



# CompanyCommand



*Building Combat-Ready Teams*

To: Company Commanders

From: Company Commanders

## *“A Year in Command—2006”*

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**Connecting leaders**



**in conversation**

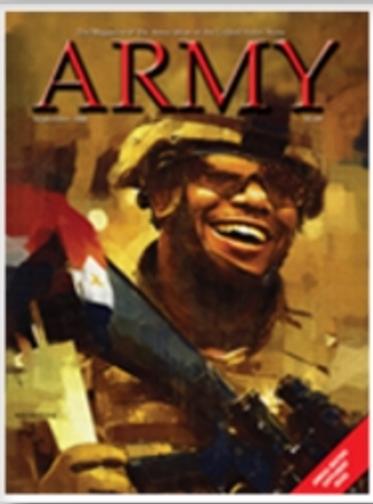
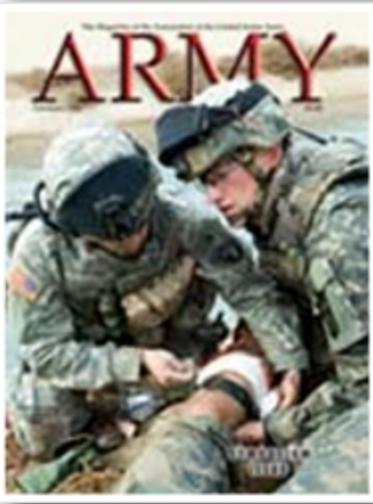
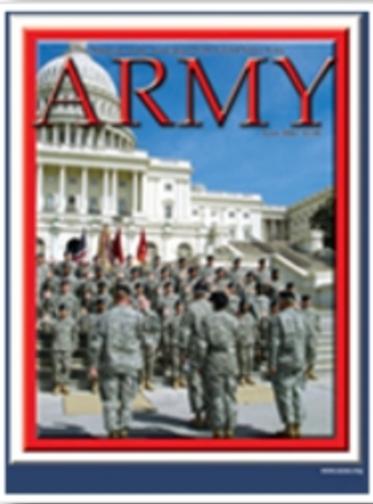
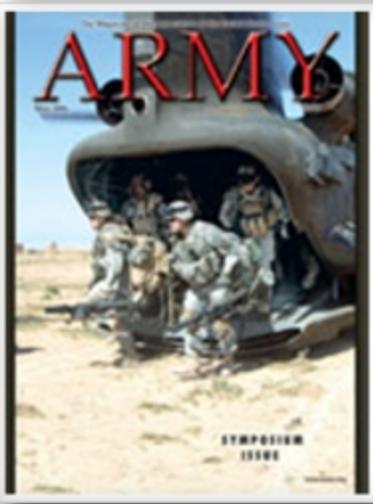
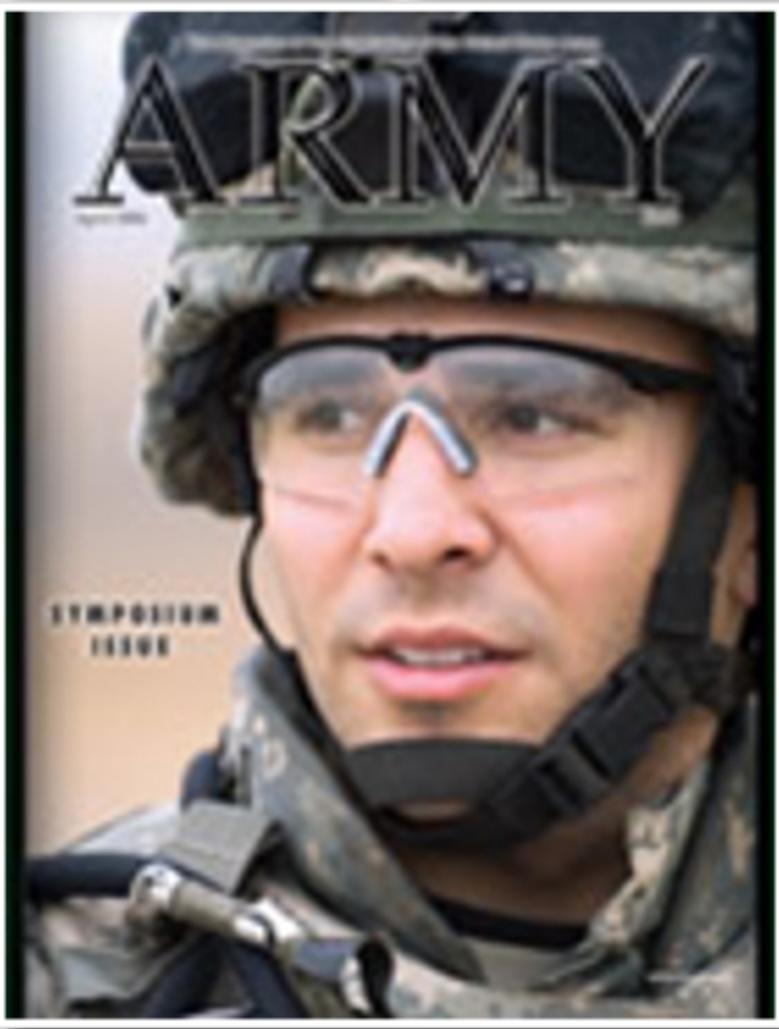
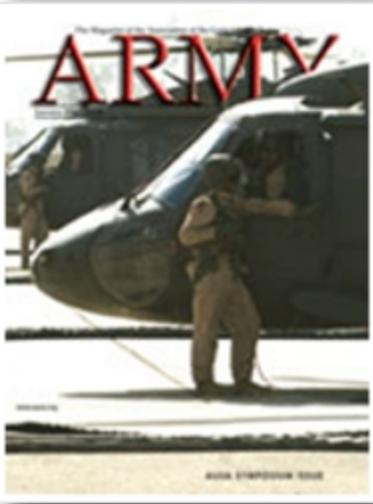
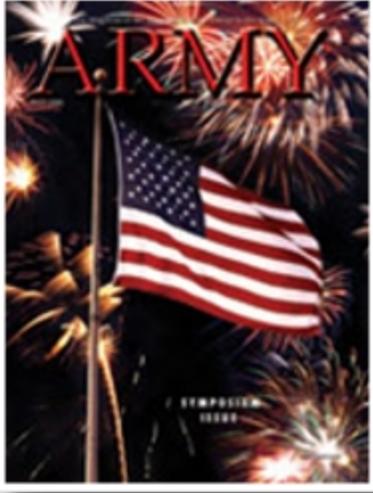
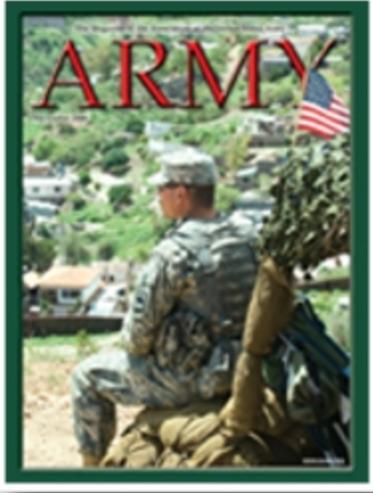
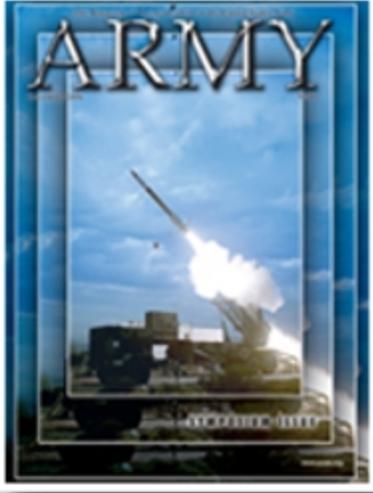
Art by Jody Harmon

A compilation of this year's CC articles  
published in ARMY Magazine.

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Company Commanders connect at <http://companycommand.army.mil>



# **“A Year in Command—2006”**

The CC forum publishes an article in each issue of ARMY Magazine (except the October “Green Book” issue). It is one more way to connect company commanders to each other and to what we are learning. Each article is by-and-for company commanders and reflects the values of the forum: positive voice with a focus on solutions, passion for quality, innovative and creative, committed to the Army, grass roots and voluntary. Thank you to AUSA and the exceptional team at ARMY Magazine, and thank you to all the company commanders who participated and made the articles possible.

## **What’s Inside**

- January “Expeditionary Fitness”
- February “Combat: What Will You Remember?”
- March “Training Iraqi Forces”
- April “Air/Ground Integration”
- May “Prepare for Combat”
- June “Company-Level IPB”
- July “Leadership & the Death of a Soldier”
- August “Leading Up”
- September “Switching Gears in the Counterinsurgency Fight”
- November “Leading our Soldiers to Fight with Honor”
- December “The Art of Rewarding Soldiers”

CC is company commanders. The CC forum is a voluntary, grass-roots forum that is by-and-for company commanders. The CC forum is positive and practical—and it is focused like a laser beam on the practice of company command and those things that are important to company commanders. Welcome to your forum.

Company Commanders connect at <http://companycommand.army.mil>

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION!**

# “A Year in Command—2006”

## What is one thing you do to make a difference for the profession via CC?

I check out the discussions at least weekly and participate whenever I can add value. —Art La Flamme

When I download and use a tool or idea, I let the person who submitted it know. People definitely appreciate the feedback. —Sean McWilliams

I ensure the future COs I know are aware of CC. —Tom Feltey

I've connected with leaders specifically because of the experiences they listed on their dog tag. So, one way to make a difference is to update your dog tag regularly. —John Whyte

When an idea works in my unit, I sound off with it on CC.mil for others to see. —Ryan Morgan

I stepped up as a topic lead for the *Engineer* rally point, and I'm doing all I can to connect EN commanders. —Dave Hibner

In the FA rally point, I've had success lately connecting commanders with experience in Iraq and Afghanistan to commanders who are preparing to go. You can make a huge impact just by being a connector. —Luis Rivera

I started keeping a command journal in the *Cdrs' Log* on CC.mil. I'm really glad I did. —Patrick McCarthy

If I have a question about anything, I ask it in the discussion area. I get great feedback, and I think we all benefit from the conversation. —Matthew Weinrich

I signed up to be a command contact for the *Fitness* topic. It's been great making a difference for other COs. —Jeff Sargent

I recently interviewed several COs on the ground in Iraq and posted the results in the *Warfighting* topic. —Dave Meyer

I developed a *Cmd Challenge* scenario based on my experience preparing to deploy to combat in Iraq. —Rob McCormick

I introduced myself in the *Medical* rally point and participate in any way I can. I also started a *Cdrs' Log* journal. —Gail Gauthier

My LTs and I use content like the *Cmd Challenges* and *Cmd Quizzes* to spark a monthly leadership discussion. —Chris Amos

I completed the combat-leader interview that is linked to from the *Warfighting* topic. I wanted to share the things I learned with leaders heading over to Iraq now. —Rob Guida

I took the *Pro-Reading Challenge*. CC.mil sent me copies of *An Army at Dawn*. My lieutenants and I are discussing it in the *Pro-Reading* topic now. —Dave Polizzotti

Company Commanders—present, future, and past—are invited to actively participate via CC—to become more effective and to advance the profession. Welcome to the conversation!

Your Professional Forum  
<http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>  
**Building Combat-Ready Teams!**

Join

Connect

Participate

Prepare

Tap into

Learn

Engage

Make a difference

Reflect

Contribute

Improve my effectiveness

Advance the profession



# CompanyCommand

## Building Combat-Ready Teams



**To:** Company Commanders  
**From:** Company Commanders

### Expeditionary Fitness

*Special thanks to the leaders of TF White Falcon (2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division) currently operating in Tal Afar, Iraq, for contributing to this critical conversation. They use the term "expeditionary fitness" to describe their approach to being physically combat-ready.*

When company commanders talk with each other about how to win in combat, one subject always comes up: Physical fitness, both in preparation for combat and during the combat deployment. Given the reality of 24-hour operations in harsh environmental conditions, a non-secure environment, and the length of our combat

deployment cycles, this is no small task! In an effort to learn from experienced leaders and to advance the profession, this month we ask:

**How can we best prepare Soldiers for the physical rigors of battle and maintain that physical edge over time?**

**CPT Joe Blanton and 1SG Greg Nowak**  
D/2-325th AIR, 82nd ABN DIV



#### Prep for Combat

One thing we did to prepare for combat was conduct a company biathlon—run and swim. It's an area not everyone is comfortable with and it's a great cardiovascular workout and team builder. We ran three miles as a company to the pool, swam about 200 meters, and then finished with a one-mile release run back to the company area.

We also did a lot of combat-focused PT events while wearing the Interceptor Body Armor (IBA)—one event was a combination of a foot march, a Skedco litter drag, a pole-less litter carry, and a stress shoot. For the stress shoot we had the Soldiers use different firing positions—standing, kneeling, and prone. We also worked on alternate firing po-

sitions, shooting around vehicles and from vehicles, both dominant and off-handed firing positions, stationary and moving. The stress shoot incorporated rapid magazine changes, multiple firing positions and a longer-range shot (150-200 meters). We try to conduct this training at a shoot house or range facility that has buildings constructed that we can shoot from. The stress shoot is a timed event—overall time with costly penalties for missing, so it pays to take a well-aimed shot versus rushing to make a quick time. The focus is on elevating the heart rate versus an all-out smoker where the Soldier gets little marksmanship training. We'd also park a vehicle at the range and have them shoot out of the left and right side of the vehicle.

In preparation for the stress shoot, we conducted reflexive fire training IAW Army M4 marksmanship manual from distances of 3-20 meters. This training consisted of: walking left, turn right and shoot; walking right, turn left to shoot; run, stop and shoot; facing away, turn towards target and shoot; and shooting standing at 3, 5, 7, 10, 15 and 20 meters. The NCOIC gives a "ready" command and then on a whistle blast Soldiers raise their weapons, identify targets, switch their selector levers to "SEMI," engage, switch their selector levers to "SAFE," and then lower their weapons.

Also, ropes are always a great cardio workout.

#### During the Deployment

We brought a set of dumbbells with us and built a bench. With that, resistance training is there. Cardio is the part that we struggle with. You can't just go for a run unless you go back to the Brigade Forward Operating Base (FOB). When we send a platoon back to the Brigade FOB to refit

## CMD Quiz

### PT that had the most impact on preparing your Soldiers for the physical/mental challenges of combat?

Warfighter PT (MOS-related battle drills, CL V carries, flak-vest runs, NBC PT, litter relays, etc.)	64.0%
APFT/FM 21-20 style standard PT (push-up, sit-up, running)	16.0%
Combatives (hand-to-hand)	9.0%
Other (may include new PT doctrine, agility drills, etc.)	7.0%
Team contact sports	2.0%
Obstacle courses	2.0%

Total Votes: 100

for 48 hours, they conduct two mandatory PT sessions; so twice a week they get cardio and they can do weight training here at our combat outpost (COP). With 24-hour operations going, it's difficult. We push it down to squad level and they manage it.

### CPT Matt Adamczyk and 1SG Jack Love A/2-325th AIR, 82nd ABN DIV



#### Prep for Combat

The individual Soldier has to be comfortable in the IBA in all kinds of weather and terrain. We did a lot of work on movement with full kit. In this urban environment here in Iraq we are constantly negotiating tight terrain and pulling ourselves up and around things. Agility, upper body strength, and mental toughness are essentials. We worked hard at putting a mixture of strength, endurance, and speed in our program. Bottom line: you need a well-rounded program. We don't move much here in Iraq with rucks—mostly IBA, combat packs, weapons, NODs (night observation devices), and ammunition.

We also conducted combatives training before deploying. Here in Iraq, when we are in physical contact with the

Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) it's usually not one-on-one. It's often three-on-one—a fire team getting one guy into zip-ties or pulling people out of vehicles. So we worked on that during our combatives sessions.

Another way we prepared for combat was through a forced-march live fire. We usually gave the Soldiers some advance notice—they would come in at 0500, draw weapons, and move on a route that took them in varied terrain through roads and woodland areas. Along the route they would demonstrate EIB-type tasks (basic military skills), and once at the range we would take them through different firing stations: reflexive fire, firing from on top of a roof or through a window. Throughout the event we recorded times and scores. We did this as a squad competition.

Another event we did was a 10 km foot march—we had to pull casualties, move ammunition, do buddy carries, and conduct battle drills. We were smoked by the time we got out to the range.

#### During the Deployment

We brought a couple of weight sets and pull-up bars so Soldiers could work out here in our company combat outpost—which is a house in the middle of Tal Afar, Iraq. While at our COP, every Soldier does at least eight pull-ups before moving through the chow line. Each platoon conducts refit back at the Brigade FOB for two days per week, during which they are expected to conduct PT at the squad level.

The foot patrols our Soldiers conduct while operating in the city are intensive workouts—when they complete a patrol they are smoked.

### CPT Ken Burgess HHC/2-325th AIR, 82nd ABN DIV



#### Prep for Combat

We conducted forced marches with IBA and kit and got away from standard foot marches with rucksacks. We do a lot of movement with IBA here in Iraq. Every time we went to the range, whether one mile or six, we carried full combat gear—to include spare barrels and all the gear we take on patrol.

We also set up an obstacle course in the MOUT site and had Soldiers negotiate it with full combat gear. I'm big on ob-

stacle courses because moving around with a weapon and the bulkiness of the IBA changes everything. Start slow with this and build up—first just have the IBA vest on, then add one plate, then two plates, then add the helmet and weapon.

### **During the Deployment**

How do you make PT work in a combat environment? Squad-level execution with platoon-level planning.

In my company COP during OIF I, we were in a compound with a large field. I brought in a bulldozer and we dozed out a field that was about half the size of a regular football field. We then made a running track that went around the field. The platoons were then able to play softball, flag football and soccer. A couple of times during our deployment we stood down the company just pulling guard on our COP and did platoon-on-platoon competitions.

I'm a big fan of maintaining fitness over here—it's a leader issue. All the companies have weight sets, and you need your own because even if there is a weight set at the Brigade FOB, you more than likely won't be staying there.

We've been deployed to OIF I, II and III, and maintaining fitness has been different for each deployment. During OIF II we mandated PT three times a week with some type of upper-body workout incorporating a towel or partner resistance exercises (PREs). When we had access to any type area we could run on, we worked cardio three times a week. But we adjusted that based on what we were doing at the time.

### **CPT Ryan Howell**

**Grim Troop/Sabre Squadron, 3rd ACR**



### **Prep for Combat**

In preparation for combat, we did marches and practiced patrolling with full kit: IBA, combat load, blank rounds, and so forth. We also just did normal PT and some combatives.

### **While Deployed**

While deployed, weight lifting is a big thing—it is something a guy can do on his own. We are trying right now to get stair-stoppers and treadmills down here at our COP. If you have equipment available, Soldiers will use it. The big thing is getting it down at the troop/company level. We

bought some weight sets and bowflex-type equipment before we deployed and it has paid off big time. So it doesn't matter where we go, we always set up a little gym. We also get a lot of cardio on our patrols. We try to fit in some sports also—it's worked out that we have a basketball goal here in the courtyard of this building we are occupying, and it gives guys a chance to compete and have fun.

### **CPT Cynthia Moore**

**501st STB, TAC CP, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT)**

I would focus on running, endurance activities, and lifting weights. I have found that the standard push-ups, sit-ups, two-mile run do not prepare a Soldier for the types of exhaustion that come from drawn-out sustainment activities. Lifting weights keep your muscles challenged, and during OIF many Soldiers lost 20 pounds or more due to the heat and lack of muscle training. The running keeps endorphins in the system, which helps combat fatigue from pulling long shifts or doing missions that last weeks on end without a break. All in all, I attribute the success our unit had in Iraq to the effective PT our leaders conducted.

