

THE COMBAT SHOTGUN IN THE BCT

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The shotgun is the most misunderstood weapon in the Brigade Combat Team. The combat shotgun has found new life in the Infantry during the war on terror and through “Modularity” with the BCT being equipped with 178 M-500 shotguns. However, at issue is that no single doctrinal resource exists supporting the current combination of roles the shotgun is being employed in. Units are forced to either search through multiple field manuals, depend on unit subject matter experts, or simply make it up. The result is often that shotguns are being used in improper roles such as a primary weapon without a stock or supporting pistol, or as a secondary weapon with the full stock slung across the Soldier’s back. In this article, I will attempt to impart the lessons learned over the last five years of employing shotguns in the 10th Mountain Division.

Methods of Employment

The shotgun should be employed in one of two methods. In the first method, the shotgun is employed as a primary weapon with a full stock. Considerations for the commander when employed in this manner are the limited range and reduced ammo capacity of the shotgun. A Soldier conducting house-to-house fighting at close ranges may be well served by the standard shotgun. However, skills that must be ingrained are: reloading constantly or the “load what you shoot” rule and transitioning to a handgun. With only six rounds at their disposal, a shotgunner may find himself out of ammo quickly in a fire fight. Reloads must occur at every lull in the fight. Transitioning to a hand gun is one method of staying in the fight if you run out of ammo. Simply put, the shotgun is lowered and the M-9 is drawn, and a controlled pair fired when the shotgun is out of ammo. The shotgunner maintains the M-9 until the situation allows him to reload the shotgun. The same process is used for a stoppage that cannot be cleared by immediate action.

In the second method, the shotgun is employed as a secondary weapon. In this case the primary weapon for the Soldier is the M-4 or M-16. The shotgun is then typically employed with a pistol



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An Iraqi Army soldier shoots off a lock during a cordon and search mission.

grip and some sort of retention system. The 10th Mountain’s Infantry Mountain Leaders Advanced Marksmanship Course (IMLARM) teaches the shotgun being slung on the firer’s side and to transition from the M-4 to the shotgun, then back again.

In the role of a secondary weapon to the M-4, the shotgun is carried uncocked on an empty chamber or with an expended cartridge in the chamber. When employed, the gunner pulls the M-4 across his body away from the shotgun, then brings up the shotgun, racks the slide and fires. Once the engagement is complete, the gunner leaves the shotgun action closed on the expended round and transitions back to the M-4. This process is repeated as required. The gunner will then reload the shotgun when the tactical situation permits.



NSN: 8465-01-491-4509

Units should look at using NSN: 8465-01-491-4509 in combination with a sling for retaining their shotguns used as a secondary weapon.

The fundamental operation of the shotgun in either role is the same. Vigorous racking of the slide back then forward assures positive extraction, ejection, and chambering of the rounds. Weak manipulation of the slide will result in the shotgun suffering a malfunction. Immediate action for any malfunction is to cycle the action again. If you are still unable to fire, transition to the M-9 or M-4 and continue the fight. Once the tactical situation allows, go into remedial actions to clear the malfunction or reload as required.

Operational Roles of the Shotgun

The greatest strength of the shotgun and its greatest weakness is

the versatility of its ammo. Everything from bird hunting loads, slugs, and flares to 12-gauge high explosive rounds are available today. Currently, the Army only authorizes a few loads: #9 shot, 00 buckshot, M-1030 breaching rounds, M-1012 and 1013 less-lethal rounds. Other rounds such as the Action FRAG-12 (USMC), Joint Non-Lethal Warning Munition (JNLWM), XM-104 Non-Lethal Bursting Hand Grenade and the Extended Range Point Less-Lethal Munitions are in various stages of development and should be expected to lead to new training requirements. This leaves a bewildering array of possible roles (anti-personnel, breaching, less-lethal, etc.) depending on the type of rounds at the commander's disposal. Further, many rounds can be used in multiple roles. For example, 00 buckshot can be used to conduct breaches but presents an increased risk of collateral damage to civilians or fellow

Soldiers. Also, lack of a STRAC (Standards in Training Commission) that sufficiently supports training with the shotgun has extremely hampered commanders understanding the shotgun.

