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20 Mar 08

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WEAPONS TRAINING BATTALION
MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5040

DETAILED INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

LESSON TITLE

INTRODUCTION TO RIFLE SHOOTING POSITIONS AND SLINGS

COURSE TITLE

ANNUAL RIFLE TRAINING



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Weapons Training Battalion
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5040

DETAILED OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION TO RIFLE SHOOTING POSITIONS AND SLINGS

INTRODUCTION

(3 MIN)

1. GAIN ATTENTION. On the battlefield, the rifleman must assume the steadiest possible position in which to engage the enemy. A steady position enables the weapon to be stabilized and trigger control to be applied in one continuous movement to the rear. The application of the five factors common to all shooting positions is critical to this process.
2. OVERVIEW. This lesson will cover the procedures for adjusting the sling and applying the five factors and three elements common to all shooting positions.
3. INTRODUCE LEARNING OBJECTIVES. The Terminal Learning Objective and Enabling Learning Objectives pertaining to this lesson are as follows:
 - a. TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE. Given a service rifle/carbine, RCO, sling, magazines, cartridge belt, magazine retention device (pouches or load-bearing vest), ammunition, and a target, without the aid of references, engage targets from a prone position IAW MCRP 3-01A. (0300.M16.1005)
 - b. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES
 - 1) Given a service rifle/carbine, RCO, sling, magazines, cartridge belt, magazine retention device (pouches or load-bearing vest), without the aid of references, adjust the sling to the position IAW MCRP 3-01A. (0300.M16.1005a)
 - 2) Given a service rifle/carbine, RCO, sling, magazines, cartridge belt, magazine retention device (pouches or load-bearing vest), without the aid of references, apply the three elements and five factors to the position, as applicable, IAW MCRP 3-01A. (0300.M16.1005b)
4. METHOD. This lesson will be taught in a classroom setting using lecture and demonstration.
5. EVALUATION. The Marine will be evaluated on this material during Table 1 firing.



TRANSITION: The sling helps support and stabilize the rifle during firing, aiding the delivery of well-aimed shots on the target. When the rifle sling is adjusted properly, it will provide maximum stability for the weapon and help reduce the effects of the rifle's recoil. There are three basic types of rifle sling adjustments: the loop sling, the hasty sling, and the three-point sling.

NOTE

The procedures in this lesson are written for right-handed Marines. Left-handed Marines should reverse instructions as needed. Substitutions of the language in this lesson plan for 'right' and 'left' hand may be made with 'strong' and 'support', respectively, or 'firing' and 'non-firing' as desired.

BODY

(55 MIN)

1. (10 MIN) LOOP SLING

Loop sling not a good idea for RCO due to inconsistent torque of the sling in different positions causing barrel to be bent out of alignment with the scope causing the rounds to be off at further distances.

a. Purpose of the Loop Sling. The loop sling, employed with a standard web sling, provides the greatest amount of stability during firing. This stability allows the shooter to perfect marksmanship fundamentals. The loop sling may be used while firing the Table 1 Course of Fire. Because it takes longer to don or remove a loop sling, it has limited combat application (e.g., in a defensive position). The loop sling provides maximum stability and is, therefore, best suited for developing proper application of the fundamentals in the prone, sitting, and kneeling positions.

- 1) In all three positions, the loop is high on the left arm above the biceps muscle in such a position that it does not transmit pulse beat to the rifle.
- 2) The buckle is positioned so the sling pulls from the center of the arm when the loop is tightened.
- 3) The only difference in the loop sling's application for the three shooting positions is the length at which it is adjusted. The sling is adjusted for each firing position to the proper length by loosening the sling keeper and pulling the feed end up or down (toward or



away) from the loop. The sling keeper should be positioned near the feed end of the sling.

