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THE ROLE OF THE SQUAD GRENAIER IN THE ASSUALT

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SUBJECT: The Role of the Squad Grenadier in the Assault

1. PROBLEM. To determine if current doctrine for employment of the squad grenadier in the assault is adequate.
2. ASSUMPTIONS.
 - a. Grenadiers will habitually participate as integral members of the squad during the assault.
 - b. Squad objective areas may be characterized by all variations of terrain, vegetation and visibility.
3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.
 - a. There are two grenadiers, armed with the Grenade Launcher, 40 millimeter, M79, and Pistol, Caliber .45, M1911A1, organic to the ROAD infantry squad. (Annex B)
 - b. During assault fire the grenadier fires well directed shots from the shoulder using the pointing technique. (Annex B)
 - c. The grenade launcher, M79, can be fired during the assault with effectiveness. (Annex A)
 - d. During the assault, when fires are masked, the grenadier shifts his fires from the objective to targets beyond the objective. (Annex A)
 - e. When there are no appropriate targets during the final phase of the assault, the grenadiers cease using the grenade launcher and use their pistols for personal protection. (Annex A)
 - f. The development of a suitable 40 millimeter cannister cartridge will eliminate the requirement to use the pistol for personal protection. (6:57)
 - g. The maximum flat trajectory range of the M79 is 150 meters. (Annex A)
 - h. The minimum range of the M79 is 31 meters. (Annex A)
 - i. The high explosive 40 millimeter cartridge is the only combat ammunition for the grenade launcher, M79. (Annex A)
 - j. The grenade launcher, when against targets in woods, is ineffective. (Annex A)
4. DISCUSSION.
 - a. Present assault doctrine does not direct a specific employment technique for the grenadier with respect to employment in a purely supporting role, in a purely close assault role, or a combination of roles. Techniques of employment will be dictated by the tactical situation, terrain, visibility, desires of leaders, and individual grenadier judgment. (4)
 - b. Assuming that grenadiers are used as integral members of the squad during the assault, doctrine specifies the following:

- (1) The grenadier will fire well directed shots at targets on the objective using the pointing technique. (3:31)
- (2) When fires are masked (or when the grenadier is within minimum range of about 31 meters) he will shift his fires to targets beyond the objective area. (3:31)
- (3) When there are no suitable targets to engage, the grenadier will use his pistol for personal protection. (Annex A)

c. The advantages of this doctrine are as follows:

- (1) Utilization in suitable terrain supplements shifted supporting fires with accurate 40 millimeter area type fire. (5:62)
- (2) Utilization in the assault permits timely control by the squad leader and employment during consolidation of the objective. (3:144)
- (3) Firing at supplemental targets assists in preventing immediate counterattacks. (3:144)

d. Disadvantages of this doctrine are as follows:

- (1) The high explosive cartridge is ineffective in wooded or jungle areas. (Annex A)
- (2) The use of the grenade launcher in close combat is extremely limited. (Annex A)
- (3) The use of the pistol for personal protection during the assault will necessitate changing weapons system during close combat. (Annex A)

e. The development of a suitable 40 millimeter cannister cartridge will offset the disadvantages of the present tactical doctrine because the flexibility of the grenade launcher will be extended to use in all types of terrain and the requirement to use the pistol will be eliminated. (6:57)

5. CONCLUSIONS.

- a. Assault doctrine for the grenadier is adequate when optimum fields of fire and visibility are available in the squad objective area.
- b. The doctrine of employment of the grenade launcher, M79, in wooded or jungle areas; in areas where observation is severely limited; and during periods of limited visibility is not adequate.
- c. The doctrine of employment of the grenadier in close combat is not adequate.
- d. Weaknesses of doctrine are directly related to limitations of present ammunition and the nonavailability of a 40 millimeter cannister cartridge.

6. ACTION RECOMMENDED.

- a. A suitable 40 millimeter cannister cartridge should be developed.

- b. Appropriate doctrine should be developed to support the employment of the grenade launcher, M79, using a 40 millimeter cannister cartridge, in order to effectively utilize this weapon under all probable combat conditions.


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ANNEXES: A - Characteristics of the Grenade Launcher, M79
 B - Squad and Grenadier Tactical Doctrine - Assault
 X - Bibliography

CONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
CONSIDERATION OF NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
ANNEXES ADDED: (Omitted)
ACTION BY APPROVING AUTHORITY:

Date:

Approved (disapproved), including (excluding) exceptions.

Signature

ANNEX A -- Characteristics of the Grenade Launcher, 40 Millimeter,
M79

1. General: "The M79 grenade launcher is a single shot, percussion fired, shoulder weapon that fires 40 millimeter projectiles." (8:4)
2. Descriptive Data, M79:
 - a. Weight: 6.45 pounds. (5:62)
 - b. Length: 29 inches. (5:62)
 - c. Maximum Range: 350 meters. (3:14)
 - d. Minimum Range - Combat: 31 meters. (1:17)
 - e. Maximum Range - Flat Trajectory Fire: 150 meters. (3:14)
3. Descriptive Data, 40 millimeter ammunition: (5:62)
 - a. Classification:
 - (1) High Explosive. (5:62)
 - (2) Practice. (5:62)
 - b. Arming Range: 14 meters from muzzle. (5:62)
 - c. Effective Casualty Radius (HE): 5 meters. (3:14)
4. Capabilities and limitations, grenade launcher, M79, and cartridge, 40 millimeter, high explosive:
 - a. The M79 is rated higher than the M14 rifle or the M60 machine gun because of its versatility in firing accurately in the flat trajectory role as well as its high angle fire capability. (6:57)
 - b. Using the pointing technique, the grenadier can effectively employ the M79 in the assault role. (6:40)
 - c. Firing from the supported position, the grenadier can effectively engage soft area targets. (1:16)
 - d. In close combat (less than a range of 31 meters) the grenadier must rely on his pistol for personal protection. This technique will necessitate changing weapons during the assault. (3:32)
 - e. The 40 millimeter cartridge is ineffective in wooded areas. (6:45)

ANNEX B -- Squad and Grenadier Tactical Doctrine - Assault

1. Organization of the Rifle Squad: "The rifle squad consists of the squad leader and two unbalanced fire teams of four and five men each. These teams are designated as ALFA and BRAVO teams respectively. The ALFA team consists of a team leader, one automatic rifleman, one grenadier and one rifleman. The BRAVO team is organized the same, except it has one more rifleman." (3:13)
2. Assault Doctrine, Rifle Squad:
 - a. The final coordination line (FCL) is located in a position which is as near to the objective as the attacking force can get without suffering unacceptable casualties. Because of the dispersion characteristics of friendly supporting fires, the location of the FCL is approximately 100 to 150 meters from the objective area. (2:35)
 - b. The rifle squad crosses the FCL in its assault formation. After crossing the FCL, the assault is conducted in one of two methods: (3:143)
 - (1) When the fires of the enemy have been effectively neutralized, the squad employs assault fire to close with the enemy. (3:143)
 - (2) When the fires of the enemy have not been effectively neutralized, the squad employs fire and movement against individual points of resistance. (3:143)
 - c. The squad grenadier normally uses flat trajectory fire to engage targets in the objective area regardless of whether assault fire or fire and movement is employed. (3:31)

ANNEX X -- Bibliography

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