A Force-Management Approach for the Division Cavalry Squadron

by MAJ Greg Marsh

As the Army transitions from a counterinsurgency focus to a multi-domain/large-scale combat operations (MD-LSCO) focus, it's imperative for commanders at all echelons to gain and maintain an accurate picture of their organization's operational environment.

The problem is that current Army force structure doesn't provide division commanders with an organic all-weather force able to conduct information collection (IC) that will support division planning; the division is the only tactical-level unit without a specialized all-weather organization that's dedicated to conducting reconnaissance, security and economy-of-force (EoF) operations.

A significant change in focus and efforts within the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education (DOTMLE) domains are required to rapidly correct this egregious deficiency.

Functional-area analysis

The Army Strategy 2018 outlining the Army's operating concept of multi-domain operations (MDO) states: "[U]nits from brigade through corps must have the ability to conduct sustained ground and air intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, electronic warfare and cyber operations to shape the battlefield across all domains."

However, U.S. Army divisions are not meeting this requirement with their current force structure. Nor does Army doctrine address reconnaissance and security (R&S) in the division deep area. Army training institutions do not effectively support the complexity or specialization of R&S missions.

Divisions **must** have an organic organization able to conduct reconnaissance, security and EoF operations. This organization **must** be able to fight for information and survive a multi-domain battlefield. The organization **must** contain the organic capabilities and systems to conduct IC across all operational domains. Why? Because the Army is the dominant land force for the United States to seize, secure, retain and exploit the initiative to achieve battlefield success.

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, **Unified Land Operations**, states: "Operational initiative is the setting of tempo and terms of action throughout an operation. Army forces seize, retain and exploit operational initiative by forcing the enemy to respond to friendly action. By presenting an enemy force multiple dilemmas across multiple domains, commanders force the enemy to react continuously until driven into an untenable position."

To do this, certain tasks are required of Soldiers. Table 1 lists the operations required by the Universal Joint Task List (UJTL). Table 2 shows the Army's mission-essential tasks (METs).

Required operations from Universal Joint Task List	
ART 1.2.2.4	Provide a screen
ART 2.3	Perform intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
ART 2.3.3	Conduct reconnaissance
ART 2.3.3.1	Conduct route reconnaissance
ART 2.3.3.2	Conduct zone reconnaissance
ART 2.3.3.3	Conduct area reconnaissance
ART 2.3.3.4	Conduct reconnaissance-in-force
ART 7.5.7	Conduct counter-reconnaissance

Table 1. Required operations from the UJTL.

Required Army METs	
17-SQDN-9314	Conduct zone reconnaissance
17-SQDN-9315	Conduct area reconnaissance
17-SQDN-9222	Conduct guard
17-SQDN-9225	Conduct screen

Table 2. Army METs.

Questions to answer

Seeing how the Army is focusing on the division deep fight, how can a division commander gain and maintain fundamental operational initiative without an all-weather R&S force dedicated as the division commander's eyes and ears on the battlefield? How can a division commander maneuver the division to present an enemy commander with multiple dilemmas if the commander cannot visualize the battlefield?

ADP 6-0, **Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces**, states that for effective command and control, commanders must "employ the operations process to drive the conceptual and detailed planning necessary to understand, visualize and describe their operational environment; make and articulate decisions; and direct, lead and assess military operations."

However, if the division commander and staff do not have a clear operational picture derived from a division-level IC organization, how is the intelligence driving maneuver? Will the division be able to mass its combat power effectively and efficiently at the decisive point in support of the decisive operation? An answer to these questions must be addressed as divisions prepare to conduct MD-LSCO.

That answer is the division cavalry (DivCav) squadron.

Functional-needs analysis

To reiterate, division commanders don't have an organic all-weather organization whose primary mission is to conduct reconnaissance, security and EoF operations. As division staffs use the military decision-making process to plan, prepare and execute division-level operations, division staffs and commanders commit forces to operations with limited ability to gather essential elements of information about the terrain and threat to support their planning efforts.

Division commanders assume tactical risk by preparing and executing conceptual plans instead of detailed operations where the intelligence warfighting function (WfF) is driving the movement-and-maneuver WfF. This results in a higher potential for operations becoming desynchronized due to unknown or unforeseen battlefield effects or conditions against a free-thinking enemy who may not fight the way a division staff wants them to fight. This places a higher stress on the brigade combat teams' (BCTs) organic cavalry organizations to support their respective BCTs' operations, as well as to provide information needed at the division level.

