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2nd knowledge management_course graduates

By Bill Ackerly | Battle Command Knowledge Center

"To save lives and help protect our country, you must be innovators," said Col. Paul E. Funk II to the newest graduates from the Army Knowledge Management Qualification Course Feb. 4. Funk is deputy commander, Combined Arms Center-Training at Fort Leavenworth.

Developed by the Battle Command Knowledge System, the four-week course prepares Soldiers to fill knowledge management roles throughout the Army, including KM sections at the division, corps and theater Army level. Military graduates of the course are awarded a Skill Identifier/Additional Skill Identifier of 1E, Knowledge Management Professional.

The 20 graduates received their certificates at a Feb. 4 ceremony in the Combined Arms Center's Grant Auditorium. The class of 11 officers, one warrant officer, two noncommissioned officers, and six Department of the Army civilians represented a variety of units and headquarters, including: 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas; 196th Infantry Brigade, Fort Shafter, Hawaii; Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe; Headquarters, U.S. Army Africa; Special Operations Command, U.S. Central Command; 113th Signal Command, Hawaii; Army Capabilities Integration Center, Fort Monroe, Va.; Fires Center of Excellence, Fort Sill, Okla.; Soldier Support Institute, Fort Jackson, S.C.; Medical Readiness and Training Command, San Antonio, Texas; Capability Development Integration Directorate, Fort Leavenworth; and Battle Command Training Program, Fort Leavenworth.

Funk described his own experiences with knowledge management during his assignment with the 1st Cavalry Division in Iraq. He cited examples of how the Army developed ways to rapidly share lessons that Soldiers were learning on the battlefield, traveling unfamiliar streets and working with new cultures.

"Whether you are a KMO in the field, an instructor in the schoolhouse, or a staff officer with KM as an additional duty, you will be key players in changing the way our Army thinks and learns," Funk told the graduates. "You are on the cutting edge, helping our Soldiers who are in the fight and training for the fight. You will help our Soldiers get ahead of the enemy's decision cycle."

Classes in this second pilot of the AKMQC included building knowledge portals, developing content management strategies and using other collaborative tools in the warfighter's KM kitbag, such as Adobe Connect sessions and wikis.

The class divided into teams to conduct knowledge assessments of several Fort Leavenworth organizations. Knowledge assessments show how well an organization creates, organizes, applies and transfers knowledge. The knowledge assessment identifies performance gaps between what the organization is doing and what it should be doing, and highlights the gap between what the organization currently knows and what it should know to perform at the desired level.

The students then developed knowledge strategies to help the organizations develop knowledge management approaches and methods to close the gaps. Through this practical exercise, students learned the basics of how to conduct a knowledge assessment, build KM strategies, conduct interviews and apply KM tools and techniques to improve unit effectiveness.

Stephan Wilcox, a knowledge management officer from the Soldier Support Institute at Fort Jackson, said the knowledge assessment portion of the course was the most helpful.

"Learning about the assessment cycle and the design cycle for implementing plans for improvements was excellent," he said.

Wilcox said the remote connect sessions with KMOs in forward deployed units were very helpful, hearing them describe what KM techniques they tried, what they threw away, what they kept and what worked for them.

Katrina Acosta, a knowledge management adviser with the Medical Readiness and Training Command in San Antonio, agreed with Wilcox about the knowledge assessment cycle.

"There's so much knowledge you want to capture. Knowledge mapping is a great tool to help you organize scattered thoughts," she said.

Lt. Col. Donald Joyner, chief of the Knowledge Management Proponent Office at Fort Leavenworth, said KM is about people, process and technology.

"The 'people' side of KM is the most important part, especially how to effectively communicate with people," he said.

"For me, the most interesting part of the course was learning about different KM processes and how to connect them ... how do I integrate KM into a process (or technology) to make knowledge flow and work correctly for me and to help my unit or organization," Joyner said.

"Right now, the AKMQC is a good course. After the third pilot, it will be a great course," Joyner added.

The third pilot course is tentatively scheduled for January 10 - February 4, 2011.

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