

# Developing Cavalry Reconnaissance Doctrine for the Next Century

by Lieutenant Colonel Mark J. Reardon

## Introduction

This article does not propose that cavalry should abandon its existing security mission, concentrating instead on its role as a reconnaissance organization. The Armor Force, however, must recognize that cavalry can perform a far more valuable service gathering information than perhaps has been envisioned in the past. The lure of technology as a means of collecting information on the expanded battlefield of the 21st century is indeed a strong one, especially when it is offered up as an attractive alternative to sending soldiers "in harm's way." While no one will argue that reconnaissance is not inherently dangerous, especially when it is conducted deep within enemy territory, embracing technology too closely will undoubtedly lead to a one-dimensional approach to information collection. Applying a one-dimensional approach during future conflicts against an adaptive foe that is leveraging asymmetrical means to overcome our technological advantages will assuredly result in unnecessary casualties.

While all combat units are capable of conducting offensive, defensive, and security operations, whether as a component of a combined arms force or by themselves, few organizations can lay claim to possessing a well-honed ability to systematically gather detailed information. Armored cavalry squadrons and regiments, however, offer the division and corps commander with an unmatched capability to conduct reconnaissance across the breadth and depth of the battlefield in spite of our adversaries determined attempts to safeguard critical information. Employment of armored cavalry to conduct reconnaissance will also provide the commander with a sustained capability to gather information in all types of terrain and weather, from stand-off distances or in close proximity to enemy forces. Cavalry not only obtains information, but it also processes it and evaluates it. Yet the current edition of *FM 17-95, Cavalry*, continues to slight this capability by focusing on offensive, de-

fensive, and security doctrine more applicable to the Cold War than information-based land operations of the 21st century.

The Cold War is not a thing of the past. There are far fewer cavalry squadrons and regiments now than there were ten years ago, but commanders still tend to employ them in an economy of force or security role rather than for collecting information. Cavalry is viewed as a recipient, not as a participant, in Information Operations (IO). As a result of that perception, cavalry doctrine does not discuss in depth the crucial relationship between reconnaissance and IO.

How many recent Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) exercises have witnessed the divisional cavalry focused on conducting an advance guard during the initial offensive phase? After repeatedly clashing with enemy security forces, the divisional cavalry is normally forced to begin reconstituting as its parent formation transitions to the defense. By continuously employing cavalry to conduct missions other than reconnaissance, the division is not taking full advantage of its capabilities to contribute to the common operational picture, and, more importantly, the division commander's situational awareness. One cannot "blame" the division staff for this tendency, for the staff relies on *FM 17-95* to assist them in determining the appropriate methods to employ the squadron.

For want of another reference, commanders and staff members at all levels have turned to *FM 17-95*, for the definitive word on reconnaissance. This attitude is mirrored within the TRADOC community, where most proponent centers and schools view Fort Knox as a primary player, if not the lead agency, for reconnaissance doctrine. However, *FM 17-95* misses the mark when discussing reconnaissance, largely because it continues to perpetuate what some term as "The Fulda Gap Syndrome," a focus on security, defensive, and offensive operations to the detriment of armored cavalry's one unique aspect, its ability to gather infor-

mation in all types of terrain and environmental conditions. With virtually the entire Army reading *FM 17-95* to gain an understanding of reconnaissance, continued neglect of this topic within the manual, which is scheduled to undergo revision starting in February 2000, would magnify an already significant doctrinal void.

Lacking an appreciation of cavalry's reconnaissance capabilities, commanders instead rely heavily on MI collection assets for critical information. While intelligence assets can gather that information, they are susceptible to electronic spoofing and operational security (OPSEC) measures. Some intelligence collection systems are dependent on input generated by enemy activity (radio emissions and movement of forces); e.g. they cannot be expected to gather information from an enemy using passive measures to conceal his presence or intentions. The MI community has invested significantly in procuring information by technical means, and in the process it has sacrificed its organic capability to gather information by physical means (Active Component Long Range Surveillance assets). As a result, the S2/G-2 has come to rely heavily on maneuver assets, especially during stability and support actions, to provide analysts with information that can only be gathered by active means, e.g. interpersonal contact.

