

# INFANTRY LETTERS



## IDEAS IN PRACTICE

Dear Sir,

Your January-February 1982 issue of *INFANTRY* was, as usual, excellent — two articles, especially.

In "A Bilateral Staff" (page 11), Major Walter Mather outlines an organization which, if not formally recognized by the Army, is at least informally practiced by a large number of combat and combat support battalions in the field.

The idea of using the XO as the Deputy Commander for Logistics and the S3 as the Deputy Commander for Operations verifies the importance of these two areas of concern for any operation. The supervision of these functions becomes even more critical in the support battalions where trains areas are prevalent and where support to forward units is likely to be extended over very large areas. Especially when the unit operates with a TOC and a jump TOC, which is normally well forward in the area of the engaged units while the trains are nearer the support area, no one person can coordinate and supervise both areas, and the need for the bilateral staff is clear.

In another article in that issue Captain Walter Shrepel discussed the battalion officer school (page 34). In my last unit the rule of the day was to train, educate, and evaluate the junior officers, and to my way of thinking there can be no better system than one that involves all of the senses in the program — the brain, the hands, the ears, the eyes. In fact, this type of school is not restricted to military units; it can also be used to help train young executives for business firms.

There may come a time when we will see officer SQT or promotion tests. Until that time, the least we can

do is to make sure junior officers have all the advantages we can offer by training and preparing them for higher levels of responsibility. Let's make the battalion officer school mandatory for everyone. General Meyer, where are you?

Thank you for a great magazine.

JOHN D. SPENGLER  
MAJ, Field Artillery  
Terre Haute, Indiana

## TRAINING'S THE ANSWER

Dear Sir,

I have carefully studied the article "MC-1 Parachute," by Lieutenant C.T. Payne (*INFANTRY*, November-December 1981, page 9), and the letter in response to it from Captain C.M. Leavelle (March-April 1982, page 49), and I would like to join the argument.

First, my qualifications to argue. I am a senior qualified parachutist with many years in jump status, including participation in eight mass tactical jumps with the MC1-1, with four of those as jumpmaster. As a qualified instructor for this parachute, I helped qualify Company C, 1st Battalion, 504th Infantry (Airborne) as the first company-sized unit to fully qualify with the MC1-1.

Not once during any jump on which I was jumpmaster, using either the T-10 or the MC1-1, did anyone get hurt or experience a midair collision. Why? Training!

First, my unit underwent extensive and repetitive training quarterly on the basics of parachuting, including equipment preparation, packing, and rigging, in-aircraft procedures, exits, canopy control, and parachute landing falls. Also included was an extremely detailed jumpmaster briefing

covering each type of aircraft and canopy that could be used on an airborne operation.

Second, my unit tried to ensure that each mission jumpmaster briefing was again extremely detailed but tailored to the specific mission. This again helped train the jumper.

All my experience was before the testing and full introduction of the MC1-1B canopy with the anti-inversion net, and before the past and present programs to more rigidly control exit interval and jumper staggering. Therefore, I ask Lieutenant Payne and others to review their basic airborne refresher training. We as leaders owe it to the airborne soldier to be as well trained for the air mission as for the ground mission. These better trained soldiers will have fewer mishaps.

WALTER D. CROLEY  
CPT, Infantry  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

## BAYONET TRAINING

Dear Sir,

Reference the news item on bayonet training in your January-February 1982 issue (page 3), in the picture the soldier appears to be executing a jab. I don't know how they teach it now in training, but the magazine well and pistol grip on the rifle are turned down.

When I was a bayonet instructor on Parris Island, we taught Marines during recruit training to turn the magazine well and pistol grip to the right. This way the flat edge of the blade would be inserted between the ribs of an enemy and up through the heart.

As an infantryman, I think that there is too little emphasis on bayonet

training. I am not an expert on the subject, but I am proficient in the five killing blows, blocks, and parries the Marine Corps teaches its recruits, and this tip might help.

ROBERT S. GERARD  
S/SGT, USMC  
Camp Pendleton, California

### ARNG MOS TRAINING

Dear Sir,

I take exception to Major Clifford Baker's letter in the March-April 1982 issue of INFANTRY (page 51) concerning Army National Guard MOS training.

