

**HEADQUARTERS FM 3-23.35**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

# **COMBAT TRAINING WITH PISTOLS, M9 AND M11**

**JUNE 2003**

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**Note:** This book contains the material found in the Chapters and Sections of the original document. The index was reformatted, and links to the Chapters and Sections were added. Minor formatting changes were made as needed, and the font face "arial" was used to enhance readability on LCD screens.

## **PREFACE**

This manual provides guidance on the operation and marksmanship of the M9, 9-mm pistol, and the M11, 9-mm pistol. It reflects current army standards in weapons qualifications. It is a guide for the instructor to develop training programs, plans, and lessons that meet the objectives of the US Army marksmanship program for developing combat effective marksmen. The soldier develops confidence, knowledge, and skills by following the guidelines in this manual.

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns used in this manual refer to both men and women.

Below are links to the Chapters and Sections in the manual. They are followed by a duplicate set of links plus a listing of the contents of the Chapters and Sections.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

## **COMPONENTS AND FUNCTIONING**

*This chapter describes the M9 and M11 semiautomatic pistols, their maintenance requirements, and their operation and functioning.*

## **Section I. DESCRIPTION AND COMPONENTS**

The M9 (Figure 1-1) and M11 (Figure 1-2) pistols are 9-mm, semiautomatic, magazinefed, recoil-operation, double-action weapons chambered for the 9-mm cartridge.



**Figure 1-1. 9-mm pistol, M9.**



**Figure 1-2. 9-mm pistol, M11.**

### **1-1. DESCRIPTION**

Summaries of equipment data for both pistols.

#### **M9 PISTOL**

Caliber....9-mm NATO

System of Operation....Short recoil, semiautomatic

Locking System....Oscillating block

Length....217 mm (8.54 inches)

Width....38 mm (1.5 inches)

Height....140 mm (5.51 inches)

**Magazine Capacity....15 Rounds**

Weight with Empty Magazine....960 grams (2.1 pounds)

Weight with 15-Round Magazine....1,145 grams (2.6 pounds)

Barrel Length....125 mm (4.92 inches)

Rifling....Right-hand, six-groove (pitch 250 mm [9.84 inches])

Muzzle Velocity....375 meters per second (1,230.3 feet per second)

Muzzle Energy....569.5 Newton meters (430 foot pounds)  
Maximum Range....1,800 meters (1,962.2 yards)  
Maximum Effective Range....50 meters (54.7 yards)  
Front Sight....Blade, integral with slide  
Rear Sight....Notched bar, dovetailed to slide  
Sighting Radius....158 mm (6.22 inches)  
Safety Features....Decocking/safety lever, firing pin block.  
Hammer (half-cocked notch)....Prevents accidental discharge.  
Basic Load....45 rounds  
Trigger Pull....Single-action: 5.50 pounds  
Double-action: 12.33 pounds

## **M11 PISTOL**

Caliber....9-mm NATO  
System of Operation....Short recoil, semiautomatic  
Locking System....Oscillating block  
Length....180 mm (7.08 inches)  
Width....37 mm (1.46 inches)  
Height....136 mm (5.35 inches)  
**Magazine Capacity....13 Rounds**  
Weight with Empty Magazine....745 grams (26.1 oz)  
Weight with 15-Round Magazine....830 grams (29.1 oz.)  
Barrel Length....98mm (3.86 inches)  
Rifling....Right-hand, six-groove (pitch 250 mm [9.84 inches])  
Muzzle Velocity....375 meters per second (1,230.3 feet per second)  
Muzzle Energy....569.5 Newton meters (430 foot pounds)  
Maximum Range....1,800 meters (1,962.2 yards)  
Maximum Effective Range....50 meters (54.7 yards)  
Front Sight....Blade, integral with slide  
Rear Sight....Notched bar, dovetailed to slide  
Sighting Radius....158 mm (6.22 inches)  
Safety Features....Decocking/safety lever, firing pin block.  
Hammer (half-cocked notch)....Prevents accidental discharge.  
Basic Load....45 rounds  
Trigger Pull....Single-Action: 4.40 pounds  
Double-Action: 12.12 pounds

**NOTE:** For additional information on technical aspects of the M9 pistol, see TM 9-1005-317-10. For additional information on technical aspects of the M11 pistol, see TM 9-1005-325-10.

