

From The Editor

On this page in the September-October issue, we discussed our recent readership survey and concluded with the point that many of our readers are also our writers. We encouraged you to write for us and said that you need not be writers – we would help you get your articles into print. We'd like to explain now what we meant by "help you" – what our major aim is in editing an article for publication.

What prompts us to do this is that, although many of our authors say they appreciate the work we have done on their articles, occasionally one does not like it at all! (One of the officers who responded to our reader survey – who must have been a former author of ours – said, for example, that we "take too many liberties" in our editing.)

The amount of editing we do depends on several things. We have a number of regular contributors whose writing is quite good. On their articles, we do very little editing. But most of our authors are not professional writers, and we don't expect them to be. They are mostly professional soldiers, which is what we do expect them to be – and need for them to be. This means that we accept many articles that another publication might reject. Although we know such articles are going to need lots of help before we can publish them, we accept them because they contain information we think is worthwhile. (If we rejected all the articles that needed some rewriting and cutting, we would rarely get together enough material to put out an issue.)

We take one of those articles and first try to isolate the major point the writer wants to make. Then we often rewrite the beginning to set up that point, if the author has not done it clearly enough. Then we proceed to cut out all the sentences and paragraphs that do not really support that major point – painful as that may be for the one who wrote them.

Our chief aim from there on is to make the article clear, easy to read, concise, and consistent (in such things as tense and pronoun references). Along the way, we also convert uniquely "Army" constructions and terms to more commonly understood language. (Our readers – especially our subscribers – vary greatly in their backgrounds.)

INFANTRY is not unique in its editorial policies. No writer who submits a manuscript for publication anywhere should expect to see it come out in print exactly as he wrote it – unless he's a highly respected (and highly paid) professional who has put that stipulation in his contract. (We, as writers, have even had it happen to us! We don't especially like it either, but once we have submitted a manuscript to another editor, it belongs to him, and he is free to edit it for his particular publication any way he chooses. He knows his readers, while we do not.)

Perhaps we do take liberties at times and, if we do, we're sorry. But whatever we do, we do in the spirit of putting out a magazine that will be helpful to Infantrymen everywhere and, at the same time, clear and readable for all those other people who are interested in what Infantrymen are doing.

So keep in mind that your *ideas* are our major interest – not your writing skills. As long as you can communicate those ideas to us, you write and we'll edit.

OUTSIDE BACK COVER:

Pamphlet for Bastogne. By Olin Dows.
Belgium, 1945. (U.S. Army Art Collection)