

Controlling Armor's Destiny

by Brigadier General John Kirk (Retired)

Although we pay a lot of lip service these days to the need for original, "out-of-the-box" thinking, my IN basket does not run over with unorthodox story ideas or revolutionary concepts. These seem to come more frequently in phone conversations with John Kirk, who remains engaged, concerned...and usually right...after 15 years of retirement. So, dammit, listen up... —Ed.

Armor's active component is an endangered species. We're fat, slow deploying, and too terrain-restricted and logistically hungry for a force projection Army. And we fight *mano-a-mano*, which means casualties. In contrast, the Navy and Air Force can deploy fast. Precision weaponeers of our own and brother services claim the ability to achieve politically popular, allegedly cheap, "nearly bloodless" victories alone. As a result, we're losing battles of survival at TRADOC, DA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and Congress. Armor's life is at risk.

THE CHALLENGE

The purpose of this article is to throw down a gauntlet that challenges the men of armor and cavalry to fix that — to design and control your own and your branch's futures. Our brotherhood seems to have lost its historic long-range perspective, focus, voice, and impact. Process has become our major product. If this and other military journals are indicators, our mental mobility and future vision have dimmed. The void in contrasting futuristic arguments hints that political correctness may be suppressing concerned divergent views.

THE MESSAGE

Our thinking and objective operational systems must reach for a distant horizon, unconstrained by the concepts, systems and support structures that are the suboptimal tools of our times. **"Armor isn't a branch of service, it's a state of mind"** is an aging but pertinent maxim. It's now more crucial to Armor and the Army than at any time since the 1930s. Successful Armor leaders, cavalrymen, and fighter pilots share similar skills and mindsets. Systems are secondary to their "state of mind" in battle — competence, clear concepts, decisiveness, attack spirit, courage, perspective and flair.

We're custodians of that spirit, not a thing called Tank or singular branch of service. Our heritage is creation and decisive employment of joint/combined arms teams with firepower, protected mobility and shock effect to win battles, wars, and perform operations short of war (OSW).

A BEGINNING

The "challenges" of Force XXI rightly concern many soldiers. We need to shake that dinger, fix the force, and move on — fast. Despite bruised feelings and honest doubts, digitization, info systems, target acquisition and precision fires are needed operational evolutions (EMA). They're speed bumps, ramps and transitions, not a "revolution." From my grille door view, new

system "leverages" are surprising mostly in their mechanical, experiential, operational, and conceptual fragility, not innovation or exploited technology. Brigade and Division XXI look like recycled, decades-old ideas. But whether Rev or Evolution, new systems must make our "varsity" as winning joint/combined arms teammates, not islands. Their toughest tests are yet to come — field-proofing by troopers that busted the Army's last improved anvil. All hands need to take part, with ruthlessness — even harsh — fairness and integrity.

We all need to take disciplined "time outs" from duties and monitors to view the world farsightedly and refresh our "state of mind." Then we need a blitzkrieg — fast, focused, coordinated, *sponsored* action before Armor's future is surrendered *nolo contendere*, outrun or outflanked by other branches and services. Read *Armed Forces Journal International* (AFJI), October 1998 issue, let your blood boil, then firewall your throttles to:

- **Take the initiative with a forceful, focused breakout from encirclement to control Armor's doctrinal and operational future.** Draft *FM 100-5*, '98, was withdrawn from circulation/comment — again. Good news! Bad book! Its recall was *prima facie* evidence of doctrine's unstable future concepts gyro, ours included.
- **Use futuristic operational concepts to redefine, validate and refine Armor's long term roles, missions, and systems.** The shape of future battle, strategic deployability, joint/combined arms conventional operations, those in difficult terrain and Operations Short of War (OSW) remain huge issues.
- **FORCE science and industry to get their snouts out of the slow-moving, low/no risk government dollar feed trough** to develop the capabilities mounted arms need to meet future strategic requirements and complement the projected operational abilities of our brother services.

DISHARMONIES

Armor's future world-mobile, multi-mission combined arms doctrine and team are at risk in a vacuum. Senior leaders are trying to meet present needs, satisfy the political, technical, and budgetary interests of "higher" and industry while the force dukes out today's ground truth. In the meantime, our future's doctrinal horse is a runaway headed for the Beltway Corral with too many riders. It won't be broke right by The Compliance Chorus, SAMS' Chanters, Jargoneers or Fiscal Strings.

The doctrinal vacuum, digital evangelism, damaging budgets and "missions too far" are corrosive to the spirit that's central to the joint/combined arms team's now and future capabilities.

To many, it seems that operations and outfits are being force-fitted with stovepipe or *ad hoc* systems, not integrated functional ones or tailored applique. "Revolutionizing" seems to have attitudinally divided our combined arms into (Bill) Gatesian indentured strata instead of the teams that are Armor's vital commodities. At the high end of the food chain, in environmentally controlled splendor, are the info, process, and precision warriors. Middlemen target and send undigested data masses down. The low end seems to be the combined arms, now appar-

ently relegated to base establishment, housekeeping, and killing trickle-throughs.

Doesn't look or sound like joint/combined arms or any possible future battlefield to me.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Rifts are constructive opportunities. A unifying joint/combined arms operational concept (construct) must be the driving force behind new doctrine and future systems. Clear, clean, impartial concepts must displace zealotry and uncertainty, then be imbedded in people, schools, system designs, operational tests and go to war (or close to it). Troopers in the holes, hulls, cupolas and CPs of the Armor Force need to mount up, take *their* initiative and challenge the system to make the positive, assertive, forward-looking changes that Reforge the Thunderbolt.

