

# Chief of Armor's Hatch: Focus on the Reconnaissance Objective

I would like to start by saying thank you for what each and every one of you do to make our branch and the U.S. Army the best in the world. Without question our individual leaders and organizations are in high demand. Our formations continue to carry out operations on all four corners of the map sheet to illustrate American commitment and resolve, but we can't rest on our laurels.

In the March/April 1988 edition of **ARMOR** magazine, MG Thomas H. Tait (former commanding general, U.S. Army Armor Center) identified shortcomings in the planning and execution of reconnaissance-and-security (R&S) operations. He challenged the Armor and Cavalry community writ large with a simple question: "What are we doing about it?" What is old is new.

Today we are at a similar crossroad as we have shifted our focus from predominately wide-area security (WAS) tasks, like we executed in Iraq and Afghanistan, to combined-arms maneuver (CAM) and WAS. Critical to both CAM and WAS is our ability to plan, coordinate and execute R&S tasks. Based on feedback from unit commanders at all echelons and our combat training centers, this is an area where we can collectively improve.

A critical step in improving the performance of individuals and organizations starts with education and training. Professional military education and functional schools provide the necessary foundation to educate and train the fundamentals. Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, **Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management Guide**, and DA PAM 600-25, **Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Guide**, are the governing documents we use to identify professional-development requirements. In the years since publication, adherence to and attendance at functional courses has ebbed and flowed, leading in some cases to leaders who are ill-equipped to perform their duties when assigned to Cavalry organizations.

Here at Fort Benning, GA, we offer several R&S functional courses that assist in building individual leader competency. These courses are constantly refreshed based on your feedback. Current courses offered at Fort Benning are the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader's Course, the Army Reconnaissance Course (ARC) and the Cavalry Leader's Course (CLC). In addition, several years ago we were able to include a Cavalry-focused elective into the Command and General Staff College (CGSC).

It is our intent, in coordination with the operating force, to have every active-duty Armor Basic Officer Leadership Course graduate attend ARC, every active-duty Armor Maneuver Captain's Career Course (MCCC) graduate attend CLC, and every Armor resident-course CGSC student take the R&S elective. We are working to provide similar functional-training opportunities to our noncommissioned officers and are facilitating attendance by National Guard Soldiers in coordination with their leadership. While attendance at functional training will increase the time an officer or NCO spends at Fort Benning, we believe it is well worth the investment.

Other initiatives we have put into motion to rebuild competencies is an R&S block of instruction into MCCC, execution of executive-level R&S-focused workshops for brigade combat teams and division leadership and an Adobe Connect R&S forum. We are also working to assist operating-force units in the development of R&S home-station training plans and subject-matter expertise for home-station training events.

This strategy will only succeed when we work together. I encourage leaders across the force to canvas your organizations and identify your organizational shortfalls and allow us to assist. We greatly appreciate feedback from the field, so please keep in touch. Together we can rapidly close the gap on this critical battlefield competency.

We are the "combat arm of decision" ... a team of teams ready to fight and win anytime, anywhere, under any conditions of battle.

Forge the Thunderbolt!

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