ARMY OPERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROPONENT

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Army Operational Knowledge Management

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Observations from a KM OC

MAJ Patrick Sullivan, AOKM Proponent

Knowledge management was an emergent concept people started speaking about in the Army when I began my time as an observer controller (OC) at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC), Hohenfels, Germany. As the Brigade Signal Trainer, I also had the responsibility of educating units on Knowledge Management (KM). The more I worked with units the more I realized knowledge management was misunderstood. The unit must have the organization and culture in place to accept the concept. Additionally, the leadership must enforce standardization to enable understanding. Units that understood what KM is, had a learning environment, and effectively used the processes were the units that were successful; the units that didn't, suffered significant problems.

The key to KM is to understand what it truly is and what it can do for you. When I first started training units on KM, I did not know what it was and was using slide shows from the joint community to explain it. This was a problem since the idea was so new most people referred to knowledge management as an expanded version of information management. I began to speak to experts on the subject and had the V Corps KM team come down and train a few units and observed what they were saying and doing. I came to realize that knowledge management is a people process that enables units and commanders to process information into knowledge to facilitate understanding, ultimately mutual understanding. The units that understood this concept generally did well, whether they called it KM or not. Knowing the difference between information and how

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AOKM Proponent - Training Update

The AOKM Proponent (AOKM-P) graduated its first pilot Army Operational Knowledge Management Qualification Course (AOKMQC) and awarded the ASI 1E to 14 students on 6 May 2011. The three-week course was attended by students from unit Knowledge Management Sections assigned to theater Army level headquarters (US Army Africa) down to the combat and functional brigade level (130th Eng Bde). The student body spanned across components (Active, National Guard, Reserve) and included both military personnel (SFC-LTC) and Department of the Army civilians. The course engaged the students in subjects that centered on KM people, processes, and technology. Multiple guest lecturers from around the Army and Academia shared their knowledge management perspectives with the students. The proponent conducted a comprehen-

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US Army Combined Arms Center

"Intellectual Center of the Army"

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Observations from a KM OC

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people apply judgment to come up with knowledge is critical to good decision-making. The knowing is fundamental in the understanding and visualizing of operations.

Even if the commanders did well at understanding and visualizing, they very often had difficulties at the describing part. Description is the most difficult task to perform well. The units that had an organization and culture that allowed information and knowledge to flow to the top rapidly and back down were able to describe what was understood and visualized. The knowledge the commanders garnered from information, if able to move up and down rapidly, was acted upon in a timely manner leading to effective action. Most units did not have this and were very stove-piped and hierarchical. Many units used boards and working groups to try to share information between the separate sections, however this was still stopped by each section leader. As a result most of that information then had to flow through two main pipes, the operations officer (S3) and the intelligence officer (S2), and then finally through the executive officers before it reached the commander. Commanders don't want to filter all this information themselves; the power of the boards and working groups lies in their ability to accomplish this filtering, disseminate information across the unit, and then give the key findings directly to commanders. The units that were successful understood there is knowledge at every level and ensured there was a method to gather that knowledge and then an efficient process to disseminate it.

The most effective means that units had to ensure knowledge was transferred, leading to understanding, was through standardization. Standardization allowed for all personnel to know where things were supposed to be located and in what format. Commanders in these units understood what they were looking at the moment they viewed the common operational picture. Soldiers and subordinate leaders knew the methods to inform their higher headquarters, everything from how each standard operating procedure document was supposed to be written and formatted to how reports were to be filled out and filed. If there is a standard and it is used, then units are successful. Whenever I asked the question, do you have a SOP and is it used, I knew immediately based on the answer of affirmative or negative if that unit or section would have complications during the rotation.

Units are composed of people who think and form knowledge in different ways. The ultimate goal of knowledge management at the tactical level is this: executers of operations have a mutual understanding and can act with no further guidance if necessary. The mutual understanding is achieved by an organization that can adapt and learn from past experiences. Additionally, the organization must be able to have standardization without formalization. The standards should not be so formal that they are resistant to change. Commanders must own the process and provide the direction and guidance for knowledge management to be successful. When the commander has an organization built to take the transfer of knowledge fluidly, then the unit will have success in whatever they do; however, when the commander thinks that everything is dependent on information systems or the unit is inflexible, then the unit's operational effectiveness will suffer.

MAJ Patrick Sullivan served as a Signal and Knowledge Management Observer Controller at JMRC from June 2007 to June 2009 and is currently working for the Army Operational Knowledge Management Proponent.

