

INFANTRY LETTERS



VIETNAM EXHIBIT AT INFANTRY MUSEUM

I was saddened to read in your "letters" section (March-April 1984, page 51) that one of your contributors was "saddened by the absence of a Vietnam section in the Infantry Museum."

The museum has had on display, since the opening of its new building in July 1977, an extensive collection of Vietnam War period weapons, uniforms, equipment, maps, rations, and personal memorabilia. This exhibit, in the Hall of Infantry on the second floor, stands proudly among others honoring U.S. Infantrymen from all the wars and U.S. Army military actions in which Infantrymen have defended the Nation, to include — as of March 1984 — Grenada.

Our Vietnam collection includes a large photo mural of 11th Air Assault Infantrymen training at Fort Benning during the early 1960s as well as a wide range of U.S. weapons used during the war.

Additionally, on the Museum's third floor in the Foreign Gallery, which opened 1 July 1983, we have several display cases of uniforms, weapons, and other equipment used by the enemy against U.S. Infantry. This interesting collection of equipment of the Viet Cong, North Vietnam, and other communist nations includes a Ho Chi Minh bicycle captured in 1970. The bicycle is displayed showing the heavy load of supplies these "people's porters" could deliver.

In addition to these two major exhibits we also have Vietnam-related exhibits in our Medal of Honor room, Gallery of Military Art, special military music exhibit, Commander in Chief exhibit, and Bond Lounge.

We recognize that our displays do

not speak to individual unit actions or campaigns. Order of Battle information, while available in our library, simply cannot be exhibited because of lack of space. Within the next year, the museum will open a room devoted to heraldic items such as flags, shoulder patches, crests, badges, and medals. This room, we hope, will fill the need for people to see something of their own units at the National Infantry Museum.

Meanwhile, we are eager to increase our collection of Vietnam era artifacts and hope that your readers will contact the museum with offers to donate unique items.

DICK D. GRUBE
Director
National Infantry Museum

LIGHT DIVISION

I have noted with much interest the Commandant's Note in your January-February 1984 issue on the new Infantry Division (Light).

There are some disturbing factors in this new-found "return-to-the-basics" movement. I don't really know much about the new division but won't let my ignorance prevent me from sharing some random thoughts — realizing that the good officers and men at the Home of the Infantry have probably already worked out the answers to these and numerous other items.

The real problem is not how "heavy" or "light" our divisions are. It is a lack of strategic airlift/sealift. Our good friends in the Navy and Air Force favor spending their dollars for power projection, antisubmarine warfare, strategic delivery systems, air defense, counter-air aircraft, space weapons, and such. Airlift/

sealift programs — programs that spend dollars to get the Army somewhere — are not high priority programs. Therefore, it seems that if one cannot get to the scene early with "heavy" forces, one must come up with a new concept — the "light" division.

The concept of this division has merit but it also has serious drawbacks. If the traditional mission of the Infantry to "close with the enemy and destroy him by fire and maneuver" is still valid (and I, for one, think it is), then what is it we want the light division to be able to do? And under what circumstances? It's all very well to have a fire brigade mentality and get the force there early, but what do we do next?

We may be structuring a division that has, at best, limited combat power and very limited staying power. Of course, the ready answer is to reinforce it with heavy elements and, *voila*, we are coming full circle again, especially if the reinforcing elements are less mobile than the division, and chances are that will be the case.

Part of the problem appears to be jumbled thinking between *strategic* mobility and *tactical* mobility. The light division has quite a lot of the first, and that's fine for *getting* the division somewhere. But it doesn't have much of the second, and that has large implications for its combat effectiveness. Of course, tactical mobility is not the *sine qua non*, because by itself it seldom wins the battle. But somewhere there is a balance between the strategic mobility of the light division and the combat capabilities of our heavy divisions.

Moreover, because it lacks the tactical mobility and the massive firepower of a heavy division, the light division stands a good chance of be-

ing driven to ground in numerous scenarios. Does this suggest then that the strength of the light division should be, by design, in its defensive capability? If so, then are we willing to give up the decisiveness of the offense? Of course, there are a number of good defense or economy of force missions for light divisions, but this is something our Army leadership should conscientiously wrestle with.

