



**Research Product 98-35**

**Train-the-Trainer Video on the Deliberate Night  
Attack**

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**February 1998**

**Infantry Forces Research Unit**

**U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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**A Directorate of the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command**

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# **Train-the-Trainer Video on the Deliberate Night Attack**

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## FOREWORD

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The NIGHTFIGHTER training research program was initiated by the Army Research Institute's Infantry Forces Research Unit to identify problems associated with night operations and possible training solutions to those problems. The research product described in this report provides guidance to leaders on how to prepare their subordinate leaders to conduct effective training for the platoon deliberate night attack as part of a rifle company. The video was made at Fort Bragg, NC and filmed by the Marine Corps Combat Camera Unit.

The video integrates training principles dispersed throughout training and doctrine literature and Infantry leader courses. It shares valuable lessons learned on training for night operations from the Joint Readiness Training Center and from experienced military leaders. Night and day photography illustrate the training sequence needed to master the individual and buddy team skills, battle drills, and situational training exercises that support the night attack. Training with night equipment, the multiple-integrated laser engagement system (MILES), and a realistic opposing force are stressed, as is leader planning and techniques to maximize training time. The video culminates with night attack training with MILES during the day and then at night, followed by live-fire during the day and then at night. The video is currently being distributed to the Infantry Pre-command Course at Fort Benning, GA.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The video was written and directed by H. Wayne Crawford (COL Ret). Without his vision, expertise, and dedication, the project would not have become reality. It was filmed by the Marine Corps Combat Camera Unit, Quantico, VA, whose photographic expertise is clearly visible in all the footage. The video was edited by Darlene Henley, Sigma Associates, Columbus, GA, whose skill in integrating military concepts and selecting the footage to illustrate key points was superlative.

The outstanding soldiers of B Company, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 2d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, Ft. Bragg, NC are to be acknowledged for their enthusiasm as the "actors" in the video and for their support in providing the required equipment, ammunition, supplies, and training areas. Finally, particular credit is given to COL John Scroggins, Cdr, 2d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division for his unwavering support of the video over a period of two years.

# TRAIN-THE-TRAINER VIDEO ON THE DELIBERATE NIGHT ATTACK

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# Train-the-Trainer Video on the Deliberate Night Attack

## Background

Army doctrine (Department of the Army [DA], 1990, 1988) states that leaders are also trainers. Leaders train their subordinate leaders as well as the units under their command. This training responsibility is particularly critical for night missions in that special equipment is used and expertise during the day, although necessary for success at night, does not ensure success at night. Additional soldier skills are required, and some skills used during daylight do not transfer directly to night operations. Clearly, having the right equipment helps soldiers, leaders, and units to "own the night." But as stated by Keen and Larson (1997), training is also critical: "... being outfitted correctly is just a part of the picture. We, as a total Infantry, must share the information we learn during training - the TTP, capabilities, and limitations of current and new equipment - and apply it to future night battles" (p. 12). The importance of leaders being excellent trainers was stated well by Noyes (1991) in reference to preparing for war, "Above all, leaders must provide outstanding training. Far more than cleverness in battlefield maneuvers, effectiveness in pre-battle training is a leader's most important gift to his troops." (p. 9).

The Army's fundamental training principles are found in *Training the Force* (FM 25-100, DA, 1988) and *Training the Force, Battle Focused Training* (FM 25-101, DA, 1990). Much of the Army's training and doctrine literature focuses on the "how-to-fight" tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), and describes exercises that must be conducted to prepare for combat. Field manuals, mission training plans, and drill manuals are examples of this essential "how-to-fight" focus. This was also the case with the Army's most recent (and only) manual dedicated to night fighting, FC 90-1, (Combined Arms Combat Development Activity, 1985), which is no longer valid. Embedded in this literature is guidance on "how-to-train," but it is secondary to the "how-to-fight" theme.

Critical training publications, which supplement these documents, are those from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (e.g., *JRTC Priority Trends*, *News from the Front*, *CTC Quarterly Bulletin*, *NTC Trends Analysis*, *NTC Trends Compendium*, CALL Newsletters, CALL Handbooks). These publications provide excellent guidance and tips on training procedures that address areas needing improvement as identified by the Combat Training Centers. In addition, proponent school publications such as *Infantry* and *Armor* have articles with training tips.

