

Black Powder™

Zulu!



Fighting the battles of the Anglo-Zulu war with model soldiers



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Contents

Anglo-Zulu War chronology	4	“Battle in Earnest”: the Missed Opportunity at Nyezane, 22 January 1879	44
Zulu!	8	Wargaming the Battle of Nyezane.....	49
Wargaming the Anglo-Zulu Wars	12	The Table	50
Zulu! special rules.....	13	British Army stats and special rules.....	51
“Eat ’em up!”: The Stunning Victory at Isandlwana, 22 January 1879	14	Zulu stats and special rules.....	51
Wargaming Isandlwana.....	20	Battle Report.....	52
Black Powder Forces.....	20	“Mountain Trap”: The Battle of Hlobane, 28 March 1879	56
Deployment.....	20	Wargaming the Battle of Hlobane.....	61
British Army stats and special rules.....	21	British Army stats and special rules.....	63
Zulu stats and special rules.....	21	Special Rules.....	63
Battle Report.....	22	Renegade Zulu stats and special rules.....	63
“Like Rats in a Trap”: The Defence of Rorke’s Drift, 22 January 1879	26	Zulu Stats and special rules	63
Wargaming Rorke’s Drift.....	32	Battle Report.....	64
The Table	34	“On the Horns of a Dilemma”: The Battle of Khambula, 29 March 1879	68
Deployment and Objectives	34	Wargaming the Battle of Khambula.....	72
British Army stats and special rules.....	35	British Army stats and special rules.....	72
Zulu stats and special rules.....	35	Zulu stats and special rules.....	72
Battle Report.....	37	Special rules.....	72
Procedures & Deployment	43	Battle Report	74



“Ginginiloveyou!”: The Battle of Gingindlovu, 2 April 1879	76
Wargaming the Battle of Gingindlovu.....	80
The Table	82
Deployment.....	82
British Army stats and special rules.....	82
Zulu stats and special rules.....	82
Battle Report.....	83
“At Her Majesty’s Pleasure”: Eric Trauner’s dioramas	86
Zulu Recognition Guide	90
The David Rattray Memorial Trust	92
Visit Zululand	93
Further Reading	94

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Anglo-zulu War chronology

11th December, 1878

Ultimatum sent to Zulu King Cetshwayo.

6th January, 1879

No 4 column crosses river Ncome into Zululand.

11th January

Ultimatum expires.

No 3 column crosses river at Rorke's Drift into Zululand.

12th January

No 1 column crosses Lower Thukela into Zululand.

No 3 column attacks Sihayo's stronghold.

17th January

Ultimatum expires.

Main Zulu army leaves Ulundi to attack No 3 column.

18th January

No 1 column advances on Eshowe.

20th January

No 4 column makes a base at Fort Thinta.

No 3 column makes camp at Isandlwana.

22nd January

No 1 column is attacked at Nyezane by 6,000 Zulus and fights them off.

Battle of Isandlwana. 25,000 Zulus attack the camp and destroy it.

Defence of Rorke's Drift.

24th January

4th Column hears of Isandlwana defeat.

27th January

1st Column hears of Isandlwana defeat.

28th January

1st Column decides to hold its position at the Eshowe mission station.

31st January

4th Column moves its camp to Khambula Hill.

11th February

Lord Chelmsford's despatch detailing the Isandlwana defeat reaches London.

Eshowe besieged and all communication ceased.

3rd March

Heliograph communication made with Eshowe.

11th March

First of the reinforcements arrive from England.

12th March

A wagon train, escorted by members of the 80th, attacked and nearly wiped out by members of the abaQulusi at Ntombe Drift.

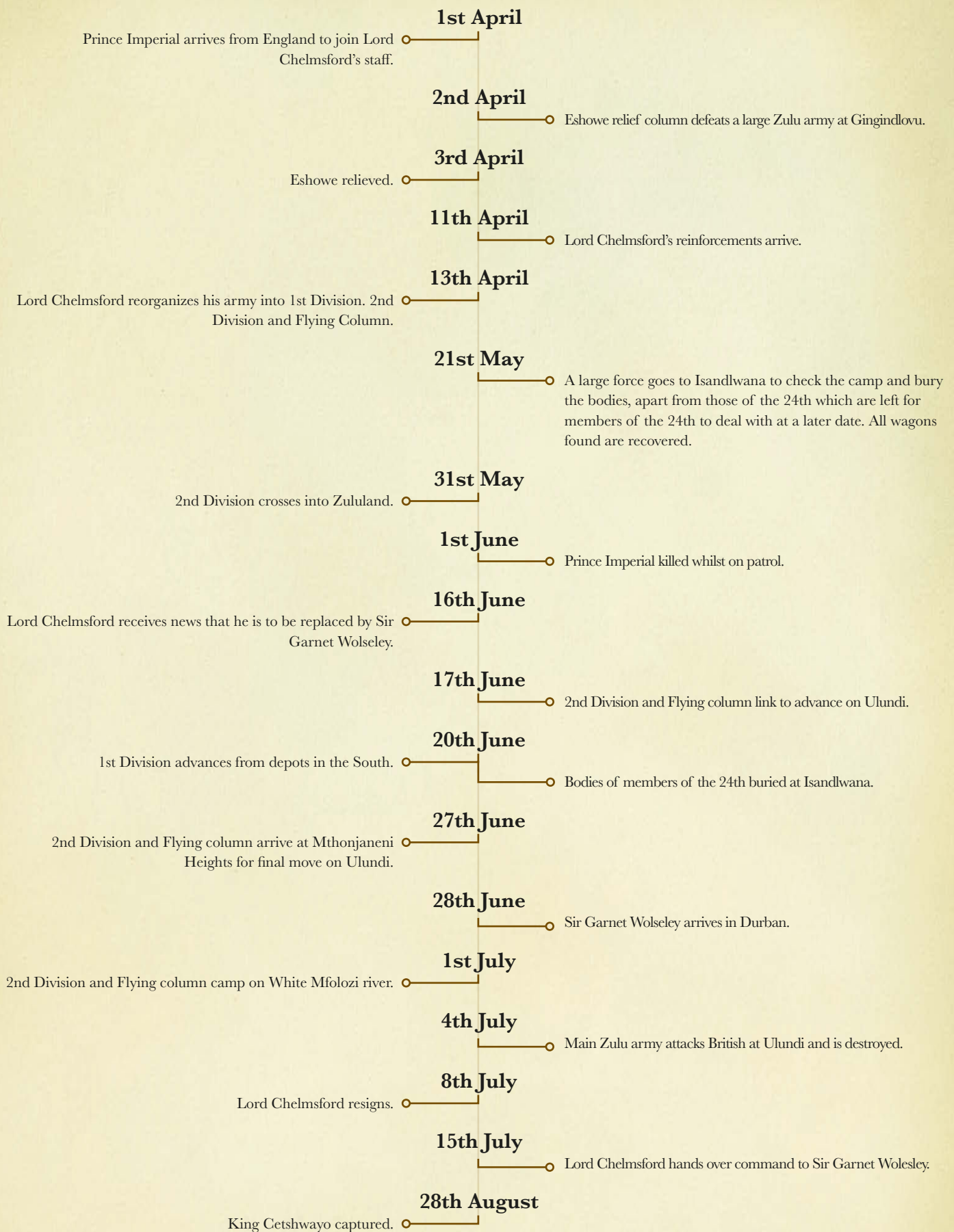
28th March

Mounted troops of No 4 column attacked and defeated at Hlobane.

29th March

Relief column sets out for Eshowe.

Elements of the main Zulu army attack No. 4 column camp at Khambula Hill and are severely beaten. This battle is generally considered the turning point of the war.







March 1879
Zulus ambush a British convoy

March 1879
Col. Wood defends against main Zulu Army

Fort Thina abandoned by Col. Wood as he moves forces to Khambula - a more secure position

January 1879
Main Zulu Army mobilises against Centre Column

23rd January 1879
Col. Pearson besieged by local Zulu army after occupying Eshowe

April 1879
Lord Chelmsford victorious at Eshowe

22nd January 1879
Col. Pearson victorious over local Zulu forces

	Main British Encampments
	Invasion Routes
	Eshowe Relief Expedition
	Zulu Movements
	Zulu Border

0 10 20 30 40 50m
0 20 40 60 80km

zulu!

King Cetshwayo stared at his advisers with increasing bemusement and anger. They had just returned from meeting with the British High Commissioner Sir Henry Bartle Frere ostensibly to discuss the results of a Boundary Commission inquiry that would decide on the borders between the Zulus, Boers, and Britain's Natal colony. What they got instead was a lecture on apparent Zulu perfidy and an ultimatum that, if accepted, would all but destroy the Zulu kingdom and reduce Cetshwayo to the status of mere vassal. This was Cetshwayo, ruler of Africa's greatest empire, heir to the legacy of the mighty Shaka, and now he had a month, until 10 January 1879, to agree to British demands.

Sir Henry, on the other hand, was delighted with how things were going. He had arrived in Africa in 1877 at the behest of Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies. Frere's mission was to impose order on southern Africa that emulated his success in organizing Canadian Federation in the 1860s. There were a few differences between the two situations, however, not including abundant sunshine and wandering lions. The hostile Boers, for example, had trekked into the interior earlier in the century to farm on Zululand's western border and wanted nothing more than to be left alone. Unfortunately for the Boers, they also happened to be sitting on top of a massive pile of diamonds that, reasoned the British, would make a useful contribution to the Imperial treasury because Empire building is not cheap you know, despite the best efforts of the British to sometimes make it appear that way. To that end, the British had annexed the Boer territory, planting the

seeds for future conflict, but for the moment the Boers needed British power to help deal with their warlike neighbours, the Zulus. They would have to be eradicated or absorbed into the new order where they would no doubt be happy to work in the diamond mines. There was only one small problem with that notion, or rather 40,000 small problems.

The Zulus rose to prominence in the 1820s under the leadership of their great general Shaka who developed a new system of fighting wars and used it to subjugate his neighbours. He and his heirs settled down in the royal kraal (a community of huts arranged in a semi-circular fashion) to run the resultant empire in the form of a kingdom. Shaka was also the first to encounter Europeans though at that time they presented no more threat to the Zulus than a fly on the backside of a lion: one swish of the tail would be enough to squash that pest. After Shaka fell to assassins from within his own family in 1828, Dingane took the throne. He soon found out that those Europeans, in the form of migrating Boers, had grown to nuisance level, so he decided to wipe them out. The Boer leader, Pretorius, and 450 of his followers had other ideas and crushed Dingane's army at the Battle of Blood River in 1838. That led to Dingane's half brother Mpande ousting the losing Zulu king and changing Zulu policy to live in accommodation with his Boer neighbours and the growing British colonies to the south. However, Mpande's subsequent attempts to settle internal Zulu affairs backfired spectacularly, resulting in a civil war that nearly destroyed the nation. Perhaps surprisingly, Mpande died in his sleep of old age in 1872, heralding the



THE ROCKET BATTERY AND THEIR NATAL NATIVE CONTINGENT ESCORT MOVE OUT OF THE SAFETY OF CAMP



DURNFORD'S NMP CARABINIERS AND NATIVE HORSE HOLD BACK THE ZULU LEFT WING WITH CARBINE FIRE

ascent of his son Cetshwayo to the Zulu throne. The new king set about reviving Shaka's kingdom, introducing military reforms that created an army of 40,000 warriors, and throwing out Christian missionaries who in turn spread the most malicious stories about the Zulus. To the British colonists, the Zulus presented a new threat all of a sudden, but now far from being the fly on the lion, the British were the lions and the last person who seems to have noticed this was Cetshwayo, but he was about to find out.

As much as he wanted to get on with his schemes, Frere could not justify a war against the Zulus without a good reason and preferably one that made the Zulus the aggressors. The British government's present focus was on Afghanistan and the Russian menace and they expected Frere to fluff the cushions in South Africa, not turn the place upside down. Carnarvon thought otherwise and had decided on his own that South Africa needed a good clean out and Frere was just the man for the job. Frere spent much of his early days in the colony clearing up a small problem with the Xhosa tribe. Once that was settled, however, Frere was free to turn his attention to the Zulus, or thought he was. Fortunately for him, Cetshwayo blundered into providing the pretext Frere needed to start his soldiers, now conveniently battle-hardened and ready for more, marching north.

In July 1878, two Zulu wives made the unfortunate error of committing adultery and running away into the British colony. A party of Zulus followed, arrested the women, dragged them back to Zululand, and executed them. That was followed in September by a band of Zulus detaining a British surveyor and

his mate. Frere must have rubbed his hands with glee when the news reached him, and his delight was probably tangible when he sent a letter to Cetshwayo to hand over the culprits for trial, only for the Zulu king to dismiss the episodes as mere rash acts. The King's dismissal was all Frere needed, or so he thought. He wrote to the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, only to be told no, he could not attack the Zulus. Ferret-like, Frere began to compile more 'evidence' of Zulu treachery to instigate a war that had to start quickly before he was replaced like his benefactor Carnarvon. He soon had what he needed and ordered Cetshwayo to send a delegation to the Tugela River on 11 December to apparently hear the findings of the Boundary Commission, but Frere waited for them with his ultimatum in hand.

The ultimatum consisted of thirteen items all of which were entirely unacceptable to Cetshwayo. The most significant demand ordered Cetshwayo to disband his army and he had a month to comply. The proud monarch opted instead to use his army to defend his kingdom, and if it came to invasion, inflict as much damage as possible on the British. On 11 January 1879, the British army under Lord Chelmsford began its march into Zululand to enforce the terms of Frere's ultimatum. Cetshwayo mustered his army: Frere had his war, but he would live to regret it.

Tommy Atkins's Army

Private Thomas Atkins, pride of Queen Victoria's army from his shiny black boots to his snow white Africa service helmet, all 5 foot 5 of 'im! He'd fought in Ethiopia in 1868; hunted down the Ashanti in '73; and stood tall on the Gold Coast the



SEEING THE GAME IS UP, THE GUNS ARE WITHDRAWN

following year, defying Africans and mosquitoes alike. In 1877, young Tommy, issued with a new rifle, faced the Zulus and they too fell in their hundreds. He had a glint in his eye, his moustaches bristled, and within a hundred years he'd be the star of motion pictures. He was one of thousands of scarlet clad soldiers that would sweep the Zulus out of their kraals and look like the epitome of manly virtue while doing so, maybe.

When the British columns began to move up to their invasion positions on 11 January 1879, Tommy's parade-ground look soon dissolved. He found himself up to his ankles in mud, extracting heavy, ox-pulled wagons, or soaked to his waist crossing swollen fords. His blue trousers with their red stripes down the outside soon sported patches of various materials, and he changed his scarlet tunic for a loose-fitting frock coat. With relaxed shaving regulations, Tommy's moustaches filled out into a beard. Finally, he learned quickly that his helmet was the most conspicuous item in all of Africa. Private Atkins rubbed coffee grounds into his white helmet and webbing to fix that problem, while his mates used tea or sometimes even cow-dung.

Looking around, Tommy could see that this army under the overall command of Lord Chelmsford was very different from that which the ubiquitous press-corps reported back to

the British public. The British infantry battalions, consisting of 5,000 of Victoria's finest young men, at least according to them, formed the backbone of Lord Chelmsford's expedition. The auxiliary Natal Native forces, however, outnumbered the British contingent by over two to one. Atkins and mates found it disconcerting to go into combat against Africans while being surrounded by armed men that looked awfully similar to the enemy. For many of the Natal Africans, their only distinguishing uniform difference from Zulus was a red headband that appeared rather easy to shed if the going got tough. That basic mistrust, although completely undeserved, meant that the three regiments constituting the Natal Native Contingent were issued only one firearm for every ten men, far less than the Zulus they would face. The rest carried spears and shields. The Natal Native Horse at least wore European style uniforms, but boots proved to be an alien concept to them, so they rode barefoot.

Natal also provided European units, almost all of them mounted and with martial names – the Natal Mounted Police, Buffalo Border Guard, and Mounted Rifles – but those units were very small and suited for not much more than scouting, although they were rather good at that. Redvers Buller's irregular Mounted Infantry units, the Frontier Light Horse, looked like other Natal European forces, but they comported

themselves and fought like a different breed of men entirely. Dressed in slouch hats and civilian clothing, the troopers were the flotsam and jetsam of Natal frontier society and few asked questions about their often dubious backgrounds, but they could fight almost as well as Buller himself and that was all that counted. In the beginning, Chelmsford's army lacked regular cavalry units. The lancers in their dark blue uniforms and the Dragoon Guards in scarlet would arrive later when the need for reinforcements became evident. The Lancers in particular would prove invaluable, hunting down Zulus with their nine foot long bamboo lances, but British cavalry horses in general proved too delicate for frontier fighting.

Artillery support came in the form of twenty 7 and 9 pounder rifled muzzle-loading field guns under the supervision of the Royal Artillery. The 7 pounders proved mostly ineffective against the Zulus, but the 9 pounders did sterling work, throwing shrapnel filled shells into the enemy at 3,500 yards. The Royal Artillery also brought rockets, though their main impact on the Zulus was more psychological than physical. The dark-blue jacketed Royal Navy sailors and Royal Marines marched off their ships to form rifle-armed Naval Brigades and more importantly to man the Gatling guns that they hoped would wreak havoc among Zulu formations.

It all looked like a mighty army to Private Thomas Atkins. Like most of his comrades, he had little idea of how the Zulus would fight – presumably they would charge straight ahead like other African tribes. To do so would play into Chelmsford's tactics of luring 'em in then unleashing a storm of lead in their general direction – what he proposed to do if the Zulus got in behind his lines wasn't quite clear until it happened. General Evelyn Wood, commanding No.1 Column in the west opted for more hit-and-run tactics using mobile forces, but he too would run into trouble of his own making.

Tommy Atkins trusted in his 1875 Mark II Martini-Henry .45 calibre rifle. He knew from recent experience that it inflicted damage at ranges of up to 1,000 yards and was positively lethal at 350 yards. It did have a tendency to jam when overheated, but even if the Zulu got close the length of the rifle at four feet and its twenty-one inch bayonet easily outranged any weapon used by the warrior. Tommy's mate Private Owen Ellis was confident enough for the whole army when he said of the Zulu that "if they dare to face us with the intention of fighting, well woe be to them". With that, he went back to his battalion, the 1/24th, and marched off in the direction of a peculiar looking mountain in the distance that the locals called Isandlwana.



THE NATAL NATIVE CONTINGENT IN FULL WAR PANOPLY

Well done, my lads!

‘We were in a position that extended over a large distance. While we fired ceaselessly, the Colonel moved continuously up and down along our line, encouraging us all the time. We saw that he was calm and serene; he even spoke jokingly to us. We heard him say “Well done, my lads!”, “Fire, boys!”, “Calm down, calm down!” Some of us didn’t like to see him so exposed to the enemy and we wanted him to protect himself behind us, but we couldn’t get him to do so. Sometimes, when he came near us, a man passed him his blocked weapon. Then he stopped and took the weapon between his knees, as he was only able to use one hand forcefully and he removed the cartridge and returned the weapon.’

from Isandlwana – The Bitter Zulu Victory

A Warrior’s Lament

We were the people of the heavens, the AmaZulu. We came to this land in what Europeans called the late 17th century and set up our villages of beehive huts (kraals). For more than a century we hunted, farmed, and raised cattle; all was peaceful, mostly. There were fights of course, battles if you like, but they were almost symbolic, ritualized combats with

few casualties, nothing like what was to come when Shaka changed everything.

Few noticed the son of Nandhi or recognized his thirst for vengeance when she was exiled away from the Zulus and her rightful place beside the king. But Shaka’s reputation grew as a soldier in the Mthethwa tribe, while he in turn saw everything, including how to rule the Zulus and make them the greatest tribe in Africa. In 1816, Shaka, aided by his brother, ascended to the Zulu throne. The greatest warrior now put his plans into place.

Wargaming the Anglo-Zulu Wars

Wargaming colonial battles requires a certain mindset: Imperial commanders must be aware that if grave errors are made then severe consequences are likely to follow. Unlike the more civilised wars in Europe, a captured officer could not look forward to a brief residence in a château then parôle home; rather, a spear up the jacksie and being left unburied to rot in the hot sun were more likely outcomes. Similarly, native commanders who were not constrained by the niceties of civilisation were not restricted by supply lines either. Not for them the need to control territory and route-centres; only the destruction of the enemy was of consequence, though denying logistical support to the enemy might be decisive strategically. The colonial war then was a clash of military cultures that should be reflected in the way tabletop armies are commanded.

On the ground, both sides exhibited extraordinary bravery but they could also take the view that once the day was lost it was every man for himself and Devil take the hindmost. We



YOUNGHUSBAND’S COMPANY FRUSTRATE THE ZULU WARRIORS

attempt to replicate this by altering certain factors to allow for particular circumstances; for example, British soldiers behind defences are generally immune to panic, but they can be shaky in the open, as the battles at Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana showed. Zulus were usually the opposite, preferring room to move around quickly and use cover where necessary. Some players will have a natural inclination to one side or the other, possibly for political or aesthetic reasons, or that one side or the other will suit their temperament. To paraphrase Phil Barker, players more used to the measured tread of the Romans or Macedonians will suit the British, those of a more freewheeling disposition and used to the vagaries of Huns or Normans might prefer the Zulus, while others will happily swap a pith helmet for feathered headdress at the drop of a ...er... hat.

The major issue with wargaming colonial campaigns is that battles tend to reach a point where one side knows it is not going to win; the player surveys the table strewn with *disiecta membra* and thinks "sod this for a game of soldiers". The fact that neither side took prisoners might help explain why. Often the morale rules will dictate when this happens, but in some of our refights the British realised that to remain would simply lead to being wiped out on the veldt, while in others the Zulu commanders' fear of Cetshwayo's wrath at their failure was replaced by fear of his wrath at wiping out their own commands. We took the pragmatic view, therefore, that a historical commander would be more interested in living to fight another day than in dying needlessly, particularly as we fought the series of battles in the spirit of a campaign. Subject to the rules, however, there are of course no restrictions as to how others refight these battles.

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night
Sir Henry Newbolt

*Ten to make and the match to win
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in,
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"*

*The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;
The Gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"*

*This is the word that year by year
While in her place the School is set
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"*

Zulu! Special Rules

Unit Sizes

- Due to the disparity between the numbers of troops involved in the battles described in this book, we treat units of varying size as standard, or small, as appropriate. You can represent these units with as few, or as many, models as you wish. The important thing is that all the standard-sized units should be about the same width frontage. Small-sized units should be no less than half this width frontage.
- When fighting hand-to-hand combat we allow only one-on-one combats (i.e. when a Zulu unit charges simply align the combatants so that one Zulu unit fights one British unit). We have found this works far better than allowing two-on-one combats as described in the Black Powder rulebook.

- You may be interested to know that we typically fielded British regiments at about 16 figures in two ranks and small units being between 5 and 8 figures. Zulus were generally 32 figures strong in four ranks. However, you can use any numbers of figures as you see fit.

Ready! Aim! Fire!

- Due to the highly trained nature of the regular British infantry any British line charged by a Zulu warband from more than two moves distant may deliver two volleys of Closing Fire. Work out the first volley after the Zulus have moved once, and take any break tests required. Assuming the Zulus pass this break test, work out the second volley once the units are in contact in the usual manner.

"Eat 'em up!": The Stunning Victory



ISANDLWANA CAMP AT DAWN.

*"When you're wounded and left on Africa's plains,
And the Zulus come out to cut up what remains,
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier."*

(with apologies to Mr. Kipling)

Armies on parade are a magnificent sight. Every man is in lockstep, a wave of bright red jackets in the sunshine, bayonets flashing; beautifully groomed horses trotting proudly along, some pulling polished brass cannons; the commander taking the salute magnificently! The British army under Lieutenant General Frederick Augustus Thesiger, 2nd Baron of Chelmsford, squelching its way towards the Zululand presented a different picture entirely. For a start, less than a third of the army were Britain's red-jacketed finest. The rest were a mix of mounted civilian-dressed volunteers and native infantry who mostly carried shields and spears like the army they had been sent to attack. The rain poured down on all of them. Far from marching proudly, many of the soldiers were engaged in dragging guns and massive ox-drawn wagons out of the mud and across swollen rivers. The sounds of British cursing, oxen snorting and bellowing, and native chanting replaced the dignified parade ground presentation of an army marching in review. Thus, the intended lightning campaign into the heart of the Zulu kingdom slogged along at a crawl.

