

Follow the Leader

The Influencers Our Generation Needs

By GySgt Chase McGrorty-Hunter,
USMC

Editor's note: The following article is the first-place winner of the 2022 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest through the Marine Corps Association. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature the second- and third-place winners and honorable mention entries.

The war for knowledge and education among Marines has found a new frontier for our youngest generation—and that frontier is social media.

The rise of social media over the last decade has permeated the Marine Corps, creating new challenges for units and leaders in the fight to maintain good order. Growing misconduct on social media came to a cataclysmic culmination in 2017 when the "Marines United" Facebook controversy made national headlines. This

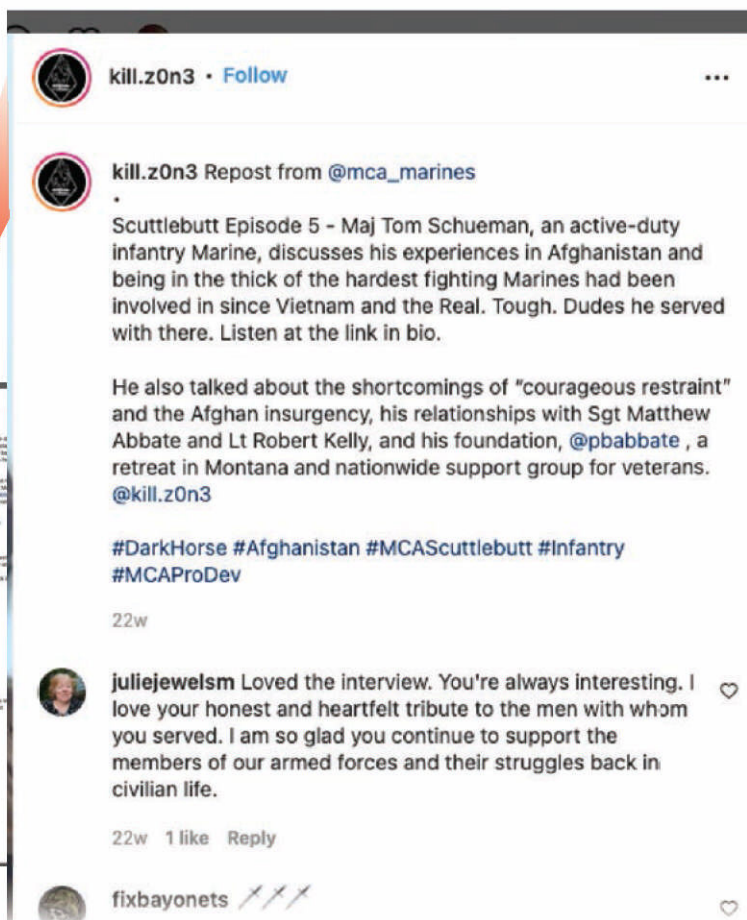
resulted in a congressional hearing that saw our Commandant having to answer for the actions of Marines on social media. Subsequent to this new attention brought on our service was the introduction of a new MARADMIN, governing Marines' conduct online.

As a result of the negative connotation that is now synonymous with social media use in the military, many leaders have been left to determine what their roles, if any, will be in the use of social media. It has been my experience that more often than not, many senior leaders choose to forgo engaging with their troops online. It can be inferred quite easily that the longstanding rules of fraternization among different rank groups have likely shaped this common outcome.

I would argue that not only is the engagement of leaders on social media warranted, but we are currently at the cusp of an awakening among the leadership of the Marine Corps on the benefit associated with their presence on social media. During the past year, I have been witness to a drastic shift online and within the ranks of the military. Now more than ever, leaders at all levels are leveraging the reach that social media has to influence the current generation of Marines. This new revolution is being spearheaded by a small group of leaders who have found a favorable response to their online presence by the tens of thousands of troops that they now have as a following.

