

# Bridgeton Crossing

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## Situation

You are a rifle company commander in 1st Battalion, 3d Marines. Your company is mounted on AAVs and has been reinforced with a tank platoon, TOW section, combat engineer section, and Dragon section (attached to the rifle platoons). The MEF has been advancing generally north. Your regiment has been ordered to swing west and seize a crossing of the Diesty River at Bridgeton in order to facilitate the continued advance. Originally the regimental commander had hoped to force a hasty crossing with 1st Battalion, but bad weather has slowed the advance. The previous night, friendly reconnaissance elements were driven from Bridgeton by an enemy mechanized force estimated to be platoon to company strength. Intelligence now reports an enemy mechanized battalion heading south on Highway 1 to reinforce Bridgeton, expected to arrive sometime mid-morning. As a result, the regimental commander has decided he will now have to conduct a deliberate crossing and has ordered more forces forward. In the meantime, your company has been ordered to conduct a reconnaissance-in-force toward Bridgeton along Rte 6 in order to ascertain the nature of enemy defenses along the axis of advance as well as at Bridgeton. You are told to advance as far as you can without getting decisively engaged. You are also instructed, if able, to look for sites near Bridgeton suitable for crossing by AAV since the banks of the Diesty are frequently accessible to amphibious vehicles.

The weather is lousy and you doubt if much will be flying until it clears. By 0805 you have advanced within 5 kilometers of Highway 1 and are surprised that you have not made contact with enemy security forces. In response to your inquiry, battalion reports no new information on the enemy battalion approaching from the north. You deploy 2d Platoon onto River Bluff to protect your blind right

flank. At 0825 1st Platoon, your lead element, reports: "Just flushed a scout car off Bridgeton Rise toward the town." Moments later, 1st Platoon calls again: "You better get up on the double to look at this." You move forward and find the platoon commander watching Bridgeton from a turret-defilade position offering excellent observation of the entire town. He says: "Take a look. I've been watching for 5 minutes now and I've spotted 3 scout cars and maybe a handful of troops . . . enough for a recon detachment. Otherwise the town is dead." With your binoculars you confirm the lieutenant's observations: no sign of infantry, mechanized vehicles or heavy

weapons; no signs of any defensive preparations. Just then, 2d Platoon comes on the net: "We got enemy mech on the River Road about 3 clicks east of Bridgeton. So far I count six APCs and two tanks, but there could be more coming into view. They're heading for the town like a bat out of hell. Do you want me to engage?" It is 0835. What do you do, Captain?

## Requirement

In a time limit of 3 minutes, issue any instructions and make any reports/requests. Once that is done, provide a sketch of your plan and a brief explanation of your decision. Submit your solution to the *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #98-4, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or fax 703-640-0823.

*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.*

