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NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE  
BASIC SNIPER TRAINING SYLLABUS

NOTE. The primary mission of the SEAL scout sniper in combat is to support combat operations by delivering percision fire on selected targets from concealed postions. The SEAL sniper also has a secondary mission of gathering information for intelligence purposes. The future combat operations that would most likely involve Naval Special Warfare would be low intensity type combat operations that would employ SEAL personnel in the gathering of information for future military operations or the surgical removal of military targets and personnal with a minimal assult force with no lost of life to civilian personnel, this is the ideal mission profile to employ snipers due to their advanced field skills, marksmanship and their abilty to operate independently in a field environment.

1. HOURLY BREAKDOWN OF 9-WEEK PERIOD OF INSTRUCTION.

HOURS	SUBJECT
40	NAVAL GUN FIRE SUPPORT SCHOOL (LITTLECREEK VA.)
4	ZEROING.
20	UNKNOW <del>N</del> DISTANCE FIRING.
66.5	STATIONARY TARGET FIRING (M-14/BOLT RIFLE).
31	MOVING TARGET FIRING.
8	NIGHT FIRING UNDER ARTIFICIAL ILLUMINATION.
15	SHOOTING TESTS - STATIONARY/MOVING/POPOP TARGETS.
12	COMBAT PISTOL SHOOTING.
12	HELO INSERTIONS/EXTRACTIONS-CALL FOR FIRE (4 APPLICATION EXERCISES- 2 NIGHT/2 DAY)
11.5	EMPLOYMENT/MISSION PLANING RELATED CLASSIES.
28	COMMUNICATIONS INSTRUCTION(6 APPLICATION EXERCISES) LST-5B, AN/PRC-117, PSC-3, AN/PRC-113.
42	MAPPING/AERIALPHOTO INSTRUCTION(6 APPLICATION EXERCISES)
1.5	WRITTEN TESTS.
44	STALKING EXERCISES(11 EXERCISES).
11	RANGE ESTIMATION EXERCISES(11 EXERCISES).

11	OBSERVATION EXERCISES(11EXERCISES).
6	CONCEALMENT EXCERCISES(3 EXERCISES).
10	HIDE CONSTRUCTION EXERCISE(1 EXERCISE).
72	MISSION EXERCISES(3, EACH COVERING A 24-HOUR PERIOD).
16	TACTICAL EXERCISE WITHOUT TROOPS(TEWT) (4EXERCISES).
	TOTAL HOURS
<hr/> 500	

## 2. SNIPER PROFICIENCY TRAINING.

The purpose of proficiency training is to enable the qualified SEAL scout sniper to maintain the degree of skill and proficiency to which he was trained. Proficiency training should be conducted on a quarterly in all sniper skills, although special emphasis should be made on marksmanship and stalking. These should be practiced as frequently as possible. Every effort should be made to maintain sniper proficiency.

Snipers should be requalified each year in all SEAL scout sniper skills. They should also be "quizzed" and/or tested every quarter. Proficiency training should be conducted to the same degree of standards as it was originally taught so not to lose any effectiveness in combat. If a sniper is not retained quarterly in all basic sniper skills, his quality of performance will decrease; therefore, he will not meet the standards of the SEAL scout sniper.

NOTE: SEAL scout snipers must be included, in the sniper roll, in normal SEAL tactical training and in tactical exercises.

