LETTERS

Mortar Doctrine Writer Responds to Article

Dear Sir:

I'm sending you this message in response to an article in your May-June 1996 issue, "Tactical Employment of the Heavy Mortar Platoon," by CPT Matt Sebenoler. I've never written to you before, but because of my close, long-term association with the subject of CPT Sebenoler's article, I feel I must. You see, I have primary staff responsibility for mortar doctrinal issues at the Infantry School and wrote much of the existing literature on the tactical employment of mortar units.

In this article, CPT Sebenoler states that little of the doctrine that he found in *FM 7-90, Tactical Employment of Mortars,* actually works under combat conditions. Obviously, I disagree. I'd like to present you and your readers with another side of this argument.

The author makes several misstatements and misrepresentations of what is (and what isn't) the Infantry School's doctrinal position on certain mortar issues. The doctrinal manual that CPT Sebenoler had available to him in the desert was the first version of *FM 7-90,* dated 11 June 1985. We have revised it once since the Gulf War, printing the upgraded version in October 1992.

When it was published in 1985, *FM 7-90* provided, for the first time, detailed doctrinal guidance to the mortar platoon leader, as well as to company and battalion commanders and the battalion S3s and FSOs who had staff responsibility for integrating mortar fires into the commander's tactical plan. As part of a three-piece set of updated mortar-related manuals which included *FM 23-90, Mortars,* and *FM 23-91, Mortar Gunnery, FM 7-90* was a timely addition to the doctrinal kitbag the Infantry and Armor combined arms team had available to take to the Gulf War.

Now, let's address some of CPT Sebenoler's specific criticisms. First, he states that doctrine calls for the heavy mortar platoon always to operate in split sections. This is not what the manual says.

On page 3-1, paragraph one says that the commander employs the mortar platoon based on his analysis of the factors of METT-T, and that there are three standard options: by platoon, section, or squad. This chapter then goes on to discuss when, and under what METT-T conditions, each of the three options would be most appropriate. Employment by split section is the second method discussed. At no place does *FM 7-90* state that operation by split section is the preferred method. Page 3-4 provides a chart that lists each employment option and then the advantages and disadvantages of each. As is the case in all American Army doctrine, the leader on the spot is required to make an informed analysis of the existing situation and then choose the most appropriate course of action.

The next supposed doctrinal weakness the author presents is that *FM 7-90* calls for three of the most important individuals in the platoon to ride in the same vehicle and that this makes them too vulnerable to loss from a single kill. Once again, he misstates. *FM 7-90* simply does not say that.

FM 7-90 makes no declaration as to who rides in which vehicle. The riding setup that CPT Sebenoler describes, with the three FDC personnel riding in the same M577, is probably the most common in training, but it isn't, even by the wildest stretch of the imagination, demanded by doctrine.

As he points out in his own article, the heavy mortar platoon has two identical FDC sections, each with its own vehicle. We fought hard for several years during the late 1980s to get the platoon's TO&E changed to authorize the extra vehicle, driver, and FDC personnel.

The justification we presented was twofold. It was to facilitate split section operations, and secondly, it was to increase redundancy of the FDC in case of just such a catastrophic kill. It was for the same reasons that we authorized the platoon sergeant's wheeled vehicle. It facilitated his control of a section during split section operation and lessened the chances of both senior leaders becoming casualties from a single round or mine.

As you can see, doctrine had already driven TO&E changes that accomplished the same results the author was seeking, lessening the chances that any single vehicle kill would render the heavy mortar platoon combat ineffective by killing irreplaceable personnel. CPT Sebenoler reduced that risk even further by cross-loading key personnel within his platoon. Rather than violating doctrine, he was on firm doctrinal grounds when making that decision.

The next supposed doctrinal shortcoming concerned the actions he had to take to compensate for his battalion commander's decision to restrict wheeled vehicle use to the trains area only. That decision was well within doctrinal norms, being based as it was (I assume) on an evaluation of their vulnerability and a desire to maximize the cross-country movement speed of his unit once the ground combat phase of the war began.

