

# TAC NEWS

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November - December 2010

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## The "Old Reliables" in a New Century A "What-If" of the 9<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION (MOTORIZED)

In 1980, as the result of the Iran Hostage Crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the army set up a program through its Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to develop a highly mobile, rapidly deployable division that could trade weight for firepower. The program was called the High Technology Test Bed and the 9th Infantry Division at Ft Lewis, Washington was charged with evaluating systems, doctrine and organization to make the program work. The 9th ID (or more affectionately called the "Old Reliables") was a standard "leg" infantry division that had a Pacific and NATO contingency mission at the time.

The 9th soon began looking at various existing systems and vehicles to understand and evaluate this concept and the big three players were the HUMVEE, the FAST ATTACK VEHICLE (FAV) and the ASSAULT GUN SYSTEM (AGS) to be the primary arms of the division. Couple these fast new vehicles with new command, control, and communications technology, and it was hoped that the 9th would have the same bite as a standard heavy mechanized or armored division without all the extra weight and excess baggage needed to deploy such formations. The 9th was reclassified as a motorized division and available wheeled equipment was used to stand in for projected technological developments. (Sheridans and M901 ITVs for the AGS, M880 Dodge pickups for the HUMVEEs, and M151 Jeeps for the FAV.)



*Assault Gun System (AGS) prototype vehicle shown*

The organizational structure was tweaked and changed numerous times until a final structure was adopted in 1988. The Division would have three motorized brigades and an air cavalry combat brigade as its unit structure. As subordinate units to the motorized brigade, the division developed three new types of combat battalions, a light combined arms battalion (CAB(L)), a heavy combined arms battalion (CAB(H)) and a light attack battalion (LAB).

As stated, the motorized division was predicated on the fielding of new equipment. In the interim, it was equipped, except in the case of the LAB, with substitute items. The projection was for the LAB to be equipped in its



*Fast Attack Vehicle (FAV)*



*M998 HUMVEE*



*M901 ITV ('Improved TOW Vehicle')*

final guise with three companies of FAVs. The FAVs were the Chenoweth dune buggies equipped with TOW missiles or .50 cal machine guns or the Mk 19 automatic grenade launcher. The dune buggies were tested and just did not pan out as effective combat vehicles in a high density combat environment against the modern tanks and IFVs of Mother Russia and they were replaced with the standard armored HUMVEE with the TOW and MK 19 AGS. The heavy CAB had two assault gun companies and one motorized infantry company, while the light CAB had that ratio reversed. The assault gun was a proposed system still being developed as a lightly armed tracked or wheeled armored vehicle with a high velocity 105mm gun.

As noted above, the Sheridan and the ITV served as surrogates in the AGS companies until about 1987, when they were replaced with more TOW and Mk 19 HUMVEEs. The AGS never really came to fruition, even though there were vehicles out there like the Cadillac Stingray. The motorized infantry companies were originally tasked to ride in the GM LAV-25 vehicles like the ones in use with the US Marines. Politics got the better here and the motorized infantry squads rode unprotected in the back of the M988 HUMVEE instead.



*M998A1 Sheridan*



*Kawasaki Dirt Bike*

Each CAB (heavy or light) had a combat support company that had motorized scouts, a heavy mortar platoon and an anti-armor platoon. The scouts would be a combination of Kawasaki dirt bikes and FAVs. The anti-armor platoon was envisioned to be equipped with a HUMVEE mounted Hellfire missile and the mortars were to be a ground mounted automatic mortar system. The end product was more TOW HUMVEEs for the scout and anti-tank platoons and the mortar platoon was a standard 4 tube battery of 'four-deuces' riding in the back of the M988 HUMVEEs.



*M998 HUMVEE w/ TOW launcher*

The end of the Cold War and budget considerations doomed the motorized division experiment. A standard Army National Guard Mechanized infantry brigade (the 81st WA ARNG) replaced the deactivated 2nd Brigade in 1988. The 1st Brigade was inactivated in 1990 and the division base and support elements followed in 1991. The 3rd Brigade was re-flagged as the 199th Motorized Brigade and eventually became the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (Light) before moving to Ft. Polk, Louisiana in 1992.

### **BUT, WHAT IF...**

Let's say that the US Army, in its infinite wisdom, decided that the 9th was needed in the post Cold War world and remained on the rolls after 1991. The 9th would prove to be a valuable asset for Operations Other Than War (OOTW) and would have probably been one of the busiest divisions

in CONUS in responding to the numerous crises and deployments that marked the 1990 decade. The 2nd Brigade that was deactivated in 1988 was restored to active service in 1993 by re-flagging a brigade of the deactivating 7th Infantry Division (Light). The brigade moved from Fort Ord (which was closing as part of BRAC - "Base Realignment and Closure") and converted to the motorized format as noted previously, giving the 9th three active brigades once again.

Here is a list of operations the 9th ID could have been participants in:

#### **Operation Desert Storm:**

It *was* tasked as the contingency response division to replace the 82nd Airborne while deployed to CENTCOM. 1st Brigade was initially alerted to deploy to Saudi Arabia early in Operation Desert Shield, but did not due to the contingency mission. It remained on high alert until ...

#### **Operation Provide Comfort (1991)**

First Brigade deployed to Turkey by air and convoyed across the Iraqi border to secure a large area north of Mosul as a sanctuary for the Kurds. The brigade engaged and defeated a large force of Saddam's Republican Guard sent north from the capital to destroy the Kurds from the Baghdad Division in April 1991. The brigade remained deployed in Kurdistan in support of the 10th Special Forces Group until September 1991 and then returned to Ft. Lewis.

