

# Cavalry for the Interim Force

## A Proposal for the 2d Cavalry Regiment

by Colonel Kevin C.M. Benson

The most important event in recent Army history occurred on 11 September 2001. Declared by act of Congress or not, the nation is at war. In light of this reality and compelling, changing threats to the nation, our Army, well underway in the process of transformation, must adapt transformation to the reality of a "wartime Army." Our Army is converting two brigades, one heavy and one light, into Interim Brigade Combat Teams. The recently released Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) directed the Army to put a seventh Interim Brigade Combat Team in Europe by 2007. On 12 July 2001, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army reinforced the momentum of transformation with the announcement of the next four brigade-sized formations slated for transformation into the Interim Force. One of these formations is the 2d Cavalry Regiment.

The Interim Brigade Combat Teams (IBCTs) are combined arms formations of infantry, cavalry, artillery, combat support, and combat service support units. These brigades are equipped with Light Armored Vehicles and will enjoy a significant mobility differential over potential adversaries. The digital information and communications systems, so called C4ISR or command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, within the brigades give them an equally significant information advantage over potential adversaries. The future of the Interim Force is full of challenges, ranging from refining the training model that will sustain both mounted and dismounted maneuver skills and sustain a level of proficiency in the digital realm, to deployment into active theaters of operations as the Army must demonstrate the worth of the Interim Force to regional commanders-in-chief (CINCs).

In light of this momentum toward the Interim Force, and its inherent bridge to the as-yet defined Objective Force, we must ask, and indeed forcefully propose, what the role of cavalry is in the Interim Force — and by extension, the

Objective Force. The Interim Force serves a two-fold purpose, meeting a near-term strategic need for regional CINCs and acting as a bridge to the Objective Force by refining solid, digital operating and fighting techniques. The purpose of this essay is to propose an operational role for the 2d Cavalry Regiment as Interim Force cavalry and a viable table of organization for the regiment that can fit into the war footing of the Army and contribute to that effort relatively swiftly.

While we all may think this is a "new" concept, a glimpse into the history of our Armored Force revealed this from the pages of the 1924 *Cavalry Journal*:

*"General Carbon, I think the battle is ripe. Direct the 2d Deathbolts to charge the enemy left." So are the fates of nations settled! By this simple order, Lieutenant-General Alonzo B. Gasoline, seated at his green-lit desk in the gas-proof seclusion of his command car loosed the two million pounds of petrol-propelled hate on the tottering flank of our doomed opponents. But how can a human Dictaphone describe the inspiring majesty of the sight which unfolded itself before our eyes on the screen of our radio motion-picture projector, whose lense, high above us in the observation helicopter, commanded a complete view of the battlefield? (Patton, p. 5, "Armored Cars with Cavalry")*

Just when you think there is a new concept — UAVs with sensor support and instant communications — George Patton was there first! Of course, his article is actually focused on how armored cars could enhance the role of horse cavalry.

Patton also introduces another difficulty Army officers of all ages contend with. In Patton's words, "the heartless shears of Fact and Finance... prune our fancies." We, too, must remember the cost of transformation as our Army programs contend with the F-22, Joint Strike Fighter, and DD-21 programs.

Why Cavalry? Before 11 September, strategists predicted an era of violent peace, relative calm in which Amer-

ica's vital interests are not directly threatened. In the post-Cold War world and in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks, we may have to re-evaluate this prediction. Threats, potential and real, to an orderly world have and will continue to emerge. America, with allies or partners, will act to deter aggressive action or decisively defeat enemies who threaten tranquil order. Thus, the cavalry of the Interim Force needs to have utility across the spectrum of conflict. A full-spectrum force is one that can be employed effectively in any form of conflict from humanitarian support to high-intensity combat. The regiment, therefore, must be a force that has the technical and tactical capability to operate over large distances and sustain a higher commander's operational picture while having the inherent combat capability to act with power and decision.

The higher commander's decision-making paradigm in the information age begins with situational understanding. The regiment, therefore, requires a mix of sensors and scouts, air — both manned and unmanned — and ground. The sensors find moving target indicators and the scouts confirm or deny enemy activity. The sensors serve as a means of focusing the efforts of the scouts of the regiment in the regimental battle space. The regiment also requires enough combat power, in the form of direct fire weapons, to destroy enemy forces, and laser designators that allow the regiment to fight effectively with air power.

