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Title: Equipment in Airborne Units – Questionnaire, Operation

"Market"

Author: Headquarters, European Theater of Operations (ETO), United

States Army, War Department Observers Board

Abstract: AGF Report No. 418 – Equipment in Airborne Units,

questionnaire in relation to Operation "Market" with the 82nd Airborne Division and 101st Airborne Division. Submitted by

COL Harvey J. Jablonsky, Infantry.

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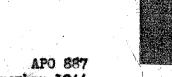
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HEADQUARTERS EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS UNITED STATES ARMY

UNCLASSIFIED

WAR DEPARTMENT OBSERVERS BOARD



APO 887 27 November 1944

SUBJECT: AGF Report No. 418 - Equipment in Airborne Units, questionnaire.

TO : The Commanding General, Army Ground Forces, Army War College, Washington 25, D. C.
(Attn: A. C. of S., G-2)

SUBMITTED BY: COLONEL HARVEY J. JABLONSKY, INF.

Questions that have arisen on Airborne equipment are answered below.

1. Jump Boot:

- Q. From a utility standpoint, is the combat boot superior to the jump boot?
- A. The boot, service, combat, wern by the Airborne troops, has been unsatisfactory in operation "MARKET" where mud and water is an accepted condition. The boot, jumper, parachute, has proven much more desirable and comfortable. The comment offered by unit surgeons, commanders, and troops is that the boot, service, combat, is a sponge that absorbs all moisture regardless of the amount of "Dubbin" used. On the other hand, the boot, jumper, parachute, properly treated with "Dubbin", has proved highly satisfactory.

2. Jump Suitr

- Q. Is the jump suit preferable to standard combat clothing?
- A. No. The standard jump suit is not warm enough for the climate encountered and it will not hold up under conditions of combat. It was not used in the operation "MARKET".

3. Carbine:

- Q. Is there any logical argument for replacing the carbine with another weapon?
- A. The carbine is not a popular weapon. Hen and commanders want the M-I rifle. In Holland the ranges were 300-400 yards and ideal for the M-I. However, the comment was that the M-I was also the best weapon in Normandy. In the hedgerow country, the M-I would shoot thru the bush

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and kill while the carbine would not. There should be no more carbines in a parachute infantry regiment than those provided for in the present T/E.

4. Pistol:

- Q. Is the pistol of any use to the parachutist?
- A. The utility value of a pistol is small but the effect on morals is tremendous. One regimental commander estimated that on D day for the "MARKET" operation 15% of his command had pistols. By D / 30 90% had pistols. Everyone agrees that the jumper must have his individual weapon loaded and looked, ready for instant use upon hitting the ground.

5. Grenades:

- Q. What type of grenade is carried by the paratrooper?
- A. All parachutists in the "MARKET" operation jumped with at least two fragmentation grenades. Some jumped with two fragmentation grenades, I smoke grenade and I British grenade #82, commonly called the Gammon Grenade. The Gammon grenade is extremely effective against light armor and for clearing houses in village fighting. Properly fuzed, it will explode on impact, regardless of where it hits, with minimum danger to the thrower. Lt. Col. Shields Warren, CO 1st Bn of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment says, "The Gammon Grenade is a most useful all-purpose weapon. It can knock out light armored vehicles. It is far superior to the fragmentation or concussion grenades in street fighting. On one occasion a Gammon grenade thrown against a building blew down a wall and 70 Germans came out of the ruins with their hands up." Similar statements were voiced by nearly all commanders.

6. Thempson Sub-Machine Gun:

- Q. Has this weapon been useful and what is your opinion of it as compared to the Sub-Machine Gun M-3?
- A. Sub-machine guns are exactly the weapon for patrol work. The criticism of the K-3 is that the clip is often lost because it is released accidently in the carrying position.

7. Light Mechine Gun:

- Q. Is the LMG Model 1919-A-6 more desirable than the A-4?
- A. The general opinion is that the LMG Model 1919 A-6 is a fine weapon. However, the concensus of opinion is that the A-6 is still not able to take the place of the BAR. All commanders desire the BAR. The parachute elements of the S2nd Airborne Division went into operation "MARKET" with either 6 or 9 BAR's per company. The parachute elements of the 101st Airborne Division could not obtain BAR's in the quantity desired but they did have 4 to 6 per battalion.

8. First Aid Packets

- Q. Is the First Aid Packet, parachutist, satisfactory?
- A. There are several things wrong with the First Aid Packet, parachutist.
- (a) It is difficult to carry because of its fragile nature and bulk. Some Airborne units carried it on the camouflage net of the helmet. It destroyed the effectiveness of the camouflage. Others carried it tied to the field suspenders. There it interfered with movement when creeping or crawling. Others carried it tied to the boot at the ankle. That is an ideal place for it provided the morphine syrette is not broken.
- (b) The Division Surgeons of both the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division feel that the morphine syrette is too fragile. It should be placed in a more durable container or made less fragile.
- (c) According to the medical personnel of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division the tourniquet in the First Aid Facket, parachutist, is no good. They will use the patient's belt rather than the tournequet.
 - 9. Q. Is the demand for W.P. still as great as ever?
- A. Comments of Colonel FINKIE, Ordnance Officer of the 62nd Airborne Division: "We still need plenty of W.P. We have it in the hand grenade but not in the Bazooka. We need more and better flares. Our flares give plenty of light but it does not last long enough. The German flare seems to hang in the sky for a much longer period of time."
 - 10. Q. Do you have enough organic transportation?
- A. Regimental and Battalion commanders all desire more transportation. The following are comments by Lt. Col. T. SHANLEY, Executive
 Officer, 508th Parachute Infantry, Golonel W. EKNAN, CO, 505th Parachute
 Infantry, and Major DeLONG, Executive Officer, 3rd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry: "We need more than 2 jeeps per battalion. By the time the
 Chaplains, the Special Service Officer, the Claims Officer, etc. get a jeep
 there is nothing left. Commanders are continually being called into comferences and transportation is needed to get to the meeting place. A 100%
 increase in transportation is needed. It can come in seaborne."

HARVEY J. JABLONSKY Colonel, Infantry WD Observers Board