

LETTERS

An Outsider's Look At Armor's Situation

Dear Sir:

Angels — and other experts — have rights to carp and crack wise when fools red dog into zones of which they have no direct experience. I have never had the honor of serving a day in the professional military, but have followed its twists and turns nearly 50 years in the course of a career teaching history. In the '60s, at the height of the student rebellion, it used to be said that war settles nothing. Yet all the major turning points in Western history, from Marathon in Ancient Greece to the Second World War, have been marked by war and battles lost and won.

It may not say much for the human race, but it says an enormous amount about what it takes to defend the legacy of civilization. Words, fine intentions, and concerned diplomacy are never enough. In the end, it is the presence of military force that determines the security of a nation's — or a civilization's — values and way of life. It certainly was not expressions of love of peace that won the Cold War, bringing an end to the Soviet threat to human freedom, but rather the strength of our military and the terminal cost to the Soviet Union of trying to match that strength. And in this, our time, the health of the U.S. armed forces is particularly critical since it is the existence of those forces that surely is the guarantor of the relative peace the world currently enjoys. In short, the debate over the Army's future — centered on the issue of doctrine in the November-December issue — goes beyond adjustments to an old and generally conservative institution struggling to come to terms with major technological change.

The current debate seems clearly to have been triggered by the ambivalent performance of the Army in Operation Allied Force. Here I think the Army has been given a generally bad rap. Ralph Peters, a man whose commitment to a better Army is unquestionable, was guilty of something of a verbal blow when he said on *The News Hour* — and I am paraphrasing here — that the "Army had found a perfect way to avoid casualties; it's obese; it can't move." The truth of the matter is that the Army was explicitly told at the outset of the Kosovo operation that no land forces were going to be committed — this was to be a bombing operation. And then, a month later, when the air campaign had not brought Milosevic and the Serbian Army to its knees, suddenly voices could be heard that land forces might be needed after all, and the European Command began to respond piecemeal, transferring a number of engineering, helicopter, and infantry companies to Albania. And the major news out of that effort was the slowness of the Apache companies to arrive and to achieve a level of combat readiness that would allow it to perform missions in Kosovo while losing two helicopters and crew in the training effort. The point to be made is that, had the Army been told at the outset in late March, it clearly could have had an effec-

tive fighting force in Albania by early June, at least at the brigade level. But it was simply not asked to do this. Even if contingency plans had been made, it would have taken an executive order to put them into effect by mobilizing the appropriate air and sea lift. So that to criticize the Army, after the fact, for not being there in force is an exercise in contradictory logic. It wasn't there with a combat ready force because it wasn't ordered to be there with such a force.

That issue aside, the Army — and its Armor branch especially — has a problem in what has been labeled Strategic Mobility. That problem has a direct effect on doctrine since what you bring to the battlefield directly affects what you can do and how you do it — the guts of doctrine. But a larger point should be made first; namely, of all the services, the Army is faced with the hardest decisions and the most difficult base from which to make those decisions. The heart of the problem is the enormous range of responsibilities with which the Army has been tasked and the rapidity which any one of those responsibilities can come front and center requiring immediate attention. The Army, in any given week, can be asked to do warfighting — and at any one of several different levels — or peacekeeping, or disaster relief, or diplomatic activity via its tutelage relationships with dozens of newly independent or emerging nation states around the world. None of the other services is forced to deal with that range of issues, and the Army has to do it on a budget that is perennially the smallest of the three major services. The Navy can concentrate on developing a force required to control the sea surface necessary to U.S. interests, a problem simplified by the collapse of the Soviet Union since the Navy now does not have to face a serious "blue water" challenge; it can concentrate on what it has termed "littoral warfare," dominating the coast lines of crisis areas. The Air Force has air superiority and precision bombing as its primary tasks, large tasks but straightforward in their structure and formulation. And both services have ancillary responsibilities of providing mobility to Army forces and that is the point; to the Navy and Air Force these are secondary to what both consider their first-line business. That leaves the Army as a kind of perpetual poor relation, drawing down on resources which its brother services would dearly love to spend on what they believe are their leading edge responsibilities. Life has been tough for the Army; it will continue to be. For the Army to do what has been asked of it is going to require some cool thought and some hard decisions. And mobility and quick reaction will be at the heart of that thought and those decisions. And more than anything that is going to mean thinking across branch lines to produce a doctrine that allows for a maximum amount of flexibility, and I doubt if there are going to be many school answers, as most of the school problems are changing before our eyes.

