

Chapter 16: Marksmen and Snipers

This page is a section of TC 7-100.2 Opposing Force Tactics.

The OPFOR recognizes both marksmen and snipers as significant combat multipliers at the tactical level. It also realizes that their successes (especially those of snipers) may have an impact at the operational and strategic levels as well. Marksmen and snipers each fill a unique niche and are an integral part of virtually all OPFOR tactical actions. This chapter primarily addresses the use of marksmen and snipers subordinate to an OPFOR regular military force, since that is the focus of this TC.

Similarities and Differences

Some of the missions of marksmen and snipers may overlap, but their roles and impact (psychological and physical) on the battlefield are different. (See Missions under Marksmen and Snipers below.) While the marksman operates as part of the unit, snipers often operate autonomously, either individually or as part of a sniper team. The proper use on the battlefield of both marksmen and snipers often causes the enemy to modify his tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and/or to operate in a more tentative fashion.

Note. Marksmen and snipers assigned to regular OPFOR units share few similarities with what are commonly referred to as "irregular force snipers," but there are many differences. (See Differences between OPFOR Regular Military Snipers and Irregular Force Snipers, below.)

Marksmen

A marksman is normally a skilled rifleman assigned to and providing direct support to a military organization's usually in infantry squad. Using his assigned, specially prepared (usually scoped) weapon, he engages and dispatches targets at a greater distance than the infantry rifleman.

The terms marksman, designated marksman, and sharpshooter are generally interchangeable. While some of their missions may overlap those of a sniper, these shooters are completely different from a military sniper. (See the Snipers portion of this chapter.)

Mission

The mission of the OPFOR marksman is similar to that of marksmen in armies around the world. He provides accurate, precision fire support to his assigned unit, thereby extending the lethality of the unit. This includes firing, maneuvering, and providing support for the other members of his unit. He may also provide precision fires as a member of a hunter-killer team. The marksmen also provide

- Overwatch.
- Covering fires.
- Unit security and sniper watch.

They can also assist in the control of key terrain. However, whenever a marksman is not performing marksman or security duties, he serves as a rifleman assigned to the squad.

Marksmen work at closer ranges than snipers and are required to place several aimed shots in a short period of time, usually at multiple fleeting targets. Marksmen usually engage targets, using a scoped 7.62-mm rifle, in the gap between those engaged by OPFOR soldiers (up to 300 m) and trained snipers (500 m and beyond).

Many of the marksman's targets may be 100 m or less in an urban or close environment. However, marksmen also easily engage enemy soldiers with precision fires out to 500 m and

area fires often well beyond that. Accuracy has increased with the common use, lower costs, and availability of laser rangefinders and scoped rifles. Quite often, talented OPFOR marksmen are selected for advanced training to become snipers.

Organization

Each OPFOR infantry squad (in an infantry, motorized infantry, or mechanized infantry company) has one marksman and one 7.62-mm sniper/marksmen rifle assigned. An infantry or motorized infantry company also has a weapons platoon with two sniper/marksmen rifles and two 12.7-mm/.50 cal antimateriel rifles assigned. Thus, an infantry or motorized infantry company has a total of 11 sniper/marksmen rifles and 2 antimateriel rifles. This gives an infantry or motorized infantry battalion a total of 33 sniper/marksmen rifles and 6 antimateriel rifles. Each mechanized infantry company has 9 sniper/marksmen rifles (1 per squad), and the weapons platoon of a mechanized infantry battalion has 3 antimateriel rifles, for a total of 27 sniper/marksmen rifles and 3 antimateriel rifles in the battalion. For additional information on OPFOR organizations and equipment, see FM 7-100.4.

OPFOR marksmen are not limited only to maneuver units. Many supporting units have their own marksmen. The marksmen in the supporting units are usually not infantrymen. They are merely assigned soldiers trained and equipped to be skilled marksmen. The OPFOR does not limit marksmen to males. It also trains women soldiers to serve as markswomen.

