A DYING BREED: THE UNITED STATES CAVALRY IN TODAY'S ARMY

A Monograph

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This monograph examines how the U.S. Army's recent changes in organization, doctrine, and technology have directly impacted the role of the cavalry in today's operating environment. Given the recent changes in the Army's doctrine, organization, and advance in technology, does the United States Cavalry still perform a unique and necessary function in today's Army?

Section One focuses on the "unique and necessary" function of the U.S. Cavalry. Section Two focuses on the two main conflicts that led to the most dramatic changes to the cavalry, World War II and Operation Desert Storm. Section Three analyzes the changes that have occurred over the years to bring the cavalry's role into question. Finally, concluding that the cavalry no longer performs a unique and necessary function, this monograph recommends how the Army should approach the employment of the cavalry in future conflicts.

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ABSTRACT

A DYING BREED: THE UNITED STATES CAVALRY IN TODAY'S ARMY, by Major Vincent A. Thomas, 47 pages.

This monograph examines how the U.S. Army's recent changes in organization, doctrine, and technology have directly impacted the role of the cavalry in today's operating environment. Since the initial establishment of the force during the American Revolution, the U.S. Cavalry has transformed more than any other organization. Performing miraculously at the unique and necessary function they were designed for. Given the recent changes in the Army's doctrine, organization, and advance in technology, does the United States Cavalry still perform a unique and necessary function in today's Army?

Section One focuses on the "unique and necessary" function of the U.S. Cavalry. Dating all the way back to their establishment and bringing the reader up through Operation Iraqi Freedom, this monograph describes what unique and necessary function the cavalry was designed for during each respective conflict. Section Two focuses on the two main conflicts that led to the most dramatic changes to the cavalry, World War II and Operation Desert Storm. World War II was significant because the end result was a complete mechanization of the cavalry force. Operation Desert Storm was significant because it was the validation of the Armored Cavalry Regiment and its new doctrine. These two conflicts not only depict what the major impacts were, but also describes how well the cavalry performed their unique and necessary functions during that timeframe. Section Three analyzes the changes that have occurred over the years to bring the cavalry's role into question. This section explains how current Army organization, doctrine, and technological advances have directly changed the cavalry's role in today's Army. Finally, concluding that the cavalry no longer performs a unique and necessary function, this monograph recommends how the Army should approach the employment of the cavalry in future conflicts.

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ACRONYMS

ACR   Armored Cavalry Regiment

AH   Attack Helicopter

AMSP   Advanced Military Studies Program

BCT   Brigade Combat Team

BfSB   Battlefield Surveillance Brigade

CAB   Combined Arms Battalion

CAM   Combined Arms Maneuver

CFV   Cavalry Fighting Vehicle

HUMINT   Human Intelligence

ISR   Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

MI   Military Intelligence

RSTA   Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition

SIGINT   Signal Intelligence

UAV   Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

WAS   Wide Area Security

ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

"As always, Cavalry's motto must remain: When better roller skates are made, Cavalry horses will wear them."

—Major General J. K. Herr, Chief of Cavalry

Influenced by General George Washington himself, the United States Cavalry's origin dates all the way back to the American Revolutionary War. Initially denying Colonel Elisha Sheldon and his 5th Regiment Connecticut Light Horse's request for volunteer service during the war, due to the Continental Army's lack of logistical support, Washington soon realized he made a mistake.[1] It was not until October of 1776, when Washington witnessed the defeat of his forces by the British Dragoons at White Plains, New York, and the "rear guard actions of the 5th Regiment Light Horse across New Jersey," that he realized the "value of a regular mounted establishment."[2] Shortly after, Washington recommended the establishment of such a unique organization to Congress. Congress accepted the recommendation and commissioned the Second Continental Light Dragoons in December 1776, under the command of Colonel Sheldon.[3]

Successful Dragoon reconnaissance, patrolling, and guard operations inspired Washington to expand his mounted force and led to the establishment of the Corps of Continental Light Dragoons only a few months later. However, it was not until March of 1792, that an Act of Congress officially "gave the President the power to raise at his discretion a 'squadron' of cavalry to serve for three years, to be under a major commandant of cavalry."[4] No longer referred to as

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[1]Second Continental Light Dragoons: Our Past, http://www.dragoons.info/Past/ (accessed November 29, 2012).

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Albert G. Brackett, *History of the United States Cavalry, From the Formation of the Federal Government to 1st of June, 1863* (Franklin Square, New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1865), 14.

the Dragoons, this act marked the beginning of the United States Cavalry and happened to be the first change of many to come for the organization over the next 220 years.

Arguably, the ever-changing operating environment over the past 220 years, has forced the U.S. Cavalry to change more than any other Army organization. The U.S. Cavalry was created to perform very specific mounted operations that were popular during 18th Century conflicts. However, as the years went by, the conflict, the environment, the technology, and the leadership all changed.

After almost every single major United States conflict, the Army has either had to modernize the cavalry to adapt to technological advances or relook how to effectively employ the mounted force. Because of the constant change in the operating environment, reorganization of the force and doctrine over the years, and the post-modern rapid evolution of technology, it can be questioned whether or not U.S. Army Cavalry units perform a unique and necessary function anymore. The U.S. Cavalry was created 220 years ago to perform a specific function, but do they still perform that unique and necessary function today?

In 2010, an Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) student wrote a monograph titled *The U.S. Cavalry: Still Relevant in Full Spectrum Operations*. MAJ Andrew J. Watson argues that the U.S. Cavalry is still relevant in Full Spectrum Operations because of its flexibility, economy of force, and unique ability to gather intelligence on the battlefield.[5] Furthermore, MAJ Watson concludes that, "regardless of the era of warfare, the enduring requirement for a force tailored to the full range of the economy of force role and the constant need to fight for information and conduct area security operations over extensive areas remains at the center of

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[5]MAJ Andrew J. Watson, "The U.S. Cavalry: Still Relevant in Full Spectrum Operations?" School of Advanced Military Studies Monographs (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2010), 4-6.

successful military operations."[6] The argument, though true in some aspects, does not take into account all the influencing factors of today's operating environment. These influencing factors are the recent rapid evolution of technology, current Army doctrine, and its organization. This monograph attempts to satisfy the further research warranted by including the true influencers on the U.S. Cavalry's current mission and will prove that, given the U.S. Army's current doctrine, organization, and vast improvements in technology, U.S. Cavalry units no longer perform a unique and necessary function in today's operating environment.

Methodology

This monograph will approach the research question by focusing on three parts. The first part is describing the unique and necessary function of U.S. Cavalry units. This will entail what the original unique and necessary function was when the U.S. Cavalry first stood up, how it evolved over the decades of U.S. conflict, and describe what the cavalry's function is in today's operating environment. The second part of the monograph will describe how the U.S. Cavalry has performed over the past 220 years of conflicts. The key point behind this chapter is to show the reader that the U.S. Cavalry performed well in its unique and necessary function during that specific timeframe of conflict. Key cases to support this argument will be the U.S. Cavalry's function and adaption during World War II and later during Operation Desert Storm. Finally, the third part of the monograph will focus on how the U.S. Cavalry has transformed to adapt over the years and the technological and doctrinal changes that were a direct reason for said transformations. This will lead to arguing that, based on the technological and doctrinal changes over the recent years, the U.S. Cavalry no longer performs a unique and necessary function in today's operating environment.

