

Training for urban signal environments

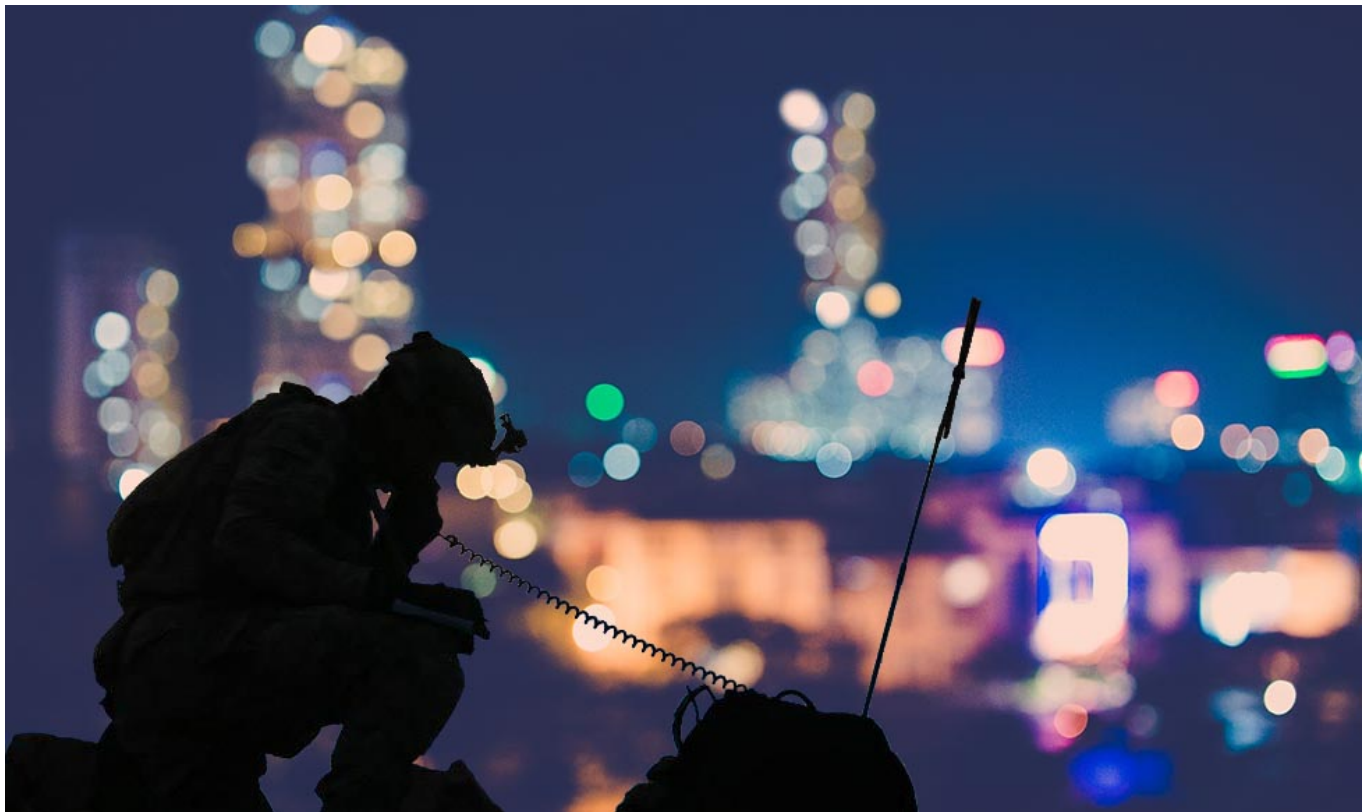
By Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas M. Hanley

18th Medical Command (Deployment Support), Fort Shafter, Hawaii

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Continuing in our series, NCOs sound off, noncommissioned officers in the field respond to the question of what training or equipment the Army should focus on to better prepare their military occupational specialty for the future.

Command Sgt. Maj. John E Braham Jr., 18th Medical Command (Deployment Support), Fort Shafter, Hawaii, asked his Soldier, Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas M. Hanley, a signal support specialist, to participate. Hanley's input supports Under Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey's emphasis on network communications as one of the six priorities of the Army's modernization efforts, as reported in the NCO Journal's recent article (<http://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/Archives/2018/February/NCO-participation-critical-to-Armys-Modernization-efforts/>), "NCO participation 'critical' to Army's modernization efforts."



(Graphic by NCO Journal)

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When I was asked to respond to how the Army should work to develop my career field to better prepare for future conflicts, it reminded me of how far the Army has come since I enlisted in 2001. I remember spending days thinking about how heavy a jump ruck was going to be with an RT-1523C VHF Radio or AN/PSC-5 Enhanced Manpack UHF Terminal (plus spare batteries). It made everyone shudder. Now a Harris AN/PRC-152A handheld radio and Thales AN/PRC-154 Rifleman Radio make for a faster, lighter warrior, and Soldiers couldn't be happier to see the technology.

If what Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley said in the DefenseNews article, "*Army Chief: Soldiers Must Be Ready To Fight in 'Megacities'*" (<https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/ausa/2016/10/05/army-chief-soldiers-must-be-ready-to-fight-in-megacities/>)" holds true, then 10 plus years from now most of our conventional forces will operate in smaller teams while fighting in megacities. Our biggest problem will be communicating through buildings using line of sight or acquiring satellites using tactical satellite terminals. Have you ever tried to listen to satellite radio while driving in a big city? It doesn't work well. Developments such as drones, which not only carry munitions but also radios so they can act as retransmit vehicles, could be beneficial in these situations (if they don't already exist).

To better prepare for this type of future and possibly this type of warfare, warfighters should train in actual urban environments. This will give them a better understanding of the radio communication limitations found in large cities.