OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

RAID
The Swift and Balanced Assault
by Mark Edwards

See, I told you that I was making every effort to treat the latest S&T games in MOVES. My contribution to Raid (other than the usual graphic effort) was to promote the use of an accurate terrain model for the line of sight rules. Unfortunately, for me as a player, I've been unable to become interested in tactical games ever since I overdosed on PanzerBlitz a long time ago. —RAS

Commando actions have long been considered one of the more exciting aspects of twentieth century warfare. How many millions have sat through movies based on commando raids (the "Dirty Dozen" to name an example) or bought books on them? Yet, until recently there has been no wargame that simulates such operations on a wide period scale. *Raid* is SPI's latest addition to its line of tactical games covering just such actions.

The format of the game appears on the surface to be like *FireFight* (upon which several of the rules systems are based), with sequential unit-by-unit direct fire and movement and four man fire-teams. The rules systems, however, have been re-designed to fit the needs of a mostly infantry game (vehicles have been included as operational weapons). By use of the *FireFight* system, all plotting has been eliminated except for artillery, which should bring some relief to owners of previous SPI tactical games employing the simove system.

Command control is one of the rules systems that was drastically re-thought. Instead of determining which units panic each game turn, players determine which units are out of command, the effect of which is the loss of the capability to perform direct fire. Platoon organization is defined through a unique numbering system. Of the two fireteams in a squad, one is designated as containing the squad leader. These two fireteams must be kept within a certain range (called command radius) of each other. The platoon headquarters is not represented by a unit but instead as a symbol which must be kept stacked with a combat unit. Squad leader teams must in turn be kept within a larger command radius of the platoon headquarters. Killing either a squad leader team or the unit that the platoon headquarters is stacked with results in an immediate transfer of command to the remaining fireteam in the squad or the nearest unit, respectively. While this has no direct effect on the game, it can have an indirect effect if the new position of the headquarters is out of command radius of some units in the platoon. Command control limits the amount of terrain a platoon

can cover, forcing the player to keep and use his units together.

The combat system in *Raid* places emphasis on infantry weapons rather than covering all modern weapons. The direct fire CRT is used by small-arms and machine guns alone. Weapons capable of destroying hard targets are used on the indirect fire CRT. Casualties are taken man-by-man so it is possible to have one-man fireteams running around. Suppression has much the same effect as in *FireFight*, with the exception that double suppressions do not kill. There is also a nasty rule about combat results "spilling over" into units stacked with the target. This rule states that if a unit receives a combat result calling for more men than are contained in that unit, casualties are exacted from any units stacked in the same hex.

Close assault is another system that has been changed due to the nature of *Raid*. Instead of vehicles, *infantry* suffers close assault (fought in the same hex). This is treated as a separate action not related to anything else in the game. Once a close assault is declared, everything else in the game stops. Combat initiative is rolled for and then the units fire away at each other until either the attacker moves off or one of the two forces is wiped out. Heavy casualties are usually sustained by both sides, so close assault should be done only when necessary. A good case attesting to the heavy casualties of close assault came up in playtesting. "Bravo" close assaulted an "Alpha" fireteam with a full squad. The result: "Alpha" was wiped out at a cost of seven men to "Bravo." As one can see, close assault is very deadly. However, next to artillery, sometimes the only way to clear an important building hex is through its use. Fire reconnaissance (drawing fire from a target to learn its nature) should be employed to avoid unwittingly close assaulting an HMG.

Artillery is not much different than in *FireFight,* but there are three minor changes. First, the plotting of fire missions has been simplified (I hear cries of joy from *FireFight* players). Secondly, the impact patterns have a wider effect than in *FireFight*. And last, the scatter procedure has been altered by the addition of a third die roll to determine how far the fire scatters (up to a maximum of two hexes).

