

Chief of Armor's Hatch

Maneuver Leader Fundamentals

The last few months have been exciting at Fort Benning, GA, as we celebrate the 75th year of the Armored Force:

- The Armor School hosted the Saint George Ball April 24 with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) commander GEN David Perkins as the guest speaker and 91-year-old CPL Neil French as the guest of honor. French was a Sherman gunner involved in the relief of Bastogne.
- From May 4-8 we hosted the 2015 Gainey Cup Best Scout Squad Competition. This competition physically and mentally challenged all troopers by rigorously testing knowledge, tactical competence and fundamentals of reconnaissance-and-security operations. The 2015 Gainey Cup winners were from 2nd Cavalry Regiment; congratulations for earning the title of Best Scout Squad in the Army!
- Finally, we are very proud of CSM Tim Metheny, who was selected as the first 19-series Maneuver Center of Excellence command sergeant major. His demonstrated competence and character will contribute greatly to the development of our future maneuver force.

As we look to the future, we must focus our training to becoming unequivocally unmatched and highly capable to effectively operate across the range of military operations.¹ As an institution, we have not fully transitioned our training emphasis, even though we constantly hear about getting back to the fundamentals. The question we need to answer is: "What are the fundamentals?" At Fort Benning, we are working toward a common framework with a leader-development strategy to develop *smart, fast, lethal* and *precise* Soldiers and formations. In the next few paragraphs, I will discuss briefly what I see as maneuver-leader fundamentals (platoon sergeant through company commander).

The intent is to focus the development of our maneuver leaders on a reasonable number of fundamentals so they can work toward mastery. Otherwise, we are likely to develop a broad array of tasks that achieves neither mastery nor proficiency from one unit to another. Training, supply and maintenance management are important aspects all leaders should master, but the following list is tailored specifically toward maneuver leaders as defined above.

1. **Troop-leading procedures.** We are doing well in getting rid of the one-page concept of operations but must get back to complete orders with graphics and a means to provide command and control such as an execution matrix.
2. **Maneuver.**
 - a. Fire: Leaders must master the weapon systems/platforms assigned to their unit and fully understand direct-fire planning.
 - b. Move: Leaders must understand the elements of command and control that allow their formation to gain positional advantage. Also, maneuver leaders must master actions on contact to act faster and more decisively than their adversary.
3. **Employ fires and enablers.** Leaders must understand how to effectively employ and integrate additional enablers as part of their maneuver to ensure the initiative and overmatch are maintained. Enablers to focus on are fire-support assets, engineers, unmanned aerial systems and aviation, at a minimum.
4. **Sustainment.** For armored forces, sustainment is our lifeblood, and maneuver leaders are responsible for synchronizing and integrating sustainment in their operations. We've established the Maneuver Leader Maintenance Course on Fort Benning to develop maintenance competencies. Key areas of emphasis are *fixing, fueling, arming, resupply* and *casualty evacuation*; these functions should be trained with the same intensity as we have on the gunnery range.
5. **Manage tactical risk.** Tactical risks are those actions that may preclude successful mission accomplishment. Maneuver leaders must develop the skills to visualize, assess and identify tactical risk and be capable of developing mitigation measures or of identifying the risk to their next higher command for more resources.

Leaders will remain the most decisive element of combat power, and leadership is more critical than any emerging technology. The maneuver-leader fundamentals are intended to focus our leaders' development on establishing the skills and attributes to be smart, fast, lethal and precise. With this foundation, leaders will be best prepared physically, socially and cognitively to close with, engage and destroy threats in close combat and then have the necessary skillsets to adapt to a changing set of battlefield circumstances.²

I encourage leaders to use Armor School media outlets to present your viewpoints on these topics. Share your leader development and education plan, best practices and lessons-learned on the U.S. Army Armor School (USAARMS) Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/USAARMS>) or on milSuite (www.milsuite.mil/book/Armored_Force).

BG Scott McKean
Chief of Armor/Commandant
U.S. Army Armor School
Armor School MilBook: (www.milsuite.mil/book/Armored_Force)
Armor School Facebook: (www.facebook.com/usaarms)

Notes

¹ TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *Army Operating Concept, "Win in a Complex World,"* dated Oct. 7, 2014.

² TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-7, *Human Dimension Concept,* dated May 21, 2014.

Acronym Quick-Scan

TRADOC – (U.S. Army) Training and Doctrine Command

USAARMS – U.S. Army Armor School