A PLAN FOR COMMAND

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Command of soldiers at any level is a privilege and a responsibility that must be approached as a sacred trust. Command of a company, however, is particularly influential because a company commander can personally influence soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and lieutenants on a daily basis. As a result, the administrative procedures, training methods, and leadership techniques he exposes them to will shape not only his company but also innumerable individuals, squads, platoons, and companies in the future.

When this long-term aspect of command is added to a company commander's basic responsibility of maintaining a combat ready unit, the real weight of command begins to bear down on the man who is lucky enough to be given the load.

All new company commanders have been to an officer basic course, most to an advanced course, and all have spent time in a battalion as lieutenants, but these experiences in themselves do not prepare a man sufficiently for command. It is essential for an officer selected to command a company to formulate his ideas of command and the mechanics of running a company, and to come up with a plan for command.

This article is intended to provide a command "reconnaissance" framework for an officer who is either now in command of a rifle company or soon will be. The techniques described have worked for me in two different organizations in two different kinds of companies.

A company commander's starting point in his personal preparation for command must be an honest self-analysis. This should be followed by a systematic look at the following areas: the chain of command, counseling, training, operations, maintenance, and administration. The only sure formula for effectively managing these areas is arrived at through dedicated thought and evaluation.

Self-analysis is important for several reasons. Through a good hard look at his personal qualities, values, likes, dislikes, beliefs, and prejudices, he can gain a better understanding of his behavior and the complexities of influenc-

ing the behavior of others. An objective study of his professional capabilities and limitations allows him to determine weak areas in his personal leadership techniques. Then he can emphasize the areas that need improvement. With a firm grasp on his strengths and weaknesses, he can achieve better control of his emotions--and control of self and others go hand in hand. Subordinates who have a stable, self-confident commander benefit from working with him.

Above all else, a successful leader continually evaluates his own performance, examining his successes and failures and adjusting his methods to different circumstances and experiences.

"Lead by example," an often-violated leadership principle, is one aspect of performance the commander must continually review. Pride in appearance is a part of this. Young soldiers don't always take an in-depth look at their leaders initially, but their first impressions can be and often are lasting ones. Personal appearance and bearing tell them a lot about their commander, and it takes little time and money for him to present a proper appearance. Through his general conduct and actions, too, a commander establishes a standard that soldiers will follow. And a soldier's pride in himself and in his unit are closely related.

A leader must be able to exceed the standard in physical activity, from physical training sessions to road marching. Anything short of the standard is inexcusable. The company commander has to *pull* his company in this area; pushing from the rear will not do.

Sharing hardship is also a part of leading by example. The company commander who requires his men to pull security on a wet night while he sits in his jeep with the top up and the heater going deserves and gets little respect from his subordinates. Any time he takes advantage of his position to make his own situation better than that of his men, he is wrong. When the company walks, he walks. When the soldiers are cold and hungry, he is cold and hungry. His subordinates quickly sense any breach of this pact.

An infantry leader who is weak in the technical and tactical skills of his job will not be able to hide that weakness from his subordinates for long. Once they realize that "the old man" doesn't know which end is up, his credibility is gone. This does not mean the commander must be an expert in everything. But he does have to have an extensive knowledge of the individual soldier skills, tactics from fire team through battalion, use of troop leading procedures and the chain of command, and company administration, to mention only a few areas. The only way he can achieve the proper kind of proficiency is through study and application.

Another important aspect of leading is handling subordinate leaders. Good infantrymen are confident in their ways. To be successful in their work, they have to be. To reach the balance required to control this class of man, some forethought is advisable. Thus, it is important for a commander to understand that each individual believes that his method of leadership is the "right way." Accordingly, if a junior leader's methods are sound and in line with unit policy and procedures, he should be given freedom of action. Counseling should be used to correct leaders whose methods are ineffective. The essential element of success in combat is developing self-confident leaders who are capable of executing mission orders.

The final area for personal preparation for command is individual integrity. This means that in any situation the commander must consistently do what he knows or believes to be right. Once his subordinates observe that he will deal with each situation in an honest and straightforward manner, they will gain confidence in him. Even when they do not agree with a decision, they will know that the decision-making process the commander has used is sound.

Development of the Chain of Command

The foundation of all company functions and operations is the chain of command, and the leaders and soldiers must understand their duties and responsibilities in relation to that chain. Formal, written job descriptions are the only way to accomplish this effectively. They should be the basis for all the counseling conducted in the company. (AR 600-20, which spells out duty position responsibilities, is a good starting point for preparing job descriptions.)

