



Tanks and Bradleys from the 3d ACR's C Troop teamed up with 101st Airborne "lightfighters" in a recent JRTC rotation.

Light and Heavy Work Together at JRTC

by Scott Seyler, Ft. Polk PAO Intern

Recent missions have made versatility and adaptability watchwords of the modern Army. A wide variety of low-intensity conflicts and varied peacekeeping duties have put a premium on the Army's ability to quickly mesh diverse units with divergent missions and highly specialized equipment into finely calibrated forces.

The Joint Readiness Training Center's March rotation reflected this new emphasis. C Troop, 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, a key element of the Army's only active "heavy" ACR,

linked up with the 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division from Fort Campbell, Ky., to forge a multifaceted brigade task force capable of some serious firepower.

"Integrating light and heavy forces is the direction the Army is going, and the JRTC was the best possible environment to prepare us for our most probable role: to support smaller, low-intensity operations. There are not many places that can field the size forces that we are designed for on a battlefield at any given time," said C Troop Commander Captain Thomas Cipolla.

C Troop, bolstered by M1A1 Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles,

normally spearheads III Corps operations. Integrating into the 101st was a unique challenge, Cipolla said.

"The 3rd ACR is normally the reconnaissance and security element for the entire III Corps. Except for any Special Operations forces, we are the first ones in," explained Cipolla. "We have to go out and find and figure out what the enemy looks like."

The exercise marked the first JRTC stint for nearly all of the soldiers of C Troop, and performing detailed reconnaissance for an unfamiliar unit in wooded terrain greatly tested the heavy unit's combat mobility.