

DESIGN NOTES FOR BATTLE OF JERUSALEM 1967

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When Divided Ground came out there were a bunch of unfinished scenarios in the game. One of these was the Battle of Jerusalem 1967. Like the others it had a rather well done map, but unlike the others it also had a partially complete order of battle. Of course there was no scenario per say, but parts of the map were used for two smaller scenarios, “Assault on the Ancient City” and “Hill of Evil Council”. Still there was a need for a scenario for the battle of Jerusalem and I finally got around to doing it here.

Because the actual battle lasted for three days and thus could not be presented in a single scenario, it was necessary to break it down into four separate phases, with a scenario for each. Before discussing the four scenarios I will first discuss the map and the order of battle.

The Map

The map was based on maps from the British War Office series of 1960. The actual maps of the West Bank area were done in the early 1950s. It looks very good considering the various hex symbols available for the terrain being depicted. The Old City may look rather strange in its shape on the map but then the real Old City walls have an irregular shape for their boundaries and trying to fit it in correctly into the hexes of the map is an impossible task. Indeed, some have questioned the labeling of the directions on the map. When the map was originally done for Divided Ground, the top of the map was labeled West, the left side South, the right side North, and the bottom side East. Obviously this was wrong. Not only that, the labeling of the various quarters in the Old City were incorrect too, plus the Dome of the Rock was in the wrong location. I have since corrected all of this. The top of the map is now due East, with left side being North, the right side being South, and the bottom being West. But if you use the Old City as a reference, the top is really Southeast, the left is Northeast, the right is Southwest and the bottom is Northwest. However that is the price you pay for converting a real life map to a hex based system in Divided Ground.

The Order of Battle

The order of battle provided in the game was at best incomplete. Because of this I had to completely rebuild it. I had to look into many sources to get the numerical designations of the units on both sides as most units had a proper name by which they known, and subsequently identified as in most historical accounts. As the opposing sides were Jordanians and Israelis, I will deal with the units of each separately.

Jordanians

One will note that the various Jordanian units have a variety of morale levels. This is a reflection of those particular units historical performance in the actual battle. Some units had good morale but were overwhelmed, others gave the Israelis a very tough fight but once their morale broke, never recovered because of their low morale levels..

3rd Infantry Brigade: The 3rd Infantry Brigade, also called the King Tatal Brigade, was the main defending unit at Jerusalem. While an infantry brigade it was also a garrison unit and so had a few alterations to its makeup. For example, its recon squadron was converted to a reserve company to react to any emergency, it did not have an engineer company, and its AT Company did not have any 17 Pdr ATGs, but instead had 106mm Recoilless Rifles mounted on Jeeps. It had two infantry battalions occupying Jerusalem itself and the third infantry battalion deployed along the northern edge of the Jerusalem Corridor. While normally it was a motorized brigade, during the battle, the trucks were largely absent as they being used by other brigades and being a garrison unit, the 3rd Infantry was frequently equipped with light transport vehicles for patrol purposes within the city.

27th Infantry Brigade: The 27th Infantry Brigade, also known as the Imman Ali Brigade, was originally part of the Jordanian reserve on the West Bank at the beginning of the 67 War. However it was gradually transferred to Jerusalem starting with its 31st Infantry Battalion just before the beginning of hostilities. It was soon followed by the 28th Infantry Battalion and then the rest of the brigade within the first 24 hours of the war. The brigade is not represented in its entirety in the scenarios as part of it was deployed off map to the north. Only those units that involved in the battle of Jerusalem directly are portrayed in the game. It should be noted that the 27th also had Jeep mounted recoilless rifles in place of the 17 Pdrs ATGs in its anti-tank company and had machine-gun armed jeeps in place of the Saladin Armored Cars in its Recon Squadron.

29th Infantry Brigade: The 29th Infantry Brigade, also known as the Hittin Brigade, was only marginally involved in the battle for Jerusalem. The brigade defended the southern part of the West Bank (Judea) and only had two companies of its 29th Infantry Battalion present on the map, defending some towns just south of Jerusalem.

60th Armored Brigade: The 60th Armored Brigade was also part of the Jordanian reserve on the West Bank. It was earmarked to support the units at Jerusalem but was prevented from arriving by constant Israeli airstrikes throughout the war. Of the units in the brigade, two squadrons from the 5th Armored Regiment came the closest to arriving, being stopped by losses to Israeli airstrikes, just off the east edge of the map. But they could have made it, if the Israelis had been late with their airstrikes. As a compromise for play balance purposes in the third scenario, I have given those two tank squadrons a 50% chance of entering the board, along with some brigade supporting units, and the Israeli player can deal with them with the airstrikes he has in the scenario.

