

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I would like to offer a supplement to the excellent article entitled “The Russian Army and Maneuver Defense” by Dr. Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles that appeared in the Spring 2021 edition of **ARMOR**. The Russian maneuver defense is actually a highly structured form of the delay. As such, there needs to be an effective counter rather than the classic time-consuming and costly “stop, deploy and assault.”

When we analyze the Russian intention for this form of maneuver, it becomes clear that they desire us to take time to deploy and then take casualties in an assault. Doing so means we play into their hands so they can delay and attrit our forces up to the point of them becoming decisively engaged, and then they withdraw by alternate bounds (at the battalion level) to subsequent positions, where we and they will repeat the sequence.

We need to prevent that sequence, which favors the Russian defense, by minimizing the delay and avoiding the assault while flanking their defensive positions to get into their depth before they can finish their withdrawal – or at least attrit their forces as they withdraw and are vulnerable. What is the answer? Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) scouts and massed fires.

When we encounter their platoon/company defensive positions, instead of deploying for an assault, we pause while our UAV scouts confirm the size and depth of their position(s). We then quickly use our already prepared defense templates to determine the most likely associated company/battalion defense positions, send our UAV scouts to confirm those locations, and then

bring massed fires onto not only the position(s) we have encountered but onto their associated positions as well. The aim is to attrit their forces using massed fires instead of them attriting our forces defending against our assault.

While we are attriting their forces using massed fires, we maneuver through gaps and/or around their flanks (as discovered by our UAV scouts) to disrupt their withdrawal by massing fires on their withdrawal route(s) in conjunction with “attack by fire” using our organic direct-fire weapons from Abrams and Bradley vehicles. The original Russian positions encountered can be dealt with by our follow-on forces with more massed fires, in conjunction with a final assault against an attrited and demoralized force. In this way we seize the initiative from them, attrit their forces and interrupt their delay and withdrawal timetable.

This requires or long-standing offensive mindset that fires support the assault be changed to massed fires are the assault. This will save precious troop lives (remember the American public’s intense aversion to “body bags” being shown in the media), attrit their forces and disrupt their timetable.

LTC (RETIRED) ROBERT T. PANDOLFO

Dear Editor,

While looking through the on-line library, SCRIBD, for info on M4 Sherman tank manuals, I found **ARMOR**’s review of the book **M4 Sherman** by French author Michele Esteve (Spring 2021 edition). I was stunned to read that the review stated the book was “[a] superbly organized, well-written,

detailed history of the Sherman tank with hundreds of photos and diagrams included.”

I purchased a copy of this book and found it to be extremely disorganized to the point of almost being unusable without repeated flipping through the book to find something. I would suggest that if you have not done a really deep dive on this book, you might want to take a second look and consider retracting that glowing endorsement of it. I, too, initially thought this was going to be an excellent resource, but the closer I looked, the more I realized it has serious flaws on almost every page.

I am going through the book, page-by-page, detailing the problems found and trying to research corrections so that the book is not a total waste for my reference library. I am only on Page 21 and have almost 10 pages of notes about problems found.

RONALD LEWIS

*(Editor’s note: This would be a good time to explain **ARMOR**’s review procedures. A book’s usefulness and organization is a subjective matter, so readers may also wish to consult other on-line reviews before forming an opinion on a book. We welcome letters to the editor, but we won’t publish letters that attack our reviewers. We also don’t “retract” reviews, as they are our reviewers’ opinions. We don’t/can’t review novels per regulatory restrictions. Any questions? Please let us know.)*

ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

UAV – unmanned aerial vehicle