

# The Armor Captain's Career Course

## Not High School and Not Ranger School!

by Captain William E. Stebbins Jr.

*"I shall always urge that the tendency in the future should be to prolong courses of instruction at the colleges rather than to abridge them and to equip our young officers with that special technical professional knowledge which soldiers have a right to expect from those who give them orders, if necessary, to their deaths. Professional attainment, based on prolonged study, and collective study at colleges, rank by rank, and age by age — those are the title reeds of the commanders of the future armies, and the secret of future victories."*

— Winston Churchill

As the U.S. Army undergoes the necessary throes of modernization and transformation to meet future chaotic challenges, virtually no weapons system, institution, or martial methodology will remain hidden from intense, strategic scrutiny. We are undergoing a comprehensive examination of our warfighting modus operandi to determine how best to adapt to, and properly defeat, any and all future adversaries. We are on the offensive, proactively engaged to defeat the staggering array of future threats instead of yielding the initiative and remaining comfortable in our established military parameters.

In the March-April 2002 issue of *ARMOR*, Major General R. Steven Whitcomb, U.S. Army Armor Center Commanding General, devoted his editorial to the very important topic of officer education. He explained his purpose for writing the piece as, "motivating us, the Mounted Force soldiers, [into] talking about these thoughts on future training." I agree. Future training initiatives need to be aggressively debated and dissected by the corps of professional warfighters to ensure flawed designs are not quietly slid in through the back door.

This article offers my humble views on officer education — specifically focusing on the Armor Captains Career Course (AC3). Having experienced the course as a student, and most recently, having taught it as a small-group instructor (SGI) for over a year, I bring a few insights to the table worthy of consideration.

### Captains Course Under Scrutiny

Currently, AC3 is pending profound transformation. It is currently an 18-week course where (very) newly promoted company grade officers are primarily taught the fundamentals of task force (TF) and company-level combat, and support and stability operations, as well as the military decisionmaking process (MDMP). They receive instruction from an SGI in a classroom of up to 14 students, including foreign officers. During this time, junior officers, fresh from their first duty station and long ride in the saddle (nowadays usually including any of the increasingly ubiquitous deployments), shake off the dust, recharge their batteries, get to know their families once again, and focus on tactics and leadership without the distraction of unit static.

Immersed in the small-group dynamic, students cross-pollinate their varied experiences, study historical battles for the gleaming of timeless lessons, gain an in-depth working knowledge of the MDMP, develop strong ties with foreign officers, and discuss leadership and command tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and philosophies in preparation for their imminent guidon exchange.

Suddenly, the successful AC3 design has a potential successor in the wings. It is in danger of being supplanted by a design considered to be more relevant and modern. In November 2002, the AC3's proposed heir, the Combined Arms Battle Command Course (CABCC), will be nominally tested in two small groups at Fort Knox. CABCC will be a 10-week course consisting of three phases: a 4-week distance-learning (DL) phase where knowledge-based instruction will be taught to nonresident students remaining at their duty station; a 4-week TDY resident phase where students go to Fort Knox to conduct execution-centric 'Gauntlet' exercises, such as multigrade, multiechelon training events, using the close combat tactical trainer, *TacOps* (a computer plug and play game), and live exercises with tanks and HMMWVs; finally, a 2-week TDY course with their SGI to a combat training center (CTC) to observe a BLUFOR unit's progress during a rotation.

Amputated from the traditional course material are brigade-level operations, the MDMP, all but a cursory familiarization with intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), battle captain, and staff rides. Perhaps the most egregious surgical procedure, however, is substituting DL self-guided learning for traditional resident, small-group instruction.

Further, due to the DL, internet nature of Phase I of the course, combined with the pruning of overall course material, Marine and foreign officer attendance appears to be in varying states of jeopardy. Permutations of the course with respect to phase length and other training details continue to change so this article cannot vouch for the veracity of the above program of instruction, but the essence of CABCC is accurately portrayed.

In a nutshell, the proposal is to reengineer AC3 into a shorter course that is execution-centric instead of knowledge-in-culcation-centric; field, simulator, and computer game-based instead of classroom-based; a TDY deployment instead of a PCS move; and rapid-FRAGO-based instead of MDMP and detailed 5-paragraph OPORD-based. In its progenitors' own words, it seeks to be more like a mounted Ranger school than a high school.

