

changed. The selection of the M9 "bayonet system" validates several of the more popular and necessary uses: The new bayonet is also a combat and field knife, a wire and metal cutter, and a saw. It would be unflattering and undeserving, though, to relegate the bayonet to its inglorious role as a "util-

ity tool." It deserves a far better fate.

Over the centuries, the bayonet in its various forms has accrued a special charm. Even now, in spite of all the impressive technological advances, it remains the ultimate man-to-man weapon, an intriguing quality indeed. Because of this aura, and its all-round

usefulness, the bayonet is likely to be with soldiers as long as they go forth to battle. How could it be otherwise?

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The New Battalion CSM

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR OTHEL TERRELL, JR.

When you walk into your first unit as a battalion command sergeant major, you won't find a road map that shows the way to success. There will be no system that lays everything out for you; nor will everything fall into place automatically. How do you start integrating yourself into the mainstream of your organization?

In most cases, your brigade command sergeant major (CSM) will give you an inbriefing, perhaps taking several sittings to complete it. Normally, your senior CSM will ask you to tell him about yourself and your military background. This is his way of getting to know you.

Your commander will also give you an initial briefing. Approach this sitting with caution, because the outcome can set the pace that will lead to a successful tour of duty, or it can start you on a downhill slide that will be almost impossible for you to recover from.

During this briefing, it is important that you take notes and ask questions. If the commander does not mention some of the subject areas you are concerned about, clarify these things at that time, and make notes on the issues you feel can wait for another day.

When these initial briefings are over, ask yourself some questions. What did I get from them? What are my priori-

ties, and how will they affect my lack of knowledge in some of the areas mentioned? You must make your decisions on the basis of your experience as a first sergeant and a platoon sergeant, in addition to your formal military education. Your real help will come from your staff NCOs. If you are reluctant (or too shy) to seek their help, you are going to have some rough days ahead.

USE STAFF NCOs

First, take the list of priorities you made while talking with your commander and start sorting these items into areas, such as individual training, support, maintenance, and administration. Then, to find out about each of these areas, ask the NCO who is responsible for it to brief you.

Once you have been briefed by the various staff section NCOs, you will then have the facts you need to conduct your first staff meeting, and you should schedule it for a time when all of the appropriate personnel can be present.

Concurrently, once the individual unit first sergeants have completed their briefings to you on their day-to-day operations, and you have had an opportunity to visit them and look at their units, you should have some con-

cept of what you need to talk to them about in your first meeting with them. It may be a good idea to discuss some short term goals and concentrate on some ideas that require immediate responses.

These are some areas you should focus on from the very beginning:

- Soldiers' appearance.
- Quality of life (billets).
- Individual training.
- Taking care of soldiers.
- Command policies and procedures.

The quality of life for soldiers living in the billets should be high on your list of priorities, and if you find yourself in the midst of a cohesive group of first sergeants, consider yourself lucky, take advantage of it, and capitalize on their knowledge and expertise.

As a CSM in your first battalion-size unit, your focus should be divided into a number of areas, but you must corral them and make them work as one. Your commander's programs and projects, for instance, will usually vary, and his leadership style may also vary as changes occur. No matter what project or program you are asked to provide feedback on, however, you should never be afraid to go back to the commander to verify details. If you are verifying policies or working on a brief-

ing, don't forget that you are not the only one with policies; you may want to research the current SOPs or discuss the contents of the old ones with your first sergeants or senior staff NCOs. When you discover that there are several variables, you may elect to brainstorm the issues and get some possible solutions.

(In most cases you will find SOPs that need to be updated. A CSM should require that the unit's NCOs be familiar with standing operating procedures that affect the unit's mission and the welfare of its soldiers and their family members. A unit should review its SOPs semiannually and upgrade the standards).

When you advise your commander on a problem you foresee, you should also present a number of alternatives as possible solutions. Most commanders want their subordinates to be objective and to present solutions that are tangible and obtainable. That is why you are there. Most commanders welcome innovative ideas that correct, alter, upgrade, and increase the unit's proficiency. Your commander expects you to look out for the welfare of the enlisted soldiers and to help him ensure that subordinate units have initiated sound plans.

It is important that you establish a solid working relationship with your commander, because such a relationship contributes to the morale, discipline, and esprit de corps throughout the command. There are some DOs and DON'Ts that you should concentrate on:

- Be honest, professional, and courteous.
- Don't put your commander on the spot.
- Keep him informed.
- Don't try to wear his rank.
- Show respect to subordinates and their family members.
- Be tactful in your dealings with everyone.
- Support your commander within the limits of the law.

When commanders allow for non-commissioned officer input, a unit can generate some good training plans, and a command sergeant major can play an

important role in this at battalion level. This input must be evaluated on the basis of the unit's mission. Before you offer advice, however, you should ask yourself the following questions concerning the plan you are proposing:

- Will this training change, correct, alter, or upgrade unit proficiency?
- What will be the value of this training?
- Will it improve the quality of life in the community or troop living area?
- Will it improve the training conditions?



