

INFANTRY LETTERS

MARKSMANSHIP

In response to Edward Pascucci's letter on marksmanship (INFANTRY, July-August 1986, page 4), the Marines have a good marksmanship program, and so does the Army. No one should ever try to compare the two programs. Marines fire only at known distance targets, and the Army's soldiers fire at known distance targets plus timed pop-up targets. The advantage of the known distance range is that it provides the soldier with an immediate round-for-round feedback. A distinct disadvantage is that it also gives the soldier an unrealistic time lag in which to fire his weapon.

I agree that the fundamentals of marksmanship are the same whether you fire at known distance or pop-up targets. But in each of these categories, training to a standard will result in a skill.

Presently, the initial entry soldier receives 20 hours of instruction in dry fire techniques and rifle marksmanship fundamentals before he goes to a live fire range. If you add the reinforcement done at the unit level, these figures could increase from 30 to 35 hours. And this is only the beginning of a soldier's basic rifle marksmanship instruction, which he receives during a period of 10 days. This instruction fully prepares him to successfully negotiate combat record fire. Record fire tests the soldier's ability to detect and engage timed single and multiple target exposures at ranges from 50 to 300 meters.

On the other hand, the ROTC advanced camp is not equivalent to basic training. It is conducted at the end of four years of ROTC training or the equivalent. The writer of the letter should not judge the Army's marksmanship solely on the basis of his ROTC experience at Fort Bragg.

An infantry soldier improves his marksmanship by attending four days of advanced rifle marksmanship instruction.

This instruction consists of known distance training, moving targets, quick fire techniques, automatic fire, and night fire.

WALTER A. ALEMANY
CPT, Infantry
Fort Benning, Georgia

AGREES ON SYMBOLS

I am in total agreement with Lieutenant Van R. Dodd concerning the need for symbols to reflect the uniqueness of the light infantry (see letter, July-August 1986, page 5). As a member of the newly formed 29th Infantry Division (Light), I have been fortunate enough to complete the Light Leader Course and serve this year as an instructor in the light leader program. As a result of this involvement, I can attest to the need for a symbol, or symbols, to establish the light infantry divisions as elite.

The change from straight infantry to light infantry has presented a remarkable challenge to the soldier. Could he adapt to the small-unit concept that places the responsibility on the squad to perform critical missions? Could the squad leaders and team leaders develop their combat skills to an even finer point? Could the soldier forget the "old" days of digging into a defensive position and staying there for days at a time? Could that same soldier be motivated enough by this new concept of "light infantry" to toughen himself even more physically and men-

tally? Clearly times have changed for the footsoldier, and that change needs to be recognized and symbolized.

Our soldiers need accoutrements on their uniforms that say, "We are Light Infantry." With pride in one's self comes pride in one's unit. A soldier could not help poking his chest out a little farther if he were wearing the tab of a light infantryman and the beret to symbolize his division.

A tab would be simple to design. A beret is already designed; we just need the color. Brown or tan would be excellent choices, but infantry blue could even be considered. Whatever the choice, I urge the Army to recognize us for what we are—the new and elite "Light Infantry."

LARRY W. STEGALL
SSG, Infantry
Radford, Virginia

ESPRIT-BUILDING

In response to Lieutenant Van R. Dodd's letter in your July-August 1986 issue (page 5), I would like to offer the following comments concerning esprit-building uniform items for light infantry units.

First, while the increased attention and emphasis now being placed on light infantry is a welcome change, the fact of the matter is that light infantry is now being challenged and required to do what it should have been doing all along. The "commitment, desire and willingness to fight and win" that Lieutenant Dodd describes is encouraging but validated so far only by training exercises and the loud remonstrations of light infantry enthusiasts who now feel that they, too, should be recognized as an elite force. Perhaps so, but if that's true, then fully one-third of our active force (Special Operations, Airborne, Air Assault, and Light Infan-

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try units) is elite—a preposterous notion.

In the bad, post-Vietnam days of the 1970s, almost every kind of unit had its own distinctive headgear, belt buckle, footwear, and so on. Apart from looking like so many marching bands, the only tangible result was the devaluation of the genuine esprit and morale of traditionally “special” units such as the Special Forces. In fact, the elimination of this widespread abuse was welcomed by many airborne soldiers who felt that any boost engendered by wearing the maroon beret was overwhelmed by the bewildering array of multicolored hats that characterized the force at that time.

