



Army



Insights from Command Staff

Serving our Nation

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Introduction

Army Lessons asked personnel in supporting roles, such as 2IC, ADJT, CSM and PLSGT to reflect on their time supporting their commander and to provide tips and anecdotes to newly appointed personnel acting in these roles.

Supporting command is a very demanding job and to do it properly you have to have an understanding and knowledge of a whole range of topics from personnel administration to the Force Generation Cycle. There are many different perspectives on each and you will need to determine what best suits your circumstances and professional environment. Some information will be more applicable to your job and the way your unit operates than others, but all points should prompt you to reflect on similar considerations within your role.

The booklet is broken up into four chronological parts: preparation, the first 100 days, life supporting command and final thoughts. You will notice there are common themes which flow throughout these phases of your appointment with particular emphasis on command and management, mission command, training, administration and governance. This structure enables you to access information for specific periods of your posting or to appreciate the bigger picture.

We learn by reflecting on experience, and this process is much more effective if we can do so by learning from the experience of others. We encourage you to reflect at regular points throughout your posting, and to drop a quick email with your lessons learned throughout your posting and/or insights to army.lessons@defence.gov.au for our next update of this publication.



Part I : Preparation

“It is helpful to know who the new staff members coming into the unit are, a little about their background (knowledge and skills), and have an understanding of their personal circumstances. This awareness helps to determine any professional development they will need to perform their job and, therefore, how soon they are going to be able to operate effectively in the workspace.”

Preliminary Considerations

Insight 1: Arrange for the conduct of a HOTO as early as possible. Being able to walk the floor and ‘talk the talk’ before work officially commences for the year is a must. Ensure that you speak with your predecessor to discuss personnel, planning issues, resource management and the proposed direction for the unit. A good handover includes not only receiving the hard copy of the HOTO notes, but a soft copy with hyperlinks to the relevant Objective files, SharePoint sites, etc. HOTO is also a good time to organise prior access to relevant Objective folders and other systems, so you are ready to work upon march-in.

Insight 2: Prepare for success. Being mentally, physically, professionally and administratively prepared will ensure a smooth and seamless transition for you both personally and professionally and maintain the continuity of plans and processes in your new unit. Make a start on your planning and preparation as soon as you are notified of your appointment.

Command and Management

Mission command

Insight 3: Understand your new commander’s intent. When networking with unit personnel prior to march-in, take the opportunity to learn what is important to the CO. You may like to ask about the previous year’s commander’s guidance as well as any activities conducted and their outcomes. This will give you an indication of how the CO expects to use their assets, their approach to training and operations, and where you fit in to it all. Your planning will flow from there.

“What interests them, should fascinate you.”

Communications

Insight 4: Get information from a wide variety of sources so you can build a complete picture. Prior to marching in, there are many people with whom you can talk to about your new job. Your first point of contact is likely to be the person currently in the position. They will be able to advise you who the key staff are in the unit as well as other essential POC, the unit’s routine and the requirements of the new role. Speaking to your future boss, the

unit key personnel, future colleagues, relevant peer cohort and remaining staff will provide you with background for the position, unit structure, context and direction for further research. Being able to speak with these personnel 'in person' is an added advantage and can be done during the HOTO. Other sources of information include personnel from within your corps who have held similar positions, and friends and colleagues.

"There is no substitute for meeting people and then learning from them. If you don't know, ask. Someone has done it all before you."

Knowledge to support command

Insight 5: Research the unit, its roles and responsibilities and your role and responsibilities. Prior to marching in, you will also have to have a basic understanding of your new unit's processes, current and future activities, operations and plans. This can be done through many means, including reading and gathering information from the intranet or through networking with existing staff. Look at your new unit's intranet web-page or SharePoint site and make sure that you are able to access and read relevant documents. For example:

- Unit history
- Unit OPOD and instructions
- SO and SOP (including higher headquarters)
- CO directives
- CO Comd philosophy
- Duty statements (yours and your subordinates')
- Synch matrices, training programs
- PAR, POR and AAR for both lessons and information

This foundational knowledge will ensure that you are able to start from a position of strength and keep pace with unit tempo.

Insight 6: Ensure that you are technically prepared for your role, so that you can be the SME and contribute to your team and the unit in a productive way. Study your position and understand which areas will require your attention. This will enable you to target your research to that which is required. Read and re-read pertinent Defence,

Army and corps-specific doctrine to assist in your overall proficiency within your new appointment. These documents could include

- CA/ CDF directives
- DOCM/ SCMA policy
- Defence Manuals and/ or Instructions on the administrative functions of your position (for example, security, housing, incident reporting, workplace health and safety, housing, welfare)
- PACMAN and MILPERSMAN
- LMPs
- Corps-specific training doctrine

Insight 7: Augment your formal training with additional reading, study and CAMPUS courses. You will need knowledge in areas not covered on promotion or other courses. Ensure that you are conversant with the computer programs and applications needed for your job. This may require you to take tutorials on CAMPUS. Researching time management techniques and business techniques could also help with efficiency and proficiency in your new position. You can also broaden your knowledge and help to improve your initial job performance by understanding lessons from a variety of sources and being conversant with current domestic and international issues.

Governance

Insight 8: Become a corporate governance guru. Corporate governance will take up most of your time, and the commander will rely on you to provide them with the correct advice in a timely manner. Although you will have subject matter experts (SME) to provide you with detailed advice, ensure that you are conversant with the following topics as a minimum:

- Incident management such as AIMS and COMTRACK (Complaint Management, Tracking and Reporting Self Service)
- Command Post management
- Resource management (ACMS)
- Welfare management
- WHS and the use of Sentinel
- Security
- Stocktaking and supply chain
- Technical integrity and maintenance
- General unit admin, such as time and work flow management, pay, leave, career and personnel administration, AIRN and the use of the Defence One system

“Although this is no different to many other roles, when providing support to command you need to provide information or take action that will have the best possible outcome for the commander. Remember that what you do or how you act, or react, will reflect on your commander.”

Self-Management

Insight 9: Prepare for the mental stress that comes with a new posting. Never underestimate the level of mental stress you may experience in a new posting, even when in a support to command role. You will need to be mentally robust and disciplined so that you can establish, meet and demonstrate the highest standards possible. Often, you will need to learn rapidly under pressure and critically analyse information before you react or make decisions within very short time-frames. Mental preparation for a new appointment includes being able to start with a fresh mind, a positive attitude and an ability to focus on the task at hand. This mental discipline will not only allow your work to be of the best standard possible, but also enable you to critically reflect on your efforts.

“Before assuming my new role, I took the time to go on leave and mentally refresh myself. I found this important as it not only enabled me to approach my new job with restored energy and vigour, but provided the opportunity to ensure all my personal and family’s administration and removal was organised, providing a strong foundation to start the new job.”