The map is a composite of the various areas typical to the actions given in the scenarios. There are four different types of terrain: building, heavy (forest/jungle), medium (broken), and mixed (rice paddy/wheat field). A coast borders one edge, complete with a small fishing village. Includ-

ed on the map are cliffs, a prison compound, and even an airport. Terrain height is indicated by contour lines (as in *FireFight*) at increments of ten meters each. The various scenario centers are cut off from one another by a large forest since in reality these areas could not be reinforced by the defending forces very quickly. Game scale is rather small at 25 meters to the hex and 1-2 minutes per game turn.

Observation appears to be much the same as in *FireFight,* but in reality it has been changed a great deal. Instead of giving the target a range at which other units can observe it, the sighting unit has an Observation Point Allowance of ten with the terrain costing points to see through depending on type. This gives rise to situations where the enemy can see you but you can't see him. For example, unit *A* is in heavy and unit *B* is in a building three hexes away. Since it costs ten observation points to see into a building, unit *B* is unsighted. However, it only costs 8 Observation Points (6 for the heavy hex and 2 for the two hexes of clear between) for unit *B* to sight unit *A*, so unit *B* can see (and fire on) unit *A* without being seen beforehand. Players should try to avoid this by calculating observation from the enemy's point of view as well as their own.

Communications on the battlefield is a little-known aspect of war that is explored in *Raid*. Radios can be given to either side depending on the scenario. They function somewhat like command units in that they are assumed to be with all squad leader teams, on-map artillery units, and platoon headquarters. Their employment allows artilery units and squad leader teams to be an unlimited number of hexes away from headquarters. Should a unit containing a radio be destroyed, there is a one turn wait before the unit assuming command can use it. This may cause units to go out of command depending upon the situation. Players should avoid spreading their units out to make sure that even should the platoon headquarters unit be destroyed, the platoon can still function.

Raid is a fast-paced game that gives the players a feel for the various problems confronting commando forces—the need for speed, the limitations of command control, and the need to properly combine the uses of various infantry weapons to name a few. Preventing the enemy from handling these problems by bogging him down, dividing his forces, and maintaining freedom for your own units is the key to victory.

The counter mix contains a full "Alpha" company and two "Bravo" platoons with two LMG's and 106mm recoilless rifles. On-map artillery units are provided

for both the 60mm and the 81mm type at two per type per platoon. Artillery impact markers were printed in a neutral color so that both sides may use them.

The four man fireteam is the basic infantry unit of the game. Instead of giving them a fixed combat value, however, these units are assigned one of three types of small-arms: automatic, semi-automatic, or bolt action. Each of these weapons is used differently and has its own strengths and weaknesses. Auto's have the best die modification due to range attenuation of the small-arms, and they shift one column to the left (to a better column), but this is offset by their terrible range (a minus one at five hexes and fire prohibited from nine hexes out). Automatic weapons perform best in close assaults, but since they are valuable—and since they acquire die modifications at a one hex distance that is almost equal to their strength in close assault—they should not be used for close assaults unless necessary.

Semi-automatics have a better range than auto's, but they don't shift any columns on the direct fire CRT and their close range die modifications are not as good. They are the best all around weapon combining modest power with a decent range. These weapons should be used in firefights where auto's might be out-ranged.

Bolt-action rifles are the classic infantry weapon depicted in every war saga. When compared to semi's and auto's, however, bolts are rather lousy weapons. They shift one to the right (to a worse column) and have no die modifications at close range so almost anything is better at close assaulting. Yet, they have the best range of the small arms. This means that one does not want to get close with these weapons but instead engage the enemy at medium range where he won't get any die modifications and the superior range of the weapon can come into play.

There are two types of machine guns, and they differ greatly as to their effects. The LMG comes with a two man crew and the HMG a three man crew. There are two special rules covering machine guns: kill zones and cones of fire. The kill zone rule is used to reflect the fact that machine guns fire heavier rounds than most weapons. These units not only affect their target, but they also affect everything a few hexes directly behind their targets (2 hexes for LMG's and 4 hexes for HMG's). By judicious use of these units more than one target can be attacked in the same game turn.