Thought by many to be at the forefront of this new representation of leaders

Maj Thomas Schueman's Instagram account has become increasingly popular with young Marines. Schueman also appeared on a recent episode of the Marine Corps Association's "Scuttlebutt" podcast.



online is Major Thomas Schueman (Instagram @kill.z0n3), a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, a former professor at the U.S. Naval Academy, and current student at the U.S. Naval War College. The impetus for the creation of his page came from research he was conducting into the capstone for his graduate degree from Georgetown University. The goal of his social media from the beginning was to elevate the narrative around the warrior culture and to create resiliency among active and veteran servicemembers.

Maj Schueman's online presence is anything but the default motivational page that some may think a Marine leader might run. As a follower, you are inoculated by his far-reaching views on leadership, warfare, and community. His reach is not only limited to the online sphere. Last year, using his online presence, he launched the nonprofit Patrol Base

We are currently at the cusp of an awakening among the leadership of the Marine Corps on the benefit associated with their presence on social media

Abbate (IG: @pbabbate), a community for all who have served and an organization where your belonging is not predicated on anything beyond having served in the military.

The work that Patrol Base Abbate has done is deserving of its own article and to try and sum it up any shorter does not do it justice. It is the success of this organization's nationwide spread in such a short amount of time that stands as nothing less than a resounding testament to the trust that servicemembers have found in Maj Schueman online. Truthfully,

you don't need to have ever had a one-on-one conversation with him to feel the care that is expressed by him to the people he serves as a leader through social media. The conversations that are fostered on social media by Maj Schueman are the inducement for thought-provoking stimulus by his followers who are currently, in large numbers, the tactical heartbeat of our Corps.

Maj Schueman's page *Kill Zone* may be a likely catalyst for this increase in online presence by leaders, but it is only one of a growing community now available to servicemembers on social media. Unfortunately, the reality is, the average young Marine just won't have the opportunity to learn directly and regularly from their sergeant major, first sergeant, or field grade officers. This new rise in Marine Corps leadership online has filled that void and opened the door to a direct learning link between leaders like the ones mentioned and the troops who benefit from that relationship most.

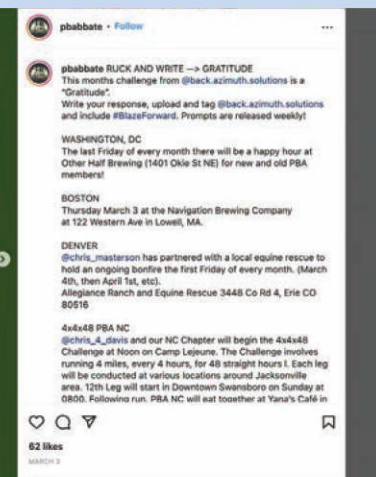
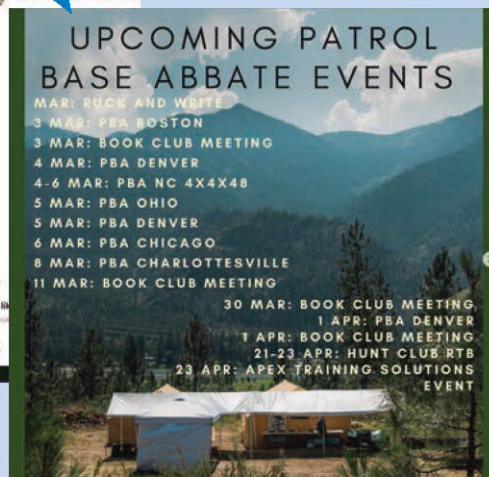
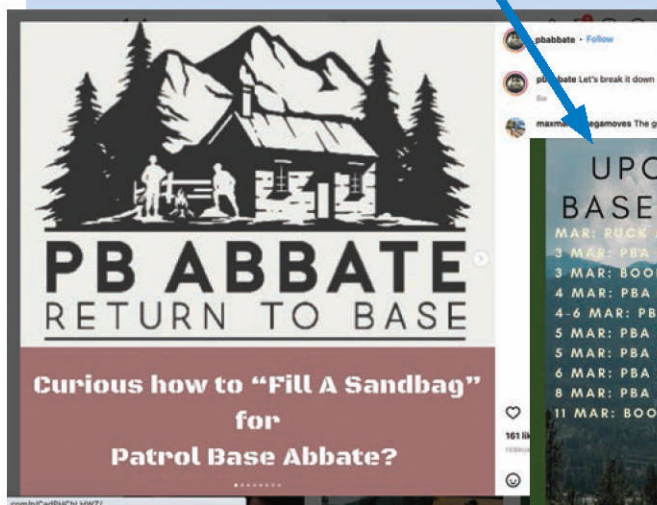