Job descriptions for leaders are best formatted in terms of tasks, conditions, and standards under the following general headings: Maintain unit mission proficiency; plan and conduct unit training; supervise subordinate unit training; maintain individual technical and tactical proficiency; conduct opportunity or "hip pocket" training; conduct unit physical training; supervise unit maintenance; and supervise unit administration. (Obviously, "unit" should be replaced with "platoon," "squad," or "section," as appropriate.) Once the specific duties and responsibilities have been identified, the power to accomplish them must be delegated to the individual concerned, and every soldier in the unit must be held accountable for his assigned duties.

The commander must give some thought to the roles key leaders play in the company. The relationship between the company commander and his first sergeant is critical to the overall effectiveness of the unit. A new commander must sit down with his first sergeant and discuss, in an organized manner, how the company will do business. If they are not "on the same sheet of music," it is certain no one else in the unit will be. After the initial understanding is reached, open, daily communication between these two must be SOP.

The executive officer, first sergeant, and commodity area chiefs who work in a well organized and well coordinated company headquarters will put their unit far ahead of those who do not in terms of organization and opera-

tions. Periodic sessions for headquarters leaders can establish or confirm procedures for handling administration, training support, and logistics. This will ensure a unity of effort and the efficient utilization of personnel.

Platoon leaders and platoon sergeants must understand where they fit into the scheme of things. The platoon leaders are responsible for the training and tactical employment of their respective platoons. At the same time, the lieutenants must understand that they themselves are in training and that the platoon sergeants, while subordinate to them, are also responsible for a part of their education. It is important to discuss this relationship openly. If a new company commander fails to establish the rules early in his tenure, personalities and immaturity can cause considerable tension as these associations develop.

Information must flow freely both up and down the chain of command, and the attitude of the commander sets the stage for this flow of information. A young soldier must feel that he can approach his fire team leader with any problem he cannot handle. At the same time, the fire team leader must feel free to pass the problem up the chain if he cannot solve it. Each time a soldier sees a buddy taken care of, it will reinforce his belief in the company chain of command and will improve morale and esprit de corps.

A commander must develop a counseling program. While some classify counseling as an "administrative duty," it is also a fundamental part of training. It is through counseling that every soldier in the company is informed of all aspects of his duty performance. Any counseling program should outline its objective; the responsibilities of the leaders implementing it; its format and frequency; and the procedures for maintaining records.

The objective of counseling is to keep a soldier informed of his strengths and weaknesses, with the emphasis on improving his performance, preparing him for promotion, and enforcing standards. The company commander is the driving force behind an aggressive counseling program, setting the example for all counselors by counseling the platoon leaders, the executive officer, and the first sergeant according to SOP. In turn, the XO counsels the commodity chiefs monthly and the junior officers informally as required. The first sergeant helps the commander monitor the quality of counseling in the unit and establishes leader classes on counseling techniques and standards. Since he is normally the most experienced soldier in the company, the first sergeant should counsel anyone who needs guidance.

In the platoons, the platoon leaders and sergeants establish counseling programs in accordance with the commander's guidance. A standardized counseling form used in conjunction with the DA Form 4856-R can go a long way toward developing an effective program. The form might include entries on the following items: uniformity, discipline, courtesy, schooling, promotion, use of chain of command, working with peers, uniform appearance, and living area.

This supplemental form accomplishes two things: It helps leaders cover pertinent areas, and it guarantees standardization of counseling throughout the company. The counseling form must be completed in writing and then presented in a face-to-face session. Once a month, or after a major deployment or exercise, every soldier in the company should be counseled by his immediate superior. Time must be set aside on the training schedule for these counseling sessions, possibly in conjunction with recovery.

Leaders must learn to use four categories of counseling—initial, formal (monthly), informal, and special:

- Initial counseling when a soldier joins the unit includes a general briefing by the company commander and the first sergeant, a briefing on platoon standards by his platoon leader and platoon sergeant, and a briefing on job specifics and individual duties by his squad leader and fire team leader.
- A formal, monthly counseling session tells the soldier where he stands. Its purpose is to correct recurring deficiencies, to praise continued outstanding performance, and to discuss anything in between. This counseling is in written form, and the platoon sergeant maintains a record of it on file.
- Informal counseling includes on-the-spot corrections and other verbal praise or correction.
- Special counseling is intended to supplement the monthly counseling. It is used when formal counseling is advised so that a particular event or incident can be documented.

Leaders must be given training in counseling techniques and the company's counseling standards. Leaders who follow the directive "Be specific and cite examples" will not miss the mark in counseling their soldiers. In spite of normal leader attrition, a commander can establish and maintain a sound program through consistent monitoring of platoon counseling files and periodic counseling classes.

