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# RIFLE SQUAD GUNNERY

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When holding terrain or securing a foothold in an urban environment, no other weapon system is more important to the success of a heavy brigade combat team (HBCT) than the infantry rifle squad. For far too long the rifle squad has been overshadowed by mechanized infantry units and their Bradley Fighting Vehicles (BFVs); it is the intent of Field Manual 3-20.21 to realize the key role of the rifleman and his weapon by developing a crawl, walk, run methodology for the rifle squad to enhance the squad's gunnery proficiency strategy.

One of the primary efforts of FM 3-20.21 was to ensure that the emphasis for gunnery was placed on the advanced tables; to do so involved creating a paradigm shift in the table methodology which included mirroring the rifle squad tables with the crew tables (for both the tank and Bradley) to prepare them to operate together in advanced tables. Therefore, the rifle squad gunnery tables are only the first half of gunnery (Tables I-VI) while collective gunnery is the second (Tables VII-XII). Chapter 7 of FM 3-20.21 will allow

company commanders the flexibility to incorporate both tactical training and gunnery. It will assist the commander by training the squad to use the direct fire engagement process using DIDEA and teach the squad and fire team leader fire control and distribution. The culminating event for the rifle squad is Table VI - rifle squad qualification.

Photo by Specialist Ben Brody

*Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, practice live-fire squad movement techniques in Kuwait in September 2005.*



The reader of FM 3-20.21 will immediately recognize a few changes in the gunnery manual. Throughout the manual there is an inherent flexibility for commanders at all levels to train for their anticipated contemporary operational environment (COE). Commanders should tailor their tables to replicate their anticipated environment as best possible. However, the one constant between the manuals is the reminder of resource constraints. Rifle squad tables must be designed using the same frequency and ammunition allocations from DA Pamphlet 350-38. In the paragraphs below, this article will discuss the methodology of rifle squad gunnery for the HBCT to include the basic gunnery concept, table resources, table design and development, and evaluations. Commanders should also note that this chapter will be redundant in the subsequent BCT manuals for both the Stryker and infantry brigade combat teams. Additionally, Chapter 7 can also be used as a blueprint of training for units that are deploying in nontraditional roles such as artillerymen and tankers mounted on high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs) tasked to execute dismantled operations.

**Rifle Squad Basic Gunnery Concept**

Rifle squad training measures the squad’s proficiency in executing specified squad collective tasks and battle drills. The idea behind rifle squad tables is to train the squad as part of a larger operation with concentration on one or two collective tasks from the Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP) Mission Training Plan (MTP). Moreover, the training tables should replicate a unit’s anticipated COE, involve the squad leader’s and fire team leaders’ decisions, demonstrate a cause and effect result for the leadership’s decisions, and be executed as a multi-echelon and combined arms event. This means that for each table developed, the construction of the table should have notional maneuver units and radio traffic incorporated to train the platoon leader (a multi-echelon focus) on making stressed decisions. For example, a squad table can be designed to where the platoon is the maneuver effort in a meeting engagement. With notional BFV radio traffic, adjacent maneuvering squads or squads in a near support-by-fire position can call situation reports to the platoon leader. As the squad begins its assault, the platoon leader orchestrates the massing of fire onto the objective. Though only the rifle squads are assessed, the platoon leader receives training as well. Additionally, this would maximize already constrained resources with accelerated deployment schedules and decreasing calendar space in today’s training environment. In keeping with the new modularity structure of the HBCTs, units should incorporate other CAB and HBCT assets into collective gunnery tables. One effective method is to combine similar collective tables and tasks from mortar, scout, armor, and engineer units and incorporate them into Tables IV, V, and VI. Lastly, commanders should incorporate organic and nonorganic vehicle platforms on the rifle squad tables. For example, as the rifle squad enters and clears a room, the squad leader cross talks with the tank commander in support. As the tank commander suppresses the building with his .50 caliber, COAX or the loader’s M240B, the squad leader calls the tank commander to shift fire to another building or window in accordance with the unit’s SOP.

