

Studying Community Management: Civilian versus Military

by John Macdonald and Robert Myers

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. —Margaret Mead, eminent anthropologist.

"Star Trek" was a ground-breaking television show. As you recall, humans and aliens served on board a starship to boldly go where none had gone before. "Star Trek: The Next Generation" was even more visionary. The new starship Enterprise was even larger than its predecessor. The ship was home to the crew and family members. There were even services on the ship geared toward crew members' families. The captain was not only a tactical commander in the traditional sense; he also served as administrator of this on-board community. Today's Army is moving toward the image portrayed in "Star Trek: The Next Generation."

An installation commander has a wartime mission that is executed upon mobilization. During armistice, however, the installation commander serves as the manager of a community. This "municipal mission" has become even more challenging over the past few years. The traditional Army of days gone by is rapidly changing.

Today's Army is a lot different from the one that fought in World War II. The stereotypical image of the young and carefree GI is outdated. Now, a typical American soldier has a high school diploma, and many are college-educated. More than 50 percent of the military service members are married, and many have children attending the U.S. Department of Defense dependent school system.

Unfortunately, the infrastructure on military facilities has not kept pace with the changing Army. In many places, existing facilities are inadequate for the modern soldier. Housing once suitable for the single soldier is unacceptable for a service member with a family. Recreational facilities and activities appropriate for the young, unaccompanied draftee are unappealing to today's professional soldier and his or her family members.

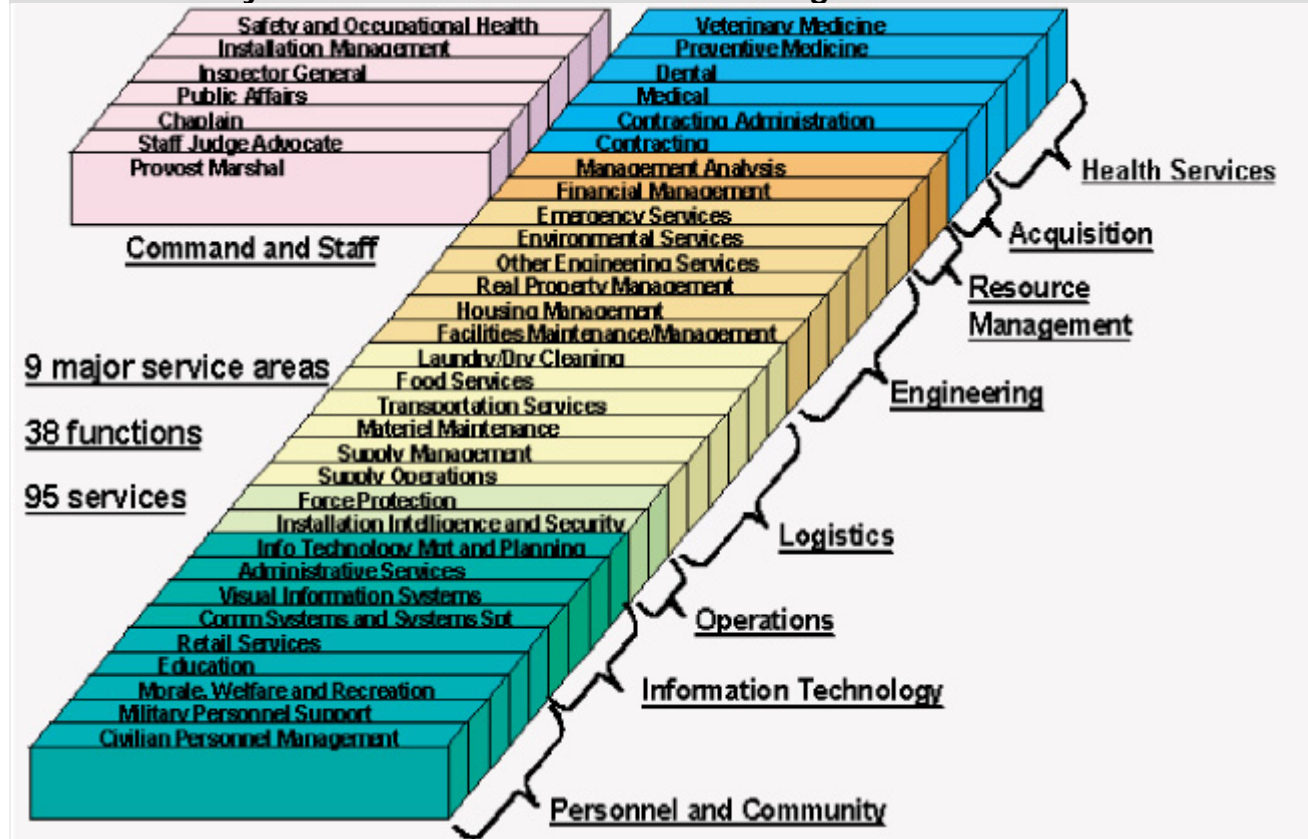
We can no longer talk about the soldier as a single entity. Instead, we have to address the broader concerns of soldiers and their families. Just like on "Star Trek," today's soldier will bring his family with him on an accompanied-tour assignment. In the event that the soldier has to serve in a dependent-restricted area, the Army must make sure that the soldier can reach back to the installation for support and must see that it takes care of the deployed soldier's family. These changes are the driving forces that build communities on our military installations throughout the world.

