



Commandant's NOTE

MAJOR GENERAL JERRY A. WHITE Chief of Infantry

INFANTRY—CENTERPIECE OF A FORCE PROJECTION ARMY

The United States Army ranked 17th among the armies of the world when Wehrmacht units invaded Poland in 1939. We had three infantry divisions at half strength and six more in various stages of organization. Technologically and doctrinally, we had improved little in the two decades since World War I. Within six years, however, the United States Army would expand to a force of more than eight million men and women, totaling 89 divisions. Technological improvements, some of them borrowed from our future adversaries, kept pace with the mobilization, and Allied forces were soon able to regain the initiative.

The United States Army's ability to recover from its period of stagnation was due in large part to the foresight of its senior leadership and its willingness to critically examine its doctrine and training. This willingness to challenge our assumptions and concepts continues today, and the 1993 Infantry Commander's Conference reflects the evolutionary nature of our doctrine through the Battle Lab concept and its relevance to force projection.

The United States Army Infantry School has proponenty for the entire Infantry branch, including the mechanized force, and exercises the vertical integration of Infantry requirements. With this in mind, the Battle Lab exercises the horizontal integration of all combined arms requirements for the dismounted soldier. Vertical integration encompasses proponent issues within the Infantry branch, while horizontal integration—a function of battlespace—cuts across all branches and functional areas. Battlespace issues require close coordination with battle labs at the other branch schools on matters which affect dismounted operations.

This year's conference affords the Infantry community the opportunity to discuss the latest doctrinal, technological, and materiel developments and their relevance to the smaller, highly trained, and lethal force that we will lead into the next century. The focus of our effort is the infantryman and the training and equipment it will take to assure his dominance on the future battlefield. A great strength of our Army has been its willingness to critically examine its warfighting doctrine, and then to institute improvements based upon that experience.

This is not a new concept. As a staff officer of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in World War I, Colonel George C. Marshall observed firsthand the materiel and training shortcomings of the AEF. Twenty years later, as Chief of Staff, he was faced with the monumental task of building an Army that would face—and ultimately defeat—Axis forces in the Pacific, North Africa, and Europe.

The task confronting General Marshall was not a small one. Since

1939, the emerging German Army had been developing—and had successfully tested in battle—the doctrine and the equipment to conduct mobile armored warfare on an unprecedented scale, and those improvements were being closely followed by our own military planners. By the spring of 1941, the United States Army had fielded improved artillery, a light tank, and an antitank gun patterned after an earlier German model. The Army Air Force had begun flying the A-24, a dive bomber inspired by the German JU-87 Stuka.

Our Army's force structure had changed as well; the old square division of World War I was being replaced by the triangular division—a concept borrowed from the Germans—which was organized for maneuver warfare. Under the new organization, echelons had their own supporting fires and could hence conduct coordinated attacks without relying on the rolling barrages and frontal assaults that had proved so costly on the battlefields of France two decades earlier.

By the summer of 1941, the United States Army had the operational doctrine, the equipment, and the beginnings of a force large enough to respond to the ever-increasing threats in Asia and Europe. In the fall of that year, this mobilization culminated in field-army level maneuvers held in Louisiana and the Carolinas. These maneuvers were the first field-army level test of our Army's logistical, fire support, communications, and maneuver systems since World War I. Although the results were not all positive, they provided the impetus for many changes in the way we were to fight World War II.

Early in 1992, planning began on modern-day Louisiana Maneuvers. While the historical perspective and name are taken from the 1941 exercises, the scope and implications of today's efforts far surpass those of the earlier exercises. The General Headquarters Maneuvers of 1941 were run in response to a clearly defined threat, and with an Army emerging from 20 years of neglect. The force fielded in the 1941 maneuvers reflected the beginnings of our emergence from the technological, doctrinal, and organizational doldrums. Today, however, we approach the Louisiana Maneuvers from a different position. Technologically, doctrinally, and organizationally, our Army is better prepared than ever to defend our national interests. The challenge we face is to plan for the known array of worldwide threats while structuring ourselves for threats that are still over the horizon. We have already focused on the current issues such as North Korea, Somalia, Iraq, Central America, the Balkans, and other hot spots; now we must focus on issues which are presently only peripheral, but which could move quickly to center stage.

To meet this challenge, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff has identified a number of issues that are important to the Army and has tasked propo-

ment schools to address them. An action plan and process have been developed, and the Training and Doctrine Command, Forces Command, and Army Materiel Command are working their respective issues. An impressive array of information-gathering tools is at our disposal; data has been—and will continue to be—drawn from worldwide exercises and simulations such as Operation Restore Hope, Prairie Warrior, Dragon Hammer, Ulchi-Focus Lens, and any other events that yield information that could benefit our force in the future.

The new Louisiana Maneuvers will continue to provide information enabling us to update and refine our data base. The end product will be enhanced strategic agility and improved decision-making ability throughout the force. The utility of this data base is readily evident in the Battle Lab concept, which was implemented in June 1992.

