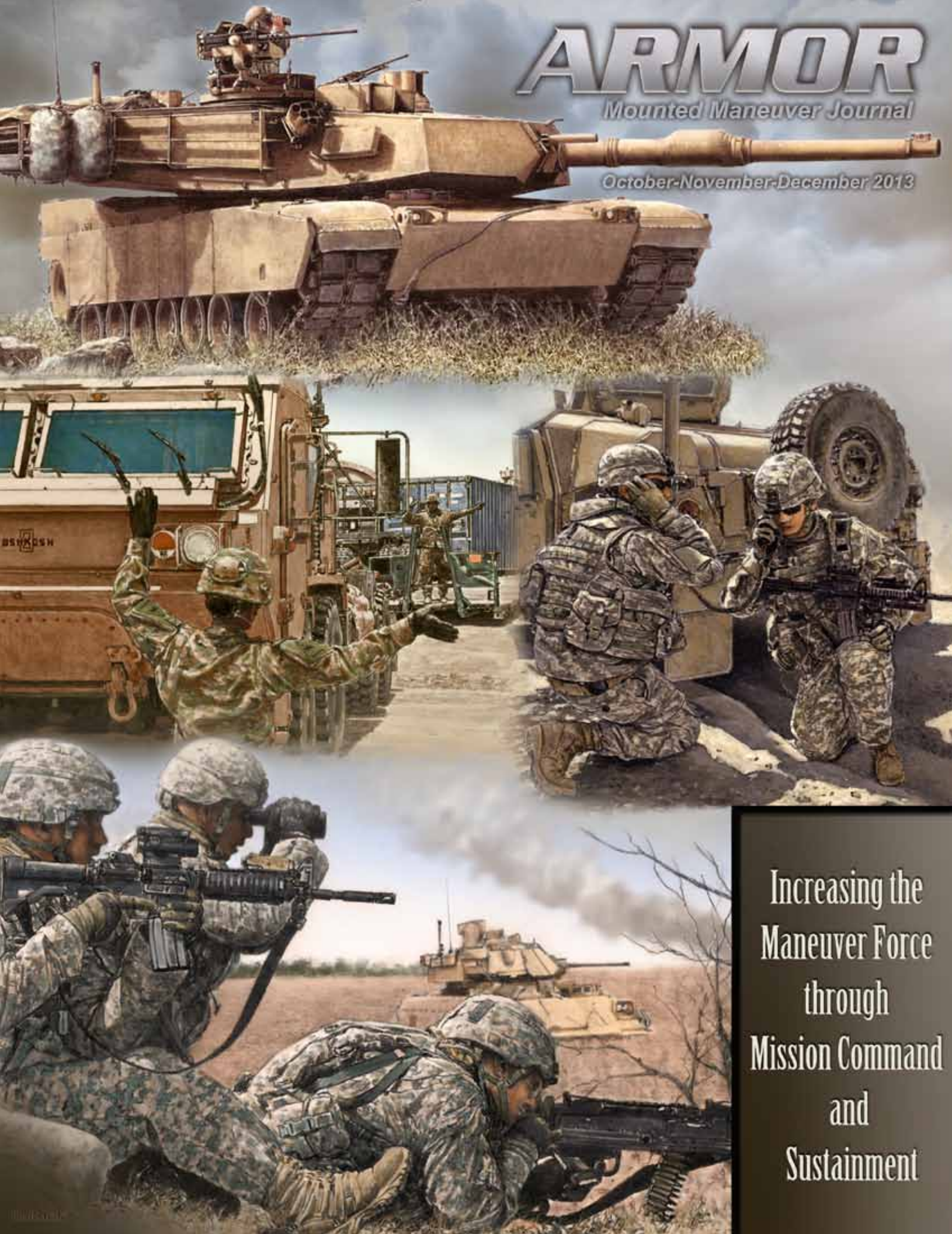


# ARMOR

*Mounted Maneuver Journal*

October-November-December 2013



Increasing the  
Maneuver Force  
through  
Mission Command  
and  
Sustainment



# ARMOR

The Professional Bulletin of the Armor Branch, Headquarters, Department of the Army, PB 17-13-4

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**ARMOR** (ISSN 0004-2420) is published quarterly by the U.S. Army Armor School, McGinnis-Wickam Hall (Bldg. 4), Suite W142, 1 Karker Street, Fort Benning, GA 31905.

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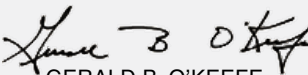
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**EDITORIAL MAILING ADDRESS:** U.S. Army Armor School, ATTN: **ARMOR**, McGinnis-Wickam Hall (Bldg.4), Suite W142, 1 Karker Street, Fort Benning, GA 31905.

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**ARMOR HOTLINE** — (706) 626-TANK (8265)/DSN 620: The Armor Hotline is a 24-hour service to provide assistance with questions concerning doctrine, training, organizations and equipment of the armor force.

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# COMMANDANT'S HATCH

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*COL Lee Quintas  
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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!

# GUNNER'S SEAT

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CSM Michael Clemens  
Command Sergeant Major  
U.S. Army Armor School



## Mission Command and Mentorship

*"The education of a man is never completed until he dies." –Robert E. Lee*

This issue of **ARMOR** magazine focuses on our efforts toward mission command that, by definition, defies orderly, efficient and precise control but asks all junior leaders to take initiative, make informed decisions and act within the commander's intent. I ask myself, what is the noncommissioned officer's role in mission command? If the intent of mission command is to empower agile and adaptive leaders in their conduct of operations, how do we, as the enlisted adviser to a commander, enable that? We will focus our efforts on what NCOs in the U.S. Army have always done: training, educating and mentoring. With this in mind, we must preserve both the gains and knowledge of the last 13 years while reinforcing the enduring principles that made us successful prior to 2001.

The NCO has long been entrusted as the primary trainer in our profession. As ADRP 7-0, **Training Units and Developing Leaders**,

states, "[NCOs] are the primary trainers of enlisted Soldiers, crews and small teams. NCOs take broad guidance from their leaders; identify the necessary tasks, standards and resources; and then plan, prepare, execute and assess training. They ensure their Soldiers demonstrate proficiency in their individual military-occupational specialty skills, warrior tasks and battle drills. NCOs instill in Soldiers discipline, resiliency, the Warrior Ethos and Army Values. In their assessment, NCOs provide feedback on task proficiency and the quality of the training."

This sounds to me like the essence of mission command: commanders empowering their subordinates to perform their mission. However, we must get back into the weeds in making this happen. The ability to assess our formations, plan, prepare and execute training, and then evaluate and retrain our Soldiers, has become an atrophied skill requiring all our organizations to immediately address this shortfall. We must never forget that the primary

duty of a sergeant is to train. Good NCOs know the level of training of every Soldier in their charge, and how prepared that Soldier is to react to stressful situations – like combat.

Educating the force means far more than getting Soldiers to NCO Education System courses or taking college courses. As ADRP 6-22 states, "Lifelong learning involves study and reflection to acquire new knowledge and to learn how to apply it when needed." Leaders have neither the time nor the opportunity to learn every lesson in a classroom. We must take upon ourselves the responsibility to seek self-improvement and gain knowledge through self-study. Education and self-study have been important aspects of leadership development since our inception. Lifelong learning is not only the domain of the officer corps; NCOs take on active learning for both our own development and to impart that desire into our Soldiers, who will lead future Soldiers in the next conflict.

We are not only the backbone of our profession; NCOs provide continuity in our organizations. As we transition from a decade of war, our NCO corps will provide solid grounding in individual and team tasks as well as an education in the nature and character of war to best prepare Soldiers for combat, lead them in battle and accomplish the next mission. Moreover, as young sergeants become platoon sergeants, first sergeants and sergeants major, our commitment to learning across a career is vital to growth as a leader and preparation for increased responsibility.

As NCOs, we may not overlook our responsibility to mentor junior members of the profession, or our responsibility to develop our Soldiers as future mentors. Consider – for the specialist in your formation who will someday be a platoon sergeant, his prospective platoon leader is in the sixth grade right now! You can develop that young specialist's ability to not only mentor other NCOs but also begin

to teach him how to mentor his platoon leader. In the not-too-distant future, he will contribute to the development of both a strong officer corps and a bench of future company and battalion commanders. The NCO/officer relationship remains critically important. It takes practice and hard work to develop the trust of our officers so they feel they can come to you with problems and you will have the knowledge, advice and recommendations on how to fix it.

All this ties back to mission command – being able to make informed decisions and learning from honest mistakes to accomplish the mission is the goal and is key to our mentorship of both the NCO and officer corps. MAJ Joe Byerly, an instructor at the Cavalry Leaders Course, wrote a outstanding blog on the **Small Wars Journal** Website titled "The Guy Behind the Guy Behind the Guy" on the importance of and the influence that mentors had on two key figures in military history. While not specifically directed at NCOs, I

encourage everyone to read this well-written piece as it highlights how a mentor, while never becoming famous himself, can affect the career of others. I do not know who Eisenhower's, Patton's or Petraeus' first platoon sergeants were, or who their first sergeant was while they were company commanders, but you can bet they were influential on the style and method of leadership they chose.

In closing, I am reminded of the NCO vision: "An NCO corps grounded in heritage, values and tradition that embodies the Warrior Ethos; values perpetual learning; and is capable of leading, training and motivating Soldiers." This charges us as members of this time-honored corps to not only seek out the inherent responsibility found in training, educating and mentoring, but to look deeper into establishing a climate that uses mission command as not just a buzzword but as a way of ensuring the continued success of our Army.

Scouts Out!





# Capstone: Strategic Landpower for the Company Commander

by GEN Robert W. Cone and CPT Jon D. Mohundro

A generation of officers grew up solving strategic dilemmas at the company and platoon levels in Iraq and Afghanistan. Well-versed in the requirements and responsibilities of an Army at war, this generation must guide the Army into an ever-evolving and uncertain future. To navigate through the complexities in front of us, the Army needs capable, adaptable leaders now more than ever who champion the Army's strategic purpose and goals. With that, one of the most important discussions over the next few years will be how company commanders understand and implement the Army's central role in strategic landpower.

Over the last two years, the Army has put many great people to work examining every facet of our training, doctrine and war-fighting capability. We did not do this to examine where we stand today. Rather, all this effort was aimed at figuring out two things: what kind of Army we will need to meet future challenges, and what we have to do to build that Army even as we continue fighting in Afghanistan and remain engaged throughout the world. Much of what we concluded is available in a single brief document: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-0,

***The U.S. Army Capstone Concept***, <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp525-3-0.pdf>. If you have not read it yet, please do so.

We won't summarize an already brief document in this article. Instead, we will discuss how the newest and most vital ideas relate to the execution level – the company. While things have been written about strategic maneuver, nothing has been written about its application at the tactical level. Although some ideas may be new, much of what must be done remains the same: training, standards and understanding the human environment. This is a result of the unchanging character of the Army's basic strategic problem and mission. As in prior eras, as part of the joint force, our Army must retain its ability to protect U.S. national interests, execute any mission assigned to us and win on any battlefield around the world.

Given our national strategy, we are required to field an Army capable of waging war decisively. Fielding a ready and responsive force with enough depth and resilience to wage sustained land combat is central to our mission, and that force must be able to conduct both combined-arms maneuver



and wide-area security. A ready, robust, responsive force deters adversaries, reassures allies and, when necessary, compels our enemies to change their behavior. Maintaining such a force requires high levels of adaptability throughout each echelon of the Army. Only Soldiers with tactical skill and operational flexibility can effectively respond to changing tactical situations in support of our nation's strategic goals and interests.

This is where company commanders fit into the concept of strategic landpower. Much like company-grade officers did in Iraq and Afghanistan, the company commander of the future must be mentally agile enough to thrive within the parameters of mission command. Developing leaders who can do so, while providing clear task and purpose to their subordinates, will be critical to the success of any mission across the range of military operations. Effective Army commanders, including those at the company level, do not use fiscal constraints as an excuse for failing to develop the best possible mix of training, equipment and regional expertise they can within their formations. Rather, they motivate their people and guide their units in a way that makes optimal use of available resources to create adaptive, effective forces.

Our Army has three primary and interconnected roles: prevent conflict, shape the international environment and win the nation's wars. The company commander has important responsibilities in each of these.

## **Prevent conflict**

It is prudent here to define what a conflict is. Since the term is thrown around a lot and attached to many different situations, it is easy to misunderstand the doctrinal meaning. Conflict is an armed struggle or clash between organized groups within a nation or between nations to achieve limited political or military objectives. Irregular forces frequently make up most enemy combatants we face now and may continue to do so in the future. Conflict is often protracted, geographically confined and constrained in the level of violence. Each one also holds the potential to escalate into major combat operations.

Many of the contingencies to which the United States responded militarily in the past 50 years have been appropriately defined as "conflicts." The same can reasonably be expected in the future, but with the addition of cyberspace.

As was true during the Cold War, many of our greatest successes in the future will not occur on the battlefield; rather, maintaining peace may be our greatest achievement. This will be no easy task, as global tensions and instability increase in ungoverned or weakly governed spaces around the world. History has taught us that without a capable, highly trained land force, the United States has little influence in many of those spaces. That land force, our Army, must remain the best equipped, best trained and most combat-ready force in the world if it is to have the strategic effect we seek. That readiness is built from the bottom up.

This is the first critical point where company commanders must help shape the future. As owners of the training schedule, commanders have the critical role in developing team, squad and platoon skills. Commanders ensure that broadening training like language, geographical and cultural familiarization is done effectively in a rigorous manner. Soldiers from the generation that fought in Iraq and Afghanistan will not be satisfied with training focused on artificial scenarios and made-up adversaries, so their commanders need to be innovative about preparing well-coordinated, realistic training. Subordinates must be challenged, and they have to feel their challenges have a direct linkage to future operations. To not lose 12 years of combat-proven leader development, company-grade officers must find a balance between building an Army prepared for the range of military operations and succumbing to pressure to "get back to the way it used to be."

Unfortunately, possession of such a trained and ready force is useless if it cannot affect regions where trouble is brewing. As units reposition from overseas bases and return to the United States, it becomes more crucial than ever for the Army to adopt an expeditionary mindset and improve its expeditionary capability. To do so, the Army is

aligning units to specific geographical regions and arranging them into scalable and tailored expeditionary force packages that meet the needs of the joint-force commander across the range of military operations. In short, our Army will be better postured to generate strategic influence anywhere in the world, and as part of the joint force, deter aggression.

In this construct, company commanders must conduct operational environment training specific to their region. Becoming familiar with the people, cultures and languages of the region in which one's unit will operate is critical to the success of a continental-United-States-based Army. Conventional-force companies learned much over the past 12 years as they executed missions historically reserved for Special Forces. War is fundamentally a human endeavor, and understanding the people involved is critically important. Company commanders cannot now ignore the hard-won lessons of their predecessors by ignoring one of the Special Forces' key tasks of understanding the operational environment. Those who meet this intent and enforce standards during this training will ensure we pay those lessons forward to the next generation.

## Shape the operational environment

During peacetime, the Army is continuously engaged in shaping the global environment to promote stability and partner-nation capabilities. We do this for several reasons, the most important of which is maintaining peace in pursuit of American national-security interests. Where conflict has already broken out, engagement helps keep it contained and may even lead to a peaceful resolution. By helping build partner capacity and trust, forward-engaged Army units greatly add to regional and global stability. Moreover, by building strong relationships of mutual trust, we facilitate access and set the conditions for success in any future combined operation in a particular region or country.

But what are shaping operations, and how are they executed at the company level? Shaping operations are defined as those

operations, occurring at any echelon, that create or preserve conditions for the success of the decisive operation. Thus, engagement by regionally aligned forces positively shapes the environment in which the Army operates throughout the range of military operations. This aligns with the notion of the "strategic corporal," which recognizes that in the Information Age the actions of individuals and small groups can have widespread impact well beyond what was intended at the time. Every action has a reaction, and it is necessary for junior officers to be aware of the role their Soldiers and unit play in the overall strategic goals of our nation.

As part of regionally aligned shaping operations, the Army will employ a careful mix of rotational and forward-deployed forces, develop relationships with foreign militaries and conduct recurring training exercises with foreign partners to demonstrate the nation's enduring commitment to allies and friends. Where we share mutually beneficial interests with an ally, the Army enhances that partner's self-defense capacity and improves its ability to serve as a capable member of a future military coalition. More capable allies generate a stabilizing influence in their region and tend to reduce the need for American military interventions over time.

Shaping operations do not end with planned training engagements by forward-deployed units. Other actions that units or even small groups of individual Soldiers take can have a shaping effect. Those actions will run the gamut from brigade- or division-sized assistance after a natural disaster to a single act of kindness to a foreign student in an Army school who later rises to high levels in his nation's armed forces. Regardless of the specific activities we conduct that have a shaping effect, all should convey to our intended audiences the clear message that while we are committed to peace, our nation protects its friends and defends its interests. Instilling this understanding among our Soldiers and junior noncommissioned officers (NCOs) is one of the vital roles the company-grade officer plays in the execution of strategic landpower.

But there is a caveat. What may be the standard for us is not necessarily useful or welcomed with our host-nation partners. So, shaping also entails tailoring our delivery of security assistance to our counterparts in ways appropriate for their culture and military capabilities. Company commanders can gain great success here by applying key interpersonal skills to know, understand and be humble when dealing with officers, NCOs and soldiers from other armies.

## Win the nation's wars

Despite our best efforts to shape a stable global environment and prevent conflict, violence is likely to remain endemic to the human condition. As it has been said, "Only the dead have seen the end of war." While we do everything possible to prevent the outbreak of war, we must ensure there never will be a day when the U.S. Army is not ready to fight and win wars in defense of our nation.

What is a war? Historically, war has been defined as a conflict carried out by force of arms, either between nations or between parties within a nation. However, as we consider hostile acts in cyberspace, the definition of war and acts of war will continue to evolve. For example, large-scale cyberattacks against government operations or critical infrastructure – such as in the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict – can reasonably be considered acts of war. Leveraging the technological savvy of today's Soldiers requires leaders with an engaged interest in their development. This will require junior leaders from the same generation who are as adept at leader development as they are technologically competent.

To defend our nation, the Army must maintain the capacity to conduct strategically decisive land operations anywhere in the world. Though we will always conduct such operations as part of a joint force, we also acknowledge that war is a clash of wills that requires the ethical application of violence to compel change in human behavior. Here, company commanders make a dramatic contribution to the application of strategic landpower by being tactically and technically proficient in the execution of combined-arms maneuver and wide-area

security. Without successful tactical execution, the best strategic concepts are doomed to failure.

The U.S. Army capstone concept lays out the details of what capabilities the Army must sustain as well as provides some guidance on how the force may be employed in the future. But it all boils down to one crucial point: an Army that cannot win on the battlefield is of little worth to the security of the nation. As everyone is aware, we are facing austere times ahead. This fiscal reality cannot be an excuse for not doing our duty or losing sight of our purpose. In the final analysis this country will one day – maybe soon – ask us to deploy to some distant land, close with and destroy an enemy, and then build a secure and lasting peace. Our Army is uniquely qualified to ensure the training necessary to make those things happen, thanks to the strength of our NCO corps. Commanders must leverage the experience of their senior NCOs and find creative ways to properly train the fundamentals despite resource constraints. We've successfully done it before in our Army, and we are counting on our young leaders to do it again.

## Conclusion

It was often platoon and company leadership who took the lead solving strategic issues in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will continue to be platoon and company leaders who keep the Army the well-trained and globally responsive force our nation needs to deter our adversaries, protect our friends and defeat our enemies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The U.S. Army must have company commanders who understand strategic landpower and their role in it. Seek out opportunities to ingrain your training events within the framework of strategic landpower. Write articles for your branch's professional journal discussing the impacts of strategic landpower for your specialty.

You can find the strategic landpower whitepaper on the TRADOC Internet homepage at [http://www.arcic.army.mil/app\\_Documents/Strategic-Landpower-White-Paper-06MAY2013.pdf](http://www.arcic.army.mil/app_Documents/Strategic-Landpower-White-Paper-06MAY2013.pdf), and on Company Commander discussion forums. This whitepaper is the primary reference for strategic-landpower concepts and the one jointly approved



by the Army chief of staff, the Marine Corps commandant and the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

It is the responsibility of senior Army leaders to set the conditions to make you, and our Army, successful. Your senior leaders appreciate what you do every day. These will be challenging but exciting times, and I thank you for your service and sacrifice as we move toward making the Army of 2020 and beyond the best in the world.



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## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**BCT** – brigade combat team  
**NCO** – noncommissioned officer  
**TRADOC** – (U.S. Army) Training and Doctrine Command

# Armored Reconnaissance Squadron in Decisive Action: Forging Cavalry for the Armored Brigade Combat Team

by LTC Geoffrey A. Norman

During National Training Center (NTC) Rotation 13-02, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, demonstrated how an armored reconnaissance squadron (ARS) could transform into a cavalry squadron capable of taking the fight to the complex, hybrid threat in the decisive-action training environment (DATE). The transformation of 7<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, from a reconnaissance-focused organization to a "fighting cavalry" outfit centered around three key issues:

- The role of the ARS within the "Raider" ABCT's way of fighting;
- Optimizing the ARS' organization to meet the new role; and
- "Fighting big" by focusing on five objectives in every engagement.

Our experiences, both positive and negative, may contribute to the ongoing discussions about the ARS within the ABCT of Army 2020 as well as provide other ARS leaders with food for thought as they attack the decisive-action (DA) fight.

## Context: NTC 13-02 DA rotation

The 1<sup>st</sup> ABCT deployed to NTC for Rotation 13-02 Oct. 18-Nov. 18, 2012. Our brigade conducted NTC's second DA rotation – the first was 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, in March 2012 during Rotation 12-05.

We conducted reception, staging, onward movement and integration for four days, then deployed the line troops, forward-support troop and squadron tactical command post to the northern live-fire area for three days of live-fire.

The squadron then transitioned and conducted four days of troop-level situational training exercises (STXs) facilitated by NTC's Cobra Team observer-controller/trainers.

The brigade executed seven days of continuous force-on-force training against NTC's contemporary-operating-environment force. The force-on-force training included movement-to-contact (MTC); guard and defense; moving flank guard; and hasty attack. Geographically, the rotation crossed terrain as shown in Figure 1.

## Issue 1: ARS' role within ABCT

Early in our train-up for NTC, the brigade commander clearly stated that he envisioned an expanded role for the ARS. Although Field Manual (FM) 3-20.96 defines the fundamental role of the squadron as "conducting reconnaissance **or** security missions in support of the higher headquarters," our commander expected the ARS to conduct reconnaissance **and** security missions in support of the brigade.

This signaled a deliberate expansion of our role, which at times included significant economy-of-force operations and shaping operations. If asked whether our role was

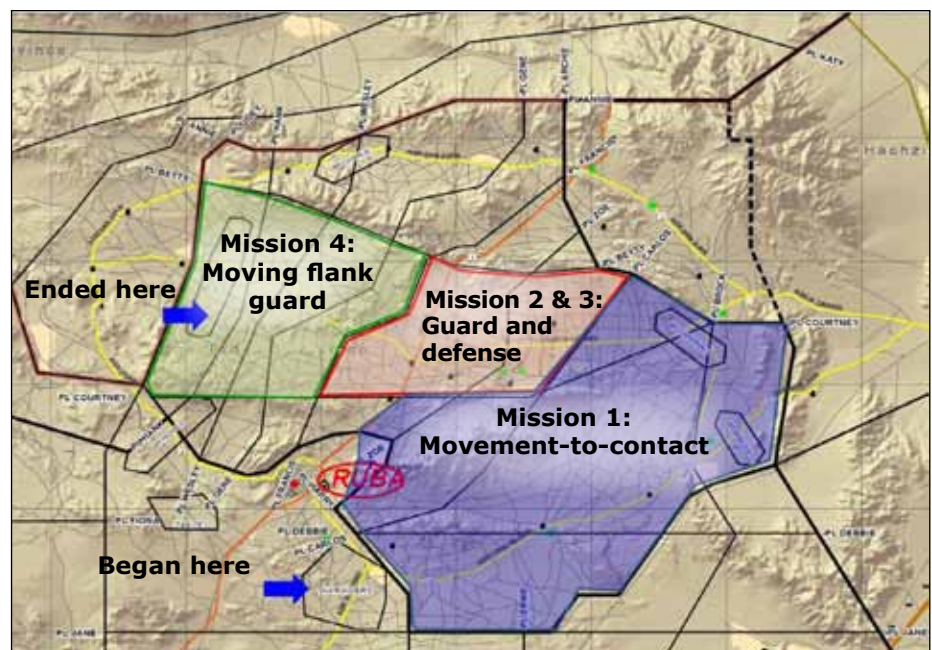


Figure 1. NTC Rotation 13-02 overview (force-on-force, Nov. 2-9, 2012).

to “answer the boss’ priority intelligence requirements (PIR)” or “fight like cavalry,” our resounding answer would be “fight like cavalry.” More appropriately, the brigade commander saw his ARS “fighting like cavalry to answer PIR and develop the situation for the brigade.”

This evolved into the ARS assuming missions and roles such as fighting for information and destroying enemy reconnaissance in MTC; seizing key terrain in limited-objective attacks; and providing security for the brigade by conducting guard operations. Our squadron did not conduct the familiar zone reconnaissance across the brigade’s front at the doctrinal rate of one kilometer-per-hour, as was the case in years past. Instead, we were either force-oriented or terrain-oriented and not encumbered with all the associated subtasks for doctrinal zone-recon operations.

These roles and missions represent an acknowledgement that the DATE demands the employment of the ARS differently from how current squadron doctrine describes it. FM 3-20.96 (March 2010) states, “The placement of dedicated reconnaissance units in the modular force takes into account their inherent direct-combat vulnerabilities or capabilities and demands employment in accordance with those defined capabilities. This understanding also requires abstaining from employing them in missions and roles for which they were **not** created or resourced. When reconnaissance units are assigned close-combat missions or become decisively engaged, **reconnaissance ceases**. When reconnaissance ceases, the potential for achieving and capitalizing upon information dominance is lost.” (FM 3-20.96, Page 1-3, Paragraph 1-10)

The realities of the DATE and the complex, hybrid threat demand an ARS that can survive close combat and first contact with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), BMPs and tanks. It also demands an ARS that can continue to provide its higher headquarters with reconnaissance information even when it is assigned a close-combat mission or when some of its forces are decisively engaged.

According to FM 3-20.96, Figure 1-1, the missions of MTC and guard exceed ARS’ capabilities outside permissive mission,

enemy, terrain, troops available, time and civil (METT-TC) considerations. The NTC 13-02 scenario presented a very non-permissive METT-TC environment. As a result, the brigade commander made organizational decisions to enable the ARS to succeed in these missions.

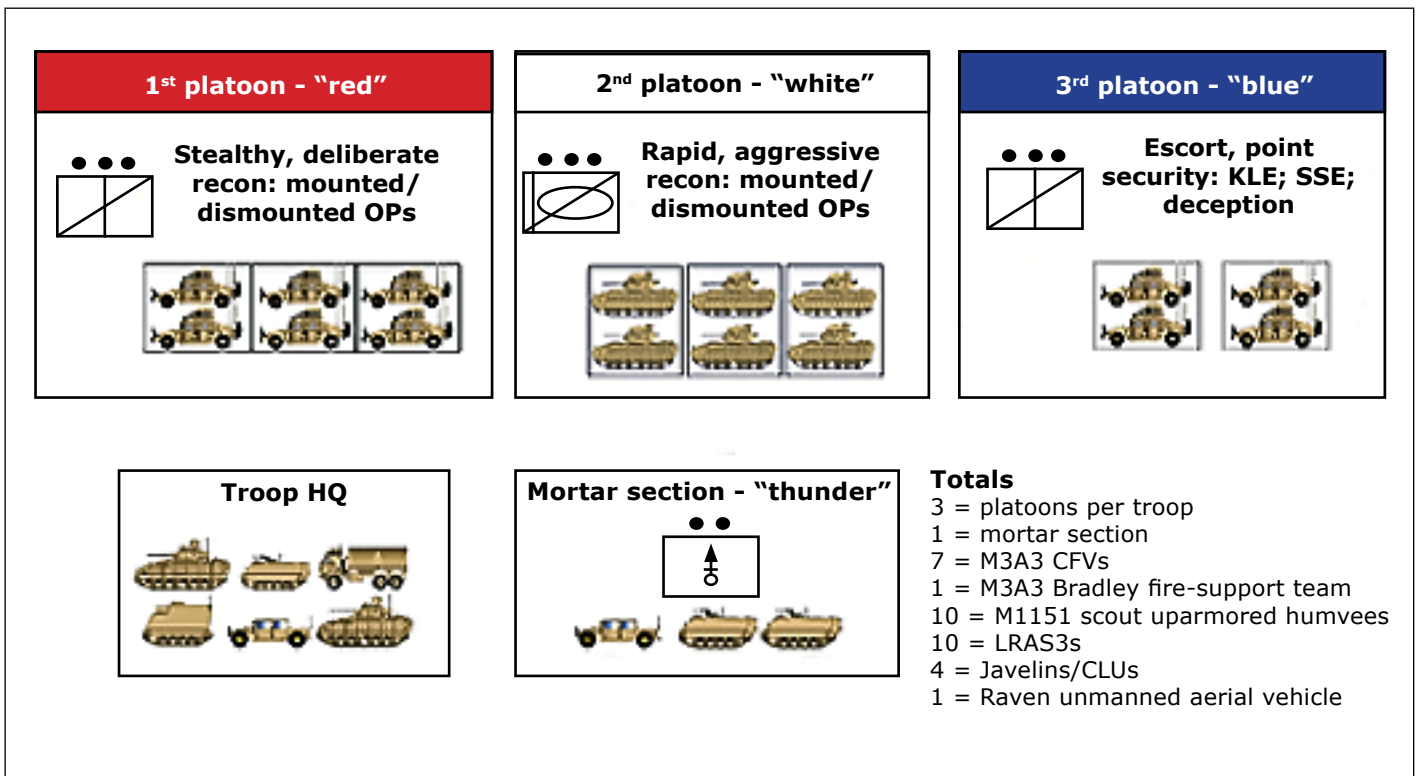
## Issue 2: optimizing ARS’ task organization

The squadron redeployed from Afghanistan in July 2011, where it fought in Regional Command-West, largely dismounted or mounted in mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles and MRAP all-terrain vehicles (MATVs). The last time the squadron conducted Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV) gunnery was 2009, and we lacked extensive Bradley expertise as we began our NTC train-up in 2012. Coming out of reset, the squadron organized doctrinally with three Bradleys and five M1151 humvees per platoon.

During our first gunnery, our Bradley scores far exceeded our humvee scores. This surprising outcome was due primarily to our emphasis on Bradley gunnery preparation, which resulted in great scores. However, we over-relied on in-theater unstabilized-gunnery habits, and those did not equate to competence for our humvee crews. Overall, mastering the gunnery skills required for Bradleys as well as M1151s with M2 heavy machineguns and MK-19 automatic grenade launchers was beyond the scope of the leaders in a single platoon. Our solution after gunnery was to make our platoons “pure” – all Bradleys or all humvees. This enabled our leaders at the platoon level to focus on single platforms and their associated weapons systems.