Over-reliance on joint and national systems, such as JSTARS, U-2, and satellites, can also lead to an operationally limited approach to collecting battlefield information. Many national and joint systems were developed and fielded to detect, track, and identify mechanized Warsaw Pact formations. This capability will have limited utility in scenarios where our adversaries are largely composed of insurgent elements or conventionally organized light infantry. Potential adversaries that hope to employ mechanized forces are fully aware of the fact that our advantages in precision weaponry and digital communications can be negated or significantly reduced by deny-

ing an accurate picture of the battlefield to U.S. commanders. They will seek to preserve their own operational capabilities by neutralizing joint and national information gathering platforms using means that we have not anticipated.

Our adversaries' awareness of our technological advantages, and their ability to neutralize them, is only one of several challenges faced by Army forces seeking information provided by joint and national assets. Another is that these assets may be focused on areas that have other immediate priorities. For example, the Joint Force Commander (JFC) may be focusing these systems on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), directing all available platforms to locate enemy storage areas and delivery means.

Weather and enemy action may also degrade the capabilities of joint and national systems. As a result, division and corps commanders may discover that supporting joint and national systems are not available during critical periods.

By focusing cavalry on reconnaissance across an expanded area of operations, we will present our adversaries with an enormously complex challenge as they seek to employ countermeasures against Army, joint, and national information gathering systems. Cavalry can actively penetrate enemy deception measures while simultaneously forcing the threat to commit significant maneuver resources to safeguard information. Cavalry can contribute significantly to the Army's ability to achieve the operational capabilities required for the 21st century battlefield by virtue of its unique ability to exploit both human and mechanical means, as well as active and passive techniques, when gathering critical information. However, the Armor Force must revise existing doctrine to ensure that cavalry's potential is fully realized.

### **Looking Towards the Future: A First Step**

It is apparent from a review of past reconnaissance doctrine that incremental change has been the norm. This was acceptable as long as the dynamics of modern conflict evolved incrementally and the U.S. Army maintained a robust capability to conduct combat operations. With the expanded battlefield, proliferation of precision weaponry, urban growth, and greater likelihood of being committed to "complex" operational environments — e.g. stability actions and support actions — coupled with the downsizing of our Army, the time for evolutionary change

has passed. Armor doctrine must be revised to recognize that cavalry possesses a singularly viable and unique information gathering capability as well as substantial combat power.

Limiting discussion in *FM 17-95* on how cavalry conducts reconnaissance, however, does not address the entire issue of doctrinal change. *FM 17-95* must look beyond the internal workings of cavalry organizations to explain how reconnaissance relates to the information operations hierarchy. Do not depend on other proponents to articulate the process by which cavalry can provide the commander with a robust capability to gain and maintain a common operational picture. The Army as a whole is too enamored with the pursuit of technology to explain how information operations result in increased effectiveness on the battlefield. To date, the articulation of how the employment of IO translates to success at the tactical echelon of command remains an elusive concept.

*FM 17-95* must also clearly demonstrate that cavalry is part of a "system of systems" that make up the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) architecture tasked to collect information for the commander. While the acronym "ISR" has been used by many, few possess an understanding of how each function relates to the other during planning, preparation, and execution. By examining IO from a maneuver perspective for the first time, *FM 17-95* potentially can address a number of voids that currently exist.

### **Linking IO and Reconnaissance Operations**

Given our fascination with the technological and managerial aspects of digital communications, it is not surprising that the Army has glossed over the fact that IO includes the active collection of information. How can we consider the issues associated with information management, connectivity, offensive IO, defensive IO, etc. when there is little or no information to act on in the first place? Information collection conducted by cavalry provides the Army with the link between IO and the traditional maneuver battlefield so clearly lacking. Aren't we trying to gain advantage by denying critical information to the enemy through a combination of defensive and offensive measures? If so, then we must expect the enemy will attempt to do the same to us. During combat operations, dependence on standoff sensors linked via digital

channels to the "military information environment" and "global information environment" may not satisfy all of the commander's information needs in the face of active threat countermeasures. We must be prepared to send cavalry scouts into "harm's way" to pierce the "fog of war."

