

# LETTERS

## Train Soldiers to Standard

Dear Sir:

I am a tank instructor at the III Corps NCO Academy, BNCOC. My letter regards the Tank Crew Gunnery Skills Test (TCGST) standards, but mainly Station 6, Boresight the Abrams Main Gun.

The 19K BNCOC Course is basically broken down into two areas: common leaders tasks (CLT) and tank related (MOS). One of the major tasks that soldiers fail is the TCGST tasks. And since we test to standard, as with Master Gunner Branch, we usually drop one to three soldiers a cycle on the retest.

I know this is nothing new for Master Gunner Branch. But the sergeants that come through this course usually have the same excuses. "My unit does not test us this way," or "I have not been on a tank for a long time."

Again, the two most troublesome tasks are Station 5A, Breechblock, and Station 6, Boresight. With the breechblock, the commanders at a lot of the units do not allow the tankers to drop them — mainly because too many soldiers do not know what they are doing and usually break something. So, when we get the tasked tanks, 75 percent of the breeches are either rusted or so dirty that you can hardly drop them at all.

Boresighting is an ongoing problem. Soldiers do not know the standards in FM 17-12-1-1. Too many tank commanders are using the shortcut method. And most of the sergeants do not do steps 36 through 44, adding the sight correction factors (SCFs). Someone has told them they are not important. And a lot of the sergeants say they still hit targets at gunnery. They must understand that on a gunnery range, when using the GAS, the ranges are usually under 1800 meters. And yes, you will probably hit the target. But, if you are in combat and have to use the GAS, at let's say 3100 meters and the correction factors are not recorded during boresighting and then placed on the GAS when firing from it, YOU WILL MISS at long ranges!

When I went to Master Gunner School, we were tested to standard. And I am sure that has not changed. Why are there so many units not testing to standard? When will master gunners, tankers, and leaders stop sending soldiers to schools not knowing if they know their JOB?

Taking care of soldiers is not just ensuring that they have clean socks or that they are being paid properly. Making sure they are trained to standard is also part of taking care of our soldiers.

SSG FLOYD C. McANALLEN  
BNCOC 19K Master Gunner  
Ft. Hood, Texas

## Problems with Checkpoint Operations in Somalia

Dear Sir:

There are two totally unsound problems with "Checkpoint Operations in Somalia." First, there is no 360° security on either checkpoint. Moreover, everyone's attention is focused on the center of the checkpoint. Second, over 80 percent of the soldiers are on the checkpoint in the open when stopping a vehicle. Both of these problems make this operation very susceptible to enemy ambush/car bombing. Solutions: (1) Bring vehicle off road to an inspection area which is covered/concealed. (2) Put LP/OPs in four cardinal directions from checkpoint. (3) Use strict sectors of fire and fire control measures; maintain 360° security with the reinforcing element. (4) Whereas a 7-98 is good for LIC, a 7-8 and the *Ranger Handbook* will offer good advice to ensure you bring all your troops home.

1LT ANTHONY J. AQUINO  
E/3/325 ABCT  
APO AE

## Communicate, Move, and Shoot Only When Necessary

Dear Sir:

I realized in reading MAJ Nowowiejski's article, "Achieving Digital Destruction..." (Jan-Feb 95 *ARMOR*), that some fundamental rethinking needs to occur.

When I was a student in AOBC (Cavalry) in 1984, I learned that the three missions of the cavalry (and by translation, the mechanized force) were "shoot, move, and communicate." This maxim found great use for me in teaching cavalry (and later scout) platoon tactics.

I used to tell scouts that "shoot, move, and communicate" was most helpful to remember in contact. You shoot to save your butt, move to a covered and concealed position to better develop the situation, and then communicate enemy compositions and dispositions and your proposed solution to the problem.

Of course, I would tell them before contact, that axiom was not used in that particular chronological order. For the cavalry, it was "move, communicate, and shoot," with the latter mission only to be conducted as necessary. Either way, proficiency in these three missions would guide them to proper tactical employment on the battlefield.

