

TRAINING NOTES



Close Quarters Combat Training *Using the IDPA System*

CAPTAIN JAY SHEBUSKI

After competing for several years within the Glock Sport Shooting Foundation (GSSF), the International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA), the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) 3-gun, and numerous local plate, steel, and pin shooting competitions, I have concluded that infantrymen shoot poorly at close quarters combat (CQC) distances (i.e. 0 to 25 meters). There are plenty of civilian men and women who shoot as a hobby who can routinely outshoot infantrymen. I attribute this to the methodology that the practical/tactical civilian shooting sports have developed, which creates shooters who can reflexively engage multiple targets quickly and accurately at CQC distances. The U.S. Army Infantry is 30 years behind these organizations in CQC weapons training and qualification. Recent U.S. Army publications such as FM 90-10-1 — Change 1 (*An Infantryman's Guide to Combat in Built Up Areas*) and chapter 14 of the Ranger Handbook covering urban operations touch on the topics of shot placement and engagement time, but the Infantry has yet to develop an effective system to evaluate, improve, and sustain those individual CQC marksmanship skills. I propose that the Infantry adopt such a

system. A CQC individual weapons training methodology that integrates IDPA, weapons currently assigned to infantrymen (M9, M4, and M249), and the imperatives published in chapter 14 of the Ranger Handbook and FM 90-10-1, C1.

IDPA

IDPA shooting matches place individual pistol shooters in multiple civilian “real world” scenarios/courses of fire (COF) where they are evaluated on shot placement, engagement time, and weapon-handling skills. It is a mini-individual live-fire exercise requiring use of cover and shooting on the move, with targets that require multiple hits and value head and chest hits highest.

How it works

There are commonly four to seven COFs during a one-day IDPA match. Each COF is constructed in a three-sided, earth-bermed bay. After a safety brief, shooters are broken down into squads. Squads then rotate through the COFs in a round-robin fashion. At each COF, an informal scenario brief is read and explained to the squad. The squad safety officer (SO), a senior more experienced shooter, gives this brief. The SO also gives the range commands, handles the shot timer, and follows the shooter through the COF (Figure 1). The standard IDPA range commands are, “Load and make ready, shooter ready, standby, start signal (start signal can be verbal, audio buzzer, i.e. timer, or visual at the discretion of the range master/OIC), unload and show clear, holster/sling, range safe.” Each shooter moves up to the start position, receives the commands and negotiates the COF. Upon completion, the range is cleared by the SO, and the shooter’s time is recorded. Each target is reviewed for shot placement score, and any observed penalties are assessed. The shooter’s score is then recorded on his score sheet. Those individuals not shooting help paste the target holes, reset reactive targets, or act as the scorer.

The structure of an IDPA match, with its round-robin rotation, safety briefs, organic shooting squad leadership, and range commands lends itself to easy understanding by platoon and company leadership.



Figure 1

the time it took to complete the string of fire (raw time) and **ADD** five tenths (.50) of a second for each point down from the possible score. Add any applicable penalties and total for your final score. As many shots as desired may be fired but only the best hits as specified by the course description will be scored (Example: If two hits per target are specified in the course description and you fired three shots, **ONLY** the two highest scoring hits will count for the score).

— IDPA Official Rule Book

Figure 3



Vickers count scoring example #1: The COF required two hits on T1. Total point score is **7** ($5 + 2 = 7$), so no failure to neutralize penalty. Total points down is **2** ($0 + 2 = 2$).

