

DESIGN NOTES FOR THE BATTLE OF RAFAH SOUTH

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Rafah South was one of the original scenarios that came with the Divided Ground game. Designed by Edwin (Mick) Comny, it depicted the part of the battle of Rafah, south of the Rafah road junction. Like most scenarios in the game, it was designed in a hurry to meet the accelerated release date for the game, and as such, was filled with errors. I largely ignored this scenario as I designed the larger Battle of Rafah 1967 scenario which depicts the whole battle, including the southern part as depicted in Rafah South. But as I am converting every Divided Ground scenario to Middle East, I had to deal with this scenario sooner or later. So here goes.

Mapsheet

The mapsheet, as with all other ones in the Divided Ground scenarios, are based on the 1960 British War Office series of the Middle East. As is well known, the maps of the Sinai Peninsula was made during World War II. It definitely shows in the Rafah South mapsheet. The Rafah-Nitzana Road is depicted on the map as an unpaved road. Yet it was well known that the road was paved in 1967. I did not change it as I wanted to keep as much as Comny's original design as possible. The area is far more sandy than on my map, but I guess it is a matter of how one interprets the terrain on the map.

Order of Battles

Comny's original order of battle for this scenario can be summed up in one word, crappy. While he did get the major units correct, their internal organization left much to be desired. The Egyptian infantry units had no support weapons what so ever, just plain infantry. The tank units had no headquarter platoons and he used the basic generic large size platoons for the individual tank and anti-tank gun units, he did not pare them down to their historical proper strength. He had a brigade's worth of artillery under one battalion headquarters. I had to create a brigade structure for the artillery, fortunately the Egyptian 49th Artillery Brigade was historically deployed in the area so I used its structure as my guide. The anti-tank guns I reduced from a strength of four each to two each. This gives the anti-tank battalion a total strength of 18 guns, not 36 as Comny gave them. The JS 3 tank and SU-100 tank destroyer units which were at five and four strength points I lowered to three strength points each and I gave the tank units their respective HQ tank units. Now one would think that I am robbing the Egyptians of some of their anti-tank potential but I made up for it by giving the Egyptian infantry their support weapons which include 85mm anti-tank guns, 107mm recoilless guns and 82mm recoilless guns. The Israeli force was not much better. The infantry received their support weapons though in this case it meant just machine gun and mortar units. The tanks received their headquarter platoon units and the Baron Force which reorganized to its historical composition. I also corrected the units numerical designations to their historical ones.

Scenario

I kept the scenario largely as is. It did make some adjustments in certain unit locations for the Egyptians, mostly to accommodate the support and headquarter units I brought in in my OB

adjustments. One change that I did not make was the deletion of the 33rd National Guard Battalion. Historically this battalion was defending the city of El Arish during the battle so its presence in the scenario is an aberration. For that reason I gave this scenario an HISB rating as the scenario type in Middle East. But this scenario is Comny's, not mine, and I want to keep his essence to make it different from my Rafah 1967 scenario. I feel that it would have been a better scenario if Comny had more time to complete it. Even with all the correction that I made, the scenario still has a strongly Pro-Arab flavor. The main problem is that Comny only gave the Israelis two battalions instead of a brigade plus worth of troops and weak artillery support. Its only saving feature is that it is shorter in length than my Rafah 1967 scenario, so players who do not have time for my scenario could consider this one to be a suitable alternative.