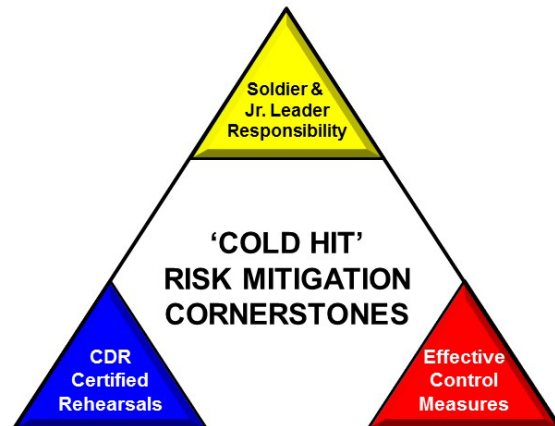


Cold Hit Live Fires: Building Confidence and Trust in Leaders. LTC Valent Bernat III (1-27IN Commander) and MAJ Joshua I Wiles (1-27IN Operations Officer)

Infantry assaulting an objective sight unseen with live munitions and combined arms support is as close to combat conditions that we can replicate. We refer to it as the 'Cold Hit.' Cold Hit Live Fire Exercises (LFX) inherently involve increased risk above the standardized 'Dry-Blank-Live' scenarios. We challenged ourselves to capitalize on the increased readiness enabled by conducting 'Cold Hit' LFXs while mitigating the increased risk to an acceptable level. The following methodology based on rigorous application of doctrine and procedures serves as our solution. This training methodology was deliberately thought through, implemented, and refined as we built capacity and confidence across the formation. Our Soldiers and units achieved 'Cold Hit' competence and continue to sustain their readiness at peak levels.

1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, 2/25 Infantry Brigade Combat Team developed and sustains a training methodology that enables 'Cold Hit' competency at all levels from Squad/Crew to Company Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX). This methodology is underpinned by three key foundational cornerstones: Soldier Discipline & Jr. Leader Responsibility; Effective Control Measures; and Certified Rehearsals. These cornerstones are essential to the process and require buy-in and implementation at all levels to be successful.



Individual discipline & Junior Leader responsibility of enforcement, particularly with regards to the application of the 15 degree rule, truly enables Soldiers to train up to the 'Cold Hit' level. Our Soldiers are inculcated with the concept that they are first and foremost responsible for ensuring they do not fire upon their teammates. They are enabled by being individually trained and certified by their leaders in the employment of the 15 degree rule. Additionally, Team Leaders are held accountable to supervise and verify Soldier's application of the 15 degree rule.

DA PAM 385-63 16 April 2014 Page 210 Paragraph 17-4o Firing Precautions

o. Small arms (5.56mm, 7.62mm, and .50 caliber), ground-mounted or vehicle-mounted machine guns may be fired at low angles of elevation (near the flank of an individual or unit). For the SDZ, there must be an angle of 15 degrees or 100m (whichever is greater) between the limit of fire and the near flank of the closest individual or unit and all impacts are beyond the individual or unit. For the batwing SDZ, all non-participating personnel must be outside of the SDZ. Tripod, traversing and depression stops will be used on machine guns to maintain the required angle and distance between the line of fire and the near flank of an individual or unit.

1-27 Infantry units incorporated focused 15 degree rule training into Advanced Rifle Marksmanship, buddy team, and fire team Live Fire Exercises. This training generated a foundational understanding for Soldiers and Leaders while providing an opportunity to employ the method in relatively docile circumstances.



Soldiers of 1-27IN over watch breach operations of 65th BEB during the units "Cold Hit" CALFX

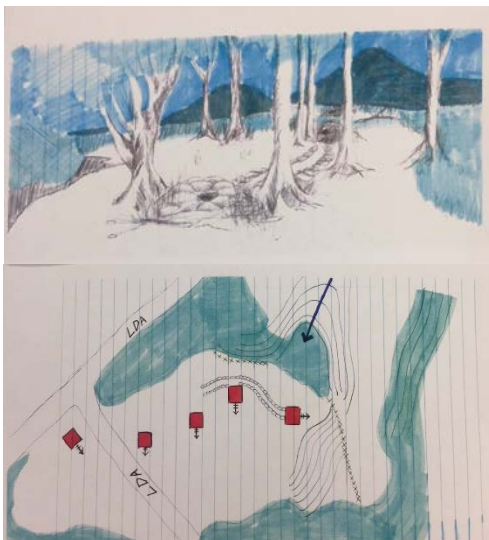


BCO 1-27IN Squad Leader checks his Soldiers point of aim to ensure he meets the 15 degrees