Equipment

Unlike other armies, which may use the smaller-caliber 5.45-mm (.215 cal.) or 5.56-mm (.223 cal.) rifle for the marksman, the OPFOR prefers the marksman's rifle be at least 7.62x54R-mm (.308 cal.). The 7.62x39-mm cartridge used in many assault rifles is a capable marksman cartridge at ranges 300 m and less, especially when the marksman is equipped with a scoped rifle. Often, however, in some of the support units, a 7.62x54R-mm rifle may not be available. In these cases, the marksman uses his or her assigned weapon. However, in the marksman role, the 7.62x54R-mm is a much more effective and capable round. It has significantly more penetration and has a greater effective range than the standard issue OPFOR tier-2 rifle (5.45-mm AK-74M) of the infantryman (less than 300 m). The 7.62x54R-mm round is available in a wide range of ammunition, some of which can penetrate lightly armored vehicles.

Note. The Russian 7.62x54R-mm rifle cartridge was developed in 1891. It has been in continuous active military service for over 120 years and longer than any other standard-issue cartridge. Ballistically similar to the 7.62x51-mm NATO round, it is still used in the PK series of machineguns and SVD sniper rifles. OPFOR marksmen generally use a mix of sniper, ball, and armor-penetrating ammunition. The marksman using a 7.62x54R-mm rifle provides the squad with an organic weapon capable of penetrating approximately 40 inches of pine at 200 m and 10 inches of cinder block at 100 m. Not many standard assault rifles possess either the range or penetration abilities of the 7.62-mm rifles of the marksman and/or sniper. For additional information on the capabilities of OPFOR marksman rifles and equipment, see the Worldwide Equipment Guide.

The OPFOR marksman carries all the equipment typically carried by a rifleman. The scoped marksman rifle is usually the marksman's only assigned weapon, although he can also be assigned an assault rifle. In addition to the typical infantry equipment, specific mission equipment may include, but is not limited to:

- 5.45-mm/7.62x39-mm scoped assault rifle.
- 7.62x54R-mm, 7.62x51-mm NATO (.308 cal.) scoped sniper rifle.
- Optical scope (of various types).
- Binoculars.
- Sound suppressor.

- Laser rangefinder.
- Night vision goggles.
- Night rifle scope.
- Laser pointer.

The OPFOR also completely understands the advantages of converting standard infantry weapons into precision weapons for a minimal cost outlay. Almost every rifle, automatic grenade launcher (AGL), or machinegun can mount a day or night scope, which has resulted in a proliferation of scopes on such weapons (especially vehicle-mounted machineguns). A machinegun has a heavier barrel and sturdier mount (bipod, tripod, or pintle) than a rifle. When combined with a mounted scope (and a laser rangefinder), it makes the perfect platform for a skilled marksman. Sound suppression devices have also proliferated and assist in concealing the shooter's location by masking the direction of the sound.

Targets

Targets for marksmen may be predetermined by leaders prior to execution, depending on the mission. However, marksmen generally concentrate on engaging targets of opportunity such as

- Battlefield leaders (such as officers and NCOs).
- Key persons (such as communications personnel, couriers, reconnaissance, or small unit leaders).
- Very important persons.
- Medical personnel and religious leaders.
- Enemy crew-served weapons and crews.
- Equipment of crew-served weapons.
- Vehicle crewmen.
- Enemy bunkers, caves, and concealed positions.
- Enemy unit security.
- Possible landmines, roadside bombs, and improvised explosive devices.
- Enemy armored vehicles (causing them to button up and become more vulnerable to antiarmor weapons).
- Vulnerable areas of armored vehicles (such as periscopes, infrared and thermal sensors, or external fuel).
- Other materiel targets.

Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

A marksman can serve either as a member of his assigned unit or as a member of a task-organized hunter-killer (HK) team. The vast majority of the time the marksman supports his assigned unit. However, when fighting in complex terrain, the OPFOR prefers to use marksmen as part of HK teams.

Assigned Unit

As a member of his assigned unit, the OPFOR marksman employs those TTP that enable him to best support his unit with precision fires. This usually places him in the best position to provide those covering or precision fires. While the marksman may be temporarily separated from his squad as he maneuvers for the location with the best field of fire and/or cover, he is never very far from his unit. He accompanies his unit whenever and wherever it goes.