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[6]Watson, 55.

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The monograph will follow a historical timeline going all the way back to the origins of the U.S. Cavalry; focusing on what purpose they were established for, whether they were effective in that operating environment, and if they were unique and necessary at that time. Looking at historical conflicts, the research will focus on how the Army has adapted its structure and doctrine to keep the cavalry unique and necessary in that respective timeframe and operating environment. The monograph will continue to the present, where technology now covers most of what the cavalry was designed to do.

In today's organization and doctrine, cavalry tasks are incorporated into all maneuver elements. This monograph will take a look at the Army's new doctrine that was published in 2012, covering a wide variety of tasks included in their new decisive action concept. This will also include a review of the two core competencies of combined arms maneuver and wide area security (CAM and WAS) to figure out how the current cavalry function ties in with the rest of the combat arms branches. Additionally, using the stand up of Battlefield Surveillance Brigades (BfSB) as an example, this monograph will determine whether or not elements such as these have taken over the traditional cavalry's unique and necessary function.

SECTION 1: A UNIQUE AND NECESSARY FUNCTION

"Necessity alone, however, is always a weak argument in American politics, and it was not until the terror of Indian depredations was wedded to the irresistible allure of commercial gain that the Federal government in Washington City was persuaded to revive the mounted arm."[7] Though the concept of the cavalry's use originated during the American Revolution, as eluded to in the introduction, the unique organization was shortly disbanded and for "seventeen long years the United States Army was without anything even remotely resembling a cavalry unit."[8] When the Federal government realized they needed a mounted force to maintain the tempo with the Indians, Congress decided to reinstate the mounted force in 1833, the recognized birth year of the uniformed United States Cavalry. The cavalry was reinstated for a unique and necessary function. It was necessary to compete with the tempo of the Indians and protect commerce. It was also unique because the cavalrymen were the fastest moving organization on the battlefield. Their speed and agility on the battlefield directly led to many successful campaigns against the Indians.

The next significant war in which the United States Cavalry had a unique and necessary function was during the Mexican War. The cavalry played a significant role in the United States's victory. Ground warfare during the Mexican War was structured around two concepts. The first was technology. Smoothbore muskets and artillery munitions were the two aspects of technology that dictated the geometry of the battlefield. They were two very effective pieces of technology during this timeframe and caused the most casualties on both sides, but only while forces were within the artillery's 400-yard danger zone.[9] This forced formations to be fairly close to each

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[7]Gregory J.W. Urwin, *The United States Cavalry: An Illustrated History* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1983), 50.

[8]Ibid., 50.

[9]Stephen Z. Starr, "Cavalry Tactics in the Civil War," Cincinnati Civil War Round Table, http://www.cincinnaticwrt.org/data/ccwrt_history/talks_text/starr_cavalry_tactics.html (accessed December 12, 2012).

other during conflict. The U.S. Cavalry took full advantage of this restriction. The mounted force took minimal casualties because it could move across this 400-yard gap in a shorter amount of time. It took too long for the enemy to acquire a cavalryman within 75 yards and take a shot before the cavalry was already at their front line. Additionally, the reload rates of the smoothbore rifle and artillery cannons were significantly slow.[10] Therefore, if the enemy was even lucky enough to take a shot at the speeding horsemen, they better hope it was accurate because there was not enough time to reload the musket. The same applies to artillery cannons, as they were not accurate on point targets during this timeframe; it was just a matter of luck.[11]

The next concept of ground warfare in which the cavalry played a significant role in was combined arms. The United States was very effective during the Mexican War at employing the infantry, artillery, and cavalry in each maneuver. Because of the short geometry of the battlefield, enemy formations were all online and in the open. The artillery munitions and infantry muskets were used to collapse the enemy's front line defenses and the cavalry was used to break through the hole and attack into the enemy's rear.[12] This was a very effective method for the cavalrymen were able to close the 400-yard danger zone fairly quickly and exploit any holes that were created in the enemy's defense. This concept, in conjunction with the shortened battlefield geometry, directly led to the cavalry's success during the Mexican War.

When the American Civil War erupted in 1861, many of the veterans from the Mexican War were now in key leadership roles or took key leadership roles at some point during the war.[13] The positive side to this is that these key leaders had experience on the battlefield already, so they knew how to command and control their organizations. Only taking approximately 10,000

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[10]Starr.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

casualties during the Mexican War, inflicting significantly much more damage on the enemy, the United States's employment of combined arms maneuver was proven.[14] The negative side of this is that there was a significant change in technology in between the Mexican War and Civil War. One that changed how the cavalry was used from that point on: the rifled musket and the Minie ball. The Union and Confederate Armies both found out the hard way that the same tactics they used in the Mexican War were not going to work during the Civil War.[15]

The First Bull Run Campaign was the first test. Both sides were prepared to conduct ground warfare as usual. When the war started, the artillery crews ran up to their firing positions and set up their cannons approximately 400 yards out, waiting to fire just like in the Mexican War. The Confederates got into their traditional online formation with rifled muskets and Minie balls, and defeated all the Union artillerymen.[16] Not only were the crews destroyed, but the artillery pieces were not retrievable because they now lie within the newly expanded danger zone. It was at that moment, that both sides realized how much the new technology was going to affect the way they conducted combined arms maneuver and how methods employed in the Mexican War were not so effective anymore.[17]

This new way of thinking was all because of the rifled musket, coupled with the Minie ball. The rifled musket came about in the late 1850's, when it was decided that the muskets would be much more accurate if the barrel was rifled. This increased the accuracy of the musket out to roughly 300 yards. Additionally, both armies decided to use the Minie ball because of its faster reload time and higher accuracy rate. The rifled musket, with the Minie ball for ammunition, now

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[14]Starr.

[15]Thomas E. Griess, ed., *The Westpoint Military History Series: The American Civil War* (Garden City Park, NY: Square One Publishers Incorporated, 2002), 22-23.

[16]Ibid., 25.

[17]Ibid.

made it effective out to 500 yards and could inflict damage on someone up to 1,000 yards away.[18] This change increased the amount of distance in which formations could effectively shoot at each other. During the Mexican War, the infantry formations only had about a minute to close the gap in between opposing formations. Because the effective range of the rifled musket was now up to 500 yards, it now took 5-6 minutes to make the charge to the break through the enemy lines.[19] Hence, forcing a change in the way the cavalry was employed. Units could no longer send their cavalrymen on a charge straight into the enemy front line.

The next major factor the rifled musket affected was how far the field artillery was positioned. As evident in the First Bull Run Campaign, the old method of running the cannons up to the front line first did not work. Artillery now had to have some standoff from the enemy infantry and found themselves behind the front lines. Canisters were no longer effective, so they had to rely more on the explosive and solid rounds that were effective anywhere up to 1,600 yards.[20] Though it was still in a direct fire method, the distance for observation was increased. The change in artillery tactics directly affected the way each side had to employ their cavalry. If the enemy had a lucky shot, they could hit a cavalryman or cavalry organization 1,600 yards away now. Cavalry charges against the enemy's front line were now more difficult.

