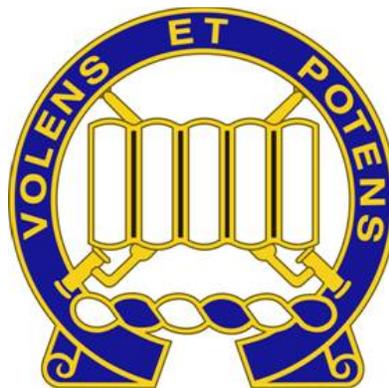


Battalion Command Lessons Learned

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3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry
2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division



Cottonbalers by God!



30 Jan 14 – 10 Mar 16

Table of Contents

Section 1: Intro	3
Section 2: 1st 180 Days	5
Section 3: 1st 365 Days	7
Section 4. 771 Day Mark (26 months – End of Command)	11
Section 5. New Lieutenant Notes	27
Section 6. Initial Field Grade Counseling	29



Acknowledgements: Thanks to the Cottonbalers who made all this possible but especially the Company Commanders (14) and First Sergeants (14), Operations Officers (3) and Operations Sergeant Majors (3), Executive Officers (3), and Command Sergeants Major (3). Thanks also to a tremendous Brigade and Division Chain of Command. Thanks to the best two kids a Dad could wish for and special thanks to my bride, Adrianna, who continues to keep the home fires burning while also serving as chief sounding board and proofer!

Section 1: Intro

I commanded the 3rd Battalion, 7th (United States) Infantry – the Cottonbalers – from 30 Jan 14 to 10 Mar 16. During this period, the battalion went through a reset period, an off post deployment to Camp Blanding, FL to serve as the opposing force for the 53rd Infantry Brigade's home station training center rotation, an 18 month train up for a rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center, a second train up for a rotation at the National Training Center, and preparation to assume mission as part of the US Africa Command Regionally Aligned Force.

I wrote these lessons learned over the 26 months of command. The first two pages are the top five lessons – those that I think are truly the most important (the number in parenthesis is where the lesson is in the main document). If you read nothing else, please read these first two pages. I have also included new officer initial counseling, which I conducted one-on-one in my office or during physical training, and my guidance to field grades and company commanders.

Please feel free to contact me by email (scott.a.shaw12.mil@mail.mil) with any questions.

1. (2.) Don't get down when bad things happen. We had 21 drug offenses in the first 90 days and a myriad of other discipline issues (DUIs, Sr NCO/Officer misconduct, etc). Of those 21, three were repeat offenders so it really meant 18. I was sitting at my desk thinking about how to get it to stop when I realized a fact.

Fact: 21 Soldiers in trouble was 3.5% of the battalion. The other 96.5% were being great Soldiers.

I was spending more than 90% of my time concerned with 3.5% of the unit. I stopped being so concerned.

2. (23.) Lick 'em tomorrow. After the first day of the Battle of Shiloh, sometime after midnight, then Brigadier General William T. Sherman came upon then Major General Ulysses S. Grant standing under a tree, sheltering himself from the pouring rain, smoking a cigar, and planning for the next day. Sherman remarked, "Well, Grant, we've had the devil's own day, haven't we?" Grant looked up. "Yes," he replied, "Yes. Lick 'em tomorrow, though." And that's what they did. The best action after a setback – regroup and "lick 'em tomorrow."

GEN Powell said "Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier." Don't get down on yourself or your unit when bad things happen. Deal with it by regrouping and lick the problem.

3. (25.) 100% accountability of Soldiers, weapons, and equipment 100% of the time. Our nature is to check accountability in the morning and evening. It's when the reports are due. This age old "0600 and 1800" mantra is too old. Battlefield tempo has changed

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such that units must be able to react very quickly. We enforced the “100% accountability of Soldiers, weapons, and equipment 100% of the time” standard and it paid off. I deliberately chose “Soldiers” vice “Men.” It paid off too. It’s one team not two.

4. (49.) “What did the old guy do?” Every previous commander, me included, has annoying habits. They might have been perpetually late to meetings showing that they didn’t value others time. They might have cut people off in meetings showing that they didn’t value others ideas. See Marshall Goldsmith’s *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful* for 18 more morale draining things that Leaders do.

Find that data and make a conscious and ‘public-without-stating-it’ effort to display the better behavior. Read your initial command climate survey closely. Talk to people that you trust deeply (like the Command Sergeant Major, Executive Officer, Operations Officer, Operations Sergeant Major, or Chaplain – I wouldn’t recommend any lower) about what behaviors you should observe and change. Launch a 360 degree evaluation (Multi-Source Assessment Form – MSAF) and pay attention to the results. Finally, listen to subordinates when you’re around them. They will tell you eventually and it will likely not be through direct conversation.

5. (61.) Battalion command is the last level of personal leadership. I walked into a sniper position after midnight (it was during a training exercise and I was wearing observer-controller gear) and whispered “SGT Fellows, what’s going on?” Without looking away from his optic, the young sergeant said “SIR! What are you doing here.” He didn’t have to see me. He recognized my voice in the dark.

That’s what battalion command is about – it’s the last level that a Soldier will recognize their Leader’s voice in the dark. It’s the last level that an officer will be able to engage Soldiers on a daily basis. It’s the last level that officers can effectively talk to Soldiers in a formation. Don’t take that for granted.

BONUS

6. (59.) Your first day in command (First Impressions Matter). Think about what you (YOU) are going to do in the first day of command. If you go from the reception (leaving your family) to a meeting at the battalion HQs and then stay until 1900, what does that say to those Leaders junior to you?

8. (62.) Battalion command is one of the six things that I am truly proud of in my life. My wife, my two kids, and the two companies that I was fortunate to command are the others. Treat every day of command as if it were your first and keep that smile that you had on the parade field on your face. I tried very hard to do so and had a great ride. I hope you do too.

Section 2: 1st 180 Days

1. AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy) is true power. I was not truly versed in the regulation as a company commander because I thought it was cumbersome and frankly didn't understand it. I read and re-read it several times before taking command (PCC is a good time to read, re-read, and study it) and then led a series of commanders' lunches on the topic. I assigned a chapter (1-2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and then 7 & 8 together since they're tied together) to a company commander to lead the discussion. We did the series three times during the 26 months programmed around the arrival of new commanders.

2. Don't get down when bad things happen. We had 21 drug offenses in the first 90 days and a myriad of other discipline issues (DUIs, Sr NCO/Officer misconduct, etc). Of those 21, three were repeat offenders so it really meant 18. I was sitting at my desk thinking about how to get it to stop when I realized a fact.

Fact: 21 Soldiers in trouble was 3.5% of the battalion. The other 96.5% were being great Soldiers.

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3. No one's a terrorist. – Everyone is trying hard – the little old lady in tennis shoes in an on post agency (the installations awards office, the housing office, or the Army Emergency Relief Office), the guy at Range Control, even the people who don't want you to do a 100% urinalysis b/c it backs up the system. Please understand that and make sure your unit's tone reflects it – You, your CSM, company commanders, 1SGs, and especially the Junior Officers and NCOs that are representing your unit.

4. The "Lost Art of Garrison Leadership" isn't lost – It's just been shelved in the name of "accomplishing the mission." Our Junior Officers and NCOs are tremendous, amazing people – and they want to do well. They have also been running at a very rapid pace for the past 12 years and in most cases have been running very hard – accomplishing the mission of winning our Nation's two simultaneous wars (if you only count OIF and OEF in Afghanistan). So FGs (including the battalion commander) and Sergeants Major (both Command and otherwise), be prepared to do some coaching/counseling that your Field Grades, CSM, Battalion Commander didn't have to do (i.e. PRT shouldn't be done on concrete. Barracks presence is important. Written counseling is not only important but also mandatory.) It's OK – it's just getting our NCOs and Officers back into understanding that leadership doesn't stop when the HMMWVs/MRAPs are parked.

