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# MOUT Training During Peacekeeping Deployments

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Peacekeeping operations in Kosovo make it extremely difficult to maintain collective combat skills. Units are challenged during any peacekeeping operation to maintain individual skills of rifle marksmanship, physical training, and to keep an aggressive warrior mentality. A solution was developed to create a Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) Academy within the company. This training took one platoon away from the company standard sector patrols for a 10-day period and provided the platoon a great opportunity to hone their warfighting skills.

The base model of the 10-day training cycle was developed from a similar training program used by the U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory. The USMC Warfighting Laboratory was very helpful and sent us electronic copies of the course program of instruction (POI) and copies of the individual class slides. Using this as a base product, the company officers reviewed the POI in conjunction with the current company MOUT strengths, weaknesses, and resources available and were able to develop a POI adaptable to the company in Kosovo.

The base POI consisted of a five-day classroom instruction along with practical exercise to re-enforce each day's instruction. In addition, the five days of instruction was incremental for the platoon's Soldiers and leaders. The first day started teaching basic weapons carry, engagement, and movement techniques, and culminated on the last day with how to plan and conduct platoon level mechanized and armor operations in an urban environment. This program was able to instruct not only the leaders of the platoon, but the Soldiers in both basic skills and leadership employment — something needed by all members of the platoon during fast paced urban combat operations.

One key shortage for the Soldiers stationed at Camp Monteith was the lack of rehearsal facilities for practical exercises. Soldiers could practice on the office spaces and living spaces provided to the company in the sea-huts, however to provide a variety of room dimensions rooms had to be fabricated. Fabricated rooms were developed by a simple method of building wood stands and stapling either packaging material or wrapping paper to the stands to fabricate walls. Brown & Root contractors created multiple stands consisting of a 10-foot 2x4 standing vertically held up by four 3-foot 2x4 legs that stand independently. This provided the company with the ability to create multiple scenarios for squad and team leaders to practice on individual rooms, create hallways, and build multiple rooms buildings for up to platoon level rehearsals. Plus, the use of free standing legs with either paper or packaging material stapled to them allowed the platoon leader and squad leaders to change the scenario each time making it more complex as the squad

or team progressed in ability.

The first five days of the academy gives platoon members a base level of knowledge, the second and final phase of the training was to conduct a three-day field training exercise (FTX) to reinforce the skills taught. Day six of the training module would be an FTX prep day. This gave the platoon NCOs the time to gather the high intensity conflict (HIC) equipment needed for the FTX and have adequate time for pre-combat checks (PCCs) and pre-combat inspections (PCIs) before deploying to the field. The training area used was a very unique area for units to use, a completely abandoned town in Kosovo. The town, Vernez, was a Croatian village southeast of Vitina that was abandoned during the war in 1999 when the residents left to move back to Croatia. This gave ample room for the platoon to train in more than 150 different types of buildings ranging from farmhouses and residential houses to commercial storefronts and walled compounds.

The company would spend three days



Courtesy photos

*Soldiers move to another building during MOUT training in Kosovo. The FTX was conducted in an abandoned Croatian village, which gave ample room for the platoon to train using farmhouses, residential houses, commercial storefronts and walled compounds.*



*Soldiers from C Company rehearse corner procedures.*

living in the town. Day one consisted of movement out to the village, and gave the squad leaders, platoon leader, and platoon sergeant time for on the ground rehearsals with MILES (multiple-integrated laser engagement system) and blanks. The platoon spent the day typically in a crawl, walk, and run phase for both squad and platoon-level operations taking the opportunity to do both daylight and limited visibility training with night vision goggles (NVGs). Day two started with three similar squad evaluated lanes with the opposing force (OPFOR) provided by the company headquarters platoon where each squad spent the morning training on three tasks: react to contact, enter and clear a building, enter and clear a walled compound. The last task is not from FM 7-8 or FM 7-7J; however, the nature of buildings and housing areas in typical Muslim areas normally consists of some variation of a walled living compound consisting of

multiple buildings all interconnected. This was the final complex task for the squad to complete and really challenged the squad. In the afternoon, the platoon would transition into platoon operations combining the platoon lanes into three missions for the platoon: react to contact, deliberate attack, and react to ambush. This gave the platoon ample opportunity to progress in complexity of operations and missions during the day. This time spent maneuvering the platoon was an excellent challenge for the platoon leader.

Although, the company was actually an MTOE (modification table of organization and equipment) Bradley fighting vehicle (BFV) equipped company, the use of BFV was not allowed inside the town. The initial solution was to use HMMWVs

(high mobility, multi-purpose wheeled vehicles) with an M240B mounted on top to simulate the BFV; however, the town's terrain was too rugged and mountainous to support wheeled or tracked vehicle movement through a majority of the areas. This ensured the FTX would be a dismounted fight only, and the

Soldiers typically assigned to the BFV section were used as additional members of the three rifle squads.

At night, the platoon went back to squad operations and conducted the squad lanes, again followed by platoon-level operations at night. The difference between the day lanes and the night lanes was that at night more specific intelligence to enemy location was given to the squad and platoon leader. This narrowed down the training objective to a deliberate attack, instead of overwhelming the Soldiers with the task of conducting movement to contact operations in an Urban Environment in limited visibility, a highly complex task.

The final day of the FTX included two platoon-level missions, where the OPFOR commander — the company master gunner — was not restricted to specific buildings or limits on deadly force. One mission kept the OPFOR in the defense, followed by the second mission having the OPFOR start at the far side of the town and move towards the platoon in a meeting engagement. Both missions challenged the platoon in a much harder scenario than the day before; taking away restrictions placed on the OPFOR basically allowed a challenging force on force fight for the last two missions. Finishing the FTX, the platoon would be brought back to Camp Monteith to conduct a day of recovery and refit in preparation to return to the standard peacekeeping patrols of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission.

The ability of the company to pull one platoon at a time out of sector, conduct high intensity urban warfare training, and then allow them the time to rest and refit provided a much needed break for Soldiers conducting the KFOR mission. Bottom line: Infantrymen often have to kill people and break things. Due to their discipline and professionalism, they can perform peacekeeping missions to standard. However, the problem for leaders is to keep up their Soldiers' basic skills and morale, and leaders need to be creative at times to find time to train when and where they can.



*Soldiers complete a night rehearsal wearing NVGs.*

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