

From The Editor

GETTING THE RIGHT WORD OUT

Information travels fast in our business, but the problem is that it may not always be accurate. Unfounded rumor and unsupported speculation are often readily accepted as gospel simply because they are more interesting and tend to reinforce what we want to believe anyway. The problem with this approach is that we learn little from it, and that only when it is often too late. Before America entered World War II, Axis leaders wanted to believe that she lacked the will to mobilize her people and her industrial base in response to their aggression. Their propaganda seized upon that theme, and it soon became widely accepted, a miscalculation with catastrophic consequences. Our own underestimation of the North Koreans' capabilities before their invasion of South Korea in June 1950 led to disastrous losses—losses that shocked an America that had so recently emerged victorious from a world war.

In the early stages of our involvement in Vietnam, similar underestimation of the tenacity and tactical skills of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army units was soon replaced by the realization that the tactics of earlier wars were not always the answer. One reason for this underestimation has always been a reluctance to take an honest look at what the enemy has to offer, and to admit that he is a force to be reckoned with. Somehow, we tend to equate this with praising the enemy, which could not be farther from the truth. If we admit an enemy's strengths, they then become *our* strengths, because we have learned from them. And learning is what it is all about.

Today, when we have troops either deployed or awaiting deployment to hot spots around the world, leaders need accurate, timely information they can use to get the job done without unacceptably heavy losses in men and materiel, and that's where INFANTRY comes in. You will still see articles and thought pieces generated by the Battle Lab and the Infantry Force XXI working group that provide a foretaste of what lies in the immediate future and beyond. But you will also see pieces on tactics, training, and equipment that will affect how we fight now, as well as relevant historical articles on how the Army has fought in earlier wars.

At INFANTRY, we cannot afford to waste time with subject matter that is irrelevant to the professional development needs of our readers; instead, INFANTRY will continue to offer practical solutions to the real-world challenges that will confront our infantry leaders and soldiers. Property accountability is one example. Mention of the subject may not bring you to your feet cheering, but lost property has cost many a commander the satisfaction of a successful tour of duty. We ran a piece on that subject last year and had more than 40 requests for the information packet that supported the article. Reader response to articles on Somalia, the Gulf War, and preparation for the combat training centers tell us that we're on track, and we need your continued input to keep us there.

You can also contribute by sharing your own specialized expertise. An example: I need an article on how units—heavy and light—refuel on the move. This is an important factor in maintaining the momentum of operations, and I know the technique is well-known to some of you. If you've done it, write or give me a call, and we'll talk about it. I realize that my feedback on some of your draft articles is not as fast as I'd like it to be, but I'm working through the stack, and I'll get word to you as soon as possible.

As I mentioned, bad information has wings; it travels far and fast. But with your help we can continue to get good information out where it needs to be—in the hands of our leaders and soldiers.

RAE

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