The Reluctant Partisan
Vol. One: The Guerrilla

A Comprehensive Training and Evaluation Program for Tribal, Community, and Family Security Preparedness

by
John Mosby

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To contact the publisher to order additional copies of this book:
J.W.
c/o 2184 Channing Way #201
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For my family.

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Introduction
Cogito, Ergo Armatum Sum

It really does seem to be "the end of the world as we know it," for better or for worse. People in these United States of America are finally beginning to wake to the abuses heaped upon them by the power

brokers of the world. From internationalist, "one world government" organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations and Bilderberg Group, to the misconduct of the Federal Reserve, and more, there is a growing—ever more vocal and visible—dissatisfaction with the over reaching grasp of an unconstitutionally power-hungry federal government, following the apparent dictates of well-moneyed special interest groups. While I am not—by any stretch of the imagination—a tin-foil hat wearing conspiracy theorist, I would argue that when even reasonably prosperous, white-collar Americans are beginning to complain loudly about these issues, perhaps even the most level-headed amongst us should begin to wonder if maybe those folks aren't quite so crazy after all.

With quiet forbearance, we have long borne a string of abuses from a federal executive branch—through various administrations of both parties—and its unelected bureaucracy, that insists on bypassing the checks and balances of our republican form of government in order to initiate ridiculous, often pointless—and always grossly unlawful—regulations and executive orders that continue to abrogate our natural human rights.

Meanwhile, we suffer ignominiously under the "representation" of a legislative branch that is apparently unwilling to honestly and faithfully represent the interests and supposedly constitutionally-protected natural human rights of all human beings. Instead, they seem to prefer to sell their souls—and our labor and heritage—to blissfully follow the bribery-financed orders of those same well-funded special interest groups, while delegating their constitutional legislative duty and authority to the executive branch with little or no genuine oversight.

We've struggled with a justice system comprised of activist judges more concerned with advancing the partisan political goals of special interest groups than in faithfully interpreting the legitimacy of current legislation and regulation through the filter of the simple, plain English language of the Constitution of the United States of America.

We've labored through decades of economic catastrophe that—despite current claims of recovery—has most recently left hundreds of thousands of hard-working, flag-waving, patriotic Americans unemployed, destitute, and homeless. The continuing increases in direct and indirect taxation of the actual productive elements of the American economy mean that many of us who actually pay taxes end up paying well over 50% of our gross income to the government in one way or another. The collapsing purchasing power of the fundamentally valueless dollar, resulting in skyrocketing costs for fundamentally necessary fuels and foodstuffs means that our remaining income seldom stretches far enough to ensure a higher standard of living for our children. Combined with incessant government spending in the form of handouts to hostile foreign regimes and multinational mega-corporations, as well as the useless socialist leeches of our own society, these financial sins pile one atop the other, preventing any positive changes in the status quo.

These types of unlawful, immoral actions by the federal regime have led to a growing disenfranchisement with the government, as people have begun to distrust its interest in protecting the lives, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of individual Americans. There are hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of normal, middle-class, "soccer mom" Americans who are beginning to recognize that the current socioeconomic policies of the federal leviathan cannot be sustained. What's worse, there seems to be a plan that is inevitably leading to a climax of catastrophe for our nation and our

culture. While no one knows for certain what such a collapse will resemble, many have begun to wonder what is the point of working so hard if it's only going to result in a rapid increase in the velocity of the plummet towards total cultural suicide?

Despite the fact that many of us pay well over a 50% tax rate, it is still inadequate to support the ever-increasing demands of the government's budgetary requirements. The only way the Beltway can hope —even vainly—to continue its profligate, rabidly irresponsible spending spree is through even greater increases in taxation, combined with the continuing devaluation of the dollar through artificial inflation —even as the rest of the world seriously contemplates "dumping" the dollar.

Unfortunately, the ready availability of unsecured consumer credit has allowed many people—even those most egregiously threatened by these behaviors—to continue ignoring these realities over the past several decades. The masturbatory fascination that most Americans seem to have with their expensive entertainment systems and meaningless hobbies like "fantasy football" and NASCAR racing, keeps John Q. Public more concerned with being entertained by "bread and circuses" than he is with ensuring that his children are not being brainwashed into enslavement while being fed poisoned foodstuffs to keep them weak and docile. He's certainly not concerned with whether or not his bills are being paid on time.

What is Coming?

What happens though, when the available credit runs out on a collective level, and the bills come due "unexpectedly?" What happens when Robbie Redneck, Ghetto George, and the rest suddenly awaken to the reality that they are now paying more for the "privilege" of going to work at that shitty minimum-wage job they hate, than they are managing to take home? What happens when they can no longer afford their 900-inch flat-screen television, Nintendo Playstation 2000, or a six-pack of Keystone Light? What happens when they realize that there is no money to buy the pseudo-food trash from McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken to feed their kids? What happens when even the most dim-witted, low-information voter suddenly realizes that it is no longer in the positive side of the balance ledger for him to go to work, so he decides to stay home instead, curled up in his warm bed with the wife?

What happens is, there is suddenly no money for the government to steal from them! If the government can't steal from them, then—theoretically at least—it doesn't have any money to redistribute. What then happens when the leeches of society, who have been told their entire life that society owes them, realize that it was all a lie? What happens when they suddenly realize that everyone in their life, from their kindergarten teachers, to the President of the United States, has lied to them for their whole lives? What happens when those leeches realize that they are not the special, unique snowflakes they've been told they are, with an "inherent value" to society? What happens when they realize that society does not, in fact, care what they think, and doesn't feel like it "owes" them a damned thing? What happens when the leeches suddenly realize that they can no longer sit on their asses and collect their livelihood off the backs of their betters?

If history is an indication—and it generally is—those recipients who have been conditioned to be totally dependent on those handouts tend to become very....unhappy...when the handouts stop. When people get hungry, or watch their children get hungry, it doesn't matter if a man is a brain-dead, drug-

addled scumbag, or a woman is heroin-addicted, brain-scrambled whore, if they cannot get food to eat —even if the food is abysmal—they will do whatever they think they need to do in order to get food. The reality is, even evil bastards generally love their children, and will do whatever they perceive to be necessary to see that both they and their children get food in their bellies. Unfortunately, while you or I —sane, rational human beings and productive members of society—would see the solution as "go get a fucking job!" presupposing the same level of rationality on others is naïve at best, and more commonly suicidal.

These people will do what comes naturally to them in order to find food for their children, or to fill the other aspects of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, regardless of the possible consequences. That might range from something as simple and pointless as joining a riot to destroy property and hurt people, out of anger and fear, to more focused efforts such as mob-robbing a store or warehouse. It may be as personal as armed robbery, or as deadly as an armed home invasion to steal food or money.

Reality is a bitch

Many of us love to joke about the ineptitude of the federal bureaucracy—and it's only partially in jest. The sad reality though, is that if you think—for even a moment—that someone, somewhere with the power structures of the world and nation, is not consciously aware of the long-term results of their experiments, you are sadly deluded.

The nation-state as a viable political entity, is a relatively modern invention that did not really come to widespread fruition until the 19th Century. The inevitability of the State's survival is a modern historical conceit with no demonstrated validity, but the power brokers and bureaucrats that see themselves as post-modern kings and feudal lords, obviously possess a vested interest in maintaining that myth. There is—I believe—a concrete reason for the increasing encroachments on the individual liberties of Americans, as well as the insistence by the federal regime that normal, working class Americans with traditional values are "potential domestic terrorists."

People are already arriving at the stage where they cannot afford to pay for groceries, utilities, or rent—let alone more taxes. People are getting angry, and they will continue growing angrier until they realize that they simply cannot afford to keep playing the game anymore. The truth is, the system ans the nation we know is doomed. The people in power, in positions of leverage, are well aware that when things do collapse, the marginal members of our societies will get "unhappy" and they will begin to riot and run amok, attacking anyone that they've been led to believe are trying to "keep them down." Those power brokers are well aware that when things do get ugly, normal, peace-loving Americans will fight back, hard. When that happens the government is ready to step in and try to control things, through the imposition of more draconian control of the populace in general, through the provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act and similar provisions and executive orders, as well as potentially the imposition of varying levels and intensities of martial law in different areas.

These impositions for crackdowns on non-compliant members of society will be much easier if those people are unarmed and non-resistant. The larger the percentage of the population that is conditioned to "doing what they are told," the easier it will be to single out and deal with the resistant. This offers a stunningly simple method to increase the control of the powerful, while ignoring the increasing anger of the proletariat due to its collapsing influence in the neo-feudal society that will result. Will you be

the nobility, a free man, a serf, or a slave?

Playing Nostradamus

How long do we have? I certainly don't know. I'm not personally aware of anyone who has a secret, magical Nostradamus hat of prophecy hidden in their underwear drawer. I do however, happen to subscribe to that increasingly common school of thought which believes the "shit has already hit the fan." Now, we're just waiting for the shooting to start. I'm actually surprised that the image of an American society has held together as long as it has. We are a huge nation, physically, numerically, and culturally, that realistically, has no chance of long-term survival when viewed with an archaeological and anthropological view of history. The Republic simply cannot survive a society as fractured as ours, any more than the Roman republic was able to. We're destined to become a totalitarian regime, in order to keep the peace through force, or we're destined to collapse and fragment. The fact that the shooting has not started yet is a testament to the forbearance of most Americans—or a testament to the lack of moral and physical courage of Americans today.

As violent crime and home invasions increase, people sit huddled in their homes, watching the news broadcasts, and worry that they will be next. They sit, concerned with where their next meal will come from, and whether they'll have utilities and running water next week, because they don't know if they'll actually see a paycheck again. Instead of doing as their forefathers did, and standing watch at the front door, saying, "If you bastards want to fight, then bring it on!" they sit back and let the government "fight crime and terror," deluding themselves into believing that they still have all of their natural human rights, even if those rights are "reasonably restrained" by modern social needs, because violent bad things always happen in some other neighborhood, and the government always has their best interests in mind.

At best, many believe that while things are bad, as soon as they can get "their" party back in control, things will be okay again, despite overwhelming historical evidence to the contrary. They have been brainwashed into believing that the Constitution is still legitimately the "law of the land," and that it is patriotic to do whatever the government tells them, because it is the will of the majority.

Finally though, people are beginning to awaken. They are preparing for unpleasantness ahead, joining with like-minded neighbors and friends to be able to protect their communities and families. They are finally beginning to thumb their noses at the government and yelling forcefully, like the founding generations of this nation, "LEAVE ME THE FUCK ALONE!!!"

Unfortunately, none of that matters. What the federal government does or does not do is completely irrelevant. People are unlikely, regardless of how angry they claim to be, to risk trading their soft bed, in their warm house, for the resistance fighter's alternative of sleeping abandoned buildings or on the cold, barren ground, while being hunted by armed men. Fortunately, the federal government is too is too small and too incompetent to do anything about it anyway, without the active assistance of state and local government collaborators.

In the event of the impending widespread riots and general violence in the streets however, local governments and their enforcement agents will likely be entirely too concerned with their own survival to be bothered with enforcing the decrees of some pompous bureaucratic windbag inside the Beltway

against the wished of well-armed, well-trained, and disciplined, citizen's defense groups who are trying to protect their own neighborhoods and communities.

The security infrastructure necessary to maintain a semblance of civilized culture within a collapsed society—the barbed wire and fortress walls, armed sentry posts, and roving security patrols seen through much of the Third World today—is going to become a very familiar reality for most of us in America sooner rather than later. Fortunately, we have a long-lived and robust survivalist culture in this country. The term survivalist of course, is today fraught with preconceived notions of whiskey-swilling, pot-bellied rednecks, with fried pork rind crusts clinging to their unkempt beards, lounging around a campfire in someone's trailer park barbecue pit, clad in military surplus camouflage, as they share fantasies of battling the evil forces of the New World Order in some machismo-laden Red Dawn scenario of sniper ambushes while living off the land.

Fortunately, most of the genuine survivalists I know do not sit around very much at all, let alone while caressing their rifles like some sort of compensatory phallic symbol, as they masturbate over dreams of shoot outs with law enforcement, UN peace keepers, or even armed bandits. While the smart ones do own at least a few semi-automatic, magazine-fed weapons of basic military utility, most are woefully unprepared for the realistic, effective application of those weapons in the antipersonnel/defensive role.

My goal with this manual is not to advocate for the overthrow of the government. The truth is, the federal government just really doesn't matter much to me, and it shouldn't matter to you. The reality is, despite the best wishes of every revolutionary in history, with the exception of the American Revolution, history has amply demonstrated—repeatedly--that the government that results from violent revolt is seldom the beneficent Utopia that the rebels hoped for. In fact, the new government typically turns out to be much, much worse than its predecessor.

A Brief History Lesson

I doubt that any reader will be unfamiliar with the probability that, as the Republic continues its decay, life will continue to degrade into further ugliness. It really doesn't matter what causes the deterioration; whether it is the imposition of martial law in key areas under the pretext of keeping the peace following some natural or manufactured catastrophe, the invited influx of UN-backed foreign peace keepers, or law enforcement officers continuing to blindly follow the dictates of their superiors by ruthlessly enforcing unjust laws. Perhaps it will be those same police officers refusing to even bother showing up for work, in the face of increasingly violent riots and protests. Many people—myself certainly included—foresee a rapid collapse into historically typical, failed-state neo-tribalism, as groups and communities band together for mutual protection and benefit. Despite the naïve delusions of many modern Americans to the contrary, tribalism is not magically synonymous with pastoral pacifism.

When groups of self-interested people exist in close proximity to each other, amidst a finite, limited amount of necessary survival resources, the historical and prehistorical archaeological record demonstrates that the demands of self-interest almost invariably result in continuous, endemic violence. In an era of readily available firearms that require—relative to the swords and spears of antiquity at least—little training to use effectively, if not efficiently, that violent conflict almost always results in catastrophic losses to all parties involved.

Even amongst the more pragmatic survivalists however, there is often a deep, culturally-created psychological barrier against the recognition of how miserably, horrifically, bloody things actually get in guerrilla warfare. Brainwashed by the intellectual conceits of the modern nation-state, they internalize the image of the guerrilla fighter as a romanticized fighter created by poet, painter, and photographer, of either the dashing cavalier of the 18th and 19th centuries, or the high-tech "supermen" of modern special operations forces. This figure—in either guise—would, from the historical perspective, be most accurately labeled as the "modern" guerrilla fighter. This is a guerrilla fighter shaped directly or indirectly, by the organized, state-sponsored military that has armed, equipped, trained, and/or fought against him. While obviously valid on some levels, this image is a far cry from what is often erroneously labeled the "4th Generation Warfare" (4GW) guerrilla. More accurately labeled the "classical" or "tribal" guerrilla, this type of local fighter has existed far longer than civilized society, or the conventional military that civilization endorses as "regular."

The guerrilla warfare that we refer to as "unconventional" or "irregular" warfare is far older than so-called "conventional" warfare, despite the intellectual conceits of western military hubris. The idea that 4GW is somehow new or novel is a belief created by the formal military educational system that views anything which does not correlate to the established, nation-state endorsed view of "proper" warfare as being "unconventional" or "irrelevant." The average citizen-survivalist—understandably accustomed to considering the views of his more professionally-educated fellow citizens in uniform—should not feel bad for this misconception, since even—perhaps especially—professionally educated military officers and NCOs, including many within the Special Forces Regiment, also suffer from this institutional conceit.

4GW theory holds that warfare has evolved through four different intellectual generations:

- The era of massed formations, such as the phalanx of Ancient Greece, and the tortoi of the Romans.
- The era of massed firepower, characterized by both the English longbow archers and Genoese arquebusiers of the Middle Ages, and the Napoleonic-era formations of musket and bayonet,
- The era of maneuver warfare, characterized by increasing mechanization, and the use of smaller, more mobile elements to leverage mobility and smaller, but more lethal weapons, to outmaneuver an opponent's defensive actions.
- The "post-modern" fourth generation of non-state actors using networks in the political, social, military, and economic spheres, to convince a powerful enemy that their strategic goals cannot be achieved without an unbearably high cost.

Well-regarded military theorist John Robb cites several valid reasons for the returning prevalence of what he mistakenly refers to as "4GW." These include the loss of organized nation-state monopolies on violence, the rise in cultural, ethnic, and religious conflict as a result of weakening nation-state influence in their civilian populations, and globalization of industry and communications making the tools and methods of guerrilla warfare more readily available to non-state actors. Robb goes on to describe some of the tools that characterize this "new" method of warfare:

- Undermining enemy strengths through the use of primitive tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and ad hoc improvisation to overcome the enemy's technologically superior advantages. An example of this would be reverting to courier communications instead of radios or cell

phones, to avoid electronic eavesdropping when the enemy has satellite-based signals intercept capabilities.

- Exploiting enemy weaknesses through asymmetric operations, such as using IEDs to target risk-averse American military forces who limit their travel to roads, using heavily armored, but low-mobility vehicles, in order to avoid the inherent risks of gunfights. Destroying an MRAP is not particularly more difficult than destroying a Prius—it simply requires a bigger explosion.
- Using terror as a psychological weapon through the conduct of rear area operations that target the infrastructure of the enemy's civil society, rather than engaging in stand-up, knock-down, drag out fights with his armed forces. The events of 11 September 2001 provide an example of this.

While there are certainly some very valuable lessons for the reluctant guerrilla to learn from the post-modern application of what is still nothing more than local tribal guerrilla warfare, there is one major problem. That problem is the idea that 4GW is somehow new is absolutely, fundamentally flawed once we moves past the biases of our intellectual cultural conceits and look back through history without the flawed filter of a modern, nation-state interpretation of the past. The differences that do exist between the 4GW guerrilla and the local tribal guerrilla going back to prehistory are simply technological. While the 4GW guerrilla has access to a global media and Internet communications network for the dissemination of TTP, such as how to build an explosively-formed penetrator (EFP) anti-vehicle mine, the fundamental tactics of guerrilla warfare—ambushes, raids, sabotage, and assassination—have never really changed at all. Yes, the guerrilla of the 21st century has access to explosives, automatic weapons, night vision devices, and electronic communications, but those are all simply force multipliers, not force creators, and anything multiplied by zero is still zero. Without a fundamental understanding of the underlying principles of guerrilla warfare—which are prehistoric—the technological force multipliers amount to nothing of substance.

The pervasiveness of guerrilla warfare, due to the waning influence of the organized nation-state, is neither new nor valid. While it seems so to the academic who cannot move past his own biases to intellectually grasp the historical youth of the nation-state concept, guerrilla warfare is older than civilization. Even throughout the short lifespan of the nation-state concept, guerrilla warfare has survived, adjacent to—as well as completely independent of—the formal military organizations of the world.

Technological advances may make it easier for the non-state actor to leverage the weaknesses of the enemy, such as the aforementioned use of IEDs, but the guerrilla throughout history has repeatedly demonstrated a greater willingness to leverage new technology than his formal military counterparts. It is the technology that has changed, not the fundamental principle of leveraging that technology against enemy weaknesses.

The reality is, what we as a modern, "civilized" people perceive as 4GW would more accurately be described as "first generation" warfare. It is far older than any other form of group conflict, and in fact, never really ceased to exist at all, other than in the collective imagination of people too arrogant to recognize that the nation-state concept was incompatible with human civilization itself. Long before the advent of agriculture—and the resulting formation of farming societies that provided the ability to

produce and store the quantities of excess food necessary to support a standing army of trained, disciplined, professional warriors, tribes and bands of hunter-gatherers existed in close proximity to one another. They competed with one another for access to limited resources like game animals, no differently than modern man competes for limited resources like raw petroleum—with violence.

Throughout the vast majority of our species' spectacularly bloody existence on this little blue sphere that we call home, both before and since the rise of civilization, most inter-group conflicts have not been contested by well-equipped, nattily-dressed parade ground puppets of conventional military forces. On the contrary, for most of humanity's existence, wars, rivalries, and grudges have been settled by small bands of haphazardly armed, ill-disciplined, and poorly trained—or even untrained—friends and neighbors banding together to protect their own turf, or to expand their control over finite resources by invading their neighbors' turf and killing or enslaving the competition. The truth is that our modern use of "conventional" and "unconventional" labels for conflict is an absurd reversal of historical fact. Attaching the label of 4GW to methods that have existed since before the dawn of time is ignorant.

Like the modern interpretation of the guerrilla, the classical tribal guerrilla used hit-and-run methods, choosing the survival advantage of fleeing before a stronger enemy, unless the fight could be clearly leveraged to his own advantage. While many psychologists and revisionist historians have adopted the feel-good, New Age humanist view that "people are inherently good and peaceful," and accept the belief that tribal battles were largely ceremonial affairs that involved little bloodshed and killing, the fact is that the archaeological record rather clearly illustrates that they are wrong. The idea behind this view is that animal species—including mankind—possess an inherent natural aversion to intraspecific killing. Anthropological reports of largely ceremonial, ritualistic "battles" between modern tribal groups is offered as "proof" of this.

The important factor that these pseudo-scientist "experts" overlook, or else pointedly ignore in the interest of preconceived political positions, is that "battles" are not the guerrilla's fight. The guerrilla is more inclined to use the raid in the deepest darkness of the night to sneak into a village and kill his enemies in their beds, burning their huts down around the decapitated, emasculated corpses of his rivals, followed by quickly fleeing back into the darkness before the victims' friends and relatives in nearby neighboring villages can mount an effective counterattack. That is the way of the classical tribal guerrilla, just like it is the way of the post-modern 4GW guerrilla.

The idea that there are some sort of civilized restraints on the behavior and battlefield conduct of the guerrilla is a cultural conceit without historical or archaeological relevance. Quarter in tribal conflicts is seldom given or expected. Just as a modern US soldier captured by a 4GW Al Qaeda fighter can expect to be beheaded, sodomized, or both, a captured tribesman through history could look forward to being burned, castrated, beheaded, and then either killed or sold into slavery—if he wasn't simply eaten. His women would be raped, and then killed or sold into slavery, while his children would either have their brains bashed out against nearby rocks or trees, sold as slaves, or adopted into the conquering tribe, and forced to forget their memories of their birth tribe. Villages would be razed, crops destroyed, and livestock either destroyed or stolen. While, in our drive to project our own world view universally, we may naively expect the 4GW guerrilla to be constrained by cultural or religious background and morality or training, or the demands of his nation-state sponsors, the use of this type of terror tactics by the classical guerrilla sheds further light on the idea that the use of terror by 4GW guerrillas is in fact,

not new at all.

The guerrilla—like any intelligent fighter—holds the adage close to his heart that "the only fair fight is the fight you win." For the guerrilla, warfare is not an extension of politics by other means. Warfare is simply survival. In his 1996 work, **War Before Civilization**, University of Chicago archeology professor Dr. Lawrence Keeley pointed out that tribal societies engaged in inter-tribal warfare suffered an average of one-half of a percentage point of their total population annually, in conflict-related deaths. For the current population of the United States, that would equate to 1.5 million deaths per year. That's more dead people—in one year—than all American combat deaths since 1775! The tribal guerrilla really has no interest in playing by his opponent's rules—assuming his foe even has rules to play by—he is interested in surviving.

A Reality Check

The reality is, fighting as a guerrilla pretty much sucks dick. You don't get to go home and sleep in your soft bed, cuddled up against your pretty little wife every night. You might not get to go home for any nights at all, for many months—or even years. You may not ever get to go home, since it's actually likely that your home will end up burned down by rivals who want your farm ground or hunting territories—or your daughters. You won't have ready access to all that rice and freeze-dried backpacking food you stored in your basement. You won't be able to protect your wife and kids 100% of the time, from every possible threat, regardless of how thorough your preparations might be. Sniper fire, even from an untrained hillbilly with a shitty deer rifle, can come out of nowhere, at the least expected time and place. Kidnappings, rapes, and destruction of property are the cultural norms in all tribal conflicts. If you somehow thing, because this is "'MURICA!!!" that things will be different here, then you're obviously a complete fucking moron. People you love are going to die. Your wife may die. Your kids may die. You may die.

This manual is specifically intended to help good people mitigate those risks by preparing effectively, now. My goal is to provide the average family man, with a job and other concerns, with the tools to develop the real-world skills and knowledge to protect himself and his family through being capable of developing a well-trained, well-disciplined, tribe of community who can stand up, when the need arises in their community, and help lead the defense of that community against any external threat, and then—out of the resulting chaos—rebuild a functioning society at the local level, dedicated to the preservation and protection of natural human rights and individual liberty.

Much of the information (but by no means all) contained in this manual is based on current and historical doctrine of the US Army's Special Forces for the prosecution of Unconventional Warfare Guerrilla operations. While historically, tribal conflicts have been fought by groups of poorly-trained or untrained fighters, centuries of experience have demonstrated that trained forces generally succeed admirably against untrained forces. Stack the odds in your favor, and get the training.

The doctrine within this manual has been mitigated by my personal experiences, as well as studies of the history of both successful and unsuccessful guerrilla campaigns. I am neither so bold, nor so stupid, as to presume I have all the answers. The solutions and suggestions that I offer in this manual are neither new nor novel. Doctrine, as it stands, may not fit any future conflict perfectly. The doctrine is not even necessarily what is being done today. What doctrine does is provides a framework of reference

to begin to understand the nature of the beast we are facing. It is a reflection of the Special Forces community's collective image of how we hope that community prosecutes guerrilla warfare, or at least how the authors of the selected manual think the fight should be prosecuted. Recognizing the truth that no two guerrilla conflicts will be identical, and recognizing that any future conflicts will not necessarily closely resemble the historical image of any past guerrilla conflicts, the doctrine still offers important advantages as a foundational frame-of-reference. Nevertheless, the doctrine, within this manual at least, is heavily influenced by three critically important factors that cannot be overlooked:

- My personal, real-world experiences in small-unit combat and failed state environments during "nation-building" operations.
- Undergraduate and post-graduate degrees in history, with the resulting perspectives that may or may not offer.
- My personal interpretations—based on the previous two factors—of what the continuing decline of our socioeconomic structure will resemble.

While those very important factors cannot be overlooked and should remain firmly in your mind as you study and apply this manual, in order to choose which lessons to apply and which to ignore, there are two other issues that you should consider about my modifications.

- At some level, despite my best efforts otherwise, my own intellectual conceits, as a product of a 20th century upbringing in a largely Judeo-Christian culture, and my subsequent education and experiences in the military and in life, will necessarily influence the conclusions I have drawn, and thus the doctrinal modifications I have determined are important.
- Despite the very real impact of these prejudices, I am aware that they exist, and have taken advantage of that knowledge to help avoid their influence.

Suggested Further Reading:
War Before Civilization by Lawrence Keeley

Chapter One
TACTICS ARE LIKE ASSHOLES...EVERYBODY HAS ONE

"The purpose of fighting is to win. There is no possible victory in defense. The sword is more important than the shield, and skill is more important than either. The final weapon is the brain, and all else is supplemental." --John Steinbeck

As in any field of complicated skill and specialized knowledge that possesses a rather small core of extremely qualified professional practitioners, and countless masses of talented and untalented amateurs, tactical training as developed a number of very commonly used cliches over the decades. These can be heard anywhere that aspiring gun people gather—especially those would-be experts that I derisively refer to as "Tactical Timmy." I've heard these stale platitudes voiced by students in classes, read them repeated as rote gospel on Internet forums and in magazine articles, and more times than I care to count, I've heard them recited over the counters of gun shops by fat, polo-clad gun shop commandos, whose closest encounter with violence was getting punched in the nose by the playground bully in the third-grade.

The problem with a cliché of course, is not that it is necessarily inaccurate. After all, it becomes a cliché precisely because it contains at least a nugget of Truth. The problem with a cliché is that it ends up being mindlessly repeated by sycophants who have absolutely no conceptual frame-of-reference to accurately understand the meaning of what they are saying, let alone enough understanding to accurately explain the meaning to whomever they are repeating it to.

A popular example of this phenomenon is the cliché, "Train like you fight!" All too often, this gets deciphered as "Dude! I played a SEAL Team Six operator on Playstation last weekend! Now that I've got all this cool Gucci gear like my avatar had on, I'm going to strap it all on and then go run some tactical drills at the range with my top-of-the-line Bushmaster AR15. I'm going to shoot really, really fast, even though I can't hit the target, because it won't matter anyway, since I'll be all tuned up with an adrenaline response in a real fight anyway, and probably miss a lot there too!"

Unfortunately, while that is obviously written with tongue firmly planted in cheek, it all too often turns out to be exactly what happens when amateurs—or even amateurish professionals—get involved in real-world gun play. From cops who fire 75 rounds towards a bad guy standing eight feet away, and miss the target, but manage to kill three innocent bystanders down the street, to shithead soldiers who call in air strikes on "enemy positions" inconveniently located in the middle of wedding parties, panic sets in due to inadequate or improper training, and innocent people die unnecessarily because someone decided that the way untrained people respond to danger is the standard we should all strive for.

A more accurate manner of stating the concept, that I heard originally from an instructor at an army SOF school long ago, and more recently from former Delta commando SGM Pat McNamara (US Army, retired), is "train to win the fight." At its foundation, this repackaging of a very tired cliché simply means that you should never settle for lowest common denominator training. Do not accept the stupidity that because someone, somewhere, at some time, reverted to an inadequate level of training, then that means you will unavoidably revert to that same level of a lack of training. What it means is, you need to determine what will be required for you to win the fight, and train to that standard.

You must determine what tasks you will need to accomplish in order to win the fights that you anticipate possibly needing to fight, and then figure out what skills will be necessary to achieve those tasks. It means that you need to determine what level of performance you will be required to achieve those skills with, and then master those skills until you can achieve that level of performance, under the

conditions that you expect to face. If your worst-case, SHTF scenario is staring down a criminal gangbanger in an alley behind a ghetto 'hood bar, then you will require a significantly less intensive training and preparation program than if you expect to be fighting off elite foreign special operations soldiers operating under the mandate of a United Nations occupation force, If you are concerned about defending your survival retreat/hobby farm against a bunch of Elmer Fudd deer hunters who have transformed themselves into a horde of rabid looters following the socioeconomic collapse, then you need a significantly different level of ability than if you foresee fighting off groups of former US special operations forces (SOF) combat veterans who have banded together into a for-hire mercenary force like some post-apocalyptic Blackwater, Inc.

This handbook discusses the TTPs that a local community defense group might need in order to provide security for their community in a post-collapse scenario. The training programs detailed within these pages are not particularly complicated or difficult to execute, although they are extremely demanding, both physically and mentally—and sometimes emotionally. Wars, battles, and fights are not won on the battlefield. They are certainly not won at the shopping mall, gun store, or on Internet shopping websites. They are won in the classroom, in the gym, and on the training range.

It is a remarkable historical anomaly that we enjoy the luxury of spending ridiculous amounts of disposable income—even in the midst of an ongoing economic recession—on the procurement of specialized fighting gear, in anticipation of the fight that we see coming. We can purchase modern fighting rifles, advanced technology surveillance equipment like spotting scopes and night vision devices, and body armor that will rather easily defeat most of the weapons we can expect to face in the hands of future enemies. Thirty years ago, much of the fighting and sustainment gear that is readily available at our fingertips today, was little more than a masturbatory wet dream at best. One hundred years ago, much of the gear we take for granted was so fantastical that it was almost beyond the imagination. Unfortunately, this ready availability of cool, cutting-edge equipment has resulted in too many people being too strongly focused on that hardware rather than on the software—training—needed to use the gear effectively.

It is remarkably simple to shoot a gun accurately. It is not even particularly difficult, from either a practical or moral standpoint, to shoot a gun accurately and kill another person. It does get slightly more challenging however, when you need to shoot a gun accurately and kill another person, while simultaneously striving to avoid being shot yourself, by either the dude you are trying to kill or one of his asshole friends, while also trying to communicate with, and protect, your own partner(s).

Too many people though, when it comes to training, ignore the difficult issues of realistic training and focus on easy, undemanding, "fun" training. This type of person—knowingly or not—is planning on running on luck when the shit hits the fan. Unfortunately for them, in my experience, luck tends to rather firmly entrench itself on the side of the man with greater skill, not the guy who simply prays and hopes a lot. Sadly though, even amongst those survivalists who are sensible enough to be concerned about training, and perhaps even do train occasionally, most do not have any real concept of which skills they need to learn and master, nor how to develop an effective training plan to learn and teach those skills.

Tactical Leadership 101

While small-unit tactical leaders do have obvious duties of critical importance in actual combat operations, any professional, competent, experienced combat leader will tell you that the single most important critical task of any effective combat leader occurs long before the first battle is fought. That task is the development, guidance, and validation of realistic, relevant training of his subordinates. Like any professional military organization though, but to an even greater extent, irregular forces typically find themselves very limited in their access to time and resources that are necessary to achieve and sustain basic proficiency—let alone mastery—of every possible tactical task. Irregular force leaders must face the very real fact that they will confront a wide range of educational and professional backgrounds within their force, as well as varying motivations. Following a framework for the development of training will allow the leader to overcome those inherent differences.

Whether a trainer is developing a program for individual instruction or collective tasks training, his foundational course of action remains the same. The first step is to plan the training. While a former junior NCO in a combat arms branch—whether infantry, artillery, armor, or military police—will have a great deal of experience teaching short blocks of instruction in the form of "hip pocket training," they will often lack much, if any experience in developing a robust, comprehensive training program to pass on the information needed to develop and maintain combat effectiveness in a small, irregular force unit.

If you've actually mastered any physical skill, you will often overlook small and apparently minor—but actually essential—details that must be covered thoroughly when training novices. What is second nature and "blindingly obvious" to you as an expert, may be so foreign to the student that it's not even on his radar. While people often glibly talk about the on-the-job training they will get when TSHTF, the price to be paid for OJT in combat is entirely too high a price to pay. The importance of a well-developed, written curriculum for teaching cannot be overstated. God, as they say, is in the details. The development and execution of that training is the single most important job a tactical leader has.

MET-L

The details of the written curriculum for tactical training are found in the mision-essential task list (MET-L). The development of your MET-L, based on METT-TC analysis and a thorough estimate of the situation, will serve as a road map to help you plan and develop an effective training program.

In order to develop a MET-L however, you have to first determine the missions that you expect your team will be required to perform. In order to accomplish that, you must determine what doctrine will guide them. It is thus, critically important to understand what doctrine actually is. The terms "doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and SOP (Standard Operating Procedures)" have become almost synonymous in common usage amongst survivalists over the years. It is important to understand the actual meaning of doctrine though, because precision is important in discussions of matters of life-and-death.

Doctrine is defined as the fundamental principles by which units guide their actions in support of their mission(s). If we define the basic underlying mission of the community security unit as "provide active and passive security measures for the defense of the community, its property, and personnel," then the doctrine will focus on the principles that allow us to perform that mission. The philosophical elements that define that mission, in my mind—and thus within the training programs outlined in this handbook—include, but may not be limited to:

- *The best defense is a good offense*. The moving, aggressively patrolling unit is exponentially more effective in a fight than a non-aggressive group of the same size, stuck hiding in a static position with no idea of what is headed their way. As the Rhodesians discovered in their war against Communist insurgency from 1965-1980, the use of small units conducting aggressive patrolling provides a greater opportunity to gain useful intelligence about the enemy's activities and intentions than anything else available. Additionally, this allows the group or community to deal with aggressors somewhere other than on your own front porch.

- *If they're on your front porch, it's too late to run away*. This has also been stated as "stand-off favors the small unit." It is axiomatic of guerrilla warfare doctrine that stand-off weapons and tactics that allow the guerrillas to choose the time and place of their fight, and then the ability to leave if the situation changes to the opponent's favor, are the best choice.

  By this, we mean that the sooner you know about a large, hostile force in your neighborhood, the better your chances are of stopping them, or at least of dissuading them from continuing to move towards your home. If that doesn't work though, you've at least created enough of a time-gap distance between them and your home and family, to allow the rest of the group or community to prepare their defense, or to flee. If you wait until they're coming through the front door however, and only then realize that you don't have the ability to hold them off, you're done, because it's too late to escape. This helps to further illustrate the importance of aggressive security patrolling in order to locate aggressors long before they can get close enough to cause irreparable harm.

- *We don't have close-air support or artillery, so we have to master traditional light infantry skills*. Since we don't have the ability to call on an A-10 or a barrage of 155mm howitzers to bail us out of tight spots, we have to create the ability to either avoid those tight spots, or to get out of them without that help.

- *The dude that throws the first effective punch usually wins the fight*. It's as true in a gunfight as it was in the schoolyard, against the grade-school bully. If we can seize—and maintain—the initiative, we can keep the hostiles reacting to our actions, rather than trying to impose their own will on events. This is not just about being willing to hit or shoot first. It's about recognizing when you have seized the initiative, and then being willing to maintain that initiative through focused, targeted aggressiveness of action.

- A Chihuahua can whip a Great Dane, as long as he remembers he's a Chihuahua. Well-trained, well-disciplined groups of physically and morally courageous fighters have historically demonstrated the ability to defend their homes and villages successfully, even against vastly superior numbers and technology. "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog," as the old saying goes.

  Quality of training and motivation—software--is far more important than the quantity of men, or the quantity or quality of equipment—hardware. While the tactical skills of the guerrilla are

no different than those of the conventional force light infantryman, if the guerrilla tries to apply those skills in conventional operations, on conventional force terms, he almost invariably loses. The guerrilla has to fight like a guerrilla. When he does, he can win, despite the naysayers in the hide-bound, conventional force military.

- *Don't be afraid of the dark*. Most people are—even subconsciously—afraid of the dark. They prefer to sleep at night, where they can hide from their fear. Fortunately, it's easier to kill people when they are asleep. Without thorough, regular training in night time operations, most people do not perform well in the dark. People that don't perform well in the dark tend to sit still at night, around campfires, with flashlights and torches. That tends to make them easier to find, if you are capable and willing to move around in the dark without those crutches.

  People tend to prefer to sleep at night. Between fear of the dark, and our natural bodily rhythms, it just comes naturally. It's only been in the last hundred years that most people began staying up much past the setting of the sun. Fortunately, it's easier to kill people when they are asleep.

Using these doctrinal beliefs as the foundation of our collective mission statement, we can begin to determine the specific missions that will allow us to provide adequate security for our families, homes, and communities. The three basic operations that I believe are essential for the security force to master are:

1. Immediate defense of the physical property.
2. Reconnaissance and security patrolling to located hostile aggressor forces within a security buffer zone.
3. Attack those hostile forces in order to interdict any hostile actions against the physical property and to destroy or deter the hostile force.

Critical Training Concepts

Within any training organization, there are critical concepts that underlie the training philosophy of that organization. For combat effective tactical training, the crucial training concepts include:

- *Train to win the fight*! Combat is a harsh, unpredictable, unforgiving, and ultimately lethal environment. Fighting elements can only be effective if they have trained to adapt to undesirable and sometimes unforeseeable contingencies. Loss of casualties and key leadership personnel, catastrophic breakdowns in communications and technology, and plans being rendered useless by enemy action, whether deliberately or inadvertently; if your training plan doesn't teach how to overcome contingencies and work through problems, then you're not training for reality. If you never bother establishing and enforcing standards of performance, you are not training for reality.

  It's critical to understand however, that this is not the same thing as tossing "monkey wrenches" into the training too soon. If students don't know how to perform the fundamentals properly—to the established standards—without additional contingencies, there's simply no way they will be able to execute them properly with the additional factors making the task more difficult.

- Train for combat proficiency. The goal of tactical training should be to achieve combat effectiveness. The surest way to achieve that is to develop realistic and relevant training standards of performance, and then ensure that all training is conducted to achieve those standards. You do not need to become fixated on the doctrinal organization of the conventional force rifle platoon according to FM 7-8 The Rifle Platoon and Squad. If you don't have ready access to automatic, crew-served machine guns, close air support (CAS), and 40+ trained, fit individuals, the doctrinal table of organization and equipment (TOE) of the rifle platoon is pretty fucking irrelevant to you.

  Within the confining limitations of safety, common sense, and good judgment, you must balance the reality of imperfect performance initially, with the demands of realism in your training. No one is capable of performing a new task to perfection the very first time they attempt to execute it under realistic conditions. Accept imperfect performance initially, as long as there is improvement every time a particular skill or drill is practiced.

  It is not enough to simply "chalk talk" your way through difficult training problems and then consider your group trained. Combat effective forces don't attend lectures—they train. Training takes place in the goddamned field. Conducting realistic, effective training is a challenging task, but tough, realistic, physically and intellectually demanding training motivates individuals and leaders. You must integrate challenging, realistic modifying conditions into your training, such as faulty intelligence information, limited communications, smoke and noise, difficult terrain and varying extremes of inclement weather. Teams must get out in the field, in all weather conditions, and actually get dirty while performing tasks. Training under realistic conditions will build competence and legitimate confidence by developing and honing critical skills and instilling loyalty and dedication to the team through a shared sense of overcoming difficulties and achieving shared goals. Tough, realistic training inspires excellence by developing aggressive, self-disciplined fighters with the moral and physical courage and hardiness that breeds initiative, self-reliance, and the hunger to learn.

- Train to standard using performance-based training methods. Your training needs to be conducted to an established set of standards conforming to realistic, combat-proven doctrinal principles. Don't rely on feel-good, New Age bullshit validation methods. You have obligations —to yourself, to your family, to your neighbors, and your your neighbors' families—to ensure that your training doctrine is combat-proven. Making up your own doctrine based on theories and perceptions molded by poorly researched novels and bad Hollywood representations of what combat entails is foolish, wasteful irresponsibility.

  Performance-oriented training is hands-on training that requires the fighter to perform the tasks to the standards of performance specified, under the conditions needed to replicated wartime conditions. Individuals train harder, learn faster, and achieve a markedly higher degree of proficiency when they know the task, conditions, and standards that they are expected to perform. Training is simply more effective when it is standards-based and performance-oriented. Individuals and teams become more proficient by repeatedly performing tasks to a

measurable standard of performance.

Take the time and effort to determine what is required to effectively execute every skill on your METL, and under what conditions they will need to be performed in combat. Ensure that your people learn to perform the required tasks—to the standards required—under the most adverse, trying conditions that you can possibly imagine having to perform them. It's one thing to be able to engage the A-Zone of a typical IDPA silhouette target on a static, known-distance CQM range, in good weather and broad daylight. Can you do the same when it's pissing down rain, after humping a 60lb rucksack for ten miles across a mountain? What about after you've been wounded or injured? Those types of standards, under those conditions, make your training relevant and realistic.

Utilizing a doctrinally-sound performance-based approach to training provides the basis for a common vocabulary and frame-of-reference within your group. Successful completion of each challenge increases the capabilities of individuals and teams to accomplish sophisticated training and combat challenges. This fulfills your obligation as a trainer to ensure that your team members receive the highest quality training available to increase the chances of combat survivability.

- Focus your training on night-time and reduced visibility conditions. The irregular force must strive to legitimately own the night, reducing the effectiveness of enemy technological assets. While there exists a broad range of technological wonders available for well-financed organizations to leverage towards effectiveness in the dark, those can be overcome through effective training that is grounded in a realistic understanding of the actual strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of those assets.

  Ensure that your people can perform all of your METL tasks not just in daylight when the weather is nice, but be like the post office is supposed to be: deliver your shit in rain, snow, sleet, or dark of night. With or without STANO (Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Night Observation) devices like NOD/NVG and thermal imaging sights. Even if you can afford to outfit every single member of your team with NOD (Nigh Observations Devices), train them to be able to continue the fight when the technology won't work, or the batteries die.

- Train with the assets that you have; eliminate the weak links. Test your people for proficiency in all of the METL tasks regularly, and then focus follow-up training on improving those skills in which they demonstrated the least proficiency. Don't take the lazy route and focus solely on making your strongest skills better. You already have those skills. Eliminate your weak links.

  Don't wait for the assets you wish you could have in order to conduct effective training. DO you have trouble convincing all of the people in your group to get together for training on a regular basis? That's okay, because you won't always have access to every person available when the shit has hit the fan either. Some will die in the first minutes, hours, or days of an emergency, while others will fall ill, get injured, or be tasked with other chores when you need to conduct combat operations. In our current living situations, people have jobs, family demands on their

time and effort, and even vacations that must be taken. This doesn't mean they lack dedication or seriousness. If we're not in this for our families, why the hell are we? Deal with it by training the people who can make it, and then allow them to learn even better by passing on the information to those who are absent, at the next training opportunity. If someone regularly devises excuses for not making it to training events however, eliminate the weak link.

- Train as a combined force and a joint team. Developing a trained cadre of security personnel for a guerrilla force in your survival retreat does not absolve you from training the women and children, the elderly, or even the somewhat infirm who will make up the mass of your "Home Guard." A group limited to eight or ten or twelve active fighting men will not be capable of projecting force through effective security patrolling and still manage to effectively fulfill the needs of immediate base camp area perimeter security. The ability to use the Home Guard as the anvil to the hammer that is the mobile security force provides a decided benefit to the survivalist group or the community if both groups know how to work in concert. Leaders and trainers are responsible for training all parts of the system, from the security force to the Home Guard, and the auxiliary Home Guard of the surrounding communities as well, not only in how to fight, but how to fight together.

  Functional task proficiency and technical expertise of all individuals and elements is a critical prerequisite or effective joint team training. Not only must the support personnel know how to perform their jobs to standard, but also how to perform the critical individual and collective task skills to fight effectively.

- Train to adapt the doctrine as necessary. Without ignoring the doctrine, training experiences should teach and encourage individuals and leaders to improvise with the resources at hand and exploit any opportunity to accomplish tasks, even if that means modifying the existing doctrine to fit a specific situation. While it is fundamentally important to understand that you cannot modify the doctrine if you don't know what the doctrinal principles of your group are, it is equally critical to recognize that not all of the task-conditions-standards statements of your METL will meet the specific demands of every possible situation.

  Elements of individual task requirements even for the same task, will often require a different focus—or even a significantly different execution—based on these considerations. A group operating in the bayous of Louisiana will require significantly different performance parameters for the critical individual and collective task "move tactically" than the same group would require to operate in Montana's Flathead Valley, or even in the French Quarter of New Orleans or the suburbs of Shreveport. A groups staring down a horde of cannibalistic San Franciscans (i.e. "mutant outlaw biker zombie lesbians") will require significantly different levels of performance standards that the same group would require to confront a unit of Russian Spetznaz operating under the auspices of a UN Stabilization Force.

- Concentrate on the Common Skills first. Some of your individual and collective tasks skills will be common to most—if not all—real world missions that you will find yourself undertaking, while others will have very specific, limited applications. Focus on proficiency and then

mastery of the most commonly employed skills first, and only then worry about the more specialized and esoteric stuff that might look cooler on a ninja resume.

When developing a training program, the trainer must ask himself several key questions regarding the information to be taught, including "Why are we here? What is the purpose of this class?" Being able to ring steel at 200 meters with a Glock 19 is a rewarding and useful task, but for a clandestine-carry protective pistol course, being able to draw your weapon under physical attack, and dump a magazine of 9mm into a bad guy at bad breath distance is probably a more important skill to develop, in the short-term. It is incumbent upon the intellectually honest instructor to determine what the actual needs of the student base are and how to address those needs, if he intends to be successful in imparting information of value to the students. These answers may not be as self-evident as the foregoing example.

A "combat rifle" course for example, may have significantly different reasons for existing, based on the needs of the student demographics. The student concerned with defending hearth and home from a 0300 home invasion by MS13 bandits will have significantly different training needs than a class for survivalists concerned about preventing raiders from stealing their cattle out of the back pasture. At a fundamental level, developing effective training requires the trainer to have a concrete idea of what he is trying to achieve in any given class period, and to have the ability to deliver the appropriate material within the context of the class.

Focus on those common skills that are relevant to your group's structure, abilities, equipment, potential or likely missions, and environment. I live in the rural, alpine West. As much as I love performing high-speed, low-drag CQB and room-clearing operations and training, the chances of my people needing to spend a lot of time clearing multiple-floored structures using those TTPs are pretty limited, albeit far from non-existent. We'll benefit far more from a focus on rural patrolling operations than on clearing skyscrapers. A group in Portland, Oregon on the other hand, or Chicago, might find learning and practicing the patrolling techniques, with urban-specific modifications, of far more value than humping a ruck up and down a mountain in the woods for a week.

Regardless, training should have a strong focus on advanced marksmanship and weapons-handling, hand-to-hand combatives, fieldcraft, and individual and team movement techniques, as as well as trauma medicine, battle drills and small-unit tactics at the fire-team and rifle squad levels, with high standards of performance to be achieved in training. As your training advances into collective skills such as security patrolling, the battle drills, and more, a strong focus on fitting those skills to the lightly-armed irregular force must become foremost in your planning and development.

Chapter Two
STRONG PEOPLE ARE HARDER TO KILL

"Strong people are harder to kill, and more useful in general." --Mark Rippetoe

I am morally convinced that it is a man thing. Every single American dude that I know seems to genuinely believe that he is the textbook example of perfect health and fitness, in fine fighting trim. It doesn't matter if the guy is actually 287 pounds of lard, with 35% body fat, and the only "athletic" endeavor in his life is sofa-surfing, while watching NASCAR and pounding out 12-ounce curls; as far

as he is concerned, he is on par with an Olympic decathlete! The number of preppers and survivalists that I meet, walking around either morbidly obese or malnourished and skinnier than a Somali on a hunger strike, while remaining completely, blissfully ignorant of their physical limitations, is mind-numbingly appalling.

Fundamental health and welfare considerations aside—although we really should NOT cast them aside, since they are the foundation of survival—experienced combat veterans have long recognized that your individual combat effectiveness in both the long-term and the immediate short-term, is largely dependent on your physical conditioning for the tasks required of you. While mindset and mental determination are ultimately the critical factors, the simple reality is, the man who lacks the moral fiber to suffer through preparing his body physically will NOT possess the moral fiber to win the fight against physical weakness and misery during a critical event either.

Effective physical conditioning is painful. There are no shortcuts, quick fixes, or ways to get around that. Physical and psychological breakdowns MUST occur. It's part of the process, and the culture of the fighting man is dedicated to the acceptance—the embrace—of that suffering. We acknowledge the pain, and we work through it, knowing we will be both physically and morally stronger afterward.

The outcome of any combat encounter, at the individual level, is largely determined by your mental attitude and will-to-endure. Superior firepower and tactical expertise are both critically important contributing factors, but the level of your mental commitment determines the effective employment of those resources. Mental attitude is the most powerful force on any battlefield. Acquiring that will-to-endure, including the stoic, joyful acceptance of pain and suffering as experiences that must be borne, is difficult in a society where comfort and wealth are considered to be far more virtuous than physical ability and serious work effort. After all, this is a society that ignores even well-schooled actors in favor of idiotic antics of untrained, no-talent, and no-effort "reality television" celebrities!

Unfortunately for the lazy, here in the real world of physical pain, suffering, struggle, and life-and-death encounters, there is no shortcut to the development of combat fitness. No number of gimmicks or late-night television infomercial gadgets will substitute for the dedication of long-term physical and mental courage to develop combat physical readiness.

Survival in general—and combat survival particularly—places a noticeable premium on the physical athletic attributes. Combat, whether a knockdown, drag-out, throat-punching, skull-stomping brawl behind the local redneck bar, a brief but furious skirmish between rifle squads in the jungle, a door-kicking raid on an Al-Qaeda safe house in Baghdad, or a marksman's duel in the alpine vastness of the Hindu Kush, is possibly the single most physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually taxing endeavor that a man can undertake. Having been present for the birth of my children, I'd hazard the guess that childbirth is on a similar level for women, but if more intense, it's not by a very wide margin. Of course, since I'm not a woman and have never given birth myself, I could be completely full of shit on the last part.

For the guerrilla combatant in a post-grid down environment, success in combat may require an almost elite level of physical conditioning more often than not. To successfully prosecute a fight, he will first have to get to the fight. Often, even in the post-modern world of international air travel and 75MPH

interstate highway speeds, this will require hiking long distances over broken, rough terrain, while carrying a heavy load. Post-grid down, such foot-mobile patrolling will become even more essential as fuel supplies and other POL (Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants) materials will become scarce enough to be difficult or even impossible to replace, assuming you've stockpiled any in the first place.

During the actual fight, running, sprinting, crawling, jumping in and out of ditches, holes, and craters, and then lifting and carrying captured equipment and supplies—or wounded companions—and doing it all for hours, days, or even weeks on end, with little or no sleep, and all too often, inadequate food, will test the physical and mental mettle of even the fittest athletes. Fat Joe, the weak, undisciplined slob who refuses to force himself to do hard, strenuous PT of any sort, let alone at an elite level, won't last the first few minutes of a no-shit, this-is-for-real gunfight, let alone the first day of security patrolling combat operations.

The physical demands of combat will not compare to the "hard" work of farm chores, no matter how tough you think it is to feed a dozen chickens and milk two dairy goats on your hobby farm every day. God forbid that you are a member of that delusional subset of survivalist preppers who believes that the performance of minor chores around your hobby farm, from milking and feeding, to splitting a couple cords of firewood, actually constitutes combat-effective physical readiness training. While it is true that historically, insurgents have come from rural agricultural backgrounds, and the toughness and durability developed by third-world peasants living in shitholes left over from the tenth century provides a level of conditioning that has seemed to serve them reasonably well in guerrilla warfare, there are two major problems with this...

- While rural-raised guerrilla forces can perform reasonably well against even technologically superior professional military forces, on the INDIVIDUAL level, that is just not the case.
- Even if it were the case, there are some pretty significant differences between the peasant farming life of a campesino in El Misery, Central America, and any recreational—or even occupational—agricultural work in the United States in the 21st Century.

On the one hand, you can reasonably expect that you will be fighting against well-fed, well-armed, muscle-bound ex-convict gangbangers-turned-warlords, or regime security force thugs, with the best gyms and exercise physiologists to develop their physical attributes. On the other hand, it doesn't matter a bit how tough YOU think your daily chore routine is, feeding a few chickens and goats, or hoeing weeds in the kitchen garden, before returning to the kitchen to prepare and consume a healthy, calorie-dense supper and then going to bed in your soft, comfortable bed, does not even begin to compare with what a migrant farm laborer in this country faces daily—let alone a farmer in some third-world shithole.

Rest easy though, because the physical demands of combat encounters don't compare to the typical gym workout at the local fitness center either. It doesn't matter how much the oiled-body, fake-tan spraying, freaks of nature wearing European underwear in the bodybuilding porn magazines tell you that "getting a good pump" is critical to fitness.

Mobility Kills

If you've spent any time at all studying small-unit tactics and the individual fighting skills needed for combat survival, you've heard of—or more likely, read about—the Holy Trinity of combat effectiveness: Shoot, Move, Communicate. What too many gun gurus and radio gadget geeks overlook though, is that damned obnoxious, "move" part of the equation. At some level, this is because at the individual tactical level, mobility doesn't typically require collecting cool toys and gear the way the other two do.

It's possible to pretend that buying a brand-new, custom-built 1911A1 means that you can shoot. You can even pretend that simply passing your amateur radio operator's Technician license exam and buying a couple of Yaesu hand-held two-ways means that you're "tuned up" on your communications skills. There's no way though, to pretend that you can move effectively when you're a lazy, fat-ass slob.

Mobility, at the individual tactical level requires dedication to the cause, and extreme efforts to develop the necessary levels of physical conditioning, as well as to ignore marginal amounts of pain and discomfort. That's not even fun to contemplate, but it's necessary. The root of combat mobility for the fighting infantryman, whether he's a conventional force soldier conducting dismounted operations, or a partisan guerrilla fighter, is combat physical readiness training.

Mobility kills, for better or for worse. You can have mobility and kill the enemy, or you can lack mobility and die at his hands. The choice is yours.

The Old School Physical Athletic Attributes

Simply passing the US Army's Physical Fitness Test (APFT) is far from adequate. Anyone who tells you that it will be sufficient either doesn't have a clue what the hell they are talking about, or is trying to sell you something that you could find for free on the floor of a dairy barn immediately after milking time. For example, many units and combat schools in the US Army utilize the 17-21 year old age group for scoring the APFT. In order to graduate from Army Basic Combat Training (BCT), you must score a minimum of 50 points (***all scores provided in this section are for males, and in the 17-21 year old age group, unless specifically noted otherwise—JM***) in each of three events. That means 35 push-ups in two minutes, 47 sit-ups in two minutes, and a 16:36 minute two-mile run. If you can't manage that, you should probably consider begging your wife to let you have your balls back from her purse.

In order to graduate from Infantry One-Station Unit Training (OSUT—a combined basic and advanced infantry training program), at Ft. Benning, Georgia, you have to score a minimum of 60 points in each event: 42 push-ups, 43 sit-ups, and a 15:54 two-mile run. To serve in an airborne infantry unit, or to got to Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS), requires a score of 70 points across the board, plus the completion of six dead-hang chin-ups. That means 49 push-ups, 59 sit-ups, and a 15:12 two-mile run time...

The 75th Ranger Regiment is renowned for having—with the possible, arguable exception of the Army's Special Missions Unit (SMU)—the fittest, most well-conditioned soldiers in the US military, and possibly in the world. Using the Regiment's APFT standards alone though, puts the Ranger Regiment roughly on par with a high school football team. To serve in the Regiment requires a minimum of 80 points in each event, as well as the airborne six chin-up standard, plus a 40:00 five-mile run. To score

the 80 points on the three-event APFT requires 57 push-ups, 66 sit-ups, and a 14:24 two-mile run. While it pains me—seriously—to admit it, that's really not much to write home to your high school football or wrestling coach about, is it?

As far back as 1987, then-Commandant on the Marine Corps, General Al Grey, noted that these types of timed events were not measures of combat physical readiness:

"There are those who pride themselves on the number of push-ups, sit-ups, and chin-ups they can perform, but no one has stressed how they can carry a wounded Marine the length of the parade ground without killing him. This is what we should know and be able to do. If some want to run in their silk shorts and Adidas, that is fine with me: but the Corps is going to return to physical readiness versus physical fitness."

Even further back, all the way to World War Two, the US Army was well aware that the physical readiness demands of combat were not developed solely through calisthenics-based endurance exercises. Looking at **FM 21-20 Physical Training** from 1946, we discover that the Army already recognized the need for several areas of combat physical readiness. These same factors were still recognized when the manual was revised in 1957, but the advances in sports and exercise science, coupled with the study of combat experiences of World War Two and the Korean conflict, had allowed the Army to determine specific methods of testing individual performance in the physical attributes that form the foundation of these readiness factors.

Marching and Running
Whether a conventional force infantryman or a guerrilla partisan, the foot-mobile fighter needs to be able to move on foot, considerable distances over broken terrain. This could encompass anything from a short 2-3 mile security patrol to long-range patrols over the course of weeks. For the survivalist guerrilla, it may even include moving 500-1000 miles or more, over the course of weeks or months, in a bug-out evasion to get to a retreat far away.

The infantry fighter also needs to be able to sprint any distance from 10 meters during a 3-5 second rush, when under enemy fire, to a few hundred meters, all while wearing his fighting load, in order to maneuver against—or away from—an enemy force. In the event of a break-contact battle drill, you may even find yourself running for hundreds of meters, or even several miles, while wearing both your fighting load and your sustainment load.

Jumping and Vaulting
The infantryman needs to be capable of traversing ditches, low walls, downed timber, and other obstacles, while sprinting across the battlefield in fighting load, or he will find himself stuck, tragically unable to prosecute the fight, regardless of how well he did on two-mile runs in shorts and sneakers on pavement.

Climbing
Depending on the specifics of a particular operational environment, you may find yourself required to hike up step hills or mountains as a regular part of security patrolling. You might even find it necessary to scale cliffs or the walls of buildings, as well as clambering through windows or onto rooftops, while

wearing your fighting load, and perhaps even with your sustainment load, depending on the specific missions and operations that you are ultimately called on to perform.

Lifting and Carrying
Any of the above physical tasks are relatively simple when a person is performing them in sneakers and silk shorts. For the partisan survivalist guerrilla though, it is critical that you begin to understand—you will NOT be performing these tasks while dressed like a high school girl in PE class! You need to be able to hike those miles—across broken country—while wearing your fighting load and sustainment load or bug-out bag. You'll need to be able to do those sprints during the fight, with at least your fighting load on. In a break-contact drill, you'll be running while wearing not only your fighting load, but your sustainment load as well. You need to possess the ability to carry whatever loads you have to carry, as far and as long as you need to carry them, over whatever terrain you need to traverse.

Worse yet, you may need to carry them, while simultaneously carrying a wounded friend or family member who is injured enough to be non-ambulatory. Even if you're not stuck carrying someone, or even just part of a stretcher carrying them, you may be stuck carrying his rucksack or other gear—in addition to your own. It's easy to consider carrying a little 25lb "bug-out" bag and say, "Hey, this is all I need!" Reality, unfortunately, is a smug little bitch in a tight miniskirt who will tempt you with shit you're just not going to see when it comes down to the wire.

Standards of Athleticism
The 1957 edition of FM 21-20 provided a series a combat physical readiness testing events that combat soldiers were expected to be able to pass. Without going too far into detail of the scoring charts, we will take a brief look at what was required to achieve the benchmarks of 60, 70, 80, and 100 points in each of these events. While the military physical readiness standards have supposedly always been geared to the demands of the era in which they were published, and while I personally subscribe to a different set of standards that will be discussed below, a serious consideration of the 1957 standards as the PT benchmarks for any prepper group would not be detrimental in the least.

75 Yard Dash
Like all of these events, this test was conducted in combat boots, utility uniform trousers, and an undershirt. The 75 Yard Dash was—obviously--intended to evaluate running/sprinting ability. 8 seconds scored 100 points. 8.7 seconds was worth 80 points, 9 seconds worth 70 points, and 9.5 seconds earned a mere 60 points.

One Mile Run
Running the mile in 5:00-5:06 minutes equated to 100 points, while 5:43-5:48 was worth 80 points. 6:13-6:18 earned you 70 points, while a minimal 60 points required running the mile in 6:43-6:48. Remember too, this was in "boots and utes," before Roger Bannister had broken the 4:00 minute mile barrier!

Five Second Rope Climb
This test measured climbing ability. Making a full 20' ascent within the allotted time earned the full 100 points, while 18'-18'6" was worth 80 points. 70 points required climbing 15'-15'6", while only passing the 14' mark earned you 60 points.

150 Yard Buddy Carry
This event required carrying a partner of the same body weight, in order to evaluate the lifting/carrying ability of the individual soldier. Accomplishing the 150 yard distance in 30 seconds was worth 100 points, while 35 seconds only netted 80 points. Covering the distance in 37.5 seconds was worth 70 points, and the 60 point score required making the distance in 42 seconds.

While the manual does not list specific standards for road-marching standards, because those were covered in a different manual, it is important to remember that forced marches, both cross-country and along roadways, were regular, frequent aspects of training in that era, and throughout military history. Distance running did not replace "speed marching," or what we currently call "conditioning marches," as the primary means of endurance conditioning for infantry and Ranger units in the US Army until the 1970s, concurrent to the sudden explosion in the popularity of low-intensity aerobics and jogging, pioneered by Dr. Cooper, in the civilian fitness sector.

What The Hell Happened?
Unfortunately, the military—like the civilian fitness industry—long ago abandoned practical combat physical conditioning for the Holy Grail of general health and wellness. For the fighting man, this is unfortunate, because not only does the exercise programming that resulted—long, steady, distance running, and body weight calisthenics in endurance-focused high repetitions—have little bearing on the actual physical demands of combat, but also because what is often recognized as general physical fitness and wellness has little bearing on real life.

Genuine fitness—especially combat physical readiness—is not about being able to strap on a pair of Nike shoes and some silk panties, and run 26.2 miles for no apparent reason, while not possessing the physical strength to lift up your own child and carry them to safety! Neither is genuine fitness or physical readiness about developing a "washboard" of "six-pack abs of steel," building "python-like" biceps, or picturesque pectoral muscles that look like porn star titties. General fitness—and combat physical readiness specifically—is about the ability to apply functional athletic attributes to the performance of actual useful tasks. It is not about aesthetics or show. It is about being able to run, sprint, jump, climb, and fight! It's about mobility at the individual tactical level.

Unfortunately, just as in the civilian fitness industry, military PT spent too long focused on feel-good nonsense that was easily quantifiable, but functionally useless for real-world applications. It's easier to control and measure a group of men doing the same exercises, in a square formation, than it is to keep an eye on a platoon-sized element of knuckle-draggers in the gym. If you don't keep an eye on them, the aggressive, testosterone-laden young bulls of combat infantry units might do crazy, dangerous things, like lift heavy shit and get strong!

Fortunately, over the last ten decade and more, both the military and civilian fitness sectors have seen a dramatic turn-around in some circles. The military has begun—forced by ongoing combat operations of the Global War on Terror—to reawaken to the fact that endurance-based exercise alone is as relevant to combat conditioning as teaching a motherfucker how to dance a waltz. Much of this has resulted from the work of "functional fitness" specialists in the civilian fitness industry.

There have been a lot of shortcomings and errors in these developments however, because what is often lauded as "functional" in the civilian fitness world is all too often neither functional nor fitness. While applaud the efforts of the pioneers of this movement, what it turned into, all too often, was simply more feel-good bullshit, focused on absurd novelties that made fat bastards feel better about themselves, building pointless self-esteem, intended to garner continuing payments to a trainer, rather than legitimate self-confidence through effective results and education that allowed fitness independence.

Standing on a balance board, performing one-legged, one-armed dumbbell shoulder presses, with cute little 2.5lb dumbbells, is stupid and completely irrelevant to anyone, regardless of how hard some "certified personal trainer" pound his clipboard trying to convince a fat thirty-something housewife that it relates to lifting a can of fruit onto her kitchen shelves. Lifting a 200-plus pound barbell in a deadlift on the other hand, while often denigrated by those personal trainers as a relic of "old-fashioned," "obsolete," strength culture, is about as functional as it gets. What's more functional than lifting stuff off the floor? Even a paltry 95-pound deadlift would serve that thirty-something year old woman better than the aforementioned—gayer than a bag of dicks—one-legged, one-armed, 2.5lb shoulder presses!

Physical conditioning training is only "functional" if it fulfills one simple performance criteria: Will it help you improve your ability to do what you need to be able to do, for the duration of how long you need to be able to do it, on demand? If not, it's not functional fitness, it's fucking retarded. For combat physical readiness, that means, will it help you shoot, move, and communicate more effectively? Will it help you be able to carry the necessary equipment far enough, fast enough, long enough, to get to the fight, while still retaining the physical ability to prosecute the fight when you have arrived? Will it help condition your ability to jump up, sprint 10-15 meters, dive back to the ground, crawl 5-10 meters to a position of cover, fire weapon effectively, and then repeat the process, over and over, for 200-300 meters? A combat physical readiness conditioning program is only effective if it will develop your ability to complete these tasks more efficiently!

The sad fact is, when we take the time and effort to begin looking at the actual, real-world physical demands that combat puts on the human body, it becomes readily apparent that the three-event APFT, conducted in shirt, shorts, and sneakers is criminally negligent in providing a measure of physical readiness. The fitness conditioning demands of combat require that you possess high absolute and relative strength, a sustained work capacity, and the endurance and stamina to perform the necessary tasks over long days—or weeks—and the durability to allow you to recover and recuperate quickly and efficiently.

General Physical Preparedness

Today, with a better understanding of exercise science and physiology, the physical athletic attributes that we recognize as contributing most to combat readiness include *cardiovascular/respiratory fitness*, strength endurance or *stamina*, absolute and relative *strength*, *power*, *speed*, and coordination, balance, and flexibility which together we recognize as *agility*. Your level of combat readiness—unfortunately—is not defined by the attribute in which you are the most advanced, but by the weakest link. Combat physical conditioning should focus on developing your ability to perform well at any and all tasks encountered, meaning that you have to have a well-balanced level of performance in all of these attributes. The first step must be achieving a high level of general athletic fitness, or general physical preparation (GPP). By focusing your development on all-around tactical athleticism, you can develop

your specific ability to move with your loads over, through, or around whatever obstacles and challenges you encounter on the battlefield. It doesn't matter how big your biceps are, or how fast you can run 26.2 miles; if you can't get yourself and your gear to the fight, under physically challenging conditions, and engage the enemy with well-aimed rifle fire, then you are fundamentally, functionally useless as the teats on a bull.

Irregular warfare requires that an individual become a physical "jack of all trades." While the physical demands of dismounted rural patrolling are as different from the demands of close-quarters battle (CQB) in a small town or large urban area as are the two missions themselves, like the missions, the physical demands have enough in common to provide common factors for developing GPP that will facilitate the conduct of either type of operation.

Inherent to all small-unit combat operations are both hyper-violent, short duration bursts of frenetic activity, and slow, deliberate endurance-focused efforts over longer periods of time. Most operations, regardless of the environment, or specific missions, will possess a combination of both. Engagements on the battlefield may last for hours or days, but the common experience is that the "combat engagement" is actually a short burst of high-speed activity, repeated over and over throughout the longer time period, interspersed with longer, less intense periods of activity. No one can accurately foretell when the actual, immediate fight will commence, regardless of planning expertise, nor can you know with accuracy, how long it will take before you get that lull in the action that provides a brief recovery period. How can you train in preparation for an event of unknown duration and intensity, when modern exercise science emphasizes the importance of "specificity?" Through effective preparation of general, relevant physical readiness in the form of GPP.

Without that solid foundation of GPP, all of your technical tactical skills will suffer. This doesn't mean that you won't be able to complete specific tasks; it simply means that you will only be working at a fraction of your actual potential. The difference between a 4MOA shot group and a 6MOA shot group may not seem like much, until you realize that it represents a very real chance of being the difference between the survival of you or your friends and family. A refined level of GPP can provide—in the heat of the fight—the difference between that 4MOA and 6MOA shot group, or even a 2MOA shot group! Regardless of your current physical abilities, if you can improve any of the foundational athletic attributes of GPP, without a concurrent negative impact on the others, you will be able to move faster with your gear, patrol longer, climb higher, push harder, and—most important of all—recover faster for the next round.

Strength

While each of the athletic attributes of GPP is critical, it has been correctly stated that strength is the most important, because it is the foundation of all the others. Without sufficient strength, none of the other attributes can be applied effectively. With sufficient increases in strength, all of the other attributes will be improved as well.

When we discuss strength, as it relates to combat physical readiness and mobility, there are a couple of critical questions that need to be addressed from the beginning. What type of strength do I need? How strong do I need to be in order to accomplish the tasks that I need to accomplish? How can I develop those types and levels of strength, within the limits of my available resources?

The merits of relative versus absolute strength have been debated since the beginnings of physical conditioning culture, and probably longer than that. Certainly within the culture of fighting men, it has been the subject of vitriolic debate for millenia.

I am personally a very vocal advocate of developing the highest levels of absolute strength that are practicably possible. A lot of supposed experts like to brag about their relative strength, or how strong they are relative to their own body weight. Gymnasts for example, may never lift a barbell in their life, but they possess remarkably frightening levels high relative strength from moving their own body weight through space.

Unfortunately, all too often overlooked is the fact that, in many aspects of the combat paradigm, relative strength is far from a determining factor if success or failure. If you are a 100lb string bean, then even a 2:1 ratio of strength to body weight is going to be pretty irrelevant if you have to carry a 200lb friend or family member to safety, once you factor in your gear and his. If you find yourself fighting a 225lb weightlifter, kitted out in body armor and MP5, even if he only has a paltry 1:1 ratio of relative strength, you're not going to win a hand-to-hand fight. In either case, you will simply not possess adequate absolute strength, and in these contexts, absolute strength is the more important type of strength.

Whether you weigh 100 pounds, 200 pounds, or 225 pounds is irrelevant. What matters is whether or not you can carry the load. Are you strong enough or not? If you are not strong enough, you are useless at that time, for that task. Despite the urban legends of 90lb mothers magically lifting Buick cars off of their crushed children, nature doesn't actually give a shit how strong you are relative to your body weight. Nature only cares if you are strong enough to perform the given task. She's an equal opportunity employer that way.

More absolute strength is almost always better than less. That much is inarguable. Becoming as strong as possible, within certain limits, will have significant positive effects on your ability to perform a variety of combat tasks, and therefore represents a crucial part of your conditioning program. When you come stronger, raising your absolute strength, every other physical attribute that requires a percentage of that strength becomes effectively better: stamina, endurance, power, and agility.

Some people in the past however, have mistaken my advocacy for high levels of absolute strength as being dismissive, or even ignorant, of the importance of high levels of relative strength. Nothing could be further from the truth. If we look at the basic soldier movement skills of old school physical athletic attributes, it becomes readily apparent that relative strength is still critically important. A 300lb powerlifting champion who cans squat 900 pounds can probably hold me down and crush my skull with his bare hands. The question arises however, can he crawl his big ass up a cliff to catch me in the first place? Can he sprint through the timber, vaulting downed trees and boulders as I run away from him?

You have to discover the ideal balance between absolute strength and relative strength for you. Body weight calisthenics however, are NOT that balance. You don't need to just haul yourself around. You also need to be able to haul your equipment, and possibly your buddy's broken, wounded body, all

while running from the bad guys over broken, varied terrain.

You need to be as strong as possible, but within the limits that it improves your performance and keeps you injury free. You don't need to get sucked into the bodybuilding trap of building massive musculature, although you will need to add lean body mass in order to get much stronger. Ignore the bodybuildng fags in the gyms and magazines. You don't need—can't in fact—isolate specific muscles in a quest to "shape" or "sculpt" them. Aesthetic balance of the physique is irrelevant as a goal. The bodybuilder—whether a competitor, or an amateur trying to impress girls at the local night club—isn't concerned about what causes his muscles to get bigger, as long as they do get bigger.

Your performance has to be on athletic performance, rather than aesthetics. Your need for strength is to lift, climb, run, jump, and carry heavy shit. Combat strength means being able to carry your gear indefinitely, being able to carry a wounded partner, or crawl up a wall or cliff. The size of your muscle doesn't matter directly, just whether you are big enough and strong enough to contribute the necessary movement, with the needed amount of force. It is performance-based strength, focused on movement, rather than muscle.

The difference lies in the much greater balance and core stability needed for athletic prowess. Without a strong central core, your performance will suffer and you will be more susceptible to physical injury. Effective, functional combat strength is not about big bench presses and bulging biceps, although neither of those is particular detrimental either. Combat strength through, revolves around a strong core.

Core strength is not about doing lots of sit-ups or—God forbid—fucking crunches. Core strength is about strengthening the entire center of the body, from the isometric support foundation around the lower back and abdomen, to the hips, ass, and legs, and then the rest of the body, because in the human body, athletic power develops from the hips outward. The ability to generate effective strength diminishes very quickly as you move outward from the hips to the extremities.

The key to developing functional combat strength—a balance of absolute and relative strength—is a combination of gymnastic-type strength calisthenics and basic barbell exercises.

When most people think of calisthenics, they think first of the typical endurance-based, high-repetition calisthenics that we all know from high school gym class and the military, such as push-ups, mountain climbers, and flutter kicks. There are however, far more effective body weight exercises that provide a much more intense training experience, providing greater benefit for the combat infantryman. These gymnastic-type strength calisthenics include squat jump variations, pull-ups and chin-ups, dips, and others. Even some of the more familiar calisthenics can be made more intense—and thus more beneficial—through differences in variation, such as performing push-ups with the feet elevated or even handstand push-ups, or by performing them with added weight resistance, such as while wearing your fighting load or a weighted vest.

Weight lifting should focus on basic barbell exercises that utilize multiple-joint, compound movements. These include basic powerlifting exercises like the barbell squat, bench press, and deadlift, as well as more "advanced" Olympic-style weightlifting exercises like cleans and jerks or presses. There is no

benefit—or sense—in using "isolation" exercises such as leg curls and extensions, bicep curls, or other absurd exercises that provide little or no value other than to fill the pages of bodybuilding porn magazines with nonsense workout routines.

Multiple-joint, compound-movement, basic barbell strength exercises allow you to lift greater weights, because they utilize more muscles to lift the weight at the same time. This results in a hormonal response well-known to serious weight lifters, resulting from lifting excessively heavy weights. It may be hard to believe, but apparently lifting heavy weights makes you stronger than lifting light weights! This is "functional" because it's how your body is designed to work, and thus is how it works in the real world, outside of the gym. "Isolation" exercises, unless you are specifically trying to rehabilitate an injured body part, is as gay as naked man, with heavily oiled skin, walking around in European underwear, on a stage in front of other men. Don't be gay—unless you are gay...but that's just really none of my business.

At it's foundation, weight lifting is about getting stronger. The only way to get stronger is to lift progressively heavier items. The best way to accomplish that—within the context of how you will use that strength in the real world—is through the use of multiple-joint, compound-movement, basic barbell exercises, combined with gymnastic-type body weight calisthenics. Balancing your weight lifting with the calisthenics will not only contribute to your absolute strength. It also improves your all-around combat strength, including relative strength. This combination of exercises will improve your core strength and movement patterns, and by forcing you to lift your bodyweight—regardless of how large you are—will ensure that you maintain a minimum of 1:1 relative strength ratio. It's difficult to get "too swole" when you have to perform pull-ups, rope climbs, and handstand push-ups...

Most of us however, are hard-pressed for the time and money to hire personal trainers and strength coaches, or to spend hours in the gym every day. Most of us have families to raise, jobs to attend to, as well as other critical training tasks, ranging from dry-fire drills, combatives training, individual and collective tasks skills, and even other athletic attribute development for the GPP of our conditioning programs. We need to be able to get stronger, get done, and then get on with our life. Fortunately, the use of "abbreviated, basic barbell" routines is a well established method for the average athlete to get bigger and stronger, in a minimum amount of time.

At it's simplest, abbreviated barbell training is simply developing a program that includes a basic hip extension exercise like the squat, an upper body pushing exercise like the bench press, overhead press, or weighted dips, and a pulling exercise, such as the deadlift, cleans, high pulls, or chin-ups/pull-ups. These three basic movements—especially when combined with gymnastic-type strength calisthenics—will develop the vast majority of all necessary strength benefits that you will ever need for combat task performance improvements. This is an adaptation of what legendary strength and conditioning coach Bill Starr, in his classic manual **The Strongest Shall Survival**, terms the "Big Three."

Endurance and the Body's Energy Systems

Endurance, as a general conditioning term, encompasses both the strength endurance referred to as stamina, and cardiovascular/respiratory endurance. Endurance, for our purposes, can most easily be defined as the ability to sustain a given level and type of activity over a period of time. Aerobic cardiovascular/respiratory endurance (***hereafter referred to as "cardio." -JM***), in the form of distance

running, has been the gold standard measure of combat fitness training for at least the last 30 years. This is unfortunate though, because as important as cardio endurance is, there is far more to combat endurance than simply going for a long run in sneakers and shorts.

The basic principle of understanding combat endurance is understanding athletic endurance, through a knowledge of how the energy systems of the body work. These are the aerobic—oxidative glycolytic—and the two anaerobic energy systems—the ATP-CP cycle, and the anaerobic glycolytic. Without becoming embroiled in a detailed discussion of exercise physiology that is ultimately outside of a college lecture hall, aerobic means "with oxygen," while anaerobic means "without oxygen." The key point though is that at the end of the day, it is ATP—Adenosine Tri-Phosphate—that causes all movement through muscle contractions that occur when ATP is consumed. While ATP is present in all muscle tissue, it is quickly deleted within the first few seconds of any effort. While the larger a muscle is, the more ATP it will contain—and thus take longer to deplete—the ATP needs to be replaced before muscle contractions can continue. Your body replaces those ATP stores within the muscles through either the aerobic glycolytic or anaerobic glycolytic systems, in order to keep the muscle moving. The more well-conditioned you are, the more rapidly these systems can produce more replacement ATP.

The aerobic energy system uses the oxygen you consume during respiration as an oxidative agent to break down the sugars in your blood stream in order to provide the fuel for muscle contractions. Aerobic consumption can be of the actual glycogen stores in your blood stream until those are depleted, or the fatty adipose tissues of your body after the glycogen stores become practicably unavailable due to depletion. This energy system provides relatively low levels of energy production for a relatively long sustained period of time. The more conditioning you perform, the more efficient this system can become, meaning the longer the aerobic oxidative system can function on demand. The faster the aerobic system produces energy through oxidation of glycogen and/or fat, the higher the intensity level that you will be able to perform at, while remaining within the aerobic demand zone.

Ultimately, this means that with adequate conditioning, you can perform longer because you are using the sugars in your blood or your fatty tissue, rather than the limited supplies of glycogen already stored in your muscles. You will also be able to perform at a higher level of intensity than an untrained person can perform for shorter periods of time using the anaerobic energy system.

The two anaerobic energy systems can seem slightly more complex. The ATP-CP system (Adenosine Tri-Phosphate—Creatine Phosphate) simply burns the phosphates—ATP—that are already stored in your muscle tissue, as we discussed above. This ATP, regardless of muscle size though, is only available in relatively small amounts, so it can only provide extremely short bursts of high intensity muscle contractions. The value of the ATP-CP system is not the quantity of energy available, but the rapidity of that availability. When you duck and cover against a sucker punch, or sprint for the first position of cover when an unexpected gunshot snaps past your head, it is the ATP-CP system that provides the initial burst of movement that contracts your muscles to keep you moving—and prevent getting yourself fucked up. Depending on the level of your conditioning and the size of the muscles in use, the ATP-CP system can provide a burst of energy as long as 20-30 seconds. For most of us however, even with arduous training, ATP-CP bursts are limited to less than 15 seconds of energy. The larger, more well-conditioned the muscles, the more ATP that will be available, leading to maximum effort and the duration of that effort.

More importantly for combat applications however, is the anaerobic glycolytic energy system that provides energy after the store of ATP within the muscles is depleted. In the same way that the aerobic system metabolizes glycogen sugars from within the blood stream, this system breaks down the glycogen stored within the muscle fibers themselves into the ATP that actually feeds the muscle contractions. Because the newly created ATP doesn't have to be transported anywhere, the energy is produced and available faster than that created through aerobic glycolysis, so it produces higher levels of energy intensity for as long as several minutes, depending on the level of conditioning.

Regardless of the somewhat confusing scientific jargon involved in all of this—and it can get far more confusing, the more you study it—the fact is, people have been successfully improving their overall physical athletic attributes since at least the time of the ancient Greeks with their gymnasiums at the original Olympiad. Of course, in today's multi-million dollar fitness industry, effective conditioning is often made to appear more complex and confusing than it is.

That is nothing more than a disturbing side effect of the profit margin considerations in an industry that has little to do with actual fitness and health benefits for the consumer, but instead, focuses on ridiculous profit margins for the pharmaceutical companies that actually control the so-called fitness industry. If they can keep you confused, you'll keep giving them money to make things simple enough to understand, such as "this supplement will make you lose fat," or "this supplement will give you big muscles." The idea that some "certified personal trainer," who was an underqualified burger flipper at McDonald's on Friday, suddenly became an expert on physical fitness because he attended a two-day weekend certification course in how to sell nutritional supplements to dumb ass housewives, is absurd. The idea that he can provide you useful knowledge in how to condition your body to the demands of your needs is retarded. While a basic level of understanding in how the body works is certainly useful, it's not absolutely critical, as long as you recognize how to apply the knowledge. You can get that knowledge yourself, for far less than you would pay for one hour of a personal trainer's advice, which will mostly focus on which high-dollar, largely useless supplements you should purchase.

The knowledge of how to develop your physical athletic attributes had been known for millenia, even if we did not always know why those methods work. Human physiology is subject to specific biological imperatives, in the form of cause-and-effect. There is nothing new or novel about this. It is not revolutionary or ground-breaking. These biological imperatives have remained the same at least since humanoids began walking upright. The geeks in the white lab coats may believe it is imperative to understand how a glycogen imperative is transported and transformed into energy, but honestly, for thee end user, all that matters is knowing the basics. Keep it stupid simple, it will still work.

It has been fashionable lately to point out that anaerobic activities are far more common that aerobic demands in combat situations. While this is inarguably true, the importance of conditioning the aerobic system cannot be overlooked. Work capacity for the battlefield—endurance—is the ability to function and continue to dominate the situation, for as long as it takes. The man who can perform short, medium, and long duration endurance efforts has a work capacity far superior to the man that only focuses on one area. By not specializing solely in one area of endurance conditioning—such as aerobic distance running, or short-burst, ATP-CP based sprinting or lifting—you can increase your proficiency in all domains of endurance. If you were to focus solely on aerobic conditioning, then your anaerobic

endurance needs, both cardiovascular/respiratory and muscle stamina, will suffer. We know this, eve if just instinctively from looking at the physiques of long-distance runners.

Traditionally, we've also believed that if you only focused on strength and power development—the anaerobic glycolytic energy system—your aerobic conditioning would suffer. Fortunately, numerous recent studies have demonstrated that intense anaerobic conditioning can provide aerobic conditioning benefits as well—within limits—although the reciprocal is not true. Anaerobic conditioning through interval raining allows the development of aerobic benefits without requiring the extended time necessary to actually train the aerobic pathway specifically. This type of general conditioning is optimally suited in all three energy systems, across a wide range of time spans. While it will not provide the pure strength of a competitive level powerlifter, or the endurance of the long-distance runner, it does develop the ability to apply force productively across all energy systems within many time ranges, while the endurance runner and the powerlifter are only able to apply useful force within the limitations of their specialties.

This does not however, mean that the partisan guerrilla can be successful with just a general conditioning program of this nature. Like any athlete, there are task-specific issues that must be addressed. Many of the tasks required of you in the irregular warfare environment will require you to tailor your conditioning program to achieve those specific tasks. Moving long distances, on foot, with heavy loads, is a prime example of this type of movement. While pure strength and stamina development in the short duration strength and conditioning training program will offer benefits for this, as will the aerobic and anaerobic benefits of weighted interval movements while carrying a heavy pack, ultimately, to get better at carrying a heavy pack for long distances, you have to carry a heavy pack for long distances.

I grew up in the military within the 75th Ranger Regiment, prior to the Global War on Terror. That meant we ran—a lot. We ran 6-8 miles per day, five days a week, at a 6:30-7:00 minutes per mile pace. Within my platoon, twice a month we ran a half-marathon distance of 13 miles. This led to the ability to consistently run sub-12:30 minutes on my two-mile APFT run. The problem however, as we've previously discussed, is that distance running in sneakers and shorts, for tactical fitness, is completely irrelevant. While there is absolutely, positively, a need for long, sustained distance conditioning work in your PT programming, strapping on silk panties and Nike shoes, to go jogging down the street for miles and miles, is not the way to go about it, especially if you are strapped for time.

The most effective way to develop combat physical conditioning for the aerobic energy system is through the use of medium-distance conditioning road marches with a rucksack. In short, once a week —at least—strap a heavy fucking pack on and go for a walk, as fast as you can. Increase the distance and the speed progressively, over time. The concern that is most often voiced regarding the application of weekly road marches is the risk that it leads to degenerative breakdowns in the body, and takes time away from other conditioning activities—like distance running, apparently.

Fortunately for us, the US Army has complete numerous studies in the past on the efficiency of weekly road marches and the physical effects of the practice. The conclusions reached in every one of these studies that I have access to, have shown that ruck marching is no more degenerative than distance running, and if properly balanced with an effective strength training program and the use of a well-

engineered pack, it is actually significantly less damaging in the long term.

While the 1992 edition of **FM21-20 Physical Readiness Training** specifically claimed that the benefits and risks of weekly road marches were identical to those conducted only twice a month, it went on to prescribe a weekly program for initial entry soldiers in BCT. The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (JFKSWCS) also currently recommends a conditioning program involving three conditioning road marches per week when preparing for the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) program. Soon after taking command of the 75th Ranger Regiment in 1997, then-Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Stanley McChrystal issued a Regimental Commander's policy that mandated that every Ranger would conduct a ten-mile road march, with a 50-pound rucksack, every week. Additionally, he directed that every Ranger would complete a quarterly 12 mile forced march and a semi-annual 25 mile forced march. This was intended not only to improve specific conditioning for the task, but equally important, served as a "gut check" to improve the already legendary mental toughness of the Rangers.

There is no reason that once a week, the partisan guerrilla in training cannot toss a 50-65 pound rucksack on his back and go for a 5-10 mile walk down the road, moving as fast as he can, while trying to break the 12:00-15:00 minutes per mile pace. It is critical of course, to recognize the distinction between conditioning road marches and tactical foot movements, such as patrolling. Of course, you are not going to conduct a security patrol while strolling along at six miles per hour over broken terrain, with a 65+ pound rucksack on. Claiming that such is the goal is fucking retarded. In fact, even the US Army doctrine that calls for something along the lines of one kilometer (0.65 mile) per hour in tactical scenarios is only realistic in the event that you have the luxury of calling on air support and indirect fire artillery for support when you get compromised by tripping over the enemy.

In addition to the aerobic conditioning and long-term muscle stamina offered by regular conditioning road marches, the use of sprint intervals of various types, both running and while humping a rucksack, will improve not only your anaerobic conditioning, but also the aerobic energy system. There are numerous studies available, such as those performed by Dr. Stephen Seiler and the famous Tabata study, that clearly demonstrat that anaerobic intervals provide tangible, identifiable aerobic energy system benefits in a much more condensed time frame. The current Army PT manual, **TC3-22.20 Army Physical Readiness Training**, which superseded the last edition of **FM21-20**, specifically recommends the use of 400 and 800 meter intervals to improve performance on both the 2-mile and 5-mile APFT runs.

While distance running is largely over-rated for combat physical readiness, medium distance runs of 3-5 miles, when conducted over broken terrain—referred to as "terrain" runs—with intermittent intervals thrown in occasionally, offer many of the energy system adaptive benefits of intervals, while also accustoming you to running and moving on uneven terrain and slopes. This leads to stabilization development in the muscles of the legs, hips, ass, and trunk—the core. There are numerous ancillary benefits to combat movement skill agility development, from jumping over fallen trees, rocks, and ditches, as well as from charging up hills, running along side hills, and decelerating down steep grades. It not only improves energy system usage, but also increases the strength and power of the body's muscular system.

The only potential drawback to terrain runs that must be considered is the possibility of a greater risk of lower extremity injuries such as ankle and knee sprains, during low-light reduced visibility or inclement weather that can reduce visibility of hazards, or even create those hazards.

In addition to ruck marches and interval training runs, there are other conditioning options available. Regardless of what methods you use, the same underlying principles apply to other conditioning methods as to sprint intervals. It's all about relatively short, hard intervals. Bust your ass for a short time, then rest a little, then bust ass a little more, then rest a little, and repeat as needed. Suitable conditioning methods can range from moderately high-repetitions of basic barbell exercises, or other weight-bearing exercises like kettlebell and sandbag lifting exercises, to gymnastic-type strength calisthenics. Heavy bag striking, medicine ball work, farmer's carry exercises, and simply pushing a pick-up truck across a parking lot can all provide the sub-maximal, but high-intensity conditioning efforts sought after.

A tongue-in-cheek way of describing the difference between conditioning and aerobic exercise is that conditioning prepares you for winning a fight, while "cardio" gets you ready to run away—slowly. Conditioning contributes to your strength conditioning by developing explosive power strength in your core musculature and makes you lean and hard. Cardio turns you into Richard-fucking-Simmons.

Agility and Athleticism

Agility has numerous different definitions in the ream of athletic attribute development. For our purposes though, the simplest way to consider agility is the recognition that it represents the necessary coordination of movement required to perform complex physical battlefield tasks without injury. It is applying strength and endurance in a functionally useful manner.

As with most things in life, agility is closely intertwined with strength and endurance development in a symbiotic relationship. Ultimately, the key to development of agility is in the strength and flexibility of the core muscles of the body and the coordination of the limb movements to movements of the core. All of the exercises we will discuss in the section on exercise selection will increase and improve your physical agility. Without intense, wasted effort, it is impossible to effectively isolate one attribute's development from the others.

Principles of Conditioning

Regardless of the specific athletic attribute you are concerned with developing—or which energy system you are focused on in your conditioning—the application of time-tested, proven principles of conditioning will ensure that you are receiving maximum benefit from your efforts.

Specificity

The principle of specificity simply means that the ideal way to develop the physical attributes necessary for the performance of any given activity is to actually perform the activity. In addition to training the athletic attributes of strength, endurance, and agility, this allows us to train the proprioceptive neural functions of that skill, with our brains learning to tell which synapses to fire, when, and in what order. The specificity principle is the ultimate expression of task-specific performance enhancement.

Of course, no serious athlete still applies this as literally as that. The gains made in physical attribute development are too minimal, and take too long to develop that way, to be of much real use. Additionally, the realities of time constraints on life means that it is reasonably safe to say that the most critical limitation on a physical conditioning activity is that it must be accessible. Unless you have the opportunity to get in a firefight every week, there's not much chance of that working well for you. It is far more practical to focus our combat readiness conditioning on the energy systems used, and general strengthening of the body, rather than specific physical tasks executed, using our field training time to master the specific physical tasks. This ends up being easier because we are already fit enough to perform at the levels of strength, endurance, and agility necessary, thanks to our general conditioning program.

Progression

Progression in exercise is what we do to get from wherever we happen to be today, in order to get to where we want to be tomorrow. If you've never walked twenty miles with 65 pounds on your back, then going out tomorrow and trying to accomplish it in ten hours is going to ruin the rest of your week. Trying to do it in five hours is a pretty good way to ensure that you end up permanently crippled, or dead from heart failure. If your last six-mile run was ten years ago, and you go out and try to run six miles today, non-stop, you're going to fuck yourself up, period. Start small and build up gradually.

Think of the Greek legend of Milo of Croesus. Milo started his PT program by going out one day and picking up a new born calf. He then proceeded to repeat this exercise every single day, picking up the same calf. By the time that the calf had grown into a mature animal, Milo could pick up a full-grown bull! That's ridiculous, of course, but for a culture that prized physical athleticism the way the ancient Greeks did, the lesson of using progressively increasing resistance was easily understood.

If you can only squat 95 pounds today, you're not going to squat 300 pounds tomorrow, or even next week. You could do 100 pounds next week though, and 105-110 the week after that. In a month or two, you could be squatting 200 pounds. Within a few months, you'd easily be squatting 300 pounds. Through the use of incremental progression in increasing the weight you are lifting, 300 pounds for the average adult male in reasonably good health is certainly achievable in less than six months. Progression is simply the act of taking a systematic approach to increasing the physical demands that you make on yourself over the span of time.

The general rule of thumb to consider is to increase either the intensity (weight or speed of execution), or the duration of an exercise no more than 10% per week. If you are planning to increase both simultaneously, neither should increase more than 5% in one week. The moral of progression is that it is not about how much you can accomplish today, but that by taking small steps to improve, you'll get where you need to go, no matter how large that leap might seem from the starting line. It doesn't matter how much you're doing today, as long as you are doing more today than you did yesterday, and you do more tomorrow than you do today.

As the old proverb says, "*A journey of one thousand miles begins with the first step.*"

Overload

In physical fitness and exercise physiology, the overload principle has a very specific meaning. For

combat physical readiness however, it actually has an additionally—even more important—relevance that must be considered as well. The first, universal importance of overload is that in order to create the adaptations to the physiological systems of the body, you must provide a stimulus. This is accomplished by demanding performance of your body that it was not able to accomplish the day before. This is what makes progression possible.

Overloading in this context is achieved through small increases in the duration or intensity of the exercise, or a combination of both. Overload for progression is stupid simple. While the "fitness professionals" and "certified personal trainers" will insist that you need to invest in a heart rate monitor —and it is good advice, actually—and keep your heart rate within the "target training heart rate zone" of a certain number of beats per minute (bpm), ultimately all that is important for our purposes is the quantifiable performance measure of *"can I perform the tasks or not?"* and *"am I improving the athletic attributes needed to accomplish my goals and tasks?"* If the answer is yes, keep doing what you're doing. If the answer is no, then you need to lift more weight, or lift it faster, or run faster.

The second aspect of the overload principle, specific to combat physical readiness, is something long recognized by combat veterans, but too often overlooked by novices. This "secret" has been understood by fighting men for millenia. The physiological effects of adrenaline and fear, contrary to popular mythology, do not make things easier under stress. Instead, the impact of those factors increase the physical effects of activity on your body systems far beyond what the exact same activity would demand in peacetime training. Marching ten miles cross-country, with a rucksack on, in combat, is significantly more difficult—physically—than completing the same movement in a peacetime training event, even if all other mitigating factors are exactly the same.