New Mission! Fighting the Network and Enabling Mission Command

LTC Brad Hilton, Mission Command Center of Excellence

During the past year the Army started to reorient its doctrine from the principle of battle command to mission command, marked by Change 1 to FM 3.0 in February 2011. The term mission command is more than just a name change from battle command, but a reflection of the hard lessons learned from ten years of war, the transformation to a modular, expeditionary force and the constant evolution of technology. As described by General Martin Dempsey, who initiated the change when he was TRADOC Commander, "this change to mission command is not merely a matter of rhetoric. It represents a philosophical shift to emphasize the centrality of the Commander, *not* the systems that he or she employs."

As the quote implies, mission command emphasizes the human dimension and the execution of the art of command across the spectrum of operations. However, further delineation from systems is made in the science of control, which also has been separated from the underlying technology. Activities such as the analysis a staff performs to transform information into actionable knowledge and intelligence is also acknowledged. For operational and tactical level knowledge managers, these additions emphasize the importance of tacit knowledge exchange amongst leaders in order to develop shared purpose and understanding beyond human to system or system to system interaction.

Furthermore, although the systems or technology employed as "a network" still executes the traditional role as an information transport layer, to think of the network as solely a service or an enabler is no longer sufficient. The network is also employed, constrained, and degraded to such an extent that planning and risk has to be accounted for in operations. This means we must employ the network as a weapon system that enables mission command.

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Eating the KM Elephant at the Brigade and Battalion Level

LTC Scott Mueller

(This is the continuation of LTC Mueller's article. The previous portion appeared in the spring edition of Connected.)

Tracking Tools: Avoiding Overwrite Fratricide

One of the golden rules of good staff work is to never bother your subordinates for information that may already reside within your own headquarters. I am sure there are many staff officers "out there" that have fielded phone calls or emails from higher headquarters staff officers requesting the same information that was submitted previously. Good knowledge management practices ensure that information resides in a repository that is accessible, well organized, and known to everyone. This way, information consumers can look for themselves before launching hate mail for a missed suspense. However, maintaining static repositories on a shared drive is bush league in today's information environment.

Static repositories may pose as collaborative information stores, but in reality they can often lead to overwrite fratricide. A static repository is an information display that cannot be updated by more than one person at a time. Excel spreadsheets on the shared drive are a good example. These spreadsheets, loved by staff officers everywhere, are wonderful tools for tracking information and computing complex formulas, but they do not lend themselves to tracking information dynamically. For instance, the brigade S4 tracks the status of every Financial Liability Investigation of Property Loss (FLIPL). He keeps a spreadsheet (static repository) with every investigation in every battalion in the brigade and posts it on the brigade shared drive. There are two ways to update this repository: the S4 or his designated subordinate gets the information from the subordinate battalion S4s and then enters it into the FLIPL tracker; or each battalion inputs the data themselves.

Both of the information collection means listed above is fraught with danger. The first one is extremely inefficient because it has only one point of entry and, depending on the amount of detail required and the number of FLIPLs being tracked, could potentially take time away from something more useful. The second method, most likely born out of frustration with the first method, is a huge fratricide risk. The S4 in battalion X saves the spreadsheet on to his hard drive to update his unit's information, while the S4 in battalion Y opens it on the server to update her unit's information. Battalion Y's S4 completes her task and closes the document. Battalion X's S4 completes his portion, saves it on his desktop, and then copies it to the brigade server effectively overwriting the previous data submission. The next day at the Brigade XO's bi-weekly FLIPL review, the meeting drags on much longer than needed because the brigade does not have accurate information.

How does one avoid this? The brigade can implement a KM solution that incorporates a technology application (web part), a well-defined business process, and end users who are trained on the SOP. Using a technology like a SharePoint list allows units to update multiple fields of information. With the FLIPL tracker on the brigade's web portal, each battalion S4 can update their unit's information without the danger of overwrite fratricide. Assuming that the units are disciplined enough to update the portal, the brigade XO can check the status at any time and have confidence that the information is accurate and up-to-date. This allows information to be briefed by exception, which shortens the FLIPL meeting, maybe to the point where it can be incorporated into another meeting. The same tools, process rules, and training can apply to managing tasks, personnel information, property accountability, requests for information--anything that can be organized into rows and columns. If built correctly, any user can import the information to a spreadsheet and print it out so it fits into their leader notebook. So we have improved information sharing, streamlined the process, and created more time by eliminating a single data entry point and a meeting. Happy days.

Meetings: Avoiding Time Thievery

Meetings serve several functions: coordination, problem solving, information sharing, decision-making, etc. However, they can be exceptional time burglars if not planned and executed well. A common complaint I have heard during different staff tours is, "We spend so much time in meetings that we have no time to work out any of the issues that those meetings address." Moreover, everyone loves those 3:00 PM meetings on a Thursday before a long weekend!

