



# CompanyCommand

## Building Combat-Ready Teams



**To:** Company Commanders

**From:** Company Commanders

### **CSI: BAGHDAD?**

As civil authorities in Iraq and Afghanistan become more capable, the importance of “burden of proof” weighs more heavily on our shoulders. Each mission becomes an opportunity to gather evidence that puts an insurgent behind bars or justifies the decision to kill him. Seizing that opportunity may require actions more akin to an episode of “CSI” than to traditional actions

on the objective. Commanders in the Company-Command forum recently addressed this topic from several perspectives: What are the resources available to make this work? How are leaders successfully conducting these operations? And perhaps most importantly, is this something Army leaders even should be doing?

#### **Available Resources**

**Ty Dawson**

##### **703rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Company**

Let me first differentiate two related terms that are commonly misused: tactical site exploitation (TSE) versus sensitive site exploitation (SSE). For all intents and purposes, our forces use these terms interchangeably, but they do have separate meanings and implications. TSE is a hasty exploitation of a site bringing to bear a small force of Soldiers spe-

cially trained by EOD or weapons intelligence teams (WIT) to rapidly gather available evidence in a tactical situation. This would apply to your IED post blasts, your targeted searches, cache recovery and targeted strikes on vetted targets listed on priority-effects lists. SSE is a more involved and higher level of exploitation which will involve “sensitive” subject matter and will require the use of more highly trained operators from other government agencies. It is a much more lengthy process and requires a scene to be meticulously disassembled in order to glean every possible shred of evidence.

The U.S. Armed Forces have a number of agencies that already possess the institutional knowledge and expertise required to train the force in the area of evidence recovery. The problem we face, by and large, is the lack of emphasis on this subject during train-ups for deployment. We do live-fire exercises. How many live-fire exercises are followed up by evidence collection and biometrics collection, to include DNA swabs, input into biometrics systems, fingerprint cards and major case prints from dead bad guys? The main point I’m trying to get at is that BIG ARMY has elements with institutional knowl-



*Each mission is an opportunity to gather evidence; good investigation of a crime scene includes systematic photographing and cataloging of every item found.*

*Patient and meticulous interrogation can produce valuable intelligence to build a better picture of the enemy network.*



edge on attacking the problem of forensic collection. Look to your EOD, military police (MP) and criminal investigation division (CID) for assistance. All of us bring separate points of view to a common problem.

#### **Matt Mularoni**

##### **545th Military Police Company**

I maintain three primary beliefs on the subject.

First, and most importantly, we need to make the decision whether the exploitation is for intelligence/targeting or for criminal prosecution. The reason is that the standards and required chain of custody (along with other legal considerations) are much stricter for criminal prosecution than for the targeting process. In addition, we ensure that whatever we collect/process for criminal prosecution in the civilian courts meets the standards of and will be accepted as evidence by host-nation legal systems.

We need to break down the barriers between intelligence and law enforcement sharing of information. Recently, forensics exploitation battalions have been deployed to Iraq. Full success will require integration and synchronization across all facets of the maneuver, intelligence and military police elements. There is tremendous capability that exists. There needs to be further studies to fully implement the amazing “garrison”/home-station capability in the combat environment, supporting the ground commander and ultimately the Soldier on the ground. It is a function not only of fighting in an asymmetrical battlefield, but also of bringing our “full kit bag” to the fight. I would guess that there is actually very little that we do in the Army that supports only the garrison mission; every possible tool, system and function needs to be added to the fight.

As for the individual Soldier, we do not need a new position

added to the squad specifically to be a CSI tech. The asymmetric warfare group (AWG) and Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) have a GTA card for rudimentary procedures in this area. I recommend that the Soldiers be identified beforehand in the mission order just as we have identified aid-and-litter and enemy prisoner-of-war teams. It should be added as a basic warrior task taught to all Soldiers.

#### **Brendan Sullivan**

##### **E Battery, 5-52 Air Defense Artillery**

When I was at the National Training Center (NTC), the observer/controllers (O/Cs) on the Bronco Team developed a training program between NTC and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). The LAPD trained observer/controllers on how to evaluate a crime scene; the Gang Special Division discussed social issues, gang warfare and similarities and contrasts with insurgent groups; the forensic specialist discussed simple forensic testing that could be done in a combat environment. The LAPD also demonstrated software programs used in correlating crimes and predicting future crimes and trends. The main point the LAPD stressed to us was pictures, pictures, pictures, especially from different angles; this enables you to reconstruct a crime scene later, if need be. The biggest difference between police forces and military forces is time on scene. Police can use days to process a crime scene. Military forces, however, don't have that luxury. From the O/C perspective, the biggest challenge I saw was when the evidence was not correlated with the suspect—no forensics, no pictures, no statements, nothing. It is hard to get a conviction under those circumstances. In return, the O/Cs trained the LAPD on the Army combatives program, so this was a win-win situation. This also formed a good basis for



and start of the Joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational relationships program at the NTC.