## **WARNING**

**The half-cocked position catches the hammer and prevents it from firing if the hammer is released while manually cocking the weapon. It is not to be used as a safety position. The pistol will fire from the half-cocked position if the trigger is pulled.**

## **1-2. COMPONENTS**

The major components of the M9 (Figure 1-3) and M11 (Figure 1-4) pistols are:

a. **Slide and Barrel Assembly:** Houses the firing pin, striker, and extractor. Cocks the hammer during recoil cycle.

- b. **Recoil Spring and Recoil Spring Guide:** Absorbs recoil and returns the slide assembly to its forward position.
- c. **Barrel and Locking Block Assembly:** Houses cartridge for firing, directs projectile, and locks barrel in position during firing.
- d. **Receiver:** Serves as a support for all the major components. Houses action of the pistol through four major components. Controls functioning of the pistol.
- e. **Magazine:** Holds cartridges in place for stripping and chambering.



**Figure 1-3. Major components, M9.**



**Figure 1-4. Major components, M11.**

### 1-3. AMMUNITION

M9 and M11 pistols use several different types of 9-mm ammunition. Soldiers should use only authorized ammunition that is manufactured to US and NATO specifications.

a. **Type and Characteristics.** The specific type ammunition (Figure 1-5) and its characteristics are as follows:

- (1) Cartridge, 9-mm ball, M882 with/without cannelure).
- (2) Cartridge, 9-mm dummy, M917.

## WARNING

Do not fire heavily corroded or dented cartridges, cartridges with loose bullets, or any other rounds detected as defective through visual inspection.

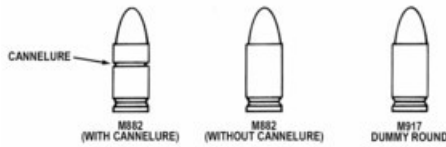


Figure 1-5. Ammunition.

### b. Care, Handling, and Preservation.

(1) Protect ammunition from mud, sand, and water. If the ammunition gets wet or dirty, wipe it off at once with a clean dry cloth. Wipe off light corrosion as soon as it is discovered. Turn in heavily corroded cartridges.

(2) Do not expose ammunition to the direct rays of the sun. If the powder is hot, excessive pressure may develop when the pistol is fired.

(3) Do not oil or grease ammunition. Dust and other abrasives that collect on greasy ammunition may cause damage to the operating parts of the pistol. Oiled cartridges produce excessive chamber pressure.

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## Section II. MAINTENANCE

Maintenance procedures include clearing, disassembling, inspecting, cleaning, lubricating, assembling, and checking the functioning of the M9 or M11 pistol.

### 1-4. CLEARING PROCEDURES

The first step in maintenance is to clear the weapon. This applies in all situations, not just after firing. Soldiers must always assume the weapon is loaded. To clear the pistol, perform the following procedures.

- a. Place the decocking/safety lever in the SAFE down position.
- b. Hold the pistol in the raised pistol position.
- c. Depress the magazine release button and remove the magazine from the pistol.
- d. Pull the slide to the rear and remove any chambered round.
- e. Push the slide stop up, locking the slide to the rear.
- f. Look into the chamber to ensure that it is empty.

### 1-5. GENERAL DISASSEMBLE

To disassemble the pistol, perform the following procedures.

- a. Depress the slide stop and let the slide go forward.
- b. Hold the pistol in the right hand with the muzzle slightly raised.

- c. Press the disassembly lever button with the forefinger.
- d. Rotate the disassembly lever downward until it stops.
- e. Pull the slide and barrel assembly forward and remove it from the receiver.
- f. Carefully and lightly compress the recoil spring and spring guide. At the same time, lift up and remove them.
- g. Separate the recoil spring from the spring guide.
- h. Push in on the locking block plunger while pushing the barrel forward slightly.
- i. Lift and remove the locking block and barrel assembly from the slide.

## **1-6. INSPECTION**

Inspection begins with the pistol disassembled in its major components. Shiny surfaces do not mean the parts are unserviceable. Inspect all surfaces for visible damage, cracks, burrs, and chips.

## **1-7. CLEANING, LUBRICATION, AND PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE**

The M9 or M11 pistol should be disassembled into its major components and cleaned immediately after firing. All metal components and surfaces that have been exposed to powder fouling should be cleaned using CLP on a bore-cleaning patch. The same procedure is used to clean the receiver. After it has been cleaned and wiped dry, a thin coat of CLP is applied by rubbing with a cloth. This lubricates and preserves the exposed metal parts during all normal temperature ranges. When not in use, the pistol should be inspected weekly and cleaned and lubricated when necessary.

