1. GENERAL. You are a company commander; responsible for everything that happens or fails to happen within your company. You will exercise mission command of your company, and I will execute mission command of the battalion through you and the staff. I will interject myself in your business when I believe it is needed or when I can make your job easier or more profitable. Don’t be put off by my involvement; it is my responsibility, as it is yours, to coach, teach, and mentor. I am dedicated to your success and that of your company.

2. SPECIFIC. In order to convey to you my thoughts about the responsibilities and keys to success for company command in general (note, my list is not all inclusive - you have good ideas too), I will use the topical headings of Leading troops (thoughts in general), Training, Maintenance, and Discipline/Having Fun. I will provide specific initial counseling to each of you within the first thirty days.

 a. Leading troops:

 1) You are the standard bearer of your unit. You must reflect the highest example of the Army ethic: loyalty, duty, selfless service, and integrity. Your character should reflect the traits which must be valued by all Soldiers: courage, candor, competence, commitment, and compassion.

 2) Always set the example, and demand that your subordinate leaders do the same.

 3) Stay calm, don’t panic or lose your cool. Your response to a crisis will be closely watched by your Soldiers.

 4) Insist that your NCOs do their jobs and hold them accountable.

 5) Coach, teach, and mentor your lieutenants; their development is a mutual responsibility. Ensure your 1SG is doing the same for your NCOs; you are mutually responsible for their development too.

 6) You must know all of your POI requirements, execution SOPs, and the BSOP.

 7) Know where your Soldiers are and what they are doing. Always be able to render a status report.

 8) Insist on Soldiers looking like Soldiers. This is an NCO primary responsibility, but you will set the tone and enforce the standard. Your company’s reputation will be made, in large part, by the way your Soldiers look and act.

 9) As company commander, brief the troops on your first day of command on your standards and what to expect from you. Never degrade your predecessor, or the way the company was run before you got there. Talk to your troops frequently as a group; after PT, before a weekend, before and after training events. Tell them what is going on; let them know how well the unit is doing - let them know where the unit has been stepping on its collective poncho. They want to hear it and it should come from you.

 10) Establish and maintain a workable, effective counseling program for every Soldier (this includes leaders).

 11) Conduct professional reading and encourage your officers and NCOs to do the same.

 12) True professional Soldiers are “silent and deadly”. Don’t let your company become a boisterous, profane mob; that is the mark of amateurs. There is a place for enthusiasm, but quiet, calm professionalism will win out every time.

 13) Be positive about other companies and battalions; don’t belittle other units and don’t let your Soldiers do so. We are all in the same Army.

 14) Teach your junior officers and NCOs the tradition of the service; support social functions, fund drives, and membership in professional organizations.

 15) Support the BN Family Readiness Group; take personal interest in it - I don’t care what level of involvement your spouse chooses to have, bottom-line is it is our program.

 16) Keep me informed of any UCMJ actions you are contemplating; I won’t interfere, but I don’t want to be blindsided either.

 b. TRAINING.

 1) “The best form of welfare for the Soldier is first class training.” Field Marshall Erwin Rommel.

 2) Conduct planning, rehearsal, execution, and AARs.

 3) Be at training; there is no substitute for the commander’s presence.

 4) First Sergeants are key trainers; use them.

 5) Have your officers and NCOs actively involved in planning; establish ownership of the plan.

 6) Closely manage your training statistics. This takes a long range focus and detailed planning.

 7) Give your officers and NCOs time to prepare, then hold them accountable.

 8) Train to standard, not to the clock.

 9) Coaching, Teaching, and Mentoring are our bread and butter; be a master at them.

 10) Leaders of all elements must be proficient in empathetic leadership.

 11) Your company APFT average ought to be 270 (+). Make your PT program tough, challenging, interesting. Work on stamina, and strength.

 12) Conduct risk Management. I will be involved; so will you.

 13) Train with all equipment, and cross train to provide redundancy.

 14) Evaluate each training event, and conduct an AAR. Ask your fellow company commanders for O/Cs, you’ll both learn from the experience.

 15) Be able to alert, assemble, and employ the company for emergency contingencies (Lost Ranger, Mass Casualty, etc.).

 16) I want to know immediately when we have canceled training. Modification to POI training requires my approval.

 17) Do not waste Soldiers time. Always prepare, rehearse, and then start on time. I get ugly when we waste time because we didn’t prepare.

 c. MAINTENANCE:

 1) Maintenance is a chain of command function. I hold the company commander personally responsible for the maintenance posture of his unit. Pay attention and be involved.

 2) Know your equipment.

 3) Always maintain by the book (-10/-20); Make sure your operators use their -10s and that they are up to date.

