

The Debrief

by Andrew H. Hershey

Situation

You have been assigned as an advisor/liason with the host-nation forces. Last night one of the host-nation companies conducted a night ambush of an insurgent convoy. The host-nation forces have a small arms capability similar to a Marine rifle company; however, their communications and night vision equipment are limited. You are attending the company commander's debrief to his battalion commander and members of his staff.

Following are the company commander's comments:

"My rifle company, with two medium machinegun teams and two assault teams attached (rocket propelled grenade style), was ordered to conduct a night ambush on a known enemy supply route. As the company commander, I had a night vision monocular. We did bring trip flares and six antitank mines along with several antipersonnel pressure mines. Our communications net enabled me to speak with my battalion headquarters and locally to each platoon leader.

"Intelligence reports indicated that enemy supplies are transported by trucks with the occasional armed jeep or light armored car acting as an escort. The trucks generally have an infantry platoon minus as local security as well. Convoys are six to eight vehicles long.

"The company was dropped off by helicopters at landing zone (LZ) Bravo at 0135, some 5 kilometers from the ambush site. The terrain was mountainous, with rocky outcroppings and low scrub. Nighttime temperatures were near or below freezing. The unit marched in column, keeping to a contour level below the crest, to the ambush site. Once there, a platoon conducted a reconnaissance and then we assumed the fighting positions as outlined on this map. We kept radio talk to a minimum using runners or chemical light signals when able. When it was still dark, the enemy convoy approached from the village as anticipated. No jeeps or armored cars were visible from my position.

"The convoy entered the kill zone, and the company opened fire with

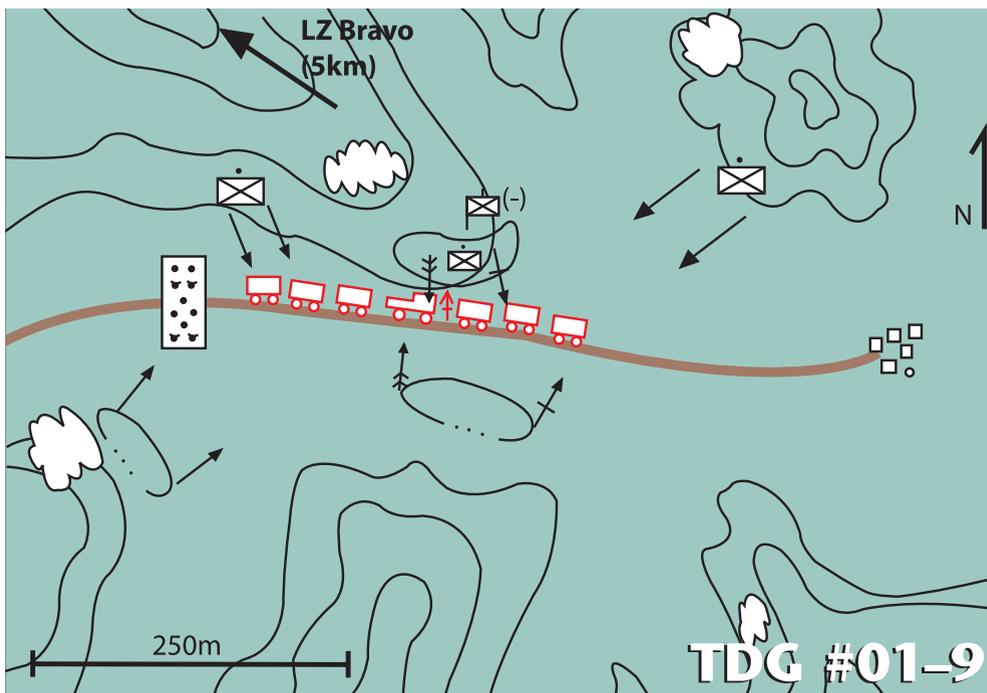
the headquarters initiating the ambush. The enemy was hard pressed to react, but some of the infantry managed to return fire aided by a heavy machinegun (HMG) from a jeep in the middle of the convoy, but then they were overwhelmed. We suffered only four lightly wounded, one seriously, and one killed in action.

"While medical attention was given to the wounded, we conducted a quick sweep of the enemy in search of items of intelligence value. We found none but did notice we destroyed a jeep with HMG. Following this search, we marched via a different route to LZ Bravo for extraction. We left the mines in place in the hopes the enemy might set them off later when picking up their dead.

"The mission was clearly a success, don't you agree, Capt Smith?"

Requirement

In a time of 2 minutes, critique the mission. Being sure to justify your observations—both the good and the bad. Provide a brief rationale for your comments and a sketch to support your concept of operations for this ambush. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #01-9, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703-630-9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.



For more detailed information on the structure of Marine Corps units, Marine Corps equipment, and symbols used in TDG sketches, see the MCG web site at <<http://www.mca-marines.org/Gazette/gaz.html>>.