Squad training in Stryker Brigades

Building the Army’s Best Team Leaders
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Call for Submissions

Do you have an opinion concerning one of the stories in this issue? We would like to print your responses in our Letters to the Editor column. Have you researched a topic that is of interest to Infantry Soldiers? Submit it to us as an article for the Infantry Bugler. Do you have personal experiences or valuable lessons learned that would benefit other readers? Let us be your vehicle for delivering those thoughts. Send your submissions to bugler@infantryassn.com.
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From the Chairman

Pandemic, Coronavirus, COVID-19, Chinese Virus, Plague ... call it what you like; regardless, it is our enemy! Prehistoric (circa 3,000 B.C.) evidence tells us man has fought viruses for thousands of years and the outcomes often changed the course of history. The Bubonic Plague, the Black Death, the Russian Plague, Spanish, Asian and Swine Flus, Yellow Fever, Polio, AIDS and Ebola were and are our enemies.

How we defeat these enemies is very similar to the traits we want infused in our Infantry Leaders and Soldiers. For many military tasks, we train for the expected and educate for the unexpected. Training to maintain a distance from others, to wear a mask, to wash hands and other tasks that come forward as we learn more about the coronavirus, should not be difficult tasks to learn. As the science of the coronavirus continues to grow, education about it should not be too challenging for our Soldiers to understand. They will find themselves in situations for which they were not trained. Thus, with their education, they will move to the best course of action available.

With adequate training and education, we must expect discipline from our Infantry Soldiers. Discipline can be a noun or a verb, and these two definitions overlap with the term “self-control.” Infantry Soldiers will face situations that increase the risk of acquiring the coronavirus. Their discipline—self-control—must kick in and move them out of this risk area. Their self-control will also give them support when via their education they realize they have been in a situation that increased their chance of obtaining the coronavirus. Discipline and moral fortitude will be required to let the chain of command know about the situation. Especially in units with quick to deploy missions, we can’t afford for significant numbers of the unit to be ill while they need to achieve their deployment mission. Our Infantry Soldiers must have the moral courage to avoid risky situations and when they realize in hindsight that they were in a risky environment, they must be candid with their chain of command. We are smarter than a virus, but we must have the moral strength to win this fight against a deadly enemy.

As we add the Space Service to fight in the Space domain, I’m reminded of the increased complexity of today’s and tomorrow’s wars. When wars were limited to the land component, little was known about deadly viruses. As military leaders added sea (surface and then sub-surface) and air domains, still little was known about viruses. We have added cyber, space and information domains, but are we ready to fight deadly viruses?

I am not lobbying for a Virus Service, but what I am suggesting is we may find ourselves in a fight with our enemy in multiple domains. Based on what we learn about the coronavirus, we will have to add the fight against it or its deadly cousins simultaneously with enemies across all the domains of the battlefield. A new deadly virus may arrive in a hundred years or next year. It could also arrive while we are at war with a peer enemy. A future virus could be an added enemy for which we must prepare to fight, alongside our human enemies. Regardless of the next war’s complexity, we must be ready to fight the next virus that shows its ugly head. I hope we capture our lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic and are ready to fight the next virus if it steps on the battlefield.

From the President

Hey, from your National Infantry Association. My column is dedicated to Ralph Puckett, a Korean War veteran and Vietnam War veteran, a Modern Ranger, an awesome Infantryman and officer. Ralph continues to volunteer his time and support to the National Infantry Association and our Infantry. He is always a pleasure to work with. Ralph is a Georgia gentleman, son, husband, father and grandfather. If you want to reach him, send us a note and we will ensure he gets it. We want to thank all of our Korean War Veterans on the 70th Anniversary of the start of the Korean War (25 June 1950). This war would go on until the U.N. Armistice on 27 July 1953. We still have forces there.

The Infantry Bugler has taken a new approach on content. For the foreseeable future, we will highlight one of our active Infantry Divisions and then our Army National Guard Infantry Divisions in each issue. We will begin with the 7th Infantry Division. Please let me know your thoughts.

As the Infantry and the National Infantry Association are still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, lots of graduations, banquets, reunions, conferences and even the Doughboy Dinner have been canceled. Two events were held in Columbus and at the National Infantry Museum on September 11-12. On 11 September, Gold Star Families were recognized and on 12 September, those who served and gave their lives in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) were recognized. The names of those who were killed or died in combat this past year were unveiled on after being added to the GWOT Memorial.

We have to give special thanks to our all-star Membership Director Stephanie Haveron for her service as a NIM volunteer, NIA awards clerk and NIA operations officer from April 2016 – October 2020. Stephanie has been phenomenal—an all-star on our team. Stephanie and her husband are relocating to Texas. We will miss her, but send her on her way with our love and well wishes. MAJ (Ret) Mike Stinchcomb is moving into the operations officer position and we will hire a new awards director.

Thank you to our Sales Director Sarah Weikert. Sarah leads our advertising and marketing effort and is constantly seeking opportunities for our Bugler and website. Please send any potential corporate marketing prospects to Sarah (sarah@weikert@gmail.com).

