

49th Armoured Division

Known popularly as the Lone Star Division and based at Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas. It was the only fully functional, reserve component armoured division in the US Army. As each state had a single armoured regiment and all of the armoured battalions were Texan, this resulted in the largest Armoured Regiment in the US Army, with the 112th consisting of 6 battalions.

On federalisation on the 1st December 1996, the Division consisted of the following:

49th Armoured Division

Divisional Headquarters

- 249th Military Police Company

- 49th Armoured Division Band

- 449th Chemical Company

- 536th Forward Support Battalion

- 1-649 Air Defence Artillery (M998 Roland)

- 249th Signal Battalion

- 49th Finance Battalion

- 649th Military Intelligence Battalion

Engineer Brigade

- 111th Engineer Battalion

- 176th Engineer Battalion

- 386th Engineer Battalion

Artillery Brigade

- 149th Military Police Company

- 1-133 Field Artillery (M109)

- 2-131 Field Artillery (MLRS)

- 3-133 Field Artillery (M109)

- 4-133 Field Artillery (M109)

Aviation Brigade

- Coy H/149 Aviation (Air Traffic Control)

- 1-149 Aviation (AH1/OH58)

- 2-149 Aviation (AH1/OH58)

- 1-124 Cavalry (AH1/AH58/M60/M113 ACAV)

36th Brigade

- 1-112 Armoured (M60A3)

- 2-112 Armoured (M60A3)

- 1-141 Infantry (M113)

71st Brigade

- 3-112 Armoured (M60A3)

- 4-112 Armoured (M60A3)

- 2-142 Infantry (M113)

72nd Brigade

- 5-112 Armoured (M60A3)

- 6-112 Armoured (M60A3)

- 3-141 Infantry (M113)



Illustration 1: 1-149 Aviation OH58 with M134 being serviced May 1997

As the unit commenced training at Camp Mawby, it was given orders to prepare to move to Europe. In early 1997 the division moved to Chicago by rail in preparation to be shipped to Europe. Here the division remained throughout the spring and summer as a shipping shortage and concerns over convoy losses stopped their transportation. During this time the 36th Brigade upgraded to the M1 (from units who had flown to Europe to use equipment from POMCUS stocks) and the 71st Brigade upgraded to new production M1A1s. The 71st Brigade also upgraded to M2 Bradleys at this point



(again from units who had mated up with POMCUS stocks). The cavalry also received the LAV75 at this point (it is unclear if the LAV75A1 was issued at this point or whether they were later addition). These LAV75s were issued to the cavalry squadrons on a 9 vehicles per troop basis and an extra “heavy” troop of 14 vehicles (later renamed a tank company). By the end of the year the “heavy” troop appears to have been made up completely of LAV75A1s. Interestingly on paper at least one source shows the tank company as being equipped with M60A3s left over after upgrading the 36th and 71st although most believe this to be an error as photos show only LAV75s (it is possible that a second tank company may have been formed but this is speculation only).

In late 1997 as the nuclear weapons started to fly the division dispersed with the 36th Brigade centred in Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, the 71st Brigade centred in Camp Atterbury, Indiana and the 72nd Brigade and Divisional Headquarters in Springfield, Illinois. From these locations the division started to conduct disaster relief operations in the northern Illinois and Indiana areas, handing over the Chicago area to the 35th Engineer Brigade. During this period the division's morale dropped as they were concerned about the conditions in their home state and the fact that they were

Illustration 2: K/3-141 reaction force engaging looters on 9th March 1998. (Jean Moreaux pool photographer embedded with the 72nd Brigade).

taking a number of casualties from gangs. In one nasty incident on 7th March in Springfield, a patrol from the 72nd Brigade was attacked by an angry mob and a reaction force was fired upon by looters who had taken the weapons from the soldier's bodies. In the aftermath of this there were allegations of soldiers taking the law into their own hands while commanders looked the other way. Desertions now started in earnest.

On 1st June 1998 the Mexicans invaded and on 3rd June, the 49th Division received orders to move south to combat them. Moving by rail and river barge the division reached Fort Sill, Oklahoma where it came under the command of the newly formed XC Corps of the 5th Army (which took a number of elements as cadres from both the 49th and 95th Infantry Division) – the Corps however still had too many officers who were given jobs that they were not trained



Illustration 3: Interesting illustration recovered from the Soviet spy Karl Smith showing the 6-112 travelling south on 21st June 1998. FBI Archives

or prepared to deal with.

