

# Iron Squad Stakes

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An INFANTRY article entitled "MILES Game Equals Training" (January-February 1985, pp. 39-42) described the merits of a squad MILES competition developed in the 3d Infantry Division. That game is credited with inspiring further development of this kind of training in the 1st Armored Division. We call our version the Iron Squad Stakes.

The Iron Squad Stakes incorporate three distinct scenarios—open field, MOUT, and woodland—into one complete package. This three-pronged approach is a simple but important modification of the 3d Division's game. While it is important that dismounted infantrymen learn to fight on open terrain, it is imperative that they be proficient in wooded and urban areas as well. This is especially relevant to the U.S. soldiers stationed in Europe where villages, woods, and open fields abound.

In two of the scenarios—a meeting engagement in a woodland environment and a meeting engagement on an open field—the objective of each squad is to decisively engage and defeat another in a head-to-head confrontation. In the MOUT scenario, a squad is required to assault a building that is defended by a three-man sniper element. This contrasts sharply with the 3d Division's game in which the squads are assigned to separate lanes. Again, the modification was intended to increase the training value and the close combat realism of the competition.

One of the best features of the Iron Squad Stakes is the unique scoring system. The participating squads can earn points in two different categories. In the first and most fundamental, points are awarded for each "kill" a squad obtains. In the second category, a squad can earn points for suc-

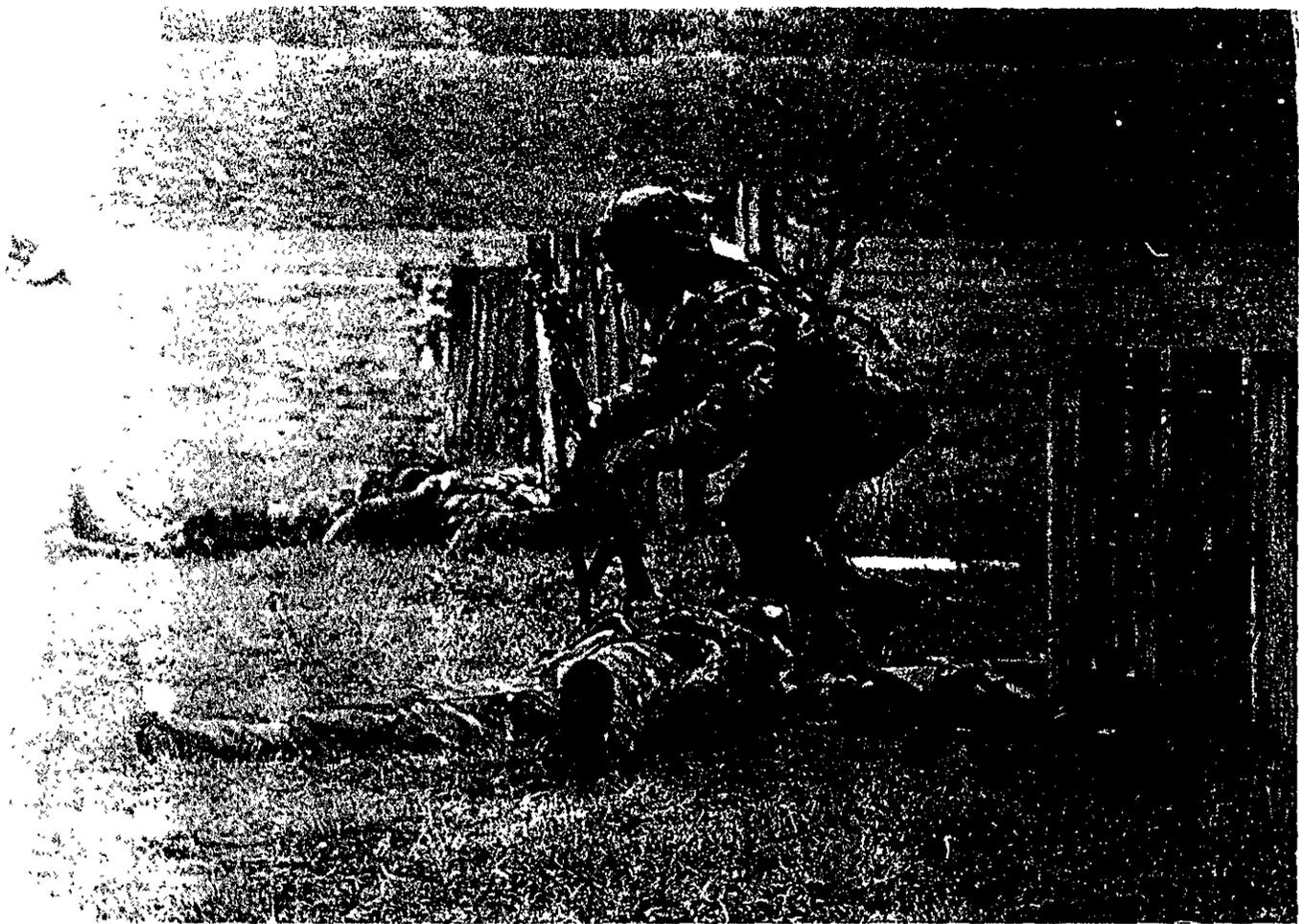
cessfully performing essential individual and collective tasks. (These tasks, taken directly from the 11B Soldier's Manual, correspond to the appropriate skill levels. Among these critical tasks are Selection of Proper Movement Techniques (071-326-5610); Move as Member of a Fire Team (071-326-0501); Move Over, Through, or Around Obstacles (071-326-0503); Fire Control and Distribution (071-326-5501); and The Squad Leader's Fragmentary Order (071-332-5002).)

