

# From the Editor

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## STAYING THE COURSE

We've heard a lot lately about upcoming changes to the force structure. Here at Fort Benning and at Fort Knox we call it the initial combat brigade team, *Army Times* discussed it in the context of a prototype medium brigade, and as time passes you may hear it referred to in still other terms, depending upon who is talking. Try not to get locked in on a name, but instead pay attention to what the new unit will look like and what we will expect it to do. The bottom line is that—at least to some extent—we will be looking at better ways to do business.

The techniques and skills we used to deploy and fight in the past will have to be re-examined—and if necessary modified—to deal with the adversaries of this decade and beyond. There are several reasons for this. First, the enemy himself is changing. Gone are the static formations and predictable doctrine that we planned—and trained—to engage for the last half of the 20th Century. Instead of the monolithic threat of the Soviet Union and its surrogates, we now see an array of smaller potential adversaries that can collectively stretch our resources. We must be ready to fight one or more of them on short notice, and very likely in built-up areas.

Secondly, we may not have forces stationed close enough to a hotspot when the pot boils over. We will have to get there fast and be prepared to go in fighting if necessary. Once we hit the ground, we may be facing an adversary on a playing field with which he is already familiar. In all probability, he will have already trained and fought over that piece of ground, and will have adapted his tactics, techniques, and equipment to achieve maximum effect on it. We will have to hit him hard, fast, and decisively, and we can do that only if we equip, train, and practice moving our combat power into theater faster than we ever have before.

Finally, we must re-examine the way we move and fight because most of our potential enemies already know how we operate. The advent of the Internet has given everyone—from hobbyists to militia groups to credible adversaries—access to the experience and lessons learned in combat and in training. We need to have a few tricks up our sleeve that no one's seen before, and that's where good, old operational security—remember OPSEC?—comes in. This is the time for initiative and innovative thinking, but share your professional knowledge only on a need to know basis, and let the bad guys learn *their* lessons the hard way. It's hard to achieve surprise today, but it's something we must learn to do.

So how do we prepare to operate as part of a lighter, more deployable Army? For now, continue to train as we have trained before, but keep your eyes and ears open. We can continue to hone that fighting edge by maintaining proficiency in the basic infantry skills. Our infantry doctrine is sound. We will always be part of the combined arms team. We will still have tanks and Bradleys because there are circumstances under which there will be no substitute for them, but we will also train to shoot, move, and communicate under other conditions as well. Whether we dismount from a Bradley, a light armored vehicle, a Fox, or a dump truck, infantry will still employ the tactics of fire and maneuver that spell success. Trust our leadership to arrive at sound, reasoned decisions; present your input as those decisions are being staffed, and spare no effort in training our soldiers to move swiftly, grapple with and whip the enemy, and return home safely. Sure, change is coming, but change has spelled success for our Army ever since 1775. Remain flexible, stay on top of the latest information, and train to win the next fight. Watch your lane!

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