

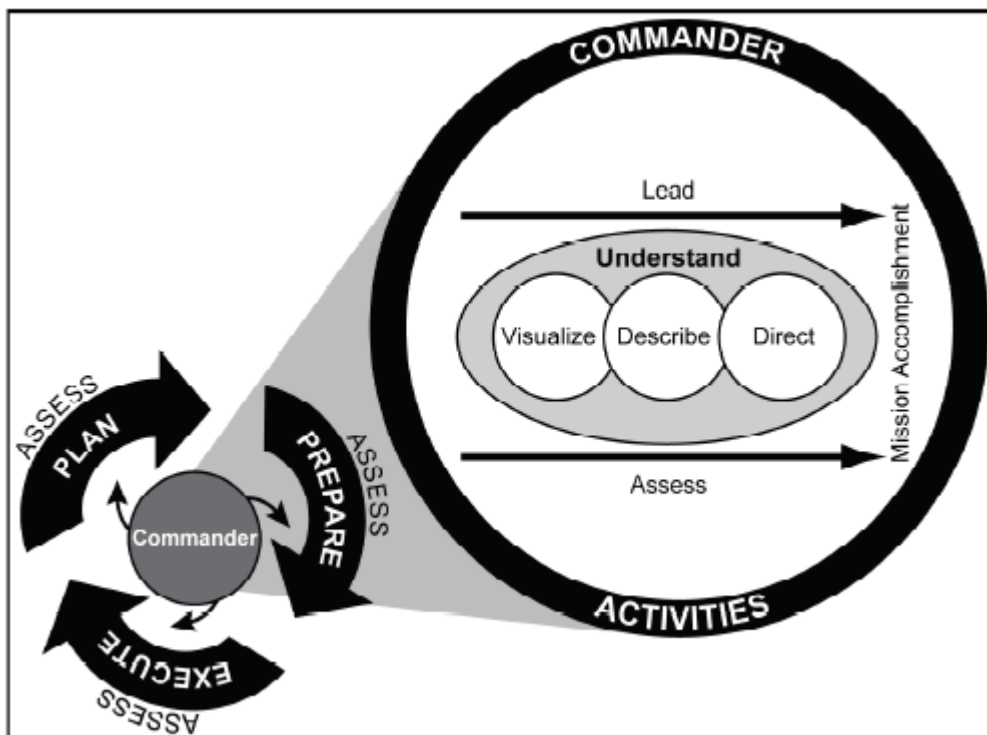


By: Captain Andrew V. Jazbec

A change of command is a critical time for an organization. Quite often, military blogs, social networks, and Center for Army Lessons Learned handbooks publish helpful lists outlining the first 90 days of command. As the *Army Handbook for Leader Transitions* outlines, these lists help a new commander set up their team, manage expectations, and establish routines. In fact, the article from which this work receives its namesake focuses on

a new leader establishing themselves in their organization. However, there is also a science and art to relinquishing command efficiently that is discussed less frequently. A poorly orchestrated change of command or leader transition can slow a unit down, create turmoil, and critically endanger readiness. Leaders must actively take part in effectively managing leader transitions to enable future success for their organization.

Luckily, the change of command process has been successfully executed for generations and you can do it too. As a framework, an outgoing commander can apply the operations process to leader transitions. Outgoing commanders must drive this process by adequately visualizing, describing, and directing subordinate leaders through an acceptable course of action for the transition. By doing so, leaders frame critical tasks for the organization and enable positive change.



### *The Operations Process, ADRP 5-0*

#### **Step 1: Plan**

Your time spent planning ensures you are not scrambling to sign that last form or fill that last shortage in the final hours before the ceremony. At the Company level, planning should begin 120 days prior to the transition to give ample time for gathering the necessary information and maximizing your opportunity to mitigate potential challenges that may arise.