The sad fact is, there are professional "trainers" out there who insist that carrying a heavier rucksack, faster than a tactical situation would allow, for conditioning purposes, is unrealistic and unnecessary. Actually, it's absolutely fucking critical! If someone—anyone—tells you that going slow and easy is okay, because you're not 20 years old anymore, he's coddling you. In my experience, if someone is coddling you, it's because they want to fuck you. The enemy, and nature, do not care if you are 15, 25, or 45. You will either perform or not. Unless you enjoy anal rape, quit acting like a bitch and start performing physically at a level beyond what you expect that you will face in the future. If you do not incorporate this factor of the overload principle into your physical readiness program, you will not be capable of performing at the required levels when you need to.

FM21-20 had a very relevant quote on this subject: *"If we fail to prepare our soldiers for their physically demanding tasks, we are paying lip service to the principle of 'train as you fight.'"*

Regularity

Despite the fact that your personal physician probably interrogates you about your regularity, I'm not interested in your bowel movements. On topic however, you can safely assume that you will lose as much as 10% of any physical performance gains from a conditioning program, for every week that you don't train. If you've gained 100 pounds of strength in your bench press over the last six months, in six weeks of not training, you'll have lost a significant portion of those gains. That number is not graven in stone of course, but it is a pretty solid reference point. You put six months into gaining 100 pounds of strength, and it only takes a month and a half to lose over half of those gains.

It doesn't mean that if you go ten or even twenty weeks without training that you're going to suddenly wake up in a vegetative state. It does mean that if you go even two weeks without training, you're going to have to scale back the intensity and/or duration when you return to training (***personally, I find that if I go more than a two weeks without training, I have to scale back the weight of my major lifts, at least 20-25 pounds to get restarted. —JM***).

Fortunately, the longer you adhere to a schedule, the easier it becomes to transform your conditioning into a habit, rather than some onerous chore. Whether you decide to train five days on/two days off, three days on/one day off, or one day on/one day off, stick to your schedule so that you will continue progressing. Don't confuse regularity with frequency however. While a lot of "professionals" insist that you have to work out 3-5 times per week for advances in any particular attribute, some workouts and training plans may be intense enough that they preclude training that particular attribute more than once a week, at least using the same method. Heavy squats, for example, when you are simultaneously performing sprint intervals, and conditioning workouts that involve leg exercises and jumps, may require at least a week of rest between sessions of heavy squatting.

Recovery

Overload must be followed by recovery if you hope to continue progressing. If you push yourself 110% for every single workout, every single day, in every exercise and modality, you're very quickly going to red line. Hitting the red line in PT, just as when an airplane red lines, results in spectacular crashes. Hard workouts have to be followed by adequate rest periods and nutrition to recuperate properly. Recovery encompasses actual rest, as well as adequate caloric intake of quality nutrition, to induce healing.

Most experts will tell you that a minimum of 8-10 hours of sleep every single night is necessary, coupled with extreme measures to ensure adequate nutrition. Don't buy it. While these are important, don't believe the hype that eating "right" is 90% of the conditioning equation, or even 50%. There are millions of granola-munching, organic-only, fat, lazy fucks in America who lack strength, stamina, and agility. It certainly doesn't hurt to stick to healthy whole foods, grown organically, on the Paleo or Primal diet programs, but there are legions of experienced combat veterans who lived on cheeseburgers and french fries, pizza, soda, and beer, while preparing for combat, and then lived on the shit nutrition of MREs in combat—never sleeping enough—and still managed to be bigger, faster, stronger, and more agile that most personal trainers and fitness professionals in America.

While I strongly recommend the Paleo diet—and practice it—and suggest back-to-back training, the training changes focus and intensity in one manner or another each day. Active rest does work, as long as the sessions are not all 100% balls-to-the-walls. A slow, easy hike of 2-3 miles, even with some interval sprinting interspersed, the day after a heavy squatting session, will actually help you recover faster and more thoroughly than sitting on your ass watching old John Wayne war movies. The most important aspect of recovery, in my experience, is adequate caloric intake.

Putting It All Together

Many of the most important innovations in current contemporary thought regarding general conditioning fitness, both for the civilian fitness industry and for combat physical readiness over the

last decade, have resulted from the efforts of of organizations and individuals like Crossfit, Gym Jones, and Military Athlete, and the respective founders of each, Greg Glassman, Mark Twight, and Rob Shaul. While there are minor differences in the evolutions developed by each of these, mostly focused —in my opinion—on personality and political differences within the industry, although with some differences in task-specific requirements of their respective clientele, most of the innovations lead directly back to Glassman's revolutionary focus on general physical conditioning before worrying about "sport-specific" training. Instead of focusing on separating the development of different attributes into specific splits, all of them incorporate strength and conditioning into one overreaching training plan, combining the development of strength, endurance, and agility. For our purposes, we will focus on Crossfit specifically, because it is well-known and readily accessible, while acknowledging the valuable differences in method provided by Gym Jones and Military Athlete.

The Cult of Crossfit

Crossfit was started by Glassman in 1995, with the stated goal of developing broad, general, inclusive fitness that would best prepare trainees for any physical contingency. Crossfit workouts use high-intensity, functional movements falling into the categories of weight-lifting, gymnastic-type calisthenics, and endurance training, referred to in Crossfit as "metabolic conditioning." In a typical Crossfit workout athletes conduct a warm-up/movement prep, a skill or strength development segment, and then a "Workout of the Day," commonly referred to as a WOD. While the WOD varies daily, they typically include a mixture of functional exercises, conducted at moderate to high intensity, lasting from 5-20 minutes.

Crossfit's WODs are structured around the inclusion of one, two, or all three exercise modalities for any given day's workouts. In every case, each specific modality is represented by a single exercise or element. When a training session includes only a single modality, such as weight training, or an endurance exercise like sprint intervals, that workout focuses on one exercise for the development of that one athletic attribute. For two element workouts—termed "couplets" in Crossfit—the emphasis is on performing two tasks, from separate modalities, and completing the prescribed number of repetitions. For three element workouts, called "triplets," all three modalities are performed in circuit fashion, for a specified amount of time. The goal is to complete as many repetitions as possible, within the allotted time. This is referred to as "time priority," and intended to keep the athlete moving for a specified period of time, rather than on the difficulty of the individual tasks.

Crossfit has become infamous in some athletic training circles over the last decade of it's increasing popularity. Common complaints include the risk and incidence of serious injury, programming issues that counter commonly accepted wisdom, and the "cult" aspect of the movement. While I'm not a Crossfit "Kool-Aid drinker," and in fact, do not possess a Crossfit certification, I've been around enough Crossfitters, performed enough Crossfit WODs, and been involved in the fitness industry as a tactical athlete for long enough, I feel qualified to approach each of these common complaints, at least from the perspective of the combat infantryman and tactical athlete.

1. Injuries. Injuries happen in Crossfit, just like they happen in typical bodybuilding, health club gyms, and just like they occur in any athletic activity. While some spectacular injuries have occurred in Crossfit, the reality is that fewer injuries have occurred over the last decade in Crossfit boxes than have occurred in sandlot, pick-up football games. Perhaps the most

commonly cited potential cause of injuries in Crossfit is the use of time as a performance quantifier, leading naysayers to claim that athletes will sacrifice good exercise form for the sake of a faster finish, leading to the potential for injury.

While this is probably true, it is demonstrably not a flaw of Crossfit programming, but rather of individual ego and bad judgment. I perform workouts for time regularly, and always make it a point of recording the time it takes to complete my conditioning workouts, regardless. What I don't do is sacrifice form for the sake of speed. If the athlete genuinely understands that they are only competing against themselves, and maintain the discipline to focus on good motor patterns before they worry about time constraints, this is ultimately a non-issue.

2. Programming. The biggest complaint about Crossfit programming is tied directly to the potential injury issue. That is the prevalence of using high-repetition Olympic lifting movements when athletes are already exhausted from previous exercises. From a purely Olympic lifting standpoint, and—arguably—from the standpoint of the average soccer mom Crossfitter, this holds some validity.

   The O-lifts are relatively complex, explosive movements that require strength, coordination, and timing to perform properly. Competitive Olympic-style weight lifters perform extremely low-repetition workouts of their lifts for this reason, combined with the fact that they are lifting extremely heavy weights. The fact is, as long as an athlete is performing the high repetitions with less than 50-60% of their one-repetition maximum (1RM=the amount of weight you can perform a single repetition of the exercise lifting), and as long as the athlete focuses on correct execution of the movements, there is no great risk of injury from performing high-repetitions of the O-lifts, anymore than there is from performing high-repetitions of the power lifts of bench press, deadlift, and squat.

   From the tactical athlete standpoint, performing these lifts, especially when already exhausted, offers a great deal of energy system and neurological specificity. The benefit of O-lifts for combative purposes, is the ability to activate the muscles and nervous system explosively, such as grabbing a bad guy and throwing him out a third story window, or jumping to catch the ledge of a rooftop to pull yourself up and over. Unfortunately for the tactical athlete—especially the guerrilla—we don't get to pick our fights only when we're well rested, well-fed, and ready. The ability to activate the explosive athleticism of the O-lifts—while exhausted, such as after moving to an objective on foot, while carrying a heavy ruck, or after fighting our way through a city—can be extremely important when we need to perform, on demand.

3. "It's a cult!" While I will be the first to admit that Crossfitters seem to get to the point where all they want to talk about is Crossfit and what it has done for them physically, I'd argue that this is far from a bad thing. When was the last time a 40-year old soccer mom went apeshit happy about a workout at the local health club gym? The "cult" excitement people get about Crossfit is demonstrative of the fact that, a) it's hell for effective, and b) it keeps people interested and excited about being fit and athletic, because it works.

Much of the complaining I see and hear about Crossfit comes from either a) would-be fitness experts

who find the Crossfit-type conditioning too hard, or who are losing clientele to Crossfit, and b) former affiliate coaches and specialty coaches who have left the Crossfit organization for various reasons. A guy who wants to focus on powerlifting will probably not be happy with Crossfit for long, nor will the aspiring competitive bodybuilder. For the general population though, and for the tactical athlete, Crossfit offers a whole lot of benefit. If all you did for PT was join a local "box" and attend two or thre workouts per week, you would be light-years beyond the vast majority of "preppers" and "militia commandos."

The adoption of the Ranger, Athlete Warrior (RAW) program for conditioning, by the 75th Ranger Regiment, in 2004, while not specifically based on Crossfit, was heavily influenced by the new innovations. A study conducted in 2010 by three officers at the Command and General Staff College (MAJ Jeffrey Payne, MAJ James Upgraft, and MAJ Ryan Wylie), looked at the applicability and practicality of using Crossfit as the basis for US Army PT programming. Their study—reinforcing what was already known by the remarkable number of units and individual service members, across all branches of the military who had already adopted Crossfit—found that Crossfit improved the fitness of every single participant in the study, as measured by both the Crossfit standards and the APFT. Crossfit has been widely accepted by members of the special operations community, as well as across the military generally.

So, What Should I Do?

With the inclusion of some pretty minor modifications for task-specificity issues, Brian Mackenzie's Crossfit Endurance (CFE), predicated on the basic Crossfit 3 days on/1 day off template, with more of a strengh bias aded, offer a solid basis for our conditioning needs.

Each training session is comprised of the following aspects:

1. Warm-Up/Movement Prep: A quick, basic calisthenics circuit, designed to get the muscles warmed up for effort, as well as to lubricate the joints and prepare them for the movement efforts to follow.

2. Strength Training: This is focused on one of the three basic movements: squat, press, and pull. Squat training is focused on a simple linear progression of 5x5 front squats, with every fourth squat workout being a back squat session of 20-rep "breathing squats" (see the section on exercise selection below).

   Pressing movements focus on simple linear progression of either heavy weighted parallel dips or bench presses, with every third press session changing to an overhead press variant. Pull sessions meanwhile, focus on a linear progression of 5x3 cleans, with every third session changing to a heavy deadlift workout.

3. Conditioning WOD: These consist of either modified couplet or triplet WOD, with the modifications including the addition of some sort of abdominal or core-specific exercise to the basic couplet-triplet. CFE's single-mode training sessions are replaced with either running intervals of some variation, rucksack marches—including interval training—or longer duration WOD that are comprised of multiple back-to-back WOD, lasting up to an hour or more, in the

flavor or SEALFIT, or Military Athlete type workouts. These longer sessions, while offering crossover between both anaerobic and aerobic conditioning, more than anything, offer stamina-focused, "gut checks."

4. Cooldown: The final cooldown phase of these workouts focuses on ancillary strength conditioning exercises such as more abdominal/core conditioning, grip strength work, and neck strengthening that are largely specific to combat and tactical athletes, followed by the foam-roller and lacrosse-ball mobility work explained and demonstrated by physical therapist and Crossfit coach Dr. Kelly Starret, of MobilityWOD.com, in his amazing book **Becoming a Supple Leopard**.

The overall training plan, over one month, is illustrated in the following chart:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week One	WOD	short intervals	WOD	OFF	WOD	short intervals	WOD
Week Two	OFF	WOD	long intervals	WOD	OFF	WOD	short intervals
Week Three	WOD	OFF	WOD	tempo/time	WOD	OFF	WOD
Week Four	short intervals	WOD	OFF	WOD	short intervals	WOD	OFF

Strength Training

Your strength training should, for all intents and purposes, be predicated on what is known as a simple "5x5" program. Apparently first pioneered by legendary bodybuilder and strength athlete Reg Park *(one of Arnold Schwarzenegger's mentors, no less!)* The 5x5 programs simply use five sets of five repetitions per exercise.

At it's most basic level, "sets across," you will perform all five working sets at the same weight. Initially, especially in the very beginning, the first several sets of the exercise will not be particularly challenging for you, but the final set or two will be. Once you add five or ten pounds, you may not even be able to hit the last repetitions on the final sets. That's okay. If you get 5/5/4/43, then for the next workout of that particular exercise, you will simply stay at the same weight, repeating it until you achieve 5/5/5/5/5. Then it's time to add a little more weight and start the process over. This is the real-world application of overload and progression.

This is the more time consuming method of using 5x5 programming, since it requires the use of several warm-up sets for each exercise first. The other drawback to the "sets across" method is that, while it builds strength, it also focuses too much effort on stamina and time under the weight. That's why we have conditioning WOD, sprints, and other exercises. All that our strength program should be focused on is strength. This should not be interpreted to mean that I don't recommend the use of sets across. I just believe they should be used later in a program, after a basic level of high strength has been achieved.

The alternative method of 5x5 programming is what I generally recommend for people starting out, or anyone trying to build straight strength, prior to a conditioning or stamina-specific focus in their programming. This method uses the first four sets as the "warm-up" sets for that exercise. This reduces

the actual work volume considerably, which is less severe for the new trainee, while also being far less time-consuming. Since we have so many different areas of physical conditioning that we have to incorporate into our physical readiness conditioning, I am firmly of the belief that this is the best introduction to 5x5 training.

For our purposes, this method can be illustrated by assuming that your working weight on a given exercise—let's say bench press—is 205 pounds. Instead of warming up and then trying to hit five sets of five repetitions at 205 pounds, you will start out with four "warm-up" sets of gradually increasing weight. The first set may be five repetitions at 145 pounds, then a set at 165 pounds, one at 175 pounds, and final "warm-up" set of five repetitions at 185 pounds. Finally, your working set will be a set of five repetitions at 205 pounds. If you miss one or more of the repetition at 205 pounds...say you only achieve three repetitions, then you will continue at 205 pounds for the working set on your next workout of that particular exercise.

Ultimately, the key for any athlete new to 5x5 programming, but especially for novice lifters in particular, is to start with less weight than you are capable of performing the complete sets with. If you just "know" you can do a 5x5 and top out with 225 pounds for five repetitions on your very first workout, then don't start there. Start by topping out 15-20% lower than that for your working set. Allow your body to adapt to the new demands of the training program before you reach your current plateau. By the time you get back to there, you'll blow through your current strength level and keep on going.

Ancillary to this principle however is, progression must be kept slow. Don't do 185 pounds for your working set one day, and the very next day try and jump to 205 pounds. Work through 190 pounds as your working set load, then 195 pounds, and finally 200 pounds, before you jump to 205 pounds. Yes, if you can hit 185 for five repetitions on your working set, you're PROBABLY going to be able to knock out 205 pounds for at least one repetition on your next workout. Unfortunately, you're going to end up stuck there for weeks or even months on end, trying to bust through a plateau that never should have occurred. It doesn't matter what specific numbers you lift today or tomorrow. All that matters is, you do more today than you did yesterday, and you do more tomorrow than you did today, and so on.

While there are innumerable other strength training programs available, the 5x5 programming, whether in the guise of Mark Rippetoe's Starting Strength program, the Stronglifts5x5, or Bill Starr's programming, is the single best introductory method of serious strength training for athleticism as we understand it in the realm of combat physical readiness conditioning. Once you're familiar with the procedures and exercises, and how YOUR body responds to different exercises and stresses, you will be able to modify things and see if you can find a more productive method for YOU.

Exercise Selection and Programming for Strength

As we mentioned previously, your exercise for strength training should be focused on multiple-joint, compound-movement, basic barbell lifts, for a pressing movement, a pulling movement, and a squatting movement. More specifically, we understand that, for the sake of total-body athleticism, we need to strengthen the shoulder-girdle, the back, and the hip hinge.

The shoulder girdle includes the chest, shoulders, and upper arms. Technically, it also includes the upper back, but we include those in the back section, which also includes the lower back. Finally, the

the hip hinge includes the lower back, the core of the body, and the thighs and glutes. None of the three centers of strength is independent of the others, but we can simplify it by breaking it down into the three movements.

The Squat

The hip hinge is the foundation of all athleticism, and the squat is the foundation of all hip strength training. The basic barbell squat—with the barbell held on the top of the upper back muscles—is arguably the single most productive exercise available for building strength throughout the body, and especially the hip hinge. Because of the heavy weights that can be lifted in the squat, it provides extremely hard work, even for short workouts. This hard work provides what some have termed a "mysterious" growth effect in strength and muscle production. The reality is that our body's have evolved to respond to extremely hard work through the production and secretion of testosterone. While heavy squatting will never replicate the testosterone levels of anabolic steroid users, we can "boost" our short-term testosterone production through the use of heavy squatting workouts.

There are, of course, many people who have been led to believe that squatting—especially REAL, full-depth squatting—is inherently bad for your knees and will cause irreparable damage to your lower body. THIS IS BULLSHIT! The fact is, full-depth squatting is nothing but beneficial for the knees. The basic barbell squat—what some people have taken to calling "back" squats—is arguably the single greatest strength exercise you can do. While it IS arguable—the deadlift may be better—it should still provide a staple in your conditioning program.

One alternative that is extremely effective for athletic strength, as opposed to simple strength, is the front squat. You will never be able to lift as much with the front squat as you can with the basic squat. The kinesthetics are different, and will simply not allow it. But...the front squat replicates how we actually use the strength of the hip hinge more specifically, bringing in the whole principle of specificity.

Fundamentally, I recommend using both basic squats and front squats in your strength program. One method is to alternate every squat workout. One workout you will perform the back squat, and the next workout you will perform the front squat. A method that may be more effective for physical readiness is the method I use. This is focusing on the front squat, and using the back squat only every third squat workout. This 2:1 ratio of front squat to basic squat allows you to gain the benefits of extremely heavy back squatting, while also gaining the athletic benefits of the front squat.

The only possible drawback to focusing so much attention on the front squat is that—done properly—it tends to be a very front-of-the-thigh focused exercise. Done to full depth, it WILL strengthen the backs of the thighs and the glutes as well, but it is less fulfilling of this than the basic squat is. For this reason, I advocate finishing your front squat workouts with straight-legged deadlifts or Romanian deadlifts...some exercise that will focus on strengthening the back of the hip hinge equivalent to the strength developed in the front by the front squat.

Proper execution of the squatting exercises is critical. Improper execution WILL cause damage. Proper execution involves lowering yourself until your upper thighs are below parallel to the floor. This means the crease of the hip joint is BELOW the tops of your knees. This allows the glutes and hamstrings to

come into play and help start the weight moving out of the bottom position of the lift.

The Pull
Squatting will help strengthen the back, since it acts as a isometric support, helping to hold the weight in position as you squat. Ultimately however, you HAVE to perform strengthening exercises specific to the back, both lower and upper.

The basic back exercise is the deadlift. This is—quite simply—lifting the weight off the ground until you are standing upright, holding the bar hanging from your arms in front of you. It is also the most "functional" exercise you will ever do with a barbell in your hands. What is more functional than picking up something really fucking heavy off the ground?

Like the squat, the deadlift is a big weight movement. Unlike the squatting exercises however, because you're lifting the weight with your back instead of simply holding it steady, and since the weight is lower to the ground, you can actually lift significantly more on the deadlift than you can on the squat. This increases the hormonal, testosterone production value of the exercise, while also simply allowing you to lift a fuck load more weight. That makes you stronger. While most strength coaches will argue that the squat is the most valuable exercise for strength gains, I would counter that by saying the deadlift is, for all of these reasons. Finally, for athletes with significant leverage disadvantages like long limbs and torsos, and people who have postural deviations they haven't fixed yet, the deadlift is significantly more manageable.

The disadvantage of the deadlift, like the basic squat, is the level of intensity of work necessary to induce the hormonal responses of the lift are extremely systemically challenging. A genuinely tough, as-heavy-as-you-can manage deadlift workout will keep you from doing another deadlift workout of the same intensity for as much as a week or two.

Another exercise that works many of the same muscles, but offers significant athletic benefits as well—benefits not offered by the deadlift—is the clean and power clean. This Olympic-style weightlifting exercise requires explosive hip extension (working the hip hinge), as well as back strength for both the first pull (the deadlift part of the exercise) and the second pull. For developing strength in the upper back—the type of strength needed to grab a dude and throw him through a wall—there is no other exercise that works as well as the clean variations. The explosiveness developed by cleans is, literally, one of the most useful athletic traits—after pure strength—that you will develop from your strength training program.

The disadvantage of the clean variations is that they are technical lifts. It requires relatively precise technique to pull these lifts off properly without injuring yourself. DO NOT LET THIS DISSUADE YOU!!! The value of cleans to a combat physical readiness conditioning program are immeasurable, and shouldn't be sacrificed because of a little bit of difficulty in learning a specific lifting exercise. Get the coaching to learn the technique, and incorporate these into your lifting program. As legendary strength coach Bill Starr wrote in **The Strongest Shall Survive**, if you can only fit one weight lifting exercise into your conditioning program, it should be the clean.

Like the squatting variations, I practice—and thus recommend—alternating between the deadlifts and

the clean variations in a lifting program. Because of the systemic stress of heavy deadlifting, and because I'm as focused on athletic strength versus raw, slow-motion strength, I use the same 2:1 ratio of cleans to deadlifts as I use with front squats to basic squats.

For those who simply cannot find decent coaching to learn the proper technique, or who simply cannot be bothered to get the coaching, high pulls are a distant second-choice to power cleans for developing the same types of strength and explosiveness. These are executed in almost exactly the same manner as the power clean, but without bothering to make the catch at the top. The first pull, and the second pull, combined with the violent hip extension, remains the same. It's just the catch that is left out.

The Press

Like the squatting movements and the pulls, there are two basic versions of pressing exercises that offer benefit for our programs: one is more athleticism-focused, and one is more pure strength-focused. Those two lifts are the overhead press variations and the bench press.

The presses, unlike the other two movement patterns however, reverse the systemic challenges. The strength-focused bench press is not as systemically challenging as the more athletic-focused overhead press variations. For this reason, while the benefits of the overhead press variations significantly outweigh those of the bench press—from an athleticism standpoint—it makes more sense to focus on the pure strength bias of the bench press more often than the overhead presses. This allows us to incorporate the strength developed by the bench press into the overall athletic benefits of the overhead press variations.

The overhead press variations include—basically—the standard overhead press, the military press, the push-press, and the jerk from Olympic weightlifting. Each has advantages and disadvantages for our purposes. The standard overhead press is simply executed by pushing the weight overhead, from a normal athletic stance, feet approximately shoulder-width apart. The military press on the other hand, is the exact same exercise, except the athlete should be standing at the position of attention, with his heels together. This focuses much more stabilization demand on the core region of the body through the exercise, than the more stable, wider stance standard overhead press.

The push-press and jerk are closely related, but are actually different. The push-press, to most weight lifting athletes who learned their methods in the 1980s and 1990s, is often seen as nothing more than a "cheating" overhead press. This is decidedly not true, although it WILL allow you to push more weight over your head than a standard or military overhead press will. The advantage that makes the push-press valuable is the triple extension of the ankles, knees, and hips used to drive the weight overhead. This is the same triple extension that you will use to shove something when you actually use your pressing strength. This concept will make sense to anyone who has ever studied a fighting art. When we talk about "punching from the ground," we are using the triple extension to drive our body weight behind the punch. The triple extension, in the push-press however, doesn't drive the weight all the way over your head to lock-out. It gets the loaded bar moving, and your shoulders and arms—and to a lesser extent, your chest—press it the final short distance to lock-out.

The advantages to this are two-fold from our perspective. Number one, we're training the body's nervous system to incorporate the triple extension into athletic pressing efforts. Number two, because

our hips and legs are starting the movement of the bar, we can actually move more weight through the press with our arms and shoulders. This gives us a greater hormonal response than a "stricter" lift, with less weight.

The jerk, an Olympic lift—part of the clean-and-jerk—uses the same triple extension to get the bar moving, and it uses the press of the shoulders and arms. Unlike the push-press though, much of the load if MOVING the weight is actually pulled away from the arms and shoulders. This is because during the upward movement of the bar, following the triple extension, the lifter actually drops into a partial or complete squat, to catch the bar at full extension overhead. The jerk is finished when the athlete rises out of this squatting position. This portion of the exercise is referred to as an "overhead squat." The jerk may also be completed in what we refer to as a "split jerk." As the lifter ducks under the bar, he jumps his feet into a split-stance or "lunge" stance, and then steps back into his standard position.

The stationary overhead presses do have a valuable place in your lifting repertoire as your skills and conditioning advance. The problem with focusing on them for the strength-focused portion of your physical readiness conditioning program is that you will—generally—lift 10-20% less on your overhead presses than you will on your bench press, and there's none of the triple extension development benefits of the push-press or the jerks. The jerk of course, is even more significantly technical than the clean variations—and since the bar will be over your head, the potential for serious, even life-ending injury is exponentially greater than with the cleans. I use, and recommend the push-press as an adjunct to the bench press for most tactical athlete lifters.

Putting Together a 5x5 Program

There are two basic 5x5 beginner lifting programs currently popular in the strength training world. One is Mark Rippetoe's Starting Strength program, and the other is based on Rippetoe's program, but is focused more on self-taught lifters' abilities. Rippetoe's program will have you doing squats to begin every workout, followed by alternating bench presses and overhead presses, in turn followed by alternating deadlifts and power cleans.

The program uses three lifting sessions per week, with a day off between every workout, and two days off on weekends. Lifters perform three exercises per workout, for sets of 5x5, with the exception of deadlifts, which involve working up to one working set of five repetitions, and cleans, which involve working up to five sets of three repetitions. Rippetoe—correctly in my opinion, not that he needs my approval—believes that the clean is a technically challenging enough lift that near-maximal lifting beyond three repetitions per set leads to a greater risk of injury. I concur.

The program ends up looking something like this:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week One	Squats 5x5 Bench Press 5x5 Deadlift 1x5	Off	Squats 5x5 Push-Press 5x5 Cleans 5x3	Off	Squats 5x5 Bench Press 5x5 Deadlift 1x5	Off	Off
Week Two	Squats 5x5 Push-Press 5x5 Cleans 5x3	Off	Squats 5x5 Bench Press 5x5 Deadlift 1x5	Off	Squats 5x5 Push-Press 5x5 Cleans 5x3	Off	Off

This is—without a doubt, and completely inarguably—a solid program for novice strength trainers to begin developing pure strength with some athleticism. The problem—if it can be called a problem—with Rippetoes' Starting Strength program, is that it is a STRENGTH program. Rippetoe is not trying to develop tactical athletes. He is trying to develop a basic level of strength prior to beginning to incorporate conditioning and other sport-specific training into the equation. There's nothing wrong with that, except we don't have the luxury of pure, old-school periodization. We don't know when we're going to need to call on our athleticism and strength, we need to be as peaked as we can be at any given time.

The Stronglifts 5x5 program is almost identical to Rippetoe's with the exception of using bent-over barbell rows in lieu of cleans, and an overhead press instead of push-press. While it, like Rippetoe's program, is a good introductory program for building basic strength, it is significantly inferior to Rippetoe's program, specifically because it negates the athletic benefit of learning the triple extension of the cleans. It really is focused more on bodybuilding for the average guy than even Rippetoe's program.

Well, Shit! Now what, John?

We need the benefits of a basic 5x5 program, but we also need to retain the time and energy to perform endurance and stamina-specific conditioning. Pure strength is critical, and the greater your pure strength, the greater your stamina will be, within reasonable limits, but we need to SPECIFICALLY train those attributes. We use High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) like Crossfit WODs to accomplish that. Unfortunately, pulling off a decent conditioning WOD, AFTER doing a full, three-exercise 5x5 workout is both time-consuming as well as energy draining. It WILL lead to overtraining.

The preferred method, to avoid this, is to perform ONE exercise (in some cases, two, as we will see), for a 5x5 workout, and THEN perform our conditioning WOD. Because of the focus on different movements, we can even get away with pulling off strength workouts on back-to-back days, as long as we incorporate rest days into the equation as well. I prefer Crossfit's 3-on/1-off routine, but recognize that for guys who cannot workout on Sunday for religious reasons, a 5-on, 2-off method, or even a 1-on/1-off routine, might work better. These would look like this:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week One	Squats 5x5 WOD	Pulls 5x5 WOD	Press 5x5 WOD	Off	Squats 5x5 WOD	Pulls 5x5 WOD	Press 5x5 WOD
Week Two	Off	Squats 5x5 WOD	Press 5x5 WOD	Pulls 5x5 WOD	Off	Squats 5x5 WOD	Pulls 5x5 WOD

3 On/1 Off Routine

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week One	Squats 5x5 WOD	Pulls 5x5 WOD	Press 5x5 WOD	Off WOD	Squats 5x5 WOD	Off	Off
Week Two	Pulls 5x5 WOD	Press 5x5 WOD	Squats 5x5 WOD	Off WOD	Pulls 5x5 WOD	Off	Off

5 On/2 Off Routine

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week One	Squats 5x5 WOD	Off	Pulls 5x5 WOD	Off	Press 5x5 WOD	Off	Off
Week Two	Squats 5x5 WOD	Off	Pulls 5x5 WOD	Off	Press 5x5 WOD	Off	Off

1 On/1 Off

My personal preference, since I don't have any religious restrictions about training on Sundays, is the 3-On/1-Off routine, although I do often find myself moving between the different variations, based on scheduling demands outside of the gym. Find the one that will work with your schedules, and stick to it as much as possible. If you miss a workout—whether because you're feeling lazy that day, or because you have a scheduling conflict—don't beat yourself up over it. Certainly don't give in to the temptation to just quit working out. Just pick up the day after and keep on trucking. You WILL get stronger and more fit.

A third variation, which is what is being used in my garage gym for our tribe at the moment, is based on Mark Rippetoe's method when his Wichita Falls Athletic Club was Crossfit Wichita Falls. It involves strength training and conditioning four days a week. Wednesdays and Saturdays become active rest days. For those with religious considerations against training on Sundays, this may be the most efficient use of your training time. The program looks like this:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Training Week	Front Squat Press Chin-Ups/Pull-Ups	Cleans	Active Rest/ Skills Development	Front Squat Press Chin-Ups/Pull-Ups	Deadlift	Active Rest/ Skills Development	OFF

In our gym, skills development on Wednesdays is a rock climbing wall day. We'll spend a hour or so working the climbing wall, since we live in an alpine area and the ability to climb may be imperative. Another variation we use is alternating Friday's deadlift with cleans each week. Saturday skills development involves a trip to the pistol or rifle range to run basic training drills.

The other advantage to this program is the ability to use weekends for training drill weekends, getting the whole group together for training in the field or to conduct classes. For most people, working as part of a group, my belief is this is the ideal training format most of the year.

Conditioning

A "WOD" is a Crossfit term—that has been pretty much coopted into the general fitness and certainly the athletic conditioning—vernacular. It stands for "Workout Of the Day," and is just a term used to describe a bout of interval conditioning. As we discussed in the section on Crossfit, these may be couplets or triplets. Outside of Crossfit, the WOD may be anything. I am known for presenting WODs

that incorporate four or five different exercises into a circuit. Other WODs may simply be a series of sprint intervals, a longer run or conditioning forced march, or even a skills development session to build your ability to perform a certain gymnastics movement for incorporation into later WODs.

Above, we outlined several types of conditioning workouts that we would use in our monthly training plan. These included short interval sprints, long interval sprints, tempo/time trials, and "WODs." While the sprints and tempo/time trials are—technically—WODs, I do this to simplify the understanding. For our purposes, when I refer to WODs, I am only referring to circuit training.

Below, I have listed example WODs, short interval sprint workouts, long interval workouts, and tempo/time trial workouts. Incorporating these, with the 5x5 strength programming, into the cycle illustrated previously, will provide you a month-to-month program for overall combat physical readiness conditioning. As you develop familiarity with the WODs and their intensity levels, you will be able to put together workouts of your own, using various exercises, that will provide the same benefits, for your personal weak areas. This is the goal of training ultimately—for you to develop the ability to create your own workouts, thus perpetuating your ability to continue your development.

Conditioning WODs

I am a believer—as has been made abundantly obvious—that strength is the ultimate determining factor in all other aspects of combat physical readiness. As such, I believe your conditioning WOD should focus on moving heavy weights to build high-power stamina. It's not enough to just be strong enough to throw a motherfucker through the wall. Nor is it enough to be able to fight long enough to fight ten guys. The ideal is to be able to throw a motherfucker through the wall, then keep throwing motherfuckers through the wall until all ten guys are outside of the room. While strength-based gymnastics drills as part of WODs are critical, the conditioning WODs should focus on building heavy stamina. As such, you won't see very many WODs below that prescribe 135 pound exercises. Most will start at 165-185 pounds, and move up from there. If you cannot lift heavy enough to pull these off as prescribed, then obviously you will need to scale the weight to what you CAN move. Your goal then should be to complete the WOD, and the next time, add weight, rather than worrying solely about the time/speed equation. Once you can complete the WOD at the prescribed weight, THEN you can focus on performing them faster to increase the intensity.

- Complete 5-10 rounds for time:
  5x 185# front squats
  10x toes-over-bars (preferably on the rings)
  15x 70# kettlebell swings
- Complete all rounds for time: 10/9/8/7/6/5/4/3/2/1
  225# barbell deadlift
  parallel bar dips
  burpees
  toes-over-bars (preferably on the rings)
- Complete all rounds for time: 10/9/8/7/6/5/4/3/2/1
  50# sandbag step-ups
  50# sandbag Turkish Get-Ups

70# kettlebell swings

- Complete As Many Rounds As Possible (AMRAP) in 10 minutes:
  5x chin-ups/pull-ups
  10x parallel bar dips
  15x 50# sandbag sit-ups
- Complete all rounds for time: 21/15/9
  225# barbell deadlift
  parallel bar dips
  hanging straight leg raises
- Complete all rounds for time: 21/15/9
  100# sandbag thrusters
  70# kettlebell swings
  toes-over-bars (preferably on the rings)
- Complete all exercises, time is recorded for individual iterations:
  4x 300M shuttle run
  rest 3 minutes
  every minute on the minute, 50M sprint
- Complete all exercises, time is recorded for individual iterations:
  6x 400M run
  2 minute rest interval

Ultimately, once you've developed a series of exercises that you can perform adequately well, you can build your own WODs quite easily. What I like to see is a few key WODs that are used for evaluation purposes that a crew will return to once a month or so, to measure improvements. Otherwise, you don't have any way to determine if you are actually getting value out of your PT program or not. Otherwise, simply using one of the training formats available, and combing it with 2-4 different exercises, can be done randomly, at the beginning of the day/workout. The key to long term success is, if you are performing heavy squats or deadlifts, etc, do NOT program the exact same exercise into your WOD for that day.

All Rounds For Time (RFT): These WODs are performed by cycling through the listed exercises, for the listed number of repetitions, as quickly as possible. Take rests no more than necessary, and for as little time as possible. As long as all weights are used as prescribed, the goal is to push through the workout as quickly as possible. This builds the ability to hit any activity that requires strength and speed and stamina, like a fight, with more intensity than the opponent is capable of bringing.

Every Minute On the Minute (EMOM): For the prescribed number of minutes, you will perform the listed exercises as quickly as possible, at the start of each minute. This means, the faster you perform the exercises, the longer your rest interval will be. This actually ends up being an awesome conditioning format for small-unit tactics, because it builds the ability to drop your heart rate and recover energy quicker, which is what is needed for individual movement techniques under fire.

As Many Rounds As Possible (AMRAP): The idea of this is to complete more rounds in the allotted time than you did the last time you performed that WOD. This builds the ability to continue moving

throughout a set period of time, as well as the ability to increase the intensity of effort that you can bring for that time duration.

Concerns and Considerations
The biggest concern you should have for conditioning WODs, in light of the need to prepare for small-unit, irregular warfare requirements, is the temptation to just use gym-based indoor WODs. You HAVE to incorporate sprint drills into your conditioning. You also need to incorporate longer run intervals up to 800-1600 meters, and occasional rucksack-loaded conditioning work in the form of road-marching. Don't fall for the convenience of just doing gym-based exercise.

The Mountain Guerrilla Road March Program
Carrying a heavy load, over long distances, is a basic skill requirement for dismounted infantry operations, anywhere in the world, and throughout history. In a grid-down future, with fuel assets extremely limited and valuable—and for bug-outs and evasion situations where staying off the roads will be a necessity as well—the ability to move, carrying your gear on your back, will be as basic a survival requirement as anything.

Learning to carry a ruck is really pretty simple. Put the ruck on and start walking. Once you can carry a given weight a given distance, then you can start improving the speed with which you can carry it for that distance. My recommendation for ruck training progression is to start with a weight you can manage on your back, even if with difficulty. For most grown men in reasonable health and condition, a 35-45# pack should be manageable for moderate distances. If you need to, you could drop it to 25 pounds, but I'd suggest seeing your gynecologist about receiving testosterone injections. Think about it: your FIGHTING load alone will generally weigh 25-35# if you're smart enough to wear body armor. Really, the ability to carry a minimum of 65-75# is a necessity for the irregular fighter.

Start with your 35-45# load, and walk two miles. When you can do that at a 15 minute/mile pace or faster, add 10 pounds to your ruck. Keep these progressions up until you are carrying at least a 65# ruckack for two miles in 30 minutes or less. At that point, start adding distance to your forced marches to the tune of 1-2 miles per progression. When you reach the point that you can perform a 6-8 mile road march with 65# or more on your back, at a 15 minute/mile pace, then you should start focusing on improving your speed. This can be done through the use of interval "runs" with your ruck. If you know that your current road march pace is a 15-minute mile, divide that by eight (1.875 which equals 108 seconds). Subtract 5-10 seconds from that, and start trying to achieve a 400 meter distance in that time frame. Thus, you're trying to achieve a 400 meter distance, with your ruck on, in around 95-100 seconds. If you can hit 4-6 repetitions of 400 meter ruck runs in 90-100 seconds, with around two minute rest intervals in between, the next time you run a two-three mile time trial with your rucksack on, you WILL see a minor improvement in your speed.

Once you can accomplish the 6x400 meter distance at the faster pace, you can stretch the distance out to 800 meters. Divide your normal pace (15 minutes in this example) by 4, for a time of 3.75 minutes, or 225 seconds. Subtract 10-20 seconds from that, and you have your 800 meter goal pace. When you can hit 4-6x 800 meters in 200-215 seconds, your next time trial will show a marked increase in average pace. Even if your time trial over 6-8 miles is a 12 minute/mile, these same intervals will allow you to improve your speed.

Ultimately, no, you will probably never hit a 15-minute mile during an actual real-world tactical movement. That's a given. You certainly won't be hitting a 12- or 10-minute mile in the real world. What you're trying to do by hitting these speeds in your CONDITIONING forced marches is exercising the principle of overload into your training. By pushing yourself to carry a heavy load extremely fast, then carrying even a slightly lighter load at a much slower pace becomes much less physically and mentally demanding. This will allow you—when conducting security patrols or evasion movements—to focus on the important elements of security and awareness, rather than focusing on how much your load sucks to carry.

Conclusions

It has been my experience that the vast majority of people who are "preppers" or survivalists enjoy warehousing gear and equipment and supplies. They enjoy participating in handicrafts and learning to cook with food storage. They enjoy going to the range and shooting their guns. Yet, they will devise any number of excuses to do something physically hard like PT. This is very ironic, since PT and health will offer you more value for long-term survival—whether the grid collapses or not—than any other single thing you can do.

Further advantages include the fact that it reduces the risk of "diseases of civilization" like diabetes and heart disease, makes you stronger—more useful—in your daily life, and will make you more physically attractive. I mean really? What's the problem with performing a preparedness activity that will actually get you laid more often?

If you are old...or crippled...or fat...or just lazy...that's okay. No one expects you to jump out and perform PT at the level I can perform it, or the level of anyone in your gym or community. We just expect you to perform it. Ultimately, it doesn't matter what you do. As long as you do more today than you did yesterday, and that you do more tomorrow than you do today, you WILL improve. If you keep improving, week-after-week and month-after-month, the rule of progression means that soon, you will be able to perform at a physical level higher than the guys who are doing nothing. That makes YOU the winner when you have to fight that guy.

Suggested Further Reading

Power Speed Endurance by Brian Mackenzie
The Strongest Shall Survive by Bill Starr
Starting Strength by Mark Rippetoe
Beyond Brawn by Stuart McRoberts

Chapter Three
THE SHO KOSUGI SHIT

"If you're in a hand-to-hand fight...your tactics suck." --military maxim

Combatives is a term used to describe systems of fighting at contact distances with close-range weapons like knives, clubs, and unarmed combat techniques. While it was historically left out of training curricula in modern times, due to time constraints, combatives training should be considered an essential part of guerrilla warfare—survival training for your tribe. While we often argue over the merits of the different available training systems, I don't know of any serious, experienced fighting man who believes that realistic, effective combatives training is a waste of time. This training is of interest to anyone naturally inclined to a desire to know how to fight.

Combatives are offensive and defensive maneuvers adapted from traditional fighting arts and combat sports like boxing, wrestling, judo, jujitsu, and rough-and-tumble gutter-fighting methods. Combatives training is an invaluable addition to any physical readiness conditioning program since, in addition to practical skill, it also builds strength, endurance, and agility. By developing legitimate, realistic self-reliance and confidence in your own combat survivability, combatives training promotes aggressiveness, and physical and moral courage. This courage will provide you the genuine ability to react violently—with maximum, immediately-focused effort—to close with and kill the enemy, while allowing you to restrict your violence to the minimum amount of force needed to control a situation.

Combatives training provides an opportunity to develop and practice self-control, focus, and cool, decisive thinking under situations of shock, violence, and physical punishment and stress, so that no matter what else happens—weapons failures, lack of ammunition, being overrun by superior numbers, or even the need to leverage stealth for survival or victory—a man with confidence in his combatives training understands that as long as he lives, he still possesses the ability to fight and win.

The modern battlefield is a 360-degree environment where fighters will see themselves confronted with

situations of combatants being closely intertwined with non-combatants. On the battlefield—wherever that battlefield may be—in the event that the guerrilla cannot employ his firearm, or his firearms malfunctions, combatives training allows the fighter to use a knife, improvised weapons, or his bare hands, to subdue or kill an aggressor. Regardless of their position within a community or group, anyone interested in being able to survive should be able to defend themselves without relying on a firearm—or a weapon of any kind.

What Works...Works

Combatives training methods are a perennial subject of heated conversation and argument anywhere fighting men gather—regardless of experience. Unfortunately, too often, even amongst experienced combatants, the focus is wrongly placed on discussions of technique versus technique, along the lines of "*My kung-fu is better than your kung-fu!*" While an understanding of the technical expression of the underlying principles of combatives is important, a realistic understanding of the nature of real violence in interpersonal conflict quickly leads one to realize that—as Steinbeck wrote—the mind is the ultimate weapon. Raw aggressiveness and a violent willingness to close with the enemy, hitting with hate, trumps most technical concerns.

While I've studied judo, western boxing, Filipino martial arts, and Brazilian jujitsu in the form of the Ranger Combatives that became the Modern Army Combatives Program (MACP), in my not inconsiderable experience as both a participant and a spectator, real fights occur in one of three ways:

- In the first case, neither participant is particularly interested in being there and has no real emotional investment in the altercation. In these cases, they tend to stand as far apart as possible, and lob ineffectual "punches" at each other. This I easily recognized by what I call "kangaroo boxing," we all witnessed in schoolyard scuffles as kids.

  In this type of fight—if indeed, this can even really be considered a fight—it really doesn't matter if either party actually knows what he is doing. The victor will be the guy who gets lucky and actually manages to land a relatively solid blow—despite his own best efforts otherwise. All the little girls will proclaim him the victor and his ego will shoot up ten points. This victory must however, be recognized as a result of luck more than of any legitimate skill.

- In the second case, while one party is legitimately dedicated to causing serious damage to his opponent, the other guy doesn't really know if he wants to be there or not. Like the first example, it doesn't matter if either guy really knows how to fight or not. The guy who has already made up his mind to win will do so by blowing right through the weak-spirited pussy who is still trying to make up his mind, regardless of either party's skill or technical expertise.

  An example of this can be seen in the legends of the prodigal "street fighter" who beats the ever-loving-shit out of the 100th degree black belt in "who-flung-poo" kung-fu. It is not because the street-raised thug with a sixth-grade reading level somehow has access to some "secret gutter fighting" techniques that the dude in Asian bedclothes doesn't. It's simply that the street fighter has learned that hyperaggressive violence wins, and has already made up his mind that he IS going to win, even if that means crippling, maiming, or killing the sissy in silk pajamas.

Regardless of his morality, he has moral courage, because he's already made up his mind to do what he needs to do.

- The third type of fight is really the only one that requires training to survive, let alone win. Unfortunately, it is also the one most likely to result in death if either party lacks adequate technical ability. This type of encounter occurs when both parties are fully vested in being there —and have every intention of killing or permanently disabling the opponent. This type of fight resembles one thing: two freight trains in a head-on collision.

  There is nothing pretty, acrobatic, or cinematic about it. There's no back-and-forth sparring bullshit. In this type of fight, only three things really matter: the will to kill, physical strength and stamina, and—finally—technical skill. Are you willing to slam another person headfirst through a brick wall? Are you strong enough to throw him through a brick wall? Do you know how to utilize leverage and momentum to throw him through that brick wall? These fights are loud, fast, and brutally efficient. The person who can hit harder, faster, and cause the most fastest, will win.

It's no secret to anyone familiar with my writing that I am a strongly biased advocate of being willing to close with—and run over—the enemy. I am an aggressive, Type-A alpha male. As such, I am an advocate of any combatives training that builds aggressiveness, the will to kill, and the intestinal fortitude required to risk pain or death in order to bring the fight to the enemy. Boxing, wrestling, judo, Brazilian jujitsu, karate, taekwondo, ninjutsu, or whatever else you feel like will work for you; as long as it is a legitimately, pressure-tested system, will do the job, as long as you will do the job.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of martial arts and combatives systems—at least as they are taught in this country—are not very martial at all. From back alley brawls and bar fights, to hand-to-hand encounters on the battlefield, I've NEVER witnessed or experienced, the kind of back-and-forth bullshit that you see in most "fighting" schools. Combat is not a contact sport. Kissing is a contact sport. Combat is about collisions. It's not pretty, and there is certainly little or no finesse involved. Any attempts to make it so are deceitful at best—and flat-out fraudulent at worst.

World War Two Combatives Systems

There are some people—including some very seasoned Special Forces veteran NCO—who advocate for the old school World War Two combatives systems as taught by William Fairbairn, Eric Sykes, Rex Applegate, and others. They claim that grappling-centric, combat sports-based systems like judo or MACP are useless.

The problem with the WW2 systems is that, while those methods were perfect for teaching a bunch of farm kids from Corn Cob, Indiana, to have the confidence and courage to close with and kill Japs and Nazis—with nothing but a Sykes-Fairbairn Commando stilletto—they were not the ultimate answer to the combatives question, even according to the men who developed them. While all of the pioneers that developed those systems selected the simplest effective techniques fom their combat sports backgrounds for the development of their respective systems, what the modern cheerleaders seem to overlook is the part in the manuals written by the founders—**Get Tough!** By Fairbairn and **Kill or Get Killed** by Applegate are the two more widely known examples—where they specifically mention that

combat sports backgrounds are superior to just learning their systems, but due to time constraints, the systems they taught were what they considered the best compromise. The distillation of techniques that those men taught were specifically developed for teaching a brief introduction to a large mob of novices in a very brief time.

When the time comes that you have to start teaching brand-new, sofa-surfing slouches, forced into the role of guerrillas, how to fight—by all means, use the WW2 methods to get them introduced to the principles. They are certainly better than nothing. In the meantime however, don't fool yourself into believing that the big, muscled-up, tattooed guy who likes to beat the shit out of other big, muscled-up, tattooed guys for entertainment isn't intimately familiar with all of the eye gouges, biting, and finger-breaking "dirty tricks" that you can come up with.

Any junior high wrestler with three months of experience on the mats has been poked in the eyes, fish-hooked, and thumped in the dick enough to know that none of those experiences will keep him from continuing to fight. Yes, any of those techniques suck to be on the receiving end of, but none of them hurts near as much as getting cracked in the grape by a 230-pound, pissed-off Samoan who is embarrassed and angry because you've managed to successfully hit him with a double-leg takedown four times in a row—despite a forty pound weight difference. Seriously—all of the dirty tricks are cool. They're like the flash-bang grenades of the combatives world. They'll work for about a second, which is just long enough for you to accomplish something more substantial, in order to cause real damage to the guy, like slamming a cinder block into his skull. This still requires you to know how to set up the dirty fighting tricks adequately, as well as to possess enough technical skill to land a powerful blow with the cinder block. Using "gutter-fighting" tricks as your fail-safe, go-to techniques for stopping someone who is beating the shit out of however...that's just a piss-poor idea.

If you've never hit a dude full-force and witnessed the effects that your coach/instructor/guru/sifu claims it will have, then you're just playing patty-cake. If your only combative encounters will be against pre-school girls—or Richard Simmons Wanna-Bes—then patty-cake will probably be sufficient. Against a juiced-up, Type-A, alpha male personality, kitted up in Kevlar helmet, body armor, and MP5? You'd better bring your fucking A-game—and be absolutely certain that your methods will work the way you think they will work.

That—ultimately—is the problem with the WW2 combatives methods. There is just no way to safely pressure test them in training. Shoving your thumb into a dude's eye might—or might not—put him out of the fight, but it will damned sure keep him from being willing to continue training with you in the future. A grappling-centric system though—from judo to wrestling—allows you to practice techniques against an actual living, breathing, moving, and resisting opponent. It's all very empirical: either something works, or it doesn't work. Either you can control the guy and choke his ass out, or you cannot.

Training in realistic, effective combatives methods is going to hurt. You'll get sweaty, slammed around and to the ground, and choked or tapped out by training partners. If you can't handle getting choked out, tapped out, or slammed headfirst to the ground in training—when your partner will give you time to recover—how do you expect to handle getting the shit beat out of you in a real fight—when the enemy WON'T give you time to recover—and still bring the fight to the enemy?

Modern Army Combatives Program

In 1995, the commander of the 2d Ranger Battalion, then-Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Stanley McChrystal, ordered a resurrection of combatives training within his battalion. There was a feeling amongst the Rangers within the battalion and the Regiment however—throughout the Army, in fact—that the techniques in the then-current **FM 21-150 Combatives**, would not work, and were a waste of valuable training time. McChrystal wanted to overcome that, and stood up a committee of NCOs, spearheaded by SSG Matt Larsen, to develop a program that was more effective.

To do that, Larsen's committee first examined successful programs from around the world, and discovered that the one common denominator among those countries with reputedly successful combatives programs was the presence of an indigenous martial arts culture, such as Korean taekwondo, Japanese judo, and Thai boxing. The one notable exception to this was Russian. The Russian military had taken an essentially untrained population and managed to provide a relatively successful combatives program with SOMBO, or Sambo. Recognizing that the success of SOMBO was largely a result of its relationship to wrestling and judo, with compenents that were simple to learn, not dependent just on size and strength, and the possession of a competitive component that served as a catalyst to spur competitiveness and further training. While there was some concern that the competitive form had changed the emphasis to more of a sport than a combative system, the Ranger committee decided that the benefits outweighed the risks substantially. They decided the new Ranger Combatives program would be based on grappling.

After looking in-depth at various grappling-centric systems, the committee decided on the newly popular Brazilian Jujitsu as the basis of the new Ranger Combatives system, after a group of Rangers was sent to train at the Gracie Academy in Torrance, California. Gracie jujitsu fit many of the needs of the Ranger Regiment. It had a concept of a hierarchy of dominant body positions. This provided both a strategy to win, as well as an organized framework for learning the system, making it easy to learn. This formed the framework of a drill-based training program that ended up providing the nucleus of the Ranger Combatives program and the Modern Army Combatives Program (MACP).

As Larsen's committee continued developing the system, they began to realize that THE key to the success of jujitsu was that you could practice it at full speed against a legitimately resisting opponent. That meant that the techniques that would not work were quickly abandoned in favor of those which did work. This realization allowed the committee to draw techniques from other training systems that hared this type of "alive" training, such as boxing, muay Thai (Thai boxing), and wrestling, to fill in the blanks that the Rangers needed, but Gracie jujitsu did not provide, with its predominant focus on groundfighting. With the inclusion of weapons fighting methods based on the Ranger Regiment's combat experience in Grenada, Panama, Desert Storm, Somalia, and other places in recent years, by the time of September 11th, 2001, the foundations of a completely integrated close-combat system, ranging from unarmed combatives to the use of knife, pistol, and rifle, and what we now refer to as "in-fight weapons access," had been developed. This formed a foundation from which to incorporate and apply the lessons that would be learned on the battlefields of the Global War on Terror.

As the system spread outside of the Ranger Regiment, Larsen was brought to the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, to establish the core of what would become the US Army Combatives School.

Eventually, the different levels of the MACP program were distilled to two—The Basic Combatives Course, and the Tactical Combatives Course. This pays off handsomely for the Reluctant Partisan who has a life outside of training.

Most of us don't have the time or inclination to spend five, six, or ten hours per week at a MMA gym, learning how to fight unarmed. Fortunately though, since we're not training for an MMA fight, we don't have to. One of the key lessons from William Fairbairn's developments in combatives during WW2 is still valid today. Fairbairn introduced the idea of not trying to master all of the techniques of a system, but to learn the principles that underlay the system, and then to select a dozen or so techniques that adhered to those principles and best suited the individual, and to master those first. Once those techniques are mastered, the individual can start branching out and learning new techniques. This methods of initially mastering a small handful of generally effective techniques instead of trying to master dozens of complicated skills is a viable solution for training in combatives for the guerrilla.

Learning How To Fight

Training in combatives is nothing more than learning how to fight. If you can wean yourself off the Hollywood and pulp fiction fantasy of the High Noon, showdown karate match, and learn to understand that a fight will be whatver the fight wants to be, you will learn much faster. You are not Chuck Norris.

The first rule of thumb to remember is that, if you're in a hand-to-hand fight, you seriously fucked up. You should have already shot him in the face, muzzle-thumped his ass, or stabbed him. If that sounds gruesome or bloodthirsty, then you need to step back and look at some fundamental issues with your own mindset preparedness. When discussing the subject of combatives, the first thing to consider is that you have to be ABLE to fight. This goes far beyond the black belt's knowledge of HOW to fight. Being able to fight means being able to hit with hate, as well as being able to eat a punch.

Are you ABLE to slam your fist into someone's face and feel his facial bones fracture and crunch under your knuckles, as you punch him over and over? Are you ABLE to drive your thumb into his eye socket and feel the viscous fluids and brain matter flowing around your digit as you gouge the eyeball out of its socket? Are you ABLE to overcome your squeamishness and deal with the tactile sensations of feeling is bones splintering as you slam a steel pipe into his arm or leg? Are you ABLE to eat a punch, delivered with the skill, precision, and pure hatred of a man who has delivered hundreds—if not thousands—of them, in real fights, and is completely convicted in his belief that he can shatter your facial bones with that punch? Are you ABLE to keep fighting, even as you feel your own eyeball popped out of your skull, despite the pain and terror of knowing that if you quit, you're going to die? Are you ABLE to shut out and ignore the pain and far of feeling and hearing your own bones break in your arm or your leg? Can you suffer through all of that and STILL be able to punch, kick, wrestle, or even bite your way to survival and victory? What if the other guy has spent seven of the last eight years in the penitentiary, fighting for his survival daily, and the other two years training in the local MMA gym?

Fighting is actually a pretty simple task. Hit the other guy as hard as possible—preferably with something significantly heavier and harder than your fists, like a brick, table leg, chunk of firewood, or a helmet—as fast as possible, repeatedly. If you crash into someone, going 90MPH, and keep hitting

him repeatedly—left/right/left/right/left/right/left—while legitimately trying to take his head off with every punch, one of three things is going to happen:

- You will knock him flat the fuck out, or at least, onto his ass. In either case, you've either won the fight, or you've created the necessary time and space to get a gun into the fight and shoot him in the face.

- Alternatively, he'll get his hands up in order to protect his head. If that occurs, you can simply drop levels and continue to move into and through him, punching him in the solar plexus, stomach, kidneys, bladder, or groin, until he goes down. I've yet to see anyone in my life, catch a solid right cross to the dick and stay on his feet, let alone retain interest in continuing to fight.

- Finally, he may try to grab hold of you, like a boxer clinching with a superior opponent, in an attempt to try and top you from hurting him anymore. If that happens, you can either shift to what boxers refer to as "infighting," striking him with hooks and uppercuts, elbows, knees, and head butts, or you can throw or trip him, sending him headfirst through a wall, a table, or the pavement. If you're good, he'll go down by himself, and you have created the necessary space and time to get a gun into the fight and shoot him in the face.

  If you're only as good as I am though, then it's a 50/50 proposition as to whether he'll go down by himself, or that you'll go down with him. As long as you manage to land on top, that's okay, because you've still got the opportunity to leverage your superior position—referred to in jujitsu and MACP as "dominant body position"—to beat the shit out of him and create the time and space to get a gun into the fight and shoot him in the face. If you end up on the bottom though...you'd damned sure better know at least enough about ground fighting escapes and reversals to get get away, or he's going to beat the shit out of you.

This is ultimately the reason that I advocate a grappling-centric combatives system. Not because "98.765% of fights go to the ground," but because when you are dealing with a fight, it's going to be what it's going to be. Granted, knocking the dude in the head with a tire iron would do, as would a solid, well-placed left hook to the chin, but can you actually pull that shit off? Every time? Unless you are actively engaged in training in a striking-centric combatives program that involves full-power punches against an actual, living, breathing, moving opponent that is trying to do the same thing back to you in the sparring ring, any conceptual ideas you have about knockinga motherfucker out is strictly hypothetical. Any legitimately experienced boxer will gladly tell you that—unless your opponent as the legendary glass chin—the chances of knocking anyone out with one punch are somewhere between winning the lottery and "ain't fuckin' happening, Jack!"

Principles of Combatives

The principles underlying a successful combatives system for the guerrilla-trained survivalist are simple, but eminently practical:

- If you can't achieve stand-off, then hug the belt. While it seems counterintuitive to get closer to

the guy who is trying to hurt you, the reality is, an untrained fighter is most dangerous at punching distances. Even if you are a skilled pugilist, it doesn't make sense to stick to a distance where he has the best chance of getting lucky.

More importantly however, is the reality that we're not discussing combat sports. We're talking about fighting and killing. We have to consider the fact that the enemy will probably have a weapon, even if we don't. Even if you're not carrying a weapon, do not assume that the bad guy is as stupid as you are. You need to be able to hurt or kill the other guy while simultaneously preventing him from getting a weapon into the fight, whether it is his or yours. Beating his ass is good. Getting your ass beat is bad. Beating his ass and then getting killed with your own weapon would be really embarrassing, not to mention detrimental to the long-term goal of survival.

Whatever method of combatives training that you select has got to involve the ability to deal with the presence of weapons in the fight; protecting your own, and preventing the enemy from accessing his own. The single best way to achieve this is to control where his hands are. The only way to accomplish that is by closing the gap and hugging the belt so you can grab and control his arms.

- Control the Key Terrain by gaining dominant body position. Before you can sucessfully utilize any combatives killing, disabling, or restraining technique, you HAVE to gain and maintain the dominant body position. The leverage gained from being in the dominant body position (DBP) will allow you to apply attacks effectively.

  This understanding of DBP is the fundamental characteristic of becoming successful fighter, since it is what ties together the strategy of what would otherwise be nothing more than a gaggle of completely unrelated techniques. The concept of DBP does not apply solely to groundfighting, but is equally valid in the standing phase as well.

- You've got a fucking weapon, so use it. While the unarmed combatives portion of a system should offer the fighter the ability to win whether he has a weapon available or not, man is a tool-using species. We don't have fangs or claws, and we don't have the thick, armor-like skin and fur of other species. Instead, we have opposable thumbs and the ability to create tools. Whether the weapon you have is a firearm, a knife, a shovel, a chunk of broken concrete, or a big fucking stick, use it. The key though, is understanding DBP, in order to create the necessary time and space to get it out. Accessing the weapon in the midst of the fight is a basic requirement for effective use of a weapon.

  In jujitsu, we say "Position before submission." This means, you have to achieve a DBP BEFORE you can successfully utilize a submission hold. For the application of weapons, we can modify this by thinking "Position before acquisition." Trying to access your weapon in order to escape an inferior position—against a grappler who knows even a little—is a sure way to end up getting killed with your own weapon, because it sets up the opponent's opportunity to disarm you.

- Finish the fight. When you have achieved DBP, you can begin trying to finish the fight with the confidence that, if a particular technique fails, you can simply try something else, as long as you can maintain that DBP. You can finish the fight with submission holds like chokes or locks, with punches and kicks, or by throwing the opponent; or, you can finish the fight by shooting him in the face.

- Most fights may end on the ground, but they almost always start out standing up. The MACP begins instruction at Level I with basic ground fighting skills and drills. The idea behind this is that grappling skills are easier to learn—to a functional level—than striking skills, and they provide a sound base from which to begin understanding the striking side of the equation. While I understand—and even agree with—this principle, the fact is, it is not particularly difficult to keep someone the basics of punching hard and fast. If you can knock the enemy out by beating his ass with punches, you may not ever need to utilize the grappling skills. Smoke a dude in the grape with a chunk of lead pipe and he will not retain much of his ability to wrestle with you effectively.

Standing Combative Skills

As we've previously discussed, the real key to winning a fight is closing with the enemy, hitting with hate: left/right/left/right/left/right, as you try to take the dude's head off. The key to hitting successfully is to drive the strikes from the ground, through the hips—thus the focus on explosive lifting methods in physical conditioning, like cleans and squats. In order to do that, you have to have a solid base, and the ability to move while attacking or defending. You also need to know how to put your hips into your punches.

It doesn't matter if you want to use close-fisted strikes, open-hand "heel-of-palm" strikes, or a clenched fist holding a chunk of firewood; what you have to learn is how to hit with power, fast. Focusing on hitting hard and fast, driving the strikes from the ground, through the hips, is the principle that underlies effective striking.

While the following basic striking skills are illustrated individually, it is critical to understand that they are not used in this manner. Strikes must be thrown in combinations that create and take advantage of any openings in the opponent's guard.

- The jab is taught—in classical boxing—as a tool for controlling range and setting up further attacks. This is true in combatives as well, but should not be construed as meaning the strike is delivered quickly by sacrificing power.

  From whatever position you find yourself in, snap your lead arm out with a slight pivot of the hip and shoulder. Your shoulder should rotate slightly, so that the punch lands with your palm down. The punch should travel in a straight line, and you elbow should never stick out away from your body during the execution of the punch. At the moment your punch connects, you should be pushing off your lead leg, to get the hips and body weight into the punch. Once it connects, quickly snap the arm straight back to the ready position.

The lead jab punch. Note that the NCO in the picture--were he to strike a live target--would break his hand, since his fist is improperly formed. Photo courtesy, US Army.

- The straight right, often mistaken for a right cross, can be a fight ender by itself, but should not be relied on as such. It is a power punch executed with the rear arm—so the right for most people. From your fighting position, pivot on the ball of your rear foot as if your were snubbing out cigarette, so your hips open up towards the opponent. As you drive the punch from the foot through the hips, drive with your shoulder, rotating your arm slightly so that your knuckles are up and your palm faces the ground. You should drive the punch to a point 2-3 inches deep in the opponent's body, and then snap it back.

The straight right. Notice the same issue with the fist as mentioned above. Photo courtesy, US Army.

For most combative purposes, the jab and straight right are the foundational punches you need to know. They will allow you to target the head, neck, solar plexus, core, and groin of the opponent with devastating, powerful punches. Whether you execute them with empty hands, or holding some object, like a chunk of granite, they allow the fastest delivery of force onto a target.

- The hook punch is—properly—a close-range punching weapon. It is a power punch, typically thrown with the lead—left—hand, to get around an opponent's guard. Executed properly—with lots of hip drive, it is an extremely powerful blow that works well in combinations as a finisher. The most common mistake made with the hook punch by untrained or under-trained fighters is using it as a looping, arm-powered punch. Properly done, it does not involve very much arm movement, generating it's power from your leg, hip, and shoulder. From your fighting position, pivot on your LEAD foot, as if you were snubbing out a cigarette, rotating your hips towards the inside line. Raise your elbow as you pivot, so that the punch lands with the arm close to, or at, parallel to the ground, palm facing your chest. Your rear foot remains planted, and following connection of the punch, your arm rotates quickly back to the ready position.

The hook punch. It can be delivered to the head or the body. Photo courtesy, US Army.

The hook punch can be particularly devastating when thrown from a tied-up clinch position, allowing it to be delivered from outside the opponent's field-of-vision, and delivered to the head, side of the neck, ribcage, solar plexus, or the kidneys. When used to the liver, directly under the opponent's ribcage on the right side of his torso, it can drop even a well-conditioned, well-trained fighter.

- The uppercut punch is almost invariably most useful in the clinch, since it is a very close-range punch that comes from underneath the opponent's field-of-vision. Driven into the bottom of the chin, the throat, the solar plexus, or the groin, done properly, it will have every ounce of your body weight and strength behind it.

Step one of the lead uppercut punch. Courtesy US Army

Step two of lead uppercut punch. Courtesy US Army

The lead uppercut is executed by rolling your hips and shoulders toward the enemy, and dropping your lead shoulder, while changing levels by flexing deeply at the knees. DO NOT BEND OVER AT THE WAIST!!! Keep the elbow tucked, and drive off your lead leg to drive your punch, palm facing your body, and locking the wrist straight. Immediately snap back to the ready position.

The rear uppercut is almost the same. Simply drop the rear shoulder instead of the lead, but you will still change levels slightly by flexing the knees deep. Once again, do NOT bend over at the waist! Drive off your trail leg through the hips. Your rear uppercut will require a slightly greater extension of the striking arm, depending on how deep your fighting stance is.

- Elbow strikes can be some of the most devastating strikes you use in the clinch. Elbow strikes will always be driven from the hips and legs, using the pivot motion described with the correlating punches above. Elbow strikes in the clinch may include the vertical—rising—elbow strike, a downward elbow "drop," or—most commonly—the horizontal elbow strike.

- To be effective, striking combinations must be thrown in combinations in order to be effective. The memory aid should be "punches in bunches." In order to become effective under the stress of a fight, combination punching must be practiced continuously. Once the basic punches are learned at the beginner level, all punching practice should be practiced in combinations. In particular, the focus should be on hitting HARD and FAST, while quickly returning the striking limb back to a protective position to help defend against counter-punching.

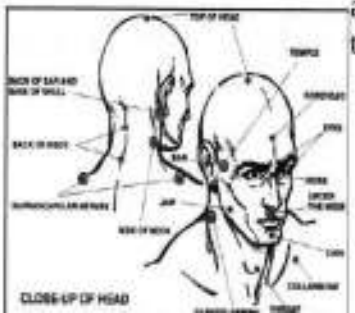
  Common punching combinations to use in training during sparring, focus mitt work, and heavy bag training should include:

  jab/straight right
  jab/straight right/lead hook
  jab/jab/lead hook
  jab/lead hook/straight right
  lead uppercut-body/rear uppercut-body/lead hook-head
  lead hook-head/rear uppercut-body/lead horizontal elbow

Kicking attacks during combatives encounters should be simple, effective, and VERY limited. Burdened with heavy outdoor footwear, and the combat load of wartime, your flexibility and balance will be severely burdened. Lifting your foot high enough to kick above the knee is a sure recipe for landing on your ass. In general, my teaching is to restrict "kicking" attacks to knee strikes and stomping kicks while in the clinch. Knee strikes may be aimed at the groin, stomach, kidneys, or liver, while stomp kicks should be limited to the sides and back of the knees—although a successfully landed stomp kick to the top of the knee cap can be EXTREMELY disabling—and the insteps and ankles, unless the enemy is on the ground. In that case, the head, neck, and dick all make particularly enticing targets.

What Not To Do

This diagram, taken from the 1992 edition of **FM 21-150 Combatives**, illustrates "effective" striking points of the human head. The idea is, directing your strikes at these specific points will increase the effectiveness of your attacks. That's a cool idea. Unfortunately, it's also complete bullshit. The targets are too small and too fine to effectively target on a moving, resisting opponent with



any degree of success. If you need to smoke the dude in the head? Smoke him in the head. Hit him hard, and it will have an effect. Hit him hard, repeatedly, and it will continue having that effective. The same principle applies to MOST vital point targeting charts for the body.

Training Methods

Effective methods for training and drilling the basic striking methods of combatives include working on the heavy bag—I generally recommend at least a 100# bag—to develop speed, power, and the biomechanics of striking effectively. When hitting the heavy bag, the goal should not be to "push" the bag. Instead, we are trying to develop the power and focus to "fold" the bag around your fist, while still hitting fast, to the tune of 4-5 powerful blows per second. When you can accomplish this—while folding the bag with every strike—you have developed some serious punching ability that correlates to breaking bones and knocking motherfuckers out.

To develop targeting and combination accuracy, the use of focus mitts is critical. The "feeder" holding the mitts will call out a combination and move the mitts so they represent suitable targets for that combination, and then move like an opponent would move, providing the fighter the ability to practice throwing fast, powerful punches in an effective manner.

Sparring—while crucial—is not the sine qua non of boxing training that most people make it out to be. Ultimately, yes, you do have to spar, and hard. The only way to learn to punch, while getting punched, is to do so. On the other hand, until you know how to punch, and how to defend against getting punched, there is NO point in sparring.

Throws and Takedowns

As a lifelong judo player, I am particularly fond of throws and takedowns. Executed properly, throws and takedowns can be fight-enders all by themselves. Driving a 200# man, headfirst, into the pavement, at the end of a successfully executed shoulder throw means you're going to fuck him up, period. At the same time, throwing techniques take a LOT of practice to master, and even black belt judo players miss throws in real fights, leaving them in awkward positions, susceptible to counterattack.

In light of that, I find it difficult to recommend any but the most basic takedowns and throws. These include the basic tackle, the double-leg takedown, the single-leg takedown, the basic leg hook, and the cross-hock takedown.

Ultimately, controlling a standing fight, and gaining the ability to pull off a takedown or throw means controlling the range between fighters. The unschooled fighter is most dangerous at basic boxing range. Your goal is to always avoid that distance, even if you are a superior striker. Your primary goal in

teaching or learning combatives, is developing the courage to close the distance.

The basic clinch position is the optimum way to hold onto an opponent after crashing to contact distance, while setting up the takedown. The basic MACP clinch is one I find myself reverting to whenever possible. When in this clinch, you have control of the opponent's far side arm at the elbow, with the arm tucked into your own armpit. Controlling this arm in such a manner will prevent him from accessing a weapon with that hand. Your head should be tucked into the enemy's chest, preferably pushing upward, against his chin, to drive his head out of alignment, upsetting his balance. Finally, your strong arm is around his waist, controlling his hips. Keeping this arm under his allows prevents his ability to access YOUR weapon. Your legs should be far enough back that he cannot easily get his hips underneath yours to attempt a throw, but not so far back that you are off-balance.

Achieving this basic clinch position means getting close enough to get hands on the opponent, without getting knocked out in the process. Closing the gap from punching range can be as simple as striking effectively until the opponent grabs hold of you, in an attempt to avoid getting hurt further. To achieve the position intentionally however, requires covering up to protect yourself against getting hit, then "crashing" through the opponent's attacks before he can move away or off-line. All of the take downs below are predicated on the belief that you are already in the clinch position.

The Basic Tackle Takedown

From the clinch, you will step slightly towards the front of the opponent and change your grip so you are hugging the opponent around the lower abdomen, with your hands clenched together at the opponent's kidneys. Pulling with your hands, drive your head upward and forward, more aggressively into his face, upsetting his balance towards the rear. Take an aggressive step forward with your lead leg, and the opponent will go over backwards. When you land, step over the opponent, and release your grip, leaving yourself in the mount position, ready to deliver finishing punches or a submission. Alternatively, you can access a weapon and shoot him in the face. See illustrations, below.

Basic tackle takedov one. Photo courtesy,

ackle takedown, step oto courtesy, US

Basic tackle takedown, step three. Finish. Photo courtesy, US Army

The basic tackled takedown is the simplest takedown method to teach and to learn. The only real drawback to it is that it does require the fighter to be stronger than the opponent, in order to avoid being simply overpowered during the attempt.

The Basic Leg Hook Sweep

The only difference between this throw and the previous takedown is the use of the leg to facilitate it. As you pull with your arms, and push with your head, if the opponent attempts to pull away, you can simply use your nearest leg to hook it around the opponent's closest leg, below the knee, and pull and lift. This prevents the enemy from getting a grounded base to resist the takedown as effectively. When he begins to fall, remove your leg hook and either let him fall, or finish in the mount as before.

The leg hook sweep. Photo courtesy, US Army.

The Double Leg Takedown

Shooting under the enemy's attacks and straight to his legs for a double-leg takedown is a definite high-percentage takedown attack. There are different ways to finish the takedown, but the initial shot is the same. To execute, change your level by flexing deeply at the knees, or even driving one knee almost to the ground in a lunge movement, and drive your shoulder into the opponent's hips. DO NOT BEND AT THE WAIST OR DUCK YOUR HEAD!!!

Your lead foot should penetrate at least as far forward as the opponent's lead foot. Continue to drive forward, as you wrap your arms around the opponent's hips.

The double-leg takedown shot. Photo courtesy, US Army

Ground Fighting

The Modern Army Combatives Program is based on ground fighting for one very simple, extremely valid reason. It is the same reason that YOUR combatives training program should be based on ground

fighting: If you're fighting a guy who is kitted out in a fighting load, plus body armor, and a helmet....where the fuck are you going to punch him, without risking getting fucked up in the process by smoking a fist into something hard and solid?

Good ground fighting training will be predicated on the concept of the dominant body position. The fundamental concept underlying Brazilian Jujitsu and the MACP, is that before any killing or disabling technique can be applied successfully, the fighter must first gain and maintain a dominant body position (DBP). The leverage gained from DBP is what allows ground fighters to defeat stronger opponents. This understanding of the importance of always being on the hunt for the DBP is critical to becoming a proficient fighter, since it is what ties together the entire concept of ground fighting based combatives.

If you attempt an attack from any old position and it fails, you're likely to find yourself choked out, stabbed, shot, or beaten stupid as a result. Failure of a specific attack from a dominant position however, means that you can simply try again, or try something new.

According to the MACP, the dominant body positions include: the back mount, the front mount, the guard, and the side control. Those who have studied grappling-based arts for any length of time will also recognize the superiority of the so-called scarfhold position, and the North-South position. Ultimately, for combatives however, there is a lot to be said for minimizing the number of positions you are concerned with.

The Back Mount. Photo courtesy, US Army.

The front mount. Photo courtesy, US Army.

Side control. Photo courtesy, US Army.

The guard position. Photo courtesy, US Army.

My philosophy on ground fighting is actually pretty simple. There are two basic principles of movement that you need to master, courtesy of Jitz Black Belt and great coach, Cecil Burch of Arizona, which will make everything else flow easier. Those are, the basic bridge movement, referred to as "upa" in Brazilian Jujitsu, and the hip shrimp. Any inferior bottom position you find yourself in while stuck in a groundfight, can be escaped by using or combining these two movements. As Coach Burch points out in his short video for the Personal Defense Network, Defensive Applications of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, these allow you to end up in either the guard position, or to stand up.

If you can create enough space to stand up, then you have the simple option of drawing a weapon and

shooting the motherfucker in the face. On the other hand, a solid knowledge of guard position tools and tactics will allow you the ability to utilize the dominance of that position to avoid being defeated, while allowing you to access weapons in the middle of the fight, as well as using the opponent's body to help protect you from attacks by his friends and partners.

Ultimately, knowledge of basic movements to get from the inferior aspect of the mount, back mount, and side control, into the guard position rely on the same principles of bridging and/or shrimping. Once in the guard, attacks may range from sweeps or submission holds to—for our purposes, the more practical—weapons access and utilization.

Escape the Bottom, Bridge

The illustrations below demonstrate this technique to escape the bottom position of the front mount, but the same principles work against the side control as well. This technique begins with the fighter on his back and the opponent mounted on his chest.

Using both hands, the fighter secures on of the opponent's arms and places his foot over the same side foot of the opponent, keeping his elbows as tight to his body as possible.

Escape the bottom, bridge, step one. Photo courtesy, US Army.

Having trapped the opponent's arm and leg on the same side, the fighter can now bridge, by driving his hips explosively upward. Since the opponent lacks the means to prevent being rolled over, he should come off the top of the fighter and fall sideways.

Escape the bottom, bridge, step two. Photo courtesy, US Army.

As the opponent falls, the fighter continues driving his hips towards the opponent, and brings his leg across, ending up in the top position of the front mount.

Escape the Bottom, Shrimp the Hips
A basic alternative to the bridge method of escaping the bottom position results in the fighter gaining the guard position, instead of a full reversal to the front mount. In my experience, this is the far more effective method, since it can be pulled off against even a larger, strong opponent. While the fighter is trying to utilize the bridge method above, he may be unable to capture the opponent's leg, as the foe keeps moving his leg away. Doing this however, creates a space under the same leg. By "shrimping," or moving his own hips away, the fighter is able to then drive his own leg through this space, effectively achieving half-guard and then the guard position.

The fighter will begin by turning onto his side, in order to face towards the opening created by the enemy, ensuring that his own leg is flat on the ground.

Escape the bottom, shrimp the hips, step one. Photo courtesy, US Army.

The fighter then uses his elbow or hand in order to maintain the space between his hips and the opponent's leg, and drives his knee through the gap.

Escape the bottom, shrimp the hips, step two. Photo courtesy, US Army.

Once his knee is past the opponent's knee, the fighter can post his weight onto the same leg and turn his body towards the other side. This brings the posted knee up, creating enough space to pull the leg out and position it over the enemy's leg. The fighter can then use his hands to hold the opponent's other leg in place to repeat the actions from the first side.

Further Training

Ultimately, while we have illustrated and explained some of the basics of an effective combatives system, based on MACP, there is no way you can learn to fight from reading a book. You HAVE to get out and train at a gym with qualified instructors. Even a Blue Belt with six months of experience is going to have enough experience to teach you the important fundamentals of jujitsu and combatives. In lieu of trying to write an entire book-length chapter on combatives, what I will do is two-fold:

- Recommend that you seek out serious training in combatives. In a world where we cannot yet go around dressed in full fighting kit, and where sometimes even concealed carry of a sidearm is not allowed or practical, you NEED to be able to protect yourself and fight your way to a gun or a knife. Regardless of how bad ass you think you are, I'm willing to bet my last dollar that—at best—you're a big fish in a really little pond. Get some instruction.

- Recommend some training resources for development of skill within your group.

The only recommendation I have for stand-up combatives training is Coach Rodney King (no relation that I'm aware of...) of South Africa. Rodney was a Golden Gloves boxer and is also a black belt in Brazilian Jujitsu. He has taken the lessons of both and developed a modification of straight competitive boxing designed specifically for MMA competition and self-defense. This method, which Rodney calls "Crazy Monkey," is probably the best distillation of the sweet science for pure self-defense that I've ever come across. Despite the goofy name, it has nothing to do with any Chinese silk pajama-wearing, incense and candle-burning, bowing to your sifu, kung-fu nonsense. What Crazy Monkey Defense (CMD) does is takes the fundamental, keep you from getting knocked the fuck out, skills from the

"gentlemanly art of self-defense," and makes them accessible to those of us who are not 18 year old Mexican athletes.

The first set of Rodney's DVDs is entitled **The CMD Championship Series for the Everyday Guy**. There are three volumes in the series, and each of them is crucial for learning the fundamentals of the system. Volume One of the series will introduce you to the foundation of the CMD program, including how to develop an effective fighting posture, as well as how to move in and out of that posture, as well as how to protect yourself and throw the basic strikes.

In Volume Two, Rodney starts looking at how to move past the opponent's offensive and defensive attempts in order to take the fight to the opponent. You will learn to use the "modified duck," and slip punches to get inside. You will then learn to use your hook, uppercut, and shovel hook punches to best effect. Finally, in Volume Three, Rodney introduces you to his unique approach to clinch work, called the "straight jacket clinch."

Once you've developed a base level of ability with the CMD Championship Series, I recommend Rodney's two-volume sequel, **The Sparring Coach: The Fight Compass**. This series is really designed for competition boxers, but it provides the tactics to tie the techniques of CMD together into a cohesive approach to the standing phase of unarmed combatives. Especially pertinent to the combatives approach is the portion of Volume One that focuses on what Rodney calls the "Pressurer Style."

Whether you believe the nonsense about striking with closed fists being a bad idea in a real fight, or not (for the record, I've never broken my fist punching people in the head), the striking skills learned in boxing will allow you to deliver fast, powerful blows, whether you are hitting with your fists, open hands, or any sort of impact weapon. Equally important however, those skills will keep you from getting your skull crushed, long enough to deliver those fast, powerful blows.

As with grappling, a lot of supposed combatives "experts" like to point out that boxing is a sport with rules, and thus far less dangerous than a real fight. While this is absolutely true, there's one very important caveat to consider about that; the longer the fight lasts, the longer there is for you to get hurt or killed. Finishing the fight fast—before you get seriously fucked up—will stop you from getting hurt. When it comes to stand-up striking in a fight, no one hits harder, faster—against moving opponents, rather than immobile pine boards—than a skilled boxer.

When it comes to ground fighting, the first priority should be on survival. Being stuck in an inferior position in a wrestling match leaves you susceptible to any number of attacks, ranging from getting choked out or knocked out, to having your skull crushed as the opponent's buddies dance a jig on your forehead. Survival is what Brazilian Jujitsu is about, and what makes it so remarkably effective for a foundation of combatives, regardless of stature.

Brazilian Jujitsu founder Helio Gracie had to learn and develop fighting methods that would let him survive against larger, stronger opponents. Since he would not be able to overpower these opponents with muscle strength alone, he looked for survival methods instead. Since it required much less strength and energy to prevent an opponent hurting you than it did to escape, he learned to focus on the use of leverage as a survival tool.

An important lesson that my friend Cecil Burch really brought home to me is that—contrary to what many people erroneously believe about Brazilian Jujitsu—survival is not about escaping submissions. If you're at that point, you're already behind the power curve. Survival is about posture and position. It's about keeping yourself in positions where you never have to use muscle strength to protect yourself. The survival posture is about discovering and adapting a position that prevents your opponent from doing what he wants to do, while also setting up your reversals. Cecil's explanation and demonstrations of these principles on his video **Defensive Applications of Brazilian Jujitsu** is—hands down—the single best explanation of the concept I've ever been exposed to.

Within this excellent little video, Cecil explains his very simple *Conceptual Escape Formula*. This consists of what he terms a prefix-root-suffix approach. The prefix is your basic survival posture. The root is the choice body movement methods—the aforementioned bridge and shrimp—to escape inferior positions. The suffix is either pulling guard or standing up.

From either of these positions, as mentioned previously, Cecil explains that you can use whatever attack you decide is appropriate: a reversal or sweep, a submission hold or choke, or getting a weapon into the fight. The beauty of this approach is the simplicity. Instead of having to memorize and master hundreds of individual techniques and each of their myriad applications and variations, once you can master the Conceptual Escape Formula, you can utilize the dozen or so specific techniques that you decide to master, and you know how to apply them.

Knives in Combatives

It's become a bit of a running joke with students in classes that I have the simplest, most effective knife use system for combatives ever developed. It's a running joke because it's true. There are hundreds of books on combatives self-defense in the world, many of which focus on—or at least include—instruction in the "art of knife fighting." There are entire martial arts styles that developed around the use of the knife for fighting. There's only one problem with 99% of them: they're bullshit.

Knife-centric martial arts are almost entirely based on the myth of the knife-vs-knife duel. That shit ain't going to happen. Here's lesson number one for Guerrilla Combatives with a knife: if a dude has a knife out, shoot him in the face. If you can't shoot him in the face, then practice your Nike-Fu and run away. Knife-vs-knife duels are the kind of thing that precipitated the old proverb: "When two tigers fight, both die." Knife fighting for combatives is really, really simple. Knife fighting is killing the other guy, using your knife. There's no fighting to it.

Using a knife to kill is retard simple: put the pointy end in the soft spots. Repeat as necessary. It really is that simple. Stab the fucker in the eye, throat, sides of the neck, stomach, groin, or lower back, and keep stabbing him, repeatedly, as fast you can. He will go down, and he will bleed out.

You can demonstrate cool disarms and counters to the "basic angles of attack" from Pekiti-Tirsa, Harimau Silat, Escrima, or some flavor of Five Animals kung-fu. They're all bullshit. I've yet to see anyone—no matter how famous a guru they might be—actually pull off a successful counter to "prison shanking 101," even in a training environment. If the guy with the knife is fit, aggressive, and serious, none of those fancy moves are going to work worth a damn.

The single best counter-knife method available is inarguably Jerry Wetzl's **Red Zone** system. Jerry is a CMD coach, possesses a solid wrestling and grappling background, and is the owner of Centerline Gym in California. His system of knife defense ties in neatly with the CMD system and Brazilian Jujitsu, as you would expect. Based on getting hold of the weapon-bearing arm with a basic grappling two-on-one, and then striking from the clinch position, Jerry's program works for one simple reason: it adheres to the KISS principle of Keep It Stupid Simple.

Combatives Training Program

The following training plan for combatives is one I've used in the past to develop a group's combatives ability from non-existent to intermediate. It should be based on the fundamental principles of combatives and the underlying doctrine we've already discussed:

- Violence of Action: VoA can most easily be described as bringing into focus all of the intensity of your physical and emotional fear, anger, and aggression, expressed through ferocious, unrelenting continuity of attack.

- Base: Base describes the position or posture of balance at any given moment, that allows you to gain leverage from the ground and apply your physical attributes and technical skills against the opponent effectively.

- Dominant Body Position: DBP can be described as your position of base, relative to the opponent, that allows you to effectively control or restrict his mobility through control of his ability to move his hips.

- Balance: Balance refers to your ability to maintain physical equilibrium during movement, maintaining base.

- Leverage: Leverage can most easily be described as attacking your opponent's weak areas with your strength. An example of this is using your arms to constrict his vascular system in the unprotected neck to achieve a choke. Another example would be using both of your arms to control one of his arms into an awkward or immobile arm lock position.

This lesson plan is intended as an EXAMPLE for local group instructors to modify, based on their personal knowledge and experience, relevant to the specific needs of their group. Each lesson is subdivided into three segments. If each segment is limited to twenty minutes, this provides a solid one hour training class. Performing two to three one-hour blocks of instruction per week will offer a solid introduction to the fundamentals of combatives in a brief period of weeks, rather than months or years. We're not training to become MMA fighters. We're training to use MMA methods in a real fights.

Lesson One

The first segment of this class focuses on the fundamentals of CMD, including the fighting posture, and the CM1 Hand Defense. This lesson focuses on the basic hunchback defense and the CM1 hand defense at jab and straight right ranges, coupled with the footwork of the system.

The second segment of this class focuses on the counterattack from the CM1 Hand Defense, using the "Diving Board" jab and cross methods. Students are introduced to these attacks using shadow sparring, focus mitts, and heavy bag striking to insure development of a balance between power generation and focused accuracy.

The third segment of this lesson allows the fighters to begin using different drills like the "wall/corner drill" against each other, learning to focus on the CM1 Hand Defense as well as footwork and avoidance for defense, while looking for openings to leverage through counterattack. Students should move through this segment of instruction in round-robin fashion, in order to practice the methods against different body types.

Lesson Number Two
This lesson is used to introduce the concept of Dominant Body Position, the bottom survival posture, and the bridge as the root of Cecil's Conceptual Escape Formula. The first segment of the class focuses on the mount position, including posture control in the mount, with the front cross-collar choke taught as the attack from the mount.

The second segment of the lesson introduces the survival posture and the bridge, through the vehicle of the escape the bottom, bridge technique.

The third segment puts both of these together, allowing the students to drill this specific lesson against one another, again in round-robin fashion.

Lesson Number Three
The third lesson in this course introduces the double-leg takedown, and the sprawl defense against it, as well as the guard position, with a basic scissors sweep from the guard and the knee-in-tailbone guard pass as vehicles for introduction. The first segment of the class teaches the double-leg takedown through repetition of the penetration step and level change, followed by the body hold and drive-through. Once the fundamentals have been understood, students are introduced to the sprawl defense against this takedown.

The second segment of the class focuses on the guard position, including posture control from the guard, and the basic scissors sweep. In order to defend the posture control and avoid the sweep, the basic knee-in-tailbone guard pass is taught, and students should be allowed to drill these two methods against one another.

The final segment of the class requires the students to perform limited sparring drills, using the takedown and groundfigting methods learned so far.

Lesson plans should continue along these lines, with each class offering two to three techniques at most, with ample repetition of the techniques in order to MASTER the fundamental body mechanics necessary. Too often, instructors focus on keeping students happy by cramming lots of cool techniques into a class, but never allowing the students enough practice repetitions to begin mastering the techniques. Rodrigo Gracie, a third-generation member of the Gracie clan, and a Brazilian Jujitsu coach

of his own right, insists—correctly—that white belt level beginners should not spar too soon. If you've not mastered the basic mechanics of the techniques in a limited resistance environment, there's little chance you're going to pull them off in training against a more experienced opponent. Begin by focusing on the fundamental movement mechanics.

Suggested Further Reading (and viewing)
Jiujitsu University by Saulo Ribiero
H2H: Hand-to-Hand Combatives by Greg Thompson
FM 3-21.150 Combatives US Army
Wrestling for Fighting by Randy Coutoure
Defensive Applications of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu w/ Cecil Burch
CMD Championship Series for the Everyday Guy w/ Rodney King
CMD Sparring Coach: The Fight Compass w/ Rodney King

Chapter Four

HIPS AND HEADS, KIDS! HIPS AND HEADS!

"A guy who has 100% confidence in his ability to use his—or any—weapon, doesn't have to worry about his personal safety. He can concentrate on his mission." --MG John Singlaub

The purpose of the combat rifle is to allow the rifleman to engage and kill—directly or indirectly—armed enemy combatants with precision-aimed rifle fire. The rifleman's individual ability with his weapon is one of the most fundamental measures of his effectiveness and survivability. If you expect to function in combat, whether individually or as part of a team, you must be both willing to—and capable of—projecting lethal force on the enemy. The ability to engage the enemy with accurate rifle fire in a confident, competent manner is the best insurance the partisan has for survival and success.

Unlike the sportsman, the combat rifleman does not have the luxury of using his marksmanship as a test of his ability. He is not—like the competition target shooter—truing to see IF he can hit a target under the prescribed conditions. Unlike the field hunter, a mis does not simply mean an empty freezer until tomorrow. The combat rifleman must know—with absolute certainty—that he can make any shot that he needs to make; failure means death.

Combat rifle skill is not a sport or a game. The fighting rifle is not—contrary to the whining pleas of the morally bankrupt—a "sporting rifle." It is—like an ax—a tool, specifically engineered and evolved to perform one task specifically. The ax is designed to chop wood. The fighting rifle is designed to allow us to kill human beings. The fact that the ax is sometimes used for sporting applications like lumberjack competitions does not change it's fundamental purpose—nor that of the fighting rifle.

Realistic, effective combat rifle training is far more than simply marksmanship training. It teaches the rifleman how to use the tool for its intended purpose, in the most efficient manner possible. A well-developed and executed training program will teach you how to zero your rifle, at what range, and why, based on the perceived operational environment, mission, and weapon. Combat rifle training teaches the shooter to engage single and multiple hostile targets at realistic ranges, under realistic conditions, from the most appropriate firing positions, while stationary or moving. Good combat rifle training teaches the rifleman how to get his weapon back into the fight, whenever the gun stops running—for whatever reason the gun stops working. It teaches speed and tactical reloads, as well as immediate and remedial action methods to clear a malfunction. It also teaches when you should simply ignore a malfunction and transition to an alternate method of killing the enemy.

A combat rifle course should emphasize precision marksmanship, not as an end in itself, but as a necessary prerequisite to making solid, fight-ending shots on minimally exposed targets under real-world conditions. A professionally trained combat rifleman is able to engage single or multiple hostiles —at any practical range—quickly and effectvely, through the practical application of the fundamentals of marksmanship and good gunhandling.

Fundamentals of Marksmanship

Traditional military marksmanship is based on competition target shooting. On the surface, there is nothing wrong with that; after all, people who can shoot and win at Camp Perry can shoot very, very well. Unfortunately, things are seldom that cut-and-dried. With the obvious exception that the intermediate goal is to place tiny, very fast-moving projectiles in a precise location on a target that is a rather long distance away, there are very few real correlations between competition target shooting and combat marksmanship. While the fundamentals of marksmanship do remain the same—they are the fundamentals after all—the execution can be drastically different.

- Consistency. Shooting is a mechanical occupation. If you don't have the machine—the firearm —then you're not shooting, you're just throwing really little rocks. Like any machine, we need to address the operation of the rifle in a consistent, mechanical manner. From a solid firing position to sight picture and sight alignment, to trigger squeeze and reset, if you always apply every single fundamental the exact same way, every single time, you will achieve accuracy. If you can perform with consistency, you will be faster, because you won't have to think about what you're doing. You won't have to continuously adjust and readjust your fundamentals and position behind the gun in order to get it right.

- A Solid Firing Platform. The necessity of a solid shooting platform should be self-evident. After all, if the gun is moving around uncontrolled, it can be awful difficult to shoot with consistency. The combat rifleman's firing position must demonstrate three inherent qualities in order to be consistent and effective. It must be stable, solid, and durable.

  It must be stable enough to reduce any movement of the weapon that would negatively impact accuracy. Unlike the competition target shooter, who is required by the rules of the game to shoot from prescribed positions of varying levels of instability in order to test his marksmanship, the well-trained combat rifleman makes a conscious effort to "cheat" by acquiring the most stable position that the situation allows him to. "If you ain't cheatin', you ain't tryin'." Practically speaking, this means that—except under very specific conditions that involve speed shooting demands at extremely close quarters—the rifleman will always strive to support his firing position with the use of a weapons rest, even if that rest is just the magazine of his weapon.

  The firing position must be solid, so that it is not affected by outside factors like the recoil cycle of the weapon. It is both mechanically and physiologically impossible to completely defeat the recoil in a centerfire rifle. Instead, we attempt to mitigate it as much as possible, to try and insure that the weapon returns to the exact same position that is started in. This will allow the shooter to run the gun as fast as mechanically possible. A solid shooting position facilitates this

ability to mitigate recoil.

The classic prone position. Notice how little of the shooter's body is available to mitigate recoil.

