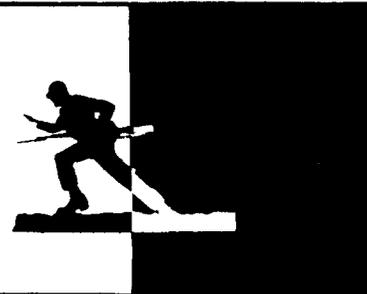


# INFANTRY LETTERS



## DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED CAPABILITY FROM JAVELIN

This letter is in response to Captain Charles L. Hiter's article, "The Antitank Section in Support of a Light Infantry Rifle Platoon" (*INFANTRY*, January–April 2000, pages 15-16).

Captain Hiter does a superb job of describing the added capabilities that an antitank section can provide to a light infantry platoon. He goes into depth exploring the employment of the antitank section with its TOW, Mk 19, and M2 weapon systems in support of light infantry platoons. However, he mentions only briefly the role of the Javelin antitank weapon system. In light of the fact that the fielding of Javelin to the Army is in full stride, it is important that readers also understand the dramatically improved capability this weapon system provides its users.

Javelin was first introduced in 1996 as a replacement for the aging Dragon. It is designed to provide light infantry forces with an effective medium antitank weapon system, capable of destroying any armored vehicle in the world.

Javelin is a man-portable, shoulder-fired, fire-and-forget system with a maximum effective range of 2,500 meters. It has an integrated day/night thermal sight called the command launch unit (CLU). With the missile, it weighs just over 49 pounds, significantly less than the 75-pound Dragon with its day and night sights. Yes, it is still relatively heavy, but it can kill any enemy armor, significantly increasing the lethality and survivability of our light forces. Furthermore, Javelin provides multi-mission capabilities against bunkers, hovering helicopters, and other threat equipment.

To date, Javelin has been fielded to the Rangers, the 82d Airborne Division,

the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry, 2d Infantry Division, and the 10th Mountain Division. Javelin is an integral part of the Army's Transformation Campaign Plan and will be fielded to the remainder of the light forces, brigade combat teams, heavy forces, and the Army National Guard.

The Javelin's leap-ahead technology enables light infantry commanders to stop and defeat enemy armored formations—previously an extremely difficult, if not impossible, mission. Its success at the National Training Center (NTC) has caused the opposing force (OPFOR) to reevaluate the light infantryman's role in armored warfare. No longer can the OPFOR simply bypass or run through light infantry battalions. Javelin has allowed light infantry to hold and defend terrain at the NTC that it could not hold before. Javelin was so effective during its first performance at the NTC that the OPFOR was caught by surprise and quickly designated Javelin a priority intelligence requirement.

Very little has been written regarding tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for the deployment of Javelin. The U.S. Army Infantry School is in the process of completing the field manual for Javelin and expects a Fall 2001 release for distribution. There are, however, some important lessons that have been learned from four NTC rotations in which Javelin played a major role in determining the outcome of each battle:

**Security:** The OPFOR is quick to learn from past experience. They now continually and relentlessly seek out and attempt to destroy Javelin early in the battle. Effective light infantry companies have made Javelin the cornerstone of their defensive positions, always ensuring they are properly secured.

**Emplacement:** If the OPFOR's Task Force Angle does not succeed in

infiltrating and destroying Javelin fighting positions before the battle, it will use chemical and artillery munitions in an attempt to neutralize them. The key to success is to ensure that every Javelin fighting position is properly dug-in, and includes additional missiles.

**Surveillance:** The Javelin thermal sight has proved to be an outstanding night surveillance device. The 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, from Fort Drum, was extremely successful using Javelin in search and destroy missions during its recent Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation. This added capability significantly enhanced the battalion's ability to take the fight to the enemy during limited visibility.

**Resupply:** During Javelin's first NTC rotation, one company—equipped with six Javelin CLUs and multiple missiles—was able to destroy approximately 60 vehicles. This was accomplished due to thorough preplanning and the use of rotary-wing aircraft for resupply during the battle. During another rotation, one company—after successfully defending its position against Task Force Angle—was able to destroy lead elements of the OPFOR before eventually expending all of its missiles. If the unit had been able to resupply that position, it would have had devastating effects on the main element of the OPFOR and significantly altered the outcome of that battle.

Clearly, Javelin will give light infantry commanders overmatch capability on each axis of the Army Transformation Campaign Plan—Legacy, Interim, and Objective. With Javelin, dismounted light forces can successfully engage and destroy modern enemy tanks from any direction, and at ranges safely outside the effective range of the enemy armored vehicles' coaxial machineguns. Javelin's superior lethality,

combined with its extremely small logistical tail, enables the rapid deployment of forces capable of carrying out antitank missions. Furthermore, Javelin's program of pre-planned product improvements will help retain a potent overmatch capability against enemy armored systems until at least the year 2025.