**CAUTION** When using CLP, do not use any other type cleaner. Never mix CLP with RBC or LSA.

- a. Clear and disassemble the weapon.
- b. Wipe or brush dirt, dust, and carbon buildup from the disassembled pistol.
- c. Use CLP to help remove carbon buildup and stubborn dirt and grime.
- d. Pay particular attention to the bolt face, guide rails on the receiver, grooves on the slide, and other hard-to-reach areas.

**NOTE:** Do not use mineral spirits, paint thinner, or dry cleaning solvent to clean the pistol. Use only issued lubricants and cleaners, such as CLP or LSA.

- e. Clean the bore and chamber using CLP and fresh swabs.
- f. Lubricate the pistol by covering all surfaces including the bore and chamber with a light coat of CLP. In extremely hot or cold weather, refer to the technical manual for lubricating procedures and materials.

## **1-8. GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

To assemble the M9 or M11 pistol, simply reverse the procedures used to disassemble the pistol.

- a. Grasp the slide with the bottom facing up.
- b. With the other hand, grasp the barrel assembly with the locking block facing up.
- c. Insert the muzzle into the forward end of the slide and, at the same time, lower the rear of the barrel assembly by aligning the extractor cutout with the extractor.

**NOTE:** The locking block will fall into the locked position in the slide.

- d. Insert the recoil spring onto the recoil spring guide.

**CAUTION** Maintain spring tension until the spring guide is fully seated in the cutaway on the locking block.

e. Insert the end of the recoil spring and the recoil spring guide into the recoil spring housing. At the same time, compress the recoil spring guide until it is fully seated on the locking block cutaway.

**CAUTION** Do not pull the trigger while placing the slide on the receiver.

f. Ensure that the hammer is unlocked, the firing pin block is in the DOWN position, and the decocking/safety lever is in the SAFE position.

g. Grasp the slide and barrel assembly with the sights UP, and align the slide on the receiver assembly guide rails.

h. Push until the rear of the slide is a short distance beyond the rear of the receiver assembly and hold. At the same time, rotate the disassembly latch lever upward. A click indicates a positive lock.

## 1-9. FUNCTION CHECK

Always perform a function check after the pistol is reassembled to ensure it is working properly. To perform a function check:

a. Clear the pistol in accordance with the unloading procedures.

b. Depress the slide stop, letting the slide go forward.

c. Insert an empty magazine into the pistol.

d. Retract the slide fully and release it. The slide should lock to the rear.

e. Depress the magazine release button and remove the magazine.

f. Ensure the decocking/safety lever is in the SAFE position.

g. Depress the slide stop. When the slide goes forward, the hammer should fall to the forward position.

h. Squeeze and release the trigger. The firing pin block should move up and down and the hammer should not move.

i. Place the decocking/safety lever in the fire POSITION.

j. Squeeze the trigger to check double action. The hammer should cock and fall.

k. Squeeze the trigger again. Hold it to the rear. Manually retract and release the slide. Release the trigger. A click should be heard and the hammer should not fall.

l. Squeeze the trigger to check the single action. The hammer should fall.

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## Section III. OPERATION AND FUNCTION

This section provides detailed information on the functioning of M9 and M11 pistols.

### 1-10. OPERATION

With the weapon loaded and the hammer cocked, the shot is discharged by pulling the trigger.

a. Trigger movement is transmitted by the trigger bar, which draws the sear out of register with the full-cock hammer notch via the safety lever. With a slight timing lag, the safety lever also cams the safety lock upward to free the firing pin immediately before the hammer drops. The hammer forces the firing pin forward to strike and detonate the cartridge primer.

b. Blowback reaction generated by the exploding charge thrusts the locked barrel/slide system rearward against the recoil spring. After recoiling about 3 mm (1/8"), the barrel and slide unlock, allowing the barrel to tilt down into the locked position. The slide continues rearward until it abuts

against the receiver stop.

c. During slide recoil, the hammer is cocked; the spent case is extracted and ejected as it strikes the ejector. In the initial recoil phase, the safety lever and safety lock separate, automatically rendering the firing pin safety lock effective again. As recoil continues, the slide depresses the trigger bar, disconnecting it from the safety lever. Sear spring pressure returns the sear and safety lever to their initial positions.

d. After contacting the receiver stop, the slide is thrust forward by the compressed recoil spring, stripping a round from the magazine and chambering it on the way. Just before reaching the forward end position, the slide again locks up with the barrel. The complete system is then thrust fully into the forward battery position by recoil spring pressure. Releasing the trigger allows the trigger bar and safety lever to re-engage.

e. The weapon is now cocked and ready to fire. After firing the last shot, the slide is locked in the rearmost position by the slide catch lever. This catch is actuated positively by the magazine follower, which is raised by magazine spring pressure.

