Six Tips for Company Commanders

EWS Combat Arms Captains
LtCol B. B. McBreen
Handouts for Co COs

Six Tips for Company Commanders (2p)
Action at Quibou (1p)
Orders Shorthand (1p)
Target Designation (1p)
Tank-Infantry SOP Extract (2p)
Tank-Infantry Fight in Fallujah (2p)
2 Para at Goose Green (2p)
2/5 Website (1p)
B. BILLET DESCRIPTION

- **Fight the company.** Deploy and fight overseas. Lead company in combat. Know company commander battle skills.

- Improve self through fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence in combined arms: CA TTPs, weapons, TDGs.

- **Train the company.** Prepare the units of the company for combat IAW Bn training plan. Plan and execute training.

- Train units. Train unit leaders. Train Marines.


C. BILLET ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Fought.** Deployed company to Iraq. Accomplished all missions assigned. Skillfully led company in combat in Fallujah.

- Improved self tactically and professionally. Taught CA TTPs to Bn officers and SNCOs.

- **Trained** company to high levels of tactical excellence. Avg pre-deployment CRP of 79 – highest in Bn. Most effective trainer in Bn: plans and executes. Exceeded assigned METL.

- Developed Marine leaders. Instituted company “tactical NCO” program. Mentored platoon commanders with skill and focus.

“Fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence in combined arms.”
6 Tips for Company Commanders

• *Fight*
  1. Fight your peers
  2. Fight your ancestors
  3. Fight your CA weapons

• *Prepare to fight*
  4. Train your platoons
  5. Train your leaders
  6. Train your leaders
     “How to Train”

Create a [Combat SOP](#)

Create a [Training SOP](#)
Challenges for the Co CO

• Decreasing
  – Echelons for mixed Combined Arms teams
  – Echelons for combat decisionmaking

• Increasing
  – Complex enemies, complex environments
  – Combat Power, Precision, and Range
  – Complexity of weapons systems
  – Close restricted terrain: urban
  – Technology

• Increasing Expectations of Competence

“Fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence in combined arms.”
Solutions

• Where is “Fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence in combined arms” evaluated?
  – Schools, promotions, FitReps NOT keyed to tactics
  – Higher skills expected at lower echelons
  – Less time, little support to build competent units
  – Squeeze 20 years of experience into 10 years

• Increase abilities of commanders

• Increase CA training of units
1. *Fight* your peers

• Seek opportunities to generate conflict
  – Expeditionary *Warfare* School
  – Trade and collect TTPs
  – Be technically and tactically proficient

• *Fight* 1000 battles:
  – Training, Patterns, Confidence, Mistakes
  – Weapons, Estimates, Decisions, [Orders]
2. *Fight* alongside your ancestors

- The human dimension never changes
- Battle references are the shorthand of the profession
- Read widely, outside USMC, pull carefully
- Know 20 battles

Naktong Bulge: 1950

Operation COBRA: 1944

CCA 3rd AD

“Fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence in combined arms.”
Ancestors

- Capt Charles MacDonald
- Capt Hans von Luck
- Capt Richard Winters
- Maj John Howard
- Capt William E. DePuy
- Capt Samuel Jaskilka
- Capt Ron Christmas
- Capt ___ __________

- I / 3 / 23 Inf 2ID
- K / PzAA 37 7PzD
- E / 2 / 506 PIR 101AB
- D / 2 / OBLI 6PD
- C / 1 / 357 Inf 90ID
- E / 2 / 5 Mar 1MarDiv
- H / 2 / 5 Mar 1MarDiv
- OEF / OIF USMC

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3. *Fight* your CA weapons

- AAV / EFV
- Tanks
- Snipers
- HMG / TOW CAAT
- CEB / LAR
- Mortars
- Air / Artillery
- Mech TTPs
- [Quibou]
- [How to EA]
- [Emma Gees]
- [Tank-Infantry SOP]
- Avoid MOS myopia
- Avoid Separate Procedures

“Most commanders generate only 25% of their CA potential.” - BG Kirk

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DePuy on Combined Arms

- “Overwatch is heavy direct fire suppression…”
- “Young commanders – small companies…”
- “Experience *before* combat is critical…”
- “Trained unit *four times* better…”
- “We don’t *train* commanders…”

