

Operation LUMP SUM

by Maj John F. Schmitt, USMCR

Situation

You are an advisor to the 719th Guerrilla Battalion in a civil-war-torn country, which makes you the de facto commander when it comes to operations in the field. The 719th consists of five 80-man companies (71st-75th), a mortar platoon, and an antitank guided missile (ATGM) platoon. The companies are actually fairly good guerrilla forces, making effective use of ambush and hit-and-run tactics, but for political as well as operational reasons, coordinated operations at battalion level and above are practically impossible. The battalion is lightly equipped, with few vehicles and only one unencrypted VHF radio. The companies are armed with mostly older-generation small arms, light machineguns, and light antitank weapons. Each company also has a pair of 23mm anti-aircraft guns mounted on trailers. You have recently received a large arms shipment of shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles and medium mortars—enough mortars to form a six-tube platoon in each company and an eight-tube platoon at battalion level. The mortars have a range of 3,500 meters and the ATGMs have a range of 2,000 meters, although line of sight in this rolling, wooded terrain is rarely more than a kilometer. Vehicle forces are pretty much restricted to the trails and few roads.

The 719th is responsible for defending the Millennium complex, with each company based near one of the five villages in the complex. The 719th draws its support from the local population and is resupplied from a series of cache sites throughout the sector. You have one assistant advisor, a squared-away junior captain.

The enemy is attacking generally from the south and outguns your forces in practically every way. The enemy has air superiority, which he relies on heavily. He prefers to operate in massed formations of brigade

or even larger to maximize his firepower. The enemy has demonstrated the capability to lift up to a battalion by helicopter at one time. Intelligence indicates he is preparing for a major offensive—up to a brigade-size air assault with gunship support deep into guerrilla territory, probably in conjunction with a ground penetration by a mechanized battalion from one of the several fire bases some 40 kilometers south of your sector. Intelligence has even learned the enemy's code name for the operation: "Operation LUMP SUM." Recent enemy reconnaissance activity suggests the enemy has been recon-

noitering landing zones (LZs). Your assistant has hastily mapped the likely enemy LZs in your sector. The two largest, each of which will handle a battalion, are between Millennium 1 and Millennium 3 along Rte. 6.

Higher headquarters estimates the enemy offensive will commence within 72 hours and wants to know the 719th's plan for defending its sector. The battalion commander turns to you. What'll it be?

Requirement

In a time limit of 15 minutes, describe your plan in the form of the orders/guidance you will "recommend" to the battalion commander. Then provide a sketch and a brief explanation of your reasoning. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #00-1, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or fax 703-630-9147.

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