However, every decision a commander makes has consequences and every benefit has an associated cost. The consequence of this decision was to somewhat reduce the flexibility of the heavy mortar platoon's command and control structure. The actions the author had to take to compensate for that reduction seem logical, but they were certainly not necessitated by any doctrinal shortfall within *FM 7-90.*

The next so-called shortcoming involved the platoon leader being forced to stop displacing his platoon by alternate or successive bounds and begin to displace as a complete platoon. He found that, despite his best efforts, the rest of the battalion was driving away from his mortar platoon as each section continually stopped, set up, waited for the other section to complete its move, broke down, and moved again.

Contrary to CPT Sebenoler's statement in his article, displacement by bounds is not the doctrinally required technique. In fact, in *FM 7-90* on page 3-6, there is a detailed discussion of the factors that affect the commander's choice of displacement techniques. Three displacement techniques are described in the 1985 *FM 7-90,* the first of which is displacement by platoon. The discussion of displacement by alternate and successive bounds even includes the cautionary note that they are slower than displacement by platoon.

What appears to have happened in the situation described by the author is that he and his battalion commander were basing their displacement techniques on two very different views of the existing tactical situation.

If the mortar platoon leader's evaluation was correct — that the battalion needed continuous and uninterrupted immediate mortar support — then the battalion commander should have been regulating the speed of the unit to remain within the umbrella of that support provided by the bounding sections.

However, if the battalion commander's evaluation of the existing METT-T conditions was correct (which appears to have been the case), then the mortar platoon was wasting its time bounding and was doing nothing but slowing the battalion down.

The issue seems to have been resolved in the battalion commander's favor, as they usually are! The author states that once he changed the displacement technique and began to travel as a platoon behind the maneuver companies, all was well.

Once again, none of this had anything to do with doctrinal shortcomings within *FM 7-90.* You could perhaps chalk it up to a lack of communication between the author and the battalion commander.

If I've come across as being harsh on CPT Sebenoler, I don't mean to. He sounds like a thoughtful and energetic young officer who successfully met the challenges that came his way in the Gulf. I

congratulate him for achieving such a degree of proficiency within his platoon that it could complete preparation for a hip shoot in under two minutes. That's an impressive time, and it shows what a well-trained, well-led heavy mortar platoon is capable of doing. Some of the technology we are now integrating into the Mortar Fire Control System will allow us to shorten into-action times even more.

To sum up, let me say that the American Army's approach to tactical doctrine is almost unique in the world. Not only are our leaders authorized to modify the tactics and techniques they use at any particular time, basing that decision on their personal evaluation of the existing METT-T conditions and their commander's intent, but they are required to do so! We select, train, and promote leaders precisely on their demonstrated ability to make just these sorts of decisions and use just that sort of initiative. We do not often promote leaders that demonstrate they are incapable of such mental agility and must follow a rigid written doctrine as if it were dogma.

All of us would be better served, and would serve our soldiers better, if we understood that unique aspect of our doctrinal philosophy. We should all read carefully and study our existing tactical doctrine, rather than make unsubstantiated claims that it is inadequate, based on an incomplete understanding of its fundamentals.

ARTHUR A. DURANTE, JR.
Deputy Chief, Doctrine Division
Combined Arms and Tactics Directorate
U.S. Army Infantry School
Ft. Benning, Ga.

Javelin Opens Up Many New Possibilities

Dear Sir:

Major Morningstar's brilliant thinkpiece in the May-June 1996 *ARMOR,* "Javelins and Skirmishers on the Battlefield," should be required reading for force developers and doctrine writers around the world. This observant young officer, apparently floating around the Atlantic somewhere, has correctly identified the advent of a "new breed of smart weapons (that) are about to fundamentally change ground battle systems, organization, and tactics." On 27 June 1996, the Javelin antitank missile system was fielded to the 3d Battalion, 75th Rangers, marking the world's first deployment of precision strike, fire-and-forget technology to the individual soldier. In the coming years, AT sections in the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and selected brigades of the National Guard will receive a revolutionary capability, comparable to the English longbow at Crecy. The future is here: there now exists the ability for dismounted soldiers to kill modern tanks with a man-portable, top-attack weapon at tank ranges, with more accuracy than the tank.

