

Chief of Armor Hatch: Enabling the Evolution of the Combined-Arms Fight

*"[The] breadth of training predicts breadth of transfer. That is, the more contexts in which something is learned, the more the learner creates abstract models, and the less they [sic] rely on any particular example. Learners become better at applying their knowledge to a situation they've never seen before, which is the essence of creativity." - David Epstein, **Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World***

The conduct of warfare is changing rapidly around us. The implementation of combined-arms warfare continues to evolve around the globe as both ally and adversary employ new technology and techniques to gain positions of advantage on the battlefield. Loitering munitions, drone swarms, electronic attacks and robotics are just a few of the new challenges facing modern warfighters. When synchronized with other existing elements on the battlefield, the effect is even more lethal.

However, the nature of war remains the same. Positions of relative advantage throughout the battlefield remain as pertinent today as they were in previous conflicts. The integration of armor, infantry, artillery and other assets at crucial moments and places decides the outcome of battles. How that occurred changed over time with the integration of new ideas and technology. Throughout modern history, creative learners applied their training and experience with new models and technology to achieve remarkable effects. Looking to the future, we must continually study recent conflicts to ascertain what adversaries may do and learn and apply knowledge in new and innovative ways.

Despite the derision from critics who claim the tank is dead, the recent conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region between Azerbaijan and Armenia tells a different story. Armenia indeed suffered heavy tank losses. But a deeper look shows that Armenia failed to update their tactics in the face of new technology. They mainly relied on methods of tank employment that gave them success against Azerbaijan in the 1990s. On the other hand, Azerbaijan updated their tactics to include new technologies, such as loitering munitions and deception unmanned aerial systems. They synchronized these technologies with the employment of their tanks, infantry and artillery to achieve stunning success.

In the end, Azerbaijan still needed their combined-arms teams on the ground to seize positions of advantage. How they got them there is an example of how to adapt combined-arms integration creatively. As we learn from this conflict, it is essential to note that synchronization remains fundamental to combined-arms success. New technologies will enable us to change the speed, tempo and rhythm of various combined-arms elements so that we are always causing multiple dilemmas for our enemies. Our mobile protected firepower systems' speed, range and shock effect remain central to our strength as an armored force. Integrating that strength with innovation is paramount to future success. We should also consider the inverse as we adapt to defend against such attacks.

Recognizing this need and adjusting our methods requires a continuous pursuit of knowledge and experience from a wide range of sources. I encourage you to broaden your reading and deepen your understanding on the employment of robotics, artificial intelligence and automated systems. By studying their implementation, we can develop a greater range as practitioners of our craft to employ our mobile protected firepower systems at decisive points on the battlefield.

We must continue to pursue the knowledge and creativity that will lead us to the next evolution of warfare. That begins here with your contributions to **ARMOR**, our mounted-maneuver journal. We possess the U.S Army's oldest professional journal, and since 1888, our journal is replete with examples where creative thought led to innovative change within the branch. I am excited to be in the seat as the 53rd commandant and Chief of Armor. And I look forward to reading your thoughts.

Treat 'Em Rough!

BG THOMAS M. FELTEY
Chief of Armor/Commandant
U.S. Army Armor School