Why Cavalry? The emerging reality is a struggling economy, budget trade-offs and compromises, and a changing security strategy. The security strategy outlined in the QDR will require us to conduct some operations as an economy of force, but that force executing the mission must still have the combat power to deter or finish a fight. Small-scale contingencies, SSCs, will still require combat power supported by equally powerful C4ISR. So cavalry will still play a vital role in an emerging strategy where we have the means

to decisively finish one fight while deterring or holding in other theaters, or conducting SSC. The small, yet violent, wars of the future will most likely be more like Kosovo and less like Desert Storm. There will also be a focus on avoiding a large-scale commitment of ground troops, except when necessary. We will also continue our predilection toward the use of precision guided munitions and precision strike operations.

The operational architecture required to conduct operations in this type of shifting environment will be a robust mix of tactical and operational C4ISR devices. A full-spectrum force engaged in a strategic economy-of-force mission may well be the only Army force on the ground. This will mean, effectively, that the regimental commander will be his own ARFOR commander and respond either directly to a joint force commander or that commander's ground component commander. A theater economy-of-force mission is tough to define in terms of kilometers, but for the sake of force structure, and realizing the limitations of existing C4ISR devices, the regiment must be able to operate over an area close to 100 x 100 kilometers. The systems architecture that will make this possible must be equal to the task and provide a robust backbone with alternate means of communication.

In the supporting technical systems architecture, the regimental headquarters will require the Global Command and Control System-Army, or GCCS-A. This device will serve as the regimental commander's portal into the joint command and control systems, and his means to execute reach operations for maneuver support.<sup>1</sup> The systems architecture built for the operations architecture briefly described above will require the regiment to own the full range of the Army family of C4ISR devices that support command and control, maneuver, combat service support, intelligence, air defense, and the common ground station links for access to JSTARS/ AWACS and UAVs. The regiment will need satellite communications systems in all of the squadrons, and to have a sufficient reserve to enable the regimental commander to place SATCOM in selected troops of the regiment if the mission requires it.

The supporting systems architecture will also enable the regiment to have access to expanded information databases that support the full range of reach operations in all battlefield functional areas. The regimental S2, for example, must be able to reach into the joint intelligence data base with assured links.

While the regimental command and control structure must be robust enough for operations in support of a corps or JTF, the squadrons will not require the same range of devices as regiment. In order to operate decisively and swiftly over large areas, the squadrons must rely on the regimental signals backbone and SATCOM, but operate with FBCB2, ASAS Lite, and AFATDS<sup>2</sup> to command and control squadron operations. This will enable squadron TOCs to operate with agile headquarters. When planning and control support is required, the squadron systems can reach other regimental assets through the regimental signals backbone.

In 1945, the General Board forwarded a proposal for the structure of cavalry regiments for the future Army. The recommendation was based on the assembled combat experience of the cavalry group commanders of the European Theater of Operations. Names like Reed of the 2d Cavalry, Polk of the 3d, Pickett of the 6th, are found throughout the body of the document.

The fundamental observation of the body was that the cavalry groups, as configured in World War II, were insufficient to face an uncertain future. The Board proposed regiments of three cavalry squadrons, with artillery, a strong communications element, and internal combat service support. Based on this wisdom of some 50+ years ago, I offer a new look at cavalry for the Interim Force.

The structure of the regiment that can execute these types of missions has its roots in a 1945 regimental structure

