

Desert Storm NBC Operations

—NBC training, planning for the 2ACR

By CPT Gerald Simmons

The 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment (2ACR) led the VII Corps in the first 82 hours of the 115 hour war. They were probably the most prepared unit in VII Corps for NBC operations. I will explain the NBC training and planning we conducted that prepared 2ACR for NBC operations in Iraq.

Predeployment

NBC training began in 1988 when the regimental chemical officer integrated NBC into biannual gunnery exercises and regimental CPXs and CFXs. The culmination of all the training took place with the external evaluations at CMTC in Hohenfels' major training area. In May 1989 the regimental NBC element (NBCE) received an overall score of 95 percent during 87th Chemical Company's first ARTEP. During the gunnery exercises troops and companies participated in situational exercises. Incorporated into these evaluated exercises were the regimental and squadron METLs. The regiment tailored these exercises to offensive operations even though the general defense plan (GDP) was primarily defensive. NBC reconnaissance, decontamination, and smoke operations played an important part throughout these exercises.

NBC Recon. The troop and company received one NBC recon team under operational control. The commander performed a given maneuver mission where he was to avoid contamination. The NBCE maintained controllers both in the maneuver control cell and on the ground. This ensured proper employment of the

recon teams. One team remained in general support to link contaminated units with decon squads. After training and practice, the unit commanders came to realize the asset they had in chemical recon.

NBC Decon. Hasty decon was the focus for decon training throughout the regiment because of both mission requirements and available assets. An ACR had only one assigned decon platoon. The supported squadron set up and controlled one hasty decon site while the decon platoon set up and controlled two hasty decon sites. Other platoon members served as evaluators at all three sites. The primary site was squadron controlled. The other two were the back-up sites in case of a bottleneck at the primary site.

Smoke. Engineer operations were the primary missions for smoke operations. The focus was on hasty and deliberate breaches and deceptions operations. One squad of three M1059 smoke carriers was OPCON to the company and troop. This facilitated smoke training down at unit level. The second smoke squad rotated missions with the first.

Staff. Our NBCE and squadron staffs trained through a series of command post and field exercises. These exercises perfected the regiment's NBC warning and reporting system (NBCWRS). Our staffs practiced planning, coordination, and employment procedures for NBC operations. Using First Battle as a basis, we set up a gameboard with maps of our GDP sector. Selected platoon leaders

would play the units on the map. Unit commanders through the regimental staff fought the battles from their operation centers. The S2 controlled and operated the opposition forces (OPFOR). A section from the NBCE worked with the OPFOR cell. They interjected NBC situations in accordance with Soviet doctrine, OPFOR mission, and tactical situation. The respective chemical platoon leaders represented smoke, recon, and decon on the board. The chemical company commander received orders from the regimental chemical officer and relayed missions to his platoon leaders. The OPFOR cell depicted contaminated areas and hazard areas on the gameboards and gave enough information to the friendly players to properly invoke the NBCWRS. The annual CMTC rotation tested the proficiency level of the regiment's NBC training.

Desert Shield

After the deployment from the intermediate staging area (ISA) in Jubail, Saudi Arabia, to our tactical assembly area (TAA) Seminole, the NBCE began an intensive refresher training program. The NBCE formed a mobile training team. The team could instruct any of the following classes: NBCWRS, first aid for chemical casualties, mask fitting, chemical detection, operations in a chemical environment, and chemical plotting procedures. Squadrons identified the areas where their troops required additional training, then the mobile training team tailored their instruction to the needs of the unit. The chemical recon platoon went to Sonthofen, Federal Republic of Germany and received training on the Fox NBC recon vehicle before deploying to Saudi Arabia. A recon squad gave a vehicle orientation to each company-size unit and battalion-level staff.

The staffs within the regiment continuously trained as well. The regimental staff conducted two CPXs (CPX Desert Star I/II)—one prior to

the air war in TAA Seminole, and one after the beginning of the air war in the forward assembly area (FAA) Richardson. Desert Star I mirrored previously described CPXs. Desert Star II actually turned out to be a CFX because the regiment conducted, for the first time since 1945, real time and distance offensive training operations. In both CPXs the OPFOR received an NBC cell. They ensured the employment of chemical weapons were in accordance with Iraqi doctrine. These exercises verified the regiment's NBCWRS.

