

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Winning the Knowledge Superiority Battle - A Knowledge Road-To-War Model

(Continued from page 13)

The outcome of KM mission analysis should be a road-to-war that, if properly resourced, will produce a trained and ready team to assume their assigned mission at RIP/TOA. The road-to-war will identify major events required to accomplish the training mission. An example of a KM road-to-war is presented in the figure below.

trained KM personnel who have completed the KM Qualification course, staff processes can be improved through an institutionalized KM working group and effective section level KM representatives or content managers.

The early integration of qualified KM personnel increases the likelihood that the KM team will work for the appropriate

who typically include KMAs from the divisions and corps, provide detailed analysis on unit KM processes, with emphasis on knowledge gaps and ways to bridge those gaps. Interactions with the staff during the assessment process result in greater staff awareness and appreciation for ways they can work smarter, not harder, to accomplish the mission. The assessment provides the unit concrete steps to improve its readiness to conduct its assigned mission. A KM assessment is such a significant enabler that it should be integrated into the ARFORGEN mission preparation. Conducting a KM assessment prior to the MRX provides the unit the opportunity to adjust staff processes before the MRX and also provides an indicator of the KM team's readiness and need for external KM support, such as KMA augmentation.

A clear understanding of the operational environment is critical to KM mission analysis and development of a relevant KM road-to-war. The best way to develop a clear understanding of the operational environment is to conduct a virtual right-seat ride linking the unit preparing to deploy to both its predecessor and successor units on the same mission. Potentially, the virtual right-seat ride includes many components such as post-deployment briefings by the recently returned KM team, the PDSS process, periodic meetings with the deployed KM team via DCO-S, or embedding KM LNOs with the unit that is to be relieved. As a minimum, the KM team must receive the OIL of the unit that most recently redeployed and should be in constant communications with the deployed KM team to maintain situational awareness of the operational environment and the KM lines of effort.

An example of "what right looks like" is the recent deployment of the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters to assume the USF-I mission. During mission analysis, the Corps KMO and staff determined that the unit would initially deploy staff sections to augment the existing USF-I staff, rather than deploy as a whole to assume

(Continued on page 16)

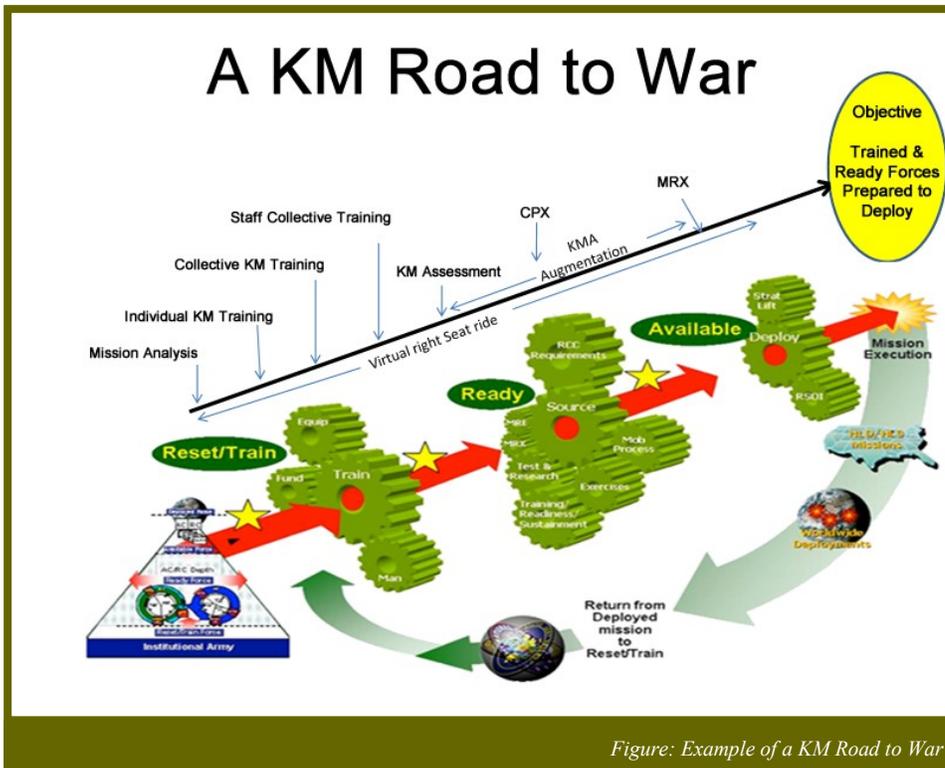


Figure: Example of a KM Road to War

A common obstacle to the preparation of the KM team is the late arrival of KM personnel, which results in inadequate time for individual and collective KM training. In many instances the KM teams deploy with only the training provided by SMEs during their MRX. The lack of KM training early in the process prevents the KM team from establishing solid KM processes, leading to diminished staff preparation for deployment. A staff that does not have the benefit of a well-trained KM team sometimes fails to focus on people, process and technology. Rather, the staff often focuses on tools, such as SharePoint, which may result in the automation of processes that are not optimized or necessary. With the help of

KM Champion. Again, mission analysis will provide insight into for whom the KM team works in theater. The late arrival of key KM leaders increases the chances that the KM team will work for a coordinating staff section, like the G-6 or the G-3, rather than the Chief of Staff. This occurs because the KMO has not had time to socialize the importance of the Chief of Staff as the KM Champion and has not had the opportunity integrate KM into all staff processes.