### **CPT Jeff Sargent**

**B/501st MI, 1st AD**

I've found it's tough, but by no means impossible to conduct a rigorous PT program while working continuous 12-hour shifts. If possible, give your Soldiers a block of time away to conduct PT during their normal shifts (assuming they are working 12-hour shifts). Rotate Soldiers to conduct PT like you would rotate them to go eat chow. Don't let PT become optional. It's frustrating when I see leaders treat PT like it's an extracurricular activity akin to an elective in school. PT is a basic Soldier duty, and leaders need to enforce the standard and set an example.

### **CPT Keith Kramer**

**A/3-69th AR, 3rd ID (M)**

Our PT program prior to deploying focused on three things: mental toughness, physical toughness, and reinforcing the junior leadership's initiative. It is as important for a Soldier to know he is tough and be confident that he can do something as for him to be able to do it.

PT was focused at the squad level because in Iraq now we are conducting individual fire team and squad ambushes, and this reinforced the leader's position and decision making. We conducted several competitions that developed the toughness and teamwork needed for success in combat. We conducted stress shoots at non-standard ranges to raise their heart rates and stress their marksmanship under tough situations. We footmarched under loads to stress the Soldiers' mental toughness and desire not to quit or fall out from their squads. We conducted weekly combatives to build both confidence and aggression, as well as a tactical skill they may need in the deployment. Our PT program was successful because we worked to bring junior leader involvement into its planning and make it challenging for them.

Here are a few deployed PT tips from CC's Fitness Topic Lead, Matt Michaelson, who commanded B/4-5th ADA & D/4-5th ADA, 1st CAV DIV:

Finding any time during actual combat deployments for doctrinal PT is extremely limited, and certainly the physical tasks of combat ops are tremendously exhausting, especially when coupled with sleep/water/chow limitations on the move or in contact. Any time that can be cut out for PT while deployed could include a variety of gravity-based calisthenics, PREs, and combatives. But, in addition to these, here are a few more ideas to try out when you're trying to fit in some kind of fitness in the craziness and exhaustion that is combat ops:

**Dynamic tension:** Muscle tone can be maintained to some degree by simply "flexing," then relaxing, the muscle—flexing and holding the flex as hard as you can for about 6 seconds is all it takes with about 3 to 6 flexes per muscle. Very much like what bodybuilders do in "hitting a pose." Ever try it (without the troops watching, of course)? It's hard! Try it out—place palms together in front of chest and flex the chest hard, imagine a 30-pound dumbbell in the hand with elbow at 90 degrees and flex the bicep, squeeze those frontal abs, then left, then right obliques even while sitting as a TC on a convoy. DT can be done with no partner, no equipment, no movement, and very little sweat (if limited DCUs prevent drenching a uniform in sweat with no laundry services available) unless you get into a whole routine. Very simple to do, looks a little funny, but works.

**Stretching:** 9 out of 10 personnel are as tight as can be. Use the deployment to improve your flexibility. Instead of the quick, bouncing, before-the-unit-run stretches, stretch all the major muscle groups, from top down, coordinating inhalation and exhalation with

stretches being held anywhere from 15 seconds to one minute. Improve range-of-motion, tone, pliability, and circulation all at the same time. Start with easy joint rotations, then relax and stretch. Again, easy to do, no/little sweat, no equipment, and tremendously relaxing and invigorating at the same time.

**Meditation/breathing/relaxation:** Not gonna get all swampy on you now, but hear me out: combat is about stress, and stress requires release to maintain harmony and peace of mind = optimum performance. Taking just 5-10 minutes a day to breathe and relax can provide a leader/Soldier with a healthy outlet to relieve stress and recharge for what's next. A few recommendations:

**1) Breathing exercises:** close your eyes, sit easy, and take 10 or so very deep breaths in/out the nose. Breathe into the pit of the belly, not the chest (we do that enough all day). After the first 5, try breathing in and holding the breath for as long as possible, then controlled exhale.

**2) Body part relaxation:** sit comfortably, close your eyes, and then systematically relax portions of the body. Scalp, forehead, eyes, face, jaw, ears, neck, traps, shoulders, upper arm, forearm, hand, fingers ... all the way down to the feet. Soldiers can also just focus the relaxation on the body part where they feel the most tension (usually neck, back, trapezius). Done well, also very relaxing.

Perhaps these few ideas, coupled with other Field PT initiatives, can help some leaders and troops stay focused on the mission while taking some care of ourselves personally and physically along the way. Go get 'em!

**Company commanders:** You are invited to visit the "Fitness" topic within the CC forum—to share your

ideas, to tap into the ideas of others, and to advance the profession in the realm of physical fitness.

## Connecting leaders

### **CC is Company Commanders.**

The CC forum is a voluntary, grass-roots forum that is by-and-for company commanders. The forum is positive and practical—focused like a laser beam on the practice of company command and those things that are important to company commanders. Send article ideas to [nate.self@us.army.mil](mailto:nate.self@us.army.mil).



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Art by Jody Harmon



**To:** Company Commanders  
**From:** Company Commanders

## **Combat: What Will You Remember?**

Being leaders in war introduces us to a vast number of unique experiences. In many cases, the experiences that we remember most are a combination of what we choose to remember and those events that are so intense that we can't help but remember them. What we remember reflects a lot about who we are, and can substantially impact who we become. In some ways, they can define who we are. Sharing those memories in conversation is a powerful way to connect with other leaders—it allows others to learn from us, and it forces us to process our experiences in a much more meaningful way. Many company commanders are writing down what they are learning about commanding in combat, and they are sharing those insights in the CC forum—creating a resource that is helping to improve our effectiveness in leading Soldiers in battle.

The “Combat-Leader Interview” is one way company commanders are choosing to contribute to the cause. One interview question in particular asks us to reflect upon our time in combat and to describe a memory that especially stands out in our minds:

**What image or event do you think you will remember most clearly in 50 years?**

In this article, company commanders respond to this question. The responses provide us with a unique glimpse into the minds of our peers. Moreover, the stories will likely elicit our own memories and connections and, for those of us preparing to deploy to combat now, can serve to focus our thoughts on what lies ahead.

### **J.P. Berner**

**E/101st FA, 42nd ID (M)**

The sound of 107mm rockets flying overhead, detonating less than 100m away, and then Soldiers calling out, “Medic!” for the wounded Soldiers. Although the sound of rockets sailing overhead and explosions nearby was common, we only heard the cries for medic once, two weeks after we got to our Forward Operating Base. I think it was the first time I realized that there were people out there trying to kill me.

### **Jerry Diamond**

**A/312th MI, 1st CAV DIV**

When I think about Iraq, I think about the kids, and how big and bright their eyes are, how happy they are to see us, and how impoverished they are. I think a lot about the kids here who lack clothes, or shoes, and who bathe in sewer water. Yet there is so much hope in their eyes. They're the ones who will make Iraq a great nation once again. They're the ones we're fighting for here.

### **Chris Altavilla**

**B/1-14th IN, 25th ID (L)**

Seeing all the children who come running out and waving towards our patrols. They don't yet know right from wrong, and are not yet tainted by the years of hatred and deceit. It sometimes served as a rallying point for “why are we here.” At times when we knew the strategic mission would take a long time to accomplish, seeing those kids gave hope for the future.



Photographs provided by CompanyCommand

### **Scott Taylor**

**E/7th FA 10th MTN DIV (L)**

The children I met on my second deployment to Afghanistan will always stick with me. I was impressed that these seven and eight year-old children spoke two or three languages. I would use the children to interpret in an emergency because they spoke English as well as most of my interpreters. They are the future of Afghanistan. If democracy is ever to take hold and replace the current political structure, then it will start with the children.

### **Ryan T. Kranc**

**Quickstrike Troop, 4/3rd ACR**

Watching the Iraqi Army (IA) platoon organic to my Troop, who almost collectively quit on the first day of training, conduct an air mobile operation along the Iraqi/Syrian border to interdict smugglers. When they all jumped off the Black Hawk, took two steps, and dropped to the prone just like they had done in training, I had to laugh to myself and say, "Hey, they're getting it!" To watch their daily movement towards independent operations has been rewarding. The IA preparation and troop leading procedure process leading up to the Iraqi National Elections has been phenomenal. Their processing of information and thinking through the major issues regarding force protection and their ability to ensure a safe and secure Iraqi election is an enormous improvement over even two months ago. I'll be able to say (soon) that I observed the IA operate independently for one mission without input, guidance or prodding. Then they'll get it.

### **Wendy Merz**

**416th Trans Co (POL), 3rd ID (M)**

I will never forget being in the OR with my Soldiers after they were in accidents, IEDs or landmines. You can never fully prepare yourself to hold their hands and comfort them. Each time you walk into the OR and watch them leave on a MEDEVAC will be different.

### **Nick Ayers**

**B/1-34th AR, 1st ID (M)**

Most likely, it will be each time that we lost one of our Soldiers.

### **Spence Williams**

**47th Military History DET**

The two interviews I did with officers who were subsequently killed in action. The last one died two days after I interviewed him. It brings home how important my job is to keep Soldiers' stories alive.

### **Matthew Stapleton**

**A/1-120th IN, 30th BCT, 1st ID (M)**

After deploying as the HHC commander and Battalion S5, I was told one day that I had a couple of hours to pack my stuff—I was replacing the detached A Company Commander who had been killed that morning. The Task Force



Commander gave me a quick briefing regarding the intense contact over the last 24 hours, then said the company could take the day off for maintenance. Shortly after, a radio call changed that to "conduct movement to contact ... insurgents on rooftops firing from several locations ..."

### **Joseph Kuchan**

**B/1-327th IN, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT)**

As we prepared for our assault into An Najaf, we had a couple of delays for a variety of reasons. To pass the time, 1SG Jeff Smith made himself and me a cup of coffee in our assault position using an ammo can, some diesel and a canteen cup. It was just so bizarre—I'd spent the whole night planning with my PLs, we were finally in our assault position, had done all our checks, and the 1SG just said, "Hey, sir, relax, the boys are ready and we've done all we could do to prepare—let's just sit and talk some things through." And we just sat and talked like it was a normal morning back at Ft. Campbell, although the topic was somewhat different.

### **Derek Boese**

**A/299th EN, CBT EN Company (M), 1BDE, 4th ID (M)**

Changing command in the middle of the Iraqi Ammunition Supply Point we had occupied. I had commanded my company for just under two years, and to leave my guys after that long a period of time in the middle of a hostile environment was possibly the worst feeling I have ever had. After I changed command, I went to HHC's compound and felt physically ill the rest of the day. Right or wrong, I felt like I had abandoned my Soldiers in a combat environment. It's nothing against my successor—it just didn't feel right, and still doesn't to this day.

### **Lonnie Williams**

**SIGO, HHC, 25th BSB, 1st BDE (SBCT), 25th ID (L)**

I will never, ever forget the sight of my friend's face lean-

ing over me when I regained consciousness after surviving a suicide bomber.

**Wes Morrison**

**C/1-120th IN, 30th HSB, 1st ID (M)**

The day my 2nd PLT was ambushed in a patrol almost 50 kilometers from the nearest FOB. When I arrived on scene, all Standard Operating Procedures were in place and the proper smoke and star clusters had been used to bring me and reinforcements into the fight. My Soldiers saved two lives that day. Their lieutenant and his gunner lost legs, but they lived due to proper rehearsals and Soldiers keeping their heads. Despite the horror of seeing my men wounded, it was wonderful to see why great training and our Army training standards pay off when it counted.

**Chris Hossfeld**

**C/1-24th IN (SBCT), 25th ID**

All of the vehicles pulling into the company area after a tremendous firefight. We had vehicles with blown tires, had taken multiple improvised explosive device and rocket propelled grenade (RPG) hits, and everyone was just a little shaken. But, everyone was all smiles, shaking hands, hugging each other, and immediately recalling the most intense fighting that we had been through yet. Everyone had made it through with some minor bumps and bruises, but everyone was still walking and talking. I was extremely proud of everyone in the company, and they were proud of each other.

**Larry R. Jordan, Jr.**

**Crazyhorse Troop, 1-14th CAV, 3/2 SBCT**

Anytime that you hear a call over the net that your Troopers are being engaged, it will cause a little knot to form in your stomach. That call hit home hard as one of my platoons was engaged by 40-50 insurgents. As I ran to my Stryker, I could hear and see the explosions of RPGs that were being used against them. Racing to provide support, we were ambushed by another group of insurgents. The fear that I would not be able to get to a position and support my men was horrible.

**Mike Dinesman**

**S2, 3/3 SFG (A)**

The prospect of ditching into the Black Sea during infil when our C-130 had mechanical/electrical problems. All I could think of was that the water would be very cold.

**Juan Nava**

**64th MP Co, 720th MP BN**

Immediately after an engagement of one of my platoons, one of my Soldiers was injured, having taken the blast of an RPG in his back and upper-backside. When I got to the aid station he had been evacuated to, I got to hold his hand, hug his head and talk to him. As the medics applied iodine to the wounds, he would scream from the burning, but when they weren't cleaning the wounds, he was joking with me and others. His strength and courage is something I will always remember.



*Art LaFlamme with an A-10 Warthog in Iraq.*

**Art LaFlamme**

**B Co (TES)/302nd MI BN, V Corps**

It's an image—an image of Iraqi armor setting into hide spots as the afternoon was coming to a close. It involves my Soldiers and I deciding to do something about it, and walking in some A-10s on this armor unit that thought they would be good to go for the night. For me, it will always remain as one of the great examples of actionable intelligence—from space, through us, across a secure phone to a radio to the pilot, out the barrel of a 30mm cannon and into enemy armor.

**Aaron Munz**

**C/1-12th CAV, 1st CAV DIV**

Some events that have made a lasting impression are the memorial ceremonies, and the anger on my Soldiers' faces. The remarkable thing is that when we have conducted missions within hours of the ceremonies, the same Soldiers whose faces were snarled with anger are able to show restraint.

**Stacey L. Lee**

**169th Port Operations Cargo Company**

Early in the ground war we were running port operations 24/7, discharging ammunition and cargo from ships in stream to support the push to Baghdad. We were short handed in some key positions, so we cross-trained some of the low density Soldiers as stevedores. One of the company's truck drivers fell into this category.

Earlier in life, he had fallen into a freezing river and spent 16 minutes face-down in the water before he was pulled out and revived. As a result, he was deathly afraid of water. Part of what we did every day was to get in a little

boat, go 1/2 to 1 mile out in the ocean and then climb up the side of a ship. The Soldier struggled even when the seas were calm, but with a lot of encouragement from his fellow Soldiers he managed to keep going.

Prior to a large storm, we went out to the ship in six-foot swells, and getting from the boat to the ship required us to jump off of the boat to a 5' x 5' see-through landing ramp. The Soldier went hand over hand down the safety lines on the side of the boat and watched the landing ramp bobbing up and down with the six-foot swells. After a few false starts, he finally leapt to the ramp and quickly moved up the ladder to the main deck. A little later, I pulled him aside and congratulated him on accomplishing something that a few weeks prior he never would have imagined himself doing, and he simply said, "You and the other Soldiers were counting on me, sir."

**Kevin Kugel**

**68th CHEM CO, 5th BCT, 1st CAV DIV**

I will never forget patrolling the streets of Baghdad on Election Day, watching the Iraqi people wait in line to vote as incoming mortar rounds impacted nearby.

**James McGahey**

**B/3-502nd IN & LRSB, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT)**

The first is my closer relationship to God. This has been an awesome experience for me to grow closer to my Savior and to serve Him as well as my country. That is the biggest memory I will have.



*Kevin Kugel and 1SG Clay Young securing an Iraqi voting site.*

**Greg Spencer**

**A/1-13th AR, 1st AD**

By far the change in command in the middle of a war. I don't think anybody even got a picture of it, and when the vehicles took off I signed a piece of paper on top of a Humvee that said I was the Company Commander. That would be what I remember the most.

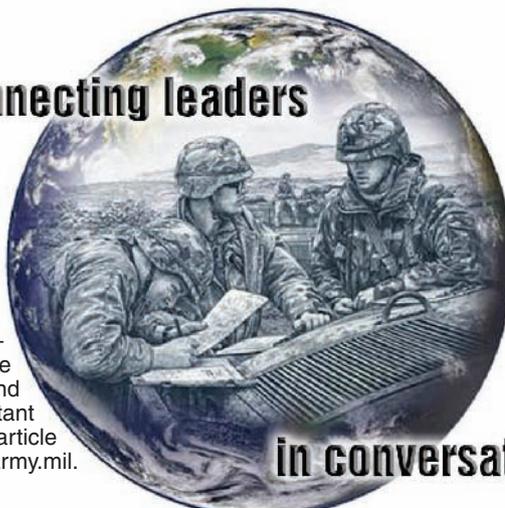
**Note to company commanders:** To see the other 100+ compelling accounts of leaders' experiences in combat, log in to the CC forum and go to the Warfighting topic. If you have combat experience yourself, we invite you to complete the Combat Leader Interview. It is one great way to capture your experiences and to help advance the profession!

Finally, we would like to thank the leaders who have already completed the interview. Your contribution is making a difference, and it is greatly appreciated by company commanders and those who are preparing to command now.

**Connecting leaders**

**CC is Company Commanders.**

The CC forum is a voluntary, grass-roots forum that is by-and-for company commanders. The forum is positive and practical—focused like a laser beam on the practice of company command and those things that are important to company commanders. Send article ideas to [nate.self@us.army.mil](mailto:nate.self@us.army.mil).



**in conversation**

*Art by Jody Harmon*

Company Commanders, connect at <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>



# CompanyCommand

*Building Combat-Ready Teams*



**To:** Company Commanders

**From:** Company Commanders

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## **Training Iraqi Forces**

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*“Concentrate on how you will train the Iraqi Army (IA) and prepare them for independent operations. The ticket out of Iraq for the Army is the fully self-sufficient Iraqi Army. If commanders at all levels and junior leaders don’t buy into this, they’ve already missed the boat. Training the IA into orienting on a given objective, gaining and maintaining contact, developing the situation rapidly, maintaining tempo and focus, reporting accurately and rapidly, retaining freedom of maneuver, developing weapons discipline and fire control, analyzing intelligence and operating off of actionable intelligence are the keys to breaking the heart of the insurgency. A well-trained Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police Force is the one great fear of all insurgents in Iraq.”*

—CPT Ryan Kranc, CDR, Q Troop, 4th BN, 3rd ACR, in the CompanyCommand professional forum.

Nearly three years ago, our Army defeated the Iraqi armed forces, bringing down a dangerous regime and giving hope to millions of oppressed Iraqis. Now, we are rebuilding the Iraqi armed forces in order to help fulfill the vision of security and Iraqi democracy. Not surprisingly, Army company commanders are once again at the forefront of executing the final 400 meters of national security policy. This month, we hear from a CO and his XO who are engaged in the complex, not-taught-in-the-schoolhouse mission of training Iraqi forces. JC Stroh and his Executive Officer, Ryan Hartwig, are tackling this mission as part of a Military Transition Team (MiTT) in Mahmodiyah, Iraq, where they train and advise the 2nd BN, 4th BDE, 6th Iraqi Army Division. JC commands C/1-75th CAV (RSTA), 101st ABN DIV (AASLT), and in between patrols with Iraqi counterparts, JC and Ryan took time to join CC’s conversation focused on Training Iraqi Security Forces by completing an online survey. Their responses are phenomenal and can help us all be more effective. As JC put it, “It’s great to hear that this feedback will go to others awaiting this similar assignment.” Here’s a look at their contributions to the profession and to the future of Iraq:

### **What are the key tasks & missions you’ve executed with the Iraqi Army?**

**Stroh:** Our job is to advise and assist this Iraqi Army (IA) infantry battalion in traditional infantry mission-essential tasks, while simultaneously conducting near full spectrum combat operations: Traffic Control Points (TCPs), Raids, Cordon and Search, Detainee Operations, Combat Logistics, Improvised Explosive Device (IED) patrols, etc.

