

THE ZULU WAR of 1879

Zulu! How can you ever forget such a movie? Stellar performances and a story of heroism, the stuff of legends. But the Zulu battles of 1879 were bloody affairs. We thought we'd take a close look at the battles and provide some materials that may help you game this fascinating Colonial period.

The Zulu War of 1879 finally was in essence the bloody result of two years of political activity by the British that was designed to remove the last challenge to their Imperial power in southern Africa.

Under the rule of Shaka, the leader who unified the tribes many years before this war started, Zululand had become a powerful kingdom, but the colonial expansion engine was in full swing and no lands were safe. The British were expanding from the south in Natal and the Boers, the Dutch settlers, were expanding from the west in the area known as the Transvaal.

Various efforts to resolve the situation failed and so it was decided that the only course of action remaining was war. This was ironic considering that a short time before this decision was made representatives of the Zulu nation were summoned to a meeting of the Border Commission which actually found in the Zulus

favour. But it was determined that in order to reduce the threat the Zulus posed a condition of 'peace' was that the Zulus would have to give up their military system which was key to their culture.

A condition the King Cetshwayo could never accept. So Lord Chelmsford decided to invade Zululand with 3 columns leaving 2 more to protect Natal and the Transvaal. Chelmsford expected the Zulus to behave like the other African Armies he had fought and prove elusive and unwilling to fight large scale actions. This was a major error on his part.

The ill fated battle of Isandlwana demonstrates this, one of the few occasions that a British force has been destroyed by a native force. Rorke's Drift was somehow turned into a victory and was to be immortalised in the movie Zulu with Michael Caine and Stanley Baxter.



I guess you can split the War into three distinct chunks:

Part 1: The costly mistakes of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift.

Part 2: Lessons learnt Khambula and Gingindlovu.

Part 3: Total victory – Ulundi.

There were several smaller encounters, such as the ill fated attack by irregular horsemen Hlobane mountain which cost 15 officers and 79 men dead, but the five battles above just about sum up the entire war as it was.

The Battle of Ulundi was to see the end of hostilities, bar some sporadic skirmishing, and Zulu nation was smashed and split up into 13 kingdoms which were given to pro British Africans. Sadly this was to only end in disaster and civil war a few years later.

WARGAMING THE PERIOD

The magazine's collection of Zulu War figures are from Newline Designs and are 20mm scale. These are excellent miniatures and have plenty of character to them. Using this scale also allows us to use plastic figures from a number of suppliers to kit out such things as dead figures and chieftans.

There were certainly some very inspiring moments during the Anglo-Zulu war but these "inspiring" moments came during the beginning of the war when Great Britain got it all terribly wrong. Although

you can game the battles of Ulundi, Khambula and Gingindlovu in our mind they do not make for a very interesting game. Now Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, they make for some interesting games.

The best advice we can give is to split the battles into linked games whose results affect each other. For example we played Isandlwana in three stages. First we played a pitched battle with additional rules allowing the Zulus to enter the board from three edges and to recycle their units. This represented the overwhelming nature of their attack quite well. The British had to hold out as long as possible before retreating off their own table edge. The second game we played with the Zulus attacking from all sides and a small British force defending a group of ammo wagons in the centre of the table, this was more of a pride game for the British to see how long they could hold out before being overrun. Finally we played a small skirmish game involving a section of cavalry trying to escape the slaughter.

The later battles in the war are not quite as interesting as the British had learnt their lessons and the Zulus were unable to get past the defences put up by the British defensive squares. However this is where you can play some fantastic "What If?" games. For instance, what if during the Battle of Gingindlovu the 60th Rifles had not held their ground, would it have been another slaughter? We are planning on playing this one very soon...



ISANDLWANA

It was on the 22nd of January 1897 that a terrible blow was struck against the British forces in Zululand. The place was 10 miles east of the Tugela River in Zululand, South Africa and here the 1st Battalion, 24th Foot, was massacred at the hands of the Zulus at the Battle of Isandlwana.

In command of the British force were Lieutenant Colonel Pulleine of the 24th Foot and Lieutenant Colonel Durnford. The Zulu Army was commanded by Chiefs Ntshingwayo kaMahole and Mavumengwana kaMdlela Ntuli.