Hunter-Killer Team

While snipers can also be used to provide precision fires, the marksman is the preferred choice for manning HK teams. HK teams are task-organized using infantry platoons or companies

(regular or irregular) as the base organization. The HK team structure is extremely lethal, especially against armored vehicles, and is ideal for dispersed combat such as fighting in urban areas and other complex terrain.

When fighting an armored unit in complex terrain such as urban areas, forests, and jungles, the OPFOR commander forms infantry antiarmor HK teams controlled by an infantry company or platoon or group. An infantry company can form as many as three of these infantry antiarmor groups or platoons. Each group or platoon consists of six or seven infantry antiarmor HK teams. Each team is generally composed of four or more personnel, which can include

- A marksman (with scoped rifle) and machinegunner. These pin down the supporting infantry allowing the antiarmor gunner to engage the armored vehicle.
- An antiarmor gunner armed with a shoulder-fired antitank or antiarmor weapon. The task of this gunner is to immobilize or destroy the armored vehicle. (Weapons with reduced back blast will be used if firing from confined spaces such as a room or sewer.)
- An RPO-A gunner. The RPO-A is a shoulder-fired thermobaric weapon that is especially effective in neutralizing enemy troops that have escaped into, or occupied, buildings, sewers, bunkers, or other enclosed areas.
- Additional personnel may serve as ammunition bearers, security, and assistant gunners. Each team member is equipped with a handheld, very-low-power radio for communicating within the team and one level up.

Note. Often referred to as a pocket artillery, the RPO-A provides the HK team and infantry squad organic firepower equal to that of an 122-mm high-explosive artillery shell. (See the Worldwide Equipment Guide.) Often four or five of these teams work together in a pack to attack a single armored vehicle. In some cases, the HK team may be composed of only three members: the marksman, the machinegunner, and the antiarmor gunner.

Depending on the target, antimateriel weapons and/or AGLs may be used to disable or destroy the vehicles. Some AGL fire can penetrate lightly armored vehicles. All AGLs can be used to button up the vehicles, destroy any external optics and electronics, and kill enemy soldiers exiting the vehicles. For additional information on the organization of the HK team, see FM 7-100.4.

Snipers

Technology and information have elevated the potential of OPFOR snipers' tactical capabilities to have strategic effects. This influence may be magnified by an effective information warfare (INFOWAR) campaign. The mere presence of a sniper can also have a tremendous psychological effect on enemy forces, instilling fear and demoralizing the enemy as well as influencing his decisions and actions, especially at the tactical level.

The skills and abilities of the snipers set them apart from the marksmen. OPFOR snipers have all received centralized advanced marksmanship training (precision long-range fires). They are also intensively trained to master field craft, stalking, stealth, concealment, infiltration, and exfiltration. These skills, while handy, are not necessarily required for marksmen. All OPFOR snipers may or may not be in uniform depending on the presence (and physical similarity) of supporting local population, the mission, and other factors.

While the marksman is employed as part of his unit, the sniper may operate autonomously either individually or as part of a sniper team. Although the action of the sniper is a tactical task, the result may easily have operational and/or strategic impact. In fact, the OPFOR may design some sniper missions specifically for the operational and/or strategic effect.

The OPFOR is aware of the lethality that snipers bring to the battlefield. It is also aware of the emphasis placed on snipers by foreign armies, some of which have several sniper squads assigned to each maneuver battalion. The OPFOR does not limit snipers to males only; women can also serve as snipers.

Note. In World War II, the Soviet Army had over 100,000 snipers, the top 20 of whom accounted for over 7,400 confirmed kills. In 1943, it had over 2,000 women snipers 1,000 of whom accounted for over 12,000 confirmed kills.

Mission

The OPFOR sniper's primary combat mission is to deliver precision long-range fires. Effective long-range sniper fire can

- Create casualties.
- Impede movement.
- Instill fear.
- Influence enemy decisions, actions, and TTP.
- Lower morale.
- Damage or destroy materiel.
- Disrupt enemy tempo.

In contrast to automatic weapons and indirect fire support, the sniper is especially effective in avoiding collateral damage due to the proximity of civilians.

