



## Improving Rifle Qualification: Part 2, Validate

Once our zero range is more efficient (see Part 1), the shooter needs to test and validate their skills. A validation exercise is a timed and scored exercise. Only when passed does the Soldier finally attempt qualification.

Ignoring the fact that Army doctrine does in fact require this (even if most personnel are oblivious to it), a common complaint against shooting additional exercises beyond zeroing is that it “wastes” time and ammunition. Consider the foolishness of this. A validation exercise can be conducted in a minute or so and takes only a few rounds. If this check is failed it indicates problems such that the Soldier will likely fail qualification so we can fix things first. It’s a “waste” to spend a 4-6 rounds to check that every-thing is a “go”, but somehow, it’s acceptable to spend 40 rounds in a full, formal qualification attempt to then find out problems. We never seem to have enough time and ammo to train and test skills but there’s somehow always enough to give a failing Soldier another 40 rounds to try another attempt to qualify.

When used with on a more efficient 25-meter range discussed in Part 1, each shooter can conduct this quick test on their point regardless of what the rest of the line is doing, calling for an available range safety or instructor to time and confirm the attempt.



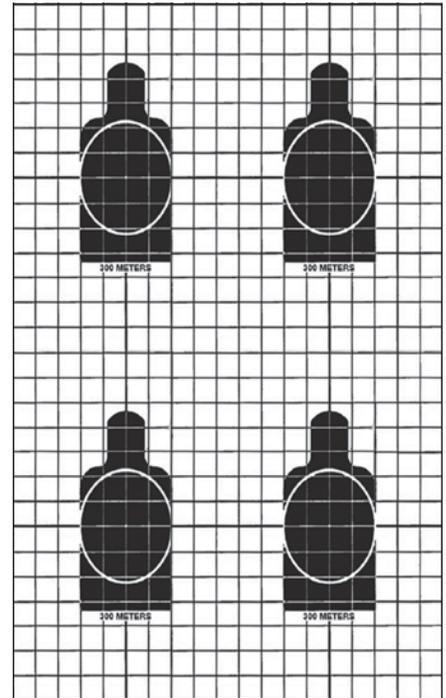
Rather than assume a good zero and shooting skills, we conduct a simple, timed exercise. If there is a problem, we have the means to work on it.

### Old Qual 25 Meter

The old RETS (Remote Engagement Target System) qualification course with its three separate tables of fire will likely be used for the near future as the new Modified Barricade qualification is brought on. Here’s a validation test for it.

When a shooter declares himself zeroed and ready, find four closely-batched E-type zero targets (scaled 300 meter or 250 meter targets) on the backer. Starting aimed in prone supported (or shoot-er’s choice), click a stop watch and allow 18 seconds to engage each target once. It’s a pass if the shooter gets three out of four hits. Look at DA 3595-R (Record Fire Scorecard) and the time limits there. Double targets run 6-12 seconds per exposure, leaving 4.5 seconds per target on average.  $4.5 \times 4 = 18$  seconds. Also six seconds is a typical amount allowed for a 300 meter exposure. Given that the test starts aimed in and ready to shoot, the shooter only needs to transition to shoot three more targets. By using four close targets, it doesn’t matter which order they’re shot in as the shooter will have to transition up, down, left, and right to engage them all. This validation only takes four rounds and just over a quarter minute to run on zero targets on the 25-meter range.

*Left: Ideally, field firing would include shooting at full distance on a KD range but this is not always available. Validate at 25-meter and again on the RETS can be done on the ranges we’ll actually use.*

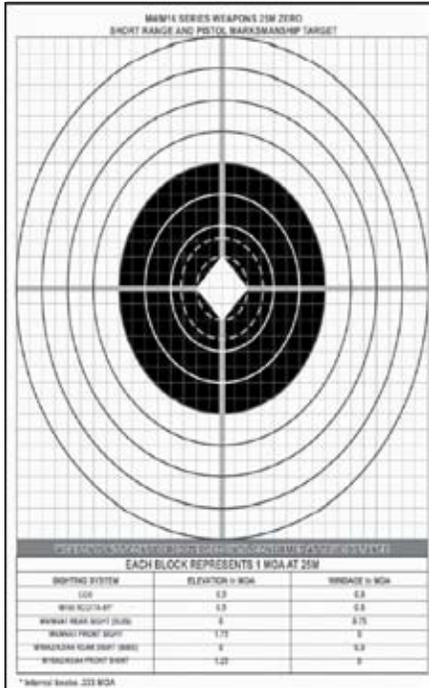


*Above: Four normal old zero targets close together can be used for a quick field fire course, shooting each target once in 18 seconds.*

### New Qual 25 Meter

The new Barricade Modified uses the same targets and roughly the same exposure times as the previous qualification, however, the four phases are shot in one continuous table with only pre-planned and timed pauses in between. The shooting isn’t actually any harder but Soldiers that find this qualification more difficult is because they failed to prepare to move between phases efficiently. This validation tests for this.