COURTESY OF GYSGT CHASE MCGRORTY-HUNTER, USMC



COURTESY OF GYSGT CHASE MCGRORTY-HUNTER, USMC

Sgt Matthew Abbate (above right) was the inspiration for the "Patrol Base Abbate" Instagram account founded by Maj Schueman, left. Abbate, a scout sniper with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, was mortally wounded while deployed to Sangin, Afghanistan, and posthumously received the Navy Cross.



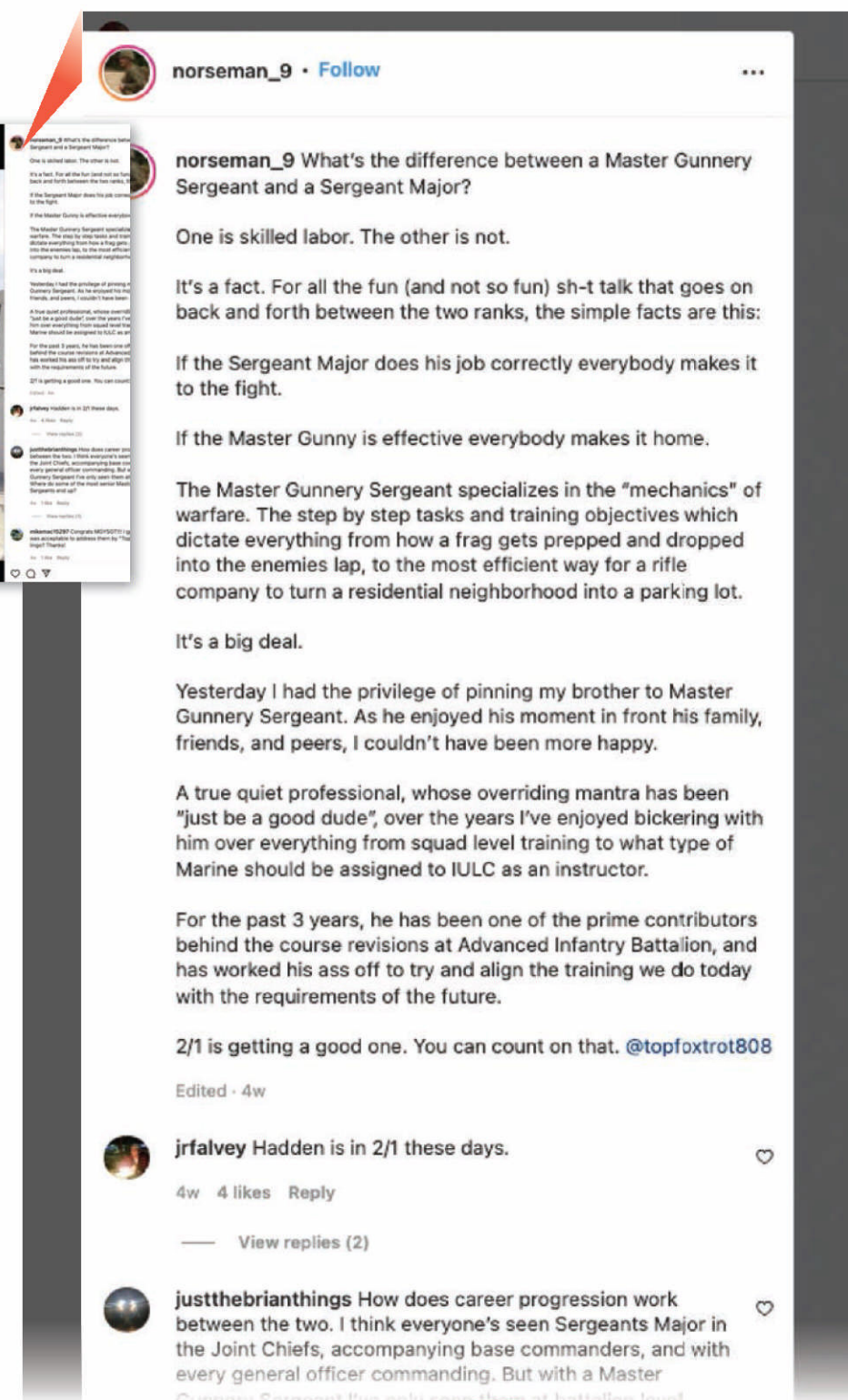
SgtMaj Reynolds (below, right)
IG: @norseman_9



