

Training Notes



SRTA ALLOWS 360-DEGREE TRAINING CAPABILITY

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Its 0830 on Range 10 at Fort Riley, Kansas, when the second transition team lines up on the firing line under the command of MAJ McGlaughlin. The seasoned team leader is no stranger to the range: he was stationed here as a young second lieutenant in the late '90s. However, for this tanker there are no main battle tanks, no smell of cordite, nor the familiar sounds of tracks — just echoes of a bygone era. Today, they have been reduced to the subdued sounds of Short Range Training Ammunition (SRTA) popping off in the distance from the first run of the day.

The first transition team on the range is returning fire following a simulated complex improvised explosive device (IED) and small arms ambush that disabled the lead vehicle and injured the gunner. The small unit leader of the transition team is on the range establishing 360-degree security using direct fire to gain fire superiority while on the move. His next response is to begin to maneuver one his vehicles to an overwatch position and establish a hasty pick-up zone after rendering a 9-line medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) call simultaneously. The enemy has chosen to fight, and continues to engage the combat patrol from three directions to which the volume of return fire elevates at the leader's direction (See Figure 1). This action is preparing teams for the chaos they may see on their deployments as transition teams. Satisfied with the outcome of the last engagement of five range scenarios, the observer/controller (O/C) calls for a hot wash and notifies the tower to prepare MAJ McGlaughlin for the next run down the mounted combat patrol live-fire lane using SRTA.

SRTA is 1st Infantry Division's means to produce one awesome, realistic, and simple

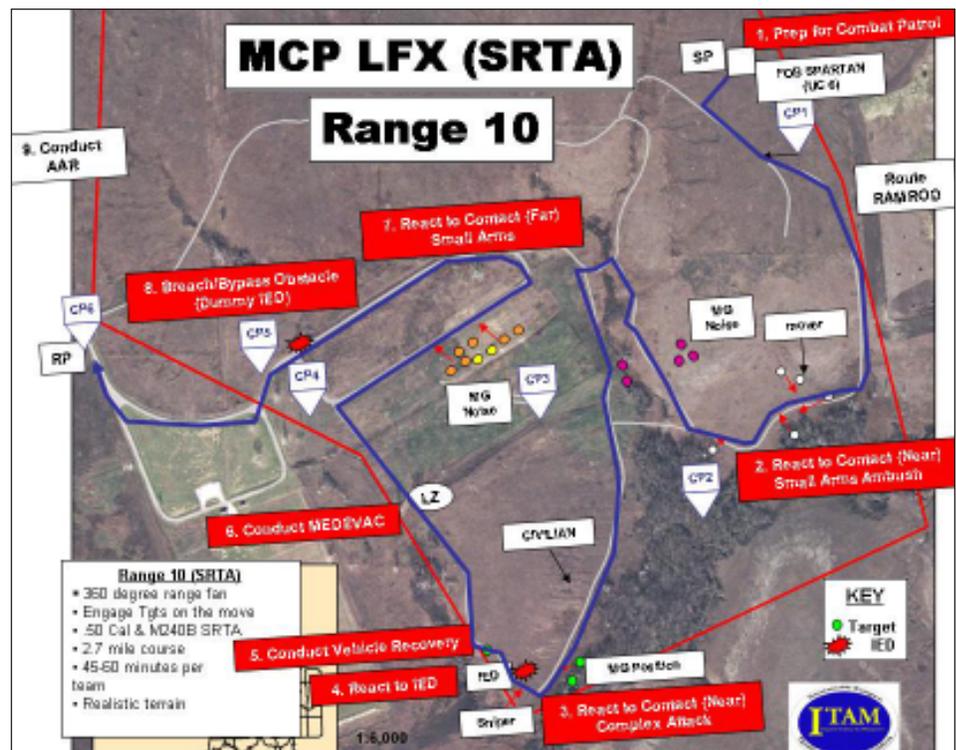


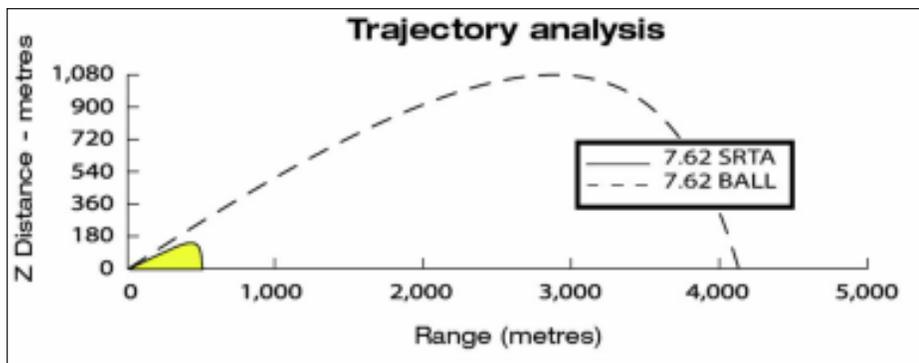
Figure 1 — Mounted Combat Patrol Live-Fire Exercise

training event. Training with this ammunition provides a “free thinking” environment and demands quick reactions, rather than a predictable range or canned lane training events. SRTA provides an unmatched training opportunity to prepare Soldiers for the realities of modern combat. It is the solution for simple and realistic training in a limited resource training environment. The transition teams are fortunate to participate in 1st ID's innovative use of SRTA as a training method, allowing Fort Riley to meet the demanding training requirements for deployment into the global war on terrorism (GWOT).

