



# CompanyCommand

*Building Combat-Ready Teams*



**To:** Company Commanders

**From:** Company Commanders

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## **Training Iraqi Forces**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photographs provided by CompanyCommand

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

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

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

#### **Hartwig:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

##### **Stroh:**

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

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



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

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

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

**Hartwig:**

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

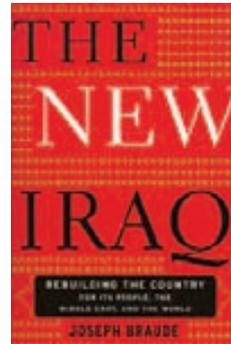
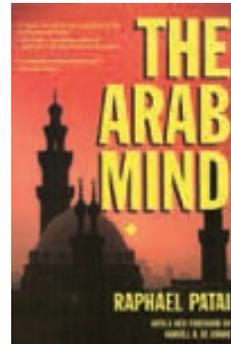
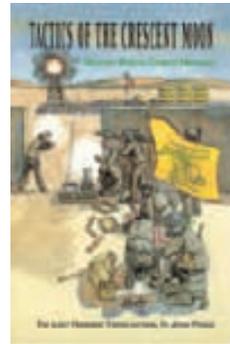
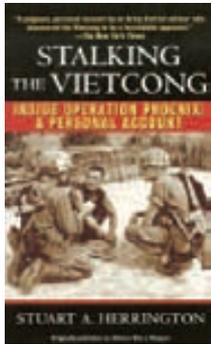
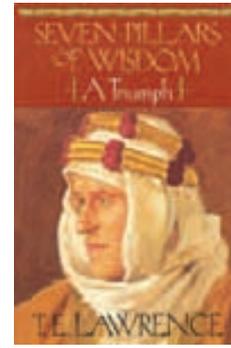
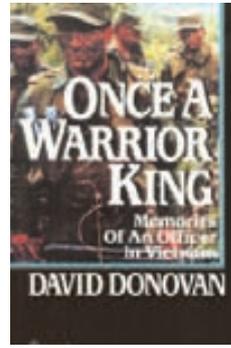
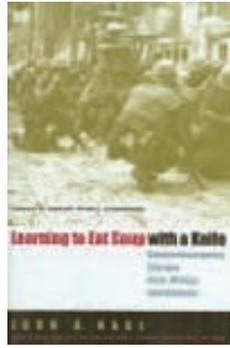
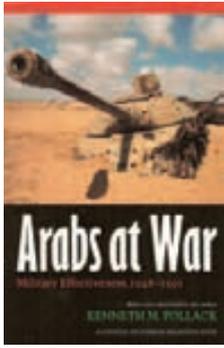
**Stroh:** Learn Basic Arabic. The role of an Advisor requires a robust language capability. All MiTTs Soldiers should begin a self-learning process of Arabic or else rely on an Interpreter for everything. You must be able to communicate in gestures, but also know how to say the basics of the mission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

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

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



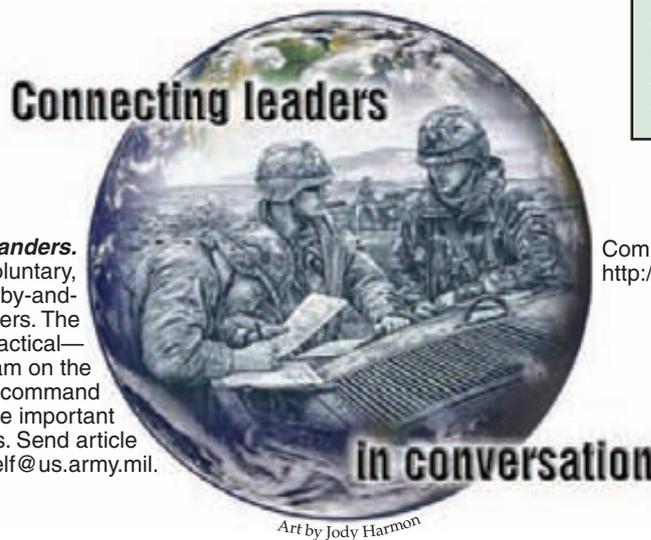
*Capt. Stroh conducts a patrol with a team of Iraqi soldiers.*



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

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

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



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

**CC is Company Commanders.**

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

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