

LETTERS

Improving Reserve Training

Dear Sir:

I was extremely interested in the article, "The Reserve Tank Company Organizational Readiness Exercise," by 1LT John A. Conklin in your last issue, since my unit recently completed an ORE cycle.

I would like to agree with his suggestion of each company-sized unit having a fairly large training area for their use. As a driver, I do not get enough time driving a tank to be very proficient. Having a nearby area available would assist units, like my own, in

sharpening their maneuvering skills. This would also increase the hands-on training that makes being a member of a Reserve Component armor unit fun. Quality training that is useful and fun is good for morale and retention.

It would be outstanding if we were able to attend many active duty schools. I, myself, would love to go to several schools, but the funding does not seem to be available for this. We usually have to settle for correspondence courses, which I feel do not replace the actual classroom setting.

1LT Conklin mentioned giving units money to contract with local health clubs and require that the soldiers participate in a

physical training program. One thing to take into consideration is that many of your soldiers do not live in or near the cities where their units are located. Many travel several hours. Some live in rural areas with the nearest club more than an hour away. This would present a problem with the suggestion, but the main idea is an extremely valid one. Many Reserve Component soldiers do not meet the standards for physical fitness, and something must definitely be done. When it comes to P.T., often the question is not "what did you score," it is "did you pass?"

Regarding the idea that E5s and above should attend an additional MUTA-4 every

month for gunnery training and other activities — you have to realize that being a citizen soldier is a part-time job. This would be asking a person to give up two weekends a month for the Guard or Reserves. Sometimes the weekend is the only time some of these soldiers have off from their jobs. This would probably cause many good soldiers to “burn out,” rather quickly, which is not good for retention.

Of course, we do want to improve the quality of our Reserve units, but we must remember that Reserve Component soldiers are serving their country part-time. Let's not take more family and leisure time away from them. But we should be providing them with the best training opportunities possible.

JEFFREY J. THOMAS
PFC, WIARNG
B-1/632 Armor

ROTC Is Not “Soft Duty”

Dear Sir:

I found many of the points in Major Morrison's “Armor Officer 2000” article (Sep-Oct 94) to be right on target (i.e. combining CAS³ and the Advanced Course, two-year command tours, and rotation between operations and logistics in staff assignments).

I take exception to Major Morrison's inference that ROTC duty is somehow a less important assignment or is less vital to the Army than other assignments. Major Morrison's belief that an officer “qualified to command, but not a tactical unit” could be recommended for an “assignment as an ROTC or recruiting company commander or a transfer to the Reserve for continued training and development,” is not only insulting to the 1,166 officers assigned to Cadet Command, it ignores the fact that the vast majority of officers within the Command are branch-qualified, having commanded units at almost every level.

I am not sure that Major Morrison fully understands the role Cadet Command plays in leader development. Currently, Cadet Command provides 67-78 percent of the active-duty officer accessions to the Army. We cannot do this without the whole-hearted support of professional armor officers who recruit, train, retain, and commission the future officer leadership of the Army. I can think of few better opportunities to influence the future of the Army than service in an ROTC detachment. For Major Morrison to imply that this is somehow an assignment for officers unfit to command tactical units directly refutes the emphasis the senior leadership of the Army is placing on protecting leader development in the face of ongoing Army drawdowns.

This article merely reflects a perception I have encountered many times throughout the Army — that ROTC duty is “soft-duty” or that ROTC cadre are below-average officers. Nothing could be farther from the truth! The high-quality young officers we produce for our Army is a direct reflection of the quality of our cadre on over 300 campuses across the country. I have personally valued my time in Cadet Command and the opportunities I have had to influence outstanding young men and women toward service to the Nation. I hope that other Armor officers recognize this unique opportunity to contribute to our Army's future.

MARK G. EDGREN
CPT, Armor
U.S. Army Cadet Command

Enough Jobs to Go Around?