Against whom would this division be employed? Preferably against other "light" forces, right? Well, even most third-rate nations nowadays have *very* substantial forces. Do we intend to pit this new light division against such folks as Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran? Presumably not, but if one looks at global hot spots, one will be hard pressed to find many "light" forces in those Third World hot spots.

This, then, leads to the possibility that light divisions could be committed early in situations in which they would very likely be seriously outgunned and outmaneuvered. They would then assume the role of sacrificial lamb, which is scant comfort to the members of the unit. I suppose the Hobson's Choice of getting there early and light versus getting there late and heavy is indeed not a choice. Sometimes it may be better not to get there at all under those conditions.

Having written all this criticism, I'd better hasten to say that Infantry is still needed and still decisive. Many countries have used Infantry forces well (and by extension, light divisions), but I would suggest that most of them did so using interior lines of communication (such as in Vietnam or China) or were willing to accept a long, costly, and less decisive form of warfare. (The Italian Campaign in World War II comes quickly to mind.)

If an army can afford the luxury, light divisions are fine to have in its force structure. For instance, if it has 130 active divisions, it might want to have half a dozen light divisions. But if it has only 16 divisions as our army does, how many can it afford?

I think the consensus among force

planners is that we need more heavy divisions for employment against our main adversary and his primary client states. Unfortunately, every light division we form will be formed at the expense of one of the heavy ones, which we already need more of. Of course, if the real reason we're forming light divisions is to get away from the lack of strategic air and sea lift, or to get away from the fact that we really can't afford to (or won't) equip and support the heavy divisions we currently have, then that's another matter completely.

Finally, Napoleon was probably right about God being on the side of the larger battalion. If a commander has a choice, there are few times when he'd prefer to go "light" if he can go "heavy." I think it has something to do with the Principles of War (we don't talk much about them any more). With the heavy division's greater firepower, better maneuverability, and more sustainability in combat, why go "light"?

All this reminds me of David Lloyd George, who once said, "The most dangerous thing in the world to do is to attempt to leap a chasm in two bounds."

ROBERT G. CLARKE
COL, INFANTRY
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MAJOR WEAKNESSES

Recently *INFANTRY* magazine published two articles on the new light infantry division. [See Commandant's Note, January-February 1984, p. 3 and "Infantry Division (Light)," March-April 1984, p. 14.] We read both with interest. However, while there is a real role for the light infantry division in the U.S. Army, we believe that the proposed structure of the new light infantry division suffers from several major weaknesses.

First, while the division's structure will improve its strategic mobility, the light division will almost certainly lack tactical mobility. Organic mobility in the division is limited to a trans-

portation battalion and two lift companies. Together, these units can move only two battalions. Meanwhile, the other seven infantry battalions will be forced to reach their objective the same way their predecessors of antiquity, the Roman legions, did — by putting one foot in front of the other.

Second, considering the regions around the world in which there is even a slight possibility for the introduction of American ground forces, with the possible exception of Central America, all of our potential adversaries have forces that are heavier and that have greater tactical mobility than this new light division. Even in a Central American scenario, one cannot help wondering whether the division would be more effective and efficient if it had more organic helicopters to transport its troops into battle. Thick jungle and mountainous terrain, for instance, will make it difficult for the division commander to concentrate his traditional foot-slogging companies and battalions quickly.

Third, when the new division is introduced into mid- or high-intensity conflicts where the enemy has greater mobility, the division will be in *de facto* violation of several of the principles of war. For example, mobility is essential if a unit is to mass its forces quickly and also conduct economy of force operations, both of which are preludes to offensive operations. And once offensive operations are under way, mobility is deeply intertwined with maneuver. Thus, because of inadequate mobility, the division will be violating the principles of the offensive, mass, economy of force, and maneuver.

Fourth, when one examines the employment of the light division in urban and forest terrain in a mid- or high-intensity conflict, one is still struck by the division's inherent weakness due to low mobility. This low mobility prevents the division's commander from rapidly shifting his forces from one sector of his urban or forest front to another — that is, massing his forces and considering

economy of force operations.

