

# SOLUTIONS — Tactical Vignette 98-6

*“Cobra’s Counterreconnaissance Fight,” from the November-December 1998 issue of ARMOR*

## Author’s Solution

“Guidons, guidons, this is COBRA Six. FRAGO follows, break...”

### 1. SITUATION

#### Friendly:

RED’s Alpha section engaged but did not destroy 1 BMP, last seen moving south vicinity grid WT086793. Alpha section has one vehicle with severe track damage, one vehicle stuck in a wadi, and a total of four wounded soldiers vicinity WT097786.

#### Enemy:

Scouts report:

- Two BRDMs are moving south on AA2 vicinity WT132809 at 0400.
- Four unidentified hot spots moving south vicinity WT095862 at 0400.

### 2. MISSION

No change.

### 3. EXECUTION

#### Commander’s intent:

No change.

#### a. Concept of the operation:

(1) **Scheme of maneuver.** Evacuate RED’s casualties, recover his vehicles, and destroy any known enemy vehicles in our AO, all in less than 1 hour. NLT 0500, start movement to PP CHARLIE. NLT 0530, have all elements passed through PP CHARLIE, signal engineers to close the lane, rearm and, refuel behind our BP, and be established in our BP ready to defend NLT 0600.

(2) **Fires.** Scouts have priority of fires to delay and disrupt enemy reconnaissance assets entering our security area. Send all calls for fire through me.

#### b. Tasks to subordinate units:

**RED 4:** Move your section as quickly as possible to recover your Alpha section vicinity CP 1 and evacuate wounded soldiers. Since you will be towing the disabled tank, you will be the last vehicle through the passage lane.

**WHITE:** Move toward CP 2. Find and destroy the two BRDMs identified by the scouts on AA2. Cross-talk with the scouts. Do not cross PL TENNESSEE without my permission.

**BLUE:** Send your Alpha section immediately and set vicinity CP 3. Orient N-NW. The BMP that engaged RED will probably continue to move south along the western wall. I will move with this section. Send your Bravo section to set vicinity CP 4. This section will serve as the safety net for the two BRDMs if they slip through WHITE. Cross-talk with WHITE to prevent fratricide.

**SCOUT 6:** Stay on my net and update reports on any enemy activity that your element identifies. You have priority of fires. Be prepared to call for indirect fires on all enemy elements you identify. You are my overwatch element. Cross-talk with WHITE and RED on their internal nets to conduct a video handoff of the BMP and two BRDMs. Update me frequently on those four hotspots, a possible CRP.

**COBRA BAND AID:** Move with me to vicinity CP 3. From there you will assist as needed in treatment and evacuation of casualties.

**COBRA 5:** Move to PP CHARLIE and control traffic flow there. Begin movement of the trains to the BP. Keep me informed of status. Ensure sappers are prepared to close the lane immediately upon our withdrawal. Get a status on WHITE’s fourth vehicle. We need to have it in the BP by 0600.

**COBRA 9:** Move the trains to our BP and conduct CSS operations from there. Coordinate for a hasty rearm and refuel there immediately upon our arrival at the BP.

#### c. Coordinating instructions:

Add the following additional graphic control measures to the current overlay, which remains in effect:

CP 1 – WT097786

CP 2 – WT130790

CP 3 – WT083763

CP 4 – WT130760

We must initiate our withdrawal NLT 0500, move all elements through PP CHARLIE NLT 0530, signal the engineers to close the lane behind our last vehicle, rearm and refuel behind the BP, occupy our BP, and be ready to defend with all vehicles NLT 0600.

### 4. SERVICE SUPPORT

No change.

### 5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL

**a. Command:** I will move with BLUE’s Bravo section and the medic PC to set vicinity CP 3. Keep me informed. We must cross-talk to prevent fratricide.

**b. Signal:** Far recognition signal is FM voice. Near recognition signal is two infrared flashes returned by three infrared flashes.

