

No Bugles, No Drums

by 1stLt Quinn P. Colgan

Situation

For the past 7 weeks the 2d Marine Division has been conducting conventional operations against an invading enemy force in the country of Hartland. The enemy has been fighting a delaying action as 6th Marines has pressed its attack across the open countryside; however, they are beginning to consolidate in more urban areas as they approach their own borders. Intelligence believes they will continue to consolidate forces and attempt to reinforce while they prepare to defend more earnestly.

Brownsville is a small town that sits along the White River, 15 miles south of Orange City, the metropolis in a string of urban communities along the White River known as the "Upper Valley." The Upper Valley and Highway 5 have been serving as important transportation and supply routes for enemy forces operating within this area of Hartland.

You are the company commander of Company G, 2d Battalion, 6th Marines (2/6). 6th Marines is conducting an attack on the southern sector of Orange City, and 2/6 is supporting that attack by seizing Brownsville and isolating enemy units in their area of responsibility in order to prevent enemy interference with the main effort to the north. Your battalion scheme of maneuver is sending Companies E and F into Brownsville from the northeast via assault amphibious vehicles, while a combined antiarmor team screens to the northeast. You have been tasked with conducting a heliborne insertion south of Brownsville and isolating the town south of Phase Line Blue (PL Blue) along route Baltimore. 3/10 is in general support of the regiment, and two sections of rotary-wing aircraft are in general support of 2/6. Company E has priorities of fire from the 81mm mortars platoon. PLs Red and Blue

are serving as company boundaries for this operation.

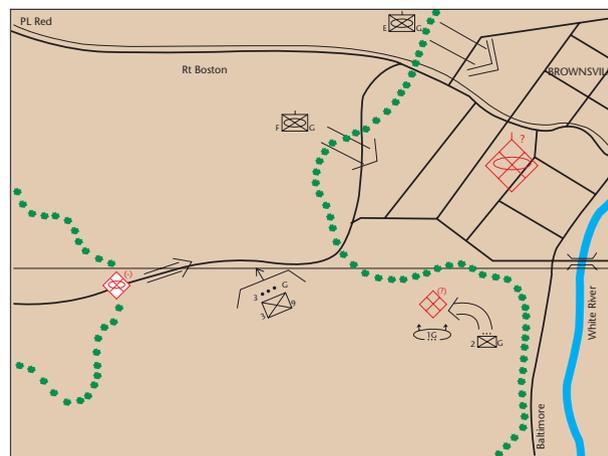
The S-2 (intelligence) reports that the majority of the indigenous population has fled the town. Those who remain are sympathetic to the enemy invasion and should be considered dangerous to U.S. forces. Expect at least a company-sized enemy force within the town itself. They have been using BMPs/BTRs (Soviet mechanized infantry vehicles/Soviet armored vehicles) and 82/120mm mortars but have

foot trafficability. Heavy rainfall in recent weeks has swollen the river and streambeds while hampering vehicle mobility on all unimproved surfaces.

Along your route toward Brownsville your company has been involved with two brief engagements with the enemy. 1st Platoon, at the lead of the company formation, came into contact, and both times you directed 3d Platoon to maneuver to the west with one assault squad and one machinegun team in accordance with your unit standing operating procedure. In both instances the enemy disengaged and withdrew ahead of the company as 1st and 3d Platoons pressed forward and pursued by fire. As you approach PL Blue, 3d Platoon is still out forward to the west and you have been unable to communicate with anyone over battalion Tactical Net 1 (Tac 1).

3d Platoon now calls you over the company Tac and tells you he has spotted what looks to be a platoon (minus) dismounted from three BTRs attempting to drive northeast toward PL Red. They are traveling along an unimproved road not recorded on the map. At that moment you hear single shots and automatic weapons fire erupt from 1st Platoon's direction, and the battalion operations officer suddenly comes through over battalion Tac 1 asking for an update. What do you do?

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been operating without adequate resupply for some time. Their morale is waning due to the lack of support and bad weather, but their increased defensive posture indicates they expect an imminent U.S. attack. There have not been any reports of reinforcement or resupply within the past 72 hours.

You inserted into Landing Zone Eagle, 7 kilometers (km) to the south of Brownsville and have proceeded north in a movement to contact formation for 5km. The terrain on the western side of the White River consists mostly of rolling hills that gradually rise into a low intermittent mountain range off to the west. The local country alternates at varying intervals between cleared farm communities and wooded areas. The forests contain moderate undergrowth that thankfully does not limit

Requirement

In a time limit of 5 minutes, develop your plan. Include an estimate of the situation, your intent, scheme of maneuver with overlay, and all reports to higher headquarters. Send your solution and the rationale for your actions taken to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #04-5, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703-630-9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.