Numbers are always tricky to get accurate but the British comprised some 1,200 men and they were attacked by around 12,000 Zulus.

BRITISH ORDERS OF BATTLE

2 x Guns and 70 men of N Battery, 5th Brigade, Royal Artillery (equipped with two seven pounder guns).

5 x Companies of 1st Battalion, the 24th Foot

1 x Company of 2nd Battalion, the 24th Foot

2 x Companies of the Natal Native Infantry

Mounted volunteers and Natal Police

THE UNTHINKABLE HAS HAPPENED

Who would have thought that a native army could destroy a force from one of the most powerful nations of the world? With nothing more powerful than their primitive stabbing weapons the Zulus defeated troops of a western power armed with modern rifles and artillery, nay they wiped the force out. This was total victory.

The disaster at Isandlwana was a wake up call for the British Empire. The complete loss of a battalion of troops set shock waves 'back home' and you could say it transformed a nation's view of war.

So what happened? The Zulu Wars started as a campaign of expansion. Britain as ever wanted more and the commander-in-chief in South Africa, Lord Chelmsford, considered the independent Zulu Kingdom ruled by Cetshwayo to be a threat to the British colony of Natal – which bordered Zululand along the Tugela River.

To start the campaign off Lord Chelmsford divided his force into three columns.

• Colonel Evelyn Wood VC (won in the Indian Mutiny) of the 90th Light Infantry commanded the column that crossed the Tugela into the North of Zululand.

• Colonel Pearson of the 3rd Foot (the Buffs) commanded in the south, by the Indian Ocean coast.

• Colonel Glynn of the 24th Foot commanded the Centre Column, comprising both battalions of the 24th Foot, units of the Natal Native Infantry, Natal irregular horse and Royal Artillery.

WIPE OUT

Lord Chelmsford accompanied the Centre Column into Zululand on 11th January, crossing the Tugela River at Rorke's Drift. Its plan was to head for Ulundi, Cetshwayo's principal kraal, and would then join up with Pearson's southern column for the final assault on the Zulu nation.

At this point a Company of the 2nd Battalion, 24th Foot, remained at Rorke's Drift, the advanced base for the column. We'll talk more about these chaps a little later.

From the start Chelmsford's original plan was troubled, he had after all planned for 5 columns to cross the Tugela. But a shortage of troops forced him to reorganise into the 3 columns.

Now he headed for Isandlwana Hill, which can be seen from Rorke's Drift, and which is located 10 miles inside Zulu land. With the British on their way Cetshwayo mobilised massive Zulu armies, some 24,000 warriors it is believed. This force then split into two, with one section heading for the Southern Column and the remainder making for Chelmsford's Centre Column.

The Centre Column reached Isandlwana on 20th January 1879 and encamped on its lower slopes. The next day Major Darnell led a mounted reconnaissance in the direction of the advance. He encountered the Zulus in strength and engaged them. His scouting force eventually disengaged from the Zulus until the early hours of 22nd January 1879.

Upon hearing of the enemy approaching Lord Chelmsford chose to advance against the Zulus with a sizeable enough force to destroy them. The 2nd