Currently, the shotguns roles can be divided into three general roles:

1. Offensive Weapon,
2. Breacher,
3. Less-Lethal Munitions delivery system.

As an offensive weapon, the shotgun should be employed as a full-stocked weapon employing 00 buckshot rounds, supported by a M-9 pistol. In this role commanders must account for the limited effective range of the shotgun. Employing the current 00 buckshot loads, the shotgun's realistic effective range would be 25-35 meters. If the shotgun is employed without a stock, this range is reduced to 10 meters.

Future munitions such as the Action FRAG-12 or a type-classified slug round combined with an improved sighting system should be expected to increase this range to 100 meters.

In the breaching role, the shotgun provides the commander with increased momentum when conducting urban operations. The breaching shotgun is extremely effective in quickly defeating locked doors with reduced risk to the Soldier compared to manual breaching methods. The M-1030 round is the primary breaching round; however, it has only been procured in small numbers. The M-1030 round presents the most effective breaching round and presents the lowest risk for collateral damage. Typically units should expect to employ #9 shot loads for training and can also effectively employ them in combat with only slightly increased risk of collateral damage and slightly reduced effectiveness. Commanders should also be aware that both M-1030 rounds and #9 shot loads are not effective anti-personal rounds much farther than arm's reach.

In the role of a less-lethal munitions delivery system, the 12-gauge shotgun offers exceptional versatility. Utilizing the shotgun instead of systems such as the FN-303 Individual Serviceman Non-Lethal System (ISNLS) reduces the training and sustainment burden on the commander also, since he already has shotguns organic to the unit. Here, more than any area though, the lack of training ammo or qualification standards has defeated the commander. The current M-1012 round provides the commander with a low to medium point pain compliance munition effective to about 30 meters. The M-1012 round is most effective in a low threat environment against an individual target. The M-1013 is a medium pain compliance round designed for use against multiple targets; however, it is also effective against a point target. Munitions such as the USMC Stingball grenade or Army XM-104 Non-lethal Bursting Hand Grenade, which are employed from the shotgun's grenade launching cup, can extend the less-lethal range out to 100 meters and give commanders an extremely effective method of dispersing rioting mobs. Developmental rounds such as the Flarebang also provide the commander with the ability to deliver more effective warning shots by providing

Figure 2 — 12-Gauge Munitions

DESCRIPTION	DODIC
Army:	
12-Gauge 00 Buckshot	AO11
12-Gauge Breaching Round M-1030	AA54
12-Gauge #9 Shot Shell	
12-Gauge Non-Lethal Point Control (M1012)	AA51
12-Gauge Non-Lethal Crowd Dispersal (M1013)	AA52
New Army / Soldier Enhancement Programs:	
Extended 12-Gauge Non-Lethal Round, XM1068	TBD
FY 07 SEP XM-104 Non-Lethal Bursting Hand Grenade	TBD
Grenade, Practice Body Non-Lethal FY 07 SEP XM-104 Non-Lethal Bursting Hand Grenade	TBD
12-Gauge Launching Cup FY 07 SEP XM-104 Non-Lethal Bursting Hand Grenade	TBD
FY 07 SEP 12-Gauge Stand Off Breaching Round	TBD
The Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program:	
12-Gauge Joint Non-Lethal Warning Munitions	TBD
USMC:	
Grenade, Rubber Ball Non-Lethal 9590	GG04
Grenade, Practice Body Non-Lethal	GG05
12-Gauge Launching Cup	AA30
12-Gauge Bean Bag	AA29
12-Gauge Fin Stabilized	AA31

a visual and audio cue. This round should prove to be exceptionally effective at check points.

SOPs

Units must consider how they configure their combat loads of shotgun ammo if they are using multiple types of ammo on a operation. Units must determine the method of employment, then the role the shotguns will be used in. For example, the commander determines that they will employ the shotgun as a secondary weapon. He further sees the role as being primarily to conduct breaching with a secondary mission of delivering less-lethal munitions. The commander elects in this case to designate shotguns as primary breachers and determines they will be loaded with breaching rounds in the mag tube, breaching rounds in the shotgun ammo pouch (fighting load) and less-lethal ammo carried in the right canteen pouch (sustainment load). In each case, the chamber is empty or after initial contact is closed with the pump unlocked.

Commanders may also segregate the types of munitions into special teams. The commander thus reduces the requirement to clear weapons in order to switch munitions. Instead, the squad leaders are able to call forward a special team to meet the need as required. He has further reduced the likelihood of firing a lethal breaching round into a situation requiring less-lethal rounds. Further segregating the load carried by the Soldier reduces the likelihood of introducing the “wrong” round while reloading.

