

LEBANON

New Scenarios for ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

By Michael Anchors

It was a remarkable feat of prophecy that, when *ARAB-ISRAELI WARS* was published in 1977 by The Avalon Hill Game Company, it contained a scenario depicting "an Israeli armored advance into Lebanon at sometime in the future". The designers of Scenario S-12 may well have taken a cue from Operation Litani, in which Israeli armor temporarily occupied southern Lebanon during the 1976 Civil War. Following the Israeli withdrawal on that occasion, Lebanon was divided into small areas "governed" by local militias, the Syrian Army or, near the Israeli border, a detachment of UN troops. This situation was obviously unsatisfactory to Israel, and to many Arab Lebanese as well, who resented the growing power of the Palestinian immigrants. The Maronite Christian minority was especially prone to violent resistance.

Scenario S-12 postulated a major Israeli offensive to "pacify" the area, but what serious student of the Middle East then would have credited the Israeli leadership with the quixotic notion that armed intervention could settle matters in Lebanon? The Lebanese have been squabbling among themselves for centuries. Those guys in Baltimore, what *chutzpah* they had! I figured they were just looking for an excuse to trot out the new P.L.O. regular army, the PLA. [And no, that wasn't a misprint on the scenario card.]

Actually, Marjayou is one of the best, maybe even the best, scenario in the *AIW* set as a challenging tactical situation. It is a balanced scenario if both sides play their best strategy, and the outcome always turns on tactics. A mysterious Arab Lebanese army, sacrifices itself to hold up the Israelis a few turns on board C. The PLA stiffened with a few *PANZERBLITZ* relics (surplus T-34s from Hungary) waits for the Israelis on board D amidst minefields and entrenchments. A Syrian armored brigade hustles south to reinforce the PLA. If significant numbers of high-morale Syrian units can reach the Palestinian entrenchments ahead of the Israelis, the Israelis have a hard time penetrating the narrow front quickly and cheaply enough to win.

Consequently, the best Israeli strategy is to send their tanks past the Arab Lebanese and attack the PLA headlong. After breaking through, the tanks race north, firing at Syrian units if necessary, and exit the board. Meanwhile, Israeli infantry and those damnably vulnerable armored infantry units seized the four city hexes on board C, setting spotters in the woods at H8 and M9. The Arabs have to attack the cities or lose on points. Israeli artillery can hold up the Arab attack with harrassing fire and disrupt spotters in the open terrain around the cities. Direct fire by the armored infantry (12 factors each) and CAT attacks by the regular footmen make spotting even more risky. (Units using their weapons in LOS of non-adjacent friendly units are not spotted at *AIW* as they are in *PANZER LEADER*.)

While S-12 was being playtested in Baltimore, Christian Phalangist leaders and emissaries from the Begin government were playtesting their own version of the scenario in secret conversations held on Israeli gunboats and secluded sites in Beirut suburbs. An unwritten alliance developed between Prime Minister Begin and Bashir Gemayel, ascendant leader of the Phalange at the time, aimed at ridding Lebanon of the P.L.O. and Syrians. Wishful thinking led to vague military agreements and two "plans" were drawn up. Operation "Little Pines" called for a limited advance of 40 km into Lebanon to push the Palestinian artillery out of range of Israel's northern settlements. Operation "Big

Pines" was a larger scheme wherein the I.D.F. would blitz all the way to Beirut, install Gemayel as president, wipe out the P.L.O. and evict the Syrians. Considering Phalangist pussilanimity, Syrian strength and Lebanese demography (70% Moslem), the Israeli intelligence service concluded that "Big Pines" wouldn't work. No one listened to them.

On June 3, 1982, an Arab gunman critically wounded the Israeli ambassador in London. Regarding the assault as a violation of the reigning cease-fire, the Israelis bombed P.L.O. headquarters in Beirut in retaliation. When the Palestinians responded by shelling Nahariya, the cabinet activated "Little Pines".

From the start, it was clear that Defense Minister Ariel Sharon intended to execute "Big Pines" instead. Immediately, Yaron's commandos embarked for a landing north of Sidon, well beyond the 40 km limit. Seven Israeli divisions massed on the northern border, four of them aimed at the Syrians in the Bekaa Valley. "Little Pines" would not have entailed fighting the Syria. To what extent the cabinet was a partner in Sharon's decision to execute the larger plan is a subject of painful controversy in the light of the great number of Israeli, American and Palestinian civilian casualties that followed. Those interested in the who, what and when of the operation are advised to read *Israel's Lebanon War* by Z. Schiff and E. Yaari (Simon and Schuster, NY, 1984). More relevant information will surface in the future, I am sure.

