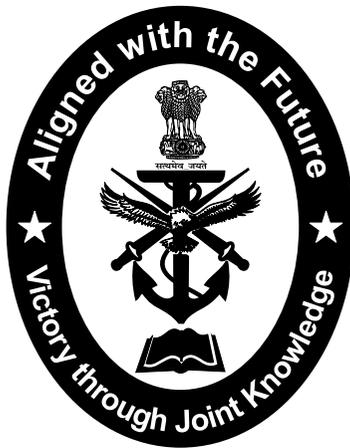


PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO COMMAND OF A UNIT

PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO COMMAND OF A UNIT

By

Brig Ranjit Singh



**Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS)
New Delhi**

*Copyright (C) 2016, Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS),
New Delhi
ISBN : 978-93-84492-18-2
Price in India : ₹ 150 /-*

All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or utilised in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Application for such permission should be addressed to the publisher.

The views expressed in the book are of the author and not necessarily those of the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies/publishers.

Printed in India

Printed by

Xtreme Office Aids Pvt. Ltd.

Basement Bhanot Building (Below Syndicate Bank)

Nangal Raya Commercial Complex, N.D-110046

Ph.: 9311156526

E-mail: xtremeofficeaids@gmail.com

Website: www.xtremeonline.in

PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO COMMAND OF A UNIT

General

Command of a unit is the first and possibly the **most coveted honour** that an officer seeks in his career. In many respects, a CO still remains a unique institution. His command is **direct, independent** and enjoys **absolute authority**. He has complete freedom of action in the style of functioning within the laid down parameters. It is undoubtedly **the most rewarding and fulfilling experience** in the career of an officer.

Over the years, the command of a unit has become very complex and challenging. This is primarily attributed to the undue **focus on administrative aspects**, pressures from higher HQ due to **telescopic timelines**, seemingly zero error syndrome with **lack of support from the commanders in chain** in the event of administrative lapses, rising aspirations and changing socio-economic order in our society leading to **low stress levels** of our men.

To accentuate the problem, the age of a CO has been considerably reduced to usher lower command profile. He may have **only 5 to 6 years of unit service** prior to assuming command, which is grossly inadequate in terms of experience, to effectively lead the unit. Under such circumstances, the newly appointed CO would take considerable time to settle down in the hot seat. In today's materialistic and highly competitive environment, one is expected to **perform and produce results from the day one**, which makes the job even more challenging.

A unit is the lowest cohesive entity with a significant combat potential placed under a CO vested with absolute authority to effectively administer, train and maintain it as a responsive fighting outfit. It is the basic entity of our organisation which defines the effectiveness of the Army as a whole. Thus, efficient and effective functioning of a

unit is **pivotal to the success of the organisation** in war as well as peace. Thus, the key to success lies in **revitalising and focusing on the effective functioning** of each unit.

Whilst, there is adequate reading material for a prospective CO, it would be prudent to afford a **Ready Reckoner in the form of a clear concise pragmatic approach** to command, to a newly appointed CO, which will give him a head start without wasting time to figure out his status, position and priorities.

CO As an Institution

Status. On assuming the coveted appointment, a CO **ceases to be an individual and dons the mantle of an institution**, till he is in the chair. What does it mean? It simply means that a CO has to take all decisions in the best interest of the unit, without any prejudice. In the process, he is expected to **subjugate his personal interest, likes / dislikes in the organisation interest**, all actions of a CO are viewed as a reflection of his unit. It is imperative for a CO to take decisions, steer his unit, keeping in mind the macro picture and the overall perspective of the organisation, as a whole.

Identity in the unit. The CO is viewed by the command as a **wise old man**, not in age, but with **immense experience & maturity, endowed with unquestionable integrity & fairness** and above all, who has solution to all their problems. With this **iconic larger than life image** in mind, the command **pledges unconditional loyalty to its Tiger**, unless the image is proved otherwise. Thus, the command walks blindfolded behind its leader and looks up to him at every step for **assurance, guidance and approval**. To live up to such high expectations is a herculean task, which a CO must realise at the outset. To summarise, the command views a CO as a **Demi-God, a messiah**, who has answer to every problem.