Training has been focused on what they’ll do on the streets in the next week: basic training (completed mostly by the unit leaders: drill and ceremony, soldier code, etc.), Basic Rifle Marksmanship, Advanced Rifle Marksmanship, Close Quarters Marksmanship, Room clearing, Patrolling (reconnaissance, presence, etc.), medical aid, vehicle use in all operations, Cordon and Search, Raid, and TCPs.

**Hartwig:** In addition, an IA Company Commander and I recently deployed small IA teams, embedded with MiTT advisors, to overwatch a road that was suspected of being used by Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) as a key avenue to transport IED-making materials, weapons, etc. We have also recently

advised an IA Company on emplacing, constructing, and securing a permanent patrol base outside of town. This patrol base was built to support dismounted patrols throughout various rural areas and to conduct TCP operations.

### **How should we focus our training?**

**Stroh:** The most important training for Advisors is learning HOW to advise. Serious advisors must learn about advisor work by talking to previous advisors from the Special Forces community and MiTTs. They must embrace the fact that they are now trainers and helpers, not frontline leaders of American Soldiers in the traditional sense. They should engage in professional reading about advisor work in Vietnam, Guerrilla Warfare, and Insurgencies. This will help junior officers and NCOs understand how to better employ the Iraqi Army.

All Iraqi weapons are simple to maintain, fire, and repair. After a basic familiarization, advisors should be prepared to teach marksmanship and maintenance to Iraqis—the foundation is the same.

**CC MEMBERS: THERE IS A LOT MORE WHERE THIS CAME FROM!  
LOG IN TO CC AND CHECK OUT THE ONGOING DISCUSSION THREAD ON TRAINING IRAQI SECURITY FORCES.**

Photographs provided by CompanyCommand



*Cpts. JC Stroh and Ryan Hartwig train and advise the 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade of the 6th Iraqi Army Division in Mahmodiyah, Iraq.*

Advisors will need medical skills. Strive to have all Soldiers deploying to Iraq advanced combat life saver qualified. All MiTTs teams should have an expert-level senior medic.

Advisors' personalities also make the team; not everyone is a good teacher. Outgoing, energetic and positive leaders will have a greater impact on the Iraqi Army than the most proficient introverts or Advisors without a sharing attitude. Bottom line: **BE CAREFULLY SELECTIVE** of whom you place on MiTTs. We send our best and knowingly sacrifice for it because we care about this mission.

#### **Hartwig:**

- Gain a basic understanding of the Arabic Language, to include saying and reading numbers, basic greetings, cardinal directions, measurements (in metric), and a basic knowledge of tactical words (foot patrol, overwatch, ambush, capture, search, security, detain, etc.)

- Maintain all basic Soldier and leader skills. As MiTT advisors, we have to maintain proficiency in the basics, since during the training of Iraqis and the early stages of their development, we may be the only ones who can execute the most basic tasks.

#### **What equipment is essential?**

**Stroh:** Chances are you won't have many of the luxuries that many of the large Forward Operating Bases enjoy if you're on a MiTT. Bring your full field complement of survival items. MBITR radios should be the standard for dismounted ops, but the use of Motorolas is very common. Obtain a good Arabic/English Dictionary.

#### **What surprised you that you wish you knew about before you got in country?**

**Hartwig:** When we arrived, we expected the Iraqis to adhere to our standards and we enforced those standards. However, they grew accustomed to having someone else upholding the standards for them. Teach the Iraqis how to set and achieve *their own* high standards. Natural reinforcement (the natural outcomes of their performance) will help push the IAs in this. The IAs have naturally built their own METL by continuously conducting the same missions day after day, logistically supporting themselves on various missions, incorporating the proper uniform items and equipment for force protection and mission accomplishment. Iraqis do have systems, standards, SOPs, and TTPs in place. We must show restraint in holding the IAs to the U.S. Army standards, yet continue to assist/guide them in reaching a higher standard with each and every IA encounter.

**Stroh:** Don't arrive expecting the initial success at the level you expect from your own unit. First and foremost, Iraqis must learn independent operations. That should be your first goal. They are still developing an NCO Corps, which takes time.

#### **What have you found to be the keys to success in working with the Iraqi Army?**

##### **Stroh:**

- Set the example in training and missions. Simple things like uniform standards, how we carry our weapons,

**DO YOU HAVE INSIGHTS ABOUT TRAINING IRAQI FORCES?  
SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED WITH FELLOW WARRIORS: <http://tinyurl.com/boy9g>**



*American advisors oversee two Iraqi soldiers training in small arms proficiency.*

basic Soldier discipline will go a long way. You will be much more effective in training Iraqi soldiers through role modeling than you ever will be through a class or briefing. American Officers must show Iraqi Officers that they can also be good Soldiers. The American example is the only way we've found to prove to them that they can be "Soldierly leaders."

■ U.S. Army NCOs are the backbone of the MiTTs program. I handle a lot of political stuff most days and attempt to get staff processes working, but every patrol, every class, every inspection, is NCO-prepared and led.

**Hartwig:**

■ Challenge their Soldiers, NCOs & Officers with realistic training and missions that produce results.

■ Empower their subordinate leaders and shift more ownership to the NCOs. Teach the IA Officers the concept of span of control and make them place ownership on their subordinate leaders. Push the Iraqi Officers to relay their Intent, a Task and Purpose, and Endstate to their Soldiers and subordinate leaders, and then to step back and let it happen.



*Capt. Hartwig checks a map with an Iraqi soldier.*

■ MiTT Leaders need to be as good at listening as they are at doing.

***If something is going to go wrong for us in working with the Iraqi Army, what will it likely be?***

**Stroh:** A lack of professionalism on our part. Units need to place leaders on MiTTs who set the standard both in their home units and in a combat environment. There is no time to worry about policing our own leaders. Therefore, maturity, initiative, work ethic, and ingenuity is a must when taking part in the MiTTs mission.

**Hartwig:** Be careful not to completely run logistics for the IA. Doing so provides them with the false sense that they don't need to coordinate or take responsibility for their own logistical support. Make the IA support themselves logistically; once again, natural reinforcement will also help push the IAs to support themselves.

***What's the biggest challenge you faced in working with the Iraqi Army?***

**Stroh:** The Iraqi Army does not understand many of the American unit self-expectations in training, tactical missions, leadership, and Soldier standards and care. We cannot change their culture; they are a different Army with different values—but they *can* complete missions.

**Hartwig:** The biggest challenge is developing an NCO Corps that is reliable and can make the mission happen.

Develop a chain of command and find ways to get the Officers to trust their NCO Corps with making the mission happen. Patience, Patience, Patience.

***Do you have any TTPs in communicating with or instructing the Iraqi Army that would be helpful?***

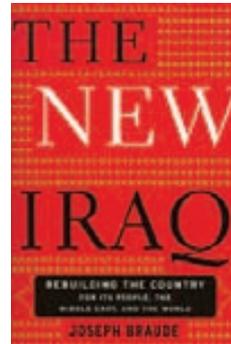
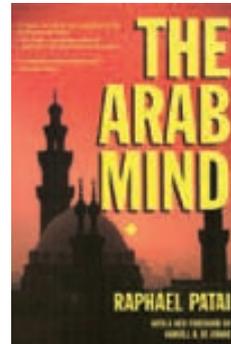
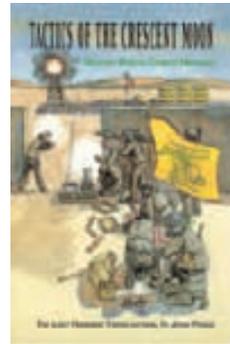
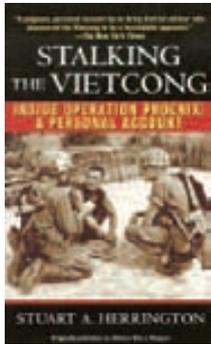
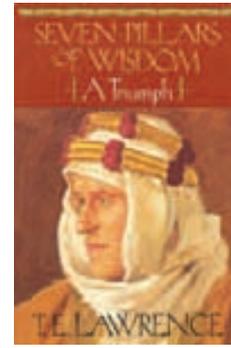
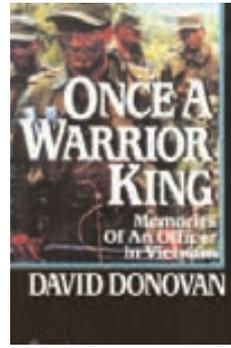
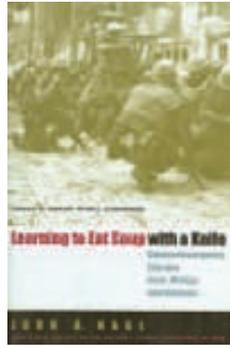
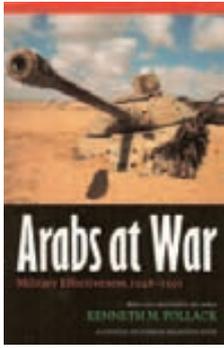
**Stroh:** Learn Basic Arabic. The role of an Advisor requires a robust language capability. All MiTTs Soldiers should begin a self-learning process of Arabic or else rely on an Interpreter for everything. You must be able to communicate in gestures, but also know how to say the basics of the mission set. Get a dictionary, work with an Interpreter, do whatever you need to learn 50 common phrases.

ALWAYS be a teacher and leader BY EXAMPLE in everything. Keep it SIMPLE in all approaches. Let the Iraqis lead their own training. Do train-the-trainer on everything. Empowering the Iraqi leaders in front of their men is ESSENTIAL. Prepare them beforehand as much as possible and then step back during their limelight training time.

**Hartwig:** Our actions have been the best instruction, not our words. Have the MiTT NCO model how to conduct the task or mission first. Many times our interpreters fail to have the ability to translate tactical "lingo" to Arabic. When we model the endstate prior to instructing a task, the Iraqi Soldiers get the point.



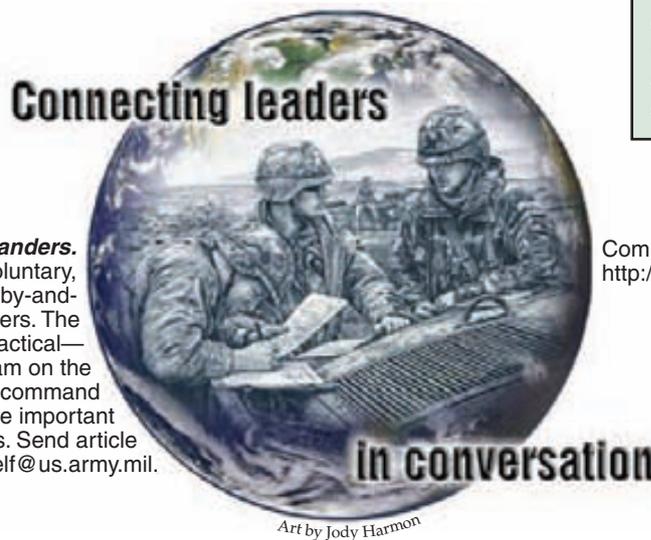
*Capt. Stroh conducts a patrol with a team of Iraqi soldiers.*



**Here's a short list of great books that company commanders are using to prepare for the mission of training Iraqi Security Forces:**

- *Arabs at War* by Kenneth M. Pollack, Bison Books, 2004.
- *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam* by John A. Nagl, University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- *Once a Warrior King: Memories of an Officer in Vietnam* by David Donovan, Ballantine Books, 1986.
- *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by T. E. Lawrence, Anchor, Reissue Edition, 1991.
- *Stalking the Vietcong* by Stuart A. Herrington, Presidio Press, 2004.
- *Tactics of the Crescent Moon* by H. John Poole, Posterity Press; Illustrated edition, 2004.
- *The Arab Mind* by Raphael Patai, Hatherleigh Press, Revised edition, 2002.
- *The New Iraq* by Joseph Braude, Basic Books, 2003.

We would like to thank the leaders who have completed the Training Iraqi Security Forces survey. Your contribution is making a difference, and it is greatly appreciated by company commanders and those who are preparing to train Iraqi Security Forces.



Special thanks to Art La Flamme, who began the Training Iraqi Security Forces discussion on CC and developed the related online survey.

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# CompanyCommand

*Building Combat-Ready Teams*



**To:** Company Commanders

**From:** Company Commanders

## **Air-Ground Integration**

**(Army Internal)**



U.S. Army, CW2 Mitch Carver

And if I concentrate while he divides, I can use my strength to attack a fraction of his. There, I will be numerically superior. Then if I am able to use many to strike few at a selected point, those I deal with will be in dire straits. —Sun Tzu

Effective integration between the Army's air and ground forces is critical in today's operating environment. Soldiers on the streets, in the desert and atop mountain ridges must coordinate daily with Soldiers flying above them to ensure mission success. As these junior leaders fight together, the CompanyCommand forum has become a place to share what they're experiencing and learning. In this ongoing conversation, some focus areas are emerging:

- *Predetermined SOPs (TTPs, graphics, etc.)*
- *Pre-deployment training (home station/training centers)*
- *Habitual relationships between units (either pre-deployment or during deployment)*
- *Pre-mission preparation (OPORDs/rehearsals/use of liaisons)*
- *Radio Communication (ad hoc, hasty planning)*

Here are some specific lessons that company commanders are learning and sharing via the CompanyCommand forum:

### **[THOUGHTS FROM AIR COMMANDERS]**

**Marshall Tway**

**D/1-1 CAV & HHC/2-501st AVN**

Okay, so I'm flying along in an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior under NODs (night observation devices). We get a call from the battalion whose sector we are in asking us to drop down to a company net. We arrive on the radio net and perform our check-in call. We receive this reply, "Okay...I'm in the HMMWV at Grid MB 12345 67890..."

#### *The "911 Call": Hasty AGI*

One of the things we were called upon to do daily during OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM was to conduct AGI with troops on the ground when no prior coordination had been conducted (we call this a "911 Call," as most often it involves friendlies in contact of some sort). The lack of prior planning in these types of missions generally translates into a lack of situational awareness (SA) on the part of the aircrews. In order to offset this, a lengthy conversation ensues and in some cases, we are forced to land to conduct a face-to-face meeting. So here are some tips for conducting AGI when you need us and we have not planned anything:

### **Pre-Mission Preparation**

We were operating in two-aircraft teams, dispersed a good distance apart. We picked a hilltop, settled into a good overwatch position, and I started using the optics to examine the likely avenues of approach. My right-seater said, "What's that in front of us?" I looked up, and saw one individual stand up, then two, then another, then all three picked up rifles. Yikes.

We beat feet out of there and reported to higher. The individuals in question turned out to be a friendly ground team emplaced to overwatch the same AO. They were nowhere on our graphics, nor was it ever mentioned in any of our mission briefs that ground teams might be anywhere in the vicinity.

This could have been a real tragedy. If we had been carrying ammo, we almost certainly would have laid down some type of suppressive fire to cover our egress, and someone could have been injured or killed.

**The Lesson:** Situational awareness is critical. Find out who owns the battlespace you're operating in and get a good sense of who's there and what they're doing. If you can't get that information, then be real careful about the extent to which you try to influence that battlespace.

### **Radio Communications**

During a home station training exercise, one of our teams was late taking off due to maintenance and weather issues. In the hurry to get on-station and checked in with the ground force, they abbreviated the check-in call and did not mention what ordnance they were carrying. When the ground troops requested that one aircraft suppress a dug-in troop position, there was silence for a moment, and then the aircraft commander mournfully replied that he was only carrying Hellfire and Stinger, not the most useful weapons for such a target!

**The Lesson:** Aircrews need to make sure they do a good check-in and that they've got both point target and area target capability in a team (if not on each aircraft), and they need to make sure the supported ground force understands the difference. They must also ensure the ground force gets all the necessary information during the check.

—Ray Kimball

■ **Check-in:** Grids get us the location, but no situational awareness. Once we tell you we have you, we both need to confirm the identification via a signal and exchange some vital information in order to begin coordination.

■ **Target ID:** Finding and positively identifying the target should preferably be done with an azimuth (degrees magnetic or clock direction) and distance from your position. Include some sort of target description. DO NOT pass a grid; we like to fly heads out of the cockpit as much as possible—passing a grid ensures that one of us will have to come inside to find it on a map, orient it, and then confirm it.

■ **How low can you go?** Push as far down as you can. You will be better served by pushing the aircraft down to the company command net and letting us talk to people there. It allows the platoon leaders, company commander and aircraft to share information, and it reduces reaction time. It also builds a working relationship between the aircrews and the ground crews. Ask a ground cavalry trooper—he knows this works.

■ **Task/Purpose/Intent:** Assign a task and purpose, and give your intent to the aircraft. Don't worry if it may not be exactly doctrinal or you aren't sure we'll understand. We will ask, or interpret what you tell us. Aviation works the same as ground forces when it comes to this portion of operational planning.

■ **Too Much Information:** We can, and will overwhelm you with all the information we can pass. We can see more; it is that simple. If this is starting to happen, let us know; tell us how we can best help you.

■ **Talk To Me!** We love to talk to you, but we like it even better when *you talk to us*. I ran an air assault security mis-

sion once where we were trying to get a blocking position to stop a car that was attempting to exit the cordon. The car got away. When we asked the leader on the blocking position if he had heard us, he replied, "Yes, but I was nervous about talking to you."

■ **Pre-determined TTPs:** Air/Ground Integration (AGI) is not hard, but it can become so when the communications are not clear. Pre-determined TTPs go a long way towards enhancing the effectiveness of the AIR-GROUND Team. When possible, get with a group of your supporting aviators and work out some TTPs. This will pay huge dividends later.

### **Ray Kimball**

F/3-7 CAV, 3rd ID (M)

**Face-to-face training** always trumps everything else. This should be especially doable with the new brigade combat team structure—aviation units should be identified to the units they support and train with them. To actually train on employment and integration, you need living, breathing people and an area to maneuver.

**Predetermined SOPs** are the next best thing to pre-deployment training—if you can't train with your air assets, at least train with an SOP that you'll both be using, so you're better prepared when the time comes.

**Radio communication** only can be risky, especially if there are no predetermined SOPs. It's very easy to misunderstand terminology and directions.

**Rehearsals** are great, but there's always some guy who doesn't get the word. If a rehearsal is the only chance you've got, get as many key leaders there as possible (down to the platoon and squad level).

### **Habitual Relationships**

We were nearing the end of our tour in Iraq. I had been detached from SQDN for a year, and due to ongoing operations we did not get the chance to attend briefings or rehearsals for an upcoming mission. The one saving grace was our relationships with the “Bandit” Troopers on the ground (my troop even called ourselves “Bandit Air”).

The mission started easily enough. We established communications with the battalion and started the route recon along the ingress route about 1 km ahead of ground forces. As the mission progressed, things got steadily worse. I think the battalion was overcome by events and was experiencing some pretty severe communications problems. The end result was that Bandit Troop and my troop ended up running the operation and coordinating the mission. My aircraft would point out targets and the B troopers would react. We had individual airplanes talking directly to the TCs and vice versa. The mission turned out to be a resounding success.

Afterwards, one of the 1SGs came up to the B Troop 1SG and said, “Wow, you guys really know this Air Ground Integration piece, it was almost as if you had worked together before!” to which the B Troop 1SG replied, “Back home, if I want to talk to the D Troop Commander, I walk across the hall.”

**The Lesson:** Even without attending rehearsals and briefs, we were able to utilize our personal relationships with the leaders of our sister troop and leverage that to pull the mission off. While far from the ideal, it shows the value that a personal relationship between units can have.

