

the test and move the company to the field. A considerable amount of this work is done, of course, by the company chain of command (platoon leaders, platoon sergeants, and squad leaders), but it is the XO's implied responsibility to ensure that everything goes smoothly. These responsibilities include making sure of the following:

- The equipment is loaded on vehicles.
- All of the sensitive items are inventoried.
- Maintenance is conducted on all vehicles.
- Reconnaissance is conducted on all routes.
- The communications equipment is operational.
- The commander's jeep is loaded and the heater works.
- All elements move on time.
- The appropriate classes of supply are available and packed.
- The training areas have been coordi-

nated with the adjacent units.

- The command post and the combat trains are functional.

Once the unit arrives at the field site, it is the XO's responsibility, with the help of the first sergeant, to make sure the combat trains are set up properly. He can then turn the logistical aspects of training over to the first sergeant and the supply sergeant and focus his own attention on tactics.

He now becomes an integral part of the tactical plan, and the commander will brief the XO thoroughly on his intent and the concept of the operation so that the XO can be placed where he can best influence the outcome of the battle, or step in at the decisive point and continue the battle in the commander's absence.

The tactical plan itself will largely govern the way the commander uses the XO in the field. Even if he assumes a tactical role, however, the XO is still responsible for coordinating with the battalion

tactical operations center, the forward area support team, and the battalion trains to see that reports are submitted and the flow of logistical support continues.

Along with the company motor sergeant, he must also request prescribed load list items and keep a close eye on company maintenance. If the first sergeant is not with the company, the XO must keep him and the supply sergeant abreast of the tactical situation so they can respond to the company's needs with logistical support packages.

Wherever the XO is used on the battlefield, though, he is always the second in command, the combat executive officer.

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# Soviet Snipers

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is another in a recurring series prepared from unclassified sources by the Threat Division, Directorate of Intelligence and Security, U.S. Army Infantry Center, at Fort Benning.*

The Soviets have used snipers successfully in the past and plan to use them in the future. During World War II, they formed entire companies of snipers and killed thousands of Germans.

Today, snipers are selected by company commanders from their best marksmen, and each motorized rifle platoon in a motorized rifle regiment has a sniper. For this job, the Soviets favor soldiers who have excellent vision and hearing, good memory, and quick reactions.

Sniper training is conducted periodically and lasts from six weeks to two months. Most of this training is aimed at ensuring that the snipers will perform properly in combat.

The sniper targets mentioned in the Soviet military press include enemy snipers, officers, forward observers, antitank crews, machinegunners, crews of disabled tanks, and low-flying helicopters. Initially, Soviet snipers concentrate on any targets that may be delaying their attacking units. The platoon leader gives the sniper the priority targets.

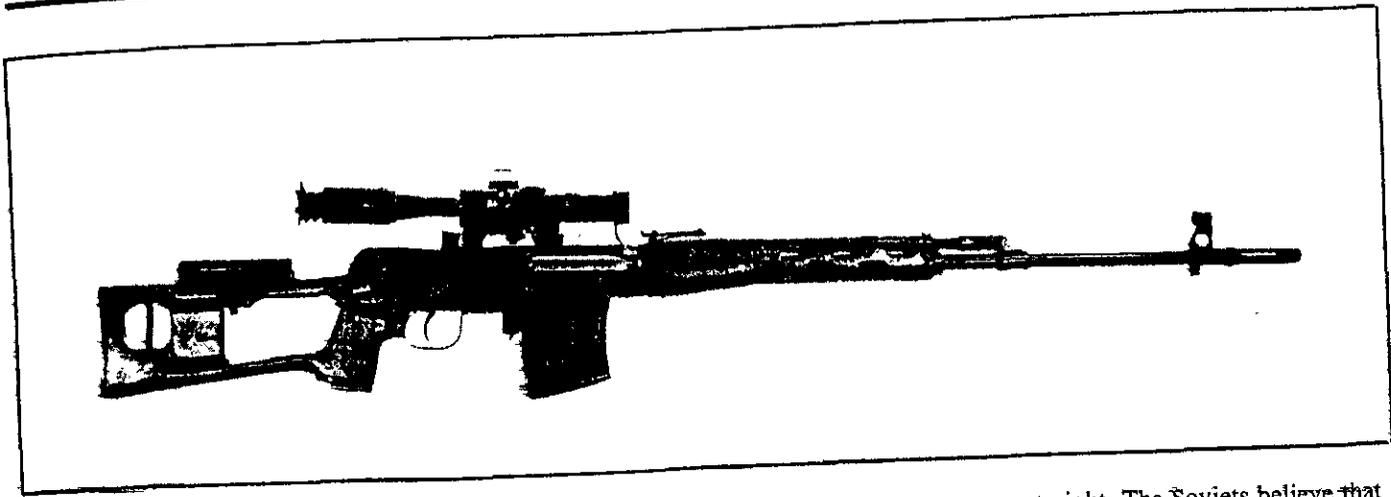
A sniper is usually paired with an observer, and this sniper team takes up covered and concealed firing positions. In the defense, the motorized platoon commander gives the sniper his missions and also identifies his primary and

reserved firing positions.

A Soviet sniper must meet the following standards:

- Know his weapon, maintain it in working order, and fire it accurately.
- Observe the battlefield.
- Evaluate targets and engage the most important ones.
- Use the terrain properly for cover and concealment and position himself close to enemy positions.

The Soviets' sniper rifle is the 7.62mm Dragunov (SVD), and they have one sniper rifle per motorized rifle platoon. The SVD is a gas-operated semiautomatic weapon with a detachable box magazine and a combination flash suppressor and compensator that helps reduce the muzzle jump and flash. The standard bayonet fits on the SVD.



The PSO-1 optical sight on the rifle is a four-power telescope with an integral rangefinder, a battery powered reticle illumination system, and an infrared reconnaissance aid. The PSO-1 has a built-in range finder that is graduated to the height of a five-foot seven-inch person.

The SVD uses a 7.62x54R cartridge. It can fire light ball, heavy ball, steel

core, tracer, and armor piercing incendiary ammunition, but is accurate only with the light and heavy ball ammunition. A sniper carries four ten-round magazines. The rifle has a maximum range of 1,300 meters and an effective range of 800 meters.

The SVD can be equipped with the NSP-3 image intensifier night sight to give the sniper a 500-meter effective

range at night. The Soviets believe that their snipers will engage most of their targets at night as the enemy tries to move under the cover of darkness.

More information on the SVD can be found in the Defense Intelligence Agency's Small Arms Identification and Operation Guide—Eurasian Communist Countries, DST-1110H-394-76, 1 August 1983.

