

Then we developed the **Water Run** - in which the soldiers, driving the track while it was buttoned up had to 'pancake' off a ramp on small Teller Reservoir downrange, swim the track across to the other side, and crawl up out of the water. He needed to go at a rather precise speed we gave him. If he went too slow the track would nose down into the water and could flood.

Finally we laid out the **Night Run**. Units in the battlefield would often have to follow each other, single file at night, blacked out with only their blackout lights on, and seeing those of the track in front of them - through the dust it might raise.

We did that through woods, while experienced NCOs would drive the track in front at a very brisk speed through and around the trees, while the soldier being trained, followed.

### ***The Reward***

When the soldier, or NCO, or Officer being

'qualified' successfully finished the Gauntlet's Fire Run, Water Run, Night Run, I thought he needed some kind of visible award.

First he was pronounced a true **MECHANEER** And was awarded a Mechaneers Certificate, signed by me.

And THEN, both to give him a visible emblem of his success, that was - like a Ranger Shoulder Tab, Pilot Wings, or Parachute Badge - he was given a real Gauntlet - the standard GI black glove, BUT with a flared (ala the Dragoons of the Civil War) cuff stitched on it, AND his First and Last name Stamped on that cuff by a steel die.

And of course the glove with cuff was a perfectly useful item to wear when around, driving, or working on his M113 Track.

And whenever Unit training of the Brigade involved working with the Tracks, men would wear their gloves.

But that was not the end of Mechneer Training. For at the Unit level, when sections, squads, platoons, Mech Infantry Companies moved with Tanks from my two Armor Battalions, and supporting Self Propelled Artillery Batteries they often had to go long distances over roads.

Officer and NCO leaders of such columns had to learn a lot of other characteristics of the M113 to be able to solve many practical problems. For instance I observed whenever a column of tracks were on the road, sometimes one would break down. But as often as not, if it were not possible to 'go around it' lieutenantant would immediately call for a Tank Retriever! Which would take forever, from far back, to get there and move the dead heavy track.

But what was the dead weight of an M113? And could many men move it? So I got the men, starting on flat paved, surfaces, to see how many men it took to move it off the road. For the 'flotation' of tracked vehicles would permit that. We had, instead of 'Tug a War' for

exercise 'Tug a Track' - so that lieutenant might first tell the 12 man squad in either his, or another track to 'push it off the road.'

And to teach forms of 'infiltration' to or through a spread out enemy I had a tank battalion spread widely as a typical 'screening force' down range at night, while individual M113s with their motors as LOW as they could go, 'sneak' through the lines.

In other words I got the Mech Infantry units of the Brigade to eat, drink, think, and play with those tracks. Adventure training - but right to the point of combat capabilities of the Brigade.

To underscore it, I personally drove the small M114 'scout' track home and parked it behind my quarters, then drove it to 'work' the next morning. They got the point

### ***Community Relations***

With all that training, and on-post soldier activities with families and girl friends, we still have annual community obligations.

## Fort Carson (10)

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For example there is annually a big Rodeo in Colorado Springs. It is preceeded by a downtown Street Breakfast where cooks from Fort Carson do the cooking. We were tasked for some Brigade cooks.

Then there is a two to three day Range Ride by a group who invites key people in the city to ride with them. I was asked this year to host them riding around our large downrange training grounds. I also, of course, rode with them. Here is a picture of the feed we gave them at Turkey Creek ranch which is on the Post.