

# INFANTRY LETTERS



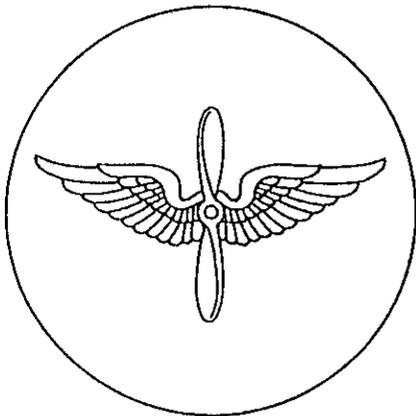
## AVIATION INSIGNIA

The Army Aviation Branch insignia shown on page 5 of your January-February 1984 issue may have been worn in the past, but it is not the new insignia approved for wear by Army officers and enlisted personnel.

Enclosed are designs of the new



branch insignia. Note that the wings have been modified and that they differ from the designs shown in your news item and also from the wing designs now used on Army and Air Force aviator qualification badges.



The new insignia draws upon the original insignia for historical and symbolic purposes, but was deliberately modified to signify a new chapter in Army aviation history.

GERALD T. LUCHINO  
COL, General Staff  
Institute of Heraldry, USA  
Cameron Station, Virginia

## EASY WAY OUT

I was appalled by Lieutenant Colonel Ralph A. Hallenbeck's article, "Reorganize Platoon," in the November-December 1983 issue of *INFANTRY*. It seems to me that what he is saying, in effect, is that his squad and platoon leaders were not doing their jobs, so instead of finding out why and then ensuring that they were able to do them, he took the easy way out and reorganized everything.

The problems the author sees with the current organization, such as a lack of maintenance supervision or deciding who will man the caliber .50 machinegun when the squad dismounts, are far from insurmountable. What ever happened to a designated carrier team leader who acts as track commander (TC) in the squad leader's absence? If Colonel Hallenbeck feels that it is a "tall order" for his squad leaders to maintain an M113 and train their squads to drive and to employ the caliber .50 and the Dragon, then perhaps he needs to find some new squad leaders.

I wonder if the author has considered what will happen when a member of the heavy squad becomes a casualty. Obviously he will have to be replaced by a member of one of the light squads since they are the only ones with any personnel to spare. But if that replacement's only experience with an APC is as a passenger, he isn't likely to make a very good driver or TC. The obvious solution here is for the light squad leaders to cross-train their squads in the duties of the heavy squad. But that's what Colonel Hallenbeck seems to feel was so difficult in the first place. The job won't be made any easier by not having their own APC to train on.

The author goes on to propose that only the best performers should be

allowed to be members of the heavy squad and that they should be "excused from petty details." That isn't likely to do much for the cohesion and team spirit of the platoon as a whole! Stacking the heavy squad may well result in "speedy and fluid maneuver" that looks good on exercises, but where does it leave the light squads, which are forced to make do with the less capable leaders and the least-experienced troops?

Let's not lose sight of the fact that those dismounted infantrymen are the platoon's real reason for existence. If a mounted maneuver force were the primary requirement, a platoon of tanks would be a lot more effective.

TED R. STUART  
SGT, A Troop  
1st Squadron, 124th Cavalry  
Texas Army National Guard  
Fort Hood, Texas

## MACHINEGUNNER MOS

I read with great interest Major Harlie Treat's article "Machinegunners" (November-December 1983, page 38). The author stresses the need for a separate training program for designated gunners, leading to a separate MOS for these gunners.

As first sergeant of a mechanized infantry company, I am very familiar with trying to "battle roster" personnel as assigned gunners and assistant gunners in addition to their duties with their respective squads and platoons. It is not simply a matter of assigning a weapon to a crew, or more often to an individual. By dividing a soldier's duties, you are not necessarily doubling his skills; in most cases you are cutting his skills in half, and he will hardly be proficient in either of his assigned duties.

Machinegunnery is a science that can be learned only by continual practice. In the not-too-distant past we had heavy weapon squads attached to each rifle platoon. These men were designated gunners whose primary duty was to operate the squad's machineguns. They were proficient simply because they handled their assigned weapons every day. Making machinegunnery an additional duty makes as much sense as making mortar gunnery an additional duty. You are doing a great injustice to both skills.

So I say, "Bravo, Major Treat!" Finally someone is addressing a problem that has been an infantryman's nightmare for a long time. The Army would be wise to give serious consideration to his suggestions.

