

Hasty TRAP by Andrew H. Hershey

Situation

You are the Platoon Commander, 1st Platoon, Company I, 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. Your battalion is the battalion landing team for 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (22d MEU(SOC)). The MEU is currently stationed off the shores of Alfán, a nation in the midst of a civil war. One faction has played host to an active terrorist group. The other side has just garnered the support of the United States and other Western nations. Alfán is a nation of contrasting terrain—huge mountains, deep gorges, and large, open valleys. There are few cities. The countryside is dotted with small villages, some of them fortress-like with their mud brick construction.

After being inserted by CH–53, your company conducted a 24-hour sweep of the assigned area of responsibility to locate terrorists, their hiding sites, and their training grounds. Your sweep yielded nothing, though you did destroy two caches of small arms ammunition found in one village. However, on approaching a tiny mud-walled village at the base of some foothills, your company became involved in a protracted firefight that lasted several hours. Your company successfully repelled two assaults by the enemy before they yielded the village and melted into the surrounding hillside. In the course of the firefight, all of the platoons had some wounded Marines, but there were no killed in action. Subsequently, the company was able to gather some useful information concerning terrorist activities from the villagers.

Several hours later your company is extracted by helo. Fifteen minutes into the homeward bound leg of the flight, a Cobra escorting your last CH–53 is hit by heavy machinegun fire and crashes. Your CH–53 takes hits as well, damaging the fuel system. The pilot from the downed Cobra is able to radio to let you know that they are alive. You and the pilot of your CH–53 agree to conduct a hasty tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel (TRAP) mission. Because of your fuel problem, you agree to conduct this operation within a very strict time limit. The CH–53 puts down, and your platoon disembarks and establishes a hasty perimeter defense, while you work to extract the seriously wounded pilot.

It's taking more time than expected to extract the pilot and your CH–53 lifts off. The CH–53 pilot informs you that he has called in a situation report, and birds will be inbound to pick up the platoon and injured pilot. He also informs you that there are about 30 enemy troops 2 to 3 clicks from your current position.

You order one squad to continue extracting the pilot. You direct another squad to establish a battle position on a nearby hill. Once you have the pilot extracted you move him to the hill. You set up recognition signals for your platoon, redistribute your limited ammunition, and ensure that 1st and 2d Squads have established sectors of fire. You task 3d Squad to establish an ambush site to attack the enemy headed your way. Darkness is setting in as the 3d Squad departs.

Your 3d Squad has been gone long enough to establish their ambush site. Suddenly your position is hit by fire from what sounds like light machineguns (RPKs). The enemy is using searching fire on the hilltop where you have established your battle position. Your Marines maintain their fire discipline. You watch as the enemy RPKs continue to use searching fire on hilltops adjacent to your position.

Suddenly, there is a bright flash, two grenades explode, and you hear a squad automatic weapon (SAW) firing from beneath your position. The firing stops, and then you hear M16s firing from the same location, followed by a volley of AK–47 fire. All goes quiet, and then the SAW opens up again.

The 3d Squad leader contacts you, "Enemy skirted your position. Hit my security element. My security element is moving back to my position now. Don't know size of enemy force. Heard two F–18s are inbound. Estimated time of arrival is approximately 10 minutes. What do you want me to do?"

What now, Lieutenant?

Requirement

In a time limit of 1 minute, issue any orders you would give and make any requests/reports. Provide an overlay showing placement of your platoon and the rationale for your actions.