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Finally, during this last quarter we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II which was the beginning of our American effort as a world leader—still impacting our Army stationed overseas. We want to recognize and thank all of our World War II Veterans for the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe (8 May 1945) and the end of World War II in the Pacific (15 August 1945). We still have U.S. Army forces in both Europe and the Pacific.

Thank you for your continued support of your National Infantry Association!
Meeting the Challenge: Recruiting the Next Generation of Infantry Leaders

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to adversely impact our routines, your Infantry Branch is pressing on with activities necessary to assess, recruit and select the best future officers from the ROTC and USMA classes of 2021. As the Department of Defense emplaced restrictions on travel, this cancelled this summer’s the U.S. Army Cadet Command’s Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC, formerly known as “Advanced Camp”) and Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT). Both of these venues offered valuable insights for cadets weighing their options. Respecting the gravity of the decision these future officers are going to make, the entire enterprise revisited the way we interact with Cadets to ensure they could make the most informed choice. Despite the challenges of connecting with Cadets in virtual mediums, your Infantry Branch seized the opportunity to enhance our social media presence and increase outreach with Cadets in a manner we will likely sustain beyond the conditions created by COVID-19.

Working closely with the Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA) and U.S. Army Cadet Command (USACC), the Infantry team created the virtual infrastructure to support purposeful engagements with Cadets online. This experience, branded by TRADOC as the Virtual Branch Orientation (VBO), occurred through two media efforts. The first is an Infantry Branching Website focused specifically on educating Cadets on the spirit of the Infantry. This website hosts video content offering insights on the skills necessary for Infantry lieutenants to succeed in our branch. The addition of testimonies from respected Infantry leaders showcase our talent and diversity while footage of our Medal of Honor recipients proudly shows the legacy we must all strive to achieve.

In building this virtual experience, two central themes remained essential. The first is that our branch is always about our people. While other branches organize around weapon systems and platforms to accomplish their mission, the Infantry relies on the fighting spirit, that our branch is always about our people. While other branches organize around weapon systems and platforms to accomplish their mission, the Infantry relies on the fighting spirit. The second theme to convey is that your leadership, remain the surest avenue to attract talent to our branch. If we are the leaders we want to be led by, the branch will remain healthy and vibrant. After all, our branch continues to modernize, the hardship and horror of the close fight will remain. We aim to continue to attract the most talented, diverse and disciplined cadets to our branch. Most importantly, we want to ensure we receive officers who are proud to echo, I am the Infantry, Follow Me!

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to adversely impact our routines, your Infantry Branch is pressing on with activities necessary to assess, recruit and select the best future officers from the ROTC and USMA classes of 2021. As the Department of Defense emplaced restrictions on travel, this cancelled this summer’s the U.S. Army Cadet Command’s Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC, formerly known as “Advanced Camp”) and Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT). Both of these venues offered valuable insights for cadets weighing their options. Respecting the gravity of the decision these future officers are going to make, the entire enterprise revisited the way we interact with Cadets to ensure they could make the most informed choice. Despite the challenges of connecting with Cadets in virtual mediums, your Infantry Branch seized the opportunity to enhance our social media presence and increase outreach with Cadets in a manner we will likely sustain beyond the conditions created by COVID-19.

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In building this virtual experience, two central themes remained essential. The first is that our branch is always about our people. While other branches organize around weapon systems and platforms to accomplish their mission, the Infantry relies on the fighting spirit, deep in our hearts, to close with and destroy the enemy in the final yards. While our young Infantry lieutenants have the least experience in their future units, they have the most exposure to Soldiers. The second theme to convey is that our branch, and the Soldiers we serve, deserve confident leadership that is constantly tested and honed throughout an Infantry officer’s entire career. Confidence to lead in the Infantry is not earned through motivational speeches, unfounded optimism or blind hope. Confidence is earned through actual achievement and doing the work. The Infantry School’s Initial Military Training (IMT) strategy for 2nd lieutenants provides the training opportunities that are tried and true for building competence and confidence.

We also used virtual “live” engagements, which provided for interactive conversations with wide audiences in real time. These sessions included panels of successful Infantry officers of all ranks to field questions and offer advice on career progression, the culture of the branch and the day-to-day experiences of an Infantry platoon leader. We quickly recognized the great advantages of these easily organized virtual engagements.

In addition to these larger panel discussions, we hosted other sessions providing opportunities for cadets to converse with both IBOLC and Ranger instructors and learn how to best prepare for both courses. Finally, a former battalion commander offered invaluable insights and expectations for officers arriving to their first units of assignment. All of these sessions benefited future officers of every branch, not just our future Infantry leaders. These sessions provided clarity to cadets on what to expect during their years as a lieutenant, imparted sage advice on building their relationships with future NCOs and Soldiers and better prepared them for their initial training here at Fort Benning.