For many young Marines, the goal is to stay out of the spotlight of their first sergeant and sergeant major. Marines like Sergeant Major Reynolds (IG: @norseman_9), the Sergeant Major for 9th Marine Corps District, and First Sergeant Flynn (IG: @constellationgroup138) from 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines, flip that maxim on its head. The two Marines have nearly four decades of combined leadership, experience, and combat prowess. It is the approach that these two gentlemen have taken—using the platform the Marines of this generation subscribe to—that has aided their success in passing on their experiences and providing mentorship wholesale across the Corps. Visiting either of these Marines' pages, you will see that they are determined and unwavering in their pursuit of interacting with and engaging the minds of the Marines following them daily.

It's this next generation of young warriors, the leaders who are serving in the tactical levels of our ground forces all over the Marine Corps, that have found an insatiable hunger for the knowledge that is now being distributed en masse by the Corps' senior leadership, who earned their own experience on the battlefields of Sangin, Marjah and Fallujah. These individuals who have synthesized the trials and tribulations of their experiences as fireteam leaders, squad leaders, and platoon commanders in combat are now priming our current generation for the role of leadership as they are hungry to leave their mark on their Marines.

Setting aside two hours on a weeknight to conduct a voluntary tactical decision game or to discuss Marine Corps doctrinal publications may not sound like the type



of event that would have young adults, 17-21 years old, jumping online to attend, but that is exactly what happens when Maj Gray (IG: @justingray usmc) and Maj Hubert (IG: @cleveland_marines_co) host an Instagram live session. In a brilliantly crafted experience, these leaders dropped the Warning Order a week in advance to their online followers, allowing



Maj Hubert
IG: @cleveland_marines_co



1st Sgt Flynn
IG: @constellationgroup138



WEAPON HIGHLIGHT: MK 48 MACHINE GUN



constellationgroup138
rare weapons systems |

At first glance I wasn't s
myself "Why does that \$
profile and large canvas
from my prior experience
Chief began to explain t
signed for upon our arri
weapon was chambered
the SAW's big brother. \$
the next 8 months and r
48 is quite a versatile m
rooftops, and mounted f
that experience I've alw
have a place in the broa
look to lighten our load i
one enablers opinion. TI
From the @fabrique_nai

The FN® MK 48 MOD 1
penetration of the hard-
more compact platform.
designed to be light and
moving troops as they n
The MK 48 MOD 1 can g
forces as well, when a m
machine gun is needed.



