

# Chief of Armor Hatch: Importance of Scout Squad

Cavalry formations “shape the battlefield for the commander to allow him to close with and destroy the enemy through maneuver and superior firepower at a time and place of his choosing.” (Field Manual 3-98). The scout squad is the cornerstone of our reconnaissance-and-security (R&S) force and serves as the commander’s eyes and the ears. Disciplined, trained and opportunistic scout squads enable quality commanders’ decision-making through enhanced situational understanding. Without it, commanders often struggle to understand the environment, and their staffs spend precious time and energy planning in a vacuum. We see this play out repeatedly across our combat-training centers.

Properly leveraging the scout squad requires discipline. The discipline required is more than just the conviction to do the right thing. The discipline I am talking about is the willingness at every level to put ourselves and our formations through exceptionally tough and realistic training. As GEN Mark Milley recently stated at AUSA 2018: “The objective [of this training] is to intentionally increase the stress on ourselves so we face our first battle in training, not in combat. ... [Increase] the distances traveled; the hours awake; the command-post jumps; the obstacles breached; the live-fires conducted; skill of the [opposing force (OPFOR)] indirect-fire attacks; the OPFOR’s guerrilla and terrorist attacks; the OPFOR’s use of electronic warfare and cyber, rotary-wing and fixed-wing attack; ballistic missile attack; chemical and biological attack; and relentless enemy offensive infantry and armor combined-arms attack – all that and more.”

Our competency in R&S operations has atrophied considerably over the years. While it is true that we are incrementally improving cavalry-squadron proficiency through home-station training, our talent-management systems are not effectively slating the right leaders and Soldiers in our cavalry formations at the right time to capitalize on those hard-earned gains.

Also, we lack the requisite repetitive-assignments models we know we need to professionalize our cavalry formations. As a result, at echelon we are not able to retain the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to master the fundamentals of R&S and understand how to employ them in the execution of combined-arms maneuver.

While every leader in our cavalry formations needs to increase his or her knowledge and understanding of R&S operations, scout-squad leaders are the primary trainers and discipline-enforcers in our formations.

To this point, the 2019 Gainey Cup scout competition focuses on testing the scout squad’s ability to answer the commander’s questions and deliver results centered on R&S fundamentals. The competition is a crucible event that requires the knowledge of R&S and the discipline to put that knowledge to use in the toughest of conditions. We look forward to seeing you at the 2019 Gainey Cup the first week of May.

**Forge the Thunderbolt!**

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## Acronym Quick-Scan

**OPFOR** – opposing force

**R&S** – reconnaissance and security