In discussing our admired branch with these future leaders, I offer a few final points. First, I’ll remind all Infantry leaders, past and present, that your example, your discipline and your leadership, remain the surest avenue to attract talent to our branch. If we are the leaders we want to be led by, the branch will remain healthy and vibrant. After all, most of us chose the branch absent any virtual discussions. Second, I refer prospective Infantry leaders to the simplicity of our Infantry School patch. Embazoned with a Bayonet, this reminds us of the “Spirit of the Bayonet.” The will to meet and destroy the enemy in hand-to-hand combat ... the spirit of the Bayonet ... springs from the fighter’s confidence, courage and grim determination, and is the result of vigorous training. This branch is not for everyone. Our patch also hosts two hallowed words ... Follow Me. While our Army continues to modernize, the hardship and horror of the close fight will remain. We aim to attract the most talented, diverse and disciplined cadets to our branch. Most importantly, we want to ensure we receive officers who are proud to echo, I am the Infantry, Follow Me!

In retrospect, I can only imagine the degree to which the transition to a mechanized unit could have been facilitated if the recommendations and courses outlined in your article had been available in Germany.

-LTC (Ret) Emanuel Williams
Where Leadership Begins:
Tomahawk NCOs Build New Team Leader Course

The Army always talks about growing our own leaders, and rightfully so. It is leadership—at every level—that provides the purpose, direction and motivation for our Soldiers to close with and destroy the enemy. With the uncertainties and challenges brought about by COVID-19, we can and must adapt to this new normal by finding ways to keep training and developing our young leaders, while also ensuring their continued health and safety.

Are we doing all we can to develop leaders, including junior leaders, across the three domains of leader development: the institutional Army, operational force and individual level?

As part of the operational force, we set out to answer that question in 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment “Tomahawks,” 1-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. I worked with my fellow senior NCOs to look inside our formation and identify opportunities to improve our leader development process.

We found an unmet need—young team leaders that are not yet sergeants and have not yet attended the Basic Leader Course. We expect a lot of these new leaders; many day-to-day duties, administrative and tactical, fall on their shoulders. How could we expect so much from them, if we do not give them the information and knowledge they need to do the job from the start? So we developed a plan to meet that need: The Tomahawk Team Leader Course.

Our intent is to provide a framework other units can build from and make their own, to ensure junior enlisted leaders in any MOS are trained and ready to succeed in their duties.

Structure and Schedule

We executed the first iteration of the two-week course with 50 Soldiers, from 27 July to 7 August 2020. The curriculum covered a variety of topics essential to junior leaders. It drew from developmental courses like the Basic Leader Course (BLC), along with specific areas we needed to work on within the unit, and also things I wish I had known earlier, during my own time as a Team Leader. Our Platoon Sergeants served as primary instructors, and other soldiers and staff from the battalion offered lessons from their areas of expertise, such as our S-1 discussing awards and NCOERs, the Chaplain...
discussing suicide prevention and our Non-Commissioned Officers from the forward support company discussing vehicle maintenance and ordering of parts.

The first week was primarily classroom-based and covered a mix of administrative and tactical topics:

- Physical Fitness
- Land Navigation
- Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)
- Fire Control Measures
- Pre-Combat Checks and Inspections
- Army Programs
- Counseling
- Army HR Systems
- Patrol Bases
- Patrolling Techniques
- Operations Orders
- Maintenance
- Chaplain and Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Programs (SHARP)

We reserved 30 minutes at the end of each class for “CSM/1SG Time,” to talk with the Team Leaders in an open forum, going over what they had learned that day and helping put it all into context rather than just drinking from a firehose of information and failing to reflect back on the bigger picture of how it ties together and applies to them.

The second week again included a mixed tactical/administrative curriculum, but—importantly—also saw time in the field:

- Team Live-Fire Exercise
- How to Conduct Barracks Inspections (legal implications)
- Counseling Packet Review
- Forward Support Companies (FSC)/Motor pool Walkthrough
- Team Leader-led Classes
- Written Exam
- After Action Review (AAR) and Graduation Ceremony

The team live-fire was notable, because it combined and applied many lessons from the previous week (like patrol base activities, principles of patrolling and crossing a linear danger area) into an authentic tactical scenario that reinforced good habits. Too often, team live-fires have a procedural, unrealistic feel; if a team was assaulting an enemy position, they would just get there, shoot the targets down, and “assault” through the objective together, walking on line in the low-ready position.

Our live-fire broke those bad habits and focused instead on real-world techniques: maneuvering tactically toward the enemy, bounding to and through the objective, clearing it and then setting up the limit-of-advance. It was about taking all they had learned in the classroom and putting it to practical use in the field—enhancing lethality. Moreover, it was about learning to lead. We conducted multiple iterations to ensure each Soldier could develop their confidence and competence as a Team Leader in the field. Even in the details, we put the onus of leadership on these Soldiers. For instance, we did not hand them a packing list or a timeline, but required the Team Leaders to develop it themselves.