Divisions lack an organic all-weather capability to answer the commander's priority intelligence requirements. These are information requirements commonly associated with a decision the unit commander must make. If the organization does not have a way to accurately answer these information requirements, then division commanders assume the risk of making decisions based on circumstantial, unconfirmed and/or incomplete intelligence.

This also requires more time for division information requirements to be answered because the BCTs must gain and maintain enemy contact instead of a division-level organization doing so. This further requires the division commander to assume risk by not identifying and bringing combat power against the division's high-value targets (HVTs) and high-payoff targets (HPTs) to shape the battlefield in support of the division's operation or plan. It forces the commander to accept limited engagements with little payoff in the division's deep fight.

Divisions do not have enough organic ability to support the targeting process: *decide*, *detect*, *deliver* and *assess*. Outcomes of Steps 3 and 4 of intelligence preparation of the battlefield involve identifying enemy HVTs. This in turn enables the organization to develop courses of action and HPTs. This is *decide* in the targeting process. The

organization assesses and allocates the best asset(s) to locate and identify HVTs and HPTs. This is *detect* in the targeting process. The organization determines the best asset to action to inflict the desired effects. This is *deliver* in the targeting process. The organization then assesses the performance or effectiveness of its targeting process. This is *assess* in the targeting process.

The division lacks an organic organization beyond the MQ-1C Grey Eagle unmanned aerial system (UAS) or the RQ-7B Shadow UAS in the maneuver enhancement brigade to support this process. This prevents the division from suppressing, neutralizing or destroying HVTs and HPTs. These targets are now left for BCT commanders to manage, severely reducing the division's effectiveness in the reconnaissance fight.

Functional-solution analysis

A division echelon R&S organization is essential in maintaining security and situational awareness while conducting MD-LSCO. A division commander's ability to see the operating environment facing the division will enable that commander to maintain the initiative and to increase lethality, speed and mobility.

The solution is to reintroduce the DivCav. Reintroduction of the DivCav would affect the DOTMLE domains.

Doctrine domain

Current Army doctrine does not address R&S operations for a division. The Army's doctrinal reference for R&S is Field Manual (FM) 3-98, **Reconnaissance and Security Operations**, which states: "This publication provides doctrinal guidance for all formations assigned to the armored brigade combat team, the infantry brigade combat team and the Stryker brigade combat team."

Unfortunately, the R&S cornerstone does not address R&S operations to support LSCO at division level. The superseded FM 17-95, **Cavalry Operations**, addresses R&S operations at echelon from the platoon through corps. This publication could be reviewed, updated and implemented as a solution to this problem.

Organization domain

The DivCav is a proven organization in peace and combat – cavalry squadrons had exceptional success in Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. The DivCav is also the premier division-level R&S organization with the proper manning, equipment, training and force structure to shape the division fight.

FM 17-95 best describes the armored DivCav's mission: "The armored [DivCav] squadron is a highly mobile, armor-protected force organized as part of the armored and mechanized-infantry divisions. The squadron operates primarily in the environmental states of war and conflict. It may deploy into a theater as part of a division, brigade or joint task force. The light/airborne [DivCav] squadron is a highly mobile, lightly armed force organized as part of light-infantry divisions. As part of the light-infantry division, it may operate in any environmental state from peace to war. The squadron is deployable by air or sealift to a theater of operations as part of the division, or in support of a brigade or joint task force. This squadron possesses a significant tactical mobility advantage over the infantry battalions in the division."[1]

When comparing U.S. Army R&S force structure by parent echelon to doctrinally templated enemy forces, the enemy has a capability overmatch. The enemy retains an organic organization at battalion through corps levels, where the United States does not.