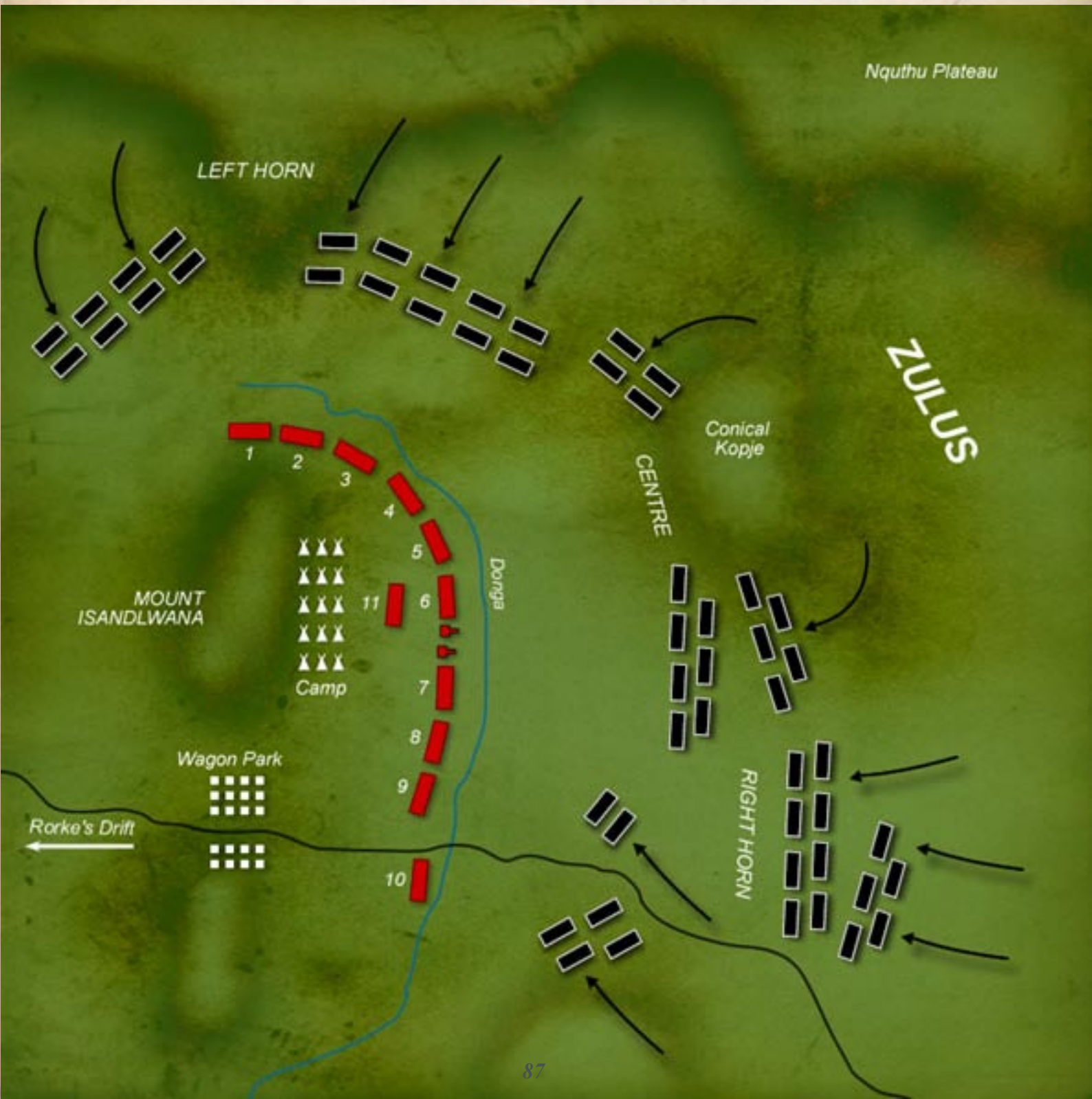
Battalion, 24th Foot, the Mounted Infantry and 4 guns would march out as soon as it was light.

Colonel Pulleine was to command the camp with the 1st Battalion of the 24th Foot and orders were sent to Colonel Durnford to bring his column up to reinforce the camp. On the morning of 22nd January Lord Chelmsford advanced with his force and eventually joined up with major Dartnell.

This is where it all goes wrong the Zulus had

disappeared and now a search began of the hills. The Zulus had bypassed Lord Chelmsford's force and moved on Isandlwana. The first sign in the camp that there was a problem was when parties of Zulus were seen on the hills to the north east and then to the east.

At this time Colonel Pulleine ordered his command to form to the east, the direction in which the Zulus had appeared. Pulleine dispatched a message to Chelmsford informing him that Zulu warriors were



ISANDLWANA

threatening the camp. It was around 10am when Colonel Durnford arrived at Isandlwana with a party of mounted men and a rocket troop.

Durnford then left the camp to follow up reports of attack and Captain Cavaye's company of the 1st/24th was placed in picquet on a hill to the North.

Durnford's mounted troops then searched for the Zulus. One troop of mounted volunteers pursued a party of Zulus but were in for a big shock as the entire Zulu army appeared. It seems that the arrival of the mounted troops caught the Zulus by surprise as well!

