

SOLUTIONS – Tactical Vignette 98-4

“Showdown at Bruechville” from the July-August 1998 issue of *ARMOR*

THE PROBLEM:

Scenario:

You are deployed in theater as part of a United Nations force where you have been assigned stability and support type operations (SASO), primarily peace enforcement and support of the humanitarian assistance efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The threat in the area is from the Athian faction, which is not satisfied with the United Nations’ resolution of border disputes or redistribution of international aid. Athian equipment includes BRDM-1s and OT-64s, which they have been flaunting in violation of the U.N. accord by using their armored vehicles to escort other vehicles and equipment around in your area of operations. Additionally, Athian activity has thus far been limited to mild anti-United Nations demonstrations and graffiti.

Recent intelligence indicates insurgent forces are suffering food shortages brought on by harsh winter months. Current rules of engagement now allow the use of deadly force when necessary to protect lives, critical equipment, and all U.N./host nation facilities.

General Situation:

You are the commander of Blackhorse Troop 1-23 Cavalry, an armored division cavalry squadron. Your assets include two scout platoons (1st and 3rd Plt) of M3 CFVs, two tank platoons (2nd and 4th Plt) of M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks, a mortar section, one up-armored fire truck and one tank and pump unit, carrying high-pressure water cannons. Additionally, there is a team of OH-58D(I) Kiowa Warriors (KWs) on station from Delta Troop that are under squadron control. The KWs are each carrying 300 rounds of .50 caliber and two Hellfire missiles.

Mission:

B/1-23rd Cavalry conducts area security operations centered on the village of Bruechville to protect food distribution points and other critical facilities against Athian insurgent threats.

You have been issued non-lethal weapons for crowd control, to include water

cannons, pepper spray, and CS grenades. You are conducting an area security mission to protect and control the distribution of food and medical supplies at a recently resupplied food distribution center. Your 1st platoon is assigned Checkpoints 7 and 9, the terrain west of the river, with its sister platoon (2nd) established in Hide Position Horse. Your 3rd Platoon is responsible for the river and the terrain east of the river, with its sister platoon in Hide Position Saddle. Your mortars are in Mortar Firing Position Rope.

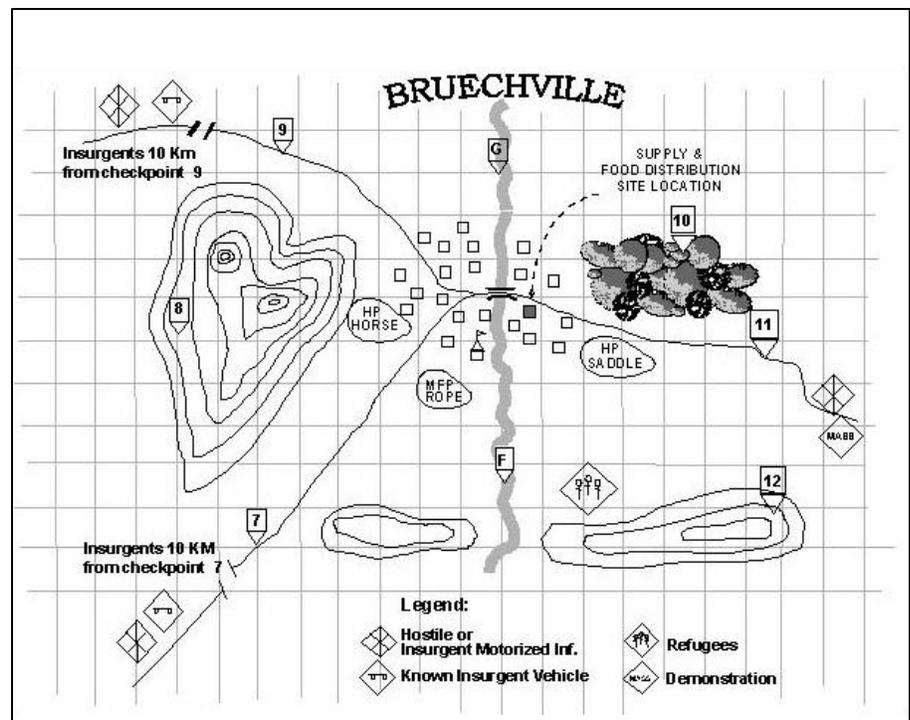
The Action Begins:

Ten minutes ago, the squadron S2 informed you that JSTARS reports two convoys approaching your position from the west on each of the major roads. Both convoys have approximately 20 vehicles, of which about half appear to be armored. The squadron commander FRAGOed the KWs to reconnoiter the convoys to determine their exact location and disposition. You plot their location to be approximately twelve kilometers west of CPs 7 and 9.

