

CRISIS OF OVERCONFIDENCE REVISED DESIGN NOTES

By
Alan R. Arvold

The scenario “Crisis of Overconfidence” is another example of originally planned big scenario that was abruptly cut short due to the time constraints caused by an accelerated release date. As a result, a small scenario was quickly formulated that only used a portion of the big mapsheet. To make matters worse, the Egyptian order of battle was small and only contained tank and anti-tank units, enough to destroy the Israeli force. The Israeli force, the ill-fated 190th Armored Battalion, was set up on the road that it historically traveled down to its doom. The scenario was designed so the historical outcome was the only possible outcome. In other words, it was a boring scenario to play as the Israelis. I decided to change this and make it a more challenging scenario for both sides. But I also wanted to make a big scenario which used the whole map. To achieve both objectives I decided to create two scenarios out of the one. I do not know what Edwin “Mick” Conmy, the original designer had intended for the whole mapsheet so these two scenarios are, at best, a guess on my part.

Yaguri’s Last Charge

This scenario presents a fuller picture of Lt Col Yaguri’s fateful attack on the 8th of October, 1973. I only used the northern third of the map as it represented Yaguri’s operational area for his battalion. I gave the 190th Battalion all of its company and battalion headquarter tank platoons so it is at full strength with 36 tanks in its ranks. I took them off the board and had them entering along Artillery Road. This way they can use one of three different roads leading to the canal instead of just the historical one. I also added a small Israeli infantry force in a bunker at the Hizayon observation fort. Historically, it was still holding out on the 8th of October, 1973 and one of Yaguri’s missions was to relieve the troops at that location. (Historically, the strongpoint fell to the Egyptians the following day.) I also added to the Israeli force one off-the-map artillery battery. Historically this battery was assigned to give general support to 190th Battalion but there is no evidence that Yaguri ever called any fire missions from them. I kept the same objective hexes in this scenario as in the original, plus added a new one, that being the Israeli Hizayon observation post. I extended the game length to 15 turns to account for the Israelis entering onto the board instead of being set up on it.

The Egyptian set seems massive. Historically Yaguri attacked at the operational boundary between the Egyptian 4th and 120th Infantry Brigades. Thus he could of attacked either the 4th’s right most battalion or the 120th’s left most battalion. (Historically he attacked the 4th Brigade’s battalion.) I thus set up the full force for each battalion east of the canal. Note that the 120th’s battalion has a line company, plus the engineers, isolating the Hizayon observation fort. West of the canal I set up what the 2nd Infantry Division had there. This included two artillery battalions, the MRL battalion, a battery of the divisional anti-tank battalion, the anti-tank company from the 117th

Mechanized Brigade, the division headquarters, and all of the transport units for the battalions on the east side of the canal. Although the infantry brigades were motorized, the Egyptians kept the trucks west of the canal, only bringing only those needed across when a dismounted heavy gun or mortar had to be moved. Those units that could move on foot did so as the Egyptians did not want to needlessly expose their trucks to easy destruction by the Israelis.

It looks as though the Israelis still do not have a chance in this scenario and that is probably true. But I am giving the Israeli player a chance to explore different options to score victory points, he does not have to charge to the canal as Yaguri did. The Egyptians may have a preponderance of artillery, but against armor it is largely useless. Yes they can use their smoke rounds to blind the Israelis, but once those rounds are exhausted, then what? Yes, the Egyptians have an overabundance of anti-tank weapons facing the Israelis but that is what their doctrine called for to counter the Israeli superiority in armored warfare. The point is that this scenario is more historically accurate than the original and the Israelis have opportunities to explore different options. Oh, by the way, the 190th was not the true numerical designation of Yaguri's battalion, it is the designation that he gave to his Egyptian captors when he was captured. As I do not know its true designation, I used the 190th. There is little difference between the Divided Ground and Middle East version of this scenario, the only major one in that the Egyptian engineer units are using Medium Trucks in Divided Ground while in Middle East they are using Engineer Trucks.

Learning How to Retreat

This is the name I gave the bigger scenario. It is based on a supposed radio conversation between the Egyptian 2nd Infantry Division commander and one of his forward subordinate leaders. This scenario occurs after the destruction of Yaguri's battalion and was the Egyptian original plan for the day before its execution was delayed by the Israeli morning attacks. For the Israelis, it was a desperate time, having to spread out their surviving armor in a picket line over a wide front. Fortunately for them the Egyptians were attacking with their dismounted infantry supported by armor. They were able to use their long range gunnery to pick off tanks and to suppress the infantry. But the Egyptians brought up their dismounted Sagger teams which time and again forced the Israeli tanks to fall back, thus allowing the infantry to move up. Eventually the Egyptians got to the Artillery Road in several places, forcing the Israelis to pull back a few kilometers. The Israeli artillery battalion, which was in a pre-war constructed position, was also instrumental in slowing down the Egyptians, not only the advancing infantry, but also rear area units, using the men in the Hizayon observation post as forward observers. Indeed the Hizayon position held out for as long as it did due to calling down artillery on the Egyptian infantry and engineer units preparing to assault them, thus breaking up the attacks before they really got started. When the artillery battalion had to be displaced due to the advancing Egyptians, Hizayon's hours were numbered (The post fell the next day.). The Israeli 460th Armored Brigade originally had three armored battalions, however due to casualties it had to reorganize into two under strength battalions, with the

third battalion being reduced to only the headquarters unit which was located near the brigade headquarters, awaiting tank replacements so it could rebuild. To the right of the 460th were the survivors of the 190th Armored which were organized into a large platoon led by a surviving lieutenant. Since they were part of the 146th Armored Brigade, that is where they are assigned in the order of battle. The Israelis had eight aircraft attack the Egyptians along the 2nd Infantry Division's front during that day, I assigned half of them in this scenario in two attacks (each attack represents two aircraft.)

On the Egyptian side of the scenario we have the entire 120th Infantry Brigade, plus part the 4th Infantry Brigade as well. Historically it was the 120th Infantry Brigade that got across Artillery Road that day. The 4th Infantry did not get as far as they got a later start in the afternoon, due to reorganizing from the Israeli armored assaults which they bore the brunt of that morning. As one can see the right most battalion of the 4th Infantry, which is set up on the board, is not up to full strength, due to taking some minor losses from their battle with the 190th Armored Battalion. Also there is a long string of wrecks along the road in their sector which are casualties of the 190th's attack. Supporting the infantry brigades are the 2nd Division's rear echelon units. This includes one the artillery brigades, the MRL battalion, the engineer battalion, the recon battalion, and the division's tank battalion, as well as parts of the anti-tank and air defense battalions. The 117th Mechanized and the attached 24th Armored Brigades were not present due to being held in reserve. The SA-6 AD missile battalion was part the Egyptian 2nd Army's extensive air defense set up that they had on the west bank.

The objective hexes in the game were based on the 2nd Infantry Division's operational objectives for the day's attack. While the Egyptians did take some losses that day, mostly in their tank units, their sacrifice enabled the dismounted Sagger units to maneuver into good firing positions and set up, thus causing the Israelis to back off when they engaged them. Again there is little difference between the Divided Ground and the Middle East versions, basically the same thing I mentioned earlier.

Conclusion

I hope that these revised and new scenarios give better insight to the actual battles depicted in them. Enjoy them.