

Chapter 6

Defensive Operations

Defensive operations require a great deal of emphasis on OPSEC. Proper OPSEC denies the Threat information about our defensive order of battle. Particularly important is the counterreconnaissance battle, during which defensive forces seek to blind the enemy by eliminating its reconnaissance forces. The winner of this preliminary battle is often the winner of the main battle. Camouflage, by virtue of its inherent role in counterreconnaissance efforts, plays an important role in both battles.

Section I. Camouflage During Defensive Preparations

6-1. Objectives. The purpose of camouflage during defensive preparations is to mask key or sensitive activities. Successful camouflage of these activities will lead to an enemy force that is *blinded* and, therefore, more likely to attack into the strengths of our defense. These activities include—

- Location of reserve and counterattack forces.
- Preparation and trace of survivability positions and obstacles.
- Nature of any engineering work.
- Maneuver of forces.

6-2. Signatures. There are a number of signatures that may indicate to Threat forces that we are making defensive preparations. The Threat analyzes these signatures to determine the outline of our defensive plan. Specific signatures that could reveal our defensive plans include—

- Engineering work on survivability positions.
- Reparation of minefield and other obstacles.
- Movement of different types of combat materiel into prepared positions.
- Reparation of routes and facilities for defensive forces maneuver.
- Construction of strong points or hardened artillery positions.
- Use or patterns of smoke and obscurants.

6-3. Reserve and Counterattack Forces.

a. *Planning.* Due to the similarity of missions, the concerns for camouflaging counterattack and reserve forces are similar to those of maneuver forces engaged in offensive

operations. Chapter 5 discusses considerations concerning assembly areas, troop and supply movements, passages of lines, and deception operations. This information is also useful as a guide when planning camouflage for counterattack.

Proper planning is essential to ensure the greatest chance of avoiding Threat detection and preventing successful enemy analysis of the engineering efforts integral to defensive preparations. As engineering equipment creates significant signatures, minimize its use on any mission to a level commensurate with available labor and time resources. Disperse any engineering equipment not required at the job site. Complete as much work as possible without heavy equipment and allow heavy equipment on site only when necessary. Engineers should minimize their time on site by conducting thorough and extensive planning and preparations.

Additional signatures that should concern camouflage planners include—

- Arrival and departure of supplies, personnel, and vehicles into the unit area.
- Construction of survivability positions.
- Smoke and heat from kitchens, fires, and stoves.
- Operation of communications facilities.
- Educational and training exercises.

b. *Movement.* Reserve forces should move along preplanned, concealed routes. They should also move and occupy selected locations at night or during other conditions of limited visibility. Quarters parties should preselect individual positions and guide vehicles and personnel to assigned locations. Light, noise, and track discipline are essential, but they are the most difficult to control during this phase. The quarters party should also develop a traffic-flow plan that minimizes movement of vehicles and troops to and from the unit area. Strictly enforce the plan to minimize movement and signatures, both of which are easily detected. Arriving units should immediately begin to conceal their positions. Commanders should detail the priorities for camouflage, based on their assessment of which signatures present the greatest opportunity for Threat detection. The sections in Chapter 5 that dealt with camouflage of assembly areas and troop and supply movements also apply to reserve forces.

c. *Assembly Areas.* While assembly area camouflage actions are similar to those of counterattack and reserve force positions, the latter positions are more likely to be occupied for a longer period. Therefore, camouflage needs are more intensive and extended for counterattack and reserve forces. In fact, their camouflage operations are often indistinguishable from those of support units that routinely deploy to positions located behind the forward line of own troops (FLOT).

Reserve and counterattack forces awaiting employment should capitalize on available time to conduct small-unit, skill-maintenance education and training exercises. Ensure proper concealment of these exercises. While essential, these activities are prone to be detected by Threat sensors. Observe camouflage discipline at all times and locations.

d. *Placement and Dispersal* Site selection is crucial when concealing the engineer effort. Proper placement and dispersal of equipment and operations are essential. Use natural screens (terrain masking); however, urban areas often provide the best concealment for counterattack and reserve forces. Chapter 8 discusses placement and dispersal in more detail. When using forests as natural screens, carefully consider factors such as the height and density of the vegetation, the amount and darkness of the shadows cast by the screen, and the appropriateness of the particular screen for the season. The condition and quality of natural screens have a decisive effect on the capability to conceal units. Commanders should include the evaluation of natural screens during engineer reconnaissance missions and conduct these missions on a timely and extensive basis.