KM assessments have proven to be a way to accelerate the KM integration and staff development processes within ARFORGEN. During a KM assessment, a team of experienced KM practitioners,

Bridge the Knowledge Gap: Communities of Practice

Denny Zimmermann, Knowledge Assessments (Contractor)

While executing the ARFORGEN deployment cycle, Army units face tremendous challenges retaining and transferring knowledge as they contend with the turbulence caused by personnel and leadership turnover. How do units capture and share knowledge that current soldiers possess, maintain relationships established over the years, and quickly develop new soldiers?

To address this formidable task, the Army has increasingly turned to the communities of practice (CoP) of the Army Professional Forums. Widely referred to as “the Killer Application” of knowledge management, CoPs are groups of people “who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic.” CoPs provide an open opportunity to collaborate across geographic distances to share ideas, look for solutions and build on innovation. They offer a way to share tacit knowledge, not easily captured, codified, or stored by bringing people together in a social environment. Given the complex, fast-paced nature of the electronic age in which Army soldiers function, CoPs offer a participatory way to overcome recurring challenges through social collaboration.

CoPs are usually formed within a single discipline to focus efforts in sharing, solving problems, or building innovation. Within the Army, CoPs are used to solve issues and improve individual, team, and unit performance. CoPs are enabling Soldiers to take collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need, enhance that knowledge, and share it with their peers. The open structure of CoPs

gives them a perfect opportunity to do those things.

Communities do not need technology to exist; however, technology has allowed these communities to develop without the constraints of geographic boundaries and connect people in different locations. The professional forums are dedicated to fostering local and online collaboration.

The following are a few guiding principles for building success in the forums:

- Focus on the practice: Be willing to join a forum and “give back” your passion and expertise to others facing similar challenges.
- Have a passion for quality: Members take pride in the relationships they build and maintain high standards.
- A stable and secure environment: The technology that supports the forums is simple and easy to use while built on a secure platform.
- Member driven and grounded in trust: The forums are all about building an environment of trust, a cornerstone of KM.
- Connect members with expertise: The 4 C’s (Connection, Collaboration, Content and Context) are vital in knowledge sharing.
- Innovation and creativity: The forums provide an open and honest learning culture.
- Positive voice with a focus on solutions: Through sharing and relationships, trust is built.
- Committed to the profession and the

Army: The forums are dedicated to supporting our Soldiers and leaders.

- Common look and feel: All forums have unique content but they share a common look and feel to enhance wide-scale useability.
- Capability to share horizontally across the forums: The forums help flatten the environment to allow sharing across all levels.

The best way to share tacit knowledge is to join or form a community of practice. To start a CoP from scratch, follow these simple steps:

- Establish a desired name or topic to focus on.
- Find an individual who will be a co-leader.
- Develop a mission and vision for your CoP.
- Invite individuals to be members.
- Set-up a schedule for meetings; about once every 3 to 4 weeks to start.
- Build a SharePoint site to capture and share information.

Communities of practice are not a new idea; in fact, they are all around us. We belong to a number of them in our daily routine, from work, to home, to our social hobbies. Some of these we recognize and some are invisible, while some have names while others do not. They can be thought of as humans “first knowledge-based social structures.” “Communities of practice are not a silver bullet,” rather they are one of many valuable tools in the knowledge management toolkit.



Photos courtesy US Army

Find... Share... Connect

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Winning the Knowledge Superiority Battle

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the mission. That determination resulted in a decision to replicate USF-I staff processes rather than develop new staff processes for implementation upon RIP/TOA. The decision allowed the KM staff to adopt the KM Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and policies of the USF-I staff as the basis for its staff preparation. The decision also drove the Corps KM staff into developing a closer working relationship with existing USF-I KM team (currently III Corps). Through weekly DCO-S sessions hosted by the deployed USF-I KMO, the Corps KM team maintained awareness of the USF-I staff processes and ongoing projects. Access to the USF-I portal from Fort Bragg also

allowed the KM team to leverage contractor support to replicate the USF-I portal on the Corps tactical SharePoint portal. The staff was then trained on the replicated USF-I portal during Corps training events, Command Post Exercises (CPX) and the MRX. Using the Corps SIPR SharePoint portal, staff products that developed during these training events were saved and migrated to Iraq once the Corps deployed. The end result was a well prepared staff assuming the USF-I mission.

As General Petraeus points out, the side winning the knowledge superiority battle wins the learning battle. The result is better decision making and combat effectiveness because of faster

flow of knowledge from those who have it, to those who need it. Winning the knowledge superiority battle requires continuity of the KM effort with improvements in KM and staff best practices during successive theater deployments. This continual process of improvement is only possible if the KM team assuming the mission understands the operational environment and its associated KM environment. This understanding, tempered by a close working relationship with the unit being replaced, lays the groundwork for establishing a KM road to war that prepares KM teams and their supported battle staff to arrive in theater at a higher level of mission preparedness.

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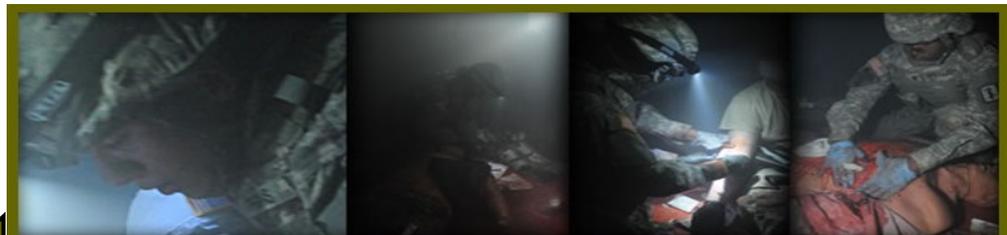
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