

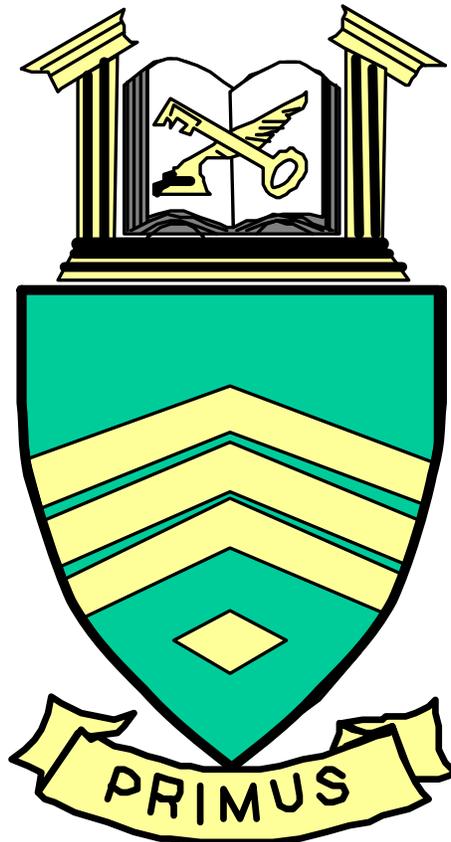
U.S. ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY (FSC-TATS)

L655

OCT 03

THE ROLE OF THE FIRST SERGEANT

**STUDENT HANDOUT**



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## HANDOUTS FOR LESSON 1: L655 version 1

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Terminal Learning Objective

Handout-1, Advance Sheet

### Index of Student Handouts

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**This Appendix Contains** This Appendix contains the items listed in this table--

<b>Title/Synopsis</b>	<b>Pages</b>
SH-1, Advance Sheet	SH-1-1 and SH-1-2
SH-2, Extracts from: DA Pam 611-21, Military Occupational Classification and Structure; and AR 611-1, Military Occupational Classification Structure Development and Implementation.	SH-2-1 and SH-2-2
SH-3, Extracts from: AR 614-200, Selection of Enlisted Soldiers for Training and Assignment; and TC 22-6, The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide.	SH-3-1 thru SH-3-6
SH-4, Company Commander and First Sergeant Quotes.	SH-4-1 thru SH-4-4
SH-5, Student Notes.	SH-5-1 thru SH-5-3

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# Student Handout 1

## Advance Sheet

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### Lesson Hours

This lesson consists of two hours of small group instruction.

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### Overview

The first sergeant directly influences most things that really matter in a unit—things like morale, the level of individual training, discipline, administration, and logistics. Doctrine, however, does not provide a specific list of duties and responsibilities for the position. Because of this, each commander may develop a different concept of the appropriate responsibility and authority for his first sergeant. Likewise, each first sergeant may develop a different concept of their own responsibilities and authorities. The resolution of these different concepts is essential to a good commander/first sergeant relationship. This lesson consists of a 1-hour conference and a 1-hour practical exercise. It will help in your preparation to resolve these differences with your future commanders.

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### Learning Objective

Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

<b>Action:</b>	Determine the factors that promote an effective commander/first sergeant working relationship.
<b>Conditions:</b>	As a first sergeant, in a classroom environment, given extracts from AR 600-20, AR 614-200, DA PAM 611-21, and FM 7-22.7.
<b>Standards:</b>	Produce an: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective commander/first sergeant working relationship,</li><li>• Pass a written examination with a minimum score of 70 percent, answering 28 of the 40 presented questions,</li></ul> IAW AR 600-20, AR 614-200, DA Pam 611-21, and FM 7-22.7.

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**ELO A** Discuss the eligibility requirements for assignment to a first sergeant position.

**ELO B** Identify the principal duty of the first sergeant.

**ELO C** Discuss the appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes of the first sergeant.

**ELO D** Identify the guidance for dividing responsibility and authority in a commander/first sergeant relationship.

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### Assignment

The student assignments for this lesson are:

- Study Student Handout 2 (Extract from DA PAM 611-21).
  - Study Student Handout 3 (Extracts from AR 614-200 and FM 7-22.7).
  - Read AR 600-20, para 3-2b.
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### Additional Subject Area Resources

None

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**Bring to Class**

All student handouts.  
All reference material you have received.  
Pen or pencil and writing paper.

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## STUDENT HANDOUT 2

Table 12-1

## Special Qualification Identifiers—Continued

Code	Title	Proponent
	b. Qualifications. Must successfully complete the Basic Installer Course (BIC) at USAISC, Ft Huachuca, AZ.	
	c. Restrictions. Installer positions will be classified in an appropriate MOS code, normally maintenance, consistent with the standards of grade in paragraph 3-7. SQI I will not be used to classify positions limited to setting up portable equipment or for positions limited to administrative, clerical, supply, or support of the installation function. Authorize use for MOSs associated with CMF 29, 31, 33, and 74 only.	

