

Common Task Testing

—challenging, realistic

Each year soldiers are required to test their skills of the common tasks found in STP 21-1-SMCT, Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks, Skill Level I. And each year they are bored to death by the method of testing—going from camouflage net to camouflage net where an NCO at a table asks questions.

This method is not challenging soldiers to react and work through their tasks. I have seen this method employed even at an infantry battalion level test site! There are 14 tasks related to protection against NBC attacks and two more on first aid for nerve agents listed in STP 21-1. All can be enhanced and trained utilizing training aids, simulators, and simulants. Here's how.

The general scenario is set up so that a squad leader or first line supervisor leads the soldiers through a training area on a patrol. The patrol route takes the squad through areas that have been selected for testing a series of tasks. An independent evaluator accompanies each squad to aid in critiques. The training aids are

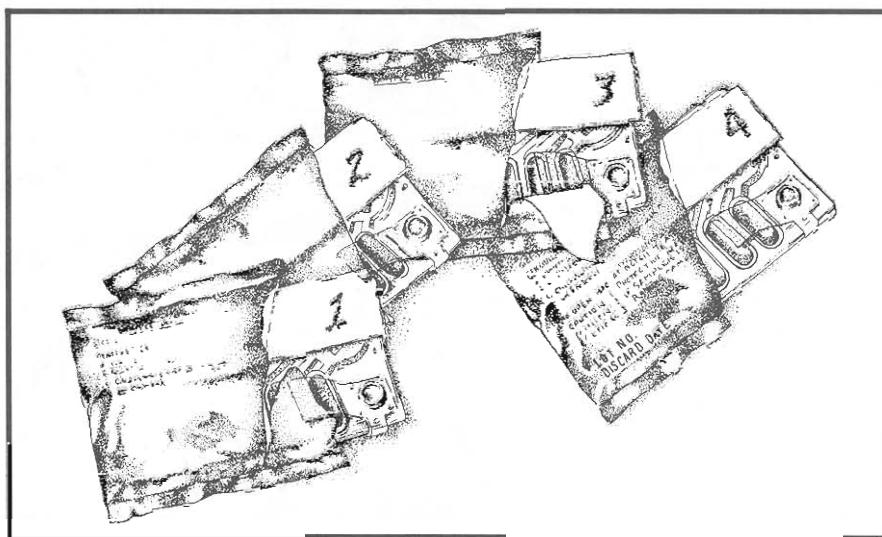
either carried by each soldier or positioned in the testing area.

The squad arrives in MOPP2 at a briefing area where they first are evaluated for proper wear of the overgarments (Task 031-503-1015). Each must have an M58A1 skin decon training kit, three MK-1 nerve agent antidote trainers, and surrogate M8/M9 detector papers. Each squad is issued an M256 TRAINS kit.

Evaluation NCO prepares the M256 detector tickets for testing.

To prevent the squad from knowing the detector ticket's marking (T-100 through T-404), the NCO removes the identifying number by tearing off the top portion of the packet and discarding it. Renumber the protective strips in the following order (see figure):

<i>Ticket</i>	<i>Previous Marking</i>
1	T-401 (pos nerve)
2	T-401 (pos nerve)
3	T-400 (all clear)
4	T-400 (all clear)



The operations order is given and the squad begins its mission. Along the trail other testing personnel have prepared for their squad's arrival:

Site 1. React to Nuclear Hazard (Task 031-503-1018). A Nuclear Weapons Effect Simulator (NWES) is positioned for detonation so the squad can readily witness the explosion. At the proper moment, a support person detonates the NWES. Each soldier must take immediate action to protect himself, as specified in the task. The evaluator takes notes of the actions. Feedback is given immediately or postponed until the after-action review.

Site 2. Recognize and React to a Chemical Hazard (Task 031-503-1019). A Simulator, Projectile

