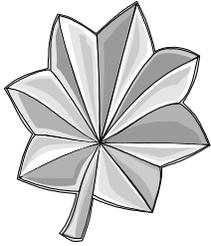


# On Battalion Command



## *Advice for Future Commanders*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD D. HOOKER, JR.

**N**ot long ago, I gave up command of an infantry battalion. I wasn't the best commander in the division, but I think I was a good one. Along the way, I learned some lessons that may be useful to you, the officer who aspires to command an infantry battalion in the U.S. Army.

There are officers out there who say they aren't interested in pursuing battalion command in today's Army. Don't buy it! If you are a leader, command is as good as it gets – the most rewarding and professionally satisfying experience you will ever have. But it will take the very best you've got to give.

### **Taking the colors**

If you are lucky, the outgoing commander has made an effort to set you up for success by feeding you information and putting you in the picture well before you arrive. He should be courteous and helpful and strive to make your reception and integration as painless as possible. Hopefully, he will involve you in decisions that will affect the battalion after he is gone, and resist the temptation to make "midnight" personnel moves that you will have to live with.

If you are unlucky, your predecessor will do few or none of these things. Command is an intensely personal experience and some officers may take it personally when you arrive to replace them. They will give up the colors reluctantly and perhaps not too gracefully. That's human nature, and I wouldn't get worked up about it. Your command doesn't begin until the moment you take the colors, and everything that happens before then you can't control. So have some compassion for the "old" guy, and focus on things you can influence. That's when the fun begins.

You'll have little to do with the ceremony itself, other than show up on time and in the right uniform! Remember that this is the outgoing commander's day, and give him every courtesy. Your remarks should be brief and modest. Resist the temptation to get your new battalion into the theater for a big talk the same day. A change of command is an emotional event for all concerned. It's far better to let your troops have the rest of the day off, and meet informally with your command sergeant major (CSM) and executive officer (XO). Focus on the next day and the next week, and forego the command philosophy discussion until later. This is your first opportunity to break the ice, and you should focus on establishing personal relationships with these two key men. Afterwards, have the CSM walk you around the entire battalion

area. Then drop in to see your brother commanders in their headquarters. Once that's done, go home and get some rest. You're going to need it!

### **What Matters, What Doesn't**

Your job as a battalion commander is to make decisions and give guidance.

You are not getting paid to draft orders, prepare briefings, poke around in trash cans or torture your subordinates about trivial things. In short, to be successful you must avoid the temptation to micromanage.

Micromanagement is the biggest problem facing the officer corps today, and it springs from an inner insecurity that demands total control. Some commanders, less confident than others, prefer to call it "attention to detail." There's a big difference.

This style of leadership is poorly suited for the battlefield for a very simple reason: once the shooting starts, you can't control the small details anyway, you can't be everywhere, and your job is to focus on those few key battlefield decisions — mostly when and where to employ your key combat multipliers like FASCAM (Family of Scatterable Mines), Volcano mines, attack helicopters or your task force reserve — to give your subordinates the best chance to win and survive. If you're doing anything else, you're not doing your job. And if you're going to lead like that in combat, you have to do it in garrison and in training.

Building a sound command environment that avoids micromanagement means empowering your subordinates and underwriting their mistakes. That takes moral courage. But what you gain is priceless. Your company commanders will learn to be decisive by making decisions, confident that you will back them up. They will make occasional mistakes, but they will learn from them and grow into their jobs with amazing speed. And they will enjoy being commanders, something all-too-often missing in our Army today.

There are, however, some mistakes you cannot condone. The death or serious injury of a Soldier due to negligence or carelessness cannot be overlooked and can always be avoided. Poorly planned and executed training is not an honest mistake – it will surely cost lives if you allow it to happen. Loss of a sensitive item is a very serious affair and is always preventable. Dishonesty and lack of integrity are and should be unforgivable. It's a good idea, early in your command, to go one-on-one with your company

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commanders and spell out clearly where they have freedom to fail, and where they don't.

