

Chapter 8

Field Firing Positions

In a combat environment, a Marine must be prepared to engage the enemy under any circumstance. It may not be possible to assume a textbook firing position due to terrain, available cover, dispersion of targets, and other limiting factors. Therefore, a Marine must strive to assume a position that offers stability for firing, maximum coverage and concealment from the enemy, and maximum observation of the target.

There are four basic field firing positions: prone, sitting, kneeling, and standing. These positions provide a stable foundation for effective shooting. A stable field firing position allows a Marine to hold the rifle steady and to control the trigger while keeping the sights aligned. These positions may be altered slightly to adjust to available cover. A Marine must learn and practice these positions during preparatory training. The essential elements of a good shooting position (bone support, muscular relaxation, natural point of aim) and the seven factors common to all shooting positions also should be practiced during field firing training and applied during combat. Slight modifications may have to be made to adjust to the combat environment. A Marine also may use a sling to stabilize the rifle while shooting.

8001. Hasty Sling

If properly adjusted, the hasty sling provides maximum stability for the rifle and reduces the effects of the rifle's recoil. To form the hasty sling, a Marine performs the following steps:

- Hold the rifle vertical with the barrel pointing upward.
- Unhook the J-hook from the lower sling swivel.

- Loosen the sling keeper.
- Adjust the sling until the J-hook hangs approximately 10 inches below the butt of the rifle. See figure 8-1.

Figure 8-1. J-Hook Location.

- Turn the sling a half turn outboard. (This allows the sling to lay flat against the back of the hand and arm.)

- Attach the J-hook to the lower sling swivel. The open end of the J-hook faces outboard, away from the rifle. See figure 8-2.

Figure 8-2. J-Hook Turned Outboard.

- Insert the left arm between the sling and the rifle to a point midway between the elbow and shoulder while holding the rifle with the right hand.
- Rotate the left hand outboard, placing the back of the hand flush against the sling. See figure 8-3.
- Place the left hand under the rifle so the handguard rests in the "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger.
- Move the left hand as required to level the rifle with the line of sight.
- Move the feed end of the sling in or out of the sling keeper to adjust the hasty sling.
- Locate the sling keeper near the feed end of the sling and secure.

Figure 8-3. Back of Hand Against the Sling.

8002. Selecting a Field Firing Position

The selection of a field firing position is based on terrain, available cover, dispersion of targets, and other limiting factors. A Marine must select a position that offers stability, mobility, and observation. The ideal field firing position contains the following elements:

- The position should lean forward slightly to aid in stability and control of the rifle.
- Muscular tension should increase in the upper body to provide faster recovery between shots.

- The left hand should move farther forward on the handguard to help reduce muzzle movement. The left hand also should grip the handguard and exert rearward pressure into the shoulder to control the rifle.
- The feet are placed on previously cleared terrain.

a. Stability. A firing position must provide a stable platform for accurate and consistent shooting. If the position is solid, the rifle should recover after recoil to the same position on the target. This allows for rapid re-engagement. The prone position provides the most stability for firing, while the standing position provides the least stability. Use of a hasty sling increases the stability of the firing position.

b. Mobility. A firing position must provide a Marine with the mobility required to move to new cover or to another area. The standing position permits maximum mobility. It allows the most lateral movement for engagement of widely dispersed targets. The prone position allows the least mobility. It allows limited lateral movement.

c. Observation of the Enemy. A firing position must limit a Marine's exposure to the enemy, yet allow observation of the enemy. Man-made structures and terrain features (e.g., vegetation, earth contours) often dictate the shooting position. The standing position normally provides the best field of view, but it usually allows the most exposure. The prone position normally allows the least exposure, but it usually provides a limited field of view.