DANIEL R. PAUL  
Pennsylvania Army National Guard  
East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

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### AGREES, BUT IRRITATED

I completely agree with Major Treat's analysis in his article "Machinegunners," in which he proposes assigning a separate MOS to machinegunners and putting them in the weapons platoon. But one thing irritates me: Why didn't he simply say that the Marine Corps has been doing this for years, that it works, and that it's time the Army did it, too?

This omission implies the solution is his own idea, which is simply not the case.

J. D. HOWELL  
1stLt, USMC  
Twentynine Palms, California

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### BAYONET REPLACEMENT

I've just lately managed to get a couple of copies of *INFANTRY*, and I see the Army has gone back to the bayonet. I have a timely idea for a new piece of equipment to take the place of this item.

The new device is a 10-round

magazine of 5.56mm cartridges. It is sealed in a special quick-opening pouch about the size of a pack of cigarettes, clipped to the load-bearing equipment where the bayonet is now carried. When someone threatens the soldier with bayonet combat, the soldier — instead of fixing a bayonet — produces the 10-round magazine, inserts it in his rifle, and shoots the offender.

This device has several advantages: It weighs no more than the bayonet and is more convenient to carry; it requires no special training apart from the usual rifle courses; and it can be used equally well by soldiers of either sex or any size. In addition, unlike the bayonet, it neither detracts from the accuracy of the rifle nor significantly increases its dimensions; it does not impose destructive strain on the rifle when employed; it can be used without disadvantage in weapons fitted with grenade launchers or optical sights; and it is lethal at a considerable distance.

I shall be happy to demonstrate the utility of this invention against any three bayonet instructors on any standard close-combat course.

WILLIAM BEFORT  
Durham, New Hampshire

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### FIRE CONTROL

I woke in a sweat the other night. After 26 years as an infantryman, and primarily as a leader, now retired, my past seemed to be catching up with me. In a dream, as I recall, I had found myself watching an enemy force closing on our positions. They were beyond the range of my .45 pistol, and for some reason the men around me were not taking the enemy under fire. Furthermore, I couldn't seem to get them to fire. I ran to one soldier and grabbed his M16 only to discover there was no magazine in it.

For all infantrymen, but particularly leaders, a critical problem that will not seem to go away is the initiation, control, and termination of fire. All those who have been in combat have

experienced the problem. In the 1950s the late S.L.A. Marshall wrote an excellent book, *Men Against Fire*. I suspect that today too few of our infantry leaders have read the book or understand the problem. It is a phenomenon that is not understood until it is too late—partly because it never seems to take focus until you are in the same situation. I do not believe we are sufficiently focusing on the problem in our training today, except as another of the many problems attendant to close combat.

In the fall of 1967, our battalion minus was in a dug-in perimeter defense. A small enemy force surprised us very near our perimeter by command-detonating two Chinese Communist claymores against our position, followed by two or three minutes of automatic weapons fire. Needless to say, our security had left something to be desired. The most surprising problem, however, was that *no one returned fire*. By the time indirect fire (organic mortar and direct support artillery) was brought in, the enemy force was gone.

I have participated in many live fire exercises under tactical conditions. Whether on offense or defense, the problem was virtually the same. First, men were reluctant to fire. Second, they rarely knew where to fire. Third, once they started, they normally fired until they ran out of ammunition. This is very frustrating, but it is really a chain of command and a training problem—one that our new infantry leaders must know about and devise ways of solving.

It would appear that our infantry will be in for a number of situations similar to Beirut and Grenada in the future. At the small unit leader level we must focus on fire control. Particularly in fluid, non-distinct circumstances, small unit leaders and their men must somehow always be ready to initiate and/or return fire. An SOP is really not good enough because circumstances change too rapidly. Infantry leaders and their men must be as well drilled as those men who took part in the Sontay Raid—at least as described in *The Raid*.

I hope this letter will somehow help to generate more thought and attention to this particular area of the profession of infantry.

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**FORMER INFANTRYMAN**

**INFANTRY DIVISION (LIGHT)**

As a soldier who proudly wears the patch of the 199th Infantry Brigade (Separate) (Light) on my right shoulder, I have a special corner in my heart for light infantry. I look upon the new Infantry Division (Light) as a much needed organization in our force structure. [See Commandant's Note, *INFANTRY*, January-February 1984, page 2, and "Infantry Division (Light)," March-April 1984, page 14.]