One of Durnford's officers rode back to Isandlwana to warn the camp that it was about to be attacked. Ironically Pulleine had just received a message from Chelmsford ordering him to move up to join the rest of the column. But this wasn't to be as he now had to react to the impending crisis.

It becomes unclear at this point whether Pulleine or any of his other officers understood the severity of the situation. The force bearing down on them was immense and mistakes were made. Pulleine sent a second company under Captain Mostyn to join Captain Cavaye's on the hill and 2 guns were moved to the left of the camp with companies of foot to support them.

The leading edge of the Zulu force overwhelmed Durnford's rocket troop, although the Royal Artillery crews did manage to escape. Now the main Zulu frontal assault started and Mostyn's and Cavaye's companies hastily withdrew to the camp, pausing to fire as they went.

To start with the battle started well for the British. Pulleine's troops fired several volleys into the oncoming Zulu force and the mixture of gunfire and difficult ground meant the Zulu 'chest' eventually went to ground. But the 'chest' was not the problem for the British. As this was going on the Zulu 'horns' raced to find the end of the British flank and envelope it.

ENCIRCLEMENT

On the British right the companies of the 24th and the NNI were unable to prevent this envelopment and the Zulus managed to infiltrate between the companies

of British foot and the irregulars commanded by Durnford.

Zulu chiefs took this opportunity to encourage the warriors of the 'chest', that had been until now pinned down by the 24th's fire, to renew their assault. This new attack forced the British troops to fall back into the encampment. Then a Zulu regiment rushed between the withdrawing British centre and the camp and the "horns" broke in on each flank. It all collapsed at this point.

With the steady line broken groups of British formed and fought the Zulus until their ammunition ran out and they were killed. It is reported that a section of Natal Carbineers commanded by Durnford provided heavy fire until they too ran out of ammo, choosing to then fight with pistols and knives until they were also killed.

Only mounted troops escaped this attack and any foot troops who ran into the hills were chased down and killed.

Isandlwana was over and the death toll is 52 British officers and 806 non-commissioned ranks killed. Some 60 Europeans survived the battle. Another 471 Africans died fighting for the British. Zulu casualties have to be estimated and are set at around 2,000 dead. The Zulus captured 1,000 rifles with the whole of the column's reserve ammunition supply.

Following the battle, upon hearing the news of the disaster Lord Chelmsford is said to have said "But I left 1,000 men to guard the camp." His column returned to the horror at Isandlwana and camped near the Rorke's Drift mission station burning. Chelmsford knew that the Zulus had crossed the Tugela.

The defeat at Isandlwana was to galvanise the British Government into action, determined to avenge the defeat reinforcements were dispatched to Natal. General Sir Garnet Wolseley was also sent to replace Lord Chelmsford, arriving after the final battle of the war.

It would seem that Cetshwayo's success at Isandlwana secured his downfall.



RORKE'S DRIFT

It's fair to say that most people have seen the Zulu movie – Lord knows it's been on television enough. Most people probably have no idea what's going on though; Michael Caine and Stanley Baker dressed in red killing a load of natives.

Rorke's Drift is offered to us as an example of heroism in the face of overwhelming odds. When you consider that 139 British troops held off 4,500 Zulu warriors it is only reasonable that we think this way.

