THE BATTLE OF AN-NAKHL

When Egypt's United Arab Republic demanded that the United Nations peacekeeping force leave the Sinai, their army occupied the border with Israel and prepared for war. The initial Egyptian plan called for a task force under General Saad el-Shazli to strike south from Kuntilla to Eilat, cutting the Israelis off from the Red Sea and creating a link with Jordan. Meanwhile, the 2nd, 3rd, and 6th Divisions would defend the border, preventing Israeli incursions. The 4th Armoured Division would provide a mobile counter-attack reserve.

When the Six Day War began on 6 June 1967, Shazli's task force crossed the border into Israel, but unable to get orders from Cairo, the Egyptian capital, halted just across the border. When they finally made contact with Cairo the next day, they were told that the entire Sinai Army had been ordered to withdraw across the Suez Canal. This left Shazli and the 6th Mechanised Division at Kuntilla terribly exposed. The Israelis were already on their way to the passes in the western Sinai, and if they beat the Egyptians there, the Arabs would be cut off. As darkness fell, Shazli force departed their positions, pursued in the morning by the Israeli 8th Mechanised Brigade under Colonel Avraham 'Albert' Mendler.

The story of what happened next is confused and unclear. What we do know is that part of *Ugdah Sharon*, the division that had smashed through the Egyptian defences at Abu Ageila, raced south towards An-Nakhl, an old Turkish fort guarding a crossroads. Sharon's intent was to cut off and destroy the retreating Egyptians before they could reach Mitla or Sudr Pass. Colonel Mordechai 'Motke' Zippori's 14th Brigade was in the lead, but did not reach An Nakhl until the morning of 8 June. One reason for the delay may have been a skirmish with other Israeli forces during the night! The United Arab Republic's MiG fighters also made their appearance, strafing the advancing Israelis.

Whatever the reason, by morning Shazli's task force had slipped through the net, as had the leading brigade of 6th Mechanised Division. However, the division's tank brigade, heavy tank regiment, and a mechanised infantry brigade defended An-Nakhl as they attempted to force their way past the Israelis. Very little is known about the resulting battle, so the scenario we have made to recreate the fight is largely guesswork. If you don't have precisely the forces we've used, this could be good news as you can easily change the forces to match your own collection!

BATTLEFIELDS OF THE SIX-DAY WAR

SINAI

WEST BANK

GOLAN HEIGHTS

QUNEITRA

SYRIA

HAIFA

JENIN

NABLUS

JERICHO

TEL AVIV

WEST BANK

AMMAN

RAMALLAH

LATRUN

JERUSALEM

HEBRON

JORDAN

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

GAZA

RAFAH

BEERSHEBA

PORT SAID

EL QANTARA

EL ARISH

ISRAEL

ISMAILIA

BIR LAHFAN

SUEZ CANAL

ABU AGEILA

QUSEIMA

KHATMIA PASS

JEBEL LIBNI

JORDAN RIVER

DEAD SEA

GIDDI PASS

EGYPT

UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

SUEZ

MITLA PASS

KUNTILLA

AN-NAKHL

SUDR PASS

EILAT

AQABA

RAS SUDR

SINAI PENINSULA

GULF OF SUEZ

ABU ZENIMA

GULF OF AQABA

SAUDI ARABIA

EL TUR

SHARM EL SHEIKH

RED SEA

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THE BATTLE OF AN-NAKHL

The Sinai Army's 6th Mechanised Division is withdrawing through An-Nakhl. The Israeli Zippori Brigade is trying to cut it off and destroy it.

FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL

The game is played using the Fighting Withdrawal mission on page 283 of the rulebook. The Israeli force (Zippori Brigade) are the attackers, and the United Arab Republic force (6th Mekaneekey Division) are the defenders.

The Israelis are attacking from the march, so do not have Prepared Positions.

FORCES

Suggested forces based on what was actually at the battle are shown on the next page. If you are playing on a larger table and want a larger Israeli force, you could add more M51 or Sho't platoons, perhaps more infantry, and some AMX light tanks and a Sayur platoon with a mix of jeeps and M3 half-tracks. The Arabs could add more T-55 or IS-3M platoons, as much more mechanised infantry as you want, and possibly some MiG-17 fighters for air support.

TIME OF DAY

To reflect the Israeli's race to get to An-Nakhl as soon as possible, you may want to roll for the time of day. If you do not want to use a random time of day, the battle is fought in Daylight.