—Marshall Tway

### **[THOUGHTS FROM GROUND COMMANDERS]**

#### **Matt McGrew**

**HHC/1-24th IN (SBCT), 25th ID (L)**

The ability to employ aircraft is no longer just a combat arms skill. Like close quarters marksmanship and combat-ives, it is a critical skill for all Soldiers who leave the wire. I also agree it is a critical part of home station training to get leaders comfortable with talking to aircraft. It would be nice if we could train with the unit that will be supporting us, but unless you are in a unit that has its own organic assets, this isn’t likely to be possible. In a year in Mosul, I worked with aircraft from three different units at one time or another (as different units rotated through). With that being said, here are some of the keys to our success using aircraft in Iraq:

- If the unit is based in your area of operations (AO), you need to get your arms around them early. The sooner you start building relationships, the better. Part of this is giving them the Common Operating Picture (COP) for your AO. This includes not just your graphics but an overlay with common names for key terrain. After a year in one location, we had names for most key/distinctive terrain in our AO, allowing us to rapidly gain situational awareness across the battalion when units were in contact. After a couple of days in sector most pilots were familiar with our reference system. You must also ensure that everyone has the most recent listing of the frequencies and call signs for all units in your AO and our intelligence staff’s assessment of the AO. Doing these simple steps cuts down on the planning time.

- Concise communications are important if you are going to keep aircraft on a busy radio net. You don’t want to tie up a net that others have to use. Concise communications are directly tied to the pilots understanding your COP.

- Trust in lower-level leaders to effectively use aircraft in the best way to support their mission. This started with home-station training but was solidified after several

months in combat. This is a function of your leadership climate and it is different for every unit.

#### **Chris Danbeck**

**F/2-2nd ACR**

- Get as low as you can go: I cannot agree more and implore fellow commanders to heed your advice about pushing down as low as possible. This allows the pilot to talk directly to the PL or PSG and communicate what was going on at the objective. I never found it to be overwhelming to the PLs, since they were ready for the additional radio traffic. If I felt I wanted to keep a tighter rein on the aircraft then I would ask for the wingman to stay on my net.

- Knowing the mix of weaponry available to the leaders on the ground is vital during check-in. The onus is on ground commanders to educate our platoon leaders about what packages you guys can carry and what the effects are.

- For the ground guys who are in units that do not have frequent access to OH-58D aircraft or pilots, do some research. Make some calls and put together some kind of OPD to get your junior leaders to understand the capabilities and limitations of the aircraft. We were able to get in the aircraft for familiarization flights, and the pilots were able to ride around in our Bradleys and tanks. It was a blast and we had a much better understanding of the constraints that the aviators were under and they could get the same from us.

- It was commonplace in my unit for Soldiers to confidently talk to aviators, and using SOP cheat sheets, they could perform AGI. The farther apart we get in the garrison environment the poorer our abilities to meld and mesh on the battlefield will be.

#### **Bryan Carroll**

**B/1-24th IN (SBCT), 25th ID (L)**

- Air and ground assets need to be incorporated at the lowest possible level. A platoon leader or squad leader needs to be trained and feel comfortable talking to aircraft.

**Here are some references that company commanders are finding helpful for Air-Ground Integration:**

- *FM 3-21.38 (FM 57-38), Pathfinder Operations*, October, 2002, ([https://akocomm.us.army.mil/usapa/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_aa/pdf/fm3\\_21x38.pdf](https://akocomm.us.army.mil/usapa/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_aa/pdf/fm3_21x38.pdf)).
- "Air-Ground Integration" by CPT Shawn Hatch, *ARMOR Magazine*, JUL-AUG 2005, (<http://www.knox.army.mil/center/ocoa/ArmorMag/CameronIndex/4CPThatch05c.pdf>).
- *101st ABN DIV (AASLT) GOLD BOOK*, July, 2002, (<http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/army/docs/101st-goldbook/>).

In the current environment you will use them nearly every day. That leader needs to be able to accurately and quickly give his position, the enemy or suspected enemy positions, and his intent for the aircraft.

- Conduct an Air Mission Briefing before any major mission. These are paramount to success. Brief the pilots your order. Make sure you all have the same graphics. Make the pilots back brief you on how they understand their mission unfolding. In short, treat them as you would one of your platoons. The amount of power they bring to the fight in regards to recon, surveillance and fire is huge.

- Train as you would fight in country. If your pilots aren't part of the unit, go find them and talk with them. Our Apache squadron was a National Guard squadron out of South Carolina. They started coming to our Brigade meetings and events six months before we deployed. Integrate them into everything you do. Get your Soldiers out talking with them and conducting missions. Send your fire support officers and noncommissioned officers and their teams to train with them.

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***"Back home, if I want to talk to the D Troop Commander, I walk across the hall."***

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**Keith Kramer**

**A/3-69th AR, 3rd ID (M)**

- To truly integrate the assets, you have to conduct regular coordination and synchronization at the supported lev-

els to ensure the aviation and the maneuver all understand each others' upcoming operations and graphics. This can be accomplished with regular Task Force (TF) synchronization meetings that include all commanders and slice elements, and brings in the attack aviation elements as well.

- One challenge with integrating attack aviation is that most of the operations in which we need attack aviation are very hasty or time-sensitive. The vast majority of the time that attack aviation is required is for "troops in contact" situations to help isolate an area or provide Close Combat Attacks so the maneuver unit can close with and destroy the enemy. The attack aviation I usually worked with understood our city graphics and generally understood our local terms for areas as well (after a very short period of operating in our AO). If they were new, either I or a PL/PSG talked them into the area using clear landmarks and cardinal directions working from big to small. As a plus, the TF was quick to push the aircraft to the lowest level.

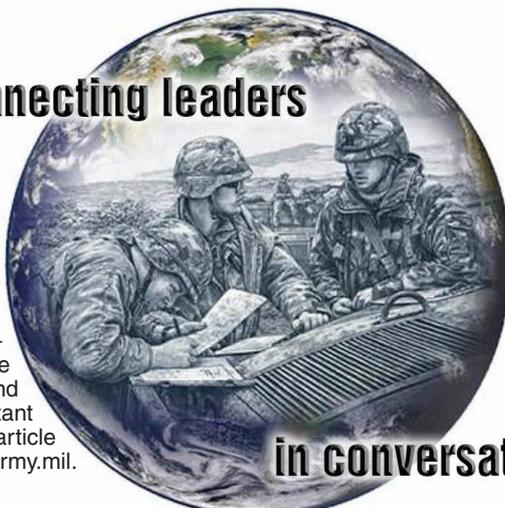
- To train this integration, we must invest quality flight hours in a garrison MOUT site, with leaders talking Apaches and Kiowas on-target on a realistic objective that has numerous buildings, streets, vehicles, etc. After the leaders have talked them onto targets dry, they need to move the exercise to the range for live iterations. Raise all the range targets and have the leaders practice calling in the attack aviation from various safe angles and discriminating which set of targets is the threat so they can talk them onto the proper set using the same principles. The range fans and angles of attack can be used to teach them about adjacent units and weapons effects.

***Company commanders: We invite you to join the conversation and share what you're learning when it comes to integrating air and ground forces.***

## Connecting leaders

### **CC is Company Commanders.**

The CC forum is a voluntary, grass-roots forum that is by-and-for company commanders. The forum is positive and practical—focused like a laser beam on the practice of company command and those things that are important to company commanders. Send article ideas to [nate.self@us.army.mil](mailto:nate.self@us.army.mil).



Art by Jody Harmon

Company Commanders, connect at <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>

# CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams

**To:** Company Commanders  
**From:** Company Commanders

## Prepare for Combat

Preparation for combat—the act of making Soldiers and equipment ready— evokes images of assembly areas, ranges, duffel bags, and alert rosters. There’s nothing quite like the energy you feel in the company area as a deployment draws near. This month we bring you commanders’ feedback on their preparation for combat, as they contributed through CC’s “Combat Leader Interview” question:

**What was most helpful in preparing you for the challenge of leading Soldiers in combat?**



### Chris Altavilla

**B/1-14th IN, 25th ID (L)**

Hard, realistic training that builds the team and the confidence in each man that we could accomplish any mission. You will fight as you train, so train hard.

### Greg Ford

**C/311 MI, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT)**

My fellow Company Commanders. Being part of the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) I could rely on Infantry, Engineer, ADA, and other branches to give me tips and advice. My brother was a Rifle Company Commander in the same BCT, so I always had a person I could turn to for help.

### Wes Morrison

**C/1-120th IN, 30th HSB, 1st ID (M)**

We developed a “combat focused PT” program that included road marching and squad competitions that raised morale and improved overall physical fitness. This PT was “focused” on wearing all your gear: IBA, Kevlar, and personal web gear. It gave the guys the real “feel” of moving with everything on and tested how fit they really were.

### Orlando Cosme

**D/3-325th AIR, 82nd ABN DIV**

When we deployed to the National Training Center (NTC), we took it very seriously; it wasn’t just another NTC rotation. Also, as a company, we conducted some very specific mission rehearsals and developed a lot of SOPs

from scratch. We sat down with leaders who had been to Afghanistan and incorporated some of the TTPs and SOPs. There’s nothing that can get you 100 percent prepared for the challenges of leading in combat. However, once on the ground, quickly confirm your unit SOPs and battle drills, get a read on how the enemy operates in your sector, avoid potential ambush routes, avoid establishing a pattern on your patrols, and never get complacent.

### Eric Lopez

**C/1-87th IN, 10th MTN DIV**

Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC). Dealing with the abbreviated orders process, maintaining Soldiers’ disci-

pline under stress, and dealing with adversity and a thinking enemy were great preparation for Afghanistan.

**Anthony Flood**

**SPT CO/2-20th SFG (A)**

Ranger School. Ranger school is the Army's best leadership school. Leadership is leadership whether it's an Infantry squad or running the mess tent. Again, given the type of conflict we faced, all Soldiers are in the Infantry now as it were. Ranger school is a short, intense "crucible" of experiences which will last a lifetime. I learned as much about myself as I did about others, especially the leadership part.

**Wendy Merz**

**416th Trans Co (POL), 3rd ID (M)**

Convoy Live Fire exercises are a great addition to garrison training. We've learned that everyone can be engaged by the enemy, not just combat arms. We have to instill a warrior mentality in all Soldiers. I learned that talking to anyone with experience in combat can help me better prepare my Soldiers for the rigors of Iraq. Don't be afraid to ask questions and be aggressive in getting answers.

**Jason Hester**

**C/5-158th AV**

Knowing the Soldiers. Every company has unique individuals and differing social dynamics. The fact that you may be on staff waiting for command does not preclude you from learning a good deal about the collective and individual personalities of your future company in many cases. I

deployed to Kuwait for the subsequent invasion nine days after I took the guidon. Luckily, I had already been flying with my future company for some months beforehand as a staff aviator. During those interactions prior to my command, I strove to learn as much as I could about the individuals, the perceptions about peers within the company, the groups that worked well together, what drives them, what is important to them, what their weaknesses are, etc.

**Paul Voelke**

**A & HHC/4-31st IN, 10th MTN DIV**

For me personally, there was the pre-deployment briefing, when I looked every spouse in the eye and told them that I would do everything that I could to bring everyone home in one piece. There is no greater motivation than the faith that your Soldiers' spouses and parents place in you. Tactically, I told my leaders that I wanted the company to be calm, intelligent, rehearsed and efficient under any conditions. What I meant was: take a moment to figure out what you're going to do; know what the second and third order effects of your actions are; think and talk through contingencies; don't waste your or (more importantly) your Soldiers' time, effort, or bullets. I wanted my guys to be surgeons, not cowboys. Not cocky and reckless, but smart and precise.

**Ryan T. Kranc**

**Quickstrike Troop, 4/3rd ACR**

Leading in combat the first time in OIF 1. As a platoon leader, I had the benefit of a great commander who showed me through example the best way to lead. This





that their actions directly affect the Soldiers, you become less effective as a leader as well as an organization.

**Trent Upton**

**A/2-5th CAV, 1st CAV DIV**

Observation and interaction with my fellow Company Commanders as well as my Battalion and Brigade Commanders. Be a “sponge.” Listen to what is happening in your soon-to-be AO. I spent my first three months in Iraq on staff. During that time I always paid close attention to what was happening in sector, TTPs that worked and those that

war is a platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and squad leader’s war. Allowing junior leaders to make decisions on their own, pursue the enemy, engage the local populace and leadership for partnership and intelligence, and to train the Iraqi Army as they would train their own Soldiers is the key. Having trust in your subordinate leaders to make the correct decision at the critical time and place is essential. Issuing clear guidance, intent, key tasks, and purposes is essential to empowering small unit leaders to lead effectively.

did not, and how commanders dealt with the ever-changing environment. I kept notes on all of these, so that when the time came for me to take command, I had a reference point from which to work.

**Frederick Toti**

**B/2-6th CAV**

We established an atmosphere of fierce loyalty and trust within the Troop. Because of our six months of training in Kuwait prior to LD, the Soldiers trusted my decisions and we all learned to trust each other as we trained. Also, I would take their input to heart. If someone had a good idea or something a little bit “out of the box” we tried it in training. As a result, we ended up training a lot of high energy tactics that were considered a little bit risky at the time; however, this training saved our lives.

**Matthew Reiter**

**HHT/3-17th CAV, 10th MTN DIV**

Knowing the Soldiers, understanding the threat in the area of operations (AO), and being mentally ready for the unexpected. I wouldn’t say that I did anything special. I led from the front from day one. Soldiers respect that. I never asked my Soldiers to do anything that I didn’t feel comfortable doing. I was able to go out on an area recon a week or so prior to taking command. That helped me understand the terrain better than just doing a map recon. If you have that opportunity, don’t pass it up.

The next best thing we did was make sure our LTs were squared away. I approached their professional development with one goal in mind: they would be tactically interchangeable with me. My instructor pilots played a key role in making this happen. I had extremely high expectations of my LTs from the start. I would often make them lead and brief entire missions. At first they were shy, but by the time we went to combat, I would have trusted either one of them to take the fight if I got shot down. In combat, it was a great feeling knowing that when I told them to execute something with their team or platoon that they would get the job done. I had no doubts in their abilities or decisions.

**Marco Ciliberti**

**D/2-14 CAV, 1st BDE (SBCT), 25th ID (L)**

Listening to my father, a Vietnam vet and retired infantry officer, and recalling my time spent as an armored cav PL.

**Brady Sexton**

**HQ & A/307th FSB, 82nd ABN DIV**

Using common sense, the KISS approach to training, and incorporating the junior leaders and junior Soldiers into the mix. Our Soldiers are smart and will make you a better leader. The second-order effect of this technique is that your junior Soldiers will feel that the leadership listens to them and allows them some say on which direction the company is going. It was not a full-blown democracy, but it was more like a “We are all in this thing together so let’s make it the best we can” kind of command. When the leadership forgets

**Jason Pape**

**B/1-13th AR, 1st AR DIV**

I think a lot of the tools that are available now to leaders in the Army (for example, on the internet) were the biggest help in preparing me to come over here (Iraq)—the fact that there are so many guys who have been here recently, or even guys who did this same sort of stuff fifty years ago who share their ideas, experiences, and lessons learned. Just to be able to get access to that so easily on various sites with lessons learned, companycommand.com, all the



different resources out there for people to share information and share experiences so that we don't all have to stumble through the first parts of any deployment or combat action, learning the same lessons again and again.

**Stacey L. Lee**

**169th Port Operations Cargo Company**

The core fundamentals of rigorous and constant physical and mental training are a must. I always add to the regimen an extra dose of R&D (Reading and Doing). I've always had a voracious appetite for reading and seem to be hardwired with an inherent drive to be moving and doing. Reading everything I can get my hands on is a key component. The search for innovative ideas and lessons learned from multiple fields has given me the flexibility to adapt to situations as they arise and to overcome challenges. Discussing and debating a broad range of topics with superiors, peers, and subordinates alike provides the perfect sounding board for ideas. Integrating new and fresh ideas into training and operations keeps everyone engaged and doing.

**Michael Gonzalez**

**D/1-504th PIR, 82nd ABN DIV**

Truly, it was versing myself in history and learning lessons from those leaders.

**Nick Ayers**

**B/1-34th AR, 1st ID (M)**

What prepared me the most was taking the time to talk and discuss with my PLs, PSGs, and Soldiers on what we were about to do. We rehearsed different scenarios and discussed the contingencies that could happen. We continued to train and refine SOPs while deployed and in between raids and missions so that when a hostile event did occur, we were all on the same sheet of music. It also gave me a chance to learn from the experiences of others. From these meetings, we were able to build an SOP while in Iraq that was very functional and useful...and saved valuable time when missions did come up.

**Matthew Stapleton**

**A/1-120th IN, 30th HSB, 1st ID (M)**

Contact with people and units already in contact... interacting at sites like this one (CC) is one of the best ways a leader can prepare for the present situation. LTs and CDRs should dig in to any number of books and articles referenced all over CC.com. I read several of the survey histories of Iraq and Raphael Patai book, *The Arab Mind*. I believe this knowledge helps with leading Soldiers because as you interact they sense that you are somewhat of a subject matter expert which builds their confidence in you.

### Ken Koyle

**E/701st MSB, Main Support Medical Company, 1st ID (M)**

Talking to those who had experience in a similar situation, such as Dan Hubbard at the Land Combat Expo, and to senior leaders (like my BN XO) who were preparing for the same mission.

### Dan Hubbard

**B/4-64th AR, 3rd ID (M)**

I knew beyond the shadow of a doubt who I could call on for the tough missions, who I had to direct and guide more, and who could take the ball and run with it. I knew what to say to certain individuals and the company/team during stressful situations that would help calm them and refocus their efforts on the fight.

### Bart Johnke

**HHC/6-101st AVN, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT)**

NTC, NTC, NTC, NTC. The value of learning how to operate in a desert environment was extremely useful, understanding how the sand and heat can affect vehicle and aircraft maintenance. Also, realistic training for an extended period away from the home station forces better planning and flexibility to cope with logistical problems that may arise. NTC also helped me understand the importance of PCC/PCIs.

### Dave Polizzotti

**B & HHC/1-66th AR, 4th ID (M)**

Talking to my peers who were already in command. They helped me understand what to expect, and how to handle a

lot of different situations that could come up. Additionally, Study, Study, Study. Since I knew the area of Iraq I would be commanding in, I had time to do some research on the area, its people and history. That helped tremendously once I was in the job—made interaction with the local populace easier.

### Chase Metcalf

**C/1-1st CAV, 1st AR DIV**

A diverse professional reading program that included military history, leadership, and psychology along with hours of professional discussions with my peers about how to lead in combat. Working with some of the best company-grade leaders in the Army allowed us to share ideas and lessons learned and helped prepare me for the challenges of combat.

