

Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men.
—George S. Patton Jr.

As a career armor officer, I often looked to this quote from one of armor's paragons as an accurate description of the conduct of warfare. Over the years, as I gained both experience and knowledge, I realized just how limiting a description this was of an Army's preparation and actual execution of war.

Patton's quote, though properly highlighting the conduct of war as a human endeavor, makes assumptions about both men and machines. Key among these assumptions is that the men and women engaged in combat are ready for its application. Warfighters require adequate tools and the spirit to win, but they also must be properly trained, organized, led, practiced, and resourced to have any chance of winning. Where Patton's aphorism is sufficient to inspire and motivate, it is insufficient for the professional soldier.

In "What Constitutes a Capability?," Lt. Cols. Kyle Hatzinger and Molly Schaefer provide an illuminating article on the war in Ukraine that provides the latest reminder of how to build true warfighting capability.¹ Referring to it as "a terrible acronym for a terrific idea," the authors reaffirm the effectiveness of our Army's application of the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leader and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P) initialism. Doctrine's "D" is in the first position not because it provides a great lead for a handy mnemonic but because building a warfighting capability always begins with doctrine. We devise how we are going to fight based on experience, current conditions, and possible futures. This is where the blueprint for readiness has its intellectual foundation. Every component of DOTMLPF-P must follow doctrine in a logical and integrated way.

Preparing the force to win today and tomorrow is the daily concern of the Training and Doctrine Command, the Combined Arms Center, and Army

Futures Command. These key elements of the institutional Army encompass and drive every aspect of integrating DOTMLPF-P. The Army's obligation is to effectively organize, lead, and train every soldier. They must have dependable equipment and be afforded the time and space to practice its application. Resourcing and synchronizing each step on this road to readiness is a complex endeavor but essential to creating a winning force.

Current conditions complicate the Army's current rendition of the DOTMLPF-P model. Daily reports from the Ukrainian front and Gaza reveal a steady stream of both novelties and anachronisms, from drones to trench warfare. Parsing out true lessons learned from basic observations requires a great deal of discrimination and judgement. Concurrently, the Army is "transforming in contact" as it actively competes with adversaries around the world and across the continuum of conflict.² This drives urgency for change and a legitimate need for speed, but buyer beware—acceleration should not mean expediency. While process will not win the war, the intellectual work of putting the DOTMLPF-P puzzle together is ignored or short-circuited at the Army's peril.

Throughout the Army's nearly 250 years of history, these periods of transformation, in and out of crisis, are a familiar occurrence. In each of these periods, getting to a shared understanding, fostering innovation, and solving thorny problems began with the exchange of ideas and debate. Our hope is that the reader of this current edition of *Military Review* engages with its content and joins the conversation. ■



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Notes

Epigraph. George S. Patton Jr., "Mechanized Forces," *Cavalry Journal* 42, no. 179 (September 1933): 8.

1. Kyle J. Hatzinger and Molly J. Schaefer, "What Constitutes a Capability? Leveraging the Ukraine Experience to Define an Overused Term," *Military Review* 105, no. 2 (March-April 2025): 53–66.

2. James E. Rainey, "Continuous Transformation," *Military Review* 104, no. 5 (September-October 2024): 10–26, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/SO-24/SO-24-Continuous-Transformation/>.



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