

Chief of Armor's Hatch: Increasing Maneuver Platoon Lethality

Maneuver platoons exist to deliver decisive lethality on the battlefield. Key to this are organizations led by noncommissioned officers and officers who are technical and tactical experts on their assigned combat platform and are ready to lead on Day 1.

Enabling readiness to "fight tonight" and tomorrow, the Army must re-establish the path to develop leaders who are technically and tactically competent and have the experience, maturity and time in key and developmental positions to lead and train for combined-arms maneuver.

Maneuver-platoon lethality is directly linked to the experience and technical expertise of the officers and NCOs who lead combat-platform crews and platoons. Competent maneuver-platoon leaders deliver decisive lethality. Our ability to maneuver a platoon to a position of relative advantage is insufficient if that same platoon does not deliver decisive lethality against its opponent. Although we've been executing decisive-action combat training center rotations going on five years and are regaining our experience in combined-arms maneuver across the force, maneuver-platoon lethality proficiency is lagging. A deliberate strategy across the institutional force is necessary to provide the doctrine, training, leadership and education programs to enable more lethal maneuver platoons and crews.

Our working group assessed institutional factors that affect platoon and crew lethality and developed a comprehensive strategy to drive increased tactical and technical expertise back into the maneuver force to increase maneuver platoon lethality. The working group collected input from various stakeholders to develop courses of action to enable increased maneuver-platoon and crew-combat platform lethality in the near-, mid- and long term. Highlights of proposed actions under this strategy include:

- Creating positional additional skill identifier coding on modified tables of organization and equipment for maneuver-platoon combat platforms to track the distribution of technical expertise across the force.
- Increasing "reps and sets" and hands-on technical training within institutional functional training courses.
- Updating Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-25 and DA Pam 600-3 to describe repetitive assignment models and combat-platform assignment-oriented training.
- Establishing Abrams, Bradley and Stryker platform-specific mobile training teams, nested within brigade combat team sustainable-readiness models and prioritize training according to utilization cycles.
- Optimizing combat-platform and direct-fire planning instruction in NCO Academy courses through assignment-oriented, hands-on technical training.
- Making Human Resource Command assignment instructions for temporary duty enroute to attend functional training.
- Standardizing and requiring training-support packages to prepare NCOs to attend Master Gunner School (sabot academies).
- Developing tracking systems that can be incorporated into Digital Training Management System for individual performance in gunnery records, platform training and experience throughout a Soldier's career.
- Improving engagement-area development, direct-fire planning and fire control and distribution instruction in leader course programs of instruction.

The objective is to train and develop leaders who will lead by example from Day 1. These leaders will train maneuver platoons and crews to deliver decisive direct-fire lethality as part of the combined-arms team. These efforts will directly impact BCT readiness now and in the future and will provide commanders lethal mounted-maneuver platoons that dominate while executing cross-domain maneuver.

We look forward to your attendance at the Sullivan Cup April 30-May 4, 2018. Also, the Saint George Ball is scheduled at 6 p.m. May 4. Please attend both events.

Forge the Thunderbolt!

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