

Chapter 7

Battle Drills

*“Train in difficult, trackless, wooded terrain. War makes extremely heavy demands on the soldier’s strength and nerves. For this reason, make heavy demands on your men in peacetime exercises.”*⁸

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel

Performance-oriented training is recognized as the best training technique available to teach Marines to perform their missions. Hands-on training imprints the information in the mind of the trainee as no other type of training can. However, a good, performance-oriented training package can be difficult to implement at the unit level due to time, personnel turbulence, and lack of trained instructors.

The following discussion will aid the small-unit commander in establishing, managing, and conducting an efficient and comprehensive training program that uses trainers and the small-unit leader (fire team, section, squad, and platoon) to conduct training. Although the discussion centers around the infantry, any subject that can be taught as performance-oriented training by a small-unit leader is applicable.

BATTLE DRILL

The purpose of a battle drill is to teach individual and collective skills to Marines. Ideally, the Marine's leader (team, section, squad, or platoon) teaches the skill. This develops team integrity and places the small-unit leader in a position of authority and responsibility. Commanders must hold their trainers responsible for the training they have been tasked to conduct. As a guide, each battle drill should last not more than 1 hour. If the subject cannot be taught, demonstrated, and practiced to mastery within 1 hour, it is probably too complex and should be broken down into two or more separate evolutions. Each evolution is divided into three phases. Appendix C contains a detailed example of an instructor's battle drill exercise lesson guide that can be used as a guide to develop a unit's own drills.

Phase 1

Phase 1 includes the trainer's preparation prior to and on the day of training. Preparation by the trainer prior to the day of training includes—

- Determining the references, conditions, and standards for the skill to be taught from the applicable ITSS, training and readiness manual, or MCCRES order.
- Obtaining the applicable references from the unit S-3 or training aids library. Ensure that the references are current.
- Studying the material and learning it thoroughly.
- Writing an instructor's guide. Appendix C contains sample guides for the trainer.
- Determining what training aids are needed.
- Rehearsing until confident with the material.

- Conducting final rehearsals with all training aids and in front of an audience that is knowledgeable of the subject matter. If possible, rehearse on the same ground as where the class will be given.
- Obtaining applicable orders for the proposed training area and ensuring that it suits the subjects to be taught. Appendix D contains techniques used to set up a training area.
- Conducting a reconnaissance of the training area and verifying the training plan.

The trainer performs the following steps on the day of training:

- Prior to the arrival of demonstrators/assistants and students—
 - Reviews applicable orders, regulations, and lesson materials.
 - Inventories training aids, supplies, and ammunition.
 - Sets up the training area as planned.
 - Constructs a sand table/terrain model of training area with detailed emphasis on the teach and practice area.
- After arrival of demonstrators/assistants—
 - Inspects weapons and equipment.
 - Conducts safety brief and ensures that it is understood.
 - Completes any unfinished preparations.
 - Rehearses the demonstrators and ensures that they understand their role in the training.
- After arrival of the Marines to be trained—

- Explains the purpose of the lesson to the Marines to be trained.
- Inspects weapons and equipment.
- Conducts safety brief and ensures that it is understood.
- Maintains unit integrity when possible. If applicable, organizes Marines for training and makes designated leaders responsible for Marines' conduct.
- Distributes supplies and ammunition and explains how it is to be prepared/loaded.

Have trainees prepare individual weapons and camouflage and make on-the-spot corrections. Conduct a review of skills/knowledge that have a direct bearing on the lesson. For example, review the immediate action required for weapons and selection of cover and concealment if the battle drill is on fire and movement. Describe the training area. Explain the scoring system. Ensure that the scoring supports the training objectives.

Phase 2

Phase 2 consists of the lecture and demonstration of the new skill. The trainees are given the chance to conduct a walk-through/ talk-through practice of the new skill. During phase 2, the trainer will—

- Introduce the subject (who, what, when, where, why, and how of the instruction).
- Explain the knowledge or skill.
- Have demonstrators execute the knowledge or skill.
- Verify that the trainees understand what they heard and saw and what they are required to accomplish.

- Have the trainees conduct a walk-through/talk-through practice and make on-the-spot corrections.
- Continue the practice until the skill is mastered.

Phase 3

Phase 3 involves final practice at normal cadence.

Battle Picture. The battle picture is issued from a vantage point, using a sand table/terrain model to supplement. It is used to give Marines both a general and specific picture of the situation. The presented information is similar to the information found in a patrol mission brief.

Battle Preparation. Preparation for the final practice includes—

- Indicating the area where the preparation is performed.
- Setting a time limit for preparation.
- Pointing out the direction of the enemy and the location of special ground features.
- Showing the limits of the training area as per range orders.
- Stating the time and place of the orders brief.
- Ensuring that all Marines know the mission and the situation, have a plan of execution, and know the range or training area limits and the routes they are to use.

Scoring System. Visually and verbally explain the scoring system. Use a chart to show 80 percent as mastery of the lesson. See figure 7-1.

Conduct of the Final Practice

- Fire team leader's fragmentary order.

- Reemphasize safety and command lock and load. The fire team leader is now in full control and the time starts at this point.
- Accompany the fire team and observe all actions. Do not interfere except in the case of—
 - Safety violations.
 - Exceeding the training area limits.
 - Crossing the limit of advance (LOA) and completion of the exercise.
 - Command cease fire at the LOA.

Individual Camouflage	5 Points
Weapons Functioning	20 Points
Use of Cover	20 Points
Individual Movement	20 Points
Fire team Formations	20 Points
Tactical Execution	15 Points
	100 Points
Bonus for No Casualties	20 Points
NOTE: The squad is fully tactical after the delivery of the battle picture.	

Figure 7-1. Example of a Scoring Chart.