The missions of the sniper are as varied as the terrain and conditions in which he operates and are not unique to the OPFOR. Generally, the missions are to conduct long-range, precision fires to produce casualties and damage materiel (attrition). Below are several typical examples of specific sniper missions:

- Conduct countersniper actions.
- Provide security.
- Support checkpoints and roadblocks.
- Cover avenues of approach.
- Support reconnaissance and/or counterreconnaissance (eliminate enemy observers and reconnaissance).
- Provide overwatch.
- Target medical personnel and religious or political leaders.
- Target materiel (see Antimateriel Role below).
- Serve as forward observer, controller, or laser designator for precision-guided munitions.
- Provide blocking or screening.
- Support or conduct raids, ambushes, or patrols.
- Support other offensive and defensive operations.
- Support INFOWAR (see Role in Information Warfare below).

See Targets below.

Organization

Each OPFOR infantry squad in an infantry company (of a motorized infantry battalion) or mechanized infantry company has one sniper (or marksman) with a 7.62-mm sniper rifle. Each infantry company (in a motorized infantry battalion) has a sniper section in its weapons platoon. That sniper section has two snipers, each with both a 7.62-mm sniper rifle or a .50 cal (or 12.7-mm) antimateriel rifle available. However, the sniper carries only one of these weapons, depending on the mission, and the other rifle remains behind with the vehicle or headquarters element. A mechanized infantry company has a weapons platoon, in which each of three weapons squads has one antimateriel sniper with an antimateriel rifle (and a 5.45-mm carbine as an alternate weapon).

A motorized infantry battalion has no weapons platoon and, therefore, no snipers or sniper weapons above company level. Each OPFOR mechanized infantry battalion has three antimateriel rifles in the weapons platoon for use by snipers. The snipers at battalion level can also choose to use the smaller 7.62-mm sniper rifle. The OPFOR routinely creates task

organizations that include sniper teams or sniper units.

OPFOR motorized and mechanized infantry brigades have a sniper platoon with 12 snipers assigned, divided into 3 squads. Each sniper has both a 7.62-mm sniper rifle and an antimateriel rifle available. However, the sniper carries only one of these weapons, depending on the mission, and the other rifle remains behind with the vehicle or headquarters element. The sniper squad typically consists of four 2-person sniper teams. The squad leader serves as the team leader of one sniper team. Each sniper team consists of a team leader/observer (spotter) and a sniper (shooter)/target designator. The duties of spotting and shooting are interchangeable between the two team members. Two teams share a vehicle when necessary.

All OPFOR mechanized and motorized infantry divisions have an organic sniper company composed of 36 snipers. Each sniper at division level has both a 7-62-mm sniper rifle and an antimateriel rifle available. For additional information see FM 7-100.4.

Single Sniper

A skilled, experienced sniper is basically a lone hunter who fires one shot from distance (with suppressor) and disappears either into the local population or into the environment. For example, the lone sniper may cache his weapon and hide in a spider hole for a day or more, prior to exfiltrating, or he may hide his weapon and rejoin a band of other shepherds or goat herders. It is often crucial for the single sniper to wear civilian clothing and blend in with the local population.

The single sniper also serves as the spotter and is responsible for his/her own security. Even the lone sniper may have a large psychological impact.

Sniper Teams

There is no set number or organization of OPFOR sniper teams. The composition of the OPFOR sniper team can vary greatly, as can sniper operations. The OPFOR organizes and equips each team depending on the situation, conditions, and mission. The size of team (number of snipers) also determines its TTP.

Individual snipers or multiple-person teams can support offensive or defensive actions and/or conduct independent operations. Separate sniper teams (observer and shooter) often work together. They may support each other or may even share the same target(s). Depending on the mission, numerous sniper teams may converge on an area.

Multiple-member teams may act as a single unit or break out into two or more mutually supporting subelements. As a single unit, the multiple-member team can provide security or early warning, or serve as spotter, recorder, and sniper. As multi-action subelements, the team may split into two or more shooters. This provides multiple fields of fire on the intended target(s) and increases the snipers' chances of success.