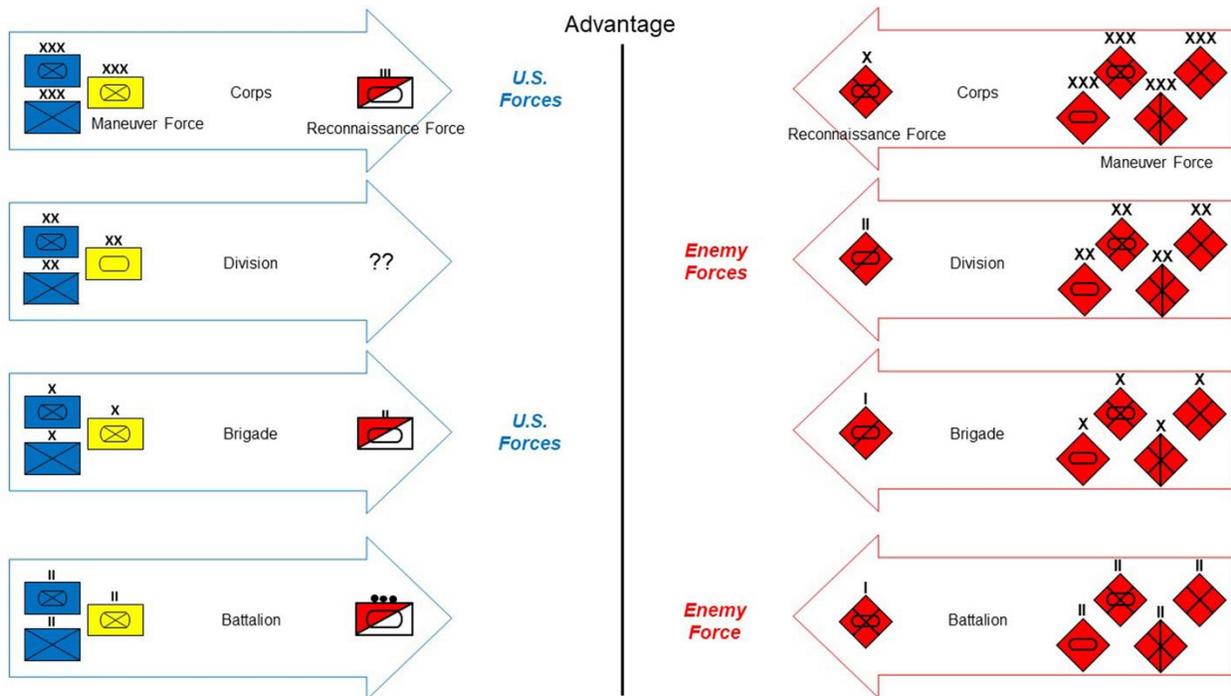Figure 1 compares U.S. and enemy R&S force structure by parent echelon.

Figure 1. American and enemy R&S force structure by echelon.

Enemy forces retain an R&S advantage over U.S. forces at battalion level because the enemy uses a company-sized force to conduct its R&S operations. This is not a specialized R&S organization, but it has triple the combat power of a U.S. battalion's scout platoon. U.S. forces retain an R&S advantage over enemy forces at brigade level by employing a cavalry squadron – compared to the enemy's brigade reconnaissance company.

At division level, the enemy retains the advantage by employing a reconnaissance battalion – compared to a U.S. division, which has no organic organization. U.S. forces gain the advantage at corps level by employing a cavalry regiment especially designed to conduct R&S operations – compared to the enemy's use of an organic infantry or armor brigade tactical group to conduct its R&S operations.

The enemy's overmatch also enables it to win the counter-reconnaissance fight. Counter-reconnaissance is active and passive and includes action to destroy or repel enemy reconnaissance elements and to deny the enemy information about friendly units. Counter-reconnaissance keeps enemy reconnaissance forces from observing the main body by defeating or blocking them.[2]

The force that wins the counter-reconnaissance fight has a significantly greater advantage over its opponent. The enemy's ability to control R&S gives the enemy commander a marked advantage in controlling the tempo of the battlefield; maximizing combat power and battlefield effects; and retaining the initiative, specifically at division level.

Requiring division commanders to accept tactical risk by not having the combat power to shape the division deep fight reduces the reaction time and maneuver space for the division. This is a violation of the Army's fundamentals of security and prevents the division commander from setting the required conditions for BCTs to be successful.

Structure needs change

The DivCav force structure must allow for semi-autonomous and self-sustaining R&S and EoF operations. A solution to prevent an increase in manning requirements would be to reduce BCT cavalry squadrons to a brigade reconnaissance troop. The squadrons' guidon, remaining personnel and equipment could then be used to build each DivCav squadron. The DivCav will eliminate the enemy's current R&S overmatch.