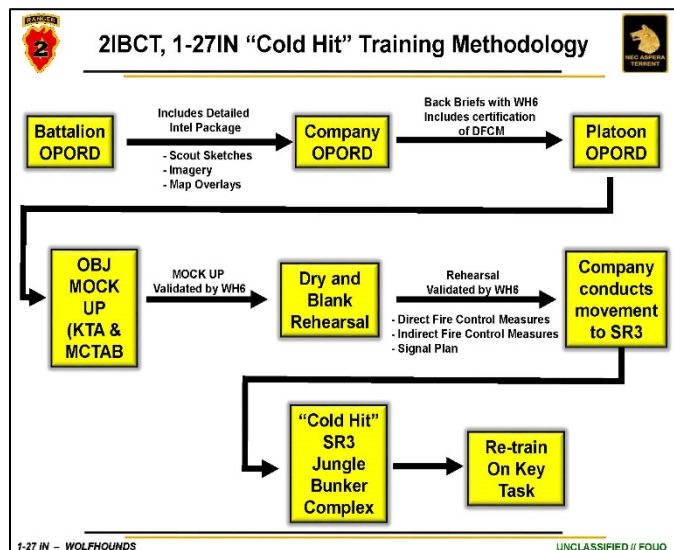
Company Commanders built upon this foundation by executing the first 'Cold Hit' concept at the Squad level. The limited number of Soldiers participating in the actual live fire (Nine) presented a relatively reduced risk environment easily mitigated by the number of available Observers and Safety personnel. Leaders are able to validate Soldiers understanding of the concept when they see them actively checking their 15 degrees while maneuvering. Successful execution at the Squad Level generated increased confidence to continue to the Platoon level Live Fires.

Control Measures are a doctrinal part of any combat operation, but their effectiveness is not always certain. This uncertainty is particularly true when a unit follows the standard 'Dry-Blank-Live' training method. Since the lane has been rehearsed twice prior to the execution of the live event, Soldiers may just execute the steps as rehearsed instead of truly employing the planned control measures to manage their fire and maneuver. The 'Cold Hit' process places distinct emphasis on effective and redundant control measures to ensure that subordinate elements de-conflict their fires and maneuver. Confirming a shift fire is not something the assault element leader can assume away. And the support by fire must be able to track the front line trace of

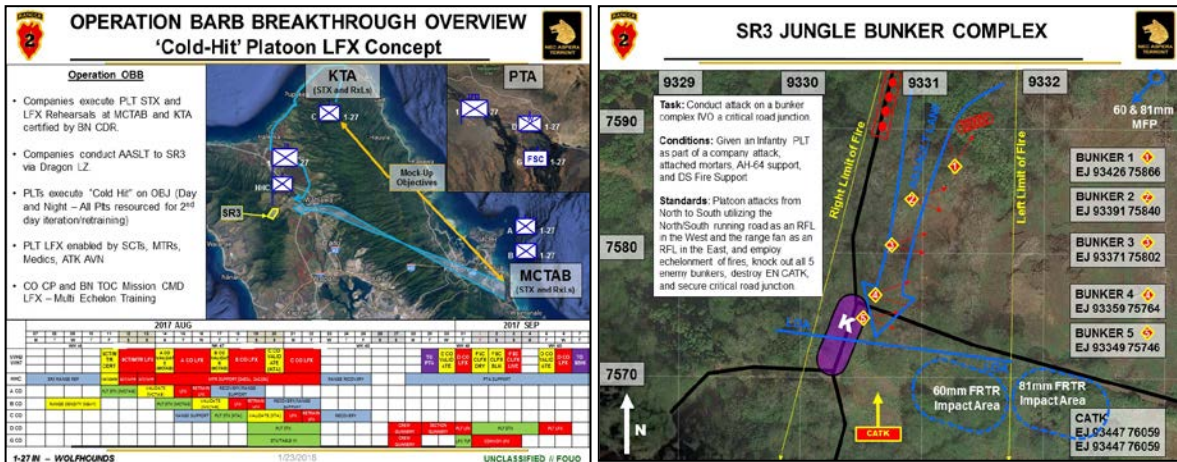
the assault element. Certified Rehearsals – The previous two foundational pieces are firmly buttressed by Certified Rehearsals. Rehearsals of actions on the objective are critical at the Squad and Platoon levels under the ‘Cold Hit’ concept. Unit leaders provided with a detailed intelligence packet of the Objective, to include overhead imagery, maps, and sketches from scouts, are enabled to construct accurate replicas of the Objective. These mock objectives are then certified for accuracy by the training official (two levels up). Recreating objectives at the squad and platoon levels is relatively easy. Creating a full scale rehearsal site for a company or larger element is generally unfeasible. Therefore the Combined Arms Rehearsal and/or ROC Drill is used as the certifying event in addition to certifying platoons on their actions on contact/on the objective.



Battalion Scout product provided to training units to build “Mock Up” Objectives.