The effective range of the rifled muskets also affected cavalry tactics because none of the Soldiers wanted to stand out in open formations anymore. Over the course of the war, leadership began to spend some time focusing on building up defensive positions and digging trenches. This allowed for the Soldiers to get behind some cover while they were taking aim at the enemy formations. The trenches were utilized often because it served two purposes. The first is that it provided cover for the Soldier from the chest down and the second purpose is that it allowed for a

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[18]Griess, 22-23.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., 25.

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stable position for the riflemen to gain a better sight picture and increase accuracy. Because of the increased distance that the rifled musket had, it changed the mindset of the leadership to more of a defensive nature. Cavalry charges were not made unless the probability of success was high. Armies could take up a defensive position and take shots at the enemy as they attempt to cross the 500-yard danger area that the rifled musket created, killing cavalrymen as they charged across the battlefield.[21]

Because of the increase in the geometry of the battlefield, formations were spread further apart. Now defensive in nature, leadership could not keep the formations online and controlling organizations on the battlefield became a significant challenge. In the Napoleonic method, it is crucial that everyone stays online to prevent fratricide and to synchronize fires. This was not occurring anymore. Armies ended up decentralizing into skirmishers, or smaller formations, to provide protection to the front and flanks and to allow forewarning as to when and where the enemy was coming from. This allowed for the leadership on the battlefield to have enough time to get their main formations in place and in the right position so they would be ready for the next conflict.

This directly affected the cavalry and changed their unique and necessary function. The cavalry charge that was so successful in the Mexican War was not effective anymore. The cavalry was now used more for speed to get Soldiers across a greater distance at a faster rate.[22] They were mostly used now for reconnaissance and to protect the flanks of the main body because they had the speed to either get to a hot spot fast or pursue enemy flankers and reconnaissance elements.[23]

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[21]Griess, 22-23.

[22]Ibid., 25.

[23]This is, arguably, where the U.S. Cavalry's modern day mission was originally derived from.

Furthermore, each side had their own internal challenges when it came to the cavalry. The necessity for speed on the battlefield, the cavalry, was greater than previous wars. Cavalrymen were in such high demand that usually the side with the most horses won the conflict. The Union had an advantage because they had the programs to procure horses and feed them, but their disadvantage was that they did not have experienced riders or the training programs in place to train new riders. The Confederates, on the other hand, did not have the easy procurement and sustainment of their horses, like the Union. Most of their horses either came off their farm before they went into the war or were stolen from the Union. However, the Confederates, being raised on farmland, were very experienced riders and had some good cavalrymen.[24]

After the Civil War, the United States Cavalry was at a steady state. After the modification of the cavalry's function, the Union realized how effective the cavalry was during the Civil War and decided to maintain the mounted force. The cavalry was unique and necessary now for their mounted reconnaissance, speed, and protection of the main body. This continued on through World War I where the demands were slightly similar, though technology and organization dictated another slight change to the United States Cavalry.

"The United States entered World War I with seventeen regiments of cavalry, but left most of these units on the Mexican border to safeguard against the threat of German agents combining their efforts with Mexico."[25] The 2nd Cavalry Regiment, the only regiment deployed to World War I, kept the cavalry tradition alive. Though they only conducted one attack during the war, it was successful enough to indicate that future warfare was still going to involve the horse-mounted element. This came into play post World War I as General Pershing convened numerous

[24]Starr.

[25]Matthew Darlington Morton, *Men on Iron Ponies: The Death and Rebirth of the Modern U.S. Cavalry* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 14.

boards to gather lessons learned. One of the topics of discussion was the future of the cavalry. Though technology and the operating environment were changing, "the board still saw a viable role for mounted troops, especially in pursuit."[26]

"The board also acknowledged that cavalry troops on the western front had often fought dismounted in the trenches as infantry. Calling for the discontinuation of the mounted attack in close order, the board recommended additional dismounted training for those times the cavalry was expected to fight like infantrymen."[27] Even though only one regiment fought in the World War, the board was convinced that the United States Cavalry would stay mounted on horses and used for reconnaissance and pursuit operations.

World War II was the most dramatic change to the United States Cavalry. The current unique and necessary function dissipated to the point that towards the end of the war, their horses were no longer required. Mechanization took over the cavalry branch. Going into the war, Army leadership still believed that horse-mounted cavalry would still be effective if combined with the mechanized cavalry.

General Douglas MacArthur, key to the mechanization of the United States Army, went into the war believing that the horse-mounted and mechanized cavalry could work together on operations. He "tasked the cavalry with: long-distance strategic reconnaissance, fighting for control of the theater of reconnaissance, tactical reconnaissance, seizing points of strategic and tactical importance, pursuit, delay, exploitation, and being part of a general reserve to be used tactically or strategically."[28] However, further into the war, the leadership realized that most of the horse-mounted cavalrymen were fighting in the trenches, dismounted, along with the infantry.

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[26]Morton, 15.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., 26.

At this point, the leadership decided to make adjustments to their organizations and tactics to reflect heavily on the employment of mechanized cavalry instead.

This change almost held true until the recent years. How the mechanized cavalry was employed in World War II is the foundation on which cavalry doctrine and tactics were built. This modification made the cavalry unique, necessary, and effective in the following wars. This doctrine held true up until the United States Army underwent modularity in 2003, which reorganized the cavalry's unique and necessary function yet again.[29]

As directed in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review, military organizations must now change how they approach planning for future operations to reflect a capabilities-based concept.[30] Planning approaches cannot be based on the threat any longer. This directive sparked the modularity initiative within the United States Army to reorganize the force to have the capability to defeat any force, anywhere.

At the time this directive was published, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) was the only organization that did not undergo modularity.[31] Keeping it unique and necessary in its function. Recently, the United States Army had modularized the 3rd ACR to transform it into a Stryker Brigade Combat Team. This transformation allows the 3rd ACR to be dismantled and assembled in any way necessary to meet mission requirements globally.

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[29]U.S. Department of the Army, *2003 Army Transformation Roadmap* (Department of the Army, 01 November 2003).

[30]U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of Defense, February 6, 2006).

[31]MAJ George A. Stewart III, "The Last Cavalry Regiment: The Corps Commander's Requirement for the 3d ACR," School of Advanced Military Studies Monographs (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2007), 4.

The next thing modularity did to make the cavalry function unique and necessary is to disband the Cavalry Squadron at the Division level.[32] This decision put a Cavalry Squadron in each Brigade Combat Team (BCT) instead. Historically, it was necessary to do this because it allowed cavalry elements to work organically with each combat team instead of waiting to reorganize for major combat operations. Whether at Division or Brigade level, the cavalry still had a unique function during the time of modularity. The necessity changed more than their uniqueness.

Modularity also had an impact on the cavalry platform. "Whilst the heavy brigade combat teams retained an Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, the force was considerably lighter without the tanks and AH [Attack Helicopter] and the basic platoon-sized building block a mixture of 'heavy' Bradley CFV [Cavalry Fighting Vehicle] and Humvee scouts."[33] Bradley Fighting Vehicles now remained with heavy organizations. Therefore, other reconnaissance assets were now restricted to lighter platforms, such as the Humvee, and now more reliant on the human dimension during particular conflicts.[34]

After modularity, and current day, the United States Army describes the cavalry's fundamental role as "conducting reconnaissance or security missions in support of its higher headquarters...builds situational awareness of the operational environment…employs unique combinations of reconnaissance and security capabilities to successfully meet the information challenges intrinsic to the spectrum of conflict."[35] It sounds like the cavalry still serves a unique

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[32]Stewart, 4.