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE: *Demonstrate the procedures in this section as they are explained.*

b. Donning the Loop Sling. To form the loop sling, perform the following steps:

- 1) Place the rifle butt on the right hip and cradle the rifle in the right arm.
- 2) Disconnect the J-hook from the lower sling swivel.
- 3) With the M-buckle near the hook, feed the sling through the top of the M-buckle to form a loop large enough to slip over the arm.
- 4) Give the loop a half turn outboard and insert the support arm through the loop, positioning the loop high above the biceps.
- 5) Position the M-buckle on the outside of the support arm.
- 6) Tighten the loop on the support arm, ensuring the M-buckle moves toward the center of the arm as the loop tightens. The sling must pull from the center of the arm to be properly positioned. In this way, as tension is applied to the sling in the firing position, the loop will tighten.
- 7) To adjust the sling for the proper length, loosen the sling keeper and pull the feed end down toward the loop. This adjustment varies with every individual and every firing position:
 - a) The loop should not be tightened excessively on the arm. If blood flow is restricted, excessive pulse beat is transmitted through the rifle sling to the rifle and causes a noticeable, rhythmic movement of the rifle sights. When this occurs, a stable hold at the desired aiming point is impossible to achieve.
 - b) Tension on the rifle sling is correct when it causes the rifle butt to be forced rearward into the pocket of the shoulder. This serves to keep the buttplate in the shoulder pocket during recoil. To increase the amount of tension on the rifle sling,



the sling must be shortened. To lessen the tension, the sling must be lengthened.

8) Move the sling keeper toward the support arm and secure it. The sling keeper should be positioned near the feed end of the sling.

9) Place the support hand over the sling from the support side and under the rifle. The rifle handguard should rest in the "V" formed between the thumb and forefinger and across the palm of the hand.

10) Move the support hand as required to achieve a desired sight picture. Adjust the length of the sling for proper sling tension and support.

c. Purpose of a Consistent Sling Adjustment. Once a sling adjustment is found that provides maximum control of your weapon, the same sling adjustment must be used every time a particular firing position is assumed. Varying the sling tension will affect the strike of the bullet, making establishment of a battlesight zero (BZO) difficult. Using the same sling adjustment will maintain your BZO and ensure the accuracy of your rounds on target. The tension created by using the loop sling has a high probability of moving the barrel of the rifle out of alignment with the RCO. This tension can cause the establish zero to shift from firing position to firing position or even day to day if the sling is not donned consistently.

Confirm by questions.

TRANSITION: The sling helps to support and stabilize the rifle during firing, aiding the delivery of well-aimed shots on the target and helping the shooter manage recoil. The hasty sling can be acquired quickly and the same sling setting can be used for all firing positions.

2. (10 MIN) HASTY SLING

The hasty sling not a good idea for RCO due to inconsistent torque of the sling in different positions causing barrel to be bent out of alignment with the scope causing the rounds to be off at further distances.

a. Purpose of the Hasty Sling. The hasty sling, employed with the standard web sling, is more adaptable to combat situations than the loop sling. It is advantageous in combat because it can be acquired quickly and it provides added stability to the rifle. The hasty sling is used in all



firing positions.

- 1) If properly adjusted, the hasty sling supports the weight of the weapon and provides maximum stability for the rifle and reduces the effects of the rifle's recoil.
- 2) The hasty sling is easy to use because the same sling setting can be used for all firing positions.

<p><i>INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE:</i> <i>Demonstrate the procedures in this section as they are explained.</i></p>
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b. Donning the Hasty Sling. To form and don the hasty sling, perform the following steps:

- 1) Hold the rifle vertical with the barrel pointing upward.
- 2) Unhook the J-hook from the lower sling swivel.
- 3) Loosen the sling keeper.
- 4) Adjust the sling until the J-hook hangs below the butt of the rifle. (The distance will vary based on the individual Marine, but the J-hook will usually hang approximately 3 - 10 inches below the butt.) Secure the sling keeper.
- 5) Turn the sling a half turn outboard (this will allow the sling to lay flat against the arm).
- 6) Attach the J-hook to the lower sling swivel so the open end of the J-hook faces outboard, away from the rifle.
- 7) While holding the rifle with the right hand, place the left arm through the sling near the lower sling swivel. Slide the arm up through the sling below the half twist. The sling makes contact low on the arm just below the triceps, above the elbow. The sling lies flat on the back of the arm.
- 8) With the left hand, grasp the handguard by pinching it in the "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger. The sling lies flat against the back or side of the wrist or on the arm near the wrist.
- 9) Move the left hand as required to level the rifle with the line of sight. Placement of the forward hand controls the tension on the sling between the back of the wrist or arm and the upper sling swivel. This hand



placement, with a straight locked wrist, will cause the sling to pull straight under the handguards and serves to stabilize the reticule of the BDC.

