OAKOC Terrain and Situation Analysis | **Student Companion Guide**
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COMPANION GUIDE TO ONLINE TRAINING

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INT-07: OAKOC TERRAIN AND SITUATION ANALYSIS STUDENT COMPANION GUIDE

The Analyst's Terrain Reference

Observation & Fields of Fire, Avenues of Approach, Key Terrain, Obstacles, and Cover & Concealment — the terrain foundation MDCOA and ACH both depend on

Seven Lessons · Full OAKOC Assessment Worksheet · Five-Category Reference Tables · Capstone Synthesis Template

Edition v1.0 · 2026

Semper Paratus, Semper Gumby
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Companion Guide to Online Training

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This companion guide is designed to be used alongside the INT-07 OAKOC Terrain and Situation Analysis online training series — the online lessons are the instruction. This guide contains reference tables, worksheets, and the full OAKOC Assessment Worksheet only. It cannot be used as a standalone document.

ONLINE TRAINING ACCESS

The seven online lessons are available online. Support the development and availability of these courses by subscribing to my Patreon:

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What this guide contains

For each of the seven online lessons: a condensed reference summary covering only the key terms, tables, and standards — not the instruction. The container/framework/method distinction, all five OAKOC category reference tables, and the capstone synthesis structure are included as working references. The full OAKOC Assessment Worksheet is in Part II. The instruction is delivered online — this guide is what you use in the field and when documenting a real site's terrain picture.

Required workflow — online lessons BEFORE using this guide

ORDER MATTERS

Do not open any section of this guide until the corresponding online lesson has been completed. The condensed summaries here are reference material, not instruction. The sequence below is required, not suggested.

Step 1 — Support the development and availability of these courses by subscribing to my Patreon: patreon.com/fortunefavorsthepreprared

Step 2 — Access the online lessons at fortunefavorstheprepared.com/int-07-landing/

Step 3 — Complete all seven lessons including knowledge checks, in sequence — the Lesson 7 capstone assumes Lessons 1–6 are complete

Step 4 — Use this guide in the field as a reference and to complete your site's full OAKOC Assessment Worksheet

THIS GUIDE IS NOT STANDALONE

The instruction for each lesson is delivered through the online training series. This guide contains condensed reference tables and a blank worksheet only. If you have not completed the online lessons, this guide will not teach you the material — it will give you tables whose meaning you do not yet understand.

Guide Map — What to Reference When

When you need...	Turn to...
The container/framework/method distinction and why terrain isn't just rural ground	Part I, Chapter 1
Observation & Fields of Fire definitions and the worked vantage-point example	Part I, Chapter 2
Avenues of Approach categories (primary/secondary/tertiary) and warning-time implications	Part I, Chapter 3
Key Terrain's consequence test and how to avoid the "prominence trap"	Part I, Chapter 4
Obstacle types (existing vs. created) and the channeling-to-chokepoint logic	Part I, Chapter 5
The cover vs. concealment distinction and the false-confidence error	Part I, Chapter 6
The full written OAKOC assessment structure (the capstone deliverable)	Part I, Chapter 7
A blank worksheet to build your own full OAKOC assessment for a real site	Part II, Worksheet
Definitions for every acronym and term used across the course	Part III, Glossary
A single-page pull-everything-together summary card	Part III, Quick Reference Card

PART I — QUICK REFERENCE

Condensed summaries for Lessons 1–7. Complete each online lesson before reading its chapter here.

Chapter 1 — Terrain Analysis as an Intelligence Discipline

Reference for Lesson 1. OAKOC is a terrain analysis framework, not a decision-making model — it produces evidence that methods like MDCOA and ACH later consume.

Container / framework / method

Layer	What it is	Course
Container	The broader intelligence preparation process this terrain work sits inside	(conceptual background)
Framework	OAKOC — the five-category terrain analysis itself	This course (INT-07)
Method	Structured techniques that consume OAKOC's output to reach a judgment	INT-06 (MDCOA), INT-01 (ACH)

The five categories

Letter	Category	Core question
O	Observation & Fields of Fire	What can be seen, from where, and how far?
A	Avenues of Approach	How does anyone get from point A to this location?
K	Key Terrain	What ground, if controlled, gives a decisive advantage?
O	Obstacles	What slows or channels movement, existing or created?
C	Cover & Concealment	Where is physical protection available, and where is only hiding available?

Chapter 2 — Observation and Fields of Fire (O&F)

Reference for Lesson 2. Observation (what can be seen) and fields of fire (how far/effectively a position can respond) are related but distinct — a position can score high on one and low on the other.

Term	Meaning
Observation	What can actually be seen from a position — sightlines, vantage points, blocking terrain or structures
Fields of fire	How far and how effectively a position could respond to what it observes — response range and reaction time in a civilian context

Include vantage points you don't control

The best vantage point over a site often doesn't belong to the site's residents. A complete O&F picture documents observation from positions outside your control, not just positions you hold. Blind spots are findings too — they often become the basis for Cover and Concealment analysis (Chapter 6).

Chapter 3 — Avenues of Approach (AA)

Reference for Lesson 3. Every route in — not just the one everyone uses — because the routes given the least attention are often the ones giving the least warning.

Category	Definition	Warning-time implication
Primary	The route most people actually use	Most-watched, but also the one people are most complacent about
Secondary	A less-used but still passable route	Often unmonitored, giving less warning if deliberately used
Tertiary / least likely	Technically passable but requires unusual effort or local knowledge	Least warning of all if used, precisely because it's least expected

"Unlikely" and "unmonitored" are two separate judgments — a route can be both, and that combination deserves the most attention, not the least. AA findings feed directly into Key Terrain (Chapter 4: what ground would let you watch or restrict a route) and Obstacles (Chapter 5: what could slow or redirect movement along it).

