out a logical recommendation to the commander. And if the commander questions the staff's recommendation during the COA decision brief, the staff officers have details readily available to support their recommendations.

After the staff has conducted wargaming and the commander has decided on a COA, a synchronization matrix can be used to fine-tune the selected COA. This synchronization becomes smooth and efficient after a disciplined wargame has been conducted, because the information is easily transferred from the worksheet and the staff officers' notes to the matrix. Additionally, the staff has "seen" the battle fought, and has already determined how, when, and where each BOS will contribute to it.

One of the most common problems is conducting the tactical decisionmaking process when time is limited; at such times, staffs routinely eliminate wargaming from the process. But units can produce better plans even if the commander and staff develop only one friendly COA and then conduct detailed wargaming and synchronization of that COA. A second way to speed up the process is for the commander to stay with the staff and personally influence the planning.

Although the time required depends upon the nature of the operation and the level of staff training, a staff should be able to wargame one friendly COA against one enemy COA in about an hour. To accomplish this, however, the commander or XO must usually keep the process moving.

What can happen when the staff officers feel the pressure of a short planning timeline is that they sit around the map, toss out ideas, then produce an operations order. This process lacks focus and discipline and relies heavily on tactical expertise. Lengthy brainstorming and debate on COAs are fine when there is enough time, but when there is not, wargaming should become *more* focused and disciplined, not less.

COA analysis is a crucial step in the planning process, yet one with which many staffs struggle. Methodical, disciplined wargaming arms each staff officer with a clear vision of anticipated events on the battlefield. This enables the staff to make clear, knowledgeable, and logical recommendations to the commander and to craft specific plans that support what they have envisioned during the wargaming.

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# Built-Down Fighting Positions

**CAPTAIN ROGER F. CAVAZOS**
**CAPTAIN ROBERT M. SMITH**

Today's technology allows the enemy to engage targets as far away as he can see them. If we want to protect our soldiers in the defense, we should develop fighting positions that are much harder to detect.

The most important functions of a fighting position are to protect a soldier from the effects of fire and conceal him from observation. Normally a position should provide a soldier with 36 to 78 inches of frontal cover and at least 18 inches of overhead cover. It should allow the soldier to engage the enemy within his assigned sector of fire all the way to the maximum effective range of his weapons, and with minimum dead space. The position should also be difficult to detect. All of these give the soldier protection and concealment and enable him to engage enemy forces on his own terms.

The old infantry fighting position (Figure 1) meets most of the criteria for an effective fighting position, except that it rises 24 to 27 inches above ground, and is therefore easier to see and easier to destroy.

The built-down series of fighting positions dramatically reduces detection and increases survivability. This series of positions includes the following:

**Built-Down (BD) Fighting Position.** This position (Figure 2) is best used in flat, open terrain such as deserts or plains. It has no frontal, flank, or rear parapets to cast shadows. It is dug down to chin level instead of the usual armpit level. This helps make up for frontal and flank positions.

The BD position is constructed in four stages:

- Measure and mark the outlines of the position; emplace the permanent sector stakes and grazing logs.
- Measure and mark the outlines of the overhead cover, and dig it out to a depth of 23 inches (18 inches plus the depth of the U-shaped pickets). Dig the shelf, which the soldier uses as an elbow rest and to store magazines and grenades. Finally, dig out the platform that will allow the soldier to cover his arms while firing to the front. Make sure the rifle

muzzle is two to three inches above ground.

• Complete the overhead cover and the grenade sumps.

• Camouflage, and continue to improve.

The BD position's main advantages over the built-up position are its ability to escape enemy detection and an infinitely thicker frontal cover. The main disadvantage is that it has no parapets.

**Low-Profile (LP) Positions.** The LPs include the best parts of the built-up and built-down positions. It is the most adaptable and protective of the positions, and it is difficult to detect. It offers infinite frontal cover, 18 inches of overhead cover, and parapets. This version can be used in almost any terrain.

The LP always has 18 inches of overhead cover. The main difference is that some of the cover (six to 12 inches) is above ground level, and the parapets slope from the top of the overhead cover to ground level at a gentle angle to be less noticeable. All the positions in the low-profile series are constructed using the same five steps:

• Measure and mark the position. Emplace grazing logs and sector stakes.

• Dig down to chin level. Extend sandbags from the sector stakes along the limits of fire. This forms the outer edge of the parapets as well as the limits of fire.

• Fill in the area from one set of sandbags to the other with the spoil to flesh out the parapets. Make sure not to cover the area where you will dig down the overhead cover. Also, ensure that the overhead cover is wide enough to cover two soldiers. Dig the grenade sumps.

