I AM THE INFANTRY

EDITOR'S NOTE: The epic poem "I Am the Infantry" first appeared in the July 1956 issue of the Infantry School Quarterly, *the forerunner of INFANTRY Magazine, pages 56-57. Since then it has been modified several times and is used in numerous ways at the Infantry Center and School. It is printed on graduation programs, for example, and a dramatic taped version with life-sized figures of infantrymen over the years is presented. Here is the latest official version of the poem.*

I am the Infantry — Queen of Battle! For two centuries I have kept our Nation safe, purchasing freedom with my blood. To tyrants, I am the day of reckoning; to the suppressed, the hope for the future. Where the fighting is thick, there am I...I am the Infantry! FOLLOW ME!

I was there from the beginning, meeting the enemy face to face, will to will. My bleeding feet stained the snow at Valley Forge; my frozen hands pulled Washington across the Delaware. At Yorktown, the sunlight glinted from the sword and I, begrimed and battered, saw a Nation born.

Hardship and glory I have known. At New Orleans, I fought beyond the hostile hour, showed the fury of my long rifle...and came of age. I am the Infantry!

Westward I pushed with wagon trains...moved an empire across the plains...extended freedom's borders and tamed the wild frontier. I am the Infantry! FOLLOW ME!

I was with Scott at Vera Cruz...hunted the guerrilla in the mountain passes...and scaled the high plateau. The fighting was done when I ended my march many miles from the old Alamo.

From Bull Run to Appomattox, I fought and bled. Both Blue and Grey were my colors then. Two masters I served and united them strong...proved that this nation could right a wrong...and long endure. I am the Infantry! FOLLOW ME!

I led the charge up San Juan Hill...scaled the walls of old Tientsin...and stalked the Moro in the steaming jungle still...always the vanguard. I am the Infantry!

At Chateau-Thierry, first over the top, then I stood like a rock on the Marne. It was I who cracked the Hindenburg Line...in the Argonne, I broke the Kaiser's spine...and didn't come back till it was "over, over there." I am the Infantry! FOLLOW ME!

A generation older at Bataan, I briefly bowed, but then I vowed to return. Assaulted the African shore...learned my lesson the hard way in the desert sands...pressed my buttons into the beach at Anzio...and bounced into Rome with determination and resolve. I am the Infantry!

The English channel, stout beach defenses, and the hedgerows could not hold me...I broke out at Saint-Lo, unbent the Bulge...vaulted the Rhine...and swarmed the Heartland. Hitler's dream and the Third Reich were dead.

In the Pacific, from island to island I hopped...hit the beaches and chopped through swamp and jungle...I set the Rising Sun. I am the Infantry!

In Korea, I gathered my strength around Pusan...swept across the frozen Han...outflanked the Reds at Inchon...and marched to the Yalu. FOLLOW ME!

In Vietnam, while others turned aside, I fought the longest fight; from the Central Highlands to the South China Sea I patrolled the jungle, the paddies, and the sky in the bitter test that belonged to the Infantry! FOLLOW ME!

Around the world, I stand, ever forward. Over Lebanon's sands, my rifle steady aimed...and calm returned. At Berlin's gates, I scorned the Wall of Shame. I spanned the Caribbean in freedom's cause, answered humanity's call. I trod the streets of Santo Domingo to protect the innocent. In Grenada, I jumped at Salinas, and proclaimed freedom for all. Duty called, I answered. I am the Infantry! FOLLOW ME!

My bayonet...on the wings of power...keeps the peace worldwide. And despots, falsely garbed in freedom's mantle, falter...hide. My ally in the paddies and the forest...I teach, I aid, I lead. FOLLOW ME!

Where brave men fight...there fight I. In freedom's cause...I live, I die. From Concord Bridge to Heartbreak Ridge, from the Arctic to the Mekong to the Caribbean...the Queen of Battle!

Always ready...then, now and forever, I am the Infantry! FOLLOW ME!