 4) Maintain during cycle; have a system that double check to ensure that maintenance is being performed.

 5) I will personally check maintenance; I will be interested in the results of Road Side Spot checks.

 6) Property accountability is the basis for effective maintenance and supply. Remember, the last item of your command that your senior rater will know about is your change of command inventory. Make sure you supervise the supply system; supply sergeants need a double check system to ensure they don’t make an honest mistake you will pay for.

 7) Make someone accountable for every piece of equipment.

 8) Initiate property adjustment documents as soon as shortages are discovered.

 9) Process FLIPLs expeditiously; be thorough with the initial investigation.

 10) Sensitive item accountability is non-negotiable. Report losses immediately, and immediately secure the area, freeze all personnel in place, and segregate those who may be involved in the loss.

 11) Expect your Soldiers to maintain their quarters as a healthy environment for them to live in. You should know where they live.

 d. MAINTENANCE OF PEOPLE, DISCIPLINE, AND HAVING FUN:

 1) Soldiers problems deserve our utmost attention. Genuine care in solving Soldier’s problems prevents AWOLs, attempts to hurt themselves, and disciplinary problems.

 2) Expeditiously complete financial/personnel actions for Soldiers. Use LES as a tool. Stay on top of what your Soldiers are doing and you should not have a late pay transaction. Keep the PAC informed of position changes and other personnel actions.

 3) Push your Soldiers to go to school; military and civilian. Prepare them for their future. Push SSD.

 4) Remember that the demography of the Army has changed and most have dependents. A Soldier’s home life affects his duty performance. Take family responsibility into consideration and insist Soldiers meet their legal obligations. Use the Chaplain, and ACS to help you help families.

 5) Establish predictability within your battle rhythms.

 6) Track your over 40 personnel, single parents, permanent and temporary profiles to ensure requirements are being met to assist these Soldiers.

 7) Inspect and conduct safety briefings before all long weekends or holidays. Talk to your troops about safety before each weekend.

 8) OERs and NCOERs are vital elements of a professional’s career. Write and submit on time; evaluations require time and energy.

 9) Awards should be given to deserving Soldiers immediately; track them and ensure the system works. Publicly recognize your good Soldiers and good duty performances; even if it is just calling them out front of the formation and thanking them for a job well done.

 10) Visit Soldiers in the hospital immediately when notified of a serious accident. Either you or your chain of command should visit hospitalized Soldiers frequently (normally, daily). Ensure that next of kin are notified; that the family readiness group is notified, and that I am notified.

 11) Use Hometown New Releases; this is a commander’s program that gets good Soldiers into the Army and retains them.

 12) Do not tolerate physical or mental harassment of Soldiers; Use the appropriate administrative or judicial procedures to deal with problem cadre.

 13) Sponsorship is a commander and 1SG responsibility. Assign good Soldiers to be sponsors.

 14) Make an effort identify quality Soldiers for service in the T-10 AGR Program.

 15) You are the company safety officer. Always conduct risk management. Train your subordinates to conduct risk management; and ensure they understand that the consequences for apathy are severe. Risk management worksheets are a contract with me.

 16) Emphasize positive leadership by thanking Soldiers for a job well done; send them a note or do it in person.

 17) Make a big deal of promotions - it is. I would like to attend all promotions.

 18) Disciplinary actions. Be smart and talk to JAG early on. I retain the authority to punish E6 and above; the CG retains all drug and alcohol cases (among others).

3. Final thoughts:

 a. The battalion staff is not the enemy. There should be reciprocal supported / supporting relationships.

 b. I like informality, and open - candid discussions. I expect you to speak freely and honestly with me. If you have a concern or issue with guidance or policies, come and tell me. Have your facts straight. Once I make the decision, execute it violently to the best of your abilities.

 c. I like to hear your good ideas; even better is to share it with your fellow commanders.

 d. Statistics are a way of life; keep an eye on them so that they don’t crush our training program.

 e. I am not a zero defects commander. I will underwrite your honest mistakes. But, I will not accept incompetence or apathy.

 f. I expect routine informal interaction.

 g. Promptly reply to questions and taskings I pass to you.

 h. Don’t worry about OERs. Your OER won’t be a surprise to you. Every 90 days, you and I will formally sit down and discuss performance - I hold you responsible for getting on my calendar and executing this.

 I. You have one of the best jobs in the Army; as great as mine. Don’t lose your perspective, or your sense of humor. Have confidence with humility. Balance the triad of professional, personal, and family responsibilities. Have fun in command. It will be a defining period in your professional and personal lives.

 R. BRIAN DEATON

 LTC, IN

 Commanding