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Army's Armoured Cavalry Regiment

Having read the 2015 Defence White Paper submission prepared by RUSI Special Interest Group on Strategy [*United Service* 65 (4), 9 – 14 (December 2014)], I would encourage the group to study more closely the contribution of the armoured cavalry regiment (ACR) to the Regular Army combat brigades – in particular their ability to add to capability through the 'battle group' concept.

An ACR is currently planned to comprise a tank squadron, a tracked armoured personnel carrier (APC) squadron and a wheeled Australian light armoured vehicle (ASLAV) squadron. With the ACR, the combat brigade will have three Regular Army combat manoeuvre battle group headquarters (two infantry battalion headquarters and one ACR headquarters). The Army Reserve battle group headquarters increases this number to four.

The brigade commander, through the 'battle group' concept, has six infantry sub-unit headquarters, two armoured sub-unit headquarters (not counting the APC squadron headquarters) and two engineer sub-unit headquarters to command combat teams which can be mixed and matched under each battle group headquarters according to the task. The current two Army Reserve combat teams are in addition.

You therefore have in total four battle group headquarters with twelve combat team headquarters available to be organised as dictated by the task, *i.e.* an average of three combat team headquarters each. These will be supported by integral artillery, signals, combat service support [with Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles (trucks)] and most likely aviation and Special Forces assets.

As an example, a brigade commander might, in a deliberate attack, establish the following force:

Breaching Force Battle Group

HQ Inf Bn (in HQ APC Sqn) with 4 x CT drawn from:
HQ Tank Sqn (2 x Tp Tank, Tp Avn)
HQ Rifle Coy (3 x Rifle PI and Tp APC)
HQ Rifle Coy (3 x Rifle PI and Tp APC)
RAE Sqn (CE Tps)

Follow-on Force Battle Group

HQ Inf Bn with 3 x CT drawn from:
HQ Rifle Coy (3 x Rifle PI and Tp Bushmaster)
HQ Rifle Coy (3 x Rifle PI and Tp Bushmaster)
HQ Rifle Coy (3 x Rifle PI and Tp Bushmaster)
Tp ASLAV

Flank Security & Cut-off Battle Group

HQ ACR with 2 x CT drawn from:
HQ ASLAV Sqn (Tp Tank, Tp ASLAV, Tp Avn)
HQ Rifle Coy (3 x Rifle PI and Tp APC)
SF assets

Stability and Security Operations Battle Group

HQ ARes BG with 2 x CT drawn from:
ARes CT (in Bushmaster)
HQ RAE Sqn (CE and Const Tps)
Tp ASLAV

Commander's Reserve

ARes CT (in Bushmaster)

This arrangement will improve again when the Army Reserve battle group reaches maturity from 2017/18 and comprises three Army Reserve combat teams.

[Note: Sqn = squadron; CT = combat team; Coy = company; Tp = troop; Avn = aviation; Inf = infantry; RAE = Royal Australian Engineers; CE = combat engineer; Const = construction engineer; SF = Special Forces]

Brigadier Allan Murray
St Ives, 24 November 2014