Nonetheless, it is frequently the case that excellent military trainers acquire their skills through a mentoring process or through modeling the trainers under whom they have served. Consequently, a training video that presents leaders with a visual model of how to conduct training and how to develop trainer skills was viewed as a valuable supplementary training aid to current written publications, particularly for night training.

A video was made that addresses this train-the-trainer need. It provides a visual training program to assist the Infantry Battalion Commander and his leaders to prepare their platoon, squad, and fire team leaders to execute the platoon deliberate night attack as part of a rifle company. It also links the training guidance on night operations dispersed throughout the training and doctrine literature and Infantry leader courses. The deliberate night attack was selected for the video as it is the most difficult night mission, and the squad/platoon attack is typically considered the fundamental battle drill for the Infantry (Keen & Larsen, 1997). The



video was part of the NIGHTFIGHTER research program conducted by the Army Research Institute's Infantry Forces Research Unit at Fort Benning, Georgia.

### **Content of the Video**

The training video focuses on dismounted Infantry, although many of the training principles and concepts apply to mechanized Infantry as well. It has two parts. Part I, 45 minutes in length, includes general training principles, leader and individual training, and buddy team training. Part II, 49 minutes in length, begins with dismounted battle drills, then situational training exercises (STXs), and ends with the night attack by the platoon.

The video shares lessons learned on training for night operations from the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) and the Army's own-the-night experiments. It emphasizes planning for and using night equipment during training by incorporating these lessons learned and the training expertise of experienced military leaders. Both day and night photography illustrate the training points.

Several training themes, consistent with Army training doctrine, are in both parts. These points are emphasized in the narration and are reflected in the video footage. These themes are:

- ***Train to standard and train as you fight.***

Key to implementing these two central training principles is to have a tactical mission as the focal point for the training. This point is stated and illustrated throughout the video in the planning and execution of drill training and STXs. Application of these principles to a tactical mission also makes trainers use the doctrine and training literature, another theme in the video.

- ***Keep it simple at night.***

Despite the advantages provided by night equipment, simple tactical plans and standing operating procedures (SOPs) are needed. Night fighting is not the same as day fighting. SOPs must be adapted for night; SOPs must be revised as new equipment is available.

- ***Ensure soldiers have mastered all the night equipment available to them, and your leaders have considered how to use it.***

The video does not detail how to train every piece of night equipment (e.g., zero aiming lights, adjust night vision goggles). Instead it focuses on showing senior noncommissioned officers, responsible for such training, the level of detail required to train individual skills to mastery. At the end of training, the soldier, his weapon, and night-vision device system must become one (Keen & Larsen, 1997). In addition, because the night equipment available to soldiers is continually changing, generic capabilities are stressed in order to prevent the video from becoming out-of-date. Other points made are: SOPs must reflect the optimum use of equipment for the tactical mission; combat load, including all batteries used with night equipment, must always be considered.

- ***Master the basics even though night equipment is available.***

Murphy is alive and well at night. Training without night devices and without reliance on other equipment is necessary to maintain proficiency and also to have soldiers appreciate their night equipment. For example, shooting with unaided vision shows soldiers how inaccurate firing is at night without night devices. Training on using a compass, map, and pace count is necessary, despite the availability of global positioning systems.

- ***Use the multiple-integrated laser engagement system (MILES) and a realistic opposing force (OPFOR).***

In all the night and day training exercises shown in the video, soldiers wear the MILES. This is also the case for the OPFOR. In addition, use of an OPFOR is shown as training progresses from the smallest collective unit of buddy teams, through drills, STXs, and the attack itself. The OPFOR should always be present in the run phase of the drills and STXs; they should be trained on how to fight at night; they should use different cues to prepare leaders and units to react quickly to any enemy contact. Another training point, illustrated in all the day footage, is that soldiers should wear night equipment during the day.

- ***Use the Army's training and doctrine literature.***

The doctrine and training manuals shown in the video are listed in Appendix A. Use of this literature helps leaders ensure that their subordinate leaders tie training to a tactical mission; that they understand the benefits of buddy training, drill training, and STXs; and that they are fully aware of the standards for all tasks, both individual and collective.