We really do not hate meetings; we actually need meetings. What we hate is their lack of effectiveness. Part of the problem is we try to cram too many different types of topics into a single meeting when we really need separate meetings. For example, we may need a very short daily huddle to discuss what is hot and what information I might come looking for you to provide. These are tactical meetings with close-in timelines. Weekly tactical meetings like Commander Update Briefs or Command and Staff type meetings look a little further out but are not good forums for solving bigger operational or strategic problems. They need special time and focus. Part of the problem with cramming all three types into one sitting is our minds have trouble shifting from the 25-meter target, to the 300-meter target to the 5000-meter targets in a short time. If we spread them out, we are more efficient, get more done and feel the value of the meetings improve.

Every leader should define the purpose of each meeting before even scheduling it. If you cannot define the reason for the meeting to begin with, then you probably should not waste everyone's time. Once you determine the need for a meeting, the next step is to determine what the inputs and outputs are, and then inform the participants so that they come prepared. The third step should be to design an agenda with an estimated time allotment per agenda point. This ensures the meeting stays on track and gets to the desired end

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Eating the KM Elephant at the Brigade and Battalion Level

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state. Then it is time to gather information and put together the presentation. If slides are the medium for presentation information, send all participants a read ahead so they can better prepare themselves, verify accuracy, and make any adjustments needed. Briefing relevant information directly from the tactical portal, rather than creating additional PowerPoint slides, is a timesaving technique. It is also extremely helpful to send the finished product (or link to a spot on the portal) to the commander if he is the target audience so he can formulate and organize his thoughts ahead of time. Finally, rehearse the meeting if there are multiple presenters to ensure everyone knows their role, and the data presents itself in the intended way

How you conduct the meeting is just as important as the preparation. Whoever is responsible for running the meeting needs to enforce the timeline. Following the "3Bs" will help in this endeavor: Be brief; Be bright; Be gone. This is certainly not a new concept, but one that seems to need revisiting. If during the course of the meeting an issue that requires resolution presents itself and may cause the meeting to run over, then one of two things should happen: 1) keep going until the group resolves the issue; 2) continue on the agenda and convene a special group afterwards with only the people required to fix the problem. The goal is get in, achieve the goals of the meeting, and get out so people can actually get some work done.

Conclusion

There is nothing too earth shattering in this article. Too often, we overlook the fact that field grade officers at the brigade and battalion level need to understand how to find efficiencies in managing information. The amount of information at the brigade and battalion can rapidly overwhelm a staff that does not understand how to sort through it and determine what is and is not relevant. In addition, while I am just scratching the surface here, the intent is to provide a starting point to evaluate these systems and manage their information and communications. It is essential, however, that brigades establish processes and procedures and then train system users to use their information systems in just the same way we train our Soldiers to use their weapons systems. The KM officer inside the brigade S3 section is the lead for helping the command make its knowledge system effective, and should be the one to design, implement, and manage the system. The desired end state is to take the burden off the shoulders of our battalion XO and S3 for being the knowledge repositories for their unit, and allow them to get back into the fight.

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.

AOKM Proponent - Training Update

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sive After Action Review process throughout the course and in some cases made rapid revisions while the course was in progress. The proponent is consolidating feedback and making appropriate refinements in preparation for executing another course in July 2011. Changes currently planned include the addition of Organization as a KM pillar and the addition of a KM Training lesson.

Close on the heels of the Qualification Course, AOKM-P conducted a Critical Task and Site Selection Review Board (CTSSB) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The AOKM CTSSB developed both collective and individual critical tasks in order to identify those specific, unique activities (tasks) performed by knowledge management personnel within the Army. Task development included the task title, conditions, standards, task performance steps, and task performance measures. In addition, the board members (KM subject matter experts) identified supporting references, supported individual tasks, pre-requisite collective tasks, supporting collective tasks, supported AUTL and UJTL tasks, and material items required to accomplish the tasks. The AOKM CTSSB developed five collective critical tasks for Knowledge Management (KM) Sections and three individual critical tasks for KM Officers. The CTSSB also developed the titles for three individual critical tasks for KM Senior Battle Command NCOs, five critical tasks for the KM Battle Command Systems Officer, and four critical tasks for the KM Content Management Specialist. These tasks were recommended for consideration and subsequent development by a follow-on AOKM CTSSB.

AOKM Qualification Course FY2012 Schedule

24 October – 10 November 2011
23 January – 10 February 2012
7-24 May 2012
6-24 August 2012

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Fostering a Learning Environment in Southern Afghanistan

LTC Michael Kitchens, AOKM Proponent

In April 2009 I was activated as part of a 17-man Kansas National Guard team that was specially formed to advise and train the Afghan National Army (ANA). We would be heading to Kandahar, Afghanistan to advise the 205th Corps Headquarters as a Regional Corp Advisory Command (RCAC). I was mobilized to become the Information Operations (IO) mentor for the team, but because of my background with the 35th Infantry Division as the Knowledge Management Officer, I took it upon myself to act as a part-time Knowledge Management advisor. My experience showed me how a leader in a combat zone was able to apply a simple KM Principle of "fostering a learning environment" to achieve extraordinary results.