5. Be the leader that your unit needs – not the leader you want to be. You need to be prepared to do what it takes to solve the problems of your unit. As seen above, we had pretty serious problems. After a significant effort including work between the leadership at the platoon, company, battalion, and brigade level along with top cover from the

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division commander and command sergeant major and assistance from CID, MPI, and others, we were able to change the climate. The company commanders and First Sergeants, CSM, and I used a lot of “influence outside the chain of command” to correct behavior and set a positive climate that turned into a positive culture. The unit was much better because of it.

I wanted to try a lot of different things that I thought were important, but realized that our unit needed other things: LPDs on training management, instruction on reconditioning PT, PCI/PCC time with leaders fully engaged, etc. Leaders must look hard at what their unit needs and move toward that.

6. Try to learn everything about your Soldiers, but realize that you’re not going to know them like your company commanders. I was really good at this as a company commander. I knew everybody’s spouse’s name, their kids’ names, and their anniversary dates. You just can’t do that at the battalion level. You have 500-1000 Soldiers, so focus on where you can make a difference. Know your FGs and their spouses, company commanders and 1SGs and their spouses, and as much about the PLs and PSGs as you can. And knowing your CSM and his/her spouse goes without saying.

7. Trust your gut. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it’s a duck. Call it. If a PL (senior or otherwise) looks like they are floundering, they are. If it appears that there is a problem with morale in a company, there probably is. Call it and figure out a way to fix it productively.

8. Relationships. They matter. Whether it’s with your ANA/ANP/IA/IP/Kuwaiti counterpart in Wardak/Logar/Diyala/Baghdad/Kuwait City, the installation Chief of CID, your partner school principal, your fellow battalion commanders, the BCT Ops SGM, the Division Chaplain, the Inspector General, or the Chief of Social Work Services, relationships matter. Cultivate and protect them at all costs. Figure out how to improve them daily – it’s like improving your fighting position. It’s never fully complete.

With solid relationships, a phone call or physical visit from me to one of the above helped commanders and thus helped Soldiers. Many times, it would sway a decision to the outcome that we desired, cut through bureaucracy, or simply get a speedy answer to something that a subordinate was struggling to solve.

Up, down, laterally, and in directions not realized, relationships matter. I’m not advocating being friends with everyone, rather investing in relationships and continually thinking about them.

Section 3: 1st 365 Days

9. Inspect Counseling. I did not inspect counseling until I had a problem. I had to remove a leader and the immediate supervisor had only done verbal counseling. Make it a point to inspect leader counseling (platoon leader and platoon sergeant) early and often. I would also make it a point to talk to platoon leaders early and often about “how to” counsel their platoon sergeant as well as to company commanders about “how to” counsel their First Sergeants.

10. Focus on developing your strengths not just improving your weaknesses. I received a lot of feedback prior to and immediately after taking command: Multi-Source Assessment Forms (MSAFs), Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (MBTI), Kolb Learning Model forms, the True Growth Seminar at PCC, Initial Command Climate Surveys, sensing sessions, and just talking to people during the duty day in the motor pool, during training, or at the DFAC. I focused a tremendous amount of energy on improving my weaknesses – sometimes at the expense of using my strengths to better the organization. I recommend using Buckingham and Clifford’s “Now Discover Your Strengths” as an analytical tool for determining your strengths on top of the MSAF, Kolb, MBTI, and True Growth tools.

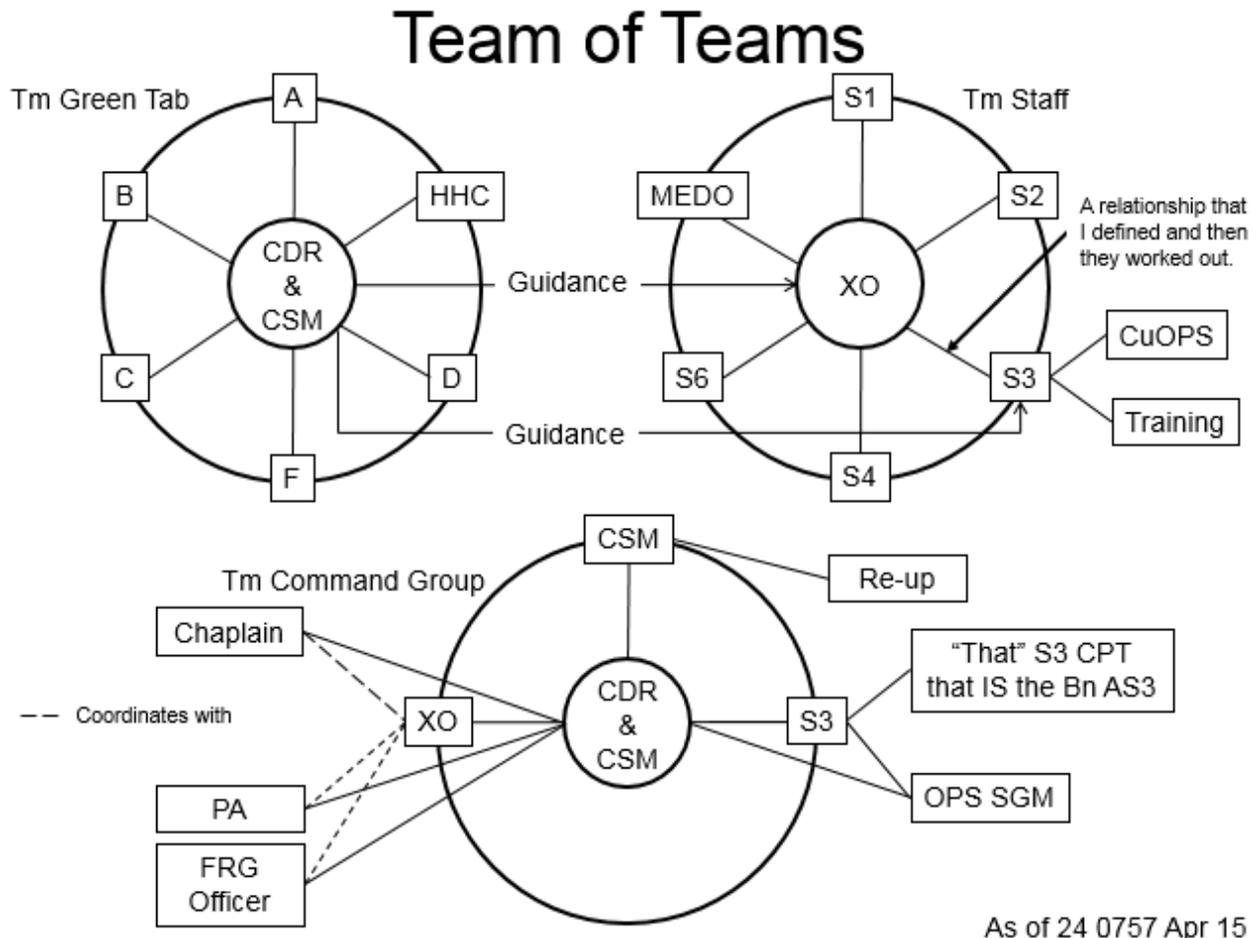
Take the words of Polonius from Hamlet, Scene 1, Act 3 to heart “This above all: to thine own self be true.” You have strengths – play to them.

11. Develop trusted agents to provide feedback. I have always had people around me that I trusted to tell me the unvarnished truth. Over the course of the first couple months in command, I developed trusted agents who provided feedback on how we were steering the organization. I used (and continue to use) my wife, my CSM, the two FGs, the Ops SGM, the Chaplain, my driver (a good sensor of the PNN – the Private News Network), and my fellow battalion commanders. It helped me to keep focused on bettering the organization in a positive way. I continued to refine my network and tools for feedback by meeting with platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, First Sergeants, and others but always brought that data back to my trusted agents for final vetting prior to making a decision.