As the author points out, Javelin systems properly employed have the potential to strip an advancing formation of its key tank assets, force deployment and delay, and greatly improve survivability in an NTC or Desert Shield scenario. Horizontally integrated in an organization conducting a force projection mission, Javelin's mobility and high stowed kill precision can be a critical element in protecting an area for follow-on heavy forces. One could envision a light cavalry regiment built around precision weaponry, airborne units that are much more than "speed bumps," airmobile tank raids, and a thousand other concepts yet to be created. The Chief of Armor has pointed the way: "to find ways to accommodate the change brought on by new weapons, new technology, new organizations, and new missions, within existing manpower and budget constraints ...to gird against defeat is not to change."

One hopes that we do not squander this technology, repeating our tank development experience of 1918-1940. The early signs are not good — it being so difficult to change in a period of relative peace, constrained resources, and the "lessons" of Desert Storm. The lessons of Waterloo on the superiority of bronze cannon come to mind. The prototype Force XXI Army Division is remarkable by its lack of change and reduces manpower by removing AT units from the organization, although many iterations remain. The Future Scout Vehicle, a potential skirmisher if ever there was one, is focused on medium caliber machine guns, of all things. The tankers continue to ignore missiles — perhaps still learning the wrong lessons from the Sheridan, a vehicle before its time if ever there was one. The Armored Gun System has been canceled on the eve of its fielding, perhaps removing armor from the light forces for a generation.

Many opportunities are coming to shape the future, however. Javelin will participate in next year's Advanced Warfighting Experiment, although it probably will be analyzed only in comparison to the last generation Dragon it replaces. The U.S. Marine Corps has given a high priority to precision weapons and will conduct trade studies and prototype integration of Javelin on their Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle and to replace TOW on the AT versions of the Light Armor Vehicle. International interest is very high, particularly in countries facing a high tank threat, those needing the low training overhead of fire-and-forget simplicity, and those wanting to upgrade current platforms without expensive development costs.

The next few years will tell — those who see the possibilities will shape the future.

FRANK HARTLINE
COL, Armor (Ret.)
Allen, Texas

Javelin Missile May Be Capable, But Is Not a Panacea

Dear Sir:

As a Field Artilleryman, I feel compelled to correct a few misconceptions and mention a few additional points not covered by Major James K. Morningstar in "Javelins and Skirmishers on the Battlefield" (*ARMOR,* May-June 1996).

Overall, I think Major Morningstar makes an excellent case for the capabilities of the Javelin missile and a rebirth of the skirmisher concept. Moreover, I agree with his analysis of the tactical possibilities offered by this system. However, I disagree with his assertion that these tactics are not possible using existing systems.

The TOW II missile is far more capable than a SAGGER ever dreamed of being, and comparing the two is unjust. TOW IIs, when fired from ITVs which have been properly deployed, sighted, and supported, are capable of inflicting the type of damage that Major Morningstar describes. True, ITVs are not a "light" system, as Javelin skirmishers are, and the TOW II is not a fire-and-forget system. However, its longer range of 3750+ meters, small silhouette, and overhead armor protection do give it some capability in this area.

In addition, Major Morningstar gives the impression that the Javelin is a stand-alone weapon and that field artillery is not very effective against armored targets. Any weapon is only as effective as the sum of its parts and its integration into the overall scheme of the operation. No one weapon is capable of winning the battle on its own, not the M1A2 tank, not the M109A6 howitzer and, most certainly, not the Javelin missile.

Fire support, like all the other BOSs, is not perfect, and is most effective when it is correctly integrated and synchronized into the *maneuver commander's* concept of the operation. Remember, the maneuver commander owns the fire support plan just as surely as he owns the maneuver plan and the logistic support plan. Furthermore:

- Field Artillery does have a precision guided munition available to attack point targets — the M712 Copperhead. Although we will never have as many Copperheads available as we might wish, and it is not a

fire-and-forget system, it does have the capability to attack and destroy individual targets (especially when they are high payoff targets).

- The M109A6 Paladin does not simply reduce the time threshold for emplacing, executing a fire mission, and then displacing; it changes those thresholds completely. M109A6-equipped FA battalions do not operate from traditional static firing positions. Instead, the Paladin platoon (which consists of four M109A6 howitzers operating in two, two-howitzer pairs and one M577A2 command track) moves continually in its position area and only stops to execute fire missions. Since the M109A6 takes far less time to emplace/displace, and fire missions are received and executed digitally, responsiveness and timeliness are vastly increased. Additionally, survivability moves are not necessary as a separate act.