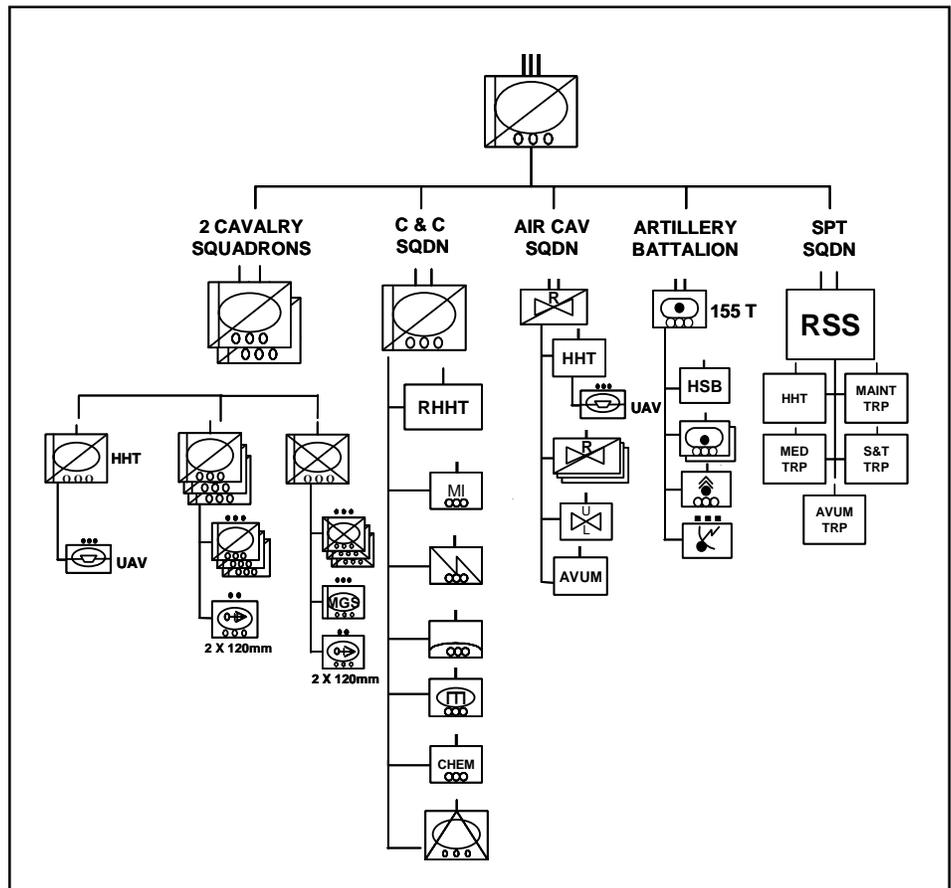


Fig. 1. Proposed ICR Organizational Concept

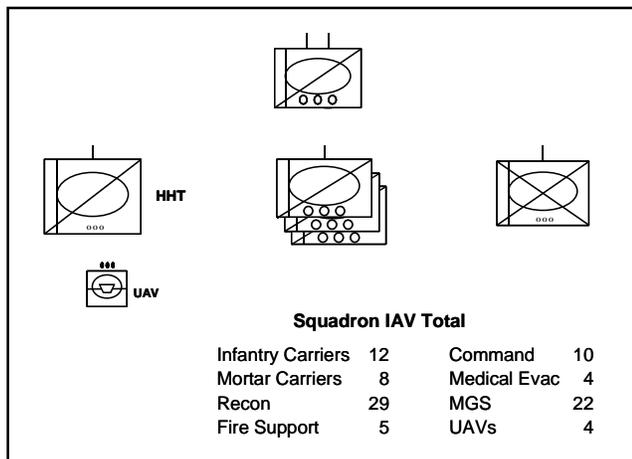


Fig 2. Proposed Ground Cav Organization

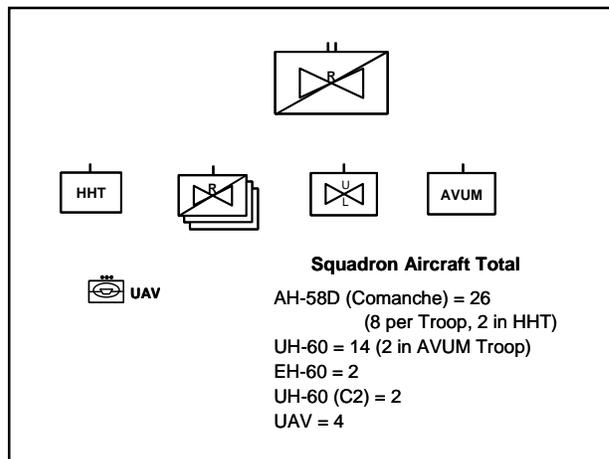


Fig 3. Proposed Air Cav Organization

proposal written by the commanders of the cavalry groups of World War II. Taking a page from history, and the operational experience of the 2d Cavalry Group, I propose a regiment of two ground cavalry squadrons, an air cavalry squadron, a command and control squadron, a field artillery battalion of rockets, radars, and guns, and a regimental support squadron. (See Fig. 1)

The regiment will have three maneuver squadrons; two ground cavalry and one air. The regiment will also have a command and control squadron that will provide the training command element for the various separate troops of the regiment, as well as acting as an extension of the regiment's overall C2 structure in extended operations. A field artillery battalion, with tube and rocket artillery supported by a target acquisition element, will provide direct and

general support fires for the regiment. The regimental support squadron will provide the complete range of CSS to the dispersed squadrons of the regiment.

