

Greetings AMLA members! Happy Thanksgiving to you and your families. This month's theme is *Digital Leadership*.

If you have anything you would like to be considered for inclusion in the monthly AMLA Times, please email us at public_relations@amla-tcml.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

TEACH – COACH – MENTOR – LEAD

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Digital Leadership

By Captain John E. Plaziak

Becoming a Digital Leader: A Necessity Towards Modern Success

[This article is an introduction to the current issues impacting technology and leadership. It describes the contemporary context of rapid information flow coupled with the distorting influence of people marketing information. The author calls for a thoughtful, inclusive, and flexible approach in leading a new generation of soldiers steeped in digital access their entire lives.]

Information moves faster than ever before in today's age. 24-hour news media and social media allows for instant publication from anyone that has access to a computer. As leaders in this digital age, it is our responsibility to understand some of the capabilities and limitations of the flow of information, understand that facts are becoming more distorted than ever, and acknowledge that newer generations that enter the military are more inherently involved in technology than we are. I also believe that leaders must, at least topically, understand some of the new ideas and technologies that are being developed. A leader's ability to evolve with the ever-changing landscape of the digital world is essential to our success.

In Martin Dempsey and Ori Braffman's book, *“Radical Inclusion: What the Post- 9/ 11 World Should Have Taught Us About Leadership,”* the authors describe a key concept that they call the “digital echo.” The digital echo is simple: it is the notion that information flows quickly between individuals, but is distorted along the way. In an environment where social media can reach millions of people instantly, regardless of fact checking and source verification, this can be incredibly problematic for us as leaders. False information can spread quickly and can often become wildly out of control. Often times, our reaction might be to squeeze down



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and attempt to control the flow of information, an action which often does not serve us favorably. A digital leader must know and accept the reality of the digital echo and use it to their advantage when they can. As described in *“Radical Inclusion,”* this digital echo moves us into the arena of narrative instead of the arena of fact. Leaders at all levels have the ability to influence this narrative in a positive and efficient manner. A leader has a choice when dealing with the flow of information: ride the wave, knowing that we are at its mercy but can influence when we can; or, we can attempt to control and stop the current, which will inevitably crush us under its wake. Social media is be a powerful tool that we can use in the military. We can inform more people than ever before, shape our narratives on the fly, react and counter-react to enemy narratives, connect with our families over long distances, share ideas and information, and hold each other accountable. A leader in the digital age must master this valuable resource so that they can steer their organization through today’s operational environment.

Leaders in the military must recognize that newer generations’ relationship with technology is very different from its previous generation. Very soon, we will have members in the military that have had technology at their fingertips since birth. Even now, there is a large technological gap between senior and junior members of the military. As leaders, we must adapt to the technological ways of the people we are trying to lead and shape into future leaders. To lead is to give meaning, and if we cannot connect with them at a foundational level, we will never be able to give them meaning. This is challenging, to say the least. We must accept newer generations’ relationship to technology and understand it enough to know when leadership intervention is necessary and when it is not. Is the quiet Soldier playing video games in his barracks room during his free time because that is simply who they are, or, is there some other issue? Knowing our people, their habits, their relationship to the technology around them, and accepting them are key to creating a unified force.

In a tactical and strategic environment, we must understand the basics of some of the potential high-level technology that we can be forced to interact with. ISIS has infamously been able to conduct massive and successful recruitment campaigns on the Dark Web and has been able to conduct financial transactions using cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, all while hiding in near anonymity. The prevalence and ease with which our adversaries are using this technology will not allow us to continue to rely on a select few in our community to understand and attempt to counteract these threats. Digital leaders must seek to understand some of these technologies and know their capabilities and limitations. With the knowledge behind the machinations of things like the Dark Web, Bitcoin, blockchain, and other complex and new technologies, we level the playing field and are able to influence where we can. At the tactical level, cyber capabilities are becoming more prevalent and in-demand. Our information, once thought to be safe on our computers, may become exposed due to minor lapses in our cybersecurity framework. Leaders must seek and understand the advice of their technology and intelligence experts and acknowledge that the cyber domain is a domain that we all operate in. A well-crafted plan is useless if the enemy already has access to it. Digital leaders are also required at the highest levels of government. As our adversaries adopt quickly to new technology and put them to use, we are confined to the procurement processes in place. To keep up, we must be equally flexible and adaptive to the breakneck speed that is our evolving technology. Every leader, from the team leader to the President of the United States, must be a digital leader.

