

## Training Lethal Sections and Crews: The Army Dilemma

Dear Sir:

LTC Mark Pires' article, "Training Lethal Tank Crews and Sections" (*ARMOR*, March-April 2002), has highlighted one of the many training shortfalls that the armor force experiences annually. I am sure that most, if not all, tank company commanders in the force would agree with LTC Pires' assessment that such training makes "a huge difference." However, in the same section, he also highlights why such training events do not happen: "The major requirements are time and training areas." These resources are, of course, the scarcest of all within the realm of a company or even a battalion training calendar. Although it may be different at a smaller post such as Fort Carson, here, at Fort Hood, training time is a luxury that few company commanders enjoy (or are given). I personally know tank company commanders who have been in command since June, 2001 who have yet to take their platoons to the field for anything other than gunnery. This is not their choice — rather they are held hostage to higher priorities: continuous force protection duties, NTC white-cell duty, augmentees to other units, O/C duty, and division and corps red-cycle taskings, to name just a few.

I understand paying the rent, but at the expense of training sections and crews? We are putting ourselves at risk. In today's army, the only time tank companies are afforded the opportunity to get out to the field is at the behest of a higher headquarters mission: OPFOR for another NTC train-up, or a brigade-run NTC train-up. Although I agree with LTC Pires that "trimming a few days of higher-level events" is worth the gain, it is my experience that senior-level commanders would not make such a sacrifice to their own training events; at least, I have never seen it happen. The same goes for adding days to a gunnery density: having to hold to a Gunnery Standardization Program torpedoed such an effort the vast majority of the time. The overcrowded ranges and training areas will rarely allow this.

Finally, the idea of a company green week would be a dream come true to most tank company commanders. In my 18 months as a tank company commander, I received this opportunity exactly once — and we did exactly as LTC Pires described because his training methodology is widely held to by many of my peers.

Something on the calendar has to give. The problem is that FORSCOM, corps, division, brigade, and even battalion all have their own taskings, training events, and contract-sponsored tests to execute.

What is truly tragic is that many platoon leaders are arriving at units during an off-cycle and are subjected to 6-12 months of a myriad of support taskings and are not given any opportunity to hone their own platoon

warfighting skills. Since their career timelines are shortened, this is often their only opportunity to lead a platoon before they must fill the empty company XO or specialty platoon slot. They can look back at their time as a platoon leader and sometimes only see one Level II gunnery and two iterations of tank services. No wonder this year's Armor Conference is concerned about training at the lieutenant and captain level... they can sit in the leadership seat for 12-18 months and maneuver their elements once or twice or not at all.

The FORSCOM commander once directed that each company commander be afforded one continuous week of his/her own training and that brigades and battalions assist in the resourcing and supporting of it. This does not happen at Fort Hood in any measure and I would wager that it does not happen regularly anywhere in the heavy community. Company, battalion, and even brigade commanders are held hostage to garrison taskings and exercises mandated by a higher echelon such as an IOT&E for the TUAV or the "Systems of Systems" test. Throw in "Quick Train" and the damage is irrevocable.

LTC Pires' article is well written and an excellent blueprint on how training should be done on a routine basis. The powers who can influence the calendar must now step up at all levels and do what is right: allow platoon leaders and company commanders the opportunity to train *on their own* or else run the risk of having a future cadre of leaders who have spent only 9-12 months as platoon leader and 12-18 months as company commander, with little or no experience in how to train soldiers, crews, or platoons.

CPT CHRIS L. CONNOLLY  
Fort Hood, Texas

## With the Right Equipment, We Could Truly "Own the Night"

Dear Sir:

CPT Mike McCullough wrote a great article ("Designating targets with 'God Guns,'" January-February 2002 *ARMOR*), which I happened to read immediately after a battle at my brigade's ARTEP exercise last month. I had just finished fighting a light-mechanized-heavy task force offense mission and "lived" the infantry-tank communication dilemma CPT McCullough discussed in his article. My tank company was cross-attached to 2-9 Infantry (Mech) for the ARTEP, along with an air assault infantry company from the 1st BN, 503d IN (AA).

