

THIS IS MY JOB

Sniper School Instructor

- > DAVID MITNAUL
- > FORT BENNING, GA.
- > YEARS ON JOB: 3

HITTING A TARGET six football fields away is no easy feat—even with 10x magnification—but it's David Mitnaul's job to make sure graduates of the U.S. Army Sniper School in Fort Benning, Ga., can do just that. A veteran of more than 100 missions, including operations in Baghdad, 22-year-old Staff Sgt. Mitnaul trains infantrymen in wind calculations, ballistics and marksmanship. The goal: 90 percent first-round hits at 2000 ft. But shooting is only one part of what Mitnaul teaches. "Most sniper missions are reconnaissance and surveillance," he says. "You very rarely pull a shot." **By Blaire Briody**



1 M-24 Mitnaul trains students mainly on these 14.25-pound bolt-action Remingtons. An M118 round (.308 caliber) leaves the 24-in. barrel at 2600 ft. per second. The manufacturer says the weapon is accurate to 3000 ft.; in Mitnaul's hands, it's closer to a mile.

2 GUN SIGHTS This standard Leupold Ultra M3A day sight offers 10x magnification and has dials to adjust for elevation and wind. Snipers also use infra-red sights to peer through smoke, rain and dust, and night sights for tracking targets in total darkness.

3 SPOTTING SCOPE In a two-person team, the more experienced sniper gets the best view: This scope has a 40x zoom, allowing the spotter to choose targets and accurately gauge bullet-flight characteristics. The second sniper pulls the trigger.

4 SHOOTING MAT This 38 x 70-in. mat provides padding and keeps snipers dry as they hold positions for up to 36 hours.

5 DATA BOOK For every shot he takes, Mitnaul records location, target distance and adjustments he made before firing—because even instructors can keep learning. "That book is my study guide," he says.

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