

INFANTRY LETTERS



ASSAULT EQUIPMENT

Dear Sir,

We have received numerous replies and inquiries in response to our article, "Attack of A Desert Strongpoint" (INFANTRY, July-August 1982, page 25). Several questions have been posed in regard to the availability of the items of equipment described in the article, especially tank minerollers and M157 projected demolition charges.

As the article mentions, the tank minerollers are now being used by selected units in USAREUR, and there are presently 360 "updated" (product-improved) M157s in the Army's inventory. Eighty-five were sent to Europe, while smaller numbers were designated for Korea. The M157 projected demolition charges do exist in the inventory and have for a number of years.

The real problem is the ability of units to obtain and train with either the M173 demolition charge or the training device, the M174.

CPT WAYNE J. SABO
CPT EDWIN L. KENNEDY, JR.
Fort Benning, Georgia

STRONG AND EFFICIENT

Dear Sir,

I have carefully read "Keep It Light," by Major John P. Gritz (INFANTRY, July-August 1982, page 6). The author makes some interesting points and brings out the spirit in all Infantrymen. As an Infantryman myself, I appreciate his argument, but I find too many faults in his analysis to allow the article to pass without criticism.

Soviet tactical doctrine has been changing to meet the needs of the

modern battlefield. (An excellent series of articles on Soviet military forces appears in the August 1982 issue of *Military Review*. Soviet forces are highly mobile and will make numerous penetrations to get to our rear areas for exploitation. Without a strong and efficient mechanized combined arms force, we will not be able to counter such an enemy thrust quickly and change on a rapidly moving battlefield.

We do not have to look only at a European battlefield to see this type of action. In the Middle East, for example, some nations also have forces structured along Soviet lines.

Mechanized infantry also enables us to exploit and pursue in offensive missions, which is vital if we are to destroy enemy command, control, and communications, and logistical facilities.

I would be the last to say we should let go of light infantry. I gained a deep appreciation for its need in Korea. Light infantry is needed in many potential trouble spots around the world, and it must be equipped and trained to go. But for the Army to return to a predominantly light infantry force would be using 1940s doctrine on the 1980s battlefield.

RICHARD D. DUBOIS
CPT, Infantry
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

HATS OFF

Dear Sir,

Hats off to Major John P. Gritz for his article, "Keep It Light," and to INFANTRY for publishing it in the July-August 1982 issue (page 6).

As a field artilleryman who was drafted into the U.S. Army Special Forces in 1964, I learned just how ef-

fective the foot soldier can be against all types of forces.

Light infantry needs to be a much more significant part of our total forces, and the time to make it such is now! With the current interest in physical fitness, with the ever-increasing cost of weaponry, and with a very strong possibility that our Constitution may be amended to require a balanced budget, we had better get on with organizing and equipping light infantry units as soon as possible.

ROBERT H. WHITE
LTC, Field Artillery
Fort Eustis, Virginia

RIFLE ZERO

Dear Sir,

I am writing in regard to an article in the May-June 1982 issue of INFANTRY entitled "Rifle Zero," by Captain Everett D. Mayfield. I find that I must take exception to a number of statements in the article.

First, I also have served as an enlisted Marine. I have not fired in competition as the captain has, but I have been a basic rifle marksmanship instructor for basic training at Fort Dix for the past two years. I have taught preparatory marksmanship, zeroing, field fire, zero/timed fire, record fire, and target detection.

The thing about the article that I disagree with is his concept of zeroing and the reasons for it. Here are my counterpoints:

- Zeroing is the mechanical process of adjusting a rifle's sights so that the rifle will hit a target at the distance the rifle is zeroed for.

- West European service rifles are not ordinarily zeroed by the soldiers who use them. Yet those same soldiers achieve significantly higher

qualification scores than our soldiers do.

- Every rifle is slightly different, and thus each rifle will have a slightly different sight setting when it is correctly zeroed than another rifle will have.

