



One-On-One tactical training

With its new Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES), the Army can now conduct more realistic training exercises than ever before. Through the lasers and sensors on the weapons and the soldiers, MILES gives the soldiers a more realistic idea of what their fate would be if the combat were real. But even with MILES there are still some limitations.

One of the problems is that usually only a few soldiers in any unit really get involved in an action at a given moment on a particular piece of ground, while the best the others can do is to hear the sounds of the action or see it from various distances and perspectives. Thus, in a movement to contact training exercise, the platoon

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leader, the squad leaders, and those in the point element may get some valuable training, while the rest of the platoon's members may benefit very little.

Another problem with unit combat simulations is that, given the variations in circumstances, it is difficult if not impossible for trainers to use any uniform standard to determine if a soldier is really doing well or simply doing the best he can.

The question for trainers, then, is how can all soldiers be given the opportunity to test their individual combat skills within a MILES exercise, and how can they be properly trained in those skills before the unit-to-unit MILES experience?

SMALL ARMS COMBAT TRAINING

To answer that question, a team from the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) and its contractor, the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), developed a one-on-one training technique that was designed to provide repeated opportunities for infantrymen to practice their individual skills so that they could better participate in collective MILES exercises.

The technique the team developed called for pitting one infantryman armed with a rifle against another armed with hand grenades. The confrontation would take place on a measured lane according to two different scenarios: a grenadier in the attack versus a rifleman in the defense, and a rifleman in the attack versus a grenadier in the defense. The team then tested this new

technique at Fort Campbell in April 1981, using nine squads from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). The squads were relatively small, averaging five soldiers each, not including the squad leaders.

(The team elected to use riflemen against grenadiers in this tryout because of a need to force grenade training and because of certain logistics considerations. But the same technique can be employed using riflemen against riflemen, with or without grenades.)

At Fort Campbell, the team set up its training area as a test lane with numbered markers on trees about ten meters apart. The line of markers let the graders for the attacker note the distances at which the opposing soldier took action. It also served to restrict the attacker's avenue of approach to an area five meters to either side of the markers.

This set-up added standardization by confining all the action to the same area. To add still more standardization, each rifleman was given only 20 rounds of 5.56mm blank ammunition, and each grenadier only four training grenades with fuzes.

Each grenadier was fitted with a MILES helmet and a torso harness so that the graders could keep track of any hits made by the riflemen. The rifles had MILES transmitters attached to them. (The riflemen did not wear MILES equipment, because their opponents had only grenades.) The usual MILES procedures for assessing grenade casualties were applied to the training — a grenade exploding within five meters of an exposed soldier was considered a hit.

The testing team was interested in getting the answers to two questions: What would the soldiers learn? And

would the training be motivating? These questions were straightforward on the one hand, yet extremely complex on the other; the answers were as expected in some cases, but surprising in others. What the soldiers did learn in a short time, though, was startling.

RIFLEMAN ATTACKS

During the rifle attack training, the rifleman was directed to proceed down the relatively narrow lane and to eliminate an enemy soldier who was armed with grenades and who occupied a one-man position. The attacking soldiers learned several things.

An attacking rifleman, for example, soon found he needed a practical approach to the concept of cover and concealment. At first, he would proceed cautiously down the lane until he spotted the grenadier, who had usually spotted him first. If he took cover behind a tree, the rifleman might find himself exposed to a grenade that had landed a few feet away. He would then realize that it was better to prevent the grenadier from detecting his exact location because, even though he did not have to worry about rifle fire, he could still be eliminated by grenades.

The value of three- to five-second rushes also became apparent when the grenadier showed confusion as a result of not knowing where the attacker was going. A confused grenadier would throw his grenades only where the rifleman had been last.

Along with this lesson, the rifleman learned the value of suppressive fire. Often a rifleman would fire a couple of rounds to make the grenadier duck, and he would then make a quick rush to some other cover, leaving the grenadier bewildered as to his exact location. The riflemen who took the training agreed that they had to be unpredictable, both to survive and to engage the grenadiers successfully.

With only 20 rounds available, conserving ammunition was essential, and this led to one-on-one tricks. One rifleman, for example, pretended he was out of ammunition, or that his rifle was jammed, by noisily working the bolt. When the grenadier stood up in his position to get a better throw at his apparently helpless victim, he was hit. Another rifleman fired a few rounds to make a grenadier keep his head down, but instead of finding a different position to fire from, he rushed the foxhole. When the grenadier popped up to see where the rifleman had gone, he was staring at the business end of an M16 rifle.

News of such tricks spread, and ingenious variations were evident from that point on, including the best trick of all — not falling for tricks.