In some cases, if the OPFOR feels it has proper situational awareness and combat superiority, the sniper unit may have enough combat power to become decisively engaged. This could be the case when supporting a larger OPFOR offensive or defensive action. In other cases, the element will conduct a phased withdrawal using bounds within the support subelement to provide cover for the actual sniper.

Two-Member Sniper Team

The typical OPFOR sniper team is a two-person team. Each team consists of a team leader/observer (spotter) and a sniper (shooter)/target designator. The duties are interchangeable, as both members are qualified snipers and spotters. One member shoots while the second member performs the functions of spotting, security, and recording the attack. For additional information,

see FM 7-100.4.

Three-Member Sniper Team

One member serves as the observer/spotter, one is the shooter/target designator, and the third provides security, transports equipment, and may be a driver. This team is similar to the two-member team above except that it provides 360-degree security and an extra man to carry ammunition, radios, water, and other items. The three-member team is more appropriate for longer-range (deeper) missions requiring infiltration and exfiltration, and/or longer duration.

Four-Member and Larger Sniper Team

One member serves as the sniper, one is the shooter/target designator, and two or more provide security and/or support and may serve as driver. Teams of four persons and above may be broken into two or more subelements. One of these subelements is the basic sniping element with observer and shooter, while the other personnel (or subelements) provide support and/or security.

Often the mission requires snipers to operate in environments where the expectation of close contact with the enemy is high and fleeting targets are the norm. On these missions, it is quite normal for some or all snipers to carry an assault rifle in addition to their sniper weapons. Often a member of larger teams will also be equipped with a light (5.45-mm) or medium (7.62-mm) machinegun to provide security to the team.

Equipment

Military capabilities and equipment have a large impact on sniper TTP. The equipment is selected to best fit the mission, conditions, and environment. For example, in some environments, targets may appear within 200 m. Therefore, the sniper may choose small arms versus a larger, difficult-to-conceal, sniper rifle as his weapon of choice or a semiautomatic rather than a bolt action rifle if the sniper expects multiple fleeting targets within a short distance. If precision fire at longer distance is required, then a sniper rifle would likely be preferred. If the target is materiel, generally a more capable, larger-caliber weapon will be selected. Optics, night vision sights, and laser rangefinders are sniper enablers and, while not required, are available to the OPFOR sniper, greatly enhancing his effectiveness. Generally, the OPFOR sniper carries either a 7.62-mm or .50 cal. sniper rifle depending on the mission. The other rifle remains behind with the tactical utility vehicle (TUV) or headquarters element. Two teams share a TUV, when the unit is so equipped.

The OPFOR sniper-specific mission equipment may include, but is not limited to:

- 7.62x54R-mm or 7.62x51-mm NATO (.308 cal.) sniper rifle.
- 8.58-mm (.338 cal.) (or larger) sniper rifle.
- .50 cal./12.7-mm antimateriel rifle.
- Assault rifle (for missions in complex terrain).
- Light or medium machineguns (for missions in complex terrain).
- Detachable sound suppressor.
- Under-barrel grenade launcher.
- Optical (or electro-optical) scope (of various types).
- Bullet drop compensator integrated into scope.
- Binoculars (possibly digital with transmission capability).
- Digital camera (possibly digital with transmission capability).
- Ballistic computer.
- Day/night observation scope (60X).
- Handheld GPS receiver.
- Laser rangefinder.
- Laser target designator.

- Night vision goggles.
- Handheld thermal viewer.
- Night rifle scope (image intensifier or thermal imager).
- Laser pointer.
- Tactical periscope.
- Ghillie suits and/or other special camouflage items.
- Manpack, low-power radio or other tactical radios.
- Satellite radio/telephone.
- Organic or provided transportation.
- Hide material and equipment.

Some of this equipment may not be carried on all missions.

Targets

The mission of the sniper generally defines the target set available to the sniper. Since the types of missions the sniper supports are virtually limitless, so therefore are the targets the sniper can engage. The sniper can engage all of the targets listed in the Marksmen portion of this chapter, above, and all of the targets listed in the Antimateriel Role portion, below.