Insight 10: Analyse the physical fitness requirements of the unit and your job and address your fitness accordingly. Physical robustness and discipline is as important as mental robustness and discipline. You will need to determine whether or not you have to maintain or increase your fitness levels, so that you are at the required level at the start of your posting. Utilise the expertise of PTIs to construct a suitable, tailored program if you need to increase your fitness level, or add corps-specific PT into your schedule.

Remember that you need to lead by example, so any additional PT will have to start well before the posting takes effect, including during the Christmas break, and may mean that you will need to do extra in your own time once in your new unit.

“In accepting the position as Adjutant I had to make sure that my administration was squared away so that I could assist my superiors, peers and subordinates with their daily administration. I had to complete all post-course administration, clear excess leave, change email address blocks and update my contact details on the Defence Corporate Directory to reflect my new position.”

“Marching into your new unit prepared and ready to go will place you in the best position to provide effective support to command. It will decrease stress associated with the start of a new year and ensure that you can focus on your unit or subunit from day one.”



Part II : The first 100 days

Preliminary Considerations

Insight 11: Be prepared to learn on the job. Sometimes, despite best intentions and efforts, preparation and planning for a new position can be less than optimal. There will always be areas of the job that you do not know or in which you are not experienced and that were not covered in a handover or previous training. These may include job-specific processes, procedures or technical knowledge. Regardless of the reasons for this deficit in preparation, potential friction can be overcome by:

- Actively seeking advice to address any knowledge deficiencies
- Using the corporate knowledge of peers and subordinates within the new unit
- Building relationships with other key personnel, SME or stakeholders so that you can draw advice from them
- Reading and researching pertinent doctrine and policy
- Analysing and understanding what qualifications and experience are required and attending professional development opportunities at the earliest possible opportunity

Insight 12: Getting established in your new position will take time. A comprehensive understanding of your commander's intent and command philosophy. Your role and responsibilities and the unit's processes, culture and members does not happen overnight. Set yourself goals and milestones that are realistic and manageable and take the time to really get to know the requirements of the job. This will allow you to finalise your own preparation and provide your commander with the best advice and support possible. Additionally, set the standard with your own personal standards. Be inclusive and allow all members of the team to contribute to its success.

Insight 13: Get to know the culture, sub-cultures and personal dynamics within your new environment. Every unit has its idiosyncrasies and nuances. Take an objective stance and observe all of the unwritten rules and conventions. This will help you to avoid unexpected challenges. For example, you may have to understand the cultures of the three services, APS and different contractors when operating in the Joint environment.

Insight 14: Understudy your one-up and build a close relationship with them. You may need to fill in for them, make decisions and control the organisation in their absence. This will be a considerable step up from any previous experience as a junior commander, so ensure that you deliberately plan opportunities before the need arises.

Insight 15: Work out small ways you can make changes and don't try to conduct large scale upheaval immediately. Collective goals can be slow and hard to achieve. This can be done by addressing the small and simple matters and then as you become more comfortable with your role, focus on more complex issues.

Command and Management

Insight 16: Create and establish a clear chain of command. In conjunction with your OC/COMD, delineate and allocate roles and responsibilities for the management of personnel, materiel, planning and other activities and clearly communicate these to all members. This will ensure a smoother start to your tenure. Confusion on command relationships, roles and responsibilities will have negative flow-on effect throughout the year.

Insight 17: Provide your specialist advice to support command decisions. If you are in a specialist platoon or organisation, it may be important to offer initial advice to your OC regarding the command relationships within your area and your roles and responsibilities. Providing technical and specialist support up the chain of command will enable the OC to make informed decisions..

Insight 18: Take the time to get to know your soldiers. Be friendly but not familiar so that you can influence them and their decisions. Learn their strengths and weaknesses and then talk to them about them; don't be afraid to discuss both, and be sensitive in the way you approach it. If you belittle a soldier, it will take quite a while to regain the trust from them and usually their peers as well. Talk to them about their job and role, how they are finding it, and offer advice when appropriate.

"It is always better to have soldiers who don't like you but are well disciplined than to have soldiers who like you right up until somebody dies due to their poor discipline."

Discipline

Insight 19: Set and maintain high standards for the unit to follow. Use policy, instructions, orders and guidelines to inform your standards and discipline focus. To maintain standards, consider implementing the following:

- Pick up the little things before they lead to bigger issues.
- Be firm and fair.
- Outline your expectations early and maintain them.
- Don't compromise on standards. Promote professional mastery in trade, corps and service. Encourage mentoring to encourage professional mastery.
- Ensure that all soldiers consistently conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- Do not condone double standards. Officers/ SNCO should be subject to the same rules and discipline action that applies to JNCO/ Soldiers.
- Resolve any discipline issues or misbehaviour early before it becomes a bigger or ongoing issue with consequences on the individual and unit capability.

*Set the standard. Live the standard.
Hold everyone to that standard.*

Insight 20: Consider your approach to discipline. A hard-line approach may benefit overall maintenance of discipline, but it could have an adverse effect on morale. Sometimes too strict a discipline regimen can backfire. If soldiers are given the responsibility to do the right thing, more often than not they will. If not, then take action.

Insight 21: Context is important in the approach to and application of disciplinary principles. For example, training establishments tend to have a more senior workforce, which reduces disciplinary problems. Even the more junior members are less prone to disciplinary issues due to their positions of authority or leadership roles. However, maintaining motivation and the modification of less-than-desirable behaviours or standards can be difficult as there tends to be more inertia. Maintaining discipline in this environment requires a little self-assuredness and the projection of confidence in addition to displaying competence. Senior members are generally more discerning about the how they are managed and their personnel issues tend to be more complex. Win their hearts and minds with genuine attention to their needs and wants. Not all can be met, but their loyalty will be well worth the investment.

"Listen to your subordinates; be available and visible."

Insight 22: Understand that 'precedence perception' matters in the unit. If a member is charged under the DFDA for a particular incident, then the next person who does a similar thing should also be charged. This reinforces consistency in approach and procedural fairness. This consistency must start at the beginning of the year.

Communication

General

Insight 23: Get to know the members of your organisation and establish and build professional relationships with those that support it. The success or otherwise of routine, short notice or high priority tasks will depend upon those interactions. Therefore, early in the year build positive relationships with people in these support roles.

Insight 24: Different people will be able to provide you with different advice depending upon the context. Speak to the people who can provide advice. Foster professional relationships with peers during promotion courses. They become invaluable

external sounding boards in times of need. Speak to the unit WOs and SGTs because they have been in your role or have previously supported it.

Insight 25: Get out and about from behind your workstation and ask for help. Communication is key, and “if you have a question, ask it; whether it is to a CPL, SGT, WO1, WO2, LT, CAPT, MAJ, LTCOL or COL... NEVER be afraid of asking for guidance. Then accept the responsibility of either following or not following the advice given.”

“Participate in sub-unit activities, PT and social activities; learn people’s names and set a high standard for dress and bearing.”

