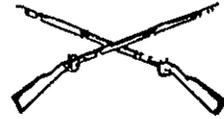


Commandant's NOTE



Major General James J. Lindsay
Chief of Infantry

THE INFANTRY DIVISION (LIGHT)

For the first time in modern history we are going to have a truly light Infantry division as an organic part of our total force structure.

The idea itself is not new. Some 45 years ago, in 1938, our organizational people came up with a proposed 10,275-man Infantry division that was lean and supposedly mean. Unfortunately, because this particular organization had little combat backbone, it wasn't very mean and it wasn't adopted.

Again, at the height of World War II, in 1943, we looked at a 9,000-man light division that was supposed to be usable in any area of the world where only a small amount of equipment could be carried. But as with the 1938 version, this one also proved to have too little combat capability, and the Army dropped the idea.

The idea for a light division was valid then, and it is valid now. The major difference today is technology. In the ensuing 40 years, there have been spectacular advances in the effectiveness and lethality of the weaponry available for a light Infantry force. As a result, the Army will finally have organic, small, flexible, essentially footmobile, strategically deployable divisions that can respond to contingencies anywhere in the world.

The Infantry Division (Light) is a compact force of about 10,000 soldiers; it will focus on defeating light enemy forces in low- and mid-intensity conflicts, but will retain the capability for employment throughout the broad spectrum of contingencies. (The overall structure of the division is depicted on the opposite page.)

The nine Infantry battalions, grouped into three brigades, can look for immediate battle-field support from a division artillery comprised of three 105mm howitzer battalions with 18 howitzers each; an aviation brigade that has 36 Black Hawks, 29 attack helicopters, and 31 scout helicopters, as well as a military intelligence/reconnaissance unit; an air defense battalion equipped with 18 improved Vulcans and 40 Stinger teams; and a light combat engineer battalion.

All of the major elements found in our current Infantry divisions have been retained in the Infantry Division (Light). And to give it the worldwide strategic deployability it needs, the entire division can be moved in fewer than 500 C-141B sorties. It is a compact offensive force that can be augmented with additional forces, weapons, and equipment before deployment based on its mission, the enemy situation, ter-

rain, time, and troops available (METT-T).

If all goes as planned, the 7th Infantry Division will be converted to the new division structure in Fiscal Year 1985. Plans for the conversion of other divisions are still being discussed.

The new division is the result of a good deal of forward-looking thinking at Department of the Army and at TRADOC. Light infantry units can go where heavy Infantry units cannot go. Bad weather and darkness, instead of hindering them, will help them. Even in mid- and high-intensity conflicts, there will be many places where light infantry units can be employed quite effectively. For example, in the last issue of *INFANTRY*, I wrote about the growing urban sprawl in every area of the world and our need to master the complexities of fighting in a MOUT environment. This is the kind of fighting in which light Infantry units, with the proper support, will excel.

This new light division offers the Infantry leader many challenges and opportunities. Its units will have to be trained to operate in close terrain, MOUT, and heavily forested and jungle areas where foot troops and light weapons are essential to the task. They will have to be

trained for air assaults, for raiding operations, and for counter-guerrilla warfare. And they will have to learn to operate with our heavy units, because they may be attached for special operations to a heavy unit, or a heavy unit may join them to create a combat task force.

How will we do all of this? By seizing every opportunity to train our units and our soldiers, by constantly working and studying, and by putting forth a disciplined effort — both in our service schools and in our units — we can create the finest fighting forces ever fielded in our Army.

At the Infantry School, we have formed a Light Division Task Force within our Directorate of Training and Doctrine to develop a training strategy for the new organization. The Task Force is now busy conducting a front-end analysis of tasks and is looking at a training strategy that will be oriented on low- and mid-intensity conflicts.

The March-April 1984 issue of *INFANTRY* Magazine will have a feature article that will cover in detail the organization and mission of the new Infantry Division (Light).