## **1-11. LOADING**

To load the pistol--

- Hold the pistol in the raised pistol position.
- Insert the magazine into the pistol.
- Pull the slide to the rear and release the slide to chamber a round.
- Push the decocking/safety lever to the SAFE position.

a. Always make sure the muzzle is pointing in a safe direction, with the finger off the trigger.

b. Never attempt to load or unload any firearm inside a vehicle, building, or other confined space (except a properly constructed shooting range or bullet trap). Enclosed areas frequently offer no completely safe direction in which to point the firearm; if an accidental discharge occurs, there is great risk of injury or property damage.

c. Before loading, always clean excess grease and oil from the bore and chamber, and ensure that no obstruction is in the barrel. Any foreign matter in the barrel could result in a bulged or burst barrel or other damage to the firearm and could cause serious injury to the shooter or to others.

## **1-12. UNLOADING AND CLEARING**

To unload and clear the pistol--

- Hold the pistol in the raised pistol position.
- Depress the magazine release button and remove the magazine.
- Pull the slide to the rear and lock it in its rearward position by pushing up on the slide stop.
- Point the pistol skyward and look into the chamber to ensure it is clear.
- Let the slide go forward and pull the trigger to release the spring tension.

- a. Perform this task in an area designated for this process.
- b. Keep your finger off the trigger, and always make sure the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction.
- c. Remember to clear the chamber after removing the magazine.
- d. Never assume that a pistol is unloaded until you have personally checked it both visually and physically.
- e. After every shooting practice, make a final check to be certain the firearm is unloaded before leaving the range.

### **1-13. CYCLE OF OPERATION**

Each time a cartridge is fired, the parts inside the weapon function in a given order. This is known as the functioning cycle or cycle of operation. The cycle of operation of the weapon is divided into eight steps: feeding, chambering, locking, firing, unlocking, extracting, ejecting, and cocking. The steps are listed in the order in which functioning occurs; however, more than one step may occur at the same time.

- a. A magazine containing ammunition is placed in the receiver. The slide is pulled fully to the rear and released. As the slide moves forward, it strips the top round from the magazine and pushes it into the chamber. The hammer remains in the cocked position, and the weapon is ready to fire.
- b. The weapon fires one round each time the trigger is pulled. Each time a cartridge is fired, the slide and barrel recoil or move a short distance locked together. This permits the bullet and expanding powder gases to escape from the muzzle before the unlocking is completed.
- c. The barrel then unlocks from the slide and continues to the rear, extracting the cartridge case from the chamber and ejecting it from the weapon. During this rearward movement, the magazine feeds another cartridge, the recoil spring is compressed, and the hammer is cocked.
- d. At the end of the rearward movement, the recoil spring expands, forcing the slide forward, locking the barrel and slide together. The weapon is ready to fire again. The same cycle of operation continues until the ammunition is expended.
- e. As the last round is fired, the magazine spring exerts upward pressure on the magazine follower. The stop on the follower strikes the slide stop, forcing it into the recess on the bottom of the slide and locking the slide to the rear. This action indicates that the magazine is empty and aids in faster reloading.

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### **Section IV. PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS**

Possible performance problems of M9 and M11 pistols are sluggish operation and stoppages. This section discusses immediate and remedial action to correct such problems.

**1-14. MALFUNCTIONS** The following malfunctions may occur to the M9 and M11 pistols. Take these corrective actions to correct any problems that may occur.

- a. **Sluggish Operation.** Sluggish operation is usually due to excessive friction caused by carbon build up, lack of lubrication, or burred parts. Corrective action includes cleaning, lubricating, inspecting, and replacing parts as necessary.

b. **Stoppages.** A stoppage is an interruption in the cycle of operation caused by faulty action of the pistol or faulty ammunition. Types of stoppages are:

- Failure to feed.
- Failure to chamber.
- Failure to lock.
- Failure to fire.
- Failure to unlock.
- Failure to extract.
- Failure to eject.
- Failure to cock.

### **1-15. IMMEDIATE ACTION**

Immediate action is the action taken to reduce a stoppage without looking for the cause. Immediate action is taken within 15 seconds of a stoppage.

- a. Ensure the decocking/safety lever is in the FIRE position.
- b. Squeeze the trigger again.
- c. If the pistol does not fire, ensure that the magazine is fully seated, retract the slide to the rear, and release.
- d. Squeeze the trigger.
- e. If the pistol again does not fire, remove the magazine and retract the slide to eject the chambered cartridge. Insert a new magazine, retract the slide, and release to chamber another cartridge.
- f. Squeeze the trigger.
- g. If the pistol still does not fire, perform remedial action.