The outcome during our second gunnery validated the pure-platoon concept as scores improved across the board. We maintained pure platoons during our maneuver training, which allowed our platoon leadership to master the employment of single platforms and “re-green” themselves on cross-country, force-on-force maneuver with just Bradleys or trucks. We found that competent crews and sections could effectively task-organize into competent hunter-killer formations with mixed vehicles as METT-TC required.





**Figure 2. Reconnaissance troop organization (pure platoons with blue platoons).**

The ARS' modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) limits the maneuver and mission-command options for troop commanders to two platoons each and for squadron commanders to six maneuver platoons. Many missions assigned to the ARS required more than six maneuver units, so we developed "blue" platoons to add a third maneuver unit for each troop. We envisioned the "blue" platoons as economy-of-force elements, which focused on tasks such as tactical-site exploitation, radio-transmissions (RETRANS) security, convoy security, command-post security, key-leader engagements (KLEs) and deception operations. We took senior staff sergeants and lieutenants from the staff to lead these platoons. The platoons were equipped with four humvees with the Long-Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3) as well as Javelins, RETRANS and deception equipment.

The "pure" platoons and "blue" platoons at troop level resulted in the baseline task organization in Figure 2. A "red" platoon equaled six humvees; a "white" platoon consisted of six M3A3 BFVs; and a "blue" platoon comprised four humvees. We employed this task organization during live-fire and STXs during NTC 13-02.

The brigade significantly augmented the squadron as we transitioned to force-on-force operations. The brigade commander wanted the squadron to have the necessary

assets to perform economy-of-force missions, reconnaissance missions and security missions as well as traditional cavalry missions like guard and MTC. We received attachment of a tank company with its associated maintenance, refuel-and-rearm cargo trucks, and tracked ambulances. We also received attachment of a sapper platoon with breaching capabilities from the Special Troops Battalion (STB). The STB also operationally controlled (OPCON) or tactically controlled (TACON) to our squadron Prophet and low-level voice-intercept (LLVI) signals intelligence (SIGINT), as well as combat observation and laser teams (COLTs), to accomplish BCT and squadron recon and surveillance tasks.

During the early phases of operations and between major engagements, the squadron benefited from direct support from scout weapons teams (SWTs) with OH-58D Kiowa Warriors and priority of fires from the brigade's fires battalion. These enablers allowed the squadron to execute MTC and guard tasks assigned by the brigade that exceeded the capabilities of an ARS' organic assets.

**MTC.** The squadron developed a unique organization for MTC. The task organization employed one troop as a "recon" troop to execute rapid and stealthy recon and to move to the key terrain of the Siberian Ridge to establish a screen (Figure 3). The

"recon" troop organization included three-humvee "red" platoons and a four-humvee "blue" platoon. We tailored this mostly wheeled formation for rapid, stealthy movement across permissive terrain to outmaneuver the enemy's brigade tactical group (BTG) reconnaissance forces before they could reach key terrain or observation posts (OPs).

A "counter-recon" troop followed the "recon" troop by two hours. The counter-recon troop consisted of two six-M3A3 "white" platoons and a four-humvee "blue" platoon. We optimized this troop to gain contact with and destroy enemy BTG recon elements between the brigade's line of departure (LD) and ground limit of advance (LOA).

These two troops developed the situation for the brigade and answered PIR in the east of the BCT area of operations along the axis of advance for the two combined-arms battalions (CABs) following from Whale Gap to the central corridor.

In the west around the Shelf and Bicycle Lake Pass, the squadron executed an economy-of-force operation with one tank-company team and a "strike troop." The tank-company team, organized with engineers, breached an opposing-force obstacle in the pass and attacked toward Brigade Hill to fix an enemy fixing- or assault-force template to attack into the brigade's flank through Bicycle Lake Pass and Valley of Death. The squadron's "strike" troop consisted of a six-M3A3 "white" platoon, a

mechanized infantry platoon, a four-humvee "blue" platoon and a deception section with military information-support operations (MISO) broadcast trucks. The strike troop was tasked to follow and support the tank-company team in the west as they breached the Bike Lake Pass obstacle or to follow and support the counter-recon troop in the east, completing the destruction of the BTG recon forces.

This MTC-adapted task organization (Figure 4) departed significantly from doctrinal organizations as depicted in FM 3-20.96 but worked well. The humvees from the recon troop moved very quickly and quietly to key terrain. The counter-recon M3A3s effectively gained contact and defeated BTG recon in the east. These two troops benefited greatly from continuous support from three SWTs, who provided uninterrupted coverage throughout the operation.

In the west, the tank-company team and strike troop breached a tough field-artillery scatterable-munitions obstacle in difficult terrain and fixed an enemy mechanized-infantry company that was poised to exploit Bicycle Lake Pass had it been open. However, we learned there was too much separation in time between our recon and counter-recon troop; the recon troop was unable to retain several of their humvee-mounted and dismounted OPs from significant attacks by BTG recon elements with BMPs and T-80s. The strike troop became decisively engaged in the west and could not reinforce in the east to complete the destruction of identified BTG recon elements.

In retrospect, the optimal task organization would have been a lead troop with two- or three-humvee platoons and one M3A3 platoon. The trail troop should have consisted of two M3A3 platoons and a "blue" platoon. The organization of the economy-of-force elements was correct. Overall, our scouts' tenacity and lethality, coupled with our unique task organization, enabled the squadron to succeed in our first force-on-force mission.

**Guard and hasty defense.** The squadron's guard organization considered the challenges

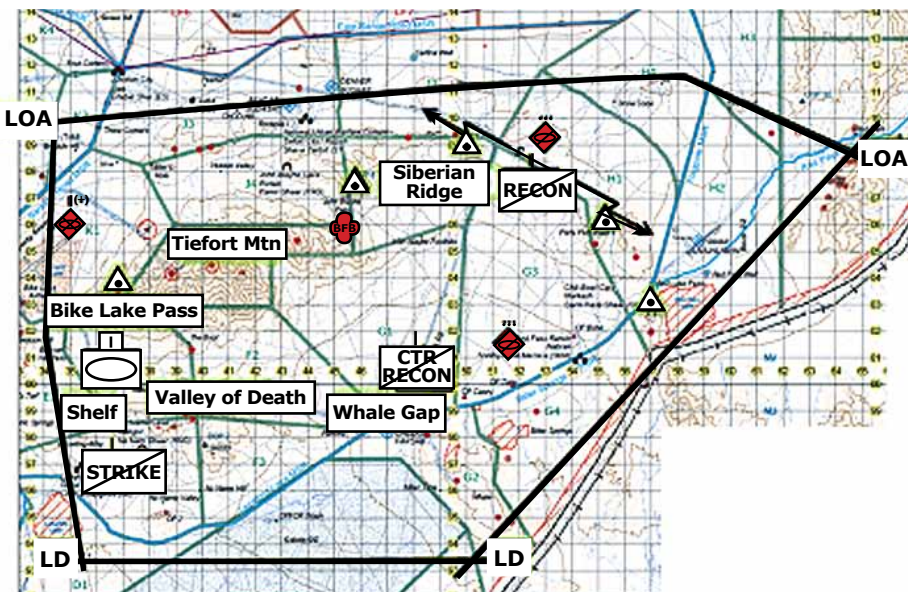
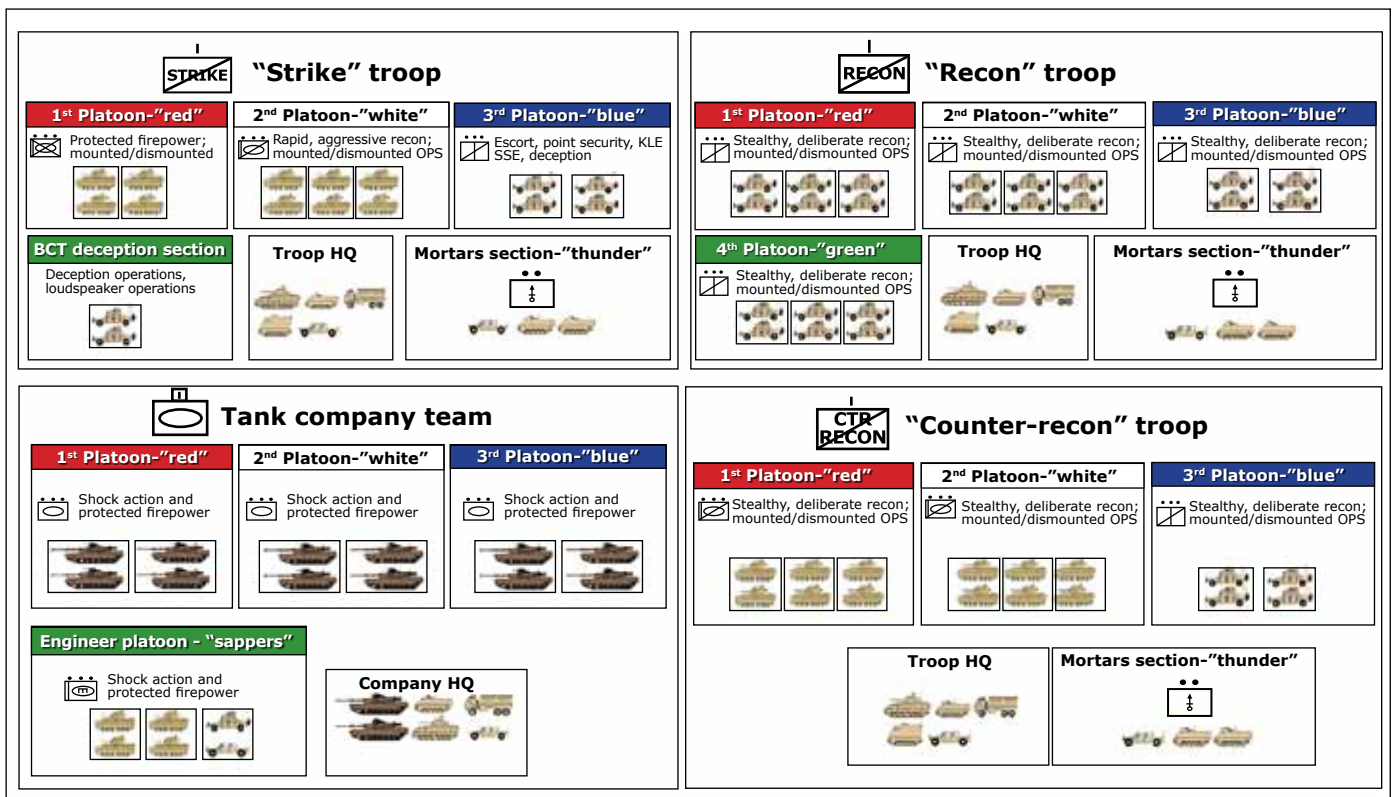


Figure 3. 7<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in BCT movement-to-contact.



**Figure 4. Squadron organization for movement-to-contact.**

associated with conducting simultaneous combined-arms maneuver (CAM) and wide-area security (WAS). We organized into two counter-recon troops with their organic platoons of red, white and blue, with one troop providing a blue platoon to secure BCT RE-TRANS.

The tank company remained pure, with three platoons defending key terrain and preventing the enemy's use of two key mobility corridors. These two troops and the tank company focused on the CAM task of guard to protect the brigade against enemy attacks from the west.

The third cavalry troop focused on the WAS task of isolating an urban area known as Ujen to prevent the enemy from using the village to influence the brigade's decisive operation occurring in the provincial capital of Razish. This troop also gained OPCON of a MISO and civil-affairs team in support of their planned KLEs. The squadron's task organization (Figure 5) sought to keep troops focused either on CAM or WAS – not both. The squadron must retain the ability to conduct CAM and WAS simultaneously, but the troops cannot do both at the same time. The squadron gained OPCON of another tank platoon and a mechanized-infantry company, minus its squads, for the main defense against the enemy's attack.

Overall, the squadron's task organization worked well for the guard and a subsequent hasty defense against a BTG counterattack. The squadron's biggest challenge was managing the multiple tasks of an ongoing guard operation with troops in direct-fire contact while simultaneously managing the tasks of an emerging stability operation in an urban area – all while employing engineers to develop engagement areas for the main defense. In reality, the squadron fought the guard fight well and set conditions to hand off the urban area to a CAB with infantry. We did not effectively maximize the engineer effort in support of engagement-area development. However, that shortcoming was overcome by the exceptional direct-fire lethality of the three recon troops and the attached tank and mechanized infantry companies, which prevented any enemy penetration of the main defense.

**Moving flank guard.** The squadron's last force-on-force fight offered us an opportunity to execute what may be the most demanding cavalry mission: the moving flank guard. Our BCT's mission was to attack from east to west through the central corridor and secure an objective on the west side of the passes near Crash Hill to re-establish the international boundary. In broad



terms, the brigade commander intended for one CAB to conduct a feint in the north near Brown Pass to fix the defending enemy while the reinforced ARS conducted a moving flank guard in the south through the Colorado Wadi and Washboard area. The ARS would protect the brigade's main effort, another CAB, which would pass to the south and west of the ARS through the Washboard and then attack north to secure the BCT's objective near Crash Hill (Figure 6).

We organized the ARS into four maneuver elements for this engagement (Figure 7). The first troop was a "fixing troop" tasked to retain a piece of key terrain dominating the entrance to the Colorado Wadi known as Hill 910. This force consisted of its six-humvee "red" platoon, a six-M3A3 "white" platoon and a four-humvee "blue" platoon.

The "infiltration troop" consisted of a six-humvee "red" platoon, its six-M3A3 "white" platoon and multiple COLTs and LLVI teams. Its task was to cross the LD early and infiltrate to OPs overlooking key terrain and the BCT's objective.

The "strike troop," consisting of its "red" and "white" platoons, crossed the LD just before first light to lead the BCT attack. It

was trailed by a tank company reinforced with engineers to follow and support the strike troop and continue the attack west while protecting the brigade's main-effort CAB.

The last two elements maneuvered together to ensure we maintained momentum as we fought through the difficult terrain of the Colorado Wadi and Washboard. The strike troop successfully advanced more than 10 kilometers deep into the Washboard and fixed the enemy's anti-tank (AT) systems poised to destroy the follow-on CAB from the Matterhorn Hill complex to the north and west. The tank company successfully passed behind the strike troop and continued the moving guard to the west, rapidly breaching a situational obstacle in the Washboard. This enabled the CAB to pass forward of the ARS and on to its objective without becoming fixed by enemy defenses.

In the final analysis, the ARS successfully retained Hill 910 with the fixing troop, emplaced the deep OPs with the infiltration troop and protected the main-effort CAB with the strike troop and tank company. This mission allowed us to employ another unique task organization against a

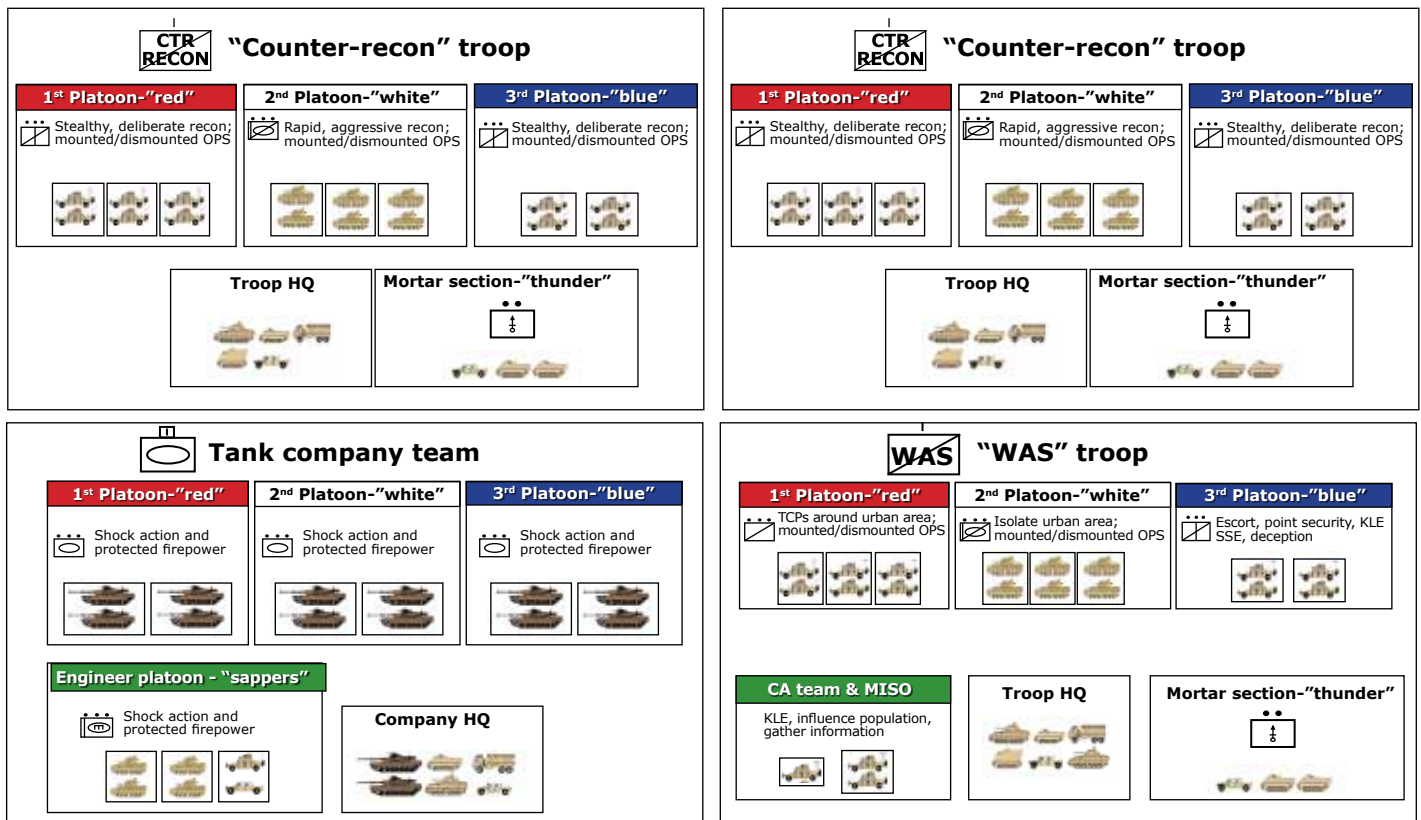


Figure 5. Squadron organization for movement-to-contact.

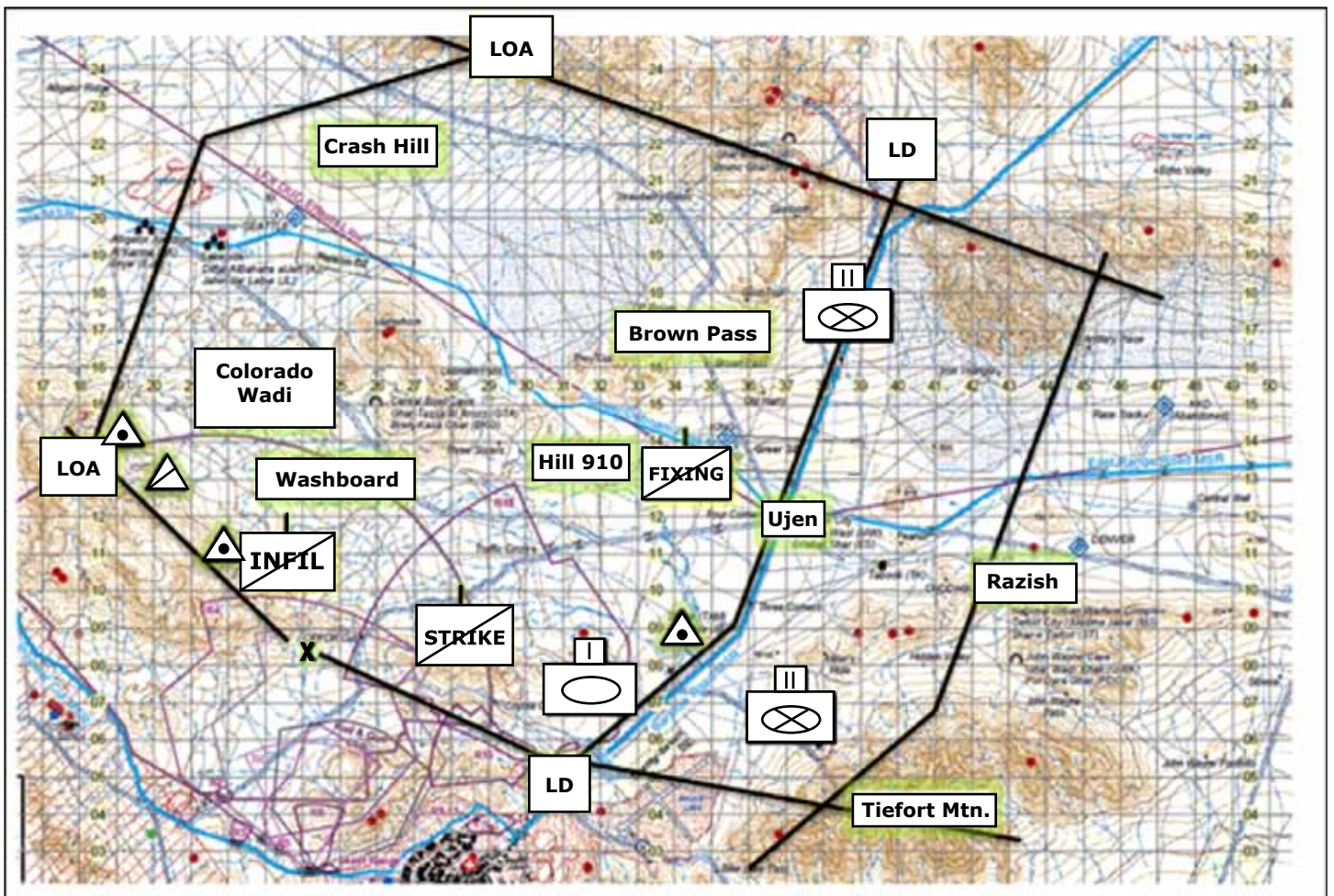


Figure 6. 7<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, moving flank guard.

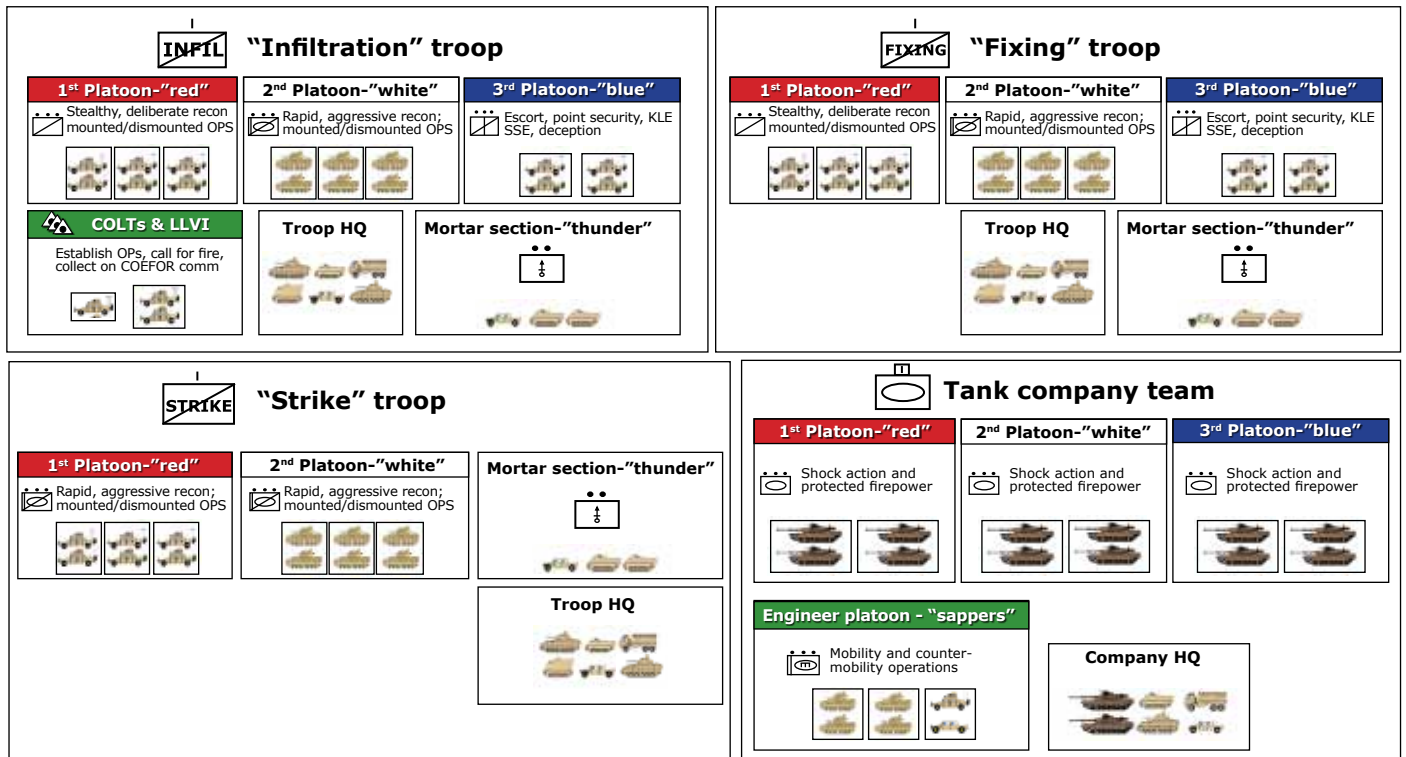


Figure 7. Squadron formation for moving flank guard.

determined enemy and see the benefits of months of training.

### Issue 3: 'fighting big'

The squadron focused on five essential objectives in each engagement during the rotation. We called these "fighting big" since they employed key systems or capabilities that allowed the squadron to extend our reach, improve responsiveness, rapidly respond and otherwise seem larger to the enemy than we actually were.

Our "fighting big 5" were:

1. **Employ mortars.** Organic mortars at the troop level provide the recon troop commander with an immediate indirect-fire capability that is the envy of his armor and mechanized-infantry commander brothers. Mortars are crucial in every fight and must be used against the appropriate targets.
2. **Kill with Javelins.** Our 12 Javelins and their associated command launch units (CLUs) provide recon teams with an unmatched ability to kill armored vehicles out to 2,000-plus meters. These systems are only effective if scouts get them out of the backs of their Bradleys and trucks. Javelins in OPs and AT ambushes can make a big difference in an engagement's outcome.
3. **Employ Ravens.** The squadron's five Ravens can provide the troops and squadron with a very effective aerial-surveillance tool. Ravens must get into every engagement but can be particularly effective during times other than the main battle. Ravens have a valuable deterrent effect and can buy the troop some additional standoff during assembly-area operations, logistics package (LOGPAC) and other times when the unit may not be at Readiness Condition I. Employing Ravens during these times reduces challenges associated with restricted-operating-zone approval since other fire-support control measures may not be active during those periods.
4. **Long-range tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW) missile kills.** Bradley crews must be able to kill with TOWs at ranges between 2,500-3,000 meters. This is a real challenge with Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) XXI. However, MILES is the weapon system in the com-

bat training centers' DATE. Crews who acknowledge this fact and master their weapons systems can turn the tide during an engagement.

5. **Communicate over long ranges.** The ARS and its troops are likely to spread beyond the maximum range of line-of-sight frequency-modulation (FM) communications. We must master the employment of FM re-transmissions and build the capability to RETRANS at troop level. Our squadron did not master the use of amplitude modulation or high-frequency radios since we lacked enough systems to employ an effective network. Our squadron required the capability to RETRANS the brigade command and administrative and logistics (A&L) nets as well as squadron command, fires, voice and A&L nets. The RETRANS efforts were part of a larger brigade-wide RETRANS plan but still exceeded the ARS' MTOE capability.

## Implications and conclusions

**Doctrine and organization.** The complex, hybrid threat faced by rotational units at NTC during DA rotations demands an expanded role for the ARS and the squadron's organization, including tanks and other key enablers. The squadron also required more maneuver platoons than the MTOE authorizes; the increase from six platoons to nine yielded tangible benefits. The squadron was consistently engaged in "fights between the fights" or continuous contact even when most of the brigade was planning or preparing for the next engagement. As a result, the squadron required the attachment, OPCON or TACON of key enablers like a tank company, COLTs, SIGINT, SWT and more LOGPAC to remain self-sufficient and agile enough to respond quickly to emerging situations between the brigade's major engagements.

**Materiel.** The ARS' current fleet of reconnaissance platforms (M1151 with LRAS3 and M3A3 Cavalry Fighting Vehicles (CFVs)) are inadequate for the DA fight. Our CFVs have a significant smoke and noise signature and are too large to allow rapid concealment in OPs. Our M1151s with LRAS3 lack the ability to conduct observation or stabilized direct-fire engagements on the move.

Both vehicles are too lightly armored to protect scouts from IEDs or direct fires from



BMPs or RPGs. They also lack cross-country mobility due to excessive demands on their tires in rocky terrain. We attempted to use the M1240 MATV as a substitute for M1151 in some formations, but the windows are too small for scouts to see out, and they do not allow rapid ingress or egress.

The shortcomings with our current M3A3s, M1151s and MRAPs demand the fielding of an alternate reconnaissance platform for ARS. The essential requirements include the ability to survive first contact against BMPs, RPGs and IEDs; cross-country mobility in soft sand and rocky terrain; long-range, stabilized observation on the move with third-generation forward-looking infrared; and a small enough footprint that the vehicle can operate in narrow urban streets and conceal quickly in OPs using microterrain. The best solution from existing platforms may be the M1127 Stryker Reconnaissance Vehicle with upgraded optics.

The ARS adds value to the ABCT by providing timely combat information that enables the higher commander to see, understand and act more quickly and with better information. DA training at the NTC provided an exceptional opportunity to transform Ghost Squadron from a reconnaissance-focused outfit into a fighting cavalry formation that conducted recon and security as the situation required. Our NTC rotation also highlighted some shortcomings in doctrine, or-

ganization and materiel that warrant resolution as we build to Army 2020.