The two branches that seem to underpin everything are Intelligence and Logistics. A tough, no-nonsense list of probable crisis

points around the world has to be prepared and a rough estimation of forces required to respond drawn up. I think it would begin with Korea, run through the Middle East, and then to the continuing drug and guerrilla warfare problems in South America. Western Europe seems a quiet front, at least for the immediate future. And then, once the list is compiled, no reaction force should be assigned to it that exceeds the logistics and transport capacity available to Army planners. I'm sure this has been done in the past; contingency plans made and locked up. What is necessary now is a kind of rolling contingency planning since the crisis of the month can arise with blinding speed. No one was talking major ground forces in Kosovo until suddenly it was upon us in May. I'll quietly suggest it could have been anticipated and that Albania would have been the place of entry.

The Armor branch is particularly affected by this debate over strategic mobility. As the physically heaviest of all the branches, it requires the greatest amount of lift and hence confronts the issue more directly of how to get to the fight in some of the farther corners of the world when the national interest demands that. The branch has been criticized for placing all its eggs in the basket of the M1A2 tank, at near 70 tons, one of the most difficult items of war to transport. Certainly the branch could have benefited from the addition of the M8 Armored Gun System to its arsenal and the decision to cancel that weapon system should be revisited. But in the interim, ways should be sought to make armored units deployable on relatively short notice. I think there are ways to do it, particularly if the branch is willing to think in terms of brigades rather than divisions.

The Navy's Military Sealift Command owns eight Fast Sealift Ships capable of sustained speeds in excess of 25 knots and with sufficient carrying capacity to load and transport a heavy division. If that bloc of ships were divided into two groups of four, each group could be preloaded with at least one heavy brigade. If one group was assigned to the East Coast and one to the West Coast, the Army would be in a position to put a heavy armored brigade into a crisis situation most likely within a week to 10 days of a national decision to do so. If one combines that capability with the capacity to airlift light forces to a crisis within several days, you come out with the ability to put a very creditable force on the ground in a matter of weeks instead of months. Light forces would not be asked to do more than seize and hold port facilities and landing strips; maneuver capacity would arrive with the heavy brigade, whose personnel would be flown in to link up with their incoming equipment. This is an expeditionary force concept and links up with a similar concept adopted last year by the Air Force. At a time when the Army can be called upon to establish a presence in areas where it doesn't have prepositioned brigade sets, it is an idea at least worth consideration. Is it workable? It is if the will is found at the DOD level to provide the shipping.

One of the implications of an expeditionary force is that it may have to be committed against a numerically superior enemy, at least at the outset of real or threatened hostilities. This was the potential condition in Kosovo. There were reported to be near or in Kosovo some 25,000 Serb troops. An expeditionary force, made up of a mix of light and heavy brigades, would probably number in the neighborhood of 10,000 soldiers. The question becomes, can a force of that size undertake offensive action against a defending force some two and half times greater? The answer is yes if one accepts the arguments that the Revolution in Military Affairs has brought advantages in reconnaissance, fire power, and communications that no other army can match. From this distance, that appears to be the hardest issue confronted by the drafters of the new version of *FM 100-5*. Do we embed the promise of the new technology of warfare in doctrine and begin to train for it? As uncomfortable as it is to say so from the standpoint of someone who would not have to be a part of it, it seems to me that this Rubicon should be crossed and that we should begin to think of sanctioning attack against a numerically superior defense. If we have the advantage of air supremacy, which I believe the Air Force can deliver, and deliver with increasing effectiveness given its heavy investment in precision guided weapons, offensive maneuver against larger defending units becomes a real possibility.