### **Brittany Meeks**

#### **178th Military Police Detachment, 89th MP Brigade**

With proper coordination, I would hope that the local CID and MP units would be able to provide some CID or V-5 personnel to do some training with your leaders on what to look for, what to think about and how to do things properly, like handle evidence so as not to compromise it. Depending upon the size of your post and how robust your DES is (and who the MPs working at the DES are), you may be able to get some training from some of those personnel as well.

Thinking outside the military box, be aware that local and state police departments often have classes at the basic and advanced levels for crime scene processing. While it isn't exactly the same as doing it on the battlefield, the concepts and methodology can transfer over. I am researching and preparing to submit some training requests for my MPs who work military police investigations here at Fort Hood to attend some short Texas Department of Public Safety courses to supplement their knowledge.

### **Mark Leslie**

#### **HHC, 2-7 Cavalry**

My adviser team got very good at this as time went on, and it all related back to some training we had done with the local police department prior to deployment. If we are going to put our Soldiers at risk in an engagement, then it is worth the time and effort to ensure that the individuals detained remain detained. I have seen the results of good site exploitation and have testified at trials for guys we detained—the pictures, evidence and good supporting statements are worth the effort. But we won't get good at this unless we train for it like everything else. This training can be done anywhere and is low cost and effort. Describing a situation from your memory banks and having several guys write statements on it is one way. Creating pseudo CSI kits and training with them is a necessity and must be incorporated into your home-station training. Make it a battle drill—end all squad-and-above training with some form of site exploitation event. We are not out to be crime scene experts, but we must be good enough to ensure that our efforts are not wasted when we detain an individual.

We were fortunate that we had developed a rapport with the local police through some shared training with snipers and urban ops. Once we started looking at the environment in Iraq and understood that TSE/SSE was part of the battle rhythm, we asked for help on this as well. Our

usual POCs were willing to help. They showed us the basics of collecting evidence—securing a scene, taking photos, labeling every ziplock bag correctly and connecting it to an individual—and went through sworn statements with us. Then a detective sat down and talked to all my lieutenants about questioning and everything else his fellow officers had discussed, but with more detail and from a detective's perspective. We then went back and worked this into our battle drills. All these skills were difficult to do with the exception of the sworn statement piece. We worked with the S-2 until we were masters of writing sworn statements even prior to deploying, and we got better as we went along. At the request of the S-2 and CSM, my NCOs actually ended up giving a class to other Soldiers on writing sworn statements.

### **Leaders in Action**

#### **Jason Holder**

##### **B Company, 2-505th Parachute Infantry**

Site exploitation was not something we trained for prior to deployment, but it was a skill we quickly picked up in Kuwait and during our LS/RS rides with the outgoing unit. We treated site exploitation like any other battle drill—as if it were merely an extension of Battle Drill 6. During the patrol brief and/or raid OPORD, squads were tagged as search teams, recorders, photographers, security, tactical questioning, etc. Each team had a specific task and purpose during site exploitation.

On top of the physical act of searching a room or house is the oh-so-fun phase of filling out all the paperwork, documenting the pictures, labeling the detainees and linking them to any contraband found on the site. This is sometimes more time consuming than the actual raid itself. Troopers must be patient, diligent and meticulous. It could mean the difference between a definite bad guy being sent to jail or set free.



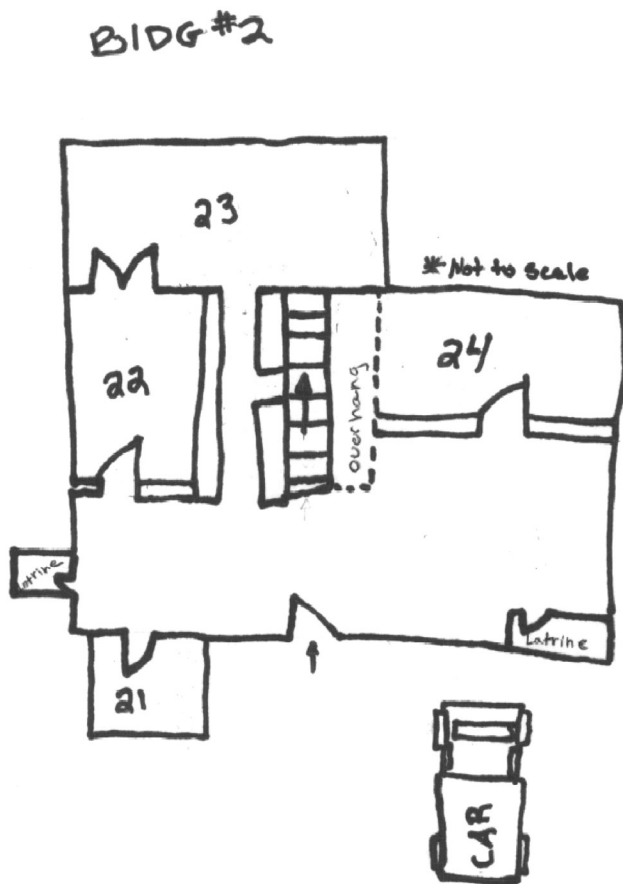
***This enemy fighting position contained evidence used to convict several insurgents.***