The same principles apply when the shotgun is employed as a primary weapon. The primary difference is based on METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain troops, time), but one of the two loads carried should be 00 buckshot. This provides the shot gunners lethal force and specialty munitions as required. Mixing more than two types (lethal, less lethal and breaching) of ammo per Soldier should be carefully considered and have sufficient measures in place to prevent employing the wrong munitions for the target.

Shotgun Ammunition/Training Strategy			
Event	DODIC	Rounds	Frequency
PMI	N/A	EST	2
Instructional Fire	A011	3	2
Qualification Fire	A011	10	2
Total Per Soldier	A011	26	
M1200 Shotgun Door Breaching Training Strategy			
Event	DODIC	Rounds	Frequency
Ballistic Breaching	AA54	8	2
Total Per Soldier	AA54	16	

Table 2 — STRAC Table 5-79

Training Plans

Commanders frequently are unable to locate qualification standards due to the lack of a supporting field manual. The soldier training publication (STP) for shotgun qualification is no longer in print and is difficult to locate online also. Short range marksmanship (SRM) standards are ironically listed in the M-16 manual. Listed after the M-16 SRM standards shotgun and automatic firing standards are described as being the same as rifle SRM. Less-lethal munitions also do not have a published standard. FM 3-19, *Civil Disturbance Operations*, and FM 3-22.40, *Tactical Employment of Non-Lethal Weapons*, outline a recommended range standard; however, they note that the Army does not have a qualification standard. Furthermore, no standards for breaching qualifications are published Army wide.

STRAC also does little to help commanders. Different types of Infantry organizations have different STRAC authorizations, with the Stryker brigade’s being the best resourced (Table 5-79). Some of those authorizations include breaching munitions, some do not. None of the STRAC shotgun tables support SRM or live-fire exercises. Commanders must develop and resource a realistic training plan that will allow them to integrate the shotgun into the full spectrum of operations. They must then push for the training system to provide them with enough ammunition to support their plan.

When developing their breaching training plan, the question of procuring doors is a frequent issue. A command or installation faces purchasing enough doors for 178 shotguns per BCT to conduct shotgun breaching semiannually. Commanders should consider using such training aids as the Breaching Technology’s Shotgun Breaching Door or Royal Arms Breach Door Trainer. Either door provides for a reusable training door that can be emplaced in a MOUT Site or MOUT LFX facility



in support of all phases of training. Both doors support M-1030 rounds and the more common #9 shot. Prior to procuring any breaching doors, the command must do a risk assessment and is advised to coordinate their actions with the Installation Safety Office and their Range Division.

Commanders must also be aware that units and individuals are also modifying the issue shotguns to better meet their requirements with untested commercial parts. Such modifications are violating the technical manual and Army Regulation 750-10, *Army Modification Program*. While there are improvements that could be made to the issue shotgun, they are outside the scope of this article. Currently the only approved method for requesting

modifications is through an Operational Needs Statement for "Special Missions Modifications."

Once properly understood and resourced, the shotgun presents the commander with many additional capabilities that he is able to tailor to his mission. From lethal force to less-lethal or breaching, the combat shotgun is on hand and ready to support the Infantry.

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TURN IN M1200 SHOTGUNS

The M1200 shotgun is obsolete and has been replaced by the M500 Mossberg shotgun, NSN 1005-01-295-1832. Units authorized shotguns that still have M1200s should get them replaced with M500s since the M1200 is no longer supported by the Army.

Units that need assistance can contact TACOM-Rock Island's Flora Taylor at DSN 793-1943, (309) 782-1943 or e-mail flora.taylor@us.army.mil

TM 9-1005-338-13&P covers the M500. (Information provided by *PS Magazine*.)

Shotgun Qualification Standards

Task: Engage targets with a 12-gauge shotgun (Qualification). Modified from STP 19-95c1 SM.

Conditions: You are given a requirement to engage targets using a 12-gauge shotgun. You are given a shotgun, 10 rounds of #00 buckshot, Type E silhouette targets, a 25-meter range and a firing barricade. The barricade should measure about 72 inches x 26 inches with an opening (window) cut 36 inches to 42 inches from the bottom of the barricade. The opening should be 18 inches wide and approximately 36 inches high.

