

Cunaxa

The March of the Ten Thousand
401 B.C.

JOHN LEE



A Scenario for 'Chariot'

Darius II, King of Persia, had two sons, Artaxerxes and Cyrus. When Darius died, Artaxerxes, being the eldest, was made King.

Before long, Cyrus was accused of plotting against him. Cyrus narrowly escaped being executed and this pushed him into open revolt. He recruited over 10,000 Greek mercenaries and invaded his brother's kingdom. Artaxerxes, when he got wind of his brother's attack, gathered his not inconsiderable army (historical sources put it between a modest? 400,000 men and a fantastic 900,000!!) and waited for his brother. The two armies met on the Plain of Cunaxa near modern day Baghdad.

Cyrus deployed the Greeks on his right flank beside the River Euphrates and the native troops recruited from his satraps on the left. At the start of the battle the Greeks advanced steadily crushing all before them. Meanwhile, Cyrus with his bodyguard of "table-companions" had charged Artaxerxes' centre and after some initial success became surrounded. Cyrus and his bodyguard died to a man: the native troops, their leader dead, panicked and ran. When the Greeks discovered their employer was dead they about-faced and started the long march home.

The Scenario

Abbreviations:

MS — Militia Spearman	SK — Skirmishers
MI — Militia Infantry	MC — Medium Cavalry
BW — Bowmen	HB — Horse Bowmen
SD — Swordsman	CH — Chariots

Force A:

Cyrus and the Greeks: 8MS, 14 MI, 5BW, 2SD, 2SK, 2MC, 1CH, 2HB, 1 "1", 1 "2", 1 "3", VP67, PL20. Deploy within two hexes of the line 1523-2219. Stacking 2.

Force B:

Artaxerxes: 24MI, 12MS, 4MC, 4BW, 4HB, 7SK, 7CH, 1 "2", 1 "3", 1 "5", VP113, PL35. Deploy within three hexes of the line 1735-2630. Stacking 2. MTEX.

Game Length: 12 Game Turns.

Victory Conditions: Cyrus must achieve a marginal victory. Artaxerxes must achieve a substantive victory and/or eliminate the leader "2" (*Cyrus). If both conditions are met, Cyrus wins.

Terrain modifications: Ignore all wood hexes.

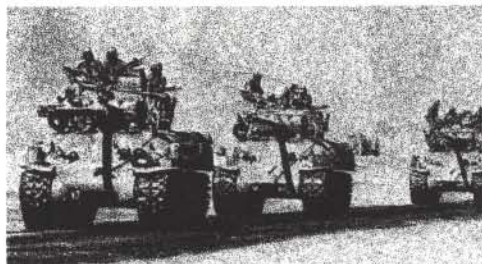
Special Rules: The Ten Thousand — the MS, SD and SK units in Force A represent the Greeks, these units may stack together up to four high — they never panic.

Cyrus's Bodyguard: The two MC units in Force A represent Cyrus's personal cavalry — an elite unit of picked men. These two units have an unbracketed melee strength of 3. They, like the Greeks, never panic.

Main source of information: Xenophon, the Persian Expedition, Penguin Classics.

BAR-LEV OLD AND NEW

JOHN D. SALT



Bar-Lev was originally published in mid-1974, only seven months after the end of the war it was intended to simulate. Thus it is hardly surprising that there were many inaccuracies in the game. It also suffered from CGC's graphics; the bright orange map, though highly durable, was not exactly pretty. The designer of the original Bar-Lev was John Hill, notorious for his chatty rules folders. Conflict's rules folders are admittedly the easiest of all to read (if you can put up with the atrocious spelling); but the informal style naturally leads to many loopholes.

Despite all these criticisms, Bar-Lev immediately became one of the most popular contemporary era games. It has retained much of its popularity right up to the present day and is without doubt highly enjoyable as a game even if it is not an accurate simulation.

CGC has now been taken over by GDW and the new owners have rehashed and reissued Bar-Lev. The new Bar-Lev has been redesigned by Frank Chadwick; while I have most of John Hill's games, my only experience of Frank Chadwick's designs is with Drang Nach Osten and Fall of Tobruk. Certainly either of these games alone would be enough to recommend him.

The first thing that strikes the buyer of the Bar-Lev reissue is the completely revised presentation. The graphics have been brought up to a standard directly comparable with current SPI games. There are some 450 counters provided; whereas the old set used bottle green for the Israelis, lemon yellow for the Syrians and buff for the Egyptians, the new colours are mid-blue, dark green and tan respectively, with buff used for the Jordanians, Iraqis et al. In my opinion, these are much more suitable, quite apart from the fact that the counters are more tidily printed and cut. Incidentally, GDW have retained the feature of large counters and large hexes. They employ 16mm. counters and 20 mm. hexes as against SPI's usual 13mm. and 16mm.

