

LETTERS

The May-June 2000 issue marked a new milestone for *ARMOR* with the first electronic submission of the magazine to our contract printer. Of course, as some of you may have noticed, it was not a totally smooth transition. Because of a font compatibility issue between our equipment and the printer's, we had a problem with some of our quotation marks and long dashes. We apologize for any inconvenience to our authors and readers. — Ed.

IBCT "Armored Car" Acquisition Squanders Millions in Research Money

Dear Sir:

As I read the "Commander's Hatch" of the March-April 2000 issue, I am disturbed by the "...Chief of Staff of the Army's decision to field an initial Brigade Combat Team at Fort Lewis." There is an obvious flaw in the pursuit of an interim fighting vehicle for the initial brigade combat team.

Of course, future technology will permit us to develop a combat platform with greater firepower and protection while being lighter, more reliable, faster, etc., than the M1A2 SEP Abrams. Any historic reading of science and technology suggests nothing else. Working with Army Materiel Command and using the Mounted Maneuver Battle Lab along with virtual prototypes and fighting them on virtual terrain is exactly the way the development process is supposed to work. We'd be foolish to do otherwise. Even hosting a performance demonstration at Fort Knox to survey the capabilities of "off-the-shelf" platforms made some sense. I contend that it could have been achieved by simply reviewing commercially published reference books, but if the "boss" needs to touch and feel before deciding, fine.

However, I cannot comprehend the statement, "We are going to learn a great deal from this fielding and apply those lessons toward the development of the future combat platform that will have the characteristics already mentioned."

What lessons? We are already ignoring nearly a century's worth of armored and mechanized combat experience when we opt for light armored cars in lieu of main battle tanks. We can develop and practice any new tactics with existing tanks, armored fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, and tactical wheeled vehicles. By buying these interim armored cars now, we are simply squandering millions in procurement money that should be spent for the future technology once it becomes available.

Let us not fool ourselves. The rationale behind this "charge to lightness" is a perceived lack of competence in deploying and logistically supporting and sustaining heavy forces. If we send tankers and troopers into combat in thin-skinned, under-armored, under-gunned, and road-bound wheeled vehicles, it is because leadership is focused on

tactics instead of logistics, and shame on us. But before we face the grieving parents, I'd hope that we could at least articulate a compelling reason to justify the expenditure. Somehow, the urgency of "doing it on my watch" falls rather short.

CHESTER A. KOJRO
LTC, AR, USAR (Ret.)

Main Battle Tank Rankings: More Perspective Was Needed

Dear Sir:

Although being pleased to read and very agreeable with Herr Klenke's letter (Jan-Feb 2000 issue) concerning the "ranking" of the world's MBTs, I would comment on three specific aspects: the ranking concept itself, a country's MBT selection, and the application or use of such a report.

Main battle tanks must be designed to, and be measured by, a fixed set of standard performance characteristics — frequently referred to as the "...ilities." These range from survivability, lethality, mobility, maintainability, durability, transportability, etc., etc. Each of these performance characteristics, in turn, is affected by vehicle weight, fuel load, ammo types, sights, etc. These are normally weighted by the designer as to priority or importance. While some of these characteristics were broadly mentioned, it seemed to be, as was pointed out in his questioning of the low Merkava rating, more subjectively than objectively. Therefore, since power-to-weight ratio only affects mainly one minor determinant of mobility (acceleration), of only one measurable "...ility," does this really move an MBT "ranking" from say a 5 to a 10?

Herr Klenke briefly mentions the purchase of one MBT over another by a non-MBT designing/producing country. While he suggests that such decisions are additionally determined by business arrangements such as offsets, there is the allusion that the Leo 2 was compared to and outperformed the "M1A1/M1A2" in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Sweden. In actuality, the first two countries made their Leo 2 purchases in March 1979 and August 1983, respectively — well before the 120mm M1A1 was available.