A good counseling program offers several benefits. First, it improves the professional development of the individual soldiers by letting them know where they stand, for better or worse. Counseling helps develop the leaders, too. It is not an easy thing for a young leader to look a soldier in the eye and itemize his shortcomings, but with practice it becomes second nature. The counseling process also reinforces the company chain of command. And finally, it enables leaders to develop an accurate picture of each soldier's strengths and weaknesses and helps identify the training needed by the squads and platoons and the professional development subjects that need attention.

Training

Training is the subject dearest to all company commanders' hearts, but effective training does not just happen. It takes forethought, planning, coordination, preparation, and imagination. A company's parent battalion, brigade, and division will provide the guidance within which the company must train. Efficient operation within this system is greatly improved when the commander provides a framework that can be adapted to the system already in place.

In order to conduct all the training his unit needs, the commander must have a good training management system. Field Manual 25-2, Unit Training Management, should be his starting point in developing his techniques for training management.

An example of a company system that worked for me follows. It is based on these principles:

- Establish unit training plans (quarterly) and training schedules based on battalion-directed objectives, a company Mission Essential Task List (METL), training requirements, and available resources.
- Use input from squad leaders, platoon sergeants, and platoon leaders when developing the company training plan.
- Conduct weekly company meetings that cover in detail the training to be executed the coming week.
- Keep the training schedule sacred and observe the five-week or six-week lock-in of events.

With luck, the commander will receive both long-range guidance and quarterly guidance from his battalion headquarters in a timely manner. He gives the platoons notice of a preliminary training meeting so they can conduct platoon sessions beforehand. During those meetings squad leaders provide data on individual and squad training needs. The preliminary company training meeting gives the commander an opportunity to receive the platoons' training input before completing the company plan. The company commander then formulates the quarter's training plan. The plan at this stage is in the form of calendars with dates for company ranges, situational training exercises, field training exercises, and similar events.

It is a good idea to go over the calendars with the first sergeant and the XO to make sure the plan can be supported. The company commander should schedule a time to brief the battalion commander on the tentative quarterly training plan. This approach allows the battalion commander to provide specific advice or guidance.

After confirming or changing the details of the plan, the commander holds the company training meeting, in which platoons are tasked to conduct various training events. The platoons plan the conduct of and the support required for each tasked event. Two or three days later, the platoons individually brief the commander on their plans for each event. The commander makes any adjustments he deems necessary, and the company XO and training NCO then assume responsibility for coordinating all the required support. This handoff of responsibilities frees the platoons to concentrate on training.

The commander then writes a company training guidance letter and distributes it to all of his unit leaders. This document details the company METL, training goals, and objectives of the quarterly training plan. In effect, by laying out the training for the quar-

ter, it enables the subordinate leaders to plan their portions of the training more effectively.

When the battalion commander has approved the quarterly training plan, the company commander writes the training schedules. If a unit has the necessary copier capability, each squad leader, platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and commodity chief, and the XO and first sergeant should receive a copy. This is in addition to the training schedules posted in the platoon areas for use by the individual soldiers. If all leaders have copies, they can better meet their responsibilities.

A training schedule describes the week's activities, and the commander is responsible for ensuring that his schedule is detailed enough to preclude confusion when it is time to execute the training. The schedule should contain, for example, range opening times, movement times, tasks to be trained on an FTX—everything the unit must know to conduct the week's training. Also listed are "opportunity training" tasks to be trained when the scheduled training objectives have been met.

The training schedule is the "bible" for all company leaders. The training should be conducted to standard, not to time, but executing tasks at other-than-scheduled times and places should be a conscious decision by the commander or, in his absence, the leader in charge.

It is a good idea to conduct a periodic "filter test" to see whether subordinates understand the schedule. A squad leader might be asked, for example, to relate what his squad will be doing for two or three days based on the new schedule. If he cannot respond clearly, chances are the schedule is not doing its job. Squad leaders should prepare instruction on a week's tasks before that week begins. Ideally, they should also require the young soldiers of the squad to give some of the scheduled training.

TRAINING MEETINGS

Weekly unit training meetings are held with these people in attendance—the commander, XO, first sergeant, platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, company training NCO, commodity chiefs, and company fire support officer. With all of these leaders present, most questions relating to training can be resolved. Most important, the chain of command can be fully informed of the plan for the coming week. This allows the subordinate leaders to make informed decisions when adjustments in the schedule are required and the commander is not available.

