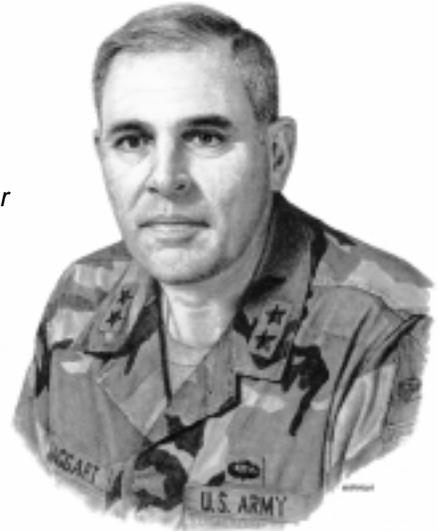


# COMMANDER'S HATCH

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## Armor and Cavalry in Transition — Time to Inventory Your Tool Bag

Force XXI is causing us to reexamine the tactical, technical, and leadership abilities required of our warfighters to lead mounted soldiers and units into combat and other operations. As the architect of mounted leader development, the Armor Center is working hard to define what tools — both new and old — are needed in the future. While this is no easy task, the quantity and quality of our experimentation and developmental work with digitization, armor in OOTW, light armor and cavalry units, decisive operations concepts, and many other efforts have given us a unique perspective on the future. This perspective yields many insights into what the “tool bag” of the 21st Century mounted warfighter might contain.

While the Armor Center continues to define and refine leader skill requirements, it is imperative that each of our quality leaders and soldiers perform a personal assessment or “inventory” of their professional skills, knowledge, and abilities. Only through a realistic assessment of our current abilities will we be able to develop instructional and training programs to meet future challenges.

The tool bag analogy is useful to describe our challenge in this area. From my vantage point, it appears that we have many tools that have worked well

in the past, continue to work in the present, and will most likely be useful in the future. Most of our leadership skills fall into this category. Based on recent work in digital operations, new tools will be required to maximize the effectiveness of these new capabilities. Technical knowledge, computer literacy, competence with information technologies, and tactical communications skills will be prerequisites to success in the future. In addition, some of our tools may require modification to adapt to future battlefield requirements. Current planning skills and mental tasks such as visualizing, conceptualizing, and synthesizing combat information take on new dimensions and importance on an information-rich battlefield.

While the exact details of future leader skill requirements are not fully known, important trends are emerging. It is within these trends that we all must focus our efforts to prepare ourselves for tomorrow. These trends include:

- Leaders will perform a greater number of tasks in the future than today.
- Junior leaders will need higher order mental skills, such as visualization, memorization, and conceptualization.
- Leaders will need creative and innovative abilities.

- Information management skills will be paramount.
- Communications with multimedia systems will be the norm.
- Technical competence with information technologies has become a core requirement.
- Alternative problem-solving skills, such as critical and inductive thinking, will be needed.

Preparing ourselves for the future is a formidable challenge. Many of the potential future requirements are subjects that are currently not developed in formal instruction or unit training programs. We must find innovative methods to introduce and hone these skills and capabilities in the great leaders that operate our mounted force. Only through a complete effort within all three pillars of leader development — institutional, unit training, and self-development — will we continue to excel as professional warfighters.

I encourage you to make time to re-inventory your professional tool bags. Lean forward, anticipate, and take action today to ready yourself for success in the future. Self-assessment is the critical first step toward transition to the future and Force XXI.

On the way!