

As a field grade officer on a brigade staff, I get the opportunity to frequently interact with captains who are counting down the months until they become company commanders. Their excitement serves as a reminder to me of how quickly time slips away in the Army. One minute you are eagerly awaiting to take command, the next you are four years removed from the experience. Because moments in command are fleeting, captains must arrive prepared, or they will not be able to make the most of their experience. Many officers think they are prepared, but are quickly overwhelmed by the administrative responsibilities that come along with being a company commander. As a result, they quickly adopt a [Leeroy Jenkins approach](#) to leading their organization. Below are a few tips to help leaders prepare for the day they take the guidon.

**Learn the dimensions of the box.** Throughout my career, I've learned that many of the same people who talk about "thinking outside the box", don't even know much about the box to begin with. It's only after we fully understand the box that we can start thinking outside of it. In the Army, we have regulations that provide us with a roadmap of what our responsibilities are as company commanders. Take the time to review them prior to taking command. I learned this lesson the hard way, and when I was fortunate enough to take a second command, I spent time actually reading the regulations and captured them in a guide that I always kept with me. While the document is a bit dated, it may provide you with direction on where to focus your efforts. [Click here](#) to download it.

**Create a personal battle rhythm.** I struggled during my first command to keep my head above water. It always seemed that there was a deadline I was missing, or a slide that I had forgotten to submit. My disorganization turned every week into a movement to contact. Many of the great ideas I had prior to command had to be thrown to the wayside because I couldn't get my hands around my weekly schedule. Fortunately, my squadron commander shared with me a version of the slide below and it literally transformed my command. I was able to map out my weeks, months, and quarters, giving me the freedom to do the things I wanted to do in my organization.


**Hellhound 6 Battle Rhythm**

**Weekly Product Requirements**

- o Slides and Schedules Published (TUES 1600)
- o Commander's SITREP (WEDS 1600)
- o Storyboards (WEDS 1600)
- o DTMS Training Submission T+4 (Thurs 1400)
- o Weekly Training Closeout (FRI 1600)

**Weekly Events**

- o Award/OER/NCOER Scrub (MON 0845)
- o Command Maintenance Formation (MON 0930)
- o XO Synch Meeting (Mon 1500)
- o Battalion Training Meeting (TUES 0930)
- o Company Training Meeting (THURS 1300)
- o New Soldier Orientation (FRI 1530)
- o Safety Brief/Closeout Formation (FRI 1600)



**Monthly Requirements**

- o Barracks Inspection (1<sup>st</sup> Week)
- o Monthly Reports (8<sup>th</sup> of month)
- o FRG Updates (9<sup>th</sup> of month)
- o Subhand-receipt Due (12<sup>th</sup> of month)
- o Cyclic Complete (16<sup>th</sup> of month)
- o Property Book (20<sup>th</sup> of month)
- o Organization Inspection (25<sup>th</sup> of month)

**Quarterly Requirements**

- o FRG Meeting
- o Counseling
- o Company PT Event
- o Next Quarter Training Review
- o High Risk Soldier Review

Training Management Battle Rhythm			
T+8	T+7	T+5	T+4
Platoons submit Slide Brief HH6	Platoons brief slide to Rogue 6	Training Schedules Submitted NLT Weds	Training Schedules are locked and submitted to BN following MTG

**Develop a strategy for tackling those areas that will consume your time.** For many of us, it's usually when things seem to be running smoothly that we are blindsided by some incident that consumes our time, energy, and in some cases, our emotional well-being. For example, watch what happens when there is a missing sensitive item. Every aspect of the organization is scrutinized. Policy letters, SOPs, and systems are put under the microscope, and it just gets worse when one of those things doesn't exist. If we take the time to develop a plan to address these areas before something happens, not only do we decrease the risk of an incident, we also are less inclined to stress out when we are asked to provide proof that our organization practices weren't the cause. Below is a 12 month plan I developed to focus my energies on areas of the organization where I believed we might have problems. Additionally, I built time into my personal battle rhythm to address each of these areas. This enabled the officers and NCOs who were responsible for these aspects of the organization to prepare for my inspections.

Commander's LOE for Organizational Inspections



The importance of these simple practices weren't apparent to me until it was almost too

late. If I had taken the guidon better prepared the first time around, I would have been a much better commander to those I led. I hope those reading this post learn from my mistakes as well as those practices that made me successful during my second command.

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