### **1-16. REMEDIAL ACTION**

Remedial action is the action taken to reduce a stoppage by looking for the cause.

- a. Clear the pistol.
- b. Inspect the pistol for the cause of the stoppage.
- c. Correct the cause of the stoppage, load the pistol, and fire.
- d. If the pistol again fails to fire, disassemble it for closer inspection, cleaning, and lubrication.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **PISTOL MARKSMANSHIP TRAINING**

*Marksmanship training is divided into two phases: preparatory marksmanship training and range firing. Each phase may be divided into separate instructional steps. All marksmanship training must*

*be progressive. Combat marksmanship techniques should be practiced after the basics have been mastered.*

## **Section I. BASIC MARKSMANSHIP**

The main use of the pistol is to engage an enemy at close range with quick, accurate fire. Accurate shooting results from knowing and correctly applying the elements of marksmanship. The elements of combat pistol marksmanship are:

- Grip.
- Aiming.
- Breath control.
- Trigger squeeze.
- Target engagement.
- Positions.

### **2-1. GRIP**

A proper grip is one of the most important fundamentals of quick fire. The weapon must become an extension of the hand and arm; it should replace the finger in pointing at an object. The firer must apply a firm, uniform grip to the weapon.

a. **One-Hand Grip.** Hold the weapon in the nonfiring hand; form a V with the thumb and forefinger of the strong hand (firing hand). Place the weapon in the V with the front and rear sights in line with the firing arm. Wrap the lower three fingers around the pistol grip, putting equal pressure with all three fingers to the rear. Allow the thumb of the firing hand to rest alongside the weapon without pressure (Figure 2-1). Grip the weapon tightly until the hand begins to tremble; relax until the trembling stops. At this point, the necessary pressure for a proper grip has been applied. Place the trigger finger on the trigger between the tip and second joint so that it can be squeezed to the rear. The trigger finger must work independently of the remaining fingers.

**NOTE:** If any of the three fingers on the grip are relaxed, the grip must be reapplied.



**Figure 2-1. One-hand grip.**

b. **Two-Hand Grip.** The two-hand grip allows the firer to steady the firing hand and provide maximum support during firing. The nonfiring hand becomes a support mechanism for the firing

hand by wrapping the fingers of the nonfiring hand around the firing hand. Two-hand grips are recommended for all pistol firing.

**WARNING** Do not place the nonfiring thumb in the rear of the weapon. The recoil upon firing could result in personal injury.

(1) **Fist Grip.** Grip the weapon as with the one-hand grip. Firmly close the fingers of the nonfiring hand over the fingers of the firing hand, ensuring that the index finger from the nonfiring hand is between the middle finger of the firing hand and the trigger guard. Place the nonfiring thumb alongside the firing thumb (Figure 2-2).

**NOTE:** Depending upon the individual firer, he may chose to place the index finger of his nonfiring hand on the front of the trigger guard since M9 and M11 pistols have a recurved trigger guard designed for this purpose.



**Figure 2-2. Fist grip.**

(2) **Palm-Supported Grip.** This grip is commonly called the cup and saucer grip. Grip the firing hand as with the one-hand grip. Place the nonfiring hand under the firing hand, wrapping the nonfiring fingers around the back of the firing hand. Place the nonfiring thumb over the middle finger of the firing hand (Figure 2-3).



**Figure 2-3. Palm-supported grip.**

(3) **Weaver grip.** Apply this grip the same as the fist grip. The only exception is that the nonfiring thumb is wrapped over the firing thumb (Figure 2-4).



**Figure 2-4. Weaver grip.**

c. **Isometric Tension.** The firer raises his arms to a firing position and applies isometric tension. This is commonly known as the push-pull method for maintaining weapon stability. Isometric tension is when the firer applies forward pressure with the firing hand and pulls rearward with the nonfiring hand with equal pressure. This creates an isometric force but never so much to cause the firer to tremble. This steadies the weapon and reduces barrel rise from recoil. The supporting arm is bent with the elbow pulled downward. The firing arm is fully extended with the elbow and wrist locked. The firer must experiment to find the right amount of isometric tension to apply.