After several months of Combat Advisor training at Camp Army Strong, Fort Riley, Kansas, the team left for Afghanistan in July 2009 and arrived a few days later at Camp Phoenix, in Kabul. After in-processing and mandatory training, we eventually made our way down to Kandahar and began our work as combat advisors. When we arrived, an Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) was already on the ground and advising the 205th Corps. Our commander, COL Vic Braden, took command of the RCAC and combined our team with the OMLT to form a unique unit made up of American, British, Canadian, Romanian and Dutch Soldiers. The leadership challenge was how to bring these Soldiers from various countries together and capitalize on their individual talents and skills. Furthermore, he had to do it while advising a foreign army fighting a real enemy. All the typical staff lanes were represented from G-1 through G-9 and most advisors had an NCO assigned to assist in the advisory mission.

After several weeks of right/left seat training, the 28 members of the Coalition Mentor Team (CMT) got down to business with their counterparts. About a week into the mission, COL Braden and I were returning from a meeting at Kandahar Airfield and we were talking about the job ahead of us. He inquired about my previous assignments and I told him about my experience as a Knowledge Manager at my unit back at Fort Leavenworth. Having spent many hours reading FM 6-01.1, I mentioned that KM was still emerging doctrine but that I thought the overarching goal was to build a learning organization. I also mentioned that I had read a lot of Observations, Insights, and Lessons Learned (OIL) reports during the train-up period which were developed by units who had returned from Afghanistan. This conversation piqued his interest in the concept of OILs, and soon afterwards we began to get daily OILs from him by email. These were simple insights he had made during the day which he thought were significant enough to codify in an email. He gave each OIL a title, a one-line sentence describing the observation, a paragraph explaining his thoughts, and how to apply the lesson learned.

Team Tornado of the Kansas National Guard

I recall one of his observations was that the Afghan 205th Corps Commander, who commanded 16,000 men in the south and who was responsible for an area as large as New Mexico, did not see himself as a Tactical Commander, but more of a Garrison Commander. He seemed more interested in the quality of the rice in the chow hall than what was happening with his troops in the remote FOBs. He rarely left his main operating base. This insight ultimately lead to an aggressive effort to schedule weekly battlefield circulations throughout his AO to increase the Corps Commander's situational awareness regarding equipment, morale and training. Eventually the commander took a more active role in deciding where he wanted to go next and began to see himself as more of a tactical commander which significantly improved his performance.

Soon COL Braden began distributing these daily OILs throughout the staff. Initially they were sent via email only to US personnel. Recognizing that the staff was multi-national and these OILs were relevant to everyone, he eventually distributed them to the rest of the staff on the NATO network. Over time, members of the staff began to develop their own OILs in their particular staff lanes. This became an accepted and welcomed method to facilitate dialogue and provide an effective way to "peel back the cultural onion" and help the advisors gain and share insights. Furthermore, it not only helped the staff understand how the Afghan National Army (ANA) performed, but more importantly, it helped collect "atmospherics." Atmospherics described intangible things such as attitudes, beliefs and feelings about the situation and were important to understand before deciding on a course of action. In many cases, these were indicators of why they performed poorly or not at all. The OILs were an almost instant hit with the British, Canadians, and Dutch who made significant OIL contributions of their own.

Each morning COL Braden held his daily update brief that was nicknamed the "snapshot." Each advisor would talk

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Fostering a Learning Environment in Southern Afghanistan

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through his or her significant issues and impediments and in some cases talk about their observations. At the end of each snapshot, COL Braden would tell everyone, "this is a learning environment," and our job was to continue to develop a deeper understanding of our ANA counterparts so that we would be effective advisors. COL Braden tasked a member of the CMT to conduct a class periodically on Thursday evening to share some cultural aspect from their country or area of expertise. It included interpreters, other coalition advisors on the team and invitees. In some cases, there were several dignitaries from Kabul, researchers, and a former Special Forces commander who was on the ground during the initial invasion. The point was to have open dialogue and debate and to have alternate opinions injected into the conversation. It was a professional forum designed to give the advisors a different perspective and gain more insight into what they were up against. In the long run, this forum went a long way to prevent cynicism from settling in and gave the advisors exposure to other, sometimes controversial, ideas.

