

# Contact at the Seven Mounds

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You are a squad leader in 3d Battalion, 4th Marines. The battalion is making a movement to contact, moving north. The battalion's mission is to locate, fix, and destroy any sizable enemy forces en route to the march objective some 15 kilometers to the north. The battalion commander has made it clear that the march objective is merely a reference point for the direction of movement; the true objective is the enemy. Your platoon is the advance guard, and your squad has the point. Your squad is in a wedge formation with 3d Fire Team on the left, 1st Fire Team in the center and 2d Fire Team on the right. An attached machinegun squad is located with you behind 1st Fire Team. The platoon commander is about 100 meters behind you, and the rest of the platoon is another 300-400 meters back.

You are fighting lightly equipped infantry forces that generally rely on ambush and hit-and-run tactics. They will stand and fight when they have the advantage but will flee when the odds are against them. As you move through the rolling, wooded terrain you occasionally make contact with an enemy fire team or two—sometimes just visual contact, sometimes a brief, long-range engagement. You think you've inflicted a few casualties, but the enemy disappears before the squad is able to close.

Your squad is approaching the Seven Mounds, a series of ancient burial sites with the ruins of a burial temple on the center mound. From experience you know that the enemy likes to fight on such terrain—they believe they gain strength from their ancestral spirits. You have told your Marines to be especially alert. As 1st Fire Team exits the woods and clears a dry streambed, you see the Marines quickly drop for cover and begin engaging the enemy, who simultaneously opens fire from the

north. You crawl forward to the streambed where 1st Fire Team has moved for cover and continues to engage the enemy. The 1st Fire Team leader points out enemy positions on the two mounds to your direct front. You estimate the enemy to be about platoon strength.

You look down the streambed to the right but see no sign of 2d Fire Team. You lost contact with 2d Fire Team once the engagement started. Where are they you wonder, more than a little angry. The machineguns are behind you in the woods. On your left, 3d Fire Team has taken up prone positions just north of the streambed. You hear automatic weapons fire from the mound to your right, but it does not seem to be aimed at you. In fact, as best as you can tell, it seems to

be aimed at the enemy. You decide it must be 2d Fire Team.

The 3d Fire Team leader crawls toward your position from the left flank. "Do you want us to assault that position on the left?" he shouts over the din. What'll it be, Sergeant?

## Requirement

In a time limit of 2 minutes, issue any orders and/or describe any additional actions you will take. Then provide a sketch of your plan and an explanation of your decision, to include your estimate of the situation. Mail your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #97-1, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or send it by fax (703-640-0823) or E-mail(gazette@illuminet.net).



*Units submitting solutions to this TDG will, upon request, be sent a collection of articles on small unit tactics. See Special Announcement on p. 43.*

