

Tropical Gold

by 1stLt Robert L. Miller

Situation

You are the company commander for Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines and your regiment is attached to 2d Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force that is part of Joint Task Force (JTF) Rambada. Six months ago the Revolutionary Forces of Rambada (ReFoR) began combat operations and were able to seize the entire country of Rambada. It took 90 days for the U.S.-led task force to position themselves and execute an amphibious and vertical assault with the intent of reestablishing the legitimate Rambadan Government. After seizing the port facilities and most major cities within the country's interior, JTF headquarters (HQ) has decided to make the final push to destroy ReFoR and all of their assets. This has been your mission for the last 2 months, and you have now entered the "seclusion zone," deep in the Rambada rain forest, to hunt down the last remaining ReFoR elements. ReFoR elements have continued to withdraw into the seclusion zone and have executed delaying actions the entire way. They have limited, but proficient, 82mm mortars and an excellent array of small arms and heavy machineguns (MGs) (U.S. and Soviet block). It has been determined that they have been withdrawing in an attempt to use their familiarity with the terrain to gain an advantage. Intelligence believes the big fight is coming, and the ReFoR is consolidating its forces.

It is approaching the monsoon season and it is raining 12 hours a day. The high jungle is triple canopy, and low areas are marsh and patties. Most rivers are not fordable and take hours to rig for crossing. The ReFoR and local farmers have systematically slashed and burned sections of low-lying rain forest to help in the growing of crops.

At present your battalion is executing a blocking mission along a supply route, and your company's mission is to secure the small village of Bulverde and the main unimproved road intersection nearby to ensure that the enemy is unable to resupply or reinforce to the northeast or withdraw from the north to the south-southeast. ReFoR command and control (C²) facilities are considered high-priority targets and should be engaged once discovered.

You have planned to secure the intersection and the village and use the surrounding steep terrain to pro-

town from west to east. Once the intersection is secured you will move forward with your remaining assets and begin to prepare defenses while your remaining platoon helps secure the village and surrounding terrain. This is the fourth village your company has secured, and you have been told there are no defenses in place and the local populace should not react harshly to your presence. You are the supporting effort and have no priorities of fires, except for a section of Cobras set on 5-minute strip alert with an estimated time of arrival of 10 minutes.

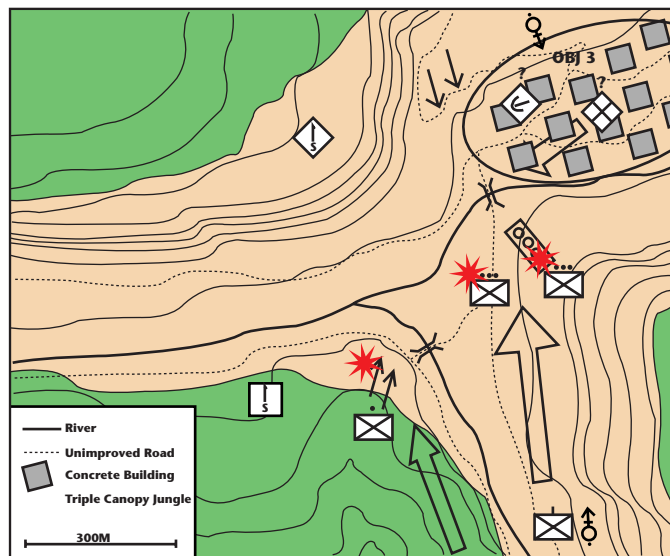
You assume your overwatch position without contact, and your two platoons quickly move forward to seize the northern bridge, intersection, and gain a foothold in the village. As they near the bridge one platoon finds itself in a minefield and quickly takes three casualties. Instantly, your second platoon comes under direct MG fire from the west of the village, and both platoons begin to take sporadic mortar fire. Your MG section opens up and attempts to destroy the enemy guns but quickly comes under accurate sniper fire from the north and takes three casualties. Your sniper

team begins to report a large concentration of C² facilities within the village and a large concentration of troops moving toward your position.

Requirement

In a time limit of 5 minutes, develop a plan to deal with the situation. Provide a sketch of your actions and the rationale behind them. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #04-2, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703-630-9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.

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vide mutual support to defend the village and intersection. Your battalion commander's intent is for you to hold Bulverde for 48 to 72 hours to allow the regiment to sweep north along your eastern flank.

Your plan is to move your company to the initial release point and set in mortars and HQ elements and then release one squad from the MG section and your four-man sniper team to move to their overwatch/support by fire position to the west of you. Two platoons will then systematically sweep toward the village, secure the intersection west of the village, and begin to clear the

