

C3i Magazine Insert Module

The Battle of Churubusco, 1847

A Gift from the Gringos!

BY RICHARD BERG

In yet another not overly subtle effort to separate you from your burgeoning sources of income, this issue of **C3i Magazine** includes the map, counters and scenario rules for the Battle of *Churubusco*, fought on August 20, 1847, during the US's War Against Mexico. Normally, we would have included this in the parent game, **Gringo!**, but there's only so much space and so little time.

So, instead, here you get it for *free*. Well, not exactly *gratis*, as you had to plunk down some bucks for the magazine, unless you got your copy from the dentist's office. Those of you who already have **Gringo!** — and for you, my portfolio manager sends his warm, but not overly solicitous, thanks (don't buy those unctuous ads on TV that show your financial manager as an integral part of your family) — are ready to jump into this game right away.

Those of you who don't have **Gringo!**, shame, shame, and I'll throw in a free anathema!! Here's your chance to avoid the arrival of the Simulation Inquisition and see

what you heretics have been missing, because, along with everything else you need to play this Churubuscan slice of historical tamale, you can download the basic rules on the GMT Games LLC website, [www.gmtgames.com]. And now you're all set to go!

Churubusco is a good way to get a taste of **Gringo!**, sort of like a nice bowl of salsa and chips as prelude to your plate-busting *chimichanga*. It's small, has few counters, but not a dearth, not too many special rules, and the Mexicans did well at this battle, so it's not some sort of *El Brazito* blowout. Even better, as the Mexicans don't have that much to do, it's a good solitaire game, for those of you who don't get out much.

So, read through the notes on the battle, below, and start to enjoy yourself. After all, that's what this is all about, Fun ... sort of like a big party, and we've shown you where the pinada is. Start whacking!!

Preliminary Information

Churubusco uses a scale different from the big battles, c. 50 yards per hex, similar to that in *Chapultepec*. While the Turn/AM sequence remains the same, each Turn now represents c. 30 minutes, not an hour. Some of the basic rules mechanics have been streamlined (cf. the artillery fire rules, below).

Gringo!

The Mexican War, 1846-48

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BV
5L49

S. ANNA BV
04
Arm of Life

2 IN
BV
556

Contents: 4-Countersheets; Two 22x34 inch Maps; Rule Book; Battle Book; one die; Player Aid Cards; Bookcase Box

Time Scale: 1 hour per turn

Map Scale: 45-125 yards per hex

Unit Scale: 50 men per strength point

Players: 1-6

Gringo!
The Mexican War 1846-48

Summary of Operations

Operations, 1846 —————>

Operations, 1847 - - - - ->

Key to Gringo game

Battle sites:

- ① Buena Vista
- ② Monterrey
- ③ Cerro Gordo
- ④ El Molino del Rey
- ⑤ Chapultepec
- ⑥ Churubusco (C3i Module)

Map Legend

- ✕ Battle
- ⊙ Capital
- City
- International Border

0 100 200 300 400 km
0 100 200 300 mi

By Rodger B. MacGowan ©2005

Scott, Winfield
(1786-1866) American general. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, Scott was made a lieutenant colonel. His subsequent army career was long and varied. In 1815-16 he visited Europe, where he studied French army practices. He served in the Seminole & Creek campaigns in 1838. In 1841, Scott was appointed supreme commander of the U.S. army. In the Mexican War, Scott approved the northern campaign of Gen. Taylor; then Scott himself accepted command of the southern expedition. The campaign was a triumph for Scott's daring strategy and confirmed his reputation as a bold fighter.

Santa Anna, General Antonio Lopez de
(1794-1876) Mexican General & President; Principal wars: 2nd War for Mexican Ind. (1821); War for Texas Ind. (1835-36); U.S.-Mexican War (1846-48).

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Game Balance

This is a difficult game for the Americans to win... if the Mexican player can maintain his position. He outnumbered the attackers, but much of that is ephemeral, as his cavalry is not in an aggressive mood and many of his units, especially the National Guard units, are in combat for the first time. But he has position, and he has field of fire. And his purpose is to delay, not hold forever. So, if he's still in place by the end of the 10' turn (which would be about the time that the Mexicans, historically, folded tent and stole away), he's done his job... and he wins.

