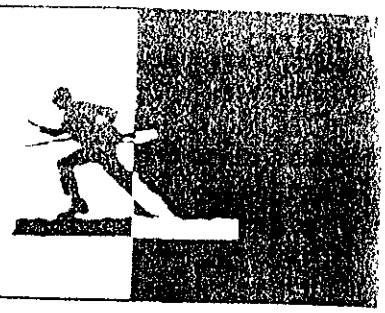
INFANTRY LETTERS



MORAL DIMENSION

I would like to offer a slight correction and add to Colonel Richard F. Timmons' fine article "The Moral Dimension: The Thoughts of Ardant du Picq" (November-December 1985, p. 10).

The Prussian Carl von Clausewitz began working in earnest on his famous work *On War* about the time du Picq was born. And he, too, was very concerned with the moral dimension of war.

He devotes Chapter Three, Book One, of *On War* to a discussion of "military genius" and tells us that "the personalities of statesmen and soldiers are such important factors that in war above all it is vital not to underrate them."

His third chapter in Book Three focuses on "moral factors" in which he maintains that "moral elements are among the most important in war," and that "all military action is intertwined with psychological forces and effects."

Unfortunately, Clausewitz died prematurely in 1831, stilling his pen and leaving what in his own words was "a shapeless mass of ideas." Had he lived, he very well might have pursued the investigation of this critical dimension of warfare along lines similar to du Picq's.

FREDERICK ZILIAN, JR.
LTC
Navy War College
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PRINCIPLES

It was at first with great interest and then with dismay that I read "On Being a Lieutenant," by Captain Richard D. Hooker, Jr., in INFANTRY (November-December 1985, p. 20).

Throughout the article, Captain Hooker offers various principles on how to deal with certain individuals or classes of individuals within a company. Nowhere did I note the principles of honesty, loyalty, dedication, or self-sacrifice. Most of my fellow soldiers, Active and Reserve Component, value these character traits in our leaders much more than a sense of humor. This is not to belittle the need for a sense of humor in our leaders but rather to place it in perspective.

In general, Captain Hooker appears to place a higher value on a style of leadership that will insure his career than on the timeless style of military leadership that is summarized as "men first, mission always."

DOUGLAS N. BERNHARD
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PUT MYTH TO REST

Reference the January-February 1986 issue of INFANTRY Magazine, in the Officers Career Notes section I note that "assignment officers may be able to help [officers] get assignments that will make it easier to get a degree, such as tours as ROTC instructors."

After reading this revelation, I immediately called Infantry Branch at MILPERCEN and asked to talk to the rascal who originated that statement. My intent was to have him tell my boss that I was in this "easy" assignment to get my master's degree. The branch representative to whom I spoke quickly assured me that the statement was erroneous and that all assignment officers had been instructed not to brief Infantry officers on easy degree programs as an inducement to accept ROTC assignments.

Let us put the myth to rest. ROTC is not a quick route to post-graduate degrees. What ROTC is is a demanding, challenging, enlightening, rigorous, satisfying, difficult, rewarding, motivating, and exciting assignment. It is also one of the most sobering experiences of an Army career.

One term that every Infantry officer understands is "mission." Over the past couple of years the mission for Army ROTC has changed. Consider the impact on a system that normally produces 8,000 officers a year when the mission is increased to 10,000 per year with no decrease in quality and no increase in training assets.

Although Infantry Branch is no longer promising degrees as an incentive for ROTC assignments, it does not have a solution to promotion and selection boards looking at files. Consider the reaction of board members looking at the file of an officer who just completed a three-year assignment with Army ROTC but does not have a master's degree, even though INFANTRY Magazine suggests it is automatic in this "easy assignment."

In an ROTC assignment the myth of a master's degree is just that. The challenge of accomplishing an important mission with few assets is the reality. Officers should fight to get the assignment for all the right reasons.

DAN GRIGSON
MAJ, Infantry
Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

PICKETT'S (?) CHARGE

Sergeant Stephen Z. Bardowski's letter on the image of leadership contains a serious historical error (INFANTRY, January-February 1986, p. 5). In his statement that "General Pickett's plumed hat thrust high on his saber, heading for the angle at Gettysburg," served the purpose of letting his men know he was in charge, Sergeant Bardowski confuses the issue of "Pickett's Charge" and the man who actually led the assault on the angle.

General Lewis Armistead, one of Pickett's brigade commanders, was the man who led the heroic but foredoomed assault into that clump of trees, since immortalized as the high water mark of the Confederacy. General Pickett was never in the vicinity of "the angle," nor did he lead the assault named after him.