REFORGING THE THUNDERBOLT

"Forge...to beat into shape." Webster

"Reforging's" Line of Departure is the Principles of War. Paraphrasing Will Rogers' famed comment on weather, "Almost nobody talks about the Principles of War and nobody does anything about 'em." We need to cross the LD with common sense and plain talk leading. We must modernize, then integrate the Principles into a coherent body of things good leaders and outfits really do, not let them continue to stand as moss-gathering totems. History, experience, and reality must be merged smoothly with operational/technological developments in a flexible, mission-centered way. Our doctrinaires must get to the core, say what they mean simply and cleanly in our profession's language, free of distorting "interdisciplinary" jargon, foggy metaphors, fuzzy logics and abstruse ideas. Their products need brutal probabilistic tests against the next century's known and potential threats in real places, with critical audiences, not demonstrations among friends and "interests."

FM 100-5 ('98 Draft) said "...Principles...are the foundation of Army doctrine." Yeah, right! So *that's* why writers led them with 22 pages of superfluous executive summary and intro explanations with text by operational dilettantes, systems analysts, engineers, designers and code-writers. Wrong stuff! We need to shut down, then restart the engine of change. Here's an approach to creating a "type" framework and logic that leaders and technocrats can use *to mutually shape technology into operations' hammer* rather than stamping joint/combined arms into shapes determined by technology's human nature-free, process-oriented mechanics:

- **Update the Principles of War (Operations).** Displace Centuries 18/19 to Century 21 ASAP. Year 1800 concepts don't fit the weapons, concepts, or experience of the last 200 years or 2010/2025 estimates. Impose high probability demands on information systems, weapons, forces, multi-mission operational concepts and human factors.
- **Connect 'em with what outfits really do.** Get "principles" into a context everyone can understand and use. Institutions and leadership must create an operational construct and spread it throughout the force so that E4 through fielded O10 have shared concepts and the tools to execute them. Then we must create a reciprocal top-to-bottom climate of absolute mutual trust and gain freedom of action from our superiors instead of their mission and careerist fail-safe constraints.
- **Project them into the future.** More later.

REFORGING I — HAMMERING (Confessions of an Iclauseclast)

The Principles of War have become an atrophied, unaccountable list, not organs of a living, evolving operational being. We've perpetuated dated concepts — levels of war as a construct, Mass and Offensive as Principles, determinism as a strategic/operational calculus. We, like the classicists, are looking for the yellow brick road to "certain" success, fighting past wars deterministically better, not future ones probabilistically well.

The Principles were first published as War Department Regulations No.10-5 in 1921. In the 78 years since, and lacking assertion-challenging institutional or academic cultures in our Army, we've questioned them less than involved, educated professional soldiers should. We and our field manuals have repeated 18/19 century fossils like nodding dogs. Wordsmithing has been substituted for thoughtful changes to compensate for the hugely altered dimensions, conditions, and tools of 20th century war. The lapse has often profoundly damaged or retarded Army doctrine, systems and battle performance.

Clausewitz' "*Vom Kriege*," 1832, is widely accepted as forming much of the theoretical foundation of the art of war. It's gained and retained neo-biblical status. His works and those of other "masters" of military theory — Du Picq, Jomini, Sun Tzu, *et al*, (Who's read Seversky, Douhet, Mahan?) have earned our admiration, not fawning recitals. They'd have expected better of us than rote repetition in the face of sweeping geopolitical, socioeconomic, and technological changes in this century.

"Visions" being "in," here's one — Clausewitz, Du Picq, & Co. (absent Fuller), in Bierstube Valhalla, sobbing or laughing uncontrollably because we haven't updated their stuff in 100-150 years. Think about it. What's the likelihood that those bright guys' ideas would be unaffected by: rifled/automatic weapons; internal combustion engines; global mass transport; flight/aerospace power; ICBMs; nukes; acquisition means; telecommunications; info technology; huge jumps in weapons ranges and lethalties; geography; socioeconomic structures; others? C'mon, doctrinaires and reviewers, think again.

We need a reality check. Many of Clausewitz's loudest champions are pretenders. No one used Clausewitz or the Principles of War in my 27+ years' service — in command guidance, war plans, orders, exercises, critiques, or after-actions (AAR) from platoon to department, peace, war or at the NTC — except me, badly. Almost no one's read his 19th century original. Few have struggled through his translated tangled logics and turgid prose. In their essays in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Rothfels ('44) noted that "*On War*...is reverently called a 'classic,' though one that seems more quoted than actually read." Paret ('86) said Clausewitz's "...influence on the manner in which wars are prepared for and fought is difficult to discern and even harder to verify."

Levels of War - Clausewitz's simplistic concept of three levels of war — strategic, operational, tactical — reflects a small nation and its continental conflicts in simpler times. Today, our Armed Forces serve in a volatile world whose aerospace systems, geopolitics, global transportation, and telecommunications have added complexities Clausewitz never imagined. Army doctrine must now embrace not just war, but the spectrum of operational tasks U.S. forces may perform.

A couple of examples tell the tale. The two-team, locked and loaded Task Force Tyree that confronted the Soviets at Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie in 1961 was controlled by SACEUR under the National Command Authority (NCA). Its commanders

knew they were strategic instruments, not mere “tactical” units. President Lyndon Johnson’s Red Rocket messages, circa the mid-60’s, could reach a force of any size and stop its action in minutes. We’ve seen similar deviations from Clausewitz’s theory in the Dominican Republic, Panama, Bosnia, Mogadishu etc. The NCA now often takes virtual control of parts or all of strategy *and* operations as it did in Desert Storm and last November’s recall of strike aircraft headed for Iraq.

Today, a single headquarters may fulfill the operational and one or two other roles simultaneously. Operations may be uniservice, joint, interdepartmental, combined or United Nations operations. The bottom line is that Clausewitz’s tidy concept just doesn’t fit our often complex goals, force mixes, and command and control, which are task-organized as needed in any combination (or omission) from these “levels:”

Strategic. Establishes policies, aims, provides resources, controls as desired.

Operational. Conducts operations to successfully prosecute the strategy.

