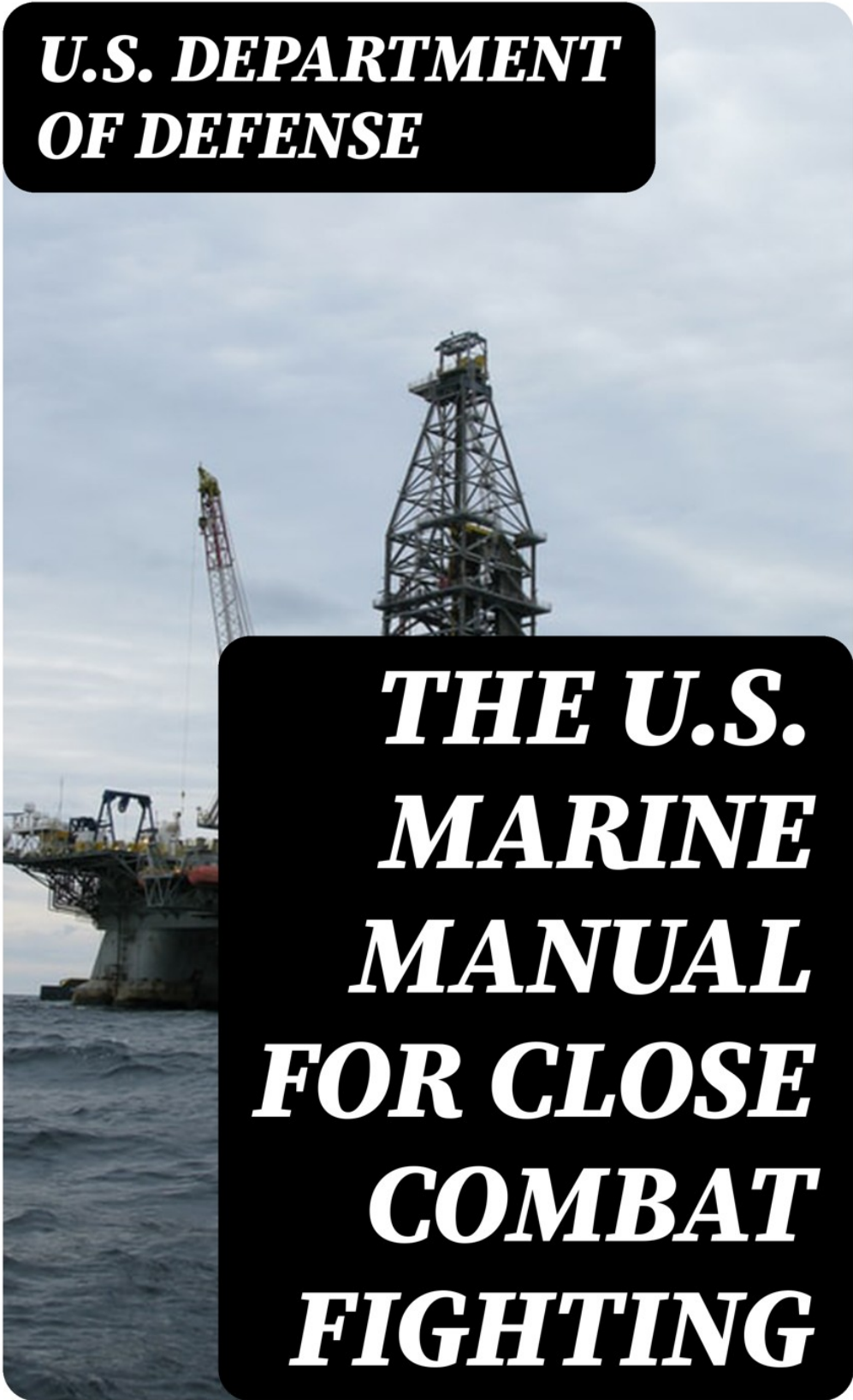


***U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF DEFENSE***

A photograph of an offshore oil rig in the ocean under a cloudy sky. The rig's complex metal structure, including a tall derrick, is visible against the grey sky. The dark blue water of the sea is in the foreground.

***THE U.S.
MARINE
MANUAL
FOR CLOSE
COMBAT
FIGHTING***

U.S. Department of Defense

The U.S. Marine Manual for Close Combat Fighting

EAN 8596547391784

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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Very few people have ever been killed with the bayonet or saber, but the fear of having their guts explored with cold steel in the hands of battle-maddened men has won many a fight.