**We normally view preparation primarily as an activity prior to an event—the word even begins with “pre”—and for the most part, it is. But preparation is also an “after” activity. When we take a close look at what we’ve experienced—whether in an AAR, in writing, in telling “war stories” and their lessons, or in simple reflection—we are preparing for the future.**

**The “Combat-Leader Interview” is one way company commanders are choosing to reflect, analyze their experiences, and prepare for new ones. A powerful by-product of reflecting and sharing through the Combat Leader Interview is the influence on others’ effectiveness.**

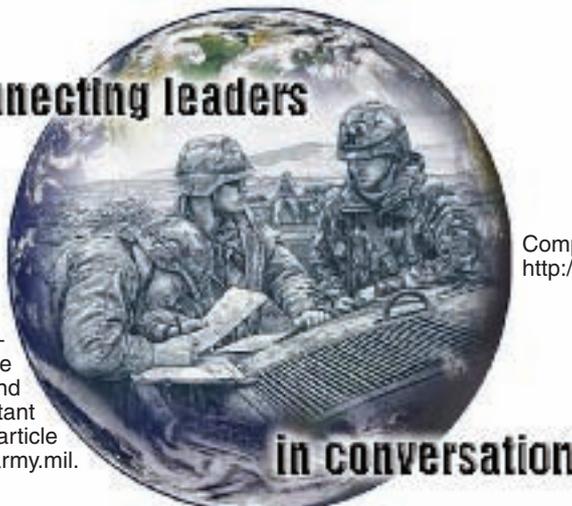
**A Note to Company Commanders:** *If you have combat experience yourself, we invite you to complete the Combat Leader Interview. It is one great way to capture your experiences and to help advance the profession! To see the other 100+ compelling accounts of leaders’ experiences in combat, login to the CC forum and go to the Warfighting topic.*

*Finally, we would like to thank the leaders who have already completed the interview. Your contribution is making a difference, and it is greatly appreciated by company commanders and those who are preparing to command now.*

## Connecting leaders

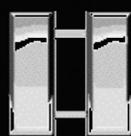
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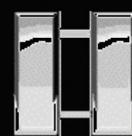
Art by Jody Harmon

Company Commanders, connect at <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>



# CompanyCommand

*Building Combat-Ready Teams*



**To:** Company Commanders **From:** Company Commanders

## Company-Level IPB

*“Remember that you know your area of operations better than anyone else—data that may be seemingly unimportant in the scope of a battalion operation may be very critical to your area of operations.”*  
—Paul Stanton

**Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield:** Throughout history, Soldiers around the world have gathered on horseback, around HMMWV hoods, in palm groves, on runways, and in foxholes to check their maps, to tweak their plans, and to anticipate the enemy’s next move. In today’s chaotic and complex world, our need to conduct IPB is as important as ever, even at the lowest levels. As company commanders, we are constantly observing, assessing, and predicting what we’ll face on the next patrol—and how the enemy will react to what we do. Many company commanders are refining their processes by turning to each other through the CC forum to discuss this crucial and evolving skill—IPB.

### **Matthew Benigni**

**A/1-12th CAV & HHT/1-7th CAV, 1st CAV DIV**

I think this is a discussion that maneuver commanders will continue to engage in for as long as we are in counter-insurgent operations. I always viewed the enemy in terms of an Order of Battle (OB), not just along specific danger areas of a route, but also within my company area of operations (AO). We looked at OB within the larger framework of the enemy’s campaign plan. We also broadened our definition of the forms of contact to include the following: Information Operations (both oriented on anti-Coalition themes and Pro-Insurgency themes), Direct Fire, Indirect Fire, IED (including multiple forms: VBIED, Suicide Bomber, etc.), Visual, Electronic, and Obstacles.

The next facet we tried to look at was terrain. The enemy uses all of these forms of contact to shape his plan extremely well. I had quickly assessed that within my AO, his combat operations shape his Information Operations. That being said, the key terrain becomes people or spheres of

people. If the key terrain we are trying to win is *people*, the decisive operation is probably in gaining influence within those groups; therefore, collection became shaping operation #1. We conduct combat operations in order to shape our Information Operations, maintain freedom of maneuver, and limit insurgent freedom of maneuver.

As a troop commander I spent about 30 minutes per day with my S2. I shared with him what I thought the OB was in my AO, and asked him how that compared with other areas in the BN and BCT footprints. Together we developed a fairly solid link diagram and OB specific to my company area of operations. The S2 actually would work analysis tasks for us, and he was glad to do it. If I could do it all over again, I would have included my platoon leaders in this from the beginning. By the time I realized how significant this collection effort was, it took me two months to get my platoon leaders in the same mind-set with enough situational understanding to pick up on indicators and make assessments. If I were going to Iraq again, I would make time to get my platoon leaders talking about the enemy in terms of the complete OB. Once we started doing that, my platoon leaders started understanding the importance of cultural awareness, and their tactical questioning yielded much more intelligence.



*CPT Joe Kuchan checks his map with his RTO, SPC Fulner, prior to assaulting into An Najaf during OIF I.*

In hindsight, gaining influence ended up being the purpose of my decisive operation, but until I had enough situational understanding within my AO to effectively conduct humanitarian aid and information operations, collection should have been my first priority. Early in our campaign we focused on combat operations as the decisive operations, and it took a significant transition in mind-set to eventually gain influence in our company area of operations.

### **Paul Stanton**

**B/1-502nd IN, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT)**

From a maneuver CDR's perspective...keep in mind that the "deuce" only knows what you tell him or her and the quality of the analysis will reflect the input. You are the one who knows what is going on in your AO better than anyone else—give the info to the S2. Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIR) are generated based on mission requirements—in this amorphous environment you have to keep the S2 informed so that you can adjust as necessary.

The S2 is supporting the BN—you have to focus what he/she gives you for your AO. There may be a tendency to inherit the S2's IPB and go with it—this would be a critical mistake. As the master of your AO, you MUST refine what you get. You are not absolved from answering the intelligence requirements, but you should not rely on it exclusively as you prepare for your own missions/patrols.

The S2 has limited people and assets to support him/her. If you overwhelm the S2 with "reports" that have little meaning, it isn't going to help anyone. I always gave the S2 the raw data, but I put my own analysis as a cover. Remember that you know your AO better than anyone else—data that may be seemingly unimportant in the scope of a BN operation may be very critical to your AO. The S2 won't know it unless you provide it. My experience was that providing my analytical insight to the S2 (along with all of the raw reports) helped focus the limited assets that the S2 had. The result was better input back to me.

I talked to the S2 every day, multiple times. I let him know what intel I needed, and helped him wade through the details of my patrol activity. Constant communication is a must.

### **Ted Stokes**

**A/6-9th CAV, 1st CAV DIV**

Here are some helpful factors in IPB:

- First, detailed post mission briefs that provide insight and data to the S2. Without a constant, steady flow of information the S2 and his section cannot identify trends and conduct analysis.

- Detailed, accurate, and timely patrol debriefs from *patrols that were in contact*. The information that is gathered from these debriefs allows the S2 to, again, build data on attacks in an effort to identify trends. He can also identify enemy TTPs and methods of attack that are specific to certain cells or individuals.

- Patrols can also be tasked to gather information on Civil Affairs project progression, identify sites and requirements for future projects, and assessments of contractor

work schedules and productivity.

- Patrols need to gather data on population demographics, religious sects, and civilian popular opinion in your patrol areas.

The key to all of this is for every patrol to have a detailed and specific PIR list prior to ever leaving the FOB gate. This allows the patrol to focus on what the commander needs to know (both lethal and non-lethal effects and targeting) and assist in gathering intelligence for the unit attachments that usually are minimally manned and over tasked.

### **Bryan Carroll**

**B Co and Rear Detachment/1-24th IN, 1/25th ID (L) (SBCT)**

#### **Before you deploy:**

- Find two or three really smart guys in the company and get them ready before the deployment. Teach them pattern analysis, debriefs, and link them up with the intelligence guys.

- Set up an area within your company command post (CP) in garrison the way you want your CP in Iraq to look. Start battle tracking things in garrison the way you will in Iraq and test your systems. You just can't jump into combat and do it differently then. What you do "day in and day out" becomes what you learn and do always.

- Hammer out your SOPs for debrief before you deploy, and practice them. This gets your guys in the rhythm and it constantly shows you areas to sustain and improve.

#### **In Country:**

The company CP needs to be doing duties that usually the battalion S2 is doing. I listed some below:

- Battle/Incident Tracking: both enemy and friendly. This will begin to form your clock methodology and geographic methodology to tracking enemy forces.

- Make sure you have the right NCOs in the CP. Guys get wounded, things happen; don't just leave these guys to recoup in the dark—use them to man the CP. That way you put their experience to work and you keep them spun up on what's going on out there.

- Conduct extensive patrol debriefs (in conjunction with battalion). Don't just let battalion debrief your boys. You know the area better than anyone (or you should) and usually take all that information in. If I wasn't on a patrol for whatever reason, myself and the operations officer sat in on the debrief. The battalion got their information, but so did I (to go back and plan future ops).

***"The key terrain becomes people, or spheres of people. If the key terrain we are trying to win is people, the decisive operation is probably gaining influence within those groups."***

**—Matt Benigni**

### **Stacey Lee**

**169th Port Operations Cargo Company**

A typical S2 Shop isn't manned to gather intelligence on every location or site in a unit's area of operation. The

shortfall is compounded in transportation and logistics units where routes can span several individual unit AOs. A smart “2” will tap into the assets that are out on the ground every day.

During my last deployment we found that one of the best sources of intelligence was the truck drivers who spent five or more days each week on the roads and routes. A good debrief passed to the “2” after a mission helped identify areas of concern for future missions. Our higher headquarters took this a step further and required weekly or bi-weekly updates and specific areas of interest. Every aspect of the mission, from requesting modified routes to justifying additional armor and security, benefited from the intelligence gathered.

A few fringe benefits of the intelligence gathered were the identification of roads in need of repair, very specific additional security requirements, and “dead spots” for comms that we were able to correct. Ted’s point about the importance of a detailed and specific PIR list is relevant not only to units conducting patrols but every unit in an AO. A good convoy commander will always end a convoy briefing with the disclaimer that if it doesn’t look right then it probably isn’t.

### Art La Flamme

B Co (TES)/302nd MI BN, V Corps

There’s always strength to be found in knowing the Battalion Commander’s decision points. As a commander, knowing what it is that your own boss faces, and what it is that he is having his staff work to answer, can go a long way in steering both the mission of your own company, as

well as its intelligence collection. Stacey is right, in that oftentimes it’s being able to reach out and tap into the people who are out and about, but a big part of that is linked into the pre-brief, knowing what to cue people to be on the lookout for and what to come back and brief. Yes, a good S2 and crew will be all over this, but it need not be at the exclusion of a company commander—the commander has as much of a vested interest in the success of the company and battalion mission as the S2 and other staff have. As a young S2, back in the KFOR 1A days, my PFC and I made some great gains also in working with LOGPAC crews, but it took a lot of work, before and afterwards, to fully prepare for and fully leverage all that they could collect for us, and things only improved as we involved the company commanders (and 1SGs) in the process more and more.

Additionally, a basic understanding of intel collection and intel analysis helps. It’s a simple enough process, extrapolating from a decision point to the PIR and all the way on down to the information requirements and actual tasks to be done to collect intelligence. There is skill, though, in doing, skill that must be refined, skill that must be sustained.

***A Note to Company Commanders:*** We invite you to log in and join your peers in conversation on the subject of Company-Level IPB. It is one great way to capture your experiences and to help advance the profession!

Finally, we would like to thank the leaders who have participated in and shaped this discussion. Your contribution is making a difference, and it is greatly appreciated by company commanders and those who are preparing to command now.

**Here are a few references that Company Commanders are finding most useful in their own IPB:**

**FM 34-8, Intelligence For Commanders** <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/269244>

**ST 2-50-4, Commanders Intelligence Handbook** (Updated version of the above) <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/703793>

**“The Twenty-Eight Articles,”** by David Kilcullen, <http://tinyurl.com/ft8ua>

## Connecting leaders

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**in conversation**



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**From:** Company Commanders

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## Leadership and the Death of a Soldier

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*"No one ever prepares you as a Soldier or a commander on how to deal with these losses, much less how to speak to your Soldiers when you are dealing with the same pain."*

*—Michael Gonzalez (D/1-504 PIR)*

One of the harsh realities of war is that our Soldiers get killed. The death of any Soldier is a traumatic event for a unit. In the few days following the death of a Soldier, a leader must take actions that will likely have lasting repercussions on the unit and on the family of the deceased Soldier.

The following composite story was developed from interviews with several commanders who experienced the death in combat of one or more of their Soldiers—Nick Ayers (B/1-34 AR), Orlando Cosme (D/2-325 AIR), Mike Gonzalez (D/1-504 IN & C/1-3 IN), Matt Harmon (SFODA 313 & HSC/1-3 SFG), Chris Hossfeld (C/1-24 IN), Ryan Mor-

gan (C & HHC/2-502 IN), and Jess Sellars (F/2-3 ACR), as well as one acting commander, Todd Arnold (K/3-3 ACR) and one platoon leader, Nate Self (1/A/1-75 RGR). Art La Flamme (B/302 MI), a casualty assistance officer in US-AREUR, also contributed ideas in a CompanyCommand forum discussion that are reflected in this story.

### **Leading my Soldiers after the death of one of our own (A composite story)**

I doubt that anything could fully prepare a company commander to deal with the death of one of his Soldiers. I always knew that it could happen, but I never saw anything written about it. As I learned, it happens, and it demands a lot from commanders. I don't pretend to know all the answers, but here's my experience, put on paper for my fellow leaders who might find themselves in a similar situation.



1LT Todd Arnold at the memorial ceremony for SPC Ronnie Williams, one of his troopers in K Troop, Thunder (3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, who was killed during combat operations in Iraq.

After SPC H was killed, I pulled his platoon in and talked with them. These were his closest friends. Some needed to vent, some needed time just to think and grieve. The chaplain spent a lot of time with them, and I coordinated for the combat stress team (CST) to visit. People were angry and questioned everything. We did a good AAR to see if there were any TTPs we needed to adjust. There weren't. The AAR was also a good time for me to reinforce that all of them had done their best in difficult circumstances, that there was no reason for them to feel guilty or hang their heads. I let them know that I was hurting, too, but I also tried to keep my head up. The mission had to go on, and I was the commander.

Also, as soon as we had heard about the death, as per SOP we locked down communications between Soldiers and their families until we could confirm that the casualty notification process had been completed. That's a small price to pay to ensure that the deceased Soldier's family is informed in the right manner and that other families in the unit are not traumatized by rumors.

I had the 1SG work with the Soldier's PSG to inventory his equipment and prepare his personal effects for shipment to his next of kin (NOK). As a task-organized unit, we had to sort out some issues of chain of custody for equipment. As we inventoried and packed his personal effects, we tried to keep in mind that the locker we sent home would be one of his family's few tangible keepsakes of the man the Army and the war took from them. We wanted it to be like a shrine. Things were folded and packed neatly. Some of his friends added personal notes and photos in the locker for the family to see.

I talked with the other platoons, too. They wanted to help out, but the platoon that suffered the loss needed their space and didn't want others involved. I made the PLs and PSGs aware of the mixed feelings. I don't know if I could have done more.

The battalion took the lead on planning a first-class memorial ceremony, which was incredibly important for the whole unit to begin to get a sense of closure. At the memorial ceremony, I kept my remarks short but personal; a memorial ceremony is not the time to be generic or talk in clichés. His friends took longer to speak, as they should. We videotaped the ceremony, editing it as appropriate, and sent the tape, along with the program and photos from the ceremony, to his family.

The memorial ceremony took place about 26 hours after the death. Six hours later, I sent his platoon back outside the wire. The down time had been needed, but now they had to get busy again. They were angry, scared, sad. I talked to them about honoring our fallen by completing the mission. I told them that I needed them to be professionals,

to keep their heads in the game. We knew by then that even if we did everything right, we could suffer casualties, but I reminded them that our odds would be better if we focused on the mission at hand and maintained our standards.

I offered to the PL and PSG to join them on that first mission. It demonstrated to the Soldiers that I wasn't afraid to go back out. It also would have been a way to ensure that their anger over the death didn't cloud their sense of values and professionalism. They seemed to appreciate the offer but declined. I did work with the platoon's chain of command and the CST to assess whether any Soldiers were not ready to get back in the fray. We ended up holding one guy out for a couple days, until he understood that "pay-back" would only make things worse.

Soon after notification, my battalion commander and I had both called the Soldier's family. I followed up a few days later, as they prepared for the funeral back home. Of course the parents are experiencing a lot of emotion and are going to blame you at some level, but they really appreciated the calls. We talked about what a great person their son was. I wrote them a pretty long letter, aware that they'll likely keep it their whole lives. I've heard that some COs haven't written letters. In my opinion, a thoughtful letter to the family is an absolute must. It's the toughest thing I've ever had to write.

I also coordinated with rear-d to establish communication with the casualty notification officer (CNO) and casualty assistance officer (CAO). They were able to help me under-



*CPT Jess Sellars and 1SG Lynn Bradley of F Troop, Sabre (2nd) Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, at the memorial ceremony for one of their Soldiers, SGT Tyrone Chisholm.*

stand how the family was coping, and I was able to convey to the CAO how important it was to me and my unit that the family be treated with the utmost compassion. A Soldier who dies has two families who love him—one who raised him and another who trained and fought alongside him.

I know this isn't always the case, but we had the opportunity to select a Soldier to escort the body home. We chose SPC H's squad leader, SSG G, because he'd already met the family and was present at the death. We knew we were accepting some risk to our other Soldiers by giving up a leader while the missions continued, but we felt it was very important to have the right representative of our unit and the Army there when the family received their son's body.

The arrival of SPC H's replacement required my attention. The concern was that some Soldiers in the platoon seemed to think that this poor private was trying to replace their buddy and was just a "FNG." The 1SG and I spoke with all of them about how their friend was irreplaceable, yes, but his combat power HAD to be replaced, and our new Soldier was now part of our team.

In the weeks and months after the death, the 1SG and I tried to designate time to cope for the guys who were present on the mission with SPC H. Talking about it with each other, the chaplain, and the CST in the days immediately following the incident were important and valuable, but that didn't totally resolve all the issues for the surviving Soldiers. We'd heard that the grieving process takes time, and from what I've seen, that's true. It's still going on for many of us.

It was important to the Soldiers in the company that SPC H be memorialized, not just at the ceremony, but permanently. Since SPC H was a PT stud, we chose to name our unit's semi-annual PT competition after him. A plaque that remembers our fallen hero hangs in our company area.

I'll never forget SPC H, nor should I. His photo sits on my

desk as I write this. After returning home, I visited his family, and together we visited his gravesite. His family asked a lot of questions about their son and the circumstances of his death, and they seemed profoundly relieved to have their questions answered. We have stayed in touch. On the first anniversary of the death, I made it a point to call them, and also to connect with the other Soldiers who were most affected by the death.

I now understand the things I'd heard about the burden of command. But I've come to accept the fact that anyone could get killed in war; usually, it's no one's fault. I don't let my Soldiers feel guilty about the death, and I try to remember that myself. I've had to learn how to grieve, and how as a leader I can help my other Soldiers and my fallen Soldier's family work through the grieving process.

I wouldn't wish this experience on any leader. I hope this helps some commander out there be a little better prepared than I was when the bad news comes over the net.

***A Note to Company Commanders:*** We invite you to log in, share your own experience, and join your peers in conversation on this topic. We owe it to our Soldiers, their families, and our Nation to prepare ourselves and to help our fellow professionals prepare for the challenges of leadership after the death of one of our Soldiers.

Additional resources for leading your unit through the death of one of your Soldiers can be found in the Soldiers and Families topic of the CompanyCommand forum and in the Leadership topic of the PlatoonLeader forum. Many thanks to Ray and Mindy Kimball for creating a great resource on casualty operations for company-level leaders.

Finally, we would like to thank the leaders who shared their experiences on this difficult topic. Your contribution is making a difference and is greatly appreciated by current, future, and past company-level commanders.