**NOTE:** The firing hand should exert the same pressure as the nonfiring hand. If it does not, a missed target could result.

d. **Natural Point of Aim.** The firer should check his grip for use of his natural point of aim. He grips the weapon and sights properly on a distant target. While maintaining his grip and stance, he closes his eyes for three to five seconds. He then opens his eyes and checks for proper sight picture. If the point of aim is disturbed, the firer adjusts his stance to compensate. If the sight alignment is disturbed, the firer adjusts his grip to compensate by removing the weapon from his hand and reapplying the grip. The firer repeats this process until the sight alignment and sight placement remain almost the same when he opens his eyes. With sufficient practice, this enables the firer to determine and use his natural point of aim, which is the most relaxed position for holding and firing the weapon.

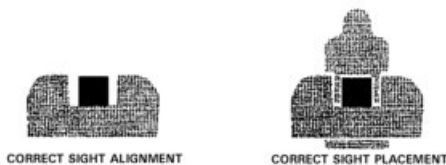
## **2-2. AIMING**

Aiming is sight alignment and sight placement (Figure 2-5).

a. Sight alignment is the centering of the front blade in the rear sight notch. The top of the front sight is level with the top of the rear sight and is in correct alignment with the eye. For correct sight alignment, the firer must center the front sight in the rear sight. He raises or lowers the top of the front sight so it is level with the top of the rear sight. Sight alignment is essential for accuracy because of the short sight radius of the pistol. For example, if a 1/10-inch error is made in aligning the front sight in the rear sight, the firer's bullet will miss the point of aim by about 15 inches at a range of 25 meters. The 1/10-inch error in sight alignment magnifies as the range increases--at 25 meters, it is magnified 150 times.

b. Sight placement is the positioning of the weapon's sights in relation to the target as seen by the firer when he aims the weapon (Figure 2-5). A correct sight picture consists of correct sight alignment with the front sight placed center mass of the target. The eye can focus on only one object at a time at different distances. Therefore, the last focus of the eye is always on the front sight. When the front sight is seen clearly, the rear sight and target will appear hazy. The firer can maintain correct sight alignment only through focusing on the front sight. His bullet will hit the target

even if the sight picture is partly off center but still remains on the target. Therefore, sight alignment is more important than sight placement. Since it is impossible to hold the weapon completely still, the firer must apply trigger squeeze and maintain correct sight alignment while the weapon is moving in and around the center of the target. This natural movement of the weapon is referred to as wobble area. The firer must strive to control the limits of the wobble area through proper grip, breath control, trigger squeeze, and positioning.

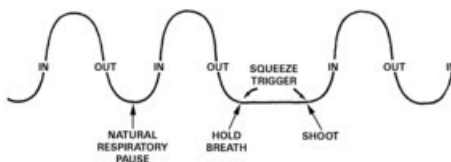


**Figure 2-5. Correct sight alignment and sight picture.**

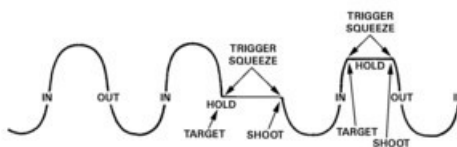
c. Focusing on the front sight while applying proper trigger squeeze will help the firer resist the urge to jerk the trigger and anticipate the moment the weapon will fire. Mastery of trigger squeeze and sight alignment requires practice. Trainers should use concurrent training stations or have fire ranges to enhance proficiency of marksmanship skills.

### 2-3. BREATH CONTROL

To attain accuracy, the firer must learn to hold his breath properly at any time during the breathing cycle. This must be done while aiming and squeezing the trigger. While the procedure is simple, it requires explanation, demonstration, and supervised practice. To hold his breath properly, the firer takes a breath, lets it out, then inhales normally, lets a little out until comfortable, holds, and then fires. It is difficult to maintain a steady position keeping the front sight at a precise aiming point while breathing. Therefore, the firer should be taught to inhale, then exhale normally, and hold his breath at the moment of the natural respiratory pause (Figure 2-6). Breath control, firing at a single target.) The shot must then be fired before he feels any discomfort from not breathing. When multiple targets are presented, the firer must learn to hold his breath at any part of the breathing cycle (Figure 2-7). Breath control must be practiced during dry-fire exercises until it becomes a natural part of the firing process.



