

Chief of Armor Hatch: Fire, Maneuver and Shock Effect!

by BG Scott McKean

I've had the honor and privilege of serving as the 49th Chief of Armor for the last 21 months and have thoroughly enjoyed the Armor School's role in "Forging the Thunderbolt." The Armored Force spearheaded the transition of our Army's emphasis on decisive-action readiness and applied it to mastering maneuver fundamentals. The skills displayed by all the Sullivan Cup crews was amazing, and we offer our congratulations to the crew from 1st Battalion, 252nd Armor, 30th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) ("Old Hickory"), North Carolina Army National Guard, in winning this year's competition. CSM Alan Hummel and I want to thank COL John Cushing, CSM Lawrence Andrews Jr. and 194th Armor Brigade for the outstanding competition they put on for the force. There is no better compliment one can receive than getting retired GEN Gordon R. Sullivan's personal thanks to all involved for the challenging events and prideful spirit each crew displayed.

In the operational force, brigade combat teams are learning and adjusting their tactics, techniques and procedures through increased repetitions at our combat training centers (CTCs). The Armor School and supporting agencies are capturing these lessons and updating programs of instruction to bolster the mounted leaders' knowledge of doctrine, battle drills and maintenance. Concurrently, the Maneuver Center of Excellence is making vehicle modernization a top priority, which will ensure we retain our technological overmatch.

ABCTs are in high demand for operational missions and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. Developing trained mounted warriors that are well versed in maneuver fundamentals is our highest priority. The ability to "fight from the hatch" has been a point of emphasis in how we train our officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). Our courses maximize platform time to give leaders and Soldiers the most repetitions to build both competence and confidence.

As maneuver leaders, sustainment and maintenance operations need to be second nature. Sustainment operations are the lifeblood of armored warfare, and we must master the art and science of sustaining continuous operations. We continue to learn hard lessons from CTC rotations and regionally aligned force deployments. We've established the Maneuver Leader Maintenance Course and Maneuver Leader Maintenance Executive Course to educate battalion maintenance officers, command teams and senior leaders how to manage maintenance programs and support high-tempo operations over extended and contested lines of communication. These skills require leader emphasis, and even "old hands" need a refresher as we change our vernacular in the new Global Combat Support System-Army.

I am very honored to pass the Thunderbolt colors to BG John Kolasheski as the 50th Chief of Armor. He is a proven leader and will continue to forge our next generation of mounted warriors while developing the requirements and doctrine for the Armored Force. I leave Fort Benning with my tanker boots strapped proudly as I see the great young officers and NCOs leading our Soldiers every day. Press on and treat 'em rough!