- ***Assess the training skills of your leaders.***

Senior leaders must recognize that not all their subordinate leaders are prepared to conduct quality training. One-third are good trainers; one-third are on their way to being good trainers; and one-third are too inexperienced to be good trainers. Use of soldiers who are good trainers and mentors as observer/controllers is essential to the development of trainer skills. Leaders must also be cognizant of the importance of safety in night training; risk assessments must be done.

- ***Design training exercises to focus on lessons learned from the Combat Training Centers (CTCs).***

Lessons learned about the dismounted night attack from the CTCs, particularly the JRTC, are cited and illustrated. See Appendix A for a summary of the major lessons learned that are presented in Part II of the video.

- ***Use training time efficiently by focusing on the attack, not on getting to the objective.***

Night navigation to the objective is critical, as the attack will not be successful if units do not arrive on time or intact. However, if a substantial portion of training time is spent navigating, the critical elements of the attack will not be trained to standard. The video stresses drills and STXs directly related to the attack; a theme consistent with lessons learned from JRTC. The four drills illustrated in Part II are react to contact, breach a mined wire obstacle, knock out a bunker, enter and clear a trench. Also stressed is that inexperienced trainers often underestimate the time and resources required to conduct night operations training. Time must be allocated for identifying needed fixes and then rehearsing those fixes. Although leaders desire night training to go smoothly, learning how to fix problems often makes them better trainers.

- ***Include company attachments in STXs.***

Use of engineer and indirect fire assets in the night attack is emphasized. Planning how to include these elements in training and showing rehearsals with them is covered in Part II.

- ***Master individual and collective skills in daylight before moving to limited visibility.***

This theme is repeated, verbally and visually, throughout the video. Part II concludes with the attack in the run phase showing the following training sequence: Day attack with MILES, night attack with MILES, day attack with live-fire, and finally night attack with live-fire.

The major areas covered in each part of the video are summarized in Appendix A. Highlights of the first video are: developing night SOPs, assessing the status of each leader's skill to train, mastering the basics for night with individual training both day and night, and lastly buddy team training day and night with MILES and live-fire. Highlights of the second video are: day and night battle drill training using drills that directly support the night attack, integrating indirect fire and engineer attachments into training, progressing to STX day and night training with the direct fire support element, use of after action reviews for training soldiers and leaders, and rehearsals for the attack itself. In the past, many units went directly to night live-fire after day live-fire rehearsals. But with the abundance of new night equipment available, day live-fire rehearsals have also been found to be necessary to ensure soldiers will employ their night equipment effectively.

### **Making the Video**

The script and storyboard were written by a retired Infantry officer who had been the senior observer/controller at the JRTC. The "actors" were soldiers from an airborne Infantry company. There was no selection of soldiers to play certain roles; they served in their assigned duty positions. Nor was special training conducted prior to the filming. The speakers were from the company and the brigade, with the brigade commander being the primary speaker in both parts of the video. A narrator was used for much of the footage.

The night footage was taken through third-generation image intensification (I<sup>2</sup>) lenses; the same technology as in the night vision goggles (NVGs) worn by soldiers in the video. Thus the imagery shown to the viewer is the same as that seen by the soldiers as they conduct night operations with their NVGs and night sights. For example, the instant blooming of I<sup>2</sup> imagery when directed at a high intensity light source such as a chemical light or fires on the objective depicted in the video is the same as that seen through NVGs. Similarly, if the ambient light was minimal due to clouds, the imagery is poorer than when the night was clear with a full moon. The Marine Corps Combat Camera Unit did both the day and night taping. Historical combat footage, JRTC footage, and night footage taken as part of the NIGHTFIGHTER research program are also included.