The good news is that—as with anything else troopers do—training, rehearsals and repetition allow us to get on and off site faster and faster. The AWG helped us refine our SOPs and were extremely helpful. Site exploitation is something troopers can rehearse and train anywhere—motorpool, LSAs, etc. Talk of getting local police involved or creating new MOSs is great in theory, but the reality is that infantrymen, tankers and artillerymen are executing this mission right now with great success.

### David Gohlich

#### I Company & HHC, 3-2 Stryker Cavalry

The first thing we did was to standardize a detainee/evidence kit for each squad. This was one of the things I inspected as a commander during PCIs. Each squad carried one in their Stryker. The bag they used did not matter, but what they put in it was standardized. It varies depending on where/when you are in Iraq, but some of the things we included were: flex cuffs, blindfolds, large and small ziplock bags, markers, notebook (for house/room layout sketches), ink pad (for finger prints), evidence tags, Iraqi and American sworn statement forms, two digital cameras. You can get some of this from the unit you are relieving, and the rest evolves over time. The “wouldn’t-it-be-great-if-we-had-one-of-these” becomes standard for all kits the next day.



*Soldiers should sketch and photograph each site and gather and bag each piece of evidence in order to build a case that will hold up in court.*

We also chose one NCO per platoon to be the evidence guy, with another NCO as an assistant. He was the one in charge at the scene to make sure the sketch gets done, to decide what evidence is kept and what is left, and to organize all the statements. This NCO was the same one who was responsible for turning over the detainees or evidence to the Coalition prison facility or the Iraqi justice system. This allowed the NCO to talk directly with the CF or Iraqi in charge of taking the detainee/evidence and work out any issues directly. The Iraqi system is constantly evolving, and we learned a lot by trial and error. The important thing is to sit down every few days, share lessons learned, and update TTPs and detainee kits.

Our JAG lawyer also ran a great class for our interpreters on how to fill out an Iraqi sworn statement. It took a few classes to get all of them to catch on, but it was a great asset. The PL or PSG could focus on the big picture and not have to walk the interpreter through the statement, and then the interpreter could explain directly to the local national how the form is filled out. It saved a lot of time.

Finally, double-check everything. Use two different cameras to get all photos. Have the PL or PSG check all the photos, evidence, sketches and statements. Two months later when your detainee is on trial, it will be too late to go back and fix anything you left out. If one camera dies and cannot download photos, you have a backup. It must be done right the first time. A good set of photos with the detainee clearly visible next to IEDs/weapons (and no Americans in the photo) goes a long way in Iraqi courts.

While you get the usual grumblings in the beginning—“I’m Infantry, not CID/MP”—once the guys saw that collecting evidence the right way made sure these guys get put away, they really took to it. The bad guys are not dumb. They know when you are collecting evidence the right way, and it gives the interrogator more leverage to use. When you have enough evidence to put the guy away for 10 years, the detainee tends to be more inclined to talk, as opposed to if he thinks he faces merely a six-months-and-out visit to prison.

### Melinda Morin

#### 34th RAOC, New Hampshire National Guard

Keep the scene clean. I worked an issue last year when a unit’s linguist was identified as a potential threat due to his presence at a site where forensics info of interest was collected. Units need to ensure their linguists are not contaminating the scene by handling evidence without proper protective equipment. Indigenous assigned personnel, specifically linguists, should *always* wear rubber gloves when entering a site and assisting U.S. forces. Otherwise, site exploitation picks up their fingerprints, creating an erroneous hit in the system. Biometrics works pretty well, and its effectiveness creates an unnecessary hassle for the installation access control, the unit and the individual erroneously identified as a current threat. We briefed the new unit, which took over (the assigned linguists), and they established good forensics practices with regard to their linguists. I never saw the same





*Each crime scene—indoor and out—should be carefully and thoroughly searched to maximize exploitation of the site.*

issue again with that unit. Policing the site of *any* event where LNs are working with U.S. forces is necessary to avoid erroneous identification issues.