You receive the following SPOTREP from your 3rd platoon: “Black 6, this is

Blue 1. We have a crowd of approximately 200 pro-Athian sympathizers on foot, moving on the road toward the resupply area, current location is two kilometers west of CP 11. We have identified known Athian blacklist personnel among the demonstrators. Also, a roving patrol has found five empty dump trucks hidden in the wooded area north of HP Saddle. The truck drivers state they are taking a lunch break from their road construction project.” Although you have been briefed on all construction projects in your area, you are unaware of any projects in your immediate AO.

The KWs report that both convoys are approximately ten kilometers west of CPs 7 and 9 respectively. The northern convoy consists of 3 BRDMs, 5 OT-64s, and 12 GAZ cargo trucks. The southern convoy consists of 5 BRDMs, 6 OT-64s, and 9 GAZ cargo trucks. Every armored vehicle has women and children riding on top. The OT-64s are equipped with 14.5mm heavy MGs, and BRDMs equipped with 12.7mm heavy MGs. The paramilitary soldiers have RPGs and SA-7s. They further report that the road is bordered on both sides by restricted and severely restricted terrain.



THE SOLUTIONS

Author's Solution

FRAGO

Guidons, this is Black 6, FRAGO follows, acknowledge, over.

Situation: There is a 20-vehicle convoy consisting of 3 BRDMs, 5 OT-64s, and 12 GAZ cargo trucks 10km west of CP 9 moving east. There is an additional 20-vehicle convoy with 5 BRDMs, 6 OT-64s, and 9 GAZ cargo trucks 10 km west of CP 7 moving east. All armored vehicles in both convoys have women and children riding on top. Blue has approximately 200 pro-Athian sympathizers on foot, 2 km west of CP 11 moving west. Blue has also discovered 5 empty dump trucks in the wooded area north of HP SADDLE.

There is an Air Weapons Team (AWT) from D Troop operating in our area. It is my assessment that this is a coordinated effort by pro-Athian sympathizers to raid the distribution site in Breuchville.

Mission: No change.

Intent: (Purpose) Prevent Athian aggressors from capturing or destroying supplies. (Endstate) Athian convoys and demonstrations dispersed and returned to their point of origin.

Tasks to subordinate units:

RED: - Establish blocking positions at CPs 7 and 9 to allow no penetration east of the checkpoints.

- On order, destroy convoys using sections from White.

- Use the fire truck at CP 7 and the tank and pump unit at CP 9 to remove women and children from the armored vehicles, or use mortar fire.

- Use mortars first, then escalate force with direct fire as necessary to stop the convoys.

- B/P coordinate with AWT to prevent penetration of CPs.

- You have priority of mortar fire.

WHITE: - Send one section to CP 7 and one section to CP 9 to reinforce Red.

- On order, destroy convoys.

BLUE: - Establish a blocking position from CP 11, west 4.5 oriented east.

- Use water cannons, CS, and pepper spray as necessary to disperse the crowd.

- Identify and detain crowd leaders and blacklist personnel.

- Detain the dump truck drivers.

- Disable the dump trucks.

GREEN: - Send one section to reinforce Blue and one section to defend the supply distribution point.

- Be prepared to reinforce Red or White.

MORTARS: - Lay one tube on a target from CP 9, west 1.0.

- Lay the other tube on a target from CP 7, west 1.0.

- Be prepared to reorient your direction of fire to support Blue.

TOC: - Keep Squadron informed.

- Request that the AWT be OPCON to us.

- Request FA priority of fires.

FIST: - Move to CP 9 and adjust fire for the mortars.

- FA POF: KWs, 1st Plt.

- Mort POF: 1st Plt, KWs.

KWs: - Maintain contact with the convoys.

- O/O use FA and organic fire to attrit the convoys.

- Be prepared to conduct BHO with 1st Platoon and fight a coordinated close fight.

TRAINS: - Move to the supply point with the 1SG's M113, maintenance M113 and the M-88.

- Link-up with Green and establish a perimeter around the supply point.

Service Support: No change.

Command and Signal: I will be with Red and White at CP 7. Acknowledge, over.

