

Chief of Armor Hatch: Reconnaissance and Security Proficiency

Armor and Cavalry troopers thrive on conditions of ambiguity, uncertainty and complexity. We are comfortable away from the main body, operating in front or on the flanks, and decisive when leading it. We are known for our ability to combine the superior capabilities of our equipment with the ingenuity of our troopers to find, fix, close with and destroy any enemies through the combination of mobility; precise, lethal and overwhelming firepower; and devastating shock effect. To fight and win under these conditions, Armor and Cavalry Soldiers, leaders and formations must be competent and grounded in the fundamentals of their craft. Commanders and leaders at each echelon have the responsibility to drive rigorous, realistic, mission-essential task list-focused, multi-echelon training that not only builds readiness but ensures that we are training the way we intend to fight. This is a collective responsibility and an area that requires our utmost attention and focus.

To close gaps in current knowledge and improve reconnaissance and security (R&S) proficiency, the Armor School is focused on four areas: 1) educating leaders, requiring attendance at critical R&S and functional-training courses prior to officers (lieutenants through majors) departing professional military education for follow-on assignments; 2) reaching out to our “dirt” combat training centers and the operating force to assist with R&S education and training and to ensure our programs of instruction (Pol) stay current; 3) recruiting the highest-quality talent with the right operational experience to come back to Fort Benning as instructors and cadre; and 4) publishing documents intended to aid brigade combat teams, battalion and company/troop commanders in the development and execution of home-station training. Two of these documents are *A Commander’s R&S Handbook* and the Armor Branch Leader Development and Training Strategy. We are also working with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command to assess R&S requirements at echelon and are submitting force-design updates to codify personal and positional additional skill identifiers for critical positions.

This year’s Gainey Cup offers the opportunity to see how we are doing as we test the mettle of scouts from across the Army, Marine Corps and our allies, and crown the “best scout squad.” The Gainey Cup will take place May 1-4 at Fort Benning, GA. On the afternoon/evening of May 1, we will conduct a “Scouts in Action” demonstration and no-host social; May 2 and 3 will be the principal competition days; and then May 4 we will host the award ceremony and have a cookout over in Harmony Church. We plan on holding the Saint George dinner the night of May 4 at the River Mill in downtown Columbus. We truly hope you can make it. For more information on the Gainey Cup, please go to <http://www.benning.army.mil/armor/gaineycup/>.

In closing, CSM Alan Hummel and I are immensely proud of our branch, the “combat arm of decision,” and each and every one of you, but we can’t rest on our laurels. Please let us know what works, what does not, where we can help, and where we need to adjust fire. Thanks and see you in May.

Forge the Thunderbolt!

BG JOHN KOLASHESKI
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