**L Linguist** **DCSINT**

- a. Description of positions.
- (1) Identifies positions in TAADS that require proficiency in a designated foreign language. In position classification, this character will be used in conjunction with any MOS requiring language proficiency.
  - (2) The appropriate 2-digit language identification code contained in AR 611-6 will be used to identify the specific language in the 8th or 9th character of its MOS code. Similarly, language identification codes will be used to identify qualified linguists who have been awarded any SQI other than L.
- b. Qualifications. Must meet Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension for foreign languages requirement outlined in AR 611-6.
- c. Restrictions. Since linguist skills are rare, positions will be considered to require linguist qualified personnel only when such qualification is mandatory for efficient performance in the job. Language identification codes contained in AR 611-6 will be used in MTOE and TDA to identify language requirements of positions.

**M First Sergeant** **USASMA**

- a. Description of positions. Identifies principal NCO (First Sergeant/E8) positions in company, battery, troop, or similar sized unit to:
- (1) Assist the commander in planning, coordinating, and supervising all activities that support the unit mission.
  - (2) Advise the commander on enlisted soldier matters to include duty assignments, promotions and reductions, leave programs, military justice, privileges, awards, welfare and recreational activities, human relations, equal opportunity, and alcohol and drug abuse concerns.
  - (3) Coordinate unit administration to include submission of required reports, vehicular support, supply, and food service activities.
  - (4) Provide counsel and guidance to subordinate personnel.
  - (5) Assist in inspection of or conduct inspection of unit activities and facilities, observe discrepancies and initiate corrective action.
  - (6) Assist the commander in performing the following training related tasks:
    - (a) Plan, conduct, evaluate, and assess unit training.
    - (b) Ensure that trainers train to a standard.
    - (c) Assist the commander in integrating individual training into collective training, and collective training into multi-echelon training events.
    - (d) Plan and execute a battle-focused NCOEP.
    - (e) Prepare and maintain an order of merit list for schools and courses, ensuring that soldiers are qualified and prepared to attend.
    - (f) Coordinate school quotas.
- b. Qualifications. Must meet requirements outlined in AR 614-200, chapter 8, and successfully complete DA First Sergeant Course.
- c. Restrictions. Positions must be coded 1SG. Personnel must be SFC(P) or MSG.

**N Joint Planner** **USACAC**

- a. Description of positions. Identifies positions requiring personnel qualified in the Joint Operation Planning and Execution Program (JOPES), formerly the Joint Operation Planning System (JOPS) and Joint Deployment System (JDS).
- b. Qualifications. Completion of one of the following:
- (1) Joint Planning Orientation Course (JPOC) and the JOPES Users Course conducted by the Joint Training Office (JTO), U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM).
  - (2) Completion of JPOC, the OPS III Course conducted by JTO USTRANSCOM.
- c. Restrictions. None.

**O No Special Qualifications****None**

Table 12-1

## Special Qualification Identifiers—Continued

Code	Title	Proponent
	a. Description of positions. Identifies positions that do not require the assignment of soldiers possessing special qualifications identified herein.	
	b. Qualifications. None.	
	c. Restrictions. None.	

**P Parachutist****USAIS**

- a. Description of positions. Identifies positions that require assignment of qualified parachutists.
- b. Qualifications. Must meet physical requirements for airborne in AR 40-501, and successfully complete the basic airborne training course.
- c. Restrictions. Soldier must volunteer for airborne training and assignment as outlined in AR 614-200, chapter 6.

**Q Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA)****USAAGS**

- a. Description of positions. Identifies positions in any MOS requiring assignment of soldiers educated at Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), and soldiers in any MOS who are graduates of DEOMI and qualified to occupy such positions. The following grading guidance applies:
- (1) EOA positions in brigades, regiments, groups, COSCOM/TAACOM or comparable units, garrisons having military populations of less than 10,000, service school headquarters, and medical centers will be graded SFC.
  - (2) EOA positions in division, Corps, MACOM with military population of 50,000 or less, and garrisons with military population of over 10,000 will be graded MSG.
  - (3) Advisors in Army and higher level headquarters and MACOM with military population over 50,000 will be graded SGM.
  - (4) Instructor positions for DEOMI will consist of one SGM and a grading pattern of one SFC, two MSGs for remaining positions (group of three).
  - (5) SGM and MSG are not authorized for instructors except at DEOMI.
- b. Qualifications. Must successfully complete DEOMI EOA course.
- c. Restrictions. Substitutability-EOA duty is MOS immaterial. Any individual awarded SQI Q and those individuals with grade of MSG or SGM as of 30 September 1984 and who were selected by DA Screening Board to retain PMOS 00U may serve in any EOA position identified with SQI Q without regard to three digit MOS.