Task(s). Loosely categorized as war (or combat) and Operations Short of War (OSW).

Mission(s). “Secure..Stabilize..Restore..” etc. Tactics are a mission function, not a level.

Mass as a Principle is dead, too. From Neanderthal man through the musket, massed formations were generally needed to produce winning combat power for forces armed with short range, limited lethality weapons. Clausewitz, “the Mahdi of mass,” deduced law from that past, but lacked a crystal ball. Mass shouldn’t have been more than *a* tactic or technique since the advent of rifled small arms and cannon. Technical evolutions were generally unrecognized by doctrine in WWI, except by the Germans at the Somme. Clausewitz’s disciples, Ludendorff and Foch, threw wool-clad soldiers at Maxim machine guns, rapid fire cannon and gas in mass “offensives.” Airpower, Sagger swarms, modern target acquisition, precision munitions, and exponentially increased lethality should have written *finis* to this notion. The crosses manning countless cemeteries from Shiloh to the Somme, at San Pietro, Huertgen, the Pacific, Korea, and Vietnam, as well as charred hulls from Algeria to the Euphrates, mutely demand elimination of mass as a principle. The constituency of our dead have a doctrinal voice we must hear — compellingly — or their sacrifice will have been vain.

Superiority of joint/combined arms combat power is mass’s modern descendent. Created at decisive times and places, it’s elemental to winning. Superiority normally results from maneuver and the focused effects of multiple systems. Mass, like infiltration, is a situation-dependent tactic to attain decisive **Superiority**. For obscure reasons, the change is unrecognized or not clearly articulated. “Effects of mass” (Draft *FM 100-5*), is an unstudied preservation of a bloody sacred cow. Such Closetwits should read Hart’s *Strategy*, Jomini and Napoleon’s *Maxims* 42, 72, 73, 74, 77, 81, 93, 95, and 115 ’til they pass Military Thought, K thru 8.

Offensive, conjoined with “mass,” was blindly adhered to in WWI, costing Europe a generation of men. It was little kinder to Pershing’s Army. Clausewitz hypothesized that the offensive was central to gaining the Initiative and thus was key to winning. Our doctrine has slavishly followed. Both are wrong. There’s no doubt that Initiative is vital to winning. The force having it plays the tune while the other guy dances. But early and recent history disproves Clausewitz’s “offensive” hypothe-

sis in both old and modern war. Nathaniel Greene wrote the “irregular” warfare book in our own Revolution. His exhaustion of Tarleton led to Yorktown. Tito, Mao and Giap showed us that, like Superiority, Initiative can be gained or seized in many ways, only one of which is the offensive. They include defensive-offensive, mobile defense, ambush, surprise, attrition, psy-war and other combinations of means, times, places and methods. An attack spirit and capability *is* central to successful offense, defense, or retrograde operations. An attack completes a strategic defensive-offensive for the winner.

Simplicity was in Clausewitz’s book, but he couldn’t think or write that way. Our concepts and language have followed his lead and need treatment as a sucking head wound. We can only hope we confuse our enemies more than us. We’ve created modern battle’s most effective obscurants with “military language” reports, orders, and “information systems” which make quantity and dominance synonyms! MG “P” Wood led 4th Armored in WWII without a single formal order. Conversely, we’ve created classic Clausewitzian friction with complex concepts; functional misfits (domains, cognitive, “branches and sequins,” etc); approval-seeking, trendy, murky verbiage; Malapropisms (asymmetry, synchronization); hosts of restrictive measures by no-casualties/zero-defect leaders; diarrheic intent; multi-word missions (where one would do); interdisciplinary jargon; newly coined words; complex maneuvers, orders, and control measures.

Determinism Versus Probabilism. Our operational theory and practice have been and remain habitually deterministic, a characteristic which history, logic and experience weigh heavily against. Few soldiers or their political masters understand probability in operations or how multipliers and risk-taking affect winning economically in war’s jungle of random events and probabilities. Let’s look at both.

- **Determinism**, endemic to man, is epidemic in the Army. The causes are complex. They start with playground logic: “I’ve got mor’n you got, so I’ll win.” When we enter adulthood discomfort arises over the uncertain game ends of life, death, and career. Many adopt rule-based value systems, “guaranteeing” a “successful” result: “If I do this, what I want *will* result.” Stairway to the stars personnel systems and *pro forma* measures like CTLs, ARTEPs, matrices, decision lines, and some checklists reinforce our early learning by seeming to guarantee “right” outcomes. It’s also a fool’s-safe approach to war and OSW, a comforting, simplistic logic that’s consistent with computers, but contrary to many acts of man, natural law, and probability. Operationally, it’s created: “correlation of forces;” mass-reliant frontal attacks; sieges; attrition warfare; indecisive, shallow envelopments; and slow recognition and exploitation of opportunities. Determinism demeans the intelligence, creative thought, will, worth and imagination of men on both sides. It also needlessly expends resources and kills soldiers in high density, low-to-no career risk operations. It exalts both correlation and diminishing returns — Monty of Alamein/Goodwood/Market Garden, Clark of Cassino, and Orlando at Anzio — counting tubes, rounds, treads, heads, fears and escalating resources toward an impossible probability of one (P=1) instead of weighing capabilities and opportunities. Determinism’s utility is limited — *rough* estimates, maintenance, pre-combat and prep-to-fire checks, pre-flights, small units and operations where Rule One, Rogers’ Rangers, means life or death.

