Dismounted Maneuver Live Fire

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No training prepares light infantrymen for the shock of combat as well as maneuver live-fire exercises. Conducting collective training tasks or battle drills under live fire conditions develops soldiers who are accustomed to the sounds of the battlefield, leaders who understand the lethality of the weapons they employ, and units that are capable of performing collective tasks and battle drills under the most challenging of training conditions.

A good live-fire, however, requires substantial effort. It takes hard work and detailed planning to develop a sound tactical scenario, well-thought-out resourcing, a comprehensive safety plan, and a thorough after-action-review (AAR) process.

The tactical scenario drives the live-fire exercise (LFX). In developing it, the commander assesses his unit's proficiency in its mission essential tasks and selects the collective tasks or battle drills he wants the unit to execute under live-fire conditions. The commander may choose to exercise a single task to focus all his efforts on a specific training deficiency, or he may incorporate several tasks or drills into an LFX. For instance, an exercise designed to improve the unit training level on knocking out a bunker could focus exclusively on that task. On the other hand, a movement to contact exercise might include the tasks of breaching an obstacle, clearing a trenchline, and knocking out a bunker. The size and training proficiency of the unit being trained generally determines the complexity of an exercise. In developing the scenario, it is important not to over-task a unit, which would dilute the focus and invite mission failure.

The tactical scenario must be both realistic and doctrinally sound to prevent a rigidly set exercise or one that teaches bad habits. The LFX must be developed according to the doctrinal description of the task being trained. For instance, if the operation is a movement to contact, specific enemy locations should not be provided in the operations order (OPORD); by definition, a movement to contact is conducted when the enemy's disposition is unclear. Additionally, the target array must support the task and must be based on a situational template of the opposing force. This is important because the soldiers will associate the task with the LFX, and later refer to it in terms of how it was conducted during the LFX. Therefore, the frame of reference must match events that may take place on the battlefield.

TLPs AND REHEARSALS

An OPORD should be written on the basis of the tactical scenario and issued to the unit to start the troop-leading procedures and rehearsals that are critical to a successful exercise. As part of the events preceding the LFX, the commander should attend the OPORD of the leader executing the live-fire so he can evaluate the subtask *prepare for combat* and also to determine whether the subordinate's plan is doctrinally sound and operationally safe. When time permits, in fact, it is desirable to have the subordinate leader present his OPORD to the evaluator before issuing it to the soldiers. This gives the evaluator an opportunity to catch errors before they are briefed to the element.

Finally, a training and evaluation outline (T&EO) must be developed to provide the unit with the training objectives of the exercise. Fortunately, the T&EOs are in the Mission Training Plan (MTP) manuals and provide the task, conditions, standards, and performance measures for all collective tasks and battle drills that may be executed under live-fire conditions. The outlines for the tasks should be identified far in advance of the LFX to allow the leader time to conduct the training that is necessary for a successful exercise.

The most critical aspect of developing a successful LFX is ensuring that it is properly resourced. Resourcing includes the selection and procurement of training areas, ammunition, supplies and equipment, transportation, targets, and communications assets, as well as the identification of the personnel required to run the exercise.

The training area must complement the tactical scenario and meet the conditions in the T&EO so the training will be realistic. Once the scenario has been determined, the commander should conduct a reconnaissance of all training areas that will accommodate LFXs. This is of particular importance for nonstandard ranges where an objective will have to be constructed and range fans developed.

Ideally, the training area and range fans should allow the unit to conduct doctrinally sound movements. For instance, if the tactical scenario requires a unit to assault, the leader should have

the option of maneuvering to the flank of the objective. Unless the conditions outlined in the T&EO dictate, open areas should not be used for light infantry LFXs. Of course, this depends on the unit's level of proficiency and the training objectives of the exercise.

To fully realize the lethality of a light infantry squad, platoon, or company, all weapons organic to the unit, as well as those that would be in support, should be employed in the LFX. To ensure that this happens, all available ammunition should be considered and forecast. Ammunition for all weapons assigned to the unit should be requested, but too often, ordnance such as 40mm (smoke, illumination, high-explosive, or TPT), sniper, tracer, hand grenades (fragmentary or simulators), and AT4 (high-explosive or sub-caliber) are left off the forecast. In addition, 60mm and 81mm mortars, artillery, attack helicopters, and engineers (with demolition and bangalores, if needed) should be requested to support the exercise.

The actual construction of the range requires the assembly of an extensive list of supplies and equipment; therefore, a checklist of all necessary items should be compiled and reviewed several weeks before the exercise. The day before range construction begins, the equipment should be stockpiled and inventoried by the officer in charge (OIC) to ensure the range preparation goes smoothly. The OIC should also have a detailed plan for range set-up and an outline of responsibilities for the personnel assisting in its construction. The end product of these efforts should be reflected in training units moving directly off their transportation into the training event with minimum distraction.

