

Accent on the

"KING OF BATTLE"



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OUR Army is greatly wanting in one of its most essential elements, a strong, well-tried artillery corps. It is regrettable to note that the Field Artillery component of the Armed Forces, has not been accorded the same attention lavished on other army components. There are two reasons why attention has not been focused so much on it. First, because the *modus operandi* of the HMBs, who are the objects of almost all AFP operations, does not warrant the employment of the artillery by our troops, and secondly, because the present financial difficulties of the AFP require that we spend only for immediate needs.

Thus most of our cannoneers are presently employed as infantrymen, and, possibly, already think as such. The situation seems justified, but when we think of the grim and threatening international scene, we see cause for alarm in the fact that without a sufficiently

strong field artillery our preparedness program is utterly incomplete. True, we have artillery units, but these batteries have been reduced to cadre strength and the funds for them are just enough to keep away the rust from the big guns. There are a good number of artillery officers and enlisted men in our Army, graduates of foreign service schools who can impart to others their knowledge, but employed as they are as foot soldiers it is doubtful whether they have heard of the latest trends in artillery and whether they have retained their old knowledge.

Past Experiences

Soldiers who fought in Bataan in the last war know the vital importance of artillery pieces in battle. To men harassed by an overwhelming enemy force, the sound of big guns on their side is a great booster of morale and fighting spirit. The battle of Bataan is past, but the importance of artillery — the

"King of Battle" remains growing by the day. The battle in Korea is just one testimony of the increasing import of this form of ground support. Artillery is the only ground weapon that can return barrage with barrage. It is the only weapon that can strike where rifles, machine guns and mortars can neither reach nor bear down on the enemy with effect. It is the only weapon, indeed, which produces the sound which to the ears of those firing it is a battle symphony.

But the mere presence of artillery pieces and men who can fire them is not enough. The experiences of our boys who fought in Korea attest to this fact. In Korea they were supplied with all the necessary artillery pieces, but they have realized that for effectiveness mere knowledge of how to fire them is insufficient. There is a coordination needed, made possible through efficient communication. And this ability to coordinate for effective fire power is acquired only,

experience has shown, from continuous training on the latest artillery tactics and methods of coordination.

A School Is Needed

A school that can turn out officers and men well-grounded on the intricate operations and problems of artillery is needed. While we have a Ground School imparting to officers and men new trends in infantry tactics, we do not have an artillery school. True, we have the ATU, but this institution is primarily concerned with and designed for training enlisted reservists. Even at that it is woefully unequipped. It has but one transit, not an artillery transit even. There is only one tape, built up of several broken segments inconveniently linked together. With this, we can not even expect artillery surveys that are accurate. Of course, problems are doled out to the students in the ATU, fire direction procedures are studied, and observation techniques are



With artillery being sparingly used in armed forces operations in the field against dissidents, little attention has been given the artillery component of the AFP, writer bewails. Most of our artillery men are employed as infantry men and possibly think as such.



United Nations soldiers fire on communist positions in Korea just before the current truce was declared. The Korean war has underscored the importance of artillery as effective fire support for ground operations.

reviewed. Only the officers of the ATU profit; they have the original knowledge. The equipment existing are inadequate for giving the neophytes more than a fundamental knowledge of artillery. And almost all the other officers who should profit, like the officers of the ATU, are either caressing machine guns in classrooms, leading patrols in the field, or performing everything but artillery functions.

There is also the SRC, which produces some artillery men, but again this school is primarily infantry. Some EM who graduate from it are basically FA and are commissioned in the artillery, but there have been but a few. Chances are those few are now also employed as infantrymen and have become rusty as far as artillery knowledge is concerned.

The ROTC contributes some graduates, but how much real artillery training do they get? Would these grad-

uates be able, at a moment's notice, to meet the many exacting requirements of artillery operations? And there is that grand military institution, the Philippine Military Academy. It is a source of artillery men, but the number produced by it is not enough and, like the others, also need training to make them qualify fully as artillery officers.

We should not delude ourselves. We need a school which is purely for the study of artillery, well-equipped, advanced, complete, capable of turning out just the number and kind of artillery officers and men we need.

Solving the Problem

The problem is obviously how to place in constant readiness a sufficiently strong FA and at the same time do it within our limited financial means. We cannot, due to limited funds, activate all artillery officers and men and maintain FA units in continuous training

separately.

Again, the solution boils down to the creation of a purely artillery school complete in every respect. To this school can be sent for training not only new-comers but also old officers and men to keep the knowledge fresh in them and keep them abreast of new developments in artillery tactics and strategy.

Artillery officers and men, currently employed as infantrymen, can be sent to the school in continuous rotation. In this way the present campaign against the HMB will not be affected inimically. The school will entail little expense, for it is just necessary to consolidate

all the scattered artillery pieces and instructors and add what is lacking. Moreover, present artillery units may be stationed within the school campus which can be the base of actual operations in which students can time and again be required to participate as a part of their practical and realistic training.

Only by establishing such a school can we have a sufficient number of real artillery officers and men who can be mobilized at a moment's notice in case of an emergency. It is the only way of filling up the gap that current field operations cause. It is late for a start, but it would be better to start now than later.



A Russian 120-mm mortar captured by UN troops in Korea from the Chinese and North Korean communists. The Russians recognized the importance, and made full and effective use, of big guns in the last war against Germany. Artillery will play the same indispensable and vital role in any future war.