To this extent, the Installation Management Agency (IMA) was founded to ease the transition from the traditional Army concept to a modern military-community perspective and to help installation commanders focus on the "managerial" responsibilities of their respective communities.

IMA's job is to administer installation management and base support services for the U.S. Army. These services are those typically found in any city or county in the United States. IMA region

directors basically perform the duties of a governor, while installation commanders are similar to managers of local governments.

Figure 1. Services typically performed by a military installation. These services also are usually found in cities and counties through the United States.



Background

Figure 1 graphically portrays the areas, functions, and services performed at a typical military installation. The nine areas (righthand side of the diagram) correspond nicely to the departments found in localities in the United States. Naturally, the military community would have additional activities not normally aligned in a local government's operational environment, such as a chaplain's office.

Historically, military facilities have performed the distinct roles of conducting and preparing for tactical maneuvers and providing the installation support services depicted in Figure 1. Military commanders were, and are, well trained for military operations. Unfortunately, in the past, military training did little to equip commanders with the tools and abilities needed to fulfill their role as chief administrators of on-base "municipalities." Furthermore, chief administrators of installation communities did not always have the flexibility to manage their own funding as they saw fit.

The wartime mission often took priority over installation management responsibilities, to the extent that funding for base services and support was routinely transferred to cover fiscal shortfalls in wartime-mission dollars. In many cases, this migration of funds to mission accounts degraded installation support services. Needed maintenance to buildings and upgrades to essential community services were deferred until money became available.

