

Battle Damage Assessment

by Sgt Richard A. Bell

Situation

You are the platoon commander of 3d Platoon, Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). Your platoon is tasked with conducting a battle damage assessment (BDA) of an AV-8B Harrier strike that was carried out on a terrorist training camp. You are to helo into Landing Zone (LZ) Talon with your platoon, reinforced by a squad of machine-guns (two M240Gs) and an assault squad (two shoulder-launched multi-purpose assault weapon rocket launchers). Also attached to your platoon are a two-man intelligence team, a combat camera team, and a human intelligence team. Your platoon carries a full combat load of ammunition to include grenades (fragmentary and smoke), M203 high-explosive rounds, and signal flares, and each squad has one AT-4 antitank rocket and one claymore antipersonnel mine. In support of your mission is a section of AH-1W Cobras providing aerial fires, but due to the flight having to take a circuitous route to avoid an unexpected ice storm, they are almost out of fuel and must return immediately to amphibious shipping to refuel. The S-2 (intelligence) briefed that current imagery shows the area is secure, with all remaining terrorists having fled to the mountains.

You have been inserted into the LZ without problems, and the CH-46s have left to refuel aboard the ships; they will not be able to extract the platoon for 45 minutes. As you prepare to conduct the BDA, the Cobra flight

leader suddenly reports to you that there is an enemy platoon (reinforced)-sized convoy moving toward the objective. The enemy is traveling west on the road and is estimated to arrive in 20 to 30 minutes. They were driving six to seven technical vehicles (pickup trucks) that appear to be mounted with either 12.7mm or 14.5mm machine-guns. Each vehicle contains about six terrorists. The Cobras have made one gun run on the convoy, destroying or damaging two to three vehicles, but are now critically low on fuel and have to return to the ship, so they cannot provide further close air support. It appears as if the remainder of the convoy (4 to 5 vehicles totaling 25 to 30 enemy personnel) is still proceeding in your direction. Time has priority, and you have 45 minutes on the ground to gather the BDA and return to LZ Talon for extract.

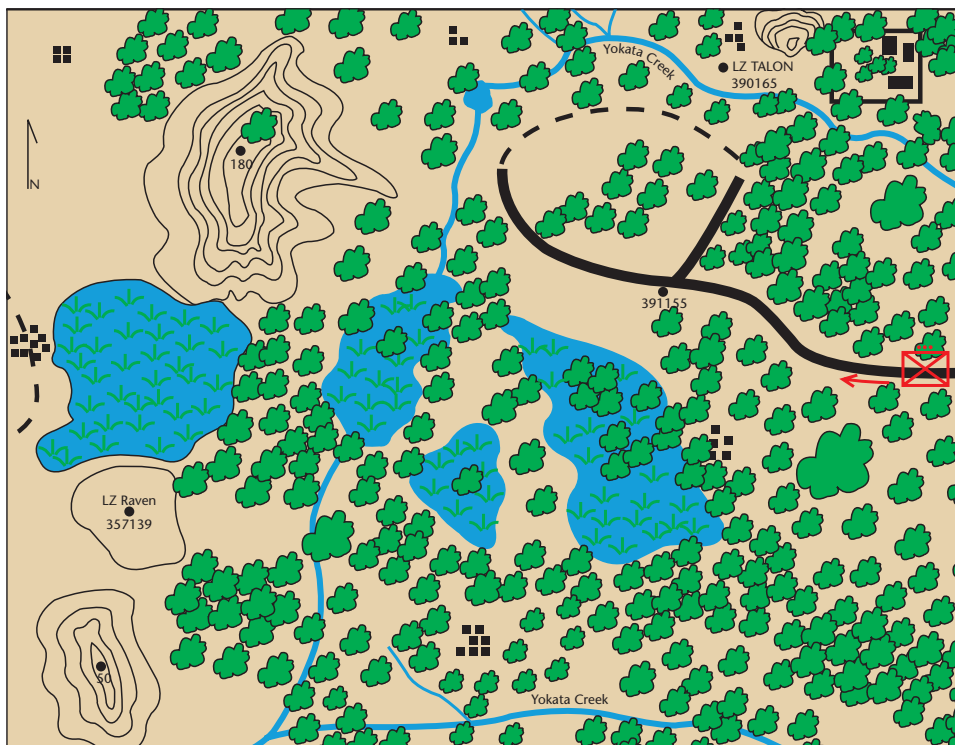
Task your squad and attachments to accomplish this mission. This is a daylight operation for photographic purposes, and all personnel in the area are declared hostile.

Requirement

In a time limit of 5 minutes, come up with a fragmentary order for your squad leaders and compose your reports to higher headquarters. Include your commander's intent and scheme of maneuver with an overlay. Send your solution and rationale for your actions to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #04-8, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, fax 703-630-9147, or e-mail <gazette@mca-marines.org>.



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