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
Total	64	140	51	262	8	40	91	656

Takeaways

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

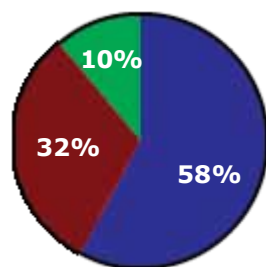58 percent of the 19-series commands are cavalry troops.

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.)

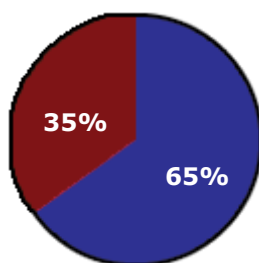**Figure 1. Distribution of maneuver commands.**

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Total armor commands: 203

Tank companies: 64 (32%)
Cavalry troops: 117 (58%)
HHTs: 21 (10%)

Line-troop commands: 181
Tank companies: 64 (35%)
Cavalry troops: 117 (65%)

Total Armor commands

- Cavalry troop
- Tank company
- HHT

58% / 32% / 10%

Line commands

- Cavalry troop
- Tank company

65% / 35%

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
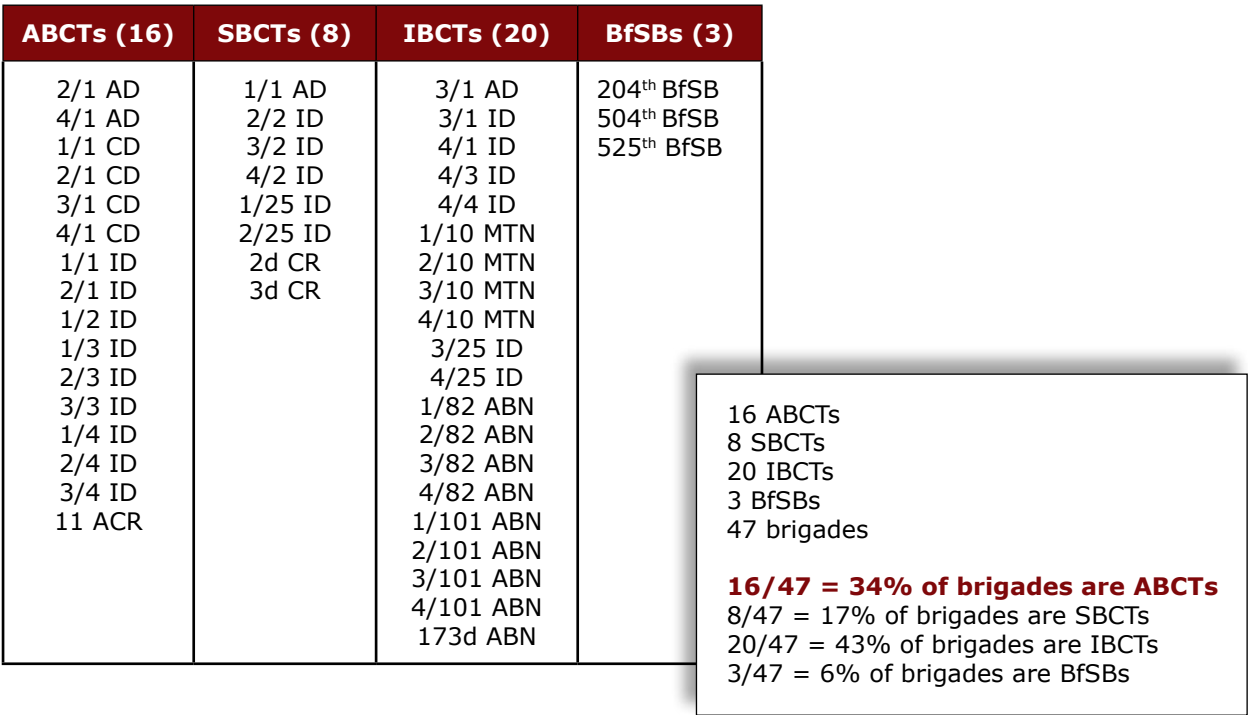
ABCTs (16)	SBCTs (8)	IBCTs (20)	BfSBs (3)
2/1 AD	1/1 AD	3/1 AD	204th BfSB
4/1 AD	2/2 ID	3/1 ID	504th BfSB
1/1 CD	3/2 ID	4/1 ID	525th BfSB
2/1 CD	4/2 ID	4/3 ID	
3/1 CD	1/25 ID	4/4 ID	
4/1 CD	2/25 ID	1/10 MTN	
1/1 ID	2d CR	2/10 MTN	
2/1 ID	3d CR	3/10 MTN	
1/2 ID		4/10 MTN	
1/3 ID		3/25 ID	
2/3 ID		4/25 ID	
3/3 ID		1/82 ABN	
1/4 ID		2/82 ABN	
2/4 ID		3/82 ABN	
3/4 ID		4/82 ABN	
11 ACR		1/101 ABN	
		2/101 ABN	
		3/101 ABN	
		4/101 ABN	
		173d ABN	

16 ABCTs
8 SBCTs
20 IBCTs
3 BfSBs
47 brigades

16/47 = 34% of brigades are ABCTs
8/47 = 17% of brigades are SBCTs
20/47 = 43% of brigades are IBCTs
3/47 = 6% of brigades are BfSBs

Figure 3. Distribution of maneuver commands.

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  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
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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 82nd 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."[1] 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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Notes

[1] 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.

Department of the Army, FM 3-21.21, ***The Stryker Brigade Combat Team Infantry Battalion***, Washington, DC, 2003.

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Kotter, J.P., ***Leading Change***, Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

Pike, J., ***Brigade Combat Team***, June 28, 2013; retrieved July 15, 2013, from http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/bua-list.htm.

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