

Chapter 6

Use of Cover and Concealment

On the battlefield, a firing position that allows maximum observation of the enemy as well as cover and concealment is a necessity. A good position will provide a solid foundation for the pistol, maximize the use of cover to provide protection from enemy fire, allow mobility, and provide observation of the enemy. Where possible, the cover should be used to provide additional support for the position.

Note

The procedures in this chapter are written for right-handed Marines; left-handed Marines must reverse directions as needed.

6001. Selection of Cover and Concealment

a. Cover. Cover is anything that provides protection from enemy fire. When contact with the enemy is made, it is important to seek cover as quickly as possible. Cover should be, at a minimum:

- (1) Thick enough to stop small arms fire.
- (2) High enough to protect the Marine when firing from behind cover.

b. Concealment. Concealment is anything that hides a Marine from enemy view; it might not afford protection. Concealment can be provided by brush, trees, etc.

c. Cover Materials. Natural cover (rocks, logs, rubble, etc.) is best because it is hard to detect. But good cover also includes buildings, structures, etc. Any material that may protect an individual from small arms fire should be used for cover. The best type of cover is dirt packed to a minimum thickness of 18 inches. Some other common types of cover material are:

- (1) **Cinder Blocks.** Cinder blocks used as foundations for houses or walls are not impenetrable cover. Although they are made of a dense material, they are brittle and can shatter upon impact from small arms fire, causing injury by secondary fragmentation.
- (2) **Trees/Logs/Telephone Poles.** Wood is a relatively dense material and offers good covering protection. Bullets have a tendency to fragment when they penetrate wood. Live trees have a greater resistance to bullet penetration than dead wood. Wood that has been treated with creosote, such as telephone poles and railroad ties, offers better protection from projectiles than untreated wood; but still does not ensure positive protection from small arms fire.

(3) Sandbags. Sandbags can be used for cover. Tests have shown that bullets more easily penetrate sandbags that are loosely filled or moist. The water in moist dirt and sand allows the bullet to travel easier; loosely packed dirt and sand contains pockets of air for the bullet to travel through. If sandbags are tamped down, their density is increased. Sandbags should always be tightly packed. Doubling or overlapping sandbags increases the protection.

6002. Considerations for Firing from Cover

The effective use of cover will enable engagement of enemy targets while affording protection from enemy fire. Cover can be effectively used to conceal the Marine from enemy view while searching for targets. There are several considerations to keep in mind when firing from cover.

a. Adjustment of the Firing Position. Cover should provide additional support for the position. The firing position must be adjusted behind cover to ensure stability, mobility, and observation of the enemy.

(1) The firing position will depend on the Marine's height in relation to the height of the cover. The firing position must minimize exposure to the enemy but allow observation of the area.

(2) Even though support is used, continue to apply the same amount of muscular tension in the grip, wrist, and forearms. Muscular tension is still necessary to stabilize the weapon sights and manage recovery.

(3) Because the sights are higher than the muzzle of the weapon, the Marine must ensure that the muzzle of the weapon clears the cover as he obtains sight alignment/sight picture on the target. The closer the Marine is to the cover, the easier it is to ensure the muzzle clears the cover.

b. Application of the Weaver and Isosceles Variations. The type of cover may dictate which variation of a firing position will be the most effective. The position should provide the Marine with the maximum amount of stability and control and allow the Marine to manage recoil effectively to recover on target.

(1) Weaver Variation. The weaver variation exposes less of the body from behind cover due to the angle of the body. The Weaver variation may be better suited for firing from behind the right or left side of cover. For instance, the Weaver prone is ideal for firing from behind a log.

(2) Isosceles Variation. The Isosceles variation is good for firing over the top of cover (e.g., a window). The Isosceles prone is ideal for firing from behind narrow cover (e.g., a telephone pole).

c. Keeping the Entire Body Behind Cover. Avoid inadvertent exposure of any part of the body. Be especially aware of the top of the head, elbows, knees, or any other body part that may extend beyond the cover.

- (1) **Log/Curb.** When firing from behind a log or curb, the Marine must present the lowest possible silhouette, and may use the log/curb for maximum support of the position. For maximum protection, muzzle clearance is kept as close as possible to the top of the log/curb. Firing can be done from either side or top of the log depending on cover and concealment. See figure 6-1. The Marine will fire over the top of a curb when it is used for cover.



Figure 6-1. Firing Around a Log.

- (2) **Wall or Barricade.** Firing is done from either side or over the top of a wall or barricade. See figure 6-2.

