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ARMY OPERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE CHARTS WAY AHEAD FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan., November 6, 2009 — More than 370 knowledge management (KM) practitioners gathered in Kansas City, October 19-23, for the 5th Annual Army Operational Knowledge Management (AOKM) Conference, sponsored by the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) and hosted by the Battle Command Knowledge System (BCKS) here.

Military and civilian personnel from the Army, Navy and Air Force joined with international officers, KM consultants, private sector leaders and educators for a week-long opportunity to share and exchange the latest KM industry information and military KM best practices, processes and lessons learned.

In kicking off the conference, Dale Ormond, Deputy to the Commanding General, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) at Fort Leavenworth, described how CAC, specifically the Combined Arms Center-Knowledge or CAC-K, employs the Knowledge Value Stream to drive change and adaptive learning across the Army. He also noted how CAC uses knowledge management techniques, tools and procedures to support the lines of operation of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and CAC’s core competencies, especially leader development.

In his taped remarks to open the conference, Gen. Martin Dempsey, TRADOC Commanding General, said a trend in the Army’s current operational environment is the “certainty of uncertainty.” He added, “Knowledge Management is a tool that will enable us to more effectively deal with uncertainty and the rapid
pace of change. ... Knowledge management will also enable us to prevail in the competitive learning environment and ultimately adapt more quickly than our adversaries. “

The theme for this year’s conference, “Winning the Current Fight,” was driven by a sense of urgency to support the current fight. Program topics included Warfighting KM, KM best practices and updates on cutting edge knowledge exploration initiatives. The conference incorporated blended face-to-face presentations and virtual Internet sessions, some with currently deployed leaders, throughout the three interlocking parts of the conference ... plenum sessions, track sessions and training sessions.

Training sessions included:

- KM in the Field: Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells and Working Groups
- Using Social Media to communicate with the force
- KM in the Future

During the track sessions, conference participants created six action plans addressing KM challenges and issues in: organizations and units above and below Corps; technology; doctrine; Army Schools and Centers; and governance. Each action plan outlined the strategies and priorities, along with the challenges and opportunities for their respective topic. Action plan teams will continue to collaborate to review progress and adjust priorities for their respective areas.

A first-class mix of military and civilian speakers spearheaded the plenum and track sessions. Speaker highlights:

- Brig. Gen. Allen Batschelet, Deputy Chief of Staff-G3, United States Army Europe (USAREUR), discussed numerous KM lessons learned and tools used during 4th Infantry Division’s Counterinsurgency Operations in Iraq.
• Brig. Gen. Jeffery Marshall, Director, J7, US European Command (EUCOM), identified KM challenges for operating in the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational environment due to security issues when operating behind Army Knowledge Online (AKO).

• Brig. Gen. Edward Cardon, Deputy Commandant, Command and General Staff College and Deputy Commanding General, CAC --- in response to a question from one of the international officers who attended the conference, BG Cardon discussed challenges and opportunities in working with mission partner-units from other countries.

• Dr. Mark Nissen, C2 Chair and Director of Center for Edge Power, Naval Postgraduate School, talked about knowledge dynamics in military learning organizations, noting that the performance of organizations is directly proportional to the speed of knowledge flow.

• Col. Earl D. Noble, Project Manager, AKO / Defense Knowledge Online (DKO) discussed AKO and Web 2.0, highlighting AKO’s recently unveiled mobile computing initiative.

• Dr. Nancy M. Dixon, Founder and President, Common Knowledge Associates, led a discussion about integrating Military Web 2.0 (milSuite) with Lessons Learned Integration (L2I) and Warfighters' and Professional Forums to create and transfer common knowledge.

• Jack Holt, Senior Strategist for Emerging Media, Department of Defense, discussed the challenges of implementing social media in a military environment. His remarks set the stage for the Social Media Panel, one of the best attended training sessions.

Lieut. Gen. P.K. (Ken) Keen, Military Deputy Commander, US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), delivered the keynote address, discussing EUCOM’s efforts to increase collaboration among the members of Defense Cooperation Office teams operating in their area of operations. He elaborated on the Teams of Leaders initiative and the role CAC/BCKS played in developing the concept, which was successfully used during the Republic of Georgia crisis in 2008.
A highlight of the conference was a live, Internet collaborative session with Lt. Col. Stewart Liles in Baghdad, Iraq. The MNC-I/XVIII Airborne Corps Knowledge Management Officer (KMO) used streaming live audio and the Web conference tool Adobe Connect to discuss how the headquarters is using SharePoint portals and other online information sharing tools on the battlefield.

The KM practitioners departed the conference and Kansas City with a better understanding of knowledge management efforts across the Army and a broader social network of experts with whom to share knowledge.

Headquartered at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Battle Command Knowledge System (BCKS) http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/bcks is a subordinate organization of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC). As the KM lead for CAC, the Army Operational Knowledge Management (AOKM) proponent, BCKS is responsible for defining AOKM requirements for the Army. BCKS develops and implements KM products and services that support collaboration among Soldiers and units. BCKS hosts approximately 60 online professional forums that serve the needs of more than 140,000 DoD Active, Reserve and National Guard leaders. BCKS is a component of CAC-Knowledge, which also includes the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate (CADD), Military Review Journal and Combat Studies Institute (CSI).

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