

SOLUTIONS — Tactical Vignette 99-2

“The Passage at Wilcox” from the March-April 1999 issue of *ARMOR*

Author's Solution

FRAGO:

Guidons, this is Black 6, FRAGO follows:

1. SITUATION.

a. Enemy. A T-72, two BMPs w/squads and a ZSU-23-4 have been reported within the town of Wilcox. The tank location is unknown but the TF scouts have heard it moving throughout the town. One BMP is located vic 782514 and the ZSU-23-4 is located vic 783543. Two squad-size elements have been identified at vic 784518 and 793524. An obstacle is located vic 802523 and is reinforced with wire and mines. I believe the enemy is defending with 2 BMPs forward and the tank in depth. The unidentified BMP is likely located near the infantry squad in building L overwatching the obstacle. The tank is likely to be located within the town ready to reposition to support either BMP.

b. Friendly. Comanche Team has cleared the enemy forces up to the 49-grid line and has established a hasty defense. Apache Team is on our left flank and attacks to seize Obj 1 in order to protect our left flank. TF 4-7 AR is on our right flank and is attacking to secure an alternate passage lane within their sector. TF 2-72 AR is located to our rear as the brigade reserve and is preparing to continue the brigade attack to the north.

2. MISSION.

Team B attacks to secure a passage lane (RED-SKIN) from PL KENTUCKY to the LOA (PL TENNESSEE) in order to support the forward passage of TF 2-72 AR.

3. EXECUTION.

Intent: Our purpose is to secure a passage lane to allow TF 2-72 AR (on order, the brigade main effort) to continue the attack to the north. We must suppress the enemy to gain a foothold and seize our OBJs. We must clear the lane of all obstacles allowing the use of the passage lane by the follow-on task force. Then we must prevent the enemy from placing fires on TF 2-72 AR during their forward passage. Our endstate is platoons occupying OBJ L, OBJ T, and OBJ U oriented north to northwest and all remaining enemy forces contained within the town, allowing no direct fires on the lane.

a. Concept of Operations.

1) The team will move through C team in a company wedge, platoons in wedge formation with 1st platoon (mech) as the lead element, 2nd platoon (tank) on the left flank, 3rd platoon (mech) on the right flank, and the Sapper Platoon following 3rd Platoon. Traveling technique of movement. Once the team passes through C Team vic PL Kentucky, we will execute traveling overwatch technique of movement oriented north/northwest of the passage lane. 1st Platoon will occupy SBF1 and destroy the BMP vic 782514 and suppress the enemy to protect 2nd

Platoon. 2nd Platoon will occupy SBF 2 and suppress enemy forces to support 3rd Platoon's attack. 3rd Platoon will attack along AXIS MUSTANG to seize OBJ L. Once 3rd platoon seizes OBJ L one section of 3rd Platoon will occupy SBF 3 to protect the Sapper Platoon. The Sapper Platoon will follow 3rd Platoon, once OBJ L is seized and SBF 3 is occupied, it will breach the obstacle vic 802524 and continue to clear the passage lane as we attack to the LOA. 1st Platoon will attack to seize OBJ T. 2nd Platoon O/O will attack to seize OBJ U. Once the OBJs have been seized infantry elements will dismount and clear them of all remaining enemy forces. Once OBJs are occupied, platoons will orient north by northwest to prevent enemy direct fires on the follow-on task force's passage. 1st

Platoon will overwatch the RP. On order, the XO will move to the SP to establish link up with TF 2-72 AR and lead the task force to the RP.

2) Fires: Priority of FA fires is with 1st Platoon. Priority of mortar fires is with 3rd Platoon. 1st Platoon, destroy BMP vic 782514 in order to allow B team the freedom of movement once we pass the 49-grid line. 3rd Platoon obscure enemy in order to support your attack to seize OBJ L. 3rd Platoon, continue to fire vic. 802524 to provide obscuration for the breach element.

3) R & S: The task force scouts will move behind our company as we attack to establish a screen along the LOA (PL TENNESSEE). XO coordinate with the scouts and keep us informed