Many battalion commanders make one fatal mistake without realizing it. They focus on something they do well and measure their subordinates against it. It may be a 12-minute two mile. It may be a 16-hour-a-day work ethic. It may be an obsession with beautiful "slide-ology." Whatever it is, it's usually not an accepted Army or unit standard. Every subordinate has a right to know what the standard is and to be measured against it. Your standards ought to be high, but they should be objective and rooted in Army standards and values — not your personal prejudices. Your every action should be designed to build the team, not breed resentment. Think about it.

Once you've established a command climate that fosters trust and openness, your next task is to focus your battalion on your priorities. They should be few and easy to remember. Publish them in a brief command philosophy statement (the shorter the better), talk about them often and reiterate them each time you put out quarterly training guidance. When you meet your officers and NCOs in the battalion area, ask them what their priorities are. If they're not sure, or have different ones from yours, work harder to simplify your message and get it out more efficiently. Your battalion can't succeed if it doesn't know what you want.

With few exceptions, infantry battalions are constrained by all sorts of things: limited training time, personnel turnover, lean budgets, scarce ammunition and busy deployment schedules. (This environment makes it imperative that you focus on a limited number of task areas that as a unit you do exceedingly well.)

Here is one commander's "Top 4:"

- PT
- Small Unit Battle Drills
- Marksmanship
- Maintenance

Remember that this is broad guidance that applies to your battalion as a whole. Obviously your battle staff or maintenance platoon, for example, will have specific training tasks, but your basic priorities apply across the unit and especially to your maneuver units. Stay away from verbiage like "we will be a physically fit, combat ready unit ready to deploy at all times." Instead, spell out exactly what you want: "the standard for companies and separate platoons is a 275 APFT average" or "subordinate units will maintain all assigned equipment to 10/20 standards with an operational ready rate of 95 percent." The temptation to stray all over the map can be strong, especially given "training guidance" that begins at the four-star level and reaches down to the bottom of the food chain with "amplification" at every level. But you must fight to stay focused across the battalion on the nuts and bolts of combat, and that means Soldiers in top physical condition who can hit what they shoot at and keep their equipment up and running. Your job is to force your unit to master the fundamentals. It sounds easy, but it's not. To get there, you need one key ingredient: discipline.

Patton liked to say "there is only one kind of discipline — perfect discipline."

That is an ideal, but one worth striving for. Because you can't

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be everywhere at once, it is discipline that provides the glue that holds everything together. But it must be a cheerful, willing discipline that permeates the unit, not a harsh exacting one imposed by fear from above.

The trick is to focus on junior leaders and take action to correct breaches of discipline, whether large or small. The best kind of discipline isn't imposed from above through fear; it bubbles up from below as junior leaders react to your leadership and guidance. Units that cheerfully practice the customs and courtesies

of the service are practicing discipline every day. Platoons and companies that conduct rigorous pre-combat inspections, training rehearsals, patrol debriefs, and AARs are laying the foundation of strong discipline. Leaders who take standards seriously and lead from the front — they provide the spark. And troopers who will go to any lengths to uphold the good name of the unit are the cement and concrete and steel that holds it all together.

Once your Soldiers and leaders understand what you want and get after it in an energetic and disciplined way, you're cooking with gas. What's next?

### **Some People Need Killing**

What do infantry battalions do? The long answer is, they do many things — training, maintaining, sustaining, deploying, and conducting combat and stability operations, just for starters. But the short answer is brutally simple: fundamentally, infantry battalions kill people and take ground. A war college classmate of mine, a former commander of a special mission unit, said it best: "At the end of the day, some people need killing. It's our job to do it." In my opinion, we dance around the cold hard truth a little too much. Close combat is the most physically and psychologically traumatic experience there is. From day one, it's critically important that you focus the unit on its core business — killing the enemy and taking ground. Everything else is secondary.

