



Map 3

detailed focal points, and they need to deploy with only the checkpoints and targets that are essential to their tasks on their overlays. For example: The Company B patrol will deploy with only

checkpoints 6, 7, and 12 on its overlay. If the overlay falls into the hands of the OPFOR, it will not compromise the entire mission. Further, these checkpoints can serve as link-up points between the

reconnaissance elements and the battalion's main effort.

A good reconnaissance plan alone will not win a battle, but without detailed information on an objective, a battalion has little chance to mass its forces and achieve a surprise attack. One of the keys to improving the attack is to get everyone involved in reconnaissance planning before orders are issued.

A detailed approach to reconnaissance yields other advantages as well: The IPB is improved; the entire staff is involved, so they routinely know more about the battle area; and the chances for mission success are improved, because time well spent on reconnaissance is never time lost.

Lieutenant Colonel Howard W. Crawford was the senior battalion observer-controller at the Joint Readiness Training Center when he wrote this article. He is now attending the Army War College. He previously commanded an infantry battalion in the 82d Airborne Division and served as a tactics instructor at the Infantry School.

Dragon Sustainment Training

STAFF SERGEANT DON F. METTERS

Dragon gunners are trained either at the Infantry School or in unit-run training programs, but these programs will not produce high-quality Dragon gunners unless the gunners also receive sustainment training to maintain their skills.

Appendix A of the Dragon manual, TC 23-24, gives some guidance on setting up a sustainment program and recommends a four-hour monthly program for each gunner. This program consists mainly of Skill Level 1 Soldier's Manual tasks—

Prepare a Dragon for firing, for example, and Demonstrate firing positions. But this program does not include tracking, which is the most difficult skill for a gunner to master and the easiest for him to lose.

While four hours a month is enough time for training on the Soldier's Manual Dragon tasks, it is not enough when tracking is included. The training time, accordingly, should be extended to at least eight hours a month. And this train-

ing probably should be conducted at battalion level to standardize the training throughout the unit and make it easier to plan and support.

In addition to the usual classroom subjects mentioned, the first part of the 8-hour training session should consist of classes on the tactics and techniques that potential enemy armored vehicles use and on the strengths and weaknesses of those vehicles.

The Army has some really good audio-

MONTHLY TRAINING SCHEDULE

0800-0830	Perform preoperational inspection and operational maintenance on a Dragon tracker and round.
0830-0900	Determine whether a certain target can be engaged with a Dragon.
0900-0930	Perform immediate-action procedures for a Dragon misfire.
0930-1030	Armored vehicle identification.
1030-1130	Film: How to fight the BMP M1973.
1130-1200	Brief for afternoon's training.
1200-1300	Lunch.
1300-1330	Movement to training area.
1330-1400	Orientation and safety briefing.
1400-1500	Instructional firing (sitting, foxhole standing supported positions).
1500-1700	Field firing (daylight).

SIX-MONTH TRAINING CALENDAR

Month #1	0800-1200 1330-U/C	Classes. Tracking (daylight).
Month #2	0800-1200 1330-U/C	Classes. Tracking daylight/LES firing.
Month #3	0800-1200 1330-U/C	Gunners test, written and hands-on. Qualification tracking.
Month #4	1330-1700 1830-U/C	Classes. Night tracking.
Month #5	1330-1700 1830-U/C	Gunners test for team competition. Tracking for team competition/LES firing.
Month #6	0800-1200 1330-U/C	Gunners test, written and hands-on. Qualification tracking.

visual training aids on these subjects that can be used in this training. Thus, this part of the monthly training session would provide a gunner with an acute knowledge of his weapon system and of ways to use it against his enemy's weaknesses.

The rest of the training session would

be dedicated to tracking practice, starting with instructional firing to make sure the gunner used the correct gunnery techniques in all firing positions. The instructors, ideally one for every three soldiers, should coach and correct the soldiers throughout their tracking. A soldier would fire once or twice in each of

the firing positions using a tracking time of five to seven seconds.

Once the instructor was satisfied with the soldiers' positions and tracking, he would move on to the next phase of the training session—field firing.

Field firing refines and sharpens a gunner's tracking skills. The tracking scenarios should start out as simple ones and increase in difficulty as the session progresses. There are many ways of increasing the difficulty of the tracking scenarios—increase the tracking time for each shot; have the target speed up, slow down, stop or move from covered position to covered position; and use smoke and pyrotechnics to simulate the battlefield. Throughout this training, trainers must keep realism in mind.

Both the day and the night sight should be used in field firing as well as in instructional firing. While instructional firing should be done only during daylight hours, field firing can be done during the day or night. If field firing is conducted during daylight hours one month, it should be done at night the next month.

The battalion can also use the monthly training session for quarterly qualification, when the time comes. The classroom time can be used to administer a written and a hands-on gunner test for part of the gunners' qualification and the instructional firing can be used to warm them up before they shoot for qualification.

An example is shown here of what a monthly Dragon training session and a six-month Dragon training calendar might look like.

Each unit must adapt its Dragon training to its own needs, but the level of training our gunners receive is directly related to the combat readiness of a unit. If we want to increase our ability to counter armored threats on the modern battlefield, we must implement and maintain realistic training for all our antiarmor weapons, and the best place to do that in the case of the Dragon is in the area of Dragon sustainment training.

Staff Sergeant Don F. Metters has served in the 1st Battalion, 504th Infantry at Fort Bragg and in the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, 1st Armored Division in Germany. He is now on recruiting duty in Yakima, Washington.



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