**Figure 2-6. Breath control, firing at a single target.**



**Figure 2-7. Breath control, firing at timed or multiple targets.**

## 2-4. TRIGGER SQUEEZE

Improper trigger squeeze causes more misses than any other step of preparatory marksmanship. Poor shooting is caused by the aim being disturbed before the bullet leaves the barrel of the weapon. This is usually the result of the firer jerking the trigger or flinching. A slight off-center pressure of the trigger finger on the trigger can cause the weapon to move and disturb the firer's sight alignment. Flinching is an automatic human reflex caused by anticipating the recoil of the weapon. Jerking is an effort to fire the weapon at the precise time the sights align with the target. For more on problems in target engagement, see paragraph 2-5.

a. Trigger squeeze is the independent movement of the trigger finger in applying increasing pressure on the trigger straight to the rear, without disturbing the sight alignment until the weapon fires. The trigger slack, or free play, is taken up first, and the squeeze is continued steadily until the hammer falls. If the trigger is squeezed properly, the firer will not know exactly when the hammer will fall; thus, he will not tend to flinch or heel, resulting in a bad shot. Novice firers must be trained to overcome the urge to anticipate recoil. Proper application of the fundamentals will lower this tendency.

b. To apply correct trigger squeeze, the trigger finger should contact the trigger between the tip of the finger and the second joint (without touching the weapon anywhere else). Where contact is made depends on the length of the firer's trigger finger. If pressure from the trigger finger is applied to the right side of the trigger or weapon, the strike of the bullet will be to the left. This is due to the normal hinge action of the fingers. When the fingers on the right hand are closed, as in gripping, they hinge or pivot to the left, thereby applying pressure to the left (with left-handed firers, this action is to the right). The firer must not apply pressure left or right but should increase finger pressure straight to the rear. Only the trigger finger should perform this action. Dry-fire training improves a firer's ability to move the trigger finger straight to the rear without cramping or increasing pressure on the hand grip.

c. Follow-through is the continued effort of the firer to maintain sight alignment before, during, and after the round has fired. The firer must continue the rearward movement of the finger even after the round has been fired. Releasing the trigger too soon after the round has been fired results in an uncontrolled shot, causing a missed target.

(1) The firer who is a good shot holds the sights of the weapon as nearly on the target center as possible and continues to squeeze the trigger with increasing pressure until the weapon fires.

(2) The soldier who is a bad shot tries to "catch his target" as his sight alignment moves past the target and fires the weapon at that instant. This is called ambushing, which causes trigger jerk.

**NOTE:** The trigger squeeze of the pistol, when fired in the single-action mode, is 5.50 pounds; when fired in double-action mode, it is 12.33 pounds. The firer must be aware of the mode in which he is firing. He must also practice squeezing the trigger in each mode to develop expertise in both single-action and doubleaction target engagements.

## 2-5. TARGET ENGAGEMENT

To engage a single target, the firer applies the method discussed in paragraph 2-4. When engaging multiple targets in combat, he engages the closest and most dangerous multiple target first and fires at it with two rounds. This is called controlled pairs. The firer then traverses and acquires the next target, aligns the sights in the center of mass, focuses on the front sight, applies trigger squeeze, and fires. He ensures his firing arm elbow and wrist are locked during all

engagements. If he has missed the first target and has fired upon the second target, he shifts back to the first and engages it. Some problems in target engagement are as follows:

a. **Recoil Anticipation.** When a soldier first learns to shoot, he may begin to anticipate recoil. This reaction may cause him to tighten his muscles during or just before the hammer falls. He may fight the recoil by pushing the weapon downward in anticipating or reacting to its firing. In either case, the rounds will not hit the point of aim. A good method to show the firer that he is anticipating the recoil is the ball-and-dummy method (see paragraph 2-14).

b. **Trigger Jerk.** Trigger jerk occurs when the soldier sees that he has acquired a good sight picture at center mass and "snaps" off a round before the good sight picture is lost. This may become a problem, especially when the soldier is learning to use a flash sight picture (see paragraph 2-7b).

c. **Heeling.** Heeling is caused by a firer tightening the large muscle in the heel of the hand to keep from jerking the trigger. A firer who has had problems with jerking the trigger tries to correct the fault by tightening the bottom of the hand, which results in a heeled shot. Heeling causes the strike of the bullet to hit high on the firing hand side of the target. The firer can correct shooting errors by knowing and applying correct trigger squeeze.

## 2-6. POSITIONS

The qualification course is fired from a standing, kneeling, or crouch position. During qualification and combat firing, soldiers must practice all of the firing positions described below so they become natural movements. Though these positions seem natural, practice sessions must be conducted to ensure the habitual attainment of correct firing positions. Practice in assuming correct firing positions ensures that soldiers can quickly assume these positions without a conscious effort. Pistol marksmanship requires a soldier to rapidly apply all the fundamentals at dangerously close targets while under stress. Assuming a proper position to allow for a steady aim is critical to survival.