**S Special Operations Support Personnel** **USAJFKSWCS**

- a. Description of positions. Identifies selected positions for Special Operations support personnel.
- b. Qualifications.
- (1) Must be Airborne qualified (except for CMF 67 and MOS 93P).
  - (2) Successfully complete OJT/OJE and serve 24 months in their primary MOS with a SOF unit (may be waived up to 12 months) or, successfully participate in at least 2 unit exercises (these exercises may be a result of unit training or actual mission requirements).
  - (3) Or, successfully complete Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) and the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC). Soldiers completing both SFAS and SFQC will be awarded the SQI and the Special Forces Tab. (Note: These courses are closed to female soldiers).
  - (4) Award of SQI will be accomplished in accordance with AR 600-200, paragraph 2-33a(1).
- c. Restrictions. Positions identified by SQI "S" are used only with support MOS 25M, 25R, 25V, 31C, 31F, 31L, 31P, 31R, 31S, 31U, 31W, 31Z, 33T, 35E, 35J, 35L, 35N, 35Q, 35R, 35W, 44E, 45B, 46R, 51Z, 52D, 54B, 55B, 55D, 62B, 63B, 63H, 63J, 63S, 63W, 63Z, 67T, 67U, 67V, 67Y, 67Z, 68B, 68D, 68F, 68G, 68H, 68J, 68K, 68L, 68N, 68X, 71C, 71D, 71L, 71M, 73C, 73D, 73Z, 74B, 74C, 75B, 75H, 76J, 77F, 81Z, 83E, 83F, 88M, 88N, 88Z, 91B, 91E, 91S, 92A, 92G, 92R, 92Y, 92Z, 93P, 95B, 96B, 96D, 96H, 96Z, 97B, 97E, 97G, 98C, 98G, 98H, 98J, 98Z in SOF organizations. Withdrawal of the SQI may occur when the local SOF commander determines the individual to be un-qualified or at the request of the individual.

**EXTRACT FROM: AR 611-21, Military Occupational Classification Structure Development and Implementation. 30 September 1997**

**Paragraph**

**6.7 SQI code**

The SQI is identified by a one-character code and will be used with the MOS and SL to form the basic five-character MOSC.

- a. The SQI must identify both positions in the authorization documents and personnel qualifications. Exceptions may be authorized only by DA ODCSPER (DAPE-PRP).
- b. The SQI is not a substitute for an MOS and will not represent the sole skill required for any position.
- c. The SQI must have a distinct and constant meaning that will not change with each MOS for which the SQI is used.
- d. Each SQI should have a minimum of 20 positions (any MOS) in authorization documents which require use of the SQI. Exceptions may be authorized only by DA ODCSPER (DAPE-PRP).
- e. Personnel qualifications. When completion of a formal course of instruction is the only method which may be used to attain the SQI skills, the required course(s) will be included in the SQI qualifications in DA Pam 611-21.
- f. Each SQI will be reviewed biennially by CG, PERSCOM, TAPC- PLC-C to ensure compliance with requirements and/or intent of above.

## Section IV

### First Sergeant Positions

#### 8-19. Scope

The most highly qualified and motivated senior soldiers must be selected and assigned to 1SG positions. Moreover, these assignments are career enhancing and serve as professional development for soldiers in a CMF where 1SG opportunities are available.

#### 8-20. Eligibility

Soldiers in the grade of SFC through MSG will be assigned as 1SGs based on the following:

- a. Outstanding qualities of leadership.
- b. Dedication to duty.
- c. Integrity and moral character.
- d. Professionalism.
- e. MOS proficiency.
- f. Appearance and military bearing.
- g. Physical fitness.

#### 8-21. Criteria

- a. All requisition authorities in CONUS/OCONUS are required to identify 1SG positions with the appropriate SQI identifier of "M."
- b. Initial entry training 1SG positions should be filled with soldiers who have previously served successful tours as DSs.
- c. When possible, the 1SG will possess the PMOS of the authorized duty position, particularly in TOE company level organizations. Soldiers will only be assigned outside their PMOS or CMF as an exception and with prior approval from PERSCOM. These soldiers must possess SQI "M" and be the only qualified soldiers available to fill the vacancy.
- d. Installation or division commanders may reassign soldiers within their command to fill 1SG positions. Soldiers who have been issued HQDA reassignment instructions through EDAS will normally not be approved for the position. However, PERSCOM will consider requests for deletion from AIs in exceptional cases.
- e. Selection priorities of soldiers for assignment to 1SG positions are outlined below. Exceptions may be made when the commander deems it essential to mission accomplishment.
  - (1) MSGs who possess the proper PMOS and have been awarded the SQI "M."
  - (2) MSGs who do not possess the SQI "M" but possess the proper PMOS and are considered by local commanders to have 1SG potential.
  - (3) MSGs who possess the SQI "M" and a PMOS in the CMF appropriate to the type unit.
  - (4) MSGs who do not possess the SQI "M" but possess a PMOS in the CMFs appropriate to the type unit and are considered by local commanders to have 1SG potential.
  - (5) As an interim measure, until a MSG who meets the above priorities can be assigned, the following applies (with no designated precedence):
    - (a) MSGs who possess the SQI "M" but do not possess PMOS/CMF appropriate to the type unit.
    - (b) SFC(P) who possess the proper PMOS and have been awarded the SQI "M."
    - (c) SFC(P) who do not possess the SQI "M" but possess the proper PMOS and are considered by local commanders to have 1SG potential.
    - (d) SFC who possess the proper PMOS and have been awarded the SQI "M."
  - f. Soldiers will be stabilized as 1SG for 24 months (see AR 614-5.), except that OCONUS stabilization will not involuntarily exceed normal tour length. Immediately upon soldier's assignment to 1SG position, request for stabilization