Cone of fire requires all units employing it to be faced so as to define the base of a cone 120 degrees wide by five Observation Points deep. Every unit that enters this cone during movement can be fired upon regardless of whether or not the machine gun has fired already.

Light machine guns are unfortunately weak as far as fire power is concerned due to the fact that their best column is equivalent to two men firing small arms. Still the additional rules covering MG's make them most useful, especially at close range where their die modifications can make up for the lack of power. While players may be tempted to close assault with these weapons due to their plus three modification, they are too valuable to waste on an attack that is only slightly better than one made from one hex away.

Heavy machine guns are the most powerful infantry weapon in the game. They get die modifications out to four hexes and, unlike LMG's, they do use the best column. Their four hex kill zone makes them deadly to close formations, and the cone of fire makes them very hard to take out. These weapons are so valuable that it would be a serious mistake to close assault with them, especially as they can probably get very close to the same odds from two and even three hexes away. A squad should be kept nearby as the enemy will try very hard to kill these units once they are revealed. The loss of an HMG early in the game can be crippling, especially if you're on the defensive.

Optional weapons include bazookas, the 106mm recoilless rifle, and an interesting combination of the M16 assault rifle and the M203 grenade launcher. Bazookas have a maximum range of eight hexes and a strength of eight on the indirect fire CRT. Since the bazooka suffers no range attenuation it should be kept as far from the target as possible. Again, a squad should be kept near as the enemy will try to kill this unit from the second it is revealed.

The 106mm recoilless rifle has the same purpose as the bazooka but a better range (16 hexes) and a higher strength (9 on the indirect fire CRT). The major drawback to this weapon is that it can't be moved except by vehicle or helicopter and it takes two full turns to load/unload. Unless transport is kept close by, the enemy will find it easy to kill unless protected. Since this is such a powerful weapon, every possible step should be taken to ensure its survival.

The M16/M203 grenade launcher is an interesting weapon that can be used either as normal small-arms or as a grenade launcher with a range of ten hexes and a strength of six on the indirect fire CRT. It can also fire a small smoke charge affecting one hex. At close range the M16 has a better attack than the M203, but at medium to long range, depending on the terrain the target is in, the M203 may do better. Of course, only through use of the grenade launcher can a building hex be demolished, so as you can see, again each weapon has its strengths and weaknesses. The combination of the two gives a fireteam hard target capability while retaining good small-arms capability.


Vehicles are also represented as optional rules in *Raid*. Tanks, APC's and trucks are represented in generalized form due to the wide time period of the game. Tanks have a 105mm gun (strength of nine on the indirect fire CRT) and two LMG's. Both the gun and one of the LMG's may be fired in a 120 degree arc. Since all of these weapons may be used on the same game turn, tanks are so deadly that more than two should never be used. For those that insist upon using tanks as "trucks," one fireteam may be carried on them, but they are considered to be in open terrain.

Armored personnel carriers have two HMG's (one is hull mounted) with much the same restrictions as tanks. They can carry up to ten men and their equipment. Trucks, of course, carry no armament, but they are the only vehicle from which infantry can fire and then only with a minus one on the die.

All vehicles have a movement of eighteen which makes them very fast. This is something to watch out for as the tank which was way out of range last turn can be right next to you this turn. Also, all vehicles may fire all of their weapons in the same game turn, so when a tank gets close, stay under cover until you've got a good shot at it with a bazooka or recoilless rifle.

While tanks and APC's are attacked on the Indirect Fire CRT, trucks are slaughtered on the Direct Fire CRT. Trucks are so vulnerable that they should be kept far away from any action, especially if there is something in them. If you expose one to the enemy, you deserve what you'll get (a non-existent truck).
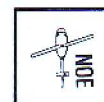
Helicopters are another rules system that has been modified from the previous standard. There are two types of choppers: transports which can carry up to ten men and their equipment and gunships armed with a powerful HMG (the Vulcan mini-cannon) and salvos of rockets.

