

Chapter 5

Offensive Operations

Camouflage measures implemented during an offensive prevent the enemy from discovering friendly units' locations, actions, and intentions. Successful camouflage contributes to achieving surprise and reduces subsequent personnel and equipment losses.

5-1. Camouflage During Offensive Preparations.

a. *Considerations.* The main camouflage concern in preparing for an offensive is to mask unit deployment. While camouflage is the primary means of masking these activities, deception operations frequently achieve these goals.

b. *Signatures.* Offensive operations create signatures that the enemy can detect. Further analysis of these signatures may alert the enemy to our offensive operations (such as planning and location). Commanders at all levels should be swam of the signatures their operations emit and strive to conceal them from enemy surveillance. These signatures include—

- Increased scouting and reconnaissance activity.
- Preparation of traffic routes.
- Forward movement of supplies and ammunition.
- Obstacle breaching.
- Engineer preparation and the occupation of assembly areas.
- Preparation and occupation of forward artillery positions.
- Increased radio communications.

5-2. Preparations.

a. *Assembly Areas.* Engineers should conduct assembly area preparations during conditions of limited visibility. They should also remove any indication (signatures) of their activities as quickly as possible.

(1) *Location.* Designate assembly areas on terrain with natural screens and a developed network of roads and paths. Thick forests and small towns and villages often provide the best assembly locations. In the absence of natural screens, use spotty sectors of the terrain or previously

occupied locations. Place equipment on spots matching its coloring, and take maximum advantage of artificial camouflage materials.

(2) **Movement.** Designate concealed routes for movement into and out of the area. Mask the noise of movement by practicing good noise discipline. For instance, the noise of armor movement can be muffled by the thunder of artillery fire, the noise of low-flying aircraft, or the transmissions of sound broadcast sets.

(3) **Camouflage.**

(a) **Vehicles.** Position vehicles to take full advantage of the terrain's natural concealment properties, and cover them with the LCSS. Apply touch-up paint and cut vegetation to vehicles to enhance camouflage at the assembly area and during battle. As assembly areas are particularly vulnerable to aerial detection, strictly enforce track and movement discipline. Take care to remove any tracks by covering or sweeping them with branches. Strictly enforce radio discipline.

(b) **Personnel.** While at the assembly area, personnel should apply individual camouflage. Application of stick paint and cut vegetation will enhance camouflage during all phases of the operation.

b. **Decoys.** The Threat may interpret decoy construction as efforts to reinforce defensive positions. Activities such as laying fake minefield and building bunkers and positions can conceal actual offensive preparations and give the enemy the impression that defenses are being improved. If necessary, conduct engineer preparation activities on a wide front so as not to reveal the area of the main attack.

c. **Troop and Supply Movements.** Move troops, ammunition, supplies, and engineer breaching equipment forward at night and under other conditions of limited visibility. Although the Threat's use of radar and IR aerial reconnaissance hinders concealed operations at night, darkness remains a significant concealment tool. Select routes that take full advantage of the terrain's screening properties. Commanders must understand how to combine darkness and the terrain's concealing properties to camouflage troop and supply movements.

(1) **Movement Orders.** When conducting a march, convoy commanders must strictly enforce blackout requirements and the order of march. Guidelines concerning lighting, march order, and other requirements are usually published in SOPs or operation orders. Required lighting conditions usually vary depending on the type of movement (convoy versus single-vehicle) and the unit's location (such as forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), division area, and corps rear area). Inspect each vehicle's blackout devices for proper operation.

(2) **Speed of March.** Enemy aerial reconnaissance usually focuses on open and barely passable route sectors. Therefore, when on the march, vehicles should pass these types of sectors at the highest possible speeds. If prolonged delays result from encountering an unexpected obstacle, halt

the column and disperse into the nearest natural screens. If vehicles break down during the movement, push them off the road and camouflage them.

(3) **Movement During Times of Good Visibility.** When marches must be conducted under conditions of good visibility, consider moving by infiltration (single or small groups of vehicles released at different intervals). Movement in stages, from one natural screen to the next, will further minimize possible detection. Use smoke screens at critical crossings or choke points.

(4) **Halts.** When stopping briefly, quickly disperse vehicles under tree crowns or other concealment along the sides of the road. Strictly enforce camouflage discipline. Particularly important points to avoid are glare from vehicle windshields, headlights, or reflectors and the control of troop movement on the road or in other open areas. Conduct reconnaissance to select areas for long halts. The reconnaissance party should select areas large enough to allow sufficient camouflage and dispersion. The quartering party should predetermine vehicle placement, develop a vehicle circulation plan, and guide the vehicles into suitable and concealed locations. The first priority, however, is to move vehicles off the road as quickly as possible, even at the expense of initial dispersion. Use the LCSS and natural vegetation to enhance camouflage. Carefully camouflage dug-in positions.

(5) **Traffic Control.** Traffic control personnel have a crucial role in enforcing convoy camouflage. Commanders should issue precise instructions to their traffic control personnel to stop passing vehicles and have the drivers correct the slightest violation of camouflage discipline. Convoy commanders are responsible for the convoy's camouflage discipline.

d. *Line Crossings.* Pass through friendly obstacles at night, in fog, or under other conditions of poor visibility. As these conditions will not protect against many types of Threat sensors, use smoke screens. Lay smoke on a wide front and several times before actually executing the passage of lines. Doing this will help to deceive the enemy about the time and place of attack. Camouflage lanes through obstacles from enemy view.

e. *Deception Operations.* Conduct demonstrations and feints to confuse the enemy as to the actual location of the main attack. Such deception operations will be effective only if prior reconnaissance activities were conducted on a wide front, thereby preventing the enemy from pinpointing the likely main attack area. See FM 90-2 for more detailed information about deception operations.

5-3. Camouflage During the Battle. When conducting battle, units should adapt to the terrain. Deploying behind natural vegetation, a terrain feature, or a man-made structure will maximize concealment from enemy observation. Make optimum use of concealed routes, hollows, gullies, and other terrain features that are dead-space areas to enemy observation and firing positions. A trade-off, however, usually exists in terms of a slower rate of movement when using these types of routes.

a. *Movement Considerations.* Movement techniques emphasizing fire and maneuver will aid in preventing enemy observation and targeting. Avoid dusty terrain, as clouds of dust will alert the

enemy to your presence. When natural cover and concealment are unavailable or impractical to use, the coordinated employment of smoke, suppressive fires, speed, and natural limited-visibility conditions will minimize exposure and avoid enemy fire sacks. However, offensive operations under these conditions present unique training and command and control challenges.

b. *Breaching Operations.* Breaching operations require the concealment of the unit conducting the breach. Use conditions of poor visibility and plan the use of smoke and suppressive fires to screen breaching operations. Deliberate river crossings present a unique challenge. Plan the coordinated use of terrain masking, smoke, decoys, and deception operations to ensure successful crossings (see FM 90-13).