

SCOUT MOUT: Model for Future Cavalry Training

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Armored Cavalry's Role In Regional Operations

The increase in the number of regional conflicts, coupled with the strong role the United States is taking in international affairs, has caused many units to update their Mission Essential Task Lists (METL) to include "regional operations." Instead of Marines or light infantry, the next U.S. involvement could include armored cavalry units on the troop list. The deciding factors will probably be the mission, the regional threat, and the terrain.

Cavalry units cannot deploy out of theater rapidly enough to accomplish missions such as noncombatant evacuation or antiterrorist operations. But given suitable terrain, armored cavalry units offer "more bang for the buck" in operations such as peacemaking, peacekeeping, and humanitarian/convo escort operations.

With a combined arms organization at troop-level, an organic howitzer battery in each ground squadron, and an aviation squadron with over 60 helicopters, an armored cavalry regiment's combat power supports the principles of economy of force and unity of command. The regiment's

own combat support squadron, military intelligence company, and engineer company reduce the joint task force commander's need to task-organize units to ensure the proper mix of combat, combat support, and combat service support.

More importantly, the cavalry's basic mission task list supports many of the operations a commander would require during a regional operation. Conventional mechanized forces generally require a thoroughly prepared battlefield with sufficient time (36-48 hours) to mount each operation. As the corps' covering force, the ACR is expected to react rapidly when ordered and to gain and maintain contact with hostile forces in a fluid environment. This is accomplished in the offense through zone, area, or route reconnaissance. Any one or all of these tasks can be expected in a low to medium threat theater. An ACR has the inherent capability to attack or defend (in a non-economy of force role) against both of these threat levels. Cavalry security missions such as screen and area security also have a direct corollary in regional operations, especially for peacekeeping operations.

This all leads to the conclusion that armored cavalry units, particularly ACRs, are well-suited for regional operations. Assuming that the United States will continue to get involved in regional conflicts, it is, therefore, a good possibility that the next cavalry mission could be a regional operation. As cavalry leaders, we owe it to our soldiers to prepare them for this future environment. How does an armored cavalry unit train for a regional operation? The Blackhorse Regiment recently addressed this question, and in the process developed a model for future training exercises.

A Methodology for Training Regional Operations

In the summer of 1992, V Corps directed a METL change for all major subordinate commands. The task "Conduct Regional Operations," with its numerous contingencies, was added. After years of the heavy-threat mentality, this subject was new to everyone, so the regimental staff conducted a detailed mission analysis and presented it to the regimental commander through a series of officer professional development seminars.

Scouts remount a Bradley Fighting Vehicle while conducting local security in a built-up area.



Using FM 25-100 as a guide, the first step was to determine the supporting tasks for each mission. Open media sources — especially television news — provided a lot of the information used to create models for analysis. Canadian and British operations in Yugoslavia, under the auspices of the United Nations, and the U.S. operations in Somalia were followed very closely. Eventually, we assigned each probable mission that supported leader and collective tasks.

All but one of the collective tasks were familiar at small-unit level; it was still basic “blocking and tackling” from this perspective. But the conditions for performance of these METL tasks had changed. Despite this difference, commanders could still formulate an assessment of unit training status through evaluation under the more common conditions.

The mission “Escort a Humanitarian Relief Convoy” was different. The subtask “Escort Supply Trucks” was a new one and had never been executed, let alone evaluated in the regiment. It was certainly common in Croatia and, with the possibility of U.S. units performing it in Somalia soon, the regimental commander directed his staff to focus on this one first.

Analyzing the Escort Convoy Mission

The regimental S3 section researched tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) for the convoy escort mission, and quickly determined there was little doctrine on this subject. However, some information was available from the regiment’s own history in Vietnam. While these accounts of the “Road-Runner” missions

did not provide detailed lessons learned, they provided insights on possible enemy tactics and provided general direction for further TTP development. We determined that the troop was the best unit to escort a convoy of up to 50 trucks and developed a recommended organization. Each convoy would have three serials: a small route recon team; the initial main body serial, light with trucks, but heavy with combat vehicles; and the rest of the main body with the majority of the supply trucks.