In August 1998 the division had the School Brigade (withdrawing from Fort Bliss after delaying the Mexicans) attached. This was then composed as follows:

School Brigade

Brigade HQ

1/124 Cavalry Squadron (Texas National Guard) – transferred to the Brigade from the 49th on attachment (This had a unique organisation with each of the two troops having 2 x M115, 2 x M113 and 1 x M901 with 1 x M577, 2 x M125 and 1 x M113 for a FO¹)

5-62 Air Defence Artillery (M163 PIVAD)

6-62 Air Defence (Patriot) – remained under XC Corps control when the Brigade was attached to the 49th

3-200 Artillery (New Mexico National Guard) (M102)

1-777 Air Defence (Composite)

1-788 Infantry (ex training school)

2-788 Infantry (ex training school)

The School Brigade in reality tended to ignore this official organisation, using the Infantry and Air Defence Artillery in composite company teams made up of 2-3 infantry platoons supported by a platoon from the 5-62nd or 3-200th acting as gun support in the anti-ground role developed by the Brigade. J/3-200 acted in a similar role for the 1/124th. The 1-777th acted as the divisional anti-aircraft unit as it contained a mix of guns and missiles.

By autumn XC Corps was felt to be combat ready and moved south. Initially the opposition was mainly marauders and paramilitary organisations (in particular the Texian National Legion which attacked isolated patrols to obtain equipment). Despite this morale was rising as the division was now fighting on home soil. On 15th October the division encountered Mexican troops of the Durango Brigade of the 4th Army. Fighting soon bogged down to deep patrols due to the vast and isolated area being fought over. Patrols on both sides found themselves fighting each other, marauders and paramilitaries in a wide area.



Illustration 4: 3-112 Stingray mid 1999. Unusually this has not had a US star added although it does have white US markings over the Pakistani cammo pattern. 49th Division Museum

In early 1999, the division now based in Oklahoma, was issued Stingrays from stocks held in depots to replace losses. At the same time a number of Peacekeeper Armoured Cars were issued to the division. These were a mix of former USAF airfield security vehicles (which often came complete with crews transferred to army service) and nuclear plant security vehicles belonging to the Department of Energy. These vehicles were used to form a Divisional Cavalry Squadron.

This was organised as follows:

Divisional Cavalry Squadron

Squadron Headquarters (1 M577, 6 HMMWV)

A Troop (5 HMMWV, 12 Peacekeepers, 4 LAV75)

B Troop (4 HMMWV, 10 Peacekeepers, 2 LAV75)

¹ See the M115 article for more details.

C "Light" Troop (24 HMMWV, 8 M151)
 D "Heavy" Troop (3 HMMWV, 6 Peacekeepers, 6 LAV75, 6 LAV75A1, 6 Stingray)
 E "Support" Troop (4 HMMWV, 4 HMMWV with TOW, 4 M106)
 F "Logistics" Troop (12 HMMWV, 14 assorted trucks, 1 M113 Ambulance, 1 M578)
 G "Air" Troop (2 AH1, 2 OH58, 2 civilian light aircraft (type not recorded), 4 HMMWV, 3 assorted trucks)

The remainder of the division now reorganised as follows:

49th Armoured Division

Divisional Headquarters

249th Military Police Company

449th Chemical Company

Divisional Cavalry Squadron (as above)

536th Forward Support and Administration Battalion

1-649 Air Defence Artillery (M998 Roland plus 1

ZSU23-4)

249th Signal Battalion

649th Military Intelligence Battalion

Engineer Brigade

111/176th Engineer Battalion

386th Engineer Battalion

Artillery Brigade

1-133 Field Artillery (M109)

2-131 Field Artillery (MLRS)

3-133 Field Artillery (M198)

36th Brigade

1-112 Armoured (M1)

1-141 Infantry (M2/Peacekeeper)

71st Brigade

3-112 Armoured (Stingray)²

4-112 Armoured (M60A3/4)

2-142 Infantry (M113)

72nd Brigade

5-112 Armoured (M60A3/4)

3-141 Infantry (Peacekeeper/ lorry)

At the same time the School Brigade was detached and became an XC Corps asset providing corps level air defence and a "fire brigade" element used to plug gaps in the line using the air defence artillery in an anti-ground role. At the same time the Brigade had the artillery removed and replaced by organic mortars.