## INTERNAL SECURITY EMPLOYMENT

### INTRODUCTION

1. Gain Attention. Imagine Special Warfare suddenly committed to a peace keeping force such as in Beirut, Lebanon. Or, imagine being committed to preserve the peace and protect innocent lives and property in an urban environment such as Detroit or Watts during a "Big City" riot. What is the role of the sniper? Is the sniper a valid weapon for employment in situations like this?
2. The answer is most emphatically, yes!! We have only to look around us to see examples of how effective the sniper can be in this type of situation. Probably the best examples available to us are two recent British involvements: Aden and Northern Ireland. In both cases the sniper has played a significant role in the successful British peace keeping efforts. Remember, that one of the key principles of crowd control/peace keeping is the use of only minimum force. The sniper with his selective target identification and engagement with that one well aimed shot is one of the best examples of the use of minimum force.
3. Purpose
  - a. Purpose. To provide the student with the general knowledge needed to employ a sniper section in internal security type environments.
  - b. Main Ideas. To explain the sniper's role in:
    - (1) Urban guerrilla operations.
    - (2) Hostage situations.
4. Training Objectives. Upon completion of this period of instruction, the student will be able to:
  - a. Employ a Seal sniper section in either sniper cordon, periphery, O.P. or ambush operations.
  - b. Construct and occupy an urban O. P.
  - c. Obtain and use special equipment needed for internal security operations.
  - d. Employ a Seal sniper section in a hostage situation.



e. Select a hostage situation firing position taking into consideration the accuracy requirements and effects of glass on the bullet.

## BODY

### 1. Urban Guerrilla Warfare

a. General. The role of the sniper in an urban guerrilla environment is to dominate the area of operations by delivery of selective, aimed fire against specific targets as authorized by local commanders. Usually this authorization only comes when such targets are about to employ firearms or other lethal weapons against the peace keeping force or innocent civilians. The sniper's other role, and almost equally important, is the gathering and reporting of intelligence.

b. Tasks. Within the above role, some specific tasks which may be assigned include:

- (1) When authorized by local commanders, engaging dissidents/urban guerrillas when involved in hijacking, kidnapping, holding hostages, etc.
- (2) Engaging urban guerrilla snipers as opportunity targets or as part of a deliberate clearance operation.
- (3) Covertly occupying concealed positions to observe selected areas.
- (4) Recording and reporting all suspicious activity in the area of observation.
- (5) Assisting in coordinating the activities of other elements by taking advantage of hidden observation posts.
- (6) Providing protection for other elements of the peace keeping force, including fireman, repair crews, etc.

c. Limitations. In urban guerrilla operations there are several limiting factors that snipers would not encounter in a conventional war:

- (1) There is no FEBA and therefore no "No Mans Land" in which to operate. Snipers can therefore expect to operate in entirely hostile surroundings in most circumstances.
- (2) The enemy is covert, perfectly camouflaged among and totally indistinguishable from the everyday populace that surrounds him.
- (3) In areas where confrontation between peace keeping forces and the urban guerrillas takes place, the guerrilla dominates the ground entirely from the point of view of continued presence and observation. Every yard of ground is known to them; it is ground of their own choosing. Anything approximating a conventional stalk to and occupation of, a hide is doomed to failure.
- (4) Although the sniper is not subject to the same difficult conditions as he is in conventional war, he is subject to other pressures.

These include not only legal and political restraints but also the requirement to kill or wound without the motivational stimulus normally associated with the battlefield.

(5) Normally in conventional war, the sniper needs no clearance to fire his shot. In urban guerrilla warfare, the sniper must make every effort possible to determine in each case the need to open fire and that it constitutes reasonable/minimum force under circumstances.

#### d. Methods of Employment

##### (1) Sniper Cordons/Periphery O. P. 's

(a) The difficulties to be overcome in placing snipers in heavily populated, hostile areas and for them to remain undetected, are considerable. It is not impossible, but it requires a high degree of training, not only on the part of the snipers involved, but also of the supporting troops.

(b) To overcome the difficulties of detection and to maintain security during every day sniping operations, the aim should be to confuse the enemy. The peace keeping forces are greatly helped by the fact that most "trouble areas" are relatively small, usually not more than a few hundred yards in dimension. All can be largely dominated by a considerable number of carefully sited O. P. 's around their peripheries.

(c) The urban guerrilla intelligence network will eventually establish the locations of the various O. P. 's. By constantly changing the O. P.'s which are in current use it is impossible for the terrorist to know exactly which are occupied. However, the areas to be covered by the O.P.'s remain fairly constant and the coordination of arcs of fire and observation must be controlled at a high level, usually battalion. It may be delegated to company level for specific operations.