[33]Major Mike Dalzell, "If Time Spent in Reconnaissance is Seldom Wasted, Are We Wasting Our Time?" *The British Army Review 156* (Winter 2012): 94.

[34]Ibid., 94.

[35]U.S. Department of the Army, *TC 3-20.96 Reconnaissance and Cavalry Squadron Collective Task Publication* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2012), 1-1.

and necessary function in today's operating environment, but technological developments in the recent years and current Army organization could dictate otherwise.

SECTION 2: U.S. CAVALRY PERFORMANCE

"The cavalry was perhaps the most resistant of the branches to change, even though its horses were the most visible anachronisms in a world moving towards machines. Still, growing numbers of cavalry officers saw the need for change in their branch."[36] Over the past 220 years and despite hesitation, the United States Cavalry has had a unique and necessary function and adapted well to change. Because it is such a great organization, it is able to adapt both during and after almost every major United States conflict. There is a strong tradition and pride in the cavalry because of its success early in its horse-mounted days, but arguably, the cavalry was most successful and should be remembered mostly for their performance during both World War II, Vietnam, and Operation Desert Storm. For the purposes of this monograph and the emphasis on the cavalry's traditional role, this monograph will only focus on their performance during World War II and Operation Desert Storm. It is in these two wars that the cavalry displays their true execution of its unique and necessary function for that particular timeframe. Additionally, these two wars highlight the biggest transitions that the cavalry had to face throughout history. The first major transition was during World War II when mechanized reconnaissance forces were introduced onto the battlefield. This war sparked the development and future use of the mechanized cavalry. The second major transition was Operation Desert Storm, where the Armored Cavalry Regiment and associated doctrine were validated in 100 hours of combat.

Traditionally, cavalrymen will always be remembered for their use of horses, but some would argue that the horse cavalry died at the start of World War II, when the mechanized cavalry was born.

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[36]David E. Johnson, "From Frontier Constabulary to Modern Army: The U.S. Army between the World Wars," In *The Challenge of Change: Military Instituitions and New Realities, 1918-1941*, eds. Harold R. Winton and David R. Mets (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 188.

U.S. Cavalry in World War II

World War II is unique to the United States Cavalry because it is the first time since the Civil War that cavalry forces had to dramatically adapt to the current operating environment and the rapid change in technology. Similar to what the United States is facing today, the cavalry underwent changes that were influenced by these similar factors. There is no doubt that the change in the nature of warfare and technology were the two main factors responsible for this change and the rate at which it occurred. Trench warfare was over, dying in World War I. Flanking maneuvers on horseback and the worrisome about the speed of which units could cover ground from trench to trench were over. The introduction of armor onto the battlefield made a huge impact on this change. After many boards and discussions during the interwar period and the introduction of armor onto the battlefield, it was time to relook the unique and necessary function of the U.S. Cavalry.

"By 1939, there was a general acceptance of the superiority of mechanized and motorized forces in a reconnaissance role. Some armies had almost completely abandoned the horse."[37] Some organizations still utilized horses; however, they did not function by themselves as in earlier wars. Any horseback cavalry employed during World War II was combined with a mechanized unit. Mechanized cavalry now led the way on the battlefield. The biggest driving factor for this reaction, coupled with the technology aspect, was the enemy's capabilities.

The German Army's organization and doctrine did not incorporate many horse-mounted cavalry on the battlefield. Most of their reconnaissance forces were either solely mechanized or displayed a combination of both horse and mechanized. They "were the first to organize and mass mechanized forces on a large scale and treat these forces as an independent combat arm."[38]

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[37]John J. McGrath, *Scouts Out! The Development of Reconnaissance Units in Modern Armies* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 77.

[38]Ibid., 77.

Because of this fact, the United States and Great Britain could not utilize the horse cavalry like they did in previous conflicts. The German mechanized force, between the panzer and panzergrenadier divisions, were far too strong for the Allies to risk an encounter with their armorless, horse-mounted forces. Thus, forcing the change of Allied reconnaissance forces into the mechanized realm.

"As the war progressed, the Germans gradually decreased the motorized component in their scout units, replacing motorcycles with half-tracked armored personnel carriers, upgrading armored cars and using obsolete light tanks, then standard medium tanks in armored regimental and battalion reconnaissance platoons."[39] Because of this, the United States Army utilized the Mechanized Cavalry Group as its main reconnaissance effort. As depicted in Figure 1, the Germans did not have any reconnaissance assets above the Division level.[40] This provided an advantage for the United States as, even though German reconnaissance forces were more heavily armored, the Mechanized Cavalry Group were organized at a higher level (Corps), outnumbered German reconnaissance forces, and provided a better common operating picture. Technology, the operating environment, and enemy capability drove the U.S. Cavalry to adapt to this method of employing reconnaissance assets to perform a unique and necessary function.

---

[39]McGrath, 96.

[40]Ibid., 97.

| Level	American		German	
Operational				
Army and Corps	Group headquarters with two subordinate squadrons		None (Panzer division armored reconnaissance battalions fill this role)	
Primary Equipment	Armored cars, jeeps, 75-mm assault guns		NA	
Tactical				
Division	panzer and panzergrenadier divisions		None infantry divisions	
Primary Equipment	Armored cars, jeeps, 75-mm assault guns	Jeeps, scout cars, mortars	Armored cars, half-tracks	Fusilier (motorized/ bicycle infantry) battalion replaced former recon battalion
Below Division	separate battalions	infantry regiment		
Primary Equipment	Separate battalions	Jeeps	Light tank or mech infantry (HT) reconnaissance platoons at panzer and panzergrenadier regiment and battalion levels	

Figure 1. German and American Reconnaissance Units, 1944.

Source: McGrath, 97.

The Mechanized Cavalry Group was "the largest reconnaissance organization fielded in the U.S. Army," and is extremely important in highlighting the adaptiveness and unique function of the cavalry during World War II.[41] All 13 Cavalry Groups were extremely adaptive both in technology and employment. Technology affected the unique and necessary function of the cavalry because it forced the Cavalry Groups to adapt to the mechanized world. The Cavalry

[41]McGrath, 98.

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Groups, originally starting with a horse-mechanized organization, ended up completely

reorganizing by the end of the war to a complete mechanized organization, depicted in Figure 2.

