

Training Notes



PROACTIVE LEADERSHIP AND THE STANDARDS OF TRAINING

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With the tempo of the Army transitioning from heavy deployment cycles back to a focus on training, a simple fact eludes many of today's leaders: We have lost our working knowledge of how to train. This situation should not come as a huge surprise. The Army currently is comprised of many combat-experienced leaders who have not been afforded the opportunities to develop, resource, and manage unit training as in the past. The Army's strategy for developing these junior leaders is with standardized institutional training. While these are excellent stepping stones which rightfully deserve their place, they fail to address certain areas which formally were a leader's foundation — training. The focus of these schools is to address individual military occupational specialty (MOS) proficiency along with the concepts of counseling, drill and ceremony, or delivering a proper operation order (OPORD).

These schools do not address training management and execution, leaving the question: "Where does the leader learn these concepts?" This topic deserves to be a top priority, along with teaching time and resource management to ensure effective training is conducted to standard. Thorough and effective training is pivotal to the operational readiness and lethality of Army formations and requires the attention of leaders at all levels to become successful.

Range Operations

"Training, training, and more training" and "train as you will fight" have become the all-too-familiar battle cries heard consistently through the ranks without regard to the value of the training and an honest, holistic assessment. We need an honest dialogue about the effectiveness of our training. Unfortunately, having lost the working knowledge of how to train to standard, we rely on either range operations or those units which have come before us to set the "standard" which has become known in the Army as "turn-key" operations. Many leaders do not know what the standard is or where to find it; trusting the word of an individual is more acceptable

A Soldier with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) fires an M4A1 Carbine while at the weapons range on Forward Operating Base Thunder, Afghanistan, on 18 October 2013.

Photo by SGT Justin A. Moeller



than verifying that the standards are consistent with approved Army doctrine. Numerous times leaders are faced with the ever present common retort, "This is the scenario that they used" — indicating that if a unit used a training scenario in the past then it must be the standard. In this situation, proactive leaders must stand their ground. Leaders must take the initiative that is demanded of their profession and verify the standard is present, per doctrinal guidance. In garrison, this is typically accomplished by performing a range walk or training exercise without troops (TEWT). For the uninitiated, a range walk is the reconnaissance conducted by unit leadership to determine the capabilities and shortcomings of a training area. A TEWT, on the other hand, focuses on leader and staff tasks.

Why is this important, you may ask? The reply is simple — a leader cannot train to standard when substandard conditions are present in training areas and ranges. Typically when someone does question if a facility meets the standard, they are greeted with either ignorance or contempt. The shortcomings are readily apparent by leaders upon their arrival at a training range. This comes in the form of missing or inoperable targetry, unserviceable latrines/buildings, or merely a facility with overgrowth and a rundown appearance. Where does the Army leader find the standards to which all training ranges should adhere to? The answer is Training Circular (TC) 25-8, *Training Ranges* (https://itsweb.us.army.mil/armypubs.asp?doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_d/pdf/tc25_8.pdf). All leaders need to become intimately familiar with this training circular, and it should serve as an inspectable item for leaders conducting reconnaissance of ranges.

However, this publication must be accompanied by the doctrinal publications which pertain to the training to be conducted. For example, qualification for the M2 .50 caliber machine gun, according to TC 25-8, must be conducted on a multi-purpose, machine-gun (MPMG) range. There is no alternate course available to perform this type of training; performing it elsewhere circumvents the established Army standard. If a range is not suitable or available for required training events, leaders must make this clearly known to higher levels of installation management. Leaders must never accept less than the standard when it comes to the training of their Soldiers. When in doubt of the capabilities of a range or if the range meets the Army standard, refer to TC 25-8 along with verification on the Army Range Requirements Model (AARM). This resource, which is available online at <https://srp.army.mil/ArrmProd/Default.aspx>, is a leader's best tool. Once the range requirement for the training is identified, the leader now must verify the range has been kept to standard through routine maintenance.

A key area of concern should be target presentation. To meet training requirements, 90 percent of the target must be visible from the firing position. The range must conform to targetry and capabilities outlined in TC 25-8. For example, on an MPMG range there are 98 stationary infantry targets;

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24 double target-arm, stationary infantry targets; 24 moving infantry target emplacements; 20 stationary armor targets; 10 firing lanes; 10 target boots; and 20 iron maiden targets. The range must also be able to support the firing of Mk19 and below. Anything less than what is required should serve to alert leaders that training cannot and should not be performed until range standards can be met. Unfortunately, these conditions most likely exist because of negligence

or mismanagement. The job of the leader is to never walk past a deficiency, and training areas should not be treated any differently. In the event substandard conditions exist, leaders should immediately inform their commanders to report these shortcomings on their unit status report (USR). USRs are one of the most critical tools leaders should use to improve training resources and facilities. "All units report the degree to which resource constraints prevent them from achieving and maintaining the highest training status level (T-1 level)."¹ The USR provides commanders with codes that reflect if the resource field has an insignificant impact, minor impact, major impact, or if the resource field prohibits training necessary to achieve or maintain T-1 level. "Precise and concise commander comments that describe the cause/effect relationship between deficiencies and current unit readiness and capability are extremely important to explain or clarify any significant resourcing issues."² These are only a small example of the requirements of training ranges, with each training event requiring a specific range and standard.

