

# LETTERS

## The Origin of the ACAV: It Wasn't Our Idea!

Dear Sir:

I very much enjoyed SFC Thompson's "Light/Heavy Integration at the JRTC" in your July-August 1998 issue. He is, however, slightly confused as to the origin of the Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicle (ACAV). The Viets didn't borrow it from us, we borrowed it from them!

In May 1965, I was briefed in Saigon that my prospective [South Vietnamese] counterpart was a madman using M113s as tanks, and I must persuade him to stop. After joining my squadron and accompanying its deployed troops in the field, I phoned back to report, "You're right. He is using M113s as tanks. What's more, it works! The 113 is the champion VC killer of I Corps. Spread the word."

My Viets were using jerry-rigged gunshields and hatch armor made from whatever scrap metal they could find. I managed to get the Ordnance depot in Saigon to standardize a design and fabricate it in quantity using real armor plate. The result was the ACAV.

U.S. units, beginning with the 1/4 Cav and peaking with the 11th ACR, were quick to adopt the ACAV and use it well throughout the war. I've even seen a few in TV coverage of the Israeli Army.

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## Recent Letter on Spur Program Spurs Objections, Calls for Change

Dear Sir:

I was greatly alarmed and concerned about the article on the Spur Program submitted by ANCOG Class 98-01D in the July-August 1998 issue. The suggested guidelines for tightening qualifications and standardizing the program are extremely one-sided. Although the 11 sergeants first class make valid points about preserving the purpose and intent of the program, they significantly miss the importance of all soldiers to a cavalry organization. Soldiers of varying specialties have contributed immensely to the successes of cavalry organizations throughout history. I would like to take this opportunity to address each of the basic requirements as emphasized in the article.

First, the reservation of "The Order of the Spur" for CMF 19 soldiers only would be unfair and unfortunate. Many soldiers serve cavalry organizations in many capacities to include: fuel handlers, maintenance, medical, chemical, aircraft maintenance, etc. To say that Spur holders should only be those that rode in the horse cavalry would slight those that belonged to cavalry units in the past. Those soldiers that provided medical treatment to our fallen comrades put themselves in the line of fire. What about those that carried

the unit colors or took care of the horses? What about the bugler who was there to lead the charge into battle? What about those soldiers who made sure there was plenty of ammunition? There were many contributors to the efforts of our cavalry troopers on horseback. Without the efforts of those behind the scenes and those riding stride for stride with the horse soldiers, the enemy may have been victorious. The Order of the Spur identifies excellence within an organization. Excellence comes in many sizes, sexes, and MOSs, and many of them rode on those cavalry horses. Our organization, which is a part of the 3rd ACR, has no 19Ks or 19Ds. We are the mechanics, medics, chemical specialists, etc., who help make it possible for our regiment to be a viable fighting force.

The next requirement discussed in the article states that, "Holders of the Order of the Spur should be at the rank of corporal or above." That opinion has some merit. Sometimes young soldiers are prematurely given the opportunity to get their spurs. It is often debatable whether or not young soldiers with little time in service are seasoned enough to appreciate the significance of the spur or have shown motivation, technical and tactical competence, leadership, and extraordinary skills over a sustained period of time. Careful evaluation by the chain of command is critical to assessing the talent within organizations. Unit leadership must have the motivation to tell soldiers up front, their strengths and weaknesses. Recommendations for Spur candidates should be based on the overall assessment of the soldier. Sometimes you just can't pin a rank on that. Once a soldier earns his spurs, he is still under constant scrutiny and must maintain the spur standards. If not, then units must disenroll them and take their spurs. Disenrollment due to unsatisfactory performance gives the command a tool for keeping the program a success story.

Regarding the third requirement for Spur Programs for only MTOE and TDA cavalry units, I wholeheartedly agree. There is great tradition associated with cavalry units and troopers. A unit's lineage and history are the stronghold by which they link the past to the present. Tradition in a unit can only make that unit stronger. It definitely builds pride, unity, and esprit de corps. Spurs and cavalry troopers go hand in hand and it should stay that way.