- If an experienced firer zeroes a rifle so that the shot groups are centered in the circle of the new zero target, then any other experienced firer can pick up the same rifle, fire shot groups at the new zero target, and hit inside the zero circle. (I have proved this in practice to skeptical drill sergeants here at Fort Dix.)

- Stock weld varies from position to position, even with the same firer. Soldiers must be experienced enough in different positions to hit targets consistently from the positions they are most likely to use in combat, including different stock welds.

My next contention, I'm afraid, has little support: I feel that novice firers should not zero weapons until after they can hit what they shoot at. It works this way: Experienced firers zero weapons and periodically check weapon zeros. The new firer is issued a rifle that is already known to be able to hit the target. When a novice is consistently hitting the target, the trainer can see that he has learned to

apply marksmanship fundamentals, and so can the firer. Feedback is the best learning device. If the soldier does it right, he hits the target. If he does it wrong he misses. And the marksmanship trainer trying to diagnose shooter problems doesn't have to worry about where the rifle is hitting compared to where the new soldier is aiming. The trainer knows that the rifle will hit the target if it is correctly aimed, if it is held steady, and if the firer practices breath and trigger control.

This is a theory that I feel should be completely tested. I have personally pre-zeroed rifles for problem firers, then I have taught them to shoot on the basis that if they hit the target they are right, and if they miss, they are wrong.

My final point about zeroing, and, I think, the key one, is this: If a soldier is on the battlefield and his rifle breaks, he has to pick up any rifle he can reach — perhaps one from a fallen squad member — and immediately engage enemy soldiers who are trying to kill him. Is he going to stop and zero that other rifle now? No. But if, while the squad was in its last assembly area, somebody made sure that all the squad's weapons were correctly zeroed, then that

soldier, or any other soldier in the squad, can effectively use the weapon he grabs at effective combat ranges.

There are a lot of marksmanship myths in the field. And there are an awful lot of soldiers out there who cannot shoot. We need to change that. Our lives and our country depend on our doing it right the first time.

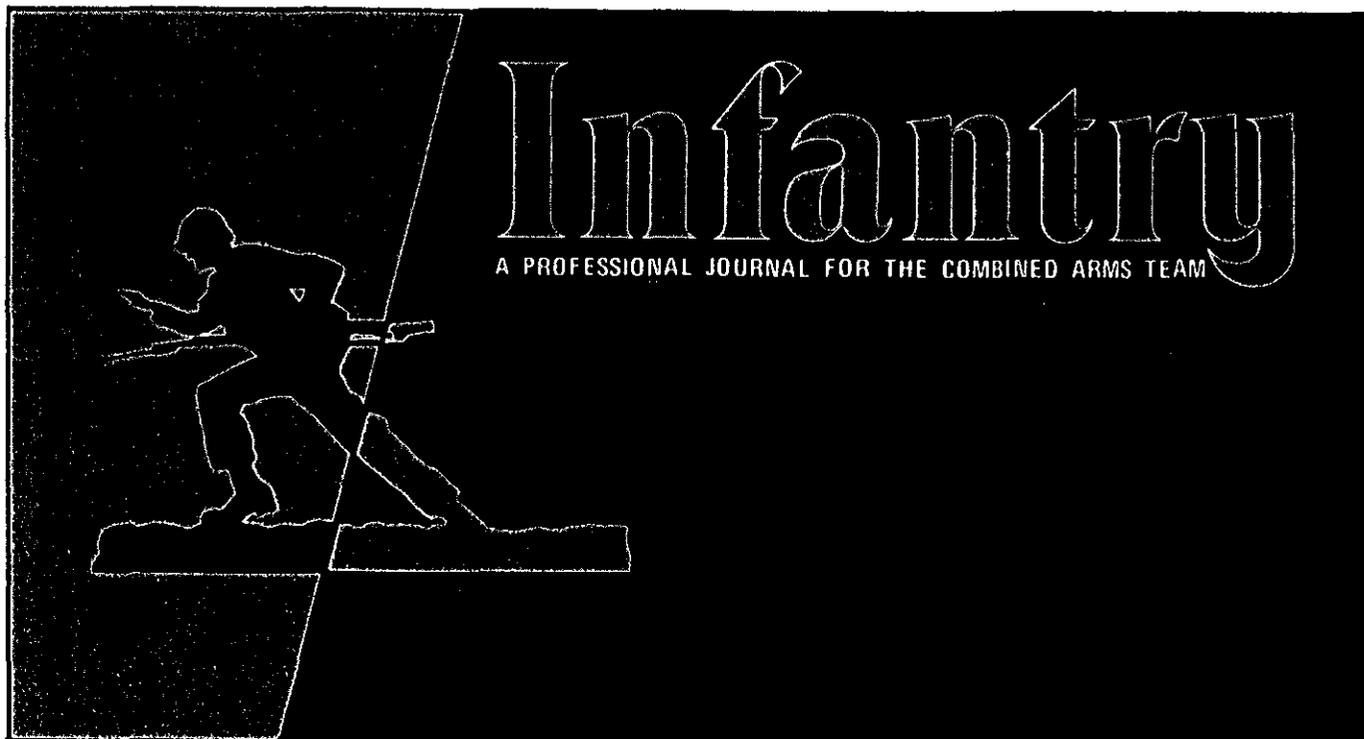
MICHAEL D. SETTLES
SSG, USA
Fort Dix, New Jersey