The draft version of *FM 100-6, Information Operations*, defines IO as "actions taken to affect adversaries' and influence other audiences' decision-making processes, information, and information systems, and defend friendly decision-making processes, information, and information systems." Reconnaissance plays a significant part, either directly or indirectly, in information operations at the tactical through strategic echelons of command. It does this by collecting and verifying critical data required by the commander to plan, prepare, execute, and assess. This critical data is known as "relevant information." Relevant information is "all information of importance to the commander and staff in the exercise of command and control."

In the face of an adaptive threat, the detail, timeliness, and accuracy of information is directly related to the type, capability, and allocation of collection resources, as well as the emphasis placed by the commander on gathering specific types of information. Cavalry provides the commander with a versatile, tailorable, and robust capability specifically organized and trained to safeguard or collect information. It can often be employed to collect or verify information that cannot be gathered by other means. Cavalry has the ability to use a variety of techniques to collect information on the activities, disposition, and intentions of enemy, friendly, and neutral parties. It is equally well suited to assess the impact of terrain and weather on military operations.

What are the payoffs when armored cavalry performs effective reconnaissance? Reconnaissance contributes to information superiority. Information superiority is translated into operational initiative by the commander's ability to maintain an advantage over the enemy in terms of information collection, offensive/defensive IO, and information management. By employing information collection assets in an integrated and complementary manner, the friendly force can gain situational awareness faster than its adversaries. By gaining situational awareness more rapidly than the enemy, the friendly commander will be able to

make informed decisions while the enemy is still trying to collect sufficient information to initiate their decision-making process. If a truly significant disparity is achieved, the enemy commander may fail completely to recognize an unforeseen battlefield opportunity or threat posed against a decisive point. Thus, the friendly commander is able to set new conditions while the enemy commander is still operating in accordance with his original, and outdated, plan.

Once information superiority is achieved, the friendly force will be able to consistently recognize when the plan must be modified or discarded to meet changing battlefield requirements. Information management, coupled with the efficient use of information systems (INFOSYS), permit the friendly force to compress the decision-making process while simultaneously reducing the level of risk associated with decision-making by ensuring accurate information is continually on hand. Information systems support collaborative planning at multiple echelons, as well as the rapid distribution of the plan once it is completed. By compressing the decision-making process, the commander is capable of recognizing, acting on, and exploiting information faster than his adversary. This will result in the friendly force realizing a significant advantage by virtue of the ability to gain and maintain the operational initiative. Cavalry units conducting reconnaissance contribute to this process by supporting the commander's efforts to achieve information superiority at critical points in a campaign or battle.

### **A Starting Point: Formation Reconnaissance**

The British Army was one of the first NATO organizations to realize that post-Cold War developments in doctrine, equipment, and force structure, as well as emerging threat capabilities, had combined to force a change in their approach to combat operations. A review of existing British doctrinal publications revealed that "reconnaissance doctrine derives from the Cold War and largely stems from the requirements of the General Defense Plan (GDP) covering force battle." Further examination disclosed that reconnaissance could provide the British Army with a link between information management, deep operations, and maneuver warfare. Recognizing that revised doctrine would serve as a guidepost for future force development and equipment procurement, in addition to permitting existing systems to be used to their fullest

potential in an evolving strategic environment, the British Army developed the concept of Formation Reconnaissance (FR).

