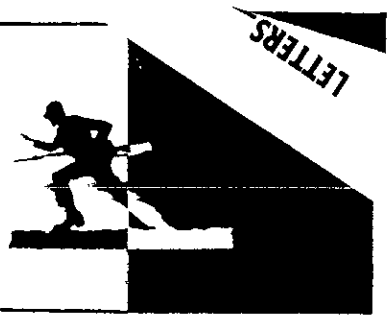
INFANTRY LETTERS



COUNTERARGUMENT

Although there are innumerable lessons to be learned from history, "Helpful Hints to Hopeful Heroes" (INFANTRY, November-December 1988, pp. 29-32) contains what I believe to be misleading advice for today's combat arms soldiers. An editorial note forewarning the reader of major differences between today's training techniques and doctrine and those of the past would have made good sense.

For example, Generals Jacob Devers and George Patton may have preached the benefits of "marching fire," "ridiculing those suffering from battle fatigue," and "tanks used as artillery" in 1946. But this advice has no place in today's professional literature. We would be better served if INFANTRY featured the lessons learned by the Israeli army in dealing with stress casualties or by a more technical view explaining that today's main battle tankers do not train for indirect fire missions.

Today's weapon systems need to be used to their fullest potential. The use of "marching fire" and of "tanks as close artillery" undermines these capabilities and makes for dumb tactics.

I did enjoy most of this article.

JOHN N. LESKO, JR.
CPT, Armor
Watertown, Massachusetts

AMBUSH

This letter is in response to "Platoon Live Fire Ambush," by Lieutenant Chris G. Pappas (INFANTRY, May-June 1988, pp. 40-42) and Captain David Walter's letter on the same subject (November-December 1988, p. 4).

Lieutenant Pappas says that in one training exercise, machineguns, even when mounted on a tripod, weren't as effective in covering the kill zone as one would expect. Machineguns should be sited to enfilade the target (fire along the long axis) whenever possible. The ideal way to do this is to position the gun in the short leg of an "L-shaped" ambush. Lieutenant Pappas's target array prevented this, since a gun so sited would have endangered the people handling the target array. That's not a criticism, just a point that should be remembered when drawing lessons from training exercises—sometimes safety considerations affect the outcome.

Captain Walter says that a claymore is not the proper weapon to use in initiating an ambush. I beg to differ! I know of only one weapon that even approaches the claymore, and that's the old "soda straw," the M67 90mm recoilless rifle with canister.

The success of an ambush is directly proportionate to the number of casualties inflicted by the first shot. Units that use shouts, whistles, or pistol shots to initiate ambushes usually find out rather quickly the error of their ways. Even rifle fire can be ineffective—as any hunter who has ever had "buck fever" can testify.

The ultimate ambush-initiating weapon would be one that kills the entire enemy party instantaneously. The claymore comes close to filling the bill here. We often used several claymores sited to thoroughly cover the kill zone (use a 10-cap blasting machine, not a clacker, to set them off). Because any survivors will run away from the blasts, claymores provide an added benefit—they can be positioned so that they drive the survivors deeper into the kill zone, thus increasing the effectiveness of other weapons.

In areas where we had successfully used mechanical ambushes (claymores with trip wires), we found that using claymores alone (without small arms fire) worked quite well—survivors would think the point had hit another mechanical ambush and would go for help. The rescue party would come up (often easily visible, since they carried kerosene lamps made from empty cartridge cases), and they in turn would be ambushed.

VERNON HUMPHREY
MAJ, Retired
Seaford, Virginia

CROSSED MUSKETS

Reference "The Crossed Muskets," by Second Lieutenant J.C. Kaskie, reprinted in your November-December 1988 issue (page 3), the article does not mention the "problem" of which musket, right or left, should be depicted overlying the other.

Captain J.M. McDuff in *United States Army Officer's Collar Insignia: 1902-1976* (J. Watson, P.O. Box 33, Steelville, MO 65565), depicts a left-over-right arrangement (with one exception) for our branch insigna. This was in response to a new and revised "General Regulation" on the U.S. Army Uniform (see General Order #81 dated 17 July 1902). In 1907 the present "switch" to right over left occurred. McDuff's book depicts this change but does not provide the reasons for it.

Which is legitimate in terms of heraldry? Right over left or left over right?

