

OIL WAR

RECONSIDERED

BY

ANDREW GILHAM

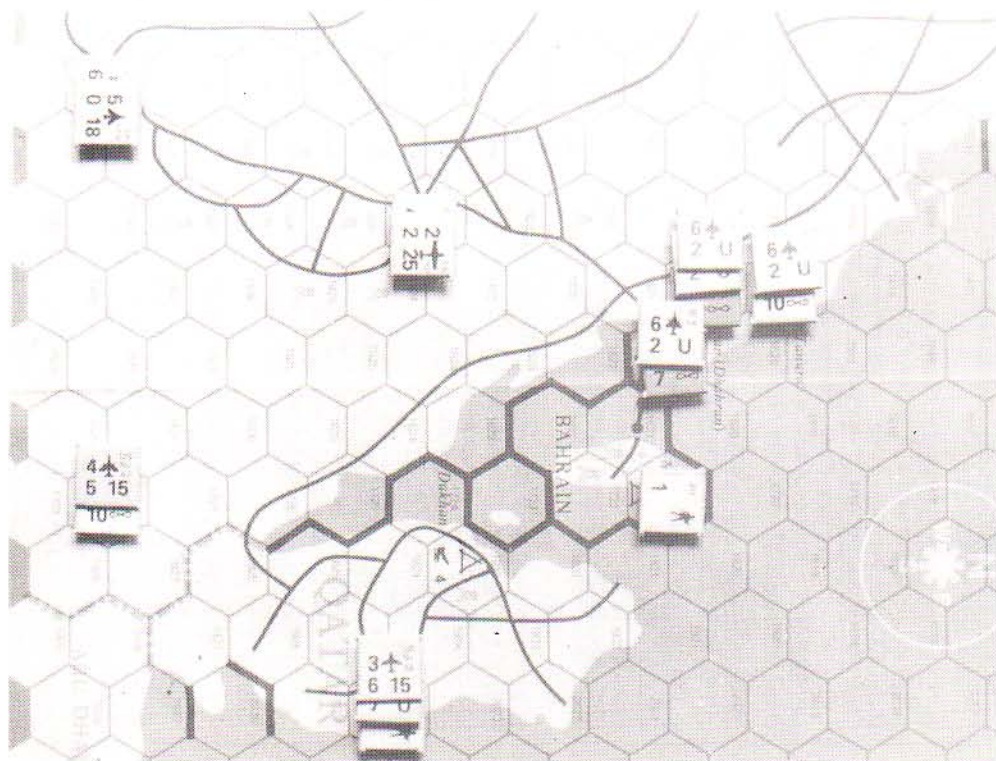
In Phoenix number two, there appeared an article entitled 'Oil War – Strategy & Tactics' by David Bolton, which sets out the author's 'Optimum' Arab deployment for scenarios 1 and 2 of the game. I would like to take issue with Mr Bolton's set-up and suggest an alternative deployment of my own.

My major complaint is that the Persian Gulf region of Saudi Arabia is virtually defenceless, inviting a US invasion there. A landing at Ra's Tanura can only be attacked by ten ground strength points, while a landing at the airbase on hex 1728 can only be attacked by eleven strength points; similarly, Riyadh can be attacked by only ten. However, these counter-attacks cannot be executed simultaneously. If the US player attacks these bases and gives them air cover, the Arab player with optimum luck can only remove one landing, and in the process will leave large areas of Saudi Arabia unprotected, allowing devastating turn 2 airdrops.

There are many invasion gambits here; I do not favour attacking Riyadh, as it is relatively distant from ports and oil facilities. Perhaps the best is to attack Ra's Tanura and Az Zahran in conjunction with hex 1728, viz



Above: Reconsidered deployment of Arab forces.



Left: American and Israeli forces attack the 'Bolton' deployment, as outlined in issue two.

In the air transport phase, these landings are made:

- hex 1419 IS 10, US 7
- hex 1520 US 7
- hex 1728 IS 10

In the movement phase:

- US 7 moves from 1419 to 1420
- US 7 moves from 1520 to 1521
- IS F4's move to 1419
- 1521 (the SAM is neutralised, rule 7.51)
- 1420
- 1420

- USN A6 and F£ move to 2024
- USN A7 moves to 1728

Vigorous Arab air attacks can eliminate any stack of air units the US can put together on turn one, hence the spread-out deployment of US/Israeli air units. The US F4 can move onto Az Zahran once the SAM is neutralised by the airlanding brigade. (Rule 7.51 states that "(SAM sites) are neutralised when occupied").

In the event of any unit being retreated in the Az Zahran area, hex 1520 is vacant. Thus all the airlanding units will survive.

The riskiest landing is on hex 1728. The IS 10 can be surrounded by the Saudis (and maybe by the Qatar unit, if it survives the air attack by the A6 and F4). Also, the Arabs can amass 28 air strength points to attack the A7 and F4 on 1728, normally enough to destroy them. If the Arab does this, the Israeli unit has an overall chance of survival of 68%. The main effect is to divert the main Arab strength from the principal landing area (Ra's Tanura - Az Zahran). If you think it is worth it, do it.

On the following turn, reinforcements will be brought in at all three captured airbases, and Bahrain will be captured by an airlanding brigade. The US breakout into Saudi Arabia will be almost immediate, and the complete capture of Saudi Arabia and southern Kuwait is virtually certain.