Two weeks of shooting on location were required. During this time, specific lessons were learned about how to acquire good training footage at night. To expedite filming and reduce ammunition costs, at least two, preferably three, cameras should be focused on the same scene, but from different angles and positions. A portable video viewer should be attached to each camera to check on the adequacy of the picture, as it can be difficult for the photographer to make this judgement. If needed, immediate reshooting of the scene can then be done. Reshooting the scene the next night to replicate the previous night is almost impossible, as ambient light conditions differ and they greatly affect the I<sup>2</sup> imagery. Cameras with zoom capability when I<sup>2</sup> lenses are attached are also needed. Night photography requires a photo team with excellent photographic skills and thorough knowledge and understanding of Infantry tasks and tactics.

Each site should be visited prior to the shooting. It is absolutely essential that the director walk through each and every scene with the soldiers, leaders, and photographers before the shoot, as all must understand exactly what will happen. Soldiers must also realize that there is often a need to choreograph certain shots to make the required teaching point. Close attention must be given to details and props and how they will appear at night. As image intensification technology does not provide 20/20 visual acuity, the distance of the cameras from the scene must be carefully planned and steps taken to ensure that the viewing audience will clearly see the training points being made. Close-up shots are more advantageous than long-range shots.

Before completing the video, leaders from the supporting unit and other senior Army subject matter experts reviewed it for doctrinal accuracy and content coverage. These reviews indicated the coverage was good and all the training points were consistent with doctrine. The major result of this review was to shorten both parts.

### **Summary**

The deliberate night attack was selected for the train-the-trainer video because this mission is basic to Infantry operations and is the most difficult night mission. Several years were required to complete the project. During that time the Army fielded additional night equipment, particularly night vision goggles and aiming lights. JRTC lessons learned since that fielding reflect the benefits from the use of this additional equipment (CALL, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). However, areas that still need emphasis and attention by units include the drills and actions central to the attack itself (e.g., react to contact, actions on the objective, and breach a mined wired obstacle). How to train these skills is the nucleus of the video.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Scope of the Video**

### Training and Doctrine Literature Presented in the Video

- Department of the Army. (1994, July). *Operator's manual night vision goggles AN/PVS-7B* (TM 11-5855-262-10-2). Washington, DC: Author.
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# Train-the-Trainer Video on Platoon Deliberate Night Attack

## Major Points in Part I

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### TRAINING PRINCIPLES

- ◆ Train as You Fight
- ◆ Use Appropriate Doctrine
- ◆ Use Performance-Oriented Training
- ◆ Train to Challenge
- ◆ Train to Sustain Proficiency
- ◆ Make Leaders the Primary Trainers

### USE THE ARMY'S DOCTRINE AND TRAINING LITERATURE:

FM 100-5 Operations  
FM 25-100 and 25-101 Training Operations  
FM 7-8 Infantry Rifle Platoon  
Drill Manual 7-8  
FM 7-10 Infantry Rifle Company  
MTP 7-8 ARTEP  
STP 7-11 BCHM Infantry Soldiers Manual  
and Trainer's Guide  
FM 21-18 Foot Marches  
TC 7-9 Infantry Live-Fire Training  
FMs and TMs for weapons and night  
equipment

### SOPs

- ① **Review unit SOPs for:**
  - ‡ Day and night operations.
  - ‡ The basics, to include
    - Movement formations
    - Actions at the halt
    - Actions on contact
    - Combat loads
    - Signals
    - Reports
    - Markings
    - Consolidation & reorganization
    - Number and types of batteries
    - Security of sensitive items
    - Night equipment
  - ‡ Think about your SOP in terms of preparation and implementation.
  - ‡ Think about command and control of the platoon at night.

② **Use your SOPs every day in training.** SOPs should be intuitively understood by all. Master in daylight before proceeding to limited visibility. Essential repetitive tasks that are well used and understood by all contribute to success at night.

③ **Don't overwork your SOP.** More is not better in the SOP business.

④ **Establish the combat load for night attack.** Where practical, everyone should wear equipment the same. Determine how to get the fighting load to 48 pounds for the assault.

### TRAINING LEADERS

① **Assess the training skills of your leaders.** Not all leaders are ready to train; one-third are probably new; one-third are gaining training skills; one-third are good trainers with considerable expertise in assessment and mentoring.