With the complete elimination of the horse, "jeep‑mounted scouts were teamed with

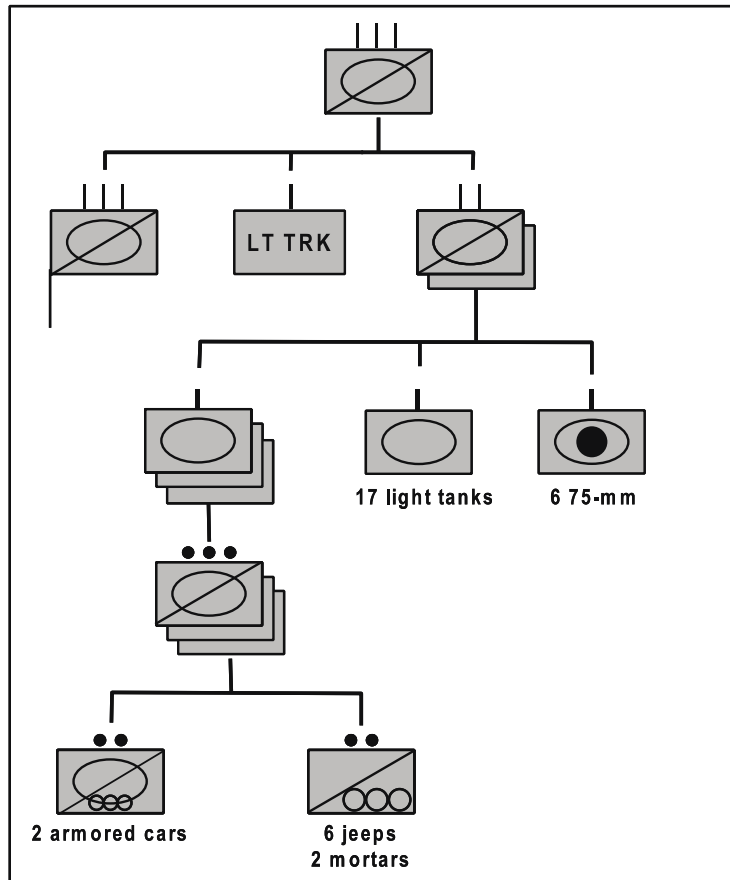reconnaissance troops mounted in the M8 light armored car."[42]

Figure 2. The Mechanized Cavalry Group in World War II.

Source: McGrath, 99.

Employment of the Mechanized Cavalry Group was the other factor that highlights the

cavalry's adaptiveness during World War II. Not just adaptiveness, but the employment of the

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[42]McGrath, 110.

cavalry during World War II was unique and necessary. Originally designed "to perform reconnaissance missions, not combat missions," this mission slowly changed as the war progressed.[43] Cavalry Groups found themselves conducting more and more combat operations, which forced reconnaissance assets to adapt again. Since reconnaissance assets started out in World War II in very lightly armored scout jeeps and horses, the United States Army soon found out that cavalry assets were not going to endure long engagements with German armored forces. With the change in the mechanization aspect of the cavalry, key leaders on the battlefield would pull them away from the reconnaissance mission and have the cavalry conducting offensive and defensive operations.

Even though the cavalry's performance during World War II was exceptional, some could argue that because U.S. leadership kept pulling the cavalry away from the traditional reconnaissance mission that it eliminated the cavalry's unique and necessary function. As Major J. Bryan Mullins argues in his monograph, "It is probably fair to say that cavalry never embraced the recon focus to begin with, and had only been trapped with that role with the surrender of the mechanized squadrons and 7th Brigade to the Armored force, and the deactivation of the mounted regiments in 1941."[44]

However, it appears that because the cavalry was adapting to the mechanized environment, outnumbered the Germans in reconnaissance assets, and performing a myriad of tasks, they were unique and necessary. World War II was impressive for the cavalry. From how they organized, adapted to the ever-changing mechanized environment, and conducted reconnaissance operations on the battlefield, the cavalry did what they were designed to do for the United States. The key point behind studying the cavalry's performance during World War II is

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[43]McGrath, 99.

[44]MAJ J. Bryan Mullins, "Defining the Core Competencies of U.S. Cavalry," School of Advanced Military Studies Monographs (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2004), 34.

that they evidently had a unique and necessary function for this conflict and performed it well. Much like the operating environment during Operation Iraqi Freedom, a lot of cavalry organizations strayed away from their traditional reconnaissance function. However, the difference between today's environment and the environment during World War II was that the United States did not have other organizations or technologies that assumed the reconnaissance role. In World War II, the United States relied solely on the cavalry for reconnaissance. Granted they performed other missions as well, but they were specifically designed to perform the unique and necessary function of reconnaissance at the time. In today's Army, with the evolution of technology, the cavalry is not the only unique organization or element that can assume the reconnaissance role.

U.S. Cavalry in Operation Desert Storm

The biggest creation that came out of the mechanization of the cavalry force during World War II was the development of the Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR).[45] Designed to perform a unique and necessary function of armored reconnaissance, the Armored Cavalry Regiment will play a vital role in the wars to follow World War II, especially during Operation Desert Storm. Operation Desert Storm is unique for the cavalry because it fits perfectly into the mold of the cavalry's unique and necessary function. The operating environment had the biggest impact on this statement. The open desert terrain was perfect for freedom of maneuver and executing the traditional deep fight outlined in Army doctrine. The United States' technology was far superior to the Iraq Republican Guard, allowing the cavalry to conduct thorough reconnaissance without getting into contact with the enemy. Everything was perfect for the United States Cavalry, directly leading to the United States' success during this operation.

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[45]McGrath, 149.

There is a problem with this concept though. The cavalry did perform a unique and necessary function during Operation Desert Storm and performed it very well. They performed too well. This is partly the reason why the cavalry's function in today's Army comes to question. Just like performances in the past where the cavalry did well during a conflict, there was a lot of hesitation or resistance to change. After World War I, even though there was much doubt about the future use of the horse, Army leaders still decided to keep the horse for a better part of World War II. It is the same concept for Operation Desert Storm. Many members of the cavalry community were hesitant to change after their reconnaissance tactics were validated during Operation Desert Storm. The war only lasted 100 hours. It was a decisive victory in which a majority of the Army's key leadership, at the time, was content with the way the war played out, how doctrine was executed, and how organizations were employed. There was no reason to change. However, because of this resistance or inability to predict the nature of future wars, the United States Army now questions if they should have changed the organization of the cavalry a long time ago since a majority of cavalrymen during Operation Iraqi Freedom were not performing the cavalry's traditional unique and necessary function.

During Operation Desert Storm, "reconnaissance units played major roles in combat operations and in pre-combat deployment, screening, and traffic control operations."[46] Utilizing the traditional Armored Cavalry Regiment concept, reconnaissance elements served a unique and necessary function during this conflict. Both the 2nd and 3rd ACRs were instrumental in the success of the United States. Each ACR deployed assigned to a Corps. As depicted in Figure 3, the 3rd ACR was assigned to the XVIII Airborne Corps and the 2nd ACR was assigned to the VII Corps.[47]
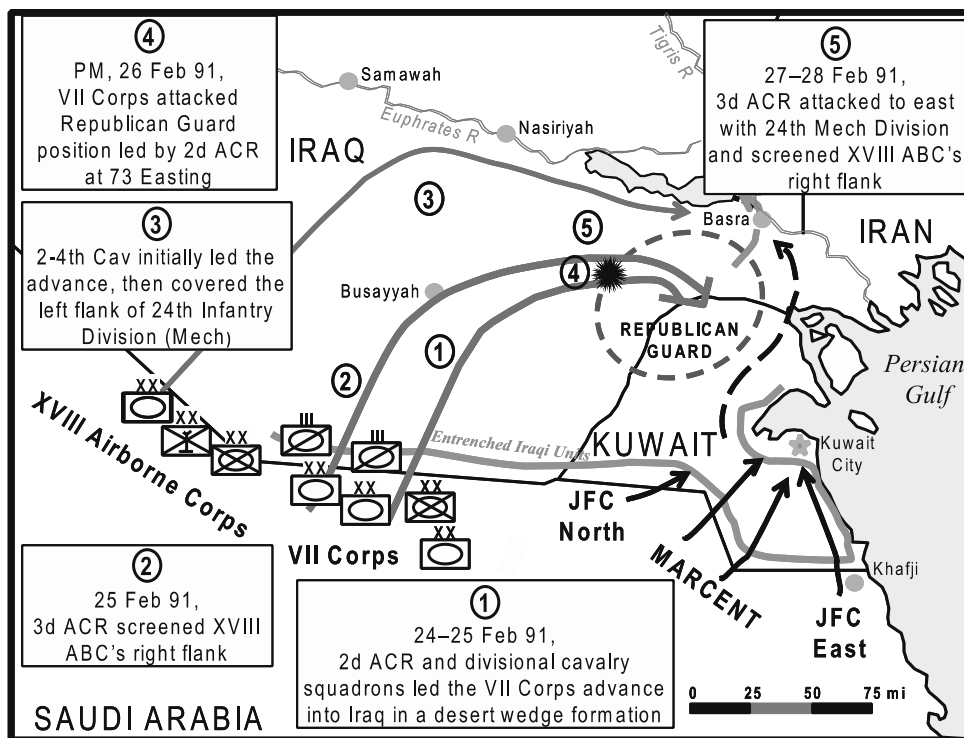
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[46]McGrath, 171.