Another highlight of Week 2 was back in garrison, where we shared a valuable lesson with these junior leaders—the do’s and don’ts, can’s and cannot’s of barracks room inspections and health and welfare checks. Every morning at 0600, the place of duty for our Team Leaders is in the barracks, checking on their Soldiers. It is vital that they know the policies, nuances and left and right limits of these inspections. We owe it to these young leaders to equip them with that knowledge, so they can execute their responsibilities fully and properly.

Additionally, I had the Team Leaders bring in their counseling packets for each of their Soldiers. All Team Leaders had one-on-one time with a PSG or 1SG to coach, teach and mentor them on how counseling should be conducted. This was not an inspection of counseling packets, it was quality time spent with junior leaders aimed at helping them get the most from each counseling session and provide them with feedback on how to make improvements.

Keys to Success

Several key factors contributed to our success in this first iteration of the Team Leader Course, including senior leader support, whole-of-unit involvement and an emphasis on real world, ground-level experience.

Senior leader support and prioritization was essential. The battalion commander and I were deliberate about making this course a priority, and we carefully protected time for this course in our training calendar, allowing for two full weeks.
We also received ample support from higher echelons. The graduation ceremony included remarks by the 7th Infantry Division Commander and Command Sergeant Major, a testament to the importance of Team Leader development.

This course enjoyed not only senior leader support but also the valuable involvement of other key leaders, staff and support soldiers from across the battalion. For example, when our FSC provided a tour of their different sections and services, it helped the Team Leaders gain a fuller picture of the maintenance process at the ground-level. Our Chaplain’s participation offered another prime example. He spoke on several issues, but perhaps most important was suicide prevention. He noted that Team Leaders, as first-line supervisors, are often best positioned to spot concerning behaviors or warning signs that a Soldier may be struggling, and help get them the support they need.

This Team Leader Course was all about real experience and teaching what our young leaders need to know at the ground level. We made a point of avoiding death-by-PowerPoint. In everything from reviewing counseling packets, to practicing room inspections, to creating packing lists and bounding through an objective, our goal was to equip Team Leaders with knowledge and experience that they can apply right now in their daily duties and responsibilities.

**Lessons Learned**

This course is an opportunity for us to shape our young leaders into the kind of leaders the Army needs, and most importantly leaders our Soldiers deserve, so we will continually refine the course as we identify “Sustains and Improves” with each iteration. We are also receiving course feedback from the Team Leaders themselves, enabling them to help shape the next class based on their experiences. For example, during the next course, slated for early next year, we may plan to focus on more tactical skill sets, such as zeroing and boresighting lasers and preliminary marksmanship instruction on different weapons systems.

This course can also serve as one possible framework for leader development efforts in units across the Army, although the precise curriculum will naturally vary based on unit missions and the Soldier’s MOS.

This course was proof that we can prioritize both health and readiness, by following safety measures and healthcare guidelines prescribed by JBLM, I Corps, and the DoD.

**CSM Joseph Nicholson entered the Army in 1993 and has served in several maneuver formations to include Airborne, Air Assault, Stryker, and Armor. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and is currently serving as the battalion command sergeant major of 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment “Tomahawks” at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.**
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Training the squad to achieve its full potential takes nothing more than ensuring your soldiers can master both their individual and collective tasks as well as the purpose of the squad. As a Squad Leader it is important to motivate your soldiers and Team Leaders to strive to perfect their craft in order to become a lethal fighting force for the United States Army. It starts with executing the basics and focusing on the details. From barracks inspections to physical training, from to rehearsals to live-fire exercises, the focus is the basics. Just like we learned to crawl before we could walk or run, we train the Squad by first ensuring individuals are proficient before moving on to teams and ultimately the squad.

We start at the individual level first. I like to instill a competitive spirit into everyday training and exercises. Individual training never ends but it always begins with physical training (PT). We must remain fit to fight, both mentally and physically. With my squad we push one another each day crushing PT. I like to create competitions by setting goals for every workout and pushing teammates to meet or beat their peers’ efforts. I’ve found our squad thrives on the competitive nature of our PT sessions and often results in both bragging rights and an increase in overall fitness. Leaders also must ensure that they are setting achievable goals, tracking their Soldiers progression, and assisting along the way. Too often Companies set an arbitrary standard (typically a 270 PT Score) and expect that every individual is going to meet that standard. Goals must be attainable and have a time-based reality attached to them. As much as the Infantry would like to think everyone is in shape, that’s not always the case. Fitness levels vary for a variety of reasons to include injury, illness and sometimes effort.

Soldiers won’t achieve their potential through a series of unrealistic standards. Following tactically focused PT leaders should focus on specific Soldiering skills training as close to the Infantry’s Expert Infantryman Badge standard as possible. This is also an opportunity to inject competition among the squad. We like to constantly compete against each other with the mindset of “it pays to be a winner.” For example, if one Soldier can correctly assemble a squad automatic weapon with no deficiencies then we’ll see if someone else can beat that soldier’s time. By shaping the training with a competitive spirit we find our Soldiers are more engaged, have a better understanding of the training and become more proficient. The competition aspect of the training also adds a sense of urgency and stress. Demonstrating a mastery of our Soldiering skills while under pressure is what makes us professionals.