② **Train leaders to be skilled in giving AARs and in establishing conditions necessary for performance assessment.**

- ‡ Review MTP standards.
- ‡ Establish your assessment team early. Observer/controllers should be experienced trainers and coaches.
- ‡ Use a trained and realistic OPFOR.
- ‡ Always use MILES.
- ‡ Have good logistics.
- ‡ Focus on critical tasks in the exercise and the AAR.
- ‡ Don't try to fix too many things in one AAR.
- ‡ Avoid simply recounting the fight, with no theme to the AAR.
- ‡ Provide specific training fixes to work-on in the next exercise.



### ⑥ Use TEWTS to train your leaders.

- ‡ The key to a good TEWT is a great plan.
- ‡ Don't spend time on skills and tasks already mastered.
- ‡ Cover training tips.
- ‡ Review lessons learned from the Combat Training Centers.
- ‡ Focus on key teaching points leaders must reinforce with their unit.

### TRAINING SEQUENCE

#### ① Master essential soldier skills first.

- ‡ Spend quality time on night equipment. Know the capabilities and limitations of these critical items.
- ‡ *Move*: Train soldiers to move well at night with and without goggles. Master both the PLGR and the use of the map and compass. Have everyone know his pace count for 100 meters. Reinforce pace and light discipline during movement. Use aiming lights and chem lights sparingly. Use signals that all can see at night, regardless of their night vision equipment.
- ‡ *Shoot*: Shoot at night with the full assistance of all night equipment. Review TMs and FMs for critical skills and tasks to be trained. Master zeroing techniques for night sights and aiming lights. Practice in firing unaided makes soldiers appreciate their night equipment.
- ‡ *Communicate*: Have the RTO listen to the attack plans. Make the setting of alternate frequencies and control of SOIs a routine part of training. Review SOPs for signals to be used both day and night.
- ‡ Use training as an opportunity to improve physical conditioning

#### ② Use buddy team training to transition from individual to collective tasks.

(TC 7-9 Infantry Live-Fire Training).  
Stress team work, cover, concealment, suppressive fires, individual and

coordinated movement techniques, and situational awareness. Practice fire control with the team leader using his aiming light or pointer. Use MILES and live-fire. Master in daylight before going to night. Wear night fighting equipment during day training exercises.

#### ③ Follow with drills and then STXs.

### MAJOR POINTS - NIGHT ATTACK

- ◆ Train to Standard.
- ◆ Master the Basics. Keep it Simple.
- ◆ Train Often at Night.
- ◆ Understand Time-Distance on the Move at Night.
- ◆ Lead Elements Move in a Wedge.
- ◆ Anticipate the Enemy Making Contact First.
- ◆ Have Fire Support Plan Ready to Go On Contact. Use it.
- ◆ Maintain Momentum and Initiative in All Contacts with the Enemy.
- ◆ Locate Support Forces near the Lead Element for Coordination and Support.
- ◆ Maintain Command and Control on Contact; Every Leader Ready to Step Up One.
- ◆ Use Expert Marksmen to Get Onto the Objective.
- ◆ Good Shooting and Fire Control Make the Difference on the Objective.

## Train-the-Trainer Video on Platoon Deliberate Night Attack Major Points in Part II

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### WHY DRILLS?

- ◆ Drills link individual, leader, and collective tasks.
- ◆ Drills enable squads and platoons to react immediately to enemy contact or upon leader command.

### TRAINING POINTS ON DISMOUNTED BATTLE DRILLS

#### ① The basics.

- ◆ Train the way you will fight.
  - ✓ Have a tactical mission as the focal point during training.
  - ✓ Use company support during platoon drills, the mortars & company command team.
- ◆ Use the drill manual.
- ◆ Have SOP and equipment set before starting training.
- ◆ Ensure leaders understand benefits of drill training.
- ◆ Master drills in daylight before night.
- ◆ Train to standard.

#### ② Preparing for drill training: adapt to night.

- ◆ Consider all night technology available.
  - ✓ How will it be used to enhance command and control and fires?
  - ✓ Who gets what equipment & why?
  - ✓ What markings and signals are needed?
  - ✓ Are you prepared for night equipment failures and personnel casualties?
- ◆ Ensure everyone knows how to use night equipment prior to the drill. Even minor turnovers in personnel will affect performance.
- ◆ Consider platoon size when moving on close terrain at night, executing drills on contact, and assaulting the objective.
- ◆ Plan on several weeks of training, both day and night.

