

# SNIPER SUSTAINMENT TRAINING

## U.S ARMY SNIPERS

Repetitive training in long-range marksmanship and field-craft skills ensures the best probability of effective engagement and the minimum risk of detection. Snipers must sustain basic soldier skills and master and sustain critical mission skills to accomplish their objectives. Both sniper and observer are trained snipers and should be highly skilled in the art of sniping. Sniping skills perish quickly; therefore, sniper teams must sustain and sharpen those skills regularly. To deny the importance and need to sustain sniper training deprives the commander of a valuable asset. This chapter also includes a 5-day sniper sustainment training program.

### BASIC SKILLS

Due to the primary and secondary missions of the sniper, minimum skill sustainment should include observation, range estimation, concealment, concealed movement, and rifle firing. Sustainment of these skills may best be accomplished through sniper training exercises and unit-level live-fire exercises. Sniper training exercises provide snipers with practical experience in detecting and engaging realistic targets under field conditions on ranges comparable to a battlefield. This training also provides snipers with a means to practice the various sniper training fundamentals that has been taught previously, often collectively. These exercises may not be graded; however, competition is a proven method to obtain the desired results. At the end of the exercises, the trainer critiques each sniper on his performance. These exercises include zeroing and practice fire, field fire (unknown distance), concealment, concealed movement target detection, range estimation, land navigation, memory enhancement exercise (KIM game), and communications. Each sniper will go through these training exercises.

a. **Zeroing and Practice Fire.** To engage targets effectively during training exercises and in combat, the sniper must have his rifle accurately zeroed. For this reason the zeroing exercises are normally conducted on a measured known-distance range to ensure precise adjustment, recording, and practice under ideal conditions and to eliminate variables that may prevent achieving an effective zero. The sniper rifle is zeroed using both the telescopic and iron sights. A bull's-eye-type target should be used for zeroing. It is important to acquire a point-of-aim, point-of-impact zero at 100 meters using the M24. As the distance increases, the sniper must adjust his telescope to allow for elevation and wind to ensure the rounds stay in the center of the target.

b. **Field Fire.** Practical firing exercises are designed to develop sniper proficiency in the accurate and rapid engagement of various combat-type targets, as well as to provide practical work in other field techniques. Snipers should be given positions on the firing line and areas of the field fire course to observe and make range cards of the area.

(1) After the range cards have been completed, the snipers will be required to fire the course by having one member call the wind and adjust the other member's fire. The ability to call the wind is important as successful engagement of the targets. After one member fires the course, they switch positions and repeat the fire course.

(2) When firing the course, snipers should engage the targets in a sequence that starts with the 200-meter target, then engage each target out to 800 meters, then engage targets back to the 200-meter target. (Targets are engaged twice. Snipers will engage a target with no more than two rounds per target.) The course consists of engaging 20 targets with 30 rounds of ammunition within a 30-minute time limit. The sniper should be scored as follows:

- 10 points for first-round hits.
- 5 points for second-round hits.
- 200 points maximum.
- 140 points needed to pass (70 percent).

(3) To enhance training, snipers should also fire the field fire course during limited visibility with overhead illumination such as parachute flares. This puts stress on the sniper to determine the range and to engage a target in a short amount of time.

(4) To provide the most realistic training environment trainers do not use range commands to commence fire and cease fire in sniper exercises. The only exception to this is when an unsafe condition exists. The command CEASE FIRE should be given immediately. Snipers must be given a thorough orientation on each exercise (to include safety requirements) before they are permitted to move into position. After the sniper has assumed his firing position in the designated location, he should be allowed to fire without further commands. Therefore, the range must be cleared for firing before the exercise begins. An NCO (assistant trainer) must be with each sniper to keep score and to maintain safety during the exercise. When the sniper completes firing, the NCO ensures the rifle is clear and signals the range officer.

c. **Concealment.** Concealment exercises develop and test the sniper's ability to conceal himself in an expedient firing position while observing and engaging an observer-instructor.

