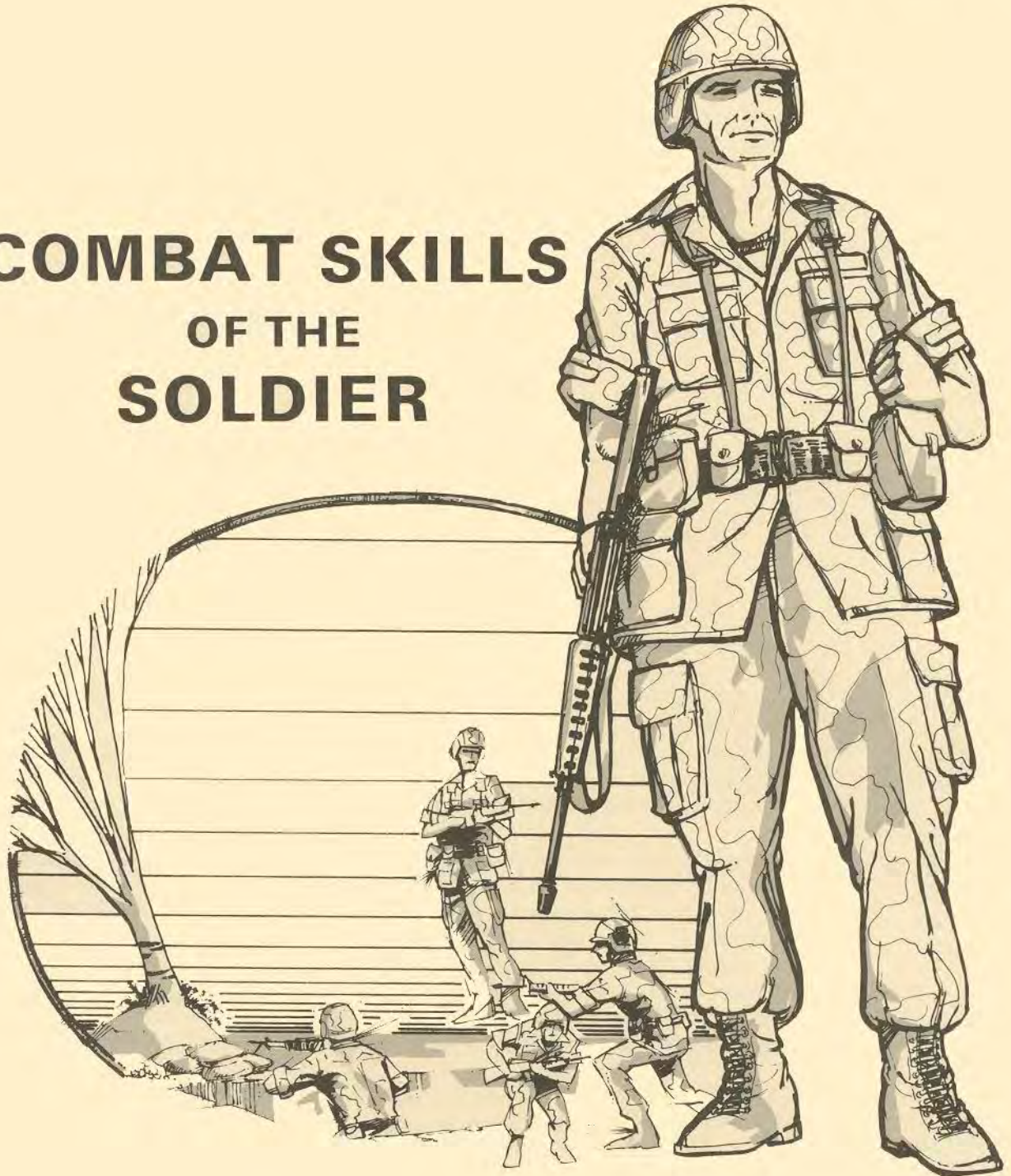


# COMBAT SKILLS OF THE SOLDIER



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## Combat Skills of the Soldier

### Preface

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This manual is dedicated to the soldier — the key to success on the battlefield. Wars are not won by machines and weapons but by the soldiers who use them. Even the best equipped army cannot win without motivated and well-trained soldiers. If the US Army is to win the next war, its soldiers must be motivated by inspired leadership, and they must know how to do their jobs and survive on the battlefield.