12. Commanders are responsible for everything that their command does or fails to do. There are going to be well-meaning people who will give a commander their opinion on a particular topic. Many times it is in the form of “This is really important to the CG.” or “This is the way that it’s always done here at Fort X.” I am not speaking of unlawful command influence. I mean people who are trying to ensure that the Commander does the right thing. I took their counsel, but made my decision based on the facts tempered by my experience and the situation. Every situation is different and warrants the Commander’s personal attention.

Note: This is derived from AR 600-20 *Army Command Policy* para 2-1 (b).
“Commanders are responsible for everything their command does or fails to do.”

13. **Team of Teams.** There are teams internal to your organization that need to be shepherded/managed for organization efficiency. These teams helped me to gain a better understanding and make better and faster decisions. Below is the method that I used.



14. **Risk assumption.** Mission command is based on “Mutual trust” and “Prudent risk.” Many of our leaders think that they should be trusted implicitly and never checked based on their rank, commissioning source, and BOLC/ALC/SLC/Ranger School attendance. While I respect Leaders’ qualifications, I also observe two levels down to ensure that I know who I can trust, and to what degree, in order to command one level down (instead of two or three). I spent a lot of time with Leaders at PT, in the field, and in garrison making observations and providing feedback.

I initially tried to assume risk by creating a large battalion level certification program. It didn’t work well. I think that our Leaders are certified for their position by TRADOC in their credentialing course (WLC, ALC, and SLC for NCOs, IBOLC for Platoon Leaders, MCCC for company commanders) but are certified for daily activities by their first and second line Leader (Thus in the case of a platoon leader their company and battalion

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commander). I placed minimum requirements on a platoon leader prior to assumption of duties. He or she had to read three books (Blackhearts, The Killing Zone, and Message to Garcia) and then do an office call within the first two weeks to explain what they learned. We then continued the discussion in weekly staff duty outbriefs, after PT sessions, on a live fire, and in OER counseling – certification never stopped. Certification is a Leader's daily effort and duty to their Soldiers, and not a one-time affair.

15. Doctrinal Command and Support relationships IAW our doctrine (the below is from ATTP 5-0.1) must be decided early, revisited often, and enforced. I have observed numerous occasions where companies and battalions decided to do something based on a lack of understanding of Attached, OPCON, and TACON. It was vitally important and one of my most important responsibilities as a commander to ensure that the task organization properly accounted for the whereabouts and duties at all times of every single Soldier organic to the battalion/assigned/attached/OPCON/TACON or in a Direct Support/General Support/Reinforcing/GS-R role. I constantly ensured a doctrinally correct command and support relationship for all units in the task force enforced and checked in accordance with FM 6-0, Appendix B in order to ensure that subordinate commanders were given maximum freedom of action.

16. You actually DO get a sixth (or seventh if you are fortunate enough to drive a Mini Cooper like me) gear issued to you at PCC – use it wisely. The AS-3/S4 IS going to go to bed before the Battalion Commander, and is likely NEVER going to be as excited about coming back to his plans desk/the battle desk/a staff project as the Commander is about commanding the battalion. A Leader gave me that counsel prior to command and I observed it early. I then set up my systems – including my personal battle rhythm – so that the organization, vice the person, could keep up with me in tactical/combat operations. I also remembered that there is a limit to the 6th/7th gear and husbanded it for use when necessary.

17. Don't always solve company commanders' problems. I (like many former staff officers) have spent a lot of time solving commander's problems. I tried to let the XO and S3 solve problems by not immediately reacting to what a company commander brings to me. This kept me better able to react to the large things, and allowed the staffers to fix the small ones-keeping the battalion running within my guidance. I also tried to practice letting company commanders struggle to figure issues out on their own as well. Many of the best lessons I learned were those I deduced myself.

18. Texting. Many senior leaders lament the death of personal contact at the junior leader level due to excessive texting. While I will admit that our under 30 crowd will use texting as "leadership" (they will use it like a Pre-Combat Check) and the Leaders need to caution against it, I also admit that it is a very powerful information distribution tool. I set up a distro list on day one. This allowed me to ensure rapid information distribution on changes to locations for training, a meeting time, or info required, and also permitted

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for a quick turn and acknowledgement that information was received, acknowledged, and actioned.

19. Investigations – keep a record at your level in case it comes back later. I've had to go back to previously completed investigations when something went to a courtmartial or admin action. It's my responsibility as a commander, and not the SJA's.

Final Note for the 365 day edition of Lessons Learned:

20. Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. I read this really good quote in GEN Petraeus' biography. This quote is most commonly attributed to Seneca (the Roman philosopher and statesman) and the full quote is:

"The best wrestler," he would say, "is not he who has learned thoroughly all the tricks and twists of the art, which are seldom met with in actual wrestling, but he who has well and carefully trained himself in one or two of them, and watches keenly for an opportunity of practicing them." --- Seneca, *On Benefits*, vii. 1

Good things come when you prepare for actions ahead and look for opportunity to reinforce success/exploit the enemy's weakness or failure.

Section 4. 771 Day Mark (26 months – End of Command)

21. There are four ways to regain the initiative in a gunfight. (Learned at JRTC's Leader Training Program from my former brigade commander)

1. Fires
2. Reserves
3. Placement of Key Leaders
4. Expend Soldiers' Lives

This lesson that I learned at the Joint Readiness Training Center's Leader Training Program is one that we took into our rotation and practiced. The goal is to never have to get to #4 but sometimes when 1-3 fail, it comes to #4 (Expending Soldiers' Lives). This basic checklist/formula worked for us in the development of a course of action and rehearsals to ensure that the right assets were in place prior to action. It also helped me in determining what assets I might move in a fight to react to an enemy's action.

22. Simple things will consume your personal time unless you (the collected unit leadership) have emplaced a standard or system and enforced it. My example is fuel in water cans (we had to stop training to inspect), but it can range from late FLIPLs, lateral transfers, and evaluations to poor training management to just about anything. Take the time to analyze the simple problems, effect a simple solution (standard or system), and enforce it.

23. Lick 'em tomorrow. After the first day of the Battle of Shiloh, sometime after midnight, then Brigadier General William T. Sherman came upon then Major General Ulysses S. Grant standing under a tree, sheltering himself from the pouring rain, smoking a cigar, and planning for the next day. Sherman remarked, "Well, Grant, we've had the devil's own day, haven't we?" Grant looked up. "Yes," he replied, "Yes. Lick 'em tomorrow, though." And that's what they did. The best action after a setback – regroup and "lick 'em tomorrow."

GEN Powell said "Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier." Don't get down on yourself or your unit when bad things happen. Deal with it by regrouping and lick the problem.

24. Friction – it's what battalion commanders must use their experience to seek out and reduce. While the Operations Officer plans, the Executive Officer ensures that the plan will work, and the Command Sergeant Major checks the battalion, the Commander must be thinking of the friction that is ahead. Commanders must use their experience and judgement to "see" problems that can arise as a result of their unit's action or inaction and emplace measures to counter that action or stimulate other action. Subordinate commanders will accomplish their mission. They are very good at getting results. The friction that is generated is what the higher commander must anticipate and then reduce to preserve the energy of their subordinate commands.

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25. 100% accountability of Soldiers, weapons, and equipment 100% of the time. Our nature is to check accountability in the morning and evening. It's when the reports are due. This age old "0600 and 1800" mantra is too old. Battlefield tempo has changed such that units must be able to react very quickly. We enforced the "100% accountability of Soldiers, weapons, and equipment 100% of the time" standard and it paid off. I deliberately chose "Soldiers" vice "Men." It paid off too. It's one team not two.

26. Logistics – with the exception of MEDEVAC – is a time based operation. After 13 years of sitting atop piles and piles of logistical "stuff," we have come to the conclusion that "it" (fuel, food, water) will be there immediately when we need "it." The First Sergeants will charge forward with the company trains and the logisticians will always be able to resupply that forward cache.

