



# CompanyCommand

*Building Combat-Ready Teams*



**To:** Company Commanders

**From:** Company Commanders

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## Third-Generation Leadership

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*“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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:tony.burgess@us.army.mil).

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