



*“The Major runs on coffee and hate...and I think he’s out of coffee.” -Some Poor Staff
Captain at NTC*

Last year I completed S3/XO time and there were a couple of things I wish I would have had in my cargo pocket when I walked into the position. For instance, I was very rusty on the military decision-making process, so it took me a little bit to catch up. As a result, I used and abused my copy of FM 6-0. There were also a few concepts that I needed to read up on and some items that I needed to add to my kit to make life more comfortable in the field.

I’m sure there are number of other tools that would have made my life easier, but these were the ones I used or wish I would have used from the beginning. Check out the recent thread on our [Facebook page](#) for some more tools recommended by readers!

Doctrine And Regulations

[FM 6-0 Commander and Staff Organization and Operations](#)

This FM was my bible as the S3 and then even more so as the XO. I found that once I better understood MDMP, the faster we got at it as the staff. At a minimum, tab a copy so you can use it for quick reference during the planning process.

[TC 3-20.0 Integrated Weapons Training Strategy](#)

As the S3, I used this training circular to develop and resource multiple training events. It also helped me better understand weapons training methodology for gunnery and weapons ranges.

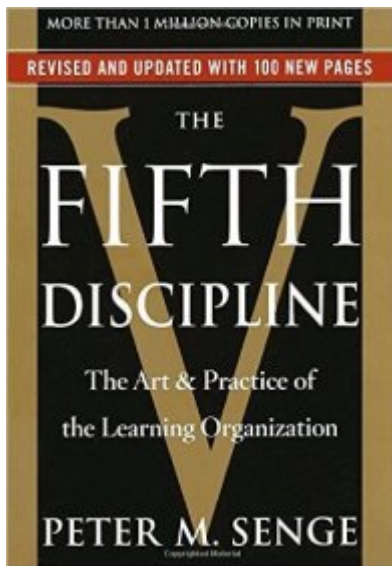
And If you really want to geek out, [check out these pocket-sized versions](#) of field manuals.

Also, [S1Net](#) is a great resource for the latest doctrinal and regulations updates. They send out regular emails with hyperlinks included. I also used the email to find out upcoming award programs well before the instructions came down from higher headquarters. And if you need to brush up on your maintenance knowledge spend a day browsing [Preventative Maintenance Magazine](#)

Finally, if your unit does not have a TACSOP, TOCSOP, or Planning SOP [start working on it](#) as soon as you arrive!

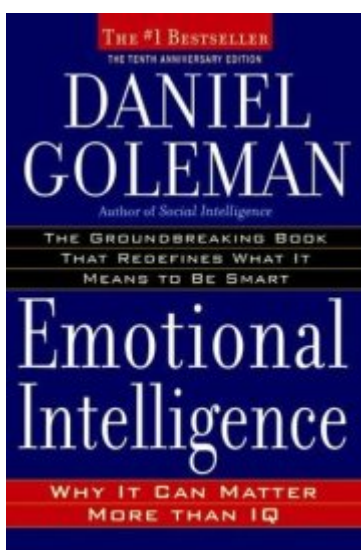
Books

[The 5th Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization](#) by Peter M. Senge



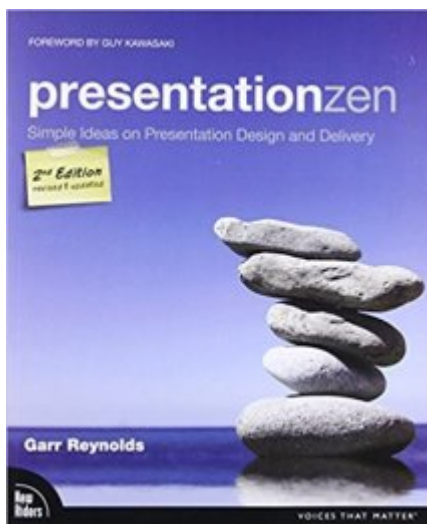
One of the keys to success of field grades rest on our ability to develop and maintain systems. This book is about systems. I read it early on in during my time as a the operations officer and it helped me better understand how the systems I create affected those at the company level. *The 5th Discipline* taught me to look first at the system, then the people when subordinates dropped the ball.

[*Emotional Intelligence 2.0: Why it Can Matter More than IQ*](#) by Daniel Goleman



As a company commander I got the job done with the authorities given to me by *AR 600-20 Army Command Policy*, as a major I had to rely on heavily on influence. This book is about the importance of emotional intelligence and it argues that EQ can have a huge impact on the success of organizations, especially if the supervisor or person in charge doesn't have much of it.

[*Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery*](#) by Garr Reynolds



Field grade officers need to be able to communicate ideas using multiple mediums, with one of those being Powerpoint. I struggled with putting together Powerpoint slides that conveyed the idea we were trying to get across, and luckily for me I had a boss who helped me with this. If I would have read this book beforehand, I would have been better off.

[*The Iron Major Survival Guide*](#) by David Dunphy



I haven't read this book, but those that have swear by it. The Iron Major Survival Guide provides an illuminating checklist of the things a staff leader and manager should consider when being assigned to or running a staff.

For the Assault Pack

[Jetboil Cooking System](#)



Two words- Game changer. Because of my Jetboil, I had a hot shave every morning and

when we were out of TOC coffee (Yes this happened), I was able to make myself a cup of instant hot coffee and keep on moving.

[Travel Mug](#)



What happens when TOC doesn't run out of coffee, but runs out of cups? I don't know because I always brought my travel mug with me.

[Nylon Hammock](#)



Nothing will ruin a field problem for the organization like the majors turning into zombies on training day 3. This hammock took about 5 minutes to set up between two HMMWVs and I slept like a baby!

Hammock Straps



This accessory allowed me to strap my hammock to anything.

There are other basics too, like [notebooks](#), ALOT of [map pens](#) (because they disappear along with single gloves, and eye protection during field problems).

Best of Luck!

Lastly, I read everything BG Coffman [wrote on his blog about Iron Majors](#)- his advice helped me navigate some of the tougher waters of S3/XO time. Finally, remember that the skills that made you successful as a company grade a bit different than ones you will need to be successful at the field grade level. Learn as much as you can, have fun, and remember that it won't last forever.

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