must be submitted to PERSCOM (TAPC-EPC-O). Effective start date of stabilization is date soldier is assigned to 1SG position. Request for stabilization must include one of the following:

- (1) FSC school graduation date.
- (2) Date scheduled to attend FSC.
- (3) GO-approved waiver for deferred school attendance.
- g. The initial period of stabilization will not be adjusted for soldiers reassigned from one 1SG position to another 1SG position at the same station. Clearance from PERSCOM (TAPC-EPC-O) will be obtained before stabilizing a soldier in a 1SG position immediately after completing a stabilized tour in another duty position located at the same station as the 1SG position.
- h. In order to be a 1SG, soldier must be assigned to a 1SG position. When loss of position or authorization occurs, personnel will revert back to their former grade.
- i. Repetitive assignments to 1SG duty will be based on—
  - (1) Needs of the Army.
  - (2) Soldier's performance as 1SG.
  - (3) Soldier's desires and professional development needs.

#### 8-22. Awarding skill qualification identifier "M"

- a. The award of the SQI "M" will be made based on the criteria in DA Pam 611-21, table 12-1. Approval authority for award of the SQI "M" will remain with the soldier's battalion commander (or equivalent), and the PSB will publish orders awarding the SQI.
- b. As an exception, soldiers in short tour areas may be awarded the SQI "M" by the first GO in the chain of command after 180 days successful completion of 1SG duty. Soldiers awarded the SQI "M" for 1SG duty in short tour areas, who are not school trained, should attend the First Sergeant Course (FSC) prior to the next assignment as 1SG.
- c. Soldiers serving less than 180 days as a 1SG in a short tour area will be treated as a first-time 1SG upon reassignment, and all regulatory requirements must be met regarding attendance at FSC prior to future 1SG assignments.

#### 8-23. Required training

- a. All AA first time 1SGs will attend the FSC through the Total Army Training System (TATS) prior to assumption of duties.
- b. All soldiers selected to fill 1SG positions in CONUS and OCONUS (long tour) will attend FSC. In the event emergency requirements preclude sending a soldier to FSC prior to assuming 1SG duties, the soldier must attend FSC within six months of assuming 1SG duties. Waiver authority for this deferred school attendance is delegated to the first GO in the soldier's chain of command. This waiver authority applies to CONUS as well as OCONUS commands.
- c. Short tour areas, while not exempt from the first time 1SG policy, will be given considerable latitude in complying with the policy for those 1SG positions affected by a tour of 13 months or less. Soldiers who are on short tours of 13 months or less and who are not school trained when selected to fill a valid 1SG position will not be required to attend FSC while in the short tour area. However, if these soldiers are awarded SQI "M" (as an exception), they may be sent to the FSC—
  - (1) TDY en route to their next assignment.
  - (2) TDY and return prior to their next 1SG assignment.

#### 8-24. Lateral appointments to first sergeant

- a. Commanders (LTC and above) may authorize soldiers in the grade of MSG to be laterally appointed to 1SG upon

## Handout-3, Extracts from AR 614-200 and FM 7-22.7

assignment to an authorized 1SG position within their command. Training required in paragraph 8–3 remains applicable upon lateral appointment.

b. Lateral appointments will be announced by DA Form 4187 or by informal memorandum. The effective date will be the date the soldier assumes 1SG duties. The date of rank will remain unchanged.

c. Upon release from 1SG duties, unit will initiate lateral appointment action to convert soldier's rank from 1SG to MSG. The effective date will be the date the soldier is released from 1SG duties. Soldier's date of rank will remain unchanged. Upon removal of 1SG designation, soldiers are no longer authorized to wear 1SG insignia.

