



CompanyCommand



Building Combat-Ready Teams

To: Company Commanders

From: Company Commanders

A Year in Command—2007

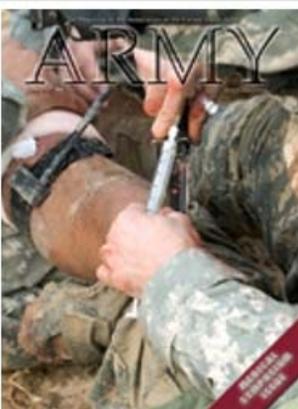
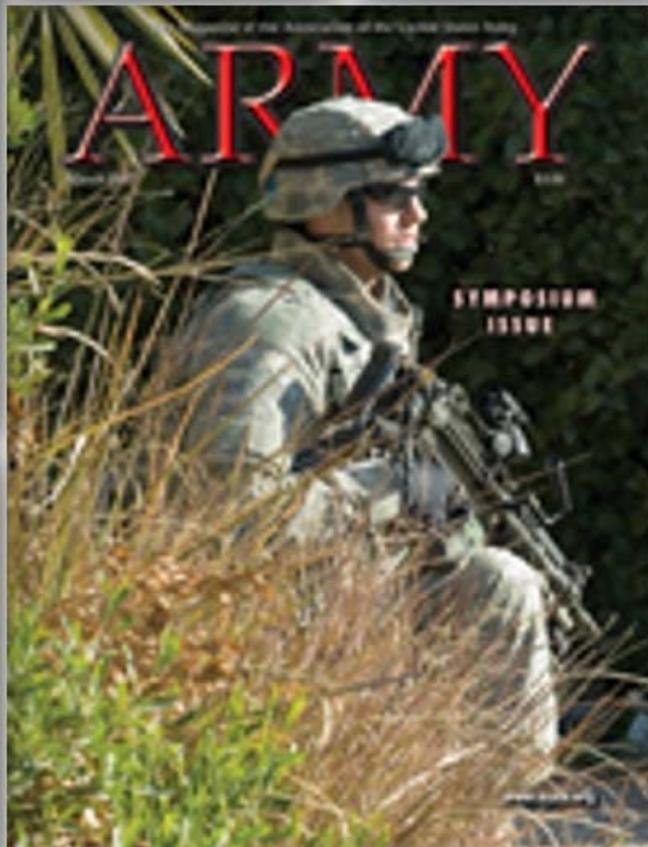
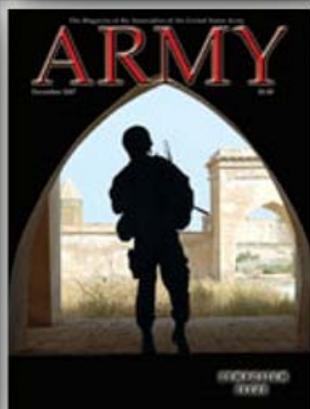
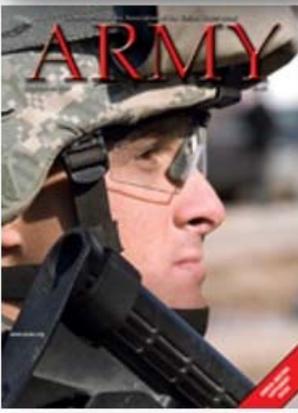
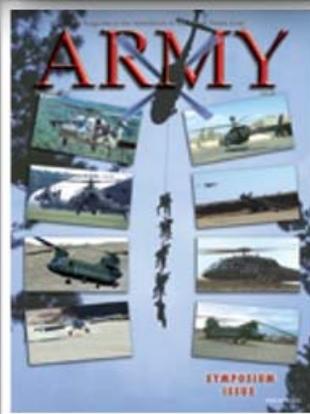
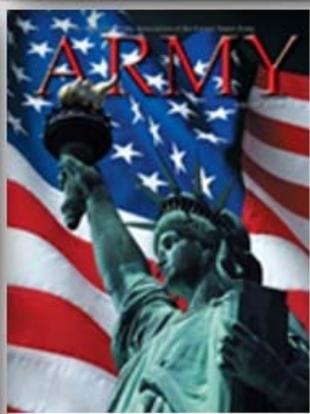
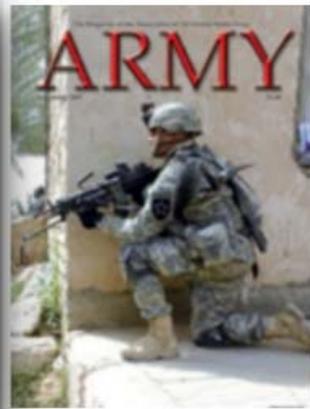
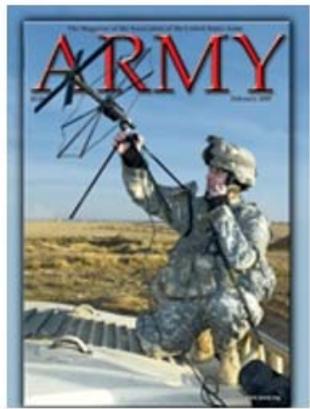
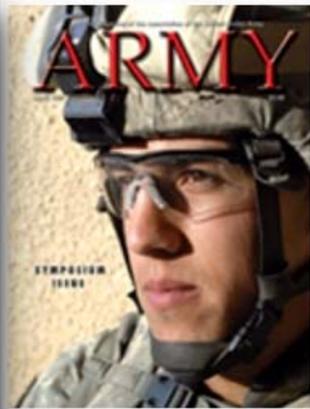
Connecting leaders



in conversation

Art by Jody Harmon

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



A Year in Command—2007

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, the team at ARMY Magazine, and to all the company commanders—past, present, and future—whose participation in the CC forum makes these kinds of articles possible.

What’s Inside

- January Force Protection for the ‘Hidden Wounds’ of War
- February Insights from OEF: Commanding in Afghanistan
- March CDR’s Log: Thoughts of a MiTT Leader in Iraq
- April Relief in Place: The Challenge of Continuity
- May Resilient Leadership
- June Third-Generation Leadership
- July What does it mean to you to command Soldiers?
- August Afghan COIN: In the Words of Commanders
- September Leadership Challenges in Iraq
- November Commander-FRG Leader Teams
- December Honoring Leaders Who Made a Difference

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.

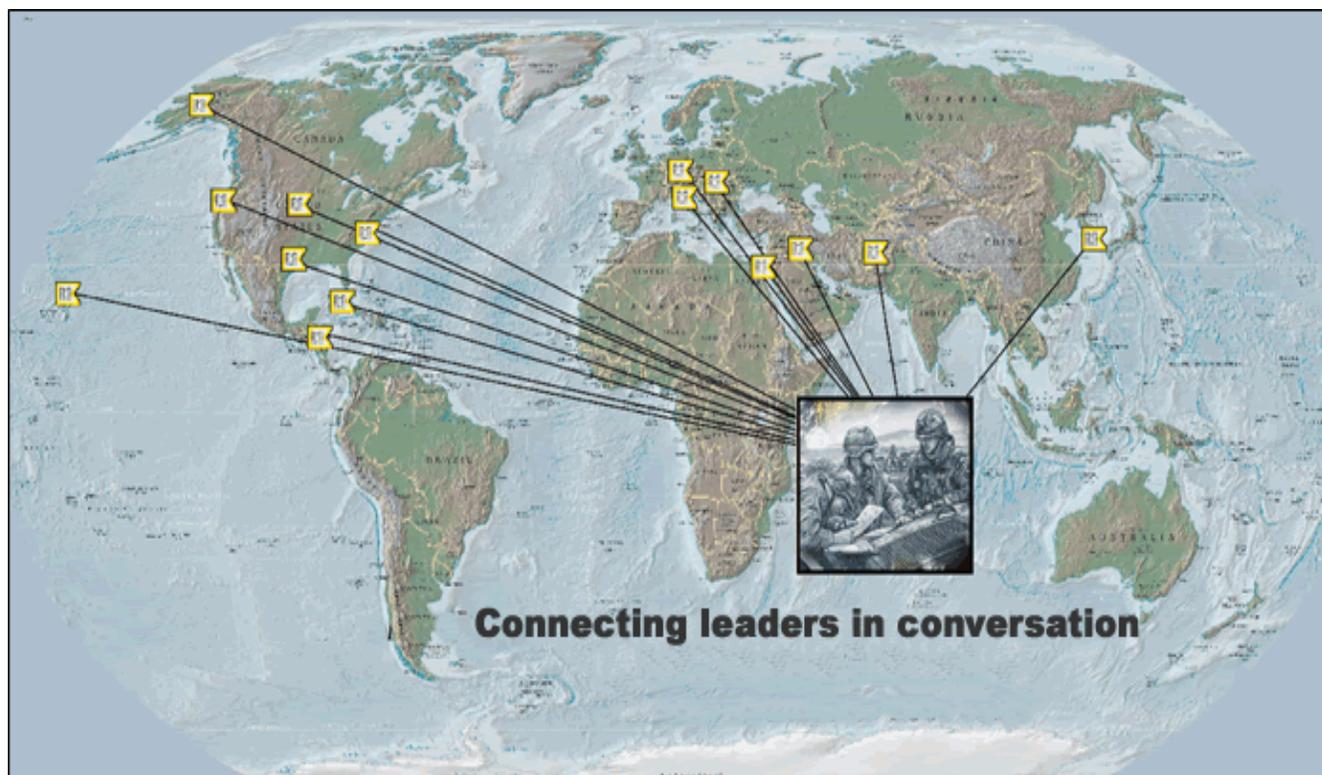
Company Commanders connect at <http://cc.army.mil>

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

A Year in Command—2007

A big thanks to all the leaders who shared their hard-earned knowledge to serve their peers and to advance our profession in 2007. The contributors:

Jerry Moon, Jeremy Turner, Aaron Swain, Jason Toole, Bill Davis, Joe Geraci, Scott Halter, Sean Macrae, Ryker Horn, Rob Thornton, Andre Rivier, Larry Sharp, Nate Sammon, Jeff Palazzini, Mike West, Ryan Howell, Chris Douglas, James Dayhoff, Seth Hall, Hannah Heishman, Ana Breslow, Katie Matthew, Travis Foley, Jermaine Sutton, Ned Ritzmann, Raul Rovira, Brian McCarthy, Wynn Nugent, Joe Doty, Chanda Mofu, Richard Moyers, Scott Horrigan, Jim McKnight, Rob Stanton, Ryan Morgan, Joe Hansen, Steve Helm, Ben Hung, Perry Stiemke, Dennis Sugrue, Shane Finn, Jim Walker, Brendan Gallagher, Jayson Morgan, James Downing, Leo Wyszynski, Josh Taylor, Robert Richardson, Rob Nevins, Sung Kato, Buddy Ferris, Mike Baka, Cecil Strickland, Jeff Noll, Jim Rogers, Jay Wisham, Adam Stocking, Chris Wehri, Ed Lerz, Carl Dick, Barbie Pepple, Jerry Brown, Traci Cook, Phillip Griffin, Angela Crist, Michael Lazo, Jeffrey Burnett, Rose Smyth, Heather Muder, Tamara Slagle, Anthony Borowski, Pat Schoof, Rob Ritz, Jay Miseli, Will Richardson, Ray Kimball, Ryan Kranc, Jon Dunn, & Jon Silk.





CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders

From: Company Commanders

Force Protection for the ‘Hidden Wounds’ of War

As awful as the physical wounds of combat are, they are at least readily identified and treated. A Soldier wounded on the battlefield is treated immediately by a battle buddy with first-responder or combat-lifesaver skills, stabilized by a medic and evacuated to a treatment facility in a well-rehearsed drill. However, not all battlefield wounds are physical. Combat exacts a toll on Soldiers’ mental health as well. Just as the bodies of brave Soldiers are torn apart by IEDs, brave Soldiers’ minds are impacted by the horrors of war.

Company-level commanders are increasingly recognizing their duty to provide “force protection” for their Soldiers’ mental well-being. One member of the CompanyCommand forum, Jerry Moon, who recently commanded B/2-101st BTB and THT 594 in the 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) in Iraq, developed his ideas into an article that is posted in the forum. This month, we share his ideas and hope they will generate increased awareness of the things leaders can do to preserve their fighting force and take care of their troops.

Taking Care of Your Soldiers’ Mental and Emotional Health— Before, During and After a Combat Deployment

By Jerry Moon

Even before I’d completed my most recent deployment (2BCT, 101st ABN DIV), I noticed evidence among some of our Soldiers of two of the classic post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms: avoidance behaviors, such as avoiding emotions, avoiding relationships, avoiding responsibility for others and avoiding situations that are reminiscent of the traumatic event; and increased arousal, exhibited as behaviors such as exaggerated startle reactions, explosive outbursts, extreme vigilance, irritability, panic symptoms and sleep disturbances. Other observers made me aware of a third symptom: Soldiers’ re-experiencing the trauma through flashbacks, intrusive emotions and memories, nightmares and night terrors.

I foresee complications arising for our Soldiers if we do not implement mitigating measures of some kind. The doctors will deal with the Soldiers who overcome the stigma of seeking help, but I’d like to suggest some things that we, as leaders, can do—before, during and after a deployment.

Pre-Deployment

Talk about killing. I think talking about PTSD, the warrior ethos and the psychological effects of killing and/or experiencing the immediate threat of being killed should be a

crucial part of all pre-deployment training. It is never too early to start talking about the moral duties and obligations that Soldiers assume as combatants. Talking about them takes away some of the stigma and negative connotation normally associated with our profession, and I think the more this topic is discussed, the less taboo it becomes.

I recommend asking experienced fighters, especially those who have killed, to address our Soldiers and discuss the rules of engagement and combat aftereffects. It might be better to employ squad leaders, for two reasons: the squad leaders are, by virtue of their position, respected by the younger Soldiers, and the credibility of the squad leaders is further enhanced because of the “been there, done that” effect. After all, the very fact that a combat veteran stands before them speaks to his knowledge and experience.

Know your Soldiers. First-line leaders must conduct some sort of assessment on the predisposition of each of their Soldiers before he or she boards the plane. Does “PVT Smith” exhibit more emotion than the average soldier? Is “SPC Miller” one of the few who apparently has nerves of steel? You’ll need to know this information once chronic fatigue and stress push your Soldiers’ nerves to the limit. Once they’re six months into a year-long rotation and have

lost a platoon leader and two platoon sergeants, you'll know that it will be "odd" for Miller to cry, but not unusual for Smith. This "personnel personal inventory" will be the NCOs' greatest tool in recognizing when Soldiers are beginning to crack. Every Soldier has a breaking point, and we, as leaders, have a duty and obligation to try to determine when the Soldiers who depend on us are approaching it.

During Deployment

Use the resources available. Once in-country, use all of the post-incident response assets available to you. Known variously as Combat Mental Health (CMH), Critical Care Teams (CCT) or Combat Stress Teams (CST), they need to be pushed down to no-higher-than-battalion level; it takes too long to get them from the BCT or DIV headquarters if they are not already on your FOB.

It is critical that these folks are given unlimited access to our Soldiers immediately following a traumatic event. Once an event occurs and the teams are there, I recommend *not* "AARing" the entire event. Rather, simply talk about the critical aspects to maybe prevent the same thing happening again, and then allow each Soldier to cope in his own way. As long as the mitigation professionals are available at the debriefing, the Soldiers who want to talk to them will, and those who do not, will drive on. However, each incident should include a follow-up visit from someone up the chain of command, and three to four days after the event, the mitigation team should briefly "pop-in." This visit is to see how everyone is doing and to discuss any unusual behavior observed in those affected. Remember the initial leader assessments of every Soldier? For you as a leader, this is payoff.

Rotate units to provide stress relief. I think it is critical to define a "threshold" for Soldiers as it relates to "bad days." If a platoon has been particularly hard hit over the course of several weeks or months, pull them off the line. Rather than giving them traffic control points, dismounted IED patrols and such, instead make them the FOB security platoon for two weeks. Talk to the BN CDR/S3/XO so this

can be done without any fanfare. No unit wants to believe they are being relieved of their mission because they cannot handle the load.

Post-Deployment

CSTs in transit. From what I have seen, everyone departing OIF will transit Kuwait and go to Camp Virginia for at least one full day before flying back to the United States. One of the things I didn't see at Camp Virginia is a Combat Stress Team. Many Soldiers said they wished they could discuss matters with someone from a CST while awaiting transfer to the States. I believe the Soldiers would use the services if they were offered. What better time for a Soldier to talk than when waiting for a flight home? In fact, I believe it provides a nice bridge between the utter chaos of OIF/OEF and the safety of home. I think the time and effort spent on providing Soldiers access to such a resource could produce some great results.

Unit reintegration. I recommend that folks look at the present program the 101st is running for post-deployment reintegration. It appears to be working well and includes seven consecutive half-day briefings on a variety of classes and events. The half-day schedule is not that stressful, yet it provides much needed structure for the Soldier upon his return. I am enthusiastic about the current program our division is running, and I think that, after deploying Soldiers from this post continuously since 9/11, the leadership here has broken the code on formal Army reintegration processes.

Force protection after redeployment. One idea that I wasn't able to put into action but think would be worthwhile is to have a shuttle bus bring redeployed Soldiers safely home from the local bars. The idea is to use available resources, such as the unit van and officer/NCO volunteer drivers, to recover Soldiers from locations off-post. This would be done during a specific time (for example, 2300-0300) on nights when many Soldiers might be expected to avail themselves of the local "attractions."

I understand that some will object to this as enabling Soldiers, but the fact is, many Soldiers *will* party and drink more alcohol than is prudent. Our job as leaders is to acknowledge that fact and then implement a risk-mitigating program to help prevent the dangerous behavior that often accompanies drinking—namely, DUI. If we simply remove the drunk driver from the equation, we will save lives. I am confident that officers and NCOs who have brought their Soldiers safely home from a year of combat are willing to do their part as drivers one night a month. Too often, the months after a unit's redeployment have proven to be an additional casualty-producing phase of its operation. Shuttling home our Soldiers who have overindulged is the right thing to do.



U.S. Army

Soldiers returning from duty in Iraq to the Southern European Task Force complete mental health screens to detect symptoms of post-combat depression.

Of course, if we do our part as leaders before and during the deployment, we may have less drinking to contend with, since heavy drinking is one symptom of PTSD.

Continue learning from the experience. Lastly, I recommend starting right after block leave with an aggressive Officer and NCO Professional Development Program at the company, battalion and brigade levels, which includes vignettes (much like the USMC Tactical Decision Games from the *Marine Corps Gazette*) based on experiences very similar to the ones that the Soldiers faced in their last rotation to either Iraq or Afghanistan.

To have junior leaders—from SGT to CPT—speaking about tough tactical and moral decisions in a group setting will be good for all involved. The experienced Soldiers will have the chance to “make sense” of their experiences, helping them come to terms with what they did and saw. After all, leaders are not immune to PTSD, and they may need to heal themselves before they lead others once again into battle. The discussions will also empower the experienced leaders in the eyes of their newly arrived replacement Soldiers. The newly arrived Soldiers will be able to learn how more seasoned military professionals think and act. Many of these young Soldiers will be expected to respond to similar situations in a matter of months once the BDE deploys again.

As leaders, we must do all we can to remove the stigma attached to combat-related stress disorder/reaction. We must reinforce the understanding that Soldiers are not “broken” when they manifest various symptoms of acute PTSD or even chronic PTSD. Like physical injuries, mental injuries vary in severity and can heal with time and treatment. Mental trauma can even be seen as a sign of moral health. I pray we will never see a time when our Soldiers are able to kill and see their buddies killed without experiencing some mental trauma. Our efforts as leaders now must be directed to ensuring that future generations of warriors are better prepared psychologically, emotionally and physiologically for the horrors of war.

Some Common Indicators of PTSD

- Recurrent flashbacks or nightmares
- Abuse of alcohol or other drugs
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Irritability or outbursts of anger
- Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Persistent avoidance of thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the trauma
- Avoidance of activities, people or places that arouse recollections of the trauma

Leader Actions/Resources for Mitigating PTSD

In Theater

- Maintain your unit’s tactical proficiency
- Talk about traumatic events within your unit
- Lead ethically by word and deed
- Unit Ministry Team
- Combat Stress Team (CST)
- Critical Care Team (CCT)
- Combat Medical Health (CMH)

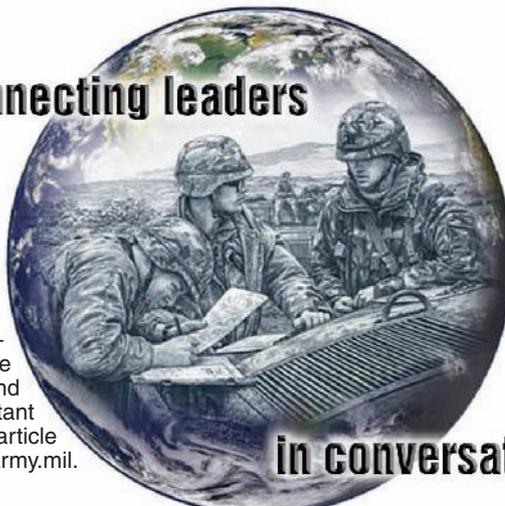
Post Deployment

- Actively monitor your Soldiers’ mental health
- Unit Ministry Team
- Military OneSource: website www.militaryonesource.com (user ID: military, Password: onesource); 1-800-342-9647 (in the US), 484-530-5908 (OCONUS Collect)
- National Center for PTSD: <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/>
- PTSD Support Services: <http://www.ptsdsupport.net/spirit.html>

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 peter.kilner@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

Insights from OEF: Commanding in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is not Iraq. As we train our units to deploy to Afghanistan, we keep in mind that our experiences and lessons from OIF may not always apply in OEF. To help leaders who are preparing for OEF, the Company-Command forum is surveying and interviewing com-

pany-level commanders who have recent experience in Afghanistan. Their responses are available in the CC forum. Listen in to some of the advice offered voluntarily by OEF veteran commanders to their brothers and sisters in arms.