Moreover, should the division's FEBA (forward edge of battle area) be penetrated by enemy units conducting breakthrough and exploitation operations, the division will be hard pressed to mass quickly the forces necessary to seal the breakthrough. In addition, there is a strong possibility that during retrograde operations the division will be cut off and isolated because it cannot keep pace with the withdrawing mechanized infantry and armor units on its flanks.

It is also worth noting that the division is preeminently a defensive oriented unit. In retrograde operations it will be difficult for it to keep up with any mechanized infantry or armor forces on its flanks. Consequently, it will tend to be assigned missions of static defense, vulnerable to being bypassed or cut off.

Fifth, the argument that the inherent weaknesses in the division can be overcome, in part, by attaching more combat support and combat service support elements to it seems to be wishful thinking. Currently, the U.S. Army does not have enough such support units to support the more mobile and logistically self-sufficient divisions already in the field. One cannot help wondering where the additional support elements for the light division will come from.

As a consequence of these weaknesses, we believe the U.S. Army needs to consider more fully the critical problems of mobility and maneuver for the new light infantry division. Otherwise, the Army is creating a division that will be so vulnerable on the modern battlefield that it probably will not be deployed but rather will turn into a manpower replacement pool for the more mobile and heavier divisions in combat.

Moreover, with the widespread discussion within the U.S. Army of converting one or more National Guard divisions to the light division structure, there is increasing concern among some of us in the National Guard that the Guard's light divisions, like the active Army's light divisions, would be broken up upon

mobilization and sent into combat piecemeal or, worse yet, that the men would be sent in as individual replacements. There is a fear, too, that converting National Guard divisions to the light structure is just another excuse for not updating and modernizing the National Guard divisions already in the field. (We speak only for ourselves here, though, not for our division or the Indiana National Guard.)

Finally, it is clear that the Army needs a light infantry division, but one with greater tactical mobility than the one proposed. It is no doubt frustrating to the Army's strategic planners that the Air Force and Navy have not provided the Army with the airlift and sealift resources necessary to carry it into battle. But the creation of strategically mobile divisions without the means to maneuver and fight effectively once on the battlefield does not seem to be the complete answer either.

PAUL H. VIVIAN
Captain, Infantry
PETER F. COHEN
Major, Military Intelligence
38th Infantry Division
Indiana Army National Guard

SWITCH

I have just finished reading Lieutenant Colonel Edward Oliver's article on antiarmor weapons in the March-April 1984 issue of *INFANTRY* and found it to be excellent. I did, however, detect an error.

On page 20 is a description of the German *Armbrust* rocket, a particularly noteworthy weapon since it can be employed from within small enclosed places, perfect for MOUT. Accompanying the description is a photograph of a rocker launcher that is definitely *not* an *Armbrust*.

On the following page is a description of the French *Strim* accompanied by a photograph identified as a *Strim* but which is in fact an *Armbrust*.

Although I cannot positively identify the incorrectly labeled first rocket, I would say that it is a *Strim*

since it matches the description, and the soldiers in the photo appear to be French.

My compliments on an otherwise outstanding article. Keep up the good work!

SEAN SEAMUS WALSH
2LT, Infantry
1st Battalion, 69th Infantry
Valley Stream, New York

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lieutenant Walsh is right. The weapon in the photo labeled Armbrust is, in fact, a Strim, and vice versa.

KOREAN WAR RANGERS

I am interested in information on or contact with men who served with any Korean War Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) or with the Ranger Training Center in 1950-51. My purpose is to plan a Ranger reunion and to prepare a history.

Anyone with such information may write to me at 355 East Baltimore Street, Carlisle, PA 17013, or call me at (717) 249-6709.

ROBERT W. BLACK
COL, Retired

BIFV WIRING HARNESS

Because of the cost and availability of ammunition, Bradley-equipped units may not be able to fire enough live-fire exercises each year to keep their skills up. To maintain our soldiers' level of proficiency, therefore, we will have to use training devices instead.

Two training devices are used for this purpose with the Bradley IFV. One of them, the M16 rifle trainer, which fires both 5.56mm and .22 caliber, can be used to simulate the firing of the M242 25mm gun and the M240C. The other device, the M55 laser, can be used for tracking and gun lay exercises.