To reduce the length of the weekly meeting and ensure that all essential items are covered, the meeting must have a format. (I devoted about one hour to a meeting that covered three weeks of planned training.) The first part of the meeting should cover the training scheduled for the third week ahead and then for the second week. The training events for those two weeks should be covered in a general way to inform leaders and to make sure necessary coordination is either complete or is being conducted by the assigned leaders and the company headquarters.

Then the coming week's training is talked about in detail, including its support. The responsible platoon leader or sergeant briefs on the training that has been scheduled for the coming week. This might include a range briefing by one platoon sergeant covering a one-day company range and a briefing on platoon and squad training for the remaining four days by the platoon leaders. The commander then makes any changes he deems necessary without disrupting coordination with outside agencies. When the meeting is over, the platoons should be prepared to execute the training and the company headquarters should be ready to support and control it.

Platoon training meetings are also essential, and the format can mirror that of the company meeting. This ensures that squad leaders are truly informed and prepared to train, not merely to carry out the instructions issued on the day of the training.

If the company commander sits in on these platoon training meetings now and then, he can gain a lot of knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of his lieutenants and squad leaders. This kind of observation will serve him well when he begins planning leader training for the next quarter.

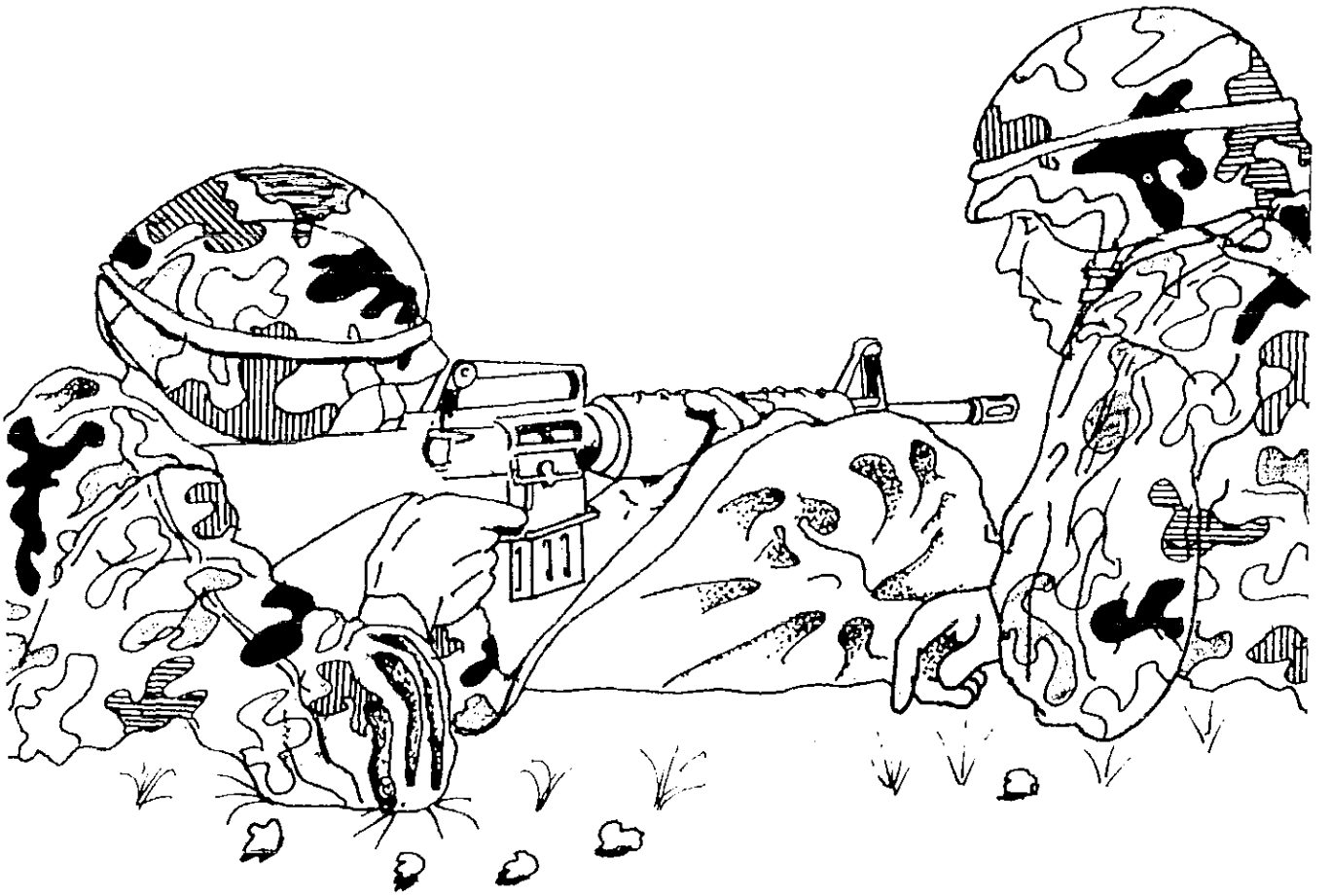
TRAINING PROGRAM

An important part of any company training plan is its leader training program, which can include professional development, technical, or tactical training. The first sergeant can be tasked to organize professional development classes twice a month, or as the schedule permits. Possible subjects are an NCO's legal status under Army Regulations, drill and ceremonies, counseling techniques, hands-on demolition training, or how to review a Leave and Earnings Statement.

The battalion motor officer or sergeant can give maintenance classes with practical exercises. The company fire support officer (FSO) can conduct training in adjusting indirect fire, possibly using the Training Set Fire Observer facility. Ideally, following this training, the leaders should be given an opportunity to adjust either the company's or the battalion's mortars, or supporting artillery.

All of the leaders should have a thorough working knowledge of squad and platoon doctrinal manuals and the technical manuals for the unit's organic weapons and equipment. They should review the pertinent parts of the manuals before conducting field training. One way to encourage them to study is to give them periodic written tests. The test questions can cover tactical, technical, administrative, or maintenance areas—whatever needs improvement in the company—and should point leaders toward preparing themselves for the coming training. The tests can be given either with or without prior notice. Approached in a positive manner, a series of such leader tests given over a period of time will yield excellent results.

The commander may decide to task different platoons



to conduct classes for the company on specific kinds of tactical operations such as techniques for military operations on urban terrain (MOUT), refresher classes on battle drills, or classes on the employment of the M60 machinegun. These provide good opportunities for young NCOs and lieutenants to organize and run training, which furthers their professional development.