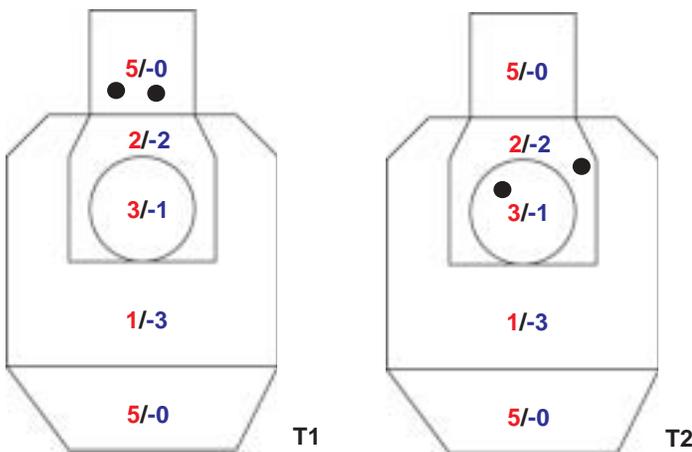
Total time from shot timer is 1.25 seconds.

$$\frac{2 (.50) = 1 + 1.25 = 2.25}{\text{Points down} \times .50 + \text{total time} = \text{score}}$$

*When utilizing Vicker's Count scoring, the **low score is best**.

Vicker's count scoring example #2: The COF requires 2 body hits per target. Total point score for T1 = 10, T2 = 5; no failure to neutralize. Points down T1 = 0, points down T2 = 3; total = 3. Total time from shot timer = 2.56 seconds.

$$\frac{3(.50) = 1.5 + 2.56 = 4.06}{\text{Points down} \times .50 + \text{total time} = \text{score}}$$



Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) and Penalties

The IDPA has developed TTPs into its scoring system. Most if not all of them were created to develop innate survival and weapon handling skills, which would benefit infantrymen.

Hits on a Non-threat Target: A single five-second penalty will be assessed per non-threat target hit. If you have more than



Figure 4

one hit on a non-threat target, you will still **ONLY** be a single five-second penalty for that target.

— IDPA Official Rule Book

This IDPA TTP focuses on improving what is referred to as **target discrimination** for infantrymen. C1, FM 90-10-1 describes this as a vital skill for our infantryman to acquire and sustain.

Target discrimination is the act of quickly distinguishing between combatant and noncombatant personnel and engaging only the combatants. U.S. forces engage in CQC in order to apply discriminating combat power and limit unnecessary casualties among noncombatants. Therefore, target discrimination is vital in CQC.

— FM 90-10-1, C1

Cover, when available, should be utilized by infantrymen to minimize their exposure to enemy fire. Currently, the use of cover is not part of an individual infantryman's marksmanship training. The proper use of cover is an evaluated TTP during IDPA matches and should be included in every infantryman's CQC marksmanship training (Figure 4).

Proper use of cover: If cover is available, the shooter must use it. More than 50 percent of the shooter's upper torso must be behind cover when engaging threat target and/or reloading. If in the opinion of the safety officer (SO) adequate cover is not being used (if the shooter does not have to move between target engagements, this is a strong indicator that adequate cover is **NOT** being used), the SO will yell **COVER**. If the competitor does **NOT** immediately move to adequate cover, a three-second procedural penalty will be assessed. All reloads must be executed behind cover if cover is available and must be completed before leaving cover. (Shooters may not move from one position of cover to another with an empty weapon.) Failure to reload behind cover or moving from cover with an empty weapon will result in a three-second procedural penalty per infraction.

— IDPA official Rule Book

Training

Utilizing this methodology, commanders should be given the opportunity to develop CQC marksmanship training COF that