Synonymous with Unit. The identity of a CO is **synonymous with the unit** i.e. a CO is known by the unit's name and he represents it, at all times good or bad. The performance of a CO is **directly linked to the performance of the unit**, if the unit does well, the CO has automatically done well and vice versa. It can seldom happen that a **CO is good but the unit is not**, but the converse is true. Therefore don't try to use the unit as a stepping stone to your future, work

honestly and diligently for the unit and success will automatically come your way. So be relaxed, **keep aside your personal ambition and try to make a small difference**, which will give you much more satisfaction than anything else. Never do anything for personal gains, **at the cost of unit interests, it actually amounts to treachery, unfortunately quite common today.**

You are Blessed. There is no doubt that you are blessed and that is why you have been chosen to lead the unit. Remember, only less than half of your course mates have been bestowed this honour, of course for your hard work and professional competence. It is **God gifted opportunity to make a small difference to usher a big change.** All these years, you have been cribbing endlessly, which was your right, but here is an opportunity to mend all that you found to be frivolous and idiotic. But, remember, **if you can't improve, let things not degenerate further, at any cost.**

Job Content and Context. It is important to understand the job content but as a head of the unit, it is imperative for you to understand the overall context under which any action / decision is being taken, failing which, the outcome is likely to be contrary to the organisation objectives.

Responsibility Vs Privilege. If you want to do justice to the onerous appointment, **perform your duty not only as a responsibility but a privilege as well.**

When in Doubt. On several occasions during the command, there will be ambiguity / confusion while taking decisions. To ensure objectivity in the decision making at such demanding situations, it would be prudent to ask the under mentioned questions and if the answer is affirmative, one could boldly take the decision :-

- **Is the decision in the unit interest ?**
- **Is the decision in the overall organisational interest?**

Demand More. Do not be miser in demanding high standards from your command. Shun status quo. Always ask yourself, **Is this the best we can achieve ? Is this the best way of doing it ?** You will get a honest reply. The **more you demand, better will be the results** but your demands must be focussed towards professional

excellence rather than administrative commitments, which must be minimised ruthlessly.

Word of Caution. The appointment bestows **absolute authority** in your hand along with legal powers. A judge takes a few years to convict a person but you can do it in few minutes. You are vested with tremendous authority which is really difficult to digest, so be humble and remember the following :-

- The authority is vested in you **to do good and not harm** anyone. If you know your job, you will seldom require to use authority to punish anyone.
- **Exception to Rule.** You are not exception to any rule or orders, absolute authority tends to make you feel as an exception, which must be avoided.
- **Isolation from Command.** You wield absolute authority which will isolate you in the unit, make deliberate efforts to reach out to your command. Therefore, device ways and means to enhance interaction and institute methods for obtaining unbiased feedback.
- **One Man Army.** The unit is a one man Army which follows the leader with unflinching loyalty. Remember, everyone in your command is a Bhoop Singh, **they will do what, how and when, you want them to.** Expecting results without giving clear directions / conveying your real intentions will fetch no results, would lead to embarrassment, more often than not.
- **True Picture.** Your trusted henchmen will feed you selective inputs. Immediate inputs received by the CO are generally not true / correct, don't go by them straight away. Go into details, otherwise you may never know the truth and your reporting / decisions are likely to be wrong.
- **Tacit Approval.** Anything done in the unit which is right /wrong / undesirable, if not appreciated / commented / reprimanded by you implies your tacit approval. Therefore, make sure that you convey your views at the earliest on every possible issue, albeit politely.

- **Don't keep the Command Guessing.** A CO must convey his views on every aspect for / against at the earliest and not keep the command guessing which leads to ambiguity, lack of focus and wasteful efforts.
- **Violation of Orders.** In your exuberance, do not violate orders to benefit any individual, displaying magnanimity. The decision will haunt you and may land you in trouble later. Do not try to extend your authority, work within the laid down rules & regulations.
- Lastly, remember **organisation is bigger than individuals**, you are here for a short time but the unit will continue to exist to eternity. Do not take it that you will be the CO all your life. Unit is **like your mother, do not do anything which will harm your mother in the long run.**

Role of a CO. It is imperative to understand the role of a CO, since there is a **tendency to gravitate towards the comfort zone** and start performing the duties of a sub unit, sub sub unit commander or even lower appointments, undermining the pivotal role of the appointment. The role of a CO is difficult to define, yet some important aspects are as follows:-

- **Advance Planning.** It is the most important role of a CO. Plan events minimum 4 to 6 months in advance and disseminate to the command. Clearly **spell out the KRAs and your expectations** in each event. A pragmatic advance planning will ensure that the events do not overtake you, otherwise you will only be doing fire fighting from one event to the other.
- **Operational Preparedness.** It is undoubtedly the **Raison d'être** of your unit and needs no elaboration.
- **Organise Training/Preparation.** Organise timely realistic training / preparation for the impending events. Ensure **specific responsibility** is assigned to the **designated appointment** to achieve the desired results and **ensure accountability.**
- **Ambassador.** CO is the ambassador of the unit to the external environment. Therefore, shaping the environment is your responsibility. But do not sacrifice your unit interest for

personal gains, ensure unit gets only the legitimate share of administrative commitments. You have to defend your unit but don't be foolhardy.

