

Individual Fighting Positions

Build an invisible two-man fighting hole that cannot be suppressed. Fight your position even under enemy suppressive fire. Stay hidden to avoid the enemy's preplanned fires, and surprise him with effective fire before he can locate your position. Fire from behind frontal cover to defeat his mutual support, overwatch, fire and movement, and assault fires.

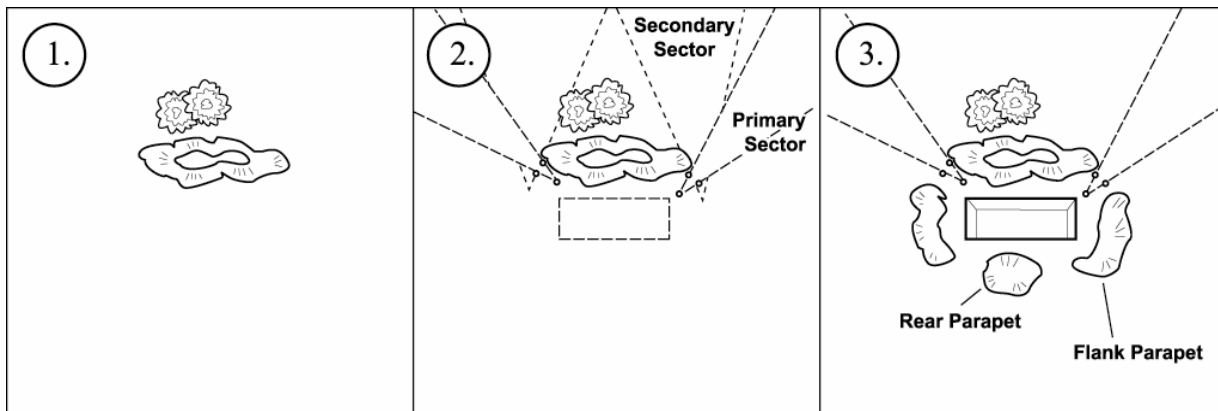
How to Build a Fighting Hole

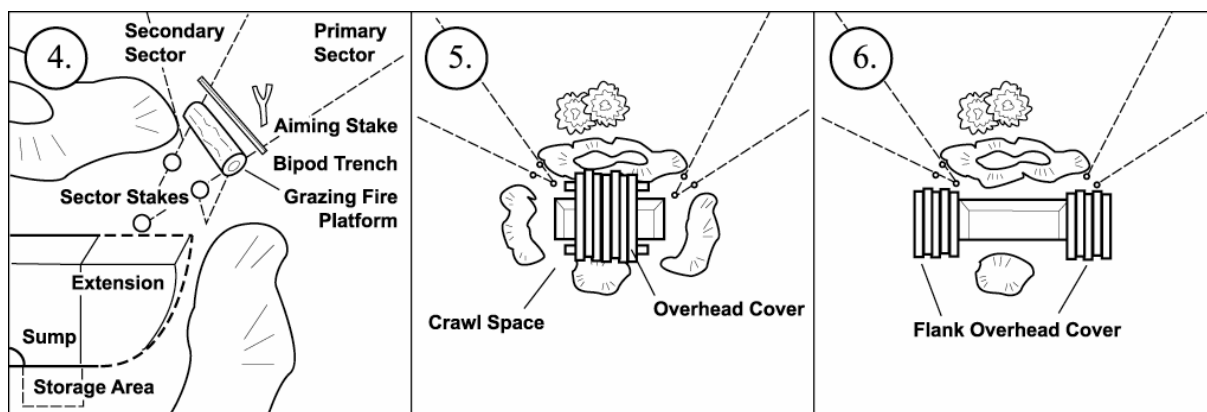
Your sector of fire defines your fighting hole. Given a sector of fire by your unit leader:

- 1. Select some natural frontal cover** – trees, rocks, earth, or rubble – **that protects you from enemy direct fire.** The best frontal cover is 18 inches of dirt, high enough to hide your head and wide enough to hide the muzzle flashes of two men. This is your hasty position.
- 2. Establish your sectors of fire.** Primary sectors cover your left and right lateral limits with *oblique* fire. Secondary sectors cover your front. Sectors should not exceed 45 degrees. Hammer in 3 sector stakes for each primary sector. Selectively clear fields of fire, focusing on low vegetation that will block your fires. Scratch an outline of your hole in the dirt.
- 3. Dig your hole armpit deep.** Use the dirt to create flank and rear parapets. Leave a front shelf for elbow holes and sector stakes. Natural camouflage should not be disturbed.