### **8–25. Frocking of sergeant first class (P) to first sergeant**

a. SFC(P) who are assigned to an authorized 1SG position may wear the grade of 1SG.

b. Commanders (LTC and above) may authorize and approve frocking of SFC(P) to be assigned as 1SG within their command.

c. Frocking will not be approved to provide an interim fill for a 1SG position.

d. Frocking will not be accomplished until assumption of duties as a 1SG.

e. Identification cards, official records (ERB) will not be changed to show a frocked grade.

f. Frocking may be announced by using an informal memorandum.

g. Soldiers who have been frocked as 1SG, subsequently promoted to MSG, and reassigned will retain the grade of 1SG or be laterally appointed to MSG.

### **8–26. Withdrawal of skill qualification identifier “M”**

a. Withdrawal of SQI “M,” under all circumstances, is an administrative action only. It is not to be used as a disciplinary measure or as a means to replace proper disciplinary action.

b. SQI “M” will be withdrawn when soldiers are promoted to SGM or are no longer fully qualified to serve as 1SGs. Withdrawal may be initiated by the soldier, the soldier's commander, or PERSCOM.

(1) Soldiers who feel they are no longer qualified to serve as 1SG may submit the withdrawal request through their immediate commander to the battalion commander (or equivalent) for approval or disapproval. Based on the needs of the Army, these soldiers may be required to complete their current or scheduled 1SG assignment.

(2) When the soldier's commander deems the soldier not fully qualified as a 1SG, he/she may submit a withdrawal request to the battalion commander for approval or disapproval. Prior to forwarding the withdrawal request, the initiating commander will advise the soldier and afford him/her the opportunity to submit matters in rebuttal, extenuation, or mitigation.

(3) When a review of the soldier's OMPF and other official correspondence reveals that the soldier's demonstrated performance, proficiency, physical standards, or other criteria are below that expected of a 1SG, PERSCOM will submit a withdrawal request to the soldier's installation commander for chain of command consideration. The immediate commander will advise the soldier so he/she may submit matters in rebuttal, extenuation, or mitigation.

c. When SQI “M” has been withdrawn from the MOS of a soldier currently performing duties as 1SG, the commander will reassign the soldier to a position for which the soldier is qualified. If no position is available within the command, the soldier will be reported IA. (See para 3–16.)

d. When a soldier is released from 1SG duties for reasons outlined in AR 380–67, the commander will forward DA Form 5248 to Commander, U.S. Army Central Clearance Facility.

**EXTRACT FROM: FM7-22.7, The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide**

**FIRST SERGEANT AND MASTER SERGEANT**

The position of first sergeant is similar to that of the CSM in importance, responsibility, and prestige. The first sergeant is the senior NCO in companies, batteries, and troops. Even as far back as the Revolutionary War period, first sergeants have enforced discipline, fostered loyalty and commitment in their soldiers, maintained duty rosters and made morning reports to their company commanders. Since today's first sergeants maintain daily contact with, and are responsible for training and the health and welfare of all the unit's soldiers and families, this position requires outstanding leadership and professional competence. The master sergeant serves as the principal NCO in staff elements at battalion and often-higher levels. Although not charged with the enormous leadership responsibilities of the first sergeant, the master sergeants are expected to dispatch leadership and other duties with the same professionalism and to achieve the same results as the first sergeant.

First sergeants hold formation, instruct platoon sergeant and assist the commander in daily unit operations. Though first sergeants supervise routine administrative duties their principle duty is training soldiers. The CSM, first sergeant and other key NCOs, must understand the organizations collective mission essential tasks during the METL-based training. Through NCO development programs, performance counseling and other guidance, first sergeants are the Army's most important mentors in developing subordinate NCOs.

The Master Sergeant serves as the principle NCO in staff elements at battalion or higher levels. Although not charged with the enormous leadership responsibilities of the first sergeant, the master sergeant dispatches leadership and executes other duties with the same professionalism as the first sergeant.

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## STUDENT HANDOUT #4

### COMPANY COMMANDER - FIRST SERGEANT--QUOTES

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#### Company Commanders and First Sergeants

The toughest job I had, and the one I remember as having more personal responsibility than any other, was being a first sergeant in combat. That was a good job also. -GEN John W. Vessey, "From Private to Chairman 1ST SGT Was Toughest." *Soldiers*, Sep 1983, p. 6.

There is no individual of a company, scarcely excepting the captain himself, on whom more depends for its discipline, police, instruction, and general well being, than on the first sergeant. This is a grade replete with cares and with responsibility. Its duties place its incumbent in constant and direct contact with the men, exercising over them an influence the more powerful as it is immediate and personal; and all experience demonstrates that the condition of every company will improve or deteriorate nearly in proportion to the ability and worth of its first sergeant. -MG Jacob Brown, letter to the Secretary of War, 1825, *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, Vol 3, p. 111.