#### **David Smyth**

Rapid SSE is not difficult, but it does require a good SOP. As soon as you secure the objective, you've got to begin the SSE process. You must film/photograph each room in exactly the same manner, every single time (left to right in a clockwise manner) and gather as much unadulterated evidence as quickly as you can. This means everyone has to wear gloves, carry plastic bags and have a naming convention that clearly identifies where the evidence was found (for example, Compound 3, Building 1, Room L3). You don't have to carry a lot of specialized equipment, but you do need to practice. In addition, military intelligence facilitators can help by bringing biometric collection devices (digital retinal and fingerprint scanners) that can save you a lot of time and have far less tendency to be corrupted. If you don't have an airtight case, chances are the guy is going to go free. Other assets to take advantage of are FBI and DEA agents who may be operating in your

battlespace. The DEA can assist you in preparing a good drug case against an insurgent. The FBI is second to none when it comes to forensic investigation.

#### **Should We Even Be Doing This?**

##### **Michael Stock**

**C and HHT, 4-7 Cavalry**

As a maneuver commander and former maneuver platoon leader, I want to get this straight. Our Soldiers aren't evidence collectors, prosecutors or detectives—they are cavalymen and infantrymen. We are trained to seek and kill the enemy. With a force now strapped in regard to manning and training, we do not have the resources, manpower or time to dedicate to this kind of training beyond the basics. Let other government agency teams do this, and leave the ground pounders to do what they do. Our Soldiers need to understand the objective is where "actions on contact" happen in both low- and high-intensity conflicts. To even propose loaning out Soldiers to "observe" the Iraqi police force is absolutely ridiculous! I need these men on the ground, within the populace, patrolling and killing bad guys.





*A scarred mosaic of Saddam Hussein rises behind Cpt. Paul Mills, HHC/2-124 IN, at the former Baath Party headquarters in Kirkuk, Iraq.*

### **John Stroh**

**C Troop, 1-75 Cavalry**

As a company commander and transition team (MiTT) chief in Iraq, my U.S. Soldiers (all infantrymen) personally conducted SSE on only those sites that the U.S. Army actually had an interest in prosecuting. Those sites contained evidence that would put an insurgent/terrorist in jail who had planned against, attacked or killed U.S. Soldiers. We had reason to be meticulous in our collection of evidence and documentation because we wanted these folks in jail.

In my opinion, the only other reason for maneuver Soldiers (non-CID types) to meticulously conduct SSE is for intelligence purposes—not for the courtroom. The best part is that our Army has been doing this for decades. The S-2s in higher echelons simply need the information/items to build a better picture of the enemy network, objectives and plans in order to build better target packets and hone in on our enemies. In my opinion, getting the evidence up to higher levels is no different from submitting a patrol debrief. It should be collected thoroughly, carefully and as soon as possible, but not necessarily to a courtroom evidentiary standard.

On MiTT missions, our objectives were Iraqi army targets, and we always made the Iraqis do the SSE. First, they do all their paperwork in Arabic, which is the language the courts use in Iraq. Second, it's *their* rule of law, prosecution system and penal system, so *they* need to enforce/support it. Finally,

this technique meant that Iraqi soldiers, *not* my Soldiers, would be called to court as witnesses. Of course, we had to train Iraqi soldiers to do these tasks, but after just a few missions they were quite proficient—at least to their standards.

We need to give our Soldiers credit for their ability to conduct what truly is not a complicated or difficult task. No offense to CID or any other investigative service, but collecting evidence (including fingerprints and blood samples for DNA) was a common task for 11Bs in my company—and we had plenty of successful prosecutions despite our novice and rudimentary efforts. The most important part is keeping our leaders focused on *why* we do it. I always sought to do SSE only when it counted: for certain prosecution of really bad guys or for intelligence purposes.

### **Paul Mills**

**HHC/2-124 IN, FLARNG**

The reality on the nontraditional battlefield is the ability to manage a crime scene. Insurgency activities have evolved from unsophisticated bands with local objectives to well-organized, interrelated philosophies using legitimate and illegal resources for funding. The fight is not limited to the battlefield—it continues at Internet cafes, places of worship and banks. Commanders at all levels and specialties have to buy into the importance of TSE/SSE and, subsequently, teach basic fundamentals of crime scenes.

*Concluding this discussion, one commander pointed out that the manual for sensitive-site operations is FM 3-90.15, available on Army Knowledge Online. The manual addresses everything from past operations and lessons learned in Vietnam, Kosovo and Bosnia to current operations with Army assets in today's operating environment. Are you a commander with experience in this field? Come to [cc.army.mil](mailto:cc.army.mil) and join the conversation!*

**Connecting in conversation...  
...becoming more effective.**



*Art by Jody Harmon*

***Have you joined your forum?***