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**PLT led: 148 MP PLT/ Wiesbaden, Germany**  
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**What were some of your major experiences as a platoon leader?**

Law Enforcement (Suicide, domestic violence, sexual crimes, crimes with children); deployment training exercise; providing security for large events; honor guard salute batteries.



**What is one thing that worked for you as a platoon leader?**

My PSG and I had an amazing relationship. That relationship did not develop overnight; it took a lot of time for me to cultivate. I had to show him that I cared about the platoon and that I was competent. Together we made every attempt to set our Soldiers up for success and make sure our platoon was functioning incredibly well. The relationship that my PSG and I built was almost like a marriage. We knew each other so well that we didn't have to talk to one another to know the other's thoughts. We knew how each other would react to a situation and we knew what the other's decision would be. Of course we didn't always agree, but we could discuss it behind closed doors, and when the doors opened, we were one force moving in the same direction (regardless of whose course of action I went with). Building this relationship with my PSG was very important and made our platoon stronger. We never went behind the other's back to change guidance. I knew I could trust my PSG to make decisions when I was around and I knew my PSG understood my intent. This allowed us to expand our influence in the platoon and make us that much more effective. He supported me and I supported him. Sure my PSG could run things without me, but together we achieved so much more and were able to take care of our most important asset, our Soldiers, that much better.

**What is one "hard lesson" you've learned that you're willing to pass on to help other PLs? What's the story behind the lesson?**

Even if you just showed up, you are still in charge. A few days after I showed up to my new location, there was a training meeting. The PL that I was replacing was gone, so my PSG briefed. The CO came to me and said that next time he expected me to brief. He said that even though I was new and not officially in charge, I could have tried to brief. He didn't expect me to know all the details, but my PSG was there to save me if I needed it. Even though I hadn't even taken over the platoon, I was still a leader. It taught me a valuable lesson that has served me well.

**Can you tell us about your relationship with your NCOs? What are some things about working with NCOs that you've learned through experience?**

When I showed up to my unit, my NCOs got me to a range quickly and invited me to take an APFT with our Soldiers, even though I had taken one at Fort Leonard Wood before I arrived. I didn't realize it at the time, but they were testing me to see who I was. I shot expert at the range and I beat everyone taking the APFT during that time. After that, it seemed like my NCOs lowered their guard a little and started to trust me. I appreciated that and I liked how they wanted to make sure that I was going to take care of "their Soldiers." Sure I could have demanded that they listen to me, but that rarely works well. I felt it was best to show them who I was and that I was not going to come in and change what they were doing. My NCOs knew that my PSG and I were in charge, but we also gave them a lot of freedom to run their SQDs and TMs themselves.

I was always asking them questions and they loved teaching me. They have so much knowledge that they were willing to pass on. Plus, they now felt like they had a stake in me and my development and didn't want me to fail. I knew they could run the platoon without me, but I was always looking for ways that I could add value and teach them something. My NCOs knew how to counsel Soldiers and write NCOERs/Awards, but I knew grammar better and I could help come up with ways to phrase bullets on NCOERs/Awards so they sounded better. We always maintained the chain of command, but I was not above learning from anyone in my platoon, including Soldiers. Many of them have mentored multiple PLs, so they provided valuable insight and knowledge. Trust your NCOs, verify what they do, but also learn from them.

**What is one thing about the life of a junior officer that has surprised you?**

I expected to be micromanaged a lot by my chain of command since I was new. That was not the case. They gave me room to lead the way I felt was best, which allowed me to grow tremendously as a leader. Of course they provided mentorship and guidance, but I showed them I was competent and they gave me a ton of freedom. I wasn't expecting that, but I really did appreciate the freedom.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share with the next generation of LTs?**

I loved my time as a PL and from day one I hit the ground running. I spent numerous nights in the office pretty late and I came in on many weekends. My Soldiers worked law enforcement for the garrison 24/7/365. They were the only ones on post that could do law enforcement. By coming in on weekends and at other times, I was able to go out on the road and conduct law enforcement and learn that skill. Sure it took up a lot of my time, but I learned more than I thought was possible. My Soldiers liked seeing their LT come in to work and teaching me what they do. They loved teaching the LT something new and it made them feel like a part of a team. Plus, it showed them that I cared and that I was willing to work weekends and holidays along with them. Of course I could have taken the weekends and holidays for myself, but I didn't feel that was right. It's not all about you as a PL; it's about your Soldiers and your platoon.