When engaging very high-value targets, the OPFOR may assign several snipers or sniper teams the mission of eliminating a single target. In order to ensure the highest probability of hit and subsequent kill, all snipers fire at the target simultaneously. The teams all fire on command, at a prearranged signal (such as from a laser pointer). Simultaneous firing is extremely difficult to achieve under tactical conditions. Due to the level of planning, coordination, and integration required, only the very best snipers and sniper teams can attain this level of proficiency.

Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

The TTP used by the OPFOR sniper are not unique to the OPFOR. However, the OPFOR may not be hindered by traditional values and laws of warfare. For example, the OPFOR sniper has no problem using civilian noncombatants as shields or lookouts. While the OPFOR sniper exploits successful, time-proven TTP, he/she will use whatever TTP provides the best chance of mission success and survival.

Snipers in Urban Areas and Other Complex Terrain

Snipers are extremely effective in complex terrain, the nature of which provides cover and concealment to the sniperâ ingress; surveillance and/or firing position; and egress. Urban structures reverberate sound. When combined with the everyday noise of urban activity, these structures can mask rifle sounds. This benefits the sniper by adding a degree of difficulty to the enemy in determining the true direction of fire and/or identifying the sniperâ firing position.

Complex terrain also enables the sniper to move undetected and establish surveillance and/or firing positions relatively close to his intended kill zone. Therefore, urban settings and other complex terrain may allow for shots of 200 m or less.

Most sniper rifles are designed to engage at a distance. Therefore, missions in complex terrain often require weapons better designed to compensate for conditions unique to close combat. This is usually in the form of the sniper carrying an assault rifle and possibly a machinegun assigned to the sniper team. (For additional information see Four-Member and Larger Sniper Team, above.)

Snipers in Open Terrain and Rural Areas

In contrast to urban settings, rural settings may lack man-made structures but provide natural settings that afford cover and concealment. Distance by itself may provide sufficient

concealment, since the sniper can fire much farther than the average enemy soldier can discriminate a concealed sniper. Rural areas may dictate greater distance between the shooter and his target, thus requiring shots at ranges greater than 500 m. However, the snipers' long-range precision fire can engage targets at a distance, and their advanced optics can easily discriminate individuals or point targets.

Open and rural areas may also dictate a greater distance the sniper must travel to obtain an optimum surveillance and/or firing position. These conditions require that snipers have a higher level of proficiency in using stealth in moving, communicating, conducting surveillance, and placing precision fire on the intended target.

Note. During combat against the Russian Army, Chechen snipers in rural areas usually operated in conjunction with a four- to six-person support (overwatch) element armed with assault rifles. The sniper would fire one or two shots at the Russians from about 1,000 m and then change firing positions. The support element usually positioned itself approximately 500 m behind the sniper. Should the Russian soldiers either fire at or advance toward the sniper, the support element would open fire to draw their fire. This allowed the higher-value sniper to escape. The well-equipped Chechens snipers generally did not deploy without a support element of four to six guerrillas.

Exfiltration

The OPFOR expends significant capital on training and fielding effective and efficient snipers and sniper teams. Therefore the OPFOR expects to use its snipers for numerous missions, not just one time. While the OPFOR may decide to sacrifice a sniper and/or team for a very high-value target, this is not normally the case. OPFOR planners put as much time and resources into exfiltrating and extracting the sniper and team as they do in the initial planning, infiltration, and execution of the mission. Snipers, having a vested interest, go into extreme detail and countermeasures to ensure their survival and subsequent extraction.

Antimateriel Role

The OPFOR views the antimateriel role from several perspectives. The term antimateriel can refer to a target, a mission, or a specific category of weapons or rifles. Generally, there is no difference between how an OPFOR sniper or marksman targets materiel or personnel. The same TTP and the same caliber and type of rifle may be used for both missions, depending on the nature of the target, range, and other factors.

Generally, however, the weapon used in the antimateriel role is more capable and larger caliber with greater penetration, and often with a greater range. Some of the antimateriel rifles can damage or destroy targets at ranges in excess of 2,000 m.