Innovation divorced from reality is meaningless. It must be wedded to truth, it must be tied to validated principles of commonsense, otherwise innovation is but a cacophonous cymbal — loud, but imparting no beauty to the symphony. History speaks to us repeatedly about the folly of innovation without truth. The American War for Independence, initiated and perpetuated by principles of Judeo-Christian Biblical

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truth, resulted in the birth of the world's freest, fruitful, and globally powerful nation. By stark contrast, the French Revolution, incubated and fed by pernicious pseudo-concepts did not reap a similar harvest. Mob chaos and horror at the blood-soaked guillotine abounded as the revolution enslaved all within its ravenous scythe.

Change for change's sake wastes taxpayer money, disrupts validated systems, and simply squanders a lot of good soldiers' time and energy. Transformation in all its facets, including officer education, must derive its foundation from reality to be of any immediate and lasting value to our Army. It must not be parasitically used as a host for just any aspiring theorist's good ideas regardless of the reams of spreadsheets in his briefcase.

New ideas or methodologies in the officer education realm will have tangible, irreversible effects that profoundly impact on our nation's security and warfighting lethality in this time of ongoing asymmetrical war. As such, these new ideas must be subjected to well-reasoned, critical analysis prior to endorsement.

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*"We must be bold to change when change gets us increased combat power and bold to reject bad ideas. We must keep our eyes focused on combat power results...not captured or dazzled by technology."*

— Retired General Fred Franks

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### Realistically Altering the AC3

So what is reality with respect to this topic? What is driving this perceived urgent need to radically alter the fundamental framework of AC3?

Surveying the myriad reasons currently articulated by those advocating this change, you find that they fall under the following general points, which we will examine respectively:

- Superior training method. Assuming that there is a better training methodology to be employed in developing captains. Experience-based versus knowledge-based.
- Technology. Assuming that DL technologies have advanced to the point that all necessary 'bookwork' can be more effectively and economically taught remotely.
- Shortage of captains. Perceived lack of pre-AC3 company-grade officers in line units.
- Cost. PCSing students to Fort Knox is too costly and/or the current AC3 price tag is now unbearably exorbitant.
- Advent of new leadership requirements. Assuming that combat leaders of our new digitized, futuristic battlefield must possess a new set of skills not previously required (or emphasized) in past cohorts.

### Experience-Based Training Superior to Knowledge-Based Training?

An idea has been advanced that knowledge-based training — studying and debating doctrine, tactics, and martial theory in a classroom — is antiquated, inefficient, and not what future company commanders *now* need at their advanced courses. The superior methodology for developing combat

leaders, it is held, is experience-based training where students are repeatedly given leadership opportunities during various training events where their performances serve to teach and coach them more efficiently than an instructor in a classroom environment. The accumulation of this 'library of experiences' then ostensibly enables future leaders to recognize 'patterns' and make exponentially faster command decisions than their classically trained peers.

Confucius, the 5th century B.C. Chinese philosopher (who, incidentally, never served a day under arms or led men into battle), is oft intoned in an effort to shore up support for the experience-based camp, "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand. I do the task several times and I know. I do the task many times and I master the task."

The great Kong Qiu, (his real name), articulated an observation that the more 'hands-on' you demonstrate something, and the greater the frequency of doing this hands-on task, the more perspicuous it becomes to the student. What he is expressly not trying to convey in this contextually 'lifted' quote is that all classically trained academic instruction should be, wherever possible, supplanted by experiential training. Though myself a fan of experience-based training and the current slate of Gauntlet events executed in AC3, I reject an approach that is exclusively Gauntlet-centric, devoid of classical classroom instruction.

This is *not* a zero sum game. We do *not* have to choose exclusively between classroom-based knowledge instruction and experience-based field training. Rather, we can intelligently combine *both* methodologies to develop a superior course. To advocate one exclusive approach and impugn the other unnecessarily hampers our transformational efforts.

Hardcore, academic, knowledge-based classroom instruction (of which Confucius was a staunch advocate) has a distinct and vital place in a professional warfighters' erudition. It is in no way antiquated, passé, inferior, or something to be shunned in an effort to appear 'transformed,' modernized, and relevant.

The idea is firmly advanced that TRADOC schools must evolve into "battle schools" of experiential learning due to increasing constraints placed on live tactical training at home station. Say again? TRADOC schools must now make restitution for perceived line unit training deficiencies?