- **Probabilism’s** more realistic, analyzing the “...likelihood...an event will occur..” or “If we do these things, we’ll

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probably get this result.” In war and life, probability’s king, randomness and accident its court jesters, diminishing returns a law. “Certainty” normally isn’t, and “probably” most often is. As a discipline, probabilism’s gaining fast among doctors and others who find that determinism’s rule-based logics or specialist medicine often produces marginal or just plain wrong answers. They’re turning (returning) to “whole-person” medicine. We should join’em! Probabilism in operations isn’t science or mathematics! It’s a complex of “whole battlespace” situational estimates linked to FOCUS (see below). Its got to be taught historically, academically, in AARs and repeatedly in simulations. Hannibal, Napoleon, Jackson at Cross Keys and Port Republic, Grierson and Grant at Vicksburg, Patton, MacArthur at Inchon were probabilists. Guderian, Rommel and Balck, too, who did the “impossible” with 20-60 tanks. It seems no accident that a good number of our better WWII leaders, civilian and military, were pretty good poker players. They understood risk, probability, human psychology and the likelihood that an event would or wouldn’t happen. *Probabilistic tactics make deep and/or double envelopments, turns, deep exploitations and fluid defense majority, not minority, tactics and Speed a critical factor* in force operations. But, from Rommel’s papers, “...Men should never be allowed to get the feeling that...casualties have been calculated...that is the end of all enthusiasm.” Napoleon’s supposed to have said, “I don’t want marshals who are good, just those who are lucky.”

- Blending and situationally balancing determinism and probabilism is the right operational answer and must be embedded in the “art” part of war (See FOCUS, later). No single equation or method of estimation will work. Whole battlespace probability, *a minimum of prudent determinism*, and related evaluative disciplines are critical skills to be taught and practiced, cradle to grave, and be rigorously applied to war and OSW. Our officer and NCO corps have not been taught them, or practiced them in disciplined school, simulation, or active operations environments. The estimates taught in schools are long on processes, short on product, and a separate subject. Today, we must teach estimation in minutes and seconds, not hours or days. Tactical exercises should have *no less than* three

feasible courses of action with varying degrees of likely winning payoff, human costs, attendant risk, and rigorous examination of governing factors.

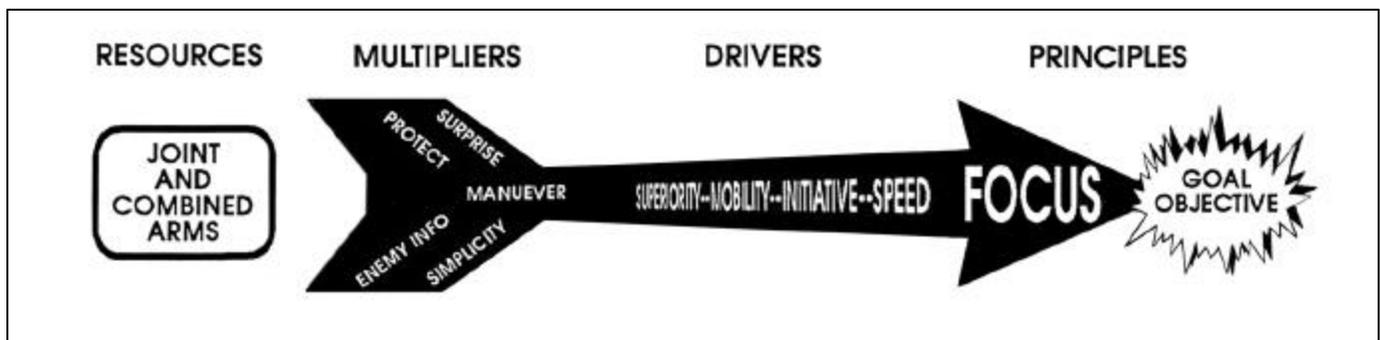
**REFORGING II:
Blending the Principles, or Common Sense Operations**

Half a career ago, a CG asked his ADC(M)’s prediction of the division’s likely performance at the NTC. Reply: “If we don’t win, you should fire me.” They “won,” by throwing out the *FM 100-5* and training dogma of the time. Leaders, troopers, and serendipity evolved a doctrine for the division. Its two consecutive “winning” rotations left a demoralized OPFOR as their footprint in the NTC sand. There have been too few “winnings” since.

Twenty years of outcomes at the NTC show that we haven’t gained much from the adventure, doctrinally or operationally. The OPFOR was born to lose — to well-led, genuinely combat-ready (C1) outfits. Failure of BLUEFOR to “win” suggests serious shortfalls in doctrine, schooling, “mentoring,” force training, resources — or the will to tell it like it is. The NTC has long offered the Army an unprecedented world-best tool to measure its products, then correct deficiencies in the processes that made them. Its data could also provide the objective foundation for training budgets and readiness risk analyses for DoD and Congress, instead of the subjective guesses still used at the NTC or JRTC.

Doctrine based on ephemeral intellectual hypotheses and performance-shrouding euphemisms won’t fix what’s broke. Officials intone “great training”...“super leader learning”...and other phrases for losing. We’re only fooling us. Blue soldiers and unquotable outside observers mostly describe results as “We lost,” adverbied by “bad” or “again.” Rationalization isn’t readiness to troops. Transmogrifying “go to war” training into paint-ball games with camouflaged results and no accountability promotes denial, not candor. Too few grime time “Top Guns” in commanders’ hatches in an environment free mostly of free maneuver and loaded with constraining orders, control measures, and other initiative-killers, are clear predictors of their futures in live operations. Marshall MacLuhan said the medium is the message. The NTC’s message is Process=Product. We’ve busted the corporate leveling bubble, reversed alchemy, or built a perpetual motion mediocrity machine.

If war and preparation for it are man’s most perfect forms of waste, the only product an army can have is winning, anytime, at least cost, in its nation’s human or other resources. In that context, our Continental European-based doctrine doesn’t provide the sound conceptual footings modern war, operations short of war, or training demand. The construct below is a recreation and small tribute to thousands of men and women who



did or will do the job right – winning. It isn't too divergent from the "masters" and seems supported by history. It's a trial balloon for your consideration, argument, and hopefully one start point for Armor's future. Certainty ISN'T included. Whatever evolves, remember that every operation has an inherent degree of probability and risk you must identify, weigh, and be balanced for.