Finally, the combat rifleman's position must be durable. Whether it takes five shots to defeat the enemy—or five minutes of shooting—despite the physiological stresses of a gun fight, the rifleman must be able to maintain or repeat the position for as long as necessary. In aiming, the weapon must become an extension of the body. The shooter must learn to adjust his body position so that the rifle naturally points at the target. In order to maximize the durability of the firing position, the shooter must minimize the amount of muscular tension required to hold the weapon in position. To avoid this muscular tension, the shooter must shift his entire firing position in order to move his natural point-of-aim (NPOA), to coincide with the desired point-of-impact. Once the shooter has learned his NPOA for a given firing position, repetitive—perfect—practice of that position and NPOA will allow him to mount the gun the exact same way, every single time. Unlike the competitive target shooter, we do not have the luxury of taking anywhere from seven to ten seconds between shots to reacquire a sight picture and break the next shot. A more durable position will allow you to recover between shots more quickly.

The first aspect of the combat rifle position is a squared position behind the gun. A squared body position will allow your body to absorb the recoil of the gun, guiding and directing the energy to the ground, rather than just the supporting shoulder. This minimizes the movement of the gun during the recoil cycle—as opposed to the more traditional angled body position behind the gun.

Second, we need to get our support hand as far out on the end of the gun as practically possible. The exact hand position on the forearm of the rifle will depend entirely on the shooter's

The prone position. Notice how my body is straight behind the gun. This allows my entire 210 pounds to absorb the recoil.

physiognomy, the weapon, and the specific firing position. While some bemoan this method of gripping the gun as a "gamer" trick, the reality is that it does allow you to run the gun faster. Regardless of who devised the method, the fact that it works is what is important.

If your body positions are stable and consistent, the position of your hand on the gun will change from firing position to firing position, but not as much as is commonly believed necessary. Simply focus on getting your grip as far out on the gun as feasible, within the limits of keeping your shoulders and hips square behind the gun within that particular position. While this position WAS originally developed within the three-gun competitive arena for faster shot-to-shot transitions, this was because it offers significant benefits to recoil mitigation and management, helping to return the gun to the same position at the end of the recoil cycle, every single time. It doesn't matter if your thumb is parallel to the bore axis, wrapped over the top of the fore end, or flagged up in the air as mine is in the photo above. What matters is that by pulling the gun into your shoulder tightly with that hand, you achieve ample leverage on the gun to mitigate muzzle flip as a result of recoil.

Actively pulling on the bore of the weapon however, will defeat the idea of reducing inherent muscular tension of the firing position. Thus, manging this is less a matter of actively "pulling" than it is a matter of simply holding the rifle in position while you aggressively lean into the stock of the gun with your firing side shoulder and body. This creates a non-muscular isometric tension that provides all the benefits, without the drawback of induced muscular tension.

The firing side hand and arm should not be stuck out to the side as in the traditional off-hand firing stance. Instead, while keeping this limb as relaxed as possible, allow it to fall against your rib cage or your load-bearing equipment. Don't CLAMP the elbow down, just let it hang naturally.

Standing position. Notice the firing side elbow "hangs" naturally, but close to the body.

Maintaining this relaxation in the firing side arm will reduce the sympathetic nervous system response in the hand. This will allow you to run your trigger as fast as possible, as well as reducing muscle tremor-induced shaking in the body and the gun. RELAX!

Cheek-to-stock weld is the final aspect of position that remains consistent from firing position to firing position. It is—with the exception of consistent trigger squeeze—arguably the most important aspect of any of the fundamentals of marksmanship. Even if all other aspects of your firing position fall completely apart—or are incorrect from the start—a proper, consistent cheek-to-stock weld will maintain your speed of target acquisition. If you can mount the gun to the exact same place every single time you mount the gun, then it doesn't matter if you are using iron sight, a red-dot optic sight (RDS), or a magnified, variable power scope, you will be as fast as humanly possible within the limits of your personal physiology and biology. You are looking at the target, you mount the gun, and the reticle or the front sight post is superimposed into your plane of vision on the target...BANG!

Utilizing consistency in your firing positions—and between firing positions—will do more for your ability to shoot fast and accurately than almost any other factors that you have influence over.

- Natural Point-of-Aim. In the type of fast, accurate shooting required in modern combat, shooting situations, the rifle must become an extension of your body. The rifleman has to learn how to relax as much as possible—regardless of his firing position. It is an old platitude that in the hands of the skilled user, the weapon becomes an extension of the body. This is not the New Age, Zen Ninja bullshit that it sounds like. Unnecessary muscle strain or tension will result in trembling that is invariably transmitted to the rifle. This increases the apparent "wobble" of the sight picture, and will result in either misses or slower follow-up shots, either of which can result in your death.

  The rifleman MUST learn to adjust his firing position—during training—until the rifle naturally points at the desired point-of-aim, rather than being forced to muscle the gun into position. To achieve this for practical purposes, you must train your NPOA into your firing positions from the very beginning.

  When training, this means that the aspiring rifleman must take the time to adjust his body position until his NPOA coincides with his desired POA, every single time he mounts the weapon, before trying to make the shot. This allows him to avoid having to use unnecessary muscular force to aim the rifle. If you have to push or pull the sights onto the target, you're not using your NPOA, no matter how small of a movement is required. In addition to the aforementioned drawback of inducing muscle tension, this also means that following every

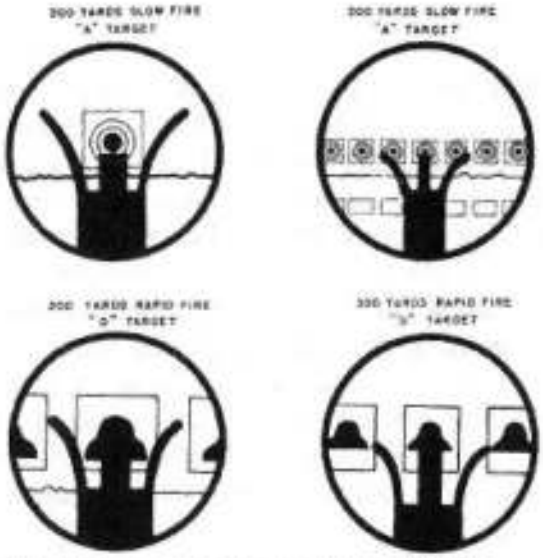
single shot, you will be forced to muscle the gun back into alignment, due to the recoil cycle of the gun, making you slower.

Attaining the NPOA
To achieve NPOA in the initial learning and training stages, upon initially achieving a desired firing position and sight picture, hold the position still as you close your eyes and breathe. At the conclusion of 3-4 complete respiratory cycles, without moving your body or the gun, reopen your eyes and see where the sights are located in relation to the desired POA. If you need to adjust your position, you will leave your elbows and arms where they are, and move your entire body around the gun until you've achieved the new sight picture. Repeat the complete process until you can open your eyes and see that your sights are still aligned on your desired POA. You have now achieved a natural point-of-aim. By taking close notice of the feel of this position, you will gradually begin to adopt your NPOA in your firing positions the very first time you drop into the position. The critical nature of unconsciously knowing and seeking our you NPOA for any firing position cannot be overemphasized. It will allow the shooter to achieve a solid, steady, and durable firing position as fast as possible, while achieving consistent first shot hits.

- Sight Alignment and Sight Picture. Sight alignment is the most critical factor in the actual aiming process. A small error in sight alignment increases exponentially with increased range and will result in misses. This is true whether you utilize iron sights, RDS, or magnified optics.

  With iron sights, sight alignment is simply the relationship between the rear sight and the front sight, as seen by the rifleman. For aperture sights like those found on every US military rifle of the past century, the shooter looks through the rear aperture, rather than at it, and centers the top of the front sight post both horizontally and vertically within the circle of the aperture. The "trick" to how this method works is to not over think the issue. Due to some peculiar way in which the human brain functions, your eye WANTS to center the point of focus in the center of the aperture, so just let it do so.

  On the modern or future battlefield however, the use of iron sights by intelligent, practical riflemen with any degree of actual experience behind the rifle will be relegated to back up systems in the unlikely event that the primary optic system fails.



Sight alignment with aperture sights is simple, but time consuming.

American riflemen have long held optical disregard, ranging from a healthy distrust of the fragility of the devices to a visceral, scornful disgust. Among the most notable reasons for this were the perception that optics were slower to acquire a sight picture with in the dynamic environment of the battlefield, not as robust as iron sights, and not very useful in general, except for snipers and other designated sharpshooters.

With the arguable exception of tube-type telescopic optics that can often provide a very narrow field-of-view, it is a fact of human biology that optics are faster to acquire a sight picture with than iron sights. They use of iron sights requires you to see objects in two different focal planes. The human eye is unfortunately incapable of focusing on more than one focal plane at a time. A decent optic, on the other hand, places the POA and the reticle within the same visual focal plane for the shooter. While it is possible to train and condition the eye to make the transition from one focal plane to another, faster, it is inarguable that no one can train his eye to make that transition faster than he can simply focus on one single focal plane.

The only time this falls apart is when new shooters or incorrectly trained shooters try and run traditional tube-based optics such as low-powered magnified optics, Due to inconsistent eye relief, shooters find themselves craning their necks and bobbing their heads in a futile attempt to find the correct eye relief and sight picture. Good gunhandling mens that you mount the gun the exact same way, ever single time that you mount the gun. A consistent cheek-to-stock weld and the application of NPOA means that there will be no need for you to hunt for your sight picture.

Historically, it is a valid point of consideration that iron sights were more robust than optics. After all, optics were narrow tubes of brass or aluminum, with fragile glass lenses and even

more fragile, finely geared moving parts and spider's web silk crosshair reticles. Iron sights, on the other hand, were made out of iron. Today however, optics are being specifically engineered to meet the demands of combat applications, and have largely made this a non-issue. While it is certainly possible to have a catastrophic failure of a modern combat optics from a quality manufacturer like Trijicon, Aimpoint, or EoTech, modern optics have sustained direct hits from enemy rifle fire and still continued to function effectively.

During the early days of the war in Iraq, a U.S. Marine's Trijicon ACOG took a direct hit from enemy rifle fire. It still functioned. So much for fragility.

The force required to cause a catastrophic failure of a modern combat optic would arguably be great enough that it would result in a catastrophic failure even of modern iron sights.

Finally, optics—especially magnified optics—are of critically important usefulness to the modern warrior. Operating in an unconventional warfare environment, no one can afford the long-term negative political impact of negligently killing an unarmed noncombatant bystander. Magnified optics serve the extremely important purpose of allowing for more positive identification of targets in the moment before you fire. Determining whether that dark silhouette flitting across your garden is really a cannibalistic San Franciscan, or simply a neighborhood boy trying to sneak in and visit your daughter may not seem important now, but when maintaining good relations with your neighbor is the only way to insure the security of your left property line, having the ability to make a conscious, informed decision to shoot or not to shoot is absolutely crucial.

Additionally, we have to face the reality that very seldom will the bad people be courteous enough to stand up down range, in broad daylight, in perfect silhouette like E-type silhouettes on the range. Generally, like ourselves, they tend to hunker down for concealment, trying to hide behind objects that stop bullets, such as rocks, boulders, and concrete walls. While I enjoy the luxury of uncorrected 20/15 vision in both eyes, I'll be damned if—even at 100 meters—I can see a bad guy's foot sticking out from behind cover. With even a simple 3x magnification however, not only can I see the foot, I can punch a round through the brand logo. Even with an inadequate poodle-shooter round like 5.56NATO, smoking a dude in the Nike tends to seriously degrade his ability to continue aggressively prosecuting the fight in a forward direction!

When fighting in any environment, even a slight bump in magnification can make searching for, and locating, targets, simpler and easier than just scanning with the naked eye. Additionally, despite the old adage that "optics just magnify errors," the reality that if you can shoot well, magnification WILL improve your abilities, by offering a more refined sight picture. The M16A2 front sight post subtends five inches at 100 yards. The center dot on many modern optics subtends anywhere from 1-4 inches at 100 yards (minutes-of-angle: one inch at 100 yards, or 10 inches at 1000 yards). Between this fact, which allows for varying levels of greater precision in aiming—and the increased definition within the sight picture itself—such as being able to see facial details, versus simply seeing a flash of movement at 200 meters, means that you can achieve a more refined sight picture, allowing for a more accurate shot.

While gear can never replace good training and consequent skill, it can be a force multiplier. The reality is that today, it is categorically not necessary to learn to shoot with iron sights in order to become an effective combat rifleman. Of course, learning to execute the fundamentals of marksmanship with iron sights will teach you to shoot accurately. The reciprocal however—learning to execute the fundamentals of marksmanship with optics will teach you to shoot accurately—is equally true.

It has been said—with some accuracy—that you should learn to run a rifle with iron sights, even if all of your weapons are mounted with optics, because you may someday need to pick up a rifle from someone who doesn't use optics. While this is becoming less and less likely as more people wake up and realize the very real benefits of optics on fighting rifles, I really can't argue with that logic. That doesn't mean however, that you have to LEARN to shoot with irons. If you can shoot accurately with optics, learning to shoot accurately with irons is cake.

I run back-up iron sights (BUIS) on most of my rifles. I started out shooting with iron sights as a private, and it's just a habit now. I don't feel "right" running a gun without at least BUIS on it. The reality however, is that—in over fifteen years of shooting with optics—I have had to resort to my BUIS due to a catastrophic failure of a quality optic exactly zero times.

The only reason in today's world to run iron sights alone on a fighting rifle is because you are legitimately too poor to afford good optics. It is inarguable that running iron sights IS superior to trying to utilize cheap, inferior optics that will undoubtedly fail at the most inopportune moment. Truthfully though? You can procure—new or used—a decent combat rifle optic for far less than $400 if you are will to do the work to locate it.

With tube-based optics, such as the low-power magnified variable scopes, sight alignment is defined as the relationship the reticle and the full field-of-view, as witnessed by the shooter. Mounting the weapon so that a full field-of-view is seen through the optic, with no shadowed crescents around the edges, is the proper sight alignment. Finially with holographic RDS like the EoTech, it is even simpler: there is no sight alignment. If the reticle is superimposed on the desired POA—and the EoTech is zeroed—then the sight is aligned and you will get hits.

Sight "alignment" with the EoTech reticle. If the reticle is superimposed on the POA, the sight is aligned.

The "secret" to achieving a consistent, fast, correct sight alignment is simple. Mount the gun the exact same way, every single time you mount the gun, using a solid cheek-to-stock weld.

Sight Picture

Sight picture, as different from sight alignment, is simply the apparent visual relationship between the reticle aiming point or the top of the front sight post—with proper sight alignment established—in relationship to the desired point-of-aim on the target. For optics users, this is as simple as superimposing the appropriate portion of the reticle on the desired aiming point. For the more traditional iron sights, the rifleman aligns the sights, and then places the top edge of the front sight post so that it appears to bisect the center of the desired aiming point on the target—or so that the desired aiming point on the target appears to rest on top of the front sight post, like a "pumpkin on a post."

The desired aiming point on any particular target will depend on mission, range, and the situation. Traditionally, we have taught aspiring combat riflemen to shoot "center of mass." Since that was a relatively imprecise measure of "where do I shoot him, boss?" it got refined to "the upper thoracic cavity."

The upper thoracic cavity is that part of the upper torso—or thorax—that houses the lungs, heart, and most of the other vital organs of the human body. It can be roughly defined as the area between the nipples and the base of the throat. This is also referred to as the "sniper's triangle." While there are certainly no guarantees of the effectiveness of any projectile's lethality, a shot placed within the sniper's triangle offers the greatest chance of a successful "one-stop shot." Between the heart, the lungs, the diaphragm, and a host of major blood vessels exiting and entering the heart, the chances of a round puncturing something vital and immediately life-threatening, is greater than in any other portion of the human body except the head. Unfortunately for those of us who deal with reality, instead of video game and square range fantasies, the head can be a particularly difficult shot on an ambulatory target due to the size and inherent mobility.

Whether the enemy is equipped with ballistic protection in the form of body armor, is jacked up on some form of chemical stimulants, or just happens to be tougher than your ammunition is deadly on that particular day, there are numerous reasons why even a properly delivered round of high velocity rifle ammunition placed in the upper thoracic cavity may not put him down. For this reason, it is imperative that the shooter develop a consistent, conditioned plan for

continuing to engage the enemy with rifle fire until he is no longer a threat. While we traditionally preached the so-called "Mozambique" or "Failure-to-Stop" drill of firing two rounds to the chest followed by an assessment and a follow-up to the head if necessary, within many tactical shooting communities that has changed, due to the inherent difficulties of successfully hitting the head shot. The pelvic girdle provides a much better alternative.

In addition to the pelvis itself, the pelvic region is rich in major blood vessels and nerves. A solid hit to this region of the body, even on n armor-clad or chemically altered bad guy, with high velocity rifle rounds, will generally result in a major mechanical collapse or dysfunction, even if it doesn't kill them. While a broken, shattered pelvis is not as immediate a fight-stopper as a round to the brain, it is a far easier target to shoot successfully, and provides a very solid method of anchoring the target so that you can then shoot him in the head. Since he is generally not moving very quickly with a blown out hip, the rapidly moving head is generally much less rapid in its movements.

These of course, are ideal situations. The reality is, no one is going to stand there, like a perfect range silhouette, waiting for you to shoot at your heart's leisure. People who find themselves caught in traffic on the high-velocity ballistic highway generally come to the very rapid realization that oncoming traffic has the right-of-way. If they cannot find an off-ramp in a hurry, they will generally be looking for some sort of barricade to hide behind. You are not likely to get the ideal target area for a point-of-aim that you'd like to get, so we shoot what we can see. Even if all you manage to do is put a round through his shoulder, leg, or arm, you WILL slow him down, or cause him to move, revealing more of his body. You may even be fortunate enough to take him completely out of the fight through a psychological fight if he's a pussy.

This is why—even t the relatively close ranges at which modern infantry combat actually occurs—precision marksmanship ability is so absolutely critical. If you can consistently shoot 2MOA or better, at any distance out past 200 meters, in less than three seconds, you have a far better chance of hitting those partially exposed body parts than if you wait to see the entire silhouette of the target.

The final potential aiming point for the combat rifleman is "known, suspected, or likely positions of enemy cover." These are positions where you know the enemy is hiding, or suspect that he may be hiding, when you cannot positively determine if there is an enemy shooter there. This will be covered in more detail later, when we discuss suppressive fire doctrine.

- Breathing and Breath Control. Breath control is an absolutely crucial element in good marksmanship. If the rifleman is breathing normally while he tries to fire, the rise and fall of his chest will cause the muzzle of the weapon to move vertically, up and down. Unlike the sedentary pace of a target range, in combat, the rifleman will be sprinting as fast as humanly possible in short bursts, while wearing heavy gear, and he will have huge amounts of adrenal hormones coursing through his system. You will not be breathing normally; you will be gasping for every ounce of air that you can get. Your muzzle will not just "rise and fall." It will seem to leap violently upward before coming crashing back down to earth, as your body struggles to force oxygen to your muscles.

Traditional marksmanship teaches us to wait for the natural respiratory pause at the end of the exhalation phase of breathing before taking the shot. This natural pause last five to six seconds, and can be extended without undue hardship for at least twice as long. Unfortunately, the enemy is only exposing himself to your fires for a few seconds, and will likely not be operating on the same schedule as your diaphragm. Survival and success make it necessary to take a shot—or a series of shots—at sometimes inconvenient moments. Instead of waiting for the natural respiratory pause, you may simply have to create a respiratory pause—what I call an "induced respiratory pause"—long enough to take a shot or shots, even if the target is presented to you in mid-respiratory cycle.

- Trigger Squeeze, Reset, and Control. Perhaps the one fundamental of traditional marksmanship that retains the most commonality with combat marksmanship is the trigger squeeze, reset, and control. The spasmodic reflex of a convulsive grip with the muscles of the whole hand, when "jerking" the trigger, will result in missing the target in a gunfight, just as it will on the target range. The trigger must move straight to the rear, along it's mechanical axis of travel, and break cleanly, without the sight picture being altered by these actions. Further, it must do so in a hurry.

  The key to accomplishing this is two-fold. First is to keep the firing hand as relaxed as possible, reducing the tension in the firing hand, in order to reduce the impact of the nervous system's sympathetic muscle response. This will allow the trigger finger to function as independently as possible, without having a negative effect on the rest of the grip of the weapon. The finger should bend at the second knuckle, to form a 90-degree angle. This will allow you to press the trigger straight backwards, without pushing or pulling it to either side.

  This MAY result—for most people it WILL result—in having more of your finger on the trigger than just the tip of the pad of the fingertip, as most of us traditionally learned to shoot. That is okay! This ties directly into the second aspect of trigger control, which is to mentally focus on making the trigger move straight to the rear, along its mechanical axis of travel. Unless the weapon is severely damaged or worn, of course, the trigger cannot move in any other direction. Trying to force it to move sideways however—even inadvertently—will cause the muzzle of the weapon to move in the opposite direction, negatively impacting your sight picture at the moment the shot breaks. That means you miss.

  Once you have fired the shot, the next aspect of trigger control that comes into consideration is reset. The importance of focusing on trigger reset seems to wax and wane in popularity among tactical shooting instructors. I believe that—at the initial learning stage—it is absolutely critical to learn and master reset, in order to run your gun as accurately and as fast as possible.

  At its simplest, trigger reset is simply holding the trigger to the rear as the shot breaks, instead of slamming the finger forward in a hurry. Once the gun begins returning out of the recoil cycle, you only let the trigger go forward enough to feel the "click" of the sear reset. As your reticle then settles back into a sight picture, for all intents and purposes, you've already taken up the slack for the next shot. Not only have you reduced the amount of time required to take the next shot—even if by only hundredths of a second—you've also managed to eliminate, or at least

greatly reduce, the margin for error from "jerking" the trigger stroke through the take-up on the next shot.

Two major arguments arise in opposition to the practice of the trigger reset. One is that it takes too much conscious effort to learn and practice. This leads to new shooters waiting too long to reset, so that they can "feel" the reset. This is initially true...sort of. If the shooter never trains past the initial stages, it will result in a very severe limitation on how rapidly he can run his gun without jerking the trigger. I can say however, that after twenty years of combat rifle training, practice, and execution, I honestly don not know exactly when I stopped thinking about it. In point of fact, if I want to avoid using proper reset, such as for teaching purposes, I have to make the conscious decision to avoid it.

Focus on holding the trigger to the rear until the gun settles back into a sight picture. Let it out until you feel or hear the reset. Once you've mastered that part, and have learned WHERE your reset is, focus on getting back on the trigger BEFORE the gun settles back into the sight picture. Ultimately, if you wait until you can "hear" the reset, you're going to be late.

The second argument that I've heard with the reset is that it's a "gamer" trick that sets up a failed reset through the shooter "riding the link," and not letting the trigger travel all the way forward to the reset. This is nothing more than a training shortfall. If you are pushing for more speed, before you've mastered the fundamentals at your current speed, you're putting the cart in front of the horse, and you WILL fuck it up. As the old cliché goes, "slow is smooth, smooth is fast." While you will initially need to focus your attention on allowing the reset to happen, eventually you need to shift your attention to ensuring that you are getting solid hits on the target. Taking your mind off of the conscious effort to manage reset will help prevent this problem.

- Speed of Execution. Speed in getting your weapon into a fight is absolutely crucial. Some people have erroneously pointed out that there are no timers on the battlefield. Those people are fucking idiots, and are slow. While it is certainly true that there are unlikely to be any PACT timers present, there will be at least one timer of far greater importance on any battlefield—the opponent who is going to try like a motherfucker to be faster than you. Use a timer in your training to ensure that you are always getting faster.

  At the same time however, you "can't miss fast enough to win a gun fight!" No matter what stage of learning you are at, take the time—from the very beginning—to develop your fundamentals in every firing position: NPOA, solid shooting position, trigger squeeze, sight alignment and picture, and trigger control. Strive to acquire the tightest shot groups you can manage. This will develop the critical base of accuracy that will remain as you increase your speed, as long as you continue to apply the fundamentals consistently. The only way to remain accurate as you increase your speed is to mount the gun the exact same way, every single time you mount the gun.

  Shooting fast, close-range drills is fun. Just like any red-blooded American man with a semi-automatic rifle, I like to do "mag dumps" at 10 meters, to see how fast I can run the gun. If

you're not willing to do the "boring" shit though, and take the time in field firing position shooting, to develop your fundamentals, then you'll never have the ability to make those difficult, precision shots, on demand. If you can't make them on demand, then you can't made them on demand. You are NOT suddenly going to be able to make the uber-super-awesome-tactical-shot-of-a-lifetime, that you've never been able to make on the range, simply because "now it's for real!" Whether the fight occurs at five meters, 50 meters, or 500 meters, when all that you can see of the enemy is the edge of his head and shoulder, along the side of a boulder or building corner, you'd sure as shit better be able to provide an accurate shot, on demand.

Yes, it is absolutely crucial to shoot the other dude before he shoots you; that is a given. A fast presentation however, as in the shear speed of moving the gun isn't what matters. A fast first shot is only a small portion of what makes a good, fast presentation. Two things are important in your presentation: a fast first hit and equally fast follow-up hits. The ONLY way to achieve those is through consistent application of the fundamentals of marksmanship to every single shot you fire.

In order to achieve the fast first hit, the final position of your presentation must have the gun on target, without having to make adjustments to your position—natural point-of-aim. This is why when you are learning to shoot the correct way, you start out slow. You take the time to achieve your position, find a sight picture, and then you check to insure that you're in your NPOA. This is the meaning of "slow is smooth, smooth is fast." At an applied level, you'd damned sure better be able to place accurate fire on target in a goddamned hurry. In order to learn how to accomplish this however, you need to go slow enough to be sure that you're learning to do shit the right way. Dialing in your presentation until it is perfect means that you should be able to fire the exact moment that your weapon stops moving.

Fast follow-up shots will only be possible if your presentation ended in a position that will allow you to shoot multiple shots without modifying the position due to the effects of recoil. There is no effective way to STOP recoil, and the only recourse we have for dealing with it is through recovering from the recoil cycle as precisely and consistently as possible. A solid, stable, and durable firing position will achieve that.

The most important goal of a perfect presentation is that it places your sight picture directly onto the target's POA, and that it provides adequate, consistent muzzle control so that at the end of the recoil cycle, the sights end up in the exact same spot they were in when the shot broke. THIS IS THE SECRET TO SHOOTING FAST!

Timing is not a specific rhythm or cadence. It's not a certain number of shots per second. Trying to time your shots in this manner, instead of letting your vision and trigger control do the work of timing the shots will simply not work. In order to shoot at the speed required, when being slower than multiple bad guys means you die, we cannot rely on the slow, deliberate trigger control we learn in traditional, competition target shooting. We can't try and "trap" the trigger, slapping it to the rear in order to try and force the shot to break at a given time either. Through proper, deliberate, sometimes slow, training, the actual break of the trigger becomes almost subconscious as it ties to what the eyes see in regards to sight picture and sight alignment.

Aiming and Firing Methods

Due to the varying differences in the balance between accuracy and speed, different aiming and firing methods have been developed over time to facilitate that balance under different conditions. It is true that "speed is fine, but accuracy is final." Sniper precise accuracy however, will do you no good if it is not delivered in time. For anyone who picks up a rifle with the intent of going in harm's way, the importance of precise, well-aimed rifle fire in small-unit combat cannot be underestimated. You should never fire faster than you can shoot accurately. You better be able to shoot accurately as fast as you need to though.

A single shot, precise enough to punch through the opponent's brain stem, is definitely a final statement to a fight. If it takes you five seconds to achieve that show however; to acquire a solid firing position, find your sight picture, control your breathing, and gently squeeze the trigger until the shot breaks cleanly, without disruption of the sight picture, it's probably not going to be the final statement that you were hoping for.

In the five seconds of relative calm that you apparently need in order to manage that fight-ending shot, I can dump most of a full magazine of 5.56NATO, at least accurately enough to disrupt your ability to get your shot. Is my round that hits you in the shoulder or leg or foot going to be as lethal as your intended shot to my cerebral cortex? Of course not. What it WILL be though, is effective at keeping you from shooting me in the head for the moment. Gunshot wounds HURT, and they tend to—at least temporarily—distract people from what they were doing when they got shot. What if only five of my thirty round mag dump actually hit you? One in the shoulder and one in the thigh, with the rest in the hands or feet; Is that "accurate enough" to keep you from shooting me in the head? If you're tough enough (and let's face it, like me, you're probably not...), it may not be enough, in the long run, but it's certainly fair to say that it will keep you preoccupied long enough that I can now move somewhere that allows me the same five seconds to get the head shot that you were hoping to get on me.

The speed versus accuracy equation is an all too often overlooked issue that is extremely relative to the immediate situation that you face. I may need to shoot you again, certainly, but if you're not shooting t me effectively—since I've interrupted your mental process—then I've probably given myself the time I need to take that second shot. While it is true that taking that precision head shot will end the fight with one round, how long is it going to take at any given range? It will certainly take longer at 300 meters than it does at 30 meters. If you're taking that amount of time—regardless of what that amount of time is for your personally—to set up one shot, how many shots can I get into your shoulder, chest, leg, arm, or other "less vital" body parts that will STILL be effective at shutting down your ability to make that difficult head shot?

The aiming and firing methods that have been developed over time are the means we utilize to apply the speed versus accuracy equation in the real world. Historically, we've taught four basic methods of aiming and firing:

- Slow, Aimed Fire. Slow, aimed fire is what most people think of when they think about rifle marksmanship. It is the most desirable method to use, because it allows us to take our time in order to accomplish very precise shots. Unfortunately, against fast-moving, fleeting targets that

are actively trying to avoid getting shot, slow, aimed fire doesn't work particularly well. By the time you've broken the shot, the target has disappeared.

- Rapid, Aimed Fire. With the prevalence of modern combat optics, slow, aimed fire is generally faster than rapid, aimed fire was with iron sights. The ability to focus on the target and the reticle at the same time makes the use of optics retarded fast. The only difference between slow, aimed fire (SAF) and rapid, aimed fire (RAF), is the time required, due to the difference in refinement of the sight picture with iron sights. Since there is no practical difference in the refinement with optics, the differences are largely theoretical. Past 25 meters, with optics, most combat firing will be RAF, due to necessity.

- Aimed, Quick-Kill. Aimed quick-kill (AQK) is a method of achieving sufficient accuracy at a higher speed with iron sights. AQK is only effective within 10-15 meters, and then it is only accurate enough to ensure torso size shot groups.

  With iron sights, AQK involves looking over the top of the rear aperture sight, and placing the front sight post on the desired POA on the target before firing the shot. With optics, AQK involves simply superimposing the top of the front bell of the optic on the target's desired POA and firing the shot. The problem with AQK is that—with optics, and often without—it is largely obsolete, due to more modern understanding of reaction times and how the mind and eye work. Through mounting the gun the exact same way, every single time that you mount the gun, what you will discover is that, by the time you would be able to achieve AQK at the 10-15 meter distance, you already have a legitimate sight picture through the reticle, or through the rear aperture. Consistency will provide greater speed than an abuse of the fundamentals of marksmanship can.

- Instinctive Fire. Instinctive fire is what most people think of when they consider the term "point shooting." This is the use of "muscle memory" to shoot the weapon, while the shooter's vision remains focused on the target. This can only be utilized inside of 7-10 meters, and most effectively inside of three meters.

  Unfortunately for the "point shooting" advocate, instinctive fire isn't. It can only be developed if the shooter has created adequate kinesthetic neural motor pathways through countless repetitions of slow, aimed fire, to insure that the weapon is mounted the exact same way, every single time the weapon is mounted. While it is extremely useful for those emergency situations where there is legitimately not enough time to even mount the weapon, let alone to verify a sight picture, attempting to use instinctive fire—even inside of 7-10 meters—without the requisite and recent slow, aimed fire practice—will result in misses, despite the extremely close range. This is the reason so many police officers can fire several magazines of ammunition at a bad guy on a few inches or feet away and miss completely. Intentionally or not, they are trying to use instinctive fire, without having developed the ability to do so through sufficient, appropriate training.

Which specific aiming and firing method you will need to use at any given time is entirely dependent

on the factors of the mission, the situation, and your skill at arms. If a dude is shooting at you from behind a concrete wall 100 meter away, how much of his body is probably exposed to you? A shoulder, part of his forearm, and maybe the corner of his head above the eye he is aiming with? What if that guy can shoot a four-inch group at that distance, firing two rounds per second? Is that going to leave you sufficient time to find the perfect sight picture and delicately squeeze off one shot, using SAF? Would you be better off using RAF, and dumping four or five rounds at him, hoping one will hit him, but knowing they will be close enough to actually force him back behind cover and to stop shooting at you? What if he is only at 30 feet, but in a crowd of non-combatants? Can you use AQK or instinctive fire, knowing that if you miss, you will kill non-combatants, or should you—just perhaps—take the risk of slowing down a beat or two, and using RAF instead, to insure that it is the bad guy you actually hit?

A practical definition of effective suppressive fire is "fire that is accurate enough and fast enough to keep the enemy more concerned with not getting shot than he is with shooting at you." If the bad guy is shooting 4MOA groups at two rounds per second, but all he can see of you is the corner of your head above the rear sight, can he hit you? Perhaps, but probably not. What he can damned sure do though, is get those rounds close enough that you are going to be more concerned with not getting shot than you are with shooting him! If, every time that you peek out to take a shot, you are greeted with two or four or six rounds blowing fragments and concrete chunks and dust into your eyes, and zipping through the space that your head was going to occupy, what is your response going to be? Are you going to be able to ignore the incoming long enough to take an accurate shot? What if the center of his 4MOA group is the middle of your forehead? Then, one of those rounds is going to kill you. By the definition above, the enemy is using effective suppressive fire, even if none of his rounds actually hit you. He doesn't need to use SAF for that. RAF, and perhaps even AQK, will get it done well enough.

Speed and accuracy are relative, and you have to decide what is the balancing point between the two that will meet your needs. In the bolt-action days of the Enfield and Springfield 03A3, thirty rounds per minute was the standard. That's pretty respectable from a bolt-action rifle, considering the length of time needed to conduct a reload with stripper clips every ten rounds, even for a practiced rifleman. With a magazine-fed, modern, semiautomatic rifle, that is ridiculously slow within the 200 meter range of common combat engagements. We don't have to hit the bad guy with every shot. We just have to be close enough to make him worry about getting shot. I can consistently shoot a sub-4MOA group out to 200 meters, with a low-powered variable scope on my M4, at a rate-of-fire approaching or surpassing the three rounds every two seconds. That is 90 rounds—three fully-loaded magazines—in one minute, and I'm putting every round where I want it to go. Suddenly precision is important, but only as it is relative to speed.

A lot of readers of course will claim that if I slowed down, I would shoot more accurately. This is inarguably true. Considering however that the norm on rifle ranges across this country is to consider 4MOA the pinnacle of practical accuracy, what trade-off would I be making by slowing down? Sure, I'd be even MORE accurate than most people...but at the cost of not being able to provide adequate suppressive fire to protect my partner.

There are other additional caveat to consider as well. What if the fight is occurring in a built-up suburban or urban area? Now, you have to slow down in order to ensure that the dude you are shooting at is actually a bad guy. You also have to be certain that, if you do miss the bad guy, your round is not

going to go past him and hit some kid running down the street. You're now back to dealing with RAF—or even SAF—as well as additional crucial topics such as target identification and discrimination, under stress and exertion. Speed and accuracy are relative, and only training and frequent, realistic practice can teach you where that balance point exists for you.

Don't shoot any faster than you're able, but be able to shoot as fast as you need.

The Prone Position

All other factors being equal, the prone position should always be your preferred shooting position, unless time, intervening obstructions, or time constraints preclude the use of the position. The prone position is more stable and durable than any other firing position, while also allowing you to present the smallest possible visual signature to the enemy. Whenever possible, as with any other position, the use of a rest to improve and increase stability should be leveraged to your benefit.

With the modern, magazine-fed semiautomatic fighting rifle, the use of the so-called magazine-monopod is often a possibility that offers great benefits for your stable firing position, while simultaneously reducing your physical profile and visual signature to the enemy.

Magazine-monopod prone. Notice the magwell is seated deep on the ground, offering additional stability to the firing position.

The key to choice of prone position variations rests on external factors, including the ability to see and engage the enemy with observation and accurate fires, while affording adequate cover and/or concealment from enemy observation and return fires. If a potential firing position offers these benefits to the prone position, then the shooter should adopt a comfortable prone firing position, square behind the gun, pushing into the stock of the weapon.

In order to use the prone unsupported position, you have to get your arms directly beneath the gun, so that you have skeletal support for the rifle, instead of using muscular tension to hold the weapon. The prone unsupported position should be used only if intervening vegetation or other obstacles preclude the ability to use the magazine monopod or some other form of rest for increased stability of the

weapon.

Prone unsupported position. Notice that the elevation required for this, caused me to have to move my hands rearward on the gun, to a mag-well grip. That's okay. We want our support hand out as far as possible. In this position, that is as far as I was able to place it in order to acquire a sight picture.

The prone position works well in any environment, although it tends to be of least utility in dense urban environments. First of all, there are so many low obstacles in the urban environment that the rifleman's field-of-view from the position can be prohibitively restricted. Second, being in the prone position on pavement increases the chances of the enemy successfully ricocheting a round into your face or upper chest.

The Seated and Squatting Position

The seated position is often considered the ideal shooting position for high-angle fire such as needed in alpine regions and urban areas. While the seated is correctly recognized as an extremely stable, durable, and solid firing position, the largest drawback to the seated position makes it largely impractical for man combat rifle situations. That drawback—the time it takes to get into a tight position—is overcome through the use of the seated positions closest cousin, the squatting position—sometimes referred to irreverently as the "rice paddy prone" position.

While there are certainly times and situations that will allow the necessary time to adopt the seated position, for most scenarios, the closely related squatting position offers all the benefits—without the drawback. When the prone position is not practical, and time is of the essence, the squatting position offers a functional alternative. It not only provides adequate clearance of intervening obstacles to facilitate accurate sight pictures on enemy positions, it also offers most of the stability and solidity of the prone position.

Personally, I find the squatting position to be as stable—or more stable—than the prone unsupported position. The squat offers the ability to "sink" into an extremely solid, stable firing position, as well as to use external rests. This allows the squatting position to be solid enough that a decent marksman can achieve solid hits at ranges in excess of 300 meters from this position, with or without external rifle rests.

The squatting position. At least as solid as the prone unsupported, but offering far greater flexibility than the prone or the seated position. This position should be mastered by every aspiring combat rifleman.

The Kneeling Positions

There are three basic reasons to adopt the kneeling position. The first is to make use of cover that will not provide adequate protection in the standing position, while not allowing for adequate field-of-fire and observation from the prone position. The second reason to adopt the kneeling position is in order to provide a suitably stable firing platform, in order to achieve a more difficult shot when the prone position will not provide an adequate field-of-view to achieve the shot.

Both of these reasons are more than adequately addressed by the superior squatting position. The third reason for utilizing the kneeling position is because you are simply too inflexible and nonathletic to achieve the squatting position.

In the first case, when the need to adopt the kneeling position for the protection offered by limited cover is pressing, a traditional variation of the kneeling position, often referred to as "urban kneeling," or "California prone," can be used by simply dropping straight down to both knees, while keeping the upper torso in the normal combat firing position. While this does not offer much of an accuracy advantage over the standing position, the lower profile, allowing the use of cover, is what takes precedence in this case.

For other applications of the kneeling stance, by sinking as low and tight as possible, and using isometric tension to stabilize the weapon and your position, the kneeling position—while not as stable or durable as the squatting—can be adequately stable to allow shots to well past 200 meters. The key to this position is that it is NOT the traditional tricep-resting-on-the-knee position. The idea is to get so tight into your position, that once you completely relax, the NPOA remains the same.

The kneeling position must be "sunk" low and tight, in order to be solid. It's not like your little green army men's upright kneeling position.

The Standing Position

Regardless of the best efforts of partisan forces to use stand-off attacks at to fight at a distance greater than the enemy's ability to shoot accurately, irregular warfare operations often end as toe-to-toe slugfests, requiring the ability to close with and kill the enemy at "bad breath" distances. Additionally, outside of those stand-off when the enemy is equipped with technologically superior assets such as indirect-fire weapons (IDF) and close air support (CAS), one of the more effective tactics that the irregular fighter can leverage to his advantage is getting "belt buckle to belt buckle" inside the safe engagement range envelopes of those weapons. Intentionally fighting at "danger close" engagement ranges will allow the guerrilla fighter to negate—or at least to significantly reduce—the advantage that the technologically superior force enjoys from these weapons. While the ability to utilize personal small arms at the mechanical limits of their effective range is an important skill set, the ability to "run and gun" at CQB distances is equally critical.

Too often however, this subset of combat marksmanship skill is too focused on simply putting a large volume of fire down range as quickly as possible, with little or no regard given to precision marksmanship and the conservation of precious—limited—ammunition. The fact is, randomly scattered holes, across the entire surface of an e-type silhouette is not precision fire, even by combat accuracy standards. Regardless of the caliber of your chosen personal small arms, the surest way to be certain of achieving rapid cessation of hostility from enemy personnel is to put rounds into his vital zones. This requires—even in close-quarters environments—the ability to utilize a solid, stable, durable firing position. During CQB, the fighter will generally find it necessary to make the majority of his shots from the standing position, despite the fact that this is the least stable firing position available.

At CQB distances however, when the need to shoot immediately rises, there my simply not be time to

adopt a more stable, lower profile shooting position. In theses instances, the need to be able to fire from the standing position, at self-defense ranges, will take precedence. Fortunately, through the use of the principles of a solid, stable, and durable firing position, is IS still possible to shoot accurately and fast at these ranges, from the standing position.

It is critical to remember that, at these distances, in the chaos of the actual fight, the need may arise to instantly and effortlessly transition from the rifle to impact weapon applications of the rifle, sich as muzzle strikes, or the use of alternative close-range weapons, such as the sidearm, knife, or even unarmed combatives techniques. The key to a seamless, integrated transition between these different methodologies of defeating the enemy at CQB distances is the use of a shooting position that can serve as a universal or systemic fighting position, regardless of the weapon. This systemic approach can also reduce the decision-making phase of the OODA cucle, by reducing the amount of thought and deliberation needed to initiate violent action when a threat arises.

In the combative standing position, the position of your feet is irrelevant. You may be required to fire from any awkward position, or even while moving. At the novice, learning stage however, the best method for initial learning is to plant your feet slightly more than shoulder-width apart, with your support-side foot an aggressive step forward. While we traditionally taught the CQB firing stance with the feet square to the target, and this worked relatively well with weapons like the MP5 and the M3 "grease gun" submachineguns (SMG), it was actually intended simply to teach the ability to fire shoulder weapons with the hips and body square behind the gun. The SMGs were rifle weight weapons, firing a pistol caliber cartridge, thus largely missing any significant felt recoil impulse. Shooting a modern fighting rifle—in a rifle caliber—means that we must confront the devil that is recoil and somehow manage to mitigate that recoil. Shooting from the combative standing position, with the support foot an aggressive forward step forward, as you lean into the gun, allows you to better absorb and mitigate recoil.

The difficulty in this is keeping your shoulders and hips square to the target. Keeping your feet, knees, and hips flexed, with toes pointed at the target, will assist in keeping your hips oriented square to the target. Remain as relaxed as possible through the shoulders, with your head up and looking forward. Do not "turtle" and drop your head in order to find the sight picture. Mount the gun the exact same way every single time you mount the gun. Bring the gun to your eyes!

Dry-Fire and the 5+1 Drill

It has been said—correctly—that expert riflemen are not made on the live-fire range, but with extensive dry-fire practice. One of the best applications of dry-fire training that I have come across is what MSG Paul Howe (USA, ret), formerly of 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (SFOD-D..."Delta"), refers to as a 5+1 drill. I first learned this technique from the senior Bravo (18B, Special Forces Weapons Sergeant) on an A-Team, before later coming across the method described in Howe's book **The Tactical Trainer**. The only difference between the two was that my former mentor used a 10+1 approach, rather than Howe's 5+1.

The 5+1 drill simply involves "firing" five dry-fire repetitions at the range before every live-fire shot you take. While not feasible with every single drill, the vast majority of training drills for combat marksmanship will benefit greatly from the use of this invaluable training drill. The 5+1 drill allows the instructor or the shooter to study the student's biomechanics during the dry-fire repetitions, rather than wasting ammunition trying to determine the cases of missed shots during the live-fire iterations.

Whenever the subject of dry-fire is raised, the use of snap caps is certain to follow closely behind, to protect the weapons from firing pin damage. This is completely unnecessary in a modern, centerfire weapon! A good quality firearm, built with modern metals, will not be damaged by dry-fire practice. My personal weapons have been dry-fired hundreds of thousands of times with absolutely zero damage from the experience.

In addition to the 5+1 drill, dry-fire should constitute a majority of your firearm's training. From presentations and adopting firing positions, to sight picture and sight alignment; from cleanly breaking the trigger for accurate shots, to reloads—dry-fire practice will allow you practice almost every aspect of your weapons handling except recoil mitigation, effectively and efficiently. If you use dry-fire to master the stable, solid, durable firing positions though, even your recoil mitigation will be improved with dry-fire practice. In addition to not costing you anything, since you are not wasting precious, expensive ammunition, it also helps preclude the development of bad habits such as flinching and recoil anticipation.

Combat Reloads and Emergency Action

Even the best modern magazine-fed semiautomatic fighting rifle can fail to fire under certain circumstances, ranging from being out of ammunition to faulty ammunition, broken parts, or foreign objects and debris inducing a malfunction. The two most common indicators of a failure in the modern fighting rifle is either a "click" when you press the trigger, expecting a "bang," or what is referred to as a "dead" trigger. This is a trigger that, when pressed, simply moves, with no discernible effect.

In a modern fighting rifle of reliable construction, the most common cause of a failure will result in a

dead trigger, because the weapon will be empty. The single most common cause of a failure in a modern rifle is that the magazine is empty. The solution for this is a speed reload, or an emergency reload.

The Speed Reload

The speed reload is an emergency procedure utilized when your weapon runs empty unexpectedly, during a fight. It is imperative that you maintain the ability to continue engaging hostiles until the fight is over, in order to prevent the enemy from successfully maneuvering against you and killing you. When your weapon runs out of ammunition in the middle of the fight, the speed reload is the best solution to this problem.

While some "experts" have pointed out—correctly—that the partisan fighter cannot afford to simply leave spent magazines behind, there are some important caveats that they are overlooking in their quest to differ with the training industry standard. There are two times in a gun fight when it is absolutely, unequivocally true that the speed reload is the only right answer. The first of these is for the initial reload of a fight. At that point, you have either achieved fire superiority and the enemy is sufficiently concerned with not getting shot that he is not particularly interested in shooting at you, or you have not achieved fire superiority. If you have achieved fire superiority, conducting a speed reload and getting your gun back into the fight as rapidly as possible will allow you to maintain that dominance of the battlefield. If you have NOT yet gained fire superiority, conducting an effective speed reload will provide you the ability to continue trying to achieve it.

The second situation that mandates a speed reload in a gunfight is when you are providing protective suppressive fire in order to allow a Ranger buddy to move and maneuver with some degree of safety. F your weapon runs dry while your partner is moving, you are obligated to communicate that fact to him at the same time you are conducting a speed reload to get your gun back into the fight and continue providing him with protection. Your ability to recover and resume firing, before the enemy can realize you are not firing at him, and get HIS gun into action, may be all that saves your partner's life.

Any time that you discover that your weapon has run dry during a fight, you should conduct a speed reload, unless you have adequate weight of numbers and fire superiority on your side to ensure that the advantage will not be lost if you take the time to conduct a slower reload.

To conduct a speed reload, the shooter will generally realize that his weapon has run dry in one of two ways: either he will press the trigger to the rear and feel a dead trigger, or he will feel the bolt carrier group (BCG) lock to the rear. With even a little bit of training and practice, the latter is a reliable method of indicating that the rifle is now empty. In either case however, a double-feed or other failure-to-feed malfunction can induce a similar or the same indicators in the gun. For this reason, the shooter must—whenever climactic and light conditions allow—visually inspect the weapon to insure that it is in fact, empty.

This is accomplished by rolling the gun inboard, so that the ejection port is facing upward, allowing the shooter to look into the ejection port and see both the empty chamber and the empty magazine. See the photos below to witness how this can look in the standing position. As soon as the shooter is able to visually verify the condition of his weapon, he returns his attention to the enemy action, and continues

the speed reload through tactile sensation.

The shooter uses his trigger finger to depress the magazine release button on an AR15 type weapon (all descriptions in this manual are for AR15/M16 type rifles, unless specifically noted otherwise), and holds it down. He then rotates the gun aggressively, around the bore axis. Generally, this will result in the magazine being ejected from the weapon due to momentum. If the magazine does not eject from the rifle, the shooter uses his support hand to grasp the magazine and rip it out, immediately dropping it to the ground.

The shooter tucks the stock of the weapon into his ribcage, while his support hand moves to the first available magazine on his load-bearing equipment (LBE). He may grasp the magazine using either the "beer can grip" or the "finger index" methods. Individual preference and the layout of your LBE will determine which is most efficient for your personally, but for most people, the beer can grip is far superior for rifle speed reloads.

Feeling the BCG lock to the read, I've rolled the gun inboard, so I can visually inspect the chamber. Notice that my trigger finger has automatically extended to the magazine release button.

Here, I've rolled the gun the opposite direction, and pulled it into my "workspace." Although the spent magazine self-ejected, I could have pulled it out at this point if necessary.

As my free hand moves to grasp a new magazine, I keep the gun in my "workspace," keeping my eyes up, focused on what is going on downrange.

Here, I've moved the new magazine up to the gun. I'll watch the feed lips into the mag well before looking back forwards, to see what is going on in the fight.

The shooter will rapidly move the feed lips of the magazine to the opening of the magazine well, simultaneously shifting his visual focus back that point for a moment. Once he visually verifies that the magazine is indexed inside of the magazine well, he drives the magazine home sharply until he feels it seat in the locked position with a "click." If you do not feel the magazine click into this locked position, SLAP the base of the magazine firmly with the heel of your hand to force it into the locked position. The shooter than grasps the magazine and tugs firmly to insure that it is both fully seated and locked into position.

As soon as the shooter verifies the seated and locked condition of the magazine, he reaches up and depresses the bolt hold open (BHO) device, allowing the BCG to move forward into battery. While the traditional method of utilizing the BHO has been to firmly slap the "ping-pong paddle" with the heel of the hand, this method tends to result in missing the paddle as the hand naturally cups around it. This in turn, results in repeated, increasingly frantic slapping of the side of the weapon, as the shooter gets locked into a mental loop. It is far simpler, and actually more robust, to simply reach up with the thumb and depress the ping-pong paddle, since it is already in close proximity, due to grasping the magazine to tug and insure that it is firmly seated.

The alternative method of releasing the BHO is to grasp the charging handle of the weapon and "rack" it rearward, then allowing it to slam forward under the power of the recoil spring. This method is as robust as depressing the ping-pong paddle with your thumb, but adds fractions of a second to the process. Your hand has to move back to the charging handle, and then move back to the forearm of the weapon to establish a firing grip. While the argument has been made that such a skill is less of a fine-motor neural pathway—meaning it will be more reliable under physical and mental stress—that is a fallacious article at best. The reality is that slapping the BHO with your thumb is considerably less of a fine-motor skill than acquiring a precise sight picture or pressing the trigger with enough finesse to avoid disrupting that sight picture. Finally, the other drawback to racking the charging handle on speed reloads is the tendency of many people to "ride" the charging handle forward, inadvertently, rather than just letting it go. This results in short-stroking the weapon, with a resulting failure-to-feed.

Finally, the shooter returns his support side hand to the forearm of the weapon, in order to reacquire a firing grip on the weapon, and resumes scanning for, or engaging, targets. The speed reload can be developed to take less than two seconds, depending on the method used to carry spare magazines. The speed reload should be practiced and mastered from all firing positions. Too many people get smoking fast on speed reloads in the standing position, but never bother trying it—let alone mastering it—from other firing positions they may find themselves in.

The Tactical Reload

The tactical reload is a technique used to ensure that the magazine in your weapon is topped off, whenever possible. Use of the tactical reload should always be considered preferable to the speed reload, since it means the gun will never be empty. The problem that arises with the tactical reload is that we have taught that it is to be used when there is a "lull in the action." This brief respite may be momentary, and while it may occur coincidentally, it often has to be created. A "coincidental" lull in the action of a fight occurs randomly, as none of the belligerents in the fight can see a suitable target to engage, resulting in a short term break in the gunfire. An induced lull in the action, on the other hand, may occur at any time that you feel that you have an opportunity to take a moment and reload. This may occur—as an example—when your Ranger buddy is providing you with protective suppressive fire, such as immediately before or after you move to or from a temporary fighting position.

The second drawback to the tactical reload—other than waiting for a lull that may never occur unless you create it—is the issue of attempting to count the number of rounds that you have fired from a particular magazine. The remedy to this is to NOT try and count the rounds fired. Instead, it is simpler to recognize the ease with which you can determine, "have I fired more than fifteen rounds, or less than fifteen rounds?" If you know—or are relatively certain—that you have fired more than half of your magazine, and can see an opportunity to induce a lull in the action that will allow you to complete a tactical reload, then do so. There is no reason that you need to wait for the enemy to provide you with the necessary lull.

While famed small-arms instructor Chuck Taylor supposedly invented the most commonly taught tactical reload method, back in the 1980s, while teaching at Jeff Cooper's Gunsite Ranch, the older method, now referred to a "reload with retention," seems to be making a comeback in the civilian

shooting sector, with good reason—it works. This second method is the technique we generally used when I was a young Ranger. I still use it, despite being intimately familiar with Chuck's method, because it is simpler and far more robust.

To execute the reload with retention (RWR) method of the tactical reload, the shooter realizes that he has fired somewhat more than half of his current magazine. He does not know, for certain, whether he has one round left in the magazine or ten, but he is relatively certain that he has fewer than fifteen rounds. As such, having decided that he does not want to run completely dry, he decides that he should conduct a RWR.

The shooter should be in a covered and/or concealed position and thus, relatively protected from enemy direct fire. He removes his finger from the trigger, and moves the safety selector switch from "FIRE" to "SAFE." He then moves his trigger finger to the magazine release button and depresses it, as he grasps the magazine and withdraws it from the magazine well. The weapon is stowed somewhere on the body, other than a magazine pouch.

Once the shooter has stowed the partially expended magazine, he moves his hand to draw a new magazine, and feeds it into the weapon. The shooter then reacquires a sight picture with the weapon, moves the safety selector switch from "SAFE" to "FIRE," and can begin to re-engage targets, as they become available. Yes, it really is that simple. Take the old magazine out, stow it somewhere, then put a new magazine in....

The rise in popularity of "dump pouches" on LBE in recent years is a solution to the problem of where to stow partially expended magazines. While a well-designed dump pouch is a spectacularly good solution to this problem, a poorly designed dump pouch causes more problems than it can hope to remedy. Because I initially learned to perform this method by stowing the partially expended magazine down the front of my BDU blouse, as a Ranger private in the early 1990s, I still tend to either stow the magazines behind my plate carrier, or in a cargo pocket, rather than using a dump pouch. When I have tried to switch to a dump pouch, in the past, I've found that I spend more time trying to find the mouth of the dump pouch than I do just cramming it into a pocket somewhere.

The point of the RWR is that the ammunition present in the magazine might become crucially important to your survival before the fight or mission is over. Simply dropping the magazine, as in a speed reload, with ammunition in it, would waste what might become crucially important ammunition. Do not however, stow the partially expended magazine in a magazine pouch where you may inadvertently grab it later, in the mistaken idea that it is a full magazine. It would be horribly embarrassing to perform a speed reload, only to run dry 2-3 rounds later, because you used what was actually a mostly empty magazine.

The Non-Diagnostic Malfunction Clearance

A malfunction can be defined as any occurrence when your weapon fails to function normally. This may happen as a result of various factors, including—but not limited to—an unseated magazine, deformed or broken magazine feed lips, squib loads, an improper or insufficient firing grip on the weapon, broken firing pin, extractor, or ejector, primer failure, or a fouled weapon. It has been common practice, within the shooting community, to teach specific malfunction clearances for what have been

labeled Type I, Type II, and Type III malfunctions. With renewed interest in the late-Colonel John Boyd's OODA Cycle however, and the resulting recognition of the need to streamline the decision-making cycle as much as possible, the concept of the non-diagnostic malfunction clearance was reborn. This method, based on the military's SPORTS acronym, provides you with a simple, step-by-step process that does not require you to take the time to determine the specific cause of a malfunction.

The first stage of the non-diagnostic malfunction clearance is referred to as "immediate action." This will clear most common malfunctions, including unseated magazines, primer failures, and failure to extract or eject. It is easiest taught and remembered through the mnemonic "Tap-Rack-Bang."

The shooter will recognize the occurrence of a malfunction when he feels the weapon fail to go into battery, or when he preses the trigger and notices either a dead trigger, or a click, when he expects to feel a "bang!" The shooter immediately rolls the gun inboard, so the ejection port is visible to the eye, as the mile is raised, and the stock of the weapon is tucked into the ribcage. If the shooter sees that the chamber and magazine are empty, he can immediately move into a speed reload. In ANY other case, the shooter will "tap" the base of the magazine by slapping it firmly, to insure that it is seated and locked into the weapon properly. He then uses the same, support side, hand to "rack" the charging handle rearward, maintaining visual contact with the ejection port and chamber of the weapon. If the shooter feels and sees the BCG return to battery, he will then reacquire a firing grip on the weapon, and a sight picture. If warranted by the situation, he can then attempt to engage further threat targets, with a "bang."

This method is an accelerated parallel to the military malfunction clearance referred to as SPORTS. Only in the case of an extremely fouled, dry weapon, will depressing the forward assist of the weapon to be warranted, in order to insure that the BCG is fully seated. Doing so under those conditions however, may actually induce further malfunctions as the weapon may be incapable of extracting/ejecting a round that was forced into an extremely fouled chamber. It can also—theoretically at least, since I've never personally witnessed it—cause a catastrophic malfunction as overpressure from the reduced space within the chamber causes the weapon to blow up in your face. The only time I advocate using the forward assist is when performing a "press check." This allows you to be certain the BCG has seated fully into battery.

If immediate action does not solve the problem, or if upon initiation of immediate action, the shooter recognizes that the malfunction is a double-feed, he may commence "remedial action." This is the second stage of the non-diagnostic malfunction clearance. Because it requires significantly more time to complete, under enemy fire at close ranges, it may be warranted to transition to a secondary or tertiary weapon, or to use the rifle as an impact weapon, rather than trying to perform remedial action during the fight.

To execute remedial action, the shooter grasps the charging handle with his support hand and pulls it to the rear. Reaching under the weapon, the shooter presses the BHO paddle with his firing side hand. Once the BCG is locked in the rearward position, the shooter returns his firing side hand to a firing grip on the weapon and grasps the magazine with his support side hand. Pressing the magazine release with his trigger finger, the shooter "rips" the magazine from the weapon and drops it to the ground. He then grasps the charging handle of the weapon with his support hand and "racks" it rearward three times, to

clear any obstructions in the chamber of the weapon.

It is critically important to understand that in man double feed malfunctions, the rounds may be jammed in tight enough that the charging handle will not clear the malfunction. In such cases, the shooter will need to lock the BCG to the rear again, and clear the offending stoppage with his fingers. Once the malfunction is clear, the shooter reloads the weapon with a new magazine, charges the weapon, and returns to the fight.

Remedial action of this type may not be sufficient to remedy particularly nasty malfunctions such as a bolt over-ride. In a fight, the only way to deal with this type of malfunction is to ignore it until the fight is over. Transition to an alternate weapon and conclude the fight.

Some instructors have taught that the remedial action of the clearance can be done without initially locking the BCG to the rear, instead simply ripping the magazine out before running the charging handle to clear the malfunctions. This method offers the apparent benefit that, if pulling the charging handle rearward clears the malfunction, you might not need to change the magazine at all. The fatal flaw in this theory is that double feed malfunctions are almost always a result of either a failure-to-extract or a faulty magazine. In either case, while pulling the charging handle to the rear MIGHT clear one of the offending rounds from the chamber, another malfunction of the same type is going to occur, probably before you finish the magazine.

Zeroing the Combat Rifle

Zeroing your rifle is essential to being able to actually hit what you are shooting at. While it was common in the days of fixed sights such as on old muzzle loading rifles, to use what is referred to as "Kentucky windage" and "Arkansas elevation," this is obsolete except in specific situations. The common availability of adjustable iron sights and optics makes it possible to specifically align your sight picture to coincide with the point-of-impact of the fired projectile.

The first step in achieving a zero is to acquire a shot group. Shot grouping is a form of assessment with two primary objectives. The first is to fire a tight group. A tight group indicates that you are practicing the fundamentals of marksmanship consistently enough that all of the rounds you fire are impacting in the same area. The second goal of shot grouping is to insure that your shot groups are striking the target in the same general location. Two five-round shot groups, in other words, shoot look—to the uninitiated observer—to be a single ten-round shot group.

Once you can achieve a consistently tight, solid shot group of no more than 2-4MOA in size, you can begin to zero your rifle. If you are unable to shoot a consistent sub-4MOA group, there is no point in attempting to zero your rifle—you are not practicing the fundamentals of marksmanship consistently enough to actually hit what you are shooting at anyway. As we begin to zero the rifle, it is imperative that you are able to remember to apply all of the fundamentals of marksmanship, to every single shot you fire: same aiming point, sight picture, sight alignment, and a steady, consistent trigger press, whether dry-fire or live-fire.

The purpose of zeroing the rifle is to establish an effective battle sight zero, or BZO, so that your sight picture is in alignment with the trajectory of the rounds exiting your muzzle. When this s accomplished

correctly, the POA and POI will coincide at the desired range, such as 100, 200, or 300 meters. A suitable BZO will provide the highest hit probability within realistic common combat ranges, requiring minimal hold over or hold under, in relation to the desired POI on the target.

Arguments and debates rage concerning the "ideal" distance that a modern combat rifle should be zeroed. The current doctrine for the US Army for the M16A2/A3/A4 and the M4 series of weapons, centers on a 25/300M BZO. Unfortunately for our needs, this was developed during the introduction of the M16A2 in the 1980s, when the most grievous threat that the US Army expected to face was a large-scale conventional attack by Soviet forces through Germany's Fulda Gap. The 300M BZO results in an eight-inch difference between POA and POI at 100 meters. Since is a fighter is far more likely—in both current and future operational environments—to need to hit a target at 100 meters than he is one at 300 meters, this BZO is a particularly poor solution to your needs. It does however, make it particularly simple to zero, using the Army's 25 meter zero target, and the M16A2 style iron sights.

An improvement on the Army's 25/300 meter BZO is referred to as the Improved Battle Sight Zero, or IBZO. This was developed by Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Chuck Santose for more applicability on modern combat environments, such as those faced by soldiers in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The IBZO involves zeroing your rifle at 50 meters, and then firing a second, confirmation zero, at 200 meters. This 200 meter zero results in a mere two-inch discrepancy between the POA and POI at 100 meters. While the difference between the POA and POI at 300 meters is obviously greater than with the 300 meter BZO, the chances of a 300 meter shooting opportunity are—despite the Walter Mitty fetishes of the survivalist community—far less than of having to shoot inside of 200 meters. Additionally, while the discrepancy at 300 meters is important, it is still important to remember that a hostile at 300 meters may offer you the opportunity to figure out and adjust for your holdovers. The IBZO is a significant improvement over the doctrinal US Army 300M BZO.

Finally, many contemporary tactical carbine instructors are pushing the 100 meter zero. This is in recognition of the fact that most self-defense and law enforcement encounters—as well as many military urban combat encounters—occur well within the 100 meter envelope. It is also a response to the theoretical shortcomings of the 5.56NATO cartridge at ranges in excess of 75 meters when fired form the shorter 14.5" barrel of an M4 carbine. There is some validity to this argument, if you are limiting the discussion to LEO and home defense shooing in the current context. Unfortunately, we're not.

The holdover discrepancy at 200 meters, with the 100 meter BZO, is significantly greater than the 200 meter holdover discrepancy at 100 meters. Even in urban environments, the presence of streets, alleys, and warehouses means that shots significantly longer than 100 meters may—in fact, will—occur.

For these reasons, in most cases, I advocate a 200 meter zero. In fact, the only two reasons that will cause me to advocate using anything else is when using M16A2 iron sights, or when you are utilizing an optic engineered to be zeroed at a specific distance. For instance, many modern optics with ballistic ranging reticles, are designed to be zeroed at 100 meters, for the center of the reticle, with other ranges specifically marked on the reticle in relation to that 100M zero.

The same basic principles apply to zeroing any optic or iron sights. The shooter begins by firing two 3-

5 round shot groups at the designated distance, such as 50 meters. Assuming that the shot groups are adequately tight (at 50 meters, the shot groups for zero must be no large than two inches in diameter...and preferably smaller than one inch), and in the same general vicinity on the zero target, the shooter adjusts the windage and elevation of the sights the appropriate amount, and then fires two more groups to insure the adjustments have zeroed the sights to the weapon.

For the purposes of this manual, I will cite the US Army's field manual on basic rifle marksmanship, **FM 3-22.9 Rifle Marksmanship**.

The purpose of battlesight zeroing is to align the sights with the weapon's barrel, given standard ammunition. When this is accomplished correctly, the point of aim and point of impact are the same at a given range such as 250 meters for the M16A1 and 300 meters for the M16A2/A3/A4 and M4-series of weapons. The sight setting provides the highest hit probability for most combat targets with minimum adjustment to the aiming point.

When standard zeroing procedures are followed, a properly zeroed rifle for one soldier is close to the zero another soldier. When a straight line is drawn from target center to the tip of the front sight post and through the center of the rear aperture, it makes little difference whose eye is looking along this line. There are many subtle factors that result in differences among individual zeros. The similarity of individual zeroes should be emphasized instead of the differences.

(2) Most firers can fire with the same zeroed rifle if they are properly applying the marksmanship fundamentals. If a shooter is having difficulty zeroing and the problem cannot be diagnosed, having a good firer zero the rifle could find the problem and eliminates the weapon as part of the problem. When a soldier must fire another soldier's rifle without opportunity to verify the zero by firing, for example, picking up another man's rifle on the battlefield, the rifle will be closer to actual zero if the rifle sights are left unchanged. This information is useful in deciding initial sight settings and recording of zeroes. All rifles in the arms room, even those not assigned, should have been previously zeroed by the last soldier it was assigned to. Zeroing this newly assigned weapon should start with the sights left where they are.

There is no relationship between the specific sight settings a soldier uses on his rifle to the sights settings he would zero another rifle to. For example, a soldier could zero his assigned rifle 10 clicks left of center, and then zero another rifle and his adjustments could be 10 clicks right of center. This is due to the manufacturing differences from one rifle to another, which makes it essential that each soldier zeroes the rifle that he is assigned. Therefore, all newly assigned personnel should be required to fire their rifle for zero as soon as possible after assignment to the unit. The same rule must apply anytime a soldier is assigned a rifle that is returned from direct support or general support maintenance, or the zero is in question.

b. All soldiers should successfully group prior to zeroing. If the unit is proficient at grouping, then two shot groups should be fired to confirm proficiency prior to making any sight adjustments during zeroing procedures...

...each shot is fired using the same aiming point (center of mass of the target, from a supported firing

position.

(4) Each soldier ensures that his sights are set for 25-meter zeroing.

(5) The soldier fires a three-round shot group at the 25-meter zero target. The firing line is cleaned, and he moves downrage to examine the shot group. The soldier examines the shot group for fundamental errors, triangulates the shot group, and writes the number 1 in the center.

(6) Initially, the soldier should fire two individual shot groups before a sight change is considered. If the initial shot group is not on paper, the weapon should be mechanically zeroed before the soldier fires his weapon again.

(7) The soldier returns to the firing line and fires a second three-round shot group.

(8) The firing line is cleared, and he moves downrange to examine the second shot group, triangulate and mark the center of the shot group with the number 2. The soldier groups the two shot groups and marks the center of the two shot groups with an X. If the two shot groups fall within the 4-centimeter circle, the soldier is zeroed and can be removed from the firing line (The majority of the round must be inside the circle to be counted).

(10) The un-zeroed soldier returns to the firing line and makes sight adjustments.

(11) Steps 1 through 8 are repeated until the soldier places five out of six consecutive rounds inside the 4-centimeter circle. If the soldier is not zeroed in 18 rounds he should be removed from the firing line and given remedial training before attempting to zero again...

...while applying the fundamentals, the soldier consistently aims center mass of the target as shown in (A) in Figure 5-18, and groups them. Based on the location of these two groups, the soldier makes the appropriate sight adjustments. After making the correct sight adjustments, the soldier fires two more separate three-round shot groups to confirm the adjustments have aligned the sights with the center of the target, and the bullets are in the 4-centimeter circle (Figure 5-19).

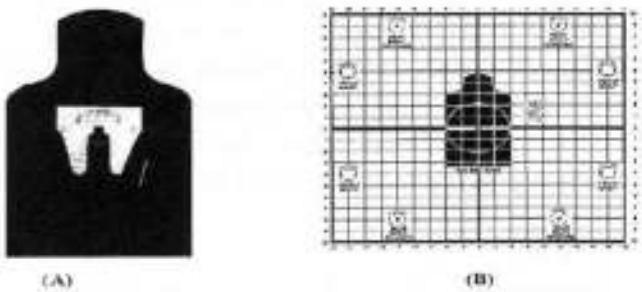


Figure 5-18 from FM 3-22.9, illustrating correct aiming and the initial shot group.

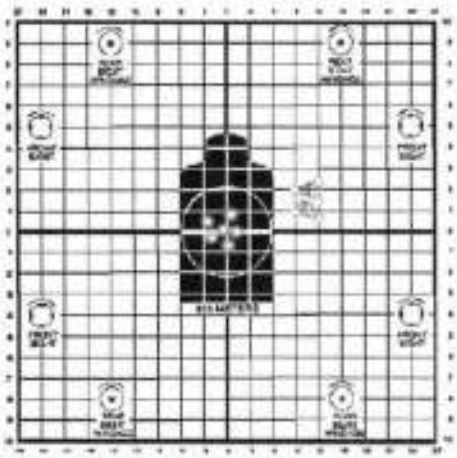


Figure 5-19 from FM 3-22.9, showing final shot group results.

The Known Distance Range

Firing on a known-distance (KD) range, using the various firing positions, has three primary objectives. These include reinforcing the ability to fire tight shot groups a known distance from various firing positions, the ability to make adjustments to the point-of-aim to mitigate the effects of wind and gravity at different ranges, and to test the marksmanship skill from the various firing positions. Firing on a KD range, contrary to the apparent beliefs of many would-be riflemen, is NOT the pinnacle of achievement behind the rifle. Rather, it is one intermediate step towards the combat firing tasks of the fighting rifleman. KD firing is conducted with a single, clearly visible target, at a known distance, while the shooter has the time to establish NPOA on that single target. On the standard KD range, shooters should fire at 50, 100, 200, 300, and 400 meters from various firing positions, depending on skill level, without any time constraints.

On known-distance field firing ranges, shooters will also fire at 50, 100, 200, 300, and 400 meter distances, from recreated field firing positions, such as from behind rocks and logs, window and door frames, and other items that might be found on the battlefield, again with no time restraints, although time restraints can be introduced later in the field-firing training.

KD range firing is utilized solely for the purpose of teaching pure marksmanship. It does not require the shooter to estimate range, detect targets, scan a sector of fire, respond to surprise targets or short exposures, or to engage multiple targets. The advantage of KD range firing, that provides its great advantage for training, is that it provides the shooter the ability to see precisely where his shot groups are striking in relation to his POA. To benefit from KD range firing, you must assess your targets to see clearly, the results of each firing string, whether a shot group or a single shot.

Controlled Pairs and Follow-Through

When engaging bad guys with gunfire, ample experience and historical research has conclusively demonstrated that the most secure method of ensuring the rapid cessation of the threat potential is to place multiple rounds into the hostile's vital zones as rapidly as possible. Historically, at close-quarters ranges, the "double-tap" was taught as the preferred technique to accomplish this n the briefest time. Fortunately, current doctrine has recognized that the obvious drawback to the double-tap is that second round that is fired is unaimed. Unfortunately, every round that you fire MUST BE AIMED. Not only can you not afford to waste rounds by missing, but you cannot afford to be responsible for an errant round killing an innocent bystander of the civilian population, and the resulting blow back from that negligence.

Controlled pairs and "hammers" are the solution that is currently acceptable doctrine. Follow-through and recovery of sight picture/sight alignment, as well as trigger reset, are emphasized throughout the learning and training process of using controlled pairs. Controlled pairs require three distinct sight pictures: sight picture-shot-sight picture-shot-sight picture. The trigger press is accelerated, but never to the point that it degenerates into a jerking movement that disrupts the sight picture and sight alignment.

Trigger reset is stressed, so that the trigger finger never loses contact with the trigger through the firing sequence, since this results in trigger slapping that interferes with accuracy as it disrupts sight alignment. Shot groups remain tight, but controlled pairs can be executed extremely fast with even moderate practice.

Controlled pairs will be slower than double taps, initially, because you have to develop the ability to aim/shoot/aim/shoot/aim as rapidly as humanly possible. With good, effective training and subsequent practice however, it is possible to fire two aimed rounds at CQM distances out to 50 meters, in less than one second. At 100 meters, two shots within the 4MOA standard in less than two seconds is readily achievable, even for relative beginners.

The controlled pair is a useful tool in accelerating your learning of fundamental combat marksmanship and weaponcraft. It is one of the basic tools used to develop the mechanics of follow-through. The problem is that—far too often—in both training and execution, the controlled pair becomes a default response that is de facto double-tap. As soon as someone who has trained exclusively in controlled pairs has to fire a third or fourth or fifth shot on the same target, they miss the last shots because they have inadvertently trained and conditioned themselves to blow the follow-through on the second shot. In best case scenarios, they tend to fire a string of controlled pairs, with a noticeably lengthy pause in between that may allow the enemy to adjust their position, slowing down the next controlled pair in the sequence, or causing it to miss entirely. Whether single shot, controlled pairs, or multiple shot string, your string of fire does NOT end with the last shot fired. It ends after you have assessed the effects of your work. You're done shooting after you've looked through your sights and seen that the threat is no longer a threat.

The problem with any default response—whether controlled pairs, hammers, or double taps—is that they simply ignore reality. You may have missed, or your hits may have not been as precise as you though they were. Alternatively, the bad guy you just shot may not be a pussy, and it will take more than two hits to the vitals to put him down. That's where the currently fashionable—and oh, so correct—adage comes from to "shoot him to the ground."

The Mozambique Drill, named by LTC Cooper, after a Gunsite alumni used it in that country to stop a threat, is a fatally flawed default response. Outside of the fact that the bad guy might be wearing rifle plate ballistic body armor, and so two to the chest may very well not slow him down, at all, what if your two shots to the chest were simply misses? What if they turned out to be just peripheral hits? Out of the blue, after missing the largest part of the guy, you're magically going to pull off a more difficult shot?

The real issue for combat rifle applications, rather than the cool-guy range ballet, is that the target is not going to be standing still ten meters in front of you, presenting a perfect silhouette for you to shoot. What if all you can see of him is his shoulder or leg?

The sensible—correct—response is to forget using any sort of preprogrammed default response. Shoot the bad guy repeatedly, until your sight picture illustrates that he is no longer a threat—or least no longer the most immediate threat. Whether that takes on, two, or ten shots, you need to be able to fire accurate, fast, repetitive shots, while assessing and adjusting through your sight picture, without

slowing down.

Change your pattern from time to time in your training. Shoot one round to one target, three or four to the next, and two to the next. Then two, five, and one. The key is not to go slow, nor to go fast. The key is to go as fast as you're able, while still being accurate enough to get the job done. Shoot only as fast as you're able, but be able to shoot as fast as you need to. Any hillbilly with a squirrel gun can take his time to draw a bead and get accurate hits on a target that isn't moving and shooting back. You need to be able to get fast, accurate shots, in a row.

A common question that arises is what do you do if there is more than one enemy combatant? Do you shoot each guy once or twice, and then come back, or do you shoot the first one to the ground, and then move on? It's a valid question about a complex process that has a very simple solution: it depends.

Remember that we're not talking about a home or personal defense situation. You should not be the only guy with a gun. If you alone have to shoot every bad guy, all by your lonesome, you need to be breaking contact and running away. Additionally, outside of CQM distances, your first or second or even third shot might not kill the dude. It might not even kill him. It may though, force him to duck deep enough into a position of cover that he no longer poses the greatest, immediate threat to you, or you're simply no longer able to effectively engage him any more for the time being.

Common sense and tactical logic tell us to address the most immediate lethal threat first. Shoot him until he is no longer the most immediate lethal threat, and then move on. Whether it takes on round or ten rounds, and whether you have to come back later or not, shoot the most immediate threat, until he is no longer the most immediate threat. You have to be able to fire multiple shot strings rapidly and accurately, because simply relying on the "double tap" is idiotic.

Multiple Target Transitions

Up to this point in your training program, your shooters have engaged only solitary targets. Real world shooting encounters however, whether in defense of personnel or property, against criminal assault, and in small unit combat, generally require the ability to rapidly engage multiple targets. Your shooters need to begin being introduced to multiple targets in the training program.

There are two basic methods of identifying and engaging multiple hostile targets. Which to utilize should be determined based on the immediate situation. The first method is to identify the targets and engage them as individuals. This generally works extremely well when targets are at an intermediate distance, rather than at extremely close range.

The second method of engaging multiple hostile threats is to treat them as one target, throughout the follow-through and trigger control. This method can effectively be used only at close-quarters distances when targets are close together, with no interspersed noncombatants. Using the second method, when noncombatant or no-shoot targets interspersed would requiring muzzle-sweeping them with your finger on the trigger—in direct violation of the basic safe firearms handling rules.

Instead of identifying and engaging the targets individually, the shooter identifies all of the hostiles as a group, and engages them on at a time, but as a single target. Instead of recovering his follow-through

and sight picture on the target he just shot, as the shooter sees the target falling, he recovers from the recoil cycle by finding a sight picture on the next target in his sequence. This method—while incredibly fast—is actually of extremely limited use to the partisan fighter. It can only be used at extremely close quarters, when you have positively identified every member of a group as a hostile, and does not return good results when hostiles have innocents intermingled.

Discrimination Shooting

Intimately related to multiple target engagements and transitions—at least in the real world—is the need to discriminate between shoot and no-shoot targets. Whether you are a police officer, an armed citizen carrying a gun for every day self-defense, a soldier or Marine performing COIN operations in Afghanistan, or a partisan fighter, the modern battlefield is drastically different than the battlefields of World War Two, Korea or Vietnam. You absolutely must discriminate your targets. Killing the neighbor's kid, because he as in your pasture, sneaking over to your house to try and seduce your teenage daughter into a roll in the hay, and you were too lazy or ill-trained to ensure he was a valid target, will not result in success or long-term survival for you. In a resistance-specific environment, killing the local administrator's eight-year old daughter, because she happened to be standing next to her daddy when you decided to assassinate him, will not win you friends amongst the local populace, regardless of how much they dislike the regime. People are—contrary to our prejudices otherwise—basically decent human beings when it comes to trying to protect children.

Discrimination shooting however, is much more than simple "shoot/no-shoot" practice, although it is often sadly reduced down to that in many supposedly high-speed tactical shooting course. It's also a matter of understanding basic geometry and ballistics, with a huge dose of cognition tossed in for good measure. Consider the basic firearm's safety rule of "know what is down range of your target, between you and your target, and to either side of your target." A solid shot to the enemy's hips is great, unless it overpenetrates the pelvic cavity and punches into the head of a four-year old standing six feet behind the bad guy! Realistic combat marksmanship can never be distilled down to simplistic jingo-like binary decision-making processes. You have to train regularly, using complex decision-making processes in your drills, in order to streamline your OODA Cycle.

It has been correctly pointed out that the human brain is incapable of "multi-tasking." The first time I heard that stated, I was extremely offended. After all, I've driven a vehicle in the tight confines of Third World traffic, engaged in shouted conversations with other crew members, and engaged hostiles outside of the vehicle—all at the same time.

After careful, deliberate consideration though, in concert with others with similar experiences, we began to realize the truth of the statement. I'd done all of those things simultaneously, but generally only one of them at a time had the benefit of my mental focus.

What happens is called task-stacking and task-switching. Your mind will prioritize the tasks facing it (task-stacking) and then flip through the different tasks as they change importance (task-switching). The faster you can train and condition your brain to cycle through the OODA Cycle, and the task-stacking/task-switching, then the faster you can discriminate and shoot. This is critical, when we have to work through the three-step process of Perception-Recognition-Acquisition (PRA), before we can fire.

The best drill I have seen for developing and accelerating your ability to task-stack and task-switch, is a modification of the PRA drill used during the Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat course (SFAUC) back when it was still the Special Operations Tactics (SOT) course, in the 1990s. The specific drill is based on the 1-5 drill developed by former SGM Kyle Lamb (USA, ret), of 1st SFOD-D, and another drill developed by former SGM Pat "Mac" MacNamara (USA, ret), also a veteran of the Unit, although I feel okay claiming credit for combing the two into this specific drill.

Described in detail in the Appendices of this book, the drill I titled the "PRA1-5" had been—I am proud to admit—more commonly referred to as "Mosby's Motherfucker Drill," due to the challenge of successfully executing this drill. It requires the shooter to think, throughout the drill, as they task-stack and task-switch between perceiving which target is the next most immediate, recognizing that target in the midst of others, acquiring a sight picture, determining if they can safely take the shot or need to move first, and then executing the correct number of shots to the target.

Moving and Shooting

The topic of shooting while moving raises a great deal of dissension among the ranks of professional gunfighters and instructors as well as among amateurs. Some very distinguished and qualified experts claim that shooting while moving is not only unnecessary, but even detrimental to training. Others—often with similar qualifications—claim that shooting while moving is the pinnacle of combat marksmanship training and ability.

The most common argument against shooting while moving is that you will either be moving too fast to shoot accurately, or you will be moving slow enough to shoot accurately, meaning you will be moving slow enough to get shot. On the other hand, room-clearing and other urban combat CQB task requirements almost mandate the ability to shoot while you are moving.

Ultimately? It depends.

Before you can shoot accurately, while moving, you absolutely must be able to shoot accurately while standing still. In the end, the determination of whether to move while shooting, or to stop and take a shot, depends on the answer to one critical question: Can you move fast enough to avoid getting shot, and still get hits? If so, then by all means, move and shoot. Otherwise, your best option is to move—quickly—to a position of cover, and then stop and shoot. This is entirely dependent on your marksmanship and weapons handling skill, and the distances involved. Shooting will moving during room-clearing in the average residential-scale house is relatively easy. Shooting at someone who is sprinting to cover, 100 meters away, while you're also moving to cover, is considerably more difficult.

When the time comes to practice shooting while moving, do not over think it. You've been walking your entire life. So, just walk. If you can walk while holding a full mug of beer, and not spill it, then you can move and shoot accurately. If you can run while holding a full mug of beer, and not spill it, then you can run and shoot accurately.

One aspect of moving and shooting that I am extremely knee-jerk reactionary about is, we do not teach shooters to fire while moving backwards. There are two basic reasons for this: the most obvious, if the

shooter is actually paying attention to their marksmanship and shooting, then they cannot see what is behind them, and will inevitably end up tripping over an obstacle. It works well, and looks cool, on a clean, groomed, square range. It doesn't work worth a shit in the real world. Anyone who tells you otherwise is full of shit.

The second reason that we do not teach or practice shooting while moving backwards is a matter of simple human physiology. No matter how athletic you believe that you are, you cannot move backwards as fast as someone else can move forward. Even in a one-on-one self-defense scenario, backpedaling while trying to shoot will not save you. Either shoot, or run away. Period.

Low-Light/No-Light, Reduced Visibility Shooting

As I write this, it is winter time here in the mountains. It is darker than three feet up a bull's ass by 4PM, and dawn does not occur until well after 8AM. Depending on the day of the year and specific weather conditions, you may face reduced visibility shooting conditions well more than 70% of the time. Considering the need to operate indoors, even in grid-down scenarios, that percentage may climb as high as 80-90% of the time. Being able to effectively and accurately perceive, identify, and engage targets in reduced visibility conditions is critical. Not only do most defensive shooting encounters occur during hours of reduced visibility, but the ability to function effectively in low-light and no-light conditions will provide you a parity of skill, or even an advantage over most potential future hostiles.

It is important to note however, that despite the modern, high-technology environment of Night Observation Devices (NOD), thermal imaging devices, and infrared lasers and lights, the single most robust method of positively identifying friend or foe on the battlefield is still the use of visible white light. Yes, I own NODs, and yes, I use them. While the use of NODs, IR lasers, and thermal imaging devices can provide a useful function during defensive and offensive operations, during an actual fight, when there will probably be non-combatants interspersed with hostiles in the battle space, it is generally in your best long-term interest to resort to visible white light and the naked eye in order to insure positive target identification, whenever that option is practicably feasible.

NODs and thermals are perfect—albeit sometimes over-rated—during the infiltration, and for security surveillance purposes, but once the element of surprise is no longer the crucial factor, it is only through rapid, aggressive application of precision force—speed and violence of action—that an opponent can be defeated. Visible white light for shooting discrimination facilitates that better than NODs.

The greatest perceived advantage of using NOD and IR lasers for target engagement with your rifle, is the ability to engage hostiles without compromising your position to the enemy. While this advantage is very real, it is most effective when you are using them in conjunction with a sound suppressor on the weapon. Without a well-designed and built sound suppressor, even the best flash suppressors cannot mask the muzzle flash and noise of your gunfire. Additionally, IR technology is readily available, despite the cost of decent quality NODs. Every camcorder on the market today offers a "night vision" capability that uses light in the IR and near-IR spectrums. So do cheap Russian optics available for less than $200, and kid's toys at Wal-Mart.

While none of these is sufficient for truly effective use, any of them will serve to help identify the location of anyone using an IR laser or IR strobe identifiers. Despite the expense of NOD and IR lasers,

they are disproportionately common amongst survivalists, and most law enforcement agencies possess third-generation quality gear as well. Between these two factors and the military, inadequate training with your NODs and IR laser will result in compromise by anyone using these technologies.

While I have seen survivalists who were willing to use their NODs in training, too often the replacement cost of the NOD is considered too high to risk damaging them in training. Unfortunately, effective use of NOD require considerable familiarization and sustainment training to compensate for the resulting tunnel vision, loss of depth perception, and degraded visual acuity. Too often with NOD, even trained professionals rely on the visual senses improperly when equipped with NOD, ignoring sensory input from other sources. Finally, since the effective use of NOD for combat firing requires the use of an IR laser, you are exponentially increasing your chances of an equipment failure. If either your NOD or your IR laser malfunctions, you are back to using white light to locate, identify, and engage the enemy.

While NOD and IR lasers are readily available to the civilian shooting community today, they are still prohibitively expensive for many people, while high-output, reliably tough, white lights are far more readily available and far less expensive. Both NOD and IR lasers require significant training commitments, above and beyond basic combat rifle marksmanship training. You need to spend enough time, performing enough different tasks, that you are comfortable in the NOD, even when not shooting. Only then will shooting with NOD be worth the investment.

With visible white lights, on the other hand, little additional training is required to gain proficiency, beyond running the same shooting tables with white light, as you would run during daylight.

White light offers the fastest, surest method of positively identifying shoot or no-shoot targets when target discrimination is necessary. The largest drawbacks to the use of white light for shooting are real however.

Number one, as everyone picks up on, using the white light readily reveals your location to the enemy, even if they are miles away. Number two, it kills your own night-vision, leaving you seeing white spots and stars, once the light is turned off. Number three, it is range limited, since even a 600-lumen light can only be used within about 100 meters for positive target identification.

The solution for the first problem is relatively simple. Turn the light on, shoot, turn the light out, and move. Once the fight is done, move further, in case he had any friends in the area who are now looking for you.

The solution for the second problem is more tricky. Yes, you can use the age-old trick of closing one eye while your light is on. Unfortunately, with the super lights we have available today, this generally doesn't do much good. There really is simply no answer, other than the possibility of covering one eye with a patch of some sort, which really is not any answer at all.

The third problem, like the second, has no simple answer. It is what it is. Ultimately, the answer is to train with both white light and night-vision, because ultimately, both offer significant advantages and disadvantages. In the long run, for the average preparedness minded citizen concerned about

maximizing his ability to use his weapon effectively in combat, the investment needs to be made for both levels of technology. In the short term however, the while the NOD and IR laser do offer significant benefits, they are greatly outweighed by the advantages offered by the use of simple visible white light.

When choosing a white light, there are innumerable choices available. Over the course of my shooting and training career, I've seen everything from the old C-cell Mag Lites hose-clamped to the forearm of an M16, to simple figure-8 clamps that held the original Laser Devices/Surefire lights on the end of our CAR15 barrels. I've seen expensive and complicated lights integrated into a vertical fore grip and of course today, we have eighty dozen different basic white lights and mounting systems available to select from.

At its simplest, you need three basic characteristics in a weapon-mounted white light for combat. You need a bright beam that provides a great deal of focused light, the ability to turn the light on and off instantly, and you need the light to be robust enough that you don't have to worry about it breaking or malfunctioning at inopportune moments. Strobe functions—in my experience—are an unnecessary extravagance if you know how to use a white light properly (on-shoot-off-move-repeat as needed). If you don't know how to use your light properly, strobes will not fix your problems.

While there are a number of well-regarded lights available for purchase on the civilian market, with any number of cool-guy trainers endorsing this light or that, the standards against which they are measured are Surefire and Streamlight. These two pioneers in the combat shooting light industry are the only two major lights still being issued and used by those units that go in harm's way in the military. They offer all three of the requirements needed in a white light for weapons-mounted use. Surefire is significantly more expensive than Streamlight (I use Streamlights), but either manufacturer provides a solid product at a reasonable price.

Application

Using a white light for target identification and engagement is relatively simple in concept, and somewhat more complicated in practice. To use it properly, when you believe there is a target available, because you've seen something or heard something in the dark, mount your weapon and aim it in the general direction you believe the target is, looking over the top of the weapon. Turn the light on and locate and identify the target as quickly as possible, while moving. If you cannot see or identify a target, turn the light back off and keep moving for a reasonable distance, determined by the environment.

If you see a target and positively identify it as a hostile, then stop moving—if necessary—long enough to shoot it to the ground, before turning the light out and moving again. Turning the light on to search for a target—especially outdoors, clearing rooms has some caveats to this—is the cause of the belief that ANY use of white light serves no purpose other than to identify you as a target for the enemy.

Conclusions

This chapter provided you with a comprehensive description of the basic, fundamental tasks involved with the individual operation of the modern fighting rifle, as well as specific tasks to master along the way, to insure 100% confidence in your ability to use your weapon. This mastery is the foundation of

skill upon which all tactical expertise and mastery is built.

When used in conjunction with the Combat Rifle Course POI, and the attendant tasks and shooting drills described in the POI, this will provide you with a solid foundation on which to build the rest of the skill set needed to perform as part of a small-unit security force for the defense of your community.

Suggested Further Reading
Combative Fundamentals by Jeff Gonzalez
Green Eyes, Black Rifles by Kyle Lamb
TAPS: Tactical Applications of Practical Shooting by Pat MacNamara
Training at the Speed of Life by Ken Murray
Leadership and Training for the Fight, 2d Edition by Paul Howe

Chapter Five
OH SHIT! I'VE BEEN SHOT!

Perhaps the single most overlooked aspect of tactical security training in the preparedness world, is the issue of immediate life-saving medical care on the battlefield. Lots—perhaps most—survivalists stockpile antibiotics, suture materials, and gauze. Yet, despite the growing recognition of the importance—absolute criticality—of trauma medical training amongst the ranks of professional gun handlers, most survivalists just cannot be bothered with much beyond a basic first-aid/CPR class.

This is unfortunate. As a guy who has maintained a basic American Red Cross first-aid and CPR certification since I was 15 years old, and hold a current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) certification from the Wilderness Medicine Institute, I'm here to tell you...civilian first-aid has about as much relevance to the battlefield as Fantasy Football does to playing in the NFL.

The training that EVERY survivalist needs is basic Tactical Combat Casualty Care, referred to as TCCC and/or TC3.

Civilian sector first aid, including WFR, focuses on getting you to a trauma emergency room inside the "Golden Hour," and with the exception of some very minor coverage, completely ignores the considerations of firearms-related/caused injuries. Despite the course occurring in the northern Rocky Mountains, my WFR class of 10 days spent exactly two minutes discussing gunshot wounds. Further, the vast majority of civilian first-aid instructors have little or no real experience with anything beyond vehicle accidents and lifestyle disease issues.

Post grid-down event in general, and on the battlefield specifically, you may not be able to be evacuated for days, let alone inside of an hour. Civilian sector care is predicated on the ready availability of well-trained, experienced surgeons, with a large support staff, and the latest, cutting edge medical equipment. On the battlefield, YOU are the expert! You need to know how to treat the most common and most dangerous types of combat-specific injuries and wounds. It's not just band-aids and aspirin.

There are several critical considerations that affect the difference between the civilian pre-hospital trauma care and battlefield trauma medicine. These include:

- the presence of people trying to shoot you!
- Low-light/no-light reduced visibility.
- Extreme environmental conditions
- Obvious different wounding mechanisms (while some urban and even rural EMT and Paramedics will have experience dealing with gunshot wounds, the types and severity of the gunshot wounds they deal with tend to be drastically different. A .30-06 hunting round makes a severely significant wound, but it is—contrary to popular misconception—a lot less severe than five or six holes caused by 5.56 or 7.62)
- Available medical equipment will be limited to how much members of a unit can carry.
- The requirements of tactical movement and maneuver to defeat the enemy.
- Long delays to hospital or remote advanced care providers

In 1996, the Special Operations Command's Medical Board developed a report, suggesting that the special operations community move away from using civilian EMS as the model for combat casualty care. That report went on to suggest the first set of TC3 protocols. They were instituted almost immediately within the community. The Department of Defense (DoD) as a whole did not recognize them and establish the Committee on Tactical Combat Casualty Care (CoTCCC) until 2000. By 2005, everyone within the military was on-board, to one degree or another. TC3 is currently use by all branches of the US DoD, most NATO and other allied nations, and many LE agencies across the country.

TC3 has improved the survivability rate of wounded fighters exponentially. What body armor has done to wound occurrence reduction, TC3 has done to wound survival. It's been—in a word—miraculous.

In World War Two, 19.1% of the wounded died of their wounds. In Vietnam, it had dropped to 15.8%. During the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the figure has dropped to 9.4%! While some of that is attributable to the difference in the nature of wounds, thanks to body armor, we are also seeing a significant number of previously unsurvivable wounds—such as battlefield amputations and severed

arteries—survive.

The 75th Ranger Regiment was one of the leading adopters of the TC3 protocols. Currently, the Regiment trains every single Ranger in TC3 as part of the selection and assessment process. The overall rate of preventable death in battlefield casualties, Army-wide, is 24%. In the Regiment, it currently stands at 3%. That is the lowest rate of preventable combat deaths EVER reported by ANY military organization, in the ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE WORLD!!! This was accomplished by training every soldier in the Regiment in TC3, and ensuring that they maintained their currency in that skill set.

Of all of the cool-guy training you can take part in, TC3 is inarguably amongst the most valuable.

Phases of Care

TC3 is divided into three basic phases of care. Care Under Fire (CUF) is what occurs when the unit is still engaged in the fight. This is generally self- or buddy-provided aid to keep the shooter alive through the cessation of immediate hostilities.

Tactical Field Care (TFC) is what occurs after the fight is over, or when a severe injury occurs when the unit is not immediately engaged by enemy forces. This would—ideally—be provided by specially trained medics or first-responders within the unit, but every individual should be able to provide this level of care.

The casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) phase is the phase of care that occurs after the patient has beens stabilized during TFC, and is ideally provided by trained medics, nurses, and physicians. For the survivalist, the CASEVAC phase will still probably be provided by members of the unit, until a safe house or retreat area has been reached. At that point, the CASEVAC turns into sustained care which may be provided by the above-named, trained personnel, or by lay persons.

Basic Management Plan for Care Under Fire Phase

This takes place when the enemy is still engaging the unit with effective fire. Both the casualty and the care provider are in harm's way and at risk of being wounded by enemy action. The first priority here is to win the fight, in order to prevent the casualty from being further injured, as well as to prevent anyone else from being wounded or killed. **The best medicine on the battlefield is fire superiority!** The firepower represented by the weapons of caregivers and the casualty may be essential to dominating the fight!

