

weapons will be fired.

Because an actual aircraft will not be available for the live fire portion of the training program, the unit can count on having a most suitable substitute — the FQM-117A radio-controlled, miniature, aerial target (RCMAT). Most training and audiovisual support centers (TASCs) have RCMATs and may also be able to furnish trained operators. (The July-September 1981 issue of AIR DEFENSE Magazine has an excellent article on the RCMAT.) If they cannot, then the unit will have to train its own operators, and it can expect to have to spend five to seven weeks doing so. This need, like those for a range and for a supply of ammunition, should be forecast by the unit well ahead of time.

The unit should also be developing a good training program. The basic document for this kind of training is the September 1979 version of Training Circular 23-44, Small Arms Against Air Attack. It does more than list training objectives; it also contains a great deal of information that the soldiers should absorb before they start shooting live bullets. One thing they should definitely know is the difference between the football field and the reference point methods of engagement. These methods are clearly spelled out in the circular.

When the unit's soldiers are considered trained and ready, they

should be taken to the range and spread out along the appropriate firing lines. Only the size of the range should limit the number of firers at any one time, although for safety reasons there should always be at least a five-meter distance between each firer. A suggested arrangement of a firing line is shown in the accompanying drawing.

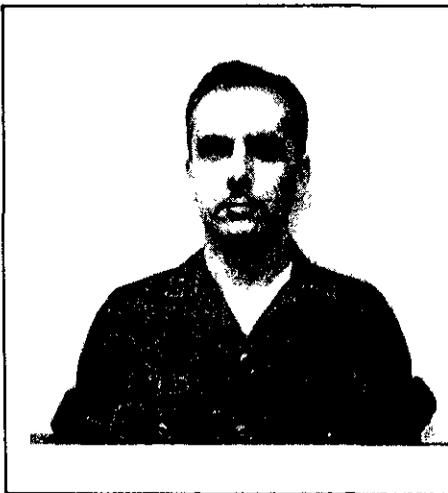
All of the unit's organic small arms should be on the firing line and should be used. The machineguns can be either on the ground or mounted on vehicles. The main point should be to show the soldiers how much fire they can put in the path of an aircraft.

The RCMAT should make a number of passes from each direction — left to right, right to left, and head on. This will give the soldiers a good

opportunity to practice the two methods of engagement.

After an exercise has been completed, the RCMAT should be landed and brought before the soldiers so they can see how many hits they scored. Then a critique should be held so that the unit's leaders can point out what went right and what went wrong, and what the soldiers should do to correct their mistakes.

This training is too important to be addressed lightly, as it has often been in the past. The benefits to the unit from this kind of training far outweigh any efforts that have to be made to make it successful. Before an infantry unit can consider itself ready for combat, it must be able to defend itself against an enemy air attack. With this training, we'll be ready to do just that.



CAPTAIN ROBERT KILMER, JR., a 1972 ROTC graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, is now Deputy Director of the Weapons, Gunnery, and Maintenance Department of the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. He has served with the 1st and 8th Infantry Divisions and has completed the Infantry Officer Advanced Course.

Flex-HOC

SPECIALIST-4 ERIC P. JORVE

Army Reserve infantry battalions that are severely understrength but faced with growing requirements often find it difficult to cope with their training problems. One such battalion, though, has found a way to

do it — and to double the percentage of its soldiers who pass the skills qualification test (SQT) in the process.

The 3d Battalion, 3d Infantry, a part of the 205th Infantry Brigade (Separate), 88th U.S. Army Reserve

Command at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, developed what it called "Flex-HOC" (flexible hands-on component), a new system of administering the hands-on component of the SQT.

In 1978, about 45 percent of the unit's soldiers either qualified or verified in MOSs 11B (Infantryman) and 11C (Indirect Fire Infantryman). The following year, however, after the new system had been used for the first time, this percentage increased to 93 percent, and the 1980 results were similar.

The Flex-HOC offers commanders greater flexibility in conducting the HOC portion of the test by fitting pieces of the test into their scheduled training and reducing the amount of equipment and the number of personnel needed to administer the test.

