

GUNNER'S SEAT

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This issue marks both the 125th anniversary of **ARMOR** and the culmination of the 2013 Maneuver Warfighter Conference at Fort Benning. These events are worth noting as they tie all of us to both our history and our future. The conference offered Soldiers the opportunity to learn and gain mentorship from legendary Soldiers of both the Armor and Infantry branches. The conference also provided valuable insights into the current operations and functions of our Army, as well as glimpses into the future of our Armor Branch.

We were fortunate enough to be in the presence of retired GEN Crosbie Saint, who graciously provided us with insights from his 34 years of service to this nation. During conversations with GEN Saint, I was asked, “Why Armor?” Reflecting on that, what makes Armor the profession young Soldiers want to be part of as they join our Army? It is a powerful question in its simplicity and one to which I welcome feedback and insight from the force to help me define for our Soldiers.

Why Armor? I would answer that it is because the United States will always require premier land forces. Our ability to dominate any other force through combined-arms maneuver is a capability that must be maintained. There is now, and will always be, value in the ability to defeat an opponent on the battlefield and place your figurative boot on his neck. For 238 years Cavalry, and later Armor, has brought mobility to the battlefield, providing the speed, surprise and shock action that is the hallmark of our profession. Even as the Army shifts its focus to the Asian Pacific Rim, home to some of the world’s largest armies, I am reminded of the invaluable role Cavalry and Armor forces played in the Pacific campaigns of World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Why Armor? The Armor force, at its most fundamental level, is about

people. I have spent this week at the conference surrounded by the legends of our profession, to include retired LTG John Sylvester, retired MG Terry Tucker, retired CSM John Stephens and retired CSM Joe Gainey, to name a few. Their contributions both on active duty and since retirement are numerous, and they personify the attributes we look for in our Soldiers. Our Soldiers are also personifying these attributes every day. I look at both recently awarded Medal of Honor recipients SSG Clint Romesha and SSG Ty Carter, and I am proud to call myself a 19D.

The citation for SSG Carter is an exceptional example of Cavalry and Armor Soldiers who exemplify the very best of this profession: Then-SPC Carter was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions Oct. 3, 2009, while serving as a scout during combat operations in Afghanistan. On that morning, SPC Carter awoke to an attack by an estimated 300 enemy fighters employing effective direct and indirect fires, occupying key terrain and surrounding all four sides of Combat Outpost Keating. SPC Carter reinforced a forward battle position, twice ran through 100 meters of enemy fire to resupply ammunition and voluntarily remained there to defend the isolated position. Armed with only an M4, over the course of several hours SPC Carter placed accurate, deadly fire on the enemy, beating back the assault force and preventing the position from being overrun. With complete disregard for his own safety, SPC Carter ran through enemy rocket-propelled grenade and machinegun fire to rescue a wounded comrade pinned down in an exposed position. SPC Carter rendered first aid and carried that Soldier to cover. On his own initiative, SPC Carter again maneuvered through enemy fire to check on a fallen Soldier and recovered the squad’s radio, which allowed them to coordinate their evacuation

with fellow Soldiers. With teammates providing covering fire, SPC Carter assisted in moving the wounded Soldier 100 meters through enemy fire to the aid station before returning to the fight. SPC Carter’s heroic actions prevented the enemy from capturing the position and saved the lives of his fellow Soldiers.

SSG Carter’s actions embody the highest values and attributes of the Armor Branch.

Returning to GEN Saint’s question of “Why Armor?” The Armor Branch is about the future. Cavalry and Armor continue to move forward in support of the Army’s core competencies of combined-arms maneuver and wide-area security. This year’s “State of Armor and Cavalry” brief at the conference resounded with ways in which we are looking to develop leaders to face the future’s challenges. We have standardized the scout squad and platoon formations. We are codifying the level of training and experience a 19D must have to be an expert in reconnaissance and security. Furthermore, we are examining the best ways to shape master gunner and Stryker training to ensure we remain the experts on mobile, protected, precision firepower for all components and the U.S. Marine Corps. It is a great time to be a member of Career Management Field 19!

In closing, I would ask that everyone think on GEN Saint’s question and do their best to answer for themselves – and to encourage everyone to respond with their thoughts – as to “Why Armor?”

Scouts Out!