PRINCIPLES

Principles are the bases for conduct of all Joint and Combined military operations in the accomplishment of a Joint force, national, or supranational purpose. There are two, GOAL (or objective) and FOCUS.

Goal (or Objective). *Define a clear, decisive, attainable and unambiguous goal (strategic) or objective (operational) for military operations.* At high levels, military force is used to accomplish largely political ends. Operationally, terrain or force objectives are often assigned as means to accomplish the overall goal. The goal or objective (aim in some armies) is the driving force for mission statements and concepts of operations. Clarity and Simplicity must dominate.

Focus. *Converge decisive, unified combined arms combat power and the collective will of the force on the fast, economical accomplishment of the goal or objective.* Focus functionally integrates minds, concepts, means and spirit to splinter (disintegrate, destroy coherence of, disassemble) enemy operations rapidly, defeat him in detail (piecemeal) with superior forces, exploit outcomes quickly to win at least practical cost in the nation's human and other resources. *Focus is simultaneously a principle of war, a property of the force and the battle art of command and staff.*

• **Focus, the principle,** *stresses disassembling enemy concepts, forces, and their will and ability to fight while retaining perspective of the operation's relation to and interdependency with the larger force.* It aims at disintegrating the enemy and killing them in detail (piecemeal) rather than a single large, destructive fight, unless that's the best or only option (kill with rapiers, not clubs). Converge all available means on contributing directly or indirectly to winning. Forces may, *but need not be,* physically massed in time or space. Integrate available combat power of all arms/services into unified joint/combined arms teams reporting to or cooperating with one boss to perform or support stated or implied mission(s). Prioritize (economize) to create superior joint/combined arms combat power in the main effort. Unity includes cooperation, supporting, OPCON or attachment. Assure mutual maneuver support in time and space, not just fires. If that's infeasible, weigh risks. "Simultaneity" violates Focus. Wrongly interpreted, it may unduly dilute the main effort, slow tempo, or cool fast burners by shooting too many targets with too many things at once. Birdshot's no substitute for concentrated fires. A similar malapropistic mistake created the "synchronized" corps' creeping steel trench in the Gulf.

• **Focus, the property** *is the ingrained ability of the force as a whole to execute operations using commonly shared concepts, methods, and tactics to accomplish the mission fast with minimum guidance or detailed control by commanders.* From squad to joint headquarters, shared understanding of the Army's concepts and methods of operations should — with mission, a sketch, and a small number of least restrictive control measures possible — convey command intent completely. Command at the critical point, not at a monitor, and

intercede only as essential. "Command/control what you should, not what you can" should be the Bible's 11th commandment! (See Letters, Jan-Feb '98 *ARMOR*, p. 55.)

• **Focus, the battle art of command and staff,** *is an institutionally taught, self-studied and mentored skill which results in a disciplined, integrated continuum of concept(s), convergent employment of superior joint/combined arms combat power and actions directed at attaining a goal or specific objective.* It is analogous to a lens — light from many sources is concentrated to produce controlled effects at a place and time. Focus is the commander's version of the fighter pilot's OODA loop (Observation, Orientation, Decision, Action). In single word Armyese: See; Sort; Orient; Decide; Act; Recycle.

See your battlespace, those adjacent.	Decide, fast ("Like lightning"—Rommel).
Sort out the mission's success vitals.	Act, fast (same).
Orient on exploiting vitals/fixing busted ones.	Recycle to See for continuous follow-through.

Commanders and staff, Army-wide, must be schooled and experienced so they share a habitual, almost subconscious, common operational concept and thought pattern. Staffs must use decentralized authorities to make their own estimates and take actions in parallel with fast (not hasty) command estimates, without guidance or approval, knowing that they and their commander have a high likelihood or certainty of reaching the same or similar conclusions and decisions. They complete anticipatory actions, often through and including warning orders, and some unit moves, and have to recall or modify almost none with command guidance and decisions only fine-tuning staff preps. *Linear, metronomic sequences cost time, inhibit early, free coordination/flow of ideas, and create event-driven execution, not opportunity-driven exploitation.* This characteristic of Manstein, Rommel, Balck, Patton, their chiefs of staff, and their staffs permitted dramatic feats of combined arms. At Tobruk, LTC Westphal, G3 of the Afrika Korps, recalled a Rommel-directed division attack on his own authority. A furious Rommel sulked, but said nothing. Westphal was right.

DRIVERS

Drivers create force, disintegrating speed, high tempo, overwhelming momentum and/or psychological advantage in offensive, defensive, and retrograde operations.

Speed. *Attain/maintain the highest possible speed in everything the command does consistent with accuracy, carefully maintaining the distinction between accuracy and precision (often unrelated).* Lightning decisions, instant initiative on opportunities, rapid and accurate response to any valid order are keys to success of own, next higher and lower commands. Speed is reasoned and modestly orderly, haste often an ill-considered, imbalanced knee-jerk response. Speed exponentially increases shock effect of any action. It facilitates Surprise, by acting faster than the enemy expects, imbalances him with ability to hit him several times, ways, and places in a short time and clouds and confuses his estimate of you. It also creates quickness — fast response to orders, reports or threats to the outfit. It may give "armor protection" in some situations by making targets so fleeting the enemy can't engage. Unsure commanders who demand precise versus accurate information waste time, destroy speed, frustrate subordinates, and kill exploitable opportunity and troopers. *The distinction between un-*

digested, time-wasting data and decision-critical information must be made and disciplined without quarter, Army-wide.