895 likes
FEBRUARY 23

MARINE CORPS DOCTRINAL PUBLICATIN-1 — "WARFIGHTING"

MCDP 1

Warfighting



What's Inside:

Chapter 1: The Nature of War

"War is a complex endeavor. It is shaped by the human will. It is characterized by friction, uncertainty, fluidity, danger and disorder. While the nature of war is constant, it remains unpredictable, and is affected by a mix of physical, moral and mental factors. While war has the characteristics of both art and science, it is primarily shaped by human experience".

Chapter 2: The Theory of War

"All acts of war are political acts. Thus, war must

It is leaders like Maj Gray who have capitalized on the age of technology to transpose that crucial message to our young leaders in a manner that is digestible and engaging.

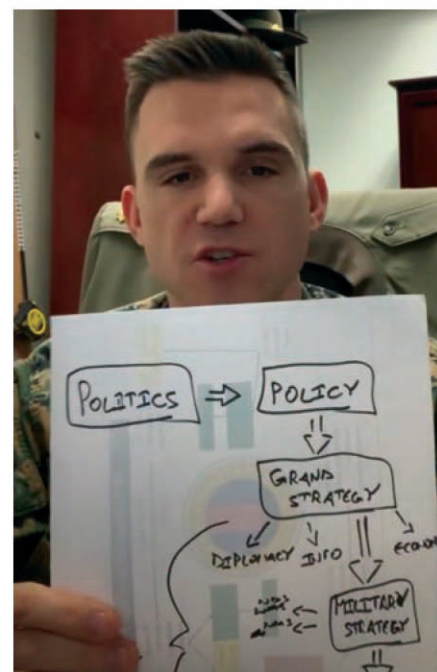
Marines and the poolees in their respective recruiting stations to work through the tactical decision games and develop their unique responses to the posed situation. The subsequent online live session that occurred saw Marines of varying ranks and poolees in attendance discussing the thoughts behind what led to their notional tactical decisions while being respectfully challenged by the two majors.

As a new instructor at the Staff Non-commissioned Officers Academy, the first class I was assigned to teach was Introduction to Warfighting Philosophy. It was in my own research to better understand our philosophy that I stumbled across Maj Gray on Instagram and his passion for the examination of our doctrine. He has been at the forefront of exploration into the warfighting philosophy that the

Marine Corps has prescribed to, MCDP-1 Warfighting. In a series of videos on Instagram, Gray dives into our philosophy and his analysis of how the principles within the doctrine apply in the actions we take as leaders within our organization.

The Marine Corps would love for its young leaders to pick up a hard copy of MCDP-1 and indoctrinate themselves in our philosophy, but the reality is that it is leaders like Maj Gray who have capitalized on the age of technology to transpose that crucial message to our young leaders in a manner that is digestible and engaging.

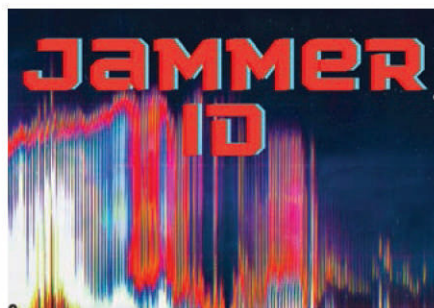
One of the key tenets of warfare discussed in Chapter One of "Warfighting" is fluidity. At its core, fluidity is the ability to adapt to the circumstances at hand. Truly, it is these leaders who have taken that tenet to heart by adapting to the ever-



Maj Gray, IG: @justingrayusmc

changing environment around them, and as a result, have influenced organizational growth within the confines of the modern landscape. Meeting this generation of Marines where they are socially has made for what I see as a turning point in the professional lives of tens of thousands of Marine leaders.