Jeremy Turner

Commander, D/2-504 PIR, 82nd ABN DIV

Operated in Kandahar, April 2005–March 2006

Be ready for a determined enemy who will fight you toe-toe for hours and days on end. There are certainly elements of the counterinsurgency fight, but there are most definitely large groups of 15- to 20-year-old madrassa students who want to get their jihad on. In all honesty, we (myself included) were not mentally ready to be in as tough a fight as it became. OEF is not a peace-keeping mission.

The next point I would add is the importance of the terrain to every aspect of the enemy, yourself and the general population. The mountainous terrain acts to isolate populations from one another, creating different paradigms within each valley. In one valley, there may be a heated rivalry between

two warlords of different tribes or subtribes. Every event that occurs within that area can be laid against the backdrop of that particular ongoing soap opera. In the next valley, those two warlords may be virtual unknowns, and, instead, drug trafficking and smuggling could be a major problem. In many areas, water may be the key friction point between multiple tribes/villages. In the next, it could be corruption in the police force, and in another area, the problem may be hard-core jihadists and Taliban forces. This fact acts to change the enemy TTPs and makes universal TTPs for you more difficult to employ. This, in my mind, highlights the importance of trust on the battlefield between subordinate company and platoon leadership. I believe the conventional forces who have responsibility for patrolling a particular area become the experts on the ground. SF, TF IED, intel guys and superhuman units who can kill people with their hair can all be great assets, but at the end of the day, you are the experts.

Fight the urge to wait on the FOB for perfect intelligence and the perfect combination of forces to then conduct a point raid on the objective. You will get a better feel for the battlespace if you conduct movement to contacts and let intel during the mission drive your next decisions. If you allow some other BOS element to completely control your timing, you will miss opportunities. Sometimes it is unavoidable, but generally let intel (not other BOS elements) drive maneuver. If you take choppers too often to conduct those



Soldiers from C/3-71 CAV, 10th Mountain Division, climb to an observation point in the mountains of Konar Province.

perfect point raids, you will probably get shot down eventually. It is physically and mentally more difficult to execute a mission for an extended period. Most point raids result in just missing the enemy HVT by about five to 10 minutes. Once you are on the ground, kick out some elements along those most likely exfil routes to try to get the large group of military-age males leaving the scene. Then spend a few days (not a few minutes) in the area developing intel.

Also, don't be afraid to embrace religion to establish some commonalities. I would make references to us all being sons of Abraham and what Allah will say when you die, and so on. I had a hard time getting the hang of this, but it was worth it when I did. Just use very illustrative terms and stories to get your point across. Don't worry if some people don't think this kind of talk is politically correct; it will undoubtedly help you to relate to your average Afghan.

Finally, think through CERP and projects. If you build a clinic or a school, you will create a target for the Taliban that has to be staffed, resourced and protected, which are huge headaches. If you build a road or a bridge, you will enhance the local ANA's and ANP's ability to influence events by them getting there sooner (security), help open up markets for the farmers (reduce opium cultivation) and open the area up socially. (I saw women's music being sold in bazaars about four weeks after a major road opened up.) Opening an area up socially acts to put the Taliban on the defensive and helps to alienate them from the population when they butt stroke

someone who just likes the tunes. Use local contractors whenever possible. This employs local hands, ensures timeliness and responsibility and builds respect for village (and elected) leaders. This eventually leads to the villagers building and funding their own school, and therefore they have an intrinsic desire to protect it. That's something that no amount of lectures can produce. They have to see it to believe it.

Aaron Swain

**Commander, C CO/3-71 CAV, 10th MTN DIV
Operated in Upper Kunar and Eastern Nuristan Provinces,
February 2006–July 2006**

OEF is a true counterinsurgency fight that is getting hotter and hotter with each rotation. The key to winning is in the local population. Don't forget this! You must win them to the side of the Government of Afghanistan while helping the local Afghan Security Forces provide a secure environment. The local population is stuck between a ruthless enemy who kills them for even talking to us and the Coalition. Do everything you can to show them that their country is improving. CERP roads using local labor are the best. With a road comes almost everything else an Afghan could want. Promote the GoA while still respecting and endorsing the tribal system.

Tactically, mortars and snipers are the greatest killers in the mountains of Afghanistan. Become an expert at the battle drill "react to ambush." Learn how to turn it around



CPT Aaron Swain and Soldiers from 3-71 CAV, 10th Mountain Division, pose for a picture in Ghaziabad District, Konar Province, with the district governor, Afghan security officials and members of the local police.



A convoy of vehicles from the 10th Mountain Division moves through a snowstorm in Afghanistan.

quickly through superior firepower and CAS. Get into some serious walking shape; you will carry loads well over 80 pounds even when you trim all the fat from your combat load. Be prepared to lose leaders as a result of injuries, wounds and death.

Jason Toole

**Commander, A (Sapper)/3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion
Operated in Lowgar and Paktia (Gardez) Provinces,
February–June 2006**

One of the things I learned early on was that if you are *not* doing things with the ANA or ANP integrated with you, you won't be as successful; you won't be seen as legitimate. If you are going to do a larger mission (cordon and search, for example), then you will work with the ANA; but if you have a quick opportunity to act based on a piece of actionable intel, it is quicker and more effective to call up the ANP and get them to send a couple guys with you. So it is important that you develop relationships with them.

I worked really hard on developing relationships with the ANP, and it paid off. By the end of my time, we would do anything we could to support them, from giving them things to supporting their operations. They would give us a call when they were in contact. One time the ANP was in a fight and we rolled A-10s for the ANP down the KG pass when they were being attacked. Although the A-10s only hit the burners and chaff, it showed the enemy that the coalition is here backing the ANP. This meant the world to the ANP, who found a huge cache on that mission that was so big it took us several days to reduce.

My actionable intel came almost exclusively from the ANP. I never worked with the ANP in Gardez, which was a major urban center. Out in the countryside, you find police leaders who actually want to make a difference. Some of them are angry at the Taliban, but they are often hamstrung and treated abysmally by the bureaucracy. Some of them are not supplied with ammunition or fuel and are not paid—they feel like they have to illegally tax the locals in order to feed their

your TERPs and treating them like humans instead of voice machines make a big difference in how they interact with people on your behalf. I wanted them to express the emotion that I was displaying. One thing you can do is try not to be ethnocentric and stomp around like the big American cowboy. Be the humble guest—even if you aren't necessarily a humble guest, because I know we have a lot more capability than a humble guest comes with—conveying the message to whomever you are working with: "I'm here to help, I want to be a good Afghan." Learn as much about the customs as you can. Be comfortable sitting, drink the goat milk from the one ladle that gets passed around the circle, eat the goat liver, have the conversation about family—tell them about your kids before you talk business—all that good stuff. Snort the tea loudly to let them know you enjoy it, do whatever you can to be Afghan in your affect as soon as possible—it pays big dividends. Ask questions about being an Afghan, and tell them you are trying to be a good Afghan. All that kind of stuff really builds inroads working with village officials. You have to be Afghan to be successful.

Bill Davis

**Commander, C/173d BSB, 173D ABCT
Operated in Bagram and Kandahar,
February 2005–February 2006**

Everything you do at the tactical level has the potential to impact operational and even strategic plans and policies. Hard knocks on the wrong door may impact national ROE. Losing battlefield awareness and hitting an ANA/ANP/PAK unit with CAS may slow down tripartite talks. Mistakes due to ignorance of cultural/religious differences may incite a riot that plays every 15 minutes on CNN. Everything you do can have far-reaching impacts. Positive tactical events can have the same level of impacts, so choose your actions wisely.

Every operation you conduct needs to be fully synchronized with all the battlefield operating systems; know what assets are available and the capabilities of each. Medevac support to operations in Afghanistan is a challenge (to the



CPT Joe Geraci controls the ground elements during a company-level, time-sensitive-target air-assault operation in Paktika Province in August 2005, while his joint tactical air controller assists in controlling fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft.

point of calculating risk) because of geographic dispersion, terrain, altitude, weather, angle of illumination and available platforms. Know the process, know the capabilities of the aircraft and know the risks involved with conducting operations. We supported/conducted several civilian medical assistance missions with various goals in mind. All of them supported the commander on the ground and served some greater purpose than just the necessary humanitarian aid. Some events were a reward for cooperation, some a way of getting a foot in the door to a denied area and others to gauge the sentiment of the population and glean information. This is just one example of using an available asset to accomplish your mission, but every BOS brings something to the fight. Know and use what you have available.

Don't be afraid to make stuff up as you go. One of the best traditions of our military throughout its history has been its ability to adapt to changing battlefields. Enforce the nonnegotiables of our trade (the Army Values, human rights, Laws of War, etc.) but give your Soldiers the latitude to be creative in accomplishing their missions. Soldiers find out before most commanders what works and what doesn't.

Joseph Geraci

Commander, A Co, 1-508th ABN, 173rd ABN BDE

Operated in Paktika Province (Eastern and Southern Districts),

February 2005–February 2006

Every operation has to be Afghan-led. In other words, Afghan battalion-size missions with U.S. forces performing

only IRF missions, and with ETTs forward with Afghans to allow commitment of U.S. fixed-wing and Medevac assets. Many of the Afghans think that the U.S. forces will go away and the locals will be stuck with the enemy. Therefore, many of them, especially in areas close to the border, are wary of providing support to the Afghan government. To alleviate this perception, the locals must see that the ANA, ANP and ABP are effective and are here for the long haul. We must continue to train them so that they are indeed effective security forces (and we can truly work ourselves out of a job in Afghanistan). By seeing effective security elements and by having an effective and legitimate Afghan government, the Afghans who are apprehensive will start working with the government and provide more intelligence.

It is key to get Afghan forces to provide constant and permanent presence forward. Throughout the entire process, your Soldiers must always operate with disciplined professionalism and treat the local Afghans with dignity and respect. Everyone needs to be trained on how to speak and interact with local nationals. Being able to speak key Afghan phrases provides you instant credibility in the eyes of the Afghans. There is no better way to drive the locals toward the enemy than by disrespecting an Afghan.

There are two components to defeating the enemy: taking away his safe haven/ population support base and killing him. Taking away his safe haven comes through presence patrols, strengthening the Afghan security forces (ANA, ANP and ABP) and getting the people to believe that

their life will be better by supporting the local Afghan government rather than the enemy forces. The most important factors in killing the enemy are tactical patience and analysis. You cannot force the intelligence to fit the operational plan. It absolutely has to be the other way around. The enemy is a creature of habit and sets patterns. To kill him, you must decipher his patterns, capitalize on his weaknesses and then strike.

Scott Halter

Commander, B/3rd Bn, 158th Avn Regt (TF Storm),

Based out of Kandahar and Bagram, March 2005–February 2006

Afghanistan is not Iraq. Most leaders with OIF experience seem to think OEF will be a lot like OIF. There are some significant differences I'd like to highlight. First, geography matters. Take a look at some maps of Afghanistan and you will quickly realize you are going to one of the most geographically challenging countries in the world. If you're an aviation unit, this is particularly important. Power management and mountain flying are of the utmost importance during training. Poor power management and complacency are the number one cause of class A accidents in OEF. Second, the enemy is very motivated. Without going into any classified detail, I will say that OEF is at times still very much an offensive operation, and aviation is at the center of it all. Do not underestimate the enemy's adaptive ability and their motivation to stand and fight toe-to-toe.

Sean Macrae

Commander, C/1-508

Operated in Paktika and Southern Ghazni,

February 2005–February 2006

One thing that remained constant, particularly in Paktika, is that the local populace was the key to all success with regard to consistently influencing the enemy. The largest threat was the pressure plate IED, which was usually conveniently placed at choke points. With the exception of three IED strikes in my AO (two on local nationals and one

on a Humvee), every other IED was discovered and reported to my elements by local nationals before we hit it. I wholeheartedly believe it was the consistent, strong, fair and tribally unbiased relationship with the populace my Soldiers gained and maintained that facilitated this support. In addition, I think this was a good metric of success as we started to see more and more caches and IEDs turned in to the FOB, the resounding theme being that the locals were tired of fighting and wanted to support their government. (I did not give any small rewards money for caches or other things.)

For anyone going to Paktika, Paktia and Kwost (aka P2K), it is absolutely critical to understand that, traditionally, these three provinces were not formally supported or required to participate in the Government of Afghanistan during the time of the Taliban or previously. There were tribal agreements that guaranteed no taxation from Kabul, support if the army needed assistance elsewhere in Afghanistan and the requirement to protect the border from the tribal regions in Pakistan. In return the P2K region was left to itself. As a result, there was no government support, education advancement or infrastructure development on any large scale in these provinces. If you have never been there you will find yourself frustrated because of the lack of perceived progress; however, the fact that there is an operational government on the provincial level, police and border police in uniform in districts, ANA operating unilaterally in many cases, and local mayors working in conjunction with the governors on some level is a huge improvement for the region—something all Afghans in the area have never seen before in their province.

Last, but not least, I struggled with being able to quantifiably express to my Soldiers if we were successful. (I had much fewer body counts and more mullahs openly endorsing the Government of Afghanistan.) We had to work very hard to quantify measures of effectiveness throughout the AO that could be reinforced within the company. All the average rifleman in southern Paktika really knew was that he

drove nine hours to get from the FOB to the northern portion of the Company AO, he pulled security while the leaders attended a meeting and then moved to another location. Be creative in how you continue to keep the company informed on mission success and effectiveness in the AO, and do it routinely. Also, your measures of effectiveness and means for reaching the populace will change frequently. As Afghan leaders come and go, you see corruption in one individual and have to adjust to another leader or in-



CPT Sean Macrae and one of his platoon leaders, 1LT Kris Kerksick, meet with the shura in the Terwa District of Paktika Province in late December 2005.

Soldiers from A/1-508 PIR, 173rd ABCT jump from a hovering UH-60 helicopter during an infiltration operation in June 2006. The high elevation and rugged terrain made it impossible for the aircraft to land.



dividual, or other things. It all leads to some frustration but must be addressed, or Soldiers will become complacent and not believe what they are doing daily is having an impact in the global war on terrorism.

Ryker E. Horn, Field Artillery
Commander, Delta Battery, 319th AFAR,
173rd ABCT
Operated in Regional Command East,
April 2005–March 2006

You can't be in all locations all the time, so you have to trust your young leaders to make the right decisions. That said, battlefield circulation is a must. My 1SG and I spent the entire deployment flying from fire base to fire base, checking on Soldiers and positioning ourselves at key locations for BN-size operations to provide that senior mentorship and to free up the PLT leadership to execute the desired operation. You must have standard reports for your PLTs to follow—that is the only way you will know what is going on at each of your PLTs. The reports I used consisted of mission fired reports, ammo matrices, weekly role-up reports and more.

Logistics is key. I was a separate battery and did not have a higher level headquarters to run all classes of supply. My robust HQ section located at Bagram worked 24-hour operations, ensuring that all the PLTs were supplied with Class V and a level of PLL so that the PLTs could fix howitzers as needed. The use of CDS was key to the battery maintaining a level of class V to support any operation,

be it DS to a unit in a TIC or counterrocket fire. Don't let ammo be an emergency resupply every time. Push ammo on all the ring routes you can and schedule CDS drops frequently. When winter rolls in, air will be a problem. Never put yourself in a position to deny a fire mission; we fired more than 6,500 rounds in support of friendly forces. There is nothing like an Infantryman, Marine—or anyone for that matter—thanking you for providing lethal artillery fires.

Do you have recent experience leading Soldiers at the company level in Afghanistan? If so, we invite you to log on to the CompanyCommand forum, go to the Warfighting topic's "Afghan Commander" folder and join the conversation with your fellow company-grade officers. You will connect with like-minded professionals and make a difference for our Army.

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 feedback and article ideas to peter.kilner@us.army.mil.



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

Art by Jody Harmon



CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders, many of whom support or will serve on a MiTT

From: Company Commanders who have MiTT experience

Training Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) is a critical mission for our Army, and thousands of us are involved in the effort. This mission presents new and unfamiliar challenges. If we are to succeed, we must learn quickly from our own experiences and from those of our fellow ISF advisors. We have to work together as a profession.

One past company commander and current CompanyCommand forum member is providing an example of how we can become more effective military transition team (MiTT) advisors while still in the experience, individually and collectively. Maj. Rob Thornton of MiTT 5825

in Mosul, Iraq, advises the XO and S-3 of an Iraqi Army battalion (IA BN). When Rob commanded two companies in the 25th Infantry Division several years ago, he recorded and shared his experiences in the "CDR's Log" section of the CompanyCommand professional forum. For the past 10 months, Rob has been keeping a log of his experiences as a MiTT advisor. His log provides a window—not only into the day-to-day lessons learned from advising an Iraqi Army unit, but also into the soul of a professional Soldier. This month, we share a few excerpts from Rob's numerous posts in his Company Command CDR's Log, including his photos.

CDR's Log: Thoughts of a MiTT Leader in Iraq

By Rob Thornton

Establishing the Relationship Between You (the Advisor) and the IA

Sun., May 21, 2006; 3:12 A.M.—Since I have not seen a manual on advising, (although there are certainly memoirs, such as T.E. Lawrence's), a lot of what I've done so far as an advisor is feel my way through it. While we were at Taji [at the Counterinsurgency Academy], there was one class that stood out above all; it was taught by a contractor named Robbie Robinson, who has vast experience as an advisor (back to Vietnam, El Salvador and various Arab states). Robbie said that cultural variances and nuances can be boiled down to respect for the golden rule. So far (remember I'm only about a month living with my IA BN), I've found this to be 100 percent correct. Cultural *faux pas* are overlooked in light of demonstrated sincerity and honesty.

What I've found so far is that it is not so much a difference in East/West, but

rather in our "Military Type-A, Larry the Cable Man 'Get 'er done'" approach contrasted with a culture that places immense value on relationships and hospitality. I've decided to keep up front in my mind that although I'll depart this BN in about 10 months, the IA soldiers will continue to remain here fighting the fight until it's done. They have to have a sustained, long-term approach that works for them. Keeping this in mind and discussing it with them will demonstrate that you understand their problem and their concerns.



1SG John Thomas, center, is flanked by an interpreter on the left and an IA scout on the right. The scout/sniper led a three-man team that took out one AIF and neutralized a five-man IED cell.

Photographs by Maj. Rob Thornton



Getting set up for Iraqi payday—no direct deposit here. “Payday” lasts days at a time.

For example, when they go on leave (one week out of four—and generally leaders get less or must distribute their days) they must travel home through contested space. Sometimes they are mistaken for AIF (Anti-Iraqi Forces) since they carry weapons through Coalition or other ISF battlespace. They go home to take care of the business of running their family—ISF pay is in cash; there is no direct deposit. Often, AIF are waiting to kill them and their families on leave. When they return to duty, their families are under constant threat, and this weighs heavily on their minds. They have much at risk, and understanding it and discussing the risks they take shows sincerity on your part.

Most of us know that tribal influences for the most part have greater influence than ethereal, philosophical ideals and nationalistic aspirations. I honestly have not even seen the Kurdish IA officers here place an independent Kurdistan above a secure Iraq for their family, but I’ve also seen a small group of officers within this BN who are beginning to view military professionalism in their peers as equally important. This shows progress in the professionalization of their military.

It’s good to sit down with your IA counterparts (you’ll be advising more than one) and just shoot the breeze, drink chai (or Coke, water, coffee) and smoke a cigar or cigarette

(if you smoke). Bottom line is: you’ll find you have a great deal in common. Soldiers are soldiers, with soldier-type problems. Just be sincere, follow the golden rule, and remember that, when being solutions oriented, any approach has to be one that the IA is resourced to execute and can sustain after we’re gone.

Positive Little Things Can Add Up

Sat., May 27, 2006; 1:51 A.M.—There seems to be all kinds of opportunities in this job to make a difference. There is the big stuff like helping the staff do analysis or providing Coalition effects during execution for their operations, but there is also the opportunity to subtly bring about change through small efforts. Our senior MiTT TM NCO, 1SG John Thomas, and our S-4 NCO, SSG Rhodes, are doing just that.

The equipment that the IA gets often comes without any training manuals, training, or CL IX repair support. We have some great five-ton trucks. They are Russian and basically have the same transmission as tractor trailers. The BN got these trucks back in 2005, but because no training was given with them, the IA soldiers tore the clutches out of most of them. From there they sat idle and the batteries went dead. Some of these trucks have four-ton cranes on

them. They would enhance the BN's ability in many ways if they could get them operational.

Here is where the American soldier's tenacity, stubbornness and will to solve problems out of spite (the "don't-let-the-bastards-win" mentality) come in. On a very personal level, 1SG Thomas and SSG Rhodes have been down turning wrenches with the mechanics. When the mechanics said the trucks would not run, 1SG Thomas and SSG Rhodes got two of them up, although the one with the crane will only go in reverse since the clutch is torn out. Yesterday, they said the crane cannot be fixed, so we tinkered with it until we got a feel for the problem. SSG Rhodes promptly came back and contacted the Russian company by e-mail. He is a man on a mission!

The point is, our actions influence others and also enhance or detract from our ability to influence. If we put forward a positive, can-do attitude it is contagious. In this way I find that it is not very different from when I was a CO CDR. There is also the personal satisfaction of small victories. You could potentially say that things are not in your lane or are outside the scope of your responsibilities, but examples of leadership are what is needed most. This does not mean

Crisis in the Dining Facility

Wed., June 14, 2006; 11:45 A.M.—You are going to have all kinds of day-to-day, "sky-is-falling" crises that you are going to get involved in to a greater or lesser extent (really depends on you). Today at 1600, the DFAC manager came to me and told me he only had enough food for the evening meal and no water or sodas for that meal. I asked him who else he'd told. "Well, no one yet," he replied. "OK, let's go upstairs and talk with the staff," I said.