Figure 2 shows this reorganization compared to templated enemy forces.
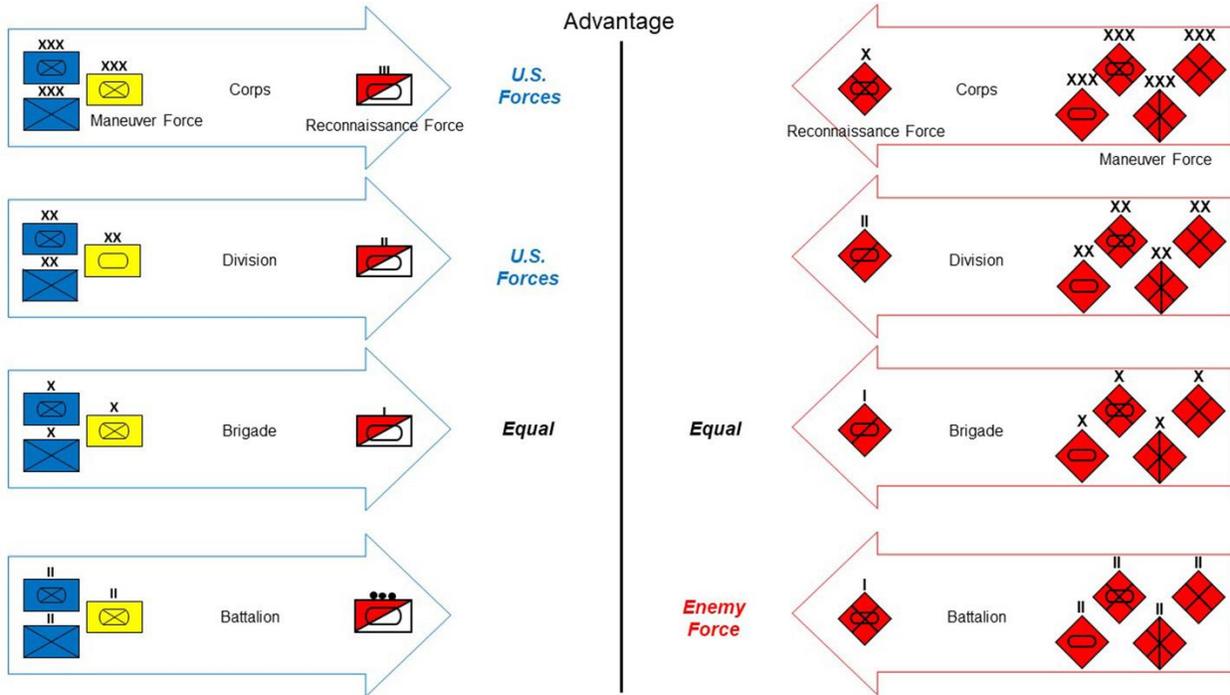
Figure 2. The proposal for each echelon to have DivCav.

The DivCav structure would depend on its parent division. Figure 3 shows the task-organization for DivCav squadrons of armor and mechanized-infantry divisions. This pertains to 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Infantry Division, 1st Armored Division, 2nd Infantry Division, 3rd Infantry Division and 4th Infantry Division.
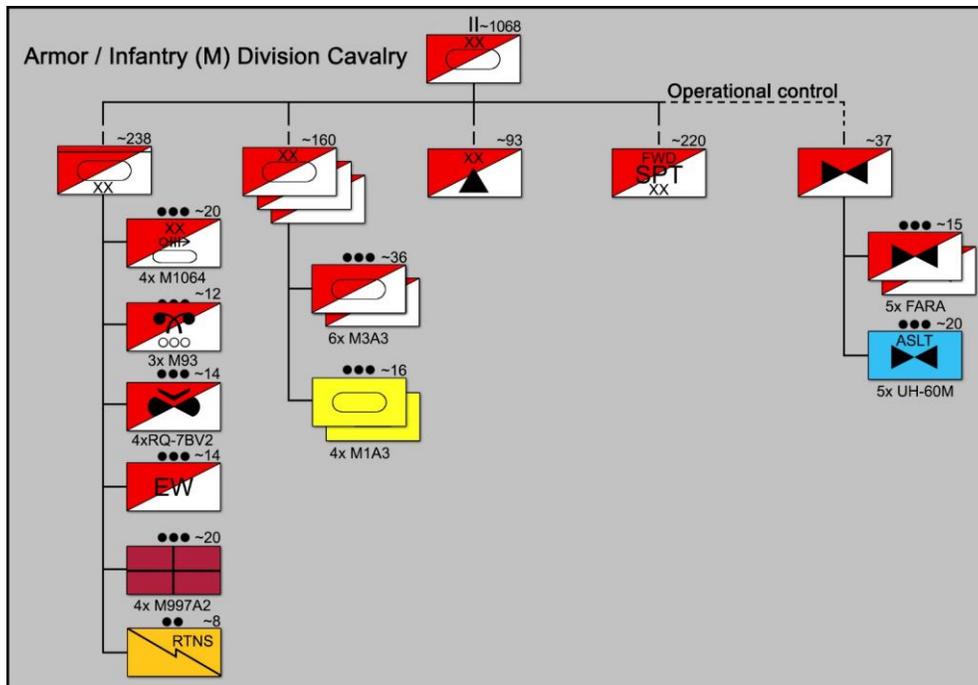