MOS qualification in our unit is handled differently and in a far more meaningful manner than in the one he describes. (Bear in mind that Adjutants General control the Guard units far more than ARNG regulations do.)

In our unit, on-the-job experience or on-the-job training (OJE/OJT) is not used for MOS qualification; only supervised on-the-job training is allowed. In some cases, per regulations, some correspondence course training (also supervised) and formal schools are also required.

Our program is based on the Battalion Training Management System, as well as on the training SOPs from brigade, battalion, and our own company. Critical task lists for MOS qualification are submitted by platoon and section leaders and approved by the company commander. This is not an administrative burden for the commander, but rather the centerpiece of his individual training program.

Furthermore, we specifically set aside time and qualified personnel to conduct MOS qualification during drill weekends, and we purposely integrate the critical tasks required for MOS qualification into all collective field training. The entire chain of command, from commander to first-line supervisor, gets involved in this effort.

By assigning tasks as "homework"

and then using the BTMS pre-test and post-test method of instruction during drill weekends, we can cover many more subjects to the prescribed standards in much less time. Finally, quality assurance tests (QAs) are conducted by the commander, the full-time training staff, and the platoon and squad leaders to ensure proficiency. At that point the MOS is awarded and MOS sustainment takes over.

Trainers Guides are used to develop critical task lists for MOS qualification, along with job books, the realities of unit equipment, and available training areas and unit experience.

Our system seems to be working well, although additional guidance from the battalion level on minimum required tasks is expected. The key to a working program, however, is direct involvement by the chain of command.

MICHAEL D. ORTON  
SFC, Oregon ARNG  
Medford, Oregon

### SQUAD TRAINING

Dear Sir,

I read the article "Individual Training," by Captain Warren Wilson, in your March-April 1982 issue (page 36) and was disappointed by the generalization concerning the way squad leaders use their training time.

The author states that he found, in his unit, that squad leaders used the lack of training time as an excuse for their own inadequacies. He then went on to tell how he had taken the opportunity to implement a program of training his soldiers in individual training.

As an infantryman, my concern is not with the program but with the method that was used to correct the problem. True, some leaders may use lack of time as an excuse, but this is generally not the case. Why is it difficult to schedule formal training for the basics that build the strength for the unit? If a battalion commander

controlled the hourly breakdown of the training schedule and told his company commanders to train their companies during delays on the firing range, during time left over after short training days, and during pauses in the action on FTXs, could they be expected to accomplish the task? Company commanders expect to be given adequate time and resources to train their units. We as squad leaders expect the same to train the individual soldier. Why does it stop at our level? Individuals die in combat, not companies. We want development and supervision, not criticism.

If a deficiency does occur in individual training throughout the company, it is most likely a problem with the entire company's training chain. It means the platoon sergeant has failed to train, supervise, and counsel the squad leaders; that the first sergeant has failed to do the same with the platoon sergeants; and that the officers have failed to implement and supervise the total training program. We must return the responsibilities and the trust to these positions instead of ignoring them with programs that dodge the problems in the supervisory levels. If a poor leader is allowed to remain in the training chain, his subordinates will not be developed properly, and his unit will be trained poorly.

The formal training schedule must include time to train leaders, individual soldiers, and units. Only then will the FTXs be worthwhile training experiences. The system is designed to work with each member of the training chain having his own span of control. If a member of the chain cannot handle the responsibilities that his position calls for, let's try to develop him. If this fails, let's indicate it on his evaluation report and find someone who can handle it.

DAVID R. LITTLEJOHN  
SSG, USA  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, Utah

Dear Sir,

After reading Mister Embry's letter on the M16 rifle (INFANTRY, March-April 1982, page 52), I must speak my piece. No need to beat about the bush — I think it is one of the best military rifles in the world today, if not the best.