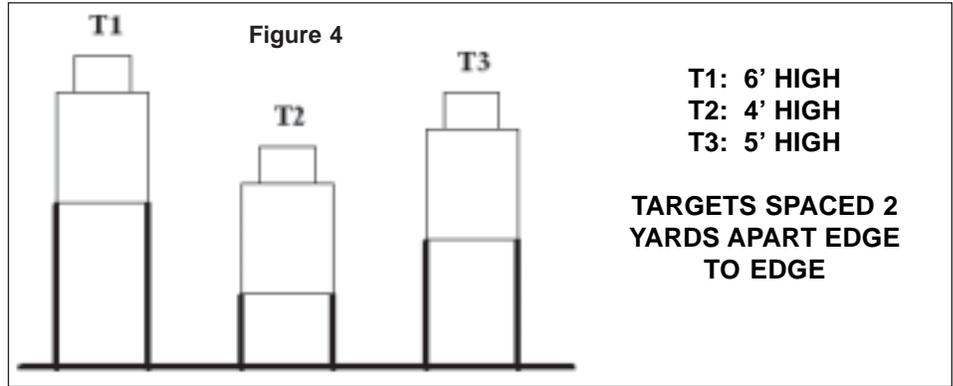
TRAINING NOTES

directly reflect mission requirements; for instance, several scenarios might depict a soldier conducting gate guard, a HMMWV patrol, a check point, moving down a hallway, an ambush in an alley, etc. Countless COFs are available to commanders on the Internet.

Several sites of interest are: www.idpa.com, www.tacticalshooters.com, and www.sportshooter.com.

Qualification

The IDPA qualification COF is composed of three stages fired at three targets, which are placed two yards apart at varying heights (Figure 4). It must be fired as one continuous COF. No breaks between strings. Shooters receive a score utilizing Vickers Count and



are ranked with shooters firing similar weapons. I recommend the Infantry adopt a modification of the IDPA qualifier shown in figures 5, 6, and 7.

* Engagements begin with shot timer

tone from prescribed start position.

* A 55-gallon barrel and a Bianchi-style barricade (a wall 24-inches wide by 6-feet tall) are needed to fire the qualifier.

* Body shot placement is shooter's choice.

FIGURE 5 — M9/M4/MP5 CQC INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS QUALIFICATION

STAGE1	DISTANCE	START POSITION	SHOT PLACEMENT per Tgt	TARGET(S)	RDS
String 1	4 meters	Low ready	2 hits pelvis, 1 head	T1	3
String 2	4 meters	Low ready	2 hits pelvis, 1 head	T2	3
String 3	4 meters	Low ready	2 hits pelvis, 1 head	T3	3
String 4	4 meters	Low ready	2 hits head	T1-T3	6
String 5	4 meters	Low ready, weak hand (M4/MP5, weak shoulder)	1 hit pelvis or head	T1-T3	3
String 6	4 meters	Back to target, low ready, 3 rounds in weapon, 1-3 round magazine in ammo pouch. At start, turn & engage T1-T3, 1 round ea., slide lock reload, engage T1-T3	2 hits head	T1-T3	6
String 7	4 meters	Low ready, strong hand (M4/MP5, weak shoulder)	2 hits pelvis, 1 head	T1-T3	6
STAGE2	DISTANCE	START POSITION	SHOT PLACEMENT per Tgt	TARGET(S)	RDS
String 1	8 meters	Low ready, engage moving forward to 4 m fault line	2 hits body	T1-T3	6
String 2	4 meters	Low ready, engage moving backward	2 hits body	T1-T3	6
String 3	8 meters	Back to target, low ready, 6 rounds in weapon, 1-6 round magazine in ammo pouch. At start, turn & engage T1-T3, 2 rounds ea., slide lock reload, engage T1-T3	4 hits body	T1-T3	12
String 4	8 meters	Low ready, strong hand (M4/MP5, weak shoulder)	2 hits body	T1-T3	6
STAGE3	DISTANCE	START POSITION	SHOT PLACEMENT per Tgt	TARGET(S)	RDS
String 1	15 meters	Low ready, drop to knee, engage T1-T3, 2 shots each from either side of 55-gal. barrel in tactical order, tactical reload, switch sides and engage T1-T3, 2 shots each in tactical order.	2 hits body	T1-T3	12
String 2	20 meters	Low ready, engage T1-T3, 2 shots each from either side of barricade, in tactical order, tactical reload, advance to 55-gal. barrel, drop to knee, engage T1-T3, either side of 55-gal. barrel, in tactical order.	2 hits body	T1-T3	12
String 3	15 meters	Low ready, drop to knee, engage T1-T3, 2 shots each from either side of 55-gal. barrel in tactical order.	2 hits body	T1-T3	6