10) Move the feed end of the sling in or out of the sling keeper to adjust the hasty sling. Sling tension is further adjusted by pushing the elbow outboard. (This enables one sling setting to fit all positions.) It is important for the hasty sling to be adjusted so it supports the rifle. The sling setting must allow the left elbow to push outboard against the sling so the elbow is not inverted under the rifle.

11) Locate the sling keeper near the feed end of the sling and secure so the back side or flat end of the sling keeper is against the arm.

Confirm by questions.

TRANSITION: Success in combat will rest largely upon the establishment of a stable and consistent firing position. A three-point sling is the standard sling employed in combat. It is important to understand how to adjust and employ the sling.

3. (15 MIN) THREE-POINT TACTICAL SLING

a. Nomenclature. A standard three-point tactical sling approved by the Marine Corps is the I.B.D Products E-Z Sling (Sling System).

1) Flexible Swivels (w/triangular grommet). There are two types of front attachments. Both are attached to the sling by a triangular grommet.

a) One attachment is designed for use on the service rifle and is made of Nomex® in order to resist melting from the heat of the barrel.

b) A second attachment is made of nylon (nonresistant to heat) and is designed for use with various other weapon systems or used as the rear attachment to the M4 CQBW.

2) 1-inch Webbing Strap with Tri-glide. The webbing strap allows the sling to be attached to the flexible swivels.

3) Transition Release Buckle (TRB). The TRB is used to transition from strong side to weak side without



removing the sling.

4) Emergency Release Buckle (ERB). The ERB allows for quick release of the sling from the body.

5) Rear Stock Strap. The rear stock strap is used to connect the sling to the buttstock of the weapon.

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE: Demonstrate how to attach the three-point sling to an M16A2/4 and M4 Carbine.

b. Attaching the Sling System

1) Feed the permanently attached front keeper with 1" webbing through the forward sling swivel from rear to front; feed the webbing back down through the forward end buckle. The buckle should be on the outside of the weapon.

2) Remove the rear stock strap from the sling system. Disassemble the strap by sliding the short end of the strap off the long end. The strap should resemble an L-shape.

3) Remove the rear keeper from the tri-glide. Set the rear keeper with 1" webbing to the side; it is not needed with the three-point sling configuration for the M16A2/A4.

4) Place the weapon with the ejection port cover facing down and the pistol grip closest to you.

5) Flip the sling over and lay it flat across the weapon with the quick release buckles facing down. Slide the middle tri-glide over the buttstock to a position approximately 1 ½" from the edge of the buttstock. The side of the tri-glide with 1 bar should be facing you.

6) Place the rear stock strap on the buttstock with the long side up and the short side to the right. Feed the short end of the strap through the middle tri-glide. Pull the strap to the right until the stitching prevents it from going any further.

NOTE

Left-handed shooters will maintain the same



orientation of the rear stock strap. The only difference will be that the sling will be pulled tight on the left side of the buttstock where the short strap attaches to the long rear stock strap.

7) Flip the sling over with the quick release buckles are facing up. Wrap the short end around the back of the butt stock. Feed the long end of the stock strap through the slot in the short end.

8) Feed the coarse end of the Velcro through the slot closest to the material of the stock strap, then through the other slot on the buckle. Fasten it down tightly ensuring the triangular grommet is facing down.

9) Pull the sling hard to ensure it is secure.

c. Wearing of the Three-point Sling

1) While grasping the pistol grip in your right hand, place the buttstock in your shoulder.

2) Using the left hand, separate the sling with your thumb to create a triangle.

3) Insert your head and left hand and arm into the triangle while maintaining control of the weapon.

4) Adjust the tri-glide so you can easily bring the weapon into action while keeping the sling tight.

Confirm by questions.

TRANSITION: Rifle firing positions are designed as foundations for the rifle. A rifle firing position may be adjusted to conform to your body configuration as long as the position provides balance, control, and stability. There are three elements essential to a good rifle firing position: bone support, muscular relaxation, and natural point of aim. We will discuss how these elements apply when employing each of the sling adjustments.