RATIONALE:

I sent 1st and 2nd Platoons to CPs 7 and 9 as a show of force and have overwhelming firepower if destruction of the BRDMs and OT-64s is necessary and/or authorized. I split 2nd Platoon because a section is sufficient firepower to destroy either of the convoys and the restrictive terrain will not allow for anything larger than a section to be effectively employed against the convoys.

I sent a section of 4th Platoon to reinforce 3rd as a show of force. 3rd Platoon has the ability to detain crowd leaders and delay the crowd so they should be dispersed before they reach the distribution point.

I detained the dump truck drivers for later questioning and possible turnover to the host nation police for their involvement in the raid. I disabled the dump trucks to prevent their usage by other personnel. I considered tasking 3rd Platoon to use them to block the road into Breuchville, but I felt time was short and they would need all they could get to plan and prepare for the crowd.

4th Platoon is my be-prepared reserve. They should not be needed in 3rd Platoon's fight or at the distribution point.

The Kiowa Warriors will provide additional firepower and eyes for 1st Platoon. They also can record the event on video.

Reader Solution

(Submitted by CPT Ray M. Ceralde)

Note: "Demon" Troop is one of the Air Cavalry Troops in the squadron.

Alert

Guidons, this is Black 6, FRAGO follows.

Situation: 20-vehicle convoy, ten kilometers west of CP 9, consisting of 3 BRDMs, 5 OT-64s, and 12 cargo trucks, moving east, break.

Another 20-vehicle convoy, ten kilometers west of CP 7, consisting of 5 BRDMs, 6 OT-64s, and 9 cargo trucks, also moving east, break.

Demon troop reports terrain on both sides of north and south road past checkpoints 7 and 9 is severely restricted for vehicle movement, break.

All armored vehicles have women and children riding on top, break.

200 pro-Athian sympathizers with identified black-listed personnel, two kilometers east of CP 9 moving west along east road, break.

5 dump trucks, stationary in woodline, 1 kilometer north of hide position SADDLE, break.

Most probable course of action is that the Athians are attempting to overwhelm the supply and food point by numbers and force to take more than their allotted share of food and supplies, break.

Mission: We will establish hasty checkpoints at CP 7, CP 9, and CP 11 to prevent armored vehicles from entering Breuchville and to prevent large numbers of civilians from massing at the food distribution point, break.

Intent: I want to prevent the armored vehicles from entering our AO, break.

I want the checkpoints to delay the passage of non-combatants so that they will not overwhelm the supply and food point, break.

I want to detain blacklisted personnel that attempt to pass through our checkpoints, but I do not want you to aggressively pursue them if they flee, break.

I want to maintain observation on dump trucks to ensure that they do not support insurgent operations, break.

All other personnel are free to continue to Breuchville within guidelines of UN Accord, break.

Tasks to Subordinate Units

RED 1, Go with your Alpha section past checkpoint 7 along south road, break.

Send your Bravo section past checkpoint 9 along north road, break. Establish hasty checkpoints and use your vehicles to physically block the road where there is restricted terrain on both sides to prevent the convoy from bypassing you, break. Upon inspection, cargo trucks and personnel can continue, but send them in intervals of two vehicles every five minutes, break. Order all armored vehicles to turn around or remain at checkpoints, break.

WHITE 1, Send your Alpha section to vicinity checkpoint 7 along south road with Red's Alpha section and physically block the road to support Red's hasty checkpoint, break.

Send your Bravo section to vicinity checkpoint 9 with Red's Bravo section along north road and physically block the road to support Red's hasty checkpoint, break.

GREEN 1, Move your platoon to the Breuchville river bridge, 3.0 west and 1.0 north from your hide position, break. Put your sections on both sides of the bridge to prevent any armored vehicles that have slipped through from reaching the supply and food point, break

BLUE 1, Send a two-vehicle section to continue to observe and report on the 5 stationary dump trucks, break. Send the rest of your platoon and all available dismounts to establish a hasty checkpoint at CP 11 to prevent the crowd from massing at the food point. Upon inspection, send groups of 20 people every five minutes, break.

BLACK 5, Move to CP 11 and supervise the situation there, break.

BLACK 7, Move company trains to food point to provide security to enable orderly distribution, break. Send fire truck and pump unit to food point to support in the event of a hostile crowd, break. I will send the mortars to provide you additional manpower, break.

BLACK 2, Move to the food point and provide dismounts to support security at food point. Obtain further instructions from Black 7, break.

Coordinating Instructions

Detain any blacklisted personnel attempting to pass through checkpoints, break.