These three missions are still pertinent to Force XXI. However, MAJ Nowowiejski's article seems to suggest that the proper chronological order is "communicate, move

and shoot:" communicate intelligence on the area of operations as it is gathered, move your force using this intelligence as your guide, and shoot proficiently when necessary to provide the outcome dictated by the commander's intent. This holds implications for future training.

First we must train our "communicate" mission. The digitized force must learn to work through the complexities of a receiving, discriminating, reconfiguring, and transmitting (RDRT) loop inherent to the volumes of intelligence that will come from the sky and on the ground. To me, this implies digitized command post exercises (DCPXs). These should be executed with the same intent as the UCOFT — to train proficiency in (digital) warfighting skills. I think not doing so would be tantamount to an aviator learning how to fly, but not how to work the radios to talk with air traffic control personnel.

Since intelligence gathered from the digitized system will drive force movement, field training exercises (FTXs), our "move" mission, should come next. Tactical training **MUST** be multiechelon in nature. This is of prime current importance with a one-way graphics update capability, as alluded to by the major's article (a critical vulnerability for a digitized force). Even when this software limitation is corrected, multiechelon training is still the way to go. As I understand it, information will flow from all over the battlefield. The only way to master the RDRT Loop is to use it the way it will come to us in the fight.

At the end of the training cycle, crews can begin gunnery training. This is not to say our "shoot" mission is of least importance. On the contrary, it is the ultimate expression of force. Simply deploying a joint task force (as we did this last October) to preempt a potential invader will not happen often in the future. But it would seem that the intelligence capabilities of a digitized force allow "shooting" to be more of an end state instead of the means we use to get there.

I have no idea how digitalization is going to change Tank Tables I-VIII. Perhaps it should not have any effect at all. But section- and platoon-level gunnery sounds like an opportunity to apply mass with acceleration (through velocity over a vectored route) to bring force to bear on the enemy. (It makes me wonder if gunnery ranges will be tens of kilometers long, or will we replicate the fight by maneuvering sections and platoons several kilometers through a training area onto the range?) It is not difficult to see digital possibilities for Tank Tables X-XII.

We should not forsake our traditional missions of "shoot, move, and communicate" as if electrons are the way to fight. Rather, we should apply electrons to bring us to

*Continued on Page 48*

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## Letters (Continued from Page 3)

the fight smarter. The best way to do that is to train to “communicate, move, and shoot.”

CPT MICHAEL L. PRYOR  
Co C, 1-156 AR  
LAARNG

### LAV Solution Too Vulnerable

Dear Sir:

I agree with most of CPT David Nobles' reasoning on the desirability of Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs) for contingency operations (Jan-Feb 95 issue). As a Marine officer I spoke out in favor of the 105-mm LAV Assault Gun variant (now perfected but abandoned by the Corps) and against the HMMWV, unarmored and unarmed, to **prevent** tragedies like we had in Somalia, where we lacked both infantry organic shock action and mission mobility in the face of enemy small arms fire. Nobody listened, and men died.

But before we let our enthusiasm for wheeled LAVs go unchecked, we need to realize that the 8-wheeled LAV used by the USMC has had — really bad — armor protection. The fragmented, burned out hulks

of LAVs hit in the Gulf War, which once held a dozen men, is a sobering reminder that this vehicle is only marginally “armored.” The 8-wheeled LAV has a hard aluminum body that can **deflect** assault rifle rounds while the HMMWV has a soft Kevlar body to **absorb** AR rounds, though the latter will be banged up. Any projectile larger than 7.62x39mm Russian will turn both vehicles into “Swiss cheese.” The key advantage of the 8-wheeled LAV is its chief weakness: if its wheels get shredded by explosion and/or set on fire — “run flats” or not — it's going to be stuck. Had USMC 8-wheeled LAVs been there on October 3d in Somalia — unless they were Assault Gun variants to blast the warlord gunmen hiding in buildings before they hit them — we would have left LAVs burning in the Bakara Market in addition to the maligned HMMWVs. Until we make the wheels of the HMMWV and 8-wheeled LAV combat-hardened, **neither will be mission-mobile in the face of enemy small arms**, obstacles, broken glass, and wire. We knew this from Panama in 1989.