King Cetshwayo's Zulu army on the other hand positively strolled on its way to meet the invader. The king knew the British planned to attack from three directions and news of the enemy columns moving reached him almost as soon as the British began their advance. Cetshwayo reasoned that he

at Isandlwana, 22 January 1879



BRITISH CAVALRY DISCOVER THE MASSES ZULU ARMY - A SHOCKING SIGHT.

could attack the two smaller columns on the coast and in the west with one-third of his army while the main impi, under the command of Ntshingwayo kaMahole and Mavumengwana kaNdllela, would hit the centre column with a view to knocking it out of the war and forcing the British to come to terms. To that end, Cetshwayo ordered his armies out with instructions to “eat up the red soldiers”.

Chelmsford's column crossed the Buffalo River into Zululand on 11 January 1879 at a small mission station called Rorke's Drift that he designated as a supply base and hospital. He also left behind a small unit to build a bridge and look after the sick who had dropped out of the advance. The rest of the column pushed

forward towards a sphinx-like, rocky butte about eleven miles away that the locals called Isandlwana. When the head of the column arrived they began to lay out their evening camp while Chelmsford worked out his next move that he hoped would bring the Zulus to battle – he would then beat them handsomely and be home for tea! Of course, he first had to find them.

In the meantime, the soldiers bustled around setting up camp as ordered. When they finished, the camp lay sprawled across the slope of the hill, the white tents in neat rows like a well-planted garden. The rear of the camp was a bit of a mess, however, with the remainder of the column dragging its way up the track and the cattle refusing to line up in neat rows like British cows would.



“AT 500 YARDS - PRESENT, AIM...”

Still, the camp would have easily graced an afternoon exercise on Salisbury Plain; except this wasn't pastoral England, they were inside enemy territory in a camp with no defences of any description. Moreover, while the view to the front was open, the British could not see past the iNyoni heights a mile to the left, or round another rocky hill to the right that covered any approach through the Mangeni Gorge. Chelmsford reasoned though, that a reconnaissance with his small cavalry units under Major John Dartnell would uncover any Zulus hiding over the horizon. So, off the horsemen rode into the sunset and sure enough just as it was getting dark, they bumped into hundreds of Zulus who conveniently demonstrated their martial prowess in front of the cavalry then promptly ran away. The eager Dartnell decided to hold his position and send a messenger back to a delighted Chelmsford who, of course, knew that's exactly where the Zulus would be. But these were not the Zulus he was looking for, and the British general was about to split his command to go on a wild goose chase.

Darkness lingered over Isandlwana when Chelmsford mounted his horse and led out most of the 2/24th Regiment and four Field Guns. He next sent for the excitable Lieutenant-Colonel Anthony Durnford who commanded a nearby force designated to defend Natal from Zulu incursion because that was about all he could be trusted to do. Durnford, ordered Chelmsford, was to move his command to the main camp where he would find five companies of the 1/24th, two guns, 130 mounted troops, and some companies of the 3rd Natal Native Contingent. Before Durnford arrived, Colonel Henry Pulleine commanded

the camp with vague orders to defend it. Durnford, however, had a different mindset when it came to the Zulus and was not disposed to wait around for them to show up. Chelmsford and his column arrived at the head of the Mangeni Gorge just before dawn, still convinced the Zulu's main impi was close by. He sent out scouts to find the suddenly elusive enemy, but back at Isandlwana the enemy was doing some finding of its own.

The first inkling of the storm about to break over the British camp was the sighting of a large group of Zulus on the iNyoni ridge at about 6 a.m. Pulleine ordered the 1/24th to stand to, but as yet he expected no real action and certainly not a major engagement. Then along came Durnford at 10:30am with a contingent of Natal Native Horse, some rocket tubes, and a small supporting force of Natal Native Contingent infantry. An hour later he was on his way again with his mounted troops to investigate the sighting on the iNyoni ridge. Durnford split his command too, to cover more area and combine again on the other side of the ridge: his rocket battery plodded along behind in case they were needed. So it was that shortly afterwards Lieutenants Raw and Roberts commanding one of Durnford's pincers cantered gently after some boys herding goats on the crest of the Ngwebeni valley about four miles from the main camp. Reaching the crest, the horsemen looked down across a picturesque, grassy valley, and a vast sea of Zulu faces staring back at them!

History does not record the exact expletives used, but we can reasonably assume some Anglo-Saxon vernacular passed



MOUNTED COLUMNS, THE MORNING OF ISANDLWANA.



DURNFORD AND HIS BRAVE LADS DISMOUNT TO HOLD BACK THE ZULU LEFT HORN.

between Raws and Roberts at the sight of 25,000 armed Zulus less than three-hundred yards away. For their part, the Zulus seemed every bit as surprised as the English officers. They had arrived in the valley that morning, but did not intend to fight until the following day when there would be a new moon. All that was moot now and they boiled out of the valley, appearing to a distant observer like someone had stepped on an ant nest. The mounted British fell back, firing into the emerging confusion of angry Zulus, and sent messengers to Durnford and Puleine, neither of whom truly grasped what was happening. The Zulus shook themselves out into their classic Bull formation with both horns running briskly out to the sides to begin their enveloping manoeuvre while the chest advanced steadily towards the British camp. A cloud of skirmishers preceded the army as it jogged forward. Durnford was still deciphering the strange message from Raws when the left horn of the Zulus appeared and the penny dropped. He too began to fall back, dismounting and firing periodically. Durnford's rocket battery, still lagging behind, only had time to fire one ineffectual rocket before the Zulus swarmed over them.

Pulleine couldn't see a thing! He heard the firing somewhere over to his left and sent two companies of the 24th out to engage whoever was foolish enough to be running around out there getting all riled up. He dispatched his two guns out shortly afterwards to provide fire support. The firing continued, so Puleine dispatched another two companies out to where the guns stood on a slight rise a few hundred yards from the camp, commanding a grand vista to fire on an advancing enemy. Soon enough, the bulk of the British occupied a flattened crescent-shaped line along the ridge facing north. Suddenly, the Zulu chest hove into Puleine's view and he too may have released a suitable epithet when he realized the pickle he was

in. He quickly pulled in the companies out on the left onto his main line and the British infantry commenced firing, gouging deep holes into the Zulu ranks. The Zulus, being no fools, hit the ground or scarpred back over the ridge line to avoid the blizzard of bullets coming their way. Nevertheless, the battle was about to swing towards the Zulus.

The British infantry line was thin, very thin, interspersed only by the native units who were little use in staving off the Zulu advance. Out to the right, moreover, one company of the 24th was all that joined the army to the isolated position Durnford took up to help the defence. On his right, there was nothing

English Dogs

‘My children, the English have declared war against me for motives unknown to me and they have crossed the Mzinyathi and opened fire on the people of Sihayo, killing many of them. Now you must go and find them and see that they do. If they still intend to advance into our country, then attack them and show those English dogs how the Zulu warriors know how to fight. Then he told Ntshingwayo to use his own judgement to attack the English in the place he considered to be the most appropriate.’

from Isandlwana – The Bitter Zulu Victory

Zulu!

but grass: the British back door stood wide open. Queen Victoria's finest therefore needed to draw closer together for mutual protection, and they had to fall back on their supply lines just in case they needed to quickly replenish their bullets and to prevent encirclement. The Zulus began to nose their way into the gaps, however, and around the open right flank. Puleine ordered the British to fall back to a more defensible position nearer the camp where quartermasters beavered away to make ready the reserve ammunition.

Just as the British line began to contract, a Zulu hero, Mkhosana by name, dressed in his finest regalia stepped forward – there's always one – to remind his warriors of their promises of derring-do before they left for battle. The emboldened Zulus rose up in unison to press forward, ignoring the British fire that killed Mkhosana in his moment of glory. The Natal Native Contingent troops could not stand against the onslaught and took off on their toes, widening the gaps between the British companies. Behind the British, the Zulu horns closed in from the right and left, the right horn pouring into the poorly guarded camp. If the doomed British infantry could have formed a square maybe, maybe, they would have had a chance, but the crush of Zulus pushed the companies apart and slowly but steadily the drip, drip of casualties weakened the British line until the red-jacketed soldiers sank beneath the waves of warriors. The ecstatic Zulus crashed through the line into the neatly laid out camp, killing everyone and everything associated with the hated invader.

Very few British escaped the ensuing carnage to tell the tale of what happens when a commander splits his force in enemy

territory and takes no steps for his army's defence. Isandlwana was a dreadful error on Chelmsford's part, one he would never repeat again even though the damage was already done both to the army and his reputation. He also grievously underestimated his enemy who demonstrated strategic and tactical acuity at the command level and astounding courage in the face of disciplined British rifle fire. Both sides paid a high price: over 1,300 British and allied troops lay strewn across the hillside, for the cost of over 1,000 Zulu lives. The news of Chelmsford's crushing defeat when it arrived in Britain shocked the public and the government, neither of whom were in any way prepared for the war Sir Bartle Frere had started on their behalf. For the Zulus, Isandlwana was a stunning victory, but a Pyrrhic one: they had wounded the lion, but they knew that a wounded lion is the most dangerous of them all.

‘...I ran so quickly and shouted the worst curses that I knew and I ended up alone in the enemy lines. There was thunder in my ears, but no lightning strike stopped me as I launched myself upon the red soldiers, handing out blows left and right in their faces with my fists. They must have been surprised to see a Zulu boy suddenly dive into their outer trench, but they quickly rushed forward and threw me to the ground. For the next hour, while the battle was raging on around me, I was underneath the body of an English soldier, who held onto me while he handed out ammunition to his comrades.’

from Isandlwana – The Bitter Zulu Victory



WHILE WE FIRED CEASELESSLY THE COLONEL MOVED CONTINUOUSLY UP AND DOWN THE LINE ENCOURAGING ALL THE TIME.

ORDER OF BATTLE

BRITISH

1st Battalion, 24th Regiment (15 Officers, 398 men)

Command

- Lt-Col H.B. Pulleine

A Company

- Captain W. Degacher

C Company

- Captain R. Younghusband

E Company

- Lieutenant C. Cavaye

F Company

- Captain W. Mostyn

H Company

- Captain G Wardell

2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment (5 Officers, 171 men)

G Company

- Lieutenant C. Pope

Royal Artillery

- N Battery Lieutenant H. Curling (Two 7-pounders)
- Rocket Battery (Three 9-pounder troughs)

Mounted Units

- Lt-Col Anthony Durnford

Natal Mounted Police (34)

Natal Carbineers (29)

Newcastle Mounted Rifles (14)

Buffalo Border Guard (8)

Natal Native Contingent

1st Battalion, 1st Regiment (5 officers, 318 men)

D, E Companies

1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment (11 officers, 231 men)

No. 6, 9 Companies

2nd Battalion, 3rd Regiment (9 officers, 328 men)

No. 1, 4, 5 Companies

- Natal Native Mounted Contingent
(6 officers, 257 men)

No. 1 Troop

- Lieutenant C. Raw

No. 2 Troop

- Lieutenant J. Roberts

No. 3 Troop

- Lieutenant W. Vause

Basuto Troop

Lieutenant A. Henderson

- Edendale Troop Lieutenant H. Davies

ZULU

Command: Ntshingwayo kaMahole, Mavumengwana kaNdlela

Left Horn

- uVe (3,500)

Chest: Left

- iNgobamakhosi (6,000)

Chest: Centre

- uMbonambi (1,500)
- uMcijo (2,500)

Chest: Right

- uNokhenke (2,000)

Right Horn

- uDududu (1,500)
- iMbube (1,500)
- iSangqu (1,000)

Reserve

- uThulwana (1,500)
- iNdluyengwe (1,000)
- uDloko (1,500)
- iNdlondlo (900)



Wargaming Isandlwana

Refighting the whole of Isandlwana presents two significant problems. First, there is the scale of the battle, both in the amount of figures needed and the space in which to deploy them all. The other issue is that any British player worth his salt will move rapidly to draw his command into a single square and shuffle onto the higher ground, all the while firing into the densely packed Zulus; not much of a game and ahistorical to boot. Rather, our scenario takes the players into the crux of the battle, the moments before the British line collapsed, and puts them in command of the rapidly deteriorating situation. The scenario is designed, therefore, to replicate the decisions made by British company commanders at Isandlwana in the absence of any overall authority as the battle descended into chaos for one side and glory for the other.

Missions

Each player, to a maximum of six, is assigned a company of British infantry with orders to withdraw to the southern edge of the table, and the safety of their camp, from their current position along the northern edge. For each unit that arrives under orders, i.e. not in rout, that player gains a victory point, plus one point for every turn spent on the table. However, to prevent the game turning into the Isandlwana Steeplechase, players are also secretly assigned a second company over which they have no direct control but will receive victory points for that unit arriving safely. The Umpire controls the Zulus who have been worked up into a veritable froth and are desperate to wash their spears in British blood. Their task is to prevent the British retiring on their camp and preferably wipe them out in the process.

Procedures

The British players take turns to draw for their buddy unit by taking a chit marked with the company letter which is then returned to the hat, which means more than one player can have the same buddy company.

- Players must not communicate the identity of their buddy company to any other player, though they must make a note of it if the umpire chooses to check.
- The game ends when the last British unit escapes or is wiped out on the table.
- The British go first, the Zulus enter at the start of their turn.
- No Zulus may enter from the southern edge of the table.

Black Powder Forces

British

4-6 Companies of British Infantry, depending on number of players, marked from left to right on deployment, C, F, E, A, H, G.

Zulu

Unlimited number of regiments under the Umpire's control (regiments may be recycled if they are driven off table).

The Table

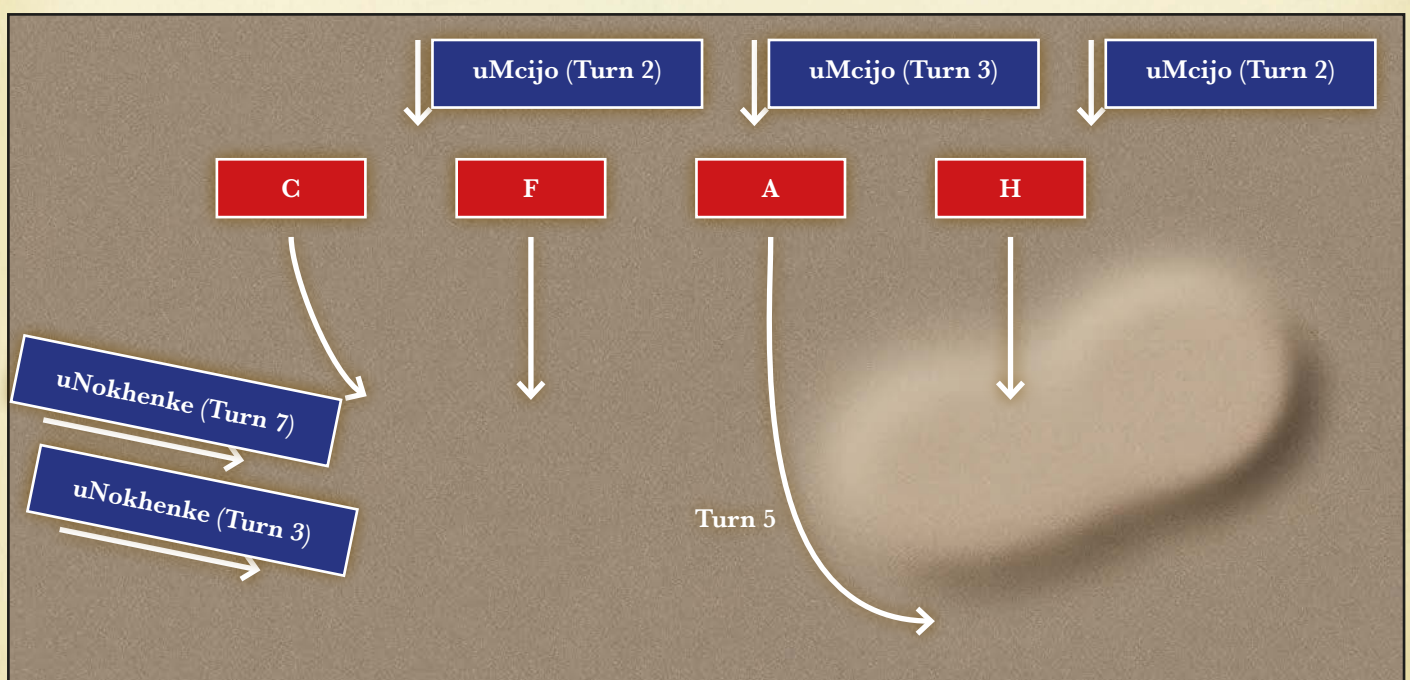
The 8'x6' table is devoid of terrain but rises slowly from the northern to the southern edge. For tactical variance, the umpire may add a donga or two running north to south if he chooses. For this refight we added a small kopje on the centreline to the British right and a donga about 6 inches in from the British left hand table edge.

Deployment

The British companies begin the game deployed in a line, six inches apart and no more than 12" in from the northern edge of the table.

The Zulus begin the game off table and unseen by the British players.

For our refight we had four players and an umpire, so the forces were:





“TWO ROUNDS OF CANNISTER – FIRE!”

British Forces

24th Regiment of Foot

A Company

- Commander Captain W. Degacher

C Company

- Commander Captain R. Younghusband

F Company

- Commander Captain W. E. Mostyn

H Company

- Commander Captain G. V. Wardell



BRITISH REDCOAT

Zulu Forces (Umpire controlled)

uMbonambi Regiment

- Commander
- Two units

uMoijo Regiment

- Commander
- Three units

uNokhenke Regiment

- Commander
- Two units



UNMARRIED ZULU

British Army stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Line	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	6	4	4+	3	Steady, Stubborn

Zulu stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Zulu	Infantry	Spear and/or firearm	6	1	4+	3	Bloodthirsty, Warband

- Up to half the Zulu units may possess firearms with a range of 18" – all remaining Zulu units have Assegai with a range of 6"

Battle Report

We assembled a motley crew of gamers for this campaign, from literal and figurative greybeard veterans of the 1970s and proper 25mm figures to callow youths brought to this parish by a quest for education at our local seat of tertiary learning. As the battle was fought by junior officers in isolation, we allocated our student contingent to the British with one of our more mature members taking the part of the umpire while this writer dispensed drinks and knobkerrie jokes.

The players all drew a chit for their buddy unit and drew as follows:

- Captain Degacher would command Company A and drew F Company
- Captain Younghusband would command C Company and drew F Company
- Captain Mostyn would command F Company and drew H Company
- Captain Wardell would command H Company and drew C Company

The British deployed their force with companies C, F, A and H reading from left to right about 12 inches back from the hostile table edge. While not yet ready to leg it they were certainly under starters orders.

The British commanders had a brief conference to sort out a plan and settled on an immediate withdrawal to the centre of the table with the flank companies refused, to see off the first wave of attacks, then retire off table. The British commanders exuded an air of confidence over the outing because they had not been told exactly what they were to fight and they had a collective lack of knowledge of the campaign, which might have been concerning for their History Masters but useful for this refight. They were also sternly warned about their inability to communicate with one another during the battle so that their initial chat was the only opportunity they had. Each company was given “follow me” orders and had fairly free rein over command and control as a result. The lack of an overall commander and hierarchy caused some bemusement until



“Eat ’em up!”: The Stunning Victory at Isandlwana, 22 January 1879

Younghusband suggested their endeavour was in the nature of a coxless four, and all became clear.

The umpire set out the Zulu plan, which was essentially a series of flanking manoeuvres to pin the British on the table, followed by all out attacks to wipe them out – not the most calculating stratagem, but suited to the Zulu psyche and a variant of the traditional Chest and Horns. The umpire rolled for the timings of the various movements, allowing for the use of dead ground etc. but with a die roll for an immediate attack if the honour of a regiment was at stake.

The game began with the 24th or Brummagen Fusiliers (as we happily refer to them, being careless of our dentistry) retiring towards the centre of the table. On the second turn two of the uMciyo units arrived and moved at a canter towards F and H companies. The British turned to face the threat and let drive to no discernible effect because of a combination of the Zulu use of dead ground and a rash of successful saving throws.

Turn three saw a unit of uNokhenke breaking cover on the British left and making straight for Younghusband and C Company who fell back behind F Company and turned to face. The third unit of uMciyo came on behind and between the other two, trying to make up lost ground. The lead units of uMciyo continued their rush towards the British, but H Company now occupied the kopje and commanded the battlefield letting drive with closing fire and sending uMciyo to ground.

Turn four was something of a lull as the British slightly reorganized their lines while keeping up a solid fire as the Zulus waited for further units and tried to work round the British flanks. There was an exchange of casualty markers, however, as the more accurate British fire was balanced by the much easier target they presented to the prone Zulus.

Turn five commenced with Degacher thinking that the uMciyo would try to outflank Wardell and H Company to the right, so he retired behind that company and faced the flank. Alas the





SAVE THE GUNS!

Zulus had no intention of doing this and promptly charged H Company which now faced attack from two directions while A Company stood in well meaning isolation. On the British left C Company had their hands full as they struggled to prevent the uNokhenke from getting behind them.

It was starting to dawn on our young protagonists that some had confused Isandlwana with Ulundi, or perhaps Omdurman, and that they were now in dire straits. Still, harsh lessons are the best learned, and as both scholars and wargamers this will stand them in good stead.

By this point (turn six), H Company was being threatened on all sides and Degacher decided that discretion was the better part of valour and led his men to the rear. The prohibition on communication was promptly ignored as Degacher's brother officers mocked him with unfavourable comparisons to the most flighty of nautch girls – truth be told, this writer had little idea what the British actually said since it was a mixture of teenage argot and LOL-speak, but the meaning was clear.

The Zulus looked to press their advantage as the second unit of uNokhenke came on-table in turn seven behind its regimental running-mate, putting further pressure on C Company, which Younghusband formed into a square. An executive decision was made to use the standard rule for facing cavalry due to the speed of the Zulus and Younghusband comfortably made the required roll. On the right, Wardell had had time to draw the depleted H

Company into a squarelet, but was overrun the following turn, personally defying all comers until stabbed from behind. The NCOs of H Company, having watched the Zulus come howling down out of the hills, took battlefield command when all the officers had copped it; but to no avail.

On the left C Company was now completely surrounded, but still letting drive at every opportunity though for the moment the Zulus had gone to ground and were winning the firefight against the company square, rolling enough 6's that there was muttering about the efficacy of their Indunas. Mostyn was caught between helping his colleague and pulling back and trying to win the game. He chose the former course and charged to Younghusband's aid, showing that there is, perhaps, hope for the next generation.

Mostyn's actions counted for little though, as the uNokhenke had interposed themselves, and he came up short and could only watch as C Company was swamped, badly holed below the Plimsoll line. Younghusband drew his sword and revolver and went down with his command. Mostyn tried to form his company into a square but it was too heavily engaged and though he managed to keep his company together for another turn it was all over for the British. Suddenly it was *sauve qui peut* and the shattered remnants of the 24th were heading for the encampment with all pretence of order in tatters and all hope lost. The victorious Zulus had taken a reasonable number of hit markers, though no units were shaken due to their ability to go to ground and use cover.

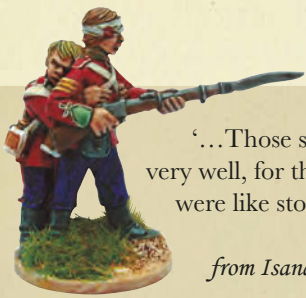
“Eat ’em up!”: The Stunning Victory at Isandlwana, 22 January 1879

A final reckoning showed that

- Captain W. Degacher scored 1 point for leaving the table, 7 points for turns on table.
- Captain R. Youngusband 8 turns on table, 8 points
- Captain W. E. Mostyn 9 turns on table, 9 points
- Captain G. V. Wardell, 8 turns on table, 8 points

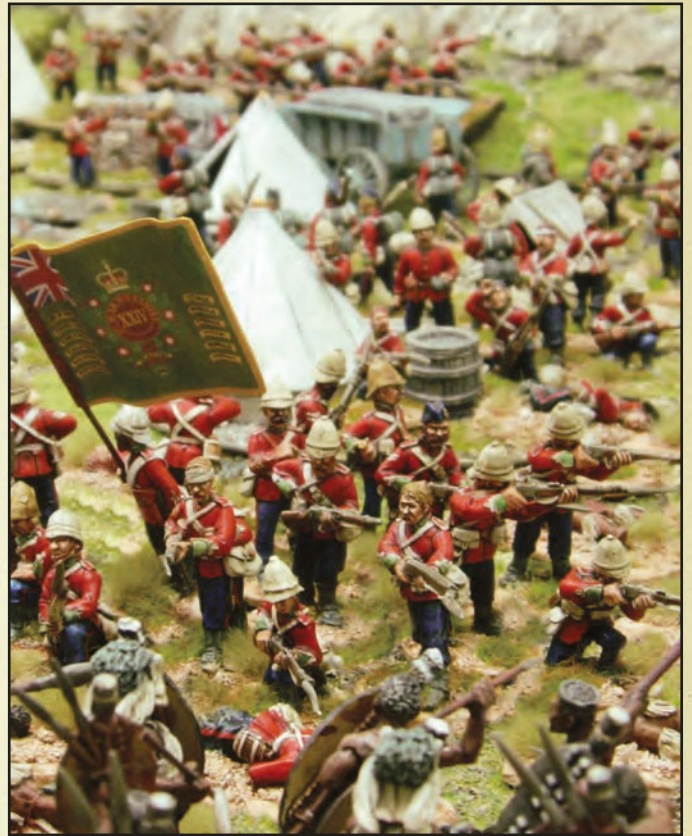
The only company to escape – “A” – had not been drawn, so no points were awarded under the Buddy system.

