

# Solutions to Tactical Vignette 98-1: "Screen at Croley Lake"

## Author's solution:

### FRAGO

Guidons this is Black 6, Frago follows:

**Situation:** D troop reports 3 BMPs and one SA 9 gone to ground vicinity grid 073556 and a company-sized element (FSE) moving southwest in march formation vicinity 119589, and reports a downed aircraft located vicinity 067556. FSE should enter EA Peter in 15-20 minutes.

**BLUE:** Maintain contact and fix the enemy by conducting SBF, orient from Hill-top 22 to TRP 03. As White begins their assault, shift fires east orienting on TRP 03 to 02. Adjust mortar fires to provide good obscuration for White's assault on the CRP. BPT assist the destruction of the FSE in EA Peter.

**WHITE:** Conduct hasty attack to destroy CRP. Assault through CP 1 and secure crash site for Band-Aid. When site is secure, signal Band-Aid to begin evac, then continue the attack to destroy the CRP. LOAs: north is PL Bengals and east is CP 2. When the enemy is destroyed, conduct hasty defense west of TRP 03. Orient east into EA Peter between TRP 01-02. BPT assist the destruction of the FSE in EA Peter.

**BAND-AID:** Follow White. Once White 1 reports crash site secure, evac pilots to AXP.

**RED:** Maintain position. Orient from TRP 02 to 03. BPT assist the destruction of the FSE in EA Peter.

**GREEN:** Maintain position. Orient from TRP 01 to 02. BPT maneuver to my location in order to reinforce Blue, orienting from TRP 01 to 03. BPT assist the destruction of the FSE in EA Peter. BPT destroy dismounted CATKs east, vicinity Redwood forest.

**FIST:** Fire immediate smoke-mortars vicinity grid TRP 3 (074552). BPT fire immediate suppression TRP 03. When D troop reports FSE vicinity CP 7, fire immediate suppression TRP 02.

**Rationale:** Speed is essential in this operation due to the arrival of the FSE within 30 minutes. With Blue in contact, they have the ability to place effective direct fires on the CRP to fix them, allowing White to assault. Blue is also in the best location to adjust mortar fires, providing good obscuration from the enemy as White conducts their attack. White assaults through CP 1 using the terrain to mask movement and

assist them in locating and securing the crash site. Band-Aid follows behind White and when the area is reported secure, conducts evacuation. White continues the attack east and destroys the CRP using fire and maneuver. Upon destruction of the enemy, establishes hasty defense and prepares to destroy FSE in EA Peter.

Red maintains its position and orientation into the EA and prepares to assist destruction of the FSE. Green also maintains its position but has a BPT mission to maneuver to reinforce Blue's support by fire onto the CRP. Without knowing the exact location of the downed aircraft and personnel, the risk of fratricide is great. The use of indirect fires to neutralize or suppress the CRP may increase that risk. By firing smoke east of TRP 03 to provide obscuration, the risk of endangering the downed air crew is lessened. At the same time, it provides White with some concealment as they conduct the assault.

The swift execution of this plan allows for the successful completion of the DARE mission, destruction of the CRP, and the array of forces to destroy the FSE in EA Peter.

### SOLUTION A

*(From 1-10 Cavalry, 4th ID, Fort Hood, Texas)*

### FRAGO

#### SITUATION

a. Enemy - Outlaw 15 has just reported the FSE at NAI3; that's 3.5 km out of direct fire range (12-15 minutes). They are still in march formation. There are three BMPs and one SA-9 remaining (vic 072551) from the CRP that Blue was engaging. This CRP has shot down Outlaw 11 and Outlaw 24 (in the same helicopter). The FSE consists of 8 BMPs, 3 T-80s, 2 engineer vehicles, and a chem recon BRDM. They are travelling at 15 kph. They are heading south and will pass to the east of Croley Lake and of Hill 22 and are expected to try to shoot the gap at 0755.

b. Friendly - B Troop on the left is still screening along DOLPHIN as is C Troop on our right. They have reported similar contact with CRPs in their sectors.