This is the soldier's field manual. It tells the soldier how to perform the combat skills needed to survive on the battlefield. These are basic skills that must be learned by soldiers in all military occupational specialties (MOS).

Users of this manual may submit recommended changes or comments, referring to the page and line(s) of the text. Reasons should be provided to insure understanding and complete evaluation. Comments should be forwarded on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications) addressed to the Commandant, US Army Infantry School, ATTN: ATSH-I-V-PD, Fort Benning, GA 31905.

The words "he," "him," "his," "man," and "men," when used in this publication, represent both the masculine and feminine genders, unless otherwise specifically stated.

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\* This manual supersedes FM 21-75, 10 July 1967.

## CHAPTER 1

**Cover, Concealment, and Camouflage****GENERAL**

If the enemy can see you, he can hit you with his fire. So you must be concealed from enemy observation and have cover from enemy fire.

When the terrain does not provide natural cover and concealment, you must prepare your cover and use natural and man-made materials to camouflage yourself, your equipment, and your position. This chapter provides guidance on the preparation and use of cover, concealment, and camouflage.

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## COVER

Cover gives protection from bullets, fragments of exploding rounds, flame, nuclear effects, and biological and chemical agents. Cover can also conceal you from enemy observation. Cover can be natural or man-made.

### TYPES OF COVER



Natural cover includes such things as logs, trees, stumps, ravines, and hollows. Man-made cover includes such things as fighting positions, trenches, walls, rubble, and craters. Even the smallest depression or fold in the ground can give some cover. Look for and use every bit of cover the terrain offers.

In combat, you need protection from enemy direct and indirect fire.

To get this protection in the defense, build a fighting position (man-made cover) to add to the natural cover afforded by the terrain.

### FIGHTING POSITION WITH COVER



To get protection from enemy fire in the offense or when moving, use routes that put cover between you and the places where the enemy is known or thought to be. Use ravines, gullies, hills, wooded areas, walls, and other cover to keep the enemy from seeing and firing at you. Avoid open areas, and do not skyline yourself on hilltops and ridges.

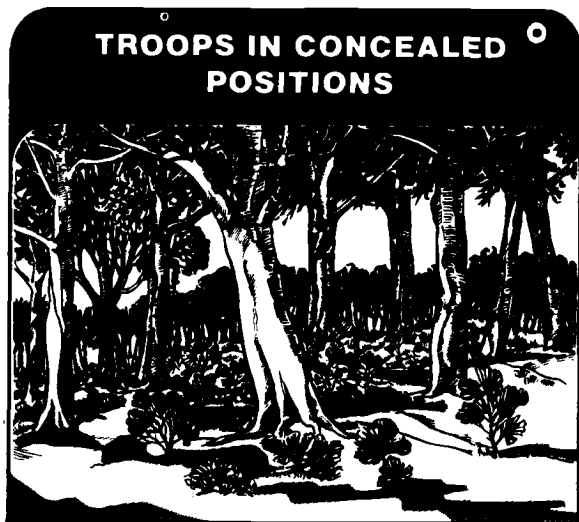
### TROOPS MOVING ALONG A RAVINE



## CONCEALMENT

Concealment is anything that hides you from enemy observation. Concealment does not protect you from enemy fire. Do not think that you are protected from the enemy's fire just because you are concealed. Concealment, like cover, can also be natural or man-made.

Natural concealment includes such things as bushes, grass, trees, and shadows. If possible, natural concealment should not be disturbed. Man-made concealment includes such things as battle-dress uniforms, camouflage nets, face paint, and natural material that has been moved from its original location. Man-made concealment must blend into the natural concealment provided by the terrain.



Light discipline, noise discipline, movement discipline, and the use of camouflage contribute to concealment. Light discipline is controlling the use of lights at night by such things as not smoking in the open, not walking around with a flashlight on, and not using vehicle headlights. Noise discipline is taking action to deflect sounds generated by your unit (such as operating equipment) away from the enemy and, when possible, using methods to communicate that do not generate sounds (arm-and-hand signals). Movement discipline

is such things as not moving about fighting positions unless necessary, and not moving on routes that lack cover and concealment. In the defense, build a well-camouflaged fighting position and avoid moving about. In the offense, conceal yourself and your equipment with camouflage and move in woods or on terrain that gives concealment. Darkness cannot hide you from enemy observation in either offense or defense. The enemy's night vision devices and other detection means let them find you in both daylight and darkness.