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## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**A&L** – administrative and logistics  
**ABCT** – armored brigade combat team  
**ARS** – armored reconnaissance squadron  
**AT** – anti-tank  
**BCT** – brigade combat team  
**BFV** – Bradley Fighting Vehicle  
**BMP** – Boyeva Mashina Pekhoty (Russian infantry fighting vehicle)  
**BTG** – brigade tactical group  
**CAB** – combined-arms battalion  
**CAM** – combined-arms maneuver  
**CFV** – Cavalry Fighting Vehicle  
**CLU** – command launch unit  
**COLT** – combat observation and laser team  
**DA** – decisive action  
**DATE** – decisive-action training environment  
**FM** – field manual

**FM** – frequency modulation  
**IED** – improvised explosive device  
**KLE** – key-leader engagement  
**LD** – line of departure  
**LOA** – limit of advance  
**LLVI** – low-level voice intercept  
**LOGPAC** – logistics package  
**LRAS3** – Long-Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System  
**MATV** – mine-resistant, ambush-protected all-terrain vehicle  
**METT-TC** – mission, enemy, terrain, troops available, time, civil considerations  
**MILES** – Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System  
**MISO** – military information-support operations  
**MRAP** – mine-resistant, ambush-protected (vehicle)

**MTC** – movement-to-contact  
**MTOE** – modified table of organization and equipment  
**NTC** – National Training Center  
**OP** – observation post  
**OPCON** – operational control  
**PIR** – priority intelligence requirement  
**RETRANS** – (re-) radio retransmission  
**RPG** – rocket-propelled grenade  
**SIGINT** – signals intelligence  
**SSE** – secure-site exploitation  
**STB** – Special Troops Battalion  
**STX** – situational-training exercise  
**SWT** – scout weapons team  
**TACON** – tactical control  
**TOW** – tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (missile)  
**WAS** – wide-area security



# Maneuver-Owned Logistics: Re-emergence of the Support-Platoon Concept in Stryker Maneuver Battalions

by CPT Andrew N. Gregory

The rapidly changing support requirements a Stryker maneuver battalion experiences while conducting offensive, defensive and reconnaissance operations against a peer competitor necessitate a permanent logistics solution at battalion level.

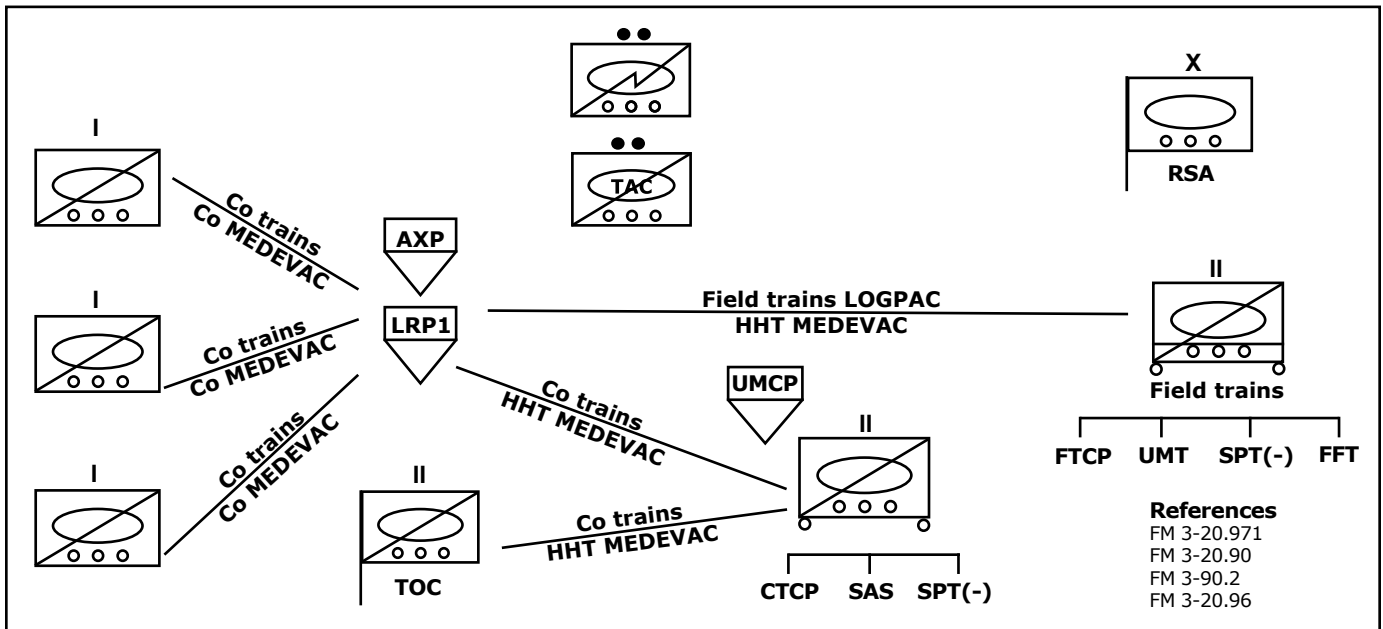
Drawing on a year's worth of experiences and observations from 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment's support platoon, this article seeks to define the specific logistic challenges of a Stryker maneuver battalion; outlines the design and implementation of the support platoon to meet these challenges; discusses the platoon's operational successes and failures during training; and makes recommendations for permanently addressing the unit's logistics requirements. Through five squadron-level field-training exercises, two gunnery rotations and the decisive-action training environment (DATE) combat training center (CTC) Rotation 13-01 between the Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels training areas, 4/2 Cavalry Regiment's support platoon performed and evolved to meet the unit's demands and proved itself as a concept worthy of consideration for

codification into the wider modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE).

## Logistic challenges

October 2011 saw elements of 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment's regimental-support squadron (RSS) attached to three infantry squadrons, the reconnaissance squadron and fires squadron for the formulation of squadron-level support platoons. Empowering individual headquarters companies to own the primary logistic support for their squadron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment formalized a support relationship familiar to maneuver brigades before introducing forward-support companies (FSCs) and the modular brigade combat team (BCT) concept.

Originally conceived as an interim formation, the Stryker brigade's designers envisioned a yet-to-be-designed division providing additional assets for the unit. Not exposed during a decade of counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the unified-land-operations (ULO) training that 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment conducted in Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels and the maneuver-rights areas (MRAs) demonstrated



**Figure 1. SBCT maneuver battalion concept of support.**

the Stryker brigade's logistics MTOE deficiencies.

Following its redeployment from Operation Enduring Freedom in May 2011, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment task-organized for ULO training. While the infantry squadrons (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) remained pure to the Stryker MTOE, the reconnaissance squadron saw its surveillance troop disbanded<sup>1</sup> and both an engineer troop and anti-armor troop added, which are normally separate regimental assets. The reorganization saw 4/2 Cavalry Regiment grow to become the largest maneuver element in the regiment, with greater and more diverse support requirements than its infantry brethren.

On paper, Stryker maneuver battalions have no organic support assets. Their combat-repair teams (CRTs) reside on the maintenance-troop MTOE, and fuel- and supply-vehicle assets are consolidated in the distribution-troop MTOE. By design, and argued exhaustively by logisticians,<sup>2</sup> Stryker brigade-support battalions (BSBs) cut tailor-made, *ad hoc* logistic-support teams (LSTs) to maneuver battalions for specific mission sets. In steady-state COIN operations, the LST concept usually consists of the maneuver battalion's CRT permanent attachment, a floating amount of distribution assets to meet logistical-package (LOGPAC) needs, and a field feeding team (FFT). This concept met the needs of COIN-employed Stryker

brigades but is not the support battalions' preferred method for ULO.

Due to the minimal amount of logistics assets in a Stryker brigade, particularly for fuel distribution (only 14 M978 Heavy Expanded-Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) fuel trucks are on the MTOE),<sup>3</sup> the operational design for the support battalion on paper is to consolidate the preponderance of assets in the brigade-support area (BSA); refine logistics requirements through S-4 and support-operations channels; then distribute Class I (CLI), Class III (CLIII) and Class V (CLV) from the BSA via LOGPACs. This concept of support received refinement from 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, with the logistics assets pushed down to squadron level for distribution from the squadron individual field trains. This is depicted in the squadron generic concept-of-support diagram (Figure 1).<sup>4</sup>

For maintenance support, the Stryker brigades remain short by MTOE, with only two wreckers per maneuver CRT and inevitably not enough mechanics to fix-forward all deadlined assets. This shortage of assets posed another constraint, as not enough equipment or personnel exist to assign a fully equipped maintenance/recovery section to each troop-sized element. The proposed concept of support, lack of CLIII and CLV distribution assets, and minimal maintenance assets assigned to each squadron posed significant constraints on the support



platoon's formulation and tactical employment.

## Designing the support platoon

Familiar to those who trained on ULO before the Global War on Terrorism was initiated, the primary support nodes for a maneuver battalion are the combat trains and field trains. During the winter of 2011-12, the headquarters and headquarters troop (HHT) commander and support-platoon leader organized the sections of the HHT and support platoon to fill out the combat trains and field trains. The design finally settled on for the support platoon broke several traditional norms and required mixing distribution and maintenance assets to achieve the desired endstate.

The platoon started as the recon squadron's CRT equipment and personnel by MTOE; a team of 91L heavy construction-equipment maintainers for support of the engineer troop; and a squad of 88M heavy-vehicle operators and 92F petroleum-vehicle operators with two HEMTT load-handling systems (LHSs) and two HEMTT fuel trucks. These disparate elements transitioned into three distinct sections for tactical employment as seen in the equipment spread (Figure 2). Alpha Section retained the preponderance of the CRT's equipment and personnel for dedicated maintenance.

The forward-repair systems (FRSs), the specialty mechanics (small arms, optics, heavy engineer equipment) and the platoon's sole satellite and Standard Army Maintenance System-Enhanced (SAMS-E) hub resided in this section tactically employed with the squadron field trains. Alpha Section's leadership consisted of the senior Stryker mechanic and maintenance warrant officer.

Bravo Section consisted of the CRT's two wreckers, a contact truck and Class IX parts for quick, forward repairs. Led by the senior wheel mechanic and the motor sergeant/platoon sergeant, Bravo pulled double

duty for the platoon. The platoon sergeant was the noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of the overall combat trains (CRT (-), medics, S-1/S-4), and his medium-tactical-vehicle (MTV)-with-trailer carried one reconnaissance-troop unit basic load of CLV for emergency resupply.

Finally, Charlie Section consisted of the CLI, CLIII and CLV distribution assets for the squadron and resided in the field trains. When deployed to the field, Charlie Section forms the nucleus of the squadron LOGPAC with all troop-supply MTVs attached to this section for supply distribution. The platoon leader, when deployed to the field, primarily organizes the squadron LOGPAC, with the Charlie Section leader<sup>5</sup> acting as the LOGPAC NCOIC.

Not depicted in the figures but crucial during training exercises, the RSS attached an FFT to the squadron field trains. While the permanent attachment of FFTs is common in COIN-deployed Stryker brigades, only temporary attachment is necessary under this concept, as all FFTs need to pool resources to run two garrison dining facilities.

The platoon's design reflects a melding of two different logistics concepts. Before the fielding of FSCs with brigade modularization



**K Troop, 4/2 Cavalry, conducts CLIII resupply while training in the Weiden MRA near the German-Czech border in March 2012. Once fully trained, 4/2 Cavalry troops conducted full CLIII and CLV resupply in under 15 minutes, day or night.**

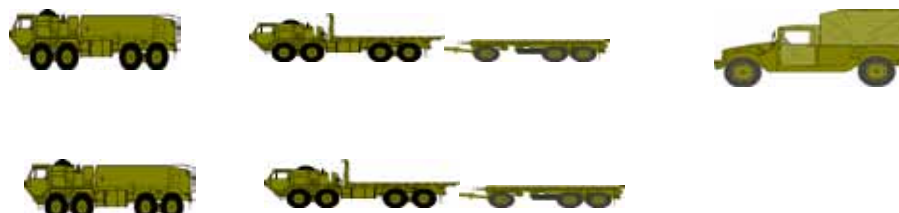
**Alpha section (field trains): dedicated maintenance/C2**



**Bravo section (combat trains): recovery and repair/emergency resupply**



**Charlie section (field trains): distribution section resupply**



**TOTAL PAX = 2/15/23 - 40 PAX**

**Figure 2. Support platoon equipment spread.**

**Support/HHT, 4/2 Cav Regiment**

**Equipment:**

- 8 vehicles, 6 trailers
- 2 .50-caliber machineguns
- 1 M240B machinegun
- CLIX parts and POL
- 2 LME, generators
- SAMS-E and VSAT

**Capability:**

- Dedicated maintenance
- Small arms, elec and missile repair
- C2 node for maintenance

**Equipment:**

- 5 vehicles, 3 trailers
- 2 .50-caliber machineguns
- 1 M240B machinegun
- CLI and V troop UBL

**Capability:**

- Expedient repair and recovery
- Emergency resupply of CLI,III,V for troops
- CLIX parts for small repairs

**Equipment:**

- 5 vehicles, 2 trailers
- 2 .50-caliber machineguns
- 1 M240B machinegun
- Container-handling unit
- 2,500-gallon water hippo
- 10 crows, 1 forklift

**Capability:**

- Logistics convoy
- CLI and CLIII bulk

in the early 2000s, mechanized units typically had very large headquarters and headquarters companies (HHCs) with separate maintenance and support platoons. These maintenance and support platoons, each led by a seasoned maneuver officer from that battalion, had the ability to task-organize into company-sized support packages, providing the maximum support forward. Of course, now FSCs provide all these functions under a logistics guidon in each armored and infantry BCT maneuver battalion. The Stryker support platoon combines maintenance and support under a maneuver officer, with the motor sergeant wearing a second hat as the platoon sergeant to provide FSC capability within the maneuver headquarters company.

The transition into the platoon's tactical formation from a CRT and small distribution section to its maneuver elements occurs upon deployment to the field and provides three main benefits:

- First, the platoon's task organization seamlessly dovetails with the battalion mission and scheme of maneuver. Clunky cross-attachments and temporary tactical-control (TACON) situations from a support battalion inhibit the timely delivery of support. Leaders read into the battalion scheme of maneuver and internal standard operating procedures facilitated a tremendous amount of flexibility.
- Second, the task organization tailors

maintenance and recovery assets to the Stryker's unique needs and the tactical situation. Maximizing recovery and hasty maintenance assets forward in the combat trains and dedicated (jobs requiring more than two hours) maintenance in the field trains returns combat power to the fight rapidly while preserving critical logistics assets.

- Third, the distro section forming the backbone of a consolidated LOGPAC of all troop-supply vehicles covered the deficiency in supply-distribution platforms found in the support platoon itself. While a heavy formation needs HEMTT vehicles to distribute CLV, an analysis of a Stryker infantry company or reconnaissance-troop ammunition basic load (ABL) demonstrates that it can all be transported on an MTV with trailer.<sup>6</sup>

Further, the LOGPAC that the supply MTVs (each armed with an M240B or M2 .50-caliber machinegun) and support-platoon fuel trucks forms has plenty of protection for convoy operations.

## Training successes and failures

The support platoon's field task organization covered all the maneuver battalion's hypothetical logistical needs, but the question remains: how did this formation perform in training?

Fourth Squadron, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment's road to the DATE CTC Rotation 13-01 included a tremendous amount of maneuver training and ample opportunities to test the support platoon's task organization. Based out of U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr, the squadron had access to not only the Grafenwoehr Training Area but also the Hohenfels Training Area an hour to the south, and thousands of square kilometers of German MRA located an hour east along the border with the Czech Republic. The MRA afforded the opportunity to train in real German countryside among the population and civilian infrastructure and over doctrinal distances envisioned for Stryker reconnaissance and maneuver operations. An analysis of how each section of the platoon, as well as dedicated maintenance, recovery and distribution performed relative to its design, will flesh out why the support-platoon concept is worthy of further consideration.

The split of CRT assets into dedicated maintenance and recovery sections distributed to the field trains and combat

trains respectively encountered three main issues in training: the conduct of repairs close to the forward-line-of-own-troops (FLOT); the placement of CLIX parts relative to the deadline assets; and the evacuation of deadline combat power to the rear for repair. In initial training exercises, the platoon placed one wrecker and one LHS with FRS in both the combat trains and field trains.

The unit discovered that the recovery-section FRS went unused due to how often the combat trains jumped and concealed themselves to avoid enemy detection, while the wrecker in the field trains could not affect the maintenance situation unless it went forward twice daily with the LOGPAC. This led to the reorganization of two wreckers forward, two FRS in the rear. This solution kept the combat trains mobile and maximized recovery assets forward, but it also led to the next issue: that of parts availability and violating the principle of fixing forward.

With only recovery assets and a small amount of shop stock forward, the ability to "pull pack," for example, did not exist in the combat trains. However, the unit found that the fluidity of operations near the FLOT showed that attempting anything but minor repairs forward would quickly overwhelm the number of mechanics on hand, exhaust available parts and compromise the security of the combat trains' site. Thus, a careful selection of CLIX parts situated in the combat trains allowed mechanics to perform jobs that would return most vehicles to the fight immediately while pushing more extensive repairs to the rear.

Of course, what to do with deadlined vehicles needing recovery? The unit found that its best practice entailed the line troop recovering deadlined vehicles to the combat trains/unit maintenance collection point either by themselves or with the help of a wrecker. The vehicles were then evacuated twice daily with the squadron LOGPAC to the field trains for repairs. As combat power came back up, it moved with the LOGPACs forward and rejoined the fight. Wreckers in this cycle moved almost constantly, and the support-platoon sergeant and recovery NCO's expert knowledge proved critical in triaging vehicles for evacuation or repair on-site. The concept succeeded in quickly returning combat power to the fight





**The 4/2 Cavalry support platoon LOGPAC conducts training in the Weiden MRA near the German-Czech border in April 2012. The support platoon's extensive training on local roads proved extremely valuable during its DATE rotation in October 2012.**

and unburdened line troops and the combat trains from securing long and dedicated repair operations.

The distribution section's, and by extension squadron LOGPACs', experiences in training proved varied and interesting. The heart of all issues the LOGPAC encountered revolved around CLIII bulk (CLIIIB) distribution. An explanation of the LOGPAC's mission cycle fleshes out all the issues and solutions encountered. In training, the unit supported from four to seven company-sized elements at a time, which with only two M978A4 fuel trucks in the platoon proved problematic. The Stryker's rather impressive fuel range (particularly when the 53-gallon fuel capacity is augmented by four five-gallon fuel cans per vehicle) made the situation tenable. Essentially, proven over the course of six squadron-level training events, a Stryker maneuver company would burn between 500 and 700 gallons of fuel a day and thus need CLIIIB resupply once every 24-36 hours.

In regard to support of the squadron, the LOGPAC ran twice daily, resupplying half the squadron in the morning and half in the evening, with troops receiving their hot meal of the day in conjunction with their CLIIIB and CLV resupply.<sup>7</sup> During the DATE rotation, the squadron consisted of six line companies and one HHT, thus an

augmentation of one more fuel truck allowed the squadron to maintain its operational tempo of three troops conducting resupply in the morning, three in the evening. Hypothetically simple, the fluidity of ULO tested this operations cycle considerably. Dynamic task organizations during the DATE required the LOGPAC to integrate new supply vehicles and troops into its support plan in stride, while air attacks at times brought the platoon down to one fuel truck. Ultimately, the unit overcame these difficulties by sticking to a stringent LOGPAC schedule.

Distances were such that the LOGPAC would spend one hour in transit from the field

trains to logistical resupply points (LRPs), where troop first sergeants would pick up their supply truck with CLI, CLV and a fuel truck. First sergeants had three hours to conduct resupply of their troops in a forward-assembly area, while the support-platoon leader and HHT first sergeant conducted resupply operations for the command nodes. The LOGPAC reformed at the LRP and moved back to the field trains. When constrained to one fuel truck, the support-platoon leader escorted the truck from one troop-assembly area to the next, allowing resupply of all troops and roughly sticking to the three-hours-on-ground time for logistics assets.

It should be noted that the amount of fuel on hand never proved to be an issue, while the number of assets to distribute it was the main constraint. At times, the LOGPAC would emplace a service-station resupply point of CLIIIB and CLV with several troops cycling through the same location. Feasible in setpiece operations (moving from troops in column into a screen, for example), the most realistic training the squadron conducted demonstrated that this concept of resupply was too centralized and not dispersed enough for fluid operations.

After several training events, the 4/2 Cavalry's support platoon proved operationally

flexible and comfortable providing support in this dispersed task organization. Furthermore, at all times the integration of the platoon and its Soldiers into the squadron's operational plan, culture and team atmosphere eliminated the tremendous friction inherent in constantly slicing off assets from the BSB for each individual mission.

## Recommendations

The support-platoon concept could serve in place of an FSC with an MTOE adjustment to Stryker maneuver headquarters companies; modification of the BSB MTOE; and a doctrinal review of the Stryker brigade's logistical-support concept:

- First, the addition of the CRT MTOE to its commensurate maneuver battalion HHC would form the backbone of a Stryker support platoon. Furthermore, a distribution section consisting of two LHS systems, three HEMTT fuel trucks<sup>8</sup> and M1151 humvees for the platoon leader and section leader would provide the necessary logistics and protection assets for supply distribution. The MTOE addition of a maneuver officer to lead the platoon would provide more developmental experience for maneuver officers.
- Second, the BSB needs backfill to make up for the assets and Soldiers now in line battalions. The maintenance company would not need more, as the CRTs are already self-sustaining paragraphs of the MTOE. The distribution company, however, would take a significant hit to its overall strength. To backfill the lost fuel-distro assets, the CLIII section could be switched to 5,000-gallon truck-trailer units (over HEMTTs) and thus carry the same amount of bulk fuel with half the Soldiers. The transportation platoon would simply need more LHS systems and Soldiers to backfill, though not a complete replacement of assets moved down to the line.
- Finally, the **Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) Logistics Field Manual (FM) 4-90.7** would need revision to reflect these changes in MTOE. A different discussion altogether, the current manual assumes the Stryker logistics limitations and lays out overcoming those difficulties through superior situational understanding and a common operat-

ing picture (COP) between the BSB and maneuver elements. Furthermore, the FM espouses continually cutting off specialty teams to overcome each individual maintenance or support requirement. The experience of our SBCT in training demonstrates that the level of situational understanding and COP necessary for seamless logistic support in ULO comes only with fusing some logistics assets with the maneuver element at battalion level.

The Army faces a myriad of budget and operational constraints in the near future that may make the addition of FSCs to the SBCT unrealistic. The adoption of this support-platoon concept by MTOE could cover the logistics shortfalls and make the SBCT more logistically independent for future operations.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment MTOEs for the SBCT reconnaissance squadron (WJHCAA) and SBCT BSB (WE35AA), Oct. 17, 2011. The MTOE changes proved very significant for the recon squadron. No longer a reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition squadron, the surveillance troop disbanded with its signals-intelligence element, and Shadow Platoon rolled into an enlarged military-intelligence company. The chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear reconnaissance platoon merged onto the organic MTOE of the recon squadron. This left the recon squadron with an HHT and three recon troops.

<sup>2</sup> Butler, Dwayne M. LTC, Bradford, Kenneth C. MAJ and Schwetz, Juliane C. CPT, "Successful Implementation of Logistics Support Teams in an SBCT," **Army Logistician**, July-August 2008.

<sup>3</sup> From 2011-2012, M978A2 fuel trucks were exchanged for M978A4 versions, so at times the unit had more CLIII assets than it really should have had. Furthermore, the regiment did not have enough personnel to run its organic MTOE, let alone excess vehicles.

<sup>4</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment maneuver pamphlet.

<sup>5</sup> The distribution troop intended an 88M30 as the leader of distro assets in each support platoon. Due to personnel shortages, at least in 4/2 Cavalry Regiment, a 19D30 and

then 11B30 held the position through the bulk of the squadron's training. The addition of "line" Soldiers to this element harkened back to pre-FSC support platoons with tankers, scouts and infantrymen filling the holes.

<sup>6</sup> The Stryker maneuver-company MTOE allots an M1083A1 MTV to supply sergeants with an M149 water buffalo. The mortar-section platoon sergeant is allotted an MTV with an M1095 trailer. The ABL for a Stryker maneuver company came out to about 21,000 pounds on 14 pallets, just within the load specifications of an M1083A1 with trailer. The support-platoon sergeant used this configuration in the combat trains to move the emergency CLV for the squadron.

<sup>7</sup> HHT's resupply proved problematic with its forward elements, tactical-operations centers, TAC and combat trains dispersed. The HHT first sergeant and supply sergeant maintained some three dozen fuel cans and normally resupplied these elements with fuel-can exchange, thus freeing up the fuel trucks for resupply of line troops.

<sup>8</sup> Another solution for CLIIIB the unit considered in the abstract: if each Stryker infantry, recon, anti-tank and engineer company had by MTOE a 500-gallon-tank pump unit fixed to an additional M1083A1 MTV with a 92F10 Soldier to run it, the need for HEMTT fuel trucks would drastically decrease while each unit would have the CLIIIB it needed to continue operations.

## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**ABL** – ammunition basic load  
**BCT** – brigade combat team  
**BSA** – brigade-support area  
**BSB** – brigade-support battalion  
**C2** – command and control  
**CLI** – Class I  
**CLIII** – Class III  
**CLIIIB** – Class III (bulk)  
**CLIX** – Class IX  
**CLV** – Class V  
**CRT** – combat-repair team  
**COIN** – counterinsurgency  
**COP** – common operating picture  
**CTC** – combat training center  
**DATE** – decisive-action training environment  
**FFT** – field feeding team  
**FLOT** – forward-line-of-own-troops  
**FM** – field manual  
**FRS** – forward-repair system  
**FSC** – forward-support company  
**HHC** – headquarters and headquarters company

**HHT** – headquarters and headquarters troop  
**HEMTT** – heavy expanded-mobility tactical truck  
**LHS** – load-handling system  
**LOGPAC** – logistics package  
**LRP** – logistical resupply point  
**LST** – logistic-support team  
**MRA** – maneuver rights area  
**MTOE** – modified table of organization and equipment  
**MTV** – medium tactical vehicle  
**NCOIC** – noncommissioned officer in charge  
**POL** – petroleum, oil and lubricants  
**RSS** – regimental-support squadron  
**SAMS-E** – Standard Army Maintenance System-Enhanced  
**SBCT** – Stryker brigade combat team  
**TAC, TACON** – tactical control  
**ULO** – unified land operations



# The Role and Responsibility of the Command Sergeant Major within the Armor Brigade Combat Team in the Sustainment Warfighting Function

by CSM Jason A. Runnels

Four armored brigade combat teams (ABCTs) conducted decisive-action (DA) rotations at the National Training Center (NTC) in the past year. A trend observed during these rotations was that command sergeants major typically did not attend brigade sustainment rehearsals. However, when one unit did send its CSMs to brigade sustainment rehearsals, it struggled considerably less in synchronizing logistical support throughout the rotation. The unit's leadership appreciated the importance of the sustainment warfighting function and used these opportunities to assist in accomplishing the brigade commander's intent.

Arguably, sustainment does not drive the tactical-planning process, but if not fully integrated, it can impede operational reach, freedom of action and the BCT's prolonged endurance. This article discusses the impact of the CSM's absence from the brigade sustainment rehearsal.

## Why absent

The brigade's dissemination of the concept of support does not nullify the need for a sustainment rehearsal as implied in Army Doctrine Publication 5-0, *The Operations Process*. This rehearsal provides confirmation of and enhances unit leaders' understanding of the concept of support. In spite of this, senior-enlisted observers/coaches/trainers (O/C/Ts) have routinely observed limited senior-noncommissioned-officer (NCO) attendance at rehearsals. Consistently the only exception was the brigade-support-battalion CSM. So the question is why do CSMs not prioritize the brigade sustainment rehearsal as a must-attend?

The reasons are varied. Some CSMs have insisted that time constraints and competing requirements prevented participation. Others failed to realize its relevance as compared to the combined-arms rehearsal or fires rehearsal. Units admit a heavy reliance on the brigade tactical standard operating procedure, coupled with staff backbriefs, as

a replacement for sustainment rehearsals. Leaders of many of these battalions routinely train independently at home station, with one battalion at a time in the field due to several constraints. Even units that get multiple battalions into the field at once often fail to replicate the same distance, dispersion and complexities as seen at NTC. Some units remain semi-reliant on installation support facilities. Usually, the support units co-locate, making the distance so small that resupply is easy. This training leads to a misconception that units have figured out their plan to support the brigade.

Thus, sustainment synchronization and rehearsals do not receive full training at brigade level, and leaders do not clearly know their Soldiers' and equipment's capabilities. Within this scenario, sergeants major will not fully see their need and role in sustainment.

## Impact of absence

The impact of senior NCOs' involvement in the sustainment-planning process means that significant input by those with extensive military experience often goes unaddressed. An in-depth analysis would reveal that most units would discover few, if any, E-9s participate in the wargaming, analysis and concept-of-support production or planning. The methodology excluding CSM participation in the rehearsal process creates unnecessary logistical challenges. At minimum, the operations sergeant major should attend in the CSM's absence.

Upon uncoiling from the tactical assembly area in preparation for the defense or movement to the line of departure, well-intentioned, uninformed leaders often mismanage brigade logistical capabilities because of this. A second order of effect can lead to hasty requests for echelons-above-brigade support.

The sustainment functions of logistics, personnel services and health services are

nothing new to career NCOs. They routinely engage in these areas throughout their career and receive education on them during their professional military education. Therefore, it is clear these leaders' actions are not ill-intentioned but suffer from limited experience in how best to effectively assist their commander in mission command while conducting combined-arms maneuver and wide-area security. As the operational tempo increases, commanders become fully engaged conducting operations, and CSMs habitually discover they are trying to assist the battalion's logistical operations without extensive knowledge or understanding of the sustainment plan.

Although the combined-arms battalion Field Manual (FM) 3-90.5 does not directly address the battalion CSM's role concerning logistical responsibilities, it does indicate their need to position themselves at the point on the battlefield most likely to encounter friction, allowing them to assist their commander. Given the DA rotations to date, sustainment synchronization and execution has been the biggest friction. This point of difficulty is worthy of expounding on and can be quite different when comparing a DA to a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment. Transitioning swiftly between DA offensive and defensive operations against a complex threat and the complexity of logistics to sustain this momentum are much different than our forces are familiar with in a COIN fight. It is therefore reasonable to presume that during the Army's last 12 years of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, a training or knowledge gap may have occurred. Before 2001, many CSMs were serving at the first sergeant and platoon sergeant level, while their commanders were serving in major and captain positions. Therefore, this may account for a lack of emphasis on attendance at the sustainment rehearsal.

Subordinates generally emulate their leader's example. If the brigade CSM does not enforce attendance of the battalion CSMs at the brigade sustainment rehearsal, it is consequently no surprise that first sergeants are also routinely absent from the battalion sustainment rehearsal. FM 3-90.1, **Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team**, specifies the first sergeant "helps the commander to plan, coordinate and

supervise all logistical activities that support the tactical mission." If battalion CSMs in the BCT lack the firsthand knowledge solidified at the brigade's sustainment rehearsal, their ability to advise, mentor and train their first sergeants about logistics is impeded. This results in first sergeants performing in the same manner as their CSM's example.

Senior NCOs at platoon, company and battalion level often serve as the linchpins at logistic-resupply points (LRPs), casualty collection points, maintenance collection points and ambulance exchange points (AXPs) during operations. It is therefore imperative that CSMs have an in-depth knowledge of the brigade's logistical plan and the impact of leading Soldiers with little or no knowledge of sustainment operations. Finally, the ability to assist the battalion executive officer and appropriately advise the commander in areas of logistics is a key part of the CSM's leadership position. Therefore, the presence of CSMs at the brigade sustainment rehearsal cannot be overemphasized.

