

Marksmanship Training

Quick-Fire Techniques

CAPTAIN BRYAN P. HERNANDEZ

Marksmanship training is one of the most fundamental skills for infantrymen. Soldiers fight as they train, and with the complexities of the modern battlefield—conducting peacekeeping operations, movements to contact, and military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) exercises—the little things can easily be overlooked in the training process.

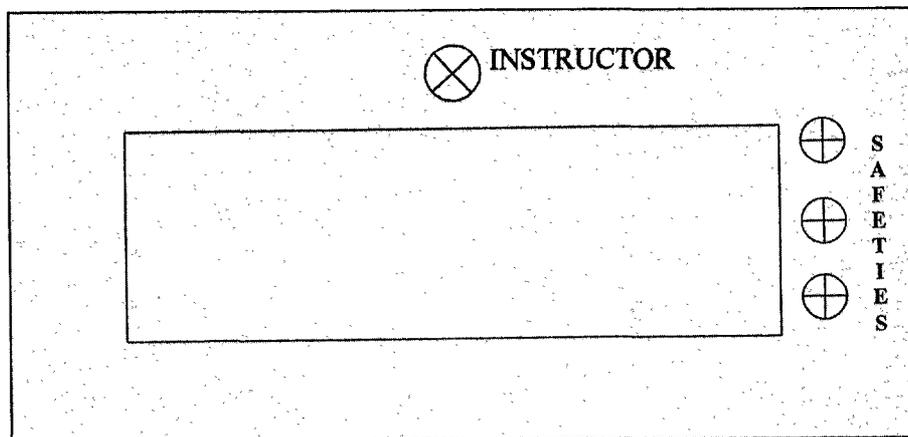
As a rifle company commander, I once assigned my platoon leaders the mission to prepare a training plan at the individual and team level for MOUT training. I gave them the individual, leader, and collective tasks that I wanted trained and evaluated and focused their attention at a level they could handle. The company had not conducted MOUT training in several months, and my lieutenants were new, so I knew much of the input would come from the platoons' noncommissioned officers. After several back-briefings and further training guidance, we left for the MOUT site. What I saw truly brought to light the differences in interpretation and experience levels among leaders, and—most—important the imperative that training must reinforce and build upon the basics.

As I walked around the classes that

morning at the MOUT site, the platoons were divided into three separate areas. One platoon was gathered around the platoon sergeant, who was giving a class, using butcher block paper, on room-clearing techniques and team member assignments. Another platoon was moving through engineer-taped areas on the ground that simulated building structures. The other platoon, however, was in a platoon formation being given instruction on marksmanship techniques. I asked the platoon leader at what point he planned to begin training in the MOUT site on room-clearing techniques. The platoon sergeant immediately jumped in and said

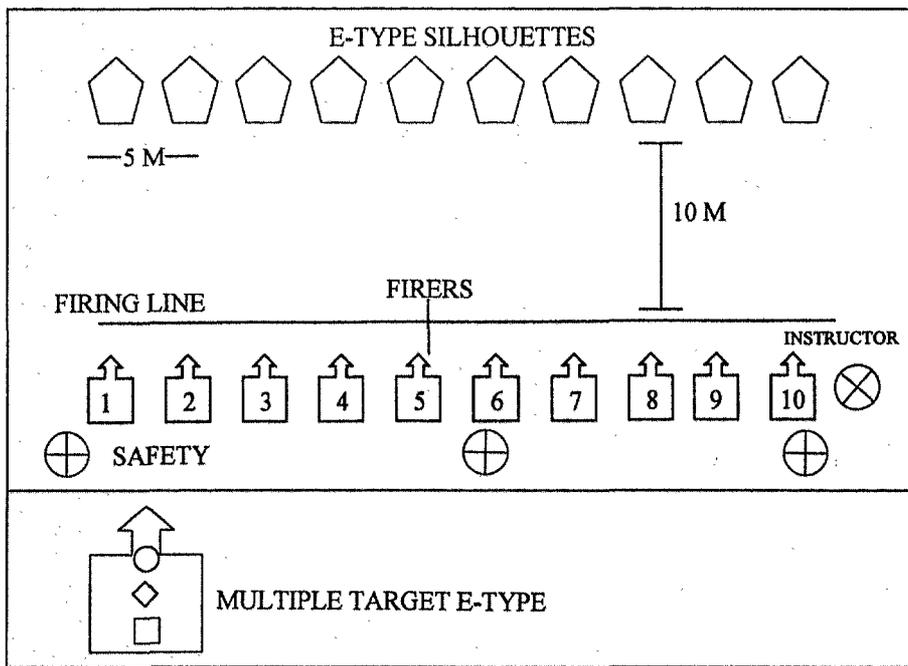
they would enter the buildings after they finished the basics, primarily marksmanship. He said there was no reason even to take the soldiers into the rooms until they knew how to walk, look, and shoot in the urban environment.