The first order of business is to consider how you're going to get to the fight. Pre-deployment preparation is hard work, and it's commander's business.

Most divisions have detailed standing operating procedures (SOPs) and checklists, but much that is vital is often left out. For example, MILVANs (military-owned demountable containers) and CONEXs (container expresses) are not always part of the maintenance inspection that usually precedes a real-world deployment. How many of yours are serviceable? Are your go-to-war sustainment supplies and packages already uploaded and ready to go? Are your containers marked so you know what's in each one? What about non-deployables? Have you carefully thought through who will constitute your rear detachment? What about batteries for radios, combat optics, laser pointers and so on? Office supplies for your command posts? Are your breach kits, mine marking kits, vehicle load plans and IR markings all up to snuff? I could go on and on, but you get the idea.

Don't wait to sort through the mind numbing details of what it takes to go to war. Because no one can guarantee you'll have time later. As a wise man once said, "you can't get better on your way

to the deployment airfield.”

Once you get into the fight, you will thank the god of battles that you have disciplined small units that can shoot straight. After more than 20 years in uniform, I am convinced that half the battle is letting your squads and platoons fight. By that I mean, stay out of their way and focus on resourcing the fight and making those few key decisions that only you can make. Fight the urge to demand sitreps every few minutes or badger your commanders with orders and suggestions. If you have given them a clear task and purpose and a clear statement of your intent, have faith that they know what to do and will do it. Your men won't let you down.

In my experience, first class units jump right out at you because of how they communicate under stress. Leaders speak calmly and succinctly on the radio, even under fire. There's very little unnecessary chatter. Critical information is passed higher and lower routinely and accurately without prompting. Company commanders cross talk on the command net – and their boss lets them. Status reports flow in regularly. “Commo problems” are few and far between.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that, even in this age of digitization, you will probably not have a complete picture and complete control of your battlespace. You may or may not have accurate and timely intelligence, fire support when you want it, or resupply when you need it. Consequently, try to plan and operate in such a way that you keep your options open as long as possible. In the end, the only intelligence you can absolutely count on is what you develop yourself. The only fires you can be sure you'll have are your own (your buddy next door may have bigger problems than you do or more bad guys to kill).

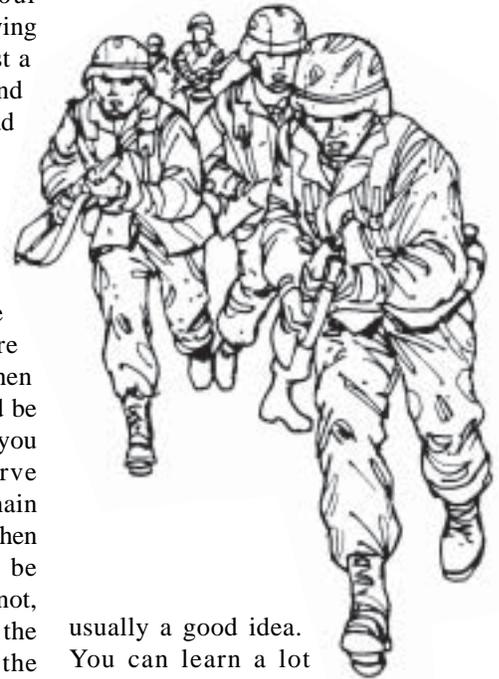
Keeping your options open is usually a function of two things: making contact with small units, not big ones, and properly constituting and employing a reserve. In movement, stick to doctrine. When your security element (flank or rear as well as in front) or advance guard runs into trouble, you are in good shape to mass the bulk of the battalion's combat power on the enemy with both fires and maneuver. If your main body runs into a major contact, you risk being fixed and losing freedom of action.

Even a few casualties will sap your momentum! Be careful, too, about trying to maneuver dismounted troops against a mounted enemy. They are far slower, and if caught in the open, you're in for a bad day.