During the mission, the light infantry company, superbly led by CPT Sean Cook, conducted a night infiltration and seized a critical hill overlooking my objective, while suffering minor losses to enemy artillery and direct fire. However, because my company team's tanks and Bradleys were not nearly as well equipped for night fighting as are most light infantry units, and because of real-world

safety concerns, higher headquarters did not even consider a night attack, so our momentum slowed to a crawl as we waited for the sun to rise. Throughout the early morning, I sat in my TC's hatch, frustrated, listening to CPT Cook's urgent SITREPs from the hill he was now defending under increasingly devastating mortar and small arms fire. Finally, at 0800, I was granted permission to cross the line of departure, and from that point on the battle unfolded in conventional fashion. Ultimately, the light infantry company's successful infiltration was helpful, but not decisive, to my attack, and I was not able to take advantage of the commanding position CPT Cook had seized, other than the obvious benefit of getting some great "cross talk" on the battalion command net as I entered the main battle area.

I understand the need for risk assessments and common sense judgment calls when it comes to safety. I went to my first NTC rotation shortly after an entire Bradley platoon drove off a cliff into the Colorado Wadi, and experienced a number of "close calls" myself. We never conducted combat missions under limited visibility, not even a perimeter defense. But our Army likes to claim to the world that we own the night. Either we need to (1) start training at night or (2) change our slogan, or at least add a disclaimer that "Only our light infantrymen own the night." Unfortunately, world events may not give us this luxury.

We urgently need to equip our tanks to fight at night on every potential battlefield we may face, i.e., places other than a wide open desert environment. While I'm glad that every one of my tank drivers has a VVS-2, and every TC and loader has a set of PVS-7s, that much equipment by itself doesn't help us fight any better. And a main gun that destroys targets 3000 meters away at night is really not very useful in cramped villages, or mountainous terrain — in Korea or anywhere else in the world — which easily overwhelms the main gun's maximum elevation. What we need is to equip our TC's and loader's machine guns with some of the same equipment that the light infantry community has been using for years: AN/PAQ-4 IR laser pointers, or AN/PEQ-2 combined IR floodlight and pointing devices. The good news is that it does not take a huge investment, just an MTOE change. PAQ-4s cost \$250 (PEQ-2s a little more), which is pennies compared to a tank that costs upwards of \$2 million. The kind of money that it would cost to upgrade my entire battalion, would barely register on a week's worth of ULLS-G exception reports.

How does this stuff work in reality? Fortunately, I have been able to find out, on a limited basis. Last November during Table XI, one of my tank platoons tested PAQ-4s on their TC's and loader's machine guns, and experienced immediate and decisive improvements in their ability to acquire, engage, and "hand off" targets to one another at ranges out to about 500 meters. There

was a brief learning curve, while crewmen got familiar with distinguishing between eight laser spots, but afterward they performed extremely well and were not confused by the "light show." Pretty soon, TC's started using the lasers to designate battle positions for their (or their wingman's) drivers, an unintended side benefit. This is similar to how paratroopers have perfected operating in drop zones that are cluttered with dozens of strobes, pointers, beams, and markers.

Imagine a future battlefield where a light company conducts an infiltration to seize a critical mountain pass at 0300, then is followed by a tank company team an hour later which attacks through the defile to seize a terrorist base camp. Tank commanders walk their .50 caliber machine guns' fires onto enemy trenches and cave openings by matching their laser designators' beams to the light infantry spotters' beams. (Oh by the way, our Apache helicopters have been grounded hours earlier after receiving murderous ground fire, and low cloud cover is frustrating our precision bombers... is this starting to sound familiar?) Meanwhile, tank loaders easily identify and destroy enemy personnel trying to ambush them from the flanks or rear. Finally a mechanized infantry platoon dismounts its two squads, which attack under a curtain of protective machine gun fire to enter the headquarters bunker and capture the enemy commander along with his personal staff.