The other two parts of the new system involves an individual training exercise (ITX), which integrates the SQT into the unit's ARTEP (Army Training and Evaluation Program) mission, and a skill qualification improvement plan (SQIP), which uses mandatory, self-paced study halls geared toward preparing the individual soldier to take the written component of the SQT.

How did this come about?

In 1978, the 3d Battalion, 3d Infantry, ran the HOC portion of the SQT in a round-robin style on a football field during a regular drill in accordance with the standard method then prescribed by the Army. The unit's leaders were not satisfied with the performance of their soldiers and did not relish the prospect of running the HOC portion again the following year, especially when the number of stations were to be increased from six to twelve and the unit had only slightly more than 30 percent of its authorized strength.

The leaders wondered what would happen if the HOC stations were split up and tested at different times during the unit's annual training period at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. They reasoned that this would permit the testing of all the soldiers with only one team of scorers. They then decided to move the HOC portion of the SQT into the field and to conduct the testing when the unit was at the peak of its training year. In effect, it meant taking the test to the soldier, not the soldier to the test.

The unit leaders developed the concept of a mobile testing team and put in a request for Active Army NCOs who were already qualified as scorers to help. They reasoned that by using the outside scorers, the unit's own senior NCOs would be freed to train and test with the unit; they also felt it would help dispel any questions of favoritism should the unit perform unusually well under the new system.

ADVANTAGES

The mobile testing team concept had several advantages. First, the team could set up its testing station as close as possible to the spot where the unit would be going through its regular training. This would reduce the time the unit's training had to be interfered with and would do away with the need for additional troop transportation.

The HOC testing, in effect, would also amount to concurrent training and would help fill in some of the gaps that inevitably occur in a unit's training. For example, a soldier or squad that had just completed range firing with the M16 rifle could move to the nearby HOC station to perform the M16 portion of the test instead of waiting for the remainder of the unit to complete its range firing. Or if a check fire should be called by the range OIC, the soldiers could be sent over for testing.

The third advantage of the concept was that, if the unit's training plans should change abruptly, the mobile team would be flexible enough to change along with the unit. (When this situation did occur later, testing plans were adjusted accordingly and without difficulty.)

The leaders soon found that they would have to depend heavily on the squads and squad leaders to make the system work. Since the squad leaders would be moving with their soldiers to and from the testing area while training was in progress, they were made responsible for seeing that all of the soldiers in their squads were properly prepared and tested.

They were expected to keep track of the weak points in each individual soldier's skills and to provide the necessary refresher training when they could. They would report the progress of their squads to their platoon leaders. In this way the squad leaders themselves would be tested on how well they could control the minute-to-minute tactical and administrative operations of their squads.

In preparing for the HOC portion of the test, the unit leaders began to see that the SQT had to be emphasized more during the unit's day-to-day training activities. They also felt that some type of brief, daily emphasis should be placed on the written component of the test — traditionally the stickiest part of the exercise. With these considerations in mind, they devised the ITX and the SQIP.

THE ITX

The ITX was nothing more than an individual soldier's tasks practiced in logical groupings that combined individual and collective training. For example, there were certain tasks within each of the six phases that the soldiers had to perform. Emphasis was placed on making sure that each task was done correctly; if the mission was accomplished at the same time, so much the better.

Each soldier going through the training program practiced the HOC stations without regard to time constraints. Any soldier who made a mistake was corrected on the spot by his squad leader. If a soldier needed additional training, it was done at the squad leader's or the unit's discretion. Squad leaders kept notes on their soldiers' progress and communicated that progress up the chain of command.

The six phases of the ITX were:

- **Preparation phase.** Squad order, camouflage, rifle maintenance, operation of the squad radio, and transmission and receipt of messages.

- **Movement phase.** Movement as a fire team member; moving around obstacles.

- **First aid phase.** The four life-saving techniques, call for MEDEVAC, and transmission and receipt of messages.

- **Land navigation phase.** Movement as a fire team member, determination of magnetic azimuth, and measuring distance on a map.

- **Contact phase.** Movement as a fire team member, movement under direct fire in buddy teams, and reorganization after contact.

