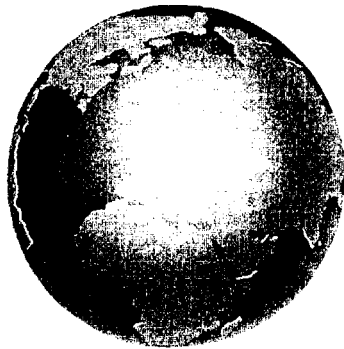


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INTELLIGENCE REVIEW



Number 214

APRIL-MAY 1954

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Commanding officers are encouraged to use the intelligence in this publication as the basis for orientation conferences for their officers. Each such conference should be prefaced by specific reference to the classification and security precautions incident thereto.

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¹ Not releasable to Foreign Nations.

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French Develop Shoe With Puncture-Proof Sole To Reduce Foot Casualties in Indochina¹

The recent development of an "armored-sole shoe" represents a significant achievement in French military footwear design. This shoe is unusual in that interlocking spiral wire mesh (similar to chain mail) is utilized in its construction.²

It was designed specifically for use by French and Vietnamese troops in Indochina in an attempt to reduce the number of casualties inflicted by a simple but effective Viet Minh device—a concealed barb or spike-filled board placed across avenues of approach expected to be used by French forces. Bamboo or other hard wood barbs are generally used, but metal spikes may be used. The barbs and spikes are dipped in buffalo dung, debilitating and infectious if its poison enters the body. Soldiers who pierce their feet on these sharp-pointed objects reportedly are out of action from four to six months.

The armored-sole shoe is ankle-height and similar in construction to a tennis shoe. It has a cleated-type sole and heel made of black vulcanized natural rubber. A layer of one-eighth-inch thick spiral steel wire mesh is

imbedded in the plane surface (not in the cleats) of the rubber sole. This mesh flexes with the sole when it is bent longitudinally, but it is very rigid transversely. The upper portion of the shoe is of heavy olive drab duck with an unbleached drill lining. The shoe also has a removable insole of compressed rubber and cloth trimming waste, with a burlap cover and a cotton tape-bound edge. There are nine large eyelets on each side of the closure; the laces are extra long and are made of olive drab cotton. The shoe is manufactured in France.

Technologists testing the shoe were able to hammer nails through the sole and mesh only by exerting considerable force. In penetrating the mesh, the nails seemed to rotate; when removed, they appeared to have been threaded. Since the barb and spikes used by the Viet Minh are firmly attached to their support, they cannot rotate sufficiently to penetrate the dense wire mesh of the shoe.

The antipuncture principle developed for this shoe may have additional military application for defense against antipersonnel mines. This item is currently under study by United States Army technologists. (Confidential)

¹ Prepared by the Intelligence Branch, Office of the Quartermaster General.