How far out does that really sound?

CPT SHERMAN S. POWELL  
C Co, 2/72 Armor

### **Blanket Accusation Disappointing; OPFOR Is Held to a High Standard**

Dear Sir:

I am currently serving as commander of HHC/1-4 IN, the OPFOR at the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) in Hohenfels. As the HHC commander, I am dual-hatted as the chief of recon for the OPFOR, so I read with great interest the letter from CPT T.J. Johnson in the January-February 2002 issue. The first paragraph of CPT Johnson's letter has some great advice for the combined arms community with respect to employing the TOW in the looker role. I take issue, however, with his allegations in the next two paragraphs of his letter.

He alleges that "OPFOR scouts...are successful because they know how to 'play the game.'" He then goes on to describe how the OPFOR "cover[s] their MILES head halos with the front flap of the boonie caps... [and] uses Vaseline on their torso sensors." Remembering that all OPFOR soldiers are U.S. Army soldiers, I'm disappointed to see a leader make a blanket accusation against the OPFOR recon soldiers. I'm equally disappointed to see that your magazine published such an accusation. Like CPT Johnson, I too have observed the OPFOR scouts

from different perspectives, as I fought against them as a BLUFOR scout platoon leader and now command them. Having fought on both the red and blue sides of the fence, I can tell you that the standards of ROE enforcement and punishment for MILES violations are much tougher in the OPFOR than in most BLUFOR units.

CPT Johnson does highlight in his letter why the OPFOR scouts are good when he states that "[t]hey have the opportunity to create and hone field SOPs because they spend two weeks out of every month implementing them." Yes, it's called training, and the fact is that the OPFOR scouts have tremendous training opportunities. Rather than making bogus allegations against young soldiers, CPT Johnson should focus on the reasons the OPFOR scouts do well and what other units can learn from them. When a BLUFOR unit has successes against us, we seek to learn from their successes and employ some of those same techniques rather than simply claiming that our opponent had cheated. Your magazine should focus its attention in the same direction.

ALLEN PEPPER  
CPT, IN  
CMTC

### **Army Is the Real Loser In OPFOR "Play the Game" Myth**

Dear Sir:

I read CPT T.J. Johnson's letter to the editor in the January-February 2002 issue with dismay. His accusing the OPFOR scouts of being successful only because they know how to "play the game" continues to perpetrate a myth that only does the Army harm.

We take cheating in the OPFOR very seriously. I have been in command of the 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment for 18 months, and during that time, we have had two cases of alleged cheating. Both cases were handled with a 15-6 investigation conducted by a field grade officer. These investigations are very thorough. The MILES II system is downloaded to identify each event. The investigating officer obtains a copy of the battle hyper during which the alleged cheating took place. Extensive interviews are conducted with anyone who could possibly shed light on the incident, to include any O/C who may have witnessed the alleged violation. If CPT Johnson really identified OPFOR soldiers cheating, then he let his organization, the OPFOR, and the Army down when he did not immediately report the incident.

CPT Johnson goes on to state that "the OPFOR are so good because they train on the same ground month after month and year after year." As a force projection Army, I would ask CPT Johnson to give me a realistic scenario where we will not be fighting an enemy on his own turf.

CPT Johnson's comments give the BLUFOR units an excuse to not train and to not develop better TTPs. There are many great soldiers out in the Army that would figure out how to accomplish the missions that we need them to conduct. But, as long as individuals like CPT Johnson provide them with excuses why they are failing, those great Americans will not spend the extra energy required to develop those TTPs, especially given the oppressive OPTEMPO of most units in the Army today. The only loser in this scenario is the Army.

Finally, what is perhaps the most negative element of CPT Johnson's letter is that he gives no credit to the soldiers who make up the OPFOR scout platoons. I fully agree that our scouts train more than BLUFOR scouts. The operative word is "train." They deploy to the field ten days every month and train themselves and the BLUFOR they oppose. Credit the platoon's work ethic; do not discredit the individual ethics of my soldiers.

