

Tactical Decision Exercise

by LTC Ben Ferguson

The following tactical vignette serves as the first in a new series of scenarios focused on large-scale combat operations. **ARMOR** publishes tactical vignettes, or tactical-decision exercises, to generate professional dialogue. Scenarios may seem vague and lack pertinent information to mimic the confusion of battle. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Use your doctrinal knowledge and educated assumptions to determine “What’s Your Next Move?” The author’s solution, along with the best solutions from the field, will be published in a subsequent issue of the magazine.

Situation

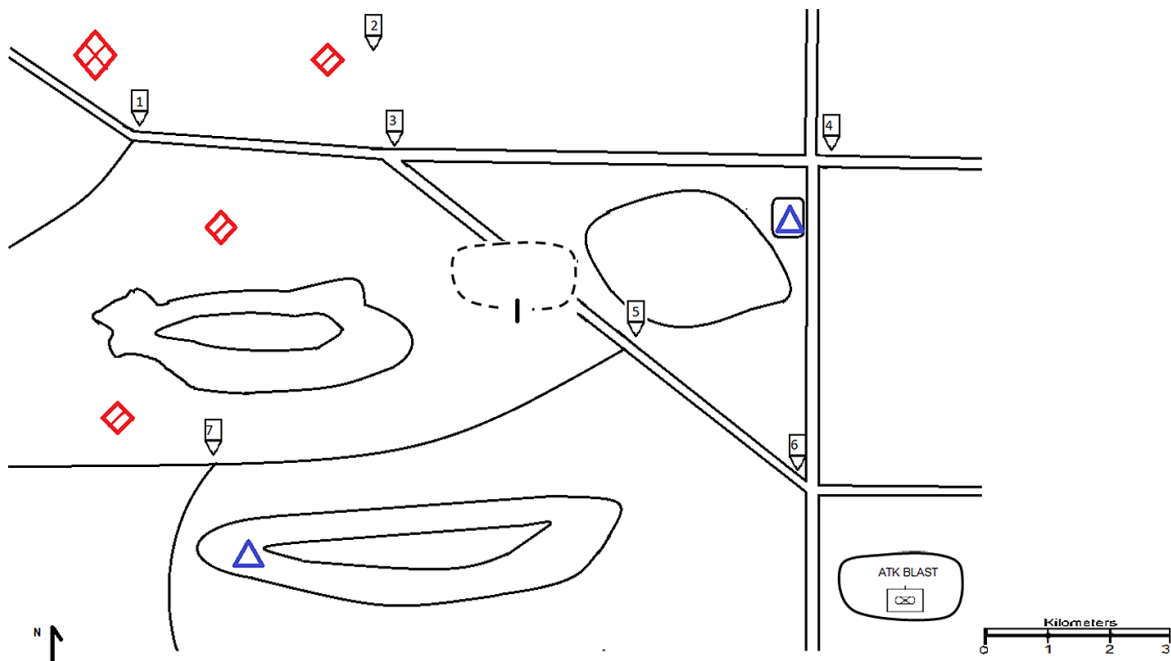
You are the commander of A Team (tank heavy), Task Force (TF) 3-8. You are the TF’s advance guard as it conducts a movement-to-contact. The TF’s mission is to fix and then destroy the advance guard of a mechanized-rifle division that is moving east toward the international airport. The TF’s movement will allow the rest of the brigade to maneuver and destroy the regimental main body, with enough combat power left to block the rest of the enemy division.



Scenario

While conducting resupply in Tactical Assembly Area Blast, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance reports locate large groups of enemy tracked vehicles 15 kilometers away from Command Post (CP) 1. The TF commander has directed you via Joint Capabilities Release (JCR) to occupy Battle Position 1 and delay the enemy force until the rest of the battalion can arrive.

Your team consists of two M1A2 tank platoons and one mechanized-infantry platoon. Your company has tactical control of the battalion scout-platoon section toward the forward-line-of-own-troops and the mortar platoon follows in support; you have priority of fires, but your fire-support officer has limited contact with the lead firing battery.



The terrain is mostly open, lightly forested prairie with little undulation, but with some higher terrain in the center of the zone. As you approach the intersection at CP 6, the easternmost scout platoon's observation post (OP) reports visual contact with about 30 vehicles, which are moving east and starting to deploy vicinity CP 1, and a wheeled vehicle moving just north of CP 7. A moment later, your other mounted scout OP reports they have identified what they assess are threat-vehicle sections north of Hill 560, moving east toward CP 3 and in the vicinity of CP 2.

What's your next move? Decide what to do and issue your fragmentary order (FRAGO) as if you were speaking on the radio or via JCR message. Following your initial FRAGO, take time and clearly define the problem(s) as you see it/them. Submit both your initial FRAGO and discussion of the problem, assumptions and rationale for your solution to **ARMOR**. Submit solutions to usarmy.benning.tradoc.mbx.armor-magazine@mail.mil no later than Feb. 11 to be considered for the Winter-Spring 2022 edition.

Acronym Quick-Scan

CP – command post

FRAGO – fragmentary order

JCR – Joint Capabilities Release

OP – observation post

TF – task force