

# COLD WAR TURNED HOT SCENARIO

During a major conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the Soviets and their allies would initiate frequent assault river-crossings to maintain momentum. The Soviet army's river crossing capability was second-to-none and NORTHAG recognised they would often be defending rivers that the enemy didn't actually consider to be a barrier.

## BACKGROUND

The battered remnants of a weakened Battle Group, the last of 4th Armored Division's covering force, crossed the River Leine at last light using hastily launched ferry bridges to escape being cut-off by the rapidly advancing Soviet Tank Division. All bridges blown, all that now stood between the IRRF Battle Group, responsible for the defence of the sector between Gronau and Elze, West Germany, was the River Leine, but IRRF BG had a five-kilometre stretch to defend. The Soviets, sensing the British army's weakened state, barely paused. Once the last of the smoking Chieftains hit the west bank and the bridging units were finally withdrawn at 2100, the night of 7 June, the Soviets prepared for their next move.

## SCENE

A one-kilometre stretch of the River Leine between Gronau and Elze. Assault river crossing by a Soviet tank regiment, supported by Army assets and elements of a second regiment. Defended by a IRRF Combat Team Alpha; the Soviets have selected two crossing sites, 800m apart, with two landing points for each site.

## MISSION

Recognising that an attack was likely, a West-German brigade had been put on stand-by in the north and the remnants of a brigade from 4 Armoured Division, reinforced by a TA battalion, in the south.

CTA's mission is to hold the northern landing site and its two landing points, 50m apart, for 20 minutes. Their first reinforcement would be the arrival of a Helarm, a flight of two Lynx with TOW and four Lynx carrying an infantry platoon, plus one Milan FP. They then would need to hold out for a further 20 minutes until the arrival of a reserve Combat Team, two troops of Chieftains (six tanks) and a platoon of mechanised infantry. Due to pressure along the entire NATO front, CTA would have only two salvos to call on, from six 105mm Abbots.

## TIMELINE

**0500-0530:** Soviet Divisional Army Group pounds a one kilometre stretch

of the west bank of the River Leine. Third Shock Army's 2S7s add to the crescendo, battering the hunkered down British troops.

**0530-0540:** Just as the closing salvos finish, SSMs, SCUD B and SS-21s strike. A non-persistent nerve agent complicates matters for the beleaguered soldiers while persistent blood agents all but paralyse airfields assigned to support IRRF's sector.

**0540-0550:** A full BM-21 Battalion lets rip, nearly 400 122mm high explosive rockets engulf the British lines, a square kilometre of ground is pulverised.

**0550-0600:** North and south of a one kilometre stretch of the western river bank comes under attack from Hind Gunships and Hip attack helicopters, while a mixture of Hook and Hip transports deliver an air assault company, from the Motor Rifle Battalion of 61st Guards Tank Regiment, on each location. In conjunction with the landing, twenty plus Grachs (Rooks), the Frogfoot ground-attack aircraft, pour deadly fire on the now dazed British force, keeping their heads down as T-80s line up on the eastern bank. Scattered in between the tanks, MTLBs deliver T-12 anti-tank guns providing additional direct support for the crossing troops as the carriers move into position.