Historical Background

Following the US surprise attack at Contreras (August 19-20) and the almost total disintegration of the Mexican Army — Santa Anna went around screaming how he was going to shoot General Valencia on sight — what was left of that army streamed towards Mexico City, with the over-excited Americans in hot pursuit.

Fortunately, the Mexicans had begun to build a very strong *tete-de-pont* defense system at the bridge across the Churubusco River, and Santa Anna decided that this would be a good place to slow — it was never meant to stop it entirely - the US advance. To that effort, he deployed the equivalent of two brigades — one of regulars and one of local national Guard contingents - in the two strong points guarding the approach, the *tete-de-pont* and the convent of San Pablo, which had its own defensive walls. Inside the convent, in its last appearance in the war, were the remnants of the San Patricio Battalion, essentially fighting as both artillerists and infantry, and refusing to surrender. Santa Anna also kept a strong contingent of cavalry across the river as a reserve.

Scott, in the meantime, allowed his army, mostly parts of three divisions — Worth's, Pillow's and Twiggs' — to rush on ahead without any apparent plan, other than to take the bridgehead, which the Americans thought would be "no problem". It turned out to be just the opposite, as the Mexicans fought as stubbornly and effectively as they had in the entire war.

The two Mexican positions were very well constructed for defense, the high walls aided

by moat-like ditches, some 4 feet deep and about 20 feet across. Just as bad, in terms of attacking, was that virtually all of the surrounding countryside was head-high cornfields, riddled with irrigation ruts and other obstacles. Add to that the fact that Scott's division commanders were, to put it mildly, not on speaking terms with each other, rendering any sort of cooperation moot.

Separate assaults were launched against both strong points, with little initial success and heavy losses. It wasn't until two brigades, under Shields (soon-to-be-President Franklin Pierce, the other brigade leader, had fallen from his horse and was *bors at combat*), crossed the river west of the village and moved (slowly) against the rear of Santa Anna's position, that the Americans began to make headway. Santa Anna was forced to move several regiments north of the river to meet this move — his cavalry, under Torrejon, didn't seem to have much affect in keeping the flanking force away ... the usual story with Mexican cavalry — and this stretched his forces south of the river to the point where they were starting to lose effect. When several US regiments managed to cross the Churubusco to the east (not portrayed in the game), Santa Anna saw the handwriting on the world and ordered his men to abandon their positions and retreat to Mexico City for the final stand.

It took much of the afternoon for Scott to accomplish this, and his men got a rather bloody nose against stubborn and capable Mexican defenders.

CHANGES TO BASIC GBACW RULES

(3.0) SEQUENCE OF PLAY

II. B (Division Orders) is used only by the US, and is applicable if the brigadier is within Command Range of his Division commander.

D (Reserve Placement) is not used.

(4.0) COMMAND

The US Division Commanders' Activation Rating is not used (they are intentionally not rated), and there are no Artillery Leaders.

(5.0) ACTIVATION

(5.1) The US automatically has the Initiative each game-turn.

(5.21) Only the US uses Efficiency markers, as per the battle rules, below.

(5.3) The Americans use Division Activation Markers. The Mexicans use Army markers for all infantry and artillery units. The Cavalry AM is used for the mounted units.

(5.34) Only the US may use Brigade Coordination.

(5.36) There is no Mexican Division leader. Mexican brigadiers are in Command if they are within Santa Anna's range. Otherwise, they are treated as Out of Command for this battle and, thus, do not get to use II/B (Division Orders).

(5.4) Efficiency Transfer is not used.

(6.0) THE ORDERS SYSTEM

(6.1) There are no March orders in this battle, just Advance and Attack.

(6.3) The Reserve Rule is not used.

(7.0) FACING

(7.21) **Change:** Units under Advance Orders may change facing one vertex (per hex) at no cost in MP.

(8.0) STACKING AND EXTENSION

(8.12) The Stacking limits are 5 SP of infantry (or one counter, whichever is bigger) and up to six guns. Only 2 guns may be placed (plus the infantry) in a Defensive Wall hex (e.g., 4103).

