

LETTERS

Despite Acquisition Delays, We Need to Train Soldiers

Dear Sir:

I was dismayed to read Mr. Potter's reaction to C/3-81's use of the BEAMHIT device for rifle marksmanship (Mar-Apr '99 *ARMOR* letters). However, I am less concerned with acquisition regulations and bureaucratic turf wars than I am with training soldiers to use their personal weapons. The soldiers our NCOs train today will serve in Korea and Bosnia tomorrow. They deserve the best training we can provide them, not excuses as to why the Army's procurement system is slow and unresponsive. My predecessors and their commanders understood that soldiers come first. When it became apparent that the old Weaponeer 66 wasn't providing the quality of training our soldiers deserve, they found a cheap, reliable training aid to use until the "system" could get around to sending us one. In fact, until C/3-81 AR procured the BEAMHIT training device, the Army's incoming 19K soldiers had no training device at all for the 9-mm pistol. Were it not for the initiative of the NCOs and leadership of 1st Armor Training Brigade, our soldiers would still be doing "pencil drills" and dry fire as their only train up for pistol qualification.

C/3-81 AR fully understands that Ft. Benning is the proponent for BRM and BPM, and we follow the programs of instruction (POI) they have developed religiously. However, when training our young soldiers demands additional effort, funds, or ingenuity, we must meet that challenge. As officers and NCOs in the United States Army, we have the responsibility to take care of and train soldiers. Even down at brigade, battalion, and company levels, we as leaders are expected to make the right decision. Any regulation which prohibits that fundamental truth needs to be changed or discarded.

The use of the BEAMHIT trainer is in addition to approved training devices, and in no way detracts from the program of instruction. The soldiers in BCT and OSUT here at Ft. Knox require training NOW, so we don't have the luxury of waiting until the latest training device winds its way through the acquisition channels. This fact becomes painfully clear with the recent cancellation of funds for the EST training device. Once again, a promised system is pushed ever farther into the future, leaving our drill sergeants and instructors with the duty of training soldiers today. Soldiers win our nation's wars. They must come first, before regulations and before bureaucracy.

CPT JOHN OLIVER
Commander, C/3-81 AR

Both Teams Learned From Light/Heavy Rotation

Dear Sir:

I am very pleased to see that the armor community is turning an eye to training in a

MOUT environment. As a light infantry company commander in the 1st Bde, 25th ID, we (1-5 IN Bobcats) trained with 1-33 Armor, 3rd Bde, 2 ID at Ft. Lewis in preparation for a light/heavy JRTC rotation. This training took place from August '97-November '97.

Both the armor and the light infantry developed numerous TTPs during our training. The forces walked away from the training with new respect for each other's abilities, and would desire each other's assistance during a future fight.

At Regenburt (Ft. Lewis' MOUT site), we trained in the MOUT site with armor. Some of my observations:

- Tanks not only add a great deal of firepower to the fight, but also physical cover to infantrymen when crossing danger areas.

- In the restricted terrain of a MOUT environment, it is very difficult for tanks to work as a section, let alone at platoon level.

- The most effective TTP we developed was to attach a tank to an infantry platoon. With the light infantry platoon's squad leaders speaking directly with the tank via FM, on the infantry platoon net. The tank platoon vehicle was kept in reserve under the control of the light infantry company commander.

- Tanks must be OPCON to an infantry company due to the inability to logistically support them.

- Tanks can not only provide transport to light infantry, but also carry additional ammo, water, and other equipment/supplies.

- Armor is very vulnerable in a MOUT environment, and needs light infantry to protect it from AT weapons, as seen in the Russians' fight in Grozny.

- Depending on the rules of engagement, the additional direct firepower of armor is very welcome to the light infantry unit.

This training was a win-win situation for both 1-33 Armor, and 1-5 IN (Light). Subject matter experts (SME) were present during the train-up and the JRTC rotation, and wrote a Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) newsletter article entitled "Fighting Light/Heavy in a Restricted Terrain: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures," published in April '98 (No. 98-10). This newsletter is a in-depth look at light/heavy operations with numerous TTPs for both offensive and defensive operations.

JONATHAN W. FOX
CPT, IN

Adopting the ACAV Concept To Operations in the Balkans

Dear Sir:

As you know, the modifications to the M113 which later came to be called the "ACAV" were first made by the Vietnamese, using whatever materials they could beg, borrow, or steal. When I came on the scene, I got the

Saigon Ordnance Depot to develop the gun shield and hatch armor shown in the picture accompanying your article. That was called the "A-kit."

There was also a "B-kit," which added smaller gun shields to side-firing light machine guns mounted on both sides of the cargo hatch. Our people in Bosnia (and perhaps elsewhere) might be interested.

RAY BATTREALL
COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)

Cavalry Lineage Goes Back Further Than Author Stated

Dear Sir:

I apologize for being behind in my reading, but I just finished the May-June 1998 *ARMOR* and I think LTC Kris Thompson misread one of his sources.

