

INFANTRY LETTERS



U-COFT EFFECTIVENESS

In response to the article "U-COFT Effectiveness," by Walter G. Butler (INFANTRY, March-April 1991, pages 15-18), the M1/M2 U-COFT is an effective gunnery tool when it is used as part of a gunnery training program. The author implies that the U-COFT is the end-all to qualification. It is not, and it is important to realize that a gunnery training program also includes gunner selection, crew selection, the Bradley Gunnery Skills Test (BGST), fire command training, manipulation training, gun theory, and motivation.

After a number of years with the Bradley at Fort Benning, two Bradley company commands, and now at the National Training Center, I still see instances in which crews cannot properly load their weapons, boresight their systems, or fix minor malfunctions. The U-COFT cannot train a crew in these areas.

To conduct a successful gunnery program, a commander must first pick and stabilize his crews. All the crews must then pass the BGST, take part in gun theory classes, practice gun lay and manipulation, and then conduct U-COFT training.

The author of the article also says a crew that does not do well in the U-COFT will not do well during live fire gunnery. This is true. But a good commander, along with his master gunner, will look at the printout from the U-COFT to determine which area that crew is weak in and assign it to remedial training to correct its deficiencies. Then the crew will go back into the U-COFT, successfully complete its exercises, and be on its way to an outstanding qualification.

The article refers to a crew receiving two hours of U-COFT training a month and completing 50 exercises in four to

five months. This is not quick enough. If a crew receives only two hours a month, these soldiers will not retain enough and their skills will continue to degrade.

Each battalion size unit has its own U-COFT. With an aggressive scheduling program orchestrated by the S-3, and using all the instructor operators available in the battalion, a company could get each of its crews 8 to 12 hours of U-COFT time a month. This would result in highly trained crews and would be workable, given a normal unit's other duties such as guard, police, and other scheduled training.

The U-COFT is a great simulation, but it cannot stand alone in training killer crews. The Air Force also uses simulations to train its pilots, but it couples this training with a number of flying hours. The Army should do the same thing and couple the U-COFT with good hands-on training to turn out highly trained and motivated Bradley crews.

JOHN F. DAGOSTINO
MAJ, Infantry
National Training Center
Fort Irwin, California

MARKSMANSHIP WITH CHEMICAL MASKS

While I understand that INFANTRY does not necessarily reflect the official Army position, and that its "Swap Shop" items represent an exchange of ideas, I am very concerned about the item in the March-April 1991 issue (page 44) on marksmanship with chemical protective masks.

This item presents a method of firing an M16 rifle while wearing an M17 protective mask. While this method may yield acceptable accuracy with the rifle,

it poses serious threats to the mask and the soldier in a chemical environment. The major concern with using this method is the likelihood of breaking the man-mask seal. This could expose the soldier to the very chemicals from which the mask is designed to protect him.

A secondary concern is the possibility of damaging the voicemitter, which might not cause leakage immediately but could render the mask unserviceable.

A doctrinally sound technique for mission oriented protective posture (MOPP) is shown in FM 23-9, M16A1 and M16A2 Rifle Marksmanship. This method offers acceptable accuracy and does not place the soldier or the mask at risk. Additionally, the U.S. Army Chemical School is now coordinating with the Infantry School in an effort to expand Common Task #071-311-2007, Engage Targets with an M16A1 and M16A2 Rifle, to include MOPP conditions and MOPP firing techniques.

JAN R. ROBERTS
COL, Chemical
Director of Training
U.S. Army Chemical School
Fort McClellan, Alabama

RIFLE MARKSMANSHIP

I read with interest the two articles on rifle marksmanship in INFANTRY's March-April 1991 issue—"Rifle Marksmanship Lessons," by Captain Philip K. Abbott (pages 38-39), and "Marksmanship and the 'New Focus,'" by Captain J. Mark Chenoweth (pages 39-41). As a retired Marine master gunnery sergeant, I hope the Army does consider instituting the suggested changes, especially in returning to the known-distance (KD) range.

Every Marine up through gunnery sergeant, and up to the age of 40, fires

his service rifle annually. (Marine officers have similar requirements.) All staff noncommissioned officers and field grade officers also must requalify annually with the pistol until their separation from active duty.

