

and from what point. Then I would develop a plan that would keep me out of their direct fire range at night (~2.5km based on lessons learned from the IOT&E). We would maneuver slowly and deliberately toward the enemy (most battles took all night). Once we acquired their positions (usually 7-9km), we would use our laser range-finder and FBCB2 to create a SPOT report that provided a 10-digit grid and an icon on the digital map. My fire support officer (FSO), who also received the SPOT report, would ask if I wanted to engage the target with indirect fire. If I said yes, he would forward the request to the task force FSO. The TF FSO would confirm the report and then process the call for fire. All this occurred in about the same amount of time it takes to complete a voice call for fire. All participants, including the mortars and field artillery, had the exact information. Additionally, the laser range finder provided very accurate

calls for fire and excellent effects. Finally, when necessary, we would attack the OPFOR with direct fire.

During the defense, we employed similar TTPs. This time, I used the LOS tool to determine the best locations to position my systems to engage the enemy at maximum range. Also, the commander's independent viewer (CIV) enabled the commander to supplement the gunner or observe a different sector of fire. This decreased target acquisition time and increased our ability to observe a sector of fire. This increased ability to acquire targets also brought challenges. One of our major challenges was the discrimination of targets beyond 7km. The NTC OPFOR used deception well to mitigate our capabilities. At 7km, their actual vehicles and deception positions looked very similar. Although we destroyed both the deception positions and their reconnaissance, we were delayed beyond BMNT (beginning, morning nautical twilight).

When the sun came up, the OPFOR defeated us in a manner for which they are famous. To prevent any recurrence of our mistakes, I would recommend further training in long-range vehicle identification.

The M2A3 is an excellent modernization to the Bradley family of vehicles. It provides distinctive advantages to the Infantry and to the Army. By using the TTPs that we used and by developing TTPs of their own, M2A3 company commanders can better employ their units during both offensive and defensive operations. As the Army transforms, the M2A3 is ready now to meet emerging threats.

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# Working With the “Light Fighters” Tips for Mechanized Company Commanders

CAPTAIN KEITH A. MCKINLEY

When I was assigned to the 2d Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, on the Korean peninsula, I learned a lot about the integration of light and heavy forces. Many of the lessons were painful, as I sat through many “humbling” after-action reviews in which every mistake I made was brought to light.

The *Strike Brigade* was permanently organized with two air assault battalions—1st Battalion, 503d Infantry, and 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry—and one mechanized infantry battalion—1st Battalion, 9th Infantry (Mechanized). As doctrine indicates, the brigade conducted operations as a cohesive fighting unit on the Korean battlefield in which light and mechanized forces worked

together. Company commanders had to fully understand the capabilities of both heavy and light forces to succeed in such an integrated brigade combat team.

I want to share some tips and techniques that I found useful during my time as a mechanized company commander within a light infantry brigade combat team.

**Understanding of heavy/light link-up operations.** The typical fight on the Korean peninsula is the classic defile fight. Normally, the two light battalions conducted air assault operations and seized high ground overwatching a defile. This allowed the mechanized force to clear the defile or low ground. To eliminate confusion on the battlefield, a battle hand-over line was established,

and the mechanized unit conducted linkup operations with the light forces in the area before moving through. This is usually conducted at battalion level with minimal difficulties. At company level, we often neglected the several small-unit linkups that needed to occur.

A mechanized company commander needs to realize that after his battalion conducts the initial linkup, he will probably conduct his own linkup with his light infantry counterpart. This is necessary because it will reduce the likelihood of fratricide and give the company commander a better picture of what is to his front. The best way to do this is to have the light commander climb up onto the mechanized commander's turret and exchange informa-

tion face-to-face. This gives the light commander a chance to orient the mechanized commander to the terrain, enemy, and disposition of his light infantry force.

Another concern that must be addressed early in the planning process is a marking SOP. The biggest threat to a mechanized commander on the Korean battlefield is enemy infantry equipped with antitank weapons. When a mechanized force enters an area with friendly infantry, both light and mechanized soldiers get a little apprehensive. Clear marking signals and an established fire control status understood by all will reduce the chance of casualties by friendly fire and can dispel much apprehension. If soldiers on the ground have a clear understanding of friendly unit locations and marking SOPs, they will be more comfortable fighting side by side and will work better with each other. This in turn will increase the aggressiveness of the entire combat team.

**Building a relationship with the light battalion's antitank (AT) platoon or company.** During a brigade fight, there may be times when light infantry AT units will be working with mechanized forces in some capacity. This works well when the two have previously established a working relationship and understand each other's strengths, weaknesses, and SOPs. These units have similar abilities and work best when synchronized.

Light antitank and mechanized units work well together and complement each other's capabilities. The small size and quick mobility makes the HMMWV the vehicle of choice when moving along small, steep trails. These highly mobile and quick vehicles can get to places a Bradley cannot. These forces work especially well in the Korean terrain.

When no trail networks are available, however, and the enemy has strong indirect fire assets at his disposal, the Bradley fighting vehicle is the better-suited platform. Even though the vehicle does not have the same armor protection as an M1 tank, the Bradley is well protected for its given weight and can take a beating if required.

**Understand the light infantry's tactical mission.** Light and mechanized leaders and staff members are encouraged to attend each other's rehearsals and orders. This helps integrate both forces. If a mechanized commander fully understands the light company's mission and concept, he can further conduct coordinations between the light company commanders and have them assist in his mission; for example, providing guides, marking obstacles, or providing intelligence updates. Coordination with these adjacent light commanders helps keep the mechanized commander from wasting limited combat power.

