

The White Papers: Training the Infantry Small Unit

Training Machine Gun Support by Fire

Purpose

The purpose of this event is to standardize the training of the medium machine gun unit battle drill *support by fire*. It provides fidelity not commonly found in our publications and SOPs.

Standard

In twenty minutes, a medium machine gun leader **plans** to *support by fire* and issues a MORT statement to direct the action.

In five minutes, a medium machine gun section **supports** *by fire*. Time starts when the unit leaves the cold position. The time limit includes all necessary pre-firing actions.

In five minutes, a medium machine gun section **displaces** to the ORP. Time starts when on the unit leader's order to displace. Displacement time includes equipment accountability.

Note: time to reconnoiter is not a part of the standard.

Equipment

Equipment organic to the medium machine gun section. Organic radios to communicate leader's reconnaissance information.

Enhancements

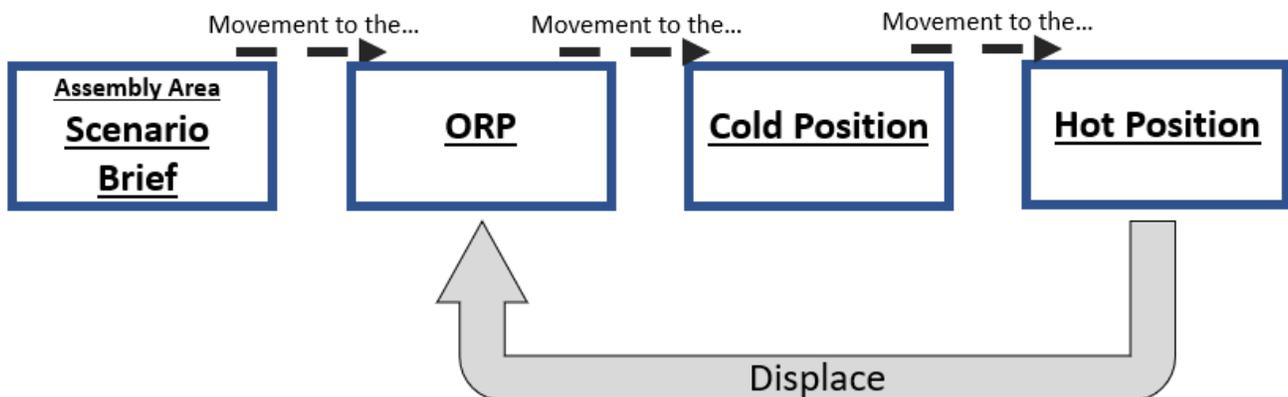
The unit carries sand-filled ammo cans. The section calculates estimated time of support from the number of sand-filled ammo cans they bring. Dummy A131 links can be laid on top of sand-filled cans for loading by the machine gun crew.

One or two squad leaders stand-in as notional maneuver units—allowing the machine gun unit to shift, cease, and exercise communication and signal plans.

Event Description

Brief machine gun units a general scheme of maneuver:

“Flanking attack west. Guns support maneuver as they attack. Tasks: Guns, support by fire third squad for in order to allow them to clear the objective. All signals per SOP.”



Building Blocks

Block One. Start this drill by training actions in the hot position.

Block Two. Start the drill by training actions from the cold position through the hot position; ready to fire within five minutes.

Block Three. Start the drill by training actions from the ORP through the hot position, with all field gear.

Block Four. Train the drill from ORP through hot position under a time limit. Displace back to the ORP within the time limit. Unit shifts fire as representative maneuver units break MSLs or OSLs.

Best Practices to support by fire

ORP actions before reconnaissance.

HOTSWAP: repack machine guns for action by packing tripod, spare barrel in the A-Bag.

Repack water and ammunition cans into assault packs.

Oil machine guns. Gunners sling rifles.

Mount or op-check optics as required.

Check gear and guns.

Cache extra gear.

Issue contingency plan.

Leader's Reconnaissance. Not part of the time standard.

Leaders determine: location of cold and hot position, azimuth to target, distribution of fire, rate of fire, classification of fire, estimated time the unit can support, initial FCLs or OSLs.

Leaders range the targets, measure FCLs or OSLs and communicate to maneuver.

ORP actions after reconnaissance.

Leader's brief the outcome of reconnaissance.