Chain of Command

Insight 26: Ensure that you build an effective relationship up the chain of command. Get to know how your boss likes things done, as “your staff work might be amazing, but if it is not in the format or to the standard required by your boss, then it is not amazing.”

Insight 27: Develop positive relationships both up and down the chain of command. This can be done by asking lots of appropriate questions and showing that you care by listening. Speak to your soldiers, of all ranks and ask them about their families and interests. If in an ARes unit, ask about their civilian employment. Be prepared to consider flexible work arrangements for ARes personnel if their individual circumstances warrant it as this will develop loyalty and improve overall work outcomes.

Key appointments and stakeholders

Insight 28: Develop a rapport with your OC and CSM, your peers within your organisation and key stakeholders. Establishing trust and loyalty throughout the unit with all members is important. “The major key to success as a 2IC, beyond your OC/ CSM is your relationship with the other CAPTs in the unit- principally the OPS CAPT and the other 2IC. Get to know them quickly, spend time socially together; so you know who to turn to for advice or help”. Also ensure that you maintain conversations with key stakeholders. This enables you to reach out and seek advice when required, learn from available corporate knowledge and develop strong working relationships based on mutual understanding. One positive benefit of gaining this mutual trust is the ability to

progress tasks or training and working through issues via DIRLAUTH or informal liaison before formalising them using the appropriate means.

Personnel and Administration

Insight 29: Become familiar with the staff and administrative processes of your new unit during the initial weeks of your new posting. This helps to get your sub-unit’s administration processed quickly and identify who to ask for assistance on particular issues. Observing the established norms will help you to understand their rationale prior to initiating any change. Learn what others expect and how they operate around you, and be prepared to reciprocate their help when possible.

“No staff cadet believes that they will spend the majority of their time on administration once a LT. They are mistaken. You will need to accept that admin will constitute a significant chunk of your work time. It is the admin churn that makes the ADF turn.”

Insight 30: Develop a detailed knowledge of the processes and the systems. Administrative tasks and time can be made more streamlined and less of a burden by a thorough knowledge of the systems and processes involved. Take the time to familiarise yourself with administrative processes. Where possible, get to know the clerks, so that you can draw on their wealth of knowledge and experience. This will help you to carry out your administrative responsibilities competently.

“Have a disciplined and organised approach to administration. Ensure that you set aside specific periods of time or windows during the day for administrative tasks and stay on track and focussed in order to achieve planned outcomes.”

Training

Insight 31: Build a comprehensive picture of the training liability to be addressed during your tenure. You may not be the only one who has posted in with a knowledge, experience or skills gap. There may be A training liability for you and your soldiers that must be addressed before you and your team can complete their work requirements. Consider what resources and training opportunities are needed, and compare them to those that have been allocated already for the TY/ FY. A SUPBID or rescheduling of the training/ work program may be required to accommodate shortfalls.

Insight 32: Be prepared to assist in the training of your subordinates. Taking an active interest in their development will not only assist in establishing a necessary professional rapport with them, it will also ensure that they are in a better position to understand the commander's intent and their role in your organisation's mission. It helps to establish your command presence and builds a stronger, more united team with greater situational awareness and commitment to getting the job done.

“Training programs are vital for the development of subordinates’ technical, professional and field skills. Adequate time must be allocated to each. One of my 60 day goals at a new unit is to conduct some form of scheduled development for subordinates. This ensures that the sub-unit is beginning the training year on a positive note, and sets the conditions for the remainder of the year.”

Insight 33: Provide on the job training for your experienced soldiers. New arrivals at the start of the calendar year will provide training challenges to get them up to speed. Consider their arrival as an opportunity for your experienced soldiers to train the new soldiers. This will enable them to have the chance to practise, develop and demonstrate skills essential to their professional development.

Force Generation Cycle (FGC)

Insight 34: Analyse the potential challenges of each phase of the FGC. For example, tempo-induced fatigue, when to include attached assets into your organisation to ensure optimal performance, and maintaining morale during low tempo periods. Quite often there is no distinct delineation between Ready, Ready and Reset; operational tempo will be an issue to manage, no matter where your unit is in the cycle.

Insight 35: Communicate the value that the cycle provides to all unit members. It is important for all personnel to understand what the FGC is, the rationale behind it, why they are conducting specific types of training and what that training is for. Soldiers will understand the FGC and its rationale if you highlight the benefits to Forces Command in terms of sustainability and training. As a result, all personnel will have an improved operational focus, and understand their duties and their contribution towards operational combat power. If team members take ownership for achieving combat power, they will understand their value to the mission, thus improving morale and motivation, and overall outcomes. This is particularly important in ARes units where quite often, soldiers may not see their contributions as a force multiplier.

Combined arms

“Too often, we jump straight into combined arms training with under-trained soldiers and then get frustrated when we do not achieve the standard required. Conduct training sequentially to build individual skills and then culminate in a collective training activity. This should only occur once basic corps skills are at the requisite level to effectively support other arms, so individual soldiers are not still trying to develop their own skills.”

Insight 36: Deliberately plan the integration of other assets before progressing to combined arms activities. Soldiers and their teams need to be proficient in their own skills, both individually and collectively, and as smaller groups before integrating other assets. If units/ sub-units have invested heavily in developing and maintaining the required combined arms capabilities, it will be easier to teach new soldiers and officers the requisite knowledge and skills. In this case, working both with other specialist

platoons and with other arms early on provides a basis to expand relationships within the Battle Group and an opportunity to share finite resources, drivers, vehicles, training areas, and safety supervisors. Capability and experience is far more important than being tied to a date, so plan your training goals and objectives accordingly.

Insight 37: Exploit every opportunity to exercise in a combined arms environment.

This will both improve and professionally develop all personnel and exercise deployment outcomes. The earlier soldiers are exposed to and practised in the combined arms environment, the better. Training must also be consistent and preferably with the supported unit.

Governance

Insight 38: Identify core business and tasks at the start of the year, and ensure these are able to be executed as a drill. Routines that become second nature to all staff will increase efficiency and allow for significantly more time on the development of capability, individual and collective training and dealing with unexpected or short-notice tasks. Create standard check-lists and templates, and conduct continuation training to ensure staff are up to speed.

“Training in the combined arms sense is best achieved after initial consolidation of the team. I would suggest a requirement exists to establish your own SOPs and TTPs prior to immersing yourself into a combined arms team. However, the sooner you achieve this, the better prepared your team will become.”

Goal Setting

Insight 39: Creating a functioning and effective organisation takes time and planning. Remember that this time can be constructive, and although there is pressure at the start of each year to set, develop and implement goals and plans almost instantaneously, doing so could be counterproductive. “Setting goals for your organisation or staff too early can lead to disappointment when they are either not achieved or are not within your scope.”

