

# INFANTRY LETTERS



## VIETNAM EXPERIENCES

Congratulations on the publication of "Infantry in Action: A Foot A Day in Company A," by Brigadier General (Retired) Frank H. Linnell (March-April 1986, p. 32).

It is an excellent account of how the 196th Brigade moved into an enemy dominated area, assessed the situation, determined what needed to be done to gain dominance and then did it, outwitting, outfighting, and outgutting the Viet Cong in the process.

I hope that more Vietnam veterans of all ranks will write about their experiences. Such essays are not only educational but also may help to dispel the belief fostered by the news media, self-appointed military experts, and other uninformed individuals that the U.S. lost the war on the field of battle.

I do have one criticism of the article. I believe the author has been unduly modest in depicting his own role in his unit's actions. Frank Linnell, as a young commander in the 6th Division fighting the Japanese in the Southwest Pacific, was known to accompany combat patrols even though he had no obligation to do so. Therefore, I am sure he took a much more active part in his unit's actions than he has implied, and that on occasion he risked *his* feet along with everyone else's.

DAVID W. GRAY  
MG (Retired)  
Golden Beach, Florida

## LIGHTWEIGHT?

Your magazine is *must* reading for me. But I did note an error regarding the MK19 40mm grenade machinegun in the INFANTRY News section of the May-June 1986 issue (pp. 10-11).

The weapon is lightweight if you hap-

pen to be a powerlifter; at 76 pounds, the gun is a handful for a two-man crew. The MK21 MOD 4 gunmount itself weighs 21 pounds; with a basic load of 800 rounds in 50-round ready cans at 52 pounds each, the total weight comes to 929 pounds!

The HMMWV came along at just the right time for this weapon system. Its increased payload capacity and stability as a gun platform makes the venerable M151 jeep pale in comparison.

The MK19 40mm grenade launcher in combination with the HMMWV will be the mainstay of the military police on tomorrow's battlefield, but lightweight it is not!

MICHAEL C. REILLY  
CPT, Military Police  
Fort McClellan, Alabama

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The weight given in the news item for the grenade gun was 7.6 pounds, an obvious error (but one not so obvious to our proofreaders). Its actual weight, according to the Armament Research and Development Center, is 75.6 pounds.*

## 40mm GRENADE MACHINEGUN

I wish to correct some glaring errors concerning the 40mm grenade machinegun item in your May-June 1986 issue (pp. 10-11).

A 40mm dual-purpose round is nothing new, or impressive. Similar rounds were developed for the M79/203 family of grenade launchers. While it is quite true that a 40mm shaped charge round can penetrate light armor, its pitiful "behind armor" effect is nowhere near enough to guarantee destruction, other than by lucky hits into critical areas.

But that is a minor point. It is the 1,500-meter range claim that is preposterous. FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms

and Graphics, defines "effective range" as that range at which an average soldier has a 50 percent probability of hitting a target with a small arms weapon. It defines "maximum effective range" as the distance at which a weapon can be expected to fire accurately to achieve the desired results.

I readily concede that this weapon can lob a projectile out to 2,200 meters and might even hold a tight pattern out to 1,500 meters, where it might be effective against soft targets. But it is inconceivable that it could hit an armored point target at anything near this range except by sheer luck.

Just look at the photograph in the article and ask yourself, "How is the gunner aiming? Walking in three- to five-round bursts at 1,500 meters and hitting?" Who are we kidding. Where are the witnesses to such marksmanship?

CHESTER A. KOJRO  
CPT, Armor  
Fort Knox, Kentucky

## 82d DIVISION IN ITALY

The article by James Huston, "82d Division in Italy" (INFANTRY, July-August 1985, p. 29) demands a rebuttal.

One would be hard-pressed to find three generals more knowledgeable of military strategy than Patton, Ridgway, and Gavin. On 12 August 1943 in the final days of the Sicilian campaign these three, along with the commander of the 52nd Troop Carrier Group, discussed the feasibility of a parachute drop across the Strait of Messina to block the enemy's withdrawal. They decided not to proceed (it was much too great a risk), and instead General Patton conducted a successful amphibious end run and arrived in Messina even before the British on 16 August 1943.

Mr. Huston disagrees with this deci-

sion twice in the final paragraphs of his article, concluding that the discarded option might have made a "really decisive contribution to the destruction of forces instead of simply in the capture of real estate."