Helicopter movement is assumed to be nap-of-earth (flying a few feet above the ground) except in special cases where the player desires or is forced to raise the chopper to altitude. While they have a normal observation range of ten hexes when in nap-of-earth, choppers attain greater observation range when they rise to altitude. This means that a chopper up high can see almost

any unit. They may see units in buildings only if those units fire or move in that turn. The only way to hide units from choppers up high is to hide them in the middle of a clump of forest hexes or get them inside a building.

Gunships are perhaps the most powerful units in the game. Their HMG has an automatic plus three with a one column shift to the left on the CRT. This is due to the fact that their HMG is the Vulcan mini-cannon with a rate of fire of 1,200 rounds per minute The rate of fire is so high that only enough ammunition can be carried for three shots per scenario. This gun is too valuable for just any target. It should be saved for enemy special weapons or units critical to the objective.

Gunships also carry two salvos of rockets for use against hard targets. They have a strength of 9 on the indirect fire CRT and a maximum range of 20 hexes (minimum of 5 hexes). These too should be saved for use against targets such as HMG's in buildings and tanks. Unfortunately, a gunship that fires a rocket must immediately rise to an altitude which may subject it to opportunity fire. If more than one chopper is available, one can be kept at extreme range and high altitude to both obtain unlimited sighting and to be able to pop off a rocket salvo without receiving return fire.

Transport helicopters can be effective weapons if used correctly. These choppers can perform two missions: load and transport or transport and unload. While this in itself may not seem too awesome, when combined with the fact that troops are allowed to move up to half their movement allowance on the turn that they unload you get instant shock troops that can go almost anywhere and close assault on the same turn. Watch out for anti-aircraft fire as nothing is worse than losing a fully loaded chopper to an HMG. It takes one turn to unload in clear, medium, or mixed terrain and the unloading units are subject to any opportunity fire. It takes two turns to unload into heavy/building terrain but the unloading units are not subject to opportunity fire. If you want to unload quickly you must do so in clear, medium, or mixed; but if you wish to protect the unloading units you must unload in heavy/building terrain.

The helicopters represented in *Raid* are of the type used in Vietnam. These choppers are not heavily armored so they are extremely vulnerable tð small-arms fire from the ground. Also they are attacked as if they were in clear terrain so any units firing will have the best column on the CRT. The only way to avoid being shot down is to stay at least seven hexes from enemy units so that negative die modifications cut down the odds. This is so important that an example is called for. In playtesting the dawn raid scenario, ''Alpha'' foolishly moved his choppers to within four to five hexes of the enemy thinking that they were invincible. The result: after ''Bravo's'' numerous opportunity fires, three choppers were downed and the fourth was in hiding.

Anti-aircraft fire is most important to the defender. The best anti-air weapon is undoubtedly the HMG. It has the highest power and the longest range of any of the infantry weapons of the game. The probability of shooting down a chopper at nine hexes range is nil for LMG's and auto's, approximately 17 percent for semi's, and 33.33 percent for bolts. The probability of downing a chopper at 9 hexes for a HMG is 66.16 percent. Strangely enough, the worst infantry small-arms weapons is the best at shooting down choppers due to its range. Of course, at closer ranges (6 hexes or less) other weapons do better, but rarely will an experienced player come closer than 7-9 hexes with a chopper and give you a shot at it.

General Players Notes

Speed more than any other factor is the most critical of all considerations when playing *Raid*. While of course one should not rush into a prepared defense, taking your time can prove disasterous. The longer you are in contact with the enemy, the more chances he will have at slowing you down. The slower you get the more opportunities he will have to slow you down even further. This is a vicious cycle which can leave you with shattered remnants of a force. Every turn spent doing something other than obtaining the objective is a turn not only wasted but actually detrimental to your force. Players should avoid exposing units needlessly to the enemy and engaging enemy units having little or nothing to do with the objective as these are wasted efforts.