Use deadly force only in self-defense and to protect lives and critical equipment, break.

CSS

Company trains move to supply and food distribution site, break.

Command & Signal

I will be with Red's Bravo section at CP 9, break.

Blackhorse X-ray will remain in same place.

Acknowledge, over.

RATIONALE

I sent one scout platoon and one tank platoon to areas along the roads where the terrain is severely restricted on both sides so that the convoys cannot bypass them.

In the event that an armored vehicle does bypass the checkpoints west of the river, another tank platoon is at the bridge blocking both sides to prevent passage to the food point. I decided to put the tank platoon at the bridge instead of supporting 3rd Platoon because they really do not need combat vehicles, but rather dismounts. Sending four BFVs and their dismounts to establish a hasty checkpoint should be able to control the situation.

The dump trucks may not have work in the area of operations and are suspicious, but unless they actually participate in

insurgent operations, there is nothing I can do but continue to observe and report. If they do something in violation of the UN accord, then I can have the BFV section block their movement and detain the drivers.

The hasty checkpoint at CP 11 is intended to slow down the movement of the crowd. The blacklisted personnel will probably not attempt to pass through the checkpoint for fear of being detained and will probably turn around. This separates some of the known instigators and will lessen the potential of the crowd from becoming hostile.

Sending personnel and trucks in intervals of 20 people and/or 2 trucks every five minutes should keep the demonstrators from initially overwhelming the food point and allows the security personnel there to establish order.

I sent the 1SG to move the company trains to the food point to provide security to the relief personnel there. The company trains personnel and equipment are capable of providing security with their M113s and M88.

I attached the mortar platoon to the 1SG to provide additional manpower for security of the food point. Based from experience in Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia, the rules of engagement extremely limit the use of indirect fires. I do not foresee the need for mortars to support with indirect fires.

I sent the fire truck and pump unit to the food point to support in case the crowd becomes hostile.

I sent the XO to the east at CP 11 because I feel that the situation there is the second most important point and I want him to control the situation there.

I will go to CP 9 in the north because I have RED 1 to control the situation in the south.

READER SOLUTION

(Submitted by Student, Cavalry Leaders Course 98-03)

Guidons, this is Blackhawk 6. FRAGO follows, acknowledge, over.

Situation: Two convoys of Athian insurgents with BRDMs, OT-64s, and trucks are currently 10 kilometers to the west, moving down the roads leading to Checkpoints 9 and 7, break. Athian use of APCs is in violation of UN accord, break. A crowd of approximately 200 pro-

Athian sympathizers is approaching Bruechville from the east, current location from CP 11 west 2.0, break. There are also 5 empty dump trucks located in the woods vicinity CP 10, break. My read is that this is a coordinated effort to raid the NGO supply and food distribution (SFD) point, break. The two armed convoys are a diversion to focus our attention away from the crowd, who will then use the dump trucks to raid the NGO SFD, break. Athian insurgents are known to be suffering food shortages, break. Athians have not used violence up to this point, break. Athian force approaching CP 9 consists of 3 BRDMs, 5 OT-64s, 12 GAZ trucks, and paramilitary forces armed with RPGs and SA-7s, break. Athian force approaching CP 7 consists of 5 BRDMs, 6 OT-64s, 9 GAZ trucks, and paramilitary force armed with RPGs and SA-7s, break. Both convoys have women and children riding on the APCs, break. Pro-Athian crowd west of CP 11 consists of 200 dismounts with known Athian blacklist personnel among the crowd, break. Dump trucks vic CP 10 consists of 5 civilian dump trucks with drivers, break. Be advised we also have a group of refugees of unknown affiliation from CP F east 2.0. Acknowledge situation, over.

Task Organization: No change within troop. Be advised we have one SWT on station, break.

Mission: No change, break.

Execution, Intent: My intent is to protect the NGO SFD point by preventing the Athians from entering Bruechville with their convoys or the crowd, break. Success occurs when we fix the armed convoys west of the river and control the crowd east of Bruechville with only use of minimum force, break. I intend to have squadron block the APCs from the west after we have fixed them, break.

Concept: We will establish roadblocks at CPs 7 and 9 to prevent Athian APC penetration of those CPs. We will establish a roadblock vic HP SADDLE to prevent the crowd from entering Bruechville en masse. We will also secure the NGO SFD point, break. We will then negotiate with the Athians to defuse the situation and allow squadron time to assist us with additional assets, Acknowledge, over.