In short, becoming a digital leader requires an open mind, the ability to adapt to a changing landscape, have the discipline to learn some of the important pieces of technology today, and understand how the digital age has transformed the way we gain and perceive information. The challenges are present, but not insurmountable. The tenacity that has driven leaders throughout the ages will not fail us. Dedication, commitment, and acceptance of the digital world and all the positive and negative aspects it brings to our lives will allow us to be successful digital leaders.

Captain John E. Plaziak writes a small blog on leadership, literature, and technology at <https://plaziakenterprises.com> and can be followed on Twitter @johnplaziak. His views are his own and do not reflect those of the Department of Defense. This article is published with the consent and permission of the author, John E. Plaziak.

Member Spotlight – Brad Runyon

By Jonnee Carter

Chief Administrative Officer, AMLA

11/20/2018

CW3 Luther (Brad) Runyon enlisted in the Army in 1970 as a Signal Corps repairman, completing BCT at Fort Dix, NJ and AIT at Fort Gordon, GA and attaining the rank of Specialist Four. Upon completion of AIT, Brad was stationed at the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Management Information, USARV, in Long Binh, Vietnam, with the primary responsibility of repairing the electric typewriter at that time (called a Flexowriter) used to prepare the administrative orders throughout Vietnam. This assignment required then SPC Runyon to travel throughout Vietnam to every Army Personnel Office to maintain and repair the Flexowriter. This heavy-duty electronic typewriter employed punch tape technology to type standard information and stop at designated placed throughout the document to manually insert variable data. Upon returning to CONUS, at the completion of his tour of duty in Vietnam, Brad separated from Active Duty and joined the Army Reserves in 1972.

In 1975, Brad returned to active duty as a tank driver/loader, completed a refresher BCT course at Fort Leonard Wood, MO and AIT at Fort Knox, KY. While at Fort Knox, Brad was selected for additional training on the M551 Sheridan Tank, which had new technology and also fired the Shillelagh Guided Missile using laser guidance. Upon completion of AIT, he was assigned to Troop A, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO. During that assignment, Brad was seriously injured and not able to return to full duty as a tanker.

In 1976, then SPC Runyon, was temporarily assigned to the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate (OSJA) as the administrator of the Magistrate Court system. There, SPC Runyon processed all civilian tickets issued on Fort Carson, prepared to docket for the Magistrate, and ensured all fines were properly deposited. He was later approved for training to reclass as a Legal Clerk/Stenomask Court Reporter, attending the AIT course at Fort Benjamin Harrison, IN. Upon completion, he was then assigned to the Trial Defense Service (TDS) at Fort Carson. After completing an assignment with the TDS, Brad was as assigned to the Claims Office processing all claims filed at Fort Carson, to include PCS household goods claims and damage to civilian property claims.

He was also assigned to the Prosecution Office (Military Justice), processing records of trial and preparing orders based upon trial proceedings, to include Final Orders as directed by the Court of Military Appeals. Brad attained the rank of Specialist Six prior to his departure from Fort Carson.

In 1981, Brad applied for and was selected as a WO in the JAG Corps and attended initial training at Fort Rucker. Shortly after appointment, Brad was assigned as the Legal Administrator for the OSJA in Bremerhaven, Germany. This office serviced the 2d Armored Division (Forward) in Garlstedt and Bremerhaven, Germany. While there, Brad was promoted to CW2.

In 1984 he then attended the Advance Course at Fort Benjamin Harrison enroute to his next assignment at Fort Lee, VA. During Brad's assignment at Fort Lee (1984-1986), serving the Army Quartermaster Center, he upgraded the office's automation systems and completed a renovation of the office.

Then, CW2 Runyon's next assignment (1986 to 1988) was to the OSJA for Eighth Army/ U.S. Forces Korea/United Nations Command located at Yongsan, Seoul, South Korea. While there, Mr. Runyon was promoted to CW3. Additionally, upon election by the residents he was installed as the first mayor of the military family quarters located at Hannam Village, Itaewon, Seoul, South Korea.

From 1988 to 1990, CW3 Runyon was assigned to the Contract Appeals Division of the Office of The Judge Advocate General of the Army. During that assignment, CW3 Runyon upgraded the computer systems throughout all the offices and consolidated the five separate offices of the Contract Appeals Division, which were located throughout the Washington, DC area into one office located in Rosslyn, VA.