- **Healthy Happy Team.** Create a healthy happy team. It is easier said than done. One requires a **very mature and pragmatic approach**, often overlooking trivial issues which tend to take the centre stage. **No cost is too big to create a happy team.**
- **Welfare.** It has a very vast connotation but can be summarised as timely provision of **roti, kapda & makan and basic amenities to your men.** It also includes **effective training, affording adequate opportunities for self growth and attention to personal issues.**

Tenets of Command

Organisation is Supreme. Remember, you are here because of the unit and converse is not true. You are a transient but the unit is there to eternity. **The unit interest is supreme** and it is imperative that every decision / action is undertaken keeping in mind this **basic truth.**

Honest. A CO must be honest in every aspect and must be **seen to be honest.** You observe the unit with **two eyes** but your command watches you with **hundreds of eyes, nothing can be hidden,** do not try to befool the unit, lest you are fooling yourself. Do not hesitate to accept shortcomings, mistakes, what is wrong, because only then can you initiate corrective action. When you accept mistakes, your **command will appreciate you and walk in step with you to mend them.**

Fair & Just. You wield tremendous powers, ensure you are fair & just in exercising them. When you are fair, people will **digest the most bitter pill** without any reservation. Treat everyone alike, do not be clouded by narrow loyalties of place, religion favouritism etc. Look at every situation and person through the same prism. **Make no exceptions, when sitting on the seat of justice.** Narrow loyalties are unfortunately finding increasing resonance in the system, a sure recipe for disaster.

Impartial. We are all human, bound by numerous social encumbrances and vested interests in some form or the other. To be impartial, demands high moral courage to subjugate vested interests and overcome biases inherent in ones personality.

Decision making. A CO is expected to take decisions big or small, day in and day out, in fact, It is the major responsibility of a CO. The decisions taken must be bold, well considered and **most important timely**. It is always advisable to consult the stake holders / key appointments before a decision is taken. Ideally, no decision should be **pending beyond 48 hours** in a unit, unless it requires consultation with higher authorities.

Promote professionalism. A CO must endeavour to link every activity in the unit towards promoting professional excellence directly or indirectly.

Accept Responsibility. A CO must accept responsibility for success & failure with humility, as the head of the organisation. While the credit for success must go to the command, onus for failure remains with the leader. However, the failure must be analysed to initiate immediate corrective remedial measures to obviate failures/ lapses in future. Do not waste time in blame game, it does not matter who has goofed up, ultimately you are responsible for it.

Hands on Approach. In the yester years, a CO was seldom seen, which was an occasion by itself. But in today's environment, a CO needs to adopt a **Hands on Approach** in all the unit activities to obtain desired results. This means that a CO should be part of planning process in all the unit activities and monitor progress at regular intervals. However, it must be ensured that you do not interfere in interference in execution by the subordinate commanders. They merely need to be given your **vision in understandable objectives** and **guided when needed** to give mid course corrections, if required.

Channels of Communication. By virtue of the appointment, a CO is virtually isolated from the command. He needs to reach out to the last man in the unit and increase channels of communication, to afford seamless interaction. The channels of communication could be formal and informal like interviews, tea with troops, visit to training

area, recreation rooms, lines, cook house etc. A CO must create opportunities to interact with his command as much as possible.

Right Man for Right Job. This is one of this most important aspect in management of a unit. A NCO may be able to do what an officer/ JCO/group of people may not be able to do. This not only helps in achieving your goals but also economises on time and effort. Do not try to put a square peg in a round hole, the outcome will be counterproductive.

Compassion. The command needs to be handled with all the care, love and affection. These are the people who have pledged their unconditional loyalty and love to their leader. **Treat them like your children and they will walk blind folded with you to make supreme sacrifice**, if required. Treat them with compassion, do not betray them when they **need your caressing hand** and support. In fact, **walk an extra step, when he needs you**, it is your obligation and duty and in return he will look up to you as a Demi-God, don't miss the opportunity to be one.

Personality of a CO. The command feels comforted when its leader is **cool, calm, composed in adversity, forgiving during inadvertent mistakes and large hearted in giving**. Try to be one, if you are not, it will make you a better human being. **Don't be miser in showering praise, giving pat on the back and acknowledging good work, the command values it the most**. After all you are not giving anything from your pocket. **Be a giver and draw inspiration from the smiles on the faces of your command**. Believe me, it is a bliss to see contentment and satisfaction in the eyes of your men. Try it, you will get addicted to it. Most important, shed your ego, if you have one beyond your size, as it can singularly ruin your command.

Leadership Styles

To effectively command the unit, a CO has to adopt different styles of leadership, as per the demand of the situation, vacillating between autocratic, democratic, directional and transformational leadership styles. Adopting a set style of leadership, in all situations is sure recipe for failure. The success of your leadership depends on adopting the appropriate leadership style as per the demand of the situation.