**Plan your day in reverse.** For the first 30 days, keep a journal of all the tasks you complete, who you call, and what systems you use to accomplish the task. If you recall, all of these were new and foreign to you when you took command, but at this point they are every day actions you probably do instinctively. These are the items that get lost in the left seat training you conduct with your replacement. Often, you are informed of the big tasks you must complete to 'stay off the radar' when you enter a new job, but what is often left unexplained is the method for completing the ancillary tasks that support reaching the end state. Journal your actions for a month and you will see a very clear picture of the critical and supporting tasks your replacement must accomplish following the transition.

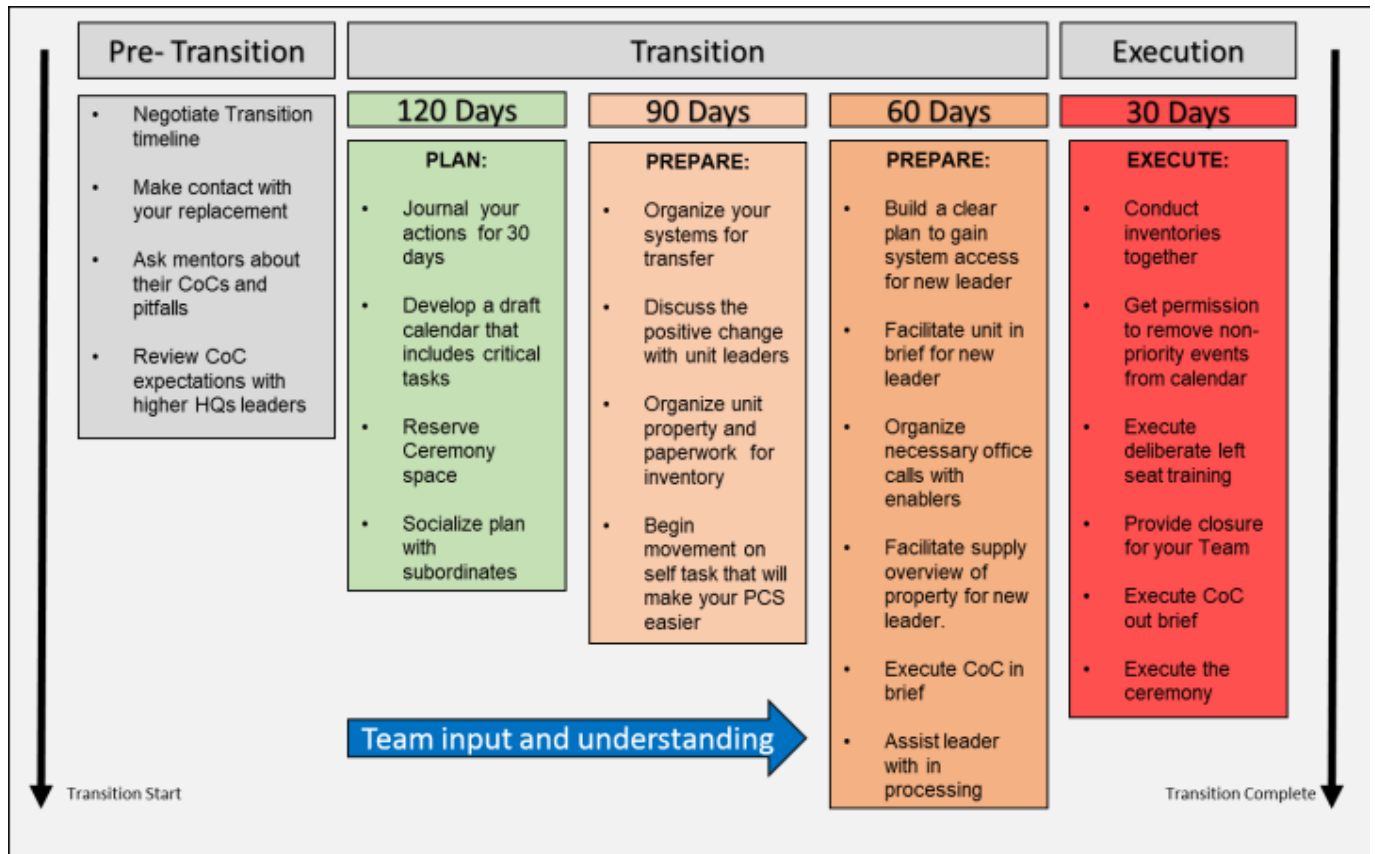
**Plan your execution timeline.** The next big step is gaining buy-in on your transition timeline from your higher headquarters. Do not wait for them to tell you when things are going to happen with your unit. Instead, gauge their expectations and present a plan for execution that includes pre-change of command inventories, new leader arrival, inventories, and the final ceremony date. Once your higher headquarters agrees to your timeline, you can begin framing what you have left to work with after consideration of holidays, priority training, and other no fail requirements.