Targetry and other training aids are a key part of achieving realism in the LFX. There are targets that can be either constructed or requested through range control that not only provide the visual effects but also afford the marksmanship feedback that is critical for a truly great exercise. Although the E-type target is the most commonly used, it is the least realistic and requires modification between iterations of the exercise to ensure feedback. This target can be improved by putting balloons or paper plates on it to record hits and by placing uniforms on the silhouettes to provide realism.

Remote-controlled pop-up targets are excellent for marksmanship, cueing battle drills, and creating changing situations. The three-dimensional OPFOR plastic individual (TOPI) target is also very good and, with the remote, provides an excellent visual effect. The best target available is the OPFOR multipurpose individual (TOMI) target, a uniformed wooden skeleton with a balloon chest cavity that causes the target to fall when hit with live ammunition. The TOMI not only provides marksmanship feedback and realism; its uniform can also be searched by enemy prisoner of war (EPW) teams. It is particularly good when used in a trenchline or on an ambush LFX.

Creating the sights and sounds of the battlefield through the use of training aids and pyrotechnics greatly improves the effects of the targetry. The pneumatic machinegun is good for initiating enemy contact and cueing battle drills, but it tends to break down and should always have a back-up. Rubber dummies in uniform with priority intelligence information can be used for EPW and search team training. Grenade and artillery simulators and smoke should be employed by evaluators to further simulate combat situations.

A comprehensive safety plan is central to ensuring that soldiers are not unnecessarily jeopardized. The safety plan, driven by a thorough risk assessment, should always include rehearsals and backbriefs, as well as a detailed safety brief. It is important that the safety plan not detract from the realism of the exercise, but that it enforce sound procedures that will prevent fratricide in combat. Because there is no safety with white tape on helmets on the battlefield, there should be none during the LFX. Additionally, locking and loading and clearing weapons should be done at a location other than the range. The leaders should be responsible for safety, not the numerous "lane-walkers" who follow the unit downrange.

The risk assessment is a comprehensive analysis of all the factors that may lead to injuries, and also a determination of the steps that will be taken to reduce the risks that are identified. A good risk assessment involves two phases:

The first assessment is done by the commander when he develops his concept. In making the assessment, he should weigh the proficiency of his unit against the complexity of the proposed LFX and then determine whether the soldiers and leaders are ready to perform the task under live-fire conditions. He should also analyze the weather, his soldiers' physical fitness, the terrain where the exercise will take place, whether it will be day or night conditions, the interval since his unit last conducted an LFX, and the personnel turnover since then.

The second assessment is conducted by an impartial party, usually from another company. This person should be taken through all stages of the exercise, from the issue of ammunition for it to its culmination. Ideally, this is done on the actual range, with the commander and OIC present to answer questions and make any necessary changes to the scenario. The risk assessment officer should then submit a written memorandum stating the possible hazards and the steps that will be taken to prevent injury.

Backbriefs and rehearsals, in addition to facilitating mission accomplishment, also reinforce safety by identifying possible hazardous situations and measures that can minimize the risk in those situations. Safety begins during troop-leading procedures following the issue of the OPORD.

The backbrief, which takes place immediately after the order, ensures that the subordinate leader understands the mission. Subsequently, the order further defines how the unit will execute the task. Again, each subordinate leader should brief his order to his leader before issuing it to his element. This allows the officer to determine whether the plan is sound and safe. Inspections

should be conducted at the same time to ensure that soldiers have the proper equipment and understand the safety measures of the LFX.

The rehearsal, the single most important event before the execution of the exercise, should include a blank-fire or MILES exercise with the commander and the OIC present. The unit should repeat the task until it is done safely and to standard before they are allowed to conduct the LFX. In a night LFX, the same sequence should be repeated.

Before soldiers lock and load their weapons and move out on an LFX, the OIC must give an extensive safety briefing. This briefing should include the range restrictions, procedures for handling weapons and ammunition, the signal for cease fire and the person who may call for it, a reminder to keep weapons on safe during movement, and when or whether soldiers will clear their weapons on the range.

The final product of the planning and resourcing should be a range packet that contains all the vital information for the LFX. The range packet is not just a checklist to ensure that all areas are covered; it can also be used for future training or passed to sister units for their use.

With the preparations complete, all that remains is for the unit to execute the LFX. The time spent in the preparations will pay off as the soldiers move from garrison into a highly realistic training environment that is the closest thing to combat they can expect to experience in peacetime.

The full value of a live-fire exercise can be realized, however, only if thorough AARs are completed immediately afterward. The AAR process should include three phases: a "hotwash" on the range, a formal AAR, and a written AAR.

The hotwash is conducted using the standard AAR format on the actual ground where the unit executed the LFX. The purpose of this first phase is to review lessons learned while they are still fresh in the minds of the soldiers and, if necessary, to conduct immediate retraining to correct deficiencies. As with any AAR, the facilitator should ask leading questions that allow the leaders and soldiers to identify strengths and weaknesses. This phase should focus on actions on the objective; and, if time permits, the unit should start at the point where enemy contact was made and walk through each phase of the operation as it occurred. The leader should reenact the events and make immediate corrections in areas of deficiency.