To begin with, let us clear up the argument that the M16 breaks easily and jams readily. Far from breaking easily, the M16 is as durable as any other military rifle. In its almost 20 years of service the M16 has never experienced any type of breakage problem. Even the problems of Vietnam were not the result of breakage. As for jamming, that problem was corrected more than 12 years ago, and it was not a problem inherent in the weapon. Documentation can be obtained from Senate subcommittee reports on the M16 and reference can be made to many sources, notably Smith's *Small Arms of the World* 1977.

Mister Embry's contention that the AR180 and the Ruger Mini 14 are superior to the M16 really raised my eyebrows. The Ruger, a favorite of American "civilian commandos," has been tested by several countries and found suitable only for police

work. The AR180 was tested and found to be unreliable, both in functioning and in parts breakage.

For 16 years now I have been a serious student of twentieth century military history and a collector and shooter of military small arms. My faith in the M16 comes from extensive research, comparison, and personal experience. For the past ten years I have served as an infantryman in Ranger, Airborne, and straight leg infantry units, and the M16 has proved to me to be a deadly, reliable rifle. I would want no other weapon for combat.

I will gladly take on all comers on the subject.

SSG SCOTT COOPER  
Kensington, Connecticut

### JUNE, NOT JULY

Dear Sir,

In his review of *Die Schlacht um Moskau*, by Janusz Piekalkiewicz (INFANTRY, March-April 1982, page 47), Wolfgang Gerhardt states that Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in July 1941. In fact, *Unternehmen Barbarossa* began on 22 June 1941. By 1 July German forces had taken Minsk, Lvov, Brest-Litovsk, and

Riga (Latvia) from the Russians.

My grandfather was a Flak battery commander in the Luftwaffe and has told me of the tension and action of the Russian invasion in June 1941.

ERHARD F. KONERDING  
Wesleyan University  
Middletown, Connecticut

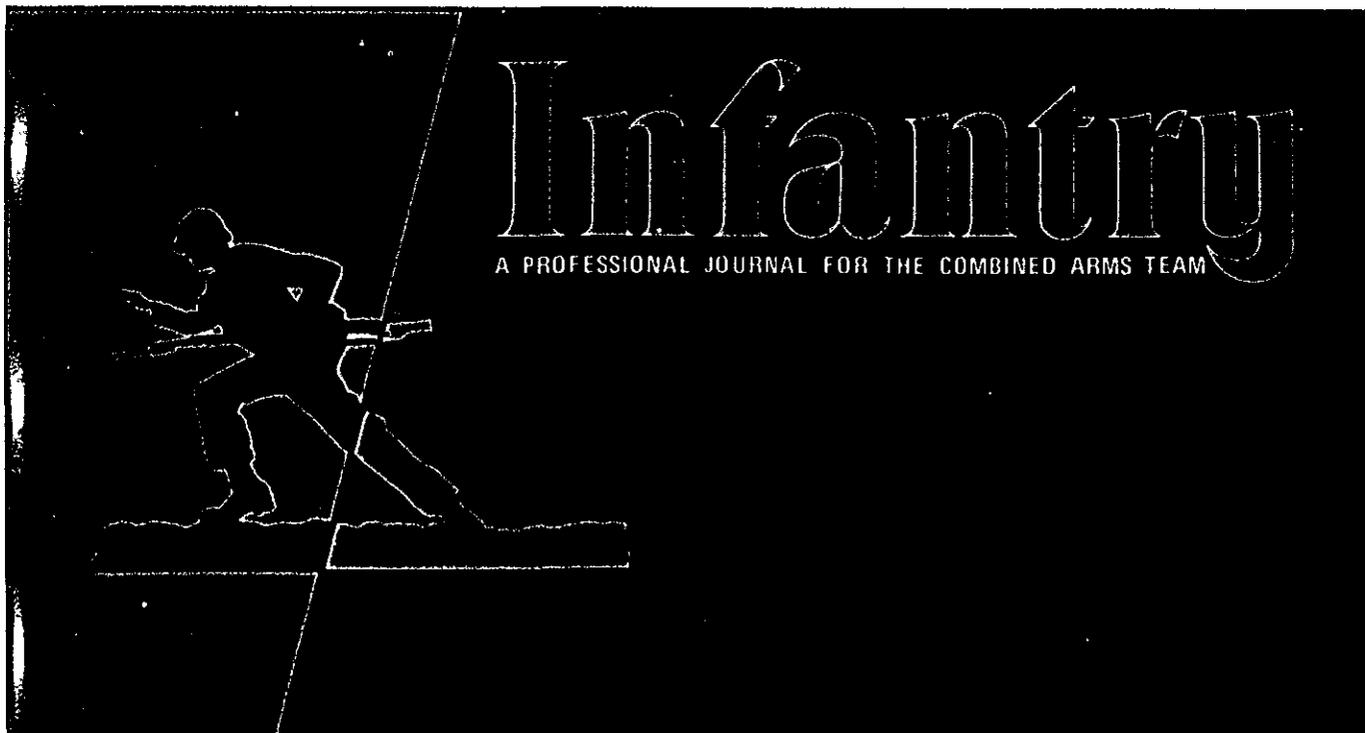
*EDITOR'S NOTE: Mister Konerding is right, of course. We knew better.*