Insight 40: Planning and goal setting will be essential to creating and establishing effective routines. Establish a solid base from which to operate for the remainder of your posting. This can be achieved by understanding the work environment, your boss and their intent; being visible around the unit; creating positive, productive and professional relationships; and setting realistic and achievable goals.

Insight 41: Assess what goal setting methods will work for your context and commander. There are many different goal setting methodologies. Some officers state that it is best to set milestones at the 30, 60 and 90 day mark whilst others believe that goal setting based on set timings does not work in such a dynamic organisation as Army. Work with your boss to determine how you will set individual and collective goals and formulate your plans accordingly.

Insight 42: At the unit level, goal setting needs to rely on direction from higher. COs and OCs set the conditions and milestones for personnel to work towards. Incorporate these into your plan, and ensure that there is synchronisation between the two. Discuss your individual and collective goals with your superiors at the start of the year to ensure that they meet the commander’s intent and are compatible with the overall plan.

Insight 43: Set good goals with the following characteristics:

- Goals must be realistic, measurable and achievable. They need to be aligned with the commander’s intent, organisational goals and individual needs.
- Goals need to be specific and have a known end-state with clear milestones along the way.
- Goals also need to be flexible to adapt to changes at the collective and individual levels.
- Goals need to be communicated to all staff. All staff need to be engaged with the process and have ownership of their own goals and those of the organisation.
- Goals can be achieved incrementally. Weekly goals can contribute positively to longer term ones. An incremental approach provides an excellent measurement tool and progress is more visible. Smaller shorter term goals are also more readily achieved and provide a sense of progress and accomplishment.

Self-Management

Insight 44: Accept that you may make mistakes, particularly if you are posted into a support position on promotion. The key will be to learn from them and move forward. Consolidate any lessons learned during the day each afternoon/evening and review them the next day to help you understand the requirements of the position, battle rhythm of the unit and particulars of the job.

Insight 45: Having a flexible approach to your job will assist in negating the risk of fatigue. It is important to never get wrapped up in the 0730-1600 h mentality as there will be times in which your job will extend far beyond the core working hours. For example, this may occur at the start of the year when you are establishing staff processes and need to get on top of the initial administrative burst. You can achieve balance, however, by knowing when to surge and when to regroup and finding creative solutions during periods of operational intensity.





PART III : Life supporting command

Preliminary Considerations

Insight 46: Find opportunities to work smarter, not harder. Governance is a key role of a second-in-command of a unit/ sub-unit. Meeting corps, business, individual soldier trade and military skills compliance requirements can be overwhelming. There may be a tension between trying to meet technical and professional requirements. There may be challenges associated with meeting all governance requirements in an ARes unit. A clinical, dispassionate approach towards managing governance and compliance issues will assist you to cope with the requirements.

Command and Management

General

Insight 47: A key function of leadership is to enable the soldiers to develop a sense of pride and purpose in their work. This can be done by creating opportunities in training for them to show their skills in front of their peers and their superiors. Give praise to those who deserve it, and they will reflect your attitude towards others.

Insight 48: Encourage soldiers to think for themselves and ask questions. Give them the freedom of action to do their jobs and learn from their experiences. Give them the skills and resources they need for success in their job. Their success will be yours. Set goals together and hold them accountable for them. Constantly provide a variety of tasks to continue to develop their professional skills. Ensure that you provide honest, timely and constructive feedback and positively reinforce good work. Be authentic in your approach to leading the soldiers, and inspire them to do their best by doing yours.

Mission Command

Insight 49: Practise active communication and enforce back briefs to enhance mission command and learning. Providing opportunities to back brief on a specific task and monitoring subordinates work is your responsibility. Give your intent, get a back brief and provide relevant guidance. Depending on the complexity of the task, this process will need to be repeated. Keeping track of tasks via back briefs and other reporting mechanisms will also enable you to head off any mistakes before they happen so that you can provide guidance or correction to subordinates when needed.

Insight 50: Determining your freedom of action (FOA) is not restricted to the battlefield. In barracks, it is important to analyse your tasks; understand the experience, skills and capabilities of subordinates; and assess any restrictions or constraints that might be imposed upon you by higher Defence policy or time-frames. Having this knowledge will also assist you in determining any friction points or risk associated with getting the job done. After analysis, develop a plan, and express any FOA through orders or tasks. Provide clear control measures when briefing a task. Personnel should then be free to work within given boundaries.

“Mission command is too often spoken about yet too rarely practised. Fully embrace mission command.”

Insight 51: Provide additional support to subordinates when allocating them ‘no-fail’ tasks. Giving your subordinates FOA to complete critical or complex tasks is essential to their professional development and the development of the team. Placing them outside their comfort zone to organise no-fail activities that are time sensitive, involve detailed knowledge of mandated policy, or contain an element of risk will provide

them with a deeper learning opportunity than those available on courses or in their daily routine. Empowering subordinates in this way will not only benefit the individual but your organisation as a whole. You may need to provide additional support to enable their development and ensure the success of the activity. This does not mean micromanaging, but rather allocating some additional time to provide guidance or receive backbriefs, allocating timelines with milestones or organising a mentor to give them additional professional support. This level of oversight will allow the individual the FOA to complete the task but also the opportunity to rectify any issues along the way.

Insight 52: Develop strong relationships based on trust to enable FOA. The provision of FOA is dependent on mutual trust; developing this trust takes time and until a common understanding is established between the commander and the subordinate, increased supervision may be required. As mentioned, this understanding and trust is developed by providing subordinates with guidance, letting them develop a plan and then providing a back brief. Providing direct guidance enables your subordinates to develop a plan to meet your end-state. It gives them ownership of the problem. You can then approve, modify or change their plan based on the principles of feasible, acceptable, suitable, distinguishable (FASD).

Insight 53: Consider risks associated with the provision of FOA. Conduct an internal risk assessment after a full appreciation of the issue and, if required, direct actions that are to occur. There may be risk associated in allocating an important task to one subordinate or failure of subordinates to meet deadlines. You may need to limit freedom of action in these cases; however, in most instances, risk can be managed or mitigated by using the principles of mission command. *LWD 3-0 Operations, Section 3.5.*

Insight 54: Encourage junior commanders to make decisions. Delegate as much as possible to subordinate leaders to enable them the freedom to execute their orders after developing their own plans. They are also best positioned to provide advice on specific soldier issues and on-the-ground situational awareness.

Insight 55: Allow subordinates to learn from their mistakes. Not all consequences are negative. Mistakes can be opportunities for gaining experience and learning. Set your team a task and give them the boundaries. Let them choose the best way to tackle a task and allow them to learn from their choices.

“Blatant ignorance or failure to adhere to policy is inexcusable but failure in terms of pushing capabilities and branching into new areas should not be punished. Mediocrity in Army leadership is bred from some junior officers not pushing boundaries.”

