

# INFANTRY LETTERS



## BRAVO!

Captain Mark D. Rocke should be highly commended for his excellent article "Training and Administration" (INFANTRY, July-August 1985, page 25). For as long as I can remember, and that goes back a long way, the burden of administration on a company commander has had a detrimental effect on the training of his unit.

All sorts of commanders, staff officers, higher headquarters, and so on have imposed administrative requirements on the unit commander, making it virtually impossible for him to devote most of his effort, time, and thought to his most important job—training his company. No other responsibility should take priority.

Captain Rocke's article provides the company commander with efficient, practical, and time-saving techniques that will help him focus his attention on training, training, and more training.

I hope Captain Rocke's recommendations are included in the curricula of our branch schools, or at the least, seriously considered by those in high levels of command.

Bravo! Captain Rocke.

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## BAYONET STANDARD FOR MARINE INFANTRY

I have been following the bayonet debate in the past several issues of your publication. As your readers may be aware, Marines have a long history of training in the "spirit of the bayonet," and still carry it as standard field gear.

No matter what the logical or theoretical arguments against the bayonet may be in this day of high-tech warfare, the bayonet is still needed by the infantry—

Marine or Army. The mission of the Marine infantry is to "locate, close with, and destroy the enemy by fire and maneuver, and to repel the enemy's assault by fire and close combat. . . ." I assume the mission of Army infantry is similar.

While the Army is (or seems to be) training primarily to fight the Warsaw Pact in Europe, it is also giving more thought to low- and mid-intensity conflict. No matter what the intensity of conflict is, infantrymen will still be involved in some very *high*-intensity combat. Whether against highly trained troops or guerrillas, there are still going to be battles, especially at night, in which a bayonet may make a difference.

In the Vietnam war there were several verified instances in which infantry Marines fought off determined assaults to the point of using bayonets and entrenching tools. Army personnel can read of one of those battles in a book by Army Colonel (Retired) Dandridge M. Malone, *Small Unit Leadership: A Commonsense Approach*. I am certain that at some time during the Vietnam war at least one Army unit found itself in a similar situation.

The life of even one infantryman saved in combat may make a difference in the outcome of a skirmish, and it will certainly make a difference to that soldier.

I do not advocate rows of infantrymen charging a hill, bayonets fixed, as in days

of old. But the bayonet is an inexpensive, cost-effective, versatile piece of equipment that should not be neglected. And the aggressive spirit that is taught in bayonet training is an asset to any infantry unit.

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## THREE KINDS OF INFANTRY

I enjoyed the article by Colonel Huba Wass, de Czege on "Three Kinds of Infantry" in the July-August 1985 issue of INFANTRY (page 11). This article represents the kind of clear and innovative thinking the Army has come to expect from Colonel Wass de Czege. I would like to offer a few comments.

Colonel Wass de Czege is right on target in his description of the missions and nature of armored infantry and regular infantry. We should think of armored infantry (along with the main armor forces, of course) as the primary instrument for exploitation, pursuit, and deep maneuver. The overriding goal of armored infantry is to ensure that the tank forces are protected and that they can keep moving. Although armored infantry may have to fight dismounted, it is most effective when it remains mounted, since the advance of the tank forces is slowed to foot-pace when the armored infantry dismounts.

Squad organization in armored infantry is necessarily different from that of the regular infantry. (For one thing, armored squads are smaller.) Armored infantrymen, I think, should also be armed differently—primarily with sub-machineguns like their tanker cousins. Armored infantry commanders must be offensive minded and must be operationally oriented (instead of tactically).

If the armored infantry is the lance,

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then perhaps it is correct to think of the regular infantry as the mace and shield. Regular infantry is tactically oriented for the most part. It suffers the heaviest blows, is given the most onerous tasks, and is more likely to become involved in positional, attrition-style warfare.

As Colonel Wass de Czege notes, regular infantry supported by tanks creates the penetration and holds the shoulders in order to break the armor formations free into the enemy's rear. Well-suited for holding ground in all but the most difficult terrain, regular infantry absorbs the enemy's main attacks and shields the armor for counterattacks.