The concept of the future infantry is taking shape in the Dismounted Warfighting Battle Lab (DWBL) at Fort Benning, which will draw upon the Prairie Warrior simulation exercise at Fort Leavenworth for information on such issues as Owning the Night and Second-Generation Forward Looking Infrared Radar (FLIR) technologies. Along with the Mounted Battle Lab at Fort Knox, the Depth and Simultaneous Attack Battle Lab at Fort Sill and Fort Bliss, the Command and Control and Battle Tempo Battle Lab at Fort Leavenworth, the Combat Service Support Battle Lab at Fort Lee, and the Early Entry Battle Lab at Fort Monroe, the DWBL is working toward the common purpose of being able to put a well-trained, well-equipped infantry unit on the ground, provide the fire support it needs, and sustain it until it has accomplished the mission. In order to accomplish all this, DWBL is focusing its efforts on a number of areas, each of which will build upon present expertise.

The DWBL is an agency staffed out of existing assets at Fort Benning, in which a number of Infantry School agencies have combined their energies to reach a common goal. Originally formed out of resources from the Concepts and Analysis Division, Directorate of Combat Developments, the DWBL now adds the doctrinal writing expertise of the Directorate of Combined Arms and Tactics and the training developments expertise of the Directorate of Operations and Training. These and other directorates and agencies have joined efforts to meet the challenge of equipping, training, and fielding the dismounted force of the next century.

As the proponent for dismounted warfighting doctrine and technology, Fort Benning is focusing efforts on several critical tasks. The first of these is to optimize the night fighting capability of the combined arms force. Our training and equipment in this area have undergone quantum improvements since the Vietnam War. Advances in thermal and image intensification technology have given us a decisive edge on the battlefield. Our forces' domination of the nighttime ground and air battle has reached a level that was inconceivable 20 years ago. But we cannot afford to become complacent; potential adversaries are also striving for the control of the night, and our lead in this area must be expanded to include combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) units.

In order to extend the envelope for detection and engagement, we will draw upon advanced FLIR, focal plane arrays, and visible-to-medium-wave infrared to help the commander maneuver and sustain his force at night.

We must also sharpen the target acquisition capability of the entire combined arms force, again including CS and CSS units, whose ability to defend themselves under all conditions will influence the outcome of the battle. Although our weapon systems now enjoy a comfortable range advantage—as demonstrated by our tank

crews in the Gulf War—future potential enemies may not give up until they have achieved parity or superiority in this area. We cannot afford to let this happen; our ongoing target acquisition initiatives will extend our engagement ranges on limited visibility battlefields, and will continue to let our forces engage the enemy beyond the engagement range of his own weapon systems. Optimal state-of-the-art target acquisition systems will also significantly reduce the likelihood of fratricide by enabling our soldiers to better discriminate between friend and foe.

Target acquisition is the first step in neutralizing the enemy's weapon systems; equally important is the increased lethality of our own direct and indirect fire weapons. We are taking a close look at both our M16A2 rifle and our M249 machinegun, using such tools as analysis of defensive live-fire data to improve fire distribution techniques. We are calling upon industry to provide the sensors, electronics, munitions, optics, and related systems necessary for upgrading our small arms capability. The United States Army Natick Research, Development, and Engineering Center is working on a helmet-mounted target acquisition display. The indirect fire weapons are receiving their share of attention as well. A new 155mm light howitzer will improve the mobility of the fire support available to the maneuver force commander, while precision-guided mortar rounds will increase the lethality of his organic indirect fire support. We expect significant advances in submunition technology as well, which will further degrade the enemy's force during the close fight. Fratricide prevention is receiving increased attention with continued research on combat identification for the dismounted soldier.

Tied in with all the improvements in night fighting, target acquisition, and increased lethality is the issue of the survivability of the dismounted soldier. Our intent is to provide him with the technology to enhance both his performance and his survivability. To accomplish this, we will develop better communications systems, lighten his load, and provide him with optical, aural, and seismic sensors to sharpen his awareness of his surroundings. New, lighter weight materials will let him move faster; stealth technology camouflage will reduce his optical and thermal visibility; and digital communication will improve his command and control.

The sum total of these efforts will be a soldier who is far more combat effective than his counterpart of today. An improved biological detection capability will likewise contribute to the combat effectiveness and survivability of the dismounted soldier. Through the use of robotics and standoff systems, we will enhance his ability to detect chemical and biological agents, while advanced protection systems and antidotes and antibodies will improve the survivability of soldiers exposed to these agents. The benefits of these initiatives are many: We will be better able to detect enemy capabilities; we can plan according to the threat; we can employ means of deterring enemy biological attack; and we can reduce the number of casualties if an attack does occur. The net gain from all of this will be the increased confidence the soldier has in himself and his equipment, and his increased combat effectiveness.

This, therefore, is the role of the DWBL. It is one key element of the Army's concept of all branches working toward a common goal. The United States Army has come a long way since those ominous months before World War II, but we can still learn from that experience. The lesson is that we must continue to assess the way we do business and maintain the lead in doctrinal, technological, and training developments, for such an advantage—once lost—can be regained only at tremendous cost in lives, money, and national prestige.