TIMOTHY A. NORTON  
LTC, AR  
Cdr, 1/11 ACR

### **Bottom Line: Success of Unit Depends on Leadership and Training**

Dear Sir:

I just read the response by CPT T.J. Johnson to CPT Shaw's article, "Breaking the Reconnaissance Code," in the January-February 2002 issue of *ARMOR*, and had to respond. The first half of CPT Johnson's response was well stated in using the TOW-equipped HMMWV as a method of gathering intelligence on enemy forces. What I do have an issue with is CPT Johnson's statement that the reason OPFOR scouts are successful is they know how to "play the game." As a former scout platoon leader at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, I couldn't disagree more. CPT Johnson states that OPFOR "cheats" to be successful. OPFOR recon doesn't have to cheat to be successful. OPFOR scouts are successful because they apply the basics of scouting and execute them on a daily basis to standard. Because OPFOR recon is out-gunned and has less technological advantages than their BLUFOR counterparts, they are forced to return to the basics of scouting — using sight and, more importantly, sound to be successful in defeating their enemy.

The second tactic CPT Johnson attributes for the success of the OPFOR is that they "face the same scenarios month after month." This is only partially true; yes the missions are the same, but the opponent is different. The assertion that this is a basis for OPFOR success is ridiculous. Many times I had to change infiltration routes based on the enemy's disposition and composition of its screen line. This proves that when you

Continued on Page 49

## LETTERS from Page 4

face a free-thinking opponent, you can have different outcomes from the same scenario.

In closing, I would like to caution CPT Johnson in making broad statements that attribute the success or failure of particular units on how much field time the unit has or how they defeat the MILES equipment. The success or failure of a unit is a direct reflection on how the unit leaders train their soldiers and the attitude that the leaders instill in those soldiers.

ROBERT W. PHILLIPS  
CPT, IN  
HHC 1-4 IN (OPFOR)

### Torsion Bar Suspension Claim Falls Short on Documentation

Dear Sir:

Mr. D.P. Dyer's criticism of the Ordnance Department for not having a torsion bar development program is fascinating but by no means persuasive. (See "The Origins of Torsion Bar Tank Suspensions," March-April 2002 issue.) It is ludicrous. First, and most important, is a definition of "development"; a word the author uses acrimoniously to launch his misleading thesis. According to English dictionaries, development means "to evolve to a more complete complex." The word also means, "advance, amplify, and promote." The Ordnance Department followed this process during World War II. Furthermore, his article falls short on historical substance because of a lack of important primary sources to support his argument and subjective conclusions. Apparently, Mr. Dyer did not take the time to look at the important Andrew D. Bruce Papers at the U.S. Army Military History Institute, Headquarters Army Ground Forces (Record Group 339, NA), the Ordnance Historical Files (OHF) and the Ordnance Committee Minutes (OCM) Items (Record Group 156, NA), and the Barnes Files to mention a few. If so, he would have had a better understanding of the organizational process in weapon acquisition decisions in the U.S. Army during World War II. These sources provide important information on Ordnance Department initiatives regarding the development of equipment for the using services, including the torsion bar suspension system.

One example displaying development initiatives was in late December 1942 during a meeting with representatives from the Tank Destroyer Board, manufacturing representatives, and the Ordnance Department's Subcommittee on Automobile Equipment. At this meeting, it was proposed and recommended to develop the torsion bar for the T70 (the T stands for development), which became the M18. The key member from Ordnance at this meeting was the chairman, BG Gladeon M. Barnes, who in 1934-35 had submitted with Warren E. Preston torsion bar suspension patent letters. (See *Reference Material: History, Ordnance Department, WW II*, Vol. II, Chapter 6, Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Record Group 156, NA.) Dyer, in his article, is not at all clear nor does he offer proof if

the original torsion bar design was based on Barnes and Preston's designs or upon German ideas. He should have examined the G-2, Military Intelligence Division (MID, Record Group 165, NA) files from the U.S. Army military attaché in Germany during the mid 1930s. Other key ordnance members in attendance on the torsion bar decision were BG John Christmas, an engineer and tank designer, and LTC Joseph Colby, a protégé of General Barnes.