The military campaign that lasted from 6 June to 11 June 1982, was another Israeli success, albeit less dazzling than those of 1967 and 1973. Mordechai's division rolled up the coastal road, easily eliminating the PLA Kastel Brigade, but meeting fanatically brave resistance from armed fighters in the large Palestinian refugee camps flanking Tyre and Sidon (Scenario L-1 below). The division linked up with Yaron above Sidon two days behind schedule. Kahalani's division broke up the Yarmuk Brigade on the central plateau (Scenario L-2) and turned northwest. Most of the PLA's top field commanders bolted when the Israelis crossed the border. Communications were wrecked by Israeli air strikes, and the component militias of the P.L.O. cooperated poorly together. The war against the P.L.O. was over before it began, a retribution long in coming.

The Israelis hoped to steal a march on the Syrians by pushing Einan's division up the central axis through the sparsely populated Shouf Mountains to the Beirut-Damascus Highway, but the Syrians got into the fray sooner than expected when Einan's division pushed by Syrian units in Jezzín (Scenario L-3). In order to provide air cover for their forces, the Israelis were forced to find an answer for the SAM-7 missile batteries in the Bekaa Valley. In a brilliant stroke that has baffled technical analysis, the Israeli Air Force destroyed the SAMs without a loss and obliterated the Syrian Air Force. Peled's division on the left and Ben-Gal's on the right then pushed up the southern Bekaa Valley destroying the Syrian 1st Division in heavy fighting. When the Syrians committed their crack 3rd Division from the north, the Israeli advance ground to a halt short of the Beirut-Damascus Highway (Scenario L-4).

Meanwhile, the Israelis rolled into Christian East Beirut and submitted Moslem West Beirut to murderous artillery fire. The P.L.O. evacuated with a multi-national force to oversee their departure. Bashir Gemayel was elected president. For the

moment, the goals of "Big Pines" seemed in reach; but the Phalangist and Lebanese armies proved unable to extend the authority of the Central Government beyond the grounds of the presidential palace. Fierce Druze militia drove the Phalangists out of the Shouf and burned their settlements behind them (Scenario L-5). An assassin's bomb found Bashir Gemayel, and vengeful Phalangists ran riot in the defenseless Palestinian camps. The debacle was upon the battered land.

As of this date, none of the goals of "Big Pines" have been met. The same Lebanese factions are bickering for control of the central government. President Amin Gemayel, Bashir's brother, is relatively pro-Syrian. Palestinians are still in the camps, and now remnants of the P.L.O. have returned to Lebanon in the Syrian-held zones. Israel occupies the area previously held by UNIFIL troops and Haddad's militia. Israel has rejected another multinational force in the buffer zone and wanted the Lebanese government to guarantee that the P.L.O. would not return to the border zone. However, the most recent news is that the Israeli government has unilaterally decided to withdraw its troops without that guarantee. What happens next will be in your newspapers tomorrow.

The five scenarios which follow highlight the course of the military campaign. The Lebanon War occurred ten years after the last historical scenario in *AIW*. Technology has not stood still, and the Unit Function Table requires some modification.

The Syrian Army possesses new T-72 Soviet tanks. This tank has 20% more armor than the T-62 and mounts a bigger gun. Nevertheless, the T-72 counters (found on the insert of this issue) are little stronger than the old T-62, proving once again that the human element in war is more important than equipment. Syrian tank crews stubbornly rely on Soviet tactical doctrines in spite of humiliating defeats. The Designer's Notes to the original game explain very clearly why those doctrines are inferior to those used by the Israelis.

In contrast, Syrian helicopters using modern nap-of-the-earth techniques were very effective against Israeli armored columns on narrow mountain roads. The French-made Gazelle helicopters would pop up suddenly from a roadside gully, let fly with HOT missiles at 2-3 km range and duck back to re-emerge in another quarter. Fast armored columns lacking cumbersome AA missile units couldn't deal with such attacks. Israeli jets, called in, often arrived too late. This is the probable role of helicopter gunships in future wars; the massed, high-flying formations of the Vietnam era are now passe. In scenarios after 1980, allow Arab helicopters to use the Nap-of-the-Earth Optional Rule.

