

## The Weak Commander

Taking command of a company or battery is a huge responsibility. Unfortunately, many young commanders take command immediately after the Captain's Career Course and are not prepared to fully "take charge". What this implies is that many commanders, with 4-6 years of time in service, lack the experience to confront a Drill Sergeant with 7-14 years of experience.

As you assume command, you must realize that you are fully in charge. That means enforcing and checking for compliance of rules and regulations, especially in the Trainee Abuse areas of TRADOC REG 350-6. As you find violations of these rules, particularly in the "gray area", you must enforce them. That means bringing in a Drill Sergeant, who may be well respected in the organization, for written counseling. Experience has told me that verbal counseling doesn't hold any weight when trying to remove a Drill Sergeant. The written counseling statement is a much better tool to add weight to your request to remove a Drill Sergeant. Too often, commanders feel that it is better to verbally counsel a Drill Sergeant instead of giving a counseling statement so they can maintain a good spirit of "teamwork" in the organization. This leads to erosion of the commander's power to enforce standards. Once you let a Drill Sergeant get away with Trainee Abuse, the others will perceive this as the command's subliminal approval to tolerate abuse of our soldiers. The written counseling statement gets around this. The counseling statement shows that you are not afraid of confronting wrongdoing and it lets the violator know that Trainee Abuse will not be tolerated. The counseling statement also serves as a record should you decide to take action or show a pattern of abuse in the future.

You must remember that command is lonely. You are not there to make friends with your cadre, but to enforce the standards. Your cadre will respect you more when you enforce standards rather than watch them constantly violated.