[47]Ibid.

Figure 3. Cavalry Forces in Operation Desert Storm, 1991.

Source: McGrath, 172.

Just as it occurred occasionally in World War II, during Operation Desert Storm "each corps used its respective armored cavalry regiments based primarily on the firepower and armored punch inherent in the units rather than as purely reconnaissance or security forces."[48] Once again, the United States Cavalry served a unique and necessary function conducting a myriad of tasks, while being the only organization capable of conducting thorough reconnaissance missions on the battlefield. Even though the two Corps utilized the ACRs as part of the main effort at times, they still fulfilled the cavalry role in the war. Two of the biggest reasons why the ACRs were sometimes pulled from their traditional reconnaissance role are, one because coalition forces sometimes assumed the task at hand and two, because the ACRs had so

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[48]McGrath, 172.

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much firepower that the Corps leadership wanted to utilize them in an offensive role against the Iraq Republican Guard.

The cavalry performed their unique and necessary function miraculously. As depicted in Figure 3, the XVIII Airborne Corps did not use the 3rd ACR to cover their open left flank. Instead, they utilized the ACR in a unique and necessary way to screen their right flank as the Corps moved towards its starting position.[49] They continued screening until all of the Corps elements were advancing and then the Corps decided to utilize the 3rd ACR as part of their main effort for the attack because of the ACR's unique firepower.[50]

"In contrast, the VII Corps commander, Lieutenant General Frederick Franks, initially used his 2d ACR as an advance guard covering force, then as an attacking element."[51] Just like the XVIII Airborne Corps with the 3rd ACR, commanders in the 2nd ACR could not resist utilizing the firepower of the cavalry during the war. Therefore, both ACRs ended up eventually becoming part of the Corps' main effort and were instrumental in their victory over the Iraq Republican Guard.[52]

Operation Desert Storm was a huge success for the United States Army and the cavalry community. In 100 hours, the cavalry had validated its deployment, organization, and employment of tactics on the battlefield. With the confirmation of the ACR organization and doctrine, leaders were hesitant to change anything about it. Their utilization was confirmed, therefore it should work in any location and against any enemy. Because the validation of the cavalry was so tremendous during Operation Desert Storm, leaders felt obligated to use the same operational approach in 2003, for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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[49]McGrath, 172.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., 173.

[52]Ibid., 174.

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Analysis

There is no doubt that the United States Cavalry is one of the most adaptive, versatile, and highly trained organizations in the force. These historical examples of World War II and Operation Desert Storm can attest to that. Just prior to each conflict, the cavalry was designed, trained, and equipped to conduct a unique and necessary function for that specific war. In World War II, the cavalry was unique and necessary because they were the only force that could conduct a thorough and proper battlefield reconnaissance. No other organization in the United States Army had the capability to assume this mission. In Operation Desert Storm, the cavalry performed a unique and necessary function because it was able to conduct a variety of missions such as screen, guard, cover, and reconnaissance. Minus, aerial reconnaissance, no other Army organization was capable of conducting these operations as well. Both World War II and Operation Desert Storm stand out for the cavalry because, during both times, the cavalry was the only organization that could conduct the unique and necessary function they were designed for and be good at it.

The other factor that stands out for the cavalry amongst these two wars was their adaptiveness. During World War II, the cavalry was constantly changing the way they fought to counter German armored assets. Initially starting with the horse, the cavalry ended up increasing their armor capability as the war progressed. During Operation Desert Storm, the cavalry was more adaptive with their mission set. They initially started off the war in a traditional cavalry role with either reconnaissance, screen, or guard operations. Towards the end of the war, the cavalry had to change the way it fought because the Corps' were utilizing them as part of the main effort. Because of their mobility and firepower, the cavalry was able to adapt quickly from their traditional role to strictly offensive operations.

Sun Tzu states, "know the other, know yourself, and the victory will not be at risk; know the ground, know the natural conditions; and the victory can be total."[53] The cavalry did this well in both wars. The cavalry leadership knew itself and its capabilities. One of the main reasons why the cavalry was able to perform a unique and necessary function in both wars, not limited to the traditional cavalry role, was that they were able to know the enemy. This was the biggest reason for the change in the cavalry force during World War II. Realizing that the Germans outmatched the United States in armored cavalry organizations, the U.S. was able to adapt quickly to counter this strength. The last item is the terrain. In both wars, the cavalry was able to take advantage of the terrain. Transforming from trench-style warfare in World War I to a more open environment in World War II, the cavalry understood this change and adapted quickly, utilizing lightly-armored scout vehicles and jeeps to cover open terrain faster. In Operation Desert Storm, the cavalry utilized their tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles to cover the open desert ground faster, overrunning dug-in enemy forces.

The problem does not lie with how the cavalry fought or how adaptive they were during these two wars. The problem lies within a bigger context. This bigger context includes viewing the Army's capabilities as a whole. The cavalry had a unique and necessary function during these two historical examples, but only because they were the only organization that could do it during that timeframe. In today's Army, current organization, doctrine, and technology can now cover the cavalry's traditional unique and necessary function. Factors that were not present during the time those wars were fought.

The second portion of the cavalry's bigger context is their hesitation or resistance to change. Because they were so successful in previous wars and validated their new doctrine and tactics, as in these two historical cases, leaders have been resistant to changing the cavalry force.

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[53]Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), translated by Roger T. Ames, 151.

This causes problems as in trying to make something work instead of adapting it to function properly. Regardless of the challenges the cavalry faces today, the purpose of this section was to display that in past conflicts, the United States Cavalry was designed for a unique and necessary function for that specific conflict, performing miraculously. As always and proven throughout history, the cavalry will continue to transform and adapt to the current operating environment, driving the force to victory.

SECTION 3: TODAY'S U.S. CAVALRY

There are three main factors that affect the United States Cavalry's unique and necessary function in today's Army. Organization, doctrine, and technology are the most influential factors that affect the uniqueness and necessity of the cavalry. As highlighted in the previous chapter with the two historical examples, there was no other technology or organization that could do the missions that the cavalry did so successfully during the time of those conflicts. In the 21st century, there is. Thus, the cavalry's function is no longer unique and necessary in today's operating environment.