Soldiers need to know the importance behind their individual soldiering skills and they should be drilled and rehearsed until they become muscle memory. I have found the intent behind all training objectives is give each Soldier a task, explain the conditions associated with that task, the standard to complete the task and a time standard. Training centered on the “task, condition, standard and time” guideline has proven to meet training objectives while producing a lethal breed of Infantryman.

Moving into the team phase of the training we also enter the walk phase where we build cohesion within the team. Here we establish buddy team tactics and Team Leader control which we enforce with rehearsals. Team Leaders need to ensure that they are leading by example at all times and that they establish tempo and urgency throughout these rehearsals. The purpose for increase in speed and tempo is to create conditions within the squad’s training that best simulates the ferocity of the battlefield. The end state is a squad that can rapidly shoot, move and communicate in both training and combat scenarios. It also ensures Soldiers are proficient at the
individual movement techniques while the team leader ensures complete control of the team. During this phase of training, the team leader should be assessing the team’s abilities and deficiencies to help guide future training. Identifying areas in individual and team deficiencies is a team leader’s job. Strong team leaders build strong teams and strong teams make great squads.

As we move into the squad level of training we focus on mastering the battle drills, actions on objectives and small unit tactics. This is an integral step in the progression of training from the individual level to the platoon and company levels. By the time training reaches the squad level, team leaders have identified weak points in their teams, and the squad leader is developing a plan to remedy deficiencies. We start with our formations and the order of movement showing the squad what proper spacing and movement techniques should look like. Ideally, soldiers will learn when to use which movement techniques and how to maintain control with a larger (squad) element.

Shifting from movement techniques to further development of the muscle memory maneuvers that are battle drills, we need the squad to understand that these are immediate action drills. These positions are a fallback for our default violence of action plan. Battle drills are entirely based in repetition. Too often Infantrymen complain that there is not enough time in the day. Most of the time this is an excuse used by individuals that do not use “white space” efficiently. All units can, and should, incorporate battle drills into everyday PT. Rehearsals can come in many forms, most often they should be conducted in conjunction with physical training. I also believe it is important to rotate the Soldiers through every position so that they understand the job of the Soldier to their left and right.

Mastering the basics is a time consuming process that is never fully completed. Starting at the most basic individual level is essential to mastering the basics. The mastering of individual tasks leads directly into maneuver and improving lethality within the team. Team leaders identify deficiencies and work with the Squad Leader to iron out individual issues through remedial training. Once the Squad can effectively and efficiently maneuver and kill the enemy, they must now focus on refining every last detail in the continuous process that is mastering the basics.

SSG Ian Douglas is currently a Squad Leader in Braves Company, 4th BN 23rd IN Reg, 2-2 SBCT. He has has served for 5 years as an 11B, holding various positions to include Rifleman, Machine Gunner, Team Leader and Squad Leader.
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It’s as if the Plumlees made a point not to stand apart. Marshall, Mason and Miles are neighbors in baby-name books. The three brothers are separated by less than four years in age. Each stands at least 6-foot-10. Each played at Duke. Each reached the NBA.

But when each calls home to Indiana, the Plumlees’ youngest and tallest son sounds nothing like his siblings. “They’ll ask, ‘Hey honey, what did you do today?’ And I tell them about blowing something up or jumping out of an airplane or flying in a helicopter,” Marshall Plumlee said. “It sounds otherworldly to a family that only knows basketball.”

The sport has bounced through their bloodline, beginning with Plumlee’s grandfather, Albert “Bud” Schultz, who played at Michigan Tech. A pair of uncles also played college basketball. So did his father, “Perky” (Tennessee Tech), and his mother, Leslie (Purdue), who met as counselors at a basketball camp.

Miles spent seven seasons in the NBA and joined the Australian league in January. Mason, now with the Denver Nuggets, is in his seventh year in the NBA. Marshall, who won a national championship with the Blue Devils and played with the Knicks and Bucks, hasn’t been on a pro team in nearly two years.

He walked away from the dream to fulfill another, as a platoon leader in the U.S. Army, stationed at Fort Lewis in Washington.

“They’ve been tremendously supportive and accepted,” Plumlee said of his brothers. “Hey, Marshall is his own individual with his own individual passions. It just happens to be that Marshall is not only passionate about basketball, but passionate about the Army and about service.”

The military career was first sparked by a love of history
classes and war movies. In high school, GEN Robert Brown, who played under Mike Krzyzewski at Army, mentored Plumlee.

Then, he joined his brothers at Duke, becoming Krzyzewski’s first player in three-plus decades in Durham to also participate in ROTC (Reserve Officers’ Training Corps).

