

# COMMANDER'S HATCH

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## Building Victory From the Ground Up

All great endeavors have one thing in common: they were all built from the ground up. Without firmly laid foundations, no accomplishment can stand the test of time. The United States Army is no different. It was built from a well-organized plan, led by dedicated leaders of uncommon vision, and its greatest strength comes from the ground up — well-trained and highly-motivated soldiers.

Our soldiers are the best in the world because our Army takes care of them from the ground up, with tough, realistic training, opportunities for advancement, skill and professional development, and quality support for them and their families. Make no mistake: Operation Desert Storm was not won by high technology or smart weapons. It was won by tough, smart soldiers, who knew their equipment and fought with skill and bravery, because they knew the Army would take care of them. Our soldiers are the bone, the muscle, and the lifeblood of our Army, and our country — and it will never be any other way.

Building from the ground up also describes how our Army, and specifically the Armor Force, must adapt to change. In the past, the Army was run from the “top down.”

Decisions were made at the top. Equipment was designed at the top. Organizations were developed at the top. All this has changed now. Our soldiers and civilian employees are the best quality we have ever had. We must use their input — from the ground up — to

keep the Armor Force leading change in the 21st Century.

In the past, new ideas often were developed separately from their intended users because the gap in experience and knowledge between users and designers was so great that it could not be easily bridged. But today's information technology allows these two to work hand-in-hand. On the digitized battlefield, the increased access to information will not be used to concentrate control at the highest levels, but to empower initiative by everyone in the force to achieve decentralized execution.

Passing information — and the ability to use that information — down to the lowest levels, will help us win future battles. New combat vehicles, new information transfer structures, new organizations, and new doctrine cannot be created by bureaucracies isolated from the field. Instead, these things must be created out of the experiences and lessons learned by those who actually use them everyday. That is why the Army has invested in Advanced Warfighting Experiments and the EXFOR.

As warfare and technology change, the Army must accommodate these changes in creative ways that meet the real needs of a changing world. The Armor Force understands this concept because it was born in response to advances in mechanization, firepower, and communication. As our yellow, blue, and red insignia suggests, the Armor Force was created from the combination of tanks, infantry, and artillery

used in overwhelming, violent, and decisive actions on the battlefield.

Among its most important missions, the Armor Center has the requirement to unlock and then organize the genius of our soldiers and junior leaders into something useful for the entire Army. For example, the Armor Center recently created Integrated Concept Teams (ICTs) to chart out the Future Combat System (Future Main Battle Tank), future scout cavalry system (FSCS), and improvements in tank armaments and ammunition, as well as upgrades to the Abrams fleet.

These ICTs pulled together participants from many different Army organizations and disciplines to ensure that the ideas and expertise of all concerned with the future of the mounted force were focused in a manner consistent with today's realities. It also was a way to build the future from the ground up.

We will use these same techniques when developing new combat organizations, new doctrine, new training packages, and new technologies. All of these will ensure that the equipment we give our soldiers of the future will be the best in the world. Creativity and innovation are key ingredients to building the future. Creativity and innovation from the entire force — not just from those at the top. It is, therefore, incumbent on all of us to think about the future and to offer suggestions on how to improve the mounted force.

**ON THE WAY!**