While many commanders think of the reserve, consciously or unconsciously, as insurance against disaster, it's far better to think of it as your bid to achieve a decision. The reserve need not be large if you are confident in your intelligence, but when uncertainty is high your reserve should be strengthened correspondingly. Ensure you rehearse committing your reserve thoroughly. If you are the brigade main effort, carefully discuss with your boss when and where the brigade reserve will be brought into action. More often than not, it's most effective when chopped to the main effort battalion task force at the decisive place and time, rather than employed independently under brigade control (obviously, this does not apply if the brigade reserve is battalion-sized). When you commit your reserve, give it everything you've got – mortars, artillery, direct fires, even attack aviation and close air support if you have it. Now is the time to confront the enemy with the awesome power of the combined arms team and go for the knockout.

In the defense, the classic errors are failure to resource the counter-reconnaissance fight, neglecting all round security, poor use of fire support and failing to rehearse. Today, a thinking opponent will likely not come at you head on. Instead, he will feel you out, then attack in a soft spot where it hurts as we saw many times in the recent war in Iraq. Large or small, your reserve should be mobile, hard-hitting and well-rehearsed. Put a good man in charge, and be sure to reconstitute your reserve once employed from an uncommitted unit.

Where should you position yourself on the battlefield? There are many schools of thought, but in my opinion commanders tend to rely too much on the map and radio instead of getting forward where they can see and influence the action. Ideally, you should find a covered and concealed location overlooking your main effort with good line of sight and communications to your tactical operations center (TOC). Taking along a small security element is



usually a good idea. You can learn a lot from the sound of the battlefield, and from face-to-face contact with your company commanders in contact. After much trial and error, I concluded that moving mounted, about one terrain feature behind the main body, is usually best. While moving on foot is more “manly” – and clearly necessary at times – generally speaking, your communications, battlefield operating systems (BOS) synchronization, navigation and tactical mobility are much better when mounted. If things go badly, you can quickly move to rally shaken leaders and units. Except in extreme circumstances, try to stay out of the zone of direct fire when you can – losing the battalion commander is never helpful – but I believe you can lead best when well forward and engaged with your troops. In emergencies, when success or failure is at stake, you should not hesitate to go as far forward as you need to win. Your troopers will fight that much harder when they see the “old man” up there with them.

Although good commanders don't spend much time in the TOC, a high performing operations center is absolutely vital to your success. Train your XO to push information and logistics forward, drive the execution matrix and decision support template, keep higher informed and think about the future. Ensure your tactical command post or assault command post is manned and organized to take over for limited periods

if the TOC is hit or moving. If possible, put your Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) commander with the TOC as headquarters commandant. Though some disagree, thinking he should work in the brigade support area, his scouts, mortars and headquarters personnel are forward and the tasks of TOC security and displacement require a seasoned leader. He also provides quality backup if you sustain leader casualties in the TOC.

### A Leader of Leaders

As a practical manner, battalion commanders work with leaders, not Soldiers. You'll spend most of your time working with your leadership to meet your goals. Although you'll have many golden moments with your troopers, your time is best spent training, teaching, coaching, counseling, and mentoring your leaders. Through them, you can touch every Soldier in the battalion. Without them, you won't get past your office door.

Before we talk about your battalion's leaders, a word about your boss is probably in order. There are many schools of thought about how to interact with your next higher, and I would be the first to say that your personal chemistry with your superiors may – for better or worse – be as important as anything you do in command. Having said that, however, I would urge you to be yourself, and never modify your behavior, your values or your decisions in an attempt to impress the boss. Let your actions and your performance, and that of your unit, do your talking for you. That's all good leaders care about anyway. Aping your boss's mannerisms, staging managing events for his benefit, and focusing on style over substance should be as beneath you as they are beneath him.