Enough! Here is my plan to save the shiekhs:

Saudi Arabia	0326 one SA4
	0828 one SA F5
	1324 one SA 167
	1420 one SA 4
	1425 one SA 6 (mech)
	1728 one SA Ltng
Kuwait	0711 one KW Ltng
	0813 one KW 1
	0914 one KW 7 (arm),
	one KW 1
Iraq	0508 one IQ 3
	0606 one IQ 3
	one IQ 4 (mech)
	0607 two IQ 4 (mech),
	one SU7, one M21
Iran	0805 two IN 8 (mech)
	0806 two IN 7 (arm)
	0807 one IN 7 (arm)
	1306 one IN 7 (arm)
	1712 one IN 6, two F5's
	1303 two IN F4's
Qatar	1922 one QT 1
Bahrain	1721 one BH 1

This set-up allows a vigorous defence of the Ra's Tanura/Az Zahran area, using Mr Bolton's upgraded Kuwaiti armour. The set-up of the Saudi and Qatar units allows landings in the Qatar area to be surrounded with ease. The units on 1420 and Riyadh deprive the US player of these airbases for bringing on of reinforcements until turn three. The deployment of the Qatar unit means that if the US lands in Qatar he must go out of his way to destroy it with his ground units. Of course, he can use air to hit it, but there is some risk attached.

Essentially, this set-up uses the Kuwaiti forces to defend northern Saudi Arabia, while using the Saudis' own meagre forces to protect southern Saudi Arabia. Contrary to Mr Bolton's suggestion, no sane US player will ever attempt invading Kuwait against a competent Arab. He is trapped between the powerful Iranians and the suddenly up-gunned Kuwaitis, and will surely be surrounded and destroyed. At the very least, his units will be forced to stack high on their airbases, thus preventing reinforcements from appearing. He is beyond the A6/A7 range line, giving the Arab air superiority (for a few turns at least). Invading Kuwait (or Iran for that matter) is a good way to lose!

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the editor.

MAIL CALL

I read in 'Mail Call', Phoenix 4, that Mr Paul Morphine is interested in a PRESTAGS scenario for Navarette - it so happens that I am way ahead of him and I take the opportunity to present:
SCENARIO - Navarette (February 1367)
 Henry's Army: 15xPS, 5xCB, 6xLC, 2xHC, 20xMI, 1x"2", 1x"3", VP=91, PL=27.
 Deploy (1215) -4, stacking:2.
 Edward's Army: 12xMS, 12xLB, 2xPS, 1x"1", 1x"2", 1x"3". VP=79, PL=31.
 Deploy N-3, stacking:2
 Game length: 20 game turns.
 Victory conditions: Both sides must achieve a substantial victory.
 Terrain Mods: Ignore all woods, towns and the stream running 0911 to 1636.

So there you are: the stacking and panic levels probably need a bit of fiddling with to sort out the balance but overall we have a larger and quite powerful army attacking a smaller force, but with considerable firepower. It makes for quite a good scenario, as both sides have their strong and weak points.

Andrew Gilham

Perhaps this tip will be of use to readers of Phoenix. A lot of gamers will have found that after playing a game once or twice or even before play the map starts to split where two folds cross in the centre. It is a simple job to halt further splitting along the folds by means of sticky tape. I use paint masking tape, as sellotape tends to dry out and fall off. Four small pieces of tape at each fold cross over will prevent any split going further along the fold.

The tape will increase the life of maps and care in folding will always help.

Ian T Parry AIST

Dear Sirs,
 I feel I must point out Dr. PHS Hatton's erroneous belief that Albert A Nofi is a fanatical Catholic for writing that Frederick of the Palatinate was "foolhardy" and "foolish" (in S&T 55), which he said on the Letters Page of Phoenix 4.

Frederick's acceptance of the Crown of Bohemia was surely based on the supposition that Ferdinand of Styria would be too weak to resist this move, as he was concerned with internal revolts and external threats (the Turks). Even so, this was to ignore the Habsburgs' allies, which included Bavaria, Saxony, Poland and, most importantly, the Spanish Habsburgs, with whom the Austrian branch of the family had fairly strong links at this time.

The Palatinate was militarily not strong enough to resist these powers and could not muster much powerful international support. Although Frederick was son-in-law to James I of England, James openly said that he was not prepared to support the venture into Bohemia and was in any case too weak to do so. The Dutch, Protestant like Frederick, were shortly to be tied up with the Spanish, when the truce with that country expired in 1621 and were thus unable to give any substantial aid. France, patron of the Protestant Union, was too weak to support Frederick in open war against the Habsburgs and lacked the guidance of Richelieu until his rise in 1624. The members of this Protestant Union disliked Frederick's leadership of that body and were therefore unprepared to support him.

In short, Frederick misread the situation. He tried to be opportunistic and failed, due to lack of the necessary power to back up a legal claim (for his election to the throne of Bohemia was legitimate) against the certain reaction of the Habsburgs. His action led to a situation where Protestantism had never seemed so threatened and he could not have foreseen the final result, when religion was less of a driving-force anyway.

R J Stephens



ORIGINS 77

The National Wargaming Expo

22, 23, and 24 July 1977

at Wagner College, Staten Island, New York City

The national exposition for wargamers sponsored by the major firms in the hobby. Features boardgaming, miniatures, fantasy gaming, seminars, workshops, exhibits, and tournaments. Expanding on the successes of Origins I and II, Origins 77 promises to be even bigger and better.

60 Trade Show Booths • Competition Prizes • "Charlie" Awards • Demonstrations • Game Auction • Dormitory and Dining Facilities on Site • Informal Gaming Areas • Designers and Artists from All Major Companies

Send for pre-registration forms now (there's a 25% savings if you pre-register rather than buying tickets at the door).

Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

ORIGINS 77, c/o SPI, 44 East 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010