On the other hand, the M113 is a tracked LAV — again, it helped save the day in Somalia — **it was able to move under fire** since its tracks can absorb small arms fire and climb over debris and still be **fully mis-**

**sion mobile.** Just about everything CPT Nobles wants to do with a wheeled LAV, the M113A3 can already do: strategically deploy by air to include airdrop, STOL air-land, air-mobile by CH-47D helicopter, swim, carry troops in quantity, act as a weapons carrier. Its 12-ton weight is light on its tracks so it can drive itself to different places operationally without need of wheeled transporter/trailers that the heavier 33-ton M2A2 Bradley and 63-ton M1A1 Abrams require. The A3 model is fast, and with 30 years of mass production, spare parts are cheap and available all around the world, making it just as affordable as a wheeled LAV.

While not as mechanically simple as a wheeled LAV, or as fast on roads, the M113A3 will keep moving under small arms fire up to heavy machine guns and keep its occupants alive, where in a 6-8 wheel LAV, they would die a horrible death. While not as quiet, due to its tracks, as a wheeled LAV, the M113A3 can dismount scouts on folding all/extreme terrain bicycles to recon ahead as the vehicle stops short of enemy sight/hearing. The abandoned USMC 105-mm assault gun and 120-mm mortar turrets could be fitted to the M113A3 and/or its high mobility stretch (HMS) variant to give contingency forces mobile firepower. For al-

most zero cost, surplus M40A2 106-mm recoilless rifles could be fitted to give our infantry organic shock action, too.

It's not a bad thing that we don't have the money to buy 6- or 8-wheeled LAVs. They are too big for effective scouting and under-protected for APC duties better suited for the tracked M113A3 and M2. The HMMWV is better sized for scouting and, if fitted with a hard shell body like the French VBL to deflect bullets, and solid foam rubber tires like the French AMX-10RC 105-mm Assault Gun LAV or what our own 1st Tactical Studies Group (Airborne) used on its folding ATBs, could become a "4-wheeled LAV." An effective countermine armor system has also been fielded for the HMMWV. Making the HMMWV a 4-wheeled LAV would be faster and cheaper than buying a larger 6-8 wheeled LAV with serious tactical liabilities. While 6-8 wheel LAVs can carry heavier armament than the HMMWV and swim, the HMMWV can easily carry the 106-mm recoilless rifle and, as miniaturization technology improves, weapons will require smaller transports. A swimming HMMWV variant could eventually be developed. For vehicles to survive on the modern battlefield, they will need to become smaller, not larger targets, better to start small and work from there. HMMWVs can also be transported by plentiful UH-60 Blackhawk medium helicopters if their weight is kept under 4 tons.

MIKE SPARKS  
Ft. Bragg, N.C.

## T90 Selected as Main Tank For Russian Armed Forces

Dear Sir:

Some important new information has appeared concerning the T-90/T-90S HPT since my article, "The Russian T-90/T-90S: An Old Dog With Some Dangerous New Tricks" (*ARMOR* March-April 1995) was sent to the printer. One of the key questions concerning the T-90/T-90S is the role (if any) it will play within the Russian Army. Apparently, this question has finally been answered. According to *VOYENNYE ZNANIYA* #9 1994, the T-90 "has been selected as the (new) main tank for the Russian Armed Forces." This significant information was included in an article comparing the Russian T-80U PT to the new German Leopard 2 (Improved) MBT in the light of Sweden's recent selection of the Leopard for its armed forces.

While this information about the T-90 answers a key question, it also leaves us with some interesting new questions as well. The possibility that Russia's historically "top-of-the-line" tank design team and production facilities (producers of the T-80U) would simply be shut down seems very unlikely. A more likely scenario would be a redirection of effort rather than no effort at all. The virtual certainty that Russian tank development will continue beyond the T-90,

and the impressive capabilities of those same people who brought you the T-64 and T-80 Premium Tanks, should fuel discussion in the armor community and the pages of *ARMOR* for some time to come.

JAMES M. WARFORD  
MAJ, Armor  
Leavenworth, Kan.

