

# Battle of Bergland

by Matt Curtis

*This scenario is based off an action as described in Larry Bond's novel Vortex (Warner Brothers, 1991).*

South Africa's Operation Nimrod commenced on August 18<sup>th</sup> with an armored thrust into southern Namibia. Elements from two SADF divisions, along with the entire 44<sup>th</sup> Parachute Brigade, were to fight their way to the impoverished city of Windhoek, replacing the fledgling socialist government there with a puppet state loyal to Pretoria. The key, as stressed in so many briefings, was speed. If South African units couldn't seize Namibia's capital in about a week (two at the most), the logistical demands of feeding and supplying thousands of troops spread throughout the country's arid landscape would wreck Pretoria's already struggling economy.

Commandant Henrik Kruger's 20th Cape Rifles spearheaded the main effort, which covered more than 170 miles in the first 36 hours. Kruger's mechanized battalion literally drove its vehicles into the ground, pushing through the Great Karas Mountains before linking up with the paras holding the strategically vital airstrip at Keetmanshoop.

The SADF troopers allowed themselves six hours' rest before renewing their advance. By August 23<sup>rd</sup> the unit was all of 25 miles from Windhoek, its rear elements just passing through the diminutive town of Bergland, when Kruger ran into a Cuban roadblock established by two companies of the 8<sup>th</sup> Motor Rifle Battalion.

That the Cubans were fighting at all came as an unpleasant surprise to Kruger, who had been assured (along with every other SADF field officer) that a lack of trans-Atlantic shipping would keep the Communist nation from entering the war. No one had counted on the Russians supplying the opposition with freighters and Il-76 transports.

With his movement restricted to a narrow defile running through the neighboring high ground, and his artillery support limited to the 20<sup>th</sup> CR's 81mm mortars, Kruger was forced to throw his troops forward in hopes of winning a full-blown slugfest with Cuban regulars. Time was money in this campaign, and the South African officer could not allow his enemies a chance to strengthen their positions.

Across this particular battlefield, Senior Captain Victor Mares was listening in disbelief as his colonel denied requests to fall back to more defensible ground. His heavy weapons amounted to a few Sappers and a single recoilless rifle. What was worse, his inability to secure the ridge before Kruger's scouts had arrived meant he would have little to no warning before the South Africans were on top of him. His only hope, if he had any hope at all, was that reinforcements would arrive before his soldiers were slaughtered.

## Setup

Assault. The Cubans are defending. Due to the harsh terrain, the SADF has only one approach route and so cannot use the rules for flank deployment.

## Rules

The SADF player has the first active turn. Before conducting any other actions, he is allowed to place smoke markers along the front of the entire Cuban line. This dissipates normally at the end of the Cuban player's first turn. This smoke screen is NOT a purchased asset, as the CWC rules do not allow for smoke screens delivered by infantry support weapons – even that's just how it is deployed in the novel.

The Cuban player has a card of his own to play. Starting with his first Turn, the Cuban HQ (Mares is the man on the spot) can either issue orders OR attempt to expedite the arrival of reinforcements. If the player chooses to call in reinforcements, he may roll against Mares's CV rating at the end of the

Command Phase. If successful, he tosses a D6. Whatever unit comes up as a result arrives at the beginning of the subsequent Scheduled Phase.

### **Roll**

1 = X2 T-62s (200 points and +1 Breakpoint)

2 = X1 BRDM-2 Sagger (165 points and +1 Breakpoint)

3 = Remaining infantry company with 3 conscripts and 3 BTR-60s (180 points and +3 Breakpoint)

4 = x1 BM-21 added to artillery support (80 points)

5 = x2 BM-21 added to artillery support (160 points)

6 = 1 PT-76 & 2 BRDM-2 "Recce" (145 points and +2 Breakpoint)

### **Cuban Forces (845 pts, Breakpoint 7)**

- Unnamed Colonel: Infantry Stand plus Gaz 69.
- Sr. Captain Victor Mares (HQ) commands the forward elements of the 8<sup>th</sup> Motor Rifle Battalion: Infantry Stand plus BTR-60 PU APC.
- One FAO (CV 6 at 15 points)
- Two Motorized Rifle Companies: 6 Conscripts\* with 6 BTR-60 APCs.
- One 105mm Recoilless Rifle Unit
- One AT-3 Sagger Unit
- Artillery Battery: 1 122mm towed gun, off-board
- X6 Trench

\* = Each Company has one unit with an RPG-7 upgrade.

**Notes:** Mares is the only commander present in Vortex, but for the sake of balance a CO is available to help juggle the Cuban forces, which are likely to grow over the course of the game.

### **South African Forces (1510 points, Breakpoint 11)**

- Commandant Henrik Kruger (CO): Infantry Stand plus Ratel HQ APC.
- Major Richard Forbes (HQ): Infantry Stand plus Ratel HQ APC.
- Major Daan Visser (HQ): Rooikat APC (marked)
- Three Rifle Companies: 9 SA Regulars\* with 9 Ratel 20 transports.
- Armored Car Squadron: 2 Eland 90mm & 1 Rooikat ... all "Recce"
- AT Company: 2 Ratel "Swift" ATGM
- Mortar Company: 2 Ratel 81mms

\* = Each company has one unit with an RPG-7 upgrade.

**Notes:** The Ratel 81mms are included because that's what I own. If the SADF TO&E was based strictly off the novel, then the AA guns would be towed and the 81mms tubes manned by infantry. Point wise, my approach makes little difference. Same thing for the Swift ATGMs.