## CAMOUFLAGE

Camouflage is anything you use to keep yourself, your equipment, and your position from looking like what they are. Both natural and man-made material can be used for camouflage.

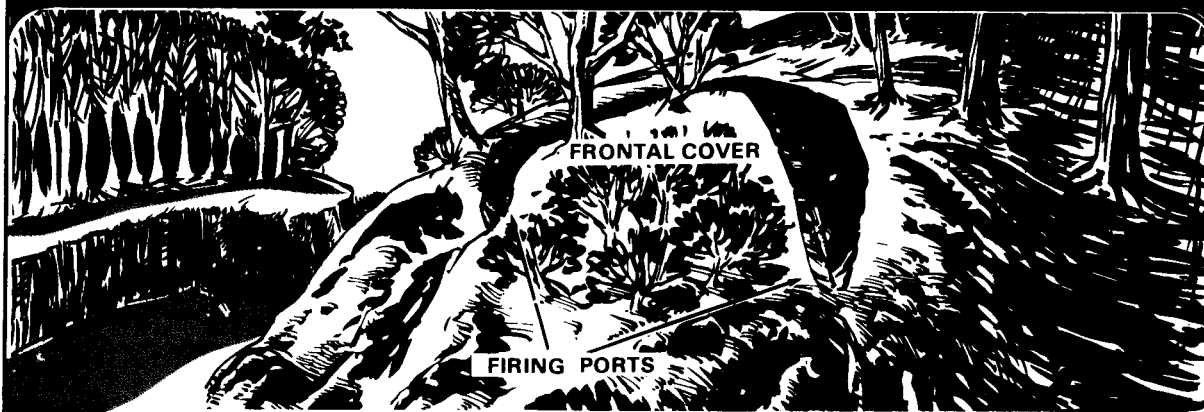
Change and improve your camouflage often. The time between changes and improvements depends on the weather and on the material used. Natural camouflage will often die, fade, or otherwise lose its effectiveness. Likewise, man-made camouflage may wear off or fade. When those things happen, you and your equipment or position may not blend with the surroundings. That may make it easy for the enemy to spot you.

## CAMOUFLAGE CONSIDERATIONS

**Movement** draws attention. When you give arm-and-hand signals or walk about your position, your movement can be seen by the naked eye at long ranges. In the defense, stay low and move only when necessary. In the offense, move only on covered and concealed routes.

**Positions** must not be where the enemy expects to find them. Build positions on the side of a hill, away from road junctions or lone buildings, and in covered and concealed places. Avoid open areas.

**POSITION IN COVER AND CONCEALMENT ON A HILLSIDE**



**Outlines and shadows** may reveal your position or equipment to air or ground observers. Outlines and shadows can be broken up with camouflage. When moving, stay in the shadows when possible.

can be reflected light from polished surfaces such as shiny mess gear, a worn helmet, a windshield, a watch crystal and band, or exposed skin. A light, or its reflection, from a position may help the enemy detect the position. To reduce shine, cover your skin with clothing and face paint. However, in a nuclear attack, darkly painted skin can absorb more thermal energy and may burn more readily than bare skin. Also, dull the surfaces of equipment and vehicles with paint, mud, or some type of camouflage material.

**SOLDIERS WITH LEADER IN A SHADOW OF A TREE**

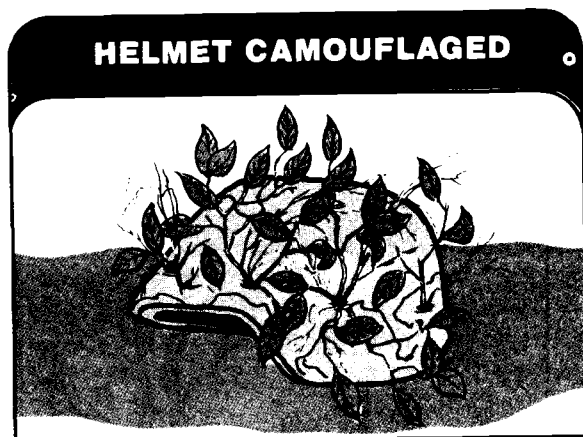


**Shine** may also attract the enemy's attention. In the dark, it may be a light such as a burning cigarette or flashlight. In daylight, it

