

**Letters
to the
Editor**

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Work Above and Beyond

Dear Editor,

I am pleased to inform you that I did get the Army Communicator package you sent me. It was awesome to receive the 150th commemorative edition along with the Knowledge Management and Micro-Cyber issues I requested and the book about the Signal Regiment. You went above and beyond my expectation. I look forward to the next issue in December 2011.

Thanks again and God Bless.

LT Julius N. Lee Jr. USAREUR

“...the task of KM from BCT through ASCC is not the sole domain of a single branch or functional area. Rather, it is a team of professionals working in concert to improve situational awareness and decision-making.”

--LTC Joseph Nolan--

True Knowledge Managers Article Missed the Mark

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to LTC Alprentice Smith's "The Army's true knowledge managers" article in the Summer 2011 edition of Army Communicator magazine. While I appreciate LTC Smith's pride in Functional Area 53 – Information Systems Management, I have to respectfully disagree with his characterization of Functional Area 57 – Simulation Operations officers and their role in operational-level Knowledge Management. KM, as LTC Smith correctly defines, is the nexus of integrating people, process and technology to increase human performance. However, the task of KM from BCT through ASCC is not the sole domain of a single branch or functional area. Rather, it is a team of professionals working in concert to improve situational awareness and decision-making. Across the Army, FA57s, FA53s, and FA24s (Telecommunications Systems Engineers) work in a mutually supporting manner to enable KM for the commander and staff. No one group is able or fully trained to do this critical task alone. Just as Infantry, Armor, Artillery and Aviation are the back bone of the combined arms team, the team of FA57s, FA53s, and FA24s serve as the back bone for KM. It is a team effort.

Senior Army Leadership from LTG Daniel Bolger, Deputy Chief of Staff G-3/5/7, to MG Anthony Cucolo, former 3rd Infantry Division Commander to Gen Peter Chiarelli all see the value of FA57's role on the KM team. GEN Chiarelli stated in an interview for our 2010 FA57 capabilities video that:

“It'll be the FA57 that will be able to recommend to the commander how to pull those different pictures (Army Battle Command Systems) – that different amount of knowledge – together



and provide the most coherent picture for his chain of command.”

The FA57 officer receives a great deal more training on KM fundamentals besides the 4-week Knowledge Management course run at the Combined Arms Center and School, Fort Leavenworth, KS, that LTC Smith references. FA57s attend a 6-week qualification course where KM principals are nested throughout the program of instruction. They also attend a 2-week Battle Command Officer Integration Course to further gain an understanding of ABCS. In addition, FA57s are one of the few functional areas to attend the 46-week ILE and Advanced Operations and Warfighting Course at Fort Leavenworth. This course provides FA57s with the fundamental framework for mastering the staff process. FA57s understand how the staff operates boards, bureaus, centers, cells and work groups (B2C2WG) as well as the information requirements to feed these functions. FA57s master this process as it is the foundation for model and simulation selection to support training.

With almost 58 weeks of training, FA57s do in fact have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and experience to serve successfully on the KM team. FA57 training runs the breadth from understanding mission command systems providing the commander and staff digital information from the battlefield to the staff processes and B2C2WGs that bring it all together. It is more than information management repackaged.

KM teams from the division through ASCC retain the O2A (branch immaterial) officer on their units' modified table of organization and equipment primary based on feedback from the field. Commanders, from division to corps to ASCC, want to retain selection of this critical staff lead. This senior O2A, ordinarily a combat arms officer, provides feedback to the KM team on emerging needs of the commander and provides support for interacting with staff principals. One of the challenges that KM officers face in the field is gaining confidence and support from the staff. The O2A officer serves as that interface between the commander, staff and the KM team to keep doors

open across the division, corps or ASCC.

Recently, as commanders and staffs become more comfortable with the role of the KM team, some units have begun to seek out an FA57 as their KM lead.

KM is not a sole function of a single staff officer or branch any more than stating that the artillery alone can win wars. KM is a solid team effort with each member bringing unique skills to bear on this difficult challenge. Enabling the commander and staff to find the nexus of people, process, and technology is the role of the KM team. A team composed of O2A combat arms officers, FA57s, FA53s, FA24s, contractors, and civilians working together at all levels to improve understanding and decision-making of the warfighter.

LTC Joseph Nolan has served as a Functional Area 57 – Simulation Operations officer since 2003, after serving in the Infantry for 10 years. He has served in various assignments to include USCENTCOM and USPACOM exercise planner, USJFCOM Battle Command officer deployed to OIF as a lead planner for the restructuring of the USF-I staff for USCENTCOM, and Chief, USJFCOM Joint Advanced Training Technologies Laboratory charged with development of models, simulations, and architectures to support Joint, COCOM and Service training requirements. He is currently assigned as the FA57 Personnel Development officer, HQDA G8.

