



# Letters to the Editor

In CPT Jeff Hayes' *Aviation Digest* (Jan-Mar 2016) article, "It's More Than Just a Hat," he correctly summarizes many of the aspects that made OH-58D units successful in the Cavalry role, as well as answering the question, "What is Cavalry?" However, he incorrectly states several aspects of not just the AH-64D/E, but of Apache aircrews as well. Apache aircraft are routinely held as reserve or committed to specific missions because of the capabilities of the aircraft, not because the AH-64D/E can act as a post-execution analysis platform. In fact, not everything in the aircraft is recorded; the aircrew controls the tape. The author confuses post-accident information, available only in certain cases, with gun tape. In the 64D, this is purely video but in the 64E, it can include video and a moving map. While manned-unmanned teaming level of interoperability 2 capability allows aircraft to transmit video between themselves and ground stations, this capability is limited to line of sight. Furthermore, recording aircrews should in no way discourage initiative; Army aircrews are used to working

from a distance using Blue Force Tracker and satellite communication radios. Whether or not our actions are recorded is irrelevant to the professional execution of our mission.

Secondly, while the Apache may have a reputation as a "hangar queen," this misses the point. Apache units can launch and recover aircraft just as well as their Kiowa counterparts. In fact, I recall several instances at the National Training Center when I was able to launch faster than Kiowa Warrior aircraft. Additionally, during our deployment to Afghanistan, my team routinely launched in under ten minutes. Not ten minutes at the aircraft, ten minutes from notification to wheels up. The same things the author cites as indicative of effective Cavalry (OH-58D) teams apply just as well to our success in Afghanistan. Specifically, team work, drilling quick-launch procedures, and experience. Lastly, the author mistakes the spatial and temporal proximity of the OH-

58 to ground forces during missions with an effective close relationship. In Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, AH-64D/E units flew high in order maximize their sensor utilization, especially in urban terrain. When required, we routinely dropped down to low altitude, either for a 'show of force/presence,' to get a closer look, or other tactical necessity. Effective air-ground teams are based on mutual understanding and trust, not where the aircraft flies. It matters little if an aircraft is literally over the shoulder if the aircrew cannot effectively orient their sensor or employ effective fires. This line of thinking confuses cause for effect and demonstrates a lack of understanding as the actual Cavalry mission, as opposed to a flight mode.

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