FIGURE 6 — M249 CQC INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS QUALIFICATION

STAGE1	DISTANCE	START POSITION	SHOT PLACEMENT per Tgt	TARGET(S)	RDS
String 1	4 meters	Low ready	3 hits body	T1	3
String 2	4 meters	Low ready	3 hits body	T2	3
String 3	4 meters	Low ready	3 hits body	T3	3
String 4	4 meters	Low ready	3 hits body	T1-T3	9
String 5	4 meters	Low ready, weak shoulder	3 hits body	T1-T3	9
String 6	4 meters	Back to target, low ready, 9 round belt in weapon, 1-9 round magazine in ammo pouch. At start, turn & engage T1-T3, 3 round burst each, 3 round mag. reload, engage T1-T3 burst each	6 hits body	T1-T3	18
String 7	4 meters	Low ready, weak shoulder	3 hits body	T1-T3	9

STAGE2	DISTANCE	START POSITION	SHOT PLACEMENT per Tgt	TARGET(S)	RDS
String 1	8 meters	Low ready, engage moving forward to 4 m fault line	3 hits body	T1-T3	9
String 2	4 meters	Low ready, engage moving backward to 8 m fault line	3 hits body	T1-T3	9
String 3	8 meters	Back to target, low ready, 9 round belt in weapon, 1-9 round magazine in ammo pouch. At start, turn & engage T1-T3, 3 rd burst each, magazine reload, engage T1-T3 3 rd burst each	6 hits body	T1-T3	18
String 4	8 meters	Low ready, weak shoulder	3 hits body	T1-T3	9

STAGE3	DISTANCE	START POSITION	SHOT PLACEMENT per Tgt	TARGET(S)	RDS
String 1	15 meters	Low ready, drop to knee, engage T1-T3, 3 round burst each from either side of 55-gal. barrel in tactical order, switch sides and engage T1-T3, 3 round burst each in tactical order.	6 hits body	T1-T3	18
String 2	20 meters	Low ready, drop to knee, engage T1-T3, 3rd burst each from either side of barricade, in tactical order, advance to 55-gal. barrel, drop to knee, engage T1-T3, 3 rd burst each either side of 55-gal. barrel, in tactical order.	6 hits body	T1-T3	18
String 3	15 meters	Low ready, drop to knee, engage T1-T3, 3 rd burst each from either side of 55-gal. barrel in tactical order.	3 hits body	T1-T3	9

FIGURE 7 — CQC INDIVIDUAL SCORING CLASSIFICATIONS

	VICKERS COUNT SCORE	CLASSIFICATION		VICKERS COUNT SCORE	CLASSIFICATION
M4/MP5	80.41 OR LESS	MASTER	M249	91.76 OR LESS	MASTER
	80.42 - 99.57	EXPERT		91.77- 111.43	EXPERT
	99.58 - 129.18	SHARPSHOOTER		111.44 - 141.82	SHARPSHOOTER
	129.19 - 181.00	MARKSMAN		141.83 - 195.00	MARKSMAN
	181.01 OR MORE	NOVICE		195.01 OR MORE	NOVICE

	VICKERS COUNT SCORE	CLASSIFICATION
M9	98.82 OR LESS	MASTER
	88.83 - 120.00	EXPERT
	120.01 - 152.73	SHARPSHOOTER
	152.74 - 210.00	MARKSMAN
	210.01 OR MORE	NOVICE

Captain Jay Shebuski is currently assigned to the 1-307th Infantry (TS), 5th Brigade, 87th Infantry at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He received his commission in 1989 through the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. Past assignments include serving as a Bradley platoon leader during Operation Desert Storm and a company commander with the 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry. Shebuski is a master-rated IDPA and GSSF shooter who competes regularly across the Southeastern United States.