Autocratic Leadership. The autocratic leadership must be adopted in challenging situations, when failures are not acceptable, when explicit obedience of orders is expected and issues are non-negotiable. However, such situations are very few and every situation should not be treated as one, otherwise your command would be devoid of humane face. You may achieve good results in short term but your command would tire out sooner than expected, leading to discontentment and frustration.

Democratic Leadership. To achieve high standards of execution and implementation, it is recommended to involve the command in decision making, by soliciting their views, even though the final decision is yours. The participative leadership ushers greater sense of belonging amongst the men, the command relishes being part of decision making process. However, this leadership style is restricted to administrative aspects only.

Directional Leadership. Today, there is an increasing tendency to micro manage every event by the CO, which is detrimental to the organisation growth, inhibits initiative in the command. May not be correct to call directional leadership in the real sense, but a CO must afford adequate freedom of action to his subordinate commanders, who would produce excellent results, if given clear, concise and explicit directions.

Transformational Leadership. At the functional level, it is ideal to adopt transformational leadership, at the unit level. A unit is organisationally structured with adequate manpower to perform every possible task that could arise in any situation. Notwithstanding, it rather surprising that a soldier with more than 10 years of service is unable fire a weapon, likewise, a driver with similar service is not proficient in driving et al. Reasons could be far too many, which cannot justify, this incompetence. Adopting transformational leadership style in unit could be panacea to the problem, wherein every individual is compelled to achieve professional excellence.

Challenges of Command

Effective command of a unit is a huge challenge due to the vast canvas one has to address to include operations, training, administration,

emotional aspect, individual and collective aspects, welfare, individual aspirations etc. **Each aspects is a full fledged subject by itself**, which have to be perused with utmost alacrity. Ours is a centuries old organisation which works on **time tested ethos and culture**. Well defined procedures are in place with laid down responsibility and accountability. A CO is only required to review and **reinforce the existing work culture, ethos and procedures** to achieve the desired objective. Minor tweaking may be required to keep it in line with the changing environment but please **do not try to reinvent the wheel** as it is at a very heavy cost to the unit. Clarity of mind on all issues is of utmost importance for a CO to effectively run his unit. Therefore, be sure what you want to do and what you want to achieve. You are endowed with hundreds of years of experience in the form of officers and other ranks, do not hesitate to gainfully utilise this experience, it is invaluable.

Operational Readiness. This is one of the biggest challenge but seldom given the due importance in today's administration driven ethos. Each tactical group, sub-sub unit / sub unit must be proficient to discharge its operational role. This can be achieved by organising realistic operation oriented training duly incorporating **large number of professional competitions.**

Training. Conduct of realistic operation oriented training is a challenge when viewed against the overload of administrative commitment in a unit. Training invariably gets the last priority, which is most damaging to the unit. One needs to evolve ingenious methods to conduct effective training in the unit. The solution lies in reducing the administrative commitment to bare minimum and accordingly highest priority to training during peace. Remember, **training is the best welfare**, it not only meets your operational obligations but welfare as well.

Administrative Commitments. Today, we have become an administration oriented organisation to the extent that **we need external support to fulfil even our mundane requirement.** In addition, a large number of administrative requirement are thrust on the unit from higher HQs. We need to sit down and ponder over it, lot of it can be cut down. The answer lies in reducing frivolous activities, reviewing our SOPs in conduct of various unit events and

evolving pragmatic drills and procedures. Just to substantiate, a unit with strength of 250 personnel performs all the unit activities akin to a unit with strength of 800, yet performs better. What is the difference? We need to analyse to get the answer.

Rising Aspirations. In view of the prevailing socio-economic environment in the society, the aspirations of our men too have gone up significantly. It is an obvious fall out, let us accept it. Therefore, there is a need to be more open to the men, give them opportunity to air their views / aspirations and afford opportunities wherever feasible. It is pragmatic to discuss the reality rather than try to befool them, which is counterproductive. Thus, the forum of Sainik Sammelan, interviews, informal interactions to frankly discuss issues gains more importance than ever before.

Stress Levels. In the modern day life style, the stress levels in an individual have significantly risen primarily due to easy communication on mobile, high aspirations, longing for a better life style, family pressures etc. The unit culture and ethos **must not compound the stress levels**, which could be due to use of abusive language, humiliation in public, favouritism, erratic unit routine, no personal time and limited channels of communications.

Administrative Lapses. No matter how careful you are, some administrative lapses are likely to take place. The moot questions is how do we minimise them, but the answer is not simplistic. These can be minimised by **efficient & effective running** of the unit, where **responsibility & accountability** are clearly delineated, **strictly adhering to unit routine**, ensuring tension free and stress free enabling environment for growth, every individual is afforded his rightful place under the sun, everyone is equal in the real sense and channels of communication are created, kept open always and every time.