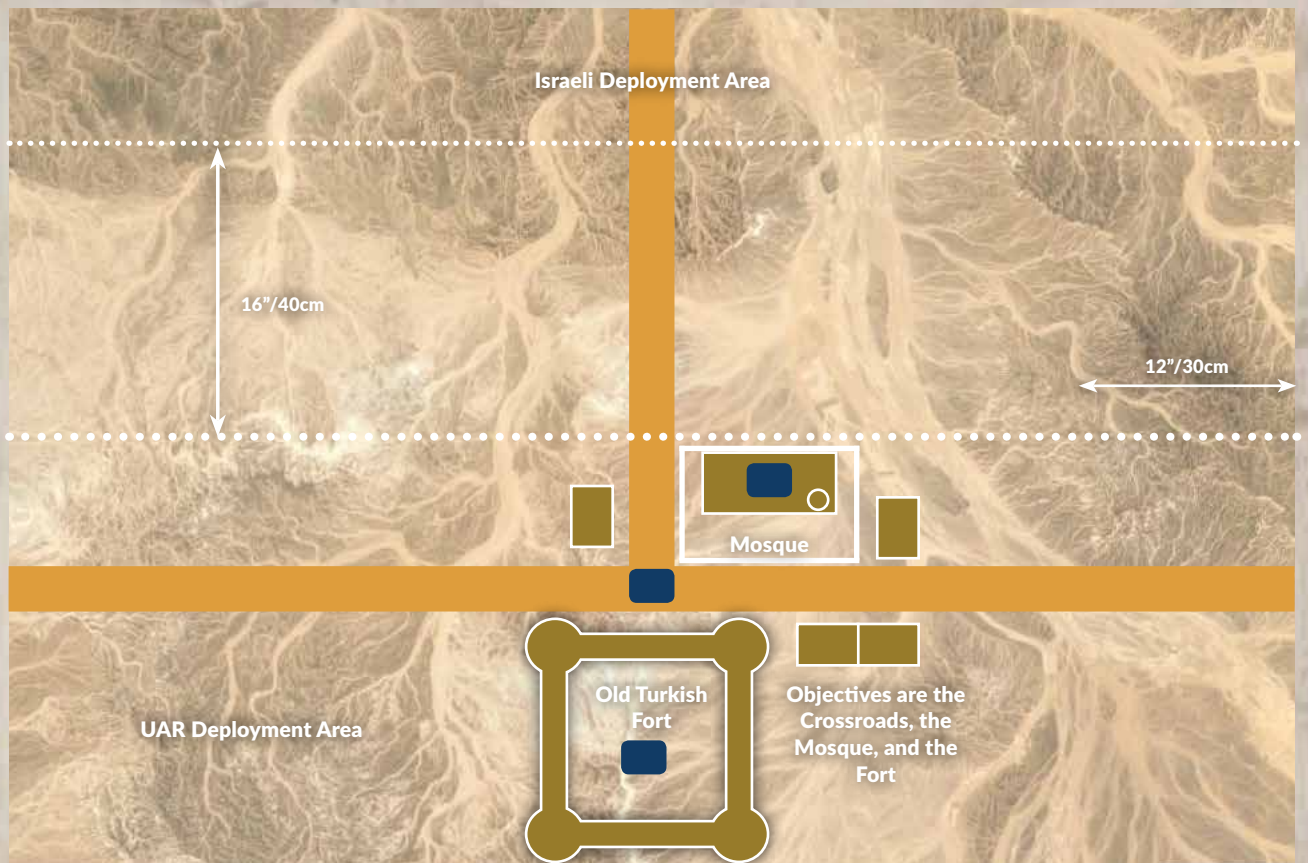| Score	Time of Day
1	Dusk
2 or 3	Dawn
4 to 6	Daylight

If the battle is fought at Dusk, the Arab forces do not have Prepared Positions, and both sides must start with two platoons (Arab companies) in Reserve. For the Israelis, these would most likely have been the Sho't tanks and the M3D (120mm) mortars. For the Arabs, the slower Centurions and IS-3M heavy tanks would probably have been the last to arrive, so would be good candidates to keep in reserve.

DESERT FORT RULES

The rules for the Desert Fort can be found on the Flames Of War website at:
http://www.flamesofwar.com/hobby.aspx?art_id=4122

Israeli Deployment Area

16"/40cm

12"/30cm

Mosque

UAR Deployment Area

Old Turkish Fort

Objectives are the Crossroads, the Mosque, and the Fort

FORCES

ZIPPORI BRIGADE

P'lugah Tan'kim HQ
  1x M50 'French' Sherman

Tan'kim Platoon
  3x M51 Isherman

Tan'kim Platoon
  4x M50 'French' Sherman

Tan'kim Platoon
  2x Sho't

120mm Mortar Platoon
  2x M3D (120mm)

Ch'ir Mamochan (Motorised) Platoon
  3 Rifle Squads & Weapons Squad

6TH MEKANEEKEY DIVISION

Kateybat Debabbat HQ
  1x T-55

Debabbat (Tank) Company
  10x T-55

Debabbat (Tank) Company
  10x Centurion 3

Heavy Debabbat (Tank) Company
  10x IS-3M

Moshaa Mekaneekey (Mechanised) Company
  3x Infantry Platoons
  2x RPD LMG teams
  2x B-10 82mm recoilless teams
  6x BTR-152 transports