Afghan Coalition Engagement

Towards the middle of the deployment, an event occurred that unexpectedly presented an incredible opportunity to learn. The previous unit had conducted a weekly "briefing" on Tuesday mornings that resembled a typical Army CUB. This was an in-house formal briefing to the boss, but seemed to have little value since it only included members of the team. COL Braden decided to invite select members of the ANA staff,one or two at a time, so they could hear and see what we saw and get "ground truth" as we saw it. We brought in an interpreter and provided tea and snacks for our ANA invitees. Within the first few minutes of the first briefing, our ANA invitees began to vocalize their thoughts about their own leadership and issues within their own ranks. We quickly realized that we were on to something. It was clear that they weren't so much interested in the tactical situation, but were more interested in helping us understand the political and cultural landscape within their own units to include corruption throughout their organizations. These were jaw-dropping insights and we were now seeing the good, the bad, and the ugly laid out before our very eyes.

The 205th CMT, made up of an OMLT and 17 members of the Kansas National Guard, was on the ground during historic times in the war in Afghanistan. Just three weeks after arriving in theater in August 2009, Afghanistan held its first national elections, whereby President Hamid Karzai was voted into office. Not long after that, the new NATO Commander, General Stanley McChrystal, published his assessment of the war as we waited to see if his request for an additional 30,000 new troops would be approved. It was. General McChrystal's plan called for every ANA unit in RC-South to be aligned with a Coalition unit so that they could, as equal partners, take on the Taliban in Marjah. This was a paradigm shift in that the Coalition had historically operated independently of the ANA and in most cases did the planning and execution in a vacuum, without ANA buy in. However, because of the insights and knowledge generated in the previous six months, we now had what we needed and the cultural understanding to develop and execute this new strategy with our counterparts.

Looking back to when I left the States in late July 2009, I never imagined that my experience in Knowledge Management would be of such significance, even though my primary role was as an IO advisor. However, the credit should go to COL Braden who saw the value of KM. He demonstrated that there is power in actually saying the words to his staff that he was "creating a learning environment." He not only said it, but lived it as well. Too many think KM is about technology. I would offer that KM is more about creating conditions so that observations, insights, and lessons learned are free flowing and injected into our day-to-day activities. If the technology enables this, then it's a good thing, but it isn't always about technology. This account reflects how one leader was able to employ the simple Knowledge Management principle of "fostering a learning environment" to achieve extraordinary results.

Note: In his civilian capacity, COL Braden (now BG Braden), is employed as the Deputy Kansas Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Litigation Division. He recently implemented a program across Kansas called "Striking OIL in Kansas Prosecution" where he meets regularly with prosecutors across the state of Kansas to share their insights (OILs) on effective prosecution techniques throughout the state.

LTC Kitchens is currently assigned as the 35th Infantry Division Knowledge Manager (Kansas National Guard). In his full time capacity he is the Chief, Concepts and Doctrine for the AOKM Proponent Office at Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

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Commophobia--Fear of Sharing

MSG Howard Miller, MEDCOM

Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) is a large and complex entity with peacetime and wartime links to a staggering variety of government and civilian organizations. Our mission can only be accomplished properly if our command operates quickly and efficiently no matter what situations come our way. Fortunately, MEDCOM is staffed by a group of dedicated individuals who have built up vast amounts of knowledge and expertise. Many of our leaders are long-term civilian employees who have decades of experience dealing with specific issues that may occur only rarely, but have a great impact on our operations. Others are senior military leaders who have immense amounts of operational experience that they bring to bear on MEDCOM tasks.

Many of these long-term employees will be retiring in the next few years and others will be moving on to other assignments. MEDCOM can't afford to lose the knowledge these folks possess; we can't afford to reinvent a wheel that took 20 years to build! So we have undertaken a project to capture and codify as much tacit knowledge as possible from our leaders and key staff. Our plan is to conduct interviews that get to the heart of what our people know and how they do their jobs. I have scheduled 70 interviews in total, and accomplished more than 50 so far. Once complete, the results of these interviews will be consolidated and disseminated throughout MEDCOM. They may drive change in training, onboarding, and internal processes for years to come.

But not everyone sees the value of this knowledge capture project. These people may be suffering from what I call Commophobia, the Fear of Sharing Information. Commophobia is real and it can happen to anyone! When it occurs, it seriously hampers our ability to capture information from our leaders. Below is a recent encounter with a patient experiencing an acute case of this disease.

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Good Morning.

Sorry to catch you so late in your outprocessing but I would like a little bit of your time to ask you about your experience and time with Army Medicine. I have interviewed others within the Command and they have provided a wealth of information. If you have time for a short interview that would be wonderful.

MSG Howard Miller

*****

MSG Miller, what is the purpose?