COL JOHN P. WEINZETTLE  
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### **IBCT MUST BE A COMBAT FORMATION, START TO FINISH**

The article "Observations on the IBCT/and the FBCB2," by Captain Jeffrey A. Saeli (*Infantry*, May-August 2000, pages 27-31) is thought provoking. But I hope it is not an indication of where we are going with the IBCT. The IBCT cannot become a beefed up MP brigade; it must be a combat formation from start to finish.

The initial IBCT concept was to create a formation that was a cross between the physical abilities of the light infantry and the increased combat capabilities of our heavy forces. The rationale for the mix was to increase the combat capability of the light forces while increasing the deployability of a heavier force.

The sentence that reads, *The IBCT is emerging as a multi-functional team that retains lethality as a capability but not as its principal purpose, except in major theater war* is expressing an unbelievably dangerous concept for the soldiers in that brigade. A combat formation has to have as its main purpose the ability and willingness to engage in combat.

The Dutch battalion in Sebrenicia was a combat formation that, for several reasons, was unable to conduct necessary combat operations when such operations they were needed. The resulting travesty not only embarrassed the Dutch Army and Government but also resulted in one of the worst mass murders of the entire sordid episode in Bosnia. The United States can never allow our armed forces to be in a similar

situation. A doctrine that emphasizes negotiation as a form of combat is a recipe for disaster.

The author further states, *This force (the IBCT) could serve as a pre-combat or a post-combat force, able to execute civil missions in a hostile environment that does not involve unrestrained combat.* This might be a great capability for the country to have, but it does not describe a combat brigade. The formation as the author describes should be a composite brigade based on an MP unit.

One sentence begs for comment: *Upon the initiation of broader hostilities, the force (the IBCT) must be able to protect itself long enough to allow the theater employment of more robust combat forces.* We cannot put a unit in a situation where it will "protect itself" while waiting for help. The IBCT must be trained and organized to fight and to do so effectively against any capability. Obviously, some situations would require augmentation for the brigade.

Our heavy forces in Bosnia were capable of conducting the peacekeeping role while retaining the ability to fight, if required. The IBCT is an interim step on the road to a new force for the Army, based on new technology and a perceived need to deploy more rapidly. The IBCT should not become anything other than a combat formation that is also capable of other functions.

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### **ARMALITE AR-10: QUICKER, LESS EXPENSIVE, LESS PAINFUL**

Reference Don Loughlin's letter (*Infantry*, January-April 2000, page 3) in response to Stanley C. Crist's article ("Is 6mm the Optimum Caliber?" September-December 1999, page 6), his comments on the cost of switching to a ballistically superior 6mm service cartridge need some comment.

First, replacing the service rifle would not cost much when compared with the cost of today's nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers, and fighter aircraft. The cost of a few Air Force drop tanks could probably equip a couple of

infantry companies with a new rifle. On the other hand, lack of common ammunition among NATO countries is a valid concern.

I have a quicker, less expensive, less painful solution: Buy the Armalite AR-10 in 7.62mm NATO for U.S. Army infantry and Marine Corps rifle companies. While the Army fiddles with the objective individual combat weapon (OICW) concept, here is a fully developed rifle, already in production, which can easily be furnished with full automatic selector or in three-shot burst configuration.

We owe this to our Marine and Army infantry. The 5.56mm round, always a poor choice for infantry, is even more so today with the closing threat of more urban combat. Although the M16's high-velocity, unstable bullet is often cited for its lethality, it is not necessary to mutilate a soldier to put him out of action. A soldier tagged with a 7.62mm NATO is still out of the fight. The AR-10 7.62mm can do everything the 5.56mm M16 can do and do it better at longer ranges, through trees, walls, sandbags, and urban fortification.

The rest of the M16 inventory can be used to arm the service troops—a perfect role for it. (Remember that the M16's predecessor and the 5.56mm cartridge were originally designed for use by Air Force police.) As for the squad automatic weapon, keep it or give it to the service troops for defense. Ideally, a new 7.62mm squad automatic weapon should be developed, possibly a bipod-equipped, heavy-barrel version of the AR-10, firing from an open-bolt and using the same magazine as the rifle.

I am not optimistic about the OICW for the near future. Didn't we go down this road a few years ago with the Special Purpose Infantry Weapon?

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### **U.S. ARMY AND MARINE CORPS ON OKINAWA**

I read with interest Mr. Nicholas E. Sarantakes' article on interservice relations between the Army and Marine

Corps in the battle for Okinawa (*Infantry*, January-April 1999), pages 12-15). Although I agree that this particular battle was a very good example of inter-service cooperation for the most part, he perpetuated a number of myths that need to be addressed.

