

KM Support to Command & Control

In the sphere of Army operations, the Army Universal Task List (AUTL) is intended to inform all members of the Profession of Arms of what the Army contributes to the joint force in terms of tasks performed. Command and Control (C2) is a fundamental component of this list, enabling a smooth operation flow, from strategic planning to tactical execution. This article outlines the indispensable role that Knowledge Management (KM) plays in supporting these C2 tasks within the AUTL. It underscores the importance of leveraging, distributing, and maintaining knowledge, ensuring that the right information reaches the right people at the right time, thereby facilitating informed decision-making, optimizing resources, and fostering agility and resilience in rapidly changing environments.

To support the exercise of command and control, commanders use KM to facilitate effective integration of operations. KM's primary roles are¹:

- Enabling the C2 warfighting function.
- Organizing the C2 system.
- Optimizing the operations process.
- Creating a knowledge sharing environment.

According to FM 3-0, “multidomain operations require disciplined initiative cultivated through a mission command culture.”² KM also enables the tenets of operations which are agility, convergence, endurance, and depth.

Army Universal Task List

ADRP 1-03, The Army Universal Task List, was rescinded on 26 May 2022. Due to the recent rescindment, not everyone may be aware that the AUTL is now hosted online as part of the Universal Joint Task List (UJTL).³ Details of specific tasks can be found online in the Central Army Registry.⁴

There are number of tasks that span all levels of command where KM is an inherent or useful component to organizational success. There are several tasks that are considered essential to C2 and consist of individual and collective tasks. There are leader tasks that employ KM as well. These primary KM requirements provide a staff with direction and subject matter expertise, which can aid the commander and staff to improve operations. Let's look in greater detail at some of the leader tasks that employ KM in the support of C2.

Establish a Shared Understanding – 150-LDR-5007

To cultivate a shared understanding, a leader strategically implements KM practices. These practices involve enhancing interaction and collaboration not just amongst leaders and subordinates, but also with unified action partners. A key facet of implementing these practices is ensuring the active participation of key leaders and staff throughout the entire process. KM techniques identify, capture, organize and share data, information, and knowledge, which in turn

helps foster shared understanding of the operational environment and enables faster decision making.

KM practices are meticulously applied to further enhance the shared understanding and decision-making process. To ensure everyone is on the same page, a leader establishes a clear commander's intent, and the mission orders are defined with absolute clarity. Through this comprehensive approach, a leader employs the KM discipline as a tool to forge shared understanding and enhancing decision-making processes in the organization. The organization employs these tools in several ways such as creating a shared database or repository, facilitating collaboration both in person and online, creating data visualization models and simulations to aid in sense making, mapping business and operational processes, promoting a culture of continuous learning, measuring knowledge use, reuse and impact, and standardizing practices.

Organize the Staff for Operations – 150-LDR-5013

KM helps organize, create, and transfer knowledge within the force. KM enables the flow of data, information, and knowledge through the organizational structure by applying people, processes, and tools. A commander employs systematic procedures and processes to streamline staff activities and enable the flow of critical knowledge (refined data and information) both within the headquarters and across the entire force. Operational performance is boosted by the deployment of various integrating processes, each designed to synchronize staff actions throughout the operational process. Among the integrating processes are several key components. One example is the Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB), a comprehensive analysis designed to equip the team with the necessary information about the enemy, itself, and battlefield's condition. Information Collection aims to gather and organize data to support decision-making processes. This information flows through the staff by way of the operations and business processes. The information when placed in context becomes the knowledge needed for action.

Establish the Mission Command Approach to Command and Control – 150-LDR-5028

KM serves as a cornerstone to effectively disseminate and gather critical data, organize it into information so that it can be analyzed and placed in the context of the situation that leads to action. A leader understands the value of human connections in building trust and promoting open information sharing. They actively work towards building these connections with the team creating an environment for collaboration, analysis, and dissemination. This information paints a common operational picture that is the foundation of shared understanding. Intent must be clearly understood through a blend of dialogue, visualizations, confirmation briefings, brief backs, and rehearsals. KM plays a role in facilitating mission command resulting in the following outcomes: shared understanding, situational awareness, collaboration, adaptability, decision-making, and continuity.

Establish the Five Integrating Processes – 150-LDR-5043

A leader should guide the staff to establish the five integrating processes within the unit. The goal of KM practices is to align people, processes, and tools to continuously capture, maintain, and reuse critical data, information and lessons learned within the organizational structure they are supporting. They ensure that policies and plans are executed in accordance with the unit's SOPs. Leaders take an active role in knowledge analysis, providing answers to the commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs). They manage and trace knowledge flow, mapping the unit's KM network which allows a clear overview of information pathways within the unit. The integrating processes are:

- Intelligence preparation of the battlefield
- Information collection
- Targeting
- Risk management
- Knowledge management.

Lead the Operations Process – 150-LDR-5100

Leading operational processes includes activities such as planning, preparing, executing, and continuously assessing the operation. This requires a deep understanding of the situation at hand, the ability to visualize the outcomes, and the ability to describe the plan in detail. The KM plan supports these efforts by enabling the commander to adapt strategies as required based on the sharing and visualization (usually a COP) of the staffs running estimates. Another aspect to consider in the KM plan is the integration of foreign partners and how we will share data, information, and knowledge with them based on their access. This includes not only granting them access to information at appropriate classification levels but also ensuring that necessary translation services are available.

Organize the Command and Control System – 150-LDR-5251

The commander organizes the command post (CP) to help control operations through continuity, planning, coordination, and synchronizing of the warfighting functions. In the institutional Army, the command post is synonymous with the staff and in some cases a local operations center. They must build and maintain situational understanding (SU) through effective, data, information, and knowledge flow by way of their operational or business processes. KM enables that flow by providing processes and tools to receive, share, and analyze information in support of the C2 system. KM processes, procedures, and tools that help commanders generate, distribute, share, use and reuse information and knowledge products – for example: reports required by higher headquarters, reports from subordinate units, and battle tracking data.

Conclusion

As you can see, the KM discipline supports command and control in many aspects. Readers are encouraged to explore the Central Army Registry and study the KM tasks listed in this article in greater detail. The performance steps outlined in each task can be used to assess the maturity of your organization's KM program.

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Notes

1. Army Techniques Publication 6-01.1, Techniques for Effective Knowledge Management, 6 March 2015.
2. Field Manual 3-0, Operations, 1 October 2022.
3. Universal Joint Task List, <https://jdeis.js.mil/jdeis/index.jsp?pindex=43>.
4. Central Army Registry, <https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog/dashboard>.



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