

Gunner's Seat: New Armor School CSM and Focus Areas

I assumed the seat as the Armor School command sergeant major (CSM) June 27 and to say that I am humbled and excited to be here is an understatement. To follow the footsteps of great leaders and work alongside the legend – George DeSario, director of the Office of Chief of Armor – is an honor. I understand I have some big shoes to fill.

The 54th Armor commandant, BG Michael Simmering, quickly empowered me to assist him in his priorities. As the Armor School CSM, I am here for the Armored Force, and I look forward to working with leaders across the branch to do what is needed for the Army.

When it comes to manning the operational force, there are quite a few initiatives and challenges that lie ahead. We will stand up the 19C military-occupation specialty in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 25. This means our branch will grow and, more importantly, will increase the lethality of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV). Bottom line, I am working closely with Human Resources Command (HRC) to ensure we are properly manning the force at the right time as we navigate the upcoming changes to the Armored Force's structure.

CSMs play a vital role in coaching/mentoring Soldiers and leaders within their formations. The Assignment Satisfaction Key-Enlisted Module is a tool to provide options. However, when it comes to talent management, CSMs have an obligation to provide professional development to ensure Soldiers and leaders are doing what is right for their career development and ultimately for the Army. I am working with HRC on this as well to message this appropriately across the Armor community.

I have started the initial analysis of our professional military education, specifically the Advanced Leader's Course for our 19Ks and 19Ds, to determine if it is enabling the tactical expertise to employ multiple mounted-maneuver entities on the battlefield. As is, the course is professional and focused on the tactical level – as it should be. However, we will examine opportunities to produce experts that are more platform-centric. Currently Fort Moore, GA, offers a Tank Commander Course and a Bradley Commander Course that zero in more on the platform itself, which provides tank/Bradley commanders the necessary competencies to perform in the operational force. Along with after-action reviews and end-of-course critiques, I will be reaching out to the force to ask for your feedback on the competency level of our staff sergeants and what you would like to see.

I mentioned the BFV earlier, but if you have not heard, its successor has a new name: the XM30 Mechanized Infantry Combat Vehicle,¹ which will bring a plethora of modernization components to increase its “shoot, move and communicate” capabilities. Also, the M10 Booker, formerly known as mobile protected firepower, was announced recently and will allow 19Ks the opportunity to serve at Fort Liberty, NC.

I am very excited to serve as the Armor School CSM, and my line is always open. I look forward to hearing back from the Armor community, and thank you for your commitment to our Soldiers.

Train 'em and retain 'em! Forge the Thunderbolt!

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Notes

¹ M. Reinsch; “New mechanized-infantry combat vehicle prototype contract awarded to two vendors”; https://www.army.mil/article/267922/new_mechanized_infantry_combat_vehicle_prototype_contract_awarded_to_two_vendors; June 26, 2023.

Acronym Quick-Scan

BFV – Bradley Fighting Vehicle

CSM – command sergeant major

HRC – Human Resources Command