## Connecting leaders

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Art by Jody Harmon

Company Commanders, connect at <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>



# Company Command

*Building Combat-Ready Teams*



**To:** Company Commanders

**From:** Company Commanders

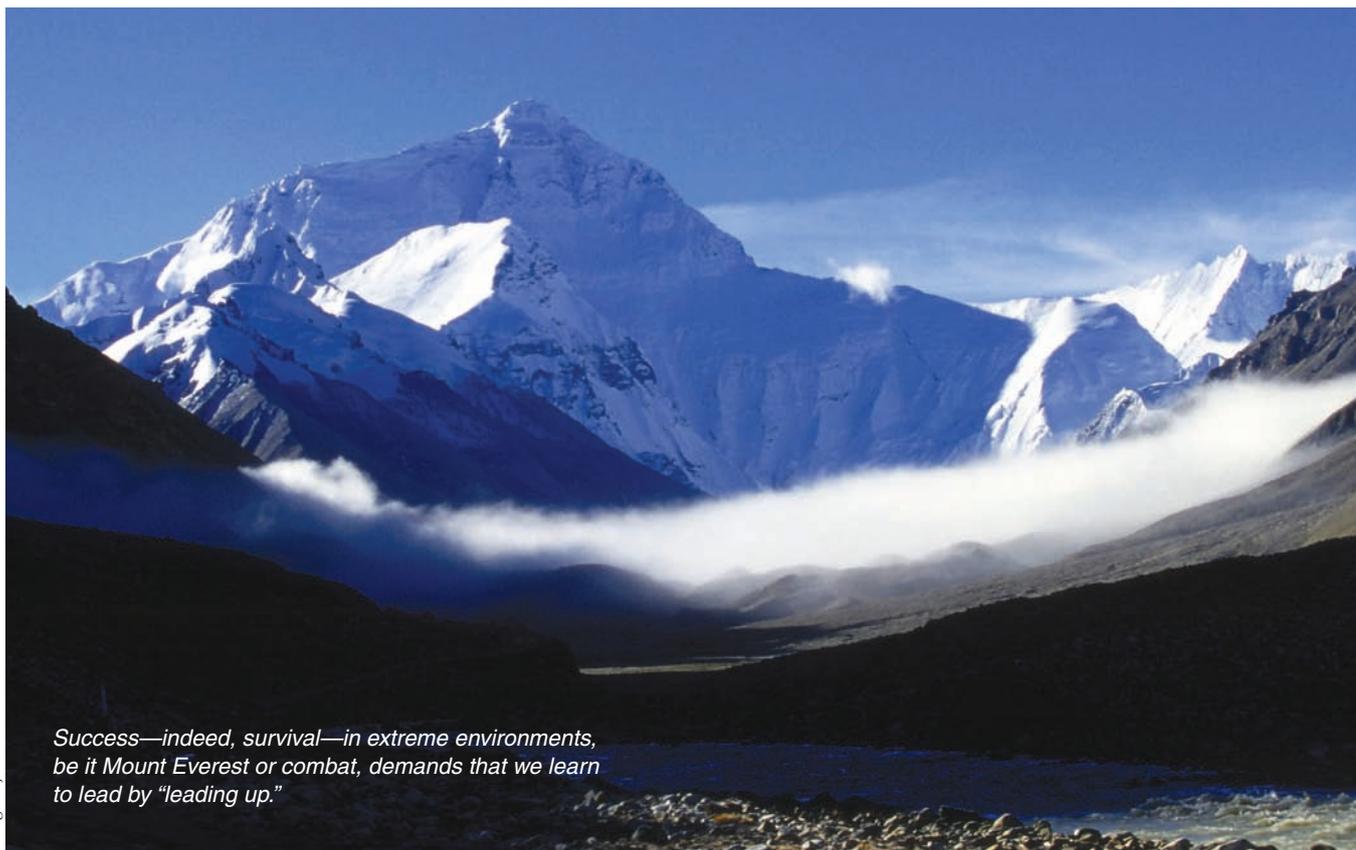
## “Leading Up”

May 1996 is marked by tragedy in the extreme mountain-climbing community. While seeking to summit the earth’s highest peak, eight climbers died of exposure and several others lost frostbitten hands and feet during a courageous fight against the elements. What makes this event even more tragic is the likelihood that it might have been avoided had team members “led upward.”

Among the teams seeking to summit Mount Everest that day, one was from New Zealand and another was from the United States. The New Zealand team with fifteen members was led by the legendary Rob Hall, who in the span of seven months ascended the world’s “seven summits”—the highest point on each of the seven continents, including Mount Vinson in Antarctica. Meanwhile, the U.S. team with twelve members was led by Scott Fischer. His numerous climbing exploits include an ascent of Mount Everest with-

out the use of bottled oxygen. Both team leaders were widely regarded as experts among climbing experts. If your objective was to climb Mount Everest, you couldn’t pick more qualified expedition leaders.

At around midnight on May 9th both teams departed Camp IV—the highest camp on Mount Everest at 26,000 feet—with the objective of reaching the peak by 1300 on the 10th. Due to the extreme nature of the environment, surviving this last push to the top of Everest is literally a race against the clock. Accordingly, both teams had established a turnaround time of 1400. To continue a push upwards past this deadline—no matter how illusively close the summit was—would be to jeopardize lives. Bottom line: If a climber hadn’t reached the top by 1400, he wasn’t moving at a rate that would get him back to Camp IV before the darkness and extreme cold of night set in and lack of oxygen took effect.



*Success—indeed, survival—in extreme environments, be it Mount Everest or combat, demands that we learn to lead by “leading up.”*

Wang Sanjun



During the climbers' arduous ascent, a bottleneck occurred at one of the more difficult points along the path. 1400 hours came and went. In spite of this, several climbers, including team leads Scott Fischer and Rob Hall, continued on. Moreover, upon summiting, Hall waited until 1600 for an additional member of his team to reach the top—it was Rob Hall's fifth and final summit of Mount Everest.

At this point in the day a snowstorm that climbers had observed building for several hours blew in, reducing visibility to near zero. Teams became intermixed as they fought to survive. One group of eight climbers huddled together against the elements, pounding on each other to keep each other awake and from freezing—little knowing that at the time they were just 300 meters away from Camp IV.

Meanwhile, Rob Hall was caught by the storm near the summit. Rescue attempts to reach him were mounted the following day, but due to the weather, none could approach to where Hall and a few others were trapped. When these efforts proved fruitless, Hall was patched through to New Zealand via his hand-held radio linked to a satellite phone for one last conversation with his wife. He had survived 32 hours at 28,700 feet but he was frostbitten, out of oxygen, and could not move.

In all, Mount Everest claimed Rob Hall, Scott Fischer and six others that day. Their memory lives on, especially among the survivors.

There are many lessons to be learned from the experience of these climbers, one of which involves a failure to lead up. As one example, team members expressed regret that they didn't speak up and encourage enforcement of the established turn-around time.

In extreme environments like this—and combat—every member of the team must think and act like a leader, and in a sense collectively make leadership happen.

With this experience in mind, how are you doing at leading up? Mission accomplishment and the lives of our men may depend on our ability to do so.

As the CompanyCommand team interacts with leaders in combat, this very issue is consistently raised. The question remains, how do we do this? In the pursuit of leading up effectively, three principles we might choose to adopt are:

1. It is up to us to manage the relationship with our boss, and the time to think about leading upward isn't during a crisis. The ability to do so in chaotic and tense situations is built beforehand and is based on trust—our commander's trust in both our competence and our character. The best way to increase our ability to influence upward is to lead and grow a competent and motivated team. And regardless of how we feel about our commander, we seek to treat him with respect on a day-to-day basis. We aren't talking about ingratiating behavior here—we have professional demeanor and positive assertiveness in mind. If our commander thinks we disrespect him, the likelihood of our being able to influence him during crisis is greatly diminished. In sum, we work towards a positive and professional working relationship with our commander. The concern is less about us and more about the effect a bad relationship may have on our soldiers and mission accomplishment.

2. Leading up takes courage and a sense of ownership for all that is going on. We possess the strength of character necessary to support our commander in difficult situations and to speak up when appropriate. When a plan is



flawed or a lack of integrity is displayed, we have perspective for what's at stake for the unit and our soldiers and we possess the courage necessary to overcome our natural concern for what the personal consequences may be. Fischer and Hall, in spite of their competence and experience, put their teams at risk by violating an agreed-upon decision point and by ignoring cues in the environment that foretold a change in weather. Likewise, there may be a time that my commander, regardless of his expertise, needs me to address a decision or identify changes in the operating environment that could prove catastrophic. (A word of caution: This principle may only be applicable in a relationship with a commander who is trustworthy. Each of us in our own situations must make this determination. However, we can always pursue the goal of being trustworthy ourselves and of fostering a leading up culture within our own units.)

3. Leading upward includes creating a leading-up environment within our own units—an environment in which we encourage our junior leaders to voice ideas and concerns that could impact mission accomplishment and soldier care.

Two recommendations made after the Mount Everest disaster can be applied to our own context as well. The first recommendation was to assign within the climbing team a “devil’s advocate,” someone whose function during the climb is to observe changes in the environment and to appropriately and professionally challenge the leader’s assumptions

and decisions. A second recommendation is for the climbing team to maintain communications with a seasoned climber who is at the base camp and is not tied to the face of the mountain physically and emotionally—a peer mentor who is outside the situation and can provide perspective and ask questions that may not be considered otherwise.

### **Company Commanders Sound Off With Insights About Leading Up:**

#### **CO CDR #1:**

Just wanted to comment on your great newsletter about “leading up.” That is absolutely awesome stuff. The failure to “lead up” at times can be catastrophic in our profession and in some others as highlighted by your vignette about the Everest climb.

What is particularly poignant to me was the point you made about establishing trust and building a good relationship with your boss so that when the time comes to “lead up,” you haven’t expended all of your capital on minor things. This is a lesson that I have only learned myself in the last couple of years.

Having the intestinal fortitude to “lead up” is also known as being willing to “fall on your sword.” I previously ignored advice to not “fall on my sword” for everything and, in the process, was not focused on building relationships and establishing trust and confidence between myself and my boss. The result was that I made myself irrelevant and had no credibility left when it came time to “lead up” on a truly important issue. Having the ability to distinguish between what issues really require you to “lead up” and which ones really require you to just “shut up” has to be developed in order to be able to effectively “lead up” on the right issues and at the right moment.

I feel that I am far better at that now than I used to be but I still have to constantly monitor myself because it is part of my nature to try to take on every issue that I personally disagree with.

#### **CO CDR #2:**

One part of the newsletter that jumped out at me was this: “The concern is less about us and more about the effect a bad relationship may have on our soldiers and mission accomplishment.”

I have personally been working on this. I call it “getting over yourself.” I encourage my leaders constantly to “self-actualize” and to “sublimate your ego” as much as possible so that your own self never enters into the equation in determining what is the correct action to take and what is best for the unit. My personal philosophy is that there is nothing I won’t do (within the bounds of ethical, legal, and moral behavior) if it helps the unit. If that means that I have to suck up to someone, apologize for something that I don’t think I was wrong about, develop a good relationship with someone I don’t like or who I think is an idiot, or do a number of other distasteful things for the good of the unit, then I will do it. As I tell my leaders all the time, “it’s not about any

of us, it's about them—our Soldiers—and the BN.”

Anyway, just wanted you to know that your message struck home and was consistent with a couple of the truisms that I have discovered lately and that I have worked to improve on in my own self-development.

### CO CDR #3:

That is where we like to say you have to choose your battles wisely. What I have found that works is to gather your fellow commanders and work as a combined arms unit in influencing the S-3/XO/CO to get what you need done. The other way it has worked for me alone is to plant the idea initially then leave it alone and come back to it several hours or days later and address the specifics. It gives the commander time to think about it on his own with an open mind versus shutting the idea down immediately. The other thing is to ensure you address the situation with social tact—don't get defensive, and be sure you describe the logic in your COA.

### CO CDR #4

**(4-time USMC company commander to include Company L and Weapons Company 3d Battalion, 6th Marines)**

The technique of leading up can be very effective if applied in a tactful manner at appropriate times. A secret that many senior leaders will never share is that there are plenty of times in which the leader knows he does not have all the answers. Another unknown insight is that senior leaders value those that speak up more than those that don't. I certainly value someone that is willing to challenge a position I take. I always try to encourage this as part of a command climate, but sometimes service or organizational culture impedes this. Problem solving involves many in any organiza-

tion to achieve positive outcomes. It is too rare an occasion that a younger leader speaks up in a savvy manner.

The person who is a battalion or brigade/regimental commander is a lot different mentally, physically, and tactically than he or she was as a lieutenant or captain. In today's armed forces the amount of organizational and technological change that all levels of command have had to sort through in the last twenty years is staggering. Add on top of this the requirements of contemporary military service where the senior leader may not have been in an operational billet for a lengthy period of time, and one begins to see some of the challenges associated with aging in the armed forces. We affectionately call our bosses, “the Old Man” for a reason.

One constant that has not changed, however, is the need for leadership.

Leading up is a two way street. Senior leaders must adhere to the time honored leadership trait of knowing their subordinates, while junior leaders must understand all that moral courage implies: speaking up when not asked, knowing that it is the right thing to do to take care of Soldiers or Marines in a given circumstance. I have done this and have seen leading up best accomplished in private, not public forums.

**Company commanders:** *Through the CC Forum, you have access to an incredible network of leaders who are passionate about leading Soldiers and growing combat-ready teams. We count it a privilege to serve you as you lead Soldiers and build an exceptional unit. We invite you to participate, to engage in your forum, and to help make a difference. Together, we are unleashing the power of our great profession!*

**WANT TO READ MORE?** The concept developed in this newsletter comes from Michael Useem's book *Leading Up: How to Lead Your Boss so You Both Win* (2001). Three chapters and several articles, to include the complete Mount Everest climbing disaster, are available for free online at the Wharton School Leadership web page: <http://tinyurl.com/jp7bx>. What a cool leader development resource!

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in conversation

Art by Jody Harmon



# CompanyCommand

*Building Combat-Ready Teams*



**To:** Company Commanders  
**From:** Company Commanders

## Switching Gears in the Counterinsurgency Fight

The battlefield faced by our Soldiers today can be chaotic, complex and volatile. We are often called upon to operate independently, and we face the challenge of waging a counterinsurgency (COIN) fight that requires the successful and simultaneous accomplishment of two overlapping objectives—to kill the enemy and to win the support of the local population. An ongoing conversation on the CompanyCommand professional forum is focused on how the conduct of COIN operations affects the nature of leadership, and conversely, how leadership, for better or for worse, can impact the COIN fight. As company-level leaders, how do we aggressively kill insurgents yet at the same time win the support of the local population? How do we reconcile the apparent contradic-

tion that is frequently presented by these two objectives? And, how do we help ourselves and our units ramp down emotionally after an intense firefight so that we can interact with the local populace in an effective manner?

This is a timely and relevant issue in the current fight. All Soldiers and junior leaders need training in COIN, to include handling one's emotions when transitioning from the assessment/intelligence collection phase of an operation to making enemy contact and then back again to interacting with people within the immediate area of contact. Listen in as CompanyCommand members share openly about the need to switch gears mentally and emotionally in a COIN environment, and about the importance of training this capability.

### Company Commander OIF III

We knew he wasn't going to make it. First Sergeant was there looking at this Soldier as his life was slipping away. That was the first time I've ever felt this intense hatred for all Iraqis. And you have to work through that. The thing that really held me together was I knew my Soldiers were feeling all of the same things. If I'd given the order to destroy every house in that area, they would have done it. The platoon sergeant was bawling. I told him, "You have to hold it together." The thing that gets you through is you are focused on getting everyone else through it. Then when you get back, the world collapses in around you. Like, this has to be a bad dream, but it isn't. You kind of forget a lot of these guys are young kids. These are people you love ... We had a day down and then we were back at it. I talked to my guys, "We are angry but we are professional soldiers. We won't do anything immoral or unethical." You want to deal with that anger, but it would not honor the lives of those men to commit murder in their names.

*Cpl. Jared Jenkins and 1st Sgt. Arthur Abiera, Apache Troop, 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, search a home during a presence patrol on the outskirts of Sadr City, Iraq.*

### Jason Pardee Killer Troop 3/2 ACR

Leaders must understand how to fight a counterinsurgency and get their men to understand it as well. The "kill 'em all" mentality certainly won't help the Army or the United States complete its mission in Iraq or Afghanistan. The ability to understand and get your Soldiers to understand the fact that actions at platoon level can affect things at levels



Photographs: U.S. Army



*Top, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Martindale, commander, 1-8 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Band of Brothers, makes a gift of a soccer ball to an Iraqi child. Bottom, Iraqi soldiers from 1st Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment, provide security for fellow soldiers preparing for counterinsurgency operations in Tarmiya, Iraq.*



suasion; you mentally “repair” them so they are not spreading an unwanted emotional charge throughout your unit.

**Jonathan Dunn**  
**Killer Troop 3/2 ACR**

Killing the insurgents is certainly the 25 meter target, and most tend to equate “winning the hearts and minds” as the 300 meter target. However, it is probably better described as the 25, 50, 100, 200 and 300 meter targets—it is a continuous objective. More to the point, it is the more important objective, because it is what will ultimately bring success. Contrary to what many junior soldiers think, it can actually enhance our ability to kill insurgents through the increased cooperation of the local population, their indifferent neutrality, or at a minimum, less active opposition towards us. I think a lot of it comes down to basic leadership, in that you must set the example and know your subordinates. You should be able to know which soldiers are more apt to be weaker at emotional control, based on off-hand comments, prior engagements

and actions, etc. First and foremost, we need to provide tough, realistic training with scenarios that replicate going from “hot” (high intensity) scenarios to “cold” ones. This can and is currently being done at the combat training centers (JRTC, NTC, CMTC) right now as they prepare units for deployment. This addresses the tactical problem and can be trained extensively, both at home station and at the CTCs. However, it only addresses half of the problem, and quite bluntly, the easier half of the problem. The more difficult aspect, and also much more difficult to train, is the emotional side. At the end of the day, one’s ability to “wear two faces” is dependent on the ability to control one’s emotions. We can never truly replicate one’s battle buddy being wounded or killed, nor of course would we want to. However, we need to be able to throw “emotional challenges” at ourselves and our soldiers. Here, the limit is truly our own imagination.

way above the BN, BDE, DIV and even CORPS is key to the COIN fight. Educate yourself on COIN, teach your NCOs and get your NCOs to give classes to your Soldiers.

**Michael Eliassen**  
**E Company, 51st IN (LRS)**

What is also important, yet often overlooked, is a cooling off period for Soldiers after an event takes place where you must use force with the enemy. This is important before going right back into a neighborhood when the kids want to play soccer with you. I learned a great lesson over here in 2003 from my old BN CDR; when a vehicle is damaged in an attack, you stay up until it is fixed. That way the psychological impact on the other Soldiers is lessened. It should be the same way with Soldiers who are in a raid or an attack that produces casualties of the friendly, enemy or LN per-



*Soldiers from the 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division conduct a raid to find an insurgent sniper in Bayji, Iraq.*

### **Jonathan Silk**

**Killer Troop 3/2 ACR**

After several weeks of high-intensity combat in every sense of the phrase, the mission may require an operation with a civil affairs or PSYOPs unit less than 24 hours after being in intense combat. This is not easy to do. It becomes even more difficult if the “soft” civil affairs mission occurs in the same vicinity as the preceding high-intensity fighting. This is a leader challenge and a leader responsibility. Leaders need to be able to keep their units aggressive in order to destroy the enemy, but leaders also need to be able to refocus themselves when the mission at hand changes from high intensity to stability operations. Leaders cannot mentally stay in the high-intensity combat fight of yesterday or three days ago. The leader needs to refocus himself and his subordinate leaders—this is paramount to successful mission accomplishment. If leaders cannot refocus, it is certain that no progress will be made at the neighborhood (grassroots) level in improving quality of life. Grassroots progress is essential to obtaining actionable intelligence from the local population on enemy activity. Such intelligence from the local population often directly leads to offensive operations, and is the only way of maintaining the initiative against an elusive enemy. The first time leaders and Soldiers experience switching gears mentally between situations and controlling emotions should not be in combat—it should be in a hard, realistic training scenario. Units have to train to be emotionally intelligent. As leaders in units train together, they will learn about fellow leaders’

emotions. Leaders will learn when their fellow leaders are not controlling their emotions and not switching gears mentally from the last situation to the present situation, and then be able to step in and refocus them. When units are trained through hard and realistic training scenarios, they will develop emotional intelligence.