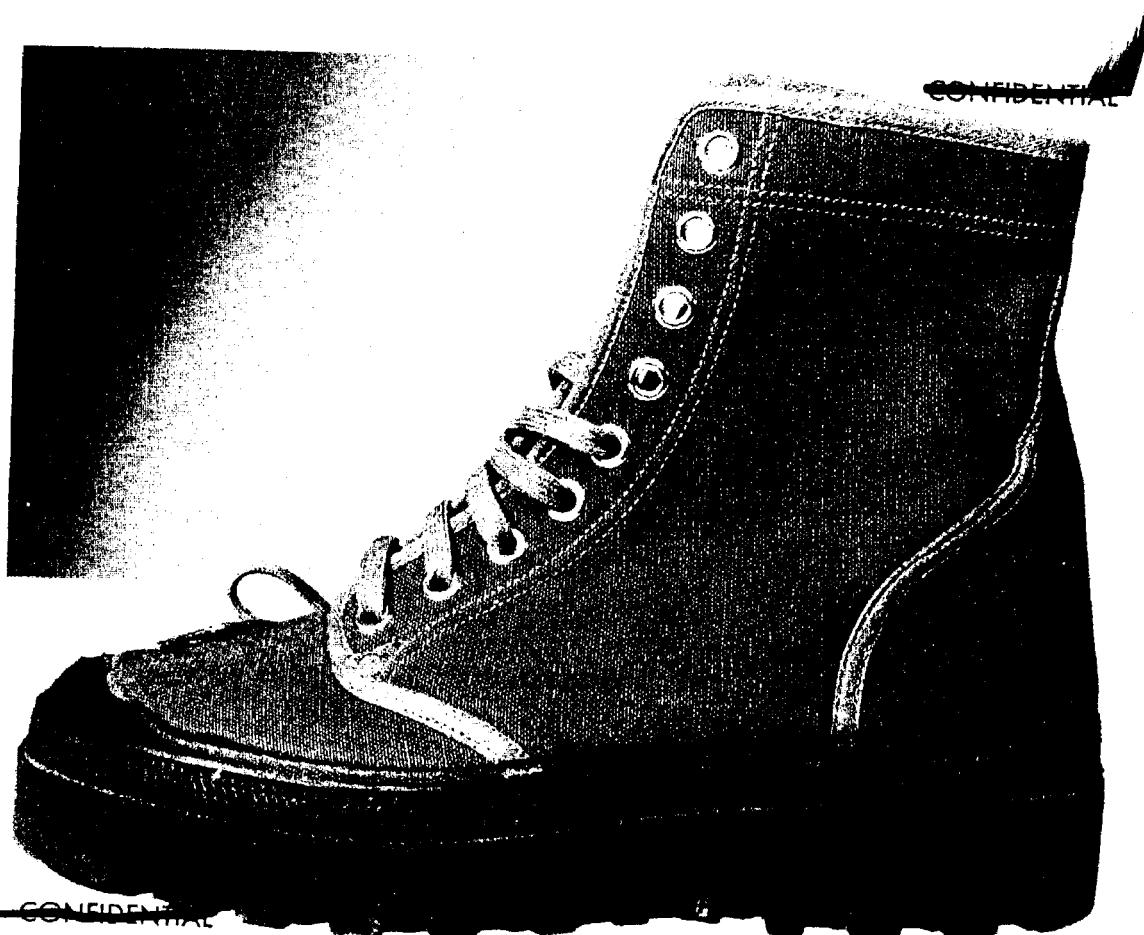
² See photographs and sketches on pages 45-47.

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THE "ARMORED-SOLE SHOE" was developed by the French for use in Indochina.

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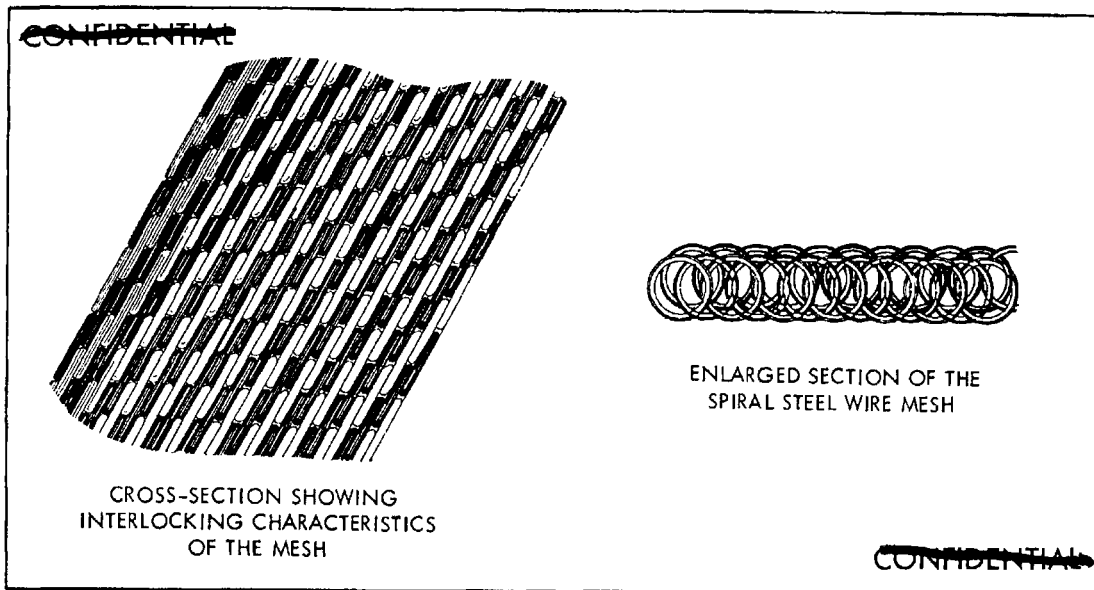
CROSS-SECTION VIEW of mesh imbedded in sole, interior construction, and tongue (removable insole not shown) of the "armored-sole shoe" developed by the French for use in Indochina.

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THIS SKETCH SHOWS DETAIL OF MESH formed by interlocking spiral wire in the "armored-sole shoe". The mesh flexes longitudinally with the sole, but is very rigid transversely.

THE END

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