Shortage of officers. The units are facing shortage of officers, particularly at the level of sub unit commanders, which makes the job of a CO even more challenging. This shortcoming can be overcome by judicious employment of JCOs for unit administration, extensive training of young officers and evolve good drills and procedures in the unit. Grooming of officers gains greater significance, which has been almost forgotten.

Preparation for Command

The command of unit is one of the most important and significant milestone in the career of an officer. It is both, a matter of great pride and honour as well as onerous responsibility, which is very challenging and demanding. Above all, it is once in a life time opportunity to realise your dreams. One must undertake necessary preparation to obtain a flying start and do justice to the coveted appointment from the day one. The command values it the most.

Know your Unit. Each unit is unique and as a head of the family, one must be conversant with under mentioned aspects, which may need to be tweaked to keep in sync with time and situation:-

- Unit ethos and culture.
- Strengths and weaknesses.
- Detailed knowledge about men - likes / dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, habits, , temperament, typical community traits & culture etc.
- Role being played by officers and JCOs.
- Mode of conduct of administrative aspects.

Operational Task of the unit.

- Operational task and proficiency on operational issues and areas meriting immediate attention for improvement.
- Specialised important aspects for successful execution of the task.

Vision. You must define your vision for the unit, i.e **how would you like to see your unit when you relinquish command.**

KRAs. Define your KRAs before you assume command. But once you have set out your KRAs, it is imperative for you to personally draw out a road map for achieving them and regularly monitor their progress.

Learn from Others Experience. Each one of us views command from a different perspective, yet **the basics are the same.** It is

prudent to take a brief on unit command from your seniors, whom you admire. They will be able to tell you, what you may learn towards the end of your command. Likewise, during the course of command, you will be confronted with numerous challenges, do not hesitate to take views from other COs / formation commander, you will invariably get better options / solutions.

Shaping the Environment.

Enabling Environment for Growth. At the outset, it is imperative for a CO to lay a strong foundation for his command by **fostering an enabling environment for growth**, which compels each individual to **give out his best willingly** and strive for professional excellence. This can be achieved by giving pre-eminence to the professional aspects in words and action, focus on realistic training with the aim of **learning** in an open and interactive environment.

Stress Free Environment. Foster a stress free and tension free environment in the unit. This can be achieved by respecting the identity & dignity of each individual, transparent dealing at all levels, seek opinions / views of the command on important issues by organising seminars / discussions with JCOs /OR etc. Each individual must be reassured that his personal requirements will be attended to promptly. Do not create power centres in the unit, which vitiate the normal chain of command and channels of functioning. **Do not create crisis when there is none.** Timelines for any job must be realistic. Essence lies in doing things correctly rather than merely completing them in time.

Cohesive Team. Create a cohesive and well knit team which functions in synergy, subjugating their own interests to the organisational objective. A cohesive team can be built by believing in your subordinates, being impartial, fair & just, honest, compassionate and above all keeping unit interests supreme over other considerations.

Attitude towards Command. It is the attitude which shapes our lives, likewise, it is the attitude of the CO which defines the unit attitude / responsiveness. One can discern the personality of a CO by seeing the responsiveness of the unit. Every individual is equally important and must be treated with respect and dignity, irrespective of a situation. Do not be **sarcastic and condescending**, people will

avoid you, it takes your away from the command. Maintain a **positive and cheerful outlook**, it instils confidence in the command. Smile at people when you look at them, **it is contagious and will spread smiles in the unit**. Be approachable at all times and reach out to the command, seek problems. **Make your presence wanted rather than people looking forward for your absence**. Make it a point to enquire about the family and children during your interactions. Lastly, offer your services to your command unconditionally, for advice and guidance at any time and place on any issue under the sun.

Healthy Spirit of Competition. Instil a healthy spirit of competition within the unit rather than cut throat competition, which is counterproductive and vitiates the environment. Do not pitch one sub unit commander / officer against the other, it leads to lack of faith and creates unnecessary barriers due to one up man ship. Remember, competition is not to choose the best but to **improve those who are not as good**, as far as you are concerned.

Power Centres. Our organisation structures are custom made and time tested, appropriately power and responsibility as per requirement. Do not destroy these structures and create power centres at will. This ruins the synergy within the unit leading to resentment, favouritism and breeds inefficiency. Follow & reinforce the hierarchical structure suitably modified as per situation and requirement. However, do not be too rigid, it may compromise responsiveness and breed inefficiency.

Recognition and Responsibility. We are very fond of branding people as **useless**. You can **condemn stores but not human beings**. If you do that I am afraid, you will have to carry lot of dead weight. Each person has strengths and weaknesses; no one is flawless or expert in everything. Every human being by nature likes to be appreciated and recognised for whatever he does. Likewise, each person loves to feel important, likes to take responsibility, therefore generate situations for each person to feel important and work for the organisation.