What do you owe your boss? First, you owe him a trained unit ready to go to war. Next, you owe him candid, tactful and honest feedback about his decisions and directives. You owe him courtesy and respect in public and private. You owe him loyal and cheerful support whether you agree with his guidance or not – and especially when you don't! Never forget that his intent should guide your actions at all times, and always strive to see things through his

eyes and from his perspective. Unless you are asked to do something illegal, immoral, or unethical, you owe your commander your unflinching support, just as you expect from your own commanders.

As for your brother commanders, put all thoughts of personal competition aside. Battalion command can be fun, worthwhile and rewarding when serving with friends, and a bitter pill when commanders become rivals. When your brothers ask for help, say "yes" without hesitation. Work out your issues and troubles in private, behind closed doors, without bothering the "old man." Never pass your problem cases to a neighbor, never badmouth a buddy, and never be a party to someone else's misfortune. If it's your turn in the barrel, step up and pull your load without complaining. The day may come – the day will probably come – when you are in combat in a world of hurt. On that day, you can't afford anything but 100 percent trust and confidence between commanders. Do all you can to play your part. There's a lot at stake, and it's the right thing to do.

What about your own leaders? Let's start with your command sergeant major. I've observed two kinds. The first, and by far the most common, is focused downwards and gains great satisfaction from building teams and particularly in developing young sergeants. This brand of CSM takes his responsibility as a role model seriously and understands how best to lighten your load with sound, timely advice and a mastery of detail. Gains and losses in critical MOSs, what companies need help with this quarter's reenlistment numbers, what rifle squads are or aren't shooting well and why – these and a thousand other invaluable details are at his fingertips.

The second kind of CSM is rare – but you have seen him before. He is focused upwards, worried about his perks, and insists on operating an alternate chain of command by giving personal orders through the NCO chain. Consequently, he is always at odds with the company commanders and field grades. This type of leader sees himself, not as the "sergeant major of the command," but as a sort of commander himself.

If you are blessed to have the first kind of CSM, you'll have few worries and you will realize – more than ever before – why our secret weapon as an Army is the NCO Corps. But if you are less fortunate, you have work to do. No battalion can have two commanders, two competing sets of priorities, or two alternate sets of key leaders – the officers and NCOs – working at cross purposes. If you sense early on you have this problem, tackle it head on and confront your CSM with counseling and specific guidance. If you aren't having success, go outside for help, starting with the brigade CSM. Chances are that other senior leaders see the same thing you do.

Your field grades are a different challenge. They will give you everything you ask for and work until they drop. You can expect them to



be highly proficient, ready to make decisions and intensely interested in the success of the unit. For the first time, you'll have a complete staff of your own, and they will amaze you with their versatility and ability. All you have to do is focus them on your intent – and avoid the temptation to get in their way.

A note of caution may be in order, however. Bear in mind that your “iron majors” are under tremendous pressure to succeed. Only a fortunate few will earn those successive branch qualifying jobs that spell a real opportunity for command. If you're not careful, your high speed majors will work their people to a frazzle to get that last 5 percent of polish on the quarterly training brief or the command and staff slides. And their natural competitiveness may lead to unhealthy friction. Sit them down early and give clear guidance on who does what, and watch out for lights burning in the S3 shop long after quitting time. There'll be times when that's needed, but they should be few and far between. For your XO and S3, this is the last stop (hopefully) before battalion command. Your every action is training them for command. Bear in mind that they will see you in all your moods, at your best and your worst, and act accordingly.

**F**or my money, your company commanders should get the bulk of your time and attention. That doesn't mean you should live in their orderly rooms. They need space and freedom to run their units and develop as independent leaders. But raising them right should be a top priority for you personally. Much of that professional development can be subtle, chatting in the field, during PT or in the mess hall. Some should be more formal, in OPDs, command post exercises and field training exercises designed to hone their troop-leading skills at the company level. Try to remember your own company command experiences, and bear in mind that theirs is perhaps the toughest job in the Army. Companies don't have staffs, and company commanders are still young and comparatively inexperienced. Your captains are under enormous pressure to succeed, and they know it. Anything you can do to lighten their load and build their confidence will make your battalion better.