-PATTON

1-1. DEFINITION OF COMBATIVES

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Hand-to-hand combat is an engagement between two or more persons in an empty-handed struggle or with hand-held weapons such as knives, sticks, or projectile weapons that cannot be fired. Proficiency in hand-to-hand combat is one of the fundamental building blocks for training the modern soldier.

1-2. PURPOSES OF COMBATIVES TRAINING

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Soldiers must be prepared to use different levels of force in an environment where conflict may change from low intensity to high intensity over a matter of hours. Many military operations, such as peacekeeping missions or noncombatant evacuation, may restrict the use of deadly weapons. Hand-to-hand combatives training will save lives when an unexpected confrontation occurs.

More importantly, combatives training helps to instill courage and self-confidence. With competence comes the understanding of controlled aggression and the ability to remain focused while under duress. Training in combatives includes hard and arduous physical training that is, at the same time, mentally demanding and carries over to other military pursuits. The overall effect of combatives training is

- The culmination of a successful physical fitness program, enhancing individual and unit strength, flexibility, balance, and cardiorespiratory fitness.
- Building personal courage, self confidence, self-discipline, and esprit de corps.

1-3. BASIC PRINCIPLES

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Underlying all combatives techniques are principles the hand-to-hand fighter must apply to successfully defeat an opponent. The natural progression of techniques, as presented in this manual, will instill these principles into the soldier.

a. **Mental Calm.** During a fight a soldier must keep his ability to think. He must not allow fear or anger to control his actions.

b. **Situational Awareness.** Things are often going on around the fighters that could have a direct impact on the outcome of the fight such as opportunity weapons or other personnel joining the fight.

c. **Suppleness.** A soldier cannot always count on being bigger and stronger than the enemy. He should, therefore, never try to oppose the enemy in a direct test of strength. Supple misdirection of the enemy's strength allows superior technique and fight strategy to overcome superior strength.

d. **Base.** Base refers to the posture that allows a soldier to gain leverage from the ground. Generally, a soldier must keep his center of gravity low and his base wide — much like a pyramid.

e. **Dominant Body Position.** Position refers to the location of the fighter's body in relation to his opponent's. A vital principle when fighting is to gain control of the enemy by controlling this relationship. Before any killing or disabling technique can be applied, the soldier must first gain and maintain one of the dominant body positions (Chapter 3, Section I).

f. **Distance.** Each technique has a window of effectiveness based upon the amount of space between the two combatants. The fighter must control the distance between himself and the enemy in order to control the fight.

g. **Physical Balance.** Balance refers to the ability to maintain equilibrium and to remain in a stable upright position.

h. **Leverage.** A fighter uses the parts of his body to create a natural mechanical advantage over the parts of the enemy's body. By using leverage, a fighter can have a greater effect on a much larger enemy.

1-4. SAFETY

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The Army's combatives program has been specifically designed to train the most competent fighters in the shortest possible time in the safest possible manner.

a. **General Safety Precautions.** The techniques of Army combatives should be taught in the order presented in this manual. They are arranged to not only give the natural progression of techniques, but to present the more dangerous techniques after the soldiers have established a familiarity with the dynamics of combative techniques in general. This will result in fewer serious injuries from the more dynamic moves.

b. **Supervision.** The most important safety consideration is proper supervision. Because of the potentially dangerous nature of the techniques involved, combatives training must always be conducted under the supervision of qualified leaders.

c. **Training Areas.** Most training should be conducted in an area with soft footing such as a grassy or sandy area. If training mats are available, they should be used. A hard surface area is not appropriate for combatives training.

d. **Chokes.** Chokes are the best way to end a fight. They are the most effective way to incapacitate an enemy and, with supervision, are also safe enough to apply in training exactly as on the battlefield.

e. **Joint Locks.** In order to incapacitate an enemy, attacks should be directed against large joints such as the elbow, shoulder, or knee. Attacks on most of these joints are very painful long before causing any injury, which allows full-force training to be conducted without

significant risk of injury. The exceptions are wrist attacks and twisting knee attacks. The wrist is very easily damaged, and twisting the knee does not become painful until it is too late. Therefore, these attacks should be taught with great care and should not be allowed in sparring or competitions.

f. **Striking.** Striking is an inefficient way to incapacitate an enemy. Strikes are, however, an important part of an overall fight strategy and can be very effective in manipulating the opponent into unfavorable positions. Striking can be practiced with various types of protective padding such as boxing gloves. Defense can be practiced using reduced force blows. Training should be continuously focused on the realities of fighting.

CHAPTER 2 TRAINING

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This chapter discusses the trainer's role in teaching and sustaining effective hand-to-hand combat. It also discusses unit training, training areas, teaching techniques, and safety precautions that must be considered before conducting combatives training.