RED, move one three vehicle scout section to CP 7 and one to CP 9. Establish roadblocks tied into severely restrictive and restrictive terrain to prevent insurgent APCs from passing through CPs, break. Halt Athian columns at roadblocks and

inform them they cannot enter Bruechville, break. Inform them that unarmed trucks and civilians can proceed to Bruechville, but in no case will we allow their APCs past our CPs, break. Negotiate as necessary to separate the trucks and women and children from the APCs, break. If the APCs refuse to stop, you are authorized to fire warning shots, then engage to immobilize, then engage to destroy, break. Use minimum weapons systems to fire warning shots, starting with small arms, break. Use pepper spray, then smoke, then CS, if I authorize, to separate civilians from APCs if you must engage APCs, break. I say again, use only minimum force in accordance with ROE. Acknowledge, over.

BLUE, move two vehicle scout sections, the fire truck, and the TPU to the road vic HP SADDLE, break. Establish a roadblock and civilian holding area (CHA) to prevent the crowd from entering Bruechville and raiding the NGO SFD, break. Move a two vehicle scout section to identify and secure in place the refugees from CP F east 2.0 to prevent possible factional violence and protect them from harm, break. Have your dismounted patrol commandeer the five dump trucks and use them to reinforce your roadblock, break. Search and detain the dump truck drivers in the CHA, break. Halt crowd vic HP SADDLE and inform them that they cannot enter Bruechville in an unorganized manner, break. Use vehicle sights and LP/OPs to identify crowd leaders and blacklist personnel, then dismount teams to snatch and detain them in the CHA, break. Negotiate with crowd to defuse situation, break. You are authorized to offer them food that we will bring to them, break. If crowd gets out of control, you are authorized to use the KWs rotorwash, water cannons, smoke grenades, pepper spray, and, if I authorize, CS, to control disperse the crowd as necessary, break. Break contact if the crowd gets out of control and you have used nonlethal weapons, then reestablish subsequent roadblocks to delay the crowd, break. I say again, use only minimum force in accordance with ROE, break. Acknowledge, over.

WHITE, Set in overwatch vic CP 9 to assist RED, break. Make your tanks a visible show of force, break. Take all commands from RED 1, break. On my order, you are to attack by fire to immobilize, then destroy, if necessary, Athian APCs if they ignore the roadblock and RED's warning shots, break. I say again, use only minimum force in accordance with ROE. Acknowledge, over.

GREEN, Set in overwatch vic CP 7 to assist RED, break. Make your tanks a visible show of force, break. You are in command of CP 7 roadblock, break. On my order you are to attack by fire to immobilize, then destroy if necessary, Athian APCs if they try to ignore the roadblock and RED's warning shots, break. I say again, use only minimum force in accordance with ROE. Acknowledge, over.

DELTA TROOP KWs, Request you assist BLUE in crowd control operations vic HP SADDLE, break. Be prepared to assist RED in destruction of Athian APCs vic CPs 7 and 9. Acknowledge, over.

MORTARS, Move to bridge in Bruechville and block it to prevent all non-troop vehicular traffic, break. Allow civilian dismounts to pass after searching for arms and blacklist personnel, break. Be prepared to fire smoke in support of line platoons, Acknowledge, over.

TOC, Blackhawk 5, inform squadron of situation and my intent, break. Request OPCON of Delta Troop SWT, additional SWTs, release of CS authority, release of mortar firing authority, CA teams, and SCO's intent, break. Recommended COA to squadron is to move a blocking force west of the armed convoys while we fix them at the roadblock to allow the squadron to confiscate or destroy the unauthorized APCs, break. Coordinate with civilian police, militia, and local leaders to keep civilians off the streets and to assist in crowd control or negotiations, break. Coordinate with NGO running SFD for emergency release of food to crowd, break. Collocate with the trains vic NGO SFD for additional security, break. Acknowledge, over.

BLACKHAWK 7, move the trains to the NGO SFD point to provide security, break. Establish a CHA vic the NGO SFD to process any civilians that approach for food, break. Assist the NGO in the issue of food and/or medical supplies to authorized civilians by providing security and crowd control, break. Search all civilians who attempt to enter the NGO SFD site for arms and blacklist personnel, break. Be prepared to move food to BLUE to defuse situation with crowd. Acknowledge, over.

I will collocate with BLUE vic HP SADDLE, break.

COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS: Use only minimum force in accordance with ROE, break. Use of CS is not authorized without my permission. Acknowledge, over.