



As a military officer, I believe that many of us like to think our good ideas are original and that the Army had to wait for us to come along before finally doing something “new” and “innovative”. This point is evidenced by the myriad of blog posts and articles on mission command (to include my own), since its adoption by the US Army a few years ago.

Overtime, I’ve realized that there is rarely anything new under the sun and that leaders who have made the study of war part of their self-development have all come to similar conclusions about how to prepare for it. I recently coauthored an article titled “[Preparing Soldiers for Uncertainty](#)”, which was published in *Military Review*. I was proud of the article because I thought my ideas were new, but I was wrong. Shortly after it’s publication, I received an email with a SAMS monograph written in 1993 by a young Army major. The monograph was titled “[Training for Uncertainty](#)” and its author is now a well-known 3-star general who was one of the [first supporters](#) of [Defense Entrepreneurs Forum](#). His endorsement of DEF goes to show, that twenty-two years later, he’s still in pursuit of common sense solutions to problems and continuously improving the military profession.

LTG Hodges’ monograph provides a sound roadmap for leaders to develop an empowering culture within their organizations. It is also a testament to how an organization can make the command philosophy of mission command work - all from a document that was written before the term “mission command” came into vogue. While the monograph is 55-pages in length, it can be divided into a series of leader development sessions under the following topics:

- The nature of war and the tenets of decentralized command
- Developing a common approach to solving problems
- The importance of small unit proficiency
- A leader’s intent and subordinate initiative
- Trust and respect within the organization

- Setting the conditions in garrison for mission command to work in the field

I encourage all leaders who are wrestling with the concept of decentralized/mission command to read LTG Hodges' monograph and start a conversation with peers, leaders, and subordinates. As I've stated, there is rarely anything new under the sun, but there are those who were once in our shoes and were able to help crack the code on pertinent issues...and more importantly, took the time to get their thoughts on paper. We owe it to them, and to our organizations, to take their lessons and use them.

Click here to download "[Training for Uncertainty](#)"

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