

# US ARMY & USMC

## GREEN & CAMOUFLAGE COLORS



N°9 Olive Drab  
FS33070



N°22 Olive Drab  
FS34087



Olive Drab 50'  
FS34087



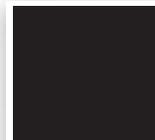
N°11 Forest Green  
FS34079



N°1 Light Green  
FS34151



N°31 Olive Drab  
FS34084



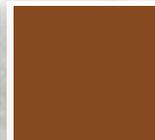
N°10 Black  
FS37038



N°5 Earth Brown  
FS30099



N°6 Earth Yellow  
FS30257



N°8 Earth Red  
FS30117



N°12 Desert Sand  
FS30279



Ocean Gray  
FS35164

During World War 2 the US Army Corps of Engineers were responsible for camouflaging military vehicles, and they developed a series of manuals (FM) and other instructions. The purpose of these manuals was to instruct the battalions of engineers who were directly responsible for the application of these camouflage colors and patterns.

The two most significant manuals were FM 5-20 and FM 5-21; these were published in October of 1942. During the war the US Army Corps of Engineers specified 12 colors; here we specify the colors along with the later Federal Standard Equivalent.

# OLIVE DRAB

## BASIC COLOR



The color Olive Drab (OD) was the base color used by the United States Army used officially since 1917.

The standard name originating in the 1930's was Olive Drab No. 22; however in 1942 the US Army Corps of Engineers was assigned the responsibility of colors used by the Army, and subsequently the name was changed to No. 9 OD

The shade of olive drab used by the USAAF was darker than that of the Army and it was referenced as Olive Drab No. 31. This shade was not unified with the Army as it had a specific anti-infrared characteristic. The Olive Drab color shades changed during the course of the war, but not the color specification, which had been the same since the 1920's. In the years leading up to WW2 it was a matte tone; however, by the end of the war it had evolved into a more satin shade. In some cases it was glossy, all of which was due to changes in the composition of the paint done to improve the quality.

The color had changes in hue; at the start of the war the shade was lighter than the color that was used at the end of the war. This also coincides with the changes leading to a glossy finish by the end of the war. It is important that we mention the different paint manufacturers all had different shades of Olive Drab; ranging from yellow to brown. As we have mentioned the Olive Drab used towards the end of the war had a glossier feature and the tone was more brown, very much different than it was at the outbreak of WW2.

# CAMOUFLAGE IN BATTLE



The 1st Armored Division was the first armored unit deployed in Africa. These vehicles were painted Olive Drab, and marked large stripes along with yellow stars. During first few battles and encounters with German forces it became it was soon realized that these were not good color choices, in the desert environment. As a result American troops used local sand and paints to camouflage their vehicles in the African environment.

It was not until the invasion of Sicily, otherwise known as operation "Husky", that formal colors were recommended by a battalion of Engineers. The complementary colors Earth Yellow No. 6, and Earth Red No. 8 were recommended by the Engineers as appropriate camouflage colors for the environment.

By the end of 1942 various bulletins were issued with profiles of the main vehicles indicating the colors and camouflage patterns to be used.

Vehicles operating in forest and warm climates were to be painted in Olive drab and Black; both dark colors applied in a pattern of large stripes. Later on Light Green No. 1 was added as a complimentary color.

For hot/desert climates colors based on OD, Earth Yellow No. 6 and Earth Red No. 8 were used. White was recommended for cold arctic climates.

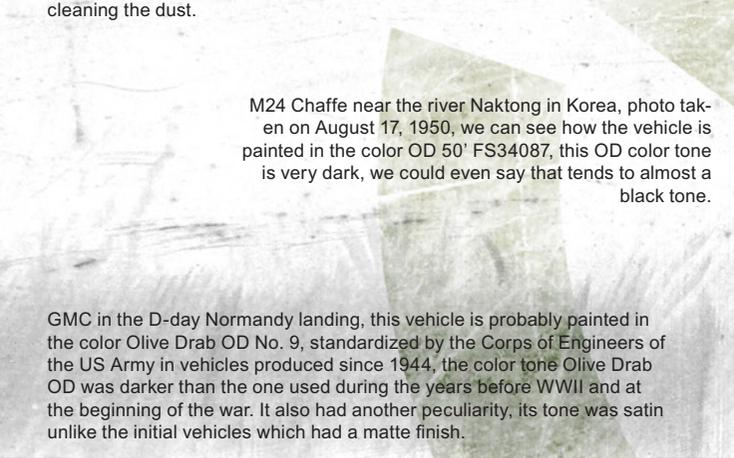


The Marine Corps used more complementary color to those used by the Army, as can be the color No. 12 Desert Sand to camouflage their vehicles, besides of the OD colors, Earth Yellow and Earth Red. The Marine Corps also used Forest Green color as base color for their M3 and M2A2 tanks, but the most common base color was Olive Drab N°9. Some LVTP and landing craft were painted in a gray color used by the Marine, color Ocean Grey.

The Army had a battalion that specialized in painting vehicles; conversely, the Marine Corps relied on the vehicle crews to apply the paint and camouflage patterns. This practice spread throughout the Corps; the invasion of the Solomon Islands saw some very colorful camouflage patterns.



M7 Priest, located at the end of WWII, here we can see how the vehicle is painted with the color OD No. 9, we see the satin finish paint in the upper zone of the hull, which is not exposed to dust effects like in the rest of the vehicle, a possible explanation is that the crew has leaned on these areas, cleaning the dust.



M24 Chaffe near the river Naktong in Korea, photo taken on August 17, 1950, we can see how the vehicle is painted in the color OD 50' FS34087, this OD color tone is very dark, we could even say that tends to almost a black tone.



GMC in the D-day Normandy landing, this vehicle is probably painted in the color Olive Drab OD No. 9, standardized by the Corps of Engineers of the US Army in vehicles produced since 1944, the color tone Olive Drab OD was darker than the one used during the years before WWII and at the beginning of the war. It also had another peculiarity, its tone was satin unlike the initial vehicles which had a matte finish.



USMC M3 Stuart, Company "C" del 1st. Marine Tank Battalion, Guadalcanal, 1943. Vehicle painted in N°11 Forest Green FS34079



M3 Medium Tank, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment, 1st Armored Division, Tunisia, 1942. This vehicle was painted in N°22 Olive Drab.



T26E3, Korean War, Base color of this vehicle is OD 50' FS 34087.



LVTP-1, destined in Tarawa invasion, 1944, this vehicle for transport the troops was painted in 'Ocean Grey FS 35164.



M4A2 del 50. Tank Battalion, 5th Division de Marines, Iwo Jima, February 1945. Vehicles painted in N°9 OD FS 33070, N°8 Earth Red FS 30117 and N°12 Desert Sand FS30279.



M7 Priest, 22nd Marine Regiment, Okinawa, June 1945, N°9 OD FS 33070 and N°6 Earth Yellow FS30257.