

Tactical Decision Game #04-9, "Urban Contact," was presented in *MCG*, Sept04 and is reprinted here.

You are the Commander, 1st Platoon, Company A. Your platoon is reinforced with one machinegun squad.

Company Commander's Order

"Enemy patrols, mostly squad size, have become increasingly bolder as we have withdrawn south. I think we can expect tentative contact here in the village this morning. The battalion is withdrawing south and repositioning in order to turn over this sector to allied forces. Company A is tasked to guard the battalion rear in order to prevent enemy interference with our withdrawal. One platoon is detached to battalion. One platoon guards the town while one platoon moves south to establish the next rear guard position. There is no close air or artillery support."

Tasks

"1st Platoon is the main effort; guard the company rear in order to prevent interference with our withdrawal. 2d Platoon is detached. 3d Platoon, move south and establish the next rear guard position in order to permit 1st Platoon's withdrawal. Priority of fires for mortars is to 3d Platoon."

Solution A

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Platoon Commander's Frag Order

To all: "I think the enemy is trying to penetrate our defense. We will canalize the enemy in order to (IOT) conduct an ambush on the east-west street. One squad will initiate fire, disengage, and move to the destroyed gas station. One squad will establish an ambush oriented to the northeast. One squad will establish an ambush oriented to the northwest. On order withdraw south to 3d Platoon's position.

"3d Squad is the main effort; initiate contact from Building A, disengage, and move to the gas station (south) IOT lure the enemy into the kill zone. 1st Squad, establish an ambush position oriented northeast in the vicinity of Building B IOT disrupt the enemy's advance. 2d Squad, establish an am-

Solutions to TDG #04-9

bush position oriented to the northwest in the vicinity of Building C IOT disrupt the enemy's advance."

Rationale

We want to draw the enemy into the east-west road so that we can bring the full concentration of fires of the platoon to bear without undue exposing of our forces.

Outcome: 3d Squad initiated fires 3 minutes into scenario (MIS), waited too long to disengage, and took one casualty in their position and another while moving south. They failed to use obscuration while disengaging. The ambush began 8 MIS; 2d and 1st Squads initiated together. Seventeen MIS, 1st Squad noticed enemy north of their position moving southeast. 3d Squad maintained position. 2d Squad was ordered to establish a position in buildings immediately to the west IOT establish a hasty ambush with 1st Squad. While moving out, 2d Squad took a casualty from sniper fire, again no obscuration used. From this point forward obscuration was used by all units moving until

they ran out of smoke. Twenty-one MIS, second ambush initiated, no friendly casualties. 2d Squad was low on ammunition after the second ambush. Twenty-four MIS, with no method of resupply, ordered 2d Squad to withdraw south. 3d Squad took over 2d Squad's position at 28 MIS. 1st Squad ordered south 29 MIS. Scenario ended 30 MIS with a minor Marine victory. (The minor victory outcome was due to victory locations (game specific). Current tactical decisionmaking simulations in development have alternate methods of determining battle outcome.)

Lessons learned: Once contact is made from hasty positions, move before the enemy can figure out what course of action to take. Use smoke as often as possible while moving. Inform the other units of your movement.