Seeking to reduce their trade deficit and assume a more independent role, the Israelis have developed many new weapons of their own. The Merkavah (Chariot) tank, for example, was designed to meet specific Israeli needs. It is cheaper and breaks down less often than American and British versions. It carries more fuel and ammo. It has 50% more armor up front and 50% less in the rear. Moreover, the engine is un conventionally mounted in the front to furnish maximum protection for the crew, faced with the usual frontal Arab assault. The armor is extremely well sloped, and the whole tank sits low to take advantage of desert terrain. Thus, the Merkavah counter in the game has two defense factors. The smaller factor is used in IF and mine attacks, and in all DF, overrun and CAT attacks in which the LOF from two of the attacking units

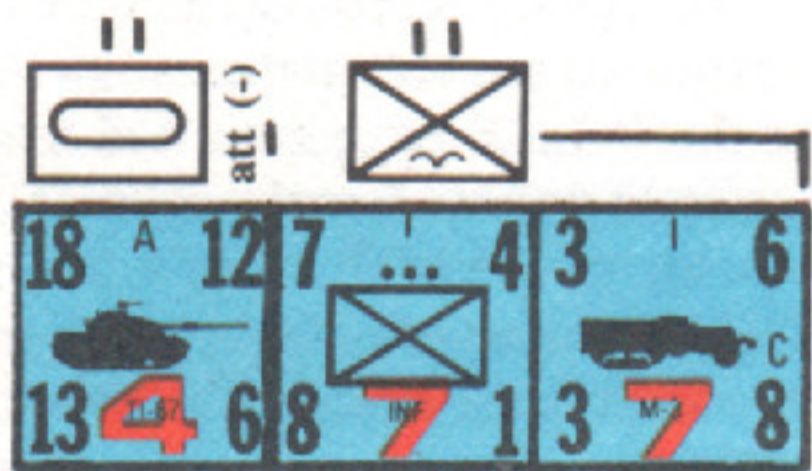
pass through non-contiguous hexsides of the defender's hex. In other cases, the larger factor is used. Israel no longer uses AMX-17 and Sherman tanks, and old Centurions are scarce.

Nearly all Israeli tanks carry laser sights, which simply allow the crews to do more efficiently what they could do before (i.e., aim rapidly and accurately through the guntube along the flat trajectory out to 1800 yards). In the game, give all Israeli tanks, except T-67, a -1 DRM on Direct Fire attacks out to six hexes. Arab tanks still lack laser sights. Maybe the Soviets will provide them in the future, given the demonstrated poor performance of allied Arab tanks without them.

SITUATION L-1 EL BAS

AVAILABLE FORCES:

ISRAELI (MORALE A)



Air Strikes:
Up to 5 (12 '(H)' attack strength points each).

SET-UP:

PALESTINIAN: Set up first anywhere within two hexes of El Bas (hexes M7, M8 and N8).

ISRAELI: Enter south edge on road, unstacked and proceed north along road at a rate of six hexes per turn until fired upon or adjacent to Palestinian unit.

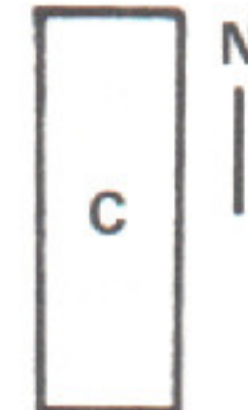
The Israelis had a partial answer to the Sagger missiles and RPG that caused them so much grief in 1973. They hung sheets of explosive "armor" on their tanks and APC. When a hollow-charge weapon impacts on one of these the sheet explodes, deflecting the jet of hot gas that would otherwise penetrate the main armor. There is thus a +1 DRM to all "G" attacks against Israeli *armored vehicles* in scenarios after 1980. Egyptian CAT attacks against Israeli armored vehicles in (let's hope) hypothetical scenarios after 1980 are doubled, not tripled.

The Israelis manufacture their own fighter-bomber, the *Kfir* (Lightning), but continue to rely **June 6, 1982:** Geiger's paratroop battalion takes a wrong turn and runs into a Palestinian refugee camp. Israeli command was reluctant to use air strikes in populated areas and Geiger was forced to extricate himself from the mess.

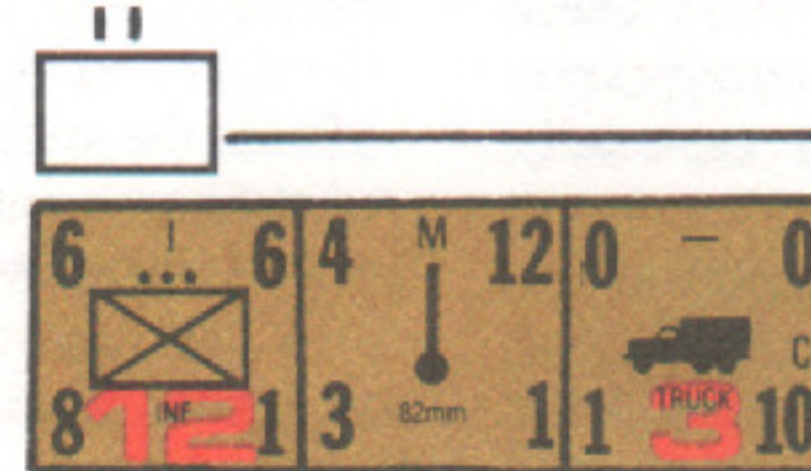
on F-15 and F-16 jets for interception. The Kfir is a delta-wing aircraft with a distinctive notched wing-edge and splendid low-altitude handling characteristics. Simply substitute the new Kfir counters for the old Skyhawks and Mysteres. The Israelis are still limited to four aircraft per "wave".