Desert Storm

The 2d Cavalry had the following assets available for planning and conducting NBC operations during Desert Storm: 87th Chemical Company, 2ACR; 172d Smoke Generator Company (Mech) (-); and 1st Platoon (Decon), 11th Chemical Company, 2d Corps Support Command (VII Corps). The regiment's mission was to conduct a movement to contact, as the VII Corps covering force, to fix the Republican Guards, and to pass the follow-on divisions (1st Armored, 3d Armored, and 1st Infantry Divisions)

through to continue the fight. The battle consisted of four phases. Phase I was a two-part phase where the regiment covered for the Corps as the divisions moved into position in their FAAs. The limit of advance for 2ACR was at phase line (PL) Becks (Saudi/Iraqi border). The second part of the phase called for scouts of the lead squadrons to conduct a recon out to PL Bud (see figure, next page). The recon took place on G-1, or the day before the ground operation officially began. Phase II was the G-Day attack to PL Busch. At PL Busch, the regiment went to MOPP 1 and assumed its covering force mission. Phase III was the actual covering force mission which began at PL Busch and ended at PL Lime. The regiment conducted two refuel-on-the-move (ROM) operations near PL Dixie and PL Lonestar. The regiment planned for six hours between ROMs. About 0400 hours on G + 3 (27 February), the 2d Cavalry became the VII Corps reserve. Phase IV was the Corps reserve mission. The regiment reconstituted and prepared for future operations. Also, because of the minimal chemical

threat, the regiment went to MOPP Zero.

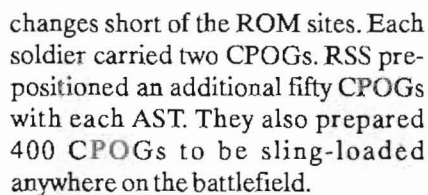
The NBC operations planning consisted of the recon platoon fixing contaminated areas, finding bypasses, and conducting link-up operations. Decon priorities were to hasty decon. Deliberate decons were part of the reconstitution plans. The squadrons were to prevent the spread of contamination outside of their rear boundary. They also had a "be prepared" mission for water resupply. Each squadron had 3,000 gallons of water for decon. The two decon platoons had 6,000 gallons each and the regimental support squadron (RSS) maintained a 6,000-gallon reserve. The smoke platoons assisted in covering air corridors, sealing flanks, disengagements, and deception. See the NBC Operations Execution Matrix below for the task organization and priorities of effort.

NBC Recon. We determined the largest chemical threat was at our left and right flanks. Our mission to make contact with the Republican Guards had us by passing defenses out of sector. Our focus for chemical recon

NBC Operations Execution Matrix

Threat	Task Organization	Priority of Effort	MOPP Level
Phase I—Cover			
Missile—GB, GF, HD	Decon (GS) 87 (-) Smoke Smoke/87 (-) GS 1/172 (-) – 2/2 2/172 (-) – 3/2	ASTs/RSS, 4/2, 82 EN RSS, 4/2	MOPP Zero
	Recon 1/Recon/87 – 2/2 2/Recon/87 – 3/2 3/Recon/87 – NBCE	No change	
Phase I—Recon			
Minefields, GF, VX	No change	No change	MOPP2—Scouts & Engineers
Phase II—Attack			
Minefield/BM21—BG, BF, HD	Decon (GS) Smoke/87 (GS) Recon (No change)	ASTs/RSS, 4/2, 82 EN No change No change	MOPP2—Scouts & Engineers MOPP1—All others
Phase III—Cover			
Arty (130, 152, 155mm)—GB, GF, HD RKTs (MRL 122mm)—GB, GF, HD	Smoke (No change) Recon (No change) Recon (No change)	No change No change No change	MOPP2—Engineers MOPP1—All others

NBC Decon. The attachment of an additional decon platoon eased the strain of decon resources in the regiment. It gave 87th Chemical Company the capability to provide either deliberate or hasty decon support. RSS's area support teams (ASTs) received these platoons as attachments. The hasty decon concept coincided with refuel operations and chemical protective overgarment (CPOG) protection. The M1A1 Abrams tank required refueling approximately every six hours during combat operations. The CPOG provided six hours of protection after liquid agent contamination. If a unit became contaminated, they would conduct a hasty decon prior to a ROM. The squadrons were responsible for hasty decons in their area of operations. Logistical release points (LRPs) established the link-up points for damaged and contaminated equipment, contaminated casualties, and contaminated units located to the rear of the ASTs. Units prepared themselves to conduct clothing ex-



The 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment did not prepare for war overnight. Only after a period of intensive initial training and sustainment training, which took place over two and a half

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