Thanks, COL X

*****

As you know we have been losing the knowledge of Soldiers and Civilians who have served this organization almost daily. In order for us to help those who will be replacing us in the future the capture and transfer of Tacit Knowledge is needed today. This will shorten the learning curve, pass best practices throughout the organization, and enhance communication and collaboration. It will also reduce the cost of mission accomplishment through superior knowledge transfer. It involves interviews with key leaders, mid-level managers, and employees in the organization. The overall effort looks across people, processes, technology applications, the organizational culture and structure.

MSG H Miller

*****

This is not something on my outprocessing list. Who is directing these exit interviews?

*****

You are right. This isn't on any out processing list.

I started this knowledge capture effort with the Plans Division because our Division Chief will retire this year and much information is at risk of being lost. The Plans Division was the pilot for this program.

*****

Thanks MSG Miller. I don't think I have the time needed to assist you. I am already clearing.

Best wishes. COL X

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Commophobia--Fear of Sharing

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If Commophobia is real, how do we treat it?

It starts with having a little power and whole lot of persistence. KM in many organizations is stuck in neutral because we allow it to remain an "other duty as assigned" or maybe we pitch it over the fence to others because it's "not in our lane." Don't let this happen. Take the bull by the horns. Keep talking KM and make it clear that you care about capturing and sharing lessons learned. Folks are very busy, but you must try to fit into whatever spot you can to observe what they do. Be open to offer assistance when you can. Helping an individual accomplish a task can be the best way to learn about his job and it may gain you an ally in your future KM efforts. If nothing else works, just walk around and interact with people. As Yogi Berra said, "You can observe a lot by watching." Write down your observations so others can learn from them.

The future will happen. People will continue to rotate in and out and retire. The historical body of knowledge in your organization will be lost every few years if Commophobia remains untreated.

New Mission! Fighting the Network and Enabling Mission Command

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The network allows commanders to employ mission command much like a tank allows a commander to conduct maneuver. Through the network, commanders expand their reach and capacity to understand, visualize, describe and direct, and share with others in order to generate shared purpose and understanding. Without the network, operations are extremely degraded or impossible. The commander cannot "see," and communications are nearly impossible. However, even under the best conditions, the network is constrained by the available bandwidth and capacity of the command post, platform or what a dismounted leader can carry. We have to learn to employ the network based on these conditions, balanced against risk in order to facilitate operations.

The knowledge management officer's (KMO) role in fighting network enabled mission command (NeMC) is to conduct a knowledge flow of what to share, when, and in what form to allow the command to execute mission command. The knowledge manager coordinates with the G3, G2, G6 and NETOPS to link operational need against technology infrastructure, accounting for bandwidth and other limitations against risk. In the past this may have implied merely a good content management plan, but the need for relationship building and tacit exchange via voice and video, both intra-theater and reach back connectivity to CONUS, further complicates the operational knowledge environment.

As the Army implements the concept of mission command across the force, there are additional roles and missions for KMOs in supporting operations beyond content management. The days of emphasizing a knowledge and information management plan to support data centric approaches or to manage SharePoint are gone. Mission command and fighting the network mean less systems analysis and content management for the KMO, and more focus on enabling the human dimension and the sharing of knowledge between Soldiers and between units to better enable operations.

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Expanding KM Training for FA 53 Candidates

Arthur Robinson, Knowledge Management Advisor (Contractor)

Present Training Situation

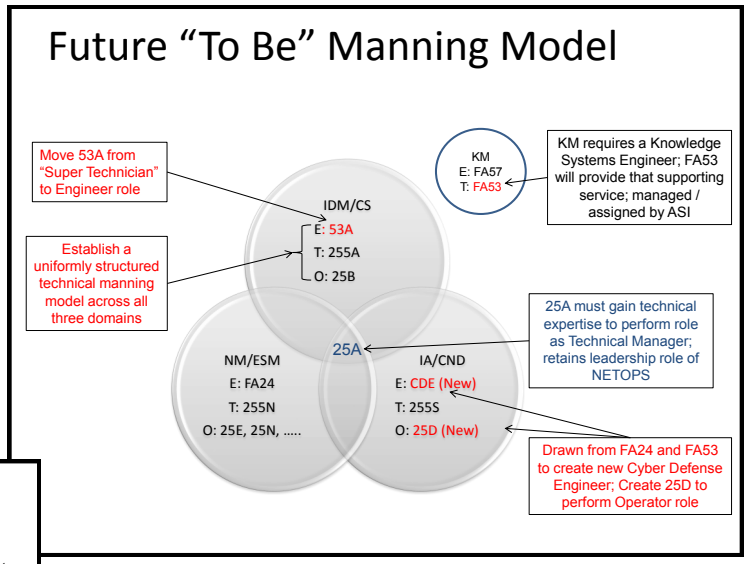
Anyone in a Knowledge Management position has usually had at least one FA 53 (Systems Automation) officer with whom to work. Alongside personnel from the FA 57 (Simulation Operations) community, an FA 53 brings to bear much-needed telecommunication skills on KM problems. Although FA53s often associate with KMOs or are turned into KMOs themselves, their own training does not emphasize KM enough. At present, they do receive some graduate-level instruction on KM. However, they are limited to just three days of KM instruction. Commendable, but still only three days worth. Enter the FA 53 Tiger Team!

