

DRIVER'S SEAT



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On The Horizon

Today, Tomorrow, and the 21st Century

Recently, while in Washington, D.C. for the Armor Functional Review at DSCPER, LTG Stroup asked me if I thought we needed to restructure our crews — based on fielding the M1A2, AGS, and the new scout UpArmored HMMWV. I replied that I didn't believe crew restructuring was necessary, but the way we recruit, train, and retain soldiers was something we might review and change. In this column, I want to briefly talk about where I see us headed as we make our way into the 21st Century. Because space is limited, I will only touch on subjects I feel directly have an impact on the Armored Force as we recruit, train, and retain.

It's not as easy to enter the combat arms today as it was twenty or thirty years ago. How well a person scores on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test will determine the recruit's Career Management Field (CMF). To qualify for Armor CMF19 requires a combat (CO) score of 90 or better. The CO score is composed of tests such as arithmetic reasoning, coding speed, and mechanical comprehension. Additionally, your Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) will determine what mental category you fall in. The categories, from highest to lowest, are 1-3A, 3B, and 4F.

Statistics for fiscal year 1990 show there were 66 percent Category 1-3A

soldiers in CMF19; of those, 93 percent were high school graduates. The data for fiscal year 1995 shows an increase to 95 percent of high school graduates. These statistics suggest that more of the brightest are opting for combat arms, where the technological challenges of the future are. It is as true today as it was yesterday — **soldiers are the Army's most important asset and greatest weapon.** The full power of technology is realized through quality soldiers. Technology enhances their power through advanced training using state-of-the-art simulations, simulators, and training devices. Because of these technological advances in our warfighting equipment, we're offering what I think are excellent packages to attract bright and motivated new soldiers. For instance, qualified recruits who enlist as 19K tankers receive a bonus of \$4,000 for three years or \$7,500 if they enlist for four years. If they sign up as 19D cavalry scouts and enlist for four years, they receive an enlistment bonus of \$3,500. These packages also include the college fund and college student loan payback programs. These incentives, coupled with the high-tech opportunities available in armor, are attracting higher quality recruits into the Armor Corps.

Speaking of high-tech opportunities, tomorrow is rapidly becoming today in the armored force. Have you ever looked inside the Army's newest battle

tank, the M1A2? If you have, then you've seen the on-board computers, screen monitors, and advanced communications hardware that make up the crew compartment. Every time I jump into an M1A2, I feel like I'm on the bridge of the *Starship Enterprise*. Looking through the optics of the M1A2 is like powering up the latest high-tech video game.

Another major advancement is the new, bullet-proof, air-conditioned, Improved Up-Armored scout HMMWV. This will enable scouts to detect threats faster at greater distances. Not only are scouts finally getting a vehicle that will enable them to do what they're trained for, they'll also receive deep-looking optics and enhanced acoustic listening systems.

The Armored Gun System, AGS, is the newest addition to the armored force. It is designed to be a rapidly deployed armored system. It will see duty with the 82d Airborne at Fort Bragg and the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment at Fort Polk. It's a great design, has an automatic loader and features most of the advanced technology of the M1A2. It also cuts the number of crew members down to three, due to the addition of the automatic loader. What this also means is that airborne training will now open up to 19Ks. Historically,

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only scouts flew in helicopters and wore jump wings. Now 19Ks will get the opportunity to jump out of perfectly well built airplanes that are capable of landing.

Enough about vehicles. Have you heard that we also have digitized warriors?

These are the guys that have been trained to use all the advanced technology I just mentioned, including individualized systems. There isn't enough space here to go into great detail about the individualized high-tech systems, but suffice to say, you'll be impressed. Soon, we'll have whole digitized divisions. It's only a matter of time before you'll be digitized as well. These things are real, not concepts or dreams anymore. They're here. Not a day goes by that some technological advancement doesn't change the way we do business. Speaking of training, today's Army trains in three environments — virtual, constructive, and live. The *virtual* training environment offers simulations that are electronic clones of real weapons systems. Tank gunnery simulators, such as Unit Conduct of Fire Trainer (UCOFT) and Simulator Network (SIMNET), are ideal examples of virtual simulations. The *constructive* environment replicates warfare in the form of interactive computer modeled simulation war games. In some constructive simulations, the computer presents soldiers with a situation and allows them to make decisions that influence the battle. Examples of constructive simulations are Janus and Brigade/Battalion Battle Simulation (BBS).

Live simulations are conducted using real equipment and real soldiers in an actual training environment that replicates combat conditions.

Our rotations at the National Training Center, Ft. Irwin, California, and the Combat Maneuver Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany, are classic examples of training areas used for live simulations.

As you can see, it's going to take highly motivated and dynamic individuals to be warfighters in the 21st century. Only bright, physically fit, and self-starting soldiers will be able to use this advanced technology to its full potential.