Finally, the problem of doctrine was glaringly highlighted in the back-to-back articles of General John Kirk, critical of just about everything the Army has attempted doctrinally in the past decade, and Col. Robin Swan, Director of the School of Advanced Military Studies. Col. Swan's essay, which was captioned as a reply to General Kirk's critique, seemed to confirm much of Kirk's complaints of the lack of focus in the current effort to rewrite doctrine. The Colonel met none of the General's specific criticisms and offered up an array of rather bland generalizations capped by the declaration that access to the working papers of doctrine writing group were and are "restricted" for fear they might be read by the Iraqis or the North Koreans. One has to wonder who benefits by the secrecy. If the doctrine is strong and successfully integrates the new weaponry in a clearly coherent and practical form, its availability to possible aggressors could serve a very useful deterrent function. Openness would also produce the double benefit of more deeply involving its ultimate consumers and thus in the end producing a more useful and workable *FM 100-5*.

ROBERT F. LIDDY
Binghamton, N.Y.

Why Don't We Demand That Leaders Know Our Doctrine?

Dear Sir:

I read the doctrinal articles by BG (Ret.) Kirk and COL Swan (Nov-Dec 99) with great interest. I found them very informative descriptions

of how we do or should arrive at doctrine. I think there is a key point that has been missed. We as an army do not put a great deal of emphasis on knowing our doctrine and there is no real price to be paid for being technically ignorant in this area, at least among the officer corps.

When an officer graduates from CGSC, he or she should be as technically competent as one can be in one year's instruction and primed to go out and learn more and apply it in the field. Unfortunately, this does not happen. A graduate of the respective branches' advance courses should be in the same condition with regard to company- and battalion-level doctrine and tactics. What happens, of course, is that we learn very quickly that these areas are not very important. How can this be? At NTC and JRTC we learn about focused courses of action, which are of course contrary to the MDMP, but are after all what you "have" to do to win or at least do well. Who out there in your readership can explain the difference between a brigade and a brigade combat team? The short answer is they are the same thing, so why do we use BCT? The answer is that we ignore current perfectly good definitions and terms to "invent" new ones at no great benefit to the Army. This process further clutters our professional lexicon and undercuts the value of doctrine.

I spent five years as an observer trainer in BCTP and I have numerous examples of senior officers, both active and reserve component, who came up with "new" terms or in some cases actual doctrinal changes on their own, and their organization was the only one that knew what they meant. There are probably many of your readers who have heard the term "penetration box." If you try to find it in any doctrinal reference, it does not exist. "Counterreconnaissance" is probably the most used and misunderstood term ever invented (Hint: it is not a mission).

As a group, officers and senior NCOs are not students of our doctrine, nor do they feel compelled to master it. Every professional school should require a solid grasp of the appropriate doctrine and tactics prior to graduation and it should be expected to be used throughout the Army. The captain and majors who come out of BCTP are, for the most part, real subject matter experts in tactics and doctrine at the battalion and brigade level, but yet they are not used in that role in subsequent assignments.

Unfortunately, they disappear into the system and a real asset goes unused.

JACK E. MUNDSTOCK
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Editor's Note: BG John Kirk's challenge to the readership to get more involved in the Army's doctrine development process drew letters to both the magazine and General Kirk's e-mail address, which he included in the article. Rather than reprint them here, he has agreed to make a summary of the comments

addressed to his email available by writing him at jmkirk@wolfenet.com.

Thoughts on Doctrine and Equipment For the Brigade Combat Teams

Dear Sir:

I read with concern recent discussion of wheels versus tracks (March *Army*, *Army Times* 28 February); Colonel Coffey's [retired, of United Defense] letter in the 13 March *Army Times*; and General Abrams' explanation on the dulling down of the vehicle requirements for General Shinseki's Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs). I don't know whether this ongoing debate is a result of the opposition to the concept by the Armor community, some budget concerns, or something else. Suffice it to say that the Army is missing an opportunity! We don't need lightly armored and armed taxis to get soldiers onto the battlefield. We need highly responsive and flexible teams that can mass, when needed, deal with most Third World threats, and are easily deployable. General Abrams focuses on the latter and gives up everything else.