It's not like that. We have begun again to train for and will operate in austere environments with limited ability to carry all that we "may" need. Logisticians must prepare concise and accurate staff estimates fed by lower units' requirements based on a lower unit's staff/Commander's estimate. Commanders must supervise the process and ensure that the tempo of the operation is enabled by the logistical system. If not, operations will stop until the timing of the logistics is fixed.

27. We do stuff; it isn't done to us. Many units take a passive approach to directed activities such as national level reset, the deployment process to a combat training center or theater, or post-deployment reintegration training. It's a bad practice. Everything that a unit does is an operation and operations are driven by the Commander. Operations are not driven by an installation staff, the division staff, or even HQ Department of the Army staff.

28. You know how you make a decision; it is better for those around you to know how you do as well. I was fortunate to serve in a unit with a commander who prepared a memo called "About me." As I read the memo and continued to serve in the organization, I realized how truly brilliant it was. If a commander has a reasonable expectation for a standard, product, or effort, then it should be known rather than figured out through experiential learning. Units and staffs have a limited amount of organizational and personal energy. A commander that spends their unit's/staff's energy figuring out what the commander wants is counterproductive and wasteful. Take the time to figure out what you want – at least a frame of what you want – and let the unit/staff solve the problem.

29. Be a steadying presence. Commanders set tone. If the Commander is excited, then unit will be excited. If the Commander is angry, the unit will be angry. If the Commander has a constant calm and steadying presence, then the unit will succeed in the most difficult of situations. I know that this is harder to do in practice than it is in the writing of these words, but I also know that an excitable commander spins units and causes poor effects/actions.

30. There are two types of plans: Those that might work and those that won't work. During planning, the staff will come up with a plan that will not meet screening criteria, is not logistically supportable, or depend on a prayer or luck. Those plans fall into category two – those that won't work. The plan that might work is the one that needs to be implemented. I did not strive for the perfect plan rather the one that might work.

31. Open Door Policy – there are going to be folks that try to close it. Commanders at all levels are required by AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy) to have an open door policy (and should). From day one, our Leaders are taught to solve problems at the lowest level. There are Leaders in our Army that will tell their Soldiers “There's no one in this platoon (squad/team) that's going to use the Commander's open door policy.”

As a technique, I brought this up at a formation and ensured that it was clear that my door was open to all and that no one could stop a Soldier from using it. This was not meant to side-step subordinate Leaders rather to ensure that all Soldiers knew that I would see them if they needed to see me. If I were able to repeat command, I would talk to Leaders once per quarter about this policy.

There are many ways that a Soldier can attempt to rectify an issue including:

- a. Chain of Command
- b. NCO Support Channel
- c. Open Door Policy
- d. SHARP Office
- e. EO Office
- f. CG's Hotline
- g. Inspector General Office
- h. Field Grade/SGM of the Day (Circulating or in their Daily Report)
- i. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/US Army WTF Moments
- j. Chaplain
- k. Behavioral Health
- l. Medical/Dental Community
- m. Trial Defense Services
- n. Article 138 (UCMJ) Complaint
- o. ICE Comment to your unit's webpage

I was aware of most of these and placed systems in place to monitor them. If there are many more of c. thru o. than there are of a. and b., I submit that there may be a lack of trust somewhere in the chain of command or NCO support channel.

32. Communications (technical and tactical) is up, down, and laterally. If you can't talk to your higher, adjacent, and lower units then you're just going through the motions. Whether field or garrison, units must have a plan for communicating tactically and administratively. I spent a lot of time on the technical aspect of communications [what radio hooked up to what antenna/what digital device hooked into what satellite system (and are we in danger of overloading it)] as well as the tactical aspect (who is talking to

whom). The higher to lower is generally easy because that's what our Leaders know. The lower to higher is what needs a battalion commander or field grade's emphasis. Again this is something to emphasize in both field AND garrison conditions. The S4 knows who to talk to in the companies; does he/she know who to talk to in the BCT staff or the BSB? A good comms card/plan/annex and rehearsing/discussing that plan is key.

33. Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good. Winning is mostly about skill and perseverance, but partially about happenings outside of our control. It was great when all that my team did caused us to succeed. Many times, success came to us in the form of something that serendipitously happened. Take victory in any form but realize that it is not always what you do that causes success.

34. A Commander's words really stick. One time I said, "That sync matrix isn't very worthwhile." One of my FGs took that to mean "Don't do sync matrices." I am a verbal processor and like to discuss topics with a broad audience. After the above incident, I really realized that I had to be very careful after that with my words.

35. "Setting conditions" needs to be described in very clear terms at the battalion level. We throw around the words "setting conditions" like everyone knows what conditions need to be set prior to an action. I asked myself "Does every staff officer know what conditions need to be set prior to launching the battalion attack?" The answer was clearly "no." Each time that someone said that during planning or a brief, I would ask specifically what conditions needed to be set prior to execution.

36. Don't judge new officers too harshly too soon. Our officers, NCOs, and Soldiers leave their initial entry training certified to do their job. Specifically, our officers have been to college and graduated, completed a commissioning program (ROTC, USMA, or OCS), and have been to functional courses. They are generally trying hard to succeed. If they are not meeting the standard, then they need to be counseled on that failure to meet the standard. Unless they have a serious character flaw in their first rating period, I would give them the benefit of the doubt and continue to monitor their performance to determine their potential in the second and subsequent rating periods.

37. An incredibly important (but often over looked) collective training event – the buddy team live fire. I did not put emphasis on the buddy team live fire but in retrospect, I would. The last action that a Soldier takes in a battalion attack is looking at her/his buddy with a look of "You got my back, right? OK, 1...2...3, go!" That "go" may cost a Soldier their life. I glossed over this too much trying to get to squad and platoon live fires, but in retrospect, would require it quarterly for every Soldier.

38. Most infamous last words – I got it. This dismissive statement is one that I have stopped using in conversation. Listening and then saying "Thank you" is more appropriate.

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39. Attention to detail. The devil is in the details. I found that “conceptual planning” created a lack of attention to detail. We would not get to the level of “detailed planning” until we were talking to company commanders or during the rehearsal. Attention to detail in the early stages of planning will reduce wasted time later.

40. Enforce the 3Bs of briefing – Be brief, Be brilliant, Be gone. Everyone wants to impress the Commander. Briefers will try to go long to impress. We put the 3B rule into place to ensure that we had quality. The XO and S3 enforced it with rehearsals and backbriefs prior to execution of a brief.

This is a rule that I would, in hindsight, also pass along to incoming/outgoing commanders in their change of command speech.

41. Pin the rose on the responsible person prior to ending any conversation with meaning. Too often, a meeting will occur and break without someone being tagged as the responsible person for an action/actions. This will lead to no action. In field conditions, this means asking the question “who observes what location with what optic and reports on what net.” In garrison, it means asking “who is at the start time of the local Armorer’s Course (or Warrior Leader’s Course) to ensure that our Soldiers are admitted.”

42. Junior NCOs deserve a team leader course, and it must be held at the battalion level. Warrior Leader Course is an excellent leadership education for new corporals and sergeants. However, it is not all-encompassing nor is it unit specific. Further, many team leaders are Privates First Class and thus low on the Division/Installation priority list. A local team leader course overseen by a very senior non-commissioned officer (the Battalion CSM) and taught by other senior non-commissioned officers (the 1SGs) can round out that education. It can also incorporate those PFCs not priority for Warrior Leader Course. I believe that this must happen at the battalion level. Company commanders and First Sergeants already have enough (or too much) on their plate to design a week’s training specifically for their non-commissioned officers. They must also supervise the Soldiers while the non-commissioned officers are in training.