Chapter 4 — Key Terrain (KT)

Reference for Lesson 4. Key terrain is defined by consequence — what happens if you don't control it — never by size or prominence.

The prominence trap

A tall, visually dominant feature that confers no sightline, route control, or resource value is NOT key terrain, no matter how it looks on a map. A modest water pump that's the only shared water source often IS key terrain. Apply the consequence test directly — never substitute prominence for it.

Key terrain you don't control is still key terrain — and documenting it is what tells you where a mitigation (an observation post, an access agreement, a barrier) might be needed even without outright control.

Chapter 5 — Obstacles (O)

Reference for Lesson 5. Obstacles slow or channel movement — whether they already exist or are deliberately created.

Type	Definition	Examples
Existing	Already present, requiring no action to be effective	A ravine, a dense treeline, a river, a rock field
Created (reinforcing)	Deliberately added to slow, block, or redirect movement	A fence, a gate, a felled tree, a locked barrier

Obstacles rarely need to seal a route completely — they work by removing the easy alternatives, concentrating movement into a single point you can actually observe. That concentration point is exactly what turns into a new Key Terrain candidate (Chapter 4). Always confirm an obstacle actually constrains the specific movement being planned against — an obstacle that's trivially bypassed isn't functioning as one.

Chapter 6 — Cover and Concealment (CC)

Reference for Lesson 6. The most commonly conflated OAKOC distinction — confusing the two creates false confidence in exactly the wrong direction.

Term	Definition	Does NOT provide
Cover	Physical protection — a position that actually blocks or absorbs a threat	Concealment; cover can still be visible
Concealment	Hidden from observation, with no protective quality	Any physical protection — being unseen isn't being safe

The error this category exists to prevent

A solid-looking wooden structure (a shed, a fence panel) is easily mistaken for cover when it only provides concealment. Confirm what a position is actually made of before relying on it as cover. Blind spots from Chapter 2 are strong candidate locations to check for concealment value here.

Chapter 7 — Capstone: Building a Full OAKOC Assessment

Reference for Lesson 7. Running each category well doesn't automatically produce a good synthesis — the categories interact, and a real assessment states those cross-category connections explicitly.

Section	Content
Site description	Location, boundaries, general layout
O&F findings	Every vantage point (controlled and uncontrolled), ranges, blind spots
AA findings	Every route in — primary, secondary, tertiary — and warning-time implications
KT findings	Every candidate feature, with the specific consequence of not controlling it stated
Obstacle findings	Existing and created obstacles, and which routes they channel
CC findings	Real cover, concealment-only positions, and features at risk of being confused
Cross-category connections	Where a finding in one category changes another — the section most often skipped, and most important

A completed assessment feeds INT-06 (MDCOA)'s capability judgment and INT-01 (ACH)'s evidence rows — both downstream tools only work with real information if this terrain picture is accurate.

PART II — WORKSHEET

Photocopy blank, or reproduce digitally, before filling in — keep a clean master.

Full OAKOC Assessment Worksheet

Use after completing all seven lessons. This is the capstone deliverable — a complete, standalone written terrain analysis for one real site, built one category at a time across Lessons 1–6 and synthesized here.

1. Site description

Location, boundaries, and general layout

2. Observation & Fields of Fire findings

Vantage point (controlled / uncontrolled)	What it sees	Effective range

Documented blind spots:

Blind spot location and notes

3. Avenues of Approach findings

Route	Primary / Secondary / Tertiary	Warning-time implication

4. Key Terrain findings

Candidate feature	Consequence of not controlling it	Controlled by you? (Y/N)

5. Obstacle findings

Obstacle (existing / created)	Route it channels	Toward what chokepoint / key terrain

6. Cover & Concealment findings

Position	Cover / Concealment / Both	Notes (any false-confidence risk?)

7. Cross-category connections (minimum two)

State explicitly where a finding in one category changes the picture in another — this section is what separates a synthesis from five disconnected lists.

Connection description

PART III — APPENDIX

Glossary

Term	Definition
OAKOC	Observation & fields of fire, Avenues of approach, Key terrain, Obstacles, Cover & concealment — a five-category terrain analysis framework.
Observation	What can actually be seen from a given position.
Fields of fire	How far and how effectively a position can respond to what it observes.
Avenue of approach	A route by which anyone — resident, visitor, or threat — can reach a location.
Key terrain	Ground that, if controlled, confers a decisive advantage — defined by consequence, not size or prominence.
Obstacle	A natural (existing) or man-made (created) feature that slows or channels movement.
Channeling	Using obstacles to remove alternative routes, concentrating movement into one observable point.
Cover	Physical protection from an incoming threat.
Concealment	Hidden from observation, with no physical protective quality.
Container / Framework / Method	The layered distinction between the broader intelligence process (container), OAKOC itself (framework), and decision techniques like MDCOA/ACH that consume OAKOC's output (method).

Quick Reference Card

One-page pull-together summary

1. OAKOC produces evidence, not decisions — MDCOA and ACH consume its output (Ch. 1).

2. Map every vantage point, including ones you don't control, and document blind spots (Ch. 2).

3. Map every avenue of approach — primary, secondary, tertiary — and note warning-time implications (Ch. 3).

4. Identify key terrain by consequence, never by size or prominence alone (Ch. 4).

5. Document existing and created obstacles, and confirm each actually constrains the movement in question (Ch. 5).

6. Separate cover from concealment cleanly — watch for solid-looking features that are only concealment (Ch. 6).

7. Synthesize all five categories into one written assessment, stating cross-category connections explicitly (Ch. 7).