A cadre training exercise is the most effective way of bringing all company leaders up to date on troop leading procedures, unit tactical SOPs, and battle drills. The commander should carefully pick a time to conduct the cadre exercise when putting together the company's quarterly training plan. Ideally, the exercise should mirror a squad or platoon operation that will take place shortly afterward.

In conducting this training, the company commander first tasks all of his leaders to study the appropriate chapters of doctrinal manuals, the battle drills, and the tactical SOPs before the exercise. Then, the proper troop leading procedures are conducted with the company commander and first sergeant acting as squad leaders of two large squads, or with the commander acting as the platoon leader of a small platoon. The emphasis is placed on carrying out the entire operation "by the numbers."

Critiques can be handled in one of two ways. There can be critiques after each phase, or just one critique after the exercise has been completed. In either case, all company leaders take part.

For any organization to train effectively, the chain of command must operate under a single training philosophy. The following commonsense principles are taken from the platoon leaders' handbook prepared by the 3d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. If these principles are taught to leaders, applied to all categories of training, and strictly enforced by the chain of command, they will ensure a well-trained unit that is ready to execute its combat mission:

- **Training is everything, everything is training.** Everything a soldier does should prepare him to perform in combat.
- **Concentrate on the basics.** The individual, fire team, squad, platoon, and company must effectively shoot, move, and communicate. If the basics are mastered, it will be easier to accomplish the more difficult tasks.
- **Strive for realism; do not simulate anything.** Putting realism into training results in faster learning and longer retention of skills. It will also avoid any surprises in combat that were not practiced in training.
- **Train to standards.** Training is conducted to ensure a level of proficiency rather than to conduct an established number of hours of required training.
- **Conduct multi-echelon sustainment training.** The

training of individual soldiers, leaders, and units at each level must be concurrent in order to capitalize on the available training time and other resources.

• **Expect the unexpected.** Nothing is more uncertain than the battlefield. Soldiers must therefore be taught to adapt to any situation they may find themselves in.

• **Take the time to execute high-quality training.** Ensure that all tasks for training are the result of an analysis keyed to mission requirements and known deficiencies. Money, material, and soldiers' time should be expended only after detailed planning and through vigorous execution.

• **Make training performance-oriented.** This type of training has precise objectives, makes efficient use of resources, and focuses on the soldier. Such training creates an environment in which a task can be performed, lays out the conditions under which it will be performed, and prescribes the standards of performance.

• **Make safety integral.** Safety considerations must not be compromised for the sake of realism. Leaders at all levels are responsible for ensuring that all training is done in accordance with post and Army safety regulations.

• **Apply stress.** Soldiers will learn faster and retain what they have learned longer if the training is conducted under conditions of stress. Stress in training can be achieved through the use of live fire exercises, night and adverse weather operations, difficult terrain, sleep deprivation, and physically and mentally demanding operations. Units must train to react quickly and decisively while its members are under stress.