A wiring harness is necessary to operate both of these training

devices, and one has been adopted. The problem is that during recent tests of the harness various safety flaws were found: It allowed the weapon to fire when it was not armed; the gunner and Bradley commander were not required to select ammunition for the system to operate; the system operated independently of the weapon control box, thus becoming a safety hazard; the gunner's control operated intermittently when the gunner traversed; and it did not have any type of safety.

While watching the testing of this wiring harness, I had an idea for a much simpler and safer one that would meet the needs of the Infantry community. This device requires that ammunition be selected and that the system be armed before it can be fired. It has a two-position switch that will place the weapon system on safety at any time.

It is also inexpensive: It costs about \$5.75 and takes 15 minutes to make, while the original harness costs about \$364 and takes four to eight hours to make.

My device (which is being considered as an official suggestion) works and is being used here at Fort Benning, but since the other one has been adopted and ordered, I am told, its production "probably cannot be

stopped," even though it does not work and is a safety hazard.

Meanwhile, anyone who would like more information on the inexpensive and safe "Payne Device" should address inquiries to the Commandant, U.S. Army Infantry School, ATTN: ATSH-W-BFV(MG), Fort Benning, Georgia 31905; or call AUTOVON 784-6201 or commercial 404/544-6201.

SSG DENNIS PAYNE
Weapons, Gunnery, and Maintenance Department
Fort Benning, Georgia

BASIC NEED

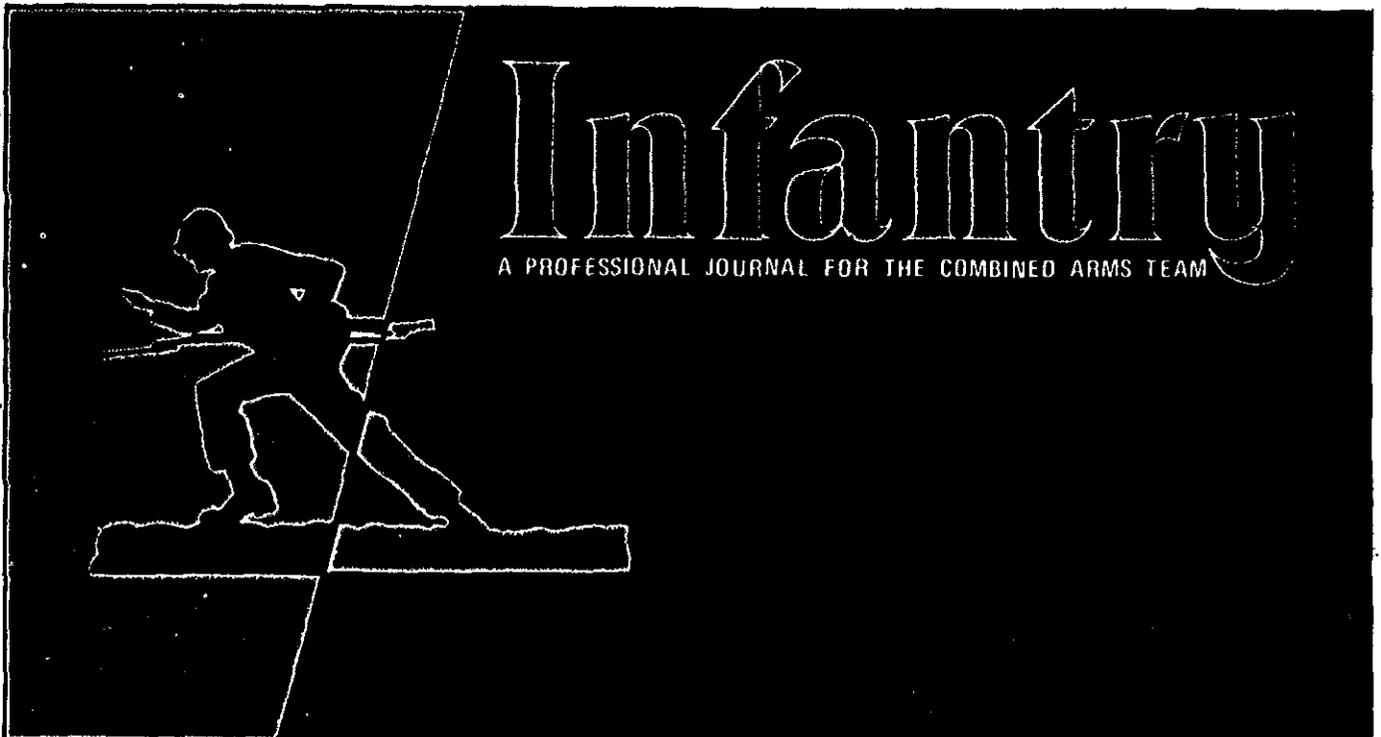
One of the most basic needs for an infantry soldier, or any other soldier, is the ability to read a map and navigate with a compass. Apparently, though, this need is not being met. During the past three years I have served as a land navigation instructor at the Massachusetts Military Academy (National Guard). The Academy's test results during that time have shown that about 30 percent of our basic and advanced NCO course students have failed to pass our land navigation test on their first try. The soldiers who failed held various