A suggested menu might be:

Intro from Battalion CSM

Counseling

Field craft

Marksmanship

Troop Leading Procedures ending in delivery of verbal orders

Pre-combat inspections including Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services

43. You win or lose in transition. The current fight is happening, needs to be monitored by the XO and OPS SGM, and action must be taken if decision points are met. The future fight is being planned by the S3 and the staff, needs guidance from the

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Commander, and must be briefed to the company commanders. Both will happen because two field grade officers are supervising them.

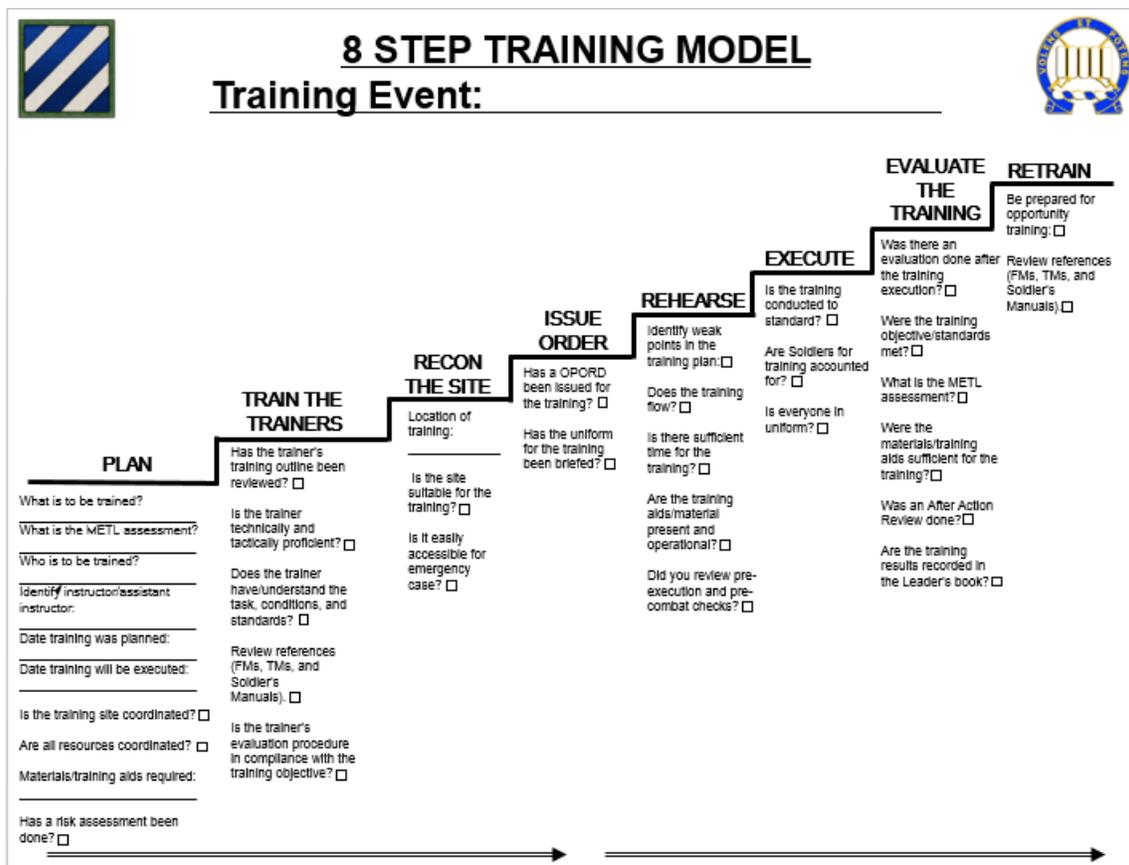
The “in between places” need field grade emphasis and oversight as well. That’s the purview of the Commander and Command Sergeant Major. The Command Team must visualize those transition points and place staff emphasis on them through the XO and S3. Command Teams must always be searching for those points as the XO and S3 are focused on their current and future fights.

44. HRC Branch Assignment Officers/NCOs/DA Civilians respond to Battalion Commanders and Command Sergeants Major. My Command Sergeant Major and I routinely engaged Infantry Branch, Armor Branch, etc as well as the functional branches (Drill Sergeant, Recruiter) to secure the assignments that were right for our formation and the Soldier. If a Soldier was assigned to Drill Sergeant duty and was not ready due to physical fitness readiness or a physical condition, we would get them deferred or deleted from the assignment.

I called assignment officers within Human Resources Command to secure lieutenant broadening assignments (see below), post-command assignments for every captain, or post-Key and Developmental assignments for all four majors.

45. Insist on pre-briefs for all training events. Pre-briefs are about two things: 1. Did the Leader plan and resource the training so that it will succeed (important), and 2. Can the Leader brief a coherent plan (more important). By the time a plan came to my office, the company commander had approved it (he or she and I had discussed it in the training meeting) and the S3 and XO had resourced it in a training resource meeting. Pre-briefs ensured that the Leader could coherently communicate the plan.

46. Use and enforce the 8 Step Training Model (or 9 or 10). We used the 8 Step Training Model in the battalion. There are others that work but the 8 Step Training Model is the most commonly used. I don’t think that one (8) is better than the other two (9 or 10), however all three are infinitely better than not using one at all. My S3 developed a one-page model (see below) for platoon leaders to use in preparation for training and briefing their training concepts for approval. The model was part of a standard two-slide range brief as the second slide. A training model is a good checklist for a trainer at any level of experience (including battalion commanders) to ensure that training is to standard.



Solid plans that are not briefed well will fail every time. I saw it as my duty to ensure that officers were able to deliver orders with technical competence and, more importantly, confidence in their abilities. A briefing to a senior officer requires preparation and rehearsals that ensure that the Leader is prepared to brief their plan to their subordinates. It also gave me a chance to evaluate Leaders two-levels down (platoon leaders) on their ability to communicate.

Finally, briefing a senior officer shows the junior officer how serious we take their training. We vote with our time.

47. Conduct home visits. As previously stated, the barracks belongs to leadership. They must be inspected. Our Army's married Soldiers nearly outnumber the unmarried and often Leaders forget their off-post Soldiers. While Leaders can't inspect the on- or off-post quarters of a Soldier of any rank, they can do a home visit ranging from a simple "stop and look" to a knock on the door. This first verifies that the address listed on the Soldier's contact info is correct. Second, it verifies that the map to the Soldier's quarters is correct. Third, it can potentially identify off-duty issues.

We had a small number of single Soldiers "crashing at their buddies place" while paying part of the rent. One Soldier rented a larger place than he needed (or could afford), took

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in roommates, and they all lived together. A large number of Soliders with two residences is an indicator of something going on that the chain of command likely needs to know.

48. Conduct Initial Command Inspections. Initial command inspections are required by regulation and typically local (installation or division) policy. They give the commander a snapshot of their new unit. From the *The Organizational Inspection Program Guide for Commanders*: “ICIs will occur within the first 90 days of assumption of command for the active-component and 180 days for the reserve component (AR 1-201, paragraph 3-3 c). The ICI ensures that the company commander understands the unit's strengths and weaknesses. The company commander's rater -- the commander who hosted the ICI -- should use the inspection results to help set goals for that new company commander. The senior commander cannot use the ICI results to evaluate the company commander or compare units. The new company commander is the only one who receives the results; however, the IG may request a copy of a generic, non-attributive set of the results to look for any patterns and trends.”

The ICI is a free look at company and battalion areas. I was responsible for the ICI for the company commanders and did not do a good job of scheduling them. I focused much energy on their change of command process but not enough on the follow up ICI. In retrospect, I would ensure that the ICI was placed on the calendar with as much emphasis as the change of command inventory and outbrief process. My rater did and it helped us in the follow on Subsequent Command Inspection (SCI) where “the senior commander may use the SCI results to evaluate the company, troop, battery, or detachment commander.”

While many may look at these efforts as “checking the block,” I saw (and see) them as a leader development exercise and simultaneously a means to provide feedback to the Senior Commander (typically the Division Commander). There will be last minute “burn the midnight oil” sessions in preparation for any inspection. We worked very hard in the period leading up to the inspection and still worked into the 11th hour. I think that this is where people may view actions as “checking the block.” Inspections are about readiness. If that's not the priority then we need to take action to move toward that.