- Will it help the unit by using resources efficiently?
- Do these tasks relate to the unit's current mission essential task list?

Whatever system you use, try to give your commander some justification for your decision. Weigh all the factors, negative and positive, before presenting your professional advice.

You must work into the battalion's training plan some training that will increase the proficiency of your staff NCOs, because when a subordinate unit needs help, the staff sections should be proficient enough to render that support. If your staff NCOs are

weak, your subordinate units are going to be handicapped, and your unit evaluation program will not be effective. You can create a strong leader training program by improving the proficiency of the staff NCOs so that they can train their own soldiers. In other words, train the trainer.

Look at your plans and figure out how to formulate a system by using the appropriate manuals. Creativity and innovative ideas are precious commodities. There are many ways to do a task, but training becomes digestible only when soldiers have a good understanding of the basics.

No two leaders will approach the training process using the same techniques, and training the trainer is not a problem in most units. Having the time to train your soldiers, however, often is a problem. The challenge is to be able to put together a training package that will enable you to train them on the individual skills that will reinforce the unit's collective training. After that, your primary role will be to help implement the training that is on the schedule.

A battalion command sergeant major and the company first sergeants should train one level down and inspect the training at all levels. When subordinates see that their leaders are enthusiastic about training and training objectives, an atmosphere will be created in which they will learn better.

When you develop an inbriefing program for new NCOs, you must have both long and short range goals. An example of a short range goal would be to establish an initial briefing format that is easy to follow and that will be effective for newly assigned soldiers.

Too often, when an NCO reports to a unit, nobody in the immediate chain of command takes the time to brief him until he makes a mistake. If you allow this to occur, you are setting the NCO up for the kill, and he will have a hard time recovering. So start somewhere. Get his attention and give him some guidance. You can judge a unit's inprocessing program in most cases by the way *you* were processed into that same unit.

You must be careful, however, not to

be critical of your new unit. Just assume your leadership role and start working toward improving your sponsorship program. The inbriefing is a beginning. It is the basis for most of the actions that can be formulated and carried out using an established standing operating procedure.

The first thing you will need to do during an inbriefing is to clear the air on expectations. Most soldiers want to hear what you expect of them and what they can expect of you.

Enlisted evaluation procedures and rating schemes should always be a part of the initial briefing for NCOs, because the NCOs in charge of soldiers have to be proficient in administering these reports. The Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Program starts when you assume your duties and never ends.

There are many factors that will affect the NCOs' perception of how well you will support them. You should be straightforward with all of them. But never promise them something you don't have the authority to deliver.

Noncommissioned officers must understand, too, that if they get into trouble in certain areas, they should not expect any help from you, except to seek sound legal advice. Some of these areas are drug and alcohol abuse, vio-

lation of integrity, misappropriation of government property and equipment, using rank for self gain, child neglect or abuse, failure to correct or report unsafe conditions, and committing an unsafe act that endangers the lives of soldiers, family members, or innocent civilians. It is important to set the record straight on this in the beginning.

Remember, too, that your NCOs will require enlisted evaluation reports. Once again, the counseling process must take place at the same time the responsibility for a report is fixed. You should look at the rating scheme and verify the appropriate rater and endorser for each NCO. If this is not done, too often their evaluation reports will not be submitted when they should be.

If you are highly motivated, you will have no problems when you walk into that first assignment as a battalion command sergeant major. Even if there are signs that the NCO leadership is poor, most NCOs react well to new leadership. In many cases, they are just waiting for an opportunity to respond to leadership that is geared to the betterment of the unit and to taking care of soldiers.

Too often, though, we as leaders do not have the moral courage to stand up and be responsive to our soldiers'

needs; nor do we set aside the time to let them explain their problems. You will find that the higher up you are in the chain, the less you know about the internal problems in your units. So if a soldier has the courage to walk up to your headquarters and ask to speak with you, he should be given permission to do so in complete privacy. If your subordinates know that they can present a problem to you and you will listen to them, you are on the road to success as a leader.

But after you listen, you should also follow up on those problems, acting as an arbitrator where it is necessary, correcting a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of Army policy, or seeing that anything necessary is done to help solve a family problem that may be involved.

Young motivated soldiers want to be challenged to do their best. This desire to excel can be reinforced with positive leadership and mentorship.

These things, and more, are just part of the job of a battalion command sergeant major.

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Thoughts for New Sergeants

ROY C. OWENS

The Army's noncommissioned officer corps traces its bloodline back to the Continental Army of 1775. The qualities sergeants had to have then were the same ones sergeants have to have today—honesty, sobriety, attention to every point of duty, neatness in dress,

the ability to command respect and obedience from soldiers, expertise in their jobs, and an ability to train their subordinates.

If you have just become a sergeant, you march in the footsteps of all the noncommissioned officers who have

gone before you, and the Army offers you a full life if you are a true professional. The more you strive for professional expertise, the more you contribute to the Army, your soldiers, and your own satisfaction.

Being a sergeant doesn't mean that