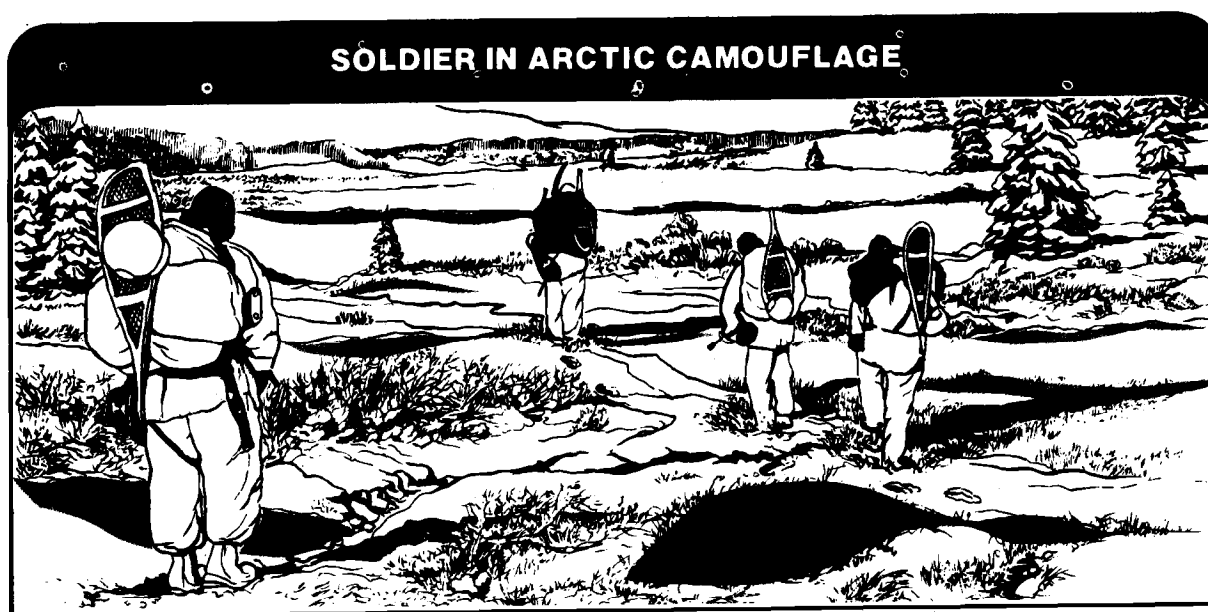
**TWO SOLDIERS CAMOUFLAGE EACH OTHER**



**Shape** is outline or form. The shape of a helmet is easily recognized. A human body is also easily recognized. Use camouflage and concealment to breakup shapes and blend them with their surroundings. Be careful not to overdo it.



The **colors** of your skin, uniform, and equipment may help the enemy detect you if the colors contrast with the background. For example, a green uniform will contrast with snow-covered terrain. Camouflage yourself and your equipment to blend with the surroundings.





**Dispersion** is the spreading of men, vehicles, and equipment over a wide area. It is usually easier for the enemy to detect soldiers when they are bunched. So, spread out. The distance between you and your fellow soldier will vary with the terrain, degree of visibility, and enemy situation. Distances will normally be set by unit leaders or by a unit's standing operating procedure (SOP).

### FIRE TEAM DISPERSED



## HOW TO CAMOUFLAGE

Before camouflaging, study the terrain and vegetation of the area in which you are operating. Then pick and use the camouflage material that best blends with that area. When moving from one area to another, change camouflage as needed to blend with the surroundings. Take grass, leaves, brush, and other material from your location and apply it to your uniform and equipment and put face paint on your skin.

### CAMOUFLAGED SOLDIERS



**Fighting Positions.** When building a fighting position, camouflage it and the dirt taken from it. Camouflage the dirt used as frontal, flank, rear, and overhead cover. Also camouflage the bottom of the hole to prevent detection from the air. If necessary, take excess dirt away from the position (to the rear).

