

CSS

For the Scout Platoon: Another Solution

by First Lieutenant John S. Wilson

As aptly stated by Captain Maus in his article "Combat Service Support for the Task Force Scout Platoon" (*ARMOR*, Mar/Apr 93), the scout platoon suffers from a lack of support. I believe Captain Maus was on the right track; however, he did not carry it far enough. Everyone has tried, in some cases successfully, to apply band-aids to this systemic problem. The main error with these quick fixes is that the task force either robs Peter to pay Paul or just lets Paul starve. The right answer is to add a support section to the current task force scout platoon MTOE. A scout support section gives the scout platoon sergeant a highly flexible element that reports directly to him, guaranteeing the scouts responsive combat service and support.

Organization and Equipment. The Scout Support Section would only require a small addition to the current scout platoon MTOE. The HMMWV section works from a M998 HMMWV in the two-door cargo configuration (See Figure 1). The M998 tows an M101A1 cargo trailer for carrying supplies forward. The HMMWV has three secure radios to allow the section to monitor the scout net, the A/L net, and the task force command net. The M998 is equipped with a winch and HMMWV tow bar for recovery operations. The section has a light wheeled mechanic's tool kit and a field medic's kit. The section is armed with three M16A2 rifles and one M203 grenade launcher. The HMMWV scout support section is manned by one 19D30, one 63B20, and one 91B20. The 19D30 must be the most experienced scout in the platoon next to the platoon sergeant. By doctrine, the support section leader position must be filled by the 19D next in line for the platoon sergeant's job.

The M3 CFV and M113 scout support section is similar to the HMMWV section (See Figure 2). The section is equipped with M113A3 and M105 cargo trailer. The best answer is to adopt the Israeli M113 configured as a recovery vehicle. However, the present M113A3 would suffice. The M113, like the HMMWV, is equipped with a winch and tow bar. The section is additionally armed with an M2 HB .50

caliber machine gun. In the M113 support section, the 63B20 is replaced with a 63Y20.

Operations. The support section answers directly to the scout platoon sergeant. The section is responsible for coordinating and supplying service and support to the platoon. The section is also manned and equipped to treat and evacuate casualties and fix or recover scout vehicles forward. The section also passes CSS information from the scout platoon to the CTCP via the A/L net. The support section stages in the combat trains or in the company trains of the forward deployed company closest to the scout platoon.

The personnel in the section work and train together regularly. The low density MOS soldiers should also work and train with their MOSs occasionally to keep their skills in tune. The section leader, the 19D30, has the experience and ability to maneuver the section to and from the screen line, through the forward lines, and back to support areas with the stealth necessary to keep the support unit in the battle. The mechanic will have the tools and on hand PLL to fix a majority of mechanical problems forward. If a vehicle cannot be fixed, the section has the assets to move it to the rear for more complex operations. The medic can stabilize casualties forward. The section can carry a small number of serious casualties rearward, and safely lead other casualty evacuation assets forward. The section has enough cargo space to carry small amounts of emergency supplies to the scouts and can relay the daily LOGPAC forward from the forward company.

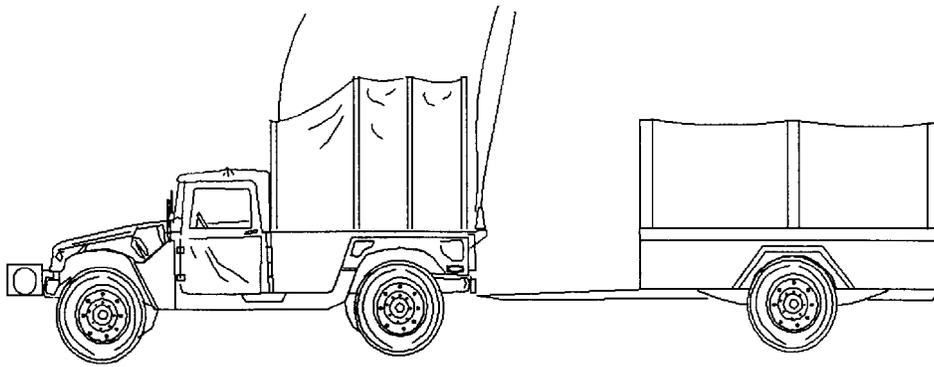
Advantages. The scout platoon would have a loyal team dedicated to ensuring they receive adequate support while forward of the main body. The dedication of assets in the new MTOE ensures the platoon has a responsive service and support on call. The section would act as a direct link between the scouts and the CTCP; ensuring the CTCP has up-to-date CSS information from the scouts that is often missing when the platoon sergeant is busy painting the task force commander a picture. The support section can guide special attachments (i.e. engineer recon, GSR) forward to link up with the scouts on the screen line. The support section could fill in for scout elements who have pulled back to a forward scout service station resupply operation. The section all but eliminates the extra headache of the area support company's first sergeant who is often