Many countries have armored car systems (Piranha, ROIKAT, Centauro, AMX-10RC) or light armored tracked vehicles with multiple variants that always include a large-caliber gun system to deal with direct fire against third world enemies hiding behind urban sprawl. The BCT needs overmatched firepower, not just digital comms to call for distant supporting arms.

The T-62 killing requirement is a "straw man" designed to make the 25mm chain gun look like a MGS tank killer, except there is a problem: no one in the Third World was supplied with T-62s. Most went from T-54/55s to T-72s. The BCT's MGS variant must be able to kill actual T-72s, not mythical T-62s.

Whatever platform vehicle (medium wheels or tracked) is chosen by the Army, it should be able to be upgraded quickly because almost all of these systems mount large caliber guns in allied forces.

Each of these variants then can be combined into a combined arms team capable of dealing with all but the most sophisticated opponents. The basic organization could be built around a modification of the U.S. cavalry platoon of the 1960s.

Each platoon would have four infantry carriers with an infantry squad, a platoon leader's carrier with C2 capability, a 120mm mortar carrier, two gun platforms (either 90mm or 105mm, but able to destroy a T-72 and bust buildings/bunkers), and two elevated ATGM (TOW or HELLFIRE) platforms. The mixture of missiles and guns are required to provide overwatch in depth and to deal with situations in urban terrain where only a large caliber gun will suffice.

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This 10-vehicle platoon must be able to operate in almost any terrain and over dispersed distances. Its speed on the battlefield and the embedded requisite digital command and control systems will allow it to mass quickly. The speed issue is critical. We need to be able to disperse and then mass quickly and overcome an opponent. Conceptually, in the defense, this places infantrymen on key terrain and in the early warning and channeling mode — building the kill sacks while denying key terrain — and only firing if attacked. The gun systems and missiles are then in depth and available to kill enemy vehicles while being supported by their own mortar and the digitally supported indirect fire.

In the offense, the process is deliberate and then dynamic — deliberate searching, finding, and fixing by dismounted infantry, infiltration, and then coordinated massed fires against critical nodes that cause the enemy's defense to come unhinged.

The above characteristics also make the force capable of widely dispersed peacekeeping operations or operations in urban terrain.

The ability to digitally issue orders and navigate are key to the execution of such tactics.

Finally, the Brigade Combat Teams will probably evolve into the test bed for the vehicles that are under consideration to constitute the future combat system (FCS). The above considerations and organization are perfectly compatible with that vision and may even provide some insights into the final 2020 force.

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Thoughts on the Formation Of the New Brigade Combat Teams

Dear Sir:

First of all, I would like to thank MAJ Daigle for allowing me the opportunity to talk through my hat and contribute, very humbly, to this debate.

Once again, the Army has determined to restructure our forces in order to meet what they perceive to be a change in the nature of modern warfare. The last time a major effort like this was undertaken was during the Eisenhower Administration when divisions were reorganized along the lines of the "battle group" concept. The theory behind this concept was that the next major conflict would involve the use of nuclear weapons and that on this type of battlefield, smaller, more "flexible" units would be most effective. It didn't take the Army long to realize, however, that the idea was seriously flawed and played havoc with the stability, morale, and command and control benefits that were the inherent strength of the triangular regimental system instituted just before the Second World War.

Now the Army has embarked upon a reorganization that will supposedly meet the re-

quirements of warfare in the 21st century. Yet, while this restructuring may allow for the quick deployment of a highly mobile force overseas, in my opinion, it will leave these 'hybrid' units extremely vulnerable should they face a determined enemy. Either they will be too light in infantry or too light in armor — depending on the circumstances — to successfully engage a well-equipped and well-trained opponent in sustained ground combat. Using such units as a stopgap until heavier forces are deployed may be a prudent idea, but as an all-encompassing approach to future warfare, I believe it is severely flawed. The old adage 'jack of all trades, but master at none' comes most readily to mind.