Create Rallying Points. To imbibe esprit de corps, it is imperative to create rallying points for the unit like winning sports / professional competitions. This will have a uniting effect, akin to Indian team

winning a final match in cricket. Select certain events which your unit has to win at any cost.

Unit Routine

The standard unit routine in our organisation has evolved and matured over decades which is time tested. As a rule, do not deviate from the unit routine unless unavoidable. Strict adherence to the unit routine, a panacea to all unit ills, automatically resolves lot of issues which would otherwise lead to administrative lapses. In particular, stick to the parade and office timings. Today, it is fashionable to have **open ended office hours in the afternoon and evening**, which has an adverse impact on the morale of the men. Do not follow the age old practice of keeping them '**Busy Without Work**,' it is not advisable. Some salient aspects to be kept in mind are as follows :-

- **CO's Parade.** It is imperative to conduct CO's Parade, as a second parade, for conduct of training five days a week. It must be of two periods, focussed towards learning, conducted with a structured training programme and organised by officers / qualified instructors. As the name suggests, everyone must attend less those exempted by the CO.
- You must leave your office in time and avoid coming to office in the evening unless unavoidable.
- Lay down timings for meals and follow them strictly, rest will fall in place.
- Ensure lights out time is strictly adhered to.
- Ensure family members are left free on half days and holidays to spend time with family.

Operations

Operational Role. To effectively perform the operational task, it is imperative that each individual is proficient in his task, each tactical group is capable of executing its operational task and the unit as a whole can effectively perform its operational role.

Execution of Operational Task. The operational task must be well understood down to the last man. This could be achieved by organising discussions/ lectures / classes at regular intervals for officers and unit on the following :-

- Task Analysis.
- Progress and Mechanics of Battle.
- Discussion on operational task at sub unit and sub-sub unit level.
- Drills and process involved in executing operational task.
- Coordination issues with supported formations.
- Evolving pragmatic logistics plan and fine tuning its constantly.

Know Your Enemy. Organise lectures / classes at regular intervals for all ranks.

Cutting Edge. Identify your cutting edge i.e critical appointment which would play pivotal role in ensuring success of your operations. Focus on achieving high standards of training for these personnel.

Critical Drills and Procedures. Identify critical drills and procedures which directly influence the outcome of your operational tasks. Focus on these during training.

Training

Learning. The training must focus on learning rather than mere conduct of generic training which does not achieve any tangible results. The important aspects of training are as follows :-

- Must be operation oriented.
- Must be well planned and organised with well defined learning objective.
- Must be progressive with carefully planned training programme.
- Individual training must be focussed towards achieving professional excellence.

- Organise training for organic crews / dets / sec/ pl/ sub sub unit.
- Must be organised by trained / qualified instructors.
- Focus on training cutting edge – Nos 1, section / crew / det and commanders
- Focus on achieving high standards of training in drills and procedures critical for successful execution of operational role.
- Afford a place of pride for “ustads” / unit experts.

Professional Competitions. Organising professional competition is one of the best methods of promoting professional excellence in the unit. Salient aspects are as follows :-

- Plan and organise large number of professional competitions at regular intervals.
- These must be organised after conduct of adequate preparation in the form of structured training to achieve the desired standards.
- Every organic det / crew / section must be made to participate in the competitions.
- The competitions must be organised as a unit event.
- Suitable prizes must be given to encourage professional excellence.

Identify Talent. A unit has enormous talent which is seldom harnessed. We need to identify talent in an individual at an early stage of service and nurture him for the benefit of the organisation as well as the individual. This could be done in an institutionalised manner by organising a suitably structured competition for personnel in the service bracket of 3 to 5 years. The competitions must be organised after giving adequate time for preparation. Personnel identified through such competitions could be groomed for ACC / SCO, instructor courses and key appointment. The competition could be structured as follows :-

- Preparation under sub unit for one month, minimum 10 personnel per sub unit.
- Theory and practical test on the trade work.
- Quiz competition akin to TV shows for top 12-15 at unit level.
- Quiz should include GK, Service awareness, trade work etc.

Administration

Our organisation has a very well defined ethos and culture supported by rules and regulations on every aspect duly augmented by drills & procedures and SOPs. Yet, the administration of a unit is becoming more and more challenging by the day. Whilst, there are a large number of factors contributing towards the frequent lapses, one factor which clearly stands out for such infringements is **non adherence to laid down ethos & culture and SOPs on the subject**. The unit administration primarily entails looking after ourselves and training for war, which is not a very difficult task as it has become in reality. As a CO, most of us take the administration of a unit for granted, as a routine mundane issue, thus the problem. The importance of unit administration cannot be undermined as it has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the unit as a whole. It is by no means being suggested that a CO must get directly involved in the unit administration but he has to evolve his own **nerve points** which he needs to check time and again to ensure sound administration in the unit. If the unit administration is not well managed, a CO will keep grappling with day to day issues with little focus on the real issues.