Initiative. *Seize and retain freedom of choice of where, when, how or if you will fight.* Gain Surprise by any means, maintain continuous pressure and high *apparent* operational tempo. Force the enemy to react to your threats, real or imagined. Exploit every profitable opportunity consistent with mission/risk. Use raids, patrols, limited objective attacks, sweeps, attacks by fire, interdiction and disinformation. Delegate exploitation authority to the lowest *competent level* with the abilities and resources. Leaders seeing a high value, low risk opportunity within the context of the operation should take it, report the decision and results, and support or join its exploitation by their parent command as a whole.

Superior Relative Mobility. *Gain and sustain the (mounted)(dismounted) ability of the force to move faster than the enemy under any conditions of weather (WX) and terrain.* Mobility is *not* mere movement of men and machines about the battlefield. Broadly, it's an integral comprised of the clearly focused mental, physical, operational, judgmental, and mechanical skills of the outfit as a team. Decisive maneuver almost always demands Mobility superior to that of the enemy. Next to Focus and Initiative, Mobility is key. Keep yours, restrict or remove his, and you normally win. Demand/attain near design rates of speed from troops/systems, despite often adverse conditions. High Mobility is an act of will and unit pride, leader through soldier. There are seven parts: mental; physical; speed (see above); fixing; weather/terrain; breaching/crossing, and recovery.

- **Mental toughness, the ability to inspire yourself and your outfit beyond norms, is basic** — toward design max of vehicles/aircraft. A near-fanatical “We can’t be stopped” spirit in crews, units, support. Max use of air fires, drops. In Table 91, Gulf War, command caution, control measures, and dressing artillery lines constrained speed, decisive maneuver, hence results. Imagination often needed. See Jackson, Sherman, Grier-son, Crook, Moseby, Rommel Papers, etc.
- **Physical mobility requires intimate knowledge of men and machines.** Patton’s aphorism on fatigue applies to mental (above), soldier stamina, and maintenance. You must push the limits of human endurance. Logistics can kill mobility.
- **Fix by removing the enemy’s mobility with whatever works.** Use man’s/nature’s obstacles and USAF/Army Aviation in attack and defense to temporarily protect flanks. Paralyze small threats with quick MLRS strikes. Good deception can freeze enemy maneuver forces, reserves.
- **Wx/Terrain must be a leader’s personal field skill more than G2/S2/ALO estimation.** Needs keen observation/Imitation Intuition Extract (IIE) (Call or write). Ability to weigh Wx/terrain risk to advantage often beats pro-pessimists’ forecasts, produces biggest payoff with decisive maneuver/surprise. Use Cav/Scouts as themselves, not phony tanks or infantry. Commander and at least one crew/squad per platoon, corps wide, must be scout-trained. Maximize use of trusted detainees/EPW.
- **Breach/cross obstacles fast as in-stride, impromptu drills.** Engineers up! Deliberate’s slow, costly – a method for the unskilled, unready, or Volga crossings.
- **Recovery/evacuation is a drill skill and art d’triage through corps.** It should never slow mission accomplishment. Mutual recovery is a vital capability to maintain unit strength

and integrity. It mandates a tow bar on every second vehicle. In the Gulf, one artillery battery lost a tube early, towed it throughout the operation. It fired every mission. An adjacent unit with a like problem destroyed the gun “to prevent capture.” Stupid. Our Army won’t have this right until the capability’s provided and the habit is burned into every outfit. We also have to figure out who’ll do triage, perform last rites, wash body parts from hulls, reform, rearm, and lead renewed units back to battle. Unpleasant.

Superiority. *Employ all available joint/combined arms forces, drivers, and multipliers, particularly Maneuver, Surprise and Initiative, as an integrated whole to attain a winning qualitative advantage over the enemy, a quantitative one when necessary or advantageous.* We must become maneuver, not firepower addicts. Fully integrated combined arms smartly employed in decisive maneuver create effects disproportionate to their numbers. The best results are had when enemy capabilities critical to his physical, conceptual or psychological success are selectively killed, neutralized, or immobilized — fast — in a priority that creates economy. Concurrent rapid, violent, deep envelopments disintegrate or destroy the rest, and on own initiative roll into exploitation nonstop. Force ratios, correlation of forces, and decision lines are the absolute deterministic enemies of good operations in any but exceptional, tightly orchestrated cases like crossing the Atlantic (or the Alps).

MULTIPLIERS

Multipliers create combat power exponentially greater than the resources committed. They must be rigidly disciplined and adhered to almost unexceptionally. Commanders deviate at their discretion, but only after carefully weighing risks of doing so against opportunity, and concluding that probability of success outweighs risks and that coherence of the overall operation will be kept. Other factors the commander considers vital to success may be added, but not many. There are two times in a soldier’s life when he should lie and cheat — to gain surprise and to protect his force using every deception the outfit’s capable of.

Maneuver. *Dynamically employ superior, fast-moving joint/combined arms forces to gain a time/space/place advantage over an enemy, disintegrate his operations, destroy his forces or seize an objective as stated or implied by the mission.* Maneuver’s purpose is to gain a positional leverage which creates decisively superior force at a time and place of your choosing, winning that fight and flowing into exploitation fast. It’s ubiquitous, casting its shadow over all combat (and political) operations. It is the major reason for the existence of Drivers and Multipliers and establishes their relative value in each operation. Surprise is normally an essential part.

Maneuver’s a strolling window shopper in our Army — cautious, shallow, pleasantly indecisive. Simple mob tactics relying on mass and throw weights to make right are more the rule. Post-WWII, Armor and Cavalry lost their way in Korea, Europe’s Cold War neo-trench warfare, and the jungles of Vietnam. Infantry still view any mobility means other than shanks’ mare and parachutes as just trucks — helitrucks, armored trucks, and wheeled trucks — useful for movement, but not related to real maneuver. Artillery’s flirtation with mobility and maneuver in the Gulf may be diluted, and “fire-base-itis” revived by long-range, precision munitions whose success is more video-apparent than real. Beyond that, we’re historically fixated on the big shows, rather than gut lessons for our future. The Civil War, blitzkrieg, and the Patton dramas, among others, have blinded us to many maneuver lessons of American and

other arms. This “Gettysburg-itis” leaves the Khan, Subutai, Grierson, Crook, Moseby, Forrest, the British Long Range Desert Group, Merrill, Inchon, the battles of the German Eastern Front, and others largely unstudied despite messages that often transcend those of Overlord and the Bulge. We’ve lost the maneuver message.