Today’s light infantry forces are undeniably better, and we would all do well to remember that it is the nameless, faceless grunt who wins wars, not the high-speed headline-gathering “elite forces” who now wear the berets and tabs that signify special status.

But there is a distinction between the soldier who volunteers and is selected for duty in airborne units and the soldier who is ordered to the “regular” combat units in the force. Romanticism should not cause us to overlook the fact that light infantry units do not have a forced entry capability, or that units such as the 101st and the 82d Airborne can be every bit as light as the 7th Infantry Division (Light) with the simple expedient of leaving behind heavy vehicles and equipment—as happened during Operation Urgent Fury.

In short, there is no evidence at all that the creation of light infantry divisions has in any way given us a capability that did not already exist. These units are simply being required to train and fight tougher and leaner than before.

So let us be content with what we are, without necessarily looking to external symbols to bolster what should be inner confidence and fighting spirit. Symbols are important, but much less so than the traditional values of hard work, teamwork, and motivation. It is the leader’s job to develop these—not the quartermaster’s.

R.D. HOOKER, JR.
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ABSURD

In the July-August 1986 issue of *INFANTRY* (page 5), there is a letter on the need for symbols. Frankly, the idea that a light division should receive some sort of distinctive clothing such as a beret or a tab is absolutely absurd. A light division is merely an infantry unit—no more, no less. Its soldiers do not jump out of planes or practice the true art of counterinsurgency warfare. Out light units “hump” more and get to train in a few more challenging environments. The light divisions can send soldiers to Airborne and Ranger school. They also get all that wonderful highspeed gear at CIF.

I would like to express my view on some soldiers who really deserve to wear some type of distinctive badge.

As a Bradley platoon leader in the 1st Cavalry Division and a former enlisted soldier in the 82d Airborne Division, I have trained in various courses—Airborne, Ranger, Jungle, Mortar Platoon, and Bradley. I have experience in the desert, the jungle, and the mountains. It has all been great training. But when the M2 lowers its ramp, my dismounted soldiers fight like 11Bs. In fact, many were 11Bs before new equipment training and the Bradley transition.

The Bradley is a lethal piece of machinery. We train the basic infantrymen how to maneuver, operate, and fight a sophisticated weapon system. We also demand that he take the EIB test, maintain high levels of proficiency with the M16, M203, M60, Dragon, LAW, and the rest. Our soldiers practice individual movement techniques and every other “light” drill. Now add to that the Bradley Gunner’s Skill Test, gunnery, company-team live fires, air assaults, and any other infantry tactic you can think of, and the life of an 11M is easier to understand.

Doctrine demands that the 11M fight as efficiently as any other infantryman. A review of any skill manual for 11M shows not just Bradley skills but basic and advanced infantry skills as well. If the “balloon went up” tomorrow, the 11M could fight like any 11B, but could the light division soldier crawl into the turret of an M2 and kill the enemy?

Training a COHORT unit cannot be that difficult. At least the men have a

basic foundation upon which to work. My idea of a tough job is guiding a brand new Division 86 task force, recently equipped with Bradleys, through new equipment training in January, a company-team test (with M1 tank companies) in April, ARTEPs in May and June, gunnery, then the National Training Center in July of the same year. We had to train soldiers of all ranks from private through lieutenant colonel. Our unit spent so much time in the field, we simply created motor pools at designated assembly areas and returned to garrison for breaks of three or four days. Then we headed back out to train again. That was a trying period for all the soldiers and their families, but we prevailed.

My compliments to our brothers in arms in the 7th, 25th, and 10th Divisions. I wish you all great success. But if you want to recognize any soldier with a badge of distinction for his efforts and all-round guts, then tip your hat to the 11M.

ROBERT S. BOBINSKI
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UPGRADE M113 UNITS

Bravo for Sergeant Foley! In his article in the July-August 1986 issue of *INFANTRY*, he made some astute observations on the capabilities and limitations of M113-equipped mechanized infantry. (See “Observations on Mechanized Infantry,” by Sergeant First Class John E. Foley, pages 29-34.) I completely agree with his common-sense, low-cost improvements especially for upgraded carrier weapons and the dismounted platoon.

