

Fighting Positions and Shelters

Section I. GENERAL

Although jungles have excellent concealment, the jungle fighter must still prepare fighting positions to get as much cover as possible. Although not as important as fighting positions, jungle shelters provide shelter from the elements and make life in the jungle more comfortable and healthful.

Section II. PREPARING POSITIONS AND SHELTERS

FIGHTING POSITIONS

A jungle fighting position should provide cover, permit effective engagement of the enemy, and blend in with its surroundings. Swamps and low areas should be avoided because they normally do not afford good fields of fire and are too wet to permit the digging of fighting positions.

PROTECTION FROM ENEMY FIRE

A good fighting position provides protection from direct small-arms fire and indirect fire fragmentation. Protection from small-arms fire is provided by frontal cover. Natural frontal cover (trees, rocks, logs, rubble, etc.) is best as long as it is strong enough to stop bullets. Natural cover blends with the surroundings; therefore, it is hard for the enemy to identify positions. It may be necessary, however, to use the dirt from the hole to build frontal cover when natural frontal cover is not available. Frontal cover must be wide enough to provide room for two soldiers, thick enough (at least 46 centimeters [18 inches] of dirt) to stop enemy small-arms fire, high enough to cover the heads of the soldiers firing from behind it, and far enough in front of the hole to provide room for elbow rests and sector stakes.

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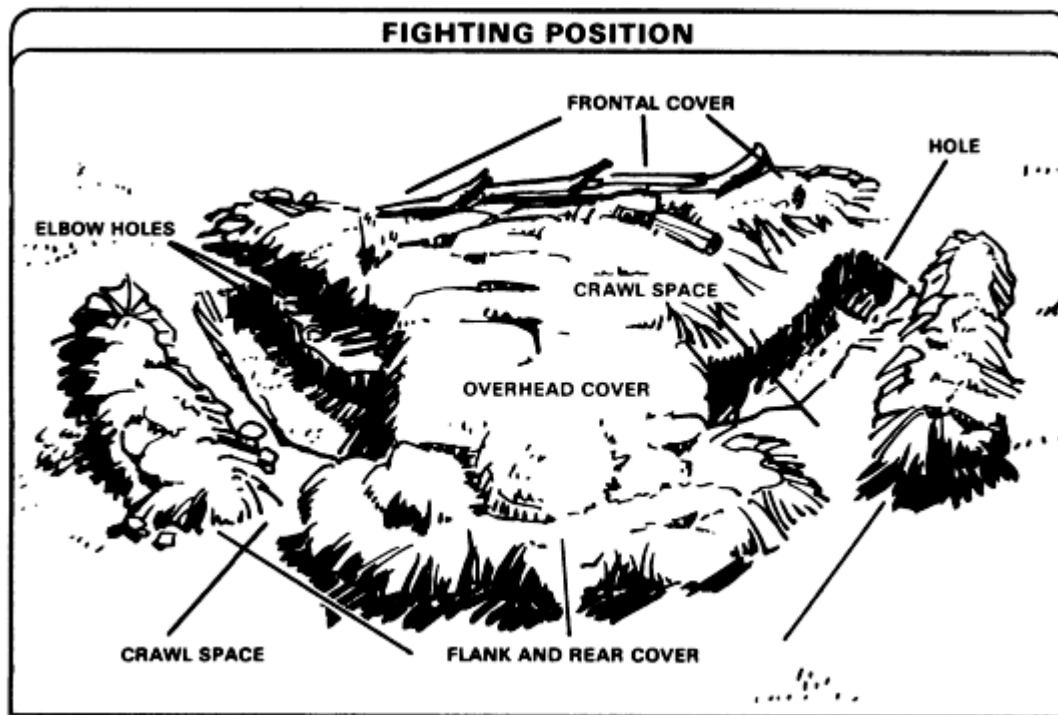
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Protection from indirect fire fragmentation is gained by getting the soldiers below ground level and by building overhead cover. The logs cut to build overhead cover must be strong. Soft wood will collapse when struck by shell fragments.