Insight 56: Allow people to produce their own solutions even though they may be completely different from what you expected. When providing guidance, try not to have a detailed expectation on the result you want. Allowing people to provide you with their ideas will not only give them ownership of a task, but also enable you to learn from different approaches and solutions.

Insight 57: Consider mistakes made and the resulting outcome(s) when judging subordinates. If a subordinate makes a mistake, then counsel them and provide further guidance in the next task that you issue them. Don't write them off.

“LTs should make mistakes. CAPTs may and MAJs should not. Don't punish LT in their PAR for failure to achieve a mission or task.”

Insight 58: Use your SME. Your subordinates will include soldiers who are knowledgeable, experienced and an SME in their own right. After initial analysis to determine capability, it should be easy to provide the SME in your organisation with the FOA to do their jobs.

“My clerks know their jobs well so I allow them as much freedom of action as necessary to achieve their daily tasks. If there is an issue that arises that they are unsure of, they will ask my advice and I will not task them with anything outside of their knowledge base.”

Discipline

Insight 59: Keep the soldiers busy. When there is no work, soldiers may get mischievous. Although soldiers complain about work, they get just as frustrated by not being utilised. If issues do arise, they need to be dealt with quickly.

Insight 60: Give clear direction and orders so that words are not misconstrued. Don't make threats in using the DFDA. Set clear boundaries and follow through with reasonable and appropriate punishment for individuals' actions. Remain consistent in approach by not over reacting by punishing the group for an individual indiscretion. Remember that people may need time and space to relax, but make sure that clear direction is given when bringing them back on task.

Insight 61: Be consistent and unbiased when enacting disciplinary measures. It is up to commanders to ensure that unbiased and strong discipline mechanisms are in place, that are fair to every individual. Each incident warrants a tailored approach and whilst overall guidance is a strong starting point, discussion should also play a part in the process. There also needs to be consistency in the chain of command in the approach and management of discipline issues.

Insight 62: Allow JNCOs, SNCOs and WOs to enforce discipline. Allow them to do their job and manage issues; however, officers should not be afraid to deal with issues instantly when they occur if they are the closest member. Correct the problem on the spot, then provide information to the relevant CSM/SSM and allow them to deal with the respective member. Understand the command relationship between soldiers and officers, and understand exactly where the line in the sand exists to ensure the structure of discipline within your unit or sub-unit.

Insight 63: Maintaining discipline is a matter of communication both ways. The balance between approachability and rank is important, but a personal touch often goes a long way to maintain discipline. Everyone is well aware of disciplinary consequences of breaches, so there is no need to harp on it too often and create a culture of non-communication.

Communication

General

Insight 64: Provide constructive feedback outside of the mandatory written reports. Continue to counsel your soldiers during the reporting period so that you are providing feedback and helping them to achieve success and meet the sub-unit/ unit's mission.

Insight 65: Ask your soldiers they would deal/handle different situations. This will both educate them for the roles they may one-day fill and help them to learn from your success or failure. This will also let you learn from them as, just because they are a subordinate, doesn't mean they don't have valid and insightful opinions.

Key personnel

Insight 66: Establish a good relationship with the ADJT, CCLK, and RSM and other key personnel. They will be vital in helping you efficiently process sub-unit administration and governance. For example:

- An RSM will be a great source of advice if you are in an ADJT position.
- For corporate governance matters, consult the XO.
- For personnel matters, consult the ADJT, Padre or CCLK.
- For operations matters, seek advice from the S33.
- For security issues seek advice from the Battalion 2IC/ S2.
- For corps/ trade advice, go through your chain of command.
- If you are in an ARes unit, talk to the SGT/JNCO who have been in the unit for several years.
- Talk with peers, colleagues and superiors in sub-units/ unit and all staff within a branch.

Social Media

Insight 67: Identifying internal and external threats and the type of platform used by personnel will help to mitigate any risk associated with the use of social media.

There are challenges every day, especially with soldiers of all ranks not recognising what should or should not be out in the social media. Soldiers have the propensity to not consider second and third-order effects of their actions or comments on a variety of social networking platforms.

"I stay off social media myself; however, I always speak to my soldiers about it, especially at the beginning of a new posting, set the boundaries with no ambiguity or room for interpretation."

Insight 68: Reinforce the importance of OPSEC to soldiers in relation to their use of social networking platforms. Soldiers need to be made aware of the consequences of communicating OPSEC information and the importance of considering their photos and posts as information that can be tactically used against Army. When discussing the use of social media platforms at induction training or prior to an exercise or deployment, reinforce the importance of service requirements and sacrifices that have to be made by members in uniform, and how that extends to soldiers' private lives.

Insight 69: Arm your soldiers with the information needed to mitigate any administrative or OPSEC risk through education and training. There has been a significant intergenerational cultural shift on how people communicate with each other and the wider community. Information and guidance is paramount to ensure that this does not adversely affect the unit. Educating people on how to use their communication tools is more important than just reiterating legislation, directives in training or orders. In an open and constructive manner, discuss with your soldiers previous observations of inappropriate use of social media and what effect this has had on the individual's, the unit's and the Army's reputation or security. It is still important, however, to be cognisant of the policy and any changes as they are updated throughout the year, and keep your COMD and unit/ sub-unit informed accordingly.

Insight 70: Include instruction on the methods of retaining privacy. People still tend to believe that their actions in the private domain are still private, even on a public forum. Remind members of the importance of being aware of public comment and the posting of and commenting on photos. Research and keep up-to-date with the methods of limiting access to personal info, locations and comments, and provide training or a discussion forum with your soldiers. For example, continual upgrades by social media platforms have in the past reset many privacy settings. This training needs to include no-nonsense examples of the consequences of not setting and maintaining privacy.

Insight 71: Treat people like adults. The challenges of slander, offensive conduct and rumour is rife on social media, but it is ultimately an individual's responsibility. Provide soldiers with the information and tools they need to manage their accounts appropriately, and punish individuals who transgress rather than restrict the group. If an infringement occurs, deal with the soldiers in accordance with Defence Instructions and the DFDA, and revisit the social media awareness presentation given during induction training each year. If individual events are pushed into the public information domain, don't hide anything and provide sound justification that the event is not reflective of the group.

"This tool [social media] has enhanced the unit's local and strategic communication rather than hampered it."

Insight 72: Using social networking platforms judiciously can enhance unit management. Defence and unit social media pages are a strong advocacy and information tool, provided that adequate control mechanisms are in place. Facebook, ForceNet and other forms of social media enable soldiers to communicate with the unit/ sub-unit about certain activities. Social media is an especially valuable tool for ARes units, as most Reserve members do not have access to the DPN outside of their Army work environment.

Insight 73: Be careful and selective about who you have as social media friends and what you place on social media. Social media can blur the line between being friendly and being familiar with other members of the unit. The guidelines are there for you to follow as well. One respondent stated that he has a personal policy of making 'friends' with people in the same seniority span one up or down, but never with junior soldiers.

