

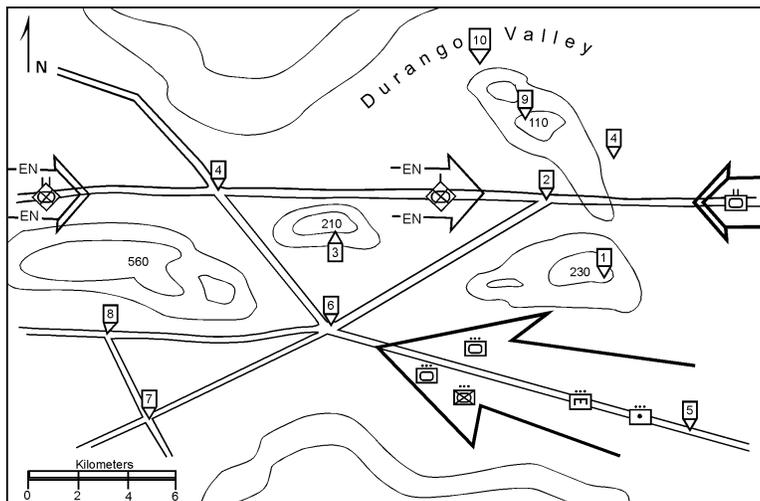
# THE PROBLEM:

"The Battle of Durango Valley" - from the September-October issue of ARMOR

## Situation:

You are the commander of A Team (tank heavy), TF 2-8. You are the advance guard company (AGC) of the TF as it conducts a movement to contact. The brigade commander wants the task force to find, fix, and destroy the advance guard of an MRR that is moving east. This will allow the rest of the brigade to maneuver and destroy the regimental main body, with enough combat power left to block the second-echelon MRR. The task force commander directs the AGC to find, fix, and destroy the FSE allowing the task force main body to maneuver into the flank of the AGMB.

Your team consists of two M1A1 tank platoons and one mechanized infantry, (BFV) platoon. An engineer platoon and the mortar platoon follow in support; you have priority of mortars. Your team is moving on an axis south of the task force based on an erroneous report that the FSE was at CP 8. The terrain is mostly open desert flanked by mountains, with some high terrain in the center of the zone. As you approach the intersection at CP 6, your 1st Platoon reports seeing approximately 20 vehicles moving east and starting to deploy vicinity CP 2. A moment later, task force scouts report they have identified the AGMB north of Hill 560 moving east toward CP 4.



You suddenly realize that the element identified by 1st Platoon must be the FSE and that it is probably deploying to engage the task force from Hill 110. You attempt to contact the task force commander but receive no response. The last transmission with the task force had them approximately 15 minutes out from CP 2. Based on the scout's last report, the AGMB is 20 minutes from CP 4. It will take you 9-10 minutes to move northeast to engage the FSE or 11-12 minutes to move northwest to intercept the AGMB. You must act now! What do you do?

## THE SOLUTIONS:

The following solutions pertain to the tactical vignette, "The Battle of Durango Valley," published in the September-October issue of ARMOR. They include the author's solution, provided by the Doc-

trine Division, and two solutions submitted by our readers.

We would like to thank those other readers who also submitted their solutions to the tactical vignette.