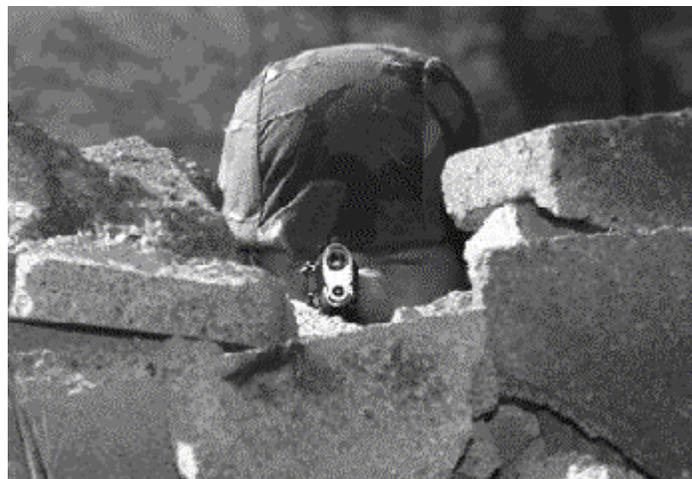


Figure 6-2. Firing From a Barricade.

- (3) **Window.** In situations where the Marine has not been detected by the enemy, he should use the side of the window or the window sill for support. Ideally, it is best to fire from the corner of the window sill when using the window for support. If there is little chance for

detection or the shot can be made without support, the Marine should remain well back and to the side of the window opening so the pistol will not protrude and his body is concealed by the shadows/darkness of the room. If the Marine is positioned too close to the window, his body will provide a silhouette to the enemy.

- (3) **Vehicle.** In many combat situations particularly in urban environments, a vehicle may be the best form of cover. When using a vehicle for cover, the engine block provides the most protection from small arms fire. The Marine should establish a position behind the front wheel or front door jamb to position himself so the engine block is between him and the target. See figure 6-3. From this position the Marine may fire over the hood of the car or underneath the car from behind the wheel. At the back of the car, the only cover is provided by the axle and the wheel. If the Marine must shoot from the back of the car, he must position himself directly behind the wheel as much as possible. See figure 6-4.

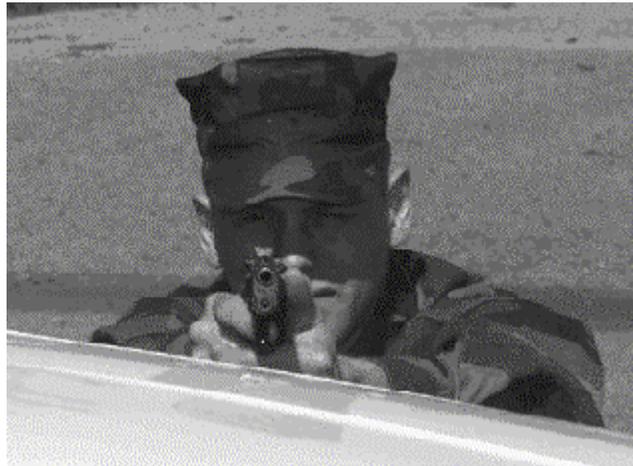


Figure 6-3. Firing Over the Hood of a Vehicle.

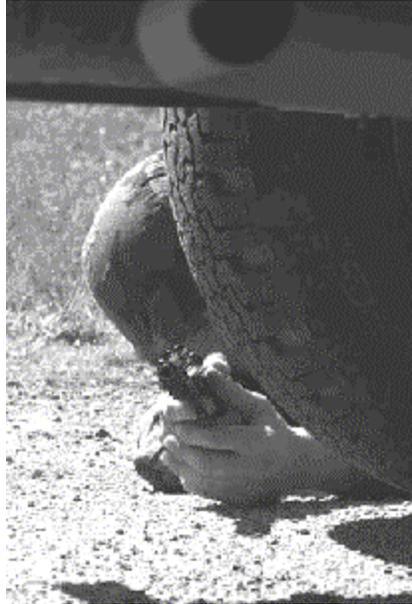


Figure 6-4. Firing From the Back of a Vehicle.

d. Support for the Position and the Pistol. The support should be used to help stabilize both the firing position and the pistol to enable the Marine to maintain sight alignment and sight picture.

- The forearms or hands can contact the support to stabilize the weapon. The Marine may rest the pistol on or against the support as long as the support does not interfere or affect the cycle of operation of the weapon. See figure 6-5.
- When firing over the top of cover, the position may be supported and stabilized by resting the trigger guard or the magazine on the cover. See figure 6-6. Likewise, the pistol may be pushed up against the support so the “V” formed by the receiver and the front of the trigger guard rests firmly against the support.
- When firing around the sides of cover, the position may be supported and stabilized by placing the back of the hand or arm against the cover. Avoid placing the slide of the pistol against the cover because it can interfere with the cycle of operation of the pistol. However, the weapon can be canted and placed against the cover so the trigger guard or the “V” formed between the receiver and trigger guard rests against the support. This position will enable the Marine to expose less of himself to the enemy. See figure 6-7.



