

## TACTICAL DECISION GAME

# SCENARIO: COMMITMENT ISSUES

Major Matthew Rolls

You are the Commanding Officer (CO) of 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment (1 RCR) Battle Group (BG). You have been operating in ATROPIA as part of a multinational division conducting offensive operations to expel the DONOVIAN military occupying Northern ATROPIA. You are currently conducting an advance to contact as the 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (2 CMBG) advance guard. You have an attached tank sqn (C Sqn) operational control (OPCON) from The Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD), and an artillery tactical group (ATG) OPCON from the 2nd Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (2 RCHA) with sufficient forward observation officers (FOO) and joint terminal attack controllers (JTAC) for three of your subunits.

2 CMBG is advancing to contact with the brigade (bde) reconnaissance (recce) sqn leading, conducting a route reconnaissance. 1 RCR is in the advance guard role and is advancing with the recce platoon leading and with The Duke's Company (Coy) as the vanguard combat team (cbt tm).<sup>1</sup> The brigade commander (Bde Comd) wants to advance rapidly by preventing the commitment of the bde's main body. To accomplish this, he wants you to locate and destroy enemy resistance, within your means, to enable the bde main body to advance unimpeded. The Bde Comd wants you to bypass any forces of section or smaller size that do not threaten the brigade's lines of communication. Any forces astride the brigade's lines of communication (route COORS) or larger than section size

are to be destroyed. If you assess an enemy element to be beyond your capabilities to destroy, then you are to fix them to enable offensive action by the bde.

Allied forces have had significant success thus far. DONOVIAN forces have been conducting a delay and tried to prevent the Division's advance over a major river. However, local initiative by a subunit commander enabled the Division to rapidly cross the river. Since then, DONOVIAN resistance has been less organized and their morale appears to be waning. Despite their losses, the DONOVIANS continue to try to delay the Division's forces to provide time for the preparation of a main defensive position farther to their rear. DONOVIAN forces consist of mechanized infantry employing the BMP-2M IFV<sup>2</sup> supported by T-72B tanks. Immediately after the river-crossing operation, the terrain became more open (cultivated land) and provided the DONOVIANS with few opportunities to affect delay on the bde. The Division is now entering increasingly closed terrain consisting of large stands of woods and small hamlets. Forested areas feature mature trees with little undergrowth, enabling fields of observation of approximately one hundred metres with significant dirt tracks throughout the area used by local inhabitants. Hamlets in the area feature Soviet construction with heavy reinforced concrete. Most buildings are single-storey family homes, with a small number of two-storey homes. The people of ATROPIA are largely supportive of the Alliance's efforts

