

From: Hertling, Mark P LTG MIL USA TRADOC

Subject: What Right Looks Like (WRL) #2, Command Expectation

IMT Teammates,

In every job I've been assigned, I've taken about 30-60 days to look at the organization, assess strengths and weaknesses, and then communicate to those who work with me on what I expected of them. While the DCG-IMT position was just created, you all know I've been with you about two months...so the timing seems right to pass on written expectations for those who work on Initial Military Training.

Recently, I stated that IMT is the "least sexy, most important" job in TRADOC. Let me explain why I said that.

Most of us grew up in the operating force...the MTOE Army. We were all driven by competition, we took initiative, and we wanted to make OUR unit the very best platoon in the battalion, the best company in the Brigade, the best Battalion in the Division. We focused on bringing skills together while building well-oiled teams for the long term, and we used "other people's money" or skimmed resources from places where others weren't using it to gain advantage. We asked for things that we believed would give our organization an edge -- in case we were ever alerted for combat -- so that our platoon, company or battalion would fight as well-led teams under us, in our style and with our design. We could make mistakes in training because we could "retrain" later, and we could insert "adventure training" that had nothing to do with our mission just because we could. Every once in a while, we had the opportunity to take a "training holiday" or a long weekend, or come together and celebrate -- with young and old soldiers that were part of our team -- and proudly proclaim how we were better than the next company over, or the battalion that was down the street. That's pretty sexy stuff, and the Army thrives on that spirit of friendly competition and well-aimed camaraderie.

But in IMT, we have a different mission. While we certainly want our soldiers to fall into formation as contributing members of the team they join, during the period we have those Soldiers we must have a different mindset, and a different mission analysis. Because when you get down to it, our job is to train Soldiers on basic and individual skills, the tasks that are most important to help our soldiers quickly "fit in" when they get to their team. We must get Soldiers in the best possible shape without breaking them before we send them off, and we must begin the process of inculcating values that will last a lifetime...while our charges are in uniform, or even if they decide to go do something else.

We have a limited amount of time and constrained resources to accomplish that mission. And we're asked to do it over and over again, each time producing the same quality product at our organization that is like the quality product produced at the other training centers (with variance for advanced or branch skills, of course).

So to accomplish that mission, here are some of the things that I will expect:

-- First, as I've mentioned before, I will require that all Brigade and Battalion Commanders and CSMs be the certifiers of their trainers...whether that trainer is a drill sergeant, AIT Platoon Sergeant, or BOLC Cadre member. Two levels down training (and one level down mentoring) is the doctrinal norm, so that is what I also expect in IMT. Our focus must be on ensuring our cadre conduct solid training and grow every day so they can make those they train get better every day. Oh, that "certification" isn't just a one time event...it's continuous. We must also find ways to professionally develop our cadre - while they're training, and while they're doing other things -- while they are part of our team.

-- Second, please understand I'm asking all of you to follow our designated

programs with precision and adhere to training those topics that our Army has designated as critically important. Every IMT course has an approved Program of Instruction; unless Commanders seek and receive permission to change those, I expect everyone to execute the approved POI without replacing topics, or substituting one subject while deleting another.

Brigade Commanders (or their subordinates) do not have the authority to eliminate or replace an assigned task for something they feel is more "important;" and Brigade Commanders (even Commandants or CoE Commanders) do not have the authority to deviate from an approved TRADOC POI without permission. There may be new or better WAYS to train, but there are never new THINGS to train on unless that "thing" gets vetted and resourced. and then we will execute that task across the entire IMT community (not just in the place where the good idea originated, because that will cause deviance in the operational force). After 34 years of experience, I've come to realize that ALL Commanders need guidance (in the operational or generating force). If I asked a BCT Commander to secure an objective, and he came back and said a different objective was better and he decided to secure that one without asking, I think we might have issues.

--Keep the focus on the INDIVIDUAL Soldier and leader we're training. Stifle your desire to conduct larger and more impressive training events, unless you can guarantee that each individual is getting the attention they require for growth, or if the event is a capstone event (the perfect example is the MI school's event where LTs, sergeants and privates are all combined in a graduation exercise, with AIT Platoon Sergeants receiving input from SLD and ALD NCOs and BOLC Lts). My experience says that in most cases the large or grand training event may be an ego boost for the Commander, but the soldier only sees and understands what happens within his/her learning parameter. So I'd ask all of you to focus on making the approved skills we're asked to train BETTER rather than focusing on those things you think are more important or which can be combined in large formations. Rule of thumb: The squad event for Soldiers is about as big as it should get.

-- While training skills, I'd ask all of you to follow the Outcomes Based Training and Education (OBTE) methodology, and reinforce that methodology with solid AARs and critiques on the skills, attitudes and understanding we want our Soldiers to have after the various training events conclude. I'd also ask you to ensure we are not executing collective events to train individual skills. If you hear or see your subordinates placing basic trainees or AIT students in situations where they can't be evaluated as individuals, I'd ask you to question those who put that event together, and get them back on track. Because that's what I'll be doing. Collective tasks in the IMT environment are - for the most part - a waste of resources, AAR capacity, and training time.

-- I'd ask all of you to find ways -- continuously -- to make your cadre's and cadre's families quality of life better. This is one of the areas where innovation and initiative is important and valued, because in this area we are not driven by an assembly line methodology. Develop programs, bring spouses and families in, and try not to add additional time to the cadre's duty day. If you let me know how I can help in this area, I'll do my very best to assist.

-- Cross talk good ideas. Within your organization and throughout IMT. Come up on the "command net" whenever you feel the urge or you have something to share.

And here are some of the things you should expect from me:

-- My priority mission is to help each of you be successful (in your personal and professional life, and in producing the Soldiers and Junior Officers who come out of IMT). I'll always fight for your "needs," and at times I'll even fight for some of your "wants" (when those wants make sense). Give me both sides of the story, and I'll help you fight your fights, or tell you why you shouldn't be fighting it in the first place. I'll be candid, sometimes outspoken, and I'll always try and be positive...but don't always expect me to say yes. When you need to use my rank to help make something better for the TOTAL Army or for your Soldiers or family, then use it.

Those are my Expectations of you, and what you should have as your

expectations of me.

Hope this helps.

MPH