

## Chief of Armor's Hatch

# Mastering Sustainment Operations

The 2015 Maneuver Warfighter Conference provided a forum for discussion on the future of joint combined-arms maneuver (CAM) and wide-area security. Specifically, the discussion focused on operationalizing the Army Operating Concept and focused on how to prepare formations to continuously develop situational understanding, rapidly task-organize for purpose and synchronize warfighting functions with joint, intergovernmental and multinational partners. The endstate is to present the enemy with multiple dilemmas, across multiple domains, to achieve a position of relative advantage and consolidate gains.

Through the use of both live and virtual communication channels, we learned four main outcomes of this multi-day discussion:

- Interoperability between brigade combat team (BCT) types limits commanders' ability to task organize for purpose from one BCT to another;
- Task organizing for purpose works if units build interoperability at the lowest level through habitual relationships, including National Guard and Reserve units;
- A lack of standardized communications platforms limit mission-command effectiveness; and
- Maintenance readiness continues to detract from operations.

It is this last point I would like to focus on in this issue.

Feedback from senior leaders and combined training centers have consistently reported that junior leaders lack the knowledge and skills to master the fundamentals of Army maintenance systems and maintenance operations. The trend demonstrates that leaders are challenged in building and sustaining combat power in joint CAM in an expeditionary operating environment as part of a joint task force or BCT. As LTG Michael S. Tucker states in his article in this edition, "Soldiers need confidence in their training." Although he is referring to achieving lethality through precision gunnery, the same concept applies to mastering sustainment operations. This year, the Armor School established the Maneuver Leaders Maintenance Course (MLMC) to fill this critical gap and build a foundation of maintenance knowledge throughout the Armored Force.

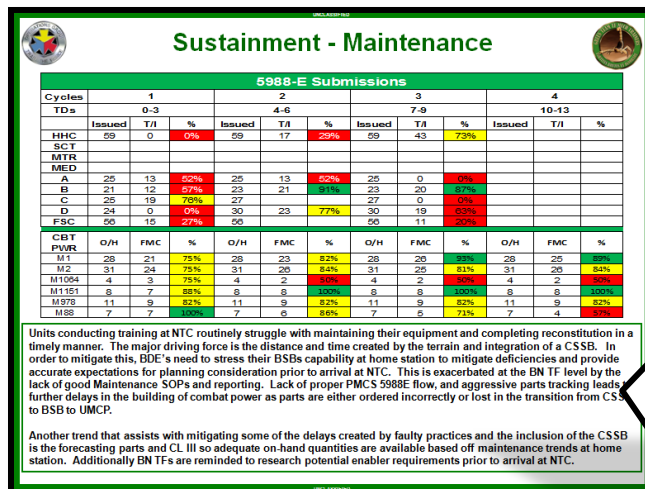


Figure 1. Units conducting training at National Training Center routinely struggle with maintaining their equipment and completing reconstitution in a timely manner due to:

- Lack of good maintenance standard operating procedures (SOPs) and reporting.
- Lack of proper Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services 5988E flow
- Non-aggressive parts tracking leads to incorrect and lost Class IX.

Battalion-level leaders do not have the skills required to manage or influence sustainment systems in a BCT fight. This course educated maneuver leaders to apply maintenance management in garrison and operational environments

## Sustaining distributed operations

Operating in an expeditionary manner and sustaining distributed operations presents significant challenges to the Armored Force. Reduced operational-readiness rates constrains commanders' ability to task-organize for purpose and sustain the momentum during operations. Making sustainment operations an integral part of all training events will gain much-needed repetitions and provide a better understanding of logistical requirements. Gunnery, situational-training exercises, combat training center train-ups and Sergeant's Time training provide many opportunities to create a culture where lethality is complemented by sustainability.

## MLMC

The MLMC fills a capability gap with junior leaders in mastering fundamentals of maintenance systems and operations to build and sustain combat power in an expeditionary operating environment. MLMC instructors train maintenance management at the company and battalion level; manage and implement a command maintenance-discipline program; and enhance knowledge on maintenance information systems and how to conduct tactical field maintenance/tactical planning considerations and operations.