## There's Still Life in the M113

Dear Sir:

Mr. Mike Sparks' article on the venerable M113 was interesting, well researched, and proves there is still a lot of life left in the world's most produced armored vehicle. Ironically, the day I received the issue of *ARMOR* containing the article (J-F 95), I also received the latest issues of *Jane's Defense Systems Modernization* and *Defense Weekly*, both of which had articles on upgrades for the 113! With so many branches vying for Bradley platforms (FIST, ADA, ODS/A3 Upgrades, etc.), there aren't enough BFVs to go around. The Engineer School is considering the Mobile Tactical Vehicle Light (MTVL) for engineer squads to avoid using a Bradley. The MTVL uses the 350 HP engine and will easily keep up with the Abrams and Bradley during combined operations.

The latest *Jane's Defense Weekly* outlined how the Australian Army is evaluating a modified M113 with the M40 106-mm Recoilless Rifle (RCL) to augment the Milan missiles and Carl Gustaf weapons systems. M113 weapon options were also the subject in the January issue of *Jane's Defense Systems Modernization*. The options for the M113 ranged from Mk 19 to LAV25 turrets. Mid-life extensions could provide smaller armies with a formidable IFV for less money than a Bradley, Marder, or Warrior.

Naming the M113 after General Gavin is a nice thought, but after 30 years I'm afraid the name wouldn't catch on with the troops. Even though the M113 is worthy of a name it will always be called the "113" or "PC" by the troops. Mr. Sparks has done his research well and has given us much food for thought.

WADE BARTTELS  
Killeen, Texas

## Make NCOs Master Gunners, Not Master Billet Inspectors

Dear Sir:

I'd like to address two articles in the July-August 1994 issue — Command Sergeant Major Davis' "Driver's Seat" and Lieutenant Colonel Williams' "Leader Development — Don't Forget CSS."

In regard to CSM Davis' article on master gunners, my best tank, mechanized, and cavalry outfits have master gunners as their first sergeants. What great trainers! We must continue to develop our noncommissioned officers into master gunners. They will lead our soldiers into the future. CSM Davis is right on track with his article.

Some may read in "Leader Development — Don't Forget CSS" that the command sergeant major can only address billets maintenance. He is the master trainer for all individual and crew tasks in the organization. He can provide quality control in all CSS training, not just billets maintenance, as LTC Williams points out in his article. He is a leader developer.

Let's remember that all armor noncommissioned officers are warriors. Keep them battle-focused. Make them into master gunners, not master billets inspectors.

CSM JOHN BECK  
2d Infantry Division

## Some Caveats on RTD Postings

Dear Sir:

It was with great interest that I read Captain Leon Smith's article concerning Resident Training Detachments in the November-December 1994 issue. His insight provides a helpful overview into RTD operations, not only for those who are assigned to RTD posts but also for those RC soldiers who may work with such personnel.

There are, however, some caveats I would like to add as a battalion commander for an RC unit. First, CPT Smith's quote from the Orientation Course (Footnote 3) should remain paramount in the minds of RTD personnel. Never lose sight of the fact that you are there to assist, and **not** to command. By far, the majority of operational conflicts that we experienced between some of our RC and RTD personnel were linked to the issue of authority. If there is a problem with the RC leaders doing their job, go to your RTD chief and the RC battalion commander.

Second, if the brigade commander, as CPT Smith states, expects RTD personnel to be his eyes and ears, do not forget that there is a battalion commander who deserves to be informed first. The first time you provide information, whether it is to your brigade RTD chief or the RC brigade

## AFV Quiz Answers

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|-------------|-----------|
| 1. LAV25    | 7. Jaguar |
| 2. OT-64    | 8. BMP    |
| 3. Gepard   | 9. 2S1    |
| 4. ZSU-23-4 | 10. 2S3   |
| 5. BTR50PK  | 11. M109  |
| 6. MTLB     | 12. AMX10 |

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commander, without providing the battalion commander some advance notice first, you will cause irreparable injury to your mission and the mission of the unit you support. Treat the RC commander like he is **your** battalion commander (even though he's not). If the news you intend to report is bad, say so — he's paid to take it.