Lastly, as a member of the Armor Association since 1972, and having previously seen the full text of the original tank "ranking" thesis, I was initially somewhat disappointed to see it published in an abbreviated context, and without greater editorial comment. But the purpose of *ARMOR* Magazine is "...to surface controversy and debate among professionals in the force," and the scope of your readership is proof of success. And the professionals know that events like Desert Storm prove our tanks' success.

J. C. HARP
Utica, Mich.

Close Look Shows Merkava's Pluses and Minuses

Dear Sir:

"What's the best tank in the world?" My Yankee impulses prompt me to vote unhesitatingly for the M1A2 Systems Enhanced Package, the most advanced main battle tank of the U.S. fleet. I am not at all surprised at the level of response, however, to the relative rankings of tanks compared in the July-August 1999 issue of *ARMOR*. Beauty contests like this always seem to rankle someone. If you do not believe me take a look at the discussion, also in this forum, over what are the best all-time tanker movies or the fuss created when VH-1 selected the top 100 rock and roll songs of all time.

I am particularly not surprised at the wave of defenders who rose up to argue that the Israeli Merkava III was wholly undeserving of its bottom ranking. I agree. Having said that, I am not sure where it should be ranked, but certainly not dead last. I was sufficiently impressed with it during my two-year tour as the TRADOC Liaison to the Israeli Defense Forces to tell folks that, if pressed, I would rate it just after the Abrams and the German Leopard II. To caveat that judgment, I should say that it is based on what I know, and there is a lot I do not, especially with regard to classified data such as armor composition etc. In fairness, I should also note that my tour of duty was 1995-1997. In terms of technical innovations, that could be considered an eon ago. At that time, the Merkava IV, with its more powerful engine, was a prototype. There is one thing I will say with confidence and that is this: the Merkava is the best tank in the world available to the Israelis. It was designed based on the IDF's combat experiences and for the conditions of its most probable conventional battlefield, the Golan Heights.

I will not recount the arguments of either the Merkava's champions or detractors. I will, however, offer a few first-hand observations. Some affirm while others counter the accolades afforded the Merkava III by LTC Eshel, IDF Retired, in the last issue of *ARMOR*. I owe much to LTC Eshel; his works were a great source of information prior to my LNO assignment. I can't say, however, that I have ever read a critical word in any of them and I note that his publications are almost invariably reviewed by the IDF Spokesman's Office. He is an Israeli patriot. That is not a bad thing, just worth noting. Many of us, in our Army, have been brought up on admiring accounts of the IDF — they literally could do no wrong. My tour with the IDF sobered me of this notion. I realized that they were every bit as challenged by resources, bureaucracy, and the tendency to be captive to one's own experience, however real that experience may be, as any other nation and army.

I had the good fortune to observe, ride, and fire several IDF tank variants in various field

conditions. I was able to tour the Merkava's production facilities hosted by MG (Ret.) Israel Tal, a man who stands among the giants in armored warfare history and who is the driving force behind the design and production of the tank. Finally, I was present at exercises in which USMC M1A1 tankers trained alongside a Merkava III tank platoon.

First, I would like to randomly note some of the more "nifty" attributes of the Merkava and IDF tank design that I have not seen printed here as yet. The Merkava III was designed with survivability as priority #1. No surprise then, it is a supremely survivable tank. Its modular armor is easily replaced and selectively upgraded. The laser early warning devices that LTC Eshel described are, in fact, terrific survivability enhancers. The Merkava III has a simple, but highly effective suspension system. It provides a smooth firing platform. Additionally, it is cleverly designed so that its components provide additional survivability, especially against chemical (energy) rounds. A combined arms concept is integral to the tank's design. The tank has space for six dismounts in the rear of the hull. It has an integrated 60mm mortar; a design common to most IDF tank variants. It has a reduced thermal signature, at least in comparison to the Abrams. This is due, in part, to the manner in which exhaust is channeled from the front-mounted engine. The gunner and TC may fire the coaxial machine gun simultaneously with or separate from the main gun. The computer solution is for the main gun, however, which may make for some erratic machine gun fire when fired simultaneously. IDF tank variants have separate daylight and thermal sights. The thermal image is very high quality although I believe Israelis train less with it than we do and discourage its use except when limited visibility requires it. There is a "TV" sight that allows an impressively broad and clear view outside the tank from within the turret. In the event of intercom loss, the TC can pass instructions to the driver using simple indicator lights to include speed up/down, turn right/left, and reverse. The automatic target tracker works as advertised, I watched a Merkava destroy a drone helicopter in flight at a simulated range of 3,000 meters. MG Tal reported that it had achieved 80-90% first round hits against moving targets at ranges in excess of 3,000 meters. The Merkava IV prototype was fitted with a much needed, more powerful 1400-hp engine of German manufacture. MG Tal claimed the tank was revolutionary versus evolutionary in design. When fielded, he said, it would look like a new tank and actually be a lighter tank. All this was not apparent from a casual observation of the prototype, but I have no reason to doubt it.