Requiring spur candidates to participate in a major exercise such as NTC, JRTC, or CMTC is a must. In our organization we require that and many more prerequisites. Not only do our support soldiers have to deploy on a major exercise, but they must participate in a squadron FTX, pass the CTT with 100%, complete an SRP and be deployable, qualify with their weapon, pass the APFT at 250 or higher, perform PMCS on all their assigned equipment, and the list goes on. The program is very difficult and leaves little room for exception. Additionally, spur candidates only get an opportunity to earn their spurs twice a year. The bottom line on any Spur Program is that

the program is only as good as the soldiers that organize it. If we become complacent and ease the standards, then maybe the best of the best aren't wearing spurs. The challenge is to have a tough, demanding program and keep it that way through all the changes of command and NCO responsibilities. The leadership of each squadron and regiment must pass on the traditions of the spur and keep it vibrant and meaningful. Another requirement for spur candidates should be that spur holders senior to them recommend them for spurs. Additionally, the person recommending the candidate must have knowledge of the soldier's performance.

The last requirement, meeting the prerequisites of the Excellence in Armor (EIA) Program cannot happen with the support MOSs. There are some prerequisites of the EIA program that support soldiers can attain; however, they can never be enrolled in the program. The EIA program is specifically geared toward armor and cavalry soldiers. In the article, the students stated that, "Other CMFs have their own methods for recognizing soldiers of distinction, such as Expert Infantry Badge...." The Armor community's EIA program is a program of distinction. It just doesn't have a patch or badge. EIA soldiers in Armor and Cavalry units should stand tall above the rest. The EIA program is a great example of a program that is only as good as the people and units that run it. Unfortunately, armor and cavalry soldiers only realize the benefit of the program when they're progressing from SGT to SSG, because the EIA program is the only program that awards 50 promotion points for taking and passing a Level II written proficiency test. So the bottom line is yes, cavalry and armor soldiers do have a program specifically geared toward distinction and excellence. Maybe we just need to do a better job of utilizing it at unit level. EIA prerequisites cannot be a standard for the Spur Program, because it would alienate superior performers in other critical MOSs.

Ultimately, the Spur Program must be a program of honor and distinction. Many great soldiers throughout history wore the spurs and represented them well. Many of those soldiers were not of CMF 19 descent. As long as units maintain their focus on the program and treat it with the utmost of tradition and symbolism, we cannot go wrong. If we allow the integrity of the spur to become questionable, then individual units need to reassess their programs. We must remember that the greatness of our units is not measured by the few, but the many that make up the team. Telling cavalry troopers, not from CMF 19, that they cannot participate in the Spur Program would damage the team. We in the cavalry are a family of one, sworn to serve our country to the ultimate levels. The troops and companies that compose the support squadron are ready to fight and win right next to our armor and cavalry brethren.

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## More on Maneuver Warfare: Can We Change a Culture?

Dear Sir:

I am writing in response to the critique by SFC Stanchfield in the July-August 1998 issue of MAJ Don Vandergriff's article, "Without the Proper Culture: Why Our Army Cannot Practice Maneuver Warfare," from the January-February 1998 issue.

It is funny that even today, maneuver warfare, as a philosophy of warfare, is a term that still carries a tremendous amount of emotional baggage. Most of this stems from the defense reform debates of the mid-1980s, where a dedicated cadre of civilian defense intellectuals sought to reform our armed forces from the outside and change our way of thinking about warfare. Our Army, being the conservative institution it is, naturally resisted these upstarts, especially their nerve at telling us how to do our business when many of them had never heard a shot fired in anger. Sadly, much of the debate took on the form of personal attacks and left the heart of the issues essentially unexamined. The irony of this is that most organizations are incapable of reforming without significant outside influence, and the Army responded in a predictable manner.

