

247th NROTC UNIT
De La Salle University, Manila

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RIFLE AND BAYONET TRAINING

Introduction

The bayonet forming part of an individual equipment of a soldier, has many practical uses in the combat zone. It is excellent weapon to use when hostile infiltration is effected at night, or in a situation where secrecy of movement is being maintained. It is also useful when the use of small arms or grenades by a soldier is impractical, or when the tactical situation does not allow the loading or unloading of firearms because this will unnecessarily disclose the location of friendly troops.

When the rifle develops a mechanical stoppage, the bayonet is used as a secondary weapon. In hand-to-hand combat, it is a hand held weapon, and this is the right moment when the soldier must have to exploit to the maximum the versatile uses of a bayonet.

Aside from its uses in hand-to-hand fighting, the bayonet can be used in a variety of ways. It can be used as a probe for mine fields, to cut vegetation, to clear fields of fire, or as entrenching tool, if one is not available when digging in for cover.

Traits of a Rifle-Bayonet Fighter

A successful rifle-bayonet fighter must be physically fit and mentally alert. His chances of survival in hand-to-hand combat with the bayonet as the primary tool to depend on his well-rounded physical training. His mental alertness, on the other hand, will help detect and meet an opponent's attack from any direction.

In addition, the soldier must develop aggressiveness, accuracy, balance and speed. These are essential traits not only in training, but also in combat situations. These traits help build in the individual soldier confidence, coordination, strength, and endurance.

Principles in Rifle-Bayonet Fighting

1. To be effective as a weapon in hand-to-hand combat, the bayonet must be aggressively used: hesitation to do so may mean sudden death.
2. The attack should be made on the most vulnerable parts of the body: face, throat, chest, abdomen, or groin.
3. In both training and combat, the rifle-bayonet fighter displays his spirit by sounding off with a loud and aggressive growl.
4. Instinctive rifle-bayonet fighting should capitalize on the natural ability and combat movement of the soldier.

Basic Formation and Positions

Hold the M16A1 rifle but without tenseness, and relax all the muscles with your right hand on the butt of the rifle and the left hand on the front hand grip. Slide your right

hand upward to the hand grip but let your left foot slightly forward of your right foot. This is the basic starting position from which all attack movements originate.

Execute the basic attack position as follows:

1. You take a short step forward to the side with your left foot so that your feet are at a comfortable distance apart.
2. Hold your body erect or bend slightly forward at the waist. Your knees are relaxed and your body weight is balanced at the balls of your feet. Your right forearm is approximately parallel to the ground. The left shoulder. Maintain eye-to-eye contact with your opponent, watching his weapon and body through indirect vision.
3. Hold the rifle diagonally across your body at a sufficient distance from the body to add balance and, grasp the weapon just below the upper sling swivel. The right hand is at the small stock. The sling is facing outward and cutting edge of the bayonet is toward your opponent Balance is most important. Positions may vary with each soldier due to the configuration of the body.

Basic Movements

There are two basic movements used throughout the rifle-bayonet instruction. They are the whirl and crossover movements. These movements develop instant reaction to an enemy attack.

1. Whirl Movement

The whirl, when properly executed, allows the rifle-bayonet fighter to meet a challenge from an opponent attacking him from the rear. At the completion of the whirl, the rifle remains in the attack position.

It is executed as follows: spin your body around by pivoting on the ball of the leading foot in the direction of the leading foot, thus facing completely about. The command is "whirl".

2. Cross over Movement

The men are formed in two ranks and allowed to move toward each other. When they come too close to each other to safely execute additional movements, the crossover is used to separate the ranks at a safe distance from each other.

Its execution is as follows: At the command "crossover", move straight forward and pass your opponent, then halt when approximately six steps behind and execute the whirl. Remain in the attack position.

Attack Movements

The four attack movements are the thrust, butt stroke, slash and smash. These attack movements are designed to disable the enemy so as to capture him. These may be used for the initial attack or as follow-up movements when the initial action fails to find its mark.

Each of these attack movements is described as follows:

1. Thrust – This movement has the objective of disabling or capturing an opponent by thrusting the bayonet blade into vulnerable portion of the enemy's body. It is especially effective against an opponent when found in trenches, in the woods, or in built-up areas where his movements are restricted. It is also effective when an opponent is lying on the ground, or inside a foxhole.

The trust is executed in the following manner: Lungs forward on your leading foot without losing your balance, at the same time, drive the bayonet with great force into any unguarded portion of the opponent's body. To accomplish this, grasp the rifle firmly with both hands and full the stock close to the right hip; partially extended the left arm, guarding the point of the bayonet to the general direction of the opponent's body. Quickly complete the extension of the arms and body as the leading foot strikes the ground so that the bayonet penetrates the target. To withdraw the bayonet, keep the feet in place, shift your body weight to the rear, and pull rearward along the same line penetration. Next, assume the attack position in preparation for the continuation of the attack.

The commands given only in training are: "Thrust and hold, move", and "Attack position, move".

