

DESIGN NOTES FOR CHINESE FARM

By
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One of the big battles of the 1973 Yom Kippur War was the battle of Chinese Farm. Yet the game *Divided Ground* did not have a scenario for it though it certainly deserved one. As it was a Chinese Farm scenario was being designed for the game when it was in development, but as is well known the development was cut drastically short as Talonsoft wanted to get the game out before they went under. What was left in the game was the map that was developed for the scenario and two bastard scenarios that were quickly made, one being a test scenario that was used to test out the game system, and the other being the Botzer scenario where the Egyptian 25th Armored Brigade gets destroyed. That's not very exciting if you ask me. Well I am going to change that now.

In this set are eight scenarios dealing with the Battle of Chinese Farm. Each deals with a day or night phase of the four day battle. Each scenario is complete and has its own victory conditions. The scenarios are not linked in a campaign and thus the outcome of a scenario does not affect the set up or conditions of the next one on the list. Each scenario uses a common mapsheet and the order of battle for each scenario comes from a master order of battle for the entire series. Also included in this set are the revised versions of the scenarios "The Most Terrible Night" and "Across the Purple Line", both by Al Sandrik, which can be found on the Games Depot website.

The Mapsheet

The mapsheet came from the original game. It was one the extra unused mapsheets that had no scenarios for them. Indeed the mapsheet itself was cut down on two occasions, one them (in an altered form) entitled "Demo", which was used in the test scenario "on Two Fronts", and the other one being entitled "Granit" for the scenario "Bitter Lake" which was the battle of Botzer. But the main mapsheet, which is entitled "Chinese", itself was unused. While the map was for the most part accurate, it was missing the peninsulas that are located just south and southeast of the Suez Canal on the Sinai portion of the map. I added them on to the map for historical accuracy. Other than that, this mapsheet was particularly well done and congratulations must go out for the original design team that created it when they developed the game.

The Order of Battle

While the order of battle for Chinese Farm is generally well known and documented in numerous historical sources, some of the small details within it are still in dispute among various historians. After accessing and researching a number of them, I decided to use the order of battle from a game about Chinese Farm as a basis and make corrections from there. I found the order of battle from the game "Suez '73" by GDW, published back in

1982, had the best game OOB and so I used that as my basis. In my order of battle I divided up each side's units into the major commands used by each side. On the Israeli side these were divided up into the four divisions, which were the 143rd Armored, the 162nd Armored, the 252nd Armored, and the 146th Composite Divisions, and the two additional organizations which were the Israeli's Southern Command's Engineering and Artillery Commands. Although during the battle, some battalions and brigades did transfer from one division to another, I kept them all in their original commands for command and supply purposes in all scenarios. On the Egyptian side, I divided the units up into three basic groups, Second Army, Third Army, and General Headquarters Reserves (which in some of the earlier histories was called First Army). Within each of these groups the units were organized within their assigned divisions or independent brigades or battalions. Again, while some units were historically transferred from one major command to another during the course of the battle, in this series of scenarios the units will stay under their original commands for command and supply purposes. In both sides, where there is disagreement among the sources on where what particular unit was assigned, I placed it was the majority of the sources agree on.

The Scenarios

Each scenario was prepared as a stand alone game. The set up and conditions are based on the historical situation at the beginning of the scenario. The victory levels and the objective hexes in each scenario are based on the particular objectives of each side in the scenario in question. The results of victory and losses in a scenario do not influence the next scenario in order. That being said, let's examine each scenario in particular.

Scenario 1: The Most Terrible Night: This scenario examines the initial phase of the battle, where the Israeli 143rd Armored Division moves up towards the Farm and the crossing point near the Matzmed strongpoint. It also features General Sharon's initial crossing of the Canal to the west side and the setting up of his bridgehead. I based the set up of both sides on Al Sandrik's scenario "The Most Terrible Night" which was done on a map at half the scale of the regular map. The visibility and game length and number of starshells each side had is also based on Al's work. All in all, this is a good scenario to start the series off with.

