

Island Takedown

by Maj Douglas J. MacIntrye

Situation

The time is now 1630, Wednesday. You are the battalion commander of 1st Battalion, 2d Marines (1/2), an east coast unit deployment program infantry battalion. Your unit is well trained and is currently preparing to return to the continental United States after over 5 months in theater. As part of the United States' continuing war on terrorism, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Command has identified a terrorist training camp on Hok Island located 190 nautical miles from Okinawa. Seizure of this island and capture of these terrorists would be seen as a key indicator of U.S. resolve in the region and a major boost for the American public.

Intelligence estimates place the number of rebels on the island as platoon- to company-sized strength with limited small arms capability. Operating mainly in the northern portion of the island, they have established a village base and a trail network connecting the island's northern beaches. The terrorists have also been seen operating small patrol craft in the bays surrounding the island.

Hok Island is a small, irregularly shaped island, 5 kilometers by 3 kilometers, located in the Philippine Sea. Except for four beaches, a village, and the known trail network, it is primarily covered with dense jungle and rough terrain. The beaches are generally rocky and rise sharply into the jungle. The two eastern beaches (East Beach 1 and 2) and West Beach 2 are suitable for up to a section of CH-53Es, while West Beach 1 can only support single aircraft landings.

At the 1800 planning session, III Marine Expeditionary Force designated 4th Marines as mission commander, HMH-465 as the aviation combat element (ACE), and 1/2 as the ground combat element. The ACE commander turns and tells you that the lift available is 4 CH-53Es (30 passengers each) with a 4-hour round trip flight window. He also states that fixed-wing close air support will be available continuously after L-hour (specific hour at which a deployment operation commences) from available Marine F-18 squadrons and a 3-hour window for an AC-130 mission. L-hour is set as 0600, Thursday.

Mission

Within the rapid response planning process that followed, 4th Marines' operations order tasked you with the following: "Seize, occupy, and search Hok Island." With this in mind, the

battalion's concept of operations seems clear—long-range helo insert, seize a foothold, multiple waves. As you are discussing this with your operations officer, an intelligence update is brought in via messenger.

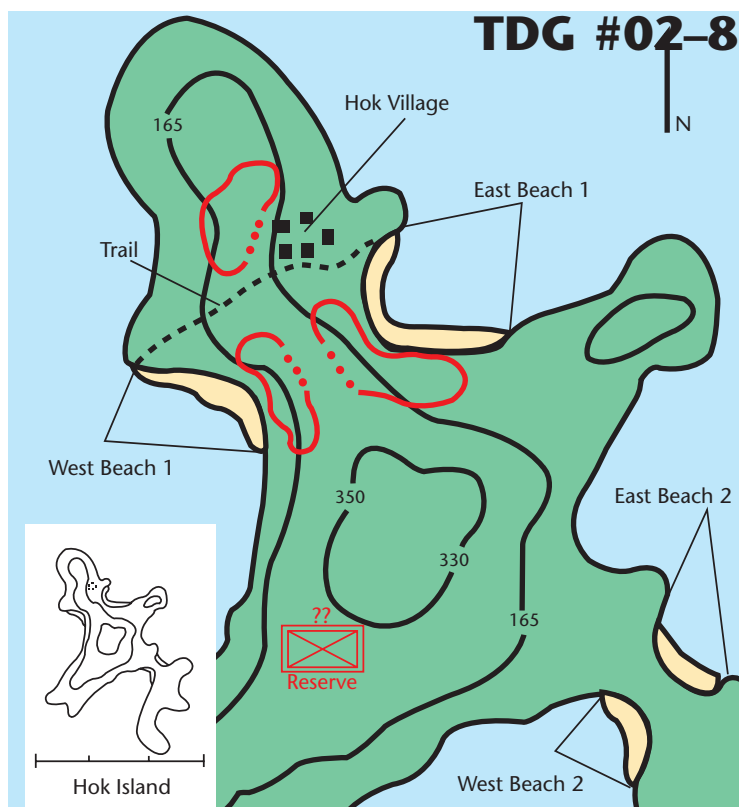
Intel Update

"Terrorists on Hok Island appear to have prepared fortified positions surrounding their village and are guarding the two northern beaches. Patrol craft with heavy weapons seen in bay near East Beach 1. Reserve unit of unknown strength seen moving in central portion of the island."

Requirement

The time is now 2115, Wednesday. In a time limit of 10 minutes, issue the changes to the concept of operations and orders to all companies and supporting arms addressing this updated situation. Provide a brief rationale for your actions and a sketch

of your plan. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #02-8, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703-630-9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.



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 <<http://www.mca.marines.org/Gazette/gaz.html>>.