He states, noting Urwin's *United States Cavalry*, that the United States government authorized two "cavalry" regiments in 1855. While this is technically correct — the regiments were designated 1st and 2nd Cavalry — these are not the first mounted regiments in United States service.

I understand LTC Thompson not going into the Revolution; but he overlooked the fact that the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Dragoons and the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen were in existence well before 1855. I once served in the 3d ACR ("Brave Rifles") and know that the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen was authorized in 1846. I don't have the dates for the two dragoon regiments handy, but I know they precede the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen. All three mounted regiments fought in the Mexican war (1848-49).

In 1861, all five mounted regiments were redesignated. The 1st and 2nd Regiments of Dragoons became the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Regiments. The Regiment of Mounted Riflemen became the 3rd Cavalry. The formerly designated 1st and 2nd Cavalry Regiments became the 4th and 5th Cavalry Regiments. The (new) 6th Cavalry Regiment was raised at about the same time.

This is not to knock LTC Thompson. I like the way he is going with his survey.

PETER L. BUNCE
SFC, USA, Ret'd

Winning the 21st Century Battle for Reconnaissance

Dear Sir:

The first "sensor" to sweep across the future battlefields of Gettysburg were the prowling eyes of Buford's cavalry. Today, future battlefields are spied out by Cav scouts using forward-looking infrared (FLIR) and image intensifier devices to create the sensor swept-battlefield.

If you can be seen, you can be hit.

If you can be hit, you can be killed.

This is the first reality of the 21st Century battlefield.

However, CPT Alexander's mountain bikes (July-Aug '98 *ARMOR*, p. 15) deploying from wheeled LAVs were not exercised against an opponent that can see like our enemies can with commonly available FLIR/NODs, though his mission descriptions were excellent primers for future bike Cav scouts. When his LAVs overwatched his bike scouts with FLIR, an ENEMY WITH FLIR COULD ALSO SEE HIS BIKE SCOUTS... calling down indirect fire on them or wait until they cycled back to their extremely thin-skinned LAVs and called indirect fire to destroy them all.

We at the 1st Tactical Studies Group (Airborne) are 100% in favor of Human Powered Vehicles (HPVs) All/Extreme Terrain mountain Bikes and Carts (A/ETBs, ATACs) fully used by light and heavy Army units. Since 1990, we've developed and perfected bikes and carts for this purpose; evidenced by articles in U.S. Army *ARMOR*, *Infantry*, and other defense journals, but it's clear that CPT Alexander's *ad hoc* experiment with bikes and LAVs ignores the reality of the sensor-swept battlefield due to fundamental weaknesses inherent in the wheeled vehicles using civilian, narrow tire bikes and thinly armored wheeled LAVs.

Alexander's bike scouts were not VISUAL and FLIR camouflaged to evade enemy protection although they were deployed far enough away that their LAV's engine did not give them away. This is a start, but if a friendly LAV can see his scout with FLIR, so can his FLIR-equipped enemy in a BMP-3, T-72 or Leopard 2. Scouts must wear "Thellie" camouflage suits (Teledyne Brown Engineering, Huntsville, AL) that render them invisible to FLIR and "ghillie" them up visually like a sniper. In 1995, we proved in field tests that ghillie strips (strips of cut burlap) can be attached to mountain bikes to break up their outline without interfering with their functions. A good sling like Ed Verdugo's Snap Sling (GRSC POB 1246, Yucaipa, CA 92399; 909-446-0272) enables carrying the long M16A2 assault rifle across your shoulder and cycle without it getting in the way. These steps make the bike Cav scouts invisible to the enemy but visible to the friendly scout vehicle by using a piece of No Power Thermal Tape (NPTT Night Vision Equipment Company, POB 266, Emmaus, PA 18049-0266; 610-391-9101) to signal back that the scout team is O.K. Area reconned can be marked by Battlefield Reference Marker System (BRMS Type A: NSN 6910-01-388-7699, EZ Info Inc., 801 Atchison St., Atchison, KS 66002; 800-676-1582; <http://users.microworld.net/~ezinfo>) panels visible to the Cav scout vehicle through its FLIR.