The single most important aspect of CUF is defeating the enemy. The best way to save a casualty's life is to stop the enemy from killing him. Just because you've been shot does not mean you're out of the fight. If you've been shot, and you KNOW you've been shot, you're going to survive. Take cover and return fire!

If your buddy has been shot, direct him to continue engaging the enemy if possible. If he cannot, direct the casualty to move to cover and perform self-aid. If you MUST move a casualty to cover, consider

the following issues: where is the nearest cover? What's the best way to move him? How big is he? Can I move him? Can the rest of the element provide suppressive fire to protect me?

When you approach the casualty, or when you get him to a covered, protected position, you should attempt to stop life-threatening hemorrhage, if it is tactically feasible. Laboratory study and battlefield experience have demonstrated that an untreated arterial bleed will kill you in three minutes or less. You will generally lose consciousness within 60-90 seconds. This is a good example of the difference between civilian EMS care and combat medicine. The civilian protocol focuses on airway management first, but battlefield experience has shown us that arterial bleeding WILL kill you faster than a blocked airway. We defer airway management until the TFC phase.

Casualty Movement

The simplest and fastest way to move a casualty, under fire, is to drag them. Drags are divided into one-person drags and two-person drags. While the one-person drag will take longer, due to the individual having to pull more weight by themselves, it is the better solution, from the tactical perspective, since it only exposes one rescuer to enemy fire.

At it's simplest, the drag simply involves grabbing a piece of the casualty's LBE with your free hand, and dragging them as quickly as possible to a safe position.

Soldier demonstrating the one-person casualty drag. Photo courtesy, DOD

The two-person drag, while exposing two rescuers to enemy fire, is sometimes necessary, especially for the partisan fighter who may not possess the athleticism and raw strength of the average 19-year old infantryman. By using two rescuers—especially with large-framed casualties—the casualty and the rescuers can be exposed to danger for a shorter period of time.

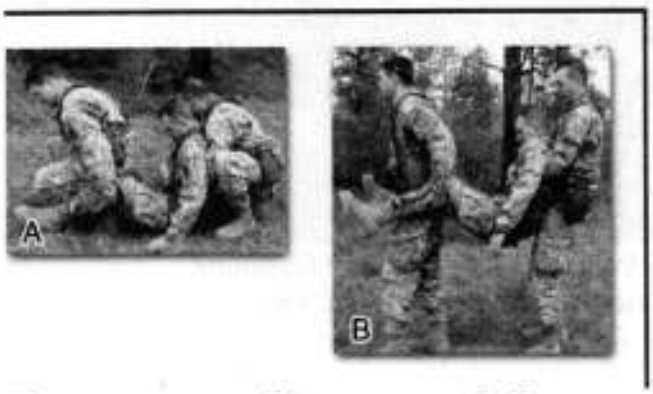
Soldiers from the 486th Engineer Company demonstrate the two-person drag. Photo courtesy, DoD.

Often, concerns are raised by civilian EMS providers about C-spine stabilization and other spinal stabilization during drags. We are not concerned about this during the CUF phase! Our only concern is moving the casualty to a position of cover, and preventing further wounding by enemy action.

The biggest drawback to the drag carries is the issue of debris and rough terrain on the battlefield making it difficult to drag a heavy casualty who is carrying a lot of gear. Two other methods transport during the CUF phase are available. One of these is the two-man support carry. This is what most of us think about when we envision soldiers helping a wounded buddy away from the fight.

The two-man support carry. Photo courtesy, DoD.

The problem with the two-man support carry is that it can be difficult to utilize if the casualty is significantly taller than one or both rescuers, or if one rescuer is significantly taller than his partner. A second two-person carry that requires more strength, but is not dependent on the relative height of the rescuers, is the two-man carry.



The two-man carry. Photo courtesy, DoD.

There are a host of methods available for transporting a wounded casualty under fire. Personal preference, training, and physical capability of the rescuer(s) is the only limiting factor.

Life-Threatening Hemorrhage

Despite the reticence of civilian EMS to learn from the lessons of the military in combat, the use of tourniquets has been inarguably proven to save lives. The ready availability of combat tourniquets such as the CAT-T, SWAT-T, SOFT-T, and a variety of others means there is absolutely zero excuse for not having tourniquets readily accessible for stopping life-threatening hemorrhage due to combat wounds.

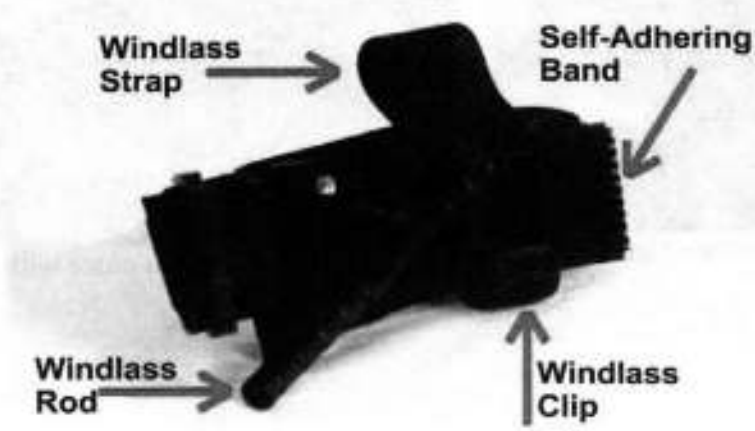
The best tourniquet available is—in my experience, and based on the recommendation of the 18D Special Forces medics that I know—the Combat Application Tourniquet, or CAT-T. The only other tourniquet currently authorized by the CoTCCC is the SOFT-T. According to the 18Ds mentioned above, the CAT-T is preferable, simply because it is easier apply under stress.

Some available tourniquets, such as the TK4 and SWAT-T, are undesirable, despite low cost and small size, simply because they lack a reliable means of increasing the pressure of the tourniquet, in the form of a windlass device.

Keep your tourniquets (TQ) readily accessible, rather than burying them in the bottom of your first-aid kit. If you need a TQ, you're going to need it in a hurry, and digging for it is going to be detrimental to survival.

For life-threatening hemorrhage from non-extremities, the current protocol is to apply QuickClot or another hemostatic control agent, with direct pressure for at least three minutes, before applying a battlefield dressing. This obviously limits the applicability of this for the CUF phase.

All we are concerned with is MAJOR hemorrhage from the extremities at this point. If it's not pouring out or pumping out, do not worry about it during the CUF phase.



The CAT-T tourniquet

Applying the CAT Tourniquet

The CAT-T tourniquet is a simple, user-friendly device that has been proven to work, despite some limited shortcomings to the

construction of the device.

Place the wounded extremity through the tourniquet.

Place the tourniquet as high as possible above the injury site. Pull the self-adhering band tight and securely fasten it back on itself.

Twist the windlass rod until the bleeding stops.

Lock the windlass rod in place with the windlass clip.

Grasp the windlass strap, pull tight, and adhere it to the windlass clip.

The same methods are used to apply the CAT-T to the leg as the arm, with the exception that it is often necessary—and significantly faster—to simply un-loop the tourniquet and wrap it around the thigh, instead of running the tourniquet the entire length of the wounded leg.

Tactical Field Care Phase

The TFC phase of care occurs AFTER the fight is won. It may also take place in the event of injuries sustained in the field, while not under enemy fire. This is the "first-aid" portion of TC3. Unlike the normal ABCDE (Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Decision about Disability, Environmental Hazards) of civilian EMS care, in TC3, we modify this with the acronym MARCH.

MARCH stands for Massive hemorrhage, Airway, Respiration, Circulation, Hypovolemia/Hypothermic Shock. In order to help this really sink in for the reader with civilian medical training, let me repeat this: Massive hemorrhage will KILL faster than an obstructed airway.

Before we can begin worrying about treating casualties however, we need to consider the importance of triage, and how we can go about triage with mass casualty scenarios.

Triage

Triage is a French word that means "to sort" or "to select." In the battlefield medicine context, it refers to the dynamic process of sorting casualties to provide the greatest benefit for the greatest number of casualties. There are five basic categories that we will sort casualties into: immediate, delayed, minimal, expectant, and dead. In order to accomplish this sorting process, we use a process called "global sorting."

The first step of global sorting is to simply ask the casualties, "If you can walk, move over here," and designate a place for them to congregate. Those casualties—while their wounds are probably very real

—are automatically put in the minimal category for the time being. They are not going to die in the next several minutes.

Of the remaining casualties, we ask, "If you are able to, please wave your hand at me, and I will be with you in just a couple of minutes." Obviously, their inability to walk indicates a more serious wound or wounds, but these casualties are still conscious and responsive, so they are probably not going to die in the next few minutes either. They are now sorted into the "delayed" category. They definitely need care, but it can be delayed for a couple of minutes, while you deal with more serious casualties.

The final stage of the triage process is saved for those who remain still, or who have OBVIOUS life-threatening conditions. They should be assessed and treated for immediate threats to life, first.

The patient assessment for battlefield care is both more informal than the civilian EMS model, and more beneficial, because it happens faster.

Massive Hemorrhage
As you approach the individual casualty, you are looking for IMMEDIATE THREATS TO LIFE. First is, any indication of an untreated massive hemorrhage. Do they have blood pooling around them? Do they have obvious major, bleeding wounds that need to be addressed. Those wounds that have been treated with a TQ successfully can be left alone for the moment. Other wounds will need to be addressed. This can range from packing a wound tightly with compressed gauze or a hemostatic-control agent infused sponge like Quick-Clot gauze or Celox, to packing an open abdominal wound with an abdominal pad and wrapping it up.

As you are assessing for massive hemorrhage, you should be talking to the patient. This allows you to assess their level of responsiveness (LOR) as well as determining if they have an unobstructed airway and can breath. Here's a super-secret military medicine treatment trick for you: If the casualty is awake and talking—or even just making vocal noises—both their airway and respiration are fine for the moment.

If your casualty is responsive and responding, you can determine their LOR at this time. We use the acronym A&O to describe level of responsiveness.

A&Ox4 means a patient is Alert and Oriented to Person, Place, Time, and Event.
A&Ox3 means they are alert and oriented to three of the factors.
A&Ox2 and A&Ox1 are the obvious extensions of that.
A&Ox0 means the casualty is awake, but is not oriented to anything. This is the casualty who is rambling about nothing, or is simply asking for his mom, or similar issues.
An LOR of "V" means the casualty is not awake, and only responds to verbal stimulus. If you call out their name, they may moan or move a little, but they are not awake or really responsive.
An LOR of "P" means the casualty is not awake, and does not respond to verbal stimulus. Only a pain stimulus will elicit a response. This can range from a stout slap to the sole of the foot, to firmly pinching their finger or toe nails or ear.
An LOR of "U" means the casualty is completely unresponsive. At this point, you need to begin assessing airway and respiration, in an attempt to determine WHY the casualty is unresponsive.

Airway

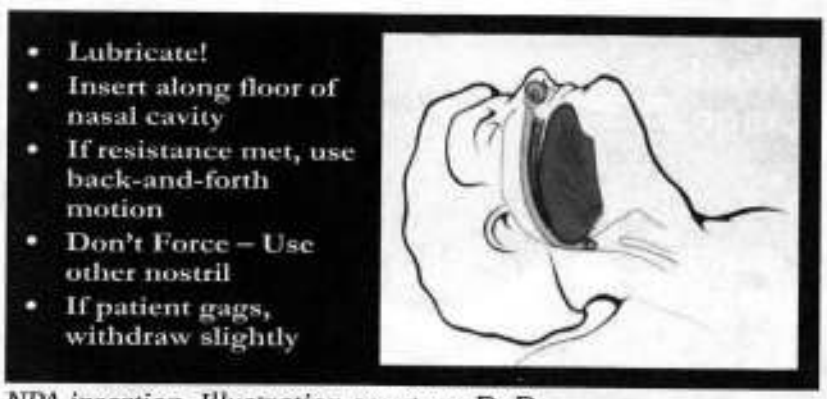
Airway management is typically limited to the traditional chin-lift/jaw-thrust methods taught in every first-aid/CPR class in civilian EMS care. This is not a bad thing, assuming you have enough extra rescuers to dedicate one of them to manage airway on each casualty. A simpler answer, for both conscious and unconscious casualties, is the use of the nasopharyngeal (NPA) airway device.

The advantage of the NPA over other airway options is that it is relatively non-invasive, and can be used in a casualty who is still conscious. I teach students, if the casualty's wounds are severe enough that you think he MIGHT lose consciousness, go ahead and insert the NPA. That way, you don't need to sit and monitor his airway the entire time. This can be important if you have three or four casualties per rescuer/care-giver.

To insert the NPA, you will need an NPA, surgical gloves, and a water-based lubricant. To begin, place the casualty on their back, with the head in a neutral spine position. Select the appropriately sized airway device by measuring the airway from the casualty's nostril to the earlobe or the angle of the jaw. For most adult males, the appropriate size will be an Fr#28. Choosing the proper length will ensure that you've selected the proper diameter.

Lubricate the tube with a water-based lubricant. While the NPA should be packaged in the IFAK with a packet of lubricant, if there is not one, simply spitting on the tube may be sufficient. I regularly insert NPA, in class, with no lubricant, without issue. Do NOT use a petroleum-based lubricant. These can cause damage to the tissues lining the nasal cavity and pharynx, increasing the risk of infection.

Insert the NPA by pushing the tip of the nose upward gently with your free hand. Position the tube so that the bevel faces towards the septum. Insert the airway into the nostril, at a 90-degree angle to the front of the face, and advance it until the flange rests against the nostril. NEVER FORCE THE NPA into the casualty's nostril. If resistance is met and slight pressure is inadequate to move past it, withdraw the tube and try it in the other nostril.



NPA insertion. Illustration courtesy, DoD.

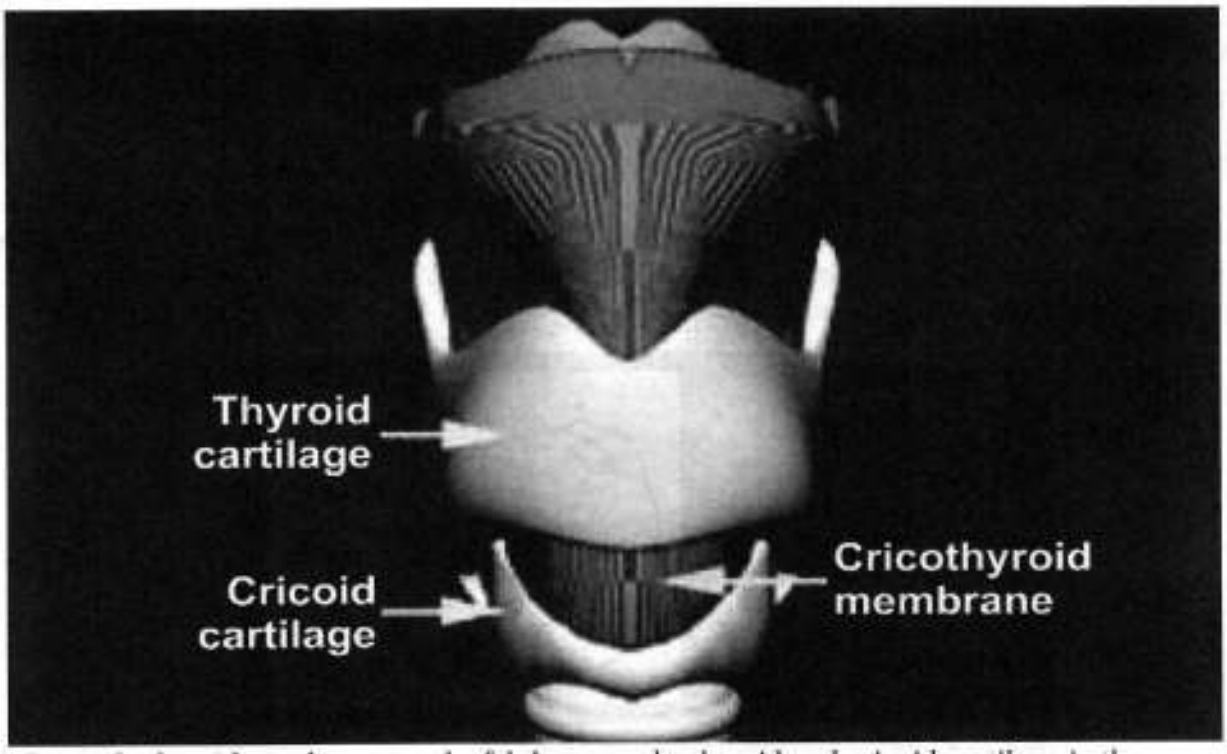
The NPA is the generalized solution to airway obstructions and impending airway obstructions in TC3. Unfortunately, there are a couple of times when you absolutely do not want to use a NPA. If you see clear, viscous fluid coming from the nose or ears of your casualty, it can be an indication of internal

head injury. Likewise, if the casualty suffered obvious blunt force damage of any sort to the face or jaw, the use of the NPA is contraindicated. The reason for both of these should be readily apparent: if there is damage to the head, it may result in the NPA being inserted places it would cause more damage than it would remedy.

If you have a casualty who has indications—or obvious—head injury, and he is conscious, leave it be, and simply monitor the airway. If the patient is unconscious and cannot maintain an open—patent is the medical term—airway, the secondary course of action is the use of a procedure referred to as a surgical cricothyroidotomy. The surgical chric is the layman's version of the tracheotomy so beloved of old Hollywood war movies.

Textbook execution of the surgical cric requires a Betadine or alcohol swab, a #10 or #15 scalpel, curved hemostats, a cric hook, a 6.0 endotracheal tube, a 10cc syringe, 4x4 gauze pads, tape, and an Ambu bag. We will discuss the textbook execution of the surgical cric, and then look at more field expedient means of accomplishing it.

Once the rescuer has all of the necessary equipment laid out, close at hand, and the casualty has been placed in a supine position, with his neck in a neutral spine position, the rescuer identifies the cricothyroid membrane, located between the thyroid and cricoid cartilages in the front of the neck.



The crichothyroid membrane can be felt between the thyroid and cricoid cartilage in the "windpipe" at the front of the neck.

Palpating the cricothyroid membrane, the rescuer uses his fingers to stabilize the cartilage, and makes a

vertical incision through the skin, directly above the cricothyroid membrane.

While continuing to stabilize the larynx, the rescuer uses the butt end of the scalpel or a hemostat to poke through the cricothyroid membrane, and then inserts the tips of the hemostat through the opening. He then locks the jaws in an open position to dilate the opening. A cric hook may also be used for this purpose.

Inserting the ET tube between the jaws of the hemostat, the rescuer insures that the tube is in the trachea, and directed downward, towards the lungs.

Using the 10cc syringe, the cuff of the ET tube is inflated with 10ml (10cc) of air. The rescuer than checks for air exchange through the ET tube to verify placement of the tube. This is accomplished by listening and feeling for air passing in and out of the tube. This will cause the tube to mist. The rescuer should also be able to see a bilateral rise and fall of the chest.

If the ET tube position is correct, the rescuer secures the tube in place with tape, and applies a 4x4 gauze dressing over the wound to protect the tube and the incision site. Continue monitoring the casualty's respirations, and ventilate if required.

That is the textbook method of performing a surgical cric. The field expedient method is almost identical, except the hemostats are not required, nor is the ET tube. Punching the hole in the cricothyroid membrane is followed by dilating the puncture with the handle end of the scalpel. Alternatively, if a pocket knife or razor blade had to be used to make the initial incision, something as simple as a car key or ink pen can be used to poke the hole in the cricothyroid membrane.

Instead of inserting the ET tube and inflating the cuff, the unusable NPA may be inserted and secured in the airway. In such a case, if the casualty does not begin spontaneous respirations, and ventilation is required, the rescuer can perform rescue breathing through the NPA.

Respiration

With a patent airway established and secured, you now need to ensure that the casualty will be able to continue breathing through that airway. If your casualty has suffered any penetrating or blunt force trauma to the upper chest, upper back, or neck region, you MUST consider the possibility of pneumothorax developing. Indications include the aforementioned, as well as an increasing inability of the casualty to breathe with ease.

Initial treatment of respiratory issues however, is to deal with open/sucking chest wounds. These are treated with a simple occlusive dressing. There is a wide variety of chest seals available on the market. These range from the Asherman device and Bolin chest seals, to Halo seals and simple vaseline-impregnated gauze. Sadly, many organizations—like the Wilderness Medical Institute—are still pushing the traditional method of using a bandage wrapper and taping off three sides to form a "flutter valve" device.

With over a decade of recent, relevant combat experience, we now know that the flutter valve method is not only unnecessary, it also simply does not work worth a shit. As recently as 2012, the CoTCCC

has also determined that self-venting chest seal devices like the Asherman and Bolin do not perform any better than simple occlusive dressings like the Halo seals.

To apply a chest seal to an open chest wound, first expose the wound(s) by cutting or unfastening any clothing that covers the wound, while disrupting the wound as little as possible. Do not remove clothing that is stuck in the wound.

Insure that you check for an exit wound as well. Feel and/or look at the casualty's chest and back, and remove their clothing if necessary. Unwrap the chest seal dressing and apply it over the wound. Ensure that the dressing extends at least two inches beyond the edges of the wound. If an exit wound is present, cover it with the second chest seal in the package.

Once the chest seals are in place, you can dress the wound with a normal battlefield dressing, if necessary or desired. If this is done, ensure that the dressing is not tied so tightly that it interferes with the respiratory process of the casualty.

Sit the casualty up, or in another comfortable recovery position, and continue to monitor the casualty for breathing and leakage of the chest seal. Monitor for development of pneumothorax. This will be indicated by distinct difficulty breathing, with painful tension on one side of the chest, as well as possible distention of the airway at the neck.

Needle Decompression

In the event of a developing pneumothorax, the primary available intervention to the TC3-level care provider is the needle decompression. This requires the application of a large-bore needle catheter (10-14 gauge), at least 2.5 inches in length, and tape. While nauseating for many people to consider, the needle decompression is actually a relatively simple, straight forward process.

To locate the insertion site, locate the second intercostal space. This is the area between the second and third ribs, at the mid-clavicular line. To locate this, draw an imaginary line from the center of the casualty's collarbone to his nipple, on the affected side of the chest. Moving down this line, palpate with your finger tips, until you feel the second space between the ribs.

At that location, place the needle tip, bevel up, and f

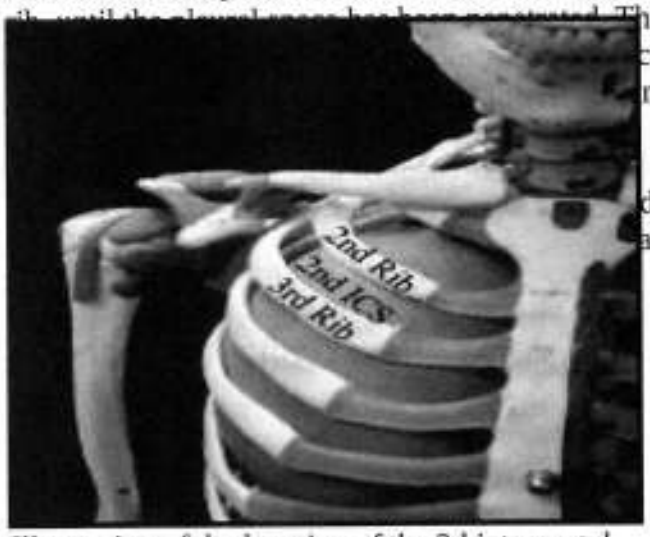
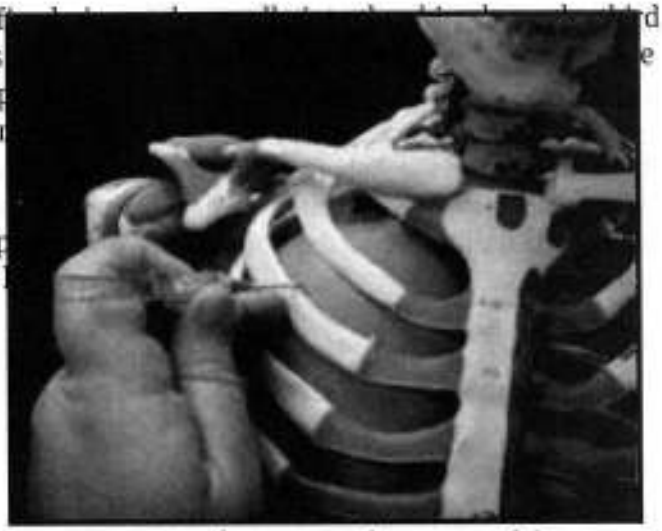


Illustration of the location of the 2d intercostal space. Courtesy, DoD.

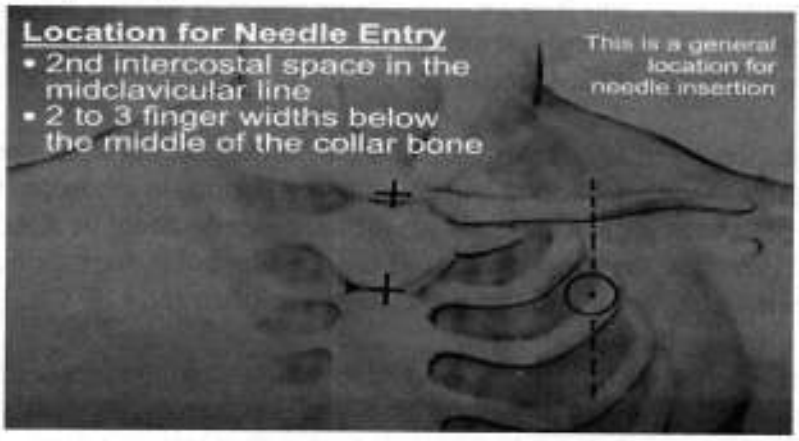


Demonstrating the proper placement of the needle for needle decompression. Courtesy, DoD.

What if you perform a needle decompression on a patient who has a chest injury, but does NOT have a tension pneumothorax developing yet? There are a couple of things to consider.

- The casualty already has holes in his chest.
- They are probably significantly larger than 14 gauge.
- You will do not additional damage to the casualty.

Once you've released the pneumothorax, remove the needle from the catheter, and use tape to secure the catheter in place. You will need to continue monitoring the casualty for development of another pneumothorax and respiratory difficulties.



Revisit Triage

Once you have completed the patient assessment to this point, you have dealt with any IMMEDIATE threats to life. You may now push this casualty to the delayed category, and move on to the next "IMMEDIATE" casualty, and look for immediate threats to life. It should take a moderately well-trained rescuer/first responder no more than 1-2 minutes to work his way through the immediate threats to life concerns of a triage patient. In a worst case scenario, requiring treatment of multiple massive hemorrhage wounds, a surgical cric, AND a needle decompression, it should still take considerably less than 10 minutes to get to this point.

Re-triage your patients. If you need to move some of your previously "delayed" patients to the immediate category, then do so. Otherwise, you can move on to the rest of the MARCH protocols, and begin dealing with all of the patients now categorized as "delayed."

Circulation

Assuming you have time, following the fight, now is the time to deal with all the bleeding wounds that were not categorized as "massive hemorrhage." This will include massive hemorrhage wounds that were initially treated with a tourniquet.

Minor wounds may be dressed with a simple dressing. This is where the much-beloved of survivalists everywhere, use of feminine napkins for battle dressings comes in. Ideally, there are better solutions to this issue. From hemostatic control agents like Quick-Clot and HemCom dressings, to simple Curlex and compressed gauze, the goal of packing wounds and dressing wounds is to cause the platelets in the red blood cells to clot, stopping the blood flow. Whether you are using Quick-Clot sponges or compressed gauze—or yes, feminine napkins—the goal is to pack as much of the dressing as physically possible into the wound cavity itself, and then apply heavy direct pressure for a minimum of three minutes. This provides time for the hemostasis to take effect.

Once the direct pressure has been applied for three minutes, the wound is wrapped in a simple battlefield dressing. These can range from the popular, effective issue bandage, referred to as the Israeli Battlefield Dressing (IBD) to more specialized dressings like H-Bandages, OALES dressings, and others. At the long-term austere level, this may be as simple as wrapping an elastic bandage or even a strip of cotton bed sheet around the dressing and wound to hold the packing in place. The key is the dressings, whether packed or simple dressed, need to be relatively clean, and very absorbent.

Previous tourniquet applications need to be reassessed. This is done by noting what wound or wounds the tourniquet was addressing, and then packing and dressing the wounds in the manner described above. Once the wounds have been packed and dressed, the tourniquets should be released—without removing—and the wound watched for a few minutes. If the dressing holds, the tourniquet can be left loose. If the dressing does not hold, the tourniquet needs to be reapplied and LEFT ALONE.

There are countless old wives' tales surrounding the use of tourniquets. Among these are the idea that use of a tourniquet automatically results in loss of the limb, and that tourniquets should be released and re-tightened regularly. NEITHER OF THESE IS TRUE!!! Rather than rely on wives' tales of obsolete wisdom, do your research and learn what almost two decades of contemporary battlefield experience has taught us of the use of tourniquets. Tourniquets save lives. Period, full-stop, end of story.

The final issue with tourniquets that we need to consider however is the use of field-expedient, improvised tourniquets. If that is the only choice a person has, so be it, but considering the relatively low-cost of tourniquets, and the proven track record of failure with improvised tourniquets, there is absolutely no conscionable reason for not stockpiling a metric shit-ton of tourniquets and using them over and over, until they come apart.

Hypovolemic Shock/Hypothermic Shock
While lots of people believe that almost anything will send you into "shock," the reality is that—medically speaking—shock only has one, simple definition. Shock is an inadequate perfusion of oxygenated blood to the brain and other cells of the body.

There are three basic types of medical shock:

- Hypovolemic: This is loss of fluid volume due to blood loss, sweating, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or severe burn injuries.
- Cardiogenic: This is failure of the blood to adequately pump blood. Taking a 5.56mm round through the heart kills you, because of cardiogenic shock.
- Vasogenic: Vasogenic shock is loss of vascular tone resulting in an increased vascular space. This is generally caused by issues like sepsis and anyphylaxis.

For our purposes, during the MARCH protocols, we are primarily concerned with hypolovolemic shock, followed closely thereafter with hypothermia. The simplest, most effective method of treating hypovolemic shock on the battlefield is prevention. By simply insuring the hemorrhaging wounds are treated immediately, we can greatly reduce the impact of hypovolemic shock.

When that doesn't happen, we need to know the stages of shock, and the signs and symptoms of the different stages, in order to determine the best course of action for treatment.

Stages of Shock
There are three basic stages of shock: compensatory, decompensatory, and irreversible. Compensatory shock is characterized by constriction of the blood vessels, increased heart rate, and increased respiratory rate, as the body struggles to keep adequate blood pressure, in order to keep oxygenated blood flowing to the brain and other organs. This is recognizable by an anxious, restless, disoriented level of responsiveness, rapid heart rate, and rapid, shallow breathing. Skin will generally be pale, cool, and clammy to the touch, and the patient may begin suffering from nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and/or thirst.

Decompensatory shock sets in as the body's efforts to compensate begin to fail. Blood pressure starts to drop, and inadequate perfusion begins. The brain is no longer receiving the oxygenated blood that it requires. The patient's level of responsiveness will continue to deteriorate, eventually to the point of unresponsiveness. Heart rate will remain rapid, but will weaken and eventually begin to slow, while the respiration will also grow more shallow, until it to slows at the irreversible stage.

Battlefield Treatment of Shock

The first thing we need to understand as survivalist care providers in an austere environment is that we have to husband our resources very, very carefully. Plugging someone with intravenous fluids may not be our best option, even if it will relieve their shock for a short while. Will it help in the long-term? Can we keep them alive if we run out of fluids? These need to be the first two questions on our minds.

The first principle of battlefield treatment of shock is to treat it before it signs begin to develop. If you have someone who is beginning to demonstrate signs of compensatory shock, we need to be looking at treatment options, BEFORE we consider sticking them with an IV. We should have already treated the cause, so now, if we can increase their fluid volume, we can probably—generally—keep them alive.

We need to keep the patient calm, and keep them at a normal body temperature. This may mean we need to strip any wet or damp clothes off of them—including sweat-soaked clothing—and getting them into a blanket or sleeping bag to maintain their core body temperature. If the patient is awake and oriented enough, we should be pushing oral fluids into them (although, it should be noted that penetrating wounds to the torso make the administration of oral fluids a non-starter.

Current TC3 protocols call for the initiation of a saline lock for future administration of IV fluids if necessary. There is also a simple, field-expedient method of determining whether you need to push those fluids or not.

Step one is checking LOR. An altered mental status—absent indications of traumatic brain injury (TBI) like getting smoked in the head with a rifle butt or a vehicle roll-over accident—is the best indicator of possible battlefield shock. The second step, and the first indicator is TBI is suspected, is the absence of a radial pulse at the wrist. If neither of these symptoms is indicated, the patient is NOT in decompensatory shock and SHOULD NOT BE ADMINISTERED IV FLUIDS!!! It was common, as a young Ranger, for everyone—from Joe Snuffy to Matt the Medic to Sam Squad Leader—to look for ANY excuse whatsoever to administer an IV. That works fine when you're part of the most powerful military in the world, and aerial resupply will never be an issue. It's not such a good idea when the 8-12 500mL fluid bags your team is carrying are the ONLY IV fluids your four man team is going to get anytime soon. Make him drink all the fluids he can handle.

If the patient IS in decompensatory shock, and your assessment indicates you may be able to keep him alive long enough to get him to a field/guerrilla hospital, safe house, or other care provider, the current TC3 protocols indicate a 500mL bolus of Hextend, followed by another 500mL bolus in half of an hour, if he's still showing signs and symptoms of being in decompensatory shock, but no more than 1000mL total. Hextend is approximately seven times more effective than Lactated Ringer's solution or Normal Saline.

There's only two major issues with Hextend for our purposes. Number one, outside of the military and trauma emergency rooms in hospitals, it's almost impossible to procure, and number two—if you could procure it—it costs upwards of $500 for a 500mL bolus.

For we mortals, the next choice is simple Lactated Ringer's, followed distantly by normal saline.

Neither is particularly desirable for this purpose, but both are "better than nothing." Further—better—both can still be purchased from local farm/feed stores generally, since both are used to treat pets and livestock.

Analgesia
Analgesia is pain relief. As much as possible, we want casualties to self-administer their analgesia in the form of a "combat pill pack," that includes pain killers and some general antibiotic for prophylaxis. All too often in classes, people ask me about Vicodin or other narcotic pain-relievers for TC3 applications. Here's the crux: Would you let someone drive your car if they were on Vicodin or Percocet? Of course not. So, why in the fuck would you let them carry a gun? You wouldn't. The pain killer of choice for the combat pill pack is 1500mg of acetomenophin. That's right—basic Tylenol. We don't use aspirin or ibuprofen, because both having blood thinning properties.

Prophylactic antibiotics are also a common topic of discussion amongst survivalists. Everyone knows that you can get penicillin and sulfa drugs from the local vet store. The current TC3 doctrine however is oral moxifloxacin, which you cannot get from the fish store. What you can get is cephalexin, in the form of Keflex, which was the CoTCCC's recommendation prior to moxifloxacin. If the casualty is not capable of taking oral antibiotics, the prescription is currently cefotetan or ertapenem, IV or intramuscular (IM). All of these can be procured from overseas pharmacies, without a prescription. Many people are concerned about ordering from overseas pharmacies, but for the most part, without cause. Thanks to a much-maligned group of people—HIV/AIDS patient advocates—the DEA and FDA do not spend much—if any—time on interfering with the importation for private use, of non-narcotic pharmaceuticals.

Other Issues
Other medical issues that may need to be dealt with on the battlefield include penetrating eye injuries, burn injuries, and CPR. For the most part, the same skill sets you learn in a basic civilian first-aid/CPR class will work for these issues in a tactical environment, with a couple of minor caveats:

- eye injuries: The single best, most effective treatment for penetrating eye injuries in the field is prevention. WEAR YOUR FUCKING EYE PROTECTION!!!
- Burns: We do not treat burn injuries. We treat casualties who have burns. Every step of the TC3 protocols can be applied over/through burns.
- CPR: "Resuscitation on the battlefield for victims of blast or penetrating trauma who have no pulse, no ventilations, and no other signs of life, will not be successful and should not be attempted." Yes, if your patient drowned, or had a heart attack, CPR may help. If they were shot or blown up, and have no signs of life? CPR ain't going to do a bit of good. They are dead.

Long-Term Sustained Care
One issue that we deal with a lot, as teachers of tactical medicine for the survivalist community, is the

plaintive wails of people who believe that trying to save lives with TC3 is pointless, because "we won't have hospitals!" True enough, as it were.

Here's the catch though...hospitals are a relatively modern invention. People survived horrific battlefield injuries for millenia before hospitals and modern medical care were developed. We have advantages over them, even without hospitals. We understand the germ theory of disease. We know the scientific reasons that the body works and how it works.

The fact is, the use of TC3 WILL keep people alive for days or even weeks. If you can get them into the hands of someone with even moderate nursing skills, many of them will survive. Ultimately, it comes down to some will survive, with decent care, others will die, regardless of the level of care they are provided. It is up to us to provide as much decent care as possible, under the circumstances, and hope for the best.

Suggested Further Reading

Handbook for Tactical Combat Casualty Care: Tactics, Techniques and Procedures Center for Army Lessons Learned

Special Operations Forces Medical Handbook, 2012 edition Joint Special Operations Medical Course

Chapter Six
SO, YOU WANNA BE AN OPERATOR?

"It is easier to find men who are willing to volunteer to die than it is to find men who are willing to endure pain with patience." --Julius Caesar

Properly conducted tactical training is preparation for interpersonal violence on a collective scale—combat. Improperly conducted tactical training is a waste of time, energy, and limited resources. It is essential that prepared, concerned citizens train to win the fights they will face, recognizing that the fight will be what the fight will be, not necessarily what they would like the fight to be. Combat is harsh, unforgiving, and unpredictable, but well-planned and expertly executed training can greatly aid in mitigating those hazards by preparing fighters to face them. To do so however, training must be kept relevant and real.

Individual task training—the foundation of successful collective task training—is the most critical aspect of a practical, effective training plan. Individual critical task skills encompass a wide range of necessary, fundamental skill sets beyond simple marksmanship and weapons craft. Unconventional warfare at the tactical level is nothing more than conventional small-unit operations conducted by irregular forces in an unconventional environment. For that reason, there is a great deal of value for the reluctant partisan in looking at the methods used in training the conventional force light infantryman traditionally.

As early as the middle of the 1990s, the US Army's 75th Ranger Regiment looked at the historical lessons learned in its recent campaigns, and previously, and re-prioritized the Regimental plan for training individual Rangers. The lessons that the Regiment developed are almost perfectly suited for the guerrilla security force, if you accept the above philosophical tenet that there is little difference in the individual tactical skills needed by the traditional light infantryman and the guerrilla fighter. In the 75th Ranger Regiment, the institutional philosophy has historically been, "We are many things, to many people, but basically, we are light infantry." The Regiment, like the partisan fighter, uses light infantry tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP), to conduct sometimes very unconventional special operations missions.

The process that the Ranger Regiment used, was to look at all of the possible contingencies and tasks that the unit might be expected to perform, and realized that there was no way to master every single one of them. The prepared citizen today suffers under even greater restrictions on time and resources, since the federal regime is not funding our training. Instead of trying to master every single, potentially useful, skill in the tactical tool box, the Ranger Regiment decided to do what intelligent survivalists will do today: focus on the fundamental skills that will cover as many potential scenarios as possible. After all...does a house carpenter really need a plumber's drain snake in his tool box?

In conducting their analysis and decision-making, the Regiment realized that there are four basic pillars to individual effectiveness in combat. These are marksmanship and weapons handling, physical conditioning, tactical trauma medicine, and battle skills and drills. While master of these four areas will allow you improvise and perform any combat task effectively, failure to achieve a degree of proficiency in any of these areas will inevitably result in individual failure. Individual failure leads to collective failure, because no team can be stronger than its weakest link.

While it is relatively simple to develop a functional proficiency in the basic battle drills needed by the irregular partisan security force, as long as the individual skills are mastered, without constant attention those individual skills will diminish rapidly. Beyond the physical readiness conditioning and combat rifle training that are relatively simple to practice and improve on your own, and tactical trauma medicine, which requires significantly more work to develop an expert level of knowledge of, individual and collective battle skills and drills are the remaining fundamental skills.

Individual tactical skills range from individual movement methods such as moving as part of a fire team or stick, to movement under direct enemy small arms fire. They include basic land navigation skills, as well as camouflage and concealment. The training paradigm of the effective partisan guerrilla fighter is infinite, but mastery of the basic, traditional light infantry tactical skills will provide a solid foundation upon which the individual can develop a complete tactical skills portfolio.

Camouflage and Concealment

The ability to conceal yourself and your equipment from enemy observation during daylight or at night, is an obvious basic skill for the guerrilla. Concealment and camouflage are one of the most basic historical weapons of small-unit warfare. While the modern advantages of air and technological superiority have led to a disturbing lack of this skill set amongst modern conventional force infantrymen, for irregular forces lacking in air and artillery support, the ability to effectively utilize camouflage and concealment may very well mean the difference between life and death on the battlefield. For lightly-armed, poorly-equipped irregular forces, camouflage skill is critical to avoiding compromise when moving through unknown or enemy-controlled areas, or while operating in a hide site or ambush position. In the same way that expert marksmanship and weapons handling will allow you to kill the enemy most effectively, knowing how and when to apply camouflage methods to enhance concealment will most effectively prevent you from being killed by the same enemy.

It is imperative that you learn to become concealment and camouflage conscious from the time you depart a safe haven such as your retreat location or community borders, until you return. Detailed attention to this fundamentals of camouflage and concealment is one of the simplest measures available

of a well-trained, small-unit combat element.

Definitions

It is important to define the differences between cover, concealment, and camouflage. Doctrinally and practically speaking, "cover" is defined as anything that will protect you from hostile fire. While it is popular in some circles to discuss "light cover" as opposed to "hard cover," the fact is, that distinction is based on ignorance. Organized military forces, law enforcement, and irregular forces use a mix of different caliber weapons with different capabilities, ranging from 5.56mm and 7.62mm, as well as heavier weapons such as .50BMG and 12.7mm (the Warsaw Bloc equivalent of .50BMG).

Cover stops bullets. Mud brick walls make pretty good cover, most of the time.

Unless you somehow have perfect intelligence regarding the types of weapons that are available to your enemy, trying to differentiate between light and heavy cover is a fool's errand. Cover is either cover—i.e. something that stops projectiles from striking you—or it is not. If your only consideration is whether something will stop one particular type or caliber of bullet, you will end up dying from a different caliber of bullet, or from shrapnel from mortars, artillery, or RPG rounds that you overlooked. In order to be considered as such, cover must stop projectiles that will kill you.

CARS ARE NOT COVER!!! Even 5.56 will punch all the way through a car body. They can be pretty decent concealment though.

Concealment on the other hand, may or may not stop projectiles, but it does mask you from enemy observation. While a rock may stop projectiles, as well as prevent the enemy from seeing you, a screen of leafy vegetation will prevent the enemy from seeing you, but it will do little to prevent projectiles

from killing you. It is critically important as well as to consider the technological implications of STANO (Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Night Observation) devices when looking at potential concealment. Additionally, the need exists to consider concealment not just from symmetrical terrestrial threats, but consideration must be given to to potential airborne threats as well.

Something that will conceal you from unaided vision, may not be adequate to conceal your presence from an opponent using magnified spotting scopes or binoculars. Something that will conceal you from these may not conceal you from thermal imaging devices.

Camouflage is the art of using natural or artificial objects and materials to help increase your concealment from enemy observation. When determining your camouflage requirements, the most fundamental rule is to first take advantage of any and all natural concealment, such as trees, brush, grass, the natural lay of the land like small folds in the ground, man-made structures, and shadows. The shape, shadow, colors, and textures of your body and equipment must be made to blend into the surrounding environment, while recognizing that even a short distance movement may result in environmental changes in color and consistency multiple times.

Basic Tenets of Camouflage Discipline
There are three basic tenets of camouflage discipline that the partisan guerrilla fighter should remember and exercise at all times. These include:

- Camouflage is not clothing. Do not focus on engineered camouflage-patterned clothing. While certain camouflage patterns may be superior in your immediate area than others, 500 meters away, it may clash violently with the surrounding environment. The use of simple, earth-toned clothing offers many advantages over "camouflage" clothing, because it is simpler to modify to fit your environment, as you move through different areas, and will blend better—even without modification—across a wider spectrum of areas. Further, in crossing urban/built-up residential areas, earth-toned solids are considerably less conspicuous than camouflage of any sort.

- Pay attention to your surroundings. Change your camouflage to match the terrain and foliage patterns you are moving through, as well as hen your natural foliage camouflage dries up and wilts. The natural foliage you use to garnish your camouflage must look natural to your environment at all times.

- Develop an eye for terrain. You must learn to observe and read terrain at an individual tactical level. This terrain appreciation will allow you to maximize natural concealment by selecting the most concealed route of movement, using shadows and other shifts in the micro-terrain, from buildings and ditches, to culverts and small folds in the ground, to remain invisible to enemy observation.

Methods of Camouflage
There are two basic methods of utilizing camouflage that are applicable at the individual level: hiding and blending.

- Hiding is defined as concealing your body and equipment behind something that masks you from enemy observation. This is accomplished by laying down in growths of thick vegetation, behind a tree or rock, burrowing into fallen leaves or snow, or simply digging in and burying yourself and your equipment underground. This method offers the additional advantage of being the most secure method of concealing yourself from thermal imaging devices. The interposition of solid objects—whether thick foliage or the thermal mass of dirt—offers the single best method available for hiding from thermal imaging.

- Blending is the method of camouflage most people think of when they hear the term. It is simply the perfection of camouflage so that—even in plain view—you are indistinguishable from your surroundings.

With the exception of the rifle, this sniper is demonstrating the use of blending type camouflage in a meadow.

A sniper in a well-designed ghillie suit should not be recognized as distinct from his surroundings, even when viewed through binoculars or a spotting scope. Your goal is to achieve the same level of expertise. The enemy should be able to look directly at you and not see you, even with magnified optics. This requires knowledge, practice, experience, and confidence.

What the Enemy is looking for

Target identifiers can be defined as anything that you do or do not do that can reveal your position to enemy observation. In order to avoid compromising your own position, as well as to aid you in the detection of enemy presence, you must know and understand typical target indicators. There are four general types of target indicators to consider:

- Olfactory indicators are things which the enemy can smell. Cooking foods, fires and woodsmoke, cigarette smoke, aftershave, deodorant and scented soaps, insect repellent, and body odor are all olfactory target indicators. During the Vietnam War, it was well-established that VC and NVA troops were often able to smell US service members in the field, due to these types of olfactory indicators. At the same time, some US soldiers allegedly also developed the ability to locate enemy personnel due to their regular consumption of nuoc man, a fermented

fish sauce used on rice in traditional Vietnamese cuisine.

In order to alleviate your own olfactory indicators, you must refrain from consuming spicy, highly seasoned foods, excessive consumption of alcohol, smoking in the field, or in clothing or equipment that you will use in the field, and the use of aftershaves and deodorants when headed to the field. While wafting woodsmoke over hunting clothes to mask the smell of human odors is a popular trick amongst deer hunters, it is not a particularly effective trick against human adversaries. It may become more so in the future, when everyone is using wood fires for warmth and heating however.

Burying human waste, including urine, or bagging it up for removal from the field, will also help to reduce possible olfactory indicators that may alert the enemy to your presence in the immediate future.

- Tactile indicators are those that the enemy can touch. These may include trip wires set to trigger early-warning devices or left over construction material and debris from occupied or recently deserted hide sites. Tactile target indicators may also include tracks, trash, or other debris left behind, such as gear or ammunition that has fallen unnoticed out of your LBE. In the tracking and counter-tracking community, these are referred to as spoor. Tactile indicators are overcome through awareness, tactical prowess, and simple good fieldcraft, including litter discipline.

- Auditory target indicators are those that the enemy can hear. These may be created by your movement, from equipment rattling or rustling, twigs or brush breaking underfoot, or simply crashing through noisy, thick, vegetation. Other auditory indicators include coughing, clearing your throat, sneezing, or simply opening equipment pouches or food wrappers. Auditory target indicators are often most noticeable during hours of reduced visibility, when the enemy cannot rely on his sense of sight as he will during daylight hours. It is absolutely critical that you learn to function at an expert level in the dark, with absolute silence, whether using NOD or not.

- Visual indicators are those most commonly thought of when discussing camouflage and concealment. These also tend to be the most often relied upon target indicators since human beings are visual creatures, and tend to "believe what we can see."

  Visual indicators can range from displaced vegetation, such as overturned leaves and bent-over grass, to others. Visual indicators can often be recognized by shape, shadow, silhouette, shine, and movement.

  Man-made shapes are most easily recognized as perfectly straight lines, such as the edge of a vehicle or the barrel of a rifle, to perfect semi-circles, such as the outline of a helmet or headlight. Perfect geometric shapes are so rare in nature that any witnessed in the field can be safely assumed to be man-made.

  Shadows may serve as target indicators, when they outline the shape of an unnatural item, or when they occur where no shadows should. Shadowed silhouettes, for example, may be

recognized as parts of a human body or military equipment or weapons. The shine of light reflecting off of even moderately reflective items will not only draw attention, but can be seen at surprisingly long distances. While LBE in ballistic nylon may appear to be camouflaged, such as in multi-cam or ATAC pattern, if it is new, the nylon itself offers a shiny surface that is extremely reflective. Worn areas on firearms, the lenses of optics, eye glasses and sunglasses, and even compass faces, can offer ideal reflective surfaces for any available visible light to reflect off of.

The visual target indicator that most often results in compromise of even moderately skilled infantrymen however, is movement. You may be perfectly camouflaged, without creating a single target indicator that would make the enemy think you were anywhere within 50 miles, and one, sudden, mistimed movement will compromise you entirely. You may not even have to be the source of the movement.

Animals or birds suddenly startled into movement may draw the enemy's attention to the vicinity, or a piece of brush or vegetation catching on your gear may suddenly whip loose; things as simple and innocuous as this may be all it takes for the enemy to focus his attention on your immediate area and lead to your detection. The cure for this of course is simple, although it is two-part. First of all, SLOW DOWN!!! Getting there faster only serves you well if you actually get there. Getting shot early, because you were rushing things will not do you a bit of good. Second is, if you know, or suspect the enemy is within observation range of your position, use terrain and vegetation to mask your movements. There's no reason to be hugging the edge of a tree line. Get inside the tree line, deep, and let the trees mask your movement. In an urban environment, get inside buildings as much as possible.

Putting it all to use

A simple understanding of what will indicate your presence to the enemy is insufficient. You must learn to apply this knowledge through experience, in order for it to be useful. Keep all of the following tricks of the trade in mind when practicing tactical movement and patrolling, both at the individual and the collective levels.

- Avoid unnecessary movement! Remain still whenever possible, because motion draws the eye. You may be perfectly hidden through blending when you are stationary, but easily detected—no matter how artfully camouflaged—as soon as you begin to move. Any movement you make against a stationary background will cause you to stand out clearly. When you must move, do so cautiously, from one position of concealment to the next, along the most concealed route possible.

- Background is critical! Even if you are hiding behind concealment, blend in with your background. Trees, brush, grass, dirt, and man-made structures that constitute your background all vary in color, texture, and appearance. This makes it impossible for your to blend with all of them, all of the time. Select movement routes with your background in mind, so that you will most easily blend your attire and equipment to the backgrounds. The background needs to be broken up enough to absorb the visual outline of your silhouette. In vegetated terrain, remain

inside of the tree line, regardless of how much more difficult movement may be, rather than right on the edge or outside of the edge of the timber.

When moving in natural environments, try to restrict your movement to times when the wind is blowing. This causes the surrounding vegetation to move, assisting in hiding your movement by blending it with the background movement. It serves the additional purpose of helping to distract the enemy's attention from looking for you, if he is trying to avoid the wind or wind-blown debris and dust.

- Stay in the shadows. Shadows will do more to hid your visual presence than almost anything else you can utilize. Shadows can be found under any conditions of day or night, and create a "black hole" effect. Looking into a shadowed area from a more brightly lit area—or across a more brightly lit area—makes seeing any details withing the shadowed area particularly difficult. Stepping from the shadows into the bright light of direct sunlight or moon glow will cause you to appear to "glow" relative to your surrounding shadows. This makes it ridiculously easy to see and locate.

  On the same hand however, it's not just the shadows you are in that you need to consider when hiding in the shadows. Hiding in a shadowed area that has sunlit areas directly behind it—relative to the point-of-view of the observing enemy—will create a highly visible silhouette, regardless of how well shadowed you may be.

- Stay close to the ground. Learn to love playing in the dirt, regardless of the weather. Being wet and cold and muddy beats the hell out of being shot and dead. Move in a crouch when upright, but crawl whenever possible or necessary. Anytime you stop to observe your surroundings, take a knee or move into the prone position in order to reduce your visual signature. By getting closer to the ground, you not only present a smaller visual signature, making it more difficult for the enemy to see you, but you increase your chances of seeing any enemy personnel who may be standing upright, because they are highlighted against the artificial horizon that you create. This is the same as if you forced the enemy to walk the skyline.

- Expose nothing that shines. Paint any shiny metal or worn metal on your equipment. If you wear sunglasses or safety glasses, keep them well under the brim of your hat, or remove them when patrolling so that they do not reflect light inadvertently. Keep the crystal face of your wristwatch either turned towards the inside of your wrist, or covered by some form of cover, such as the throat portion of an old sock, or the wrist gauntlets of your gloves. Use a lens cap on your optics. Remembers the aforementioned shininess of nylon gear.

  Anything that will reflect the light—however dully—can be seen from remarkably long distances, and will attract visual attention. The best way to ensure that you are not exposing anything that shines is to simply become anal retentive about staying in the shadows.

- Camouflage your face and hands. Exposed skin reflects light and shines, just like new nylon, because of natural skin oils. Sweaty, oily skin that occurs when you are physically exerting

yourself reflects even more light, and shines even more brightly. Even very dark pigmented skin will reflect light and shine, just like a wet, dark rock will.

Additionally, the human face is the single most recognizable object on the face of the planet to another human being. Even on a subconscious level, we recognize when we see a human face, whether we realize it at that moment or not. You look at human faces all day, every day, unless you are a single hermit, living on a remote hilltop in a mud hut. The average person cannot count the number of individual times he looks at another human face—even of the same person, over the course of the same conversation—over the course of one day. That repetitiveness makes it impossible to not recognize a human face when we see it.

Do not be afraid to use camouflage face paint. Burnt cork charcoal is a traditional alternative that can work as well, particularly at night, if you plaster it on the highlight points of your face.

A US Army Ranger with his face painted in the distinctive SOP pattern utilized by the 75th Ranger Regiment for decades. Notice the high points of the face are colored with the darker shade.

While mud is often considered an effective tool for camouflaging your skin, there are two major drawbacks to its use that are often overlooked. Number one is the fact that—when exposed to your natural body heat and dry air—mud dries out remarkably fast, and will quickly flake and peel off, leaving you exposed. Second is the fact that mud is mud. It often contains bacteria and other micro-organisms that can cause serious illness or medical conditions if you have—or get —even a small nick or cut on your face.

In addition to camouflaging your face, it is important to remember the sides and back of your head and neck. While the same methods work for camouflaging your hands that are effective for your face, it is far simpler to just wear a pair of earth-toned gloves. They do not need to be the latest, high-speed, low-drag, Oakley operator gloves. Even simple, brown, cotton jersey gloves, purchased for around a dollar at Wal-Mart will suffice. Something more robust may be preferable—in fact, is preferable—but do not get hung up on glove selection and turn it into some sort of fetish.

- Alter the appearance of normal items. You must remember to camouflage all of your equipment, as long as your camouflage efforts do not interfere with the actual operation of that equipment.

  Rifle. The mark of a well-trained and motivated rifleman is a weapon that has the scars to prove that it has been used and proven in tough, realistic training. It's not a toy. It is a tool, and a fighting man recognizes that. If you're afraid to camouflage your weapons, for fear of negatively impacting their resale value, then you're not treating it as a weapon and a tool, but as a safe queen financial investment. That is gayer than a bag of dicks and you deserve to be butt-stroked in the nuts for being retarded.

  Your weapon—if treated like a weapon and a tool—will undoubtedly end up painted, stripped of paint, and repainted many times over, in order to change the pattern to fit different operational areas. While it is currently fashionable to have a weapon treated with special camouflage treatments in various patterns, don't be afraid to simply spray paint the damned thing with Krylon. Do however, make the effort to change the color of your weapon and break up its visual signature.

While a multi-cam pattern would look better in the safe or on a gunshow table, the reality is, this simple pattern works just as well--if not better.

  There is very little in nature that is truly black, and fewer items yet that consist of as many perfectly straight lines as a modern fighting rifle. You need to disrupt these visual indicators as much as possible.

  While it is imperative not to interfere with the function of the weapon itself, or of the optics, the addition of small strips of burlap camouflage garnish or natural materials to the weapon, will help to further disrupt the visual signature.

  LBE. Even if you are using the latest, greatest, multi-cam or ATAC pattern camouflaged nylon load-bearing equipment, spray painting it with Krylon will help reduce the shininess of the nylon fabric. If you use a helmet to mount NOD for low-light/no-light conditions, camouflage your helmet as well. Use a camouflage helmet cover and/or netting to both break up the distinctive shape of the helmet, but also as an anchor to which you can attach burlap or natural camouflage garnish to further alter the visual signature of the helmet.

Rucksacks. The same rules apply to your rucksack, as to your fighting load LBE. From spray-painting a few stripes to break up the outline of a solid-colored pack, and to reduce the glare of new nylon shininess, to adding strips of burlap, netting, and natural garnish to further the effect, the use of paints, dyes, garnish, and natural materials will help to increase your survivability through good camouflage discipline.

Once again, do not overemphasize the importance of engineered camouflage clothing. Normal outdoor wear, whether Carhartts or Dickies brand work wear, or athletic apparel designed for adventure athletes, in neutral, earth-toned colors, will serve far better in most cases. For one thing, it is far easier to blend in with different environments than it is in a camouflage pattern specifically manufactured for one operational area. "Multi-cam" is not. While the contemporary "multi-cam" and "universal" camouflage patterns may work reasonably well in multiple environments, even the best of them are no more effective than normal, earth-toned clothing, when the required garnish and additions are made.

Further, if you suddenly find yourself moving into a built-up area, without the opportunity to change your clothing, it is a lot easier to blend in with noncombatants while wearing North Face, Patagonia, or Carhartt brand clothing than it is wile wearing ATAC-FG or old woodland pattern BDU. It is also significantly less intimidating to most people you will encounter when trying to interact with the local civilian populace. Rather than looking at you as "the crazy survivalist militia nuts," they can see you as normal folks who were smart enough, tough enough, and lucky enough to survive.

One area of engineered pattern camouflage clothing that I've always found particularly loathsome is the fascination that some people have with "snow-flage." Unless you live in a barren, Arctic wilderness well north of the Arctic Circle (or parts of Wyoming or Montana), there will always be brush and trees that do not get completely blanketed in snow, even in the most severe winter weather conditions.

Solid white winter camouflage is seldom as effective as many inexperienced people believe it to be. It is perfectly effective to simply wear the same outdoor clothing tones that you would wear in your operational area, and simply make sure that you're not setting up a patrol base in the middle of an open, snow-blanketed field.

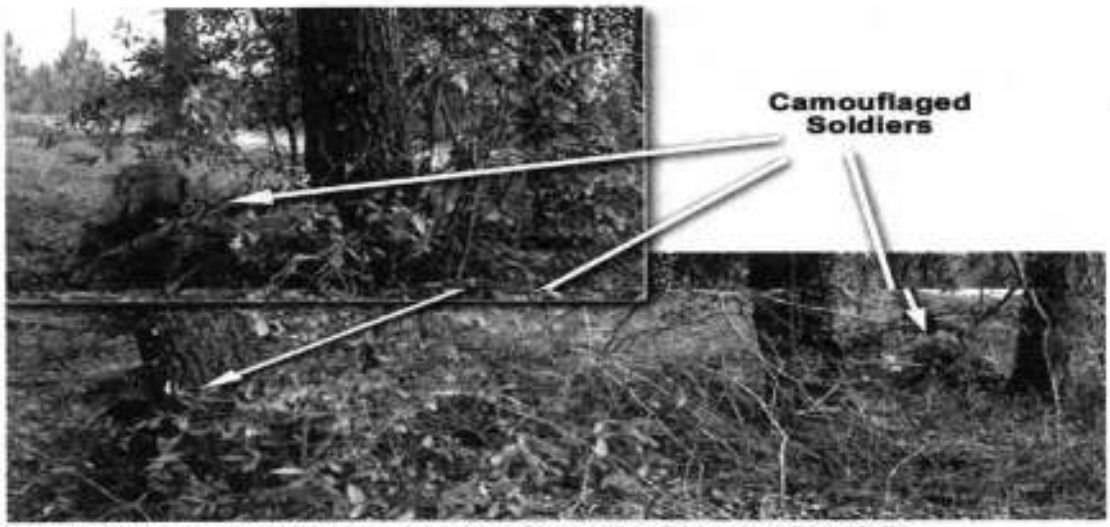


Illustration from FM 3-21.75 Warrior Ethos and Soldier Combat Skills,

Use your Ranger buddy! When applying camouflage, whether make-up, or natural or man-made garnish, use the buddy system and check your buddy's camouflage regularly. Ensure that your Ranger buddy's foliage garnish is not becoming wilted or falling out. Ensure that he has covered all of his exposed skin, and that there are no shiny portions exposed on his gear. Expect him to provide the same service to you.

Adhere to noise discipline. Do not talk when patrolling. Limit communications to hand-and-arm signals, and use slow, deliberate movements for those. Turn your radios off, except during prearranged communications windows. If you MUST communicate verbally, get your mouth close to your buddy's ear and speak in a reduced volume, but a normal tone of voice, rather than trying to whisper. Whispering changes the pitch of your voice and the higher frequency will actually carry further than the normal timbre of your voice at the same volume.

Do not allow pieces of metal or plastic on your equipment bang or clank together. If you use Velcro for pocket or pouch closures, don't rip them open suddenly. Smother the sound with your body and open it slowly.

Individual Tactical Movement Skills

The ability of a patrol to move clandestinely is predicated on the individual tactical movement skills of the patrol. The individual ability to move tactically involves moving quietly, with minimal abrupt movements that may provide visual target indicators to enemy observation, while also utilizing the principles of concealment and camouflage. This will maximize stealth, increasing the security of the small patrol element.

Key to silent, stealthy individual movement is the preparation of yourself and your equipment for silent movement. This includes camouflaging yourself and your equipment, as outlined in the previous section of this chapter. It also involves taping or padding any parts of your gear or weapon that may rattle, bang, or snag on brush or other pieces of your equipment. A commonly overlooked example of this is the tendency of a lazily-carried rifle to bang against magazines in chest rigs or on war belts with a very distinctive metal ringing sound.

While baseball caps are comfortable, cool, and de riguer for the wanna-be JSOC crowd, they provide a readily identifiable visual target indicator to the enemy, because they provide a perfectly round silhouette of your head. Wear a soft cap with an indistinct shape instead. Although the older style BDU patrol cap—when provided a "ranger roll" or "ranger crush"—works almost as well, boonie hats with their all-around floppy brims are the obvious solution. These work even better with a piece of netting glued to the crown portion in various places and garnished with a few pieces of burlap or jute cord, and some natural foliage from the surrounding area.

Do not carry any more weight than you absolutely have to, in order to accomplish your mission and survive. While it is fashionable to carry equipment in the patrol pack or go-bag to be prepared to deal with every possible contingency, software skills trump hardware equipment solutions, and heavy loads will tire you prematurely and impede free movement. At the same time though, going "ultra-light" and

leaving behind or ignoring key mission-essential or life-saving equipment in an effort to save weight is just as foolhardy. While you may have to carry more weight than you would like to—or than is comfortable—don't carry anything that is not essential to the mission or to survival. "Don't carry any more than you have to, but be able to carry what you have to." If you cannot carry what you need to be able to carry, then you need to do more PT.

Always consider the principles of camouflage and concealment when moving. Stop frequently to look around and genuinely observe your surroundings, searching out target indicators of enemy presence with all of your senses. When you do stop, take a knee or go to the prone. Do so in a position of concealment or cover, well hidden in the shadows. When you are scanning visually, to observe what is going on around you, move your head slowly, but steadily. Don't bother with quick, rapid jerks of the head. Move smooth, with no rapid or abrupt movements.

Always move from one position of concealment to another position of concealment. Look for, and locate, your next position of concealment BEFORE you move out of your current position. Select the best concealed route to follow in order to reach it, and move slowly. You are NOT out for a walk in the park! Stay in the shadows as much as possible, instead of traversing well-lit sunlit or moonlit areas. Take full advantage of micro-terrain features such as low walls, ditches, or dips and rises in the ground. Sometimes, crawling along a six-inch deep depression will provide the fastest, securest route to move to your next position of concealment.

Move when the environmental conditions favor you. Wait for the wind or a breeze to blow, causing your background vegetation and foliage to move, to help you blend into your background as you move. Choosing to move in heavy rain or snowfall can aid in masking your thermal image from technologically superior foes, while moving in even light rain can help mask your view from most night vision.

Keep as much space as possible between yourself and your buddies, while still maintaining the ability to communicate with your Ranger buddy and your patrol leader, using hand-and-arm signals. Seriously, this is one area that the manuals gets flat fucking wrong. Ignore the recommendations of specific distances between personnel. Ignore the doctrine, just this once, and stay as far apart as possible, while still maintaining visual communications. While it is well known that this reduces the chances of multiple injuries from hand grenades and other shrapnel weapons, it also reduces the chances of compromise from visual target indicators. Each individual enemy fighter can only look at one place at a time. The further apart you are, the less chance there is that any one of them will actually see any of you.

Avoid leaving tracks. Walk on hard ground and across rocky areas—without overturning the rocks—whenever possible. While these methods alone will not deter a skilled tracker, the fact is, skilled trackers are actually pretty rare creatures. Between this, good camouflage discipline, and good litter discipline, you will deter all but the most skilled, trained tracking efforts.

Night Movement

The only way to become proficient in individual tactical movement at night is to practice it. Whether you possess night vision technology or not, it is critical to become confident and comfortable moving

in the dark, even without NOD. The standard, doctrinal recommendation for what the US Army has historically called "night walking" is to lift your lead foot, move it forward 6-12 inches, and ease it to the ground, toes pointed, feeling for twigs, brush, and trip wires. Slowly place the foot on the ground and transfer your weight to it. Once you're confident of solid, quiet footing, move your weight all the way forward, pause, and repeat the process with the other foot.

That's not bad advice in general, and if you are walking, it is sound. The simpler method for the guerrilla who must maintain stealth to survive, is to crawl on hands and knees. Use your hand to feel where you will place your knee, to ensure that it is clear of brush, twigs, leaves, or other debris. Slowly move your knee forward and place it down on the cleared spot. Repeat on the other side of your body. The advantage of this method is that it applies the principle of camouflage and keeping a low profile, reducing your visual profile. It also provides a better chance of not inadvertently causing noise by breaking twigs or brush, or setting off a tripwire, because your hands are significantly more sensitive than a boot- and trouser-clad leg and foot.

Illustration of walking at night. Photo courtesy US War Department FM 21-75, 1944

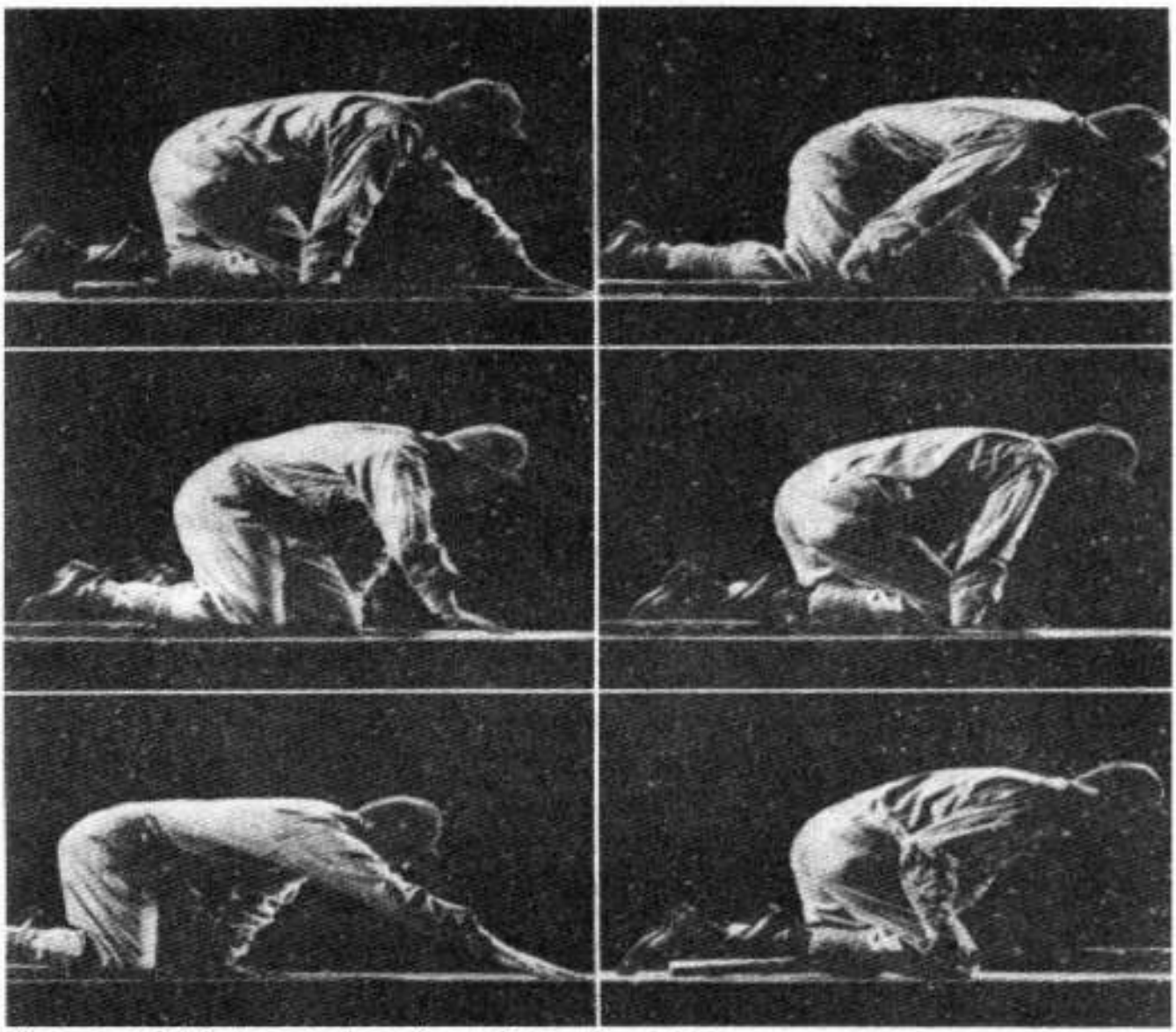


Illustration of night "creeping" crawling technique, from US War Department FM 21-75, 1944

Regardless of your movement technique of choice, night movements require that you observe all of the other fundamentals of individual tactical movements, exactly the same as in daylight, because you must assume that the enemy has night vision capability and thermal imaging devices. One critical, often overlooked aspect of this is do not forget to look around you, scanning for threats, instead of just looking at the ground at your feet.

In addition to making things difficult to see, darkness with unaided vision can also significantly change the appearance of objects that are seen. A tree—for example—looks smaller in silhouette in the dark than it does during daylight. This is because the smaller twigs and leaves along the periphery are not seen in the dark. You must learn to recognize items on the battlefield by their nighttime profile, as well

as in daylight. Night vision can make it possible to see some objects that would otherwise be invisible, as well as to see some details that would be missed with the unaided eye, but they are NOT magic. The same principles apply to using NOD at night as apply to the unaided eye. The only way to get really skilled at seeing in the dark with NOD, is to spend a lot of time looking at things in the dark with NOD. You must learn to recognize items on the battlefield by their NOD-viewed profile, as well as in daylight.

Ultimately, you must learn to rely on sound for most of your target identifiers at night, whether you use NOD technology or not. The reciprocal truth must be recognized as well. The ability to stop, and just listen, for long periods of time, without making noise, must be practiced and mastered.

Land Navigation

One of the most basic fundamentals of foot-mobile, light infantry patrolling is "have men who can navigate." Preparation, planning, and training for effective combat security operations is utterly useless if your patrol cannot locate its basic objective. The use of map and compass is one of the most basic skills that any infantryman should possess. Sadly however, in today's world, too many have learned to rely on the GPS satellite system and have forgotten—or never learned—the basic skill of navigating with a map and compass.

At its most basic level, navigation with a map and a compass involves simply being able to determine where you are located, where the enemy is located, on the earth and on the map, and how to get from where you are to where the enemy is—or is not—based on the relationship between the map and the actual terrain it represents. We will use land navigation to determine our location, locate a suspected or known enemy position, and plan and follow routes of movement between those locations.

Critical Definitions

In order to use a map and compass effectively, it is crucial to share a common understanding of the basic terminology of land navigation. Important terms include:

- Degrees. A degree is a unit of measurement of angle with subdivisions of minutes and angles. There are 360 degrees in a complete circle. For navigation purposes, North is represented by 0 degrees or 360 degrees, while East is 90 degrees, South is 180 degrees, and West is 270 degrees.

- Azimuths. An azimuth is a horizontal angle, measured in a clockwise direction from a North (0 degrees) baseline. All azimuths must be measured from the North as the point of reference. A back azimuth is a reverse direction from a back azimuth. To simplify the determination of a back azimuth, if the given azimuth is greater than 180 degrees, subtract 180 degrees to determine the back azimuth. If the given azimuth is less than 180 degrees, you simply add 180 degrees to determine the back azimuth.

- Contour lines. Contour lines are lines representing an imaginary line on the ground, along which all points at the same elevation are connected by an unbroken line. Contour lines indicate vertical distance above or below the lowest point of an object. Contour intervals—the distance in elevation between contour lines—are located in the marginal information of a map, and can

be used to help determine distance, elevation, or depression of an unmarked hill, valley, ravine, or cliff. The contour interval may change from map to map, depending on the type of terrain and the scale of the map.

- Pace. Pace is simply a method available to you to determine the distance you have traveled. Methods of keeping track of your pace include the use of the string and knot method, Ranger pace beads, the pebbles in pocket method, or writing it down with pen and paper, as well as the use of map orientation and the distance scale on your map. The importance of knowing your personal pace count—over varied terrain—cannot be overemphasized. For instance, during my uniformed service, my pace count in wooded, rolling terrain, hovered at roughly 65 paces per 100 meters. Today it is higher—closer to 75 paces per 100 meters—because I sadly lack the same flexibility and athleticism I possessed then. It is extremely beneficial to know your personal pace count, but if you lack that knowledge, or the means to determine it, the use of your map and its map scale can be used to determine distances traversed.

The Compass

The compass as its most simple, is nothing more than a magnetized needle. This needle is acted upon by the natural magnetic field of the Earth, causing the magnetized point of the needle to always indicate the magnetic pole of the Earth (with the critical distinction that in some volcanic mountain regions—such as specific locations in the Rocky Mountains of the western US—local iron ore deposits can interfere with this dramatically!). The magnetic North Pole, as opposed to the geographic North Pole, is located below the Earth's surface, slightly south of Greenland.

While many people, including some well-known military SOF veterans, prefer civilian orienteering compasses for various reasons, the USGI lensatic tritium compass, while heavier than its civilian market counterparts, offers many advantages. Among these are the the more refined aiming capacity, as well as specific construction details for use in low-light/no-light conditions.

Notable parts of the USGI lensatic compass include:

- Cover. The cover of the USGI compass is built of aircraft aluminum, and is extremely robust. It is designed to protect the more fragile parts of the interior.

- Graduated Straight Edge. Like many civilian compasses, the USGI compass has a graduated straight edge along one side that allows it to be used to measure distance on the map.

- Sighting Wire. Unlike its civilian counterparts, the USGI compass possesses a very fine sighting wire to facilitate the extremely accurate readings needed for military applications, such as calling for fire support and adjusting those fires. This allows for extremely accurate azimuth readings, leading to a far more exact bearing than the equivalent civilian orienteering compass.

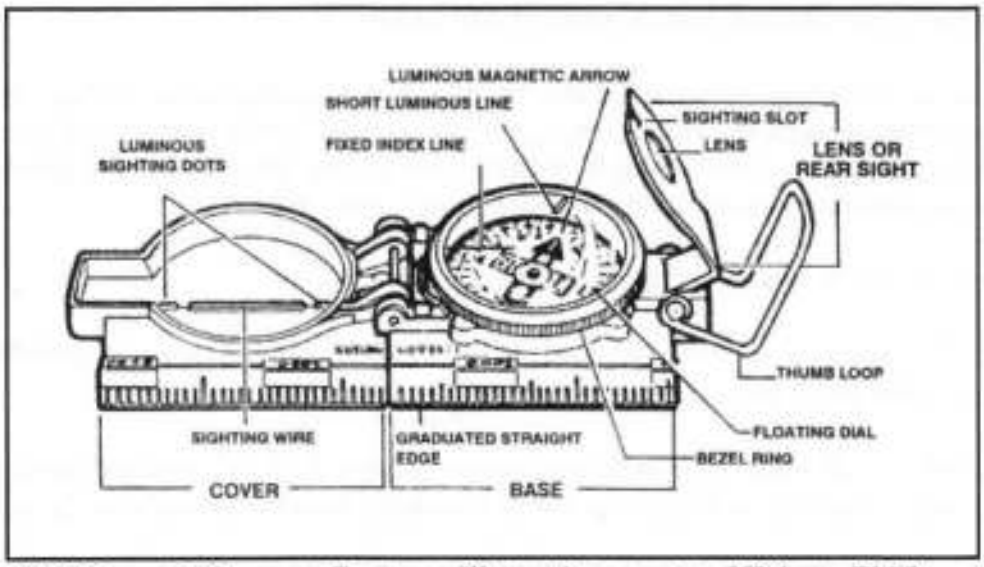
- Luminous Sighting Dots and Navigational Arrow. Many parts of the USGI compass are luminous, due to the application of the radioactive element tritium, which glows in the dark without the requirement to first expose it to visible white light. This allos the compass to be

used in the dark without resorting to artificial external illumination. The compass can also be used as a close-range signaling device in the dark. Like the tritium in the night sights of a firearm, the tritium in the USGI compass is enclosed in protective capsules, so there is no danger of radiation poisoning.

- Bezel Ring. The face of the USGI compass is surrounded by an adjustable bezel ring. Each click of the bezel ring equals three degrees. For night land navigation, this is beneficial, because using the luminous short line and dot, you can set and change your azimuths without having to resort to white light.

  To set a night azimuth, using the bezel ring click method, rotate the bezel ring until the luminous short line is located over the black index line on the face of the compass. Now, rotate the bezel ring in a counterclockwise direction for the number of clicks required. This number is determined by dividing the value of the the required azimuth by the number three. For instance, for an azimuth of 90 degrees, you would move the bezel 30 clicks. Now, turn the compass until the North arrow is directly below the luminous short line. By following the two luminous dots on the cover, you will be able to navigate along a 90-degree azimuth.

- Other parts of the compass include the aforementioned black index line, a degree and mil ring, a sighting slot and magnifying lens, as well as a thumb loop.



USGI Lensatic Compass Features. Illustration courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

The Map

A map is a mathematical representation of a portion of the Earth's surface, systematically plotted to scale upon a flat, plain surface. Maps will typically depict man-made and natural features of the land through the use of symbols, lines, colors, and forms.

Any map will feature representations of numerous objects that may be used for navigation. These representations are referred to as symbols. Some of the more commonly seen symbols represented on maps include churches, cemeteries, mines and buildings, roads, railways, lakes, ponds, rivers, and others. It is critical to understand that the symbols used may change from one map to another, so you must refer to the legend of the map, most commonly located in the margin of the map sheet.

For topographical maps in the USA however, the standard colors on a map do tend to represent the same things from one map to another. These colors typically represent the following:

- Blue is used to represent bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers, streams, and springs.
- Black is used for man-made features including buildings, roads, and railroads.
- Brown represents brushy areas, contour lines, and partial swamps.
- Green is used to denote forests and vegetated areas.
- Red is used for primary and secondary roads, built-up areas, and/or special features on the map.

Land features commonly seen on topographical maps can be easily recognized from their topographical representations. These include hills, ridges, valleys, saddles, depressions, draws, spurs, and cliffs.

Military personnel will commonly refer to grid coordinates, using the Military Grid Reference System (MGRS). This feature, while extremely useful, is not commonly available on civilian topographical maps such as those from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the US Geological Survey (USGS), unless specially ordered. For this reason—in addition to the basic unavailability of indirect fire support weapons for most of us—we will not cover the use of MGRS in this manual. While other methods of grid reference are also available, they are also outside the scope of this manual, because there are simpler, alternate methods available for determining and relaying information on specific locations that will be detailed.

Important Tactical Land Navigation Skills

There are numerous important skills involved in tactical land navigation. For the guerrilla fighter however, the most important can be basically distilled down to eight fundamentals:

- Identify terrain features on a map.
- Measure distance on a map.
- Determine a location on the ground by terrain association.
- Orient a map to the ground using terrain association.

- Orient a map using a compass.
- Navigate by dead reckoning.
- Navigate by terrain association.
- Select a tentative movement route using a map.

Identify Terrain Features on a Map

The elevation of points on the ground and the relief of an area are referred to as terrain features. These features affect the movement, positioning, and—in many cases—he effectiveness of the guerrilla unit. You must know how to identify the elevation and relief of areas on common topographical maps, and how to recognize common terrain features in order to navigate effectively. To accomplish this, you must first understand how the cartographer indicates the elevation and relief on the map.

As mentioned above, contour lines are lines used to illustrate terrain elevation on topographical maps. The elevation represented by a contour line is the vertical distance above or below sea level. Three different types of contour lines are used (see the illustrations below). Starting at zero elevation, or sea level, every fifth contour line—regardless of the contour intervals of the specific map—will be a heavier, darker line. This is referred to as an index contour line. Normally, index contour lines are numbered with the elevation.

Between the index contour line will generally be four lighter contour lines referred to as intermediate contour lines. These generally do not have their specific elevation marked.

Finally, on some maps, in areas where there is very little change in elevation—such as a flat plain—a map may use supplementary contour lines at half the normal contour elevation of the map. These contour lines are usually in the form of a dashed line.

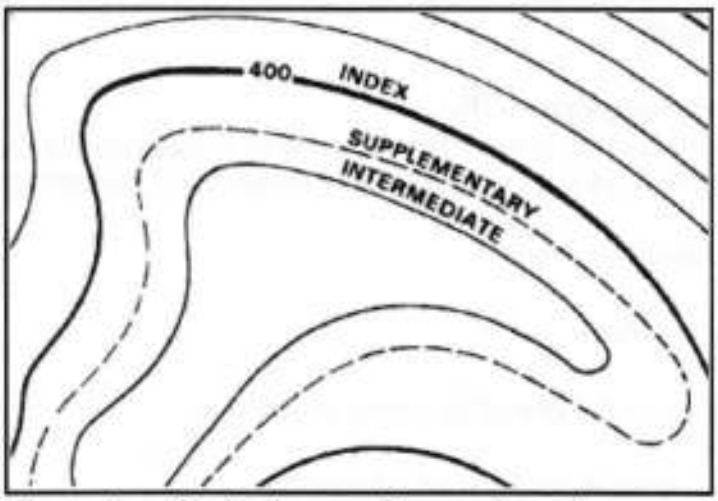
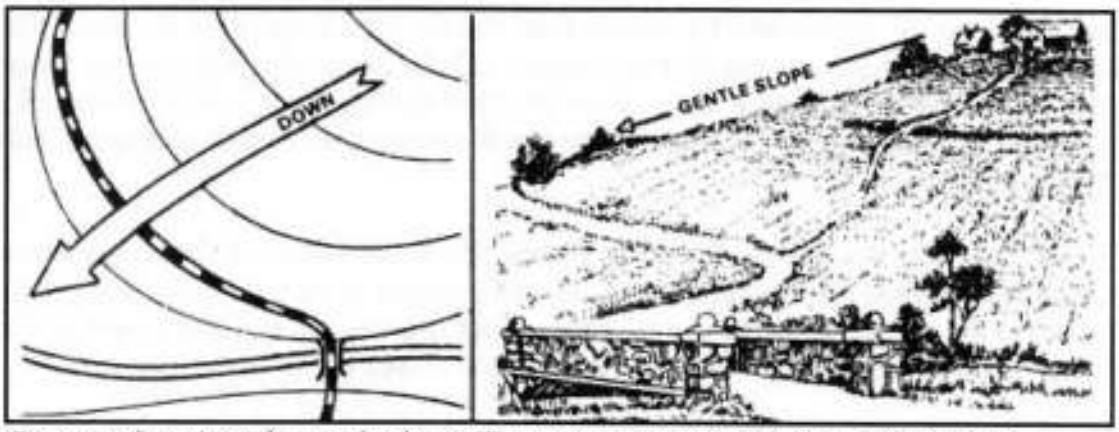


Illustration of index, intermediate, and supplementary contour lines.

A critical element of correctly identifying terrain features on the map is being able to determine the degree and shape of the slope of the feature. This can play a particularly important part in route-planning as well, because the speed at which personnel can move is affected by the slope—the rise and fall of the terrain feature. The slope of a terrain feature on the map can be determined by studying the relationship of the contour lines. The closer the contour lines are on the map, the steeper the slope will be that it represents on the ground. Gentler slopes will be represented by contour lines that are farther apart on the map.

For military navigation, we generally classify slopes into four categories:

- Gentle slopes are represented by contour lines that are widely and evenly spaced. Considering only the relief (i.e. ignoring foliage, vegetation, and micro-terrain), a gentle slope will require traversing a slight incline.



Contour elevation of a gentle slope. Illustration courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

- Contour lines that are evenly spaced, but close together, represent a steep slope. The closer together the contour lines are, the steeper the slope is that they represent. A steep slope will require a more arduous effort to traverse. Extremely steep slopes may require advanced climbing techniques and equipment.

Contour elevation of a steep slope. Illustration courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

- Concave slopes are represented by contour lines that are closely spaced at the top of the terrain feature and more widely spaced near the bottom. This allows an observer near the bottom of the slope to observe the entire face of the slope. To climb the slope, you would be exposed to an observer—at top or bottom—throughout the climb, and the climb would increase in difficulty as you neared the top.

- Convex slopes are the reverse of concave slopes. The contour lines will be widely spaced at the top and close together at the bottom. The notional observer at the top of the slope cannot see all the way to the bottom, allowing you to remain concealed through much of an ascent of the slope, while your climb would become easier as you neared the more exposed top.

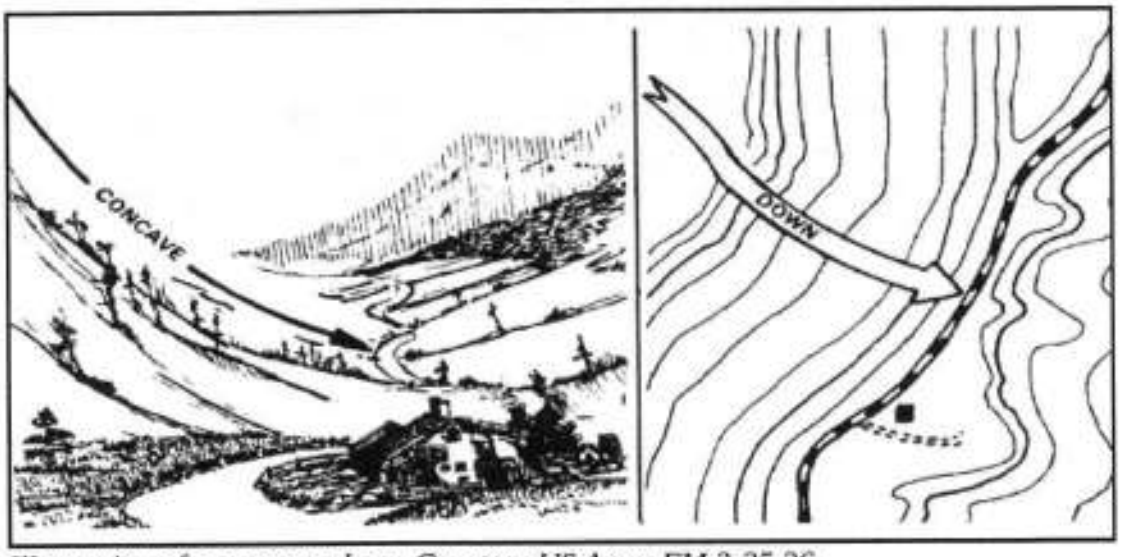


Illustration of a concave slope. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

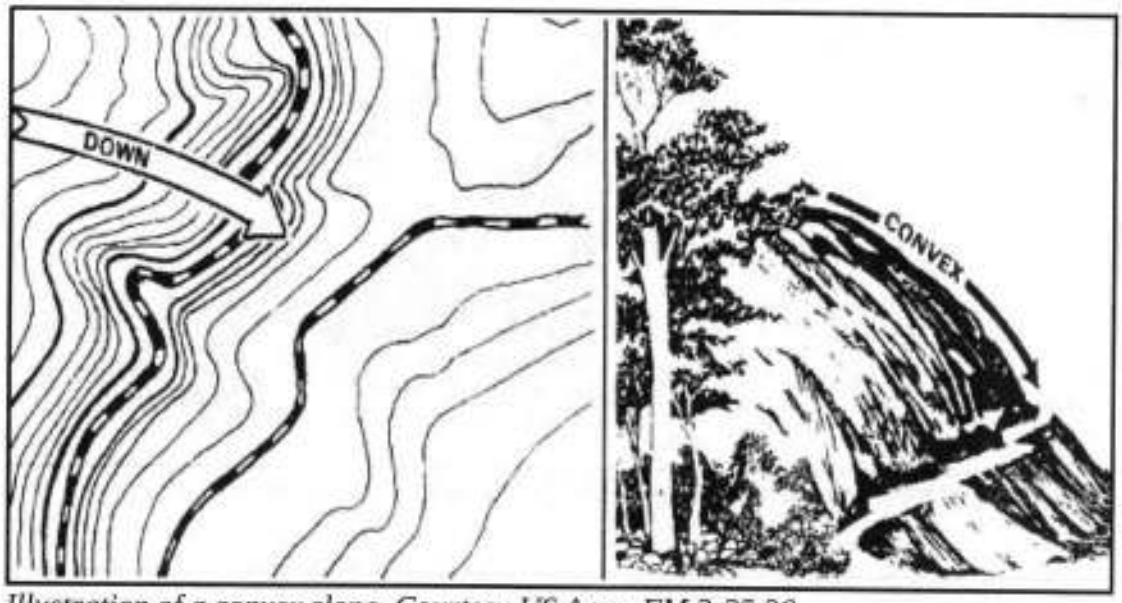


Illustration of a convex slope. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

Identifying Terrain Features

Major and minor terrain features on a map can be recognized by certain defining characteristics of the representative contour lines. Major terrain features, for our purposes, can be defined as hills, saddles, valleys, ridges, and depressions. Minor terrain features are defined as spurs, draws, and cliffs.

- A hill is an area of high ground from the top of which, all surrounding terrain slopes downward. Hills are represented as a series of concentric rings. The smallest ring in the center of the hill is the top of the hill.

- Saddles are areas of low ground between two higher points of land. While a hill is generally thought of as the area between two hills, this is not necessarily the case. It may be a depressed area in an otherwise level ridge. The surest way to recognize a saddle is a low area with two sides encompassed by higher ground, while the other two sides fall in elevation. A saddle is normally recognized on contour illustrations as an hourglass shape.

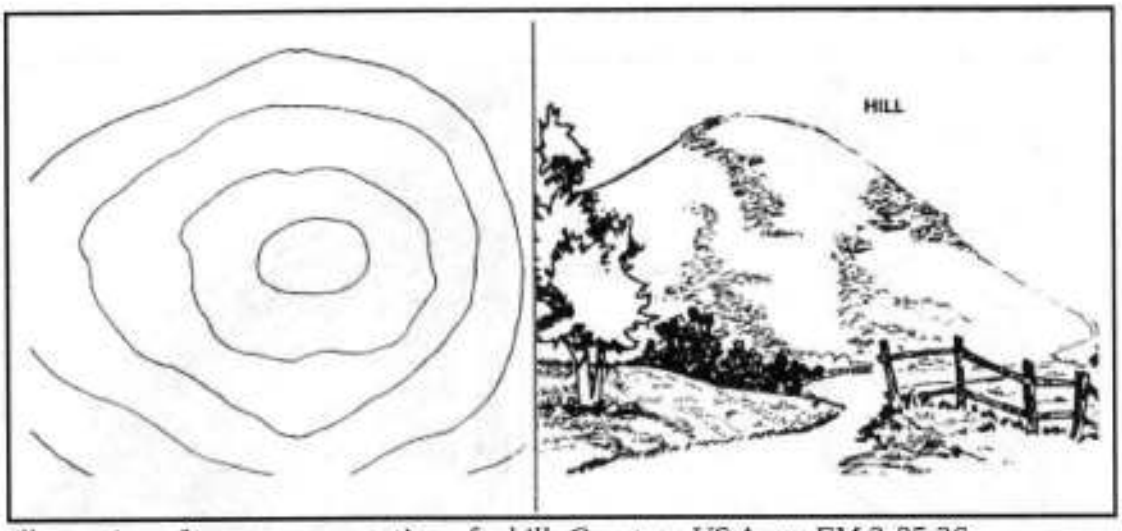


Illustration of topo representation of a hill. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

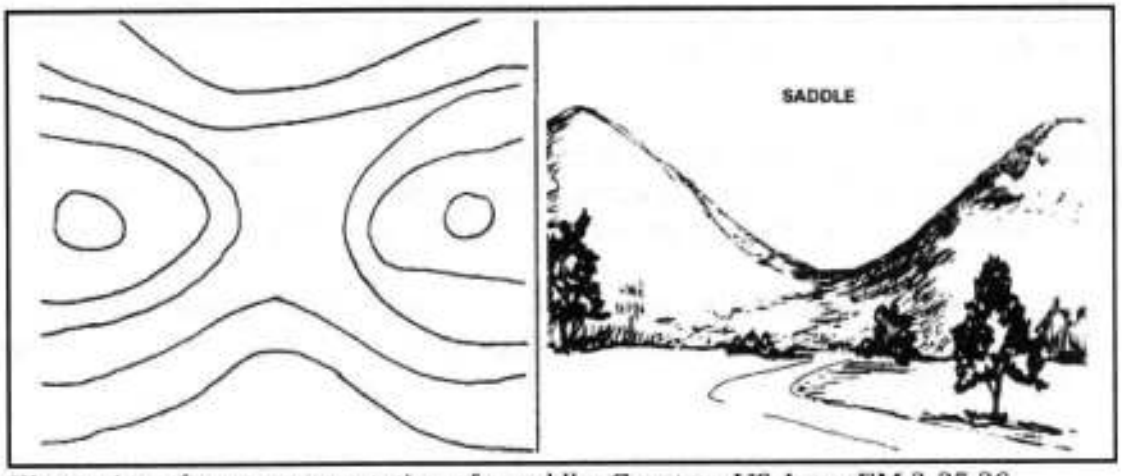


Illustration of topo representation of a saddle. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

- A valley is a linear low area in the land, generally formed by streams or rivers. A valley generally features higher ground on three sides, and may have a course of running water, or a dry stream bed running the length of it. Depending on the size of the valley and the specific local contours of the terrain, it may not be immediately obvious that you are standing in a valley. On the map, contour lines representing a valley will form a U- or V-shape. The closed end of the contour line representation will always point upstream, or towards the higher end of the valley.

- A ridge is a sloping linear formation of high ground. A ridge will feature obviously sloping descents on two parallel sides, and a possibly less obvious slope downward in a third direction. Contour lines representing a ridge are generally either a U- or V-shape like a valley, but the closed end of the contour lines specifies the low ground on a ridge.