At the time, however, the 82d was at less than two-thirds strength. The author would have made expendable what was at that time the only U.S. airborne division assembled at the very beginning of the Allied Forces shift from a defensive to offensive game plan.

At that time, each of us as an 82d Division paratrooper was armed with little more than an M1 rifle with a limited amount of ammunition, a trench knife, and a couple of grenades. To execute the proposed operation would probably have resulted in Arnhem II!

The author goes on to state, "Instead, the 82d assembled and flew back to Tunisia, there to prepare to fight under less favorable conditions at Salerno the German forces that had escaped from Sicily." Not so! The intended next mission of the 82d was not the Salerno beachhead. The intent was to penetrate deeper, such as to Naples or even Rome.

The author totally overlooks one of the great values of an airborne division. Being off the line preparing for an operation immobilizes much enemy strength simply because the enemy has to be prepared to defend many areas simultaneously — in this instance, any part of the Italian peninsula.

MARVIN W. BAYER  
CPL (Ret.), Infantry  
St. Mary's, Ohio

## VALUES

If I may respond to Corporal Douglas N. Bernhard's letter (May-June 1986, p. 4) concerning my article "On Being A Lieutenant" (November-December 1985, p. 20), I understand and agree with his premise that traditional values of honesty, loyalty, dedication, and so on, are what leadership at any level is all about. I point out, however, that the focus of the article was on techniques of leading at platoon level. While the two cannot be divorced entirely, techniques

differ from ethics and values in the sense that the one is concerned with approach and method while the other focuses on fundamental motivating influences and value systems.

Other authors with more wisdom and ability have, I believe, developed a thorough sensitivity and appreciation in this army for the overriding importance of selfless and moral leadership. Our challenge is to reflect those values without fear or expectation of reward, for no other reason than that it is the right thing to do.

Corporal Bernhard is correct in assuming that I place my faith and my career in respect for my fellows and my men, in hard work, and in a positive attitude. There may be other, surer ways to the top (whatever or wherever that is), but then, it seems to work for me.

R. D. HOOKER, JR.  
CPT, Infantry  
Fort Rucker, Alabama

## ON READING

You did all concerned a service when you published "Professional Reading Program," by Captain Harold E. Raugh, Jr. (INFANTRY, March-April 1986, p. 12). Many such lists have been compiled, but Captain Raugh may have a unique approach in starting it within his own territory of Company B, 5th Battalion, 21st Infantry. He shows a lot of scholarship in making the tough choices for the list, and he has the writing ability to present a convincing essay. (I hope his bosses make his efforts rewarding, but I'm sure he knows they may not.)

I hope the program can eventually include some of the fiction works that are based on our military experience, because those too can be instructive on a personal level. (I will restrain myself from sending a boxful of suggestions.)

On the other hand, I want to submit for his consideration a suggestion on a source book that I think is indispensable for a project such as this, and it may be that he has it on hand. The book is *A Guide to the Sources of United States*

*Military History*, edited by Robin Higham (now editor of *Military Affairs*, in addition to other duties), Hamden, Connecticut, 1975. (There are also two supplements to the book.) Each category, chronological or thematic, has an essay on sources and then a bibliography of the books mentioned. Even though the book was published in 1975 and costs a cool \$35 now, it's worth the money. And so are the supplements.

ROLFE HILLMAN  
COL, Infantry (Retired)  
Falls Church, Virginia

## MARSHALL STYLE

During the 1985 Year of the Leader, many articles were published on leadership, but nowhere have I seen anyone address the subject more succinctly than George C. Marshall did as a major in 1920. His observations on what constituted the success of the outstanding figures in the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I are as applicable today as they were then.

To be a highly successful leader in war (Marshall noted in a letter to General John S. Mallory), four things are essential, assuming you have good common sense, have studied your profession, and are physically strong.

When conditions are difficult, the command is depressed, and everyone seems critical and pessimistic, you must be especially cheerful and optimistic.

When evening comes and all are exhausted, hungry and possibly dispirited, particularly in unfavorable weather at the end of a march or in battle, you must put aside any thought of personal fatigue and display marked energy in looking after the comfort of your organization, inspecting your lines, and preparing for tomorrow.

Make a point of extreme loyalty, in thought and deed, to your chiefs personally; and in your efforts to carry out their plans or policies, the less you approve the more energy you must direct to their accomplishment.

The more alarming and disquieting the reports received or the conditions viewed in battle, the more determined must be

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your attitude. Never ask for the relief of your unit, and never hesitate to attack.

