

CONTEXT OF THE ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS NATIONAL IHL COMPETITION 2021

NOTE: Please bear in mind that Role Play and Moot Court Competitions share the same background elements and context but are otherwise hermetic from each other. Findings, analyses and scores from the Role Play may not be used as evidence or grounds for arguments in the Moot Court, and vice versa.

Alpha and Bravo are neighbouring countries and historical rivals. They have fought several small wars over the past 200 years but more recently have experienced a period of improving relationships and economic co-operation. Both countries are participatory democracies with complex economies. In 2023, the region experienced a significant economic downturn as the result of disruption to agriculture due to a drought, the effects of which were exacerbated by climate change. Several smaller neighbouring countries with largely agricultural economies suffered severe social upheaval leading to large numbers of refugees entering both Alpha and Bravo.

This influx of refugees, coupled with the social stress caused by the regional economic downturn led to a rise in nationalism in both countries. In Bravo, elections held in 2024 saw significant electoral gains made by the Bravo Front, an ultra-nationalist and militarist party that ran on a platform of stopping most forms of immigration and expanding the military as a way of reinvigorating the economy. Unsurprisingly, the Bravo Front had strong support in some parts of the Bravo Defence Force.

The gains made by the Bravo Front were imitated, and exceeded, by the Alpha Alternative Party in Alphan general elections in 2025. This party ran on a very similar platform to the Bravo Front and won both a majority in the Parliament and the Alphan Presidency. The new Alphan President, Gustavo Fring, was known for his ultra-nationalism and soon began implementing policies that reflected this. Refugees and immigrants were targeted by discriminatory policies, and the borders were largely closed. Fring also ramped up rhetoric against Bravo. The new Alphan government also considerably increased military spending and significantly expanded its military – actively recruiting thousands of new soldiers.

In response, and at the urging of the Bravo Front, the Bravo Government also increased its military spending, and soon both nations announced significant new purchases of military hardware in a rapidly escalating arms race. Both nations began deploying troops along their mutual border and conducting large military exercises. Despite attempts by international actors to defuse tensions, fighting soon erupted between the two rivals. On 13 July 2026, Alphan forces crossed the frontier, and the military engagement between the two armed forces soon began. Alphan forces quickly captured a number of key border cities as the Bravo military was pushed back. Alphan forces drove toward the Bravan capital, Bravoville, and were soon in sight of the outer suburbs of the city. A hurried defence by the Bravan forces stopped the Alpha advance in its tracks, and this was the extent of the territorial gains made by the Alphan military.

Bravan forces soon gained the initiative and recaptured all of the territory lost in the initial Alphan offensive. When they reached the border, the Bravo Government attempted to enter into negotiations with the Alphan regime, but these overtures were rebuffed, and an increasingly hard-line Gustavo Fring made a series of incendiary speeches from the Alphan National War Memorial and Museum of Glorious Victory. The National War Memorial is over 300 years old and contains many artifacts that are significant to the Alphan nation, including its original Constitution and Declaration of Independence. Lately the Memorial had become central to the Fring regime and the Alphan ultra-nationalists as a symbol of Alphan military power.

The Fring regime declared that it would never surrender to Bravo, and so the Bravan military drew up plans to invade Alpha and destroy its ability to wage war. On 1 August 2026, the invasion of Alpha commenced. Bravan forces quickly gained control over large parts of Alpha, including its centres of

industrial production. Alphan forces, seriously weakened by supply shortages and a series of defeats throughout the country, began to surrender *en masse*. Support for Fring among most of the population and the military plummeted, and across the country, people began actively protesting the Fring regime.

By 26 August, only the most populous Alphan province, East Alphalia remained under Alphan control. East Alphalia is the home to the Alpha's capital and is the stronghold of Alphan nationalism. The Alphan military in East Alphalia, which included the 7th Army, were the most loyal to the Fring regime and were prepared to fight to the death against the Bravans. The Bravan military paused to regroup, establish logistical support, and deal with the large numbers of surrendering enemy troops.

On 29 August, taking advantage of this lull in the fighting, the Alphan 7th Army launched an unexpected counter offensive from its defensive positions in the northern end of East Alphalia. This offensive caught the Bravan military completely off-guard, and the 7th Army made significant territorial gains in the province of North Alphalia. Major Lydia Rodarte-Quayle was in command of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Royal Bravo Infantry Regiment was stationed at the northern end of the border between Alpha and Bravo. On 2 August, the 3rd Battalion moved into the Alphan province of North Alphalia and was tasked with overseeing approximately 10,000 surrendered Alphan prisoners of war (PoWs) and several hundred civilians who had also been detained on security grounds.

The 7th Army's offensive came close the 3rd Battalion's positions and it appeared that Alphan troops would soon overwhelm the comparatively small number of defenders. Major Rodarte-Quayle hurriedly set about re-tasking her troops from guarding the PoWs to preparing defensive positions. Major Rodarte-Quayle was unable to spare many of her own troops and so, on 30 August, she ordered some of the detained civilians to assist with the establishment of the defensive arrangements, such as digging trenches and fortifying strong points. In order to encourage their participation, the civilians were told that they would receive extra rations and their participation will be looked upon favourably at their next periodical review pursuant to Geneva Convention IV article 78.

Major Rodarte-Quayle realised that she did not have enough troops to meet the enemy advance and made the decision on 30 August to deploy M1984 mines to deny avenues of advance to the enemy. This would enable her to concentrate her defending forces and funnel the enemy advance. The M1984 mine utilises a shape charged warhead to penetrate the armour of enemy fighting vehicles and simultaneously disburse fragmentation around a wide area. These weapons are designed to be command initiated by a remote control. However, the Bravo military manual describes how to deploy the mines also includes instructions on setting up an improvised tripwire which will set off the mines. Major Rodarte-Quayle ordered that the manual be distributed to the civilians. In placing the mines, MAJ Rodarte-Quayle ensured compliance with the marking and warning requirements of the amended second protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Forward elements of the 7th Army were within one day's drive from the positions occupied by the 3rd Battalion when their fuel supply ran out. This allowed other Bravan units to attack the Alphans in the area and stop their counter offensive after several days of fighting. The remnants of the Alphan 7th Army in North Alphalia surrendered to Bravan forces on 6 September without reaching the PoW camp.

Meanwhile, Major Rodarte-Quayle's cyberwarfare captain informed her that the famed hacker known by the name "Mr Robot" was somewhere in Alphan territory. Mr Robot is an Alphan citizen but has Bravan heritage. He had posted online about his opposition to the militaristic policies of the Alphan government. Major Rodarte-Quayle developed a plan to disrupt Alphan military operations and contacted Mr Robot. She messaged him telling him to conduct a cyber-attack on the National War Memorial. In one of the messages, she said "you should know that we have your family but we are taking good care of them. We need you to do this for us, and for Alpha." In another message she said that she expected that the attack would undermine the morale of the remaining Alphan forces who were yet to capitulate. (CURRENTLY UP TO DATE)