Once again, I must strongly disagree. First, resourcing does not currently preclude quality company-level maneuver training. While in command at Fort Hood, ample opportunities to plan and execute company-level maneuver training without OC scrutiny existed for all to capitalize on, as opposed to my lieutenant years in Germany during the early 1990s. In fact, we were admonished if we failed to rack up a prescribed quarterly mileage goal. This similar experience has been repeatedly collaborated by peers who commanded elsewhere.

Secondly, the belief that TRADOC schools, such as AC3, should become training centers or battle schools is flawed thinking. Making restitution for perceived line unit training deficiencies is not within the AC3 mandate, scope, or purpose, nor should it be!

Our Army conducts live training at the world-class CTCs, as well as at homestation training, and it is at these places that you train established SOPs with units of habitually-ros-tered soldiers operating the full complement of combat systems that they will deploy with. That is good training. What we do not need is yet another training center.

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*"I think there is no activity more important in a man's preparation for war than his periodic return to school duty, not so much because of what he learns in mere facts and knowledge as because during that period he is relieved of the ordinary routine duties... For that period he is given an opportunity to think, think in terms of war, without limit on the scope of his ideas."*

— General Dwight D. Eisenhower

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Further, we expressly do not need a new "battle school/training center" that hastily pits soldiers and leaders together for the first time, struggling to fight within the parameters of a contrived SOP that seeks to standardize how to fight unorthodox, nondoctrinal equipment compositions that would be fought nowhere else but at the diminutive Gauntlet training area at Fort Knox! That is not training as you fight. It does not build a library of battle-centric experiences that you can draw on in the chaos of combat to expedite and streamline your decisionmaking; that is, unless as an Army we are preparing to fight hastily organized, ad hoc units of HMMWVs or companies of less than 14 tanks.

Contrary to the community of theorists who seek to demean or malign as prehistoric knowledge-based instruction where students exercise that which differentiates us from the animal kingdom, it is my opinion that we expressly need to retain and defend the institution wherein are taught tactics and war-fighting theory underpinned by the crucial framework and cosmology of military history.

Many authors admit that experiential training scenarios must be realistic, and therein lies the rub.

**Rub 1.** Realism means individuals of all ranks assigned to units that train together daily and operate under a tactical SOP enforced by their commander. Realism is not two or three isolated ranks of peer students brought together for the very first time struggling with an SOP that is not uniquely their own.

**Rub 2.** Realism for a commander means maneuvering 14 tanks or 10 tanks and 4 Bradleys, or 6 tanks and 8 Bradleys (you get the picture). It is not maneuvering nondoctrinal, unorthodox combinations of HMMWVs, or a company of but 6 tanks.

**Rub 3.** Realism is maneuvering a company against a robust, finely trained enemy on a sufficient expanse of terrain to permit true maneuver. It is not maneuvering an ad hoc company of lieutenants and captains for 40 minutes on the same 5x5 kilometer postage stamp parcel of terrain that offers only limited maneuver options to the adversaries.

Such exercises do not invigorate or stimulate battle command skills, nor do they provide experiential lessons that can be applied to a true chaotic battlefield. All training is not good training; only good training is good training.

In fact, my guess is that if we placed this current, self-imposed educational dilemma in his lap, Confucius might respond with, "Practice does not make perfect. Much practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect."

The ultimate goodness derived from Gauntlet events is the interaction and mentorship between captains and lieutenants in the basic course. AC3 students reap tangible rewards in the practice of writing and articulating their orders to subordinates, while the Armor Officer Basic lieutenants get a first-hand feel for what it will soon be like in their first units.

Both learn that effective radio communication is indispensable.

These are the tangible benefits of a Gauntlet. What is not harvested, in fact what cannot be harvested (despite the press reports), are real-world tactical maneuver TTPs — the library of experiences — which one can purportedly draw on in battle to solve tactical dilemmas.

Finally, the CTCs have a very difficult time approximating battle realism; such are the logistical requirements of such a ponderous endeavor. But our nation provides the financial resources for the CTCs to accomplish this effect and they do so to the greatest degree possible. However, to entertain a notion that Fort Knox and its schools with their vastly inferior resources (compared to a CTC) could even come close to approximating reality for worthwhile live exercises is ambitiously quixotic. Further, the funding that would be required to meet this minimum realism standard stands in direct opposition to the aforementioned cost argument that is supposedly requiring AC3 transformation in the first place.