In recent years, the Corps has placed more emphasis on marksmanship. Failure to requalify with his authorized weapon can be damaging to a Marine's career; the failure is noted on his fitness report, which in today's shrinking and competitive Corps all but guarantees that he won't be selected for promotion.

Negative incentives aside, annual requalification on a KD course makes sense. It gave those of us who were not infantry and not in combat arms-related military occupational specialties an opportunity to become comfortable with and knowledgeable of our weapons. I was never a distinguished shooter, but I did shoot expert at various times. I also always knew I was going to qualify, if only to set the example to those around me.

Shooting the range was a challenge, and it was fun. It boosted my morale to break from some desk assignment and get out in the predawn, call my shots, and receive the instant gratification of seeing the white disk roll past the target from 500 meters. It gave me confidence in my fellow Marines, for I really believed that Marines, on the average, were the best military riflemen in the world. Over the years, I got better and enjoyed giving hints and tips to junior Marines. I took pride, when I had the opportunity, in giving marksmanship classes and then watching those Marines who listened apply the principles taught on the range.

Like all Marines, I learned early in my career, and later in Vietnam, that it isn't the noise from the rifle or the number of rounds you put out that counts. It is the hits, and that takes discipline. You won't hit anything if you don't believe in your shooting abilities and don't know your weapon.

I was with a unit of Korean Marines set up in a predawn ambush in the Vietnamese countryside when they spotted a single Viet Cong soldier, returning as point from a night mission.

Several of the Korean fire teams, apparently lacking in marksmanship training, opened up on the soldier from 300 yards and missed. As he beat a path toward the nearest treeline, a U.S. Marine corporal working with the Koreans dropped him at 500 yards from the off-hand with one 7.62mm round from his M14 rifle. Was this just a lucky shot? Maybe. But the Marine smiled and said, "Not bad for a guy who barely managed to qualify as a marksman in boot camp!" I believe he hit that Viet Cong soldier because he knew he would.

Over the years I watched the Marine Corps introduce the Weaponeer and experiment with other simulators. These are wonderful training devices, but they are used to reenforce what Marines have learned through firing the KD course annually, not as a substitute for that firing.

In today's high-tech military environment, we often forget that being able to shoot accurately is what soldiering is all about. A good rifleman, with one well-aimed shot, can slow and pin down a large unit. That also saves money in expended artillery and air-delivered ordnance. It is demoralizing to an enemy to be picked off at a great distance. Disciplined and well-trained riflemen don't fire on automatic at everything that moves. Rear echelon Marines, when trained, prove to be very effective riflemen in the defensive. Usually, when the fighting does come to them, it gets dangerously close—too close for anything but rifle, pistol, and bayonet. They had better understand their weapons and be confident in their shooting abilities. If they're not, they will put their selectors on automatic, pile up empty magazines, and run empty at a time when resupply is, at best, tenuous.

If possible, every man and woman in the Army should have lessons learned on a KD course drilled into them and should take as much pride in mastering their weapon as they do in mastering their other military skills.

The Army has some intelligent, well motivated men and women who deserve to be taught such basic skills. Captain Abbott's suggestions come from a

proven training system. I feel confident that the soldiers in the Army would respond favorably to returning to a similar system, and that the benefits would show up where it counts — on the battlefield.

R.R. KEENE
Assistant Editor
LEATHERNECK
Quantico, Virginia

LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

Colonel Richard T. Rhoades' article "Low Intensity Conflict: What Captains Should Study" (INFANTRY, March-April 1991, pages 10-12) is a good vehicle for further thinking about the future that faces us all, so I'd like to straphang on his comments with some thoughts and tips of my own.

He correctly identifies the term "LIC" as a basket (or perhaps "basket case") that holds diverse operations. And, as one that has taken on a life of its own, it is counterproductive to an understanding of the nature of the environment. Some would argue vehemently that the intensity of the "small war" in Panama was anything but low.