The U.S. Army currently uses three types of SRTA. There is one type for each of three

common infantry weapons — the M4/M16 rifle, the M240B medium machine gun, and the M2 .50-caliber heavy machine gun. These rounds are lead-free and constructed of non-toxic plastic. While integration of a frangible round is ongoing, a thorough police call of the training area will leave far fewer hazards to the environment than the lead-based service ammunition currently in use.

SRTA allows for free thinking during training, complex training scenarios, and multiplies the lessons learned from range training. Given the pace of transition team operations, the volume of Soldiers requiring training, and the friction created by units competing for ranges and facilities, the 1st Infantry Division has enthusiastically



General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems, http://www.simunition.com/upload/doc_10.pdf

Figure 2 — 7.62 Trajectory Analysis

embraced the use of Short Range Training Ammunition.

Only SRTA can provide free-thinking using fire and maneuver in a 360-degree training environment because of the surface danger zones (SDZ). The reduced maximum range of SRTA allows for the utilization of training land for LFX training previously unavailable, being restricted by the SDZ of traditional service rounds (see Figure 2).

This 360-degree training capability is what makes SRTA unique as a training munition. Soldiers train while completely immersed in the scenario and the threat could come from any direction. This capability provides a level of realism unmatched on any standard weapons range. Dusty and sweating from his just-completed convoy live-fire exercise, one Soldier from 1st ID's 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment commented that in all of his years in the Army, he'd never been on a more satisfying range; "its more satisfying," because SRTA is as close as you can get without "being there." In addition to enhanced realism, SRTA use also allows training with limited available space.

After completing convoy live-fire training, one unit commented in its after action review that use of SRTA allows trainers to "condense the battlespace to ranges less than 200 meters and at varying heights from ground level to 2nd or 3rd floor windows or engagements on overpasses. On a standard range, elevated engagements again would be prohibitive or shut down adjacent ranges based on the ball ammunition SDZ." In addition to this added flexibility, SRTA also exacts a lesser toll on range facilities such as shoot houses and urban clusters, decreasing overall range maintenance costs.

"This round gives our Soldiers an opportunity they couldn't get any other way: firing live rounds, seeing the ricochet, feeling the kick of the rifle just like they would with service ammunition," said LTC Frank Zachar, former commander of 1-16 IN and current assistant chief of staff, G3, 1st ID.

The realism of SRTA training allows for complex lessons learned. The scenarios include realistic target presentations more consistent with engagements that transition teams will encounter in theater. The 360-degree mounted combat patrol (MCP) live-fire exercise (LFX) scenario also forces transition team crews to quickly coordinate between crew members and exercise more disciplined target discrimination. The O/Cs can integrate into the convoy or move to an over watch position based on the engagement to capture adequate notes for the after action review. Both the team gunners and O/Cs reap the benefit of using up-armored vehicles to observe

each others' actions during the fight. The subsequent AAR will capture crew drills, target handoff, fratricide avoidance, direct fire response, and other training objectives.

The battle drills trained by SRTA are easy to transfer from one range to open installation maneuver area, based on demands for competing resources. The opportunity for resources that SRTA creates increases training productivity. While planned range expansion on the installation is ongoing, 1st ID at Fort Riley currently has only four locations within its available range complex and training areas that can support required transition team (TT)

MCP LFX training. Two of the four training locations are multipurpose range complexes (MPRC) designed for tank and Bradley fighting vehicle gunnery; the others are open maneuver space.

Today's environment is one nested in the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) concept. This model places units into a continuous deployment cycle and requires vast resources to keep pace and balance with the increased demand from light, wheeled, and heavy units. The 1st ID is using SRTA to accommodate for limited time and space that ARFORGEN demands. Use of SRTA allows trainers to convert the maneuver space into ranges.