In this game, as in any other game dealing with modern warfare, the only way to succeed is to combine the use of the different weapons given to you. The rule that illustrates this best is the cross-fire rule. The one column shift can be the difference between wiping out the target and merely inflicting casualties but leaving it alive to fire again. For the same reason any heavy weapon should have a squad near by to provide support when the enemy starts devoting himself to destroying it (something the enemy usually does from the first sight of such weapons). While an HMG is almost awesome in its power when faced with many enemy units attacking from different directions, it can easily be lost unless other units are near by to provide the much needed support. However, the squad is not there just to protect the weapon but to help it too. An LMG alone hasn't much chance of wiping out an enemy unit in clear terrain even at three hexes distance, but with the help of cross-fire from a neighboring unit this can be changed to an almost sure probability. Combined arms and support from neighboring units is a winning tactic.

Terrain is another facet of the game that should be exploited to the fullest extent possible. While the main reason for using terrain is still the protection of your units, there are other things that can be done with it. Attempting to gain sight of the enemy without being seen yourself is an example. A thorough knowledge of the rules covering the use of terrain and the ability to spot situations where an advantage can be gained is key here.

Attacking a prepared defense is best done from two different directions. This forces the defender to split up his forces with a resultant loss of efficiency. The attacks should be co-ordinated with each other so as to present the defender with a mass of problems and no time to clear them up. For instance, if the defender has a large area to cover then perhaps the destruction of his platoon headquarters is called for, as it may put some of his forces out of control. If instead he is in a close formation, the use of machine guns with their kill zones would be best as to inflict high casualties.

The defender is hard pressed in *Raid*. Due to the nature of commando tactics, in most cases the defender is caught by surprise (reflected by a loss of command control in the first few game turns) and will have a hard time resisting the enemy in those crucial first turns. The only way to counter this is in the defender's set up. Thought must be given to the careful placement of his units. Machine guns should have wide fields of fire for the employment of the cone of fire rules. Since opportunity fire is the only action the defender's men can take that will inflict casualties on the enemy in the first turns, every avenue of approach must be covered by as many units as possible. This will ensure a large number of opportunity fires for the defender. Also the set up should not be too close as this will not only reduce the chance for cross-fire, but it will also make it easier for the attacker to kill large numbers of units at a time (by means of artillery, machine gun kill zones, etc.).

The defense should be kept fairly fluid to allow for the easy shifting and concentrating of forces on the attacker's units. All in all, the success of a defense will depend on its ability to react to the attacker's forces. All this of course does not replace the need to hamper and bog down the enemy, as this is most desirable for the defense and should be attempted by the defender to as great an extent as possible.

Artillery can be employed in a number of ways to aid either offense or defense. Units in buildings will succumb to a heavy barrage of artillery without the heavy casualties brought about by close assaulting (although it takes longer). Since artillery attacks anything that moves through its impact pattern, it can be used to create a cordon to prevent withdrawal or escape, or in the case of defense, to inflict heavy casualties on the attacker and slow down his offensive. Artillery ''patterns'' (the over-lapping of two or more fire plots to cover a large amount of terrain yet achieve higher than normal attacks in those hexes between the impact hexes) can be used to not only attack a position effectively, but to virtually seal it off with a rain of fire. And of course there is always smoke, something which players never seem to use to the full extent. Smoke is perfect for covering a withdrawal, isolating part of the enemy, or limiting his command control by cutting off

After Thoughts

Tournaments are very popular at the various national and regional conventions. Winners are announced as the best players of a specific game or a specific set of games. I would think, however, that the ultimate accolade would be "best wargamer." Unfortunately, it will never be given because it is too much work to arrange. Whoever devised the tournament would have to take a widely known game (or system) and create several new situations. During each round of the tournament, each pair of gamers would play the same new situation. As in duplicate bridge, all players of the French (say) would be evaluated amongst themselves, and their opponents would be evaluated amongst *them*selves. After perhaps three or four games (opponents in each case assigned at random) winners could be determined from total scores. There are various ways this could be arranged, but a timing system would be necessary. A tournament of this type would test the ability to wargame, not just the ability to play a specific wargame.

