

Attack on Rocky Run Hollow

by Maj John F. Schmitt, USMCR

Situation

You command the 1st Battalion. Your enemy is elements of the Quantico Liberation Front (QLF). A tough and effective guerilla force, the QLF tends to operate in small units, relying on ambush and hit-and-run tactics. Faced with a superior enemy, QLF forces will usually withdraw quickly, springing ambushes on their pursuers. QLF forces have shown themselves capable of mounting operations up to battalion size, with up to 8-10 light tanks in support. The terrain is thickly vegetated; line of sight is rarely more than 200 meters, and often less than 100. The largest stream, Rocky Run, is never more than 3 feet deep; the others are intermittent and pose no obstacle to infantry. The only road in your area is Highway 6, a one-lane dirt road. Vehicles are mostly limited to the road and trails.

Regiment hopes to bring the QLF to battle with a pair of simultaneous predawn surprise attacks. Your battalion is tasked to locate and attack a possible enemy regimental supply depot in Rocky Run Hollow west of Highway 6. The regimental commander makes it clear that the true objective is to force the QLF to fight, and the idea is to do that by threatening his logistics. Meanwhile, some 10 kilometers east, 2d Battalion will launch a helicopter-borne raid on Triangletown, a suspected QLF assembly area.

You have two sections of Cobras (Zipper 1 & 2) in direct support and two preplanned close air support missions. Your antiarmor assets are organized into "Whiskey" Company, consisting of M2 heavy machineguns, Mk19 grenade launchers, and TOWs mounted on HMMWVs and organized into four platoons of four vehicles each.

You come up with what you think is an adaptable plan. Alpha will swing around to block the western flank near Hill 86. Whiskey will advance north on Highway 6 to block from the east. Bravo will advance directly north on the suspected logistic site in order

to fix the enemy or flush him toward Alpha or Whiskey. Charlie will be in reserve, ready to exploit the situation. Aviation will be on call.

The approach march goes well. Alpha reaches its attack position at 0300 without making contact. Whiskey reaches Homestead 1 having lost only one vehicle to an enemy mine. Bravo advances quickly in the face of sporadic harassment from an estimated squad and reaches the rise overlooking the suspected logistic site with minimal casualties. Radio traffic indicates 2d Battalion has run into a sizable force near Triangletown. As Bravo continues to advance at 0400, Whiskey moves north from Homestead 1 toward the E-14 trail intersection to "tighten the noose." Bravo

reports increasing resistance, probably platoon strength, but no sign yet of a logistic site. At 0430, Whiskey reports an enemy column of infantry with six enemy tanks at the Highway 6/E-14 intersection, heading east on E-14. Whiskey was able to knock out a light tank before "everybody went to ground. They didn't expect us." Just then, you receive a report from higher headquarters of an enemy infantry company "double-timing" south on Highway 6 near Homestead 2.

What will you do?

Requirement

In a time limit of 5 minutes, make your decision in the form of any orders you will issue or reports you will make. Then provide an overlay and a brief explanation of your decision. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #99-11, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or fax (703) 630-9147.