On 5th June, the division was the lead element in the attack south against the Mexicans. The initial attack against an unidentified Mexican unit using M4 Shermans went well with the division

2 These acquired the nickname the 3-112 Unarmoured due to the poor armour when fighting Division Cuba's T72s



Illustration 5: D Troop rapid reaction force troops rush to their Peacekeeper Armoured Cars mid 1999. Note the soldier nearest the camera is carrying an M870 shotgun (possibly ex US Air Force). Note the gun shields show no weapon as the cavalry squadrons tended to dismount the M60s usually carried there as squad weapons due to shortages of heavy weapons for dismounts.

"I saw this Lt from the 49th marching north with about thirty men. He and his men were in a shit state, they were ragged in all manner of kit, bearded and with next to no kit. They looked more like bandits than soldiers. Many were displaying bloody bandages. Some were helping others hobbling on crutches. As they reached us I realised the Lt was a superior officer so I jumped up and saluted. He looked at me blankly before returning the salute and seemed to focus his eyes on me at last. I didn't know what to say so I said his platoon looked as if they had had a rough time against the Soviets. The eyes just bored through me and he said completely flatly and completely unemotionally that this was his battalion. There was nothing I could say to that. He just looked me in the eyes and it was like seeing the opened gates of Hell. Then they sort of went out of focus and he turned to lead his men north. That was my introduction to the horrors ahead."

Created for the

2lt (later Major) Mel Netta, 95th Infantry Division, forward to Texan Tragedy, Lone Star Books, 2021

inflicting heavy losses on the Mexicans. Hitting the dug in Division Cuba head on, the 49th took heavy losses, in particular those armoured units equipped with the Stingray (the 3-112 Armour was very badly mauled by the Soviet T72s taking above 65% of the armour destroyed on the first day).



Illustration 6: 5-112 M60 knocked out by Division Cuba 7th June 1999(TASS)

As the division was thrown back the Soviets counter-attacked and only a stubborn defence by the 95th Infantry Division (Light) and the attached School Brigade stopped the complete destruction of the 49th as it routed. The 5th Army withdrew back to the start line in northern Texas. In the aftermath of the attack, XC Corps ordered the School Brigade reattached to the division as it reorganised to consolidate its losses. The 95th Infantry Division now formed the front line with the 49th Armoured Division reforming behind it in Oklahoma where it remained for the rest of the year.

During this period a number of local guerillas feeling the pinch of Soviet anti-partisan activity made their way north to the 49th and enlisted in the division. The best known of these are the crew of “Lone Star Louis” a BMP2 captured from Division Cuba which for many

years stood outside the Officers' Club in Fort Sill prior to being restored.

Throughout 2000, the division was responsible for defending the southern flank of Milgov's mid-western enclave. This entailed patrol operations into north central Texas to break up groups of marauders and Soviet/Mexican bands (it was not always easy to tell the difference with the state of Mexican logistics at this date). The state of Texas however did little to help morale within the unit and a steady stream of desertions throughout the year occurred as troops slipped away to try and find family and friends (taking their weapons with them in order to protect them). The division gradually started to operate as individual battle groups.



Illustration 7: Late 2000 – unidentified troops of the 49th conduct a sweep through Mead, Oklahoma

Fortunately we are still in possession of a strength return as of 1st July 2000. On this date, the division had a strength of 3000 with 4 M60A3, 8 M1, 1 M1A1, 7 Stingrays and 3 LAV75s. The School Brigade had a strength of 1800 with no MBTs.

In November 2000, the School Brigade was detached from the division and placed directly under XC Corps and tasked with internal administrative duties in western Kansas plus acting as the Corps reserve force. It has been suggested that this is as it was one of the few regular army units in the 5th Army it was less likely to be sympathetic to Civgov

who had an enclave nearby.

“New recruits had a really low survival rate, some had never even fired the weapons they were issued, we did what we could but they still tended to die before they learned. In some units, guys would use a skirmish screen of new guys ahead of the veterans. That way if there were casualties it was the new guys who died.”

Lt Tim Lanister A/1-141st

Letter to the author

An attempt to reinforce XC Corps with troops evacuated during Operation Omega failed when a ship carrying 1600 replacements sank while moving the units down the coast from Virginia to Atchafalaya (using precious fuel reserves from many of the remaining ships of TF34). The loss of the Dawn Light has never been fully explained, many of the few survivors claim an explosion occurred before the ship started to list badly just after midnight on 8th February 2001. It is likely that this was either caused by an explosion in the engine room of the ship (it was in poor condition having been used as part of TF34), an explosion in the munitions being carried or a mine. With most of the passengers asleep below decks and the quick sinking, losses were high. The loss of so many armoured warfare specialists was a major blow to XC Corps and instead locally raised drafts of poor quality were all that was immediately available.