Personnel and Administration

Insight 74: Time used in getting it right is not time wasted. Good administration takes time, organisational skills and attention to detail. If you consider the level of responsibility involved in operating a Supply Customer Account (SCA), then time used for accounting for equipment by sections, supervised by PLSGT, is worth it. Getting it right the first time will save you time and effort in the long run.

Insight 75: Factor in additional time to complete tasks as specialist administrative support may not be available to you. Quite often, clerks will be brigaded into a central organisation, and you will be without organic support. This might result in an increase in the number of administrative tasks you complete. You may also need to factor in additional time to complete tasks. This additional burden may cause stress for you and your staff. For example, clerk support in ARes units may be limited, and you will find yourself doing more than you anticipated. There are a number of strategies that you might consider to alleviate the pressure, which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Insight 76: Develop a clear process for management of admin within your unit. Once developed, ensure that processes are strictly adhered to. This will ensure that you will always have a 'hand-rail' to guide you and allow you to easily back-track when

required. At the start of the year, take note of the induction training on unit admin procedures. Take time to re-read the DIs and policy on all activities you may need to undertake. Digest each, and create a brief checklist to keep track of which ones you have read and those that you still need to read.

Insight 77: Rationalisation of effort will increase efficiency. Minimise the effort required of your sub-elements by rationalising reports and returns. This will ensure that data is received by your higher command in a timely manner. Reduce the number of committees required by creating larger, centralised groups.

Insight 78: Decrease the amount of paperwork required to achieve simple outcomes. Constant staff checking for minor formatting errors will not result in efficient or effective administrative processes. Use some common sense when it comes to adhering to the Defence Writing Manual (DWM). Remember that the content is what is important. Set up some templates to use so that formatting does not become an issue, and you can focus on getting the message across.

Insight 79: Move the paperwork along quickly. Work on the principle of getting administrative tasks and paperwork off your desk within a 1-2 day period (barring major activities keeping you out of the office). Occasionally you may have to work extra hours to get it all done.

Insight 80: Provide realistic time frames to accomplish admin tasks. Include a date/time to be completed and the required reporting mechanism to provide feedback to the appropriate authority when the task is complete. Ensure that you are included in any reporting framework.

Insight 81: Delegate where possible. Another way to deal with corporate governance and compliance is to delegate. While this may sound a cop-out, you will otherwise quickly find yourself swamped by governance that will consume your time and patience. Where appropriate, delegate tasks to the experienced, qualified experts in your unit/sub-unit, such as the RQMS, CSMs or PL SGTs. Delegation does not mean outsourcing the responsibility for the tasks; you can delegate the task but not the authority or responsibility that comes with it. Provide guidance, time-frames for back briefs and the final product, and take an active interest in the SME's work. Additionally, sub-units and platoons need to be held to account for their responsibilities. Ensure that they are on task, and that the key appointments take responsibility for their tasks and soldiers.

Insight 82: Empower subordinates to complete a range of administrative tasks. Delegating the responsibility will ensure that the load is shared and has the additional

benefit of allowing these members to develop their leadership and management skills. CAPTs can be authorised to complete certain administrative tasks at the SQN/ COY level with oversight of their OCs. This on-the-job training is beneficial for their careers and will be enhanced by formal training on promotion courses.

Insight 83: Encourage individuals to take ownership of their own admin. Ensure that all personnel are aware of their individual administrative responsibilities and hold them to account. Let them know what you are accountable as well. For example, if you are a PL SGT make sure that your section commanders are clearly aware of the expectation of them to be the initial POC for personnel matters, including correct and appropriate counselling, professional and correct submission of correspondence and timeliness and expectation management for resolution.

Insight 84: Have regular meetings with set goals and reporting responsibilities. It is still important to conduct periodical checks through activity planning and management, and to refine as you go. Enforce the chain of command and ensure that your subordinates take responsibility for their tasks and soldiers. Once your daily and weekly routine is established, stick to it; delegate if necessary.

Insight 85: Schedule time in which to complete your governance tasks. Your work rate will be affected by mandated governance requirements and it may be hard to maintain a focus on training whilst completing the necessary compliance paperwork. For example, ensuring people maintain currency and movement within the OMD is a challenge whilst ticking all the boxes required for force generation, which can also be difficult to fit into a training program.

Insight 86: Monitor AIRM compliancy closely and consistently. Encourage a culture of monitoring, foresight and action by the leadership and individuals within your unit/sub-unit. Be prepared to take the hard line if individuals, particularly those in leadership positions, allow their compliancy to lapse.

PME and Training

Insight 87: Incorporate redundancy into your planning to allow for on-going development of soldiers. Professional development at all levels, whether in the form of internal training or external courses, must form an integral part of your scheduling and routine; it will not only contribute to the collective knowledge of the unit, it will improve individual morale and motivation. Although releasing soldiers to attend driver or leadership courses (especially during key activities) does hurt, the long-term benefit to the unit will outweigh this pain.

Insight 88: Help your soldiers' situational awareness. To maintain motivation, ensure the soldiers are focussed on the rationale behind your unit/ sub-unit's training phase. Soldiers need to understand that readiness leads to capability and that they can be called to fight anywhere, anytime

Insight 89: Engrain a culture of readiness and a focus on tough, relevant yet rewarding training. This is essential to maintaining motivation and, as a result, preparedness. When possible, maintain standards and interest during the annual exercise schedule by avoiding repetitive content. Try to vary exercise scenarios and include challenging problem solving activities to maintain interest and focus. Ensure all soldiers are fully read into the training picture, the goals and targets of the CO and unit and are consistently tasked according to their roles and responsibilities.

"The opportunity to conduct individual or collective professional development is an essential inclusion to any schedule and will enhance capability in the long run."

Force Generation Cycle

Insight 90: Maintaining motivation through each phase of the FGC has its own set of challenges. There are a variety of challenges associated with leading soldiers through the each of the FGC phases. These include;

- Keeping individual motivation high when soldiers who are ready to deploy (for example as part of the Ready Battle Group), see other members of the unit be considered for deployment whilst they 'sit on the bench'.
- Maintaining motivation during the reset phase when there is a decrease in funding and training opportunities.
- A lack of understanding by different units and chains of command who have different requirements of the same platoon.

Insight 91: Be aware of fatigue. Lead-up training to certification (from section level training to Regiment within a Brigade) will take a large chunk of field time and preparation. You need to be cognisant of the fact that soldiers and officers get burnt out trying to coordinate training, attend to corporate governance, prepare themselves and subordinates, and conduct maintenance of equipment in the short periods available

in between exercises. Operational tempo can increase dramatically if you are in a unit where individual components within the unit are involved in all three FGC phases simultaneously, which can occur in ARes or logistic units. For example, in one unit both FORGEN and OPGEN activities occurred concurrently and often conflicted, which resulted in an extremely high workload and competing priorities.

