

A better mousetrap

The 20th Engineer's "Mission Card" reduces class preparation time, improves training quality

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The Battalion Training Management System (BTMS) is now the standard training system throughout the Army. By definition under BTMS, the squad leader is the primary trainer, and this indeed is proper. All echelons above the trainer have the primary task of providing him the resources to accomplish this training mission, and of these, time is probably his most acutely needed resource. For the trainer to do his job properly under BTMS, while still paying proper attention to his leadership responsibilities, is truly a challenging, full-time endeavor. Can we provide him more time? Perhaps not, but the 20th Engineer Battalion at Fort Campbell, Ky., has devised a way to minimize the squad leader's time requirements while serving in his role as *the* trainer. The vehicle we employed to construct this better mousetrap is the "mission card."

Our 5-by-8 inch mission card

was designed to minimize the inordinate amount of research required to properly prepare a class on any of our ARTEP tasks. Each ARTEP task was addressed at every applicable

echelon. An example, shown in Figure 1, describes ARTEP task 6-18, *Construct Barbed Wire Entanglements*, which is a squad level task. (As an aside, our card was adapted as an offi-

MISSION LIST					
MISSION: CONSTRUCT BARBED WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS	LEVEL	BN	CO	PTL	SQD
ARTEP TASK: 6-18					X
RELATED ARTEP TASK: 6-21					
PRINCIPAL SM TASK: 051-195-3003					
CONDITIONS: Required materials available on site. Security provided. Gauntlets available.					
SUBTASKS		RELATED SM TASKS			
1 Const. triple standard concertina	051-195-3003/1001/1002				
2 Construct knife rest	051-195-3003/1001				
3 Construct wire obstacle (see note)	051-195-3003/1002				
4					
5					
6					
7					
FC Form 2415, 1 Jan 81					

The mission card provides a complete listing of ARTEP tasks and sub-tasks. (Figure 1.)

LAST TRAINED:	PROJECTED TRAINING:	CURRENT STATUS:	H	P	T	F
REFERENCES: FM 5-15; 5-34; 5-13; 5-35; 31-10						
RESOURCES: TEC 947-071-0070; Triple standard concertina- 53 long pickets, 4 short pickets, 4 reels barbed wire, 30 rolls concertina; Knife rest- 1 reel barbed wire; GPBTO- 1 seven module package.						
TASO ASSETS: TF 5-3002; TG 5-9-2; FS 5-156						
NOTES/REMARKS: Construct wire obstacle using general purpose barbed tape obstacle (GPBTO).						
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As a handy guide listing references and training assets, mission cards significantly reduce class preparation time for unit instructors. (Figure 2.)

cial Fort Campbell form and is now available to any unit, not just engineers.)

The front of the card lists not only the ARTEP task number, title and conditions, but also shows related ARTEP tasks, the principle leadership Soldier's Manual (SM) task(s), and all sub-tasks, either specified in the ARTEP itself or implied. Most importantly perhaps, it also lists all the related SM tasks where individual proficiency will be required to satisfactorily complete the collective task. Knowing these required tasks, the squad leader can begin preparing his soldiers well ahead of the required ARTEP task class, using his job books to determine individual proficiency and opportunity training time as needed.

The reverse of the mission card lists his squad's status on the ARTEP task so he'll know exactly the depth of instruction required. It also lists all necessary references, resources including applicable training extension course tapes in the battalion learning resource center, and assets available at the

post training and audiovisual support center, including all pertinent training films, training devices, instructional packets, etc. The *Notes/Remarks* section perhaps would have been better titled "Training Tips" since each trainer notes here any items of particular interest, such as a refinement, knack or clever nuance he has discovered. This information is then shared at periodic company/battalion meetings.

Basically, the mission card contains, in one place, all the necessary information required to prepare a class on any ARTEP task. It has done the trainer's homework, for the most part, allowing the trainer to devote his scarce time to preparing the class, not researching it. The improvement in both class presentations and in task proficiency is significant!

Each trainer has a set of mission cards for all tasks at his level, and for each echelon below his level. Thus a platoon leader/sergeant has the 67 cards for his platoon tasks and also a complete set of the 41 squad

cards (as does each squad leader). Ultimately, there is one 258-card deck at battalion concerning all tasks at the battalion, company, platoon and squad levels.

The initial compilation of the complete deck was a staggering task, but its impact was reduced by equitably distributing card preparation tasks to all levels throughout the battalion. Thus, any given squad leader was responsible for preparing only two or three cards. The draft cards were reviewed at all echelons before final approval and publication. Word processing equipment, while not essential, has been an extremely valuable aid in quickly and simply refining existing cards.

A complete set of ARTEP 5-35 mission cards will be forwarded to the Engineer School for their possible use since substantial numbers of the tasks covered are common to all engineer ARTEP's. Once a set of mission cards is completed, the user's task is simply to continually refine and improve the cards. The 20th Engineer Battalion is extremely pleased with the mission card concept and how it has increased the efficiency of trainers at all levels and improved the professionalism of battalion training. Try using mission cards, we think you'll like them, too!

Lt. Col. Ailinger, as commander of the 20th Engineer Battalion (Combat), Fort Campbell, Ky., designed the mission card system, instituting it with the help of Capt. Whitten, the battalion operations officer. Ailinger, commander of the 173rd Engineer Company (Airborne) in Vietnam, currently is executive officer of the physics department at the U.S. Military Academy. Whitten, a Virginia Military Institute graduate, still serves as the 20th's S-3.