Scenario 2: The Tirtur Road: This scenario examines the start of the struggle for the Chinese Farm itself as well as the battle for control of the Tirtur Road which the Israelis need in order to bring up their bridge for their Canal bridgehead. It also shows General Sharon's gradual expansion of the bridgehead on the west side of the Canal. As one can see the previous night's combat has left a number of wrecks on and about the Farm. While the Egyptians in the immediate combat area are fighting hard, the rest of their forces are locked in place to simulate the higher Command's that the fighting is just a local action and not part of something bigger and thus they will not release their forces, save those brought in to reinforce the local action. Likewise the Israelis have units locked in place to due to their missions of keeping the Egyptian units in front of them occupied. Although the fighting lasted longer than the six hours that the sixty turns represents, due

to the nature of the game, a lot of action seems to happen quicker than in real life, thus causing it to become compressed into a shorter time period. This is true in all of the scenarios.

Scenario 3: Holocaust at the Farm: This scenario examines the situation on the second night. As one can see the Israelis have greatly expanded their bridgehead but are now locked in place due to Southern Command's order to hold in place and the denial of anymore units crossing the Canal until the situation on the east bank is resolved. During the previous day the Israeli Southern Engineering Command had moved their boats, rafts, and ferries to the crossing point. (This was done after the time period of the second scenario, thus is why they did not appear as reinforcements there.) I have them located on the long peninsula to the south of the Canal to keep them out of the way until they are needed, except for the ferries which I have placed in the shallow water at the crossing point. Players will note that visibility has slightly improved on this night. The Egyptians, now aware of the Israeli bridgehead, are starting to bring in reinforcements to seal it off. The Egyptians still hold on to Chinese Farm and thus still control Tirtur Road as they are still locked in battle with the Israelis. This is another good scenario.

Scenario 4: Securing the Corridor: This is the scenario that features the infamous charge of the Egyptian 25th Armored Brigade against the southern edge of the Israeli lodgement on the East Bank. It is with this scenario that I started to feed replacements into both sides forces. Both sides have a limited amount of replacements that they can use during the entire battle and so I increase the strength of selected infantry and support units by one each to reflect this. In addition, the Israelis have a tank replacement rate that reflects their ability to recover and repair their own knocked out tanks and put them back into the fight during the course of the scenario. As the scenario starts, the Israelis do not have any units down south to meet the Egyptian 25th Armored Brigade, but because the entry time of the Egyptians is known, will have more than enough time to shift forces down south and meet the onslaught. In addition, they have a paratroop battalion that has made inroads into the Chinese Farm position, though at the cost of some casualties. The Egyptians have strengthened their containment of the Israeli West Bank bridgehead, despite having taken casualties from engagements from the night before and in this scenario will attack it with the 116th Mechanized Brigade.

Scenario 5: Adan's Crossing: This scenario depicts the crossing of General Adan's division and the last real chance that the Egyptians have to crush the Israeli bridgehead on the West Bank. On the West Bank the Israelis still have most of the units on the perimeter locked in place, only those units of the division reserve which were moved to meet the Egyptian attacks of the day before are not locked in place so the Israelis may shift them to other sections of the perimeter if need be. The Egyptians for their part have moved the 116th Mechanized Brigade into a defensive set up in the northern part of the perimeter after a failed attack from the day before. The Egyptians have more reinforcements coming in this scenario on the West Bank, thus providing them with yet another opportunity to crush the Israeli bridgehead. On the East Bank one sees a long line of wrecks along the Lexicon road heading toward the southern edge of the map. These are wreckage of the Egyptian 25th Armored Brigade which was destroyed in the previous

scenario. The Israelis now have the upper hand on the East Bank and are finally in the process of clearing the Chinese Farm enough that now the Israelis can use Tirtur Road along its entire length. They are slowly shifting battalions around so Adan's division can cross the Canal this night and reinforce the Israeli bridgehead. The Egyptians on the East Bank are fighting a bitter holding action, giving up ground only grudgingly while inflicting maximum casualties on the Israelis. This scenario can go either way if played out in its entirety.