Pre-deployment training may be key to success (or prevention of failure) in an environment in which the psychological is to the tactical as the World Series is to T-ball. As elements of the 7th Infantry Division found in Panama before JUST CAUSE, and as our DESERT SHIELD troops found, seemingly innocuous actions can have consequences out of all proportion to their size—witness the daily confrontations with the Panamanian Defense Force, or the sight of female soldiers in PT gear in Saudi Arabia.

While Colonel Rhoades suggests liaison with the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency, I suggest a call or visit to the regionally oriented special operations element to whose area a unit will deploy. Special Forces, civil affairs, and psychological operations units (both Active Army and Reserve Component) are required to be culturally aware of their area of

operations, must have been down range numerous times, and must have a language capability (albeit limited in some areas).

As the beginning of an acclimatization program that should identify what's important in what is likely to be a very different society, the S-2 or G-2 should obtain a copy of the basic psychological study that outlines the society, its culture, and its mores.

For some readings that sharply illustrate the different (and often difficult) nature of military operations short of war, I offer an article and three books:

In the article, "Uncomfortable Wars: Towards a New Paradigm" (PARAMETERS, U.S. Army War College, Volume XVI, No. 4), General John Galvin, no stranger to warfare anywhere along the conflict continuum, writes eloquently that as the nature of the threat to our national interests changes, leaders must expand their thinking about the nature of warfare and about how we might adapt to a changing reality (as we saw Longstreet trying to persuade Lee in *The Killer Angels*).

The three books that speak to the frustrations of, and operations in, military operations short of war are *The War of the Running Dogs* (Malaya, 1948-1960); *Street Without Joy*, by Bernard Fall (First IndoChina War, 1946-1954); and *A Savage War of Peace*, by Alistair Horne (Algeria, 1954-1962).

I have not recommended any works on our involvement in Vietnam, but I believe strongly that each of us must study that war from all sides and come to our own understanding about its meaning. Don't let the talking heads and Hollywood tell you what the Vietnam Syndrome means. It is only slightly incongruous that most of us young guys know more about the three days at Gettysburg than we know about our longest war.

Finally, Colonel Rhoades orients the map to the ground by stating that "we must study and prepare now for low intensity conflict operations" — study and preparation that cause a soldier to believe that in this most psychological of all operational environments, indi-

vidual actions can have strategic consequences. In a scenario where the LIC imperatives of political dominance, unity of effort, adaptability, legitimacy, and perseverance are overriding, an understanding of their role in mission accomplishment should be a weapon that is part of every unit's basic load.

ROBERT C. LEICHT
MAJ, Special Forces
Thousand Oaks, California

M3 AS TOW VEHICLE

I read with great interest Lieutenant Colonel E.W. Chamberlain's suggestion that antiarmor companies should be equipped with the M3 Bradley instead of the improved TOW vehicle (ITV). (See letter in INFANTRY's March-April 1991 issue, page 3.) As one of the wags who originally dubbed the ITV the "interim TOW Vehicle," I've long wondered why the M3 wasn't adopted for tank killing duty in these companies.

If Colonel Chamberlain's suggestion receives serious attention, though, several modifications to the antiarmor platoon's TOE should be considered.

First, a dismountable TOW system should be included as part of the vehicle's equipment. (Currently, the TOW components of the Bradley are permanently installed.) This would mean the addition of a missile guidance set (MGS), a traversing unit, a launch tube, a tripod, and at least two battery assemblies for the MGS. Say what you want about the M901 and M220 TOW vehicles, at least their crews enjoy the tactical option of dismounting their TOW systems.

Second, the antiarmor squad should be increased from four to five soldiers to allow for a three-man heavy weapons dismount team. The fifth soldier, a dismount loader (IH), would load the TOW system while it was ground mounted. This soldier would also help provide local security while the squad remained mounted. The Bradley TOW loader (IH) would serve as the dismount TOW gunner. These two soldiers and the squad leader would form the heavy

weapons dismount team. If the squad leader elected to keep the squad mounted, the Bradley TOW loader and the dismount TOW loader would also man an observation post.

Third, a laser designator should be part of the squad's equipment. FM 6-30 describes several different types of designators that antiarmor squads could be equipped with, depending upon the terrain. This would allow the dismount heavy weapons team to deploy a tripod-mounted laser designator if the situation warranted it.

