

M48A3 Record?

Dear Sir:

In our troop we have an *M48A3* tank that has probably broken the record for original equipment. Tank A26 has its original engine and transmission and is still in excellent overall condition after having run more than 5085 miles.

We understand that the current record is 5053 miles. Have we broken a record?

WILLIAM F. WILSON
Motor Sergeant

Troop A, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry
4th Infantry Division
APO San Francisco 96262

Another Member Found

Dear Sir:

Your two letters indicating that you had not received my new address have been received. Your interest is appreciated.

ARMOR had been coming to the squadron during my eight months of command. The articles were excellent and received considerable attention from the squadron officers.

I consider *ARMOR* one of our best spokesmen for Armor's accomplishments in Vietnam. Thus my interest in our publication is greater than ever. Keep up the excellent presentations.

GARLAND R. McSPADDEN
LTC, Armor

Headquarters USARV (G3)

The ARMOR staff does its best to keep track of members and subscribers. The arrival of change of address cards makes the task easier. Your kind comments indicate that we are keeping mission oriented at least in part. The articles that you and others in Vietnam are going to send in will allow us to continue to do so. EDITOR

On Cavalry in Vietnam

Dear Sir:

I hope it's not too late to comment on Colonel R. W. Farley's excellent "Blackhorse Report II" (*ARMOR*, Mar-Apr 68) and on the Annual Meeting Symposium discussion (*ARMOR*, Jul-Aug 68).

As one of a very small group of Armor types directly involved with selling the idea that the 11th Cavalry rather than a mechanized brigade or various other contenders should be sent to Vietnam, I have followed its exploits with more than ordinary interest. And

proud exploits they have been. The regiment has thoroughly justified its presence and done more than perhaps any other unit to put Armor on the map of Vietnam. I intend no derogation of this fine record when I point out the regiment has not yet developed its full potential.

The original highway security mission centered on Xuan Loc was intended to be merely a starter—an excuse, if you will, to get the regiment in country in sure hope that once its capabilities were seen other even more important tasks would be found. To a certain extent, of course, this has already happened, and the Blackhorse has participated nobly in numerous offensive operations in III Corps Tactical Zone. Nevertheless, Colonel Farley's report makes it quite clear that the regiment has gradually, and probably through no fault of its own, become tied to its fixed base camp and fallen into the habit of thinking of a particular "tactical area of interest." Indeed, but for the 2d Squadron's sojourn with the Americal Division, Blackhorse hasn't been out of the III CTZ.

In contrast, the early planners envisioned a mobile base which never stayed in the same place more than a few days. Even better would have been satelliting the regiment's base activities on some area or areas already reasonably secured for other purposes. In any event, we hoped (and I still hope) that over the months the regiment or its squadrons would appear in all four CTZs—reinforcing a key operation in the Delta, reacting to a threat on the Plateau, or conducting a spoiling sweep along the Coastal Plain—but always keeping the enemy off balance and insecure, wondering where they would turn up next.

Perhaps we asked too much for a single organization. Certainly there is more than enough work to keep several more squadrons or even a couple of additional regiments busy. Even so, a comparison of Colonel Farley's map of operations on page 9 with General West's and Colonel Starry's "going" maps on page 25 of the same issue shows clearly that Blackhorse has a lot of room left in which to roam. I earnestly hope that they will be able to break the shackles of the base camp, overcome the constraints of Log Command's desire to deal only with the regiment and not the squadrons, and escape from the perfectly natural possessiveness of their next higher headquarters to scout new pastures farther afield.

But already the limited "tactical area of interest" is having its inevitable effect on thinking. The table of recommended organizational changes on page 7 reflects experience gained almost entirely in III CTZ. Its adoption would no doubt optimize operations in that familiar area, but what about other areas where either Blackhorse or some other Cavalry unit might operate? Specifically, I refer to the recommended restoration of medium tanks to the reconnaissance platoons.

At this point, I suppose I should admit that I was primarily responsible for taking the tanks and *M114s* out of the recon troops in the first place and replacing them with modified *M113s* (ACAVs). In doing so, I was guided by the experience of ARVN Armor and by country-wide terrain considerations. Refer once again to the "going" maps on pages 24 and 25 and note the large areas marked "No Go, Tk," particularly in the wet season. My thought was that most people seem to take more readily to receiving an attachment than to giving up an organic element. Moreover, higher headquarters are more likely to give a mission in an area where *all* of a unit's vehicles can go than in one where something must be left behind. A troop of pure ACAVs, therefore, can expect more varied employment than one containing organic tanks (unless, of course, the tanks are amphibious as is the *Sheridan*).

Let me emphasize that I have nothing against tanks. They are vastly more powerful than ACAVs and, where they are able to go, absolutely indispensable. The 11th's tank troops remained precisely because they were so valuable, but their presence throughout *all* elements tends to limit the entire organization to areas where they are able to go. In the interest, therefore, of the future flexibility not only of Blackhorse but also of other Cavalry units whose organizations will doubtless be patterned on theirs, I strongly suggest that if more tanks are needed—and they probably are—they be obtained by adding one or even two more platoons to the tank troops without weakening the ACAV strength of the recon troops. If personnel ceilings interfere, they can be met by cutting base camp. Surely a 6000 man base can take a 1% reduction (60 men or three tank platoons) and still support a 4112 man operating force. It might even become easier to move.

RAYMOND R. BATTREALL, JR.
LTC, Armor