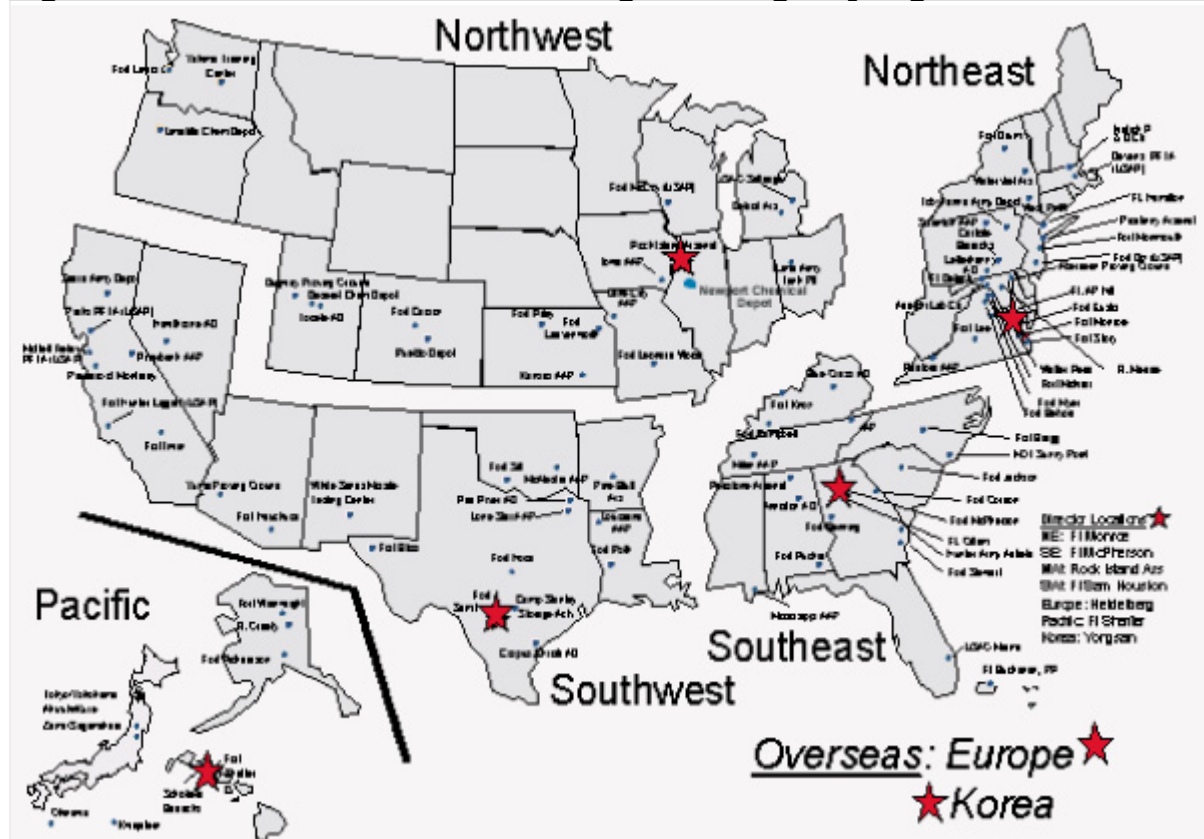
Needless to say, under the traditional Army system, installation commanders were hindered in their efforts to manage base support services effectively. Something had to be done to preclude the migration of funds and to ensure that neither the wartime nor the installation support mission would be degraded.

Installation Management Agency

In October 2002, the Army went through a major reorganization, perhaps the biggest in the history of the military since the Department of Defense begun in the Truman administration in 1947. This reorganization did two things.

First, commands that had a tactical mission were divested of the Army's base operations and installation support responsibilities. Thus, these commands were allowed the opportunity to focus solely on their primary wartime missions. Second, this grand redesign of the Army also established the IMA to provide equitable, effective, and efficient administration and oversight of Army communities throughout the world.

Figure 2. The seven Installation Management Agency regions.



Army leaders hoped that centralizing installation management under the IMA structure would help to support mission readiness and execution; to enable the well-being of soldiers, civilians, and family members; to improve infrastructure; and to preserve the environment. To accomplish these aims, IMA supervises seven regions (illustrated in Figure 2). Although this article is relevant to any of the seven regions, it focuses primarily on the Korea region.

Figure 3. Area support activities in Korea, and major cities within each area.



An Overview of the Korea Region

The Korea Region Office (KORO), located in Seoul, manages four area support activities, as shown in Figure 3. KORO performs a governorship role over the communities. Its staff establishes policy and gives guidance and direction to the area support activities through a sound governance system.

Serving as "governor" to the military communities in Korea is a challenging responsibility because each area has its own unique chemistry. Area 1 is on the front lines of what might be considered freedom's frontier. Although currently the news primarily focuses on events in the Middle East, the threat to peace in Korea still is extremely real.