"It's a first sergeant's responsibility to the unit to take the knowledge he has learned and pass it to the commander of the unit as well as the privates," said [1SG Miles] Retherford.... Retherford's advice is similar to that of General Omar N. Bradley who said, "When soldiers know their jobs, the first sergeant knows he's done his." -"The First Sergeant." *Sergeants' Business*, Mar-Apr 1989, p. 17.

Your company will be the reflection of yourself. If you have a rotten company it will be because you are a rotten captain. -MAJ Christian Bach, address "Leadership." 1918, *Congressional Record Appendix*, Vol 88- Part 9, p. A2252.

The soldier having acquired that degree of confidence of his officers as to be appointed first sergeant of the company, should consider the importance of his office; that the discipline of the company, the conduct of the men, their exactness in obeying orders, and the regularity of their manners, will in a great measure depend on his vigilance. -MG Frederick von Steuben, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, 1779, p. 145.

The Captain must be sure that his wishes and ideas are carried out. Only deep loyalty will insure this. This loyalty includes the right of the First Sergeant to disagree with the Captain, argue a point, and then, even if not convinced, loyally carry out the wishes of the Captain.... Many a poor Captain has had his reputation saved and his troop kept, or made, a good troop by a fine First Sergeant. -COL Charles A. Romeyn, "The First Sergeant." *Cavalry Journal*, Jul 1925, pp. 297, 298.

In my first battery command [my] First Sergeant respectfully, but often, reminded me that he had more stripes than I had bars and years of service combined, and I would do well to use his counsel at times. - LTC Norman E. Jarock, *Battalion Commanders Speak Out*, 1977, p. 6-3.

[When taking command of a company, the company commander and the 1SG should] develop and agree on unit goals, standards, and objectives:

--Specify and publish them. (For example, a goal of 260 for everyone on the PT test.)

--Agree on "the forbiddens: the catastrophic non-redeemables." (For example, safety, weapons and ammunition accountability, drugs, DWI, and AWOL.) You and your first sergeant must be on the same "priority frequency" to ensure fairness.

--Show your 1SG a copy of your completed OER Support Form....

Many new company commanders are head-strong and self-assured. They tend to disregard the advice of their experienced and capable 1SG. A few blunders usually bring them back to reality, but you can avoid that humiliation with common sense. Listen to your first sergeant; draw on that long experience.... Good communication also includes listening. [The 1SG] must be able to articulate to you [the company commander] both sides of a problem. He can't do that if he doesn't hear both sides. -BG John G. Meyer, *Company Command: The Bottom Line*, 1990, pp. 43, 36, 41.

It is imperative that the company commander and the First Sergeant work as a close-knit team and that they also include the executive officer in the team. These three must stick together through thick and thin, even if they don't like each other. -SFC Paul H. Johnson, "Brigade First Sergeant." *Infantry*, Nov-Dec 1986, p. 21.

The first sergeant...is about the most indispensable, certainly one of the most famous and probably the most terrifying personage in the United States Army. [He] must be tough and understanding; a genuine out-of-doors type competent to do desk work [who] knows his way around in that bewildering maze and torment known as "Army paper work."... First sergeants many times have saved the bacon of captains and lieutenants. Not alone do recruits and private soldiers learn military wisdom from the top kick. So, if they are wise, do commissioned officers. -Samuel T. Williamson, "Top-Yes, Top-Sergeant." *New York Times Magazine*, Jan 18, 1942, p. 14.

Commanders and First Sergeants are not friends. Their relationship is more important than that. It is a bond based on mutual trust and respect- a bond that exists from the moment the battalion commander passes the guidon to the company commander. The First Sergeant does not think, "You, company commander, have to earn my respect"- that respect is automatically given to the commander. The Army cannot afford the time for respect to be built- the unit may have to go to combat the next day. This mutual respect is based on understanding the backgrounds of the two individuals, and their mutual dedication to the service of their country. As the company commander and First Sergeant work together, this bond can be strengthened, weakened, or broken. A weakened relationship can be repaired through honest dialogue. But once broken, this bond cannot be restored.

The command team must know each other's strengths and weaknesses, because those are the team's strengths and weaknesses. For the command team to reach a point of tangency, it must use the strengths to its greatest advantage while covering for the other's weaknesses- even if it means breaking with traditional officer/NCO roles. -CSM Jimmie W. Spencer, letter 1 Sep 1997.

Good 1SGs make company commanders good. -*The Battalion Commander's Handbook*, 1991, p. 21.

It wasn't until I became a first sergeant that I realized how vital the union of [the company commander and the 1SG] is in forming a strong company command team and setting the command's climate.... There has to be a bond between these two leaders before they can form their team. That bond building can be done by working on five elements: relationship, responsibilities, loyalty, duty, and goals.

--*Relationship*- The commander and first sergeant relationship has to be one of mutual understanding and respect. They must share experiences and ideas both good and bad. They must take each other into consideration and give honest responses. Openness leads to proper sharing between the team. Friendship is also important. Not "buddy buddy," but one of personal concern for each other and their families....

