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Attack Reconnaissance Helicopter Operations

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Attack Reconnaissance Helicopter Operations

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Preface

Field manual (FM) 3-04.126, is intended for use by commanders, staffs, and United States military personnel expecting to operate and employ Army aviation attack reconnaissance units.

This FM is the Army's doctrine for how to fight and sustain attack reconnaissance helicopter battalions, squadrons, companies and troops. The operational concepts described in this manual are based on Army doctrine as established in FM 1, FM 3-0, and FM 3-04.111. Emphasis is placed on modular force structure and the enhanced operational capability provided by Army aviation transformation.

FM 3-04.126 applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard/Army National Guard of the United States, the United States Army Reserve, and Army civilian employees across the spectrum of conflict, unless otherwise stated. It builds on collective knowledge and experience gained through recent operations, numerous exercises, and the deliberate process of informed reasoning. This publication is rooted in time-tested principles and fundamentals, while accommodating new technologies, and evolving responses to the diverse threats to our national security. This manual will also assist Army proponent schools in teaching attack reconnaissance helicopter operations.

FM 3-04.126 describes attack reconnaissance organizations, missions, command and control (C2), tactical employment and sustainment. It describes the responsibilities and duties of essential personnel during training, operations and combat. This manual is authoritative but not considered inflexible. Each situation in combat must be resolved by an intelligent interpretation and application of the doctrine set forth herein. Standardized battalion, squadron, company and troop operations are necessary for the effective employment of aviation battalion task forces. To this end, like companies and troops should follow similar operational and employment procedures. Appendixes A through D provide supplemental information on aircraft survivability, Army aviation air-ground integration, joint air attack team operations, and aircraft characteristics. A reference library is provided in Appendix E.

FM 3-04.126 furnishes a foundation for attack reconnaissance helicopter doctrine, force design, materiel acquisition, professional education, and individual and unit training.

The proponent of this publication is Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Send comments and recommendations on Department of the Army (DA) Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to publications and Blank Forms) or automated link (http://www.usapa.army.mil/da2028/daform2028.asp) to Commander, United States Army Aviation Warfighting Center (USAAWC), ATTN: ATZQ-TD-D, Fort Rucker, Alabama 36362-5263. Comments may be e-mailed to the Directorate of Training and Doctrine (DOTD) at av.doctrine@us.army.mil. Other doctrinal information can be found on the Internet at Army Knowledge Online (AKO) or call defense switch network (DSN) 558-3551 or (334) 255-3551.

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

This publication has been reviewed for operations security considerations.

Chapter 1

Missions and Organization

The attack reconnaissance battalion (ARB) and attack reconnaissance squadron (ARS) are organized and equipped to support joint, interagency, multinational and Army operations. These units conduct continuous combat operations throughout the depth and breadth of the operational environment. Although their organization and missions differ by parent division, their principal focus is similar. Each unit focuses on time-tested fundamentals to achieve success. This chapter discusses these fundamentals and outlines basic organization, principal mission focus, and capabilities of the ARB. The organization description for each unit is based on the official table of organization and equipment (TOE). Operationally, all units are resourced according to the modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE), so actual organizations may look different from the TOEs described in this FM.

Note: Throughout this manual, for readability, the term company includes troop, and battalion includes squadron. The terms troop and squadron may be used when specifically discussing air cavalry squadrons (ACSs) or their respective subordinate units.

SECTION I – OVERVIEW

COMBINED ARMS

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1-1. Combined arms is the synchronized and simultaneous application of the warfighting functions (WFFs) to achieve an effect that is greater than if each arm were used in sequence. It is the full integration of different capabilities in such a way that, to counteract one, the enemy must become more vulnerable to another. Combined arms employ all the WFFs and their supporting systems. Combined arms multiply the effectiveness of Army forces in all operations.

1-2. Employing combined arms is simple in concept. However, it requires highly trained Soldiers, skilled leadership, effective staff work, and integrated information systems. Combined arms operations must be synchronized so the effects of combat power occur simultaneously. *Synchronization* is the arrangement of military actions in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at a decisive place and time. (FM 1-02) Through synchronization, commanders arrange WFFs to mass the effects of combat power at the chosen place and time to overwhelm an enemy or dominate the situation.

1-3. Combined arms are achieved through organizational design (standing organizations) and temporary reorganization (tailored and task-organized units). For example, units organic to brigade combat teams (BCTs) perform all WFFs. However, the BCT does not organically include Army aviation. When required, the capabilities are added through tailoring and task-organizing, temporarily subordinating elements of different units under one commander.

1-4. Aviation battalions plan, coordinate, and execute operations. They create opportunities for commanders to disrupt the enemy's decision-making process, forcing them to make decisions that disrupt

initial plans. The battalion–through coordination, liaison, C2, situational awareness (SA), and situational understanding (SU)—helps set conditions for the force's success.