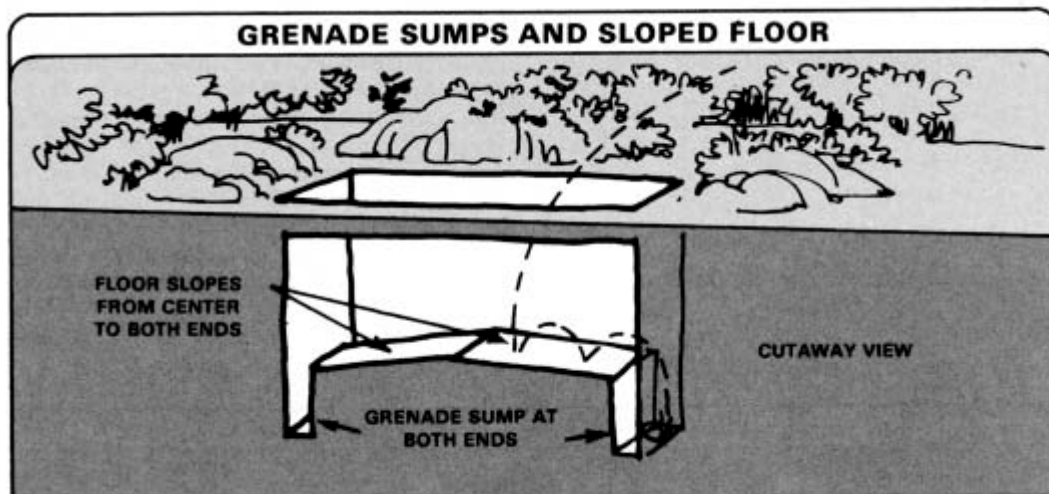
To insure complete protection for fighting positions, it is necessary to build flank and rear cover. This cover protects against the effects of indirect fire that bursts to the flanks or rear of the position and against the effects of friendly supporting weapons located in the rear.

To conceal the fighting position, troops should take advantage of the jungle's natural cover. They should use large fallen or standing trees and depressions in the ground, and work to improve upon the natural cover provided. Some logs, such as palm tree logs, are too soft to stop bullets. If forced to use soft wood in building cover, a 10- inch layer of dirt or sandbags will have to be added to the protection provided by the wood.



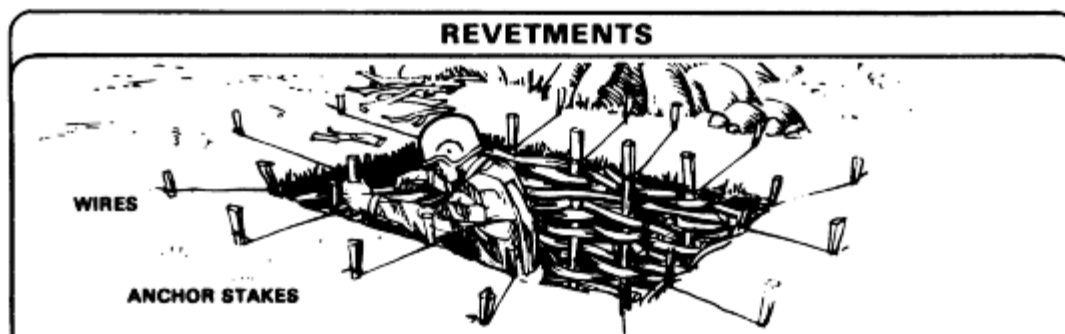
When positions are constructed, all artificial cover must be camouflaged to blend in with the surrounding terrain so it cannot be detected by the enemy. Camouflage should be kept fresh--dead or rotting vegetation will give away positions. Troops can transplant live plants--the moist soil will help these plants survive.

All positions should provide for drainage during tropical rainstorms. The floor of the position should slope from the center of the position toward the grenade sumps. This is important during the rainy season to avoid immersion foot.



If time permits, an elevated floor stand of saplings can be built so that soldiers do not have to stand in mud or water. Grenade sumps must remain clear.