Operations

In preparing for and executing tactical operations, the standardization of company troop leading procedures is essential to effective command and control. The first procedure the commander should formalize is the makeup of a company orders group. This group consists of the members of the chain of command who always assist in planning and who attend company operations orders. Obvious members are the company commander, XO, first sergeant, communications NCO, NBC NCO, supply sergeant, training NCO, company FSO, and platoon leaders with their radio telephone operators. Including the platoon sergeants and platoon forward observers as well will ensure a continuity of understanding of the mission and of the commander's intent in case a platoon leader becomes a casualty.

Needless to say, some conditions in the field will not permit all of these people to be present at orders, but whenever possible it is a good idea.

Fixing responsibility for taking care of recurring tasks in preparing for an operation is the next priority. When the tasks have been mastered, they can then be rotated among the lieutenants in the interest of professional development.

When they are used by all sub-elements of the company, prefabricated formats for warning orders, operations orders, and recurring annexes will ensure several things: First, if the formats are cut to fit inside a BDU trousers pocket and acetated, they are weatherproof, easy to carry, and handy to use. Second, the leader and the individual soldier get used to receiving information the same way in every operation. This makes understanding and issuing orders easier. When time is short, leaders can write information in the appropriate blanks, which allows more time for thought. Another advantage is that the leaders are conditioned to receive orders one way; if the commander or a platoon leader misses something, a subordinate is more likely to catch it. Finally, by placing constant emphasis on issuing orders in a standardized manner when there is time to do so will make issuing orders easier when time is short or in other stressful situations.

Time schedules, rehearsals, and pre-combat inspections are often the most ignored part of the troop leading process. Once a company commander receives his mission from his battalion commander, he allocates the use of the available time and issues a warning order. Since the warning order includes a time schedule, the company commander ensures that his unit can begin its preparations and can even begin moving (if required) while he continues his estimate process and completes his plan.

Rehearsals and pre-combat inspections go hand in hand in preparing a company for any assigned mission. Rehearsals at squad, platoon, and company level are desirable, with "talk, walk, run" being the operative approach. The leader first talks through the operation. The unit then walks through the operation, using all signals. Finally, the unit executes the operation at full speed on terrain that mirrors that of the area of operation with light conditions that approximate those expected. The uniform for the rehearsals should be that of the mission. If time is not available for a full set of rehearsals, priorities are set for the ones that time will permit.

Another effective technique is the backbrief. After the company order is issued and before the platoon leaders give their orders, they backbrief the commander on their plans. This allows the platoon schemes of maneuver to be amended, if required, before the squad leaders are briefed and ensures that the platoon leaders have fully understood the mission. Backbriefs at platoon and squad levels are also useful.

Leaders must be familiar with all of the individual and organizational equipment items that are required for the mission. The only way to ensure that the needed equipment is serviceable and present for the mission is by conducting a thorough inspection. This requires constant emphasis by the chain of command.

The weight of the load carried by the soldier must also be on the company commander's mind during his planning and should be checked during all inspections. Tailoring the load to meet mission requirements is essential to ensuring that each soldier is ready to fight when the time comes. Commanders must be willing to

take calculated risks when specifying the loads they ask their soldiers to carry.

Troop leading procedures should be trained in garrison. Before moving to the field for training, the commander should exercise the alert roster and issue an order for the movement and the subsequent operation. As a matter of course, the initial deployment to the field and the follow-on mission should be a company operation. Then the company can break down to squad or platoon level for training. By doing this, the unit exercises accountability, outload, troop leading procedures, and company operations.

Again, requiring the unit to go through a process by the numbers when time is abundant enables it to execute to standard when time is short.

Physical Training

Physical training in an infantry rifle company must occupy a preeminent position on the training schedule, whether the unit rides or walks to war. The positive attitude, team spirit, and physical readiness achieved through a good PT program are the foundation of any fighting force. The standards for physical training must be established and enforced equally throughout the company.

Physical training should be planned along with the quarterly training plan to ensure that it supports the unit's training objectives and goals. The focus of company PT sessions should be at the squad level; this is, after all, the unit that will carry the fight, and its cohesion is most important. The commander should designate three days a week for squad PT, two days for platoon PT, and one day for company PT. If the battalion has one day of PT weekly, this can be the company's day.