I would hope that died-in-the-wool *AIW* players will forgive, or even applaud these innovations. Try them with the new scenarios below. But, if these five situations prove anything, I think that it is that the quality of the troops and the tactical ability of their commanders is still the decisive factor in the Middle East.

MAPBOARD:



PALESTINIAN (MORALE B)



SPECIAL RULES:

1. Palestinian units are normal value, not doubled, in CAT attacks due to a scant supply of RPG in the camps.
2. Airstrikes cannot be called until an Israeli unit is *eliminated*.

VICTORY POINTS:

PALESTINIAN: 2 points for each Israeli unit destroyed; 1 point for each Israeli airstrike used in the course of play.
ISRAELI: 1 point for each Israeli unit exited off the north edge of the mapboard.

GAME LENGTH: 9 turns—ISRAELI moves first.

SITUATION L-2 NABATIYE

AVAILABLE FORCES:

ISRAELI (MORALE A)



Off-board Artillery:
2-155mm batteries (each 15 '(H)' attack strength points).

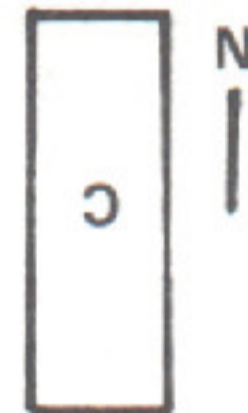
SET-UP:

PLA: Set up first anywhere north of hex row H, inclusive

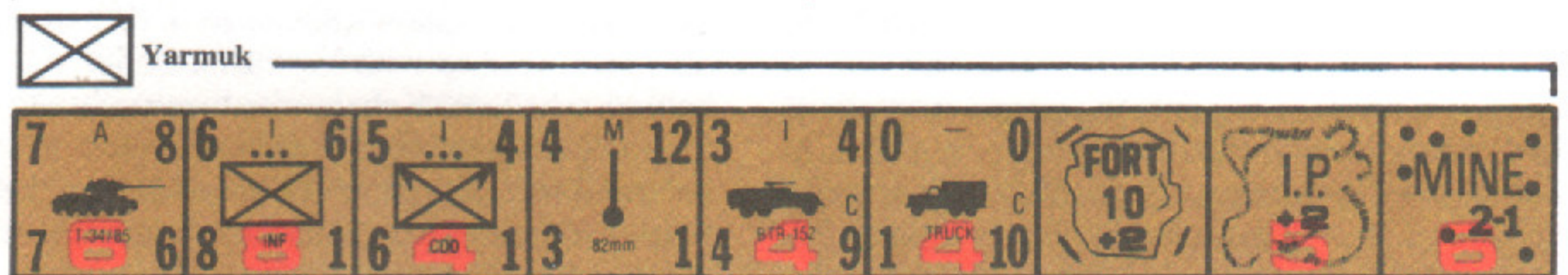
ISRAELI: Enter south edge of mapboard on Turn 1.

June 7, 1982: Isolated and abandoned by its leaders, the Yarmak Brigade of the PLA tries to defend Nabatiye from the onrushing Israeli spearheads. This is the real "Marjayou".

MAPBOARD:



PALESTINIAN (MORALE D)



SPECIAL RULES:

None.

GAME LENGTH: 8 turns—ISRAELI moves first.

