



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
208TH FINANCE BATTALION
UNIT 30041
APO AE 09166



AEUFC-FBS-AG

1 October 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR See Distribution

SUBJECT: Policy Letter 1 - Command Philosophy

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the vision for this battalion and to briefly highlight the way we should approach the execution of our duties. This memorandum will give you insight to my priorities, my style, what you can expect from me, and what I expect from you.

2. **BACKGROUND:** When the film director John Ford was interviewed about his technique for making westerns, he stated that there was only one way to open a film to arouse people's interest. You must begin, he said, by having a stranger ride at full gallop into town. The peaceful life of the settlement is going to be disturbed by this stranger. The townspeople don't know who he is; they don't know where he's coming from; they have no idea why he is in such a hurry. And why here? The life of the settlement was then primed for conflict. I see similarities between this scenario and the arrival of a new commander. This memorandum will give you some insight to the "stranger" that has galloped into your town.

3. **VISION:** The primary goal of the 208TH Finance Battalion (FB) is to be "a world class finance battalion, trained, mission ready, and capable of providing a full spectrum of financial support to all customers within our area of operation, while ensuring the well-being of soldiers, civilians, and families."

a. **MISSION FIRST, PEOPLE ALWAYS!!!** Training, mission accomplishment, and caring for soldiers, civilians, and their families are paramount in our profession. Our training focus will be on providing unsurpassed finance support in garrison, in the field, and in any deployed location. I intend to challenge our ability to use the latest communication and automation assets to provide full finance support from any location. Our contribution on the battlefield is judged in terms of our ability to perform our technical mission; which also requires a fundamental understanding of the basic soldier skills required to survive and sustain operations.

b. **Human decency and respect for others** are the very foundation for caring, compassionate leaders. The 208TH FB will be a unit that operates free of bias and fosters fair, humane treatment that maximizes the individual talents of all personnel.

c. **Discipline** is the cornerstone of our Army. Doing what is right in all circumstances, regardless of who is present, demonstrates individual discipline. Unit discipline is evident in how we conduct physical training; maintain weight standards; equitably administer rewards and discipline; clean the office, barracks, etc. A high level of discipline will cause the routine things to happen routinely and the difficult to happen even under the most austere and difficult conditions.

d. **Personnel actions are always #1.** We will make time to take care of our most precious resource – our people. Sponsorship, counseling, ratings, awards, disciplinary actions, etc... will be conducted timely. Handle each action as if it pertained to yourself. Treat others like you would you like to be treated.

e. **Everyone makes mistakes.** I will accept honest mistakes or decisions, although some have consequences that cannot be overlooked. I will not tolerate careless, dishonest, or mistakes of apathy. Integrity violations are non-negotiable.

f. **Safety** is every person's responsibility. Everyone has the authority to stop an unsafe act or situation.

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g. This is an Officer led, NCO run battalion. Each has a responsibility to train the other for the betterment of the unit, and the individual. Power down!!! NCOs must be given the opportunity to do their jobs, but they also must be given the commander’s intent, mission, and guidance. They are critical in the Planning and the Execution. Don’t sell our young soldiers short either. Everyone must be given authority and responsibility for the success of the battalion.

h. Communication is hard; never make assumptions or take it for granted. In the desired order, communication will occur face to face, on the phone, in writing e-mail. Misunderstandings occur when we do not openly discuss issues and allow freedom of opinion. In writing e-mail, you cannot read body language or sense when your words have been taken out of context. Be careful. When possible communicate face to face, and be blunt, honest, and candid in your remarks.

i. Teamwork is critical. Constantly work on team chemistry, building esprit, and don’t be afraid to show it off. Transition is a fact of life in our profession. With every gain and loss, the chemistry of your team changes.

j. Individually, none of us has all the answers. Collectively, we can capitalize on better ways of doing business and increasing customer satisfaction. If you have a suggestion - get it out in the open. Leaders will objectively review all suggestions, instituting those that have merit, and giving proper credit where it is due. Applaud the actions of your soldiers and frequently say “Thank You” for a job well done.

4. SUMMARY: Our profession requires so much from every soldier and civilian. That is why the ones who pour their hearts and souls into our mission are so special. My goal for the next two years is to share my thoughts and experiences with each of you, and to solidify the image that our vision points us toward. We should be known for our:

- a. Positive, Customer-Service Attitude
- b. Realistic, Battle-Focused Training
- c. Hands-On Work Ethic
- d. Fun!!

5. I am proud and excited to be the Commander of the 208TH FB and I look forward to the challenges ahead.

SERVICE, PAY, SUPPORT!

STEPHEN J. RIVIERE
LTC, FC
Commanding

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