

# Chief of Armor Hatch: Applying Lessons-Learned

by BG John S. Kolasheski

First I want to say thank you for what you, your Soldiers and leaders are doing/have done for the Army and the joint force and then tell you what an honor it is to assume responsibilities as the 50<sup>th</sup> Chief of Armor and one of Fort Benning's deputy commanding generals. I want to thank MG Scott McKean for his leadership and stewardship of the branch and school over the past two years. I look to build on the momentum generated by my predecessors as we build technically competent and confident armor Soldiers, cavalry troopers and armor officers that are successful regardless of their operating environment.

Today on all four corners of the map sheet, armored and cavalry formations are demonstrating American commitment and resolve. In places like Korea, Europe (Operation Atlantic Resolve), Afghanistan (Operation Freedom's Sentinel), Iraq (Operation Inherent Resolve) and the greater Middle East (Operation Spartan Shield), our Soldiers and troopers are carrying out operations aimed at bolstering partner capacity, preventing conflict and deterring our adversaries – oftentimes at great personal risk and sacrifice. When not deployed, these same units are focused on building readiness so that when called on, they are prepared to fight and win decisively across the full spectrum of conflict as part of the joint force.

We are driven by lessons-learned and observations from today's contemporary operating environment – specifically the Ukraine-Russia Conflict – rotations at our combat training centers and information you and your organizations share. What we've learned has reaffirmed the importance of armored-warfare fundamentals. We must maintain the capability to “shoot, move, communicate and sustain” in support of combined-arms maneuver and wide-area security.

These lessons-learned are also driving the development of initiatives within the Maneuver Center of Excellence and Armor School. Some of these initiatives are the armored brigade combat team triangular redesign; development of mobile, protected firepower for infantry brigade combat teams; an aligned Abrams / Bradley / Stryker master-gunner training strategy; hosting and supporting international tank and reconnaissance competitions; transitioning the military-occupation specialty for Stryker Mobile Gun Systems from 19K to 19D; developing and updating reconnaissance-and-security doctrine; gender integration; and alignment of functional courses to support armor-leader assignments.

The Armor School will continue to be the institution of choice for developing agile and adaptive leaders, Soldiers and formations that can operate in any environment; are skilled in the art of mounted warfare; are capable of integrating combined arms; and are experts in reconnaissance-and-security operations. Under the leadership of the Maneuver Center of Excellence's commanding general, MG Eric Wesley, I look forward to working with BG Pete Jones and the Infantry School as we harmonize efforts to support current operations and initiatives; inform the future; and provide trained, agile and adaptive combat-ready Soldiers and leaders for the Army.

Lastly, I want to take this time to thank COL Charles Freeman for his service as the Armor School deputy commandant over the past year. He will be taking over as chief of the Leader Development Division, Directorate of Training and Doctrine. I also want to welcome COL David Davidson to the Armor School team as the new deputy commandant. No stranger to the Armor School – having previously commanded 316<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Brigade – COL Davidson is coming to us from U.S. Army North, where he served as the G-3.

In closing, I am proud to be the 50<sup>th</sup> Chief of Armor, and I look forward to seeing many of you at this year's Maneuver Warfighting Conference Sept. 14-16, 2016. Take care and keep in touch.