So we go up and find lots of hand wringing and gnashing of teeth, but no action. "What are we doing about it?" I said. "Well, we have attempted to contact the contractor, but he will not answer his phone," they said. "Well, was there a request dropped for food with enough time for him to deliver?" I said. "Yes, the problem is that no one can force him to bring the food," they said. "OK, who is the first person who can make the contractor respond?" I said. "The commander," they said. The BN CDR is returning from leave.

Before I continue, you have to understand how this affects the big picture. These IA soldiers are volunteers, and they can leave anytime they want to (and some do). They live on a combat outpost, with some less-than-stellar neighbors—they shoot at us to say hello.

The equipment has a high not-mission-capable rate (MGs, trucks, etc.). The pay is OK but is often screwed up (had one soldier who had not been paid for eight months—had to "almost" threaten the S-4 to fix this), the promotions are screwed up (managed by the ministry of defense). The training for basic soldiers is limited, for NCOs very limited and for junior officers very, very limited (leadership and understanding the responsibilities of the leader is the biggest problem). It's getting very hot, and the air conditioners are at a less-than-50 percent operationally ready rate. Most IA soldiers have only one uniform, their boots have holes in them, etc. Under these conditions, when you start talking about taking their chow away—we were about to have a demonstration. However, let me say that I'm in complete awe of these guys, because even with all of that, they are still doing the mission.

Well, we fixed the problem for now. I

went down and called our boss, the brigade MITT technical maintenance chief, and asked him to bring the issue to the IA BDE CDR or XO. Once the IA BDE XO called the contractor, there was an immediate response and chow was on the way. You'd think that when you pay somebody over here, the incentive is to keep getting paid; it's not that simple. The contractor provides substandard food in both quality and quantity, but the contract is managed at echelons



A Kraz 7.5-ton truck with Inman crane and Iraqi operator is used to remove a generator for maintenance.

being point man in a stack during a mission—at that point you are disrupting their leadership—but it does mean getting to know IA soldiers on a level that makes a personal difference and provides a positive example for them. This is no different from how we build teams in our Army. If the soldiers believe you have their best interests at heart, your effectiveness as a leader is enhanced. The big things are important, but the little things add up, too.

MAJ Ala'a, the BN S-3, and LTC Abdul Khaleq, the BN CDR, give instructions to a patrol during an October 2006 AIF attack on ISF nodes throughout Mosul. The ISF (both IA and IPs) defeated the AIF resoundingly with little CF assistance, resulting in a huge surge in IA morale and a loss of face for the terrorists. MAJ Mark Hayden (background) helped coordinate CF aviation support.



above reality, so you can't fire him. It's fair to ask where the \$\$\$ goes. The contractor responds to pressure only from somebody he fears (there are not many). That's OK, you just need to know that, and the IA needs to know that.

If the IA BN XO would have picked up the phone and called the IA BDE XO and said, "Hey, Sir, the scumbag contractor is screwing my soldiers and I need help so I can tell my boss we've got it taken care of," then I'd have never known about it, and neither would the soldiers. It was just something he did not know to do, or did not have faith that something would be done about it. It's that absence of leadership skills at certain levels that the MiTT guys help them fill. It's painful, but never dull. Even the newest CO CDR in our Army learns pretty quick that bad news is not fine wine, and that if he needs help he'd better ask before he gets more help than he needed. Here, that is just not the case. Our guys are pretty good at the tactical stuff, but understanding how to build and maintain organizations is new to them. Understanding that leadership extends beyond the cordon and search is a little foreign to many of them. Today was still a good day, though, because they learned something.

Understanding IA systems

Fri., July 28, 2006; 6:04 A.M.—One of the things we (our BN MiTT) are learning is that the IA has systems for doing things that have already been adapted to fit their condi-

tions. I've tended to try and associate what they are doing at times based on the context of what is familiar to me. As such, I missed the boat on some things and have since tried to consider what they are doing and why, without applying my own bias. This takes considerable conscious effort, and sometimes I still catch myself.

You'll find that the IA is a very innovative and adaptive organization. Their rationale often stems from concerns you are not keen enough to pick up on (remember, they live here). I think it's fair to assume they often feel the same way about us, even when you have a solid relationship. Not all things translate well.

Now that I've been watching the BN CDR and his officers for a while, I can tell you that they are better at people problems than we are. We seem to be very linear, and that suits us, given our culture. Some of these guys can balance people problems scores at a time. They don't have the luxury of just getting rid of guys—too many tribal relations, MOD constraints, and a need to fill holes, so instead they deal with people. They do this with local leaders, each other, etc., on a very personal scale.

What I've learned is to watch and ask questions. Although we are the "advisors," you have to be careful about overplaying your role. If you're fortunate and your counterpart is a good leader, you'll find you probably learn more than you teach. And before you can advise, you really need to have a

good understanding of their systems and thought processes—this is not an overnighter. We're almost halfway through the tour, and I feel like I'm just starting to understand.

It's not something you can just go into and say, "Tell me what you're doing." We made a joke the other day about embeds being here to provide excellence through osmosis. It may be that there has to be some "reverse osmosis" first so you can understand ground truth. This really helps with reporting on the IA unit you are looking at.

Don't waste your time telling yourself how screwed up they are, and wringing your hands because they won't adopt your system; instead, spend some time analyzing what you see, and consider it in the context of the conditions.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Sat., Sept. 3, 2006; 2:28 P.M.—There are going to be times when you feel like you just can't win. Last night, one of our RTOs (provided by our Coalition Forces partner unit) came and knocked on my door at 0230 and told me the Coalition partner battalion was asking for me on the radio. What had happened? The Coalition had a strong lead on a possible target in our IA BN's AOR—a 10-digit grid and make, model, color and distinguishing characteristics of the vehicle, but the IA would not go and check it out, citing that the IA DIV had tasked them to the bone and they had no patrols left. I went and talked to the IA BN S-3 and tried to explain that it was OK to break down one of the division-mandated static TCPs for the hour it might take to check this out, but he was adamant about executing division-level guidance to the T. As a result, the BN missed an opportunity.

I finally went back downstairs and explained to the CF partner that the mission was not going to happen. I felt bad for the IA because I knew the S-3 knew it was the wrong answer; he knew the right answer was to go and check it out, but he felt like his hands were tied. I woke up the next morning and tried to make sense of it. My fix is to come up with a commander's critical information requirement where the BN CDR is notified and either makes the call or gets in touch with the BDE CDR, but even that is only treating a symptom of the problem.

The problem is the "professionalization" of the Army, a slow process (slow when you know you only have a year to make as big a dent as possible and want to see the IA succeed) that at times defies words to describe your frustration. "Why," you ask, "can't they just have a quick reaction force always ready to roll within five to 10 minutes?" The answer is that they are just not there yet. The only upside is knowing how far they have come in a relatively short time,

seeing some of the improvements in just six months and knowing that I'm seeing more and more Iraqi Army soldiers who want to succeed.

I just have to get over the fact that what we consider easy for us is not for them. The other day I had to call out the BDE S-3 in the IA BDE targeting meeting because he was adamant that the exact locations provided by the DIV for TCPs be executed. We spent 15 minutes explaining the problems with adhering to haphazard grids provided by a DIV staff officer for static TCPs, and why allowing subordinate commanders to exercise flexibility within the higher echelon commander's intent was better. I still don't think he believed us, but because the various IA BN MiTT S-3 advisors and the CF partner gangpiled him, he caved. It was an argument I was just not willing to lose because of the importance of it—and I was just plain tired of the micromanagement.



LTC Abdul Khaleq, IA BN CDR, talks to a group detained from a local mosque for having AIF propaganda in their possession. The BN CDR knew that detaining them further would be counterproductive, so he used the opportunity to get out his message. The IA increasingly understands the value of good IO to counter the AIF messages and to win public support.

That is what I mean by "easy for us, not for them." Much of the leadership at the BDE and DIV is entrenched in 1980–1990s Soviet/Iraqi-era doctrinal command philosophies. Just come prepared to rub your head a lot from running into walls, and then backing up and trying it at another angle. *Why* will be the unspoken word always in the back of your throat.

Discussions About Morals and Ethics

Sat., Nov. 4, 2006; 4:49 A.M.—You will find that many opportunities arise for you to discuss ethics and morals with your Iraqi counterparts. These will be among some of the most challenging and rewarding conversations you will have. These conversations will require you to examine your

BN S-2 CPT Ahkmed hands out candy to a young Iraqi boy. The IA is improving the ways they conduct patrols and, consequently, the way they are perceived by the population. CPT Ahkmed is an outstanding practitioner of HUMINT.

own beliefs in the context of how and why Iraqis see the world differently. You will need to consider why they see the world the way they do, such as understanding the long-term effects that a brutal, totalitarian dictator has on their cultural and national psyche. You will need to frame your (our) ethical and moral beliefs in a manner that resonates with them. Here are some vignette topics you can use to discuss morals and ethics with your counterparts.

Corruption. Pick a case from the recent news (it's all over both the Iraqi news and our own since the media is pretty much universal in their coverage). Shape it into a vignette that has a personal impact, so it becomes more relevant. Discuss at length its consequences at every level, so they understand the harm it does. Do not expect to come to a real concurrence on beliefs with the first conversation; instead, focus on planting the seed. You have also established your views on the subject, empathized with them by trying to understand the environment in which their views have grown and have set the stage for future discussions.

The Army as a guarantor of human rights. This is a delicate subject, but one you will need to discuss and understand. Remember, you are not advising the U.S. Army (or for that matter, any Western army). These men will be fighting this insurgency and potentially others within their own country days on end, for an indeterminate period. They may be targets of revenge for their actions, even after the insurgency is over. They have seen neighbors, friends, family and innocent women and children killed for no other reason than because someone in their family served. When they see a terrorist, they realize that the next time they see this man it may be in an ambush or fleeing from a crime where one of their family was murdered. For many, their frame of reference of a time when security was guaranteed was when Saddam held absolute power. (They tend to gloss over some of the more thorny details.) They are disheartened by the seemingly (perspective is nine-tenths of reality here) apathetic criminal justice system, which may appear corrupt or which seems to value the rights of the criminal above those of society or the safety of society's defenders and their families. They understand their average insurgent better than we do. They know his background and what he has endured before he ever gets to them. They know that the insurgent is a hard man who will use every



advantage, such as claiming to target only Americans, to claiming abuse, to using connections to regain his freedom so he can conduct his terrorist activities again.

Within this context, you are going to have to make your case. It doesn't help that the Iraqi ROE is rigid, cookie-cutter and heavy-handed. I've heard Iraqis become so frustrated with the system that they proclaim the next time they will not risk capturing the terrorists, but instead will kill them. I've heard them discuss the need for stronger techniques during the questioning of detainees. You have to argue for the problems with such a cookie-cutter, rigid application of force. You have to point out the short- and long-term problems with such solutions. Explain the consequences of a climate where everyone (or at least every soldier) is free to use violence because it seems the most expedient and most convenient. Point out that while Saddam's regime may have preserved order, the price paid was heavy, and that many innocent people died as a result. Point out that what they are fighting for is not to set the conditions for another Saddam to come to power. Point out that such conditions allow for abuse of power under the guise of public good. Again, you are going to have to frame your arguments within the context of the environment you are in. You are not trying to castrate them. Ultimately (and I mean down the road when the MiTT training wheels come off and we are no longer embedded) their solution may be something we would have trouble accepting in our society.

My point in this thread is that no one told me I'd be mentoring on ethics. The "advisory pitch" made things seem much cleaner: discuss the military decision-making process, work some effects and conduct a few after-action reviews. This is not a combat training center, and you are

not an OC. Advisory work is more like developing a team from the inside out than the outside in. You are part counselor, part staff officer, part role model. I'd recommend you familiarize yourself with a few other texts besides FMs. You might bring along a little Jonathan Hume, some Plato, some Shakespeare, Twain and the Federalist Papers for a start. Actually the list could be very broad, and there are lots of places to reference good discussions on morals and ethics. You are more than just a military advisor; you are something of a mentor, too. Your day-to-day interactions and conversations over the year you are an advisor will do more to develop and influence your counterparts than any class or block of instruction you give. The former is a cumulative picture of who you are and what a U.S. Soldier believes in; the latter is a stand-alone class that is delivered and received as such. I look back over the last eight months and I see that my most important conversations with my counterparts were the ones that developed and sparked deep conversations on nonmilitary subjects.

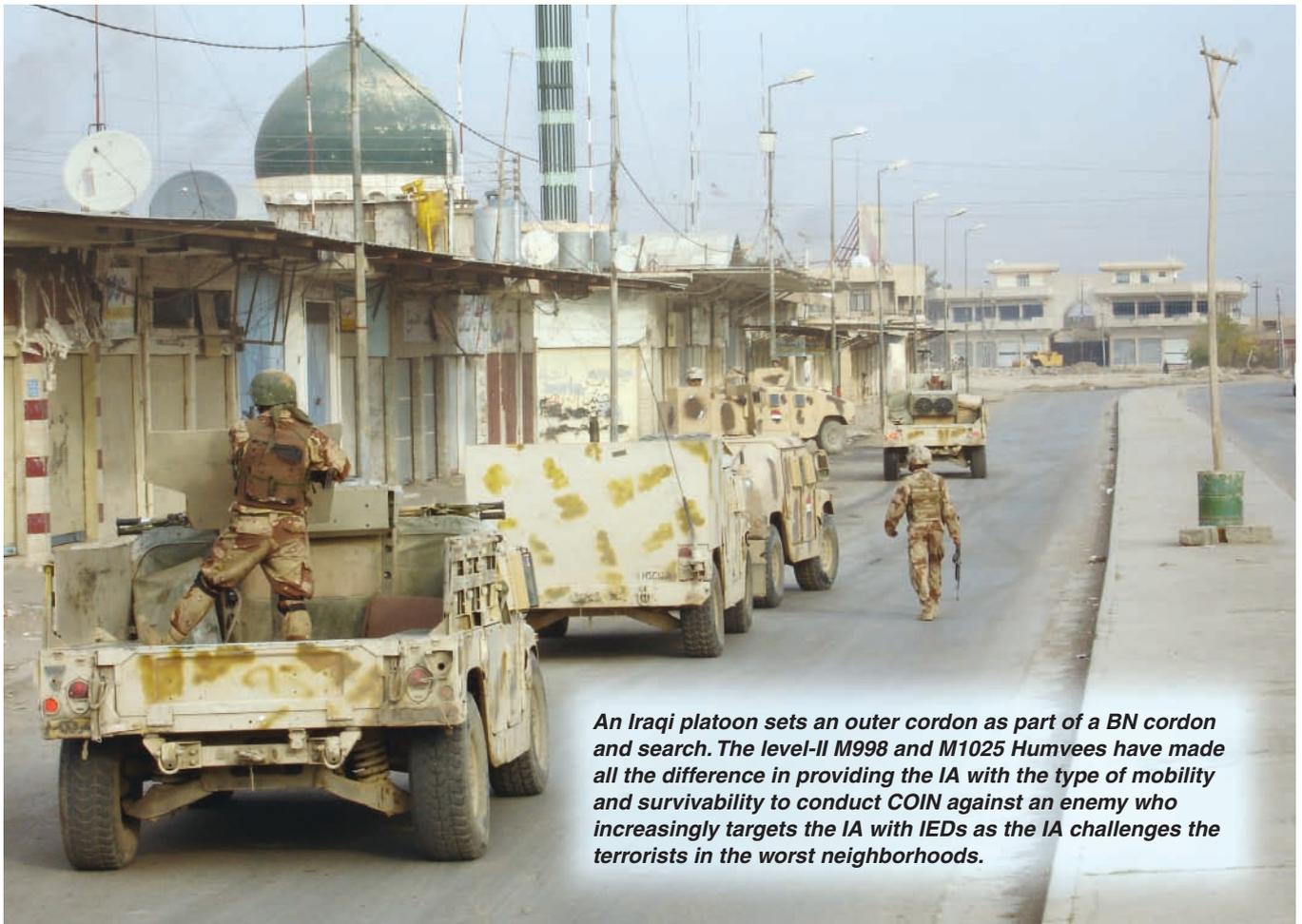
Putting the Puzzle Together

Thurs., Nov. 30, 2006; 4:14 A.M.—One of the things I've come to learn here is that few things are ever what they are claimed to be. I remember that when we first got here, many IA soldiers, NCOs and even some officers would come to tell us about a particular problem and how it was

the chain-of-command's fault it was not fixed. Cries of corruption, apathy, bad leadership, etc., were foisted upon each member of the MiTT. It was a process of figuring out the puzzle. One of our interpreters once told me that it was a puzzle they were waiting for us to figure out. When I asked him if he'd just tell me, he said, "You have to figure it out, or you will not believe it."

I now understand that "almost" everybody here has some form of agenda. It is just the way things are after three decades of Ba'athist rule in a culture that differs from ours in many ways; however, I also would say our cultures have many things in common, and that we also have agendas, but pursue them in different ways. That is one of the things that cause confusion and misunderstandings—the way we pursue our agendas.

I now look and listen for commonality in what is being done or said. I look for those things which are most in line with our objectives and seek to strengthen them. It's a long-term process, which is why relationships are so important. Today, three soldiers came to me from 4th Company. They are Kurdish and of the same tribe as the BN CDR. They were upset that the BN CDR reprimanded them in front of the Americans and their peers. It is strange to think a soldier would not know how to take an "ass chewing" and just move out and improve, especially in a country where in the old conscript army of Saddam, they could be



An Iraqi platoon sets an outer cordon as part of a BN cordon and search. The level-II M998 and M1025 Humvees have made all the difference in providing the IA with the type of mobility and survivability to conduct COIN against an enemy who increasingly targets the IA with IEDs as the IA challenges the terrorists in the worst neighborhoods.

beaten and jailed for six months for the slightest disrespect toward an officer. Now, when soldiers are free to quit without punishment and can openly disagree with almost anyone—it's a very emotive culture—these men feel their honor requires them to quit or heap an equally fair insult on the BN CDR because of an ass chewing.

So, for a good hour I explained to them what their BN CDR had accomplished for them (with minimal MiTT encouragement, I might add), why it was important to have a chain of command, why it was important to have discipline, *why, why, why*. When they tried to tell me about this officer who did this, or that officer who has done that, I pointed out what I'd seen in each one of those officers. I've known and watched them for some time (about nine months), so I know them well. Will the soldiers quit? Maybe, I don't know. But they do know now that I understand how things are. So while they will still come and ask me for things, like to intercede on their behalf, or come to say hello, these particular soldiers will not cry wolf anymore to me. They will wait till the next MiTT comes in.

Work on solving the puzzle as quickly as you can. Share the information among your team members and the associated MiTTs. The former will help put the pieces in place, the latter will give you a semi-outside perspective (like someone standing away from the wall and telling you if the picture is straight while you hang it). Be careful about making something what it is not because that is what you want it to be—an analytical fallacy. Don't apply Western standards too rigidly to someone who does not have Western values, but do discuss them and listen to what they say about your standards and theirs. One of the benefits of this job is that you will likely come to know yourself better.

Rob's E-mail Response to Reading this Article

Wed., Jan. 17, 2007; 2:09 A.M.—You know, it's interesting, as I read these posts, I realize how far along the BN has come. A few key things fell into place, and the IA got better. They were the ones who decided they were going to make it happen. I think what we provided was the rationale and encouragement. It's really hard to make a big dent in any one thing, but if you make a bunch of small dents, you still get volume. We were talking as a MiTT team about finishing strong being the way you'll remember things, and that is what we are shooting for. It's definitely been a team effort, and each member made things happen at different times that the rest of us could build upon. I'd say that next to command, this has been my most rewarding professional experience. I appreciate you putting this together. If possible, I was wondering if you could add something that basically says, "The IA BN Rob discusses made some incredible strides forward over the year, and the MiTT team learned just as much from their Iraqi Army BN family as it learned from them."

Regards to all,
Rob

Has reading this CDR's Log made an impact on you? It's striking to note that Rob himself learns from contributing. As he writes, he reflects on his experiences, which accelerates his own learning and development. Several other company-level commanders are keeping CompanyCommand forum CDR's Logs. If you are a current company-level commander, we invite you to reflect upon and share your experiences with your professional peers at <http://cdrslog.army.mil>, a topic within the CompanyCommand forum.

About CompanyCommand

CC is a place for company-level commanders—current, past and future—to connect and share ideas and experiences. This is YOUR forum—it is voluntary, grassroots, by and for company commanders and is focused like a laser beam on CompanyCommand. By joining, you are gaining access to an amazing community of professionals who love Soldiers and are committed to building combat-ready teams. Collectively, as a profession, we possess the knowledge that can enable us to build and lead our units more effectively. With this in mind, please participate, contribute and tap into the experiences of others. You'll never know the full impact of you taking a moment to share your experience with others!

Connecting leaders



Art by Jody Harmon

The CC space is organized around the "big rocks" of command that we call "Topics"—Leadership, Warfighting, Training, Fitness, Supply, Maintenance, Force Protection and Soldiers & Family.

We also have an area specifically for Professional Reading, as well as the CDR's Log (as highlighted in this article), where commanders are journaling their command experiences. And, if you are preparing for command, we recommend you check out the "1st 90 Days" topic located in the Leadership Section of the web site. If CC is adding value to you, encourage your platoon leaders to check out their forum—a forum that is centered on excellence in platoon lead-

in conversation

ership—at <http://platoonleader.army.mil>.

Send article ideas to peter.kilner@us.army.mil. Company Commanders connect at <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>.



CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders

From: Company Commanders

Relief in Place: The Challenge of Continuity at the Company Level

Almost every time we rotate in or out of an area of operations (AO), we execute a relief in place (RIP) with our company-level counterparts. The information that we exchange with our fellow commanders during these RIPs is crucial to our collective success. After all, the local populace is not rotating; the enemy is not rotating. Therefore, to gain and maintain the support of the people, as well as to retain the initiative on the enemy, our transitions of units must be as seamless as possible.