A close fought win for young Mostyn though he was killed so not eligible for the VC he richly deserved. Degacher was the only surviving officer and no doubt his report would be a mixture of bravado and whitewash. Our post game debriefing confirmed that the players’ knowledge of the campaign was indeed sketchy, something they swore to put right before the next game.



‘...Those soldiers dressed in red, fought very well, for the few that they were. They were like stones, each falling in its place.’

from Isandlwana – The Bitter Zulu Victory



WE DIE AS BRITISH SOLDIERS.



REGULARS AND COLONIALS FIGHT AND DIE SIDE-BY-SIDE.

"Like Rats in a Trap": The Defence



*When first under fire an' you're wishful to duck,
Don't look nor take 'eed at the man that is struck,
Be thankful you're livin', and trust to your luck,
And fire to your front like a soldier.*

Rudyard Kipling

The desperate defence of the mission station at Rorke's Drift by a single company of the 1/24th Regiment on 22 January 1879 is arguably the most iconic battle in the history of the British Army. It was indeed a most British battle, where a vastly outnumbered force with their backs to the wall fought with tremendous courage and valour to achieve a singular victory. Eleven of the defenders received Victoria Crosses for their heroics, and while some historians contend the number of awards was excessive and politically motivated in the aftermath of the defeat at Isandlwana, it may equally be argued that more defenders were worthy of Britain's highest military honour. Rorke's Drift also presents some interesting challenges for *Black Powder* wargamers, but no attempt to recreate the Zulu War would be complete without it.

Rorke's Drift was never meant to be the site of one of Britain's most famous battles, or any battle at all for that matter. Its role in the Anglo-Zulu War was to act as a supply base and hospital for Lord Chelmsford's no-doubt victorious centre column as it advanced into Zulu territory. When Sir Bartle Frere manufactured his war against the Zulus, Rorke's Drift had been a mission station and trading post, but it was located at an ideal crossing point on the Buffalo River and thus made for a convenient staging area for Chelmsford. He arrived there with his column on 9 January and deposited a small garrison,

of Rorke's Drift, 22 January 1879



HERE THEY COME...

consisting of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment of Foot, when he crossed the river two days later. Chelmsford's force remained in the vicinity for over a week then headed for a pillar of rock at Isandlwana six miles distant. Lieutenant John Chard of the Royal Engineers who had arrived on the 19th to build a bridge over the river watched them go.

Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead commanded the 111 men of B Company, and like them he had little to do in those early days of the war. Others around him hustled and bustled; the hospital soon filled up, mostly with typhoid cases; the engineers under Chard got on with building their bridge; a company of the 3rd Regiment of the Natal Native Contingent drilled nearby; supply columns rolled in from the nearby depot at Helpmakaar, and the quartermaster's staff unloaded food and ammunition when they arrived. The scene was typical for the Victorian British army on campaign, but that was about to change.

The morning of the 22nd passed without incident at the little mission station. From off in the direction of Isandlwana, though, came the sound of firing, which caused most of the men at Rorke's Drift to pine for action rather than fret for their own lives. Soon, however, panicked riders arrived, telling the shocked men of B Company about the disaster at

Isandlwana – the choice was now fight or flight. Bromhead was the highest ranking officer on the spot and he decided to bolster the defences. Rorke's Drift suddenly became a frenetic hive of activity to prepare for their uninvited guests who would soon be arriving in their thousands. The men loaded up on ammunition; some went to bring in wagons to use as barriers; others began constructing walls of boxes and mealie bags to form a defensible perimeter. Chard and his men came in from their work at the river and the Royal Engineer made a quick inspection with the infantryman Bromhead.

The mission sat on a shelf of ground overlooked by the lower slopes of nearby Shiyane Mountain. The plateau provided stretches of terracing on which the men built temporary walls. Even with temporary walls, however, other areas with no natural advantages, such as where the sloping road entered the mission, would prove more difficult to defend. Two thatched, brick buildings, the storehouse and hospital, facing north and set apart diagonally with about 35 yards of space separating them, had their own walls, of course, but an area of dead ground in front of the hospital bothered Chard. Conversely, a nearby stonewalled cattle kraal boosted the defences in that direction. The perimeter then was mostly a matter of joining the fixed structures with temporary walls and clearing the best possible fields of fire. The only things left to do were distribute

Zulu!

the defenders and wait. As the bulk of the men organized their defences, twenty left to form a skirmish line in the direction of Isandlwana, and another six moved into the hospital to add to the dozen patients able to fight. Fugitives came and went during the afternoon unable to face a fresh Zulu onslaught. The company of NNC also decided that discretion is the better part of valour and jumped over the walls, running like hounds were on their heels. That action dismayed the men of B Company, but the sight of a British NCO attached to the NNC following the natives brought out their fury and disgust, so they shot him down. Those that remained gripped their rifle stocks and peered into the heat of the African afternoon: the Zulus were coming.

The fast approaching corps of Zulus, the Undi Corps, consisted of four regiments, the uThulwana, uDloko, iNdlondlo, and iNdluyengwe, and they were fighting mad. The reason for that was that after all their boasting and preparation to fight the British invader they didn't get in on the Isandlwana action. Having missed out on the main course, the keyed up warriors were ravenously hungry. Their de-facto commander, Prince Dabulamanzi, also had a point to prove, being the half-brother of King Cetshwayo. Like many of his soldiers, he too may have believed that this war would be a one-shot deal and so far Dabulamanzi had no war stories to tell when he got home. Chasing down a few fugitives would not cut it for enhanced martial reputation, but as luck would have it, a garrison of redcoats was sitting around at kwaJim, the Zulu



NOBODY TOLD YOU TO STOP WORKING!



THE YOUNGER ZULUS USE THEIR SPEED AND STEALTH TO FLANK THE MISSION STATION.

name for Rorke’s Drift, just waiting to be slaughtered. The Prince gathered his regiments to him and they set off in the direction of the little mission station. The 4,500 advancing Zulus resembled a flock of starlings, swooping and wheeling in formation with small groups breaking off to chase fugitives or burn abandoned kraals before rejoining the main body. Within a few hours, they were all back together and in sight of the British garrison.

The iNdluyengwe attacked in the late afternoon, aiming at the south wall and the hospital. It was the first of many uncoordinated assaults on the British position. The garrison maximised its firepower at every point, sometimes knocking down Zulus in bunches, and almost always finding juicy targets. Still the Zulus came on, exhibiting raw courage in the face of the British fire. Some of the warriors made it to the barricades only to find that a fixed-bayonet Martini-Henry rifle made for a longer and heavier spear than they carried. While Zulus were brave, they were not stupid; many of them dived for cover and began firing at the barricades and any British soldiers foolish enough to show themselves. Fortunately for the defenders, the Zulus were very poor shots and only a few bullets found their mark. The attacks continued all around the barricades with almost no success, partly due to the lack of coordination that allowed the British to rush defenders to critical points, but also because not all the Zulus could reach the walls at the same time, so they stacked up waiting for their turn to fight. In the meantime, Zulus posted on the slopes of Shiyane poured down fire into the compound where the British could not avoid taking casualties, and each loss was a terrible

blow to the desperate defenders. That, exhaustion, and sheer numbers inevitably led to Zulu penetration: only frantic effort and cool heroism could save the mission.

The fighting continued in this manner into dusk then deep into the night; wave after wave of Zulu attacks and desperate British defending; men clutching rest whenever they could; others scuttling about resupplying ammunition and bringing water to parched mouths; the wounded on both sides crawling away from the firing lines to get help; and the relentless din of battle interspersed with pregnant periods of quiet. It was against that backdrop that eleven of the defenders carried out acts of extreme heroism, for which they earned the Victoria Cross, and whose stories offer flashing vignettes of the struggle enveloping Rorke’s Drift.

Private Henry Hook’s duty at the start of the fight was to man a loophole in the hospital. The Zulu pressure proved too much, however, and Hook took a protective role while Private John Williams evacuated the wounded through a series of ‘mouseholes’ dug out of the interior walls until they reached a ward with an exit out to the main compound. When they arrived in that room, they found Privates William and Robert Jones barring a doorway against the Zulus while the wounded attempted to escape through a window. Robert Jones received three assegai wounds for his troubles, but most of the men in the hospital made it out through his, William Jones, John Williams, and Henry Hook’s courageous stand. As they escaped, the thatched roof that had caught fire in the fighting fell through, killing the Zulus still inside the hospital.



PRESSURE IS MAINTAINED AGAINST THE BARRICADES

Private Frederick Hitch was the first member of the garrison to fire on the incoming Zulus when the battle began. He won his VC, however, along with Corporal William Allen, for his efforts in helping to hold open the line between the hospital and the inner defences when the Zulus broke through all around them. Zulu fire wounded both men in separate incidents, but undaunted, Hitch and Allen carried ammunition to their comrades on the battle line for the rest of the fight. Surgeon Major James Reynolds dressed Allen and Hitch's wounds along with many others, all the time under constant crossfire from the Zulus. One of Reynolds' patients was Corporal Frederick Schiess of the Natal Native Contingent. Despite suffering from a wounded foot, Schiess jumped onto the outer barricade to stab one Zulu, shoot another, then bayonet a third before retiring to the inner wall. Assistant Commissary James Dalton also earned his VC for bayonetting a Zulu and saving his comrade's life. Chard and Bromhead, leading by example, oversaw the whole effort; they, like the other nine, earned Queen Victoria's highest honour.

At 6 pm, Chard recognized the hopelessness of defending the northern perimeter and pulled back into an internal cordon.

That forced the abandonment of the hospital and the subsequent heroics. Four hours later, under incessant attack, Chard ordered the defenders of the cattle kraal to pull back too. Without adequate firepower, the Zulus could not force their way into the shortened defences. A constant stream of casualties also dampened their ardour. By 2 am it was all over bar the shooting, but after two hours of that, the Zulus finally gave up. The exhausted but surviving British soldiers peered into the black night expecting more attacks, their relief palpable when dawn broke and it became obvious the Zulus had left. Of the 150 or so men who manned the barricades the previous afternoon, 14 lay dead and almost all the rest nursed wounds; the Zulu dead and wounded lay all around in heaps. Then, at 8 am, Lord Chelmsford's column arrived after its harrowing journey from Isandlwana, signalling a definite end to the battle of Rorke's Drift. The men whom Sir Garnet Wolseley later derided as fighting "like rats for their lives" as if that somehow negated their courage, had made it through one of the darkest nights and brightest dawns in British military history.

ORDER OF BATTLE

BRITISH

Command: Lt John Chard, Royal Engineers

- Lt Gonville Bromhead, 24th Regiment
- Six officers

1st Battalion, 24th Regiment

- One Sergeant, 9 privates



• 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment

- One Colour-Sergeant
- Four Sergeants
- Two Lance-Sergeants
- Four Corporals
- Two Lance-Corporals
- 98 Privates
- Four Royal Artillerymen
- Three Army Hospital Corps
- Three Natal Mounted Police

Five 3rd Regiment, Natal Native Contingent

- Eight Others

ZULU

Command: Prince Dabulamzi kaMpande

- Three Regimental Commanders

uThulwana, 1,500 warriors

uDloko, 1,500 warriors

iNdlondlo, 900 warriors

iNdluyengwe, 1,000 warriors



ZULUS RUSH THROUGH THE GARDEN AND TO THE WALL



THE FIRST ZULU IS IN – TIME FOR THE BAYONET!

Wargaming Rorke's Drift

The fighting at Rorke's Drift pitches 150 men against 4,500 and therefore presents us with something of an unusual challenge as wargame: how do we represent those kind of odds on the battlefield? With our normal conventions for unit sizes, the defending side would be reduced to a single unit, and probably a small unit at that. Such an arrangement wouldn't really give any sense of the action, and no scope at all for tactics, so something else is plainly called for. We must also remember that for the defenders this is 'do or die', if all else fails there is nowhere to run to. These factors call for some adjustment to the normal Black Powder rules.

To start with, we recognised that it would be necessary to adopt a different representational scale for each side, so that each group of players would have something like a dozen units to consider. The Zulu's would be organised into warbands in the usual Black Powder style. The British would be represented at approximately one model for three actual defenders, giving us twelve units of four models each. Despite the paucity of models in each unit, the defenders would be given regular stats, so this would be no simply walkover for the Zulus.

The other major consideration is that of the station buildings and compound. The conventional Black Powder rules would suggest treating this as one or more separate building areas, but given the scale of the defending forces we decided it would be better to consider the open area of the compound as open ground, with the biscuit boxes and mealy bag defences

counting as defended obstacles. Because our building models were divided internally into distinct rooms, we decided to treat each room as an adjacent building area in terms of the rules; this would allow us to occupy a room with a single unit of defenders and represent the important details of room-to-room fighting.

Rorke's Drift – Special Rules

Despite having so few models, British units are treated as standard sized units and therefore receive the full value of bonuses associated with units defending buildings, i.e. they get a +3 combat result bonus for hand-to-hand fighting within a building.

British units must remain within the bounds of the compound. British units within the bounds of the compound are treated as troops defending buildings/fortifications for purposes of taking break tests, i.e. they will ignore any break test results that normally oblige them to retire, and will hold their ground without becoming disordered instead. Remember, this applies to units mounting the biscuit box/mealy bag barricades and units within the open area of the compound as well as to units within buildings.

Adjacent rooms are treated as adjacent buildings. It is therefore possible to move from one room to an adjacent room at a cost of 6 inches of movement, i.e. as if entering a building. Once a unit enters a room its movement is over for that turn. We won't worry whether rooms are connected by doors or not –

BLACK POWDER FORCES

BRITISH

Units

For this scenario we organised the British into units of four models – although it could equally well be three or five – four was convenient for us. For the sake of our narrative we gave each unit a name corresponding to one of the gallant defenders, and – where available – a suitable model of the named individual was provided!

- | | | |
|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| • Allan | • Hunter | • William Jones |
| • Fagan | • Hitch | • Maxfield |
| • Harrigan | • Hook | • Schliess |
| • Hayden | • Robert Jones | • Williams |

ZULU

Commander Prince Dabulamanzi kaMpande (Command Rating 7)

UThulwana Brigade

- Commander Zibhebhu with a Command rating of 7.
- 3 warbands

UDloko Brigade

- Commander Mehlokazulu with a Command rating of 7.
- 3 warbands

INdlondlo Brigade

- Commander Sithole with a Command rating of 7.
- 3 warbands

INdluyengwe Brigade

- Commander Mbetete with a Command rating of 7.
- 3 warbands

the walls can be cut through or broken down to allow access to any adjacent room or compound area. Remember, units within rooms/buildings are reduced to a maximum hand-to-hand combat value of 2 per facing.

In the case of Zulu units entering rooms, the rooms are rather small, and the Zulu units represent many hundreds of men, so we shall create a rule to allow the Zulus to occupy more than one room at once. If a Zulu regiment wins a battle over a room and breaks the defenders, the Zulus unit can surge forward and occupy the room. As it will be physically impossible to move the entire unit into the room, just move a few models to show the room has been captured. The rest of the unit remains where it is. If a Zulu unit succeeds in fighting from room to room, we allow the unit to occupy each room it captures, effectively occupying several rooms all at the same time. Remember that units occupying rooms can only be driven out if they are broken, so this will be bloody fighting indeed!

Units fighting from within buildings/rooms get the usual +2 bonus to their morale saves, as do units fighting from behind barricades. This means the defenders will pass morale saves on a roll of 2+ in most cases, so the Zulus will have to be persistent – or very lucky – to inflict casualties with ranged fire.

Zulu units can try to set alight to the roofs of buildings if they are adjacent to undefended rooms. They cannot do this unless the adjacent building/room area is undefended. The Zulus can try and do this in their own turn, at the same time as working out hand-to-hand fighting – a Zulu unit can try to set one fire instead of fighting. Roll a dice. On the score of a 5 or 6 a fire has been set – mark the roof to

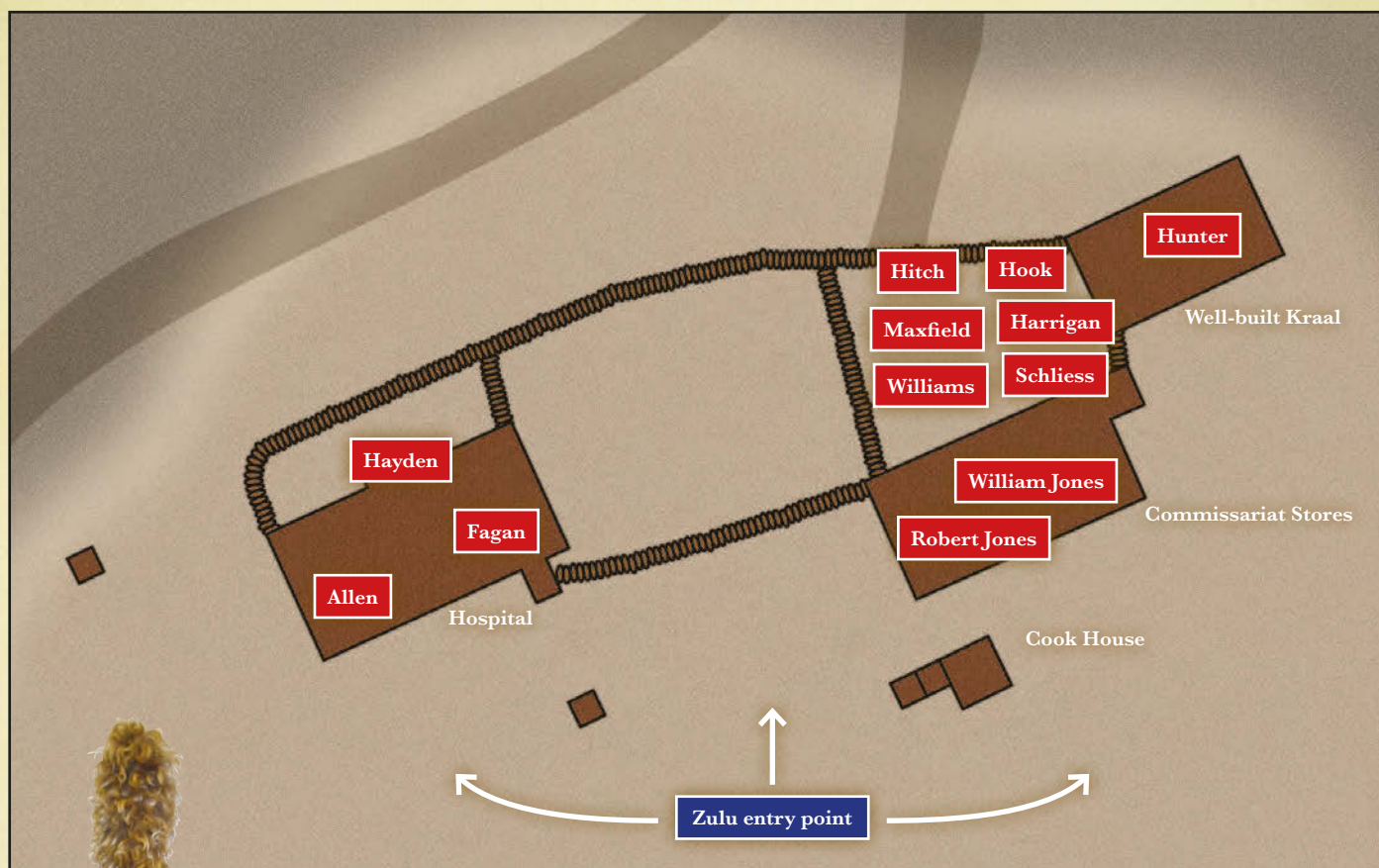
show it is on fire. Once a roof is on fire make a further roll at the start of each turn, on the score of another 5 or 6 the roof above that room collapses, on the roll of a 1 the fire goes out unless the room is occupied, in which case the fire goes out on the roll of 1, 2 or 3. If a unit is inside a room when it collapses it suffers 1 casualty as a result and must immediately make a move into an adjacent empty room, or outside area, or perish. Once a building/room area has collapsed in flames it cannot be defended, but it can be moved through as if it were open ground.

Rather than organising the defenders into formal brigades, we allow either of the British commanders to give orders to any of the units, either individually or as group orders. We will also allow any units from either side within the compound to be given a group order without any distance penalties applying (i.e. all units effectively count as Marauders if they are inside the compound).

British

Commanders

As we have two players to represent the British we give the defenders two commanders of equal status in rules terms: Chard and Bromhead, both have a command value of 10. Remember, rather than divide the command into formal ‘brigades’ we allow either commander to give orders to any of the defending units. Even so – a unit can only be given orders from one Commander in a turn, and a unit that fails to receive an order from one Commander cannot be ordered by another. Our commanders agreed to divide the forces between them for practical purposes, although both anticipated opportunistic helping out.



The Table

The eight by four foot table was set up with Rorke's Drift occupying the centre as shown on the map. To the south the slopes of the Shiyane begin to rise 18" from the southern wall of the store building.

On the north side the plateau ends abruptly at a ledge. Elsewhere, a WC on the western edge and the cookhouse to the south

'Some Zulus threw assegais at them, others shot at them; but they did not get too close – they avoided the bayonet; for any man who went up to stab a soldier was fixed through the throat or stomach, and at once fell. Occasionally when a soldier was engaged with a Zulu in front with an assegai, another Zulu killed him from behind.'

*Fight Us In The Open,
by J. Laband*

ZULU SHIELD AND ASSEGAI COURTESY
OF THE STALLARD COLLECTION

offer some cover to the Zulus, and various rocks and bushes provide sporadic cover – but not within 12" of the station itself. The British perimeter is made up of mealy bags and boxes as shown on the map. A further section of barricade wall divides the position into two, which gives the British the opportunity to retreat from the outer defences and retain a defensible area should this prove necessary.

Deployment and Objectives

The British can deploy anywhere within Rorke's Drift, occupying the rooms/building areas and manning the barricades as required.

The Zulus enter the table from the southern (Shiyane Hills) table edge.

The Zulus get the first turn.

We opted to play within the time available to us – some four hours – and should either side be reduced to half its original units this was deemed sufficient to claim the victory. Otherwise, the objective was simple enough – the British had only to hold on and survive whilst the Zulus would settle at no less than their complete eradication.

To make matters more interesting we would introduce a little competition between the defenders. Each time a British unit fights and survives a round of hand-to-hand fighting the player rolls a dice, and on the score of a 6 a Victoria Cross commendation would be made for this feat of heroism. Each unit tots up its VCs and scores would be compared at the end of the day.





THE HOSPITAL IS THE TARGET OF THE SWARMING ZULUS.

British Army stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Rorke’s Drift Defenders	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	6	3	4+	3	Steady, Stubborn

Special rules

- British ignore all break test results short of ‘broken’ – they are like rats in a trap and will fight to the death.
- At the end of any melee combat between units in which a British squad loses no casualties, the officer commanding rolls a D6 with a score of 6 resulting in a Victoria Cross commendation for a member of that squad.
- A British soldier inside a building that wins four single-combats is awarded the Victoria Cross.
- Bromhead and Chard: Inspiring Commanders – every British unit within 6" of Bromhead or Chard can shoot with an extra shot (4 rather than 3) and fight with an extra attack (7 total rather than 6).
- Note: In this scenario the British units have been given the stats shown to represent the very special circumstances of the battle. These are slightly different to the stats given for full-sized units in the rest of this book – and deliberately so.

Zulu stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Zulu Warband	Infantry	Spear and firearm	6	1	3+/4+	3	Warband, Bloodthirsty

Special rules

- Zulu morale is very high at the beginning of the game, but only for two game turns when morale will recede to average levels.
- All Zulu units include a proportion of men equipped with firearms – either trade-muskets or captured British rifles – given the limited availability of ammunition and notoriously poor marksmanship of the Zulus, we treat these as smoothbore muskets, with a range of 18" and allow 1 shot.



LATE AFTERNOON AND THE POST IS SURROUNDED.



Battle Report

After fighting Isandlwana our much chastened British sought the chance to redeem themselves: three were given the defenders, the other and a roaming greybeard took over the Zulu forces, eager for a crushing victory to round out their day.

