Commandant's NOTE

MAJOR GENERAL JERRY A. WHITE Chief of Infantry

TAKING CARE OF THE SOLDIER — EQUIPPING HIM

In his first speech as Chief of Staff of the Army, General Gordon R. Sullivan affirmed the importance of the individual soldier. He said, "Our warfighting edge is the combined effort of quality people, trained to razor sharpness, outfitted with modern equipment, led by tough, competent leaders, structured into an appropriate mix of forces by type, and employed according to up-to-date doctrine . . . . *I am certain the single most important factor is the soldier.*"

The TRADOC commander has made the soldier a top priority throughout the command. For example, the acronym DTLOM — *doctrine, training, leader development, organization,* and *materiel* — has been used to attack problems in the past. But this acronym has been changed to DTLOMS, with the *S* standing for *soldier.* This reemphasizes that all TRADOC efforts must consider the soldier's needs, which are truly a top priority.

As the Chief of Infantry I have been asked to be the "conscience of the Army for the soldier" with the primary aim of improving the combat effectiveness of all soldiers.

An extensive Soldier Modernization Plan (SMP) will combine the Army's many efforts to improve soldier effectiveness and to influence both current and new technology. While the first fully integrated Soldier System will not be fielded until the year 2000, the SMP outlines many near and mid-term improvements to our current capability.

Congress is providing research and development money to "increase the combat effectiveness of . . . infantrymen (foot soldiers) through the development of lighter, more lethal Infantry weapons and improved equipment." This is all part of the Soldier Enhancement Program (SEP).

Briefly, the SEP allows for the review of non-developmental (off-the-shelf) items and for speeding research and development on soldier items. This will allow our soldiers to receive new equipment as fast as possible. The SEP is a joint program coordinated with the United States Marine Corps' Marine Enhancement Program. The SEP focuses on weapons and munitions; combat clothing and individual equipment; food, water, and shelter; and communication and navigation aids.

The intermediate cold/wet glove is one of the items already developed through this program. It uses the current technology that is also used in the ski gloves many soldiers now purchase. The first issue of the new glove will be to the 82d Airborne Division in January 1992.

Other items developed under this program include an improved desert boot, a lightweight flashlight, an assault pack for M249 squad automatic weapon (SAW) ammunition, a flameless ration heater that will be issued with new MREs (meals, ready to eat), and the type classification of the M4 carbine. These items have been bought and issued for evaluation to such units as the 75th Ranger Regiment and the 82d Airborne Division.

Some items still under development show promise. These include a lighter helmet with an