In addition, a few additional examples will service to contradict Dyer's thesis.

In *The Tank Destroyer History*, Historical Section, Army Ground Forces, Study No. 29 (1946), page 62, it was noted that the "greatest single accomplishment of the Tank Destroyer Board was the development of the M18." In its development, however, special mention was noted regarding the cooperation of General Motor's officials with the Ordnance Department. Another example of the Ordnance Department's initiative in developing the torsion bar can be found in *The Role of the Army Ground Forces in the Development of Equipment*, Historical Section, Army Ground Forces, Study No. 34, (1946), page 38 in reference to OCM Item No. 19775, 18 February 1943, subject: Medium Tank T20E3. It stated, "At the request of the Armored Board, it was decided to provide one model of the T20 series with torsion bar suspension, which had been developed by the Ordnance Department...[it] appeared to give greater promise than the conventional volute suspension." Later when the T23 pilot model was being evaluated (OCM Item No. 20182, 15 April 1943, subject: Medium tank T23E3), the Ordnance Department suggested the torsion bar suspension be substituted for the volute suspension system. Eventually the torsion bar system was used in the M24 Chaffee and M26 Pershing tanks. The developmental history of the torsion bar suspension is indicative that it would not have become a proven system without the proposal, recommendation, and approval of the Ordnance Department.

What is even more disingenuous in Mr. Dyer's article was when he wrote (page 45) that General Colby stated, "he was never in a position to get funds for its [torsion bar] development until the winter of 1942-43." Dyer listed no source regarding Colby's comment. However, in *ARMOR*, November-December 1991 (page 18), the author of an article on tank destroyers quoted Colby from a personal letter he had received from the general stating, "I was never in the position to get funds for its development until the winter of 1942-43." In this case, the author did list his source (page 19, fn 20). General Colby wrote the letter to the author regarding his early involvement over the torsion bar debate. It is courteous among professional military historians to quote accordingly and not engage in plagiarism. This adventurism questions the validity of Mr. Dyer's article.

For Mr. Dyer to say that the Ordnance Department did not approve and was not involved in the development of a torsion bar program is shortsighted and demonstrates a

lack of research. Furthermore, his article is obscured by his lack of understanding the organizational turmoil experience by the Ordnance Department due to huge demands of developing new weapons under wartime pressures and rapidly changing requirements insisted on by the using services. Nevertheless, the torsion bar system would never have been approved without the driving force of the Ordnance Department.

It is a pity that Mr. Dyer created another myth. He has, over the years, contributed many excellent technical drawings for various technical and buff magazines, many of which appealed to "nuts and bolts" historians.

GEORGE F. HOFMANN, PH.D.  
History Professor  
University of Cincinnati

### Battalion Master Gunner Disagrees With Civilian Replacement Concept

Dear Sir:

I am writing in regards to SFC McIntosh's letter in the March-April 2002 *ARMOR*. I would like to start with this statement. I completely disagree with his assessment!

I have served as a master gunner on both Active Duty and as a member of the National Guard. I have served in positions at the company, battalion, and brigade level. I will not say that I am the best there ever was or the best there ever will be, but I will say that I am a leader and a soldier no matter what position I hold. Regarding SFC McIntosh's questions: "Do we really want or need that high speed NCO in the tower, the MILES warehouse, or making tracking charts? Wouldn't we rather have him leading his men?" — if he feels that he is not needed in the tower, in determining those discreet CCFs, in making sure that the MILES and LTIDs the battalion's 44 crews are about to use are operational, in tracking gunnery results for historical data, fixing broke fire control systems, etc., and isn't leading men or training them to be warriors, maybe he needs to evaluate exactly how high speed he is.