Dear Sir:

I am writing in reference to MAJ Douglas J. Morrison's article in the September-October 1994 issue of *ARMOR* (“Armor Officer 2000”). MAJ Morrison makes some very valid points about the professional development of company-grade officers and his suggestions for changes to career progression sound like the right path to take. I was fortunate enough to serve two years as a platoon leader and one year as a tank company XO during my first tour in Germany. The troop experience has proven invaluable to me and has had a positive influence during my first year in command. While MAJ Morrison's suggested career path for company-grade officers sounds great, I have questions about its feasibility.

One stumbling block is the availability of XO and specialty platoon leader positions in tank battalions and cavalry squadrons. With 12 tank platoon leaders and only eight XO/specialty platoon positions (in a tank battalion), it would be difficult to give every lieutenant two years in such an assignment. Another obstacle is the ever-present need to fill staff jobs with lieutenants due to shortages of captains. We all know that lieutenants will be needed to fill assistant and even primary staff positions, unless we can actually get enough captains to fill all these positions in all tank battalions and cavalry squadrons. That is not likely to happen soon.

I whole-heartedly agree with MAJ Morrison that CAS³ should follow AOAC. Even better is the suggestion to combine the two. Most of the instruction in AOAC is geared toward staff training and spent in small group instruction, and combining the two would save the Army considerably. In this day of shrinking budgets, every dollar

saved is precious. Usually, when a captain attends CAS³ he has already had command and is enroute to an assignment away from tactical units.

Regarding the suggestion that every advanced course graduate serve one year in an operational staff assignment, followed by a logistical staff assignment at the battalion/squadron or brigade level, I again question the feasibility of such a policy. Are there enough jobs to go around? I would also question the ability to keep officers in these positions for the suggested time limits. There will always be the command that comes open early due to relief, functional area assignments, schooling, and other causes common to battalions/squadrons today. I agree that officers must understand both the logistical and operational sides of our profession, and if we could train all company-grade officers in both applications, we would be an even stronger organization than we are now.

What MAJ Morrison's article suggests is the “perfect solution” for training company grade officers. But the Army isn't perfect, and what he proposes would be next to impossible to execute. Personally, I would love to see these changes made to our professional development system, but I'm not holding my breath. Hopefully, MAJ Morrison's article stirred as much interest with the Personnel Management folks as it has with me. As a 41 designee, I would like to hear MAJ Morrison's (or anyone else's) ideas on how we could make such a system work.

CLIFFORD E. WHEELER
CPT, Armor
3-66 Armor, 2AD
Ft. Hood, Texas

Why Cav Changed in the '70s

Dear Sir:

BG (Ret.) Philip Bolte's article in the September-October 1994 issue, “Full Circle: The Armored Cavalry Platoon,” is square on target, no adjustment needed for the second round. As the Director, Combat Developments, the Armor Center, during the mid 1970s to the early 1980s, I was involved in the elimination of the combined arms type cavalry platoon. BG Bolte's subjective reasons for the Armor Center's position for change were influencing factors. However, one major driving force of the studies was obsolete performance equipment available for that platoon as projected into the 1980s-1990s period when tank battalions and mechanized infantry battalions would be equipped with the M1 and the M2.

Continued on Page 50

LETTERS (Continued from Page 3)

The early 1970s R&D scout vehicle program had been terminated, the 1/4-ton was not the solution, the M551 Sheridan was a failure, and the M113 family as a platform for the mortar carrier and infantry squad was projected to be obsolete for the future. The hard fact, in both analytical studies and real world comparisons, was that the platoon's poor mobility, firepower, and materiel reliability doomed it as a unit on the M1 and M2 battlefield and, thus, even risked ground cavalry's existence in the future division and corps organizations. There were no R&D or procurement dollars available to develop, procure, or optimize vehicles for the combined arms type platoon. Monies available to armor and infantry were dedicated to the high priority XM1 and XM2 program, a correct decision at that time.

The quick and, I consider, interim term fix was to buy into the XM1 and XM2 programs for future armored cavalry platoon equipment. The result was the M1 tank and the cavalry version of the M2, the M3. The trade-offs in greatly increased platoon materiel costs vs. enhanced mobility, firepower, survivability, and reliability resulted in the current organization of scouts and

tanks or scouts alone, but with a reduced cavalry missions capability.

