**U.S. Armoured Cavalry**

U.S. Army armoured cavalry has the mission of reconnaissance and security. Unlike armoured and infantry units, U.S. Cavalry is organized in *Regiments*, *Squadrons*, and *Troops* which are equivalent to *Brigades*, *Battalions*, and *Companies* respectively. A regiment of armoured cavalry, such as the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (the *Black Horse* Regiment) in Vietnam, consisted of three full squadrons of armoured cavalry. The squadron *normally* consisted of a headquarters troop, three cavalry troops, a tank company, and an *aviation* troop. The three ground troops were a mixture of M48 Patton tanks and M113 ACAVs (Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicles). The *aviation* troop of the squadron was equipped with helicopters, consisting of UH-1 transports, OH-6 Cayuse scouts, OH-58 Kiowa scout/gunships, and AH-1 Cobra gunships.

Armoured cavalry regiments operated in country for the Corps/Theater Commander, while the *squadrons* operated as the *eyes and ears* for the US Army Division Commanders. An Army brigade would only be authorized a cavalry *troop*, and not a whole cavalry squadron.

According to Army doctrine, the cavalry would find the enemy, and hold the enemy in place; if this was the mission, until the heavy forces were brought up to deal with the *located enemy*. This process was known as the *battle hand-off.* The cavalry found them, now the heavies can deal with them; at which point the cavalry is free to disengage and continue with other missions. Security missions could be rear guard, flank guard, or advance guard; the same functions as performed by infantrymen, only with tanks and ACAVs. With the infantry, the *advance guard* would be called the *point man*.

During the Vietnam War, it was the mission of armour (tanks) to close with the enemy with firepower, manoeuvre, and shock action to destroy him. With the US Infantry, the mission was the same, minus the shock power. Artillery's mission was to add firepower to the equation. The US Armored Cavalry's mission was to find the enemy and/or provide security for the Army, while having the means to destroy the enemy if becoming decisively engaged. In Vietnam, the US Army deployed 7 Armored Cavalry Squadrons, 1 Armored Cavalry Regiment (containing 3 squadrons), and 2 Armored Cavalry Troops:

1/1st Armored Cav, 2/1st Armored Cav, 1/4th Armored Cav, 3/4th Armored Cav, 3/5th Armored Cav, 1/10th Armored Cav, 11th ACR (11th Armored Cavalry Regiment/Black Horse-3 squadrons), 4/12th Armored Cav (*Troop "A"* only), 1/17th Armored Cav (*Troop "B"* only), and the 2/17th Armored Cav.

From about January 1969 until the last mounted unit re-deployed from Vietnam in 1972 (air units remained in country) most armoured cavalry units (except the 11th ACR's tank companies) were equipped with the M551 Sheridan *armored airborne reconnaissance assault vehicle* (today, known to historians as a *light tank*).

Armoured cavalry units can use hunter-killer teams. Scout vehicles and tanks can operate in concert, suited respectively as "hunters" and "killers". For instance, in U.S. land forces, the cavalry scouts of a team (often mounted in M3 Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicles) go in search of enemy positions, and flush the enemy into a designated kill zone where the armored units can inflict more damage on the enemy than the "hunters" alone could hope to.