- **Adjust artillery phase.** Movement as a fire team member, estimation of range, transmission and receipt of messages, and call for fire.

Different phases of the ITX were also used when a squad moved to a HOC station for testing. For example, in one case the battalion moved out into the field in a defensive posture; the ARTEP mission of the unit at this point was the "squad in defense."

As each squad prepared its own defensive position, members of a squad or the entire squad went back to an area behind their lines to perform the HOC station using the movement phase of the ITX. Thus the squads left the area tactically,

while the other squads in the area covered for the missing squad as required by the ARTEP mission. In this respect, there was little loss of training time.

THE SQIP

The SQIP was aimed directly at improving the individual soldier's performance on the written component of the SQT. It involved a series of study halls geared toward refreshing a soldier's military knowledge, not starting him off from scratch. The study halls were designed to make each soldier aware of his own strengths and weaknesses with respect to the written component of the SQT.

Multiple-choice questions were extracted from the Soldier's Manual on the basis of questions that could be asked of soldiers at Skill Levels 2, 3, and 4. Senior NCOs at Skill Level 5 were expected to study at their level on their own.

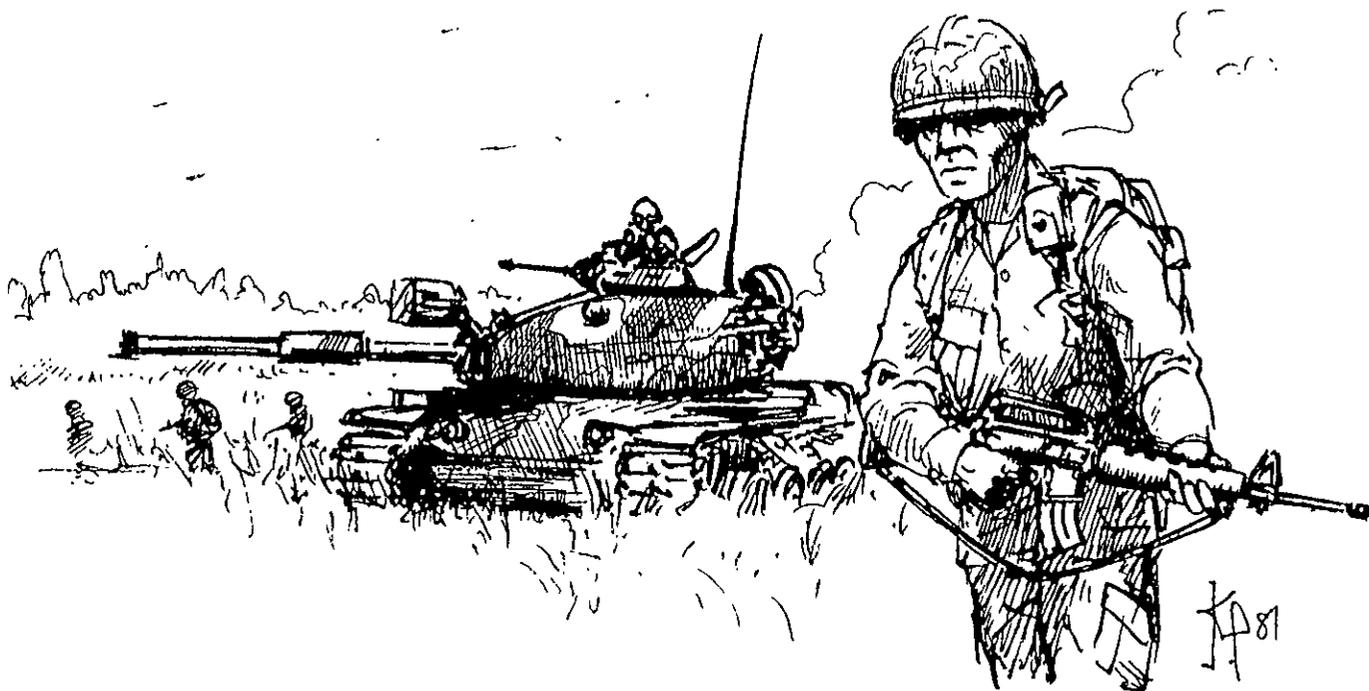
Pre-tests were made up on each subject area, such as NBC or the M16 rifle. The soldiers at Skill Level 2 were expected to answer six questions

correctly while the Skill Level 3 personnel were expected to answer eight correctly. The questions that were drawn up turned out to be surprisingly close to the actual questions on the SQT.