Some battalion commanders enjoy playing “gotcha,” but the good ones know better. Avoid e-mail and work face to face. Don't task companies with things your staff can do. Ask “what can I do to help?” often. Save harsh words for the rare occasions when they're called for. Praise early and often, and be ready to underwrite honest mistakes that are the price of growth. When company commanders struggle, there are many reasons besides incompetence or lack of effort, and first among them is that they haven't been trained properly for their jobs. And that's your job.

Your company commanders train lieutenants day in and day out, but you have a key role in professionally developing them. Think back to your lieutenant days. Wasn't “the Colonel” a “larger than life” role model for you and your buddies? For better or worse, much of what young officers come to believe about officership is formed in their first assignment by their senior leaders. Your every word and action can influence these young men – tomorrow's senior leaders – in ways you can't imagine. That's a heavy responsibility.

In today's Infantry, lieutenants face a tough challenge. As a body, our platoon sergeants and first sergeants are so talented,

proficient and self-confident that, more than ever, new lieutenants can be intimidated. Don't let them stand on the sidelines or hide out in the arms room or motor pool. They are not apprentice officers. With due regard for youth and inexperience, throw them in the briar patch and insist that they lead.

Many battalion commanders come under pressure, because of inbounds or the need to fill more senior lieutenant jobs, to move new lieutenants before they have spent at least a year in a rifle platoon. In my view, that time should be sacred. Do all you possibly can to fence your rifle platoon leaders for a full year. The payoff down the road is well worth it.

Your best lieutenants will likely end up in the S1, S3 Air, and specialty platoon jobs (support platoon, scouts, and mortars). Your next best will go to company XO jobs. Think carefully about the HHC and AT company XO positions (if your battalion has a Delta Company). Horses are needed there! Always keep in mind that a company XO might have to take over the company in combat at a moment's notice. If you lack confidence in one of them, think twice before moving them into that position.

It's a wonderful thing to see a new second lieutenant join your battalion, green as grass and nervous as a cat. Very quickly they sprout, until before you know it, they have the swagger of seasoned, salty veterans. The transformation is as sudden as it is profound, and one of the command's most satisfying and rewarding experiences. Give your lieutenants good soil to grow in and elbow room for rash, brash mistakes. But draw the line on integrity, lack of effort and safety. They'll stay inside your “white lines” if you're clear about where they are.

As a group, your time spent with lieutenants will be limited, and that's even more true with sergeants. But never forget that sergeants are the heart and soul of the battalion, far more than the officers who come and go. Sergeants are always on the front lines, always in the trenches, always under the gun. If you go to war, your fire teams, squads and platoons will do the fighting, the killing and dying, led by your sergeants. They deserve your respect, your support and your confidence. Be cautious about hemming them in with so many command policy statements and directives that they can't exercise their own judgment. As a rule, they should be left in troop-leading positions longer than officers to provide the continuity and perspective that success demands. Be sensitive to their own professional development needs, however, and never hurt a sergeant's career to solve a short-term problem.

**I** often met with company first sergeants, one on one or as a group. They will give it to you “with the bark on,” and sometimes you'll need thick skin as you listen to their comments and input. They have their fingers on the pulse of their units in a way that your officers can't. When they speak with one voice, listen. If a room full of first sergeants ever agrees on anything, they're likely to be right!

While we're talking about leaders, let's not forget the women who lead your family readiness group. I am deadly serious when I say they are crucial to your success. There is every chance you will take your battalion into harm's way during your command, and a well organized, caring FRG can move mountains to keep things back in the rear on an even keel. Most of your problems

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will surface with junior enlisted wives, new to the service and to married life, unused to separations, and always worrying about finances. They carry a particularly heavy burden. Strong company FRGs (often led by sergeants' wives, not necessarily the company commander's spouse) who are well informed about Army support agencies and who focus on young wives make all the difference. Care and nurture these organizations and the wonderful women who lead them. They don't get paid, but their service is priceless.

