

COMMANDANT'S HATCH

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Improving the Maneuver Force through Mission Command and Sustainment

As 2013 ends, we at the Armor School would like to take a moment to thank our Armor and Cavalry Soldiers, leaders, Department of the Army civilians and families for their tremendous service and sacrifice. Your efforts have proven invaluable in addressing the challenges of an Army at war while preparing our force for the demands of tomorrow. Because of your selfless dedication and inspiring example, the Armor Branch will remain the combat arm of decision through this critical transitional period.

In this issue of **ARMOR** magazine, we examine the impacts of mission command and sustainment on our maneuver force. By definition, mission command is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders. Mission command features disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations (Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-0).

At all levels within our Army, mission command remains a vital component in unified land operations. The past decade of persistent conflict reinforces what we have learned time and again over centuries of warfare: that the commander's role remains critical on the battlefield. Whether it was GEN George Washington's crossing of the Potomac, BG John Buford's reconnaissance at Gettysburg, GEN George S. Patton Jr.'s invasion of Sicily, or then-COL Sean MacFarland's direction during the Anbar Awakening, leaders throughout history have achieved mission success by enabling their units to seize the initiative and create and exploit opportunities. Military operations continue to occur in complex environments. Time, terrain, weather, civilian populations and political-economic dynamics all influence enemy and friendly organizations and capabilities. A commander's understanding of these variables and their interactions is enhanced through a deliberate

and collaborative planning process. From this understanding, the commander can communicate clear and concise task, purpose, intent and endstate nested with higher and adjacent organizations, all integral to mission success. Key to mission command is the commander's application of decentralized execution through empowering agile and adaptive subordinate leaders in these most complex, ever-changing and uncertain conditions.

Success in this environment requires leaders who possess a focused understanding of sustainment, the provision of logistics, personnel services and health-service support necessary to maintain operations until successful mission completion (ADP 4-0). As Armor and Cavalry leaders, our understanding of sustainment influences our planning and execution of operations. More than a decade of war reinforces that we can never assume that our lines of

communication (LOCs) will be secure behind friendly forces. Instead, LOCs will be constantly vulnerable to enemy combatants and social, political, economic and environmental factors. To succeed under these conditions, the relationship between our combat arms and logistics professionals must be built on a foundation of constant integration, coordination, synchronization, trust and confidence. We foster this relationship daily at the Armor School through

our unique privilege of training and educating future Ordnance Soldiers during tank (91A) and Bradley (91M) mechanic advanced individual training (AIT). Our great logisticians – the best in the world, literally – ensure our equipment and personnel retain the highest possible operational readiness within our armored brigade combat teams (ABCTs).

Finally, as we look to promote excellence in mobile protected firepower, the

Armor School will host the 2014 Sullivan Cup “best tank crew” competition. The competition occurs May 11-16, 2014, and will identify the top tank crew from a field of teams representing the U.S. Army, U.S. Marines Corps and international competitors. The competition will evaluate crews on physical fitness, problem-solving, tactical skills and precision-gunnery skills. We look forward to your participation. Excellence starts here! One force, one fight!

Forge the Thunderbolt!