‘Cold Hit’ Platoon Live Fires are the nexus of complexity with the introduction of enablers: engineers, indirect fires, and combat aviation. These additional components distinctively increase the requirement for effective control measures and leader understanding of the plan. Our Advance Rifle Marksmanship and Team & Squad LFXs set the stage for the 15 degree rule while the Platoon LFXs distinctly stressed clear and redundant control measures. Soldiers and leaders quickly learned the primacy of visual signals vice auditory, and that radios were at best a tertiary means in the close fight.



1-27 IN under the oversight of 2/25 IBCT concluded our 'Cold Hit' proof of concept with both a dismounted Infantry Company CALFEX and a mounted Heavy Weapons Company CALFEX. Both iterations incorporated mounted and dismounted elements in the attack. Company level 'Cold Hit' CALFEXs required the company leadership to conduct a Combined Arms Rehearsal (CAR) as a final certifying event on top of the platoon level actions on the objective. The Battalion Commander, LTC Valent Bernat III, certified the platoons and the Brigade Commander, COL Anthony Lugo, certified the CAR in keeping with the doctrinal two levels down. All of the steps executed in preparation for the 'Cold Hit' LFXs are in keeping with the preparations you would conduct prior to executing a combat operation given the necessary time and resources. This process, in fact, reinforces and validates the doctrinal emphasis to develop a detailed plan and rehearse prior to all operations if possible. This training path resulted in distinctly increased competence and confidence at all levels of the formation including trust in our enablers.



1LT Cook CCO, 1-27IN Leads his Platoon through the CALFX



“Bunker Clear” 1-27IN Soldiers conduct PLT LFX, Schofield Barracks, HI.

Additionally, training efficiency was gained executing this methodology, specifically with regards to time. Executing units built their rehearsal sites and mock objectives on available training area away from the range. These dispersed locations greatly increased the available time to construct the actual range and since units were only executing their live iterations on the actual lane, more time was available between iterations for range reset and retraining. Company level leadership trained dry iterations with their units prior to the Battalion Commander certifying the blank iterations. The companies were enabled with more time and resources to validate control

measures, signal plans, and validate unit SOPs. All of our platoons were able to take lessons learned from their first live iteration and apply them to their subsequent iteration – either correcting a deficiency or reinforcing good practices.

‘Cold Hit’ Live Fires may seem to be fraught with risk and uncertain gain, but our team experienced the opposite. Firstly, Soldiers and specifically junior leaders understood and accepted their individual roles and responsibility to mitigate risk in order to protect one another. Secondly, the iterative building block methodology grew confidence among the Soldiers and Leaders while also deepening discipline and trust across all levels. Finally, the competence and confidence generated at the conclusion of the Company CALFEXs permeated the entire formation. These Soldiers and Leaders understood they had successfully executed operations in conditions as close to combat as possible. We felt that the process would increase capacity in planning, control measures, signal planning but underestimated the intangible confidence that was gained throughout the formation. These are the types of formations that can fight and win, which are operating at the readiness levels our leadership requires of us.

LIVE FIRE COLD HIT CONDITIONS CHECK	
<input type="checkbox"/> DAY LIVE FIRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Range Scenario approved by WH6 <input type="checkbox"/> Range Scenario approved by Range Control <input type="checkbox"/> Lane Safeties certified by BN <input type="checkbox"/> Range construction certified by Range Control <input type="checkbox"/> CDR/1SG/XO, and Lane Safeties conduct TEWT <input type="checkbox"/> Soldiers certified on the 15 degree rule <input type="checkbox"/> Weapons Qualification Certified <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Soldiers trained on employment of HG <input type="checkbox"/> SCT/MTR PLT validate lane <input type="checkbox"/> Executing Leaders receive accurate intel of OBJ including imagery <input type="checkbox"/> Mock Up of OBJ validated by BN CDR <input type="checkbox"/> Dry/Blank Day and Night Iteration on Mock Up of OBJ validated by WH6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmation of Direct Fire Control Measures <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmation of signal for lift/shift fires <input type="checkbox"/> LFX Uniform Briefed <input type="checkbox"/> OIC/RSO conducts final safety brief <input type="checkbox"/> EXECUTE LIVE FIRE EXERCISE ON OBJ 	<input type="checkbox"/> NIGHT LIVE FIRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identical Target Array to day <input type="checkbox"/> Day live fire completed <input type="checkbox"/> Weapons/PEQ15 bore sighted <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Weapons laser bore sighted <input type="checkbox"/> All targets have thermal signature <input type="checkbox"/> All Soldiers have working NVG's <input type="checkbox"/> EXECUTE LIVE FIRE EXERCISE ON OBJ
<p>1-27 IN - WOLFHOOUNDS UNCLASSIFIED // FOUO</p>	