Assumptions were tested through the use of simulation wargaming. Aviation was also integrated and the TTP was further refined. We determined that the basic convoy organization worked, but that combat vehicles needed to be interspersed with the supply vehicles to offer more protection. Aeroscout teams could clear routes before the ground element reached the starting point, but indigenous forces committed to emplacing an obstacle would wait for aircraft to pass. Even attaching engineers to the route recon team did not always work. It established a pattern, and local hostiles could wait for this element to pass and then emplace an obstacle between elements. Built-up areas (BUAs), with their restrictive terrain, were ideal ambush sites and very challenging for the escort forces.

The wargaming proved several things. First, with its TO&E and doctrine, the cavalry is ideally suited for this mission. Second, at the basic scout section and platoon level, none of the tasks they perform escorting a relief convoy are radically different from the battle tasks they normally perform in support of the troop METL. Scouts react to direct fire, take actions at an obstacle, etc., almost the same way as before. Again, what is different are the conditions, and the most difficult condition is urban terrain. Finally, since reaction forces could sometimes take up to 30 minutes to arrive, small unit proficiency in these basic tasks needs to be at a T + level.

These last two factors validated what the regimental commander had been advocating for some time. In the training guidance, the regimental commander told leaders to identify the five or six basic tasks each small unit performs, and focus efforts on training these to standard. The keys to success are imaginative use of resources and task repetition. Looking at the upcoming Hammelburg densities, the regimental commander issued guidance to build the training scenario for “Scout MOUT” around a regional operation to prove his points on training and to evaluate troop performance of the convoy escort mission.

Training Cycle

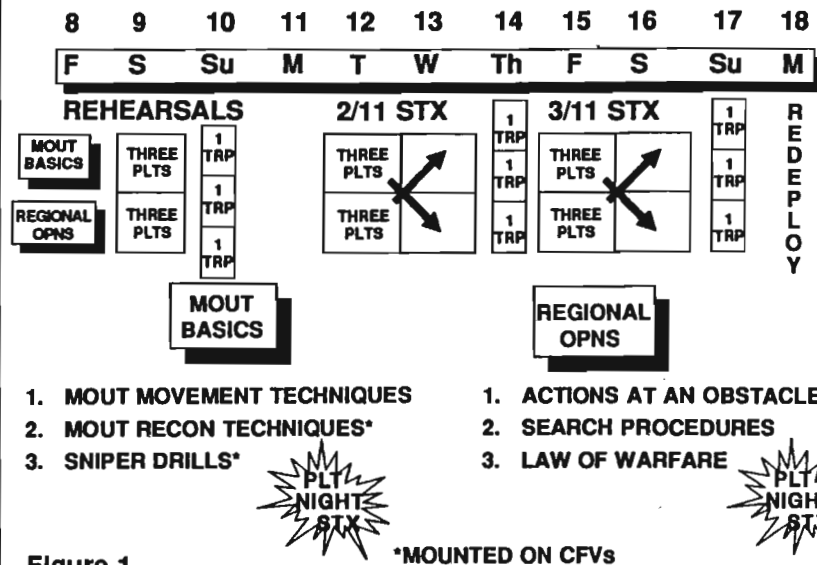


Figure 1

Scout MOUT Exercise Development

In the spring of 1992, while resourcing FY93 Annual Training Guidance, the regimental S3 signed up for Hammelburg, an Allied Major Training Area. This is a small training area, less than 36 square kilometers, but it has one of the world's best MOUT training facilities — Bonnland.

Military Operations on Urban Terrain has always been an identified weakness in the Blackhorse because it was never considered a mission essential task, and hence never properly resourced. The regiment's trainers had begun to consider MOUT a change in training conditions (built-up terrain as opposed to the normal open terrain) rather than a separate task in itself, and decided to sign-up for two ten-day periods to train scouts in MOUT basics. The January 1993 density fit nicely into the regiment's calendar because it came after a busy first quarter that included a long gunnery/CMTC deployment and holiday block leave for the entire regiment. It would be a good way to get back into the training mode. The name Scout MOUT was readily adopted.