The standard course size is 24 students. The target audience consists of pre/post-Maneuver Captain's Career

Course (MCCC) captains, executive officers/pre-MCCC lieutenants and mid-grade noncommissioned officers. These are the leaders who will establish, operationalize and maintain sustainment systems that enable units to achieve overmatch in any environment.

Block 1: Maintenance Fundamentals & Command Maintenance Program Days 1-4	Block 2: Maintenance Information Systems Days 5-6	Block 3: Maintenance Assets & Tactical Maintenance Employment Days 7-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-CMD maintenance program</li> <li>-5988-E flow</li> <li>-Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)</li> <li>-Army Oil Analysis Program (AOAP)</li> <li>-Small Arms Repair Parts (SARP)</li> <li>-Test Measurement and Diagnostic Equipment (TMDE)</li> <li>-Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Global Combat Support System-Army (GCSS-A)</li> <li>-Standard Army Maintenance System Level 1 Enhanced (SAMS-1E)</li> <li>-Fleet Management System (FMS) Web</li> <li>-Logistics Information Warehouse (LIW)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Recovery operations</li> <li>-Planning consideration in Offense and Defense</li> <li>-Unit Maintenance Collection Point (UMCP) operations</li> <li>-Tactical Standard Operational Procedures (TACSOP)</li> <li>-Maintenance Assets Above Battalion Level</li> <li>-Battalion Maintenance Meeting</li> <li>-Battle Update Brief (graded event)</li> </ul>

Figure 2. MLMC 10-day course.

For more information on MLMC, please contact 1-16 Cavalry Squadron's S-3, MAJ Ralph P. Aaron Jr., at (706) 626-8237.

As we begin 2016, the U.S. Army Armor School and U.S. Cavalry and Armor Association have announced this year's General Donn A. Starry Writing Competition. The competition evaluates and recognizes outstanding writers from across the Army who demonstrate clarity and vision about the future of the mounted force. Articles for 2016 will answer the question: **Given no restraints, what would be the optimal design for an expeditionary and sustainable armored cavalry regiment in Eastern Europe or the Middle East and why?** Participation confirmation is due no later than March 18, 2016, with article submission due no later than April 15, 2016. Recognition of the winning author will occur May 6, 2016, during the Saint George Ball at Fort Benning, GA. He or she will receive a \$1,000 check from the Cavalry and Armor Association, a 1911 commemorative pistol and possible publication in **ARMOR** magazine. For more information and requirements, see <http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/starry>.

Also, we are excited to announce the 2016 Sullivan Cup "Best Tank Crew Competition" hosted by the Maneuver Center of Excellence, the U.S. Army Armor School and 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade. The competition is set for May 2-6, 2016, at Fort Benning, GA. The competition tests tank-crew maneuver, sustainment and gunnery skills. These competitions foster the competitive spirit of our Armored Force and are included in U.S. Army Forces Command's training guidance. For more information and requirements, see <http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/sullivan>.

I encourage leaders to use Armor School media outlets to present your viewpoints on establishing maintenance systems, unique sustainment training plans or how to best operationalize those systems to the rest of us. How is your organization preparing sustainment systems for upcoming training events? What are you doing personally? What are your thoughts on MLMC and how it will help shape armored warfare?

Share your leader development and education plan, best practices and lessons-learned on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/USAARMS>) and on milSuite

([https://www.milsuite.mil/book/community/spaces/apf/maneuver\\_net/maneuver\\_center\\_of\\_excellence/armored\\_force](https://www.milsuite.mil/book/community/spaces/apf/maneuver_net/maneuver_center_of_excellence/armored_force)). And of course, you may email me directly.

**BG SCOTT MCKEAN**

Chief of Armor/Commandant

U.S. Army Armor School

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## **Acronym Quick-Scan**

**BCT** – brigade combat team

**CAM** – combined-arms maneuver

**MCCC** – Maneuver Captain's Career Course

**MLMC** – Maneuver Leader's Maintenance Course