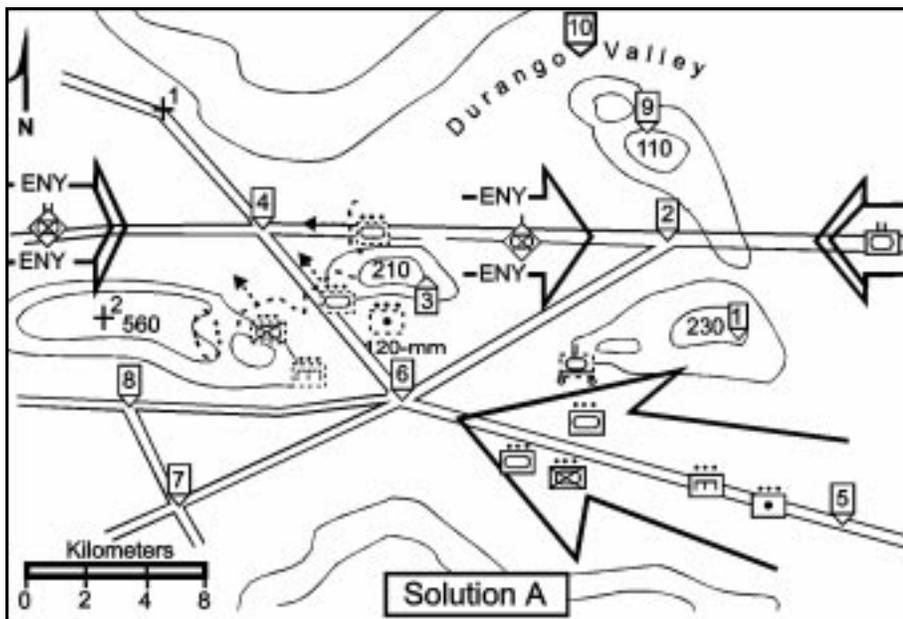
### Author's Solution

#### FRAGO:

"GUIDONS, this is BLACK 6, FRAGO follows. **Situation:** The enemy FSE is deploying at CP2 to engage the main body of the task force, and the AGMB is moving east toward CP4. BREAK.

"**Mission:** We will attack by fire to fix the AGMB vicinity CP4 to allow the task force to move to a position of advantage to destroy the AGMB.

"**Intent:** (Purpose) The purpose of our mission is to fix the AGMB to allow the task force time to move to a position of advantage and destroy the AGMB. We will accomplish this by attacking by fire from a blocking position west of CP3 oriented north and west of CP4, in effect luring the AGMB into an 'L'-shaped ambush. (End state) The company team arrayed in attack by fire positions vicinity Hill 210, oriented to the west; the AGMB fixed vicinity CP4; and the task force maneuvering to destroy the AGMB. BREAK.



### Tasks to subordinate units:

“RED (MECH), move to the intervisibility line vicinity grid 135454, oriented north. **Task:** Attack by fire from a blocking position, orienting fires from TRP1 to CP4. **Purpose:** To protect the company team’s flank, denying enemy movement toward the south. Be prepared to shift fires to the west, oriented on CP8. Move dismounts to vicinity grid 130451 (Hill 560) to block enemy dismounted avenues of approach. BREAK.

“WHITE, move to grid 140456 west of CP3, oriented north. **Task:** Attack by fire from a blocking position, orienting fires on CP4. **Purpose:** To prevent the enemy from maneuvering to the north. BREAK.

“BLUE, move to grid 145473 north of CP3, oriented west. **Task:** Attack by fire from a blocking position, orienting fires from CP4 to TRP1. **Purpose:** To prevent the enemy from maneuvering north. BREAK.

“MORTARS, move to grid 145442. **Task:** Disrupt the AGMB with HE/smoke. **Purpose:** Disrupt the enemy’s formations, giving us a direct fire advantage by forcing him to button up and disperse. BREAK.

“FIST, move to a position vicinity CP3 to regain communications with the task force and call for fires against the AGMB. You have priority of fires.

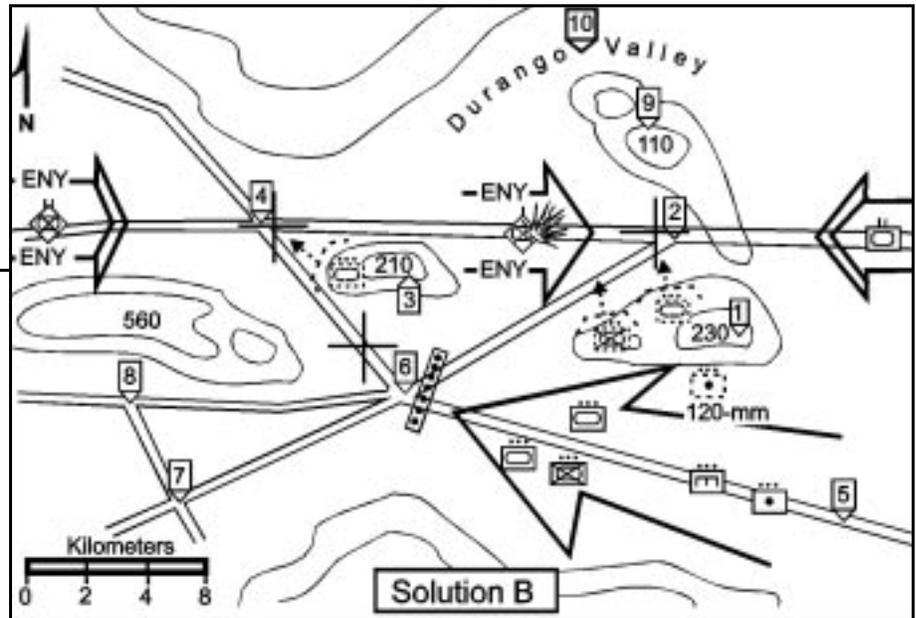
“BLACK 5, provide protection for the FIST. Assist in calling for and adjusting fires. Observe location and movement of FSE. Regain contact with higher and report. BREAK.