Do not overcamouflage. Too much camouflage material may actually disclose a position. Get your camouflage material from a wide area. An area stripped of all or most of its vegetation may draw attention. Do not wait until the position is complete to camouflage it. Camouflage the position as you build.

### CAMOUFLAGED FIGHTING POSITION BEING IMPROVED



Do not leave shiny or light-colored objects lying about. Hide mess kits, mirrors, food containers, and white underwear and towels. Do not remove your shirt in the open. Your skin may shine and be seen. Never use fires where there is a chance that the flame will be seen or the smoke will be smelled by the enemy. Also, cover up tracks and other signs of movement.

### USING A TREE LIMB TO COVER UP A TRAIL



When camouflage is complete, inspect the position from the enemy's side. This should be done from about 35 meters forward of the position. Then check the camouflage periodically to see that it stays natural-looking and conceals the position. When the camouflage becomes ineffective, change and improve it.

**Helmets.** Camouflage your helmet with the issue helmet cover or make a cover of cloth or burlap that is colored to blend with the terrain. The cover should fit loosely with the flaps folded under the helmet or left hanging. The hanging flaps may break up the helmet outline. Leaves, grass, or sticks can also be attached to the cover. Use camouflage bands, strings, burlap strips, or rubber bands to hold those in place. If there is no material for a helmet cover, disguise and dull helmet surface with irregular patterns of paint or mud.

### CAMOUFLAGED HELMETS

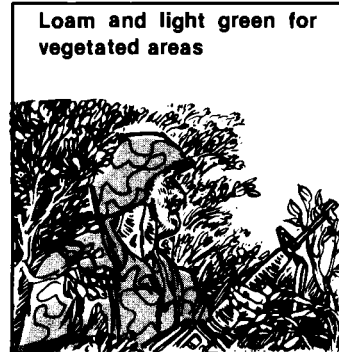
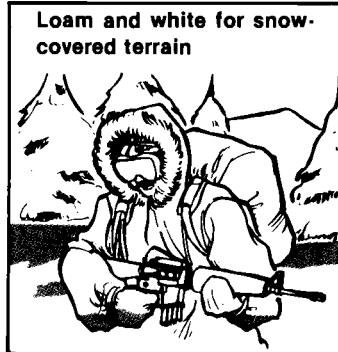


**Uniforms.** Most uniforms come already camouflaged. However, it may be necessary to add more camouflage to make the uniform blend better with the surroundings. To do this, put mud on the uniform or attach leaves, grass, or small branches to it. Too much camouflage, however, may draw attention.

When operating on snow-covered ground, wear overwhites (if issued) to help blend with the snow. If overwhites are not issued, use white cloth, such as white bedsheets, to get the same effect.

**Skin.** Exposed skin reflects light and may draw the enemy's attention. Even very dark skin, because of its natural oil, will reflect light. Use the following methods when applying camouflage face paint to camouflage the skin.

**COLORS USED IN CAMOUFLAGE**



| CAMOUFLAGE MATERIAL                      | SKIN COLOR                                       | SHINE AREAS                               | SHADOW AREAS                            |
|--|--|---|---|
|  | LIGHT OR DARK                                    | FOREHEAD, CHEEKBONES, EARS, NOSE AND CHIN | AROUND EYES, UNDER NOSE, AND UNDER CHIN |
| LOAM AND LIGHT GREEN STICK               | ALL TROOPS USE IN AREAS WITH GREEN VEGETATION    | USE LOAM                                  | USE LIGHT GREEN                         |
| SAND AND LIGHT GREEN STICK               | ALL TROOPS USE IN AREAS LACKING GREEN VEGETATION | USE LIGHT GREEN                           | USE SAND                                |
| LOAM AND WHITE                           | ALL TROOPS USE ONLY IN SNOW-COVERED TERRAIN      | USE LOAM                                  | USE WHITE                               |
| BURNT CORK, BARK CHARCOAL, OR LAMP BLACK | ALL TROOPS, IF CAMOUFLAGE STICKS NOT AVAILABLE   | USE                                       | DO NOT USE                              |
| LIGHT-COLOR MUD                          | ALL TROOPS, IF CAMOUFLAGE STICKS NOT AVAILABLE   | DO NOT USE                                | USE                                     |

When applying camouflage stick to your skin, work with a buddy (in pairs) and help each other. Apply a two-color combination of camouflage stick in an irregular pattern. Paint shiny areas (forehead, cheekbones, nose, ears, and chin) with a dark color. Paint shadow areas (around the eyes, under the nose, and under the chin) with a light color. In addition to the face,

paint the exposed skin on the back of the neck, arms, and hands. Palms of hands are not normally camouflaged if arm-and-hand signals are to be used. Remove all jewelry to further reduce shine or reflection.