3. (10 MIN) THREE ELEMENTS OF A GOOD SHOOTING POSITION

a. Loop Sling

1) Bone Support. The body's skeletal structure provides a stable foundation to support the rifle's weight. A weak shooting position will not withstand the



repeated recoil of a rifle when firing at the sustained rate or buffeting from wind. To attain a correct shooting position, the bones of the body must support as much of the rifle's weight as possible. Proper use of the sling provides additional support.

a) The weight of the weapon should be supported by bone rather than muscle because muscles fatigue whereas bones do not.

b) Establish a strong foundation for the rifle by utilizing bone support. This will enable the shooter to relax as much as possible while minimizing the movement of the weapon due to muscle tension.

2) Muscular Relaxation. Once bone support is achieved, muscles are relaxed. Muscular relaxation helps to hold steady and increase the accuracy of your aim. Muscular relaxation also permits the use of maximum bone support to create a minimum arc of movement and consistency in resistance to recoil.

a) There is no way to achieve muscular relaxation without bone support. During the shooting process, the muscles of the body must be relaxed as much as possible. Muscles that are tense will cause excessive movement of the rifle, disturbing the aim.

b) When proper bone support and muscular relaxation are achieved, the rifle will settle onto your aiming point, making it possible to apply trigger control and deliver a well-aimed shot.

c) The three point sling you will use muscular tension to control the weapon due to the lack of support from the sling.

3) Natural Point of Aim. The point at which the RCO reticule settles when bone support and muscular relaxation are achieved is called the natural point of aim.

a) When in a shooting position with proper a full field of view and reticule placement on the target, the position of the reticule will indicate the natural point of aim. When completely relaxed, the reticule should rest on the desired aiming point.

b) One method of checking for natural point of aim is to aim in on your target, close your eyes, take a couple of breaths, and relax as much as possible. When you open your eyes, the reticule of the BDC should be positioned on the desired aiming point while maintaining a full field of view.



c) Since the rifle becomes an extension of your body, it may be necessary to adjust the position of your body until the reticule settle naturally on the desired aiming point on the target. For each shooting position, specific adjustments will cause your reticule to settle center mass, achieving a natural point of aim. These adjustments will be covered in each of the position lessons.

b. Hasty Sling. With the hasty sling donned, the bones are not used to support the weapon. Instead, the shooter must apply an amount of controlled muscular tension in the left arm to keep the sling taut and stabilize the reticule.

1) Resistance against the hasty sling controls the point at which the reticule will settle. The muscular tension is applied outward against the sling rather than in an effort to hold the rifle up. However, muscular tension should not be excessive to cause the shooter to shake, tremble, or fatigue.

2) Because bone support and muscular relaxation are not achieved with the hasty sling, natural point of aim does not exist.

c. Three-point Sling. Of the three elements, only bone support is relevant with the three-point sling. Unlike a loop sling, the three-point sling provides minimal support of the weapon, so the position must be adjusted to support the weapon.

1) Bone Support. The three-point sling was designed to transport or carry the weapon. The sling, as designed, provides little support to aid in stability of hold, management of recoil, etc. Therefore, the bones of the body must support as much of the rifle's weight as possible.

a) Bone support is mostly achieved by placing as much of the left elbow as possible directly under the weapon for each firing position.

b) Bone support will enable the shooter to minimize the muscular tension required to hold the weapon.

2) Muscular Relaxation. Muscular tension, rather than muscular relaxation, is required to hold the weapon up and steady the reticule with the three-point sling donned; the shooter must apply an amount of controlled muscular tension in the left arm to stabilize the weapon sights.

3) Natural Point of Aim. There is no natural point of



aim when using the three-point sling because muscular relaxation cannot be achieved. Therefore, a consistent amount of controlled muscular tension must be applied to allow the reticule to settle.

Confirm by questions.

TRANSITION: The three elements serve as a foundation for learning how to apply the fundamentals of marksmanship. The loop sling is a good tool for learning and applying the fundamentals. However, we have seen how the application of the three elements changes when employing the different sling configurations. Next we will cover the five factors common to all shooting positions.