Now, I will pass a few rounds of ammo the way of the Merkava's detractors. Notwithstanding LTC Eshel's defense, the Merkava is grossly under-powered; and it accelerated slowly, especially on inclines. Our Abrams tankers easily outpaced the Merkava platoon in a road march across the desert. Second, I

am not sure the Israelis have gained much in fire crew safety by going to an electric, versus hydraulic, turret. It seems that advances in lubricants and other features have mitigated the Abrams risk. What is clear, however, is the relatively slow slew rate of the Merkava turret. It took 12 seconds for full rotation. I would say 3-4 times longer than that of the Abrams. The Merkava's main gun rounds are in the rear of the hull in 49 separate canisters, a design meant to eliminate secondary explosions. This presents two problems. One, having dismounts on board is a trade-off. They occupy the same space as the removable canisters. Two, except for ready rounds in the turret, the main gun must be forward positioned to access the hull ammunition.

Finally, while I was impressed with the "BAZ" auto-tracking fire control system, I was not overly so. At the time I served in Israel, the IDF tank corps held an annual competition for the best tank platoon representing each of its regular army tank brigades. The IDF M60 Patton tank variants were always competitive with the Merkava. In fact, in one of my two years, the oldest M60 variant beat out all others, to include the Merkava III tank platoon. This says something about the crew and training, but it also diminishes, if only a little, my estimation of the Merkava III. I have no doubt, whatsoever, that the advance represented by the 2nd generation FLIR on the M1A2 SEP will do more to revolutionize lethality than any automatic target tracker ever can.

I must conclude by restating my admiration for the Merkava III. The fact that a young and resource-poor nation like Israel could build a revolutionary tank product line is an amazing feat in itself. There is no equal in SWA, save the Abrams tank, to the Merkava tank, and that is enough. I am not a technical expert and so I am unable to speak that language with the authority of a well researched individual like LTC Eshel, nor am I smart enough to program the computer inputs to obtain tank comparisons like the study that ignited all this discussion. I am, however, confident in the accuracy of what my eyes observe and what my simple brain, trained to assess training, concludes.

MAJ KEVIN WRIGHT
Former LNO to the IDF
HQ, USAARMC
Fort Knox, Ky.

(The Editor is declaring a unilateral cease-fire on further comments about the tank ranking survey article in our July-August 1999 issue. — Ed.)

A "Regimental System" of Sorts Thrives in the National Guard

Dear Sir:

The article by COL Guy C. Swan III ("It's Time for a True Regimental System"

ARMOR, March-April 2000) is squarely on target. It raises many issues that go straight to the heart of the morale and combat readiness of our Army. As a National Guard officer, I would like to bring the perspective of my own National Guard service to the table.