ranks and MOSs and represented a number of National Guard and Army Reserve units. Among them were about equal numbers of prior service and non-prior service soldiers.

Most of these soldiers, unfortunately, had had little or no land navigation training in their units before being sent to the Academy. And while one of the functions of all NCO academies is to teach land navigation, these academies operate on the assumption that their soldier-students know at least the basic elements of that subject. In short, it is the responsibility of unit commanders and unit trainers to teach their soldiers the basics of land navigation before sending them to an NCO academy, and then to sustain that training after their soldiers return.

Although my exposure has been confined mainly to Army National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers and units, the problems and solutions I present here may apply to Active Army soldiers and units as well.

One of the chief areas of weakness among the soldiers who come to our Academy is knowing how to convert azimuths. This instruction should be kept simple, and it can be. We have had good results using the LARS/RALS rule to teach soldiers how to make conversions. Thus, to



convert from grid to magnetic azimuth, use LARS — left (GM angle), add; right (GM angle), subtract. To convert from magnetic to grid azimuth, the RALS rule applies.

(Left and right, of course, refer to the magnetic line on the declination diagram on the map. Add and subtract refer to the number of degrees of the GM angle.)

The second weakness that shows up in our students is their lack of understanding of how to hold and use a compass. The program of instruction for the military academies does not include training in this area because it is expected that the soldiers have already had compass training.

We have found that, in teaching soldiers to use the compass, it is important to avoid using teams; it is far better to have individuals navigate on their own. Too often, when teams are used, one skilled soldier will navigate while the others in the team are content to follow him.

Soldiers should also know how to read contour lines to determine elevation. Again, the NCO Academy curriculum does not cover this subject. Resection and intersection instruction should also be kept clear and uncomplicated, and these skills must be

refreshed and used occasionally.

Finally, many of our soldier-students do not know what various map symbols and colors represent. To remedy this problem, it would be a good idea if commanders of Army units (Active, Reserve, and National Guard) would periodically give their soldiers and officers a short informational test that covers the following skills: converting azimuths; measuring road and straight line distances; resecting and intersecting; map symbols; figuring back azimuths; determining coordinates; and measuring grid azimuths.

A test such as this one should reveal the areas in which training is needed and also specifically who needs that training. A commander can then sit down with his platoon leaders and sergeants to plan the needed additional training.

RUSSELL G. FURTADO
SFC, Army National Guard
Hyannis, Massachusetts

16th INFANTRY MEMORABILIA

On 24 February 1983, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was redesignated

the 4th Battalion, 16th Infantry (Rangers), 1st Infantry Division. This battalion is now seeking items of historical interest for display in its battalion museum.

Former 16th Infantry Rangers and their friends who are interested in donating service-related memorabilia (photographs, awards, books, letters) highlighting the Regiment's long and distinguished history (Civil War through Vietnam) are asked to contact the adjutant, Captain Shaver, at this address: Headquarters, 4th Battalion, 16th Infantry, APO New York 09137.

GEORGE BASSO
LTC, Infantry
Commander

FIRST DIVISION REUNION

The Society of the First Division will hold its 66th Annual Reunion in Boston, 22-26 August 1984. For further information, anyone who is interested may write to me at 5 Montgomery Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118.

ARTHUR L. CHAITT
Executive Director

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