

# SCOUT PLATOON

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\*This publication supersedes FM 17-98, 9 September 1994.

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# Preface

On the ever-changing landscape of the modern battlefield, the scout platoon remains one of the tactical commander's most valued assets. This is especially true in the traditional role of the cavalry: as the commander's "eyes and ears" on the forward edge of the battle. Today's scout platoon complements its strengths in mobility, speed, and stealth with the latest technology to provide an accurate, timely picture of developments in the area of operations.

This field manual describes how the scout platoon conducts its primary missions, reconnaissance and security. The manual focuses on the principles of platoon operations and on the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) the platoon uses to acquire information and provide security and protection for other units on the battlefield. It also covers a variety of supporting tasks and operations the platoon must perform or coordinate, either as part of its reconnaissance and security missions or as assigned by the commander.

FM 17-98 is for leaders of scout platoons employing either M3-series cavalry fighting vehicles (CFV) or high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWV). This covers scout platoons of the armor battalion, the mechanized infantry battalion, the heavy division, the heavy cavalry regiment, and the light cavalry regiment. The principles and TTP are also adaptable for scout platoons of the light division reconnaissance squadron.

Users and readers of FM 17-98 are invited to submit recommendations that will improve its effectiveness. Prepare comments using [DA Form 2028](#), if possible. A memorandum presenting recommendations in a format similar to the form is acceptable as well. Send comments to Commander, USAARMC, ATTN: ATZK-TDD-P, Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121-5000.

Unless otherwise stated, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

The scout platoon is organized, equipped, and trained to conduct reconnaissance and, to a limited extent, security for its parent unit. In simplest terms, the platoon serves as the commander's eyes and ears on the battlefield. It employs proper techniques of movement (both mounted and dismounted) and stealth to gather information, its primary function. Scouts provide current battlefield data to help the commander plan and conduct tactical operations.

The scout platoon also conducts limited security missions, but it is not organized and equipped to fight for extended periods or to act as tank killers. Although it can employ a variety of antitank (AT) weapons (AT-4s, M47 Dragons, or Javelins), the platoon normally uses these assets for defensive purposes (self-protection and breaking contact), not for offensive reasons.

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## SECTION 1 — GENERAL

### TYPES OF SCOUT PLATOONS

There are several types of scout platoons in the force, including light and heavy division cavalry platoons, air cavalry platoons, and those in separate cavalry troops. (**NOTE:** The areoscout platoon is discussed in detail in [Chapter 6](#) of this manual.) The two most prominent types, however, are the CFV scout platoon and the HMMWV scout platoon. Both types consist of one officer and 29 enlisted soldiers. The platoons are organized by tables of organization and equipment (TOE) into a headquarters element and two or four scout sections (see [Figures 1-1](#) and [1-2](#)). When executing missions, the scout platoon is organized according to the factors of mission, enemy, terrain (and weather), troops, time available, and civilian considerations (METT-TC) into an appropriate tactical organization consisting of a variable number of scout sections or squads.




<p><b>Vehicle # 1 - Platoon leader</b></p> 	<p><b>Vehicle # 4 - Platoon sergeant</b></p> 
<p>LT (Platoon leader)                  SGT 19D20 (Gunner)                  SPC 19D10 (Driver)                  SPC 19D10 (Scout/Loader))                  PFC 19D10 (Scout)</p>	<p>SFC 19D40 (Platoon sergeant)                  SGT 19D20 (Gunner)                  SPC 19D10 (Driver)                  SPC 19D10 (Scout/Loader)                  PFC 19D10 (Scout)</p>
<p><b>Vehicles 2 and 5 - Section leaders</b></p> 	<p><b>Vehicles 3 and 6 - Squad leaders</b></p> 
<p>SSG 19D30 (Section leader)                  SGT 19D20 (Gunner)                  SPC 19D10 (Driver)                  SPC 19D10 (Scout/Loader)                  SPC 19D10 (Scout)</p>	<p>SSG 19D30 (Squad leader)                  SGT 19D20 (Gunner)                  SPC 19D10 (Driver)                  SPC 19D10 (Scout/Loader)                  PFC 19D10 (Scout)</p>

Figure 1-1. CFV scout platoon.