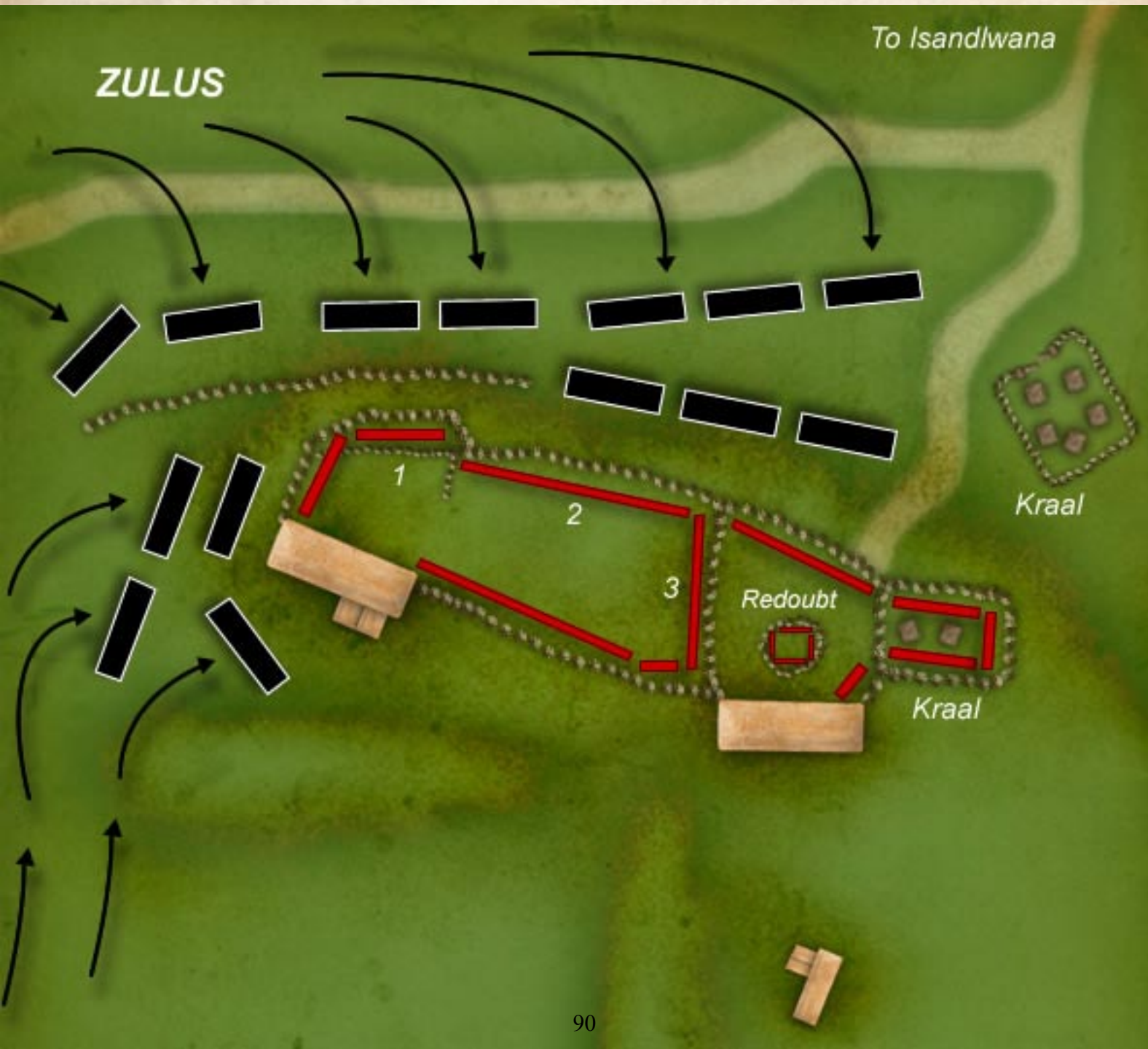
The garrison is located near to the Tugela River in Natal Province and on the 22nd January 1879 its commanders - Lieutenant John Chard, Royal

Engineers, and Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead of the 24th Foot – held off a concerted attack by Zulu warriors commanded by Prince Dabulamanzi kaMapande.

The 139 British troops broke down as follows:

B Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Foot
Men of the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Army Service Corps, Commissariat and Medical Corps.

Hardly a volume of soldiers. What Rorke's Drift represents is the antithesis of Isandlwana. At one battle we were slaughtered and at another we did the killing. Here we have Bromhead's B Company, 2nd



Battalion of the same regiment that was destroyed clinging to a victory, well a victory of sorts.

So here we have a single company of infantry at a mission station taking shelter behind a wall of biscuit tins! In charge were the company colour sergeant, Frank Bourne and a sole officer – Michael Caine (aka Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead).

A Swede by the name of Reverend Otto Witt ran the church/mission and at the time of the attack it had been turned into a store by the British Army. Worse still his house was now a military hospital under the command of Surgeon James Reynolds.

