

INFANTRY LETTERS



CORRECTIONS

Thank you for publishing my article "TOW Position: An Alternative" (September-October 1987, pages 36-38). In reading it, however, I discovered some errors:

On page 37, under the paragraph headed "It is split level," the word *machineguns* was an incorrect interpretation of the abbreviation *MGS*. The sentence should have read, "This makes it easier for the soldiers to manipulate both the TOW system during tracking and firing and the *missile guidance set* in testing the system, and it also offers the crewmen the protection of a deeper hole."

Also, on page 38 in the final paragraph of the article, the word *overwatch* should have been *overhead*: "At times, it may be both possible and desirable to build actual overhead cover for the system as shown in the manual."

Anyone who would like a copy of my original manuscript with the schematics of my proposed fighting position may write to me at Company A, NTC, ATTN: OPS GP, Fort Irwin, CA 92310.

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M3A1 LIGHT TANK

The tank pictured on page 7 of the September-October 1987 issue of INFANTRY is identified as an M3A1 Stewart light tank . . . the first American tank committed to use in World War II."

First, the correct spelling is "Stuart" (after the Confederate Cavalryman J.E.B. Stuart).

Yes, the M3 "light" tank was the first American tank to be used in World War II, but what you have pictured is not of the first type committed to action. The lend lease M3 (called the "Honey" by the British for its sweet disposition in

comparison to their own tanks) and the M3 used in the defense of the Philippines had a riveted turret and a raised cupola. The pictured tank has a welded "horse-shoe" turret.

Also, the early M3 light tanks mounted M1919A4 .30 caliber machineguns in the hollow bores (sponsons) over the treads in the belief their fires would detonate buried land mines. The tank in the photo has cast armor in place of the gun-mount openings. The fix on the M3 was to simply weld on a piece of plate steel in place of the gun aperture. This was due to the experiences of General Weaver's Provisional Tank Group during the defense of the Philippines that the fixed guns were of little use in combating mines.

The troops of the Tank Group (National Guardsmen of the 192d and 194th Tank Battalions) found through battle experience beginning in December 1941 that a more effective use of the scarce machineguns was to dismount them, and often the anti-aircraft machinegun as well (which was continually stripped away by the jungle overgrowth), and to give them to the under-equipped Philippine Army infantry units. The M3 then retained bow-mounted and coax .30 machineguns and this proved enough. Some tankers did keep their anti-aircraft machineguns. Lieutenant Archibald Bianchi of the 31st Infantry manned such an exposed gun during the Battle of Trail Two and the Pockets, earning a posthumous Medal of Honor. (This information is from the recollection of my father, Technical Sergeant Zenon R. Bardowski, who fought on Bataan with Company B, 192d Tank Battalion.)

The M3 light tanks I have seen in pho-

We welcome letters from our readers and print as many of them as we can. Sometimes it takes a while before we find room. But keep writing on topics of interest to our readers, and we'll do our best to publish your letters, sooner or later. All letters are subject to editing to fit space and other editorial requirements.

tographs of the British 8th Army in the North African desert display riveted turrets as well, which leads me to believe that, while the tank pictured in your news section is of the type used in North Africa, it is a later model than the Stuarts initially employed.

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TANKS AND GENERALS

The tank shown on page 7 of the September-October 1987 issue of INFANTRY is an M3A1 *Stuart* (not *Stewart*) light tank, named originally by the British purchasers after Confederate General James Ewell Brown ("Jeb") Stuart.

Other American tanks in British service were the M3 medium tank dubbed "Grant" or "Lee" depending upon its armament, and the famous M4 medium "Sherman," a name also used by the U.S. Army.

Later tanks named by the U.S. Army after general officers were the M24 Chaffee; M26 Pershing; M41 Walker Bulldog; M47, M48, and M60 Patton; and the current M1 Abrams.

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BATTLE DRESS

In his article "Battle Dress SOP" (INFANTRY, September-October 1987, pages 18-19), Captain Noyes B. Livingston III makes some excellent recommendations on the wear of the load bearing equipment (LBE). His reasoning and suggestions concerning how to best con-

figure the gear are very sound and evidently based on experience.

I take exception, however, to the basic principle of the article—that commanders should dictate an SOP to their soldiers. The LBE is an individual matter for the soldier to configure the way that best suits him. Commanders should have better things to do than dress their soldiers; it is bad for the individuals and the system when this occurs in a unit.