RIFLEMAN DEFENDS

When a rifleman acted in a defensive role against a grenadier who was attacking, the rifleman learned additional skills. The rifleman would make sure that he used



cover and concealment properly until he had a good target. His use of suppressive fire was also interesting. He might hold his fire until the grenadier was in an awkward position and then pin him down, leaving him unable to do anything except throw grenades wildly. Soon, the rifleman could predict the behavior of the grenadier. For instance, one grenadier was behind a tree 25 meters away and did not have a clear throw. When a grenade sailed toward the rifleman, he ducked, but the rifleman knew the grenadier would probably rush for a better place. When the rifleman popped up, he was aiming at that "better place" instead of at the grenadier's previous location.

GRENADIER ATTACKS

Some interesting variations of the tricks occurred when a grenadier attacked a rifleman, because cover and concealment were important. A smart grenadier would proceed stealthily until he spotted the enemy or was spotted himself. If he could not effectively throw a grenade from this location, he would make short erratic rushes to a better position or break contact and approach from a better angle. He quickly found that while a thin tree might protect him from M16 fire, it might not give him the opportunity to throw his grenades properly.

One enterprising soldier discovered that his grenade could be used in an indirect way rather than in the direct line-of-sight, fast-ball approach. The trick involved spotting the rifleman in the foxhole, withdrawing a few meters to cover — hidden completely from the rifleman — and pitching a grenade in a high arc over the trees, achieving an air burst a few feet over the foxhole. Cooking off the grenades became standard after the first few members of a squad had theirs thrown back at them.

Another trick was to use more than one grenade at a time to suppress or confuse the rifleman. A grenade might be thrown from an awkward position in the general direction of the foxhole to cause the rifleman to duck. While the rifleman was down, the grenadier could get set for a well-aimed throw without fear of being hit.

Another way to use the grenade in a suppressive role was to throw one and maneuver to a better position while the rifleman ducked. It didn't always have to be a grenade, either. A clump of dirt or a rock would work, too, if the rifleman wasn't onto the trick.

GRENADIER DEFENDS

During training with grenades in the defense, cover and concealment could be used to the greatest possible advantage, because a grenade's origin wasn't as obvious as the muzzle flash from a rifle. Even when a rifleman knew a grenadier's position, if the grenadier anticipated the movement or the actions of the rifleman, he could be extremely effective with his grenades.

For example, the rifleman might fire a few rounds to get the grenadier to duck, and then he would maneuver to

a position from which to shoot him. But a battle-wise grenadier would have a grenade waiting for the rifleman at the next likely tree, and the grenade would blow up just as he got there. Once again, rocks instead of grenades were sometimes used to confuse the rifleman.

In another situation, a rifleman's trick led to counter-tricks by the grenadier. One of the grenadiers threw a grenade at a rifleman, but instead of rolling away, the rifleman charged the grenadier's position. The rest of the grenades exploded harmlessly behind the charging rifleman, who ran up and shot the grenadier. When that rifleman went back to his squad with his new-found tactics, the next few grenadiers suffered the same fate.

A platoon sergeant who was watching these charges talked quietly with a defensive grenadier for a moment and another trick resulted: The next time a rifleman charged, the grenadier, instead of throwing his grenades to explode ineffectively behind the rifleman, pulled the pin of one and set it just forward of the parapet of his foxhole and then ducked deep into the hole. As a result the confident rifleman ran up to the foxhole just in time to be hit by the grenade. That effectively ended the indiscriminate banzai charges.

MOTIVATION

By the end of this test, it was clear that the soldiers had become combat wise and that they had been motivated by the training. A high degree of motivation was expected, partly because of the "cops and robbers" nature of the training, but it was originally feared that poor performance and repetitiveness, both unavoidable in the technique, might adversely affect troop motivation. Surprisingly, these predicted pitfalls only increased motivation.

Success and pride showed on the faces of the soldiers who were especially good, and it was obvious, in many cases, that the other members of their squads viewed them in a better light. But failure was also motivating; those who performed poorly wanted to go through the training again to redeem themselves in the eyes of their comrades.

BENEFITS

Some additional and unexpected benefits also came from the training. In one case, for example, a squad leader acting as grader for attacking grenadiers watched one of his fire team leaders throw four grenades without once hitting the rifleman. The fire team leader was closing his eyes and throwing the grenade quickly after pulling the pin, and the squad leader soon realized that a fear of having the grenade fuze blow up in his hand was at the root of the problem. With that knowledge, the squad leader was able to give the soldier some corrective training and eliminate the problem.

Another squad leader was puzzled when one of his soldiers who had scored as an expert during his annual rifle qualification did no better in this training than others