

...rong, and your job is to see to it that nothing does go that wrong. In the world of functional area management, delegating isn't necessarily a virtue.

Make certain that you know — or learn — your business. If you had to take over your additional duty without having any experience with it, rectify the situation as soon as possible. Attend a school if you can. If you can't, take a correspondence course. If all else fails, learn fast on the job. As a minimum, know how to do preventive maintenance, teach relevant classes, and use equipment.

Develop a plan for attaining unit objectives within your area, and keep some milestones. For instance, two weeks before a major inspection or tactical exercise is not the time to begin squaring away your area. Everyone should know what the milestones are; your commander, your senior functional manager, and your subordinates should all be helping you move in that direction. If you fall behind, ask for help. Make everyone part of the problem; then they will have to become part of the solution.

Now we come to the payoff — the inspection. If you haven't followed the principles outlined thus far and your inspection is tomorrow, this part won't help

you. On the other hand, if you have a good area, this will help you present it in the best possible light.

Many good units get marginal inspection grades because they organize poorly for inspections. You'll get good grades if you apply these principles:

- Find a quiet area in which to lay out your presentation. Don't end up flailing around in your own office with the telephone and other distractions. Lay on a conference room or classroom well in advance.

- Prepare the presentation. Lay it out in exhibit format using the inspection checklist. (Almost all inspections have one.) And have it all together. Don't look disorganized by running around during the inspection looking for odd pieces of documentation.

- Never make the same mistake twice. Review all previous inspection reports—you can be sure the inspector has. Make sure you have corrected any previous problems. If you haven't completely solved them, document what you have been doing toward that goal.

- Don't argue with the inspector. Any good inspector will look closely at what you've been doing, and will give you the courtesy of a thorough inspection. If he

nitpicks, you are probably in good shape. This means he is having to work hard to find problems. But if he finds problems when he looks at your first exhibit, you're in big trouble. Don't make it worse by antagonizing him.

None of these inspection tips will make an unsatisfactory unit satisfactory, but they can help you put the final touches on weeks or months of hard work. Your value to your unit in combat may revolve around your tactical proficiency, but you'll never get to that point if you are relieved in peacetime for failing a brigade career-planning inspection. Success as a functional area manager will help you develop a reputation for competence that will serve you well throughout your career.



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# Your First Assignment

MAJOR ERIC E. HOLDEMAN

For most officers, their first assignment is a time when their learning curve is at its peak—a time when they formulate their basic conceptions of what the Army is or is not; how it operates; and how they operate within it.

That first assignment is indeed different from all the other assignments an officer can expect to have during his military career. Never again will he experience the frustrations and successes that come from being a newly commis-

sioned officer. And as the initial weeks and months grow into years, his "military personality" will develop.

Recognizing the fact that a great deal of literature is already available to guide young officers who are willing to read it, the ideas and thoughts set forth in this article represent only a few of the guideposts some of my acquaintances and I have found to be particularly helpful. We hope that the young infantry officers who are now facing their first assignments will

find them helpful, too. I therefore address the following advice directly to them.

As a leader, your mission, of course, is to lead soldiers. But the first principle of leadership is knowing how to follow. Giving orders is easy; taking them can be difficult. The example you set for your subordinates in executing the directives given to you can be an unspoken testimony to the esteem in which you hold the Army as a way of life. Your attitude

toward your duties and their performance will be reflected by the members of your platoon. If you become moody and disenchanted with the tasks at hand, these feelings will be conveyed to those who must follow your orders. Half-hearted orders will be executed in a half-hearted manner.

Physical fitness and maintaining personal conditioning are much more important than most lieutenants realize. One easy way to gain your men's attention is to do either poorly or extremely well on a PT test. The officer who falls out on a morning run will also find his other leadership tasks harder to perform. At your level of leadership, you must strive to learn everything your subordinates know and more. Their respect will follow.

### INTEGRITY

The one leadership trait that can help bond your men to you is unquestioned integrity. It is something we all start with and something only you can take away from yourself.

Motivating your subordinates is the key to your success. Every person can be motivated to do things he may not want to do, although the tactics and techniques may vary considerably. But whether you use stick or carrot, your goal is to keep the motivation performance oriented.

One last thing on leadership—we all want to be liked. Many a new lieutenant has had to face the fact early in his first assignment that respect for his decisions and for him as a leader is more important than being liked. If you set high standards for your men and insist on performance, success will follow, as will the respect of your men.

When you walk into your first unit, you must start evaluating the people you will be working with, and that means your NCOs. You lead your platoon, but you do it through your NCOs, and your primary job is to lead them. Don't try to become the super squad leader to every soldier. The NCOs will be glad to show you their technical expertise, and as they teach you, you will be able to evaluate what they are made of and in turn to train them in the areas you find deficient.

Don't fail to turn to your platoon sergeant or First Sergeant for advice or counsel. Their practical experience and know-how in dealing with everyday problems can be of great assistance. But remember that you are still the leader, and you must make the decisions.

Among your specific duties, there are at least two that you may need to be worried about—property accountability and safety.

### PROPERTY ACCOUNTABILITY

Property accountability will be an important part of your weekly activities. It's one of those subjects that may have been glossed over in your schooling, but one that can come back to haunt you later if you don't pay attention to it.

A good inventory cannot be over-emphasized. Every supply room has the publications you need to read to become an expert on supply accountability. Do thorough inventories, and if you don't see an item, don't sign for it. You must have a continuing program of inventories and subsequent supply actions if you want to keep from paying out of your own pocket.