### **CPT Ryan Kranc**

**Quickstrike Troop 4/3 ACR**

Doing the right thing all the time, even when others aren’t looking (I’ve read this somewhere before) is the essence of military leadership in combat—although in combat, someone is watching at all times, whether it’s the kids at the school down the mud path or the insurgent on surveillance duty. We are always seen. Given the fact that perception is individual reality, we try not to give our enemies the silver bullets of poor perception. These values are only reinforced through good relationships with respected local leaders and populations. Combat leaders have to have the ability to switch gears between drive, neutral and reverse, sometimes bypassing the natural progress and grinding the gears in the process. For instance, small units must have the ability to pass out soccer balls in a community that shot at them on the last patrol, where things may have been heavily kinetic a short time ago. Keeping in mind that the eyes of the village, and indeed, the world are on us and our Soldiers, we, as leaders at the junior NCO and officer level, must be the moral compass that our Soldiers will follow when things get bad. Only through dynamic and realistic

training will we condition ourselves into making the right decisions at the critical point. Ethics classes, Law of Land Warfare training, and other seminar-style training events are good to reinforce success in these areas, but cannot be the silver bullet that prevents unethical or immoral action in wartime. Putting the Soldiers in the position in training that would most closely replicate those scenarios is key. It is going to be up to innovative and smart Assistant S-3s to develop the training that will expose the Soldiers to these types of situations. Canning the same training scenario over and over will not help. Changing training to replicate the contemporary operating environment through good research over SIPR as to the TTPs and methods currently being used in theater is essential. Relying on past experience, even from OIF 1, will not prepare soldiers for OIF 5. I remember that many of the TTPs we used in the summer of 2003 did not work at all during OIF III.

Reinforcing success by explaining to your soldiers the concepts of second- and third-order effects is crucial. Having them understand that everything they do or do not do elicits some sort of response and reaction from the insurgents, the populace and the media. Given that the populace has a significant hand in the way things go, the entire concept of counterinsurgency operations can be paralleled to a game of chess. Every move we make precipitates a countermove from the aforementioned factors. Thinking three or four steps down the road and wargaming how your opponent will react is the only way to stay ahead.

**LT Raub Nash**  
A/1-24 IN (SBCT)

It is imperative that you train your squad leaders to recognize when to change gears. Here is a personal example. Our task one day was to conduct Information Operations in the northern part of our company AO in Mosul. While the day started out well—soccer balls and chai for everyone—we were rudely interrupted by a drive-by shooting in which we chased the vehicle with help from our aviation assets all

over Mosul. Once we pinned down the vehicle to a small area, we had to clear about two blocks of homes to find the culprits. We found them and then returned to the neighborhood where the day began. As a leader I knew that my squad leaders would gather themselves and their boys and tone it back down for the IO campaign. As with most things involved with being a leader, I think it boils down to how well you know your squad leaders and how well you have trained them and conveyed the task to them.

**Company Commander**  
OIF III

I pulled the guys in and told them, “We took one on the chin today and we are going to get right back out there and get them. We need to grieve and we have a mission to do. Everyone is going to handle this differently. Don’t let your anger turn towards your buddies. Some will cry, some will laugh, some won’t say anything. We are a family, and if there’s one time we need each other, it’s now. Do what you need to and then when you get out there you be a professional Soldier. There will be innocent bystanders out there and you need to treat them with dignity and respect. You need to direct your anger at those who deserve it and direct your compassion at those who deserve that also.”

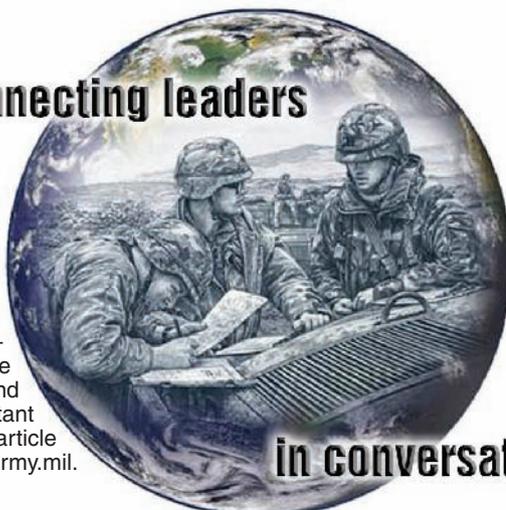
I wanted to keep the guys focused on the enemy as an outlet for their anger and focused on helping the people as an outlet for compassion. At that moment, I could have put the troops on line and leveled the whole city. I mean everybody was angry that day. I just wanted to make sure the anger the guys had wasn’t misdirected. I guess that wasn’t so much a concern, but it was a reality that I knew was out there.

*Our ability to learn, adapt and become more effective leaders in the counterinsurgency fight will have a huge impact on the war’s outcome and our Soldiers’ welfare. We invite you to log in and join the conversation on COIN taking place in the CompanyCommand professional forum.*

## Connecting leaders

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Art by Jody Harmon

Company Commanders, connect at <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>

**in conversation**



# CompanyCommand

*Building Combat-Ready Teams*



**To:** Company Commanders  
**From:** Company Commanders

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## Leading our Soldiers to Fight with Honor

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*He who fights monsters should look into it that he himself does not become a monster. When you gaze long into the Abyss, the Abyss also gazes into you.*

—Friedrich Nietzsche

Extended combat operations, especially counterinsurgency operations, unleash forces that can distort our Soldiers' moral compasses. The intense emotions of combat—fear, anger, grief, frustration, power, exhilaration—are experienced with a complexity and scale unlike anything outside of war. In this environment, we are called upon to lead our Soldiers to engage the enemy without becoming like him, to kill the murderers without becoming murderers ourselves. The overwhelming majority of us succeed, even if the media focus on isolated incidents of leadership failure. Listen in as recent commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan share their experiences of how they trained and led their Soldiers to fight with honor.

### **Lead by consistent, personal example...**

**Jeff VanAntwerp**

Commander, A/1-24 IN, 1st BDE, 25th ID  
(SBCT)

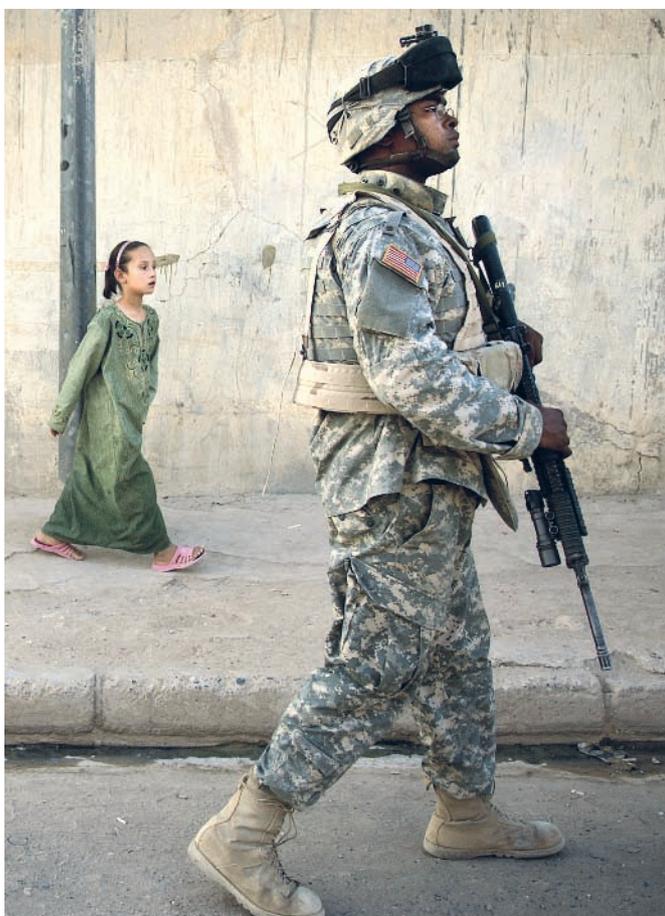
From my experience, the only way to ensure that Soldiers will do the right thing, in any situation, is to develop meaningful relationships with them and consistently model correct behavior through personal example. ROE briefings, vignettes and AARs are great, but they are all secondary to leadership by personal example that is

grounded in values that don't change when the shooting starts. Regardless of whether I was at the opening of a park, trying to avoid being suffocated by excited children as I handed out soccer balls or locking down a neighborhood in search of an AIF shooter who had just injured one of our own, Soldiers did as our leaders did because we were committed to leading by consistent, personal example.

Obviously you, the company commander, and your platoon leaders and platoon sergeants can't be everywhere. But you need to be in a lot of places a lot of the time to ensure that the respectful treatment of people becomes habit, regardless of the circumstance. To really be consistent, you must know who you are and your Soldiers must



*CPT Jeff VanAntwerp, left, with one of his platoon leaders, 1LT Scotty Smiley, in Mosul in early 2005*



U.S. Army

*SPC Antoine Davis, from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, patrols Tal Afar, as an Iraqi child walks alongside.*

as a chance to learn about your expectations and develop their relationship with you.

Sometimes physically setting the example is easy and opportunities abound. It may be the difference between breaking the car window or asking for the keys when the intelligence on the target is suspect, or slowing down and using the horn rather than throwing objects at people's cars.

But sometimes it can be really hard. After one of my soldiers had been shot and subsequently died en route to the CSH, I went straight back to the neighborhood, determined to find the shooter or get some information. I was still crying and incredibly angry as I picked a house near where I thought was the shooter's original location. I asked the man at the door what he had heard or seen, and when he denied knowing anything, I slammed him into his door and verbally went off! Within two minutes, my platoon leader and interpreter were doing the same thing. I quickly changed my demeanor and reminded them that the shooter was most likely not from the neighborhood and that the people were just afraid. I later apologized to the man and his family. A few minutes later, a young boy approached my battalion commander and described how the shooter had fired from the rear seat of a gray Opel sedan with some distinguishable markings. Two days later, the same platoon killed the insurgent as he stepped out of his gray sedan with an RPK with a 75-round drum and took aim on my TAC. The incident served as a good reminder of how quickly my actions affected my subordinates, both positively and negatively, and how the respectful treatment of people ultimately reaped the greatest reward both tactically and personally.

know the fundamental values that govern your behavior. If a week went by and I had not been on a patrol at least once with each of my platoons, it was unusual. In a year-long deployment, your leaders and Soldiers will get beyond the feeling that you are somehow checking on them or evaluating their performance. They will see patrols—just like card games on the FOB, a day at the range, or PT—

*Excerpt from "Morals in a Combat Zone," by Maj. Pete Kilner. The complete essay was published originally in The Washington Post on June 11, 2006, and is available in the CompanyCommand and PlatoonLeader professional forums.*

A combat zone is not some parallel universe where the nature of human beings or moral judgment is different. Combat is a human endeavor, and like any human activity it can be carried out morally or immorally, and moral judgments can be made on it ...

The circumstances of this war's battlefields are terribly complex. Soldiers find themselves conducting a wide range of operations, from warfighting to policing, often during a single patrol, and those different operations require different principles for the use of force. It is often difficult for soldiers to discern which approach is appropriate and when ...

The good news is that well-trained, well-led soldiers can and do overcome the moral challenges of war and conduct themselves with great honor, and the great majority of American soldiers are well-trained and well-led. Although we fight an enemy who intentionally violates all norms of human decency and goads us to follow him into the abyss of wanton killing, America's soldiers continue to exhibit remarkable restraint.

What explains the difference between units that commit war crimes and units that don't? Leadership. Leadership is the critical factor in ensuring moral conduct in war. When junior officers and senior NCOs train their soldiers to do what is right and when they maintain their composure and lead by example, their soldiers are able to retain their moral bearings despite the temptations and frustrations of battle. American military history reminds us that war crimes can be prevented by small-unit leaders with moral courage and judgment.



*CPT Josh Bookout attends a District Shura meeting in Afghanistan in February 2005.*

### **Mentor and supervise subordinates...**

#### **Keith Kramer**

**Commander, A/3-69 AR, 1st BCT, 3ID**

After the death of a Soldier, his platoon or even the whole company can begin to develop a revenge mentality. It is very difficult to help your Soldiers maintain the moral high ground when you yourself want to go out and break things and hurt those responsible.

I struggled with this after the loss of a young Soldier in OIF III. His platoon wanted very much to find and kill those responsible for the IED attack, as did I. The problem became identifying who was responsible for emplacing the IED and who wasn't. It becomes very frustrating in identifying the guilty party when the standard answer is "No Ali Baba in Samarra, Mista" every time you talk to people who have had IEDs blow up within 100 meters of their homes.

I began to identify issues with the platoon's use of force and thought some of it was indiscriminate, so I sat down with the key leaders of the platoon—the platoon leader, platoon sergeant and some of the squad leaders. I generally talked to them individually and not in a butt-chewing mode; I intended more to be in the mentoring mode (although some of those leaders may say otherwise about our talks now). I changed some of the missions I gave them and was very specific in ROE/engagement criteria. The bottom line is that I reeled them back in a little more than they were used to and provided more direct supervision to them, but I never let them off the hook except for a short period when I pulled them from patrol and placed

them on the force-protection mission to help them reorganize and reassess. This was frustrating to them, but it was needed, and it allowed me to go up on the roof of the patrol base and talk with "Joe" at 0200 when he is pulling security from his bunker. I had some very interesting conversations with him, but always worked to bring it back to what we are trying to do in the big picture and how killing everybody alienates us from the population and only builds the insurgency.

### **Establish clear expectations, control emotions...**

#### **Josh Bookout**

**Commander, C/2-5 IN & C/3-4 CAV, 3rd BCT, 25th ID**

I believe that setting the conditions to ensure Soldiers do the right thing in combat starts with realistic and challenging training. To every extent possible, plan every major training event to involve difficult situations that replicate actual combat experiences from units in OIF/OEF. If you can put junior leaders and Soldiers into tough situations during training, they will take that knowledge and experience into combat. I found that good AARs after such training will give you insight into what the Soldiers and NCOs thought throughout the training. I found at times that there can be vastly different perspectives and feelings surrounding TTPs or decisions within the ranks—especially when the training event challenges the Soldiers to react to new situations. You can be the sounding board to get everyone on the same track and ensure that "right" and "wrong" actions are clearly understood.



*CPT Neal Mayo receives a gift from the leader of a Neighborhood Advisory Council in appreciation of his company's assistance and cooperation with the Iraqi Security Forces during the January 2005 Iraqi National Elections.*

The most difficult aspect of training is that it can never evoke the emotions that occur during combat—especially when friendly casualties are involved. You can never underestimate the importance of leading by example in these situations. If you completely lose control, verbally or emotionally, the Soldiers will view that behavior as acceptable. It is important to set the example—because every Soldier will remember the leader's reactions.

I found that talking with the junior leaders and Soldiers immediately following a mission that involved friendly casualties helped to set the conditions for coping. Every Soldier is going to deal with it differently, and it is important to give them some space and time to do it. I relied heavily on my NCOs to give me feedback on the Soldiers who were having the most difficult time or those who expressed particularly "hot" emotions. The 1SG and I made it a point to have one-on-one conversations with those Soldiers to help them through the process. The relationships you have with your Soldiers will help to continuously reinforce the command climate you set to always do the right thing.

### **Train to prevent over-reactions...**

**Chris Douglas**

**Commander, K/3-25 IN, USMC**

Ensuring your people will do the right thing in combat begins prior to deployment. The focus of my company's pre-deployment training was on weapons handling, culture briefs and Killology classes. The purpose of weapons handling was to ensure a Marine was comfortable with his tools and did not overreact in a high-stress situation. Culture briefs were intended to educate Marines to avoid misjudging a situation that involved Iraqi civilians. Finally, Killology classes ensured that all hands understood the difference between

killing and murder. To ensure we operated in the same manner, all of this training began with my NCOs and officers. The company leadership continually drilled tactical decision games during our pre-deployment time, and they, in turn, drilled their Marines. The final step was repetitive review of the rules of engagement.

Our emphasis on the ROE continued during the deployment. Review of the ROE was built into pre-combat inspections. Marines were quizzed on actual and likely scenarios with differ-

ent variations. Whenever there was a development that we could not answer at our level, I requested a Staff Judge Advocate to conduct a review. The SJA also held question-and-answer sessions during which the Marines would provide actual scenarios that we had encountered. We would then "what if" the scenario and problem solve with the SJA's input. I believe that when servicemembers are comfortable in the environment they are operating in, comfortable in their ability, the ability of their equipment, and comfortable in what actions they can take, they are less prone to overreact and make a mistake.

All the talk in the world won't matter if leaders don't act responsibly when under fire. Our actions send a message to our subordinate leaders more powerful than all our words combined. How we act will trickle down to all our subordinates. During combat operations in Hadithah, Iraq, my company came under fire. During the fight, an RPG killed my civil affairs officer, and five other Marines were wounded. Although I had just lost a good friend and fellow warrior, I knew that it was important for the Marines to see me respond professionally. They, in turn, acted in a way that kept our honor clean.

### **Make on-the-spot corrections to uphold the standard...**

**Torrey Cady**

**Commander, A/1-37 FA, 3/2 SBCT**

I believe that more training on the fog of war, using vignettes coming out of Iraq, would help leaders to really think about these situations before they occur. Just as importantly, they would allow leaders to see the way their Soldiers think when they are placed in the situation. I was very surprised during the train-up for my Balkans deployment in

the 1990s by some of the responses my Soldiers and NCOs gave when placed in complex scenarios via a vignette. The reason they felt comfortable giving the responses they gave was that they honestly did not see anything wrong with the thought processes that led to that response. The vignette training gave me a window into how that Soldier thought, which then gave me the opportunity to train the Soldier and teach him a different way of looking at the situation. It also reinforced the ROE and command guidance and taught my soldiers how those messages applied in different scenarios. My unit did some vignette training prior to Iraq, and we continued to reinforce proper behavior in combat through discussions during AARs and on-the-spot corrections.

Nothing can replace a leader on the scene—leading by example, showing your Soldiers how to act under pressure through your own behavior and immediately correcting the actions of soldiers who are not behaving properly, regardless of the circumstances. If a Soldier treats a noncombatant or prisoner inhumanely, and a leader allows it, then a new standard has been established in your unit that may escalate into a worse act. Leaders at all levels must use the bully pulpit of their position to place command emphasis on what they want their Soldiers thinking about and talking about. If no command emphasis is placed on ethical behavior in combat, don't expect it to occur by itself.

### **Humanize the indigenous people through personal interaction...**

**Neal Mayo**

**Commander, A/1-153 IN, 3rd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division**

As an Infantry officer generally focused on the “tougher” side of the job, I used to respond to the term “cultural awareness” with sarcasm and frustration. Having served in Iraq, I am now a firm believer that developing personal relationships with the indigenous people serves as a foundation for success in counterinsurgency operations. Developing professional Soldiers who act appropriately across the full spectrum of conflict requires an enormous amount of

discipline. Our company attempted to meet this challenge through the development of personal relationships with the Iraqi people in Baghdad.

Given the inherent cultural differences between U.S. Soldiers and Arab people, it is incredibly easy to stereotype, associating all Iraqi people with the insurgency. This phenomenon exists especially in cases in which insurgents have conducted recent attacks on U.S. forces. In an effort to combat this phenomenon and create conditions for positive responses, our company leadership attempted to humanize the Iraqi people, interacting with them on a daily basis in a professional manner, creating personal relationships instead of an “us versus them” mentality.

Specifically, the leadership felt it extremely important to conduct dismounted patrolling throughout our area of operations. In addition to the tactical advantages it provided, it allowed us the opportunity to interact more closely with the Iraqi people, capitalizing on the common needs and struggles that we all faced rather than on our cultural differences. Over time, not only did we develop positive relationships with the Iraqi people, thus humanizing them in the eyes of our Soldiers, but the Iraqis felt comfortable sharing actionable intelligence with us, thus leading to a more stable environment and enhancing the force protection of our Soldiers.

