

port required to set up an ARTEP.

An STX should be planned so that the battle drills relate logically to each other and flow easily from one drill to the next. Again, the use of a good OPFOR and the MILES system will contribute to realism. Even though an STX is not as comprehensive or complex as an ARTEP, it is an effective way for squad and platoon leaders to determine a squad's weak areas and plan to correct those weaknesses.

An STX can be more challenging if it is made into a live fire exercise, which is one of the best training sessions any squad can have. It not only includes the execution of battle drills, but also gives the squad members confidence in their weapons and in their ability to work as a team and win.

In bringing together the time and resources for quality training, planning is the key. One idea used in the 1st Armored Division in Europe was to dedicate one day a week to collective squad training. The hours from 0700 to

1200 were used to train each squad in the battle drills it needed to work on. Since this training was scheduled for the same day each week, it was easy for a company XO to plan the training and provide the necessary support.

The whole chain of command, however, had to work together. The squad leaders, platoon sergeant, and platoon leader, for example, would have a training meeting and plan the training for at least the following month and sometimes as far ahead as three months. They worked out every possible detail in these meetings, and since the training was a regular item on the schedule, the leaders could build upon each training session. Although some of the designated days had to be used for platoon training, most of them were devoted entirely to squad training.

Since the *crawl, walk, and run* method takes time, a squad could train in only one drill at a time on any given training day. After three or four of these sessions,

though, one day was dedicated to an STX that combined all of this training. Even with FTXs, ARTEPs, and other commitments, a good 30 to 45 days of training could be done in a year. What commander would not grab at the opportunity to get that much squad training time?

This kind of scheduling may not work in every unit because of differing missions, but the idea of regular dedicated collective squad training time does have enough merit to warrant further study by all commanders, especially at the company and battalion level.

Battle is the ultimate test of a unit's training, and battles are won or lost at the small unit level. For anyone who is trying to form a winning unit, the squad is the place to start.

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# A Physical Training SOP

CAPTAIN GREGORY T. BANNER

A high level of fitness is basic to the armed forces, especially to the soldiers in infantry units. Unfortunately, though, our PT on the whole is not very good and does not fulfill its purpose of keeping us in condition to go to war. In fact, in some units it barely sustains our soldiers at a minimum level of fitness.

One of the problems with PT is that it is not only boring but also fails to challenge our soldiers, many of whom want to be challenged and stressed. With some attention to these problems, PT can be made better.

The following, a portion of a PT SOP that I wrote for an infantry company, is

offered in the hope that it will stimulate thought on the subject and lead other commanders to develop even better programs for their own units. The particulars of a program are secondary, though, to the principles of doing good PT, making it interesting, offering a little variety, and providing a forum for leadership development within a unit.

## *Company SOP for PT*

### *General Procedures:*

- Each platoon will be responsible for the company's physical training for a week at a time. A rotating schedule will be kept by the first sergeant.

- The assigned platoon will be entirely responsible for conducting PT during its week. This includes establishing routes, setting the pace, coordinating all the required support and safety measures, and completely leading the PT session. This platoon will also lead the remedial PT session at the end of its week.

- The basic schedule is only a guide for the basic PT program; deviation is authorized and encouraged. The only requirement is that the PT be productive, challenging, and safe. Any changes to the basic schedule will be briefed to the company commander the preceding week and the necessary information will be posted



Units should take advantage of opportunities to march to and from training areas.

by close of business Thursday of that week.

- Whenever possible, all exercises, formations, and commands will be according to Army regulations. PT sessions will be used as a forum to train soldiers and noncommissioned officers how to lead such formations properly. At the conclusion of every PT session, the first sergeant will critique the training.

- Organic platoons and squads are the basic units for PT formations. Under the direction of the platoon leading the PT, organic unit leaders will control their own personnel.

- PT will be completely cancelled only by the company commander. A weather decision will be made daily at 0600 by the leader of the controlling platoon. If rain or adverse conditions make the scheduled PT difficult to do, the platoon leader will decide whether the alternate PT plan will be put into effect. The alternate plan will consist of a rucksack march with the soldiers wearing rain gear, boots, helmet, load bearing equipment (LBE), and 60-pound rucksack over the regular PT uniform.

- The first sergeant will maintain the company's remedial PT list. Remedial PT is designed to give more exercise to the soldiers who need it; it will not under any circumstances be used for punishment. Platoon sergeants will enroll and disenroll soldiers from their platoons.

**Weekly Schedule:**

- **Monday.** Calisthenics. Run a

minimum of four miles. By the close of business Monday, the uniform and specific instructions for Thursday's PT will be posted next to the CQ desk.

- **Tuesday.** Rucksack march of at least eight miles. Uniform will be boots, LBE, rucksack containing 60 pounds. (Infantrymen must march with rucksacks to stay in shape for walking. They must get their boots broken in and keep them in shape; they must have their LBE and rucksacks adjusted for hard and long walks. Aside from formal PT, units should take advantage of other opportunities to march with rucksacks—such as moving to and from training areas.)

- **Wednesday.** Calisthenics. Run two miles at a seven-minute pace.

- **Thursday.** "Sports Spectacular." The platoon in charge will devise and organize a competitive or special athletic event. Anything is allowed as long as it is safe and is good PT. (Suggested events are 100-pound rucksack races, buddy-carry races, squad or platoon relay races, log carries, guerrilla drills, litter races, and the like.)

- **Friday.** Calisthenics. Run a minimum of four miles.

- **COB Friday.** Remedial PT. Calisthenics. Run a minimum of five miles at the pace of the slowest man.

- **COB Tuesday and Thursday.** Remedial swimming. A swimming instructional staff will be maintained at company level. Every soldier who cannot pass the quarterly swimming test will be

enrolled in remedial swimming until he can pass the test. Anyone who cannot pass it will be considered non-deployable for any "real world" combat operation. For training purposes, however, platoons will make allowances for non-swimmers and weak swimmers in allowing them to train with their units. (Soldiers should not graduate from basic training without being able to swim. Since they are allowed to report to their units in that condition, however, units must have swimming programs to bring them up to an acceptable level.)

As with all training, PT should be organized, well-thought-out, and should have specific goals. Most units, unfortunately, view it as something to get out of the way so that the "real" training day can begin. Some units, also unfortunately, do PT only to the level of their commanders, which usually does not make for a challenging program.

We can't afford to waste any of the time allotted to us, and we can't afford to have out-of-shape soldiers. It is the responsibility of the entire chain of command to develop and maintain a good PT program.

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