The post inspection time is just as if not more important. Showing Leaders that standards are not just for inspections is Leader Development and Systems Improvement. We vote with our time.

49. “What did the old guy do that irritated people?” Every previous commander, me included, has annoying habits. They might have been perpetually late to meetings showing that they didn't value others time. They might have cut people off in meetings showing that they didn't value others ideas. See Marshall Goldsmith's *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful* for 18 more morale draining things that Leaders do.

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Find that data and make a conscious and ‘public-without-stating-it’ effort to display the better behavior. Read your initial command climate survey closely. Talk to people that you trust deeply (like the Command Sergeant Major, Executive Officer, Operations Officer, Operations Sergeant Major, or Chaplain – I wouldn’t recommend any lower) about what behaviors you should observe and change. Launch a 360 degree evaluation (Multi-Source Assessment Form – MSAF) and pay attention to the results. Finally, listen to subordinates when you’re around them. They will tell you eventually and it will likely not be through direct conversation.

50. Community Health Promotion Council. Commanders are paid to assess and reduce risk. Our Soldiers are at risk every day through their actions and the actions of others. A community health promotion council is one way to reduce that accidental (non-tactical) risk. Questions like “What risks are those junior taking that we can help them with?” or “What are we doing to reduce the readiness of our formation and how do we stop doing that?”

This type of council is typically conducted at the BCT and Division level but can be held at the battalion level. Participants should include all command teams, the Physician’s Assistant, the Chaplain, and the Retention NCO. It could also include outside experts such as the BCT Physical Therapist, the BCT Nurse, the BCT Behavioral Health Specialist (or Team), the Brigade Judge Advocate, and any other with a good idea. If I were able to change the battalion battle rhythm in hindsight, I would hold this formally each quarter with the above personnel. We did this informally and did not achieve an optimal effect.

51. Put maintenance, including services, on the training calendar. If it’s not on the calendar, it’s not going to happen. Maintenance is a readiness topic that must be constantly addressed. A good maintenance SOP will set the priorities for maintenance by week but will not ensure that services are conducted. The battalion XO and Motor Officer/Maintenance Tech must take the services schedule to the S3 and ensure that the schedule is properly placed on the calendar. Failure to do so will result in failure to conduct timely services.

52. Know yourself and strive to know yourself better over time. After 17 years of Army service I had participated in officer education including the Basic and Career Courses, functional training, and the Command and General Staff College. I had also taken part in the Pre-Command Process where I had taken several personality tests, received feedback from multiple sources (MSAFs, True Growth, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Kolb Learning Inventory, and simply talking to people – receiving counsel from senior officers, peers, junior officers, non-commissioned officers, and a chaplain or two, and most importantly my spouse), and had reflected on my performance as a Leader. All of these combined provided feedback that led to a better understanding of me.

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I spent a lot of time reflecting on that feedback with those that knew me best – my wife, my CSM, and my very closest friends. It was the reflecting that provided the greatest gain over time.

On top of the process above, I recommend several other tools for reflection (in no particular order):

- A. Marcus Buckingham *Now, Discover Your Strengths*
- B. Daniel Goleman *Emotional Intelligence*
- C. David Daniels and Virginia Price *The Essential Enneagram*
- D. Geoffrey Tumlin *Stop Talking Start Communicating*
- E. Marshall Goldsmith *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful*

53. Readiness is the direct purview of Command Teams. Our Chief, GEN Mark Milley, has stated publicly that it is our number one priority and that there will only be one number one. Readiness has multiple components – equipment, maintenance, training, and personnel. All four of them are important and the purview of Commanders. I will focus on personnel.

The number of deployable (or available) Soldiers that we have in our formation matters. The difference between deployable (those that are physically able to deploy) or available (those that are physically able and also not tied to an essential task on the installation such as borrowed military manpower, in the retirement process, or at off-post schools) matters.

Many times, the battalion's deployable number is inaccurate because of a misunderstanding of the flag report. Company level Leaders flag and battalion HQs code the flag. That code can mean flagged deployable OR flagged non-deployable. There are confusing rules within AR 220-1 (Unit Status Reporting). To that end, we must use business rules when describing that number to our higher headquarters at every level. Our Army is working through standard business rules in addition to AR 220-1 (Unit Status Reporting) but until that is solidified, I asked the following questions prior to coding a Soldier non-deployable/available.

- MRC3A: Does the temporary profile under 30 days truly prevent them from deploying? Also, does the profile end prior to the end of the reporting period. (Sub-question - If you are seeing repeated under 30's for the same ailment, you need to dig deeper into the Soldier's health concerns.)

For dental, does the Soldier have a scheduled dental procedure that fixes their condition prior to the end of the reporting period.

- MRC3Bs: Consider a separation action or Medical Evaluation Board if they have a permanent profile that prevents them from deploying.

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You need to scrutinize the Medical Readiness Decision Point (MRDP) with your PA and the brigade surgeon to determine those long/repetitive profiled Soldiers to determine if they should go into the MEB process or to the Warrior Transition Unit.

- LR Codes: Should only be those Soldiers in long term confinement and not those that just happen to be in jail at the time the report was pulled.

- LZ/LI Codes: Only those Soldiers that have committed or have allegations that are being investigated for felonious acts. If a Soldier is flagged for a FLIPL or is in the punishment phase for UCMJ, then they are not LZ/LI.

Finally, consider when a Soldier is non-deployable due to a separation action. Many will say, "It's when he/she is being 'chaptered'" but that needs definition as well. I did not code a Soldier non-deployable until the company commander signed the complete packet informing the Soldier that they were being separated.

The bottom line is that the CSM and Commander must look at every non-deployable/non-available Soldier's circumstances to see if they are truly non-deployable/non-available and take action to get them back into the deployable category.

52. Broadening Assignments. This relatively new term has taken hold. It is a well needed term but too many times officers think more about the far future (their broadening assignment in the halls of Congress) than broadening at an appropriate level. I submit that the battalion commander needs to be thinking about appropriate individual paths for each of their officers [for example Platoon Leader to staff to Specialty Platoon Leader (Weapons Platoon, Mortar Platoon, Scout Platoon)] to Company Executive Officer then to the Career Course. The battalion commander must also think about those opportunity jobs (Aide to the Deputy Commanding General, Division Headquarters Battalion Company Executive Officer, Airborne School Company Executive Officer) as well.

Above all, consider the needs of the officer as well as their wants. The things that company commanders (the job that most lieutenants will serve in after the Career Course) need help with are inside of their own company – the supply room, the arms room, and the training room. Those are broadening opportunities to consider assigning to a young officer who's looking for one.

I was able to secure the following assignments for officers while in command:

Pre-Command:

Army Central Command (ARCENT) Staff Officer

Brigade Functional Staff Officer (Officer was Career Field Designating outside of Operations)

1-507 ABN Co XO

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Division HHBn XO x2
Division Training Company XO x2

Post Command:

Division Training Company Cdr x2
JCS Fellow
Benning Doctrine Writer
Observer/Controller, Ft Polk
Project Warrior (Polk then Benning)
Recruiting Command

Since leaving command and seeing other opportunities, I highly recommend both the JCS Intern Program as well as the Army Congressional Fellowship Program (ACFP). I managed the ACFP for a year and supervised three JCS Interns and can answer questions about either.

53. Everything that you do has a Leader Development opportunity looking to surface. I desperately looked forward to doing physical training with a rifle platoon when I took command. It was what I loved about being a battalion staff officer (Battalion S3) and what I missed when I was a brigade staff officer (BCT S3). I did PT with a platoon on day one. I talked to the platoon leader about his plan so that I could mentally prepare for what we were about to do. I then did the PT session and conducted an after action review with the lieutenant. Leader development conducted!

