

Signaleers share front line experiences--an FA57 perspective

Translating technical to tactical and back again

By LTC Jason Jones

Simulation Operations Officers (Functional Area 57) working in the Knowledge Management realm take on the position of Battle Command Systems Officer, charged with ensuring users are getting the most out of their ABCS. Based on the recent deployment of the command and the leadership's high confidence in our operators ABCS ability, the Chief of Staff declared that the CJ6 would manage these systems, not the KMO so that role was taken on by the users and the JAMO.

With the traditional ABCS role for the FA57 covered, I moved into the deputy KMO position and managed numerous projects outside the technical realm.

Fortunately, many of the skills associated with FA57 transfer into KM, but much of the job uses skills Army officers possess.

Required skills Battle Command Systems

I didn't use these much during our tour, but the FA57 is the lead for integrating ABCS and should be well versed in this area.

Translating technical to tactical

God bless you pointy-headed programmers (I'm looking at you FA53). I love you, but somebody has to turn your deep thoughts and code-speak into something an end user can understand. From the world of exercise development, FA57s are experienced with explaining the capabilities and limitations of simulation systems and briefing how these systems can best be used to meet the commander's training objectives.

Translating tactical to technical

The people we work with and for usually know what they want, but they are rarely well enough versed in the technology to know the range of possible solutions. Users frequently will demand solutions based on their experience (I want a spreadsheet that shows "X").

The user may know that a spreadsheet isn't the

best solution, but it's what they know - to the hammer, every problem looks like a nail.

The FA57's experiences turning training objectives into a set of instructions that create a training environment work equally well on these problems. The FA57 breaks down staff requirements to their critical components

(requirements, stakeholders and objectives) and identifies only the framework of a solution.

If a solution seems to be technical in nature, the FA57 and FA53 meet and review the requirements and the solution framework. At this point, the FA53's technical expertise helps determine the most effective solution implementation. But be careful, even the FA53 can turn into the hammer and engineer a more complex solution than what's needed.

LTC Jason M. Jones served as deputy knowledge management officer for Regional Command (East)/ Combined Joint Task Force 101 in Bagram, Afghanistan, from May 2010 - May 2011. Upon redeployment he will continue to serve in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). His functional area is 57A simulations operations officer and his basic branch is Logistics. LTC Jones holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology from Transylvania University and a Master of Science degree in Modeling Virtual Environments and Simulations from the Naval Post Graduate School.



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