Tenacious on the defense, dogged in the offense, regular infantry depends heavily on artillery and tank support. I would add that the vehicles in which the regular infantry moves must be artillery-resistant.

I disagree slightly with Colonel Wass de Czege's description of light infantry. In mid- and high-intensity warfare, the number of light infantry units in theater should be kept small. Light infantry should *never* be used in roles where armored and regular infantry will suffice.

Many of the tasks Colonel Wass de Czege prescribes for light infantry—defending in rugged terrain, freeing other forces to become operational reserves, holding chokepoints—can be performed just as well by regular infantry and should be. Light infantry can hold ground, but such a mission does not take advantage of its best qualities.

Instead, light infantry should be directed to objectives that take advantage of its particular skills in speed, shock, surprise, and violent but limited offensive action, most often against the enemy's flanks and rear. Light infantry hits hard, unexpectedly, then slips away. It is the commander's stiletto. As such, it should be employed only under special conditions.

Colonel Wass de Czege's discussion seems to center on mid- to high-intensity warfare. It is worth noting that armored infantry has little or no utility in low-intensity conflict. Regular and light infantry, conversely, are well-suited for low-intensity conflicts, where they complement each other well.

I would like to suggest that the artillery

reconsider its own organization in light of "Three Kinds of Infantry." Just as we need one infantry organized and trained for exploitation and deep maneuver and another prepared to slug it out dismounted, so we need one artillery type organized and trained to accompany and support armor spearheads and another prepared to support the regular infantry-armor team in the main battle area. These two separate functions require artillery organizations with substantially different capabilities and orientations. But this is the subject of another article.

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### TAKES OFFENSE

My unit, the 1st Battalion, 315th Infantry, takes offense at Captain Tony N. Wingo's article in your May-June 1985 issue (p. 42).

Throughout the article, Captain Wingo refers to "RC" units that do not train the middle weekend of their annual training period. It should be pointed out that only National Guard units do not train the middle weekend. Army Reserve units have been training throughout their annual training period for years.

In the case of our battalion, we go directly to the field and return to cantonment at the last possible minute. We train as we intend to fight.

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### SOME DON'T, BUT SOME DO

In response to Captain Wingo's article "Extended FTX for RC Units" (May-June 1985, p. 42), I would like to make a few comments.

He makes some good points about the tendency of RC units to fail to rearm, refuel, and repair forward, and about the typical schedule—7 days on, 2 days off on the middle weekend, then 6 days on. In the 32d Separate Infantry Brigade

(Mechanized), Wisconsin Army National Guard, this calendar of events has not been the case for at least the past four annual training (AT) periods.

During AT 1982, 1983, and 1984, I served as assistant intelligence sergeant for the brigade, and on each of these AT periods we went to the field on Sunday or Monday after arriving and remained tactical for nine or ten days.

AT 85 brought a new challenge to the troops of the brigade. Most of one mechanized infantry battalion and parts of the other were airlifted to AT by C-130 aircraft to a tactical airstrip on Saturday. They footmarched to a marshalling area and spent Sunday in pre-combat inspections and a move to a tactical assembly area where units were task-organized. From the first Monday through Tuesday of the second week, battalion task force-on-task operations were conducted.

All of AT 85, including the move to the AT site with A and B bags and Alice packs, the sustaining operations, the move directly to the field, was a dress rehearsal for ODT-86. The 32d Brigade will be the largest RC unit ever to deploy outside the continental United States in peacetime, complete with equipment, to participate in REFORGER 86.

This brigade takes very seriously its role in the total force. We have enjoyed some excellent relationships over the past decade with the Big Red One and now with the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized).

The Active Army and National Guard combat units have their own unique, inherent strengths and weaknesses (which could be the subject of an article in INFANTRY), but we all strive for a state of readiness that will hopefully make unnecessary the ultimate comparison of the two.

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