

8-84. At a minimum, the following actions must be taken:

- The platoon approaches the defensive positions from the rear or flank.
- The platoon establishes direct fire control measures or, if these are preplanned, reviews the plan.
- The platoon leader reports, "Occupied" to the company commander.

8-85. The platoon conducts deliberate occupation of defensive positions when time is available, when enemy contact is not expected, and when friendly elements are positioned forward in the sector to provide security for forces in the main battle area. Actually establishing defensive positions is accomplished concurrently with the development of the engagement area. The platoon leader directs the initial reconnaissance from the engagement area and then tentatively emplaces crew-served weapon systems.

8-86. Once the defensive positions are established, subordinate leaders can begin to develop their sector sketches and fire plans based on the basic fire plan developed during the leader's reconnaissance. Fighting positions are improved while the direct fire plan is finalized and proofed. The platoon leader, with guidance from the company commander, designates the level of preparation for each defensive position based on the time available and other tactical considerations for the mission. The three levels of defensive position preparation (occupy, prepare, and reconnoiter) are listed here in descending order of thoroughness and time required.

### OCCUPY

8-87. Complete the preparation of the position from where the platoon will initially defend. The position is fully reconnoitered, prepared, and occupied prior to the "defend not later than (NLT)" time specified in the company order. The platoon must rehearse the occupation, and the platoon leader must establish a trigger for occupation of the position.

### PREPARE

8-88. The position and the corresponding engagement area will be fully reconnoitered. Squad positions in the defensive positions and direct fire control measures in the engagement area should be marked. Survivability positions may be dug, ammunition caches pre-positioned, and protective obstacles emplaced.

### RECONNOITER

8-89. Both the engagement area and defensive positions will be fully reconnoitered. Tentative weapon positions should be planned in the defensive positions, and direct fire control measures should be established in the engagement area.

8-90. In addition to establishing the platoon's primary defensive positions, the platoon leader and subordinate leaders normally plan for preparation and occupation of alternate, supplementary, and subsequent defensive positions. This is done IAW the company order. See Section II for characteristics of alternate, supplementary, and subsequent defensive positions.

### PRIORITY OF WORK

8-91. Leaders must ensure that Soldiers prepare for the defense quickly and efficiently. Work must be done in order of priority to accomplish the most in the least amount of time while maintaining security and the ability to respond to enemy action. Below are basic considerations for priorities of work.

- Emplace local security (all leaders).
- Position and assign sectors of fire for each squad (platoon leader).
- Position and assign sectors of fire for the CCMS and medium machine gun teams (platoon leader).
- Position and assign sectors of fire for M249 MG, grenadiers, and riflemen (squad leaders).
- Establish command post and wire communications.
- Designate FPLs and FPFs.
- Clear fields of fire and prepare range cards.

- Prepare sector sketches (leaders).
- Dig fighting positions (stage 1 [see Section VII]).
- Establish communication and coordination with the company and adjacent units.
- Coordinate with adjacent units. Review sector sketches.
- Emplace antitank and Claymore mines, then wire and other obstacles.
- Mark or improve marking for TRPs and other fire control measures.
- Improve primary fighting positions and add overhead cover (stage 2).
- Prepare supplementary and then alternate positions (same procedure as the primary position).
- Establish sleep and rest plans.
- Distribute and stockpile ammunition, food, and water.
- Dig trenches to connect positions.
- Continue to improve positions—construct revetments, replace camouflage, and add to overhead cover.

8-92. Unit priorities of work are normally found in SOPs. However, the commander will dictate the priorities of work for the company based on the factors of METT-TC. Several actions may be accomplished at the same time. Leaders must constantly supervise the preparation of fighting positions, both for tactical usefulness and proper construction.

## SECURITY IN THE DEFENSE

8-93. Security in the defense includes all active and passive measures taken to avoid detection by the enemy, deceive the enemy, and deny enemy reconnaissance elements accurate information on friendly positions. The two primary tools available to the platoon leader are observation posts and patrols. In planning for the security in the defense, the platoon leader considers the terrain in terms of OAKOC. He uses his map to identify terrain that will protect the platoon from enemy observation and fires while providing observation and fires into the engagement area. Additionally, he uses intelligence updates to increase his situational understanding, reducing the possibility of the enemy striking at a time or in a place for which the platoon is unprepared.

## OBSERVATION POSTS

8-94. An observation post gives the platoon its first echelon of security in the defense. The observation post provides early warning of impending enemy contact by reporting direction, distance, and size. It detects the enemy early and sends accurate reports to the platoon. The platoon leader establishes observation posts along the most likely enemy avenues of approach into the position or into the area of operations. Leaders ensure that observation posts have communication with the platoon.

8-95. Early detection reduces the risk of the enemy overrunning the observation post. Observation posts may also be equipped with a Javelin CLU to increase the ability to detect the enemy. They may receive infrared trip flares, infrared parachute flares, infrared M203 rounds, and even infrared mortar round support to illuminate the enemy. The platoon leader weighs the advantages and disadvantages of using infrared illumination when the enemy is known to have night vision devices that detect infrared light. Although infrared and thermal equipment within the platoon enables the platoon to see the observation post at a greater distance, the observation post should not be positioned outside the range of the platoon's small-arms weapons.

8-96. To further reduce the risk of fratricide, observation posts use GPS, if available, to navigate to the exit and entry point in the platoon's position. The platoon leader submits an observation post location to the company commander to ensure a no-fire area (NFA) is established around each observation post position. The commander sends his operational overlay with observation post positions to the battalion and adjacent units. He receives the same type overlay from adjacent units to assist in better command and control and fratricide avoidance. The platoon leader confirms that the company fire support element (FSE) has forwarded these locations to the battalion FSO and has received the appropriate NFAs on the fire support graphics.