



## The Two Soldiers

Heavy enemy pressure has resulted in orders for all units to move a mile to the rear to more defensible positions. LT Taggart's platoon has packed up and is ready to move. Taggart has a special mission in the adjustment. He has been told to move directly to an ambush position in a defile that leads to a corps chemical unit providing early warning of the use of chemical munitions by the enemy forces. His ambush is critical because only he can reach the position in the thirty minutes he has been given—the thirty minutes that will allow him to ambush a small, fast-moving enemy column headed directly for the defile through the line of hills that constitutes the new line of defense. His ambush will be part of his mission to protect the chemical unit. As Taggart prepares to give the order to move out, his Platoon Sergeant tells him that one of two reconnaissance patrols being pulled back to the platoon has just returned. The three-man patrol reports that they observed members of the other recon patrol, two soldiers, being captured by a squad of enemy soldiers. They followed the enemy squad on a trail into some dense vegetation and captured the man in the rear of the enemy column at a sharp bend in the trail. That prisoner revealed that the squad is on its way to a POW collection point, but the POW will not reveal its location.

The Platoon Sergeant says, "LT, we have got to get those guys back! You know what the enemy has been doing to prisoners! If they are lucky, they will just be shot! Give me five minutes with the guy the patrol brought back and I will have the exact location of their POW collection point. If it's close, we can snatch them back in no time."

A quick check of the distance to the ambush site convinces Taggart that he must leave within ten minutes to fulfill his protection mission. It is now 0900 and he has been ordered to establish the ambush not later 0945. If the Platoon Sergeant does learn enough to mount a rescue mission, Taggart will probably have to split the platoon to try to accomplish both purposes. As he ponders, his RTO tells him that the Company commander has passed the word to move quickly. Division is calling in a series of air strikes on the positions now being vacated, hoping to catch the enemy units in exposed positions moving forward.

### **QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR SOLDIERS...**

1. Should LT Taggart allow the platoon sergeant to question the prisoner?
2. Should he try to mount a rescue operation?
3. Discuss how a units' climate and culture will influence this situation.
4. Does LT Taggart have other courses of action? If so, what are they?
5. Discuss this vignette in terms of how the relationship between LT Taggart and his platoon sergeant will affect outcomes and courses of action.
6. Discuss this vignette solely from a rules based point of view.
7. Discuss this vignette solely from an outcomes based point of view.
8. Discuss this vignette solely from a personal value based point of view.