When camouflage sticks are not issued, use burnt cork, bark, charcoal, lamp black, or light-colored mud.

## CHAPTER 2

**Fighting Positions****GENERAL**

When defending, or when temporarily halted while making an attack, you must seek cover from fire and concealment from observation. Cover and concealment are best provided by some type of fighting position. This may be an existing hole, a hastily dug prone shelter, or a well-prepared position with overhead cover. The time available for preparation determines how well you build your position.

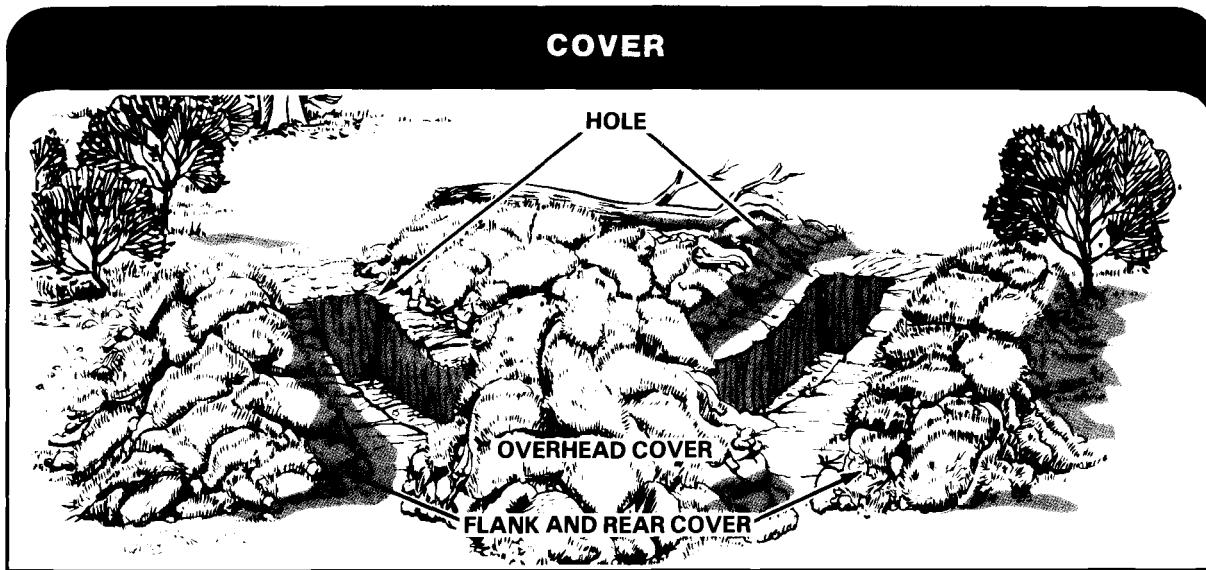
Your fighting position **must**:

- **Allow you to fire.**
- **Protect you from observation and direct and indirect fire.**

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## COVER

The cover of your fighting position must be strong enough to protect you from small arms fire, indirect fire fragments, and the blast wave of nuclear explosions. The position should have frontal cover to give protection from small arms fire from the front. Natural frontal cover (trees, rocks, logs, and rubble) is best, because it is hard for the enemy to detect a position that is concealed by natural cover. If natural cover is not available, use the dirt taken from the hole you dig to build additional cover. The cover can be improved by putting the dirt in sandbags and then wetting them.



Frontal cover must be:

- Thick enough (at least 46 cm [18 in] of dirt) to stop small arms fire.
- High enough to protect your head when you fire from behind the cover.
- Far enough in front of the hole to allow room for elbow holes and sector stakes so that you can fire to the oblique.
- Long enough to give you cover and hide the muzzle blast of your rifle when you fire to the oblique.