



Commandant's NOTE

MAJOR GENERAL JERRY A. WHITE Chief of Infantry

Tomorrow's Infantry—A Progress Report

In my Commandant's Note of July-August 1993, I discussed our Infantry Functional Area Assessment and its implications for total force integration, modernization, training, and the role of the Army as we approach the next century. In this issue, I want to bring you up to date on what has been accomplished during the past year, and highlight some of the challenges that still face us.

The entire spectrum of operations other than war (OOTW) will demand more and more of our attention in the years to come. The future role of our Infantry in contingency operations has come into sharper focus with the rapidly changing frequency and type of activity in Somalia, the deployment of peacekeeping forces to Macedonia, the emergence of ancient rivalries in parts of Africa, and even the spectre of political instability in our hemisphere. Today, more than ever before, Infantry units will be the first maneuver forces deployed, and we must ensure that they have the training, equipment, and logistical support to get in, do the job, and return safely. The requirements for rapid deployment, mission accomplishment, force protection, and redeployment comprise a complex equation, but one that is capable of being solved.

The most important element of this equation is the soldier. The Land Warrior fighting system described on Page 12 of this issue of *INFANTRY* is a vision of the dismounted soldier of the future that will incorporate enhanced integrated subsystems of lethality, command and control, survivability, mobility, and sustainment. Land Warrior represents the culmination of the extensive research and development that went into the earlier Soldier's Integrated Protective Ensemble (SIPE), and will enable commanders to influence battlefield tempo and maneuver forces more responsively and effectively than ever before.

A Land Warrior equipped soldier can detect, identify, and determine the location of a target and engage it, either with his own weapons or with systems whose fires he can direct. His effectiveness will be greatly improved by voice, digital, and graphic communications systems at his disposal. His survivability will likewise be enhanced by ballistic and NBC protection, as well as protection against directed energy, flame, and incendiary weapons. The system will reduce the soldier's load and facilitate sustained operations for longer periods of time than present systems. The Land Warrior system is intended as a one-for-one replacement for the sub-systems now in use by the dismounted infantryman.

Another of the challenges that face us is small arms—the tools of the soldier's trade—and the Small Arms Master Plan (SAMP) will ensure that tomorrow's soldier carries the best possible type, mix, and munitions of small arms onto the future battlefield. A number of initiatives are now under way to make this possible. One of them, the modular weapon system for the M16 rifle and the M4 carbine, will have four mounting rails—one above the receiver, one below the barrel, and one on either side of the barrel—to permit the installation and simultaneous availability of a variety of accessories. Some of the accessories currently envisioned include powered optics, collimator sights, night vision devices, laser aiming lights, grenade launchers, flashlights, and the multiple integrated laser engagement system (MILES) small arms transmitter (SAT) training device. Once the system is fielded, commanders will be able to configure a unit's weapons to meet specific mission requirements, and an additional advantage of this system is that a soldier can mount and remount the available accessories without having to rezero it.

In another enhancement, the M4 carbine will be

replacing M16 rifles in selected units beginning in the second quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 1995. The production contract was awarded to Rock Island Arsenal in the third quarter of FY 1993, and the 82d Airborne Division, 10th Mountain Division, 101st Air Assault Division, and 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) will be the first units to receive the new carbines.

The M4 shares approximately 80 percent of its parts with the M16A2 rifle, and there is no operationally significant difference in accuracy or reliability between the two weapons. A close-combat optic will likewise complement the M4 and M16 family of weapons. Recognizing that the use of an aim point type optic with long eye relief will improve both the infantryman's ease of aiming and his situational awareness, the Army Research and Development Command is currently testing four candidate systems to develop and field a red- or blue-dot optic.

Central to the Small Arms Master Plan is the objective individual combat weapon (OICW), the centerpiece of the small arms family. The OICW—intended to replace the M16 rifle, the M4 carbine, the M249 (in its automatic rifle role), and the M203 grenade launcher—will be capable of firing both air bursting high explosive and compact lightweight kinetic energy munitions. Its range-determining laser and day-night sight will give the soldier a high probability of incapacitating point targets out to 500 meters and suppressing area targets out to 1,000 meters.

As envisioned, the OICW will weigh less than a fully loaded M203 system with AN/PVS-4 night sight. The OICW will become the future individual combat weapon for the infantry soldier, and the Infantry School fully supports the research, development, and the field-

ing of the objective individual combat weapon.

These are but a few of the areas in which progress has been made since I last discussed the functional area assessment and its impact on our Army. Other improvements include the 120mm battalion mortar system and its ammunition and fuzes, the improved mortar ballistic computer, a mortar fire control system tied in with the global positioning system, an objective crew-served weapon, a machinegun optic, and the mini eyesafe laser infrared observation set (MELIOS) described in this month's INFANTRY News section.

It is important to remember that we are making these improvements in the face of fiscal constraints not seen in recent memory. Confronted with the realities of a smaller Army, fewer training dollars, reduced resources to support the development of weapons systems, and increasing restrictions on the type and scope of training we can conduct, we need to account for our resources as never before. It is the responsibility of every leader to demand the strictest accountability and ensure that every dollar spent results in tangible benefits to our Army and its soldiers.

These technological advances—and the doctrinal base that will complement them—all attest to the ongoing effort to ensure that the American soldier is the best equipped, best trained, and best supported fighter in the world. The knowledge of this fact alone will deter many potential aggressors. There may remain others who will test our resolve, but the American soldier—backed by the tremendous technological and industrial potential of our Nation—will once again demonstrate his ability to seize the initiative, strike the decisive blow, and dominate the battlefield.