Section I. TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

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Professional instruction is the key to success in combatives training. Instructors must be physically fit and highly proficient in the demonstration and practical application of the skills. They must review and be familiar with this manual. Confidence, enthusiasm, and technical expertise are essential for success in teaching hand-to-hand combat. Assistant instructors must also be properly trained to help supervise and demonstrate maneuvers. Selecting the trainers is the first step in establishing an effective program.

2-1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRAINERS

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Diligent effort is needed to perfect the various hand-to-hand combat techniques, to apply them instinctively, and to teach others to safely master them. The following instructor responsibilities are the core of planning and executing combatives training.

- a. Seek maximum efficiency with minimum effort. Continually strive to reduce all unnecessary explanations, movement, and activity. Streamline the training without compromising content, efficiency, or safety.
- b. Stress cooperation and technical mastery. Promote suppleness and controlling aggression.
- c. Reinforce the details of each technique and provide positive feedback when warranted. Use occasional humor to motivate soldiers, but avoid degrading or insulting them.
- d. Ensure serviceable training aids are present in sufficient quantities for all soldiers being trained. Ensure training areas are well maintained and free of dangerous obstructions.
- e. Ensure instructors and assistant instructors are well-rehearsed and prepared before all training sessions. Conduct instructor training at least five hours weekly to maintain a high skill level.
- f. Develop as many skilled combatives instructors for each unit as possible. Instructor-to-soldier ratios should not exceed 1 instructor for 20 soldiers. Encourage after-duty training and education for instructors.
- g. Require strict discipline of all soldiers.

2-2. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

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To prevent injuries, the instructor must consider the following safety precautions before conducting combatives training.

a. Supervise all practical work closely and constantly. Never leave a group unsupervised.

b. Familiarize the soldiers with each maneuver by a complete explanation and demonstration before they attempt the moves.

c. Do not allow the soldiers to get ahead of the instruction.

d. Ensure the training partner offers no resistance, but allows the maneuver to be freely executed during the learning stages and while perfecting the techniques.

e. Ensure there is adequate space between soldiers during all practical work – for example, allow at least an 8-foot square for each pair of soldiers.

f. Ensure that soldiers empty their pockets, and remove their jewelry, and identification tags before training.

g. Stress that only simulated strikes to vital points, such as the head, neck, and groin area are to be executed. Soldiers may use light blows to other vulnerable areas; however, they must exercise caution at all times.

h. Ensure that soldiers understand the use of both physical tapping and verbal signals to indicate to the partner when to stop the pressure in grappling and choking techniques.

i. Make sure soldiers warm up and stretch properly before practical work.

- j. Teach and practice falls before conducting throws.
- k. Ensure that the soldier to be disarmed does not place his finger in the trigger guard during rifle and bayonet disarming.
- l. Make sure soldiers keep scabbards on knives and bayonets firmly attached to rifles while learning bayonet disarming methods.
- m. Use bayonet scabbards or rubber knives during knife disarming training.
- n. If utilizing a sawdust pit, inspect all sandbags on retaining wall before conduct of training to ensure that all bags are serviceable, at least 75 percent full, and that the entire retaining wall is covered with sandbags. Any bag placed where personnel are likely to fall will be filled with the same consistency filler as the sawdust in the pit and will also provide a minimum of 6 inches of sawdust.
- o. Maintain a buffer zone of 6 feet from retainer wall and demonstration area during all training, especially training requiring throws and takedowns by students.
- p. Rake the training pit to loosen sawdust and remove all sharp objects. Properly inspect the pit so that all safety hazards are removed before instruction or demonstrations are executed.
- q. Perform inspections of the depth of sawdust with enough time before training to resurface the pit. Remember that new sawdust will need to be raked and inspected for foreign objects that may cause injuries.

Section II. UNIT TRAINING

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Entry-level soldiers receive a training base in combatives during basic training and one-station unit training (OSUT). Advanced individual training (AIT) commanders should review the training presented during basic training and, as time permits, expand into the more advanced techniques discussed in this manual. For soldiers to achieve and sustain proficiency levels regular units must incorporate combatives into an organized training program to include situational training exercises (Appendix A).

