
CAMBs

A Better Solution

CAPTAIN MATTHEW MOTEN

An experiment in combat organization is being conducted at Fort Hood that warrants closer inspection by all professionals of the combined arms. This experiment is called the combined arms maneuver battalion (CAMB).

Armies have been task organizing since the inception of mounted combat. In World War II the trend on both sides of the front in the European Theater was to adjust their combat units into balanced combinations of infantry, armor, antiarmor, and artillery elements. And the Israelis found in 1973 that armor could not survive without infantry.

Field Manual 100-5, Operations, sets forth the necessity to "combine arms and sister services to complement and reinforce" as an imperative of the AirLand Battle. Most of our plans for the defense of Western Europe, in fact, call for the employment of task forces rather than pure battalions.

U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) units have learned that forming proper task organizations is a major factor in their successful performance at the National Training Center (NTC). Further, in order to develop teamwork and cohesion before training at Fort Irwin, brigades have begun task organizing during their train-up periods. This phenomenon, called "habitual cross-attachment," occurs on a regular basis for the purpose of allowing units to grow accustomed to working together. (See also "Extended Cross-Attachment," by Lieutenant Colonel William

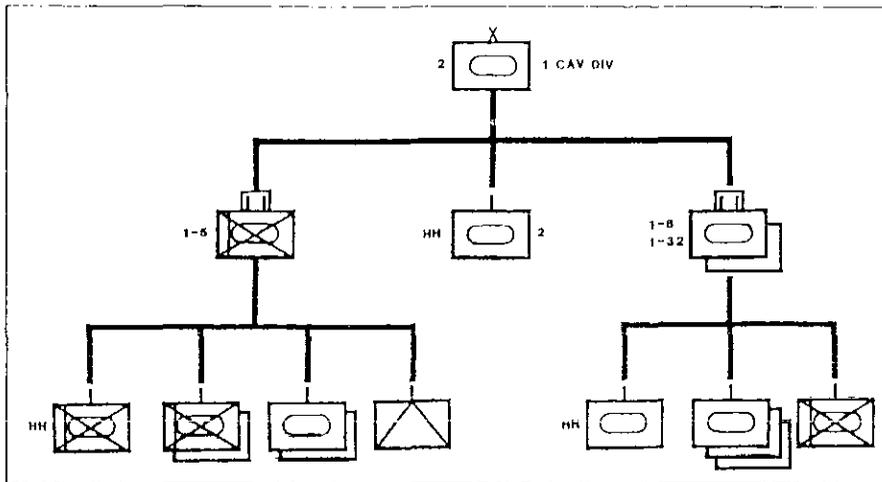
A. DePalo, Jr., *INFANTRY*, July-August 1984, pages 5-6.)

The problem with habitual cross-attachment is that it forces us to fight against countless Army systems, from personnel and administration to prescribed load lists (PLLs) and unit status reporting. In the 2d Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division, we found that to overcome the problems involved, we needed a documented MTOE (modified table of organization and equipment). In September 1986 we

received authorization for just that.

The result is the combined arms maneuver battalion, or CAMB (pronounced cam-BEE). Our CAMBs are organized in accordance with AirLand Battle doctrine. Thus, Task Force 1-5 Cavalry is a balanced task force with a mechanized infantry base. The other two task forces, TF 1-8 Cavalry and TF 1-32 Armor, are tank-heavy, each with three tank companies and one Bradley company (see diagram).





This organization is not a "best guess" but a partial solution to any postulated combat task organization. CAMB allows us to start with a mix that will sustain a task force organization from the standpoints of support and command and control.

Our CAMBs also make further reorganization easier because their headquarters and headquarters companies (HHCs) are configured to support their respective task forces. There has been no addition of people, authorizations, or equipment for CAMB—our MTOEs did not allow it. The only cost of CAMB to date has been directly associated with the testing of the concept.

There has been some realignment of the personnel and equipment in the HHCs. First, the executive officer and the S-3 Air in the tank-heavy task forces are infantrymen while in TF 1-5 Cavalry, those slots are coded armor. Second, the CAMB MTOEs cross-level mechanics and authorized PLL stockages as well as five-ton trucks and heavy expanded mobility tactical trucks (HEMTTs) and their drivers and fuel handlers. Finally, there has been an exchange of test, measurement, and diagnostic equipment (TMDE). Because this is a zero-sum game, however, the balanced task force is left without one set of MI adapter hardware for STE-M1/FVS and MI break-out boxes.

The feedback from the soldiers and leaders in the combined arms maneuver battalions is generally positive. Most leaders note increases in

the ability to further task organize, in their own knowledge of combined arms, and in cohesion among all ranks. CAMB allows us to train together and to develop the teamwork and cohesion that is so crucial to winning the AirLand Battle. We *think* combined arms every day.

What makes CAMB unique and worthwhile is the MTOE documentation of the concept. The various supporting systems with which we all work are friendlier to CAMB because of the official recognition of its existence. The armor-based task force can requisition Bradley infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) parts or HM soldiers as easily as the infantry-based task force can. When we compare this to the bureaucratic struggles with habitual cross-attachment, CAMB truly begins to show its worth.