Knowledge-based, knowledge-retention training is always the precursor to hands-on, effective training. Ranger school cannot be done via DL. In Ranger school, students are given countless hours of resident (not DL) instruction on small-unit tactics, which students then employ in the mud. They do not take students, issue them their gear, and disgorge them into the Floridian swamps to somehow, through discovery learning, try to impress their instructors that they are worthy of the coveted tab. You do not complete a Ranger school DL, nonresident module prior to attending. You learn the information the old-fashioned, relevant way — eyeball to eyeball.

In a similar vein, interns are not relieved of years of hard-core medical school and instead tossed the scalpel and challenged to plod their way through a patient's abdomen in hopes of successfully locating and extracting the ruptured appendix to be validated as a physician.

Unfortunately, and amazingly, some in the thick of this evolving problem advocate an approach bordering on 90 to 100 percent experience-based instruction — the stuff you would expect to read about in silly, apocryphal science fiction novels — basically the "throw 'em in the swamp over and over again and let 'em figure it out" approach. This appears to lack balance and discernment.

Just to recap: CABCC includes a DL phase where students remain at homestation and absorb requisite knowledge over the internet. By tackling knowledge-based curricula at home station, the student officer assumably saves the Army money by not PCSing twice during one year, and effectively learns everything he needs to know prior to his TDY to Fort Knox, where he then immerses himself in almost nothing but experience-based Gauntlet training to construct the alluded-to 'library of battlefield experiences.' Dispensing with the litany of obvious objections this new course design elicits, for the moment let's advance forward and address the DL issue in a bit more detail.

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## **DL Technology: To Boldly Go Where No Student Has Gone Before**

Germane to this discussion, in fact essential, is whether or not the existing course should be transformed into a DL-flavored coursette at all. What is driving this particular change? Is the technological tail wagging the digital dog? Just because we have emerging DL technology, does part of the armor community feel compelled to make it the paramount medium of knowledge training to the detriment and loss of SGI mentorship and student experiential cross-pollination?

Having taken (and continuing to take) DL courses, and having taught (and continuing to teach) AC3 in the small-group fashion, I can, with a modest degree of authority, claim that I can teach any tactical topic quicker and better in person where students answer to me and are not competing with numerous other distracters, than can be taught to them in the remote, DL manner. By reverse conclusion, I challenge that anything taught in residence requiring 6 hours of explication (for example), will require twice that amount of time, or 12 hours at a minimum, to teach via DL and achieve the same level of understanding!

Further, a high preponderance of DL instruction will likely, because of its inherent inefficiency, result in poorly absorbed topics demanding subsequent SGI review and amplification when the student finally arrives at Fort Knox. The problem is this 'catch-up' period is currently not built into the pending CABCC design.

I maintain that any existing DL designs that do not multiply the time needed for teaching any topic by two, is flawed in design from the outset and predestined for a degree of failure! And if my assumption is correct, then the timesaving aspects of CABCC are beginning to rapidly evaporate. We might likely be producing poorly trained, doctrinally illiterate company grade officers for our nation, in return for negligible savings in educational time and money.

So who is qualified to cast judgment on the above assumptions? Those who have never taught IPB or the MDMP to a young, newly promoted company grade audience? Those who have never personally taken DL courses and therefore have no frame of reference as to the efficaciousness of such courses? Those who attended an advanced course years ago and have but a cursory snapshot idea of what is now AC3? The answer is rhetorical.

*Balance* is what we should strive for. DL prep work may well have a beneficial place in the officer education system framework, but in addition to, and not in lieu of, resident subject matter expert instruction. DL mentorship, however, is virtually impossible.

### **Where are all the Company Grade Officers**

Another argument posed for AC3 truncation and DL maximization is a perceived shortage of pre-AC3 officers serving in line units. It appears that suddenly the outcry for company grade officers to remain in their line units longer and not PCS for 18 weeks to Fort Knox has hit critical mass, requiring a pronounced overhaul of AC3. If we shorten AC3 and retain them in our line units (as they execute the 4-week DL phase), so the theory goes, this paucity will be minimized.

If lack of captains in the force is a significant impetus driving the need for a shorter AC3, then we need to admit that

there are other, larger reasons behind the disease. To abruptly reengineer and curtail the course based on this reason is akin to treating the symptoms as opposed to curing the disease. Worse still, it is a treatment, much like 'blood letting' during the War Between the States, that may do infinitely more harm than good to several waves of AC3 graduates — entire year groups of company commanders.

As an Army committed to providing the very best education for its officers, we need to isolate the real problem — treat the disease. That said, it is entirely outside of the scope of this article to address officer retention strategies. However, tacking on yet another TDY deployment (CABCC), after an already robust string of real-world deployments and CTC rotations, may just exacerbate the officer shortage dilemma beyond its current precarious level.