We all know, however, that too often our RIPs leave open seams that the enemy exploits. The stakes are too high to accept this state of affairs. As professionals, we can come together, share our experiences and lessons learned, float ideas and improve the effectiveness of our company-level RIPs. Listen in as commanders from recent deployments reflect on their own experiences and lessons learned from rotating into their AOs.

Andre Rivier

Commander, B/2-502 IN

About three weeks before arriving in Iraq, I was told that my company would be tasked out to support the Iraqi elections, but I didn't know to what unit or where. When we arrived, I found out that my company was attached to 1AD, with the unit split between two battalions. In fact, at one point in that first month, my Soldiers (and our equipment) were tasked out to six different companies in two different battalions in a different division. Working under an unfamiliar

chain of command as I RIP-ed in was tough, and property accountability became an issue.

With the two platoons I retained control of, I actually had a very effective RIP with my predecessor, Brian Borakove, who was a very good CO of a Maryland National Guard company. When he had RIP-ed in a year earlier, he'd received nothing from his predecessor, and he wanted to make sure that our RIP was better. He and his unit handed over a thorough, written intelligence packet, and he and I talked about informants, targets and the like. A written

product is so much more helpful than a verbal brief, because you can continue to refer to it long after your predecessor is gone. He also linked me up with the CO of our partnered Iraqi Army company, and the three of us conducted several days of joint patrols. All three of us went out together to meet the key personalities. The IA



Capt. Andre Rivier, left, and Capt. Brian Borakove, right, talk with their Iraq Army partner-unit commander, Lt. Col. Khalil (center, facing away), during the relief in place (RIP) between Borakove's and Rivier's companies. They are meeting inside Patrol Base Alamo in Saba Al Bor, a city 20 miles northwest of Baghdad.

commander knew a lot of people, and the continuity he provided to the RIP was very helpful. The two months I had in sector partnered with that IA unit were the two most effective months for my company in our yearlong deployment. Partnering U.S. and IA companies is the way to go, and we should stagger unit rotations so that either the U.S. or IA unit is always familiar with the AO.

About two weeks after arriving in Iraq and in sector, I took control of the sector. Because of my company's task organization, I had available only half the troops and half the equipment of the company I replaced. Still, thanks to the quality of the intelligence handover, within a month we captured two of the main targets from the intel packet—AQIZ (Al Qaeda in Iraq) guys who were making IEDs. We accomplished this by integrating old and new intelligence to identify aliases, and that's really a testament to the outgoing commander and our partner IA commander.

Larry Sharp

Commander, B/1-68 AR

I had a pretty decent RIP. I took over from a very dynamic officer who wasn't afraid to make his guys work to get a good product for us. All the COs in my battalion moved north ahead of our units to attend the COIN (counterinsurgency) academy, and then we linked up with our counterparts two weeks before our units arrived. So I had two weeks of free RIP time with my predecessor, during which I was able to get a good feel for the AO without any other distractions. The coin of the realm there is information, and what he handed over to me was enormous—all their missions, AARs (after action reviews), intel from their entire year. The format was really good, too; it gave us something to build on.

One challenge we had with continuity came just after the RIP. Local national translators, or terps, are an important source of information and continuity. My translator had been the previous CO's translator, and he—like most of the terps we fell in on—had been working with Americans for several years. When we drove down streets, he would be pointing things out, saying, "We've raided that house two times, one successfully, one not.

.... In this house lives the mother of an insurgent leader who we captured last year. Next door is his cousin," and so on. Well, my unit arrived just as FOBs (forward operating bases) were being consolidated, and we had to move to a larger, brigade-sized FOB. Some of the terps, who had come to see our current battalion-sized FOB as their home were more fearful about the new location and were unwilling to make the move. Other translators became insulted by the new FOB's rules—they were no longer trusted to carry a sidearm or cell phone—and they quit. I lost my last two experienced translators when higher HQ came to my TOC (tactical operations center), arrested them and held them overnight before releasing them. After this affront to their honor, they quit. So, within a month of the move, I lost all my translators, who had until then been invaluable sources of information on the AO.

Nate Sammon

Commander, A/2-9 CAV

We RIP-ed with 1-15 IN, and they gave us a good initial brief and on-the-ground orientation to our new area of operations. They told us and showed us where they were getting hurt and attacked, the hot spots. They covered the Iraqi personalities—not just the government leaders, but all



Capt. Nate Sammon and Iraqi Army Lt. "M.", east of Tikrit. Sammon considers meeting your Iraqi partners to be a critically important component of the RIP process.

The Other Side of RIP: A Thought Experiment

Imagine that you are a high school student in a school where, every year, the entire staff and faculty changes. Your teachers change. Your coaches change. The rules change. Every year, consequently, you have to get comfortable with new leadership. Every year, you have to reestablish your reputation. You never know if the hard work you did in one year will be remembered the next. You never know when a new coach will arrive with a scheme that makes you less important to the team. How would that feel? What would you want and expect the incoming and outgoing staff and faculty to

do, not only to keep the school running smoothly, but also to maintain a sense of fairness? If we think about it, the Iraqi and Afghan people—who are the centers of gravity in the counterinsurgency fights—are like students in such a school. The Iraqi and Afghan peoples have to form new relationships and reestablish their reputations with U.S. forces after each RIP, which often occur more often than once a year. With this in mind, are there things we can do at the company level to reduce our RIPs' negative impacts on the Iraqi and Afghan peoples?

sources of information. We learned who they are, what their religious background is, their relative levels of cooperation. It was more than just an area orientation that said, "70 percent Shia, 30 percent Sunni." It was a personality orientation. They also went over their milestones, their road to success—where they started, where they are now and how they got there. That enabled us to pick up the mission and keep it moving forward.

The most important part of RIP was getting out on the ground with my predecessor and his subordinate leaders (platoon leaders and platoon sergeants). We drove around the AO, talking to each other on the headset. He pointed things out. "This is where so and so lives, this is what he does, this is what's important. This is where one of our soldiers was killed." He broke down the physical and cultural geography of that particular area. The next most important aspect of RIP was learning how to use equipment we were operating for the first time, like M1114 gun trucks for our Bradley-trained crews. The nametag defilade we had trained on, for example, was an insufficient TTP (tactics, techniques and procedures) in our AO. A gunner "up" in the turret is not likely to identify an IED on the highway, but he is very likely to sustain fatal head injuries from an exploding IED. That was a change from the way we had done our crew-level training, but it was good to learn that lesson the easy way from the departing unit.

Jeff Palazzini

Commander, E/1-68 AR

The emphasis of RIP should be on all the personalities that influence your AO. The one thing the outgoing commander knows infinitely better than the incoming commander is the people in the area. It's crucial to know what someone's motives are, who's backing him and why. Knowing whether someone is Sunni or Shia or Kurd is a start, but it's only scratching the surface of what you need to know to be effective. Normally during a RIP, you'll get a name and short biography on key military, police and city council leaders. If you're lucky and have a good MiTT (military transition team), you might get information on Iraqi security forces platoon leaders and platoon sergeants. But for other key players, such as the sheik, imam or mukhtar in an

outlying town, you are lucky to get a name. You need to get to know those people quickly.

Commanders deploying to Iraq need to understand that, if you are not going to Baghdad, you will not have the number of soldiers you need. You are part of an economy-of-force mission. The only way you will be able to cover your AO is by developing bonds with the Iraqi Army and police. That cooperation will be personality driven; you have to develop relationships with leaders in the local Iraqi Army and Iraqi police.

As we continue through OIF rotations, we're getting very few guys in leadership positions who haven't been to Iraq before. That can easily lead to situations where the incoming commander thinks, "OK, I've got it, just tell me the names of the roads, MSRs (main supply routes), buildings and get out of my way. I've been here once or twice already. I've got it." While it's great to have a foundation, you have to take RIP seriously, because things change. I know in my case things changed a lot from OIF-1 to OIF-4. It's probably a new area or a new city. You shouldn't underestimate the wealth of knowledge possessed by the guys who have been living there 24/7. They know the specifics of the AO, even if your unit will fight differently. I know what it's like to be thinking, "I'm done with National Training Center; I'm done with brigade train up; we're experts with our weapons, I'm done with Kuwait; let's get the mission started." But there's information that *only* the people who have been on the ground there know. If you don't take the time during RIP to ask, listen and learn, you're doing your unit and your mission a disservice.

Chris Douglas

Commander, K/3-25th Marines

Before my second company command tour in Iraq, I sought the advice of a mentor who had served two tours in Vietnam as a rifle company commander. He gave me some great advice on the importance of a good RIP, emphasizing that I should glean as much information as I could from the outgoing company commander about the enemy, area of operations and training. In addition, he recommended an in-theater training plan, which was something the Marines had done in Vietnam. The outgoing unit would set up and

Maj. Chris Douglas, center, uses a Marine interpreter to talk with an Iraqi civilian during a cordon-and-knock operation in Iraq.

conduct training lanes to familiarize the incoming unit on the local TTPs, friendly and enemy.

I arrived in Iraq ahead of my unit, during Operation River Bridge. The company I was scheduled to conduct my RIP with was operating in the city of Hit. The battalion XO arranged my transportation into the city so that I could meet my counterpart company commander. I was able to spend a great deal of time with him during combat operations, watching and learning. During our turnover, we coordinated lane training in preparation for the arrival of my company. His company, C/1-23 Marines, went all out, providing classroom instruction followed by practical lane training that was led by their small-unit leaders.

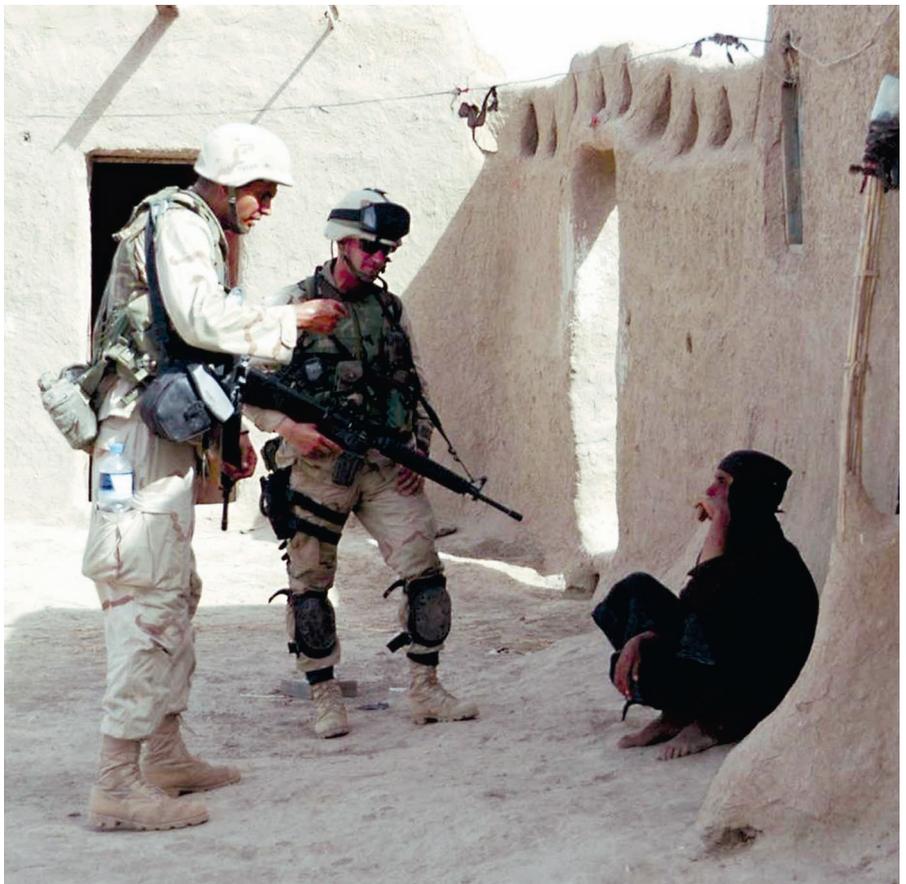
The IED lane they set up for us, out on the actual terrain of the AO, was exceptional. We valued that training so much that, when it came time for us to RIP out, we planned and resourced similar training for our successor unit. Unfortunately, the incoming company commander felt that his pre-deployment training was adequate and declined our offer.

Mike West

Commander, D/1-68 AR

You always have a plan, and the plan is never what you actually end up doing. Sometimes it is because of friendly elements, sometimes because of enemy elements and, more often than not, it is because of surprises that nobody can pin down. My company was tasked to be the ground convoy security element for the movement of the battalion's vehicles from Kuwait to Baqubah, Iraq, and the plan was for me to be with them. As it turned out, the ground convoys coming out of Iraq were delayed because of route conditions throughout the country, and this caused a major delay in our ground convoy movements into Iraq. This delay affected the equipment movement but did not change the RIP timeline, and the decision was made to move all commanders via air into country to begin the RIP process. Talk about heartburn—the first time my company was going to be in a combat zone, and I wasn't going to be there with them.

My early arrival turned out to help the RIP process, however. It got me into our area of operation with a chance to meet my counterpart company commander and see the way that his company conducted business. I was also able



to knock out inventories before the remainder of my company arrived. This was very useful, because before my arrival, we didn't know what equipment we'd be falling in on. Every day in the weeks leading up to the RIP, we received a new list of what we would or would not be signing for. By being able to take care of the inventory with the company assets that I had on the ground with me (supply sergeant being the key), when my company arrived we were able to focus the RIP on learning the AO, not on inventories.

RIPs have an interesting dynamic. The old guys are ready to get out, ready to go home. They say, "You're here, you can take over." And my guys were very anxious to take over. The time in Kuwait is enough to drive you crazy. Once you get into the RIP, there are so many briefings, so many things you have to do that keep you from getting out and spending time on your land. And the outgoing commander is telling you, "This is how we do things, these are things you have to do." And you're thinking, "Hey, man, I just trained up for a year, I know how to do things." That can be an issue. Of course, after a while, you realize that some of the things he said were right on: "I should have done it that way. If I could do it again, I'd conduct operations the same way the outgoing unit had, at least for the first month or so. After this time I'd step back, see what I had learned about what worked and did not work, and make changes as needed. After all, they've been there for a year."

One thing I wish I'd known ahead of time is which company AO we'd be taking over. We could have had maps made, routes and checkpoints set up and learned the



Capt. Mike West shakes hands with Col. Abbas, who was the Joint Coordination Center commander for the Iraqi police and Iraqi Army in Khan Bani Saad, the major city in West's company sector. The photo was taken after a March 2006 City Council meeting.

One other big thing: the outgoing unit might do something as their last hurrah, and as a result, everything you learned about your AO could change. In my AO, the day before the TOA (transfer of authority), the outgoing unit arrested the mayor of my major city. How you handle this (or whatever your first major issue might be) will set the stage for the rest of your deployment.

names and pronunciations of the towns within our area of operation. That way, we could have focused the RIP more on the particulars of the local people and terrain, and in the first week of doing operations on our own, when someone said go to Khan Bani Saad, everyone in the company would know where it was and how to get there. If you're thinking about the route and you have to constantly watch your map, you're not watching for IEDs or seeing what's going on around you.

How will you approach your next RIP? As you read these accounts and reflect on your own combat experiences, if you agree that RIP is important enough to study as part of your profession, step up and share your ideas and experiences. Log onto companycommand.army.mil or platoonleader.army.mil, or write Tony.Burgess@us.army.mil and sound off with your RIP experiences and ideas. You'll never know the full impact your sharing could have on your peers who are preparing to deploy or redeploy.

About CompanyCommand

CC is a place for company-level commanders—current, past and future—to connect and share ideas and experiences. This is YOUR forum—it is voluntary, grassroots, by and for company commanders and is focused like a laser beam on CompanyCommand. By joining, you are gaining access to an amazing community of professionals who love Soldiers and are committed to building combat-ready teams. Collectively, as a profession, we possess the knowledge that can enable us to build and lead our units more effectively. With this in mind, please participate, contribute and tap into the experiences of others. You'll never know the full impact of you taking a moment to share your experience with others!

Connecting leaders



Art by Jody Harmon

in conversation

The CC space is organized around Leadership, Warfighting, Training, Fitness, Supply, Maintenance, Force Protection and Soldiers & Family.

We also have an area specifically for Professional Reading, as well as the CDR's Log (as highlighted in this article), where commanders are journaling their command experiences. And, if you are preparing for command, we recommend you check out the "1st 90 Days" topic located in the Leadership Section of the web site. If CC is adding value to you, encourage your platoon leaders to check out their forum—a forum that is centered on excellence in platoon leadership—at

<http://platoonleader.army.mil>.

Send article ideas to peter.kilner@us.army.mil.

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



CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders
From: Company Commanders

Resilient Leadership

Will our units thrive, survive or fail in the unpredictable, volatile and extreme environment of combat? One factor that determines this is resilience—the capacity to take a blow and come back fighting. Resilience is embodied when an individual or unit resolutely bounces back—mentally, physically, emotionally and morally—after a traumatic event. Resilient leaders and their units are able to maintain their combat effectiveness and professional values even in the face of extreme adversity.

We had the privilege of interviewing a company-level commander who—like so many of our peers—proved to be a resilient leader. Capt. Ryan Howell commanded Grim Troop, Sabre Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment during OIF III. We talked to him in Tal Afar, Iraq. Listen in as Ryan talks about facing adversity and trauma as a combat leader. These three stories are transcribed excerpts from his oral interview. We believe they provide insight into the critical leader trait called resilience.

First Enemy Contact/Loss of Soldiers

Our first contact with the enemy was an IED explosion that occurred during RIP (relief in place) with the unit we were replacing. Two junior enlisted Soldiers were killed, a senior specialist lost his leg and another specialist was wounded and later returned to duty. It woke my guys up.

We got everyone together and talked about the two Soldiers who died. They couldn't find one of my Soldier's dog tags; they couldn't find his ID card. So I had to go in and see the bodies. It solidified some anger in me. It empowered me to be focused and diligent in hunting down the enemy.

At that moment, I could have put the troop on line and leveled the whole city. Everybody was angry. I guess that wasn't so much a concern, but it was a reality that I knew was out there—the whole vengeance thing. You know, "My buddy got killed, so I'm going to go kill someone," and trying to justify actions that way. I made sure the guys understood that there has never been a place for that in the American Army and there never will be.

To know that they would have done anything at my command reminds me of the whole burden of command. I'd always heard, "Your guys will look to you for answers," but I didn't truly understand it until then. I realized that I had to be the strong one—the father figure—and show them what they needed to do. It's scary, too, to realize that you have the ability to give candy to a kid and in the next instant destroy an entire neighborhood with a simple push of a button on the radio. It's a very sobering experience, because I realize the decisions I make will affect me and my Soldiers'

lives and the people of Iraq. My decisions can bring credit or shame to my nation.

I pulled the guys in and told them, "We took one on the chin today, but we are going to get right back out there and get them. We fell off the horse, and we are going to get back on the horse." I told them, "We need to grieve, but 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 back out there, be professional Soldiers. When you find the enemy, kill or detain them. But keep in mind 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 towards 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 Iraqi people as an outlet for compassion.

When it was time to go back into the city after that, I could see the hesitation in my men. I told them, "It's going to be OK. I'm going with you." You know you have to take action, and you know you have to take charge a little more than you normally would. I tried to do whatever I could to reassure the guys that this is not the end of the world, although it is a horrible event. The experience made me think so much more about the personal dynamics of combat. It's easy to sit in an office and say, "Go do this and go do that."



Resilient leadership proved crucial in this search for weapons caches by members of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Tal Afar, Iraq.

It's harder to say, "We are going to go do this, and let me get my body armor on because I'm going with you."

Heavy Contact Involving Civilian Casualties

We conducted a patrol with Iraqi Army soldiers in a part of the city that was supportive of the old regime and angry with our presence. We wanted to talk with them and say, "Hey, we are here to help. What are your concerns?" I don't think we made it a hundred meters before we ran into an ambush. We returned fire, killed an insurgent, and for the next three hours we worked through the complex urban terrain while under fire.

As we were fighting, the insurgents would set up in a position, fire at us with RPG and small-arms fire, and then bound back. This is one of those times when you realize all of the power in your hands. We were receiving enemy contact from an alleyway and from behind a car in another direction. Our small-arms fire was not having an effect, so I told one of my Bradleys to suppress the car with coax machine-gun fire, and the enemy subsequently moved out. It was about an hour before we were able to clear out that area and get down to where the car was. We moved up to the car and found two dead children behind it, and a blood trail where a wounded insurgent had fled. We've seen kids throwing hand grenades and sometimes the insurgents use them as human shields. One of the neighbors con-

firmed that the insurgents had grabbed one of the kids.

We brought up body bags and I said to the people, "We want to meet with you to make restitution." We tried to get the people back and attempted to assist, but it was starting to get out of control. My interpreter was phenomenal. He said, "Sir, here's the deal. They need to be allowed to do what they are going to do in the mourning process." They were physically hurting themselves. They were inflicting pain like banging their heads against the wall and slapping themselves. And there were people starting to wash the bodies—the feet and the hands—preparing them for burial.

Having seen dead bodies before helped me. One of my sergeants came up and almost threw up. Another guy was about to cry. I was like, "OK, you need to leave; you are acting fine, you stay." I worked to set up security and was overcome by events. I was too busy to really know what was going on, and I was trying to be sympathetic to the families at the same time. The Iraqi Army soldiers were starting to get hysterical and trying to comfort and pray for the family. The Iraqi commander said, "My men don't need to see this." So he set up security on the perimeter. It was like Western and Arab culture—everything came to a head right there.

Eventually we were able to reconcile with the family. We arrested some guys that day, and we found the insurgent who was wounded.

The gunner of the Bradley who fired was later sent back to the States for PTSD. He was a brand new father and his wife was pregnant with their second child. I told him, "Look, I told you to fire," but he just couldn't handle it.

So I've got collateral damage in my face, children dead, and a Soldier who did not take it very well because he was the gunner. That was another hard lesson to learn.

