

SNIPER SCHOOL UPDATE:

Changes Reflect Ever-changing Face of Modern Battlefield

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Sniper School has the unique role of not only teaching its students a skill but teaching a whole new skill set. The five-week course gives graduates the tools to be effective in an almost entirely new job. The implementation of the M110 Semi Automatic Sniper System (SASS) and the ever-changing face of the modern battlefield drive the need for instruction to grow parallel to modern tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs). The U.S. Army Sniper School has made several changes to the current program of instruction (POI) that will shape sniper graduates to more effectively deliver long range precision fire and collect/report battlefield information.

Currently, the course's 443 hours of instruction focus on the following areas: field sketching, target detection and selection, range estimation, sniper marksmanship, organization, use and employment of snipers, command and control, mission planning, camouflage and concealment, stalking, and the selection, construction and occupation of sniper positions. Additionally, snipers are challenged by four record fire events, where they must pass a marksmanship qualification to move on in the course. They fire unknown distance, moving and snap targets, moving and snap targets during limited visibility, and M107 .50 caliber unknown distance. These events, in conjunction with numerous written exams and quizzes, ensure that graduates have developed a good working knowledge of both the weapon systems and the techniques involved with employing them.

The school has recently identified several areas where training could be tailored to more effectively prepare snipers for the modern battlefield. Through new instructor input on modern threats and techniques, as well as direct feedback from deployed snipers, the new POI addresses areas where new skills can be trained to increase the survivability and the overall lethality of a sniper team.

The M110 Semi Automatic Sniper System, which will soon replace the existing M24 as the primary sniper weapon, gives snipers an ability that they previously did not have with a bolt action rifle. The ability to rapidly engage multiple or fleeting targets with greater speed and accuracy allows more flexibility

in employment, as well as more survivability and increased overall combat power. The M110 still utilizes the same M118SB or LR precision ammunition as the M24 Sniper Weapon System, which is a 7.62 x 51mm NATO. The M110's accompanying PVS-26 gives snipers an in-line night vision device which uses the magnification of the day optic. Since it is simply a light intensifier in front of the existing scope, there is no risk of "losing zero" by removing the day optic. The PVS-26 is also compatible with the M151 spotting scope. This gives the team a 40 power night vision device, greatly increasing the ability to distinguish targets during hours of limited visibility. Additionally, the M110 comes equipped with a detachable weapon suppressor, thus reducing the signature of a round being fired by 31.8 decibels without affecting the muzzle velocity or accuracy.

To accommodate the new weapon system, the school has developed and implemented two new record fire events. In addition to shooting unknown distance and day/night moving targets with the M24, students will be required to pass these marksmanship gates with the M110. Students will now have the fundamental base, having shot the M24 deliberately to extended ranges, as well as the ability to quickly reduce multiple or fast-moving targets. The transition from shooting the M24 to the M110 is not a difficult one. The same basic marksmanship fundamentals and relatively similar optics apply. The marksmanship focus for the M110 will be shorter, faster engagements, fully exploiting the weapon's semiautomatic capabilities and training students for real-world engagements in built up areas such as Iraq.

Another tool that is emerging is the Horus Vision ATrag MX Ballistic Software, coupled with a personal digital assistant (PDA). The software allows management of multiple weapon systems and multiple shooters. The ability to quickly index targets and have interactive data at a glance is proving itself an invaluable tool.

To complement the M110 training, students receive an additional six hours of urban training. They must plan and organize a mission using aerial imagery and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)

M110 Semi Automatic Sniper System





Private Mary Gurnee, *The Fort Campbell Courier*

In addition to the resident course, the Sniper School also offers a mobile training team package where instructors are sent to a unit's home station to complete training. For more on the MTT, see page 17.

reconnaissance. This culminates with a concealed movement exercise where they are required to execute their plan by moving into a position in an urban environment as a 4-6 man team, set up a room hide, provide security and fire under observation without being detected.

The course now offers a challenging 457 hours of instruction testing the students with five record fire events, 32 fieldcraft events, 75 hours of conferences and lectures, and four hours of written examination. Graduates are now more prepared to face the challenges of the modern battlefield.

In today's contemporary operating environment of Iraq and Afghanistan the need for well-trained agile and adaptive snipers is highly critical. The Army identified the need for an improved weapon system that can be used in that environment, and the U.S. Army Sniper School is evolving its TTPs and POI to meet the new emerging threats.

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SNIPER COMPETITION SET FOR OCTOBER 16-23

The Eighth Annual U.S. Army International Sniper Competition is set for October 16-23 at Fort Benning, Georgia. The competition will be hosted and administered by the U.S. Army Sniper School, C Company, 2nd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment and the U.S. Army Infantry Center. The competition will be conducted regardless of weather conditions and is designed to physically and mentally challenge sniper teams from all over the world.

The objective of this competition is to further the sniping skills of all participants. Competitors from different units and different countries will be able to exchange techniques and tactics during the event.

Competitors must be organic two-man sniper teams with proof of sniper training. Every sniper team will participate in 10-15 combat-related events. The following are examples of some sniper skills that will be tested:

Field firing. Each team will be tested on its ability to successfully engage targets of unknown distances with a primary (long gun) and alternate (spotter) from 0m-1100m (day/night) as well as engagements with secondary weapon

(pistol) from 0m-50m. Each team will also be tested on its ability to compensate for cold bore/clean bore shots with the primary weapon (day/night). This will take place during more than one event.

Advanced marksmanship. Each team will engage moving targets at varying speeds and distances (day/night) with individual weapons. Each team will also be required to engage targets using alternate firing positions. This will take place during more than one event.

Field Craft. Each team will be challenged on its abilities to select a route, move into a firing position, deliver a shot, and exfiltrate undetected while under continuous observation. Each team will be challenged on its abilities to construct a field sketch, detect concealed targets, and estimate range to targets and items without the aid of a laser range finder.

For more information, visit the Sniper School's Web site at <https://www.benning.army.mil/197th/courses/sniper/index.htm> or contact Captain Jason Lojka at (706) 545-7507 (DSN: 835) or e-mail jason.lojka@conus.army.mil or Sergeant 1st Class Jared Van Aalst at (706) 544-6006/6985 (DSN: 784) or e-mail jared.vanaalst@us.army.mil.