Korea remains one of the world's critical flashpoints, a place where the flames of the Cold War have yet to be extinguished. North Korea still maintains a large, forward-deployed Army along the 38th Parallel. U.S. soldiers assigned to Area 1 are on a dependent-restricted, 12-month tour.

The commander of Area 1-the manager of this Army community-has the responsibility of setting up programs that facilitate the rapid transition from an armistice environment to a wartime posture. The manager has to provide programs and services that meet the physical and mental demands that soldiers can expect on a modern-day battlefield. Essentially, the commander of Area 1 establishes programs and directives-ordinances-that help soldiers survive and overcome the rigors of battle.

Areas 2 and 4 are accompanied-tour areas. These "municipalities" are composed of soldiers, U.S. civilians, and family members. Consequently, the managers of these communities have to implement programs and policies suitable for families and children. They place a strong emphasis on municipal

services, to include high-quality family housing, recreational activities geared toward the different age levels of the population, maintenance of buildings and grounds, and school transportation. Basically, the managers of Areas 2 and 4 try to fashion a community-living environment comparable to that found in the United States.

Area 3 is in the process of becoming one of the principal, enduring installations in Korea. At this point, Area 3 is building new facilities, including a large supermarket (commissary) and a department store (post exchange), to accommodate a larger population base. The manager of this community must set timelines and begin policies and programs that ease this transition and deal with an overall increase in population.

Recognizing that installation commanders have a diverse population to serve is only half the story. Administrators of on-post communities in Korea have responsibilities to their neighboring off-post communities and to key stakeholders of their installations. The relationship among the key on- and off-post communities and among major stakeholders has fostered enduring partnerships to preserve the peace on the Korean peninsula and to provide excellent municipal services.

Efficiencies Realized

KORO nurtures an environment receptive to positive leadership, empowerment of employees, and training that will improve the region's abilities to deliver high-quality municipal services. The Korea region office actively seeks ways to produce highly effective, state-of-the-art communities that maximize support to people and enhance the theater's overall readiness posture.

The Korea region has applied and deployed the Malcolm Baldrige criteria for performance excellence throughout the organization, to focus its governance system on ethical behavior, on efficiencies, and on those key results-prime measures-that indicate how well the governor and managers are delivering good-quality local services to citizens and stakeholders.

Key Communities and Stakeholders

Like all civilian cities or counties, on-base military neighborhoods have key stakeholders that contribute to the growth of the entire community. These stakeholders influence policies and laws, employ the "citizens" of the community, or provide some type of service or benefit to the on-post community. The manager of the on-post township has to work closely with these stakeholders. Such productive partnerships build public trust and confidence, improve and develop systems of infrastructure, lead to efficiencies, and help to increase the knowledge assets of the on-base community.

The director of KORO-the "governor" of the region-and the area commanders develop long- and short-term strategies to accommodate and support stakeholders. For example, the director of KORO has established a semiannual reporting requirement to KORO's primary stakeholder, the Eighth U.S. Army. This briefing outlines KORO's efforts to deliver quality-driven community support services to the Army.

KORO also participates in well-being initiatives that improve the quality of life for service members, civilian employees, and family members. Some of the current initiatives include improving the sports fields and recreational areas, offering more options for teenagers, and soliciting stakeholders to hire students for part-time work.

The region office and the communities practice a "good neighbor" policy with the Korean hosts. As

governor, the director of KORO sets the example of practicing good citizenship with the off-post Korean population. The director accomplishes this by extending invitations to regional activities to top-level civilian and military executives within the Korean government.

In their capacities as managers, area commanders extend the same courtesies to local political figures and key businesspeople. Extending the hand of friendship to the community "outside the gate" helps commanders to stay abreast of developing issues and concerns. Furthermore, it gives the director and commanders an opportunity to find creative solutions to developing situations before they become insurmountable problems.

Visionary Leadership and Fact-Based Management

Under the major command structure, the installations primarily function as city-states. This point has caused disparity in the way municipal services have been delivered. Although key municipal services had been delivered to the citizens of the on-post communities, they were not necessarily standardized.