8003. Prone Position

The prone position is easy to assume, provides maximum body contact with the ground, is an extremely stable position for firing, and presents a low silhouette for maximum concealment. However, the prone position is the least mobile of the shooting positions and may restrict a Marine's field of view for observation. To assume the prone position for field firing, a Marine performs the following steps:

- Drop to the ground and break the fall with the left hand (if using the hasty sling, it may be necessary to break the fall with the right hand).
- Kick both legs straight to the rear.
- Dig the toes into the ground and push slightly forward. (This increases tension on the sling and provides better control and quicker recovery between shots.)
- Place the legs closer together to present a smaller target.
- Ensure that the body is directly behind the rifle. (This allows body mass to absorb recoil.)

See figure 8-4.

8004. Kneeling Position

The kneeling position is quick to assume and provides good mobility for quick reaction. To

Figure 8-4. Prone Position.

assume

the kneeling position for field firing, a Marine performs the following steps:

See figure 8-5.

- Keep the left foot in place, step back with the right foot, and drop to the right knee.
- Position the left upper arm on the left knee to provide maximum bone support.
- Place the right side of the buttocks on the right heel, making solid contact. (Available cover and the need for mobility determine if the buttocks rests on the heel.)
- Increase tension on the sling to provide better control and quicker recovery between shots.
- Lean into the position to decrease recovery time dur-

Figure 8-6. Sitting Position.

ing recoil.

Figure 8-5. Kneeling Position.

8005. Sitting Position

The sitting position provides stability and a low silhouette. However, it limits mobility. To assume the sitting position for field firing, a Marine performs the following steps:

- Grasp the handguard of the rifle with the left hand.
- Bend at the knees and hips and drop straight back while breaking the fall with the right hand.
- Push backward with both feet to extend the legs and place the buttocks on the ground.

See figure 8-6.

8006. Standing Position

The standing position provides a clear field of view and is highly mobile. The standing position used in the field may differ from the basic position in that the stance may be wider to provide a broader base of support. A Marine's center of balance shifts forward slightly to decrease recovery time and increase the stability of the position. See figure 8-7.

Figure 8-8. Supported Prone.

8007. Supported Firing Positions

A Marine can use any available support (e.g., logs, rocks, sandbags, or walls) to stabilize his firing position. A supported firing position minimizes exposure to the enemy, provides protection from enemy fire, and maximizes rifle stability. A Marine can adjust the basic firing position to fit the support as long as the adjusted position maintains balance, control, and stability for firing. The surrounding combat environment dictates the type of support and position used.

A

B

Figure 8-9. Supported Kneeling.

vides the lowest silhouette. This position provides maximum protection from enemy fire. To assume the supported prone position, a Marine performs the following steps:

- Brace the forearm or back of the left hand against the support and rest the rifle in the "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger of the left hand.
- Keep the position as low as possible. (This reduces or eliminates exposure of any body part to the enemy.)
- Get directly behind the cover. If the cover is narrow, keep the legs together. The body should be in line with the rifle and directly behind the rifle. This presents a smaller target to the enemy and provides more body mass to absorb recoil.

See figure 8-8.

Figure 8-7. Standing Position.

a. **Supported Prone.** If possible, a Marine should use the supported prone position when firing from behind cover. It is the steadiest position and pro-

b. **Supported Kneeling.** If the prone position cannot be used, the supported kneeling position may be appropriate. To assume the supported kneeling position, a Marine performs the following steps:

- Assume the kneeling position and shift weight forward until the left shoulder or left arm and the left leg contacts the support.
- Rest the forearm or the back of the left hand on the support and rest the rifle in the "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger of the left hand. Do not touch or rest the barrel on the support.
- Alter the position to conform to the cover or support by adjusting to a high, medium, or low kneeling position.

See figure 8-9.

c. **Supported Standing.** If the supported prone or kneeling positions cannot be used to engage the target (e.g., when firing from behind a tree or over a wall), a Marine may use the supported standing

position. To increase the stability of this position, a Marine should lean slightly forward into the support. The barrel should not touch or rest on the support. The forearm or the back of the left hand rests on the support and the left hand supports the rifle. See figure 8-10.

Figure 8-10. Supported Standing.