A plethora of information may be exposed or re-emphasized at the brigade sustainment rehearsal if executed appropriately, as outlined following. This is not an all-inclusive list, but it includes the major areas of concern consistently observed by all functional CSM O/C/Ts at NTC.

- Sustainment graphics (maneuver ammunition seal/frequency assignment subcommittee/AXP/forward-logistics element (FLE)/brigade-support battalion).
- Consumption rates based on mission, tempo and environmental considerations.
- Primary Alternate Contingency Emergency communication plan, Battle Command Support and Sustainment System/Command Post of the Future/Very Small Aperture Terminals/frequency modulation (FM)/Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below/Blue Force Tracking.
- Commander's logistical critical-information requirements.
- Administration and logistics FM communications retransmission ability/location.

- Logistical status reporting time and method (bottom-up refinement).
- Casualty and equipment estimates.
- Phase-line triggers for AXPs: manned or unmanned.
- Medical evacuation/casualty evacuation air/ground/non-standard, security and flow of requests and reporting.
- Limited illume and night logistical-planning considerations.
- Class VIII distribution plan (Directorate of Environmental Compliance and Management).
- Displacement of ambulances by type/location/triggers.
- Responsibilities for evacuation from Role I to Role II treatment facilities and security requirements.
- Casualty and personnel replacement.
- Dirty routes/decontamination logistical requirements/decontamination locations.
- Human-remains recovery plan/clear team responsibilities/Mortuary Affairs location.
- Class I rations cycle.
- Class III distribution/tactical-retail operations.
- Class V authorization, distribution and redistro guidance; consumption reporting.
- Equipment evacuation/retrograde and catastrophic recovery.
- 5988E flow and Class IX management.
- Clarity of the definitions associated with green/red/amber reporting and days of supply.
- FLE composition and priority of support.
- Trash and waste management.
- Emergency resupply ground/air capabilities.
- Personnel, equipment and capability of the field transportation/combat trans/company trans or combined-arms-battalion support area.
- LRPs (tailgate/service station/reduction and suicide prevention).
- Consequence-management packages:

content/location.

- Pre-staged logistical packages: contents/location.
- Forward Army and refueling points location/capacity.
- Religious support.

All these are necessary for the brigade's logistics common operating picture to remain relevant and to allow the brigade commander to make informed decisions.

Some of the impact associated with not covering intricate details in the brigade sustainment rehearsal we commonly see here at NTC are:

- Poor backwards planning;
- High number of "died of wounds";
- Loss of combat power;
- Over- and under-resupply of Class III;
- Missed link-ups at LRPs;
- Inaccurate logistics-status reports;
- Class V shortfall by type;
- Unknown disposition of friendly forces;
- Fratricide;
- Slow personnel replacement; and
- Loss of communication with support elements.

Most units rely on emergency resupply as the answer to their lack of coordination, synchronization and understanding of the concept of support. As fatigue and high optempo take their toll, sustainment suffers greatly when not rehearsed.

## Conclusion

The areas addressed in the brigade sustainment rehearsal clearly affect senior NCOs' abilities to take care of Soldiers. This is a brigade-level-down change in attitude that, if the brigade CSM embraces it, will influence to the lowest level of NCOs. This is not to imply that having battalion CSMs present will solve all the brigade's logistical issues, but this knowledge will empower them to effectively assist NCOs and staff members inside their organization. By making the battalion CSMs part of the solution in synchronizing the brigade's sustainment



plan, it helps maximize the brigade's internal capabilities. Staffs who understand that the commander values the CSM's opinion in sustainment matters can leverage this in productivity. This will allow them to influence the development of their unit's brigade sustainment rehearsals and anticipate logistical requirements.



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## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

- AXP** – ambulance exchange point
- BCT** – brigade combat team
- COIN** – counterinsurgency
- DA** – decisive action
- FLE** – forward-logistics element
- FM** – field manual
- FM** – frequency modulation
- LRP** – logistics-resupply point
- NCO** – noncommissioned officer
- NTC** – National Training Center
- O/C/T** – observer/coach/trainer



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# Checks Unbalanced: A Doctrinal and Practical Solution to the Army's Pre-Combat Checks and Pre-Combat Inspections Problem

by CPT Bobbie L. Ragsdale III, CPT Eric J. Dixon and SFC Jason B. Miera

Of the tasks leaders conduct in the Army, pre-combat checks (PCCs) and pre-combat inspections (PCIs) are among the most vital. Doctrine goes so far as to state "PCCs and PCIs are critical to success."<sup>1</sup> Despite this universally accepted importance, most rotational units' performances at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), Fort Polk, LA, reveal troubling trends arising across the Army.

These trends include reduced command emphasis, the grouping of PCCs and PCIs into a single activity, a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of PCCs and often a complete absence of either PCCs or PCIs at echelons above the squad leader.

This problem can be solved and the trends reversed, however, through increased involvement by battalion-level leadership in defining and enforcing standards, and through a slight change in the troop-leading procedures (TLPs) execution cross-walk currently being taught across the Army.

## PCC and PCI standards

Before each JRTC rotation, leaders at brigade, battalion and company levels develop their lists of key tasks and training objectives. These objectives usually include PCCs and PCIs, typically worded, "Our unit will conduct PCCs and PCIs to standard."



Their recognition of the importance of PCCs and PCIs is clear, but less clear is what those standards are or how the two activities differ.

In the Army's Field Manual (FM) 3-20.98, **Reconnaissance and Scout Platoon** – the primary doctrinal resource for Cavalry platoons – the chapter on command and control broadly defines PCCs and PCIs. Of PCCs, the section opens, "Equipment operators, vehicle crewmen and individual Soldiers conduct PCCs before executing operations."<sup>2</sup> Of note, there is no specific mention of leader checks in the PCC process; rather, it states that PCCs are individual Soldier tasks. The same manual opens discussion on PCIs, however, by stating, "Leaders in reconnaissance and scout platoons conduct PCIs to ensure that subordinate leaders and Soldiers have executed the necessary PCCs," clearly delineating the differences and establishing the leader task of PCIs as a check on the individual task of PCCs.

At the start of each rotation, their observer/coach/trainers (O/C/Ts) typically ask rotational platoons' leadership if they understand the differences between PCCs and PCIs. The answer is nearly always yes, but their answers often betray a common misconception; as demonstrated above, PCCs are an individual task but frequently misunderstood to be a leader task at a smaller or more detailed level. Somehow, the notion has arisen that PCCs are a squad leader or team leader function, while PCIs are the purview of the platoon leader or platoon sergeant. Partly due to this misunderstanding, the two activities are usually combined, if conducted at all, and implemented in a way that greatly reduces their effectiveness.

Doctrine provides little help in attacking the specifics of the problem, as the standards for PCCs and PCIs therein are scant. FM 3.20.98 explains simply that, "PCCs are conducted in accordance with appropriate technical manuals, supply catalogs and unit [standard operating procedures (SOPs)],"<sup>3</sup> prescribing the responsibility for refinement and standardization to the individual units. Conversely, FM 3-21.8, **Infantry and Rifle Platoon and Squad**, goes a little farther by providing an example PCC checklist with 46 items to inspect, but does so essentially

in lieu of a discussion on PCCs' role in the TLP process.<sup>4</sup> Later, in the appendices, the FM offers a second list of 39 vehicle and equipment checks – clearly a PCC checklist – that it curiously calls a "pre-execution checklist,"<sup>5</sup> needlessly introducing a new term and complicating what is already a confusing issue for junior leaders.

These example checklists provide a solid starting point for leaders, but they fall far short of definitive and require much refinement at the unit level. However, without instruction on the theory behind the action, how can a young leader provide that refinement? When instructing leaders, a list of specifics without a general discussion is less useful than a general discussion without specifics. With PCCs, general discussion of theory is necessary given the complexity of the task and the number of variables that exist from unit to unit and mission to mission.

Complicating matters still, the doctrine seems unclear on what TLP step PCCs and PCIs should be conducted. The Cavalry and Infantry platoon FMs both state that PCCs and PCIs both belong in the final step, "Step 8: supervise and refine."<sup>6,7</sup> The TLP crosswalk taught at the Maneuver Captain's Career Course (MCCC) confirms as much.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, FM 3-20.98 presents an "example" of a screening operation during which "the platoon conducts PCCs" while the platoon leader "briefs his plan to the S-2 and the combined-arms battalion commander at the tactical operations center."<sup>9</sup> If the platoon leader is in the middle of "Step 3: make a tentative plan," it would seem that he could not simultaneously be in Step 8. This example seems to indicate that PCCs should occur during "Step 4: initiate movement," which "can be executed at any time throughout the sequence of the TLP."<sup>10</sup>

## Harmful PCC and PCI trends

A number of JRTC O/C/Ts observe the following negative trends as being prevalent, though not universal, among rotational units over the last several years:

- Neither PCCs nor PCIs receive proper standards at the appropriate levels. Units do not develop an SOP that identifies PCC or PCI standards prior to arrival at JRTC. This trend does not seem to be



entirely a product of lack of planning time, as standards for other complex issues are often thought out and reflected in their orders process – e.g., information operations themes and messages.

- Leaders do not understand the difference between PCCs and PCIs, or how to properly conduct them.
- Leaders and Soldiers simply do not conduct PCCs or PCIs. Leaders asking their Soldiers, “Do you have your stuff?” are neither PCCs nor PCIs. When the tasks are infrequently performed, leaders are often observed merely going through the motions with the knowledge they are being observed.
- Leaders frequently claim they do not have time to conduct proper PCCs or PCIs.
- Leaders forget to conduct a PCI, typically as a result of failing to plan for it, not budgeting the time and not using a proper mission checklist or order template (e.g., SH 21-76, **The Ranger Handbook**), which would ensure that PCIs be properly considered as part of the mission process.
- When effort is made to plan for PCCs and PCIs, they are almost universally grouped together in the timeline.
- When PCIs are conducted, mission-essential equipment is not prioritized and often goes unchecked.

## Policy recommendations

The tasks are simple but clearly not automatic. To ensure their proper execution, the following steps must be taken to enhance unit SOPs and develop junior leaders for mission success:

- Creation of uniformity is vital across all doctrinal sources for the handling of both PCCs and PCIs. Regardless of branch, company and platoon-level field manuals must include both a basic checklist specific to their unit type and a general discussion on the nature of the tasks, what they mean to accomplish and how they ought to be conducted. This provides grounding in the specific and promotes independence in the general.
- PCCs and PCIs must be discussed separately in doctrine. The two are too often confused in practice; there must be special emphasis in doctrine to clarify their

differences. Of particular note, it should be clear that PCCs occur at all levels as an individual task, and that PCIs occur at all leader levels, to include team leaders and squad leaders. PCIs must cease to be seen as a platoon leader/platoon sergeant or commander function only.

- PCIs should remain in Step 8 of the TLP, but PCCs must be moved to Step 4. The practical example in FM 3-20.98 already describes it as such, but this concept is not formalized anywhere else. Since PCCs are an individual task, and they may be conducted at any time – in fact constantly throughout the mission-preparation process – they must fall earlier in the TLP. Step 4 is the most logical place. This must be codified and formalized in doctrine, in **The Ranger Handbook** and, at minimum, in the TLP crosswalk taught at MCCC and the Armor Basic Officer Leadership Course (ABOLC).
- Battalion-level units must ensure that basic PCC checklists are developed and validated at company level. Each echelon of leadership moving down should add to, and seldom take from, the checklist provided from their higher command, but it is that higher command’s responsibility to both validate its subordinates’ checklists and enforce their use. This refinement applies to leadership at all echelons, starting with team leaders.
- PCC checklists must be treated as living documents that are constantly re-addressed and modified for different mission sets. An observed best practice involved a rotational commander who, to validate them, gave PCC checklists to his platoons with instructions that anything needing to be added or removed must be backbriefed in real time. This set a clear tone for his command emphasis on PCCs, ensured that his intent was met and increased his platoons’ combat effectiveness by enforcing PCC performance.
- Soldiers must be made to understand the significance of self-responsibility in ensuring they are mission-capable. They must be mentored on the importance of self- and battle-buddy PCCs. When Soldiers understand how their role affects the greater mission, they are more likely to PCC themselves and their battle buddies. Leaders may empower Soldiers

with their tasks by having them develop their own PCC checklist for their own equipment – i.e., a radio/telephone operator performing his own communications checks.

- PCI SOPs should establish the minimum standards for different mission types, with special emphasis on mission-essential equipment. Further, leaders should be coached to make their PCI intentions clear during the warning order or operational order, enabling subordinate leaders to ensure their PCIs address key issues first.
- When building PCIs into the timeline, they must be planned with enough time to fix any deficiencies should they be found. Too often, when units do manage to conduct PCIs, they force themselves to delay their mission to fix issues that are discovered. It is better to find these issues than not find them, but if fixing them requires desynchronizing a larger operation, the solution may be worse than the problem. The answer is to plan accordingly. Planning a PCI mere minutes before execution indicates a desire to go through the motions but reveals little thought put into the activity's actual purpose or utility.
- Leaders must remember that during PCIs, they are not limited to only checking physical items; they should also consider checking Soldiers' knowledge of the mission, their task and purpose and their priority intelligence requirements. Clarified doctrine, checklists and command emphasis will ensure these are checked as well.
- The final, key ingredient, as with most Army tasks, is discipline. "Discipline ... makes the Soldiers of a free country reliable in battle," GEN John Schofield famously said. Complacency is a major enemy to the execution of PCCs and PCIs, but if leaders stress their importance and Soldiers are disciplined, no obstacle to PCC or PCI execution is insurmountable.
- PCCs and PCIs are not only for combat operations. They should be conducted for every task any unit is charged with. If PCCs and PCIs are performed at all times in garrison to published and vali-

dated standards, when the time comes to execute in combat, the process will be second nature.

## Conclusion

PCCs and PCIs ensure a unit is in the best possible condition for the operation it is about to conduct. It stops a unit from making itself a victim through preventable errors. Regardless of a unit's experience or skill, of its cleanliness or care of equipment, or of its discipline and attentiveness, mistakes will still be made. Equipment will still be broken. Things will still be forgotten. PCCs, especially when codified, written and followed to the letter, catch these mistakes before they cost lives and before they fail missions. PCIs ensure standards through command emphasis and that PCCs happen as they should. A breakdown at any level in the process creates a hole whereby failure can slip through. The preceding recommendations aim to keep the net as tightly woven as possible. If we are defeated in battle, let it be through the enemy's cunning and not through our carelessness.



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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Department of the Army, FM 3-20.98, **Reconnaissance and Scout Platoon**. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office (GPO), August 2009.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Department of the Army, FM 3-21.8, **The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad**, Washington, DC: GPO, March 2007.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>FM 3-20.98.

<sup>7</sup>FM 3-21.8.

<sup>8</sup>"Troop-leading procedures outline Version 2 (July 09).ppt," MCCC, 2009.

<sup>9</sup>FM 3-20.98.

<sup>10</sup>FM 3-21.10.

## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**ABOLC** – Armor Basic Officer Leadership Course

**FM** – field manual

**GPO** – Government Printing Office

**JRTC** – Joint Readiness Training Center

**MCCC** – Maneuver Captain's Career Course

**O/C/T** – observer/coach/trainer

**OIF** – Operation Iraqi Freedom

**PCC** – pre-combat check

**PCI** – pre-combat inspection

**SOP** – standard operating procedures

**TLP** – troop-leading procedures



# Command-Post Layout and Service-Design Thinking

by MAJ Richard Z. Groen

The physical layout of a maneuver brigade combat team (BCT)'s command post (CP) can enhance or hinder its staff's productivity. This article suggests a CP layout using service-design thinking.

A CP is a unit's brain or nucleus. It constantly receives, distributes and analyzes information; integrates and synchronizes systems; plans future operations; issues orders; and makes recommendations to the commander to facilitate decision-making. Essentially, a CP is a learning environment for organizations.

## Service-design thinking

In a 2011 study of learning-space service design, Elliot Felix,<sup>1</sup> the director of Brightspot Strategy, used historical data to prove that learning-environment design should focus more on outputs and services and less on furniture, technology and physical space. He advocates designing learning environments around student-directed services, not a physical building or "container." He calls this process "service-design thinking" and recommends identifying needed student services or functions and then designing the physical environment around requirements.

Felix believes his service-design planning builds knowledge, skills and community while providing for all learning styles in an updated age of technology. Learners are in an interaction age, where collaboration occurs between students and teachers over community and Web-based forums.

Felix also notes that successful service-design identification depends on three major considerations: personas, journey maps and service blueprints. *Personas* identify the learning audience and their learning styles by assessing the intended students. *Service blueprints* and *journey maps* identify their required specific services vs. output at specific timeframes.

After services are identified and physical space is designed, departments must assess

usage, level of satisfaction and impact through various instruments. These assessments facilitate service-design adaptation with learners, technology and community needs.

## Army application

Learning or thinking organizations such as the U.S. Army could use Felix's same principles for establishing their CPs or containers. All too often, organizations receive a series of tents with a preplanned layout of where the warfighting functions<sup>2</sup> (WfF) involving current operations (CUOPS) or plans are located.

To apply service-design thinking, organizations must first identify their personas, journey maps and service blueprints. For instance, a maneuver BCT first identifies its key personnel and the level of interaction these people need with each other daily. Next, the BCT lays out its requirements for functionality to conduct battle drills for CUOPS, planning sessions, staff meetings, Soldier leadership engagements (SLEs), desk spaces, chairs, connectivity requirements, projectors, etc. Lastly, developing a battle rhythm before designing a CP identifies if more spaces are required or if a single space can be deconflicted and used repeatedly.

Key personnel in the CP are the command group. Army Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (ATTP) publication 5-0.1, **Command and Staff Officer Guide**, dated September 2011, identifies the command group as "the commander and selected staff members who assist the command in controlling operations away from a CP." These individuals make decisions or directly assist decision-making. As Felix noted, they are key personnel or personas who facilitate decisions as well as creative and collaborative thinking, and they influence most of the organization.

As the command group can be seen as key personas, the CP's service blueprint can be split between CUOPS and plans. ATTP 5-0.1

defines CUOPS as the “focal point for the execution of operations. This involves assessing the current situation while regulating forces and WFFs in accordance with the mission, commander’s intent and concept of operations.” CUOPS is an organization comprised of all WFFs. It executes the missions generated by plans, the cell “responsible for the long-range planning horizons. It prepares for operations beyond the scope

of the current order by developing plans and orders, including branch plans and sequels.” The plans cell ideally consists of and receives input from all WFFs. Both CUOPS and plans require a considerable amount of workspace and areas to facilitate collaborative planning and meetings.

The balance of all these activities are laid out on a journey map or BCT-produced

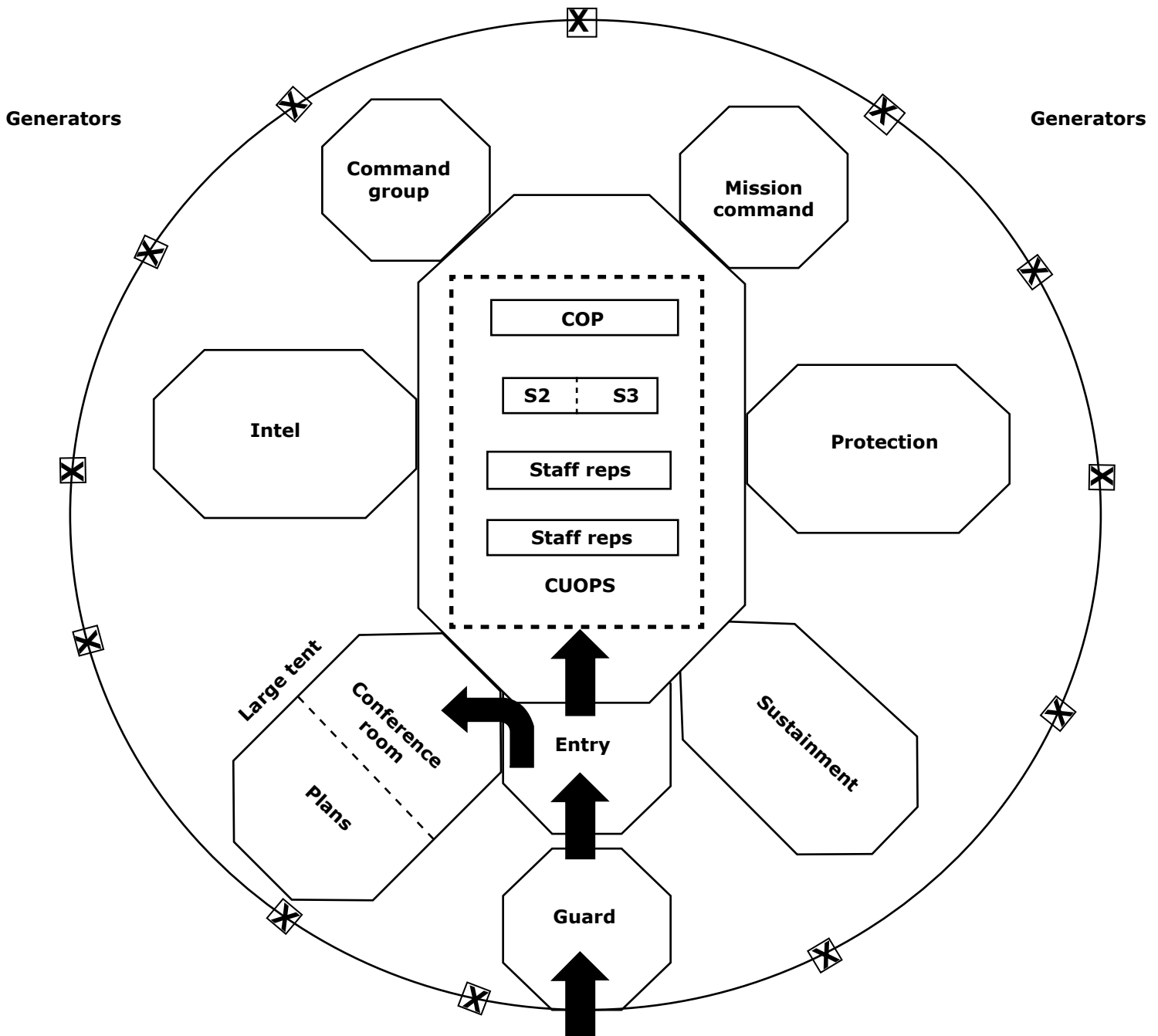


Figure 1. Command-post setup.

calendar and battle rhythm, “a deliberate daily cycle of command, staff and unit activities intended to synchronize current and future operations (plans)” as outlined in ATTP 5-0.1. The battle rhythm’s key point is the synchronization of space and time within the CP because multiple events, meetings and planning sessions must occur, but space may not be available. The battle rhythm – in concert with the calendar – can synchronize events, use space properly and account for unforeseen events like SLEs, impromptu meetings and unexpected planning sessions.

## CP layout

Figure 1 provides a possible solution in designing the CP around functionality, and not a predetermined container, while using Felix’s service-design thinking. CUOPS is the CP’s center, with representation of the WfFs by cells who assist in immediately receiving, distributing and analyzing information; integrating and synchronizing assets; and assisting the commander in immediate decisions. Personnel would enter the CP from the guard area. Those who need to attend meetings in the conference room would enter without disturbing CUOPS and the execution of operations.

Plans personnel are colocated with the conference area. Other WfFs have their own areas that branch from CUOPS to facilitate operations but are separate to limit traffic and overcrowding. The command group also has its own area external to CUOPS, preferably with the ability to digitally visualize the battlefield and communicate to subordinate units. The commander should possess the same connectivity as CUOPS for any sort of meeting or needed communication without hindering possible ongoing battle drills and events.

Though this example is a recommended layout based on Felix’s service-design thinking, it may not be applicable to units who are issued a set grouping of tents or containers. However, a BCT can tailor its containers to facilitate functionality. Identifying that a CP is another form of a learning environment, BCTs can conceptualize Felix’s methods of service-design thinking.

To increase overall functionality and productivity, and facilitate the learning environment, BCTs first need to identify personas and its command group; develop the service blueprint by ensuring the CP has areas for CUOPS and plans; and complete a journey map through synchronization of the battle rhythm and calendar.



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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Felix, Elliot, “Learning Space Service Design,” *Journal of Learning Spaces*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2011; retrieved Feb. 10, 2012, from <http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ojs/index.php/jls/article/view/284/162>.

<sup>2</sup> The warfighting functions (movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, mission command and protection) are a group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information and processes) united by a common purpose commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives. Retrieved Sept. 27, 2013, from Center for Army Lessons Learned Website, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/thesaurus/toc.asp?id=33276>.

## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**ATTP** – Army tactics, techniques and procedures  
**BCT** – brigade combat team  
**CP** – command post  
**CUOPS** – current operations  
**SLE** – Soldier leadership engagement  
**WfF** – warfighting function

# A Tool for Achieving Regional Understanding at the Company/Platoon Level

by MAJ Adam R. Brady, MAJ Dustin A. Menhart  
and MAJ Russell B. Thomas

*"Army training must balance current-operations missions while simultaneously preparing forces to meet future requirements. The future requires the Army to be regionally responsive and globally engaged. Army training will provide the critical depth and versatility needed to support the three strategic roles of [p]revent – [s]hape – [w]in. ..."*<sup>1</sup>

The Army's shift toward regionally aligned units demonstrates the need for a focused training framework that creates regional understanding in Soldiers and leaders. This article will provide a proposed training outline and tool based on the operational variables of political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, time (PMESII-PT) – and on their subvariables.

This outline is for execution at company level to complement the information provided by the Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace (LDESP) program. The goal is to provide company-level-and-below leadership with a general training plan and the regional analysis worksheet (RAW) tool to conduct a sufficiently thorough analysis of a more focused area than current training facilitates.

## Current training

The U.S. military is responsible for developing "innovative, low-cost and small-footprint approaches to achieve [the nation's] security objectives [through] exercise, rotational presence and advisory capabilities."<sup>2</sup> These approaches place a premium on gaining and maintaining a level of knowledge about a specific region defined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as *regional expertise*. This knowledge focuses on gaining an "understanding [of the impact] of political and cultural differences [on] military operations."<sup>3</sup> The Joint Chiefs go further, stating that such expertise is gained through a 40-credit graduate degree or substantial immersion in a geographic area.<sup>4</sup>

In-depth regional knowledge such as this is important at strategic and operational levels, but it is unrealistic to expect this level of

knowledge in Soldiers and leaders at company level. Instead, Soldiers at company level should strive to gain an understanding of a specific region.

One of the current training tools available to units is the LDESP program. This Web-based learning utility, managed by the Naval Postgraduate School, provides a centralized location for regional combatant commands (COCOMs) to create and manage training for the brigade combat teams aligned with them. U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), the COCOM with the first regionally aligned conventional units, requires all regionally-aligned-unit Soldiers to complete a specific training module and 40-question exam.<sup>5</sup> Once complete, they receive certification to operate within AFRICOM.

While this training provides a solid foundation for understanding the complexities of Africa, it does not provide a framework for the more focused information required at the platoon and company level of operations. Given the current expectation that company-level units are the highest echelon that will deploy as a whole, their area of operations will be much smaller than the continental focus that LDESP training provides.<sup>6</sup> With the possibility of multiple small units deploying at any given time, battalion staffs may find it difficult to provide the detailed information required by each of these platoons and companies. Therefore, the responsibility for conducting region-focused training events falls to the company commander, with approval from the battalion and brigade commander.

## Regional understanding at company/platoon level

As the Army continues to geographically align units with COCOMs, doctrine provides us with a structured method of investigating and evaluating the operational variables defined as the PMESII-PT aspects of a region and people. (Table 1).<sup>7</sup> This doctrinal framework provides military leaders a method for creating regional understanding in diverse environments.



Variables	Description
Political	Describes the distribution of responsibility and power at all levels of governance — formally constituted authorities as well as informal or covert political powers.
Military	Explores the military and paramilitary capabilities of all relevant actors (enemy, friendly and neutral) in a given operational environment.
Economic	Encompasses individual and group behaviors related to producing, distributing and consuming resources.
Social	Describes the cultural, religious and ethnic makeup within an operational environment and the beliefs, values, customs and behaviors of society members.
Information	Describes the nature, scope, characteristics and effects of individuals, organizations and systems that collect, process, disseminate or act on information.
Infrastructure	Is composed of the basic facilities, services and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society.
Physical environment	Includes the geography and manmade structures, as well as the climate and weather in the area of operation.
Time	Describes the timing and duration activities, events or conditions within an operational environment, as well as how the timing and duration are perceived by various actors in the operational environment.

**Table 1. Operational variables (PMESII-PT).**

While LDESP is tremendously accommodat- ing, it does not provide the detailed analysis required at platoon and company level. By supplementing LDESP’s resources with the RAW (available from <http://www.westpoint.edu/gene/SitePages/Publications.aspx>), this detailed information can be systematically determined.

The RAW provides a doctrinally correct and useful tool that is readily available for Sol- diers and leaders at company and platoon level (Table 2). By using the operational variables and subvariables of PMESII-PT, the complicated nature of a specific region can be effectively distilled into manageable pieces for individual Soldiers and leaders (Table 3).<sup>8</sup>

## Application in unit training schedule

The unit training-management process, based on the operations-process framework in Army Doctrine and Reference Publication 7-0, **Training Units and Developing Leaders**, is the Army’s methodology for devel- oping training. Unit training management occurs through proper planning, preparation, execution and assessment of training (Figure 1).<sup>9</sup> From qualification on a marksmanship range to the completion of bus-driver train- ing, Army leaders excel at training Soldiers

to a specified standard while continually as- sessing and improving that training. The key to gaining regional understanding is dedi- cated and focused training, similar to that devoted to basic rifle marksmanship, land navigation and combat lifesaver training.

The following is an ideal training method for achieving regional understanding at the in- dividual level. We understand it will not al- ways be feasible – for example, due to the current operating environment’s fluid na- ture, regionally aligned units may receive short notice for a deployment’s location. However, the requirement for detailed in- formation will not change. By using RAWs and conducting this training in whatever time is available, company commanders are able to increase the regional understanding of their Soldiers in concert with predeply- ment requirements. The size of the element deploying directly affects the level of lead- ers who will be involved with this material’s instruction.