GOOD SHOT, BUT ...

Dear Sir,

I have just read the May-June 1982 issue of *INFANTRY* and I was especially interested in Captain Everett D. Mayfield's article, "Rifle Zero."

Many times I have been sent to the range to fire for qualification with a rifle I have never seen before, much less zeroed. The weapon I fire on the range is often not the weapon that is specified on my weapon card. It is the rifle that is next on the rack as the unit armorer hands them out. At the range, I have rarely been given time and ammunition to zero my weapon properly.



I fired in civilian competition for many years, starting with small-bore rifles at age 13 and working up to the National Match course with an M1 Garand. I have also fired at moving targets under field conditions during many hunting trips. In short, I am a good shot, and no one can tell me otherwise. Yet I am wearing only a Marksman badge on my uniform because I have never been allowed to show what I can do. You can imagine what this does to my pride.

I hope Captain Mayfield's article will strike a responsible chord in the hearts of those who conduct marksmanship training and qualification firing.

PAUL F. ADAMS
SSG, USAR
Tucson, Arizona

INFANTRY UPS AND DOWNS

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to "Infantry: A Prevailing Theme," by Lieutenant Peter W. Harris, USN (INFANTRY, July-August 1982, page 16).

The best reason for the rise and decline in the use of infantry could be

the emphasis placed on infantry; that is, the rise of the chariot might have caused a decline in the use of infantry. In other words, the rise of a different (or novel) weapon system could and usually did cause the decline of infantry. But proper usage increases with time, training, and understanding of how to best employ



infantry (or any other weapon system, for that matter).

Two of the examples Lieutenant Harris uses are not correct, as I see it. At Waterloo, Napoleon was declining in his tactical abilities, and he was faced by a soldier who was rising in his abilities. Napoleon used his artillery to weaken the enemy line so that his infantry columns could break

the line for exploitation by the cavalry. Neither Wellington's artillery nor his cavalry stopped D'Erlon's or Jerome's attacks; the British Infantry did! And the author might have mentioned the fact that the British Foot Guards (with assistance from the 52d Light Infantry) stopped and then turned back the French Guard.

As to World War I, the infantry's decline during the middle of that war was due to the fact that most of the combatants' pre-war armies were devastated and the raw recruits had not received proper or sufficient training. The result was the great frontal attack bloodbaths. The successful German Sturmtruppen attacks in 1918 were due to training, albeit in the new tactic of small infantry unit infiltration.

Finally, as to the French column, one tactical formation consistently defeated the column — the British two-rank line — through superior morale, discipline, training, and firepower. As Napoleon once said, "The moral is to the physical as three is to one."

FRANK W. LESLIE
SSG, USA
2d Armored Cavalry Regiment

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