Figure 3. Proposed DivCav task organization for armor and mechanized infantry.

Figure 4 shows the task-organization for light-infantry divisions. This pertains to 10th Infantry Division (Mountain), 25th Infantry Division, 82nd Infantry Division (Airborne) and 101st Infantry Division (Air Assault). DivCav squadrons

would contain organic small-caliber fires (mortars); anti-armor capability; extended-range communication; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) detection; UAS; and sustainment. Fires would be provided by the division-artillery brigade with the soon-to-be-fielded "extended-range cannon artillery." These organic capabilities ensure the squadrons would sustain MDO.
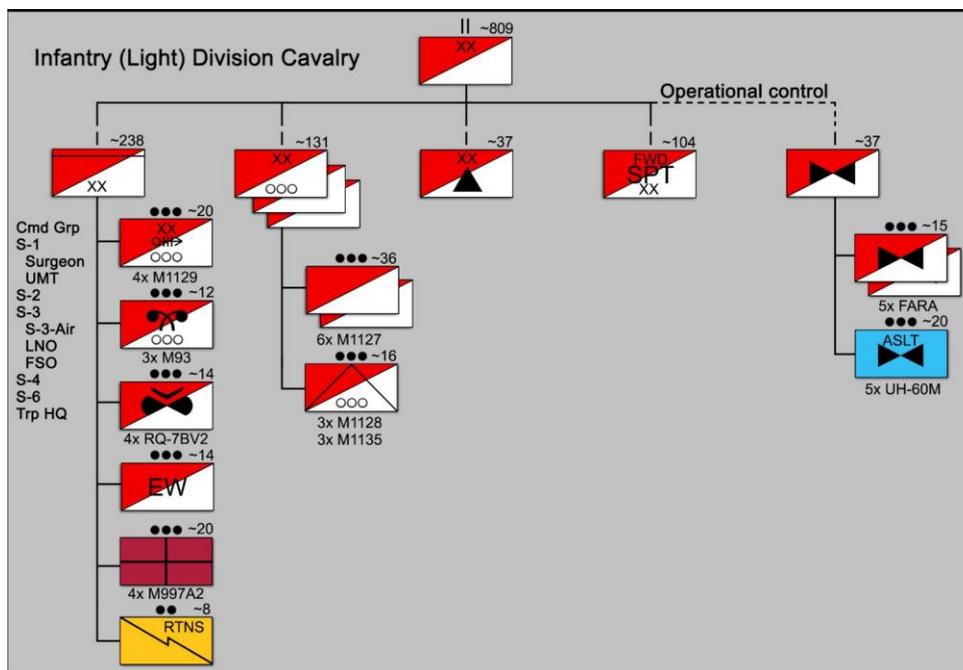

Figure 4. Proposed DivCav task organization for light infantry.

To maximize the three-dimensional battlefield, the division's combat-aviation brigade would provide one air-cavalry troop (ACT) and one aviation-assault platoon under the DivCav commander's operational control. The ACT would extend the DivCav's operational reach beyond its ground systems. ACTs would extend the DivCav's range to detect, identify, locate and report HVTs, HPTs and enemy movement; and to destroy targets of opportunity.

Aviation-assault platoons would add an enhanced level of rapid mobility for movement and maneuver, personnel recovery, casualty evacuation and sustainment operations. Aviation-assault platoons can stealthily emplace dismounted scouts over extended ranges; conduct aerial resupply; extend line-of-sight communications; and rapidly move casualties to the squadron's main aid station or to the division-support area.