Hammelburg actually has two MOUT facilities: the 50-building town of Bonnland and the 12-building Hundsfeld village. The regiment scheduled both MOUT sites and the "Waldkampf Bahn" (forest fighting training facility) because it best supported tracked vehicle maneuver. As opposed to the MOUT training site at CMTC, tracked vehicles are permitted on any improved trail or road in Bonnland, allowing scouts to train as they would fight. An asphalt tank road also circles the entire training area, but traffic is only permitted Thursdays through Sundays because of range operations the rest of the week. Aviation could not be incorporated into the exercise due to numerous German flight restrictions in the area.

The regimental training officer developed a progressive training scheme based on the commander's guidance and resources available. Each squadron would receive a three-day training package. The training focused on the scout platoon, and was organized into two different areas: MOUT Operations and Regional Operations. Each area had three platoon training stations; platoons rotated stations every three hours. At the end of the day,

each scout platoon was evaluated in the performance of those three tasks through a night situational training exercise (STX). The next day, platoons went to the other area, and began the process again. The third day was considered the "graduation exercise," with each troop (-) escorting a convoy through hostile terrain.

An entire regional scenario was developed for the country of "Hamm-land." The scenario supported all of the platoon and troop training. The Hammlandians, an ethnic minority, had seceded from "Neuvolkland" after the country's long-time dictator had died. The larger Slovenian republic is determined to protect the rights of the ethnic Slovenians in Hammland, and vicious fighting has broken out. Many people in the region are on the verge of starvation, and the Blackhorse is a part of a United Nations relief effort. Cultural handbooks were manufactured and distributed to all units. A skit was developed using linguists from the MI company for the inprocessing brief to reinforce the differences in the factions.

The regimental staff judge advocate (RSJA) also developed a realistic set of rules of engagement (ROE) to support the entire scenario. The ROE state in effect at all times was AMBER. The governing condition for this state was that we were not at war. Soldiers were instructed to use only the minimum force necessary to control a situation without endangering friendly units or risking the success of the mission. All personnel were to take measures to minimize the risk to civilians. ROE RED only came into effect in the event of war, but still restricted certain reactions.

Platoon Training

The actual MOUT training encompassed dismounted movement in built-up areas, reacting to direct fire (sniper), and reconnaissance of a built-up area by a scout platoon. The dismounted

movement station taught individual scouts and teams the basics without getting into in-depth infantry tactics not appropriate for reconnaissance. It culminated in a 15-station MOUT obstacle course that allowed scouts to move confidently in urban terrain. Reacting to a sniper was geared towards sections, and reinforced the MOUT principles of suppress, isolate, and clear. The MOUT recon station taught a mounted scout platoon the drill for reconnaissance of a BUA using a three-section organization. The night STX evaluated the scout platoon's ability to reconnoiter a built-up area and react to fire from a two-man sniper team. One sniper would always quickly attempt to escape after contact to test the platoon's ability to isolate the building. The other remained behind to evaluate the platoon's clearing procedures.

Regional operations focused on three critical areas. The RSJA presented a class on the Law of Land Warfare and used a hands-on approach to cover situations soldiers might encounter in a region stricken by factional conflict. Another team instructed a course on proper EPW search and handling

techniques, and evaluated performance using uniformed and civilian combatants.

The third team trained platoon actions at an obstacle and hasty breach drills with an attached engineer squad. This night STX was especially difficult. The platoon would encounter a point minefield "guarded" by armed indigenous personnel. These local fighters never threatened the platoon and, in accordance with the Law of Warfare and the ROE, the platoon could not initiate hostile actions against them. While the platoon attempted to negotiate with these personnel, a machine gun ambushed them from a flank. The platoon had to quickly decide how to treat these "guards" (they are never able to determine which faction fired at them) without committing a war crime and then still reduce the obstacle.