Jungle soils are soft and erode quickly during the rainy season. Revetments will prevent the walls of a position from caving in. The stakes should be driven all the way into the ground, once the anchor lines are attached. They must then be concealed so that they cannot be confused with the firing stakes.



OBSERVATION AND FIELD OF FIRE

Soldiers should clear away *only* what is absolutely necessary, in order to retain as much natural concealment as possible. In properly constructed positions, the soldier's eyes and weapon will be at ground level. In this way, the soldier is concealed from the enemy, is protected by cover, but still can detect any approaching enemy. If a small tree is in a soldier's field of fire, it should not be chopped down completely. Only the branches that deny observation should be removed. The cuttings on the tree should be darkened with mud. Overly cleared areas or fresh, improperly concealed cuttings are easy to spot.



CONCEALMENT FROM ENEMY AIR OBSERVATION

Positions should be placed under the jungle canopy for its natural concealment from air observation. If this is not possible, positions should be covered with camouflage nets or with expedient covers of loosely woven vines and branches.

For more detailed information on how to prepare jungle fighting positions, see [FM 7-8](#).

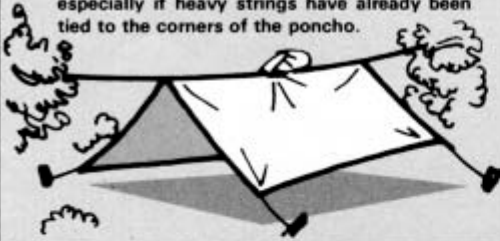
SHELTERS

Shelters are made when the tactical situation permits. The poncho can be used as a roof for the shelter. It reduces the need for extensive concealing foliage and provides protection from the elements. However, natural camouflage must still be applied to break up the outline of the poncho and reduce the glare of a wet poncho.

EXAMPLES OF PONCHO SHELTERS

HASTY SHELTER-CANOPY FASHION

A hasty shelter is made by suspending the poncho from low underbrush. Due to its simplicity, it can be easily erected at night, especially if heavy strings have already been tied to the corners of the poncho.



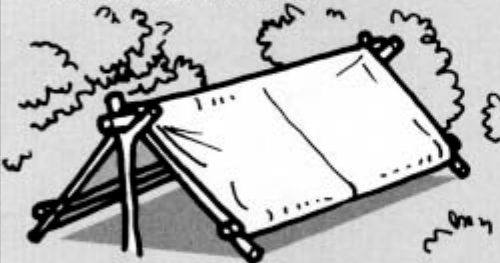
HASTY SHELTER-CANOPY FASHION

This is another hasty shelter pitched canopy fashion.



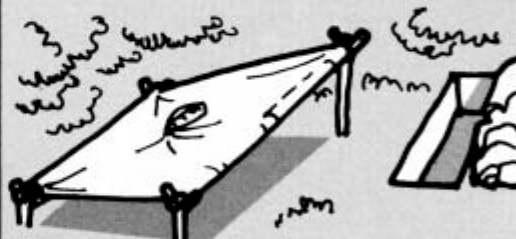
PONCHO AND SPREADER BARS

This is a hasty shelter using a poncho and two branches for spreader bars.



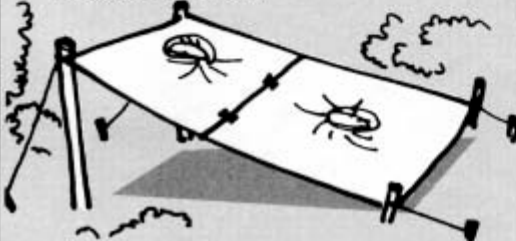
LOW SILHOUETTE SHELTER

This low silhouette shelter can be used while improving fighting positions. It can be lowered by removing the front upright supports.



PONCHO SHELTER

Two ponchos fastened together will shelter four soldiers from the rain. Extra ponchos can be used as ground sheets.



SLEEPING-PLATFORM AND FOOTREST

The following type of shelter may be used for a longer stay in more secure areas. A sleeping-platform and footrest protect from dampness and insects.