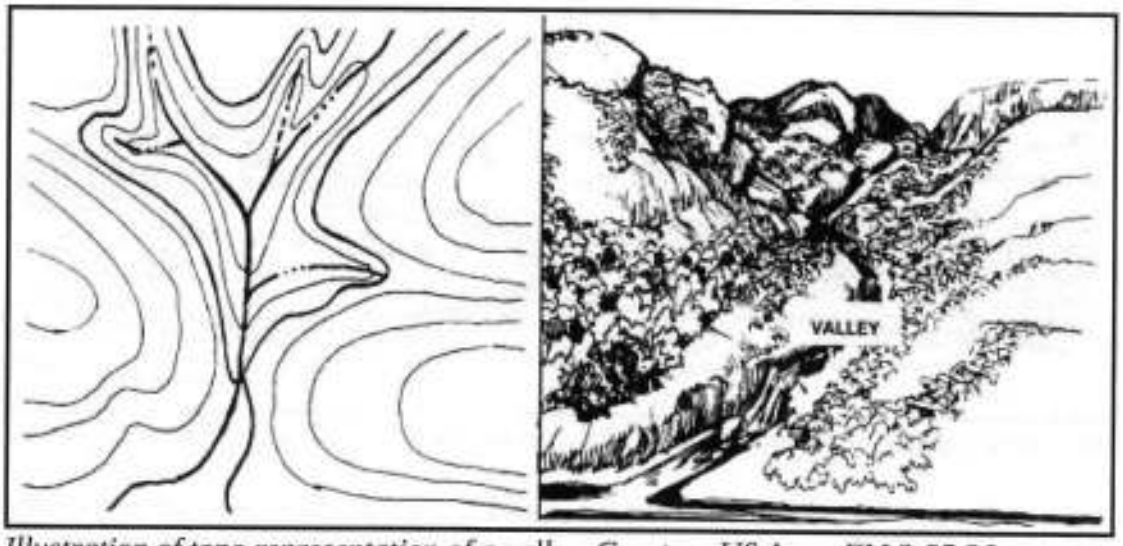


Illustration of topo representation of a valley. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

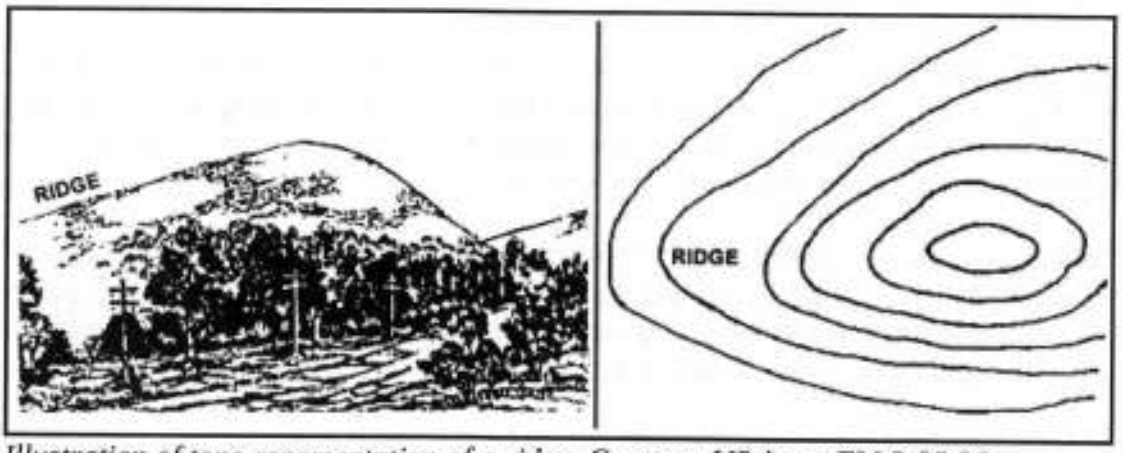


Illustration of topo representation of a ridge. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

- Depressions are areas of low ground, surrounded by higher ground in all directions. It may simply be a hole in the ground, such as a sinkhole, or it may just be a low spot, caused by eons of erosion. Typically, depressions will be represented on a map only if the diameter of the depression is greater than the normal contour interval of the map. The contour representation of a depression is a closed circle with tick marks pointing towards the center of the depression.

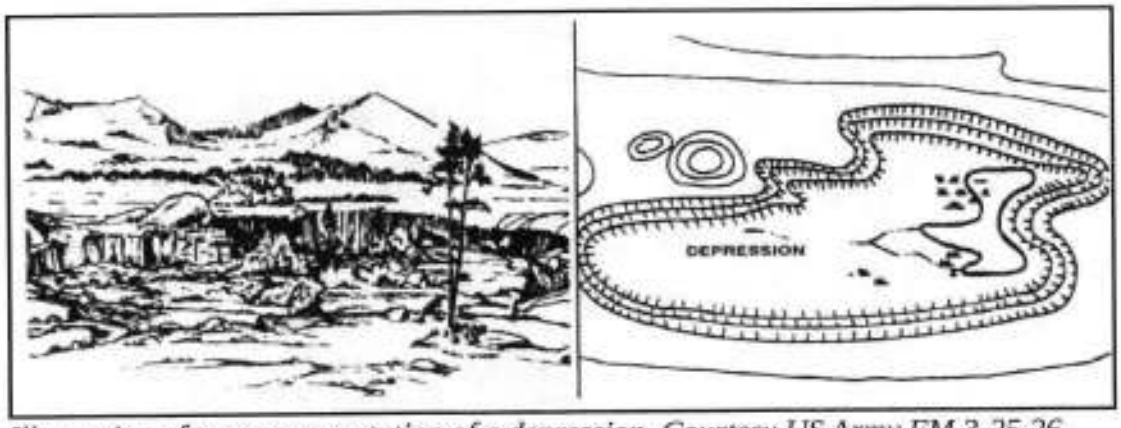


Illustration of topo representation of a depression. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

- Draws can be considered a smaller version of a valley. They are represented by the same contour illustrations as a valley, although generally with little or no level ground in the center of the terrain feature.

- Spurs are smaller versions of ridges, usually projecting from the sides of a ridge. Spurs are typically formed by erosion from two roughly parallel streams forming draws down the side of a ridge. A spur represented by contour lines on the map will look like a smaller version of a ridge, originating at—or just below—the crest of the ridge.

- Cliffs are vertical or near vertical, features representing an abrupt change in the topography of the land. When a slope is so steep that the contour lines converge, the last contour line will have tick marks pointing towards the low ground. Cliffs may also be illustrated by contour lines simply being extremely close together, or touching.

One simplified method for identifying a terrain feature on the map is the mnemonic memory aid SOSES. Terrain features can be examined, described, and compared with each other, as well as with corresponding map contour patterns in terms of their Shape, Orientation, Size, Elevation, and Slope.

- Shape is the general form or outline of the feature, and is typically easy to recognize.

- The general direction that a terrain features lies, in relation to your location is called orientation. A feature can be said to be in line, across, or at an angle to your position.

- The length or width of the terrain feature across its base is the size of the feature. One terrain feature may be larger or smaller than another terrain feature nearby.

- The height of a terrain feature, described in either absolute or relative terms, compared to your location or other terrain in the area.

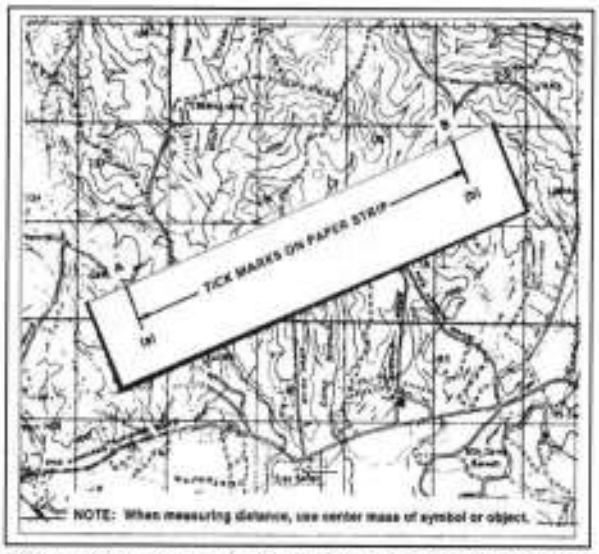
- The type of slope—gentle, steep, convex, or concave—and the steepness of the sides of a terrain feature may aid in identifying the feature on the map.

The use of the memory aid SOSES for identification of terrain features on the ground and the map, is an extremely useful training tool. With practice, you will be able to look at a terrain feature on the ground, and quickly relate it to the contour illustration on the map using these key identifiers.

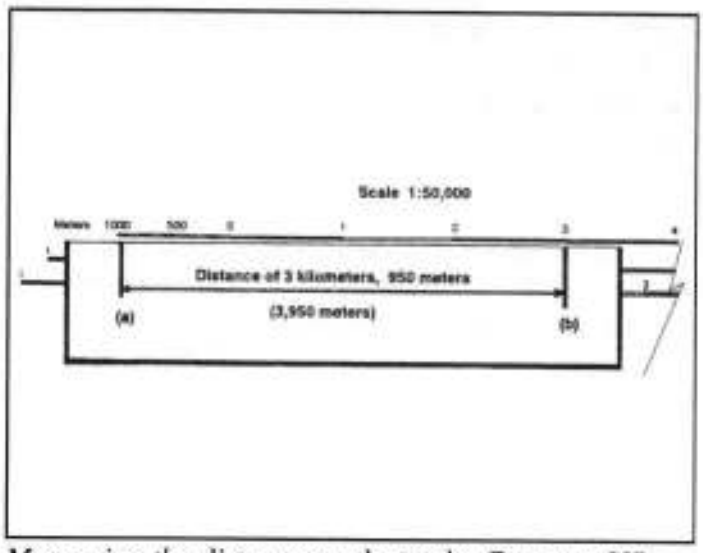
Measuring distance on a map

Measuring distance on a map is a relatively simple endeavor, sine most maps feature a map distance scale in the marginal information. The first step in measuring distance on a map is to determine the scale of the map. The most commonly available civilian topographical maps are those produced by the USGS, although there are also now numerous private entities producing maps that can be ordered online, or even downloaded directly to your computer and printed off at home. The most commonly available map scale of tactical utility for foot-mobile forces s the 7.5-minute map, which is a 1:24,000 scale. This means 1 inch on the map represents 24,000 inches on the ground.

Measuring distances on a map may involve simple straight line distances or road distances. To determine a straight line distance between two points on a map, align a straight edge of paper with the beginning and end points on the map. Mark both points on the straight edge of the paper. Align the marks on the paper with the bar scale located in the bottom margin of the map and determine the distance. You should be able to determine distance accurately with this method—with a little practice—with no more than a 5% margin of error.



Measuring straight line distance between two points. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26



Measuring the distance on the scale. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

To determine the road distance between two points on the map, align the straight edge of a piece of paper with the beginning point on the map and the point where the road—or route—begins to make its first curve. Mark both ends of the piece of paper. Repeat the previous step, each time using the point that marked the curve as your new beginning point, until you reach the end point. Align the edge of your paper with the appropriate bar scale at the bottom of the map. Determine the distance on the scale that compares to the distance represented on the paper. You should be able to determine road distances

accurately with this method, with no more than a 10% margin of error.

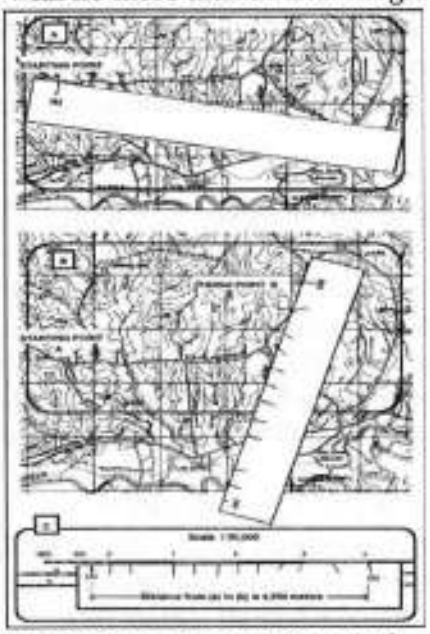
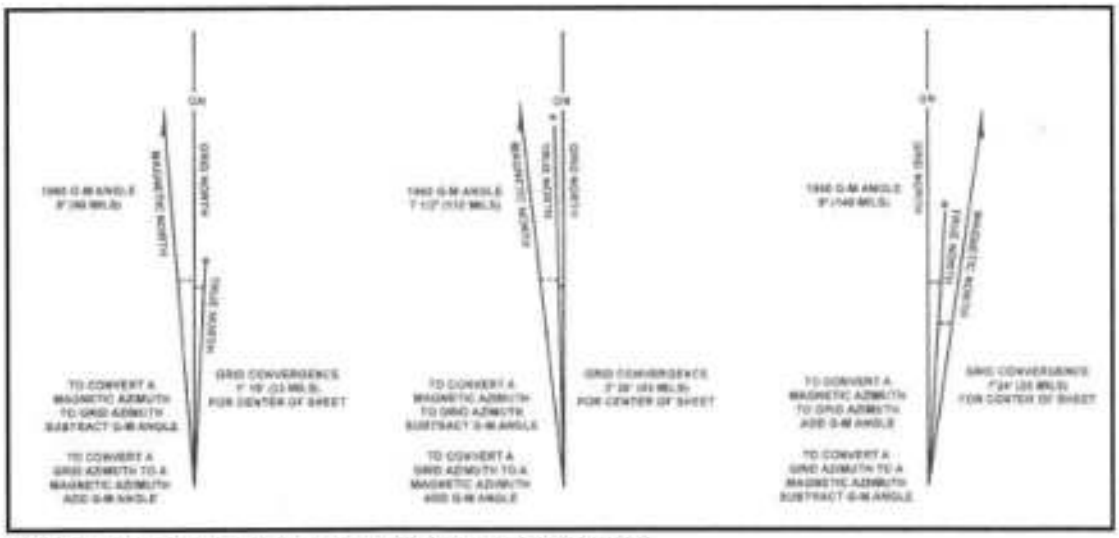


Illustration of measuring road distances. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

Orient a map to the ground using a compass

The first step to successfully navigating in the field using a map and compass is correctly orienting the map to the area of the Earth's surface that it represents. A map is said to be oriented when the graphic representation of North and South on the map correspond to true North and South on the ground. The simplest method of orienting the map to the ground for the beginning navigator is with the compass.

When orienting a map with a compass however, it is important to remember that the compass points to magnetic North, while North on the map represents true geographic North. On USGS topographical maps there is a small icon located on the left side of the bottom margin called a declination scale.



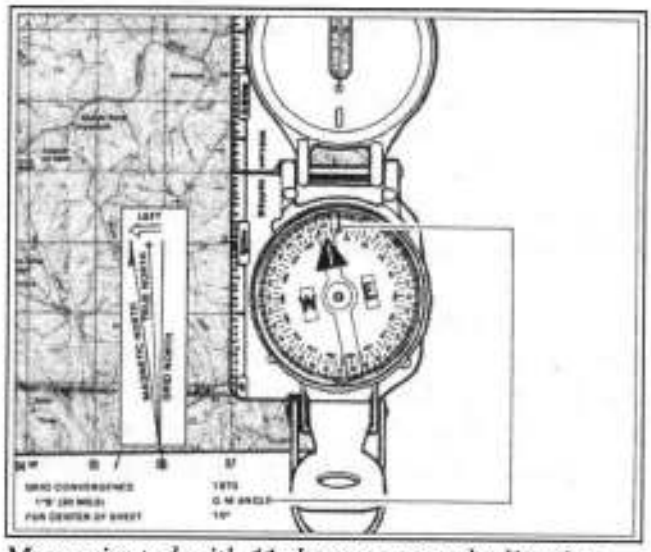
Declination Scale. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

This will illustrate the proper magnetic declination—the difference between true North and magnetic North—AT THE TIME THE MAP WAS PRODUCED. A little understood fact however, is that declination at any given place on the planet changes from year to year, as the magnetic North Pole moves below the Earth's surface. THE DECLINATION SCALE ON YOUR MAP MAY BE—PROBABLY IS—INCORRECT!!! Currently, it is possible to perform an online Google search for different web sites that offer current, up-to-date declination diagrams for most parts of the USA. Post grid-down? We're pretty much fucked.

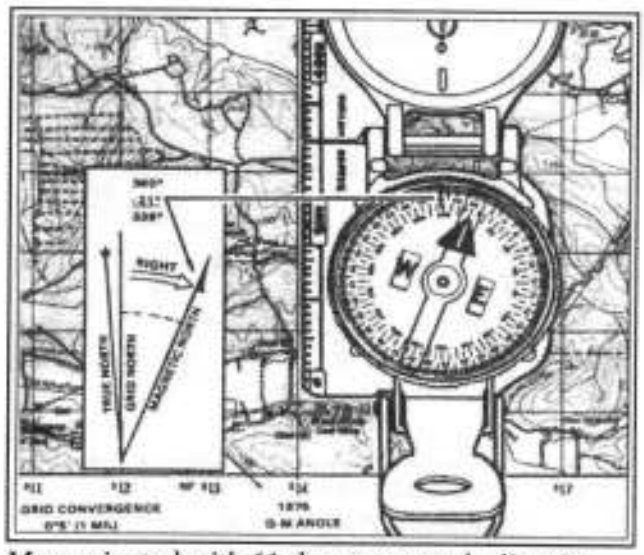
The simplest method to deal with declination is to lay the map on a flat, horizontal surface, such as laying on the ground, and use the straight edge on the left side of your compass alongside one of the black, North-South grid lines on the map, with the top of the compass pointing towards the top of the map.

Maintaining this alignment of the compass, rotate the map and compass together until the magnetic arrow of the compass is below the black index line on the compass. Rotate the map and compass in the direction of the declination diagram. If the magnetic North arrow on the declination scale is to the left of True North on the map—as in the eastern United States—check the compass reading to determine if it equals the grid-magnetic angle indicated on the declination scale. The map is then oriented. It really is that simple.

On the other hand, if the declination diagram indicates that magnetic North is to the right of True North—as in the western United States—check the compass reading to see if it is equal to 360 degrees, minus the grid-magnetic angle.



Map oriented with 11 degrees west declination. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26



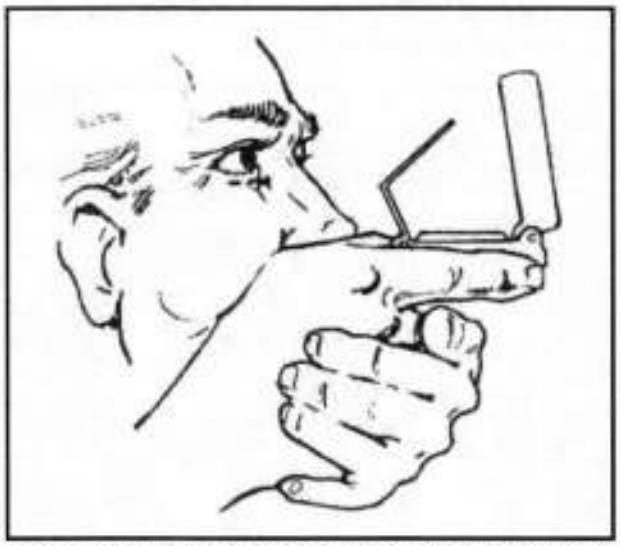
Map oriented with 11 degrees east declination. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

Orient a map to the ground using terrain association

While the use of the compass to orient your map to the ground is the most certain method for the beginning navigator, a map can be oriented by terrain association in many places, as you gain confidence in your ability to recognize terrain features on the map. This is particularly useful if you lack a compass, or need to make numerous quick references while moving, such as during an evasion scenario. Using this method requires a general knowledge of your current location, and detaled examination of the surrounding terrain and the map. This method does not work particularly well in extremely flat areas, such as most of Ft Bragg and Camp Mackall, North Carolina, or Ft Steward, Georgia. You need some noticeable variations in terrain and elevation to associate to. In places with more varied terrain however, such as the mountains of northwestern Montana, terrain association is a

much faster, simpler method of orienting your map, as long as you possess an approximate knowledge of your location.
By observing the contour lines on your map, and using the SOSES memory aid, you should be able to recognize any of the five major terrain features in your immediate vicinity. One-by-one, match the terrain features you can see in your area, with the same features depicted on your map, and determine your approximate relationship to each one. This will allow you to approximately triangulate your position on the map, and then orient the map to the surrounding terrain.

Determine a magnetic azimuth using a compass
In order to navigate by dead reckoning, you must know how to determine and follow a magnetic azimuth to a point on the ground, using the USGI lensatic compass, open the cover of the compass until it is at approximately a 90-degree angle to the base, and position your eye at a 45-degree angle to the base of the compass. Place your thumb through the thumb loop, and establish a steady, level base with your hand.



Proper cheek-hold method for using the USGI lensatic compass for shooting azimuths. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

Move the compass to your face and position your thumb so that it is against your cheek bone. If the dial is not in focus through the magnifying lens, move the eye piece up and down until the dial comes into focus. Align the sighting slot above the magnifying lens with the sighting wire in the cover, and aim at the designated point. Read the magnetic azimuth below the black index line on the face of the compass.

Holding the compass so that the correct magnetic azimuth is aligned below the black index line, turn the bezel ring of the compass until the luminous line is aligned with the North-seeking arrow. The magnetic azimuth is now set.

To follow this azimuth, hold the compass in front of your and turn your body until the North-seeking arrow is aligned with the luminous line. Proceed forward in the direction that the black index line is

aligned.

It is important to realize, when using any compass, that both metal objects and heavy electrical current can negatively impact the performance of your compass. While non-magnetic metals and alloys do not have this detrimental effect, it is recommended that you consider the following stand-off distances when using your compass to insure accurate readings:

- high-tension power lines: 55 meters
- large trucks or construction equipment: 18 meters
- telephone lines or non-high tension lines, or wire fences: 10 meters
- machine guns: 2 meters
- individual rifles: approximately ½ meter, or 18 inches

Navigate by dead reckoning

Land navigation by dead reckoning is the simplest method of navigation with map and compass. It is easy to teach and easy to learn. It can also be an extremely accurate method of navigating from one point to another—if done correctly. In areas where few readily identifiable terrain features are available, it is the most sure method of accurate navigation. This is the method initially taught in the 75th Ranger Regiment and within Special Forces, in my personal experience.

Dead reckoning consists of two basic steps. To begin, you have to determine the direction and distance between your starting point and your destination on the map. Second, you have to use the map and some method of measuring the distance you've traveled—your pace count—to relate that information to the ground.

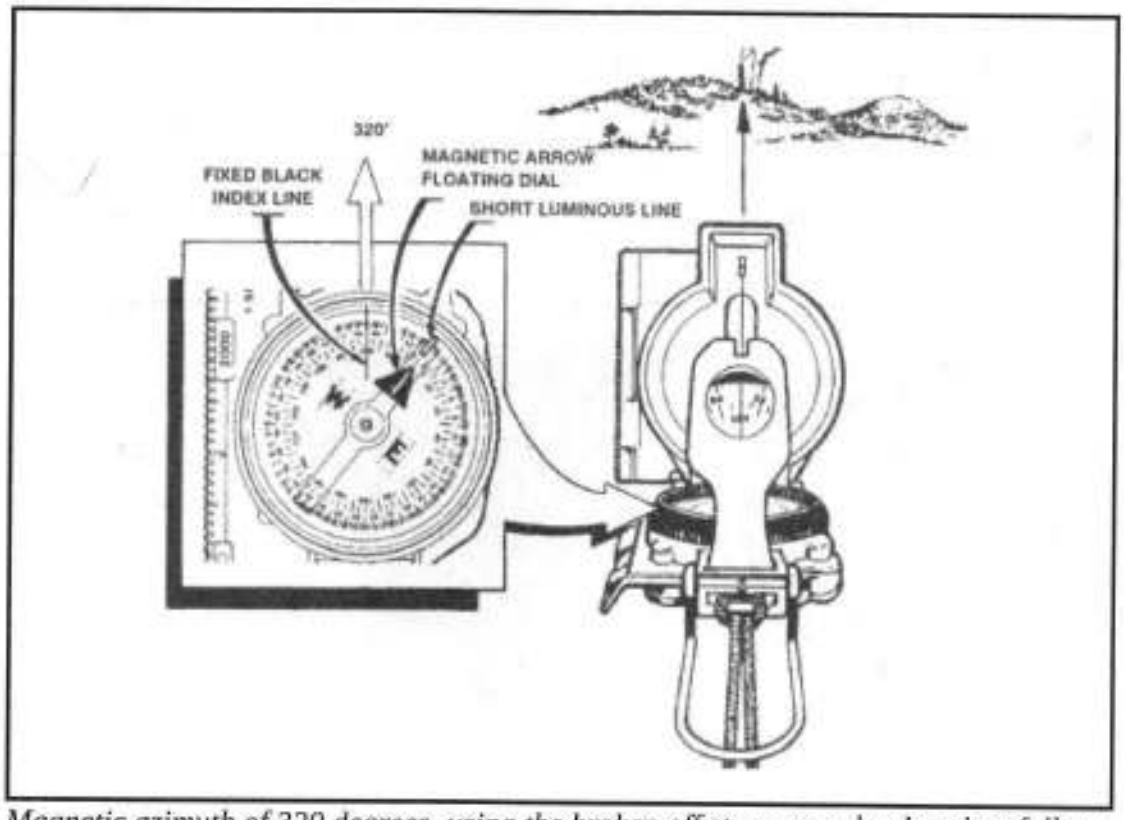
Most patrolling operations that utilize dead reckoning for navigation will not consist of simple, straight-line movements, because you cannot simply ignore tactical and navigation aspects of METT-TC. This may require the use of multiple, shorter distance straight legs. Unfortunately, mistakes from these can compound over time and distance, leaving you far afield from your intended destination, even if you performed the procedures correctly. Additionally, compasses and pace counts are imprecise measuring devices under the best circumstances. The only way to overcome these pitfalls is to regularly confirm your location through terrain association or resection. Routes planned for navigation via dead reckoning will generally feature a series of relatively short-line distances between easily recognizable terrain feature checkpoints. Like every other tactical skill, land navigation requires a great deal of practice in order to achieve mastery.

To utilize dead reckoning during daylight hours, in open or relatively open country, along a specified azimuth, you do not need to walk with the compass open in front of you. Doing so will result in inaccurate navigation, because when the compass moves as you walk, it will remain neither steady nor still, giving you inaccurate readings. At the start point, face with the compass pointed in the correct direction, and sight in on a distant landmark that is located along the magnetic azimuth to be followed.

Close the compass and walk to that landmark. Repeat the process as necessary, until you complete the straight-line leg of the route.

The landmarks chosen for this are referred to as "steering marks," and they are crucial to success. For this reason, they are selected as the movement progresses, and are never determined from a map study. They may be readily identifiable trees, rock outcroppings, hilltops, towers, or buildings. Any readily identifiable feature will work, as long as there is some characteristic about it—color, size, or shape—that will ensure that you will be able to continue to recognize it as you progress.

If there are several easily identifiable objects along the desired azimuth, the most distance object will provide the best steering mark, if it is high enough that you will be able to maintain sight of it throughout the movement. This allows you to travel further, with fewer references to the compass.



Magnetic azimuth of 320 degrees, using the broken off stump as a landmark to follow the azimuth. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

Steering marks selected at night must have even more unique identifying shapes than those used during daylight hours. It may even be necessary to send a member of your patrol forward of your position to create your own steering mark, in order to proceed. His position should be as far in front of your position as possible, to reduce the margin of error. The use of NOD may allow you to use hand-and-arm signals or IR laser designators or aiming lasers, to guide him into the correct position along the designated azimuth.

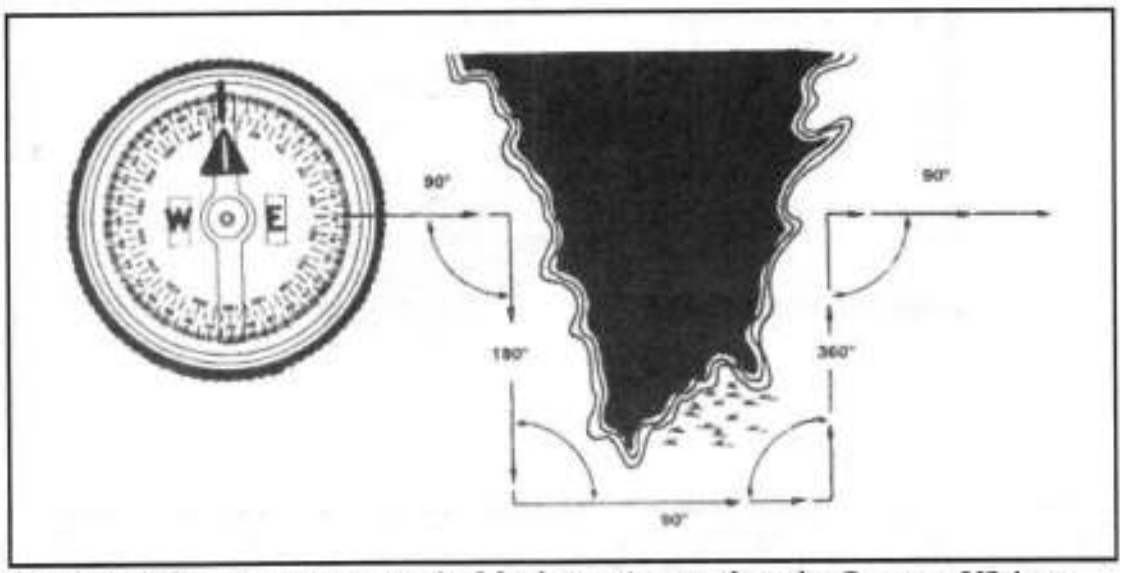
Dead reckoning is time consuming and demands constant attention to the compass and steering marks. Errors accumulate rapidly, and can cause mission failure. Even something as simple as stepping around trees in your path can multiply rapidly, causing you to miss your destination. While dead reckoning is the simplest method of navigation to learn, it is greatly inferior to navigation by terrain association, when the latter method is achievable.

Bypassing obstacles during dead reckoning

To bypass obstacles, such as built-up areas, or functionally impassible terrain, such as swamps or lakes, and still maintain your orientation during dead reckoning navigation, you can detour around an obstacle by moving at right angles for specified, predetermined distances. This is a relatively simple maneuver, day or night.

For example, if you are moving along a 180 degree azimuth, and you decide to bypass an obstacle,

simply change your azimuth to either 90- or 270-degrees—as appropriate to the METT-TC of the situation—and walk straight until you are certain that you have passed the left or right limit of your obstacle. Change your azimuth back to your original 180 degrees, and walk straight until you have bypassed the far limits of the obstacle. Change your azimuth to the back azimuth of your 90- or 270-degree azimuth from earlier, and return the same number of paces that you moved off your original line of travel. Change your azimuth back to the original 180 degrees, and you are back on the correct heading and route.



Ilustration of dead reckoning method for bypassing an obstacle. Courtesy US Army FM 3-25.26

Route Planning and Selection

Accurate, useful terrain assessment must be made in order to plan and select functional movement routes as part of land navigation. This is a critical individual skill, as well as a planning and leadership skill. Terrain assessment, using OCOKA is one of the most critical and complex tasks of the planning process. It is intellectually demanding because, while it is imperative that you select a route that will not unnecessarily expose you to enemy observation, the unnecessary selection of an overly difficult route makes navigation more complicated, and may cause additional physical and mental stress on yourself and other patrol members. You have to consider each factor of OCOKA, not only from your own perspective, but from the enemy's likely and possible perspectives as well.

- Observation and Fields-of-Fire. The purpose of observation is to see the enemy or significant landmarks to aid in navigation, without being seen by the enemy. It can be said that anything that can be seen can be shot. Therefore, fields-of-fire are any area that the enemy can engage effectively with their weapons from a given position. You have to look at the area you intend to move along and consider what observation and fields-of-fire overlook that route. Can the enemy see you as you move? From how far away and where? Can you see likely enemy positions? Can you fire on likely enemy positions from your route-of-march?

  If you're considering moving along a valley floor, but the enemy may have observation posts

overwatching it, that will allow him to see and engage your patrol, would moving the patrol's route to the tops of the ridges be more advantageous? If you know the enemy is in hilly or alpine areas, are the slopes steep or gentle? Convex or concave? How will this impact your tentative route-of-march?

- Cover and Concealment. Cover is protection from enemy fire, remember? Always try to select covered routes and always seek covered positions for halts, no matter how brief you plan on the halt being. Unfortunately, terrain may not provide adequate cover for your entire movement route, so concealment is a secondary selection factor.

  Concealment, as we previously discussed, is protection from enemy OBSERVATION, including aerial observation, if that factor needs to be considered, according to METT-TC. While trees have historically offered good concealment—generally speaking—with modern thermal imaging devices, they may not be effective unless they are thickly vegetated, and close together.

  If your route does offer good observation and fields-of-fire, will it provide adequate cover and concealment as well? If there's more cover and concealment in the thickly vegetated valley floor, does that offer a significant enough advantage to offset the limitations in observation and fields-of-fire? Or, if aerial threats are not a pressing concern, will the top of the ridge offer better concealment from the enemy, if you move along the backside of the ridge?

- Obstacles. Obstacles are any obstructions that will stop, delay, or divert your movement. These may be natural, such as rivers, swamps, cliffs, or mountains, or they may be man-made, such as barbed-wire entanglements, security fences, highway right-of-ways, and built-up areas like towns and villages.

  What natural or man-made obstacles are located along your tentative route-of-march? Will they affect the enemy as well, and how? Can you modify your basic proposed route to keep obstacles between your patrol and likely or known enemy positions?

- Key Terrain Features. Key terrain is defined as "any locality or area that the seizure or retention of affords a marked advantage to the possessing combatant." When planning patrols, you must consider what key terrain features are in the immediate area of your planned route. If you set up a support-by-fire (SBF) position for a deliberate assault, but the enemy has a mortar crew or sniper hide that overwatches your SBF position, guess who has the key terrain feature?

  High ground is often automatically assumed to be THE key terrain feature, because it generally offers good observation and fields-of-fire. This is not necessarily the case however. High ground ceased to "always" be THE key terrain feature on 17 December 1903, in the Outer Banks, North Carolina town of Kitty Hawk, when a couple of bicycle-building brothers named Wright made history by putting wings and an engine on a bicycle. Unless you possess aerial superiority in your operational area, the high ground may not be the high ground...

  Low ground can actually be THE key terrain feature. For example, in an open, flat area, a draw

or wash may provide the only cover and concealment for a great distance in any direction, while offering ample observation and fields-of-fire, thus making IT the key terrain feature. Additionally, in urban areas, sewer and storm drain routes may be key terrain features, since they can offer access routes to most of the battle space, as well as providing cover and concealment, while limiting the observation and fields-of-fire of the enemy.

When conducting security patrols, it is critical to ensure that the planned movement route includes actually walking on—or at least closely observing from a dominant position—any key terrain features that overlook the route-of-march.

- Avenues of approach. These are access routes that may provide you a way to move to the enemy, or for the enemy to move to you. Any identifiable route that approaches a location or position is an avenue of approach to that position, and will often be identifiable as terrain corridors such as valleys, draws, or wide, open areas. Ridges and spurs may also be functional avenues of approach.

  The problem is that most people are inherently lazy, so patrol planners and individuals look for speed and convenience when considering potential avenues of approach. The problem with this is, that if the enemy has studied small-unit tactics at all—or even just possesses a modicum of common sense—he will place his most dangerous weapons and security elements in covered and concealed positions that offer superior observation and fields-of-fire along what he perceives as the most likely avenues-of-approach.

  Everyone considers putting a gate up on the driveway, right? Only the psycho, paranoid dude thinks about booby-trapping the deer trail that crosses his back fence. Having the ability to select and use primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency (PACE) avenues of approach to potential enemy positions or key terrain features that no sane person would ever consider using, has led to some of the more spectacular achievements in military history.

  The 1st Special Service Force, a combined US-Canadian special operations unit in World War Two, conducted a raid on a German installation at La Difensa in Italy. Their approach to the objective included a 10-mile forced march, followed by scaling a cliff that even the sport alpinists of the day had declared unassailable, before they actually attacked the Axis position, offering perfect surprise for the attacking Allied unit.

  The 2d Ranger Battalion, scaled 100 foot cliffs—under German fire—at Ponte du Hoc, during the Normandy invasion on D-Day.

  During Operation Anaconda in 2002, US special operations forces scaled the backsides of mountains overlooking the valley, and set up observation posts from which they were able to direct air support missions against Al Qaeda and Taliban overwatch positions.

  Every one of these spectacular achievements was a result of solid training and extremely high levels of physical conditioning.

Once you have conducted an OCOKA assessment of possible routes-of-march, you can begin planning a movement route. Planning a route depends on the size of the patrolling unit, as well as the length of the patrol, and the type of movement to be conducted. Several factors must be considered in selecting a good route or routes.

How long will it take you to travel a given distance, and how long is the route you are studying? Can you cover the distance in the time available? This will be determined by a combination of factors include the METT-TC analysis of the terrain, as defined by the OCOKA assessment, the enemy threat, and your friendly troops assessment, including the level of physical fitness of your patrol personnel.

Is there adequate maneuver room available along the proposed route for the mission intended? Can your forces move along the proposed route effectively? Can your patrol personnel effectively traverse the terrain, or will the energy expenditures required be too great for their fitness levels? Does the potential route off the possibility of moving to, or around, enemy positions without being prematurely compromised? Are there available, easily recognizable terrain features for checkpoints and steering marks for navigation? Fundamentally, your tentative route selection requires an educated map study and should address the requirements of the mission, tactical situation, and time available, as well as providing ease of movement and navigation, as much as the tactical situation allows.

Move Under Direct Fire as Part of a Buddy Team

The ability to move under direct fire is the ability to apply the fundamental warfare concept of fire-and-maneuver to the individual rifle marksmanship and weapon handling you have already been introduced to. This is the skill that bridges the gap between those individual tasks and the collective tasks that lie ahead.

If the rifle is the ultimate expression of the individual's ability to project force, then the ability to coordinate and cooperate in concert with a rifle-equipped partner, makes you exponentially more effective and lethal. The use of fire-and-maneuver is the foundation of ALL successful tactics in modern warfare. Mastering this ability by performing fire-and-maneuver in concert with an equally adept and armed partner will not DOUBLE your effectiveness, and your danger to the enemy. It will multiply these factors EXPONENTIALLY.

If you have made contact with the enemy, and are getting shot at, you are under enemy small-arms direct fire. That is what gunfights are about. In order to fight effectively, you must take full advantage of any positions of cover available as you maneuver against the enemy, while leveraging the benefits of fire-and-maneuver to your advantage. This involves the use of aggressive movement and accurate, effective suppressive fires.

Temporary fighting positions

Temporary fighting positions are locations of cover and/or concealment that provide protection from incoming enemy fire, while also offering you the ability to effectively engage the maximum number of known, suspected, or likely positions of enemy cover and/or concealment, with accurate, aimed rifle fire. This is a critical factor to understand!!!

IF YOU ARE BEHIND COVER, BUT CANNOT SEE OR ENGAGE THE ENEMY EFFECTIVELY,

YOU ARE NOT "IN POSITION!"

Your movement under fire must always be from one temporary fighting positions to another. When moving from one position to the next, look for your next position BEFORE YOU MOVE. Large rocks, stumps, fallen trees, rubble, or small folds in the ground may provide covered firing positions.

When selecting your next temporary fighting position, you need to look for positions that will provide you the most protection from enemy fire, but that will also allow you to return enemy fire. They should not require you to move directly in front of other members of your team, thereby masking their fires on the enemy. STAY IN YOUR LANE!!!

If you team leader—or pure necessity—directs you to a temporary fighting position that requires you to move to the other side of a member of your team, move BEHIND the other man, so that he can continue to provide you with the protection of accurate, aimed suppressive fire against the enemy. The best cover on the battlefield is accurate, outgoing fire. STAY IN YOUR LANE!!!

When preparing to move to your next temporary fighting position, look for micro-terrain features between your current positions and the next positions that will offer you a covered, concealed movement route. A gully, draw, or even a shallow ditch may provide you with adequate protection from the enemy's fire to allow you to move safely.

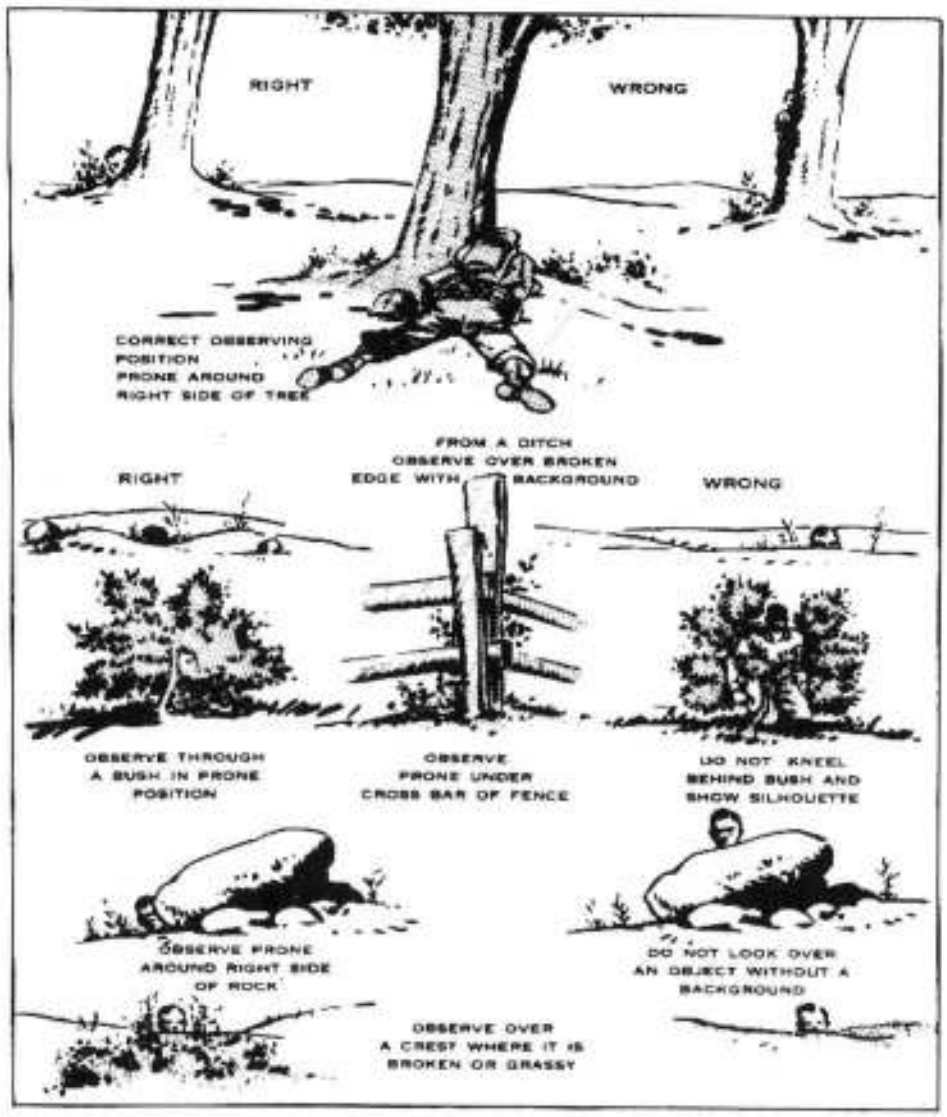


Figure 1. Correct and incorrect methods of observing.

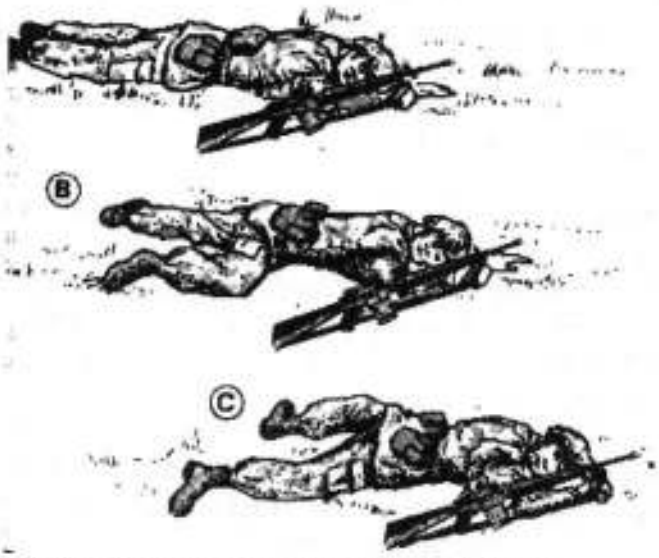
5

Although the caption is focused on observation, this illustration from the 1944 edition of FM 21-75 also illustrates the correct use of temporary fighting positions to engage the enemy.

There are three basic movement techniques for individual movement under direct fire. These include the low crawl, the high crawl, and short rushes. The methods for applying each of these techniques has changed over the years, but the basic principles remain the same.

- The low crawl is used if your movement route provides cover and concealment less than one foot high, if visibility conditions provide good observation to the enemy, and if speed is NOT

the most critical consideration. Because the longer the fight lasts, the greater the chances are that you will be shot, the low crawl—due to its inherently slow nature—should be your last resort for movement under direct fire. It should be resorted to only when absolutely necessary.



The Low Crawl. The entire body is kept as absolutely low as possible. This is SLOW.

- The high crawl is used when your selected movement route provides cover and concealment, poor visibility hinders the enemy's ability to observe your movement, and speed is required, but terrain, vegetation, and/or the accuracy and intensity of enemy fire precludes the use of short rushes. The high crawl is—in my experience—commonly the most effective movement technique in fights at close ranges between 50 and 200 meters, if both parties involved in the fight know what they are doing and are aggressive.

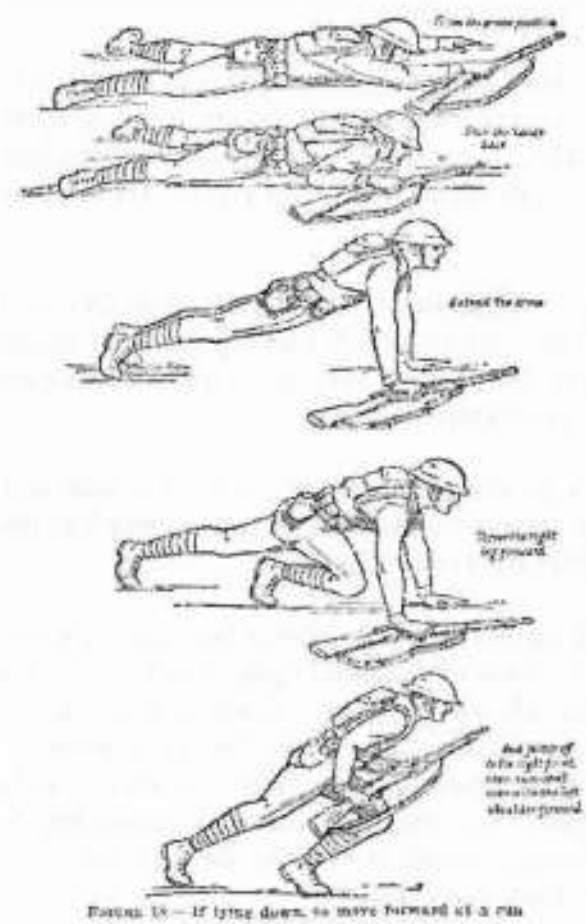
The High Crawl. Movement is created by pulling with your elbows and pushing with your feet and knees. Unlike the traditional method shown here, most fighters today maintain a firing grip on the weapon with their firing side hand.

- Typically, short rushes are used as 3-5 second rushes. These are very brief sprints that last three to five seconds. The mantra used to remember this is "I'm up! He sees me! I'm down!" This should still be your default mechanism for short rushes in intense, close-range encounters.

  Rushing techniques are used when you must cross open areas, speed is essential, and you are not being directly targeted by enemy fire.

  While 3-5 second rushes should be your default mode when using rushes, experience has demonstrated that, in many fights, especially in heavily wooded or extremely rugged, broken terrain, it is possible to get away with taking longer rushes. One method is to use the rush to advance as long as possible, until you begin to hear rounds directed at you cracking past or striking nearby. The drawback to this method—of course—is that the first one to come close may be the one that actually strike you!

  There are numerous ways that have been taught to get into and out of the prone position to start and finish a short rush. From the "combat roll" taught in the 1980s and early 1990s, to the methods detailed by some modern tactical instructors, whatever works for you, works for you. For most people that I've worked with, the simplest method is the best. From the prone position, maintaining a firing grip on your weapon, perform a push-up. At the top of the push-up, drive one knee and leg forward, into a sprinter's start position, and sprint forward from there. As you stop, simply drop to both knees, and then fall forward, catching your body weight with your outstretched support-side hand, and collapsing into a sort of one-arm push-up.



Old as fuck (notice the WWI style helmet?) illustration of getting out of the prone to start a rush.

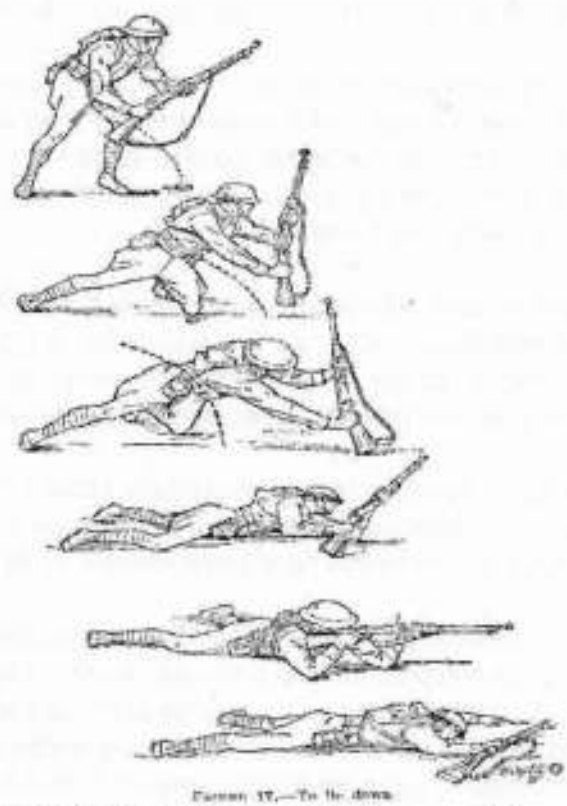


Illustration from the same--unknown--old manual illustrating a method of getting back into the prone at the conclusion of a rush. While I learned the butt stroke the ground method in basic training, with the M16A2, this is a REALLY, REALLY bad method with M4 variant with collapsible stocks. Just drop to both knees, and then drop down, catching your body weight with your support hand.

One consideration that must be noted with short rushes...short rushes should never be used back-to-back. If you cannot make it to your next temporary fighting position before the 3-5 second rush is complete, do NOT jump up and attempt another 3-5 second rush. Instead, high crawl or low crawl the rest of the way to your fighting position.

The 3-5 second rush method was developed based on how long it takes the typical rifleman to notice your movement, adjust his firing position, acquire a sight picture, and squeeze a reasonably accurate shot off. If you tie two rushes, back-to-back, he's already gotten a "bead" on you, so as soon as you rise up, you're going to catch a bullet in the kisser.

A buddy team is a relationship between two individual members of a team. An effective buddy team—like any successful relationship—is built on a foundation of trust and good communication. Your ONLY job is to protect your Ranger buddy. In turn, his ONLY job is to protect you. If both parties do

their job successfully, everyone goes home happy, except the enemy.

This relationship is built on communication however, and a failure to communicate effectively will have a significantly deleterious effect on your ability to protect your Ranger buddy. If you or buddy fail at this—because you're too worried about your own safety, because you're trying to be a glory-hound hero, or because you are too scared shitless to communicate effectively—then you BOTH die, and the enemy adds your wives to his harem.

Communicate with your Ranger buddy before you move. This allows him to focus on protecting you with well-aimed, accurate fire, rather than looking for his next temporary fighting position, reloading his weapon, or any other momentarily less critical tasks. The specific verbiage you use is unimportant, as long as both partners understand what the verbiage is intended to convey.

You may choose to use the doctrinally correct, "Cover me while I move!" or the more popular and common, "Moving!" Your partner, if he is prepared to protect you, will direct you to move by either telling you that he has "got you covered!" or he'll simply tell you to "MOVE!"

If you communicate your intention to move, but your partner does not respond, but you CAN hear him firing his weapon, you have to make a critical decision. Some experienced fighters will tell you that you should NOT move, because he may see something that is a threat that you are unaware of, and he feels that it is not safe to move. There is nothing wrong with this concept. It is flat-out, balls-on correct. Nevertheless, there are others—myself USUALLY include amongst them—who will tell you that if he doesn't respond, but you can hear him firing, and you don't hear effective enemy fire impacting close to you, then move, because he's got you covered. This thought process is based on the idea that aggressiveness of action should be your default mechanism in a gunfight.

Once you've reached your next temporary fighting position, do not tell your partner that you are "In position!" or direct him to "MOVE!" until you are actively engaging the enemy with aimed, accurate, suppressive fire. If you are unable to engage the enemy for any reason, then you are NOT in position and are unable to protect your Ranger buddy!

If you experience a malfunction or stoppage—if your weapon runs out of ammunition—while you are protecting your Ranger buddy with protective suppressive fire, you need to communicate the problem to him BEFORE the enemy can recover and take advantage of the lapse, while you are remedying the problem by conducting a speed reload, or immediate action, as the situation demands This allows him to drop immediately—even if he is not yet in his next temporary fighting position—and take up your slack to protect both himself and you.

"Malfunction!" and "reloading!" are the two most commonly used verbal indicators for these situations. Do not use the other commonly heard indicator amongst the untrained, "I'm down!" This has an entirely different meaning, indicating you are wounded and out of the fight, rather than simply suffering from a minor glitch like running empty or a malfunction.

If you are moving, and hear your Ranger buddy communicating that he is experiencing any of these issues, your immediate task becomes to drop to the ground, or a position of cover within three strides,

and fire on the enemy to protect yourself and your partner, until he rectifies his problem.

When performing these individual movement techniques, as part of a buddy team, you should strive to keep as large an interval as possible between yourself and your Ranger buddy, while still maintaining the ability to communicate effectively and to protect one another. This will make it more difficult for the enemy to engage either of you with accurate, aimed rifle fire, thereby increasing your survivability. The caveat to this is two-fold:

- Number one, you have to make sure that your partner can hear you communicate. The use of electronic, magnified hearing protection will assist in this, both by protecting you from the noise of gunfire, and by magnifying the input of his/your yelled communications.

- Number two, when communication, YELL YOUR ASS OFF! Stealth is critical, but once the first round goes "BANG!" noise is no longer your primary concern.

Suppressive fire
Well-executed suppressive fire is arguably the most critical factor in effective fire-and-maneuver. The maneuver element CANNOT move to, or along, a covered movement route, unless enemy weapons can be destroyed or effectively disabled. Effective suppressive fire is a prerequisite for any maneuver. Modern conventional forces military personnel are not effectively trained to provide suppressive fire with their individual weapons, the focus instead being on the use of automatic weapons like the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) and crew-served weapons such as the M240 machine gun and the M2 .50BMG machine gun.

Whether at the fire team level, or the platoon echelons, this is unfortunate for the conventional force soldier, because well-trained riflemen, using semiautomatic, aimed rifle fire CAN actually suppress the enemy far more effectively than automatic weapons can. In order to overcome this deficiency, the survivalist guerrilla must first define exactly what "suppressive fire" is. A belt-fed M240 machine gun, hosing down the enemy position, is decidedly NOT effective suppressive fire. Between the political considerations of noncombatants possibly—probably, in our context—being downrange, and the fact that all too often, the gun crew running the gun is causing more property damage than personnel damage, the reality is that this is extremely limited in applicability in the unconventional warfare environment.

Because contemporary doctrine focuses on the use of indirect-fire and crew-served weapons—as well as close-air support—for suppressive fires, there is little or no current doctrine defining training and application standards for providing suppressive fire with individual small-arms. The classic British model of 30 rounds per minute, developed for application with the magazine-fed, bolt-action, Enfield rifle, is certainly valid as a starting point, but it is ONLY a starting point.

US Army **FM 23-12, Techniques of Fire of the Rifle Squad and Tactical Application, 1963**, offered the following suggestion for the rate of fire for suppressive fires with the individual rifle:

"The maximum effective rate at which a squad member can fire is determined by how fast he can take a

sight picture, properly control the trigger, and reload his weapon. The sustained rate of fire is that rate which can be maintained indefinitely without danger to the firer or damage to the weapon. The squad members fire their first few rounds, particularly in the case of surprise fire, at the maximum EFFECTIVE rate in order to gain fire superiority. Thereafter, the rate is reduced to the point that will maintain fire superiority. This reduction is necessary to insure continued operation of the weapon and to conserve ammunition." (Emphasis added)

The simplest definition of effective suppressive fire is "suppressive fire is fire that keeps the enemy more concerned with not being shot than he is with shooting at you." Suppressive fire is protection. The best cover on the battlefield is accurate outgoing fire. It is well-directed fire, aimed at the enemy, rather than at the objective.

Effective suppressive fire at 400 meters in order to be effectively accurate, may not be any more rapid than one round every two seconds, but at half that distance, it might need to be twice as rapid, or faster. It's METT-TC. At 50 meters, you might need to fire 2-3 accurate rounds per second, in order to effectively keep the enemy's heads down.

Well-dispersed, accurately aimed suppressive fire is the best way to get inside the enemy's OODA Cycle, and stay there, by ensuring that accurate fire covers all enemy positions, precluding any opportunities on the enemy's part to return fire effectively.

The most effective way to ensure effective suppressive fire is to prioritize engaging known, suspected, or likely positions of enemy cover and/or concealment.

- Engage any exposed enemy personnel, followed by enemy positions that are positively identifiable by enemy muzzle flashes. Specifically, your prioritization of targets of known enemy positions should focus—in order—on crew-served weapons, grenadiers, communications personnel, and then key leaders. The key is to attack the most immediate threats—the most casualty producing weapons—first, and then work your way down the threat matrix.

- Once all KNOWN positions of enemy cover and concealment have been effectively engaged, work on suspected positions. These may include the edges of doors and windows in urban environments, the tops and sides of fighting positions, as well as both sides of the bases of trees, stumps, rocks, and other places you believe the enemy is hiding.

- Finally, target any likely positions of enemy cover or concealment that you haven't already engaged in your specified sector of fire. This may include the ridge of a building's roof, next to chimneys or smokestacks, or bushes that may be concealing enemy combatants.

One critical consideration that must be made from the partisan guerrilla's view, is that engaging suspected or likely enemy positions may not be an option. It if appears to be a good position of cover or concealment, but no one is firing at you from there, this is not necessarily an indication that no one is hiding there. It may just not be a bad guy. If I were stuck in the midst of a gunfight that I was not

involved in, I'd certainly be looking for a position of cover to hide in, until I could find a way to escape safely. This means you have to limit your suppressive fires to KNOWN positions of enemy cover, in order to avoid accidental killing of noncombatants. If they're not shooting at you or your buddies, you don't get to shoot them—usually.

Drake Shooting
The ability to engage known enemy positions of cover, even when you cannot actually see the enemy in that position, exists. This method was made popular—but contrary to popular opinion of internet experts, NOT invented by them—by Rhodesian forces during the brush wars in that country before it became Zimbabwe. Referred to as "Drake Shooting," this method DOES NOT replace fire-and-maneuver, but acts as a means to apply fire-and-maneuver when the enemy cannot be specifically observed. Drake shooting is not a random spraying of rounds at cover, such as "walking fire" used in the jungle in Vietnam, but is a deliberate and methodical method of applying fire in a manner that elicits maximum effect with the least expenditure of ammunition.

To effectively utilize Drake shooting against known enemy positions, when it is not possible to aim at the actual enemy fighter, the shooter simply fires one or two rapid, aimed shots to one or both sides of the base of the cover. Since most people are right-handed, the generally means that your first rounds should be directed at the left side of the cover, from your point-of-view, followed by one or two equally rapid, aimed shots to the right side of the base of the cover.

In general, Drake shooting can be used to "kill" the cover used by the enemy. It is not necessary to actually see the enemy, and no time is wasted searching for the enemy fighter's body. Instead, you use careful observation of the position, while "killing" the cover, thus exposing the bad guy to direct, aimed fire.

When using Drake shooting, aimed directly at the base of the cover, shooting deliberately low. Even in the event that you miss, tumbling rounds, dislodged stones or chinks of concrete, or shards of wood, all cause severe, often debilitating injury to the personnel being shot at. Each round fired is still fired in a deliberate, aimed manner, despite being fired as rapidly as possible.

Your rate-of-fire for the first magazine of a contact—especially a surprise contact, as in sudden encounters requiring you to break contact—should be to fire the first magazine as rapidly as humanly possible, using Drake shooting with AIMED fire to known enemy positions. This is followed by a speed reload, and then the rate-of-fire is reduced to the point that it allows you to retain fire superiority, preventing the enemy's ability to respond with effective aimed fire, still using the Drake shooting method when necessary.

Suggested Further Reading
FM 21-75 Scouting, Sniping, and Patrolling, 1944 by US War Department
FM 23-12 Techniques of Fire of the Rifle Squad and Tactical Application, 1963 by US Army
FM 3-25.26 Land Navigation by US Army
Combat Tracking Guide by John Hurth
Be An Expert with Map and Compass by Bjorn Kjellstrom

Chapter Seven
A CHIHUAHUA CAN KICK A GREAT DANE'S ASS

"Soldiers have to eat soup together for a long time before they are ready to fight." --Napoleon

Light infantry battle drills are collective action responses that are rapidly executed in response to commonly encountered situations on the battlefield. When properly trained, they are executed without the application of a deliberate decision-making process. The execution of battle drills requires leaders who can make decisions rapidly, and who can issue brief oral orders quickly.

Characteristics of effective battle drills include:

- They require minimal leader orders to execute and are standardized responses to specific cues or situations.
- They are sequentially-ordered actions that are vital to success in combat, and the preservation of life of the unit.
- They may apply to teams, squads, or platoon-sized elements.
- They are thoroughly TRAINED responses to enemy actions or leader's commands.
- They represent mental steps that are followed for offensive or defensive actions in combat.

Your ability to accomplish critical tactical missions for security patrolling will often rest on the ability of your patrol team members to execute key actions quickly and correctly. You must have trained, immediate responses to enemy contact, as well as the follow-on actions.

Battle drills are limited to situations that require instantaneous responses. You must train them until they become your instinctive response to the necessary cues. This can only result from continuous, ongoing practice. Battle drill execution must be mastered in all environmental and visibility conditions, including at night. The successful execution of battle drills at night can be viewed as the pinnacle of achievement in small-unit tactical training.

The battle drills described in this chapter will provide you a template for developing your own Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for responses to other critical situations. Successful training and practice of battle drills will build not only practical skills, but will also develop unit cohesion, physical and moral strength and courage, and mental and spiritual aggression.

Break Contact

For the small-unit, irregular partisan force, the only acceptable fight to get involved in is the fight you start, on your terms, at a time and place of your choosing. This makes the single most critically important battle drills to know, understand, and master, for our purposes, the Break Contact drill. Any surprise contact, when your patrol finds itself engaged by an unexpected or potentially overwhelming hostile force, may mean the only chance of survival is to break contact and flee.

Situation

Your 4-8 man patrol is conducting a security patrol and finds itself in an unexpected contact. The patrol leader, or the most forward deployed sub-element leader, determines that the patrol must break contact —based on the volume and accuracy of incoming fire, or according to SOP—in order to survive.

What happens

All fighters in contact immediately take up positions of cover and begin returning fire with a high volume of aimed, suppressive fire at all known enemy positions, using Drake shooting.

The in-contact element leader controls the fires of his element using standardized fire control commands, containing an abbreviated version of the basic elements of alert, direction, description, range, and method of fire, and then directs the rest of the patrol to continue breaking contact.

"Contact front! Infantry in the trees at 200 meters! Suppressive fire and break contact!" or, as it more commonly comes out, *"Contact front! 200 meters! Break contact!"* Fire control commands must be brief and complete, with the leader erring on the side of brevity. When all else fails, rely on the mantra of *"Follow me, and do as I do."*

The smallest element in contact—this may be as large as a four-man fire team or as small as a two-man buddy team, in our context—remains in contact, in order to cover the disengagement of the rest of the patrol, long enough to allow the rest of the patrol to begin moving back to the last en route rally point.

As soon as the in-contact element leader recognizes that the rest of the patrol has begun movement to the last en route rally point, he directs his team to begin breaking contact. This is done by buddy team bounds, in reverse. THE TEAM LEADER SHOULD BE THE LAST MAN ON HIS TEAM TO BOUND BACK!!!

If available, the in-contact element leader will supplement its suppressive fire and buddy team bounds with the application of smoke grenades and/or tear gas or OC/pepper spray grenades, to help mask their movement, and to interdict the enemy's ability to continue pursuit effectively.

The in-contact element continues moving by reverse buddy team bounds, until it is no longer under direct enemy small-arms fire. At that point, the team leader will direct the team to move to the last en route rally point. They may do so as an intact element, or individually by buddy teams in order to consolidate with the rest of the patrol.

Once contact has been broken, and the patrol has consolidated at the last en route rally point, patrol leaders will account for all personnel and reorganize and redistribute equipment as necessary, to continue the patrol mission. Alternatively, the patrol may move into a deliberate or hasty ambush to interdict and deter enemy pursuit by engaging and destroying pursuing enemy elements.

Alternate sequence of events
If the volume and accuracy of enemy fire is too great to allow the in-contact element to successfully break contact using buddy team bounds, the patrol leader may designate an overwatch position, and the first element to disengage will move to that position.

Once in the overwatch position, that element will direct protective suppressive fires to the enemy position, in order to provide cover for the disengagement of the in-contact element.

The in-contact element will then bound backwards to the next overwatch position, and begin engaging the enemy position. The two elements will continue to use bounding overwatch to prosecute a break contact until successful.

Once contact is broken, the two elements will consolidate at the last en route rally point, reorganize and redistribute equipment before continuing the patrol or conducting a hasty or deliberate ambush to interdict enemy pursuit by engaging and destroying pursuing hostile elements.

What it all means
Fundamentally, in order for a break contact to work effectively, anyone who is getting shot at—by which we mean they can hear rounds cracking past them in close proximity—needs to hit the fucking ground and start laying down hate and discontent on the enemy. Anyone NOT getting shot at directly, should be moving back, as buddy teams or as a complete element, to the last en route rally point, unless the leader of that element decides to stop short and set up a hasty ambush for pursuers to get caught in. This is actually preferable, for many—obvious—reasons.

Meanwhile the guys who ARE getting shot at are performing buddy team bounds, in reverse, to move away from the enemy. The catch to this is, it has to be FAST. The enemy WILL be maneuvering against you, so you need to move back faster than they are moving forward. This takes practice and superior communication.

As soon as the incoming enemy fire is inaccurate enough to allow it, the team leader—whether a buddy

team or the fire team or the squad—needs to communicate to his guys that every one needs to "RUN!" or "FOLLOW ME!" And then, everyone needs to HAUL ASS!!!

If the first element set up a hasty ambush, they need to signal the follow-on element as they are moving through the ambush, so they can join the ambush. Otherwise, everyone meets at the last en route rally point, consolidates and reorganize, and moves out, before pursuing forces can catch up.

Hasty Attack

The break contact drill should be the bread-and-butter, most critical emergency battle drill that your group practices and masters. Due to the small size of partisan forces—especially during the conduct of security patrolling operations—the only legitimately survivable course-of-action in the event of an unexpected, deliberately chosen fight is to break contact and escape.

The second most important battle drill to master however, is the basic Hasty Attack drill. In order to effectively destroy or deter hostile intent and actions of enemy forces, the partisan unit must learn to take the fight to the enemy with speed, surprise, and violence-of-action, through the aggressive application of fire-and-maneuver. This drill is a simple, basic response to enemy contact that uses fire-and-maneuver to fix and finish enemy forces.

Despite the conventional doctrinal insistence that a defender in a fixed position holds a 3:1 advantage over an attacker, the reality is that the proper, efficient, and aggressive application of this battle drills has allowed significantly smaller forces to wreak devastating, crippling damage to company, battalion, and brigade-sized elements. For the survivalist retreat or community security force however, the greatest advantage of the Hasty Attack battle drills is the fact that mastery of this drill solves a wide variety of potential and likely small-unit tactical problems.

Whether your problem is a chance encounter with an enemy element small enough that your patrol can successfully overcome it, or it is a need to conduct a deliberate attack on hostiles moving through your area of responsibility wth a deliberate or hasty ambush, or the problem is you decide you need to conduct a raid for some reason, the basic principles of the Hasty Attack still apply!

You are utilizing a support-by-fire (SBF) element to protect the maneuver element until they get into place, concentrating accurate, aimed suppressive fires on enemy positions and personnel, and then lifting fires, as well as using individual and team or squad-level maneuver to attack the enemy. While the options for an extremely small patrol of 4-8 personnel to utilize this battle drill effectively ARE limited, it is possible with adequate expert training. More importantly however, understanding how to conduct it at the small-unit level allows you to append the force with more personnel and apply the exact same drill with a larger element.

Situation

Your team finds itself under enemy small-arms direct-fire from a small enemy force, or you find yourself under enemy small-arms AND indirect-fire weapons support that indicates a need to "hug the belt" in order to stay inside "danger close" distance to survive. The patrol leader, or the most forward deployed sub-element leader, determines that the patrol has the ability to prosecute the fight, based on a rapid METT-TC estimate of the situation.

What happens
Fighters in contact immediately take up covered fighting positions and return fire with a high volume of accurate, aimed suppressive fire at known enemy positions of cover. All members of the in-contact element call out an alert, direction, and distance warning. *"Contact front! 100 meters!"* Upon depletion of his first magazine of fire, each fighter will conduct a speed reload and immediately remove his rucksack. He will then resume firing at known positions of enemy cover with protective suppressive fires.

The in-contact element leader identifies the enemy positions, distance and nature of the threat to the patrol leader or to the trailing sub-element leader. He may also indicate what he believes to be the best route of covered movement for the maneuver element to use for their bounding movement. *"Bound left, behind the ridge!"* or, *"Move right, up the ditch!"* The in-contact element leader also controls the fires of his element.

The in-contact element remains in contact. If possible, they continue to close aggressively with the enemy by buddy team bounds, or by individual bounds, while continuing to suppress enemy positions with their personal weapons. If the volume and accuracy of incoming enemy fire precludes the ability to continue forward movement towards the enemy, the SBF element leader may elect to simply hold his position and allow his team to engage the enemy with accurate, aimed suppressive fires from where they are. If the ability exists however, always err on the side of aggressiveness, and keep the pressure on the enemy by continuing to move forward.

As soon as the in-contact/SBF element leader has relayed the distance and direction of the contact to the patrol leader or the trailing sub-element leader, that leader guides his maneuver element to begin moving around the enemy position. While the maneuver element should definitely consider using the route indicated by the in-contact element leader—who after all, has the best view of the enemy positions—he is free to move in either direction, based on his personal METT-TC estimate of the situation.

Initially, the maneuver element may need to move by individual or buddy team bounds to get clear of incoming enemy fires and/or observation. Once clear however, speed becomes essential. Speed is security! The maneuver element begins a "sprint" around the enemy's flank, maintaining a rough wedge or "skirmish line" formation, at a run. Individual weapons should be carried at the ready, as fighters scan forward during this bound around, but speed is essential.

When the maneuver element has reached a position of cover/concealment to the side of the enemy position—between 45 and 90 degrees off the original axis of contact—the team leader directs his team into a "skirmish line" formation perpendicular to the enemy position, and directs them to begin moving forward by bounding overwatch, until they can begin firing on the enemy with effective, accurate, aimed suppressive fire.

When the maneuver element reaches a point where the leader determines that the benefits provided by the SBF element's suppressive fires are less than the potential risk of fratricide, he will signal a lift or shift fire, using a prearranged, SOP signal. This may range from a series of whistle blasts or radio

communications, to the use of aerial flares or other signaling methods, according to METT-TC or unit SOP.

It is ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE that the maneuver element increases its rate-of-fire when the SBF element lifts fire, in order to maintain fire superiority! Handover of responsibility for suppressive fires from the SBF element to the maneuver element is absolutely critical and cannot be stressed enough.

At some point, during the maneuver element's assault, it will no longer make sense to continue moving forward by bounds, due to proximity and lack of available cover and protection. At that point, the maneuver element leader will instruct his element to assault through. The entire element will then move forward, in a "skirmish line" formation, and sweep across the enemy position, engaging hostile targets as they appear, without stopping or slowing.

Once the maneuver element reaches the limits-of-advance (LOA), the maneuver element and SBF element begins to conduct consolidation and reorganization activities.

Key Principles
Learning, remembering, and applying some key principles will hasten your mastery of the Hasty Attack drill.

- Find the Enemy! You have to determine the location, disposition, and strength of the enemy, and communicate it to all elements as rapidly as possible. This may be made more effective through a thorough knowledge of the topography of your operational area. If you know that the enemy's position is overlooked by a small ridge to your left, that may allow your maneuver element to mask their movement, as well as to utilize plunging fires directly into the enemy positions during the assault. If you're operating in an urban area, and know that an underground sewage tunnel runs under and into the basement of the building the enemy is firing from, you may have a way for your maneuver element to move against the enemy's rear, uncontested.

- Fix the Enemy! Use effective, accurate, aimed suppressive fire to your advantage. In order to close with enemy forces, the assaulting maneuver element must first suppress the enemy's ability to fight back. Enemy suppression is most effectively accomplished by irregular, partisan forces limited to individual small-arms, through the application of appropriate suppressive fires. The goal is to ensure that he is more concerned with not getting shot than he is with shooting at you. If the enemy is successfully suppressed, the maneuver element has the ability to move against him without concern of being engaged in the open. The assault element always attempts to maneuver in order to achieve a concentration of fires and effort on a weakness along the enemy's flank or rear.

  The enemy knows this and expects the attempt. Only through effective suppressive fires will you be able to successfully maneuver to prevent his ability to reinforce his weak points, or to counterattack with fire-and-maneuver himself. The enemy must be fixed in position by effective, accurate, aimed suppressive fires!!!

- Finish the Enemy! Fight to and THROUGH the enemy position with speed, surprise, and violence-of-action. The maneuvering assault element must move forward to a final assault position, and then through the enemy's position as quickly and aggressively as possible, in consideration of METT-TC factors on the spot. ALWAYS ERR ON THE SIDE OF AGGRESSIVENESS!!!

- Control organic fires. It is absolutely critical that suppressive fires are heavy enough and accurately dispersed enough to effectively suppress the enemy's ability to respond. Team leaders must guide and control the rate-of-fire, and the targeting, of individual riflemen within their elements, in order to deliver maximum benefit from suppressive fires. While it would be fatal to allow the SBF element to run out of ammunition before the maneuver element begins its final assault, it is equally catastrophic to not provide adequate volume of fire to suppress the enemy. The point of balance between these will be predicated on the terrain as well as the physical conditioning of the individual members of the maneuver element and their ability to move around the enemy quickly.

- Teamwork is predicated on leadership and control. A team without leadership and coordination is nothing more than a mob of individuals with firearms, running amok. Success depends on the level of teamwork created by leadership control within the team. Methods of successful control are generally established by SOP. These may include hand-and-arm signals, verbal commands, whistles, radio communications, pyrotechnics, and the "Follow me, and do as I do" method.

  Once team SOP are established, only consistent, sustained, disciplined practice will develop the smooth, coordinated teamwork that is essential to survival and success of the small unit. Teamwork training should become more advanced, and should cover as many potential battlefield situations as possible. If a team loses contact with his team leader and/or Ranger buddy, the training he has experienced should offer him the guidance he needs in order to remember what he is supposed to do. This is control in absentia, because the team leader has provided the training and guidance to allow the individual to continue the fight.

- DO NOT COMMIT MURDER! Don't compromise your values. Once clearing the enemy position, as the maneuver element moves past any wounded or dead personnel, the International Law of Land Warfare allows for belligerents to "finish" enemy personnel in order to secure the objective and prevent the enemy from "playing opossum" until your back is exposed. Once you have taken even one step past an enemy body however, if you then turn and re-engage—absent an unmistakably aggressive action by the wounded enemy—you have committed murder. By moving past the body you have already determined that he was not a threat, or you would not have exposed your back to him.

Alternative Applications of the Hasty Attack Drill

The basic Hasty Attack drill can be used as the foundation for other critical battle drills for the partisan unit, in order to streamline and simplify the training process. Battlefield situations and drills that can be fulfilled this way include React-to-Ambush, Conduct a Hasty Ambush, and Conduct a Deliberate Attack (Raid or Ambush). In this section, we will discuss the application of the Hasty Attack drill to

React-to-Ambush, and Conduct a Hasty Ambush, because these are the two most immediate needs for retreat or community security patrolling missions.

React-to-Ambush
We will restrict our discussion of React-to-Ambush to the response to a near ambush, because reacting to a far ambush is legitimately no different than conducting the basic Hasty Attack or Break Contact drills. The near ambush is doctrinally defined as an ambush that occurs with the assault element within hand grenade range of the kill zone (KZ). This is generally accepted as being within 30-40 meters, but in some areas, due to tight confines, will be considerably closer.

The close proximity of the enemy force requires an extremely fast, aggressive response to survive. A Break Contact response of any sort offers little chance of survival outside of very, very dense foliage, due to the extremely close ranges inherent to the near ambush.

Situation
A portion of your patrol has entered the KZ of an enemy ambush and the enemy has initiated the ambush with a casualty-producing weapon, ranging from an IED or Claymore mine, to a crew-served machine gun, or even simple high volume fire.

What happens
Patrol members within the KZ and receiving enemy fire immediately drop to the ground and return fire as rapidly as possible, in order to create a massive, overwhelming volume of suppressive fire.

Patrol members NOT inside the KZ move to covered positions and immediately begin to engage known positions of enemy cover with effective, accurate, aimed suppressive fire.

Upon completion of a speed reload, following depletion of their initial magazine of fire, fighters in the KZ immediately use a single, coordinated rush to and through the enemy position, on the command of the team leader or senior man in the KZ. They act as the maneuver element.

Patrol members not in the KZ act as the SBF element and must lift fires as the assault element sweeps through the enemy position.

In the case of an L-shaped ambush, the maneuver element members assault towards the direction of the greatest volume of incoming fire in order to break the back of the attack. In this case, if possible, the SBF elements outside of the KZ shift their fires to the remaining arm of the ambush, rather than simply lifting fire.

The reality
Being caught in the KZ of a well-planned and properly executed near ambush is a no-win situation. Even in a poorly-planned and improperly executed near ambush, chances are most of the individuals caught in the KZ are going to die—or at least be seriously wounded—in the first burst of fire. It is possible however, to assault through and defeat a near ambush with individual small arms, if you do so with aggressive action and speed. A brief interlude from recent military history offers a perfect example of this:

During combat operations in Afghanistan, in support of Operationa Enduring Freedom (OEF), SSG (then SPC) Salvatore Guinta of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, stationed in Vicenza, Italym became the first living recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War. SSG Guinta was awarded the CMH for his actions in countering an enemy near ambush of a dismounted patrol he was part of during night combat operations.

Despite a massively overwhelming volume of effective enemy fires, the apparent disappearance of the squad leader, who had been wounded and actually captured by the enemy, and the extreme close-quarters fight, precluding the use of hand grenades, SSG Guinta and several other members of the patrol immediately charged the enemy position with their individual small arms and broke the attack. SSG Guinta then moved forward on his own to locate his squad leader. Discovering the wounded squad leader had been captured by the enemy and was in the process of being dragged off, SSG Guinta engaged the enemy fighters with his individual rifle, driving them off, and rescued his grievously wounded squad leader, While two members of the patrol—the squad leader and an attached medic—died of wounds sustained in the fight, this anecdote clearly illustrates the fact that you CAN survive and overcome a close-range near ambush with just individual small arms fire—if you are aggressive enough. The use of aggressive action, high volume, accurate, aimed suppressive fire, and overwhelming violence-of-action in maneuvering to and through the enemy position WILL overwhelm and destroy the enemy's will to continue the fight.

Conduct a Hasty Ambush

It is generally accepted by even amateur tacticians that an L-shaped ambush is far superior to a linear ambush, whenever it is possible to emplace the superior technique, because it allows the attacking force to mass fires on the KZ from different angles, reducing the ambushed force's ability to respond effectively.

A hasty ambush is simply an ambush that is conducted on the spur-of-the-moment, when a patrol observes an enemy force moving in a direction that will allow the patrol to intercept the route, and establish the ambush before the enemy reaches the tentative KZ. The application of the Hasty Attack drill to the task of conducting a Hasty Ambush, near or far, with an L-shaped ambush formation, should be readily apparent.

Situation

Your patrol is moving and observes a force approaching along a route-of-march that will allow your patrol to interdict their movement. Your patrol leader decides to conduct a hasty ambush.

What happens

The lead team immediately moves to covered and concealed positions that will allow them to observe and fire on the defined KZ of the ambush position.

The trailing team conceals their rucksacks and immediately begins to move around, along a covered/concealed route that does not expose their movement to the enemy force's observation, in order to reach a suitable concealed final assault position between 45 and 90 degrees off the axis of

movement. On arrival at the final assault position, the patrol leader directs the members of the maneuver/assault element to individual positions of cover that allow them to observe and fire on the defined KZ of the ambush position.

When the main body of the enemy force has entered the KZ of the ambush, or any element or individual of the ambush force believes that they are in imminent danger of compromise, the patrol leader, or the in danger member of the patrol, initiates the ambush with accurate, aimed fire directed at enemy personnel and enemy positions. Personnel continue to fire at exposed enemy personnel and enemy positions of cover for a prescribed amount of time as determined by unit SOP.

When fires are lifted, the patrol waits and observes the KZ for 30-60 seconds—as determined by unit SOP—for signs of life among the enemy bodies. If signs of life are observed, the patrol reengages all visible bodies and known positions of enemy cover, If no signs of life are observed, the assault element moves forward by buddy team bounds. In accordance with METT-TC and the distances involved, the assault element may move forward by buddy team bounds, or in a single rush, to assault through the KZ and seize the position. Upon reaching the LOA, the patrol leader consolidates and begins reorganization of the patrol before moving out again to continue the mission.

Other Critical Common Skills Tasks for Patrolling

In addition to the basic battle drills for emergency actions, there are several other common skills tasks that are essential to the successful execution of patrolling operations. These also fall into the category of offering standardized responses to commonly occurring situations during patrolling operations. While they do not require an instant, unthinking response like the immediate action battle drills, the establishment of SOP for these tasks reduces the workload of the patrol leader, and simplifies planning and rehearsals during the troop-leading procedures (TLP). Additionally, the use of SOP for some of these common tasks—such as special teams training for actions on the objective—will help to insure that nothing is overlooked during the consolidation and reorganization after a contact.

Cross a Linear Danger Area

A danger area is any location along a patrol's route-of-march that the patrol leader's estimate of the situation during patrol planning indicates to him that the patrol may be at particularly high risk of exposure to enemy observation and/or fires. Typically, danger areas are bypassed during patrols, through the use of the 90-degree method of bypassing an obstacle (see Chapter Six). Linear danger areas however, provide a particular difficulty with this, since taking a detour around a linear danger area is often simply not a realistic option.

Examples of linear danger areas include:

- roads
- trails
- power line right-of-ways

- fence lines
- streams and creeks

Whenever possible, route selection should encompass a concerted effort to avoid the requirement to cross linear danger areas. The requirements of speed and timely arrival at a destination though, or the need to put eyes-on surveillance on a particular location or objective, may preclude the ability to simply avoid linear danger areas in particular cases.

The most commonly used method for crossing a linear danger area for small unit patrols of platoon-sized elements is the Scroll-to-Road method, outlined clearly in **SH 21-75 Ranger Handbook**. For smaller patrols of 4-8 personnel however, this method is prohibitively time consuming, and actually increases the chances of compromise in the danger area. There are two simpler methods for small-unit patrols that are more secure, and much easier to learn and practice for small patrols of 4-8.

The first of these is to simply continue patrolling past and across the danger area, keeping your patrol members adequately dispersed to ensure that only one or two members of the patrol are actually exposed in the danger area itself at any given time. If using this method, when the individual patrol member enters the danger area, he should quickly move across the danger area and back into concealment on the other side.

The second method is to simply use a modified bounding overwatch technique.

Situation
Your small patrol has reached a linear danger area that must be crossed in order to continue the execution of your mission. This may be a planned or unplanned crossing of a linear danger area.

What happens
The lead man in the patrol recognizes the danger area ahead and uses hand-and-arm signals to halt the patrol. He then uses the signal for "linear danger area" to indicate to the rest of the patrol the reason for the halt. This can be either simply tapping your shoulder—where your unit insignia would be in the Army—in the signal for "scroll to road," or by placing your free hand, palm down, and dragging it across your throat, back and forth. A third method I've seen used for signaling danger area—and that I use myself—is to do the same motion, but diagonally across the front of the body.

The patrol leader moves up to the lead position and identifies the danger area himself. He identifies where he wants to crossing to occur, and determines a near and far-side rally point. All other members of the patrol take a knee or move into the prone position, and provide 360-degree security.

The patrol leader sends one sub-element of the patrol across the danger area, while the remaining element performs overwatch to protect the maneuvering element. The maneuvering element crosses the linear danger area and conducts a brief security sweep of the area including the location of a suitable covered position for the conduct a security halt. Once in position, the maneuver element takes up an overwatch to provide protection for the remaining element to cross the danger area.

The remaining element crosses the danger area and moves to the identified security halt position. The first element rejoins them—as necessary—and the patrol performs a 10-30 minute security halt. At the conclusion of the security halt, the patrol leader indicates a direction of movement to the lead man of the patrol and directs the patrol to resume movement.

Occupy a Patrol Base (in force) and Priorities of Work
A patrol base is a temporary position occupied by the patrol element for conducting extended halts. Doctrinally, a patrol base should never be occupied for longer than 24 hours except under extreme circumstances, and seldom for more than 10-12 hours. The exception to this would include the occupation of a hide-site/mission support site (MSS) for the conduct of a longer-term surveillance mission.

A patrol base is used to:

- stop all movement in order to avoid enemy detection
- hide during a long, detailed surveillance of an objective area
- eat, rest, and perform preventive maintenance of weapons and equipment
- conduct final planning and troop-leading procedures
- consolidate and reorganize after the infiltration of an enemy-controlled area
- provide a temporary base of operations from which to conduct several consecutive operations, such as reconnaissance, followed by a raid, followed by an ambush of pursuit forces.
- Provide a temporary base of operations from which a patrol can conduct security patrolling activities in remote locations, or over an extended period of time.

Patrol base selection and occupation methods for platoon-sized elements is covered in detail in the **Ranger Handbook**, allowing us to focus on the selection and occupation of patrol bases for smaller elements of 4-12 men within this manual. Patrol base selection for small patrols is relatively simple: pick out the nastiest, foulest, most unappealing, uninviting, apparently inhospitable piece of terrain you can find, and set up housekeeping.

While tentative hide sites for patrol bases should be identified during patrol planning, the suitability of a specific site must be confirmed upon arrival. Due to security considerations and the small manpower pool available, for the extremely small unit patrol, necessity will often require the occupation in force method of occupying and establishing a patrol base.

Security considerations include selecting a location that offers:

- Terrain that the enemy would consider of little or no tactical value.
- Terrain that is off primary, secondary, and tertiary lines of drift.
- Difficult terrain that severely impedes foot movement, such as areas of dense vegetation with bushes and trees that spread close to the ground, with thick overhead foliage. This will provide maximum concealment from both visual and thermal spectrum observation.
- Terrain that is near a source of water, but not so close that the patrol is at grave risk of compromise by local civilian populace using the same water source.
- Terrain that can be successfully defended in the short term if necessary, and that provides good cover and concealment.

At the same time, the patrol leader should make an effort to avoid hide sites that are:

- known, suspected, or likely enemy positions.
- Near built-up areas and human habitations.
- Ridges and hilltops, except as necessary for the maintenance of communications and the necessary observation for the conduct of specific surveillance and/or reconnaissance tasks.
- Near roads and trails.
- Located in small valleys and narrow canyons that may act as traps.

Situation
Your group is conducting an evasion "bug-out" to a planned "bug-out location" and needs to occupy a patrol base for rest. You have identified a potential hide site ahead, during your map reconnaissance of the route, and have instructed your point man to identify the specific location that will provide the best hide site patrol base.

What happens
As the patrol approaches the tentative patrol base location, the point man signals a halt and signals the patrol leader to come forward. The patrol leader moves forward and conducts a leader's reconnaissance of the tentative patrol base location. This may be as simple as he and one Ranger buddy moving to the location. If he approves of the location, he directs the point man to conduct an occupation-in-force.

While the patrol leader moves forward and conducts his leader' reconnaissance, the rest of the patrol takes a knee, or moves into the prone position, in order to provide 360-degree security.

The patrol picks up and begins moving again. The point man moves a minimum of 100-150 meters

(METT-TC dependent. It may be much further) past the patrol base location, and then conducts two 90-degree turns at least 50 meters apart, before moving into the patrol base. This will interfere with tracking attempts, by forcing the tracker to move past the patrol base, while under observation.

Finally, the patrol moves into the patrol base, while closing up intervals into a Ranger file. As each man moves into the patrol base location, the patrol leader directs the men to specific locations around the perimeter and points out their personal sector-of-fire, in order to provide 360-degree security.

If available, a command-detonated antipersonnel munition, such as an IED, or an early warning device, may be installed along the axis of entry into the patrol base, at least 50 meters away from the nearest patrol member's position.

Patrol Base Activities and Priorities of Work
Once the patrol base is occupied, they should remain at 100% security for minimum of 30 minutes, as established by unit SOP and METT-TC, in order to provide a degree of protection against pursuit and follow-on attack by tracking and pursuit forces. Following this security halt, the patrol may may move to 50% security during the completion of the priority of work activities.

Priorities of work in the patrol base may include:

- Security. Security is ALWAYS your FIRST priority of work, especially for the very small unit. 360-degree awareness must be maintained at all times. The patrol leader will assign sectors of fire all personnel. Individuals may develop sector sketches, or simply study their assigned sector for range estimation purposes and identification of likely positions of cover, as well as dead space that could facilitate concealed enemy movement. If the patrol base will be occupied for a longer duration—such as throughout an entire period of daylight hours—individuals may be directed to create small "shell scrape" fighting positions—or they may do so of their own accord. In extremely small units of 4-8 men however, good site selection, secure occupation of the patrol base, and maintenance of security may be adequate to avoid surprise contact.

- Weapons maintenance. Once the initial security listening halt has been completed, the patrol leader may direct fighters to begin equipment and weapons maintenance. At an absolute minimum, weapons should be wiped down and oiled. Weapons maintenance may also include changing out batteries in IR lasers and optics if applicable and necessary. Weapons maintenance should be conducted in buddy teams, with one man providing security while his partner conducts weapon and equipment maintenance.

- Personal Hygiene. Remove sweaty, wet socks, and powder your feet it necessary. Put on clean, dry socks. If necessary and tactically sound, replace wet or sweat-soaked clothing with dry clothing if the patrol base will serve as a rest location and you expect to sleep. When removing boots, only one boot at a time should be removed, except when changing trousers.

- Mess plan. At a bare minimum, security must be established and weapons maintenance completed before the mess plan is initiated. Eating may be conducted consecutive to, or before

the hygiene plan, depending on needs. One partner eats while his Ranger buddy provides security. Ration planning must include at least some food that can be easily accessed and does not require cooking with a fire or stove. These items can only be used if in the patrol base during daylight hours, and the noise and olfactory target indicators created do not pose an imminent threat of compromise for the patrol. Noise and litter discipline MUST be considered when selecting field rations, due to the noise concerns of plastic wrapping materials.

- Rest plan. All patrol personnel must get the maximum amount of sleep possible, providing that the necessity to maintain security is met at all times. While resting, personnel should remain fully clothes, with boots and shoes on. LBE may be removed or may need to be worn, depending on the tactical situation. If it is removed, it must be within arm's reach and at all times. Weapons must be kept under the immediate physical control and attached to the body during patrol base activities, including while sleeping. In order to provide a maximum opportunity for all personnel to get as much sleep as possible, the Ranger Handbook and conventional doctrine recommends a reduction to no less than 30% security. For the small patrol of 4-8 men however, that may be reduced to as low as 25% in some tactical situations.`

- Planning and Preparation. Patrol leaders and team leaders may conduct follow-on or final planning, conduct sand-table rehearsals, and even issue five-paragraph patrol orders in the patrol base, depending on mission demands.

Other patrol base considerations for small unit patrolling may include the use of patrol bases at Objective Rally Points (ORP) for a temporary base of operations during the leader's reconnaissance and final planning phases of operations. This may mandate a modification to the priorities of work.

The necessity for stealth and security during movements, in order to gain or keep the element of surprise over hostile elements may require the ability to move during hours of darkness or otherwise reduced visibility. When conducting night patrols, establish your patrol base at least one hour before daylight, and conduct stand-to (100% 360-degree security) for at least 30 minutes before and after sunrise. In the evening, conduct stand-to from 30 minutes before sunset until 30 minutes after sunset, moving out of the patrol base no more than one hour after sunset, in order to allow for maximum available travel time under conditions of darkness.

Alternatively, you may move out of the patrol base before sunset and simply conduct a security halt during the evening stand-to time, in order to allow eyesight to adapt to the changes in available light, as well as to prepare NOD and other night-vision devices and equipment for use.

Actions of the Objective and Special Teams Activities

Many of the actions you will perform during the conduct of local security patrols may require you to fight and win against hostile forces. This may range from a chance contact with hostile force to the conduct of an ambush to destroy or deter hostile movements into your area of operations. Once you have made the decision to close with and destroy the enemy, you will need to clear his positions.

This action, and the follow-on consolidation and reorganization of your patrol following the fight, are

referred to as "actions on the objective." Developing an SOP for these activities will allow you to conduct your actions on the objective, exploit any assets discovered on the objective, and egress the immediate area as quickly as possible.

Actions on the objective
Actions on the objective include consolidation and reorganization.

Once the maneuver element has seized the enemy position, they will continue to move all the way across the position to the far side, before taking up temporary fighting positions. This is referred to as the limit-of-advance (LOA). Once the maneuver element reaches the LOA and takes up temporary fighting positions, the team leader will assign sectors of fire for his personnel, while the patrol leader signals the SBF element to move forward.

Once the SBF element reaches the occupied enemy positions, the patrol leader will designate to the team leader what sectors his team needs to cover, or the patrol leader will individually place the men into positions and identify their sectors of fire. These positions should correlate to those of the maneuver element in order to provide 360-degrees of security. Once 360-degree security has been achieved, the patrol has consolidated on the objective, and may begin reorganization.

Reorganization is accomplished by deploying special teams and completing the following tasks:

- If necessary, the chain-of-command of the patrol may be reestablished to account for wounded or killed key leaders.
- Critical equipment such as radios or NOD carried by wounded or killed patrol members may be redistributed.
- Aid and litter teams will treat the wounded and begin evacuation of the wounded to the ORP if applicable. If there is no ORP, then the aid and litter team will package the casualties for transport on litters, or by buddy-carry methods.
- EPW (Enemy Prisoner of War) search teams will secure and search all dead personnel on the objective, as well as searching, silencing, segregating, and safeguarding all detainees, in according with the plan and unit SOP.
- The team leaders will conduct a LACE (Liquids, Ammunition, Casualties, and Equipment) status report and provide them to the patrol leader in order to facilitate redistribution of load and mission-essential equipment throughout the patrol.
- As soon as possible, the patrol moves out, back through the ORP, or in a new direction, and continues the security patrol or returns to the guerrilla base camp/retreat location for rest and refit, in accordance with the plan and/or unit SOP.

Special Teams Training

The need to search dead bodies which may be disfigured or burned is a disturbing and distasteful task for most people. Nevertheless, it is essential that your patrol have trained EPW and casualty search teams, in order to fully benefit from winning fights, by collecting any information of potential intelligence value.