Insight 92: Consider coordinating training with local units to take advantage of all potential training opportunities. When planning a combined arms activity, an FTX is ideal as there is less of a bill for resource and support personnel than that associated with an LFX. ARes units may need fight to get opportunities to train in the combined arms environment some soldiers might not be able to parade for the organised activities.

Insight 93: Integrate assets early. Early and consistent integration of assets remains essential outside of the FGC for those soldiers whose job it is to support manoeuvre units. For example, soldiers in a joint fires team (JFT) have a permanent combined arms focus. One of their key functions is to integrate with their supported manoeuvre sub-unit when they fire in support of manoeuvre units.

"RAE soldiers also benefit from practising with their supported asset. This is because engineers don't operate in isolation so they should train in a combined arms setting whenever possible and as soon as possible. This gives sappers the time to adjust to the supported unit's way of working and allows them to develop a relationship with the unit they are supporting."

Post-HAMEL activities

Insight 94: Plan for post-HAMEL training. No matter which phase of the FGC you are in, post-HAMEL months are critical for a staff officer or sub-unit 2IC. Ex HAMEL needs to be the focus for Army-wide training with soldiers immersed in combined arms training in the months leading up to it. The remaining four months post-HAMEL represent a significant shift in approach, so use them to their full effect. Careful and detailed planning for this period is required as well as the allocation of funds, booking training areas and organising any other required resources.

Insight 95: Shape the training opportunities post-HAMEL according to your FGC phase. If readying, the focus may be on skills, courses and re-mediation based upon HAMEL lessons. If part of the Ready Brigade, continuation training is required to maintain individual and collective readiness in anticipation for operational deployment. If transitioning to Reset, the focus may be on individual promotion or professional development courses.

Insight 96: Maintain individual and collective readiness in anticipation for operational deployment. They will focus on the Contingency Forces (CONFE) maintaining their directed Readiness Notice (RN) against specific Defence Preparedness Requirements (DPR) in accordance with Chief of Army's Preparedness Directive (CAPD).

Insight 97: Get creative with training ideas post-HAMEL. Training content could be practically based or a departure from the usual. It could include remediating post Hamel lessons, short courses (e.g. chainsaw, driver, maintainer courses) which provide both a capability to the platoon and a depth of talent, or a series of missions which are short in nature and exciting to undertake. Examples of this include raids, cross-training on weapons systems, adventure activities. Other post HAMEL activity ideas include:

- A stand down period for soldiers to rest and reconnect with their families
- Clearing corporate governance responsibilities
- Planning for the following year's training and exercise commitments
- Refurbishing or returning stores and equipment and conducting mandated auditing requirements of accounts as appropriate for post-exercise or pre-HOTO
- Maintaining and servicing of vehicles and equipment
- Meeting mandated personnel compliance requirements, such as PESA and BFA
- Conducting individual pre-course for next posting or next training year (e.g. instructor development courses) or professional development training or other courses
- Conduct training and activities which develop team cohesion

“Book early and with a glide path for individual and collective training. Train around lessons and shortfalls identified on Ex. Plan for positive outcomes, however, if there are problems that cannot be fixed, ensure that there is a plan to address them.”

Insight 98: Focus on team cohesion. Soldiers who want to be in the platoon are less likely to seek opportunities to leave, so look for different training activities that will achieve the same outcomes. Some of these might be difficult to justify to Ops, but the intangible benefits to the platoon are generally worth the effort. For example:

- Conduct adventure training (AT) or other recreational training to establish greater interpersonal bonds within the team. AT for example, replicates the stress of exercise or deployment so the skills associated with operating under stressful conditions are maintained.
- Find unfamiliar training areas to undertake survival training.
- Book chalets to undertake winter activities.
- Go on a road trip to practise communications.

PME

Insight 99: Think about PME critically. Professional Military Education (PME) must be meaningful, purposeful and aligned to the unit's mission and tasks. It must fit seamlessly into the schedule and not place an additional unnecessary burden on the soldiers. PME should occur frequently and regularly to be effective in the development of 'professional mastery'. Sessions do not have to be overly complex and can vary widely and can include physical training activities, set reading and writing tasks, talks from guest speakers or forum discussions. You can hold information sessions on the roles and capabilities of sections and equipment within the unit or supporting/supported elements and units, or discussions on current operations or issues. PME could include sessions on physical and mental hardening, QDEs or TEWTS, and training targeted specifically at addressing a knowledge or skills deficiency.

Insight 100: Include OJT. On the job training (OJT) is also valuable, particularly if the soldier has to work one level up. Remember to monitor their work and provide redirection as required. OJT can be achieved by:

- Enabling soldiers to take on and accept tasks above their rank and/or position
- Providing them with clear direction and deadlines
- Allocating clear areas of responsibility and allow them to execute the associated duties
- Providing guidance and feedback to help them learn from any mistakes they have made

Insight 101: Work with JNCOs to develop one-off activities. Ensure they understand and are proficient at meeting the administrative responsibilities required to get an activity off the ground. Give your soldiers several of these activities through various stages of planning or execution. This will result in less breeze-way time for soldiers, and an opportunity for the PHQ/THQ to observe a variety of training activities.

Insight 102: Teach and trust your JNCO to design complex ranges, with only minor assistance when necessary. Bringing in JNCO to assist in the production of templates and other activities normally associated with the PHQ, provides something tangible to comment on during reporting, ownership by someone else over an activity, and reduced effort on your part to get an activity off the ground.

Insight 103: Provide your soldiers with blogs and short articles as they are easy to read. You can collect relevant articles from several sources, such as the AKO webpage, Forcenet, The Cove and Smart Soldier. You could either print them out and distribute them in a binder during battle prep or you could encourage your soldiers to access and read specific Smart Soldier or other articles on Forcenet or The Cove, using their phones, PC or devices. The DPN is no longer required to access the information that you want them to know and whilst not every soldier may read all of the articles that you set, they may read some during periods of low tempo or when the opportunity arises. When conducting the AAR, have robust conversations with those soldiers who have read the articles as it will be more enjoyable and beneficial than organising a lecture. It will also have the added effect of encouraging more of the platoon to read the articles in preparation for field exercises.

Insight 104: Actively support ideas from all members. Your soldiers may come up with other ideas for training which could include build-up training, specific or functional training, arduous team building activities and scenario workshops. Allocate those training tasks to your subordinates. This not only gives them ownership of the activity, it gives you the chance to discuss it with them and pass on your knowledge and experience.

Governance

Insight 105: Develop a culture in your unit/ sub-unit in which compliance activities are seen as just as important as FORGEN activities. View governance as another activity in your unit/ sub-unit. Plan for and factor governance requirements into your schedule. Careful analysis of the comprehensive list of governance requirements might reveal potential savings in time and effort.