**MISSION** - A/1-23 CAV conducts DARE operations vic 070552 to rescue Outlaw 11 and 24.

### EXECUTION

a. Commander's Intent - **Purpose:** rescue Outlaw 11/24 while still executing original mission in OPORD. **Critical tasks:** Use massed tank fires to destroy the CRP and SA-9 vic CP2. Outlaw 15 will provide intel and o/o call fires on FSE. One scout platoon will rescue the downed crew while the other scout platoon provides supporting fires and observation across PETER. **End-state:** 11/24 rescued and transferred to 1SG for medevac, CRP and SA-9 destroyed, nine tanks alive and positioned in hide, three M3s screening to the NW behind Hill 22, and five M3s providing supporting fires from the south.

b. Concept of the Operation - Three major events must happen simultaneously and quickly: 1) White and Green w/A66 will move rapidly west to the 07 N-S and then violently assault the SA-9 and three BMPs, destroying all enemy to allow Blue to complete the rescue; 2) Blue will move immediately behind the tanks to rescue 11/24; 3) Red will provide overwatch and supporting fires to allow the tanks to destroy the CRP and SA-9. Outlaw 15 will maintain observation of the FSE and o/o call fires to allow White and Green to destroy the CRP and SA-9. Once the CRP and SA-9 have been destroyed, the tanks will move rapidly around the north side of Hill 22 to a hide position vic CP1. Once Blue has picked up 11/24, one section will screen to the NW, providing early warning to the tanks; the other section will prepare to assist in the assault on the FSE from the west. o/o, Red will initiate direct fire against the FSE from the south, NET 555 E-W, diverting attention away from the west. o/o, White and Green will assault from the west in to the FSE, destroying all enemy. Blue will SBF. Red will SBF. o/o, Outlaw 15 will call indirect on the FSE.

c. Tasks to Maneuver Units:

#### Red

Overwatch tanks  
Assist in directing White and Green to CRP, SA-9  
Deceive as to the location of the defense  
Maintain comms with Outlaw 15  
B/P to call arty fires  
Call Mortar fires  
B/P to call mortar smoke vic CP7  
Initiate direct fires  
Kill far right (east) tank with TOW

#### Blue

Conduct rescue  
Transfer 11/24 to 1SG for medevac  
Screen to NW  
B/P to guide tanks into hide position

Coordinate with B Troop for screen to NW  
Secure helicopter; be prepared to destroy (need CG approval)

#### White

Kill two BMPs in CRP  
Kill SA-9  
Kill left (east) tank in FSE  
Kill east four BMPs in FSE

#### Green

Kill one BMP in CRP  
Kill two middle tanks in FSE  
Kill four middle BMPs in FSE

#### Outlaw

o/o call arty fires on FSE  
B/P to kill select targets w/HELLFIRE

#### d. Coordinating Instructions:

Speed is essential!!  
All vehicles transfer ammo from semi-ready to ready racks whenever time permits  
Accepting risk in NW  
Short depth engagement area - violence and speed is essential in assault  
Medics travel with Blue

#### SERVICE SUPPORT - n/c

**COMMAND AND SIGNAL** - CDR with tanks

#### Assumptions made:

- 1) Initial OPORD has been given and issued.
- 2) Initial Mission Statement: A/1-23 CAV will screen along DOLPHIN NLT XX1600JAN98, destroying all division and regimental recon and the FSE in order to provide three hours of advanced warning to 52nd AD.
- 3) Enemy situation has not changed significantly from initial OPORD.
- 4) The terrain will allow tank movement forward of PL DOLPHIN.

**Rationale for Plan** - The main effort is to Blue Platoon (rescue). Secondary effort is to the tanks because they will kill the CRP which is preventing the rescue effort. Red will provide supporting fires to allow tanks to kill CRP and SA-9. Time is critically short because the real threat is the FSE that is at NAI3 (about 12-15 minutes out of [the FSE's] direct fire range. There is not enough time to execute a complex plan. Given the armor protection of an M1A1, especially against a BMP, there is little reason not to conduct a frontal assault with all nine tanks to kill the CRP, especially when we consider how little time we have before the FSE is within direct fire range. Green Platoon will have to travel a maximum of 3.5 km to kill the CRP; White only 2 km.

This entire movement should take not more than 10 minutes. Red will have to call mortar or artillery smoke in order to conceal the movement of the tanks behind Hill 22 to ensure surprise for the remainder of the mission. Whereas effective artillery fires by Outlaw north of PL COWBOYS would slow down the FSE, it would also cause them to deploy into battle formation, which I do not want; I want mass enemy confusion once Red opens the direct fire fight. Red will initiate direct fires to draw attention to the direct south. It is important that Red kill the far right (in battle formation) or the front tank (in march) with TOW. The tanks will assault directly into the flank of the FSE. Given the superior armor protection, fire control, surprise, numerical superiority (9 to 3), and armament of the M1 to the T-80, added to the shock effect of nine M1A1s rolling at you at 25 mph, the odds are heavily stacked in favor of A Troop. Add to that supporting fires from Red, Blue, and Outlaw 15, the fight will be quick.