The formation reconnaissance concept recognizes that reconnaissance forces, whether they are called "cavalry" or by some other term, can provide the commander with an "intelligent system" possessing the capability to analyze a situation, counter enemy deception, and apply judgment to bring a measured response. By operating in real time, reconnaissance elements identify opportunities as they occur, or create them when necessary. The ability to produce accurate, timely, and continuous information, coupled with human flexibility, ingenuity, and cognitive reasoning — to include the ability to re-task themselves and retain the initiative at the decisive point — clearly supports the fact that cavalry performs as a key component in the overall ISR effort. *However, in order to realize its full potential in this role, reconnaissance units must have the capability at platform and unit level to leverage information provided by the other components of the ISR system.*

Emerging British FR doctrine also calls for dramatically expanding the traditional area of operations in which armored reconnaissance assets are normally employed. For example, corps reconnaissance operates 40-80 kilometers ahead of the main body. A considerable distance would also separate divisional reconnaissance elements from the lead maneuver units of the division. The primary mission of corps and division reconnaissance is to "satisfy the commander's Priority Information Requirements (PIRs), to inform maneuver decisions, and to provide information for 'recec strike' missions on opportunity and high-payoff targets."

Divisional reconnaissance, according to the British Army, will normally operate within the indirect fire and air defense envelope of the division — up to 40 kilometers forward of the main body. Because threat counterreconnaissance efforts will be concentrated in this area, divisional reconnaissance will be more likely to fight for information. Direct contact with enemy forces will occur frequently, resulting in repeated abandonment of stealthy reconnaissance techniques in favor of aggressive reconnaissance. This will require development of a reconnaissance force structure that easily transitions between both techniques. The proximity of other divisional assets will provide the reconnaissance organization

with the necessary combat power to answer PIR despite the enemy's attempts to actively deny critical information to the friendly commander.

While it may seem to some that the emerging FR concept merely westernizes Soviet reconnaissance doctrinal theory, the important point is that the British Army has espoused adoption of a doctrine that is very different from that which NATO armies have followed for the past five decades. In an attempt to balance operational constraints against desired capabilities, the British have actually created a compromise version of what they were aiming for, e.g. dramatically increasing situational awareness across a much greater expanse of the battlefield. However, operational capabilities in the current U.S. Army inventory, coupled with systems that will be fielded in the near future, can provide us with the ability to achieve what the British Army cannot. The U.S. Army has technology and resources that no other military force can hope to match — digital C4I systems, JSTARS, precision fires, capable intelligence collection systems, and a robust rotary wing aviation capability — all of which are necessary to conduct reconnaissance during information-based land combat in the 21st century. All the U.S. Army lacks is a comprehensive doctrinal construct designed to bind it all together.

### **Reconnaissance in Support of Information-Based Land Combat**

*FM 17-95* cannot continue to focus exclusively on the tactical echelon of command without confining cavalry's relevance to a very small, albeit important, portion of the battlefield. This trend is not surprising, however, given the fact that doctrine originally developed during World War II has always tended to limit the employment of cavalry to the forward edge of the battle area. The challenges associated with avoiding decisive engagement by enemy forces, resupply, communications, medical evacuation, and maintenance support were considered too difficult to overcome. Unfortunately, the U.S. Army has never truly stepped back from the perception that the usefulness of cavalry is limited to tactical depths, relying instead on aerial reconnaissance, LRS, and signals/electronic intelligence instead of enhancing the capability of cavalry to collect information at operational depths.

The armored cavalry regiment, with its unparalleled collection capabilities and tremendous combat power, is well suited

to conduct reconnaissance in support of the operational echelon of command. The ACR's traditional area of operations, normally linked to a parent corps, encompasses the requisite operational and physical expanse. The robust capabilities inherent within the ACR also allow the operational commander to maintain a level of situational awareness required to clearly visualize multiple interrelated events, often occurring simultaneously, spanning the entire area of operations. An ACR conducting reconnaissance at operational depths is aided by information gathered by joint and national systems. Committing the ACR, in addition to joint and national systems, will enhance the operational commander's situational awareness at decisive points during critical periods, e.g. the "focused telescope," by massing collection assets where they are most needed. While numerous benefits can be gained by focusing the ACR on operational level reconnaissance, the prevailing notion in the immediate post-Cold War era, that the ACR served primarily as a security organization for the corps, has unfortunately left us with one heavy and one light ACR.

