

LESSONS LEARNED
DEFENDER CHALLENGE 2003
FOR MAJCOMs

1. Function/Event Name: Combat Weapons.

2. Submitted By: Capt Barrett.

3. Lessons Learned/Recommended Actions:

a. M249 automatic riflemen along with M240 machine gunners and assistants were generally unfamiliar with their weapon and many could not reassemble the weapon in less than 5 minutes.

Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

b. Only one team was able to don gas masks within the prescribed 9 seconds. All other teams had at least one team member and several had more than half the team, who were unable to don within 9 seconds.

Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

c. Lack of squad verbal communication within the squad (member to member) significantly impacted successful target engagement with the M203 grenade launcher.

Recommended Action: Training.

d. Most teams performed poorly with the M203 grenade launcher. Many had difficulty engaging targets at any range. No competitor had more than 35% of rounds impacting targets. Use of the new day/night sight without formal training may have been a contributing factor.

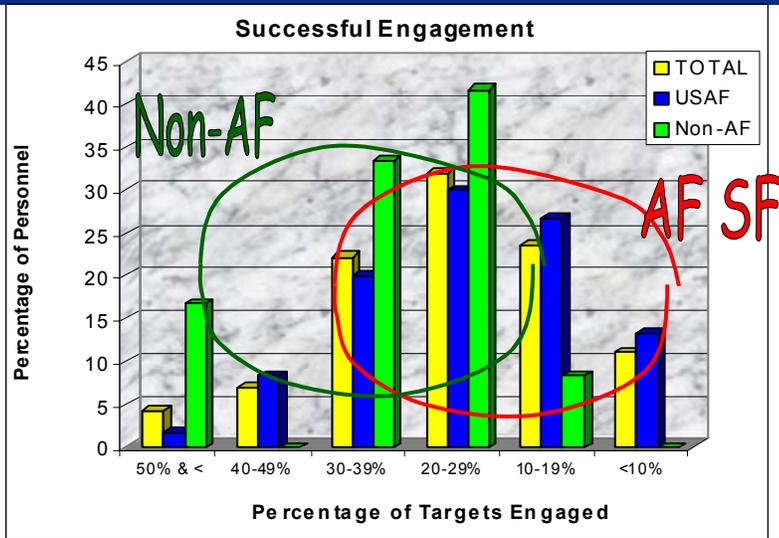
Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

e. Overall combat weapons engagement. SF competitors were generally unable to effectively engage targets. One in 60 SF engaged 50% or better while 2 in 12 non-AF engaged 50 % or better. Only 10% SF engaged at 40% or better while rate was 16.7% for non-AF. See following graphic.



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OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

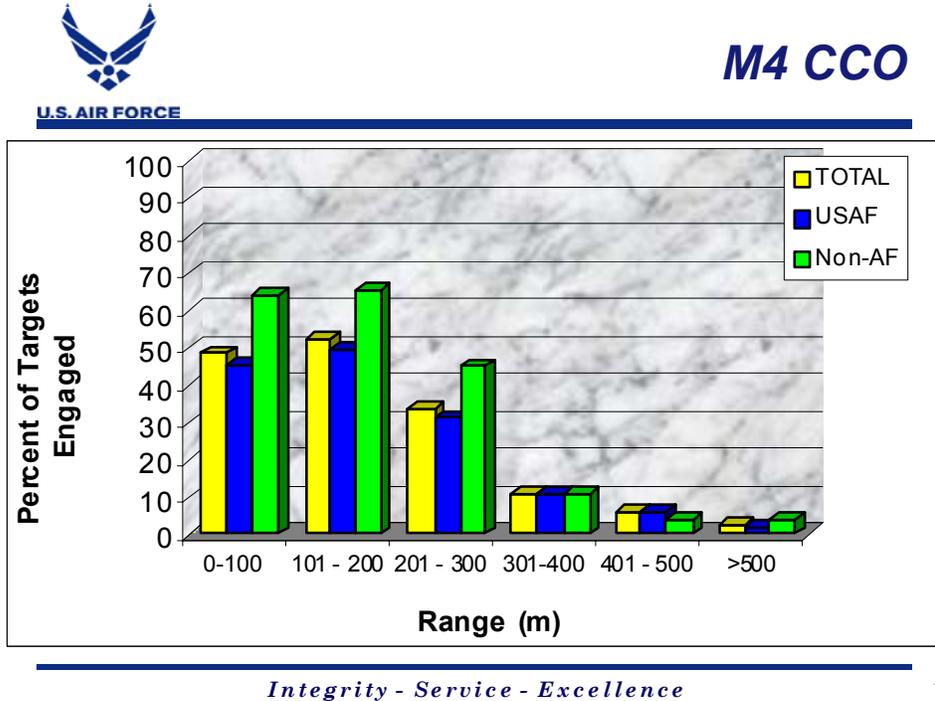


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Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

f. M4 rifle with close combat optic (CCO). Non-AF personnel consistently outperformed SF personnel. (Note: CCOs were configured to 300 meters, meaning that site adjustments were required for targets at different ranges.) See following graphic.



