

USING VIDEOGAMES FOR MILITARY TRAINING

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Annotation. This article examines the potential of using video games for military training. In the context of modern technological development and the transformation of armed conflicts, the integration of innovative approaches is becoming necessary. The paper considers specific methods and techniques for integrating video game technologies into the combat training of soldiers.

Keywords: military training, realistic suppression system, Modern combined-arms combat, military simulators, tactics, game-based training, SQUAD

Introduction. Amidst the evolution of technology and the changing nature of armed conflicts, traditional training methods are being augmented by innovative approaches. One such approach involves the training of soldiers through video games. This paper will examine that concept using the specific video game Squad as case studies, focusing on their realistic depiction of combat operations, tactics, teamwork, and terrain navigation.

Main part. Squad (Picture-1) is a multiplayer tactical military first-person shooter developed by the Canadian studio Offworld Industries. The game was officially released on Steam on September 23, 2020, and is built upon the core principles of teamwork and communication. The developers demonstrate that in modern combined-arms combat, communication, strategy, logistics and supply, leadership, the ability to operate as part of a unit, marksmanship, and navigation are critically important.



Figure 1: Video game

Let us examine the gameplay mechanics utilized in Squad that are pertinent for training purposes.

This involves not only the development of accuracy but also the application of various firing techniques. The game features elements such as firing from behind cover (leaning left and right), from a crouched position, and from a prone supported position. Furthermore, projectile ballistics are simulated, meaning that accurate long-range shooting requires the use of the sight's aiming grid.

In Squad, teams are divided into squads, each led by a Squad Leader. The Squad Leader directs the unit alongside their team, places fortifications, and coordinates their squad's actions with others. Soldiers, in turn, assume roles such as riflemen, medics, drivers, pilots, grenadiers, combat engineers, snipers, machine gunners, and crewmen. The primary roles are as follows:

Medic – A mandatory class in any squad. Medics can revive wounded soldiers and treat critical injuries, preventing player deaths. This class is the most vital element of each squad, determining whether the unit can advance or will be eliminated before achieving its objective.

Rifleman (Infantryman) – The most common role, equipped with an ammunition bag from which allies can resupply.

Grenadier – A fire support class armed with an under-barrel grenade launcher, utilizing fragmentation and smoke rounds for concealment.

Combat Engineer – A class dedicated to reconnaissance, destroying enemy radios, vehicles, and fortifications. They are equipped with mines and tools for digging and constructing defenses.

Sapper – Equipped with remote-detonated explosives, this unique operative can threaten enemy emplacements and vehicles.

Sniper – A precision marksman capable of eliminating enemies with a single shot to the torso, designed to neutralize high-value targets at range.

Unlike linear shooters where tactics often boil down to choosing a corridor for attack, Squad provides teams with a blank slate for tactical creativity. The game's name itself points to the primary condition for victory: cohesive collective action. Squad does not teach tactics; instead, it creates an environment where effective tactics and competent team coordination become the only means to survive and accomplish the mission [1].

The mission execution process begins long before the first shot is fired. When a team receives an order, a «brainstorming» session begins in the voice chat, simulating real-life planning. Squad leaders analyze the terrain using the map, assess approach routes, delegate tasks, and organize logistics. At these moments the importance of each step in operational preparation becomes clear. Once the plan is approved and the Squad Leader issues the order, the group moves out along the designated route. Each member assumes their position and observes their assigned sector. The voice chat is no longer filled with heated discussions – only brief enemy reports and the issuance of orders.

The integrated voice chat system is not merely an option but the primary tool for battle management. Squad features a channel separation critical for situational awareness. Local chat is audible only to nearby soldiers and is used for situational information exchange within the fire team. Squad chat is for the Squad Leader to assign tasks and receive reports from subordinates. Command chat allows squad leaders to coordinate company-level actions, request support, and synchronize attacks. A separate commander channel provides an overhead view via a UAV-like perspective to issue strategic orders. Trainees learn to report information concisely and clearly, understanding that congested communication can cost the unit its life, as a commander might miss a critical report of approaching enemy armor.

Realistic ballistics and a suppression system make combat akin to tactical chess, where a direct frontal assault is deadly. The game allows for marking critical points, suspected enemy positions, and attack objectives on the map. A Squad Leader can devise various tactics, including those based on deception – limited only by imagination and ingenuity. The enemy may spot the maneuver and counterattack, reinforcements may be delayed, or a well-placed mine may destroy enemy vehicles. This dynamic teaches a crucial skill: adaptability. A plan can crumble in the first seconds of contact, and it is precisely then that a unit's true cohesion is tested: the ability to quickly regroup and continue the mission under changed circumstances.

Logistical support is equally important in the game. Players use vehicles to transport ammunition and equipment to the squads. They witness firsthand that without protecting supply lines, an offensive will stall. This instills an understanding of the importance of rear-area support.

Conclusion. There is a vast multitude of military simulators in the form of video games, but not all meet the requirements for military training due to the «casualization» of games for the sake of player enjoyment. Yet, even the best examples have room for improvement and further development [2].

References

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