That platoon sergeant could not have said it better. As the training progressed, this platoon performed much better than the other two platoons in all the evaluated tasks the company trained. The training this platoon conducted focused on weapon control, movement, quick-fire techniques, and confidence in acquiring and engaging targets. I later used this training tech-

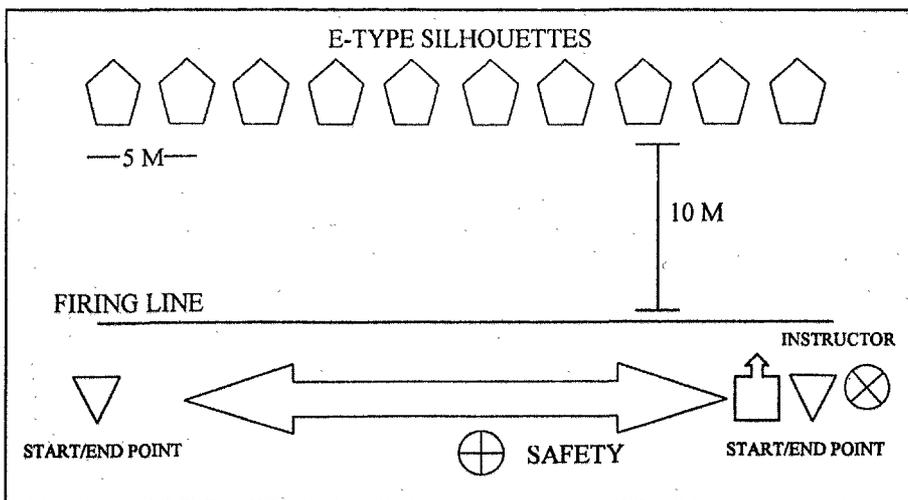


PHASES I-III. Formation

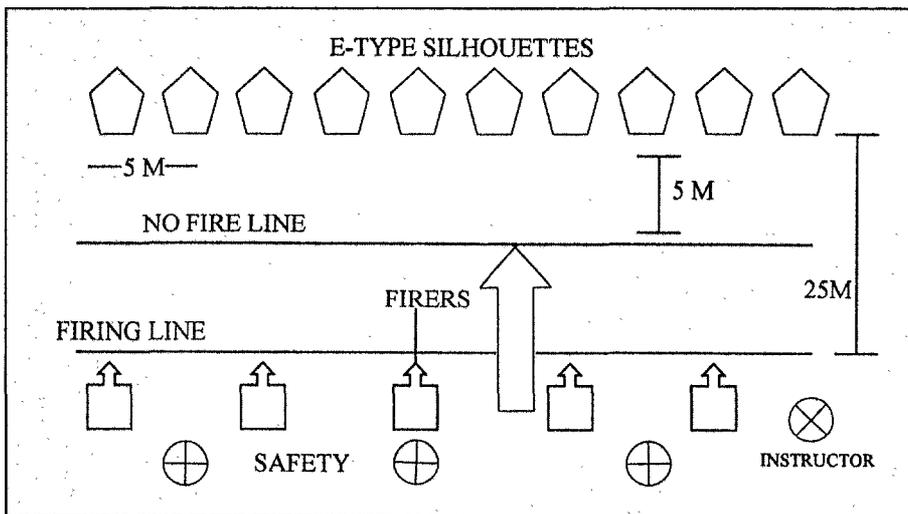
TRAINING NOTES



PHASE IV. Range Qualification



PHASE V. Range Qualification (1st Iteration)



PHASE V. Range Qualification (2nd Iteration)

nique at all levels for every operation we conducted.

The great advantage of quick-fire training is its compatibility with basic and abundant M-16 and squad live fire ranges. After developing the training plan and safety data zones, conducting quick-fire training was just a matter of setting the range up to meet the specific requirements.

