



# CompanyCommand



*Building Combat-Ready Teams*

**To:** Company Commanders

**From:** Company Commanders

CC is company commanders. We are in an ongoing professional conversation about leading Soldiers and building combat-ready teams. Company Commanders connect at: <http://CompanyCommand.army.mil>

## Relinquishing Command

The last thing you probably want to think about is passing the guidon—in fact, it may feel like you just took command! But, inevitably, that time will come. For CompanyCommand's own Rich Scott and hundreds of other commanders, the time to make the transition of the unit to a new commander arrived this summer. In fact, as we complete this article, Rich is passing the B/6-32nd FA (MLRS) guidon to Romel Pajimula at Ft. Sill, Okla.

### The Question

*What was the most important thing you did in your last 90 days of command to set up the incoming commander and the unit for success?*



CPT Rich Scott

Photographs provided by CompanyCommand

*We begin with insights from CPT Rich Scott and his key leaders...*

#### Rich Scott

**Outgoing Commander, B/6-32nd FA (MLRS)**

Probably the most important thing for me as I prepare to change command is the welfare of the men. I take their safety personally. I think about their families and their subordinate Soldiers, and focus on preparing them for the demands of war, while still living a balanced and healthy lifestyle. As far as what I've done to set up my successor and the unit for success, I've made some observations:

- Let your troops know in advance what's going to happen and when it's going to happen. Hand-receipt holders should have their hand receipts updated and everyone should show up on Day 1 ready to make a good first impression.
- Ensure all documents are updated and give the incoming commander a thorough brief of the Soldiers and families that require extra or special attention.
- Give him a good right seat ride so that he is familiar with places and faces during inventories. Also, this is a good time to brief him using the inventory calendar and the battalion/battery training calendar.
- Give him a straight-shooter's assessment of the men and equipment. Highlight positives, use discretion when

addressing negatives. This will make sure he comes in with a positive attitude, and he won't be clouded with your personal feelings about someone or something.

- Early in the inventories, pass along to the incoming commander a digital copy of all of your policy letters so that he can update them and get an idea about the standards you've established.

- Have the battery training room generate all of the memorandums, weapons cards, and signature cards he will have to sign so he can have everything already signed as he tries to figure this whole command thing out.

- Surprise the battery with a 100% urinalysis or a battery alert. This will ensure they don't get soft and lose focus.

- Plan on getting the incoming commander to the qualification ranges at some point during inventories to allow him to evaluate the battery in a tactical environment, as well as ensure that he is qualified upon taking command.

- I used a heavy-day, light-day rotation for inventories. Some days the paperwork/supply legwork requires more time than other days. This allowed the supply officer to keep paperwork regularly prepared and updated.

- Plan a family readiness group (FRG) meeting sometime during inventories so that the family members can meet the incoming commander and be properly introduced. And, just as with any planning, ensure it's at a time and place that's best for maximum participation. As a courtesy, try to leave him at least \$100 in the FRG account.

- Let the incoming commander escort you to your mandatory meetings about a week out from the change of command. This way, it won't be so foreign to him afterwards.

- Burn a disc for your lieutenants, and anyone else who asks, of your successful battery programs. It's a courtesy that will definitely help them as they prepare for command. Pass it along to the incoming commander in case he wants to reference any of your old stuff.

### **Jim Metz**

**Executive Officer, B/6-32nd FA (MLRS)**

CPT Scott used the change of command inventory as a learning experience for everyone. Some commanders try to do it themselves, but CPT Scott used it to develop some junior leaders. This way, problems still get resolved and there are more people in the loop to catch the problems.

CPT Scott was more than accommodating to the incoming commander. He would sit down with him, brief him, and talk through supply issues. He went out of his way to give him access to his computer and invited him to do PT with the unit.

### **Mike Carroll**

**Platoon Leader, B/6-32nd FA (MLRS)**

I found out that it's important to ensure that you do thorough cyclic inventories and pre-change of command inventories to a high standard—it makes the actual change of command inventories much easier.

CPT Scott pushed responsibility down to the NCOs who are actually responsible for all the property. He gave them

the time and resources necessary to set them up for success, and they were successful.

It's important for the outgoing commander to help the unit to understand that when the guidon is passed, there should be a transfer of loyalty. Before the incoming commander got here, CPT Scott was saying great things about him and his reputation. Now it's up to those left behind in the battery to carry that on.