(1) In a cleared area with a wood line about 100 meters away, snipers conceal themselves within 10 minutes in the wood line. After the 10-minute preparation, an observer-instructor 100 meters away visually searches the area for 2 minutes without the aid of optics. After 2 minutes, the observer-instructor searches the wood line (from his position) for 18 minutes, using binoculars and the M49 observation telescope. If there are more than 10 snipers in the exercise, two observer-instructors and two assistant trainers may be needed. After the 20-minute period, an assistant trainer with a radio moves within 10 feet of a sniper, who is ready to fire at an observer-instructor.

(2) The sniper should be able to identify a white 5-inch number that is painted on an 8-inch by 8-inch international orange panel. This panel is held over a vital part of the observer-instructor, and two blanks are fired at him without the sniper being detected. If the target detects the sniper, he radios the assistant trainer and directs him to the sniper. The exercise should be scored on a 10-point system, with 7 points being a passing score.

d. **Concealed Movement.** Concealed movement exercise develops and tests the sniper's ability to move and occupy a firing position undetected.

(1) This exercise requires the same amount of trainers and equipment as in the concealment exercises. Areas used should be observable for 1,000 meters and have easily recognizable left and right limits. Ideally, snipers should train in a different type of area each time they perform these exercises.

(2) The snipers move 800 to 600 meters toward two observer-instructors, occupy a firing position 100 to 200 meters away, identify in the same manner as the concealment exercise, and fire two blanks at the targets without being detected at any time. If one of the observer-instructors detects a sniper, he radios one of the assistant trainers and directs him to the sniper's position. The sniper is given three hours to complete the exercise. The exercise is scored on a 10-point system, with 7 points being a passing score.

e. **Target Detection.** Target detection exercises sharpen the sniper's eyes by requiring him to detect, describe, and plot objects that cannot be easily seen or described without the skillful use of optics.

(1) Areas used for target detection should be partly cleared at least 200 meters in depth and 100 meters in width with easily definable left and right limits. The area should have at least three TRPs that are easily recognized and positioned in different locations throughout the area. Ten military items are placed in the area. These items can be radio antennas, small-scale mock vehicles, batteries, map protractors, or weapons. Items should be placed so that they are undetectable with the naked eye, detectable but indescribable with the binoculars, and describable only by using the M49 observation telescope.

(2) Snipers are given an M49 observations telescope, M22 binoculars, pencil, clip board, and scorecard. Snipers are given 40 minutes to detect, describe, and plot each item in the area. Snipers remain in the prone position throughout the exercise. After 15 minutes, they will move to a different position, left or right of the centerline of observation and remain there for the next 15 minutes. For the last 10 minutes, they can choose a position anywhere along the line. When an object is detected, the sniper gives his location on the line of observation (A or B). Next, the sniper must describe the object using the categories of size, shape, color, condition, and appearance. Snipers receive 1/2 point for correctly plotting a target and 1/2 point for correctly describing it. They must achieve 7 points to receive a GO in this area.

**NOTE:** The trainer should sanitize the site before the exercise. If the sniper finds additional items to describe he may use the eleventh and twelfth lines of the scorecard. If the trainer allows the sniper can obtain credit for observation and detection skills.

f. **Range Estimation.** Snipers must correctly estimate distance to effectively fire weapons, complete accurate range cards, and give reliable intelligence reports. Range estimation exercises should be conducted in an area that allows unobstructed observation of a human-size target up to 1,000 meters away. Personnel should be placed at various ranges and stages of concealment to give the sniper a challenging and realistic exercise. Snipers should be graded on their ability to estimate range by using the naked eye, M19/M22 binoculars, and the M3A scope. Snipers must correctly estimate the distance to 7 of 10 objects using their eyes ( $\pm 15$  percent), 7 to 10 objects using the binoculars ( $\pm 10$  percent), and 7 to 10 objects using the M3A telescope ( $\pm 5$  percent).

g. **Land Navigation.** This exercise develops the snipers' proficiency in specific field techniques such as movement, land navigation, and radiotelephone procedure. Snipers must move from a starting point to a specific location and then report. During this exercise, snipers should be fully equipped. To provide training