2-3. BASIC OR ONE-STATION UNIT TRAINING

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This is a suggested training program for basic training or OSUT. It is based on ten hours of available training time, divided into five periods of two hours each. Training should start with ground grappling, which is not only easier both to teach and to learn, but also provides a sound base for the more difficult standing techniques. A program should not begin with techniques that will take a long time to master. The result would be almost uniform disillusionment with combatives in general.

a. **Period 1 (2 hours).**

- Introduction to combatives safety.
- Combat demonstration performed by instructors or trainers to gain attention and to motivate soldiers.
- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Stand up in base.
- Escape the mount by trap and roll.
- Pass the guard.
- Achieve the mount.
- Drill No. 1, 10 to 15 repetitions; escape the mount, pass the guard, achieve the mount, in sequence.
- Escape the mount by shrimp to the guard.
- Escape the mount drill.

b. **Period 2 (2 hours).**

- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Drill No. 1, ten repetitions.
- Arm push and roll to the rear mount.
- Escape the rear mount.
- Drill No. 2: Arm push and roll to the back mount, escape the back mount.

- Grappling for position, five minutes and then change partners. Repeat for duration of class.

c. **Period 3 (2 hours).**

- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Drill No. 1, ten repetitions.
- Drill No. 2, ten repetitions.
- Introduction to choking.
- Rear naked choke.
- Cross collar choke from the mount and guard.
- Front guillotine choke.

d. **Period 4 (2 hours).**

- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Drill No. 1, ten repetitions.
- Drill No. 2, ten repetitions.
- Bent arm bar from the mount and cross mount.
- Straight arm bar from the mount.
- Straight arm bar from the guard.
- Sweep from straight arm bar attempt.

e. **Period 5 (2 hours).**

- Warm-ups and stretches.
- Drill No. 1, ten repetitions.
- Drill No. 2, ten repetitions.
- Review.
- Rules introduction.
- Competition.

2-4. UNIT SUSTAINMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

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Command emphasis is the key to a successful combatives program. Combatives training sessions should be regular, and should be included on unit training schedules at company and platoon level.

a. Successful unit combatives programs continue to focus on the core techniques taught in the basic training or OSUT program. Mastery of these moves will result in more proficient fighters than exposure to a large number of techniques will.

b. As the level of proficiency rises the natural progression of moves is as follows:

- Advanced ground grappling.
- Takedowns.
- Strikes and kicks.
- Fight strategy.
- Situational training.

c. Primary trainers should be designated at all levels. Regular training sessions with these trainers will ensure the quality of training at the small unit level.

d. Primary trainers should be of the appropriate rank; for instance, a platoon primary trainer should be a squad leader or the platoon sergeant to ensure that the training actually occurs.

e. Modern combatives allow soldiers to compete safely. To inspire the pursuit of excellence, individual soldiers may compete during organizational day. Leaders may also call squads, sections, or individuals to compete randomly as a method of inspecting training levels. All combatives

competitions should be conducted IAW rules established in Appendix B of this manual. However, competition should not become the focus of combatives training, but remain a tool to inspire further training.

Section III. TRAINING AREAS

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An advantage of combatives training is that it can be conducted almost anywhere with little preparation of the training area.

2-5. TRAINING FORMATIONS

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Formations used for physical training may also be used for combatives training (FM 21-20). If the extended rectangular formation is used, the first and third ranks should face the second and fourth ranks so that each soldier is directly across him a partner.

A large, grassy, outdoor area free of obstructions is suitable for training. Each pair of soldiers should have an 8-foot square training space. When practicing throws or disarming techniques, soldiers need twice the normal interval between ranks. Instructors also pair soldiers according to height and weight.

2-6. MATTED ROOM

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Because inclement weather can be a training distracter, the best training area is an indoor, climate-controlled facility with both padded floor and walls. Mats should be sufficiently firm to allow free movement, but provide enough impact absorption to allow safe throws and takedowns.

2-7. PIT CONSTRUCTION

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A common area for teaching hand-to-hand combat is a sawdust pit. Sawdust pits are designed to teach throws and falls safely, but are not very suitable for ground fighting. Figure 2-1 shows a training area for 200 soldiers with a sawdust pit surrounding an instructor and a demonstrator platform.

a. To construct the pit, dig out and level an area 50 meters wide, and build a retaining wall at least 24 inches high. The wall can be cinderblocks, sandbags, or dirt if other materials are not available. (To prevent injuries when using a cinderblock retaining wall, cover the wall and the top of the wall with sandbags.) Place a layer of plastic sheeting on the ground to prevent the growth of grass and weeds, and place a sand base up to 12 inches deep on top of the plastic. Then, place a layer of sawdust about 6 inches deep on top of the sand.

b. Build a 14-foot square demonstration area (Figure 2-1) in the center of the pit with the same type of retaining wall described in paragraph a. This area should be large enough for two demonstrators and the primary instructor.