CW3 Runyon's next, and final, assignment was as the Legal Administrator for The Judge Advocate General of the Army in the Pentagon and as Assignment Manager for the Army JAG Legal Administrators from

1990 to 1992. Upon completion of this assignment, CW3 Runyon separated from the Army under a then-in-place early separation program.

CW3 Runyon's guiding principles while on active duty: 1) tell the Soldier what is needed and let the Soldier accomplish the mission, 2) lead by example; be ready and willing to do what needs done, 3) be, know, and do everything with integrity and singleness of mind, and 4) treat staff as they could be, not as they are – inspire them to grow and attain new heights.

After 20 plus years of service CW3 Runyon separated from the service in 1992 and worked as a freelance court reporter in the Southern Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky areas. In 1995, Mr. Runyon started his own legal and medical transcription service primarily for State and local government contracts. In 2008, Mr. Runyon then merged his company with a larger transcription service and was assigned as the Senior Vice President for US Transcription and Government Contracts (USTGC). During his time at USTGC he was assigned as Chief Operating Officer and then later as Chief Executive Officer of a subsidiary of the corporation. This subsidiary was responsible for transcription services for 13 VA Medical Centers.

In 2015, Mr. Runyon resigned from that company and again started his own transcription service, with an emphasis on Federal and State contracts, as well as large hospitals and medical centers. Then in early 2018, Mr. Runyon sold his second company due to not being able to work due to a major medical event. Mr. Runyon is now working with the Veterans Administration to address the medical complications resulting from the 1975 injury.

You will find more on Mr. Brad Runyon in Volume 2 of the Judge Advocate Warrant Officer Chronicles (June 2019).

Candidate Outreach

By Rebekah Stuyvesant
Member, AMLA
11/21/2018

October is such an exciting month for Army JAG Corps Warrant Officers because the new Warrant Officer accessions are selected and revealed to the Corps. This year, the Army JAG Corps selected six new Soldiers to become 270A Warrant Officers. In addition, a Chief Warrant Officer Two from Aviation Branch was selected to become a 270A.

The purpose of the Candidate Outreach Committee is to collect and disseminate one full set of the Warrant Officer One Army Service Uniform shoulder boards, dress shirt rank, and Operational Camouflage Pattern rank. The committee accepts donated rank at the Law Office Manager's Course that occurs every June. The committee will mail a package to the selected Soldier that contains a letter from the AMLA President, as well as the identified rank set, in advance of the selectee attending Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS) at Fort Rucker, Alabama. This year, the six candidates will attend WOCS in February and graduate in March. In addition, they will attend the Warrant Officer Basic Course located at Charlottesville, Virginia, alongside their Reserve, National Guard, Marine Corps, and re-branch teammates from May through June.

Please join me in congratulating the newest selections for Active Duty 270A Warrant Officers. I encourage everyone to reach out and welcome the newest selections to the community. They need your mentorship and guidance throughout the next year and in their future as 270A JAG Warrant Officers.

CW2 Alexander Para
SFC Margo Fisher
SFC Chrystal Littleton
SSG Quo Vadis Parker
SFC Blaise McPhearson
SSG Markus Small
SFC Stephen Mossey

Monthly Themes

AMLA

All members are encouraged to write articles and provide content for the AMLA Times. If you'd like to submit content for a specific issue, we are ready to receive that content at any time, there is no need to wait. In order to ensure they are added to your desired issue, there are deadlines posted next to each issue, this gives us time to insert, format, review, and publish each issue on time. We encourage you to send us your content as soon as you have it completed.

The themes for each of the monthly AMLA Times for FY19 are listed below:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
October 2018 – Teaching	13 September 2018
November 2018 – Digital Leadership	13 October 2018
December 2018 – Work-life Balance	13 November 2018
January 2019 – Goal Setting	13 December 2018
February 2019 – Coaching	13 January 2019
March 2019 – Community Outreach, Giving Back	13 February 2019
April 2019 – Mentorship	13 March 2019
May 2019 – Membership Drive	13 April 2019
June – Setting Yourself Apart, Branding	13 May 2019
July 2019 – Leading	13 June 2019
August 2019 – Building Morale, Esprit de Corps	13 July 2019
September 2019 – Back to School, Refocusing	13 August 2019

Email all of your content to public_relations@amla-tcml.org