

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment: NTC's "Home Team" Battles with the Best

The mission of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment "BLACKHORSE" is to serve as the world's premier opposing force. Located at the National Training Center (NTC) Ft. Irwin, Calif., the 11th ACR conducts combat operations as the 60th Guards Motorized Rifle Division, providing the U.S. Army the most capable and lethal combined-arms opposing force anywhere in the world. The 11th ACR's mission at the NTC focuses around training brigade task forces to achieve proficiency in their mission essential tasks, improve their ability to synchronize and employ the combined arms team, and enhance their combat readiness. The 11th ACR executes these combat operations during 10 rotations a year while at the same time maintaining its own U.S. Army BLUFOR skills.

Reviewing the Blackhorse year, troopers of the regiment engaged in heavy MILES combat in October against the 3rd ACR "Brave Rifles." Fighting across three corridors and conducting a week of continuous operations, both ACRs came out to the rotations exhausted but exhilarated at the training conducted. The capstone of this hard fought rotation was the "Lucky 16" dinner, a celebration of the "Cav Spirit" attended by members of all three active armored cavalry regiments (2nd ACR, 3rd ACR, and the 11th ACR).

The following rotation was against the 1Bde of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division, a unique training challenge that pitted the premier mechanized force of the U.S. Army against the world's premier air assault force. Both sides learned valuable lessons for future combined arms operations.

Following rotations pitted the Blackhorse against the 1st Cavalry Division and the 3rd Infantry Division. The 1st Cav and 3rd ID trained hard in the rainy, windswept desert of the NTC. Each BCT left better trained and with a higher METL assessment.

The OPFOR refined its mission by conducting AC/RC, joint, and coalition operations. January's rotation introduced the 1-221 Cavalry from the Nevada National Guard as an augmentation unit to the 11th ACR. The 1-221 Cav "Wildhorse" became the 11th ACR's 3rd Squadron for rotation 98-04. Acting as an independent tank battalion, the 1-221 Cav added another facet to the NTC battlefield. This

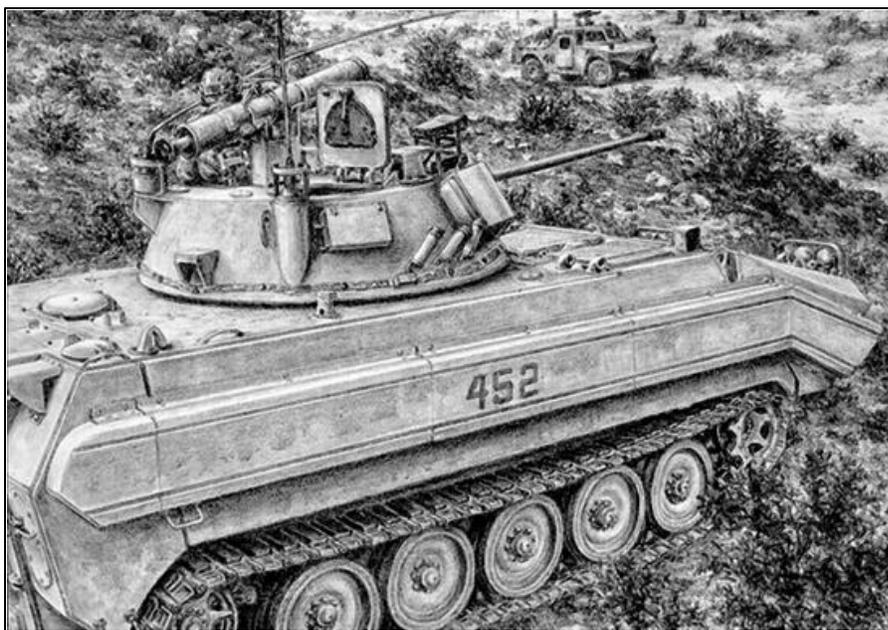
force multiplier validated the 11th ACR motto "One Team, One Fight."

The 11th ACR was also augmented by the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry and by Marines from 29 Palms and Camp Pendleton during rotations 98-04 through 98-06. These light fighters provided the BLUFOR with an infantry threat attacking simultaneously at night against both flanks. All of these units fought with the intensity of seasoned OPFOR units.

The completion of FY98's first campaign concluded with the Expert Field Medical Badge and Expert Infantry Badge training and competitions. These

of command. COL Guy C. Swan III passed the 11th ACR colors to COL John D. Rosenberger, 58th Colonel of the Blackhorse. Without pause, the regiment continued its hostile, uncooperative OPFOR mission to all BLUFOR units rotating through the NTC.

The August rotation brought the 116th National Guard Brigade Combat Team to the NTC, a unit consisting of units from 41 states. This rotation was the first time in nearly seven years that a National Guard BCT had fought the OPFOR. The Secretary of the Army, Louis Caldera, and the Army Chief of Staff, General Reimer, visited while the National Guard



The OPFOR Surrogate Vehicle (OSV), based on the M113 APC with visual modifications that make it resemble a BMP, will expand tactical capabilities by allowing dismounts to be carried.
—Jody Harmon Sketch

first class NCO-run events improved trooper proficiency and raised esprit de corps. The EFMB, run by 1/11 ACR, awarded 19 badges from a field of 76 medics. The EIB, run by 2/11 ACR, awarded 157 badges from 292 troopers.

Immediately following our chance to hone our BLUFOR skills, we again went into battle in two rotations, against the 1st Cavalry Division and the only CONUS brigade of the 1st Armored Division. The regiment concluded these two hard-fought rotations with a regimental change

was conducting force on force. The fact-finding visit introduced the Secretary of the Army to the mission of the 11th ACR OPFOR and also to the National Training Center's mission.

The 11th ACR's fleet of combat vehicles continues to consist primarily of the M551 Sheridan, portraying the T-80 and BMP-1/2. Future vehicle modifications for the OPFOR fleet include the OPFOR Surrogate Vehicle (OSV). This vehicle, currently funded through FY00, will enhance the capabilities of the OPFOR. The

vehicle consists of a M113A3 chassis with a Bradley turret and fire control system and a BMP-2 visual modification. This vehicle, along with its capability to carry dismounts, will provide a more realistic combined arms challenge to the visiting units of Force XXI.

Through it all, the regiment continues to focus on family and community relations. The regiment supports two veterans associations, the Blackhorse Association and the 11th Armored Cavalry Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia. The annual Blackhorse Round-Up was recently held

in New Orleans affording 11th ACR troopers of past and present to continue the traditions of Cav camaraderie. The 11th ACR looks forward to next year's San Diego Round Up in July 1999. This reunion will include a trip to Fort Irwin where Blackhorse troopers will visit the newly dedicated 11th ACR Museum.

The 11th ACR's force structure continues to evolve. Ironhorse 1st Squadron portrays the OPFOR armor. Eaglehorse 2nd Squadron portrays the OPFOR mechanized infantry. Packhorse Support Squadron provides logistical, chemical,

engineer, intelligence and maintenance support to the regiment. The round-out units consist of the 1-221 Cavalry Squadron, from the Nevada National Guard, and the recent addition of the 1/180 Field Artillery battalion, from the Arizona National Guard.

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment has continued to set the standard for the combined arms army. Rotation after rotation, we live by our motto, "Find the Bastards, Then Pile On." We will always stand ready to fight.

ALLONS!