We conducted this training at least quarterly and incorporated it into squad and platoon live-fire exercises. The training can be conducted with both blank and live ammunition, in any environment. The range setup and the necessary equipment can be found in any unit and can easily be provided by the installation range control office.

The training normally requires one day of dry-fire exercises, Phases I to III, and two days at a suitable range for Phases IV and V.

Phase I. Instruction on the fundamentals of marksmanship techniques. This class is taught in the platoon configuration with a primary instructor and safeties.

The following are the areas of instruction:

- A. Weapon control.
- B. Proper firing positions (with a focus on holding the weapon in the low and high carry).
- C. Target acquisition (proper use of the front sight aperture for quick firing).
- D. Safety (focus on thumb safety release method and weapon awareness).

Phase II. Instruction of the fundamental movement techniques. Concentration is on "sweeping the weapon," proper firing positions, and walking (proper foot placement), using the same method as in Phase I.

- A. Foot placement and rotation with turns.
- B. Sweeping the weapon into a proper firing position.
- C. React to an empty magazine (drop to a knee) and magazine exchange.
- D. Movement using the low crouch and "duck walk."

Phase III. Basic four firing positions and target acquisition while walking. This instruction is given in a platoon formation with added space between ranks. Safety personnel are

placed so they can provide immediate corrections. All positions are taught first in the stationary position and then while moving in the low carry with a slow walking pace.

- A. Left Side (Stationary/Moving).
- B. Right Side (Stationary/Moving).
- C. Front (Stationary/Moving).
- D. Rear (Stationary/Moving).

Phase IV. Range Qualification. This phase is conducted at the range on Day 1. Instruction is given on range safety and orientation, NCOIC firing commands, target composition, and target acquisition.

A. Range firing is conducted in three iterations for each firer. The iterations cover the four basic firing positions, single and double tap method, and multiple target engagement.

1st Iteration: Firer reports with eight magazines, with 20 rounds each. This first iteration consists of the four basic firing positions.

- Left Side (two magazines).
- Right Side (two magazines).
- Front (two magazines).
- Rear (two magazines).

2d Iteration: Firer reports with eight magazines, with 20 rounds each. This iteration is conducted the same as the first but using the double tap method.

- Left Side (two magazines).
- Right Side (two magazines).
- Front (two magazines).

- Rear (two magazines).

3d Iteration: Firer reports with eight magazines, with 30 rounds each. Targets are engaged using multiple targets (E-type silhouettes with circle, diamond, and square painted on each). The NCOIC directs the specific target and order in which to fire the engagement; for example "circle, diamond, square." The NCOIC uses a whistle to order "Commence firing." This iteration can be conducted with the single or double tap method, depending on the firer's proficiency.

- Left Side (two magazines).
- Right Side (two magazines).
- Front (two magazines).
- Rear (two magazines).

Phase V. Range Qualification. This range is conducted on Day 2 of firing, after firers have exhibited proficiency in Phases I-IV. This phase focuses on engaging targets while moving parallel to the target line and forward (see diagram). The two parallel movements concentrate on the individual's ability to fire from both the left and right sides. This firing is conducted with one firer at a time. The subsequent movement is firing from the low carry while moving forward. This range can be conducted with five firers at one time, alternating firing positions. The first iteration concentrates on the ability to engage targets on the NCOIC's command while moving.

1st Iteration:

- Left Side (one 30-round magazine).
- Right Side (one 30-round magazine).
- Once firer has reached the no-fire line, he moves back to the start position and resumes.

2d Iteration:

- Forward movement.

This movement consists of using the low crouch and "duck walk," starting 25 meters from the target and moving slowly to the no-fire line (five meters from the target). Once the firers have reached the end point, they return to the start point. This engagement may begin with the single shot method and progress to both double tap and multiple target engagements.

The training can be executed from squad to company level within the times specified, and it requires minimal logistical support. As fundamental as the training is, it offers dividends that make it well worth the effort.

Captain Bryan P. Hernandez commanded a rifle company and headquarters company in the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division. He previously led rifle and mortar platoons in the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, and served as a company executive officer. He is now in a foreign area officer assignment in Brazil. He is a 1989 graduate of Marion Military Institute and holds a master's degree from the University of Alabama.