In fact, could it be that the most "flexible" response to the perceived changes in the Army's mission is not the creation of new types of units, but the continued maintenance of both heavy mechanized and non-mechanized formations? Would it also be true to assert that the requirements inherent in rapid deployment and "peacekeeping" missions, as well as low-intensity conflicts, can best be met by the use of "straight-leg" infantry components adequately equipped with modern "man-portable" weaponry? And if greater mobility is required, could this not be met by the subsequent deployment of heavier mechanized forces?

The real decision the Army is facing is how best to utilize its assets in the apparent mission 'vacuum' of the post-Cold War era. These assets include both heavy mechanized and non-mechanized formations that, in my humble opinion, will each continue to play an essential role in our nation's defense for many, many years to come.

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Clarifying Some Points About a Much-praised New Book

Dear Sir:

In the introduction of *Camp Colt to Desert Storm* by George F. Hofmann and General Donn A. Stary, it was stated that, "this book is an anthology that seeks to identify milestones in the history of the mechanization of the U.S. Army... Each chapter is written by a storyteller describing important events." Chapter 13, "The Abrams Tank System," by MG Robert J. Sunell, has serious omissions of historical significance. And, in a few instances, conclusions are drawn and credit given to individuals, who as short-term participants, were undeserving of the successful conclusions reached by the author.

However, even with the omissions, the author's story outlines in credible fashion a roadmap of events that covers the Abrams tank program from development through its production and fielding. It is too bad that the M1A2 variant part of the story centered on minor tactical events, rather than the difficult

strategic issues that were fortunately overcome, such as the selling of the M1A2 program to Congress in 1988. In an unprecedented step, General Dynamics joined with the United Auto Workers (UAW) union in championing the M1A2 on Capitol Hill. While key Army players testified, the GD/UAW lobbying effort carried the day. And of course, saving the industrial base was not an issue at this time. The 62 M1A2 tanks were not approved for production, but as a limited quantity for training, given the new digital technology of the M1A2.

And let me make a short comment on the author's story that DOD and the Army pursued an aggressive plan to sell M1A2 tanks to overseas customers. This is a complete "terminological inexactitude," to quote Mr. Churchill. The M1A2 Abrams was sold to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in spite of DOD's recommendation, in writing, for KSA to buy the M1A1. Donald Atwood, Deputy Secretary of Defense, signed a letter to KSA as Acting Secretary of Defense recommending that the M1A1 was the Army's production tank and as such, it was recommended for purchase. A small quantity of M1A2s were being procured for training purposes, etc. Mr. Atwood will be remembered as the former General Motors executive who was a strong advocate of not supporting the tank industrial base. He was quoted as saying, "Any 10,000 GWV (gross weight vehicle) truck contractor can build tanks."

As for the Army's role in making the Saudi sale a reality, it was passive. The energetic and aggressive PM, MG Pete McVey, was having health problems and was quietly taking a supportive role to the General Dynamics Land Systems initiative to sell the M1A2 and not the M1A1. Credit must be given to LTG (R) Richard Graves, the GDLS in-country representative, advising the armor corps of KSA. His vision and foresight in advising the Saudis on the merits of digital technology, and alerting GDLS management to make a responsive offer, carried the day. The KSA purchased 315 M1A2 tanks, the DOD's recommendation notwithstanding.

I have selected three omissions that stand out as critical events that could have altered the entire direction of the M1 Abrams Tank Program, or, the termination of the program, hence jeopardizing the very existence of a U.S. Army Tank Program for a new tank. The three critical events follow below with a few comments on each.

The start of the M1 Tank Program marked the beginning of a new era in armored vehicle development and engineering. The M1 was the first tank designed and engineered by a contractor; heretofore, the U.S. Army arsenal system developed armored vehicles. The best arsenal engineers were promoted and moved on to PM jobs. There was no turning back.

