



# 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.*



*Capt. Morgan reenlists a soldier in Iraq.*

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 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.

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,

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



*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.

#### **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.

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



**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](mailto:peter.kilner@us.army.mil).



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