(d) The number of O.P.'s required to successfully cordon an area is considerable. Hence, the difficulties of sustaining such an operation over a protracted period in the same area should not be under-estimated.

##### (2) Sniper Ambush

(a) In cases where intelligence is forthcoming that a target will be in a specific place at a specific time, a sniper ambush is frequently a better alternative than a more cumbersome cordon operation.

(b) Close reconnaissance is easier than in normal operation as it can be carried out by the sniper as part of a normal patrol without party to its hide undetected. To place snipers in position undetected will require some form of a deception plan. This often takes the form of a routine search operation in at least platoon strength. During the course of the search the snipers position themselves in their hide. They remain in position when the remainder of the force withdraws. This tactic is especially effective when carried out at night.

(c) Once in position the snipers must be prepared to remain for lengthy periods in the closest proximity to the enemy and their sympathizers.

(d) Their security is tenuous at best. Most urban O.P.'s have "dead spots" and this combined with the fact that special ambush positions are frequently out of direct observation by other friendly forces makes them highly susceptible to attack, especially from guerrillas armed with

with explosives. The uncertainty about being observed on entry is a constant worry to the snipers. It can and does have a most disquieting effect on the sniper and underlines the need for highly trained men of stable character.

(e) If the ambush position cannot be directly supported from a permanent position, a "back up" force must be placed at immediate notice to extract the snipers after the ambush or in the event of compromise. Normally it must be assumed that after the ambush, the snipers cannot make their exit without assistance. They will be surrounded by large, extremely hostile crowds, consequently the "back up" force must not only be close at hand but also sufficient in size.

### c. Urban Sniping Hides/O.P.'s

(1) Selecting the Location. The selection of hides and O.P. positions demand great care. The over-riding requirement of a hide/O.P. position is for it to dominate its area of responsibility.

(a) When selecting a suitable location there is always a tendency to go for height. In an urban operation this can be a mistake. The greater the height attained, the more the sniper has to look out over an area and away from his immediate surroundings. For example, if an O.P. were established on the 10th floor of an apartment building, to see a road beneath, the sniper would have to lean out of the window, which does little for the O.P.'s security. The locations of incidents that the sniper might have to deal with are largely unpredictable, but the ranges are usually relatively short. Consequently, an O.P. must aim to cover its immediate surroundings as well as middle and far distances. In residential areas this is rarely possible as O.P.'s are forced off ground floor level by passing pedestrians. But generally it is not advisable to go above the second floor, because to go higher greatly increases the dead space in front of the O.P. This is not a cardinal rule, however. Local conditions, such as being on a bus route, may force the sniper to go higher to avoid direct observation by passengers.

(b) In view of this weakness in local defense of urban O.P.'s, the principles of mutual support between O.P.'s assumes even greater importance. The need for mutual support is another reason for coordination and planning to take place at battalion level.

(c) The following are possible hide/O.P. locations:

(1) Old, derelict buildings. Special attention should be paid to the possibility of encountering booby traps. One proven method of detecting guerrilla booby traps is to notice if the locals (especially children) move in and about the building freely.

(2) Occupied houses. After careful observation of the inhabitants daily routine, snipers can move into occupied homes and establish hides/O.P.s in the basement and attics. This method is used very successfully by the British in Northern Ireland.

(3) Shops.

(4) Schools and Churches. When using these as hide/O.P. locations, the snipers risk possible damage to what might already be strained public relations.

(5) Factories, sheds, garages.



(6) Basements and between floors in buildings. It is possible for the sniper team to locate themselves in these positions although there may be no window or readily usable firing port available. These locations require the sniper to remove bricks or stone without leaving any noticeable evidence outside of the building. To do this the sniper must carefully measure the width of the mortar around a selected brick/stone. He must then construct a frame exactly the size of the selected brick with the frame edges exactly the size of the surrounding mortar. He then carefully removes the brick from the wall and places it in his frame. The mortar is then crushed and glued to the frame so that it blends perfectly with the untouched mortar still in place. The brick/frame combination is then placed back into the wall. From the outside, nothing appears abnormal, while inside the sniper team has created an extremely difficult to detect firing port. Care must be taken however that when firing from this position dust does not get blown about by muzzle blast and that the brick/frame combination is immediately replaced. Another difficulty encountered with this position is that it offers a very restricted field of view.