By incorporating these fundamental infantry tasks into the scoring scheme, we reward technique as well as success, and positively reinforce current U.S. Army Infantry School doctrine.

These tasks also provide an excellent training tool for our trainers and leaders. With the results from the task scores as well as the "kill" scores, leaders can



Points are awarded for each kill a squad obtains.



Soldiers must be proficient in woodland areas.

more accurately examine the reasons behind the successes and failures of their squads.

Here, attention is given to the relative *weight* of the tasks that are scored. Logically, a greater weight should be attached to the number of "kills" a squad gets, because the mission always takes precedence. Accordingly, the scoring ratio between "kills" and tasks is about 6:4.

With these scoring procedures, the Iron Squad Stakes enable companies and battalions to evaluate their TOE squads and rank them from best to worst. If two squads score high in the "kills" category but only one of them does well on its tasks, then that squad is clearly the winner.

But the competence with which these tasks are graded is essential to the legitimacy of the scoring as well as to a successful competition. Graders, therefore, are obviously important. Unless the graders are intimately familiar with the tasks, conditions, and standards involved, they will not be able to render the most accu-

rate scores. Increased familiarity with the graded tasks is also essential to a meaningful after-action review.

These prerequisites make experienced NCOs and junior officers well-suited to serve as graders. Ideally, a commander can use his platoon leaders and platoon sergeants in this capacity. This makes sense, because the participating squads are likely to come from their own platoons. Thus, the leaders and trainers have a big stake in the training value of the competition.

#### SUCCESSFUL

Competitions similar to the Iron Squad Stakes can be conducted by just about any unit. The 1st Battalion, 52d Infantry ran all 36 of its TOE squads through the Stakes in two days. During this time, the battalion proved that this competition could be conducted successfully on a fairly large scale.

The results of the competition were well

worth the effort it took to make it work. In two days all the key leaders in the battalion gained invaluable information on the dismounted fighting ability of their squads. At the same time, the morale and fighting spirit of the battalion's infantrymen was given a healthy boost.

The competitions demand no fixed requirements. The Iron Squad Stakes were developed so that a commander could build upon or streamline the basic concept. Examples of this would include the incorporation of nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC), or night fighting into the Stakes.

On the other hand, the available resources may limit the amount of ammunition and pyrotechnics that can be used, but these limitations can serve as an additional training tool by introducing the squad leader and the soldiers to the use of fire control and distribution.

Some basic requirements must be met, of course, if such a competition is to get off the ground. In Germany, most of the

## TRAINING NOTES

U.S. Army installations have access to training areas sufficient for all three scenarios. In other areas, the MOUT site, for example, can be questionable; if so, this can be left out.

Another consideration that cannot be ignored is the availability of MILES equipment. This is the biggest hurdle, because both the realism of the exercise and the objectivity of the scoring process hinge on the MILES gear. (Unit training NCOs can help with it.)

Finally, there is a requirement for 5.56mm and 7.62mm ammunition. In the LOI we developed, the figure arrived at was 80 rounds of 5.56mm per rifleman per scenario and 250 rounds of 7.62mm per machinegunner per scenario, but fig-

ures are only working guidelines. (We will gladly furnish copies of the LOI to anyone who is interested.)

Squad-on-squad competitions are not new, but the Iron Squad Stakes are somewhat different. What the 1st Armored Division has laid out are some practical guidelines to a dynamic competition. The goal was to substantially increase the training value the infantry squads of the division were receiving, and that goal has been realized. The results achieved show great promise for improving squad combat skills throughout all the infantry battalions of the division.

Now it is up to other infantry battalions to take up the challenge and use their own imaginations. This is just a glimpse of

things to come in small unit infantry training, and anyone seriously interested in training should take notice.



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# Depth Through Initial Positioning

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Many of our doctrine experts today seem to be expressing preconceived and ill-reasoned notions of what is tactically sound when they present their views on our new light infantry units and their role in maneuver warfare, particularly their defensive role.

To them, the only threat our light infantry forces can expect to face is the one represented by the heavy mechanized and armor forces of the Warsaw Pact in Europe or those of certain military powers in the Middle East. Therefore, they postulate, because our light infantry units cannot outrace heavy forces in open country, and because they have no protection other than from their fighting positions, a light infantry rifle company can get defensive depth only through its initial positioning of its platoons and weapons, not by maneuver. Any light infantry unit attempting

to maneuver to establish depth in its defensive position would invariably be caught in the open and destroyed.

This reasoning may appear sound for a situation in which light infantry forces are pitted against mechanized forces in country that naturally favors a fast-moving mounted attacker and in which those same light infantry units have not been given enough time to prepare fortifications and obstacles.

## OPPORTUNITIES

But there are many other possible situations, and against mechanized forces there will be many occasions and circumstances in which light infantry units will have an opportunity to maneuver to gain depth in the defense. Once a Soviet motorized ri-

fle division, for example, dismounts, it becomes just another light infantry division with relatively poor training as light infantry and an enormous logistic tail only partly offset by greater organic firepower. The keys to forcing such a unit to dismount are terrain, weather, and time.

Cities, jungles, mountains, rivers, fortifications, muddy open areas, and some desert terrain will force an attacking mechanized force to operate dismounted much or all of the time. These are clearly the types of areas in which light infantry should be employed. Since our senior commanders are neither stupid nor irresponsible, we can predict that light infantry will usually be employed in such restrictive areas or, where such areas are not available, will be given time to fortify extensively. By virtue of a defender's ability to reconnoiter and rehearse routes to