The British players set out their stall; Allen and Fagan were in the hospital with Hayden on the veranda; Harrigan and Hitch were in the enclosure in front of the hospital, the Jones boys were in the storeroom; Hunter was in the kraal; the enclosure in front of the storeroom was defended by Hook, Maxfield, Scheiss and Williams and overseen by both Bromhead and Chard with Reynolds in attendance. Throughout this report the squads will be referred to by the name of their leader, so it is not necessarily an individual fighting but a leader and a few others.

Ammunition Smith, Surgeon Reynolds, the various boxwallahs and costermongers were represented on-table but were noncombatants, being deemed to act as bearers and bhistsis. The inner defences would only be manned in extremis and the redoubt was not expected to be required at all. To borrow naval terms they had battened down the hatches and were standing by to repel boarders and when the enemy hove into view they would be engaged with all weapons.

The Zulu plan was relatively simple; an all-out assault to expunge the regiments' collective shame at having missed the battle at Isandlwana. Both Zulu commanders made it perfectly clear that this would be no firefight but they would try to use their numbers to take the defences by coup de main: this would not be a day for them to use their outspoken, flinty lipped brazenfaced jades. The uThulwana would attack from the north, the uDloko from the east, the iNdlondlo from the west and the iNdluyengwe from the south. Prince kaMpande decreed that the initial attack would come from the south and west in a bid to capture the hospital, and so it began.

The defenders of the hospital, or the Tolman Maze as it was promptly christened, saw the iNdluyengwe coming in at a canter and opened up, but the Zulus ignored the fire and tried to force their way into the building. Allan and Fagan made good use of their advantage and fought off all comers, winning two combats each. Mbeté promptly decided that this was no way to go on and fired the thatched roof of the hospital, in part to avoid it lighting his attacks once darkness fell, which says much for his confidence in a quick victory. As the flames spread, Allan and Fagan did what they could to evacuate the wounded, taking them (and their casualty markers) across the open area towards the storehouse but some, alas, died in their charpoys. As they retreated they attracted long-range fire from the Zulu "marksmen" on the high ground and a blizzard of thrown spears from those iNdluyengwe not actively involved against the defenders. This proved too much for Fagan's squad, which was nearest the attackers, and it was wiped out. Allan made the safety of the biscuit box barrier, but not without cost.

Harrigan and Hitch began firing on the fast approaching iNdlondlo, with Hook and Maxfield being dispatched from the reserve to help out. As in life, the fire did not stop the



USUTHU! THE ZULUS CLOSE IN.

Zulus and they ran up to the barricades with a will. The defenders used their reach and height advantages to fend off all comers with the Zulus falling back after three turns and trying their hand with a mixture of firepower and thrown spears. This proved surprisingly successful and the defenders were forced below the parapet to avoid further hits. The iNdlondlo took this as their cue and came on again only to have the defenders pop up and fend them off, though not without taking some more hits. Hayden, Harrigan and Hitch

‘The Zulus say he never fired rapidly. Every shot was an aimed shot, killing a Zulu. Initially we had too much to keep us occupied in the camp, disembowelling our own, and the enemy, to worry about him. Eventually a few of us, with our new found rifles, clambered up the side of the hill. We lay down behind rocks and fired into that cave. It took us a long time to kill him. We didn’t know how those rifles worked. But eventually by ricochet or direct shot, we killed him. We thought he was a very brave man. We clambered up to the cave and pulled his body out, and disembowelled him. Some say they cut him up into pieces so we never knew who he was.’

*An account at Isandlwana - from Anglo-Zulu War,
by Robert Gerrard*

held out, ignoring the growing conflagration of the hospital for the moment.

kaMpande decreed that the remaining regiments were due a turn, so they lined up with the usual chanting and banging of shields as the iNdlondlo and iNdlyengwe withdrew. We were six turns in at this point, though both sides were still looking for victory rather than the endgame. The next attack would be on the northwest corner, by way of the kraal, into the small kraal and then the main defences. With much jeering at their compatriots’ failure the uDloko charged the small kraal and the uThulwana used the cover of the brush to get right up to the defences virtually untouched. The British had of course seen them coming and Hook and Maxfield were recalled to their original posts.

On came the uDloko who decided to stand off Hunter and take the squad on with thrown spears, and their numbers told. Unfortunately, Hunter could be given no aid as the rest of the defenders were quickly engaged with the attackers. (The hits the Zulus took are largely left out of the narrative as there were so many Zulu units that these were rotated and replaced as need be). Having pulled the defenders into this attack kaMpande tried to switch the pressure from the east to the south, with the uDloko disengaging and swinging round to attack the storeroom. Chard and Bromhead were wise to this and deployed their forces to cover, moving Scheiss and



HOOKY CELEBRATES WITH A SWIG OF PILFERED SPIRITS (AS PER THE CELLULOID VERSION OF EVENTS!)



Williams to that flank with Bromhead leading the defenders in person, as an officer ought. The Zulus fought with their customary disregard for safety, but the Midlanders and Welsh were equal to the task and gave far better than they got, with Scheiss and Bromhead already being eligible for VCs.

By now the sun was setting fast and kaMpande sent the remaining units of the uDloko back to the east wall where they reoccupied the small kraal and took on the Jones Boys over the mealie-bags. This attack petered out, as did the iNdlondlo assault on the north, but not before they had killed Hook and it took a last ditch counter-attack by Chard, Harrigan and Hayden (recalled from the now quiet west wall) to sweep the Zulus from the parapet.

As darkness fell some of the Zulus crept back into the brush to the north of the defences and the rest reformed in the darkness. The hospital fire had burnt itself out and the British decided to pull back to the biscuit box barricade as their numbers were by now depleted. The Zulus followed up cautiously and occupied the burnt out shell of the hospital. The Jones Boys returned to the storeroom, the rest of the garrison were spaced around the defences, with Chard and Bromhead in reserve with Scheiss.

As matters stood Bromhead, Scheiss, Harrigan and Hayden had more than four “kills” all they had to do now was survive the night....

kaMpande eschewed subtlety for his next attack and the uThulwana were sent through the scrub to attack the northern perimeter and in a shower of spears they erupted out of the darkness. A few lucky shots (or more sixes than expected) allowed them to making a breach by overrunning Hitch and forcing back Maxfield. Chard and Scheiss charged to the rescue once more. This gave the defenders some breathing space, though the darkness concealed the Zulu units queuing up to join the fun. Our man representing kaMpande started to talk some trash as he became more confident of the result.

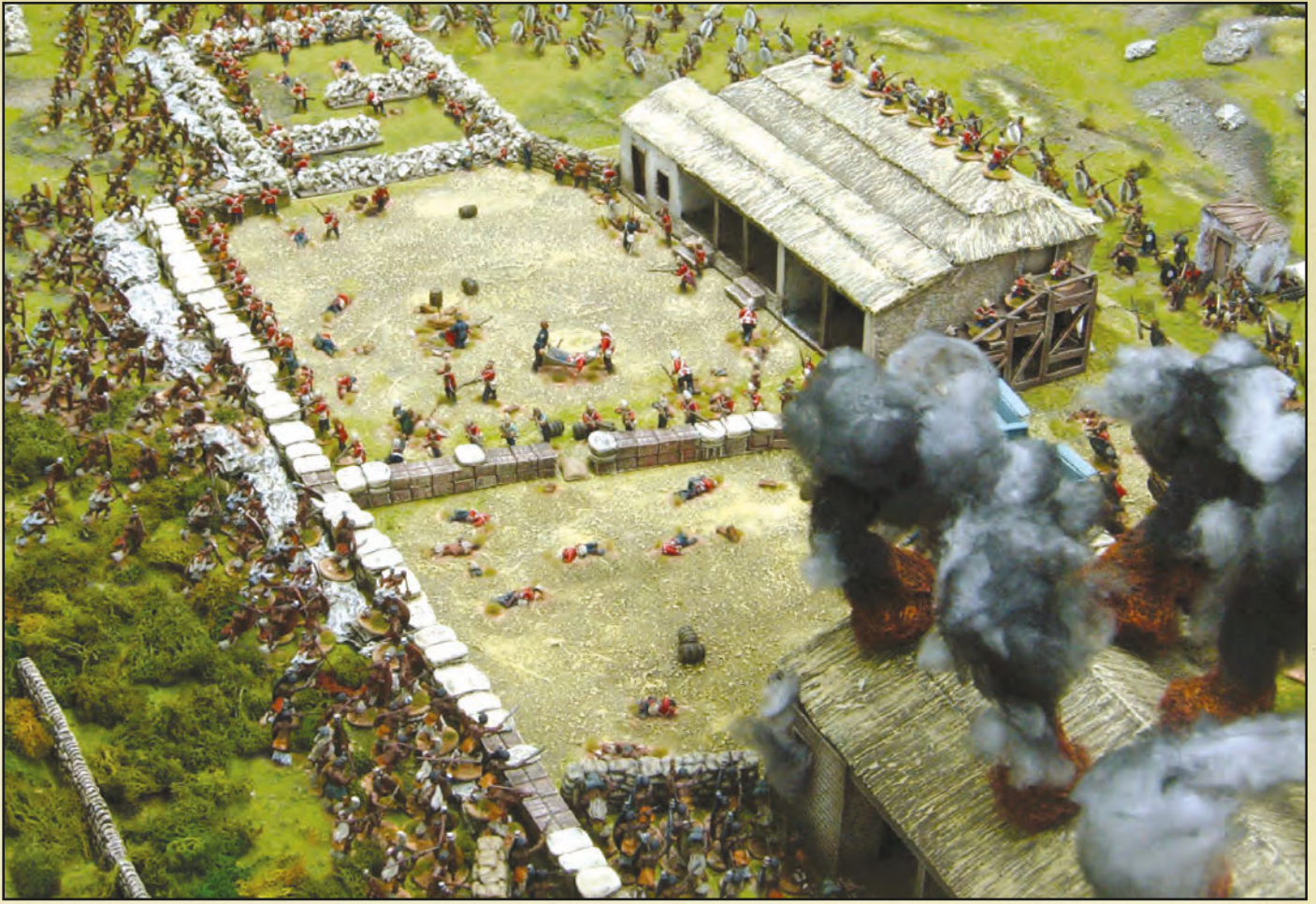
On the southern flank the iNdlondlo swarmed over, through and around the storeroom despite the best attempts of the Joneses. They fought their corner but their dice rolling left a lot to be desired and they were cut down, having killed five or six times their number in hand-to-hand combat. The Zulus fired the roof and as the flames spread the British had to abandon the building and surrounding area. The die was now cast and the night air was filled with spears, bullets and profanity as the British perimeter was comprehensively breached and forced back. All order was now lost and the turn sequence was largely ignored as individual combats were fought to a conclusion to give more of a feel for the denouement. Surgeon Reynolds was allowed to defend himself and his patients, but fell to a well-placed assegai thrust. A last stand of Chard, the indefatigable Scheiss, Maxfield and Hitch held out for several turns against the combined might of the uDloko and uThulwana, but the night was lost and the last remnants of the 24th went the way of their colleagues earlier in the day. The Zulus won with five turns to spare and the way to Natal now lay open.

This singular combat was highly entertaining to refight and it is clear that it could easily have gone either way, on the table as in real life. Perhaps reducing the game to twelve turns would have given the British more of a chance but the Zulus could have simply upped their operational tempo to compensate. Ultimately, in our refight, the Zulus swamped the British as they should have done in 1879. The British lost but could take some measure of comfort that their men died heroically, winning six VC recommendations. But who was alive to make the recommendations?



Captain Godson's Helmet

This helmet belonged to Capt Godson of the Kings Dragoon Guards and was one of the party that captured Cetshwayo escorted him to prison, from the Perry collection.



Zulu!

As with any battle, Rorke's Drift was the result of a series of particular events and decisions. If any of those change, the nature of the battle might change too. As wargamers, we have the luxury of playing out those alternative scenarios. There were three forces in the story of Rorke's Drift that could plausibly have been involved in the battle if their commanders had made different decisions. The first was Lt Alfred Henderson's No.4 Troop Natal Native Mounted Contingent. They numbered only 100 but were armed with Swinburne-Henry carbines. They were also fugitives from Isandlwana and shaken badly by that experience. When the Zulus arrived at Rorke's Drift Henderson's force galloped off in the opposite direction with Henderson not too far behind. A strong commander might, however, have kept them in the battle.

The second force was 400 men of Captain William Stevenson's Company of 3rd Regiment Natal Native Contingent that absconded shortly before the Zulus first arrived. These men were surplus to requirements for Lord Chelmsford's main column and gathered at Rorke's Drift for training. In equipment and dress, they differed very little from their Zulu enemies; indeed, the Zulus probably had more rifles. They could, however, have proved very useful in manning the perimeter at Rorke's Drift.

What Chard really needed at Rorke's Drift was more firepower. If fate had looked more kindly on him he would have got that in the form of two companies of British infantry, D and G Companies, 2nd Battalion, 24th Foot, Major Russell Upcher and Captain Thomas Rainforth commanding. They were on their way from Helpmakaar when they began to encounter fugitives from Isandlwana, forcing them into a decision to help at Rorke's Drift or retire and defend against a presumed Zulu invasion of Natal. In the event, they turned away from Rorke's Drift, but if they had kept going, Chard could have called on another 200 or so experienced and f-upper-lipped British infantry to go with the 150 already in the mission station getting ready to face the onslaught.

Unit Sizes

The scales in this adaptation of Rorke's Drift are changed to accommodate the new units. In this wider scenario, the garrison company is split in two, one under Chard and the other commanded by Bromhead. Similarly, we will split the NNC into four half-companies, but we will keep D and G Companies intact as single, separate units. Henderson's Horse also forms one unit. The Zulus, however, remain in their larger sized units as for the more detailed scenario. The *Black Powder* British Order of Battle is now as follows:



THE LAST DITCH - THE REDOUBT



FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY – TO THE LAST.

British Garrison

- Lt John Chard, Royal Engineers and ½ Company (16 figs on 4 bases)
- Lt Gonville Bromhead, 24th Regiment and ½ Company (16 figs on 4 bases)
- Captain William Stevenson, 4 ½ Companies of 3rd Regiment NNC (16 figs on 4 bases x4)
- Lt Alfred Henderson, No.4 Troop NNC (8 cav figs on 4 bases)

Reinforcements

- Major Russell Upcher, D Company 2/24th Regiment (20 figs on 5 bases)
- Captain Thomas Rainforth, G Company 2/24th Regiment (20 figs on 5 bases)
- *Black Powder* Stats and Special Rules are the same for Rorke’s Drift

Terrain

We also need to widen the window for the battlefield. That is done by reducing the size of Rorke’s Drift, reorienting it, and enlarging the terrain roundabout the mission. Thus, Rorke’s Drift measures approximately 12" x 24" and is oriented with its narrow edges facing north and south. The mission is positioned about 12" to the east of the centre of the table and 12" from the north edge with the hospital building closest to the centre. The slopes of Shiyane Mountain rise up to the northeast corner of the table from about 8" from the rear of the mission perimeter, and sweep round to the centre of the east edge. A road runs from the north edge down along the west face of the mission a few inches past the hospital then in an almost straight line to the centre of the west table edge then presumably on to Helpmakaar. The road cuts through a

steep river channel running north to south about 12" in from the western edge. Rocks and debris lie all around, coming to within 12" of the British perimeter.

Missions

- Zulu – Destroy the British position at Rorke’s Drift.
- British – Repel the Zulu attack and hold Rorke’s Drift at all costs.

Procedures & Deployment

- The British Garrison and NNC may deploy anywhere on the table, but not south of the hospital.
- The British Reinforcements begin the game off-table ready to come on along the Helpmakaar Road.
- The Zulus may arrive at the beginning of Turn 1 anywhere along the southeastern edge of the table.
- British reinforcements may arrive after Turn 3 on the roll of 4, 5, or 6. They may cross the river only along the road – the steep banks are deemed impassable.
- The British Garrison may fight in mixed order, but the NNC must fight in base-to-base formations only.
- The British and NNC must adhere to all *Black Powder* break test rules – they now have somewhere to run.
- To set fire to a thatched roof takes one full turn using the following procedure:
 - The initiator determines where to start the fire; there must be a figure present to do so
 - The initiator rolls a d6 with a 1 resulting in failure.
 - A fire will take two turns to destroy the roof of either building.
 - Once the whole roof is destroyed the building becomes unusable for three turns.

"Battle in Earnest": the Missed



REDCOATS TRYING TO STEM THE ZULU FLOW AT THE NTOMBE RIVER.

*"When shaking their bustles like ladies so fine,
The impis o' the enemy wheel into line,
Shoot low at the Indunas an' don't mind the whine,
For noise never startles the soldier."*

Rudyard Kipling

Colonel Charles Knight Pearson was probably as surprised as anyone to find himself in charge of the first column of his friend Lord Chelmsford's three-pronged attack on the Zulus. After all, he was a half-pay retiree from an unspectacular career in Queen Victoria's army when in November 1878 the Zulu crisis blew up. Within a few weeks, here he stood on Zululand's coastal border with Natal, getting his little army ready to cross the Thukela River as Bartle Frere's ultimatum to Cetshwayo ran out. Pearson's orders were to occupy the mission station at Eshowe, thirty-five miles away, defeating any Zulu forces sent against him; although he had no idea where the Zulus might be in the seemingly endless stretch of lush grassland rolling away across the river. His immediate problem was how to get across the Thukela, which had transformed under intense rains from a benign stream to a raging torrent that even his hardy naval contingent found almost impossible to control. Moreover, some of his troops had only just arrived after negotiating the mud-filled tracks that passed for roads between Fort Pearson and their disembarkation port of Durban. Nevertheless, the sailors performed magnificently to finally jury-rig a pont across the Thukela and at least Pearson could begin to get his forces over to the other bank. Six days later, he was still at it.

The initiative for the campaign in the coastal region lay with the Zulus and their commander Chief Godide kaNdlela Ntuli. King Cetshwayo ordered him to take three regiments from the main Zulu army and hook up with the Zulus living along the coast, then fall on the British column at a time and place of the Chief's choosing. Godide departed the Royal kraal at oNdini on

Opportunity at Nyezane, 22 January 1879

the 17th, the same day that Pearson finally finished crossing the Thukela. The Zulus faced none of the problems of the British; they travelled light, carrying their arms and shields and little else while the local warriors could stay at home until the scouts reported the British arrival. Godide's warriors loped down from oNdini until three days later they gathered with around 2,500 local warriors a few miles from the local Zulu stronghold at KwaGingindlovu. The Zulu army now numbered nearly 6,000. That would surely be enough to destroy any British army that had the effrontery to invade Zulu lands, or so they hoped. But Godide faced an unusual problem for the Zulus; he did not know the whereabouts of Pearson's column. It was now the Chief's turn to be surprised: the British were close, very close.

Pearson's two-thousand strong column, consisting of British infantry, artillery including a rocket battery, sailors, volunteer mounted units from Natal, some Natal Native Contingent troops, and too many heavy wagons drawn by increasingly exhausted oxen, began its advance on the morning of 18 January. Spirits were high: the Zulus would catch what-for when the British found them, if they found them. Six miles later, they encountered the swollen iNyoni River and the cursing, swearing, and general grumpiness that affected them on the Thukela started all over again. Four miles after that, and a day later, the column slipped and skidded its way to the banks of the mSundusi. Another torrent awaited them four miles further on at the amaTigulu River, and on the 21st, the column prepared for yet more backbreaking work when Pearson received a report that the Zulus were gathering nearby at a place called KwaGingindlovu. He quickly

'The whites shot us down in numbers, in some places our dead and wounded covered the ground, we lost heavily, especially from the small guns (small arms), many of our men were drowned in the Nyezane river, in attempting to cross at a part of the river where it is too deep for any but a swimmer... The 'itumu' (intululu) (Rocket) killed people but the small guns were the worst.'

from Fight us in the Open, by John Laband

organized a 600 strong reconnaissance-in-force to go there and see what they could find.

Much to their disappointment, the eager soldiers found a single, elderly woman who they promptly arrested and took back for further questioning. In the meantime, the sailors with the little flying column tested out their 24-pounder rocket on the fortified village of straw covered mud huts with rather spectacular results. Somewhat pleased with their day's work the force retired back to Pearson's position. Behind them, KwaGingindlovu still smouldered when the first of Godide's advance scouts arrived. They ran back to tell the chief the British were in striking distance. Godide immediately broke camp in pursuit and that night the Zulus found the British encamped as if they were on public display in Hyde Park. Now was the time for the Zulus to attack, to send the redcoats and their native lackeys back down the muddy road into Natal, but they didn't.



CAPTURED REDCOAT, CAPTURED RIFLE...



ZULU HIGH COMMAND IN CONFERENCE.

The pitch black night closed in around the British sentries. They could see and hear nothing, except perhaps the whisper of the wind in the grass. They shouted to each other for reassurance and to mark their locations. For the Zulus, night-time was never empty; those whispers in the grass may have been evil spirits and they had no pre-battle magic that worked in the dark. Nevertheless, the warriors moved quietly into positions all round the British camp in readiness for a morning assault. Godide grew wary, however, at the British sentries' shouts. He took that as a sign the British were preparing an ambush, so taking the better part of valour he withdrew to fight under more favourable circumstances. Only when the sun came up to reveal the swathe of trodden-down grass surrounding the camp did it dawn on the British how close they had come to complete disaster. With that in mind, it seems remarkable that Pearson ordered the advance to continue without making any substantive plans on what to do if the Zulus attacked. Rather, his mind was on crossing the Nyezane River a few miles distant and navigating the high ground beyond.

As the column neared the Nyezane, Pearson sent out his mounted troops to reconnoitre the heights. They splashed across the narrow river and cantered along the track up a hilly spur, one of three that pointed down to the river like splayed fingers. The track ran up the middle spur which was lower than the other two and separated from them by bush-filled gulleys. The horsemen returned to Pearson and reported the high ground clear of Zulus and also that a small knoll on otherwise flat ground on the opposite bank would make a good camp site while the wagons crossed the river. Pearson placed some vedettes around the camp while the bulk of his infantry fell out and the rest helped the wagons. The British need few excuses to put the kettle on and small camp fires quickly mushroomed across the little table of grass. Nearby, white bodies bobbed along in the river as men took time to bathe and indulge in horseplay. A few hundred yards away on top

of the middle spur, a small group of no-doubt bemused Zulus stared down on the somewhat idyllic scene in all probability doing the Zulu version of 'counting their chickens'. Fortunately for Pearson, someone on his side was staring back and ran to tell Pearson.

On being notified of the Zulu scouts, Pearson ordered a company of Natal Native Contingent under the command of Captain Fitzroy Hart to investigate. Hart's men drove up the spur towards the Zulus who in turn disappeared into the bushes only to reappear on the spur facing the British right, known locally as Wombane Hill. Then the Zulus slipped over the hill followed by the increasingly pensive NNC men. Dark comedy ensued when Hart crested the hill. Rather than finding the small band of Zulus he was chasing, Hart suddenly stood less than a hundred yards from a few hundred of their friends. Like a good British officer, Hart ordered the charge, except he didn't: instead of shouting "charge!" from his phrasebook of catchy local idioms, Hart ordered his men to run like the clappers. And they did, leaving Hart standing with his sword in his hand, which he may suddenly have felt go limp. He too turned and fled with the Zulus hard on his heels. A few of Hart's men detoured into the ravine where the Zulus easily overtook and killed them. This was all an inauspicious start to the battle for Pearson, but paradoxically such an easy kick-off may have made the Zulus overconfident to fight a battle for which most of their army was not ready.

The sound of firing caught Godide on the hop once again. His plan was to attack the British on the march from his positions behind Wombane Hill, and now the young bucks from the uMxapho regiment had jumped the gun. The chief had no choice but to order his other regiments out to follow up the work already begun. An equally startled Pearson was still organizing the river crossing when firing broke out on the high ground. All around him chaos erupted, men rushed

around gathering their equipment and picking up their rifles. Fortunately, Pearson's mounted force acted coolly, dismounting either side of the road to form an impromptu firing line; others quickly rode up to join them. They already had more than enough targets: Zulus sprinted from behind Wombane Hill out to the British right while more warriors crested the hill, edging their way down towards the British position into the gully whence they opened a galling but ultimately ineffective fusillade. The apparent absence of the Zulu right horn was the only thing missing from the classic Zulu battle formation. Otherwise, the British, with only half their men across the river, were in a mess of trouble.