The Chrysler Corporation and General Motors defense business units thus became essential components in meeting the needs of the U.S. Army for a new tank. Chrysler's Tank

Division was the incumbent tank producer for many years, operating a government-owned, company-operated facility, the Detroit Tank Plant. Chrysler, for the most part, was looked upon as a stodgy, unimaginative organization and as a no-investment contractor.

General Motors' massive resources and reputation for innovation was appealing to a number of DOD/Army decision-makers wanting change. All this translated into a win for GM on the MBT-70 co-development program with Germany, which was terminated in 1971.

The M1 Tank Program competition, starting in 1973, again brought together the two prior adversaries. Both contractors received validation phase contracts enabling each to offer a prototype, one diesel-powered and one turbine-powered tank. The next phase was the Full Scale Engineering Development phase, a winner-take-all competition. The author indicated that, prior to an award decision, the consensus was that General Motors was "first choice." I would have stated it differently. Both prototypes met the requirement, as was stated. Hence, I would say that Chrysler was not the "front runner," meaning that if the products were equal, one contractor must have a lower cost offer, aside from the turbine-vs-diesel bias mentioned. Chrysler won the FSED contract following a four-month extension and a re-pricing requirement making Chrysler the low bidder. Had General Motors won, would the Army have been better off? Let me go on.

Chrysler's FSED 36-month effort went through arguably the normal developmental growing pains. The transition to Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) beginning in 1979 at the Lima Tank Plant, started a series of production problems that ultimately forced Chrysler to exit the tank business. The Chrysler tank business unit, reconstituted as Chrysler Defense Inc., was put up for sale in December 1980. How did this conclusive event happen?

As mentioned by the author, MG Duard D. Ball took over the M1 Abrams Program in June 1980. However, while assigned, he did not immediately take the helm. COL Herman Vetort, the Deputy PM at the time, became acting PM for over two months. Quietly, with minimal exchange and/or contact with Chrysler's Defense management team, he assessed the M1 tank production problems and the contractor's ability to recover. In October 1980, prompted by MG Ball's report, GEN John Guthrie wrote to Mr. Lee Iacocca, CEO and chairman of Chrysler Corporation, to this effect: "Come see me. I am considering shutting you down."

What was Mr. Iacocca's reaction to this letter? I happened to be one of the briefers meeting with Mr. Iacocca to review issues and concerns on Chrysler's tank contract. About 20-30 minutes into the briefing, Mr. Iacocca stopped the briefing. "I am having difficulty understanding the various defense terminology and contract language of this briefing and I do not have the luxury of time to learn it. I am

trying to save this corporation (from bankruptcy) and its employees. I know you worked hard to pull together this briefing, colored slides, briefing books, etc. Thanks. I will go see GEN Guthrie and talk to him. I do not require any further efforts by you to brief me."

The meeting was held in October, 1980, at AMC headquarters, Guthrie and Iacocca alone in GEN Guthrie's office. Following the meeting, there were no directives from Chrysler's corporate offices to the Defense management team, other than to keep working the problems.

In March 1982, General Dynamics Corp. (GD) completed the purchase of Chrysler Defense Inc. Mr. O.C. Boileau, president of General Dynamics, assumed the general management responsibility of the business unit, named General Dynamics Land Systems Division (GDLS), and was named its acting president for about one year. He arrived on site with a transition team on 16 March 1982. GD provided not only the leadership but also a capital infusion of engineering, management, and quality control talent drawn from Convair, Fort Worth and other divisions of GD. Mr. Boileau's team, both GD and ex-Chrysler members, went to work hands-on with a degree of urgency not shown formerly. The production bottleneck was eliminated, a new cooperation with union employees was developed, and by the efforts of Mr. Edward Ewing and the quality control leader, Mr. Eric Smith, both transferred from the Fort Worth F16 Division, a zero defects program was initiated. In time, this program crossed over to suppliers and paid off handsomely in improved quality and fewer hours in assembly. The Army's authorized acquisition objective (AAO) was doubled to 7,000 units, enabling a multi-year contract and stable production base. Mr. Boileau turned over the general management responsibility of GDLS to Robert Truxell, a seasoned executive retired from General Motors with strong operational experience and a proven record in plant and engineering operations. The former Chrysler Engineering organization, often referred to as a fiefdom in management style and lacking computer system technology, was transformed into a high-tech operation with avionic technology and extensive computer system capabilities. Gordon England, formerly of GD's Fort Worth engineering staff, should be credited with the transformation that gave birth to the M1A2 variant with its digital technology.