5. (10 MIN) FIVE FACTORS COMMON TO ALL SHOOTING POSITIONS

There are five factors common to all shooting positions. The five factors affect your ability to hold the rifle steady, maintain a full field of view, and control the trigger. The way these factors are applied differs slightly for each position, but the principles of each factor remain the same.

NOTE

The following procedures are written for right-handed shooters; left-handed shooters should reverse directions as needed.

a. Forward Hand. The placement of the forward hand affects placement of the left elbow, eye relief, stock weld, and sling tension.

1) Loop Sling. In all positions it is desirable that the handguard of the rifle rest in the "V" formed by the thumb and index finger of the left hand. The left wrist is straight with the rifle resting across the heel of the hand. The left elbow should be positioned directly under the weapon to create bone support and a consistent resistance to recoil. The fingers can curl against the handguard, but should apply only the minimum amount of pressure to prevent the hand from slipping on the handguard.

2) Hasty Sling. In a hasty sling configuration, the sling is attached to the upper and lower sling swivels of the rifle. When the left arm is placed in the hasty sling, tension created by the sling travels from side to side. This tension affects how the position is established. There are fundamental differences between



the application of the seven factors when using the hasty sling. The most obvious of these is placement of the left hand and the left elbow.

a) To maximize the support provided by the hasty sling, the left elbow should not be inverted and under the rifle. Instead, the elbow should be pushed outboard against the sling. To achieve this, the position of the shooter's body must be more squared to the target. In addition, the hasty sling must be loosened to allow the elbow to push out against the sling far enough so that the elbow is not under the rifle.

(1) The tension on the hasty sling causes the center of balance to change on the rifle. When the elbow is under the rifle with the hasty sling donned, the sling pulls down on the sling swivel disrupting the center of balance and causing the muzzle to drop. Therefore, the elbow must be pushed outboard.

(2) Outboard tension on the sling by the elbow drives the buttstock into the pocket of the shoulder. To enable this, the sling must make contact on the arm just below the triceps, above the elbow.

b) To stabilize the front sight of the rifle, the forward hand, wrist, and forearm should be straight with the wrist locked in place; the hand is rotated up so the rifle rests in the "V" formed by the thumb and index finger; the fingers will not curl around the handguards. Instead, they will pinch the handguard slightly to keep the hand from slipping on the handguard during recoil.

(1) When the forward hand's wrist is straight and locked, it creates resistance on the sling close to the muzzle because the sling is in contact with the back or side of the wrist or on the arm near the wrist. This resistance allows the front sight to be stabilized.

(2) In contrast, when the rifle rests across the palm of the hand, the only resistance created is where the sling meets the triceps. Since the resistance is further from the muzzle of the rifle, it makes stabilizing the front sight more difficult.

3) Three-point Sling. In all positions it is desirable that the handguard of the rifle rest in the "V" formed by the thumb and index finger of the left hand. The



left wrist is straight with the rifle resting across the heel of the hand. The fingers can curl against the handguard, but should apply only the minimum amount of pressure to prevent the hand from slipping on the handguard.

b. Rifle Butt in the Pocket of the Shoulder. Place the rifle butt firmly into the pocket formed in the right shoulder. This reduces the effect of recoil, helps steady the rifle, and prevents the rifle butt from slipping in the shoulder during firing. Consistent placement of the rifle butt in the shoulder pocket is essential to firing tight shot groups and maintaining a battlesight zero (BZO).

1) Loop Sling. With the loop sling donned, the toe of the rifle butt is placed in the pocket of the shoulder. Therefore, the butt of the weapon is higher in the shoulder than with other sling configurations.

2) Hasty Sling and Three-point Sling. The butt of the rifle is placed in the pocket of the shoulder.

a) The body is squared to the target to provide a pocket for the butt of the weapon; squaring the body provides a better pocket in the shoulder in which to place the rifle butt.

b) The butt of the rifle should be placed high in the shoulder to achieve a proper stock weld. Placing the weapon high in the shoulder allows you to bring the stock up to your head, rather than lowering your head to the stock, which can degrade acquisition of a full field of view and reticule placement.