Mission

The mission of the sniper engaged in the antimateriel role is to destroy, damage, and/or attrit enemy materiel. Examples of types of materiel targets may be found below. Antimateriel rifles (and associated missions) are integral to any modern battlefield. Due to their low price, easy availability, and capability as a combat multiplier, they are proliferating very rapidly in most armies worldwide, modern and otherwise. Although not snipers, marksmen will also engage materiel targets of opportunity as they are presented.

All OPFOR snipers have antimateriel rifles available for use as the mission dictates. Typical missions involving use of antimateriel rifles would be:

- An ambush on a lightly armored column.
- A raid on a command and control (C2) facility.
- An attack on critical equipment.

Organization

The OPFOR does not have dedicated antimateriel sniper organizations. However, if needed, commanders could task-organize (and equip) their existing snipers for the mission. Team configuration is the same as for the standard sniper. See Organization in the Sniper portion of this chapter, above, for details. For additional information see FM 7-100.4.

Equipment

The sniper with an antimateriel mission has the same equipment as for a standard mission. The primary difference may be in the weapon selection, determined by mission, availability, and conditions. Antimateriel rifles may be single-shot, bolt action, or semiautomatic. Calibers range from 5.45-mm (with limited antimateriel capability) to 20-mm (in limited numbers). The most prevalent caliber for antimateriel rifles is .50 cal./12.7-mm. Some example typical calibers used in the antimateriel role areâ€

- 7.62-mm (.308 cal.).
- 8.58-mm (.338 cal.).
- 12.7-mm (.50 cal.).
- 14.5-mm to 20-mm.

Although the larger-caliber rifles (12.7-mm and above) may also be categorized as sniper rifles, they are generally employed as antimateriel rifles. Armor-piercing and incendiary ammunition or specialty ammunition is generally used in the antimateriel role. For additional information on the capabilities (ammunition, penetration, and ranges) of antimateriel weapons, see the Worldwide Equipment Guide.

Targets

The sniper is the soldier that services the antimateriel mission and engages the enemy materiel. Although the OPFOR may use larger-caliber weapons (12.7-mm and above) against personnel, their primary use is against materiel. The OPFOR has no set target list for these weapons. The range of targets the OPFOR will engage with these weapons is unlimited. The following are some typical antimateriel targets:

- Lightly armored vehicles.
- Fixed-wing aircraft (ground or taxiing).
- Rotary-wing aircraft (ground, taxiing, hovering, or in flight).
- Radars.
- C2 assets.
- Unmanned aerial vehicle support systems (such as launch and control vehicles).
- Missiles (all types).
- POL storage facilities, flexible storage tanks, and vehicles.
- Transformers, generators, and other electrical systems.
- Water purification units.
- Other critical infrastructure.

Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

The TTP used by OPFOR snipers to engage enemy materiel targets are no different than the TTP used for engaging human targets. While the range, munitions, and equipment may be different, the basic TTP remain. Some TTP may have to be modified, however, due to the heavier weight of antimateriel weapons and ammunition and other factors.

Role in Information Warfare

The OPFOR realizes that the nature of sniping carries a significant (and very personal) terror

(psychological) element. Single acts of sniping (other than the elimination of key military, national, or religious leaders) rarely have a widespread psychological impact. However, cumulative attacks, especially over time, may have an extensive psychological impact. This impact can cascade to several levels and ranges fromâ

- Influencing individual behaviors (such as instilling fear and creating a tentative soldier),
- To a tactical influence (modifying enemy TTP),
- To completely demoralizing the enemy,
- To affecting civilian support of a cause.

Modifying Individual and Group Behaviors

The goal of using precision sniper fires as a tool of OPFOR INFOWAR is to influence both military and civilian populations. While the methods used to affect both groups may differ in application, they still depend on the manipulation and exploitation of human behaviors.

Military

Precision sniper fire instills fear and creates a tentative soldier. Some individual soldiers may be terrorized to the point they are combat ineffective, may be a casualty, and must be withdrawn from the fight. Sniper fire may also cause entire units to modify their TTP.