“It almost seems like fate. Coach K, I would argue there is no one who has a better understanding of the basketball world and the Army world simultaneously, coaching me as a basketball player and like a future Army officer,” Plumlee said. “What’s been really cool is how I feel both have helped one another. I started to notice it more watching Coach K lead, all of the discipline, all of the leadership lessons instilled in him from the Army, I said, ‘Hey, I want that in my life.’ ”

Plumlee was signed by the Knicks as an undrafted free agent in 2016 and appeared in 21 games as a rookie, while serving in the New York National Guard. After another eight games with the Bucks and a few G-League stops, he gave up the game for good.

“Every time I got to serve in the National Guard, it was a great feeling. It never felt like work,” Plumlee said. “I kept getting that itch and wanted to serve in a different capacity. It’s really Coach K, I called him and he encouraged me to pursue active duty. His advice was, ‘You don’t always have a great jump shot and you don’t always dribble that well, but you do have a really good heart,’ and he encouraged me to follow my heart. I loved the NBA experience, but my gut told me I think it’d be cooler to continue to be a part of something bigger than myself.

“It hasn’t felt like an either-or thing. It’s felt like a both because there’s been a lot of carryover between the two. The lines between the two have been blurred in a lot of ways.”

In 2019, Plumlee signed up for Ranger School at Fort Benning. The goal of the grueling two-month training is to join one of the world’s top military units, utilized in difficult and dangerous missions, engaging in close combat and direct-fire battles. Applicants train in the air, in the mountains, in swamps, in a seemingly never-ending battle with mental and physical exhaustion.

“I don’t think there are any parallels to Ranger School. It’s a wholly unique experience. They really challenge your toughness,” Plumlee said. “It gave me a brutal look in the mirror of what I’m good at and what I need to get better at. It really helps build your character as a soldier.”

Plumlee faces unique challenges as a seven-foot soldier, when curling up in vehicles and jumping out of planes. He faces inherent and unnecessary risk, as a 27-year-old who could bank at least six-figure annual salaries to play a game.

“I feel confident. I feel safe. I feel ready that we have a good plan of attack for any kind of adversity that will be thrown our way,” Plumlee said. “I don’t feel the danger.”

He doesn’t feel anything but certainty with his decision.

“People often ask me if I miss the NBA now, but in the Army, I feel like I’m getting that same feeling every day,” Plumlee said. “I’m part of a team with people from diverse backgrounds and we’re coming together for a common mission.

“I’m hooked on the analogy, ‘I’m getting to plant a bunch of trees I’ll never see grow.’ It’s a really cool feeling.” ★

Reprinted with permission from the New York Post.
A cursory reading of *A Christmas Carol* would be the best preparation for the times ahead. One could imagine a chapter wherein Scrooge would declare, “Oh, spirit, make it like it was; I want things to go back to normal.” The exasperated spirit would say, “There will not be normal.” Scrooge would whine, weep, gnash his teeth and exhibit a longing for what was. Again, the spirit would bellow, “There will not be a normal after ‘this.’ … There will be an ‘is’ that will continue to change and force adaptation.”

The best practices we are using today for life, health, safety, information and connectedness will remain. All share one thing in common. They are “best” because they allow us to accomplish our tasks to the expected standard while mitigating the risks of our current conditions. Currently, we are hyper-vigilant and sensitive to our environment. Where most change can be found, though, is simply in the way we communicate with those we lead. Our communication mediums, once wholly reliant on being face to face, have morphed with the advent of social media and other web-enabled platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and FaceTime. The intent, though, remains the same: to inform and influence.

The requirements to communicate effectively have also remained unchanged. Harry Hertz, director emeritus of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, shares a model of effective communication that states, “EC=C+E+L+L,” or Effective Communication equals Caring plus Explaining plus Listening plus Living the Role. While the model is expressive, it is missing the COVID-19-induced variable of media, medium and how we communicate.

Many of us have come to the realization (in some cases, too late) that overreliance on person-to-person interface due to current conditions can prove costly. This has proven true in the U.S. economy, and in the Army’s case, building and sustaining readiness. Any enterprise that is solely reliant on outdated modes or single modes to communicate intent will incur possibly unrecoverable costs. Adaptation is absolutely necessary. We are going to have to think and act differently if we are to ever master the conditions we find ourselves acting under. Again, to quote Hertz, “Effective communication is everyone’s job. It builds trust, teamwork, and high-performing organizations. If culture drives an organization, effective communication is the fuel.”
In the #MilTwitter arena, I am excited by the innovation and engagement initiatives I see across our force. Helping to lead the charge are @FieldGradeLDR, @TheWTFNation, @Doctrine_Man and a host of other social platforms. These entities have mastered the art of communication because they go where people are.

Four things we have learned you must do to thrive in the “is” or future “this” are:

1. **Trust your people.** We must place adequate “controls” on our people that are reinforced by the right checks and assessments. We have to check the penetration of our messages and orders down to the lowest level.

2. **We can do this.** We have a “what’s next” attitude that is shaping our culture and energizing our members. We are now more deliberate, and that is a good thing. We’re seeing this now, and we’ve seen this in the past. We are a “call to action” generation.