too busy filling his company's needs to the detriment of the trusty scouts. A permanent support section relieves the HHC commander and the S4 of the tribulations of piecemealing a scout support plan together. As a bonus, the section can act as a relay station between the screen line and the TOC when scout radios are out of range. Who knows? The scouts may even get a hot meal for once.

Disadvantages. The section is mounted in a thin-skinned vehicle and is vulnerable to enemy attack. However, the section sergeant can compensate for this with stealth and experience. One could perceive the section as a loose cannon on the battlefield. Training and coordination with the combat trains and company first sergeants will alleviate the problem. The section, especially the M3/M113 section, can carry little or no fuel forward to the scouts. While the HMMWV section can carry fuel forward via 5-gallon cans, the M113 section would have to lead a fuel HEMTT forward to a safe location, set up a fuel point, and fill in for each scout vehicle as it goes to refuel. The fact that the M113 weighs less than the M3 is a drawback to using the M113 for recovery. The M113 can tow the M3, but should only tow it as far as the forward supporting company/team whose M88 and maintenance team could take it from there.

An addition to the MTOE during the Army drawdown would seem to make this proposal cost-prohibitive. However, when weighed against the loss of effective, experienced scouts on the screen line, the addition is worth it. The maneuver task force can no longer afford to patch ineffective solutions together with limited CSS and tactical assets.

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- 1 x M998 HMMWV w/Winch
- 1 x M101 Trailer
- 1 x HMMWV Tow Bar
- 1 x Light Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic's Tool Kit
- 1 x Field Medical Kit
- 1 x Camouflage Screen System
- 1 x Global Positioning System
- 1 x AN/VRC-49 (2 x RT-524s)
Secure with AN/VRC-47 (1 x RT-524)
Secure or 3 x AN/PRC-119
SINGARS Radios
- 3 x M16A2, 1 x M203 40mm GL



19D30

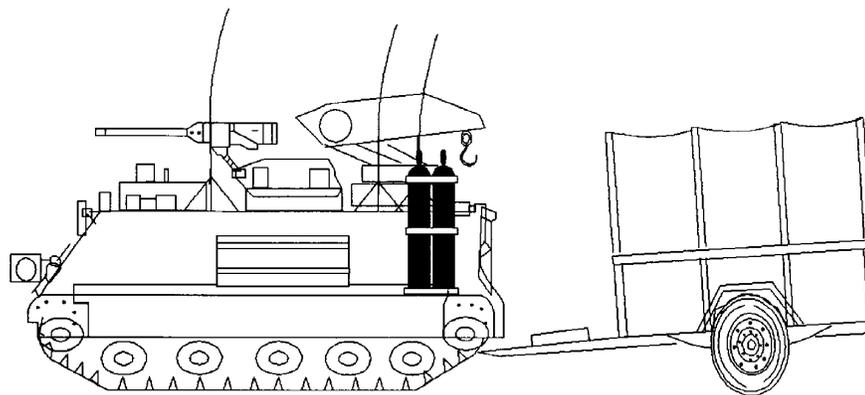


63B20



91B20

**Fig. 1 Scout Support Section
(HMMWV Pit)**



- 1 x M113A3 MRV
- 1 x M105 Trailer
- 1 x Tow Bar
- 1 x Light Tracked Vehicle Mechanic's Kit
- 1 x Field Medical Kit
- 1 x Camouflage Screen System
- 1 x Global Positioning System
- 1 x AN/VRC-49 (2 x RT-524s) Secure with
AN/VRC-47 (1 x RT-524) Secure or 3 x AN/PRC-119
SINGARS Radios
- 3 x M4 Carbine
- 1 x M203 40mm Grenade Launcher



19D30



63Y20



91B20

**Fig. 2 Scout Support Section
(M3/M113 Platoon)**