

Once More Unto the Breach



As we go to print, diplomatic efforts to resolve Iraqi disarmament issues have almost reached the terminal stage. Unless a significant breakthrough occurs, U.S. Armed Forces will once again act as the hammer. I know we are up to the task, but we cannot become overconfident in our equipment, tactics, and soldiers. Our leaders must stay focused on the basics and maintain our high standards. Good luck to all.

The Battle of Kursk is considered one of the most epic tank battles of all time. To the Germans, it was an opportunity to repeat their 1941 and 1942 successes, encircling vast Soviet armies and destroying them in the process. The German losses are put at over 3,500 armored vehicles, with the true number unknown. To both sides, the salient around Kursk — 200 kilometers wide and 150 deep — was the single most obvious target for the Germans to attack. Captain Benjamin Simms' analysis of the battle provides important lessons learned that are applicable today.

In 1917, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Davis, U.S. Cavalry, was sent by the U.S. War Department to the headquarters of General Sir Stanley Maude to serve as an observer to the combined British-Indian Expeditionary Army — later renamed the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. This army waged a multi-front campaign against the Turkish army in what is now present-day Iraq. During his assignment, Davis recorded his daily observations in a journal and later submitted these observations as a report to the War Department. Although the information contained in the report may not have been "pertinent to current operations then ongoing on the Western Front," Davis thought the report would serve as a useful primer on an extremely important area of potential military operations. Reading through the report, one can see the low-intensity conflict nature of the final phase of the Mesopotamian campaign where British and Indian troops carried out extensive combined small-unit operations were similar to the United States' ongoing operations against the remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Is technology the answer to battlefield confusion? The real confusion of battle is not the so-called fog of war created by imper-

fect or incomplete information, but the friction generated in the commander's mind by uncertainty, exhaustion, and fear. Captain Scott Thomson advises that heavy cavalry is designed to fight for information. However, the distances over which the troop operates, combined with the uncertain enemy situation inherent in being the first force to cross the battlefield, presents the commander with the most difficult situation in which to concentrate his firepower. This is what makes the cavalry mission a dangerous and frustrating one.

Transforming the armor cavalry force remains a topic of considerable discussion. Captain Ryan Seagreaves provides insight on how to effectively transform the Task Force Scout Platoon. Seagreaves proposes the critical limitations of the Task Force (TF) HMMWV Scout Platoon can be corrected by a transformation to the light armored vehicle (LAV)-25 reconnaissance vehicle, the Coyote.

The Armor Association and community extend its deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the Abrams family on the recent death of Mrs. Creighton W. Abrams at the age of 87.

Julie Abrams was a genuine rarity, a polished diamond. She remained connected to the Army and active in many of its organizations even after the death of her husband in 1974. In the early 1970s, she and a group of other concerned women became founding members of the Army contingent of Arlington Ladies, a group of dedicated, caring women who still ensure that no soldier's funeral at Arlington National Cemetery goes unattended. She cared about soldiers and families. She also pioneered many of the programs now espoused through the Army's Well-Being program. For over 66 years, Mrs. Abrams graciously served and blessed our Army and this great country as a wife and mother.

One last thing, my well of articles for future issues is drying up. I am hoping in the near future to receive some outstanding articles and lessons learned from our latest deployments.

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