| Rifle Squad Ammunition Resources |   |                      |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
|                                  | Frequency                                   | Recommended Table    |
| Fire and Move LFX                | 4 (2x Buddy Team once per gunnery)          | Rifle Squad Table I  |
|                                  | (2x Fire Team once per gunnery)             | Rifle Squad Table II |
| Squad/Platoon LFX                | 4 (2x Squad Qualification once per gunnery) | Rifle Squad Table VI |
|                                  | (2x Section Qualification once per gunnery) | Table IX             |

**Table Resources**

To underscore, FM 3-20.21 was developed using DA Pamphlet 350-38, and there are no anticipated changes to the strategy. The table above shows how rifle squads are currently resourced for certain events.

Throughout FM 3-20.21 the virtual, constructive, and live methodology has been used to maximize training resources. The virtual device of choice is the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000, while the constructive devices of choice for rifle squad training on non-firing tables for the preliminary, basic, and advanced gunnery phase is MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System) with blank ammunition.

**Table Design and Development**

Outlined below is the new table layout for rifle squad gunnery training.

| Rifle Squad Gunnery Tables: Chapter 7                  |
|--|
| Table I - Buddy Team/Fire and Maneuver Exercise (LFX)  |
| Table II - Fire Team Maneuver Exercise (LFX)           |
| Table III - Squad Battle Drill Exercise (Blank)        |
| Table IV - Squad Situational Training Exercise (Blank) |
| Table V - Squad Practice (Blank)                       |
| Table VI - Squad Qualification (LFX)                   |

Preliminary rifle squad gunnery tables should be conducted using the crawl (dry fire), walk (blank fire with MILES) and run (live fire) method of training. Once a squad has completed the battery of rifle squad tables in the basic rifle squad gunnery training, it is ready for advanced gunnery training with the tanks and Bradleys. This training model can also be used by units that are deploying in nontraditional roles. Finally, Rifle Squad Table VI is a prerequisite for Table IX.

The purpose of Table I is to train and evaluate individual movement techniques as part of a buddy team in a live-fire and maneuver exercise. Example tasks to evaluate include:

**Individual:**

- Movement under direct fire (0713260502)
  - o High crawl
  - o Low crawl
  - o Rush

■ Select temporary fighting positions (0713260513)

**Buddy Team:**

■ Move over, through, or around obstacles (0713260503)

■ React to indirect fire while dismounted (0713260510)

The purpose of Table II is to train and evaluate a fire team's ability to live fire and maneuver. This is the first table that the fire team leader is able to maneuver and control the fire of his team in a live-fire event. Example tasks to evaluate include:

Move as a member of a fire team (0713260510)

Control movement of a fire team (0713265605)

The purpose of Table III is to train and evaluate a rifle squad's ability to exercise battle drills in a field setting. A battle drill is a collective action executed by platoon or smaller element without applying a deliberate decision-making process and generally supports other collective tasks. This is the first opportunity for squad leaders to fire and maneuver both fire teams during a new gunnery density as an evaluated event. Example tasks to evaluate include:

- Battle Drill 2 - React to Contact
- Battle Drill 2A - React to Contact
- Battle Drill 3 - Break Contact
- Battle Drill 3A - Break Contact
- Battle Drill 4 - React to Ambush

The purpose of Rifle Squad Table IV is to train and evaluate a squad's ability to execute collective tasks in a situational training exercise (STX). This is the first opportunity for new squad leaders to maneuver both fire teams as an evaluated event. Tasks evaluated include but are not limited to those found in Chapter 5 of ARTEP 7-7J MTP. Collective training events for the rifle squad should be organized as part of a larger element.

The purpose of Rifle Squad Table V is to train and evaluate a squad's ability to execute collective tasks in a live-fire training exercise. Tasks evaluated include but are not limited to those found in Chapter 5 of ARTEP 7-7J MTP and/or the battle drills found in ARTEP 7-7J Drill. Collective training events for the rifle squad should be organized as part of a larger

element. This table is the building block to Rifle Squad Table VI (squad qualification) and should focus on collective tasks or battle drills identified as a firing task for subsequent tables.