Scenario 6: The Breakout: In this scenario we have the first Israeli breakout attempt. On the West Bank the Israelis have most of Adan's division, plus a brigade of Sharon's division to attack out with. The Egyptians have what seems to be an overwhelming force but most of it is being held back behind the lines, supposedly for another planned attack against the bridgehead, but as it turned out, ended up being used to establish new lines and the Israelis broke through the old ones. On the East Bank one will notice that most of Adan's brigades are gone, having transferred to the West Bank during the previous night. The battle for Chinese Farm still goes on, both sides having rested the previous night, but as noted before the Tirtur Road is now open for Israeli business. The Egyptians are still maintaining a bitter defense, but their meager replacements have run out and each new loss will hurt them all the more. For the first time, both sides now have airstrikes coming in, whereas before only the Israelis did. Historically this was the time that the Israelis brought down their pre-constructed bridge on Tirtur Road. Since there is no unit for this bridge, it will not be simulated in this scenario.

Scenario 7: The Buildup: In this scenario we see that the Israelis have greatly expanded their bridgehead on the West Bank but have not broken out yet. On the East Bank they have finally pushed the Egyptians out of Chinese Farm. However by shortening their lines, the Egyptians have actually become stronger as many of their reduced units are piling up in the new defensive positions, presenting a strong combined defense. This presents a problem for the Israelis on the East Bank as more units, including all of the reinforcements that come in during this scenario, are earmarked for the West Bank. They may not be able to sustain their drive to the north. On the West Bank the Egyptians containment of the bridgehead is getting weaker, despite of all of the reinforcements that they received in previous scenarios, and their best bet is to make local counter attacks to weaken the Israelis and possibly cut off and surround a small part of their bridgehead, but they will no longer be able to crush the bridgehead as they could of in previous scenarios. As it were much of their artillery units had to displace to avoid being captured or destroyed. Historically the Israelis used this night to rest and recuperate their units that had been in combat for over 72 hours and the Egyptians did the same so there was no combat on this night.

Scenario 8: Fayid and Beyond: In this scenario we see the final Israeli breakout and advance off the map. There are three new exit hexes for the Israelis, one in hex 0, 18, one in hex 0, 24, and one in hex 25, 0. These reflect the historical Israeli options at that point in the war. The Egyptian set up on the West Bank reflects their historical set up at that point in the war also. While the way to the south seems weakly defended by the Egyptians, the potential arrival of the Egyptian 4th Armored Division from that direction

more than makes up for that deficiency, providing they get there fast enough. There are also reinforcements coming from the west to stop any Israeli advance towards that direction. The Israelis themselves receive their final reinforcements during this scenario, which they can use on either the East or West Bank at their discretion. Both sides have airstrikes although the Israelis have twice as many as the Egyptians to reflect the reduced air defenses in the Chinese Farm area. As the Israelis can apply an overwhelming force to a selected part of the line on the West Bank, thus ensuring a breakout, their exiting the map is almost guaranteed. It is up to the Egyptians to limit how many Israeli units are able to exit the map by the end of the game. All in all this is a fine concluding scenario to this series.

Corrected Scenarios

Included with this set are two corrected scenarios by Al Sandrick. Both “A Most Terrible Night” and “Across the Purple Line” were created when Divided Ground first came out, before any patches were made for the game. The organizations of both sides in each scenario are both horribly inaccurate, but then the Order of Battle editor was inaccurate too when the game first came out. I have since corrected the orders of battle for each side, based on the improvements that the patches have made to the game. One thing that Al does in all of his scenarios is that he does not use mobile leaders, instead he uses dismounted leaders, even for mobile units, and mounts them on the headquarters platoon vehicles. This has the problem of prohibiting tank units from firing as they are carrying a dismounted unit on the outside of the vehicle. I have deleted all of these leaders and replaced them with mobile leaders with the same stats and names. However, dismounted units which would normally have dismounted leaders have retained them. I also changed the Israeli entrance onto the map so instead of just appearing on random hexes in Al’s version, they enter onto the map at a specific entrance hex, which is more realistic. Thus I have made both scenarios much better.

Conclusion

This concludes this article on the Chinese Farm scenarios. I hope that players will find them both intriguing and enjoyable.