#### **Operation Provide Hope (1992-93)**

Third Brigade deployed to Somalia as a mobile contingency force to assist the 10th Mountain Division and the Marines around Mogadishu. Three weeks before its return home, Third Brigade provided a mobile reaction force to extract the doomed Task Force Ranger team from the streets of Mogadishu. Ten "Go Devil" soldiers were killed and numerous ones were wounded from the continuous firefights encountered as part of the Ranger rescue and recovery mission.

#### **Operation Restore Hope (1994-1997)**

The 9th rotated brigades into Haiti on a six month basis to assist the UN peacekeeping operations there following the abortive 1994 invasion.

#### **IFOR/SFOR - BOSNIA (1998-2002)**

The "Old Reliables" rotated brigades in and out of Bosnia as part of the SFOR mission. HQ 9th ID served as HQ Task Force Eagle for SFOR 9 as part of the Bosnia Security Mission for NATO.

#### **KFOR - KOSOVO (1999-2000)**

The 9th Cavalry Brigade (Air Attack) deployed as a whole to Albania to become Task Force Falcon as part of the Allied Force mission. Three Apache attack helicopters crashed resulting in the death of six army aviators from the

9th ID as part of the train up for this mission in Albania. The 9th CBAA deployed into Kosovo and became the basis for the TASK FORCE FALCON/KFOR for NATO.

#### **OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (2001-2004)**

1st Brigade deployed to Khandahar, Afghanistan to support the 101st Air Assault Division in 2001. A subsequent rotation by 3rd Brigade was made with the 82nd Airborne in 2002. 2nd Brigade was ineligible for deployment downrange in this period since it had been tasked to become the army's first STRYKER brigade and would be the subject of intense training, testing and evaluation of the STRYKER program for the next two years. The 9th Cavalry Brigade deployed to Afghanistan in 2004 as the rotary wing command and control element for OEF having recently received the new AH-64D Longbow Apache in its Attack Helicopter Battalion.

#### **OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (2003-2005)**

1st Brigade, fresh from its deployment from OEF, was turned around at Ft. Lewis and sent to Kuwait as part of the build up to the Iraqi Invasion to oust Saddam Hussein. The Brigade would serve as a rapid reaction and lines of communication security force to support the main drive to Baghdad by the I MEF and V Corps. The Brigade engaged fedayeen and insurgents all along the road between Baghdad and Basra in their mission to keep the supply and support convoys moving from Kuwait to the main force. At the close of hostilities, 1st Brigade remained in the Anbar province to support IMEF in stability and security operations leading up to the re-establishment of an Iraqi government. The 2nd Brigade, just recently established as the army's first STRYKER Brigade was sent with the 9th Division headquarters and other AC/RC units up to Mosul to serve as MND - North. Due to the success of the STRYKER brigade, the Army decided that as part of the reorganization of the total army, the 9th would become the basis for the Unit of Employment over a force of three Stryker Brigades and one Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The motorized brigades mounted in HUMVEEs replaced them with STRYKERS and the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was created from the redeployment of the 2nd Brigade 2nd ID from Korea to Ft. Lewis in 2006.



*M1128 STRYKER Infantry Fighting Vehicle*

# Order of Battle - 9th Infantry Division (Motorized) FT Lewis Washington - December 2003

## 1st Brigade - 9th ID (Motorized) FT Lewis (Deployed to Al Anbar Province, Iraq)

4-2 Infantry (LAB)  
2-2 Infantry (CAB -HEAVY)  
4-23 Infantry (CAB-LIGHT)

## 3rd Brigade (GO DEVILS) - 9th ID (Motorized) FT Lewis (Just returned from OEF)

2-1 Infantry (LAB)  
2-60 Infantry (CAB-HEAVY)  
3-47 Infantry (CAB - LIGHT)

## 2nd STRYKER Brigade - 9th ID (Motorized) FT Lewis (Deployed as part of TASK FORCE OLYMPIA - Mosul Iraq)

1-60 Infantry (Stryker)  
1-1 Infantry (Stryker)  
3-2 Infantry (Stryker)  
2-14th Cavalry (Stryker RSTA)  
4-11TH Field Artillery (155mm M-198 Towed)  
536th Engineer Company  
D /54th Infantry (Anti tank)  
79th Brigade Support Battalion

## 9th Cavalry Brigade Air Combat - FT Lewis (Deployed to Afghanistan)

1st Battalion 9th Aviation (AH-64D)  
1st Squadron 9th Cavalry (Air) (OH-58D)  
2nd Battalion 9th Aviation (UH-60L/EH-60A)

## 9th Division Artillery

1-11th Artillery (155mm M-198 towed) (with 1st BDE)  
3-11th Artillery (155mm M-198 Towed) (with 3rd BDE)  
1-84th Artillery (M-270 MLRS - Converting 2004 to HIMARS)

## Division Base

15th Engineer Battalion (Combat)  
1-44th Air Defense Artillery (Avenger/Stinger MANPADS)  
109th Military Intelligence Battalion (CEWI)  
9th Signal Battalion  
9th MD DISCOM  
9th Military Police Company  
9th Chemical Co (FOX/HUMVEE)

*Note - 1st and 3rd Brigades transitioned to Strykers from 2004 to 2008 becoming like the 2nd Brigade. The 9th ID became a UEx over the 3 Stryker Brigades and the 9th CBAA. The 9th received the 2nd Brigade 2nd ID, which re-flagged as the 4th Brigade, 9th ID. The 9th dropped the (Motorized) designation from its title and the 9th CBAA became a medium modular multi-functional aviation brigade with an Apache, a Kiowa Warrior, a Blackhawk Assault, and a General Support Aviation Battalion with Blackhawks and Chinooks. 9th ID DIVARTY became the basis for the 210th Fires Brigade, taking 1-84FA with it. The rest of the division base split up to modularize the four brigade combat teams.*



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