

OPERATION MODULAR –GAME 3

Report

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Filipe Martins

“FAPLA’s withdraw”

FAPLA’s 47th Armoured Brigade was ordered to evacuate its heavy materiel south of the Lomba river while keeping a bridgehead for possible future moves. At the same time, SADF’s Battlegroup Charlie was instructed to clear those positions from enemy presence...

The South African’s plan consisted in taking the left flank in order to secure a good fire position. While this was taking place, two artillery barrages would shell the FAPLA’s positions, enabling the SADF infantry to proceed to their objective. In the right flank, an AT unit would provide enough cover from enemy action. Far behind, infantry and armoured units lay as reinforcements.

A thought planning was made and things went as expected for the first four turns. Then, the SA artillery started doing its job...

The first 155mm shells hit right on target, and at first the couple of T-55 and the BRDM Sagger placed on the top of the central hill seemed doomed. But this wasn’t their moment and they escaped unscathed. The second barrage was even more disappointing. Something went wrong with the coordinates and instead of hitting the woods by the crossroad, the shells hit the void.

| The SADF forces were the following: | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Units | Composition |
| Reece Unit | 2x Ratel 20 |
| Reece Unit | 2x Ratel 20 |
| 1 st Mech Infantry Coy | 4x Casspir |
| 2 nd Mech Infantry Coy | 4x Casspir |
| 1 st AT Group | 3x Ratel 90 |
| 2 nd AT Group | 3x Ratel 90 |
| Tanks | 3x Olifant |
| Tanks | 3x Olifant |
| AT support unit | 2x Jeep/ENTAC Ratel ZT3 |
| Artillery support | Quebec (155mm G5) Sierra (120mm M5) |



Nevertheless, it was time for the infantry to leave its cover and move on. But from the woods (which should have been hit by the 120mm mortars) came a recon party made of PT-76 and BRDM 2. In the ensuing fight, a Casspir and a BRDM paid the ultimate price. Likewise, the SA Ratel 20s on the left flank did their job. Using its 20mm gun on a BTR, one of them got a clean shot. The problem is that the armoured unit of the far side of the table responded using its 100mm guns and Sagger missiles with good effect. An Angolan artillery barrage hit the SA infantry but no casualties were taken. Again, a tit-for-tat situation. But things were about to take a bad turn to the South Africans.

With good targets within their range, the AT unit on the right shot at the PT-76 in front and the T-55 in the hill on their right. But they all missed their shots, and more than once! The enemy, on the other hand, managed to hit a tiny little Land Rover and a Ratel 90.

Another artillery salvo (122mm BM-21) fell on the SA AT unit taking a second Ratel 90 while on the left a Ratel 20, trying to reach out for the woods, was hit by an RPG.

Things were looking bad, but suddenly Luck turned its eyes upon the South Africans.

After revealing themselves, the T-55 became obvious targets for the Olifants. The 105mm guns showed their power and a couple of Soviet-made tanks burst into flames. On the left flank, the Ratel 90s left their position to try to expell the Angolan infantry off the woods. A couple of RPG were fired to prevent this by they all missed their targets.

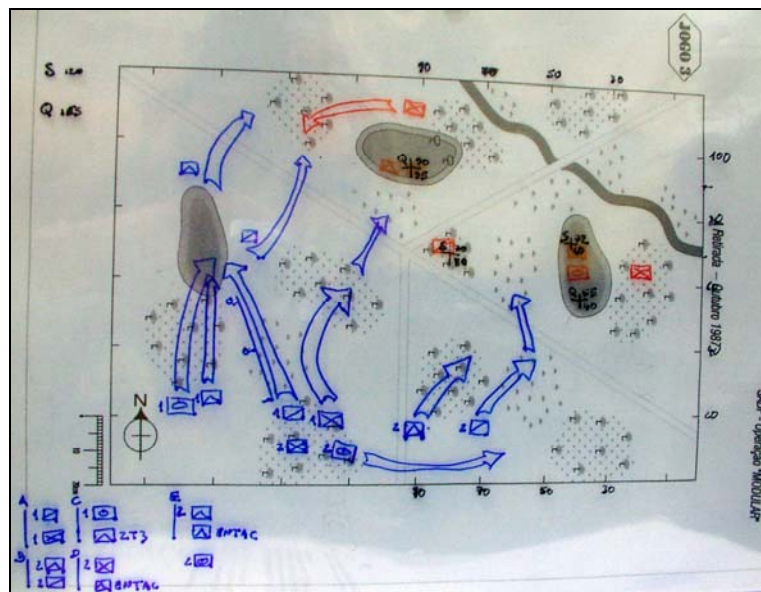
The Ratels hit back with their 7,62mm and the Angolans were cut to pieces. In the centre, the PT-76 and the BRDM were finally put out of action. But the death blow for the Angolan party came with a

second artillery barrage that hit both their armoured units with a devastating effect. Without armoured support and already suffering 60% casualties, the FAPLA commander decided for a retreat.



The table at the end of the match

To be fair, most of the difficulties faced by the South Africans were due to extremely unlucky dice, from the initial artillery barrages to most of the shots fired, even including the shooting initiatives. Should the two artillery barrages early in the game had been effective, as they should have, the Angolans would have caused far less casualties on their enemies. Despite the FAPLA's breaking points being – in my opinion – too high compared with the SADF's, nevertheless this was a very balanced, very tactical and very mobile game, fully enjoyed by everyone.



SADF and FAPLA's positions and moves.

| Casualties | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Infantry & vehicles | FAPLA (OP =71); break at 50% | SADF (OP =104) ; break at 20% |
| Tanks | 4x T55 | --- |
| APC/IFV | 1x BTR-60 | 2x Ratel 90 + 1x Casspir |
| Reece | 1x PT-76 + 2x BRDM | 2x Ratel 20 |
| Others | 2x BRDM Sagger | 1x Jeep + ENTAC |
| Infantry | 2x T1 | --- |
| TOTAL O. P. | 43 OP (60%) | 16 OP (15%) |