Focusing on squad and platoon PT accomplishes several things: The chain of command is forced to function; small groups can conduct more efficient physical training sessions; and the platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, first sergeant, and company commander have an opportunity to observe their junior leaders in action and schedule any needed remedial training or counseling. In addition, this approach allows the assignment of the responsibiliy for conducting PT to team leaders and individual soldiers, including five minutes of drill and ceremonies as a cool-down after a run or road march. This provides leadership training, prepares young soldiers for the primary and basic NCO courses, and promotes the professionalism of the company as a whole.

Maintenance and Refitting

The maintenance of weapons, individual and organizational equipment, and vehicles during and after an operation is fundamental to combat readiness and a direct reflection on a company's discipline. The commander must therefore see that field maintenance becomes a habit for his company. The chain of command should always have this in mind and plan for it. Planning includes putting cleaning supplies, particularly for weapons, on the packing list for every operation.

A company SOP for recovery, designating actions to be taken by the individual soldiers and leaders on their return from the field or during stand-down in a rear area, goes a long way toward ensuring efficient maintenance of weapons and equipment.

Such an SOP should include the following requirements:

- A standard platoon layout diagram is followed.
- An individual soldier's equipment layout diagram is followed.
- All weapons are cleared while the soldiers are still in formation.
- All personnel and equipment are inspected for brass, ammunition, and pyrotechnics. (Squad leaders perform a visual and hands-on inspection of rucksacks, load-bearing equipment, magazines, and the uniforms of all soldiers. The platoon sergeant inspects the squad leaders.)
- A 100 percent inventory is conducted of all items taken on the operation, including TA-50, packing list items, and sensitive items for accountability and serviceability. (The platoon sergeants prepare a consolidated direct-exchange list for turn-in to the company XO.)
- Rucksacks are repacked, minus direct exchange items and wet or soiled clothing. (Also, a not-later-than time is established for the complete packing of rucksacks allowing for cleaning dirty items. This is especially important if the company is on an alert status.)
- Foot checks are conducted by the company medics on all personnel, including the leaders.
- All SOIs (signal operation instructions) and extracts are turned in to the company communications shop by the RTOs.
- Weapons are cleaned by an individual or the crew. (The squad leader fills out a single DA Form 2404 for all his weapons. This is done in conjunction with his inspection of the weapons for cleanliness and serviceability. No weapon is turned in until it has been checked by a squad leader.)
- Radios and communication gear are cleaned by the RTOs, and deficiencies are recorded on DA Forms 2404 and turned in to the communications shop.
- Other sensitive items are cleaned by the users; again, DA Forms 2404 are used to record defects before turn-in.
- NBC equipment is cleaned by the user or operator, and DA Forms 2404 are used to record deficiencies before turn-in to the NBC room.
- Platoon sergeants and leaders spot check weapons and equipment as the items are turned in to the commodity areas.
- The platoons turn in a consolidated report to the company XO detailing the status of their weapons and equipment.
- The company submits a comprehensive closing report to battalion after recovery is complete and before the company is released.

A detailed recovery SOP of the kind suggested here reinforces the chain-of-command's responsibility for the company's equipment and for seeing that tasks are performed to the stated standards. This is not only essential to the combat readiness of a company but it also provides another tool for training leaders in their duties.

Administration

Although preparing his company for its combat mission is his first priority, a commander must strike a balance between training, maintenance, and administration. The following list is not comprehensive, but it highlights several administrative areas to which he must give his attention.

The first and the most distractive to training is the huge volume of administrative paperwork that flows into a company—DFs, reports, work orders, maintenance requests, and similar actions. (How much of this paper is necessary is a topic for others to consider.) The company commander and his leaders have to process everything that comes in, and it is vital that he develop and maintain a systematic and efficient method to meet the requirement. The first sergeant and the XO must work closely with each other and with their company commander to get this paperwork completed correctly and on time.

Maintaining the required reenlistment records, for example, is a big job. The commander must first review the reenlistment regulations. Then he must select a good staff sergeant to act as the company reenlistment NCO and give him an opportunity to train on the Army's various Re-Up programs.

An individual soldier's Reenlistment Data Card, DA Form 1315, lists the interviews the commander must conduct during a soldier's time in the unit. It takes a lot of work by the reenlistment NCO and the commander to keep up with these interviews. If they are done properly, though, these interviews will not only meet the requirement but deliver added benefits as well.

The reenlistment NCO can feed the individual cards in to the commander by platoon as individual interviews come due. The commander can then consult a platoon sergeant on each soldier as he fills out the DA Form 1315. In this way, the strengths and weaknesses of the soldiers are identified, and the commander can reinforce the counseling the soldier has already heard from his chain of command. Interviews can be conducted in the field as well as in garrison.