One of the true strengths of National Guard units, especially combat arms battalions, is that they are *de facto* organized more like traditional regiments than any other units in the Army. Citizen-soldiers in these battalions often serve their entire careers in a single battalion. Noncommissioned officers have literally "grown-up" with their unit and feel personally responsible for its success. Senior noncommissioned officers are often respected members of their communities and bring a wealth of human and institutional knowledge to their military jobs, which would be impossible to match in units made up of soldiers in constant transition. Many National Guard soldiers enjoy the unique feeling of camaraderie that arises from serving with friends, neighbors, and even family members. Career progression and the need for varied experiences dictate that officers be periodically reassigned to other companies or batteries within the battalion. However, most officers serve for long periods of their career within the same battalion or brigade. This gives National Guard officers a similar sense of camaraderie as that enjoyed by enlisted soldiers. I can personally attest that in trying times the unique camaraderie, the feeling of being a respected member in a "band of brothers," is what has kept me in uniform. This mutual reliance and trust can only translate into superior unit cohesiveness and enhanced combat power. I should add that the system is not impermeable. People sometimes relocate for personal reasons or because of their civilian careers. But this "natural" attrition coupled with retirements and occasional reassignments outside the battalion or brigade keep the units from becoming too ingrown and stale.

Another intangible morale-builder is the sense of history maintained by National Guard units. The flags of the two infantry battalions and one artillery battalion in which I have been privileged to serve have been literally covered by campaign streamers ranging from the Civil War to World War II. Many soldiers recall when their fathers, grandfathers, or uncles served in the very units in which they now serve. Frequently, mementos of the hometown unit's war service, such as captured cannon or public memorials, are prominently displayed at town squares or local museums.

All these positive points do not mean that there are no problems in the system. Yes, there are cases of cronyism, the proverbial "good ol' boy" networking, and cases where sub-standard, or problem soldiers are retained or tossed from one company to another. But, in my experience, these have been few and far between. In addition, the constant enforcement of "the Army standard" in all things, from the APFT to battle drills to

the staff Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), has served as an objective quality control tool that has served to increase the professionalism of units immeasurably. Another, subtler, quality control measure is the genuine desire of the overwhelming majority of soldiers to live up to the highest traditions of their battalion/regiment and not "lose face" amongst one's peers. This internal motivation is often far more powerful than any external coercion because once an officer or NCO loses the respect of his/her regimental peers he or she loses all moral authority.

Again, I applaud COL Swan for raising a much-needed and often unwanted or unheeded voice on behalf of the need to substitute the Army's faceless individual replacement system for a working regimental system. From my perspective, I would like to see the National Guard leadership officially solidifying and cementing the traditions of our regimental system. Furthermore, I invite my Active Component (AC) colleagues to dialogue with members of the National Guard on our experiences with our "regimental" system. The "lessons learned" from these experiences may well benefit the morale and combat effectiveness of the Total Army.

MAJ PRISCO R. HERNANDEZ, ARNG
4th Bde, 75th Div (TS)
Ft. Sill, Okla.

New Sensor System Will Be Fielded in Greater Numbers

Dear Sir:

I would like to set the record straight and clarify some misconceptions in the article "Reconnaissance and Security Forces in the New Heavy Division Structure" Pages 26-29 in the March-April 2000 issue written by Major Michael C. Kasales.

He mistakenly reported the current fielding schedule for the LRAS3, or Long-Range Advance Surveillance System, as one per scout platoon. The correct fielding rate is one per scout platform in each mech infantry/armor battalion scout platoon. Instead of a scout platoon only receiving one LRAS3 per platoon there will be a total of six per platoon (one per platform).

The LRAS3 is a superb sensor and will give scouts a great advantage on the battlefield.

SSG DANIEL R. GASTELUM
Directorate of Force Development, Ft. Knox
LRAS3 Project NCOIC

Starry Also Attempted Personnel Reform on His Watch

Dear Sir:

My compliments to First Lieutenant Martin J. D'Amato's article "Vigilant Warrior: General Donn A. Starry's AirLand Battle and How it Changed the Army," in the May-June

2000 issue of *ARMOR*. His article is well written and researched. I must add — and I emphasize I am not correcting Lieutenant D'Amato's article — that Starry attempted more than a revolution of the Army with doctrinal, technological, and educational reforms. He also attempted to evolve the latter three institutions that compose the Army with dramatic changes in the personnel system.... It was a system that Starry stated was an "anachronism," and the last remaining Army institution that needed to be "fixed."