This rising online presence hasn't stopped with the aforementioned Marines and their resounding lessons on leadership. Every day new accounts focusing on different aspects of the profession of arms are being created and followed by Marines in their pursuit of improvement. Retired reconnaissance Marine Blake Flannery (IG: @blakewater0326) runs an account focused on the practicality of gear additions to a Marine's kit, as well as tactical lessons learned over a career of warfighting. For the 0600 communication field, The Communicator (IG: @the_communicator) is a page focused on the technical



The Communicator
IG: @the_communicator

Opening the app for many of us is now a way to keep a finger on the pulse of the Marine Corps as it stands today as well as shape our minds for what may be required of us tomorrow.

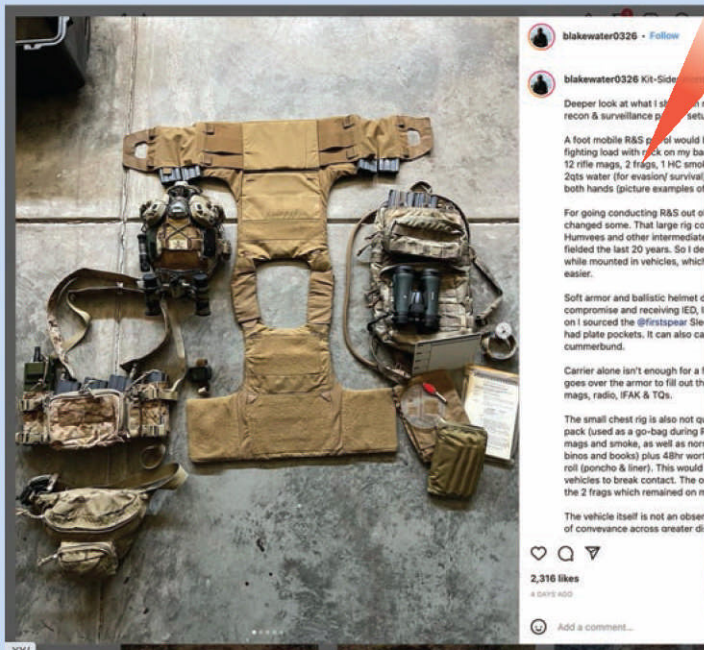
adaptation and education of the communicators training vigorously for our nation's next fight. Not solely for officers, HTBAGL (IG: @howtobeagood lieutenant) runs the gamut from lessons learned as a company executive officer to how to teach your Marines about personal finances.

It seems that this trend has not only caught on but is flourishing in a manner that has reshaped the purpose of social media platforms like Instagram for many Marines. No longer is this form of social media a place to resign the mind to aimlessly like photos of strangers. Opening the app for many of us is now a way to keep a finger on the pulse of the Marine Corps as it stands today as well as shape our minds for what may be required of us tomorrow.

The manifestation of the pages mentioned—and the many more not mentioned—has brought much-needed vigor back into the lives and aspirations



Blake Flannery, IG: @blakewater0326



blakewater0326 Kit-Siderations: Mission Dictates

Deeper look at what I shared in my stories about "motorized recon & surveillance patrol" setup.

A foot mobile R&S patrol would be my usual chest rig for my fighting load with ruck on my back and go-bag inside. That was 12 rifle mags, 2 frags, 1 HC smoke, 1 radio (PRC148 maritime), 2qts water (for evasion/ survival), IFAK & 2 TQs accessible by both hands (picture examples of that rig on last two slides).

For going conducting R&S out of trucks, or motorized, the setup changed some. That large rig could be very awkward to sit Humvees and other intermediate ground vehicles the USMC fielded the last 20 years. So I developed a secondary load for while mounted in vehicles, which made driving and gunning easier.

Soft armor and ballistic helmet due to increased risk of compromise and receiving IED, IDF, RPG, and small arms. Later on I sourced the @firstspear Sleeper that fit our armor cut and had plate pockets. It can also carry 4 rifle mags in the cummerbund.

Carrier alone isn't enough for a fighting load, so a small chest rig goes over the armor to fill out the fighting load. This carries 5 mags, radio, IFAK & TQs.