**Plan your plan with others.** The worst thing you can do is fail to socialize your plan with

your team early on. They will often be the ones to tell you about competing requirements for a day, or remind you that you also have to squeeze in a personnel asset inventory (PAI) as part of the change of command. You may want to hold a formal meeting to socialize your plan early with your executive officer, first sergeant, training room NCO, and platoon leadership. Present your plan and give them time to digest its contents while overlaying it on their internal operations. Leave the meeting with a hard date and time to sit back down and work through concerns and constraints. Finalizing your plan with your organization's stakeholders creates buy-in and ensures shared understanding across your entire organization.

Plan the ceremony: Nobody wants to be embarrassed by typos in the program, or errors in the script.. As with everything else, start planning the ceremony early. Once your team collects the incoming commander's biography, have your first sergeant, the battalion CSM, or battalion executive officer vet the program. Plan to order yellow roses for their spouse as they may not remember or know where to get them. It's also appropriate to ask your replacement about their reception plans following the ceremony. After all, it will be their first hour as a new commander and the last thing they need is for their plan to fail. By working together with your replacement to plan the ceremony, you can eliminate seams and gaps in the plan and increase the chances for smooth execution.

At the end of your planning period, you should have a document that outlines inventories, a unit in brief, team introductions, left seat tasks, and other items that must be accomplished for the unit to be successful (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Transition Timeline**

**Step 2: Prepare**

In the prepare phase, start necessary movement to put your plan into action. Begin organizing systems, leaders, property, and yourself to execute a successful transition.

**Prepare your systems.** Not having access to the systems required to do your job can be a major roadblock to success. Have your training room or battalion staff submit access requests for these systems early to ensure your replacement can get to work as soon as the ceremony is over. Remember that journal you kept in step one? This tool is also handy for identifying all the systems and platforms you use on a regular basis. For a start, ACT, GCSS-

A, CRRD, MEDPROs, DTMS, GEARs, and UCFR all require specific access requests for a new leader to be able to use them effectively. Beyond your technical systems, it is also critical to lay out for your replacement the internal systems that keep the unit operating. From how Soldiers in-process to submitting awards, there are many things that you take for granted now, but had to figure out in the first 30 days of your new job. Be sure to prepare your systems for transfer by making them as portable as possible and ensuring access for those who require it.

**Prepare your Leaders.** The attitude of the outgoing leader can play a huge role in how the incoming leader is received. As the outgoing leader, you can help prepare your officers and NCOs for the transition by scheduling time for the key leaders to meet the new commander and provide an overview of their operations. Offer the incoming leader some time to get to know the team before they have to depend on them for action. Put your pride aside and allow your replacement time to talk with your soldiers, ask hard questions, and provide input to things that will be on their plate after the transition. Enabling the new commander's understanding of the company's current and future operations before the change of command will set up the entire organization for long term success.

**Prepare your property.** No one wants to end a successful command with a financial liability investigation of property loss (FLIPL)... However, if you are reading this in the last month of your command, and you have not been abiding by the tenants of command supply discipline, it may be too late.