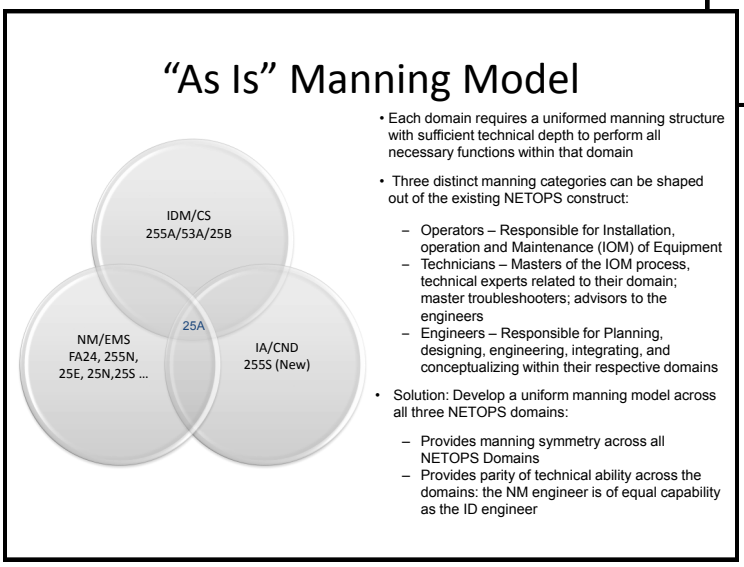
Formation of FA 53 Tiger Team

The topic of future training for FA 53 officers was first brought up in January 2011. That was when the Chief of Signal chartered a team to develop a 2-5 year Concept Plan to transform the FA 53 community. Since then, approximately 30 team members from across the FA 53, FA 24 (Telecommunications Systems Engineering), and FA 25 (Signal, General) communities have come together to participate in discussions on the future of the FA 53s. Included in this group are representatives from the Signal Center of Excellence, TRADOC, Combined Arms Center, and the FA 57 field.

The FA 53 Tiger Team's primary objective is to make recommendations on what changes, if any, need to be made to the career path for FA 53s. With Cyber Warfare competing for attention, it presents a challenge to anyone trying to balance cyber training with any change in KM education for these officers. Decisions on how to divide the FA 53 training program pie would almost have to be Solomon-like when rendered. Fortunately, the Tiger Team recognizes how critical it will be for future FA 53 officers to know more about KM.

Making their task even more challenging is the complexity of today's world that includes the full spectrum cyberspace operational environment together with net-enabled mission command capabilities and formations. The high OPTEMPO places a constraint on the Army's ability to maintain and retain skills while acquiring new knowledge and attributes. An anticipated decline in contracting support will only serve to widen any existing skill-set gaps.





Tentative Direction for Changes

More updates will be forthcoming as the Tiger Team has not completely finished with their task. However, they have formulated a few points for consideration. Those points are to:

- Refocus the curriculum for FA 53 from automation to engineering skills.
- Develop critical thinking skills in addition to technical skills for FA 53s.
- Develop a new knowledge management system engineering (KSE) curriculum for FA 53s.
- Shift more of the automation tasks to FA 25As.
- Develop a new cyber "Jedi Knight" from the FA 24 career field and a new FA 53 career field (details to be determined).

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Army Professional Forums, CALL RFIs, and ALLIS

Robert Fox, Center for Army Lessons Learned (Contractor)

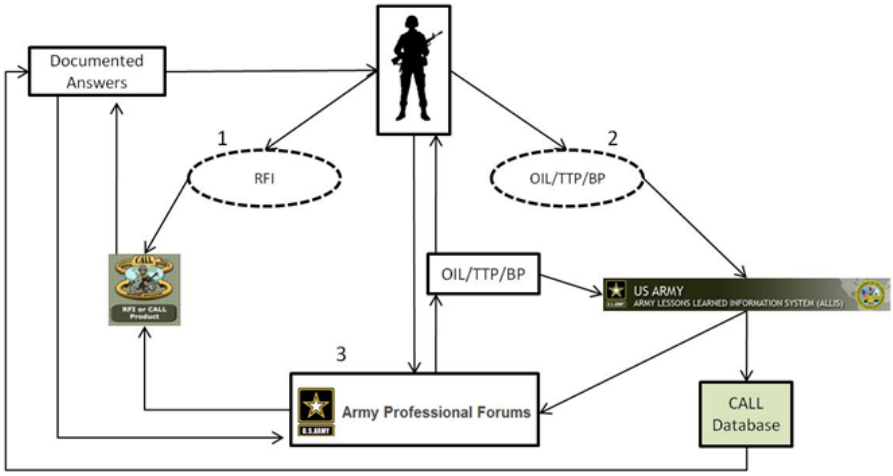
How do we integrate the Army Professional Forums, CALL RFI/Products and the Army Lessons Learned Information System (ALLIS) to benefit the Soldier?