SUPPORT

Because supply and maintenance support for both M1 Abrams tanks and M2 Bradleys is in place in each of the task forces, we are better able to accommodate further task reorganization. And because of the better training opportunities we have and the improved sustainability of our tanks and IFVs, we are able to more fully exploit their combat power.

Infantry and armor leaders in the CAMBs have a better appreciation for the skills, capabilities, and employment of each other's units. They are also better able to train each other's

soldiers. Task force commanders have developed tougher standards for cross-attached companies because they more fully understand the capabilities of those units. Despite some initial fears, our infantrymen have found that their dismounted skills have not been lost, and that they now have more opportunity to train as combined arms teams. Bradley gunnery has also improved throughout the brigade, largely because of the infantrymen's relationship with the tankers, whose greatest institutional strength is their skill in direct fire gunnery.

We are not satisfied with the configuration of the HHC. In addition to needing one set of diagnostic test equipment (STE-M1) adapters, each CAMB would be better able to support itself with a standard HEMTT fleet. We have not implemented these solutions because our experimental charter was to change without any additions. One of the lessons of CAMB, however, seems to be the need to develop a common battlefield base (HHC). This base would provide command and control and support for any combination of tank and mechanized infantry companies (up to a total of five). Such a standardized HHC would require some redistribution of personnel and some limited changes in equipment authorizations.

This issue is problematic, because it is difficult to say how far one should go with the standardization of the HHCs. For instance, with varying numbers of attached companies, the mechanics in the HHC may be under- or over-employed, depending on their MOSs (military occupational specialties). Certainly it is true that one could not develop a standard HHC for all heavy battalions, because pure battalions with such HHCs would be under-resourced in some areas and "fat" in others.

A final assessment of CAMB is elusive, because we find ourselves trying to evaluate intangibles. Such an evaluation is naturally subjective. But the leaders who work with CAMB do feel positive about it. The increase in camaraderie and cohesion has improved our combat effective-

ness. There is simply no question that we are better able to task organize than our colleagues in pure battalions. Of the four ways that a heavy battalion can organize—pure, balanced, tank-heavy or mechanized infantry-heavy (depending on the battalion base), and reinforced—CAMB gives us a leg up on all of those except for “pure,” which is the least likely in any situation.

We must train and sustain as we intend to fight. CAMB is intended to organize our maneuver elements to train at the task force level in order to fight the AirLand Battle. It facilitates task organization changes on the basis of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process and METT-T. It is a partial step toward a favorable wartime maneuver configuration, which is a far cry from no solution at

all. CAMB embraces the combined arms concept to a degree rarely seen before in the history of our Army.

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Scout Platoon Offensive Reconnaissance

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The scout platoon will cross the line of departure 30 minutes before the heavy task force's lead element. The S-2 has only vague knowledge from brigade where the enemy forces are, and the task force commander must rely on his "eyes," his scouts, to find them. He tells the scout platoon leader to mark the limits of the enemy's fire sack. The scout leader replies that he has only 30 minutes in which to execute his reconnaissance before the task force moves out. The commander says that is plenty of time, the staff needed eight hours to complete the order and brief.

It is 1000 hours as the scout platoon crosses the LD, and suddenly the platoon leader's track becomes a blazing wreck; he has found an enemy kill zone. The remaining scout tracks move toward the flanks of the flaming marker and discover the left and right limits of enemy fire. Burning brightly, the scout tracks now mark the way into the enemy's engagement area.

If we continue to conduct reconnaissance this way, such failures will become commonplace before offensive

operations. Too often, we pretend that the heavy task force scout platoon is an elite advance guard that can hold the first enemy it encounters until the entire task force can arrive. Then we assume the task force can overwhelm the enemy force without any knowledge of what exists beyond that point.

OUTRIDERS

Scouts should be used instead like the outriders of the past, ranging far and wide to seek the enemy. Their best chance for success is to operate in a six-vehicle configuration. The six teams, properly trained, can raise the task force's stakes while decreasing the enemy's knowledge of the gathering storm that follows the separate teams.

In approaching a movement to contact or a hasty attack, it must be remembered that a heavy task force scout platoon is not a cavalry unit; it is the eyes and ears of the task force. Regimental cavalry units can fight for information because they have a highly trained scout-and-tank

working relationship. Thus, they can fill the role of advance guard. But if these forces are stripped away by enemy action or other missions, the task force can still create an advance guard that can defeat the enemy security elements found by the scout teams. The role of the scout platoon, therefore, is to approach reconnaissance with complete stealth and accept the fact that it may not see all of its elements again until the mission is complete.

To succeed, a task force must treat the reconnaissance phase of its deliberate attack as the blueprint to winning the offensive battle. The commander and the staff must realize that time is critical to the scouts and must give them enough time to locate and confirm the S-2's offensive intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). Given that time, the scouts can find more than the regimental outpost—they can also see what is behind the security belt. The combination of flexible reconnaissance planning by the battalion staff and the scouts' execution once they cross the