The same can be done while you are qualifying on the rifle range, observing a platoon or company training meeting, participating in driver's training, or visiting the field feeding site. You just have to look for the opportunity and seize it.

54. Loyalty. Leaders must have loyalty to several: Nation, Army, Unit, and Soldier. Company grade officers are very close to problems and can lose focus on their obligations to Nation, Army, Unit, and Soldier. Battalion Commanders must not.

55. Big Rocks and Little Rocks. The resource most controlled by commanders is time.



Put the "big rocks" in first



Otherwise, your jar will fill up with sand

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Doing homework before the year/quarter planning sessions begins enables commanders to put “Big Rocks” (What YOU want to do) in their jar (your training calendar) or the jar (your training calendar) WILL fill with sand (Things that others want you to do).

Note: The above photo is a diagram from Burgess and Allen’s Taking the Guidon.

56. Establish reporting standards for garrison operations in the same manner as you would for combat. I did not serve as an executive officer at the battalion or brigade level prior to commanding a battalion. I was not sensitive to what needed to be reported to the brigade leadership nor when it needed to be reported. I talked to my peers who had served as both battalion commanders and brigade/battalion executive officers and developed the card below. This card helped company level leaders report properly and promptly. I passed it out on day 2 (day 1 after the change of command and reception, I went home. See #59.) to the Company Commanders and First Sergeants along with copies for their Officers and Non-commissioned Officers (Platoon Sergeants). Company-level Leaders passed on in exit discussion that they found it to be helpful.

<p><u>Baler Reporting Requirements</u> I – Immediate contact N – Next day before PT C – Next day after 0900</p> <p>Reporting Chain: First report to Bn XO by CoC (CO, XO, 1SG, Bn SDO/SDNCO). Bn XO contacts Bn Cdr, CSM, Staff.</p> <p>(I) Red Cross message (5Ws with plan and contact info for Soldier) (I) Incident of SH/SA/Assault/Discrimination (Race, Gender, Orientation) (I) Suicide Ideation/Event (I) Safety violation (Injury to Soldier/Damage to Gov’t equipment) (I) Domestic Abuse allegation (I) MP/CID/MPI Presence in barracks (I) Soldiers working after 1700 (M-F) or during weekends (Not on Tng Schedule) (I/C) Loss of equipment (I) Sens Item</p>	<p>(C) All others (I) Missed mvmt by a Plt or greater formation (I) Environmental Incident (I/N/C) Visitor to Bn AO (GO, BCT Cdr/CSM, installation agency) (I/N/C) Media event (I/N/C) An event the Co Cdr deems necessary for contact (I/N/C) Misconduct</p> <p>(N) Death of a family member of a Soldier assigned to the battalion</p> <p>(C) Marriage (C) Birth of child (C) Death of a Soldier or immediate family member of a Soldier assigned to the installation/division</p>
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57. Consider writing guidance for specific events/time periods. Our battalion trained very hard for our JRTC rotation. I had been a couple times and so had the Command

Sergeant Major. The Commanders and First Sergeants had as well. All of our experiences were different – some Mid-High Intensity, some Mission Readiness Exercises for deployment focused solely on Iraq or Afghanistan. We wanted guidance that platoon level leadership could digest and understand in order to fight and win in a Decisive Action Training Environment at a Combat Training Center – a new or refreshed environment for all including the battalion leadership. After discussion with the battalion and company level leadership, we issued the card below to the Platoon Sergeants and above. Our Army doesn't spend \$20M for an Infantry Battalion to go to a CTC to learn, our Army sends us to fight and win.



Winning

Enduring Mission: The primary mission of the Infantry battalion is to close with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver. Its purpose is to destroy or capture him, to repel his assaults by fire, close combat, and counterattack, or all of these. Infantry battalions can deploy rapidly and can be sustained by an austere support structure. They conduct operations against conventional and unconventional enemy forces in all types of terrain and climate conditions. FM 3-21.20 (The Infantry Battalion) Para 1-1.

As of 14 0500 Aug 15

In short – Cottonbalers fight and win. We don't deploy to learn – that may happen with reflection – we go to fight and win.

Commander's Enduring Intent:

- Hunt the enemy relentlessly.
- Destroy his IDF.
- Safeguard the population.
- Maintain awareness and communication up, down, and laterally. Your best weapons are your radio and adjacent unit.
- 100% Accountability of 100% of Soldiers, Weapons, and Equipment 100% of the time by checklist.
- 360 degree security always.
- The lightest practical load always.
- Fight complacency. Inactivity and routines kill Soldiers.

As of 14 0500 Aug 15

58. Rule #1 of combat. Don't BS yourself (Learned from a great Deputy Commanding General in the Marne Division). I was very careful not to overestimate the abilities of my unit and more importantly myself. This is much more common in company grade officers, but Field Grades do it as well.

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Pointed questions like the following help subordinates understand themselves and their units so that they can visualize, decide, and direct the actions of their units then lead and assess the same.

-Exactly how many Soldiers (Companies) will it take to execute the task seven weeks from now that will not be present for a training event?

-How long do you think that it will take to move from the landing zone to the edge of the town? (Time is the most underestimated item)

-How many trucks do you need?

59. Your first day in command (First Impressions Matter). Think about what you (YOU) are going to do in the first day of command. If you go from the reception (leaving your family) to a meeting at the battalion HQs and then stay until 1900, what does that say to those Leaders junior to you.

60. Think about whether you and your Command Sergeant Major should/need to/don't need to/can attend the Pre-Command Course together. Commanders want to be ready for their first day; Command Sergeants Major too. Going to the Pre-Command Course (PCC) together seems like a great idea to do just that and in a rapid fashion. If that happens, great. If not, potentially also great.

Going to the Pre-Command Course together is not the only way that Commanders and Command Sergeants Major can form relationships. I had three Command Sergeants Major in 26 months. I did not attend PCC with any of them. We talked before, during, after, in the battalion HQs, in the field, and at each other's houses about just about everything.

Both you and your command sergeant major have been in units working hard and at a furious pace for years. You need time to think and reflect prior to the day of the ceremony. Most command teams arrive a month or more prior to the day of the ceremony and thus are able to forge a relationship prior to the change of command. You're going to continue it in the first weeks and hopefully be there the whole two years. Those weeks at PCC can be time to discuss ideas in an academic environment that can be peer reviewed and forgotten (or implemented with changes).

61. Battalion command is the last level of personal leadership. I walked into a sniper position after midnight (it was during a training exercise and I was wearing observer-controller gear) and whispered "SGT Fellows, what's going on?" Without looking away from his optic, the young sergeant said "SIR! What are you doing here." He didn't have to see me. He recognized my voice in the dark.

That's what battalion command is about – it's the last level that a Soldier will recognize their Leader's voice in the dark. It's the last level that an officer will be able to engage

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Soldiers on a daily basis. It's the last level that officers can effectively talk to Soldiers in a formation. Don't take that for granted.

62. Battalion command is one of the six things that I am truly proud of in my life. My wife, my two kids, and the two companies that I was fortunate to command are the others. Treat every day of command as if it were your first and keep that smile that you had on the parade field on your face. I tried very hard to do so and had a great ride. I hope you do too.

Section 5. New Lieutenant Notes

This is a list of topics that I used in the very first initial counseling with officers who were brand new to the battalion. I counseled them prior to personally handing them off to their company commander. Generally, I did not hold a second lieutenant in the S3 shop. I would assign them as an assistant XO unless it was going to be a very long time before a platoon opened. This conversation was generally one way and needs to be had with officers who have never really lead people for longer than the 24 hours of a leadership position in Ranger School, Basic Officer Leader Course, or their commissioning source.