The addition of a laser designator would not supplant the mission of the Air Force's forward air controllers or the field artillery forward observers, or the helicopter scouts, for that matter. Rather, it would improve the battalion task force's ability to acquire targets. The gunnery skills of IH soldiers will prepare them to use a laser designator. The fire control discipline of antiarmor sections and platoons goes a long way toward avoiding duplicate laser designation errors.

The antiarmor company, working with the FSO and the S-3 Air, could provide vital sets of highly trained eyes to spot and defeat enemy target arrays at long range. This mission would greatly strengthen the company's over-watch capabilities, reduce friendly fire casualties, and point the way to the future.

Antiarmor squads of the twenty-first century are likely to have a variety of tank killing weapons. Kinetic energy weapons will penetrate heavier enemy armor at greater ranges. Dual-power directed energy weapons will defeat enemy optical guidance systems and guide smart munitions. Ground-launched guided missiles fired from behind terrain features will seek out laser designated enemy vehicles. Automatic grenade launchers of heavier caliber and greater range will defeat and mark thin-skinned vehicles in dead spaces on the battlefield.

We could develop twenty-first century tactics for these weapons with equipment that is in the inventory today. The M3 Bradley will provide a wonderfully adaptable antiarmor weapon platform

for years to come, but only if we adopt Colonel Chamberlain's suggestion soon.

W.H. HAYES
1LT, Infantry
U.S. Army Reserve
Lincoln, Nebraska

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

The 10th Annual Reunion of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge will take place 5-8 September 1991 in Charleston, South Carolina. All servicemen who served in the Battle of the Bulge, their families, and friends, are invited to attend.

Anyone who would like additional information may write to me at P.O. Box 11129-R, Arlington, VA 22210-2129.

NANCY C. MONSON

FORMER FORT BENNING RESIDENTS

Fort Benning is supporting a plan to make each set of quarters on the post that is more than 50 years old a monument to the people who have lived there. There are 492 such quarters. The plan is to place inside each set of quarters small metal plates bearing the occupants' names and dates of occupancy.

The program is now directed at

officers only, but it may grow to include enlisted residents later.

The post has records of occupants from 1977 forward, and the residency of some officers before then has been pinned down. What we need now is to locate some old post directories or telephone books dated before 1977, and to identify individuals who have lived on the post in past years who might be able to help round out our information.

Anyone who can help with this project may contact me at 3616 N. 36th Road, Arlington, VA 22207, telephone (703) 527-6181; or Colonel B.D. Wheeler, 5001 Donna Sue Drive, Columbus, GA 31907, telephone (404) 563-0453.

ELLIS W. WILLIAMSON
MG, U.S. Army (Retired)

LETTERS FROM DESERT STORM/SHIELD

I am seeking first-person accounts of Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM or the aftermath — letters, diaries, essays, jokes, audio-cassette recordings — for national publication in a new book, *Letters from the Storm*, a portrait of the American experience in the Persian Gulf, in the words of the men and women who took part.

Send written materials, IBM-compatible diskettes (3½-inch or 5¼-inch), audiocassettes to me at 4401-A Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 296,

Washington, DC 20008; fax to (202) 244-4523; E-mail to MCI Mail ID #4661205.

Be sure to include your name, rank, address, age, and unit. Confidentiality will be respected. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of materials. If you have any questions, call me at (202) 364-8625.

STEPHEN MENICK

UNIT HISTORY BIBLIOGRAPHY

I am in the process of compiling the second supplement to my *United States Army Unit Histories: A Reference and Bibliography*, published in 1983.

I would like to include in that supplement any unit histories published by units that participated in Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM. If your unit intends to or has published a history, no matter how small, I would appreciate knowing about it so I may include the title in that supplement.

I would also be interested in hearing from other units that may have printed books, booklets, or pamphlets, or that may have printed yearbooks or histories concerning their units. I maintain a large library of such titles for my research and am always interested in obtaining more. I am willing to pay for them.

My address is 97 Mayfield Street, Springfield, MA 01108.

JAMES T. CONTROVICH