Jerusalem Militia Battalion: The Jerusalem Militia was the local militia unit in Jerusalem. It was mostly deployed in the Old City, although one of its companies was used to surround the Israeli garrison on Mount Scopus.

Israelis

16th Infantry Brigade: The 16th Infantry Brigade, also known as the Jerusalem Brigade, was an oversized brigade with eight infantry battalions. Four of these were regular army battalions (161st through the 164th) and the others were reserve battalions (165th through 168th). Of these the regular battalions were involved in the battle of Jerusalem, the others being deployed off map, one assisting the Israeli 4th Infantry Brigade in the battle of Latrun to the west (the 165th) and the other three deployed around the border of Judea, keeping the Jordanian 29th Infantry Brigade in check. The 16th also had a tank company of 21 old Shermans, armed with the 76mm gun, a recon company, and a mortar battalion. In addition, there was an “Academic Reserve Company” which was a line company from one of the reserve line battalions which was composed of students and teachers from various colleges in Israel, who were called to duty.

55th Paratroop Brigade: The 55th Paratroop Brigade was a reserve paratroop brigade, originally scheduled to be parachuted into El Arish on the first day of the war but the quick capture of the town canceled that mission. It consisted of three paratroop battalions (the 28th, 66th, and 71st), an engineer company, and a combination recon/anti-tank company. The paratroop battalions were unusual in that they still had four line companies per battalion whereas the other infantry brigades in the Israeli Army had gone over to three line companies per battalion. After the battle for Jerusalem was over, the 55th sent two of its battalions north to participate in the battle of the Golan Heights.

10th Mechanized Brigade: The 10th Mechanized Brigade was a regular Army brigade with the usual two mechanized battalions (the 104th and 106th) and one armored battalion (the 95th). The 95th Armored Battalion was unusual in that it had five tank companies, four of them equipped with M50 Super Shermans and the other one equipped with Mk3 Centurions. Prior to going into battle, the 95th gave up two of its companies, one to each mechanized battalion, and received two mechanized companies in return. Thus each battalion was in reality a combined arms force and this is how they are organized in the scenarios in this battle. The brigade also had an artillery battalion equipped with 25 Pdr howitzers and a mechanized scout company.

Mount Scopus Garrison: The Mount Scopus Garrison was the name I gave to the combined security forces in the two main structures on Mount Scopus, namely the Hadassah Hospital and the Hebrew University. Both were approximately platoon size. I made them as militia units as this would about commensurate with their abilities.

Middle East Version: When this scenario was originally created, I used mobile headquarters units for almost all battalions on both sides as all of them were either armored, mechanized, or motorized. Further research showed that most all of the infantry and paratroop battalions had shed their vehicles prior to going into combat in the city of

Jerusalem, including those for their headquarter units. So I changed the applicable battalion headquarters to dismounted ones as well as a few mounted leaders to dismounted ones.

The Scenarios

Scenario #1: Scenario #1 depicts the action on the first day of the battle for Jerusalem, namely the battle for Government House in southern Jerusalem and other areas south of there (The Sausage, the Bell, and village of Sur Bahir). However, I have the entire forces on both sides set up on the board in case either player wants to try to conquer Jerusalem with the forces at hand. All of the Jordanian forces on the board are fixed in place though as their mission was primarily defensive in nature and are not released until they are attacked. The Israelis are free to move at the beginning but the sides are too evenly matched for them to accomplish much. Both sides are free to fire though and that is about what happened with units engaging in firefights but no real maneuvering save those units of the forces in and around Government House. The victory point hexes reflect the actual Israeli objectives for that day. The minefields, blocks, and defensive positions on the board are an approximation of the actual layout of the Jordanian defensive scheme for Jerusalem and the surrounding area. The Israeli set up reflects how they were before they started massing for the attack on Government House so the Israeli player will have to spend the first few turns moving his units into their attack positions. The victory levels reflect the historical Israeli objectives for the day and can be exceeded greatly in either direction if either side decides to attack all across the board.

