

JUNGLE OPERATIONS

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*This publication supersedes FM 31-35, 26 September 1969.

The words “he,” “him,” “his,” “man,” and “men,” when used in this publication, represent both the masculine and feminine genders unless otherwise specifically stated.

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CHAPTER 1

The Jungle Environment

Section I. GENERAL

This chapter introduces jungle environments—where they are found and what they are like. Later chapters build on this information, providing guidance on fighting and living in the jungle.

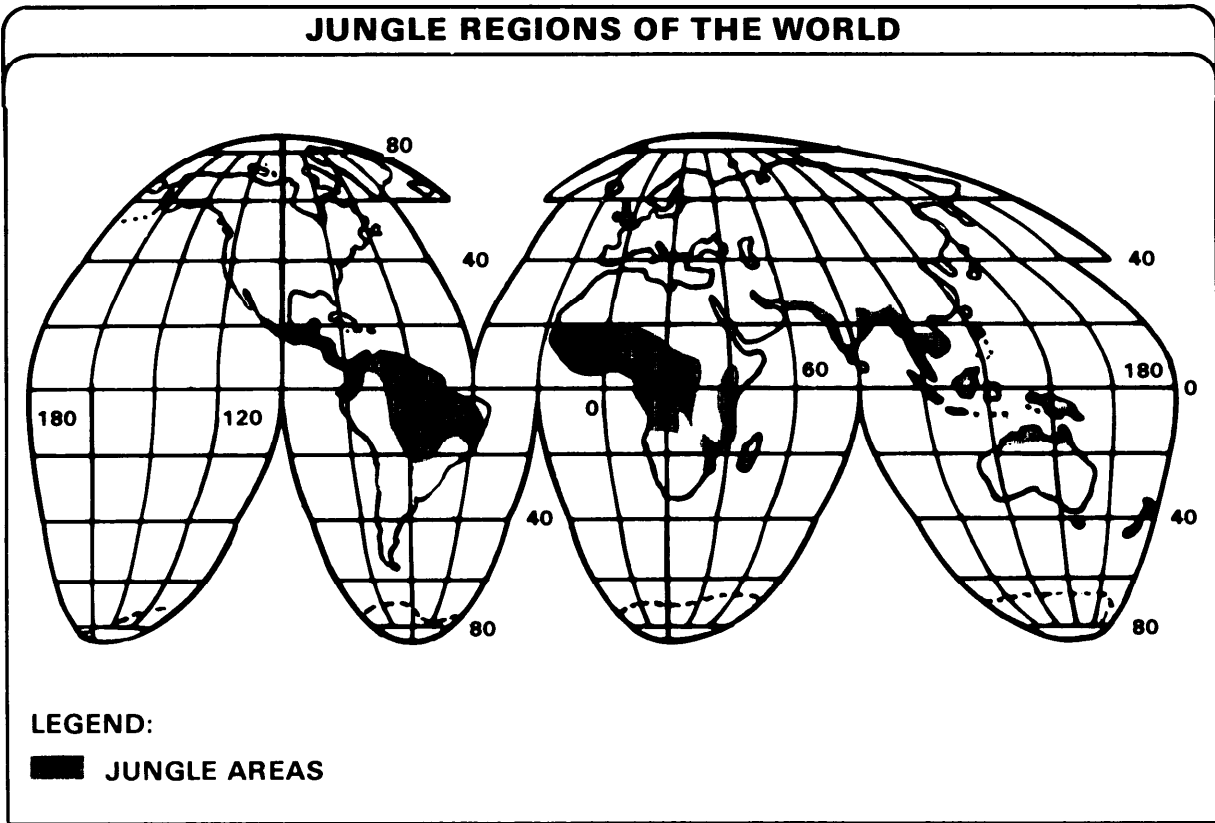
Field Marshal Slim’s words reflect the image of the jungle most armies carry into jungle warfare. At first, the jungle seems to be very hostile, but the hostility wanes as troops learn more about the jungle environment.

Jungles, in their various forms, are common in tropical areas of the world—mainly Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

“To our men. . . the jungle was a strange, fearsome place; moving and fighting in it were a nightmare. We were too ready to classify jungle as ‘impenetrable’ . . . To us it appeared only as an obstacle to movement; to the Japanese it was a welcome means of concealed maneuver and surprise . . . The Japanese reaped the deserved reward . . . we paid the penalty.”

–Field Marshall Slim, Victor in Burma, World War II (Concerning the dark, early days of the Burma Campaign)

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Section II. CLIMATE AND WEATHER

The climate in jungles varies with location. Close to the equator, all seasons are nearly alike, with rains throughout the year; farther from the equator, especially in India and Southeast Asia, jungles have distinct wet (monsoon) and dry seasons. Both zones have high temperatures (averaging 78 to 95+ degrees Fahrenheit), heavy rainfall (as much as 1,000 centimeters [400+ inches] annually), and high humidity (90 percent) throughout the year.

Severe weather also has an impact on tactical operations in the jungle. The specific effects of weather on operations are discussed throughout this manual.

Jungle climates (high temperatures, high humidity, heavy rain) seriously affect:

- Men
- Clothing
- Equipment
- Weapons
- Vehicles
- Maintenance operations
- Training
- Tactics

Section III. TERRAIN AND VEGETATION

TYPES OF JUNGLES

The jungle environment includes densely forested areas, grasslands, cultivated areas, and swamps. Jungles are classified as primary or secondary jungles based on the terrain and vegetation.

PRIMARY JUNGLES

These are tropical forests. Depending on the type of trees growing in these forests, primary jungles are classified either as tropical rain forests or as deciduous forests.

Tropical Rain Forests. These consist mostly of large trees whose branches spread and lock together to form canopies. These canopies, which can exist at two or three different levels, may form as low as 10 meters from the ground. The canopies prevent sunlight from reaching the ground, causing a lack of undergrowth on the jungle floor. Extensive above-ground root systems and hanging vines are common. These conditions, combined with a wet and soggy surface, make vehicular traffic difficult. Foot movement is easier in tropical rain forests than in other types of jungle. Except where felled trees or construction make a gap in the canopy of the rain forest, observation from the air is nearly impossible. Ground observation is generally limited to about 50 meters (55 yards).

Deciduous Forests. These are found in semitropical zones where there are both wet and dry seasons. In the wet season, trees are fully leaved; in the dry season, much of the foliage dies. Trees are generally less dense in deciduous forests than in rain forests. This allows more rain and sunlight to filter to the ground, producing thick undergrowth. In the wet season, with the trees in full leaf, observation both from the air and on the