(8.4) Line Extension is not used; we've kept the units to small enough size, *vis a vis* the scale, to make this unnecessary. See, though, Special Fire Rules (8.45), below.

(10.0) FIRE COMBAT

(10.52) Mexican units in Defensive Wall hexes may use prepared Fire at any range, if they don't move.

(10.61) Mexican artillery may **not** move. US batteries may **not** move and fire in the

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same activation.

(10.63) Mexican guns in different hexes may not combine fire. Guns that are stacked together may do so, regardless of type.

(11.0) SHOCK ASSAULT

(11.37) Units defending against shock while in a Defensive Wall hex subtract one (-1) when undertaking a Pre-Shock Cohesion check.

(13.0) MORALE AND RALLY

(13.3) Ignore this rule; it is not used.

(15.0) ENGINEERING

This section is ignored; no one may build breastworks.

(17.0) FATIGUE

Fatigue is not used; the battle is too short.

SPECIAL RULES FOR THE BATTLE

• TERRAIN

Fields. The entire area around the village of Churubusco (and the Portales "farm" just to the north) was cornfield, with the corn head high, and the ground criss-crossed with irrigation ditches and wagon ruts. The corn slowed movement, and the ditches rendered artillery movement extremely difficult, other than by roads.

Causeways and Roads. The farm roads provide the only speedy access on the battlefield. The Causeway leading into the *tete de pont* appears "raised" because it is bordered by the same type of ditch (perhaps not quite as wide) that surrounds the strong points.

Ditches. These were mostly for irrigation, although the defensive works used the idea, in moat fashion, to make moving against them just that more difficult. The ones surrounding the fortifications were 4 feet deep and 28 feet wide.

The Defensive Walls. The walls guarding both the *tete de pont* and the convent were recently constructed, and done so quite well, although, as you can see, the western flank was not finished. About 9 feet high, the walls had places atop for the guns and defenders, and thus they are placed inside

the hex (not on the hexside). A unit in a defensive Wall is assumed to be atop that wall. It may exist in that hex and not be on the wall by placing a "Not on Wall" marker atop of it. Note costs to get atop wall from inside, and to get off the wall (also inside).

Play Note: Remember that units defending inside/atop such fortifications (a) get a -1 DRM to any pre-Shock Cohesion checks, and also (b) may ignore Retreat results (see TEC).

The Convent and Church. The church buildings had their own walls, not built for defensive purposes but still quite high. They were not crossable militarily, with access to the convent grounds solely by doors and gates. The Mexicans had constructed some scaffolding along the walls to allow a few men to take position there, and some defenders were atop the convent roof. Given that the area outside of the convent was about 100 yards away, and that the walls did much to block LOS, it is not quite sure what good these units could do.

With this in mind, the game allows entry by any **one** unit to the Convent through either of the two gates, and such entry places that unit atop the convent roof.

• EFFICIENCY/ACTIVATION MARKERS

The **Mexicans** get to put two (2) Activation markers into play each turn. He may use either two Army AM, or one Army and one Cavalry AM. They do not use/need efficiency markers.

- The Army Marker activates all infantry and artillery on the map.
- The Cavalry AM activates all cavalry. However, cavalry may only be activated once per turn.

The **Americans** get 6 Efficiency markers, which are drawn for the 3 US Divisions (four 2's, two 3's). Each Turn the US player draws one for each Division, as per the usual rules. However, they may not be modified by any ratings.

• SMALLARMS FIRE

(8.31) The Maximum Fire Strength per hex is **five (5)**.

(8.45) If both units - 'a' and 'b' (e.g., the 4 US regiment) - of the same regiment are in

adjacent hexes, for purposes of combining fire SP's, they are treated as if they were "extended".

Play Note: This does not apply to 10.42/Return Fire.

Infantry uses the *Churubusco* Small-Arms Range Chart to determine the DRM for fire.

• SPECIAL ARTILLERY RULES

On-Map Artillery

Given the scale of the map, any gun of the era could reach any hex on the map with relative efficiency, given good Line of Sight. Therefore, to simplify matters, the artillery in this battle do not use the normal artillery firing rules. Instead, they use the *Churubusco* Artillery Firing Table.