Crawl, Walk, and Run Methodology

The crawl, walk, and run methodology of training is the foundation of how the Army trains to a demanding, yet achievable standard. Many times, this simple concept is lost on the inexperienced leader whom, through a lack of knowledge, bypasses performance measures and steps designed to aid those being trained. A typical scenario is in the application of "train as you will fight," which means training under an expected operational environment for the mission.³ The young leader interprets this to mean wearing full gear at all times, regardless of the event, or carrying loads well above the recommended level despite insufficient physical preparation or lack in understanding of the given task. This is absolutely not the case nor should it be emphasized by senior leadership as an indicator of proficiency. Warrior proficiency is built through muscle memory formed through repetition and clear and concise guidance. A Soldier should not be expected to wear upwards of 95-plus pounds of gear when they have not successfully learned the basics of the task at hand. The concept and principles of the action should be focused on before the conditions of the task. A complex training event not fully understood by the subordinate is a rush to failure scenario.

How does this apply to me? As a leader, you have a vested interest in the level of proficiency of the Soldiers within your formation. This vested interest comes with an inherent

responsibility to ensure training is structured in a manner which facilitates a thorough understanding, minimizes wasted time and resources, and produces tangible results such as qualification. The proper use of a crawl, walk, and run methodology for the M16/M4 is a simple but sometimes time-consuming one. Leaders should formally counsel their subordinates on upcoming events, expected results, and required equipment. Leaders provide basic preliminary marksmanship instruction conducted to the standards outlined in Field Manual (FM) 3-22.9, *Rifle Marksmanship M16-/M4-Series Weapons*. Soldiers, with the aid of their leaders, borelight their assigned weapon according to the applicable technical manual and prepare for the range. The leader conducts a thorough range walk, ensuring the range is to standard, and prepares for the arrival of the Soldiers. The training event is conducted with remedial and concurrent training established, and the qualification is recorded for each individual Soldier. With qualification completed, then and only then should the inclusion of additional training be considered. A leader's emphasis should be the task at hand before the addition of advanced skills. Soldiers' proficiency in other areas should never interfere with their ability to defend themselves or others in combat with their assigned weapon. Uniform standards should act in a beneficial manner, not one which impedes movement, coordination, and most importantly, a Soldier's confidence in themselves and their equipment.

Training Standards

Army leaders must ensure consideration to the standards which must be adhered to for all events. Firing a weapon system during the day but not at night does not teach Soldiers how to employ their weapon system to its fullest capability. Additionally, if the doctrine which supports your training does not explain or inaccurately portrays actions, conditions, or standards, leaders must take action to correct these occurrences. This action consists of finding the proponent agency and submitting recommended corrections on DA Form 2028, *Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms*. This is another crucial tool which leaders must use to assist themselves and others. The standards which apply to all weapons are found in DA PAM 350-38, *Standards in Training Commission*. This document provides all required training events, authorized ammunition per fiscal year, and training interval requirements for each branch of the Army. Required events for each weapon are annotated by a superscript number (¹) and must be performed to be considered qualified. Continuing with the example of machine-gun qualification, "Ninety percent of Soldiers assigned the M2 .50 cal. MG will meet the day and night qualification standards according to the tables and standards listed in FM 3-22.65 (*Browning Machine Gun, Caliber .50 HB, M2*) every six months for the AC (active component) and 80 percent for the USAR/NG (U.S. Army Reserve/National Guard) every 12 months."⁴ With the interval of training now known, the events surrounding the qualification are examined. Table II Day Zero/Qualification and Table IV Night Qualification must be completed together for a Soldier to be

considered qualified per DA PAM 350-38.

Turning to FM 3-22.65, we find the standards listed for Tables II and IV. Table II consists of zeroing on a single, stationary infantry target at a distance of 500 meters and then firing on five additional single, stationary infantry targets at one minute intervals, two of which are engaged while under CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) conditions, and finally two double stationary infantry target presentations with two-minute intervals. Firing at the wrong presentations (different targetry), incorrect distances, and not performing the CBRN requirement provide little to no training value and waste valuable training time and resources.

Leader Self-Evaluation

The hardest part as a leader in the Army is evaluating the most important member of the training cycle — yourself. As a leader, you play the most important role in the training of the Army's future leaders. Ask yourself, when was the last time you fired a true qualification, not a familiarization (FAMFIRE)? When was the last time you conducted preliminary marksmanship instruction (PMI) for your Soldiers or performed a range walk? Leaders must stop following what has been done and lead their subordinates to what is right. Leaders must take action now against elements which provide negative training value, such as unsatisfactory training facilities, and use the proper reporting channels to cause a change. Quality training requires an ongoing effort from leaders at all levels and should never be grouped with the phrase "good enough for government work." Leaders who commit themselves to taking "the harder right over the easier wrong" truly set the example for their subordinates to follow. Soldiers who have witnessed true substantial, thoughtful, and thorough training will remember those events for the remainder of their careers, and when the time comes conduct training to the standards which they have seen. We as leaders should strive at all costs to achieve this effect during all training events, never accepting substandard conditions or excuses. The Army is only as successful as its lowest leaders and requires the utmost attention to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse of its resources and in the upkeep of its training ranges to ensure a bright future for its Soldiers.

Notes

¹ AR 220-1, *Army Unit Status Reporting and Force Registration — Consolidated Policies*, dated 15 April 2010, http://www.apd.army.mil/pdf/r220_1.pdf.

² Ibid.

³ ADP 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, dated August 2012, http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp7_0.pdf.

⁴ DA PAM 350-38, *Standards in Training Commission*, dated 21 October 2014, <http://www.atsc.army.mil/tcmlive/strac/MenuFY14.asp>.

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