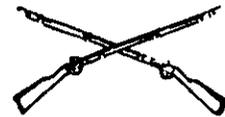


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Chief of Infantry

Commandant's NOTE



HEAVY-LIGHT MIX

In my Note in the March-April 1985 issue of *INFANTRY*, I expressed my concern that our Infantry community could become a divided one if Infantrymen everywhere did not accept the idea that while there might be several *infantries*, there is only one *Infantry*.

What I feared then seems to have come to pass with heavy (mechanized) infantry and light infantry advocates going at each other rather strongly. In particular, the mechanized infantrymen feel they are somehow being short-changed in manpower and resources, that the Army's hierarchy is concentrating most of its attention on the new light infantry units while ignoring their genuine needs, and that the TRADOC service schools — specifically the Infantry School, which is being accused of "going all light" — are ignoring the mechanized infantry's need for training and doctrinal publications while churning out all kinds of light infantry material.

Let me assure all Infantrymen now — we at the Infantry School are not partial to any one of our *infantries*, but we are very partial to the *Infantry*. I feel that the balancing of forces now going on is good for the Infantry because for the first time in a decade we are adding infantry battalions to the Army's structure and are increasing our infantry foxhole strength.

Let's face it: Under the Division 86 structure the initial TOEs were not fully resourced simply

because the Army never had the resources to do so. In order to get it down to manageable levels the strength of the infantry battalion was reduced from 896 to 844 soldiers. Some of these losses were suffered by our rifle squads as they went from 10 to 9 men each. Many of our mechanized infantry battalion commanders have been concerned with this loss of foxhole strength, because they know they have only 32 fighting soldiers in their 36 Bradley-equipped squads.

With our new light units, therefore, we are getting more dismounted fighting infantrymen on the ground, where they belong, either to fight independently or to act in concert with our mechanized infantry units. Many of our light infantry divisions will integrate with our heavy divisions in a NATO war. (On the latter subject, see the three articles in the July-August 1984 issue of *INFANTRY*.)

The Army is not bringing light infantry in at the expense of its heavy units. These infantrymen are coming from the reorganizations of our present regular infantry divisions — such as the 7th and the 25th — and from our TDA overhead. And while we will not see an increase in the number of infantrymen in the mechanized battalions neither will we see another decrease in the number. What we must do now is train to integrate our mechanized and light infantry units.

when the scenario calls for it so that they can present a strong, united front against any enemy. (I would also recommend as reading on this subject General William Depuy's article, "The Light Infantry: An Indispensable Element of a Balanced Force," which appeared in the June 1985 issue of *Army* magazine.)

Are we concentrating too much of our attention on our light infantry units? I'm not, and I know the Infantry School is not.

It is true that at Benning we are putting out several manuals on light infantry tactics and training; are running the Light Leaders Course and the expanded Ranger Course; and have an add-on light infantry operations module for IOAC.

But at the same time, we have made a monumental effort in formulating manuals for Bradley units — The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Task Force (FM 71-2J), The Mechanized Infantry Platoon/Squad (BFV) (FM 7-7J), and Bradley Drills (FC 7-21B); we are putting out a new improved ARTEP for Bradley platoons; and we are looking at various Bradley training devices. In fact, mechanized infantry operations serve as a basis for most of our tactical instruction.

We have also added periods of instruction on the Bradley fighting vehicle to our basic and advanced officer courses; we offer a Bradley commanders course; we have an officer maintenance course; and we have an additional course as an add-on module for advanced course students assigned to mechanized units.

We realize that training the Bradley force is tough because there are new demands on leaders and that the hard, detailed gunnery and turret maintenance skills require a precision most infantrymen are not yet used to. We are working on how best to do all of these things. In addition

to our NET team, for instance, we have ARI, TRASANA (in Europe), and Litton working with us on these problems. I think we know how to transition a unit. How to structure a sustainment training program for Bradley units is not that easy. I think the tactics are settling down, but they are not yet deeply ingrained. We will share everything we find and ask that you do the same.

Let me again emphasize this point. Our infantrymen, no matter what label precedes their names, are infantrymen first, and their basic mission has not changed in 210 years. To be ready when called on to do battle, they should be trained and experienced in several specialties — mechanized, airborne, air assault, motorized, and the like. We cannot afford to have infantry officers and noncommissioned officers hold views so narrow and so specialized that they cannot serve effectively in different types of infantry units around the world; yet we must recognize that each does have specific training standards for today's job.

I regret that some infantrymen today are concerned about the increased hype given the new light infantry units. I certainly do not view our mechanized infantry and light infantry units as being in competition. We must be realistic about getting more infantry onto the battlefield, and we must all pull together to get more infantry. Every war we've ever had has proved time and time again that we did not have enough infantry of *any* type.

Admittedly, we are in a period of transition. But with all of us pulling together and sharing our thoughts, we can make our Infantry the finest fighting force the world has ever seen — balanced, determined, skilled, and thoroughly professional.