1. Timeline for positions – I detailed what I thought their path would be. I assigned to a rifle platoon then the S3 shop and then mortar/scout/weapons platoon with company XO immediately prior to the CCC.
2. Ranger School – It is important for Infantry Officers to complete. Most new lieutenants that we received were not Ranger graduates. I did not and would not send back platoon leaders while assigned to a platoon as it is turmoil for their platoon. I would and did send officers in the S3 shop. I would also work an officer's three year timeline in the battalion to give them an opportunity to attend.
3. PT – You need to do it every day with your Soldiers. It's OK if you want to go with an NCO (your platoon sergeant/squad leader(s)) every once in a while but don't make it a daily occurrence.
4. Be with your Soldiers – Officers have a small amount of time to be around the most precious gift that we will ever be given – our Soldiers. Even if you're fortunate enough to have multiple reps at being a platoon leader or company commander, it's still a small fraction of the time that you will have. Maximize that time.
5. Your platoon sergeant and you – Ft Benning instructors always gave the same answer when initial training (IOBC/IBOLC) second lieutenants asked questions about garrison/field life. "Ask your platoon sergeant. He'll know." My first platoon sergeant couldn't ride in his Bradley due to a back problem. Some platoon sergeants will have ethical or knowledge problems. It's your platoon, lieutenant. Talk to the NCOs but understand that you the final decision is yours. Finally, take responsibility for your unit's actions in accordance with AR 600-20 2-1b.
6. Fraternization – An officer at a platoon party is fraternizing. Don't do it. If Soldiers show up at a restaurant or bar and you're there, be friendly and then leave. It doesn't build cohesion.
7. Full Force Actions on the Objective Rehearsals are the standard – Make time to rehearse in the conditions closest to execution that you can.
8. Getting on the ground – In keeping with the theme of #4, also do what they do. Look through the sights in the position that the gunner will look through them. Carry the same equipment that they do. In short, get on the ground.
9. Priorities of work/Soldier/NCO Business – You, lieutenant, set the priorities of work for your platoon and ensure that they are carried out. Your platoon sergeant and squad leaders must advise you, but they're yours. Enforce them. Understand that there's no such thing as "NCO business" that the lieutenant doesn't need to know about. It is Leader business and you need to know.

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10. New Soldiers – Incorporate them as quickly as possible. No “new guys” in the formation; they are Soldiers in your platoon from day 1. Watch the post-deployment cliques. Watch the new Soldiers during PT; slow it down if you need to.

11. Bar to re-enlistment – Use the bar to re-enlistment as a tool to improve performance or eliminate due to “failure to overcome a bar to re-enlistment.” This highly unused tool will get results in the form of an improvement of the Soldier or the unit’s performance.

12. Informal leaders – Informal Leaders in organizations are very powerful. Whether it’s the Specialist with a Ranger Tab, the group of NCOs who made the last deployment together, or a very powerful squad leader, you must identify informal Leaders quickly and get them on the platoon’s path.

13. Fires

a. Understand the capabilities of the asset (M825 Smoke from 105mm vs WP smoke from 120/81/60mm mortars)

b. Keep yourself under two means of IDF

c. Describe the effect that you want then supervise your FO’s execution of your desired effect.

d. Understand the consequences of your actions – what does a Raven do/how does the radar zone that I want affect the battalion/BCT?

Section 6. Initial Field Grade Counseling

Memorandum for XO and S3, 3rd Bn, 7th Infantry

Subject: Initial Counseling (Continued) _____ Bn Cdr _____ XO/S3

4. Specific:

Field Grade Rules:

1. Field Grade Officers play team ball.
2. You can't do it all yourself. You're just asking for sleepless nights.
3. Get some sleep. No less than 6 hours.
4. You run your organization – you have lots of people assigned to your staff, but when it all comes down to it, it is yours for good or bad.
5. The calendar belongs to the S3 – both short and long range. The S3 owns them. The S3 must personally manage them.
6. You have knock and enter privileges. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.
7. You are not peers with any other member of the staff – and the XO's not on the staff, he/she's the chief of staff.
8. The S3 must support the XO – sometimes that means that S3 personnel work for the XO. The S3 must respect the XO's duties (maintenance, personnel, dealing with XOs).
9. Be wary – always – of those who come to you and say "the colonel said."
10. No one gets up in the morning and says "You know, I am going to screw something up today" or "I am totally going to be a jerk to _____ (fill in the blank)." People just have bad days. Remember that.
11. Don't accept sub-par work from anyone...ever. It only leads to more sub-par work.
12. Just because you think something is obvious does not make it so for anyone else.
13. Facts are important to know, but context is king.
14. No one is going to work as hard as you. Don't be angry about it. Realize it and get past it.
15. You are not a doer.
16. Lose the baggage.

Training: I want to you to plan training that takes units to the threshold of failure.

Company Commander Guidance: I pass this along as guidance that I gave to the company commanders.

-----Begin Text-----

Company commanders are men and women of action. Inaction is what costs Soldiers' lives. When planning action to solve your problem, take the following into consideration:

1. What can I do?
2. What should I do?

3. What am I allowed to do?
4. When am I done?

- Know and understand your environment.
- Standards are standards. The battalion standard is my standard. If you want to discuss it, start with the CSM or XO and bring it to my attention.
- First impressions matter. My initial impression of you and your company is what will carry over. You can change that, but only through hard work. Please ensure that your platoon leaders and their subordinate leaders understand that.
- Statistics Matter. I look at what is happening in your unit and build a picture partially based on those statistics.
- E-mail etiquette. Be professional. Every e-mail is one forward away from embarrassing you. In addition, please have a professional signature block with no quotes.
- Hazing = No. Here are a few examples:
 - Rank Wetdowns
 - Blood Rank/EIBs/CIBs/wings/etc ceremonies
 - Rank/EIBs/CIBs/wings/etc being pounded into chests
 - Combatives where a Soldier is singled out or repetitively used as a demonstrator
 - Treating a Soldier with a behavioral health issue with disrespect or indignity.
- Take care of classified material including FOUO.
- UCMJ – Indiscipline happens. When it does, I expect to know about it IAW the reporting procedures. I also expect to know what you plan to do about it. That includes corrective training.
- SITREPs. There will be a procedure for them. Your role is to highlight the training and work of your company so that I can advocate on behalf of you to the brigade commander.
- Plan on a breakfast/lunch with me twice per month every other week. I will ensure that they are on the training schedule. Bring an idea.
- Don't let the immediate overtake the important. If you're having problems with the tasks that you are being given, come see the XO and if he can't help, come see me.
- Admit your mistakes, reflect on them, and move on. Don't quibble or whine. It's counterproductive and unprofessional.

Command is not about having fun. It's about being rewarded.

Finally, I want to emphasize that you are all on the same team of teams. Peer competition is unprofessional. I would rather have six good companies than two excellent companies and four below average. Learn from and teach each other. It's the mark of a professional.

Notes from Company Commander Books

Warriors

p39 – Meeting your 1SG and determining the “state of the command”
p42-68 - Quick Task Organization
p 42 – Trusting NCOs (SSG Jaynes)
p52/53 – Co Cdr trying to do too much; low balling
p102-103 – How to move in a jungle
p108-109 – Ground guides
p122 – LRRP false report
p152 – CO and PL leave patrol base to get Soldiers
p154 – Template the eny then act; got to be thinking all the time
p159-160 – A lot of the CO being a PL
p166-176 – PLs failed b/c CO didn't prep them

Company Commander Vietnam

p99 – If you don't love Soldiers
p146 – If you love them too much
p140 – Dealing with a sub-standard Soldier (Sweet Willie Dubray)
p151 – CO/1SG Relationship
p28-30 – CO/1SG Duties
p176-177 – How to deal with a sub-standard Soldier pt 2 (Sweet Willie Dubray again)
p198 – 1SG Sullivan on company command

Platoon: Bravo Company

p51 – Wrong tactics
p74/75 – Quick OPORD techniques
p117/118 Use of enablers
p156 – use of OH/AH
p185 – Cross talk w/companies/formulating a quick plan