Organization is the first factor that directly affects the cavalry's ability to perform a unique and necessary function in today's Army. Two things occurred in the United States Army that caused this to happen. The first was modularity. As outlined previously, modularity disbanded cavalry at the Divisional level and now put a Cavalry Squadron with every Brigade Combat Team. Yes, this did make the cavalry's mission unique and necessary because it was the only reconnaissance element within a maneuver organization. However, "among the most common points of feedback from brigade combat teams in Iraq and Afghanistan is the fact that the current Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition Squadrons organic to Stryker and those Armored Reconnaissance Squadrons assigned to Heavy Brigade Combat Teams are too small and improperly resourced to conduct full spectrum operations."[54] This caused a shift in reconnaissance missions from traditional cavalry elements to maneuver elements conducting their own reconnaissance because the cavalry was ill-equipped.

The second part of the Army's current organization that directly affected the cavalry's function was the stand up of the Battlefield Surveillance Brigades. Developed in 2007, the BfSB was initially established to be the eyes and ears for Division level and higher, since modularity disbanded the cavalry at the Division level. Coupled with numerous intelligence assets and the

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[54]Watson, 51.

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best surveillance technology, the BfSB consists of a light cavalry squadron, and two Military

Intelligence [MI] Battalions.[55] The Military Intelligence Battalions "not only provide technical

surveillance assets in the form of UAV [Unmanned Aerial Vehicle] and SIGINT [Signal

Intelligence], but also HUMINT [Human Intelligence] collection and analysis, as well as fusion

of other intelligence sources."[56] This change to the organization of the United States Army has

had a tremendous impact on the cavalry's role. With the BfSB providing such assets at the

Division level, tailored to deploy and support any organization, Cavalry Squadrons at the Brigade

Combat Team level are not able to perform a unique and necessary function. This could be a big

reason why most Brigade Combat Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan have been utilizing their

assigned Cavalry Squadrons in more of a combat role.

The next factor that affects the cavalry's ability to perform a unique and necessary

function in today's Army is current doctrine. The Army has recently revamped all of its doctrinal

manuals to reflect how the Army will prepare for and fight future wars. Traditionally, the cavalry

will always have the mission of conducting reconnaissance, screen, guard, and cover missions.

However, it is not the cavalry's mission that has changed in the new doctrine. The change in the

new Army Doctrine Publication series affects all Army forces, which puts redundancy on the

traditional cavalry mission, no longer making it unique. In *ADRP 3-0 Unified Land Operations*,

the Army introduces two core competencies, combined arms maneuver and wide area security.

Stating that, "Army forces demonstrate their core competencies of combined arms maneuver and

wide area security by combining offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil

authorities tasks simultaneously."[57] What the doctrine is describing is called decisive action.

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[55]Dalzell, 94.

[56]Ibid.

[57]U.S. Department of the Army, *ADRP 3-0 Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2012), 2-8.

Whether it be a defeat mechanism or a stability mechanism, Army forces are expected to be able to execute any mission (decisive action) regardless of how the combined arms are organized. This requires all forces to be versatile on the battlefield and function in a combined arms manner.

Part of this decisive action concept in the new doctrine is the idea of "information collection in decisive action."[58] Doctrine states that, "information collection highlights aspects that influence how the Army operates as a ground force in close and continuous contact with the area of operations, including its weather, terrain, threat, and populace."[59] This statement implies that every organization in today's Army must be proficient at information collection. Thus, making the cavalry function not so unique. The cavalry is traditionally supposed to focus on intelligence collection of the enemy and terrain. The information collection in decisive action alludes to the inclusion of weather and populace as well. It is not possible for the cavalry to assume all aspects of this mission. Therefore, proper information collection must rely on the force as a whole instead of just the cavalry for reconnaissance functions.

The last factor that directly negates the cavalry's unique and necessary function in today's Army is technology. Technology is, arguably, the most influential reason why the cavalry's role is currently in question. Technology has advanced so much over the past decade that a lot of the requirement to see the terrain and see the enemy can be done with other assets besides putting a cavalryman on the ground and seeing with his own eyes. Back when the cavalry was unique and necessary in previous conflicts, this type of technology was not available. Therefore, the cavalry mission was required. Now, with the amount of Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets that are available, it is hard to justify putting a soldier in harm's way to get the same information from an even greater distance away. The stand up of the BfSB really highlighted this thought process because of its heavy reliance on its technology. With an

[58]U.S. Department of the Army, *ADRP 3-0 Unified Land Operations*, 2-6.

[59]Ibid.

increase in communications technology, it would not be so rare to see a case where the BfSB filters information through the Division level faster than a Cavalry Squadron can get information to their Brigade Combat Team. As highlighted in an article published in *The British Army Review*, "the impact of technology in generating the ability to conduct stand-off collection of intelligence also provided an opportunity for reconnaissance units to maintain their own freedom of action by conducting their mission out of contact."[60]

In this article, written by Major Mike Dalzell (a United Kingdom Liaison Officer to the U.S. Army National Guard), the author analyzes whether there is a requirement anymore for ground mounted reconnaissance. Focusing mostly on the British perspective, Dalzell does include some United States Cavalry history and makes some valid conclusions as to what the cavalry's role is in today's Army. Dalzell makes two valid conclusions that directly support this monograph. The first is that he suggests that because there is "very limited historical and recent evidence of successful reconnaissance by stealth," that future engagements are most likely to be where "ground forces 'find' the enemy."[61] This directly ties into his recommendation that "Ground Mounted Manned Reconnaissance should therefore become a skill at which the Combined Arms Battlegroup is capable."[62] Translated to U.S. Army terms, he is stating that because it is extremely difficult to conduct stealthy ground reconnaissance in today's operating environment, that the reconnaissance task should be a common task in which the Brigade Combat Team should become proficient in.

Dalzell's second conclusion, that is pertinent to this research question, is that an "attempt to create specialist reconnaissance units that can also perform secondary tasks almost always seems to result in compromise. Such units rarely end up being used for their primary purpose in

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[60]Dalzell, 95.

[61]Ibid., 98.

[62]Ibid.

major combat operations."[63] Such was the case in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Because cavalry units were either ill-equipped to perform a unique and necessary function or another unit had taken over that function, some cavalry units found themselves conducting infantry or armor type missions. Ill-equipped was not the case in Operation Desert Storm, it was more like too equipped, because both ACRs eventually ended up being part of the Corps' main effort on the main assault due to their dominating firepower.

The second key point about this conclusion shows some concern for the BfSB. They were designed as a special reconnaissance unit, to be the eyes and ears of the Division. However, the Brigade is extremely technologically heavy with two Military Intelligence Battalions. It only has one light Cavalry Squadron. With the Military Intelligence assets assuming a large part of the reconnaissance mission, one can only assume that the Cavalry Squadron will be utilized on secondary tasks. Not only because their function is assumed by other assets, but also because they are the only combat arms element in the organization. Any force protection requirement or patrol that is required by the Brigade will most likely go to their only Cavalry Squadron.