I couldn't have built a better crime scene. You've got the Bradley, you've got the car, tons of AK47 ammunition behind the car. You can also see on the Bradley where all the enemy rounds hit. I showed the gunner pictures of where the Bradley was hit and where he wounded the enemy—we could see the blood trail going from behind the car. It didn't work for him, unfortunately. I couldn't have staged a better vignette for tragic events that happen in war.

Sustained Contact with Reinforced Enemy

We conducted a raid based on intelligence that identified the location of a weapons cache and foreign-fighter safe house. The target was two houses adjacent to a school. We rolled into the target area, established security and ran into prepared enemy defensive positions. As soon as the Bradley ramp opened, a machine gun fired on us from the school. We killed that guy and then found ourselves in the middle of hell. The enemy had lots of RPGs and machine guns. One of my soldiers was shot in the throat. We were firing everything we had at the school, but they were dug in. We could not get to them without a serious fight. We also received a lot of the contact from alleys as they repositioned other forces. It was about a five-hour firefight. When my First Sergeant brought in the medic vehicle to evacuate our wounded soldier, he was hit by an IED, which flipped the vehicle and crushed the driver. In spite of his own wounds, First Sergeant was pulling guys out of direct fire from the enemy and covering bodies with his own body. Fuel was everywhere, power lines were down and sparking all over the place.

We were still receiving fire from the school, so I was working with the aviation unit to fire a Hellfire missile at the enemy position. But at the last minute the pilot was called off. There was confusion about a report that there might be women and children in the school. In actuality, the women and children reported were in a separate building. We ended up pulling back after the contact died down to sporadic fire. There were lots of enemy killed and wounded; we had defeated the counterattack. One of my Soldiers had been killed and another had his leg amputated. Everything was a blur.

I've run this through my head a million times. There was a point when everyone on the net was talking—"One of our soldiers is dead." And I had to get on and say, "OK, take a deep breath. I don't want any communication on the net for 30 seconds—let's get refocused." I remember at that point sitting on the ground by a truck saying out loud to myself, "Gosh, guys are wounded, one Soldier is dead, I have 360-degree contact with the enemy and we are getting low on ammunition." Then it was, "Let's go!"

After the contact, there was a point when I could see my guys looking at the detainees we'd taken as if they would

■ **Resilient leaders embrace challenges.** Instead of despairing, they are energized and rise to the occasion. Their confidence energizes those around them. They see change as positive, and they believe that experiences—even failures—make them and their units better in the long run.

■ **Resilient leaders are positive and optimistic,** even under extreme circumstances. They not only hope for the best, they expect the best. They have the ability to face harsh reality and call it what it is, but they don't get mired down in the negative. The attitude of resilient leaders creates an echo effect that reverberates through the unit.

■ **Resilient leaders remain committed to the mission and their people for the long haul.** Instead of withdrawing and shirking their responsibilities, resilient leaders remain fully engaged and visible, relentlessly pressing forward, on toward victory. Their presence at the decisive points of the operation clarifies their commitment. There is no doubt in anyone's mind as to where these types of leaders stand as far as loyalty to their soldiers and to the mission are concerned.

■ **Resilient leaders take action.** They believe that outcomes are not locked in stone; instead of being paralyzed by the vastness of the challenge at hand, resilient leaders take action to influence those things that they can influence. These leaders understand that they can't "eat the elephant in one bite," so they break the situation down and work at it "one bite at a time." Resilient leaders develop plans that transform overwhelming situations into actionable tasks for the unit.

■ **Resilient leaders are effective communicators, which includes listening.** They are tuned in and perceptive and continuously engage with their soldiers. In addition, they use multiple techniques to keep their soldiers informed and to help them "make sense of" and understand what is happening. Examples include face-to-face discussion, written notes/newsletters, and radio commo. Soldiers in these units believe that their voice is heard, and they also believe that they know what is going on. They have a strong sense of purpose and sense of direction in the midst of chaos.

like to beat the s*** out of them. I told them, "We aren't doing anything to the prisoners." I then told my leaders to get the Soldiers focused on working on their vehicles, and I put my First Sergeant in charge of the detainees. I was trying to refocus their energies.

In the aftermath of this experience, I learned I have to make more time for me—time to release all my anger and sadness and frustration and everything else. I was listening to my guys and counseling my guys, but it was my First Sergeant who sat me down and said, "You wanna talk?" I said, "No, I'm good." But he didn't let up. "No, we need to



Capt. Ryan Howell commanded Grim Troop, Sabre Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment during OIF III.

talk,” he insisted. So he started saying some things and I started to say some things. Then he said, “Why don’t you talk to the chaplain?” I told him, “Nah, I’m OK.” But the next thing I know our chaplain was down to see me the next day—“First Sergeant said for me to talk with you.”

I appreciate more than ever that this is a volunteer army. A lot of guys joined out of patriotism after 9/11. These guys are over here fighting for their country. But now it’s more than that—they are fighting for their buddies, they are fighting for a guy in the troop they don’t even like, but he’s their brother in arms. And it has really made me understand more deeply the humanity of every Soldier. Before commanding here in Iraq, I thought the whole PTSD thing was a bunch of crap. I’m more sympathetic now to the fact that a human being is a fragile organism. I hadn’t really thought about or planned for how I was going to sustain my Soldiers for 12 months of combat. So, I set up a rotation where they weren’t always in the fight—finding a way for them to decompress. I think that’s the biggest thing that is different from anything I’ve done—trying to find a way to do continuous combat operations without destroying the human being.

Note to company commanders: Please see more company commander experiences like this in your professional forum <http://companycommand.army.mil>. We invite you to join the conversation.

Finally, we would like to thank Ryan for taking the time to share from his experience so that we can learn and grow as a profession. Ryan, thank you for modeling this for us and for living out your professional calling so faithfully.

About CompanyCommand

CC is a place for company-level commanders—current, past and future—to connect and share ideas and experiences. This is YOUR forum—it is voluntary, grassroots, by and for company commanders and is focused like a laser beam on CompanyCommand. By joining, you are gaining access to an amazing community of professionals who love Soldiers and are committed to building combat-ready teams. Collectively, as a profession, we possess the knowledge that can enable us to build and lead our units more effectively. With this in mind, please participate, contribute and tap into the experiences of others. You’ll never know the full impact of taking a moment to share your experience with others!

Connecting leaders



Art by Jody Harmon

The CC space is organized around Leadership, Warfighting, Training, Fitness, Supply, Maintenance, Force Protection and Soldiers & Family.

We also have an area specifically for Professional Reading, as well as the CDR’s Log (as highlighted in this article), where commanders are journaling their command experiences. And, if you are preparing for command, we recommend you check out the “1st 90 Days” topic located in the Leadership Section of the web site. If CC is adding value to you, encourage your platoon leaders to check out their forum—a forum that is centered on excellence in platoon leadership—at

<http://platoonleader.army.mil>.

Send article ideas to tony.burgess@us.army.mil. Company Commanders connect at <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>.



CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders

From: Company Commanders

Third-Generation Leadership

“I am an American Soldier. I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values ... I am an expert, and I am a professional ...” —from The Soldier’s Creed

Think about one person who has significantly influenced your development as a leader. Picture this person in your mind. For Steve Delvaux, that person is Capt. Hank Arnold, Steve’s company commander when he was a lieutenant in C/5-502nd (Berlin Brigade).

During the Captain’s Career Course, we had the privilege of hearing newly promoted Capt. Delvaux tell story after story about Capt. Arnold and the example that he set developing his lieutenants. In fact, we affectionately began calling them “Hank stories” and could recount them as if they were our own. Steve went on to command a rifle company in the 101st where Hank’s imprint could be seen in the way Steve developed his own lieutenants. Hank Arnold’s legacy is the leaders that he influenced and—more powerfully—the leaders that his leaders are influencing today and into the future.

The Hank Arnold/Steve Delvaux story is an excellent example of third-generation leadership. This is the idea that the investment you make in developing your Soldiers will decidedly influence successive generations of leaders. In first-generation leadership the primary focus is the immediate future—commanders are training their lieutenants to be good platoon leaders. Second-generation leadership broadens the focus to include leader development for subsequent service—commanders train their lieutenants to be good platoon leaders and good future commanders. In third-generation leadership, commanders not only develop lieutenants to be good commanders, they also provide them with a model of how to develop their lieutenants.

Parenting provides a useful illustration of this concept in action. A third-generation perspective on parenting involves raising kids with your grandchildren in mind. In the process, you explain what you are doing and pass on a developmental vision so that your kids are inspired and equipped to do the same with their children. The rewards of parenting in this way are delayed; in fact, the full impact is often never seen by the parent.

This is true for leadership as well. Leaders with a third-generation perspective develop their leaders with future generations in mind. While they influence primarily by role modeling how to lead, they also impart the why behind their actions in such a way that their Soldiers are not only inspired but are also equipped to do the same with their subordinate leaders. For example, a company commander might ask a platoon leader to describe what she is doing to develop her squad leaders, with the additional expectation that she would then ask her squad leaders to describe how they are developing their team leaders. In this process, the company commander is role modeling by developing the platoon leader and not leaving further application to chance. By having the platoon leader lay out how she is developing her squad leaders, the commander is putting third-generation leadership into motion.

Success is not developing great leaders. Rather, success is developing great leaders who themselves have a personal vision to develop great leaders.

Third-Generation Leadership & Advancing the Profession

A third-generation mind-set opens up possibilities that extend beyond leader development and expand how we think about our role within the profession. Our legacy is not only our subordinate leaders and the leaders that they develop; it is also the knowledge that we create together and the advancement of the profession itself.

By engaging in CompanyCommand.army.mil (CC), commanders gain access to knowledge; however, more important for the profession, they gain a platform to share their ideas, lessons learned and wisdom born of experience. They are enabled to be professionals on a scale never before possible. Third-generation thinking, applied to CC, happens when you contribute to the forum with the insight that it is not just a place to get something or even to give back, but as a place where the profession grows. We

Steve Delvaux (left) and Hank Arnold crossed paths again during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This picture was taken outside of Sinjar, Iraq, just before an air assault operation. The shadow of the future is long, but so is the impact we have when we choose to develop our leaders with a third-generation mind-set.



envision current company commanders investing in the next generation of commanders in the same way that past commanders invested in them. In doing so, we will develop together a leadership engine that will create future leaders long after we are gone.

Retiring warriors value the memories of victories won and challenges overcome, but on that day when they take the uniform off, their deepest meaning is found in the difference that they made—both in the lives of Soldiers and in the effectiveness of the profession. Their legacy is the leaders and the Army they leave behind.

Project yourself forward and picture yourself standing in front of your family, friends and comrades-in-arms at your own retirement ceremony. As you look back on your career, what stands out for you? Where do you find the most meaning? Who influenced you and in what way?

Invitation for you to participate

So, who is that person? Who influenced your development as a leader, and what did he or she do to create that impact?

Send your “Hank stories” to Jay at Jason.Miseli@us.army.mil and share the third-generation leadership that was passed on to you. Your stories will be featured in ARMY Magazine later this year.

About CompanyCommand

CC is a place for company-level commanders—current, past and future—to connect and share ideas and experiences. This is YOUR forum—it is voluntary, grassroots, by and for company commanders and is focused like a laser beam on CompanyCommand. By joining, you are gaining access to an amazing community of professionals who love Soldiers and are committed to building combat-ready teams. Collectively, as a profession, we possess the knowledge that can enable us to build and lead our units more effectively. With this in mind, please participate, contribute and tap into the experiences of others. You’ll never know the full impact of taking a moment to share your experience with others!

Connecting leaders



Art by Jody Harmon

in conversation

The CC space is organized around Leadership, Warfighting, Training, Fitness, Supply, Maintenance, Force Protection and Soldiers & Family.

We also have an area specifically for Professional Reading, as well as the CDR’s Log where commanders are journaling their command experiences. And, if you are preparing for command, we recommend you check out the “1st 90 Days” topic located in the Leadership Section of the web site. If CC is adding value to you, encourage your platoon leaders to check out their forum—a forum that is centered on excellence in platoon leadership—at

<http://platoonleader.army.mil>.

Send article ideas to tony.burgess@us.army.mil.

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



CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders
From: Company Commanders

What does it mean to you to command Soldiers?

What brings us together in the CompanyCommand forum is the shared experience of commanding American Soldiers. Recently, we have been thinking about what a privilege that is, and how it might be motivating to share with each other what the experience means to us. Future

commanders could get a taste of what awaits them, and current and past commanders could hear other perspectives and reflect upon our own.

We invite you to read, to reflect on your own experience and to join the conversation.

James Dayhoff

HOW 2/3 ACR, Fort Carson, Colo.

There is no greater responsibility than leading Soldiers in combat. Your every decision—whether made in an instant or after hours of consideration—will directly affect their lives. Commanding Soldiers will be the greatest burden you will ever carry and the most rewarding. When you leave command, you will feel the greatest relief and, suddenly, the greatest emptiness. I would stay a Captain the rest of my life if the Army would let me keep commanding Soldiers.

Seth Hall

HHS/5-3 FA, Fort Sill, Okla.

There is no greater privilege, no greater responsibility, than to command America's finest. I thank God every day for the opportunity and ask for the wisdom and courage to provide these men with the leadership they deserve. It's impos-

sible to articulate the pride I feel when they succeed. We train together, fight together and bleed together. In Shakespeare's *Henry V* there is a quotation that comes closest to describing how it feels to command: "Whoever does not have the stomach for this fight, let him depart. Give him money to speed his departure, since we wish not to die in that man's company ... for whoever has shed his blood with me shall be my brother. And those men afraid to go will think themselves lesser men as they hear of how we fought and died together." Commanding these Soldiers at a time of war is humbling; it is the greatest honor of my professional career.

Ryan Morgan

C/2-502nd IN, 101st ABN (AASLT) DIV, Fort Campbell, Ky.
& HHC/2-502nd IN

As I sit in my nice comfortable office, far from the danger of combat, I look at my wall and see my guidons—both of which



Capt. Dayhoff's battery, taken the day of his change of command, gathers at Talafar, Iraq.



Capt. Morgan pins combat infantryman badges in Iraq.

Commanding was the best experience of my life; it by far made every bad day in the Army absolutely worth it.

Visiting my motorpool never failed to lift my spirits and keep me going. My Soldiers—and their families—motivated me every moment to do, be and give my best, and I did so without thought or hesitation. They never gave less than 100 percent, regardless of the mission. It was amazing, eye-opening, thrilling, exhausting, frustrating, and—without question—the most fun I’ve ever had. I was and still am deeply humbled and honored to have served with my Soldiers and their families. Bulldogs, Hooah!

Ana Breslow

331st Signal Company, 1st BCT, 1st ID, Fort Riley, Kan.

It is easy to get caught up in the mystique of command, in the privilege and honor of leading U.S. Soldiers. But command is more than just the reverence we invest in the position and the Soldiers. Command is personal. Your hard work, your morals and your decisions affect each Soldier’s ability to do a job. They want to be the best. It’s your responsibility to make that possible by training hard, making tough and fair decisions, even when you don’t want to,



Capt. Morgan reenlists a soldier in Iraq.

and sometimes by fighting a losing battle so you can look them in the eye the next day. Command is earning and deserving their respect. I loved building and being part of a team, one that even after inactivating still greets me with “Bigg Doggs forever!”

Katie Matthew

HHC BDE, 1st BCT, 1st ID, Fort Riley, Kan., & D/101st FSB

Words like *privilege* and *honor* only touch briefly on what it means to command. And for those of us who have done it, there is no other word that will bring you back to that special time and remind you years later of what an American Soldier is. He’s not a Soldier; he’s PFC Ortega, SFC Stone, or Top. She’s the one you watched come into your company a private and earn her first stripes years later. The media sometimes uses the word *Soldier* flippantly, but for those who have commanded, it is a hallowed word. It is Soldiers who got you out of bed each morning for PT or out of the cot after only two hours sleep on deployments, and made it worth it. The worst day in command is just another memory you share with genuine pride because even in the worst circumstances, your

are a little tattered, worn and faded. One has some kind of stain on it, probably break-free. Although the crossed rifles are no longer white, there is no doubt what they are and what they stand for. I look at those guidons and I see my Soldiers—tattered, worn, dirty, strong. I see the Soldiers that stood 24-hour guard on the post gates to protect our families after 9/11. I see the Soldier who suffered winter rain in a trench in a live fire exercise again and again to get his squad to do it beyond the standard. I see a Soldier who cleared house after house after house in five different Iraqi cities to defeat the enemy during the invasion. I see a Soldier who carried children into a hospital to get treated for the flu. I see Soldiers who gave the greatest measure of service for those who would never know their names—and for those who will never forget.

Hannah Heishman

B/101st FSB, 1st BCT, 1st ID, Fort Riley, Kan.

Commanding American Soldiers is an honor and a privilege—and not to be taken lightly. They are willing to give and give until there’s nothing left, and it was almost scary how hard they’d push themselves, especially for each other.

Captains Heishman, Breslow and Matthew (the Three Amigas) commanded together at Fort Riley, Kan.

Soldiers made you proud to be associated with them. To run into them months and years later and be introduced as “my commander” brings a smile and a tear. They remember you, and you remember them. That family is permanent regardless of future deployments, PCS and retirement. For that small moment in time, you bonded together for life. And that is the true privilege.

Travis Foley

F/10th BSB (1-87 IN FSC), Fort Drum, N.Y.

Being in command of Soldiers is the reason I went to OCS, so it means a lot to me. Even though this is a short-term goal for some officers, this is what I aspired to be as an enlisted Soldier. I am very proud to be the commander of a great bunch of Soldiers. Sometimes the 5 percent get to you and can get you down, but you always have to remember there are another 95 percent behind you all the way. I am preparing for deployment currently, and I am amazed at the positive attitude my Soldiers have on a daily basis.

Jermaine Sutton

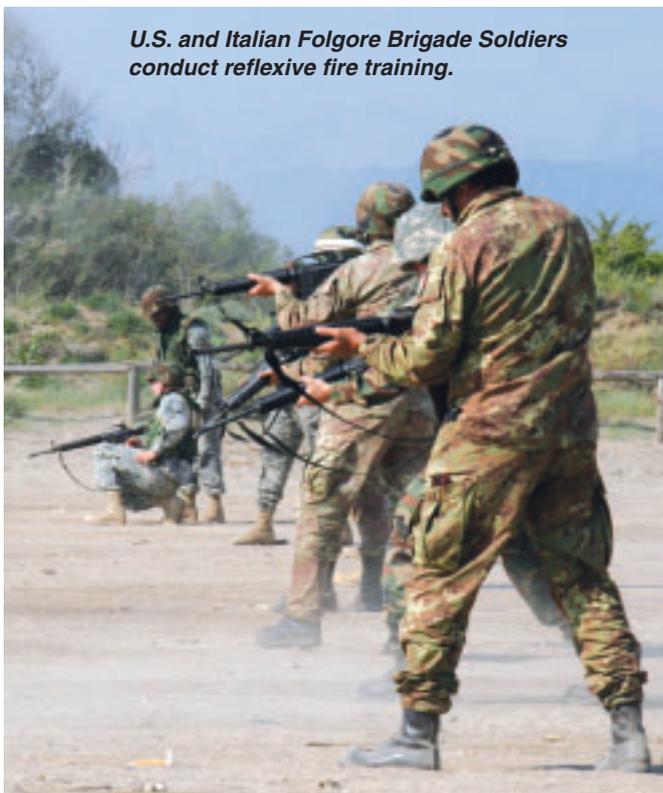
B/1st Satellite Control Bn, Fort Meade, Md.

Being in command of American Soldiers means taking care of the many sons and daughters of our great country.



The thing I’ve enjoyed most about being a commander is working through the process of building a winning team and preparing Soldiers for the battles that lie ahead for our great Army. It is our purpose to constantly step outside our comfort zone to do what is best for our Soldiers. The reward is knowing that you saved lives because you prepared them for the unknown. A great leader once told me that we don’t know what we don’t know, and because of this belief, I felt that it was important to prepare Soldiers for everything. They may not like it at first, but eventually they get it, and that to me is what it truly means to command American Soldiers.

U.S. and Italian Folgore Brigade Soldiers conduct reflexive fire training.



Ned Ritzmann

A/1-508th IN, 173rd ABN BDE, Vincenza, Italy

One of the most amazing things that ever happened to me was when I received a letter from a parent that said, in essence: I trust you with my child’s life. There is no way I’ll ever forget that.

Raul Rovira

HHC, USAG-Livorno, Italy

Commanding Soldiers has been one of the most fulfilling and rewarding experiences in my life. At times, I can’t wait to go to bed so I can go to work the next day. I can only hope that these positive energies will influence Soldiers to do the same and help shape them to be better Soldiers and people.

There is a burden in command—as well as the good, the bad and the ugly. There are so many unknowns, yet we are trusted to make the hard decisions, decisions that affect lives. We learn to deal with making those decisions.

The big meaning of commanding is being a part of each of my Soldiers’ lives and careers. To inspire them and see results inspires me more—to see that team accomplishment has no dollar value. Ask me to command again and I will say, “Send me!” Any day I can command is a great day to be in the Army.

Brian McCarthy
B Troop, 1-10 CAV, 4 ID, Fort Hood, Texas
& Rear D Cdr, 1-10 CAV

This discussion comes at a perfect time for me since I'm just giving up the guidon after 32 months. These 32 months have been the highlight of my career. This was the reason I went to OCS, and it is the reason I am still in the Army. It cannot be said enough that it is an incredible privilege and honor to command young (and old) Americans in garrison and in combat. Looking back, it has meant making some personal sacrifices and spending some extra time at work, but I think that the greatest thing about being in command is that you wake up every day with both the opportunity and the ability to make a difference in a Soldier's life. Troop command has been both an honor and a humbling experience, and I will not forget it.

Wynn Nugent
1022nd EN Company, West Monroe, La.