The ground cavalry squadrons will have three cavalry troops and one infantry or dragoon troop (Fig. 2). The cavalry troops will have mixed platoons of recon IAV and MGS. The recon IAVs must all be equipped with laser designators that can illuminate targets for artillery and air delivered (rotary and fixed wing) precision munitions. This ability will allow the regiment to extend the reach of the corps commander or JTF commander's punch and shape the battle. Dragoon troop, a combined arms team, gives the squadron commander a lethal, potent force that expands his tactical options depending on the mission at hand. The stronger on-the-ground strength of dragoon troop will allow the squadrons to

patrol more intensively, clear small villages, or conduct dismounted combat patrols. The mortars within each troop will provide responsive immediate suppression fires for the squadron until the air cavalry and/or field artillery battalion can mass fires. The squadron also extends its own eyes with the addition of a UAV section in the headquarters troop.

The air cavalry squadron (Fig. 3) is a robust organization. The squadron

can operate with our traditional air-ground team pairing, or in advance of the regiment in offensive operations. The range of aircraft and UAVs in the squadron afford the regimental commander the ability to extend the eyes of the regiment, enhance his communications architecture with airborne relay, and move the dragoon troops in limited air assault operations.

We must also be motivated by the ever-present facts and finance of Patton's essay. The need for this regiment is NOW. We cannot afford one-for-one substitution of tanks and Bradleys for Recon IAVs and MGS. The cost of one-for-one substitution is prohibitive. The industrial base cannot produce sufficient quantities of these vehicles for a one-for-one substitution, which is a fact. Even given the potentially new budget reality in a post-11 September world, we cannot indulge in fiscal fantasy. The proposal outlined here can be made given the fact of the industrial plant of the IAV manufacturer and within the iron reality of the budget. We must also remember that other services will have needs, and there is not an infinite supply of cash.

The other fact we must deal with is the availability of strategic lift. Using a rough planning factor of three LAVs, three OH-58Ds, and two UH-60s per C-17, the sortie rate required to move this regiment is roughly 170 C-17 and 10 C-5. A ground squadron will require roughly 40 C-17 sorties. Depending on which component is the main effort at what stage of an operation, lift will be at a premium, indeed, it is ALWAYS at a premium. The proposed T/O of the regiment will fit into all forms of available strategic lift, and give the regional CINC a potent force.<sup>3</sup>

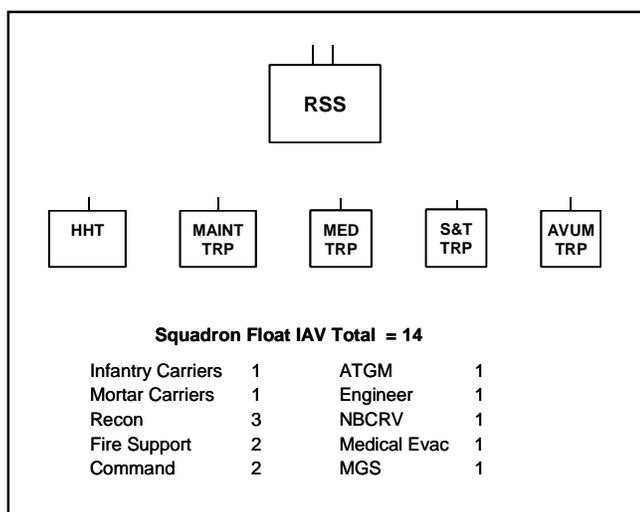
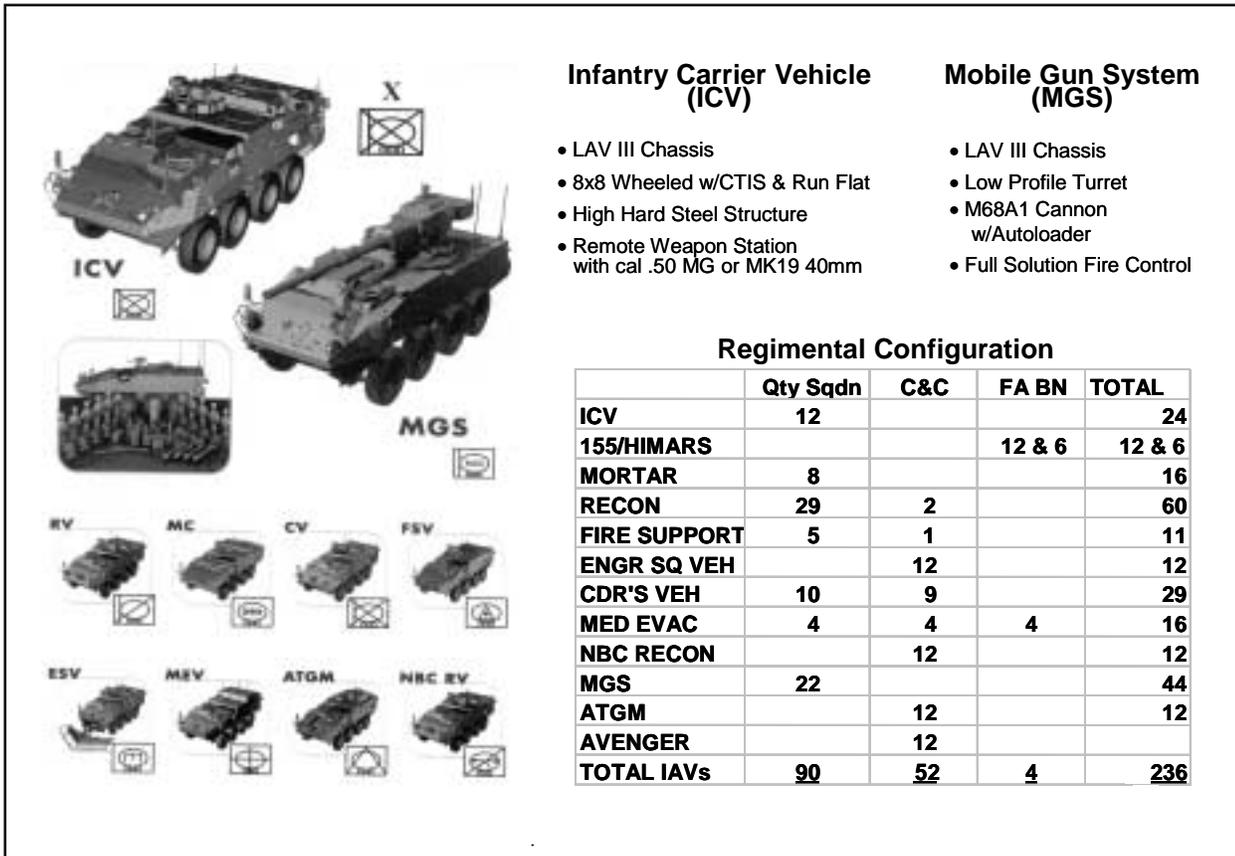