In today's Army and operating environment, it is evident that the Army's organization, doctrine, and technology have directly affected the unique and necessary function of the U.S. Cavalry. Back in World War II and Operation Desert Storm, the cavalry performed a unique and necessary function. Unhindered, because there was no other organization or technology that could assume that role. Over the past decade, technology has evolved so much that the Army cannot reorganize enough to compensate for the changes. UAVs and ISR capabilities have assumed a lot of the unique and necessary functions of the cavalry and warrants a relook at how to effectively utilize the cavalry in future conflicts.

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[63]Dalzell, 98.

CONCLUSION

As McGrath points out, "the nature of reconnaissance has changed since the days of the horse from a specialized function done by units with unique capabilities to merely one of several functions any combat unit is expected to be able to accomplish. The retention of units designed and organized to perform such missions no longer reflects operational realities."[64]

There are many critics who would argue that the United States Cavalry still performs a unique and necessary function in today's Army. This is not a new debate. Since World War II, the United States Army has wrestled with this question and has been amongst the most debated topics in cavalry discussion.[65] Major Watson, who concludes that the U.S. Cavalry is still relevant in Full Spectrum Operations, states that, "as the debate has raged, the Army continues to seek ways to capitalize on the immense array of technological advancements provided by unmanned aerial vehicles and other remote sensors being developed in conjunction with recently fielded initiatives such as the wheeled and highly digitized Stryker Fighting Vehicle."[66] This a very valid conclusion on how the Army views the future organization of the force. However, the truth is that because of the rapid advance on technology in the past decade, the cavalry function is quickly becoming less unique and necessary in today's Army.

Army leadership has already recognized the fact that this huge technological cannot go unanswered and requires a change in how the Army is organized and employed. This is evident by the Army's decision to transform both the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment to Stryker Cavalry Regiments. Only keeping the cavalry aspect in the name, the organization was transformed to a Stryker Brigade Combat Team to better suit the operational environment. Additionally, the stand up of the BfSB was another answer for the increase in

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[64]McGrath, 203.

[65]Ibid., 183.

[66]Watson, 50.

technology. Leaving only the Cavalry Squadrons in the BfSB and Brigade Combat Teams to provide its unique and necessary function for the Army on the battlefield.

It is no lie that the U.S. Cavalry has changed more over the years than any other organization in the Army. The Army saw these changes mainly during World War II with the introduction of mechanized cavalry and again in Operation Desert Storm with the development of the Armored Cavalry Regiment. Once the change was recognized, the cavalry initially adapted to the situation, the Army validated the new concept and it became the new method of employment for the cavalry in the following conflict. The cavalry is not the only function of the Army this happens to. It is just the function it happened to the most.

Doctrinally, the United States Army faces new challenges in the road ahead with its most recent revamp of Army Publications. The cavalry's unique and necessary function used to fit well into the old doctrine under the Full Spectrum Operations concept. The cavalry had a very specific mission set across offense, defense, and stability operations. Now that Full Spectrum Operations is not longer a doctrinal concept, the cavalry's new task is to figure out exactly how it fits into the new realm of decisive action. It is important that this is sought out because if not, the cavalry risks losing it unique and necessary function for good as most of the core competencies outlined in the new doctrine can be conducted by any combat organization.

The recent changes in the Army's technology, organization, and doctrine dictate a need for change in the future employment of the cavalry. Otherwise, the United States Army runs the risk of subjecting the cavalry organization to operations other than reconnaissance as was the case in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Organizations like the BfSB, where the Cavalry Squadron is the only combat element in the organization, run the risk of misusing the Squadron to do other missions, such as force protection or escort missions. This was recently evident during Operation Iraqi Freedom where traditional Cavalry Squadrons were utilized as a small Infantry Battalions during stability operations in theater.

Therefore, it is clear in the evidence laid out in this monograph that the U.S. Cavalry no longer performs a unique and necessary function in today's Army. The cavalry is not what it used to be and has lost its traditional meaning over the past 220 years. Traditions are great to have in any organization, but resisting change only inhibits the true potential of such an organization as the U.S. Cavalry. This conclusion does not discredit the cavalry and everything they have done for their country, by any means. It simply boils down to the fact that the change in the Army's organization, doctrine, and technology over the past decade has forced this paradigm shift and the United States Army has to adapt.

Recommendations

There are two recommendations that can be made to assist in the loss of the unique and necessary function of the United States Cavalry in today's Army. It is important to outline what the Army can do to make the future better for the cavalry. Since the monograph already highlighted that the U.S. Cavalry no longer performs a unique and necessary function in today's Army, it is important to determine what the best course of action is to fix it. Does the Army disband the organization or figure out how to incorporate it into the new doctrine and technological aspect of warfare?

The first recommendation is to reevaluate how the Cavalry Squadron is organized in the Brigade Combat Team. Competing against two other Combined Arms Battalions (CAB) in the Brigade, the Cavalry Squadron is usually staffed at about half the personnel and equipment of a CAB. Granted, the Cavalry Squadron does have specialized equipment to fulfill their traditional reconnaissance role, but there is not a great difference from what the CAB has. With the new publication of decisive action and the two core competencies of combined arms maneuver and wide area security, it is crucial that the cavalry's role in this new approach is specifically outlined. If the Cavalry Squadron still has a role in the way today's Army fights in the Brigade Combat Team, then it needs to be war-gamed thoroughly to see if it still works. If not, the

recommendation would be to cut the traditional Cavalry Squadron out of the Brigade Combat Team or transform it into another Combined Arms Battalion.

The following recommendation, if the Army was to transform the Cavalry Squadron into a third Combined Arms Battalion, is to make sure that the traditional functions of the cavalry (reconnaissance, screen, guard, cover) are part of the collective tasks trained by Combined Arms Battalion soldiers. Without the cavalry, these organizations would have to conduct these missions on their own and have it left up to the Battalion to figure out which battalion performs these missions on the battlefield. With the new doctrine outlining decisive action, it implies that all combat arms are going to have to be versatile and well trained on a myriad of tasks, other than their traditional roles.

The second recommendation is to sustain the transition of the Armored Cavalry Regiments to Stryker Brigade Combat Teams. This was a great decision for the Stryker Brigade is one of the most versatile organizations the Army has. Halfway between light and heavy, the establishment of this organization inadvertently squashed the ongoing debate over light versus heavy reconnaissance. This transformation, coupled with the new decisive action doctrine, is setting the stage for future conflicts in which the U.S. may engage. Additionally, the establishment of the Battlefield Surveillance Brigade was a great decision as well and complements the way the Army leadership is looking into the future. It was a great decision to couple these organizations together to one, bring back some type of reconnaissance to the Division level, and two find a way to fit all the recent technological advances together so it functions more effectively on the battlefield.

Because the U.S. Cavalry no longer performs a unique and necessary function, Army leadership needs to be constantly looking for ways to adapt to the ever-changing environment and account for the rapid increase in technology. The biggest problem the cavalry faces today is that everything is changing so fast that the reorganization can hardly keep up with the pace. Over the

past decade alone, advances in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles have made it one of the most dominate ISR technologies on the battlefield. The Army is making the right decisions in relation to the cavalry's future. Disbanding the Armored Cavalry Regiments and activating new units, such as the BfSB, to figure out the best way to employ their most-advanced assets, is a step in the right direction. This needs to continue, and within the next five years there will be a better solution as to how the cavalry best fits into the Army's organizational plans for future employment.

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