When a shooter declares himself zeroed and ready, find a fresh zero target, five rounds, three magazines, and complete issue web gear/FLC. Fill a magazine with two rounds each, another with one round, and stow them in magazine pouches.



**Above:** A quick validation for the Modified Barricade course can be done on the new zero target.

Go to condition Red, making ready with two more rounds in the third magazine. Have a peer coach give a “Go” command and start a timer/stopwatch.

Starting from standing at low ready, go to prone and engage the target with two rounds, reload without command while moving into the kneeling position and engage with two more rounds from the second magazine, reload without command while moving into the standing position and engage with the last magazine of one round.

The peer coach observes the target as this is being done. The prone shots should be in the 8 MoA ring (about the same width as a silhouette at 250 meters) or better. The kneeling shots should be in the 12 MoA ring (about the same width as a silhouette at 150 meters) and the standing shot should be in at least the 20 MoA (five inch) circle surrounding the black bullseye. All of this needs to be accomplished in 35 seconds or less.

Here’s the time breakdown. Go-To-Prone should take about two sec-

onds. Moving from prone-to-kneeling is allowed eight seconds and five for kneeling-to-standing for qualification. Eight seconds for two prone shots (same time as the 200-300 meter exposure), eight seconds for two kneeling shots (same time as the 150-250 exposure), and four seconds for one shot standing.

Each shooter can conduct this quick test on their point regardless of what the rest of the line is doing, calling for an available range safety or instructor to time and confirm the attempt. Rather than assume a good zero and shooting skills, we conduct a simple, timed exercise based on the shooting and timing requirements of the qualification course. The shooter is conducting a Go-To-Prone (Drill H) and Fight-Up (Drill G) based on the Training Circular and in the same manner used during qualification. Time limits and accuracy standards are also very similar to the qualification. This validation only takes five rounds and a half minute to run on a single zero target on the 25-meter range.

**Old Qual RETS**

The 25-meter validation exercises test the shooter’s ability to hit targets and move through a course of fire requiring similar accuracy and time limits as the qualification. The only down side is they can’t test the ability to hit targets at full distance. It would be best to use KD range or a LOMAH (Location Of Misses And Hits) system but these likely won’t be available. Instead, we’ll validate on the RETS targets prior to shooting the qualification.

With the old qualification, simply leave the 300, 200, and 100-meter targets up on bob mode. That is, put these targets up and set to drop when hit without any time limit. For a quick validation, have each shooter engage these targets with a maximum of five rounds. If all three targets aren’t hit at least once with five rounds, the validation is failed. If the shooter passed the 25-meter



**Above:** A quick check on full distance RETS targets validates the Soldier’s zero and shooting is good enough to likely pass qualification.

validation, a failure here is likely due to an improper zero that didn’t take a needed offset into account.

**New Qual RETS**

As the name implies, the new Barricade Modified qualification demands that Soldiers engage using a barricade for support. It also requires moving through the four phases in one, continuous table of fire. Exposure times are about the same as the previous qualification, so the only real change is moving through positions efficiently and using a kneeling supported and standing supported position. This validation tests for this.

The range is set by leaving the 300, 200, and 100-meter targets up on bob mode. Fill three magazines with two rounds each. Starting from standing at low ready, go to prone (supported or unsupported, your choice) and engage the 300-meter target with two rounds, reload without command while moving into the kneeling position and engage the 200-meter target with two rounds from the second magazine, reload without command while moving into the standing position and engage the 100 two rounds. Total time limit is 40 seconds, using the same time break down as given above. Each target must be hit at least once within this time limit to be considered a go. Also note, that a Soldier’s basic load includes

seven magazines, the same number as three mags of two for the validation plus four more magazines of ten for the qualification.

Given we lack full distance confirmation, these RETS validation tests provide a quick check that the Solider is zeroed and shooting well enough to likely pass a full test. It's faster and cheaper than wasting 40 rounds on a full qualification attempt to find that out.