Training

Cavalry organizations must be removed from under the Armor Branch and made their own independent branch. Cavalry operations are a specialized field. The nature of the missions cavalry troopers conduct require unique individual training and specialized schools with their own training pipeline.

However, BCT cavalry squadrons and troops are commanded by infantry and armor officers. Cavalry scouts in light-infantry divisions are filled predominately with infantry Soldiers. This results in light-infantry BCTs using their cavalry squadrons as another infantry battalion rather than as a specialized R&S organization.

As mentioned, cavalry troopers require specialized training in R&S. The 19D (cavalry scout) military-occupation specialty (MOS) pipeline will need to produce more cavalry scouts because there will be a shortage due to removing previous 11B (infantry MOS) Soldiers from the light-infantry BCTs.

Current non-19D cavalry scouts in all enlisted ranks require an MOS reclassification course. R&S operations require a range of additional training to support the complexity and unique operational environment of a DivCav squadron.

Table 3 is the recommended additional skill identifiers (ASIs) with respective training courses for DivCav squadrons.

Over-the-horizon communications are an emerging training deficiency within the cavalry community. This must be an area of concentration for cavalry troopers – up to and including troop level – to ensure consistent communication with the squadron main command post in MDO.

Division	ASI	Description	Eligible Population
82nd Infantry	5P	Parachutist	All
All	1G	Joint Terminal Air Controller	Staff sergeants and above
10th Infantry, 101st Infantry	2B	Air assault	All
All	2C	Javelin gunnery	All
All	2S	Battle staff	All staff noncommissioned officers in charge (NCOICs)
All	5U	Tactical air operations	All staff sergeants and above
82nd Infantry	5W	Jumpmaster	All platoon leaders / platoon sergeants; company commanders / first sergeants; squadron commanders / command sergeants major
All	6B	Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader's Course	All staff sergeants and above
All	8L	Master resilience instructor	All platoon sergeants and above
All	B4	Sniper	Four per troop
All	C6	Cavalry leader	All platoon sergeants
All light infantry	F7	Pathfinder	All sergeants and above
All	L7	Joint fires observer	All platoon forward observers
All	Q7	Intel, surveillance, recon synch manager	All squadron S-2 officers in charge (OICs) and NCOICs
All	S9	Joint spectrum manager	Squadron S-6 OICs and NCOICs
All	U7	UAS instructor-operator	All staff sergeants and above 15W

Table 3. Recommended ASIs.

Materiel

Generating the DivCav ground-combat power is possible by reallocating equipment from existing BCT cavalry squadrons as they change to brigade reconnaissance troops. The M3A3 Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicle has proven to be a viable platform for the armored reconnaissance troop (ART). This would be an interim solution until a more viable and tactically sound platform is available.

A possible solution is the M1127 Stryker Reconnaissance Vehicle. The M1A2 System Enhancement Package V3 Abrams tank and the soon-to-be-fielded M1A3 Abrams tank are the best platforms for the armor platoons in the ART.

The future armed reconnaissance aircraft (FARA) would be the airframe of choice for the ACT. This new aircraft design will take significant time to mature to support the air-ground integration that doctrine requires. There are more viable, adaptable and cost-effective solutions (off-the-shelf aircraft) for FARA than a first-built airframe.

The M93 Fox CBRN Reconnaissance Vehicle is sufficient for the DivCav's CBRN reconnaissance platoon. The RQ-7BV2 Shadow will provide the requisite organic UAS for the DivCav.

Sustaining the DivCav will require a forward-support troop (FST). Current FSTs within each brigade-support battalion configured to support the BCT cavalry squadrons can be reallocated to the division's sustainment brigade

to sustain the DivCav. Detailed analysis of Class III bulk and Class V requirements are required to ensure each FST has the necessary transportation assets.

Leadership and education

Professional military education (PME) remains the cornerstone of institutional knowledge. Cavalry troopers require specialized PME and a larger pipeline to sustain manning requirements.

Table 4 shows the PME required for cavalry leaders.

The focus on cavalry operations and doctrine would require a separate cavalry career path and PME.

Components 1, 2 and 3. The DivCav should be assigned to the 10 Component 1 and eight Component 2 divisions. Component 3 does not have division-level combat-arms organizations. MD-LSCO will require equal R&S capabilities at all echelons regardless of Army component.

Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom demonstrated the need to employ all combat formations at echelon, regardless of Army component.

