

# Advance Guard at Colenso Crossing

by Maj Kevin D. Poling, USA

## Situation

You are the commander of Company A, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, currently assembled about 45 miles west of Middleburg. Your unit is part of I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), which is supporting Arconian defense forces in resisting an invasion from Baltonia, its neighbor to the east. Reinforced by infantry, tanks, and artillery, the battalion is ordered to secure at first light the two bridges near Colenso Crossing in order to facilitate the attack by follow-on mechanized forces east along Highway 8 to defeat Baltonian forces and restore the Arconian border.

The time is now 2115. Your battalion commander briefs you on the situation: Arconian forces have broken contact and withdrawn to a hasty defensive line along the Longhorn River following a Baltonian attack. An Arconian regiment is located in Middleburg with forces on Hills 299 and 304. Since the Baltonian attack, only small enemy patrols have been sighted near Colenso Crossing, with no reports of enemy movements further west. Baltonian forces are equipped with second-hand Soviet-style gear and adhere loosely to Soviet doctrine. The Baltonians are not equipped with the latest thermal devices for night fighting, but there is a good chance they have captured some thermal devices

from the Arconians. The Baltonians can achieve local air superiority for up to a few hours at most.

Highway 8 is a paved, two-lane highway in various states of repair between Middleburg and Colenso Crossing. The terrain is mostly rolling farmland with patches of forest. Because of steep banks, it is believed the Longhorn and Mineral Rivers can be crossed only at bridges or identified fords. Sunrise is at 0500 and sunset at 2000. Colenso Crossing is culturally significant, being the site of several historic Arconian landmarks.

Your company will form the battalion advance guard and main effort, and at 0500 will conduct a surprise attack to seize Objectives Gin and Tonic, the two bridges at Colenso Crossing. You will be reinforced with an infantry platoon on assault amphibious vehicles and a tank platoon, both

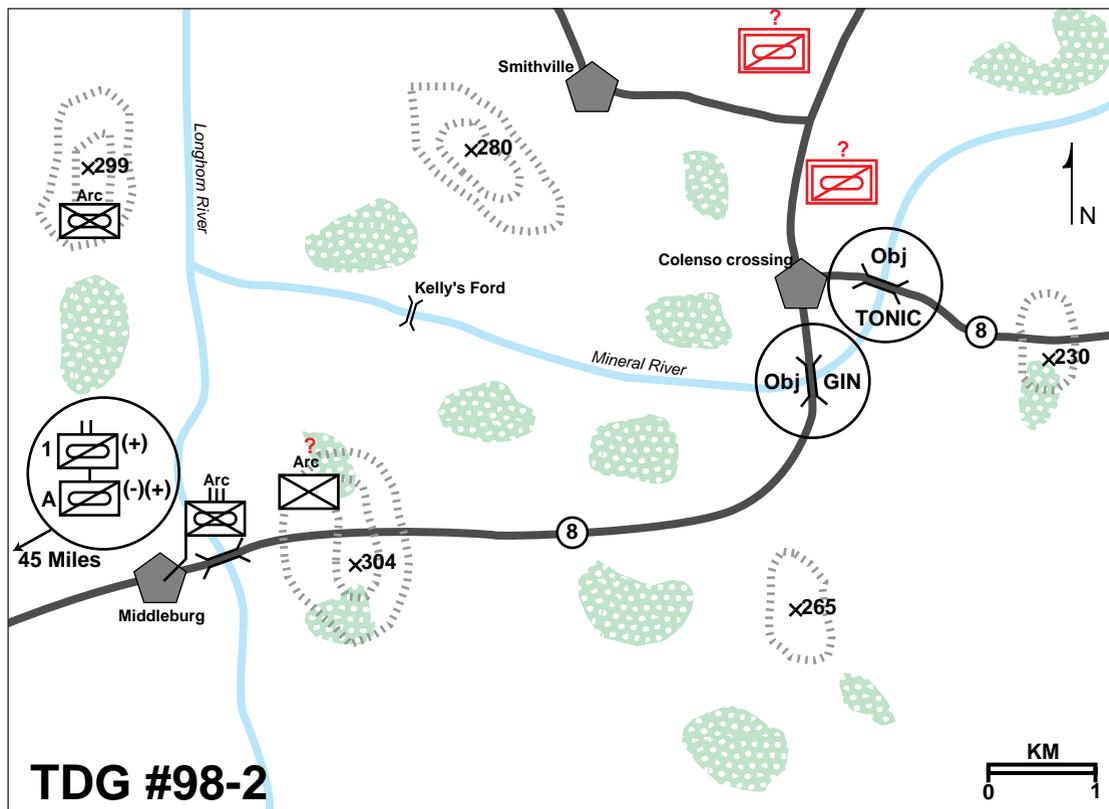
of which are on their way to your company assembly area. The battalion main body will follow an hour behind and will consolidate positions around Colenso Crossing or reinforce your attack if needed. Supporting artillery will provide on-call suppression. Radio listening silence will be in effect until contact with the enemy. The battalion commander instructs you go forward with him at 2145 to coordinate the passage of lines with the Arconians at Middleburg, leaving you very little time to make the necessary arrangements. What is your plan, Captain?

## Requirement

In a time limit of 10 minutes, issue any orders and make any appropriate reports/requests. Then provide a sketch and explanation of your plan. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #98-2, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or fax 703-640-0823.



*For more detailed information on the structure of Marine Corps units, Marine Corps equipment, and symbols used in TDG sketches, see MCG, Oct94, pp. 53-56 and the modification reported in Jan95, p. 5.*



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