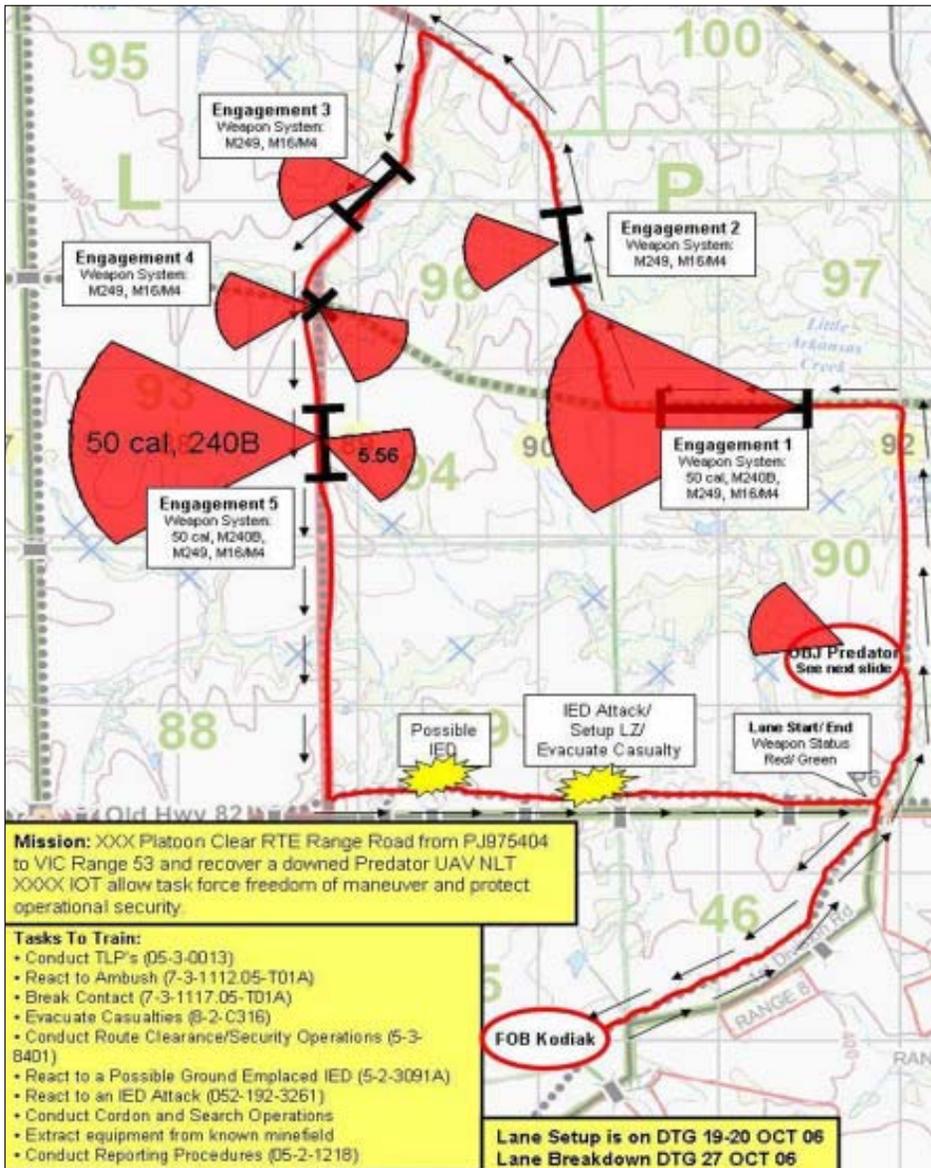
SRTA ranges can be created from maneuver spaces. This conversion can provide engagements less than 200 meters and at varying heights from ground level to 2nd or 3rd floor windows or engagements from overpasses. On a standard range, elevated engagements would be prohibitive or shut down adjacent ranges based on the ball ammunition SDZ. In addition to this added flexibility, SRTA also exacts a lesser toll on range facilities such as shoot houses and urban clusters. Without SRTA, Fort Riley and the U.S. Army TT trainers would face significant and difficult obstacles in ensuring that all transition team members receive the very best training the U.S. Army has to offer prior to their deployment in support of the GWOT. The 1st ID has seized the SRTA opportunity, developing new in a constrained training environment without sacrificing realism.

Using SRTA, 1st ID has created 360-degree cloverleaf MCP lanes. This design significantly increases the capability of the transition team trainers to train and certify members of a transition team (See Figure 3). The benefit of SRTA is that it allows trainers to use the vast maneuver spaces available across the installation.

Because of the increases in land resources the training tempo has increased. This equates to firing approximately 60,000 rounds of SRTA in support of TT training. This training supported 31 transition team classes, all of which are now deployed or are preparing to deploy in theater. Plans for FY08 are to fire approximately 410,000 rounds of SRTA in support of continuing TT training for the 1st Infantry Division.

The training ammunition requires some additional resources to be compatible with standard issue weapons. The weapons need adaptors that modify the weapon system to be capable with the rounds. Most of the additional equipment is available at TASC. Additional information for this equipment can be found in Appendix

Figure 3



B, FM 3-22.65 (FM 23-65) with Change 1, Browning Machine Gun, Caliber .50 HB, M2, March 2005.

Without Short Range Training Ammunition, the 1st Infantry Division and the U.S. Army transition team trainers would face significant and difficult obstacles in ensuring that all transition team members receive the very best training the U.S. Army has to offer prior to their deployment in support of the Global War on Terror. The way ahead for SRTA is definitely continued development of procedures and employment of the awesome training ammunition.

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