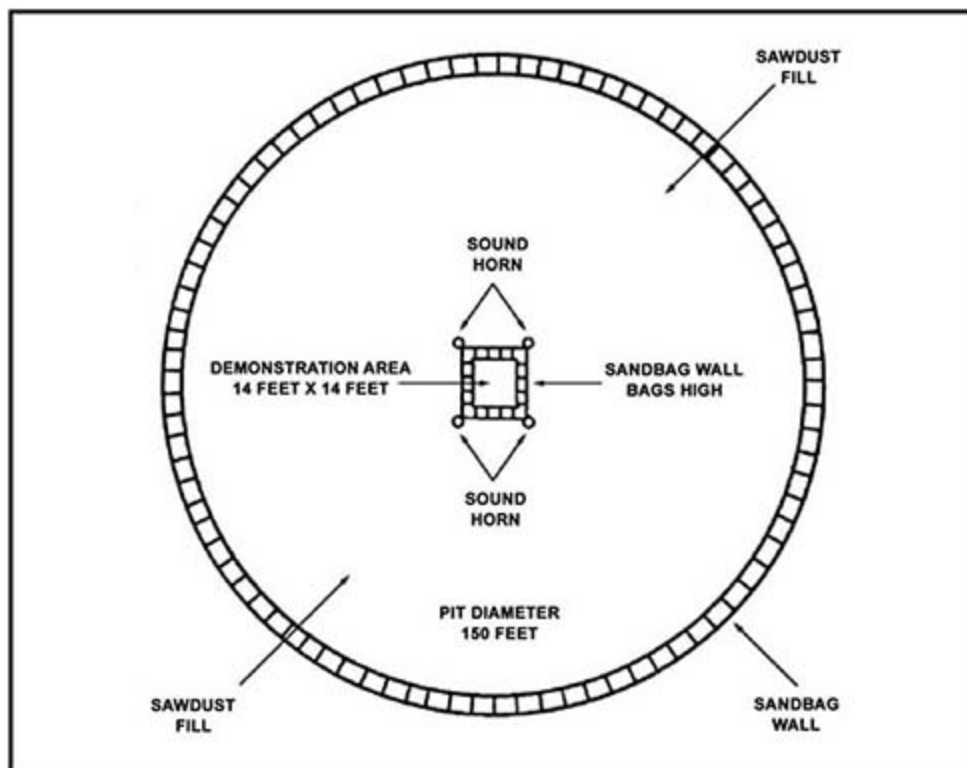


Figure 2-1. Combatives training pit.

2-8. BAYONET ASSAULT COURSE

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The bayonet assault course provides the commander a unique training opportunity by allowing soldiers to employ rifle-bayonet fighting skills under simulated combat conditions. The course can be built and negotiated so that demands placed on the soldiers' abilities and on their endurance approach those experienced under combat conditions. Realistic sights and sounds of battle — fire, smoke, confusion, and pyrotechnics — can also be created to enhance realism. The training objectives of the bayonet assault course include:

- Improving rifle-bayonet fighting skills.
- Improving physical fitness and aggressiveness.
- Improving speed, strength, coordination, and accuracy.
- Providing realistic rifle-bayonet fighting under near combat conditions.
- Challenging the soldiers' determination and stamina, which are needed in combat.
- Providing an opportunity for team and squad leaders to develop their leadership and control measures.

a. **Safety.** The safety of the soldiers should be the primary concern of the instructor and his assistants. The best safety aids are constant control and supervision. In addition, instructors should brief soldiers at the beginning of each class on the requirements for safety during rifle-bayonet training. Instructors use the following safety measures:

- (1) Bayonets must be fixed and unfixed only on command.

(2) Rifles should be grounded near the targets when the soldiers are ordered to move to the instructor's platform for explanations or demonstrations.

(3) A level surface that does not become slippery when wet should be provided for the training area.

(4) Left-handed soldiers should be positioned so they are opposite another left-handed soldier when working against the targets. This type of arrangement prevents possible injury when executing a series of movements.

(5) When using the M16 rifle against a target, the force of contact during the thrust movement may drive the hand gripping the small of the stock into the forward assist assembly (on the right-hand side of the weapon near the stock). To prevent injury to the hand, the soldier must maintain a firm grip on the small of the stock. Gloves should be worn as part of the training uniform when weather dictates.

b. **Layout.** The 300-meter-long course consists of a series of targets to attack, and obstacles to negotiate. Lay it out over natural terrain, preferably rough and wooded areas. Include natural obstacles such as streams, ravines, ridges, and thick vegetation. Build artificial obstacles such as entanglements, fences, log walls, hurdles, and horizontal ladders (Figure 2-2).