May 1, 1931

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

to govern

In Extending Mechanization and Motorization

throughout the Army.

1. The fundamental mission of an army to secure decisive victory and to secure it promptly, has not changed throughout the long period of recorded history.
2. In undertaking such a problem, an army commander is confronted with preliminary tasks whose proper accomplishment is a prerequisite to finial success. Other tasks must be accomplished when the bulk of the opposing forces are engaged while still others must be performed when pursue the beaten enemy or are forced ourselves to retire from the field. The character of the tasks to be performed fixes in a general way, the characteristics of the troops assigned to them.
3. The various tasks that the combat arms are expected respectively to perform become their general “missions”. In organizing combat forces, the question then arises, “how should those troops be equipped to enable them to carry out these missions?” Here is where we see the modern stamp on our forces, as they are equipped with new implements of war to assist them in solving missions centuries old.
4. Too often in the past organization has been attempted from the standpoint of equipment rather than from the standpoint of missions assigned.
5. Few classes of equipment belong exclusively to any one arm. The rifle although the basic arm of infantry, is an important item of the equipment of other arms. When the tank had only the speed of the foot soldier, its use was confined generally to close support of the infantry in attack. When it required strategic mobility, it has to be entrucked. Today, tanks possessing great strategic mobility are being developed, and it follows that certain types of those tanks may appear in organizations having missions far beyond the normal missions assigned to the infantry.
6. Cavalry acquired its name during a period when soldiers mounted on horses were able to move more rapidly upon the enemy than any other arm. At that time the horse also had a value as a charging weapon. Thus, there has grown up in the public mind a very natural conception that cavalry must include the horse. Modern firearms have eliminated the horse as a weapon, and as a means of transportation he has generally become, next to the dismounted man, the slowest means of transportation. In some special cases of difficult terrain, the horse, properly supplemented by motor transportation, may still furnish the best mobility, and this situation is properly borne in mind in all our plans.
7. The missions of the cavalry arm now, as in the past, include the following:
8. Long distance strategic reconnaissance.
9. Fighting for the control of the theater of reconnaissance.
10. Seizing points of strategic and tactical importance.
11. Tactical reconnaissance.
12. Pursuit of the enemy, or delay of his advance.
13. As an exploitation force to take advantage of any break or weakened point in a hostile battle line. In this type of operation, the cavalry may act alone or in conjunction with other arms.
14. As a part of a reserve to be used tactically or strategically. It is not difficult to visualize a reserve of the future, moving out in column from head to rear --- Cavalry (mechanized), units of the Tank Corps, Infantry temporarily embussed, all elements being able to move at a uniform speed without noise. Field artillery must be prepared to support such a force with units especially organized and equipped to accompany it.

An equally important function of the arm is to preserve the cavalry spirit, an asset which, while intangible, is none the less a vital factor in combat.

1. To enable the cavalry to develop its organization and equipment so as to maintain its ability under modern conditions to perform the missions enumerated, the following program is announced:
2. The Mechanized Force will be reorganized as a reinforced cavalry regiment, in which appropriate equipment of the present Mechanized Force will be absorbed. To proved for future development of the proper supporting arms for use with mechanized cavalry units perhaps larger that a regiment, the artillery and maintenance units will remain attached for the present.
3. As far as necessary, officers and enlisted men of any arm or corps may be attached to the regiment in order that the best thought upon this subject may be brought to the cavalry. Changes in enlisted personnel will be made gradually so as to accomplish both the retention of the experience gained in the Mechanized Force and the reconstitution of detached units in their parent organizations.
4. The cavalry will undergo such general reorganization and re-equipment as will enable it best to perform the missions enumerated in paragraph “7” above. This may require at least two types of cavalry regiments. One (horsed) in which the horse and mule may remain only where they cannot be replaced by motor for the performance of difficult tactical missions, or for operations in the best mobility. A second type of cavalry (mechanized) in which the horse and mule has disappeared entirely.
5. The infantry mission is to close with the enemy, and its ability and power to accomplish this makes infantry the decisive arm. Its success is a prerequisite to army success; consequently, its efforts must not be dispersed in the performance of auxiliary and supporting missions that can be carried out by other arms. In time of peace the infantry will be trained in close proximity with other arms in order to develop the team work and mutual understanding so necessary to insure the accomplishment of the infantry mission.

As one of the principal duties of the tank will be to support infantry, it should be trained with it to develop the most efficient type of machines and most applicable methods of tank support for the infantry units. But the tank itself may never become a piece of equipment assigned to an infantry regiment. In war, tank organizations may be assigned to corps and army troops to be employed where opportunity offers, including opportunities of terrain.

In the development of tanks, and tank organizations, it must be remembered that certain important considerations apply to the employment of tank units in war. Among these are:

1. Tanks will be difficult to procure in large numbers, particularly in the early stages of any war.
2. Opportunities for their best employment on the battle front must be carefully selected, both as to time and as to place. They are assault weapons only, to be used for relatively short periods of time, under favorable opportunities.
3. Maintenance will offer many difficulties, particularly in the areas of front line divisions.

All those considerations indicate the desirability for visualizing tank units in war as Corps, Army and G.H.Q. troops. In the development of the tank, due regards must be paid to the necessity for strategic mobility, even though its fundamental qualification must be tactical mobility.

1. The “tank” is properly the term that will be used when this vehicle is employed with infantry. When it is employed as a part of the equipment of cavalry, it may be developed to possess characteristics particularly requisite for such service, and it might then be given the name of “combat car”.

(Signed) DOUGLAS MacARTHUR

 General

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