Unmilitarized bikes are unable to ride in sand, take up too much space and have to be stored outside, can get flat tires and are a handicap in close terrain. We fixed this by using FOLDING all-terrain bikes that can be

carried INSIDE the scout vehicle or with only a small part outside. A special case was developed to airdrop the folded ATBs for light/airborne units to use for recon/security issues. ATBs were jump tested in 1992 by Chuck Gilbert and myself in 1993 using the airdrop bag to lower my folded ATB prior to landing for quick recovery. The rest of the Army team (SSG Ernest Hoppe, SF; CPT Jeff Schram, AR) separately dropped from the same turbo-prop aircraft, linked up with me on the ground, then infiltrated to Fort Bragg, N.C., 30 miles away in less than an afternoon's time. Later tests, with 1LT David Tran and SGT Paul Latham (IN), proved visual and FLIR camouflage techniques and movement techniques. <http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/5265/atb.htm>

Our bikes don't have inner tubes. A solid foam inner is used that cannot go flat regardless of how many nails, bullet holes, broken glass, rocks slam into the tire. (No More Flats; Cyclo Manufacturing, 1438 S. Cherokee St., Denver, CO 80223) If the terrain is too rugged to cycle, the ATB's rear rack makes it a cart for heavy items like the AN/PRC-119 SINC-GARS radio/ALICE rucks. In loose sandy desert terrain, extreme terrain bikes (ETBs) can be used that have 10-inch wide tires, making bike Cav Scouts fully invisible and mobile on the 21st century battlefield, not just areas where soil is firm enough to accept narrow civilian bike tires.

The U.S. LAV is a seriously flawed vehicle in terms of survivability. Its armor can only stop "garden variety" AKMs and there is a huge fuel tank inside ready to be exploded. If the wheeled LAV is detected, it's easy to disable and destroy it by enemy direct/indirect fire. Like the bike tires, its tires are filled with air when it should have a solid foam core. "Run flats" only allow it to limp home, not finish the mission.

The Canadian Army LAVs and our M113A3s have external fuel tanks. Regardless, wheeled LAVs cannot advance against enemy fire like a tracked M113A3 LAV can. The U.S. Army can save its money "reinventing the wheel(ed)" LAV using the tracked M113A3 LAV it already has, as pointed out regularly by armor futurists like Stan Crist.

Army Cav scout troops with M113A3s could airdrop force-entry into the named area of interest (NAI) and begin operations immediately, whereas a surface-landed wheeled LAV cav troop would have to wait for a beach or an airfield to be secured. The U.S. Army has the institutional heavy airdrop and rigger expertise/supplies proven with the decades of routine 3/73d Armor Battalion's M551 Sheridan airdrop in peace and in war to ensure our "Buford's Cavalry" gets to Little Round Top first. "Getting there fustest with the mostest" is critical to having our sensors sweep the battlefield first. With applique armor (protects all the way up to auto-cannon and RPGs), external fuel tanks, spall liners, the M113A3 is not easily damaged by enemy counterreconnaissance. Its tracks will not go flat as they can rumble over glass, debris without damage. A/ETB scouts deploying from the M113A3 by being invisible to the enemy themselves will

not compromise their motor driven vehicle. M113A3 engines can be silenced like the German Army's and a space blanket mylar tarp thrown over it, FLIR camouflaged from detection in its hull down, hide/overwatched position. Vehicle and its scouts are now "stealthy" and invisible to the enemy detection, yet we can see the enemy first. The side that sees the enemy first WINS the war.

The M113A3/A/ETB Cav scout troop does not have to restrict itself to just passive recon or direct fire engagements, M113A3s have plenty of space to carry Javelin "fire and forget," signatureless ATGMs to ambush and destroy enemies forces at little risk to themselves. Javelins can be fired on foot, from the top troop hatch of the M113A3, or from forward ambush position cycled to by the A/ETBs.

U.S. Army 25th Bicycle Corps troops put down riots in Cuba and charted the west with early bikes. Yamashita used bikes to defeat the British by massive jungle infiltrations into rear areas to seize Malaya/Singapore in 1942.

British Commandos jumped folding bikes to seize the Bruneval radar station in WWII. Their Gurkhas, 5th Airborne Brigade, and S.A.S. use them today. The militarized mountain bike has almost unlimited potential as "stealthy" platforms if fully exploited. The light tracked LAV to carry bike Cav Scouts comes from our terrain agile Vietnam past, the M113A3 (1990s incarnation): the ideal, no-cost platform for a global U.S. Cavalry force in the 2d ACR to meet the world-wide demands of the U.S. Army XVIII Airborne Corps.

Mike Sparks
1st TSG (A)

A Call for Papers

Dear Sir:

The Council on America's Military Past, a non-profit organization, has changed the name of its publication, *Periodical*, to *The Journal of America's Military Past*.

We have recently changed our title and our editorial policy. We are looking for articles about historical military posts (to include battlefields, ships, and airplanes), as well as biographical and autobiographical pieces about servicemen or servicewomen who, ideally, served on a historical post.

If you have written an original article about these topics, the editors of the Journal would like to hear from you. COL Nicholas Reynolds, USMCR, the editor, can be reached at P.O. Box 3087, Laredo, TX 78044 until 1 August, when his address will be 502 North Norwood St., Arlington, VA 22203. COL Reynolds is also on email at NRREY@compuserve.com. Associate Editor Mark Bradley is at 3607 N. 22nd St., Arlington, VA 22207, or at email munbrad@erols.com

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