

SNIPER TRAINING

Introduction

What is a sniper, what are his tasks?

A sniper is an expert rifleman trained in the techniques of the individual soldier and assigned the mission of sniping. A sniper needs many skills. He must be physically and mentally hard, a crack shot, and must be able to --

- Estimate ranges.
 - Search areas.
 - Locate and identify sounds.
 - Use cover, concealment, and camouflage.
 - Use maps, sketches, aerial photos, and the compass.
 - Recognize enemy personnel quickly.
 - Move without detection.
 - Endure long periods of waiting.
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Your Mission as a Sniper

Your mission as a sniper is to shoot key enemy personnel -- leaders, gunners of crew served or automatic weapons, communications specialists and radio operators, observers, and enemy snipers. In the absence of these priority targets, fire on any targets of opportunity. You must also collect information for your intelligence officer.

Employment of Snipers

Plans must be made to properly locate sniper teams. Other troops in the area must avoid these areas. The use of snipers must be incorporated into the tactical plans of the unit commander.

Your Equipment

You should carry only mission essential equipment. Besides your weapon, you may need binoculars or spotting scope, watch, map, compass, and camouflage clothing. Much has been written about sniper weapon systems. The best caliber is not necessarily the flattest shooting, longest-range cartridge. You have limits in the amount of ammunition that you can carry, because of space and weight considerations. Re-supply is an issue to consider. Field reloading equipment will allow you to make your own ammunition when you need it. But reloading has its disadvantages. It takes time, and the extra equipment is heavy. Equipment used by sport shooters is out of the question. Such equipment is designed for use on a bench. You must be able to load using a volume, not weight, of powder. You must use tools designed to be portable and accurate. You must also practice until you are sure you can make reliable, consistent ammunition. Other sources of resupply are cartridges in standard use by other weapon systems, including the enemies own.

Every rifle has a distinctive sound. If you choose a rifle that sounds different than those used by others in your area of operations, you will call attention to yourself. If you choose a system that your enemy uses, you must be careful to let others in your unit know the area in which you will be. Failure to do so could result in friendly fire, and "friendly fire" never is when you are on the receiving end.

Your mission will dictate the equipment you carry. Most sniper teams employ rifles that are designed for the types of missions that they will be assigned. If resupply is not an issue, and you will not be in the area long, a .300 Winchester Magnum makes a very good choice. It is expensive to shoot and load and heavy in bulk. .308 Winchester (7.62x51mm NATO) is a popular choice because the ammunition is plentiful, recoil is light, and more ammunition can be carried. Other systems are employed in special circumstances.

A good spotting scope is essential. Yes, there are laser range finders that are very good for long range shooting. But one must never take them for granted; good range estimation is something you must be able to do without mechanical or optical aids.

Finally, you will need tools for the observation and scouting aspects of sniping. You should carry the following: camera, tape recorder, pencil, and notebook for recording intelligence, a map of the area, compass, camouflage paint, and weapon cleaning supplies.

What It Takes to Be a Good Sniper

Basically, it takes three things to be a good sniper, and a wicked shot is the least of them. Discipline and cunning are the important qualities. Snipers do not (usually) roam around looking for people to shoot. **They do not shoot non-combatants, i.e. women and children, other unarmed persons, livestock, windshields, and houses, etc.** The sniper is either alone, or with one to three other people, depending on the mission requirements. Taking shots at targets not worth shooting only increases the risks of being discovered, captured or killed. Discipline and patience are essential qualities to have when faced with a shoot or not to shoot decision.

Ask yourself this -- Do you have a hot temper? Do you anger quickly? Anger causes the pulse to quicken, which we will discuss later, and may cause careless or irrational behavior, all of which are bad. Do you like to hunt? Do you like to hunt alone? Have you ever spent an entire week

alone? No television, no phone, no friends, no family, no nothing? Have you ever gone camping alone? In a remote area where you saw no one? How did it make you feel, what did you think about? What did you do while you were there? How many times did you masturbate? How often did you eat? Was there a difference in your mental state on the first day and the last? Snipers are not necessarily "loners." In fact, someone who has problems relating to other people may not make a good choice.

Why is all of this important? A sniper may stalk a target for days to get a shot. He may never get it. Could you abandon the mission without shooting anything? The window of opportunity for a shot may last only 3 seconds. If you are daydreaming, fooling around, eating, or anything else you will not be successful. You should be studying the kill zone and waiting for your shot. This is why a spotter or second shooter is so desirable. It is very hard on the eyes to use binoculars or a spotting scope for more than 20 minutes at a time. You and your partner can take turns. You can't change positions while in your hide. You must remain still at all times to avoid detection. This sounds easy but it's not. Think of a small child who is just learning to fish. It's impossible for them to leave their line in the water for more than a minute or two without pulling it out to check it. If you have hunted deer you know how hard it is to hold still in a deer blind. It might be easier if you knew that your prey would shoot you if it saw you first. But it is very easy to relax when you *think* that no one can see you.