### SAFETY

You pay in another way if you neglect safety, because you are responsible for the safety of your men—on and off duty. This is a fact that many young officers find hard to accept. You may ask yourself, "How can I influence what a sergeant does when he's off duty?" You can do it by preaching "Safety First." Accidents rarely "just happen." They are caused by an inattentive chain of command. The soldiers who are killed or maimed by the hundreds each year suffer, for the most part, needlessly.

Find out the safe way to do things, from changing tires to backing vehicles. (The safe way isn't always the quickest.) When you move on to your next assignment and look back on your tour and no one is missing, this will be your reward—and you'll know you did a good job.

Something else that goes with you when you leave that first tour is your

reputation. Because the Army is relatively small, and in many ways a closed society, you can expect to meet acquaintances and friends again and again throughout your career. The reputation you build, therefore, is no small matter, and it begins with your first assignment.

First impressions are lasting. When you walk in the door of your new unit, you make a statement, without saying a word, about who you are and what you think of the Army. Your appearance, uniform, and personal grooming are the first indications of what type of officer you will be, and military courtesy is another indicator of who you are and what can be expected of you.

Company commanders usually throw their lieutenants into the breach to find out what type of officers they are. So, sooner or later as a new officer you will be given a project or task, large or small, that will give you your chance to shine.

And you will want to do well, because there is an underground pipeline of information between officers about other officers and their ability to perform. If you should fail in your first effort, it will take many more successes to overcome that failure. If you have a number of successes before your first failure, though, that failure will be seen as only a minor aberration in your otherwise sterling performance.

While striving to do well in your first assignment, though, you should not neglect your family.

If you aren't married now there is a good chance that you will be. When you marry you accept another commission as important as your military one, and the balancing act between a military career and a family is not an easy one. Priorities change and your wife can become disenchanted with Army life quicker than you can say "short tour to Korea." If you unknowingly teach her to dislike the Army, you may face a "me or the Army" decision later in your career.

There are some things you can do, of course, to make the Army a good experience for all. First, if you express positive feelings about the Army and your experiences, your wife will be much less likely to express its negative aspects. Allow your family to participate in your career by talking over the next assign-

ment with them and then taking their opinions and feelings into consideration. Keep your wife informed about your activities at work and any upcoming training events. This will make her feel like a part of your military life and not separate from it.

Participating in the social life of the Army brings you into contact with other military couples, and these friendships can help to sustain not only comrades in arms but their spouses, too.

The Army is a profession, not a job.

Do not expect to receive more than you give. Normally, you'll receive less. The pressure to succeed and continue advancing through the ranks will increase with your years of experience. No amount of money or benefits can adequately pay for the hours, the separations, the hardships that come with Army life. If after a few years of service you decide the Army is not for you, then finish your service honorably and move on to something you enjoy more. If you decide to stay, be the best officer you know how to be.



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# HHC Executive Officer

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The executive officer (XO) of an infantry battalion headquarters company has a variety of duties and responsibilities that an officer newly assigned to the job may not fully understand. The headquarters XO is assigned many additional duties as well, depending upon the mission and organization of his particular unit.

An XO's first step in understanding his job should be to understand his unit's particular organization. In a regular infantry division, for example, an infantry headquarters company usually consists of a battalion headquarters section, which is made up of the S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4 personnel, and a company headquarters section, which is made up of the company commander, the XO, the first sergeant, and the supply sergeant. In addition, there is a communications platoon, a maintenance platoon, a medical platoon, and a support platoon (which includes the mess team and the transportation section.)

Because of the diverse organization of the company, its commander must call on his XO to monitor several important aspects of the unit's daily operation—usually education, maintenance, crime

prevention, and physical security—and any other missions that may suddenly become crucial to the company's mission.

As education officer, the XO closely monitors the education level of the soldiers in the company. He is the link that connects the company to the education center for such classes as the Basic Skills Education Program (BSEP) and the Advanced Skills Education Program (ASEP).

He works with the sections, the platoons, and the first sergeant to identify the soldiers who need this kind of training. He keeps an up-to-date education bulletin board and talks to each soldier about his personal educational goals. Furthermore, he keeps all personnel informed of new classes, programs, and educational opportunities. (It takes a bright, intelligent soldier to operate and maintain the Army's new and sophisticated machinery.)

As maintenance officer, the XO represents the commander in the motor pool. This is a daily function and one that requires tedious attention to detail. Poor maintenance can instantly decrease unit readiness, especially if the unit has ve-

hicles that are older than the drivers, and the Army's new hardware requires its own kind of special care and attention.

The headquarters XO's primary function in this area is to see that all vehicles are operational. He must know the status of each and must see that all vehicles receive their scheduled maintenance, even when their drivers, for one reason or another, are not present for duty.

This means that he must check each vehicle regularly and see that all deadline deficiencies are corrected immediately. All priority (0-3) parts should be ordered the same day the need for them is determined, and regular (0-6) parts should be ordered as soon as possible after the priority parts. And he must check the deferred maintenance board to see that all items have been ordered and the requisitions properly recorded.

Each day, he should see that the parts bin is cleared out, and that the parts are put on the equipment within 24 hours. Vehicles that are not operational but awaiting parts must be repaired the same day those parts arrive.

Each day, the maintenance officer (XO) must inspect the vehicle line for police, leftover parts, and vehicle line-