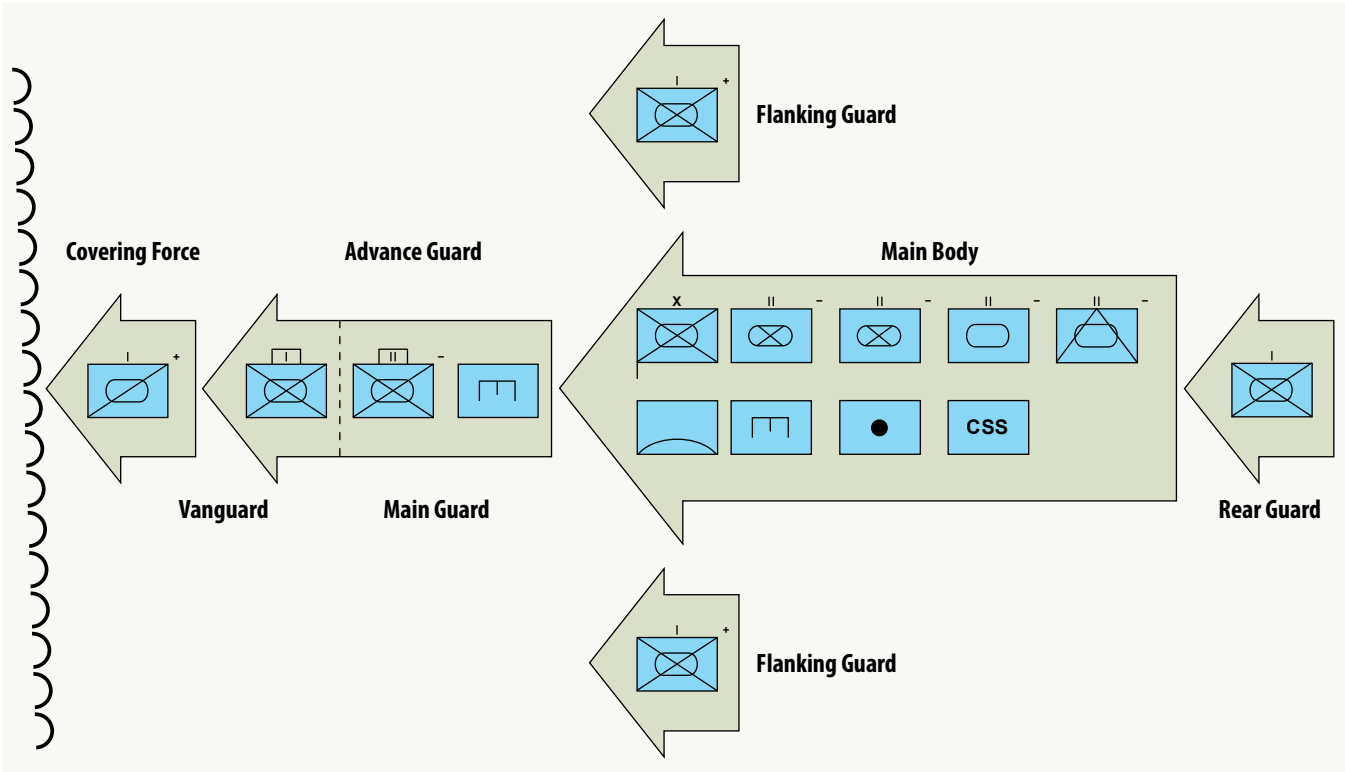


Figure 1: 2 CMBG's formation for the advance to contact. Bde recce sqn as the covering force. 1 RCR as the advance guard with The Duke's Coy as the vanguard.<sup>3</sup>

