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## MAW SCENARIO

# BATTLE OF RESACA DE LA PALMA

### May 19, 1846

#### The Scenario

The Battle of Resaca de la Palma was fought the day after the Battle of Palo Alto. The scenario recreates the entire battle, can be played by two American and two or three Mexican players, and takes about three hours to complete.

#### Terrain

Terrain should be laid out as shown in the scenario map. Terrain effects for the scenario are as follows:

**Chaparral.** Most of the battlefield is covered by dense chap-

arral, an area of brush and stunted trees that reduce line of sight to 4”. Where the chaparral covers both sides of the 1” wide Point Isabel-Matamoros Road, visibility increases to 10” looking down a straight stretch of the road, and only for units and leaders located in or overlapping the road. All roads are treated as clear terrain where the chaparral only lies on one side of the road. Dense chaparral is rated broken ground for infantry and dismounted leader movement and rough ground for mounted leaders, cavalry and artillery. In fire combat, the firing stands suffer a -2 for full cover only when firing at a target deployed in extended line located in chaparral. A target unit in any other formation does not receive a cover modifier. Chaparral does not provide favorable ground in charge combat, however, the cavalry charge modifier is reduced to a 0 for cavalry charging over rough ground.

**Plazoleta.** A “plazoleta” is a small clearing surrounded by chaparral. There are four clearings on the map. A plazoleta does not affect line of sight, movement or combat.

**Resaca.** The Mexicans occupy a strong defensive position along a dry riverbed called a “resaca,” that once was the

Units and leaders have a clear line of sight into, out of, and across the resaca, however the resaca is covered by dense chapparal that reduces visibility. The sides of the resaca form an embankment Movement up or down an embankment or along the riverbed below is at the rough-ground rate for infantry, cavalry, and leaders. The embankments and riverbed are impassable to artillery. Guns only may cross the resaca on the main road.

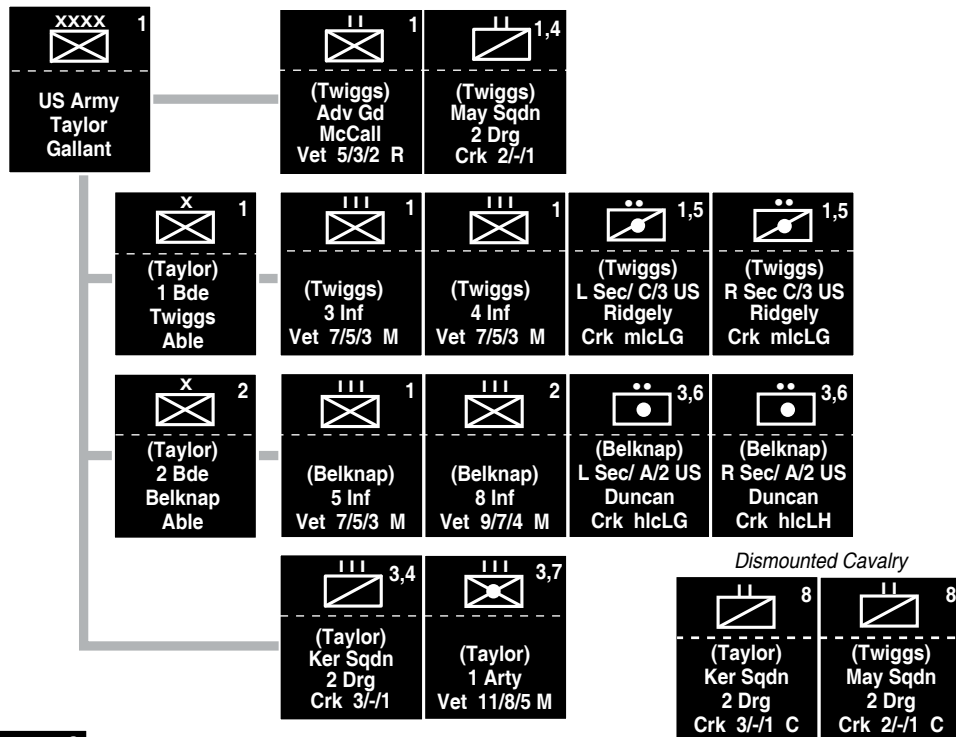
for partial cover when firing at an infantry target in line aligned behind the near embankment of the resaca, or a -2 for full cover if that target is in extended line. In charge combat, defending infantry behind the near or far embankment receive a +1 modifier for favorable ground. Also, the cavalry charge modifier is reduced to 0 when charging up or down an embankment and not on a road. The embankment does not provide a maneuver check or fire combat modifier for troops in column, cavalry, or for a unit deployed above the embankment.