### SOLUTION B

*(From Task Force Eagle Heavy Reserve, A/1-37th AR, TF 1-36th Infantry, Bosnia)*

#### FRAGO

"GUIDONS, this is BLACK 6, FRAGO follows. **Situation:** 3 BMPs with SA-9 support located vicinity 072552. Downed OH-58D air crew vicinity 069554. Suspected FSE vicinity 119588, moving into sector. ETA to EA PETER is 20 minutes."

"BLUE, maintain contact with enemy. Fix the MRP by conducting support by fire, oriented from Hill Top 22 to TRP 03. Adjust mortar fire on MRP. Adjust smoke to vicinity 086560 when WHITE begins its attack. Lift or shift fires on my order. Once MRP is destroyed, orient fires from TRP 03 to TRP 02. Prepare to destroy FSE in EA PETER."

"WHITE, Conduct hasty attack on MRP. Move north-west through CP1. Locate and secure crash site of OH-58D on Hill 22. Once site is secure, continue to attack east in order to destroy MRP vicinity 086560. Priority is destroying air defense assets. Do not cross PL BENGALS. LOA is tree line on Hill 22. Initiate smoke mission vicinity 086560 in order to obscure your attack. Trigger is continuing your attack east from crash site. Once MRP is destroyed, conduct hasty defense vicinity tree line west of TRP 03. Orient from TRP 02 to CP2 and prepare to destroy FSE in EA PETER. Move now."

"BAND-AID, move behind WHITE. Once site is secure, treat and evacuate

downed air crew to ambulance exchange point. Move now."

"RED, hold in place. Orient from TRP 03 to TRP 02. Do not engage targets on Hill 22. RED 1, personally verify all targets due to WHITE's attack. Prepare to destroy FSE in EA PETER."

"GREEN, hold in place. Orient from TRP 02 to TRP 01. Prepare to destroy FSE in EA PETER. BPT to reposition to my location in order to reinforce BLUE, orienting from TRP 03 to TRP 01. BPT orient east towards Redwood Forest to counter a dismounted attack."

"FIST/THUNDER, Immediate suppression 072552, BMPs/SA-9 in the open. BPT fire WP smoke at 086560 during WHITE's attack in order to obscure observation from the north-east."

"End State: NLT 0655, air crew evacuated to AXP. SA-9 and MRP destroyed. All elements prepared to destroy the FSE in EA PETER."

### RATIONALE

With the impending arrival of the FSE in under one half an hour, speed is imperative. BLUE is in contact, and can place effective direct and indirect fire on the MRP, fixing it. The nearest unit out of contact is WHITE. The tanks are the best choice due to the speed and firepower necessary to make the hasty attack as quick and devastating as possible. With BLUE fixing the MRP, the mortar section pounding them with HE, and WHITE conducting a flanking maneuver, we should be able to destroy it within ten to fifteen minutes, giving WHITE time to set up its hasty defense. There will be a five-minute delay between the tanks and the medics due to their position. That five-minute buffer allows the tank platoon to react to contingencies, such as a crash site occupied by the enemy, without exposing the medics to danger. We accept risk in that once WHITE 1 decides the area is clear, he will continue with his attack, leaving the medics with no security. WHITE's objective is not far away, however, and could react to any contact on the crash site within minutes.

We will keep RED and GREEN in their prepared positions in order to provide cover over EA PETER while the other two platoons destroy the MRP, and to keep the enemy confused as to what is in front of him. There is no doubt that the MRP has spotted BLUE and has called their position to the FSE. The longer we can keep the enemy thinking that they are facing one scout platoon in this sector the better. By the time they realize they are taking fire from a tank platoon on their flank, they

will be dead with no time to inform the FSE. If BLUE continues to take casualties we will reinforce them with GREEN to help finish off the MRP, and help with the destruction of the FSE.

The most complex part of the operation will be coordinating the indirect fire. In order to confuse and fix the MRP, we will hit it with HE from the beginning. BLUE has the best position to adjust the fire, and will do so until WHITE continues from securing the crash site. WHITE must cancel the HE mission and begin the WP smoke in order to obscure their actions from the FSE. Only they will know when they continue their move east. They will not be able to observe the smoke however, and BLUE must adjust the smoke accordingly until WHITE has completed the attack.

This plan allows for the securing and evacuation of the downed air crew, the destruction of the SA-9 and MRP, and the destruction of the follow-on company-sized element in EA PETER.