**Army Reserve Postal Matches**

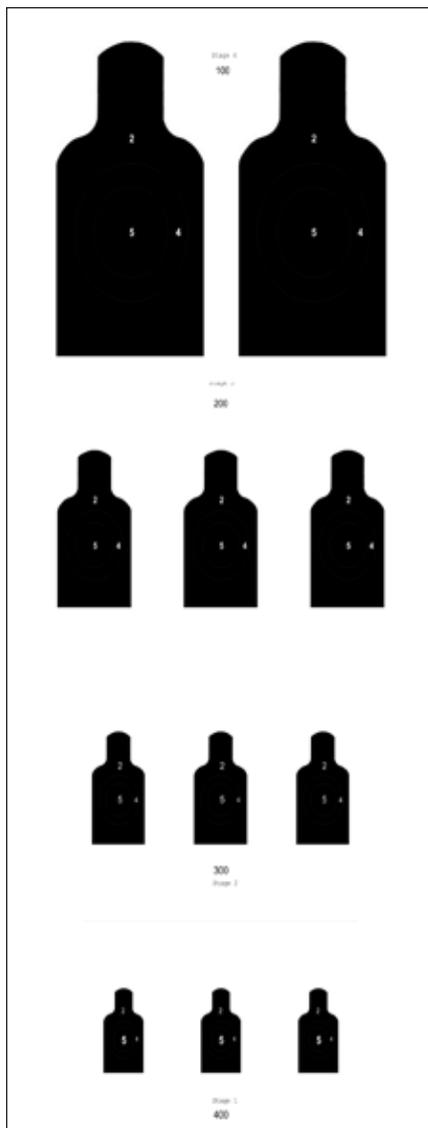
A Postal Match is an organized marksmanship event in which participants shoot during routine unit qualification and are results submitted to an organizing body to tabulate and compare to others. Per Army Regulation 140-1, Chapter 7 (Marksmanship Training and Competitive Program), section 7-2 a. (11), the Chief, Army Reserve will conduct the World-wide Chief, Army Reserve Postal Matches. Army Reserve Marksman is the official US Army Reserve resource supporting marksmanship force wide. All Army Reserve units are encouraged to participate.

The Army Reserve Postal Match is conducted every fiscal year. All Reserve units and Soldiers are eligible. To be counted in the current fiscal year event, scores are due by September 30. When submitting results be certain to include Public Affairs information so we can promote your unit and this event to USARC.

Postal Matches are also a great validation exercise. The USARMarksmanship Program has two.

**USAR EIC Postal Match**

The first Postal Match is based on the current Excellence In Competition Match 321 used in Service Conditions matches. Based off courses of fire used at All Army and AFSAM (Armed Forces Skill at Arms Meeting), the entire match is shot at 25 meters on scaled targets and can be held during grouping and zeroing exercises during routine unit qualification. This is a good choice



*Above: The USAR EIC Postal Match is based on Match 321 and similar Service Conditions events.*

for Soldiers interested in attending these competitions.

Place all targets 25 meters from the shooter. A PDF of these targets are available at [ArmyReserveMarksman.info/postal-match](http://ArmyReserveMarksman.info/postal-match). Any standard 8.5x11 size paper will work, however, heavier, matte paper about 67 pounds in an off white or light, dull yellow color is more like commercial target stock and superior to standard 20 or 24-pound copier or printer paper.

After posting targets shooters will be granted a three-minute preparation period.

Allow enough time between each stage of fire to refill magazines as needed. For Stage 1 – 400 is shot from the prone supported position at condition Red (charged magazine in place, chamber loaded, safety on “SAFE”) with nine rounds loaded.

At the command to fire engage each target with three rounds each. Targets may be engaged in any order. A sandbag may be used and/or the magazine may touch the ground and/or sandbag for support. A loop or tactical sling may be used and it can be adjusted and fit during the preparation period before the command to fire is given. Time limit: 60 seconds. All shots fired after the “Cease Fire” command is given are penalized five points each. Maximum score possible: 45 points

Stage 2 – 300. Start position is standing position at low ready (muzzle pointed down at a 45-degree angle) in condition Red (charged magazine in place, chamber loaded, safety on “SAFE”) with three rounds loaded. An additional six-round magazine will be secured in a magazine pouch on the shooter’s equipment (not on the ground.)

At the command to fire, assume a prone position and engage each target with three rounds each, re-loading as necessary without command. The magazine may touch and/or rest on the ground. A sand-bag or other support may not be used. A sling may be used, however it can NOT be looped on or around the arm before the command to fire is given. Time limit: 50 seconds. All shots fired after the “Cease Fire” command is given are penalized five points each. Maximum score possible: 45 points.

Stage 3 – 200. Start position is standing position at low ready (muzzle pointed down at a 45-degree angle) in condition Red (charged magazine in place, chamber loaded, safety on “SAFE”) with three rounds loaded. An additional six-round magazine will be secured

**Right:** *A The Modified Barricade Postal Match is based on the Primary and Secondary hit areas.*

in a magazine pouch on the shooter's equipment (not on the ground.)