Veracruz [continued from page 11]

U.S. player be able to exploit any misinformation the Mexican might have. The dummy counters could be effective if the U.S. player attempted wide flanking moves, but the U.S. supply situation and the terrain fairly well preclude this from happening, or from being very effective if it does happen. (As an aside, the untried militia rules work well, particularly in the early stages of the simulation.)

As for the units in the game, the Leader counters represent the most important. The U.S. player should carefully plan his attacks to ensure the highest possible preliminary leadership level. This level for him should never be below three, nor should the Mexican player ever fight with a level below two. This necessitates both players restricting their use of the one-level leaders to instances of absolute need or to attacks against unled forces. In fact, the U.S. player may be better off using one less division rather than organizing one around Major General Pillow.

The artillery units are the most restricted land units in the game. Not only can they not move without benefit of division or army organization, but they are also forfeit in a force that suffers a flee result in battle. Given his slim chance of ever attacking a U.S. fortress, the Mexican player should take his battle losses in artillery units to preclude losing more than necessary due to a flee result. Likewise, the U.S. player should take artillery losses after the volunteers have withdrawn and Perote is in hand. He will have no other targets requiring the use of artillery, and the stipulation of no more than three artillery units per division can restrict his flexibility at a critical time. If Santa Anna is called to the capital, he should take three artillery units with him as part of his required 20 strength points as well.

The U.S. Navy battery is of very limited use once the U.S. takes Veracruz. With a movement rate of one hex per turn, it is far too unwieldy to do the U.S. forces in the interior any good, yet it is an ideal garrison force for Veracruz. Once in Veracruz it can, with the fleet, reduce the fortress of San Juan de Ulua and serve to keep the Mexican Army out of that key port once the fortress is rebuilt.

As for the other units in the game, their utility is fairly obvious. The cavalry units, dragoons for the U.S., are perhaps the most flexible combat units available to each side. The Mexican units can strike deeply along the U.S. supply path in the middle and late stages of the game. Though the U.S. player has only three dragoon units, he will find them of particular value when he attempts to cut the Mexican Army off from its supply sources. The reconnaissance units can be useful in obtaining information about flanking forces, though the Mexican player will find he will need to reconnoiter with many units to obtain any information at all and that his strategic situation may render that information unusable as discussed above. More useful to him will be his insurgents who can tie up large U.S. forces in escort duty.

All things considered, the simulation *Veracruz* is a success. It's a rare game that provides such graphic beauty with the balanced tension of its subject matter. What is more, the morale rules of *Veracruz* should become classic.

Raid! [continued from page 23]

his platoon headquarters (which will affect his artillery).

The proper use of command control is a very important consideration as it affects the ability of your units to fire. Be careful when carrying out offensives or defensives that require your forces to be spread out, because the destruction of platoon headquarters will probably put a great deal of your forces out of command control. Likewise be careful when using radios—the destruction of one will again put units out of command control. All heavy weapons should be kept within six observation points of the platoon headquarters so that, in case line-of-sight is interdicted these weapons will remain in control. The headquarters unit itself should be stacked with a fireteam since these units have the greatest number of men and correspondingly they take the longest (on the average) to kill. The other fireteam should be kept close in case the one with the platoon headquarters is killed. If possible, one should make sure that not only are his units within radius of the headquarters, but also within radius of the nearest unit to that headquarters since this will assure his units of not being out of command in case of the destruction of the unit containing the headquarters. Make sure that this unit has a good field of sight so that it can continue to plot artillery missions.

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