**NOTE:** During combat, there may not be time for a soldier to assume a position that will allow him to establish his natural point of aim. Firing from a covered position may require the soldier to adapt his shooting stance to available cover.

a. **Pistol-Ready Position.** In the pistol-ready position, hold the weapon in the onehand grip. Hold the upper arm close to the body and the forearm at about a 45-degree angle. Point the weapon toward target center as you move forward (Figure 2-8).



**Figure 2-8. Pistol-ready position.**

b. **Standing Position without Support.** Face the target (Figure 2-9). Place feet a comfortable distance apart, about shoulder width. Extend the firing arm and attain a twohand grip. The wrist and elbow of the firing arm are locked and pointed toward target center. Keep the body straight with the shoulders slightly forward of the buttocks.



**Figure 2-9. Standing position without support.**

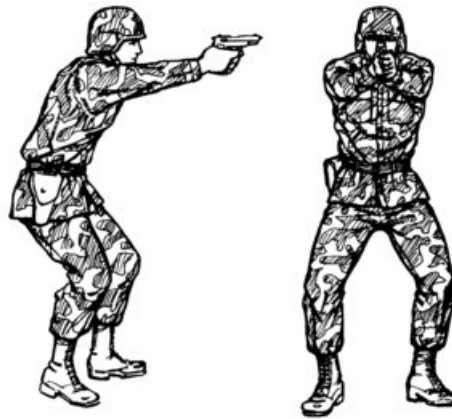
c. **Kneeling Position.** In the kneeling position, ground only your firing-side knee as the main support (Figure 2-10). Vertically place your firing-side foot, used as the main support, under your buttocks. Rest your body weight on the heel and toes. Rest your nonfiring arm just above the elbow on the knee not used as the main body support. Use the two-handed grip for firing. Extend the firing arm, and lock the firing-arm elbow and wrist to ensure solid arm control.



**Figure 2-10. Kneeling position.**

d. **Crouch Position.** Use the crouch position when surprise targets are engaged at close range (Figure 2-11). Place the body in a forward crouch (boxer's stance) with the knees bent slightly and trunk bent forward from the hips to give faster recovery from recoil. Place the feet naturally in a position that allows another step toward the target. Extend the weapon straight toward the target, and lock the wrist and elbow of the firing arm. It is important to consistently train with this position, since the body will automatically crouch under conditions of stress such as combat. It is also a

faster position from which to change direction of fire.



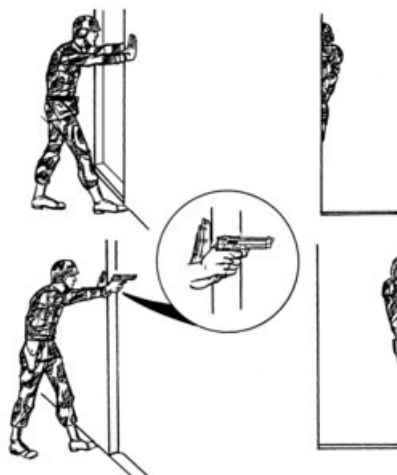
**Figure 2-11. Crouch position.**

e. **Prone Position.** Lie flat on the ground, facing the target (Figure 2-12). Extend your arms in front with the firing arm locked. (Your arms may have to be slightly unlocked for firing at high targets.) Rest the butt of the weapon on the ground for single, well-aimed shots. Wrap the fingers of the nonfiring hand around the fingers of the firing hand. Face forward. Keep your head down between your arms and behind the weapon as much as possible.



**Figure 2-12. Prone position.**

f. **Standing Position with Support.** Use available cover for support—for example, a tree or wall to stand behind (Figure 2-13). Stand behind a barricade with the firing side on line with the edge of the barricade. Place the knuckles of the nonfiring fist at eye level against the edge of the barricade. Lock the elbow and wrist of the firing arm. Move the foot on the nonfiring side forward until the toe of the boot touches the bottom of the barricade.



**Figure 2-13. Standing position with support.**

g. **Kneeling Supported Position.** Use available cover for support--for example, use a low wall, rocks, or vehicle (Figure 2-14). Place your firing-side knee on the ground. Bend the other knee and place the foot (nonfiring side) flat on the ground, pointing toward the target. Extend arms alongside and brace them against available cover. Lock the wrist and elbow of your firing arm. Place the nonfiring hand around the fist to support the firing arm. Rest the nonfiring arm just above the elbow on the nonfiring-side knee.



**Figure 2-14. Kneeling supported.**

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**Section II. COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP**

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