#### ③ Executing drill training.

- ◆ Teach drills in a crawl, walk, run manner, but progress rapidly from squad to platoon drills.
- ◆ Use a realistic OPFOR in the run phase. Surprise leaders with different OPFOR cues, so units are ready for any encounter (ambush, OP, indirect fire).
- ◆ Use MILES.
- ◆ Give team leaders a chance to run the squad, and squad leaders, the platoon.

#### ④ Feedback on performance.

- ◆ Use AARs and corrective actions to fix problems.
- ◆ Execute again to determine if fixes are successful.

### DESIGN DRILL TRAINING TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED AT THE CTCs

- ◆ Piecemeal attacks result from lead squads not allowing time for their platoon to move and support the action.
- ◆ Squad and platoon do not initiate any drill when making contact with OPFOR.
- ◆ When in contact, squads and platoons do not use ground effectively, or do not move far enough to flank the OPFOR.

### USE STXs (Situational Training Exercises)

- ◆ STXs train one collective task or a group of related battle drills and collective tasks.

## TRAINING POINTS ON STXs

- ▶ Focus on the last 300 meters. Get to the assault and attack tasks; don't waste time walking over the terrain to the objective.
- ▶ Use examples of STXs in ARTEP 7-8 MTP and guidance from senior leaders to guide your training.
- ▶ Select drills that support the attack to make STX training more efficient.
- ▶ As with drills:
  - ✓ Teach in a crawl, walk, run mode
  - ✓ Master in day, then night.
  - ✓ Use MILES & a realistic OPFOR.
  - ✓ Use TEWTS to train subordinate leaders
- ▶ Unlike drills, the method of executing STXs is not established.
- ▶ Conduct a risk assessment prior to training.
- ▶ Make everyone aware of the MTP standards for the attack.
- ▶ Allow sufficient training time. STXs with AARs can run 6 to 8 hrs and more.
- ▶ Allow time for OPFOR rehearsals with selected night equipment.
- ▶ Anticipate need for battalion support.
- ▶ Use your attachments: mortars, FO, & engineers.

## DESIGN STXs TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED AT THE CTCs

- ❶ **Enroute to the objective:**
  - ▶ Priority targets not shifted as unit advances to objective
  - ▶ Enemy initiates contact early.
  - ▶ Units do not get fire support plan into the battle.
  - ▶ Navigation onto the objective delays the attack.
  - ▶ Support positions look good on paper, but don't support the assault force.
  - ▶ Smoke is not well-positioned nor of adequate duration.
- ❷ **Actions on the objective:**
  - ▶ Assault force arrives early; exposed to enemy fire during the breach.
  - ▶ Units not focused on specific objectives

to break into the objective

- ▶ Personnel exposed too long; limited use of IMT.
- ▶ Command and control breaks down; fire support and maneuver become disconnected; situational awareness is lost.
- ▶ Platoons are slow to reorganize to squads.
- ▶ Assault force stays on objective too long.
- ▶ Reports are not timely.

## THE ATTACK PLAN

### ❶ Keep the tactical plan simple.

❷ **Make adjustments at night:** formations, communications, control of fire, speed of movement, security of the force, location of support, and route selection.

❸ **Make the assault platoon second in order of march with attachments.** Lead platoon has greater probability of making contact with enemy in route, and will often move into a support position.

## TRAINING SEQUENCE FOR THE ATTACK IN THE RUN PHASE

- ❶ Day Attack with MILES
- ❷ Night Attack with MILES
- ❸ Day Attack with Live-Fire
- ❹ Night Attack with Live-Fire

## SUMMARY POINTS

- ◆ Train Leaders Before Training Your Unit.
- ◆ Use the Army Training Literature.
- ◆ Execution to Standard, not Knowledge, is the Most Significant Challenge in Training.
- ◆ Develop Sound and Simple SOPs.
- ◆ Learn to Use All the Equipment Available to Improve Your Ability to Move and Fight at Night.
- ◆ Build Safety and Situational Awareness into Every Action; Let Your Leaders Retain This Responsibility.