Standards: Engaged targets with the 12-gauge shotgun, scoring a minimum of two pellets per round in the targets.

SHOTGUN QUALIFICATION					
POSITION	ROUNDS FIRED	DISTANCE	METHOD	TIME STANDARD	NOTES
Standing	2	25	Off Hand	4 Seconds	Load 4 Rounds
Kneeling	2	25	Off Hand	4 Seconds	
Crouched	2	25	Underarm Assault	4 Seconds	Load 4 Rounds
Standing	2	25	Strong Side Barricade Supported	4 Seconds	
Standing	2	25	Barricade Supported	4 Seconds	Load 2 Rounds

SHOTGUN FIRING, SHORT-RANGE MARKSMANSHIP QUALIFICATION (Modified from FM 3-22.9, *Rifle Marksmanship*, Chapter 7, 7.27 Phase III)

Soldiers should conduct SRM qualification semiannually, using the shotgun in the full stock configuration. In addition to qualification, commanders should conduct familiarization using the same qualification standards while altering the conditions. Firing the qualification tables with out stock, in protective masks and during periods of limited visibility with night vision devices should be included.

Task: Conduct short range marksmanship with a 12-gauge shotgun . Modified from FM 3-22.3

Conditions: You are given a requirement to engage targets using a 12-gauge shotgun. You are given a shotgun, 16 rounds of #00 buckshot, Type E silhouette targets, and a 25-meter range.

Standards: Engaged targets with the 12-gauge shotgun, scores 16 hits day and night. A hit is a minimum of two pellets per round in the targets.

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Shotgun qualification standards con't ...

SHORT RANGE MARKSMANSHIP (SRM) RECORD AND PRACTICE FIRE					
POSITION	ROUNDS FIRED	DISTANCE	METHOD	TIME STANDARD	NOTES
Straight Ahead	2	25m	Controlled pair	4 Seconds	Load 4 Rounds
Left Turn	2	25m	Controlled pair	4 Seconds	
Right Turn	2	25m	Controlled pair	4 Seconds	Load 4 Rounds
Straight Ahead Walking	2	5m begin at 15m	Controlled pair	4 Seconds	
Straight Ahead Walking	4	10m begin at 20m	Controlled pair	8 Seconds	Load 4 Rounds
Straight Ahead	2	25m	Controlled pair	4 Seconds	Load 4 Rounds
Walk laterally to the left	2	10m	Controlled pair	4 Seconds	

LESS-LETHAL QUALIFICATION MODIFIED FROM FM 3-19, CHAPTER 5, 8-9

Soldiers should conduct less-lethal qualification annually, using the shotgun in the full stock configuration. In most cases, kinetic energy will only carry these NL munitions projectiles 75 meters or less. This gives trainers flexibility as to the locations where a live-fire exercise can be conducted, especially in a field-expedient situation.

Task: Conduct less-lethal marksmanship with a 12-gauge shotgun. Modified from FM 3-19.

Conditions: You are given a requirement to engage targets using a 12-gauge shotgun. You are given a shotgun, a grenade launching cup, 2 rubber ball grenade (Sting ball), 2 launching rounds, 7 M-1012 rounds, 6 M-1013 rounds, Type E silhouette targets, and a 25-meter range.

Standards: Engaged targets with the 12-gauge shotgun, scores 15 hits USMC, 13 hits Army.

Note: The Sting ball grenade and grenade launching cup is a USMC only program. Stingball grenades should not be fired directly at individuals. The XM-104 Non-Lethal Bursting Hand Grenade SEP program should be expected to provide this capability to the Army in the future.

LESS-LETHAL RECORD AND PRACTICE FIRE					
POSITION	ROUNDS FIRED	DISTANCE	TARGET TYPE	ROUND TYPE	NOTES
Standing	1	75m	Area	Sting Ball/ Launching Round	Load 1 Round USMC only
Standing	1	50m	Area	Sting Ball/ Launching Round	Load 1 round USMC only
Standing	4	25m	3 Area, 2 Point	3 M-1013/ 2 M1012	Load 4 rounds
Standing	3	20m	3 Area	3 M-1013	Load 3 rounds
Standing	2	20m	2 Point	2 M-1012	Load 2 rounds
Standing	2	15m	2 Point	2 M-1012	Load 2 rounds
Standing	2	10m	2 Point	2 M-1012	Load 2 rounds