Pearson ordered the units on his side of the river to form on the mounted troops then ran to the knoll to take charge of events. British troops caught on the opposite bank rushed across the river to take their places in what rapidly became a cohesive firing line running down the road to the riverbank and hooking round on the left to face the right flank of the Zulu chest. Pearson's two artillery pieces deployed and spewed shrapnel across the open ground between the British line and the Zulus. Then the Naval contingent joined in with their hand-cranked Gatling-gun spitting out bullets in a cloud of smoke. Well-aimed, disciplined British infantry volleys completed the crescendo of noise and violence aimed at the mass of Zulus. Godide's warriors could simply not get close enough to throw their assegais and despite the number of firearms they deployed the Zulus were still terrible shots, so there was nothing to do but lie down and avoid the storm of British lead as best they could and hope the horns could turn the British flanks. The right horn was still nowhere to be seen, however, but the left horn for a few moments had a chance if they attacked now and quickly.

Impressive as the British line was, its right flank lay open. Only a desperate stand by engineers pulled hastily from their river crossing duties held the Zulu horn in check at a range of 250

yards. Two more British infantry companies plunged across the waist high river to assist and their timely volleys ensured the crisis on the right was over. Elsewhere, part of the Zulu chest occupied an empty homestead just off the road on Pearson's left and opened fire. As they did, the right horn began to take shape, threatening to pivot on the homestead and crash into the British left. Only withering fire from a small group of dismounted Natal volunteers dissuaded the right horn from deploying fully, although it must be said this was not their best effort. When Godide reported his failure to Cetshwayo after the battle, the King expressed himself quite disgusted with his subordinate. Pearson, however, was delighted, and more so when the Naval rockets slammed into the homestead, driving out the pesky Zulus. Now was the time to turn defence into attack.

Give a sailor a gun, a target to shoot at, and watch him go. So it proved when Pearson ordered the pursuit of the Zulus now retiring up the track. But the Zulus were not yet spent: they waited until the matelots crested the ridge and opened fire at a hundred yards, wounding seven of them. The ever steady British infantry advanced not far behind, however, and their volleys finally broke the Zulu resistance. The Zulus retreated back over Wombane Hill and without cavalry there was little Pearson could do to stop them. Still, the British held the field, suffering only a dozen killed and twenty more wounded. Zulu courage cost Godide hundreds of dead and hundreds more wounded. His army therefore paid a high price for the chief's uncoordinated assault and failure to close with the British. Moreover, the defeat at Nyezane demonstrated that frontal assaults on British regulars would undoubtedly fail if the horns could not turn the enemy's flanks. On the other hand, Pearson's lack of casualties masked how close he had come to disaster: only the timely action of the Royal Engineers on the right and Zulu incompetence on the British left saved Pearson's command from what could have been the second catastrophe to befall a British army in less than twenty-four hours.



"DROP YOUR SIGHTS TO 300 YARDS!"

ORDER OF BATTLE

BRITISH

Command

- Colonel C.K. Pearson

Mounted

- No.2 Squadron Mounted Infantry (5, 115)
- Natal Hussars (2, 37)
- Stanger Mounted Rifles (2, 35)
- Victoria Mounted Rifles (2, 45)

Infantry

- 2nd Battalion, 3rd Regiment, 5 Companies (11 officers, 400 men)
- 99th Regiment, 2 Companies (5, 160)
- No.2 Company Royal Engineers (4, 85)
- 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment NNC (28, 800)
- 2nd Battalion, NNC (27, 800)
- No.2 Company Natal Native Pioneers (2, 60)

Artillery

- Naval Brigade (two 7-pounders, one Gatling Gun, one Rocket Tube) (6, 128)
- Royal Artillery (two 7-pounders) (1, 22)



ZULU

Command

- Chief Godide kaNdlela Ntuli

Main Army (1,000)

- uDlambedlu
- izinGulube

Sub-Commanders:

- uMbilwane kaMahlanganisa
- uMasegwane kaSopigwasi

(local command) (2,500)

- iQwa
- uDududu
- iNdabakawombe

(from oNdini)

- Advanced Unit (2,000)
- uMxapho





BATTLE-CRAZED ZULUS SURGE TOWARDS THE BRITISH LINES.

Wargaming the Battle of Nyezane

The Battle of Nyezane differs from most colonial battles in that it is an encounter engagement between two sides on the move. The Zulus fully expected to catch the British crossing the Nyezane River and destroy them; the British saw them coming and deployed rapidly. In history, the Zulus could not coordinate their attacks, but our *Black Powder* scenario gives them every chance of getting it right.

Missions

The Zulus must destroy the British on the north bank of the Nyezane and cause over 50% casualties. The British must maintain at least 51% of their force on the north bank by the end of the game.

Deployment & Procedures

1. The Zulus begin the game off-table.
2. The British must begin the game with no more than 1/3 of their force across the river.
3. The British may deploy in column along the track as they

see fit, with forces not yet across the river waiting to cross.

4. The Zulus begin the game once the British are deployed.
5. The Zulu chest and horns roll a d6 each with an odd number allowing them to enter the table.
6. The Zulus may enter from any point along the west edge of the table and up to 18" along the northwest edge.
7. The Nyezane is treated as an obstacle (6" of movement is required to cross) but can be crossed at the ford without penalty.

The game ends when one side has left the table.

Victory Conditions

Destruction of the British Force results in a Zulu victory

Destruction of the Zulu Force results in a British victory.

Anything else is a draw.

BLACK POWDER FORCES

BRITISH

Commander: Colonel Charles Pearson (8)

Commander	Naval Brigade	Natal Native Contingent Brigade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commander • Royal Artillery, one 7-pounder • Royal Engineers • 3rd Regiment of Foot • 99th Regiment of Foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commander (8) • One 7-pounder • One Gatling gun • Squadron of Mounted Infantry • Stanger and Victoria Mounted Rifles, (Mounted Infantry) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commander (7) • Natal Hussars • 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment NNC • 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment NNC • One Company Natal Native Pioneers

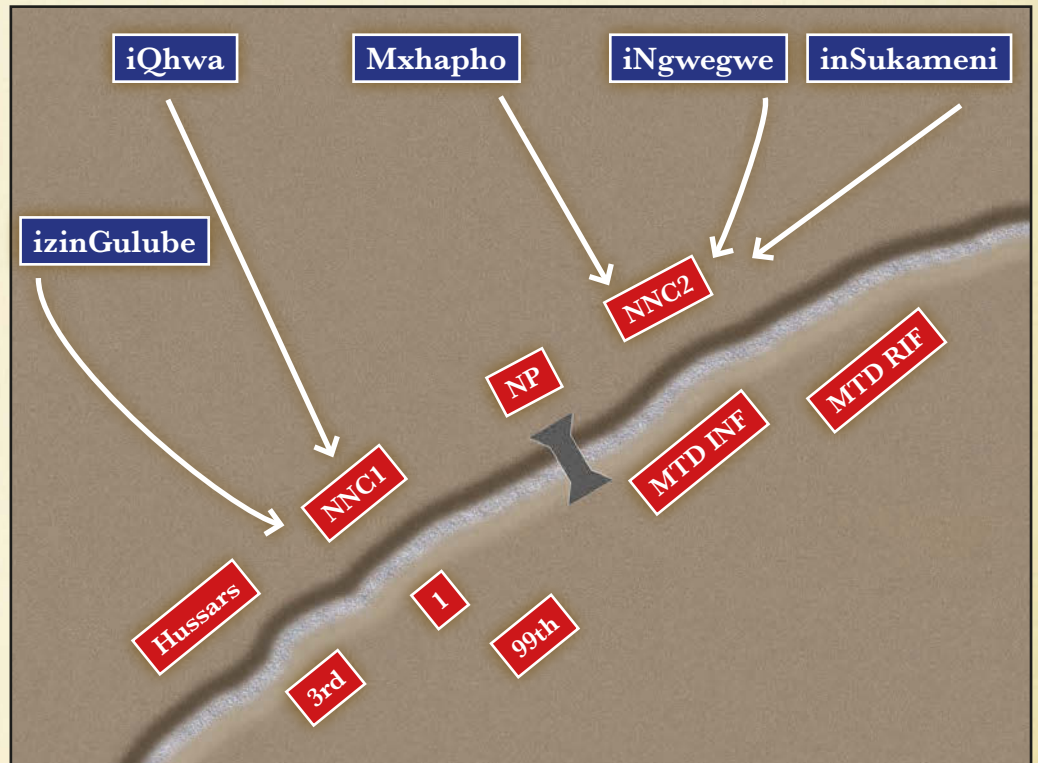
ZULU

Commander: Godide kaNdlela (8)

izinGulube Regiment	Mxhapho Regiment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two units • Commander (8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two units
iNgwegwe Regiment	iQhwa Regiment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two units • Commander (8)
inSukamgeni Regiment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two units 	

The Table

The 8'x6' table is set up with the river entering about 30" along the southeast edge of the table then curving round to exit 12" high on the east edge. Two spurs emanate from the west edge, one 24" from the north edge and the other 24" from the south edge. The northern spur extends 48" along the table and the southern spur 36". The track along which the British hope to march enters the table at the southeast corner, crosses the river at 24" from the east edge and runs north for 12" before turning west through the gap between the two spurs. The rest of the terrain should be grassland with a few scenic elements spread around for aesthetic purposes only.





WADING ZULUS PRESENT ESPECIALLY FINE TARGETS...

British Army stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
3rd and 99th Foot	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	6	4	4+	3	Steady, Stubborn
Mounted Infantry	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	3	2	4+	2	Stubborn, Small
Natal Hussars	Cavalry	Breech-loading carbine	3	2	4+	2	Small
NNC Infantry	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	6	3	5+	3	
Royal Engineers and NN Pioneers	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	4	2	3+	2	Stubborn, Small
Artillery	Artillery	7 pdr	1	3-2-1	4+	1	Steady
Gatling gun	Artillery	Gatling gun	1	Special	4+	1	Stubborn

Zulu stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Zulu	Infantry	Spear and/or firearm	6	1	4+	3	Bloodthirsty, Warband

- Up to half the Zulu units may possess firearms with a range of 18" – all remaining Zulu units have Assegai with a range of 6"



A ZULU REGIMENT SETS OFF FROM ITS HOME KRAAL.

Battle Report

We took as our theme for this battle “failing to prepare is preparing to fail” as this might readily be applied to both sides. The British commanders were nominated from the most slapdash of our number and the Zulus from the more reckless. The commanders of both sides of course believed themselves to be the most moderate and temperate of men. Each side had three commanders who were given orders to find and engage the enemy.

The British decided on a “forward” policy with the entire NNC contingent manning the north bank while the Naval Brigade, British foot and artillery were to stand on the flanks and keep the Zulus off. The mounted infantry would be held in reserve to either cover the withdrawal or lead the pursuit. The Naval Brigade’s insistence on measuring distances in cables rather than furlongs like normal chaps led to some confusion, but eventually the plan was agreed.

The British deployed with the Natal Hussars furthest over the river; the Hussars, though Valentine Baker would have shuddered at the designation, were fine horsemen and well suited to the country and enemy and would scout on the left flank. The 1st Battalion NNC was deployed north of the river to the left of the drift to cover it; the Pioneers took up positions at the north of the drift; and the 2nd Battalion were in column waiting to cross and form up on the right flank. The British Brigade would deploy on the heights south of the river on the left flank with the Naval Brigade moving to the right with both batteries deployed to cover as much of the approaches to the drift as possible.

The Zulu plan was a variant on the usual chest and horns with the horn regiments trying to roll up the British position from the flanks while the chest pinned them from the front. They hoped to avoid the British and concentrate on the NNC, having a healthier regard for Private Atkins and his rifle than for his allies. The Zulu commanders took the pragmatic, but slightly counterproductive, decision that the various regiments would attack as soon as possible. This was partly an acceptance that they would inevitably fail to co-ordinate their attacks while under fire along with the usual issues of honour and jealousy.

The iNsukamgeni would enter on the left, the iNgwegwe next, then the Mxhapho, and the iOhwa and the izinGulube on the right. There was a fundamental difference of opinion within the Zulu command as to the merits of fire and movement over the ways of their fathers but the basic premise was approach at the gallop taking any obstacles as they came, in the style of a local steeplechase.

On the first turn the NNC 2nd Battalion rushed across the drift and took up their position to the right of the 1st Battalion. The Mxhapho and izinGulube rolled odd and came on-table, the former straight at the 2nd Battalion and the latter heading for the 1st. The British were scurrying to the heights on the south of the river and would be in position by the end of the second turn.

During the second turn, the iNgwegwe and iNsukamgeni came on, the iNgwegwe swinging towards the right flank of the NNC 2nd Battalion and the iNsukamgeni fronting up to the Naval Brigade with a view to going to ground and engaging them in a firefight, though if the opportunity presented itself

they were not above crossing the river. The British and Native infantry were now more or less in position and could see the way the wind was blowing, so fixed bayonets and braced up. As the izinGulube bore down on the British force the Hussars rode out of the way with a cry of “toro!” exposing the Zulus to the fire from the 3rd Foot and 1st NNC. The Hussars then made their way to the flank of the iOhwa where they would spend the rest of the battle like a good number 3 at Polo, harassing the Zulu flanks and rear to break up attacks. They were however always under starter’s orders for a swift exit if matters became too hot – the Hussars will play no further part in this narrative, but were present throughout.

Turn three saw the iOhwa join the fun by following on behind the izinGulube accepting the latter’s mockery as the price of their failure to roll sufficiently well. The Mxhapho bore down on the 2nd NNC who were somewhat nonplussed to realise that the iNggwegwe were heading for their flank. They refused two companies on the right and opened fire in both directions, aided by the Naval Brigade artillery. The iOhwa and izinGulube came piling in but were held at bay by the combined fire of the Buffs and 1st NNC, with the 99th and artillery chiming in.

The bails were removed for tea at this point, so we may recap the position: from the British point of view the NNC were deployed across the river, but under fire and pressure from the front and flanks. The left flank was secure, with the 99th and 3rd happily taking on the izinGulube in a firefight; it was briefly contemplated that they should try to ford the river and roll up the Zulu left, but that was ruled out as impractical. On the right, the Naval Brigade was under severe pressure as they

‘We went back to Wombane (mountain) and overlooking Nyezane (river) we saw the English with wagons... and went back and told Godide kaNdlela what we had seen. We were told to advance and, grasping our arms... we went forward packed close together like a lot of bees... we were still far away from them when the white men began to throw their bullets at us, but we could not shoot at them because our rifles would not shoot so far... When we were near them we opened fire, hitting a number of them... After that they brought out their ‘by-and-by’ (imbayimbayi) (cannon) and we heard what we thought was a long pipe coming through the air towards us. As we advanced we had our rifles under our arms and had our assegais in our right hands ready to throw them, but they were not much good for we never got near enough to use them. We never got nearer than 50 paces to the English, and although we tried to climb over our fallen brothers we could not get very far ahead because the white men were firing heavily close to the ground into our front ranks while the ‘by-and-by’ was firing over our heads into the regiments behind us (the uMxhapho was in the forefront of the impi)... The noise it made could be heard by the old men and the women who had stayed at home, and they climbed up onto (sic) the top of the hills to see what they could of the battle... The battle was so fierce that we had to wipe the blood and brains of the killed and wounded from our heads, faces, arms, legs and shield after the fighting.’

from Fight us in the Open, by John Laband



FURTHER WAVES OF ZULUS LINE THE RIVERBANK.

were greatly outnumbered, but were holding on. From the Zulu side, they were confident that most of the British were pinned and once the iNngwegwe got moving they could roll up the NNC. If the price of that was losing the firefights on both flanks then so be it. As the teacups were removed and scone crumbs brushed from Zulu regalia, the Indunas went through another tiresome round of chanting while the British stoically returned to the ranks.

The battle now hinged on the iNngwegwe, who were withdrawn from the line to allow the inSukamgeni to take over their frontage and mask the flank. The Naval Brigade were kept busy by the inSukamgeni who were wilting under the British artillery fire but still hanging on. The Mxhapho took the re-organisation as their cue and charged the 2nd NNC frontally but were driven to ground once more. The net effect of this was that the iNngwegwe were given a free run at the two companies of the 2nd NNC facing them and charged through the closing fire and into contact despite the best efforts of the supporting British on the heights. A swift round of die rolling put the 2nd NNC under extreme pressure, which meant the following turn their fire to the front slackened and the Mxhapho charged once more, getting to melee. This proved too much for them, for they were under attack from two sides, outnumbered, and shipping casualties. After a sterling defence, the 2nd were overrun and the unit was removed, leaving the way open to the drift.

All this caused some dismay in the Pioneers and they promptly legged it back over the drift to the southern side. The 1st Battalion NNC were next in line and turned half the unit to face the Mxhapho on their flank, and the rest facing the izinGulube to their front. The 1st NNC fought well but were

in turn swamped and wiped out, with the victorious Mxhapho and izinGulube washing their spears in the bodies. The iNngwegwe moved to cross the drift but were promptly engaged by the British artillery from both flanks with the 99th also turning to face the drift and join in the fun. The Natal Pioneers had reformed and were, for the time being at least, helping to hold the line. This was too much for the iNngwegwe who fell back and went to ground.

The iOhwa tried their hand at crossing the river but were sitting, or rather, wading targets and were driven back. The inSukamgeni thought better of this and continued to engage the Naval Brigade to some effect due to the disparity in numbers, but took more hits than they gave.

The Zulus had shot their bolt and were in cover on their side of the river and restricting themselves to the odd pot shot at the British. The mixture of casualty markers and shaken results that the various Zulu units were carrying meant they were in no position to attack the British so would hold their ground and wait for nightfall. For the British commanders the game was now akin to lion taming, if they could keep a confident and united front the Zulus wouldn't attack, but any sign of weakness would bring the forces of Cetshwayo down upon them. The British commanders concentrated their forces on their side of the drift with a view to forming a laager with the wagons or legging it, with the smart money on the former.

All in all an enjoyable game with a draw a reasonable result; the British had just enough protection from the river to keep the Zulus off, while the Zulus had enough of the British force in the open to give them a chance.



ZULUS MASS BEFORE TAKING THE PLUNGE.



A TIGHT SPOT!



Mountain Trap: The Battle of



*But the worst o' your foes is the sun over'ead:
You must wear your 'elmet for all that is said:
If 'e finds you uncovered 'e'll knock you down dead,
An' you'll die like a fool of a soldier.*

Rudyard Kipling

It was just as well that Colonel Evelyn Wood was a fighting man because for him civilian life was just too dangerous. True, he was seriously wounded as a midshipman in the Crimea, and again as a cavalry officer during the 1874 Ashanti Campaign. In between, however, a giraffe stomped on his face; a tiger took him for a tasty morsel; he caught pneumonia; suffered from seemingly constant digestive issues; and even chronic toothache nearly accounted for the wiry, little redheaded son of a clergyman. When he arrived in South Africa to take charge of Lord Chelmsford's third column, a horse-drawn pharmacy followed him out to his command in northwest Zululand. By contrast, his second-in-command, Brevet-Colonel Redvers Buller was an appropriately named ox of a man who tasked any poor nag that had the misfortune to carry him; and woe betide anyone who got in his way, either friend or foe, when he was in a bad mood, which was seemingly always. Together, the little-and-large act fought a modern, irregular-style hit and run campaign against the Zulus for two months from January

Hlobane, 28 March 1879

1879. But, on 28 March on top of Hlobane Mountain, one of a chain of flat-topped, mountain strongholds in northwest Zululand, they almost came completely unstuck and only the most heroic of actions in a desperate retreat would save them.

The northwest front differed from the theatre of operations assigned to Colonel Pearson and that of Lord Chelmsford's central column. This was the region of contested boundaries that brought Sir Bartle Frere to South Africa in the first place; the Boers coveted this land, while various smaller Zulu tribes fought them, the British, and each other to maintain their presence. Wood soon got down to business on his arrival. He and Buller, along with a mostly irregular army, numbering 2,000 and consisting of small mounted units and native auxiliaries with some British infantry for backbone, hit the local Zulus fast and hard then withdrew to their base. Buller's ruthless mounted units in particular caused havoc amongst the Zulus, killing many and stealing their cattle, with the exception of one tribe, the abaQulusi under the command of Prince Mbilini waMswati. Their vicious counter-raids against farms along the border would drive Wood to utter distraction, and it did not take long for him to realize that something would have to be done about them.

Mbilini was already a thorn in the side of the British before the war broke out; indeed, one of the conditions of Frere's ultimatum was that King Cetshwayo hand Mbilini over to stand trial for his raiding activities in the region. The irony was that Mbilini was not a Zulu but a Swazi, whose allegiance to Cetshwayo waxed and waned according to his needs. He was a merciless little son of a Swazi too, hated by the Boers and British alike and feared by almost everyone, especially those living in isolated farmsteads for whom Mbilini was the bogeyman. By the time Frere's ultimatum expired, the defiant Mbilini lived openly on the slopes of Hlobane Mountain and

acted as the defacto commander of Zulu resistance against Wood. Therefore, Wood's difficulty was not in finding Mbilini and the abaQulusi, but driving them out of their hilltop lair.

On 20 January, Wood made his first attempt to dislodge the abaQulusi, sending Buller with his Frontier Light Horse and some Boers to the first mountain in the chain, Zungwini. But he had seemingly underestimated his enemy. Around a thousand Zulus met Buller's ascent with a sweeping attack that nearly trapped his command like the Grand Old Duke of York, neither halfway up nor halfway down. Buller escaped by the skin of his teeth, narrowly avoiding another British disaster that January after the calamity at Isandlwana. Undaunted, Wood returned two days later, this time with some infantry, and surprised the Zulus who fled, leaving their cattle behind. Wood was jubilant until someone tapped him on the shoulder and pointed to the next mountain Hlobane where 4,000 Zulus drilled out in the open. Wood realized that this might be a bigger job than he first thought; but there was no one else to do it and it's always best just to get on with things. Thus the British were back on 24 January ready for another go. They opened the engagement with artillery, only for the abaQulusi warriors to retreat back up the slopes of Hlobane where, for the moment, British soldiers feared to tread. In any case, the news of Isandlwana brought any plans Wood had for the conquest of Hlobane to an abrupt halt. He therefore moved his base to Khambula to cover the town of Luneburg and settled into hit and run operations for the next two months.

Neither the British nor Zulus scored any useful victories in the tit-for-tat fighting that continued through February, but then in early March Wood's little corner of the war blew up in spectacular fashion. The drama concerned an ammunition wagon train travelling between the towns of Derby and Luneburg. Captain David Moriarty of the 80th Foot took



a company out from Luneburg to escort the train, but on 9 March, the raging Ntombe River stopped the little column in its tracks. All that day and the next Moriarty's men struggled and cursed the wagons across, but on the night of the 10th they were still at it when darkness fell and they settled down to wait until morning. Moriarty exhibited the by now typical British overconfidence when he split his command to occupy both banks with nary a thought to the dangers of Zulu attack. Mbilini, on the other hand, could hardly believe his luck and wasted no time getting his men ready to attack. Mist shrouded the river the next morning when one of Moriarty's sentries gasped at the sight of 900 Zulus approaching rapidly. His last earthly view was a line of Zulus at 70 yards, leveling their rifles and firing, before launching a devastating charge into the British tents. Moriarty died along with over 70 of his men and civilian wagon drivers. The soldiers on the south bank got away, as did Mbilini's men with as much ammunition as they could carry along with all the transport.

The disaster on the Ntombe galvanized the British. Chelmsford had been preparing for revenge since Isandlwana and ordered his subordinate commanders to raid the Zulus all along the front on 28 March. That was music to Wood's ears and gave him his excuse to risk a concerted attack against Mbilini on Hlobane Mountain. He too began getting his command ready for a predawn assault. What Wood did not know was that the Zulus weren't exactly sitting around waiting for the British to come knocking. Indeed, Mbilini was expecting different company in the form of 20,000 veteran Zulu warriors sent by Cetshwayo. They left the Royal kraal on 24 March intent on delivering a lesson to Wood's column similar to that handed out to Chelmsford. For his part, Wood heard the reports of the impi heading towards him but he chose to ignore them, and besides, he was busy. From the 24th to the 26th, the British wandered up and down the Ntombe valley on a wild goose chase based on false intelligence before finally arriving, weary and tired, near Hlobane on the night of the 27th to prepare for their attack the next day.



WORKING ON THE PONTS AT RORKE'S DRIFT.

Wood peered through his telescope at the slopes of Hlobane Mountain as dawn broke on the 28th. The sight that greeted him might have intimidated lesser commanders. Hlobane stretched for four miles running east to west between two lower hills. The sides rose steadily to heights of 800 feet where chiseled cliffs completed an almost impenetrable ring of rock. The undulating grassland on top of the mountain promised ideal cavalry country, but two steep and treacherous slopes, one at each end of the mountain, formed the only means of access. Wood's plan called for a simultaneous attack from both ends of the mountain. Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Russell would take 200 mounted troops, 440 native auxiliaries, and a rocket-battery up the western path and clear that end of the mountain, while Buller, with 160 Frontier Light Horse, 480 irregulars, and the other rocket-battery, attacked from the east. Wood chose to remain below coordinating the operation. The advance began in the dark at 3:30am with neither Russell nor Buller fully appreciating the difficulties that waited for them.