(7) Rural areas from which urban areas can be observed.

(d) An ideal hide/O.P. should have the following characteristics:

(1) A secure and quiet approach route. This should, if possible, be free of garbage cans, crumbling walls, barking dogs and other impediments.

(2) A secure entry and exit point. The more obvious and easily accessible entry/exit points are not necessarily the best as their constant use during subsequent relief of sniper teams may more readily lead to compromise.

(3) good arcs of observation. Restricted arcs are inevitable but the greater the arc the better.

(4) Security. These considerations have already been discussed above.

(5) Comfort. This is the lowest priority but never the less important. Uncomfortable observation and firing positions can only be maintained for short periods. If there is no adequate relief from observation, O.P.s can rarely remain effective for more than a few hours.

## (2) Manning the O.P./Hide

(a) Before moving into the hide/O.P. the snipers must have the following information:

(1) The exact nature of the mission (i.e. observe, shoot, etc.)

(2) The length of stay.

(3) The local situation.

(4) Procedure and timing for entry.

(5) Emergency evacuation procedures.

(6) Radio procedures.

(7) Movement of any friendly troops.

(8) Procedure and timing for exit.

(9) Any special equipment needed.



(b) The well-trying and understood principle of remaining back from windows and other apertures when in buildings has a marked effect on the manning of O.P.s/hides. The field of view from the back of a room through a window is limited. To enable a worthwhile area to be covered, two or even three men may have to observe at one time from different parts of the room.

(3) Special Equipment for Urban Hides/O.P. The following equipment may be necessary for construction of or use in the urban/O.P.

- (a) Pliers. To cut wires.
- (b) Glass Cutter. To remove glass from windows.
- (c) Suction Cups. To aid in removing glass.
- (d) Rubber Headed Hammers. To use in construction of the hide with minimal noise.
- (e) Skeleton Keys. To open locked doors.
- (f) Pry Bars. To open jammed doors and windows.
- (g) Padlocks. To lock doors near hide/O.P. entry and exit points.

## 2. Hostage Situations

a. General. Snipers and commanding officers must appreciate that even a good, well placed shot may not always result in the instantaneous death of a terrorist. Even the best sniper when armed with the best weapon and bullet combination cannot guarantee the desired results. Even an instantly fatal shot may not prevent the death of a hostage when muscle spasms in the terrorists's body trigger his weapon. As a rule then, the sniper should only be employed when all other means of moving the situation have been exhausted.

### b. Accuracy Requirements

(1) The Naval Special Warfare Sniper Rifle is the finest combat sniper weapon in the world. When using the Lake City M118 Match 7.62 mm ammunition it will constantly group to within one minute of angle or one inch at one hundred yards.

(2) Keeping this in mind, consider the size of the target in a hostage situation. Doctors all agree that the only place on a man, where if struck with a bullet instantaneous death will occur, is the head. (Generally, the normal human being will live 8-10 seconds after being shot directly in the heart.) The entire head of a man is a relatively large target measuring approximately 7 inches in diameter. But in order to narrow the odds and be more positive of an instant killing shot the size of the target greatly reduces. The portion of the brain that controls all motor reflex actions is located directly behind the eyes and runs generally from ear lobe to ear lobe and is roughly two inches wide. In reality then, the size of the snipers target is two inches not seven inches.