When firing guns, the player rolls the die and consults that table. He adjusts that die roll as follows:

- +1 for each SP over '1' in that unit (thus, a 2SP section would get a +1 DRM)
- -1 for all Mexican guns
- +1 for firing at any target within three hexes
- Terrain?

Historical Note: *The Mexican artillery held their fire until the Americans were in musket range, mostly for effect; partially because the corn hid the approaching units.*

Restrictions. Aside from the normal LOS rules, Mexican artillery atop the defensive Walls may not fire into any hex adjacent to that wall hex. This includes Reaction/Return Fire. (A question of the inability of the guns to depress at that angle).

US OffMap Artillery

The US batteries do not have to move onto the game map. The fields presented major movement problems, and the roads and causeways, narrow as they were, had to remain open for the foot units.

The three US batteries may be placed one hex off-map, at either 3202 or 3211. They count range by tracing from there, the first hex they count being either 3202 or 3211. Mexican guns may fire at these batteries by reversing the range count.

US **offmap** artillery may **not** fire at any hex that is adjacent to a friendly unit.

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• THE MEXICAN ARMY

Initial Mexican Deployment [All units are under Advance Orders]	
Hexes	Units
Any Defensive Wall hex or other hex adjacent to the Convent	Rincon: All units of the Bravos and Independencia National Guard; the San Patricio Battalion; all 4lb, 6lb, and 8lb, artillery units.
Within 2 hexes of 4212	Perez: any 4 units from Perez's brigade, the 12-pounder artillery units (1 per hex).
On the road between the <i>Tete de pont</i> and the Convent (3907-4209)	Any 3 units from Perez's brigade.
Any hex north of and adjacent to the Churubusco R from 4312, east.	Any 4 units from Perez's brigade.
Within two hexes of 4511	Santa Anna [a]: the Hussars of Special Powers [b], <i>Tulancingo Curraissiers</i> , Light Mounted Regiment of Vera Cruz.

a = It appears that Santa Anna was in overall command of the Mexicans during most, if not all, of the battle. However, his role appears to have been limited to moving units around to shore up defenses. As the Mexican position here is entirely defensive, there is no need to have Santa Anna be part of the "game" mechanics.

b = The Hussars are Santa Anna's personal guard. They will never move more than one hex away from him, and they move only when Santa Anna moves. The other two regiments may be activated as part of a cavalry activation.

Torrejon's Cavalry

The Mexican Player has a large brigade of cavalry sitting just off the eastern edge of the map, north of the river. The Mexican Player may bring these units on in any Turn after an American unit has appeared north of the Churubusco. They enter with any Cavalry Activation (see above) through 4618.

THE US ASSAULT FORCE

No US units start on the map; all units enter as Reinforcements. They enter under whatever Orders the US Player wishes.

There are three divisions:

- **Worth's Division:** the brigades of Garland and Clarke
- **Twiggs's 2nd Division:** the brigades of Smith **[a]** and Riley
- **Pillow's 3rd Division:** the brigades of Pierce and Shields **[b]**

a = Smith's brigade (1/2 Div), included the regiment of Mounted Rifles. While these men fought dismounted at Cerro Gordo, it appears that they were mounted here and served solely as escort for the infantry. We have not included them in the counter-mix.

b = Shield's brigade was actually part of Twigg's Division. However, it was reassigned to Pillow for the attack because, among other reasons, Pierce (soon to be 14th President of the US) fell off his horse early in the day, fainted from the pain, and could not take command, so his regiments were combined with those of Shields to form one brigade.

US units enter through any one of three entry hex/areas. The US Player must openly assign (after Mexican deployment), before starting the game, one division to each of the three entry hexes:

- **3402** (This is the road from Cocoyanas, where Scott has his HQ)
- **3411** (the road from San Antonio, and Contreras)
- **4501-4601**. These hexes may not be used until Turn 4.