#### “ACKNOWLEDGE”

### RATIONALE

To meet the TF commander’s intent, you have one hour to successfully accomplish the following:

1. Destroy all enemy reconnaissance elements in your security area.
2. Recover your vehicles and evacuate wounded soldiers.
3. Withdraw your company team, and be prepared to defend from your BP with all of your vehicles.

The BMP and two BRDMs are most likely elements of the enemy’s regimental reconnaissance. The four unidentified hot spots are probably one of the combat reconnaissance patrols leading the enemy attack.

Scouts will maintain contact with the BMP and BRDMs as long as they can. You must get your killers in position to conduct a “video” handoff from the scouts before they lose contact with the BMP and BRDMs. The current “gap” between the hunters and the killers is too large. If scouts lose contact with the enemy before they can hand him off to the killers, the enemy may slip through unharmed. Depending on the terrain, you may not regain contact with the enemy until it is too late.

**NOTE:** The counterreconnaissance mission requires extensive IPB. It should be fought primarily as a defensive mission from positions of advantage along likely enemy avenues of approach; there should be sufficient depth and redundancy of observation and fields of fire within the security area. Therefore, the commander should position his elements to maximize coverage of likely avenues of approach and minimize the requirement for friendly movement. By minimizing friendly movement, the commander also reduces the risk of fratricide. Optimally, the hunters provide the killers with early warning (on their platoon in-

ternal net) and continuously track the enemy, providing real-time updates of enemy activity as he enters and passes through the security area. The hunters maintain contact with the enemy and conduct a “video” handoff to the killers, who destroy the enemy with a simple, gunnery-style defensive engagement. In this scenario, if the killers had been positioned vicinity PL TENNESSEE to engage targets on AA1 and AA2, and there was depth within the security area from the beginning of the operation, we would probably not be in this situation now.

Delegating specific tasks to each section allows you to conduct many tasks simultaneously.

1. You have the TF scout platoon attached to your company team. It has the capability of providing overwatch for your entire company team; use it to provide overwatch as you conduct your tasks and withdraw your company team. Since you have priority of fires, the scouts can also impede, harass, suppress, and possibly destroy enemy reconnaissance elements. Also, the activity and composition

for the four unidentified hot spots will most likely be designated as PIR for the TF commander.

2. Send RED’s Bravo section to recover its Alpha section and evacuate the wounded soldiers because it is closest and can be there quickest. If Bravo section encounters the BMP, it is capable of destroying the enemy vehicle, although this is not Bravo’s primary mission. The M88 is in the hide position and is too slow to move up, conduct recovery, and get back in time.

3. Send WHITE to destroy the BRDMs on AA2 because it is closest and can be there quickest. You need to conduct a “video” handoff of the BRDMs from the scouts to WHITE. If scouts lose contact with the BRDMs before they can hand them off to WHITE, the enemy may slip through. You may not regain contact with them until it is too late.

4. Send BLUE’s sections up to PL CAROLINA to add depth to your coverage of the security zone and to serve as a safety net in case the enemy slips through

RED and WHITE. The BMP will probably attempt to infiltrate south along the western wall to conduct reconnaissance of our defensive positions and obstacles. Therefore, position BLUE’s Alpha section against the western wall to block potential enemy penetration.

5. Bring the medic PC up with you and position it on PL CAROLINA. If RED has any urgent casualties, the senior aidman can transfer them to the medic PC and begin treatment while en route to the FAS. You are assuming risk by sending your 1SG and trains to the BP. If you take additional casualties or require additional recovery, you will have to conduct it without assistance from the 1SG or company trains assets if you are to meet your timeline.

6. Throughout this operation, especially upon withdrawal, cross-talk is a key factor in preventing fratricide. Position your XO at the passage point to control traffic, keep you informed, maintain communications with the TF, and coordinate with the engineers to close the lane after you have withdrawn.