c. Grip of the Right Hand. Grasp the pistol grip with the right hand and place the forefinger on the trigger, with the thumb and remaining fingers wrapped around the pistol grip. Firm rearward pressure should be exerted to help keep the rifle butt firmly in the shoulder, reducing the effects of recoil. The trigger finger should be placed naturally on the trigger and care should be taken to ensure that the trigger finger can move independently without dragging on the side of the receiver. Proper placement of the right hand on the pistol grip allows the trigger to be moved straight to the rear without disturbing the full field of view.

d. Right Elbow. The right elbow should be positioned naturally to provide balance to the position and create a pocket in the shoulder for the rifle butt. If the elbow is correctly positioned, it helps to form the pocket in the right shoulder where the rifle butt rests. The exact placement of the elbow varies with each shooting position but should remain consistent from shot to shot, ensuring the



resistance to recoil remains constant.

e. Stock Weld. Stock weld is the point of firm contact between your cheek and the stock of the rifle. Your head should be as erect as possible to enable the aiming eye to look straight through the ocular lens of the RCO. Depending on the type of mounting system used for the RCO, a shooter may not be able to place as much contact of the cheek on the stock as when firing with iron sights.

1) To properly establish stock weld a shooter should lower the bottom portion of the jaw to the meaty portion of the cheek until a full field of view is established through the optic. This may not be a familiar placement of the cheek, but must be maintained in order to ensure accurate and consistent shot placement.

a) Scope shadow is caused when improper stock weld is achieved, or improper eye relief. If concentration on achieving a full field of view is maintained throughout the aiming process then there should not be a presence of scope shadow.

b) If inconsistent scope shadow is present when the shot is fired, the error in shot placement will be increased as the distance to the target increases.

2) If the position of the shooter's head causes him to look across the bridge of his nose or out from under his eyebrow, the eye will be strained. The eye functions best in its natural forward position. Eye strain will produce involuntary eye movements which reduce the reliability of vision. This will affect your shooting performance.

3) Changing the placement of your cheek up or down on the stock from shot to shot may affect shot placement and the battlesight zero (BZO) on the rifle due to the error created in not establishing a full field of view or eliminating scope shadow. The placement of the shooter's cheek against the stock should remain firm and consistent from shot to shot. Consistency of stock weld is achieved through proper placement of the rifle butt in the pocket of the shoulder. A firm contact between the cheek and the stock enables the head and rifle to recoil as a single unit. This provides quick recovery between rapid fire shots, keeps the aiming eye centered in the rear ocular, and prevents the head from bouncing off the stock during recoil.

4) Optimal eye relief is 1.5 inches from the rear ocular. Every shooter is different. The distance



between the aiming eye and the rear ocular will ultimately depend on how long the shooter's neck is and the position of the rifle stock in his shoulder. Every effort should be made to accommodate the 1.5 inches of relief. The ability to move the RCO on the rail system can help accommodate the optimal eye relief of 1.5 inches the RCO shouldn't be forward of the 4th recoil lug on the upper receiver. The shooter should annotate where he mounts the RCO on the rail and be consistent with its placement.

Confirm by questions.

OPPORTUNITY FOR QUESTIONS:

(1 MIN)

1. Respond to questions from class.
2. Prompt students with questions to the class.
 - a. QUESTION: What are the five factors common to all shooting positions?

ANSWER: Forward hand; rifle butt in the pocket of the shoulder; grip; right elbow; stock weld.

- b. QUESTION: Why is the rifle sling important to the shooter?

ANSWER: It provides added stability and maximum control of the rifle when firing.

- c. QUESTION: What are the three elements of a good shooting position when firing with a loop sling?

ANSWER: Bone support, muscular relaxation, and natural point of aim.

- d. QUESTION: What does bone support provide the shooter?

ANSWER: Bone support helps reduce the effect of recoil, prevents muscle fatigue, and allows muscular relaxation.

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE: Ask Marines as many questions as necessary to ensure they fully understand the material presented in this lesson.

SUMMARY:

(1 MIN)



ART.07
20 Mar 08

The sling is an important tool in firing consistently and accurately because it provides stability and control of the rifle during firing. Understanding the elements of a good shooting position and the factors common to all shooting positions will help obtain the best results when employing the sling with any rifle firing position. The ability to understand and apply these basic firing techniques is essential to ensuring consistent and accurate target engagement.