

Sergeant, You Have Your Orders. Carry Them Out, Now!

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Situation

You are the company gunnery sergeant of Headquarters Company, 3d Assault Amphibian (AAV) Battalion. The battalion has been assigned to the 1st Marine Division. The division is currently deployed in a Third World country as part of a Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF).

The battalion is encamped 7,000 meters inland on the south side of a primary road. The compound is one of several that forms a defensive perimeter around the country's second largest city. The battalion's letter companies are deployed forward in direct support of division's regiments. Headquarters and service company's AAV platoon periodically supports field operations.

In an effort to extend the city's defensive perimeter approximately 1,700 meters along the waterfront, the division commanding general has directed the attached Navy mobile construction battalion (NCB) to erect a new camp for the AAV battalion on the beach to the northeast side of a small mountain. A monastery belonging to the country's primary religious sect is located on the mountain. The nation's senior cleric remains in the monastery during the day. However, each evening he returns to the city in a late model, armored automobile.

The NCB agrees to build the camp provided their work detail can return to their primary defensive camp within the perimeter each evening. They offer to provide 81mm mortar support from their camp, approximately 1,000 meters north of MAGTF headquarters, for any security detachment assigned to protect the worksite. Their mortar position is approximately 4,000 meters from the new campsite.

The decision is made that elements of headquarters and service company will provide security at the new encampment. The security element consists of 10 AAVs and their 3-man crews, platoon commander, platoon sergeant, radio operator, 2 mechanics, truck driver, and a corpsman—a total of 37 personnel.

During the first week the encampment is subjected to small arms fire and an occasional rocket propelled grenade (RPG) being fired into the area. It has been determined that the harassing fire coming from caves located on the mountainside is being directed by observers in the vicinity of the monastery. At the request of the platoon commander the platoon is reinforced at night with additional headquarters personnel—roughly 13 Marines under command of the company gunnery sergeant.

Several days later the encampment is hit hard with small arms fire and several RPGs. In responding to

the situation you find several Marines have been wounded, one Marine seriously. His left arm has been severed at the shoulder from an RPG round that struck within 3 feet of his position. A ground medical evacuation is conducted that catches the enemy offguard, and all wounded Marines are safely evacuated.

The following morning, still dressed in your blood-spattered uniform, you report to the battalion commander (CO). The battalion interpreter accompanies you. The CO is livid and informs you that you will go to the monastery and speak with the head monk. He directs you to inform the cleric, "If one more round is fired at my people on the beach from the vicinity of that rock pile, the next time he sees you will be the last time he sees you." Although you remind the CO that division has explicitly directed that contact with the head priest must first be approved and coordinated by MAGTF headquarters, the CO tells you to carry out your orders.

As you prepare to do so the interpreter asks for some time to compose a letter to his family. When asked why he tells you he does not expect to return from the visit to the monastery.

Requirement

In a time limit of 5 minutes explain how you intend to carry out your orders. Provide a sketch of your actions and the rationale behind them. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #02-10, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703-630-9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.

