

he needs to act instinctively. Therefore, close combat training should be simple but challenging and realistic. And it should not always be conducted in an open field or a gymnasium. Once the soldiers have progressed beyond the basics, urban combat facilities, trenchlines, and individual fighting positions should also be used.

To aid in realism, the training should not be limited to daytime or favorable weather conditions, because it is not likely that an enemy will surprise you or get

too close to your positions on a warm sunny day. If the training is aimed at conducting noncombatant evacuation operations, for example, pitting one soldier with a pugil stick against two unarmed foes in a dimly lit room is a great stimulator.

Close combat training is an excellent opportunity for an infantry leader to exercise his duties as a commander—to challenge his men and prepare them for combat today so that they will be able to win on the battlefield of tomorrow.

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The Bayonet Commonsense Lessons

MAJOR ROLAND J. TISD, JR.

No weapon inspires the infantryman quite like the bayonet. And in this age of sophisticated systems, this simple but deadly weapon, in the right hands, can still decide a battle. To make the most of it, though, Infantry leaders must remind their soldiers of the bayonet's purpose, teach them how and when to use it, and emphasize that it is not just an impressive ornament to be used only when going through an occasional bayonet assault course.

During a recent live fire platoon assault exercise, I saw a platoon leader expertly maneuver his squads through a course that was laid out over difficult terrain. The course itself was infested with numerous "enemy" bunkers that simulated fire with pneumatic machineguns. The soldiers were heavily laden with ammunition but overcame most of the bunkers by using maneuver and high rates of sustained overwatching fire. In some cases, though, the soldiers advanced to within 20 meters of an "enemy" position before they engaged it. As the ammunition be-

gan to run low, it was apparent that if the platoon had been engaged in a real fight, close combat could equate with contact at bayonet point.

After suggesting to the platoon leader

that he should have his men fix bayonets, I noted his surprise at such a thought. Then I watched the excitement level rise as each soldier attempted to respond to his order, "Fix bayonets."



Soldiers who train with fixed bayonets will not hesitate to use them in combat.