At the same time, the need to conduct a search of captured enemy personnel—as well as safe, secure, responsible handling of those detainees that is often given mere lip service, or is overlooked completely in survivalist circles with the ridiculous assertion of, "I won't have the facilities to deal with prisoners, so we'll just kill them all."

Whether you have the facilities to deal with them or not, once you have taken a detainee into custody, you are responsible for them for the time being. You'd better have a plan for dealing with them beyond the hyperbolic and stupid, "Kill 'em all; God will know his own!"

Searching corpses—Situation
Your patrol has just destroyed or displaced an enemy force and is performing reorganization on the objective. You are assigned as part of an EPW search team. You need to secure and search the deceased.

What Happens
Working with your Ranger buddy, use the fundamental concept of fire-and-maneuver to insure your safety. Place your partner to one side of the body, in the prone position, and preferably behind some form of cover. He should be looking at the body, with his weapon aimed at the victim.

Sling your own weapon behind you back. Approach the head of the deceased at a 90-degree angle from your Ranger buddy, being sure not to mask his ability to fire if necessary.

Immediately remove all weapons from within reach of the body, and then use the "eye thump" method to determine that the victim is truly dead and not "playing opossum." This involves forcefully thumping the victim's eye/eyes with your finger tips. Once you've determined that the enemy is truly deceased, lie down in the prone, on top of the body. Place your knee that is nearest your partner's position between the legs of the dead body, and your other knee outside of the dead man's legs, opposite your partner's position. Grasp the shoulders of the dead body's shirt or jacket, or the shoulder straps of any LBE. Alternatively, you can simply hook your hands and forearms under his armpits, as if hugging the body to your chest.

Make eye contact with your partner and ask "are you ready?" assuring that he will be able to see under the dead body when you move it. If he confirms that he is ready, hold the dead body's torso tight to your own and roll AWAY from your partner, bringing the upper torso of the body with you, so your partner can ensure that there are no ugly surprises hidden beneath.

If your partner notices an IED or other "booby trap," he can alert you, allowing you to roll the body back atop the device to absorb any blast. If the body is clear, you can roll the body back over and proceed to search it.

Begin with the head, and work your way toward the feet. Check for anything of military value. Remove

all LBE, any weapons or ammunition, and any written or printed materials that might provide insight into the intended actions of his still-living compatriots.

In position, atop a "dead" body, preparing for search.

Rolling the "corpse" away so my Ranger buddy can look for nasties.

My partner saw something, so I've rolled the "corpse" back over and am atop it, to allow the body to absorb any blast.

Searching the "corpse."

Searching detainees—Situation
Your patrol has just destroyed or displaced an enemy force and is performing consolidation and reorganization on the objective. You have been assigned duties as part of an EPW search team. You need to search some surviving detainees.

What happens
Working with a partner, place your partner in position to cover the detainee with his weapon. Command the detainee to face you, raising his hands over this head with his palms facing you. Visually check the detainee's hands for weapons. Direct the detainee to place his hands on top of his head, and then to kneel and cross his ankles (note, this paragraph only applies—obviously—if the detainee is standing or kneeling.)

Instruct the detainee to move into the prone positions and to place his hands straight out to his sides, palms facing up, forehead touching the ground, and keeping his ankles crossed. If the detainee is already on the ground—even if wounded—start here by having him roll face-down and follow these instructions. Notice that positioning the detainee in this manner—using verbal commands—is predicated on his level of compliance with your commands. If he is non-compliant, you may need to utilize escalating levels of physical force to ensure compliance. A severely injured detainee may need to be physically assisted in assuming this position, but outside of immediately life-threatening wounds and injuries, detainees should be secured and searched prior to receiving medical attention.

Apply flex-cuffs to the detainee. Approach the detainee from the side, opposite your partner's position. Kneel down, placing your inside knee on the detainee's hips or lower back.

Note that my knee--and my weight--is centered on the detainee's hips. He cannot move with alerting me.

Place the palm of your outside hand on the back of the detainee's head and—if possible—grasp a handful of hair, Spread your weight between your hand the knee placed on his hips. You now have positive physical control of both of the detainee's points of leverage. It is impossible for him to move without giving you ample warning of his intent.

I'm leaning on his head and his hips. Notice his arm elevated in a "pain response" at this point? This is NOT a comfortable position to be in.

Use your free hand to grasp the detainee's nearest hand by the thumb and move his hand around and up, behind his back, palm up, as close to his neck as possible without causing injury. This is the classic "hammer lock" hold. Hold the arm in this position as you remove your opposite hand from the back of his head and apply a flex-cuff to the detainee's secured wrist.

I've got the detainee's arm in the "hammer lock" hold and am using my other hand to secure the flex-cuff.

Holding the "hammer lock" in position, use your free hand to move the detainee's other hand into position to apply another flex-cuff and secure the two flex-cuffs together.

Search the detainee in the same thorough, but rapid manner used to search dead bodies. Once the search is complete, you may need to gag the detainee by placing a strip of 100MPH tape over his mouth, and segregate by blindfolding him or placing a sandbag over his entire head. To move the detainees at this point, you will need to assist them to a standing position.

Assisting the secured detainee to his feet. For some reason, students in classes are uncomfortable with me putting gags and sandbags on them....

Continue processing detainees in accordance with patrol plan and unit SOP.

Suggested Further Reading
SH 21-75 The Ranger Handbook by US Army
Combat Tracking Guide by John Hurth

Chapter Eight
NOCTURNAL NATURE WALKS

"Stay alert! Stay alive!" --military maxim

In a world where something like 75% of the human population of Earth resides in urban or suburban areas, why should we bother learning traditional light infantry rural patrolling skills, in preference to high-speed, low-drag SWAT or military special operations urban warfare TTP? For many survivalists, the answer it simple...WE live in sparsely populated areas with higher wildlife populations than humans. Disappearing into the wilderness is not only possible in some places, it actually happens occasionally.

For the rest of the survivalist community though, what is the point? There are numerous reasons why patrolling is extremely relevant to you, in the event of a grid-down/WROL situation, even if you currently reside in the midst of a post-modern urban metropolis.

- Proficiency in light infantry patrolling operations requires the same skills as many of the individual and collective tasks skills that are necessary for military or paramilitary combat operations in any environment. These range from land navigation and tactical movement to combat weapons handling, battle drills, and operational/patrol planning.

- The fundamental principles and concepts that allow a small force to conduct effective combat operations in the woods are the same principles and concepts needed to conduct effective combat operations anywhere. As a friend says, "If you can do this shit in the woods, you can do this shit anywhere. If you can't do this shit in the woods, you can't do this shit anywhere."

- Patrolling is a means of projecting force outwards. Projecting force outwards is the defining factor of security in WROL scenarios. The ability to locate, interdict, and/or destroy individuals and groups with hostile intent, BEFORE they are standing on your front porch, is the surest way to protect your family, home, and community. It's one of the doctrinal principles we discussed in

the very beginning of this manual.

Whether you foresee a future need to resist a tyrannical regime or simply want to be able to defend a survival retreat location after a socio-economic collapse of the social and civic order, patrolling is THE basic security collective task for ensuring your survival and success. If you are a member of a survival group, then you have an obligation to ensure that all of your people who are physically capable, are trained in patrolling skills. You also have an obligation to ensure that all of your people who are not physically capable, but can become physically capable, do so through the development and enforcement of physical conditioning standards.

In addition to the fundamental grasp of real-world skills for small-unit combat that are realized through realistic, effective patrolling training, organizational cohesion and personal loyalty between group members will be developed and enhanced through the shared experience of arduous physical and mental challenges faced during tactical patrolling training.

Whether you grid-down plans involve remaining in place—"bugging in"—or they involve a plan to "bug out" to some distant retreat location, you WILL at some point, be required to move, on foot—or in a vehicle—through unsecured areas that will potentially be occupied by hostile groups and individuals. The skills necessary for combat patrolling will keep you alive in those scenarios. They will allow you to see the enemy before he sees you, which will facilitate your ability to avoid contact. In the event that contact becomes unavoidable, you will be able to react to that contact in a practiced, professional manner that offers the greatest chance of success and survival.

Fundamentals of Patrolling

A patrol is doctrinally defined as a detachment that is sent out from a larger element in order to perform an assigned mission of reconnaissance, combat, or both. For our purposes, effective security patrolling allows us to project force out, away from our retreat location or community, so that we're not stuck trying to fight bad guys in our front yards. This is predicated on the doctrinal truth, "If they're in your front yard, it's too late."

Types of patrols

There are three basic types of patrols:

- Reconnaissance patrols are information-gathering patrols. They may be area or point reconnaissance patrols. They are specifically organized and equipped to collect information. They are not typically equipped to fight sustained fights, although they should be able to fight enough to conduct an effective break contact drill.

- Combat patrols are organized, equipped, and tasked with the specific intent of harassing, killing, capturing, or destroying enemy personnel, equipment, and installations. The intent is to destroy the enemy's will and ability to fight. Combat patrols will also gather information, but their primary purpose is to wreak havoc and despair on the enemy.

  Combat patrols are broken down into raiding patrols, ambush patrols, and movements-to-

contact, which were what used to be called "search-and-attack" patrols. Each type of combat patrol is specifically focused on the tasks that its name entails.

- Security patrols are the most important type of patrol for most survivalists, although both the other two types may be important at different times. Security patrols use the traits of a reconnaissance patrol to move out and search an area to determine if there are hostile forces in the area. If there are hostile forces in the area, the security patrol transitions to a combat patrol to attack those forces through attacks or ambushes to deter further aggression or to destroy the enemy force.

Principles of Patrolling

There are five generally accepted principles that are inherent to successful planning and execution of all types of patrols. It is imperative that you keep these principles in the forefront of planning and execution. Failure to address the principles of patrolling will result in failure.

The principles of patrolling are remembered through the offensive mnemonic memory aid, "Puerto Ricans Suck Cock Constantly." This stands for Planning, Reconnaissance, Control, and Common sense.

- Planning. Failing to plan is planning to fail, as they say. Patrol planning needs to encompass the intended mission, the terrain that will be traversed, the men available to perform the patrol and the equipment available to them, the enemy situation and possible courses-of-action he will take, and at least three possible courses-of-action that the patrol can select from.

- Reconnaissance. In order to effectively plan or execute a patrol, you have to know what the terrain in the area looks like, as well as what the enemy situation is. Conducting initial reconnaissance may be no more complicated than a thorough map study, and talking to local residents and refugees with knowledge of the situation on the ground there.

- Security. 360-degree security—before and during the patrol—both physically and operationally, is paramount to the survival of the small-unit patrol.

- Control. As we've previously discussed, leader control is what facilitates effective teamwork, and teamwork is the root of successful small-unit tactics. Failing to address specific control issues in your patrol planning will result in failure as teamwork falls apart.

- Common Sense....isn't common...

Rally Points

A rally point (RP) is a location where a patrol can reassemble and reorganize if dispersed, or a place where it may temporarily halt in order to reorganize and prepare prior to actions on an objective—an objective rally point (ORP). Rally points must be readily recognizable even under limited visibility conditions and stress or fear, provide cover and concealment, be defensible for limited periods of time, and be far away from natural lines-of-drift.

During the planning process, the patrol leader takes the time during his map reconnaissance, to identify likely rally points. The ORP definitely needs to be specified in the patrol order operations order (OPORD). En route rally points, while not normally specified in the patrol order, may be if the mission is complex or distances to the objective are long. If so, then their general location will be designated by terrain features or other terrain reference points. A rally point is a location that is physically passed through by the patrol. You do NOT say, "See that cliff over there? The one over there, about 200 meters away? That's our en route rally point!"

Important considerations for rally points include:

- For security patrols within a well-known operational area, rally points can be identified in the patrol order, due to the inherent familiarity with the terrain and the surrounding area to to members of the patrol.

- If the patrol is dispersed for any reason, individuals and the patrol as an entity, should make every effort to reconnect at the last en route rally point. If enemy activity precludes the use of the last en route rally point, then personnel should know to move to the NEXT last en route rally point immediately preceding the untenable location.

- A time limit for consolidation and reorganization at a rally point should be established by SOP or in the patrol order. If an individual is unable to reach the rally point within the time limit, he would immediately enact his personal Evasion Plan of Action (EPA).

- In small-unit patrols, the patrol leader can use hand-and-arm signals to designate en route rally points.

Patrol Movement Formations and Techniques

In order for the partisan force—possibly inferior in technology AND numbers to the enemy—to survive on the battlefield, stealth, dispersion of forces, security, and simplicity must become the hallmarks of their procedures. You must be able to use individual tactical movements—as a group.

Patrol movement formations are the collective arrangements of elements and individuals within the patrol, relative to each other. Formations should be selected to maximize control and security, based on your METT-TC analysis. Leaders lead from the front, by example. "Follow me, and do as I do!" As such, in any patrol formation, all individuals should be able to see their immediate element leader.

For irregular force patrols, the ideal size of a team may well be the Rhodesian example of the four-man "stick." This allows for two buddy teams. Each man can protect his Ranger buddy, and each buddy team can protect its brother buddy team. More experienced fighters can be partnered with less experienced partners. Additionally, by stacking four-man teams into larger elements, the guerrilla force can increase effectiveness without violating fire team or buddy team integrity, or requiring units to retrain in small-unit tactics.

Patrol formations were never intended to be hard and fast arrangements. They should be fluid and

flexible. Individual members of the team or patrol take their positions in the formation relative to the other members of the patrol and the terrain, depending on their ability to maintain visual communications and still make full use of cover and concealment. Individual members of the teams—and individual teams within the patrol—move closer in thick cover, inclement weather, and in darkness. In open terrain, in daylight, and in good weather, they spread out, further apart.

A patrol may find it necessary to use a number of different formations within a single patrol operation. The ultimate goal of any patrol formation however, is the ability to provide maximum massed fires in any direction, while reducing the number of men who will be suppressed by hostile fire from any source, to the absolute minimum possible.

In the four-man patrol there are three basic patrol formations:

- The wedge is the currently accepted doctrinal patrol formation for the fire team. It allows the most dispersion of fire across the front, while still allowing for effective, all-around, 360-degree security and leader control. The wedge however, is truthfully at its most efficient when there is more than one team working together, in a squad column formation, with multiple follow-on forces/teams behind.

- The Ranger file today is generally only used when visibility limits the ability to control an element in any other formation, or when speed is the absolute most important consideration. The Ranger file limits the immediate dispersion of fires to the front or rear, but it maximizes the ability to fire to either side...and it maximizes and simplifies control.

  For the partisan security patrol, this maximized control means that often, the Ranger file will be the most appropriate movement formation even in relatively open terrain environment, because it allows for maximum leader control of units with personnel who may posses varying levels of training—or lack of training—and self-discipline under fire.

- The diamond formation is an old technique that seldom sees use—or even mention—today, except among older members of the Special Forces community performing the UW mission. This is unfortunate for the survivalist community, likely to be forced to work in four-man and multiples of four-man teams, due to inherent manpower limitations, because it is arguably, the single best patrolling formation for UW with partially trained, and a mix of trained and untrained personnel operating in the UW context, but it is generally an unfamiliar formation and concept to the typical 11B infantry NCO veteran who ends up training these groups.

  Like the wedge formation, the diamond provides maximum leader control of the element. While it does reduce the speed with which the full force of the team can be deployed frontally, it provides increased security rearward, and allows equal rapidity of dispersion of force in ALL directions, with a minimum of ¾ of the team being able to fire in any direction instantly.

Beyond the single, four-man team working alone, guerrilla units must develop movement formations for situations and opportunities that require larger elements to work together. The most commonly used

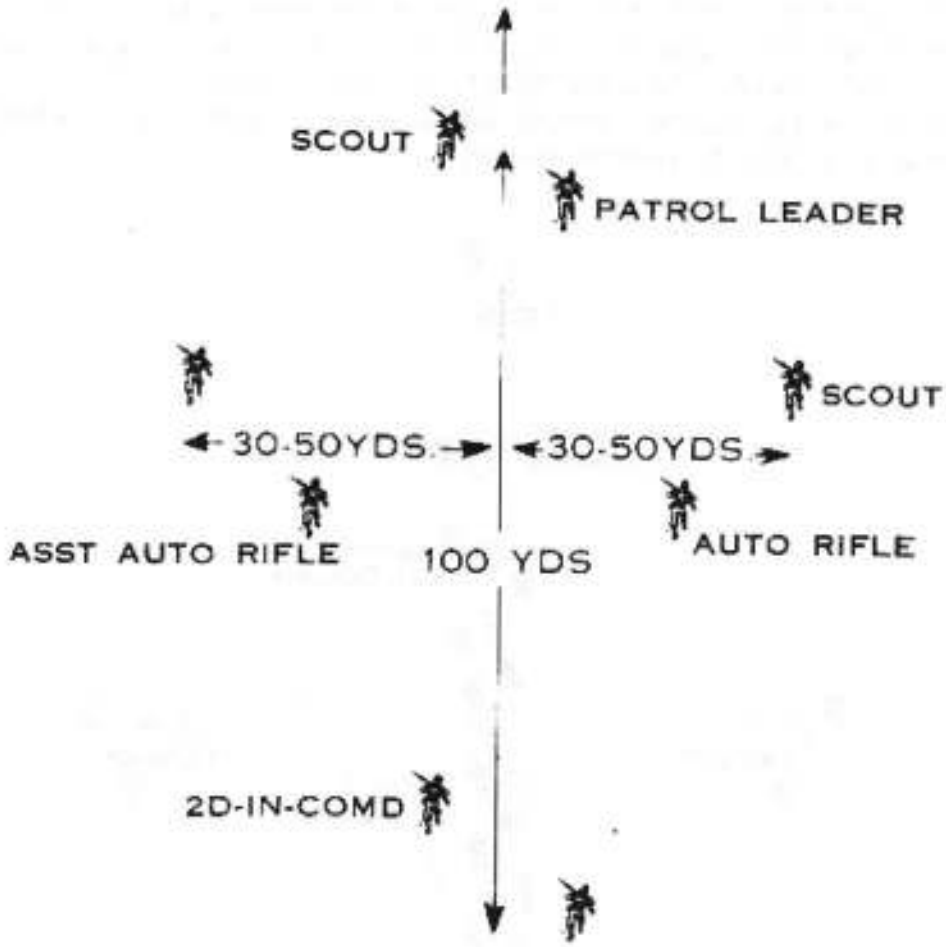
formation today in the conventional military is the squad column. While the individual teams continue to use the wedge formation, the squad column simply places those teams in line behind the lead team. This provides the benefits of a Ranger file for movement speed and control of the larger element, with the security benefit of the wedge formation for the individual teams. In squad column formations, it is recommended that all subordinate units use the wedge formation, except the trailing team, which utilizes a diamond formation.

The squad column however, is NOT the *sine qua non* of small-unit patrolling. The diamond formation, even for units larger than the four-man team, offers significant advantages for control and maneuverability. While the squad column offers many advantages to the unit trained only in that formation, patrol formations should not be hard and fast, and the diamond formation actually offers numerous benefits to the small-unit formation of eight to twelve men as well as the four-man team...and offers increased security for safeguarding non-combatant personnel like family members and poorly trained auxiliary fighters needed in certain emergencies.

The Eight Man Diamond
With two teams of four, the obvious solution is to use team wedges and the squad column, but the diamond offers greater benefits to the partisan unit that is not made up of professional soldiers. In the old, "obsolete" US Army **FM 21-75 Scouting, Patrolling, and Sniping, 1944**, the following advice is offered in regards to the diamond formation for the eight-man team:

"The eight men are generally arranged in pairs at the four corners of the diamond. In operation, one man of the leading team observes for ground targets, while the other man (the patrol leader) looks for tree snipers. The flank men operate similarly, with the outside man in advance of the inside man, so that the protecting fires of the inner man will be directed away from the patrol when his partner encounters resistance from the tree snipers. The rear pair divides responsibility by having one man observe to the rear and one flank, while the other watches the patrol leader and the other flank. To facilitate control, all inside men must maintain visual contact with the leader. The direction of movement is easily changed in a diamond formation upon signal toward either flank or to the rear, and the same formation and individual functions continue."

For the non-professional fighters of partisan patrolling element, this is almost the ideal method of conducting an eight-man patrol formation. While we probably don't need to be overly concerned with tree snipers, each individual buddy team can act almost semi-autonomously, and far enough apart that only one buddy team would be brought under fire by an enemy attack from any direction. This allows three buddy teams—one full fire team, plus—to engage any hostile forces with maneuver while the suppressed team tries to gain fire superiority.
Even in a worse case scenario, with two buddy teams suppressed by enemy fire, you have the ability for two buddy teams—a full fire team—to maneuver against the enemy.



Eight-man diamond formation. Ignore the specific duty position labels, and focus on the movement formation. Illustration courtesy US Army FM 21-75, 1944 edition

Buddy teams may be as far as 30-50 meters apart, with the front and rear teams of the formation 100 or more meters apart, depending on METT-TC factors—terrain specifically. This offers the benefits of dispersion, but still allows for maximum massing of fires.

Nine-man diamonds function exactly the same way as the eight-man diamond except the patrol leader, instead of being part of one of the buddy teams, is free to move from one place to another, as the patrol changes directions, or when he needs to check on the status of any single buddy team. It's a much more flexible and maneuverable formation than squad columns, because it DOES offer such autonomy to the individual buddy teams and fire teams to select positions at halts that best serve their individual needs.

Twelve-man patrols and larger are better served by blending the advantages of the diamond formation with the Ranger file's benefits. By pushing two-man teams forward, backward, and to either flank, the rest of the patrol can move in Ranger file, or twin Ranger files—columns. If the buddy teams that are providing security on the outsides are your most well-trained personnel, this offers maximum security for the overall unit, but allows the remaining trained personnel in the center to help maintain

accountability of any untrained or lesser-trained individuals and elements in the center positions. This will help to prevent the loss of accountability to these individuals, but also offers the ability to the trained "handlers" in the center to physically move the untrained or less-trained personnel exactly where they want them, and provide them specific instructions, even in the midst of a fight, because they have the outside security elements providing security.

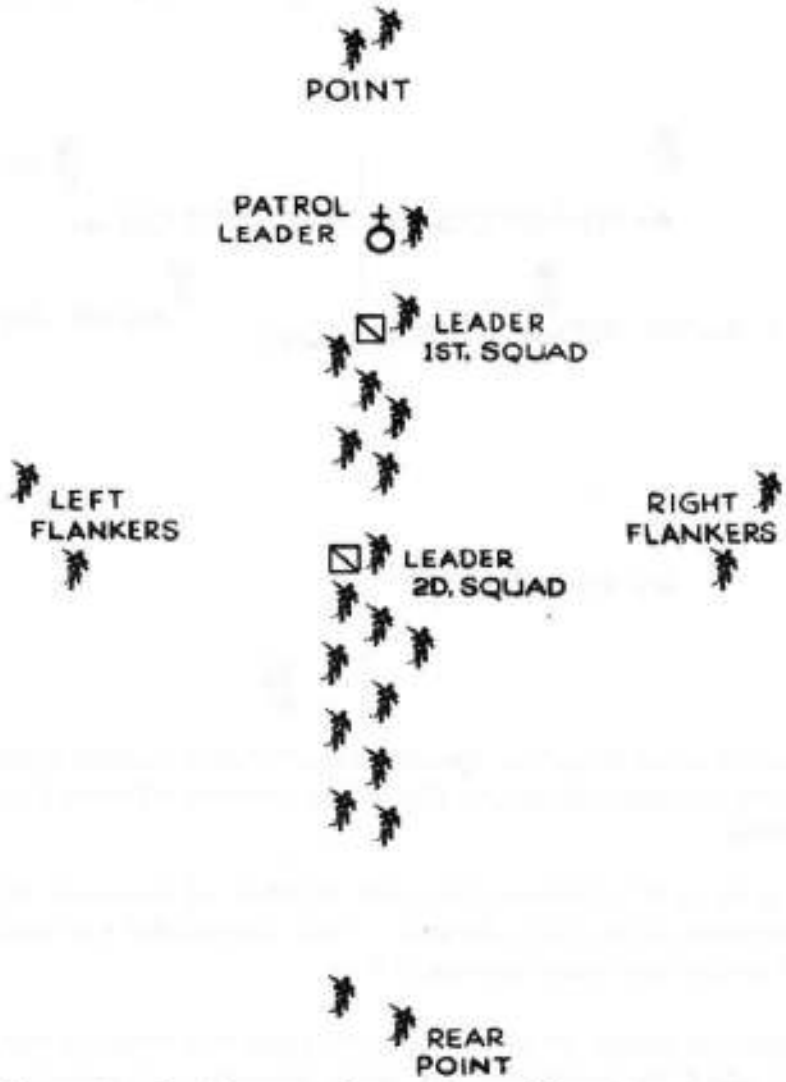


Illustration of a 12-man or larger diamond formation. Notice the control possible with all the untrained and less-trained personnel in the center? Courtesy US Army FM 21-75, 1944 edition

For families or survivalist groups with families who find they need to move on foot for a bug-out scenario, the diamond formation offers this significant advantage for security with lesser trained individuals like wives and children that no other movement formation offers. With the security elements out, those teams create a buffer while the noncombatant members of the group are moved

away from the fighting to a safer location.

The advantages of the diamond formation for security come about largely as a result of the differences in the way movement techniques can be utilized. Doctrinally today, there are three basic movement techniques that a small-unit patrol uses: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. Which method should be used is predicated on the expected chances of enemy contact.

Traveling is used only when the chances of enemy contact are considered unlikely. For our purposes however, it should be considered by patrol elements that they must always assume that they are operating in hostile-occupied areas. This means the chances of enemy contact are always possible, or even likely. This precludes the use of the traveling formation.

Traveling overwatch is used when enemy contact is possible. It should be the de facto movement technique of choice for survivalist partisan patrols. In traveling overwatch, the doctrinal distance between individuals should be approximately 20 meters, with the distance between individual elements being approximately 50 meters. This is modified, in accordance with METT-TC considerations, to facilitate control by the patrol leader, as well as the ability to bring immediate fires to bear on a threat from any direction, by the maximum number of rifles in the patrol.

When functioning as a larger element, using squad columns, the lead team remains far enough ahead of the rest of the element to detect or engage the enemy before the enemy observes or is able to engage the main body. It also needs to remain close enough to the main body however, to be supported by the fires of the main body, if necessary. Depending on visibility considerations, such as terrain, thickness of vegetation, weather, and daylight or dark, this may be as much as 100 meters.

In a squad column formation, only the lead team needs to be using the traveling overwatch, unless greater dispersion is specifically necessary due to the security situation. Pushing a two- or four-man security element out in the front of a diamond formation however, offers the same benefit, without needing the change the overall formation, while allowing GREATER flexibility and speed to maneuver left or right against an enemy.

The difference between doctrine or reality in this case is simple. Individual members of a patrol—regardless of formation used—should separate themselves as far apart as possible, as long as they can still maintain visual contact and the ability to protect their Ranger buddy with immediate small-arms fire.

The bounding overwatch technique is used when enemy contact is expected imminently. In the final legs of a movement to contact with a known enemy position, or when approaching a suspected or likely enemy position of concealment, the bounding overwatch should be the movement technique of choice.

The bounding overwatch as a patrol movement technique is similar to—but not the same—as the movement used during buddy team bounds under enemy direct-fire small-arms fire. While the number of individuals within the different elements will vary, depending on the size of the unit, there will be basically two elements in performing unit-level bounding overwatch: the maneuver element and the overwatch element.

When using bounding overwatch, one team will move forward while the other team overwatches. If the bounding team makes contact, the overwatch element is in position to provide a base-of-fire to protect the bounding element so that it can break contact. Alternatively, the bounding element can use that protection to move into a covered position and provide a base-of-fire to allow the former overwatch element to become the maneuver element in a Hasty Attack.

Teams can bound alternately or successively. Successive bounds offer greater control, but alternating bounds offer greater speed in closing with the enemy. In either case, each bound must remain well within the supporting fire range of the overwatch element's supporting fires. This means that the maneuver element should never move more than one-half the distance away from the overwatch element that the worst marksman on the overwatch element can fire his weapon effectively. Otherwise, the length of the bound is determined by terrain, visibility, and control.

Before beginning a bounding movement, the bounding element needs to communicate the direction and intended route of its bound, as well as the location of their next intended overwatch position. This will be predicated on the position of the overwatch element and the known or suspected enemy position. Within the bounding team, the team may move as a singe element, if there is adequate cover and concealment. If there is not adequate cover and concealment however, the individual fighters may need to move singly or in buddy teams, using short movements from one position of concealment to the next, walking, crawling, or using short rushes.

Night Movement Considerations

It is an oft-cited belief that guerrillas "own the night." While this phrase is often paid ample lip service, gun camera footage from aerial attacks by US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the fact of readily available night-vision and thermal imaging illustrates that—without adequate proper training and practice—it is nothing more than a platitude.

An effective partisan guerrilla unit SHOULD be able to function at night and in inclement weather though, just as effectively as in daylight, with or without the use of STANO technology, and despite the enemy application of STANO technology. The patrol must be able to maintain control, navigate effectively, maintain security, move efficiently and effectively, and stalk at night, despite the possible—or probable—enemy possession of superior STANO technology.

Control

During hours of reduced visibility, the following methods may be used to maintain control of the patrol:

- The use of NOD should be leveraged by leaders and more experienced fighters to maintain observation and control of less experienced and confident members of the patrol. Inexperienced fighters using NOD tend to place too much reliance on the technology and overlook their other senses. Night-vision is NOT magic! The loss of depth perception and reduced clarity of vision compared to daylight is not readily apparent to the novice user who is overly impressed with the –admittedly amazing—level of vision available from Gen III night-vision, as well as thermal imaging.

- Leaders and more experienced personnel must conduct regular security halts and head counts to ensure accountability to all personnel. If someone is separated from the patrol, he will end up compromising the rest of the patrol to the enemy, and the patrol leader is at fault. Losing one of your people due to laxity is an unpardonable fuck-up.

- Rely on head counts, training, and controllable movement formations to maintain accountability in low-light. Luminous tape "cat eyes" on head gear or LBE/rucksacks were great when night-vision was pretty much a Buck Roger fantasy, or when you are the only force on the battlefield that has night-vision capability. To a NOD-equipped enemy, having cat eyes on your gear means you might as well have a 10,000 lumen spotlight on your head. Yes, you can safety pin it and remove it, but unless you're a jackass, you're going to assume that there is ALWAYS someone around with NOD other than you and your friends—especially if you don't have NOD.

- Leaders lead from the front. By remaining close to the front of movement formations, leaders can ensure that the patrols remain on course and they possess the best ability to maintain visual contact with all members or elements of the patrol.

- Reduce your speed. While irregular partisan patrols should move slowly at all times, since movement is the most damning target indicator, you will need to reduce your speed even more at night. This will allow the slower-moving members of your patrol, who lack confidence in their ability to move well in the dark, to maintain contact with the man to their front and rear. It will also reduce the chances that the patrol will be compromised by outside elements using STANO technology noticing their movement target indicators. Intervals should also be closed up between individuals and elements, to ensure that visual communications are still possible for both personnel with NOD and for those without.

Navigation

Lots of people can use a map and compass reasonably well. Fewer can do so in the dark. Many people can learn the skills discussed in the section of this manual dedicated to land navigation with map and compass. Far fewer will actually be bothered to practice those skills in the dark. To facilitate night time land navigtion:

- Use terrain association whenever possible. The ability to recognize the general direction of movement, combined with recognition of prominent terrain features on the ground and on the map, will allow you to travel in the correct direction, even in the dark.

- Use movement routes that parallel readily identifiable terrain features, and use similarly recognizable terrain features as checkpoints and steering points to verify your position and route regularly.

- If terrain association is not a practicable method for your level of skill, or for your operational area, and you have to resort to dead reckoning, use short navigation legs, coupled with specific pace counts to reach readily identifiable way points. At the end of each leg of the movement,

whether you have easily recognizable waypoints, such as a bridge, specific buildings, or road intersections, or not, take the time to verify your location on the map and the ground.

- When all else fails, if you suck at land navigation, use local guides, or mark your route during daylight hours, prior to the conduct of night patrols. In the meantime however, don't be a fucktard...acknowledge your incompetence and practice more night time land navigation.

Security

In a world of amazing technological STANO advances, security is the hardest issue to deal with in night time patrolling. It CAN be done however.

- Designate a man comfortable with movement in the dark as your point man, so he can maintain alertness without being afraid of every bump in the night. The point man can be partnered with a Ranger buddy who is equally confident in the dark to act as a compass man, in order to keep the point element on route.

  One of these men—at least—should be equipped with night vision or thermal imaging, but they must remember to rely on their other natural senses to a greater deal, only using the STANO to observe ahead and select routes before moving, or to communicate visually with the rest of the patrol.

- Passive night vision technology, such as PVS-type optics like the PVS-7 and PVS-14, are the most commonly seen types of NOD. These magnify the available light. Although the do have available active IR illuminators, they function by magnifying the available light. Even under the best conditions, it is not possible to see as much at night with NOD as you can see during daylight with your naked eyes. If your methods of concealment work during daylight hours to conceal yourself, they will work equally well against night-vision equipped hostiles at night—as long as you use the same methods during the night as you use during the day.

- Whenever possible, night time patrols should make use of thick overhead and ground-level vegetation, heavy rain or snow, terrain masking, and other methods to mitigate the threat of enemy possession of thermal imaging capabilities.

  Thermal imaging—while being as close to it as exists in the real world—IS NOT MAGIC! It can be defeated, and it's not particularly difficult to do. The only way for thermal imaging to see INSIDE of a vehicle—for example—is if the windows are down, or if someone inside if actually TOUCHING the surface of the vehicle inside, long enough for their body heat to transfer through the body of the vehicle. Thick vegetation offers the same benefits, as can HEAVY rain or snow. All it has to do is be thick enough, between you and the thermal imaging device that it offers a fundamentally solid barrier between you and the device. Thermal imaging CANNOT SEE THROUGH ANYTHING SOLID.

  Keeping solid earth between yourself and known or suspected enemy positions will also mask

your thermal image. Thick dirt offers better thermal masking than any other possible choice. Digging in and providing thick earthen overhead cover will hide you from thermal imaging, even in the sky.

A simple poncho—or even a wool blanket—suspended above you, as long as there is air space between your body and the poncho or blanket, WILL mask your thermal image from thermal imaging devices in the sky or on the ground. Radiant barriers like casualty or "space blankets" only become necessary if you have a significantly higher temperature heat source that will raise the ambient air temperature under the surface of the shelter.

Heavy rain or snow offers the additional benefit, besides forming a de facto solid surface between you and the device, of cooling the external temperature of your clothing and body, reducing your thermal signature further.

While there is a great deal of fear in the world about thermal imaging, it is largely the result of superstition and active PSYOP to create that fear. Yes, thermal imaging is a potent weapon, but IT IS NOT MAGIC!!! If it WERE magic, 10th century goatherds would not have held the most technologically advanced military in the history of the world at bay for a decade and a half, simply by covering themselves up with some fucking wool blankets. It is certainly crucial to keep the threat in mind, but quit being a pussy about it already. Assume the enemy has the capability, and plan around it for the security of your patrol.

- Reduce or restrict your use of radios for inter- and intra-team communications while patrolling at night. Restrict verbal communications as well, The simple fact is, sound travels better at night, when there is less "static" in the air, and people pay more attention to their hearing than they do during the unlimited visibility of daylight.
- Do not allow smoking or the use of any visible or IR illumination, except in the most dire emergency situations.
- Make frequent listening halts, and any time you are not moving, be scanning for threats.

Stealth is Security

The ability of a patrol to move quietly, in order to get close enough to an enemy force to effectively attack them cannot be overemphasized. In a grid-down environment, even non-government forces will have access to and possession of military-grade armaments and equipment. It has been noted that the "average" military-trained rifleman can use his weapon—with varying degrees of effectiveness—out to a maximum of 200-300 meters. The average gangbanger or Elmer Fudd deer hunter—contrary to the beliefs of too many in the survivalist community—possesses even less skill at arms. This make it an apparently obvious conclusion that the survivalist wants to stay outside of that distance. In a close-range gunfight, after all, "quantity has a quality all its own," as the man said.

The ready availability to potential hostile forces of crew-served weapons with long-range capabilities—

the doctrinal maximum effective range for a M249 SAW and an M240 machine gun, on a point target, is 800 meters—and indirect-fire weapons organic to light-infantry companies—the M224 60mm mortar has a maximum effective range of over two miles—however, makes the "I've got a rifle that I can shoot out to 500 meters" as stupid as it sounds when you watch the guy miss four out of five 8-inch plates at 100 meters on the range. While the precision rifle/SDM certainly has a role to play in the irregular force equation, it is not the panacea that too many want to make it out to be.

Assaulting a larger group of hostiles, potentially armed with anything up—and including—Strykers, MRAP, .50BMG M2 machine guns, and MK 19 40mm automatic grenade launchers (maximum effective range for a point target is around 1500 meters), inside of that envelope means that there will be a LOT more incoming rounds than outgoing, regardless of how quickly you can fire your first magazine of accurate, aimed suppressive fire. Unfortunately, moving out t the limits of your ability at 400, 500, or even 600 meters puts you squarely in the range of larger, more casualty-producing weapons, any one of which will cause significantly more damage than your .30-caliber rifle. Even Level IV NIJ-rated body armor doesn't do shit to stop .50BMG.

The historically proven alternative is to simply get close—intimately close. You may remember—if you've been reading long enough—that I advocate for a return to the skill and stealth of the classic woodsman-scout model of light infantry skill. This paradigm applies whether your likely operational environment is rural alpine, dense swamp, or built-up urban metropolis. The ability to leverage that sort of primitive stealth and field craft with the modern technology available today, can allow the trained partisan fighter to get so far inside an enemy's security cordon and his mental OODA Cycle, that the bad guy will think you're conducting a proctological exam.

It is entirely possible for small, unconventional units to conduct successful security operations against numerically and technologically superior forces, wreak havoc and despair amongst them, and then slip away in the resulting confusion. It's been done before. The collective task has to move from the doctrinal to the unconventional.

The clandestine infiltration—light infantry patrolling in general, actually—requires a trained level of ability it extremely close-quarters combat skills. At the risk if sounding like some sort of would-be Rambo ninja, who believes martial arts are some sort of panacea to firearms, the ability to use close-quarters, silent-killing weapons (to use an OLD school turn of phrase), ranging from truncheons and knives to axes and maces, or even bayonets, is important. Suppressed firearms also provide an obvious benefit in these operations, but can never completely replace skill with the more primitive—and typically quieter—options. Do not overestimate the quiet—or the importance—of suppressed firearms.

In the event that a patrol is going to be compromised by a hostile security outpost or guard, the need to prevent this—without alerting the entire hostile force—requires swift, violent, but quiet, action. It may be necessary to prevent ANY gunfire from occurring, in order to avoid an early warning or alert to the main body of the hostile force. To accomplish that feat however, requires the mastery of difficult, exacting individual and collective skills tasks, from mastering the use of personal weapons, camouflage and concealment, tactical movement in daylight and dark, to....you guessed it...extreme, elite levels of physical conditioning. Of course, that involves much more self-discipline, training, and physical stamina than most survivalists and "militia" members can be bothered with, but it IS possible.

Suggested Further Reading

FM 7-8 The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad, 1992 by US Army
ARTEP 7-8-MTP Mission Training Plan for the Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad by US Army
The Ultimate Sniper by MAJ John Plaster

Chapter Nine
GET—OFF—MY—LAWN!!!

"The best defense is a good offense." --old proverb

Guerrilla operations—even for the reluctant partisan—should be inherently offensive in nature. Defensive operations, as such, should be the exception that proves the rule. This does not mean you should be a marauding bandit. Whether the goal of your operations is to protect the personnel and physical infrastructure a rural farming community, an urban neighborhood, or an isolated family survival retreat, the old proverb that the best defense is a good offense holds true.

Nevertheless, defensive protective operations may be critical both to support and facilitate further

offensive security patrolling, as well as when those security patrols fail to detect and deter hostile intruders into your operational area. Defensive operations are conducted to resist, defeat, or destroy an enemy assault only to facilitate follow-on offensive operations. Don't think that because you got lucky and kicked their ass off your property, that you don't have to immediately go back to aggressive patrolling operations to hunt down and run off the surviving attackers.

There are fundamentally three types of defensive strategy: strong point, perimeter, and area defenses. Defensive operations for the partisan survivalist should focus on the area defense, through aggressive security patrolling. That is the theme of this manual. The skills outlined in this manual and the training programs outlined in the appendices are focused on this.

The area defense goes further than this though. Defense of your home or your community starts at the central strong point, guarded by your perimeter, and further protected by the buffer zone of the area defense.

In normal unconventional warfare, the guerrilla base camp is initially established as a temporary, highly mobile encampment that has its ease of dispersement as its greatest defensive attribute. In the face of an impending enemy attack, the personnel in the base camp can simply scatter and later re-consolidate in another location to resume operations. In the case of an established community or a retreat homestead however, we are already at the stage of the more developed, semi-permanent guerrilla base camp that comes later. This provides us with a defensible strong point that forms the nexus of a coordinated, planned defensive operation.

Like the developing guerrilla base camp however, most of our homes and communities are not already established military or paramilitary compounds with fortified defenses. From the beginning of our recognition that the "shit has hit the fan," all of our defensive operational planning should be coordinated and developed using every asset available to the security force in a synchronized, layered, defense-in-depth. Planning considerations must include planning for a 360-degree perimeter, in a generally non-contiguous environment, including an understanding of of likely and possible avenues and enemy approach for both mounted and dismounted operations, the economization of force along the more unlikely avenues of enemy approach, the impact of potential air and indirect fire assets on the defensive plan, and the employment of community members with engineering, construction, and demolition backgrounds to increase survivability and protection by constructing reinforced fighting positions, and channelizing obstacles along possible and probable enemy avenues of approach.

During the development of your defense-in-depth plans, there are various relevant priority-of-work considerations that must be implemented. These include the careful selection and construction of listening and observation posts (LP/OP), for emplacement of whatever key weapons systems you have available, to cover likely and possible enemy avenues of approach from both mounted and dismounted forces. This may include the use of precision long-range small-arms for personnel interdiction, to long-range, heavy-caliber systems like the .50 BMG sniper rifles that can provide limited light vehicle interdiction. This will also include the development, construction, and emplacement of both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle IED munitions and "booby traps" for route denial.

Further priority-of-work considerations will include ensuring that all positions have clear fields of fire

to all areas of their respective sectors, including the use of loopholes, aiming stakes, sector stakes, and target reference point/range cards, with weapons placed to maximize the benefit of their strengths. This will also include the construction and emplacement of command-detonated IED munitions—as possible—for the coverage of dead space that is not susceptible to direct-fire from small arms in positions covering those sectors.

It is critical to your survival security that you identify and secure all avenues of approach, no matter how unlikely. While the main effort should obviously focus on the most likely avenues of approach for suspected enemy forces, do not overlook the possibility of well-trained, prepared, and physically fit hostile forces "sneaking" in a back door through the least likely avenue of approach.

Movement routes between key positions, LP/OP, and the strong point command post (CP) should be improved and marked, to facilitate rapid movement of reinforcements during hours of limited or no visibility, and while under attack.

Outside of your active security patrolling, well-placed, manned LP/OP overwatching likely avenues of approach will provide the bulk of the defensive security effort. They need to be numerous enough—and well-sited enough—to ensure that they provide observation of all avenues of approach. Proper placement of LP/OP will ensure that while ever LP/OP covers multiple avenues of approach, every avenue of approach is also observable from multiple LP/OP, and that all LP/OP provide adequate fields-of-fire and observation to interdict enemy approach with effective, aimed suppressive fires. LP/OP should also be placed—whenever possible—to provide mutual supporting fires to protect one another. LP/OP will need to be in communications contact with supporting LP/OP, as the CP via radio or wired radio telephone communications, as well as maintaining communications with the security patrols via low-power radio communications.

In addition to your far-ranging aggressive security patrols, close-range roving security patrols of 2-4 personnel should be moving between and around the LP/OP positions. This provides security to act as a maneuver element, in concert with the LP/OP base-of-fire efforts during interdiction of hostile forces, as well as a means to ensure eyes-on security of any "dead space" that cannot be observed from the LP/OP.

The close-range security patrols should be conducted primarily along key terrain features that dominate likely avenues of approach. Do not allow your close-range security patrols to attempt to maneuver inside these likely avenues of approach, because this leaves them susceptible to ambush or attack by hostile forces approaching. Close-range security patrols should maintain contact with LP/OP and the CP via low-power, line-of-sight radios, The use of these limited power radios will offer the additional benefit of forcing the patrol to maintain high ground positions and routes on key, dominating terrain to avoid losing radio contact.

In addition to the emplacement of LP/OP, and the use of active close-range security patrols, key leaders should focus engineering and construction efforts on the utilization of natural obstacles, such as mountains, cliffs, streams, etc, as well as the implementation of man-made obstacles like fences, walls, roadblocks, concertina or barbed wire, and more, to channelize enemy movement into those areas covered by the LP/OP and security patrols. Whenever possible, man-made obstacles should be

concealed or camouflaged from enemy observation, as well as being erected in irregular patterns and in depth. They should also be tied in with existing natural obstacles to form as much of a contiguous perimeter as possible.

Command and Control Considerations
While all security elements of the defensive effort should be in coordinated communication with the CP, this is not intended to facilitate micromanagement by key leaders. Instead, it is to allow those elements to provide critical intelligence information to the CP, as well as—through the CP—to all other elements of the security effort.

Individual element leaders—whether in an LP/OP or on a close-range security patrol—should be responsible for his actions and the efforts of his team. It is not realistic to expect a "leader" safely ensconced in a sandbagged bunker somewhere, to effectively guide the efforts of a subordinate by looking at his maps. Instead, good tactical leadership means proper prior training, and subsequent trust in the subordinate's training and judgment to known how to perform his job properly.

Movement and Maneuver in the Defense
Depending on the operational environment, movement corridors are often easily identifiable, and the nature of some terrain types play a major role in determining how a force can move and maneuver in the attack or the defense. Some terrain types—including urban and alpine terrain—severely restricts movement to obvious avenues. Proper development of your community or retreat defense should include planning for a terrain-centric defense, rather than an enemy-oriented defense of your strong point, in order to slow, disrupt, or stop the enemy attack long before it reaches the final protective line.

This means incorporating the use of primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency positions that allow ample massing of defensive fires on the channelized, restricted maneuver spaces available to the attacking force. Effective weapons positioning within these positions, allied to key terrain features that provide adequate flanking fires on enemy avenues of approach, along with covered, protected movement routes between key fighting positions, allow the defending force to appear as if they are effortlessly outmaneuvering attacking forces, even in severely restricted terrain. These features may include dug trenches between positions, mouse holes blown in the connecting walls between building and debris-filled alleys in urban areas, or other options.

Ultimately, planning your specific area and perimeter defense requires a thorough understanding of METT-TC and OCOKA, as well as the ability to stand back and look at the capabilities of your force objectively.

Considerations for Final Strong Point Defense Efforts
The final defense of your home or retreat is the strong point defense. This is the focus of too many survivalists today, who focus on stockpiling sandbags to fortify their walls, and steel shutters to protect their windows. This is a ridiculous approach that will result in the death of you and your loved ones.

The methods and techniques that will protect your family and home from being broken into and ransacked by a lone meth-head tweaker, looking to steal Granny's heirloom silver flatware to finance his habit will NOT be adequate to protect you against a coordinated effort by trained, organized assault

elements using high-power weapons and fire-and-maneuver.

Remember our doctrinal truth, that if they're in the front yard, it's too late. If things get to the point that you're defending your house against multiple enemy elements, all utilizing select-fire weapons, potentially with armored vehicle and indirect-fire weapons support, and all clad in body armor, you might kill one—or even some—but you are NOT going to win or survive all by yourself. It will take a bigger team than just you and your wife.

Establish realistic, effective perimeters. Let your LP/OP and roving, close-range security patrols be a "trip wire" to warn you of the approach of enemy forces. If the LP/OP and security patrols are getting their asses kicked, and the bad people are getting past them, inside of your perimeter, LEAVE.

Have an escape route preplanned. Ensure that it uses covered and/or concealed routes, and keep in mind that your enemy may have access to STANO, so don't just rely on darkness to conceal you. Have go-bags and/or your survival loads ready to go, and practice escape drills regularly. Don't plan them. Just pull them out of your ass, when people least expect them.

DO NOT EXPECT TO SIT OUT A SIEGE AND SURVIVE!!!

If all else fails, and the bad guys are stacking on your door before you've gotten out, then recognize that you've got about three seconds from the time they stack, until the breacher will be blowing your door off the frame. A magazine of rifle rounds through the walls on either side of the door, at knee level, will go a LONG way towards ruining their day. Ignore the Hollywood bullshit. I've been on the receiving end of a flashbang reinforced entry, by trained personnel. You will be hating life and not providing much resistance when the first man comes through the door. Even if you get rounds into him, Number Two WILL have your number. Reinforce your doors. Two, three, or even four deadbolts, in a reinforced door and a reinforced frame, with reinforced, hidden hinges, will slow down a ballistic breach with a shotgun armed breacher. Good luck stopping or slowing down and explosive breach. If there's a way to successfully reinforce a door adequately to stop—or even slow it down—an explosive breach, I've never seen it.

If you have time, pile a bunch of furniture in front of the door. It won't stop the entry, but it WILL slow it down, giving you the opportunity to put more rounds through the walls. You're NOT going to win. You're not even going to survive. At least you can go a long way towards making them earn your scalp.

Chapter Ten
HIDE AND SEEK FOR ADULTS

"Bugging out" is one of the most popular topics of conversation in the preparedness community. Everyone has a plan to "bug out," if shit gets tight. They've got "bug out bags" packed, and "bug out locations" selected. The one aspect of "bugging out"—or "escape and evasion" to use a now-obsolete doctrinal term—that is too frequently overlooked in American survivalist literature and discussion is the planning aspect. Typically, bugging out seems to be covered by, "I've got my BOB/GHB/Go-Bag packed! I'll head to the mountains!" or, "I'm going to hike to Cousin Bernie's house...1600 miles away!" That's coo! Weekend at Bernie's, right? Beer and babes.

If you start asking the intrepid survivalist some pertinent questions however, he quickly begins to hem and haw, demonstrating a decided lack of actual forethought. When was the last time you walked 16 miles, unencumbered, let alone 1600 miles, carrying everything? How long is your trek going to take? What route are you planning on taking? What if the route is impassable for some reason? Are you going to walk, drive, fly, or ride? What if you're being hunted or pursued? What if your wife is injured? What if you get dysentery?

Paramilitary partisan operations, whether area security patrols or "bugging out," will generally not be limited to just the immediate area of the survival retreat or community. A projection of force into the surrounding areas will help to ensure the security of the immediate area. Whether you are conducting projection-of-force patrols, intelligence-gathering reconnaissance patrols, or just the initial "bug-out" attempt to reach a safe haven, during the conduct of irregular small-unit patrols, personnel will constantly be at great risk of becoming separated from the rest of their element, leaving them isolated and "on the run," possibly in hostile-controlled areas.

Individual survivalists and survival groups who are in deadly earnest about their training for preparedness will incorporate and emphasize evasion-survival training into their overall training program regularly. It's great to have a plan, and know what do when the plan goes right. It's even better to know what to do when the plan goes to shit.

Individuals should be trained and prepared to survive and evade for extended periods of time—72-96 hours at an absolute minimum, depending on the METT-TC considerations, but much longer in a "bug out" gone wrong—over long distances, in order to reach a safe location. It is absolutely critical to consider unassisted evasion as a contingency during ANY unconventional warfare planning. Failing to do so is hubris and overconfidence at best. At worst, it's just flat fucking stupid.

Any serious survivalist should expect to take responsibility for his own recovery to the maximum extend possible. The Ranger Creed mantra of "never leave a fallen comrade..." is ideal, and even irregular elements should strive to live it, but the odds are stacked in such a way as to make it necessary for any individual to be ready to fend for himself.

Successful evasion-survival is—and always will be—predicated on mindset, effective training, and preparation. Specific areas of training include evasion and survival fieldcraft such as foraging for sustenance, shelter construction and protection from the elements, counter-tracking, environmental

health hazards of consideration in the area, and any evasion-specific intelligence information available for the operational area.

Survivalists should plan for extended evasions. Extended evasions can differ drastically from short-range evasions. Planning and preparing for long-term evasion however, ensures that short-range evasion is far simpler and less painful, while planning only for short-range evasion leaves you fucked if you are forced into an extended evasion.

Considerations in developing extended evasion tentative courses-of-action may include the nauseating realization that the distance to your safe location may be hundreds of miles that have to be traveled on foot. While lots of survivalists fantasize about "living off the land," out of their Bug-Out Bags (BOB), for weeks on end, while hiking to their retreat, facing the ugly reality of doing so may be considerably disheartening to the overweight, chain-smoking, forty-year old programmer with a six-package a day Twinkie-eating habit, whose only outdoors experience was freezing his ass off in a deer stand when he was twelve.

Rambo meets reality where the will-to-win, physical conditioning, sheer perseverance, and practiced knowledge of survival field craft becomes critical. The evader has to consider the implications of natural and man-made travel control restrictions. Roadblocks and glacier-crested mountain ranges are obvious, but flooded tunnels off a hurricane-ravaged island, or earthquake-destroyed bridges over a river or bay can just as critically impact your evasion plan to walk out, or to utilize an owned, borrowed, or stolen—errr...."requisitioned"—vehicle for travel.

Evaders must plan for and practice supply economy when on the run. He will have to determine what gear to keep, as well as how and where to cache the remained for hopeful later recovery. In order to determine this, he will need to realistically and objectively look at the assets available to him, as well as how far he has to travel, and how long—worst case scenario—it will take him to arrive, as well as taking a harsh, unyielding look at his own field craft abilities, or lack thereof. Most critical of all, the evader must internalize the understanding that the most fundamental goal of evasion is...EVADING CAPTURE OR DEATH...even if it means deviating from his evasion plan of action (EPA), or dumping all of his gear so he can run that much faster.

Individual survivalists and survival groups that know they will be operating outside of friendly-controlled areas, or who will be required to "bug out" for long-distances, should consider prepositioning resupply caches. During specific operational planning, the locations of relevant caches should be made known to potential evaders, as part of their EPA planning considerations, when that information is relevant. Anyone considering extended evasion to reach a bug out location—and if it would take you longer than 24 hours to hike that distance, under ideal conditions, it WILL end up being an extended evasion under real-world conditions—should already have prepositioned caches along likely travel corridors. This includes primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency routes.

Anyone who is part of your bug-out patrol group needs to know the locations and descriptions of these caches. What if you are injured, and they need to access the cache for supplies to provide you aid. If you don't trust them with that knowledge, it might behoove you to reconsider trusting them to pull security while you sleep.

Keyword SURVIVAL
Historically, one of the training tasks for SERE has been to "employ the keyword SURVIVAL," as a mnemonic memory aid to assist the evader in avoiding capture, the maintenance of health, and recovery to friendly control. Considered properly, it still forms the foundation of a quality evasion-survival training program.

Size up the situation
While you may initially need to run like a raped ape to avoid immediate capture, as soon as possible, you should find a short-term hide site in a covered and concealed location that will allow you to "stop and catch your breath." Security takes precedence, and stealth is security. Ensure that you are well-camouflaged, paint your hands and face if necessary, and add some local foliage to break up your shape and silhouette.

These are basic patrolling individual tasks anyway. Taking the time to perform routine tasks will help you calm down and prevent panicking. Take stock and evaluate your physical condition. Are you wounded or injured? Apply necessary self-aid. Drink some water and eat a snack if possible. Are you so physically and mentally exhausted that you are afraid you may make critical mistakes? Take a damned nap!

Conduct an inventory of your equipment. Do you have just your fighting load, or did you manage to recover your rucksack as well? Did you have to dump your fighting load so you just have your weapon and what's in your pockets? How much ammunition do you have? How much food and water? Can you ditch some of your gear and come back for it later, in order to reduce your load and facilitate faster movement? If you ditch ALL of your gear except your sidearm, could you steal a car and come back for the rest?

Take a look at your surroundings and your map. Orient your map to the ground, and yourself to the map. Determine where you are in relation to your EPA and your planned evasion corridors. Plan your next move BEFORE you move. Will the terrain and your training allow you to move at night? Do you have NOD, or can you move at night without STANO? Do you need to stick to moving in daylight, in order to avoid breaking your legs?

Undue haste makes waste
As Type A alpha males, special operations soldiers tend to live and preach the proverb that "the wrong thing now beats the right thing an hour from now!" In a gunfight and many other situations, there's a lot of truth to that. In an evasion-survival situation, action simply for the sake of action, will get you killed or captured. If you act in haste, without forethought and planning, you will lose or forget equipment, end up disoriented, and even run headfirst into an enemy patrol that's hunting you. "Prior Proper Planning Prevents Piss-Poor Performance."

There are certainly times and places—when the enemy is close by and about to crawl up your ass—to move quickly to avoid capture. Then, you may need to pull the raped ape act, but even then, if you've been planning your movements, and following your EPA, you can move with a purpose. The mnemonic

is not "haste makes waste." It's UNDUE haste that kills.

Remember where you are
Whether you are the patrol leader, or the newest, most junior man on the team, keep tabs on where you are throughout patrolling. Know the planned route, and pay attention to where you are along that route, as well as the location of en route rally points.

Whether you are in a patrol base, or just at a temporary security halt, always take the time to try and find out exactly where you are. Then, if you're separated, you can improve your chances of reconnecting with your patrol.

This can be difficult to really internalize the importance of, until you have an experience that really develops your frame-of-reference. As a young Ranger, I "knew" the reasons for en route rally points on a patrol. The critical nature of them never really sank in however, until I got separated from my platoon on a night patrol once. It's a little tough to maintain your self-image as a bad ass Airborne Ranger, when you're floundering around in the woods at night, it's darker than three feet up a bull's ass, and you have no fucking clue where you are, where anyone else in, or where the last en route rally point was!

It's even harder to maintain that self-imaged bad ass status when you get "rescued" by the assholes from Range Control after you stumble out of the tree line, into the road in front of their pick-up truck at 0300, when they were called out after your company got on line and swept the entire training area for your dumb ass—before calling out a quarter of the personnel on post to conduct a mission person search, and people have been looking for your for the last six hours, because your stupid ass managed to stumble somewhere in the vicinity of eight VERY roundabout, wandering miles in the dark...

Vanquish fear and panic
Abject terror and rectum-clenching panic are far more dangerous enemies in an evasion-survival situation than any human adversary. These are not unusual emotions. It doesn't matter how much of a rough-and-tumble, bad ass, armed-to-the-teeth survivalist you are. When you're alone, on the run, being hunted by men with guns, you're either scared shit less, or you're a fucking liar.

That's okay though, because the way to beat the evil enemies of fear and panic is to own them and control them. Instead of running in blind panic off a cliff and breaking both legs, the best way to control fear—the only way to control fear—is through good training and practiced, experiential knowledge. If you know the necessary evasion-survival field craft, and you have well-practiced confidence in your abilities, you'll be able to focus your mental imagery there, instead of on panic-inducing hallucinations of beating eaten by primordial, tropical rain forest dwelling, black polar bears.

Improvise
You can have the greatest survival kit ever devised by the mortal mind of man, full of the latest and greatest, "Delta/SEAL/SWAT/ninja cool guy" gear you could find on E-Bay, and you'll still find evasion-survival situations that your kit won't cover. Or, you may find yourself evading capture in an unfamiliar environment, where your favorite "go-to" technique won't work so well. You have to be able to adapt what you have and what you know, to fit the situation you are in. This is why we emphasize

the software-versus-hardware approach to training. While it's pretty difficult to operate a software program without some hardware tools, it's a lot easier to build your own computer than it is to write your own operating system code.

During one of my brief stints living in the Pacific Northwest, I was cruising back roads and logging trails way up high in the Washington Cascades in the spring, when I managed to blow two tires simultaneously. They were really bald tires. It was less than an hour until nightfall, and I was hell-and-gone deep, way back in the middle of "who the fuck knows where." There wasn't anything in that forest that wasn't bone-deep wet. Even breaking open old, down trees to get at the rotten punk inside was useless.

It was drizzling, and promising to be a nasty, miserably cold night, with the rain already starting to freeze, and I had no sleeping bag in the truck. Then, I IMPROVISED. I cut open the seat of the truck and pulled out a couple big handfuls of stuffing—it was an OLD truck—and probably some mouse turds, to use as tinder. Ten minutes later, I was contentedly munching a cap of hot Spaghetti O's, in front of a warm campfire, under an old deadfall, with an old tarp for a ground cloth and roof. Not because I'm super-duper Special Forces bad ass, but because I was willing to think far enough outside of the box that the box may as well have no longer existed. Improvise!

Value living
Your indomitable will to survive will help you overcome mind-numbing odds and mental despair. Some people find that will-to-win through the desire to make it back to the wife and kids. Others look to their faith in higher powers. Some look to the history and esprit de corps of their unit and don't want to be a disappointment to their forebears and comrades. I've met some who swore it was the desire to have another crack at the enemy that helped them survive.

Often overlooked as an aspect of "value living" is the ability to maintain your sense of humor. I can't speak authoritatively for anyone else, but for me at least, my well-honed ability to find humor in any situation, especially my own follies and foibles—and anyone who has ever met will tell you, I'll make fun of myself any day of the week, and twice on Sundays—has been the determining factor in getting me through a lot of shitty situations.

Act like the natives
This does not refer to drinking too much Thunderbird and pissing in the casino parking lot! Look at how the aboriginal people of your operational area traditionally lived and survived. They—and the local fauna—are the best teachers on how to adapt to the environment. If you live and operate exclusively in an urban area? Well, try drinking too much Thunderbird and pissing on sidewalks—or just cut the hearts out of your captured enemies on the roof of the tallest building around.

Learn fundamental skills
The time to learn and master basic survival skills is now, not after things have gone to Hell. Use and practice survival skills during your training drills and field exercises. Do not confuse survival skills with adventure or "nice-to-have" skills. Knowing Paiute Indian basket weaving techniques form southern Utah might be cool as hell—I wouldn't know, since I'm not really the basket-weaving type—but the harsh reality is, if you cannot procure water in the desert, your evasion will last approximately

48 hours after you drain your last canteen.

Sleeping in a tent might be "hard." It might count as "roughing it" compared to "camping" in a 40 foot RV, but if you've never built an expedient shelter, then started a fire to heat it—in a blizzard—with nothing more than 550 cord and a pocket knife, don't waste your breath or time bragging about what a bad ass survivalist you are.

Evasion Kit Aids and Survival Kits

The elements, terrain, hostile enemy forces, and even hostile local civilians, can all challenge evaders' abilities. To help overcome these and be successful, evaders must receive adequate training, information, and equipment—before commencing operations. Whenever possible, evaders will have all of their sustainment load for survival gear during an evasion. Unfortunately, since the event that causes your isolation will—by definition—typically be sudden and unexpected, you may find yourself quickly separated from much of your gear. Alternatively, space considerations and clothing configurations may limit what evasion aids can be carried. Fortunately, the most important part of your evasion-survival kit is your brain. Training and "software" are infinitely more important than hardware.

Nevertheless, even great software works best when it is leveraged with appropriate hardware. Ever tried to run Linux OS on a typewriter? Thus, it may be prudent to construct survival kits. The unfortunate reality however, is that the vast majority of survivalists just do not understand how the survival kit is supposed to be utilized, let alone how to put one together for themselves.

The first step in developing a functional evasion-survival kit is considering your own level of knowledge and expertise. Unfortunately, most people—especially American men who consider themselves survivalists—grossly overestimate their own abilities with even the most basic survival skills. You know how to build a fire? Great! In a torrential downpour? With no matches...in a 60MPH wind? Do you "know" how to do it under those conditions, or have you DONE it under those conditions?

You know how to hunt and fish and trap food? Cool! So, by hunt, do you mean you stumble into a deer stand in the pre-dawn darkness, then sip coffee from a Thermos until Bambi traipses through the cornfield, twenty feet in front of you? By trap, do you mean that you've run a successful, productive trap line, using snares, or do you mean you built a figure-four dead fall, and a spring-pole snare—once —in Boy Scouts, twenty years ago in the Scout Master's backyard?

In addition to assessing your own individual expertise—or lack thereof—you need to develop a METT-TC estimate of the situation. Consider the known/intended likely and possible missions that you will perform. Simple, close-range roving security patrols in the immediate neighborhood, or long-range security patrols miles from home? Consider the environmental conditions of the operational area and seasons. Western Wyoming has considerably different weather and climate than the Idaho panhandle—and both are drastically different than southern Arizona or eastern Tennessee. Consider likely and possible modes of travel and organic equipment. Consider your normal load-out as part of your tiered evasion-survival kit. If I carry a shelter in my ruck, do I need to carry a separate, plastic sheet for a "bivouac tent" in my "survival kit" that also rides in my ruck? Do you need a dedicated "survival knife" if you keep a folding knife in your pocket, a multi-tool on your belt, a fixed-blade combat knife

on your fighting load, and an ax or machete in your rucksack?

Consider the ability to perform multiple functions with one tool. You can make a bow drill fire starter kit, cordage and shelter, and eating and cooking utensils with a pocket knife, if you had to, but why bother? If you pull the inner strands out of your 550 cord boot laces, and you have a poncho and a canteen cup, you've got most of those covered. Plus, the poncho can also serve as a litter or garment, or it can be used for carry water in a pinch.

Survivalists are fond of reciting the "two is one, one is none" mantra, and shoving three lighters in their pocket. That's not how it works. Utilize a tiered-approach to the construction of your evasion-survival kit. Everything up to and including your rucksack is your primary survival kit. If you have to drop your ruck, you should still have enough secondary gear, between your fighting load and pockets, to function and survive—albeit not as comfortably. Finally, if you need to dump your fighting load—or you just lose it—what you have in your pockets should be enough to keep you alive, based on your level of knowledge. It's not going to be comfortable, but a fire-starter and some form of tinder in your pocket is one Hell of a lot better for trying to get a warming fire started after falling in an icy creek, than trying to gather the materials to build an effective bow drill set on the fly.

There is a lot of interest in building "survival kits" and "bug-out bags." There's no harm in that. What does appall me is the preponderance of otherwise sensible people who invest a lot of time and effort into building the silly little Altoids can-based "survival kits" that then get thrown in their ruck with all of their other gear….all of their other gear that is specifically chosen to keep them alive in the field.

If you adopt the SMOLES (*See Appendix One*) concept for packing your rucksack, as well as for developing your fighting load and first-line gear, there's really no reason to have a "survival kit in a can." That is, after all, the reason for the three-echelon packing concept. If you've got your ruck and fighting load with you, then you should have the ability, equipment-wise anyway, to survive indefinitely. If you have to dump your ruck—which if you have it on when things go haywire, you shouldn't have to except in very limited cases, unless you're a fat ass who doesn't do effective PT and so you can't carry the goddamn thing—or your EPA kicks in when you don't have your ruck on, such as it is sitting in an Objective Rally Point (ORP) when a raid or ambush goes to hell on you, you still have your fighting load and first-line gear on. If that was developed with SMOLES in mind, you probably won't be as comfortable as you would be with your ruck on, but you should still be able to survive. If for some reason you have to dump your fighting load, then you've still got a full SMOLES load-out in your first line gear, and that should only get dumped if the pursuers are doing it by dumping your pockets after they've killed or captured you.

Evasion-Survival Skills

Escape and evasion survival training in the US military and paramilitary cultures has traditionally focused in large part—although certainly not entirely—on what are fundamentally very elementary bush craft skills such as fire-building, shelter construction, and building traps and snares for food procurement. While these are not useless skills—for either survival or general well-rounded adulthood—if you as a survivalist lack these skills, you are already woefully behind the curve on skill development, and you should have been a Boy Scout. Modern evasion-survival training—while touching on these subjects—needs to focus less on bush craft skills, and more on basic field craft. That

field craft is the individual application of fundamental, basic light infantry skills.

First of all—of course—is the ancient law, the seven P rule. Proper Prior Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance. While it is often overlooked completely, or at best, given lip service during the planning of conventional force operations, the development of solid, well-developed EPA is absolutely critical to guerrilla force operational planning, in order to maximize the chance of survival for your most valuable assets—your people. Whether you are planning an ambush, a security patrol, or a bug-out to escape the city in a time of unrest, you need to have well-developed EPA.

Land Navigation
The ability to determine your location, the location of your destination, and then to move successfully from point A to point B is of obvious importance to evasion. An inability to effectively navigate will result in evaders stumbling around, lost and confused, until they end up either tripping over their pursuers, or get cold, tired, and scared enough to voluntarily search out their pursuers, because "anything is better than being lost in the big, dark, scary woods!"

Tactical Movement
Being able to run like a raped ape, for a couple of miles, even with your sustainment load on might be critical, and is something you need to be capable of, but slow and steady, when you are trying to evade pursuit is what ultimately will win THAT race. The same skills that will allow you to avoid being the reason your patrol gets compromised are the skills that will allow you to evade successfully. You need to master your camouflage and concealment, and selecting and occupying a hide site is really nothing more complicated than occupying a patrol base—by yourself.

Conclusions
Evasion planning and training is a critical skill set in irregular warfare. Unfortunately, in American tradition, we tend to focus more on the easy-to-do, "fun," bush craft aspects of it. Those are easy to practice in your backyard, or at the park, and require little or no real physical effort to learn and practice. The real, important, aspects of evasion planning however—being fit enough to go miles, every day, day-after-day, on little sleep or rest, and less food, while still managing to think clearly enough to select good routes, and utilize your map and compass for land navigation to get you where you need to go—require actual commitment to train and practice. Not learning them and practicing them however, will result in your inability to escape and evade capture. Whether it's invading Chinese paratroopers, DHS security forces after a martial law crackdown, or hordes of cannibalistic San Franciscans, when the time comes to nut up and run, you'd better have the necessary skills and abilities.

Suggested Further Reading
Five Years To Freedom by Nick Rowe
Six Ways In, Twelve Ways Out by USRSOG
98.6 Degrees: Keeping Your Ass Alive by Cody Lundin

APPENDICES

Chapter Eleven
LIKE A BOSS!

"Proper Prior Planning Prevents Piss-Poor Performance!" --proverb of professionals

The bulk of this handbook has concerned individual and critical skills for the conduct of foot-mobile infantry patrols in the tradition of the classical light infantry model of the frontier woodsman-scout. The first principle of patrolling however, is planning. Failing to plan is planning to fail. For that reason, the final chapter of this manual will cover what is arguably the most important topic within: patrol planning. We will accomplish this through a discussion of the nine steps of the troop-leading procedures (TLP).

The troop-leading procedures offer a process to enable a leader to prepare a unit for the execution of an operation, including a patrol. The TLP begins when you are alerted to, or recognize the need for, a forthcoming operation. For our purposes, this might range from the local mayor showing up at your door and saying, "Hey Bob! We need you guys to go find these assholes gangbangers that keep kidnapping people and burning down houses in the middle of the night!" to your survivalist group itself saying, "Gee, maybe we should go look around the neighborhood to make sure no one is sneaking up on our back door!"

Not all nine steps of the TLP will be followed in sequential lock-step formula. They simply provide an outline of the necessary tasks to help ensure that leaders remember what needs to be achieved in order to maximize the chances of operational success. They exist in order to help you ensure that you do not forget any aspect of planning or preparation, as well as to ensure that your team understands the mission plan adequately.

Step One: Receive the Mission

Unlike a conventional military unit, as a security element for a survivalist group or a community, outside of some unlikely case of an organized resistance to a tyrannical regime, you will probably not have a superior headquarters pushing operations orders (OPORD) down to you, with mission assignments. Instead, it will be up to you or the members of your group or community, to determine what security operations need to be undertaken, and to insure that those are executed. If you don't know what your mission is, there's not much point in going any further in the TLP, because you cannot plan for something that you don't know you need to do.

The first step of the TLP may be as simple as you or the group or community as a whole, sitting down and saying, "We need to be conducting security patrols. We don't want any cannibalistic San Franciscans sneaking up on us and killing us in the garden!" By definition then, "Conduct a security patrol" becomes your mission.

Once you've received the mission, you have to study those factors that will influence your planning and ability to execute the mission. This will allow you to determine the details that specifically compromise the mission. "Conduct a security patrol" is an operation, but it's not a specific mission until we know all of the relevant details. We've determined that we're going to conduct a security patrol, but where are we going to conduct this patrol at or to?

What is the hostile or enemy situation like in the area surrounding the patrol's destination or route?

Whom do we have available to participate in the patrol. How will their absence impact our ability to protect the retreat location or community against a direct attack while the patrol is gone? What's the terrain like along the route? When do we need to conduct the patrol? Do we have to conduct it during daylight, or will our training and equipment allow us to conduct the patrol at night? What will the neighbors think if they see us patrolling down the road or across their property? Will they shoot at anyone in camouflage who is carrying a gun, or will they hide, not knowing who we are?

These questions can be answered through an "estimate of the situation." That estimate is described through the well-known, but seldom understood acronym METT-TC.

- Mission: A mission statement should describe the Five W's: Who, What, When, Where, Why? Who is going to do what? When are they going to do it, and where? Why are they going to do it? For a security patrol, that's a pretty simple statement, if you work your way through all of the METT-TC factors before you try and write your mission statement. Prior to the development of your plan however, your mission is "We are going to conduct a security patrol."

- Enemy: What is the enemy situation? Do you know? Are you even certain that there is a hostile force out there, or are you just going out to make sure that there is not one? If you know that the hostile force exists, how do you know? Did someone tell you, or did you see them yourself? What other information is available about them? Can we complete a comprehensive SALUTE report on the hostile force?

  1.Size: What is the composition of the force, both in pure numbers and in fighting strength? Is it a small group of ten to twenty hardcore bandit fighters, or is it a huge group of fifty or more, including family members, children, and the goddamned pet cat, Buzz?

  2.Activities: What are they doing that indicates they are hostile? Are they attacking people and property? If so, how are they doing it and when? What level of professional trade craft are they displaying? Are they putting out security? Are they quiet and professional, or do they look like a herd of lost sheep trudging down the road? If they've been in fights with other local residents, how did the hostiles perform? Did they fight effectively, using disciplined fire control, or did they spray-and-pray and run away? Did they use disciplined fire and maneuver, or did they try to charge fixed positions?

  This knowledge—if available—will go a long way towards indicating possible and probable courses of action of the enemy when your patrol makes contact with them. This allows you to plan what your courses-of-action will be in response.

  3.Location: Where do you think the enemy is? Where are they going to? If they're just strolling through, do you really even need to fight them, or can you simply let them bypass you, while you maintain surveillance to ensure that they don't deviate from their route and accidentally trip over your retreat or town? Where are they stopping to rest? Are they stopping in sheltered, concealed locations that offer cover and indicate professional judgment, or are they stopping wherever they happen to be when they get too tired to continue walking?

4.Unit/Uniform: In the military, the "unit"paragraph is used because it can indicate the level of training personnel may have received. A special operations force or a professional infantry unit may pose a significantly higher level of threat than a bunch of transportation troops press-ganged into acting like infantrymen. For our purposes however, we need to look at apparent levels of ability for indicators, rather than uniforms, because matching camouflage uniforms can be indicative of different things in our context. Are the guys clad in matching multi-cam uniforms a bunch of local militia types whose idea of training h been predicated on sitting around a campfire drinking beer and trading MOLLE pouches back and forth, or are they a group of OEF combat veterans who have banded together in a mutual assistance pact? Are they a local SWAT team that wore multi-cam because they wanted to pretend to be bad-ass commandos, or are they a group of Airsoft competitors who had too much money to blow on a ridiculously gay hobby?

Are the guys kitted out in blue jeans and Patagonia fleece jacket, with a bunch of different LBEs, a bunch of ex-corporate bankers forced by the situation to turn to a more honest and honorable form of banditry, or is it a group of former SOF gunslingers looking for a place to settle in and hunker down?

Wearing uniforms does not make you professional. It doesn't even make you look professional. A lot of survivalists have read Jim Rawles' preparedness classic "**Patriots: A Novel of the Coming Collapse**," and bought into his idea that wearing matching uniforms, different from those commonly seen in the local area, will make you appear to be more professional to potential attacker, as well as reduce the incidence of "blue-on-blue" fratricide.

The reality is, a fat slob in a uniform still looks like a fat slob. A fit, professional fighting man looks like a fit, professional fighting man regardless of what he is wearing. Solid, quality training that results in expert gunhandling and professional execution of small-unit tactics will mark you as a professional, not the uniform you wear.

When gathering information, look at the actions and behaviors of the people, not their fucking costumes, to determine capabilities.

5.Time: What time of day or night does the hostile force move? When do they stop to sleep? Are they moving in low-light conditions and inclement weather, or are they hunkered down in tents and other shelter trying to stay dry and warm? When they do stop, do they put out security?

How often and on what schedule do they change guard shifts? How fast do they move when they are moving? Are they moving with a sense of urgency and purpose, or do they seem to be simply wandering?

6.Equipment: What type of equipment do they have? Are they refugees on foot, or are they in vehicles? If they are in vehicles, what kind? Are they all riding in whatever they could find that would run, or are they running high-performance street car or off-road vehicles? Did they

manage to steal armored vehicles of some sort? What kind of weapons do they have? Are they all carrying fighting rifles, or are they using a variety of weapons, from fighting rifles to hunting rifles, pistols, and melee-type impact weapons? DO they seem to have radios and NODs? Do they have anti-vehicle capabilities, or antipersonnel munitions like hand grenades and Claymore mines?

While you may not have answers to all of the pertinent questions, it's important to get as complete a picture as possible of what the enemy capabilities and probable courses-of-action are. Once you've completed as thorough and accurate an assessment as you're capable of, you can use it to determine what the enemy is likely to do.

If you run into them on accident, are they likely to run away, or will they stand and fight? If you conduct sniper-like raids-by-fire, will they hunker down and try and fight back with fire-and-maneuver, or will will they try a frontal attack?

If you decide to conduct an ambush against them, will they fight back effectively by charging the ambush, or will they try and run away?

Even in scenarios where there is no known enemy force in the area, and you are simply looking for information on what might be happening in the area and link up with neighbors to try and get news of the surrounding areas, you should have some idea of what has been happening in the area. Have you heard gunfights occurring? Have you taken sniper fire from the tree line? Have you heard rumors on the radio, from neighbors, or from passing refugees, about supposed threats in the area?

Anyone you converse with who passes on even the smallest tidbit of information regarding armed groups of any sort should be solicited for a SALUTE report on what they've seen or heard, even in passing.

- Troops Available: What does your available talent pool look like? Do you have trained, fit personnel who can conduct a security patrol? Are there enough people to leave a security force behind as well? The same SALUTE report format can answer your questions for your own troops available.

  1.Size: How many capable fighters do you have? How many are trained in marksmanship and small-unit tactics? How many are physically and mentally fit enough to conduct a patrol? Can they fight effectively if your patrol makes contact? How many of them do you need to leave behind to protect the retreat property or the community? Can you use untrained personnel who can shoot and are fit, by partnering them with trained, experienced infantrymen?

  Can you kick out an eight- or twelve-man patrol and still have enough fighters left to adequately defend the base camp area and its residents? Do you have trained, fit, and equipped neighbors that you can call on for help—on the patrol or at the base camp?

  2.Activities: What training a preparations have your group members undergone? Is everyone

capable of running a gun capably? Are the wives trained to shoot? What about teenagers and pre-teens? How many have been trained in patrolling and small-unit tactics? How many have spent time in the woods, living out of a rucksack, sleeping on the ground?

3.Locations: You obviously know what your location is: its wherever you're standing. What types of locations can you operate in to project force however? Can you function in steep alpine valleys and canyons? Can you function in thick, vegetation-choked swamps? Urban or suburban neighborhoods?

Will your training, equipment, and physical conditioning enable those areas? Can you scale cliffs or wall, or crawl through swamps or sewers to get somewhere, if you need to? Do you have people who can actually get to the locations where you think the bad guys might be hiding?

4.Unit/Uniform: If you're going to call on the neighbors for help, have you trained with them before? Do you know their capabilities? If so, is that because they told you what their capabilities are, or because you've witnessed them in trainingor real-world?

I've met hundreds of people who have insisted that they could shoot man-sized silhouettes at 500 meters, because they'd been to Appleseed and had earned their "Rifleman's Badge!" I've had very few of those hundreds—probably less than 30 in fact—who could actually even qualify on a 300 meter qualification under field conditions however, where the targets are hidden or partially hidden, and are not painted bright fucking red!

I've met lots of people who have taken a "fighting rifle" course from any number of "Tier One Special Operations" veteran instructors (some of whom instructors I hold a great deal of respect for professionally), who were unable to hit a full-sized silhouette at 200 meters, in the open, from the prone positions.

By God, they can hit a head shot at 3 meters though! You should see their speed reloads too...in good weather, after a solid eight hours of sleep, with a full belly, standing on a flat, groomed, square range!

Are you going to trust a guy you've never seen shoot, let alone trained with, to shoot past you in a firefight, under stress, in the middle of the fucking night? I'm not. Are you going to trust your co-worker's wife Lucinda Mae, to shoot well enough in a gunfight, that you will leave her behind to repel any possible attack on the retreat location, protecting your wife and children? Even though you don't know if the bitch has ever even picked up a rifle before? I'm not.

You have to have unit cohesion to fight effectively, and a security patrol, in the end, must be able to fight. You cannot have unit cohesion if you've never trained together, allowing you to make an honest, objective analysis of the ability of your people to work together under difficult,life-and-death conditions.

5.Time: Have you trained to conduct low-light/no-light operations? What about performing in

inclement weather? Are you limited to daylight operations, during spring and early autumn, so it won't be too cold or too hot? Can you only function if it's not raining outside? Or have you trained, hard and honestly, in every type of possible weather that your local environment can throw at you? Can you fight in pouring rain? Can you hump a ruck and move tactically when it's 110 degrees Farenheit, with snow blowing sideways (Yeah, I know....)? Can you even live out of a rucksack for three or four or ten days, shitting in a plastic bag, or a hole in the ground, sleeping for an hour or two a day? When can you conduct operations?

6.Equipment: What equipment is available, and who do you have that knows how to use it? How does that affect the other SALUTE factors? Do you have a .50BMG sniper rifle that will stop the light-armored trucks that the hostiles are reputed to posses? Will the owner let anyone other than himself shoot it? Is he capable of performing the other tasks needed for the patrol?

Do you have NOD an IR lasers that will allow you to engage the enemy in the dark, or do you have to rely on tracers, muzzle flash, and noise to identify the enemy? Do you have adequate field survival gear to stay alive, sleeping outside, regardless of the weather? DO you have anti-vehicle munitions that will stop vehicles if necessary, or will you have to shoot the driver? Sure, a .30-caliber round to the engine block will stop a vehicle—ten or fifteen miles down the road...

Do you have access to hand grenades, flash-bangs, or even LAW or SMAW rockets? DO you have Claymore mines or IEDs that can be used against the enemy? DO you have ATVs or 4WD vehicles that can be used for parts of the movement of the patrol?

You have to have an honest, objective, no bullshit assessment of your strengths and weaknesses, in order to determine what you're actually capable of achieving. If your mission is to conduct a raiding patrol on a hostile gang's encampment, in order to destroy their vehicles or food supplies, but you've only got two guys who you can spare for the mission, you're going to have to either scrub the mission, or steal that fat, old dude's Barrett .50BMG that he won't let anyone else shoot, and conduct a "raid-by-fire" to destroy the vehicles from a distance.

Bad action movies aside, the chances of successfully pulling off a clandestine infiltration, sabotage, and exfil are slim to none with just two people. On the other hand, if you can get eight to twelve guys together, and want to conduct a High-Value Target (HVT) snatch on the hostile leader, in order to beat the shit out of him, to dissuade further operations in your area, you might be able to pull that off, if all of your guys are trained.

If you want to simply perform a reconnaissance patrol to see who's out there, and maybe conduct a Far Ambush to scare them out of the area, that two-man team might be able to pull it off, acting like a sniper team.

7. Time: When we are analyzing time considerations for patrol planning, we must consider a variety of factors, including the time characteristics within our SALUTE reports of enemy and friendly troop situations. How far away are the enemy? How long can we afford to be gone? Do we have the ability to carry food for that long, or do we have resupply caches in the area? Can

we mix both capabilities, living out of caches when possible, saving the foodstuffs in our rucksacks for emergencies,such as finding a cache compromised, or being forced to escape-and-evade?

How can we stay away, considering the other survival tasks that need to be accomplished at camp area? If we need to plant or harvest a butcher livestock on a certain day, is that impact the time available for our patrol? Is the hostile force expected to be in our area within a certain time frame, and we need to locate them and stop him before he gets too close?

Is the enemy stuck in camp, around the fires at night, while we have the ability to conduct patrolling movements in the dark due to our training and technology? Can we patrol through the day and night, in order to catch him in the chaos and confusion of packing up camp in the morning? Can we conduct a nighttime infiltration and kill the leaders in their sleep silently, and then escape, in order to wreak havoc and discontent amongst the enemy due to suspicions? If the enemy moves at night and sleeps during the day, would it make sense to move during daylight hours—even with the greater risk of compromise —in order to catch him bed? Or does his ability to move at night indicate a professionalism that tells us he probably has security out when he's sleeping?

If we don't have the trained ability to function in the dark, and the enemy does, how does that affect our ability to conduct operations against him? If I've got a group of men trained to move and fight in the dark, I'll do exactly that, and lay up in well-concealed hide sites during the daylight hours. Even if you've heard rumors of where I'm at, the only time that you can look for me is when I'm hidden and not moving, but I can easily see you approaching, because it's broad daylight. On the other hand, since I can move at night, and possibly count on the fact that my enemies are not competent enough to patrol at night, they may not even be competent enough to see my guys in the dark—even with NODs—before we see them and silence the sentries.

I can also choose to simply hole up in a prepared ambush site, leaving a security team awake to wake up the rest of the team and alert us when the enemy is about to stumble into the KZ.

• Civil Considerations: People within the local community who are not part of your group, not part of any allied security group, and are not known to be actively hostile against you, are part of the local civilian populace. Everything that you do will in some way, impact them and their lives. It may be because you are not doing anything to help protect them, so they have to stay up all night pulling security, which means that they don't have enough energy to get a crop in to feed their families next winter. It may be because when you raided the hostile camp, they got pissed and started fucking people up they were otherwise going to ignore.

Maybe the locals are pissed because when raiders came through killing, raping, and burning, "that bunch of camouflage-wearing asshole militia guys with the machine guns" couldn't be bothered to come out and help. Now, when you're out actively looking for the bad guys, the locals are all either dead, or pissed off at you so they refuse to help, or even actively support the bad guys against you, because they figure those will be the new bosses in town, and it pays to get on their good side.

> If your security patrols are out and hunting for bad guys, but are skulking around and trying to hide from the locals for OPSEC, instead of actively engaging the locals in conversation and the common defense, what impact will that have on any potential relationship with the local population? Are they going to think you're some sort of Casper the Friendly Ghost, or will they assume that you're a bad guy sneaking around? It doesn't matter how good you think you are, if you're moving around, and they're out looking for food and supplies, they will see your tracks eventually.
>
> Do you think the farmer who has driven his tractor through the same field six days a week for the last thirty years, isn't going to notice the extra "foliage" in the trees next to his field where you hung your "camouflage" netting to help hide your position? You will engage with the locals, and it should be in a positive way that benefits both parties. If you offer them support and help, then you can consider the impact that those personal relationships will have on your patrol's ability to conduct missions. Can you stop and get last-minute information on the hostile forces? Can you stop and ask the farmer if he's seen anything suspicious?
>
> If you insist on "maintaining OPSEC" and never reveal yourself to your neighbors, what is the civil impact going to be when a bunch of half-starved, scared townspeople with "only" two dozen hunting rifles and a handful of cartridges for each suddenly sees a group of well-fed, well-clothed, extremely well-armed men come traipsing into their town and start asking questions?

METT-TC is an often-cited, but all the more frequently misunderstood, factor in planning. It should never be a platitude, tossed into conversation without a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the equation. In many cases of course, accounting for METT-TC prior to a grid-down event may be impossible. How do we know what the enemy situation will be? Will it be invading UN troops, local gangbanger thugs, or roving, cannibalistic San Franciscans, fleeing the apocalyptic nightmare of a devastated urban landscape?

Developing a METT-TC analysis for every operation—when you are planning the operation—is the critical first step in determining exactly what that mission entails at that time.

Step Two: Issue a Warning Order

Once you've conducted your METT-TC estimate of the situation as it will affect the mission, you can start developing a tentative plan. Before you do that though, you have to consider the importance of giving your patrol members time to prepare. They will need to complete their own tasks, from double-checking their gear to making sure magazines are loaded and that their weapons function, as well as getting some food and sleep. The way to accomplish this heads-up notice is through the issuance of a Warning Order (WARNO) to those people who will participate in the patrol.

Since you've completed your estimate of the situation, you have a rough idea of how many people will be needed, compared to how many are available. Since you completed a comprehensive analysis of your friendly troops situation, you also know who is qualified for the mission in question, allowing you to identify the personnel that you want or need to have on the patrol. In order to provide them with the

maximum amount of time possible, you can provide them a WARNO, so they can get started preparing on the things that are common to all patrols, even before you have completed your plan.

Your WARNO should have a specific description of what the patrol's mission will be, utilizing the Five W's:

"We (who) will conduct a security patrol (what) beginning at 1100 tonight (when), moving from this location to the intersection of Highway 69 and Old Church Road (where), in order to locate and interdict a hostile patrol of gangbangers (why) moving towards our community."

While it shouldn't be, it may also be as informal as, "Hey guys, we're going out on a patrol tonight!" That doesn't provide enough information to the members of the patrol to allow them to plan and prepare adequately. They don't know how long they'll be out, so they don't know how much gear or food to pack. They don't know specifically what they'll be doing, so they don't know what gear to pack.

In addition to simply providing an alert about the mission however, you also need to provide any general instructions that you can that they need to know to get prepared.

- Organization: The task organization within a patrol is generally predicated on the mission of the patrol. A conventional combat patrol will have an assault element, a support-by-fire element, a security element, and a headquarters element. It may also have attachments, such as anti-armor teams, engineers, or mortar crews. A partisan combat patrol will still have—at an absolute minimum—an assault element, security element, and a support-by-fire element, but the HQ element may simply consist of the patrol leader, who will also be the assault team leader, and the assistant patrol leader, who will act as the SBF team leader.

  A simple security patrol however, may be as simple as Team A and Team B. Regardless of the level of organization mandated by the mission's nature however, the patrol leader should specify in his WARNO, who will be on what teams, and what teams will be in what positions on the order-of-march. If Team B knows that it will be the lead team, then that team leader knows he better have his best point man pack the right gear for that role. If the medic is assigned to Team A, then that team leader knows that he needs to make sure the medic has packed the fucking aid bag. While a well-organized and trained survivalist group will have already trained in fire teams, they should have cross-trained so that fire teams can be split when necessary,to provide the special skills needed for specific missions. Buddy team integrity however, should never be violated.

- Uniforms and Equipment Common to All. This include clothing, equipment, weapons, and food. Realistically, most of this should be part of a group's published SOP. For example, your SOP may simply state that, "for any operation, all patrol members will carry a minimum of 160 rounds of ammunition, their personal primary weapon, at least one quart of water, an IFAK/BOK medical kit, and two days of food."

In addition to ensuring that people can actually keep their "ready gear" ready, it simplifies the WARNO process, because the PL can simply say, "uniforms and equipment common to all will be in accordance with the SOP." Alternatively, he can modify that—when necessary—by adding, "...with the following changes..."

- Special Weapons and Munitions: If you group has access to special weapons or munitions, and the patrol's mission dictates a need for them, the PL will designate which teams need to gather and inspect those weapons. This could range from "Team A needs to grab two of the suppressed .22 Ruger pistols so we can kill the guard dogs," to "Team B needs to bring the hand-held FLIR device," or "Team A needs to grab three Claymores, and Team B should bring the M240B that we grabbed from those outlaw bikers last month, plus 1200 rounds for it." If NOD are considered specialty items due to their scarcity, the PL may include, "Team leaders and point men, make sure you've got NOD."

- Chain-of-Command: The PL needs to designate who will be the team leaders, unless there are set teams being used for the patrol, with an established order. Regardless, he needs to specify who the assistant patrol leader will be, and then describe the succession of command for the patrol, down to the last man.

  This prevents confusion or argument, in the middle of a patrol, if someone is killed or injured, that could result in the rest of the patrol being killed, simply because someone can't put their ego in check. Everyone would like to believe that they would be the bigger man, and put their ego aside, but stress fucks up the mind of the best of men. Don't leave the details to chance. God is in the details.

  For a small patrol of twelve men or less, the PL will generally be one of the team leaders, while his APL will be another team leader. For a one-team patrol, the patrol leader will be the team leader, with the least experienced man as his Ranger buddy, while the APL will be the most experienced man on the other buddy team.

- Time Schedule: The patrol members need to know the tentative time schedule. They need to know when they will be expected to meet for the issuance of the completed patrol order, as well as what time the patrol will leave. The patrol leader should take less than 1/3 of the available time for his planning and for issuing the patrol order. This gives the rest of the patrol—as well as the PL himself—time to get their personal gear ready for the patrol, as well as to conduct rehearsals of critical tasks, and to conduct final pre-combat inspections.

  In scheduling these, the patrol leader works backwards, starting with the time the primary task of the patrol needs to occur—whether that is hitting an objective or simply departing the base area—in order to be absolutely certain that he is allowing the patrol adequate time for planning

and preparation. For a small unit, performing a simple security patrol, it should not take an inordinate amount of time to plan and conduct the necessary preparations, including rehearsals and inspections. In fact, the rehearsals of critical tasks such as battle drills and actions on the objective, may take more time than anything else. Utilizing no more than 1/3 of the available time however, will provide time for the patrol members to complete all of their tasks, as well as to get rest and food prior to the departure.

- Time/Place/Uniform for Receiving the Patrol Order: The members of the patrol should be informed of when and where they will receive the patrol order briefing. This could be as complex as, "we will conduct the OPORD briefing at 0100, in the classroom annex. All personnel should be in field utility uniforms, with pen, paper, and personal weapon," or as simple as, "Hey guys, we'll do the patrol order at 0100 in the team room," with guys showing u in jeans and sweatshirts to receive the briefing. It's about making sure people know where they need to be and when. It's not an inspection, or at least it shouldn't be.

- Time/Place for Inspections: On the same hand, pre-combat inspections (PCI) and rehearsals do need to happen before the patrol leaves, so folks need to know when that will occur. It should be part of your SOP that when people show up for PCI and rehearsals, they show up with all of the gear required by the specific tasks they are assigned in the patrol order. You don't want to conduct a PCI, minutes before leaving the base area, and find out that your mortar man has all of his shit, but left the base plate in the team room, because he was planning on grabbing it just before you left, and didn't want to lug the heavy bastard around for no reason. You can bet your last pre-64 silver quarter that if he did that, he'll forget it when you leave the wire.

• Specific instructions: Specific special instructions may be necessary, depending on the type and size of the patrol. This could range from special instructions to team leaders reminding them to draw special weapons from the group arms room, to parts of the TLP that the patrol leader wants them to perform, in order to streamline the process. In a small-unit environment, this may be having each team leader sit in on the planning process and develop alternate courses-of-action (CoA) for the PL to choose between, besides his own tentative planning CoA.

Special instructions may also pertain to selected individuals or personnel assigned special teams duties, such as EPW search teams or aid-and-litter teams. If you have access to explosives, and your mission calls for the use of demolitions, this may involve letting the designated breacher know what munitions you want him to draw from the magazine, and what you want him to construct with them.

Step Three: Make a Tentative Plan

As soon as the WARNO is issued, the patrol leader needs to sit down—preferably with his subordinate team leaders, but definitely with the APL at a minimum—and start developing a tentative plan. It is a tentative plan, because regardless of your best guesses and intelligence collection and analysis efforts, the actual situation on the ground may be discovered to be different than the information you had available to develop your METT-TC estimate of the situation, necessitating later changes.

To develop his tentative plan, the patrol leader takes a second look at his METT-TC analysis, and based on that information available, develops a minimum of three CoA, followed by comparing them and deciding on which is the best. As the CoA and plan are developed, new information—ranging from a patrol member being too ill to participateor someone else with an inoperable weapon, to new information coming in that the hostiles are not where they were thought to be—may come in. The PL constantly updates his METT-TC analysis and updates his CoA development accordingly.