“SAPPER (ENG), move to vicinity grid 132424. **Task:** Provide flank security, oriented on CP8. **Purpose:** Provide early warning of enemy forces moving on southern avenue of approach. BREAK.

“BLACK 7, move trains to a hide position near Hill 230, west of CP6; be prepared to execute MEDEVAC. ACKNOWLEDGE, OVER.”

### RATIONALE:

Our mission was to find, fix, and destroy the FSE, but it has bypassed us and



may fix the task force, allowing the AGMB to maneuver on it. Our dilemma is whether we should attempt to destroy the FSE or move to fix the AGMB. We do not have the time or the combat power to accomplish both. I decided to establish a blocking position and attrit the AGMB before it has time to develop the situation and maneuver against the task force.

I moved the mechanized infantry to high ground, oriented northwest, to provide greater range for their TOWs as they establish their blocking position. Red’s dismounts will block enemy dismounted avenues of approach. I positioned the tank platoons along Hill 210, fixing the enemy from the east and denying him movement north or south. We should be able to accomplish the mission of fixing the AGMB with accurate direct fires. I had the XO provide security for the FIST to regain communications with higher and keep an eye on the actions of the FSE.

Both the company FIST and the mortars are in a position to support the company fight. The engineers are positioned to reinforce the blocking position and observe the southern avenue of approach.

Even though my mission to find, fix, and destroy the FSE has essentially failed, the brigade commander’s intent for the task force was to find, fix, and destroy the AGMB. By fixing the AGMB, we are disrupting the enemy’s plan, providing time for the task force to destroy the FSE and still gain a position of advantage to destroy the AGMB. Although we have not achieved our original task, the task force still has a shot at winning.

## SOLUTION B

*(Submitted by MAJ John Allen and CPT(P) Donald Barnett, Doctrine Writers, Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas)*

### FRAGO:

“RED and WHITE (MECH) will occupy attack by fire positions west of CP1, on Hill 230 oriented on CP2. Fix and/or destroy the FSE vicinity CP2. BREAK.

“BLUE, along with BLACK 5, will occupy Hill 210 vicinity CP3, oriented on CP4. Observe approach of the AGMB, and cover hasty minefield emplacement vicinity CP6. Engage the lead company of the AGMB between CPs 4 and 6. Delay the lead company of the AGMB for 10 minutes or withdraw under direct pressure. Move now. BREAK.

“DIGGER (ENG) will emplace a hasty minefield at CP6; intent is to delay the lead company of AGMB from moving eastward from CP6 to CP5, allowing BLUE more engagement time. BREAK.

“FIST, use mortars to suppress the FSE vicinity CP2; plan to suppress the lead company of the AGMB using targets vicinity CP4 and CP6. Plan for a smoke target between CP3 and CP6 to screen BLUE’s withdrawal. DIGGER will inform BLACK 5 and FIST of minefield grids. BREAK.

“MORTARS will emplace vicinity grid 123456 southwest of Hill 230 and return fire within 10 minutes. BREAK.

“FIST, DIGGER, and BLACK 7 will immediately contact higher to report our intent. BLACK 7, attempt to regain con-

tact with battalion by either FM or face to face. ACKNOWLEDGE, OVER.”

### Rationale:

The company will maneuver north to fix and, preferably, destroy the FSE. This is in keeping with the commander's intent: preventing the FSE from fixing or turning the battalion prior to CP2 while exercising the initiative to destroy the enemy force. The commander feels he can destroy the FSE because he is on its southern flank. The BLUE platoon is pushed forward to Hill 210 to gain observation of the AGMB and to delay the AGMB if it continues straight or south at CP4. If the AGMB goes northeast, the battalion can then attack its flank from CP2 to CP10.

If the AGMB continues straight, the battalion can flank it by attacking from CP9 south, or it can attack from CP5 to CP3 or CP6, then turn north. If the AGMB goes south (most likely because of the expected demise of the FSE), the enemy will be delayed trying to negotiate the minefield and defeat the BLUE platoon on Hill 210. This delay gives the battalion commander the option to bypass remnants of the FSE at CP2 and attack the flank of the AGMB from CP3 and/or CP4. Of course, to make any of this work, the AGC must regain contact with the battalion!