1-5. The ARB conducts full spectrum operations (FM 3-90) in support of their higher headquarters. The ARB supports offensive and defensive operations (reconnaissance, security, and attack) against armored or mechanized equipped threat forces, and against lighter equipped or insurgent forces. The ARB is less suited for stability and civil support operations based on organization, but can support these operations by providing security (area, route, and convoy) and quick reaction force (QRF) capability and reconnaissance through the supported unit's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations.

FUNDAMENTALS

1-6. All battalions should be able to—

- Plan and conduct strategic deployment.
- Conduct administrative and tactical movements.
- Coordinate with supported maneuver units.
- Develop and maintain intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB).
- Use the full spectrum of communications means to satisfy internal and external requirements for combat information.
- Act as a battalion task force (TF) headquarters.
- Conduct multiple simultaneous operations.
- Plan multiple future operations.
- Conduct liaison with adjacent and supported units.
- Protect and sustain their forces.
- Conduct air-ground intergration.

ARMY WARFIGHTING FUNCTIONS

1-7. Battalion commanders and staffs must be fully aware of the six Army WFFs (see field manual interim [FMI] 5-0.1). Table 1-1 gives examples of tasks the ARB may perform in support of each WFF.

Table 1-1. Attack reconnaissance battalion's role in Army warfighting functions

Army Warfighting Function	*ARB's Role*
Movement & Maneuver	• Engage enemy forces decisively through attack operations. • Shape the operational environment through aggressive IAs, reconnaissance, and security operations.
Intelligence	• Assist commander and staff in conducting IPB. • Provide higher headquarters SA. • Confirm or deny elements of the ISR plan and priority intelligence requirements. • Conduct reconnaissance to allow commander to make informed decisions, delegate authority, and synchronize the WFFs. • Conduct reconnaissance to find bypasses, adequate sites and routes, and provide overwatch for ground operations.
Fire Support (FS)	• Designate for laser-guided artillery or other service munitions. • Conduct counterbattery fires to find and target enemy mortars and artillery. • Synchronize indirect fires to delay, disrupt, or destroy enemy forces, systems, and facilities.
Sustainment	• Generate combat power in support of ground operations. • Perform reconnaissance to identify routes and provide pickup zone (PZ), landing zone (LZ), or convoy security. • Provide security for air movement of personnel, supplies, and equipment in support of

Table 1-1. Attack reconnaissance battalion's role in Army warfighting functions

Army Warfighting Function	*ARB's Role*
	ground forces, refugees, or disaster victims.
C2	• Provide backup radio communications with supported forces.
Protection	• Provide direct fires and/or call for indirect fires to cover obstacles. • Provide security for ground movement, assembly area (AA), and fixed based operations.

DECISIVE, SHAPING, AND SUSTAINING OPERATIONS

1-8. The ARB may operate over a dispersed area of operations (AO) supporting their higher headquarters through decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations (FM 3-0).

Decisive Operations

1-9. The battalion participates in decisive operations to find, fix, and destroy enemy forces (especially moving forces), and to confirm intelligence. Decisive operations do not require the presence of overwhelming forces; they simply require the ability to mass overwhelming firepower and other effects at the time and place where the enemy's assets and strengths are most vulnerable. The battalion may be tasked to perform movement to contact or attack operations including close combat attack (CCA), interdiction attack (IA), or a raid. ARBs also support decisive operations by conducting reconnaissance to confirm intelligence.

Shaping Operations

1-10. Shaping operations establish conditions for success of the decisive operation by setting the battlefield to our advantage. Shaping includes lethal and nonlethal operations that make the enemy vulnerable to attack, impede or divert its attempts to maneuver, provide combat support to facilitate the maneuver of friendly forces, enhance deception, or otherwise dictate the time and place for decisive battle. Through shaping, commanders gain the initiative, preserve momentum, and control the tempo of combat. Shaping operations may occur with, before, or after initiation of decisive operations and may involve any combination of forces.

1-11. Some shaping operations, especially those that occur simultaneously with the decisive operation, are economy of force actions. If the available force does not permit simultaneous decisive and shaping operations, the commander sequences shaping operations around the decisive operation. A shaping operation may become the decisive operation if circumstances or opportunities dictate. In that case, the commander weighs the new decisive operation at the expense of other shaping operations.

1-12. In addition to finding, fixing, and destroying enemy forces and confirming intelligence, the battalion can facilitate shaping operations by—

- Conducting reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) operations to complement other maneuver forces.
- Orchestrating joint air attack team (JAAT) operations.
- Providing security for air assault and air movement operations.
- Conducting feint and/or demonstration operations.

Sustaining Operations

1-13. Sustaining operations generate and maintain combat power. Failure to sustain normally results in failure of the overall effort. Sustaining operations at any echelon are those that assist the decisive and shaping operations by ensuring freedom of action and continuity of operations. Sustaining operations include base security, maintenance, sustainment, movement control, terrain management, and protection of lines of communications (LOCs) and headquarters.