Let us give the heroic dead their just due.

ROBERT G. SMITH
LT, Armor
Fort Hood, Texas

SOLDIER'S LOAD

I would like to congratulate Captains Stephen P. Perkins and Christopher S. Barnthouse on two fine articles on the combat load of the American soldier in your January-February 1986 issue ("Standardize Combat Load," p. 16, and "Infantry in Action: Sustainability," p. 27).

Captain Perkins refers to the tendency of commanders to load their soldiers down with supplies to meet every eventuality and recommends a reduced combat load suited to actual need instead of possible need.

I agree with his recommendation that the standard combat load of the infantryman be reduced. From my own experience I can recall movements to contact in the noon heat of the Mojave Desert in which each soldier carried a rifle, seven magazines of ammunition, a flak jacket, a steel helmet, two canteens of water, a first aid pouch, two ammunition pouches, a poncho, and full marching pack filled with boots, uniforms, underwear, soap, and razor blades. Just carrying these loads made many of us sag like old men, and by the time we reached our objectives (sometimes miles away) we were often too exhausted to carry out our assaults with the proper speed and aggressiveness.

On one particularly long movement, I can recall mass heat casualties with a good part of the battalion incapacitated and requiring medical evacuation. Needless to say, our tactical movement became a rout to the cantonment area. Such occurrences are an unnecessary embarrassment to military commanders and could be alleviated with a little common sense.

Captain Barnthouse cites historical examples in which excessive loads carried by U.S. soldiers actually inhibited their movement under fire and contributed to the sustainment of mass casualties in combat.

He points out that soldiers lose energy not only because of these heavy combat loads but also because of fear. Many of us can probably recall a time when a pervasive fear weakened us beyond the level that could be attributed to our physical exertion. This factor, too, must be considered in loading the combat soldier.

Ideally, this soldier should be concerned with moving only two items — himself and his individual weapon. All logistical items such as rations, ammunition, and medical supplies should be staged in rear areas and transported by support personnel, not by combat troops on the move.

Again, my congratulations to these two authors. I only hope the Army listens to them.

EDWARD PASCUCCI
Cadet, ROTC
Syracuse, New York

GUIDELINES

I would like to comment on Captain Stephen P. Perkins' "Standardize Combat Loads" in your January-February 1986 issue (p. 16).

Captain Perkins has obviously devoted a good deal of time and analysis to the question of the individual soldier's combat load. His argument is generally sound and his research is thorough, but he has set himself an impossible task. There is no such thing as a standard, Army-wide soldier's load, and it is foolish to maintain that our Army needs such a standard, *especially* for light infantrymen.

The one enduring principle governing the composition of the individual soldier's load is that it is utterly dependent on the factors of METT-T. Clearly, a light infantryman operating in Norway in the winter would bear a load significantly different from that of a soldier fighting guerrillas in Central America The light infantryman holding close terrain in Europe against a mechanized Soviet threat would organize his individual load much differently from the way a soldier deployed to a jungle or a mountainous theater of operations would organize his. Captain Perkins attempts to circumvent this principle by establishing five "restrictive assumptions." In so doing, he creates a completely artificial environment that ignores the lessons of history.

For instance, he assumes that "operational weather will remain moderate." A cursory look at modern light infantry operations shows that light infantry is more often than not intended for use in areas where the weather is anything but moderate — hot jungle, cold mountains, arctic tundra, desert — these are the environments where light infantry forces have been most active and where we can expect our own light forces to operate.

Consider the Chindits of the Burma Campaign in World War II. They conducted harassing attacks and interdiction against the Japanese rear area for months at a time in 1943 and 1944. Resupplied every five days or so by airdrop (primarily), the Chindits carried a load that averaged about 70 pounds per man. Because their operations took them over steep jungle trails and through almost impenetrable bamboo thickets in extreme heat, these 70-pound loads seemed unbearable. Yet they were absolutely necessary, given the mission, terrain, climate, and limits on resupply.

A few years later, the British infantry fought insurgents in Malaya and Indonesian raiders in Borneo. The changing situation then enabled them to reduce the individual load to an average of 50 pounds per man. In Borneo, the British SAS commanders were able to insist that the packs of their men be weighed before moving out on extended operations to see that no man carried more than 50 pounds. Experience tailored the load. Nobody, for instance, wore underwear in the jungle. Only two uniforms were carried. The clean one (sometimes a black jumpsuit-type coverall) was worn at night to sleep in. The wet, dirty one was redonned in the morning. Helmets were left behind in favor of jungle hats. Poncho-type

sheets substituted for sleeping bags, shelter halves, and ground covers. Nobody needed gas masks, gloves, sweaters, or field jackets.