At the command to fire assume a kneeling unsupported position and engage each target with three rounds each, reloading as necessary without command. External support may not be used. A sling may be used, however it can NOT be looped on or around the arm before the command to fire is given. Time limit: 50 seconds. All shots fired after the "Cease Fire" command is given are penalized five points each. Maximum score possible: 45 points.

Stage 4 – 100. Start position is standing position at low ready (muzzle pointed down at a 45-degree angle) in condition Red (charged magazine in place, chamber loaded, safety on "SAFE") with three rounds loaded. An additional three-round magazine will be secured in a magazine pouch on the shooter's equipment (not on the ground.)

At the command to fire assume a kneeling unsupported position and engage each target with three rounds each, reloading as necessary without command. External support may not be used. A sling may be used, however it can NOT be looped on or around the arm before the command to fire is given. Time limit: 30 seconds. All shots fired after the "Cease Fire" command is given are penalized five points each. Maximum score possible: 30 points.

### Modified Barricade Postal Match

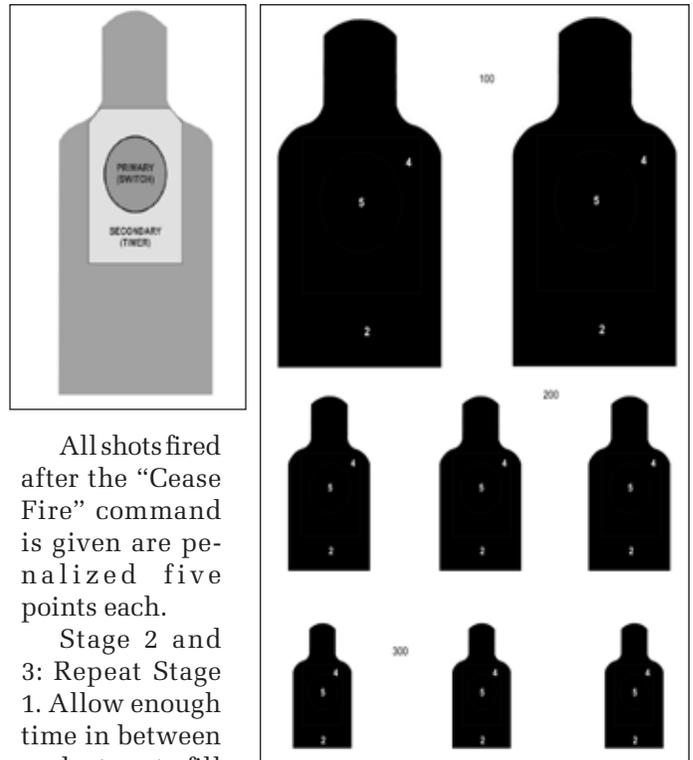
The second postal match is based off the Modified Barricade qualification. The entire match is shot at 25 meters on scaled targets and can be held during grouping and zeroing exercises during routine unit qualification.

Place all targets 25 meters from the shooter. See last pages of this document. After posting targets shooters will be granted a three-minute preparation period. Allow enough time between each stage of fire to refill magazines as needed.

Stage 1. Start position: Standing position at low ready (muzzle pointed down at a 45-degree angle) in condition Red (charged magazine in place, chamber loaded, safety on "SAFE") with three rounds loaded. A three-round magazine and a two-round magazine will be secured in magazine pouches on the shooter's equipment (not on the ground.)

At the command to fire, assume a prone unsupported position and engage each 300-meter target with one round each, reload without command with the three-round magazine while moving into the barricade supported kneeling position and engage each 200-meter target with one round each, reload without command with the two-round magazine while moving into the barricade supported standing position and engage each 100-meter target with one round each.

Time limit: 50 seconds.



All shots fired after the "Cease Fire" command is given are penalized five points each.

Stage 2 and 3: Repeat Stage 1. Allow enough time in between each stage to fill magazines and

prepare accordingly. Maximum score possible: 120 points (24 total rounds fired)

The time limit breakdown is 2+8+5 seconds to go-to-prone, then to kneeling, then to standing respectively. Five seconds are allowed for each 300-meter target and four seconds for each 200 and 100-meter target. This is a comparable, if faster, time standard to the qualification. The scoring rings award five points for hitting the Primary (switch) area, four points for hitting the Secondary (timer) area, and two points for the rest of the silhouette. This is the same suggested hit areas presented in the Training Circular and makes this course more challenging.

Course books and targets can be downloaded at <https://armyreservemarksman.info/postal-match/>

The primary win with conducting validation is insuring Soldiers have practiced and proven their ability to shoot well enough to at least qualify. A validation test will catch those still struggling and allow for remedial training and help as needed. This will ultimately save time, ammunition, and make for a better trained force.

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