I completely agree with General Bolte's statement that new equipment available today has much to offer if viewed in the 1950s-1960s combined arms type cavalry platoon organization. To list a few: The M1109 HMMWV, the close combat vehicle light, the M2 infantry vehicle, and the M2 mortar carrier version.

The quick fix of the late 1970s has been overcome by available modern vehicles and greatly enhanced weaponry and vision devices. Don't re-invent the wheel, just re-examine an old and proven spoke — the combined arms structure.

JIM PIGG
COL (Ret.), Armor
Shalimar, Fla.

Light Cav LTs Need TOW Training

Dear Sir:

There is a very interesting phenomenon occurring within the armor community. Down in the steamy bayous and soupy for-

ests of western Louisiana, armor lieutenants are being placed in charge of TOW platoons without any real training on the TOW weapon system. I am referring to the Army's only full light cavalry regiment, the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment at Fort Polk. The 2d ACR uses only HMMWVs for its combat platforms. The scout platoons are mounted in HMMWVs instead of Bradleys, and in place of the tank platoons of the heavy regiment, light cavalry uses a platoon of four HMMWV-mounted TOWs. Traditionally, the HMMWV-mounted TOW system has been a weapon system used in infantry units as an overwatch measure against an armored threat. But now that this weapon system is being used in a cavalry organization, the platoon leader for the TOW platoon is not an infantry lieutenant, but rather an armor lieutenant.

The idea of placing an armor lieutenant in the position of TOW platoon leader is by no means a bad one. Cavalry tactics are still at the heart of the light cavalry organization, however a certain adjustment is necessary, both philosophically and technically. There should be some formal fine tuning for a lieutenant who has come from Ft. Knox and has been studying the tactics

and techniques of an audacious steel beast when he must suddenly readjust to a new platform and a new weapon system. What is the solution?

Army-wide, the only institution for TOW system instruction geared specifically for platoon leaders exists at the Infantry School at Fort Benning. The Infantry School has a course which they call the TOW Platoon Leader's Course (TPLC). This course is aimed at the TOW platoon leader within infantry TOW companies, but is still excellent training for TOW platoon leaders in the new light cavalry organizations such as the 2d Armored Cavalry at Fort Polk. The course covers the workings of the TOW system, TOW maintenance programs, TOW training management, TOW training aids, TOW gunnery, and most importantly, TOW tactics.

Recently I went to Fort Benning to take this course, but regrettably it was cancelled after only one day of training due to the low attendance (I was one of four lieutenants who showed up). The instructors there told me that the classes for this course have been growing steadily smaller. It seems as though the infantry is relying less and less on this weapon system while, ironically, the armor community is now embracing the system as part of its light cavalry concept. In speaking with the instructors, reviewing the texts, and looking at the training schedule for this two-week course, it struck me as the ideal transition course that armor lieutenants need to more effectively lead a TOW platoon. In some situations, however, units find it difficult to send lieutenants all the way to Fort Benning for this course because of ever-shrinking budgets and the high cost of TDY pay.

The Infantry School does offer a solution to cash-strapped commands who perceive the need for this training yet can't afford the TDY expense of sending lieutenants to Fort Benning. The Infantry School is able to provide the course in its entirety in a mobile training team (MTT) format. The TPLC instructors could set up the course on your post and thereby save money. The course can instruct up to 28 lieutenants. All that the host unit needs is a range that can support TOW gunnery (no live missiles need be used), two classrooms for classes and for tests, and all the TOW equipment needed. The cost to the unit is simply the TDY costs associated with the ten members of the instructional team and any support costs such as fuel, ammo, range support and any equipment.

Whether the MTT is the answer or whether there is an even smarter answer, I do not know for sure. But one thing that I am fairly certain of is that, before taking over a TOW platoon in this new light cavalry, an armor lieutenant needs TOW-specific training. With such training, an armor lieutenant is the ideal platoon leader for the light cavalry TOW platoon.