Conversely, in extremely cold weather, it is hard to imagine that a soldier could avoid a load of 100 pounds or so, particularly if traveling cross-country over snow. Survival alone would demand heavier clothes, more fuel, skis, snowshoes, and such items.

Instead of standardizing an individual combat load, Captain Perkins would do better to advocate adhering to a few well-chosen guidelines. I offer a few for consideration:

First, every effort must be made to lighten the soldier's load through technology (lighter rations, lighter ammunition, lighter clothing) and ingenuity. Leaders at high levels must make a point of responding to the ideas of their subordinates on this matter.

Second, soldiers must be trained to do without the things they think they "need," and first-line leaders, platoon sergeants, and junior officers must be absolutely ruthless about what soldiers put in their rucksacks. Experience will go a long way toward training the soldiers, but leaders must constantly check and make corrections. Many soldiers, for example, will fail to carry enough water, and some will short themselves on ammunition.

Third, when the situation changes, the SOP should also change.

Finally, when the need for an item is in doubt, the soldier probably can get by without it. Food is a good example. Rations can be stretched, and the environment can usually be counted on to provide some sustenance. In many situations, light infantrymen can use the enemy's resources.

Above all, the light infantryman must not be so loaded down that he is continuously exhausted, inattentive, and unready to practice his craft. Observing these guidelines, I think, is a better approach to the problem of the individual combat load than trying to establish an Army-wide standard.

SCOTT R. McMICHAEL
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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

RE-ARM M113

The M113-series armored personnel carrier is a grand and venerable vehicle, and many units will be equipped with it for some time to come. There is a problem, however, with its firepower — its M2 .50 caliber machinegun.

This weapon, when fired from a tripod (anchored with a traverse and elevation mechanism), is extremely accurate out to more than 1,600 meters. In its free-mount mode (non-anchored, pintle mounted) as it is on the M113, however, it is far less effective. Because of the recoil produced by the rapid firing of such a heavy bullet, not one in ten gunners, even with a significant amount of practice, can hit a target accurately at long range. In other words, a mechanized infantry platoon must close to within 500 or 600 meters to deliver effective support to another platoon. What good is fire support at such a short range to a unit that by its nature fights over much greater distances? And, of course, when a crew buttons up to protect itself from artillery, it loses *all* of its firepower.

The answer to these problems lies in history — with the M114A1 armored reconnaissance vehicle. It, too, had the M2 .50 caliber machinegun, but in a simple, hand-cranked cupola. The M2's backplate was simply removed and stored, and the gun was then slid into a cradle and anchored. In the back of the cradle was a solenoid, which when actuated pressed up on the trigger bar in the same manner as achieved by the manual butterfly trigger. The cupola was manually operated and had two crank handles — one for elevation and one for traverse. On one of the handles was a thumb switch that activated the trigger solenoid.

The weapon had three sights available: the normal integral iron sights on the receiver and barrel; a concentric ring antiaircraft sight; and a tubular iron sight that hung below the cradle (since it was visible through the vision blocks on the cupola, it could be used when the crew was buttoned up).

This same kind of manual cupola could be added to the M113 at little cost, and its advantages would be remarkable. With the weapon anchored, its accuracy at maximum range would be restored, thus allowing the platoon a much greater degree of stand-off in fire support on an objective or in overwatch when maneuvering. In addition, the weapon could then be used when the gunner was buttoned up, enabling the mechanized platoons to maintain suppressive fires at the critical stages of an assault. The weapon's use in a ground mount would not be affected; it would simply be removed from the cradle, and its backplate would be replaced.

To speed the availability of the cupola to the field, it could be developed as a kit, to be installed under a modification work order by direct support units. The time and cost for development could be avoided by using the plans for the M114A1 as a basic cupola design. (This is fundamentally the way the turret traverse mechanism for the M901 ITV was built — from the turret traverse used on the M114A1E1 and its powered cupola.)

For only a few hundred dollars a vehicle, we could multiply the effectiveness of our M113-equipped units many times over. The cupola might not be glamorous, but it would work — and it could be ready almost immediately.