I am currently serving as the battalion master gunner for M1A1-equipped 2-123 AR, of the Kentucky Army National Guard. We do not have the luxury of self-diagnosing equipment, on-board diagnostics, in-line replaceable LRUs, or air conditioners. Our master gunners are instrumental in keeping our tanks operational on ranges and during maneuver exercises. The use of the STE-M1 and the BOB are still daily occurrences for us and, most times, we are the trainers for our turret mechanics in their use. I use them often to ensure the OPTEMPO on firing ranges continues at the highest possible rate. They work hand-in-hand with my maintenance sections. They provide the majority of the input for the commander as we/he develops yearly training plans.

I will agree, to a point, that a lot of what is taught at Master Gunner School is not al-

ways used at the unit level. However, I would submit that what they teach gives the Master Gunner a decent understanding of how the Fire Control System and the subsystems work and at least provide a starting point for diagnostics.

Replacing these dedicated and knowledgeable leaders with civilian contractors would be a mistake. Are the civilian replacements going to come out to the range in subzero temperatures, climb through the mud at Graf or Hohenfels, show up at 0200 to trouble-shoot a tank, or deploy to war with us? The master gunner must be in the same uniform and face the same hardships as the soldiers.

He makes the argument that being the master gunner keeps leaders from leading soldiers. The master gunner position is an additional slot on the TOE/MTOE of armor units. Replacing them with a civilian would eliminate a senior NCO position, of which there are already not enough.

The master gunner is a very valuable asset to the commander, at any level he is assigned. His knowledge of the Abrams capabilities and that of our possible enemy's equipment can and should be a consideration of commanders, not only on gunnery ranges but in the preparation for war. Our input can and should help the commander develop training scenarios that will help the Armor force prevail on the modern battlefield. The master gunner's input during staff exercises, Warfighters, and even during a basic MDMP process can help mold the way commanders think and act. The key is to know when and how to present this valuable data.

ROBERT W. KYLOR  
MSG, KYARNG  
2-123 AR BN Master Gunner

### **Prepositioned Floating Heavy Brigade Could Act as Armor RDF**

Dear Sir:

I have been an avid reader of *ARMOR* magazine for many years, but have never written to you before. As a former NCO and officer in both 3/185 AR and 1/184 IN, CA ARNG, I retain both my interest in the goings-on of the Armor Community and its future. The invitation issued by MG Whitcomb in the Nov-Dec 2001 issue, and the ongoing discussion within your pages over the formation and equipping of the IBCT brigades, has inspired me to offer my own opinion about this new force structure and, more importantly, the role of the Legacy Force and the Objective Force.

The decision to equip the IBCT with the LAV III has been hotly debated by many of your authors, most noticeably Mr. Stanley Crist, and I do not believe that I can contribute significantly to it here except to say that I LIKED the M113A3. It is handy, quick, and reliable. In the hands of a skilled driver, it can overcome most types of terrain and, key point, it can swim. This is a capability sadly lacking in today's Legacy Force. As to its protection and firepower, these can be up-

graded just like those of the basic LAV III. In fact, when I was associated with United Defense Technologies, the makers of both the Bradley and M113, I encountered numerous examples of upgunned M113s equipped with 20mm or greater caliber cannons and TOW missile launchers. These modified M113s were, and are, used by Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, and others. Although to the purist these are not tanks, they don't carry infantry and they function as light armor. As such, the Armor Community has a strong interest in their development and employment. It occurs to me that the Army could purchase these off-the-shelf items for the IBCTs at far less cost than developing a completely new 105mm cannon armed LAV variant, which, as Mr. Crist notes in the March-April edition, may not be technically feasible. Light armor, M113 or LAV based, equipped with missiles and light cannon, may be all the IBCTs get.