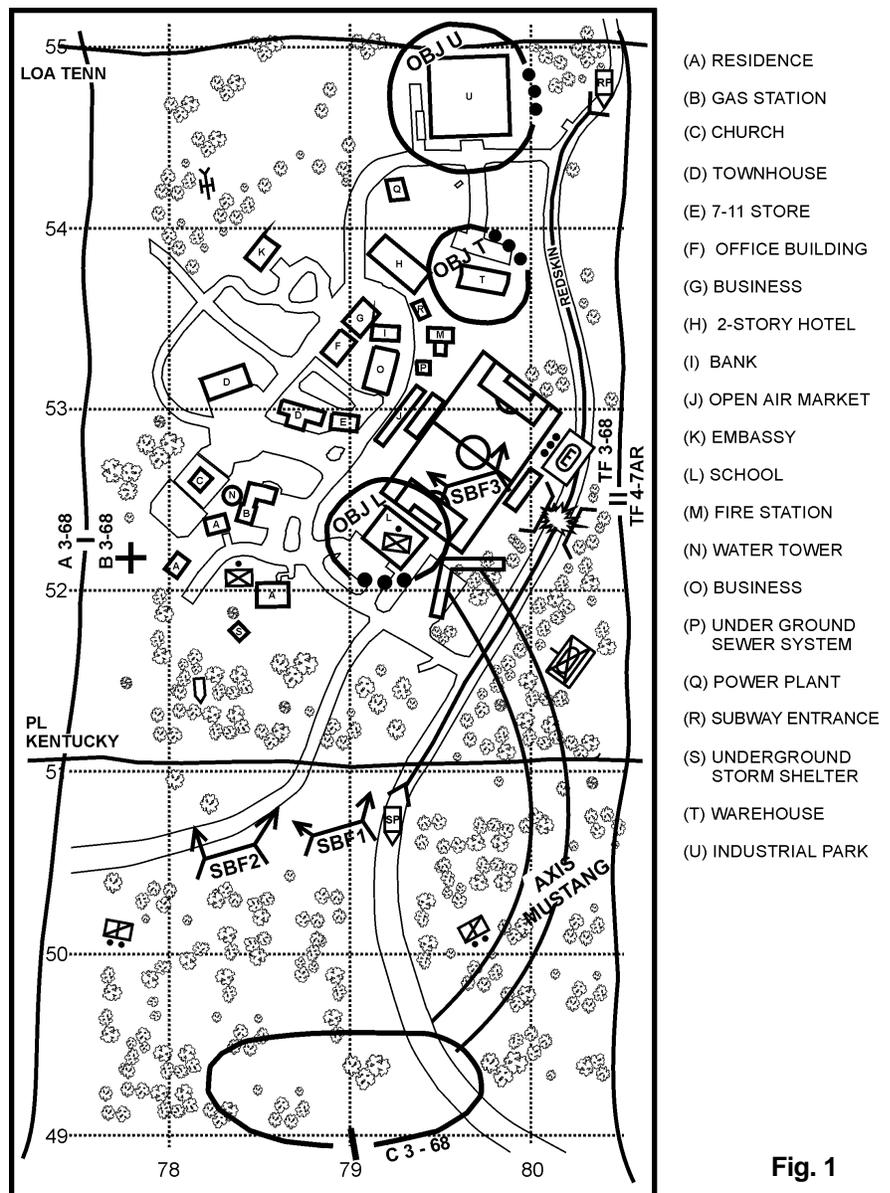


Fig. 1

of their plans and locations to prevent any fratricide.

4) Intel: We must be able to locate the tank.

b. Task to subordinate units:

1st Platoon (Red): Lead element in formation. Suppress enemy from SBF 1 to protect 2nd platoon's occupation of SBF 2. On order, attack to seize OBJ T to protect follow-on forces during their movement through the passage lane and overwatch the RP.

2nd Platoon (White): Initially move on left flank of the company wedge. Suppresses enemy forces from SBF 2 to protect 3rd platoon's attack on OBJ L. On order, seize OBJ U to protect follow-on forces during their movement through the passage lane.

3rd Platoon (Blue): Initially move on the right flank of the company wedge. Attack along AXIS MUSTANG to seize OBJ L. Then move one section to SBF 3 and suppress enemy forces to protect the Sapper Platoon as they breach the obstacle.

Sapper Platoon: Follows 3rd Platoon. On order, breach obstacle at grid 802523 and continue to clear the lane behind our attack in order to provide a trafficable lane for TF 2-72 AR.

Black 5: Move with Blue to assist them with additional firepower to protect the Sapper Platoon. On order, move to the SP. Link up with and lead TF 2-72 AR along the lane to the RP.

Fist: Follow Red set SBF 1. Adjust artillery and mortar fire. Call artillery fires on BMP in open vic 782514 and then smoke and suppression to protect the breach vic 802527. Fire smoke and suppression for 3rd Platoon's attack on OBJ L with mortars.

Black 7: Initially set vic PL KENTUCKY behind SBF 2. On order, move along AXIS MUSTANG set vic 802513 and support reconstitution and recovery.

c. Coordinating Instructions:

New operations overlay (Fig. 1) is being sent over IVIS.

4. SERVICE SUPPORT: No change.

5. COMMAND & SIGNAL:

a. Command: I will move with 1st Platoon.

b. Signal: No changes.

