

through serving in the student chain of command, conducting peer evaluations, and competing in map reading and drill and ceremony competitions.

Applicants must meet the following qualifications:

- Be U.S. citizens or able to become citizens before 1 July of the year they graduate from USMAPS.

- At least 17 years of age but not over 21 prior to 1 July of the year in which attendance is desired.

- Unmarried, with no legal dependents.

- High School graduates or GED equivalent.

- Medically qualified for admission to the Military Academy. Vision must be correctable to 20/20 with glasses. Pregnancy results in medical disqualification.

- Of high moral character, with no civilian or military felony conviction and no history of venereal infection or

of alcohol or drug abuse.

- Highly motivated toward careers as officers.

Anyone who is interested may obtain further information by calling the Admissions Office, DSN 992-1807/1808, commercial (908) 532-1807/1808; or by writing to Commandant, USMAPS, MAPS-ADM, Fort Monmouth, NJ 07703-5000.

SWAP SHOP



KEEPING THE M17 MASK IN ITS CARRIER

A soldier's basic protection against a biological or chemical threat is his M17 series protective mask. Although the mask itself works well, the carrier it is stored in does not. The biggest drawback is that the flap used to keep the mask in the carrier will not stay snapped, and it usually opens at the most inappropriate time—during critical individual movements while assaulting an objective, or while on night patrols in thick vegetation or a swamp.

Some soldiers have tried to solve this problem by wrapping tape around their carriers. By far the most popular method is to wrap the carrier leg strap tightly around it and then connect the leg strap hook to one of the metal rings on the carrier. Because the metal rings are between the carrier and the soldier's body, however, they are not easy to reach.

Both of these methods keep the mask in the carrier, but they do not allow the soldier to retrieve the mask in the prescribed, life-saving time standard of nine seconds. I have found that a standard Kevlar helmet camouflage band works well. This is an issue item and costs about 35 cents.

To use the helmet band with the mask carrier, unsnap

the M256 decontamination kit carrying pocket, stretch the helmet band around the mask carrier, place the band under the decontamination kit pocket flap, and snap the flap closed. The helmet band is tight enough to keep the mask in the carrier yet elastic enough to allow it to be removed easily. By hooking the band with the thumb and pushing down or pulling up, a soldier can gain immediate access to his protective mask. The helmet band will still be attached to the carrier by the decontamination kit pocket flap for reuse. A safety pin can also be used to double-secure the band to the carrier. The luminous tape sewn on the helmet band also helps a soldier find the carrier at night when he is not carrying it. With practice, a soldier can retrieve and don his mask within the time standard.

I have carried my mask this way for several years, and it has never failed me. I've parachuted from aircraft, rappelled, conducted water operations, low-crawled, and breached concertina wire, without having the carrier inadvertently open. And it never prevented me from meeting the standards during EIB and CTT training and testing.

The need for a new carrier for the M17 series mask is obvious; meantime, though, we have to use the one we have and make sure the mask is handy when it is needed.

(Submitted by Staff Sergeant Brent Holman, Fort Harrison, Indiana.)