Recognizing soldiers for outstanding work is an area that is often neglected. Different posts have various rules for giving awards, but a company commander can control recognition at his company formations. Recognition can take many forms—an Army Achievement Medal, for instance, or a battalion certificate of achievement, a three- or four-day pass, or a handshake and a few words in front of the assembled unit.

Consistency in the unit awards program is important and can be obtained if there is a set of criteria for awards and a chain of command that follows it. The XO, in close coordination with the first sergeant, is the man to oversee the program and ensure quality control. Formal awards ceremonies in accordance with FM 22-5, Drill and Ceremonies, should be used in recognizing the unit's soldiers. This instills pride and professionalism and reinforces discipline.

A formal payday activities program can deliver many positive results. In such a program, the leaders are tasked with preparing their soldiers for inspection of rooms and uniforms. This develops attention to detail, initiative, and dependability among NCOs and young soldiers. Supervision and inspections ensure that everyone knows the proper way to wear the Army green uniform, and barracks stan-

dards are reaffirmed in the same way.

A formal in-ranks inspection on that day exercises the leaders in conducting drill and ceremonies. The traditional half-day off on payday for conducting personal business is a service to the soldier and his family.

Payday formations are also effective for accomplishing many administrative requirements such as POV inspections, hearing tests, preparation for overseas movement, and counseling. Morale and unit cohesion are also improved by good payday activities, because the soldiers will feel good about themselves and their company as a result.

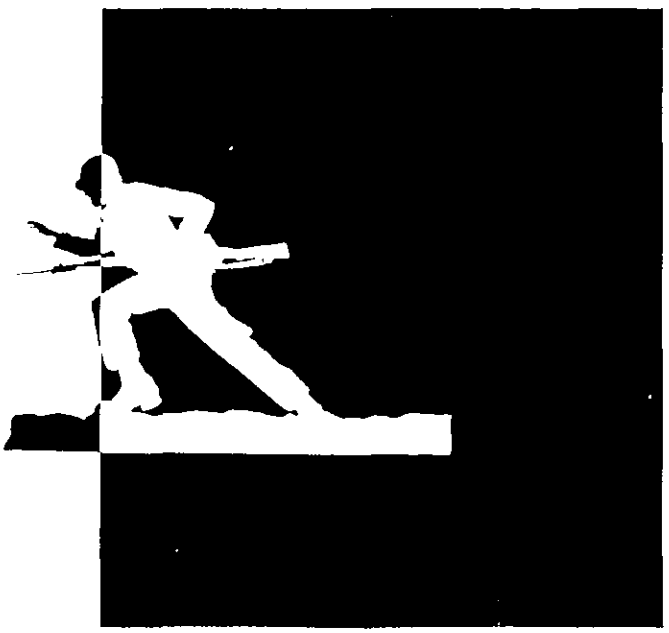
The additional duty responsibilities delegated to the lieutenants should be under the direct supervision of the XO. These duties are essential to the smooth functioning of the company and also to the professional development of the young officers. It is through the exercise of these duties that the lieutenants begin to grasp the wide range of activities involved in running a rifle company. In addition, balancing these duties with his duties as a platoon leader forces a new officer to set priorities and manage his time.

The company charge of quarters (CQ) and runner positions are important for three reasons. First, the professional development of the unit's NCOs and soldiers can be improved if attention to detail, acceptance of responsibility, and execution to standards is demanded and checked by the company chain of command. Second, the manner in which the CQ and runner conduct themselves in dealing with visiting staff duty officers, parents and other guests, and telephone callers gives an impression of the unit that is either professional or unprofessional. Finally, the CQ and his runner affect the readiness of the unit, particularly when an alert notification occurs during off-duty hours and the CQ and his runner must begin the notification process and the outload procedures in the absence of the major members of the chain of command.

A wise commander—through his first sergeant and by way of an up-to-date, well-organized CQ book—will ensure that the company CQ and his runner are prepared to act effectively and professionally in his absence.

Needless to say, many of the techniques described in this paper are not new. They include elements of the Battalion Training Management System (BTMS), higher unit SOPs, and other commanders' techniques.

The message is not that these techniques are the only way to do business but that each commander must develop his own methods of handling all of the interconnected aspects of a company's operations. The formats and checklists I have used should be useful as a starting point, and copies of them will be sent upon request to INFANTRY, P.O. Box 2005, Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-0605.

Units with a strong, informed chain of command and set procedures for training, operations, maintenance, and administration will function effectively in garrison, in the field, and in combat. Discipline and a "combat attitude" will manifest itself in all the activities of such a unit. This type of unit is the result of a commander who knows himself, knows how to lead men, and has started out with a "Plan for Command."

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