Division and brigade assets require the same capabilities as the ACR to ensure the effective integration of reconnaissance effort. By nesting identical capabilities within corps, divisional, and brigade assets, the Army increases its ability to sustain high-tempo operations, where elements of one echelon may relieve another at any point on the battlefield in order to facilitate reconstitution, resupply, and reorganization. In too many instances in the past, we have called upon cavalry to do too much, too often, and with too few resources. While cavalry has normally accomplished those missions, despite considerable obstacles placed in their path by the enemy, it came at a price the commander could ill-afford in the long run — a slowly deteriorating picture of the battlefield as the operation progressed. With the inevitable arrival of the "fog of war" came culmination and casualties. With the reduced force structure of today's Army, combined with a National Military Strategy calling for rapid conflict resolution, we really can no longer afford to encounter the "fog of war" at any point in a future campaign.

### What Should the New *FM 17-95* Include?

The attempt by the British Army to redefine the role of reconnaissance in the 21st century can serve as an impetus to our own efforts; however, we should not

be bound by their emerging concept. As noted previously, the U.S. Army possesses unique systems that enhance the ability of cavalry to conduct reconnaissance. First and foremost, we need to realize that cavalry is not alone on the battlefield when it comes to conducting reconnaissance. It is bound functionally, and through communications linkages, to other systems within the ISR architecture. Rather than focusing exclusively on the internal aspects of how cavalry conducts reconnaissance, *FM 17-95* must recognize that cavalry is inextricably joined with MI assets, as well as joint and national collection systems. These linkages enhance the cavalry's ability to conduct reconnaissance over a much wider area of operations, thus increasing the relevance it possesses on the 21st century battlefield, a capability that is especially useful considering the comprehensive information collection requirements of IO.

Nor have we articulated techniques that support the continuous employment of cavalry — an approach that will allow the Armor Force to enhance the cavalry's ability to conduct simultaneous, versus sequential, operations. The versatility of cavalry can satisfy many of the tactical and operational commander's requirements, yet we continue to find ourselves mired in internal debate concerning the relative merits of aggressive versus stealthy reconnaissance techniques. In this instance, the British Army has correctly identified the need to rapidly transition between both techniques, thus enhancing cavalry's already considerable flexibility. Increased span of operations, improved ability to conduct sustained operations, and operational flexibility all combine to significantly enhance the relevance of cavalry reconnaissance doctrine as the U.S. Army enters the next millennium.

### Cueing Reconnaissance

Cueing provides cavalry with linkages to information collected by the other components of the ISR architecture, as well as a means to focus reconnaissance operations. It allows the commander to tailor reconnaissance by employing the assets best suited to gain information in the detail that he requires. Some examples: based on the report from a JSTARS that it has detected vehicles moving down a road, the commander may employ an armored cavalry troop to gather more information to enable him to make a decision in response to the JSTARS sighting. Conversely, if a RAPTOR minefield detects a tank, the commander may

commit a wide area surveillance system to determine how many armored vehicles are in that area. Another advantage is that cavalry units do not have to be committed on unproductive reconnaissance and surveillance missions. The commander can now choose to not commit his cavalry until a wide area surveillance system detects sufficient enemy activity.

