

LTG Kevin T. Campbell

Commanding General,
U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/
Army Forces Strategic Command



Integrating Technology into the Fight

W e recently completed the 11th Annual Space and Missile Defense conference in Huntsville, Ala., Aug. 14. Once again, the combined efforts of all those involved ensured a successful outcome. It was especially rewarding to hear the perspectives of diplomats, military leaders and industry leaders regarding the pressing issues of Space and Missile Defense in the context of developing world events. I recommend attending conferences like this one to enhance your professional development.

The summer edition of the Army Space Journal deals with perspectives about Space Technology. If there is a “theme” to the articles, it is that Space professionals must be current on emerging technologies in order to integrate those capabilities into the fight.

I will leave it to the authors to provide information about the types of technologies available or within reach. What I will discuss for this issue is the importance of being a productive member of the team – whether that team is a division, corps, Army or Joint staff – because all the best

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technologies available cannot help the Warfighter if those technologies are not integrated into the fight. They won't be integrated into the fight unless the Space professional is considered a valued and trusted member of the team.

How do you accomplish that? Three ways:

First, you must be credible. Those you work with and those you work for must trust that you know your business better than anyone else. Someone with a satellite dish at home cannot know more than you about satellites. You must be more than technically and tactically competent; you must be the expert in your field. You must constantly update your information and your knowledge about your field. For example; you need to thoroughly understand what a satellite can do, how it works, what are its limitations, what you can do to affect shortfalls; know who are the "satellite drivers" that can provide you instant data when there is a problem. Understanding concepts is not enough, you need to know the nuts and bolts about satellites. The same can be said for sensors, or software – how do they communicate with each other? What are the limitations? What are the strengths? What are the work-arounds? What's on the horizon? What technologies are being worked on in the SMDC/ARSTRAT labs? Have you called the Future Warfare Center or the Technology Center lately? You get the idea ...

Second, you must be a team player. You may be the lone Space professional on staff but you should not be considered a lone wolf. You need to be in there getting your hands dirty, helping with the orders process, making yourself indispensable to the commander and to your

fellow staff members. Do not work outside the decision-making process. As a member of the commander's staff he/she expects you to know the orders process and to interject your analysis and courses of actions at the appropriate time. The Military Decision-making Process (MDMP) applies to Space professionals as much as it applies to the combat arms folks. If you haven't participated in a Military Decision-making Process since Combined Arms and Services Staff School or Command and General Staff College, then break out the books. The commander does not have time to teach you what you should already know.

Third, get it right. You will be marginalized if your advice tends to be wrong or if you are late providing input. The old adage of: "measure twice, cut once" applies to good staff work. Check your sources, check your information and then make your recommendation. Anyone can read the morning report or the battle update brief. As a valued staff officer, you need to do the analysis – to see around the corner.

In the end, technology can only take you so far, and then it is back to basics. We may have new technologies to assist in making decisions, but it still takes good leadership skills to get things done and it still takes good personal skills to work in a group.

As always, the Army Space Journal is your publication. I encourage you to provide comments about the articles to the editor and to submit articles about topics that may be of interest to the Space community. This is your magazine – use it. 

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