

HQ 26TF BDE/G3/100

HQ 7 Div

INCIDENT REPORT OF BHT ATTACK ON GWOZA ON 5 AUG 14

INTRODUCTION

1. I took over command of the Bde on 14 Jul 14 as the Ag Bde Comd from Col IY Dogara who was proceeding on medical treatment. I was still being taken round to familiarize myself with the deployments of the Units and was to visit AHQ Team A at Kirawa the following week when Gwoza town was attacked and over run by Boko Haram terrorist on 5 Aug 14. This report will give an overview of troop's deployment, an account of the attack and manpower and equipment status of 26 TF Bde.

AIM

2. The aim of this report is to give an account of BHT attack on Gwoza town on 5 Aug 14.

OVERVIEW OF TROOPS DEPLOYMENT BEFORE THE ATTACK

3. Gwoza was the location of HQ 26 TF Bde and 82 Bn (Cbt Team E). Gwoza town is bounded to the East by Gwoza and Mandara hills, while it opens directly to the Sambisa Forest on the West. The town is fed by 3 major roads, namely; Rd Gwoza - Wala B – Wala A – Warabe – Pulka – Bama - Maiduguri, Rd Gwoza – Bita – Damboa and Rd Gwoza – Limankara – Madagali – Michika - Mubi. All the linking bridges along these 3 roads were already demolished by BHT long before the attack, leaving Gwoza tactically isolated. 82 Bn was tasked with the responsibility to defend Gwoza Town, thus 82 Bn deployed troops at Hambagda and Kurunabasa, while its third deployment was at Pulka on Rd Gwoza - Bama. Other locations manned by the combined troops of 82 Bn and Bde Gar was at the Emir Palace and the INEC Junction in Gwoza to cover the Rd Gwoza – Bita – Damboa junction in order to prevent incursion from the general area of Sambisa Forest. The Bde HQ and Bn HQ were co-located at the Local Govt Lodge on the entry to Gwoza from Wala A. This was the disposition of the troops in Gwoza as at the time of the BHT attack on 5 August 14.

ACCOUNT OF THE ATTACK

4. On Tuesday 5 Aug 14 at about 1700 hrs, BHT dressed in NA desert camouflage uniform and using APCs and Toyota Land Cruiser/Hilux vehicles mounted with AA guns simultaneously attacked troop's locations at the Bde/Bn HQ, Hambagda, Kurunabasa, INEC Junction and Emir's Palace. Immediately it was obvious that Gwoza was under attack, I directed the BSO to contact HQ 7 Div and 79 CG for air support while I was trying to make similar calls to HQ 21 Bde for support. The air support did not come until the next day at about 060600A Aug 14. The BSO also contacted AHQ SF Team A and 21 Bde and informed them of the attack. The Comd 7 Div Sig was also informed of the attack. The simultaneous attack left each location to fight independently, without reinforcement from any other location. However, as the attack continued, I moved to the APC ordering the gunner to open fire in the direction of the attack but the gunner told me that the gun had stoppages. All the support weapons, including the A vehicles, were also mobilized and immediately moved forward to counter the attack as the BHT MOWAG APCs and AA Guns which were then firing directly at the Bde/Bn HQ.

5. I then moved to the Shilka who was protecting another flank and led the driver under fire to face the direction of the attack and after firing some burst of shots that destroyed 2 BHT Hilux vehicles and inflicting unconfirmed number of casualties on the insurgents, the Shilka stopped in the middle of the road and was not firing again. All efforts to make the Shilka fire did not yield any positive result. On noticing that the Shilka had stopped firing, the BHT MOWAG APC then moved forward and rammed into the Shilka blocking it from having access to move forward. Efforts to extricate the Shilka by the fire of the second Styre APC failed as the gunner also said that he had stoppages. The first APC then withdrew into the Bde Complex to carry out immediate action to clear the guns which has stopped responding, as claimed by the crew.

6. As the fire fight continued, the 2 x 105mm PH Arty Guns were deployed in direct role when it became obvious that, BHT A vehicles were gaining access into the Bde/Bn HQ Complex. The arty crews were forced to abandon their position when BHT fire became overwhelming on them. The attacks were initially resisted by own troops until they abandoned

their positions. The failure of the troops to remain to fight and the inability of the MGs to fire effectively cause the BHT, who on realizing the failure of the support weapons marched on to the Bde HQ Complex with overwhelming force equipped with APCs and vehicles mounted with AA guns while their foot soldiers charged in from all directions. Own troops already deployed at their defensive posts could not resist the overwhelming fire of BHT APCs and AA guns and had to withdraw to the hills at the back of the Bde HQ Complex.