Zulu warriors were first sighted nearby to Rorke's Drift on 19th January. On the 21st January the garrison heard firing from a distant battle (Isandlwana) this was to be verified by the arrival of Lieutenant Ardendorff who confirmed to them the tragic events.

It was now time to improve the defences. The reduced numbers of men meant that shorter perimeter line (made from biscuit boxes) needed to be assembled.

The battle commenced when 500 Zulus appeared around the hill to the South of the mission. These warriors were met with heavy gunfire. At roughly 50 yards from the wall they veered around the hospital to attack from the North West. Again gunfire drove them back ...and the warriors hid in the undergrowth that had not been cleared because of the lack of time.

It was now that the main body of Zulus came up and opened up with heavy fire on the British from cover around the West and North West of the mission. Now the hospital at the western end of the fortifications became the focus for the fighting.

This building was set on fire and stormed by the Zulus. As you can watch in the superb movie Zulu the troops could not stay inside it and the hospital was evacuated – but some patients died in the flames.

Here we have Privates John Williams, Henry Hook, William Jones, Frederick Hitch and Corporal William Allen receiving the Victoria Cross for their defence of the hospital building.

With the hospital gone the fighting concentrated on

the wall of biscuit barrels linking the mission house with the mealie wall. As night fell the British withdrew to the centre of the station where a final defensive bastion had been hastily assembled. The light from the burning hospital assisted the British in their fire.

Savage attacks came and were beaten back by the men of the 24th Foot, until around midnight when hostilities suddenly ended. Exchanges were made until 4am at which time the Zulus withdrew.

At 7am a main body of the Zulu force appeared on the hill, but no attack was made. In the movie you may remember the Zulu commanders almost saluting the brave souls of Rorke's Drift for their bravery. You have to wonder whether the fact they could see Chelmsford's column approaching from the direction of Isandlwana led to their retreat.

Zulu casualties are thought to have been around 500 with the garrison at Rorke's Drift detailing 17 men killed and 10 wounded.

Wargaming this great battle allows for plenty of last stand scenarios. We played the game several times starting with a game portraying the initial Zulu assault on the British gun line and then played through an assault on the hospital.

We used basic maps drawn on wipe clean mats usually used for dungeon adventuring. The Zulus had to fight their way through the hospital and we got to use the VC winning heroes to thwart their attempts.

We finished the battle with a renewed Zulu attack on the "thin red line". In this game the British had to hold out for a number of turns and then retreat to the final redoubt and make a stand there. Our results mirrored history but I reckon we took a few more casualties than they did in real life.

Our final game will be a 1:1 20mm large scale action of the scenario but this if going to take sometime to complete. The British is easy, only 139 combatants to portray, but the Zulus are an altogether larger problem. Even recycling the figures we're still looking at many hundreds of figures to get the feel of the game right. It will be a while before we show you this game, but once completed Dave Robotham is talking hosting a Zulu Gaming weekend for the WJ writers.

KHAMBULA

On March 29th 1879 in Northern Zululand the British Number 4 Column encountered the Zulu Army and the Battle of Khambula took place. The commanders on the day were Colonel Evelyn Wood VC and Ntshingwayo kaMahole. Some 2,000 British troops and native levies fought a horde of 20,000 Zulus.

Number 4 Column, the most northerly British force, invaded Zululand on December 6th and were facing the abaQulusi tribe. This tribe was led by Prince Mbilini waMswati.

British Regiments:

1st Battalion of the 13th Light Infantry
The 90th Perthshire Light Infantry
Royal Artillery, 11th Battery, 7th Brigade.
Boer Commando
Mounted Infantry
Frontier Light Horse
A Native Contingent of Swazis

January 21st saw Wood's force marched out of camp and his force moved rapidly on the Zulu positions, forcing the Zulus to withdraw onto Hlobane Mountain. After this initial success the British set up camp and waited until January 23rd when the attack on Hlobane began.

It was early in the morning that news of Isandlwana and the destruction of Chelmsford's camp and the loss of nearly a full battalion of British troops was received by Wood and his men. With the belief that the Zulu force that crushed the British at Isandlwana would turn and attack his force Wood chose to abandon the attack and move his column North to a new camp site, away from the Zulu army.