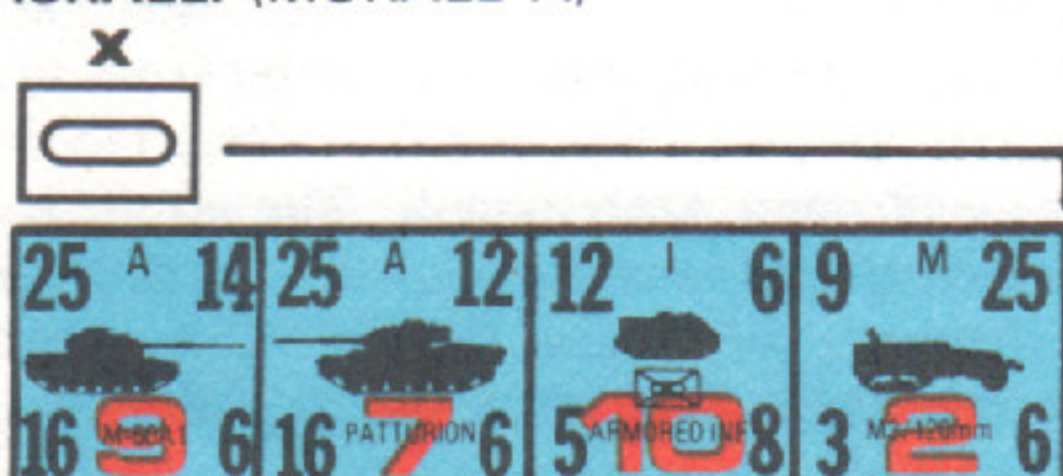
VICTORY POINTS:

PLA: 3 points for each town hex *not* containing an Israeli unit; 3 points for each Israeli unit destroyed; 2 points for each Israeli tank still on board at conclusion of play.
ISRAELI: 3 points for each town hex occupied by an Israeli unit; 1 point for each Israeli tank exited off the north edge of the mapboard.

SITUATION L-3 JEZZIN

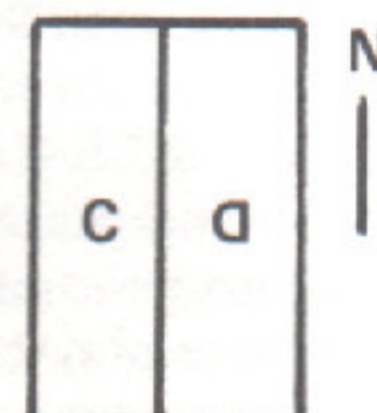
AVAILABLE FORCES:

ISRAELI (MORALE A)

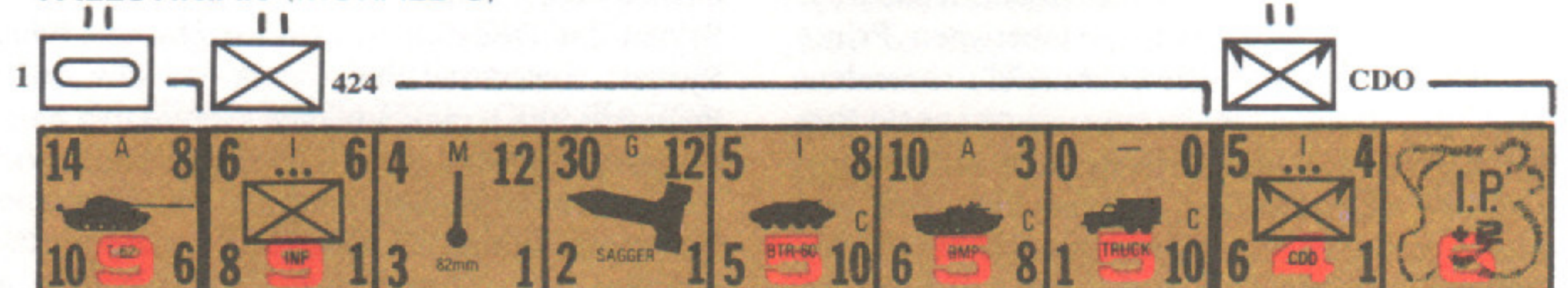


June 8, 1982: After an Israeli blocking force joins combat with the Syrians, and Israeli armored brigade moves in to capture Jezzin and secure the Israeli flank. The Syrians, unknown to the Israelis, had reinforced the town's defenders during the night.

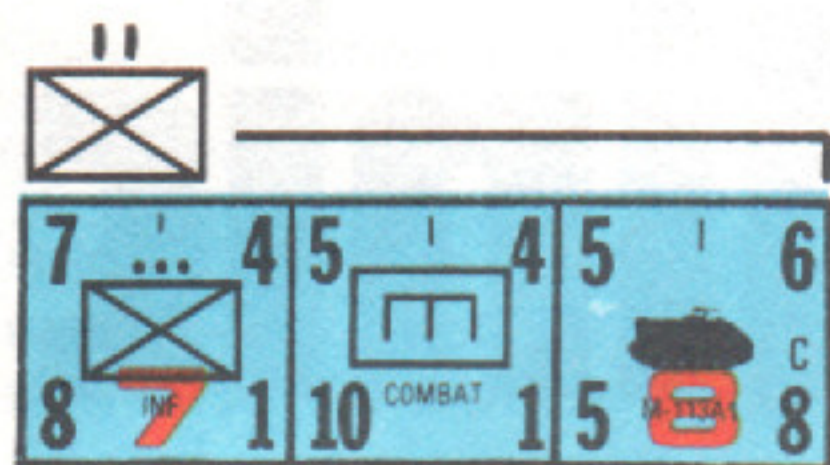
MAPBOARD:



PALESTINIAN (MORALE C)



Off-board Artillery:
2-122mm batteries (12 '(H)' attack strength points each).