Vehicle #1 - M2		Vehicle #4 - MK-19	
			
<b>Headquarters element</b>			
Lt (Platoon leader) SPC (Scout/Gunner) PFC (Driver)		SFC (PSG) SPC (Scout/Gunner) PFC (Driver)	
<b>ALPHA section</b> Vehicle #2 - M2	<b>BRAVO section</b> Vehicle #5 - M2	<b>CHARLIE section</b> Vehicle #7 - M2	<b>DELTA section</b> Vehicle #9 - M2
			
SSG (Sec leader) SGT (Sct/Gunner) SPC (Driver)	SSG (Sec leader) SGT (Sct/Gunner) SPC (Driver)	SSG (Sec leader) SPC (Sct/Gunner) PFC (Driver)	SSG (Sec leader) SPC (Sct/Gunner) PFC (Driver)
<b>Vehicle #3</b> <b>MK-19</b>	<b>Vehicle #6</b> <b>MK-19</b>	<b>Vehicle #8</b> <b>MK-19</b>	<b>Vehicle #10</b> <b>MK-19</b>
			
SGT (Sqd leader) SPC (Sct/Gunner) PFC (Driver)	SGT (Sqd leader) SPC (Sct/Gunner) PFC (Driver)	SGT (Sqd leader) SPC (Sct/Gunner) PFC (Driver)	SGT (Sqd leader) SPC (Sct/Gunner) PFC (Driver)

Figure 1-2. HMMWV scout platoon.

## VEHICLES

The CFV platoon, equipped with six M3 CFVs, is found in the cavalry squadrons of an armored or mechanized division or in an armored cavalry regiment; it is also found in certain mechanized battalions, specifically in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. The HMMWV platoon comprises 10 M1025/1026 HMMWVs. It is found in light cavalry regiments, in air cavalry and reconnaissance squadrons, and in mechanized infantry and armor battalions.

## PLATOON HEADQUARTERS

The platoon headquarters element provides command and control for the scout platoon. It consists of the platoon leader, the platoon sergeant (PSG), and their respective vehicle crews. The CFV scout platoon rarely uses a headquarters element during tactical operations. The HMMWV scout platoon is organized by TOE with a headquarters element; based on the factors of METT-TC, the headquarters may be split into two subelements (platoon leader and PSG), each moving with a scout section for security.

# SCOUT SECTIONS AND SQUADS

The scout section is normally employed as the platoon's basic tactical maneuver organization. Each section is made up of a section leader, squad leaders, and their crews manning two or three CFVs or two to four HMMWVs. The platoon may also be task organized for maneuver purposes into elements known as scout squads; the squad is normally a single vehicle and its crew. (**NOTE:** Refer to [Section 2](#) of this chapter for a discussion of tactical organization.)