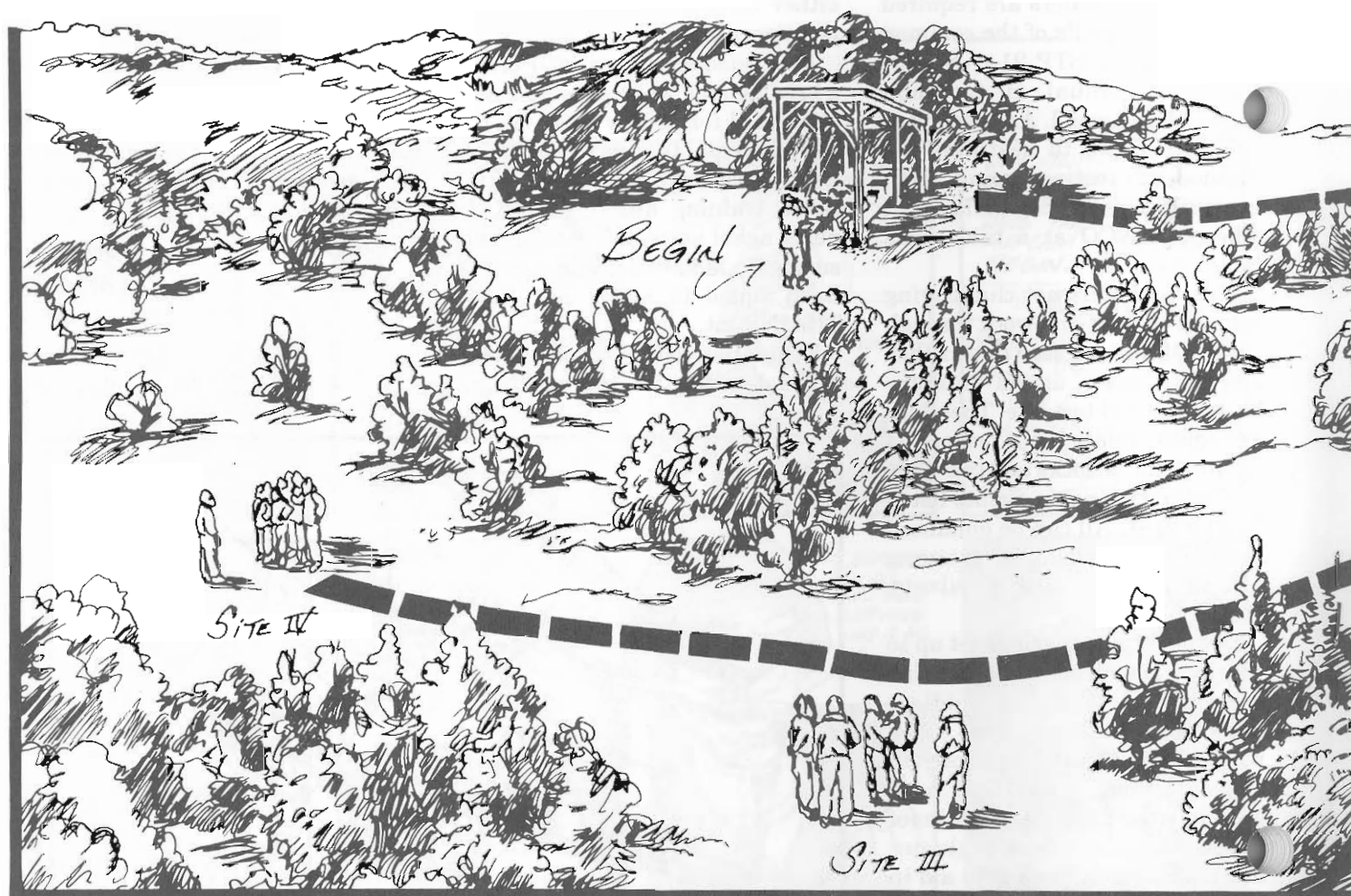
Airburst Liquid (SPAL) is positioned so the wind will carry the Persistent Chemical Agent Simulant (PCAS) solution onto the soldiers as they pass. The PCAS is mixed as a G-nerve agent.

At the proper moment, a support person will detonate the SPALs. Each soldier must take immediate actions to protect himself. Any style of mask can be used by personnel—M17, M24/25, or M40 series protective masks. As the squad assumes a higher level of MOPP, the evaluator directs each soldier to decontaminate himself (Task 031-503-1007). Soldiers making obvious mistakes are designated as nerve agent victims and must be given first aid (081-831-1030/1031).

The evaluator uses the Chemical

Agent Disclosure Solution (CADS) to select victims and to identify improper decon techniques. Soldiers use the M8/M9 surrogate papers to detect and identify the agent. The squad leader submits an NBC1 observer's report to the evaluator, and the squad continues its patrol mission.

Site 3. Exchange MOPP Gear (Task 031-503-1023). The squad is directed to perform a MOPP gear exchange. A second set of clean MOPP gear and equipment are positioned along the route. The squad leader controls the activity. The evaluator notes errors made by the squad leader or the soldiers. The CADS will identify a contamination hazard spread by improper procedures. Upon completion, the squad moves to another area where



the M256 TRAINS is employed. The evaluator has the discretion to direct the ticket 2 (nerve agent positive) or ticket 3 (all clear) is used. This decision is based upon the squad actions and conditions of training. Continued MOPP4 should not affect the completion of the squad's mission. If the all clear is given, then proper unmasking procedures are used. At some time during the exercise, the squad leader directs that soldiers drink while in MOPP4 (Task 031-503-1009).

Site 4. After-Action Review. The evaluator and squad leader conduct an AAR for the soldiers. Each soldier receives a GO/NO-GO status on the tasks, as well as a verbal critique on his/her actions. Since many of the actions are done as part of the squad, teamwork and cooperation is addressed.

Using training devices and

simulants allows soldiers to experience NBC effects and conditions. The combination of soldier use and support personnel use is necessary since training devices augment the training. The soldiers' environment is enhanced by the surprise of the SPAL and NWES detonations.

Some expedient methods are available to decrease the cost of this training or if equipment is not available. In the nuclear portion, the NWES is substituted by placing the ATOM marker on the route. The squad carries a simulated radiacmeter which receives a signal from the T-1 LARTS transmitter, simulating the radiation hazard.

During the chemical operations, the SPAL device is substituted by

placing a GAS marker sign from the NATO marking kit along the route. PCAS is spread over the vegetation from a spray bottle. The M81 chemical alarm simulator is sounded by the evaluator to alert the soldiers of chemical agent presence.

To sum up, even common task training and testing are enhanced by NBC training devices. By employing the devices to challenge the soldiers' thought processes, training is more meaningful. Teamwork of squad-sized units adds to the realism of training.

Only the lack of leadership can hamper common task testing. ●●●

