

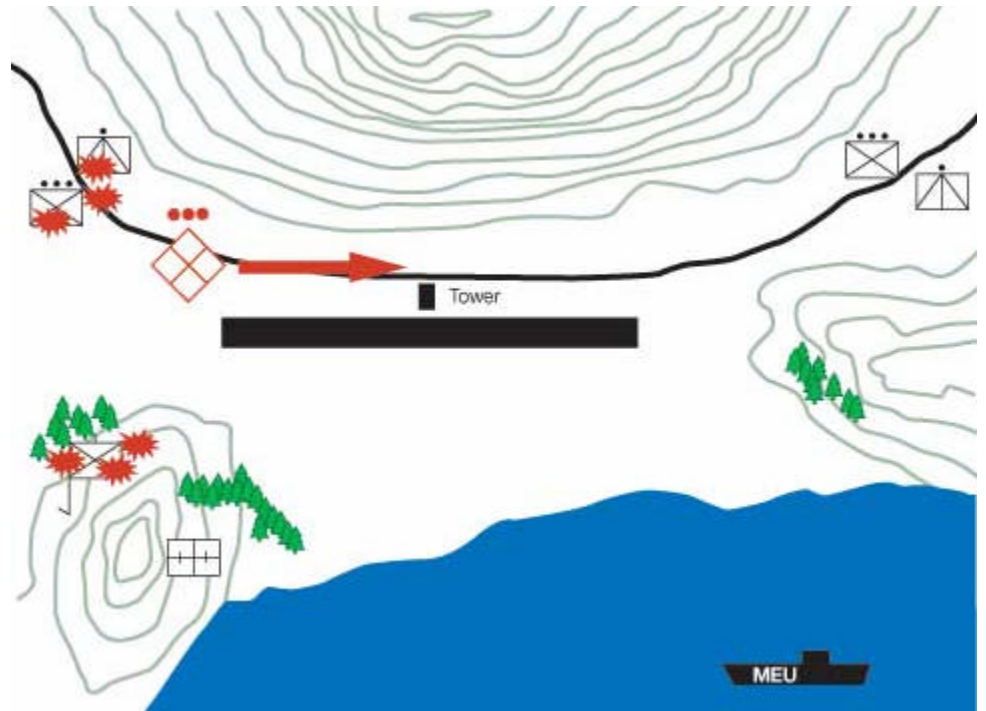
Tactical Decision Game #05–10

Doctor's In Charge by LT William B. Warner, USN

Situation

You are the medical officer of a battalion landing team of a Marine expeditionary unit (special operations capable) (MEU(SOC)). Though you have no formal training in infantry tactics, you have been with the unit long enough to understand how it functions. You know the general capabilities of the weapons in the MEU and how to operate the radios.

In preparation for upcoming humanitarian missions ashore, the MEU commander has directed your battalion commanding officer (CO) to secure a small airfield along the coast. Intelligence reports show no organized enemy forces or activity, but rogue groups, with light arms, have occasionally interfered with local government attempts at humanitarian aid. For this reason, the MEU has been asked to assist. Your battalion CO assigns the mission to one of his company commanders. Due to lift restrictions, he takes only two platoons, each reinforced with two vehicles, one carrying a .50 caliber machinegun and the other an Mk19. These platoons will cover each avenue of approach along the main supply route. A command element consisting of the company commander, a forward air controller (FAC), and two radio operators will set up its command post (CP) in a thicket of trees at the base of a hill on the southwest end of the airfield. Each platoon is carrying an AN/PRC–119 radio to communicate with the command element. The radio operators have set up an OE254 (biconical antenna) on top of the hill facilitating communications with the two platoons as well as the battalion CO afloat. They also have an AN/PRC–113 ultrahigh-frequency radio.



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You have been tasked to provide medical support to the mission and to establish an aid station at the airfield in support of upcoming operations ashore. You set up a tent on the other side of the hill, about 75 meters from the CP. An ambulance with a vehicle-mounted very high-frequency radio has been lifted ashore by a CH–53, along with the four gun trucks. You and your 4 corpsmen are carrying M9 pistols and 20 rounds of ammunition each.

During the first 24 hours the platoons establish and improve their positions. There is good communications between all elements. Patrols reveal no enemy activity. At dusk on the second night you hear a loud explosion in the area of the CP—a direct hit from a mortar round. Two corpsmen quickly respond and find the company commander and FAC dead. Both radio operators are seriously wounded. There is a quick call for the ambulance. The radio operators are evacuated to the aid station. The corpsmen grabbed all of the papers, maps, and AN/PRC–113 before they left to return to the aid station. You immediately begin treating the patients and stabilize them. After 5 minutes, you hear gunfire up the road coming from the west. It becomes louder and louder—and closer. Soon you see enemy forces advancing into the open toward the airfield. Part of them are foot-mobile; a number of them are riding in civilian pickup trucks. They appear to be carrying only light weapons.

You debate what to do. The western guard force appears to have been overrun, and with the enemy advancing toward the airfield, you are essentially “behind enemy lines.” You do not have the training or weapons to engage the enemy yourself, not to mention you are outnumbered. You also consider your noncombatant status and the two wounded patients you are treating.

As the only one with good communications assets and full awareness of what is happening, will you take command of the situation or return to your tent?

Requirement

In a time limit of 2 minutes, decide what you are going to do. Provide an explanation of the actions you would take, an overlay of your actions on the map, and the rationale for your actions.