Tactical Decision Game #00–8

Supporting the LAR Screen

by Capt Terry L. Branstetter

Situation

You are the CO of Battery C, 1st Battalion, 10th Marines. Your battalion is the fires element to 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade (2d MEB), which has been operating in a high desert environment (terrain is restricted to vehicle traffic off roads and severely restricted above the first contour line, see map) against a mechanized enemy. 2d MEB is tasked to prevent disruption of JTF units arriving to the south.

Today, Battalion Landing Team 3/2 (BLT 3/2) 2d MEB's ground combat element (GCE) attacked a strongpoint at Checkpoint 21 (CP 21). The remnants of an enemy reinforced mech company, believed to be the advance guard of a mechanized brigade, withdrew to the west after the 3/2's successful attack.

BLT 3/2 is now establishing defensive positions at CP 21. The Light Armored Reconnaissance Company (LAR Co) was pushed west to screen as shown on the map. Your battery, with a detachment of the BLT's Combined Antiarmor Team (CAAT) (two TOWs and three heavy machineguns), was sent forward to provide suppressing and disengagement fires to LAR Co. A host nation mechanized platoon is screening the MEB's left flank (south of the map).

2d MEB expects the enemy will attack to the south tomorrow morning. The LAR Co is tasked to destroy the enemy's recon elements/advance guard and slow the main body advance. Once your battery fires the disengagement fires for LAR, it will rapidly displace to its previous firing position east of the GCE engagement area.

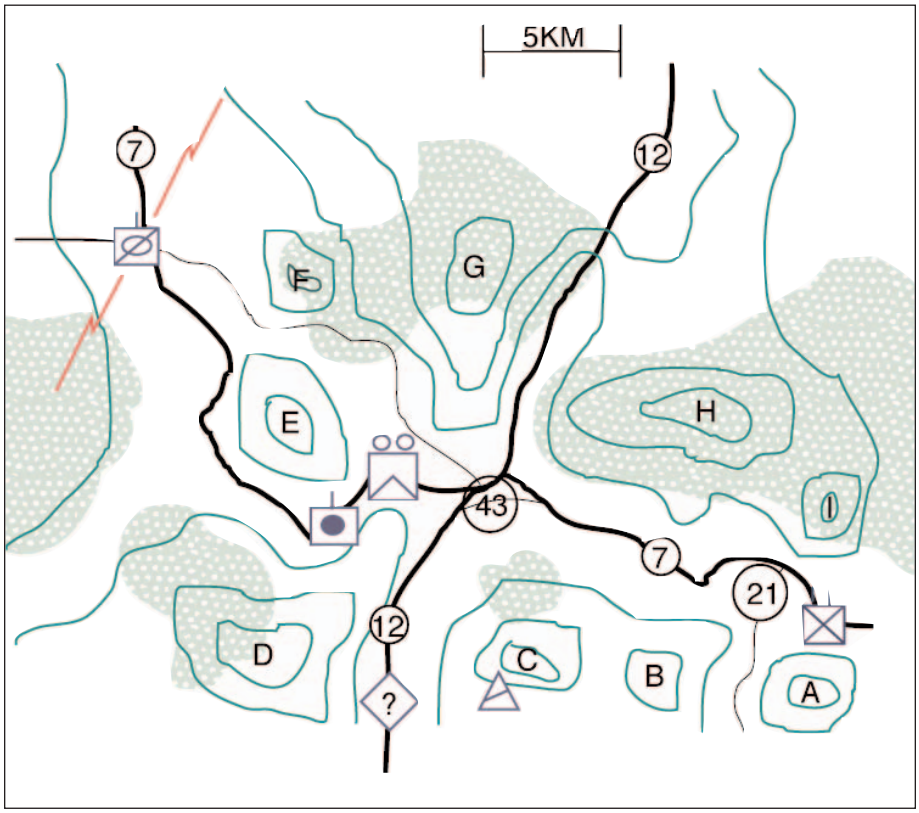
You are currently in position to support LAR. The CAAT detachment is augmenting your local security. Because you pushed forward, before you could be resupplied with ammunition, you have only a third of your daily allocation of 155mm ammunition. The remainder of the GCE's artillery can range to vicinity of CP 43 from positions to your east. The MEB fire support coordination centers are located some 25km to your east.

After a few hours sleep, you check on the status of the early morning's events. All reports indicate that things are progressing according to plan, except one. Communicators give you a report timed 0440 stating that a recon team to your south reported vehicle movement. It is unclear whom the report came from.

Attempts to inquire about the report fail. Your communications chief reports that the net is down. He says that it will probably not be up until the sun comes up, 45 minutes from now. You talk to the CO of the LAR Co who knows nothing of the possible enemy to the south, but he reports that his scouts see dust clouds to the west. As he prepares to fight his battle, he reports, "My forward observer will be setting the time on target for the first series soon."

You tell the fire direction officer to continue with the plan. Your XO reports that he has the rear road guard post on the landline and that it reports vehicle movement a few miles to the south.

Requirement

In a time limit of 5 minutes, make your plan and issue your orders to deal with your current situation. Then provide a sketch and explanation of your plan. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #00–8, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or fax 703–630–9147.

For more detailed information on the structure of Marine Corps units, Marine Corps equipment, and symbols used in TDG sketches, see MCG, *Oct94, pp. 53–56 and the modification reported in Jan95, p. 5.*