Insight 106: Schedule compliance time in to the battle routine and stick to that schedule. Set your procedures into place early. Conduct compliance requirements at the start of each training year and rely on advice from your subject matter experts. Remember to include specific dates and training opportunities set for each requirement, an audit schedule and a reports and returns schedule. Track it closely and ensure that all relevant personnel are on top of their tasks.

Insight 107: Analyse and assess each issue as either a 'must do' or a 'should do'. There is no room for debate on must-dos. They should become a drill or part of daily routine and the consequences for not adhering must firm and swift, provided they are indeed must-dos. Must-dos should be summarised and articulated as simply as possible and then promulgated from a central location or from a central source.

Routines and Goals

Insight 108: Create plans for the establishment of routines and the setting of goals. Successful schedules are created out of meticulous planning and a comprehensive understanding of the mission, roles and responsibilities of your subunit, unit and higher which are aligned with the professional and personal needs of your soldiers. Routines are developed from this schedule and incorporate the often competing needs of all of its stakeholders. They need to be simple and consistent so that they remain flexible enough to adapt to change.

Insight 109: Achieving set goals and tasks requires gritty determination by unit/ sub-unit leadership and hard work by the team. Despite best efforts in planning and goal setting, short notice tasking, under-manning and a hectic operational tempo will impact upon the morale and motivation of the soldiers, and on your battle rhythm. Maintaining unit/ sub-unit motivation and focus can be achieved by comprehensive planning to set realistic, achievable goals. Plans must include a degree of foresight, redundancy and flexibility to account for any unforeseen circumstances whilst still allowing individuals and the team to achieve set tasks.

Support for Command

Insight 110: Once goals are set, they must be pursued. Stay focussed on these goals and do not allow yourself or the team to be distracted by side issues or extra tasks (where/when possible). As you complete each task or goal, the team will feel a sense of accomplishment and look forward to achieving the next milestone.

Insight 111: Adhere to the routine. Flexibility within your schedule does not equate to the creation of ad hoc routines. These will only exacerbate stress and the ability to coordinate events as time progresses. Include the following in your schedule as a minimum:

- A clear weekly outline of the training and activities planned in enough detail to allow your subordinates to know what they need to prepare
- Information that is relevant and specific to your work area
- Consistent timings for routine activities and meetings. These could include specific days and times for soldier visits, administrative deadlines and dealing with other routine administrative issues
- If in a ARes unit, account for and acknowledge, as much as is practicable, the outside work commitments of your ARes soldiers

Self-Management

Insight 112: Use mistakes to your advantage. You will need to be accountable for your mistakes, but by being honest about them not only will you learn but your subordinates learn as well. Provide advice where necessary and share the team's successes.

"Fatigue in Defence cannot always be avoided, but it must always be managed."¹

Insight 113: Achieving an appropriate work life balance is not an easy task. Actively create opportunities for balance and take a disciplined approach to incorporating adequate rest periods within your routines and schedules, and those of your subordinates.

¹ Defence WHS Manual, Vol 2. Defence WHS Policy, Part 2, Chapter 10 Section 1 Overview, para 10.1.1



“You don’t get medals for working late.”

Insight 114: Develop your routines with the consequences of fatigue in mind.

Despite your best efforts, the ability to create, establish and maintain a routine will be constrained by the effects of tempo and mandated unit commitments or externally imposed (often short notice) tasks, routines and requirements. Personal fatigue impacts upon capability, productivity and personal well-being. The effects of fatigue are well documented, and although Defence is required to minimise or eliminate fatigue by law, it is a personal responsibility and a function of good leadership to make it happen.

“Long hours are the only solution to the job of Spt Coy 2IC. There are no tricks, just work.”

Insight 115: Use your time wisely. Whilst some time outside routine hours is to be expected, if it becomes the norm then a solution beyond the creative use of your spare time might become necessary. Continuously working longer hours than necessary past the scheduled knock-off time throughout the year may not always result in improved performance or outputs. It might be that your job needs to be changed or tasks delegated so that your work can be achieved within a reasonable time-frame during the day. Consider the following if you are struggling to find the time or the means of achieving rest and recuperation:

- Accept that you will never complete your task list. Prioritise your deadlines and use a task tracker to manage prioritisation of task completion. Ensure that the important tasks to be completed that day are complete, and less important tasks are carried over to the following day. At the end of the working day, write a list of your tasks in priority order for the next day.
- Be aware of the chain of command’s battle rhythm, and schedule meetings and appointments to suit their routine. From this, you will be able to establish your own battle rhythm so your subordinates know when to schedule their own activities.
- Although much of the content of a unit/ sub-unit routine is mandated and

essential, consider not overcrowding the schedule with too much as you and your soldiers will quickly burn out. Incorporate downtime into the schedule.

- Analyse the schedule and training programme, and forecast and manage your time both at home and at work. Make time by actively allocating specific blocks of time for specific tasks into programs and schedules. For example, designate a time to attend to emails. It is easy to get drawn into checking and responding to emails as they appear in your inbox. Set about an hour aside to manage emails and then complete the tasks derived from them.
- Remember to do the jobs that you should do yourself, but delegate as many tasks that can be done by others as possible. Utilise effective communication and allocate responsibilities and time-lines to collectively and collaboratively complete tasks.
- Part of good unit management is excellent personal management. Recognise that you need to give your mind the chance to rest and recover every day. Try keeping a calendar entry in your email account for home time, so that “even if you dismiss it, at least you keep track of time.” Disconnect from work when you are not there and avoid working on DPN/ DREAMS after hours unless absolutely necessary. Include personal administration and family time into your schedule. This will allow you to focus on your commitments at home so that they do not impinge on your daily work. Consider other simple solutions such as using your commute to wind down.
- Do not turn on your computer before PT. In fact, do PT every day, no matter what other pressures you may have. This provides you with an opportunity to rest your mind, get you out of the office and to interact with members of your unit/ sub-unit.
- Actively reassess and manage your routine. Analyse the year ahead as well as the quarterly and weekly rhythms. Understand what you really need to deal with yourself, and then delegate the rest. You must formulate a rest and leave plan in advance, or you will find yourself completely out of work-life balance. Deliberately and routinely plan leave well ahead of time and place it into the unit schedule. Try to take a couple of annual leave days attached to a weekend for a mini break every few months to recharge.
- Do not self-sabotage your opportunities for rest. For example, the temptation to work longer hours than necessary if posted MWD(U) needs to be tempered with a disciplined effort to look after yourself.
- If all else fails, keep a work diary with the tasks completed and hours expended. This could provide evidence for reassignment of personnel or tasks.

Part IV : Final thoughts

Insight 116: To support your commander and get the most from your role you will need to:

- Understand that communication is not an email or phone call.
- Be prepared to press the flesh in order to understand how your dependencies intend to achieve their mission, and collectively determine how you can best support them in doing so.
- Learn from your experiences and the experience of others.
- Seek advice from those around you.
- Take something away from each posting to help you in your next.