2LT PATRICK J. GRIEBEL
A Trp, 1/2 ACR
Ft. Polk, La.

Sleep Management Revisited

Dear Sir:

I was interested in Captain Patrick J. Chaisson's comments on sleep management in combat in his article, "Rest for the Weary," (*ARMOR*, Sep-Oct 94). As a tank platoon commander, it took me a while to develop my own sleeping patterns and effective sleep for my soldiers while on operations.

I found that I needed three hours of sleep a night in order to operate effectively. Any less than three hours continuous seemed to leave me extremely drained. In developing a sleep program that kept in mind the need for local security and radio/listening watch, I found that three hours sleep plus 15 minutes for waking up and going back to sleep to be the most effective. If a soldier had a middle of the night security shift, I tried to get him two hours before and after to make up for the disruption. Additionally, to even the workload, tank commanders would serve on radio watch and crewmembers would provide security or runners as necessary.

I also found that after five to six days, depending on the phase of war being exercised and intensity of operations, that two sustained six-hour periods of sleep were needed. This usually coincided with the need for company-level maintenance day.

My hat off to CPT Chaisson for putting to words what I found through two and a half years of trial and error.

2LT BRADLEY T. SHOEBOTTOM
Royal Canadian Armoured Corps
Canadian Armed Forces

Fixing the Scout Platoon

Dear Sir:

LTC Woznick's article in the September-October 1994 issue of *ARMOR* is right on the mark in identifying the requirements of the perfect scout steed. But, he has overlooked an interim fix to overcome the HMMWV's shortfalls while we wait for the FSV. With the correct mix of the scout platoon's organization we can overcome the shortfalls of the HMMWV and play to the strengths of the M3 and the HMMWV.

In my experience in scout operations, I have encountered missions that required both the stealth of the HMMWV and the firepower, survivability, and observation capabilities of the M3. To overcome this dichotomy, I suggest a platoon mix of six HMMWVs and four M3s. Under this task organization, the scout platoon can array these assets, adjusting to METT-T, to capitalize on the strengths of each of the systems.

By leading the HMMWVs in a two- or three-section configuration, the platoon

puts its most stealthy and quickest eyes forward. They can be closely followed by the M3s, which can provide overwatching thermal observation and, if the need arises, fires. In a screen mission the lower silhouette and noise signature of the HMMWV can be used to hide in forward positions that the M3 cannot fit, while the M3s cover.

This organization also overcomes some of the shortfalls in the platoon's combat load problem of the current 10-HMMWV configuration. The added storage provided by the M3 for both equipment and personnel adds to the platoon's capability for special missions (e.g., carrying sappers for prebreaching or additional dismounts for patrols).

Track-mounted attachments the platoon may receive also fit nicely into this mix. Often, a COLT or GSR team mounted in 113s spoil the stealth of an all-HMMWV platoon. In a mixed organization, these mounted elements can still travel under the control of the M3 scouts and be employed with the same constraints for tracked vehicles. Another appropriate and highly useful addition to this organization is two motorcycles. Utilized for messenger/courier transport or flank coordination, this vehicle can be very valuable.

Let's not wait for the long-range development of a FSV or settle for an upgrade of a vehicle not designed or entirely suited for all scout missions. The stealth, survivability, and combat power of a mixed M3/HMMWV scout platoon provide a versatility needed now. A good football coach would not put a player built like a corner back on the offensive line. Different roles, missions, and capabilities call for a mixed platoon.

CPT LOUIS J. LARTIGUE
1st Cav Division
Ft. Hood, Texas

Seeks Members of 4-66 Armor

Dear Sir:

I am a former M1A1 tank platoon leader of 4-66 Armor, 3d Brigade, 3d ID (stationed at the time in Aschaffenburg, Germany), who is writing a book portraying my unit's actions before, during, and after deployment to Southwest Asia during Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM.

I need information from unit members I have not already interviewed as well as updated addresses for those I did. I can be contacted at the address and phone number below.

1LT MICHAEL KELLEY
1411 Norwalk #105
Austin, TX 78703

Phone: (512) 479-4160