Having said that, MAJ Vandergriff's thesis is quite simple. Assuming you have accepted the notion that the philosophy of maneuver warfare is a superior (faster and less costly) method of winning in war, then we must create a culture that will allow us to practice this. Most historical analysis will support this notion. His assertion, which I support, is that our current culture, which according to the *American Heritage College Dictionary* is "the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought characteristic of a community or population," must change to practice maneuver warfare. This culture of our Army, not our society as SFC Stanchfield asserts, is embodied in our system of promotion, schooling, assignments, command selection, emphasis on short-term results, micro-management and zero-defects. These attitudes and mores translate directly into how we lead, train, plan, evaluate training, command, use reconnaissance, use supporting fires and such. This culture dissuades all but the most exceptional leader from developing the boldness, tactical ability, and most importantly trust to properly execute maneuver warfare. We must change our culture, primarily in the officer corps, if we are to stay ahead of a future enemy, especially one who is determined to win and believes as much or more in his cause as we do in ours. Otherwise we are very likely to meet defeat on the battlefield and suffer the same critique of the French Army of 1939, the best army in the world until May 1940, when a more dynamic army swept them to the English Channel in six weeks.

How were the Germans able to defeat the most technologically advanced army of the time while being outnumbered in men and

material, save aircraft? Contrary to the Hollywood stereotype of the Prussian automaton or Sergeant Schultz of *Hogan's Heroes*, the Germans simply were able to outthink the enemy due to a military culture that started in the late 18th Century and endured through many forms of government. I encourage those who critique MAJ Vandergriff's article to examine *The Roots of Blitzkrieg* by James Corum, *The Dynamics of Doctrine* by Timothy Lupper, *Stormtroop Tactics* by Bruce Gudmundsson, and *A Genius For War* by Trevor Dupuy. It was only after 1942 and the strategic blunders over England and in North Africa and Russia did the professionalism and exceptional battlefield performance of the Wehrmacht start to unravel due to extraordinary casualties, especially among its cadre of peacetime trained, long-service professionals. Still, it bears looking at an army that was still able to generate a 5 to 1 casualty ratio against the Russians in April 1945. Can we or should we copy them outright? Of course not. But a high percentage of their practices are worth emulating. We must take advantage of our uniquely American characteristics. And initiative is one of those. However, if we have a culture that rewards the non-risk taker and punishes those bold individuals who seize the initiative and all the risks that go with it, we will lose that ability in our Army. And when the time comes for it, we will not have it in enough of our warrior leaders. I say we have that culture now.

We must restore trust in our officer corps and destroy the cult of micro-management like the scourge it is. These problems are due to a culture that places the individual above the unit and fosters an unhealthy competition among brothers-in-arms for favor, resources, promotion, awards, evaluations, and key jobs.

If we don't, defeat on the field of battle, while not necessarily inevitable (SFC Stanchfield's word, not MAJ Vandergriff's), is highly likely. Especially if the foe is determined to win, has solid technological resources, and masks his weaknesses while attacking ours. Look at how some of our SAMS-trained field grades tried to apply the MDMP in Somalia against an enemy that didn't fight by a doctrinal template. The result was a lot of raids that were busts, or captured UN workers, or led to near-disaster.

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## Role of OH-58D Is Essential In Brigade Reconnaissance Troop

Dear Sir:

In response to the article written by CPT Felty ("The Brigade Reconnaissance Troop," Sep-Oct 98), I was disappointed to see his lack of discussion about the OH-58D. He mentions the use of the helicopter as providing critical information to the brigade, as well as providing overwatch for the scout platoon's movement. Yes, this is true; however, the

aircraft does not identify enemy vehicles or targets, this is done by the pilots who crew the aircraft. (This holds true for the ground scouts as well.) Our best asset in the OH-58D is the tactical and technical expertise of the pilots who operate this machine. Our sight system (Mast-Mounted Sight) provides both a thermal imaging system, laser rangefinder, and a television sensor, all capable of incredible search techniques. The system, in its current configuration, will not identify targets (unlike the Longbow or Comanche system). Additionally, in the ACR role, we typically work well forward of the ground assets, providing real-time, accurate information to the ground force commander. Operating behind the scouts is a role used in the past by OH-58 Kiowa units. This technique is still used, but typically not preferred. Having the largest concentrations of Kiowa Warriors in the Army (32) in the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment, affords the regimental commander and corps commander with assets that can see the battlefield, digitally call-for-fire, send digital imagery (Improved System), and record all that the pilots see on an 8mm tape. These reconnaissance platforms provide all of this plus an attack capability of Hellfires, a .50 caliber machine gun, 2.75-in. rockets, and Stinger missiles. Great article, and I enjoy reading more with each new issue.