Maneuver of joint/combined arms demands men and women steeped in history, command, and field operations since their oath, and brutal, career-affecting realism in our training and readiness centers. It needs corporate emphasis, in-depth historical and experiential grasp, mentoring, the ability to thrust trust to the lowest level (power down), accept some disorder, take some risks. Planning for and execution of modern battle and maneuver are too important to be left in the hands of operational gadflies, pedants, or mere theoreticians. Commanders who are unwilling to put their futures in the hands of squad leader, O3s, O5s, and O6s, whom they were responsible to mentor, opt for safety rather than making bold strokes. Stochastic, man-in-the-loop simulations give us an unprecedented opportunity in this respect, but back-spacing is no substitute for being smart enough to do things right. Some points:

- Risk is part of life and maneuver. Learn to exploit it, not run from it.
- Fire and airpower alone seize and retain or physically control nothing.
- EMA notwithstanding, fire supports maneuver, not the reverse.
- Successful maneuver demands a high degree of subordinate initiative, operations decentralized to the lowest *competent* level, and few restrictions. Unwillingness or inability to decentralize shows subordinate resources are too low, mentoring failed, or you distrust your own products.
- Threat gaps or discontinuities must be sought continuously, exploited instantly.
- Envelopments must be decisively deep and exploited fast. Double envelopment’s an art form to be mastered, team through fielded army.
- Flank attacks are generally useful only to small units. Higher, they’re indecisively shallow.
- Delay must be a “defend” nature of resistance, including violent local counterattacks, not fire and fall back. Corps should practice having divisions do it so cavalry can get back to cavalry business.
- Ambush psychology (sneak, hide, deceive, pounce) and forms are elemental to smart maneuvers. It leverages force, simplifies orders, forms mental pictures easily, has intent wordlessly embedded.
- Winning’s your sole criterion, not process or press (media).

Simplicity. Make Simplicity permeate everything the command does — concepts, plans, orders language, and actions. Simplicity is our Army’s longest term deserter, not a simple AWOL. As a multiplier, Simplicity counters Clausewitz’ fog and friction of war. With Focus and freedom of Maneuver, Simplicity hatches Initiative in subordinates! It’s heavily reliant on the Army, its institutions, and commands mentoring and leading by example. A common operational framework and concepts, single or few-word mission language, an ambush psychology, and ruthless elimination of toney vocabularies and cool jargon would help. Ambitious people capture the “essence”

(smell) of “expert” language, then rush to inflict the same junk on seniors and subordinates for effect when simple words would do. Troopers who roll their eyes up and slump in their seats are sending them a message, Over.

Give plans and orders that see operations in as great a depth in time and space as you can foresee to assure understanding, delegate freedom of action, gain and retain momentum. After their planned start, operations generally become improv (as in music), so *use the minimum number and least restrictive control measures possible to reduce change conflicts, retain flexibility, and promote sub-leader initiative.* Excessive detail in orders erodes confidence and morale by conveying distrust. Control measure-induced “slowness” often kills more of our men/things than direct hostile action. “Intent” paragraphs, *perhaps* needed at corps and division, should be infrequent at brigade, superfluous below that, except in extraordinarily complex or subtle operations.

In all but rare cases, written intent from brigade down is *prima facie* evidence that the Army’s institutions, its officer corps and NCO corps, haven’t gotten their conceptual and mentoring acts together or are personally insecure. Intent that is understood and acted upon by all hands consistently over time comes from force-wide shared operational concepts, *effective* education, officer and NCO mentoring by capable seniors, trust-based training, simple mission orders and pictures in the sand, on butcher paper, in person, or via teleconference. Examples from the Gulf War are atrocities that seem written for “I ordered ’em to” defenses against the press or a special prosecutor rather than operations. Some mission orders start at stand-to, finish at lunch. Two-minute FRAGOs draw fire and EW. Most of the FRAGOs sent in to this magazine as solutions to tactical vignettes deserve burning because of length, complexity, and telling folks what the commander should have already taught them. In sum, simplicity must be branded on the minds of the Army’s body politic, then be bodyguarded by draconian discipline to restore it to our concepts and the words and pictures used to express them. It’s professionally embarrassing that Tom Clancy’s *Into the Storm* captured the essence of Army doctrine better in fewer, simpler words than our doctrine writers.

Surprise. Hit the enemy with fire, maneuver, or both in times, places, weather, or ways he least expects and for which he’s physically or mentally unready. Create virtual unreality in your opponent’s head. Make him disbelieve his ability to execute his doctrine, or beat you *mano-a-mano*, or as an outfit. Use deception, Speed, Initiative, Maneuver to gain Surprise. Strike at unexpected times and places with unexpected tactics, speed, violence, or strength. Create and sustain an ambush mindset in subordinates. Use ambush forms in defense, adapt them to offense. They convey mission, concept, intent and coordination in FRAGOs fast, simply, completely. Avoid predictable patterns in feeding, fueling, arming, and fixing. Exploit enemy habits. Fatigue can be your ally or enemy, so sustain a tempo and pressure that tires him without collapsing you or your soldiers. Reverse cycle operations work well mixed with others. Until all threats equal our night vision and acquisition systems, smoke is a valued ally.