3. **We must utilize our tools to enable initiative.** We will have disciplined and high performing teams only when those units of action have access to information such as guidance, intent and defined objectives.

4. **Get in the arena.** The need to communicate is an absolute imperative of leadership. You have to go where your people are. No longer can a leader say, “Well, I don’t Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.”

   Your presence in these forums is absolutely necessary for you to distribute information, influence behavior and be involved in the life of those you lead. This need not be a singular or individual pursuit—all that matters is that you get in the arena and compete.

   If having read all the above, you wonder how to do this, then the following should prove informative, instructive and interesting. Though initially meant for Twitter audiences, I believe it holds true for all forms of social media and communication in general. First Lt. Kelsey Cochran, a panelist on social media use at the 2019 Association of the U.S. Army Annual Meeting and Exposition and known as @LadyLovesTaft on Twitter, offers the following advice to achieve understanding through communications.

   **1. Identify why you want to be on social media.** Is it to broadcast your ideas? Is it to be visible to your organization? Is it to participate to learn from others? This will change how you interact. Communication online should have concrete goals with intended audiences.

   **2. Your username and bio are important.** When someone clicks on your profile, they should understand who you are and what you care about. Names and pictures are preferred for senior leaders, though that’s not always necessary to make an impact, depending on your goals (see @Accidental_E9).

   **3. Social media is not a platform purely for broadcast.** If you’re trying to be visible on social media, that requires some level of interaction—engage in a conversation, respond to a comment. (It’s also OK if you’re using social media as a learning tool. You don’t have to try to grow your account. It all depends on your communication goals.)

   **4. Know there’s an element of transparency and accountability.** Be deliberate in what you say, and don’t let yourself be dragged into the mud.

   **5. If there’s a leader on social media who is communicating the way you want to, study what they do and why it’s effective.** You can learn a lot about what works and doesn’t work online from accounts and/or leaders you respect.

   **6. Be genuine.** Don’t try to be funny if you’re not. Sarcasm is hard online. Know your audience, because social media for leaders is about communication goals and not about Internet points.

   **7. Market yourself.** Discover ways to inform your audiences where you exist online, from daily interactions to your email signature block. Be creative and deliberate.

   Your way ahead has been pressed upon us by circumstance. In short, it will be different, but what we have learned will make us better. ★

   ILT Kelsey Cochran contributed to this article.

   MG Xavier Brunson is commanding general of the 7th Infantry Division, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. Previous assignments include assistant commanding general (Support), U.S. Army Special Forces Command (now 1st Special Forces Command [Airborne]), Fort Bragg, NC, and Operation Inherent Resolve, and deputy commanding general (Operations), 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, NY. He also served as chief of staff, Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve, Iraq, and XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg. He can be found on Twitter at @BAYONET6X.

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Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on 6 October 1929, Einar Harold Ingman Jr. grew up on a farm. At the age of 19, he joined the Army in hopes of working with heavy machinery. Instead, he became an Infantryman. In 1951, he was a corporal serving in Company E, 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division in Korea.

On 26 February, he was among two squads of men tasked with assaulting a fortified ridge-top position near the town of Malta-ri. Learning that both squad leaders were wounded, Ingman combined the squads and took command. After making a radio call for artillery and tank support, he led his soldiers against the position, encouraging them and directing their fire.

He single-handedly attacked a machine gun which was firing on his group, tossing a hand grenade into the emplacement and killing the crew with his rifle. While approaching a second machine gun, he was knocked to the ground and lost part of his left ear when a grenade exploded near his head. Returning to his feet, he was shot in the face by a Chinese soldier with the bullet entering his upper lip and exiting behind his ear.

That didn’t stop Ingman and he continued his attack on the machine gun, firing his rifle and killing the remaining crew with his bayonet until he fell unconscious. His men went on to capture their objective and force the opposing troops into a disorganized retreat.

Ingman regained consciousness seven days later in a hospital in Tokyo. His left eye was destroyed, his left ear was deaf and he had suffered a brain injury which left him with amnesia, unable to recall his own name. After having emergency brain surgery, his memories slowly returned, although he never regained any memory of being shot or of the events which immediately followed, and continued to have memory trouble for the rest of his life. Over the next two years, he had more than 20 surgeries.

On 5 July 1951, Ingman, recently promoted to sergeant, was flown from his hospital to Washington D.C. where President Harry Truman presented him with the Medal of Honor (MOH). Upon arriving home in Tomahawk, Wisconsin, the townspeople gave him a new car and boat during a celebration of his return.

Following his discharge from the Army, Ingman returned to Tomahawk and worked for 32 years at a paper company—first as a security guard and then as a mail clerk. One year after receiving the MOH, Ingman married his wife Mardelle and they had seven children.

He died in Tomahawk on 9 September 2015 at the age of 85.

Mardelle recalled in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel what Ingman often said about the medal.

“I don’t wear it for myself,” he said. “I wear it for all the men that didn’t come back.”