Starry was doing this as he had done with doctrine: he brought smart people in, gave them a mission-style order with a clear end state, and continually checked it. Unfortunately for the Army, the personnel system was the one institution that was so entrenched that even the energy and brilliance of Donn Starry could not penetrate it.... By the end of the 1970s, and in the beginning of 1980s, the Army, led by Chief of Staff General "Shy" Meyer, began extensive studies to implement a unit-based personnel system.... The first study was conducted at TRADOC under the direction of General Starry. The second one was conducted with the guidance of General Meyer by the Inspector General, Lieutenant General Richard Trefry.

(Starry's) proposal was a copy of a European regimental system adapted for the United States, but the latter program attempted to establish a smaller program within the larger, individual-focused personnel system, and as a result was doomed to failure. Starry opposed this compromise, but the bureaucracy ground him down.... Upon assuming command of TRADOC in 1979, General Starry began examining ways to implement a regimental system and replace the individual personnel system with a unit replacement system. He asked liaison officers from the United Kingdom and Canada to undertake a detailed study of their countries' systems and suggest how these could be incorporated in the U.S. Army. After a year of extensive study, the Allied officers — Lieutenant Colonel P.W. Faith of the British Army and Lieutenant Colonel R. I. Ross of the Canadian Army — returned with an excellent regimental plan for the U.S. Army called the "Application of the Regimental System to the United States Army's Combat Arms," referred to as the TRADOC Faith/Ross Study.... This proposal was a true regimental system that involved more than rotating units: it concentrated on unit cohesion, with all its inherent complexities of recruiting, sustaining, training, personnel policies, and tradition.

The TRADOC Faith/Ross study suggested a grouping of regiments from all combat arms by state, or states. Each grouping had to ensure a minimum population base of five million supporting four regiments. A more detailed study would have been required to adjust the base figure to national recruiting trends. The regimental system would create an image of the regiment that could not fail to improve community and public relations

for the whole Army.... The authors suggested that regiments could actively recruit only within their own areas and should supply recruiting personnel as part of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command in these regions. In each region, the regimental headquarters would be established and colonels of regiments would be authorized. The study did support the current, centralized recruit training system.

The study emphasized the adoption of the regimental system, which makes the regional basing of units more significant. If building regiments with a strong tradition and a sense of history is important, regional recruiting or regional defense districts should be considered. Otherwise, regimental pride and association with a specific headquarters are not important in a system with nationwide recruiting and where units are arbitrarily headquartered.

The proposed regimental system would also have a strong tie to the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, where regiments, brigades, and divisions have been linked to regions for years. Specific units have operated in specific areas for over a hundred years. (The 29th Infantry Division, which served proudly in World War II, is composed of units from Virginia and Maryland and can trace its origin to the Civil War. The three regiments of the Massachusetts Army National Guard have existed since 13 December 1636.)

Under TRADOC Faith/Ross the entire personnel system warranted reform. Management practices would become more regimentally oriented for both promotion and posting of enlisted soldiers. The TRADOC Faith/Ross study recommended the elimination of the "up-or-out" promotion system, to be replaced with an "up-or-stay" promotion system for both the officer and enlisted ranks. This promotion system would be decentralized, with more trust being placed in the hands of the regimental commander.

The TRADOC Faith/Ross study recommended that regimental commanders should play an important role in selecting enlisted personnel for assignments away from the regiment, such as serving on higher staffs, recruiting, or as an instructor at a branch school. Increased personal attention to individuals in a decentralized system would lead to better retention rates, and foster an atmosphere where the best individual, not the best file, would be promoted.

Finally, the TRADOC Faith/Ross plan addressed officer management interwoven with the regimental system, instead of separate from it. Like the enlisted promotion system, it recommended abolishing the "up-or-out" promotion system because of its disruption of cohesion. It also stated that "up-or-out" created a lack of experienced officers by constantly moving them from one position to

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another. Officer management would also be more decentralized, with officers below the rank of lieutenant colonel promoted and managed by the regiments in regards to assignments, promotions, and selections for schools. Active officers and senior noncommissioned officers of the regiment would rotate to serve in the battalions of the regiment that belonged to Army Reserve and National Guard units. This would improve a "one Army" concept.