Camouflage your flank and rear parapets with turf. No fresh earth should be visible from the enemy's direction.

- 4. Improve your hole.** If needed, extend each end of your hole to allow you to observe and fire on your secondary sectors. Keep your hole small to protect you from grenades and shell bursts. If needed for low visibility, hammer in y-shaped aiming stakes. Add a log or sandbag grazing fire platform. If needed, dig a bipod trench. Dig a grenade sump and slope the floor toward the sump. Dig a storage area in the back wall for equipment and ammunition.
- 5. Build overhead cover.** Reinforce the front and rear parapets with logs. Lay a support layer of logs or engineer stakes across the parapets. Cover this with a waterproof layer of flattened boxes, a poncho, plywood or plastic sheeting, and an 8-inch protective layer of earth. Maintain enough head room so you can fight your primary sector from under the overhead cover. **Camouflage your overhead cover with turf.**





6. Build flank overhead cover if center overhead cover is impossible. Lay a support layer of logs or engineer stakes at both ends of your hole, just below ground level. Cover this with a waterproof layer of flattened boxes, a poncho, plywood or plastic sheeting, and an 8-inch protective layer of earth as a flank parapet. Dig a covered space beneath these logs.

Requirements of a Fighting Hole

Once your sector is covered by fire, your fighting hole:

- Must be invisible
- Must provide frontal cover

These requirements are best met by selecting good natural ground. It takes *less* work to build an excellent position on good ground than to build a poor position in the open.

Your fighting hole must be invisible. If the enemy can see it at 35 meters – grenade range – he will destroy it. Your fighting hole may be perfectly built, but if it is visible to the enemy you will be killed.

Natural frontal cover – trees, rocks, earth, or rubble – is the best camouflage. It is readily available, will not attract attention, and does not need to be replaced. Shaded locations are best. Do not spoil natural camouflage when digging. If using sandbags, wet them, mold them, then camouflage. Do not over-clear fields of fire.

Invisible positions protect you from:

- Direct fire, machineguns, missiles, and RPGs,
- Indirect fire, and
- Observation

Invisible positions surprise the enemy by engaging him before he sees you. **Check your camouflage from the enemy's point of view.**

Your fighting hole must provide frontal cover. Frontal cover allows you to fight even while being suppressed. Fire from behind frontal cover to defeat the enemy's mutual support, overwatch, fire and movement, and assault fires.

Natural frontal cover – trees, rocks, earth, or rubble – is best. Insure something solid is between the enemy and your head. Do *not* attempt, as is shown in some manuals, to fire over the top of your frontal cover. Fire at the enemy at an oblique angle while protected by your frontal cover.

- Frontal cover protects you from enemy small arms and large caliber direct fire.
- Flank and rear cover protect you from small arms direct fire and indirect fire – *and* friendly fire. Natural cover is best, but man-made parapets are sufficient.
- Overhead cover protects you from indirect fire and grenades and adds to concealment. Overhead camouflage is *not* cover.

Your fighting hole must provide – and receive – mutual support from adjacent holes. Interlocking fires across the front of each hole are required. Unit leaders coordinate the fires of multiple fighting positions.

Notes

- Build a man-made frontal parapet only as a last resort in completely clear terrain.
- A one-man fighting position is built the same way. One-man positions do not benefit from alternate watches, sharing ammunition, casualty assistance, or psychological support.
- Every position does not need to fire in two directions. Every position does not need secondary sectors of fire.
- On steep terrain, avoid silhouetting yourself. Dig a curved 'C'-shaped fighting hole with both ends facing downhill.
- Sandbag bunkers – protecting existing structures that cannot be hidden – are *not* fighting holes.

Guidelines

Your fighting hole should be:

Simple. Select good ground. The fastest and easiest fighting hole is a good natural position. Natural terrain hides you in folds in the ground. This is the best camouflage and the best cover. A good position needs less digging. A great position, a sharp dip in the ground surrounded by berms, would require almost no digging, and would naturally limit your fields of fire without aiming stakes.

Clever. Good fighting holes ambush the enemy through clever selection, construction and camouflage, and clever use of both natural and man-made available materials.

Progressive. Your fighting hole should be continuously improved from hasty position to deliberate position to overheard covered position.

See *FM 21-75 Combat Skills of the Soldier*,
Chapter Two: Fighting Positions