

# COMMANDER'S HATCH

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## Focus on the Triad of Excellence

It is indeed a privilege for me to return to Fort Knox as the 37th Chief of Armor. Since my last assignment at Fort Knox, our Army has undergone vast changes. We have successfully defended the frontiers of freedom in Europe, causing the Iron Curtain to fall, and deployed overseas to participate in several differently demanding operations, such as Operation Just Cause, Operation Desert Shield/Storm, and Operation Joint Endeavor. Throughout this continuum of operational environments, the mounted force has fielded and fought on six versions of tanks and five versions of personnel carriers/fighting vehicles. Despite the diversity of operational environments, the mounted force continues to achieve success in all of its endeavors.

Our success comes from many sources, I will talk about three of those sources — a triad of excellence — starting with our people. Soldiers, civilians, and their families are the foundation for all of our success in the past, and they will continue to be that foundation in the future. Our soldiers continue to prove how smart they can be, regardless of the conditions or environment. We are continuing to build the force with the most intelligent recruits in the history of the Army. Every leader's charter in the mounted force should be to provide the most challenging environment available to these soldiers — they deserve it! However, let us not forget that we must provide our

families a comfortable and just environment whether at home or abroad.

As trainers throughout the mounted force, we owe our people only the best preparation for combat available. The world-class training at our Combat Training Centers (CTCs) continues to be the centerpiece of our preparation for future wars and military operations other than war. The National Training Center, Combat Maneuver Training Center, Joint Readiness Training Center, and Mounted Warfare Simulation Training Centers throughout the world provide our soldiers and their leaders training that is unmatched anywhere else on the face of the globe. The observer/controllers at these facilities shape our future achievements by providing the best possible coaching and teaching, through candid feedback after each mission. We must continue to use these training centers to provide the toughest and most realistic training available to maintain an edge over all of our opponents. However, this triad of excellence is not complete without the right equipment to provide the means to achieve our goals.

Currently, the equipment available to our mounted warfare soldiers is second to none. Continual developments in weapon system survivability, lethality, mobility, and digital capability are keeping our soldiers out front on the modern battlefield. We are making unprecedented achievements in the development of these new weapon systems

and their complementary tactics, techniques, and procedures to fight effectively on future battlefields. Providing the proper equipment for the mounted force is clearly a priority!

Our opposition today has many faces. Unlike the monolithic threat we trained to fight in the past, we face an enemy whose size, capabilities, and tactics are ever-changing. We must be prepared to fight a large or small enemy, with either high or low technical capability, and beat him regardless of his preference to fight a linear or non-linear conflict. Alongside this warfighting spectrum lies the environment of stability operations, peace support operations, and operations other than war. In these types of operations, the missions could range from the challenges of separating multiple warring factions, where the threat of combat is always present, to providing disaster relief in Africa or to our own citizens.

The challenges facing the mounted force of the future are many. This is our force, and I'm taking a personal stake in its future. I challenge all soldiers and civilians of our force to claim their own stake, whether it be providing for the needs of our fine soldiers and their families, in finding ways to enhance our training, or in improving our equipment. I want your ideas.

I am honored with this opportunity to lead the mounted force into the future.

**FORGE THE THUNDERBOLT!**