

and emphasis by commanders and proper execution by small unit leaders.

Phase I. A weapons maintenance session and inspection is conducted before firing to identify weapon deficiencies that might cause problems on the range. Magazines are inspected because many malfunctions are caused by old, defective magazines.

Dry fire training is conducted and the four fundamentals of marksmanship are reinforced during the days prior to range firing. Squad leaders train their own squads. The commander allots time on the training schedule instead of relying upon hip-pocket training. A buddy team approach is used in which one man serves as a peer coach to observe his partner and make corrections. This develops individual proficiency, provides quality control on the skills being practiced, and helps develop marksmanship proficiency in the unit's subordinate leaders.

Phase II. Down-range feedback is conducted on a 25-meter zero range or, if resources are available, on a KD range. To establish a pattern of consistent individual firing techniques, soldiers fire three-round shot groups without making sight adjustments. This should take no more than 9 to 18 rounds per man. Still

using buddy teams, the coach concentrates on the shooter, not on the target down range.

Weapons are zeroed using the current M16 zero target, NSN 6920-01-167-1396. (The Canadian Bull is no longer used, and younger soldiers have never seen it.)

KD firing confirms battlesight zero at various ranges and builds the soldiers' confidence. Thirty rounds fired at 100, 200, and 300 meters (10 rounds at each range) is sufficient.

Phase III. A 40-round practice record fire is conducted. Again, a coach is used with each firer to watch him and help him correct any problems. The qualification table is fired on a different lane from the one on which the practice table was fired.

The following additional training tips, which are used to train OSUT soldiers, can be easily incorporated into unit marksmanship programs:

- Leaders should familiarize themselves with the manuals. The new FM 23-9 contains many good training tips on marksmanship. It covers the phases of training, lists the training aids and devices that are available, and provides a helpful range operations checklist.

- Ownership of the training program should be established in the subordinate

leaders. Training should not be surrendered to a committee-type approach. Squad leaders should be made responsible for training their squads, and a competition or reward system should be established, with an awards ceremony or visible recognition for the best individual firers and the best subordinate units.

- Good marksmanship skills should be practiced whenever weapons are used in training. Even when soldiers are firing blanks, they should practice good shooting fundamentals.

- MILES or Weaponeer systems should be used when live ammunition is not available. This gives soldiers immediate, accurate feedback without going to the range.

Good marksmanship is a critical but easily degraded skill. As infantrymen we rely on our ability to shoot well; as leaders we owe it to our soldiers to train them well.

Captain John L. Wolf was a company commander in the 2d Infantry Training Brigade at Fort Benning. A 1980 graduate of the United States Military Academy, he has also served in platoon leader and staff assignments with the 9th Infantry Division and in various assignments with the Ranger Training Brigade at Fort Benning.

Scout Platoon Vehicle

CAPTAIN MARTIN N. STANTON

As an observer-controller at the National Training Center (NTC), I participated in three ground cavalry training rotations. The first two involved the cavalry troops of the 194th Armor Brigade (Separate) and the 197th Infantry Brigade (Separate). The third involved a troop of the 3d Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR). I believe that the results of this training have certain im-

plications for J-series mechanized infantry scout platoons.

The organization of these three troops was virtually identical—basically regimental cavalry troops of two tank and two scout platoons with a heavy mortar section. They were organized exactly the same as those in a J-series mechanized infantry unit. Their equipment, however, was radically different. The two separate

brigade troops were equipped with M60A3 tanks and M901 ITVs for their scout platoons, while the 3d ACR troops had M1A1 tanks and M113s with TOW caps; we called the latter vehicles M220s.

I won't dwell on the obvious advantages of an M1A1 over an M60A3. What was interesting to me was the difference in performance between the two types of scout platoons. The scout platoon of the



Vehicle with TOW cap in raised position.

3d ACR troop tended to achieve more TOW kills than those of the two independent troops. Although this may be partially explained in terms of specific scenarios, I do not believe that this alone was a major factor. Nor do I believe the platoons' level of training or tactical competence was a major factor. All three troops had good soldiers and conscientious leaders who tried hard, learned from their mistakes, and continued to improve tactically throughout the rotation.

The largest single reason for the difference in TOW kills, in my opinion, was their vehicles. As a scout TOW vehicle, the M220 appeared to be far superior to the ITV.

I will not argue the merits of the ITV in general. At the NTC, Echo companies in the mechanized infantry battalions have been both successful and unsuccessful using this weapon system. Their success has seemed to depend more on the tactical proficiency of the unit (from battalion task force commander to individual crew skill level) than on any specific failure of the vehicle itself. In short, as an antitank vehicle in an antitank company, the ITV works well enough.

As a scout vehicle, however, it has

several drawbacks that reduce its efficiency when it is used in a reconnaissance role and decrease its survivability:

- Only two members of the crew can observe from the vehicle without dismounting. When the ITV is moving, the driver and the track commander are the only ones who can see out of it. While it is stationary (erect), only the driver and the gunner can observe. (The commander's periscope field of vision is so narrow that it does not merit discussion.)

- The ITV has only an M60 machinegun for a secondary weapon. As a scout vehicle, therefore, it is always at risk from a sudden encounter with enemy reconnaissance or fighting elements.

- The vehicle cannot move with the TOW in its firing position. This is not a problem so long as things go according to plan (that is, if the unit always gets to set up overwatch positions where it wants them). In a surprise situation, though, the ITV crew members will lose anywhere from 10 to 15 seconds erecting its turret and acquiring the target, and this may be more time than they have.

The M220, as a scout vehicle, has several key advantages over the ITV:

- With its open troop target compart-

ment, the M220 affords each crew member a sector of observation. In addition, each of the crew members in the troop compartment hatch can engage troop targets, as well as aircraft, with their small arms in sudden encounters.

- The M220 has a .50 caliber machinegun as a secondary armament. This gives the vehicle a limited antiarmor capability (in addition to the TOW missile system), a limited anti-aircraft capability, and a greater penetrating capability against buildings and fortifications.

- The M220 can move with its TOW system fully erected and ready to fire. There are two important reservations about this, however. First, before firing, the crew must perform a self test to make sure the system is properly boresighted. (Obviously, this requirement can probably be waived in desperate situations.) Second, the nightsight should be recollimated at every halt. The open nature of the M220 allows for improved acquisitions (more people are looking). It also allows the TOW gunner to track aircraft (helicopters) more easily than he can in an ITV.

Given these factors, it is not really surprising that the 3d ACR troop did better with its TOW than the two independent brigade troops.

I do not advocate doing away with the ITV, but it needs to go to the antitank companies where the ability to fire from cover and reload under artillery fire are more important than all-around observation on the move.

For the scout platoons of all mechanized infantry and armor battalions and cavalry squadrons, however, the ITV just does not meet the requirements. Until all of these organizations receive the Bradley cavalry fighting vehicle (and it's going to be a while), I believe we can greatly improve the combat power of the scout platoons and their ability to conduct reconnaissance missions by equipping them with M220s.

Captain Martin N. Stanton, an Infantry officer, is a company observer-controller at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin. He previously led rifle and TOW platoons in Korea and commanded the combat support company, 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry at Fort Lewis. He is a 1978 graduate of Florida Institute of Technology.