It is in the map that the greatest improvement is apparent. Separate sheets are provided for the Syrian and Suez front maps, instead of putting both on one. The designer is also good enough to tell us the ground-scale, something John Hill apparently forgot. Not only are the new maps much more pleasing to the eye but they are vastly more accurate. Indeed they bear an uncommon resemblance to the maps given in Chaim Herzog's book "The War of Atonement" (Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 1975; Futura, 1977). This is currently just about the best single reference on the Yom Kippur War and (though there is no bibliography in the game) Frank Chadwick seems to have drawn a good deal from it. It was, of course, unavailable when the game was first published, so John Hill's map bears only the most general resemblance to the actual terrain.

The orders of battle given in the revision have been substantially changed and made much more accurate. Units are now given their historical designations. The Arabs have been given a due proportion of helicopters, previously available only to the Israelis. The Arab SAM umbrella has been realistically strengthened with more SAM batteries, longer ranges for them and the addition of plenty of ZSU-23 units for point defence;

against this, the air-to-air capabilities of Arab aircraft have been severely curtailed. All these changes go towards making a more accurate simulation. Previously, the arrival of the Arab allied contingents was determined by die-roll; now they arrive on the day they did historically.

There are further changes which significantly alter the opening turns (which are probably the most crucial). On the Suez Front, the Bar-Lev line has been made quite weak, as indeed it was. John Hill would have us believe it was manned by almost an entire division of infantry; it was in fact manned by Gaby's Brigade, dispersed among the various forts and largely composed of inexperienced reservists. The new game also shows the large number of commandos used by the Egyptians. These composed the first assault wave; they crossed the canal in rubber boats and infiltrated through the gaps between the Bar-Lev forts. The old game left the poor Egyptian confronted with a solid line that could only be broken, usually at some cost, by driving his tough tank units straight into it across the bridges over Suez. In the revision, crossing the canal is easy for the Egyptians; most of the first week's losses, exactly as in the real war, are not suffered on the canal but in the open Sinai desert beyond. Here an over-hasty Israeli armoured counter-attack will end in disaster, because a special rule dealing with Arab anti-tank missiles has been added in.

On the Syrian front, the change that most alters play is the treatment of Mount Hermon. Historically, Hermon was a very important location, as it permitted surveillance of most of the Golan Heights. The original game ignored this and so both players generally ignored Mount Hermon. Now rules have been introduced forbidding artillery to fire on enemy stacks that aren't adjacent to friendly and didn't fire any artillery themselves. The catch is, anyone who owns Hermon can ignore these restrictions for the Syrian Front. The effect is, as they say, shattering; the owner can bring down devastating and wide-ranging artillery fire on his opponent and suddenly Hermon becomes a key objective.

Apart from special provisions such as the above, the rules do remain surprisingly similar to the original. All the CRTs remain the same. There is a major difference in direct fire combat; units are allocated attack and defence strengths instead of a single combat strength. Thus while tanks pack more punch than infantry, they are more fragile. A new rule makes tanks less vulnerable to air and artillery attack.

The rebuilding rules (which allow a given proportion of destroyed units to return to the fray) are also substantially the same. As before, they are biased in favour of the Israelis; they have a substantial advantage in rebuilding tanks, reflecting the great efficiency of their ordinance troops.

The most noticeable addition to the rules is the system of Arab "operational points". A limited number of these are allocated and may be accumulated from turn to turn. Bridge-building, mobilising units and moving HQs all require the expenditure of operational points. Naturally, there are never quite enough to do all you want to. To annoy the Arab player further, two HQs are provided for the Egyptians and two for the Syrians. Any units not within six hexes of an HQ are heavily penalised.

The overall effect of all the modifications I have listed is to make the game no less enjoyable but also to make it the most accurate simulation on the subject to date. SPI's Sinai is the only other game that deals with the whole Yom Kippur conflict and like John Hill's Bar-Lev it suffers from being published too soon after the War. Golan and Chinese Farm are not quite so badly off in this respect but still seem to have been designed without all the data available for the new Bar-Lev.

Any gamer with an interest in Yom Kippur or the modern period in general would be well advised to add the new Bar-Lev to his collection. Unless you are not concerned with historical accuracy, Bar-Lev is well worth buying even if you already own a copy of the original design.