**Planning.** The company commander devel- ops a training-plan process to develop pla- toon and individual tasks. It is important to identify regional understanding as a key in- dividual task that supports the battalion commander’s guidance and the company’s mission-essential task list; if regional train- ing isn’t identified as an essential task and

<b>P1. Attitude toward the United States</b>			
<b>Positive (POS)</b>	<b>Neutral (NEU)</b>		<b>Negative (NEG)</b>
<b>P2. Centers of political power and type of government</b>			
<i>A. Name of state</i>	<i>B. Capital and location</i>	<i>C. Form of government</i>	<i>D. State shape</i>
<i>E. Area of state</i>	<i>F. Political boundary type(s)</i>	<i>G. Major boundary dispute(s)</i>	<i>H. External threats/enemies</i>
<i>J. Informal or covert political powers</i>			
<b>P3. Government effectiveness and legitimacy</b>			
<i>Effective (yes/no)    Legitimate (yes/no)</i>			
<i>Details</i>			
<b>P4. Influential political groups</b>			
<i>A. Group 1</i> <i>Name:</i> <i>Size:</i> <i>Objectives:</i>	<i>B. Group 2</i> <i>Name:</i> <i>Size:</i> <i>Objectives:</i>	<i>C. Group 3</i> <i>Name:</i> <i>Size:</i> <i>Objectives:</i>	
<b>P5. International Relationships</b>			
<i>Bordering countries</i>	<i>Relationship (POS, NEU, NEG)</i>	<i>Other significant relationships</i>	
A. B. C. D.	A. B. C. D.		
<b>P6. History</b>			

**Table 2. Regional analysis worksheet example.**

given dedicated focus, it may fall by the wayside among many competing tasks.

Following development of a unit training plan, the last step in the planning process is identifying topics that will promote improved Soldier understanding of the specific region the unit is aligned with.<sup>10</sup> Our recommendation is that company commanders use the RAW, with its foundation in the operational variables of PMESII-PT, to assist in researching a specifically assigned region.

**Preparation.** Training preparation is primarily executed by the leaders conducting training, with company commanders supervising the development and sourcing of specific training requirements. For regional understanding, platoon leaders and platoon sergeants serve as the primary trainers.

Individual squad leaders serve as alternate instructors, conducting reading checks and enforcing the daily requirements with their subordinates. Each platoon leader and platoon sergeant receives specific PMESII-PT variables to research and use to train the company (Figure 2). The RAW was formatted to be easily printed and distributed in pieces to individuals for completion.

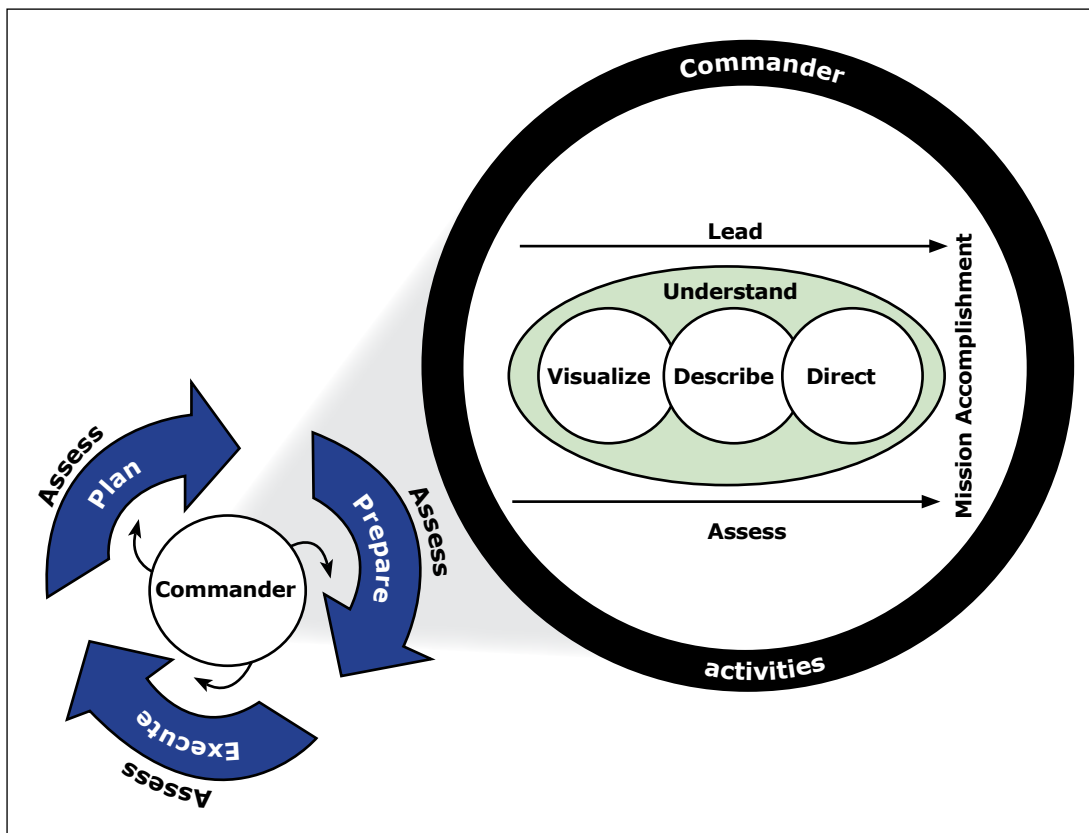
Every Soldier in the unit, to include all the identified instructors, should first conduct training using the LDESP program. This will create a foundational understanding of the COCOM and satisfy any required certifications. The trainers should then complete their portion of the RAW and become subject-matter experts in their assigned operational variable. They should heavily use

on-line resources such as country studies available through the Library of Congress Website, LDESP, the Central Intelligence Agency's **World Factbook**, U.S. State Department fact sheets and the Center for Language, Culture and Regional Studies at the U.S. Military Academy. The company commander should then validate his leaders in their specific region in the form of a review of the RAW and backbrief. The trainers would then be responsible for planning and executing regional training in accordance with the company commander's training plan.

The final step of preparation is refresher training. Depending on the length of the training cycle and the large amount of information Soldiers must digest, refresher training will likely be an ongoing requirement. Platoon leaders and platoon sergeants will be responsible for creating this training under the company commander's guidance, with a focus on being able to quickly update the information to include changes that have occurred due to new information or experiences after spending time in the region.

Political variable	Social variable	Physical environment variable
Attitude toward the United States Centers of political power Type of government Government effectiveness and legitimacy Influential political groups International relationships	Demographic mix Social volatility Education level Ethnic diversity Population movement Common languages Criminal activity Human rights Centers of social power Basic cultural norms and values	<b>Terrain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation and fields of fire</li> <li>• Avenues of approach</li> <li>• Key terrain</li> <li>• Obstacles</li> <li>• Cover and concealment</li> <li>• Landforms</li> <li>• Vegetation</li> <li>• Terrain complexity</li> <li>• Mobility classification</li> </ul> <b>Natural Hazards</b> <b>Climate</b> <b>Weather</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Precipitation</li> <li>• High temperature - heat index</li> <li>• Low temperature - wind chill</li> <li>• Wind</li> <li>• Visibility</li> <li>• Cloud cover</li> <li>• Relative humidity</li> </ul>
Military variable	Information variable	
Military forces Government paramilitary forces Nonstate paramilitary forces Unarmed combatants Nonmilitary armed combatants <b>Military functions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Command and control (mission command)</li> <li>• Maneuver</li> <li>• Information warfare</li> <li>• Reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition</li> <li>• Fire support</li> <li>• Protection</li> <li>• Logistics</li> </ul>	Public communications media <b>Information warfare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic warfare</li> <li>• Computer warfare</li> <li>• Information attack</li> <li>• Deception</li> <li>• Physical destruction</li> <li>• Protection and security measures</li> </ul> Intelligence Information management	
Economic variable	Infrastructure variable	Time variable
Economic diversity Employment status Illegal economic activity Banking and finance	Construction patterns Urban zones Urbanized building density Utilities present Utility level Transportation architecture	Cultural perception of time Information onset Tactical exploitation of time Key dates, time periods or events

**Table 3. Operational subvariables.**



**Figure 1. Operations process.**

The methodology trainers will use will vary greatly from topic to topic; however, a standardized framework for material to be covered is essential. This is where the RAW is helpful in creating a detailed syllabus. This syllabus, at a minimum, should include operational variables and subvariables to be covered; specific knowledge of goals/outcomes; training location(s); and a general timeline for the training.

At the end of the preparation phase, the commander has reviewed and certified all training plans and trainers, published the syllabus (training schedule) and allocated time for regional training to be conducted.

Ideally, this training will be conducted as a "round-robin" event in a location that facilitates learning and encourages interaction from all Soldiers participating. A suitable environment can vary greatly dependent on the type of training conducted. For regional understanding, this location should provide trainers the ability to properly present their material and give Soldiers the room needed to take notes and truly engage in the topic.

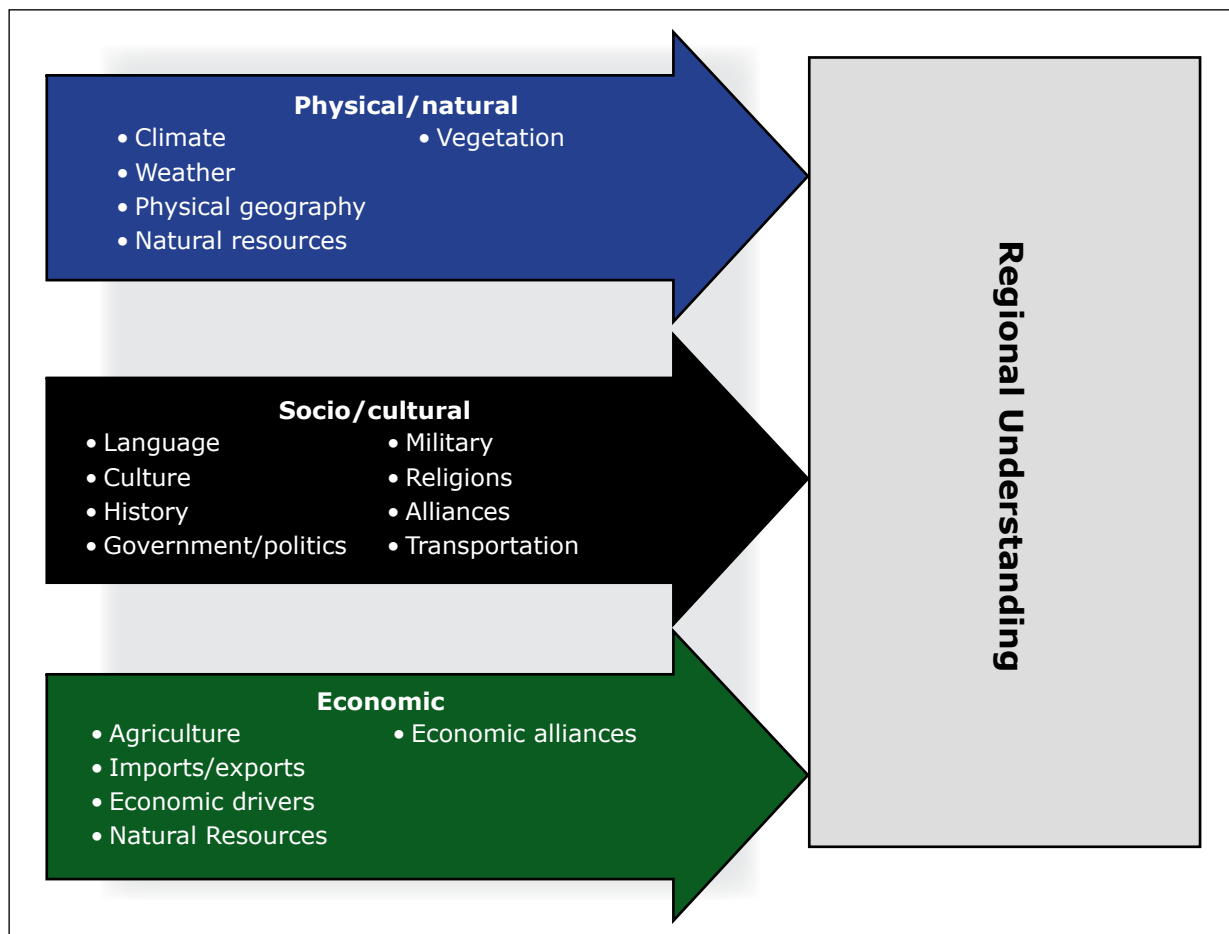
**Execution.** With all topics divided among the company's platoon leaders and platoon

sergeants, training can be conducted efficiently and effectively. Also, by assigning each platoon a particular group of operational variables, those individuals attain a level of understanding nearing regional expertise. For example, the platoon responsible for the political and military operational variables becomes the company's most knowledgeable element in those subject areas.

Critical to the execution phase are daily requirements at the team and squad level. These requirements can include, but are not limited to, squad briefings on a portion of the day's material, a team case study of a region or backbriefs to their platoon on previously covered material. By assigning these tasks, Soldiers are required to complete the given assignments, participate in their own learning and guide their learning in a direction of their interests. This will improve the success of the program by creating a deeper understanding of the material.

Also, trainers should be encouraged to vary the methods of training they use. Situational exercises, limited lectures, the judicious use of PowerPoint presentations and reinforcement of reading assignments are a few techniques.





**Figure 2. Subsystems of regional understanding.**

**Assessment.** In accordance with ADRP 3-07, *Training Management*, commanders and other leaders conduct assessments throughout the entire training cycle. For regional training to succeed, assessing each Soldier is critical; if there is no qualification requirement, training will be much less effective.

To verify the success of regional training, individual testing can be included. Any test should be designed in a similar fashion to a high-school examination, with questions varying from multiple-choice, fill in the blank and short answer. While other verification and assessment methods may be used, regional studies are fact-based and thus an examination of the material is the most effective way to assess an individual's retention of knowledge.

The specifics of these examinations could be designed by the company commander and approved by the battalion or brigade commander. However, a centralized standard test format developed by the regional COCOM would prevent multiple standards across aligned units.

Key to this concept is that performance is valued. Encouraging Soldiers to value a test of any type is difficult. Thus, association of performance to a reward is critical. Rewards

are at the discretion of the command, but a recommendation would be those that award promotion points or recognize personal achievement. Army Achievement Medals, certificates of achievement and company special passes for those who excel on examinations are options company commanders have available. Conversely, Soldiers who do not achieve the standard can be subject to consequences such as revocation of pass privileges, developmental counseling or weekend re-training.

Regardless of the final technique or specific tasks trained, the company commander will be able to determine individual Soldiers' regional understanding and certify each as T (trained), P (practiced) or U (untrained).

Finally, the after-action review process provides the opportunity to incorporate lessons-learned into future training to better support the unit's mission.

## Conclusion

The regionally aligned unit structure mandates that our Soldiers and leaders gain and maintain an in-depth understanding of a specific region to facilitate building partner capacity.<sup>11</sup> This regional understanding requires a standard training framework at

company level and below, which complements the existing COCOM training requirements and provides enough detail to ensure Soldier understanding. This emphasis on using the RAW while conducting training at company level complies with the Army training strategy of “[restoring] decentralized training management” while providing a tool for leaders and Soldiers to use when time is of the essence.<sup>12</sup> This focus will build on past cultural training events and allow unit leadership to emphasize the importance of required skills outside of *shoot, move and communicate*.



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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Army, *The Army Training Strategy*, October 2012.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense*, [http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Strategic\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf), accessed Oct. 24, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*, [http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/JV2020\\_Capstone.pdf](http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/JV2020_Capstone.pdf), accessed Oct. 24, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3126.01, *Language and Regional Expertise Planning*, [http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs\\_directives/cdata/unlimit/3126\\_01.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs_directives/cdata/unlimit/3126_01.pdf), accessed Nov. 20, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> *Leader’s Development Education for a Sustained Peace*, [www.ldesp.org](http://www.ldesp.org). AFRICOM’s training module is currently required for all Soldiers who are members of 2/1 Infantry Division aligned with the command. This requirement was provided during an email conversation with LTC Jeffrey Powell, squadron commander, 5-4 Cav.

<sup>6</sup> Vandiver, John, “AFRICOM first to test new regional brigade concept,” *Stars and Stripes*, May 17, 2012, available from <http://www.stripes.com/news/afri-com-first-to-test-new-regional-brigade-concept-1.177476>, accessed Feb. 25, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> ADRP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, Washington, DC: Department of the Army, May 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ADRP 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, Washington, DC: Department of the Army, Aug. 23, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> *Army Training Strategy*.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

- ADRP** – Army doctrine and reference publication
- AFRICOM** – Africa Command
- COCOM** – combatant command
- LDESP** – Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace (program)
- PMESII-PT** – political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment and time
- RAW** – regional analysis worksheet
- USMA** – U.S. Military Academy

# Strategic Stones and the Path Ahead

by retired U.S. Marine Corps LTC Robert W. Lamont

The Department of Defense published its strategic guidance, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense*, in January 2012, detailing missions and principles that will guide the development and employment of Joint Force 2020. This document clearly articulated a shift toward the Pacific Theater and the potential need to challenge emerging Chinese military force and competing economic interests. The purpose of this article is to explore the ramifications of this strategic shift and the potential military interactions resident in any such struggle.

A clash between an American-led coalition and the Chinese state would be a contest of differing military philosophies representing contrasting military histories and cultural experiences. To gain insight into the nature of these differences, I will contrast board games associated with each culture. In the case of the Western system, I'll use chess as a conflict surrogate to explore selected principles of war. On the Eastern side, the game of Wei Ch'i, or Go in the Japanese experience, will be used to illuminate the concepts of the Maoist-centric system and its evolving employment template. Finally, I'll explore the potential influence these operational approaches may have on the formulation of future strategies.

The nine principles of war have long provided a backdrop against which to conduct

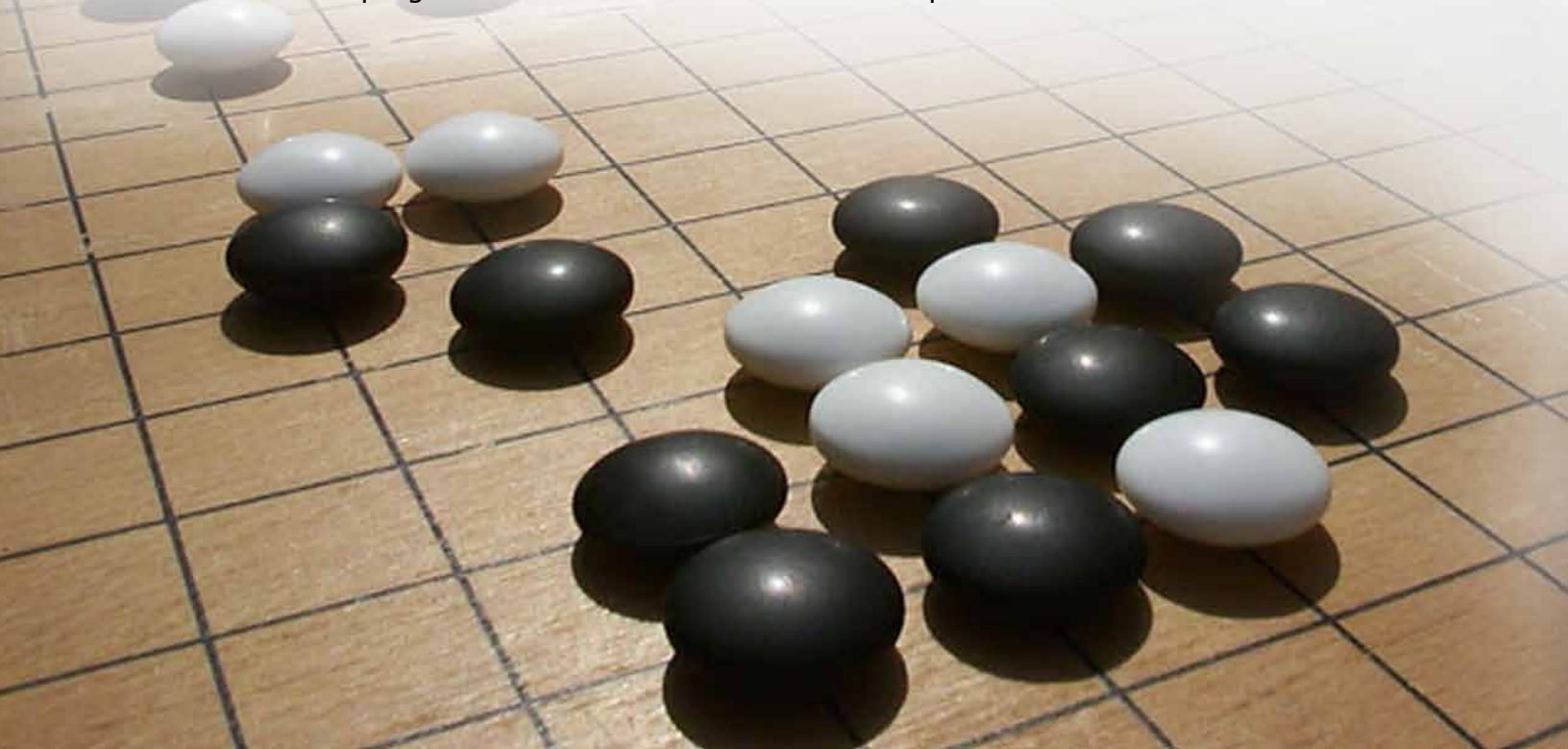
campaign analysis and doctrinal review. The first of these is that the *objective* and each game system have a unique approach as to what goals are sought during the contest. The remaining eight principles of war lend themselves to groupings in similar functional sets. *Offense, maneuver, mass* and *surprise* can be thought of as principles facilitating the imposition of our will on the enemy. Conversely, *simplicity, unity of command, economy of force* and *security* are principles that retain our freedom of action in the face of enemy action and the natural friction arising from the inherent uncertainty associated with any contest between competing endstates and wills.

I'll focus on offense, maneuver and mass since they provide the most insight in opposing defeat mechanisms and operational design.

## Chess: the Western system

Capturing the opponent's king in chess becomes the overriding objective to which all other activity leads.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that this objective tends to set a material-based theme for many key elements and techniques within the game. The overarching strategy resolves around gaining positional or material advantages to obtain the goal.

Fred Reinfeld in his discussion of chess tactics emphasizes an offensive theme in





generating threats to achieve tactical goals. He outlines imposing our will on the opponent, hitting them where they are weak and gaining material advantage to break down the opponent's defenses.<sup>2</sup> Within the context of game combinations, a series of related moves aimed at gaining material or positional advantage play an important role in executing the offense. These combinations become the core of rapid rearrangement of forces on the board and take on a blitzkrieg-like character as the battle ebbs and flows.

One final observation that tends to characterize chess is that each type of piece is unique and varying in its abilities to move and capture. The stronger the piece's combat value, the more valuable its relative worth. This tends to make combinations and exchanges take on a material focus, reinforcing attrition orientation.

Maneuver alters the relative combat power of military forces in relation to one another. It becomes the vehicle by which friendly forces achieve a positional advantage and is often achieved by effective firepower.<sup>3</sup> In chess, the masters key in on the relationship between good position on the board and how such an advantage enhances the striking power of pieces relative to your opponent. For instance, Reinfeld details the concepts of "good squares" and "fighting for the center" as guideposts to improving your position on the board and enhancing

offensive power. Two specific examples he uses are placing your rooks on open files where they can dominate an entire row, and getting your bishops to diagonals where their movement characteristics can similarly dominate.<sup>4</sup> By controlling the center of the board, you are able to maximize the hitting power of your pieces. It follows as no surprise that so much of chess literature is dominated by discussions of controlling this area during the game's opening moves.

The ability to mass combat power, in terms of material and firepower, at the decisive time and place has long been a key defeat mechanism in doctrinal thought around the world. This concept translates well to the chessboard, as pieces maneuver against weakness to develop additional advantage. Along these lines, Reinfeld noted that the ability to gain material advantage in one area leads to greater material advantage.<sup>5</sup>

During the Cold War, the entire Soviet military system ashore was obsessed with developing operational advantages in speed and mass. It is interesting to note that during this same timeframe, the Soviet Union dominated the world chess ranking in international competition.

The goal here has not been to teach the game of chess but rather to demonstrate how chess has captured the operational essence of many of the key combat concepts articulated in Western military tradition. In the context of chess, this tradition can be thought of as functioning under a rapidly





Principle of war	Chess	Wei Ch'i / Go
Objective	Capture king; oriented on opposing force	Gain most territory; space- or resource-oriented
Offensive	Attack weakness to gain material or positional advantage	Control base areas, extend deliberately toward strength; strategic not tactical threats
Mass / concentration	Combine striking power to a single area to overwhelm defense	Combine striking power from multiple directions to encircle defense
Maneuver / mobility	Use movement of pieces to dominate rows and diagonals; use combinations to gain advantage in materiel or position; rapid and changing forces; operate on interior lines by controlling the board center	Methodical, step-by-step extensions from bases; exploit tempo in one area for exchange in another; complicate control by operating from many directions; operate on external lines

**Table 1. Game concepts and the principles of war.**

changing operational landscape, controlling the center as key terrain and maintaining orientation on the opposing force with the ultimate goal of removing its central piece, the king.

## Wei Ch'i/Go: the Eastern system

The objective in Wei Ch'i is to control territory. To accomplish this, each player sequentially places control markers, referred to as *stones*, on the intersections of the board grid. Players capture opposing stones by surrounding them and cutting off any open intersection points to the stone or a group. Therefore, by walling off areas and encircling enemy stones, the game progresses until all space is controlled. All stones have the same characteristics of play, so only their position on the board determines their relative value. In this regard, the game is comparable to economic competition for scarce resources (in this case terrain) as well as a model of armed conflict.

The game reflects the combined need for blending offensive and defensive strategies at different parts of the board simultaneously. Unlike chess – in which players attempt to dominate the center of the playing area – the opening of a Wei Ch'i game is dominated on the edges and corners. Iwamoto Kaoru, the Japanese nine-dan Go master, in his discussions on game strategy details the importance and techniques for controlling the corners to establish base

areas. This approach, referred to as *shimari* in game lexicon, allows players to construct areas from which to strike on a larger scale to the center of the board.<sup>6</sup>

In Mao's writing, we find direct parallels in his approach to resisting Japanese operations in China. He details his approach as operating on exterior lines corresponding to the edge of the board, establishing bases as in *shimari* and finally extending the war to other areas.<sup>7</sup> These are all solid revolutionary techniques directly reflected in the Wei Ch'i mechanics of game play.

Offensive operations in the game context extend beyond base areas to capture and contest your opponent's territory. Kaoru offers the Go adage of "stay away from thickness" as one signpost to extending control on the board. He recommends a step-by-step approach when closing on your opponent. This technique ultimately leads to encirclement and capture of enemy stones, resulting in the addition of territory.

The idea of avoiding strength and exploiting weakness is not new in the conflict of arms, but does it have relevance as a tendency in the Eastern military approach? In GEN Vo Nguyen Giap's writing, we see close linkage in these game concepts to his reflections on how he conducted the war in Vietnam. He discusses the development of the opponent's weakness in operational methods and how he used a "step-by-step" approach to secure victory.<sup>8</sup> His observations continue on how "tight encirclement" played a key

role in cutting off reinforcement and ensuring annihilation of the enemy to secure all the territory of South Vietnam.<sup>9</sup> Wei Ch'i references are clearly articulated as the general discusses his operational methods.

The Maoist view of mass, like in Wei Ch'i, takes on a subtle difference when contrasted with its Western counterpart. In chess, committing more pieces to the exchange or fight adds strength. On the Wei Ch'i board, the object is control with just enough force, but not massing your stones so closely they can't influence more area adjacent to them. In the Western tradition, force is massed to conduct operations and achieve an objective. By contrast, in the Wei Ch'i scheme, encirclement is achieved through coordinated action of different groups from dispersed areas on the same objective.<sup>10</sup>

Giap makes strong references to the correlation of forces as a prelude to developing the strength needed to overwhelm South Vietnam. He links the proper use of space with the refined mobility of the road network to define aimpoints that allowed his forces to achieve the concentration needed to win.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, Kaoru introduces a tactical scheme known as *kakari* designed to challenge base areas your opponent uses to extend his territorial holdings. Minimum stones are played to force a disproportional defensive commitment of resources. The intent here is not to overwhelm or defeat the opposing base but rather focus your opponent on this area of the board and in so doing gain freedom of action elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> This is an important paradigm from which to assess the Chinese build-up of military power.

## **Influence of approaches on strategy**

Table 1 summarizes the two approaches to conflict as represented in the differing game systems. The table also summarizes the extent to which these abstractions capture the essence of regionalized military thought, contrasted against the principles of war, on either side of the Golden Meridian.

With these opposing approaches to conflict as a frame of reference, what would an expansionist strategy look like emanating from China? The first important observation is

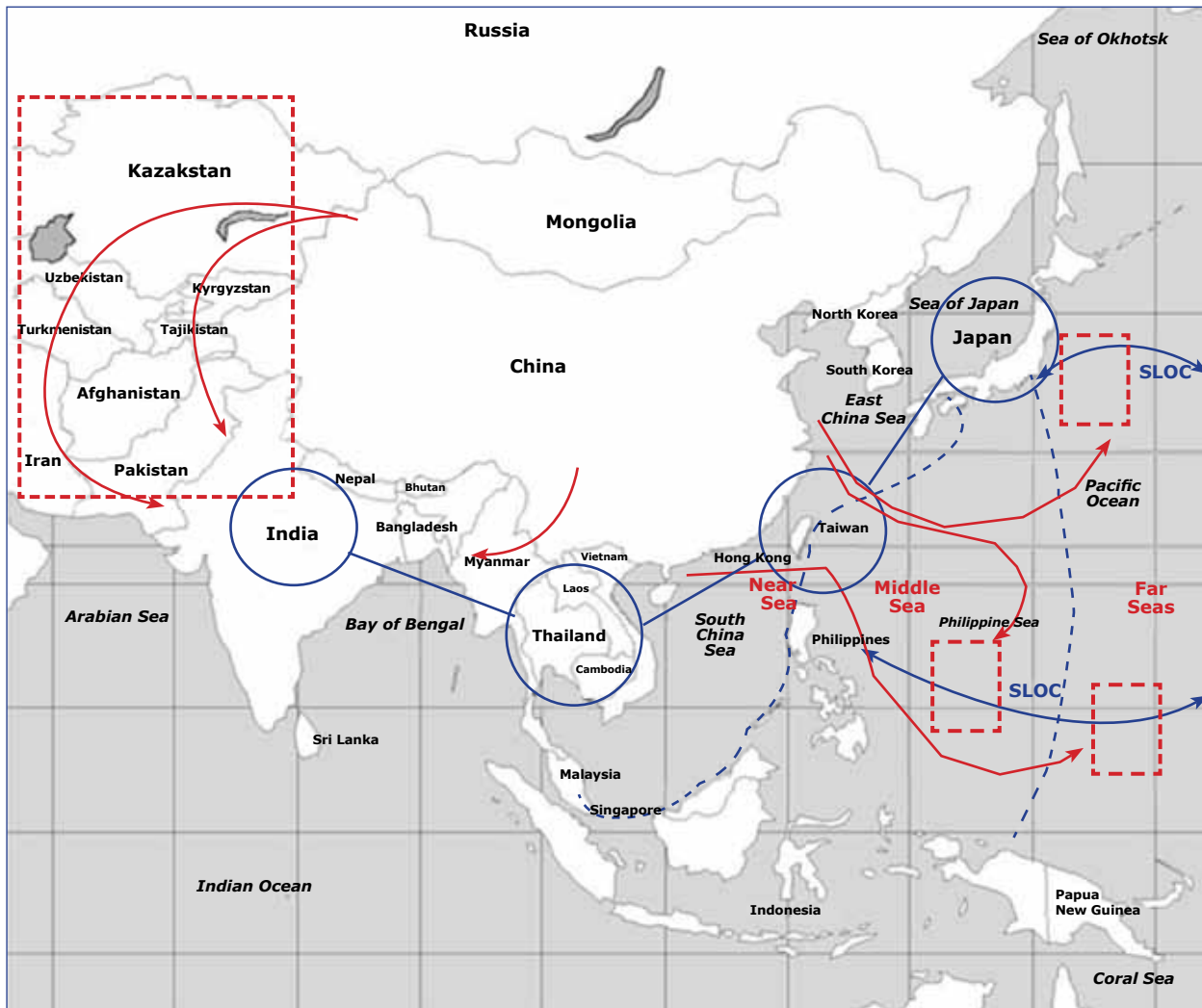
that China has already played some of the "strategic stones" on the geopolitical Wei Ch'i board.