BARTON L. PEARL
MAJ, Infantry
Hq, U.S. Army, Europe

USE OF ENGINEERS

I was disappointed by Major Robert J. Henry's article, "An Execution Matrix" (INFANTRY, September-October 1985, p. 34) — not because of his proposed matrix but because of his employment of the engineer platoon. I know he was only including the platoon for the purpose of his example, yet he demonstrates a mode of thinking that engineers and the engineer branch have been trying to eradicate for years.

The purpose of giving the engineer platoon to Company B was "to help the commander dig in his company." With three squads, four M113s, and a five-ton dump truck, the only thing they can dig in with is shovels. That's an inefficient, labor intensive, time-consuming effort.

The best use of that engineer platoon is out front emplacing obstacles and rein-

forcing the terrain, thereby increasing the lethality of the engagement areas. A good engineer platoon leader will advise the task force commander appropriately, but a better knowledge of engineer capabilities and employment will greatly improve the results when a maneuver commander uses his number one combat multiplier, the engineers.

KURT E. NYGAARD
CPT, Engineer
Fort Hood, Texas

25th INFANTRY REGIMENT

I am seeking information on anyone who was assigned to the 25th Infantry Regiment, made up entirely of black soldiers, in order to plan a reunion of all the regiment's remaining people.

Anyone who has this information may write to me at 1563 Warbler Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

HANK WINN
COL, Retired

FIRST DIVISION

The Society of the First Division, composed of veterans of the Army's First Infantry Division (Big Red One), has announced that the group's 1986 reunion will be held in Buffalo, New York, 3-7 September 1986.

Previously, the reunion had been scheduled for Charleston, South Carolina, but plans changed and the 1987 meeting will now be held there.

Information about either meeting can be obtained from the Society at 5 Montgomery Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118; telephone (215) 233-5444.

SOCIETY OF THE FIRST DIVISION

222d INFANTRY REUNION

A reunion of the 222d Infantry, 42d Infantry Division will be held at the Holiday Inn and Helidome West in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 9-12 July 1986.

Anyone who is interested may contact Al Brewer, P.O. Box 242, Mustang, OK 73064.

JAMES McNICOL

SPIRIT OF AMERICA

"Spirit of America," the patriotic extravaganza that has thrilled Washington audiences for many years, will be performed 11-15 June at the Capital Center in Landover, Maryland.

Daily performances will be at 8 p.m., with added performances at 2 p.m on 14 and 15 June.

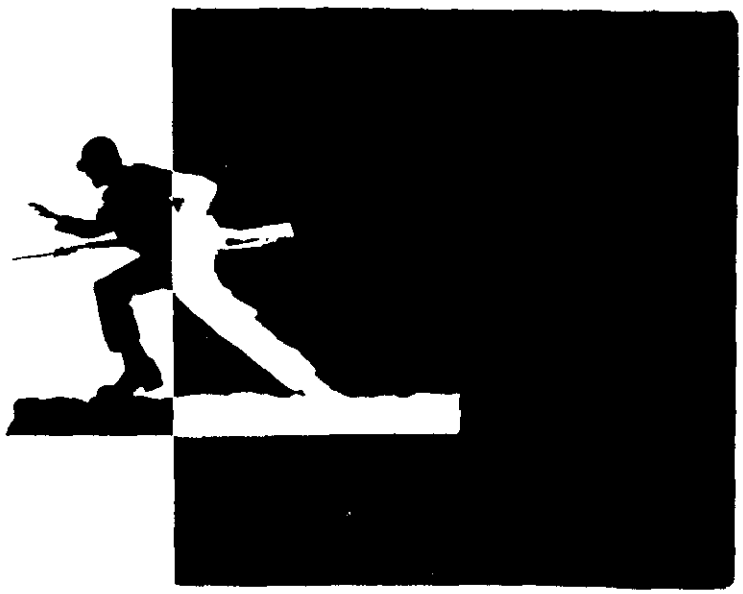
These performances are free, but because of the great demand, tickets are required. They can be obtained from Spirit of America, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC 20319-5050. Dates and times desired must be specified in the order.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
Military District of Washington

INFORMATION SOUGHT

I am a freelance writer searching for military and civilian personnel who served in Laos and Cambodia during the Vietnam War — military aviators and intelligence officers, ground troops, CIA personnel, Air America pilots, MIA families, indigenous forces, U.S. Government authorities, and others.

The information collected from these people will be used for a history book and some related articles.

Please send letters in confidence to me at 4229 Albermarle Street, NW, Washington, DC 20016, or call (202) 966-2346.

MICHAEL REED