Marshall was certain in his belief that the average man who scrupulously followed this course of action was bound to succeed. He continued to say that few seemed equal to it during the war but believed that was due to their failure to realize the importance of so governing their course.

Marshall's analysis of the essence of military leadership is certainly applicable to today's leaders from fire team to the highest echelons of the Army. He succinctly identifies such important tenets of military professionalism as setting the example, caring for the soldiers entrusted to one's command, total dedication, and unyielding loyalty. Although written 65 years ago by an officer whom many revere as America's foremost soldier of the 20th Century, these words serve as a standard of success for the modern infantryman.

COLE C. KINGSEED

MAJ, Infantry  
Wahiawa, Hawaii

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### TRAIN TO WIN

After participating in a National Training Center (NTC) rotation, with its specially trained OPFOR, I believe we have duped ourselves for too long about the opposing forces, aggressors, or "enemy" in our local FTXs. We have not given our OPFORs the ability to exercise their freedom of action as defined by mission-type orders. In fact, generally we have espoused the belief that because of our ability to make and execute decisions rapidly at all levels and because of "their" great inflexibility, we will thoroughly whip "them" every time. As a result, our FTX OPFORs have cooperated with us, been where they were supposed to be, done what we expected them to do.

But are our potential enemies as inflexible as we have made them out to be? While their technology and sophistication may not be as advanced as ours, they can still think and react. Infantrymen everywhere generally have the same vulnerabilities, the same fears, the

same reactions as a round cracks close by, and they also have the same goal—to win.

We have fostered the "inflexibility" idea through our FTXs where the aggressors are predictably located on all objectives, make little use of patrols, LPs, and OPs, and are normally not found in unexpected places. They seldom use aggressive tactics such as hugging techniques. We use our OPFORs to meet the specific training goals of our particular exercise at the expense of realism in training.

This approach has value during the grooming stages of small units and the training of their leaders, but mature units need to be challenged—not only by the terrain and the weather but by an aggressive, thinking, uncompromising OPFOR. To exercise against anything less creates false impressions, false ideas, and a false sense of well being. It's no wonder that when units get to the NTC, they suffer from "culture shock" as they meet a trained aggressor who moves quickly, who is excellent at using the available cover and concealment and, above all, who uses his God-given ability to try to out-think and outwit his opponent to win.

We need to exercise against a non-cooperative OPFOR in competitive scenarios during our FTXs. This does not mean that each post or unit needs a specially trained OPFOR unit such as the one at the NTC. But the aggressor units in our training exercises should have the freedom to think and react in accordance with sound tactical doctrine, safety, logic, and the exercise director's mission-type orders. This would provide a framework to exercise tactically against a unit that is trying to score a tactical success over another unit. Since none of us likes to lose, the competition would make us all better.

Competitive scenarios would provide the best opportunity to develop the synchronization of all combined arms forces against "real world" intelligence information. A premium would be placed upon collecting and verifying intelligence, which is the key to successful NTC rotations. If the enemy can be located, the full brunt of the combined

arms available in a particular exercise can be synchronized to defeat him (or at least the opportunity is there). If intelligence is poor, however, for any number of reasons, one must "gouge" for the enemy. Although this may be undesirable, it is realistic. Through this process, the real value of adequate and timely intelligence will be apparent to all.

Such non-cooperative OPFOR exercises are possible at all levels. Two squads, for example, could be given a similar mission within the same area. Each would know the other was there *somewhere*. The mission of both could be to clear the area, and one squad would be directly pitted against the other. Soldiers relish opportunities to show they are better than the other guy, and we need to give them such opportunities.

By employing OPFOR units that are also trying to win, we all stand a better chance of learning to win ourselves in the long run. To do anything less short-changes our soldiers, our leaders, and ultimately our Army.

EDWARD G. DEVOS, JR.

LTC, Infantry  
Fort Drum, New York

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### 34th INFANTRY, 1950

I have been working on a research project covering the combat actions of the 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, for July and August 1950.

The true story of the regiment is a unique one and its publication will be beneficial in many respects. In order for me to relate an adequate story, however, I need the input of everyone possible who can provide it. So far, I have received meaningful data and personal narratives from about 35 former members of the regiment for that two-month period in 1950.

Anyone who may have pertinent information may contact me at Box 167, Winchester, Indiana 47394; telephone (317) 584-1280.

LACY C. BARNETT  
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