Third, the sense of community and support for your family that you have on an Army post is hard to achieve in this assignment. Many assignments are to headquarters in small towns where a majority of the RC soldiers may or may not reside. Too, there is only a limited number of peer AGR officers and NCOs. We have constantly sought to resolve this problem but to date have met with only limited success. On the bright side, because you are assisting an RC unit, this assignment should allow you to spend more quality time with your family.

Finally, you will have some lively discussions about how to train and do things with the RC soldiers. FM 25-100/101 and the standard for the task being trained should quickly put to rest any questions. Good communication between the RC commanders and staff and RTD personnel is truly the key to success.

Our RTD team has been and will continue to be an integral part of our unit. I wouldn't trade any of them, especially my RTD master gunners. They are making a difference in the quality of training every day.

CHARLES S. WOODS  
LTC, IN  
1-155 Infantry, MSARNG

### Grow's Philosophy: An Exchange

Dear Sir:

In your September-October 1994 issue was an article on "Armor History and Operations in 1944" by George F. Hofmann, Ph.D. When describing General Grow's philosophy of life, the author said: "Grow did not believe in the superstitions and pagan formalities cherished by the churches."

Since these words and their sentiment were not attributed to General Grow, they appear to be a value judgment of the author and a gratuitous insult to church-going people. By logical extension, the comment sandbags our dedicated Chaplain Corps including officers like Vietnam Medal of Honor winners Chaplains Loe Liteky and Charles Watters.

While Dr. Hofmann is free to believe anything he wants, he should no more be permitted to use *ARMOR's* pages as a platform to insult church-going people than to make racist or sexist statements.

By the way, I am neither a chaplain nor religious cult member — just an old grunt who very much appreciates the importance of religious practice by soldiers who sorely rely on it in times of battle and other personal trials.

LAWRENCE J. DACUNTO  
COL, INF (U.S. Army, Ret.)  
Wayland, Mass.

### The Author Replies

Dear Sir:

Colonel Dacunto's letter was most provocative, and this author thanks him for his interest in armor leadership. However, I found his letter lacking substance and thus question his logical extension.

In looking through the membership roster of the 6th Armored Division Association, I did not find Colonel Dacunto listed, so, I assumed he never served in the 6th Armored Division, nor did he mention that he personally knew or served under General Grow. Since 1971 until the early 1980s, my family and I were frequent guests of General Grow at his home in Falls Church, Va. In addition, we routinely met for years at Fort Knox at the 6th Armored Division Association's annual reunions. There were many evenings we stayed up late discussing Clausewitz and his philosophy on war, and the role religion had played in numerous wars throughout history. The last mentioned subject was of interest because the

General served two years (1947-1949) as head of the U.S. military mission in Iran. He was no stranger to Islamic fundamentalism. Many times, the General expressed his feelings about the superstitions and pagan formalities cherished by the various churches. He transgressed from the dogma of blind faith to a higher order in the Hegelian sense of exploring truth towards the absolute spirit. This in no way denigrates a religious practice. Thus there was never an intention in our discussions to insult "church-going people," only to quantify a personal philosophy that provided substance to leadership development. What was written in the *ARMOR* article was, in fact, an accurate reflection of a philosophy on life as expressed to me many times by General Grow. In addition, this philosophy was recorded in Chapter XV, "Epilogue," *The Super Sixth. History of the 6th Armored Division in World War II and Its Post-War Association* (1975). Before the manuscript was submitted to the printer and the publisher, General Grow had reviewed the "Epilogue" and made no changes nor offered any objections to what I wrote about his philosophy on life. He entirely approved in my assessment. General Grow had the greatest respect for his division's chaplains; they effectively served the spiritual needs of his men. I have talked to and interviewed many general officers and found General Grow possessing one of the most perceptive and challenging minds in my many years of experience in assessing military history.

Finally, to accuse one of expressing a racist and sexist statement is a very serious accusation, even more so when the accuser lacks a logical sufficient reason for assenting to the truth. Three thousand and five hundred (3,500) copies of *The Super Sixth* were printed and distributed through the United States and Europe. Not one reader or book reviewer had made a comment that the history contained a racist or sexist statement. There is no place in any logical discussion for emotional, unsubstantiated biased remarks.

GEORGE F. HOFMANN, Ph.D.