The small chest rig is also not quite a full load, so the assault pack (used as a go-bag during R&S) carries the remainder of mags and smoke, as well as normal equipment (represented by bins and books) plus 48hr worth of water and chow with ranger roll (poncho & liner). This would be grabbed if abandoning the vehicles to break contact. The only thing not repeated would be the 2 frags which remained on my normal rig most of the time.

The vehicle itself is not an observation platform, merely a means of conveyance across greater distances. The idea is conduct the



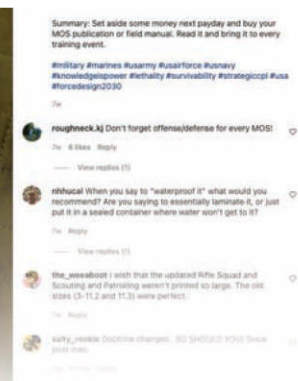
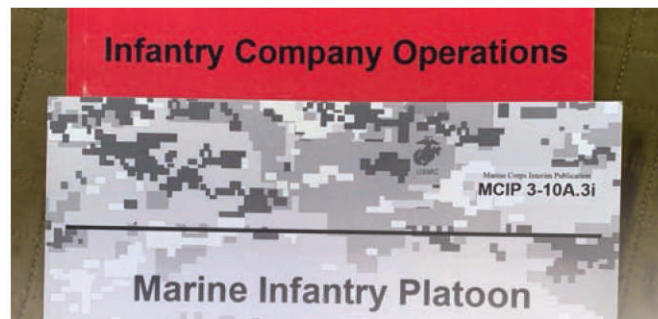
IG: @howtobeagoodlieutenant

Author's bio: Gunnery Sergeant Chase McGrorty-Hunter is a cyber network chief by trade and is currently serving as a faculty advisor at the Staff Noncommissioned Officers Academy aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico. He recently served with 1st Battalion, 4th Marines where he deployed twice in support of the 31st and 15th MEUs.



**Spirit of Basilone award by
IG: @goons__up**

COURTESY OF GYSGT CHASE MCGRORTY-HUNTER, USMC



howtobeagoodlieutenant • Follow

howtobeagoodlieutenant HQ SECTIONS:

S1 Administration: Handles all admin matters including but not limited to pay, awards, orders, travel/DTS, rosters, and accountability. The S1 will also track personnel from the Battalion COC utilizing mission cards. Treat your admin Marines, SNCOIC, & Adj right & they will help you out more than you know.

S2 Intelligence: Responsible for all-source intelligence collections, distribution, & intel support to planning. Trains & gives enlisted intel analysts to the companies. Manages Bn SUAS program, creates GRG's, & acquires, makes, and distributes maps. Need a map, GRG, or SUAS support? See them. Want to learn about the Regional Intelligence Training Center courses you can send you O3XX Marines to in order to develop your Company Level Intelligence Cell? Talk to them. Billet holders to know: Intel Chief, S2A, Scout Sniper Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Commander (if they fall under your S2 section and not the Weapons Co.)

S3 Operations: Plans & ensures support for all training. Sends Marines to schools & runs all required physical training events. Ensures annual training requirements are met. Billet holders to know: Ops Chief, Schools NCO, Battalion Gunner, CBRN WO, Assistant Operations Officer. Air Officer.

S4: Logistics: Responsible for supporting the entire battalion logistically. Sub sections include Motor T, Maintenance, Field Mess, Combat Engineer Platoon, Battalion Aid Station, Chaplain, Armory, Ammo, & Supply. Billet holders to know: S4 Chief, S4A, Motor T Chief & Platoon Commander, AMMO TEC, Engineer Plt Sgt & Platoon Commander, Maintenance Chief & Maintenance Management Officer, Field Mess Chief, BAS Chief/Independent Duty Corpsman, Chaps/Assistant, Armory Chief, & Supply

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction
prohibited without permission.