The Army Professional Forums are designed to be leadership, functional specialty and staff member focused communities of practice. There are more than fifty Army Professional Forums, twenty six of which are monitored daily by a forum facilitator. The forum facilitator manages the day to day operation of the forum. When needed, the facilitator connects members who have knowledge, information and products with members who need them.

Integrating these professional forums with the existing Center for Army Lessons Learned systems can connect Soldiers who submit requests for information through CALL with the knowledge of 240,000+ Army Professional Forum members.

The bottom line is Soldiers now have three options when using CALL systems. They can submit an RFI directly to CALL through the CALL RFI process, submit an RFI through the Army Professional Forums to generate discussion, and they can submit Observations, Insights, and Lessons Learned (OILs) through the ALLIS system.

When a Soldier submits an RFI through the CALL RFI process, CALL will conduct a search of their existing database for documented answers, and then respond directly to that Soldier within 72 hours. Within the RFI response, CALL provides a link to relevant topics within the Army Professional Forums. If an OIL, best practice, or TTP is discovered based on these discussions, it will be transferred to the ALLIS rapid adaptation system for further analysis.



Soldier also have the option of posting questions directly to the Army Professional Forums. The forum membership will assist Soldiers in finding answers to their questions based on past experience and knowledge of the topic. In addition, if deemed appropriate, the forum facilitator can post a question as an RFI into the CALL RFI system, which will also generate codified documentation for the Soldier. Once again, if an OIL, best practice, or TTP is discovered based on these discussions, it will be transferred to the ALLIS rapid adaptation system.

The third option available to Soldiers is the ability to post OILs, best practices, and TTPs directly to the ALLIS system. These observations are analyzed and codified into documentation that is incorporated into the CALL database to ultimately feed the RFI answer process. In the mean time, these observations are also posted to the forums to generate feedback discussions from the communities, which may also generate more OILs, BPs, and TTPs that can be transferred to the ALLIS rapid adaptation system.

Links to KM Sites and Products

- Army Professional Forums: https://forums.army.mil/secure/CommunityBrowser.aspx
- Center for Army Lessons Learned: http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/
- ALLIS Rapid Adaptation Site: https://www.jllis.mil/army/index.cfm?currentTierID=9
- Air Force Knowledge Now: https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil
- Navy Knowledge Online: https://wwwa.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/

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Knowledge Management Officer Symposium

LTC Andy Mortensen, Chief of the AOKM Proponent Office, hosted a virtual symposium for Army Knowledge Management Officers (KMOs) on 2 June 2011 on Defense Connect Online. Mr. Keith Hibner, Knowledge Management Advisor for FORSCOM, moderated the event.

The symposium's theme was "KM People, Processes, and Technology in Support of ARFORGEN." More than 90 individuals participated in the symposium, including representatives from JFCOM, NORTHCOM, EUCOM, CENTCOM, all Army Commands and several deployed units in Iraq and Afghanistan. Three formal briefings were presented, followed by question and answer sessions and general discussions among the participants. The knowledge sharing generated by this crosstalk was of immeasurable value to the KM community.

Several innovative tools were used during the symposium that enhanced the interactivity of the event. A chat pod was used to capture comments and questions from the field during and after the formal presentations. Meanwhile, a Twitter aggregator allowed comments and content to be distributed to a large audience outside the DCO meeting room. In addition, a survey tool captured immediate feedback from the participants.

Survey results showed that the KMO Symposium was seen as a worthwhile event. Based on this feedback, the AOKM Proponent Office plans to hold symposiums more regularly. The next meeting is scheduled for 17 August 2011.

Symposium Presentations

AOKM Proponent Brief, LTC Andy Mortensen
OEF Observations, Insights and Lessons Learned, LTC Don Edwards, KMO, RC South
Division KM Training Plan, CPT Dave Fittipoldi, Deputy KMO, 28 ID

A recording of the June DCO session can be found here:

https://connect.dco.dod.mil/p25991414

KMNet and milBook discussion forums about the symposium can be accessed at these locations:

https://forums.army.mil/secure/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=1439687&lang=en-US
https://www.milsuite.mil/book/thread/11356

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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 us by 15 August. Our staff will conduct an interview to help you tell your organization's story.

AOKMWebmaster@conus.army.mil