## SOLUTION C

*(Submitted by 1LT Daniel T. Head, XO, HHC, 2nd BDE, Fort Stewart, Georgia)*

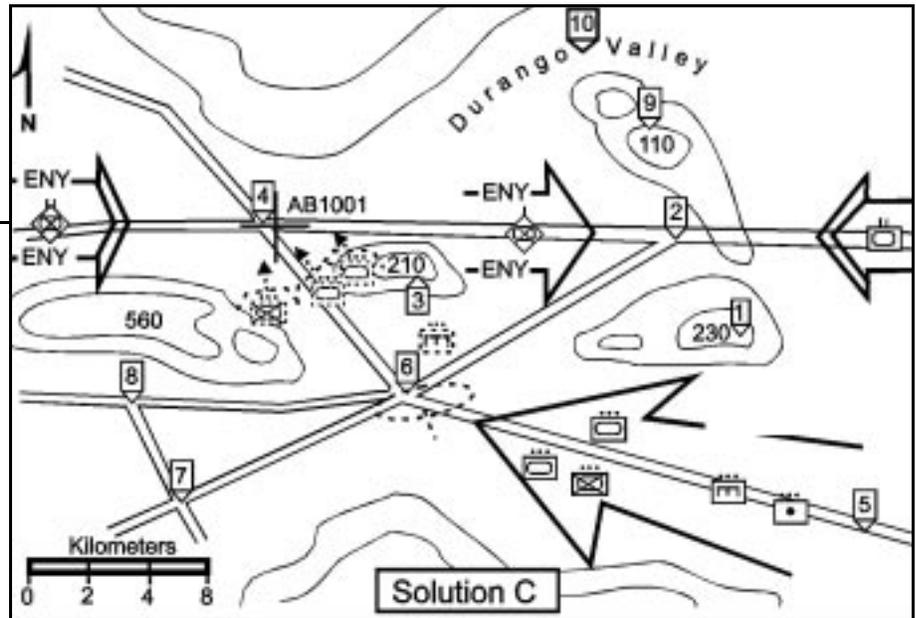
### FRAGO:

“GUIDONS, this is BLACK 6. Probable enemy AGMB spotted vicinity grid 123445. Will arrive at CP4 in approximately 20 minutes.

“WHITE (MECH), set vicinity grid 124678; orient from CP4 left. Engage enemy vehicles with TOWs when they reach CP4. Do not dismount.

“RED, set to the right of WHITE; orient on CP4. Engage enemy once three vehicles are past CP4.

“BLUE, set to the right of RED; orient from CP4 right. Engage once enemy is 1,000 meters past CP4. Watch CP2 for possible enemy or friendly activity. Ensure positive ID before firing. Prepare to



bound to the left of WHITE. Prepare to cover the company's displacement.

“MORTARS and FIST, CP4 is target AB1001. Tanks and BMPs in the open. Fire as the first enemy vehicles pass CP4. FIST is the primary shooter. RED is the alternate.

“ENGINEERS, begin digging hasty, hull-down fighting positions vic grid 122455, oriented west.

“GUIDONS, on order, the company will shift south, with left-most platoon vicinity CP6. We will orient on CP4. BLUE will cover the company's move. ACKNOWLEDGE, OVER.”

### RATIONALE:

The commander's intent was for the company to find, fix, and destroy the FSE, but with the enemy AGMB coming toward me and the FSE behind me, this is no longer practical. The task force should be able to deal with the FSE, especially if I can reestablish communications. A hasty attack on the FSE leaves me open to attack from the rear by the AGMB as well as to friendly fire from my own task force as they engage the FSE.

I would set my company on the northwest side of Hill 210 (on the reverse slope in turret-down positions) in a hasty defense oriented on CP4. A tank company in the defense is a match for an AGMB in a direct fire fight. If I can successfully fix, delay, and destroy most or all of the AGMB, the task force will be able to destroy the FSE and then move on to destroy the AGMB piecemeal.

This plan allows the company to engage the AGMB from a hasty defense if

the enemy chooses to follow the road (an obvious axis of approach). Should he turn south, the company will reposition before the enemy is close enough to bring accurate and deadly direct fires.

One probable reason for the loss of ammo is that we have gone too far and are now outside the TF's primary SINCGARS range. Switching to the retrans frequency will probably restore ammo. If I can restore ammo, I will send a spot report and SITREP to the TF commander or TOC (whomever I can contact).

### **Budget Cut Eliminates Knox Doctrine Home Page ...and "Issues in ARMOR"**

*Fort Knox's Directorate of Training and Doctrine Development (DTDD) has declined to renew the Entelechy, Inc. contract that originally created the Doctrine Home Page, opting to use the resources elsewhere.*

*The cutback also impacts the ARMOR Magazine Internet presentation, "Issues in ARMOR," which was part of that home page.*