China will seek to disrupt the adverse influence of a Western maritime coalition by attacking the weakest link within the Mao precept of conserving one's own strength and destroying the enemy.<sup>13</sup> This leads me to believe that a future conflict in the Pacific will take on more of the feel of the struggle between France and England in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century than a replay of Japanese expansion in World War II. It is unlikely that the newly emerging surface forces of the Chinese navy will actively seek engagements beyond the Near Sea. They will remain in play as a classic Colbett "fleet-in-being" to complicate the effective use of our sea-based naval power.

China's overarching strategy will be to hold along its eastern seaboard while expanding and encircling to the east and south. This observation is consistent with Chinese efforts to build a maritime access-denial apparatus to deter Western incursion along their coast. While the United States focuses on securing its maritime base in the Pacific, the Chinese will be free to expand on the other side of the "Wei Ch'i board."

One part of the "board" involves China's near neighbors. The Soviet Union's collapse resulted in the balkanization of the center of Mackinder's Heartland.<sup>14</sup> From the Caspian Sea to their border with China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan emerged from the collective protection of the former Soviet state as resource-rich nations with limited military means. Given the general difficulties experienced in U.S. relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan, coupled with a long-running hostility toward Iran, our position on that side of the Wei Ch'i board is weak.

If we realize that the opening rounds of the game are underway – as represented by Chinese regional infrastructure investments in roads and pipelines – China's moves fall into a deliberate long-range strategy almost incomprehensible to the Western mindset.<sup>15</sup> From a Wei Ch'i viewpoint, in which the competition for limited resources or space is the struggle's essence, these economic



**Figure 1. From a Wei Ch'i viewpoint, in which the competition for limited resources or space is the struggle's essence, economic goals play within a deliberate framework of expansion aimed at India's potential encirclement. When Chinese economic and military ties to Myanmar become part of the landscape, the threat becomes real, giving those on the subcontinent reason to pause and question historic and current Western commitment to the region as a trading partner and coalition member.**

stones play within a deliberate framework of expansion aimed at the potential encirclement of India. When Chinese economic and military ties to Myanmar become part of the landscape, the threat becomes real, giving those on the subcontinent reason to pause and question historic and current Western commitment to the region as a trading partner and coalition member. (Figure 1.)

National power remains built on a triad of economic strength, military power and political engagement. Half a century of growth in what President Dwight D. Eisenhower termed the military-industrial

complex has slanted relationships among these three elements and left the United States in a position unsustainable in any major prolonged struggle. Our chess-like focus on military material – the playing pieces, if you will – has resulted in a myopic strategic vision that has underplayed the role of the economy and international affairs in building a construct to advance American interests around the globe. When contrasted with the more subtle Wei Ch'i approach to strategy, we see a China aggressively pursuing raw materials, expanding its industrial strength, building up its armed forces and converting these advantages into international capital in their

negotiations with other states. This balanced Eastern approach has inherent Daoism overtones, which should not come as a surprise in our assessment of Chinese strategic direction.

In the struggle between Britain and France in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Pitt's Plan emerged as a strategic blueprint for how a maritime power could challenge a continental opponent. The tenets of this approach have strong implications for the Armor force, as they chart a path in the post-war-on-terrorism world. The main pillars of this approach are maintaining maritime superiority; building a coalition partner on the continent; and retaining the strategic flexibility to challenge overseas holdings. It is incumbent on the Army as the nation's premier land-power proponent to retain the capability to develop and lead any future continental coalition.

This will demand the progressive modernization of brigade combat teams capable of engaging across the full continuum of conflict, retaining the strategic mobility to be at the point of conflict and employing a range of lethal firepower to dominate the battlefield. The armored brigade combat team will hold center stage in the formulation and development of coalition capabilities through peacetime engagement in country-to-country exercises and exchanges. The inherent capability of the Armor force given its firepower, survivability and mobility make it well suited to challenging any opponent along the steppes of the global heartland. These powerful combined-arms organizations will add stability and confidence to any potential coalition partner as they assess their options in the future alignment of nation states.

The increasing pace of China's emergence on the geopolitical stage as a true peer-competitor should give us all pause as we reconstitute the Armor force in the next decade. While many of the capabilities that established this force as a leader in land combat remain valid, increasing inherent ability to deploy and sustain Armor in austere regions around the globe must receive increased attention. Our current strategic shift to the Pacific falls short as a counterforce or deterrent strategy along the rimlands of central Asia when viewed in light of Wei Ch'i principles. Closing these gaps will hinge heavily on the extent to which

the Armor force can assume the role as leader of the coalition that opposes hostile moves emanating from the Middle Kingdom.



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## Notes

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<sup>6</sup> Koaru, Iwamoto, CPT, *Go for Beginners*, Tokyo: The Ishi Press, Inc., 1972.

<sup>7</sup> Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961.

<sup>8</sup> Giap, Vo Nguyen, *How We Won The War*, Philadelphia, PA: RECON Publications, 1976.

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<sup>10</sup> Boorman, Scott, *The Protracted Game, a Wei Ch'i Interpretation of Maoist Revolutionary Strategy*, Oxford University Press, 1969.

<sup>11</sup> Giap.

<sup>12</sup> Koaru.

<sup>13</sup> Mao.

<sup>14</sup> **Editor's note:** This refers to an article titled "The Geographical Pivot of History" by Halford John Mackinder, submitted in 1904 to the Royal Geographical Society advancing his Heartland Theory. According to Mackinder, the Earth's land surface was divisible into the *world island*, comprising Europe, Asia and Africa; the *offshore islands*, including the British Isles and the islands of Japan; and the *outlying islands*, including the continents of North America, South America and Australia. The heartland lay at the center of the world island, stretching from the Volga River to the Yangtze River and from the Himalayas to the Arctic.

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# Partnership at Platoon Level: Experiences from Afghanistan

by 1LT Raphael Moyer

During my scout platoon's training cycle and deployment to Afghanistan, we found no doctrine that explained how to partner with the Afghan National Army (ANA) at the tactical level. We had to create tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) on our own; this article shares our lessons-learned.

Our training on partnered operations consisted of 10 days at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), during which we learned by trial and error as we worked with mock foreign forces. While Field Manual (FM) 3-07.1, **Security Force Assistance**, explains how to advise and assist foreign security forces (FSF) at the battalion staff level and above, there is no similar FM about how platoons can effectively mold company-and-lower-level units. My platoon needed a manual to guide us in arranging our forces on the battlefield to best mentor the ANA, especially in those crucial first 90 days after arrival in theater. More specifically, we needed a doctrinal framework with sequential steps to wean the ANA off U.S. support and metrics, thereby

enabling continuous assessment of the ANA's competence.

Building ANA capacity has become the main effort in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Armor Soldiers on the frontlines of the partnered fight have a critical need for a guide on partnered operations.

Without doctrine, my troop had to create TTP to build the ANA's capacity from scratch, using the previous unit's operations as a baseline. When we conducted our relief-in-place with the outgoing unit, there was no formalized assessment of our partnered ANA forces – we knew the opinions of the outgoing company commander and platoon leaders, but we had no metrics to help us create a plan to assist the ANA in their weakest areas on a platoon-by-platoon basis.

Based on my troop's operations, this article develops some specific TTPs for planning and executing partnered operations at the tactical level. Using these TTPs, my troop was able to shift partnered ANA forces from fully integrated to independent operations. While some parts of the TTPs may be idio-



syncratic to operations in mountainous terrain, the basic concepts can be applied anywhere.

## Area of operations

Over a nine-month deployment, my motorized cavalry troop's area of operation (AO) comprised about 420 square kilometers of very mountainous terrain surrounding the Khost-Gardez (K-G) road in Paktia Province. We were tasked with building the capacity of the ANA kandak (battalion) responsible for the K-G road. The kandak was comprised of its headquarters, a heavy weapons company (HWC) with three specialty platoons and two ANA companies at a separate combat outpost (COP) some seven kilometers away. (The kandak had more companies outside our AO.) At our COP, we also had a security-force assistance team (SFAT) responsible for developing the kandak staff.

My troop's objective was to build an ANA force capable of conducting independent operations in known insurgent strongholds, a task which would likely continue beyond my unit's tenure. Once on ground, we encountered vastly varying levels of competence across the ANA companies: the platoons within the HWC were all capable of semi-independent operations to varying degrees; one of the companies at the separate COP needed a great deal of guidance; and the second company at the separate COP could conduct some operations independently, depending on the patrol leader.

The ANA patrol schedule was generated at kandak level but was often not communicated to the outlying companies. ANA company commanders were not empowered to make their own patrol schedules or to push their ideas for patrols to battalion headquarters. Also, poor maintenance meant the ANA sometimes had trouble mustering the number of vehicles needed for any given patrol.

## Framework for tactical-level partnered operations

Partnered operations require junior leaders to strike a tough balance: they must continually push FSF to be self-reliant and conduct ever-more-difficult operations while providing enough support to ensure FSF do not fail. If U.S. units pull back support too slowly, FSF will never stand on their own;

too rapidly and FSF might sustain a defeat that will destroy both self-confidence and credibility with the population.

Thus, "as much as possible, FSF should begin with simpler missions [and] as their confidence and competence grows, these forces can assume more complex assignments," according to FM 3-07.1. A gradual approach is necessary by which FSF are slowly weaned off U.S. military support. The process of pulling U.S. support can be painful, as partnered units can initially be very reluctant to move independently without U.S. armor protection and fire support.

In the following, I lay out several grades of tactical-level partnership used to build partner capacity slowly, with an endstate of fully independent FSF operations. As the amount of assistance U.S. forces provide decreases, the U.S. ability to influence operational outcomes and assess FSF proficiency also decreases.

Also, the amount of U.S. support was not wholly dependent on the FSF unit's competence. FSF units possessing minimal ability to plan complex operations can execute some patrols because of their simplicity or routine nature. In our AO, these sorts of operations were conducted as part of our partnered kandak's daily routine, including observation posts (OPs) along the K-G road, a patrol clearing for improvised explosive devices (IEDs) daily and rudimentary traffic-control-point (TCP) operations.

Beyond these routine patrols, ANA and partnered U.S. platoons also conducted patrols to villages and known insurgent staging areas. These type of patrols, especially those to hostile villages, often required tactical acumen the ANA lacked; dismounted route selection became key as patrol leaders needed to balance speed with security. OP positions needed to constantly move to maintain direct-fire support of friendly forces; mounted elements needed to overwatch friendly movement while implementing strict fire-control measures to prevent fratricide; cordon elements needed to move rapidly to pre-planned blocking positions.

Even simpler tasks, such as land navigation, team-level fire control and dismounted movement formations could prove challenging for some partnered ANA units. Because of their radically varying levels of competence, each ANA company required

different mentorship strategies for planning and executing operations. My troop found that the ANA's ability to plan future operations inextricably linked with their ability to execute current operations. When the ANA leadership developed and disseminated a quality patrol schedule, ANA platoons could take the lead in operations; without a clear schedule, the ANA would often show up with no plan at all, making it impossible for them to lead.

## **Phase I: integrated operations**

One of our partnered ANA companies at the outlying COP proved to be largely incompetent when my unit arrived. The ANA leadership had minimal map-reading skills and often did not know their daily patrol objectives. Tactical-movement formations and discipline were poor. In these conditions, my troop had two choices: push kandak headquarters to disseminate better plans and hope the ANA began to patrol, albeit with poor tactics, or take the lead in partnered operations, mentoring the ANA and forcing them to patrol their sector. We chose the latter, seeing that the ANA unit would likely not improve if we waited for change to stem from kandak level. Tactically, this meant integrating U.S. and ANA units at the individual and vehicle level.

Upon arriving at the separate COP, my platoon linked up with the day's ANA patrol and conducted a planning session with patrol leadership. Through probing questions, my platoon sergeant and I guided the ANA to develop a ground tactical plan including overwatch positions, vehicle placement, react-to-contact plans and task-organization of forces. As the partnered patrol left the COP, we interspersed ANA and U.S. vehicles, at first with U.S. vehicles leading and, after further ANA progression, with ANA vehicles leading. The arrangement gave the ANA the benefit of U.S. electronic-warfare (EW) capabilities and more armor protection in the convoy, allowing the ANA the confidence to get out into sector.

While dismounted, U.S. and ANA Soldiers interspersed so the ANA could observe good dismounted patrolling techniques, especially in terms of route selection, bounding overwatch techniques (which we often used in mountainous terrain) and dismounted

movement formations. ANA and U.S. Soldiers also manned partnered OP positions to overwatch friendly movements in the villages below. Throughout, U.S. team and squad leaders mentored ANA Soldiers on sectors of fire, weapons emplacement and patrolling basics. Because of the risk of green-on-blue violence, at the rear of the formation would always be two or more U.S. Soldiers.

Within villages, the ANA frequently took the lead in engaging the populace and searching suspicious areas, ensuring the ANA were the face of the operation. U.S. Soldiers also entered the village, observed ANA activities, mentored the ANA on search techniques and conducted biometrics on suspicious persons. Especially in the valleys closer to the COP, the ANA knew the locals and preferred that U.S. forces stay on the periphery, worried that we would be culturally insensitive and jeopardize relationships. We usually granted this request while still maintaining close eyes on the ANA.

Depending on patrol objectives, we let the ANA stop and drink chai with local leaders to enable them to build relationships in the AO. (During time-sensitive patrols, we would often have to tell the ANA that drinking chai was not permissible.) When the ANA were rushing the patrol or were staying stagnant without showing initiative, my platoon sergeant or I intervened to get the patrol back on track.

With ANA and U.S. elements interspersed and U.S. Soldiers either taking the lead or closely guiding the ANA, my platoon was able to mentor the partnered ANA patrol at the individual, team and squad level. In contact scenarios, my team and squad leaders could exert high levels of control over our partners, preventing the "death blossom." Accurate assessments of the ANA were easy as we could directly observe the ANA as they moved, set up in OPs and entered villages. We also controlled the ANA tempo, preventing the ANA from getting ahead of us.

At the same time, the ANA had little incentive to exercise initiative and could simply follow U.S. forces while learning little. Realizing this, my platoon began to make even the less-competent ANA platoons lead interspersed formations. During patrols, we pushed the ANA patrol leader to make and

enact good decisions, which often took U.S. mentorship.

Interspersed formations quickly became a crutch for the ANA, and the transition from interspersed formations to ANA platoons in the lead was difficult. It proved especially hard to convince the ANA to put their vehicle formations ahead of ours and to conduct dismounted route clearance in IED danger areas, as the ANA possessed fewer IED-defeat devices, lacked EW protection and had no armor on their Ford Rangers. Interspersing elements was clearly a short-term answer. While interspersing got ANA forces out into sector, taught them the basics of patrolling and made it easy to keep an eye on their movements, it also made them highly dependent on partnered U.S. units.

## **Phase II: putting ANA in lead**

The next stage of partnership involved putting ANA patrols in the lead with a U.S. platoon in close support. (The platoons in the HWC were all capable of this upon my troop's arrival.) Key was ensuring that the plan for the patrol was ANA-generated, and that patrol objectives were disseminated to the ANA patrol leader from higher headquarters. When the ANA did not have a plan at link-up, my platoon waited for the company to communicate with its kandak or helped develop a plan on the spot using shortened troop-leading procedures (TLPs). This process ensured the ANA could not revert to earlier and easier stages of partnership with the United States in the lead while also pushing the ANA to patrol in sector. (In later phases of partnership, we would not support an ANA patrol without a plan.)

While mounted, all ANA vehicles usually led the patrol, with U.S. vehicles behind. (Because of terrain, the only vehicle formation possible was the column.) In this formation, the ANA lost U.S. armor and EW protection, causing the ANA to dismount and clear IED danger areas more frequently, which often slowed infiltration. During the dismounted clearance of IED danger areas, U.S. dismounts moved behind the ANA clearing elements, sharing some risk while using IED detection equipment. During high-tempo missions like battle-damage assessment and time-sensitive targeting, we would put U.S. vehicles in the lead,

enabling partnered patrols to more comfortably move mounted through IED danger areas.

During dismounted movements, the ANA moved 50 to 200 meters ahead of the partnered U.S. patrol, depending on terrain. In certain circumstances (for instance, when searching for caches), partnered patrols followed parallel routes to cover more ground. When set in overwatch for friendly forces moving at the base of valleys, ANA and U.S. elements established mutually supporting OP positions, constantly bounding to maintain effective observation and fire support. At no point would an ANA OP be the only position supporting a U.S. element below because of fratricide risks and frequent ANA indiscipline while scanning assigned sectors. (Sometimes ANA would drink chai on OPs without security established.)

As partnered patrols moved through villages, the ANA element was the only element interacting with locals and searching suspicious areas and buildings. U.S. forces stayed within 50 to 100 meters of the ANA on the outskirts of the village, conducting biometrics on locals the ANA deemed suspicious and acting as a quick-reaction force (QRF) if anything went wrong. If the ANA found weapons or ordnance, a U.S. team with a tactical site-exploitation expert assisted the ANA in proper handling of evidence. While dismounted elements were moving through villages, U.S. vehicle crews maneuvered in synch with ANA vehicles to maintain fire support.

With an ANA platoon in the lead, operations appeared to the local population to be wholly ANA-driven. Often U.S. forces had minimal interaction with locals. Separate ANA and U.S. OP positions, by increasing the total amount of ground under observation, dramatically improved observation of potential insurgent firing positions and infiltration routes. With U.S. forces following behind, the U.S. patrol leader could adjust the amount of guidance he gave the ANA on a patrol-by-patrol basis, actively coaching the least experienced ANA leaders via radio or at short halts while allowing the best ANA platoons (who often resented U.S. guidance) to conduct near-independent operations.

There were some problems with this partnership technique. While both mounted and dismounted, ANA elements would sometimes



speed off, leaving U.S. patrols behind. Fire control proved a challenge, as the ANA typically lacked enough radios for all elements because of the inherent difficulties in using a translator to communicate over frequency-modulation (FM) devices.

Also, the U.S. patrol sometimes could not observe ANA activities within villages, on OP positions and while searching for caches, making it difficult to assess where the ANA required more mentorship. Often, my platoon had to accept the ANA doing a good enough job with us in support, which was far better than us doing a great job with a reluctant ANA patrol in tow.

### **Phase III: independent ANA operations with U.S. support**

After an ANA unit demonstrated competence on patrol and was capable of more independent operations, my troop would put the ANA fully in the lead while remaining within supporting distance. The tactic, called follow and support, gave the ANA space to maneuver independently while maintaining confidence-boosting U.S. support in the form of QRF and fire support.

ANA planning capability became even more critical, as U.S. forces offered minimal guidance during patrols. If the ANA patrol lacked a clear plan at link-up, the partnered U.S. patrol simply returned to base. This sent a clear message to the ANA: if they were not prepared to conduct operations, they would not receive U.S. support. The kandak could no longer ride on U.S. operational planning to get patrols into sector.

In this final phase of tactical partnership, the ANA maneuvered as far as three kilometers ahead of U.S. elements. The ANA moved through a village, engaging the local populace and searching for caches while maintaining OPs on the surrounding ridgelines for security. The partnered U.S. patrol found key terrain from which to observe ANA movement and overwatch exfiltration routes to prevent insurgent ambushes. While U.S. forces could still observe the ANA patrol, direct-fire support was often impossible because of the long ranges involved.

If the ANA entered heavy contact, however, U.S. forward observers could provide indirect

fires, close air support and close combat attack to prevent the ANA from becoming overwhelmed. Also, the partnered U.S. patrol could move as a QRF to prevent the ANA from being decisively defeated. Key to such fire support and QRF movement was good communication with the ANA, often gained through FM communications or, during larger-scale operations, by the co-location of an ANA staff or command element with U.S. forces. Good communications with and observation of the ANA proved crucial to maintain situational awareness of ANA movements and prevent fratricide.

Follow and support was a challenging but critical step in the development of our ANA partners. U.S. forces lost the ability to make recommendations to the ANA, especially about lower-level tactical issues such as patrolling techniques. U.S. forces also could not perform tasks such as biometric enrollment or tactical site exploitation unless specifically called on to do so by the ANA. All guidance from U.S. forces was via radio or through the co-located ANA staff element and, much of the time, the ANA was disinclined to accept advice. U.S. forces similarly lost the ability to assess ANA operations, as observation of ANA movements and activities became limited at longer ranges.

Long distances between U.S. and ANA forces complicated observation of enemy positions and identification of friend or foe, creating difficulties in providing accurate and timely fire support. At the same time, follow-and-support operations allowed the ANA to become fully independent, giving them the confidence to continue operations when U.S. forces leave while preventing them from failing catastrophically. Also, follow and support forces the ANA to plan operations, addressing perhaps their biggest weakness. Though the ANA might not execute independent operations to a U.S. standard, even after years of partnership, follow and support provides the ANA the opportunity to achieve the standard of "Afghan good enough," with which they will surely operate after U.S. forces leave Afghanistan.

### **Conclusions**

U.S. tactical leaders at the troop-and-below level need a formalized way to assess partnered ANA platoons and companies, and

also need doctrine that describes how to transition ANA forces (and future partnered FSF) from incompetent to “competent enough.” U.S. units have a tendency to want to immediately conduct aggressive operations upon arriving in theater, meaning they may revert to earlier stages of partnership to accompany the ANA onto the objective. While such behavior may produce better tactical results, it constitutes a reversal in partnership objectives. Also, the ANA may see the arrival of a new unit as an opportunity to return to easier and safer integrated operations since the new unit may not be fully cognizant of their partners’ tactical readiness.

Transitions between units can often be counterproductive for partner capacity, as much of the ground gained over a long deployment can be lost. Formalization of partnership metrics would smooth the transition between units and allow units to accurately track ANA capabilities, thus preventing backtracking in partnership efforts and establishing a means to provide targeted mentorship to the ANA units needing the most work. Formal metrics also give commanders the ability to report tangible progress to higher headquarters, allowing units to focus on the partnership mission rather than on achieving kinetic effects. If the Army makes building partner capacity a core mission for conventional forces, it will need to build doctrine and training that elevates partnership concepts to the same level as the fundamentals of maneuver warfare. While there are no cookie-cutter solutions to partnership, there are certainly fundamental concepts and effective tactics.

For my unit, partnership was never a clear-cut progression from one phase to the next, as it might appear in this article. Often, there would be one step forward and two steps back, as ANA who led one mission well proved unmotivated and tactically

incompetent during the next. Our own missteps in trying to push “competent enough” ANA leaders to do even better sometimes made the ANA reticent to work with us. My unit’s aggressiveness sometimes worked against building ANA capacity for independent operations, as we were initially too quick to take the lead when the ANA faltered.

The ANA after-action review process was clearly broken, as after large-scale patrols the kandak staff and ground-force leaders ignored glaring tactical and sustainment issues in favor of self-congratulatory speeches. With U.S. forces curtailing operations in preparation for the 2014 withdrawal, our partnership process was artificially accelerated to rapidly prepare the ANA for unilateral operations. We often found that what the ANA lacked – fire support, tactical discipline, maintenance and sustainment – they made up for with their ability to relate to the populace, giving us hope for the ANA’s future. As the U.S. Army begins to exit Afghanistan, partnered operations have become the main effort, and it is critical that some sort of doctrine or guide be published and widely disseminated to the platoons and troops tasked with developing Afghan national-security forces.



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## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**ANA** – Afghan National Army  
**AO** – area of operation  
**COP** – combat outpost  
**EW** – electronic warfare  
**FM** – field manual

**FM** – frequency modulation  
**FSF** – foreign security forces  
**HWC** – heavy weapons company  
**IED** – improvised explosive device

**K-G** – Khost-Gardez (road)  
**OP** – observation post  
**QRF** – quick-reaction force  
**TTP** – tactics, techniques and procedures

# Ideas on Cavalry

by CPT Joshua T. Suthoff and CPT Michael J. Culler

The April-June 2013 edition of the *Cavalry and Armor Journal*, although nostalgic, points out glaring issues that continue to cripple the branch as a whole. The articles debating the use of saber over pistol and the benefits of having troopers able to fight mounted or dismounted are troubling. Troubling because even today the branches (Cavalry and Armor) struggle to justify their existence, stay relevant or completely explain or execute the reconnaissance mission. The need for a main battle tank will never go away, but the validity of the Cavalry will if the branch does not adapt and prove its necessity.

The sheer brute force of an Abrams tank requires a different mentality

than a Cavalry scout who must weigh compromise vs. the possibility of intelligence gained. A Cavalry scout must be prepared for both the heavy kinetic fight like his 19K brother or be able to transition to the skills required to conduct reconnaissance on an asymmetric enemy.

## Identity crisis

The promotion results from the 2013 majors board point out obvious issues with supporting and recognizing both Cavalry and Armor officers (Figure 1). In the below-the-zone (BZ) category, 90 percent of the officers picked for BZ promotion were in the

armored brigade combat teams (ABCTs), where only 40 percent of that year's officer population resides. Only one officer was selected for promotion from both infantry brigade combat teams (IBCTs) and Stryker brigade combat teams (SBCTs), where there are at least 21 Cavalry units with an Armor population. No officers were selected within the battlefield surveillance brigades (BfSBs), the newest Armor Branch formation.

Some of this can be attributed to performance, but it seems unlikely that all the branch's best performers are within the ABCTs. Is this based on performance or an outdated career path set before Armor officers were incorporated into every brigade combat team?





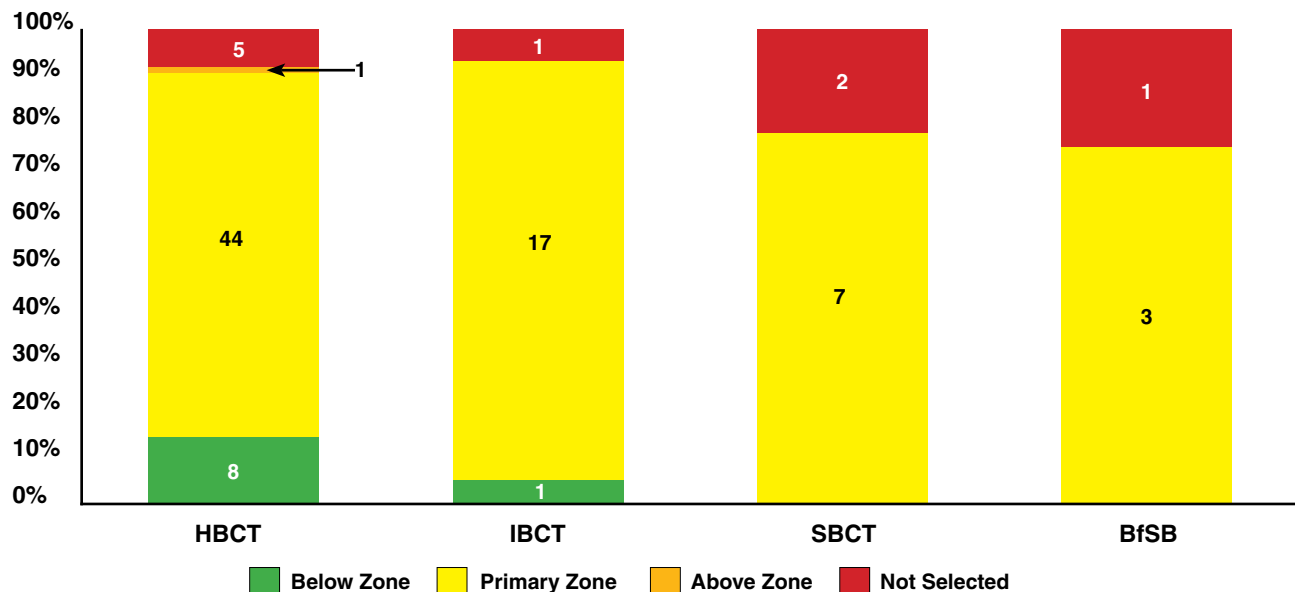


Figure 1. Armor Branch majors board analysis FY13.

Is an officer incorrect for not serving in an ABCT when it only makes up a third of the Army's force? After the upcoming brigade organization plan is executed, there will only be 12 ABCTs to 24 SBCT, IBCT and BfSB brigades. The namesakes of the former armored cavalry regiments (ACRs), 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Cavalry Regiment (SCR) and 3<sup>rd</sup> SCR, are not even task-organized according to the ABCT design.

The reality is that these officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) should be managed separately. The officers and NCOs of a tank company have a specialized skill that needs to be managed accordingly. Also, the last 12 years of the war on terrorism, especially ABCT deployments to Afghanistan, have shown that sometimes you have to dismount. IBCT, SBCT and BfSB 19Ds have a greater requirement to train for that skillset. It does the Army no good to train officers who are "jacks of all trades" in regard to both tank and reconnaissance but a master of none. A lieutenant who has mastered

M1A2SEPV2 and then assumes command of a Cavalry troop is at a great disadvantage to a lieutenant who was "raised" in the Cavalry world of SBCTs or IBCTs.

This can be applied as well to the ability of a 19Z, who in reality was a 19K his entire career but is allowed to assume the mantle of first sergeant in a Cavalry troop/squadron. It can be done, of course, but why?

The branch could and should split into Armor and Cavalry officer-control fields. Armor officers would stay within the ABCT realm, and Cavalry officers would move among SBCT, IBCT and BfSBs as they learn the specialized art of reconnaissance with mounted, dismounted, air-assault and airborne assets.

Troopers deserve officers who understand the fundamentals of reconnaissance before they assume leadership roles within Cavalry units. Reconnaissance is an art that must be mastered just the same as mounted gunnery. However, reconnaissance is currently a task shared by Infantry, Armor

and Special Operations Forces (SOF). It could be argued, based on authorized vehicles, lack of variation in insertion/exfiltration methods and level of training that Armor is at a significant disadvantage.