The pre-tests were broken down into six study periods, which ultimately were scheduled for Days 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 12 of the annual training cycle. The study halls, held in a barracks rearranged for the purpose, began after the evening meal and ran about an hour and a half.

The study halls were self-paced. Each soldier first took the pre-test at one of the various stations dealing with one portion of the SQT notice. If the soldier passed the pre-test, he was given a "go" and advanced to the next station. If a soldier passed all of the pre-tests, he was finished.

If he failed to pass a pre-test at any of the stations, however, he was directed to do additional study on the particular subject. Immediately behind the station was a variety of resource materials — the Soldier's Manual was opened to the appropriate page, a Bessler Cue-See projector with the appropriate tapes was ready





to use, and other resource materials were there for the soldier to work with.

In addition, someone who was knowledgeable about the subject was present at that station to answer questions and provide personal instruction. This person was either a platoon sergeant, platoon leader, or Active Army NCO.

If the soldier could not pass a post-study test, his squad leader was notified so that he could conduct remedial training.

After the plans for the HOC portion of the test, the ITX, and the SQIP had been developed, the equipment and personnel needed to conduct the test were assembled. The necessary field tables, training aids, and other supplies were drawn from the battalion's S4 section. The Training Aids Support Center at Fort McCoy was the main point of issue for such training devices as Claymore mines, M72 LAWs, hand grenades, and moulage wounds. Medical supplies were obtained from the battalion medical section.

Other units were tasked to provide some of the sensitive items for HOC

testing, such as M60 machineguns, M16 rifles, and M203 grenade launchers. Mortar units provided .45 caliber pistols, compasses, and M16 plotting boards.

Test booklets and mark-sense forms were filled out at the home station by the soldiers themselves. On the first day of the annual training period, the soldiers checked their forms for accuracy. Then the forms were filed by unit and MOS and put on board the mobile testing team's van. When the soldiers arrived for testing, the scoring booklets were removed from the filing cabinet and issued to the soldiers. The individual soldiers were then briefed and tested, and the scoring team marked the booklets and refiled them.

When the testing was completed each day, the results were recorded and provided to the unit commanders. To save time, the mark-sense forms for the written test were included in each soldier's booklet. The forms for the HOC portion of the test were also maintained by unit and MOS; once completed, they were placed in the individual's scoring booklet for a quality control check at

his home station.

The battalion S1 and S3 sections assisted in completing the mark-sense forms, and the S1 section also provided the testing team with an accurate personnel roster and the status of each individual soldier. The S3 section helped with integrating the HOC stations into the training schedule, requisitioning training devices, forecasting ammunition needs, and coordinating various aspects of the operation. It was left to the test site manager to determine the exact times for testing and the sequence of units to be tested.

The battalion's leaders believed that this plan helped make their unit's testing and training more realistic and challenging. Their soldiers were more enthusiastic about studying for the SQT and often did more than they were required to do. The Active Army scorers who helped with the system also felt it was effective.

In 1980 two other Army Reserve infantry battalions adopted the flex-HOC system and had equally impressive results. In all three battalions, the ratio of soldiers who qualified (scoring 80 percent or better on the SQT) as compared to those who verified their MOSs (scoring 60 to 70 percent) was significantly higher.

Flex-HOC has caught the eye of Army trainers everywhere. Additional information on the program can be obtained from the 88th U.S. Army Reserve Command, Building 57, Fort Snelling, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55111.

SPECIALIST 4 ERIC P. JORVE is an information specialist with the 88th U.S. Army Reserve Command at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. He served on active duty as a photojournalist with the *SETAF Outlook* in Vicenza, Italy, among other Army publications, and has worked for several civilian publications since his release from active duty in 1977.