Our Army now does not have enough infantry to hold the ground that our firepower is going to make available to us on the battlefield. The Division 86 armored division, especially with its two armor and one mechanized infantry mix simply does not have enough riflemen to provide the necessary close combat strength to defeat enemy infantry. With the advent of the powerful Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, the infantry squad has been reduced to nine men and the actual "rice paddy strength" (to use a phrase from long ago) will be further reduced to keep a crew on the vehicle. We need more rifles, and the Infantry Division (Light) will give them to us.

I see two problems with the division, however—employment and support. The employment problem (outlined above) is that when a unit is short of infantry by TOE and has an infantry mission (MOUT, rough terrain, for example), it has to get the infantry from somewhere. If we are not careful we are going to find the light infantry brigades of this new division falling under the operational control of other units and rarely fighting under their own division headquarters.

If this happens, it will bring on the other problem—support. Having fought in a light infantry brigade with too few trucks to provide ground

transport, too few helicopters for air transport, and too little artillery to provide adequate fire support, I can see it happening again.

I just hope the force developers will think long and hard about just how the division will be supported in the various employment options open to its commanders.

**QUENTIN W. SCHILLARE**  
CPT, Armor  
Killeen, Texas

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**MILITARY HISTORY SYMPOSIUM**

The U.S. Air Force Academy's Department of History will sponsor the Eleventh Military History Symposium 10-12 October 1984. The topic of the symposium will be "Military Planning in the Twentieth Century."

The program includes examination of successes and failures in strategic military planning from an international perspective but focuses on U.S. planning efforts. Topics will range from the education and training of the military planner to the reconciliation of twentieth century technological, managerial, and social changes with traditional military planning. The discussions will also include the experiences of planners during the Cold War and in limited warfare.

For information about symposium registration, anyone who is interested may write to me at the Department of History, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO 80840, or call me at (303) 472-3230.

**BERNARD E. HARVEY**  
Captain, USAF  
Executive Director

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**CONVERT TO METRIC**

I would like to congratulate Captain Michael McEwen on his article "A Fitness Badge." But I would like to suggest one change to the endurance run and hope that change could be extended to all military fitness tests:

All distances should be in meters or kilometers, for some very practical reasons: They would be more universal, for one thing, and they would help give soldiers a better grasp of the international system of measures as well as the ranges of their weapons. I taught the metric system for several years and found that having my students walk a 100-meter course and a 1,000-meter course gave them a better sense of judgement regarding such measurements.

In the military, we should not, for example, write that we have a NATO 5.56mm weapon that weighs 8.2 pounds. This is mixing two entirely different and totally unrelated systems of measurement.

It would not be a bad idea for the military to convert completely to the metric system. All it would take would be about six months of instruction, followed by a total "overnight" conversion replacing all equipment and forms.

**GEORGE WILLIAMS**  
1LT, USAR  
Greenville, North Carolina

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**DISLIKES NEW HELMET**

Although I knew a German-style helmet was being tested for the Army, I was quite surprised to read that some of the troops who were used on Grenada wore this new helmet. From what I've read, the Kevlar works ballistically, but I see two serious deficiencies in the helmet's design: First, it impairs the soldier's hearing; and second, it is a one-piece helmet. From my experiences in World War II, both of these can cause serious problems.

As for the hearing part, some of the most lethal things on a battlefield occur very quietly. With good, unobstructed bilateral hearing, a rifleman may survive these lethal things, but without it his chances become slim indeed.

With a howitzer shell, for example, a sort of rustling noise precedes it, allowing a rifleman with keen hearing to pick out a depression that may be as

far away as 5 or 10 meters and dive into it before the shell explodes.

A mortar shell sort of whispers in, so even keener hearing is required to detect that noise, determine its direction, and act to evade the shell. (In that connection it's too bad the Army is getting away from the 60mm mortar, because it is about the most difficult mortar to hear and evade. This, in turn, makes it more effective than its relative burst pattern would indicate.)

Shells from direct fire tank guns and similar weapons are a real problem for the rifleman. With us in World War II it was the German 88. (Our 90mm tank gun is essentially identical to the 88, and the 105mm and perhaps the 120mm tank guns are only slightly different.)

Because the 88s were fired at us from relatively short distances (perhaps 1,000 meters), the shell had a time of flight of maybe a third of a second. Even so, an alert infantryman could hear it and dive for cover in that split second. (After seven weeks of being shot at, this one-time PFC rifleman did pick up a piece of shrapnel from an 88. But I ducked enough to cover up all the vital places and was back on duty within a week. A soldier can't duck, though, when he's under direct fire and can't hear.)