- The employment of the FA battalions in the examples Major Morningstar gives, while probably true, are misleading and definitely not in keeping with current U.S. Army maneuver and fire support doctrine. Any FA battalion that fires continually for six minutes at its max range deserves to be acquired and destroyed, especially if another battalion was available to reinforce its fires but did not because it was out of range.

What should have happened is that as the Forward Security Element (FSE) entered the constricting terrain (as predicted by the S2, who made this area a Targeted Area of Interest or TAI), it came under the observation of the Brigade's Combat Observation/Lasing Teams (COLTs). As the FSE reached the trigger point, the COLTs initiate a series of fire missions. Indirect fire lands on the FSE and an FA-delivered FASCAM minefield, which reinforces obstacles already emplaced by the engineers in the TAI, is emplaced. These serve to attrit, slow, and disorganize the FSE. As the FSE executes a hasty breach of this obstacle, intense indirect fire from both FA battalions (which were positioned so that the TAI was well within their 30,000 meter range) continues to hammer them in conjunction with direct fire from Javelin and M1A2-equipped skirmishers. The skirmishers, in conjunction with additional obstacles and continuing fires from the FA battalions and mortars, continue to attrit the FSE until it is destroyed. As the Advanced Guard Main Body enters the constricting terrain, it can look forward to the same treatment, augmented by attacks from fixed and rotary wing CAS.

I grant that the above actions are easy to talk about, but are very difficult to achieve. However, if we expect to fight and win on the battlefield of the future, we have to improve our ability to integrate and synchronize all available weapons, and BOSs. Javelin is a wonderful system, but it cannot win by itself.

JEFFREY A. CUSHING
MAJ, FA, CAARNG
Brigade FSO, 2nd Brigade 40 ID (M)

Too Much Digital Information Could Slow Operations, Not Help

Dear Sir:

It it great to see the "Issues in ARMOR" forum in place... and even better to see that the first issue is one near and dear to me. I was a platoon leader along with Bob Krenzel in A/3-8 Cav for the M1A2 IOTE. I am now a Military Intelligence officer who still keeps up with new developments in armor and maneuver doctrine.

One of the key issues that we will see come up with this new digital technology is that the dissemination of battlefield information and intelligence now has the ability to flow higher, lower, and to adjacent units with the push of a button. Imagery from a corps deep-look asset can be digitally sent to frontline battalions and soon, even platoons. Information from the critical battalion scout can be viewed by the division commander in near-real time. Information management needs to be practiced and rehearsed at all levels to keep only the necessary intelligence and information flowing. Commanders need to carefully develop Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR) and staffs need to pick Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIR), Friendly Force Information Requirements (FFIR), and Essential Elements of Friendly Information (EEFI) that support those CCIRs. These requirements need to be understood at least two levels up and three levels down to assure that the vital information is pushed up... and down. Lower echelon units (battalions) need to understand higher level collection techniques so they know what information can be pulled down. Staffs need to keep the commander's IVIS screen updated with what he needs... not cluttered with nice-to-know information. With digital information transfer in practice at section and platoon level, our ability, as an army, to force a murderous OPTEMPO on the enemy may be constrained by users plugging the pipes with nonvital information that will slow the decision-making cycle. Leaders at all levels must do their part in pulling and pushing the correct information up and down the digital pipes that feed our information-starved forces.

JAKE ROSE
CPT, MI

National Guard Needs M1A2s To Keep Up with Modernization

Dear Sir:

In reading everything I can get my hands on in reference to digitization, I am slapped in the face with the fact that the words "Army National Guard" cannot be found anywhere. It is true that *National Guard* magazine printed an article (Mar 96, "Louisiana Is Ready to Roll on the New M1A2") that suggested my battalion would be the first Guard unit to receive M1A2s. At the article's printing, a lobby effort was underway to convince Congress to include $300 million in the FY97 budget for dedicated procurement of a battalion set of M1A2s for the Guard. Due to budget constraints and a desire by the HNSC to present a budget that they believed would fly — they were already $10-$12 billion over the White House proposal — the lobby effort has dropped to one dedicated company's worth of -A2s. (While this is quite disappointing, it might not be a bad thing as it would show the reserve components how we would have to radically alter the way we train.)