End of Lesson Procedures

- Clear and inspect all weapons and magazines.
- Critique the exercise and allow for questions.

How to Conduct Training --- **7-7**

- Give the score, summary, and look forward to subsequent training.
- Police the range/training area.
- Prepare for the next evolution.
- Repack the supplies and equipment.
- Secure the area.

BATTLE DRILL SUSTAINMENT TRAINING

Battle drill sustainment training is a technique used to test Marines on the knowledge/skills they have been previously taught. It differs from the battle lesson in that it is accomplished at normal cadence under realistic battle conditions using blanks against a realistic enemy force. The battle drill sustainment exercise is conducted much the same as a battle lesson. The differences will be readily apparent from the description that follows. See appendix C for specific examples of a battle drill exercise. The MILES may be integrated to enhance realism.

Phase 1

Phase 1 includes the trainers preparations prior to and on the day of training.

Preparation by the trainer prior to the day of training includes—

- Determining the references, conditions, and standards for the skill to be taught from the applicable ITSS, training and readiness manual, or MCCRES order.
- Obtaining the applicable references and orders from the unit S-3 or training aids library. Ensuring that the references are current.
- Studying the material and learning it thoroughly.
- Writing an instructors' guide. Appendix C contains sample guides for the trainer.
- Determining what training aids are needed.
- Rehearsing the class until confident with the material.
- Conducting final rehearsals with all training aids and in front of an audience that is knowledgeable of the subject matter. If possible, rehearse on the same ground as where the class will be given.

- Obtaining applicable orders for the proposed training area and ensuring that it suits the subject to be taught. Appendix D shows techniques of setting up a training area.
- Conducting a reconnaissance of the training area and verifying the training plan.

The trainer performs the following steps on the day of training:

- Prior to the arrival of assistants/aggressors and students—
 - Reviews applicable orders, regulations, and lesson materials.
 - Inventories training aids, supplies, and ammunition.
 - Sets up the training area as planned.
 - Constructs sand table model of the training area with a detailed emphasis on the teach and practice area and the final practice area.
- After arrival of assistants/aggressors—
 - Inspects weapons and equipment.
 - Conducts safety brief and ensures that it is understood.
 - Completes any unfinished preparations.
 - Tests MILES equipment, if it is to be used.
 - Rehearses aggressors.
 - Tests fire weapons.
 - Ensures that assistants/aggressors understand their role in the testing.
 - Issues additional supplies and ammunition as needed.

- After arrival of the Marines to be tested—
 - Explains the purpose of the exercise to the Marines to be tested.
 - Inspects weapons and equipment.
 - Conducts safety brief and ensures that the following elements of that brief are understood.
 - Location of corpsman.
 - Actions in case of injuries.
 - Actions for fires.
 - Radio and landline locations. Station a list of applicable callsigns, frequencies, and grid coordinates at each location for directing aid.
 - Location of principal roads in the area and suitable landing zones.
 - Signal plan for use in emergencies.
 - Maintains normal fire team organization, if possible. If required, reorganize as per normal progression.
 - Distributes supplies and ammunition and explains how they are to be prepared/loaded.
 - Describes the training area, administrative area, concurrent training/review area, assembly area, and test area.
 - Reviews training.
 - Explains the scoring system, both graphically and verbally. Explains to the Marines being trained that the squad will be scored in the areas of preparation and execution. A detailed breakdown of how they will be scored will be explained in the assembly area prior to the final testing.
 - Ensures that Marines understand what they saw and heard.

Prior to phase 2, the trainer conducts a review of skills/knowledge as required.

Phase 2

During phase 2, Marines prepare to conduct sustainment training.

Introduce the Exercise. This is the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the exercise. Trainers ensure that Marines understand what they heard and what they will be required to accomplish.

Battle Picture. From a vantage point, the leader issues an operations order, fragmentary order, or mission brief as applicable to the situation. This sets the tone for the battle exercise. The battle picture can be very detailed or vague as the exercise dictates.

Battle Preparation. Preparation for the final practice includes—

- Indicating the area where the preparation is to be carried out.
- Setting a time limit for preparation.
- Pointing out the direction of the enemy and the location of special ground features.
- Showing the limits of the training area as per range orders.
- Stating the time and place of the trainees' orders brief.
- Ensuring that all Marines know the mission and situation, have a plan of execution, and know the range or training area limits and the routes they are to use.

Scoring System. Verbally and visually explain the scoring system. Develop a chart to show Marines the areas they will be graded on during the exercise. The areas selected should support the basic intent of the battle exercise. See figure 7-1.

Phase 3

Phase 3 is the practical application of the battle exercise. Phase 3 includes—

- Repeating the safety procedures and ensuring that all Marines understand them.
- Updating Marines on the battle picture and limits of the range/ training area.
- Listening to the operation order and observing the final battle preparation.
- Accompanying Marines on the exercise, evaluating the performance as per the standards set forth in the applicable training reference.
- Ensuring the safety of the exercise (do not interfere with the play of the problem unless an unsafe situation occurs). The range safety officer/supervisor should accompany the Marines and be primarily concerned with safety. This leaves the trainer free to concentrate on the conduct of the exercise.
- Ordering *CEASE FIRE AND CLEAR ALL WEAPONS* at the limit of advance.
- Executing end of lesson procedures:
 - Inspect all weapons and magazines to ensure that they are safe.
 - Conduct an on-the-spot debrief while Marines' actions are still fresh in their minds.
 - Describe Marines' actions in chronological order.
 - Discuss common faults and give praise where warranted.

- Give Marines their scores and explain why they received a specific score.
- Summarize the evolution.
- Look forward to subsequent training.
- Police the range/training area.
- Prepare for the next evolution.
- Repack the supplies and equipment.
- Secure the area.