**Combining the combat service support (CSS) effort.** The CSS plan is crucial for both forces to continue operations and sustain the force. In order to maximize logistical efforts, both light and mechanized forces need to combine their efforts whenever possible. Trans-

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***Mechanized forces are in a better position to help in the CSS plan. For example, once a light force seizes key terrain, the mechanized force can drop off much-needed supplies before continuing the assault forward.***

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portation of soldiers is another way mechanized forces can help light units. Mechanized units can "shuttle" light forces upon the consolidation and reorganization phase of a mission or assist in linkup operations.

Another effort that can be combined is the casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) plan. Using the same example as before, when the light fighters seize terrain, mechanized forces can escort wheeled ambulances forward and drop them off at a designated location before pushing forward. An FAS (forward aid station) and an MAS (main aid station) should be established as far forward as possible to enhance medical treatment. This consolidation of effort and resource will expedite CASEVAC and conserve limited medical assets.

It is important for all logistical players within the brigade to work together

early in the planning phase and not as separate units. The brigade S-4 has to work closely in synchronizing the brigade plan and maximizing efforts for both battalions. All logistical planners need to understand the strengths and limitations of both light and mechanized CSS needs and requirements.

**Tap into the light unit's intelligence assets.** The intelligence collection effort should be combined and consolidated at brigade level. To make this a reality, light and mechanized commanders need to cross-talk and constantly update the enemy situational template. This can be done over FM or, if possible, face to face using a map.

Each force has different collection assets that can help the other. Mechanized units have a mounted scout platoon that can be more mobile and have better optical assets (thermals or AN/TAS-5s). But mechanized scouts have difficulties traveling over restricted or severely restricted terrain. This is where the light scout platoon can help. Even though the platoon's speed is limited, it can observe places where mechanized scouts cannot go. Also, the insertion process is easier with light forces.

Another force at a light battalion commander's disposal is his antitank platoon or company. This element has almost the same capabilities as the mechanized scout platoon and can fulfill the same missions. When these forces combine their intelligence assets with mechanized and light scout units, commanders can have a much better picture of the battlefield.

**Exploit successes and compensate for failures.** To maintain tempo on the battlefield, both forces need to understand each other's strengths and limitations. This will enable leaders to shift forces quickly to exploit success or compensate for failures. The integration of both forces is key in minimizing losses and keeping the enemy off balance. If light and mech company commanders understand each other's capabilities, they can easily modify the current plan on the move and capitalize on enemy errors.

To achieve a mutual understanding of both forces, company commanders

should consider conducting combined officer professional development sessions, focusing on equipment capabilities and unit SOPs. Also, brigade level FTXs where both units are working together or against each other in a realistic force-on-force environment, will greatly enhance mutual understanding of unit capabilities.

**Conduct heavy/light combined arms live-fire exercises (CALFEXs).** The best way for light and mechanized infantry units to learn more about each other's capabilities and limitations is to conduct them together. These exercises allow leaders to incorporate different weapon systems and equipment not normally under their MTO&Es into mission planning. Light and heavy units also learn how to employ each other's assets and maximize combat power.

Live-fires teach weapon capabilities, showing exactly what different systems can or cannot kill. The more realistic and innovative the live fire, the better. All available ammunition and weapon

systems need to be employed. They teach the control measures that are key in controlling fires. In addition, leaders learn the support requirements (Class III, V, IX) to sustain the readiness of various systems. Light and mechanized leaders will also learn each other's internal SOPs and valuable tactics, techniques, and procedures.

It is important for both company commanders to work together to create a heavy/light live-fire concept. This will allow each to incorporate his specific capabilities into the live fire and achieve pre-determined training objectives for both. The S-3 sections should conduct the initial planning, but the detailed planning should be left to the company commanders. Battalion commanders will need to provide guidance to ensure that the CALFEX meets his intent.

In summary, heavy/light operations sound great in a classroom but are virtually useless unless company commanders train together and understand each other's capabilities. An under-

standing of heavy/light operations should not remain at higher levels of command, but should be common knowledge to the leaders who are actually on the ground. A properly task organized unit that can work in synchronization is a powerful force that can overcome any obstacle on today's battlefield. Heavy/light operations are the future of our profession. Company commanders who have a clear understanding of how to integrate the two infantry forces will succeed on the future battlefield, where they will be able to move fast, strike hard, and seize the day.

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# Leadership Training In Tomorrow's Army

MAJOR KEITH Q. MCGUIRE

Our national security strategy entrusts the Army with global responsibilities that can be met only through force projection. Yet force projection remains caught in the classic dilemma of force design—light, heavy, or mixed? America's threats range from asymmetrical to heavy conventional forces backed up by weapons of mass destruction. We can deploy light forces quickly but possibly without significant maneuver and firepower. Or we can take months to deploy heavy forces, with the necessary logistics arriving too late to influence geopolitical events accelerated by telecommunications and reactions gener-

ated by media coverage.

The Army leadership has long struggled with this issue. For smaller interventions such as Grenada, Panama, and Haiti, these compromises have proved acceptable. We should be thankful that Saddam Hussein is a dysfunctional military leader; otherwise our light divisions on the ground might have sustained serious losses in the summer of 1990. Gratefully, his strategic myopia allowed us to bluff him into taking that fateful five-month pause in the deserts of Kuwait. But such past success does not guarantee the same for the future; a more sophisticated opponent using con-

ventional heavier forces in an unconventional manner could lead to disaster for light forces. An unconventional mob relying on relatively simple technology and small arms inflicted such losses on Task Force Ranger in Somalia. That tactical bloody nose led directly to a strategic defeat that has affected American policymaking ever since. That fact is not lost on the potential enemies of the United States. We can assume the U.S. will not forego superpower status. The Army will continue to seek a balance that marries rapid deployability and the ability to fight a sustained operation. The latest