--*Responsibilities*- These are well defined in AR 600-20. The commander is responsible for everything and the first sergeant implements. Share tasks. Do it in any manner that is comfortable for both leaders....

--*Loyalty*- This is the element that bonds the team. Loyalty to and from each other must run deep....

--*Duty*- This is professionalism at its best.... Both the company commander and first sergeant must be truly professional and set high standards....

--*Goals*- Short term goals must be established early along with the long-term goals. These goals could last into the next change of command. But setting these goals does pay off....

A command team forms if a commander and first sergeant work out the five elements discussed. That team has a sense of direction and duty built on mutual trust and will assist each other in accomplishing their mission.... The team attitude will allow you both to lead your company and successfully take care of your soldiers and lead them where you want them to go. -1SG Grover L. Watters, "Five Steps to Success." *NCO Journal*, Winter 1993, p. 7.

Set a time limit for the "official" portion of the [unit meetings. 1SG Michael Teal] timed my portion of the meetings and I timed his. Thus, we kept all timetables. -CPT Thomas R. Siler, "NCO Development Program." *Army Trainer*, Summer 1983, p. 15.

Good, capable non-commissioned officers form so strong a backbone to an organization, be it troop, company, or battery, that if the non-commissioned officers are not up to the mark of reasonably fair efficiency, there is no end of annoyance to the commander. -1LT C. W. Farber, "To Promote the Efficiency of Non-Commissioned Officers." *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States*, Jan 1898, p. 98.

### **General of the Army George C. Marshall on First Sergeants**

I placed the first sergeants on the "officer of the day" roster. They did this work surpassingly well, and I always felt a complete confidence in the state of the garrison when one of these men was on duty. They took it very seriously and there was little that went on in the garrison that they did not already know about. In line with this I made it a point...during the visit of the Corps Area Commander [to present them] personally to him. -General of the Army George C. Marshall, 1941, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, Vol 2, p. 546.

[CPT Charles Lanham wrote to GEN George] Marshall: "Your old friends- the first sergeants down here- never tire of talking of you." [GEN Marshall wrote back:] "I look back on my year at [Fort] Screven as one of the finest in my Army career, and in many ways it was very instructive. The most gratifying phase of the period was contact with an unusual group of noncommissioned officers. I think we had the finest collection of first sergeants there I have ever seen together." -General of the Army George C. Marshall, 1939, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, Vol 2, p. 58.

[When GEN George Marshall was asked in 1933] what he could spare for CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] work, he said, "Leave my post surgeon, my commissary officer, my post-exchange officer, and my adjutant, and I will run this command with first sergeants." -Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Education of a General*, p. 276.

## STUDENT HANDOUT #5

### THE ROLE OF THE FIRST SERGEANT



Identify the factors that promote an effective commander/first sergeant working relationship

L655/ OCT03/VGT-1

### ELIGIBILITY

- SFC or MSG
- Outstanding qualities of leadership
- Dedication to duty
- Integrity and moral character
- Professionalism
- MOS proficiency
- Appearance and military bearing
- Physical fitness

L655/ OCT03/VGT-2

### SQI "M" QUALIFICATIONS

Must meet the eligibility requirements IAW AR 614-200, Chapter 8;

AND

Successfully complete the U.S. Army First Sergeant Course.

L655/ OCT03/VGT-3

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**PRINCIPAL DUTY**

**Training of Soldiers**

L655/ OCT03/VGT-4

**FIRST SERGEANT JOB DESCRIPTION**

- Assist the commander in planning, coordinating, and supervising all activities that support the unit mission
- Advise the commander on enlisted matters
- Coordinate unit administration

L655/ OCT03/VGT-5

**FIRST SERGEANT JOB DESCRIPTION (cont)**

- Provide counsel and guidance to subordinate personnel
- Assist in inspection of or conduct inspection of unit activities
- Assist commander in performing training related tasks

L655/ OCT03/VGT-6

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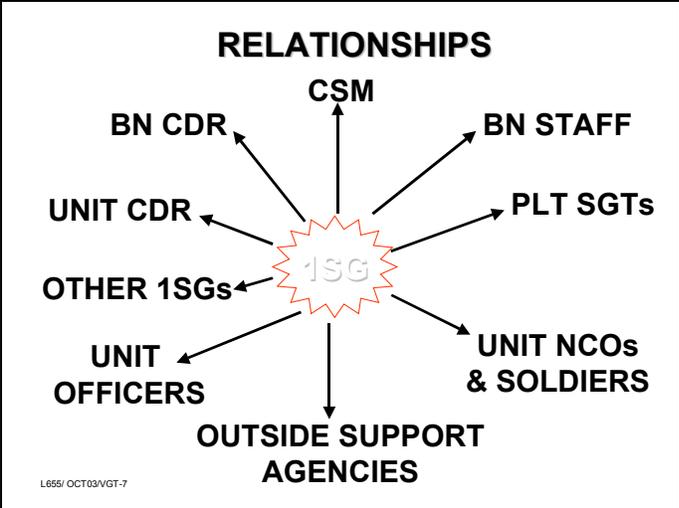
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### EXPECTATIONS