Scenario #2: Scenario #2 depicts the night attack by the 55th Paratroop Brigade into the suburbs in northern Jerusalem on the second day of the battle. These would include the actions at Ammunition Hill, the Police School, and the Rockefeller Museum. Historically the attack lasted into the late morning, well after dawn, but I am presenting it as a night attack as the plan was to have all of the objectives captured before dawn. However, city fighting being what it is, the fighting usually takes for longer to finish than if it was in the country. The victory point hexes again reflect the Israeli objectives for that attack. In addition, the 55th also had to relieve the siege of Mount Scopus (if one could call it that considering that there were only Jordanian militia units surrounding it). Again the Jordanians are fixed in place at the start of the scenario and can only be released by being attacked. The Jordanian 28th Infantry Battalion, which was pushed out of Government House the day before, was transferred during the night to road north of Jerusalem to Ramallah where they start the scenario, having just moved in. One will note that Israeli units are set up in southern Jerusalem in Government House and there about to reflect the area captured the day before. One will also note that the obstacles in that area have been removed and the minefields have either been removed or reduced. This reflects the actions of the Israeli engineers to remove them during the time space in-between scenarios. The artillery battalion that the Israelis have on the west edge of the board belongs to the 10th Mechanized Brigade. It was historically set up there so as to be in a centralized location where it could both support the 10th Mechanized (which is off board to the west) and the on-board 55th Paratroop Brigade. Again the victory point levels reflect the historical Israeli objectives for that attack.

Scenario #3: Scenario #3 depicts the daylight battle to surround the Old City and to drive off the remainder of the Jordanian forces during the second day. The biggest problem I had with this scenario was that historically it began while the battle depicted in Scenario #2 was still raging. I solved this by treating the second scenario as being over, with the Israeli forces holding all of the objectives that they had at the end of the real battle. Another problem is that all of the actions depicted occurred during the course of the whole day and even part of the second night, yet I have compressed them all into a scenario that lasts 30 turns, which is three hours in real time. Still there are some starting differences. For one thing, the Jordanian 4th Infantry Battalion is in the process of pulling back. This is represented by its right most company setting up in the town of Beit Hanina and its battalion headquarters pulled back even further. All of the 4th Battalion's units are also unfrozen to accomplish this. This is to prepare for the arrival of the Israeli 10th Mechanized Brigade which will arrive on board in a flanking position on the Jordanian 4th Infantry. The Jordanian 28th Infantry Battalion who we saw set up on the Jerusalem-Ramallah road in the last scenario now has Improved Positions as there was more than enough time to construct them between the scenarios. The 28th also has one of its companies unfrozen so it can shift to cover the gap on the road going off the north edge if they need to. The Jordanians also have elements of the 60th Armored Brigade with a 50% chance of entering the east side of the board behind the 28th Infantry Battalion. The Israelis have 20 airstrikes that can really make things tough for the Jordanians. As before, the Israelis have removed obstacles from recently captured land, yet they use the captured defensive positions from the same area. The victory point objectives are the historical Israeli goals for this stage of the battle and the victory point levels reflect those goals.

Scenario #4: Scenario #4 depicts the final phase of the battle for Jerusalem. The Jordanians have been driven away back to the Jordan River, where they were crossing to escape to the east. All that is left is the Jordanian garrison in the Old City. Just about all of the units in there are of reduced strength. Mostly because these were soldiers and militia men who chose to make a last stand or who did not get the word to retreat. Most of the militia simply melted away as the men simply went home since they lived locally. The tank wrecks near the Lion's Gate are Israeli tanks from the 16th Tank Company that got lost in the streets of Jerusalem during the battle the day before and ended up by the Old City where Jordanians rained RPG rockets down upon them from the city walls, taking out eight of them. The scenario is only 15 turns long (90 minutes) as this was how long it historically took to capture the Old City. However the victory point levels reflect more than just that. The Israelis must also exit a large number of units off the board to the east and south in pursuit of the retreating Jordanians. Fortunately, a battalion of the 10th Mechanized Brigade is set up on the Jerusalem-Ramallah road, ready to do just that. Although the Israelis have again removed obstacles from the land captured in the previous scenario, the minefields on both shoulders of the Jerusalem Corridor remain as it took several weeks to remove them all after the war. In essence, the Israelis are really completing against history in this scenario. The fall of the Old City is a forgone conclusion. The scenario just sees if the Israelis can do in the same time as they did historically. If it takes longer, in other words, if they do not end up with at least 1400

victory points at the end of the game, then the Jordanians can be considered to have won a morale victory.

Conclusion

I hope that players find these scenarios pleasing and exciting. As it is, another scenario (or in this case a series of them) that was originally supposed to be in the game is finally there. Enjoy the scenarios.