Historical Entry: For those wishing to follow exactly who entered where, the attack started with an assault on the Convent, led by Smith's brigade. Worth's Division was assigned the road from Cocoyanas (3402). Twiggs advanced from San Antonio (3411) with (Clarke's brigade in the lead). Garland's brigade (for the most part) entered somewhat later and swung to the right (east) to cross the river. Shield's extended brigade (from Pillow) entered a couple of hours after the initial assaults had taken place, as a flanking maneuver, through 4501-4601.

Historical Note: A company of dragoons was present, but did not take place in the battle.

Initiative

The US Player always has the Initiative.

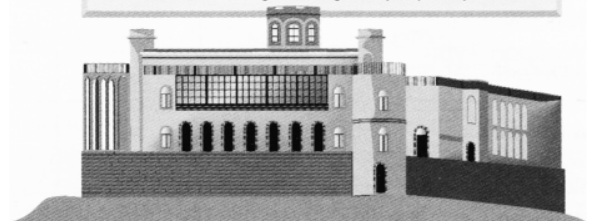
VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game has **10 Turns**.

The **U.S. Player wins** if, at the end of any game-turn (not Activation Phase), he occupies **both 4311 and 4212**.

The **Mexican Player wins** if the US player doesn't.

Chapultepec – [Aztec = grasshopper hill]; A castle built on a hill there in the late 18th cent. for the Spanish viceroys; heavily fortified, was the scene of spectacular fighting during the Mexican War; Gen. Scott ordered the storming and taking of Chapultepec (Sept. 1847).



Battle of Churubusco: Charts and Tables

Churubusco Charts and Tables

THE TERRAIN EFFECTS CHART:

Terrain	MOVEMENT				COMBAT		
	Infantry	Cavalry	Artillery	Leader	Effect on Fire*	Effect on Shock*	Block LOS
Fields	2	2	4	2	-1 [f]	X	NO
Road [a]	1	1	1	1	X	X	NO
Village	2	3	3	2	-1	-1	NO
Convent [b]	3	NA	NA	3	X	X	YES
River	+2D	+4D	NA	3	X	-3	NO
Ditch	+1	+2	NA	+1	X	-1	NO
Defensive Wall [e]	+2	NA	NA	+1	-1 [d]	-2 [d]	YES [g]
Convent Wall [b]	NA	NA	NA	NA	X	X	YES
Gate, Bridge	Negates Cost of Crossing Hexside				OTIH	OTIH	NO
Change Facing, per vertex [c]	1	1	1	1	X	X	NO

NA = Not Allowed

D = Automatically Disordered at the end of movement

OTIH = Other Terrain in Hex

X = No Effect

* = Effects are all adjustments to the Dieroll. They apply if the defender is in the named hex, or being shocked/fired at across that hexside.

Movement/Combat Notes

a = The roads, of course, negate any other terrain in the hex for movement costs. Road hexes are considered to be "clear".

b = This refers to entering the convent through the gate and going onto the roof, which is allowed for one unit only. The cost also applies to leaving the roof and going through the gate.

c = There is no cost for changing facing when using - and following - a road.

d = Units that incur a Retreat result as a 2nd Disorder

from either Shock or Fire may, if it wishes, ignore the Retreat and stay in place with no additional effect.

e = See Mexican Prep Fire rules, and restrictions on the number of guns that may in any one of these hexes.

f = This applies to all fire except that from an adjacent hex. It has more to do with visibility than anything else.

g = To everything except the Convent roof.

Churubusco Artillery Firing Table

Ajusted Dieroll	Result
0-3	No Effect
4	d-2
5	d-1
6	d
7	d+1
8	d+2
9+	D

Dieroll Adjustments

+1 for each SP over '1' in that unit. Thus, a 2SP section would get a +1 DRM.

+1 for firing at any target within three hexes.

-1 all Mexican guns.

-1 Terrain?

There are no DRM for Off-Map US Artillery, other than terrain.

Churubusco Small-Arms

Weapon Type	Max/Prep	Range in Hexes					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
M (Musket)	[5/2]	+3	+2	0	-1	-3	X
BkR (Baker Rifle)	[7/2 'x']	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3
C (Carbine)	[5/na]	+1	0	-1	-2	-4	X
E (Escopetta)	[1/na]	+3	X	X	X	X	X