More important, each area command had its own distinct measurements to gauge success and stakeholder and citizen satisfaction. Consequently, favorable trends in a specific municipal service reported by the commander, Area 4 (Daegu community), might be unfavorable by Area 2 (Yongsan-Seoul community) standards.

The director of KORO and KORO's staff recognized that each community has its own chemistry. Each community, however, delivers similar services to its citizens. The director of KORO used this basis of similarity among the services being provided to start a management-by-fact system using standardized measurements to determine success at each community.

The management-by-fact system is briefed quarterly, enabling the reporting system to be kept current and facilitating timely decisions by the governing bodies (director of KORO and the area commanders) within Korea. Portions of this report are briefed to the principal stakeholder, the Eighth U.S. Army, every six months.

Focus on the Future

Stagnation in a community hinders its growth and prosperity. In today's public management environment, the pursuit of sustainable growth and the need to be a leading community manager require a strong future orientation and a willingness to make long-term commitments to key stakeholders: the citizens of a community, major organizations within it, and external, neighboring communities. The regional director and the installation commanders have to anticipate the community's and other key stakeholders' expectations.

In today's Army, Quonset huts and open-bay, group barracks and gang latrines have all become passé. Consequently, leadership within the Korea region has worked toward eliminating obsolete quarters and replacing them with what service members-citizens of the communities-expect.

Many members of military communities live on the Korean economy. This challenges the community managers to provide adequate force protection and good quality housing. The governance system is the foundation for meaningful measures that protect the force. Housing has been another challenge that has required an innovative solution to fit the future plans of this theater.

The United States government gives soldiers and civilian employees an allowance to live on the local

economy. Korean property owners employ a "key money system." A tenant gives the landlord a huge sum of money up-front; once the lease is finished, the landlord returns the key money to the tenant.

Westerners, of course, use monthly rent. In Korea, however, the rent is paid up-front just like key money, except that the landlord keeps the rent money. Adopting the western way of paying rent to landlords caused inconveniences. Citizens of the communities often lost money when they converted currencies. And they also had to negotiate with the local landlord, endure an outdated bureaucratic process, and pay unexpected charges, fees, and commissions.

In Seoul, it cost the U.S. government approximately \$90 million to house military members and civilian employees and their families in off-post housing. But taking advantage of the Korean key money system cost \$65 million, yielding a \$25 million cost avoidance that could be used to fund the resources to meet other requirements. Such innovative thinking could allow this region the opportunity to acquire high-quality housing at a more reasonable cost. Furthermore, if adopted and implemented, this program would allow the area to return to the traditional method of establishing leases, thereby demonstrating good citizenship.

Agility

Success in administering a community demands agility and the capacity for rapid change and flexibility. In Korea, agility means the ability to change from an armistice environment to a wartime scenario. The regularly scheduled noncombatant evacuation exercises permit the communities a chance to practice making the transition from the current truce structure to mobilization.

Public managers have a "prime directive" to ensure that citizens placed in their care are safe and secure. This is especially true in Korea. KORO and community administrators have set up procedures to ensure that civilian employees and family members are out of harm's way, should a natural or man-made disaster occur on the Korean peninsula.

The Army is moving from "Camp Swampy" to the Starship Enterprise. Part of the job of the director of KORO and of the area commander is to seek ways to realize efficiencies in the areas of stakeholder interests, visionary leadership, future focus, and agility. Regions have to bring the key stakeholders into the overall planning process in order to realize efficiencies.

Leaders develop standardized measures to gauge success and to be proactive in identifying and resolving concerns and issues. Innovation helps a community grow and prosper. And agility measures the military communities' capability and capacity to change to support different environments and customer expectations.

A Chinese proverb reminds us, "One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade." The Korea region and the communities are "planting trees" so that citizens can enjoy the future "shade" of these endeavors.

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