Off-board Artillery:

3-155mm batteries (15 '(H)' attack strength points each).

SET-UP:

SYRIAN: Set up first anywhere within two hexes of Jezzín (hexes M7, M8 and N8 on Board C) and/or anywhere on Board D.

ISRAELI: Enter east edge of Board C on Turn 1.

SPECIAL RULES:

None.

GAME LENGTH: 10 turns—ISRAELI moves first.

VICTORY POINTS:

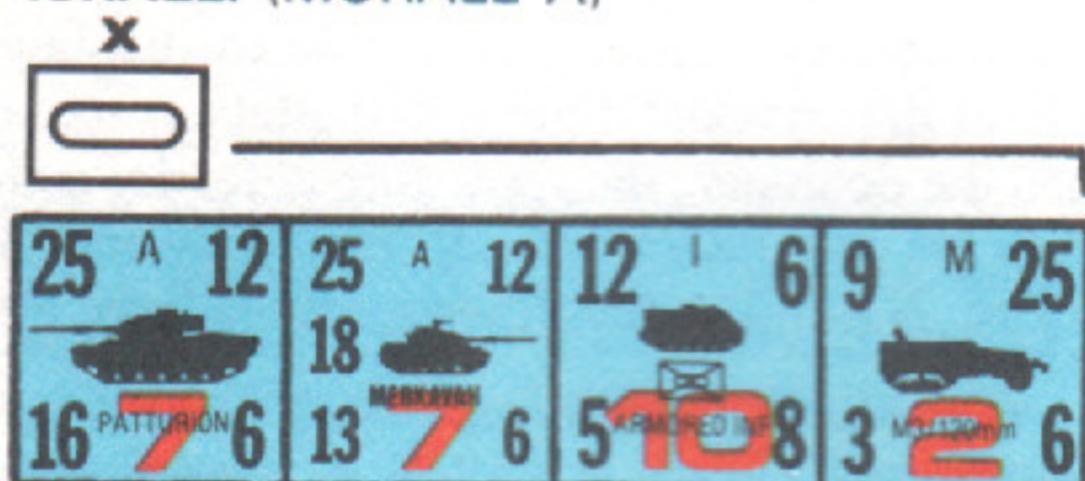
SYRIAN: 3 points for each hex of Jezzín occupied by a Syrian unit; 1 point for each Israeli unit destroyed.

ISRAELI: 3 points for each hex of Jezzín occupied by an Israeli unit; 1 point for each T-62 unit destroyed.

SITUATION L-4 SULTAN YAKOUB

AVAILABLE FORCES:

ISRAELI (MORALE A)



Off-board Artillery:

2-155mm batteries (each 15 '(H)' attack strength points).

Air Strikes:

10 air strikes (21 'A' attack strength points each).

SET-UP:

SYRIAN: Group A sets up first on Board C north of hex row L, inclusive. Group B enters on the north edge of Board D on Turn 1.