Documentation. The documentation in respect of all ranks is invariably incomplete, thus denying timely benefits particularly to the men. Institute regular check of documentation and could be included as a KRA. The standard of our clerks is deplorable, you must organise training for them.

Discipline. It is the bed rock of our organisation which must not be compromised at any cost. A CO must **take cognisance of every infringement** that comes to notice. However, the punishment could range from mere admonishment to written warning to harsh punishment depending on the offence.

Sainik Sammelan. It is an ideal forum for a CO to speak directly to his command, must be used effectively. Convey your mind frankly on whole range of issues. You must discuss future events and your expectations in each of them. Devote half your time on administrative lapses/ infringements, personal issues, family problems, children education, financial aspects, *et al.*

Interviews. It is one of the best means of one to one interaction with personnel of your command. Let people open up and speak their mind. Seek their suggestions and consider them. Interview as many people as possible, could be even daily, as it takes only a minute or two, which one must spare for such an important aspect.

Outsourcing. Do not waste man hours on aspects which can be outsourced. **Shun Mughal culture** while conducting events. We have directly copied the **marriage hall culture** from the civil. Be frugal in spending and maintain decorum of our institutions.

Misc. The following aspects merit attention :-

- Forbid use of abusive language.
- Humiliation in public should not be permitted at any cost.
- No mass punishment.
- Forbid money collection in any form.
- **De-Addiction.** We are creating habitual drinkers in an institutionalised manner, leading to addiction in large number of cases. Undertake de-addiction drive, if you care for your men, bring down the liquor issue days to 3 to 4 in a week.
- Focus on completion of task and not the time to be taken in accomplishing the task.
- Create varied recreational facilities in the NCO Club, beyond mere liquor issue.
- Pay adequate emphasis on correct salutation, military bearing and conduct.

Upkeep of offices and Lines. CO must organise regular visits to offices, lines and other areas at regular intervals. **Visits should not be restricted to scheduled inspections only.** The visits must start with toilets and cook houses as the case may be.

Provision of Stores. The entire range of stores authorised to the unit are seldom demanded or deficiency made up. A CO needs to pay special attention and maintain the issue as part of his check list, to be revisited at regular intervals. Your scrutiny of deficiencies will do the needful.

FOL. It is very important to review the procedures for issue and accounting of FOL. CO must organise surprise checks of vehicles returning from duty and stock to obviate pilferage.

CSD. Ensure the following:-

- Prohibit sale to unauthorised people.
- Authentic stock taking on receipt of stock and monthly BOO.
- Monitor sale of liquor
- **Change the CSD staff after every six months.**
- Prohibit **direct contact of CSD staff with dealers.**
- **Do not take money / items in kind from dealers** for demanding particular brand of liquor.

Welfare. Welfare in our organisation has a very vast connotation. To ensure high morale and motivation in the unit, it is imperative for a CO to personally monitor various aspects related to welfare. Some salient aspects are as follows :-

- **Leave.** Timely leave is one of the most important welfare measure in a unit. The schedule of unit events must be communicated to the men well in advance so that they can plan their leave.
- **Food and Shelter.** Ensure timely hot meals with good variety and standard are served to the men. Living accommodation

must have basic amenities and toilets are functional and hygienic.

- **Personal Time.** Each individual must be afforded personal time in which he is free to undertake recreational activities.
- **Time with family.** The family members must be allowed time to spend with their families on half days and holidays.
- **Unit Welfare Cell.** A Unit Welfare Cell could be created to cater for registering MES complaints, organise collection of LPGs, do train reservations and organise home delivery of rations.
- **Tuitions for children.** Tuition could be organised for children in X and XII classes in Maths and science subjects. It would be worthwhile giving motivational prizes for children excelling in the exam of higher classes.
- **Family Welfare Meet.** These should be organised to afford an opportunity to families to interact and educate them on issues like medical, health care and financial management. They should not be forced to attend and should assemble only 15 minutes prior to the event and served good eats. **Cultural programme must be forbidden in these meets.**
- **Opportunities for Growth.** It is aptly said that **training is the best welfare.** Each individual must be afforded adequate opportunity for growth within the organisation. This could be done by timely identifying talent by organising suitably structured competitions and create opportunities to promote professional excellence.

Financial Dealings. Today, a unit is flush with public and regimental funds. **Financial probity is a pre requisite for success of command.** Do not get into any money making ventures in the unit, it is not desirable by any count.