Protection. Never allow the enemy to understand your intent, concept, or method(s) of operation, scheme of maneuver, to strike you or gain an unexpected advantage in time, place, position, or means. OPSEC deserves bastardly enforcement, as well as leadership by persuasion and example. Use organic cavalry mostly for intelligence, reconnaissance, and targeting. Push your cavalry out to the limits of comms and supporting fires. Deceive

or destroy direct or clandestine observation, and overhead platforms. Prevent standoff attacks by fire, infiltration or terrorist penetration. Protect forces from acquisition or engagement by enemy ground, air, and missile forces. Destroy enemy intelligence collectors, in a priority, with any means available. Use surveillance, OPSEC, outside resources, overheads. Decoy with visuals and reduce or multiply RF and heat emitters so all headquarters and their decoys look alike.

See the Enemy (ENINFO). Analyze current enemy strengths, operations, forms, and patterns, getting critical enemy info to the echelon most effected NOW. (Readers are warned that these comments are biased by having received only two useful intel reports in a career, but rooms full of failures.) Recommend/decide *based only on enemy capabilities and probable courses of action, never try to guess his intent.* Western rationalities are uncharacteristic of many likely opponents. Some individuals and their forces exhibit unexpected patterns, behaviors or capabilities.

Don't confuse data with intelligence. Until data is sifted, analyzed and compressed into decision-critical probabilistic information, it's ration-heating trash. It must contribute directly to Speed, violence, and integration of joint/combined arms at the mission level.

To read capability/probability, put collection assets at the echelon that needs them. Use ethnic minorities for SIGINT despite clearance rules, or timeliness is lost. Nuke black boxes/ green doors. At corps or lower, purge people and systems that brought national and theater intel arrogances with them. Fight to get and create your own HUMINT. It's potentially your greatest strength, but still our system's biggest weakness. Finally, remember that overactive situational awareness glands are human, exist everywhere, may fog Focus, situations or destroy wanted outcomes. They can become fear/rumor machines, prompting wrong reactions by men, leaders, and units. Corrupt filtering of situational awareness information to produce "desired results" is a sad systemic and dangerous potential.

ARMOR'S NEW HEADING

As complex as blending Principles with operational concepts may seem, it pales compared with what's needed to assertively project Armor into the future. Potential battlefields (spaces) and OSW defy prediction as to time, place, and their military and human contexts, including religion and ethnicity. Even our own nation isn't immune from concerns of social or terrorist-stimulated unrest or destruction. The assertion that any projected future battlespace will be reliably saturated by acquisition, targeting, and delivery means is a grotesquely huge assumption that rests on bum joints and shaky legs. Mother nature's mischiefs, terrain, rapidly evolving countermeasures, mobility, orbital periodicities, other service priorities, physical fragility, human error, our inability to produce systems that meet advertisements, budgets, and probability are among limiting factors.

The battlespace of the foreseeable future will remain discontinuous — a big, porous Swiss cheese full of moving "black holes" often free of technological intelligence, HUMINT sources, or fires. Without hunter-killer air teams and mobile, lethal ground maneuver elements those "Black Holes" containing armed, operationally effective enemy will be undetected, uncountered threats. In the Gulf, HUMINT-free depth was a strategic and operational flaw that hurt estimates, decisions, and outcomes. Lack of HUMINT and bureaucracy killed in Mogadishu. Desert Fox (DF) air operations *against stationary targets*

put an exclamation point behind this estimate, written weeks before DF was executed and its BDA in. DF showed again that after 30+ years of effort and hundreds of billions in expenditures by all services, "near-real time," "perfect knowledge," "precision delivery," "destruction," a PK of 1.0 and control of battlespace without ground forces still escape us. Precision weapons and air power alone can't win wars. When airmen and precision artillerists assert their omnipotence to you, cheerily ask, "*Have you killed a SCUD today?*"

Future operational fluidity, realistic targeting/shooting system probabilities, and holey battlespace mandate mobile, lethal forces far forward. The holes are the future Armor force's natural battleground and present Armor with both its greatest challenge and opportunity — **IF** we create a concept and move dynamically and resolutely to grab the brass ring. Manned recon and very deep (40-400km) ground maneuver forces to gather HUMINT, target, destroy forces, and seize objectives seem essential complements to remote systems. Mobile commands of extraordinary speed, operational radius, lethality and remote sustainability will be necessary to operate in time-distance harmony with AWACS/JSTARS and deep precision Naval and USAF Air Expeditionary Force fires. Armor's roles in limiting terrain, "constabulary" operations, and nation-building must be established, not waived. In all cases, Armor's future leaders must be marked by their "state of mind" excellence, winning experience, and performance in operations and command more than by their 8x10 glossies and gold-plated, multi-track ORBs.

These future-oriented notions emerge:

- **Armor must make time/space our strategic and operational allies, not adversaries. We must equip and size to fit the lift we've got, get to/perform any mission anywhere and be operationally complementary, budget and strategic-mobility competitive with sea and air power or we lose.**
- **The Armor team must develop a dynamic future-oriented combined arms concept and the expertise needed to force it through Army and interdepartmental developmental and budgetary processes.**
- **Armor forces and leaders for foreign and domestic contingencies must be historically many-dimensioned, experienced operators, not mere multi-track Process Prinzen or regimental retreats.**
- **We need to move out 40 years ago.**

Future victors **won't** be thick-lensed nerds, heads-down in their turrets or welded to work stations and large screen displays in search of checklisted, matrixed, summed and scored deterministic answers.

They **will be** bold, confident, tough, smart SOBs who lead in front, think fast in the heat of combat, are comfortable in uncertainty, weigh probabilities and risks, make apparent order from obvious chaos and **WIN**.

GOOD HUNTING!

BG Kirk served 24 of 27 years "happily undiversified" in command, operations and training. Seven consecutive years of grime time as 1 AD G3, Bde Cdr, C/S and 5 Mech ADC(M) preceded terminal posting as Director of Training, ODCSOPS, DA. He retired in 1983. For terse replies on this or other stuff, fire flak at: KIRK.celtzen@wolfenet.com starting 17 Mar '99.