### LOCK, STOCK, ETCETERA

Dear Sir,

On the continuing M16 controversy, the fact that a defense such as Mister Osborne's (INFANTRY, September-October 1981, page 22) seems necessary should be a warning sign. And if its reputation is underserved, why are all the modifications being made, which are to give us the M16A2? These modifications include a burst-fire lock to replace the fully automatic operation; an unbreakable nylon stock and grip; a heavier barrel with a shorter twist and muzzle brake; and new sights.

That's quite a package. In fact it amounts to the replacement of the entire rifle — lock, stock, barrel, and sights. Even the cartridge is to be replaced by the NATO SS109.



Whether we admit it or not, we are, in fact, now in the process of replacing the present M16 with a new rifle, but the only candidate being considered is the M16 itself. This is absurd when there are many other good rifles that deserve consideration — the 5.56mm rifle that Fabrique Nationale produces, for example, as a companion piece to the light machinegun we've adopted.

The FN rifle would give U.S. forces a common design of weapons at platoon level; it would open up the possibility of common infantry weapons among NATO countries; and it would relieve us of the burden of writing articles to convince the troops, against settled tradition and their own better judgment, that the M16 is really an excellent infantry rifle.

If we can afford to rework the M16 from buttplate to muzzle brake, we can afford to look at something else.

WILLIAM BEFORT  
Moscow, Idaho

**SHUFFLING AUTHORS**

Dear Sir,  
In the article "One-on-One Train-

ing" in your May-June 1982 issue (page 30), the name of David L. Hanaman should have been listed first in the byline, because he was the primary author of the article as well as the one who originally conceived and developed the training techniques discussed.

While this might seem like a minor point, it does clarify things and give appropriate credit to Mister Hanaman.

JOYCE ARDALE  
Army Research Institute  
Alexandria, Virginia

*EDITOR'S NOTE: We mistakenly converted the authors' names to alphabetical order in the byline and further erred in scrambling the biographical data at the end of the article. Thanks to ARI for straightening us out.*

**FIXED BAYONETS**

Dear Sir,  
It is hard to take your magazine seriously as a professional journal when you publish articles as poorly researched and illogical as the one on bayonet training by Mister Garzone

(INFANTRY, March-April 1982, page 34).

The author shows a definite lack of scholarship when he says that "During World War I . . . an infantry assault with fixed bayonets was the only way ground could be gained." This implies that no ground was gained without the bayonet. Bayonet or no bayonet, no ground was being gained except through extreme carnage. Machineguns and artillery were the problem; that's why we have tanks today instead of high technology bayonets.

I also like the thought that the primary goal of bayonet training is to teach aggressiveness. I would suppose that the real objective is to teach soldiers to kill people with it.

That the Infantry Training Brigades can devote nine precious hours pandering to the myth of the bayonet is extraordinary, because soldiers are still not trained very well to use the thing it is attached to — the rifle — to hit targets out to 460 meters. This distance, ironically, is also the length of the new bayonet assault course.

CHARLES L. TALLMAN  
CPT, Infantry  
Newport News, Virginia

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