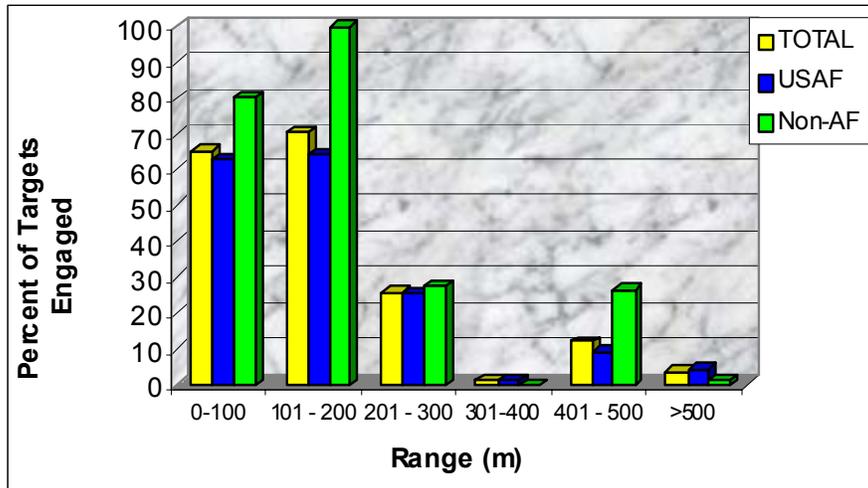
Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

g. Competitors firing the M4 rifle with the advanced combat optic gun sight (ACOG) performed well at short range. 400 meter targets were rarely hit because the targets were partially exposed. There was a slight improvement in hits at the 400-499 meter range over the CCO. Non-AF teams were statistically better shooters. See following graphic.



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M4 ACOG



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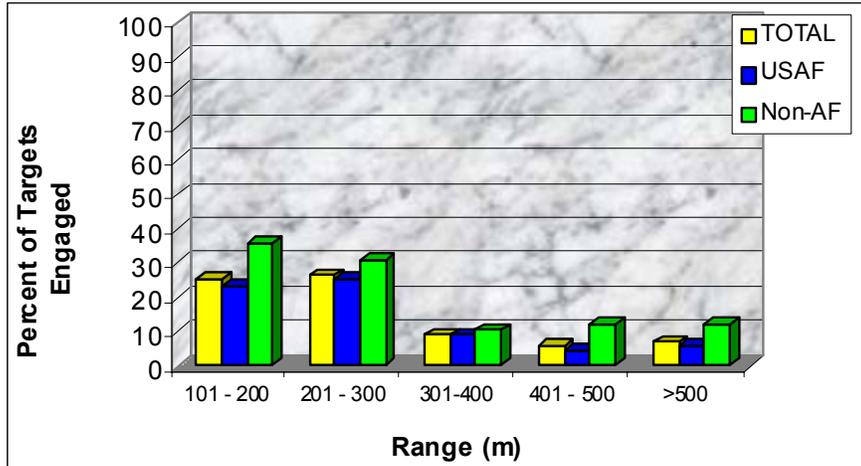
Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

h. Competitors firing the M249 machine gun were unable to effectively engage targets at any range. Non-AF teams were statistically better shooters. See following graphic.



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M249



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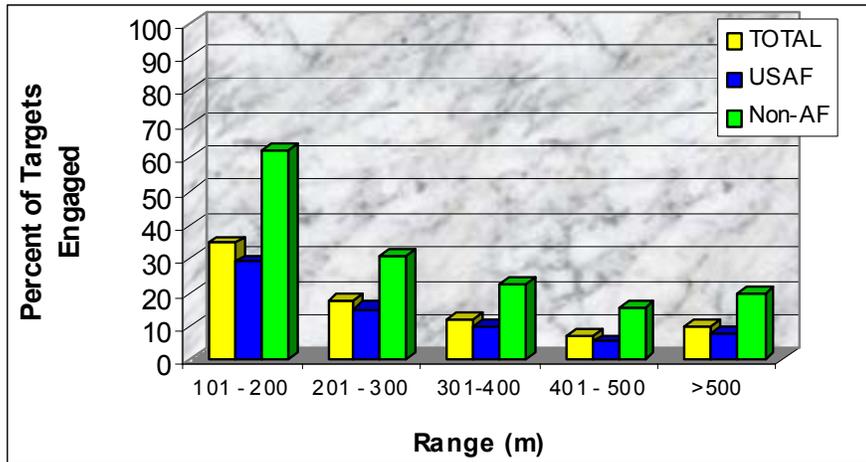
Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

i. Competitors firing the M240B machine gun performed adequately at short range. Gunners quickly exhausted supply of ammunition. Non-AF teams were statistically better shooters. See following graphic.