## Schools and scouts

Infantry and SOF reconnaissance personnel attend a myriad of schools before they are considered proficient at recce operations and usually have to attend a selection board to be considered for reconnaissance units. Currently 19Ds only need to attend basic training and perhaps Army Reconnaissance Course (ARC) or Cavalry Leader Course (CLC) as their career progresses. Military-occupation specialty (MOS) 19Ds should attend, at a minimum, ARC, Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course (RSLC) and Ranger School to be competitive with other reconnaissance forces.

It's not necessarily the schools that make scouts better, but the desire to learn and be the best scout.



As the Army downsizes and elements justify their existence, Cavalry needs to do the same and show the level of scout/Soldier they can produce and the reconnaissance capability they provide. Cavalry needs to justify its reconnaissance role and show we are more than just a skirmishing unit sent to screen ahead in the event of the next full-scale conflict. What makes a Cavalry squadron different from its fellow infantry battalion within an IBCT or SBCT besides an anemic modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE)?

Cavalry Branch and unit leadership need to push all specialized courses (Ranger, RSLC, ARC, Pathfinder, Airborne, Air Assault) to create scouts who have the ability to conduct reconnaissance using any available means necessary. Leadership positions throughout Cavalry units need to be coded, at a minimum, as ARC and Ranger-qualified, and this needs to be enforced. Branch needs to use the Army's downsizing to raise its standards and keep only the best scouts. The command of a Cavalry troop needs to be a privilege and not a right for Cavalry captains.

Capabilities like Joint fires observer are now as important as the Skill Level 1 task of call for fire. Scouts need to be physically capable of fighting and conducting reconnaissance, both mounted and dismounted, with the corresponding skillsets. Just like in other branches, achieving the mantle of scout should be desired and fought for, not just given upon graduation from 19D

one-station unit training (OSUT) at Fort Benning, GA.

If the branch wants to continue in the realm of reconnaissance, we need to take the lead on developing the new equipment, vehicles and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) required to make us effective. Case in point is the development and use of a smaller all-terrain-vehicle (ATV)-like reconnaissance vehicle. Other reconnaissance forces like SOF have used them throughout the war on terrorism and continue to push their development through defense companies. A great example of using small recon vehicles was in Operation Anaconda, where small recon teams were able to cover rough terrain quickly with their ATVs and provide valuable feedback to the higher command.

A vehicle like this could be extremely effective as the lead section, screening terrain ahead of humvees, Strykers or Bradley Fighting Vehicles (BFVs). Small vehicles like this can recon better routes and disrupt enemy direct fire and improvised-explosive-device (IED) ambush ahead of the heavier humvees, mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) ATVs (MATVs) or even BFVs. A couple of scouts using current and developing communications technology on an ATV platform could keep a brigade in near-real-time intelligence as they push back visual and sensor information.

Our branch must become both the proponent for an ATV scout vehicle and the subject-matter expert (SME) on reconnaissance vehicles.

We didn't build the Abrams battle tank from a vehicle concept the Infantry Branch decided on – i.e., the Stryker or Bradley. The Armor Branch built the Abrams for a specific purpose: to be the best main battle tank. Why do our scouts not have the same luxury? How effective could a Cavalry or BfSB troop be with an ATV scout vehicle that can be slung or carried internally by rotary and fixed-wing aircraft? Why is the mounted branch of the U.S. Army not interested in a vehicle that provides mounted reconnaissance that can be air-dropped or -inserted?

Part of it could be that our current vehicle set is moving in the opposite direction by adding more armor at the cost of stealth and mobility, all in the name of risk mitigation. MRAP vehicles, MATVs and Strykers are by no means the cutting edge in reconnaissance vehicles. Changing seating configurations around and adding a 130-pounds-plus Long-Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3) to a vehicle does not make it a proper reconnaissance vehicle. Cavalry needs to develop our own reconnaissance platforms and stop trying to modify platforms designed for infantry missions.

This also includes developing sensors like unmanned aerial vehicles and ground-based sensors to greatly increase the range a 19D scout platoon can screen, recon and guard. When employed properly, sensors can help determine when and where manned reconnaissance needs to be employed. With

this equipment, we must develop junior leaders who can manage the information collected and provide valuable, relevant and timely feedback to higher headquarters. The need for manned reconnaissance will never go away, but its use has to be refined as technology increases. Cavalry needs to be the one writing, developing and testing the doctrine.

The Armor School recently assumed control of RSLC, and this is a step in the right direction. This school, combined with ARC, has to be the premier reconnaissance course offered, and graduates should be masters in the reconnaissance field. The branch needs to absorb the mentality behind the insertion/extraction methods taught there (Special-Purpose Insertion Extraction System (SPIES), Fast Rope Insertion Extraction System (FRIES), free-fall).

Cavalry Branch must establish itself as the SME on all things reconnaissance, including communications equipment, weapons and TTPs. Branch has to embed in other reconnaissance elements like Ranger Reconnaissance Detachment and SOF teams to gather good TTPs and make necessary connections.

All vehicles and insertion methods are only a method of accomplishing a reconnaissance mission. Again, 12 years of the war on terrorism shows that scouts must be adaptable and capable for a wide range of reconnaissance mission sets. When was the last time a scout platoon from an airborne IBCT parachuted in for a

reconnaissance mission? Critics say it costs money and adds undue risk, but chutes can be retrieved.

A Cavalry trooper is supposed to be by nature cunning and clever, so why are we not making leaders like this? Cavalry reconnaissance units are not tasked with tough reconnaissance missions because we lack the capabilities and skillset to do much more reconnaissance than act as skirmishers during the next major conflict. An asymmetric enemy requires scouts capable of conducting reconnaissance dismounted in small teams to be effective. Even the most high-intensity conflicts slowly degrade to low intensity, and each requires its own level and skill of reconnaissance.

If as a branch we don't want to do reconnaissance right and train accordingly, we need to not do it at all.

## Specialized unit

CPT Ken Segelhorst points out in his article, "Keeping the Sabers Sharp: Maintaining Relevance in the Modern Era," (*ARMOR*, November-December 2012) the need for scouts to attend specialized schools, but most especially a need for an elite Cavalry organization. This is completely right. This was the ACR of the past, but now as a branch, neither Armor nor Cavalry have an elite organization to look to.

As the Army downsizes and consolidates brigades, it should take the "deleted" brigade footprint on those posts and consolidate the three remaining Cavalry squadrons under one Cavalry

regiment. This "post cavalry regiment" can plan reconnaissance training, manage assets and, most importantly, maintain some type of lineage to the Cavalry regiments under one roof. As infantry brigades deploy, they can pull troops or squadrons as required from their post Cavalry regiment to answer their reconnaissance needs.

This type of reorganization could be possible at a number of Army installations, where one of four BCTs is casing its colors.

We can also apply this specialized unit mentality to the BfSBs located with 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Corps. These units have great possibilities as discussed in my previous article, "Validating the [Reconnaissance and Surveillance] Squadron and the Future of Reconnaissance" (*ARMOR*, April-June 2012). As corps assets, these Cavalry squadrons need to be fully supported by our branch and manned with our most capable scouts and best equipment. Scouts and officers alike can refine their reconnaissance art within the BCTs and assess to serve in the BfSBs.

Every other MOS and branch in the Army has the ability for its Soldiers to apply for an elite unit in SOF. It is hard to retain some of our best junior leaders if we offer no promise of upward mobility and better mission sets. A great example of this is the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment and an infantry Soldier's ability to compete and join that organization. If an Armor officer, 19D or even a 19K wants to join an elite organization, he must go to

a SOF selection board and ultimately change his MOS – and the Armor Branch loses a quality Soldier.

As U.S. operations in Afghanistan close down, Armor Branch needs to fight hard for the newest radios and weapons being distributed throughout the Cavalry formation. Scouts need the most advanced communications equipment available because, by doctrine, they will fight ahead of the formation.

If Cavalry is to be maintained, ideas to keep the branch relevant cannot be scoffed off as dangerous or outside our capabilities. U.S. Cavalry officers must be prepared to act in both full-scale war and counterinsurgency, just as they did in the American Civil War and Indian Wars. We've fought effectively during the war on terrorism, but we are not equipped to be masters of reconnaissance. The current MTOE makes Cavalry squadrons less capable than their larger infantry/combined-arms battalion counterparts to the BCT commander, yet they aren't used effectively as reconnaissance assets.

As the Army downsizes and re-equips, we must establish our Cavalry as the premier expert in reconnaissance and security operations. Our scouts and their leaders must be able to plan and

fight mounted or dismounted using whatever assets are available to find and disrupt the enemy.



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## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

- ABCT** – armored brigade combat team
- ACR** – armored cavalry regiment
- ARC** – Army Reconnaissance Course
- ATV** – all-terrain vehicle
- BCT** – brigade combat team
- BfSB** – battlefield surveillance brigade
- BFV** – Bradley Fighting Vehicle
- BZ** – below-the-zone
- IBCT** – infantry brigade combat team
- MATV** – MRAP ATV
- MOS** – military-occupation specialty
- MRAP** – mine-resistant ambush-protected
- MTOE** – modified table of organization and equipment
- OSUT** – one-station unit training
- RTB** – Ranger training battalion
- SBCT** – Stryker brigade combat team
- SCR** – Stryker cavalry regiment
- SME** – subject-matter expert
- SOF** – Special Operations Forces
- TTP** – tactics, techniques and procedures



# People Will Be What They Can See: a Case Study in Leadership

*1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry, September 1994-September 1996*

by LTC Joseph Kopser and CPT Allen M. Trujillo

## Why should we study successful organizations?

Successful organizations are constantly examining their practices to determine what works. In the process, systems evolve over time and take new shape. In the U.S. Army today, there is renewed effort to examine leader development and assessment to ensure we are choosing the best leaders possible to fit each organization's mission and purpose. As we foresee future reductions in the force, it is more important than ever that we identify and retain our best leaders who have the greatest potential for creating a positive impact on our institution.

To examine the tenets of our organization, the Army began an in-depth analysis of the values of our profession and made this challenge: "As the Army transitions from a

decade of war, this is an appropriate time for such a critical self-evaluation, so as to build upon our strength and confront our weaknesses. Such reflection, coupled with decisive action aimed at the professional improvement of the total force, will ensure we will always have an Army prepared to meet any challenge and defeat any foe."<sup>1</sup> It is important to look to our past for examples of best practices.

To create great units and still be good stewards of our resources, we must find and examine successful organizations that build high-quality leaders who go out and build more high-quality units. It is a better return on our investment in both human capital and fiscal capital. After all, "Soldiers are not in the Army. Soldiers are the Army."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, we must examine the long-term impact on our people when assessing





successful leaders. We have all read stories of short-term success where a leader pushed his people too hard and caused more long-term harm than good for the organization. As the business world moves to a more responsible lifecycle cost of a resource, so too should leadership assessment. In fact, during a recent survey of more than 40,000 Army professionals, the overwhelming trend among respondents was that the Army needed to “enforce our standards and values, and integrate more Army culture into our unit activities.”<sup>3</sup> People want to be part of healthy, productive organizations.

Members of 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) from 1994-1996 provide an example of this concept. Since their time together in 1994-1996, the squadron’s leadership has remained in the Army at very high rates of retention and has provided a large number of key leaders across the Army. By almost every measure, Tiger Squadron was a successful unit with a command climate that produced a generation of successful leaders throughout the Army. These leaders emerged despite early exposure to some of the worst leadership in the Army at the time.

The authors surveyed 70 former members of the squadron. Among the survey’s many insights, one of the most powerful was the impact of good leadership in repairing command climate through leadership by example; developing and mentoring subordinates; and replicating that success repeatedly throughout the Army via its alumni.

## **Thesis: people will be what they can see**

The impact of leaders on a unit and its legacy is as simple as one phrase: People will be what they can see. This phrase actually has several aspects representing different factors that potentially led to the long-term success of Tiger Squadron and the people inside its organization.

**Leading by example and role modeling: the leader’s traditional role.** In the Army profession, role models provide inspiration to their followers, most especially in times of trouble. Over time, an organization’s climate reflects the leader, creating great

power to affect positive change. Or there can be a dark side of “people will be what they can see” if young and impressionable leaders see their leaders acting in a negative or toxic way and think that is acceptable behavior.

**Mentorship and leader development.** Long-term mentorship and career counseling allow the subordinate to visualize himself/herself in a certain role in the future, thereby increasing the likelihood of it happening. Laying out a roadmap or career timeline allows a person to set conditions now for future success. Perhaps the most important question a leader can ask a subordinate is “So, what do you hope to do next?”

**Set the conditions to replicate the success: stories, vision and social media.** People in successful and healthy command climates are more likely to use the stories and anecdotes in describing to future team members what is possible as they develop their own teams down the road. The often-mentioned “war stories” play an important role as people say, “Do you remember how we used to ...?” We should never underestimate the power of a story or anecdote in replicating quality leadership across the Army.

The preceding factors are discussed in more detail, following.

## **Leading by example and role modeling**

**Toxic leadership: background on Tiger Squadron before Fall 1994.** When an organization turns around quickly and moves to top-level performance, it begs an important question. Was it good people or good leadership? Did good people cause the lasting legacy, or was the reason the presence of good leadership?

The story of Tiger Squadron serves as an example where good people were stifled by toxic leadership, then quickly transformed into a high-performing unit with a deliberate change in the overall climate. The plight of Tiger Squadron and its higher headquarters, 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR, before Fall 1994 was well known throughout the Army. Officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) not in the unit were being warned away from the unit

and encouraged to change their orders.<sup>4</sup> Both the squadron and regimental commanders were known as abusive and self-serving leaders.

By Summer 1994, the climate was at an all-time low. Allegations of misconduct, excessive spending and improper relationships were eating away at the morale of the entire regiment and squadron simultaneously. It was not long before word spread of officers working weekends and briefing the colonel "pool-side" while he enjoyed his Sunday with his family. One officer commented that he learned more about leadership by seeing what **not** to do than he was able to from positive leadership. Fundamentally, both squadron and regimental commanders had undermined the unit's trust.

**A change in leadership in Tiger Squadron.** Remarkably, Tiger Squadron's leadership and culture changed in an instant when the regimental and squadron commanders were both relieved. In Fall 1994, the unit was operating with no lieutenant-colonel commander, and people were making plans to transfer out of the organization. Within weeks, the new squadron commander, LTC Robert W. Cone, arrived, and things began to change quickly for the better. In fact, a Tiger Squadron survey found that more than 85 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that Cone's positive leadership style led to a rapid turn-around in the unit. He seemed to genuinely be having fun as a leader while building valuable relationships and making loyal followers of almost everyone in the command.<sup>5</sup>

Looking back at Tiger Squadron's success, three trends emerge and are supported by survey results. First, Cone led by example and demonstrated firsthand how to effectively train a unit. Second, Cone invested time in the leader development and mentorship of young officers, restoring their trust in the Army profession. Finally, he set the conditions for future success by constant storytelling that inspired the next generation of stories and anecdotes used by those who followed. He reinforced the importance of having fun and sticking together as a team. These three changes created the conditions that cemented a legacy of quality leaders who would go on to lead our Army through some great challenges.

## Leading by example: training, recognition and socializing

Cone wasted no time after taking command to improve the climate. He led by example in three major areas: effective training, Soldier recognition and focus on "work hard, play hard." To do so, he used the unit's wartime mission as a vehicle to focus the squadron in a positive direction. Cone used the concept of group buy-in. He organized his subordinate leaders to cultivate a unified idea of the most important principles to use as a guiding force within the unit.

Soon after taking command, Cone organized a training conference to learn his leadership's perceived strengths and weaknesses. More importantly, he was there to gain buy-in from all members of the team. Cone asked his leaders to develop their own ideas of what key elements it would take to become a successful organization and compiled the most important tasks into what Cone called the "Big 5," a list of the top five training objectives that defined Tiger Squadron. This list of training objectives became the simple rules that described Tiger Squadron's vision. As the unit began to unify around these key ideas, they strived for the highest levels of excellence in everything they did, creating a high esprit de corps, which in short is "honor and pride for your unit."<sup>6</sup>

The training climate he created welcomed honest mistakes as a sign the organization was learning. In fact, it created confidence among young leaders that they could make honest mistakes (once) in a protected environment. As stated by LTC Jason Wolter (now a battalion commander himself), "We worked harder to not let LTC Cone down, and we worked hard to show constant improvement."<sup>7</sup> Tiger Squadron was constantly evolving and learning. Most of the unit members took that passion for development with them to their next assignments, extending that influence throughout the Army.

Another critical factor in the rapid improvement of Tiger Squadron's command climate was the emphasis on individual/team recognition and unit ceremony. Subordinates saw events as recognizing their value and contributions. Tiger Squadron did not fail to recognize its subordinates, and as a result,

more than 95 percent of survey respondents agreed that “ceremonies mattered.”<sup>8</sup> One respondent mentioned that “[Tiger Squadron placed a] great emphasis [on] ceremonies and traditions, [overall unit] esprit de corps,” while another stated that ceremonies “reaffirmed our success. It was a way to let us know that we were accepted and doing the right thing.”

The combination of promoting esprit de corps and recognizing excellence is essential to an organization’s long-term success. People also enjoy the ceremony and social side of organizations because it links them to their predecessors. It is a kind of rites of passage and tradition that gives a larger sense of community.

Finally, in restoring a healthy and positive command climate, Cone did more than just focus on the unit’s wartime mission. He took deliberate steps to restore the organization’s social aspects. Recognizing that trust is stronger among friends than just coworkers, Cone never missed an opportunity to build connections among his team.

To foster those connections, however, requires a sincere interest in other members of the team. There are few ways to better foster a connection among a team than to socialize together as entire families. In restoring the climate, Cone worked hard to bring his leaders together outside the context of the strictly work environment. It is not only the moments that include just the adults around a keg of beer but the Saturday picnics, weddings or children’s birthdays that begin to build those bonds. It’s best described as “friends at work make work more friendly.”

That was certainly true for Tiger Squadron. The parties and socials did something far more important than allow people to see each other. It brought together junior and senior officers and their spouses for conversations that ranged from the Army profession to the best brands of baby formula. Those exchanges were important on so many levels. Mostly, because when families know and respect each other, it is easier to get them to spend time together. The more they are together, the more they talk. The more they talk, the more they share ideas. The more they share ideas, the better the unit becomes and the richer their lives become. Something as simple as a chili cook-off hosted at the squadron

commander’s house was cited more times than any other single event as a defining moment in the unit’s culture.<sup>9</sup> Never underestimate the potential of hosting a party at your house.

When asked, 100 percent of the survey respondents agreed that Tiger Squadron created a culture where it was as “important to play hard as it was to work hard.” This critical component of leader involvement shows us that in extremely successful organizations, leaders go above and beyond in showing their subordinates that having fun together is just as important as being successful together.<sup>10</sup>

## Mentorship and leader development

**Active and involved mentorship.** One of the most important aspects of the Tiger Squadron renaissance between 1994-96 was Cone’s career advice and coaching. His investment in his junior officers and NCOs provided an example for them to follow later in their careers – people matter.

Cone would often tell stories about his own development as a young officer growing up in the early 1980s. He would cite the influence of senior leaders (generals such as Eric Shinseki, Scott Wallace and “Doc” Bahnsen, to name just a few) who helped shape his style, personality and focus on training. In many ways, everyone under his command felt that connection to their “ancestors.”<sup>11</sup> Squadron members began to visualize their own future in the long-term. Just as Cone had grown over the last 20 years, they could too if they maintained a long-term view of their lives and careers.

LTC Brian Byers described why Cone invested so much time in the mentorship and career development of his junior officers. He stated that Cone was “focused on building teams at the lowest level.” Cone wanted the unit to know that the Army was a good place to work with good ideals and that it had been good to him. He didn’t want them to walk away from an organization that had treated him so well and for them to not be jaded by their prior experience in the unit.<sup>12</sup>

**Empowering subordinates.** A significant aspect of Cone’s unification and success within Tiger Squadron was his ability to empower his subordinate leaders as well as his unique ability to work beside them rather

than over them. Cone took personal interest three levels down in the organizational hierarchy. He became a transformational leader, giving his subordinates both the ability to be leaders themselves as well as inspiring them to excel.

Another member of the unit, LTC Chip Daniels, who also went on to successful battalion command, stated, "Cone empowered his [junior officers] because he trusted us. This made me feel like my opinion and decisions were valuable to the Tiger Squadron team. He demonstrated this trust by allowing [us] to develop our own training plans, and even gave us full days to maneuver our [unit during training]. I know that a young [24-year-old second lieutenant] probably lacks the experience to fully maximize that opportunity. There was likely some short-term waste that could have been prevented if more senior officers had strictly managed what I did with that time, fuel and other resources. However, that opportunity fostered a sense of responsibility and ownership in me. I wanted to use the time to [train my team to accomplish our goal]. That is what we did. In short, there was a short-term cost in terms of fuel, time, etc., but the long-term gain in leadership development was vastly more important and enduring."

Within Tiger Squadron, evidence shows that Cone focused on allowing his subordinates the opportunity to exercise creativity and initiative in accomplishing their tasks. In the authors' survey, more than 80 percent of the respondents stated that leaders in Tiger Squadron did not micromanage their subordinates.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, a remarkable 100 percent believed that subordinates were allowed the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. One respondent mentioned that "leaders were given a task and the freedom to execute within the commander's intent," and another mentioned, "I was allowed a lot of freedom to explore different ideas and implement several programs to try to increase readiness throughout the squadron."<sup>14</sup>

## **Cementing the legacy: the power of stories**

**Restoring the command climate (both on and off duty).** As Cone was restoring the unit's trust in senior leadership, it also helped considerably that he took time to explain in broad ways how the unit fit into

the context of the much larger mosaic of the professional Army. It felt like he was letting them in on a secret. It was one thing to do just the job, but when he explained where the unit fit into the larger picture, it gave its members a much clearer sense of purpose. It allowed them to connect the dots in their understanding and career development (which later reinforced his points in the mentorship he provided). But more importantly, as he developed this learning organization – as Cone shared with unit members the much larger issues – it went a long way to create a sense among junior officers that they were "part of the club."<sup>15</sup> What he was really doing was instilling a connection to the Army profession in everyone.

**Staying connected through social media.** Part of the long-term success of the unit over time was the power of social media. Social media and today's technology makes it even easier for high-performing units to stay in touch and share news of family, promotions, struggles and success. Email, mailing lists and Facebook aid not only Soldiers to stay in touch, but also their family members. In fact, when spouses stay in touch, this might be one of the most powerful connective forces of all. That allows two sets of eyes and ears to remain connected.

By leveraging the power of email distribution lists, Facebook and holiday-card mailing lists, the friends and families of Tiger Squadron stayed in touch. Almost two decades later, most officers and NCOs the authors interviewed commented that they routinely stay in touch with the people of Tiger Squadron. Even more impressive to see are the examples of Tiger Squadron alumni reaching back to start helping the children of their friends as they enter college, military service or their own careers.

This connection and network of former colleagues was able to stay better connected to help each other. In some cases, it was a simple case of sharing written products or example copies of standard policy letters. In other cases, it was a friend in another command or another country looking into a matter personally. Regardless of the context, it was through bonds and trust created in the beginning and then fostered through social media that kept the Tiger Squadron family together. Later, all those connections



translated into career and professional functions that contributed to a healthier institution.

**The stories we tell our teams now.** In addition to keeping friends and family connected, the stories and visuals of Tiger Squadron continue to influence and improve our Army decades later. One of the most interesting findings from conducting the Tiger Squadron survey was the influence of the experiences from Tiger Squadron on its members. All the respondents said they use Tiger Squadron “as a teaching point” and believe this was “one of the most memorable times” of their Army career. The climate in Tiger Squadron helped define its members and created a sense that they “wanted to emulate its characteristics” everywhere they served. Leaders in Tiger Squadron routinely cited examples they saw in those two years that still influence them 17 years later.

Even more impressively, these future leaders took those very same lessons and are applying them throughout the Army today. Wolter, a former platoon leader in Tiger Squadron, said he used Cone’s command philosophy (originally written in 1994) in 2012 when he wrote his own command philosophy.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusions and recommendations

Prior to Cone’s arrival, Tiger Squadron was under the control of an underperforming leader. It was not until Cone arrived and changed the culture within Tiger Squadron that its members received a chance to realize their full potential. Because of his work, the people of Tiger Squadron were able to “see what they could be.” What they became is impressive.

Now a four-star general and commanding general of the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Cone came from their ranks. Sergeant Major of the Army Ray Chandler, a former command sergeant major in TRADOC; retired CSM John Sparks; and general officers Robert Abrams and Paul Funk also came from their ranks. Other notables include a brigade commander, Scott Efflandt; a growing list of more than a dozen battalion commanders; five division G-3s; six special assistants to four-star generals; and a large list of sergeants major. Clearly,

there was more than just a lucky convergence of quality people in the squadron.

This transition in leadership highlights the importance of the presence of a high-performing mentor in determining if in fact a good unit will produce good leaders. Cone appears to be just as responsible as Tiger Squadron itself in explaining the organization’s success. Similarly, Cone was successful as a commander because of the exceptional personnel already present before he arrived. The highly selective nature of Tiger Squadron set conditions for leaders to excel. When analyzing both facts simultaneously, one can begin to discern the importance of both factors in the squadron’s success.

When we asked survey respondents to name the most influential person in Tiger Squadron, as expected, a large majority specifically mentioned Cone and several members of his leadership team. However, one respondent stated that the most influential person was “[the regimental commander who was relieved due to the poor command climate]. The lifecycle pattern of [Tiger Squadron] then was very similar to E/1-506<sup>th</sup> in World War II. When Dick Winters was asked at the U.S. Military Academy in 1999 why Easy Company was so cohesive, he responded immediately with ‘Captain Sobel.’ The previous dysfunctional climate set the conditions that allowed exceptional leaders to excel.”<sup>17</sup>

When looking at the success of a great leader in a great unit, one cannot forget the circumstances that surrounded their existence. For Tiger Squadron, the failures of the previous commanders set the stage for great changes to follow. In an email to a former Tiger Squadron troop executive officer in 2009, Cone acknowledged that had the previous commander not been removed in the dramatic fashion surrounding his departure, Cone would have inherited a “cancerous unit” and the chances of success would have significantly decreased. Cone himself realized the importance of this circumstance in his eventual success.<sup>18</sup>

Following situations of great organizational turmoil, it requires positive leadership to step in and set a new direction. Tiger Squadron’s highlights from 1994-1996 are examples of the potential of such change. Through a focus on leading by example, powering down to subordinates, investing in leader

development and then cementing those changes through fun and positive social experiences, great things can occur for the long-term health of an organization.



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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>TRADOC annual report, "U.S. Army: Army Profession Campaign" April 2, 2012, <http://cape.army.mil/repository/CY11ArmyProfessionAnnualReport.pdf>.
- <sup>2</sup>Abrams, Creighton, quoted in **A Better War** by Lewis Sorley, Harcourt, Inc., 1999.
- <sup>3</sup>TRADOC annual report.
- <sup>4</sup>The author was in Germany on vacation in June 1993 a year before arriving and was warned by a sergeant in line at the airport not to go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR, that the climate was terrible.
- <sup>5</sup>Kopser, Joseph, and Allen Trujillo, Tiger Squadron unit survey conducted March 22-Aug. 1, 2012.
- <sup>6</sup>Interview with LTC Doug Boltuc April 20, 2012.
- <sup>7</sup>Interview with LTC Jason Wolter, April 20, 2012.
- <sup>8</sup>Kopser and Trujillo.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup>Allen Trujillo, Kiara Ward, Leena Vazirani, Laura Rodriguez and Matt Brown, "Tiger Squadron, 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR – Team KALLM" research paper, April 30, 2012.
- <sup>11</sup>Essay of comments about Tiger Squadron by LTC Chip Daniels, Jan. 6, 2012.
- <sup>12</sup>Interview with LTC Brian Byers, April 27, 2012.
- <sup>13</sup>Kopser and Trujillo.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup>Daniels.
- <sup>16</sup>Interview with Wolter.
- <sup>17</sup>**Editor's note:** CPT Herbert M. Sobel commanded Company E for the unit's basic training at Camp Toccoa, GA. A strict disciplinarian, he earned the hatred of many of his men. However, many of the company's veterans also credited the intense training he gave them with creating the finest company in 506<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment. Sobel was negatively portrayed as inept in the television series **Band of Brothers**, a television miniseries focusing on MAJ Richard Winters' experiences. Winters was one of the officers to succeed Sobel in command of Company E.
- <sup>18</sup>Interview with LTC Michael Donahue, March 2012.

### ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**ACR** – armored cavalry regiment  
**NCO** – noncommissioned officer  
**TRADOC** – Training and Doctrine Command

# Reconnaissance Training: a Time for Innovation

by CPT Amos C. Fox

The force structure of today's Army has officers of both armor and infantry branches commanding cavalry formations at the troop and squadron level as well as serving as staff officers in cavalry formations. Therefore, the need for cavalry training for both armor and infantry officers is necessary. To adequately prepare armor and infantry officers with the knowledge necessary for future assignments and to gain the most benefit from present instruction, the Cavalry Leaders Course (CLC) staff and curriculum must be integrated into the Maneuver Captain's Career Course (MCCC).

The following points support this call for innovation:

- The preponderance of troop-level armor commands in U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) are cavalry troops;
- Infantry Branch plays an active role in these cavalry formations;
- Squadron-operations officer and squadron-command positions in cavalry formations are no longer coded specifically for armor officers; and
- There is no longer a geographical constraint to prevent standardized instruction on reconnaissance and security operations.

## Armor Branch disposition

Force structure has changed over the past several years to yield a much different

Armor Branch than that of the past. Today's Armor Branch is predominately a cavalry-based branch with a small tank contingent. Currently there are 656 troop-level FORSCOM maneuver commands; Armor Branch owns 202 of these commands. Of the 202 Armor commands, 117 are cavalry troops, 64 are tank companies (181 total) and 21 are headquarters and headquarters troops (Figure 1).

If one uses the distribution of cavalry troops to tank companies as the metric for determining branch disposition, he or she will find that Armor Branch is 65 percent cavalry and 35 percent tank (Figure 2). Yet officer professional development at captain level in the institutional Army does not reflect the branch's disposition. If most armor captains will command cavalry troops, their institutional training must prepare them for those assignments.

Moreover, tank companies are only found in the Army's armored brigade combat teams (ABCTs). ABCTs comprise 34 percent of the FORSCOM combat and surveillance brigades. Infantry BCTs (IBCTs), Stryker BCTs (SBCTs) and battlefield surveillance brigades (BfSBs) make up the remaining 66 percent of the force (Figure 3).

Armor officers assigned to an ABCT have a 57 percent chance of commanding a tank company based on the ratio of tank companies to cavalry troops in the brigade (Figure

Code	Tank	Cavalry Troop	HHT	Infantry Company	AT Company	Weapons	HHC	Total
19B	64	0	0	0	0	0	1	65
19C	0	117	21	0	0	0	0	138
11A	0	23	27	262	8	40	60	420
02B	0	0	3	0	0	0	30	33
<b>Total</b>	64	140	51	262	8	40	91	656

### Takeaways

31 percent of the 656 FORSCOM maneuver commands are coded 19-series.

58 percent of the 19-series commands are cavalry troops.