That being said, where the rapidly air-deployable infantry divisions are "light" forces and the Abrams/Bradley divisions are "heavy" forces, the IBCTs are "medium" forces falling somewhere in between. As such, the IBCTs can be air deployed where an Abrams/Bradley brigade cannot and, once on the ground, they provide the desperately needed stiffener to the light infantry forces likely to be deployed with them. However, if an IBCT encounters a local force of heavy armor — think Iraq, Iran, or North Korea — they may survive the encounter, but they will suffer for it. The key to surviving the next medium- to high-intensity conflict remains with the "heavy" forces that this nation used so successfully in WWII and Desert Storm. Following on the letter by MAJ Stollenwerk, also in the March-April 2002 edition of *ARMOR*, which advocated the elimination of various levels of intermediate headquarters between battalion and corps, I suggest that the "heavy" brigade be the core combat element of any future American Expeditionary Force.

A suitably reinforced heavy brigade with battalions of armor, mechanized infantry, aviation, artillery, and engineers, as well as a beefed up support battalion, could serve as a mini-division at the beck and call of the in-theater corps commander. Supplemented by the IBCT and infantry brigades deployed in front of it, the heavy brigade, especially digitized, would act as the wide ranging armored fist of the corps commander. I suspect that a corps with one heavy brigade, a pair or more of IBCTs, and an infantry division could, and would, demolish just about anything our foes could throw at it — certainly long enough for follow-on forces to arrive if needed.

To make this concept a reality, however, requires the cooperation of the Navy and the support of the senior Department of Defense leadership. As has been stated many times, and is the final justification for the IBCTs, the Abrams/Bradley forces are just too heavy to get anywhere very quickly if deployed directly from CONUS. Transporting from home station by rail to a suitable port and then combat loading onto ships takes weeks. The answer to this dilemma is pre-loaded, fast sea lift. If the Navy can be prevailed upon to

build and maintain two sets of fast sea lift ships with two sets of proposed heavy brigades aboard, it would be only a matter of days before a heavy brigade-sized force could be deployed wherever it was needed. Having two sets of floating reserves would allow one set to be in port at any given time for maintenance and overhaul leaving the other to patrol in the vicinity of potential hot spots. If it became necessary to deploy the floating heavy brigade, after an air/beachhead has been established, its soldiers could be airlifted out to meet their equipment at the dock. The second brigade could follow shortly thereafter. In effect, these two brigades would be the Armor Community's version of the Rapid Deployment Force. Note that this concept is recommended for both the Legacy and the Objective Forces as I have a very hard time believing that even the future armored vehicles of the Objective Force will be light enough to be air deployed in great numbers.

Obviously, this is just an idea. I offer it in the hopes that it will spark discussion beyond what kind of Objective Force vehicle will eventually be developed to the debate on how that vehicle will get where it is needed.

TIMOTHY S. SMYTH  
Los Angeles, Calif.

### **Look To Div Cav for Basic Concept Needed to Empower Company CO**

Dear Sir:

I am responding to MAJ Stollenwerk's letter, "Empowering Company Commanders: Now It's Time; Here's a Way," in the March-April 2002 issue.

One need look no further for this basic concept than the divisional cavalry unit. The only difference with this concept versus MAJ Stollenwerk's is that the brigade HQ is eliminated, instead of the the division. Just coming from such a unit in Germany, and now being assigned to an armor battalion in CONUS, I find myself missing the added support of having organic mortars, scouts, maintenance, and air support, as well as having the added benefit of direct engineer and medic assets sliced to you at troop level instead of at battalion.

The current armor battalion, as MAJ Stollenwerk points out, has too many echelons directing training and training support, without the convenience of having any of the above-mentioned assets, and the number of soldiers to train with directly. Making the companies larger by assigning CSS and combined combat arms together and empowering the company commander to be able to train his soldiers as a combined arms team not only gives leaders at all levels the experience to work with every BOS, but establishes an esprit de corps among the troops creating a more cohesive combat team.

SFC JASON R. MCMURRY  
Platoon Sergeant  
2-70 AR, 1AD