

The Race Is On

by CAPT Garth Gould, Australian Army

Situation

You are a squad leader conducting a foot patrol in wooded, rolling terrain. You have a machinegun team from weapons platoon (two M240Gs) attached to your squad. You are in radio contact with another squad from your platoon that is patrolling approximately 2,500 meters to your north. The remainder of your platoon is occupying a firm base some distance away. Due to the threat posed by enemy counterbattery fire, your squad is unlikely to receive any indirect fire support during this patrol. Recently, your unit has encountered enemy who are well-trained and usually operate in teams of six, although they regularly combine two or three teams together.

The time is 1600 hours when you suddenly hear the sound of a helicopter flying low to your northeast.

Although you can't see the helicopter through the trees, something tells you it's in trouble. As you expected, you soon hear the abrupt thud of the aircraft hitting the ground not far from your patrol. You shake your squad out and cautiously patrol toward the accident sight. After only a few minutes your patrol reaches the edge of the tree line. You can see that a friendly utility helicopter has crash landed heavily 300 meters to your east. There is smoke emanating from the engine of the wreck. Some aircrew and passengers are frantically trying to pull other survivors from the wreckage, and it's obvious that several personnel have been seriously injured in the crash. Just as you're deciding what to do, your scout draws your attention to a group of enemy moving from the cover of a tree line into a creek

about 700 meters to your northeast. They are moving cautiously and appear to be equipped with small arms. You've counted five into the creek line so far. What do you do?

Requirement

Within a time limit of 5 minutes, issue the orders you will give to your subordinates. Provide the rationale for your decisions and a sketch of the plan. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #03-10, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703-630-9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.



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