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M240B



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Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

LESSONS LEARNED
DEFENDER CHALLENGE 2003
FOR MAJCOMs

1. Function/Event Name: Sadler Cup.

2. Submitted By: Wg Cmdr Day.

3. Lessons Learned/Recommended Actions:

a. The majority of teams had difficulty plotting coordinates on a map and navigating to specific locations from a known location. When teams arrived at the staging area they were told their exact location (eight-digit grid quadrant), oriented to north and to two prominent terrain features (Chango Airfield and Butte Hill). Upon mission notification teams were given an eight-digit grid quadrant to establish a hasty checkpoint. Only two teams were able to quickly and accurately plot their start point (SP), the objective, and determine the route to the objective. The majority of the teams attempted to go in the wrong direction and only one actually set up in the correct objective location. Because of time considerations the Observer Controllers had to take over and direct the teams in the right direction and location (600m from the SP). Many of these errors were caused by a having the protractor inverted, map orientation reversed and lack of attention to detail.

Recommended Action: Emphasize basic map reading (protractor and compass navigation). Both manual and technology assisted navigation should be a core skill trained annually.

b. The majority of teams did not employ the Maneuver Support Team to their maximum capability. In many cases the maneuver support element was caught up and killed in the battle on the objective. Doctrinally in an offensive operation there should be an assault element and a support element. The support element should provide suppressive fire from an over watching position so that the assault element can maneuver to the objective. In all but two MOUT assaults during the competition all elements converged on the objective without effective supporting fire. As a result the OPFOR was able to pick apart the BLUFOR. Additionally, a major contributing factor to elements converging on the objective/kill zone was tactical dispersion of mounted elements. Many teams did not maintain an adequate interval between vehicles and when attacked all teams consolidated and assaulted together. Proper vehicle interval would have placed only one team in the kill zone and allowed the other teams to maneuver to an appropriate support or assault position.

Recommendation Action: Emphasize fundamental dismounted and mounted tactics, techniques and procedures. (Principles of War / Shoot, Move, Communicate, Secure Sustain).

LESSONS LEARNED
DEFENDER CHALLENGE 2003
FOR MAJCOMs

1. Function/Event Name: Warrior Challenge.

2. Submitted By: Capt. Ledford

3. Lessons Learned/Recommended Actions:

(Note: Due to variances in DoE and RAF-R medical protocols from USAF standards, they are not included in the below reviews).

a. Obstacle course. There were no penalties assessed against any teams for missing equipment or for improper negotiation of obstacles. All teams adhered to the spirit and intent of correct negotiation of obstacles.

Recommended Action: None.

b. Self-aid Buddy Care skill stations. Overall assessment of SF performance is excellent. Only 2 of 10 teams missed the following questions: (1) Once a tourniquet has been applied, loosen it every 15 minutes. Correct answer, false. (2) Basic lifesaving steps (in order) are: Correct answer, establish an open airway, ensure breathing, and control bleeding to support circulation.

Recommended Action: None.

c. Land navigation. Overall assessment of land navigation is marginal. Practical portions of map and compass skills were high missed areas. The PLGR steps were performed nearly perfectly, with the exception of five teams missing one or two steps. The following questions/skills were areas that three or more teams missed: (1) Locate and identify a major feature at a given eight-digit grid coordinate. Correct answer, saddle between two hills. Missed by seven of 10 teams. (2) Given two known points by eight-digit grid coordinates, locate a third unknown point by intersection and give its eight-digit grid coordinate. Seven of 10 answered partly or entirely incorrectly. (3) Given two prominent terrain features, locate your position by resection and give an eight-digit grid coordinate. Nine of 10 answered partly or entirely incorrectly. (4) What color does brown identify on a topographical map? Correct answer, identifies relief features and elevation on older edition maps. Three of 10 answered incorrectly. (5) What is located at a given grid location. Five of 10 incorrectly identified a dam. (6) What is located at a given grid location? Three of 10 incorrectly identified a racetrack. (7) Determine curved line distance between two given points. Seven of 10 gave incorrect responses.

Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.

d. Nuclear, biological and chemical protection. Overall assessment of SF performance is marginal. Five of 10 teams incorrectly administered the practice nerve agent antidote (wrong anatomical area—buttocks or injecting #2 kit before #1 kit). The following questions were high missed areas. (1) Difficult seeing, tightness in chest and confused behavior are all symptoms of what category of chemical agent? Correct answer, nerve agent. Four of 10 answered incorrectly. (2) On M-8 paper the color green indicates what type of chemical agent? Correct answer, nerve agent. Five of 10 answered incorrectly. (3) You have injected yourself with one Mark I kit (nerve agent antidote). Within 5 to 10 minutes, your heart is beating very quickly and your mouth becomes dry. What is/are the appropriate step(s)? Correct answer, do not administer a second kit and seek medical assistance immediately. Four of 10 answered incorrectly.

Recommended Action: Familiarization and training.