(3) By applying the windage and elevation rule, it is easy to see then that the average Seal sniper cannot and should not attempt to deliver an instantly killing head shot beyond 200 yards. To require him to do so, asks him to do something the rifle and ammunition combination available to him cannot do.

c. Position Selection. Generally the selection of a firing position for a hostage situation is not much different from selecting a firing position for any other form of combat. The same guidelines and rules apply. Remember, the terrain and situation will dictate your choice of firing positions. However, there are several peculiar considerations the sniper must remember:

(1) Although the sniper should only be used as a last resort, he should be moved into his position as early as possible. This will enable him to precisely estimate his ranges, positively identify both the hostages and the terrorist and select alternate firing positions for use if the situation should change.

(2) If the situation should require firing through glass, the sniper should know two things:

(a) That when the Mils ammunition penetrates glass, in most cases the copper jacket is stripped off its lead core and fragments. These fragments will injure or kill should they hit either the hostage or the terrorist. The fragments show no standard pattern but randomly fly in a cone shaped pattern much like shot from a shotgun. The lead core of the bullet does continue to fly in a straight line. Even when the glass is angled to as much as 45° the lead core will not show any signs of deflection. (back 6 feet from the point of impact with the glass).

(b) That when the bullet impacts with the glass, the glass will shatter and explode back into the room. The angle of the bullet impacting with the glass has absolutely no bearing on the direction of the flight of the shattered glass. The shattered glass will always fly perpendicular to the pane of the glass.

d. Command and Control

(1) Once the decision has been made by the commander to employ the sniper, all command and control of his actions should pass to the sniper team leader. At no time should the sniper have to fire on someone's command. He should be given clearance to fire and then he and he alone should decide exactly when.

(2) If more than one sniper team is used to engage one or more hostages it is imperative that the rule above applies to all teams. But it will be necessary for the snipers to communicate with each other. The most reliable method of accomplishing this is to establish a "land line" or TA-312 phone loop much like a gun loop used in artillery battery firing positions. This enables all teams to communicate with all the others without confusion about frequencies, radio procedure, etc.

OPPORTUNITY FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

SUMMARY

1. Reemphasize. During this period of instruction we discussed urban guerrilla operations and hostage situations. In urban guerrilla operations we outlined the tasks and limitations common to all operations. We then discussed the two methods of employing snipers: (1) sniper cordons/periphery O.P.s and (2) sniper ambushes. We discussed selecting a position

in an urban area and the most suitable locations for hides/O.P.s. Then we *looked at how to man an O.P. and what special equipment you might need to construct and work in it.*

In the discussion of hostage situations we examined the accuracy requirements and the position selection considerations common to all terrorist environments. We also discussed the command and control procedures for employing snipers in this type of role.

2. Remotivate. Remember, its not outside the realm of possibility that someday you or someone you've trained could find himself in this type of situation. At that time you'll take the test--let's hope we have no failures, because the political and social repercussions are too great a price to pay for one sniper who didn't prepare himself to put that one round on target.



OCCUPATION  
AND  
SELECTION OF POSITIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. Gain Attention. Relate story of Russian super-sniper Vassili Zaitsev and German super-sniper Major Konigs at the Battle of Stalingrad. (Excerpts from Enemy at the Gates by William Craig.)

2. Simply stated, the Specwar snipers mission is to see without being seen and to kill without being killed.

3. Purpose

a. Purpose. The purpose of this period of instruction is to provide the student with the knowledge required to select and occupy a position.

b. Main Ideas. The main ideas to be discussed are the following:

- (1) Position Selection
- (2) Hasty Positions
- (3) Position Safety
- (4) Actions in Position

4. Training Objectives. Upon completion of this period of instruction the student will:

a. Identify those features which contribute to the selection of a position. i. e. cover, concealment, fields of fire, avenues of approach and withdrawal, etc.

b. Determine, using maps, aerial photos and/or visual reconnaissance, the location of a suitable sniper position.

TRANSITION. To effectively accomplish their mission of supporting combat operations by delivering precision fire on selected targets the sniper team must select a position from which to observe and fire.

BODY

1. Position Selection. The sniper, having decided upon an area of operation, must chose a specific spot from which to operate. The sniper must not forget that a position which appears to him as an obvious and ideal location for a sniper will also appear as such to the enemy. He should avoid the obvious positions and stay away from prominent, readily

identifiable objects and terrain features. (TA) The best position represents an optimum balance between two considerations.

