

INFANTRY LETTERS



BRADLEY COMMENTS

With all the publicity concerning the Bradley infantry fighting vehicle, I thought someone might want to hear the opinion of a Bradley platoon leader in Germany. Having been through two major field exercises and three gunneries, I believe I am qualified to air my views.

First of all, the Bradley is the best armored vehicle around for the purpose of allowing soldiers to fight mounted and for supporting them when they are dismounted. Despite all the negative publicity about the Bradley's survivability, I would never expose my platoon's Bradleys like sitting ducks and expect them to take *direct* hits from T-72s and survive. I know of no armored vehicle in the world that could do that.

The various proposals for improvements to the Bradley that I have read of—adding reactive armor, going from a 25mm to a 30mm main gun, installing a Stinger launcher on the turret, increasing engine horsepower, and improving the TOW system—may be well and good, and if so I heartily embrace them. But there are some common sense additions that I believe would not only increase the survivability of the vehicle and the soldier but would also make the vehicle more combat effective.

To begin with, the vehicle crew—commander, gunner, and driver—ought to be equipped with some type of sidearm, probably the 9mm Baretta. The reason for this is simple. Consider two examples:

Scenario 1: A20 and wingman are in the overwatch position in a clump of trees with a good field of fire covering the bounding element. Abruptly, an enemy soldier with an

RPG pops out of a bush 50 feet away. The Bradley commander cannot swing the turret because of trees on both sides. What does he do? He reaches under his armpit, yanks his pistol out of a shoulder holster, and shoots the enemy soldier.

It is not enough to rely on firing port weapons for this type of situation, especially when fighting mounted. Even if his dismount element is on the ground, the commander has a much better perspective from this position (presumably, the gunner is scanning through his ISU). The commander will have a much better reaction time than he would if he tried to alert someone on the ground who might not be able to see the threat.

Scenario 2: The crew is dismounted in a rear area, the driver is doing PMCS on the trim vane, and the commander and gunner are checking the weapon system. The driver hears a noise, looks up, and sees an enemy soldier with a satchel charge approaching the vehicle. The driver reaches for his 9mm.

Why isn't his M16 handy? It probably is, but it may be slung on his back, in the driver's hatch, or even three feet away on the trim vane. In both of these scenarios, the crew members need a weapon that

will let them respond quickly to any situation that threatens them or their vehicles. The M16 in such situations is not readily available, and it takes too long to engage an enemy with it in a fast reaction, short-range situation.

The second issue concerns the firing port weapons. To begin with, the M231 is a good weapon, and with a little practice a soldier can use it effectively. The problem arises in that every rifle team member ends up being responsible for two weapons—either a SAW, an M203, or an M16A2 in addition to his M231.

The solution to the problem of carrying extra weapons, and therefore adding to the necessary clutter in the hull, is to make the M16A2 adaptable to the firing port, thus eliminating the need for the M231. This M16A3, if you will, would ideally resemble the CAR-15. It would have a collapsible stock with a flange on the end of the barrel so it could be screwed into the port. The front sight would need to be placed to the rear of the flange, but the ribbed handguards could stay. The M203 could even conceivably be adapted in the same manner. The barrel would have to become longer, and the grenade tube would have to be modified. The SAW could also be modified to fit the firing port. (If nothing else, an adapter flange could be developed as a type of clip-on device much like that on the M16 bipod.)

The vehicle crew would still have rifles, of course, and these could be placed in an accessible, but out-of-the-way rack.

The suggestions presented here are not catch-all solutions to problems of Bradley survivability and efficiency. The sidearm issue could

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be handled very easily. The firing port weapon modifications would take some research and development but would be well worth it.

In this era of space age technology and improvements, it is always advisable to remember that in the end it is the combat soldiers who do the groundwork. If the infantryman's job is made simpler, he will be able to perform more efficiently.

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ARTILLERY IN A LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION

Reference the article "Light Artillery," by Lieutenant Carl R. Moore (INFANTRY, May-June 1987, page 20), the record needs to be set straight.

The 2d Brigade, 10th Mountain Division at Fort Benning, Georgia, is in a unique position in that its supporting artillery battalion has not yet been formed. Because of this—and in order to provide fire support personnel to integrate fire and maneuver and forward observers for the company and battalion mortars—the brigade has chosen to attach its assigned fire support personnel to their supported infantry units. Once the direct support artillery battalion is formed and the 2d Brigade moves to Fort Drum where the rest of the division is stationed, the fire support personnel will be reassigned to the artillery battalion, as is doctrinally done in the other light divisions.

Let me emphasize that the role and organization for combat of the field artillery does not change just because a unit is "light." The organization of the light division still provides a direct support artillery battalion for each brigade. When the 10th Division becomes fully fielded, there will be a direct support artillery battalion for the 2d Brigade. Until such time, one

should not confuse "light artillery" with a lack of artillery.

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TOWARD EXCELLENCE

The commandant of the Infantry School, Major General Kenneth C. Leuer, in his first Commandant's Note in INFANTRY (July-August 1987, page 1), says, "Training is ~~everything~~ and ~~everything~~ is training." His predecessor, Major General Edwin H. Burba, Jr., in his final Commandant's Note (INFANTRY, May-June 1986, page 3) says, "If we can get the command and staff responsibilities performed in peacetime aligned with those performed during war, we will develop more positive command environments, ~~better~~ combat leaders, and higher unit readiness."

How can we simplify the massively complex task of achieving readiness for war in peacetime operations? The key is the alignment of the command and staff responsibilities of peacetime with those of wartime. We need only to look at the production of orders and guidance to see the solution. In wartime, commanders at every level use the military decision-making process and their battle staffs to produce orders. In peacetime these same people produce training schedules, inspection schedules, training circulars, letters of instruction, and many other well-intended pieces of paper and actions that dilute the commander's intent. In wartime, there are only orders and that "open and frank communication. . . without fear" that General Leuer understands as the "key to success."

General Burba, in his note, contends that the reason officers prefer wartime command to peacetime command is that the roles and missions divisions, brigades, and battalions are designed to perform be-

come blurred. It is an understatement to say that the "roles and missions" become blurred. The entire command environment is blurred by many things:

- The failure of staff members to present to their commanders alternative courses of action for training.
- The failure to consider "everything" as training when producing the yearly or quarterly training plan.
- The failure to synchronize the actions and activities of peacetime operations within the scope of the training plan. (Unity of Effort.)
- The failure to anticipate events or provide warning orders to subordinates.
- The failure of a commander to designate, sustain, and shift the main effort. (Too many priorities.)
- The failure to concentrate activities that distract from training into a precise time block or to combine functional system checks to complement and reinforce one another.
- The failure to understand the effects of over-supervision on soldiers, units, and leaders. (If a commander wants initiative, he and his staff cannot overreact to the failures of their subordinates.)

Commanders at all levels must realize that success comes from writing operations plans and orders and from requiring the same synchronized staff efforts during peacetime that they would require in wartime. They should take a hard look at all the recurring reports and inspections they require; they should make sure their peacetime SOP is in line with their true needs and not with their staff officers' need to look good; they should strive to save resources and simplify guidance with the same spirit they would show in saving lives in combat. Finally, they must be willing to accept risks and directly supervise their main efforts.

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