I spent three years as a brigade S-4 in Europe; during my tour our brigade converted to the J-series MTOE and transitioned to the M1 and the M2/M3. The Bradley is a fine fighting vehicle, but not all mechanized battalions will receive Bradleys. It is time, in light of reduced budgets, for the infantry community to give serious thought to cheap and readily attainable improvements, especially in firepower, for M113 units. The technology is either here or being worked on.

I agree with Sergeant Foley’s idea for a platoon mortar. A carrier-mounted

60mm mortar, fired by direct lay or direct alignment, is ideal for reconnaissance by fire, immediate suppression, and smoke, as well as for illumination.

Branching out a bit—is anybody at Fort Benning looking at the *operational* employment of M113 units as “regular” infantry along the lines suggested by Colonel Huba Wass de Czege in “Three Kinds of Infantry”? (See July-August 1985, page 11.) Neither Bradley battalions nor those in the new light infantry divisions are really suitable for the hard slugging required to attack well-entrenched enemy or defend a battle position in depth. Bradley battalions, although long on firepower, are short on dismounted infantrymen; light battalions don’t have the firepower or the sustainability needed. I fully realize that light infantry prefers to attack the enemy’s weak spots, but sometimes you can’t find a weak spot to attack.

Finally, I haven’t read anything recently about the concepts and equipment being tested by the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis. The motorized concept, previously so full of promise, seems to have died on the vine. A motorized division appears to be an excellent compromise between transportability and firepower. I also see no reason why it could not be tailored for use in a low-intensity war.

PAUL L. CONWAY
MAJ, Infantry
Durant, Oklahoma

REORGANIZING

I would like to make two comments on General Wayne Downing’s excellent and thought provoking article “Reorganizing” (INFANTRY, March-April 1986, page 22).

First, in Table 2 it appears that the numbers for the light infantry platoon headquarters with a field strength of 22 or more and the lesser strengths are incorrect. To be consistent with the text and the structure of the argument, instead of four in each case, the number should be seven. As the argument goes, a viable platoon needs a maneuver group and a base of fire. The light infantry base of fire would be two 2-man machinegun

teams located in a light infantry platoon’s headquarters along with the platoon leader, the platoon sergeant, and a radio-telephone operator, a total of seven men. This would be consistent with the platoon total in the table’s final column.

In general, the article does not deal with the problem of reorganizing on the basis of the soldiers’ capabilities. Not all of the soldiers available can or should be moved into certain positions that become vacant. A platoon leader will have to know which men can serve in which capacities, not just what jobs have to be filled first.

Also, the heavy platoon leader will have to think in advance about redistributing soldiers, and about their unique talents, after the loss of a vehicle. A platoon’s capabilities will be greatly affected by a vehicle loss.

Overall, the article was very informative, and I hope my comments will be taken not as criticism but as an addition to it.

STEVEN MINNIEAR
Washington, D.C.

INFANTRY IMAGES

Let’s talk for a moment about the sacred image of the Infantry. You know the one: You wouldn’t introduce either your sister or your daughter to an Infantryman. He prefers field duty when the weather is (at the very least) uncooperative. He wallows in the mud—and loves it. He lends atmosphere to what otherwise might be a stuffy affair.

That image isn’t really a problem. After all, the Infantryman is the guy on the ground with the gun. And the Infantry is the first in and last out. Not only that, but the Infantry is proud of that sacred image. Infantrymen everywhere climb proudly on that bandwagon—and just as proudly reduce it to splinters.

There’s a serious side to that image. Some people say we Infantrymen can survive with so little for so long that we can do anything with nothing. Those people point to Sherman’s march to the sea, the Third Army’s race across Europe, and any number of other instances to show that Infantrymen are masters of the

“make do”—all the time. To our credit, we have proved them right over and over again—effectively, efficiently, and constantly.

But it’s time for a change. It’s all well and good to be pigs in the mud, but we must learn to leave the field in the field. When we come back to civilization, we need to come all the way back—to baths, clothes and, yes, even deodorant. There’s another side to that, too. The Infantry, as a branch, needs to try hard to *stop* doing everything with nothing. The Infantry needs to demand its fair share and the same respect the other branches seem to get.

In the field it’s fine to make do with what we’ve got and to take a certain pride in doing without. But not in garrison. Not on the installation.