The FUTURE must include us in the mix. Over and over again, I must repeat former Chief of Armor General Brown's words that, "…We cannot do another Desert Storm without the Guard's armor battalions..." We must be able to interface with the active component if we are to fight alongside. While it would seem that a by-product of the lobby effort mentioned above is a realization in Congress that 1,079 may not be enough, I argue that some Guard unit, somewhere, must start now with the M1A2 in order to find its sea legs. What is taking a daily effort of trial, error, retrial, success, etc., by the EXFOR at Ft. Hood will take even longer for the Guard to realize. While nearly every Guard leader drills more than just two days a month, all of those days not in the turret do nothing to add to teaching, learning, doing, and/or assessing curves.

One day, the M1A2 will be in our armory motor pools and MATES sites. It is much better that we start the process now, however slowly it may move, than well into the 21st century.

CPT MICHAEL L. PRYOR
Co C, 1-156 Armor
Louisiana ARNG

PIRs Are Not Focused Enough For Scouts' Reconnaissance

Dear Sir:

After reading the article, "Training the Task Force Scout Platoon," by LTC Lynch and CPT Cichocki in the July-August issue of *ARMOR,* I need to clarify a fine point on

LETTERS (Continued from Page 5)

tasking R&S assets. In the article, the authors use Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIR) to task the scout platoon, stating these "provide focus for the actual conduct of reconnaissance." This is not entirely true.

According to *FM 34-2-1, Reconnaissance and Surveillance and Intelligence Support to Counterreconnaissance,* PIRs provide the initial focus for R&S. In essence, they get you started. The real focus comes from translating those PIRs into indicators of a particular enemy activity. The S2 takes the indicators and develops Specific Information Requirements (SIR). SIRs are nothing more than indicators put in the form of a question. It is from these SIRs that the Specific Orders or Requests (SOR) that tasks the scouts are issued.

The key to successful R&S planning and tasking is to give the scouts a mission they can accomplish. Even the most focused PIR is often too large a requirement for scouts. By breaking PIRs down into specific pieces of information, you give scouts requirements they can satisfy. Through all of this, the S2 and the rest of the staff need to understand the logical ties between the SORs that the scouts are collecting against and the PIRs that the specific requirements are focused on.

ROBERT S. MIKALOFF
CPT, MI
USAARMC Threat Manager

Army's Users, Not Ordnance, Delayed Sherman Upgunning

Dear Sir:

With some interest, I read MAJ Mansoor's book review about the M4 Sherman tank (May-June 1996), especially where he wrote: "...The Ordnance Department could have done more to correct the greatest weakness of the Sherman — the low muzzle velocity of its main gun — but the Army did not realize the changing nature of tank combat until the huge losses in Normandy forced the Army's leadership to face the stark reality of modern armored warfare..." and other comments about the M4's deficiencies.

Not entirely so, MAJ Mansoor! I refer you to my letter to *ARMOR* in the March-April 1974 issue, pages 3 and 51. I'll quote only a portion of that letter on the matter of the controversy surrounding the 75mm gun on the Sherman: "It was the Ordnance Department's position that this gun was inadequate, but this viewpoint was overruled by the Army Ground Forces. After the combat experiences in North Africa highlighted the discontent with the Sherman, it was the Ordnance Department, ironically, that accrued the 'blame.' At the time when General Patton was supposedly incognito in England, just prior to the Normandy invasion, he and my father (then Colonel George G. Eddy) got embroiled in a very loud and public argument about the source of the tank's deficiencies. The dispute was broken up in a large officer's mess in London by Major General E.S. Hughes, later Chief of Ordnance when General Eisenhower was Chief of Staff, who pulled General Patton away, reminding him of General Eisenhower's concern about any publicity of Patton's whereabouts."

It should be remembered that the using service determines what it wants in outlining key specifications, not Ordnance. Certainly Ordnance is expected to point out consequences and alternatives. This was done with the Sherman, and the using service got what it requested.

