

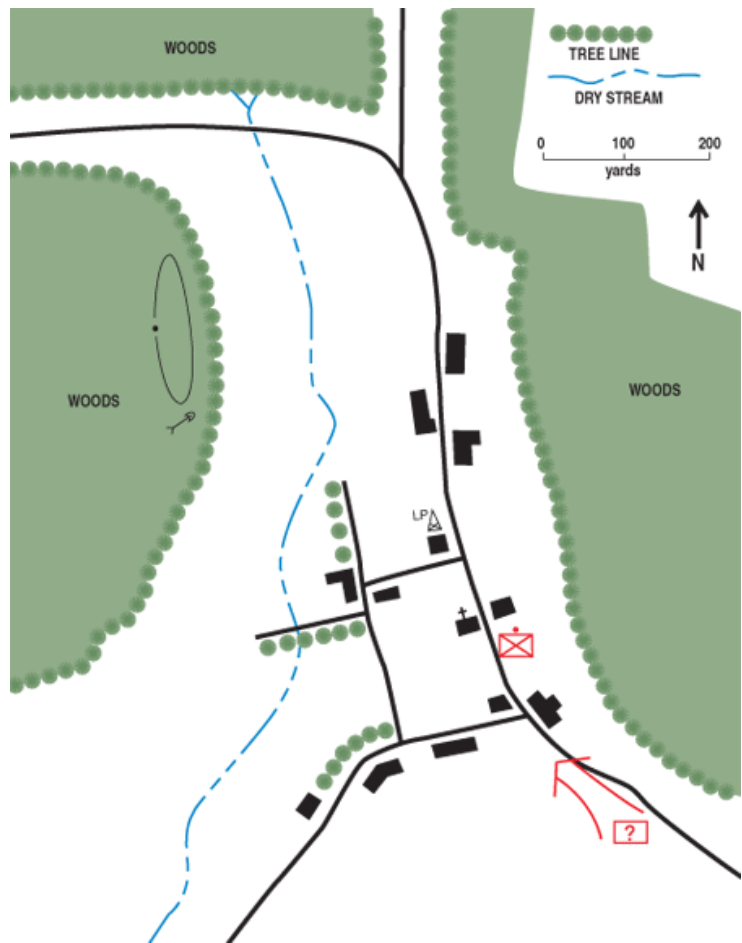
Village Overwatch by Paul Turnan

Situation

Your battalion is conducting economy of force operations across a broad, thinly manned front. In the event of enemy attack, the commander's intent is to engage the enemy well forward with indirect fires, and to fight delaying actions without becoming decisively engaged in order to trade ground for time until friendly forces can be assembled to counterattack. The battalion's area of operations is rural, wooded, and dotted with small villages.

The region is criss-crossed by roads, logging trails, firebreaks, and footpaths. All-weather hardtop roads are few. The local population counts just as many who favor the enemy as welcome the Marine forces. Most of the locals remain impartial, trying to stay out of the line of fire. Enemy activity has been limited to small, meek reconnaissance patrols. Weather has been terrible—stormy and foggy. Low cloud cover and limited visibility have grounded aircraft.

You are a squad leader. You have a Dragon team attached (two Marines with a single launcher). For the past 3 days you have been outposted overlooking a village and road junction. Your mission is to provide security for an artillery forward observer (FO) team collocated with your squad. Your Marines are in well-prepared two-man fighting positions with overhead cover and good fields of fire toward the village and the road. You have posted two reliable Marines in the village with a field phone as a listening post. Your company occupies a village 2 miles to the west. Friendly forces on both flanks are unknown. Yesterday afternoon four gun trucks from Weapons Company drove eastward through the village.



Your day begins cold, wet, and foggy. It is the same as the day before. Suddenly an artillery barrage slams into your squad's position. You race to your fighting position. Artillery rounds impact on your squad's position for 10 minutes. When the firing lifts, you check the lines and are relieved to find no one injured.

"We were pretty lucky," you say aloud. "Luckier than the FO team," replies your corpsman. "Their hole took a direct hit. Nothing left but smoking crater. People, gear, radio—all destroyed."

The FO's radio was your only communications link to your company. You look up in time to see three Weapons Company vehicles racing west on the road leaving the village. You ring your listening post in the village. They answer immediately, "We're OK for now, but I can see at least a dozen enemy grunts walking into town, and I think there are more where they came from."

It is now 0720. You can hear enemy artillery impacting farther behind you. You notice about half of your squad gathered around you, eager for you to take charge.

Requirement

In 5 minutes, issue orders to your squad. Provide an overlay of your position, placement of weapons, and plan of action. Include the rationale for your intended actions.