**Ponds.** Several stagnant ponds follow the course of the resaca. Units and leaders have a clear line of sight looking across a pond. Ponds are a major obstacle to movement. To cross, a unit or leader must move at the rough-ground rate and halt when entering a pond. In the next maneuver phase they may move at the rough-ground rate to exit the pond. A unit forced to retreat through a pond must lose formation, and retreat a full move broken, and it does not halt movement when retreating through

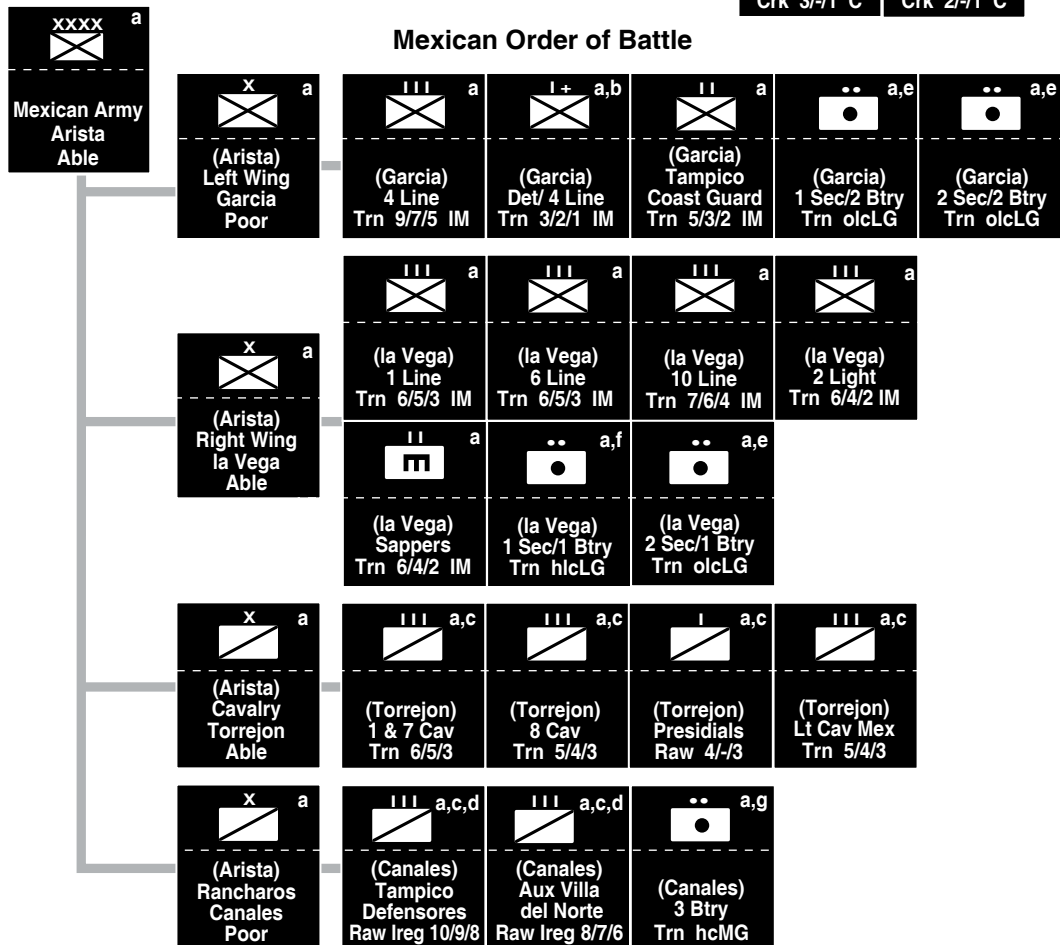
300-yards  
12" 15mm  
18" 25mm  
9" 6mm

Map of the Battle of Matamoros, Texas, 1846. The map shows the Rio Grande (Rio del Norte) flowing from the top left to the bottom right. The U.S. forces are positioned along the river, with the 4th Infantry at the top, followed by the 5th Infantry, Taylor, McCall, and a Detachment. The Mexican forces are positioned along the river, with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Battalion, 4th Battalion, 6th Battalion, 10th Battalion, and 8th Cavalry. The map also shows the Plazuela, Dense Chaparral, and the Point Isabel-Matamoros Road. A scale bar indicates 300 yards, 12 inches, 15 mm, 18 inches, 25 mm, 9 inches, and 6 mm. A compass rose is in the top left corner.

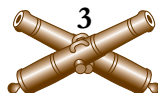
## Resaca de la Palma Scenario American Order of battle



## Mexican Order of Battle



Photocopy and cut out labels





the pond. Ponds are impassible to artillery.