There is no greater honor than to be given command of American Soldiers. I won't BS you and say it is easy. If you are doing what you are supposed to do, it is one of the most challenging things you will ever do. It is also the most rewarding. I use a quotation from Sun Tzu on my e-mail that sums up how I feel about command: "Regard your Soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look upon them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death. If, however, you are indulgent, but unable to make your authority felt; kindhearted, but unable to enforce your commands; and incapable, moreover, of quelling disorder: then your Soldiers must be likened to spoiled children; they are useless for any practical purpose."

Joe Doty
C/3-8 FA, 18th FA BDE, Fort Bragg, N.C.
& HHB XVIII Abn Corps Arty

Command is a powerful experience and an awesome responsibility. Nothing compares to it. Well, being a parent

comes close because it involves genuine (not phony) caring and love for others. As commanders, we are responsible for EVERYTHING (that is a whole lot) the unit does and/or fails to do ... PERIOD.

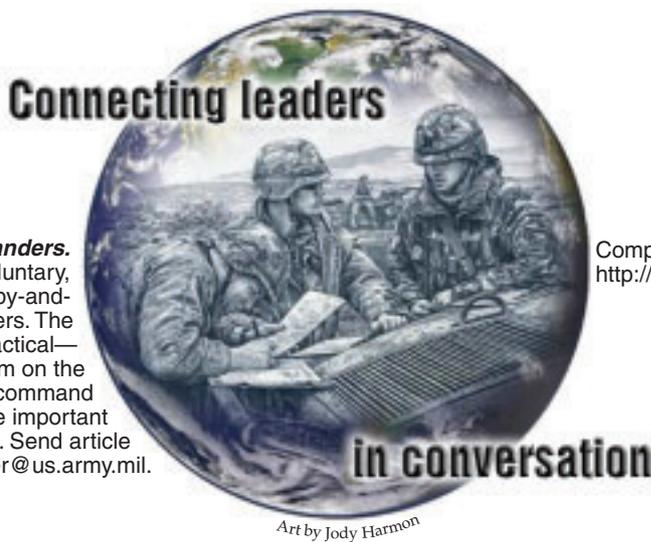
Richard Moyers
C/2-35 IN, 25th ID(L), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii
& HHC/2-35 IN

Though what I say here is not unique or overly captivating, it is important to say. Commanding American Soldiers is something that our fellow Americans cannot particularly understand. It is about seeing an 18-year-old boy grow into a 19-year-old man. It is about helping the single mother build a family-supportive environment that takes care of her two kids, all while she is still able to pursue a profession that she sees as worthwhile and personally exciting. It is about taking care of the little things that allow these special Americans to achieve great things.

Commanding American Soldiers is a personally rewarding experience because it is my personal investment in the well-being of those Soldiers, their families and our great nation by serving for their greater good. Those little things help to define what being American is, so commanding and serving those Soldiers as they do all those little things ... Well, that's what being an American really is all about.

Chanda Mofu
B/1-6 IN (M), Baumholder, Germany & HHC/2-6 IN (M)

Commanding the American Soldier was an amazing privilege, not just for me, but also for my family. Together, we were able to serve not just in developing a combat-ready team, but in reaching deeper and serving the immediate families of those young men. Command was one of the most challenging times of my life. The reward for your hard work is often intangible, while the cost of duty neglected can be severe. There is no profession like it; I am grateful and blessed to have commanded Soldiers in combat and in garrison.



CC is Company Commanders.

The CC forum is a voluntary, grassroots 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 peter.kilner@us.army.mil.

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

Art by Jody Harmon



CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders
From: Company Commanders

Afghan Counterinsurgency: In the Words of the Commanders

In these pages, company commanders of Task Force Spartan (3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division) have gathered with you to share their hard-earned knowledge—knowledge borne of sweat and blood, forged in the rugged and sometimes ruthless mountains, valleys and plains of Afghanistan. Having served the last 15 months in combat, they know as well as anyone right now how your preparation can and will make the difference between life and death, between success and failure. They want to serve you and make a difference for you. They are in it with you!

Scott Horrigan
A/2-87 IN (Paktika)

When I came to this deployment, I had no idea how tough it was going to be. I'd been in Afghanistan as a lieutenant, and the two deployments don't even compare. Afghanistan is a different place two years later. As I look back on it now, I see that my understanding of counterinsurgency (COIN) operations—my understanding of working with tribes, with religion and with the people, instead of fighting the enemy (those are two totally different things)—has grown immensely.

Three to four years ago, when we were in Afghanistan, we were cordoning off entire valleys, raiding and clearing caves, and probably not getting into a fight or finding a single thing. Then we'd leave the area, and we wouldn't come back. We'd color it green on a map somewhere. Now we arrive in an area and we stay there, we develop a relationship, we build rapport with the people, and we have the ability to actually measure whether we've done a good job or not.

My understanding of counterinsurgency operations has increased dramatically from the attitude that we have to kill as many of these guys as we can, to: OK, do I have a governor? Do I have a chief of police capable of doing his job, and does he have the weapons and the vehicles to do his job? Have the *shura* leaders merged with my operations, and am I targeting them properly? Am I handling the money that is available as far as commanders' emergency response program money, humanitarian assistance supplies and medical assistance supplies are concerned? How am I using those assets that are available to me?

My way of thinking did a 180 from when I first got here.

Jim McKnight
A/1-32 IN (Kunar)

Reference that ridgeline 1,000 meters away getting me in trouble—guys always popping their heads up, taking their shots and then getting back down. I came up with a big tactical plan involving a complex obstacle, some ambushes, some long-range claymores—all kinds of ideas to protect that piece of terrain or deny it to the enemy. I sent out my plan to all the other company commanders and said, "Hey, guys, I could use your help and any thoughts you have."

Joe Evans, from Company B, came back to me with: "Your plan is textbook, but if you don't get the people, you are going to be dealing with that ridgeline forever." I thought that was so telling about the counterinsurgency. In the northern part of the valley, as the people have come around, the enemy has just stopped. There is this very intangible feeling you get when the human terrain becomes "pro." You don't need to work nearly as hard at defending yourself; you still have to do it, but there is a lot of security that you just can't explain that comes with a bunch of kids asking for another piece of candy. You have to do the lethal piece, but if you're not eventually getting to the hearts and minds of the people, you're just wasting your time.

Our guys have conducted extended operations in austere environments. They've typically lived without a shower for 30 days, eating MREs for that time, and we've had to learn a lot of field craft that is required when you live like that: purifying drinking water from streams, hygiene with baby wipes and sewing up your clothes. It all goes back to the population. We do all the things that extended operations require in order to live *with* the population—to secure them, to get intelligence from them, to drive the enemy out, to deny him safe haven.

If we lived on the forward operating base (FOB), there is no way we could get to the population.

Rob Stanton

C/1-32 IN (Kunar)

The very first thing we did was ensure that we lived with the people and that we lived in the enemy's backyard. I didn't fully realize its importance until I had done it for a while. You read about it in counterinsurgency theory, but it doesn't really click in your mind until you actually do it. We established three firebases in my battle space that are literally on the side of the road. They were established with Humvees; we strung out some wire and that was it—that's where we lived.

We were within the village limits; we could look outside the wire where local nationals were walking up and down the road and coming to see us; we could look at the local nationals' houses—I mean we were right there. And right off the bat it made a difference because no one had ever done this here before. Everyone up in this area of responsibility worked out of Asadabad or Camp Blessing, and the only time they went out among the populace was to conduct operations. So the people only saw U.S. Soldiers when they were showing up to kick the door in, or conducting a night counter-improvised explosive device patrol, or carrying out a major operation with a massive amount of Coalition forces in your backyard. It was the first time that the Afghans had the opportunity to reach out and touch us, when we were not dealing with them in a threatening manner. We were there, sitting on the side of the road. You couldn't miss us: 35 Humvees and 60 Soldiers hanging out, going on missions, walking into the village, having lunch with the elders.

In a lot of ways, it endeared the populace to us. You probably can't fully endear them to us because we are Americans and they are Afghans, but to be with them every day is priceless. You get to know the people, and the people get to know you; they are not as afraid of you, and you *show* them that the government is the better option and is here to stay. When you look at the elder and the *shura* leaders and can say, "I live here, too. I'm out here getting shot at just as you are," you have a shared experience with the people. They



Capt. Jim McKnight observes 155 mm artillery fires from the Korengal outpost within minutes after receiving enemy mortar and sniper fires.



This is the view members of one platoon have from their outpost located directly along the Pech River Road.

respect that a lot, and it makes it a lot easier to deal with them and to get support and information.

Joe Hansen

B/4-25 FA (Kunar & Nuristan)

One interesting experience that stands out for me is when we brought in the 155 mm howitzers, which have never been in the Hindu Kush mountains. Arable land here in Kunar Province is extremely precious, so it became a po-

Rob Stanton spends quality time with local Afghans.



tential point of contention with the locals when we needed to expand Camp Blessing for the howitzers and a landing zone (LZ). One concern we had was saving the soil on the land that will eventually go back to the people. After many conversations, we decided to defer to the locals on how best to preserve their land. The “Afghan way” was to resod the LZ using little plots of grass from the river.

They resodded the entire LZ! It took about a month, but it was worth the effort. Aesthetically, it looks great and is a visible symbol of our commitment to being good stewards. We also planted vegetables along the berms that surround the LZ—melons, squash and other things, that will go to the *zakat* (alms for poor locals).

The people’s concerns become our concerns. In everything we do here, we try to find a way to achieve the mission and support the people. These two things are intertwined, each affecting the other.

At Camp Blessing, my first sergeant became the FOB mayor, and I became the FOB commander, primarily dealing with the day-to-day contact and interaction with the people and local leaders. Continuity is important to stability and security. My continued day-to-day presence and focus on developing relationships with the people (district governor, police chief and others) have made a big difference.

Interestingly, the 155 guns give me an added level of prestige with the Afghan people. Those guns are a powerful symbol of our kinetic power. In six months, we have gone from Camp Blessing receiving attacks upwards of three to four times a week to receiving a single rocket attack maybe once a month. And the people are the biggest part of that. Innovative and resourced nonkinetic operations will always be important; ultimately, though, the people are the ones who establish the security. Security and stability materialize when the people decide that they will no longer tolerate a communal enemy. When they make that collective decision, we step into the realm of success. And my presence day in and day out affirming Coalition support has helped that to happen. The people see and hear Coalition forces taking the fight to the enemy while we simultaneously address their concerns, from infrastructure development all the way down to personal relationships. At a certain point, the community takes up the “information operations (IO) guidon” and marches with it. This can be a long process, with much patience required, but it is well worth the effort when your desired effects are realized.

As infantry and provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) and others move forward in their counterinsurgency efforts, the howitzers come in behind them. We are set up and packaged to provide fires support; we are also set up to provide IO support. We are solidifying the stability gains and allowing the infantry to push forward and expand the security bubble.

The key to IO is using effective systems and leaders. There are 29 *shuras*—29 groups of elders in this valley. They are the primary voice of the people, the primary conduits to stability in this area. When we first got here, they were not engaged, nor were the *ulema* (the religious *shuras*). I was lucky and



The “Afghan way” of resodding the landing zone at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Blessing commences plug by plug.



Building projects help foster good relations between the people and their government leaders. Here, Capt. Joe Hansen uses a development project as a catalyst for this kind of relationship building.

had a very effective governor. We consolidated those 29 *shuras* and created a mega *shura*—and then brought the *ulema* into that. With our governor's great diplomatic efforts, we brought them together, found common ground and started to address and solve issues. As we did that, stability and security in this area started to flow outwards. It started to work here. My role in that could be described as a coach, mentor and Coalition adviser to the governor. Any unilateral action is counterproductive, and we usually will feel the effects of it in our ongoing operations.

Steve Helm

C/2-87 IN (Paktika, Kandahar, Ghazni)

Everything with counterinsurgency revolves around population. Picture a diagram with population in the center; everything else has to feed into that. Tell your soldiers, "Hey, look, we are affecting the population with everything we do." That is the key to COIN. If you can bring the population to your side, you will eliminate the insurgency.

Use Afghan leaders you partner with in lead roles during leader engagements. You make the biggest contribution by mentoring the leaders you work with before the meeting happens, and then remaining in the background during the engagement.

We recently invited every mayor, police chief and *shura* member from all four of my districts to come to the Afghan National Army side of our FOB to do what we call a "super *shura*." You have to have an agenda or things will get off track. In this case, the Afghan company commander I partner with was the keynote speaker. The day before the *shura*, I met with him to lay out an agenda. Then we put time limits on each subject, because if you don't you'll go into a meeting and people will run off on tangents and you'll be chasing your tail in circles.

During the *shura*, my leaders and I were visible, but we tried to allow the Afghan company commander to drive

things. He brought the meeting to order and discussed the items on the agenda. On a couple of occasions, I had my interpreter whisper something that the Afghan commander had forgotten, but otherwise we stayed in the background. The *shura* leaders are going to look at you and say, "He's the American who is leaving in six months or a year," but the local leader is going to be here long-term.

Treat Afghan Security Forces and the embedded U.S. trainers as true partners. When I work with an Afghan commander, I talk to him as a fellow

commander and member of the team. I'll share my general concept for the operation and ask for his help. Then, he'll provide insight and concerns, and we will work through it together. You have to talk to your Afghan counterparts; you cannot alienate them. They are the main effort, and you have to treat them that way.

Ben Hung

HHC/ 3rd BSTB (Logar & Nangahar)

One of the major innovations in Logar Province was actually first suggested by the governor and then put into action by the battalion commander and our company: the creation of the Provincial Coordination Center (PCC). This C2 node is a meeting place for Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)—Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan National Army and the National Directorate of Security—to discuss security issues, coordinate mission support and decide on mutually supporting responses/quick reaction force missions. Before this creation, there was really no system established, and most things were to be coordinated over the phone or in various meeting spots throughout the province. The PCC has empowered the ANSF and also created more of a partnership between forces. Every mission, with the exception of resupply convoys and security meetings, includes some combination of ANA or ANP support. These combined missions build ANSF credibility as a legitimate and competent arm of the government of Afghanistan and show U.S. cooperation with Afghans that temper arguments of "occupation."

Perry Stiemke

A/ 3rd BSTB (SAPPER) (Paktia & Nangahar)

At around the fourth month of command and conducting combat operations, I discovered that the key to success in Afghanistan is the people. It was during Eid; the entire company was operating out of FOB Zormat, and we had just suffered our second ambush within a three-day period.

Establishing FOB Wilderness in the critical K-G Pass gave the people tangible evidence that their government was serious about creating a secure environment.

The attack had taken place along a well traveled route in the middle of the night. Thankfully, there were no injuries during this one and, as far as we could tell, there were no casualties taken by the enemy.

We have nothing to show from the attack except that we traded rounds. I'm not disappointed with this, but with the fact that it seems like we were off target in our strategy. The killing of insurgents that night would have been seen as a success. Yet, that very killing of insurgents could itself create more insurgents, given the nature of Afghan society.

The local people know who conducted the attack. I've probably met or talked to one of the attackers during a *shura*. Ironically, they continue to ask for support from us. The thought occurred to me that I've been off target in trying to attack the insurgency force-for-force. Instead, if we target and win the support of the people, they will either in-



fluence or turn in the insurgents. At a minimum, the insurgency will come to us instead of us chasing ghosts in the middle of the night. If we alienate the people through unfocused violence, abandon them after we get a target, or use them to our own gains, the people will continue to shelter and quietly support the insurgents for their own gain through our unknowing support.

Task Force Spartan Counterinsurgency Strategy

By Col. John Nicholson

The overarching Task Force (TF) Spartan strategy during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)-VII has been to:

- Separate the enemy from the population.
- Achieve effects with the population through its government.
- Transform the environment both tangibly and intangibly so that the enemy is no longer welcome.

This strategy can be effectively implemented only when both U.S. and Afghan forces live among the people. TF Spartan recognized this and nearly tripled its footprint by establishing company- and platoon-sized outposts across the area of operations, selecting locations important in both the physical and human terrains. When combined U.S. and Afghan security elements move into an area and stay, they radically change the dynamics of the environment. Presence enables relationships with the people, develops their confidence in their own government and security forces, and continuously pressures the enemy.

While a population-focused strategy relies heavily on nonkinetic means, it increases kinetic operations as well. "Planting the flag" in the heart of known enemy sanctuaries dislocates the enemy, both physically and psychologi-

cally. He must fight back or lose. TF Spartan experienced a sharp rise in combat over previous rotations, but thanks to the close combat skill and firepower of American units, killed exponentially more enemy than suffered friendly casualties. The metric of enemy dead is not useful in gauging counterinsurgency success, but it does provide insight into the degree to which a unit has separated the enemy from the populace. Killing, capturing, forcing to flee or convincing the enemy to reconcile are all ways to achieve separation. This is a continuous process, but once begun, it buys space and time for the company commander and his leaders to achieve effects with the populace.

By integrating Afghan National Security Forces at every opportunity, connecting the people to their government and setting the conditions for economic development through road building and other projects, the population is convinced that their best hope for a brighter future lies with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRoA). If the enemy attempts to regain influence, they return to find a transformed environment that is no longer hospitable to them. This transformation does not occur overnight, but through months, often years, of determination, relationship building, economic development and IRoA capacity building.



Capt. Dennis Sugrue gathers with village leaders when 3-71 CAV was just establishing a base of operations at Kamdesh, Nuristan.

Dennis Sugrue

HHT/3-71 CAV (Kunar, Nuristan)

We have conducted very few offensive operations here. In a counterinsurgency, this is important. We focus our efforts on appealing to the population centers. When the population starts to like us, the enemy comes looking for a fight.

Winning over a population is, in part, winning over the leadership. You do this through developing relationships. One thing that won me a lot of ground initially was sitting

and spending two hours to conduct a 10-minute meeting. That's difficult for Americans to do. Our emphasis on reconstruction projects was our reason and our motivation to get into the towns and stay close with the people. Focus on the people.

One of the most effective ideas our squadron has put into action is a new radio station that has created a way to communicate with the population (90 percent of whom are illiterate in this area) who did not have a reliable radio station before now. We hired local nationals who broadcast in the four main languages of the area. Programming includes things like readings from the Koran, poetry and news: local, national, international. It gives us a platform to communicate ANSF advancement, Coalition forces' successes, like completion of a reconstruction project, and enemy blunders, like the time they caused a fire that burned a local school. The ability to communicate like this with the people is priceless. Counterinsurgency battles are won with genuine concern and a connection at the personal level. They are lost with bullets and the overuse of force.

About CompanyCommand

CC is a place for company-level commanders—current, past and future—to connect and share ideas and experiences. This is YOUR forum—it is voluntary, grassroots, by and for company commanders and is focused like a laser beam on CompanyCommand. By joining, you are gaining access to an amazing community of professionals who love Soldiers and are committed to building combat-ready teams. Collectively, as a profession, we possess the knowledge that can enable us to build and lead our units more effectively. With this in mind, please participate, contribute and tap into the experiences of others. You'll never know the full impact of taking a moment to share your experience with others!

Connecting leaders



Art by Jody Harmon

The CC space is organized around Leadership, Warfighting, Training, Fitness, Supply, Maintenance, Force Protection and Soldiers & Family.

We also have an area specifically for Professional Reading, as well as the CDR's Log where commanders are journaling their command experiences. And, if you are preparing for command, we recommend you check out the "1st 90 Days" topic located in the Leadership Section of the web site. If CC is adding value to you, encourage your platoon leaders to check out their forum—a forum that is centered on excellence in platoon leadership—at

<http://platoonleader.army.mil>.

Send article ideas to tony.burgess@us.army.mil.

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



Company Command

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders

From: Company Commanders

Leadership Challenges in Iraq

Leading America's sons and daughters in combat is an awesome privilege and responsibility. Soldiers entrust their lives to us; our decisions in war have life-or-death consequences for them and many others. Our solemn duty, then, is to do all we can to command our units expertly.

The more we learn from each other, the less we have to learn from our own mistakes. With that in mind, more

than 120 company-level commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan have sat down this year with the Company-Command team and shared their leadership experiences. A first step to preparing ourselves for leadership challenges is being aware of them. Listen in as company commanders in Operation Iraqi Freedom briefly share their most demanding leadership challenges.

Shane Finn

C/4-31 IN

Developing a company-level intelligence cell

Our battalion has the best S-2 I have ever worked with, yet higher intel still fails us daily. It's the nature of the war. In order to stay in touch with what is going on I have always devoted hours daily to figuring out the terrain (people) in my sector. It's a challenge to develop my subordinates and my command post to appreciate the importance of company-level intel processes, but we have developed some good ideas on how to battle this monster. At the company level, you have to figure out and learn the personalities in every household in the battle space in order to understand where you want your troops to maneuver to have the desired effect of isolating the insurgents from the people.

Jim Walker

A/2-12 CAV

Training/working with Iraqi Security Forces

Working with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) is a huge challenge. They are often unreliable and unwilling to operate independently. Elements of the ISF, especially the Iraqi Police here in Baghdad, are actively engaged in anti-Coalition forces activities and extra-judicial killings. You want to help the ISF to develop and improve so that the government of Iraq can establish control and we can go home, but you also have to keep both eyes open so you can reduce, or at least not unwittingly enable, their illicit activities.

Brendan Gallagher

B/1-5 CAV

Managing risk

Managing risk is a constant process that could have catastrophic implications if not done effectively. There is a constant tension between protecting your Soldiers and accepting necessary risk to accomplish the mission. There are also trade-offs between short- and long-term effects. For example, decisions about today's guard force will impact tomorrow's missions (Soldiers' rest, equipment readiness). Should you have more Soldiers manning the entry control point today or more Soldiers rested for tonight's raid? Managing risk pertains to all operations—defending our combat outposts, patrolling, rest plans and more. Where do you choose to accept the risk and how do you mitigate the effects? The commander has to make these



CPT Shane Finn at Company Patrol Base Corregidor, in a rural area south of Baghdad, values "the importance of company-level intel processes."



CPT Brendan Gallagher commands his unit on a company-sized raid in western Baghdad.

decisions and live with their consequences, which literally can have life or death implications for your Soldiers.