Trainers were experienced officers and NCOs nominated by the squadrons. They attended a two-day Observer/Controller/Evaluator (OCE) academy designed and executed by the regimental training officer and the regimental scout master gunner. In order to train MOUT Recon and

React to a Sniper, they had to actually develop the standard drills and then the evaluation checklists because FM 17-98 and FM 17-98-1 do not cover these tasks in depth. Throughout the execution of the exercise, the regimental S3 acted as the senior OCE and the training section maintained the training standards while 1/11 managed the training assets and administered the schedule. OCEs also evaluated platoons during the night STX and the troop integration exercise. First Squadron's troop commanders acted as the troop OCEs for the integration exercise because they were now the most experienced in the mission.

As opposed to regimentally sponsored events in the past, SCOUT MOUT was not a competition; it was training to a standard first, then receiving an evaluation. During the day-time training, OCEs walked units through by the numbers and made on-the-spot corrections to ensure that everyone performed to standard. Only after passing through these "gates" were platoons ready for the night STX.

The "Graduation" Exercise

On Day 2, troop commanders also received leader training on convoy escort from the regimental S3. In a 90-minute class, he covered the TTP developed from the regimental staff seminars, recommended task organizations, and discussed lessons learned from previous iterations. Immediately after the class, the commanders received a squadron OPORD; each troop would escort 10 supply trucks the next day with three-hour blocks between convoys. Commanders had the rest of the day to do their own intelligence preparation of the battlefield and devise a plan.

Each convoy encountered at least five different situations:

- A hasty point minefield usually laid in between the first and second



A convoy moves past a "disabled" supply truck in the village of Bonnländ.

1/11 ACR's Recommended Convoy Organization Based on Integration Exercise Experience

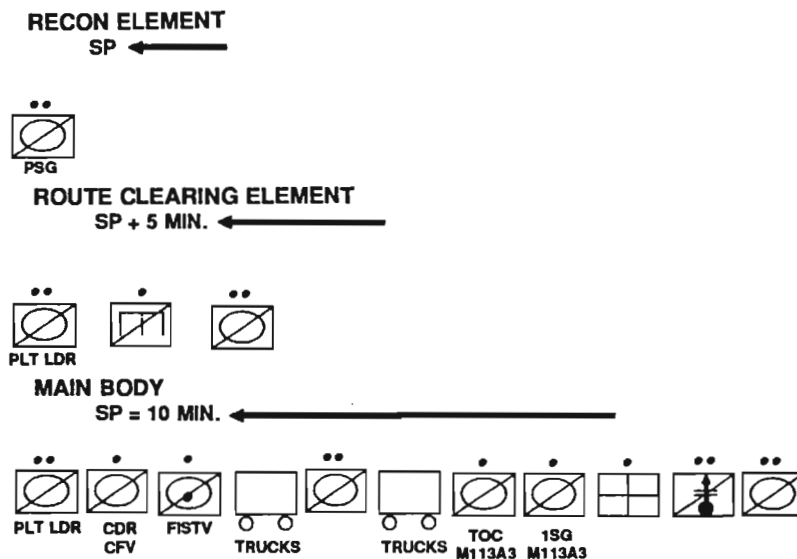


Figure 2

serials. It could be unguarded, covered by sniper fire, or covered by mortar fire. In each case, rapid obstacle clearing drills ensured the convoy remained safe.

- A roadblock manned by either hostile or sympathetic host nation partisans demanding to see the convoy's commander. A good understanding of the regional handbook was absolutely necessary here, and if the scouts negotiated, they could at the very least pass, but might also receive some valuable combat critical information.

Convoys also encountered an obnoxious BNN (Blackhorse News Network) camera team trying to get a scoop here. They were interjected to raise the stress level — they would persistently pester leaders attempting to talk to the locals — and the tapes they made were also used in the troop after-action reviews.

- A squad-size ambush that targeted the soft-skinned vehicles. This force would not attempt to exfiltrate until it was either destroyed by direct fire or received indirect fire from the troop's mortars.