The Infantry must demonstrate that it is no longer willing to get by with less than the best in terms of facilities and posts, camps and stations. We must look at ourselves and our sacred image and demand the best. After all, we *are* the best.

DOUGLAS A. MARTZ
MAJ, Infantry
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ALOC, ALC, ALCC?

Lieutenant Colonel Joel D. Williamson’s interesting article “Command and Control” (INFANTRY, May-June 1986, pp. 25-29) contains a minor discrepancy. He uses the acronym ALOC for the term “administrative logistics operations center,” and this is incorrect.

The glossaries of FM 100-10, Combat Service Support, and FM 63-2-2, Combat Service Support: Armored, Mechanized, and Motorized Divisions, both list ALOC as “air line of communication.” Unfortunately, the glossary of FC 17-1J, The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team (coordinating draft), does list ALOC as “administrative logistics operations center.” But then, drafts are for the purpose of eliminating such little problems. The correct acronym is ALC, for “administrative/logistics center.”

Acronyms are supposed to make communication easier. Considering the num-

ber existing and our penchant for coining new ones, it is clear why many of our brightest second lieutenants are often confused. Now let them beware the ALCC!

WILLIAM G. KEYES
LTC, USA, Retired
Fort McClellan, Alabama

ONLY A GRUNT?

I once had a soldier complain to me that he was tired of being "only a grunt" and that he wanted a more important job. He was somewhat surprised when I explained to him why there could never be a more important job than that of the infantryman.

If it is true that the noncommissioned officer corps is the backbone of the Army, then it certainly follows that the rifleman is the Army's lifeblood. After all, it is the rifleman to whom falls the ultimate challenge: Defeat the enemy on a man-to-man basis and secure victory by bullet and bayonet.

In the heat of the jungle the infantryman often forgets that his job is considered so important that millions of dollars worth of men and equipment are kept standing by to support him in his mission. It is the grunt who leads the way for armor, artillery, and others to follow.

When the rifleman is crawling through the mud or standing guard in the rain, all efforts are directed toward his success. From the aircraft crews that provide him with supplies or close air support to the rear echelon troops funneling food, cloth-

ing, and ammunition to his jungle outpost, countless people recognize that his mission has the priority.

No, there is no more important job than that of the grunt. There is also no greater feeling of pride than to hear yourself called "Infantryman."

CHUCK GRIST
SSG, Infantry
Casselberry, Florida

VIETNAM BOOK

With the great help of the hundreds of veterans I've interviewed, I've sold three books on the Vietnam War. I'm now starting a fourth proposed book involving the following: The actions from 29 March to 1 April 1970 when the 2d Squadron, 7th Cavalry was attacked in its LZ, the 2d Squadron, 8th Cavalry was overrun at LZ Illingworth, and the CG, 199th Infantry Brigade was killed; and the 1 May to 30 June 1970 incursion into Cambodia by elements of the 4th, 9th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, 1st Air Cavalry Division, 101st Airborne Division, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, and 199th Infantry Brigade.

Veterans, please call me or write any time to arrange interviews: 220 Kingsville Court, Webster Groves, MO 63119; telephone (314) 961-7577.

KEITH WILLIAM NOLAN

HISTORICAL SCROLL

Last year the Devonshire and Dorset

Regiment celebrated its 300th Anniversary and, in connection with this celebration, produced several items. One of these items is a handsome horizontal format wall poster (43 inches by 18 inches) which we call our Historical Scroll. It depicts in color the uniforms the regiment has worn from the time of our founding in 1685 up to now.

It occurs to us that there may well be other people with general military or army historical interests who might like a chance to buy this unique item. The price is four pounds sterling (remittance in sterling please), which includes a protective tube and surface mail.

PETER BURDICK
LTC, British Army
Tercentenary Project Officer
The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment
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LOOKING FOR SEABEES

An all-out search is under way for about 400 men who served their country well in the 46th Naval Construction Battalion (Seabee) during World War II. About 600 of the 1,012 members who were stationed in Guadalcanal, New Caledonia, and New Guinea have been located.

Anyone with information concerning the whereabouts of a member of this battalion is urged to contact Mary Holliday at 1833 NW 11, Oklahoma City, OK 73106.

GAIL PECK
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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