Jayson Morgan

B/2-32 FA

Performing non-METL missions

The most significant experience I have had so far was converting a field artillery battery to an infantry company in the weeks immediately before, during and after our deployment. This was not very difficult for the platoon leaders, but the NCOs were a different story. In artillery, NCOs are more technically oriented. They take great pride in knowing everything possible about their weapon system, and they work diligently to get their crew drill down to as fast as possible. But they are used to taking all orders from an officer. For every fire mission executed, there are several checks, all of which are blessed off by an officer. It was very difficult to get some of the more experienced NCOs out of this mind-set. Developing squad leaders and team leaders proved to be most challenging. In the past months the battery has become very good at its role. But this is at a cost. If we were asked to fire artillery today, it would be very difficult and time-consuming to execute. I think our technical mind-set has led us to be very successful with the non-kinetic missions. This, in turn, has led to successful kinetic missions. Overall, while challenging, this change of mission has been a positive experience for the battery.

Josh Taylor

B/1-73 CAV

Ad-hoc task-orgs/switching AOs in mid-tour

Since deploying, my task organization has changed five times and my battle space four times. These kinds of changes are necessary in a nonlinear battlefield. The environment is very fluid and commanders have to be prepared to change with it in order to keep ahead of the enemy.

CPT Jayson Morgan interacts with Iraqi civilians to assess 'atmospherics' during a patrol in the Yarmouk neighborhood of Baghdad in April 2007.

James Downing

C/1-325 AIR

Coaching a struggling subordinate

My most challenging decision so far was temporarily suspending one of my platoon leaders from his duties and responsibilities. At the time, he was failing to consistently enforce some tough but nonnegotiable standards, such as maintaining security at all times, as well as having some difficulty understanding my intent about appropriate uses of force. After being given some time to think about what is expected of him as a leader in combat, he's back on the job and doing much better.

Anonymous

Current commander in Iraq

Receiving inadequately resourced missions

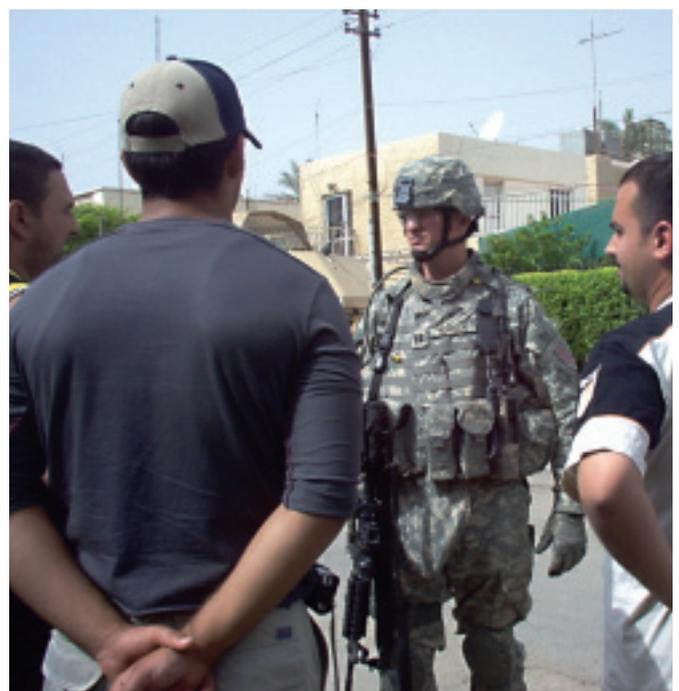
My most demanding challenge is being inadequately resourced to effectively conduct operations in a highly volatile area. We conduct continuous operations while maintaining force protection and force projection, despite receiving no backfill for the personnel and equipment that we have lost in battle. We are directed to operate on multiple lines of operation instead of focusing on the one or two where we could make an impact, given our resources.

Leo Wyszynski

C/10th CAV (OIF-2)

Preventing burnout in yourself

More than any single event, maintaining focus over the length of the deployment was extremely challenging. It took me several months when I was approaching the breaking point to understand that taking care of myself in terms of sleeping, eating and discussing issues with other commanders was essential to maintaining the energy required to lead.



Having a Soldier Killed or Seriously Wounded

This is the leadership challenge cited most often by experienced company-level commanders. Nothing can ever prepare us completely for this tragic challenge, but these commanders hope that their experiences will help their fellow combat leaders.

“What has been my most demanding wartime leadership challenge? Leading a freshly arrived unit through the grieving process for a senior NCO lost on the first day of patrolling.”

—Robert Richardson, A/1-7 Cav

“Trying to keep the company mission-focused after suffering substantial combat losses; this includes my own feelings and perspectives after my own patrol suffered a loss due to a catastrophic IED.”

—Rob Nevins, D/2-5 CAV

“Walking into an aid station and seeing one of the strongest men I have ever known reduced by an IED that took both legs from him. Staying with him, looking him in the eyes and telling him that he is in good hands. Then finding out, two hours later, that he passed away in surgery and delivering that news to a platoon that had lost an NCO just five days previously to a sniper.”

—Mike Baka, C/1-26 IN

“Maintaining focus and composure as I watched a Soldier’s corpse burn next to a burning vehicle with ammunition still cooking off, then fighting the feeling of helplessness that comes from it in order to recover the body and get it out of sight of the other Soldiers.”

—Cecil Strickland, C/1-26 IN

“Dealing with the death of one of my most trusted and competent platoon sergeants.”

—Sung Kato, D/1-505 PIR

“Dealing with everything surrounding the loss of four soldiers at once.”

—Chris Wehri, C and HHT/1-7 CAV

“Working through the loss of two Soldiers (team leaders) to IEDs, trying to rebuild the fire teams and squads that experienced the losses.”

—Adam Stocking, 543rd MP CO

“Suffering the loss of one-third of a platoon in three minutes, followed by the long-term effects on the Soldiers (stress, PTSD, anger).”

—Buddy Ferris, C/2-505 PIR

“Leading soldiers back into areas where contact was near guaranteed. Taking casualties nearly every day in the same market area and still suiting back up to go in and explaining to my Soldiers why it’s important to do it.”

—Jay Wisham, E/2-5 CAV

“Writing letters home to the families of my Soldiers who had been killed.”

—Jim Rogers, A/1-16 IN (OIF-2)

“Dealing with the loss of a Soldier—delivering the news to the company (for those who didn’t know), properly memorializing and paying tribute, staying mission-focused and continuing the mission, and identifying Soldiers’ emotional/psychological reactions, sometimes months afterwards.”

—Jeff Noll, B/1-23 IN



CPT Mike Baka greets an Iraqi Army soldier before a joint patrol in Adhamiyah, Baghdad.

Ed Lerz

HHC/2-3 IN

Preventing burnout in others

Trying to keep my subordinates and Soldiers informed and motivated during clearing operations in other units’ battle spaces is a big challenge. We move to a new area every few days, so we constantly have to become familiar with a new battle space. We don’t have the satisfaction of staying in an area of operation to see the results of our work. Also, my unit is a headquarters and headquarters company that operates in a nonstandard role as a smaller, plug-and-play maneuver element. We do just as much as a line company, but with fewer vehicles and personnel. I try to manage OPTEMPO so my men have as predictable a schedule as possible.

Top Challenges of Army Company Commanders in Iraq

The CompanyCommand team surveyed 84 combat-experienced company commanders in Iraq from April through June 2007, as well as 25 company commanders from previous Operation Iraqi Freedom rotations, a total of 109 combat-tested commanders.

Which of the following wartime experiences of Company Commanders do you think would be most valuable to gain a deeper understanding of as a profession? Select up to 10.

Frequency	% citing	Challenge
62	57%	Having a Soldier killed or seriously wounded.
58	53%	Developing your own company-level intelligence cell or processes.
53	49%	Training and/or working alongside indigenous security forces.
51	47%	Dealing with burnout in yourself and others.
48	44%	Engaging with the local population.
39	36%	Interacting with indigenous political or social leaders.
38	35%	Dealing with Family Readiness Group issues.
38	35%	Coaching/mentoring a struggling subordinate.
37	34%	Performing non-METL missions.
37	34%	Dealing with combat stress/PTSD among your Soldiers.
36	33%	Managing risk, in terms of mission accomplishment versus force protection.
36	33%	Working with ad-hoc task organizations.
33	30%	Operating autonomously from your parent unit (e.g., company outpost).
33	30%	Adapting your unit's SOPs/TTPs to counteract the enemy.
32	29%	Receiving poorly defined or inadequately resourced missions.
30	28%	Communicating the strategic mission to your Soldiers in terms they understand.
30	28%	Building your relationship with your first sergeant.
30	28%	Deciding to fire a subordinate leader.
30	28%	Taking command while deployed.
30	28%	Dealing with varying interpretations of rules of engagement or changed ROE.
29	27%	RIP/TOA/battle handover challenges.
29	27%	Making a decision when all options are ethically problematic.
24	22%	Switching area of operations in mid-tour.
22	20%	Leading your Soldiers through bad news (e.g., tour extension).
21	19%	Making judgment calls that violate a higher-unit SOP or policy.
21	19%	Dealing with unethical actions by your own subordinates.
20	18%	Sharing hardships with your Soldiers.
15	14%	Addressing fear—in yourself and/or others.
15	14%	Helping your Soldier ramp up/ramp down in accordance with the situation.
12	11%	Integrating new Soldiers into your unit while deployed.
12	11%	Being the subject of an investigation.
12	11%	Killing noncombatants.
11	10%	Dealing with rear-detachment issues.
11	10%	Losing equipment—due to enemy action, negligence, accident, etc.
11	10%	Dealing with unethical proposals/actions by a senior officer.
9	8%	Experiencing an actual or near-miss fratricide in your unit.
8	7%	Killing enemy combatants.
7	6%	Working with NGOs, host-nation services, OGAs, etc.
7	6%	Being mentored by a superior—you made a mistake and were supported.



Above left, 1LT Chris Harrington and CPT Carl Dick during the construction of Combat Outpost Firecracker in central Ramadi. Above right, Soldiers of HHC/2-3 Infantry conduct a dismounted patrol.

Carl Dick
C/9 EN

Working with ad-hoc task organizations

Commanding an ad-hoc company team of 190+ Soldiers, Marines and Seabees while building COP Firecracker for the Marine Corps. We constructed the largest COP in Ramadi in four days—working 24/7 and emplacing approximately 100,000 sandbags. The Marine task force had a great plan and provided great support. My company and I showed up two days before the operation kicked off, and as soon as the site was seized, we

became the main effort, leading attached platoons of Marines and Seabees.

The intent of this article is to increase our shared awareness of the leadership challenges that company commanders are facing in the war. If you are preparing to command Soldiers in combat, or if you are a currently commissioned officer who is willing to share your own leadership experiences, we invite you to log on to <http://companycommand.army.mil> and join the conversation.

About CompanyCommand

CC is a place for company-level commanders—current, past and future—to connect and share ideas and experiences. This is YOUR forum—it is voluntary, grassroots, by and for company commanders and is focused like a laser beam on CompanyCommand. By joining, you are gaining access to an amazing community of professionals who love Soldiers and are committed to building combat-ready teams. Collectively, as a profession, we possess the knowledge that can enable us to build and lead our units more effectively. With this in mind, please participate, contribute and tap into the experiences of others. You'll never know the full impact of taking a moment to share your experience with others!

Connecting leaders



Art by Jody Harmon

The CC space is organized around Leadership, Warfighting, Training, Fitness, Supply, Maintenance, Force Protection and Soldiers & Family.

We also have an area specifically for Professional Reading, as well as the CDR's Log where commanders are journaling their command experiences. And, if you are preparing for command, we recommend you check out the "1st 90 Days" topic located in the Leadership Section of the web site. If CC is adding value to you, encourage your platoon leaders to check out their forum—a forum that is centered on excellence in platoon leadership—at

<http://platoonleader.army.mil>.

Send article ideas to tony.burgess@us.army.mil.

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



CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders and their FRG Leaders
From: Company Commanders and their FRG Leaders

Commander-FRG Leader Teams

“You enlist the soldier. You reenlist the family.” Great leaders understand the power of this maxim. In a high-OPTEMPO Army, the importance of the Family Readiness Group (FRG) cannot be overstated. A resourceful, motivated FRG leader can make all the difference to the spouses and children left behind when a unit deploys.

Commanders and their FRG leaders work together as teams, and so do their respective forums—Company-Command and FRG Leader. Listen in as experienced company commanders and FRG leaders talk about working together to make a difference for Soldiers and their families.

Barbie Pepple
HHC, 21st TSC

When I was appointed FRG leader, we had to start from scratch. In three months time, our company commander, O’Shea J. White, has established and signed off on all required SOPs. He has now added the FRG to the unit budget, we now hold monthly FRG newcomers luncheons, and

he has written and signed appointment orders for every key volunteer. The Family Readiness liaison, the Family Readiness support assistant and I now have weekly meetings to ensure everything gets done that needs to be done. He has also ensured the FRG now holds monthly meetings. Whereas before there may have been 20 people who showed up for the meetings, now there are more than 130.



CPT O’Shea J. White stands in formation with Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 21st Theater Sustainment Command.

Our company commander even gave the FRG four rooms in the building where he works. One room has four computers for FRG training and is always accessible to the Soldiers and family members to use to ensure they stay in contact with family members back home and down range. Another room is the FRG meeting room, filled with tables and chairs along with all administrative supplies the FRG needs. The two other rooms are used as children's playrooms during FRG meetings.

CPT White will be leaving soon, but he is leaving the FRG better off than when he arrived. Even though he will be moving on, he is still planning to ensure that the fundraisers and the holiday party (which he will miss) are going to be the best yet. He is an amazing man with an amazing family. The FRG, the Soldiers and the family members will be forever grateful for all he has done for this unit.

Jerry Brown
877th QM CO

My FRG leader, Karen Brown, and my FRG liaison, Aaron Sweet, have made great strides in developing a one-woman program into 10 spouses that are willing to help at a drop of a hat. We started with nothing in the FRG funds account and now, in less than six months, we are above \$1,000. The FRG program has filled the void between information on what the unit is doing and then getting that information back to the spouses at home. The newsletter has been a great tool. Because it goes directly to the spouses, now they know pretty much everything I know when it comes down to events that affect the unit.

Traci Cook
B/1-39 FA (MLRS)

My favorite event planned by our battery commander, Nate Cook, was a "Family Day in the Field." The unit had a three-week training event, so he planned a day in the middle of that training for the families to come to the field and see their Soldiers in action. We had a high participation rate, and the families really enjoyed the time.

He had a bus come pick us up and take us out to the field, where the unit was training. We were able to see where they were training and get a real feel for what they were doing out there. One spouse told me that in 18-plus years in the Army, she'd never known what it was like for him during the field exercises.

Families brought yummy picnic meals with lots of cold drinks (we were in hot and steamy Georgia during the summer), and the Soldiers showed us how to eat Meals Ready to Eat. The kids loved that. We all brought lots of extra food for the single Soldiers. We even had some parents come in from out of town to see their single Soldiers. It was a very fun day focused on families and a nice break for the Soldiers as well.

I thought this was exceptional because it brought the entire unit together for a day of fun and showed us (the families) a part of the Soldiers' lives that we had never experienced before. I love that our battery commander was thinking about us back home.

Phillip Griffin
A/2-183 CAV

I would like to commend the A/2-183d CAV FRG Team (Mrs. Olivia Pernula and Mrs. Megan Griffin), among other volunteers, for their tremendous work on behalf of our Soldiers.

The FRG leaders sponsored an FRG coffee to ensure that the FRG is responsive, available and committed to the family members of the unit. They plan to continue these coffees. The FRG reps also assisted in multiple premobilization family fairs to disseminate deployment information and support to the families. They then participated in the planning and conduct of a first-rate unit departure ceremony at which family members were invited to send off their Soldiers in style. The FRG leaders assisted in developing and implementing a key-caller phone tree to ensure that information is disseminated and family members are kept up-to-date on events. The FRG sponsored a children's playdate at a local mall to provide support and recreation to unit family members. This great team routinely relays family issues to the unit leadership to assist in the quick resolution of family matters, which has had a positive impact on Soldiers and their families. One of my FRG leaders even went to a national-level FRG conference in Chicago to maintain awareness of current FRG operations and to maintain FRG contacts.

What a wonderful job they continue to do—taking care of the troops and relaying information to family members. We truly couldn't do our job without them.

Angela Crist
66th Transportation CO

I have two very memorable actions from our company commander, Fred Crist.

First, he recognized our FRG volunteers with Department of the Army awards. Initially, when he was researching these awards, the battalion was not familiar with the proper procedures, so there was a lot of legwork involved. However, our commander prevailed and honored our FRG volunteers with this special recognition.

Second, we had a children's art contest in honor of the Month of the Military Child. My commander not only acknowledged all of the children at the event, but he also invited the battalion commander to attend, and each child received a battalion coin. Having the battalion commander present was a huge deal because the unit headquarters was located more than an hour away, plus he was not married and had no children. Seeing our leaders interacting with these kids was adorable, but most important, it revealed their compassionate side.

Michael Lazo
A/118 MED BN (AS)

Our FRG leader, Cathy Lazo, did an excellent job in keeping families involved. She organized a clothing drive, which kept all families active. The drive also led to a free flow of information as it opened up great lines of communi-



Cathy Lazo and family members of the Company A, 118th Medical Battalion FRG are about to enjoy a Halloween hayride.

cation. Once the clothes were collected, they were sent to us in Iraq for distribution to the local town. Now that I have moved to a new unit, she is heavily involved in standing up the new FRG. She has been and continues to be a great asset.

Jeffrey Burnett
A CO, AFNORTH BN

I was in command of a U.S. Army company in NATO for 32 months. Although I recently departed command, I feel

obliged to respond and outline some of the achievements my exceptional SFRG (we called it Soldier and Family Readiness Group) leader accomplished. She was directly responsible for outright improving the quality of life for U.S. Army Soldiers and their family members, and she had a positive impact on those with whom she came in contact and helped serve throughout the international community. My SFRG leader assisted me in maintaining readiness of Soldiers and their families by promoting self-sufficiency, resiliency and stability in garrison and during individual NATO

deployments. My SFRG leader spearheaded the U.S. delegation's role in supporting the American Family Humanitarian Aid Distribution to Serbian villages in Plemetina and Azotikut, Kosovo, in January and February 2005. This included leading the drive for generous donation of clothes and



Cari Burnett, SFRG leader, helps her son, Gavin Burnett, at the arts-and-crafts table at the 2004 Allied Forces Northern Europe Battalion Christmas party.

miscellaneous items that totaled more than 30 boxes, which she personally delivered to the U.S. Post Office and mailed through MPS to Kosovo Forces Headquarters in Film City, Kosovo. In addition, she made certain that Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq received care packages, particularly during the holiday seasons, including sending thank-you and holiday cards signed by members of the company. She also made personal telephone calls to family members of deployed Soldiers on a weekly basis, to let them know the importance of their role and that there is support available from the company, battalion and local community. My SFRG leader served as or assisted the welcome coordinator, ensuring new Soldiers and family members received a welcome bag of fruits, goodies and community information within the first few days upon their arrival at the local hotel. By helping ease the transition to their assigned duty location, she made a positive first impression for many Soldiers and family members. And last, but certainly not least, she cooked for and conducted numerous bake sale and breakfast fund-raisers to increase money for the SFRG and also coordinated meals for families with newborns, personally bringing the meals to their homes. Her constant enthusiasm, exceptional leadership abilities and untiring drive are based on her desire to take care of military family members and had a direct positive impact on the company, the battalion and U.S. Army. My command would not have been nearly as successful without my SFRG leader and her dedicated support.

Tamara Slagle
B/725 SB

I've just taken over our FRG but have already had a wonderful experience with the commander, Tony Lindh. The unit is currently deployed, and I have not yet even met the man in person, but he has taken the time to e-mail me personally to tell me about himself and his wife. He has sent me pictures of him and the Soldiers in the unit and has been a great help. He was fast acting to get me my appointment letter and has tried to keep me updated weekly. I'm sure that once they return home we will get along fine and make the FRG a success and something the family members will want to be involved in.

CPT Tony Lindh, commander of Company B, 725th Support Battalion (Airborne), contacted his new FRG leader quickly to provide updates on the Soldiers.

Rose Smyth
C/407 BSB

My FRG leader, Cheryl Monette, has been absolutely exceptional. She coordinated for our family members to participate in a "Walk to Iraq and Back" to keep the spouses, children, family and friends involved with a goal that they could focus on as individuals and at their own pace while we were away. This activity was available for anyone, not just the family members located at our post. We have family members participating all over the United States. For every 15 minutes of exercise, they are granted one mile towards the mileage log that tracks how far along their route they are. Our FRG Team called itself "Charlie's on the Warpath" to mirror our company motto. Currently, our team remains in first place and has logged in more than 2,000 miles. They have until April 2008 to complete their trek. It's been pretty inspiring that our FRG chose to do something that not only provides them a goal but keeps them health-conscious as well. I'm really proud of them.

Heather Muder
E/4-227 ARB

Shortly after our battalion deployed, I received a handwritten letter from the battalion commander thanking me for my sacrifice during my husband's deployment. I was so impressed that my husband's commander would take the time to write me a note from Iraq saying what a fantastic job he was doing as a company commander and that the Army's mission could not be accomplished without the sup-



port I provided my husband during the months ahead.

I wanted the other women in the company to feel this same sense of pride, both for their husbands and the sacrifices they were making by completing daily tasks (working, raising children, etc.) without their Soldiers. My husband agreed and handwrote each Soldier's spouse a letter thanking her for her support of her husband, the company and the Army's mission. He personalized each one with details about her Soldier.

Although it was a time-consuming process for him to complete, the wives received his letters with tremendous gratitude. This gesture helped solidify bonds within the FRG, drew connections between the spouses and their husbands' careers and filled hearts with hope and pride.

