LIEUTENANT COLONEL CLAYTON R. NEWELL

For centuries soldiers have studied the question of the best way to mix heavy and light forces on the battlefield. Recently, the question has taken on new significance in the U.S. Army. For example, the employment of mixed heavy and light forces in Europe is the subject of three articles in the July-August 1984 issue of INFANTRY (pages 10-22). These "heavy-light" articles, written by experienced infantrymen commanding at various levels in USAREUR (U.S. Army Europe), provide a preview of how those commanders might mix light infantry forces with their heavy forces.

Previously, however, the Army published its White Paper 1984, entitled *Light Infantry Divisions.* It contains the Army leadership's plan for the development of its new light infantry divisions. Surprisingly, though, a comparison of that plan with the apparent plans of the commanders who wrote the "heavy-light" articles reveals a significant difference in approach: The White Paper describes the characteristics, formation, manning, training, equipping, and sustaining of light infantry *divisions,* while the USAREUR commanders describe the tactical employment of light infan- · · *brigades* and *battalions.*

This difference is more than semantic. In the first of the three "heavy-light" articles, Lieutenant General John R. Galvin, VII Corps commander, begins his tactical discussions with the assumption that the corps commander will have the authority to break a light infantry division into smaller parts when it is deployed to Europe. The tactical scenarios in his article and the other two focus primarily on the employment of those smaller parts — the brigades and the battalions.

These tactical scenarios, all set in typical Central European terrain, employ light infantry to defend in close terrain such as urban areas and forests. Using light infantry in this manner frees the armor and mechanized infantry forces to engage the enemy in open terrain. And this approach is a proper one: While light infantry forces are not generally suited to stand and fight heavily armored forces in the open, once dug in they can hold close terrain indefinitely.

Emphasizing the advantages of light infantry in close terrain, however, argues against the light infantry division as it is described in the White Paper, because the close terrain of Central Europe is not all in one place so that it can be defended by light infantry divisions. It is scattered about, surrounded by open terrain, thereby lending itself to defense by brigades and smaller units. And the writers of the "heavy-light" articles accurately portray that situation.

The difference between the goal of the White Paper and the planned employment of light infantry units in Europe is one of organization. The question raised is not whether the Army needs light infantry but whether it needs light infantry *divisions.*

A recent article on Army force design, in fact, proposes that the brigade replace the division as the basic interchangeable part of the Army force structure. (See "FM 100-5: Conceptual Models and Force Design," by Majors James M. Dubik and James J. Montano, *Military Review,* July 1984, pp. 16-26.) The authors argue that by forming a variety of separate brigades the Army could tailor its divisions to specific missions and terrain better than is currently possible.In the case of light infantry employment, the tactical thinking in Europe, as represented by the INFANTRY articles, seems to support this proposal.

Using brigades and smaller units to augment the heavy forces stationed in Europe instead of committing light in-

fantry divisions as integral units is a sensible approach. But it will destroy the cohesiveness that is supposed to be an inherent part of the light infantry division as the White Paper describes it.

Light infantry can be effective in a European war, but if the commanders on the ground want to use it in pieces smaller than a division, then a better approach might be to build light infantry brigades in the first place. These brigades could then be employed as integral units in consonance with the plans of our USAREUR commanders. Certainly, light infantry brigades that were designed to fight independently would provide a stronger overall force than the same number of brigades trying to fight as pieces of a broken division.

In Army force design, form must follow function. When organizing new units such as light infantry, the first consideration must be its planned employment — its clearly defined role — on the battlefield. The innovative employment of infantry has always been the key to succes in battle. Its imaginative organization today could prevent time-wasting reorganization on the battlefield tomorrow.

Lieutenant Colonel Clayton R. Newell, an Infantry officer, is assigned to the U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency, where he works on force development studies. He has served in light infantry battalions in Vietnam and in a mechanized infantry division in Europe.

Heavy-Light Forces: Assessing the Challenge

JAMES B. MOTLEY

In the July-August 1984 issue of INFANTRY, Lieutenant General John R. Galvin, the VII Corps commander, presented an excellent discussion of the reinforcing missions that light infantry divisions might assume in the early phases of a mobilization to meet an impending Warsaw Pact attack in Europe. I would like to expand further on the issue of heavy-light forces. (Portions of this article will appear in a more detailed and comprehensive treatment of low-intensity conflict in a forthcoming issue of MILITARY REVIEW.)

Current U.S. defense policy and general-purpose force structure and modernization programs continue to focus heavily on a NATO contingency — a contingency that is increasingly inappropriate, given the global power shifts now under way and the newly identifiable threats now developing in other areas. A critical assessment of the political and military realities affecting international security reveals:

- The increasing frequency and intensity of terrorist incidents as a means of obtaining political goals.
- The armed forces of at least 36 countries — one in five of the world's nations — involved in military operations, more than 30 of which involve revolutionary or separatist insurgencies.
- Increasing Soviet-Cuban involvement in Central America.
- Little hope for the early cessation of the Iran-Iraq war.
- The continued Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the buildup of Soviet forces along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

"The nature of warfare today is such that we cannot await the outbreak of hostilities before initiating suitable and necessary military preparations, especially in light of the military power other nations — particularly the Soviet Union — maintain in constant readiness."

John O. Marsh, Jr.
Secretary of the Army

It is evident then that the type of warfare the Army will face for the remainder of this century is unlikely to be the traditional NATO/Warsaw Pact scenario (World War II military operations but with more sophisticated technology). Rather, it is likely to involve the use of combat force at the lower end of the conflict spectrum. ("Low-intensity conflict" is the term currently in vogue to describe this range of activities. Other terms, often used synonymously, include "small or minor wars," "low-level violence," and "limited contingencies.") The Army will face many types of low-intensity challenges over the next decade. It must suffice here to say only that such military operations will be limited in scope, confined principally to the Third World, and directed toward accomplishing limited political-military goals.

The low-intensity battlefields of the