The third omission of historical importance is the joint venture initiative by the FMC Corporation to combine the M2 Bradley production with the M1 Abrams tank production at the Lima plant. This was a serious effort in 1993 that was envisioned by FMC as a joint venture under their control. In the early stages of meeting after meeting to evolve a joint venture, General Dynamics Corp. was seriously interested. Later, the chairman and CEO, William Anders, reconsidered. I was present when he said to his vice chairman, Harvey Kapnick, "Call them up. I'm not selling, I'm

buying. Let me know." This is a very brief capsule of the event, but one can easily envision the impact had it come about.

There's much more to the Abrams tank story, but I chose the Letters to the Editor route to present a snapshot of missing events and details that I consider serious omissions, the General Dynamics contributions in particular. Lastly, the author mentions by name a handful of Chrysler Defense employees who contributed to the M1 tank program only in the early stages. Be assured that, without the likes of Boileau, Truxell, Ewing, Smith, England, Claysmith, and one or two others, there would not be an Abrams program as we know it.

One more comment...The Egyptian program started with the design and construction of Factory 200 under contract (mid-1980) with General Dynamics Services Company, GDSC, which I headed. The co-production of 555 M1A1s that resulted later was planned to coincide with the activation of Factory 200, which was both a depot and tank plant (for new production). As a matter of fact, it is larger than the Detroit Tank Plant.

GEORGE P. PSIHAS
Former President, GDLS

Korean War Experience Supports Stealthy Scout Emphasis

Dear Sir:

After reading the comments submitted by LTC Burton S. Boudinot in "Letters," *ARMOR*, November-December 1999, entitled "Stealth in Scouting Requires Small, Quiet Vehicles, Not Guns," I am obligated to respond. Colonel Boudinot is right on target with his comments and Armor Branch should wisely take note. I, too, consider the XR311 the best scout vehicle for the U.S. Army.

I consider myself qualified to offer comment on this subject ... From March until August 1951, I was a member of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, 5th Cavalry Regiment and Intelligence and Reconnaissance Section, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry. During combat operations in Korea, I was assigned as an infantry reconnaissance scout and served as a scout driver, section leader, and squad leader.

Previous to my assignment, the regiment had lost two I & R platoons. One had been captured and it was unknown what became of the other. The incident of the captured platoon is worthy of note. The platoon was led by First Lieutenant Joseph Toomey and was conducting route reconnaissance. The terrain was restricted, with steep banks on either side of the road. All three recon squads were in column on a narrow dirt trail. Lieutenant Toomey was leading the platoon, and as the platoon rounded a curve, a Russian .51 caliber machine gun opened fire, inflicting casualties. At that instant, Chinese soldiers swarmed down

the slopes on both sides of the trail and completely overwhelmed the platoon. It was over in a flash.

This action was witnessed and reported by the platoon sergeant, who was the only member to escape. His jeep had developed engine problems and had dropped out of formation. He managed to continue, and upon rounding the curve witnessed the action. As he rounded the curve, the .51 caliber machine gun opened fire on his jeep, damaging a tie rod and causing the vehicle to careen into a ditch short of the ambush site. The platoon sergeant, driver, and RTO all ran, but only the platoon sergeant returned to report the incident.

During my period of service with the platoon and the 1st Battalion I & R Section, not one soldier or vehicle was lost even though patrol activity increased.... The platoon used procedures outlined in the field manual on scouting and patrolling with particular attention to the chapter on mounted patrolling with the ¼-ton truck 4x4. This manual was written by officers with combat experience during WWII. We followed these procedures and only changed or modified them based on the factors of METT.