Here the British column encamped on a plateau at Khambula, where the ground sloped away on two sides. A fortified camp with wagon walls and trenches was set up and the force readied itself for battle if it came.

Over the next few weeks the Zulus raided north into the areas occupied by Boer farms and villages, away from Wood's camp, while the British raided the Zulu areas. On March 12th the Zulus scored another victory over the British as a supply train was attacked near Luneburg in the North of Zululand.

Captain Moriarty, commanding the escort of a company of the 80th Regiment, set up a defensive position against a river. On the morning of the 12th a force of around 800 Zulus, commanded by Prince Mbilini, approached to within 50 yards of the camp, obscured due to the morning mist, and rushed the defences. Moriarty and 60 of his men were killed and a group of the 80th on the south bank of the river laid down enough fire to drive off the Zulus.

News of this latest setback prompted Wood to launch a full scale attack on Hlobane Mountain. Lord Chelmsford urged on the attack because he needed to create a diversion in the North so that he could move his column to relieve Colonel Pearson's column in its fortified camp at Eshowe.

Even though they knew that the Zulu King Cetshwayo was preparing to advance on Wood's troops, a force of mounted troops (Colonels Buller and Russell left Khambula with 700 and 250 mounted troops each) commenced an attack on either end of Hlobane. But this attack was not successful and Buller lost 12 officers and 80 men. No one knows how many native irregulars were killed.

Now the Zulus were ready to attack the main British force, but this not going to be like Isandlwana. This British force was in a compact formation behind fortifications.

When the Zulu Army was finally in sight the troops assembled at their positions; 1,200 men of the 1st/13th Light Infantry and the 90th Regiment with 800 other irregular troops. Artillery comprised of 4 seven pounder guns, 2 mule borne guns and several rocket troughs. The mule guns took post in the redoubt while the seven pounders were located in the open ground between the two main fortifications.

The battle began at 1.30pm as the Zulu Army moved towards the British with increasing speed, its horns spreading out to the left and right, the chest heading straight for the centre of the camp. As it closed the left horn disappeared from view into the valley to the South, but marshy ground held up its assault.

The right horn circled round to the North and came in towards the camp. Using some clever tactical sense Wood dispatched Buller with his mounted men to

provoke the right horn into making a premature attack before the rest of the army was in place. Buller's move had the effect intended, the mass of the right horn rushing towards the British fortifications.

Once the mounted men were clear the troops along the north face, the 90th Light Infantry, opened fire with the guns positioned in the open between the wagon laager and the redoubt. The devastating fire utterly destroyed the right horn, removing it as threat to the British force.