CoA development should focus on the details of execution, administration and logistics, and command and signal. The simplest way to do that is to use the outline of the OPORD patrol order paragraphs, 3, 4, and 5.

- Execution: The execution paragraph of the patrol plan and order needs to cover the concept of the operation—the overall plan—as well as the implied and supporting tasks of the patrol. Without an idea of the overall concept of the plan, developing the details of the specific tasks is impossible.

  1.Concept of the Operation: Figure out—in general terms—while looking at the map, how the patrol as a whole, will accomplish the mission. Identify the most critical task that has to be conducted (conduct an area reconnaissance, for example), and any other essential tasks to accomplish that (move tactically, occupy a patrol base, conduct battle drills, etc). This paragraph should be very brief; it is only describing the broad outline of the patrol mission.

  Doctrinally, we say it should take less than six sentences. If it takes more than that, you're either being too detailed, or you're trying to bite off more than you can chew. An example might read: "My intent is that we will conduct a security patrol of the Ewok Valley, from our location to the intersection of Highway 69 and Old Church Road (one sentence). We will look for any personnel not local to the area and attempt to determine their threat status (two sentences). Apparently hostile elements will be engaged with the intent to cause them leave the area, or to destroy them (three sentences). Elements whose intent we cannot determine will be kept under observation until concrete assessment of their intent can be determined, or until they leave the operational area (four sentences). Our goal is to prevent bad guys from discovering the presence or location of our base camp area, in order to protect our families (five sentences. The last one could probably be done away with.)

  2.Maneuver: The maneuver planning should encompass a description of the elements by name, providing the essential tasks for each. Designate who the main effort is, with all other identified tasks supporting the main effort. For a security patrol, this could be as simple as describing the main effort as "conduct an area reconnaissance," while outlining the route-of-march and order-of-march.

  3.Tasks: Other than the overall essential tasks, the patrol leader needs to determine and describe what the supporting essential tasks are that must be accomplished and how those will be accomplished. This should include not only the task, but all supporting tasks for each element, by name. For example: "In the event of a contact with a hostile element that requires us to perform a hasty ambush, Team A will act as the SBF element, while Team B moves to an assault

position. Tasks for Team to achieve this include: Provide overwatch for Team B during maneuver to the final assault positions and as they assault through the enemy position, provide suppressive fires during the ambush attack, and shift fires as Team B assaults through the enemy position. During consolidation and reorganization, Team A will provide a two-man aid-and-litter team. Tasks for Team B will include: move tactically during the maneuver to the final assault position, provide suppressive fires during the attack, move by buddy team bounds during the assault to the enemy position. During consolidation and reorganization, Team B will provide a two-man EPW search team."

Obviously, the patrol leader needs to come up with these task descriptions for each of his possible CoA. One CoA may involve a plan to counter any hostile incursions with hasty ambushes or deliberate attacks.

A second CoA might be a plan to interdict their movement and intent with raids-by-fire, while the third CoA might involve simply observing the hostiles until they leave the area, with the contingency plan of acting as the "hammer" to the "anvil" of the base camp "Home Guard" acting as a base-of-fire element if the hostiles move towards the base camp area. The last option would be predicated—obviously—on the Home Guard being capable of fighting a battle for the fixed fighting position of the base camp area.

Alternatively, the patrol may simply act as a reconnaissance patrol—for example if only two or four men can be spared—with the intent of finding any hostiles, and then calling for a second, larger patrol to join them if it is determined that they need to be attacked, if manpower and capabilities allow that option.

Specifically, tasks that need to be considered in the execution of planning the patrol, depending on the specific concept of the operation and size of the patrol, may include: primary, alternate, contingency and emergency routes-of-march, organization and movement—including anticipated movement formations and techniques in certain areas according to the map reconnaissance or known characteristics of the local terrain, actions at danger areas and on enemy contact, rally points, actions on the objective, and the procedures for exiting and reentering the base camp area.

4.Coordinating Instructions: It may be necessary to list coordinating instructions or not, based on METT-TC. These may include:

-information requirements for reconnaissance efforts.

-safety considerations such asenvironmental hazards or friend-or-foe identification procedures.

-engagement and disengagement criteria and instructions.

-any non-SOP instructions for consolidation and reorganization.

-the rules of engagement.

-any instructions pertaining to linking up with civilian guides or neighboring group security teams for combined operations or information sharing.

• Administration and Logistics: At some levels, this paragraph and planning considerations may seem unimportant and unnecessary. Don't overlook it however.

While you may have limited support assets, you still need to consider what supplies and assets that you do have available that will facilitate accomplishment of any mission. This planning does not apply only to combat service and support elements, but also the logistics that are organic to the organization conducting the patrols.

1.General: Are there any resupply caches available in the vicinity of the patrol's intended routes that can be utilized by the patrol? Are there friendly supporting civilians in the area that can called on for logistics support, or that can provide a safe house location to drop injured or wounded patrol members at for later recovery and pickup? Determine the locations of available assets and see how those affect your tentative proposedroutes-of-march.

2.Materials and Service:
-Supply: What supplies, such as field rations, water, ammunition, batteries for electronics and flashlights, or other materials do you think you will need? Do you need to draw special weapons from the group's arms room? How does the availability—or the lack of availability—of those items affect your proposed CoA?

-Transportation: Consider what transportation assets you have available and what impact the constraints of using them would have on different CoA. Can you drive most or all of your proposed reconnaissance route? Do you have to use cars, or can you use SUV or ATVs? What about horses? If you have those assets and think they might be options, how will they impact your proposed CoA? Can you incorporate those assets into the CoA at all? Have you trained on immediate action drills if contact is made while horseback or on an ATV?

-Maintenance: You need to consider the maintenance of the equipment needed to execute the different CoA. Can you supply feed for the horses, or do you expect them to graze during patrol base operations? Can you afford extra people to act as horse-handlers during fights, or do you somehow believe you are capable of fighting as cavalry rather than mounted infantry? If you're running ATVs or vehicles, can you carry adequate fuel supplies and other POL (petroleum, oil,lubricants) requirements? Do you have tools for repairs? Do you have a mechanic on the patrol, or will you abandon the vehicles or ATVs if they break down during the patrol? How will that affect your CoA?

Is someone on the patrol an experienced farrier, or can someone at least nail a shoe back on? Do you have EZ Boots for a temporary solution if a horse throws a shoe, or are you going to pack an anvil with you?

-Casualty Evacuation (CASEVAC): What are you going to do for CASEVAC? Do you have to

carry the wounded all the way back to the base camp area, or do you have local civilian friends in the area that will let you stash the wounded with them for later recovery? Can you call the base camp area on the radio and have someone drive a vehicle to meet you somewhere to pick up the wounded? Is that safe and tactically feasible in accordance with METT-TC? What about the dead? Will you carry the bodies out, leave them where they fall, bury them on the spot, or cache the body for later recovery? How will you mark the remains for later recovery?

3.Personnel: What is the plan for EPWs? Are you going to murder them? Are you going to release them? Do you have a local safe house location that can act as an EPW collection and processing site before they get transported out of the area and dumped off somewhere? Can you transport them to the local county sheriff's office for detainment, trial, and punishment?

4.Miscellaneous: What are your plans for the destruction or collection of enemy equipment and supplies you capture? Will you cache them and pick them up later, or carry them back with you immediately? Can your patrol members carry the extra weight and still move? Will you destroy them? Give them away to the local civilian populace?

• Command and Signal: Command and signal needs to cover the chain-of-command of the patrol, signaling within the patrol, as well as signal plans for communicating with the base camp area, as well as local civilian supporters and friends, or other security groups in the local area. It should provide a communications PACE plan, with Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency procedures for each requirement, whenever possible.

1.Command: Where will the patrol leader and APL be in the order-of-march? Who is the APL, and what is the succession of command?

2.Signals: This needs to cover anything specific to the patrol that is not covered within the SOP.

-What are the challenge and passwords? What are the running passwords? Will these change daily?

-Radio signals operating instructions (SOI):Most of the signals instructions for local security patrols should be encompassed within an SOP. For example,"intra-team communications will be by hand-and-arm signal, with whispered verbal communications as the alternate. In the contingency that neither of those will work, we'll use the radios. In the event of contact, commands will be by whistle, with radios as the alternate, and shouted verbal commands as the contingency.

Semaphore or signal mirrors can be used as the emergency during contacts, if a prearranged communications code is developed for using those. For communications with base camp, we will conduct a radio check every four hours, on the half-hour, starting with the hour we leave the base camp area. We will initiate the radio checks on channel 15, and jump four channels for each successive radio check.

Contact with local civilian supporters will be initiated by the patrol leader and his Ranger

buddy, with the rest of the patrol providing overwatch."

Once the patrol leaders and the team leaders have developed a minimum of three possible CoA, encompassing—or at least considering—all of these factors, they need to debate the merits and possibilities of each CoA. Ultimately, the decision of which to select must fall on the shoulders of the patrol leader himself. He will select a CoA and develop the patrol order based on the selected CoA.

It is critical to understand the importance of developing multiple CoA though. Don't have team leaders or your APL develop a possible CoA just to check a box and say you've done it. Give full weight and consideration to the concerns and objections voiced during the selection process. This is why small units of highly trained personnel like Special Forces and Long-Range Surveillance (LRS) teams use multiple people to develop different possible CoA. It prevents one guy from developing a CoA and deciding it is perfect, so why bother taking the time to develop any other alternatives? It's about getting different eyes looking at the problem and seeing different issues.

Step Four: Begin Necessary Movement
In some instances, it may be necessary for the patrol to begin its movement before the patrol leader has finished the planning process. In such cases, the APL would lead the patrol until the patrol leader is ready. Generally this is only going to happen in very large organizations however, with the patrol comprising one small part of the whole. Otherwise, this step ends up taking place in concurrence with Step Nine.

Step Five: Reconnoiter
In most cases—especially for security patrols—the reconnoiter step will be a map reconnaissance, taking place during the CoA development. If your group has access to COTS (Commercial, Off-the-Shelf) UAV technology however, it may be possible to develop an aerial asset that can be used to conduct aerial reconnaissance, in order to determine the feasibility of your tentative plan.

In the absence of that technology, your reconnoiter occurs during the execution of the patrol. As you move along, you may see things that impact your plan. These can require you to use a temporary halt, or even to occupy a patrol base, while you modify the plan, or select an entirely different CoA.

Step Six: Complete the Plan
Based on the results of the reconnaissance efforts, the patrol leader completes his finalized plan. Any changes to the tentative plan that occur following the issuance of the patrol order, such as in a patrol base, are issued in the form of a fragmentary order (FRAGO), covering only those paragraphs of the patrol order that are changed.

Step Seven: Issue the Patrol Order
Your patrol order briefing should be conducted orally, using maps and/or terrain model "sand tables" as appropriate. The patrol order should be issued using the standard five-paragraph OPORD format, with suitable omissions of a given paragraph based on METT-TC considerations. The patrol order may be abbreviated where appropriate, by simply noting that certain tasks or issues will be addressed "in accordance with the SOP."

The patrol order is not intended solely to disseminate information on how the mission will be conducted, but also to insure that every individual member of the patrol knows and understands the entire operation, as well as his specific role in the scheme. Key points of understanding include the commander's intent, the concept of the operation, and the assigned tasks of the individual and his team. The patrol leader should ask selected members of the patrol to brief back parts of the patrol order, as well as asking specific, pointed questions about critical portions, to ensure understanding.

The five-paragraph OPORD format includes:

- Situation
  1.Weather Forecast
  2.Enemy Situation: Identification, Location,
  Activity, Strength, and anticipated CoA.
  3.Friendly Situation: Known friendly organizations and individuals operating orliving in the immediate area, missions and routes of other patrols nearby—if applicable.

- Mission: What the patrol is going to do, when it will do it, and where it will be done. This statement should answer Who, What, When, Where, and Why. It should be repeated twice during the patrol order presentation to stress the importance. If all other parts of the plan fall apart, if the individuals within the patrol know the mission and the intent, they can still attempt to complete the mission, even if alone. Especially in the context of a grid-down, local security force struggling to protect their families, homes, and communities, the last stanza of the Ranger Creed is an important guidepost: "Readily will I display the intestinal fortitude required to fight on and complete the mission, though be the lone survivor!"

- Execution:
  1.Concept of the operation
  2.Main Effort Tasks and supporting tasks.
  3.Supporting Effort Tasks and supporting tasks.

- Administration and Logistics (Service and Support):
  1.Supply Situation, including food and water
  2.Arms and Ammunition (in the case of special weapons and munitions, specify who will carry it and who will use it)

  3.Uniforms and Equipment (in the case of special equipment, specify who will carry it and who will use it)

  4.Methods of handling Casualties and EPWs

- Command and Signal:
  1.Signals plan for contact with base camp area, including call signs, PACE frequencies, communication window schedule, and any brevity codes to be used.

2.Signals to be used within the patrol.
3.Challenge and password instructions, including running passwords/numbers.
4.Chain-of-command, including locations of leaders during movement, at danger areas, and at the objective.

Step Eight: Inspect-Rehearse-Supervise
Inspections occur at the time and place specified in the WARNO. The patrol leader may conduct inspections, or have his APL or team leaders (in the case of larger patrols) conduct inspections. With the exception of final PCI, inspections should be conducted prior to rehearsals, in order to insure that all patrol members have all necessary and assigned equipment. During the inspections, leaders can take the opportunity to question patrol members on their understanding of the plan and their role in it, to ensure retention of the information.

Inspections should include:

- Weapons and Ammunition: Weapons should be clean and serviceable. They should have suitable optics that are zeroed, a visible spectrum white light, and—if appropriate—IR lasers. Ammunition should be inspected as appropriate to the weapon and mission, and for the required amount. You don't want your designated marksman with the SR25 packing around an ammunition load-out of 5.56mm!

- Uniforms and Equipment: If Friend-or-Foe identifiers are used, they should be inspected for presence and serviceability. All required personal equipment, from LBE to shovels and shelters; from medical kits to NOD, should be inspected for presence and serviceability.c

- Special Weapons and Equipment

- Understanding of the overall mission and the individual role.

- Communications: Inspections should cover understanding of the communications plan, as well as the presence and serviceability of necessary communications equipment, including SOP mirrors, signal whistles, and signal panels, if appropriate, as well as intra-team radios, signal flares, etc.

  Food and water: Leaders should insure that patrol members have appropriate amounts of food and water, in accordance with the plan and patrol order instructions.

- Camouflage: Although it will change with movement, leaders should inspect that patrol members are using camouflage: natural and artificial garnish, as well as face paint and gloves, as appropriate. All shiny items have been painted, dulled, or removed. Leaders have patrol members perform the "jump and rattle" test.

  Deficiencies should be corrected on the spot.

It is important to understand that leaders will continue to conduct inspections during the execution of the patrol, at temporary halts and in patrol bases, in accordance with METT-TC requirements, even if only by watching their personnel for continued professional behavior and actions,as well as providing the patrol leader with regular LACE reports.

Rehearsals help to insure the operational proficiency and readiness of the patrol members and of their equipment. They allow the patrol leader to check his plans and make sure that all is correct, or to make changes as necessary. The patrol leader uses rehearsals to practice essential and common tasks and to improve individual understanding of the operation and the patrol members' individual roles in that plan. This bolsters the individual's confidence in the plan and in himself.

In many situations, actual full dress rehearsals will not be possible, due to METT-TC considerations. In such cases, rehearsals may include team leaders briefing the patrol leader on the planned actions of their element in the execution phase of the plan. In the case of immediate action battle drills and other common tasks, rehearsals may begin prior to the patrol order briefing. Tasks that may be rehearsed as common tasks include:

- battle drills
- actions at danger areas
- occupation of patrol bases
- movement formations and techniques
- use of special weapons and equipment

Step Nine: Execute the Plan

Well-trained, experienced combat leaders plan the fight, and then they fight their plan. Conducting an operation according to the plan, while adapting it to contingencies that arise, will provide the greatest opportunity for success and survival. History shows us that most of the great battles of history—large and small—were not lost due to a lack of fighting ability or valor, but die to poor planning prior to the battle.

Patrol planning training may seem boring and dry compared to the fun and exciting aspects of training, but "Proper Prior Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance." Plan your patrols and fights. Fight your plan.

Afterword

My goal, when I began the project of writing this manual, was to provide a comprehensive training plan of the most critical skills required to conduct a security patrolling mission for survivalists and prepared families who lacked formal military training. I intended to cover as many of the critical skills as possible, knowing I could not cover them all.

My bookshelves contain thousands of titles, and hundreds of those are "professional" reading material concerning unconventional and guerrilla warfare. Dozens of them are Army field manuals and training documents on those subjects alone. There is no way—in the course of 300 pages—to accurately and adequately describe all of the critical tasks necessary to provide security in a guerrilla warfare/grid-down/WROL scenario, in any detail.

Rather than simply regurgitate short snips of doctrine from military publications, and then referring you to those documents for further reading, I have tried to cover the broadest span of the most essential tasks, in order to allow you to begin developing a frame-of-reference. My hope is that this will allow you to understand and modify the information found in the doctrinal publications to the needs of the partisan guerrilla providing local security.

Future volumes will cover other aspects of unconventional warfare as it applies—as I believe it applies

—to the survivalist context.

John Mosby
American Redoubt

Appendix One
HOW MANY SUITCASES DID YOU BRING?

(***Most of this article is a compilation of articles on the subject of load-bearing equipment originally posted on the Mountain Guerrilla blog***)

The foundation of load-bearing is—bearing a load. If your belt line is significantly larger in circumference than your chest, there's not a single type of load-bearing rig in existence that is going to make humping that shit comfortable, or even bearable. If you can't walk up a flight of stairs without getting winded, it doesn't matter what type of LBE you use, you're not going to be able to carry that shit.

The partisan fighter—whether a resistance guerrilla or a survivalist security provider—must learn to function as a light infantryman in the classical sense of the term. Regardless of his operational environment—wilderness, rural, suburban, or urban—he is conceptually a woodsman-scout. The partisan must possess the trained ability to operate day or night, over varied, broken terrain, using field craft expertise and whatever limited technological assets are available to him to escape the interdiction of his movement by the enemy. Like his woodsman-scout forebears of the American westward expansion, the modern partisan needs to develop a system that requires him to carry only the necessities to ensure his survival and effectiveness. Additional, unnecessary weight leads to excessive, accelerated fatigue, impedes and slows movement, and leads to a compromising over reliance on the technology represented by his equipment, rather than his native wit and skill.

The traditional light-infantry paradigm cannot be found in the Stryker Brigades, LAV-equipped Marine Corps units, or even HMMWV-mounted convoys that drive to a disembarkation point two kilometers from the objective. The light infantry paradigm is found in field craft, mobility, tactical expertise, and marksmanship and weapons handling. The ability to sneak inside the enemy's OODA Cycle reactionary gap unnoticed, strike with overwhelming violence-of-action at his weakest points, and then disappear into the surrounding environment before a reaction force can be mustered, is the definition of the light infantry paradigm. This "hit-and-run" ability and mindset is the chief tactical advantage available to irregular forces in a technologically or numerically disparate battle space.

The conventional military today generally lacks a true light infantry capability, outside a small number of limited application units, such as Long-Range Surveillance Units (LRSU). The fundamental problem —the overburdening of foot-mobile infantry soldiers—has existed nearly as long as armies have existed, and has been a subject of intense study and debate for nearly as long. The modern development of advanced, even "lightweight," technological war fighting assets, has exacerbated the problem rather than remedying it, as soldiers have had communications tools, STANO equipment, and soldier-tracking devices added to their load. Despite the best efforts of military logicians and theorists, the load of infantry soldiers has continued to increase. The modern conventional-force "light" infantryman is often required to carry load far in excess of 120 pounds, even when operating in difficult, broken, and steep terrain, such as the alpine environment of the Hindu Kush of Afghanistan.

Even rabid attempts at miniaturization and weight-reduction have only slightly mitigated these issues—and once mitigated, the gains are quickly rendered void by the addition of more equipment deemed "essential" to soldier survivability. Worse yet, continually lowered standards for physical conditioning as a result of a steadily declining level of fitness in the general population recruiting base bas made the ability to carry the necessary weights an equally large part of the problem.

According to an unidentified infantry First Sergeant, from the 187th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), concerning the loads his soldiers carried during Operation Anaconda back in 2002:
"We had extreme difficulty moving with all of our weight. If our movement would have been to relieve a unit in contact or a time-sensitive mission, we would not have been able to move in a timely manner. It took us eight hours to move five clicks. With just the vest and LBV, we were easily carrying 80 pounds. Throw on the ruck and you're sucking."

During World War Two, the US Army conducted research studies and found that the average infantryman had carried approximately 55 pounds, from the skin out (FSO) during movements in the field on foot. These studies concluded that this was about the maximum weight that the average soldier could effectively carry during the approach march, and still be able to fight once he reached the objective. A decade later, a follow-on study determined that this still applied, but allowed for a maximum 48 pound FIGHTING load, in combat—as opposed to the sustainment load carried during the approach march—if carried by a CONDITIONED fighting soldier.

The fighting load is doctrinally defined as the actual load carried by a soldier during combat, while actively engaging the enemy with their personal weapons. This approach march load—on the other hand—is the load carried by the soldier in order to survive, while he attempts to get close enough to the enemy to prosecute a fight. Despite the results and knowledge gained by these studies—and later corroborating studies—by 2002, soldiers engaged in dismounted combat operations in the mountains of Afghanistan were carrying a 60-80 pound fighting load, while their approach march load was often in excess of 120 pounds. In some instances, particularly machine gunners and mortar crew members, the approach march load would be in excess of 150 pounds.

Today's conventional force infantryman cannot move fast with his doctrinal load, especially in restrictive terrain. It is important to remember also, that these loads were predicated on a regular resupply of water, food, and ammunition via air or ground vehicle convoy every 48-72 hours. This means that most of the load as basic survival equipment and war fighting equipment.

The partisan survivalist cannot expect to have the support assets available to effect resupply every 48-72 hours. He will be forced to live off his own preparations, in the form of what he can carry, resupply caches, and native wit and ingenuity. You must learn to overcome these liabilities.

In your attempt to do so, there are several lessons to be learned from Special Forces and other SOF organizations, when it comes to equipment selection and load-bearing equipment SOP. Number one among these is to minimize your load-bearing requirements through the use of extensive resupply caches throughout your operational area.

Second is to adopt the concept of the three-tiered survival-fighting-sustainment load approach to equipment selection and load-bearing. The survival load is comprised—quote simply—of those items that can be carried on the person, in his pockets, that are not attached to his fighting load. They are intended for last-ditch survival application. The conceptual approach to the survival load is that it can allow the individual—based on his ability and training—to escape and evade hostile pursuit, while surviving in the operational environment, for an indefinite period of time.

After the 1st line survival load, you have the 2nd line fighting load. This is the equipment required to allow the individual—within their operational requirements—to prosecute a fight against the anticipated enemy, based on METT-TC.

Finally, we deal with the 3rd line sustainment load. This is the equipment required by the individual, to sustain himself—for as long as necessary—while moving to or from an enemy position. It may also include equipment necessary to move from one secure area to the next, in order to avoid unnecessary—

or undesirable—contact.

Using the three tiered approach to equipment selection and load-bearing allows us to maximize the software-centric approach that places value on training and knowledge above the hardware-centric approach endemic to the survivalist community specifically and American culture generally.

SMOLES

To approach equipment selection and load-bearing from the software-centric angle, we look at the roles that we expect equipment to fulfill. SMOLES is an old acronym from the Special Forces and Ranger survival training culture that represents the necessary areas that should be provided for with your survival equipment. It stands for: Self-defense, Medical, Observation/Optics, Land navigation, Extreme weather conditions, and Survival. Each of these can be further subdivided, based on the tasks necessary to fulfill the obligations within the category.

Self-Defense. Self-defense, in our paradigm, can range from protecting yourself and your family from a mugger in the city on a Friday evening, to defending your family on a camping trip from a gang of MS-13 gangsters, to self-defense in combat. Regardless, the three broad categories that we need to address are: Shoot, Move, Communicate.

Medical. Medical care in our paradigm can range from the band-aids and aspirin of the the "boo-boo" kit, to the trauma medical care of TC3's Care-Under-Fire and Tactical Field Care phases.

Observation and Optics. This can range from a pair of decent binoculars to NODs and Thermal Imaging devices, depending on METT-TC and your capabilities.

Land Navigation. Map-and-compass. Map-and-compass. Map-and-compass. Map-and-compass.

Extreme Weather Conditions. The general assumption, when we begin discussing dealing with extreme weather conditions is the need to survive in extreme cold weather, like we deal with in the winter time here in the American Redoubt. As any of the bloggers in the region will "gleefully" inform you right now however, we're dealing with extreme heat, in thetmental, base level of Maslow's Heirarchy of Needs: Oxygen, Water, Food, and Shelter (which includes clothing, which is nothing more than individual shelter from the elements…). In addition to understanding these, we need to understand the Rule of Threes. You can survive three minutes without Oxygen, three hours without Shelter, three days without Water, and three weeks without Food.

In order to address each of these categories, we will look at the sub-category requirements of each, then look at them in more detail with some of the ways we can fulfill those requirements, for each tier of our equipment-selection and load-bearing paradigm.

The Survival Load

The survival load can be defined as those items the partisan carries on his person, either in his hand, in his pockets, or on his belt, but are separate from his fighting load tier of equipment. The concept behind the survival load can be most simply defined as gear that will allow the partisan to escape and evade contact, provide for self-defense, and survive indefinitely, if not comfortably, long enough to return to the control of his friends and family.

For the underground or auxiliary member, the Survival Load may be all he carries with him on a

regular basis, whereas the guerrilla fighter may have the benefit of carrying a fighting load on his person as well during actual security operations. However, even for the guerrilla, the conduct of a clandestine infiltration of denied-territory, or the need to simply dump all of his gear in an effort to run faster while trying to escape an overwhelming enemy force while breaking contact, the need to develop an carry a 1st Line Survival Load-out is critical.

At it's fundamental level, the survival load consists of:

Self-Defense Items. These can range from a simple folding knife or ASP baton that can be used to defend yourself, to the more practical concealed carry sidearm. While I am an advocate of "Never bring a knife to a gunfight!" my experiences and training, leading to recognition of the importance and truth in the so-called "21 foot rule" (more properly, probably the "30 foot rule"), lead me to also be an advocate of "Never bring a pistol to a knife fight!"

As a matter of practical application of science, I will always choose a firearm over a contact weapon, but I also recognize the importance of being able to defend myself until I can get my weapon into the fight. That means, as important as my sidearm is, my combatives abilities are as important to my survival load, if not more so.

In extreme evasion scenarios, daily self-defense, or covert or clandestine operations conducted in denied territory in built-up areas, my sidearm may very well end up functioning as my primary weapon. The necessary prerequisites are that it be utterly, unfailingly reliable and readily concealable. Because the sidearm plays a dual-role in a resistance situation, as both a personal defense weapon and a direct-action combat operations primary weapon, against multiple possible hostiles, a magazine-fed, high-capacity, self-loading pistol is really the only logical choice for this selection (as a slight historical/technical footnote, while I'm not denigrating the 1911 variants, for those of you who carry high-capacity 1911s, like the Para-Ordnances, I'd like to point something out…If you're carrying a double-stack "1911" then you're not carrying a fucking 1911. John Moses Browning never–to the best of my knowledge–designed or built even a prototype double-stack 1911. Calling it a 1911 is the equivalent of calling a Browning Hi-Power a 1911, because they share similarities.).

In addition to your sidearm, you need a method to carry it. This can range from "Mexican Carry" by shoving it down the front of your pants (not something I recommend with most striker-fired pistols like the Glock…), to a holster. You also need sustainment for the weapon, in the form of additional magazines. These can range from carrying a spare mag in your pocket, to dedicated pistol mag pouches on your belt.

As specific examples, I carry a Glock 19 in a Raven Concealment Systems VG2, Appendix-Inside the Waistband. I choose this method of carry, despite the potential safety issues (after all, the gun is pointed at my dick and my femoral artery...) and the minor discomfort (when I sit, the muzzle is jammed into either my dick or my femoral artery), because it offers several very distinct advantages over other carry positions. Number one, it's smoking fast to draw from the appendix, even under a cover garment. Number two, and perhaps more important to me, I've got more positive control of the gun. It's in my workspace, and easy to defend against gun-grab attempts. Number three, it's the easiest place there is to conceal the weapon. I do NOT recommend the A-IWB carry for novice gun carriers. Let me repeat that,

I do NOT recommend the A-IWB carry for novice gun carriers. The margin for error from inept or careless gun-handling are too slim, and the drawbacks to those errors occurring are too severe.

Additionally, if your "sidearm" is serving as your primary weapon, then the ability to reload the weapon, in order to continue to prosecute the fight. Determining how many reloads you need to carry as part of your survival load out will necessarily be METT-TC dependent (Personally, I'm ALWAYS an advocate of carrying as much ammunition as you're physically capable of carrying without interfering with your ability to fulfill your role. I make it a point to carry no less than two spare magazines for my Glock in every day carry–EDC– and those are G17 mags, for my Glock 19).

In addition to your sidearm, a back-up weapon is generally a good idea. This can be a second sidearm, or it can be a knife. For my purposes, a knife makes more sense. While I advocate a general field-utility knife, the possibility of using it as a combative weapon to create a path to your sidearm should never be overlooked. My choice of survival load cutlery has run the gamut from a Benchmade folder in my pocket (I don't carry any folding knives except Benchmades, as I've explained in previous articles) to a Cold Steel push-dagger, to a RAT III bush knife. The primary requisite is that it should be small enough to be readily concealable and carried daily, while being large enough to actually be functional as both a weapon and a tool.

Medical Items. The Blow-Out Kit on my fighting load fits into a double-stack M4 magazine pouch. Unfortunately, walking around the mall or Wal-Mart with a double-stack mag pouch on my belt would be neither practical nor prudent. At a basic level however, your survival load medical items should facilitate you being able to provide basic Care-Under-Fire TC3 care to yourself or someone else. This means a tourniquet of some sort, and a pressure dressing and compressed gauze or CombatGuaze. In my normal TC3 classes, as part of the Patrolling classes I teach, I advocate against the carry and use of two things: TK4 tourniquets and QuickClot compressed gauze. In my experience, and the experience of numerous 18D Special Forces Medical Sergeants that I've discussed the subject in-depth with, the CAT-T tourniquet is preferable, by an order of magnitude to the TK4, and regular compressed gauze is as effective, while being far less expensive, than the QC product.

For the survival load however, a TK4's primary drawback (lack of a windlass device, to ensure adequate tension to stop deep-tissue arterial bleeding) can be overcome in an EDC (Every Day Carry) environment, through the application of an expedient windlass device. QC comes in a much more low-profile packaging that compressed gauze, making it simpler to conceal tucked in a pocket, than H&H compressed gauze that is my preference in a fighting load BOK. Combined together, the two can also form a pretty reputable replacement for a battlefield dressing like the Israeli Battlefield Dressings.

In essence then, the medical items in your survival load should, in light of your level of knowledge and practical expertise, provide you with the ability to stop massive hemorrhage for Care-Under-Fire. For me, the carry of a TK4 tourniquet and QC compressed gauze, answers that need.

Observation/Optics. The need for optics in the survival load is often, in my experience, over-emphasized. I can certainly see the need to be able to look back and search out pursuers, or to look ahead and determine likely areas of enemy concealment along my route. However, outside of specific METT-TC determined needs, which makes them part of the fighting load, the only Observation/Optics

need I include in the Survival Load is a pair of sun/safety glasses.

In the mid-1990s, the Ranger Regiment issued every Ranger a pair of Ray-Ban sunglasses as part of his CIF (Central Issue Facility…your basic issue of equipment). Nevertheless, Rangers were not allowed to wear them, because it was considered non-uniform (WTF,O? I never have been able to understand that…). Today, thanks to lessons learned from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the use of safetyylenses is generally accepted as mandatory. Polarized, tinted lenses during the day, with ANSI Z87 safety ratings, will increase your visual clarity, reduce eye strain and fatigue, and protect your eyes from common battlefield debris flying around. While these can range from $10 glasses from Wal-Mart or your local Stop-N-Rob, the two most popular manufacturers of "tactical" safety glasses are inarguably, Oakley and Wiley X. While the argument can be made that the Wally-World China-Mart specials are less conspicuous than the latest cool-guy, CDI tactical selections from Ranger Joe's, I've seen enough oilfield workers wearing Wiley X and Oakleys, that I'm not particularly convinced of that being an issue, at least until gangbangers start shooting people for their sunglasses like they used to for their Air Jordan Nike shoes.

A dedicated flashlight is also pretty critical to your survival load out. While you may carry a weapon-mounted light, although it can be difficult to do with IWB concealed carry, you also need a separate hand-held flashlight. While I, like many people, prefer simplicity in my technological gear, I do advocate for one of the multiple purpose, cool-guy tactical lights for this role (I carry a StreamLight PT2L. It's an LED light, and has a variable-mode tailcap operation that allows for a 260 lumen bright light, a completely fucking useless high-intensity strobe function, and a dimmer light at a mere 13 lumens for general purpose use. While I used to carry a low-powered miniature light on my key chain, the 13 lumen low power on the Streamlight made this unnecessary)

Land Navigation. I personally subscribe to the view that all of your land navigation issues can be met by carrying a decent orienteering or USGI lensatic compass and a laminated topographical map as part of your survival load.

(I don't do GPS, for numerous reasons, all of which have previously been described, in detail, in this blog in the past. If you prefer a GPS, more power to you. I will say however, that if you run a GPS, and don't bother learning to use a map-and-compass, then when you die from being lost in the woods and exposure, I'm stealing all of your cool shit.)

While the woodsman-scout background of the partisan light-infantryman means the fighter should possess the ability to determine directions, at least roughly, without a compass, he should rarely, if ever, be without a compass. The ability to reliably traverse terrain that the enemy considers impenetrable is the strength of the guerrilla. Possessing a compass, whether a standard orienteering compass on a lanyard around the neck, or a simple button compass on a watchband, should be considered a necessity for anyone, anywhere, as part of his ability to escape and evade when needed.

Extreme Weather Conditions. As previously mentioned, the ability to function under extreme weather conditions is not solely a matter of surviving in extreme cold weather. Triple digit temperatures, high humidity, and unrelenting overhead sunshine, can contribute to survivability issues just as severe as cold weather. Further, while cold-weather conditions can be pretty simply accommodated in the

survival load by carrying some form of fire-starting device, there really are no simple answers in hot weather, except the use of a wide-brimmed hat (boonie hats or straw/palm leaf "cowboy" hats) and a scarf that can be wet regularly and worn around your neck to cool through the evaporative process.

For cold-weather, at the survival load level, dealing with extreme weather conditions is fundamentally limited to what you are wearing, although in climates like the northern boreal forest regions and high-elevation areas of alpine regions, shoving a casualty blanket folded up in a coat or parka pocket can be a life-saving addition as well. It should go without saying that a poly or knit-wool cold-weather hat is a no-brainer, as is the use of adequate thermal underwear, as long as your thermals do not contribute to heat exhaustion due to exertion.

Additionally, simply carrying a means to start fires for warmth can be a life-saver for the evader in extreme cold-weather conditions (for you readers from the South, just to clarify, 0 degrees Farenheit is NOT extreme cold-weather. Unless the temperature is dipping below -20F, or you're soaking wet, the great outdoors is survivable without fire, assuming adequate proper clothing and/or shelter). Fire starting materials may be a simple Bic lighter, waterproof match-safe stuffed with weather-proofed "hurricane-lifeboat" matches, a flint striker, or a flint-and-steel kit. The serious survival expert will never allow himself to be caught without some means that he can use reliably, to build a warming fire to stay alive. More important than what you specifically carry, is the trained, proven (not "Gee, I bought this and watched some videos on YouTube, so I'm good to go!") ability to utilize it under austere, extreme field conditions.

Survival. As we discussed briefly above, the requirements of survival are covered by a glimpse of Maslow's Heirarchy of Needs, and an understanding of the Rule of Threes.

Oxygen, for the survival load, may be as simple as making sure you don't end up somewhere with bad air. That could mean being able to read HazMat decals and placards. For instance, in Wyoming's natural gas fields, walking into an "empty" condensate tank without respiratory protection will result in your very rapid demise, due to the air quality. Additionally, while the concealed carry of a military or law-enforcement protective mask is probably unrealistic, N95 respirators and/or simple paper dust masks may be adequate in some scenarios. Finally, your handy-dandy scarf for hot weather or cold weather may be enough to provide some protection when wrapped tightly around your face.

Water can be difficult to carry in any quantity. At eight pounds per gallon, water is heavy stuff, and it's bulky enough to make concealed carry unrealistic. Fortunately, the common carry of water bottles by every Tom, Dick, and Harry in the world these days means packing a Nalgene bottle around is pretty innocuous. The ability to procure or manufacture safe drinking water however, cannot be overlooked, especially in a situation wherein your only gear is what you are carrying on your person. Historically, evaders have suffered horribly from dysentery after being forced by necessity, to drink stagnant, putrid water on the run in evasion situations. Even if you cannot or will not carry a dedicated water bottle, the prevalence of store-bought bottled drinking water, soda, and sports drinks, means that you should always be able to find a useful receptacle to carry your water, as long as you can purify it to make it safe for drinking. Whether a small contained of iodine tablets, a filter straw, or a pocket-sized "standard" water purifier, it is critical to possess safe, clean drinking water to stay alive, healthy, and effective (I personally still use a product called "ION Stabilized Oxygen" for water purification. I've

used it all over the world, purifying water from stock tanks and ditches, without ever getting ill. It's smaller, lighter, and more effective than any micro-filter method I've seen or used. I can keep a bottle in a cargo pocket and forget that it's even there. I've heard of course, even from commenters here on the blog, that it is nothing more than bleach. I don't know how it works, or why. I do know it's FDA approved for water purification–for whatever that endorsement may be worth to you–and I know it's worked for me.)

Food can be equally difficult to carry in quantity in the survival load. While Clif Bars and other sports nutrition bars are an often-voiced option, even they take up quite a bit of space when your carry options are limited to pocket space. My answer to this, as recently espoused in a letter that was posted to Western Rifle Shooters, is to suck it up, buttercup. In a survival situation, you're going to be hungry. Deal with it. The Rule of Threes says you can go three weeks without dying, so a week before you can find some more food is certainly do-able. For people with dietary-based medical issues like Diabetes or hypoglycemia, I don't have any simple answers.

Shelter for the survival load is fundamentally the clothes you are wearing, and your ability to construct shelter in the field. From tents and jungle hammocks to poncho hooches and bushcraft lean-tos, the ability to get the rain and other precipitation off of you, and methods to trap your body heat, or other heat sources, like fires, is critical to survival in cold-weather conditions. In hot-weather conditions, shelter can be equally important, if for no other purpose than providing shade to protect you from heat and direct solar radiation.

Cordage is, rightly, considered a critical tool in the survivor's tool kit. The simple truth is, outside of a good knife, there are few things of more practical use for shelter construction than high-quality, high-strength cordage. Many long-range surveillance units (LRSU) and some ODAs make it part of their SOPs to to replace the laces in their field boots with 550 cord. It's out of the way, readily accessible, and the survivor is never without the requisite material to construct field expedient shelters (to this day, every pair of boots and shoes I own has the laces replaced with 550 cord).

The Survival Load Conclusions

Different "experts" on survival will recommend different elements to add to the survival load. One issue with this is that, depending on your outlook, there is either no such thing as a "survival expert," since only someone who has HAD to subsist off his survival gear could be considered to have earned this title, and then only in the specific environment where this occurred. Additionally, we are all survival experts, by the definition of we're still upright and breathing.

When looking at the "survival load" as part a layered, tiered approach to equipment however, a minimalist approach, reinforced by solid, realistic field-craft training and survival lore, will more than adequately provide the essentials needed to keep the evader alive during escape and evasion scenarios in the remote chance that he has to ditch his fighting and sustainment loads, or is compromised and forced to E&E without the ability to procure and utilize his normal fighting and sustainment loads.

The Fighting Load

To preface this section, it is critically important that one understand that the selection of tactical equipment in preparation for future social unpleasantness must be predicated on some major philosophical constraints. Among these is the recognition that the world and nation we know is rapidly imploding around us. If this recognition exists, there are some critical issues that must be addressed. The first of these is in regard to the degree of seriousness with which one prepares. If it is simply a hobby in which you participate, because you enjoy shooting guns (and your wife tolerates your gun-hobby if you label it "preparedness"), that's okay. There is certainly nothing wrong with that in a free society (of course, there's also nothing wrong with me calling you a fucking moron, either). If that is the case, you don't need to invest any more time or money than you feel like spending. You will get along just fine with inexpensive, airsoft-quality gear and base-level, budget-priced firearms and tools. However, if you genuinely believe that "bad times, they are a-comin'," then you obligate yourself to look at your preparations in a far more serious light. In this brighter, more harshly focused light, then genuine quality becomes a far more crucial issue. How much is your life actually worth to you? How about the lives of your spouse and children? What about a successful restoration of the Constitution and the Republic?

Load-Bearing Equipment

Keeping the previously mentioned importance of maintaining the lightest possible load for the partisan in the woodsman-scout motif firmly in the forefront of deliberation, the foundation of the 2nd tier, Fighting Load is the load-bearing equipment, or LBE. While it is certainly possible for the guerrilla or auxiliary Home Guard partisan to toss a spare rifle magazine in his pocket, a bag of lunch and a blanket in a knapsack, and traipse off to war, experiences and battle damage assessments (BDA) from Afghanistan have demonstrated that this is far from an ideal way to go about this business (on numerous occasions, following airstrikes on Taliban/AQ positions, SFODAs conducted BDA and found numerous dead enemy fighters with this exact load-out). Such a poorly equipped fighter is, while certainly capable of wreaking great levels of havoc and despair on his enemies, regardless of the depth of his religious motivation, a lousy match for an equally-devoted and well-trained fighter with proper equipment.

While the partisan may spend a great deal of time in nothing more than his basic 1st tier "survival load," whenever the situation permits, he is not going to willingly choose to go to a fight, even an unintended fight, with only his survival load.

Unfortunately, with the wide variety of different LBE available on the current market, making a suitable selection can be daunting for the unschooled. Should he copy the equipment used by an infantryman of the 82nd Airborne Division or the 1st Marine Division? Perhaps a set-up like that used by a member of the Ranger Regiment or the SEAL Teams would be cooler? Considering the difference in missions, logistics support, and organization of these different units, the answer should be readily apparent that none of these selections would be appropriate for the partisan.

The partisan must, as in every thing he does, look at this task through the filter of METT-TC. What is his mission? What is his suspected likely enemy situation going to be? What Troops will he available to him, including auxiliary support? What time factors will play a part (will he be operating at night, or only during daylight hours? All year round, or only in "good weather)?" What kind of Terrain will he

be operating in (the alpine deserts and forests of the Redoubt require a different approach to load-outs than the urban jungle of large urban areas or the dense hardwood forests and swamps of the Old South)? You must base your fighting load on the likely projected circumstances of your future operational environment. While it is obvious that you will likely not possess the logistical support services available to the conventional military or law enforcement forces, it is also critical to realize that even many historical guerrilla models will not fit.

The American Prepper Partisan (ooh, another new Mosby-term?) cannot realistically expect much help from external sources such as friendly foreign nation-states, such as enjoyed by the Viet Cong from the PAVN and the PLA. The Syrian and Iranian governments aren't likely to support American partisans following an international grid-down situation., nor are the Saudis and Pakis, as they supported the mujihadeen and Taliban in Afghanistan, through the ISI. Even during World War Two, the French Resistance, from whom this blog borrowed its original title, enjoyed an extremely high level of material, moral, and technical support from the Allied Forces High Command. Instead, the American Prepper Partisan will necessarily be forced to "live off the land," turning to his friends and family within the auxiliary as well as pre-positioned caches, battlefield re-supply, and whatever he can carry on his person, for logistics support.

While the utilization of auxiliary support may facilitate the use of vehicles for transportation of both personnel and supplies, the ability of potential regime or foreign security forces to utilize both airborne and space-borne surveillance and reconnaissance assets for vehicle-tracking and pursuit, as well as probable fuel and spare parts shortages on the open and black markets, will mean that vehicular transportation for partisan forces will in many cases, be extremely limited. The resultant need to revert to "primitive" light-infantry, traditional foot-mobile travel will act as a limiting factor in the fighting and sustainment loads of partisans.

The Ex-Girlfriend

For several decades, following it's official adoption in 1973 (although development unofficially started in 1961, and it was just a lighter weight modification of stuff that'd been used since at least World War Two), the standard issue load-bearing equipment of the the ground forces of the US military was the LC-1 and LC-2 "ALICE" system. Comprised of a wide, thick pistol belt with various equipment pouches and canteens suspended from it, this system used a pair of nylon suspenders to help hold the loaded belt around the soldier's mid-section. The ALICE system was sufficient, if not ideal (in other words, she'd do, but she was a moody bitch at times…). Drawbacks included the fact that the ammunition pouches were cumbersome and slow to reload from, the canteens carriage tended to result in occasionally disabling (and always annoying) chafing and more serious injuries (I once sustained a seriously bruised pelvis from performing a PLF–parachute landing fall–on to my canteen. It left me with a pronounced limp for several weeks), and the disheartening reality that the system was neither well-balanced on the soldier's body, nor ergonomic for the soldier's need shoot, move, and communicate.

The Hot, Young, New Girlfriend

In the middle 1990s, the Army's Natick Laboratories, in cooperation with elements of the United States

Special Operations Command and the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as several defense manufacturers, began development of a new, modular, lightweight load-bearing system based around the Pouch Attachment Ladder System (PALS). This system is known as MOLLE (although MOLLE is technically proprietary to Natick Labs, it's the common usage term for any type of gear that utilizes the PALS attachment system). MOLLE, like most women, has her issues, but overall, has turned out to be a pretty decent lady.

This new system, first adopted by elements of the Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the USMC in 1997, did not see widespread adoption until 2001. It offers several distinct advantages over the older ALICE gear. With MOLLE, equipment-carrying lay-out can be tailored to the mission-specific needs of the individual. Since the equipment can be spread more evenly over the individual's torso, instead of everything hanging off the pistol belt, it rides closer to the body's center-of-gravity, leading to reduced fatigue, as well as less interference with general combat athleticism.

The current, ready and inexpensive availability of the older ALICE gear on the military surplus market (although it seems to be disappearing quickly these days), makes it an obvious, popular choice for many survivalists. Between the low-expense, as well as the familiarity with the gear for many older survivalists who used the gear while in the service, there is nothing inherently wrong with the selection of ALICE gear as a primary fighting load system. For all intents and purposes however, outside of your being a cheap bastard, or holding a nostalgic affection for "the good old days," or "back when it was HARD," the advantages of a MOLLE-based system for fighting load carrying makes it a far better choice.

General LBE Considerations and SMOLES

Especially when we consider the SMOLES considerations, the choice of MOLLE becomes more self-evident as the smart money bet. The foundation of a MOLLE-based 2nd Tier fighting load comes in one of three basic forms: the plate carrier, the chest harness, and the newer, "War Belt," which is really not new at all, but a MOLLE-based derivative of an age-old concept, the equipment belt. Making your decision on which system to adopt should be honestly, and objectively, based on a METT-TC analysis, and the SMOLES considerations.

Self-Defense

Since the Fighting Load is the load we would choose to carry if we knew or expected we were going to a fight, it is imperative to look at it, first and foremost, as a Self-Defense load-out. That can mean that everything is predicated on "Shoot, Move, Communicate," while carrying your primary weapon.

Plate carriers, designed to carry ceramic or metal plates that provide direct protection from high-velocity, small-arms threats, offer one huge benefit over chest harnesses and "war belts:" assuming they are equipped with those body armor plates (and there's no reason to wear a plate carrier if they're not), they fucking stop bullets! The use of ballistic armor in the form of rifle-round defeating hard plates, has saved an untold number of American lives from small-arms fire as well as the shrapnel threats from IEDs and indirect-fire weapons that were all the older "FLAK" jacket body armor would protect against.

For the partisan however, there are several mitigating drawbacks to plate carriers that must be considered. First among these is the fact that the weight of body armor MAY be detrimental to mobility for the foot-mobile light-infantryman. While no one who has ever been on a two-way firing range will (at least in my experience) argue the inherent value of body armor, there are some within the military who have questioned whether some of the lives "saved" by body armor were not in fact "saved," but had their hits caused by the inability to move fast enough to avoid getting shot in the first place.

Certainly, the use of full-spectrum "Outer Tactical Vests" (OTV)uch as the military-issue "Interceptor," with groin protection, side plates, deltoid shoulder protection, and throat guards, are best left to dudes who ride around in MRAPs and Strykers. The weight of these system and the resulting decrease in mobility is largely what led to the development of "stand alone" rifle plates that don't need "soft armor" behind them to protect against rifle caliber fire, and "plate carriers" to hold them. These are smaller, lighter body armor developments that hold the ballistic plate over the vital areas of the torso, both front and back. Currently, there are plate carrier systems available that, combined with ceramic, multi-hit protection, NIJ Level III rifle plates, weigh significantly less than 10 pounds. Unlike the OTV systems, these provide adequate rifle protection while not limiting the mobility of the wearer, allowing him to both shoot and move effectively, while being reasonably well-protected.

Most plate carriers available today are covered, front and back, with PALS webbing, allowing the fighter, soldier or partisan, the ability to attach his load-bearing pouches directly to the plate carrier. This is probably the most common method of using the plate carrier (although I will describe below an alternative system that I, and many others of similar background, feel is a far better system).

Chest harnesses, unlike plate carriers, are simply light-weight panels of nylon with PALS webbing, that cover all or part of the front of the torso. While the chest harness suffers from the obvious drawback of not offering any ballistic protection whatsoever, they do offer increased mobility, due to their lighter weight. The fighter can move much faster, and possibly more quietly, with a loaded chest harness on than with the same load attached to a plate carrier, with the added weight and rigidness of the plates inside. In hot weather (Extreme Weather Conditions–see below), the reduced weight and increased ventilation offered by a chest harness, versus the plate carrier can have a significantly beneficial impact on survivability, due to the reduced risk of heat-related injury.

One of the loudest complaints about the chest harness MOLLE system in the past has been lower back strain resulting from the load being unbalanced towards the front of the body. While this can be remedied by the addition of a small assault pack or a full hydration bladder on the back, a new model of MOLLE load-bearing gear was developed that also served as an answer to the problem.

The war belt, or "battle belt," system involves the use of an "outer belt" covered in PALS webbing nested outside of a stiff inner belt that suspends the load around the hips. Often, but not always (I don't use them, for example), the load of the belt will be supported by suspenders, like the older ALICE gear. This system initially found favor in the civilian tactical shooting community, quickly followed by elements of the Special Operations community and PMC contractors.

(I actually currently run a combination of all three of these, ironically, in a tiered system that kind of

replicates the older RACK–Ranger Assault Carrying Kit– and the ALICE gear we ran in the Ranger Regiment in the 1990s. It consists of a low-profile plate carrier, with a chest harness over that, and a war belt. This allows me a very modular approach to my LBE set up, as well as the ability to retain or ditch elements as necessary.)

The selection of which load-bearing set-up you use, whether a plate carrier, chest harness, war belt, combination, or an older ALICE system, is dependent solely on a honest and objective METT-TC analysis, including your fitness levels, preferences, perceived future missions (are a G, or the auxiliary?), and of course, current budgetary influence (However, in this last case, there are some serious considerations that need to be made. With the current demand for MOLLE gear for the military, law enforcement militarization, and the civilian enthusiast, there are a vast number of companies producing MOLLE gear in one form or another. Unfortunately, this high level of demand also means that the cost of quality MOLLE gear is still relatively high, especially when compared to older, surplus ALICE gear. While it is possible to procure less expensive imported gear, it is imperative to remember that most of the imported gear manufactured in the People's Republic of China (PRC), is intended solely for the recreational airsoft culture. While it looks, at first glance, comparable to hard-use gear, relying on equipment intended for a kid's game in a life-or-death situation is stupid. The fact that some private in the 101st was dumb enough to buy it, and his NCOs were dumb enough to let him use it, is not evidence that it is suitable for actual combat use, especially if that dumb-ass private and dumb-ass NCO were say, an administration unit or something similarly non-combat arms. Having left the FOB once, to run some paperwork to Baghdad, does not make you a stone-cold killing, combat arms expert.

If you go forth and "invest" in the cheap ass airsoft gear for your load-bearing equipment, and subsequently die due to an equipment failure, I will personally make it a point to laugh at your funeral.

The following manufacturers have my ringing personal endorsement, for whatever that may be worth to you: Eagle Industries, High-Speed Gear Incorporated (HSGI), Special Operations Technologies, Original Special Operations Equipment (OSOE), 5.11, Shellback Tactical–I LOVE the Banshee Plate Carrier–and Tactical Tailor. Those are endorsed by me solely because I have used their equipment, or do use their equipment, and have found it trustworthy. If another gear manufacturer wants my endorsement for some fucking reason, let me know. If I haven't run your gear, I'll let you send me some for T&E…just be forewarned, I'll be honest, for better or for worse.)

As we look at deciding which set-up to select, and how to set it up, we have to return to the Shoot-Move-Communicate necessities. Your gear absolutely cannot prohibit your movement or combat athleticism. If it's too heavy, or too bulky, you either need to do more PT (probably), or you need to look at different load-out systems and/or ditching some gear.

When we look at the requirement to "shoot," we're actually looking at all the necessities of required to direct lethal force on the enemy. Primary amongst these of course is the rifle. That however, is a topic somewhat separate from the load-bearing equipment itself, so it's been covered elsewhere. Second to the weapon, is the ability to continue feeding the hungry beast. Opinions on how much ammunition the individual should carry on his fighting load differs, based on whom you ask and what their specific mission experience entails. Some tactical trainers will insist that, for the armed citizen, no more than three or four rifle magazines will ever conceivably be needed. Former Special Operations Sergeant

Major (SGM) Kyle Lamb (USA, retired), of Viking Tactics, is an advocate of this approach, even for military special operations. As he explains, logically, in his excellent book "Green Eyes, Black Rifles," three magazines of 30 rounds each (like myself, the SGM advocates loading a 30 round magazine with…30 rounds!), equals 90 rounds. Assuming it takes three rounds per bad guy to kill him, that still allows for 30 dead guys accounted for by each shooter before he runs out of ammunition. If a person is in THAT serious of a fight, then either he'll have plenty of buddies around to borrow a magazine from, or there will be plenty of rifles and magazines laying around to pick up. There's a lot to be said for that argument, including the fact that such a minimalist load will do a great deal towards ensuring maximum mobility for the fighter (MSG Paul Howe, a veteran of the same unit as SGM Lamb, concurs with the SGM for that very reason).

On the other hand, unlike a member of that unit, the partisan fighter, like the SF soldier in an UW role, does not have the option of counting on a "speedball" re-supply getting dropped on the objective, not the ability to readily call for a helicopter-borne quick-reaction force (QRF) if help is suddenly needed. It is entirely possible, and far from uncommon, for every soldier in an UW, small-unit element, such as an SFODA or a LRSU team, to run through more than three magazines performing just one "break contact" battle drill. Additionally, in the event of a break contact, it is entirely plausible that, while performing an exfiltration from the immediate area of the fight, an UW unit could be forced into further contact with pursuing forces, before having the opportunity to re-supply from a pre-positioned re-supply cache. It should be considered that the US Army doctrinal "basic load" of ammunition is 210 rounds, and the average conventional force infantryman has a lot more buddies around to call for help, including CAS (close-air support), indirect-fire weapons, and QRF, than you will (as a young Ranger, I was blessed to have a squad leader who encouraged us to carry nine magazines on our old ALICE LBE, instead of six, and one in the rifle. As an 18B NCO in SF, my personal rule was to carry 12 full magazines: one in my rifle, one in a butt-pouch on the rifle, and ten on my LBE. My current standard is 12 magazines: one in the rifle, three on my war belt, and eight on my chest harness). My recommendation is, "carry as much ammunition as you are physically capable of carrying, as long as it does not preclude your being able to physically perform the job you've assumed." (Want to test your load? Can you perform a 300-meter shuttle run in less than 1:30 minutes, with your gear on? Can you run an 800 meter sprint, through the woods, cross-country, in no more than half-again as long as it takes you without gear on? If so, you're probably alright. If not, you either need to dump some gear, or do more PT…probably the latter) While this certainly adds more weight to the load-out, considering the possibilities of being out-numbered and pursued by numerically superior forces, it's unlikely that you will ever be carrying "too much" ammunition (As I tell people in classes, "I've never been in a gunfight, after which anyone said, 'Damn, I had way too much ammo! I should've left some of that shit in the rear.!' I have however, been in more than one fight, where halfway through it, people were screaming, "Dude, I'm out! Toss me a magazine!")

Magazine pouches today run the spectrum from single-mag to double- or even triple-stack configurations, both open-top and flap-covered. They can be had in soft nylon and hard kydex. The argument is often made, rightly, that open-tops offer the benefit of a faster speed reload. If you need a speed reload, you need the fastest speed reload you can manage, and an open-top magazine pouch can facilitate that. On the other hand however, an open-top magazine pouch is susceptible to the magazine falling out under stress, at least in theory, as well as the infiltration of dirt, mud, and debris, which could lead to malfunctions of the rifle.

Flap-topped magazine pouches, on the other hand, while significantly slower to execute a speed reload from (predicated on equal training and practice with both types), offer greater security and protection for the magazine.

(Personally, I run a combination. I run three open-topped HSGI "Kangaroo" style "Taco" pouches on my war belt. I've yet to lose a magazine from one of these pouches, due to the unique bungee-cord based retention system they use, and putting the magazines in the pouch open-end down precludes mud and debris being an issue. On my Tactical Tailor MAV chest harness, I run four double-stack, flap-covered magazine pouches. This offers me added protection for most of my ammunition load-out, while still facilitating speed reloads when necessary, from the war belt. It's imperative to note however, that I've trained myself to only perform speed reloads from the belt. "Tactical" reloads always come from the chest harness. This system also allows me, in the event I have to ditch my chest harness, to still have three magazines on my war belt to continue to prosecute the fight with, or as is more likely, to protect myself as I escape-and-evade.)

While your concealed carry sidearm is part of the 1st Line "survival load," it should be noted that there are various other options for carrying it once your LBE is added (although I do know one former Team Sergeant from SF who carries a concealed sidearm, AND another on his 2nd Tier Fighting Load! He's about 18 times the bad ass I could ever aspire to be however.) For most of us, the facility of using a concealed carry holster, under our LBE is greatly reduced. In these cases, any number of holsters can work well, depending on the preferences of the individual. It should be noted however, that it is important to remember that the sidearm is, ultimately, a next-to-last-ditch weapon, followed only by the fighting knife and unarmed combatives. As such, it should probably remain attached to the individual, rather than the actual fighting load LBE, in case that needs to be ditched, as in an escape-and-evasion scenario. To me, this precludes mounting the holster on your plate carrier or chest harness.

Selection of a holster however, should entail consideration of a few critical elements. First of these, is that, if you are wearing body armor, or other LBE that covers a significant portion of your torso, traditional belt-holsters can be problematic as the LBE can inhibit your draw stroke of the weapon. Further, while some "experts" have advocated for the use of flap covers, such as on the old M12 from Bianchi (in fact, I should remove the sarcastic quote marks around experts, because the aforementioned former Team Daddy uses a flap holster, to the best of my recollection). The reasoning behind this is that the flap can keep dirt and mud from getting lodged in the holster, protecting the sidearm. Since that's the reason flaps were originally used, it's a pretty sound argument. Unfortunately, in my experience, if I need my sidearm, I need it right-fucking-now, if not yesterday. The M12 is a slow motherfucker to draw from. I've run a metric shit-ton of holsters, from the old Eagle Industries SAS drop-leg, to drop-legs that the riggers built me, to Safariland (my personal favorite and what I carry today). I've never had a problem with getting so much mud accumulated around the gun that I couldn't get it out and functioning when I needed it, even when I ran finicky guns like 1911s.

It really doesn't matter what kind of holster you choose, as long as it keeps the gun in the holster until you want it to come out, and at that point, it lets it out in a hurry (I run a Safariland ALS on a drop-leg panel). I've favored a drop-leg holster for as long as I've been able to carry a sidearm in the field. While some supposed internet "experts" deride drop-leg holsters as suitable only for the airsoft crowd

and "keyboard commandoes," this is ignorance speaking. Remember that this design was introduced to the world of gunfighting by none other than the British SAS. From the sands of North Africa during World War Two, to the Princess Gate hostage rescue, to the mountains of Afghanistan today, David Stirling's boys stand second to no one as a fighting unit. The drop-leg holster is not intended to be worn Hollywood gunslinger style, around your knee, a la Angelina Jolie in "Tomb Raider." It should be worn just low enough to clear your body armor and LBE–the reason it was designed in the first place–but otherwise, as high as possible on the thigh. In such a position, it is still more than adequately comfortable for long-term wear while moving on foot, and it stays in one place, ensuring it will still be accessible when it is needed, as it will be, in a hurry.

In addition to rifle ammunition and a sidearm (which, ultimately, it is important to realize, is in no way a mandatory addition to the fighting load. While I would personally not forego my sidearm in order to forego a few pounds, especially since I consider it a critical portion of my 1st Tier "Survival Load," it is easily legitimate to say that you don't need a sidearm on your 2nd Line "Fighting Load," unless you feel you need it.) the 2nd Tier load-out also needs to include spare ammunition for the sidearm. These can be integrated into the design of rifle magazine pouches, as they often are, or if you have adequate real estate on your LBE, they can be separate pouches (Since I run a war belt with "Kangaroo" pouches, I run three G17 magazines for my G19. Before I started using a war belt, I kept them in Kydex pouches on my trouser belt).

A combat/utility knife can be considered under the "shoot-move-communicate" category, due to it's potential use as a fighting tool. Due to it's primary role, in my mind, as a utility knife (since I don't live in the martial arts fantasy world that so many people do…I know Gun-Fu beats tanto-jutsu or any Filipino martial arts, hands down), I relegate it to the "Survival" category instead, with its acknowledged potential as a weapon duly noted.

Under the sub-category heading of "Communicate," we have to look at how we intend to communicate with others in our element, in the field. In addition to the obvious radio option (entirely too organizational dependent for me to even begin providing recommendations for, even if I were a commo guy, which I'm not, being a lowly knuckle-dragger and all. Hopefully, MSG Daniel Morgan will take the time to pen us an article on his recommendations? The only note I will add is that, even as a knuckle dragger, unlike a lot of "survival" and "tactical preparedness," I've received enough signals intercept-based intelligence to recognize that the weak signal strength of commonly available FRS/GMRS radios are actually a benefit for tactical level intra-team use, since limited range means limited intercept potential), I would offer the suggestion of adding a signal mirror (optional, but oh so very multi-functional, since I use it to apply camouflage), and a patrol whistle (Ask anyone who's taken a patrolling class with me, how useful the patrol whistile ends up being, even when there are radios present…) One often overlooked option for communications is some variation of simplified semaphore, even if it's just waving a bright-colored flag at your support-by-fire element to signal a "cease fire." The old tactical stand-by of sewing a piece of brightly colored VS-17 panel into the top of your patrol cap, or the inside back of your uniform blouse should not be overlooked (The VS-17 panel is a large ground-to-air signal panel of nylon material. It is fluorescent pink on one side and blaze orange on the other. They're a pain in the ass to locate at Army Surplus stores, although they seem to still be readily available from internet sources).

Medical

A serious injury or wound can be the single most mobility-reducing issue to impact the partisan. With the development of the oft-mentioned on this blog, Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TC3) protocols, there exists a useful, working, single, doctrinal methodology for providing battlefield aid to casualties that makes complete sense, and takes into account the realities of the battlefield (sometimes, "good medicine is bad tactics, and good tactics are bad medicine," but "the best medicine on the battlefield is fire superiority!") Predicated on actually receiving functional TC3 training in Care-Under-Fire (CUF) and Tactical Field Care (TFC), your 2nd Tier Fighting Load medical gear should be a Blow-Out Kit (BOK) built around those principles. The equipment required is minimal, weighs very little, and will compact into a very small space, but it WILL prevent death from small-arms fire wounds if treated properly and rapidly (My BOK currently resides on my war belt, and fits into a double-stack flap-covered rifle magazine pouch. It includes a pair of nitrile surgical gloves, a Fr28 Nasopharyngeal Airway, a package of H&H Compressed Gauze, two occlusive dressing chest seals, a 3.25-inch needle catheter for needle decompression of a pneumothorax, and a 4-inch Israeli Battlefield Dressing–IBD, as well as a combat pill pack of analgesics in the form of Tylenol, and broad-spectrum antibiotics. I do NOT carry my three CAT-T tourniquets in the magazine pouch. Two are attached externally, to my war belt, and one is 100-mph taped to the stock of my rifle. It is critical that tourniquets be readily accessible to you or a buddy providing aid, without having to search for them, or dig through your BOK to locate them. I've currently got an order in for a new BOK pouch that takes up the same space as the magazine pouch, but folds out, and will hold an extra IBD and an extra package of compressed gauze. I tuck a pair of bandage scissors wherever I can fit them, tucked into the PALS webbing on my gear, usually, behind one of my magazine pouches on my chest harness, or on my plate carrier.)

Do NOT include "boo-boo" medical gear in your BOK on your fighting load. All it will do is get in the fucking way when somebody is trying to dig through your shit to patch you up in a hurry.

Observation/Optics

For the 2nd Tier Fighting Load, observation/optics play a more critical role than they do in the 1st Tier Survival Load. These may include binoculars, spotting scopes, and other STANO devices. I've carried a small pair of 8-10 power binoculars in the past, as well as a 10X monocular on my Fighting Load. I never particularly liked the monocular, since it led to undue eye-strain (I currently carry an inexpensive, but adequate pair of 10X compact Bushnell binoculars, after dropping a pair of Steiners off a fucking cliff in Utah. If someone wants to donate a pair of Steiners, I'll gladly accept). The methods of carrying your STANO on your fighting load vary, from dedicated MOLLE compatible hard cases to protect the lenses and electronic components, to simply wrapping them in an old sock and shoving them in a pouch somewhere. Some guys even still tuck a small pair of binoculars under their gear and shirt, on a string around their neck (My Fighting Load STANO load-out includes the aforementioned Bushnell binoculars, and a US Night Vision Company PVS-14. Both are wrapped in old wool socks, and then crammed inside of a general-purpose utility pouch on the front of my MAV chest harness. Additionally, while I also carry the aforementioned Streamlight in my pocket as part of my 1st Tier Survival Load, I carry a Petzl headlamp in the same pouch with my Fighting Load STANO items.)

Land Navigation

(In addition to an orienteering compass around my neck, I keep a tritium-illuminated, USGI lensatic compass on my chest. This rides in a grenade/admin pouch on the MAV, along with my signal mirror and patrol whistle, mentioned under communications in "Self-Defense" above. I carry my topo maps in a cargo pocket or, if I'm wearing jeans, tucked into the kangaroo pouch on my plate carrier.)

Extreme Weather Conditions

(I don't really carry anything relevant specifically to this on my fighting load, since it's taken care of as part of my Survival Load-Out and my 3rd Tier Sustainment Load.)

Survival

Remembering Maslow's Heirarchy of Needs, as well as the Rule of Threes, approaching the Fighting Load survival gear is pretty simple. First of all, we've got the quintessential survival tool, the knife. As mentioned above, the combat/utility knife will most generally, see its primary usage for general field craft and utility applications, but the potential is there for its use in the anti-personnel role . One perennially popular selection amongst professionals, in my experience, is the classic USMC stand-by, the Kabar (or any of it's legitimate, government contract alternatives, such as the Ontario or the Camillus). Developed during World War Two, and originally (and I believe technically, still properly) designated the MK2, the Kabar as a well-earned reputation as both a general utility tool and an effective fighting weapon (despite the best efforts of Bill Bagwell, the one-time "Battle Blades" columnist for Soldier of Fiction…err…Fortune Magazine to tarnish or dispel that hard-won reputation. Considering that Bagwell was renowned as a BIG Bowie knife cutler, and an advocate of a classical European-fencing style of knife combatives training, that was somewhat understandable. However, when you consider that the MK2 was adopted at a time when the Marine Corps still taught the Fencing-style of knife combatives, under the influence of guys like LTC Anthony Drexel-Biddle and John Styers, it's a little less understandable…it still works really well for the "put the pointy end in the soft spots" school of knife combatives that I personally subscribe to. As I've mentioned, numerous times, my selection for a Fighting Load knife has run the gamut from the Cold Steel push-daggers to the RAT 3, and even, back-in-the-day, or Back-When-It-Was-Hard, to the Gerber MKII dagger…I always seem to keep coming back to some variation of the MK2. Currently, it's an original Ontario, Army-issue variant. In fact, the S-4 sticker is still on the leather sheath…It's just a hard knife to beat when you look at the actual role a knife on the Fighting Load is intended to fulfill. I carried a Camillus version in Afghanistan.)

Oxygen. It's entirely plausible, if you see the use of chemical weapons, such as tear gas, by your perceived potential enemies, to add a protective mask to your fighting load (I don't, so I don't have any recommendations. The only time I ever wore a ProMask in the military was when it was–rarely–required for sustainment training).

Water. Carrying a Camelback or other hydration system, attached to the Fighting Load is an extremely common practice. The convenience of having the water tight to your body, and readily accessible for drinking, while moving, from the drink tube, makes it an apparent no-brainer…especially if you're not

carrying a rucksack much. On the other hand, if you expect to actually carry your ruck, the way it was designed, on your back, a 100 oz bladder can cause serious imbalance of the load. On the other hand, the old, kidney-shaped one-quart canteens, while they worked well, when seated against your ass-cheeks on the ALICE pistol belt, take up a lot of unnecessary real estate on most MOLLE configurations, adding one more advantage to the wide-mouth, hard Lexan, Nalgene-style water bottles. Additionally, the wide-mouths of the Lexan bottles allow for easier cleaning, as well as the addition of various drink powder mixes, such as Gatorade, which can enhance rehydration efforts (on the other hand, as I write this, it occurs to me, I've never bothered trying to place the old-style one-quarts on my war belt. While the Lexan bottles don't fit particularly well, I can see the potential for the canteens to fit well….Fuck me, now I've got to adjust my gear again and try it out…)

In addition to your water carrying method, a means of purification is in order. One other advantage of the wide-mouthed bottle design, is the existence of various backpacker-type purification systems that screw right onto the mouth of these bottles (I personally stick with the ION Drops for the fighting load too). Water bladders also, however, like the Camelback, have in-line filtration systems available, although those result in contamination of the bladder itself that must be dealt with later. They also offer filtration systems for use while filling the bladder that can be an option.

(I currently use two wide-mouth Nalgene bottles, attached to my chest harness, in 5.11 VTAC water bottle pouches. They look cumbersome, but haven't seemed to interfere with my ability to "shoot-move-communicate" in the slightest)

Food. As with the Survival Load, I tend to lean towards the idea that food in a combat situation, is an over-rated luxury. On the other hand, I am cognizant of the fact that most people are not the caloric masochist that I am, and in fact, I do carry food in my Fighting Load. This can range from a field-stripped MRE (as MSG Daniel Morgan alluded to in his suggestions in the WV AAR). This is simply disposing of the thick-ass plastic outer bag, and keeping only those items inside that you will actually eat, such as the Main Entree, any particularly delectable side dishes or deserts (How's that for an oxymoron? Delectable in an MRE?), and the powdered drink mixes. The little pieces of Chiclet-looking gum reputedly have an anti-constipation, laxative effect, so if you eat MREs, make sure you eat the gum (We used to have a dude that would come back from a week in the field, having not taken a shit the entire time. He'd down a half bottle of laxative, then shit a turd so long and big, it would literally displace all the water in the toilet….use the gum!).

Alternatively, emergency rations in your fighting load (and make no mistake, they are emergency rations. If you're eating them, it ought to be because you've lost your sustainment load somehow…) could be anything from sports nutrition bars like Clif Bars (I generally have Clif Bars), although these can get pretty rank in hot weather, or some form of backpacker's Gorp-type trail mix (HH6 is particularly fond of a homemade trail mix I make for her that includes peanut butter, raw sugar, rolled oats, M&Ms, and whatever kind of nuts the local bulk goods grocery has in the bins that look like they might work well). I used to know a guy who stashed Peanut M&Ms in his LBE, as well as a one-pound block of mild cheddar cheese and a plastic jar of Crunchy Peter Pan peanut butter (the latter two only in winter). His claim was, the high amounts of fats in these helped stoke his internal furnace (makes sense to me, too. On the other hand, if you go this route, you'd better pack some laxative, or you'll be shitting monster turds too…).

Shelter. (In addition to the aforementioned combat/utility knife, I keep two basic shelter construction tools in my fighting load. First is an additional 25 feet of 550 cord, above what's on my boots. The second is a casualty blanket, tightly folded and rubber-band wrapped, that crams into the back of a utility pouch on my chest harness. Between the two, even in cold weather conditions, I can build a shelter, and stay warm. In extreme cold-weather, the addition of a small survival warming fire, like a Dakota-hole fire, will keep me alive, if not particularly comfortable.)

Equipment Lay-Out

Ultimately, the greatest advantage of the MOLLE/PALS system, is the ability of the individual to set-up his load-bearing equipment that works the best for him, based on his personal operational needs, and his particular physiognomy. Only a few general recommendations should be adhered to religiously, in my far from humble opinion.

Keep all of your ammunition where you can reach it, in a hurry. Some people will tell you that every magazine you carry must be equally accessible to either hand. I don't agree with that, but I do believe MOST of your ammunition should be readily accessible by either hand.

Keep your BOK where you can access it with either hand, in a hurry, while wounded. Keep it where others will be able to readily find it, under stress, with zero visibility. Make sure your BOK is clearly marked and identifiable. I don't subscribe to the need to stick a bright red tab or cross on it (in fact, I think the bright red tabs on many currently available BOK pouches are so far beyond stupid that they are close to the status of vanity: "Fuck camouflage! I'm bulletproof, so it doesn't matter if you see me!" Mine does get marked with a red paint pen, but the paint quickly dulls with exposure to the elements. It's visible, but only at close distances.) In fact, of all the items on your Fighting Load, I believe the BOK and the tourniquets are the only two that should be placed, in accordance with a unit SOP, in the same place for everyone.

Keep your tourniquets outside of your BOK. Keep them readily accessible, and easy to find. Keep a minimum of two on your fighting load.

Be able to get out of your gear, in a hurry, when you can't see, and perhaps, can't breathe (for instance, if you were to fall into water and were unable to swim to safety due to the weight…it's happened, more than once).

Be able to "shoot-move-communicate" in your fighting load. If you can't shoot, at least as accurately as you can without gear on, then you're gear is fucking you. Fix it. If you can't move at least 3/4 as fast with your gear on as you can without it on, either your gear is fucking you, or you're not doing strenuous enough PT. Fix it, one way or the other, before you get your buddy killed. Neither nature, God, nor the Zombies, give two shits about how old and crippled you are. When the fight comes, it will come dressed as itself, regardless of what you wish it to be. You'd better be fit enough to deal with it, because it's not going to give a shit about your excuses.

Conclusion

Like my previous article "Travel Light, Freeze at Night," on setting up and packing your Go-Bag, this article is not intended as specific recommendations on what you should carry for your Survival Load and Fighting Load. The use of SMOLES as a frame-of-reference, along with the appropriate

subcategories ("Shoot-Move-Communcate," as well as Maslow's Heirarchy and the Rule of Threes, specifically), should however, provide a very useful framework for you to begin developing a suitable and sustainable general equipment load-out, regardless of what role you see yourself playing in your community defense in the rapidly escalating unpleasantness.

Look at each aspect of SMOLES, for each Tier of your load-out, and measure them against the METT-TC analysis you can develop, then decide on what gear you need to have.

Appendix Two
MINE IS COOLER THAN YOURS IS!

(Like the previous, this Appendix is largely compiled from articles previously published on the Mountain Guerrilla blog)

This conversation is not intended to instigate a debate on the merits of the Stoner platform versus anything else, nor is it intended to foment discussion on 5.56mm ammunition versus anything else. The first has been largely dispelled—amongst serious students of armed combat—by the effective use of the weapon as the longest serving rifle in American military history. The second, I'm just not interested in discussing.

I know—as do most veterans of the last thirty years—that 5.56mm kills people, dead. 7.62x51mm kills people, dead. 7.62x39? It creates lots of wounds. I—and many of my contemporaries—choose to carry 5.56mm weapons, because it kills people dead, and we can carry a lot of it, so we can kill more people.

I get asked a lot, during classes, about why I set up my rifles the way I do, and what I recommend for others. To start with, I prefer rifles with a 14.5-16" barrel. This gives ample ballistic energy to ensure maximum performance of the 5.56mm engineering out to the common combative range of <200M (i.e. specifically, yaw of the round upon impact, leading to fracture at the cannellure, resulting in massive hemorrhage due to multiple wound channels, or at least a larger, more catastrophic wound channel), but still ensures the weapon is handy enough to not "get in the way" in tight confines, whether those are the

trees and brush in the forest, or the doors and windows in a built-up area.

I also prefer a 1:7 twist, which pretty much rules out most commercial grade AR-15s, with their 1:9 twist, except Colt. The reason behind this is, a) we run 62-grain, M855 "green tip" exclusively. The round—engineered as SS109 by the Belgians, for performance in the Minimi machine gun—while not as apparently "devastating" as the lighter, 55-grain M193 that preceded it, offers improved penetration.

It was specifically designed to penetrate Soviet soft body armor of the era, and a steel helmet at 600M (1/8 inch of steel). While some (most notably, in my mind, Paul Howe), have pointed at it's failure due to over penetration of malnourished individuals such as confronted in Somalia during the Battle of Bakara Market in 1993, the fact is, it does the job just fine, if you do yours, and shoot the bad guy where they need to be shot. Additionally, and of equal importance, is the 1:7 twist offers me the ability to load up to 77-grain MK262, if I so choose, further improving the range of the caliber, if for some reason I can no longer get M855 to to the trick.

Some really well-regarded instructors, including some I consider friends and all-around good guys, prefer a muzzle brake over a flash suppressor, because they run suppressors on all their guns. If you are going to ask permission to mount a "can," or blow off the permit system and run a can without the permission slip, a muzzle brake offers a lot of advantages over a flash suppressor, in the recoil mitigation department. I don't do either, yet, so I run flash suppressors to protect my night vision.

Further, well designed flash suppressors can actually function like a muzzle brake by reducing muzzle flip during the recoil cycle. We run either standard -A2 style birdcages or the YHM Phantom flash suppressors. For my money, these two designs, or variations thereof, are the best choice. A lot of guys really like the various 3-prong type flash suppressors, but I've never been a fan of the harmonics involved. That's a ME thing though, in all honesty.

As far as barrel profiles go, I prefer either a government profile, or a pencil barrel for the weight advantages. Are there trade-offs in accuracy? Maybe, but the fact that all my guns will shoot MOA or better tells me it's negligible.

All of our fore-ends are either free-floated. The accuracy difference is relatively minor, until you start looking at realistic practical shooting considerations, such as resting the rifle on something like a position of cover, to enhance accuracy.

For sights, I've previously advocated for a 1-4x variable-powered optic. That hasn't changed, but just like then, it's a METT-TC consideration. In most of Wyoming, 300 meters is rock-chucking distance, so 4x gets used, a lot. In western Montana or northern Idaho, 300 meters is a LONG, LONG way in the timber, and while the advantages of target identification are inarguable, the speed of a red dot sight may overwhelm it, in some circumstances.

On the other hand, there's really no excuse for NOT running an optic. I don't care how fast you THINK you are with your irons, or how accurate you THINK you are with your irons, it is a scientific, inarguable reality that—with proper training—you will shoot faster and MORE accurately, with an optic than with irons, all other things being equal.

No, the optic won't make your shooting fundamentals better, and it won't overcome shitty trigger control or body position. It will allow you to acquire the sight picture faster, and in most cases, to aim more precisely. I don't have a preference, as long as the optic comes from a serious, well-known, proven manufacturer.

Aimpoint obviously has a well-deserved reputation for quality, considering the tests they have passed as the M68 Close-Combat Optic (CCO), and a lot of guys really like the T-1 and H-1s. I know I kind of like them too, but can't afford one currently.

EoTech's I've always been really, really, REALLY ambivalent about. For awhile, they had a bad reputation because the battery terminals would work loose under recoil. SF legend Mike Pannone developed a cheap, easy fix for that, and it really works well—although having to add a field-expedient fix to a $500 piece of equipment should NEVER have to happen—and EoTech has apparently remedied the situation with their new generation of sideways mounted batteries. I will say, the more I use the EoTech, the more it grows on me. With the 1MOA center dot, I can literally shoot a 15-round, one-hole, smoking fast, at CQM ranges. With that 65-MOA outer donut, getting a CQM sight picture in the center of the upper thoracic cavity or hips is stupid fast.

I've been a fan of the Trijicon ACOG since I was first introduced to it as a young Ranger private, in the mid-1990s. The sight is ridiculously tough, needs no batteries, and has a ranging reticle out to 800+ meters, meaning hold-overs are retarded simple. That's assuming though that, a) you're running the round it was engineered for, and b) under the same environmental conditions it was engineered for.

I've also been an advocate of 1-4x optics with ranging reticles, even recognizing the same shortcoming in them. A lot of that is laziness on my part, because I hate doing the math to develop new range cards every time I move. A 1-4x with a mil-dot reticle works just as well, assuming you're not the lazy piece-of-shit I am.

I don't care how robust your optics are, you need a back-up sighting system. A lot of guys have started doing the 3-gun gamer thing and mounting a miniature red-dot sight on their gun as well as their primary optic. There's nothing wrong with that, but traditionally—and to most of us, still—back-up sights means back-up iron sights. I've used chopped-down -A2 style carrying handles, MagPul's MBUS, and a host of others. We're currently running the MaTech rear irons.

A fighting rifle had better have a white-light mounted on it. Show up at my class without a white-light mounted, of AT LEAST 80 lumen—and really, 200 should be your minimum—and I will give you shit about it for the duration of the class, since you'll be ineffective for 3/4 of the time right now. Winter in the northern Rockies means LOTS of low-light/no-light. I run a Streamlight TLR-1, with the 600-lumen lamp.

The last vertical grip mounted rifle in our arms room just lost it's VFG today. It was HH6's gun, and was used as a reference point for her, where to mount the gun. The "dildo" grip firing position has been obsolete for years, as we've learned the realities of what allows you to shoot quickly and accurately. Even Army SOF has gotten away from mounting VFGs from the reports I'm hearing from guys I trust.

I prefer the M16 bolt-carrier group (BCG), if for no other reason than, when the time comes to do so, I can drop my uppers onto the bad guy's select-fire lower and still have it function reliably. Ultimately though, the M16 BCG is what the platform was designed to run, so I try and stick with it.

All of our fire-control group parts are bare-bones mil-spec stock. I dropped in lighter springs on my personal rifle for a little while, but went back to the mil-spec because I didn't trust the tolerance stacking issues. I really, really like the Geisselle triggers, but don't run them for a couple of reasons, which will be discussed below—and the cost is a prohibitive issue for me. There's nothing stopping a guy from getting expert with a stock trigger, if he's willing to do the work and get it done.

Our stocks are all mil-spec style M4 collapsible stocks. I dig MagPul's basic MOE stock, but I absolutely HATE the SOPMOD stock from LMT. I just run the M4 stock because of familiarity.

Slings….ah, slings…I fucking hate slings, and 90% of the time, I don't even bother using mine, except when I'm teaching a class and need my hands free a lot. That having been said, slings have an important place, when used properly.

I don't know of any serious gunslinger or instructor who still advocates a three-point sling. I'd go so far as to say, if a guy is advocating the three-point sling, he's full of shit and doesn't know what he's talking about. Run away, as quickly as you can, from any such instructor. I'd be willing to be proven wrong, but I doubt it'll happen.

Single-points have been popular for a long time, and I've been a fan. I ran one for a long time. I think the biggest selling point for single-point slings, for most people, is the cool-guy CDI (chicks dig it) factor. Guys see Chris Costa, or Travis Haley, or Kyle Defoor running them, and want one. The reality is, I HATE single-point slings. Every time I drop the gun, whether to transition to my sidearm—doesn't happen nearly as often as a lot of training courses make it seem like does—or to go hands-on with someone, the fucking rifle nails me in the nuts. Ever tried to run forward getting slapped in the dick at every stride?

A quality two-point sling, such as Larry Vickers' design, available from Blue Force Gear, or the VTAC two-point from Viking Tactics, are the way to go. We run the VTAC version, because it's smaller, thinner, and lighter. If I was running a SAW again, I'd go with the padded version. I can transition easily to sidearm, edged-weapon, or hands-on, without worrying about my daughter's future siblings, I can sling the weapon all the way around behind me if I need to squat or kneel down to provide aid to a casualty, or to crawl up a wall, and with the good designs, they're easily adjustable whether I'm wearing my plate carrier or simply walking around the yard. Additionally, while I've NEVER seen a sniper actually sling up with his rifle in the field, I've seen—and used—a tightly adjusted two-point sling to stabilize my rifle for precision shots.

I tape a CAT-T to the stock of all of our rifles. While we run them on our LBE as well, the stock of the rifle is a really convenient place to keep one more, and I've got it, even if, for whatever reason—bump in the barnyard, in the middle of the night—I don't have the LBE or plate carrier on.

One of the biggest draws of the Stoner platform, is it's inherent modularity, and the ability to do some really "cool" stuff to it. Drop in enhanced triggers, heavier or lighter buffers, different length gas systems, or even piston systems, rails on top of rails, lights, lasers, grips, bipods, scopes and more can be added.

The problem is, as any first-year engineering student will tell you, is tolerance stacking. A machine—any machine—is engineered to run within certain parameters. As soon as you change something, such as increasing the suspension lift on a pick-up truck, you've changed the engineering of the machine. One change isn't that big a deal, and probably won't negatively impact the performance of the machine greatly. But, as you continue to change the original engineering—let's stick with the truck example—by adding different sized tires, and you start impacting fuel mileage and roll-over characteristics. Then, you change something else, such as pulling off the body and replacing it with a different body style. Then you pull the motor and throw in a different motor. Pretty soon, you're no longer driving the same machine that the original engineers designed. When it gets a shitty 4MPG, and rolls over on a highway turn at 25 MPH, you'll still blame the engineer though.

Same-same with a rifle. Stoner designed a rifle. Colt and the Army Ordnance Board changed the design and the weapon failed. When it was put back together the right way, it ran. Further engineering changes have been well-thought out, well-engineered, and tested changes. You can change anything you want on YOUR rifle, from drop-in triggers, to different barrels and adding whatever doo-dads you want. Just recognize that, whatever changes you make, you're changing the design of the weapon.

Secondly, look at what you're training and preparing for. It's cool to have say, an AK47 with a left-side charging handle. That's cool. Except, where else—in the entire world—are you EVER going to pick up and run an AK with a left-side charging handle?

I preach—and practice—to run your weapon as bare bones stock as possible, because I want to be able to pick up the same platform, from anyone, anywhere, and run it with the same manual of arms as I've trained with. Yes, this applies to southpaws too. I know it's easier to run a Stag-L than a regular AR, but how many people do you know run one? Where are you going to get a replacement when yours dies?

In essence, what I look for in a rifle set-up, is a weapon that is as light as possible, because I know I will be carrying it for long periods of time, and I don't want to carry a weapon so heavy it impacts my performance. Additionally, I want to run as stock as rifle as I can, without impacting my performance.

Finally, it is a machine, made of metal and plastic. Machines wear out. Stockpile replacement parts for your rifles. I had an extractor go out on a loaner rifle at the last Combat Rifle class. That rifle has somewhere around 30K rounds through it, and the extractor finally just shit the bed. It happens. It's not a failure of the rifle, but a failure of my preventive maintenance schedule.

While this is Stoner-specific, the principles apply whether your choice is a Stoner, a Kalashnikov, an M1A, or a FAL. Keep it as light as possible, run a sling when necessary, have a white light mounted, and keep it as stock as possible.

More on Optics Selection

"I'm old school, I still like to run my irons!"

"Optics break too often, I'll stick with iron sights like Grandpa used!"

"Ten minutes after the lights go out, iron sights will rule the world!"

There are a lot of reasons why optics of one sort or another have replaced iron sights as the primary sighting mechanism on the rifle of every serious gunfighter in the modern world. From actually being MORE robust than some of the iron sights available, to the increased speed of acquiring a suitable sight picture, to more positive identification of targets, in the case of magnified options, the use of effective optics on a fighting rifle is not just the wave of the future, it's the only serious option right now, today.

Iron Sight Deficiencies

Iron sights have been the choice of serious combat rifle shooters—and many recreational shooters—for almost as long as rifles have existed. They have ranged from the extremely simple "buckhorn and blade" type iron sights of the black powder era to the rear aperture sights of contemporary American fighting rifles. Even today, there are countless shooters in the world who profess a distrust of the ability of anything except iron sights to withstand the abuses of a combat environment, despite well over a decade of the common issue of combat optics to most common troops, and over a century of optics issue to specialized troops like snipers in combat zones.

Nevertheless, while it will annoy the ever-loving shit out of the old fuckers and hidebound traditionalists of the world, there are several key deficiencies to iron sights that mean, if you're not willing to join the arms race, you're fucking yourself, your buddies, and your community. The most important deficiency of iron sights—when compared to modern optics—in the minds of many, is the speed equation. It is a categorical, inarguable, scientific fact that optics are faster than iron sights.

I've heard all the old school arguments to the contrary too. They're wrong. The necessity of focusing on a minimum of two different focal planes—three if you're using "open" iron sights instead of apertures—with iron sights, versus the common focal plane shared by target and reticle of optics, makes it an obvious given that optics will be faster, from a biological PoV, than shooting irons accurately.

This need to shift focal planes also raises another closely related, but separate issue with using iron sights as your primary sighting system. The requirement to focus finely on the front sight post or blade, in order to make any sort of accurate shot, at any range, but especially at intermediate distance ranges increases the difficulty of maintaining observation and awareness of a realistic combat target. It's relatively easy when both you and the full-size, completely exposed silhouette are sitting still on the square range.

Add in movement, on the part of the target or yourself, such as tends to happen when people are shooting at one another, or the target being partially obscured by cover and/or concealment, which is also a common element in gunfights, and suddenly, at anything beyond reflexive fire "point-and-shoot"

distances of 1-3 meters, using iron sights suddenly starts to feel really, really, really slow to the end user.

A lot of guys, as I mentioned above, fall back on the antiquated notion that iron sights are more robust than optics. While this was undoubtedly true when iron sights were simple, largely immovable parts of the gun, soldered or welded to the metal of the action, it's simply not the case anymore.

From the molded polymer with metal inserts of many modern "iron sights," to the multiple, finely geared adjustment mechanisms of contemporary aperture sights, I've seen optics—and there are plenty of examples in different videos and articles on the Internet, if you haven't witnessed it—take hits and keep functioning that would have—at best—left the zero of a set of iron sights unknown, if not completely destroyed. There are countless readers of the Mountain Guerrilla blog who have attended rifle and patrolling classes with me, and witnessed me do things as ridiculous as drop an EoTech mounted rifle—optic first—onto pavement and gravel, to grabbing a rifle—magnified optic mounted—by the barrel, and heave it across a meadow, before going on, in both cases, to engaging precision targets with the rifles in question with no ill effects. My current rifle, mounted with a Burris MTAC variable scope (details below), was actually ejected from a vehicle at 65MPH—long story—and the optic not only survived, but maintained its zero, no less. This archaic idea that iron sights are robust, while optics are fragile is as obsolete as the idea that skin color is an indicator of humanity.

Optics Science 101: The OEG and BAC Methods

(*Before we begin this section, I think it's imperative to point out that the OEG label for the concept it employs is specific to the Armson sight and the BAC–Bindon Aiming Concept–is named for Gyl Bindon. Both are technically specific to Trijicon sights today, although the principles that make them work are biological/physiological functions of natural human, binocular visison, so it's a matter of semantics and lack of a better label that causes me to use these terms*)

The OEG–Occluded Eye Gunsight–concept and the BAC–Bindon Aiming Concept–are very, very closely related, but are also distinctly different methods of shooting with an optic. The OEG method, using non-magnified optics like the original Armsons used during the 1970 Son Tay Raid, or the more recognized, modern EoTechs and Aimpoint variations, is a simple matter of seeing the target and downrange with the non-dominant eye, and seeing the very bright, very obvious "red" dot reticle with your dominant eye.

It's a rather cool function of the human physiology that we see with binocular vision–the image of both eyes are presented to the brain as one image. So, if we're looking at a target with one eye, and the reticle/aiming dot with the other eye, what our brain sees is the aiming point superimposed over the target. You can actually test this theory with your own EoTech or Aimpoint red-dot sight actually.

Cover the front lens of your sight with a scope cap or piece of 100MPH tape. Mount the gun, looking at the target with one eye, and the aiming point/reticle with the other, and you'll see that you have a usable sight picture. This of course, makes for an extremely rapid sight picture acquisition, if you use sound biomechanics in your weapons-handling, and mount the gun the exact same way every single time you mount the gun.

The Bindon Aiming Concept—named after Trijicon's founder—uses the same basic principles of the OEG sighting method, but applies it to magnified optics. A long search was made to try and combine the speed of non-magnified optics with the numerous combat shooting advantages of low-power variable magnification optics. Much of the credit for these discoveries goes to the Trijicon company that seems to have not only discovered the concepts, but certainly were the first to make widespread use of it with the development of the Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight (ACOG).

The use of some sort of brightly illuminated central image for the reticle, instead of the traditional cross-hairs reticle of hunting and sniper scopes, makes it extremely easy to use modern low-power scopes with both eyes open. This is—at its foundation—simply using the OEG method, but with a magnified optic. Just as with the OEG concept, the brain merges the two images. While people often claim difficulty using the BAC, this generally stems from ignorance of how the method is supposed to be applied.

At most ranges, with movement of the optic, the image through the magnified optic is blurred, at least somewhat. The only image that the brain can see and identify is the brightly-lit, high-visibility reticle/aiming dot. The non-dominant eye, on the other hand, is tracking and seeing the target image. Just…like..the…OEG…concept. The difference arises when your brain superimposes the two images. With the BAC, you can then shift all of your attention to the dominant eye, as the gun and sight stops moving, and you have a magnified sight picture with the reticle where it should be, that allows for precision shot placement, quickly.

People often point out that this is—necessarily—slower than the OEG method used with non-magnified optics, at CQB ranges. This is only partially true and—when it is true—is largely a function of training and physiology. Inside of 25M, I've clocked my shot time differences at an average of anywhere from .05-.10 between using a non-magnified EoTech, and using a magnified variable power at 4X or 6X. While it will take slightly longer for the brain to switch from binocular vision focus to a monocular focus, the time required can be significantly reduced through training the eyes to switch focal planes faster. More importantly by far, is the fact that—at CQB ranges—you don't need to switch to monocular vision, except in rare cases that require super-precision in your shots. Thus, it's actually —if applied properly—absolutely no slower to use a low-magnification variable than a non-magnified optic even at CQB ranges, assuming solid training.

I do recognize however that for a very small percentage of the population, for whatever reason, the ability to force the brain to do this, without switching focus, and closing the non-dominant eye, is simply not possible. While it's almost heretical to say so, there is a really simple solution to this: close your non-dominant eye to take the shot and then re-open it. Sure, you're going to "lose" peripheral vision for a moment. Reality check?

If you're actually focusing on the shot, you're not going to have much peripheral vision for the duration of taking the goddamned shot anyway. This entire conceptual approach to targeting becomes extremely useful, particularly when dealing with targets that are moving, or are concealed, to one degree or another, in dense concealment.

1X Red Dot Sights (RDS) versus Variable-Power Magnification

I doubt that it is any great secret to regular readers of the blog that I am a big fan of low-power magnified optics, ranging from the classic ACOG to more modern variable powered optics. Rather than simply taking my advice that they are superior in almost every way to 1X RDS however, let's look at some of the advantages of these optics.

The obvious factor at play is the magnification. The requirement for a combat-effective low-power variable optic came to the forefront of the collective conscious of the special operations community following the Battle of Bakara Market in 1993. As numerous veterans of that fight have pointed out in various places, when you've got hostiles intermixed with non-combatants at varying ranges from 25-100M or more, sticking just their heads out of concealment to figure out where your positions are, magnification starts looking really, really important both to positively identify targets, as well as to increase the chances that you'll actually hit the dude.