Embracing the SASMO Mission

(Editor's Note--The following letter was written in response to an Army Communicator article, entitled "Signal Life in the Logistic Lane.")

Every Signal Soldier should understand that logistics systems are supported by the Signal community. The SASMO section is not a happenstance cluster of Soldiers thrown together to support random logistics systems. Instead it

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Embracing the SASMO Mission

“We must not confuse what we would like to be doing with what is required of us all.”

--CW3 Niky Frazier--

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is a well organized group of subject matter experts from multiple military occupational specialties. Concerns about manning and lack of personnel appear to be directly related to a lack of command emphasis and support of the SASMO mission. Upcoming MTOE updates will remove the 53A from the SASMO and put the 251A firmly in charge of the section.

Decision Briefs and Management Skills

I routinely receive phone calls from junior warrant officers complaining about the lack of personnel in their sections. When questioned, they almost always state that the CSM/SGM told them they weren't getting any more Soldiers. Most of these young warrant officers have accepted this answer and suffered the consequences of trying to accomplish their mission at 20%-30% manning. I am not encouraging young officers to override or ignore senior NCO leadership, but I am advising you to prepare a decision brief for your commander to discuss how the lack of personnel impacts your mission. Meet with your S-1 to discuss your MTOE along with future gains and losses. If the unit is fully manned, then your Soldiers have boots on the ground and you need to find out why they are not in your section. You may not get your full manning, but those of you deployed with only 30% of your

Soldiers should be outraged. The Warrant Officer Career College or WOBC at Fort Gordon should place more emphasis on teaching young officers to prepare and present decision briefs and presentations. We are more than technicians. It is necessary for us to lead and manage our personnel and mission. Stop looking for a memo or regulation to defend your position and articulate your requirements with solid justifications. You should have a permanent seat at the table when the meetings begin. If not, everything will be decided for you. If you refuse to position yourself to be a part of the decisions, then you must accept the outcomes without complaining.

Training and Support

The Army Logistics University offers a SASMO course at Fort Lee. This course is designed to train SASMO personnel on the systems they are required to support. It provides students with training in the areas of computer systems hardware, operating systems, Logistics-IT applications: ULLS-A, SAMS-E, PBUSE, SARSS (including RF/AIT), SAAS Mod, TCAIMS II, MC4, MTSU, systems interfaces, systems networking, troubleshooting, communication protocols, and the use of VSAT/CAISI. Unfortunately, lack of unit emphasis has prevented SASMO personnel from attending this much needed training. The SASMO OIC must articulate the

need to attend training to their command. While there may be some difficulty in getting the entire section to SASMO training, every effort should be made to get everyone trained.

The LAR and FSR are readily available when needed. They are an extremely responsive group dedicated to helping and supporting the mission. I am guilty of not always utilizing their expertise and I have sometimes struggled through a problem when the LAR/FSR already had a solution.

MOS Stir-Fry

The 251A is not a temporary presence in the SASMO. As previously mentioned, they have never been more firmly planted in the SASMO as they are today. The loss of the 53A puts the 251A in the challenging position of being a technician and a leader simultaneously. The SASMO is absolutely a career enhancing position. The section is filled with automation equipment that includes networking devices and satellites. Who should manage

these devices? The answer is very simple, signal warrant officers and Soldiers. While there may be more preferable assignments, a mature warrant officer must accept the SASMO mission as a valid signal mission that deserves the time and attention of those entrusted with it. The opportunity to manage personnel, coordinate with external sources and interact with the unit staff are training opportunities that cannot be overlooked.

Planning missions, maintaining and accounting for fully capable equipment, establishing SASMO policy within the command, and managing a budget are skills that translate across the Army.

Embrace the Mission

When a Blackhawk pilot moves from one duty station to another he/she is not required to retrain because a Blackhawk is a Blackhawk no matter the geographic location. When a Signal warrant officer relocates he/she must find out what systems are being used then

learn and eventually improve upon the systems to ensure mission accomplishment.

So we don't hit the ground running like a pilot, but we possess the skills to quickly adapt to our environment to ensure that our commands trust that we possess the technical and leadership skills to execute our mission.

We must not confuse what we would like to be doing with what is required of us all. Embrace the SASMO mission.

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ACRONYM QuickScan

ACDD - Automated Cargo Documentation Detachment
CSM - Command Sergeant Major
FSR - Field Support Representative
LAR - Logistics Assistance Representative
MTOE - Modified Table of Organization and Equipment

NCO - Noncommissioned Officer
OIC - Officer in Charge
SASMO - Sustainment Automation Support Management Office
SGM - Sergeant Major
SME - Subject Matter Expert
WOBC - Warrant Officer Basic Course