

Commander Down

by Capt Terry L. Branstetter

Situation

You are the local security chief for Battery A, part of Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/8. Your battery has been supporting the BLT during offensive operations ashore. Most of the fighting has been light with artillery fire used only sporadically. The battery has encountered ineffective small arms fire during its movements.

You are currently with the battery advance party (AP) scouting a new position and have just arrived in the vicinity of the prospective site. The main body of the battery is 8 kilometers to the southwest and will displace in about half an hour. The AP is led by the CO with a hardback HMMWV and mounted M240G. The AP 5-ton is next with a mounted M2 .50 caliber machinegun. Two communications vehicles—advance fire direction center and advance communications—are in trail. Per standing operating procedure, the CO led the AP to the edge of the new position. You dismounted all but the CO, corpsman, machinegunners, and drivers to conduct the security sweep of the position.

The clearing is surrounded by patches of brush and scrub growth that provide concealment as well as three areas that contain sizable trees. You split your 12-man force in two and lay out the plan for a heart-shaped recon around the new position. You take a man-pack radio to keep in touch with the CO and move with the western team. Traveling up the streambed, you've encountered no activity when you hear gunshots to the south. They are followed by rifle and machinegun fire. As you halt your men, one of the drivers reports over the radio, "Grizzly 11 this is Grizzly 6D, the 6 has been shot. He's down hard, but the corpsman's working on him." It appears that you are now the leader of the AP. No sooner do you realize this when you hear more gunfire from across the open firing position. What do you do?

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Requirement

In the space of 2 minutes, reach a decision on what you intend to do and what orders you will issue to the AP. Provide a sketch of your decision and a discussion of the rationale behind it. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #00-9, 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.