The possibility of detection increases considerably when survivability positions are prepared. Detection is made easier due to the increased size of the objects to be camouflaged, the easier detection of contrasting upturned soil, and the difficulty of camouflaging a construction operation in progress. Despite these considerations, the enhanced protection afforded by survivability positions usually dictates their use. To minimize the possibility of detection, employ a combination of natural screens and overhead nets to conceal construction sites.

6-4. LCSS. Use the LCSS to camouflage vehicles, tents, shelters, and equipment. Use vegetation to further distort the outline of the object, rather than completely hide it. Ensure vegetation is not removed from one location, leaving a signature for Threat detection. Gather vegetation sparingly from many nearby areas. This technique allows your immediate area to remain relatively undisturbed.

6-5. Stoves and Fires. Strictly control stove and fire use. Fires and stoves produce visual and thermal signatures that Threat sensors may detect. In cases where fires are necessary, permit them only during daylight hours. Place fires in dead ground or under dense foliage. Using nets and other expedient thermal screens will also serve to dissipate heat, reducing a fire's thermal signature.

6-6. Communications. Discipline communications to prevent Threat intelligence teams from identifying unit locations. FM 24-33 addresses techniques essential for reducing the threat to friendly communications. Use as few wire communication lines as possible, because the Threat can easily identify and trace communication lines.

6-7. Camouflage Discipline. Strict camouflage discipline will allow the continued concealment of a unit's position. The longer a unit stays in one location, the harder it is for the unit to maintain camouflage discipline. Extended encampments require constant command attention to camouflage discipline. Evacuation of an area also requires camouflage discipline to ensure that evidence (such as trash and vehicle tracks) is not left for enemy detection.

Section II. Survivability Positions and Obstacles

6-8. Description. Survivability positions include fighting positions, protective positions (shelters), and connecting trenchworks. They are usually constructed of earth and logs but may also be composed of man-made building materials such as concrete.

6-9. Placement. Proper placement of positions and obstacles is the single, most important camouflage consideration. When possible, place positions and obstacles out of the direct view of

Threat forces. An excellent example of this technique is the reverse-slope defense. Place positions and obstacles at night or under other conditions of limited visibility.

6-10. Backgrounds. Select backgrounds that do not silhouette positions or obstacles or that provide color contrast. Use shadows to make detection by Threat forces more difficult. Place positions or obstacles under overhead cover, trees, or bushes, or any other dark area of the terrain. This technique will prevent disruption of terrain lines and possible aerial detection.

When using the terrain's natural concealment properties, avoid isolated features that usually draw the attention of enemy observers. Similarly, do not construct positions directly on or near other clearly defined terrain features (such as tree lines, hedge rows, and hill crests). Offsetting positions into tree lines or below hill crests not only avoids silhouetting against the background, but also counters enemy fire.

6-11. Natural Camouflage Materials.

a. Use natural materials to supplement artificial materials. Before constructing positions or obstacles, remove and save natural materials (such as turf, leaves, and humus) for later use in restoring the terrain's natural appearance. During excavation, collect spoil in carrying devices for careful disposal. Avoid disturbing the natural look of surroundings. Use LCSS and natural vegetation to further distort the outline of a position or to hide the bottom of an open position or trench, as well as to mask spoil used as a parapet. To further avoid detection, replace natural materials regularly or as wilt and color change set in.

b. Consider the effect of back blast from rocket launchers, missile systems, and antitank weapons. Install concealed open space to the position's rear to accommodate back blast. The back-blast area should not contain material that will readily burn or generate large dust signatures.

c. Use natural materials to supplement camouflage of machine gun nests. Machine guns are priority targets, and their concealment is an essential combat task. Although camouflage is important, placement is the primary factor in concealing machine guns.

d. Place mortars in defilade positions. Proper placement, coupled with artificial and natural camouflage materials, will provide the maximum possible concealment. Also consider removable overhead concealment.

e. Use decoy positions and obstacles to draw enemy attention away from actual survivability positions and obstacle traces. Decoys serve the additional function of drawing enemy fire, allowing easier targeting of Threat weapon systems.

6-12. Camouflage During Battle. Camouflage during the defensive battle is essentially the same as that for the offense. While a majority of the battle is normally fought from prepared, camouflaged positions, defensive forces will still maneuver to prevent enemy breakthroughs or to counterattack.

When maneuvering, units should adapt to the terrain, making optimum use of concealed routes. Preselect and improve concealed routes to provide defensive forces a maneuver advantage. Plan smoke operations to provide additional concealment for maneuvering forces.