

Some words are tough to write. Sometimes, there are no right words to tell a story and every word becomes a struggle. Sometimes, though, there's only one way to say what needs to be said, so the word choice flows much easier onto the page. Writing about this edition – technically, the 27th – of the Army Space Journal is a case of the later. You see, really, the story starts as a letter to our senior editor and technical director, Sharon Hartman, who edited all those publications and has been with us since April 2000. It continues with a nearly duplicate letter to our graphic designer, Michael Kahl, who designed our publications since October 2007. Both letters credit him and her with fostering the publication's development into what it is today.

For both, this is their last publication. Here's a portion of what I wrote in their letters:

There are many tangible results. The biggest, of course, is the creation of the Army Space Journal in 2001. There is absolutely no way that we would have been able to achieve monumental success of this widely distributed publication without your vision, technical know-how and willingness to adapt. Equally, you carefully fostered growth, development, and change in order to ensure our team produced the highest quality of video or multi-media productions. This careful approach to your work also created a variety of unique print products such as posters, brochures, and pamphlets that helped tell our story. Your leadership in creating this wide range of communication tools for highly visible events and broad audiences led to award-winning and highly praised results.

So I signed the letters and delivered them to the contracting officer as we put this publication, our last task together, to bed. I thought about how, in a sense, the Army Space Journal changes after today, after this edition. To understand how it will change or mature in the future, you have to understand where it is today. To understand that, you must understand how it all began. And, to understand that, you must realize that there are actually 28 editions of a professional journal dealing with Army space issues of interest to the space community, while there are now 27 editions of the Army Space Journal.

The first was called The Journal of Army Space Operations. It was a black-and-white newsletter affair sent out to the less than 200 space operations officers in the Army in late 2001. The idea was to provide a journal-type magazine to members of the newly created career field for Functional Area 40 officers in the Army – similar to publications for the infantry, signal, field artillery, etc. Remembering those days, the Rumsfeld Commission's assessment of national security space organization and management had recommended each military service to create its own career management systems for space professionals. As a result, the new career field for space pro-

fessionals began in the Army and the concept to have its own publication was an immediate and natural inclination. The first black-and-white edition was the answer to that call.

Soon after, Terry Nelson and I met for the first time. He was grumpy and I was confused, both about the direction we had independently received in regard to taking over the publication and developing it in a different direction. Leadership in the command felt that what was then the Force Development Integration Center – where Nelson was the deputy director – and the Public Affairs Officer for what was then Army Space Command – me – should figure out how to make the original lackluster newsletter into a showcase type publication to promote discussion on critical space issues in the Army. The vision, as we quickly shaped and embraced it in those genesis days of the publication, was to create a new professional journal that not only informed the Army space professional but also targeted key audiences both inside and out of the Army community.

That is the background to how we began the new publication, with the first edition under the title of Army Space Journal hitting the streets early in 2002. So in all, this current edition is the 28th professional journal for the space career field and the 27th Army Space Journal. Although we called the edition our second, it was actually the first full-color journal under our new vision and name. We essentially combined the traditional role of a professional journal in publishing more technical type articles with the traditional role of public affairs type publications in publishing more human interest stories. By doing this, we hoped to increase the content's scope, interest, and potential audience – and thereby grow the magazine beyond the limiting numbers required for the space functional area alone.

This hybrid idea basically recognized that meatier technical articles on space issues and lighter articles on the people doing the Army space mission all possess an appeal to the multiple audiences important to the command's missions in space. The idea recognized that there were more people who do the space mission for the Army than officers in the new functional area for space. The new Army Space Journal was visionary because it also targeted all Soldiers and Civilians outside those Army officers with the space operations functional area designation who work in providing space-based capabilities to our Army – we refer to this today as the broader Army space cadre community. The idea also acknowledged a need to inform a broader Army audience to help increase understanding in how the space mission contributes to ground operations.

It was more difficult to make the vision a reality than to come up with the vision. With the vision in mind, we approached the job looking through big eyes while we attempted to emulate professional-appearing publications even though our resources lacked in comparison. Our biggest deficiency in those days | eventually became a very useful measure of success over time.

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Today the publication boasts a circulation Army-wide of 5,000 copies each time we publish, with each edition containing at least 80 pages. In addition to winning a number of journalism awards to indicate some professional success, we regularly hear from all sectors of our target audiences showing that the publication is read. But the most telling indicator has come in the articles we receive. In those early days, quite frankly, we could not successfully beg for enough quality articles to publish. Today, we routinely receive more than enough quality articles unsolicited from the field.

The question is now where to go from here. While getting articles from our readers saves us from having to twist arms for our content, more importantly it means that readers not only want to have their articles published in the Army Space Journal but that our information is more likely to be of interest to other readers. While the content is closer to matching our professional appearance than it was in earlier editions, the publication's content is not exactly to where it needs to be. In the next year – the Army Space Journal's tenth production year – we see continued growth in this area with increased interviews of key leaders and articles from the field on critical space issues. Along with this, we would like the publication to follow a more regular and predictable quarterly schedule for our readers. In short, we want to continue the growth began in our forming years.

Dedicated, focused resources are the key to taking the journal to its next level. A product of the hard work that both Ms. Hartman and Mr. Kahl – among many other contributors – gave to the publication's development is the recognition of the need for two Department of the Army civilian employees for producing the publication. For the first time, the publication has certified manpower vice contracted effort dedicated to the program. In my view, this actually validates the legacy that our senior editor and graphic designer has given the Army space cadre community and Army over the last years. It will be very difficult to replicate the effort. As editor-in-chief, I cannot say enough, give enough, or do enough to express my personal gratitude to these two individuals.

This brings me to the end of my rather easily-told story. I heard a speaker at a dinner the other night say that “duty, honor, country” is the heart of military service and represents an opposite concept to “life, liberty, happiness” which is the central focus of the declaration of independence. Some of my friends on Facebook told me that the two concepts are actually not opposite, but rather interwoven ideas – you cannot have one without the other. I guess it really doesn't matter how you see “duty, honor, country” to recognize its value to the mission. Along with that, I have learned by knowing Ms. Hartman and Mr. Kahl that it doesn't take a military uniform for a person to have the relationship of both “duty, honor, country” and “life, liberty, happiness” in his or her work ethic and heart.

I salute their effort. We will only know the future of our Army Space Journal because of it.

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Facebook Notes

Mike Howard on Facebook



Mike Howard This afternoon I am hosting a farewell ceremony for two very special workers in my office. After 32 years in Army public affairs and watching PA operations in a lot of different places, I have to say this is my toughest goodbye. I will miss them both tremendously.



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Mike Howard Are these two word groups opposite: “Duty, Honor, Country” and “Life, Liberty, Happiness”? I heard it at a dinner last night ... just curious what others think. The first is at the heart of military service and the second defines the declaration of independence.

December 10 at 5:09am · [Comment](#) · [Like](#)

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