Machine Gun Leader's Reconnaissance Report

Location of hot position, number of guns, azimuth of fire, method of fire (MSL or OSL),
location of FCL, estimated minutes of support

Cold Position actions.

Rear security or contact team.

Prepare ammunition.

Prepare tripods and guns.

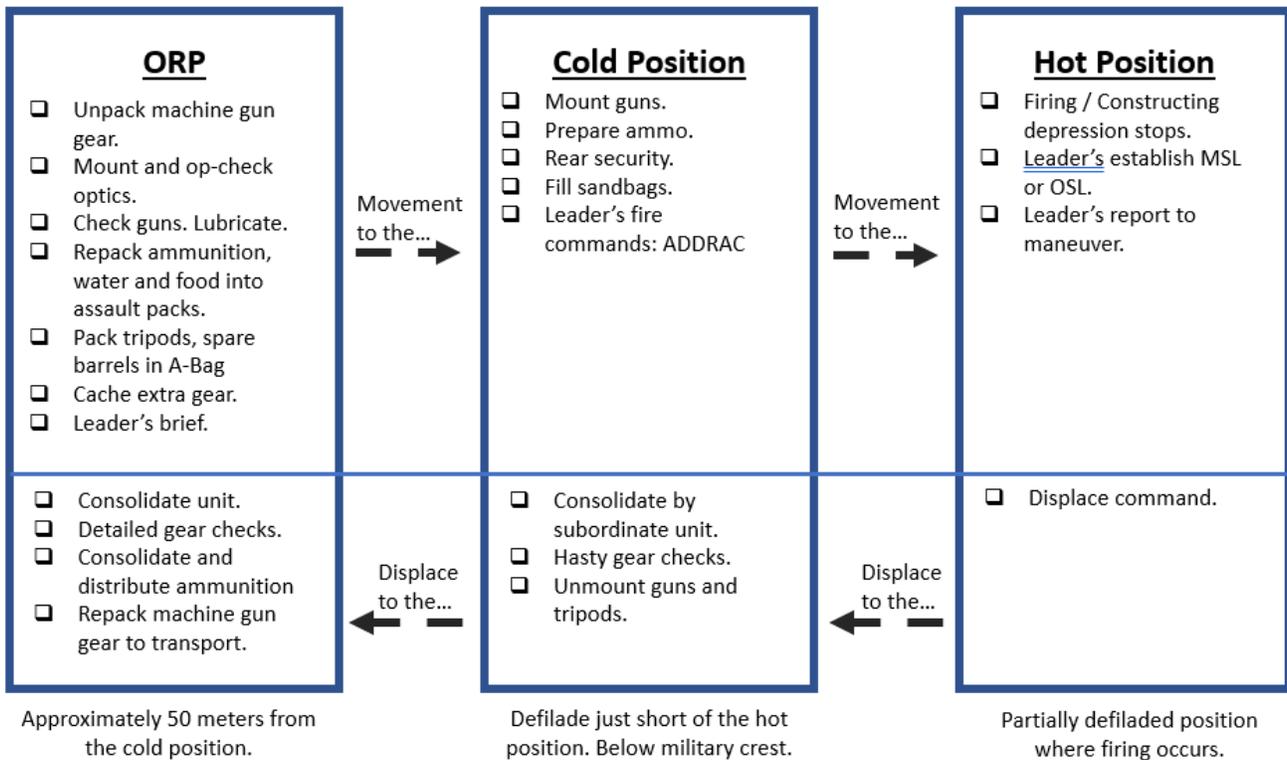
Filling sandbags for tripods or depression stops.

ADDRACs—given by the leader—finalize firing commands and sets the unit in action from the cold position.

Hot Position.

Leaders determine MSLs or OSLs by instrument.

Leaders shift or cease fires without signals or communication.



Recommended Debriefs

- Efficiency: every Marine is engaged. Unit evaluators pay special attention to Marines who appear to not know what to do.
- Leaders are trained to use a compass, binoculars or mil-reticle, WRM formula, and laser range finder. Leaders determine MSLs and OSLs. Leader's communicate to maneuver.
- ORP is not within 50 meters of the hot position (ECR of enemy artillery). *Crew-served weapons are enemy priority targets!*
- Machine gun math. Leaders brief maneuver estimated support from rates of fire from ammunition on hand.