While I hope I've got your attention, may I use this opportunity to recommend to your readers the article, "Planning For Kwajalein" by my father, BG George G. Eddy, in the July 1996 issue of *ARMY.* After he retired in the 1960s, I prevailed upon him to describe some of his most significant WWII experiences in a number of tapes. Years later, I transcribed and edited some of the events he related, and this article was the result. During WWII, he was the Director of the Ordnance Research Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, and became intimately familiar with a great variety of weapons, armaments and ammunition, and especially terminal ballistics. As a result of General Marshall's first-hand knowledge of my father's competence, he sent him on several special missions overseas to demonstrate new weapons and equipment, as well as to review upcoming invasion plans for the proper designation and employment of Ordnance materiel.

COL (Ret.) GEORGE G. EDDY, PH.D.

Author's Queries

For a study of women's experiences during the Vietnam War, I would appreciate hearing from the mothers, wives, and girlfriends of men who fought in the Vietnam conflict. Please include memories about the period your loved ones served overseas, including (but not restricted to) strategies for coping, networks of support, and attitudes of the population at large. Please also include a brief description of your background, including age, race, ethnicity, and the area of the military with which your loved one served. Send responses to:

VIRGINIA LAFFEY
P.O. Box 2052
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

* * *

I am researching the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in and around Stroud, Gloucestershire, England, prior to the Normandy landings, June 1944. I would like to obtain enough information on the units camped around Stroud, who were here for training and practice before going into battle, for a publication in memory of the men and also for a part of Stroud's history.

I need additional information on the following unit that was camped on Minchinhampton Common on a hill above Stroud. I think it to be a tank destroyer force, for the shoulder flash (patch) was a Tiger with a tank in its jaws; a Collar Dog that I have here belongs to the Quartermaster Corps. This was given to a boy at that time by one of the men. Also, they were Black Americans. Lastly, I have one name and possible address: Andrew (Andy) Dodson, North June Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

I would like to hear from some of the guys who were here for their memories, and any photographs, including themselves in uniform, that I may purchase.

PAUL F. ASTON
15 Hillclose
Lightpill
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 3PG England

* * *

For a book on the Maginot Line, I would like to hear from anyone with personal reminiscences or family papers, military or civilian, from the period August 1939 through July 1940.

John J. Gallagher
c/o Sarpedon Publishers
166 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010

Confessions of an Observer/Controller

Dear Sir:

Now that I have concluded a year as an observer controller (OC) in the Battle Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, I believe I have some experiences and opinions worth sharing. And since I am no longer an OC, I won't have to eat my words at a later date. The opinions and observations expressed in this letter are mine alone and DO NOT represent the opinions or policies of the Battle Command Training Program or its leadership.

I was a brigade OC for Division Warfighting Exercises (WFXs). As an OC, I always emphasized the TOC operations and not the results of the Corps Battle Simulation (CBS) or the game. The game can become a great distracter from the learning experience. It simply does not have the fidelity necessary to determine the combat success of a unit. It is not an analytical model. The key for an OC and a unit is to look at what the commander and staff did, based on the information the game provided, the commander's guidance, and the techniques and procedures the unit wanted to exercise. No one should believe they will be successful in a future battle based on winning at a WFX. A WFX is only one of many contributors to the future success or failure of a staff.

I realize that everyone wants to win. I also believe we do not want personnel in the Army who are not competitive. Competition and the will to win keeps us motivated and sharp; just be careful of the conclusions you draw from a computer simulation. Try to draw conclusions about the staff process and what needs to be done to improve the performance of the staff.

I am proud to say that I never once went into a TOC where I was considered a threat, and it was not necessarily because I was a great OC. Today's soldiers and leaders want to learn, and will take every advantage offered. The members of today's Army are true professionals who believe they must be tactically and technically proficient and believe in the individual's responsibility to improve himself.