The cueing process involves communication between two or more reconnaissance or surveillance systems, as well as the use of common communications channels dedicated to passing reconnaissance information between units. Cueing can also involve communications between a subordinate reconnaissance element and its controlling headquarters that possesses direct feeds to joint and national systems. Cueing is conducted vertically (when enemy forces cross friendly operational boundaries) or horizontally (within the same echelon of command or area of operations). Effective cueing hinges on communications interoperability as well as the ability of various systems to pass critical information in a timely manner. There are three major categories of cueing:

- **Reconnaissance System to Reconnaissance System.** This category of cueing occurs when a reconnaissance asset does not possess the capabilities necessary to gather all of the information required by the commander. Reconnaissance assets may cue each other for the purposes of defeating enemy countermeasures, confirming contradictory or unclear information, or massing information-gathering effects. Cueing can result in the handing over of responsibility to other reconnaissance systems or necessitate the integration of the efforts of two or more reconnaissance systems. Reconnaissance systems must be able to communicate directly with each other for this type of cueing to be effective. The controlling headquarters, not the respective reconnaissance systems themselves, will authorize this type of cueing to take place and the degree. The decision to reposition systems as a result of cueing information also rests with the controlling headquarters in order to preserve the integrity of the commander's overall reconnaissance effort.

- **Reconnaissance System to Surveillance System.** This involves the exchange of information between reconnaissance and surveillance systems for the purpose of tracking or handing over a target or enemy force. It may also occur when surveillance systems are unable to provide the necessary level of detail re-

quired by the commander, which in turn necessitates the commitment of a cavalry force. When surveillance systems employed to monitor secondary avenues of approach detect enemy activity, this type of cueing may also occur as primary responsibility for monitoring that area is turned over to an armored cavalry unit.

• **Reconnaissance System to Fire Support System.** Cavalry may be employed for the specific purpose of providing information that will result in the destruction of a high-payoff target. Cavalry is used to cue fire support systems when the target is difficult to detect, when the exact target location is unknown, when it is positioned far behind enemy lines, or when it is moving too rapidly for other target acquisition means to be effective. When a cavalry unit is designated to cue the employment of FS systems, it should be provided with dedicated fire support liaison teams that have direct links to the designated FS asset and are capable of precision targeting. Because this scenario can involve the diversion of a cavalry unit to accomplish a critical FS task, the mission to conduct target acquisition should be not accorded a secondary priority by the controlling headquarters or unit commander.

### **The Great Debate: Stealthy Or Aggressive?**

For some obscure reason, the Armor Force seems to believe that a cavalry unit can conduct aggressive reconnaissance or stealthy reconnaissance, but not both. This belief has even manifested itself during force structure debates in recent years. We have HMMWV scouts and Bradley-equipped scouts. They are expected to employ techniques used to gather information on the battlefield that can be classified as stealthy or aggressive. Units employing stealthy reconnaissance techniques avoid contact with the enemy in order to collect information unobtrusively. In sharp contrast, aggressive reconnaissance involves ground and aviation assets, or a combination of both, using maneuver and fires to gain information from the enemy. Simply put, aggressive reconnaissance involves fighting for information because the enemy is actively trying to deny information to the friendly commander or because combat is the only means by which that information can be obtained. While engaging in aggressive reconnaissance, friendly forces normally engage enemy reconnaissance and security elements while avoiding decisive engagement in order to retain freedom of

freedom of action while collecting information.

The decision to use either technique has usually been made on the basis of the reconnaissance unit's equipment. Those equipped with HMMWVs use stealthy techniques to offset their lack of ballistic protection. On the other hand, the lethality and mobility of the helicopter allows air cavalry to conduct aggressive reconnaissance even though rotary-wing aircraft also possess limited physical protection when compared to the direct fire threats found on the modern battlefield. Armored cavalry is well suited to conduct aggressive reconnaissance because of the mobility, ballistic protection, and lethality of the M1 Abrams and M3 Cavalry Fighting Vehicle.

Equipment factors can influence the choice of reconnaissance techniques, but they should not dictate that decision. Employing the various methods should not be viewed as mutually exclusive — cavalry units must be able to use either aggressive or stealthy reconnaissance techniques. Reconnaissance techniques are tailored for specific missions rather than based on platforms. Commanders may find it desirable to employ the M1s and M3s of an armored cavalry unit, especially if they are the only assets available, to conduct reconnaissance in a stealthy manner. They may employ a combination of techniques during the course of an operation based on METT-TC. The commander must also consider the risk of compromising the entire plan or potential for escalation when choosing the type of reconnaissance technique. Once the enemy detects our reconnaissance effort, the activities of cavalry units gathering information can provide the threat with an indication of the friendly commander's intentions.