The day started to go awry almost before it began. Russell received the first shock when he discovered in the dawn's early light that the path to the top of Hlobane was impassable to his mounted soldiers. He opted to send up some dismounted troops while the rest remained on the lower slopes connecting Hlobane to the adjacent small hill, Ntendeka. Buller's command had the easier climb geographically, although he did manage to lose Lieutenant-Colonel Weatherley's Border Horse along the way. His subsequent misfortune came from the heavens in two forms; first, a sudden thunderstorm drenched them, then almost immediately Zulu sentries spotted Buller's command and began raining down bullets. The indomitable Buller spurred his men on to the crest of the hill where surely the Zulus would be drawn up just waiting to be scattered across the plateau. Unfortunately for Buller, Mbilini's mother didn't raise an idiot.

Buller's men got their first view of the hilltop at 6:30; they saw cows and lots of them, but of the Zulus they could see neither hide nor hair. When the sentries had raised the alarm, the abaQulusi moved quickly into gear. Most of them took up positions amongst the rocks around the rim of the mountain and commenced firing, while the rest climbed down and around to the rear of Buller's column effectively closing the back door. Just as they were settling in amongst the rocks at the foot of the hill, however, along came Weatherley's Border Horse, recently joined by Wood, and a vigorous exchange of fire ensued. The always aggressive British commander ordered the attack, which he led personally only to lose his interpreter, staff officer, and his horse to Zulu bullets. There then followed a most bizarre episode when Wood ordered nearby native auxiliaries to bury the two men immediately, which they did, probably wondering if they were also digging their own graves. Wood conducted the burial service then promptly rode off down the hill with his escort in tow!

Back on top of the hill, Buller's men busied themselves rustling Zulu cows while a small rearguard kept up a steady fire on the abaQulusi. But superior Zulu numbers began to tell as more warriors climbed up the rocks to fire on the British.



VETERAN REDCOATS ON THE MARCH.

Then Buller spotted another Zulu force on top of Ityenka, adjacent to Hlobane along the path running east. With the Zulus forming a crescent of fire round his command, Buller ordered a hasty exit. Unfortunately, he was not the only one giving orders in what was rapidly becoming a chaotic situation; so the rearguard found itself one minute fighting, the next retreating, the next going back to fight again. Buller also became distracted by the need to retrieve one of his fallen officers and sent a troop of Frontier Light Horse under Captain Barton to go and get him. Barton started off only to bump into Weatherley's horsemen coming the other way. They decided jointly to get off the mountain down the eastern slope. Meanwhile, a dust cloud rose slowly to the south of Hlobane; it was the main Zulu army arrayed in columns but beginning to sweep out east and west to envelop Hlobane.

Russell saw the huge impi first and fell back to the foot of Ntendeke: Buller saw them last and ordered his command to withdraw to the northwest to escape the jaws of the Zulu trap. He also sent word to Barton and Weatherley, but they were already on their way down the eastern slope directly into the path of the impi's right wing. They wheeled and attempted to break through the abaQulusi behind them, but

those that did ended up on the cliffs facing north. Few of the British survived their tragic error – Barton escaped only to die after a seven mile chase when his horse collapsed. The rest of Buller's command faced a situation almost as perilous when they arrived at what became known as the Devil's Pass, a slope of boulders running down Hlobane to the northwest. The rapidly disintegrating force only had a small path to navigate with any certainty whilst all around them the Zulus in the rocks opened a fierce fire while others closed in for the kill. Slaughter is the only word for what happened next. The Zulus behind Buller's force had the advantage of attacking downhill, and any attempt at a stand at the bottom of the slope collapsed with more Zulus from the main impi attacking from the south. All the British could do was run as fast as they could out of the killing zone, though some, including Buller, heroically doubled back to rescue dismounted comrades. The Battle of Hlobane was over: nearly 100 British lay dead on the mountain along with over 100 native auxiliaries and an uncounted number of Zulus. The affair was another disaster for Chelmsford's forces, but also another stunning victory for the Zulus who refused to lie down at the feet of the British lion. That in turn, however, would lead to a fatal miscalculation by the Zulus that would prove equally disastrous.



THE LANCE VERSUS THE ASSEGAI.

ORDER OF BATTLE

BRITISH

Command

- Brevet-Colonel Redvers Buller
- Royal Artillery Rocket Battery
- 2nd Battn Wood's Irregulars (277):
Major Knox-Leet

Mounted Force

- The Burgher Force (40)
- The Frontier Light Horse (160):
Captain Robert Barton
- The Transvaal Rangers (70):
Commandant Pieter Raaf
- The Border Lancers (54):
Lieutenant-Colonel Weatherley
- Baker's Horse (80)

• Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Russell:

- Royal Artillery Rocket Battery
- 1st Squadron Mounted Infantry (80)
- Natal Native Horse – Edendale Troop (70)
- The Kaffrarian Vanguard (110)
- 1st Battn Wood's Irregulars (240)

Native Auxiliaries (150): Prince uHamu kaNzibe



ZULU

abaQulusi

- Command: Prince Mbilini waMswati
- 4 Warbands (250 each)

Zulu Impi

- Command: Ntshingwayo kaMahole
- 10 Regiments (1,000 each)

BLACK POWDER FORCES

BRITISH

Bullerforce

- Commander Brevet-Colonel Redvers Buller (10)
- Royal Artillery Rocket Battery one launcher, mule mounted
- The Frontier Light Horse
- The Transvaal Rangers
- The Border Lancers
- Baker’s Horse

Burgher Force

- Commander Piet Uys (8)
- The Burgher Force

Russellforce

- Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Russell (8)
- Royal Artillery Rocket Battery one launcher, mule mounted
- 1st Squadron Mounted Infantry
- Natal Native Horse
- The Kaffrarian Vanguard
- 1st Battn Wood’s Irregulars

Renegade Zulus

- Commander Prince Hamu kaNzibe (8)
- Allied Zulus

Woodforce

- Commander General Evelyn Wood (10)
- Wood’s Irregulars



ZULU

Zulu Impi

- Commander Mehlokazulu (8)

iNgobamakhosi Regiment

- 4 units of 30 figures

abaQulusi

- Commander Mynamana Buthelezi (8)
- 4 Units of 16 figures

If further Zulus are required, they can be recycled or added; though if they are required something has gone terribly wrong.

Wargaming the Battle of Hlobane

Our scenario for the battle of Hlobane begins with the British players already on top of the mountain: the problem is how to get off, and quickly. Indeed, with a major Zulu impi closing in, the race to escape might get desperate. To add a certain piquancy to the affair, the British ally Prince Hamu kaNzibe is out with the British command as his war is very different to theirs. Similarly, the main Zulu force and abaQulusi do not necessarily see eye to eye and are fellow travelers as much as allies. The game is designed to be representative of the problems faced by the various factions rather than an accurate refight of the battle. There are several things the British are unaware of, so it might be prudent to use an umpire and to limit the British players’ access to the following missions.

Missions

The British force is divided into three contingents and their mission is now simply to get off the mountain in as few pieces as possible.

Prince Hamu kaNzibe takes the view that his enemy’s enemy is not his friend, simply a convenient bedfellow. For him, the British might be useful for deposing his half-brother but no

more than that. The Prince is also aware of a path down from the midpoint of the southern edge of the plateau that his men can take, but mounted troops cannot. For obvious reasons this last sentence was omitted from the general briefing given to our guinea-pig players.

The Zulu mission is straightforward; destroy the British force and kill the renegade Prince Hamu – you do not expect the abaQulusi to do much more than slow the enemy down.

The abaQulusi must hold the British up for the main impi to arrive while not sacrificing everything in so doing. Preventing the removal of your cattle is the priority, and as the British have already abandoned them you have a free hand to appear committed while avoiding casualties.

Procedures

- The British begin the game on-table and deployed.
- The British side gets the first turn.
- At the beginning of Turn 2, and every Turn thereafter, the Zulu player rolls a d6 for his forces to arrive, needing a 6 on that turn, a 5 on the next etc. with a successful roll resulting

Zulu!

in the arrival of a Zulu regiment on the western table edge, and a further regiment every turn thereafter. However, the first Zulu regiment automatically arrives the turn after the British cross the midpoint of the table.

- The game ends when the last British or renegade Zulu unit escapes or is wiped out.
- Due to this being a four-handed game, victory conditions are impossible to prescribe, but it should be obvious at the end who has done best. If it isn't, you can always try again!

The Table

The 8'x6' table is sectioned into three lengthways with an identifiable track running down the centre. The final third is the Devil's Pass. It is covered in boulders that are impassable to horses whether mounted or dismounted, except for the track that winds down to the edge. The track should allow for one stand at a time to pass. Troops on foot cross the boulder field at 1/4 speed.

The other two-thirds of the table are flat grassland with a few boulders sprinkled around. A border of rocks runs up either side, six inches from the edge, to represent the edges of the Hlobane plateau. The western edge of the table is open.

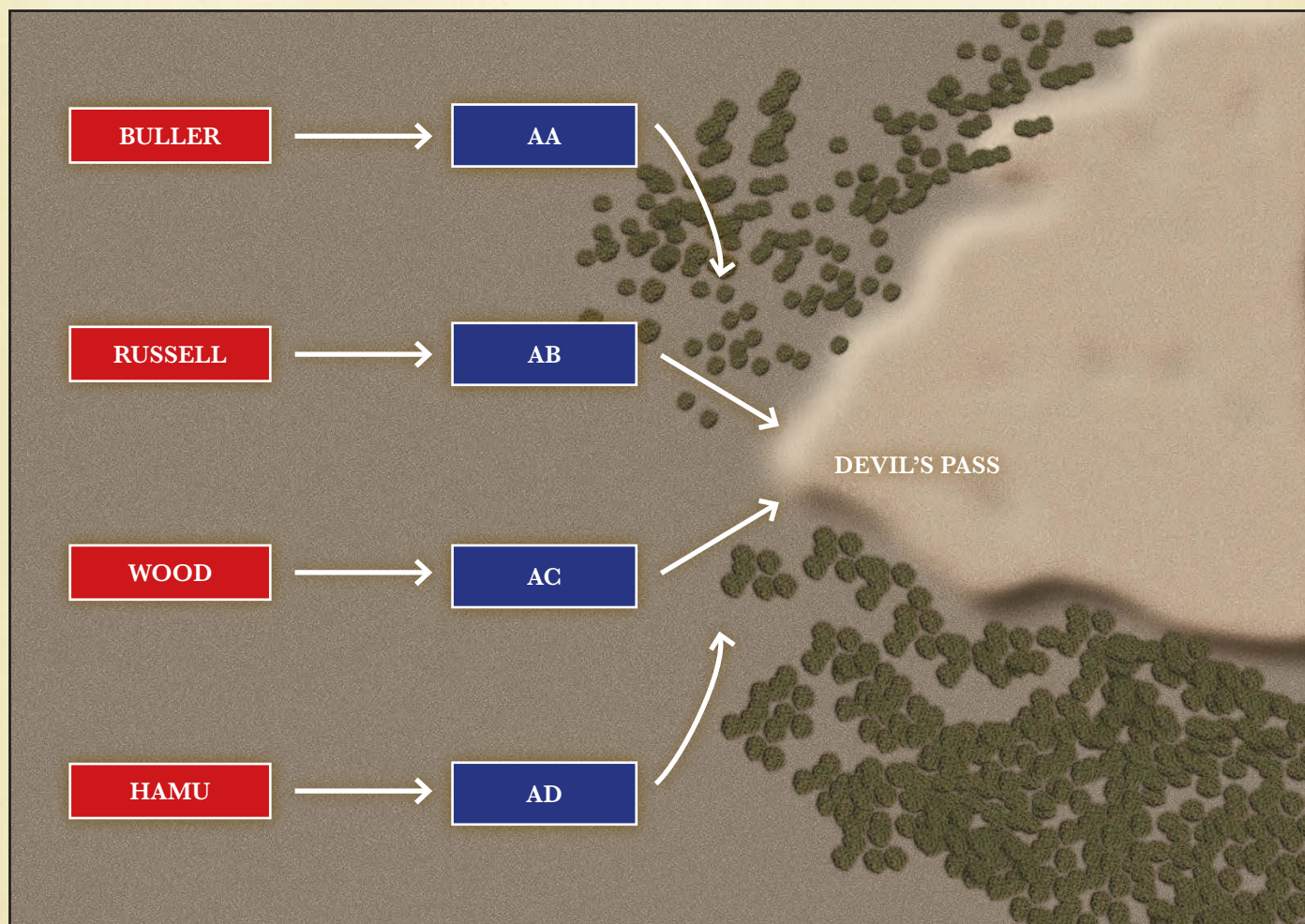
Deployment

The British deploy across the width of the table 12" from the western edge. The abaQulusi deploy anywhere on the table west of the Devil's Pass and more than 18 inches from the western table edge. The Zulu impi is off table. If figures are available, the abaQulusi cattle should be represented, but these are now of little interest to the British so are only for aesthetic purposes. Everyone except the British is aware of the path down from the middle of the southern table edge.

'He said before I left the saddle, I looked back and there I could see my chief in the centre of his square, with his long moustaches, and one good arm held high up in the air. He was shouting and laughing 'Come round me, come round me. There is no point in running from these people, I know them too well'.

That was the last I saw of my chief. But I still heard him shouting when I was way down in the valley. 'Come round me and fix bayonets and fight and die like British soldiers do'. So it was to be.'

from Angle-Zulu War, by Robert Gerrard



British Army stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Wood's Irregulars	Cavalry	Breech-loading carbine	4	3	4+	3	Skirmish, Marauders
Mounted Infantry and other Horse	Cavalry	Breech-loading carbine	4	2	4+	2	Skirmish, Stubborn, Small, Marauders
Rocket Battery	Artillery		1	Special	4+	1	

Special rules

- All skirmish cavalry can dismount and fight on foot and can subsequently remount if required. A unit can move and dismount/remount as a single move, but requires a specific order to do so.



Renegade Zulu stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Zulu	Infantry	Spear and firearm	6	1	4+	3	Stubborn, Bloodthirsty

Special rules

- All the Zulu units include a proportion of troops with firearms – although mixed – we count these as muskets with a range of 18".

Zulu stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
abaQulusi	Infantry	Spear and firearm	6	1	4+	3	Skirmish or Warband

Special rules

- Any unit of abaQulusi can be Skirmishers due to their preference for ambush and firepower. Units must choose whether to be Warbands or Skirmishers at the start of the game.
- Up to half the Zulu units may possess firearms with a range of 18" – all remaining Zulu units have Assegai with a range of 6".

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Zulu	Infantry	Spear and firearm	6	1	4+	3	Warband, Bloodthirsty

Special rules

- Up to half the Zulu units may possess firearms with a range of 18" – all remaining Zulu units have Assegai with a range of 6".



"JOIN THE BRITISH ARMY", THEY SAID, "SEE THE WORLD..."

Battle Report

We split the grizzled veterans and raw enthusiasts to simulate the experienced British like Redvers Buller and the untested abaQulusi; this writer drew Wood and resolved to live up to his historical predecessor. As a concession to Prince Hamu and the Dutch farmers of Buller's Force, it was decided that "Coalition" was a better term for our merry band than "British", but those of us from the Northern Isles knew this was mere window dressing and that the fate of the battle matched our own.

The Coalition deployment was straightforward. Prince Hamu insisted on taking the southern flank, something to do with royal precedence and juju or some nonsense his *injamga* came up with; then Wood, Russell and Buller deployed to his north. Their plan was to take the plateau at a canter, sweep all before them, hopefully without having to dismount, then form a perimeter at the top of the Devil's Pass, keeping the flanks of the path clear with firepower. Buller set his Boers out as a screen, partly as a prudent measure and partly as he was sick of hearing "de Boers zijn en onafhankelijke kommando" or some similar Dutch jibber-jabber.

The abaQulusi were helmed by one of our students, but a calculating type, who set out his forces on a map because they were thus far invisible to the Coalition, according to the umpire. Once placed on table they would form a rough arc across the table about 24 – 36 inches from the western edge. Their plan was to hold in the centre and fall back as required

on the flanks. For identification purposes we referred to them as a, b,c and d, reading from the north with 'a' opposite Buller and 'd' opposite Prince Hamu.

The Zulu plan was also straightforward, get on the table as soon as possible and wipe out the Coalition. Prince Hamu was first on the hit list, but they wouldn't stand on ceremony and any order of annihilation would do.

Turn One began with the Coalition advancing at best speed to put some distance between themselves and the Zulu entry point and to trigger any ambushes lurking in the broken terrain in the knowledge that the abaQulusi were in front of them and reasoning that they would not resist firing on such a juicy target. Uys led his men forwards and like a well trained hound set about flushing his quarry, which he promptly did as the abaQulusi 'a' unit opened fire at them but without any success. Elsewhere, the abaQulusi kept their powder dry while the Coalition advanced.

Turn Two saw the Zulu player throwing a 2 followed by some choice expletives. The Boers had to halt and dismount into cover in the face of sustained abaQulusi fire; the rest of Bullerforce closed up behind them. Russell pressed on unopposed, Wood was coming under fire from his front but returned fire on the move (to negligible effect), while in the south the abaQulusi 'd' unit had fallen back unseen and was sorting itself out to charge Prince Hamu who in turn was seemingly steadfastly ignoring the fire escape to his right.

Our Zulu player, growing tired of cooling his heels and manning the coffee urn, much to the amusement of all promptly threw a 4, granting the Coalition one more turn of breathing space before the impending Zulu automatic entry. Buller swept past Uys as the abaQulusi melted away before him. The abaQulusi ‘b’ unit, though, had now picked a spot for their stand and opened up on Russell who, apparently mistaking his wild colonials for the Light Brigade, ordered them to charge! The startled abaQulusi promptly melted into the long grass. Wood, meanwhile, had been forced to dismount his men and was winking out the abaQulusi in front of him while keeping a weather eye on his rear. Prince Hamu kept on going, being reasonably certain there were abaQulusi to his front, but keeping open the option to swing north to help Wood.

With a mighty cry at the start of Turn Three, the iNgobamakhosi Regiment came on the table and made straight down the centreline, aiming for the top of the Devil’s Pass. Seeing this the abaQulusi thought honour was satisfied and melted away in front of Buller and Russell, the latter sweeping through their last known position with a mighty “Huzzah!” though what we may kindly refer to as sniping was all the opposition they had faced. Wood was still struggling to impose his will on the equally numerous ‘c’ unit and was hoping that one or other of the units to his flank would lend a hand, but

‘We came across those red soldiers standing shoulder to shoulder in a great square. There were some wearing black or blue, the Natal Carbineers and Natal Police. There were a few Zulu amongst them, fighting for the English.

In the centre of the square was a tall man, with long moustaches, with one good arm held high. He shouted, laughed and joked with his men. Those red soldiers had run out of ammunition. They stood there with their rifles in front of them, with their long knives; their bayonets; on the end of their rifle barrels.

We Zulus were literally within spitting distance. We had run out of ammunition and throwing spears. We belloed our war cries, picked up our knees and drove our feet into the ground. We tried to frighten those red soldiers, but they wouldn’t move. Finally we picked up our dead, and hurled our dead at those long knives. Only when our dead stuck on the end of the rifle barrels, did they rip those rifles, then we stepped forward, stabbing and thrusting with our spears, killing those red soldiers, and quickly stepped back.’

from Angle-Zulu War, by Robert Gerrard



FAST-MOVING LINES OF ZULU SKIRMISHERS PRESS FORWARD.

Zulu!

keeping in character felt himself unable to ask. Hamu and the abaQulusi 'd' unit happily charged one another in a fratricidal manner and would be left to it by the rest of the Coalition who could not easily tell friend from foe.

Now that all the participants were on the table, turns started to blend into one another as Russell secured the top of the Devil's Pass and started to filter his units down it, with the rocket tube set up to cover the flank and his battalion of Wood's Irregulars covering them. Buller established his rocket tube on the other flank and organized his forces to follow on, apart from Uys and the Burgher Force who were setting about the abaQulusi with a will and the occasional comment of "Exit stage left pursued by a Boer" for which this writer can only apologise. Buller gave "follow me" orders to the Frontier Light Horse and led them to help Wood, who was now bogged down completely and casting ever more nervous glances at the advancing Zulus who were streaming onto the table. On the southern flank, however, the umpire stepped in to take the participants and their figures into another room for reasons that will be revealed. Wood made it to the British perimeter just as the lead Zulus crashed into it.

To recap, the 1st Battalion of Wood's Irregulars were bearing the brunt of the defence; Uys and Buller were still outside the perimeter; Wood's own force was at the top of the Pass; and the rest of the British were trailing down the Pass. At this point, the umpire along with Hamu and the abaQulusi player, re-appeared and placed a unit of Zulus to the south of the British and a number of small Zulu units dispersed on the plateau and boulderfield. Despite being given the option by the umpire, Wood's Irregulars declined to roll to see if this unit was hostile and decided to treat them as abaQulusi, which proved prudent as they were hostile. Prince Hamu's objections to the possibility of friendly fire were met with a shrug.

A brisk firefight now ensued at the top of the Pass, which became brisker and accompanied by the occasional "whoosh" of rockets as the iNgobamakhosi Regiment started down the boulderfield to cut off the British. Around this time, both Buller and Uys ran out of luck, leading their tired men on exhausted horses into melees with vast numbers of Zulus, much to the glee of the Zulu player. Wood now took command of the perimeter and Russell set off down the Pass, but the mass of Zulus swarming down the slope meant all was lost for the Coalition.



A ZULU COMMANDER OBSERVES HIS WARRIORS' PROGRESS FROM AFAR.



A FIGHT TO THE BITTER END.

Buller, Uys, Wood, and Prince Hamu were all killed, and all the Coalition except the Transvaal Rangers, the Border Lancers, the Natal Native Horse, and Kaffrarian Vanguard, were lost. Russell led this bedraggled band back to camp, having cut his way through by force of extraordinary die rolling using factors which the umpire freely admitted he made up as he went along; for example, a roll to burst through hostile Zulus, while riding an out of control horse down a scree slope. In the circumstances it was left to the Zulus and abaQulusi to argue over the victory and the spoils, which they happily did. The Coalition was equally happy to blame one another with the general perception being that each contingent had been badly let down by the others. The Zulus were now on a roll with three wins out of three and looking forward to the next battle, while the British were licking their wounds and hoping for a “proper standup fight” to quote the recently deceased Redvers Buller.

Thousands of 'em...

‘At about 10:30 the Zulus were seen coming over the hills in thousands. They were in perfect order, and seemed to be in about 20 rows of skirmishers one behind the other. They were in a semi-circle round our two flanks and in front of us and must have covered several miles of ground. Nobody knows how many there were of them, but the general idea is at least 20,000... Before we knew where we were they came right and left. Everybody then who had a horse turned to fly. The enemy were going at a kind of very fast half-walk half-run. On looking round we saw that we were completely surrounded and the road to Rorke’s Drift was cut off.’

from Heroes for Victoria, by John Duncan and John Walton

"On the Horns of a Dilemma":



*When 'arf of your bullets fly wide in the ditch,
Don't call your Martini a cross-eyed old bitch;
She's human as you are -- you treat her as sich,
An' she'll fight for the young British soldier.*

Rudyard Kipling

To the younger Zulu warriors, full of bloodlust and intoxicated by success, fighting the British appeared to be a relatively enjoyable exercise. After all, had not the Zulus destroyed one column, forced another into hiding behind their walls at Eshowe on the coast, and sent a third British force scurrying back to their base from their raid on Hlobane Mountain? How future generations would celebrate their deeds. To those Zulu warriors with a bit more gristle attached, the enthusiasm of their less experienced comrades masked some harsh realities. They knew Zulus could not stand up to devastating volleys of rifle fire from disciplined British troops; and they understood that the British might be checked but never fully beaten. Only great tactical skill, masterful generalship, and good luck had prevented defeat so far in this short war, but that was against an outnumbered enemy arrayed in the open. Hadn't King Cetshwayo ordered his brave Zulus never to attack the British behind barricades and walls? Yet, here they were only one day after the battle of Hlobane, watching the British lining the barricades and walls of their base at Khambula while the fevered shouts of the younger regiments working themselves up for the assault rang round the valley. Soon they would move off to charge the wounded British lion, where they would surely be greeted with its roar of booming cannons and thundering rifle volleys.

