



Saddle Up... Tonight We Ride

"They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance."

— General John Sedgwick (just before being killed by a sharpshooter at Spotsylvania Court House)

I lost a bet. Never would I imagine that anyone, much less MAJ Rex Awesome, could stay awake through an entire Army chain teach on "Consideration of Others." Awesome proved me wrong, though I'm certain he cheated through chemistry. So I again turn my column over to Awesome for one of his inspired tirades, my apologies in advance. — D2

Daigle, enough! During Army chain teaches and most PowerPoint briefings I prevent myself from lapsing into a coma by mulling over things that are just plain stupid. No doubt, readers are bored with your pandering and desperate for straight talk, so with that said, here are some just plain stupid things:

Off-site conferences. Most of you probably don't know what these are since you don't rate an invite (me neither). It seems many muckety-mucks figure that they can't have meetings on post in the usual locations — too many distractions. So they cut themselves, and in some cases their spouses, TDY orders so they can go off to a resort and have those important meetings. I'd love to know just how much money the Army spends on these boondoggles; betcha it's enough to buy a platoon of Crusaders or enough ammo to run a brigade through an annual gunnery.

Designated parking. I support designated parking for those who require special access, but drive around a post and tell me that this situation has not become ridiculous. Check it out, everybody has a designated parking slot, that is, except that mother of three small kids who has to park in Siberia so some retired O6 can park next to the commissary entrance. Why do we even have G.O. parking slots when they get dropped off all the time?

Deputy commanders. When and how did this stupid trend begin? Correct me if I'm wrong, and I'm not, but did we not

have commanders and executive officers in the old days and did that not work? There can only be one "old man" and, as I understand it, the commander is responsible for everything his unit does or fails to do, so where does a deputy commander come in? I'm at a loss here, folks! Whose ego are we trying to inflate with this bogus title? Call an XO an XO.

Long speeches. I hate these worse than blue laws. Why some people feel they need to bore the socks off an audience for longer than 10 minutes is beyond me.

Reactionary behavior. Somewhere, someone does something stupid, illegal, and embarrassing. The next thing ya' know, we're wearing values dog tags, carrying values cards, suffering through another chain teach, putting together sensitivity training, or creating a comic book. Here's a novel idea: when someone screws up, we hold them accountable and hammer 'em if need be. Please note that rank should not matter in the hammering; too many times senior officers are allowed to slip away quietly to retirement while we take that young E5 to the mat.

The yelling leadership style. I know there's a whole lotta leadership books out there and most discuss different leadership styles, but there are really only two types: leaders who react on the default mode of yelling, ranting, or raving and those who discriminate and lift off for select occasions. Most dismiss the screamers and their effectiveness is muted; however, I've seen the non-screamers send an audience into panic with a well-timed pause or hard look.

Some of you Poindexters might ping me for whining. Well this ain't whining, this is griping, and if you don't know the difference ask someone with kids to explain it to you. One thing I discovered from being miserable doing Army training is that if the team is griping about the bad chow or weather things are fine; it's when they are silent you had better worry.

— Rex, Out!

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