



Editor's Note:

Mission 2000 - Making an Issue of Doctrine

Armor soldiers and cavalrymen are by profession men of action, chosen to carry out the close combat mission of engaging and destroying the enemy. For many of these men, the very mention of the word “doctrine” triggers the sleep reflex faster than a movie on the Lifetime Network.

But doctrine is critical to how we fight. It is our way of thinking about fighting, an agreed framework that also defines how we train.

Sometimes, our doctrine does not suit the fight we later encounter. When this happens, the classroom of combat quickly redefines the doctrine on the basis of on-the-job training and learning. One example is the way the U.S. Army adopted its weak and incomplete doctrine on urban fighting during the course of World War II, a transition described in **Captain Ken Casey’s** article in this issue, “**Urban Combat in World War II.**” He describes how the city fight evolved from an infantry-dominated struggle to an effective combined arms partnership keying on cooperation between infantry, armor, and combat engineers.

Brigadier General (Ret.) John Kirk, in “**Move It On Over,**” approaches the importance of doctrine from another direction. The repeated losses of BLUEFOR units to the OPFOR at the NTC, he argues, is not the “good training” some would make of it, but indications of doctrinal failure. He says we don’t understand our doctrine, leaders don’t mentor it, and as a result, soldiers can’t follow it. General Kirk’s article is a call for everyone to get involved in the review of the upcoming FM 100-5, *Operations*, our keystone doctrinal manual for the next seven years. General Kirk’s opinions are validated by a lifetime of service, culminating in assignment as Director of Training, ODCSOPS, at the Pentagon, and including two victorious rotations at the NTC with one of the Army’s then-lowest priority units. A reply from **Colonel Robin Swan**, Director of SAMS, follows.

Ralph Zumbro, whose “**Lighten Up, Guys**” appears in this issue, is another author who has been there and done that. He was a tank sergeant in Vietnam, terrain never doctrinally considered to be “tank country” until tanks began to operate there successfully. Zumbro, who has written three books on armor operations since his retirement, urges soldiers to look upon peacekeeping and stabilization deployments as “training wars” in which units can practice many of the mission-essential tasks they would accomplish in an actual conflict. But we need to be able to get there, he says, and that means developing the doctrine and hardware to deploy lighter armored units to the world’s trouble spots.