Colonel Evelyn Wood knew the Zulus were coming and was happy; indeed, this was his fervent desire. He had lost many good men the day before at Hlobane but none of his precious British infantry or artillery, and his entire command occupied a particularly strong position on a ridge running east to west along the centre of a wide valley. Wood's command post stood on a

The Battle of Khambula, 29 March 1879

narrow knoll in the middle of the ridge, surrounded by a trench and parapet that was filled with soldiers thirsting for revenge. Just over one hundred yards away to the west, British infantry of the 90th and 13th Regiments manned a large, six-sided wagon-laager that also incorporated trenches with barricades of mealie-bags and biscuit-boxes added for extra protection. The Royal Artillery deployed four cannons along the neck connecting the laager to the redoubt and one each in those positions. All around, the ground sloped away, providing almost perfect fields of fire. That is except for one area on the slope south of Wood's redoubt where a smaller wagon-laager contained Wood's cattle herd and a company of the 13th. That obstructed the firing vectors of the two main defensive positions, and if lost to the Zulus could prove to be a thorn in the British side. Wood had therefore erected a wooden palisade from the redoubt to the cattle-laager to prevent the Zulus moving freely between the three defensive positions to concentrate their attacks. Having prepared as best he could for the onslaught to come, Wood and the 2,000 men around him waited, anxious for the Zulus to attack.

The massive Zulu impi hove into view during the late morning, their destination as yet unknown. There was always the chance they might bypass Khambula to attack across the frontier against softer targets. Wood was therefore quite relieved to see the warriors shake out into their familiar bull and horns formation. The British soldiers checked their weapons one last time and made ready. The Zulu left horn, consisting of the uKhandempemvu, uMbonambi, and uNokhenke regiments, jogged into the southern stretch of the valley;

the iNgobamakhosi and uVe regiments making up the right horn loped out to the north; and the iNdlondlo, uDloko, uThulwana, iNdluyengwe, iSangqu, uDududu, and iMbube forming the centre chest formation took up positions due east of Wood's redoubt. The crescent of 20,000 Zulus thus formed closed in steadily; the crescendo of war cries, stamping feet, and clashing shields, unnerving the British defenders. The impi stopped three miles out to synchronize the advance, then began again, pressing forward relentlessly like a massive black wave about to crash on a very small island. Suddenly, the right horn broke ranks, sprinting to within a thousand yards of the British defences. Skirmishers next ran out ahead to take up positions as the warriors behind girded themselves for the devastating final charge. These were the Zulus bravest, or most foolish, fired up into a fever pitch of fury, desperate to prove themselves better than their rival regiments on the left horn. But to the warriors' amazement, a hundred mounted soldiers rode out from the main laager to within a few hundred yards, dismounted on the slope, and began firing.

The horsemen were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Redvers Buller, sent out by Wood to goad the right horn into a precipitous attack. The tactic worked: stung by bullets, the furious young warriors poured forward, getting tantalizingly close to Buller's retreating troops, even catching a few, but the rest eluded the Zulus, escaping back into the laager. With the horsemen safely in the laager, the curtain they made was drawn aside to reveal the leveled Martini-Henrys of the British infantry. "Fire!" shouted Wood, followed



TWO 7-LBERS OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY DOUBLE THEIR FIRE AS THE ZULU CLOSE.



immediately by a scything volley from all along the northern barricades. No courage could overcome the British bullets, though some Zulus made it to the walls of bags and boxes before succumbing. The rest fell back, scrambling for cover behind some boulders about 700 yards distant. Wood's tactical masterstroke thus threw off the timing of the Zulu attack: his attention now turned to the Zulu left and centre who were closing in for their first attack. First blood went to the British, but this battle was far from over.

The left horn had a distinct advantage over the centre and right formations because a terrace about a hundred yards from the British position on the southern slope covered their advance. But, having taken the sting out of the attack by the right horn, Wood moved three of his artillery pieces to face south. When the Zulus finally appeared over the shelf, the British assailed them with a torrent of lead that flailed them mercilessly. Nevertheless, the courageous warriors broke into the cattle laager, driving out the overmatched company of British infantry. The Zulus took up the British positions and opened up a galling fire in support of a gathering assault on the main laager. That prompted Wood to go back into his bag of tricks. As the Zulus started anew up the slope, Major Robert Hackett led out two companies of the 90th from the main laager. The British infantry turned into line in front of the laager and unleashed a staggering volley at two hundred yards. The main Zulu attack recoiled, but those in the cattle laager kept up their fire and they were joined by another group of warriors who occupied a dung heap just to the west of the main laager. Hackett's line was caught in the crossfire, the major himself catching a bullet that blinded him for life. Wood had seen enough and called his infantry back to their defences. In the meantime, Buller ordered the soldiers in the main laager to concentrate their fire on the dung heap, which was quickly reduced, along with the Zulus using it for cover.

More assaults followed. The right horn tried again and British fire shattered them again. The centre charged from their mustering positions around an abandoned village east of Wood's redoubt. Some of them almost made it into the redoubt, but the veterans met the same fate as their excitable juniors. All afternoon, the increasingly disjointed and desperate assault waves crashed against the British rock, and rolled backwards. Wood continued to throw the Zulus off their stride. He sent a company of the 13th back into the cattle laager to evict the Zulus using some sharpened Sheffield steel; then followed that up, ordering a company from the 90th down to the terrace where they fired into the backs of the retreating Zulus. Even when it became obvious that the wind had gone out of the Zulu sails, Wood kept his men firing, and firing, bringing down more warriors whose only thought was to escape this cauldron. Then Wood ordered out his mounted infantry, the men that suffered at Zulu hands the day before. The troopers could not fire fast enough into the fleeing Zulus, some grabbing enemy assegais and returning them with interest. The slaughter continued for seven miles until exhaustion and darkness finally brought an end to the first complete British victory of the war.

Wood lost 28 of his British troops killed in the Battle of Khambula and 55 wounded. An unknown number, but probably not many, of his native auxiliaries fell too, but their losses were nothing compared to the carnage inflicted on the Zulu impi. An estimated 3,000 Zulus either lay dead around the British positions or died later of wounds, and the army's morale was shattered beyond repair. From Khambula onwards, it was all downhill for the Zulus, but their courage kept them in the field to keep on fighting: the Zulu War was not yet over.

ORDER OF BATTLE

BRITISH

Commander: Colonel Evelyn Wood

Redoubt: Lt. R. Payne

- Two Companies of 13th Light Infantry
- One 7-pounder Field Guns and Royal Artillery Crews

Cattle Laager

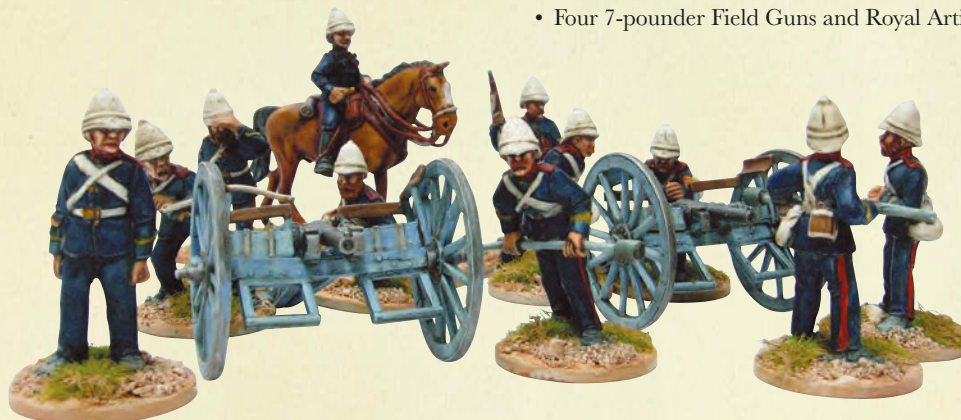
- Captain Cox
- One Company 13th Light Infantry

Main Laager

- Colonel Evelyn Wood
- Two Companies of 90th Light Infantry: Major Robert Hackett
- One Company (100) Frontier Light Horse
- Two Companies of 90th Light Infantry
- One 7-pounder Field Guns and Royal Artillery Crews

Between the Redoubt and Main Laager:

- Four 7-pounder Field Guns and Royal Artillery Crews



ZULU

Commander: Ntshingwayo kaMahole

Commander: Mnyamana kaNgqengelele

ZULU IMPI

Left (6000)

- uKhandempemvu
- uMbonambi
- uNokhenke

Right (6000)

- iNgobamakhosi
- uVe

Centre

- iNdlondlo
- uDloko
- uThulwana
- iNdluyengwe
- iSangqu
- uDududu
- iMbube



“FIRE LOW AND MARK YOUR TARGETS!”

Wargaming the Battle of Khambula

On the face of it, gaming a Zulu attack on a well-defended British hilltop kraal does not sound like much fun for the Zulu player. Nevertheless, the circumstances of Khambula present an interesting challenge to both sides. First, the Zulus were extremely confident of success and arrived at Khambula. The Zulus, therefore, have every chance of taking, then holding, a defensive position. For the British they must both defend and attack, something of a novelty in this war for Her Majesty's forces.

Missions

Control of the cattle kraal is the key to this game: the British must maintain their hold on it with minimal losses.

Procedures

Zulu units must attempt to move to contact their enemy, i.e. they cannot wait around for the other regiments to arrive.

At the start of the first British turn of each stage, roll a dice. On a 5 or 6 artillery are available for that stage – otherwise no artillery is available during that stage.

Whoever holds the kraal at the end of play wins the game.

The Table

The table is arranged with the cattle kraal in the centre on a ridge of high ground; it is well constructed with a palisade, mealie bags, and other field defences to make it a strong position. The dunghill is on-table to the south east of the cattle kraal with a field of fire to the west. The British artillery is off-table to the northwest with its field of fire restricted by any British units on-table.

British Army stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
13th and 90th Foot	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	6	4	4+	3	Steady, Stubborn
Royal Artillery	Artillery	7-pdr gun	1	3-2-1	3+	1	Steady

Special rules

- The British have artillery available on a roll of 5 or 6, rolling each Stage.
- Artillery cannot fire indirectly in this scenario.

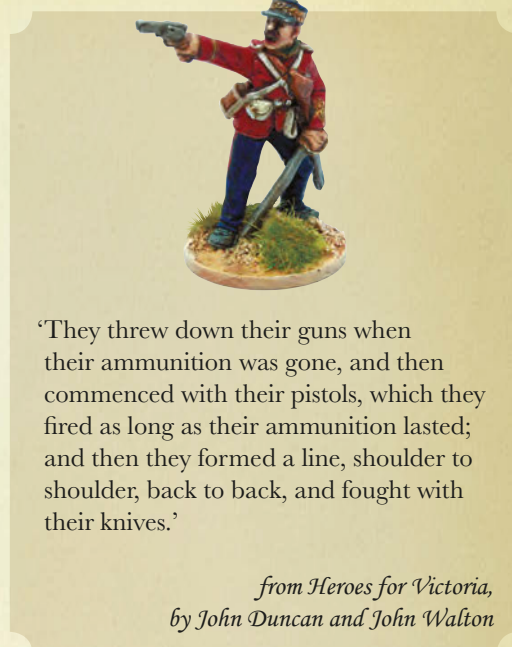
Zulu stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Zulu	Infantry	Spear and firearm	6	2	4+	2	Warband, Bloodthirsty

Special rules

- This battle is fought in four stages. In stage 1 the Zulus receive a +1 Morale bonus (Morale 3+). In stage 4 the Zulus receive a -1 penalty (Morale 5+). See the battle report for more details.
- Zulu warbands include a proportion of troops with firearms of various types – often poor quality trade muskets, but also captured rifles in some cases. Overall, we count these as smoothbore muskets, with a range of 18".





ORDER OF BATTLE

BRITISH

Captain Cox

- One Company 13th Light Infantry
- In the cattle kraal at the start of stage 1

Captain Paterson

- Two Companies of 90th Light Infantry
- Come on at the start of Stage 2

Captain Wilkins

- One Company 13th Light Infantry
- Come on at the start of Stage 4

Off-table

- Four 7-pounder Field Guns and Royal Artillery Crews

ZULU

iNgobamakhosi

- Commander Somopho
- Three units of 20 figures come on in Stage 1
- One unit in the dung heap. On all game but cannot leave their position.

uVe

- Commander Mbilini
- Two units of 20 figures come on in Stage 3





STEADY REDCOAT COMPANIES AWAIT THE ENEMY APPROACH.

Battle Report

Because we fought the action around the Cattle Kraal, which is one of the rare actions of the Zulu War where the British attacked a defended position, there was something of a rush to play the British. This writer pulled rank and claimed Cox, however, while erstwhile Zulu commanders picked Paterson and Wilkins. The Zulus were commanded by the last two players to arrive whose objections were quickly overruled. The scenario is split into four Stages, the initial Zulu attack on Captain Cox and his men; the abortive British counter attack, the Zulu reinforcement and the final British attack by Captain Paterson. Throughout the game, the Zulus were in possession of the dungheap and could attempt to interdict the British approach with fire. Of course, if matters were not to follow the historical pattern then we would simply have to wing it – again!

Stage one

The game began with the lone company of the 13th firmly ensconced in the Cattle Laager peering over the mealie bags and waiting for the attack to come. Cox was determined to hold his ground and see off the Zulu attacks while the Zulu plan was straightforward; rush the British, kill or evict them and then settle down to hold the laager against all comers. After the usual chanting and cavorting from the Indunas the tapes went up and the iNgobamakhosi were off with the three units in a line and the usual plan for the chest to engage the British while the horns lapped round the flanks.

The 13th rolled a 3 for artillery support, but the guns were busy elsewhere, belying their cap badge. So the West-country infantry stood their ground and let drive with closing fire as the chest came towards them. Despite a number of hits the Indunas had done their magical protection work well and all the saves were made. Cox muttered *damnum absque injuria* and took a long hard look at the Zulu dice, but as these were the usual cowhide coloured ones

his complaints were not taken seriously, particularly as those dice had been responsible for some of the worst collapses yet seen on our Anglo-Zulu War table.

As the iNgobamakhosi swept in and up to the defences, the 13th switched to cold steel. In the ensuing hand-to-hand fight, the Zulus started to get the best of things; numbers told in the face of superior technical factors and the Westcountrymen were slowly forced back. When the horns came into play, they inflicted hit after hit and the 13th broke and ran with their figures removed from the table. The iNgobamakhosi settled in for the long haul and lined the kraal with the rifles to the fore.

Stage two

After a brief pause to redress lines and recharge our glasses, the two companies of the 90th advanced on-table at light infantry pace with the Scots determined to retake the kraal. Captain Paterson rolled a 5 and the artillery were freed from duty elsewhere and turned their attention to our corner of Khambula. The Zulu morale was now reduced to the standard 4+ because they were on the defensive, but they seemed cheerful enough when they opened up on the British. Their fire was, however, pretty ragged. The 90th returned the compliment to better effect, but the Zulus made all but one save. The artillery meanwhile made free with canister and shot, disordering the troops on the dungheap and minimizing their effect on the advancing British.

With 'follow me' orders from Captain Paterson the 90th continued to advance, intending to let the Martini-Henrys do their work at shooting range and to stay out of melee. But if need be, they would "get tore in". The Zulus were reluctant to stand in the face of the British fire, but held their ground for the moment, although disordered. After two more turns of this, however, the Zulus were visibly wilting. The British now decided subtly be damned and followed General Cathcart's

motto that in extremis one must try the bayonet. They retook the kraal with cold steel and cries of “They don’t like it up ’em, Captain!” With the centre unit of iNgobamakhosi removed from the action, the right hand unit was soon broken by artillery fire and the left hand retired in sympathy.

Stage three

We were now drifting away from the historical game, so decided that the surviving iNgobamakhosi would be joined by the uVe to attack the kraal. Captain Paterson having promised Wood that he would retake the kraal, and being a firm believer in the dictum *meum pactum*, settled down for the impending assault. The British rolled a 1, so the artillery was again no longer interested in the fate of the Cattle Kraal or its defenders.

The uVe prepared for the attack with the usual Indunas blessings and chanting, which despite all evidence to the contrary they still believed matched the power of Birmingham’s finest firearm. Then the iNgobamakhosi formed the right horn while still carrying one hit; the uVe moved into position, forming the chest and left horn.

The Zulus on the dunghill gave what support they could as their regimental mates charged in but the British remained calm and let drive, disordering the centre uVe unit and causing the iNgobamakhosi two further unsaved hits making them “shaken” and bringing them to a halt. The left horn swung in, reaching the kraal wall and trading blows with the defenders, but without inflicting any hits.

In the second turn of melee the reach of the Martini-Henry and bayonet against the assegai proved the deciding factor and the uVe got the worse of it and were forced to fall back. Despite the fire coming from the right horn and the chest, the 90th remained steadfast. Their rifle fire also began to tell against the Zulus who were rapidly losing enthusiasm for the fray. Seeing that matters would not improve for the moment, the Zulu commanders fell back to lick their wounds and ponder their next move.

Stage four

The British rolled another 5 and once more the Gunners loaded canister and awaited targets. Wilkins and the 13th duly made their appearance and a brief durbar was held to decide what form Stage 4 should take. The Zulus recognized that their luck had deserted them for the day and charging into more artillery and rifles with their morale reduced to 5+ would have only one outcome. They decided therefore that discretion was the better part of valour and declined to come out for a romp. With a salute to British bravery, the Zulus left the table to forage for biscuits and sympathy.

Our refight of Kambula turned out to be a straightforward British victory, with Tommy Atkins getting the better of the Zulu warriors both in attack and defence. The British took more casualties than their historical counterparts but still ran out comfortable winners. For the Zulus it was a rude awakening that the tide had very much turned and their morale and enthusiasm for the fight was ebbing away.



DRAGOON GUARDS RUN DOWN THE BROKEN WARRIORS AT ULUNDI.

"Gingini love you!": The Battle of



"MARK YOUR TARGETS!" MOUNTED INFANTRY STEADFAST IN DEFENCE.

*If your officer's dead and the sergeants look white,
Remember it's ruin to run from a fight:
So take open order, lie down, and sit tight,
And wait for supports like a soldier.*

Rudyard Kipling

The loss at Khambula on 29 March 1879, confirmed to King Cetshwayo that he could not defeat the British in the field. The best he could hope for was to inflict enough damage on his surrounding enemies that they would bargain with him and save his kingdom. What the King could not know was the extent to which his successes before Khambula had shored up Lord Chelmsford's determination to destroy the Zulus and save his own reputation. The King was about to find that out though, for on the very day one of his armies collapsed at Khambula, news came that a large British force had broken camp and was heading in his direction along the coast road. Cetshwayo gathered what forces he had to hand, around 7,000 Zulu warriors, and sent them to meet this fresh attack alongside 3,000 local fighters. As they loped off into the distance, however, time was running out for the Zulu king.

Chelmsford mounted his horse at 6am on the 29th with a look of steely resolve etched on his face. He had anticipated this moment ever since the debacle at Isandlwana where his overconfidence had cost the Empire so dearly. In the wake of that disaster, he sent home for reinforcements, the last of which, the 60th Rifles, had arrived in Durban only a week or so earlier. They joined the largest imperial force so far seen in this war, made up of 3,400 white troops supported by 2,300 native auxiliaries. The green jackets of the 60th added to the colourful array of kilted Highlanders of the 91st, blue and white uniformed matelots, red-jacketed British line infantry, and the earthy clothing of the local

Gingindlovu, 2 April 1879

volunteer cavalry, to form a colourful sprawl across the African landscape. The sailors took up their place in the assembling column equipped with two Gatling Guns that, along with the Royal Artillery's two Field Guns and four rocket troughs, would make up for in firepower any imbalance in numbers between Chelmsford's expedition and the Zulu armies that surely awaited. The army showed other signs that Chelmsford had learned lessons from his stalled January foray. The British commander doubled the amount of oxen for his 120 wagons so that the force could move at a regular pace and not get stuck at the various rivers they had to cross. Chelmsford also left behind the heavy baggage including the tents, and he ordered all the spare ammunition boxes to have their lids loosened for quicker access should the need arise. Looking around at his grand force and confident that this time he was ready for whatever Cetshwayo should throw at him, Chelmsford ordered the march to begin.

The British column covered ten miles on the 29th, heading in the direction of Eshowe where Pearson's beleaguered column had festered since January. From there the plan was to advance, but cautiously, on Cetshwayo's Royal kraal at Ulundi. Chelmsford had also learned his lesson on camping in Zulu territory. This time when the day's march ended, the British column drew its wagons into a square laager and dug a perimeter trench round it at twenty yards out. Sentries were also sent out up to half-a-mile away to make sure no Zulus could spring a surprise attack; although it isn't clear what they were expected to do if a wandering hippo or lion came by. Once they had completed all their preparations, the men settled down between the laager and the perimeter trench hoping for a quiet night under a canopy of stars.

The march trundled along until at noon on April 1st they came to the Gingindlovu River just fifteen miles from Eshowe. Chelmsford was now presented with his first real military problem: most of the terrain between him and Pearson, comprising of a swampy, forested area giving way to undulating hills, was ideal country for hiding an army of Zulus. Moreover, Chelmsford's scouting reports suggested that Zulu numbers were growing out to his front, and if they were to attack him the site selected for this evening's laager would probably be the best place to meet them. Chelmsford therefore ordered his column to build the laager on a nearby knoll with excellent fields of fire all around. The soldiers quickly got down to work, digging and pulling the wagons into a rough square measuring 130 yards on each side – to an attacking enemy they would appear as almost a solid mass. What Chelmsford intended to do about his route forward if the Zulus did not attack is not recorded but, fortunately for him, the Zulus were in an obliging mood.

The Zulus had scouts too, of course, and ever since Chelmsford's column crossed into Zulu territory, they had been watching. Later reports had the Zulus claiming they did not know what they were up against so attacked in ignorance, but that seems highly unlikely. Indeed, from the moment they left the Royal kraal, the Zulus were almost preordained to attack both through their warrior ethos and the nature of their commanders on the ground. Somophoka Zikhali led the main Zulu army. He was a friend and trusted advisor to the King and victory over Chelmsford would greatly enhance his reputation. Of his subordinates, Mavumengwana had commanded at Isandlwana, so attacking the British held no fears for him, and Prince Dabulamanzi kaMapande needed to restore



MOUNTED INFANTRY RUN TO THEIR POSITIONS AS THE ZULUS CLOSE.

his martial reputation after his failed attack on Rorke's Drift. It was, therefore, a wee bit ironic that when all the commanders wanted to attack immediately on their arrival near Gingindlovu on the night of April 1st, Dabulamanzi urged caution. He wanted to attack at dawn when the warriors would be rested and fed, and after much debate finally persuaded Somopho to follow his plan. That night, the Zulu warriors settled round their campfires while only a few miles away Chelmsford's column huddled in pouring rain or worked to strengthen the defences.

A thick rolling mist covered the ground around the British camp at first light the next morning. The men were already up, those that had slept anyway, and at their stations after word arrived overnight that the Zulus were definitely coming. But when? Anxious hands gripped rifles, others fiddled with bayonet scabbards, Chelmsford sent out riders to scout around: for nearly two hours, men peered into the pre-dawn darkness. Two disciplined Zulu columns finally rolled into view just before 6am, heading towards the camp. Chelmsford's officers mounted their horses ready to take command; shouts of "steady" rose from his NCOs; his soldiers and native allies checked their equipment one last time. Some of the Zulus split left and right to encircle the camp to form the horns in their classic Bull formation. Then the Zulu centre came on.

The newly arrived 60th had the honour of presenting arms first. They occupied the north edge of the British square that was now the front face. On their right, the 57th made ready, as did the 99th and 3rd regiments down the left face. The 91st on the rear face prepared to make sure no uninvited guests would come through the back door. The Naval Brigade filled in the corners; on the eastern angles, matelots attached drums of bullets to their Gatling guns, while others loaded rockets into position on the western junctions. Chelmsford's native troops took up their place in the centre of the laager along with the mounted troops, waiting for their moment. In the meantime, the Zulu centre closed, skirmishers out in front and the main body following in open order.

The first volley from the 60th crashed out at 500 yards, followed quickly by the spitting Gatling guns. Neither had much effect on the Zulus who sprinted, skulked, and squirmed from cover to cover, firing all the time. Those that fell to British bullets were quickly replaced and the tidal wave of Zulus kept coming. As the range came down, the 60th wavered, some men shivering with fear, and only the coolness of their officers and continued fire-discipline kept the men in line. The Zulus enveloped the square in similar fashion on three sides as the battle reached its crisis. Then suddenly, at less than 100 yards, the Zulu onslaught staggered to a halt and began to roll back.



ELITE ZULU WARRIORS IN FULL WAR PANOPLY.