When you talk about soldier training, you probably picture ruck marches, target practice, obstacle courses and nighttime field exercises. But to shape the complete Soldier, the Army must also teach trainees about their history. The men and women who came before them learned valuable lessons that are just as relevant today as they were generations earlier.

Fulfilling this need is one of the National Infantry Museum’s primary missions. A visit to this world-class museum just outside the gates of Fort Benning is an integral part of every trainee’s journey.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit in March, the museum was shuttered. It still has not reopened to the public. But in July, the NIM sat down with the leadership at the Maneuver Center of Excellence to work out a way for the Soldiers to continue their heritage training. They had already been living and working in cohorts to stem the spread of COVID-19. Their trips to the museum would be handled the same way.

So now, several days a week, the museum rolls out the red carpet for a couple hundred young men and women. During their 4- to 6-hour stay, they tour the museum with trained docents, enjoy a hearty meal in the Fife and Drum restaurant, buy boots and gifts for friends and family in the new Soldier Store, challenge each other to high scores in the DownRange Combat Simulators and fill up on pizza and snacks at the concession stand. It’s a treat for these hard-working trainees, and they walk away with a deeper understanding of the profession they’ve chosen.

But the only way to make this work is to keep the Soldiers segregated from the public. Fort Benning still is not allowing family members on post, even for graduations. Nor are trainees allowed to leave post. That’s how the post has kept them protected from the virus. To make sure they stay “clean”, the museum has implemented a stringent and exhaustive sanitizing program in-between visits.

Even with the museum mostly closed, staff have stayed busy since Georgia lifted its stay-at-home order in early May. Without guests to work around, they’ve been able to polish woodwork, scrub monuments and pavers, paint exterior doors and interior walls, replace aging equipment, make repairs and even refinish furniture. The stainless steel kitchens in the Fife and Drum and the Rally Point Canteen are sparkling. The replica Blackhawk combat simulator is freshly painted.

The museum also remains available for private group rentals. A number of weddings and social events have been held here over the summer. As long as safety protocols are followed and no Soldier tours are on the schedule, we’re happy to work with you on your special event.

Like everyone else, the museum is anxious to reopen to everyone, and to return to some level of normal. But the last thing we need is to disable our nation’s fighting force. They are crucial to our country’s wellbeing, and we’re proud to have a part in their training. In the meantime, please continue your support of the museum as it honors today’s Soldiers as well as all those who came before them.
Joined by his family, SSG Charles Tuttle, a Drill Sergeant at 2-19 IN at Fort Benning, was presented a Ranger Pack from @thereadypack as he prepared for Ranger School. Thanks to The Ready Pack for the pack donation. Check their website for more information on how to save time and money before going to ROTC, Ranger School and Sniper School.

SFC (R) Juan Santiago (center) recently presented the Order of St. Maurice to SSG Willis Ferguson (left) and SSG Ryan Hartinger (right), both active duty recruiters with the U.S. Army’s Central Florida Recruiting Company.

On 15 June 2020, Mrs. Stacey Davis, wife of BG Johnny Davis was presented the Shield of Sparta by the Joint Modernization Command, Fort Bliss, Texas. COL Chuck Rhoede made the presentation.

On 31 July at Fort Carson Colorado, LTC Jason R. Lojka (center) presented the Order of Saint Maurice to CPT Max Underwood, MAJ Arcadio Avalos, MAJ Andrew Osborn and CSM Charles Smith.

COL William Voorhies relinquishes command of the 198th Infantry Brigade to COL Ryan Wylie on Inouye Field at the National Infantry Museum. MG Gary Brito, commanding general, Maneuver Center of Excellence, was the reviewing officer. At the ceremony, NIA President COL (Ret) Rob Choppa (left) presented Voorhies with the Order of St. Maurice, Primicerius level.
On 12 June 2020, SFC Kyle Gibson presented the Order of Saint Maurice to SSG Jacob Ladd in the COF of Delta Company, 2-508 PIR, 2nd BDE, 82nd Airborne Division.

On 6 August 2020 at Fort Dix, New Jersey, SFC Michael Robinson (center) was presented the Order of St. Maurice by CSM Daniel Shealy (left) and MSG Jose Flores (right).

On 25 June 2020, National Infantry Association President COL (Ret) Rob Choppa presented the Order of St. Maurice to NIA Awards Manager MAJ (Ret) Mike Stinchcomb at the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

On 11 June 2020, CPT Travis O. Thompson presented the Order of St. Maurice to 1SG Jason N. Ruiz. The ceremony was conducted on Taylor Field, inside the compound of 3-11IN (OCS).

On 11 June 2020, RAND fellow MAJ Don Kanase (upper left) virtually presented the Order of St. Maurice to (top row, left-right): LTC (Ret) Dr. Stephen Dalzell, Dr. Matthew Lewis, (bottom row, left-right): Dr. Sally Sleeper, Dr. Bryan Hallmark and Dr. Lisa Saum-Manning. All are leaders within the RAND Arroyo Center, which is the U.S. Army’s only federally funded research and development center.
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