The purpose of Rifle Squad Table VI is to qualify rifle squads. This table should encompass an entire operation from troopleading procedures through consolidation and reorganization. Rifle squads should be evaluated on their ability to effectively move tactically, control organic fires, and report/communicate as a squad and as part of a BFV platoon. Well prepared squad qualification tables are interactive (forces squad and team leaders to make clear decisive decisions) and multi-echelon (trains platoon leaders to fight both dismounted and notional mounted elements).

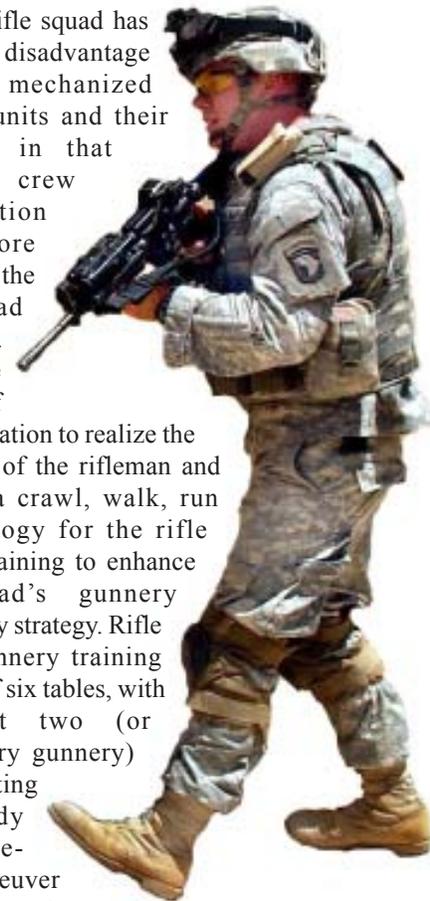
**Evaluating Rifle Squad Gunnery**

All weapon systems in an HBCT will be assessed utilizing the training and evaluation outlines (T&EOs) that support the mission or table being conducted. Evaluation for rifle squad gunnery tables is the same as it is for advanced gunnery and is outlined in Chapter 11. The senior evaluator will assess the overall performance of the rifle squad as either trained (T), needs practice (P), or untrained (U) using the collective task scoring model. The greatest change in advanced gunnery scoring is how scoring is tabulated. First, there is no mathematical solution to the scoring process. Second, the gunnery score is tied to the task standard of each training and evaluation outline, meaning gunnery is much like an additional line in the T&EO task standards. The squad must kill, capture, or force the withdrawal of the enemy, which forces attrition to a point of combat ineffectiveness. Therefore in a T&EO, the gunnery standard minimum proficiency level (MPL) that should be met is half of the enemy force has been killed, which results in no less than a needs practice or P for the firing element. Lastly, using the overall T&EO assessment and the overall gunnery assessment, the senior evaluator is able to assign an overall table assessment.

FM 3-20.21 was written to standardize the evaluation process for all weapon systems in mind for the HBCT. For far too

long the rifle squad has been at a disadvantage with mechanized infantry units and their Bradleys in that tracking crew qualification was more important the rifle squad training. It is the intent of this publication to realize the criticality of the rifleman and develop a crawl, walk, run methodology for the rifle squad's training to enhance the squad's gunnery proficiency strategy. Rifle squad gunnery training consists of six tables, with the first two (or preliminary gunnery) concentrating on buddy and fire-team maneuver and the last four (or basic gunnery) honing the effectiveness of the squad.

We encourage commanders, master gunners, and training managers to read the coordinating draft of FM 3-20.21 and ask them to contact the Stryker/Bradley Proponent Office with recommendations for the gunnery manual. For more information, contact the author at (706) 544-6201 or [william.f.simons@us.army.mil](mailto:william.f.simons@us.army.mil).



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