Solution B

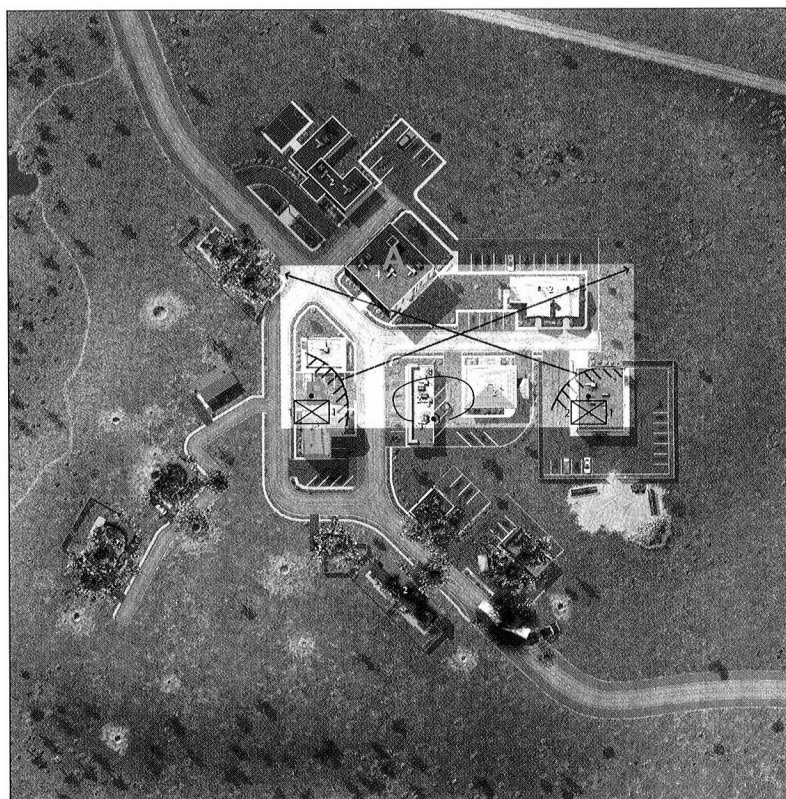
by Sgt Thomas R. Brown

Platoon Commander's Frag Order

To the squad leaders: "The enemy has three courses of action: a flanking maneuver to the west, a head-to-head

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A





movement to contact advancing from north to south across the village, and a flanking maneuver to the east. If I were to order those courses of action by precedence, I would say they would hit us from the west, followed by the east, then followed by a head-to-head confrontation. Our mission is to provide security for the company's withdrawal. There is no need for offensive maneuver. However, we may be here awhile depending on how fast the main body takes getting back to battalion's lines. It is just us, so we need to be proactive in our defensive posture.

"1st Squad (on western flank) is going to set up a machinegun down the avenue of approach. You will also harass any elements maneuvering to your flank. Any firing is on my order. The time is 0722. At 1030 I want your support fire team at the rally point. Your remaining squad will assume the squad's posture in your defense.

"2d Squad will assume the defense atop the building in the center of the village. You will put a machinegun in place with a primary direction of fire (PDF) down Route 1. Once the enemy commits to occupying the buildings at the northeast side of the village, you will harass them to keep

them in place. Prevent their advance! I need your security fire team at 1030. Your remaining men will assume your security posture.

"3d Squad will protect the eastern flank of our position. If the enemy decides to push over to your area you will fire on them. Force them back to the center of their advance. I want your assault team at the rally point at 1030. Your remaining elements will assume the rest of the defense."

To the fire teams selected to rally at the platoon rally point: "You will converge as a squad that will run security patrols throughout the village if the opportunity presents itself. You will provide shoot and move harassment against the enemy. No firefight you engage in will last longer than 30 seconds before you disengage and fall back to a safe rally point."

To all: "My intent is to deny the enemy positional advantage on our flanks while we remain in position to prevent the enemy access to the rear, and prevent cut off from the rest of the company to force the enemy to set in at the northeast section of the village."

Rationale

The platoon is going to be tested by lack of information right off the bat.

We only have an estimate of how long we will be in the defense. My course of action is to assume 3 to 5 days to play it safe. I don't want to cut assets short. 1st Squad will protect the western flank, and they will do so with eight Marines for at least 25 percent of the time, as will all squads. They will employ an M240G medium machinegun to set up PDF down Route 2. It would be wise to have the right lateral limits set up as the PDF so the gun can traverse to cover the rest of the flank as well. 1st Squad, as well as all other squads, needs to attempt to force the enemy to the center.

If the enemy gets around us they will cut us off from the rest of the company as well as attack the company. 3d Squad will protect the eastern flank. 2d Squad will protect the center of the defense and have a machinegun firing a PDF down Route 1.

The enemy appears to be advancing into a confrontation. I believe that to sustain a firefight with an unknown force (being us), they will need to plot evacuation points, objective areas, a command post, and a scheme of maneuver. I feel this may slow them down based on their training and operational leadership. I think they need to establish a base of operations. My guess is they will stop at the northeastern side of the city. Even if they try to maneuver around to our flanks, we can push them back with minimal fire based on our use of terrain and position.

To deceive the enemy I have taken a calculated risk and have formed a joint squad combining the assault, support, and security fire teams to make a squad. This squad will move constantly to harass the enemy. The firefights will be long enough to establish a presence and confuse and disrupt enemy movement into and around the village. I just want to keep the enemy stationary long enough to pull back safely.

Note: I did not have the aid of the references outlined by the author when completing this game.

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For more detailed information on the structure of Marine Corps units, Marine Corps equipment, and symbols used in TDG sketches, see the MCG web site at <www.mca-marines.org/gazette>.