"There was this one order came down as everything went to rat-shit and everyone was leaving to look after their own families. It said that abandoning the unit and deserting was a capital offence and you could be shot for doing it. I guess it was intended to try and hold things together, sure as hell didn't though. Up until then I had dragged deserters back, I had even sent out half-hearted patrols to find them, now I didn't, I couldn't blame guys trying to get back to their families. I made sure my men knew that I wouldn't try and get them and hoped that loyalty to me was stronger. Worked with some but not others, at least while we were still in Texas, as we dwindled and withdrew there was no way we could hold things together. Do I regret it, yes and no, maybe if we had been tougher we could have held the unit together but my conscience couldn't have coped."

Lt Tim Lanister A/1-141st

Letter to the author

By April 2001 when we have the next strength return, the strength has dropped to 1200 dispersed in company and battalion level groups with 1 M60A4 (upgraded from an M60A3), 2 M1 and 2 Stingrays. The remaining vehicles had gradually broken down and been abandoned, few had been lost to hostile action. At least 1 LAV75 had however been retained by the crew and was actively used in defending a ranch. A number of vehicles were used as pillboxes around the Divisional Headquarters at Fort Sill by the increasingly isolated command elements (originally the plan had been to use the specialist mechanics of the reinforcements to try and get these back into operation). Using a number of sources we have been able to reconstruct the following order of battle (although this is far more tentative than those given previously):

49th Armoured Division

Divisional Headquarters

249th Military Police & Intelligence Company

C/386th Engineer Battalion

Divisional Cavalry Squadron (1 x M60A4, 3 x

M113 ACAV, 2 x BMP-2, 1 x M901, 1 x LAV75, 1 x LAV75A1) –

this was used very much as the Divisional fire brigade based at Divisional HQ

536th Forward Support, Administration and Signals Battalion

133rd Field Artillery Battalion (4 x M198) – one source adds a second battery with 3 captured D30 howitzers but no evidence of this has ever been found, another source states that the second battery had M102 but again no evidence has come to light)

36th Brigade

B/386th Engineer Battalion (broken into individual platoons)

1-112 Armoured (2 x M1)

3-112 Armoured (2 x Stingray)

1-141 Infantry (Peacekeeper – withdrawn from the Divisional Cavalry Squadron)

"A lot of authors have wondered why my battalion fell apart, well it wasn't through a lack of trying but even before we got to Chicago we had problems as the 1-141st was scattered all over the state and never got together as a unit except for annual camp and the "outliers" (as we called them) always seemed to do things their own ways and use different SOPs. In Chicago we were always too busy to train as much as we needed, especially as the battalion seemed to be used as scouts for everyone while the Cav were adapting to the LAV75 – for all that it was worth! (Having worked as small units all the time we were all good at this). Once we were fighting the Mexicans and Russians it was too late, the cohesion wasn't there. Losing most of a Company to Division Cuba, the subsequent reorganising to take in the new recruits and the lack of morale when we were fighting against marauders that would attack then vanish, well that just about finished us. After that when we tried to cover too much ground, it was no wonder why people jumped the fence."

Lt Tim Lanister A/1-141st

Letter to the author

71st/72nd Brigade

A/386th Engineer Battalion (broken into individual platoons)

2-142 Infantry (Lorry)

3-141 Infantry (Foot)

B/1-649 Air Defence Artillery (used in ground support role) – broken down into single vehicles to support 3-141

Both of the Brigades were broken down into small task forces of company to battalion level. The organisation of these is so confused that we have been unable to make any reasonable attempt to untangle the groupings (which may well have been changed on an ad-hoc basis).

There is a photo of an XM21 LADA vehicle with 49th Division insignia that has been dated by some sources as May 2001. It is more probable however that this is an earlier photo as the School Brigade are known to have had one in the 1-777th when the brigade was attached.

By July 2001 with the desertions increasing and the unit strength dwindling, the severely

overextended division stopped actively patrolling southwards and gradually withdrew northwards into Oklahoma to consolidate the ground it could effectively cover.



Illustration 8: A typical improvised armoured APC as used by Task Force Golf of 2-142 Infantry in early to mid 2001. Many units used one to either lead or bring up the rear of convoys. Few used more than two in a company due to the increased fuel consumption. (Collection of Mary Scooter)

On 1st December 2006 the rump of the division was disbanded and the bulk of the troops transferred to the 95th Infantry Division (Light). It was then reformed as the 49th (Training) Division at Fort Sill.

