

THE DECISIVE ROLE OF SKILLS IN BUILDING THE ARMoured FORCE

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The armoured force is a new force in our army. Tanks are its main component. Our tankmen, however, are transfers from the infantry and artillery forces and so they are not familiar with the use of tanks. Everyone, from the commander to the other officers and the rank and file should master knowledge relating to tanks. In particular, officers must personally learn tank-driving and shooting. Such skills are decisive in the building of this new force. Political work should ensure improvement of skills on which the accomplishment of military tasks depend. We must, therefore, work wholeheartedly to acquire them.

Combined operations involving the different services and branches will be characteristic of future wars, and tank troops will play an important role in achieving victory. Tankmen, who function as artillerymen under cover, are the backbone of the ground force. In order to destroy the enemy's pillboxes, pursue and attack his troops and his effective strength, it is imperative that we master the use of tanks and bring their power into full play. If our men are not skilled, they will not be able to manoeuvre their tanks or hit the targets, or repair their weapons when they break down. Every officer, especially those at and above the regimental level, should master the relevant skills. Those who have not yet done so must learn. It is unacceptable for those at the higher levels to lack these skills themselves but require those at the lower levels to master them. An officer will be considered qualified only when he can teach his subordinates. In future, there must be no one on the battlefield who does not know how to fight. Everyone, not only commanders but political and logistical personnel, must know how to use weapons. The current Korean war²⁹¹ has

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taught us an important lesson. The enormous size of our forces has made it difficult to supply provisions not only to fighters but to non-combatants. In the future, tank troops should carry their own provisions so as to reach and destroy the enemy sooner. In combined operations deploying different services and branches, it is extremely important to gain time. Every minute — indeed every second — counts. A delay of only a few seconds due to lack of skill may bring disaster. Our comrades must, therefore, resolve to train hard to increase their proficiency, mounting the tanks to learn how to drive them, how to aim and fire their weapons and how to operate their radios. They must persevere and learn everything not yet within their grasp.

Without highly-developed skills, there can be no good tactics. Indeed, highly-developed skills make learning tactics easier. We must, therefore, learn skills first, then tactics. Only after this can one undertake the study of the co-ordinated actions of various forces. One must become highly proficient in order to manoeuvre one's tank at any desired speed. Skilled use of tanks is complicated, so tankmen must acquire the necessary technical knowledge, buckle down to learn how the tank functions, as well as how to manoeuvre and shoot. Officers in particular must acquire a high degree of skill before they can take command of a number of tanks and co-ordinate them with other forces in battle. In the final analysis, the question is how to successfully train and educate troops. We hope that in six to twelve months you will learn the technical structure of a tank and its weaponry as well as how they function, and acquire all the skills required, including communications. Officers should join their men in learning. You must not feel embarrassed in doing so or put on airs. When you don't know something, just say so and learn it, or else you will suffer. You should concentrate all your energy on learning skills.

Future wars will consist of combined operations involving the air, tank and other forces. The tank force will be required to put the enemy out of action promptly. To this end, tankmen must do their best to master skills to meet actual needs, and then they will be able to manoeuvre tanks and strike at the enemy accurately. Otherwise, there will be trouble. Every Party member should pledge to perfect his skills and attain professional proficiency with wholehearted effort. It is essential that we build on what has already been achieved and do a good job of running our schools and training qualified personnel in order to promote the swift building of our armoured force.