



# Commandant's NOTE

MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL F. SPIGELMIRE Chief of Infantry

---

## THE POINT OF THE SPEAR

What a privilege it is for me to return to Fort Benning as the Commander of the Infantry Center and Commandant of the Infantry School, and to serve concurrently as Chief of Infantry.

While I am gratified to have been chosen for these critical positions, I also realize that even more compelling are the responsibilities and challenges that come with them—the many tasks to be accomplished, and the awareness that many of the decisions we make at Benning influence not only the entire U.S. infantry community but every individual U.S. infantryman as well.

I feel fortunate in coming to Benning fresh from serving as the commander of the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized). That experience sharpened my awareness of the needs of the infantrymen in the field. Historically, Fort Benning's goal has been to turn out the world's finest infantrymen. Today, more than ever, it cannot do less.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of the infantryman's role in combat. I am convinced the infantryman is the ultimate weapon. Whether he walks, rides, jumps, or flies into battle, his is the most demanding role on the battlefield. He is the "point of the spear"—the cutting edge, causing it all to happen, putting together combat power at the point of decision.

At the same time, we know that although the individual infantryman has not changed, the battlefield has changed dramatically. In future wars, infantry will rarely, if ever, fight alone. Other combat arms—armor, artillery, air defense, engineer, and many others—will help the infantryman accomplish his mission. The combined arms team, therefore, is the key to success, and infantry commanders from squad through division must learn to plan their tactical operations in terms of combined arms opera-

tions. They must follow the principles of balanced firepower and mobility, because the whole purpose is to generate overwhelming combat power at a particular time and place. We must make certain that the infantryman can perform to the fullest his role as a member of the combined arms team.

I serve as your steward, and my charge is to develop good, sound infantry doctrine; to train your new soldiers and junior leaders; and to plan for and design the organizations and equipment our infantrymen will need in the 1990s and beyond. We at Fort Benning cannot do the job alone. I plan to visit all of our infantry units in the months to come, and I earnestly solicit your ideas and suggestions as to how we can improve our service to the field. I also look forward to seeing many of you at our next Infantry Conference, which has been tentatively planned for early April 1989.

In the two months I have been at Benning, I have found our ongoing actions to be both exciting and progressive. To define clearly the infantry's role on the future battlefield takes clear thinking, vigorous analysis, and realistic testing.

Technology advances, tactics change, and warfare becomes more complex. One of our most important missions, therefore, is to keep the field supplied with accurate, up-to-date doctrinal publications that have been fully coordinated with our field units and combat training centers.

Doctrine for the infantry force is dynamic and ever-changing. We have updated and revised a number of our doctrinal manuals describing how infantry fights at squad through brigade levels. In addition, we have written new manuals in the areas of antiarmor employment and long range surveillance operations.

There is a large amount of doctrinal literature

already available to our infantry leaders, but our leaders need to read it if it is to be effective. I strongly suggest that our field manuals and mission training plans be added to the professional reading lists being produced by many schools and units today.

Our training emphasis continues to focus on developing the warrior ethos—those tactical and technical proficiencies necessary for our infantry leaders to be successful in combined arms combat. These proficiencies stem from a common core of infantry tasks that are deemed critical for success. Two training initiatives with long term implications are the development of training strategies and soldier training products.

Our training strategies provide a good foundation upon which to develop soldiers, leaders, crews, and units who can win on the battlefield. This is a long overdue effort which allows us to examine the training system as an entity rather than in individual elements.

At the same time, the School has made tremendous strides in linking its individual and collective training products, which includes a complete redesign of our Soldier's Manuals. Today, we have only four Soldier's Manuals instead of the twenty we formerly had, and the information in them has been simplified. Coupled with this initiative, we have aligned the standards in the Soldier's Manuals and the standards for the Expert Infantryman's Badge. We now have one standard—the Soldier's Manual—to measure performance.

All of our MTPs for squad through battalion are at the printer, and you should have them by December. Following close behind will be the MTPs for the special platoons and combat service support units. This represents a complete overhaul of our MTPs and replaces ARTEPs 7-15 and 71-2. The MTPs themselves are organized around a common set of operations and a core of common tasks; the tasks have universal applicability and represent what successful infantry units must do in the combined arms fight.

I encourage all of our infantrymen to take a serious approach toward SQTs, and to remember that the test is being adjusted from previous years. The

SQT questions in 1989 will come from the Soldier's Manuals, but not all of the tasks contained in the SOI notice will be on the test. There will be a greater variety of questions, fewer carryovers from the previous test, and more difficult questions. Soldiers must prepare diligently to succeed on this test.

We are continuing to look at the organizational structures of our squads, platoons, and companies to identify ways of standardizing them. We feel all types of infantry squads, platoons, and companies should be organized along similar lines. Through this process, we hope to improve and simplify task organizing.

I am also dedicated to making certain that we at Fort Benning do all we can to give the infantryman the finest tools that today's technical knowledge and tomorrow's skilled workmanship can produce.

We have a small arms master plan that will bring us advanced hand held, shoulder fired, and crew-served weapons. Our family of mortars is in good shape and getting better, and we have made a firm commitment to develop and field an all-new medium antiarmor weapon system. In addition, directed energy is here to stay, and we are studying its future application.

We have learned much about the Bradley fighting vehicle since it was first fielded several years ago and are over the hump in that maturation process. We are looking at a future family of vehicles for development in the 21st century, a family that will benefit from our experiences in the field with the Bradley.

Some have argued that every five years or so there is enough of a change in the technology or in the art of war to require a change in doctrine as great as that from the Civil War to World War I, or from World War I to World War II. If this is true, we can expect several major new areas of concern and interest as we move toward the new century. Each of us can contribute to the kind of infantry we will have in the year 2000. The infantry of the future, in short, is being shaped by the decisions we make today.

The legacy we leave for tomorrow depends on our efforts today. A strong foundation is in place but much remains to be done. I hope you will share my pride in the fact that as our Army moves forward the Infantry, as always, is spearheading that progress.