## SECTION 2 — TACTICAL ORGANIZATION

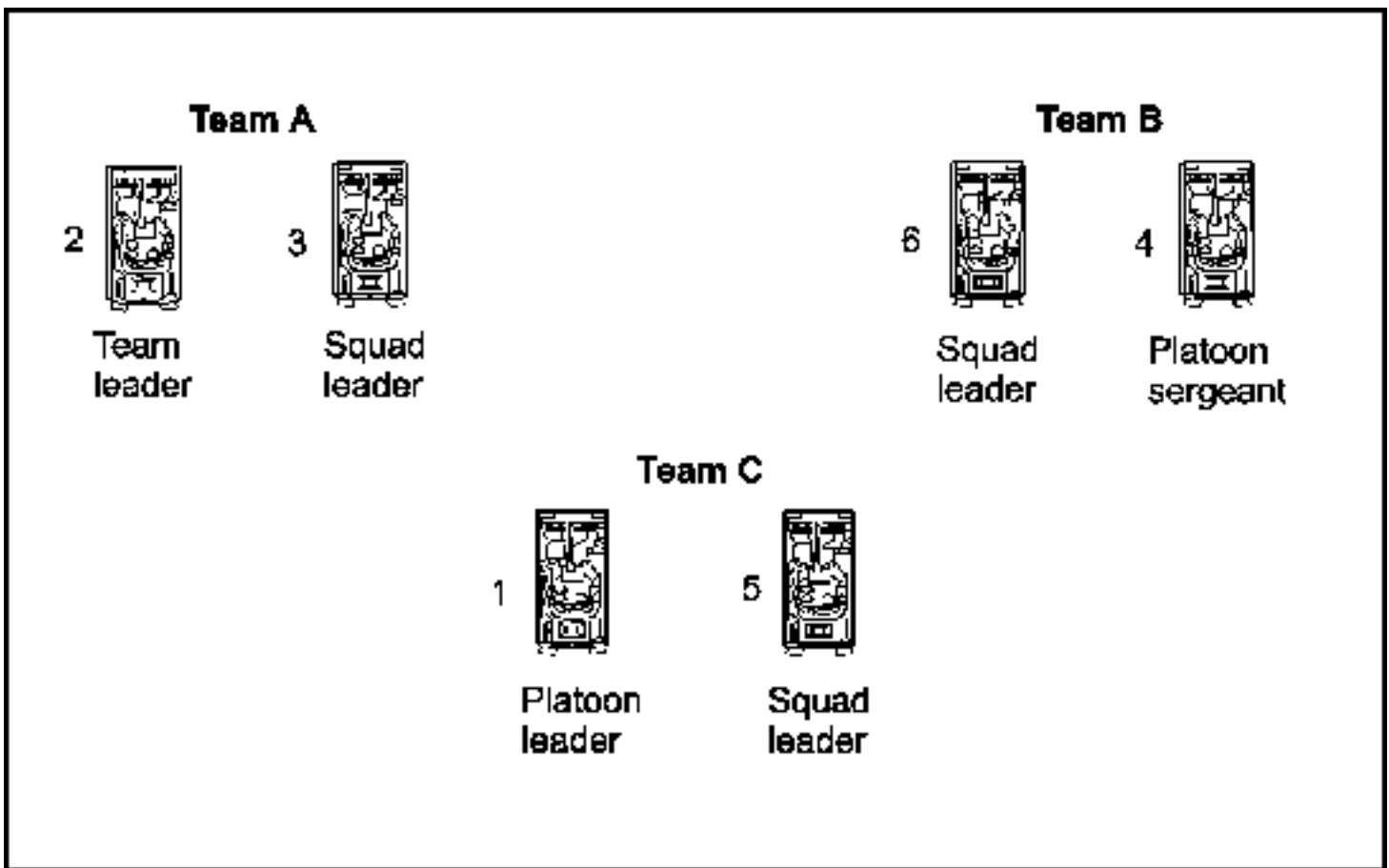
The scout platoon leader task organizes his platoon to accomplish the mission based on the factors of METT-TC. Unlike most other combat arms platoons, which maneuver together in formation, the scout platoon normally maneuvers as individual scout sections or squads under the direction and control of the platoon leader. A scout section or squad may consist of from one to three vehicles plus any combat elements under its operational control (OPCON). Determining which organization best meets his mission requirements is one of the key decisions the platoon leader must make during his troop-leading procedures.

### CFV SCOUT PLATOON

Regardless of the mission it is executing or the formation or movement technique it is using, the CFV scout platoon normally operates in one of three organizations: as three sections with two vehicles in each section, as two sections with three vehicles in each section, or as a six-vehicle platoon. The CFV platoon, with only six reconnaissance platforms, rarely has the luxury of operating a separate headquarters element.

#### Three-section organization

Three sections are the basic organization for the CFV scout platoon (see [Figure 1-3](#)). This organization allows the platoon to achieve a good compromise between the requirement of employing a maximum number of elements during the reconnaissance or security mission and the need for security. It is the ideal organization for the conduct of a route reconnaissance mission. In a screen mission, this organization allows employment of three long-duration observation posts (OP), which are occupied for 12 or more hours; it also facilitates the simultaneous conduct of dismounted patrols.



**Figure 1-3. CFV scout platoon three-section organization.**

In this organization, the platoon leader and PSG are members of scout sections (C and B, respectively). As members of these sections, they have to perform both scout duties and the command and control requirements of their duty positions. To minimize their workload, these leaders must make maximum use of their gunners, and they should position themselves as the overwatch element within their sections.

### **Two-section organization**

The two-section organization is used when increased security is required, when the area of operations can be covered efficiently with only two elements, or when operational strength (less than six vehicles operational) makes the three-section organization impossible. The two sections are formed by splitting the C element of a three-section organization; refer to the illustration in [Figure 1-4](#).