Minimizing the importance of institutional periods of warrior instruction and the quality family time that goes hand-in-glove with said periods might be viewed as demeaning and disrespecting the often-touted, vociferously proclaimed notion of 'caring for Army families.' This applies equally to single, as well as married officers with children. All professionals need to recharge their batteries from time to time. Again, back to the balance thing. Burning the candle at both ends without surcease is not the way to endear wives, children, and fathers.

The AC3 mandate is to produce doctrinally fluent, tactically savvy company grade officers, armed with the mental arsenal to command with unparalleled proficiency. It is not to solve Army officer retention problems.

### **Saving Dollars at Leaders' Expense**

Any worthwhile discussion on AC3 transformation necessarily must orbit about the axis of purpose, regardless of cost. What must we achieve? What must we train new company grade combat arms officers? I pose that if our endstate is not a confident, well-resourced, doctrinally sound company grade officer, but rather a quantifiable sum of monies saved, then we are perilously off course.

In a perfect world, financial resources and officer strength should not drive AC3 redesign. This is not a perfect world, however, and reality dictates that budgetary restraints must be dealt with. The issue then becomes where we draw the line. What aspects of our national defense do we consider exceedingly important and not to be toyed with? I submit that officer education — the erudition of our leaders and warfighters — is one of those hallowed areas that we must fight to preserve inviolate.

Are we willing to merely accept dwindling pools of financing even if we know that it will degrade the education of our officer corps? Should this be a battle to wage — to convince those who manage the purse strings that a strong, invincible military requires a cadre of doctrinally proficient, well-rounded and aggressive leaders, and that this cannot be accomplished on a shoestring budget?

It is a very dangerous proposition to cut costs at the expense of officer education — the warfighting erudition of those men who lead our nation's sons and daughters into harm's way. We may save some money in the short term — and those savings will look brilliant on spreadsheets — but in the long run, the exorbitant cost of potential lives lost as a result of poorly schooled leaders would border on the criminal.

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It is expressly our burdensome and grave mission — duty — to ensure potentially myopic, savings-centric politicians understand and accept this truth. These are the meaningful, behind-the-scenes battles that must be fought and won, even as our forces are fighting and winning in the harsh landscapes of distant lands today. It does a great disservice to our nation's citizenry to kowtow in obeisance to uncontested financial restrictions and knowingly hobble our warrior education to save a few dollars.

If the new threat and OPFOR paradigm is a ruthless, vulnerability-seeking, freethinking enemy — and our Army has said that it is with the advent of the current operational environment — then I maintain our leaders require more training, more mentoring, and more immersion in the theory of tactics and battlefield TTPs — not less! Further, we are currently engaged in a war on terrorism that threatens fellow Americans on our own soil and promises to be a protracted war at that; this is not the time to be budgetarily Spartan in the officer education realm.

### Enter Tomorrow's Warfighter

In seeking to develop a transformed leader-training methodology, theorists have struggled with first defining the model, combat proficient future leader. From this definition, then, would spring the methodology best suited to arrive at the goal.

Recent protransformational articles claim that in current and future environments, leaders' decisionmaking time will be cut in half, and that windows of opportunity for seizing the initiative will be shorter. Therefore, tomorrow's leader must be a rapid decisionmaker. This is the first assumption with which I must disagree. With the advent of revolutionary command, control, communications, computer, and intelligence (C4I) systems, future warfighting is predicated on exponentially higher degrees of friendly and enemy situational awareness (SA) than ever before. If one has 80 to 90 percent SA — exponentially more SA than we have ever had in the past — then one would have more, not less, time to analyze the situation and determine what course of action to follow. This is because warfighting operates in a pervasive SA fog — we struggle to ascertain the enemy's array from stale human intelligence reports, even as we fight to determine our own friendly situation. Often, our perception of the battlefield is drastically different than reality. In that type of uncertain battlefield, you have to adapt quickly to what will turn out to be the truth of the situation when it finally (at the last moment), rears its ugly, fanged head.

I am saying that leaders should have more time if digital/SA systems work as advertised, and as they are being briefed. You cannot make a logical argument for shorter decisionmaking times and briefer windows of initiatory opportunity in an SA-enhanced, digital environment, unless you concede that digitization simply does not now, or in the near future, truly aid SA truth.