Again, this is a process you want to start early. Thirty days prior to pre-change of command inventories, each sub-hand receipt holder should execute a 100% layout of their equipment and re-validate their shortages with the executive officer. This will make pre-change of command inventories much smoother. Your supply section will have time to solve any discrepancies, conduct necessary FLIPLs and complete adjustment documents. By the time you do inventories with your replacement, your unit should know how to conduct a proper

inventory. Pre-change of command inventories allow you to assess your organization's preparedness and impress upon each of the hand receipt holders that the inventory is the first thing their new boss will see. The greater the effort prior to your joint change of command inventories, the easier the actual task will be. If you conducted your mandated inventories and fixed documentation throughout your tenure, you will be in good shape.

**Prepare yourself.** Do not forget about the things YOU need to accomplish to transition to your next assignment with ease. There are orders, transportation, a hotel reservation, immunizations, evaluations, and speeches that must be prepared. So long as you follow step one, your plan should include those gates that you must complete individually to be successful as well. Leaders often take care of themselves last. However, the process is made easier through deliberate planning and preparation.

At the end of the prepare step, your plans and the way ahead should be 100% complete (Figure 2-1, 2-2). Your team will know and understand your plan, and your systems will be as portable as possible for the transition.

# 60 Days

## Pre-COC Schedule

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>LEGEND:</b> BLACK: CoC BLUE: Left Seat					1 FTX	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 BN LPD	16
		Small Arms Range				
17	18	19	20 CPT H Arrival	21 CPT H—In processing	22 CPT H—In processing	23
		Drivers Training				
24 CoC BIO Due NLT	25 CPT X—In processing Company In Brief to CPT H	26 CPT X—In processing Battle Rhythm Training Schedules	27 CPT X—In processing PDP KATUSA Manning	28 CPT X—In processing Reports FRG/SHARP/EO	29 CPT X—In processing Officer Slate NCOER Slate	30
	CO White Cycle					
31						

### *Sample 60 Day Calendar Overview*



# 30 Days

## COC Schedule

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
NOTE: 2nd PLT GRN Cycle 1APR-- 5MAY  <b>LEGEND:</b> <b>BLACK:</b> CoC <b>BLUE:</b> Left Seat	1 Systems Access Rations/EES GCSS – Dispatches CRRD ALERTS/DTMS LOGSA/GEARS UCFR/CDR Portal	2 Vehicles Trailers CROWS  CoC Program to BN	3 PLT Radios Urban OPS Kits Binos OER-254 JCR	4 Generators Radios Towbars  UCFR	5 Gun Mounts Tripods CBRN Detectors Power Supplies  Monthly Reports	6
7 Office Calls for month: BH/USO DES DPTMS/ATO MPD/Finance CID/CI 19th retention, G34	8 Containers Wrecker Trucks MREs	9 Tool Kits DRASH	10 903rd All CDR Sync W/ BC	11 Arms Room	12 Arms Room  <b>Mid Point Reconcile and AAR</b>	13
DTA 1151/1117						
14  Order New Sign NLT This week	15 Arms Room	16 Arms Room	17 Cooks MKT San CNTR TRNG MTG C&S	18 Containers  Command Photo	19 PAJ Masks Vests Contact Truck	20
Masan Range						
21  Order CoC Food NLT this week	22 HQ Automation	23 Barracks 363	24 Barracks 500 Series CO TNG MTG CDR Sync W/ BC	25 Final Document Reconcile with PBO Sign Books	26 CoC Outbrief w/ BC	27
28	29 Systems Verification: Rations/EES GCSS – Dispatches CRRD ALERTS/DTMS LOGSA/GEARS UCFR/CDR Portal	30 Systems Walkthrough QTB Overview	MAY 01 Order Flowers	MAY 02 CoC Rehearsal	MAY03 CoC	

### Sample 30 Day Calendar Overview

*CPT Jazbec is a Military Police Officer currently in command of the 188th Military Police Company and 903rd Military Working Dog Detachment in Daegu, South Korea. He will soon be transitioning to U.S. Army Recruiting Command where he hopes to help recruit*

*America's next greatest generation*

Resources Used for this Post.

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