

LETTERS

Dear **ARMOR**,

In the article “Reconnaissance Training: a Time for Innovation” (**ARMOR** October-December 2013 edition), CPT Amos C. Fox asserts that the Cavalry Leaders’ Course (CLC) should be integrated into the Maneuver Captains’ Career Course (MCCC) for the purposes of expanding maneuver officers’ knowledge of cavalry operations at the troop and squadron level. While I agree wholeheartedly with the purpose of his article, I must disagree with the proposition, as it will likely erode the effectiveness of the CLC curriculum.

Fox points out the relatively low number of noncommissioned officers who attend CLC in the resident course. While from a pure numbers standpoint this is correct, the intangible benefit of having NCOs in the class is overlooked. NCO students provide grounded experience and context for the officers, whose experience in cavalry operations is varied. The result is an officer graduate who has had an “aperture widening” classroom experience through the combination of knowledge and experience provided by the NCOs, and an NCO graduate who has had the opportunity to learn alongside commissioned officers and increase his exposure to military operations above the platoon and troop level. Indeed, every class I have taught has resulted in an NCO revealing to me that he has a much better appreciation for what his commanders do and how to

better support it. That cultivation of senior NCOs will pay dividends when they return to an operational unit.

Also, Fox’s article does not address the increased number of non-armor/infantry officers who attend the course, which will be severely degraded if CLC is folded into MCCC. A typical resident CLC class will contain a small number of aviation officers from the Aviation Career Course, as well as field artillery, engineer and other non-maneuver branches – and this percentage is even greater on mobile training teams. These students come from various points in their careers, from pre-command junior captains and lieutenants to field-grade officers in squadron and brigade staff positions. This mixture of rank and branch, coupled with the NCOs previously mentioned, creates a learning environment unique from MCCC and its branch equivalents. The result is a course where students learn not just from the instructor but also from the experience of seasoned NCOs and the knowledge of other officers.

If reconnaissance and security training is important, we should seek to avoid the one-size-fits-all military-education system. Integration of courses like CLC with MCCC, and the Army Reconnaissance Course (ARC) with Armor Basic Officer Leadership Course (ABOLC) (as has been mentioned in some circles) will, without question, decrease the effectiveness of the course and its output. As a functional course, CLC is able

to focus wholly and solely on the doctrine and tactics of cavalry operations. The result is an instructor who is an expert in his craft and laser-beam-focused on training future cavalry leaders. Instructors will, on average, conduct eight to 10 teaches annually, creating unmatched expertise in the doctrine and course outcomes. To combine CLC’s curriculum into a professional military education (PME) course like MCCC – which is required to train students across a broad spectrum of subjects – will degrade this expertise. While the numbers will show an increase in “trained” officers, the reality is those officers’ understanding of cavalry doctrine will be greatly reduced from current CLC standards.

While we appreciate the value placed on CLC in Fox’s article, we must also point out that the course’s autonomy is what creates that value: the ability to focus solely on providing world-class cavalry operational and doctrinal instruction. Instead, the Armor Branch should consider the percentage of its officers who will serve in cavalry organizations vs. armor units and adjust its training focus accordingly, as addressed in the article “Ideas on Cavalry” (**ARMOR** October-December 2013). To integrate with the MCCC would not result in innovation but would rather lead to stagnation.

BRIAN J. HARRIS
CPT (P), AV
CLC Manager