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**Report date:** 27 November 1944

**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 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. Submitted by COL Harvey J. Jablonsky, Infantry.

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HEADQUARTERS  
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS  
UNITED STATES ARMY

WAR DEPARTMENT OBSERVERS BOARD

UNCLASSIFIED

APD 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, worn 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 Suit:

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. Men and commanders want the M-1 rifle. In Holland the ranges were 300-400 yards and ideal for the M-1. However, the comment was that the M-1 was also the best weapon in Normandy. In the hedgerow country, the M-1 would shoot thru the bush

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 morale 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 locked, 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, 1 smoke grenade and 1 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 fused, 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. Thompson 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 M-3 is that the clip is often lost because it is released accidentally in the carrying position.

#### 7. Light Machine 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 consensus 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 82nd 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 Packet:**

**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 Packet, parachutist, is no good. They will use the patient's belt rather than the tourniquet.

**9. Q. Is the demand for W.P. still as great as ever?**

**A. Comments of Colonel FINKIE, Ordnance Officer of the 82nd 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, Colonel W. ERMAN, 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 conferences and transportation is needed to get to the meeting place. A 100% increase in transportation is needed. It can come in seaborne."**

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