

# FORUM & FEATURES



## Extended Cross-Attachment

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Combined arms operations are the bedrock of heavy maneuver force tactics. But if a maneuver unit commander is to maintain the tactical proficiency of a company team or a battalion task force, he needs to have both the infantry and the armor components consistently available for training. Unfortunately, this is not easily attained. Even within brigades, training priorities, budget limitations, scheduling conflicts, or competing activities often keep task forces from forming for specific training periods. As a consequence, infantrymen and tankers seldom gain the practical experience they need to employ attached combat elements effectively. Leaders, therefore, have to exploit any procedure that brings them closer to attaining this fundamental training objective.

One technique that has proved successful in solving this training problem is the extended cross-attachment of maneuver companies between infantry and tank battalions in the same brigade.

Over the past two years, the 1st Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) has validated this concept, which entails the exchange of companies between infantry and tank battalions for a period of about six months. In effect, a tank company, for example, becomes an integral part of a mechanized infantry battalion, subject exclusively to that battalion's training directives, policies, and pro-

grams. (At the same time, a mechanized infantry company becomes an integral part of a tank battalion.) The tank company is integrated into the infantry battalion's master training plan, which virtually eliminates the competing activities that often thwart efforts to conduct solid combined arms training. Tank gunnery is the only part of the training program that may require the tank company to return temporarily to the operational control of its parent battalion. All its other needs, including supply and maintenance, are met by the infantry battalion.

Several factors must be considered, however, before a unit decides to implement an extended cross-attachment program: First, because it is a brigade-directed action, the brigade's staff must closely plan, support, and monitor it to resolve any unanticipated problems. If COHORT units are involved, company overseas rotation or deactivation dates must be taken into consideration. Cross-attachment is impractical if either of the battalions concerned is in the process of receiving and training a new COHORT company or deploying one to Germany.

Agreements must be reached, too, regarding the administration and logistics of this program. Such factors as UCMJ jurisdiction, efficiency report rating schemes, promotion authority, billeting arrangements, readiness reporting, and combat ser-

vice support requirements must be examined in detail and spelled out in writing.

In the 4th Division, some of these major planning issues were resolved in the following ways:

- Each battalion commander was given complete Article 15 authority over the personnel assigned to the attached company.

- All administrative actions except reenlistments and leaves were processed through the parent battalion's personnel administration center.

- Efficiency report rating schemes for all detached personnel were unaffected except for the company commanders — their rating chains were adjusted to add as the intermediate rater the commander of the battalion to which they were attached.

- The attached company continued to submit its SIDPERS transactions, unit status reports, and materiel condition status reports through its parent battalion. The commander of the battalion to which it was attached, however, received daily personnel status and deadline reports from the company and was responsible for the operational readiness of his attached company's equipment.

- The infantry battalion required some combat service support augmentation from the tank battalion to take care of hauling the extra fuel and ammunition and to meet the recovery needs imposed by the attachment of the tank company. The

dedication of a cargo GOER and a fuel GOER to the cross-attachment package satisfied these CSS shortages.

- Because the billets and orderly rooms were close enough within the brigade area, the affected companies stayed in their original facilities. But all vehicles and ancillary equipment belonging to each company were relocated to the appropriate battalion motor pool.

- A company's funds continued to be allocated by its parent battalion, with the battalion to which the company was attached being responsible for tracking the expenditures on a weekly basis.

- So that their employment would be more flexible, the two TOW

systems that were organic to the rifle company but consolidated in the anti-tank platoon of the combat support company participated in the cross-attachment.

The feasibility of such an extended cross-attachment program was demonstrated repeatedly throughout two six-month iterations, each of which included a successful rotation to the National Training Center. The habitual relationships that developed through these prolonged associations fostered a solid understanding of tank-infantry employment. These relationships also gave the infantry units a better appreciation for the problems inherent in a tank unit's sustainment operations.

Only through a long-term relationship of this nature can a battalion train habitually with an attached company and achieve a high degree of mission proficiency that makes the most of the abilities of both of these combat arms.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM A. DePALO, JR., developed the brigade's implementation plan for the extended cross-attachment concept, monitored its execution, and, as commander of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 10th Infantry, at Fort Carson, had a tank company attached to his battalion for five months.

## Israeli M113s

CAPTAIN EDWIN L. KENNEDY, JR.

The experiences of the Israeli Army in the war in Lebanon have led a number of professional military men to criticize the use of mechanized infantry in its mounted role. Unfortunately, much of the criticism stems from a generalized view of the results without a careful analysis of the causes.

The heavy loss of M113 infantry personnel carriers in Lebanon has caused the Israelis to look again at their use of mechanized infantry. It has also caused critics of infantry fighting vehicles in general to claim that infantry AFVs are of no use on the modern battlefield. But to understand why the Israelis suffered such losses, it is important to consider the various factors that affect their employment of mechanized infantry and how their employment differs from that advocated by the U.S. Army.

The Israelis learned quickly during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War that armor

could not operate on the battlefield independently of infantry and combat engineers. Accordingly, they modified their organizations and equipment to meet the requirements of combined arms operations, and their mechanized infantry companies are now organic to their armor battalions.

The Israelis quickly filled their arsenals with American-made M113 armored personnel carriers for these mechanized infantry companies. This meant they had to modify the M113s, however, to fit their particular requirements dealing primarily with the terrain and the need to keep pace with fast-moving armored columns. Obviously, if the Israeli mechanized infantry was to move with and provide close-in mutual support for their tanks, the U.S. M113 personnel carrier had to be turned into a fighting vehicle — an important difference.

This change created a number of problems, some of which the Israelis solved by altering the vehicle's

structure:

- The troop seats were emplaced in the center of the carrier facing outward so they would be easier for the troops to stand on and fire from.

- Two swivel mounts with pintles were emplaced forward of and on each side of the cargo hatch for MAG 58s. (7.62mm light machineguns). (The MAG 58s can be dismounted for the infantry squad's use.)

- Cargo racks were put on the outside of the carriers to clear the tops for fighting.

- The communication junction boxes were supplemented and their locations changed to facilitate the control of fires while mounted.

In addition to the driver, the .50 caliber machinegunner (in the cupola), the two MAG 58 machinegunners, and the squad leader (located in the cargo hatch) were equipped with combat vehicle crewman helmets while mounted. With this arrangement, the squad leader could control