The ability to see into thick concealment to locate targets, the ability to more positively identify a target —whether seeing that he does, in fact, have a weapon, or to see his face to use facial recognition—even at short ranges like 100-200 meters, the magnification offers significant advantages. While there are a lot of guys out there who are still sold on the idea of mounting a magnifier behind their EoTech or Aimpoint, I personally feel this is a dead-end approach. You're getting absolutely no advantage over a regular variable power telescope sight, other than the dubious one of losing some weight, when you remove the magnifier.

For an example of the dubiousness of this claim: My Burris MTAC 1.5-6X weighs 14.1oz. The P.E.P.R. mount it came with is 8.0oz. Total weight then is 22.1 oz. My EoTech 554 is 10.9 oz. The EoTech magnifier with the flip-side mount is 16.5. Total weight then is 27.4oz. Either way, it's a pretty marginal difference, except I've got 6X magnification, versus the 3X of the EoTech. Even if you were to remove the flip-side mount and magnifier, you're only saving 3/4 of a pound, but if you NEED the magnification, you're going to have to go digging through pouches, rather than simply mounting the gun. I'd rather do a couple more reps at PT than have to risk missing a shot because I couldn't get to my magnifier in time.

With the magnification of the variable, you're also getting better light transmission in low-light environments, meaning you're not only going to be able to positively identify targets, you're going to be able to do so later into the evening or earlier in the morning, without additional visible light. More importantly, because it improves the clarity of your vision, this increases your ability to ID targets as friend-or-foe, shoot/no-shoots at all times.

While magnification is often dumbed down to being a range/distance issue, it's really not. It's about precision of marksmanship, and being able to see what you need see to get hits. You can train yourself to shoot a magnified optic faster; you cannot train to improve your positive identification with a 1X optic.

There are a lot of potential "drawbacks" to using a variable-power magnified optic on a fighting rifle. Most of them don't really hold up, as we've seen above, when looked at objectively. In addition to the

issues already discussed in this article, perhaps the one I hear most often that forces me to debate the merits of being a fugitive from justice the rest of my life, for throat-punching stupidity is, "I can mount my PVS-14 behind my RDS on my rifle!"

If you're mounting your NOD on your rifle—except in extremely limited situations—you're a fucking moron who is too stupid to continue contributing to the gene pool. This means that—in order to use the NOD—you have to a) hold your weapon up in a firing position at all times and, b) point your rifle at me, if I need to communicate with you visually.

Do you like having your "buddies" point guns at you? Yeah, me neither.

I actually don't care—as usual—what you run for an optic on your rifle. Iron sights, 1x RDS, or magnified, variable-powered scope. I do recommend serious consideration–no scratch that–I heartedly recommend a switch to a magnified, variable-powered scope.

Do batteries die? Sure. Of course. Absolutely. So?

Buy more batteries. Seems like a "No shit?" solution to me. By the time the battery stores of the world are completely deleted, we'll all be either dead, will have gone back to iron sights, or the ammunition will be expended too, and we'll be living out every nerd's Dungeons and Dragons fantasy, fighting with swords and shields and shit. Keep track of your battery life, and discard/replace them before they die. Sure, I need to turn off my MTAC, or the batteries will eventually die, instead of being able to leave it on at full power for ten years, like the Aimpoint. So what? If I don't have time to move a dial ONE FUCKING CLICK, to turn the illumination on, I'm probably too late getting to my gun anyway.

Appendix Three
OLD SCHOOL, HARD SCHOOL, BEST SCHOOL

(***This appendix, based on an article for the Mountain Guerrilla blog, is a collection of contemporary tips, based on the "Tricks of the Trade" for SF Recon soldiers during Vietnam***)

During the Vietnam War, among many other responsibilities in Southeast Asia, US Army Special Forces fulfilled a core mission, providing leadership cadre for indigenous ranger-type guerrilla units referred to as "Mike Force" units. One of the lasting legacies of this "PROJECT DELTA" was the production of the now legendary **B-52 Recon Tricks of the Trade** document.

In 1988, following nearly decade of jungle-based operations in support of anti-communist efforts in Latin America, 1st Battalion of 7th Special Forces Group developed and compiled an update of the 1970 B-52 tips. These were called the **B-720 Tips**, and did not include some of the tricks from the earlier method that had—in the ensuing years—simply become doctrinal methods.

For a series of articles on the Mountain Guerrilla blog, I exhibited the arrogance of attempting to update and revise the **B-720 Tips** for application to survivalist partisan guerrilla operational needs. It was one of the most highly complimented articles I've written, and received critical acclaim from a host of SF veteran readers. Since it is relevant, I've taken the liberty of adding it as this appendix.

General Tips of the Trade

1. When conducting operations, minimize fatigue. A tired shooter is a careless shooter. Sleep

deprivation is a well-known and common training tool, specifically because it creates extreme stress in individuals. The same trait that makes it a useful training tool makes it a killer in combat patrolling.

Contrary to popular mythology, you can become accustomed to sleep deprivation, but not inured to it. On operations, it will be necessary at times to forgo sleep in the interests of mission-essential tasks and operational requirements, but this should be minimized as much as possible. Considering the disadvantages faced by small units of partisan defenders in confronting large numbers of potentially well-equipped hostile forces, maintaining the mental equilibrium of individual shooters and leaders should be a critical element of planning and logistics. Don't skimp on sleep gear and dry clothing because you want to be "hard." There's a fine line between hard and stupid.

2. Always, always, ALWAYS possess and display self-confidence in front of your subordinates. If you are confident, they will reflect your confidence. False bravado is not the same thing as confidence though. Confidence in the tactical arena can only come from realistic, effective training. You cannot "fake it 'til you make it." TRAIN!

3. Never lose your temper in training or on operations. Not with your own personnel, not with the enemy, and certainly not with yourself. A temper tantrum or rage will have a deleterious effect on your judgment, leading to rash decisions. Plan for contingencies and keep them in mind when shit seems to be going wrong. Don't be afraid to take advice from experienced subordinates. It does not make you less confident.

4. Be able—and willing—to laugh at yourself.

5. Teamwork is the crucial element in tactical success. Teamwork comes only through constant practice, training, and good leadership. You must practice your collective tasks and battle drills as an element. "Chalk talks" and walk-through rehearsals have their place, but they cannot replace realistic field training.

6. All other considerations aside, a good PT program will lead to fewer health problems arising in the field. A healthy, athletic body under combat stress will still end up sick eventually. An unhealthy, nonathletic body under combat stress will not have a fully functioning immune system to help resist those same illnesses. Historically, illness and disease has killed and otherwise made combat ineffective, more fighters than enemy action.

7. Hydration is critical, but do not overlook the replacement of other nutrients. Wholesome, nutritious food must be available in the field, as well as at home.

8. Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing that is suitable for the environment when operating in the field. This does not necessarily mean the latest multi-cam uniforms. It does mean clothing that is specific to outdoor athletic activity, whether mil-spec, work wear, or outdoor adventure sports clothing. Tight-fitting clothes restrict movement and—more often than not—tear at inopportune times in inopportune places.

9. Develop a system of pre-mission checklists to facilitate your pre-combat inspections to ensure that not patrol member forgets anything. Whether built around your unit SOP or specifically developed for individual operations, this will help prevent embarrassing situations like arriving at the breach point of a structure and having to ask, "What dumb motherfucker left the breaching shotgun at the house?"

10. If you need to criticize a member of your patrol, use tact and common courtesy when doing so. Take the individual aside and do it in private, in order to allow him to save face and react positively to the criticism.

11. Regardless of what type of radio communications devices you utilize, preset your frequencies so that you can change channels in the dark, while running.

Uniform and Clothing Tips

1. When conducting rural/wilderness operations, wear camouflage utilities, or at least different colored-clothing. When wet, solid-colored dark clothing such as olive drab utilities like OG-107s will appear solid black when viewed through NO. Camouflage patterns, while still dark, will disrupt your silhouette.

2. Tuck your shirt into your trousers. You can't use the lower pockets of a BDU-type blouse when wearing LBE or body armor anyway. With the blouse tucked in, you can throw spent magazines down the front of your shirt, without fucking around with a "dump pouch."

3. While luminescent "cat eyes" had a valid function, they glow like a goddamned flashlight when viewed through NOD, so don't use them when you expect the enemy might have the ability to see in the dark, unless you are using them specifically to allow overwatch elements to identify friend-or-foe. If you are doing that, be extremely judicious in their use.

4. Sew a section of VS-17 panel into the inside of your boonie hat. While you probably won't be using it to signal air assets for personnel recovery, it can be used for visual signaling between patrol elements. Sewing a small square of IR "glint tape" into the center of it can facilitate inter-team signaling at night, when equipped with NOD.

5. If you use a solid-colored rucksack, break up the silhouette of the pack with judiciously applied Krylon spray paint.

Rifle/Carbine Tips

1. Tape or otherwise cover the muzzle of your weapon to keep out water, dirt, or other debris. 100MPH tape works well, although condoms are a perennial favorite. They also make plastic muzzle caps specifically for the AR15 muzzle device. You can shoot through any of these covers if needed, with no deleterious effect on accuracy.

2. If you are the only man on your patrol, or even just within your buddy team, with NOD, alternate ball and tracer ammunition in your magazine, to allow you to identify targets for your

technologically-impaired friends to focus their firing on.

3. Sleep with your weapon locked and loaded—with the safety selector switch on SAFE—in case you are awakened by hostile fire and the need to engage bad guys immediately. In the morning, if you haven't fire it, replace the round in the chamber. While it's not a major issue in chrome-lined bores and chambers, condensation in the chamber, combined with powder residue, can lead to stuck cases. In case you are dumb enough to run a non-chrome lined barrel, this will lead to a pitted chamber that will result in your dying with a goddamned cleaning rod jammed down your barrel—even with non-corrosive ammunition.

4. Lube your weapon thoroughly every day in the field. A rifle—like a woman—is happy when it is kept wet. A dry weapon will choke. Carry a bottle of lube on your fighting load, even if you don't carry any other cleaning or maintenance materials.

5. Keep your safety selectors switch on SAFE unless you are actively trying to kill someone. It will not make you faster to have the switch already turned to FIRE, but you will end up shooting yourself or your buddy on accident.

6. Slings are to rifles as holsters are to pistols, but don't treat your sling like some sort of irreplaceable sensitive item. Outside of specific circumstances, most of the time you ought to not have the damned thing slung anyway, regardless of what your buddy says he learned in his "awesome" two-day DELTA/SWAT/ninja "operator carbine class." An M4 weighs seven fucking pounds. If you can't carry that all day long—without a sling—you need to do more PT.

7. Keep your rifle as slick as possible. A light is a necessity. An optic—while not a necessity—is useful enough that it can be considered a necessity. A sling is generally a necessity. If you are running NOD, an IR laser is a necessity. Nothing else is a necessity. Run your gun as slick as possible.

8. DO not use gadgets or other tricks to change the manual-of-arms of your weapon. If yours breaks and you need to pick up a rifle from someone else, it will probably not be set up exactly the same as yours is. Your team doesn't need you to have a mental meltdown because you don't know how to put your gun into battery without a fucking Magpul BAD lever.

9. Inspect and test all of your magazines before conducting a patrol. Ensure that they feed properly by checking for bent or broken feed lips and weak springs. Mark every single magazine that you own. If one fails to perform in training or during an inspection, throw it in the trash. If you want to make it easy on yourself, buy PMAG. I'm as hard on gear as anyone I've ever met, and I have yet to break one in normal use.

10. It should be self-evident, but I still see guys fuck it up: place your magazines into your magazine pouches with the feed lips pointed down. This prevents loose rounds from falling out on the ground.

11. These rules apply, regardless of what type of rifle you carry. We all "know" that Kalashnikovs

are impervious to abuse and can be run over by the tracks of an Abrams tank and still function flawlessly, but humor the gods of war and do the right thing anyway.

12. Forget about shooting center-of-mass. Yes, you should still aim for the center of the largest piece of enemy meat that you can see, but if you can see the torso, aim for the hips and then the head. Bad guys of all persuasions wear body armor these days. A hip shot may not kill the guy outright, but a series of hits to the pelvic girdle will put a fucker on his ass, severely limiting his mobility. That makes it much easier to make the fight-ending head shot. Trainers that are not teaching this need to wake the fuck up. "Hip and heads, kids! Hips and heads!"

13. Paint your fucking weapon already. Black sticks out in the woods—even at night—like a five-dollar crack whore in a convent. It's not a financial investment; it's a tool to help you kill people. Let it help you kill them by reducing the chances that it will the thing that gets you killed.

LBE Tips

1. Be certain that all Velcro closures are closed before you leave the patrol base. Ensure that all of your plastic Fastex buckles are snapped shut. Yes, Velcro sucks, but it beats the shit out of the old snaps that always seemed to quit working right about the time you exited an MC-130 at 800 feet above the ground, over some god-awful drop zone, and then refused to work again until you tried to replace it. If you can't figure out how to be quiet while using Velcro in the field, have a seamstress replace ll the Velcro with Fastex buckles.

2. Make sure you can get your magazines out in a hurry. If you can't, then either replace your magazine pouches or modify them by cutting the lips down. If that doesn't work? Train more.

3. Tie off anything that is attached to your LBE. Snaps fail. I've yet to see MOLLE gear fall off the PALS webbing in the field, but I'd rather not worry about it. My life is worth more than the cost of a couple of inches of 550 cord. A lot of guys use zip-ties these days.

4. Always carry a knife in the field. Quit worrying about what a bad ass, man-killing piece of battle blade awesomeness that it is, and focus on having a functional field tool. It's one hell of a lot easier to kill a guy with a goddamned Swiss Army Knife than it is to cut aiming stakes at 0200 with a fucking Gerber Mark II dagger! Too many guys focus on edged weapons instead of cutting tools. The best all-around production field knife ever made for utility chores AND killing people is inarguably the USMC Kabar knife. Even when I want to hate it, I end up coming back to it.

5. A lot of guys want to know about machetes and tomahawks. Machetes are great in the jungle and thick brush. I own two. One is an Ecuadoran model that I picked up somewhere along the way. The other is a Cold Steel Kukri machete made in South Africa.

   Hatchets generally suck. I've carried a tomahawk and even took a clinic once from the guy that trained the actors in the 1992 version of the movie **Last of the Mohicans**. I've still got a soft spot in my heart for tomahawks. It's a Roger's Rangers thing, I believe. If a guy showed up to

train with a 'hawk on his LBE though, I'd have to ask him what it was for. "Bush craft" might be an acceptable answer. "Breaching" would be passable if I were in a particularly good mood. "Killing motherfuckers" would get him kicked in the nuts. "Bush craft, with killing motherfuckers as a secondary purpose" would get him a snicker and patted on the head for being a motivated little man killer.

6. Keep some sort of high-energy, concentrated snacks in your pockets as emergency E&E rations. Even a couple of bouillon cubes, dissolved in some water can provide a little bit of energy for a day or two. Some of the newer sports nutrition energy bars are even better. I keep a week's worth of protein bars and other snack-type foods in my LBE. If I have to escape and evade, I can focus on running, rather than on trying to gather food like I'm fucking Pocahontas.

7. As much as we'd like to have them, fragmentation grenades are going to be out of reach for most of us—at least initially. Smoke grenades and flash-bangs are available with a little bit of work. Smoke grenades should be carried in your ruck, rather than on your LBE. You don't fight with smoke grenades, and 99% of the time, if you need it, you will have time to get it out of your ruck.

8. Every member of the patrol should carry at least thermite grenade. If you cannot access or manufacture thermite grenades, one ground signaling flare will suffice as an alternative. These will burn hot enough to allow you to destroy the equipment that cannot be recovered and removed from the battlefield.

9. Bug dope leaks and spills easily, and the good stuff will fuck up synthetics. Separate it from all the other gear in your ruck, wrap it up in a plastic bag—or ten—and check it daily.

10. In most environments, if you are patrolling at night and sleeping during the warmer daylight hours, a poncho, casualty blanket, and a couple of poncho liners—with some long underwear and fleece jacket—will be sufficient to allow you sleep comfortably. In deep snow, you always have the option of a snow trench or burrowing into the snow beneath conifer trees for an ad hoc snow cave if necessary.

11. Keep STANO equipment like binoculars, spotting scopes, and cameras, or other mission-essential items in external pockets on your rucksack, or near the top of the load, to facilitate easy access without having to dump out your entire fucking rucksack in the patrol base. Dual-access, top- and front-loading rucksacks are awesome in this regard.

12. Always use the water from the Camelback on your ruck before using the water on your LBE. This ensures that you will still have water if you have to dump your ruck and run.

13. Check, double check, and triple-check the should straps on your ruck before a patrol. Carry extra 550 cord on patrols to facilitate repairs if they break.

14. Use a waterproof bag—or waterproof bags—to protect items in your rucksack on patrols. It sucks to hit a hide site and dig out your sleep gear, only to discover that it is soaking wet.

Patrolling Tips

1. When conducting foot-mobile patrols, always identify and communicate suitable en route rally points to all patrol members.

2. Minimize the amount of map you carry by cutting off the unnecessary portions outside of your patrol zone, but don't get too carried away with it. Leave a couple of grid squares around the edges of your zone in case you need "running room" to escape a contact without drawing the enemy straight back into your front yard.

3. Carry a notebook and pencils in a pocket, in a waterproof container. I don't care how cool you are with your iPad, Blackberry, or Tough Book computer, batteries die. WRITE SHIT DOWN! You will forget by day four, the important detail you observed on day two. Write it down. Use pencils instead of pens, because ink smears and runs.

4. Ensure that your team medic carries cough syrup and antihistamines in the aid bag. Don't die because you couldn't stop coughing or had to sneeze while you were hiding from pursuers.

5. While the introduction of modular LBE has made it possible for guys to carry their gear in the most ergonomic fashion for them personally, some items should have an SOP location on your LBE, in your pockets, and in your rucksack.

   Everyone should have at least one tourniquet in the same place. Signals plans and other critical information should be stored in the same pockets. Maps should all be carried in the same spot. This allows any member of the team to get at them in a hurry if the original carrier is dead.

6. Don't smoke in the field. Tobacco smoke is easily identifiable and can be smelled from much further away than smokers realize. Even when not smoking, smokers emit a very distinct, unpleasant, and easily recognizable odor.

7. Keep your signal mirror and patrol whistle where they can be used for combat communications on the fighting load. Dummy cord them with 550 cord, so you don't lose them.

8. Everyone carries a high-end Surefire or Streamlight flashlight, but everyone needs to be carrying a low-powered flashlight with a colored lens and/or a headlamp in their gear as well. There will be times when a light is necessary, but spotlighting with a 600 lumen torch is nothing but a target indicator.

9. When you are on patrol, move like you are still-hunting, because you are. Stop moving and listen more than you move. Don't be predictable about it. Don't break limbs or branches on trees and bushes. Gently move foliage out of you way with your hand, step past, and then replace it gently. Reduce the amount of spoor you create, and help frustrate tracking teams.

10. Move at night and hole up in a hide site during the day. Be cautious when moving at night though, because NOD are cheap and common.

11. Use terrain association instead of dead reckoning, whenever possible. When you have to use dead reckoning though, change azimuths frequently, to avoid setting up an ambush on yourself for the enemy.

12. Don't wear snivel gear when you are moving under a load, unless it is extremely cold. Anything above 0-degrees Fahrenheit does not meet that criteria. You will overheat.

13. When you need to change your socks, try and wait until you are in a hide site, and don't take both boots off at the same time.

14. Don't discard batteries in the field. Invest in Eneloops or other rechargeable batteries, and recharge them when you get home.

15. Avoid overconfidence, apathy, and laziness. Just because you haven't seen the enemy in 3-4 days of patrolling does not mean that he isn't there. He may be watching you walk into his kill zone at any time. Maintain good tactical movement and security. A large percentage of small-unit patrols have historically been compromised because of poor noise discipline.

16. When you occupy a patrol base, eve for just twenty or thirty minutes, perform a security check for at least 100 meters in all directions.

17. Avoid cooking as much as possible on patrols. In severe weather events it might be possible to get away with it, but cooking fire smoke and the odors from cooking food travel a long distance and will lead the bad guys straight back to you. Most backpacking stoves are also retarded loud as well. My MSR XGK sounds like a fucking jet turbine engine!

18. Whether you are operating at night or during daylight, every man is responsible for maintaining visual and communications contact with the man to his front and rear and ensuring that he can receive hand-and-arm signals from his team leader or the patrol leader. Watch your sector, but keep an eye on the patrol leader as well. He should not have to wave frantically and hiss to get your attention.

19. Unless it is raining torrents, do not piss on rocks, leaves, or bare dirt. Dig a small hole, or look for a crevice. Wet spots and dried wet spots are easily identifiable even to untrained trackers. Plus, the stench of your urine travels further if it's out in the open.

20. Master your battle drills!

21. Don't overburden yourself with a week's worth of clothing. One pair of dry clothes to sleep in is adequate. Carry lots of socks though. I like to carry at least six pairs of socks.

22. When stopping for short halt, don't ditch your ruck. Do the rucksack flop instead. Sit back and lean against the ruck, unless you are getting into the prone. When moving into a Remain Over Night (RON) site, don't ditch your ruck until a security sweep or the initial security halt has

been completed.

23. When conducting surveillance missions, establish your ORP a minimum of one terrain feature or one kilometer away from the objective. Let your scout-observer buddy teams move to the actual observation points from there. While entire six-man teams have managed to avoid enemy detection despite being within 20 meters of them in flat, middle eastern deserts, two guys are a lot easier to hide than a full-blown MSS, with four or more guys and all of their gear.

24. Switch your scout-observer buddy teams as often as possible in accordance with METT-TC considerations. Laying in a hide and staring through a spotting scope is way more exhausting than you would think. Exhausted observers miss important details.

25. A dead man's pockets or pack will often be as valuable—or more so—than his rifle. Unless a dude is packing an M320 grenade launcher or a fucking Carl Gustav, don't worry about his weapon until you've got all of his other gear.

Patrol Base Tips

1. Practice proper patrol base procedures whenever your team is training, even if just on the rifle range. Take advantage of all training opportunities to develop good habits.

2. Select a tentative patrol base site from a map reconnaissance, at least two hours before you need to move into it.

3. Never move straight into a patrol base. Move past it, then button-hook out and back into the patrol base site from the off side. Any pursuit/tracker teams will then be forced to move past the patrol base, allowing you the opportunity to notice them before they're crawling into your ass.

4. Upon moving into a patrol base, the patrol should keep their equipment on and maintain 100% security for at least another 30 minutes, before going into patrol base activities.

5. When moving a small-unit patrol into a patrol base, place the designated "point man" on the side directly away from the enemy's most likely avenue of approach. This will allow him to lead the patrol straight out of the patrol base if it is necessary to move out in a hurry.

6. Never transmit with a radio from inside your patrol base. If you feel it necessary to relay to others where your location is, transmit while en route, and simply tell them you will RON 1000 meters to the south/east/west/north of a known landmark in the area that will not be recognizable to the enemy by that name.

7. If you do have to transmit via radio from your patrol base, ensure that you are moving the fuck out no less than 60 seconds later. Radio-direction finding is a real threat.

8. The patrol leader should—as part of his patrol base activities—personally check on every man in the element. At that time, he should specify the primary and alternate rally points in case of a contact while in the patrol base. One half of the team should have their compasses set on the

primary rally point and the other half on the alternate. If the enemy comes from the direction of the primary rally point, the element with the azimuth to the alternate site can lead the way out of the patrol base.

9. Ensure that Ranger buddies are next to each other in the patrol base. In the event one is wounded, his buddy should be responsible for ensuring that he is evacuated with the patrol if it becomes necessary to exfil the patrol base in a hurry.

10. You ruck should be stashed with the shoulder straps "up" so that it can be slipped on in a hurry. It is permissible to sleep with the plate carrier and/or LBE off, but at a minimum, your 1st line survival gear should stay attached to your body. If all else fails and the patrol base is being over-run before the shooter has time to kit up, at least he will be able to grab his fighting load on the run.

11. If a person snores or talks in his sleep, gag him. Seriously.

12. Don't bunch up or sleep next to each other, but remain close enough that you can touch the other guy's shoulder without moving your body. This will facilitate communications within the patrol base.

13. If you are conducting vehicle-borne patrolling, the same basic fundamentals apply. Don't sleep inside the vehicles, or under them. Move away a few meters. If the enemy hits the convoy in an attack, the vehicles will be their primary target. Leave a security team on the vehicles, but sleep away from them at least 25-30 meters, to avoid getting caught by water anti-vehicle weapons the enemy uses.

14. Develop your plan for the next operational phase before you rack out. Communicate it to key leaders, so they have time to develop their part of the fight as well.

15. If you develop the ability to procure/manufacture early warning devices, such as tripwire activated flares, they should be placed around the patrol base perimeter by a two-man buddy team. One man sets up the device, while his partner pulls security. Always place such devices where the patrol will be able to maintain visual overwatch of the device. It doesn't do you much good to have a tripwire activated flare if you can't shoot the dude who just walked into it.

16. Do not fall into the development of bad habits. Be unpredictable. Always moving into your RON site at 1945, always taking your noon break at 1230, or always moving out of the patrol base at 0600 is setting yourself up to be ambushed.

17. Most security patrolling should occur during night time hours, unless specific tactical considerations mandate daylight patrolling. Daylight is when most amateur threats will be moving around, making them easier to accidentally trip over. At night, they're not moving, and thus are easier for you to locate on your own terms.

NVG Tips

NVG—Night Vision Goggles—or to use the older term that I am more comfortable with, NOD, are a force multiplier of equal or greater value than two or three extra riflemen, when used properly. If you have six rifles of your own, but no NOD, you're fucking yourself and your team. Fix your shit.

1. Don't wear your NOD 100% of the time when it's dark out. US forces have come to depend too much on their NOD, leading to an over-reliance. NOD result in horrible tunnel vision. As humans, we are more comfortable relying on our sense of sight than our other senses. People tend to ignore what their other senses are telling them, if the image in their NOD doesn't say the same thing. Hiding from NOD is actually easier than hiding from naked vision in daylight, since it's monochrome.

2. Use your NOD to observe when you are in the overwatch position of a team bounding overwatch movement. When you are actually bounding, flip the NOD up out of the way, or stash them in a pouch out of the way. When you finish your bound and move into a position to overwatch the other element, use your NOD to make visual contact with the opposite team leader and signal him that you are in position and ready for him to begin his bound.

3. NOD and thermal imaging sights function differently, in different light spectrum, but they can complement each other well. If most of your team has PVS-7 or PVS-14, consider investing in a thermal sight instead, to complement them on operations.

Appendix Four
SCHOOLYARD STUFF

This appendix is a compilation of Mountain Guerrilla training class programs-of-instruction (POI) that I use when teaching classes. I have included the basic outline of subjects, as well as some of the specific drills I use—including task, conditions, and standards statements—to teach and drill those subjects in classes.

COMBAT RIFLE PROGRAM-OF-INSTRUCTION

Period One—Introduction and Safety Brief

Welcome to Combat Rifle. My name is John. I'll be your primary instructor for the course of this class. For those unaware of my background, I spent 10 years in Army SOF, including the Ranger Regiment and Special Forces. I am currently the author of an online blog entitled "Mountain Guerrilla." That blog is a study of small-unit irregular warfare, as it applies to those of us concerned about impending disquiet in the socio-economic structures of the world and our nation.

As a word of warning. I am extremely foul-mouthed. If that offends you, let me know, and I'll make an attempt to keep it under control. If I slip, however, please accept my apologies in advance, because I've got more important things to do this weekend than apologize every time I slip and say the word FUCK. (Introduce any associate instructors) I'd like to take a moment and introduce my associate instructors. None of these gentlemen should be addressed or labeled as "assistant" instructors, because each of them has as much, or more experience in this field than I do.

In closing, this program of instruction will be physically and mentally demanding. Metaphorically, I am going to point a firehose at you, turn on the hydrant, and tell you to drink. I suggest taking copious

notes, asking any questions you have, at any time you have them, regardless of how stupid you think they might be, and paying attention. You will be mentally and physically exhausted at the close of this training. Recognize however, that it is just a fraction of how exhausted you will be when you're doing this shit for real.

With that, let's get some other important preliminaries out of the way, so we can get started:

Safety Brief
This is a hot range. Unless I, or another instructor, specifically instruct you otherwise, for the duration of a specific drill, your weapon should be loaded with a magazine, and a round in the chamber, on safe, at all times. You need to learn to live, move, and survive with a hot weapon. Big Boy Rules Apply.

Everyone should be familiar with the five basic safe gunhandling rules:

a) Treat your weapon as if it were loaded, unless you have specifically made it otherwise, verified its condition, and had someone else verify its condition. Don't treat it like its radioactive. Treat it likes its a firearm, and you'll be safe. Since this is a hot range, this should be a really easy rule to remember.

b) Do not intentionally or deliberately point your muzzle at anything you are not willing to destroy, without an adequate reason for doing so. This is a practical field training class, in a field environment. Shit will happen, so don't get your knickers in a twist if someone inadvertently muzzle flashes you during an exercise. However, at the same time, make a conscious decision to NOT point your weapon at other people. This is also known as the "don't point your fucking weapon at me!" rule. Some of us have developed a very refined response to having people point weapons at us. It involves a very simple, very rapid, binary decision-making matrix: shoot or don't shoot. I will always err on the side of my safety.

c) Know what is between you and your target, beyond your target, and to either side of your target. This is important folks. We're not going to be operating on a square range out here, nor in the real world.You will have buddies and non-combatants down-range of you. Pay attention. Consider the reality that you might miss. The reality that someone may step in the way of your shot, and the reality that your round may punch all the way through someone and keep going. Most of all, consider the reality that you might miss.

d) Keep your booger hook off the bang switch. If you fail in all of the three preceding rules, there is a fourth one for good measure. If you point your weapon at someone while it is loaded, but don't pull the trigger, the worst thing that will happen is you'll probably get your ass beat. Unless you are actively engaging a target, with a solid sight picture, there is no reason, whatsoever, for your finger to be on the trigger. It will not make you any faster, to run around finger already on the trigger. I promise.

e) Finally, use your fucking safety. It's there for a reason, and it does, generally, work, really well. If you're running and you trip, and you will be running and you will trip, its entirely within the realm of the probable, for a stub to end up inside your trigger well. That will cause a bang if your safety is not engaged. Even on a Kalashnikov, it's possible to move the safety selector switch from safe to fire, and back again, quickly and positively.

I have a zero tolerance policy for safety. If you violate these rules, it will be neither pretty nor enjoyable. Pay attention. In a nutshell? Don't do stupid.

Environmental Hazards
(***Discuss animal and weather hazards. Heat or cold. Hydration and adequate clothing.***) If you are having a problem, stop and let one of the cadre know. We will do what we can to remedy the situation. Do not try and impress us with how tough you are. We're all well acquainted with tough. There's a fine line between hard and stupid, and each of us standing up here has crossed that line, and seen it crossed by others, on numerous occasions. Don't do stupid.

Emergency Action Plan
Is anyone an Emergency Room or Trauma surgeon? Any ER nurses? Any other kind of medical doctor? Any other kind of nurse? Any paramedics? EMTs? Does anyone have basic first-aid/CPR training? (***Designate primary, secondary, and tertiary care providers. Designate a primary and alternate to summon EMS***)

In the event of a student or cadre injury, if EMS needs to be summoned, all weapons will be cleared pending their arrival. Upon the arrival of EMS, I will communicate with the IC and let them take control. Let's not make that necessary, okay?

Period Two—Fundamentals of Marksmanship
Instruction Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercise. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the movement skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Purpose: The purpose of this period of instruction is to teach the participants the proper, efficient and effective methods of manipulating the modern fighting rifle. This is a dry-fire practical exercise. In addition to learning the new skills, it allows the instructor the opportunity to begin assessing the participants' safety habits and practices.

A carpenter's final product is defined by how well he can manipulate his tools. In the same manner, the effects of a combat shooter's efforts are defined by his ability to manipulate his weapon effectively and safely.

Performance Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction
At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain and demonstrate the fundamentals of marksmanship.
- Demonstrate the patrol ready and low-ready positions with the modern fighting rifle.
- Demonstrate the ability to instantly acquire the prone, squatting, kneeling, or standing firing

positions, from the patrol ready position.

- Demonstrate the ability to perform speed reloads, tactical reloads, and reloads with retention with the modern fighting rifle.

- Demonstrate the non-diagnostic malfunction clearance, using the Tap-Rack-Bang or SPORTS methodologies for immediate action, and the use of remedial action.

Fundamentals of Marksmanship

Practical Exercise Number One

Task: Adopt Field Firing Positions from the Patrol Ready

Conditions: Given an individual shooter standing in the patrol ready position, with fighting load, unloaded modern, magazine-fed, self-loading rifle with empty magazine inserted, and a target on a 25-100 meter rifle range with specific aiming points noted on the target.

Standards: Students will drop into the designated field firing position, conduct the NPOA drill, and then dry-fire one "shot" applying all the fundamentals of marksmanship.

Sub-Tasks and Standards of Performance:
• students will perform 10 repetitions moving into the prone position.
• students will perform 10 repetitions moving into the squatting position.
• students will perform 10 repetitions moving into the standard kneeling position.
• students will perform 10 repetitions moving into the combative standing position.

Practical Exercise Number Two

Task: Perform Dry-Fire Practice of Reload Techniques and Non-Diagnostic Malfunction Clearances

Conditions: Given an individual shooter, with fighting load, unloaded modern, magazine-fed, self-loading rifle with empty magazine inserted, and a target on a 25-100 meter rifle range with specific aiming points noted on the target.

Standards: Students will practice the speed reload, tactical reload, reload with retention, and the non-diagnostic malfunction clearance, from the prone, squatting, kneeling, and standing positions.

Sub-Tasks and Standards of Performance:
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the speed reload from the standing position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the speed reload from the standard kneeling position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the speed reload from the squatting position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the speed reload from the prone position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the tactical reload from the standing position.

• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the tactical reload from the standard kneeling position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the tactical reload from the squatting position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the tactical reload from the prone position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the reload-with-retention from the standing position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of the reload-with-retention from the prone position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of Tap-Rack-Bang from the standing position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of Tap-Rack-Bang from the standard kneeling position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of Tap-Rack-Bang from the squatting position.
• Students will perform 10 repetitions of Tap-Rack-Bang from the prone position.

Period Three—Live-Fire Introduction from the Prone Position

Instruction Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercises. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures of every stage, with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the applied skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Purpose: The purpose of this period of instruction is to teach the participants the proper, efficient, and effective methods of engaging hostile targets rapidly and accurately, from the prone position at and beyond realistic combative ranges. The rifle is the ultimate expression of the individual's ability to project force. It must be used to do so in an effective manner. You must learn to move efficiently, with economy of motion, and acquire a fast, adequate sight picture, depending on the range you are engaging your targets at, in order to be an effective combat rifleman. "Speed is fine, but accuracy is final," is an important refrain, but outside of the training range, only fast, accurate shots will ensure that your accuracy remains relevant.

Performance Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction

At the completion of this period of instruction, you should be able to:

- Move easily and quickly from the standing position into the prone position.
- Engage single targets from the prone position with precision rifle fire at ranges out to 400 meters.
- Engage multiple targets, dispersed across your front, from the prone position, at ranges out to 400 meters.
- Conduct speed reloads, proficiently, from the prone position.
- Conduct non-diagnostic malfunction clearances, proficiently, from the prone position.

Stage One: Single Target, Single-Shot, From the Prone for Zero

- With a single zero-type target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, from the prone position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group. Adjust sights for POA/POI.

- With a single zero-type target, at 50 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, from the prone position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group. Adjust sights for POA/POI.

- With a single zero-type target, at 100 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, from the prone position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group. Record POA/POI shift in shooter's notebook.

- With a single target, at 200 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, from the prone position. Repeat 5 times. Check and confirm shot group. Adjust sights for POA/POI. Mark sights for zero. Note POA/POI differences between 50 meter zero and 200 meter zero.

- With a single target, at 200 meters, single shot, from the prone position. Repeat 5 times. Check and confirm shot group/zero.

- With a single target, at 300 meters, single shot, from the prone position. Repeat 5 times. Check and confirm shot group. Record POA/POI shift in shooter's notebook.

- With a single target, at 400 meters, single shot, from the prone position. Repeat 5 times. Check and confirm shot group. Record POA/POI shift in shooter's notebook.

Stage Two: Single Target, Single-Shot, Standing to Prone

- With a single target, at 100 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to prone position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 300 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to prone position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 400 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to prone position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group..

Stage Three: Single Target, Multiple Shot String, Standing to Prone

- With a single target, at 100 meters, fire a four round shot string, standing to prone. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 200 meters, fire a three round shot string, standing to prone. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Four: Multiple Targets, Single-Shot, Standing to Prone

- With two targets, at 100 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot, standing to prone. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.
- With two targets, at 200 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot, standing to prone. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Five: Multiple Targets, Multiple Shot Strings, Standing to Prone

- With three targets, at 100 meters, perform the Viking Tactics (VTAC) 1-5 Drill, for time. All shots must hit the target for time to qualify.
- With three targets, at 300 meters, perform the Viking Tactics (VTAC) 1-5 Drill, for time. All shots must hit the target for time to qualify.
- With three half-scale IDPA steel silhouette targets, at 50/100/200, perform Rifle El Presidente, for time. All shots must hit the target for time to qualify.

Period Four: Live-Fire Introduction from the Squatting and Kneeling Positions

Instruction Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercises. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures of every stage, with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the applied skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Purpose: The purpose of this period of instruction is to teach the participants the proper, efficient, and effective methods of engaging hostile targets rapidly and accurately, from the squatting and kneeling positions at realistic combative ranges. The rifle is the ultimate expression of the individual's ability to project force. It must be used to do so in an effective manner. You must learn to move efficiently, with economy of motion, and acquire a fast, adequate sight picture, depending on the range you are engaging your targets at, in order to be an effective combat rifleman. "Speed is fine, but accuracy is final," is an important refrain, but outside of the training range, only fast, accurate shots will ensure that your accuracy remains relevant.

Performance Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction

At the completion of this period of instruction, you should be able to:

- Move easily and quickly from the standing position into the squatting and kneeling positions.
- Engage single targets from the squatting and kneeling positions with precision rifle fire at ranges out to 200 meters.
- Engage multiple targets, dispersed across your front, from the squatting and kneeling positions, at ranges out to 200 meters.

- Conduct speed reloads, proficiently, from the squatting and kneeling positions.
- Conduct non-diagnostic malfunction clearances, proficiently, from the squatting and kneeling positions.

Stage One: Single Target, Single Shot, Standing to Squatting and Kneeling

- With a single target, at 50 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to squatting position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 50 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to kneeling position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 100 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to squatting position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 100 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to kneeling position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 200 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to squatting position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 200 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, single shot, standing to kneeling position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Two: Single Target, Controlled Pairs, Standing to Squatting and Kneeling

- With a single target, at 50 meters, fire a controlled pair, standing to squatting. Repeat three times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 50 meters, fire a controlled pair, standing to kneeling. Repeat three times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 100 meters, fire a controlled pair, standing to squatting. Repeat three times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 100 meters, fire a controlled pair, standing to squatting. Repeat three times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Three: Single Target, Multiple Shot Strings, Standing to Squatting and Kneeling

- With a single target, at 50 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, standing to kneeling or squatting at the shooter's discretion. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 200 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, standing to kneeling or squatting at the shooter's discretion. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Four: Multiple Target, Single Shot, Standing to Squatting and Kneeling

- With two targets, at 50 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, standing to squatting position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With two targets, at 50 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, standing to kneeling position. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With two targets, at 150 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, standing to kneeling or squatting at shooter's discretion. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Five: Multiple Target, Multiple Shot Strings, Standing to Squatting and Kneeling
With three targets, placed at 50/110/170, fire two rounds to the 50 meter target, standing to squatting or kneeling, at the shooter's discretion. Stand up and run forward 10 meters to the next position.

Engage the 100 meter target with three rounds, standing to squatting or kneeling, shooter's discretion, as long as it is the opposite of the last target shot. Stand up and run forward 10 meters to the last position.

Engage the 150 meter target with four rounds, standing to squatting or kneeling, at shooter's discretion. Check and confirm shot group.

Period Five: Live-Fire Introduction to the Standing Combative Position
Instruction Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercises. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures of every stage, with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the applied skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Purpose: The purpose of this period of instruction is to teach the participants the proper, efficient, and effective methods of engaging hostile targets rapidly and accurately, from the combative standing position at realistic combative ranges. The rifle is the ultimate expression of the individual's ability to project force. It must be used to do so in an effective manner. You must learn to move efficiently, with economy of motion, and acquire a fast, adequate sight picture, depending on the range you are engaging your targets at, in order to be an effective combat rifleman. "Speed is fine, but accuracy is final," is an important refrain, but outside of the training range, only fast, accurate shots will ensure that your accuracy remains relevant.

Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction

At the completion of this period of instruction, you should be able to:

- Move easily and smoothly from the patrol ready to the low ready, and from the patrol or low ready to a standing firing position or snap shot rapidly and consistently.
- Engage single targets from the combative standing position at ranges from 10-50 meters.
- Engage multiple targets, dispersed across your front, from the combative standing position at ranges from 10-50 meters.

Stage One: Single Target, Single Shot, Standing

- With a single target, at 10 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 15 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 NPOA and Dime drill, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 50 meters, perform a 5+1NPOA and Dime drill, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Two: Single Target, Controlled Pairs, Standing

- With a single target, at 10 meters, fire a controlled pair, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, fire a controlled pair, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 50 meters, fire a controlled pair, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 10 meters, fire a controlled pair, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Three: Single Target, Multiple Shot Strings, Standing

- With a single target, at 10 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, from the standing. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 25 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, from the standing. Check and confirm shot group.
- With a single target, at 50 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, from the standing. Check and confirm shot group.
- With a single target, at 10 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, from the standing. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Four: Multiple Target, Single Shot, Standing

- With two targets, at 10 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.
- With two targets, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.
- With two targets, at 50 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, from the standing. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Five: Multiple Target, Multiple Shot String, Standing

- With three targets, at 10 meters, perform a Viking Tactics (VTAC) 1-5 Drill. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With three targets, at 10/15/50, perform a modified Viking Tactics (VTAC) 1-5 Drill. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Six: "A" Drills
"A" drills were, to the best of my knowledge, developed or at least named, by Andy Stanford, of OPS Inc. In the mid-1990s, Andy was part of a team that was trying to develop a paradigm shift in Marine Corps marksmanship training, by moving away from competition target shooting-based training, to a more effective, real-world methodology.

Task: Perform "A" Drills From the Prone, Squatting, Kneeling, and Standing Positions

Conditions: Given an individual shooter in fighting load, weapon at patrol ready, safety selector switch on "SAFE," loaded with two rounds, with the next available magazine loaded with at least two rounds. Targets may be IPSC or other silhouette-type targets, or photo-realistic targets. A-Zones should be marked on the target. For novice shooters, A-Zone boundary markings should be conspicuous from the firing line. For intermediate and advanced level shooters, A-Zone boundary markings should not be visible from the firing line. Shooter begins each iteration of the "A" drill standing, on the firing line.

Standards: Shooters must execute all fundamentals of marksmanship and weapons handling, from the

designated firing position. All shots fired must hit the target within the C-Zone, with at least one round per drill striking within the A-Zone. Failure to place all rounds within the C-Zone, or failure to place at least one round within the A-Zone is a NO-GO for this task evaluation. If shooter is a GO, time for completion of each "A" Drill will be recorded in shooter's notebook.

Sub-Tasks and Standards of Performance:

- On the signal to commence, shooter will adopt the prescribed firing position, move the safety selector switch to "FIRE" and fire two aimed shots to the target's A-Zone.
- Upon bolt-carrier lock, shooter will execute a speed-reload.
- Shooter will engage the target's A-Zone with two more shots.
- Shooter will evaluate the target through the sights, perform a scan-and-assess, move the safety selector switch to "SAFE," then stand up, to signal completion.
- Shooter perform one iteration of this drill from the prone, squatting, kneeling, and standing position, at 400, 200, 100, and 25 meters, respectively.

Task: Perform the Four-Position "A" Drill Shoot

Conditions: This is an individual drill that incorporates movement and the execution of all fundamentals of marksmanship. Students will begin at the 400 meter firing line. Weapon is loaded with 2 rounds, at the patrol ready, safety selector switch on "SAFE." All other magazines are loaded with four rounds each. Shooters are equipped with fighting load. Targets may be IPSC or other silhouette-type targets or photo-realistic targets. A-Zones should be marked on the target. For novice shooters, A-Zone boundary markings should be conspicuous from the firing line. For intermediate and advanced level shooters, A-Zone markings should not be visible from the firing line.

Standards: Shooters must execute all fundamentals of marksmanship and weapons handling, from the designated firing position for that firing line. All shots fired must be within the C-Zone, with at least one shot from each group striking within the A-Zone. Failure to place all rounds within the C-Zone, or failure to place at least one round within the A-Zone from each position is a NO-GO for this task evaluation. If shooter is a GO, time for completion of the Four-Position "A" Drill Shoot will be recorded in shooter's notebook.

Sub-Tasks and Standards of Performance:

- On the signal to commence, shooter will drop to the prone position, move the safety selector switch from "SAFE" to "FIRE," and fire two aimed shots to the target's A-Zone.
- Upon bolt-lock, shooter will execute a speed reload.
- Shooter will engage the target's A-Zone with two more shots.

- Shooter will move the safety selector switch from "FIRE" to "SAFE," get up and run to the 200 meter line.
- Shooter will drop to the squatting position, move the safety selector switch from "SAFE" to "FIRE," and fire two aimed shots to the target's A-Zone.
- Upon bolt-carrier lock, shooter will execute a speed reload.
- Shooter will engage the target's A-Zone with two more shots.
- Shooter will move the safety selector switch from "FIRE" to "SAFE," get up and run to the 100 meter line.
- Shooter will drop to the kneeling position, move the safety selector switch from "SAFE" to "FIRE," and fire two aimed shots to the target's A-Zone.
- Upon bolt-carrier lock, shooter will execute a speed reload.
- Shooter will engage the target's A-Zone with two more shots.
- Shooter will move the safety selector switch from "FIRE" to "SAFE," get up and run to the 35 meter line.
- Shooter will remain in the standing, move the safety selector switch from "SAFE" to "FIRE," and fire two aimed shots to target's A-Zone.
- Upon bolt-carrier lock, shooter will execute a speed reload.
- Shooter will move the safety selector switch from "FIRE" to "SAFE," perform a scan-and-assess. Upon completion of the CoF, shooter and coach will assess target for accuracy and scoring.
- Shooters perform one iteration of this drill, for record. Task is scored GO or NO-GO.

Period Six—Target Discrimination Shooting

Instruction Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercises. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures of every stage, with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the applied skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Purpose: Whether you are a police officer, a soldier performing COIN operations in Afghanistan, an armed citizen in every day carry self-defense, protecting your retreat property against armed incursion by cannibalistic San Franciscans, or are an insurgent trying to effectively counter the security forces of a totalitarian regime, you HAVE to discriminate your targets. Killing the neighbor's kid, because he was

in your pasture, sneaking over to talk your daughter into a hayloft visit is a non-starter. Killing the local commander's 8-year old daughter, because she was next to her dad, and you missed a shot, will not win friends and influence people amongst the local populace.

Target discrimination is much more than just "shoot/no shoot," although it quite often gets dumbed down to that level in shooting courses. It's also a matter of understanding basic geometry and physics. Think about the rule of "know what is downrange. Know what is between you and your target, to either side of your target, and beyond your target." A solid hit to the hips is great...unless it over-penetrates his pelvic cavity and punches into a kid's head six feet behind him...Realistic combat shooting is not a simple binary decision-making process. You have to train to streamline the rest of the OODA cycle in order to speed up your binary matrix aspects. One great drill I've discovered for accomplishing this is a modification of the old SFAUC PRA drill. PRA stands for Perception, Recognition, Acquisition. While this drill is not as effective for training this as is force-on-force training with Sims guns, it's one of the best methods I've found for square-range work.

It has been said, correctly, that the human mind is not capable of "multi-tasking." The first time I heard this, I was offended, and argumentative. After all, I've driven a vehicle in the tight confines of third-world streets, engaged in shouted conversation with other vehicle crew-members, and engaged hostiles outside the vehicle with gunfire, simultaneously! As I considered it however, I realized I was incorrect. Sure, I'd done all of those things, but I could only do ONE of them well at one time. This is, I learned, called "task stacking." Your mind will focus on one task at a time, shuffling the other tasks in the Rolo-Dex of your mind. The faster you can condition your brain to "task stack," the faster you can drive through the OODA Cycle, and the faster you can drive through the PRA process. This drill does a good job of teaching your brain to task-stack faster.

Performance Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction

At the completion of this period of instruction, you should be able to:

- Explain the critical importance of being able to positively identify appropriate targets before engaging targets with rifle fire.
- Explain the discrimination process of Perception, Recognition, Acquisition.
- Explain the decision-making matrix of whole person-demeanor-hands for discrimination of targets.
- Execute the PRA 1-5 Drill proficiently.

Stage One: Perception, Recognition, Acquisition Target Discrimination Shooting

Lecture Portion/Preface: Discuss the OODA Cycle, Task Switching and Task Stacking vs. the myth

of multi-tasking, and how PRA drills help train your mind to prioritize for task stacking and how to task-switch faster.

Task: The PRA 1-5 Drill

This drill is loosely based on the PRA drills utilized at the Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat Course. It is more directly based on a decision-making shooting drill described by SGM Pat "Mac" MacNamara (US Army, retired) in his book "TAPS: Tactical Application of Practical Shooting," and the Viking Tactics (VTAC) 1-5 Drill demonstrated by SGM Kyle Lamb (US Army, retired) in his videos.

Conditions: Shooter is equipped in fighting load. Weapon is loaded with one 15-round magazine. Weapon is held at the patrol ready, safety selector switch on "SAFE," facing up-range, 10-25 meters away from the firing line. A number of identical targets are arrayed downrange at varying ranges and differing lateral ranges between 10 and 400 meters. Each target is identified with a number that is readily visible from the firing line. At the start position, the shooter will be shown a card with three random numbers, coinciding to the numbers on three of the targets downrange. On the signal to commence, the shooter will turn and sprint to the firing line. The shooter may use any authorized firing position, or combination of authorized firing positions, for his targets. Shooter may move from one position to another, within the limitations of range safety, to allow for effective firing positions.

Standards: Shooter will engage only the card-designated targets downrange. No non-identified targets can be engaged by any round, before or after it strikes the designated target. All targets should have the requisite number of holes, according to it's position in the firing order, all shots must be in the C-zone, with each target recording at least one hit in the A-Zone. Failure to score all hits within the C-Zone, or failure to have a minimum of one round to the A-Zone of each target will result in a NO-GO for this task evaluation. Any round striking a no-shoot target, anywhere on the range will result in a NO-GO for this task evaluation.

Sub-Tasks and Standards of Performance:

- On the ready signal, the shooter will be shown a card with three numbers, in random sequence. Shooter must recite the numbers, in order, aloud.
- On the signal to commence, the shooter will turn and sprint to the firing line. En route, or upon arrival at the firing line, the shooter will scan the targets downrange to locate his targets.
- Shooter will engage the first target in his sequence with one round.
- Shooter will engage the second target in his sequence with two rounds.
- Shooter will engage the third target in his sequence with three rounds.

- Shooter will re-engage the second target in his sequence with four rounds.
- Shooter will re-engage the first target in his sequence with five rounds.
- Shooter will move the safety selector switch from "FIRE" to "SAFE," and then perform a scan-and-assess. Upon completion of the exercise, student and coach will assess all targets for hits and accuracy.
- Shooters will perform 3 repetitions of the PRA 1-5 Drill, with the targets being moved randomly between iterations. Repetitions that result in a GO score will have their times recorded in the shooter's notebook.

Period Seven—Moving And Shooting

Instructional Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercise. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures of every stage, with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the applied skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Purpose: The topic of shooting while moving raises a great deal of dissension amongst the ranks of professional gunfighters, trainers, and recreational shooters alike. Some very distinguished and qualified, genuine experts will claim that shooting while moving is not only unnecessary, but detrimental to practice. Others claim that it is the penultimate goal of close-quarters marksmanship training. The reality is, it depends.

Before you can hope to shoot accurately while moving, you'd better be able to shoot accurately standing still. Ultimately however, the determination to shoot while moving, versus stopping to shoot is predicated on one thing: If you can move fast enough to avoid getting shot, and still get hits, then shoot and move. If you cannot move fast enough to avoid getting shot, and still get hits, then either move or shoot. This is entirely contingent on your marksmanship and weapons handling skill and practice, as well as the distances involved. Shooting while moving during room-clearing in the average residential-scale house is relatively easy. Shooting at someone sprinting to cover, 50 meters away, while you're also sprinting, is considerably more difficult.

When the time comes to shoot and move, don't over think it. You've been walking for at least two decades....So, walk. If you can walk while holding a full glass of water and not spill it, you can walk and shoot. If you can run while holding a full glass of water and not spill it, you can run and shoot.

Performance Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction

At the completion of this period-of-instruction, you should be able to:

- Determine and explain when you are personally capable of shooting while moving, versus when you personally should stop and shoot, then move out again.

- Engage single and multiple targets at ranges up to 15-25 meters, while moving forward.
- Engage single and multiple targets, while moving laterally, left or right, by stopping, turning, engaging, then continuing to move, at ranges up to 50 meters.

Stage One: Single Target, Single Shot, Moving

- With a single target, at 10 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, moving forward to the 5 meter line. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, moving forward to the 10 meter line. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, moving left to right, stop, turn and fire. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, moving right to left, stop, turn and fire. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill moving left to right, stop, turn and fire. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill moving right to left, stop, turn and fire. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Two: Single Target, Controlled Pairs, Moving

- With a single target, at 10 meters, fire a controlled pair, moving forward to the 5 meter line. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, fire a controlled pair, moving forward to the 10 meter line. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 50 meters, fire a controlled pair, moving left to right, stop, turn and fire. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 50 meters, fire a controlled pair, moving left to right, stop, turn and fire. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Three: Single Target, Multiple Shot String, Moving

- With a single target, at 10 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, moving forward to the 5 meter line. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 25 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, moving forward to the 10 meter line. Check and confirm shot group.
- With a single target, at 10 meters, fire a 5-round shot string, moving forward to the 5 meter line. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Four: Multiple Target, Single Shot, Moving

- With two targets, at 10 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot, moving forward to the 5 meter line. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.
- With two targets, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot, moving forward to the 10 meter line. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.
- With two targets, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot, moving left to right, stop, turn and shoot. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.
- With two targets, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot, moving right to left, stop, turn and shoot. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Five: Multiple Targets, Multiple Shot String, Moving

- With three targets, at 10 meters, perform a VTAC 1-5 Drill, moving forward to the 5 meter line.
- With three targets, at 25 meters, perform a VTAC 1-5 Drill, moving forward to the 10 meter line.
- With three targets, at 25 meters, perform a VTAC 1-5 Drill, moving left to right, stop, turn, shoot the first target, then proceed to complete the drill, moving forward.
- With three targets, at 25 meters, perform a PRA 1-5 Drill, moving forward to the 10 meter line. Score and record.

Period Eight: Low/No-Light Engagements with Target Discrimination and Shooting
Instructional Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercise. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures of every stage, with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the applied skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Performance Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction

At the conclusion of this period-of-instruction, you should be able to:

- Explain the advantages and principles of learning to use visible white light for target discrimination and shooting during low/no-light engagements.

- Demonstrate the ability to correctly use visible white light to identify and discriminate targets, while minimizing your target signature to the enemy.

- Demonstrate your ability to engage single and multiple targets, during target discrimination shooting, under low/no-light conditions, while moving.

Stage One: Single Target, Single Shot, Stationary

- With a single target, at 10 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, illuminate, shoot, and side-step. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, illuminate, shoot, and side-step. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

- With a single target, at 50 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, illuminate, side-step and shoot. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Two: Single Target, Multiple Shot String, Stationary

- With a single target, at 10 meters, illuminate, fire a controlled pair, and side-step. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 25 meters, illuminate, fire a controlled pair, and side-step. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 10 meters, illuminate, fire a 5-round shot string, and side-step. Check and confirm shot group.

- With a single target, at 25 meters, illuminate, fire a 5-round shot string, and side-step. Check and confirm shot group.

Stage Three: Multiple Targets, Single and Multiple Shot Strings, Stationary

- With two targets, at 10 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, illuminate, shoot, and side-step. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

- With two targets, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, illuminate, shoot, and side-step. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

- With two targets, at 10 meters, illuminate, fire controlled pairs to each target, and side-step. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

- With three targets, at 10 meters, illuminate, perform a VTAC 1-5 Drill, and side-step.• Perform a PRA 1-5 Drill with illumination.

Stage Four: Multiple Targets, Multiple Shot strings, Moving

- With two targets, at 10 meters, illuminate and fire controlled pairs to each. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With multiple targets from 10-25 meters, perform a PRA 1-5 Drill, moving forward.

Period Nine—Support-Side Shooting with the Rifle

Instructional Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercise. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures of every stage, with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the applied skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Purpose and Background

The ability to engage hostiles around cover on the support-side of your body is an important skill but it is also one that is commonly over-emphasized to the point of becoming a cheap parlor trick. While it may be useful and pertinent to be able to do so at extreme close-quarters, at most ranges, for most people, even in intense combat situations, it is far superior to continue shooting off the shooting-side, and simply use angles and geometry to minimize your exposure to enemy observation and direct-fire. Nevertheless, we will discuss two methods of shooting off the support-side shoulder, for speed and accuracy, within the limits of the weaknesses of the techniques.

Performance Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction:

At the conclusion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain the strengths, weaknesses, and concepts behind shooting off the support-side shoulder.
- Demonstrate the ability to engage targets, at CQM ranges, while firing from the support-side should, using either the firing-side hand or the support-side hand for control of the weapon.

Stage One: Single Target, Support-Side Shoulder, Firing-Hand Control

- With a single target, at 10 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.
- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Two: Single Target, Support-Side Shoulder, Support-Side Hand Control

- With a single target, at 10 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

- With a single target, at 25 meters, perform a 5+1 drill, single shot. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Stage Three: Single Target, Controlled Pairs, Support-Side Shoulder

- With a single target, at 10 meters, perform a controlled pair from the support-side, firing-side control. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

- With a single target, at 10 meters, perform a controlled pair from the support-side, support-hand control. Repeat 3 times. Check and confirm shot groups.

Period Ten—Individual Movement and Buddy Team Maneuver

Instructional Type: Lecture/Demonstration/Practical Exercise. Instructor will explain and demonstrate the procedures of every stage, with the participants imitating the instructor's actions. The participants then practice the applied skills under the supervision of the instructor.

Purpose and Background: If the rifle is the ultimate expression of the individual's ability to project force functionally, then the ability to coordinate and operate in concert with a rifle-equipped partner is the penultimate expression of the individual's ability to project force functionally. The use of fire-and-maneuver is the foundation of all tactics in modern armed conflict. Mastering this ability, and performing fire-and-maneuver, to standard, with an equally armed and adept partner will not double your effectiveness, and danger to an enemy, but will instead increase these attributes exponentially.

Objectives of this Period-of-Instruction:

At the conclusion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain the fundamental concepts and elements of individual movement under direct fire.

- Explain the fundamental concepts and elements of buddy team-level fire-and-movement.

- Identify and utilize temporary fighting positions and individual movement techniques for movement under direct-fire.

- Utilize functional communications to coordinate actions with a partner to effectively apply buddy team-level fire-and-movement, while consistently demonstrating the fundamentals of combat marksmanship.

Stage One: Individual Movement Techniques for Movement Under Direct-Fire

Temporary Fighting Positions

Low Crawl

High Crawl

3-5 Second Rush

Suppressive Fire

Communicate

Stage On: Individual Movement Techniques

- On command, shooters will low-crawl 10 meters forward, then high crawl 10 meters forward. Repeat 3 times.
- On command, shooters will perform 3-5 second rushes, for 100 meters.
- On command, shooters will perform 3-5 second rushes, interspersed with high crawls for 10 meters, for 100 meters.

Stage Two: Buddy Team Bounding Exercise, Dry-Fire Practice

Task: Buddy Team Bounds Training Drill

Conditions: Given a buddy team of shooters, unloaded rifles, with empty magazines seated, in individual fighting loads, starting from the prone position, on the firing line, with multiple silhouette targets located at ranges from 100-400 meters downrange. Shooters will carry a noted amount of ammunition available on their fighting load. Designated and/or opportunistic/environmental positionsof cover and concealment should be readily available throughout the course of fire, for shooters to use as temporary fighting positions. Positions should be from 10-15 meters apart. Targets should be reduced to 1/2-scale and/or partially obscured.

Standards: At its most basic level, this drill is a simple GO/NO-GO exercise. The addition of time constraint-based competition however, will increase shooter enthusiasm and participation, while increasing the training value by instilling a need for speed and violence-of-action.

To score this exercise, at the end of the course of fire, the coach and student will account for the amount of ammunition the shooter has remaining in his fighting load, and subtract that from the amount he started with. They will then count the number of hits on the shooter's targets. The number of hits indicated on the shooter's targets must be at least 70% of the amount of rounds fired by the shooter to score as a GO for this task evaluation.

Sub-Tasks and Standards of Performance:

- On the signal to commence, both shooters will fire a complete magazine as quickly as they can aim and fire. The first shooter to complete his first speed reload will then communicate his intention to move, and direct his partner to provide covering suppressive fire.

- The Ranger buddy must acknowledge this request and agree to do so, and must continue to fire throughout his partner's movement. In the event of an empty rifle or a malfunction, the shooter must communicate to the mover, immediately, his status.

- If the mover completes his movement without his Ranger buddy indicating a problem, he will announce that he is in position and direct his Ranger buddy to move forward.

- The Ranger buddy will communicate his intention to move and direct his partner to provide covering suppressive fire.

- His partner will acknowledge this request and agree to do so, and must provide suppressive fire.

- If at any point a mover notices partner is no longer shooting, or he hears notification of a malfunction or reload, the mover must immediately drop to the prone or another suitable, covered and concealed position, and begin providing suppressive fire until his partner is able to return his gun to the fight.

- This process will continue, back-and-forth, until the shooters have crossed the final limit of advance for the drill.

- Shooter must utilize ALL fundamentals of marksmanship and weapons-handling throughout the duration of this drill.

- Shooter will perform a minimum of three dry-fire iterations of this drill before moving on to stage three.

Stage Three: Buddy Team Bounding Exercise, Live-Fire
Students will perform 1-2 iterations of the buddy team bounding exercise, live-fire. Scores and GO/NO-GO status will be recorded in the shooter's notebook.

Period Ten—After-Action Review and Conclusion of Training
After-action reviews are intended, in this case, more as an opportunity for you to let me know what I could have done better, or how I can improve this class and my presentation of the material covered.

Rules. There are two simple rules:

- You must answer all subjects honestly and thoroughly.

- Big Boy Rules Apply. Nothing is off-limits, and you cannot hold back for fear of hurting my feelings.

Subject Matter. There are only four areas that I insist you cover in your AAR right now.

- Tell me a minimum of three things you learned from this class that you did not know, or did not understand, before taking this class. Why do you think these are important lessons? How will you incorporate these into your own training in the future?
- What do you think was the single most important thing that you are taking away from this class? Why do you consider that the most important lesson?
- Tell me a minimum of two things that you think I can do to better present this material more clearly, in future classes.
- With the above considerations in mind, do you consider this class worth having taken, and would you consider taking it, or another class, in the future? What would it take to get you to participate in follow-on training?
- Is there anything that I haven't covered in this short AAR format that you feel is essential and would like to mention?

Conclusion

You have now completed the three-day Combat Rifle class. If you take the skills presented in the training here, including the training methods, and continue to practice them, while setting and maintaining realistic, challenging, appropriate standards for your performance, you will be far, far ahead of most "tactical" shooters in this world, including most military and law enforcement. If you fail to continue practicing however, you have wasted your time and mine, as well as your money.

Go forth, practice, and teach these skills to others.

Thanks for coming, and have a great trip home.

Supplementary Lecture Periods

- The OODA Cycle
- The Adrenal Stress Response and it's Impact on the Combat Rifleman
- Terrain Analysis/OAKOC
- Rifle Selection and Set-Up
- Load-Bearing Equipment Set-Up for the Fighting Load

SECURITY PATROLLING PROGRAM-OF-INSTRUCTION

Training Plan

Day One

- Introduction, Welcome, and Safety Brief (30 minutes)
- Camouflage and Concealment (1 hour)
- Individual and Team Movement Techniques and Formations (1.5 hours)
- IMT Move Under Direct Fire and Buddy Team Bounds (2 hours)
- Introduction to the Break Contact Battle Drill (2 hours)
- Fundamentals of Land Navigation (3 hours)
- Patrolling Techniques Common Tasks (3 hours)
  1. Cross a Linear Danger Area
  2. Occupy a Patrol Base in Force/Priorities of Work
  3. Special Teams Training
  - EPW Search Teams
- Move Under Direct Fire and Break Contact Drill/Night Fire (2 hours)

Day Two

- Introduction to Fire-and-Maneuver. React-to-Contact Battle Drill (4 hours)
- Alternative Applications of React-to-Contact Battle Drill (4 hours)
  1. React-to-Near Ambush

2. In the Deliberate Attack
3. Conduct a Hasty Ambush

- Fundamentals of Patrol Operations (2 hours)
  1. Principles of Patrolling Discussion
  2. Types of Patrols Lecture
  3. Ambush Patrols

- Practical Exercise. Conduct a Patrol, including night fire React-to-Contact (4 hours)

Day Three

- Mission-Planning and Troop-Leading Procedures Lecture (4 hours)

- After-Action Review (2 hours)

(35+/- hours total training time)

Period One—Welcome, Introduction, and Safety Brief

Safety Brief

This is a hot range. Unless I, or another instructor, specifically instruct you otherwise, for the duration of a specific drill, your weapon should be loaded with a magazine, and a round in the chamber, on safe, at all times. You need to learn to live, move, and survive with a hot weapon. Big Boy Rules Apply.

Everyone should be familiar with the five basic safe gun handling rules:

a) Treat your weapon as if it were loaded, unless you have specifically made it otherwise, verified its condition, and had someone else verify its condition. Don't treat it like its radioactive. Treat it likes its a firearm, and you'll be safe. Since this is a hot range, this should be a really easy rule to remember.

b) Do not intentionally or deliberately point your muzzle at anything you are not willing to destroy, without an adequate reason for doing so. This is a practical field training class, in a field environment. Shit will happen, so don't get your knickers in a twist if someone inadvertently muzzle flashes you during an exercise. However, at the same time, make a conscious decision to NOT point your weapon at other people. This is also known as the "don't point your fucking weapon at me!" rule. Some of us have developed a very refined response to having people point weapons at us. It involves a very simple, very rapid, binary decision-making matrix: shoot or don't shoot. I will always err on the side of my safety.

c) Know what is between you and your target, beyond your target, and to either side of your target. This is important folks. We're not going to be operating on a square range out here, nor in the real world. You will have buddies and non-combatants down-range of you. Pay attention. Consider the reality that you might miss. The reality that someone may step in the way of your shot, and the reality that your round may punch all the way through someone and keep going. Most of all, consider the reality that you might miss.

d) Keep your booger hook off the bang switch. If you fail in all of the three preceding rules, there is a fourth one for good measure. If you point your weapon at someone while it is loaded, but don't pull the trigger, the worst thing that will happen is you'll probably get your ass beat. Unless you are actively engaging a target, with a solid sight picture, there is no reason, whatsoever, for your finger to be on the trigger. It will not make you any faster, to run around finger already on the trigger. I promise.

e) Finally, use your fucking safety. It's there for a reason, and it does, generally, work, really well. If you're running and you trip, and you will be running and you will trip, its entirely within the realm of the probable, for a stub to end up inside your trigger well. That will cause a bang if your safety is not engaged. Even on a Kalashnikov, it's possible to move the safety selector switch from safe to fire, and back again, quickly and positively.

I have a zero tolerance policy for safety. If you violate these rules, it will be neither pretty nor enjoyable. Pay attention. In a nutshell? Don't do stupid.

Environmental Hazards

(Discuss animal and weather hazards. Heat or cold. Hydration and adequate clothing.)

If you are having a problem, stop and let one of the cadre know. We will do what we can to remedy the situation. Do not try and impress us with how tough you are. We're all well acquainted with tough. There's a fine line between hard and stupid, and each of us standing up here has crossed that line, and seen it crossed by others, on numerous occasions. Don't do stupid.

Emergency Action Plan

Is anyone an Emergency Room or Trauma surgeon? Any ER nurses? Any other kind of medical doctor? Any other kind of nurse? Any paramedics? EMTs? Does anyone have basic first-aid/CPR training?

(***Designate primary, secondary, and tertiary care providers. Designate a primary and alternate to summon EMS***)

In the event of a student or cadre injury, if EMS needs to be summoned, all weapons will be cleared pending their arrival. Upon the arrival of EMS, I will communicate with the IC and let them take control. Let's not make that necessary, okay?

Period One—General, Camouflage, Concealment, Cover

Why Patrolling?

Camouflage, Concealment, and Cover

Period Three—Patrol Movement Formations and Techniques
Introduction

Patrol Formations
- Team Wedge
- Team Diamond
- Squad and Platoon Diamond
- Squad Columns

Movement Techniques
- Traveling Overwatch
- Bounding Overwatch
- Ranger File
- METT-TC Considerations in choosing movement techniques and formations

Individual Movement Considerations

Practical Exercise

"You will now conduct a tactical foot movement from this location to (identify destination). Your patrol will depart in twenty minutes. Please drink some water, check to ensure that you have your gear, including weapon, fighting load, and rucksack. We will move along a straight line, as possible, IAW METT-TC, to the destination point. You will be expected to maintain the standards as described in the foregoing block of instruction. Gentlemen, we depart in fifteen minutes."

Task: Conduct a Short-Distance Patrol

Conditions: Given a small unit patrol, equipped with basic fighting and sustainment loads, and armed with individual personal primary weapons, and the mission to execute a tactical foot movement from point A to point B.

Standards:
- The unit crosses the departure/start point at the designated time.

- The unit follows the prescribed route, rate of march, and intervals without deviation unless otherwise required by the METT-TC situation, and/or arrives at the designated destination point at the prescribed time, maintaining accountability of all assigned personnel.
- Unit uses movement formations and techniques ordered by the PL IAW METT-TC.
- Leaders remain oriented to their location, within 100 meters, and follow their planned route unless METT-TC dictates a change or alteration.
- Patrol maintains 360-degree security and 100% alert during movement, and a minimum of 50% alert during halts, unless METT-TC indicates otherwise (leaders must be able to express a legitimate METT-TC factor to warrant going to less than 50% security).
- Control measures are used during movement, including: head counts, rally points, rest halts, etc.

Period Four—Individual Movement Techniques Under Direct Fire and Buddy Team Bounds
Introduction

The Prone Position
Temporary Fighting Positions and Principles of Individual Movement

Practical Exercise

Task: Incoming Small-Arms Fire Familiarization

Conditions: Given a class of non-combat experienced personnel, equipped with standard basic fighting load and individual personal primary weapons. Given a trained instructor, with a zeroed rifle and a safe firing position and direction.

Standards: Students will assume the prone position from 50-100 meters away, down range of the instructor. Instructor will fire an entire magazine, using rapid aimed fire and/or slow aimed fire, over the heads of the students, from one side of the student line to the other and back, until the magazine is depleted. Fires should come no closer than six feet above the students' for safety, and should be no more than 20 feet above their heads for effectiveness of the exercise.

Practical Exercise

Task: Real-World Sight Picture Familiarization

Conditions: Given a class of non-combat experienced personnel, equipped with standard basic fighting load and individual personal primary weapons. Given a trained instructor, with a zeroed rifle, safe firing position and direction, and rifle-level ballistic body armor.

Standards: Students will clear their weapons. Ranger buddy will confirm weapon is clear. Instructor

will use visual and tactile means to verify the weapons are clear. Instructor will move downrange of students 20-25 meters, and face the students. Instructor will direct students to acquire a sight picture on his body armor, and dry-fire one "shot."

Instructor Guidance
"Before we go any further, I believe it is imperative to conduct a drill that I try and perform in every class I teach. This drill will make many of you extremely uncomfortable, due to the raw truth inherent in it. That is the point of the drill. At this time, I need everyone on line, facing me, and clear your weapons. Have your Ranger buddy inspect your weapon and verify that it is clear."

Walk the line. Inspect every weapon for clearance. Use your eyes and your fingers to inspect the chamber, as well as the magazine well of each weapon. If the weapon is not clear, instruct the student to step off the line and place their weapon on the ground, then to step three steps back from the weapon.

If the weapon is clear, proceed with the instructions to each individual student, as you complete your inspection: *"Put your bolt forward. Put both hands on your weapon in a firing grip. Do not remove your hands until I instruct you to do so. Do you understand?"*

Once all weapons are inspected, step back off the line and move to the 20 meter line.

"Can everyone see this patch on my body armor?" Point to a patch over the center of your rifle plate. I want you to acquire a sight picture on this patch. Now."

Wait for compliance.

"Move your safety selector switch from 'SAFE' to 'FIRE.' Now, maintaining your sight picture, I want you to squeeze the trigger until you feel the sear break and the hammer fall."

Wait for compliance.

"Raise your hand if you were uncomfortable with that drill. How many of you have ever aimed an actual, real weapon at another living human being, and squeezed the trigger all the way to hammer-fall?"

"For the rest of you, you were uncomfortable with this drill, because you've spent your entire life being told not point guns at people. We're not out here though, to poke holes in pieces of paper. We're talking about killing other human beings, with these rifles being the tools to achieve that end. Granted, it's to protect our lives, our families, our homes and property, and our communities, but it's still about taking aim at another human being, and doing the deed. You'd better be prepared. If you were uncomfortable doing this, with a weapon that THREE different people verified was clear and safe, don't fool yourself into thinking you'll magically be okay when it's for real, because 'he'll have it coming!' You need to put serious thought and introspection into your ability and capability to drop the hammer on another human being. Fortunately, as psychiatrists and trainers have discovered over the millenia, it gets easier with repetition. Now, you've done it for the first time, it only gets easier from here."

Practical Exercise

Task: Buddy Team Bounds

Conditions: Given a two-man team, equipped with basic standard fighting load and individual personal primary weapons, under enemy small-arms direct fire. Given a current firing position 200-400 meters from the enemy, that provides protection from enemy fires. Given the requirement to move to within 25-50 meters of the enemy position.

Standards:

- Individuals selected an individual movement route that adhered to any instructions provided by the team leader, minimized exposure to enemy fire, and did not require crossing in front of another team member.
- Communicated movement intent and status to Ranger buddy and/or team leader, as appropriate, using verbal or visual signals.
- Moved using the high crawl movement technique when appropriate.
- Moved using the low crawl movement technique when appropriate.
- Moved using the 3-5 second rush movement technique when appropriate.
- Identified temporary fighting positions before beginning to move from last temporary fighting position.
- Repeated all of the above, as necessary, to close to within 25-50 meters of the enemy position.

Practical Exercise

Task: FoF Buddy Team Bounds

Conditions: Given a two-man team, equipped with basic standard fighting load and individual personal primary weapons, under enemy small-arms direct fire. Given a current firing position 200-400 meters from the enemy, that provides protection from enemy fires. Given the requirement to move to within 25-50 meters of the enemy position.

Standards:

- Individuals selected an individual movement route that adhered to any instructions provided by the team leader, minimized exposure to enemy fire, and did not require crossing in front of another team member.
- Communicated movement intent and status to Ranger buddy and/or team leader, as appropriate, using verbal or visual signals.
- Moved using the high crawl movement technique when appropriate.
- Moved using the low crawl movement technique when appropriate.
- Moved using the 3-5 second rush movement technique when appropriate.
- Identified temporary fighting positions before beginning to move from last temporary fighting position.
- Repeated all of the above, as necessary, to close to within 25-50 meters of the enemy position.

OPFOR Instructions: "*You will select a temporary fighting position in the identified area, downrange. Your weapons will be clear, with verification conducted by the instructor. All loaded magazines will be left at the staging area. You will be "patted down" to ensure their are no loaded magazines on your person. This is for the safety of all participants. When the drill begins, you will scan for movement. When you see a shooter move, you will attempt to acquire a sight picture, and count, "one one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand." You will keep track of the number of times you are able to do this, before the target moves into a covered/concealed position. The purpose of this exercise, from your perspective, is to help you understand the importance of dispersion and intervals, as well as speed and aggressiveness in closing with the enemy.*"

Period Five—Introduction to the Basic Break Contact Battle Drill

Introduction

Break Contact Battle Drill

Practical Exercise

Task: Conduct a Team-Level Break Contact

Conditions: As part of a four-man team, conducting a patrol, equipped with basic standard fighting loads, sustainment loads, and personal primary weapons, caught in an unexpected contact by a numerically superior enemy force. Given the requirement to break contact.

Standards:

- On initiation of fires, all personnel move immediately to a covered/concealed position and engage known, suspected, or likely positions of enemy cover and/or concealment in the

direction of contact.

- Team leader calls out fire control commands and all personnel repeat the fire control commands.
- All fighters engage continue to engage known, likely, or suspected enemy positions with rapid aimed fire through their first magazine.
- Upon depletion of first magazine, fighters individually change magazines and continue to provide a base-of-fire. Upon depletion of his first magazine, team leader performs a speed reload and directs the second buddy team to move.
- Second buddy team moves backwards for one 3-5 second rush, to temporary fighting positions, and communicates their readiness to the team leader, by re-engaging the enemy.
- Team leader instructs his Ranger buddy to move and both men move backwards for one 3-5 second rush, to temporary fighting positions, and re-engage the enemy.
- Team continues to alternate moving back, by bounding overwatch.

Period Six—Introduction to Basic Land Navigation

Introduction

Critical Definitions

The Compass

The Map

Important Tactical Navigational Skills

Practical Exercise

Task: Measure Distance on a Map

Conditions: Given a 1:24,000 scale map, a strip of paper with a straight edge, and a pencil.

Standards: Determine the straight-line distance between two points in meters, with no more than a 5-percent error, and the road distance between two points in meters, with no more than 5-percent error.

Performance Steps:

- Identify the scale of the map.

- Convert a straight-line map distance to meters using the map's bar scale for map distances. The scale for most maps can be located in the center of the bottom margin of the map.

  1. Align the edge of a strip of paper with the beginning and ending points on the map.

  2. Mark on the straight edge of the paper, the beginning and ending points.

  3. Align the marks on your paper with the appropriate bar scale in the map legend.

  4. Determine the distance on the scale that compares to the distance on the paper.

- Convert a road distance map distance to meters using the map's bar scale for map distances.

  1. Align the edge of a strip of paper with the beginning point and the point where the road begins to make its first curve on the map.

  2. Mark both points on the piece of paper.

  3. Repeat the previous steps, each time using the point of the curve as the new beginning point, until you reach the ending point.

  4. Align the edge of the piece of paper with the appropriate bar scale in the map legend.

  5. Determine the distance on the scale that compares to the distance represented on the paper.

Practical Exercise

Task: Determine a Location on the Ground by Terrain Association

Conditions: Given a 1:24,000 scale map of the area, pencil or pen, paper, a map protractor or coordinate scale, a compass, and a requirement to determine a location on the ground by terrain association.

Standards: Determine the location on the ground successfully, within 100 meters.

Performance Steps:

- Identify the type of terrain feature on which you are located.
- Identify the types of terrain features which surround your location.
- Correlate the terrain features identified to those visible on the map.
- Determine your location.

Practical Exercise

Task: Orient a Map to the Ground Using Terrain Association

Conditions: Given a 1:24,000 scale map of the area and a requirement to orient the map to the ground.

Standards: Orient the map to within 10 degrees of True North.

Performance Steps:

- Hold the map in a horizontal position.
- Determine your location on the ground by terrain association.
- Match terrain features you can see surrounding your location to the terrain features you can identify on the map.
- Align the map so that the terrain features you can identify on the map correlate to the terrain features you can see surrounding you location.

Practical Exercise

Task: Orient a Map Using a Compass

Conditions: Given a 1:24,000 scale map of the area and a compass.

Standards: Orient the map to the ground using the compass. The north- seeking arrow must fall within three degrees of the angle illustrated in the grid-magnetic angle on the map's declination diagram.

Performance Steps:

- Place the cover side of the compass pointing towards the top of the level map.
- Align the compass with any North-South grid line. This will place the black index line of the compass parallel to grid North. Since the needle of the compass points to magnetic North, a declination diagram on the face of the compass is formed by the index line and the compass needle.
- Rotate map and compass together until the angles of the declination diagram formed by the black index line and the compass needle match the declination diagram printed on the margin of the map. If the magnetic North arrow on the map is to the left of the grid North arrow, the compass reading equals the G-M angle, given the declination diagram. If the magnetic North arrow is to the right of the grid North arrow, the compass reading equals 360 degrees minus the G-M angle. The compass reading will be apparent. If the G-M angle is less than three degrees, do not line up the North arrow.

Alternative Performance Steps:

- Draw a magnetic North line on the map from any N-S and E-W grid line intersection using a map protractor.
- Align the straight-edge of the compass along this magnetic North line.
- Rotate the map and compass together, until the North arrow falls beneath the fixed black index line on the compass.

Practical Exercise

Task: Determine a Magnetic Azimuth Using a Compass

Conditions: Given a compass and a designated point on the ground.

Standards: Determine the correct magnetic azimuth to the designated point on the ground to within three degrees.

Performance Steps:

- Determine direction by aligning the compass in the direction you want to go.
- Locate the scale and determine to the nearest degree, the position of the black index line over the scale.
- Open the cover of the USGI lensatic compass until the cover is at a 90- degree angle to the base.
- Position the eye-piece at a 45-degree angle to the base.
- Place your thumb through the thumb loop.
- Establish a steady, level base with your third and fourth fingers.
- Extend your index finger along the base of the compass.
- Place the hand holding the compass into the palm of the other hand, if the opposite hand is free.
- Move both hands up to your face.
- Position the thumb that is through the thumb loop against your cheek bone.
- If the dial is not in focus, move the eye-piece up and down until it comes into focus.

- Align the sighting slot with the sighting wire in the cover with the designated point.

- Read the magnetic azimuth under the index line. Note that both metal and heavy electrical current can affect the performance of your compass. Non-magnetic metals and alloys of course, do not affect the compass, but the following stand-off distances are recommended to ensure proper functioning of a compass:

  • high-tension power lines: 55 meters

  • trucks or armored vehicles: 18 meters

  • telephone or non-high tension power lines, or wire fences: 10 meters

  • machine guns: 2 meters

  • individual rifle: 1/2 meter (approximately 18 inches)

Practical Exercise

Task: Navigate from One Point on the Ground to Another Point on the Ground

Conditions: Given a 1:24,000 scale map of the area, a protractor, a compass, a designated point on the ground, and the requirement to conduct dismounted foot movement to the designated point.

Standards: Navigate to the designated point using terrain association, dead reckoning, or a combination of the two.

Performance Steps:

- Navigate using terrain association.

  1. Identify the start point and destination point on the map.

  2. Analyze the terrain between these two points for both movement and tactical purposes (OCOKA).

  3. Identify terrain features that can be readily identified during movement, such as hilltops, roads, rivers, and mountains.

  4. Plan the best route, including navigation checkpoints, if needed.

  5. Determine the map distances between identified checkpoints and the total distance to be traveled.

6. Determine the actual ground distance by adding 20 percent to the map distance. Twenty percent is a general rule-of-thumb for cross-country traverses. Road movements and flat terrain may not require this 20 percent adjustment.

7. Move to the identified destination point using identified terrain features as aiming points and handrails.

- Navigate using dead reckoning.

1. Identify the start point and destination point on the map.

2. Analyze the terrain between these two points for both movement and tactical purposes (OCOKA).

3. Plan the best route, including navigation checkpoints, if needed.

4. Determine the grid azimuths between identified checkpoints (if any) and the final point.

5. Covert the grid azimuths to magnetic azimuths.

6. Determine the map distances between checkpoints and the total distance to be traversed.

7. Determine the direction of movement using the compass.

8. Move in the identified direction of travel or towards an identified steering mark (steering marks are recommended when navigating by dead reckoning. A steering mark is a distant feature visible along your route that is used as a distant aiming point that you move towards. Once reached, another steering point is identified until a change of direction of the final destination is reached.)

9. Determine a new steering mark or confirm direction of travel as needed. The direction of movement, when not using steering marks, must be confirmed at frequent, regular intervals.

- Navigate using a combination of dead reckoning and terrain association.

1. Follow the procedures outline for both techniques.

2. Use each technique to reinforce the accuracy of the other technique.

Period Seven—Patrolling Techniques Common Tasks

Introduction

Cross a Linear Danger Area

Occupy a Patrol Base in Force/Priorities of Work

Actions on the Objective and Special Teams Training

- Actions on the Objective
- Special Teams Training: EPW Search Teams

Period Eight—Move Under Direct Fire and Team-Level Break Contact/Night Fire

Introduction

You have already been introduced to the fundamental tactical skills of move under direct fire, both individually and as part of a buddy team and a fire team. You have also been introduced to the basic Break Contact battle drill.

As a member of an irregular force, small-unit patrol however, you must develop the ability to perform all necessary tactical tasks, to the standard, not only in daylight, but also at night, under reduced visibility conditions. We will now conduct two of our previous exercises, in low-light conditions. If you have NODs, you may use them for these exercises. If you do not have NODs, do not feel like you are at a disadvantage. Often, NODs and technology become a crutch. Proficiency in these tasks, under limited visibility conditions should be about training to the task, not to the technology.

Practical Exercise

Task: Buddy Team Bounds

Conditions: Given a two-man team, equipped with basic standard fighting load and individual personal primary weapons, under enemy small-arms direct fire, under limited visibility conditions. Given a current firing position 50-100 meters from the enemy, that provides protection from enemy fires. Given the requirement to move to within 10-25 meters of the enemy position.

Standards:

- Individuals selected an individual movement route that adhered to any instructions provided by the team leader, minimized exposure to enemy fire, and did not require crossing in front of another team member.
- Communicated movement intent and status to Ranger buddy and/or team leader, as appropriate, using verbal or visual signals.
- Moved using the high crawl movement technique when appropriate.
- Moved using the low crawl movement technique when appropriate.
- Moved using the 3-5 second rush movement technique when appropriate.

- Identified temporary fighting positions before beginning to move from last temporary fighting position.

- Repeated all of the above, as necessary, to close to within 25-50 meters of the enemy position.

Practical Exercise

Task: Conduct a Team-Level Break Contact in low-light

Conditions: As part of a four-man team, conducting a limited visibility patrol, equipped with basic standard fighting loads, sustainment loads, and personal primary weapons, caught in an unexpected contact by a numerically superior enemy force. Given the requirement to break contact in the dark.

Standards:

- • On initiation of fires, all personnel move immediately to a covered/concealed position and engage known, suspected, or likely positions of enemy cover and/or concealment in the direction of
- contact.
-
- • Team leader calls out fire control commands and all personnel repeat the fire control commands.
-
- All fighters engage continue to engage known, likely, or suspected enemy positions with rapid aimed fire through their first magazine.

- Upon depletion of first magazine, fighters individually change magazines and continue to provide a base-of-fire. Upon depletion of his first magazine, team leader performs a speed reload and directs the second buddy team to move.

- Second buddy team moves backwards for one 3-5 second rush, to temporary fighting positions, and communicates their readiness to the team leader, by re-engaging the enemy.

- Team leader instructs his Ranger buddy to move and both men move backwards for one 3-5 second rush, to temporary fighting positions, and re-engage the enemy.

- Team continues to alternate moving back, by bounding overwatch.

Day Two

Period Nine--Introduction to Fire-and-Maneuver--Hasty Attack Battle Drill
Introduction

Practical Exercise

Task: Conduct a "Hasty Attack" Battle Drill

Conditions: As part of a six to eight-man squad, conducting a security patrol, equipped with basic standard fighting load, sustainment loads, and personal primary weapons, caught in an unexpected contact with a small enemy force. Given the requirement to prosecute the fight.

Standards:

- On initiation of fires, all personnel move immediately to a covered/concealed position.
- Individual members of the in-contact element immediately engage known, suspected, or likely positions of enemy cover with effective suppressive fires. Upon completion of initial speed reload, individual fighters, in a staggered fashion, drop their rucks, and continue engaging the enemy with sustained suppressive fire.
- Team leader calls out fire control commands and all personnel repeat the fire control commands.
- Team leader communicates threat to trailing team leader or patrol leader.
- Trail team members drop their rucks and follow the trail team leader or the patrol leader as a maneuver element.
- Maneuver element moves along a covered and/or concealed route to a final assault position somewhere between 45 and 90-degrees from the initial axis of the contact.
- Maneuver element begins to assault the enemy position, using individual and buddy team bounds forward, while providing suppressive fire for the rest of the team.
- Team leader signals for the support-by-fire element to "lift fires."
- Assault element continues to bound forward, and then uses a single rush to clear the objective to the LOA.
- Assault team leader begins consolidation and reorganization tasks on the objective.

Period Ten—Alternative Applications of the Hasty Attack Battle Drill

Introduction

React-to-Near Ambush

Conduct a Hasty Ambush

Practical Exercise

Task: React-to-Near Ambush

Conditions: As part of a six to eight-man squad, conducting a security patrol, equipped with basic standard fighting load, sustainment loads, and personal primary weapons, caught in the prepared KZ of an enemy ambush.

Standards:

- On initiation of the ambush, all personnel caught in the KZ immediately drop to the ground and return fire as rapidly as possible.
- All personnel not in the KZ immediately move to a covered and concealed position engage the enemy position with effective suppressive fires.
- Upon completion of an initial speed reload, personnel caught in the KZ immediately perform a single rush through the enemy position. Personnel providing suppressive fire immediately lift/shift fires as the assault moves through the enemy position.
- Patrol leader conducts consolidation and reorganization as necessary.

Practical Exercise

Task: Conduct a Hasty Ambush

Conditions: Given a small-unit patrol, conducting a foot-mobile security patrol, equipped with standard basic fighting load, sustainment loads, and individual personal primary weapons. The patrol observes an approaching enemy patrol, but is not observed by the enemy.

Standards:

- First patrol member to observe the enemy signals to his Ranger buddy and Team Leader. The signal is passed to all personnel within the patrol.
- The lead team moves immediately to covered/concealed positions, removes rucksacks, and adopts temporary fighting positions, in preparation for contact.
- The patrol leader identifies a suitable final assault position. The trail team drops their rucks in a concealed location and immediately moves, along a covered and concealed route, to the final assault position.
- The patrol leader directs members of the assault element into individual temporary fighting positions in covered/concealed locations. Individual members of the assault element ready themselves for contact.

- Patrol leader initiates the ambush with aimed rifle fire when all members of the enemy force are within the KZ.
- All members of the patrol immediately begin to engage any enemy personnel within their sector (45-degrees to the front of the individual)with rapid, aimed-fire.
- On signal, or IAW SOP, shooters "Cease Fire!" and listen and observe for 30-60 seconds for signs of life.
- Patrol leader leads assault element in moving to and through the enemy position.
- On reaching the LOA, patrol leader begins immediate consolidation and reorganization in preparation to exit the ambush site.

Period Eleven—Fundamentals of Patrolling Operations

Introduction

Types of Patrols

Principles of Patrolling

Rally Points

Period Twelve—Patrol Operation

Introduction

"Gentlemen, at this time, we are going to conduct a foot-mobile security patrol. Here are your instructions"

Instructor Guidance:

Previous to the start of Day One, you need to have conducted a reconnaissance of the training area. Locate a place where the patrol can conduct a Hasty Attack Battle Drill safely, in daylight or dark. Set up several (3-5, depending on the size of the patrol class) steel reactive targets in semi- concealed locations, but visible from the route-of-march.

Note the location on your map, and determine a magnetic bearing from the primary range/classroom area, to this area. At the beginning of this block of instruction, give the students ten minutes to get their gear on, hydrate, and be ready to move out.

*"Gentlemen, your mission is to conduct a security patrol along a given avenue from this point. You will follow a magnetic bearing of (**insert magnetic azimuth here**) and look for enemy personnel. Intelligence information has been received that there is a small group of 3-5 (**specify number of target plates set up**) hostiles moving somewhere along this area.*

They have previously used sniper-type attacks to kill isolated individuals and steal their belongings.

Our suspicions are that they are headed here. Rather than wait for them to target us or our families and neighbors, we're going to conduct a patrol to locate them, if they are in the area. When we locate them, we will close with and destroy the enemy patrol. Are there any questions?"

Break the teams up into 4-6 man elements, provide them the magnetic azimuth, and let them go. Fall in at the rear of the formation. Keep an eye on safety at all times. Watch your compass to ensure they don't get so far off course that they completely miss the objective area.

Have them conduct the patrol and the first Hasty Attack with empty weapons, dry-fire. Once they have completed consolidation and reorganization, have them run the Hasty Attack live-fire one time, if their dry-fire iteration was proficient.

Standards of Performance include:

- All members of the patrol use tactical movement techniques, are camouflaged, and utilize individual concealment.
- Team stays within 3 degrees of assigned direction of movement.
- All personnel remain alert, throughout the movement, and actively look for signs of the targets.
- Patrol uses appropriate actions at danger areas, designates rally points en route, and actually makes contact with the targets.
- Upon completion of consolidation and reorganization, PL moves the patrol out and moves at least 1km or one terrain feature away before stopping.
- Patrol stops and occupies patrol base, including priorities of work, and maintains a minimum of 25% security throughout the night.
- Patrol conducts stand-to 30 minutes before daylight, until 30 minutes after day light.
- Patrol moves out of patrol base, and PL ensures that all signs of occupancy are gone.
- Patrol moves back to the start point/main range/classroom area successfully.

Day Three

Period Thirteen—Mission-Planning and Troop-Leading Procedures Lecture

Introduction

"The bulk of the instruction throughout this course has been on the physical execution of common

individual and collective tactical tasks necessary for security patrolling operations. We are now going to spend several hours discussing the first principle of patrolling: planning.

This discussion will cover the eight Troop-Leading Procedures as well as the details of actually planning an effective security patrol. "

Patrol Planning and Troop-Leading Procedures

Period Fourteen—After-Action Course Review

Introduction

"We have now spent most of three days covering the subject of small-unit security patrolling. We have covered camouflage and concealment, individual and team movement techniques and formations, moving under direct fire and buddy team bounds, the basic battle drills of "Break Contact" and "Hasty Attack," as well as adaptations of the "Hasty Attack" for other battle drills and immediate-action drills such as "React-to-Ambush" and "Conduct a Hasty Ambush." You've learned how to cross a linear danger area, occupy a patrol base in force and the priorities of work in a patrol base, as well as special teams tasks for aid-and-litter teams and EPW search teams. You conducted patrolling operations and battle drills in daylight and dark, dry-fire and live.

We've discussed fundamental tasks and principles of patrolling, ranging from the types of patrols you may need to perform in a grid-down scenario, to the essential components of planning and organizing a patrol.

Are there any questions? "

After-Action Review

What we are going to do now is conduct a brief after-action review of the class we've just completed. Rather than stick to a doctrinal military AAR format, there are a couple of things I want you to cover in your AAR:

- Lessons Learned: I want you to list a minimum of three things you learned, during this class, that you did not know, or that you misunderstood, prior to coming here. I do not want everyone to list the same three things, either.
- Most Valuable Lesson: What is the one most valuable or important thing you feel that you learned during this course?
- Suggested Changes or Improvements: I want you to name a minimum of one thing that you think I could do to change the presentation of the material in this class, that would lead to a better presentation or learning environment for the class.
- Do you have any questions, concerns, or comments that have not been addressed in your AAR, or during the class that you'd like to bring up before we're done?

"Thank you gentlemen, for your time and your presence. Thank you for the efforts you put out physically, mentally, and spiritually, to be here for this class. I look forward to seeing you in future classes, and if that is not to be, I wish you good luck and fortune in your lives. God bless...Training is complete."