2. Butt Stroke

This movement is designed to deliver a forceful blow on the body of an opponent with the rifle butt. The aim of the butt stroke is either the opponent's weapon or a vulnerable portion of the body. It may be vertical, horizontal, or somewhere between the two (2) planes.

To execute it, step forward with your trailing foot. At the same time using your left hand as a pivot, swing the rifle in an arc and drive the rifle butt into your opponent. To recover, bring your trailing foot forward and assume the attack position.

The commands are: "Butt stroke to the head, move", "butt stroke to the head, series, move."

3. Slash

As the words cannotes, the slash is designed to cut the opponent with the blade of the bayonet.

It is executed as follows: Step forward with your lead foot, and at the same time extend your left arm and swing the knife's edge of your bayonet forward and down in a slashing arc. To recover, bring your trailing forward and assume the attack position.

In training, the commands given are: "Smash and hold, move", and "Attack position, move". At combat speed, the command is "Smash, series, move." Of the attack

movements just described, two (2) have modified versions. These are the modified thrust and slash movements. These modified movements allow the soldier to slash or thrust an opponent without removing the hand from the pistol grip of the M16A1 rifle should the situation dictate.

The modified thrust is different only in the sense that the right hand is grasping the pistol grip of the rifle. The right hand is also similarly positioned in the modified slash movement.

In addition to the attack movements, let us now study the defensive and follow-up movements that a soldier must learn by heart.

Defensive Movements

There are times when a soldier loses the initiative to attack and is compelled to temporarily defend himself from an opponent. He may also meet an opponent who does not present a vulnerable area to attack. Therefore, he must be well-versed in the use of parry and block movements to be followed up by a vicious attack against an enemy. The follow-up attack must be immediately violent.

Parry right is executed when an opponent is left-handed, which means that he carries his weapon with left hand. To execute it, step forward with your leading foot, and then strike the opponent's weapon, deflecting it to your right, and follow it up with either a thrust, slash or butt stroke.

The parry left movement, on the other hand, is carried out when the enemy is right handed or when he carries his weapon with the right hand. In executing it, step forward with your lead foot, then strike the opponent's weapon, deflecting it to your left, and follow it up with a thrust, slash or butt stroke.

While in training, the commands are: "Parry right (left), move", "Thrust, move", and "Attack position, move." At combat speed, the command is: "Parry right (left) with follow-up attack.

2. Block – When surprised by an enemy, the block is used to cut off the path of the attack by making a weapon-to-weapon contact. A block must always be followed up immediately with a vicious attack.

The block is used as follows: Extend your arms, using the center position of your rifle as the stroking area. Cut off the opponent's attack by making a weapon-to-weapon contact. Strike your opponent's weapon with enough force to throw him off balance.

There are three (3) types of blocks-involved. These are the high, low, and side blocks. Let us see how each differs from one another and how they are executed.

The high block is executed in the following manner: Extend your arms upward and forward at a 45 degree angle. This action deflects your opponent's slash movement by causing his bayonet, or the upper part of his rifle, to strike against the central portion of your weapon.

Execute a low block when confronted by an enemy's butt stroke. It is done as follows: Extend your arms downward and forward with approximately 15 degrees from your body. This deflects your opponent's butt stroke aimed at your groin by causing the lower part of his rifle stroke to strike at the center portion of your rifle.

The side block is carried out to stop a butt stroke aimed at your upper body or head. It is executed as follows: Extend your arms with the left hand high and the right hand low, thus holding your rifle vertically. Push the rifle to your left to cause the butt of your opponent's rifle to strike the central part of the weapon.

On completion of these defensive movements, counter-attack with a thrust, butt stroke, slash, or smash.

The commands are: "High (low, side) block, move", and "Attack position, move".

Follow-up Movements

These are additional attack movements that a soldier can take advantage of when his initial actions fail to produce the desired results of either disabling or capturing his enemy. These naturally follow from the previous completed attack movements, such as, the thrust, butt stroke, slash, or smash, that have not succeeded in neutralizing the enemy, these are resorted to in order not to lose the initiative.

The following explains the practical exercise portion of rifle-bayonet training.

THE QUALIFICATION COURSE

Purpose

The qualification course gives the unit commander the chance to measure the proficiency of his men in the technique of rifle-bayonet training. It increases esprit-de-corps within a unit by creating a competitive attitude and by offering special recognition to the men qualify. It also makes demands on the soldiers speed, accuracy, strength, and endurance that approach the demands made on him in actual combat.

The course

A bayonet assault course is 300-meters in length employing targets, obstacles, and neutral terrain features. The same course can be used for both practice and qualification. Qualification can be determined on any assault course as follows:

- a. The course will contain a minimum of :
 - 1) Four types of targets: thrust target, parry-thrust target, parry-butt stroke to the groin target, and parry-butt stroke to the head target.
 - 2) Seven types of obstacles, such as: log wall, hurdles, ditch jump, log balance horizontal ladder, tunnel crawl, fence vault, and double apron barbed- wire fence, respectively.
- b. The course will contain a minimum number of lanes to permit one-half of a squad to run at the same time under the squad leader, assistant squad leader, or other designated leader.