*FM 17-95* should emphasize the fact that both techniques, stealthy and aggressive reconnaissance, are not mutually exclusive. Commanders may find a combination of aggressive and stealthy methods useful given enemy dispositions, varying resources, and environmental conditions. For instance, a commander may direct his cavalry units to use aggressive reconnaissance techniques in the enemy security zone to penetrate the threat counterreconnaissance screen, but once that portion of the mission is complete, those same units may revert to stealthy reconnaissance when they enter the enemy main battle area. Bottom line — the debate that has raged in the past within the ranks of Armor officers is ir-

relevant. Cavalry requires the capability to employ both stealthy and aggressive information gathering techniques if it expects to play an important role on the expanded battlefield of the 21st century.

### **Sustaining Continuous Reconnaissance**

Battle management is as important to reconnaissance as the capabilities of the individual platforms and organizations themselves. Cavalry is not an expendable force. The decision-making requirements of the commander, combined with the frequency with which events take place on the battlefield, will drive the tempo of cavalry reconnaissance operations. Commanders are often forced by operational requirements to commit their cavalry for lengthy periods of time. This can result in unacceptable degradation of equipment and personnel. This tendency is also exacerbated when commanders interpret "never leave reconnaissance in reserve" as implicit guidance for the continuous employment of all cavalry units at their disposal.

The timing of rest and refitting periods is the responsibility of the commander. Pulling a cavalry unit off of the line to prepare for a follow-on mission does not constitute placing that unit in reserve. Commanders must anticipate the need for a fully rested and refitted reconnaissance force based on his vision of future operations and assessment of the risk that may be incurred. Commanders cannot, however, afford to remove a cavalry unit for rest and refitting without replacing it with some other system that has the capability to gather information. Even with this constraint, a number of options still remain available to facilitate the rest and refitting of cavalry in anticipation of continuous operations. Commanders may be forced to rely entirely on internal resources, or they may receive external assistance. These options will vary according to the available resources at each echelon of command, as well as the criticality of operational requirements.

• **Using Assets from Another Echelon of Command.** The commander has the option of requesting the temporary attachment of a reconnaissance asset organic to his higher headquarters for the purpose of temporarily relieving one of his own units. The higher headquarters can provide reconnaissance assets or it can direct another subordinate element to provide the requesting commander with assets. At corps level, the commander can attach one squadron of the ACR to a divi-

---

sion or direct a division held in reserve to provide their divisional cavalry squadron. In another example, a mechanized infantry division may temporarily provide a troop from the divisional cavalry squadron to relieve a brigade reconnaissance troop (BRT) in order to provide the latter with an opportunity to rest and refit. The gaining commander should assess whether or not he will also require a liaison team and additional CSS assets to accompany the attached reconnaissance unit.

• **Relief by Maneuver Elements.** Specialized organizations, such as LRS, air cavalry, and armored cavalry, are often in the midst of conducting reconnaissance while their higher headquarters plans a future operation. When reconnaissance units are deployed on a screen line or manning outposts, they may not have the time necessary to conduct preparation, rehearsals, and pre-combat inspections due to current operational demands. In these cases, based on the factors of METT-TC as well as the significance that a specific reconnaissance unit may have in an upcoming operation, the commander can authorize a relief in place be conducted between designated reconnaissance elements and a maneuver force. This will enable the reconnaissance unit to conduct TEWTs, brief the operations order, attend rehearsals conducted by other units, conduct briefbacks, and test fire weapons. Granting the reconnaissance unit a limited period of time in which to prepare for a difficult mission undisturbed will provide those units with renewed confidence in their ability to perform successfully during upcoming operations.