Divisional Commanders 49th Armoured Division

Jan 1995 – Nov 1997

Major General Sean Royce (died of radiation poisoning)

Nov 1997 – Jan 1998

Brigadier General Kelvin Moor (discharged after injuries received in a traffic accident)

Jan 1998 – June 1998

Major General Robert Connor (to XC Corps)

June 1998 – June 1999

Brigadier General (later Major General) Sarah June (killed in action)

June 1999 – June 1999

Colonel Thomas Davis (killed in action)

June 1999 – July 1999
Colonel William McKenzie (temporary command)

July 1999 – January 2000
Brigadier General Anne Relquist (killed in action)

January 2000 – May 2000
Brigadier General Oscar Tell (mental breakdown)

May 2000 - June 2004
Brigadier General (later Major General) William McKenzie (retired)

June 2004 – December 2006
Major General Antonio Morerras



Illustration 9: Major General William McKenzie with his grandson Herbert

Divisional Commanders 49th (Training) Division

February 2007 - March 2008
Major General Antonio Morerras (retired)

March 2008 – May 2010
Brigadier General Carlton King (medical grounds)

May 2010 – December 2012
Brigadier General Bill Phillips (retired)

January 2012 -
Brigadier General Mark Smith

Famous Former Divisional Members

Post war, one of the most popular country singers in southern Oklahoma was Sgt Mary Scooter, a former vehicle mechanic with the division who served from 1997 to 2006. Performing sad laments while wearing her trademark BDU jacket with the 49th Division flash, she dedicated many of the songs to people in the division she knew personally who had died during the war. By 2012 she was becoming far better known outside the local area and cassettes of her songs were starting to circulate nationally. By 2015 she was a well known figure nationally before her gradual fall from fame due to her difficulties with alcohol caused by her post traumatic stress disorder. She died in 2018 from alcohol related abuse.



Another member of the division who became famous for his work after the war was Lt Roy Tubbs who served as an intelligence officer with the division from 1998 to 2003. On leaving the Army he moved from job to job before he spent more and more of his time studying the bird population of the American south in the aftermath of the war. He was the first to identify that bird migration patterns had changed with the climactic changes and that certain species were also capable of

avoiding areas of severe radiation contamination.

Major Karl Turner started the war as a platoon commander in 2-112 Armoured. A long serving member of the National Guard he was a police officer in Brownsville. By late 1998 he had been promoted to Captain and was the company commander of F/2-112. When the division reorganised in early 1999, he moved to command D Troop of the Divisional Cavalry Squadron using the experiences he had gained commanding Stingrays. His skilful handling of the Squadron in supporting the lighter elements was recognised with a promotion and command of the squadron on 16th June 1999 when the previous commander was killed in action. Through the rest of the battle he desperately tried to form a rearguard as the division fell back. By the end of the retreat he had lost 65% of his command but had probably saved the remnants of the division. In July 2001 he left a letter stating that he could no longer in all good conscience remain with the division and he needed to try to find his family. He travelled into Texas and being unable to find his family joined a guerilla group fighting the Mexicans. In December 2001 he was betrayed and captured by the Mexicans. He was hung in Brownsville in January 2001. It is thought that he would probably have been recommended for a high award if he had not deserted.



Lt Col Bill Phillips was the commander of 3-133FA at the start of the war. A school inspector in his day job he was widely respected by his troops. In the aftermath of the June 1999 fighting he found he was the senior commander left alive in the remnants of the 133rd and assumed command. Rebuilding as best he could consolidated the remaining equipment and agreed the transfer of excess crews to the divisional infantry. He left the division in 2012 as a Brigadier General and ran unsuccessfully for the post of Senator for Oklahoma before his death from lung cancer in 2017.

Further Reading

For details of how the Stingray came into US Service, readers are advised that a good starting point is the article The Armoured Gun System Programme.

Brief details about the unique organisation of the 1/124 Cavalry are given in the article on the M115 Meade.

Design Notes

I have substituted the 1st, 2nd, 3rd Brigade structure of the American Combat Vehicle Handbook with the historically accurate designations above, keeping the numerical order for simplicity. A 6th battalion of armour was also added at the expense of a Bradley battalion to again match the real world strength.

The School Brigade is given different dates of attachment. I have tried to reconcile these. The notes regarding the artillery elements of this also conflict so I have tried to resolve this.