



# CompanyCommand



**Building Combat-Ready Teams**

*CC is Company Commanders. We are in an ongoing professional conversation about leading soldiers and building combat-ready teams. The conversation is taking place on front porches, around Humvee hoods, in CPs, mess halls and FOBs around the world. By engaging in this conversation, we are becoming more effective leaders, and we are growing more effective units.*

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## Redeployed—Now What?

**By CPT Jay Miseli**

Imagine that you are a company commander and that you've just finished redeploying your unit after a year in combat. You haven't had a chance to think much beyond getting your soldiers and equipment safely home. As you contemplate your situation over lunch one day, seven senior Captains sit down with you. As they talk, you realize that they all have experience redeploying from combat—they have hard-earned knowledge that could make a difference for you **RIGHT NOW!**

I recently asked a group of experienced COs to picture themselves sitting down with a CPT like the one I described and to share with him from their experience. Here are a few short excerpts I drew from the many responses I received.

### **The Question**

*If you were a company commander in my shoes just finishing a major redeployment, what would be your top priority? Why?*

#### **People First!**

**by Mike Jason**

(B and HHC/1-35 Armor, Germany)

There are so many moving pieces and "urgent" demands following a redeployment. Without a focus on people first and a plan to make it happen, soldiers will land on the tarmac at Fort Hood or Fort Lewis and there will be no one there for them. Young single soldiers will get keys to empty barracks rooms, and the enormity of what they went through will crash on them like a ton of bricks. Without a plan, "old" soldiers will PCS without awards, evaluations, or even a good-bye. New soldiers will get lost in the shuffle or not accepted as part of the team ("Where's your combat patch, new guy?"). You will get caught up in equipment and sensitive items issues and, before you know it, months will pass and you will have forgotten to take care of your people.

#### **Plan To Rest and Reset Your Soldiers!**

**by Mike Kirkpatrick**

(I/3/2 ACR and HHT/1/2 ACR, Fort Polk and OIF)

It is important to decompress your soldiers under a controlled environment. I highly discourage any plan to cut soldiers loose on block leave immediately upon redeployment. Also, do not rest on your laurels upon redeployment from combat—you may return to combat sooner than you expect. So make a plan to be ready. In an ideal world, I recommend something like this: Week 1-2: Reverse SRP and reintegration training. Reestablish barracks and S&A facilities. CDR/ 1SG: Develop a reset training plan. ICW the squadron reset plan. Week 3-4: Block leave. Week 5-6: Receive equipment, equipment maintenance. Establish accountability of equipment, update H/R's. Reestablish vigor in PT program. Week 6-7: Individual training such as weapons qualification. Begin to "reset" the soldiers and unit and get ready for the next deployment.

## **Recovery—Of Your Troopers and Their Families!**

**by Dave Dudas**

(2 BCT, 25th ID (L), Schofield Barracks)

Pay close attention to re-acclimating/re-acquainting soldiers with their families—I believe this should be done in a controlled environment to ensure soldiers and their families are properly equipped to overcome some of the issues that arise from long deployments and separation. I recommend incorporating activities into the work day that don't infringe too much on soldiers' personal time. Ideas range from a barbeque in the motor pool with families included to a more structured classroom approach covering the issues of separation and of reunification of soldiers and families.

### **See Yourself**

**by Rob Smith**

(A/2-7 IN and HHC, 1st BCT, 3d ID (M), Fort Stewart and OIF)

As you return from combat, assess your unit in all aspects—I call this “seeing yourself,” meaning getting a good status of your personnel and equipment. Immediately begin scheduled maintenance like weapons gauging, TOW verification, and NVG purging. Although it may not seem critical at the time, wasted time on this will haunt you later when you start training. For example, you can't qualify TOWs unless they are verified. This goes for equipment shortages as well. Here is a real world example: We were missing numerous PVS-14 J-hooks after OIF, and we did not get replacements prior to our SQD gunnery. My soldiers could not mount their NVGs—all they could do was hang them around their neck. One technique that helped overcome these types of problems was having a weekly meeting during which we (me, 1SG, XO, etc) went over our personnel, maintenance, and equipment issues with a fine-tooth comb.

### **Establish Your Battle Rhythm and Get Fit!**

**by Jim Stevenson**

(584th DS Maintenance Company, Fort Campbell)

Based on my experience redeploying my company after a year in OIF, there are two key things I would focus on. First, establish a garrison battle rhythm that gets everyone

back in a routine. Provide structure and a plan: Establish meeting times, reassign and distribute additional duty appointment orders, clarify barracks and arms room SOP's, and organize your staff. You need to ensure your personnel clerk, your training sergeant and your supply sergeant understand their daily requirements from battalion and the daily information they must provide you. Second, focus on physical fitness, starting with a plan that builds the company back up again (crawl, walk, run). This focus area also includes things like dental and medical requirements. Physically fit, healthy soldiers with a solid routine or battle rhythm will be ready to deal with the many other issues that arise.

### **Lead by Example and Capture the Organization's Knowledge**

**by Jeff Spear**

(Operational Detachment 323, 1st Bn, 3rd SF Group, Fort Bragg)

The CO has a responsibility first and foremost to get his men and equipment returned to home station. Assuming he has not had time yet, he should capture any details regarding performance of his subordinates for either OER or award input while it is still fresh in his memory (1-2 days max). His second and immediate duty is to his family. As a CO, one should lead by example and that means when his company goes on block leave, he goes on block leave. I know from personal experience upon returning from OEF that my family appreciated the undivided attention. I also know that I was able to return to work with a much sharper focus.

### **You're Only As Good As Your Next Op**

**by Pat Work**

(B/1-23 IN (SBCT) and C/2/75 Ranger, Fort Lewis)

Given the world situation, we need to keep improving how fast we transition from retrograde, to refit, to training again. This begins while still deployed: Conduct “in-stride” AARs that capture your lessons learned and focus your future training. Work with battalion—and your peer commanders—to develop your recovery as well as your future training plan so that you can start resource requests (e.g., ammunition, air, land, etc.) prior to retrograde to CONUS. Unit, installation, and MACOM training management suspenses do not wait for a “tired” commander.

**JAY MISELI commanded HHC/2-69 AR in OIF 1. He is the topic lead of the HQ Commander Rally Point, a forum on CC for HQ commanders to gather and share ideas. If you have experience redeploying a company-level unit from combat, please add to this ongoing conversation by sharing your experience. E-mail Jay at [jason.miseli@us.army.mil](mailto:jason.miseli@us.army.mil).**