Ponds do not provide a cover benefit in fire combat. In charge combat, a defending unit receives a +2 modifier for strong position if the attacker charged out of a pond, and the cavalry charge modifier is reduced to 0 for rough ground when charging out of a pond.

**Roads.** The Point Isabel-Matamoros Road is the only road rated in good condition. Units in march column, limbered guns, and leaders may move on the good road at the prorated road-movement rate, and cross the resaca without a movement penalty. All other roads are trails in poor condition. Movement along a trail is at the open-ground rate. Units and leaders on a trail may cross the resaca at the open-ground rate.

American units and leaders cannot use the hidden trail that crosses the resaca at point Y until it is discovered using an escalating die roll procedure (see special scenario rule).

**Hasty Breastwork.** The Mexican battery south of the resaca is defending a hastily built breastwork of piled tree limbs. The breastwork only provide modifiers to a battery aligned behind the works and is not substantial enough to benefit troops. The hasty works do not affect line of sight. The battery receives a +1 in its maneuver check for linear cover. In fire combat, firing stands suffer a -1 modifier for partial cover when firing at the battery behind the works. In charge combat, the battery receives a +1 for defending favorable ground. Also, the cavalry charge modifier is reduced to +1 for charging over broken ground.

**Ranchero.** The ranchero, can be represented by a single adobe building. The ranchero is rated broken ground for movement. It has no effect on line of sight or charge combat. The ranchero is too small a structure be garrisoned and a unit must have enough movement to pass completely through it. In fire combat, firing stands suffer a -1 modifier for partial cover, or a -2 for full cover if the target is in extended line, if half or more of the fire points are firing through the ranchero.

**Baggage Train.** The Mexican baggage train at point X can be represented by one oxen- or horse-drawn wagon marker. The train cannot move and is a key terrain feature for determining victory conditions and replenishing units marked low ammunition. See special scenario rules for ammunition resupply. A unit may move through the baggage train at the broken-ground rate. The unit cannot occupy the train and must have enough movement to pass completely through it. The train does not affect line of sight or charge combat. In fire combat, firing stands suffer a -1 modifier for partial cover when firing through the train, or a -2 for full cover if the target is in extended line. The train cannot be destroyed.

**Friendly Table Edge.** Broken Mexican units must retreat away from the enemy and toward point B where the main road exits the southern table edge. Broken American units must retreat toward point A where the road exits the northern table edge. The retreating unit must halt at the table edge. If it fails to reform in the following Maneuver Phase, its remaining stands

are removed from play and count toward heavy casualties.

## Order of Battle

The following number of stands are needed:

STAND	AMERICAN	MEXICAN
Infantry	40	35
Infantry command	6	7
Cavalry	3	32
Cavalry command	2	6
Dismounted cavalry	3	0
Dismounted cavalry command	2	0
Artillery (gun with limber)	4	5
Supply train	0	1
Army leader	1	1
Brigade leader	3	4
Total	64	91

**American Forces.** Total stands represent a force of 2,240 men and 8 guns.

- 1) The following units and leaders start on the table: army leader Taylor with McCall's Advance Guard and May's Dragoon Squadron; brigade leader Twiggs with the 3rd and 4th Infantry, and Ridgely's Horse Battery; and the 5th Infantry from Belknap's Brigade.
- 2) Enter on turn 1 at point A: brigade leader Belknap with the 8th Infantry.
- 3) Enter on turn 8 at point A: Duncan's Battery, Ker's Dragoon Squadron and the 1st Artillery in march column on the road.
- 4) The two dragoon squadrons may charge with cold steel when mounted. Dragoons may also maneuver and fight dismounted.
- 5) Ridgely's Horse Battery is equipped with mounted, light carriage, light guns (mlcLG), and rated as "flying" artillery (See special scenario rule).
- 6) Duncan's Field Battery is equipped with horse-drawn, light carriage, light guns (hlcLG) and light howitzers (hlcLH), and rated as "flying" artillery (See special scenario rule).
- 7) The 1st Artillery Regiment functions as infantry.
- 8) Alternate labels for dismounted dragoons.

**Mexican Forces.** Total stands represent a force of 3,400 men and 10 guns.

- a) All units and leaders start on the table: army leader Arista; brigade leader Garcia with the 4th line, an infantry detachment from the 4th, and the 2nd Battery; brigade leader La Vega with 1st, 6th, and 10th Line, 2nd Light Infantry, Sapper Battalion, and 1st Battery; brigade leader Torrejon with the combined 1st and 7th Cavalry, 8th Cavalry, Light

Cavalry of Mexico, and squadron of Presidials, brigade leader Canales with the Tampico Defensores and Mounted Auxillary Villa del Norte and the 3rd Battery with only 1 gun section.