Fig. 4 Proposed Support Squadron Organization



**Fig. 5 Interim Armored Vehicle (IAV) Distribution**

Except for the field artillery battalion's HIMARS and the Avenger anti-aircraft system, the regiment's vehicles would share the common chassis of the LAV III, but with many variations. Chart shows distribution of these variants within the regiment.

This proposed macro table of organization for the regiment will allow our Army to field the 2d Cavalry rapidly and provide the Army a robust, lethal cavalry organization. The regiment will meet a near-term need and fit into the reality of a wartime Army. It will also serve by refining the tactics, techniques, and procedures our Army must develop for information-based combat and an air-ground mix of forces we believe will make up the Objective Force.

The President has called the Army, and the Nation, to war. In his speech to the nation he said he would, "direct every resource — every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, ... every financial influence, and every weapon of war to the disruption and defeat of the global terror network." Our task is clear. We must field a regiment capable of entering the fray as soon as possible. The regiment must be able to capitalize on a trooper/sensor mix that will fulfill the role of cavalry to find, fix, and finish the enemy. The bugler is sounding "Boots & Saddles." It is time to ride!

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup>Reach operations are those that use the power of information devices to reduce the size of an in-theater staff. For example, intelligence reach allows an in-theater force to be supported from a secure support base not in theater or even from bases in the U.S. Service support reach will allow a reduction in the amount of classes of supply brought into theater, avoiding the "Iron Mountain" of supplies. This is NOT a disguised form of "just-in-time" logistics. It requires total integration of operations and logistics staff officers in planning and execution of operations. CASCOC is working on details of CSS reach.

<sup>2</sup>FBCB2 is Force 21 Battle Command Brigade and Below, a digital communications device; ASAS Lite is the work station associated with the All Source Analysis System, the superb intelligence device used by our G2s; AFATDS is Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System.

<sup>3</sup>I made these calculations based on my experience as a planner at XVIII Airborne Corps. I know that Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) has an engineering section that can produce much tighter transportation estimates. I offer, though, that estimates are in the ballpark.

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*The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Professor Doug Campbell, Director of the Center for Strategic Leadership, Army War College (and former Cavalryman); Professor Owen Cote, Deputy Director of MIT's Security Studies Program; and Colonel Dave Mollahan, USMC, for their guidance on this essay. The faults and opinions are mine alone.*