Figure 6-5. Hand Resting on Support.



Figure 6-6. Trigger Guard Resting Against Support.



Figure 6-7. Hand Resting Against Side of Support.

- When using a vehicle for cover, the Marine can establish additional support for the pistol by positioning himself in the car behind the door jamb (frame of door) and placing his hands or pistol against the "V" formed by the open door and door frame. See figure 6-8.



Figure 6-8. Firing From Behind the Door Jamb of a Vehicle.

- When shooting from the left side of cover, the Marine should still use his right hand and eye. See figure 6-9. He may have to cant his head and the pistol to the left to establish

sight alignment. For right-handed Marines, shooting from the left side of cover may expose more of the Marine to the enemy than shooting from the right side.



Figure 6-9. Firing From the Left Side of Cover.

e. Change Positions. If the Marine has been firing from cover and has to reload or clear a stoppage behind cover, he should attempt to resume firing from a different position. The enemy will be aware of the Marine's position and will be waiting for him to reappear.

f. Movement. In combat, the Marine must be constantly aware of his surroundings and available cover should enemy contact occur.

- When moving from cover to cover, the Marine should select the next cover location and plan his route before moving from his present position. This is done by quickly looking from behind cover to ensure the area is clear, ensuring the head and eyes are exposed for as short a time as possible.
- If necessary, the Marine should conduct a Condition 1 reload before moving from cover.
- Once the Marine is committed to moving, all focus should be on moving until cover is reassumed.

6003. Supported Firing Positions

In combat, the Marine may not have the time to assume a perfect firing position. He must know instinctively that his position is correct rather than follow a regimented sequence of movements to ensure its correctness. With training, the Marine can assume stable firing positions quickly and instinctively by incorporating the use of cover for support. Supports are foundations for positions; positions are foundations for the pistol. To maximize the support the position provides, the firing position should be adjusted to fit or conform to the shape of the cover. Elements of a sound firing position, such as balance and stability, must be incorporated and adjusted to fit the situation and type of cover.

a. General. A supported firing position should minimize exposure to the enemy, maximize the stability of the pistol and protection from fire, and provide observation of the enemy. Any stable support may be used such as logs, sandbags, or walls. The surrounding environment will dictate the support and position. The size, distance to the target, and time will affect the need for stability and recovery in the selection of a supported firing position.

(1) For example, for a target a great distance from the Marine, the Marine may choose to sacrifice some of his ability to manage recoil in order to assume a supported firing position which will provide him additional stability needed to fire accurately at long range.

(2) On the other hand, recovery may be more important for the Marine if he must fire multiple shots on target quickly. In this situation, the Marine may choose to sacrifice some stability in his supported firing position in order to engage a target with multiple shots.

b. Supported Prone. The supported prone position provides the lowest silhouette, providing maximum protection from enemy fire. The prone position can be assumed behind a tree, a wall, or almost any type of cover. It is flexible and allows shooting from all sides and from cover of varying sizes. To assume the prone position and maximize the use of cover:

- Keep the position as low as possible to ensure no part of the body is exposed to the enemy.
- To maximize the use of cover, the body must conform to cover.
 - If the cover is narrow, the Marine should position his body directly behind it and keep his legs together. The Marine's body should be in line with the pistol, directly behind the weapon. The Isosceles prone position presents a smaller target to the enemy and more body mass to absorb recoil.
 - The Weaver prone position is ideally suited to fire from around cover (e.g., log) because of the angle of the body. See figure 6-10.



Figure 6-10. Weaver Prone.

- c. **Supported Kneeling.** When the prone position cannot be used because of the height of the support, the supported kneeling position may be appropriate. The kneeling position allows shooting from all sides and from cover of varying sizes. This position may be altered to maximize the use of cover or support by assuming a variation of the kneeling position (high, medium, low, or two-kneed). The kneeling position provides additional mobility over the prone position. In the kneeling position, the Marine must not telegraph his position behind the cover with his knee. For example, to fire from the left side of cover, the Marine may change knees. Any part of the body that is exposed presents a target. See figure 6-11.