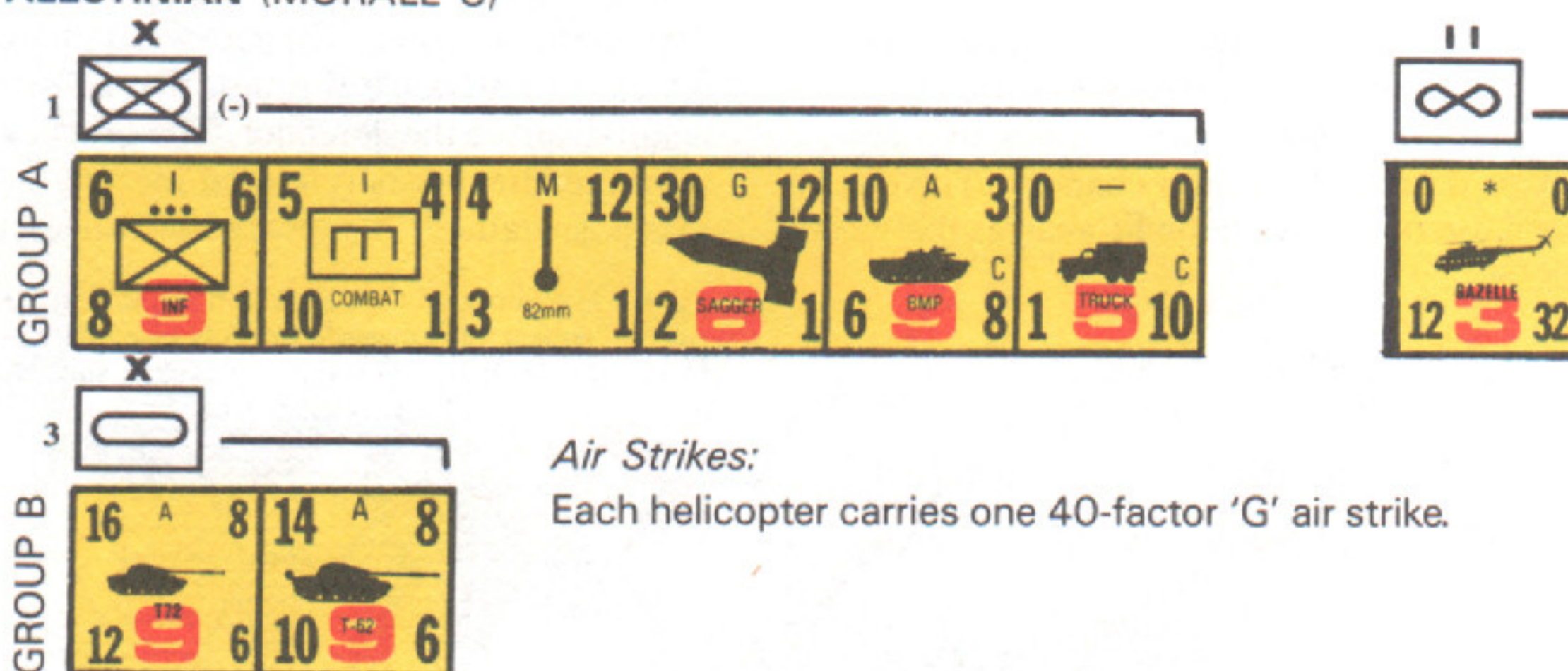
ISRAELI: Enter on south edge of Board C on Turn 1.

June 11, 1982: Elements of the Syrian 3rd Division join battered remnants of the 1st Division fighting to halt the Israeli advance south of the Beirut-Damascus Highway.

MAPBOARD:



PALESTINIAN (MORALE C)



Air Strikes:

Each helicopter carries one 40-factor 'G' air strike.

SPECIAL RULES:

None.

GAME LENGTH: 10 turns—ISRAELI moves first.

VICTORY POINTS:

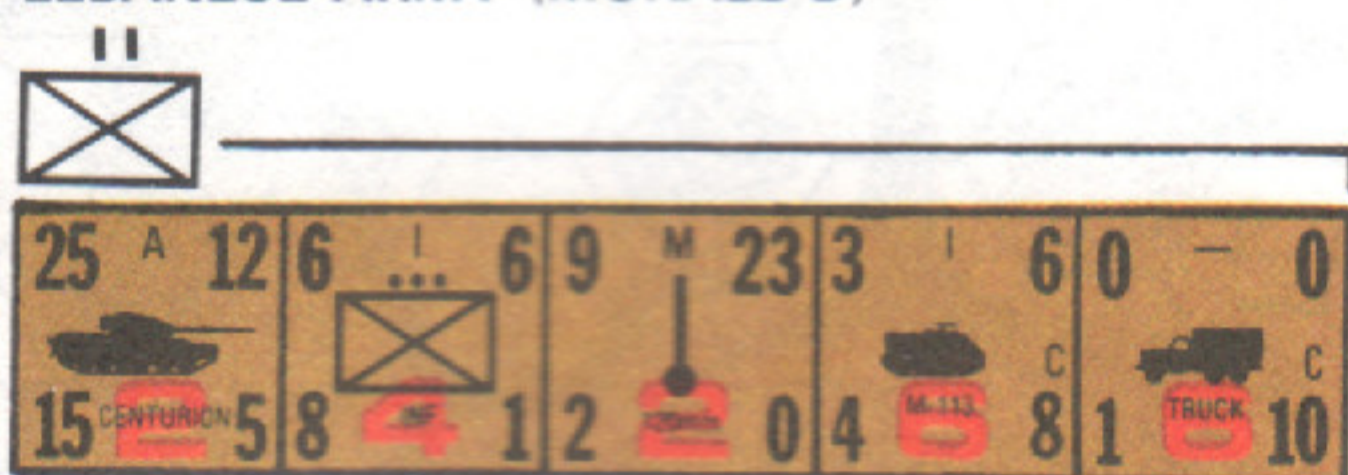
ISRAELI: 5 points for each Israeli unit north of the Beirut-Damascus Highway (i.e., north of hex row Q on Board D); 1 point for each T-72 unit destroyed.