Because of the learning attitude of today's soldier, the informal AARs are easy and very rewarding. Commanders and their soldiers are willing to listen, willing to analyze the successes and the failures, and make appropriate changes. The AARs are great learning experiences and an opportunity to hear someone else's ideas (for both the staff and the OC). But, I truly believe I had the greatest impact on the captains, lieutenants, and sergeants I had a chance to talk with one-on-one. These conversations were truly non-threatening and private. I really felt I had an impact because of their willingness to listen and learn. However, if I recommended a soldier do something differently, I would also strongly recommend he first get the approval of the chain of command. This kept me from stepping on toes, and I did not want to give the impression that I was the judge of success or failure.

In today's Army, everyone believes he or she is being evaluated all the time. We have almost a zero-defects mentality that has made some soldiers fearful of making mistakes and taking chances. Many of us believe that one screw-up can potentially differentiate us on the next rating. All of this may be true, but I believe commanders still want soldiers who are imaginative, knowledgeable, and willing to take chances to get the job done.

Don't misunderstand; you are being evaluated, just not by us. Most BCTP OCs believe strongly that they are not evaluators. Most of us believe outsiders should never evaluate a unit. It is the chain of command's responsibility. The chain of command wants to do it; they just cannot be everywhere all the time. That is where the OC comes in. We observe and provide information to the chain of command to assist in assessment of individuals and staffs. The unit commander decides what he wants the OC to focus on.

The bottom line is that all of us are getting evaluated every time we do our job. This is true in everyday life, as it is true during a Warfighter.

My greatest recommendation to any staff officer is: know what capabilities your Battlefield Operating System (BOS) brings to the battlefield; how to adapt those capabilities to the ever-changing plan, but staying within the commander's intent; and a current status of those capabilities. Too often I have seen some assets go unused because the person responsible for integrating those assets into the fight was just not paying attention, or was sitting back waiting for someone to tell him what to do.

Most of the brigade commanders, XOs, and S3s I have observed do have an excellent understanding of the BOSs and how to integrate those into the fight. However, these key personnel often get overwhelmed about the same time the plan goes awry. Therefore, such critical assets as artillery, GSRs, UAVs, helicopters, volcanoes, and transportation go unused. Every staff officer and NCO in the TOC must keep abreast of the current tactical situation and be willing and able to suggest how his battlefield operating system can assist in the fight.

A division WFX is an excellent opportunity for a new staff to get to know how the commander operates. The pace usually allows the brigade commander and XO to do lots of mentoring of the staff. There is time for the staff to discuss their operations and make improvements during the WFX. A division WFX is an excellent new staff team building exercise.

Several times I have been asked if the brigade should operate with a TOC only, or operate both a TAC and a TOC during a division WFX. A brigade can provide the division all the radio traffic and staff interaction they can handle from a single TOC. However, I have seen units exercise both very well during division WFXs. Everyone believes we must train as we would fight, but the brigade really needs to address where they are in the development of the staff to determine if they want to operate a TAC. The brigade should ensure it will not detract from the focus of the exercise, which is the division commander and his staff.

I have had the opportunity to observe a brigade operate both a TAC and TOC just before they deployed to the National Training Center. This brigade had spent considerable time training as a coherent staff and used the WFX as an opportunity to fine tune their SOPs. They were more prepared after the WFX. Another brigade had just returned from a different CTC and used the division WFX as an opportunity to exercise the changes recommended there. The WFX gave them an opportunity to assess the changes and continue to improve.

As most can tell you, TOC operations are basically information management. The right person, usually the commander, needs to know the right information at the right time so he can make the right decision. There is little well-written doctrine on how to operate a TOC efficiently. Being efficient is a matter of practice, practice, and practice. Unfortunately in today's Army, there is not much time for practice. In each WFX I observed, two-thirds to one-quarter of the staff was new.

Because of the great turnover, many staff officers look to the OC for an approved solution. There aren't any. An OC can tell the staff what he has seen work, or not work, but usually cannot explain why a technique is successful for one staff and not another. I have tried. I believe group dynamics is the only real reason for these inconsistencies. The staff's experience, the length of time the staff has worked together, the wants and needs of the commander, and the staff officer's ability to fully understand how his battlefield operating system can affect the mission are all keys to success. The relative importance of these keys are different for every staff.

I will truly miss being an OC. My greatest reward in the Army has been knowing that I was having an impact. I hope my comments will be helpful to someone somewhere.

MAJ EDWARD W. PAYNE
Fort Leavenworth, Kan.