Covering Force Operations (Offense)

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Organization

- Offensive Covering Force Doctrine
- The Armored Cavalry Regiment as an R&S force
- VII Corps in Op DESERT STORM
- Insights on Security Operations
- Discussion
Covering Force Doctrine

- Semi-independent
- Fights beyond supporting range of the main force
- Protects the main force from observation and interference
- Gives the main force time and space to act
- May become decisively engaged
- Fights for information and reports continuously
CF Characteristics

- Develops unique combat info and intelligence
- Fights outnumbered
- Needs **air parity/superiority** and **air-ground mobility advantage** over enemy units
- Relies on fast, heavy fire support
- Needs capable mobility/counter-mobility
- Hindered by anything that impedes observation or communications
Covering Force in a Corps Formation

Figure 5-1. Movement to contact
The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Armored Cavalry Regiment

1991

116 x Bradley Scouts, 123 x M1 Tanks, 40 x Scout Helos, 24 x AH1 Helos, 24 x 155mm SP Howitzers, c. 4,500 troops
Ca. 142,000 Soldiers (AC, RC)
5.6 M Gallons CL III/Day
3.3 M Gallons Water/Day
Ca. 6,000 Tons CL V/Day
2nd ACR’s Combat Organization
Covering Force Lessons

- Security forces shape division/corps maneuver.
- Standoff collection means and WAM /PGM alter security force use and tactics.
- **Change is nearly constant**; requires mission command, active junior leaders.
- Formation discipline can only be maintained with anticipation and active supervision.
- Momentum and tempo depend on mutual support between the main force and the covering force.
- Air-ground operations can be operationally and tactically decisive.
- Logistics will be an operation within the operation.
Other Thoughts

- Tactics should vary; not a process, no single solution
- **Every level matters but capable platoons are essential**
- CF maneuver should be integrated into the main fight.
- CF orients on both the main force and the enemy
- An able R&S force can be worth at least two BCTs to the formation commander
- The R&S force is 50% more capable in flying weather
- Standard TOE makes things easier, multiplies options
- CF commanders and staff often deal with opposite numbers two echelons up; good staff is combat power
Training Lessons

• Train at full scale: operate over wide, deep AOs.
• Change things continually—boundaries, objectives, direction, task org, rates of movement.
• Practice Passage of Lines and battle handover to main force
• Stress prompt, accurate reporting.
• Focus on formations & battle drills, platoon fire, integration of FA/mortars/CAS.
• Multi-echelon training is essential; every leader goes to training with specific objectives and a plan.
• Train for Mission Command and junior leader initiative. Plan for it and critique it.
• Make AARs tough and open
Backup Slides
Training Lessons

• Mission focus must guide training; you can’t do everything equally well. **Stress combat basics, plan and execute well.**

• Apply high standards based on combat reality. Expect to fall short occasionally. Tell people how they’re doing.

• Multi-echelon training is the only way to train effectively; insist that every leader goes to training with specific objectives and a plan.

• Formations & battle drills, platoon fire, integration of FA/mortars/CAS get you a long way.

• Train for Mission Command and junior leader initiative.

• Make AARs tough and open