As Captain Livingston points out, the purpose of the LBE is to support the soldier's needs *in combat*. Toward that end, the soldier must learn what he needs and how best to organize his load. The commander is not going to be the one lying in the mud having to find a full magazine, or in the bottom of a foxhole trying to pull out a bandage. With proper, realistic training, the soldier can figure out what works best and he will organize himself accordingly.

Of course, training is the key. A truck driver will be happy with one ammunition pouch (for his candy and cigarettes) and a canteen, until he is ambushed a few times or is told he will have to revert to his secondary MOS (11B) for a couple of days. To an infantryman, this intimate familiarity with his combat life support system should be second nature after a few *good* exercises. An SOP, however, takes away that acquired knowledge and becomes just one more thing to do without any understanding of why.

In other words, such leading by the hand is a poor leadership technique that promotes ignorance and is just another way of destroying initiative. If he doesn't even have a chance to make his LBE work better, a soldier won't even try. This extends into all facets of leadership, and I would argue that a commander who oversupervises soldiers to this extent is creating a unit of drones, not aggressive, thinking soldiers.

The above statements argue from a leadership viewpoint that a soldier is the best one to figure out his own SOP. But this is also true from a practical viewpoint. The individual is by far the best qualified to judge what is comfortable, how weight should be distributed, and what in fact should be carried. Leaders at all levels have a legitimate interest in a minimum packing list. But it is impossi-

ble to make allowances for left-handed versus right-handed people (to determine which shooting shoulder should be left free of clutter), height, weight, or other physical characteristics.

The other age-old argument about whether the LBE should always be fastened or should be left open is also entirely personal. A fastened LBE in hot weather can contribute to heat injury; likewise, an open LBE may flap dangerously in a sudden fire-fight. Again, though, with good training the soldier will figure these things out for himself.

In summary, we don't need SOPs to tell soldiers how to wear the LBE. What we need is realistic training that stresses the soldier so he can figure things out for himself (and not just how to configure his equipment). Micro-managing instructions may make a unit look uniform and pretty, but that is not a legitimate goal for a combat ready organization. In fact, the need for such supervision is probably more a sign of a weak unit than a strong one.

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HEALTH SERVICE SUPPORT VIDEOTAPES

The Academy of Health Sciences has produced a series of eight videotapes for heavy and light forces to be used to provide an overview of medical support doctrine forward of the brigade support area.

These videotapes will help unit members understand medical support doctrine for company through brigade level operations. The videotapes will be available to units through installation training support centers by early 1988.

The videotape titles and release numbers to use when ordering are as follows:

- An Introduction to Health Service Support AirLand Battle (TVT 8-141).
- Soldier Health Maintenance (TVT 8-142)
- Far Forward Care (TVT 8-143).
- Unit Level Health Service Support (Heavy Division) (TVT 8-144).

- Extricate Wounded Crew from the M-1 Tank (TVT 8-145).

- Extricate Wounded Crew from the M-3 (TVT 8-146).

- The Medical Company of the Forward Support Battalion (TVT 8-147).

- Health Service Support of Tactical Operations (Heavy Division) (TVT 8-148).

For further information, call Captain Hacker, ARTEP Branch, Unit Training Division, AUTOVON 471-2672/6291.

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THE MILITIA

I enjoyed Captain Robin M. Cathcart's article "Forgotten Heritage" (INFANTRY, July-August 1987, pages 18-19). It is good to remind all of us of the One Army Concept and to point out that there are many Reserve and National Guard units with a long and proud history.

But he made a common error that is of Constitutional significance. The National Guard is not THE militia of the United States — it is only one part of the militia.

Section 311, Chapter 13, Title 10, United States Code quite clearly states what the militia is:

The militia of the United States consists of all able-bodied males at least 17 years of age and, except as provided in section 313 of title 32, under 45 years of age who are, or who have a declaration of intention to become, citizens of the United States and of female citizens of the United States who are commissioned officers of the National Guard.

Interestingly enough, it is possible to be in the Guard and not be in the militia, as only those women with commissions are in the militia. Therefore, all enlisted and warrant officer women are not in the militia.

Please don't think that this is just historical trivia. It pertains to our military and national heritage.

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