

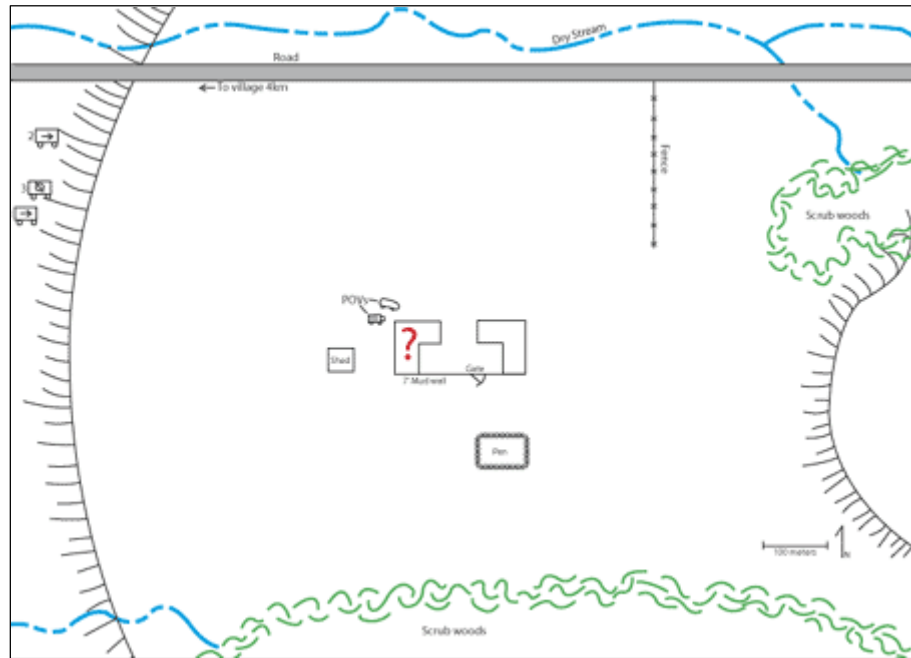
## Tactical Decision Game #05-4

### A Home on the Range by Paul Turnan

#### Situation

Your battalion has been conducting patrols in its area of responsibility as part of counterinsurgent operations in support of the host government. The local population actively supports the insurgents. Most families have men fighting in antigovernment forces. Despite these antipathies, there has been little contact with insurgent forces during the 2 months your battalion has been patrolling its beat, perhaps because the fighters are away with antigovernment forces.

The area of operations (AO) is arid, sparsely populated, and poor, with an occasional market town. Here and there extended families reside in low, single-story dwellings built to form a central courtyard. You and your men are quite familiar with these dwellings from your weeks of patrolling and frequent house searches for weapons and contraband.



You command a Marine rifle squad (13 men) mounted in 3 HMMWVs, 2 with ring-mounted M240 machineguns and 1 stake bed type. Two indigenous policemen are attached to your squad for this patrol. In order to deny this region to the enemy as a sanctuary or supply source, the mission of your patrol is to interdict any insurgent forces or their supplies transiting your AO and to confiscate any caches of arms or equipment discovered.

During an uneventful patrol through the local village you notice more than a score of unarmed, military-age men loitering about. You don't recall seeing any of them before. Those who meet your gaze give you hard looks. You notice that the general store has sold out their small stock of canned goods. Per the patrol route, you drive by a circuitous route to a residence 4 kilometers east of town and reputed to be the family home of a popular insurgent chief your battalion has long been after.

You halt your vehicles in a concealed position and advance with one of the policemen to observe the house. You notice an unfamiliar pickup truck and van parked adjacent to the house. You observe an older man butchering a sheep in the front yard. The policeman explains this and other activities as preparations for a celebration.

You return to your vehicles to radio in your observations and solicit instructions from company. "Wait, out" is the only response to your call. One of your team leaders volunteers that company headquarters is busy with another patrol that just got into a hot firefight on the other side of the company's AO. As you hear requests for situation reports, radio checks by the reaction force, and calls for fire on the company net, you realize that you are no one's priority now. Your driver asks, "What now, Sergeant? Back to the barn?"

Sunset and curfew are in 80 minutes. Your company's operating base is 10 kilometers away on the far side of the village from your present position. Rules of engagement prohibit Marines from shooting except in response to hostile fire. What do you intend to do?

#### Requirement

In 5 minutes issue orders to your squad. Detail your task organization. Provide a sketch of your plan and an explanation for your actions.