• Emplace the overhead cover. Carve out a shelf as an elbow rest. Start gradually, sloping the parapets from the overhead cover to the ground, using the row of sandbags to form the edges of the parapets.

• Camouflage, and continue to improve.

The variations on this position include the amount of overhead cover that sticks out of the ground, the depth, the width of the angle of the sector of fire, and most important the type of weapon.

**Low-profile M60 (LP60).** The M60 position is basically an L-shaped position

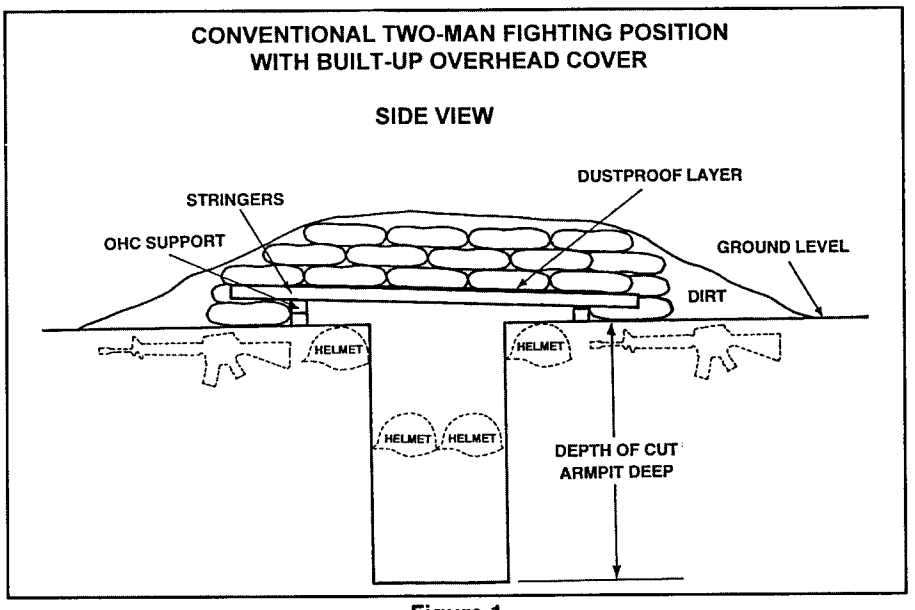


Figure 1

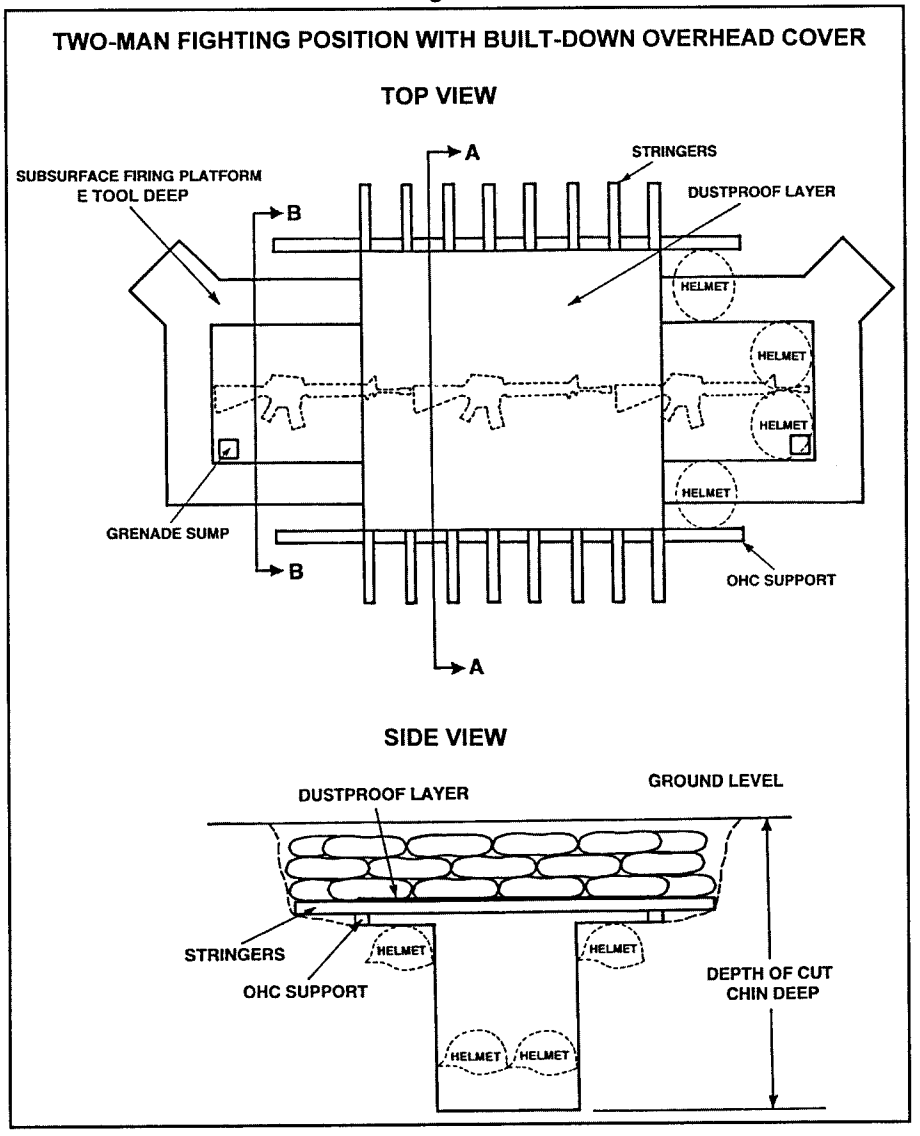


Figure 2

formed around the firing platform that holds the tripod. The gunner gets behind the gun on the longer axis of the L. The assistant gunner is left of the M60 on the shorter axis.

**Low-profile Dragon Position.** The Dragon position differs from the others in that it has an additional position that is only waist deep and a shelf for the Dragon feet. This firing position is dug only waist deep to give the missile 24 inches of clearance and to keep the backblast from bouncing off the back of the position and injuring the soldier.

The chief advantage of the built-down series of positions is increased survivability through concealment, which allows the soldier to escape enemy detection and subsequent destruction, and an infinite amount of cover from the chin down. One of the shortcomings is that these positions cannot be used everywhere. They are ineffective when not dug deep enough; for example, in permafrost or shallow bedrock areas. They are also less effective in jungle terrain.

For a quick guide to a built-down position, see Graphic Training Aid 7-6-1, and look soon (in six months to a year) for a video tape on the built-down series. Also in the works is a three-dimensional model, which instructors can use as an example when describing the positions.

The positions in the built-down series offer more protection than the built-up fighting position. The most important thing is for the commander to see that his troops dig in every time they are not moving.

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## *FIFTY YEARS AGO IN HISTORY July-August 1946*