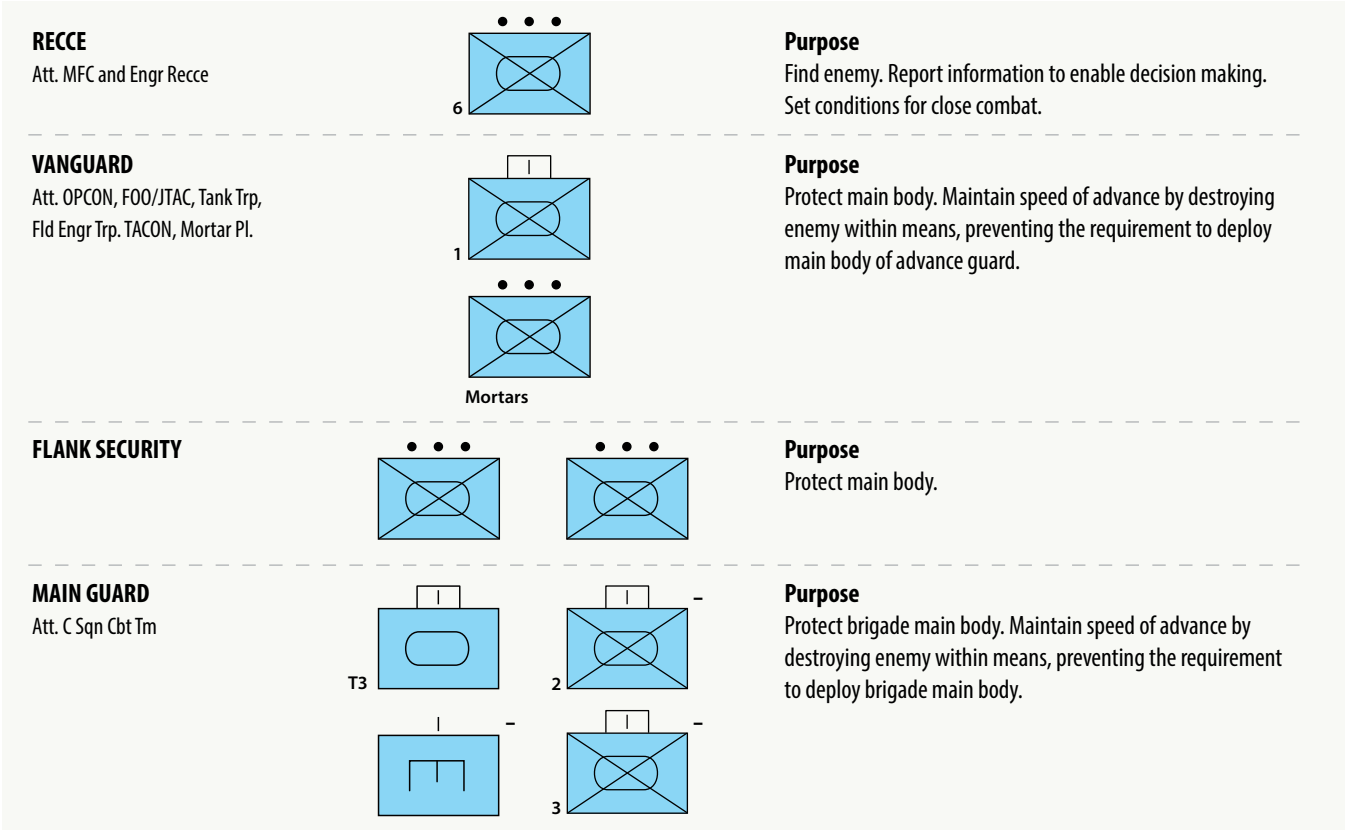


Figure 2: 1 RCR's formation as 2 CMBG's advance guard.

to liberate their country from DONOVIAN occupation. There are some DONOVIAN-speaking militias that have been supporting DONOVIAN forces with reconnaissance and harassment of coalition forces. Many ATROPIAN urban areas have seen displacement of people away from the fighting, but significant numbers of people remain behind.

The bde's recce sqn from the RCD is screening the advance, and 1 RCR's recce platoon is following behind them. The recce sqn has been finding enemy contacts, then handing off surveillance to the recce platoon as it carries on the advance. Contacts with the enemy have thus far been fleeting. They have involved limited direct fire exchanges followed by the DONOVIANS' withdrawal. As the terrain becomes increasingly canalized, it is expected that enemy resistance will stiffen.

Approximately an hour ago, a two-car patrol of the bde recce sqn approached the outskirts of YIGA from the SOUTH. As it closed on the village, it drew gun and missile fire. The patrol reported the contact, then withdrew to observe YIGA and await the BG's recce platoon. About 30 min later, the recce platoon took responsibility for observing the contact from the patrol, which then bypassed YIGA along route MILLER and then continued its route reconnaissance task with the remainder of the recce squadron NORTH of YIGA. BG recce is now observing YIGA to better understand enemy strength, composition and disposition, as well as looking for suitable attack positions and firebases to provide the BG CO with options. Two and Three sections have pushed out WEST and EAST of YIGA respectively along routes STELLA and CORONA, and they have also kept eyes on YIGA directly from the SOUTH following the handover with the bde recce sqn.

"0, this is 6, call sign 61 is observing SOUTH and EAST portions of YIGA. Current location is suitable for subunit-level firebase. Call signs 62 and 63 have confirmed routes MOOSEHEAD, STELLA, ALPINE and CORONA to their current locations as suitable for both Leopard 2 and light armoured vehicle. Both their current locations are suitable attack positions; however, subunits would need to shake out beyond the treeline in each area. All three call signs are reporting dismounted movement of DONOVIAN forces along the perimeter of the village. No armoured fighting vehicle seen at this time.

Enemy size, composition and disposition cannot be determined from current locations without drawing contact. Call sign Echo recce has observed no tactical obstacles on approaches to the village, over."

"6, this is 0, acknowledged. Continue to observe. Out."

"6, 0, this is 9er, I acknowledge last. In conversation with Bde G2 currently, out."

You switch back to the bde net and continue your conversation with the Bde G2. He tells you that, based on previous contacts and electronic warfare intercepts, he assesses the enemy in YIGA to be between platoon and company size. He also informs you that the bde recce sqn has found an enemy mechanized rifle coy dug in approximately 3 km NORTH of YIGA along route COORS. The Bde Comd is looking for an update on your proposed course of action to deal with YIGA.