Despite the details outlined in the TRADOC Faith/Ross study of the merits of a regimental system, and extensive historical evidence to back its credibility, the plan was resisted by the Army staff, particularly personnel managers and lifelong personnel bureaucrats. Several general officers were also against the plan despite extensive proof of the failure of the individual personnel system in three wars... Personnel managers did not want to relinquish control; they wanted to micro-manage soldiers. Rigid patterns had been established for officers to succeed in the "system."

A regimental system, the MILPERCEN bureaucrats stated, would not make the system equal for all individuals, because of the focus on unit excellence. Personnel bureaucrats also argued that the entire personnel accounting system would have to be reformed to support a regimental system.

General Starry was simply "stonewalled" by most of the general officer corps and the personnel bureaucrats. The DoD personnel accounting system was a complex derivative of the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS), an accounting system brought into the Defense Department by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in 1963 to manage the Defense budget. The Army staff continued to look for a compromise in 1979-1980, and that compromise would become the COHORT program, which was left to die slowly and had disappeared by the time the Gulf War broke out ten years later.

MAJ DONALD E. VANDERGRIF
Woodbridge, Va.

Letter Added to Abrams History, Authors of Book Respond

Dear Sir:

Regarding Mr. George P. Psihas's letter to the editor (May-June 2000) concerning omissions in Major General Robert J. Sunell's Chapter 13 of the book *Camp Colt to Desert Storm*, the editors of the book, Dr. George F. Hofmann and General Donn A. Starry, consider the information provided by the former President of GDLS a valuable addition to the history of the Abrams Tank System. In fact, we believe that there is a story to be told about other major vendors: Hughes for rangefinder and thermal sight,

Avco Lycoming for the AGT1500 engine, Computer Devices of Canada, Allison for the transmission, and other vendors from 41 states who supplied the key components that, when assembled, comprised this magnificent tank.

However, Chapter 13 in this book is about the Abrams tank and not about General Dynamics. General Sunell clearly stated in the third paragraph of his chapter (page 432) that he "...could not cover all of the details of the Abrams Tank System in a single chapter. To cover it from concept formulation through production would require, at a minimum, an entire book." More so, General Sunell followed the guidelines provided by the editors to all the contributing authors to keep the book focused and as readable as possible.

We thank Mr. Psihas for the additional historical information he has provided to readers of *ARMOR* about the efforts of both Chrysler and General Dynamics in making this tank a reality. We also recommend that he team with other major vendors of this system and complete its history, describing in detail the difficult time the various vendors had in perfecting their portions of the Abrams tank.

DR. GEORGE F. HOFMANN
University of Cincinnati

GENERAL DONN A. STARRY (RET.)
Fairfax Station, Va.

MOUT Training Sites May Not Be "Urban" Enough

Dear Sir:

I read "Armor's Role in Future U.S. MOUT Doctrine," May-June 2000, with great interest. I would like to share some thoughts with you based upon my training and experience in MOUT.

- It's important to note that "urbanized terrain" includes both urban terrain and suburban terrain. Urban terrain comprises a mix of residential, industrial, and commercial sub-terrain types. Fort Knox's MOUT training facility is based upon suburban terrain. Lessons learned on suburban terrain may not apply on urban terrain. Many U.S. cities have clusters of deserted buildings suitable for MOUT training on urban terrain.

- Urban terrain contains interior and exterior spaces. Interior spaces offer cover and concealment; exterior spaces offer observation and fields of fire. In order to survive on urban terrain, troops and vehicles must travel through, conceal themselves in, and fight from interior spaces.

- The M113A2 APC has a minimum height of 6'7", that allows the M113A2 to be driven into and through most urban interior spaces. The most common urban construction pattern worldwide is the curtain wall (as opposed to weight-bearing wall construction).