7. I however rallied together about 4 x 45 troops at the top of the hill that night, including my SO1 G1/G4, Lt Col AM Adetuyi, the BC, Capt J Apir, Lt MA Areago – PI Comd Bde Gar, hoping to get additional reinforcement in the morning as it was already dark. Contact could not be made to Pulka due to the lack of communication network. Further calls were made to HQ 7 Div and subsequently HQ 21 Bde from Bama was to come as reinforcement. The reinforcement, however, ran into an ambush at the broken bridge at Frigi the following day incurring some casualties. The Air force jet came around 060600A Aug 14 and carried out bombings in Gwoza while I maintained communication with the Alfa Jet and ATR. While there, I noticed an Eagle MBT, suspected to be the one deployed at Kurunobasa, on full speed charged through the mist of the BHT who have then occupied Gwoza and moving towards Pulka. I remained in the position with the troops for the next 24 hrs but when it became apparent that the reinforcement from 21 Bde couldn't come to Gwoza as the ATR pilot later informed me that they had been ambushed and also because BHT, having suspected that own troops were still on the hills and directed their AA guns to sweep the area, I left with the troops to link up with Pulka at night. However, on getting to Pulka it was discovered that the troops deployed at Pulka had withdrawn to Bama and later to Maiduguri without directive from me. With this I moved with the troops to Ngoshe Junction, a forward location of AHQ SF Team A.

FOLLOW UP EVENT

8. At Ngoshe Junction on 7 Aug 14 more troops had joined up. After conducting a headcount, a total of 10 x 165 offr/sldrs had reported to the location. While there, a report came from civilians that one armoured tank was abandoned at Pulka. Consequently, I took a patrol, in company of the SO1 G1/G4 and the OC deployed at Ngoshe Junction, to Pulka and

confirmed that it was own MBT who had escaped the fighting at Kurunobasa when the place was overrun by BHT. I tried severally to start and possibly move the MBT after inspecting it but the vehicle did not respond. As the vehicle could not start, I recovered 17 rounds of the main armament ammunition and another 17 boxes of 0.50inch secondary armament ammunition to Ngoshe junction. I then directed the CO AHQ SF Team A, Lt Col CA Magaji to get his LAD team with spare batteries to start the vehicle but the vehicle did not start. It was later discovered that the driver had disconnected some things in the vehicle to prevent it from starting. The secondary armament, the MG, was also removed from the vehicle to Ngoshe Junction..

9. Same day, I proceeded to the AHQ SF Team A HQ at Kirawa to make a calls to the Ag GOC and the COS 7 Div since there was no network at Ngoshe junction, to give a detail of what has so far transpired. I was directed to go with a patrol to Bama to link up with HQ 21 Bde for further action, Consequently I directed the CO of the Unit to raise a patrol to take me to Bama but could not go that day because we were still trying to move the Eagle MBT to Ngoshe Junction from Pulka which we could not achieved because there was no recovery vehicle and the CO AHQ SF Team A insisted that his T55 MBT could not move to Pulka Junction to recover the Eagle MBT. The next day however, the patrol left for Bama but at Pulka it was discovered that the Eagle MBT had been burnt (picture attached). The patrol later ran into BHT ambush at the broken bridge at Frigi where we lost a soldier and 1 x 2 offrs/sldrs of AHQ SF Team A still missing. We went back to Ngoshe Junction to reinforce and later came back fought through again until we met with AHQ SF Team B from Bama at the Frigi broken Bridge, for onward move to Bama.

DISPOSITION OF TROOPS

10. Some of the dislodged troops of Gwoza withdrew to Ngoshe Junction from different directions. As at 8 Aug 14 a total of 10 x 165 troops (see Annex A) were at Ngoshe Junction while waiting for reinforcement to go back to Gwoza. Also 3 x 74 troops were reported to have resurfaced at Mubi, 6 soldiers were also reported to be in Banki while it was reported that 7 x 112 troops were in Maiduguri with CO 82 Bn as at 12 Aug 14. While 82 Bn/Bde Gar is confirming its strength however Capt Aboogie, OC FRG and Lt Hosea of 26 TF Bde Int Gp

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are still MIA. The names of 1 x 13 personnel injured during the attack and hospitalized at AHQ SF Team A location at Kirawa is at Annex B. The names of the APC crewmen who claimed that their APCs developed stoppages are at Annex C.

EQUIPMENT CASUALTIES

11. Equipment lost include; 6 Hilux vehicles and office equipment of the Bde HQ. The Bde Gar equipment lost include 2 Steyr APCs, while 82 Bn equipment casualty include one Eagle MBT which was abandoned and later burnt at Pulka, one Shilka, capture with the crew, 2 x 105 mm PH Arty Guns, 2 Steyr APCs and office equipment. Communications equipment lost include one RF 5800 MP, one VHF Motorola (for base station), one repeater station, one inverter and 2 RF 5800 multiple charger. However, the signal crew retrieved and claimed to have buried one IP phone and 2 PRC 5800H at a safe place. Summary of equipment lost is at Annex D.

CONCLUSION

12. Troops positions in Gwoza were attacked and overran by BHT on 5 Aug 14 after own troops were overwhelmed. Equipment failure and the inability of the troops to hold their positions due to stoppages of support weapons contributed to the loss of position. The Shilka and the crew were captured by the insurgents including 2 x 105 mm PH Arty Guns of 82 Bn. Communications and office equipment were also lost in the fight. Troops who were routed at Gwoza later converged at AHQ SF Team A location at Ngoshe junction, 234/213 Bn location at Mubi and Maimalari Barrack in Maiduguri.

Aug 14

VO ITA

Col

Ag Bde Comd

Annexes:

- A. Names of Gwoza Troops at Ngoshe Junction as at 8 Aug 14.
- B. Names of Persons Injured and Hospitalized at AHQ SF Team A HQ at Kirawa.
- C. Names of the APC Crewmen who Claimed Malfunction of their APC Guns.
- D. Equipment Casualty.