Other "quiet" sounds can signal something just as lethal. A machinegun being loaded, for example, will make a sort of click, which, if an infantryman hears it, can help him survive. (A fellow first scout in the platoon next to mine once heard enough of a noise to cause him to dive for a shallow depression. The German machinegunner laid into him with an



entire belt—250 rounds. His squad members were horrified to see his web equipment—a light pack and a canteen—shot right off his back. His buddies did knock out that machinegun and recover their first scout. He and I walked back to the aid station together. He had 42 burn marks on his shoulder blades and buttocks, but the skin in those areas was not broken.)

With other individual weapons, a safety being pushed off will make enough of a click to enable the keen-

hearing, alert rifleman to take evasive action. In a defensive position, the breaking of a twig or the crunch of a light footstep made by enemy infiltrators or an enemy patrol may enable a rifleman to survive.

Combat is for keeps, and that is something that some people don't seem to realize.

A recent newspaper article on the new helmet says that the "protective design" of the helmet made hearing more difficult "compared to the steel pot," but that "scientists at Army laboratories in Natick, Massachusetts, were said to believe soldiers would adapt with experience."

My division lost its rifle strength about five times over during the three months the division was on line. To put it in other terms, every week the division had to replace half its strength of riflemen. About half of these losses were due to the problem Americans have in fully perceiving that someone else is really out to do them in—that once committed to the line everything they did was for keeps, that there was no second chance. The statement by Natick scientists that soldiers would "adapt" reflects this difficulty in perceiving reality.

As for the "protective design," wounds to the ear are rare, as studies published by the Surgeon General



# Infantry

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE COMBINED ARMS TEAM

have shown. In one study of 4,600 men wounded in action in Korea, there were 1,189 wounds to the head, of which only 38 were near the ear. That is hardly enough to warrant incorporating into the new helmet a "protective design" that will impair the rifleman's ability to survive in battle.

As for the one-piece design of the new helmet, I believe a two-piece helmet is essential to the rifleman's survival. My division in Europe in winter needed the steel pot to bail water out of our foxholes, and it is inconceivable to me that anyone would want to try to cope with winter warfare without a two-piece helmet. (Even with it, my division lost about 4,000 riflemen to trenchfoot, and getting their feet wet was the major cause.)

The Germans did not like the one-piece helmet either. My squad captured more than 200 Germans out of field fortifications and were astonished at the number who had thrown away their steel pots. It seemed that in most cases they were wearing their soft hats. Even in the face of the enormous volume of artillery fire the U.S. Army was then capable of, it seemed that, often as not, the German front line soldiers did not wear their steel pots.

The point of all this is that two

somewhat minor improvements do not compensate for the adoption of what is, in my opinion, an unserviceable helmet. The improvement to the suspension system could have been made to any helmet, even to the liner of our current M1 helmet. And it has been long recognized that the Hadfield (manganese) steel used for the M1 steel pot could one day be improved upon. If Kevlar is that improved material, fine, but even Kevlar could be used in a design as good as that of the M1 steel shell.

Quite aside from these real design problems, there is also the idea that a helmet of "Fascist" design only lends itself to our enemy's identification of the U.S. as "Fascist" and "imperialist"—the same malignancies that identified the Kaiser and Hitler and proved eventually to be the cause of their defeat. That such allegations against the U.S. are false is irrelevant. What is relevant is the perception, as was proved to us again in Vietnam.

Just as the obstruction of hearing caused by the new German-style helmet will be disastrous for the riflemen who have to wear them in combat, its symbolism could prove disastrous to the best interests of the Nation.

From here, it seems that the production of the new helmet should be

cancelled and the stocks withdrawn from the field.

**ROBERT P. KINGSBURY**  
LTC, USAR (Ret)  
Laconia, New Hampshire

**DINFOS ALUMNI**

The Defense Information School (DINFOS) is compiling an alumni list in conjunction with its 20th Anniversary in July 1984.

Anyone who is a graduate of DINFOS at Fort Benjamin Harrison, or any of its predecessor schools—the Armed Forces Information School at Fort Slocum, N.Y.; the Army Information School at either Carlisle Barracks, Pa., or Fort Slocum; the Air Force Information School at Craig AFB, Ala.; or the Navy Journalist School at Great Lakes, Ill. — are asked to send their names, armed services, school attended, graduation date, present occupations, and addresses.

The address is Public Affairs Office, Defense Information School, Building 400, Fort Benjamin Harrison, IN 46216.

**GARY L. WERNER**  
COL, Armor

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