Course	Eligible population	Remarks
Cavalry Basic Officer Leader's Course (CBOLC)	All ground cavalry lieutenants; all air-cavalry lieutenants after completing FARA aircraft-qualification course	SLC included with CBOLC
Scout Leader's Course (SLC)	All platoon leaders (air and ground), platoon sergeants (ground), troop commanders (air and ground), troop first sergeants (ground)	Platoon leaders and platoon sergeants complete prior to assuming position
Cavalry Leader's Course	Troop commanders (air and ground), squadron S-2 OICs / NCOICs (air and ground), squadron commanders (air and ground)	Troop and squadron commanders complete prior to assuming command; squadron S-2 completes prior to assuming position
Air Cavalry Leader's Course (ACLC)	Troop commanders (air), squadron S-2 OIC / NCOIC (air and ground), squadron S-3 (air and ground), squadron S-3-Air (ground), squadron commanders (air)	Troop and squadron commanders complete prior to assuming command; squadron S-2 OIC completes prior to assuming position
19D Advanced Leader's Course	All 19D sergeants selected for promotion to staff sergeant	Attendance follows Select, Train, Educate, Promote (STEP) methodology
19D Senior Leader's Course	All 19D staff sergeants selected for promotion to sergeant first class	Attendance follows STEP methodology

Table 4. Specialized cavalry PME.

How solution fits operations

Having an organization with a specialized focus, craft and branch would ensure division commanders have a critical capability the U.S. Army hasn't had for more than 20 years. The reintroduction of DivCav will give division commanders a robust, dynamic and flexible IC asset.

The DivCav would also enable divisions to develop and shape operations in the division deep area, supporting the division commanders' objectives. It would also enable subordinate BCT commanders' success in assigned missions.

Furthermore, the DivCav's ability to conduct EoF missions would enable preservation of the division's decisive operation's combat power. The combat power within DivCav would enable the squadron commander to solve the division commander's problems before they become bigger problems.

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Squadron, 6ᵗʰ Cavalry Regiment, Fort Drum, NY; J-3 aviation officer, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan Detachment South/Southwest, Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan; and platoon leader, Troop C, 4ᵗʰ Squadron, 6ᵗʰ Cavalry Regiment, Fort Lewis, WA. MAJ Marsh's military schools include the Command and General Staff Course, ACLC, O/C/T academy, Maneuver Captain's Career Course, Cavalry Leader's Course, Joint Firepower Controller Course, Warrant Officer Basic Course, OH-58D Aircraft Qualification Course, Scout-Platoon Leader's Course, Tank Commander Certification Course and Armor Officer Basic Course. He has an associate's of arts degree in liberal arts and military history from New Mexico Military Institute, a bachelor's of science degree in liberal arts from Excelsior College and a master's of arts degree in management and leadership from Webster University. Among MAJ March's awards are the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with oak-leaf cluster, the Air Medal (third award) and the Combat Action Badge.

Notes

[1] FM 17-95, **Cavalry Operations**, 1996.
[2] FM 3-98, **Reconnaissance and Security**, 2015.
[3] Maneuver Center of Excellence, Army Reconnaissance Council, Oct. 2, 2020.
[4] Ibid.

Acronym Quick-Scan

ACLC – Air Cavalry Leader's Course
ACT – air-cavalry troop
ADP – Army doctrine publication
ART – armored reconnaissance troop
ASI – additional skill identifier
ASLT – assault
BCT – brigade combat team
CBOLC – Cavalry Basic Officer Leader's Course
CBRN – chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
DivCav – division cavalry
DOTMLE – doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education
EoF – economy-of-force
EW – electronic warfare
FARA – future armed reconnaissance aircraft
FM – field manual
FSO – fire-support officer
FST – forward-support troop
FWD – forward
HPT – high-payoff target
HVT – high-value target
IC – information collection
LNO – liaison officer
MD-LSCO – multi-domain/large-scale combat operations
MDO – multi-domain operations
MET – mission-essential task
MOS – military-occupation specialty
NCOIC – noncommissioned officer in charge
O/C/T – observer/coach/trainer
OIC – officer in charge
PME – professional military education
R&S – reconnaissance and security
RTNS – retransmission
SLC – Scout Leader's Course
SPT – support
STEP – Select, Train, Educate, Promote
UAS – unmanned aerial system
UJTL – Universal Joint Task List
UMT – unit ministry team
WfF – warfighting function