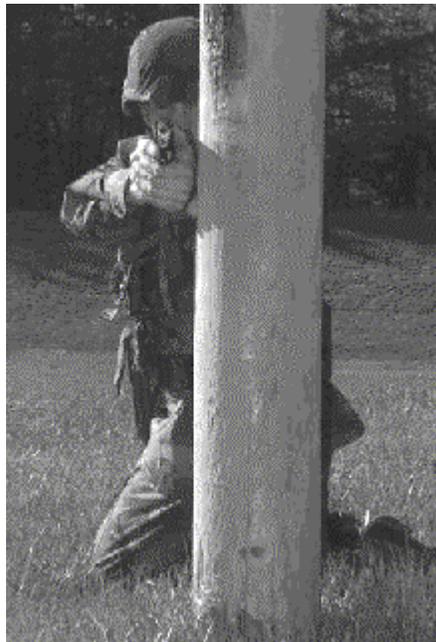


Figure 6-11. Supported Kneeling.

- d. **Supported Standing.** When use of the support is maximized, the supported standing position can be as stable as the supported kneeling or prone position. The supported standing position provides greater mobility than the other positions and usually provides greater observation of the enemy. In the standing position, the Marine must not telegraph his position behind the cover with his foot. See figure 6-12.

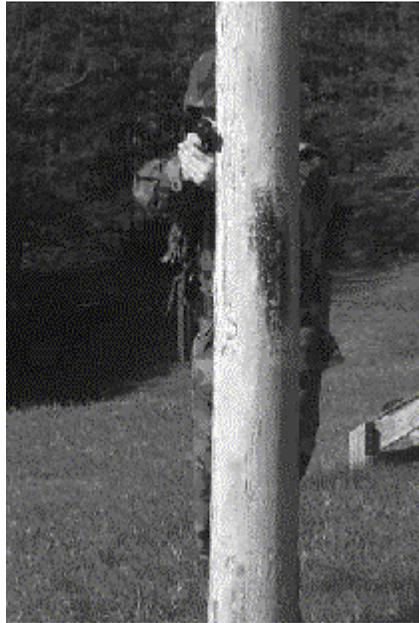


Figure 6-12. Supported Standing.

6004. Searching for Targets and Engaging Them from Behind Cover

To locate targets when behind cover or to ensure the area is clear before moving, the Marine must expose as little of himself as possible to the enemy. Additionally, the Marine must be ready to fire if a target is located. There are two techniques that the Marine can use to locate and engage targets from behind cover: the pie and rollout techniques. These techniques minimize the Marine's exposure to enemy fire while placing the Marine in a position to engage targets or to move to another location if necessary. Both techniques are used in the kneeling and standing positions.

- a. **Pie Technique.** In this technique, a Weaver position is the most effective because the position of the body minimizes exposure from cover. To perform the pie technique:

- Staying behind cover, move back and away from the leading edge of the cover. The surroundings and situation will dictate the distance the Marine should move back and away from the cover. Generally, the further back the Marine is from cover, the greater his area of observation; staying too close to cover decreases the area of observation.
- Assume a firing position and lower the pistol sights enough to have a clear field of view, aiming in on the leading edge of the cover.
- Taking small side steps, slowly move out from behind the cover, covering the field of view with the aiming eye and muzzle of the weapon. Wherever the eyes move, the muzzle should move (eyes, muzzle, target). See figures 6-13 and 6-14.



Figure 6-13. Pie Technique - Moving Out From Behind Cover.



Figure 6-14. Pie Technique - Moving Out From Behind Cover (Cont.).

- Continue moving out from cover until a target is identified or the area is found to be clear.
- When a target is identified, sweep the safety, place the finger on the trigger, and engage the target.
- If a target is identified before moving out from cover, the pistol should be thumbcocked and off safe before moving out.
- When necessary, locate and move to other cover.

b. Rollout Technique. In this technique, an Isosceles position is the most effective because the position of the body allows the Marine to better maintain his balance. To perform the rollout technique:

- Staying behind cover, move back and position the body so it is in line with the leading edge of the cover, ensuring that no part of the body extends beyond the cover.
- Assume a firing position and come to the Ready, ensuring the muzzle is just behind the cover.
- Canting the head and weapon slightly, roll the upper body out to the side just enough to have a clear field of view. Keeping the feet in place, push up on the ball of one foot to facilitate rolling out. See figure 6-15.



Figure 6-15. Rollout Technique.

- Continue rolling out from cover until a target is identified or the area is found to be clear.
- When a target is identified, sweep the safety, place the finger on the trigger, and engage the target.
- If a target is identified before moving out from cover, the pistol should be thumbcocked and off safe before moving out.
- When necessary, locate and move to other cover.

c. Combining the Pie and Rollout Techniques. In some situations, it may be necessary to utilize both the pie and rollout technique in order to search an entire area for targets (i.e., corner of a building, doorway). Changing from one technique to another may allow the Marine to minimize his exposure to the enemy and reduce the time he is exposed to enemy fire.