• **Relief by Surveillance System.** The commander may choose to employ surveillance systems in lieu of a cavalry unit while the latter is being rested and refitted. The surveillance system should be capable of continuous coverage of the sector in question during the period that the reconnaissance unit is off of the line. The commander must also determine whether he wishes to accept the level of risk that might be potentially incurred by employing a surveillance system that may not have collection capabilities identical to the cavalry unit it is replacing. The IPB process can be used to provide commanders with an assessment of the level of risk associated with this option. If the risk is deemed too great, the commander can choose to limit refitting to a portion of the reconnaissance unit at a

time, while continuing to augment the reconnaissance effort with assistance from surveillance systems.

• **Internal Relief in Place.** Cavalry units may be required to execute rest and refit while simultaneously conducting their assigned mission. Given this constraint, the commander would withdraw a portion of the unit to undergo rest and refit, while the remaining elements continue gathering information. Once the first element completes rest and refit, they assume the responsibilities of that portion of the unit still conducting operations. In the interest of time and METT-TC, this option may force the commander to place greater emphasis on refitting equipment rather than resting personnel.

---

*The Army cannot afford to rely exclusively on standoff electronic sensors to provide commanders in the field with information they need to make critical decisions.*

---

### Conclusion

This article has touched on but a few of the topics that must be revised in upcoming editions of *FM 17-95*. For example, conducting reconnaissance at operational depths presents CSS sustainers with an entirely new set of challenges to grapple with when determining how they would conduct maintenance, evacuate casualties, fuel vehicles, etc. If the Armor Force wishes to thrust cavalry into the 21st century, however, it must ensure that its doctrine has relevance. Limiting cavalry to a narrow tactical role, in both an operational and geographical sense, will condemn it to professional obsolescence when set against a greatly expanded and more complex area of operations. Current doctrine seeks to reproduce the Fulda Gap by focusing discussion on the employment of cavalry to conduct security, offensive, and defensive operations for brief periods of intense combat in support of the tactical fight. This approach diminishes cavalry's potential contribution to the process by which the commander gathers critical information that can decisively influence the overall fight.

Additionally, our responsibility to contribute to the Army's collective warfighting capability cannot take a back seat to parochial notions. If the Armor Force does not articulate the linkage between IO and cavalry, will other proponents do

so? I think not. It is also the responsibility of the Armor community to remind the senior leadership that IO must remain relevant to the needs of the commander on the maneuver battlefield. The Army cannot afford to rely exclusively on standoff electronic sensors to provide commanders in the field with information they need to make critical decisions. Reconnaissance should in fact be categorized as a human or soldier endeavor to ensure that commanders are personally involved in the reconnaissance planning process in recognition of the high risk often associated with information gathering. More importantly, the Army has to acknowledge that reconnaissance is a mission, not a platform or organization. *FM 17-95* can play a large part in convincing its readers of these important distinctions.

Cavalry reconnaissance doctrine must remain relevant in an evolving operational environment. As the Armor Force continues to develop doctrine for the 21st century, it must also clearly describe the role that cavalry plays when conducting reconnaissance in support of corps, division, and brigade information-based land combat operations. The past focus on conducting offensive, defensive, and security operations, to the detriment of reconnaissance, must be reexamined to produce a doctrine that can fill the contemporary needs of an information-based force. *FM 17-95* could conceivably evolve to a point where it becomes one of the doctrinal pillars used to bridge the gap between Force XXI and Army After Next (AAN) maneuver forces that use information to enhance precision maneuver and fires. Before that can happen, however, we need to elevate reconnaissance to its proper place within cavalry doctrine.

---

LTC Mark J. Reardon was commissioned as an Armor officer in 1979. He has since served in CONUS, Germany, Korea, and Saudi Arabia. His previous assignments include commander, B/2-72 Armor; commander, A/3-4 Cav; S-3, 3-4 Cav; XO, 373 Armor (Airborne); and both G-3 and deputy commander, ARCENT-Saudi Arabia. He is enroute to the National Military Command Center following an assignment with the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, CGSC, Ft. Leavenworth.