The M113A2 can be slowly backed into a curtain wall, using the top rear edge of the hull to push in the concrete blocks between vertical supports. Gross vehicular weight and interior floor loading are critical factors when the ground floor is not the bottom floor. Tracks not only distribute vehicle weight more evenly than tires do, tracks are significantly more durable than tires are in a broken glass and rubble environment.

- The M1A2 MBT is too heavy and its exhaust is too hot and too noxious for the M1A2 to drive through, conceal itself in, and fight from interior spaces. With a minimum height of 9'6" and a combat weight of 32 tons, the M2A2 Bradley is too tall and too heavy. (The M8 AGS, however, might do well on urban terrain because of its height, weight, tracks, diesel engine, and armament.)

- Conflict intensity is a critical factor in MOUT tactics. Restraint is the key to fighting a low-intensity conflict on urban terrain occupied by civilians. A mix of light infantry and military police was appropriate in Panama. The key to fighting a mid-intensity conflict on urban terrain is to fight the environment against the enemy. A mix of light infantry, combat engineers, and assault guns would be more appropriate in a mid-intensity conflict.

- The USMC has a weapon ideally suited for this purpose: the shoulder-fired, multi-purpose assault weapons (SMAW). Unfortunately, the U.S. Army declined to buy the SMAW. That decision should be reconsidered.

DAVID A. PILS
Via email

MOUT Efforts Are Overdue, But Still Far From Adequate

Dear Sir:

My compliments to CPT Klug on his article, "Armor's Role in Future U.S. MOUT Doctrine" in the May-June issue of *ARMOR*. It appears to be an accurate assessment of what is going on. Unfortunately, it also reveals the utter inadequacy of the effort to date. I contend that MOUT is being given lip service and the proposed fixes are mere band aids and hyperbole, all lacking serious command focus. Of course, we need to train at lower echelons, but we need to focus on senior-level command leadership.

Fort Knox MOUT Site. The MOUT site is a great effort, so far as it goes. While the idea is wonderful, it only addresses the platoon-level fight, and adding SIMNET will not help much. There is plenty to be done at the platoon and company level. Physical conditioning is a tremendous training task in itself. Figuring out how riflemen in buildings can communicate with buttoned-up tanks down the street and around the corner is another challenge.

USIPECT Concept. Refining offensive MOUT doctrine again, this time from four phases (Reconnoiter, Isolate, Secure a foothold, Clear the area) to seven (Understand, Shape, Isolate, Penetrate, Exploit, Consolidate, and Transition) is meaningless until we put it into practice. The real challenge with MOUT is that it is HUGE! What is needed is training of the command and staff of divisions and brigade task forces to orchestrate the full combined arms team, along with combat support and combat service support. USIPECT needs to be implemented at the division and brigade level, not company and platoon.

Medium Brigades in MOUT. I have no idea how anyone has determined that the yet-to-be developed Interim Armored Vehicle (IAV) units are suitable for MOUT. Armor's role in MOUT is to support the dismounted infantry fight. Armor supports by fire and shock action (moving rapidly, massing suddenly, and delivering overwhelming fire) in close coordination with light infantry who battle room by room and building by building. If you go to lighter, less mobile, less lethal, and less survivable vehicles, you only reduce your chances of success. The measure of effectiveness is not how much better a medium force is compared to a light force. We need to compare the effectiveness of the Abrams/Bradley/light infantry team against an IAV/light infantry team.

UAVs and UGVs. Unmanned aerial and ground vehicles are panaceas that still have very little actual capability in MOUT. Someday, maybe, but not in this day and age. UAVs cannot see into buildings and UGVs cannot negotiate rubble and obstacles, let alone defended stairwells and doorways. Further, the data link to the soldier is tenuous at best.

The Army will demonstrate seriousness about MOUT when it starts command post exercises and tactical exercises without troops in large urban areas. We need to have battalion and brigade command groups develop an OPLAN to seize and secure Elizabethtown, Kentucky (or equivalent), and then wargame it as part of division CPXs. Until then, all of this is just eyewash.