- b) Only the 2nd Light Infantry may deploy in open order (See special scenario rule).
- c) All Mexican cavalry cannot dismount and are armed with lances (See special scenario rule).
- d) The two irregular cavalry units commanded by Canales are Rancheros with a low rating of raw experience and dispirited morale. Only Canales may command the Rancheros and he only can place them under provisional command with a -1 modifier in their maneuver check. Also, Rancheros receive a -1 modifier in charge combat.
- e) Oxen-drawn light carriage, light gun (olcLG).
- f) Horse-drawn light carriage, light gun (hlcLG).
- g) Heavy carriage, medium gun (hcMG).

## Game Length

The game is 12 turns long, starting with the American player turn at 2:00 PM, and ending after the Mexican player turn at 4:45 PM.

## Victory Conditions

One side must achieve more victory conditions than its opponent to claim victory. Victory conditions are achieved by inflicting heavy casualties and greater losses on the enemy, and occupying the key position, as follows:

**Heavy Casualties.** The American player achieves one victory condition after the Mexican forces lose 17 (20%) troop or gun stands. The Mexican player achieves one victory condition after the American forces lose 14 (35%) troop or gun stands. The arrival of American reinforcements on turn 8, increases their threshold to 20 stands lost.

After an army reaches its threshold for heavy casualties, all units receive a -1 modifier in subsequent maneuver checks.

**Greater Losses.** A second victory condition is achieved and the modifier increases to a -2 after an army reaches both its heavy casualties threshold and suffers greater losses than the enemy.

**Key Position.** The Mexican baggage train at location **X** is a key position. The Americans receive one victory point if they capture the train. To capture it, at least one American unit must pass through the train. To recapture the train, at least one Mexican unit must be the last unit to pass through it. The last side to pass through the train receives the victory point.

In addition to a victory condition, each turn after the Americans capture the baggage train, all Mexican units suffer a -1 modifier for key position lost in subsequent maneuver checks until the train is recaptured. If at least one Mexican unit passes through the key position in a later turn, the modifier is reversed and all American units suffer the -1 in subsequent checks. The -1 modifier always applies to the last side to lose the key position.

## Special Scenario Rules

**Ammunition Resupply.** Mexican units that suffer a low on ammunition effect may replenish their ammunition by moving within 12" of the baggage train at location **X** and perform a replenish ammunition maneuver. The American baggage train was parked several miles to the rear, so units that suffer a low on ammunition effect cannot replenish ammunition.

**Flying Artillery.** The two highly trained batteries under Ridgely and Duncan are rated as "flying" artillery. Flying artillery that successfully roll a Double Quick effect in their maneuver check may perform one of the following maneuvers:

- Full move, unlimber, and fire
- Limber, full move, and unlimber.

Ridgely's battery had sufficient mounts to maneuver at the horse artillery movement rate. Duncan's battery may maneuver as flying artillery, but use the slower horse-drawn light carriage movement rate.

**Lancers.** All Mexican cavalry are armed with lances (see page 11). Lancers only receive the +1 charge combat modifier for cold steel when the opposing enemy unit is disordered or broken troops, or limbered or silenced guns. The cold steel modifier does not apply to lancers charging enemy troops in good order or an unsilenced gun.

**Open Order.** The extended line formation used in the basic rules is replaced with an open order formation (see page 11). Not all units are trained to maneuver and fight in open order. All American infantry and dismounted dragoons may deploy in open order. Only the Mexican 2nd Light Infantry Battalion may deploy in open order.

Open order stands are placed in two ranks, with intervals of from one-half-inch to one-inch between stands, and the stands in the rear rank overlapping the intervals between the front rank stands. A unit in open order may freely expand or contract intervals between stands during its movement.

**Hidden Trail.** Historically, the American found a hidden trail starting near point **A**, that led south to where it crossed the resaca at point **Y**. The hidden trail cannot be used by American units and leaders, and is treated as dense chaparral until it is found. Where the trail crosses the resaca, the movement penalties and modifiers for the embankment and pond also apply as long as the trail remains hidden.

Starting on turn 1 the American player rolls one ten-sided die in his Maneuver Phase. On a die result of 10 the Americans find the trail. If the player fails to roll a 10 he rolls again at the beginning of turn 2 and the trail is found on a 9 or 10 result. If the trail remains hidden, roll again on each successive turn and increase the die result probability of finding it by one for each additional turn the die is rolled. On a successful die roll, the trail is found and can be used that turn as open ground by units in march column, limbered guns and leaders moving on the trail.