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## Excessive Simulation Breeds Training With Little Basis in Reality

Dear Sir:

COL Guy C. Swan's letter from Fort Irwin (Jul/Aug 1998, pp. 3-4) is proof to me that our reliance on computer simulations has grown excessive. The simulations industry has been a gold mine for retired soldiers now in the private sector. They have seduced policy-makers, who should know better, into believing that armor and mech infantry units can be trained on the cheap, and that none need any longer scrape their knuckles disconnecting final drives in the dark.

My experience is that soldiers accustomed to the ease of moving computer icons have lost touch with the actual weight and volume of ammo, fuel, parts, water, and food consumed by real units. These soldiers grow spiritually and psychologically soft in the sterile indoor setting of the Sim Center, coping with rain, snow, mud, and insects only between there and the gymnasium.

I commend 1LT Todd A. Napier of USAREUR ("Maneuver Training: Overcoming the Limitations," Jul/Aug, p. 4) for creative thinking. Yes, maneuver in HMMWVs is a good fix to get around the long-standing USAREUR training restrictions he describes.

*Continued on Page 39*

## LETTERS (Continued from Page 4)

In Armor's best tradition, LT Napier has assessed the situation on the ground, looked around for what is available, and offered a cost-effective solution. I add only the old lesson, I hope still taught at Fort Knox, that any bus or rail traveler can improve himself by planning the attack or defense of terrain visible during a halt.

"Devil's Advocate" Don Loughlin (Jul/Aug, p. 37-8) breathes fire, like Satan himself. Mr. Loughlin is correct in citing the still-swollen Cold War-era DoD civilian payroll as a black hole for money that once went into live training outdoors and to building tanks. "Sayonara, Armor"? No, not yet. But unless redundant layers of (military and civilian) middle management can be eliminated, Armor and Infantry will continue to shrink. Companies and platoons will be left undermanned, as now. Brigades and battalions will be unready in our hour of need.

May I be a bit more specific? For every colonel or Navy captain commanding troops, nine push paper and computer icons. The swollen staffs include: the Office of the Secretary of Defense, all four Service headquarters in Washington, the myriad defense agencies, the four-star Service MACOMs, and the worldwide regional "CINCDoms." Many of these "troops" don't know what web gear looks like. Many of them serve years, and even decades, without zeroing an individual or crew-served weapon.

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### Tanks and Rapid Deployment: It Ain't Impossible!

Dear Sir:

I have to disagree with the "official" from the Future Concepts Division of the Joint Warfighting Center when he says that once tanks arrive, they don't move very quickly. I was fortunate enough to command a tank company in 1st Bde., 3d ID at Fort Stewart, Ga. We lived the rapid deployment mission daily. With the loss of the 3-73rd Armor at Fort Bragg, we assumed the rapid deployment mission to support the 82nd should they deploy and need the extra combat power. My company participated in two rapid deployment training exercises to validate the concept and help to refine the division's SOPs for the Immediate Ready Company (IRC). The division had the ability to manipulate the packages that would fly in order to meet the mission, and the standard was that the company would be "wheels up" in 18 or 22 hours, depending on the mission. We were never pressed to meet the time standard. We deployed with a company-minus and all the support needed to sustain the unit during the initial 48 hours of conflict. Tanks and Bradleys are able to fly completely uploaded with all classes of supply, including ammo, in about the same amount of time that the 82nd is.

On the far side, when the C-17s landed, the tanks were unchained in less than five minutes and rolled off of the planes. Once on the ground, the only preparation needed was to remove the gun tube tie-down, verify that the fills in the SINCGARS were on time with the 82nd, and fight. In less than ten minutes from the time the tanks hit the ground, they are ready to battle-carry and fight. In a combat situation, I know this time would be reduced.