First, the concept that United States Army tactics focused on overwhelming firepower in a head-on confrontation is ridiculous. The implication that the Army relied on frontal assaults while the Marines practiced maneuver warfare is silly. You will not find this concept in Army doctrinal publications of the day, and neither will you find it in general practice during World War II—though at times and in certain circumstances, it was the only tactical option.

The idea that you shouldn't use overwhelming firepower if it is available and can save lives is equally ludicrous. Both Soldiers and Marines used it in great quantities in the Pacific war, especially naval gunfire. We had (and still have) the best artillery and indirect fire control in the world, and we would be foolish not to employ it.

Okinawa on the negative side shows the growing struggle, which continues today, over roles and missions, part of which involves who gets credit (largely in the press) for their contribution to victory. Prior to World War I the Marine Corps had very little to do with America's wars. Competition for a significant ground combat role began with World War I and the brave performance of the Marine brigade as part of the 2d Infantry Division. This was lauded in American newspapers in direct contravention of General John Pershing's orders not to publish items that identified units. The result was a predictable disgust on the part of the American Infantrymen serving in the 30 Army divisions of the AEF (read, sixty brigades), who performed with equal bravery. They were the ones who bore the brunt of the fighting and were, by far, the greatest contributors to victory.

This same situation occurred, as Mr. Sarantakes described, in the Pacific war and has repeated itself in almost every conflict since then. This is not to dilute the sacrifice of Marines. However, to somehow enhance their reputation at the

expense of the American Soldier is flat wrong. Even today, most Americans think Okinawa was a Marine fight (as many think the whole Pacific war was prosecuted by the Marines). In fact, four Army divisions fought on Okinawa as opposed to two Marine divisions. It was predominantly an Army operation.

Interservice cooperation on the battlefield of Okinawa was good, but not as good as Mr. Sarantakes describes. He conveniently left out the 1st Marine Division's grab for Shuri Castle literally minutes before air strikes and artillery were about to rain down on this 77th Infantry Division objective. With the approval of the 1st Marine Division commander, elements of his unit crossed not just a division, but a known corps boundary between the Army Corps and the Marine Amphibious Corps with no coordination to seize this prominent terrain feature just ahead of the 77th. Only feverish efforts by Major General Andrew Bruce, the 77th Division commander, to stop the preparation averted disaster.

One final point concerns the 27th Infantry Division, Marine Lieutenant General Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith and the relief of Major General Ralph Smith, commander of the 27th. The idea that the 27th was a "substandard National Guard" outfit is a long proliferated myth, a product of the ineptitude of General Smith's planning and execution of the Saipan campaign and his well known dislike and almost paranoid distrust of the Army (and the Navy as well). In fact, the 27th which was a National Guard outfit, bore no resemblance to its original organization by the time it was brought up to strength with replacements and trained for combat.

General Ralph Smith himself was a regular Army officer who had been in the first convoys of troops from the 1st Infantry Division to arrive in France for World War I, where he fought with both the 1st and 4th Divisions and was wounded in combat. General H.M. Smith, likewise was in the first convoys but served as a brigade liaison officer and subsequently at corps level, seeing little combat action. On Saipan, General Smith's plans went awry. His or-

ders to commit the 27th as his Corps reserve afloat were scanty, confused, inadequate by any standard, and given without regard to where the troops should land or what their mission was to be.

The particular instance in Mr. Sarantakes' footnote about the 27th making the least amount of progress is particularly galling. I would suggest the author do a detailed research of the fight for "Death Valley," the terrain in question. The Marines had made no progress there either and elements of the 27th were thrown into the center of the Marine line, once again with minimal instructions or coordination. While Marine units were able to make some progress on the less well defended flanks, units of the 27th had to advance over open terrain into the valley, dominated by defended ridges and cliffs.

It is interesting to note that neither General Smith nor members of his staff during this time ever made a personal reconnaissance of the area where he was committing the Army troops—preferring to remain on the beach. Except for a limited role in the attack on Iwo Jima, General Smith was never again given a chance at combat command. This single fact provides a powerful statement by his non-Army superiors regarding his capabilities as a senior commander of joint forces.

If Okinawa was an example of inter-service cooperation, Saipan was the perfect example of what can happen when senior commanders in a joint command do not have a good appreciation for those outside their own service. All senior commanders must remember that those in their charge are Americans fighting for their country, regardless of service, and hence worthy of respect and credit. If this is not done, the negative result can linger for decades and become accepted fact, where the truth is something entirely different. Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner had this appreciation; Lieutenant General H.M. Smith did not. Perhaps this is the real lesson of Okinawa.

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