



Will there still be tanks and tankers, scouts and cavalry troopers, or are we soon to be replaced with precision-guided weapons? What does our future look like? These questions reverberate within almost every card and letter we receive, nearly all of the e-mail we are "cc'ed," and within the pages of every military magazine, journal, and newspaper that we read. These two questions also weave their way through much of what you will read in the following pages of this issue of *ARMOR* and in the next couple of issues. They are what is running through everyone's minds. They deserve print time.

The answer to the first question is the easiest one to derive and can most quickly be proven by an example. A look at the latest crisis that Saddam Hussein has fomented amply demonstrates that, while the bad guys pay attention when you threaten them with cruise missiles and PGWs, they can only be counted on to change their behavior when the threats also include boots and tracks on the ground. That is us.

The latter question, about our future, is more problematical. "We don't fight our M1-equipped battalions any differently than I fought my M60A3-equipped battalion some years ago." This statement by an ex-commander who knows both types of units should cause lots of us to stop. If we have not designed today's organizations and the doctrine which governs their actions to take full advantage of what our equipment is capable of, what says that we are capable of doing so for the next force? The situational awareness that the not-too-distant digitized force will have available at the push of a few keystrokes, on almost all parts of the battlefield, is revolutionary. However, are we up to the task? Are we willing to go ahead with the 60- or 70-percent solution? Are we willing to relinquish the centralized control of fires (direct and indirect) and the lock-step adherence to phases and graphic control measures in order to keep our foes rocked back on their heels until they can do nothing but surrender or die? I know a lot of guys, good men who want everything to work, who are nevertheless doubtful.

Some senior folks might be inclined to say these are the understandable, yet ultimately unfounded fears of junior people who don't know any better. Those same folks will also argue that the changes to our training base don't have to be so revolutionary — hey, we're getting more computers all of the time, aren't we? They will say that the training for a lot of the new tasks that future systems will require our soldiers to perform will be handled by requiring that embedded training be built into the systems. And, if the next war points out some shortfalls in individual or collective training, well, the guys will have to learn in theater. It worked in World War II (see *Closing with the Enemy* by Micheal Doubler) and with Desert Storm, didn't it (see "Points of Attack" this issue)? Those of us who were in the battalions and squadrons need only think back to the breach training complexes "somewhere in the desert" in Saudi Arabia to appreciate the point. One need only to recall all of the many things you did in the desert that would have got you killed at a CTC to also appreciate that even the best hands-on training isn't ironclad — some of the lessons we learn at the CTCs (hopefully, a small number) are things we have to unlearn when real bad guys, with real death loaded into their bullet launchers, are opposing your operation. If we have capabilities that we aren't using because our soldiers and junior leaders can't handle them — change the training, radically.

Make no mistake about it. Change is what has to happen for us to get the most out of our digitized force, and change is what we must wholeheartedly embrace if we are to keep ourselves relevant as a branch in the eyes of the CINCs who must ask for us, and the congressmen and representatives who have little experience with us, but must fund us. With the digitized force, large-scale battles against large, well-armed foes are still quite possible, but even in those situations, no enemy's center of gravity is going to be safe from the situationally-aware 21st century armored task force, brigade combat team, or cavalry regiment, or maneuver groups, or what ever you want to call them. These organizations will be capable of maneuvering right to the enemy's most valuable, sensitive, vulnerable spots, and like the character Billy Jack in the 1970's movie said, "there

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