



## Saddle Up... Tonight We Ride

I confess, I'm old enough to have TC'ed an M60A1 dinosaur complete with searchlight and exterior telephone. My mud-caked telephone was inoperative, like most, but it was also a constant source of amusement. The first time an infantry soldier approached the tank and tried yelling over the engine to tell us something, my loader said, "Watch this sir," and pointed the infantryman toward the telephone. Diligently the infantryman worked his way through the mud on the outside of the long-ago broken phone to find yet more mud on the inside, eventually the determined grunt would find the phone and attempt to talk to us. We would laugh and occasionally my loader would nod his head as if he actually heard what the grunt had to say. It was great fun.

I'm willing to bet the articles we receive for publication are a good barometer for what's on the mind of the armored force. One trend that we here at *ARMOR* have observed is an increase in pieces that discuss working with light infantry (see March-April 1999 *ARMOR*, "Life After Operational Maneuver"). Gone are the days when we merely gave lip service to the task. From Panama to Haiti to Bosnia and the prospect of Kosovo looming, armored and cavalry units are working more and more with infantry and will no doubt continue to do so.

The increased emphasis on working heavy/light goes hand in hand with another trend observed — more pieces on MOUT. This issue's "Commander's Hatch" describes the Armor Center's approach to operations in urban terrain, and LTC Lamont, USMC, details the role of armor on two urban battlefields — Hue and Khorramshahr. Imagine, MOUT being more than finding and fixing the local *bäckeri*.

I doubt many tankers will ever be comfortable or confident inside an urban canyon wondering where an RPG-equipped hunter-killer team might be setting up an ambush. But the reality is that tankers and cavalymen must be prepared to

execute when called upon. A recent report by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology confirms the same — the U.S. will continue to deploy forces to urban locations. True it's easy enough to find those who will chant the old mantra "Tanks don't go into cities." One must only look as far as the 22 March issue of *Army Times* where the president of a consulting firm (do you ever wonder where reporters find these guys?), condemns the use of armor in urban terrain with these tired, short-sighted lines: "Tanks are cumbersome and make easy targets in cities," and "Everyone these days has an antitank weapon." The consultant may be correct with his blinding flashes of the obvious, but is anyone advocating armor operate solo in urban terrain? Rather we strive for a combined arms team that trains and prepares for MOUT on the same type of facility this consultant derides. Agreed few tankers or cavalymen relish the prospect of taking tanks into an urban environment, but once again the refrain of Panama, Haiti, and Bosnia with the addition of Mogadishu (not to mention Chechnya, Lebanon, and Northern Ireland) point to the necessity of training and preparing for MOUT. Should tanks do cities? Read Mark Bowden's *Black Hawk Down*.

Since I seem to be in the habit of dropping the names of other publications, let me recommend Lester W. Grau's "The RPG-7 on the Battlefields of Today and Tomorrow" in *Infantry's* May-August 1998 issue. Grau provides a chilling account of the use of RPGs in Grozny and points out: "Whenever U.S. soldiers are deployed to a trouble spot in the future, the RPG-7 is likely to be a part of the local landscape..." Also see this issue's article on the Grozny disaster.

Not a positive note to close on, but as I bang away on the column, Kosovo unfolds and the debate over inviting ground forces to the fray rages. Where are we going? By the time you read this, we may be there. — D2

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