ISRAELI: 2 points for each Israeli unit destroyed.

SITUATION L-5 THE SHOUF

AVAILABLE FORCES:

LEBANESE ARMY (MORALE D)



VERSION ONE: EARLY AUGUST

SET-UP:

DRUZE MILITIA: Group A set up first, east of hex row M inclusive.

LEBANESE: Enter west edge of mapboard on Turn 1.

GAME LENGTH: 8 turns—LEBANESE moves first.

VICTORY POINTS:

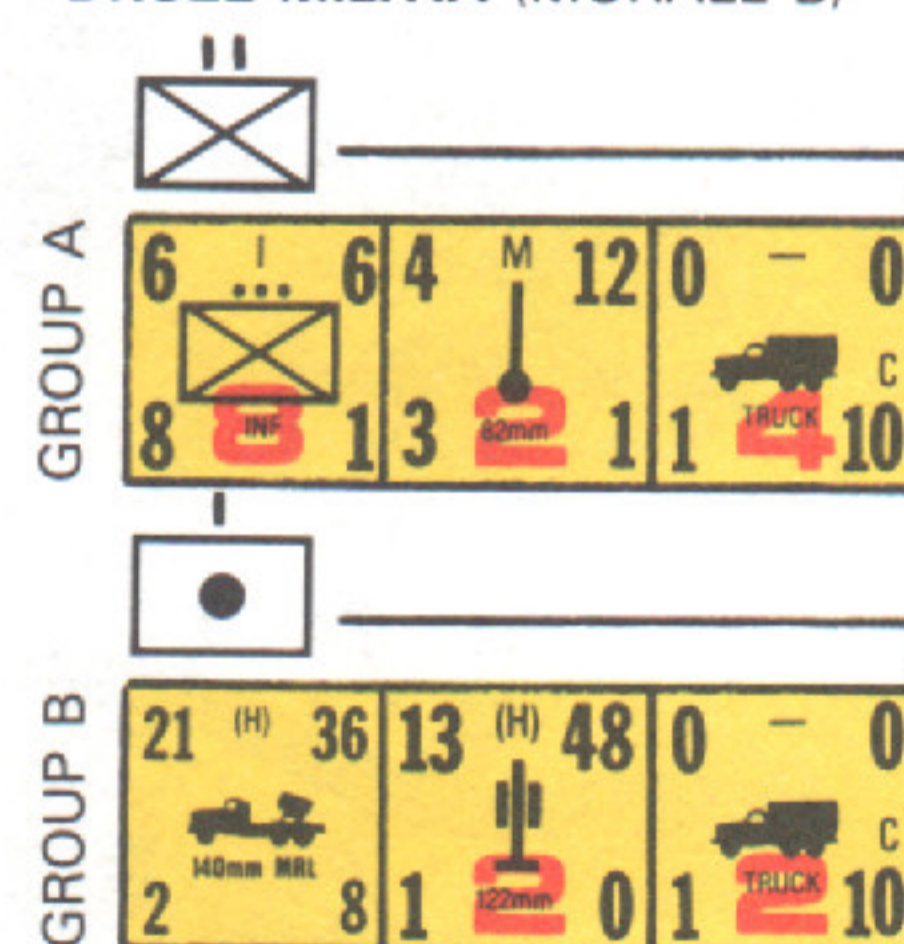
DRUZE MILITIA: 1 point for each Lebanese unit destroyed.

August 1982: The Lebanese Army wrestles with the Druze militia for control of the vital Shouf mountains east of Beirut.

MAPBOARD:



DRUZE MILITIA (MORALE B)



LEBANESE: 1 point for each truck unit exited off east edge of mapboard.

VERSION TWO: LATE AUGUST

SET-UP:

DRUZE MILITIA: Set up Group A and Group B first, anywhere east of hex row S exclusive.

LEBANESE: Set up second anywhere west of hex row S exclusive.

SPECIAL RULES:

1. Druze indirect fire *always* drifts.

GAME LENGTH: 8 turns—DRUZE MILITIA moves first.

VICTORY POINTS:

DRUZE MILITIA: 10 points for occupying the village (hex F3).

LEBANESE: 1 point for each non-truck Druze unit destroyed.