Rationale

To accomplish the mission B Team must secure a lane for the follow-on task force. The goal is to avoid costly, time consuming fighting in the town and secure a lane as quickly as possible. The plan is to seize key positions that control the lane and only engage those enemy forces required to secure the lane. OBJs L, U, and T are key to controlling the lane. From these positions the company can prevent the enemy from interfering with the passage of TF 2-72 AR. Initially a mechanized infantry platoon and tank platoon supported by artillery destroy the known enemy BMP and suppress remaining enemy forces to support an attack to seize OBJ L. With massed suppressive fires from the two platoons in SBF 1 and SBF2, a mechanized infantry platoon sup-

ported by mortars can rapidly seize OBJ L. OBJ L provides a position of advantage for the platoon to protect our breach of the obstacle and provides a commanding position overwatching all the southern approaches into the passage lane. Once the obstacle is breached, the tank and mechanized infantry platoon move from their SBF positions to seize the remaining two objectives, being protected by the suppressive fires of the platoon on OBJ L. With OBJ L, OBJ U, and OBJ T secured the company can effectively overwatch the lane and suppress or destroy any enemy forces attempting to interfere with the passage.

Reader's Solution

(From the officers of Co. B, 2d Tank Battalion, 2d Marine Division, 2d MEF)

"Guidons, guidons, this is Black Six, FRAGO follows, break..."

1. SITUATION

Task Organization

Effective immediately an engineer platoon is attached to Team Barbarians.

Friendly:

Team Apache is on our left flank. Team Comanche has cleared all enemy forces up to the 49-grid line. They are currently in a hasty defensive position. TF 4-7 AR is on our right flank and is tasked with securing an alternate route. Two scout sections are located to our front at grids 508778 and 504797.

Enemy:

TRP Zulu, office building, located at grid 534789. Alpha 1, one ZSU 23-4; Bravo 1, one BMP with dismounted infantry squad positioned near an underground storm shelter. Bravo 2, one dismounted infantry squad located in a school. A road crater at 524803 is reinforced with wire and mines. The location of another BMP are unknown. Scouts report hearing track vehicle noises they believe to be a T-72. Some civilians are believed to be hiding in their homes.

2. MISSION

O/O Team Barbarians secures a passage lane from PL Kentucky to PL Tennessee IOT allow the passage of TF 2-72 AR through our lines.

3. EXECUTION

Commander's Intent

Higher's intent is for Team Barbarians to facilitate the passage of follow-on forces. The final result desired is for all enemy hard targets to be destroyed. One tank platoon will set on PL Tennessee with two mechanized platoons securing the passage lane.

a. Concept of the operation

(1) Scheme of maneuver. Team Barbarians will conduct a deliberate breach with one platoon establishing a support by fire position. The tank platoon will conduct a breach at the road crater to allow follow-on forces to reach PL Tennessee. The remaining platoon will secure the passage lane. Once the breach has been affected, both

mechanized platoons will provide security for the passage lane.

(2) Fires. The purpose of indirect fires is to support our breaching operation. First platoon has priority of fires from mortars to suppress enemy positions. Second platoon has priority of fires from artillery for obscuration and suppression. The first unit to gain eyes on the ZSU 23-4 gains priority of fires from artillery.

a. Tasks to subordinate units

1st Platoon: Establish a support by fire position vicinity of grid 508788. Suppress all enemy positions within Bravo 1 and immediately report the position of the T-72 and the second BMP. Your left lateral limit is the church. Your right lateral limit is the school. Once the breach is complete, defend the passage lane oriented to the west from checkpoint 1 to checkpoint 2. You have priority of fires from TF mortars.

2d Platoon: Breach the obstacle located at grid 524803. You have a platoon of engineers attached to you initially. Upon completion of the breach, detach the engineers to 3d platoon. Proceed to PL Tennessee and screen to the North. BPT facilitate the forward passage of TF 2-72 AR through our lines. You have priority of artillery throughout the mission.

3d Platoon: You are designated the assault force. Follow in trace of 2d platoon during the breach. You are responsible for adjusting artillery fire for 2d platoon. Upon completion of the breach, defend the passage lane from checkpoint 2 to PL Tennessee.

Engineers: You are attached to 2d platoon and will provide engineer support during the breach. Upon completion of the breach, continue to improve the passage lane for follow-on forces.

b. Coordinating Instructions:

The following checkpoints have been added:

CP ET- 515796

CP 2 ET- 530804

4. SERVICE SUPPORT

No change

5. COMMAND & SIGNAL

a. I will be with the support force and the XO will move with the assault force.

b. All vehicles will display a green flag to indicate an open passage lane through the obstacle. The alternate signal is green star cluster.

Rationale

The mission is best accomplished by avoiding the potential MOUT situation. The decisive point during the mission will be the breach. The locations of the T-72 and one BMP remain unknown, therefore the tank platoon should be the breach force. Second platoon provides more armor protection and precision firepower to the engineers. The Bradleys will be able to provide adequate suppression on the enemy dismounted infantry squads and the known BMP. It is important to protect the passage lane until TF 2-72 AF passes through our lines. This can be accomplished by positioning second platoon along PL Tennessee and both mechanized platoons along the route.