<u>WHO</u>	<u>EXPECTATION</u>	<u>C.O. EXPECTS 1SG</u>
CSM	RUN COMPANY	ADVISE
OTHER 1SGs	SUPPORT	BE COMPETITIVE
UNIT OFF	TEACH	BE SUBORDINATE
PLT SGTs	GUIDE	SUPERVISE
UNIT NCOs	COACH	SUPERVISE
SOLDIERS	BE UNIT CLERK	SUPERVISE

L655/ OCT03/VGT-8

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## Practical Exercise 1

### 1. GOALS.

- a. Determine appropriate tasks for the first sergeant.
- b. To assess these points:
  - (1) The commander and first sergeant share the same goal.
  - (2) The commander and first sergeant share responsibility.
  - (3) No sharp, definitive lines separate the commander's and the first sergeant's responsibilities.
  - (4) The commander and first sergeant must jointly determine the best division of tasks by considering the mission, the situation, individual abilities, and personalities.

### NOTE:

This is a joint learning exercise and not an evaluation of your ability to perform this task. This exercise provides you an opportunity to learn from your own experience and share the experiences of your classmates. There is no objective standard of success. Only the participants will judge the results of this

2. PURPOSE: This exercise begins the development of your own concept of appropriate responsibility and authority for you as a first sergeant. The task list on pages PE-1-2 and PE-1-3 is an extract of the captain's section of the Manual of Common Tasks for Lieutenants and Captains, STP 21-II-MQS, Jan 91. Using this list as a starting point, you will identify tasks you feel you and your commander should share. For each shared task, you will also decide if you or your commander should perform most of the actions that make up the task. This exercise, of course, is only the first step in a continuing process. In other lessons, you may decide to change your choices for a particular task or note some specific actions in a task that you should perform. You might also add or delete tasks because of changes in your knowledge or skills. The materials issued for this lesson are not recoverable. You may keep them for future reference.

3. SITUATION: You are preparing to assume the position of first sergeant.

4. INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENT: For each task on pages PE-1-2 and PE-1-3:

- a. Underline "SHARE" if you feel that you and your commander should share responsibility for the task.
- b. Underline "CO" if you feel that your commander should perform most or all of the actions that make up the task.
- c. Underline "1SG" if you feel that you should perform most or all of the actions that make up the task.

NOTE: There is no "school solution" for this exercise. Make your choices based on your own experience, ability, and personality.

5. GROUP REQUIREMENT: For each task, discuss your reasons for different individual choices.

1. Develop a unit counseling program. (SHARE CO 1SG)
2. Develop subordinate leaders. (SHARE CO 1SG)
3. Build a cohesive unit. (SHARE CO 1SG)
4. Establish a positive command climate. (SHARE CO 1SG)
5. Administer military justice. (SHARE CO 1SG)
6. Conduct company operations according to the Laws of War. (SHARE CO 1SG)
7. Minimize combat stress. (SHARE CO 1SG)
8. Plan convoy operations. (SHARE CO 1SG)
9. Defend a company position. (SHARE CO 1SG)
10. Evaluate unit calibration program. (SHARE CO 1SG)
11. Plan graves registration support. (SHARE CO 1SG)
12. Perform wartime strength accounting. (SHARE CO 1SG)
13. Recommend enlisted personnel for reduction. (SHARE CO 1SG)
14. Recommend enlisted personnel for promotion. (SHARE CO 1SG)
15. Monitor the suspension of favorable personnel actions. (SHARE CO 1SG)
16. Prepare combat orders. (SHARE CO 1SG)
17. Develop mission essential task list (METL). (SHARE CO 1SG)
18. Plan battle focused training. (SHARE CO 1SG)
19. Conduct training. (SHARE CO 1SG)
20. Develop a physical fitness program. (SHARE CO 1SG)

21. Conduct land navigation sustainment program. (SHARE CO 1SG)
22. Assess the writing of others. (SHARE CO 1SG)
23. Administer crime prevention/physical security program. (SHARE CO 1SG)
24. Inspect unit supply records. (SHARE CO 1SG)
25. Conduct change of responsible officer inventory. (SHARE CO 1SG)
26. Supervise management of accident risk in unit. (SHARE CO 1SG)
27. Conduct mobilization planning. (SHARE CO 1SG)
28. Monitor command supply discipline program. (SHARE CO 1SG)
29. Process administrative discharges. (SHARE CO 1SG)

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