### **Pulling the Trigger**

There's no doubt in my mind that the hardest part about battalion command was making the tough calls, what one mentor used to call "pulling the trigger." Plenty of commanders can brief well, execute brilliant staff actions, and impress the brass and still lack the moral and spiritual fiber to make a difficult decision. Yet, that is the essence of command.

You'll have almost daily opportunities to make hard calls, and almost as many chances to duck them. When you counsel a subordinate and fail to identify areas needing improvements, you've ducked another one. When you see a clear failure to meet a standard and don't act, you've ducked a hard call again.

In garrison, your toughest calls will invariably involve people. There will be times when all evidence concludes that a particular Soldier or leader is a failure and must leave the unit or the Army. It might be an officer who simply lacks any aptitude for leadership or responsibility, or any potential to improve. It might be an NCO who can't overcome a personal problem that affects his job. It might be a Soldier who just can't adapt to an environment where good order and discipline are the rule. In such a case, doing nothing can be the easier course. You won't have to build a case, or "fight city hall," or directly confront someone with bad news. But it's your job, and no one else's. Once you know the facts and have listened to the advice and recommendation of your subordinates, never be afraid to act. It's what we get paid for.

In combat, the stakes are higher. Making a decision that might get people killed is a daunting prospect. Making a decision to depart from the plan always carries risk. Acting without complete intelligence or before you're 100 percent ready could lead to disaster. And acting without orders might well get you in trouble!

All this is true. But what commander ever won a battle without taking risks or making tough decisions? The Army placed you in command because it believes you have the skills, experience and character to lead Soldiers in combat. No one admires an unruly subordinate who acts rashly, looking for glory and ignoring his boss's orders and intent. But all commanders want subordinates who know their craft and have the confidence to act intelligently and decisively in the chaos and complexity of combat. As I said earlier, when you boil it all down, command is about making decisions. Never be afraid to pull the trigger. That's your job.

### **Go With Your Gut**

If I could offer a final word of advice, it would be to trust yourself when it's time to make the hard calls. You've spent many years

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building the skills, experience and judgment that got you selected for command. You've proven you have what it takes. Almost every time I went against my better judgment, I regretted it. My brother commanders often told me the same thing. By all means, if time permits avail yourself of the advice and experience of your peers, superiors and subordinates. When it's crunch time, though, go with your gut. You'll be glad you did.

Looking back, I think battalion command was the hardest thing I ever did. Few days were easy, and many were hard as hell. More than the individual tasks you have to perform, the weight of responsibility takes its toll. There will be tough days when bad things happen, and up and down the chain, people are looking to see if you handle adversity as well as you do success.

Yet, I wouldn't have traded the experience for the world. As an infantry battalion commander, you're in charge of a powerful, complex organization that plays a major role in the "Common Defense." Those colors in your headquarters tell amazing stories about sacrifice and heroism; if you look hard you can almost see the blood stains and the shot holes they carry. Every trooper bursting with pride as you pin on his EIB; every sergeant you see shouting "follow me" over his shoulder; every young officer you come upon, huddled in deep conversation with your CSM; these and a thousand other sights, sounds and lasting memories will make every moment special and worthwhile.

As a young man, I once asked my father, an old infantry colonel, what branch I ought to choose. He grunted, "the infantry," and when I asked him why he said, "because it's the hardest," and walked away.

Many years later, I think I understand. He didn't walk away because I asked a dumb question. He walked away because he missed it. So do I, and so will you when it's all over.

So good luck, Colonel. Today's world is a dangerous place, and you have work to do. I know your troopers will be lucky to have you taking care of them and their families. We old timers will look for you on the high ground. I know you'll do us proud.



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**Lieutenant Colonel Richard D. Hooker, Jr.** commanded the 2d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

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