TERRY W. HARMON
MAJ, Infantry, USAR
Granite City, Illinois

EDITOR'S NOTE: Major Harmon's question was referred to the Army's Institute of Heraldry, and the following is the Institute's reply:

Since its introduction in 1875 there have been several versions of the Infantry Insignia of Branch. Apparently due to lack of specifications, illustrations, or

descriptions, the insignia was manufactured either way (left over right or right over left) depending upon the manufacturer of the item.

The correct insignia is the one with the right musket over the left.

The Institute of Heraldry initiated a quality assurance program in the late 1950s to ensure, among other things, that insignia were manufactured from a standard design. Additionally, manufacturers of items worn on the uniform must borrow the tools from the Army, thereby assuring uniformity.

The principles of heraldry state that the object "in bend" (right) surmounts that "in bend sinister" (left side) when objects are crossed. This is qualified, however, with the statement "unless otherwise stated." It is not an ironclad rule but rather a guideline. Generally, this guideline is followed by this Institute.

ROBERT F. BAKER
COL, U.S.A.
Institute of Heraldry
Cameron Station, Virginia

SOUNDS AND WEATHER

I am studying two aspects of battlefield experience—sounds and weather—and would appreciate hearing from anyone who has been in combat, or from military history buffs who have been there in spirit.

I am seeking succinct word pictures, vignettes, or re-creations from any source, professional or private, as experienced from a sensory point of view.

What did you hear when facing the enemy? Include vivid descriptions of foreground sounds—the combatants themselves (human reactions, conversation, exclamations, personal reactions) under fire and during lulls; or background sounds—the battle itself (activities of your own and enemy ground-sea-air weapon systems, the enemy himself, weather, animal-bird-insect-plant life).

What was the weather like before, during, or after specific battles (temperature, sky condition, wind, humidity, precipitation)? Please include the date and time of day.

I am also interested in notable published accounts depicting "battle sounds" and "battle weather," regardless of who, when, and where.

When I receive enough meaningful input, I will be able to compile an overall paper on these findings and will include the names of contributors on the mailing list.

Please write to me at 140-10 Franklin Avenue (B44), Flushing, NY 11355-2626.

MICHAEL J. MOONEY

4th BATTALION, 18th INFANTRY

On 19 June 1989, the 1st Battalion, 48th Infantry is scheduled to be redesignated the 4th Battalion, 18th Infantry. We are therefore looking for photographs, stories, or historical data readers may have pertaining to the 4th Battalion, 18th Infantry.

The contributions should be sent to Commander, 1st Battalion, 48th Infantry, ATTN: 1LT Gaal, APO New York 09091. Any questions may be directed to Lieutenant Gaal at 011-49-6051-696/818.

DAVID H. STAPLETON
1LT, Infantry

REUNION OF 33d INFANTRY DIVISION

Veterans of all the units that served in the 33d Infantry Division (World Wars I and II) will gather 27 September to 1 October 1989 in Indianapolis, Indiana, at the Hilton Hotel.

For information contact me at P.O. Box 532, Kirkland, WA 98083-0532; telephone (206) 822-4000 or 745-0252.

BILL ENDICOTT
Convention Chairman

REUNION OF BIG RED ONE

The Society of the First Division, which is composed of men who served in World War I, World War II, Vietnam, and in peacetime, will hold its 71st Annual Reunion 2-6 August 1989 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

For information, contact me at 5 Montgomery Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118.

ARTHUR L. CHAITT
Executive Director

HAVEN FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL

The Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Club in New York City, a few blocks from the Empire State Building, is available to enlisted personnel from all branches of service. It is also open to cadets from the U.S. Military Academy and midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy. One floor is specifically reserved for female personnel. The charge is $20 a night.

Support for the club, a non-profit organization, depends upon contributions from the public sector.

Enlisted personnel may call for reservations, 24 hours a day, at (212) 683-4353. Spouses and children over the age of 12 are also welcome.

PHILIP A. SERPICO
Executive Director

PHOTOGRAPHS NEEDED

The Command and Staff Department, U.S. Army Armor School, is in the process of establishing a photographic display of current armor battalion/cavalry squadron and heavy brigade/cavalry regiment commanders.

We need current 8X10 color photographs of infantry colonels, in Class A uniform, who command heavy brigades with at least one armor battalion assigned.

Photographs should be sent to Professional Development Division, USAARMS, ATTN: ATSB-CS-PDD-T, Fort Knox, KY 40121-5211.

MELVIN J. LITTIG
LTC, U.S.A.