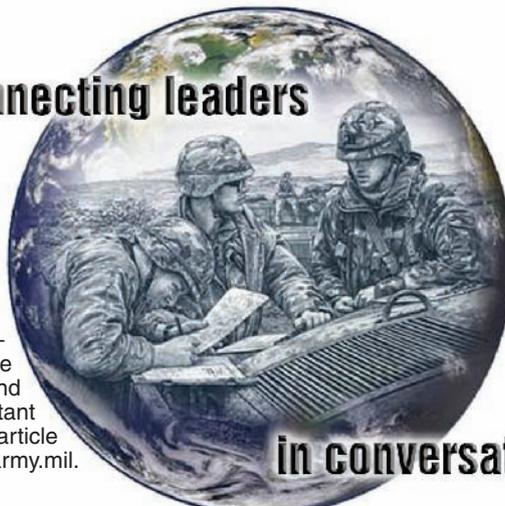
We specifically ensured that Soldiers conducted patrols and visited “normal” events—such as school and hospital ribbon-cutting ceremonies, neighborhood soccer games, outdoor musical events, and even community council meetings. Although these events might sound mundane and unexciting—and many times they were—they served as an environment in which Soldiers could associate and connect their experiences from home with the experiences of the Iraqi people we operated around on a daily basis.

Given various threat levels, I clearly understand that this method is not feasible in all environments in which the Army is currently operating. Based on the experiences of our company, though, we believed this mind-set of humanizing the Iraqi people led to more professional soldiering and successful operations across the full spectrum of conflict.

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**in conversation**

*Art by Jody Harmon*



# CompanyCommand

## Building Combat-Ready Teams



**To:** Company Commanders  
**From:** Company Commanders

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## The Art of Rewarding Soldiers

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Our Soldiers do more for us than we can ever possibly hope to recognize. Still, the number of ways a commander can reward his or her Soldiers is literally limitless and extends well beyond the standard system of individual and unit awards. Company-level commanders are using both their imaginations and subordinate leaders to reward their troops in ways that are fresh, innovative and, most importantly, meaningful to the Soldiers themselves. Listen in as several experienced commanders discuss the fine art of rewarding Soldiers.

**CJ Douglas**  
K/3-25 IN (USMC)

I took the approach that the best way to recognize a warrior is to praise him to his family. During my first tour in Iraq, I wrote to specific Marines' families. During my second tour in Iraq, I wrote thank-you letters to each Marine's family in my unit. In the letter, I explained that their Marine was doing a great job, how he was making a difference and how much I appreciated the support of his family. In addition, I



Marine company commander MAJ CJ Douglas, center, in Nasiriah, Iraq, with one of his platoon commanders, SSG John Monte, left, and his company 1SG Joseph Angelino.

made sure to keep their families informed of significant events and other happenings through my family readiness group. I found that recognizing a Marine to his family was rewarding to both the Marine and his family.

**Matthew Marston**  
Troop C, 5-7 CAV

One of my platoon leaders (PLs), along with many of my Soldiers, is really into mixed martial arts/ultimate-fighting competition-type exhibitions, so he asked if we could have a troop combatives tournament. We got the rules for the tournament out of the combatives manual, and the PL certified me and the XO to referee and score matches. We had a weigh-in and made brackets according to weight class. The morning of the event, we had rings set up on the PT field and a safety brief prepared (key risk management considerations: taking off jewelry, checking soldiers' fingernails, briefing illegal holds and positions and knowing when to stop the match). The matches went for two minutes or until one man "tapped out." My SCO and CSM came by to watch and thought it was great. The guys are still talking about it, and I've got a lot of Soldiers who want to try out for the division tournament in December. I like this kind of event because it's a definite break from the usual PT and fosters the ever so elusive "Warrior Ethos."

**Jeff Sargent**  
Company B, 501st MI BN

One other thing I did that Soldiers seemed to like was posting a U.S. map and world map in the company area. We then took photos of each Soldier and linked the photo with their hometown with 550-cord gut and a push pin. This wasn't a reward per se, but it did in some way build the team. A lot of water cooler type discussion happened around the maps.

I took a lot of photos during command. As the time came for me to give up the guidon, I wanted to leave each Soldier with something, so I enlisted the help of one of my tech-savvy Soldiers and made a video that encompassed the entire 20 months. I showed the video the evening be-



From left, 2LT Matthew Wiener, SFC William Cooper and CPT Matthew Marston of Troop C, 5-7 Cavalry, officiate at an Army combatives match during their troop combatives tournament.

fore the change of command, and there weren't too many dry eyes in the room. I then copied the 30-minute video on a CD-R for each Soldier to keep. My point is—be your Soldiers' biggest fan. Take an active interest in them as people as well as Soldiers, and they will follow you anywhere.

**Dan Dwyer**

**Company A & HHC/1-63 AR, P/3/16th CAV**

I found that one of the best rewards for a Soldier and his family was time off, so they could be together. Part of my battle rhythm as a commander, at the beginning of each month, was filling out personalized cards to those Soldiers whose birthdays landed during that month. The card was worth that day off. If they could not take their birthday off, or if it landed on a weekend or holiday, the Soldier, in concurrence with his chain of command, would use it another day. Before long, the word got out and Soldiers would remind me two months ahead of time when their birthday was. It was really cool and, in the grand scheme of things, a very small token of appreciation for their hard work. The information is readily available in your unit records, and the super trooper I had in my orderly room knew that at the end of each month, it was time to give me next month's list of birthdays.

**Mindy Kimball**

**Company B, 509th PSB**

Here's an idea that serves two purposes and applies more to post-deployment morale: When you return from a deployment, take the time to write a letter of thanks to your Soldiers

and personally sign the letter. You don't have to make it flowery or gushy, but just tell them you know about the sacrifices they made and that you appreciate their hard work. Address the letter to that individual Soldier and include the dates of their deployment. Once you write the form letter, you can cut and paste the names—it really doesn't take that much time.

It serves two purposes: First, it shows your Soldiers that you care. Using the word "appreciate" goes further than you can imagine. Many soldiers will share that letter with family and friends, and they can refer to it during their transition period while they are readjusting to garrison (you'll have more morale problems than you think once you redeploy). Second, when the admin tracking of the deployment goes all to heck (as it often does), your Soldiers will each have a letter proving that they deployed (who, what, when, where, why). If later awards or medical benefits come from that deployment, you have taken care of your Soldiers in the long run. This is especially important since many post-deployment award/money/benefits decisions have specific calendar dates and specific geographic locations connected with eligibility.



The "Soldier map" in CPT Jeff Sargent's company area.



*CPT Mindy Kimball with two of her soldiers, SSG Gregory Giger, left, and SSG David Campbell, in Korea.*

When I left Korea, I sent a postcard to each of my soldiers (handwritten) that was a little more personalized about their tour so far. I asked them to work hard for their new commander and to watch her back like they did for me. My successor told me later that the Soldiers enjoyed the postcards and they did work hard for her. It was only about 75 postcards, and I did it on my flight home. It was nice closure for my command to reflect on each one of my Soldiers.

### **Paul Voelke**

**Company A & HHC/4-31 IN, 10th MTN DIV**

When it came to rewarding Soldiers, especially as an HHC commander, what I liked to do was to go talk to the BN CDR about the great job someone was doing. He would then seek the Soldier out and give him a coin. It usually caught the Soldier off guard. I also liked to recognize



*CPT Paul Voelke, center, with two of his Soldiers, vehicle gunner SPC Matthew Wright, left, and driver SPC Aaron (Doobie) Locke.*

guys during my weekly safety brief. The brief was a tool I used to talk to the company informally and was a great time to talk about what had happened during the last week.

For rewarding spouses, my wife and I recognized all the ladies who helped with the FRG at our post-deployment party. It was important to let them know that the work they did was noticed, and it reinforced how important their role in the FRG was.

As others have said previously, the best tool is to talk to Soldiers frequently, and just tell them that you appreciate their hard work.

### **Ryan Kranc**

**Troop Q, 4/3 ACR**

In an organization like the Cav, rich in tradition, history and an abundance of canine and equestrian extravaganzas (as opposed to mere dog and pony shows), the unit did a lot to recognize soldiers. New spouses were given cavalry garter belts and inducted into the squadron with much cavalry ceremonial pomp and circumstance in a fun atmosphere of hails and farewells. Tiger Squadron would occasionally have Tiger Day, a very organized and well planned kegger and BBQ with designated drivers. Never do I remember an alcohol-related incident stemming from this, partly a result of NCO and leader emphasis, but I think even more it was because of the *esprit de corps* that the event generated.

Before OIF, the regiment conducted spur rides regularly. Sabre Squadron conducted a spouses' spur ride under COL Toby Green. This was a day-long event that was more of a spouse awareness-and-orientation seminar of what their husbands did. Ladies got to go into tanks and Bradleys in the motorpool, work with NVGs in a tent and worked a gunnery exercise in CCTT. At the end, they were awarded the Order of the Spur with a spur-shaped lapel pin.

I think the bottom line on something like this last event is the fact that as Soldiers we have pretty cool jobs. To expose our family members and invite them into our world and see what we do on a limited scale helps families cope with what mom or dad does for a living. It fosters, I think, a bit more mutual understanding and most definitely promotes more discussion among married couples. In addition, it brings the spouses together in a setting different from just a military ball or official military ceremony. In short, they have some fun together.

### **Frank Jenio**

**Company C, 1-503 AASLT; Company C, 2-75 RGR**

More than anything else, morale building activities require work. My IN BN, while deployed to Iraq, tried to do at least one a month, but believe me, doing so required "extra credit" work, and it's not like the OPTEMPO slowed or stopped to let the BN build some morale. Get your younger guys involved and let them run with some minimal guidance.

My BN had 2 x Organizational Days (standard sports day complete with really crappy trophies bought in a small Iraqi town nearby—which the boys loved). We had a couple of su-



*MAJ Jeff Sargent re-enlists SPC Brent Christiansen aboard a Navy MH-53 helicopter in Kuwait in April 2006.*

per suppers, and for Halloween we rented donkeys and had donkey races and then did a Fear Factor contest in which the winner got a four-day pass to Qatar. We also had a boxing smoker that featured 2 x fights and the standard Thanksgiving and Christmas meals at which the officers served and the senior NCOs (PSG and above) pulled security at the base camp for two hours so the boys wouldn't have to eat and run. For Christmas, we chopped down a 40-foot tree and then bought some Iraqi lights and decorated it and put it up by a flagpole where we hung the Stars and Stripes.

The younger guys know what truly enhances morale; once you find that out, then it will require some work on your part to bring it to fruition. Whether in garrison or deployed, it is possible to have good events if you put some elbow grease into it.

#### **Daniel Stuewe**

**PL, C/2-502 INF, 101st ABN DIV**

The most important and most effective way to boost morale I've seen has been talking to your Soldiers. It seems so simple, but so many leaders forget to do it. We get caught up in operations and other stuff and forget about what makes a unit great: confident and focused Soldiers.

On Thanksgiving, our battalion commander shook the hand of every soldier in my unit. For 48-72 hours, there

was a noticeable difference in their attitudes, discipline and missions. If a leader sits with a Soldier or a more junior leader and puts an honest effort into talking to his men, they will know who cares about them and find more purpose in their duty than they could have ever achieved on their own.

Be as simple and off-the-wall as possible. Something that might seem stupid will make a Soldier smile quicker than you think. For us, it was the hard-nosed, no-nonsense first sergeant dressing up as Santa (with the rank sewn on the sleeves—nice touch) and handing out gifts to every Soldier in the company. Those Soldiers might be missing their families, but they'll never forget that moment on Christmas.

Remember, just an honest interest in the men can motivate them more than most understand.

#### **Kenneth Burgess**

**Company C & HHC/2-325 AIR, 82nd ABN DIV**

Host award and promotion ceremonies in small (company or lower) and frequent informal events. Personalize the presentations with unique descriptions of the Soldier and the conditions under which he's being rewarded. Allow his teammate, squad leader or platoon sergeant to say something in addition to the officers. I preferred informal ceremonies, with Soldiers gathered closely around and relaxed, over formal ceremonies with Soldiers at attention in

formation while official orders were read. Soldiers love recognition in front of their peers. Do not restrict recognition to official awards. Just pulling guys out in front of their peers for PT, marksmanship, performance in training—anything—shaking their hand, saying well done and reminding them about their contributions to the team goes a long way.

Rewarding Soldiers with breakfast, lunch or dinner is a personal, appreciated method of saying thanks. A guy reenlisting, a job well done on a live-fire, or PCSing from the unit are good excuses for getting a bite to eat. It also affords an opportunity to get feedback on your unit through the eyes of one of your Soldiers. If time is limited, just hit the unit chow hall for 30 minutes.

After new Soldiers completed their first night, mass-tactical airborne operation and a live-fire exercise, I presented them with a yellow safety lanyard that was embroidered with their name. It was a nonabrasive indoctrination that recognized that the Soldiers were now “seasoned.” It solidified their positions as part of the team. This was not a rite of passage—Soldiers need to feel needed and appreciated upon first arrival to the unit—but the recognition did serve to further cement the newer members into the company fold. Any apprehension they may have had about acceptance was dissolved.

### **Nathaniel Garza**

**759th Ordnance Company (EOD)**

While deployed to Iraq for the early part of OIF-1 (and for all of it), systems were just being established to get all the “comforts” of the war zone in place. For example, the chow hall provided adequate and tasty food. But for me, I was getting tired of it. At work, too, we got into our routine, and work was slowing down and becoming repetitive. I wanted to spice up our routine, and a way to do that is to change what you eat.

In 1994, in the deserts of Fort Bliss, Texas, my squad leader instilled in me five basic things that affect morale. They are (in no particular order): food, ice, mail, pay and

training. Being at Fort Bliss on an FTX, especially during the summers, I experienced firsthand what something as small as ice means to a Soldier when you’re working outside in a desert environment. There was no happier time for me than when I saw the ice truck drive out to our grid to drop off gigantic blocks of ice for our welfare when the temperature was well over 100 degrees. I took that concept of these five items and thought to myself, “What can I do to improve morale (which was never low) or change things up just a bit?”

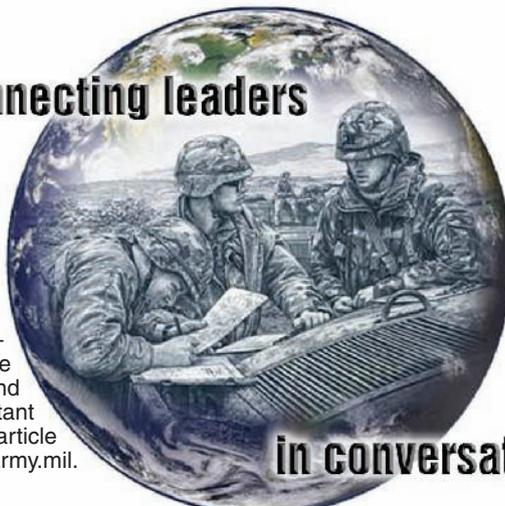
Being EOD, we receive some of the best training that any unit can receive—quality technical and tactical training. So I didn’t worry about our training. Everyone was enjoying their new deployment pays from DFAS, so I couldn’t influence pay. Our S-6 ensured we had access to e-mail which took care of the mail/e-mail. My battalion S-4, MSG John Landry, worked his butt off to get air conditioning in our building. So I couldn’t help with the ice. Food, my favorite pastime, came to mind. Now, I am selfish in the fact that I didn’t ask everyone what they wanted or ask all the Soldiers to submit three courses of action. I thought of the one food that I love and probably most warm-blooded Americans like, too—nachos. So I had my wife send the ingredients and we had our Nacho Fest. If you could have seen the faces of all the Soldiers when we sat down as an organization to eat, you would have been amazed. It reminded me of the deserts of Fort Bliss when my unit received its blocks of ice. For just a couple of minutes, you forgot you were in Iraq, and you were somehow transferred away from the hardships of the job we had. Together as a unit/family, we enjoyed each other’s fellowship over a fun meal.

*Right now, leaders all over the world are sharing ideas on everything from tactics to awards, professional development to past remembrances, and Soldier awards to spouse welcomes. Do you have something to add? Come to [companycommand.army.mil](http://companycommand.army.mil) and JOIN THE CONVERSATION!*

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**in conversation**

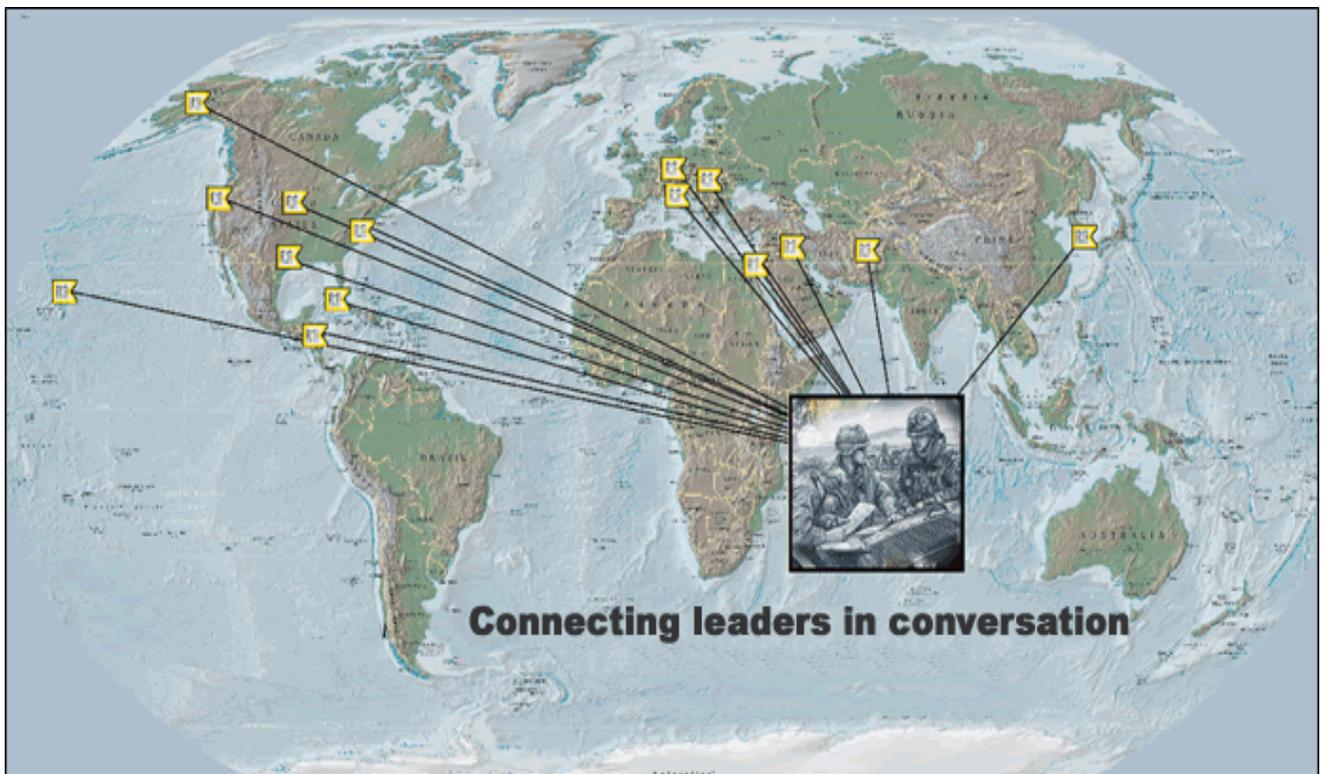
*Art by Jody Harmon*

# *“A Year in Command—2006”*

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This was a great year for company commanders  
in our Army!



We look forward to continuing the conversation...

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