One of CABCC's prime assumptions is that future leaders will have less time and must become fully versed in rapid decisionmaking (RDM). The emphasis is on time-constrained decisionmaking, transmitting these decisions through bare-boned FRAGOs, and then execution. As such, and as you would expect, in proposed CABCC curriculums, the MDMP and the full-blown IPB process will not be taught.

I trust no one would debate that making tactically sound, rapid decisions on the battlefield is a good thing. I think it is one of the hallmarks of a true martial leader. What I challenge is the notion that the nature of future conflict exponentially necessitates this skill. As stated above, I maintain that this ability was more necessary on the past legacy battlefield where our common operational picture was more fully obfuscated and uncertain for longer periods of time.

### Defending AC3

AC3, in its present form, is a live companycommand.com. For all the reasons that many admire the pioneering, beneficial website — cross-pollination of real-world, helpful TTPs, sharing experiences, and the vicarious learning dynamic — are the same reasons that resident AC3 is to be preferred over a DL-intensive, non-SGI-mentored course. Again, it is a 'live' companycommand.com, but even more than that, it is one that a student must report to daily for 18 weeks; he has no recourse but to be fully immersed in his craft. He does not have the luxury of not logging on Monday or Friday, or even weeks at a time, due to other competing requirements. AC3 is his requirement and he is 'logged on' for 4 months of intensive warfighting and leadership training under the scrutiny of his SGI.

We are already successfully incorporating experience-based training into AC3 while maintaining balance. Stagnant classroom instruction devoid of any hands-on experiential training is foolish, especially when so many opportunities and so many technologies exist to maximize experiential learning. As such, Gauntlets are being executed while simultaneously preserving the irreplaceable goodness of resident, small-group instruction where tactics and leadership are discussed in great detail. There is simply no need to cannonball off of the diving board into the deep end of the extreme pool. Knowledge-based and experience-based — they both have their place.

It is easy to make sweeping pontifications on courses based on dollar amounts that fit into tidy spreadsheets. What is missed by simply analyzing that which can be quantified, however, are those intangible, but far more important, qualities and results that are harvested in the small-group classroom over 18 rigorous weeks.

### Coda

I admit that perhaps not fully cognizant of the resource-constrained environment driving our perceived necessity to radically alter an already successful AC3 and other courses like it, I do believe I am in possession of at least the problem's basic parameters. Lack of company grade officers in line units, and a dwindling education budget, coupled with a dangling carrot of increased technological capability (DL) that promises to help us as a force leverage our time better, all combine under the expansive umbrella of transformation and provide opportunities for leaders to enact change in many different areas. In this type of environment, it is easily construed that to resist any change placed on the table is to be a myopic, 'legacy' heretic actively employed in the anti-transformation resistance movement. Ludicrous, but often evidenced.

Change for change's sake is fool's gold. All change is not beneficial, therefore new initiatives and new course designs need to be scrutinized with discernment and not blindly ac-

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cepted. It goes without saying that our senior leaders are working diligently to create the best possible educational course design that answers all of the e-mail simultaneously. We must present new ideas before the Armor community, discuss and debate them vigorously, and only when we have a logical, well-reasoned understanding of the impacts, begin changing courses and effecting educational patterns.

If the foundational assumptions of new ideas are valid, then they have nothing to fear from a robust barrage of healthy criticism and professional debate. If invalid, the assumptions will shatter and our Army will be saved the disgrace of an unsound and damaging escapade in Pandora's digital box.

This is easily done by canvassing the entire cadre of SGIs in existing courses, past and present, as well as soliciting detailed feedback from past and present students to identify impacts different course designs will likely elicit.

We must take care not to launch into a quest for the digital grail, rabidly seeking change for change's sake. There are universal, unchanging principles. Leadership will never become supplanted by something else more advanced and scintillating. The machine will not replace the man. Being diligent stewards of taxpayers' money is noble, but this must never be at the egregious expense of degraded warfighting leadership and proficiency.

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As an Armor Corps, we can continue to believe the publicity reports without doing any requisite study and analysis of our own, and keep marching down this particular primrose path to company grade leader transformation until we find that we are saturated with doctrinally illiterate, shallow-thinking, reactionary leaders, *or* we can cut to the marrow and salvage the goodness of knowledge-based training and use Gauntlets in their proper, supporting role. The choice is ours and we must decide which methodology or theory we are to endorse, for we will live with the results in what promises to be a protracted, turbulent war-torn future.

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