- A built-up area with sympathetic civilians who mobbed the lead relief

supply truck. After the convoy halted, a sniper would open up on the truck, scattering the civilians, and wounding one in the process. The troop commander had the option here of ordering the convoy to attempt a bypass, or have that building cleared and the damaged truck pushed off the road. In either case, there were still friendly and civilian personnel to deal with.

- A machine gun team on the far side of town ambushed any members of the troop attempting to reinforce the forces engaged with the sniper. The only option here was to react to the direct fire and clear the building.

Convoy Escort Lessons Learned

First Squadron's experience with the convoy escort was typical. All three missions were successful, but experienced some problems. Each commander met the five situations with varying degrees of difficulty and resolution. Basic skills, such as road marching, actions at an obstacle, actions on contact, and reporting, were executed to standard. However, tricky situations involving either passive or hostile action by one of the host

nation's factions required quick thinking or refined reaction by junior leaders and their subordinates. This did not go as well as we hoped. For example, every roadblock in situation #2, manned either by hostile or sympathetic local fighters, was forcibly removed. Negotiations would have been better, circumventing possible violent situations.

Each convoy did make it to the release point within the three-hour standard. Each convoy ended up losing from one to two UN relief supply trucks, and at least two to three WIAs. Valuable lessons learned were collected during the convoys and at the AARs. The major ones include:

- Our scouts were too aggressive toward the indigenous population. In some cases, they violated the civil rights of unarmed civilians while attempting to establish local security. Scouts cannot treat every civilian, even the armed ones, as "contact." If that BNN news team had been for real, some unfortunate events would have been displayed world-wide, creating an international incident for the U.S. Relations with the locals are very sensitive in nature, and an in-depth knowledge of the regional situation and the ROE are essential to success.

- Almost every troop organized its convoy differently, but all provided for a lead reconnaissance element. The recon teams that deliberately reconned the route had more success in clearing the route. When they identified obstacles, they breached a lane and then continued with their mission, leaving a squad to overwatch it and prevent reseeding. In future convoy escort operations, commanders want to test the possibility of having a squad or section from the recon element double-back along the route to discourage sabotage attempts. Commanders also unanimously decided to eliminate the M577 from future convoys because of its inability to maintain the rate of march.



Scouts practice urban movement during MOUT basics training.

- Working in coordination with non-radio equipped supply trucks, the commander must develop a common SOP for actions drills and signaling. One recommendation was to use flags to signal from the CFVs to the trucks, and to use lights to signal from the trucks to the escort vehicles.

- Indirect fire was almost never used due to the rapid nature of partisan tactics. What commanders can do is plan targets on possible ambush sites, and then continuously update the mortar priority target as the convoy approaches and passes targets. This increases the effectiveness of the mortars even though it is a hip-shoot.

- While the engineer assured us that the "pop-and-drop" technique for clearing hasty point minefields would not crater the road and make it unpassable for wheeled traffic, some were concerned with using the technique in a BUA. Secondary explosions could cause unwanted collateral damage to civilian property. Grappling seems to be the preferred alternative.

Assessment of the Exercise Planning and Execution

Scout MOUT also set the standard for future training events in the Blackhorse.

The feedback from the scouts was extremely positive. Many thought it was about time the regiment took a close look at MOUT. Others enjoyed the challenges of urban terrain. Leaders appreciated the opportunity to train tasks to a standard prior to any evaluation.

The days of plenty are over, and we must make imaginative use of the resources available. The most highly praised training event in recent regimental history did not bust the budget

due to the use of vehicle hot-seating, the low OPTEMPO mileage brought about by the standardized training plans, and the use of internal assets to meet some of the transportation requirements. Redundancy was also eliminated by designating one squadron host to provide all the base camp and training requirements. The host unit command post was invaluable as the Exercise Control Center, because they coordinated the movement of all assets and units (including OPFOR), published training schedules, and ran the net control station.

Conclusion

Although the exercise was titled Scout MOUT 1993, many different MOSs participated in the intense training regime. All departed with the conviction that the training was worthwhile and that missions of this nature require special attention. The Blackhorse Regiment is unique in its capabilities and feels confident in its ability to meet the demanding requirements of units deployed for a regional operation.

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