What does the word "cunning" mean to you? To a sniper it is everything, and it affects everything he does. Cunning alone can make a sniper successful. A sniper must decide where to position himself, how to get there, how to leave, what to take with him, how to camouflage the hide, where to place alternate hides, and what to do if something bad happens. A sniper must be able think an entire shoot through from beginning to end and set it up in a manner which will produce results. Anyone who has watched enough television has seen a million wrong ways to do this. Snipers do not shoot from rooftops, open windows, or a prominent terrain feature. These are the places that will immediately draw attention and return fire. A rooftop can be a hard place to escape from too, as would a climbing stand used by deer hunters.

Marksmanship is the final element. A sniper must be able to engage targets at as long a range as is possible under any circumstance. Distance equals escape time. Surprisingly, people who have never before fired a rifle can become excellent shots with proper training. Old habits are hard to break, and this applies to shooting methods as well. In order to develop adequate shooting skills an individual should be prepared to fire between 5,000 to 10,000 rounds of ammunition during long and arduous practice sessions. A good coach is essential. If you don't know how to read shot strings you will not know what you are doing wrong.

Special Operations Target Interdiction Course - Memorandum of Instruction

MEMORANDUM THRU: Commander, United States Army Special Operations Command,

ATTN.: AOOP. Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28307-5200

FOR: Commander, United States Army Special Operations Command,

ATTN.: AOOP-TP, Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28307-5200

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Instruction, Special Operations Target Interdiction Course (SOTIC)

1. PURPOSE. To provide the United States Army Special Operations Command with the information necessary to prepare students for the SOTIC.

2. General.

a. Purpose of the SOTIC. To train selected personnel in the technical skills and operational procedures necessary to deliver precision rifle fire from concealed positions to selected targets in support of special operations forces. Course emphasis is to provide the force with personnel who can achieve first-round hits from a cold barrel on these high-value targets. Additionally, personnel will be able to correct for wind and determine the previous round's bullet trace to achieve second-round hits if necessary.

b. Course Length. The SOTIC is a six-week course conducted at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Students will be attached to Company D, 2d Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28307-5200.

c. Class Size.

(1) Maximum - 24 students.

(2) Optimum - 24 students.

(3) Minimum - 8 students.

d. Prerequisites. Students must meet the following prerequisites. Students who fail to meet these prerequisites will be returned untrained to their parent unit.

(1) Must be currently assigned to or on orders to a Special Forces detachment of Ranger company, currently Ranger-qualified or Special Forces-qualified, or selected Department of Defense personnel.

(2) Must have a current periodic physical. Students must have their medical records with them when they report for inprocessing. Vision must be correctable to 20/20 in each eye.

(3) Must have in their possession a memorandum from their unit commander certifying that the student has scored expert with the M16A1/M16A2 rifle in accordance with FM 23-9, M16A1 Rifle and M16A2 Rifle Marksmanship, July 1989, within 12 months of the reporting date.

(4) Must have undergone a psychological evaluation (Minnesota Multi-phasic Personality Inventory) under the direction of a qualified psychologist within 12 months of the reporting date. A copy of the evaluation must be presented on the course starting date.

(5) Must have in their possession an original verification of their security clearance (copies unacceptable), dated no earlier than 30 days prior to the course starting date.

(6) Must meet the Army height and weight standards as prescribed in AR 600-9, Height and Weight Standards.

(7) Must currently be on jump status and be medically qualified to participate in airborne operations.

Requests for waivers must be addressed to --

**Commander
1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne)
ATTN.: AOJK-GP
Fort Bragg, NC 28307-5200**

Waivers must be approved prior to the class starting date. Personnel who report on the class starting date without an approved waiver will be returned untrained to their parent unit.

e. Reporting. Students will report to Company D at Building O-3550 prior to 1700 on the course report date or telephone DSN xxx-xxxx/xxxx or commercial (910) xxx-xxxx/xxxx during duty hours. Students arriving after duty hours prior to the starting date should obtain lodging at Moon Hall (bachelor enlisted quarters [BEG]). Company D maintains a 24-hour guard post located in our compound (telephone DSN xxx-xxxx or commercial (910) xxx-xxxx). Students reporting after the closing of inprocessing will not be permitted to start the course and will be returned to their parent unit. Additionally, personnel reporting prior to the course starting date should secure any weapons in the company arms room, which can be accessed 24 hours a day through the aforementioned guard post phone number.

3. RATIONS AND QUARTERS. Temporary duty orders should reflect that rations and quarters are not available. As a result, it is recommended that off-post parent units provide a rental car for their students attending the course. On-post BEQ reservations may be available if coordinated for at least 45 days prior to the course starting date. If the BEQ is unavailable, statements of non availability will be issued and students may billet off post. It is the responsibility of the student to file an accurate travel voucher upon his return to his parent unit.