CHESTER A. KOJRO
LTC, AR, USAR (Ret.)

Comments on Suoi Tre Story From a Veteran of the Battle

Dear Sir:

I cannot let 1SG Christopher Worick's article on the battle of Suoi Tre pass without some comments.

I was with Co C, 2/22 INF that morning. We had actually crossed the Soui Samat River late the day before. We were starting to move out for continuing patrol when ordered to move to Fire Base Gold. At first, we put the tanks, M48s, in the lead, but they proved too slow for the now-critical situation. We

bypassed them, breaking a wide trail for them. I only recall seeing two tanks attached that day, along with the M88, but could be wrong. We were equipped with tired M113s (gasoline) but managed to obtain 20- to 25-mph speeds through heavy jungle. My PC went in with 3,000 rounds of .50 cal. and ended with 300 left. Several other PCs had melted and warped their barrels. There is no doubt that the combined arms of armor and mech infantry carried the battle that day. Nor can one discount artillery and air support! Even the two combat engineers I had attached could be seen popping up and firing their M14s. Never saw an F4 that day, but F100s were scraping the trees as we came in.

I did not see it, but I have heard from some 3/22 and 2/22 Recon people, that a B-52 made a low level pass across the battle site as we came in.

There are some personal accounts of that battle posted on our 22nd INF Regiment Society web site at: <http://www.22ndinfantry.org/>

JIM HARDIN
Via email

Thoughts on Improving Author's Guard Mission Analysis

Dear Sir:

CPT Young's article in the March-April 2000 issue ("A Company/Team Guard Mission...") is an interesting piece for several reasons. He has obviously served in the

appropriate positions for an officer of his grade and was also an instructor. I would like to offer some observations on his article and some other thoughts.

CPT Young opens with a good definition of the guard mission. But when he moves to the task and purpose he runs in to a little trouble. The task is "to destroy enemy recon," but *what* enemy recon? As the author states later, *FM 100-60* lists enemy forces. The OPFOR recon will be echeloned, just as the combat forces will be. CPT Young's team can expect to encounter elements of the division recon and elements of the brigade recon. In addition, the combat reconnaissance patrols (CRP) will present one or two platoon-sized elements in his sector. If the mission is to destroy all of this, it must be stated that way. The team will also have a responsibility to at least identify the forward security element (FSE) and maintain contact (*FM 17-95*, p. 4-7). An alternate mission statement might be "TM performs a guard to destroy enemy recon through the CRP, identifies the FSE, and maintains contact during battle handover..."

The author next talks about establishing "counterrecon boxes." Unfortunately, no such graphic control measure exists. As depicted in the article, they appear to be engagement areas but are not developed as such. Counterrecon is a term that causes a tremendous amount of confusion. It is the result of a security mission, but not a mission in and of itself (*FM 71-100*, p. A-5)

CPT Young talks about obstacles but not enough to understand what the obstacle intent is for the company sector. The mini-

mum would be a disrupt intent, which would require obstacles in half the maneuverable terrain. It does not appear that this is planned and the absence of an adequate obstacle scheme will cause problems.

The use of fires is not fully developed, as the author does not address priority targets or the use of final protective fires (FPF). In most security area operations, the use of indirect fires is critical as it allows you to engage the enemy without being in a direct fire situation and allows the security force to conduct battle handover and movement to subsequent missions. It would be extremely difficult to execute the mission described without the use of an artillery battalion.

The concept for battle handover and movement to subsequent positions is not clearly discussed. In most cases, this is the hardest part of the whole operation to execute, and often results in a security force that is unable to disengage from the enemy and, as a result, is unavailable to the higher headquarters at a critical time in the coming main battle area (MBA) fight.

The reason for this is related to my earlier comments. Inadequate fire support and obstacle plans make security area operations difficult, if not impossible, to execute.

Tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) are critical to executing our doctrine. We have to be careful to address all the critical aspects that will influence a successful outcome.

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