



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 16th Sustainment Brigade
21st Theater Support Command
APO AE 09139



1 APR 2010

Memorandum for Leaders, 16th Sustainment Brigade

SUBJECT: Command Philosophy

1. Vision. One statement summarizes my vision for this brigade. ***“In the Absence of Orders, Attack!!”*** It epitomizes my vision for our unit and each individual trooper in one simple sentence. When a challenge arises, take it. If a problem arises, fix it. We all know what is right, we just need to do it without waiting for someone to tell us. If we apply this attitude to all aspects of our duties, our brigade will be one of the best in Europe and the Army.
2. The mission of the 16th Sustainment Brigade is to provide sustainment support to forces in the EUCOM AOR and, on order, the AFRICOM AOR. On order deploy to execute theater opening and RSOI of forces, provide expeditionary sustainment support to full spectrum operations, and on order redeploy. The brigade consists of 14th Movement Control Battalion, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 39th Movement Control Battalion, and the 391st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.
3. Command of soldiers is the highest privilege that the Army can bestow on any officer. Command of Soldiers forward deployed in Europe is an even greater honor given our Army's history for it is likely we will be the one of the first to fight when our Nation calls. I am extremely proud to be your Commander in the 16th Sustainment Brigade and privileged to serve alongside the finest troopers in the world.
4. As leaders, we have four basic priorities: training, maintaining, caring, and leading. Each one is a building block of readiness. I believe that these tenets of command are the firm basis of a sound command philosophy. I will address them in the following order: readiness, training, maintaining, caring for soldiers and their families, and leading with an additional comment on risk management/safety.
 - a. Readiness. This brigade with its battalions and companies may be one of the first to go to war. Our Nation relies on us to execute this mission without hesitation. Therefore, our readiness to deploy when alerted, establish support, and defeat the enemy must always be our number one priority. We must 'Think War' and keep it as our watchword. All of our efforts must improve, sustain, and support the brigade's and subordinate units' combat readiness.
 - b. Training. All training must be METL-related. Our training must be tough, realistic, and challenging. Focus your efforts at the section, platoon, and company level. Proficient, tough, and combat-ready sections and platoons result in combat-ready companies and battalions. Conduct all training in accordance with FM 7-0, 7-1, and all applicable training guidance issued by the brigade. The best method to ensure mission accomplishment and our troopers' safe return is to execute tough, realistic training. Our greatest legacy will be trained Soldiers capable of successfully accomplishing all assigned missions under adverse conditions.
 - c. Maintaining. During a deployment, contingency operation, or training exercise, the equipment we take must work properly to provide sustainment support and enhance combat power. A sound maintenance system and good maintenance training are absolutely essential to our combat readiness. Responsibility must be fixed for each weapon, vehicle, and piece of equipment. I expect maintenance to be scheduled and conducted to standard. Leaders and supervisors at all levels will conduct maintenance training and ensure each trooper can maintain assigned equipment.

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d. Caring for our troopers and their families. The most important method for us to demonstrate caring is to train our troopers well. In that manner, we help assure the maximum number will return from combat to rejoin their families and friends. This concept relates directly to tough, realistic training and combat readiness, but there is also more to caring. Care and concern for our troopers is demonstrated from the beginning by good sponsorship and reception programs. For many, the first impressions a trooper and his family have of a unit are lasting ones. A solid, functioning Family Readiness Group (FRG) at company, battalion, and brigade level are key to caring for our troopers and their families. We must 'Think War' here as well. The FRGs will be crucial when we deploy, and unless they function well now, they won't function well when we go to war. We must also not overlook our single troopers. The Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program is a great tool in caring for our single troopers. Learn about the BOSS program, use it as a foundation, and build on it. Another tool integral to caring for our troopers is performance counseling. Not only is effective performance counseling vital to our readiness, it will often uncover problems which the chain of command can readily address and easily solve. A caring chain of command will virtually eliminate readiness distractors, improve morale, build cohesion, and result in increased combat readiness. The end result of caring for our soldiers and their families will be stronger units at all levels.

e. Leading. "***In the Absence of Orders, ATTACK!!***" My leadership philosophy is perfectly summarized by this phrase. Every leader should be decisive and aggressive. In our chosen profession there is no room for timidity. Leaders should set the standard and lead by example. Leaders must be technically and tactically proficient in all aspects of their duties. As leaders, we must be the bedrock of Army values and embed these values in our troopers. We are entrusted with an awesome responsibility, our nation's sons and daughters. We must give this responsibility our full attention and complete dedication. As leaders, we also have a responsibility to develop our young leaders. One must be a leader and fully demonstrate those essential attributes of character as a model for others to follow and emulate. In our brigade are the future leaders of the Army and in our units are the future first sergeants, command sergeants major, as well as company, battalion, and brigade commanders. These young leaders are another part of our legacy and they will determine the future of our Army. They are our investment in the future. Pay particular attention to leader development because these young leaders will someday be responsible for our sons and daughters.

f. Risk Management/Safety. As Soldiers, we serve in an inherently dangerous profession. Everything we do has certain degrees of risk associated with it. We can never totally eliminate risk. However, we can learn to recognize risk and mitigate it. Leaders must make risk assessments and take the necessary steps to reduce the risk level when necessary. As your commander, I personally take responsibility for every trooper assigned, and I expect you to do the same. Emphasize risk management and safety in all things, our troopers are too valuable to us to lose them senselessly.

5. We are leaders in the finest Army in the world. Our Army has a rich tradition and history. You will add the next chapters to that history for both the brigade and the Army. We must strive to live up to the many fine examples of leadership demonstrated countless times by members of our Army in World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Bosnia, Kosovo, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. I have attached a few thoughts on what I value in addition to those discussed above. Remember, "***In the Absence of Orders, ATTACK!!***"

Deeds Not Words!

KEITH SLEDD
COL, LG
Commanding

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“In the Absence of Orders, ATTACK!!”

1. **Fitness** – Physical and moral fitness are essential in all that we do. Physical fitness is more than the APFT. It includes a comprehensive fitness program including an upper-body regimen and road marches.
2. **Loyalty** – To the Nation, the Army, to the unit, and to each other.
3. **Sense of Humor** – Our business is serious but let’s not take ourselves too seriously. Humor is vital to an organization and reduces stress.
4. **Competence** – As leaders we must know our job and demonstrate our abilities every day because lives depend on it. From combat logistics patrols to weapons proficiency to combat service support, if you aren’t sure what to do then find out.
5. **Honesty** – Non-negotiable.
6. **Questions** – Questions are not disrespectful. If you don’t understand something, ask me.
7. **Taking Charge** – There is no place for a timid, laid-back leader in the 16th Sustainment Brigade or our units. Get out front, take risks, and lead.
8. **Soldiers Who Like to Soldier** – They are why I have stayed in the Army this long. Identify, reward, and reenlist these fine individuals. If you do, the Army will be better for it.
9. **History** – Critical to our chosen profession. Make your troopers learn about our unit and the Army and appreciate the rich traditions. You will see their pride swell and crispness in their step.
10. **Teamwork** – We never fight by ourselves. Think this way and encourage our troopers to do the same. I value teamwork among and within units and commanders. Together, no task is too great. Remember, there is no ‘I’ in ‘Team’.
11. **Attitude** – Positive attitudes are contagious and make better units.
12. **Discipline** – Fundamental to our Army and its success. Set the standard and enforce it.

KEITH SLEDD
COL, LG
Commanding