***Tensions among former Allies had not abated by the summer of 1946; in fact many had steadily worsened. Friction between Nationalist and Communist Chinese factions was at the breaking point; Yugoslav gunners regularly fired on U.S. aircraft crossing that nation's airspace, and the Soviet Union attempted to align Turkey against the United States. At the same time, the United States was taking its first tentative steps into the atomic age with testing and legislation aimed at harnessing and administering the power of the atom.***

***These and other highlights of the postwar years have been provided by Mr. Bud Hannings, in preparation for his upcoming chronology of the Korean War.***

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| *1 July* | *The Russians send a message to Turkey, suggesting that only Black Sea nations have access to the Dardanelles, and that the straits be placed under joint Russian-Turkish defense. Fearing the advantage this would afford the Russians, and not wanting Russian troops on Turkish soil, the Turkish government seeks advice from the Truman Administration, and subsequently rejects the plan.* |
| *1 July* | *The United States detonates a 20-kiloton atomic bomb over the Bikini test site, in the Marshall Islands. A second, underwater, detonation will take place on 25 July.* |
| *7 July* | *The Chinese Communist Party issues a manifesto criticizing U.S. policy toward the Nationalist Central Government of Chiang Kai-shek.* |
| *13-27 July* | *Chinese Communists ambush and capture seven U.S. Marines, but their safe return is negotiated without retaliatory action.* |
| *21 July* | *At a meeting with the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, Bernard Baruch announces that the United States will endorse an international inspection team to oversee the production of atomic bombs.* |
| *29 July* | *Chinese Communist troops ambush a small Marine patrol, killing three and wounding others.* |
| *10 August* | *President Truman dispatches a letter to Chiang Kai-shek, expressing dissatisfaction at the inability of the Nationalists and the Communists to form a united government, and blaming both factions for the escalating chaos. General George C. Marshall has previously advised President Truman that the Communists will prevail if all-out civil war takes place.* |
| *21 August* | *The U.S. delivers an ultimatum to the Yugoslav government following the shooting down of two unarmed T-47 transport aircraft enroute to Italy. Yet another C-47 is shot down on 23 July, resulting in the death of five crewman. Tensions ease somewhat with the arrival of an official Yugoslav apology.* |