

Company Training Program

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Our training isn't very good. You know it. I know it. And the Chief of Staff of the Army knows it. But how do we make it better?

It was probably this question that the Chief of Staff had in mind when he directed the Training and Doctrine Command to develop a *workable* training system, one that had "a balance of drills and ARTEP missions." He said that "units should drill the blocking, tackling, passing, trapping and plays (individual and small unit collectives) and then apply them in an innovative and flexible manner in response to differing conditions during scrimmages (ARTEP mission training)."

In response to this directive, a small team from the Army Training Board has developed prototype mechanized infantry company and platoon training programs. They resemble ARTEPs. But unlike conventional ARTEPs, the new programs are designed for the small unit leaders — the company commander and the platoon leader — not for staff planners, and they incorporate a wealth of "how to do it" material.

Each of the programs is based on a straightforward approach to training. The team, working from a list of the fundamental tasks that a mechanized infantry company must perform, developed field training exercises (FTXs), situational training exercises (STXs), and squad drills. It then packaged the whole into documents

that are targeted for each echelon. The fundamental tasks are shown in the accompanying chart.

The heart of the company and platoon programs are the ARTEP mission training plans. Only five tasks are needed at each level, because three of the eight fundamental mission tasks — as shown in the chart —

EIGHT FUNDAMENTAL MISSIONS	FIVE ARTEP MISSIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TACTICAL ROAD MARCH• PASSAGE OF LINES• MOVEMENT TO CONTACT• HASTY ATTACK• DELIBERATE ATTACK• HASTY DEFENSE• WITHDRAWAL UNDER PRESSURE AND DELAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MOVEMENT TO CONTACT• HASTY ATTACK• DELIBERATE ATTACK• DEFEND A BATTLE POSITION• DELAY IN SECTOR
* TRAINED IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER ARTEP MISSIONS	

are done in conjunction with other tasks. Each training plan culminates in a 24- to 48-hour FTX.

The basic building blocks of the plans are the 11 company level and 14 platoon level STXs, each of which is designed to teach a single collective task such as the occupation of an assembly area, or a passage of lines. The FTXs are used to tie the tasks taught by the STXs into combat scenarios. (The squad drills — 18 all told — are spelled out in a pocket-sized training drills booklet, which can be easily carried and used in the field.) There are a total of 10 FTXs, five at company level and five at platoon level. These are designed to be flexible so that commanders and leaders can modify them as needed.

All of the products — FTXs, STXs, and drills — are laid out in

detail in the documents. They incorporate leader training, tactical doctrine, support requirements, and scenarios.

Of course, any training plan requires good evaluation standards. Fortunately, the Army Training Board's team had on hand detailed evaluation standards for companies, platoons, and squads as a result of work the Board had done previously in other training areas.

The new company and platoon training programs, if adopted, will supplement the battalion ARTEP, which will remain unchanged. All a battalion commander will have to do is to announce his training priorities, and his company commanders, platoon leaders, and squad leaders will have ready-made training plans to use in meeting those priorities.

The prototype mechanized infantry company and platoon training programs will be tested this spring. Be ready for them.

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