



By: CSM Samuel C. Rapp and SFC Harlan D. Kefalas

Hey Sir! Welcome to the unit. Whether you are the operations officer or the executive officer, we are going to be working close together. NCOs will do most of the heavy lifting with support from a great group of Soldiers. We would like to offer you some advice from our perspective that will make you successful.

Characteristics of successful field grades from the staff NCO:

Treat your relationship with the operations sergeant major the same as your relationship with your First Sergeant (from your company command days). Especially when it comes to manning. Our team will only be as effective as our slowest rower. In turn, the sergeant major will support you the same as your 1SG did.

Support the Headquarters Company First Sergeant by enforcing all staff members (both commissioned and enlisted) to maintain weapon qualifications, APFT, MEDPROS, mandatory training, etc. This will be tracked and coordinated by the staff NCOs. However, there will be cases when we will need your help with certain individuals.

Provide guidance and expectations, but leave the sausage making to us. If our process is inefficient and we do not realize it, please help us improve it. Your perspective and experience will be of assistance.

Play devil's advocate. If our work sucks, tell us it does. Also tell us how to improve it. We will appreciate the criticism. Remember, our output will have yours or the boss' name on it.

Make us do PT. And be there with us. Our workload provides numerous reasons to miss PT. Don't let us. One of the best ways to do this is to show up at least twice a week. We will appreciate it, and you will set the example for us. If the XO/S3 can PT with their section, all officers can.

Develop us. We are not trained or practiced in staff work. Include us in the planning process. Chances are we have done what you are planning (or something extremely similar) and can provide a needed dose of realism. We are familiar with the logistics and heavy lifting required to get mission command nodes established. We can provide you with feedback on how much time is needed or where we can develop efficiencies. However, we do have other responsibilities as well - security, TOC setup and teardown, and keeping the current operating picture (COP) updated.

On the topic of development, **don't forget to incorporate counseling into your quarterly battle rhythm.** This is a great way to set some time aside to let key NCOs that you rate know their strengths and weaknesses as you see them. We will do the same with our NCOs and Soldiers.

Support our initiatives. It cost nothing and the payoff is great. A simple question can lead to the battalion spearheading a Center for Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE) seminar for the post, which makes the organization look good. For example, a staff NCO read a MILPER message about CAPE offering to come to organizations, asked their XO and BC if they should send an email. Six months later CAPE responded, and that battalion hosted the seminar for all of Fort Leonard Wood.

Don't forget you are still a Soldier. If you drink coffee, make coffee. Do not expect us to do it for you. If you make a mess, clean up after yourself. We will check your gear and uniform, but do not expect us to put them together for you. These little things speak volumes about your character. Your actions will also set the tone for the rest of the leaders on staff.

As with any unit, we are very similar to a family. Planning an occasional family outing, away from the office, will improve morale and strengthen the family bond.

Remember, we're all on the same team and we need each other to be successful. The quicker we understand your expectations and you understand what we bring to the fight, the better off we will be as an organization. We wish you the best of luck in your new assignment!

CSM Samuel C. Rapp, a native of Choctaw, Oklahoma, entered the Army in August 1994. His operational deployments include Operation Able Sentry in Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Joint Task Force East Romania, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan and Operation Atlantic Resolve in Europe. He is a recipient of the Draper Armor Leadership Award, the Order of St. George, member of the SGT Audie Murphy Club and SGT Morales Club. He is currently the Brigade CSM for the 3rd Armor Brigade Combat Team at Fort Carson, CO.

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