ORDER OF BATTLE

BRITISH

Command: Lord Chelmsford

1st Brigade (2570)

- Command: Lieutenant-Colonel Law, 31st Regiment

Naval Brigade (350)

- HMS *Shah*
- HMS *Boadicea* (with Gatling Gun)
- HMS *Tenedos*

3rd Regiment (2 companies) (140)

- 91st Highland Regiment (850)
- 99th Regiment (5 companies) (430)
- 4th Battalion Natal Native Contingent (800)

2nd Brigade (2,670)

- Command: Lieutenant-Colonel Pemberton, 60th Rifles

Artillery

- Two 9-pounder Field Guns
- Two 24-pounder Rocket Tubes

Naval Brigade (190)

Royal Marines (100)

57th Regiment (640)

- 60th Regiment (6 companies) (540)
- 5th Battalion Natal Native Contingent (1,200)

Artillery

- Two 24-pounder Rocket Tubes
- Gatling Gun

Mounted Support

- Command: Major Barrow, 19th Hussars
- Mounted Infantry (70)
- Volunteers (50)
- Mounted Natal Native Contingent (130)
- Native Foot Scouts (150)



ZULU

Command: Inkosi Somopho kaZikhali
Prince Dabulamanzi kaMapande
Mavumengwana kaNdlela Ntuli
amaKhosi Sigcwelegcwele

Regiments (7,000–9,000):

iNgobamakhosi

uMcijo

uNokhenke

uMbonambi

iNdluyengwe

uThulwana

Local Tsonga warriors (3,000)





A WAGON LAAGER - THE KEY TO FIGHTING THE ZULU SUCCESSFULLY.

Wargaming the Battle of Gingindlovu

Gingindlovu pits a Zulu army that is full of confidence against a British square. For their part, the British have confidence in their square formation, and its ability to stop the Zulus dead, literally if need be. This presents something of a problem for the gamer, that of giving the British something useful to do and important decisions to make.

Accordingly, and in part to remedy our Anglo-centric bias, our protagonists all commanded

‘All guns captured were retained by the impi, for everyone who got a gun claimed that he has seized it from the European he had himself killed. The guns were not taken to the king, but the king directed that they should be brought up, when he inspected them and told those who had them to retain them.’

*from Fight us in the Open,
by John Laband*

MARTINI-HENRY RIFLE, COURTESY OF THE
STALLARD COLLECTION.

various Zulu forces with victory conditions and instructions that replicated the piecemeal nature of the Zulu attacks on the day.

Missions

Zulus

The Zulus must attempt to destroy the square, with honour going to the units that do. If that fails, then the regiments that showed themselves most prominently and fought longest will be able to hold their heads up and mock those that did not. Each regiment will be awarded victory points as follows:

- First to fire on the British causing a casualty: 3 points
- First into melee with the British: 5 points
- Breaking the square: 10 points
- Each turn under effective British fire: 1 point
- Each Gatling gun or rocket tube captured: 5 points
- Killing or capturing Chelmsford: 10 points

British

See off the Zulu attacks, inflicting maximum casualties. In a spirit of co-operation the British rolls were made by the Zulu commander on the opposite face of the square. We didn't think we needed anyone playing the overall British commander because – as Chelmsford would have put it – we need not concern ourselves with trifles.

BLACK POWDER FORCES

BRITISH

Commander-in-Chief: Lord Chelmsford

Advance Division

- Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Law (7)
- Naval Brigade
- 57th Regiment Advance Company
- 99th Regiment
- 91st Highlanders
- 4th Battalion Natal Native Contingent
- Two rocket tubes

Rear Division

- Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Pemberton (7)
- 3/60th Regiment
- Naval Brigade and RMLI
- 57th Regiment
- 5th Battalion Natal Native Contingent
- One Gatling gun
- One 9-pounder artillery piece

Mounted Brigade

- Commander Major Barrow (7)
- Mounted Infantry
- Natal Native Horse
- Scouts



ZULU

Commander-in-Chief: Chief Somopo kaZikhala mThembu

uMcijo

- Commander Chief Mbilwane kaMahlanganisa (7)
- Three units

uMhlanga

- Commander Chief Masegwane kaSopigwasi (7)
- Three units

uMbonambi

- Commander Prince Dabulamanzi kaMpande (7)
- Three units

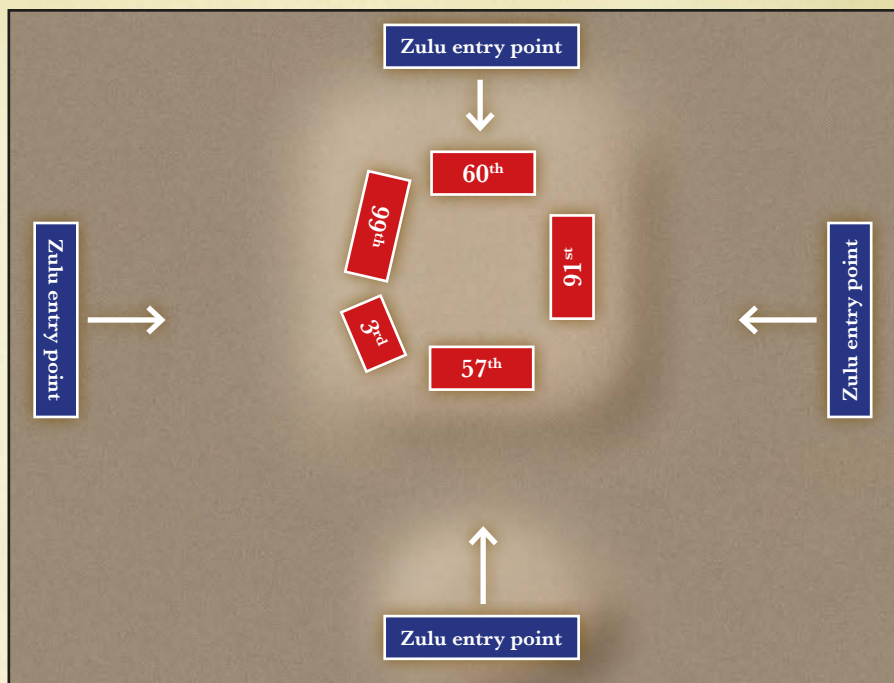
uThulwana and iNgobamakhosi

- Commander Chief Sigcwelewele KaMhlekehleke (7)
- One unit
- Two units



The Table

The table is mostly open with the British deployed on a slight rise in the centre, with a second unoccupied rise to the south. The northern table edge is the Nyenzane River, which flows gently west to east and presents no barrier to movement, the eastern edge is the Gingindlovu River, again little more than a stream, flowing northwards. An abandoned mission and drift are at the centre of the northern edge for local colour with an old kraal on-table to the east of the British and the village of Gingindlovu to the northeast. None of these played any part in the battle. The road being traveled by the British enters the table at the old kraal, passes their position and turns northwards exiting the table at the drift. Again this is simply aesthetic.



Deployment

The British begin the game fully deployed in their square. The Zulus begin the game off-table.

British Army stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Naval Brigade RMLI and 57th Regiment Advance Company	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	4	3	4+	2	Stubborn, Small
Line Infantry and Highlanders	Infantry	Breech-loading rifle	6	4	4+	3	Steady, Stubborn
Mounted Infantry	Cavalry	Breech-loading rifle	4	2	4+	2	Stubborn, Small
Natal Native Contingent	Infantry	Smoothbore Musket	6	3	5+	3	
Natal Native Horse and Scouts	Cavalry	Breech-loading carbine and spear	3	1	4+	2	Small
Gatling gun	Artillery	Gatling gun	1	Special	4+	1	Stubborn
Artillery	Artillery	9 pdr	1	3-2-1	4+	1	Stubborn
Rocket tubes	Artillery	Rocket	1	Special	4+	1	Stubborn

Zulu stats and special rules

Unit	Type	Armament	Hand-to-Hand	Shooting	Morale	Stamina	Special
Zulu	Infantry	Spear and firearm	6	1	4+	3	Bloodthirsty, Stubborn, Warband

Special rules

- Zulu morale is high for this battle – so we have given them the Stubborn special rule to reflect this.

- Zulu warbands include a proportion of troops with firearms of various types – often poor quality trade muskets, but also captured rifles in some cases. Overall, we count these as smoothbore muskets, with a range of 18".

Battle Report

An old Greek once said; “Age and treachery will defeat youth and skill”. For the Zulus, however, the latter days of this war were more along the lines of, “age will try to lure youth to its doom and then take the credit”.

The British were played by the umpire and deployed historically with the 60th on the northern face of the square, the 91st on the east, the 57th on the south, and the 99th and 3rd on the western face. The other units were safely ensconced within the square. The Gatling was on the northeast corner and the artillery on the southwest. The British plan was simply to sit it out, as they were in terra incognita; opening fire with all weapons as soon as the Zulus came into effective range.

The Zulu commanders drew for their start positions, with each picking a compass point. Drawing in order of seniority, the uThulwana picked the west, the uMbonambi the north, the uMhlanga chose south leaving the uMciyo the east. Our players took their briefing to heart and before the game began there was much boasting and taunting between the impetuous young and the calculating old. The Zulu commanders were indeed a mixture of young and old but we will draw a veil over which commanders were which to avoid embarrassment.

The Zulus to the east and west started on the table with the handicapper making allowances for the Nyenzane River when

setting weights to ensure a fair contest, though that was the last thing on the mind of the players. We began with rolls for initiative, again in order of seniority, with the uMhlanga rolling for a triple move, the uMciyo and uMbonambi a double and the uThulwana a single; and in response to the accusations of cowardice the riposte was that they were simply playing the long game.

The going was firm to hard, so the impis made good progress with the uMhlanga making the early running. They swept onto the rise to the south of the square, using the dead ground as long as possible, but when the British opened up a very effective fire, scoring two hits, the Zulus went to ground.

Making a mockery of the handicapper, the uMciyo ran on-table across the Gingindlovu River and into the teeth of rocket fire. There they halted along the line between the Gingindlovu village and the Old Kraal. Having composed themselves, in the next turn the warriors swept up the hill only for the 91st to let drive. The Highlanders rolled a trainload of boxcars (double-sixes to the uninitiated), bringing the Zulus to a crashing halt in a disordered state as they had accrued three hit markers and the saves were not made.

The uMbonambi entered the table, crossing the Nyenzane River at Mission Drift and went hell for leather for the 60th Rifles whose die rolling belied their historical competence. So



RAW COURAGE VERSUS SCIENCE.



7-POUNDERS PREPARE TO BOMBARD THE ONCOMING ZULU HORDE.

the Zulus swept on and the British braced for impact. Their closing fire was more effective, but not enough to stop the Zulu wave that soon reached the mealie bag barriers.

To the west the iNgobamakhosi, leading the way from their married brethren of the uThulwana, stormed across the plain and up the slope towards the Buffs and Jocks on the west face of the square. The British fire on this flank was not the best with more 1s and 2s than a statistician would expect. Chief Sigwelewele put such lacklustre shooting down to the quality of his indunas and their egregious capering, but the wiser heads felt that what goes around comes around out at some point in the future, though not necessarily in this game.

To the south the uMhlanga made good time charging over the rise and into the fire of the 57th. The Diehards stopped them with some severe die rolling, so the Zulus went to ground and returned fire to some effect, causing two hits and earning victory points.

True to form, or Mr. Newboldt's famous poem, the Gatling jammed, though the colonel was very much alive, and the British troops were happily blazing away at all before them regardless of chirpy subalterns and playing the game. The Royal Artillery were dourly letting fly at any and all targets,

with the Zulu commanders to the north and east happily rolling as high as possible to mess with their counterparts and prevent them getting more points. As he threw for the rocket tubes, the umpire whistled some ditty about rockets' red glare, to the bemusement of the Zulus, then promptly rolled snake eyes as they roared harmlessly into the veldt.

The first rush was now stopped with the Zulus roughly equidistant on all sides. The closing fire of the British had proved sufficient to the task, forcing the Zulus to ground, muttering about the need to adapt tactics. They did however return fire, but to little effect given the British defences.

'This is not the Zulu way. To shoot a man down like a dog. I should have been fighting those red soldiers with my assegai and they should have been fighting me with their long knives, their bayonets. But to shoot a man down like a dog, who couldn't shoot back. That was not the Zulu way.

from Angle-Zulu War, by Robert Gerrard

The scores to this point were as follows:

- uMcijo: Nil
- uThulwana: first in combat, joint **5 points**
- uMhlanga: first casualty **3 points**
- uMbonambi: first in combat, joint **5 points**

The various Zulu commanders girded their loins and made plans for their second efforts. The uThulwana took a canny view and opted for a firefight before attempting to close, so blazed away then charged. But the Jocks and Buffs stood their ground, firing volleys then switching to individual fire and standing the Zulus off to the disgust of their commander.

Masegwane, commanding the uMhlanga, tried fire and movement on the south side; using the extra cover of the rise. This was initially successful: the Diehards were soon carrying several hits despite the protection of the barricades before they found their range and started to inflict hits on the uMhlanga, forcing “shaken” results on one unit after another until the Zulus were forced to pull back out of range, taking refuge in various kloofs and spruits.

The uMcijo eschewed subtlety and charged repeatedly, prompting the comment from the umpire that they came on in the same old way and were defeated in the same old way. After several turns of this, all three uMcijo units had more casualty markers than they could handle and they were removed, thereby condemning them to fourth place.

The uMbonambi also charged and made it to the barricades, where they were stopped by the British who used their higher factors to good effect, holding the Zulus off and causing enough hits to make them shaken. That led to the Zulus retiring and the 60th ‘clear-felling’ several acres of them as they did so.

The uThulwana, having ridden off the iNgobamakhosi, were now in melee, but to no better effect than their comrades. They

then took to the brush and sniped (or wanged the odd shot dushmanwards, depending on your point of view) but also with little profit.

The battle had by now degenerated into a firefight on two fronts, becoming a competition to roll 6s, which the British were winning. The Zulus were shattered on the other two fronts, so if need be the British could rotate units. As matters stood, eventually the remaining Zulu units would have to withdraw or be wiped out and with the British declining to come out for a romp we called stumps and added up the points. For the Zulus it was *diem perdidi* – another day wasted.

Chelmsford was very much alive and the square unbroken, so no points were awarded for those. The uMhlanga caused the first British casualty, while the uThulwana and umbonabi were jointly first into melee. The uThulwana and uMhlanga were on-table until darkness fell while uMcijo and uMbonambi had long since headed for the hills, we decided on 15 turns on-table for them and attributed points accordingly.

- uMcijo: 8 turns ontable **8 points**
- uThulwana: first in combat, 5 points plus 15 turns ontable **20 points**
- uMhlanga: first casualties caused 3 points plus 15 turns ontable **18 points**
- uMbonambi: first in combat, 5 points plus 9 turns ontable **14 points**

So, the uThulwana won by a short head from uMhlanga, then the uMbonambi with uMcijo trailing in a poor fourth. This game reinforced the Zulu belief that they couldn’t live with British firepower if the red-jackets managed to form up. Those Zulu commanders, like kaMahlanganisa who espoused the old man’s ways came unglued; those who adapted to the new ways tended to live longer.



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At Her Majesty's Pleasure

Eric Trauner's dioramas





A consummate modeller, Erik Trauner has built this exquisite diorama showing a patrol of the British 17th/21st Lancers questioning Zulu stragglers in a donga after the battle at Isandlwana in the Ulundi campaign.

The level of detail that has gone into the positioning of models and terrain as well as the beautiful natural lighting are testament to Erik's modelling prowess.

What really sets this superb diorama apart from the crowd is that it is done in 20mm (1:72nd scale)!

You can see more of Erik's work on his website at www.diorama-dreamland.at





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

1. THE BRITISH LANCERS KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON THE DISARMED ZULUS, WARY OF ANY ATTEMPT TO ATTACK OR FLEE
2. ONE OF THE BRITISH MOUNTS TAKES ON MUCH-NEEDED REFRESHMENT AFTER A LONG DAY ON THE PARCHED, DUSTY AFRICAN TRAILS.
3. IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE ERIK'S MASTERPIECE IS PRODUCED IN SUCH A SMALL SCALE!
4. THE DIORAMA IN ALL ITS GLORY.
5. BOWED BUT NOT BROKEN, THE ZULUS GRUDGINGLY ACQUIESCE TO THE BRITISH ORDERS.



Zulu Recognition Guide

Guide courtesy of Empress Miniatures

The creation of the Zulu Empire by Shaka in the early Nineteenth Century saw the amalgamation of differing tribes and clans into what Europeans recognised in 1879 as one nation. In actual fact it was not as simple as this and Shaka and his heirs to the throne had varying degrees of success at controlling opposition political factions. One key part of controlling these clans was the army system. Regiments (ibutho) were created not based on clans but from males of a similar age and therefore no one clan ever politically dominated a regiment. These regiments were then housed in barracks (amakhandla) which were strategically placed around the kingdom to administer the Kings rule.

Regiments were further split into unmarried and married. On the kings command an entire unmarried regiment would be allowed the honour of marrying. This usually occurred in early middle age. This was significant as unmarried regiments were in effect doing national service and were at the kings command. On marrying the men would be allowed live at home and to give obedience to their families and local chief as well as the King.

There are many incorrect beliefs about the nature of Zulu society and indeed the 1879 Zulu war as a whole. One of these is that the married regiments formed an elite in the army. This is not actually the case. To describe the Zulu army in more European terms one has the regular army of serving troops (unmarried) who on leaving the army went on the reserve list (married). This explanation is perhaps an over simplification of the system but hopefully helps to explain the married, unmarried regimental and social distinction in its political context.

Obviously the experience gained in campaign by long serving men was a benefit but at the younger end of the system the high testosterone levels of young warriors eager to prove their abilities in battle would have been a great asset, especially when led by older experienced men.

Like European armies regiments wore uniforms, although not in a way that the Europeans would necessarily have recognised. Firstly all married regiments wore the head ring. Unmarried regiments did not. This seems to have been the one part of Zulu dress that was adhered to throughout the entire period.

Secondly Shaka had created a system of shield colours and this had led to the creation of cattle breeding to achieve the necessary skin colours for shield production. In general terms married regiments carried white shields and unmarried black. However as time passed this simple system began to become less specific. For example a regiment may be given an honour by the King which was shown in a change of shield colour. If you will excuse the pun, the system, by 1879, was not as black and white as it had been.

Regiments also had ceremonial dress which was extremely ornate and obviously regimentally specific. Cetshwayo ordered the regiments not to wear these ceremonial distinctions in battle therefore we will not go into too much detail.

What follows is a list of each of the regiments in the Zulu army which will illustrate their shield colours, their married status and what major battles they are known to have been in.

The Regiments

UNOKENKE

Unmarried. The shields were black although many of the warriors are recorded as carrying black shields with white spots.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 2000 warriors in the chest (Centre Right). **Khambula** and **Ulundi**.

INKOBAMAKOSI (THE BENDER OF KINGS)

Unmarried. The shields were of various colours such as black, black with white spots, red, red with white spots.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 6,000 warriors, Chest (Centre Left). **Hlobane**, **Khambula**, **Ulundi** and **Gingindlovu**.

UMHLANGA (THE REEDS)

Unmarried. Shields were black with white spots.

IZINGULUBE

Fought at **Nyezane**.

AMASHUTU (THE LION EATERS)

Unmarried. Shields were black or black with white spots.

UMCIJO (ALSO CALLED UKHANDEMPEMVU)

(The Sharp Pointed). Unmarried. Shields were black.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 1,500, Chest (Centre). **Hlobane**, **Khambula**, **Ulundi** and **Gingindlovu**.

IQWA (FROST)

Unmarried. Shields were black although some witnesses describe them as also carrying red and white shields.

Fought at **Ulundi**.

UMBONAMBI (THE EVIL SEERS)

Unmarried. Shields were red with a white spot.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 1,500 warriors. Chest (centre). **Khambula**, **Ulundi** and **Gingindlovu**.

UMXAPHO (THE SPRINKLERS)

Unmarried. The shields were black although some may have been red or black with red spots.

Fought at **Ulundi** and **Nyezane**.

UDUDUDU

Unmarried. Shields were black with white spots.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 1,500 warriors. uNODWENGU Corps (Right Horn), **Ulundi** and **Khambula**.

IMBUBI (LION)

Unmarried. Shields were black with white spots.

Fought at **Isandlwana** and **Khambula**.

UDHLOKO (NAME OF A SNAKE)

Married. Shields were red with a white spot.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 1,500 warriors. Undi Corps (reserve fought at **Rorke's Drift**), **Ulundi** and **Khambula**.

UDUKUZA (THE WANDERERS)

Married. The shields were white with large black spots.

USIXEPI

Married. The shields were white with a large black spot.

BULAWAYO (THE PLACE OF KILLING)

Married. The shields were white and white and red.

UDLAMBEDLU (ILL TEMPERED)

Married. The shields were white with either black or red spots.

Fought at **Nyezane**.

MBELEBELE (THE LITIGIOUS)

Married. Shields were white with red spots.

UTULWANA (NAMED AFTER A BASUTO CHIEF)

Married. Shields were white with red spots.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 1,500 warriors. Reserve fought at **Rorke's Drift**, **Ulundi**, **Khambula** and **Gingindlovu**.

INDHLONDHLO (EUPHORBIA)

Married. The shields were white.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 900 Warriors. Reserve fought at **Rorke's Drift**, **Ulundi** and **Khambula**.

NKONKONE (BLUE GNU)

Married. The shields were white.

UMLAMBONGWENYA (ALLIGATOR SWAMP)

Married. The shields were white with large black spots.

UMZINYATI (BUFFALO RIVER)

Married. Shields white with black spots.

UDABAKAOMBI (THE AFFAIR OF OMBI)

Married. Shields white with either black or red spots.

USIXEPI

Shields white with large black spots. 80 years old!

NSUGAMGENI (NAME OF A HILL IN ZULULAND)

Unmarried. Shields black with white spot on lower side.

Fought at **Ulundi**

NGWEKWE (CROOKED STICK)

Unmarried. Shields white with black or red spots.

NGULUBI (THE PIGS)

Unmarried. Shields white with black or red spots.

UMKUSI (RIVER IN ZULULAND)

Unmarried. Shields white with black or red spots.

MKULTYANE (THE STRAIGHT LINES)

Unmarried. Shields were white.

ISANGQU

(Vaal River). Unmarried. Shields were white.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 1,000 warriors. uNodwengu Corps (Right Horn).

Khambula and **Ulundi**.

INDLUYENGWE (LEOPARDS DEN)

Unmarried. Shields were black with a white spot on the lower half.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 1,000 warriors. Reserve fought at **Rorke's Drift**,

Ulundi and **Khambula**.

AMAKWENKWE

Unmarried. Shields were red with white spot.

UNQAKAMATYE

(Stone Cobblers). Unmarried. Shields were black.

UMTULISAZWI (THE PEACE MAKERS OF THE LAND)

Unmarried. The shields were black.

UVE (NAME OF A BIRD)

Unmarried. Shields were white with black and red spots.

Fought at **Isandlwana**, 3,500 warriors (Left Horn). **Hlobane**, **Ulundi** and **Gingindlovu**.

ABAQULUSI

The **abaQulusi** were an administration section of the Zulu Royal House. Shaka had built a royal homestead upon **Hlobane** mountain and in the following 50 years the local population had mixed with the household staff and their descendants who had settled in the area.

Due to this history they were fiercely loyal to the Zulu Royal family and under the immediate authority of the King. As such they had managed to stay outside the Zulu military system and developed some form of independence. They had no chiefs as such but instead were ruled by **Indunas** appointed by the King.

Their Independence meant that they did not carry specific shield colours and didn't have married and unmarried regiments. Instead married and unmarried men seem to have been mixed together in company sized units of around 50 to 70 warriors. There is the possibility that the companies were separated by age into different units but this is unknown for sure. This gives the wargamer the opportunity to mix both married and unmarried warriors in the same unit with each warrior having a shield of any size, colour and shape that they like! There is one reference of a company at **Hlobane** having white shields which could well have been due to them being issued from the Royal homestead during the battle (and presumably given to the older warriors).

The **abaQulusi** fought in the north against Wood's column at **iNtombe Drift**, **Hlobane** and possibly made an appearance at **Kambula** to support the main Zulu army.

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Photographs courtesy of John Stallard and Simon Tift.



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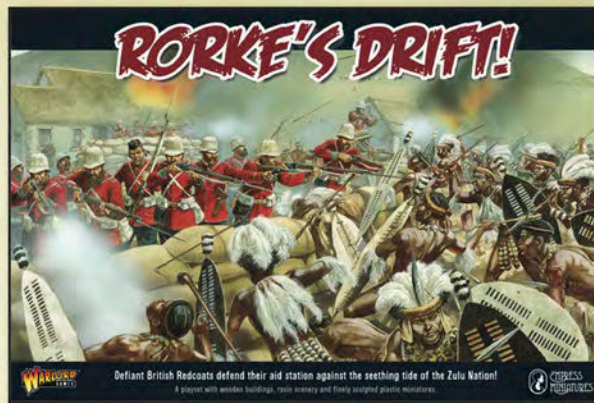
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