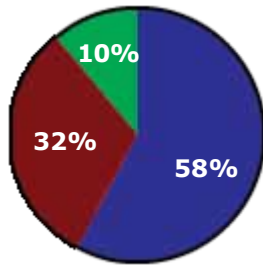
16 percent of the 140 FORSCOM cavalry troops are coded 11A (C troops/companies in IBCT and BfSB recon squadrons).

(Data pulled from combined analysis of information found in "further reading" list.)

**Figure 1. Distribution of maneuver commands.**

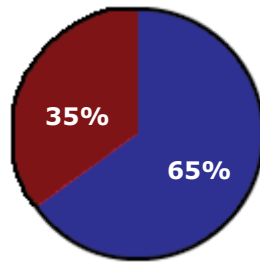
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Total Armor commands



■ Cavalry troop  
■ Tank company  
■ HHT

Line commands



■ Cavalry troop  
■ Tank company

**Total armor commands: 203**  
**Tank companies: 64 (32%)**  
 Cavalry troops: 117 (58%)  
 HHTs: 21 (10%)  
**Line-troop commands: 181**  
 Tank companies: 64 (35%)  
 Cavalry troops: 117 (65%)

Figure 2. Distribution of maneuver commands.

4). Conversely, an Armor officer selected to command in an IBCT, SBCT or BfSB **will** command a cavalry troop due to the absence of tanks in those formations.

Armor officers not in command will serve on battalion and brigade staffs. Armor officers assigned to an ABCT will have the opportunity to serve on the staff of either the cavalry squadron or a combined-arms battalion. Armor officers assigned to an IBCT, SBCT or BfSB will likely serve on the cavalry squadron's staff. Therefore, it makes sense to ensure armor officers receive training on squadron-level reconnaissance planning and operations.

Therefore, when one takes a holistic look at the Armor Branch and its representation in the operational force, coupled with the nature of armor-officer professional development, two major points quickly become apparent:

- Armor officers departing MCCC will likely be assigned to cavalry formations; and
- The institutional Army must adapt its view on armor-officer training and not

rely on antiquated paradigms in regard to training and professional development. As such, all armor officers must be trained in reconnaissance operations at troop and squadron level to meet the operational force's demands.

### Infantry's role in cavalry formations

Of the 140 cavalry troops in FORSCOM, 23 (16 percent) of those troops are coded 11A. These troops are the C troops (or companies) in the cavalry squadrons of the IBCTs and BfSBs. While Infantry Branch does not have a majority stake in FORSCOM cavalry troop commands, the branch has enough involvement to require mandatory reconnaissance training for all infantry officers.

Furthermore, like their armor counterparts, infantry officers will play critical roles on cavalry squadron staffs. If an infantry officer is in the command cue within the cavalry squadron, he is likely serving in the S-3 shop, assisting the operations officer in planning squadron operations. In light of



this, it makes perfect sense for infantry officers to also receive the same instruction on reconnaissance operations as their armor brethren do.

## Cavalry assignments at field-grade level

Recent changes to cavalry-formation modified tables of organization and equipment (MTOE) have yielded squadron operations officers and squadron command positions coded 02B (combat arms, branch immaterial). As such, one is just as likely to find an infantry officer as the S-3 or squadron commander in a cavalry squadron as he or she is to find an armor officer in the same position. The release of the Fiscal Year 14 Army Competitive Category Centralized Selection List for command and key billets provides a great example of this point. Ten of the 20 cavalry squadrons (armored reconnaissance squadron; reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition; or reconnaissance squadron in the old terminology) on the list are going to inherit infantry officers as squadron commanders in the upcoming fiscal year.

The Army's adoption of a modular mindset in regard to field-grade assignments compounds the problem with the lack of reconnaissance training for maneuver officers. Generally speaking, infantry officers receive

far less formal reconnaissance or cavalry training than their peers in Armor Branch. Specifically, there are few infantry officers in the Army Reconnaissance Course. Likewise, few infantry officers attend CLC. Moreover, there is very little reconnaissance training in MCCC.

Based on the MTOE changes in cavalry formations, the potential exists for an infantry officer to be charged with a duty assignment for which he is ill-prepared and undertrained. Therefore, as the Army continues to eliminate specific branch codes for assignments and increases the number of branch-immaterial codes, institutional training must adapt to meet the demands of the operational force – the Army must incorporate reconnaissance training into the curriculum at MCCC.

## Cavalry Leaders Course

The current option for troop- and squadron-level reconnaissance training is CLC. While CLC once met the Army's need for providing trained cavalry experts, this is no longer the case. Changes in force structure and MTOE coding have rendered the CLC ineffective at meeting the operational force's demands.

The largest problem with CLC is its elective nature. The current force structure and MTOE coding of assignments should dictate

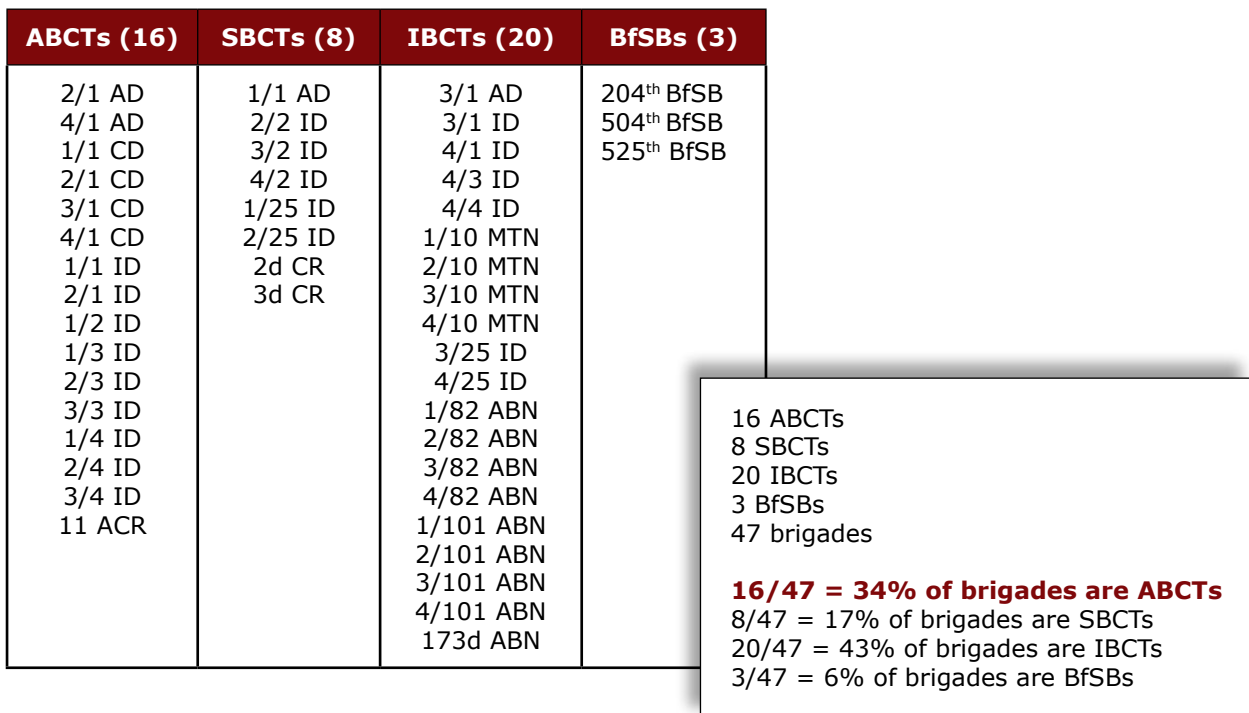


Figure 3. Distribution of maneuver commands.

2 tank companies per CAB  
 + 2 CABs per ABCT  
 = 4 tank companies per ABCT  
  
 1 armored reconnaissance squadron per ABCT  
 + 3 line cavalry troops per ARS  
 = 3 cavalry troops per ABCT  
  
 4 tank companies  
 + 3 cav troops  
 = 7 armor commands per ABCT  
  
 $4 / 7 = 57\%$  chance of commanding tank company in ABCT  
 $3 / 7 = 43\%$  chance of commanding cav troop in ABCT

**Figure 4. Armor-officer commands in an ABCT.**

that cavalry training be mandatory for all maneuver officers. However, this is not the case. The course is not only not mandatory for all maneuver officers, it isn't even mandatory for maneuver officers going to cavalry formations. One could make the argument that this equates to sending an officer to serve in 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division without first sending him to Airborne School.

Another problem with CLC is that many units are reluctant to send leaders on a temporary-duty (TDY) assignment to attend the course at Fort Benning. Likewise, CLC's mobile-training-team (MTT) schedule does not close the gap in regard to meeting the operational force's demands. By incorporating the CLC's curriculum into MCCC, the institutional Army would not only be ensuring that maneuver officers are receiving appropriate training, but they would also be saving the Army money by eliminating TDYs to the course as well as the costs associated with running an MTT.

Also, if the CLC curriculum were integrated into MCCC, the reach of reconnaissance training would be far greater than it is currently. CLC trains about 350 officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) a year. If the CLC curriculum were part of MCCC, the reach would be about 1,050 students (150 students per MCCC class x seven classes per fiscal year).

## Geography

Lastly, geography no longer provides a barrier to prevent armor and infantry officers from learning both reconnaissance and security operations together. The Armor School's move to Fort Benning, GA, provides the impetus to offer standardized reconnaissance training to maneuver officers of both branches at one location. As

the infantry and armor's captains' career courses were combined to form MCCC, it makes sense to consolidate CLC with MCCC to further improve MCCC's curriculum by better linking force structure with institutional training.

## Recommendation

BG David A. Fastabend and COL Robert H. Simpson wrote that "[i]f we do not develop an institutional ability to innovate at the pace required of the rapidly evolving future, then we will fail our Soldiers who walk point and our officers and NCOs who lead them."<sup>1</sup> The institutional Army must innovate. Institutional training must be geared to support the operational force's needs. CLC served the Army well for the 20-plus years of its existence, but it's time to move forward. The CLC staff and curriculum must be incorporated into MCCC to better arm leaders with the right skills and knowledge.

## Criticisms

While developing recommendations to improve the quality of reconnaissance training, a few criticisms came to light. However, while there are a few issues, the benefit of integrating the CLC curriculum outweighs the drawbacks.

The first criticism considers the potential for MCCC to be lengthened due to incorporating the CLC curriculum into MCCC's schedule, and the potential impacts that extending MCCC's length would have on the Army Force Generation cycle. If one takes a hard look at the MCCC training schedule, it is easy to identify that the current schedule rarely has students in class beyond 2 p.m. each day, especially during Company Phase. Maximizing available time would allow CLC instruction to fit into the current MCCC timetable.

Another consequence of integrating CLC into MCCC would be the loss of reconnaissance training for the NCOs who attend CLC. Looking at historical course information, one finds that there are only, on average, three to four NCOs per course. The average CLC class size is 26-32 students, and there are roughly 10 CLC classes per fiscal year. Therefore, out of the approximately 320 CLC students each year, only about 35 of those students are NCOs. Incorporating CLC into MCCC will take away that training

for 35 NCOs from across the Army, but in return will provide reconnaissance training for some 1,050 maneuver officers each fiscal year. This will better allow reconnaissance training to be dispersed throughout the operational force.

The last major impact would be on National Guard Soldiers, specifically concerning the loss of CLC MTTs. The same argument regarding the impact to NCOs can be made for the National Guard – the impact of losing National Guard MTTs is offset by the benefit of having all maneuver officers receive CLC instruction while in MCCC. This would further negate the need for units to send Soldiers TDY to attend the course, saving money for the Army and cash-strapped states.

## Conclusion

The Army's force structure has changed noticeably in recent years. Two major aspects of this change include: the Armor Branch is becoming primarily a cavalry-centric branch; and Infantry Branch's role in cavalry formations is increasing. Also, MTOE codings have changed in cavalry formations to make squadron-operations officer and squadron-command positions open to officers from either Armor Branch or Infantry Branch.

The current model of training leaders to fill cavalry assignments is not capable of meeting the operational force's demands. The institutional Army must adapt its institutional training to meet the current force's changing by scuttling CLC and incorporating its curriculum into MCCC. Doing so will provide more applicably trained maneuver officers to the force.



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*is pursuing a master's of art degree in secondary education from Ball State University in Muncie, IN. CPT Fox is a member of the honorary rolls of the Blackhorse Regiment, Order of Saint George and Order of the Spur.*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Fastabend, David A. BG, and Simpson, Robert H. COL, "Adapt or Die: the Imperative for a Culture of Innovation in the United States Army," U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, no date.

## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**ABCT** – armored brigade combat team  
**BCT** – brigade combat team  
**BfSB** – battlefield surveillance brigade  
**CLC** – Cavalry Leaders Course  
**FORSCOM** – (U.S. Army) Forces Command  
**IBCT** – infantry brigade combat team  
**MCCC** – Maneuver Captain's Career Course  
**MTOE** – modified table of organization and equipment  
**MTT** – mobile training team  
**NCO** – noncommissioned officer  
**SBCT** – Stryker brigade combat team  
**TDY** – temporary-duty assignment

## Further reading

Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-20.96, **Reconnaissance and Cavalry Squadron**, Washington, DC, 2010.  
 Department of the Army, FM 3-21.20, **The Infantry Battalion**, Washington, DC, 2006.  
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 Pike, J., **Stryker Brigade Combat Team**, May 11, 2011; retrieved June 29, 2013, from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/brigade-ibct.htm>.



# Sustaining the Warrior Spirit in a Post-Conflict Army

by MAJ Russell Nowels

The past decade of combat operations created a tough and resilient force. The long deployments, difficult operating conditions and an adaptive enemy required mentally and physically fit Soldiers. The years of conflict, combined with arduous home-station training, resulted in a collective adaptation by the force: the adaptation of the warrior spirit. Now, as the Army begins to transition to a post-conflict (and budget-constrained) organization, how will it sustain the warrior mindset within the force?

It is critical for leaders to consider this question to ensure preservation of the warrior spirit as combat missions wind down and the force transitions to a garrison Army. The recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated that the enduring demands and pressure of combat forges warriors; however, in a garrison Army, a comparable warrior spirit is best nurtured through daily physical-readiness training (PRT), an aggressive combatives plan and a competitive sports program.

## PRT

PRT is the foundation of the daily training schedule and an effective venue to build physical and mental toughness as well as a sense of camaraderie among Soldiers. PRT's importance is highlighted by the fact that it is the only training event that takes place every day while in garrison. This guarantees leaders the opportunity to train the warrior-athlete daily.

PRT's intent is to prepare "Soldiers and units physically to be successful in the conduct of full-spectrum operations."<sup>1</sup> This is accomplished through tough and realistic physical training, which causes Soldiers to embrace unique physical, mental and psychological challenges that promote a "never quit" attitude and resiliency.

Further, the rigor of unit PRT enables Soldiers to demonstrate the focus and drive to remain committed to themselves and their comrades in the face of adversity. This is





why reinforcing these qualities is paramount for future success during combat.

## Combatives

Combatives is another physical-training activity that improves conditioning while instilling the warrior virtues of courage and confidence in Soldiers. As a fitness task, combatives delivers all the essential elements of fitness: strength, endurance and flexibility.

This aspect alone should encourage unit leaders to plan for combatives weekly on the training schedule. However, the real advantage of combatives training is the physical assurance and psychological benefits gained, which strongly correlates to military functions. Through hand-to-hand combat or ground grappling, Soldiers achieve an "understanding of controlled aggression and the ability to remain focused while under duress."<sup>2</sup>

A training event that requires Soldiers to close the distance, gain dominant body position and then finish the fight yields the proper fighting attitude necessary in armed conflict. However, the advantages of combatives proficiency go beyond the lethal environment. Through combatives training, Soldiers develop a physical poise, which is beneficial during noncombat missions that restrict the use of force such as peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance or disaster relief. It is evident that combatives training results in "building personal courage, self-confidence, self-discipline and esprit-de-corps," all of which are characteristics of a strong warrior spirit.<sup>3</sup>

## Sports

A competitive sports program is arguably the most valuable and overlooked tool in developing warrior-leaders. Competitive sports are fun and unique training events that provide Soldiers a valuable opportunity to develop an aggressive combatant spirit on the confines of unit athletic fields.

Following World War I, GEN Douglas MacArthur said, "Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that upon other fields, on other days, will bear the fruits of victory." This quote refers to MacArthur's belief that sports are an indispensable tool in preparing Soldiers for combat. Through sports, Soldiers

develop critical teamwork and communications skills while embracing competition.

Similar to the actions on contact battle drill, athletic competition requires Soldiers to understand the environment, assess the situation and make split-second decisions against unpredictable opponents. Also, team sports teach Soldiers how to cooperate with each other in the pursuit of a common group objective. The parallel between sports and combat is why GEN Alexander Haig thought that "sports provided the only peacetime activity where the stressors were similar to those on a battlefield."<sup>4</sup>

The importance of sports in developing characteristics desirable in combat was obvious to generals MacArthur and Haig. Likewise, leaders today can prepare for future conflicts by cultivating these warrior traits through the participation in sports.

## Nurturing warrior spirit

The post-conflict Army will be challenged to maintain the combat proficiency gained through a decade of war. Budget constraints and changing priorities will limit the resources available to train the physical tasks and skills so critical during combat operations. Vanishing are the days of abundant ammunition and range time, many live-fire exercises and vehicle maneuvers. Leaders must adapt and realize that during these challenging periods, opportunity still exists.

Although many physical combat skills requiring resources and repetition will become dull or deteriorate altogether, the proper warrior mindset for combat can still be trained and maintained. This mentality, which is every bit as valuable as core combat tasks, can be exercised through PRT, combatives and sports. Keeping a Soldier's mind and body sharp, while simultaneously nurturing the necessary warrior spirit, only requires the unit physical-training field or post athletic fields.

Take advantage of the opportunity by keeping the physical-training gear and mouth-guard close – it's time to train like a warrior!



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Kirtland Air Force Base, NM. His previous assignments include instructor, Department of Physical Education, West Point, NY; commander, A Troop, 1-10 Cavalry, 2-4 Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO; regimental adjutant, 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Carson; and executive officer, G Troop, 2-3 Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Carson. His military schooling includes the Armor Officer Basic Course, Armor Captain's Career Course, Intermediate-Level Education, Space Operations Officer Qualification Course and Joint Professional Military Education Phase II. MAJ Nowels holds a bachelor's of science degree from the U.S. Military Academy in geography and a master's of science degree from Indiana University in kinesiology. He is a certified Army master fitness trainer, Modern Army Combatives Level II instructor, USA Track and Field Level I coach and a CrossFit Level I coach.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Headquarters Department of the Army, Training Circular 3-22.20, **Army Physical-Readiness Training**, Washington, DC, Aug. 10, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Headquarters Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-25.150, **Combatives**, Washington, DC, Jan. 18, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Pim, Ralph, **West Point Competitive Sports Program**, West Point, NY: Academy Print Plant, 2011.

### ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**PRT** – physical-readiness training

# REVIEWS

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The Liberation Trilogy: **An Army at Dawn** by Rick Atkinson, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 2002, 681 pages, \$22.50; **The Day of Battle** by Rick Atkinson, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 2007, 791 pages, \$23.49; **The Guns at Last Light** by Rick Atkinson, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 2013, 877 pages, \$35.

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Many professional military officers, scholars and historians purport to have a good working knowledge of the campaigns of World War II, especially those of Western Europe. The Liberation Trilogy describes several battles with which most of us have only cursory familiarity: Longstop Hill and Sidi bou Zid in Tunisia; Troina and Monte Cassino in Sicily and Italy; and the Argentan-Falaise Gap and the Colmar Pocket in France. In his three-volume opus of the American Army in North Africa, the Mediterranean and on the Continent, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rick Atkinson leads the reader on a 2,400-page odyssey from incipient U.S. unpreparedness through heuristic tactical learning on to final victory. Ranging from two privates firing on enemy troops from the same fox-hole up through Roosevelt and Churchill discussing strategy over cocktails, Atkinson's central narrative recounts the rise of American military power during the pivotal years of 1942-1945. In the end, however, his well-constructed tale leaves

the reader asking several pointed questions.

**An Army at Dawn** begins the trilogy, with Atkinson illustrating the results of the strategic decision to put American troops into the European Theater in North Africa before the end of 1942. Our veteran British cousins vie to temper American ardor with cautionary admonitions that we do not yet fully grasp the totality of the effort required for Allied victory. Once the U.S. Army organizes, trains and sails across the Atlantic for the Operation Torch landings, our troops first encounter the Vichy French; after several engagements between former allies, the United States and the French put aside our political differences to fight the Germans. Then the still-green U.S. Army runs into *Panzerarmee Afrika* at Kasserine Pass and is mauled. Once we recover from this terrible loss, the U.S. Army buckles down and meets the Germans head on, beginning to comprehend the depth of the British platitudes. After choking off an Axis army in Tunisia, the Americans finally look to our British colleagues with an understanding of the enormity of the task before us. Victory will take time and a tremendous amount of resources.

Starting with the Trident Conference, the second volume, **The Day of Battle**, pits the Western Allies in a nearly constant debate over future operations. The

invasion and conquest of Sicily conclude before the Allies can even agree what to undertake next. The British argue the immediacy of invading the continent through the Balkans; FDR and the Americans, wary of British colonial aspirations, refute this with the pressing need to liberate France and the Low Countries via a cross-channel invasion. Meanwhile, the soldiers on the ground slog through setpiece battles up the Italian peninsula reminiscent of World War I – to include the tremendous casualties. By June 1944 – and the conclusion of **The Day of Battle** – the Allies have captured Rome and have begun exploitation north toward the Gothic Line, a defensive works they would not penetrate until April 1945. The reader is left with Martin Blumenson's lament that "events generate their own momentum," wondering how the Allies ever agreed on a common approach.

The final installment, **The Guns at Last Light**, opens with American soldiers saturating everyone and everything in England during Spring 1944. From here, Atkinson takes the reader through the buildup and bloody invasion in Normandy. As the now-heftier partner in the alliance, U.S. design pervades Allied strategy, most notably in Eisenhower's insistence on the broad-front approach in favor of Montgomery's dagger-thrust alternative. This

potholes among the top leaders caused much ill feeling, and Atkinson relates how it was only due to Ike's charm that the alliance held firm. Following Allied mistakes during Operation Market Garden, in the Hurtgen Forest and in the Belfort Gap, the Allies finally rally in response to the German Ardennes offensive. Ultimately, the Western Allies meet their Soviet counterparts as the German armies finally wilt away.

Atkinson tells this epic story in an immensely readable fashion. First, he cites countless primary sources, mostly diaries and letters from soldiers themselves, who depict the story in stark reality. Second, his command of the English language, both in word choice and sentence structure, is at a sharper level than most historians. He is at his best in the physical descriptions of people, architecture, emotions, nature and even destruction, which are vivid, penetrating and lasting. Related to this, the maps and photographs are outright superb. Third,

rather than attempt to encapsulate every major battle and combat action, he focuses instead on those that further illustrate his two central narratives: the accession of the United States to senior partnership and the American quest for effective generalship throughout the campaign.

I believe he succeeds in validating the first, explaining that by war's end "the United States was making half of all manufactured goods in the world." However, although he rightly criticizes American (and to a lesser extent, Allied) generals for their shortcomings, he proffers no panacea to the reader. Patton may have brandished himself to excess and Bradley may have failed to act at the start of the Ardennes offensive; however, if the U.S. Army struggled with the attributes of generalship in Europe during World War II, then the reader wonders who got it right? If none of our senior leaders offered an example, how should a democracy choose its military chieftains?

Similarly, I felt a sense of yearning for a fourth volume: how did the U.S. Army squander so many tactical lessons from World War II that led to such unpreparedness (again) a mere five years later in Korea?

In a time wherein our Army once again faces a reduction following successful battlefield experience, perhaps the real message of this trilogy is for leaders of today and tomorrow to keep an eye on how to expand the Army rapidly while maintaining combat readiness. Like two of the characters Atkinson repeatedly references, Bill Maudlin and Ernie Pyle, Atkinson views himself as simply the guy who's telling you the story. From a Pulitzer Prize winner and award-ridden columnist for the *Washington Post*, we should expect some better conclusions from this otherwise fantastic recounting of the American Army in Europe during World War II.

**DOUGLAS A. BOLTUC**

LTC, U.S. Army, Armor Branch



# LETTERS

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Dear **ARMOR**,

So what's the big "game change" of the advanced multipurpose (AMP) round? ("XM1069 Advanced Multipurpose Munition Concept Is a 'Game Changer'" by Steven A. Peralta and Jeffrey McNaboe, **ARMOR**, April-June 2013 edition) Is it an improved capability or simply a reduced "battlecarry"?

The authors suggest that the XM1069 AMP round replaces the M1028 canister and M830 high-explosive (HE) anti-tank (AT) (HEAT), M830A1 multipurpose HEAT (MPAT) and M908 obstacle-reduction rounds. Well, yes, I suppose it might replace them, but only if you give up having their specific capabilities. Also, there's some double- and triple-counting here. For example, the M830A1 was supposed to replace the M830, not be carried alongside it. The M908 is essentially a modified M830 with the point fuse removed to allow deeper obstacle penetration. So are we really replacing it, or just losing that capability, too?

Meanwhile, the Armor Branch is ignoring the already long-available solution. Please join me down memory lane.

Canister is in effect a "shot-gun" round for cannon. One can debate its merits on the modern battlefield, but to suggest that it is not effective against AT guided missile crews at long range is

ludicrous, since it was never intended for that. However, beginning in the 1960s, the M60A1 fired the 105mm "Beehive," which was a canister round (loaded with nail-like darts rather than balls) with a manually set timefuse. Given the range, the loader set the nose knob before shoving it in the chamber, and the round detonated in front of the target out to 4,400 meters. The Beehive could well address a long-range target in the open, and linking today's digital fire control with an automatically set range fuse would be at least as simple as the proposed AMP round's unspecified (and then a miracle occurs?) "datalink."

HEAT is first and foremost intended to penetrate heavy armor with all its metallurgical and technological wizardry and add-ons (rolled homogenous plate, face-hardened, spaced, laminated, angled, reactive applique, etc.). Developed in World War II, it was a replacement for the then-limited capability of the armor-piercing (AP), solid-shot, kinetic-energy round. HEAT was the best-penetrating tank round until the AP discarding sabot of the 105mm main battle tank, the M60. Because of its limited but still effective blast in conjunction with its relatively high velocity, and thus accuracy, HEAT was retained as a general-purpose round.

MPAT, on the other hand, is already a compromise

round. With claimed improved blast effect over HEAT but far less filler volume than conventional HE, it was developed when M1A1 tankers pointed out that they had only two types of service rounds, the sabot and HEAT, both optimized for AT use. Similarly, there was a rush for the poorly-thought-through M1028 canister round. At the time, HE was not desired because its different ballistic characteristics complicated the existing fire-control computer.

So why don't tanks fire HE? Let's go back to World War II and the 75mm M4 Sherman.

The M4 tank fired essentially the same relatively low-velocity round with the same point-detonating impact fuse as the 75mm field-artillery cannon, little changed since the World War I-era "French '75." It was a good general-purpose round against soft targets, but increased enemy tank armor caught the armor force unprepared, and better AT capability was desperately needed. Before rounds like HEAT and sabot could be developed and fielded, the answer was higher velocity for existing AP. The M4 (76mm) was soon fielded. Though its barrel diameter was negligibly larger, it had a much larger cartridge with 2.5 times the powder charge. With similar projectiles at higher velocity, the 76mm would penetrate about one

inch more armor than the 75mm gun at comparable ranges.

Even this improved level of penetration was soon found inadequate, but in the meantime, the higher velocity and flatter trajectory rendered the HE round far less effective since much of its already limited burst was directed into the ground and wasted. Recall also that the field artillery had early on recognized the limitations of 75mm ammunition and replaced the 75mm gun with the 105mm howitzer.

What did the armor force do? The interim answer was to husband the 76mm tank for AT use and rely on the 75mm tank against soft targets, while M4 (105mm) howitzer tanks were added into the tank battalion headquarters and headquarters company as a three-tank "assault gun" platoon. With victory and the introduction of 90mm M26 Pershing tank, and its subsequent Cold War variants – the M46, M47 and M48 Patton series – the problem sort of went away, though it not adequately resolved.

Meanwhile the British developed an HE squash head. It was a soft plastic-explosive filler with a base-detonating fuse. Upon impact, the warhead would literally flatten against the hard surface and then detonate. This tremendously focused the round's

explosive energy. Even when the round failed to fully blast through, it caused the other side to spall. Developed as a bunker-busting round, the spall effect also occurred against even heavy armor. At least it did so as long as the armor was solid and not with spaced cavities, but those modifications came later.

The United States fielded the round under the designation *high-explosive plastic* (HEP). In the M60 series' 105mm tank gun – with its low velocity and hence soft recoil, a large explosive charge and a very simple and reliable unexposed fuse – HEP was deemed effective against troops, fortifications, materiel and, to a limited extent, even stationary tanks. It was the general-purpose round of the 105mm M60 Patton series. While its low velocity supposedly reduced accuracy, the actual problem was the limited accuracy of the hand-cranked optical coincidence rangefinder and cam-operated mechanical ballistic computer, which was then cutting-edge technology. With the laser rangefinder of the M60A3, not to mention today's digital fire control of the Abrams, a 120mm HEP would be fantastically accurate and lethal.

So pardon me for being underwhelmed by the proposal

to someday field yet another compromise round with goodness knows what sort of sophisticated multi-option fusing mechanism, not to mention the "datalink," that must be retrofitted into the tank. Personally, I'd suggest fielding the 120mm HEP round to give tomorrow's tanker the same capability that yesterday's tanker had. Meanwhile, please consider that this is all just a repackaging of the original MPAT and its obstacle-reduction variant, which together I thought had already "revolutionized land warfare as we know it." It seems to me that you could have simply replaced the M830A1 point fuse (or reinserted it into the M908) and had something a while ago.

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### ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**AMP** – advanced multipurpose  
**AP** – armor-piercing  
**AT** – anti-tank  
**HEAT** – high-explosive anti-tank  
**HE** – high explosive  
**HEP** – high-explosive plastic  
**MPAT** – multipurpose (high-explosive) anti-tank

# 7<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY REGIMENT



The distinctive unit insignia was originally approved for the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment June 29, 1924. It was redesignated for the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment (Infantry) Dec. 16, 1953. The insignia was redesignated for the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment and was amended Feb. 4, 1983, to revise the description and include symbolism. The color gold, or yellow, is symbolic of the Cavalry service, yellow being the color of the facings on the old blue uniform at the time the regiment was first organized. The horseshoe is adapted from the regimental coat of arms, the seven nail holes alluding to the unit's numerical designation. The gauntlet and saber at the "charge" position are also adapted from the coat of arms and represent the "cavalry charge" and the battle heritage of the regiment. "Garry Owen" is the name of a song that was a favorite of GEN George Armstrong Custer and once was used as a battle song in the Indian Wars.

