

Air Cavalry Squadron and Troop Operations

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By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

Official:



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Preface

The RAS is an organic element of the corps ACR and ACR/L. The DCS is an organic element of the armored, light infantry, and airborne divisions. The ACS is an organic element of the air assault division. The ACT is the basic element of the RAS, DCS, and ACS. The RASs, DCSs, ACS, and ACTs are organized and equipped to perform reconnaissance and security operations in support of the overall scheme of maneuver. In addition, the RASs, DCSs, and ACS each play a vital role in command and control enhancement for their higher headquarters. Successful employment of these units on the modern battlefield depends heavily on the proper use of the tenets of Army operations.

This manual describes the organizational structure of the RAS, DCS, ACS, and ACT; as well as the doctrinal and tactical employment of these units on the modern battlefield. Appendixes A through K provide supplemental material on risk management, aircraft characteristics, OH-58D systems, movement and rapid deployment, assembly area operations, troop order guide, JAAT, ASE, fratricide prevention, environmental concerns and compliance, and air-ground integration. This manual is based on the doctrinal and tactical employment principles outlined in FMs 1-100, 1-111, 17-95, 100-5, 101-5, and 101-5-1. The RAS and DCS represent the smallest combined arms maneuver force on the battlefield. The versatility, maneuverability, and lethality these units bring to the battle can best be understood and used through the application of this manual in conjunction with FMs 17-95 and 17-97. This manual is intended for use by RAS, DCS, ACS, and ACT commanders, as well as a practical tool for ground commanders.

This manual applies to commanders and staffs who will lead, employ, or fight with a RAS, DCS, ACS, or ACT and to soldiers assigned to these types of organizations. It also serves as a reference for flight crews learning to understand and conduct reconnaissance and security operations in the RAS, DCS, ACS, and ACT.

The proponent of this publication is Headquarters, TRADOC. Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) to Commander, USAAVNC and Fort Rucker, ATTN: ATZQ-TDS-D, Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5263.

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

Chapter 1

Reconnaissance and Security Helicopter Fundamentals

SECTION I—PRIMARY ROLES AND MISSIONS

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ARMY OPERATIONS

1-1. Army aviation's rapid, terrain-independent air mobility helps create tactical opportunities for commanders at all echelons. These opportunities allow commanders to operate inside the enemy's decision cycle and force the enemy to make decisions that will disrupt its initial plan. The air cavalry provides crucial information by performing reconnaissance and security operations. By effectively using air cavalry, the maneuver commander takes the initiative away from the enemy and conducts combat operations on his own terms. By knowing and integrating the essential characteristics of Army operations, air cavalry can enhance the commander's ability to capitalize on enemy vulnerabilities. These essential characteristics are agility, initiative, depth, orchestration, and versatility.

AGILITY

1-2. Air cavalry greatly enhances the ACR, division, and corps agility because of the outstanding mobility it brings to the battlefield. Agility is the ability of friendly forces to act faster than the enemy. It is the first prerequisite for seizing and holding the initiative. Agility requires flexible organizations and quick-minded, flexible leaders. They must know of critical actions as they occur and act to avoid enemy strengths and attack enemy vulnerabilities. They must do this repeatedly so that every time the enemy begins to counter one action another immediately upsets its plan. This leads to ineffective, uncoordinated, limited enemy responses and to the enemy's eventual defeat. To be effectively agile, leaders must continuously "read the battlefield." They must use the information provided by the air troops as well as other intelligence-gathering efforts, decide on a COA quickly, and act without hesitation.

INITIATIVE

1-3. The aggressive actions of the air cavalry allow the ACR, division, or corps commander to select the time and place of his attack. Through the effective use of FS, CAS, and AHs, the air cavalry assist in taking the initiative. The underlying purpose of every encounter with the enemy is to seize or to retain independence of action. To do this, the commander must reach decisions and execute actions faster than the enemy. These actions include accurate and timely reporting and possibly delivering the initial shock to the enemy.