Civilian Population

The terror generated by sniper fires demonstrates and reinforces OPFOR dominance. Targeting the local population leads the population to believe the OPFORâ enemy cannot protect them and is not the dominant force in the region. The same applies when a sniper fires a single round and the locals see all the enemy soldiers scramble right and left.

Dissemination of Mission Results

The OPFOR plans precision sniper fires to support the INFOWAR plan, and disseminates the results of such fires in accordance with that plan. Usually an OPFOR combat photographer or videographer records the successful sniper event and then passes the data (usually digital) either through the battalion intelligence officer or through OPFOR INFOWAR channels. The information will be screened, analyzed, processed, and then disseminated by the INFOWAR personnel in accordance with the plan. The results of the incident may be disseminated via a sympathetic media provider or other means. The single act of a sniper may easily reach an international audience within hours of his making the shot.

Differences Between Regular Military Snipers and Irregular Force Snipers

Snipers at all levels rely on a system to support and sustain operations. To one degree or another, logistics (including weapons, ammunition, and sights), intelligence, and an INFOWAR capability (such as camera, video, and media) are all facets of the sniper system. These sniper support and sustainment functions also emphasize a number of differences between the regular military sniper and irregular force sniper. Table 16-1 contains several points of comparison illustrating the differences between the two. For additional information on OPFOR insurgent and other irregular force snipers, see other parts of the TC 7-100 series.

Table 16.1. Differences between regular military snipers and irregular force snipers

Regular Military Sniper	Points of Comparison	Irregular Force Sniper
Ability and skill high. Field craft, long-range marksmanship, stalking, stealth, concealment, and infiltration/exfiltration high.	Ability and Skill Level (Includes	Low to high. Limited (but some) field craft. May be limited by equipment. Initially, skill levels may vary widely but will improve with experience.

	Discipline)	
Tier 1 with niche technology. The trend among modern armies is to more capable weapons (range and accuracy) and more 12.7-mm antimateriel rifles in addition to 7.62-mm sniper rifles.	Equipment	Varies tier 1 to 4. Generally limited to what is available. Trend is to more sophisticated and capable sniper systems and support systems. Increasing numbers of 12.7-mm antimateriel rifles and systems.
600 to 1,000 m with 7.62-mm rifles and well beyond (out to 2,000 + m) with 12.7-mm rifles.	Effective Range	Most capable of neck and/or head shots out to 300+ m. A few may be effective out to 800 to 1000 m (beyond with 12.7-mm) depending on training and equipment.
Professional occupation. Highly trained in marksmanship, countersniper, field craft, stalking, infiltration/exfiltration, stealth, concealment, communications, and targeting.	Training	Varies from none to formal sniper training provided in another country.
Selected from existing force. Elite shooters recruited from trained troops, usually from the pool of designated marksmen.	Selection and Recruiting	Persons with previous military or sniper experience and/or hunters preferred.
Same as other regular military.	Sustainment/ Logistics	Usually reliant on external funding and the local population. This link is vulnerable.
Same as other regular military.	Media Manipulation	Major tool. Often primary reason for attack.
Standard military sniper targets (see above) and targeting.	Targeting and Reconnaissance	Population assists in target identification. Not restricted by laws on whom they target.
Desired but not critical.	Local Support	Critical. May receive food, concealment, targeting information, transportation, and other support.
Same as other regular military.	Incentive	Varies (such as money, religious, cultural, ethnic, or revenge).
Same as other regular military.	Finance	Critical, vulnerable.
Same as other regular military.	Life Cycle Vulnerability	Extremely vulnerable.
From individual sniper to a sniper team of 4 or more (see Organization under Snipers, above.)	Team Composition	Individual or team of 2 to 4 (shooter, driver/ spotter/ security, support, video, possibly cell leader/trainer) or more. (Leader/trainer is usually an experienced sniper.)
May or may not be restricted by laws of ground warfare. Proliferating into organizational structure of most modern armies.	Other	Ability to blend in with the population (usually because part of the population). Not restricted by laws of warfare. Cost-effective combat multiplier.
Notes: 1. Snipers in guerrilla units are usually much more skilled than insurgent snipers but may not be as proficient as those in regular military units. 2. For equipment tiers, see the Worldwide Equipment Guide.		