JCOs & Senior NCOs Seminar. It is an excellent idea to conduct JCOs & NCOs Seminar at regular intervals at unit level, chaired by the CO. The issues pertaining to unit administration, training and

welfare activities could be discussed in these Seminars. This forum affords an opportunity to the JCOs & NCOs to air their views and also obtain their suggestions. Merits of the suggestions could be analysed and implemented, if found worthwhile. This gives them the opportunity to participate in the decision making process, which obtains better response in execution.

Role of Ladies.

- The unit ladies can play a constructive role towards welfare of families in the station. However, the issue needs to be dealt with compassion and maturity to ensure it does not degenerate into a painful ritual for the families.
- The unit ladies play a very important role in defining the environment amongst the officer fraternity. The issue needs to be handled with utmost maturity and tact. It is advisable to address officers and ladies on pertinent issues of contention to foster a happy team.

Conclusion

Command of a unit is once in a life time experience, approach it with a positive outlook and make it a delightful experience, which you will cherish all your life. To enjoy your command, keep aside your personal ambition and work with passion for your unit with a singular aim of making a small difference, success will not elude you. If you follow even half of what has been given in this paper, your command will be a great success. **Wish you good luck and all the best for a most satisfying command.**

CENJOWS PUBLICATIONS

SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS		Price (Rs)	Year
1	Indian Way of War Fighting	395/-	2008
2	Indian Experience in Force Projection	300/-	2008
3	War Against Global Terror	495/-	2008
4	Leveraging India's Soft Power as a Strategic Resource	250/-	2010
5	The Strategic Importance of A& N Islands	100/-	2010
STUDY			
6	India's Comprehensive National Power: Synergy through Joint Decision Making	800/-	2009
7	Uniform Code of Military Justice	100/-	2009
8	India's Strategic Stakes in Afghanistan	295/-	2010
9	An Essay on the Armed Forces Tribunal Act	100/-	2010
10	Defence Industrial Base-2025	850/-	2010
11	Integrated Force Projection by India	750/-	2011
12	Space Security : Indian Perspective	550/-	2011
13	Employment of Special Forces: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future	795/-	2012
14	Indo-US Defence Cooperation	225/-	2012
15	Water A Source for Future Conflicts	995/-	2013
16	Role of Pakistan in India's Energy Security	250/-	2013
17	Implementation of RTI Act 2005 in Armed Forces and Its Implications	450/-	2013
18	Rise of Islamists in Bangladesh	95/-	2014
19	Sino-Pak Nexus and Implications for India	350/-	2015
ARTICLE (Handbook/Monograph/Issue Brief)			
20	India-Oman : A Perspective (Handbook)	100/-	2010
21	Afghanistan Future Scenario and Intentions of Key Players	100/-	2012
22	India's Quest for Defence Equipment Policy	100/-	2013
23	Chinese Chequers in the Indian Ocean Region (Monograph)	100/-	2014
24	Understanding of Iran An Issue Brief (Monograph)	100/-	2014

25	India's Foreign Policy Time for a Rethink (Issue Brief)	100/-	2014
26	Training & Technology Requirements for Anti-Maoist Operations (Issue Brief)	100/-	2014
27	CENJOWS Debate on Jointness (Issue Brief)	100/-	2014
28	2050 : Shape of Things to Come (Issue Brief)	100/-	2015
SYNODOS PAPERS			
29	LTTE & Sri Lanka : A Way Ahead	50/-	2009
30	India's Options in the Emerging Political Scenario of Bangladesh	50/-	2009
31	Situation in Nepal, Implications and Policy Options for India	50/-	2009
32	Myanmar India Relations: An Appraisal	50/-	2009
33	Indo-US Relationship : A Perspective	50/-	2010
34	Afghanistan Past Present and A Way Ahead	50/-	2010
35	Developments in Pakistan	50/-	2010
36	Southeast Asia : Our Foreign Policy Priority	50/-	2011
37	Review of India's Civil Nuclear Energy Programme: Post Fukushima Disaster	50/-	2011
38	Implications of Tactical Nuclear Weapons in India's Neighbourhood	50/-	2011
39	Asia Pacific Region Ballistic Missile Defence Scenario 2020 Recommended Approach for India	50/-	2012
40	Democratization of Myanmar and its Implications for India	50/-	2012
41	People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF)	50/-	2012
42	Emerging Trends in the Ballistic Missile System	50/-	2013
43	Is India Prepared to Exploit the Opportunities Offered by Space? An Assessment	50/-	2013
44	Sino-Pak Economic Corridor : An Appraisal	50/-	2013
45	Deciphering Uighur Unrest in China	50/-	2014
46	Logistic Parks : The Game Changers	50/-	2014
47	Defence SEZ A Catalyst for Self Reliance in Defence Sector	50/-	2015
48	Indigenisation in the Defence Industry – Is Increasing FDI the only Answer?	50/-	2015
49	Employment of Non-Lethal Weapons (NLWs) in India in the Emergent Warfare Context	50/-	2015