In the formal AAR, lessons learned are reviewed and procedures for more successful execution are developed and refined. The focus is on the training objectives, strengths and weaknesses, and ways to correct deficiencies. This formal AAR is normally conducted off the range in a tent that has a terrain model of the entire area of operation and a detailed depiction of the objective. The site should be well-lighted and should also offer a place where the

LIVE-FIRE RESOURCE CHECKLIST

RANGE CONTROL

- Range Flag
- E-Type Targets
- Remote Targets
- TOPI Targets
- TOMI Targets
- Remote Batteries
- Remote Box

TRAINING SUPPORT CENTER

- Pneumatic Machinegun
- OPFOR Dummies
- Practice Grenades
- Dummy Uniforms

UNIT SUPPLY

- Warming and AAR Tents
- Space Heaters
- Light Set or Propane Lights
- Generator
- Tables and Chairs
- Pioneer Tools
- Fire Extinguishers
- Materials for Terrain Model
- Balloons or Paper Plates for Targets
- Duct Tape
- Staple Gun
- Engineer Tape
- Chemlites
- Garbage Bags
- Flashlights
- Five-gallon Water Cans
- Butcher Boards and Markers

ARMORER

- Armorer Tools
- CLP

COMMUNICATION

- Field Telephones
- Wire
- OE 254
- Radios

S-3

- Training Area Requests
- Ammunition Requests
- Aviation Requests
- MILES Requests
- Additional Communication Support

SUPPORT PLATOON

- Troop Transport Vehicles
- Exercise Support Vehicles
- Ammunition Vehicle
- Ammunition Drop-off/Pick-up
- Class IV Required
- Pallets for Ammunition

HHC XO

- Meals Required
- Hot Soup and Coffee
- Type of Meals (A/T/M)

MEDICAL PLATOON

- Medics
- Front-line Ambulance

UNIT HQ

- Range Regulations
- Appropriate Manuals

PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

- Officer in Charge
- Safety NCO
- NCOIC
- Ammunition NCO and Detail
- Target Detail
- Reporting NCO
- RTOs
- Gate Guards
- Medics
- Combat Lifesavers
- Armorer
- Contact Team
- Drivers
- Mechanics
- Target Operator
- Range Construction Detail

soldiers can sit down and be warm and dry.

The AAR starts from the beginning of the operation with the leader's OPORD and ends with actions on the objective. The training objectives should be listed on a butcher board so all soldiers can see them. The objectives should be addressed in sequence as they occurred and the status of training should be identified (T for trained, P for needs practice, or U for untrained). An additional butcher board should be used for notes on strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve.

Finally, a memorandum on the lessons learned is written in the days following the exercise. This written AAR is used as a reference for future training to prevent repeating the same mistakes and also to share lessons with sister units. The memo should begin with a description of the concept of the exercise and the training objectives. The body of the memo should include all the lessons learned from the exercise. The conclusion should identify how the lessons can be incorporated into future training.

Live fire exercises both develop the skills critical to success on the battlefield and test the unit's ability to close with the enemy. Infantrymen throughout our nation's history have mastered the skills and have been successful in combat; and units that continue to train and practice with live fire exercises will be well prepared for the next conflict.

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Counter-reconnaissance HMMWVs

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In military operations throughout history, we have seen that when the scouts succeed in their mission, the battalion usually succeeds as well. The opposite also holds true. It therefore seems reasonable that a battalion could improve its chances for success by placing equal emphasis on defeating enemy scouts and on seeing that its own scouts succeed.

Unfortunately, counter-reconnaissance has never received a great deal of emphasis in terms of defined doctrine or tactics. Scout platoons often have counter-reconnaissance as an additional task; but it is at least as difficult and complex as reconnaissance and should receive the attention and planning of a *mission* instead of a task and should be treated accordingly.

Often, units combine elements of an antitank platoon with those of a scout platoon to accomplish this dual mission, which is sometimes referred to as a SCAT (scout/antitank) mission. The SCAT configuration can be broken down further into one of two task organizations:

The first is to combine the scout and TOW elements to form a series of hunter-killer teams. This method is generally used during offensive operations where well-defined engagement areas (EAs) are not likely. It also works better when the team can be augmented by armor whose firepower and shock effect can quickly destroy enemy reconnaissance forces.

The second method is to have a pure counter-reconnaissance platoon working with a pure reconnaissance platoon. Separating the elements enables the commander to separate these related missions from each other, which allows for more detailed planning for each mission and less interdependence between them. If one element attempts to conduct both missions at the same time, it may do neither of them well, and both will fail. This method is generally used during defensive operations in which the TOW elements can use well-established engagement areas.

I want to outline a method we used effectively when I was a battalion antitank platoon leader in the 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry, 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR)(Light)—formerly the 199th Separate Motorized Brigade—during a National Training Center rotation. Motorized infantry (now referred to as light cavalry), is particularly well suited for such missions because of the unique configuration of the equipment on hand (Figure 1):

The scout platoon consists of ten hard-shell high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs) (M1025/1026), equipped with five M2 .50 caliber machineguns and five MK-19 40mm grenade launchers.