Anthony Borowski
582nd MED LOG CO

Our FRG leader, Kimberly Borowski, has done an outstanding job in supporting our company before, during and after our deployment to Afghanistan. To ensure a mission is successful, communication is paramount. This goes the same for my wife as she continues not only to stay involved with our FRG leaders at the battalion and brigade level, but also with all of the spouses in the company to make certain that they have up-to-date information about how the com-

pany was doing during the deployment. It is also key that both the FRG leader along with the rear detachment work together as a team, not only to delegate responsibilities to maintain the morale of our deployed Soldiers, but also to assist each other in providing information that can better prepare our company during and after the homecoming. Clearly, involvement is the cornerstone not only of a successful FRG that helps with unit morale, but it is also a means to support our international relations with our host country by providing humanitarian relief such as clothing and school supplies.

It would be a detriment for a company commander not to have an effective and engaging FRG. This support element is a vital asset in the commander's arsenal, not only for Soldier issues, but also to assist the unit in its specific missions while deployed.

The intent of this article is to highlight a small fraction of the great things that company commanders and FRG leaders are doing for one another. If you are a current officer or FRG leader and have ideas about how to better take care of Soldiers and their families, we invite you to log on to <http://companycommand.army.mil> or <http://frgleader.army.mil> and join the conversation.

About CompanyCommand

CC is a place for company-level commanders—current, past and future—to connect and share ideas and experiences. This is YOUR forum—it is voluntary, grassroots, by and for company commanders and is focused like a laser beam on CompanyCommand. By joining, you are gaining access to an amazing community of professionals who love Soldiers and are committed to building combat-effective teams. Collectively, as a profession, we possess the knowledge that can enable us to build and lead our units more effectively. With this in mind, please participate, contribute and tap into the experiences of others. You'll never know the full impact of taking a moment to share your experience with others!

About FRG Leader

FRG Leader is the place where motivated FRG leaders—past, present and future—connect to share ideas and experiences. The energy that is generated in this community is the direct result of heroes like YOU who have a passion to connect and serve with other like-minded individuals. This community understands what it means to be an FRG leader. Having others we can identify with is a very powerful component in supporting

each other as we serve and lead Soldiers and their families. The FRG Leader forum conversations are candid, creative and focused on solutions. We extend a warmhearted invitation to you to join and meet with FRG leaders from around the Army. Most important, let us know what is working (or not working) for you. We look forward to learning with you as we serve the families of the U.S. Army.





CompanyCommand

Building Combat-Ready Teams



To: Company Commanders

From: Company Commanders

Honoring Leaders Who Made a Difference

As we reflect on how we came to be the leaders we are today, we are reminded of our role in developing the leaders of tomorrow. In the June 2007 Company-Command article, we shared the story of Hank Arnold, Steve Delvaux and Steve's lieutenants as a great example of "Third-Generation Leadership."

Leaders with a third-generation perspective develop

their leaders with future generations in mind.

There are thousands of untold "Hank and Steve" stories in our profession. One CC forum member, Jay Miseli, inspired by the article, launched a discussion in the CC forum, telling his own story and asking his fellow professionals, "Who made you the leader you are today?" Listen in as CC members reflect upon this question.

Jay Miseli

C Co & HHC, 2-69 AR, 3 ID

I took my Headquarters Company on a Thursday morning, spent that first day responding to a congressional inquiry and spent Friday getting my arms around admin for this beast (375 Soldiers on the books). That Monday, my mortar platoon was supporting an IOBC (Infantry Officer Basic Course) indirect fire exercise, and I intended to visit them on the range but didn't make it out. That evening, when they returned to the company HQ, the platoon sergeant reported some disturbing news. (The platoon leader was TDY to the Mortar Leader Officer Course at the time.)

The new brigade combat team (BCT) commander, who had been in command about one month at this point, had dropped by the range and wasn't happy with what he saw. The IOBC cadre had directed the platoon to set up their mortars in an open field with no camouflage nets or any cover because the cadre wanted the second lieutenants to see the adjustments occurring. So, the platoon complied (outside of their SOP), and having registered their tubes, were in the middle of a lunch break in a nearby woodline when the BCT commander arrived. Not only was the platoon in, shall we say, a degraded uniform for lunch, but the firing positions were anything but tactical per the previous

request. The BCT commander calmly explained to the platoon sergeant (PSG) that this was a wasted training opportunity and that in our BCT, we never waste an opportunity to prepare for war. They walked through the positions and made some refinements, and then he departed.

Soon after that report from the PSG, my battalion commander called and relayed (again in a calm manner) the same basic story. At this point, I felt like a dirtball, having not gone out there and not really knowing the ap-



CPT Jay Miseli (left), who commanded HHC/2-69 Armor in Operation Iraqi Freedom-1, and his first sergeant, Lonnie Smith, relax after their company's combat-patch ceremony in Baghdad.

propriate standards for mortar firing positions in the first place; I felt certain that this had cemented a negative first impression with the BCT commander.

Four days later, our battalion was doing a run when the BCT commander saw us and decided to join us. He started running with the command group, and then started working his way down the line through the companies, talking for a while with each company commander. When he got to me, I thought, "Here it comes," expecting to get a well-deserved chewing out for Monday's range. Instead, he ran with me for more than 10 minutes, the entire time explaining that his singular focus as BCT commander was wartime readiness, and that if necessary, training and preparing for war would be at the expense of other areas (what he deemed housekeeping). In those 10 minutes, he gave me the clearest guidance I had received as far as priorities go, and for the remainder of my time in Headquarters and Headquarters Company (22 more months, including Operation Iraqi Freedom under his command), I knew, with firsthand knowledge, that my boss expected me to train and prepare for war above all else—and this gave me perfect clarity for focusing my efforts.

I will never forget the power of that experience. I fully expected to get chewed out and treated like an ineffective commanding officer from there onward. Instead, I got a powerful lesson in calm and positive leadership as well as perfectly clear guidance for my number one priority in command. I recall more than a few times when he shielded us from institutional forces that stood counter to this priority, so it wasn't just a statement but a fact of life.

Ryan Kranc

Quickstrike Troop, 4/3 ACR

I was fortunate enough to get paired up with some of the best NCOs the Army has.

My first platoon sergeant, then-SFC, now-SGM Bill Lindsey, was patient enough to teach an eager second lieutenant the technical and tactical aspects of leadership while also teaching me the importance of maintenance, supply accountability and physical fitness. I don't remember a day going by when we didn't run together in the morning for PT less than four miles. He was the first person to teach me what a 5988E was and how to correctly fill it out. He taught me demolitions, breaching and how to command and control a platoon. He was the reason I was a successful engineer platoon leader. SGM Lindsey pinned my 1LT bar on my shoulder.

As an Armor officer, I was blessed to lead a scout platoon with then-SFC, now-1SG Dean Lockhart. His detail-oriented, zero-defect method-

ology in operations, maintenance, supply and training allowed me the time to do my job as a platoon leader. He always showed what right looked like. Even in his worst hour, as he lay bleeding on the side of a Ramadi highway in July 2003, he ensured security was established as he was cared for. First Sergeant Lockhart pinned my captain's bars on my shoulder.

I could go on and on.

The bottom line is that the NCOs are the backbone of the Army. For a young officer, the platoon leader/platoon sergeant relationship sets the tone for the success of the platoon. As you move on, the commander/first sergeant relationship solidifies those common traits and roles with a scope of influence that affects four times as many Soldiers. Both of these men epitomize what an NCO and Soldier should be, and because of that, have been my strongest influences in the Army.

Raul Rovira

HHC, US Army Garrison, Livorno, Italy

It's about time I give credit to the one who built the foundation, my platoon sergeant back then, SFC(P) Jaime Rodriguez. He was a promotable SFC who refused to take a staff job as long as he could be on a tank and with Soldiers.

"SFC Rod" was a stud at PT, maintenance, training, gunnery and tactics. I was his seventh platoon leader, and he trained me and the platoon well. After a few months on the job, every project, operations order, maintenance plan, training event and PT session was our product—PL and PSG together. In the end, the plans and orders were written by me and he just looked them over and gave his two cents, like my personal small group leader. Without my noticing at the time, this was a "crawl-walk-run."

I can honestly say that we were each other's shadow back there in Korea. Other PSGs in the BN would tell me, "I wish I had that tight of a professional relationship with my LT." In some cases, LTs would come to me and say, "I wish I could get one month with your PSG." I was fortunate to



Then-2LT Raul Rovira (right) and his platoon sergeant, then-SFC(P) Jaime Rodriguez, try to smile despite subzero temperature during a platoon field training exercise in Korea.

have him for seven months. I pinned MSG on his hat right as he left the platoon. He remained in the battalion, and we stayed in touch.

About a year later he was “Top Rod,” 1SG Rodriguez, in 3-69 AR at Fort Stewart, Ga. I was a captain by then in the area support battalion. I would look him up for lunch from time to time to continue with the mentorship.

It was a proud moment when I was invited to his graduation ceremony, where I saw him receive his BA a few months before his retirement. He retired as a first sergeant and now lives happily in Florida with his wife and two children.

Pat Schoof

233rd Trans Co (CBT HET)

I have become a leader who believes that, while accomplishing tasks is important, having subordinates who take the mission, make it their own and then execute with proficiency is really more important in most circumstances.

I owe this leadership principle primarily to two leaders in my past. The first was one of my commanders while I was still enlisted and working in an operations position. He allowed me room to maneuver while, at the same time, being there to ensure unit and organizational standards were being met. The other benefit of seeing him in action was the intangible “officership” that he lived. He was always comfortable with the troops, yet he didn’t get too close, so he was always effective in leading the team; he was a professional. Then, my first commander when I was a lieutenant exhibited many of those same characteristics. He led by empowering his subordinates.

Please do not confuse empowering with laissez-faire. The two are completely different. Both of my mentors demanded performance standards that needed to be met or exceeded. They allowed room for error, provided I learned from my mistakes; there were few zero-defect situations.

The vision of third-generation leadership is a noble one. Now a few months out of command, I have received some very positive feedback on the way I approached situations and the way I “trained” lieutenants. Seeing this happen is personally rewarding, since I take great pleasure in seeing people grow. I hope that I can continue to live up to the legacy that was provided to me.

Jon Dunn

K Troop, 3/2 ACR

So many Army leaders made me the leader I am today, but my PSG and CO were most critical and complemen-

tary. I had the fortune of having a great PSG, then-SFC Ronnie Kelley, and two outstanding commanders, then-CPTs Rob Purvis and James Isenhower. From my PSG, I learned how to conduct, inspect and track the maintenance of my equipment, and how to maneuver my platoon. From my commanders, I learned how to plan and resource training (specifically how to run mission-essential task list-based and effective training meetings), property accountability and how to employ the combined-arms team.

We truly are reflections of those we learned under and need to always remember the impact we have on those learning under us.

Jonathan Silk

C Co, 1-72 Armor

I had several years of prior service experience as a light infantry NCO before I was commissioned as an Armor officer. As a light infantry NCO, I did not have a lot of property to be accountable for—just radios, night observance devices and weapons.



Then-CPT Jon Dunn (left) and then-2LT Jonathan Silk stand in front of the bridge at Al Kut the day after their troop’s successful counterattack to seize the eastern Iraq city.

As a lieutenant, I was assigned to K Troop, 3/2 ACR. Jon Dunn (Killer 6) was an awesome commander. One way he mentored me was in the area of property accountability. As a cavalry scout platoon leader, I had six gun trucks, all the basic issue items and a bunch of other equipment. Killer 6 ensured that my fellow platoon leaders and I hand-receipted the platoon equipment down to the sections and made sure we did regular inventories and that every piece of equipment was secure and maintained to standard.

Now, as a commander, I enforce the same standards on

accountability of equipment with my platoons as Killer 6 did with me. My PLs consider me an “accountability Nazi,” but they will learn to appreciate—as I did—the value of knowing what you have and having what you need.

Will Richardson

C Co, 2-6 Infantry

“Never forget that no military leader has ever become great without audacity. If the leader is filled with high ambition and if he pursues his aims with audacity and strength of will, he will reach them in spite of all obstacles.”

— Carl von Clausewitz

I had nine years as a cavalry scout NCO before becoming an officer after OCS. Two of the most influential and effective leaders in my career embodied the characteristics mentioned by Clausewitz—audacity and strength of will. Both men demonstrated their strength of will and personal courage to overcome significant obstacles to turn broken organizations into highly effective units in a short period of time before deployments.

My platoon sergeant in Germany had the greatest influence on my initial leadership development. He taught me how to be a leader who cared for but didn’t coddle his Soldiers. He also taught me that anything is possible if your will is stronger than that of anyone else involved. He overcame the toxic staff sergeants who had ruled the platoon, and he proved to his superiors that he could be counted on to live up to his word. The platoon had been known to be poorly disciplined and apt to lose sensitive items in the field. He rigidly enforced equipment accountability by beginning each day in garrison with complete equipment layouts. There was no doubt in our minds that equipment accountability and operability was critical to our mission. The platoon became one of the most disciplined and respected outfits during our deployment to Bosnia in 1995–96, purely through his leadership. He appeared to be too audacious in the field, but we always pulled off the mission. He completely changed the organizational attitude in three months. He set high standards and enforced them continuously. He set seemingly impossible goals and always accomplished them. We were proud and confident. He set the base for my leadership development.

My second battalion commander as an officer changed the organizational attitude of the battalion in roughly the same time it took my platoon sergeant to change a platoon’s. I soon realized that the size of an organization is irrelevant and the strength of

the leader’s will to accomplish his vision is absolute. I could go on for pages detailing the lessons I learned from Panther 6, but the big five were: calm leadership under all circumstances, adherence to fundamentals, constantly learning and studying your trade, knowledge of military history (and especially your organization) and war is a test of wills.

I was honored to witness incredible leadership in action during the initial occupation of the former Yugoslavia and OIF I. It’s incredible to see the words spoken in garrison and training translate to positive actions and results in combat. This brings me to the most important thing I learned from these two leaders—listen to everybody. They always did.

Ray Kimball

F Troop, 3-7 CAV, 3 ID

This is going to sound odd, but it was actually my time on staff that shaped my leadership style more than anything else. Let me explain.

I was a thoroughly mediocre platoon leader. I made some small mistakes and some huge mistakes, but I never really “connected” with the Soldiers and warrants I led. No one will ever look at my platoon time and say, “Wow, that’s what a platoon leader should be.” After 14 months as a PL, I moved up to be the battalion (1-10 Aviation, 10th MTN DIV) S-4, where I would stay for 28 (!) months.

Being in that position, I got to interact with all of the company commanders in the battalion and get a sense of their leadership styles and how they led Soldiers. Working with line commanders like Nick Arata, Jim Nugent and Brian Zarchin, I learned about tactics, operations and how critical it is for leaders at all levels to accurately spell out their strengths and weaknesses. Working with support commanders like Jon Scott Logel, Garner Pogue and Lamar Adams, I learned how logistics enables quality tactics and



MAJ Michael Lundy and LTC Jerry Scott, leaders who made a big impact on Ray Kimball, supervise the Comanche Base flight line during Bosnia’s worst snowstorm in 50 years.

operations. Because I got to look at so many leadership styles in action, I got to pick and choose the ones that best fit the way I wanted to lead. Today, when I talk to cadets about leading Soldiers and the expectations that come with it, I think about those commanders.

My most direct influences in that job were the two amazing executive officers for whom I had the privilege of working, MAJ Joseph Blackburn and MAJ Michael Lundy. Both were tough, skilled leaders with a passion for quality and high standards for good staff work. More important, though, both also had a deep and personal commitment to professionally developing the officers under their leadership. Both of them knew that Aviation officers typically view staff work as a kind of purgatory, keeping them away from the flight line. Both of them did everything they could to counter that perception and show us that not only was our work important for the battalion's mission, but it was also important in preparing us to be future commanders at all levels. I felt a deep sense of personal concern and professional commitment from both men that you just don't always find, and it made a huge difference.

Robert Ritz

C Troop, 8-10 CAV, 4/4ID

CPT Daniel Gade was my commander in D/2/72AR. I hated him. I still hate him. And yet I love him, and if I had to identify a mentor, it would be Dan.

I'll never forget the first words he ever spoke to me. "I don't want you in my (expletive) company!" Even though I was only a platoon leader for four months before moving on to XO of another company, he continued to push me

and, yes, berate me. When the time came for us to deploy from Korea to Iraq for OIF, I was on the verge of "killing" him. Yet he still chose me over all other LTs in the brigade to be his XO.

Then came the day when the IED took him out of the fight. He lost his entire right leg and was given only a 20 percent chance of pulling through. With the hectic pace of assuming command as a young lieutenant—in combat, in Ramadi—I never really sweated it. Working for Dan had been a hell of a lot harder than 20-hour days with two to three patrols all coming into contact. It was then that I realized what he had done. He had challenged me. Given little guidance and told not just to swim but to swim against the current with a full ruck on my back, I had learned from Dan to take care of my men and accept no slack. Dan trained me to lead and succeed in combat.

Dan is still in the Army and was picked up major BZ (below-the-zone). He's currently assigned to the White House on wounded-warrior issues. Throughout his entire ordeal of rehab and constant surgeries, he has still stayed the same old Dan—berating me and pushing me. He continues to mold me and lead me.

Who made an impact on your development as a leader? How are you inspiring and equipping your leaders today so they have the vision and experiences they need to develop their leaders in the future? To share your ideas and experiences and to hear those of other Army officers, participate in the professional forum for Army company commanders at <http://companycommand.army.mil>.

About CompanyCommand

CC is a place for company-level commanders—current, past and future—to connect and share ideas and experiences. This is YOUR forum—it is voluntary, grassroots, by and for company commanders and is focused like a laser beam on CompanyCommand. By joining, you are gaining access to an amazing community of professionals who love Soldiers and are committed to building combat-ready teams. Collectively, as a profession, we possess the knowledge that can enable us to build and lead our units more effectively. With this in mind, please participate, contribute and tap into the experiences of others. You'll never know the full impact of taking a moment to share your experience with others!

Connecting leaders



Art by Jody Harmon

The CC space is organized around Leadership, Warfighting, Training, Fitness, Supply, Maintenance, Force Protection and Soldiers & Family.

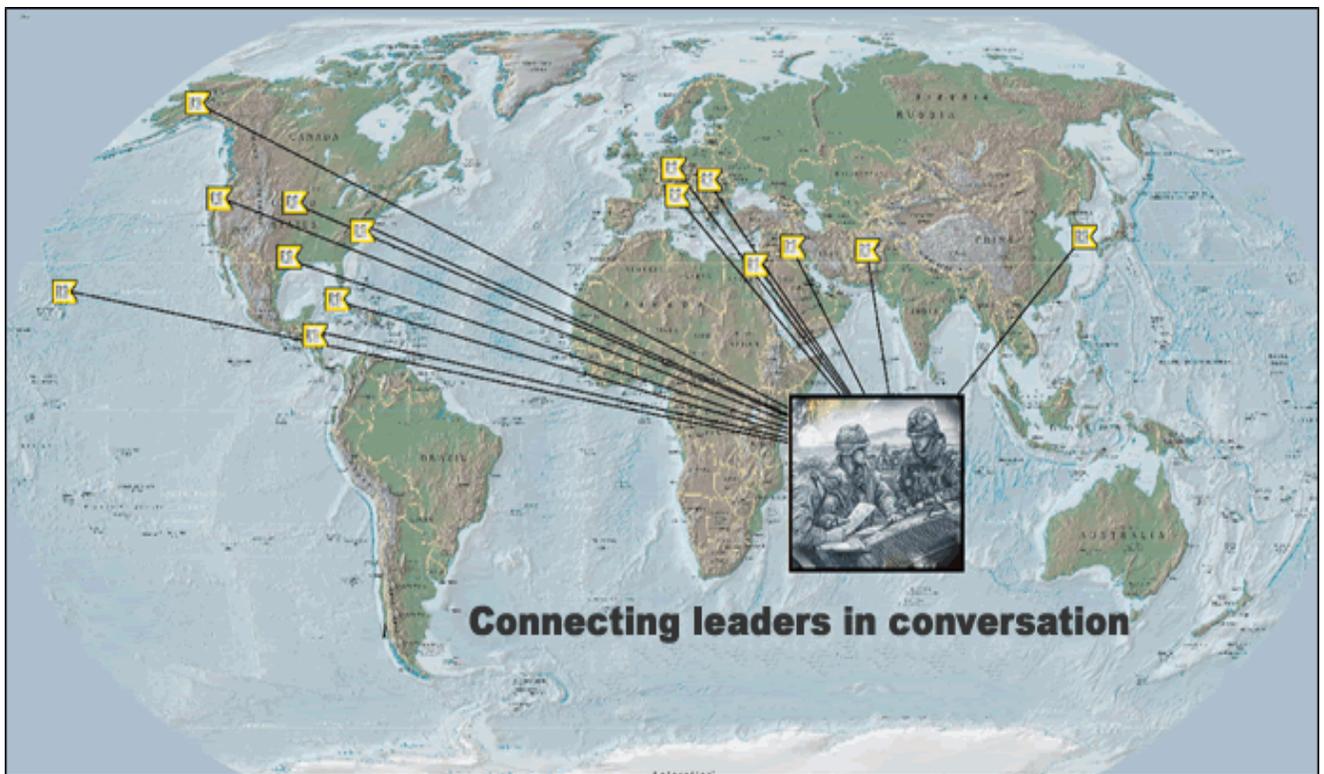
We also have an area specifically for Professional Reading, as well as the CDR's Log where commanders are journaling their command experiences. And, if you are preparing for command, we recommend you check out the "1st 90 Days" topic located in the Leadership Section of the web site. If CC is adding value to you, encourage your platoon leaders to check out their forum—a forum that is centered on excellence in platoon leadership—at

<http://platoonleader.army.mil>.

Send article ideas to tony.burgess@us.army.mil. Company Commanders connect at <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>.

A Year in Command—2007

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



We look forward to continuing the conversation...

Company commanders connect at <http://cc.army.mil>