### **Rafael Tirado**

**First Sergeant, B/6-32nd FA (MLRS)**

Over the years, I've seen outgoing commanders get defensive and protective when they're getting ready to relinquish command. My advice is to not get so attached to the unit during those last days, because in the long run, it will hurt the battery and the Soldiers.

The outgoing commander's objective should be that by the change of command, all the Soldiers have passed their APFTs, are qualified on their weapons, mandatory training is complete, all counseling, evaluations, awards, administrative and legal actions are complete, reenlistment is up to date, etc. There should be nothing due or overdue at the change of command.

*Other thoughts from former commanders...*

### **David Polizzotti**

**B Co & HHC/1-66th AR, 4th ID (M)**

The single most important thing I think I did was prepare a "continuity book" that contained all the information that the new commander will be required to be familiar with almost immediately. In my transition book I had:

- All updated alert rosters
- Copies of all the current battle rosters (with all Soldier data)
  - Company APFT data by platoon
  - Legal actions brief
  - Reenlistment data
  - The last quarter's QTB to provide him with a start point so he can get familiar with the training that we've done in the last 3 months as well as where they are headed in the current quarter
    - Copy of the battalion and company training calendars and the training schedules six weeks out
    - The company training SOP so he will understand the process currently in place
    - All FRG data, SOPs, rosters, etc.
    - Current copy of the MTOE, so he could learn the ins and outs of the organization.

### **Nate Allen**

**A/2-5th IN, 25th ID (L)**

The most important thing I believe we did—with a specific focus on the incoming commander and what was best for the company—was incorporating the incoming commander into our training meetings starting at T-7 weeks prior to the change of command. In this way he was able to

get a sense of the training he was going to be executing, and we were able to get specific things he desired to do as a part of his transition into command on the training calendar, including meetings with the Soldiers and NCOs. This allowed for a smoother transition between commanders. He had a deeper understanding of the way the company was operating, along with the "why" behind some of the leadership team's decisions.

### **Mike Dinesman**

#### **A Co, US Army Combined Arms Support Battalion**

My last 90 days, I really tried to focus on reducing the amount of property I had that was not being used. I focused on cleaning up the hand receipts and getting rid of equipment that was not being utilized. I was able to turn in \$390,000 worth of equipment other people could be using. I think it is worth looking at things that are not used as a liability and trying to get rid of them.

### **Charles Prevatte**

#### **HHD, 200th Regiment & A/2-37th AR, 1st AD**

The most important thing I did for the incoming commander was stay in command. I put my XO and my supply sergeant on the course for inventory success and I worried about keeping the company trained and ready to deploy. This set the new commander up for success as he took command and went straight into services and then a week in the field. He was ready to go.

### **Ken Hutchison**

#### **D/2-502nd IN, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT)**

The most important thing to have straight for the incoming commander is property. Before he even starts his inventories, conduct good pre-change of command inventories, update shortage annexes with missing items on order, and have reports of survey all complete or initiated.

The incoming commander should be able to see all the

property laid out the way he wants it, inventory it, sign new sub-hand receipts to the operators/users, and have everything sub-hand receipted before he signs the master hand receipt at the property book office.

### **Ray Kimball**

#### **F TRP/3-7th CAV, 3rd ID (M)**

The most important thing I did was set up the transition to take advantage of the incoming commander's strengths and shore up his weaknesses. I tried to take a step back and get a sense of where his comfort level was. If I felt like he was out of his comfort zone on something, I made sure we took the time later (not in front of troops) to go over it. Ultimately, I needed to feel like I had done everything I could to set him up for success from Day 1.

### **Christopher Altavilla**

#### **B/1-14th IN, 25th ID (L)**

Being in a deployed environment, continuing to lead to ensure the unit continued to accomplish the mission was most important to me. Aside from squaring away an inventory plan, I had to focus my energy on accomplishing the mission until we completed our last operation prior to starting the inventory. It was important to put a lot of effort and detail into the plan, however, not as important as continuing to accomplish the current mission at hand.

*If you are a current company-level commander or a commissioned officer preparing to give up the guidon, we invite you to join your professional forum at <http://company-command.army.mil>. Check out more of Rich Scott's thoughts on relinquishing command, as well as Brett Patron's article on the "Last 90 Days" page. We invite you to participate in ongoing discussions and see what tools are most popular as officers across the Army prepare to relinquish command. Send your comments, questions, or suggestions to [cocmd.team@us.army.mil](mailto:cocmd.team@us.army.mil).*



*Rob Thornton giving up command of HHC/1-24th IN.*