- “I can watch your unit bound …”
- “Today’s weapons are more complex than WWII airplanes…”
- “Mech infantry is small…”
- Co CO is overtasked…”
- “User’s manuals – not theory…”
Terrain Appreciation

• Dirt is armor
  – Earth is still the best armor for men and machines
  – Hull down, turret down, indirect fire
  – Point-to-point defilade
  – Reverse slope through a saddle
  – “Dirt on your cheek”
• Walk the ground, discuss tactics
• Lifestyle: Terrain has zero effect on our lives
  – Airplanes, highways = door-to-door travel

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4. *Prepare* to train platoons

- Focus on critical collective tasks
  - Aim for high levels of competence
  - What about Marine Corps training requirements?
  - What about 110 Platoon CTSs?
- Focus on unit training: *Prime Training Time*
- NCOs train ITSs ISO CTS
- Handout: [Combat Leader as Trainer]
5. Prepare to train leaders

- Train leaders how to fight
- 25% of your time is mentoring
- Delegating is leader training
- Prepare (12) decisionmaking sessions
  - “Teach them to learn like experts”
- Set the example IOT train your leaders:
  - Estimates, Orders, Tactics, Procedures
  - Terrain, Weapons, Rehearsals

“Fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence in combined arms.”
6. Prepare to train leaders
  “How to Train”

- Prepare a [Company Training SOP]
- Set the example IOT train your leaders:
  – Plans, Exercises, Evaluations, Standards

- Gain autonomy: tasks and resources
- Maximize Prime Training Days
- Presentation: [How To Plan Training]
  Examples: [Infantry Unit Training Management]
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  6. Train your leaders “How to Train”

Create a [Combat SOP]
Create a [Training SOP]
www.2ndbn5thmar.com

- Unit SOPs
- Night Warrior
- Combat Orders
- How to Train
- Tank – Infantry SOP
- Fighting Positions
- PME: Battle Studies
- “The Squad Leader Makes the Difference”
- Decisionmaking, TDGs, Simulations
- TTP: Comm, AT, Keyhole sectors

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Issue: Training Day Math

• 12-week quarter
  – 3 Prime Training Days per week
• Minus
  – Standown, Range, HHQ Events, other “Training”
• Average 6 weeks = 18 days
  – For company and below, CTS and ITS

• QTP Assigns tasks. Must assign specific days!
Issue: Overtasked Co CO

• IDF, Bundeswehr: “Co CO, key leader on the battlefield, is overwhelmed”
  – Direct Organic Units [Platoons, Mortars, MG, Assaultmen]
  – Coordinate Attachments [CEB, AAV, Tanks, HMG, AT]
  – Coordinate Aviation, Fire Support [FO, 81 FO, FAC]
  – On contact, 20 transmissions on command net, more on FS nets. Accurate. While Under fire.

• DePuy: “Company commanders…have too many men to be trained on too many weapons, in too short a time, with too many diversions.”
Solutions?

• Put old heads on young shoulders: 10 years of CA TTP training and development for “all arms leaders.”
• Hackworth: “Major COs”
• Balck, DePuy: “Smaller units, single type”
• Mellenthin: “Pure units, less attachments”
• Balck: “More leaders, three-year tours”
• IDF: “Smaller units”
• RM, British Army: “Older officers, multiple tours”
• Bundeswehr: “Cross attach at Bn, not Co-level”
2 Para 1982: Company COs

- Company Commanders at Goose Green
  - Maj Farrar-Hockley  A / 2 Para: 90 men
  - Maj Crossland      B / 2 Para: 90 men
  - Maj R. Jenner      C / 2 Para: 55 men
  - Maj Neame          D / 2 Para: 90 men
  - Maj Ryan           H / 2 Para: 100 men
  - Maj H. Jenner      S / 2 Para: 128 men

- Avg 36 years old, 16 Years TIS [Handout]
- Experience Leading, Fighting and Training
- Older officers, multiple tours, smaller units

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Marine Corps Solution:

- Increase abilities of commanders
- Increase CA training of units
- “Fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence in combined arms.”