- a. It provides maximum fields of observation and fire to the sniper.
- b. It provides maximum concealment from enemy observation.

2. Hasty Positions. Due to the limited nature of most sniper missions and the requirement to stalk and kill, the sniper team will in most cases utilize a hasty post. Considering the fundamentals of camouflage and concealment the team can acquire a hasty sniper post in any terrain. (TA) The principle involved when assuming a hasty position is to utilize a maximum of the team's ability to blend with the background or terrain and utilize shadows at all times. Utilizing the proper camouflage techniques, while selecting the proper position from which to observe and shoot, the sniper can effectively preclude detection by the enemy. (TA) While hasty positions in open areas are the least desirable, mission accomplishment may require assuming a post in an undesirable area. Under these circumstances, extreme care must be taken to utilize the terrain (ditches, depressions, and bushes) to provide maximum concealment. The utilization of camouflage nets and covers can provide additional concealment to avoid detection. There should be no limitation to ingenuity of the sniper team in selection of a hasty sniper post. Under certain circumstances it may be necessary to fire from trees, rooftops, steeples, under logs, from tunnels, in deep shadows, and from buildings, swamps, woods and an unlimited variety of open areas.

3. Position Safety. Selection of a well covered or concealed position is not a guarantee of the sniper's safety. He must remain alert to the danger of self-betrayal and must not violate the following security precautions.

- a. When the situation permits, select and construct a sniper position from which to observe and shoot. The slightest movement is the only requirement for detection, therefore even during the hours of darkness caution must be exercised as the enemy may employ night vision equipment and sound travels great distances at night.

- b. The sniper should not be located against a contrasting background or near prominent terrain features, these are usually under observation or used as registration points.

- c. In selecting a position, consider those areas that are least likely to be occupied by the enemy.

- d. The position must be located within effective range of the expected targets and must afford a clear field of fire.

- e. Construct or employ alternate positions where necessary to effectively cover an area.

- f. Assume at all times that the sniper position is under enemy observation. Therefore while moving into position the sniper team should take full advantage of all available cover and concealment and practical individual camouflage discipline. i. e. face and exposed skin areas

camouflaged with appropriate material. The face veil should be completely covering the face and upon moving into position the veil should cover the bolt receiver and entire length of the scope.

g. Avoid making sound.

h. Avoid unnecessary movement unless concealed from observation.

i. Avoid observing over a skyline or the top of cover or concealment which has an even outline or contrasting background.

j. Avoid using the binoculars or telescope where light may reflect from lenses.

k. Avoid moving foliage concealing the position when observing.

l. Observe around a tree from a position near the ground.

m. Stay in the shadow when observing from a sniper post within a building.

n. Careful consideration must be given to the route into or out of the post. A worn path can easily be detected. The route should be concealed and if possible a covered route acquire.

o. When possible, choose a position so that a terrain obstacle lies between it and the target and/or known or suspected enemy location.

p. While on the move and subsequently while moving into or out of position all weapons will be loaded with a round in the chamber and the weapon on safe.

4. Actions in Position. After arriving in position and conducting their hasty then detailed searches, the sniper team organizes any and all equipment in a convenient manner so it is readily accessible if needed. The sniper team continues to observe and collect any and all pertinent information for intelligence purposes. They establish their own system for observation, eating, sleeping, resting and making head calls when necessary. This is usually done in time increments of 30 to 60 minutes and worked alternately between the two snipers for the entire time they are in position, allowing one of the individuals to relax to some degree for short periods. Therefore it is possible for the snipers to remain effective for longer periods of time.

The sniper team must practice noise discipline at all times while occupying their position. Therefore arm and hand signals are widely used as a means of communicating. The following are recommended for use when noise discipline is of the utmost importance.

a. Pointing at oneself; meaning I, me, mine.

b. Pointing at partner; meaning you, your, yours.

c. Thumbs up; meaning affirmative, yes, go.



