

Remember the Basics

AN SAS GUIDE TO BATTLE TRAINING

Response to *Shooting in the Real World* – CONTACT #28, December 2010, page 20

Dear editor,

I would like a chance to clarify several points made by the author of the above-mentioned article. I fear the basic infantry soldier reading that article may go away thinking “what chance do I have in the realm of combat if all of this information is true?”

While the author makes many good points, some of the comments are a little sweeping to say the least and one or two are simply incorrect.

Before I go any further, you may be asking yourself who am I to pass judgement. Well, I am a Warrant Officer Class Two (WO2) who has spent the past 20 years serving in the SASR. I have completed three tours in Timor, two in Iraq (one of those with UK SF) and am currently on my eighth trip to Afghanistan (one of those also with UK SF in Helmand province). I have also studied and taught on numerous close-quarter battle (CQB) courses and urban combat (UC) courses over the years. That said, in preparing this response I have discussed this article with many other members of the SASR.

I will address the issues in the order they are presented in the article – not necessarily in order of importance – to minimise confusion.

On page 22 paragraph three, Sergeant Warren poses the question “so, having come to the point where MBA is now in common use, what are the advantages of MBA and do we still need to use belt order?”

There is a place for belt order, albeit slightly modified from what you would picture as traditional belt order. However, SAS has used easy-access pouches on the outside of the main ammunition storage pouch, for quick and easy access in contact situations, since Vietnam days. These pouches were aptly named ‘panic pouches’ and typically we have these on our belt order, actually located on our belts – but more on that later.

Next, page 22 paragraph four, Sergeant Warren makes a general comment that “the rifle range is the only place a soldier will shoot from the classic prone position.” This is simply not true. I and many others who I have talked with, relay anecdote after anecdote about having to use the prone position. One such anecdote, as an example, was in an urban environment lying in the street with a gutter as the only cover. Others include lying in open desert in a slight fold in the ground, lying on a table in a house in Iraq to take up a fire position deep in a room, lying under a tree in an orchard – all adopting the prone position to gain the optimal shooting position to engage targets during close combat.



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