### What now, Lieutenant-Colonel?

*The Duke's Coy cdt tm is currently advancing NORTH and is approximately 30 min out from call sign 61's location. The remainder of your BG trails another 30 min behind The Duke's Coy. Determine your course of action and develop your orders in 10 min. 🍁*

### About the Author

Major Matthew Rolls enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces in 2006 as an infantry officer and later joined The Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR). Major Rolls has spent all of his regimental time with 2 RCR, having been a platoon commander, company second in command, assistant operations officer, adjutant, and rifle company and admin company officer commanding. He deployed as a rifle platoon commander with both the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team and 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment Battle Group, on TF 1-10 and in Latvia for Operation REASSURANCE as a rifle company officer commanding. He graduated from the US Marine Corps Expeditionary Warfare School and the Joint Command and Staff Program. He has a bachelor's degree in Political Science and a master's degree in Defence Studies and Military Studies. He is currently employed in Canadian Special Operations Forces Command.

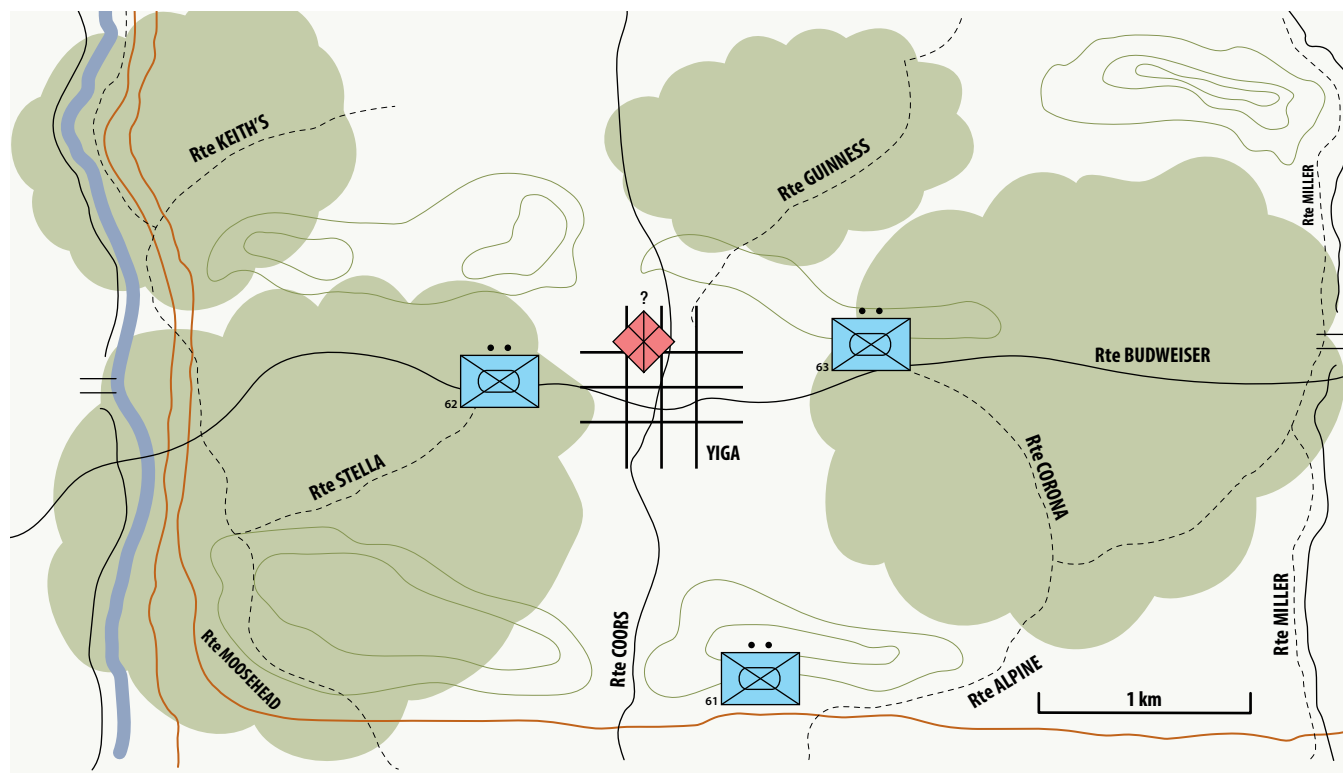


Figure 3: Map

1. The Duke's Company is the first rifle coy of 1 RCR. It is a standard rifle coy.
2. BMP-2M IFV consist of a Soviet mechanized infantry fighting vehicle.
3. Department of National Defence, B-GL-321-005/FP-001, *Battle Group in Operations*, Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2011, 9–16.