Flying a battalion into a site with a pre-positioned fleet was also discussed. This is another option that offers a very real solution on how to get tanks into the fight. While in 1st Bde., we also did a To Accompany Troops (TAT) deployment. In February of this year, 3-69 Armor was deployed for gunnery. Upon hearing of Iraq's non-compliance with the U.N. resolution, and seeing that a deployment to Kuwait was imminent, the soldiers in my company only requested enough time to go home and do laundry before we boarded planes. The packing of the TAT equipment was completed within a matter of hours from the start time. Six hours after the actual alert for deployment was called, we began manifesting for the flight to Kuwait. Once on the ground there, the battalion fell in on equipment at Camp Doha, and within six hours rolled out of the motor pool to the ammo upload site. This is not a slow process, or a process that has not been tested. In both cases, we have gone beyond the theoretical stage and actually executed to see if we were capable of doing what we were briefing.

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USMA AR Branch Representative

### Current Missions Require Both Heavy and Light Attributes

Dear Sir:

The U.S. Army structures its divisions as either being "light," without *any* armored vehicles to rapidly deploy by air and fight in closed terrain, or slow-deploying "heavy," with armored vehicles to fight in open terrain. Official documents list the pros and cons of each arrangement, and we assume all is well. Yet light forces got clobbered in Somalia without AFVs, and Russian heavy, AFV-equipped forces get decimated in Chechnya without foot infantry. All is not "relative" in war, *you do all you can to win*, not make excuses for weaknesses or hope the mission's demands will not expose these self-imposed flaws. We think that by clever semantics over what "missions" our divisions are performing we can somehow dodge the realities of the battlefield. To win on the modern battlefield you need *absolute quality*, a force with *both* heavy and light attributes. Both light and heavy forces have wheeled vehicles. Since wheeled vehicles can operate in either "light" or "heavy" mission areas, there is no excuse why light forces couldn't have a small force of light, tracked AFVs, like the M113A3, for armored vehicle firepower, mobility, and protection. The addition of light AFVs will not heavy up

the LIDs to the point where they become non-rapidly deployable by air, since a C-130 easily carries a M113A3 and dozens of troops in a single lift. The basic assumption — "light without armored vehicles, heavy with armored vehicles" — is a lie, an "all or nothing" tunnel vision.... Heavy forces in large numbers cannot get to the battlefield in time by air. Light forces can get there in time but do not have the firepower, armor protection, and mobility to win without heavy casualties. Light armored fighting vehicles, like the air-droppable, swimming, 11-ton M113A3 weigh the same as 22,000 pound, 5ton trucks (which are now air-dropped) and can mount heavy weapons to move the leading segment of the light force to victory on the battlefield — a heavy/light mix now....

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### Thoughts on Training, Simulators, And the Need for Qualified O/Cs

Dear Sir:

In reviewing this article ["Simulations and Training," by Major Mark Alan Eastman and Mr. George Helton, March-April 1998 *ARMOR*], I can see where readers may be lead astray from the types of simulation training that is conducted in the simulation world. Simulation training is done in both the constructive and virtual world. In constructive simulation training, both friendly and opposing forces weapon systems are set to represent the capabilities for that weapon system. However, when a unit is training in a virtual simulation exercise the friendly forces, using the manned-simulators, are only as good as their crew skills.

The second issue is training the unit conducts prior to its NTC rotation. I am sure they did their very best with what they had to work with, but without having a professional observer/controller team to help them in this training they never reached their full training potential. Professional operators are needed in order to make constructive simulation training work to its fullest potential. At NTC, we have to support the units training so they can train and not have all the burdens that come with this type of training. I do agree with COL Swan [Letters, July-August 1998 *ARMOR*] that, short of war, the training a unit receives at the NTC is the very best training a unit can receive. The Army cannot train all its units each year at the NTC. We need to give our soldiers the best possible training we can in order to prepare them for their next battle. Using what training resources we have, and supporting those resources correctly, you will see that the total training package will work. Virtual and constructive simulations can and will prepare any unit for live training, as live training at the NTC prepares a unit for combat, if and only if this training is given the correct resources it needs to make it a part of the total training package.

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