The platoon performed route, area, and zone reconnaissance, which included bridge and route classification. The platoon also conducted day and night dismounted patrolling, and observation and listening post assignments. The platoon performed all missions with squads. The entire platoon was not used, as it was too large for precise control and resulted in excessive noise and movement.

There are three jeeps in the scout squad. Each jeep was assigned a specific procedure. These procedures were practiced, practiced, practiced. The scout vehicles were gun jeeps equipped with pedestal machine gun mounts. Each jeep procedure was specified. The lead vehicle was the scout vehicle; the scouts on this vehicle performed all the scouting requirements. The machine gun on this vehicle was never used. The second vehicle was the overwatch vehicle. The scouts on this vehicle provided cover for the scout vehicle. The third vehicle was the base of fire vehicle. The scouts on this vehicle provided cover for the two forward vehicles. The squad moved by successive bounds. It was determined that this method resulted in effective and secure results. Artillery fires were planned for the patrol route. These fires were accurate and timely and enabled the patrol to break contact when required. Each jeep was equipped with a pedestal machine gun mount and a .30 caliber light machine gun. The windshields were removed to eliminate reflections. The vehicles were sandbagged to protect against antipersonnel mines and provided better stability at speed on unimproved roads and cross country.

The supporting ordnance battalion provided additional weapons and modifications as requested. A dash pedestal machine gun mount

was installed on the overwatch vehicle. One squad was equipped with two cradle mounts welded together with two water-cooled .30 caliber machine guns mounted on the pedestal mount. A .50 caliber machine gun was mounted on the base of fire vehicle. This required that a steel plate be welded to the bottom of the vehicle to prevent the pedestal mount from breaking loose. One squad mounted a 57mm recoilless rifle on the base of fire vehicle. I cannot state that this equipment was necessary, but it was effective.

The following is an illustration of a patrol using stealth and quiet, not guns. During the early summer of 1951, the Chinese Army seems to have completely disappeared in our sector. The rifle companies were engaged in extensive day and night patrolling without contact. The First Cavalry Division initiated mounted patrolling by the 16th Reconnaissance Company, the division reconnaissance element...My unit at the time was the I & R section of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry. My orders were to find the enemy. Initially, the section came upon the regimental I & R platoon, which was halted. The platoon sergeant said it was too risky to proceed. We next came upon the 1st platoon of Company A, 70th Tank Battalion. The platoon leader said he could not proceed as the road was mined. I remember thinking at the time that those big V8s on the M4A3E8s, were anything but stealthy. We continued very slowly and quietly until we were approximately six miles beyond the MLR. At that point, I considered it too risky to continue with the vehicles. The section dismounted while the drivers remained with the jeeps. Radio contact was maintained. After proceeding about a half mile, we encountered a large Chinese force descending the high ground to a large open area. We reported and withdrew without incident. The Chinese did not observe us.

In December 1973, then-Major General Donn A. Starry, while enroute to Fort Knox to assume command of the Armor Center, was the guest speaker at the Armor Cavalry Ball at Fort Leavenworth. I asked him at the time what he thought about the XR311. He said he had driven it and he liked it. I thought then, as I do now, that this is the best scout vehicle for the U.S. Army.

Colonel Boudinot is right. Let's take another look at the XR311.

GEORGE G. CHAPMAN
LTC, Armor (Ret.)

Vietnam Battle Account Was Worth the Space

Dear Sir:

What a great read in the January-February issue! "The Anonymous Battle" is exactly the material that I've longed to see in *ARMOR*. I commend you for publishing such a timely and interesting manuscript. I've distributed the extremely poignant description of tactics,

initiative, and combined arms contact to my small group of 12 Armor Captains Career Course students, and have encouraged the other instructors here to do the same. We'll use the article to further our study of company/team operations, as well as demonstrate its use as a battle analysis from a first person perspective.

Mr. Poindexter's riveting account of his personal challenges as a company-level commander certainly cost you space for the publication of other worthy articles, but in my estimation, we need to revisit small unit actions and initiative from a historical as well as contemporary CTC perspective more often in this publication. Keep up the good work.

JOSEPH C. HOLLAND
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