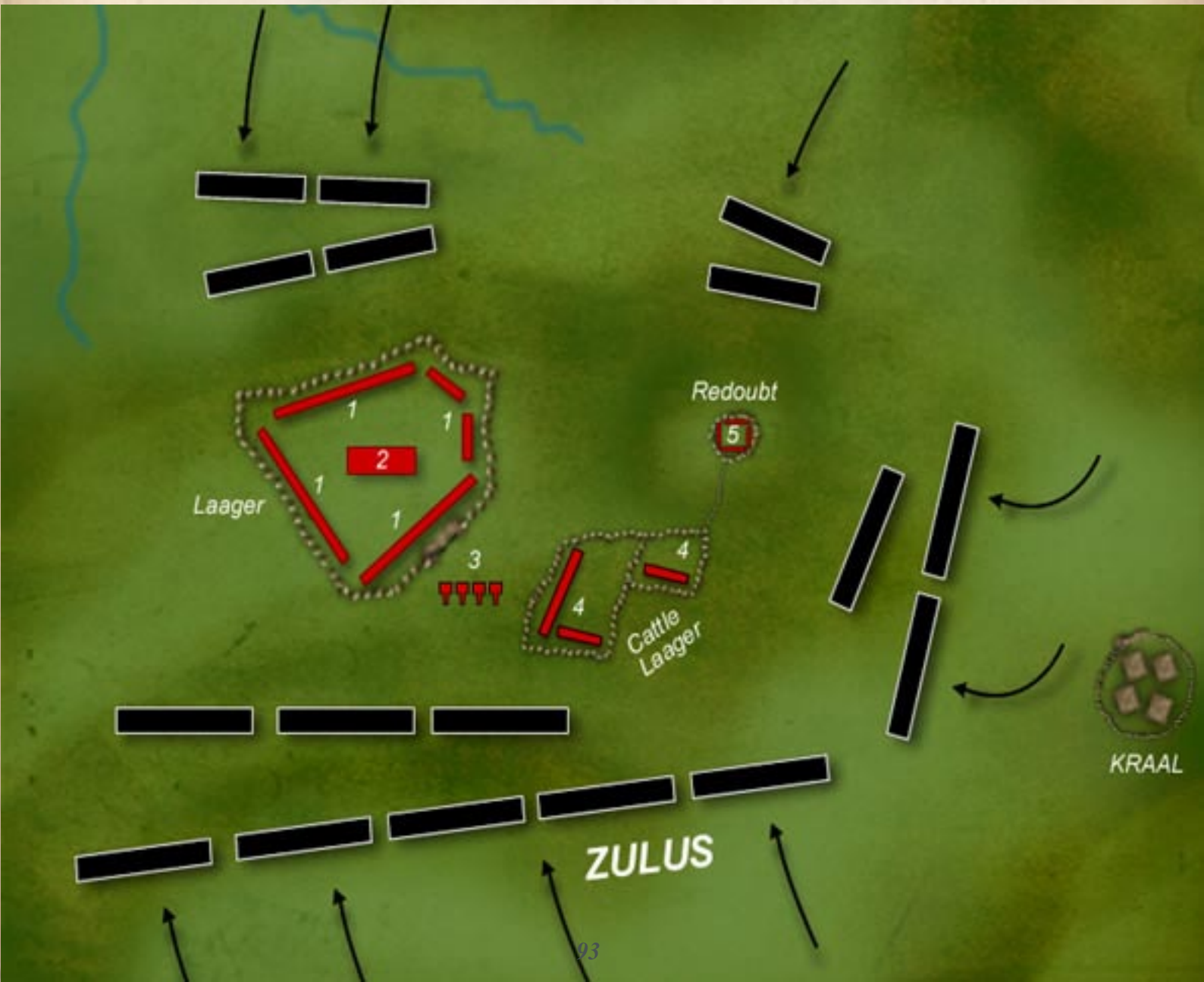
This tactical advantage allowed Wood to redeploy significant numbers of troops and guns from the north side against the chest and left horn as they came up for their assaults. The left horn climbed the south face of the hill only to be met by heavy fire from the 13th Regiment. Zulus on the right attacked the cattle laager, forcing Wood to withdraw its garrison and leave the laager to the Zulus.

A tactical error saw Wood order Major Hackett of the

90th to take two companies to the edge of the hill and fire down into the Zulus assembling in the valley. But the Zulus had captured Martini Henry rifles captured at Isandlwana and used them against the two companies. The move failed and the two companies were forced back, but not before Hackett was blinded.

During the course of the day the left horn and the chest kept attacking but they kept getting forced back by withering fire. At 5.30pm the Zulus began to fall back and Wood ordered the infantry forward to fire into the withdrawing Zulu regiments.

The last phase of the battle was the order to send Buller's mounted men in pursuit of the Zulus. Wood's force suffering 83 casualties. It is believed that 3,000 Zulus were either killed in the battle or died of their wounds afterwards. The way was open for British to now invade Cetshwayo's Zululand kingdom. The diversion also allowed Chelmsford to relieve Pearson's column at Eshowe. Ulundi beckoned.



GINGINDLOVU

INTRODUCTION

The British were outnumbered 2:1 at Gingindlovu with 5,250 British and colonial troops against 11,000 Zulus warriors.

Following the disaster of Isandlwana, the British government rushed reinforcements to Natal: 2 Batteries of Royal Artillery, 2 Regiments of cavalry and 5 Battalions of Foot. It couldn't afford anymore embarrassments at the hands of what London classed as savages.

So it was that at the end of March 1879 Lord Chelmsford found himself in the worrying position of another column in trouble. Colonel Pearson's Number 1 Column lay isolated in a fortified position at Eshowe, which is deep in eastern Zululand. Chelmsford worried the force would be destroyed before it could be relieved.

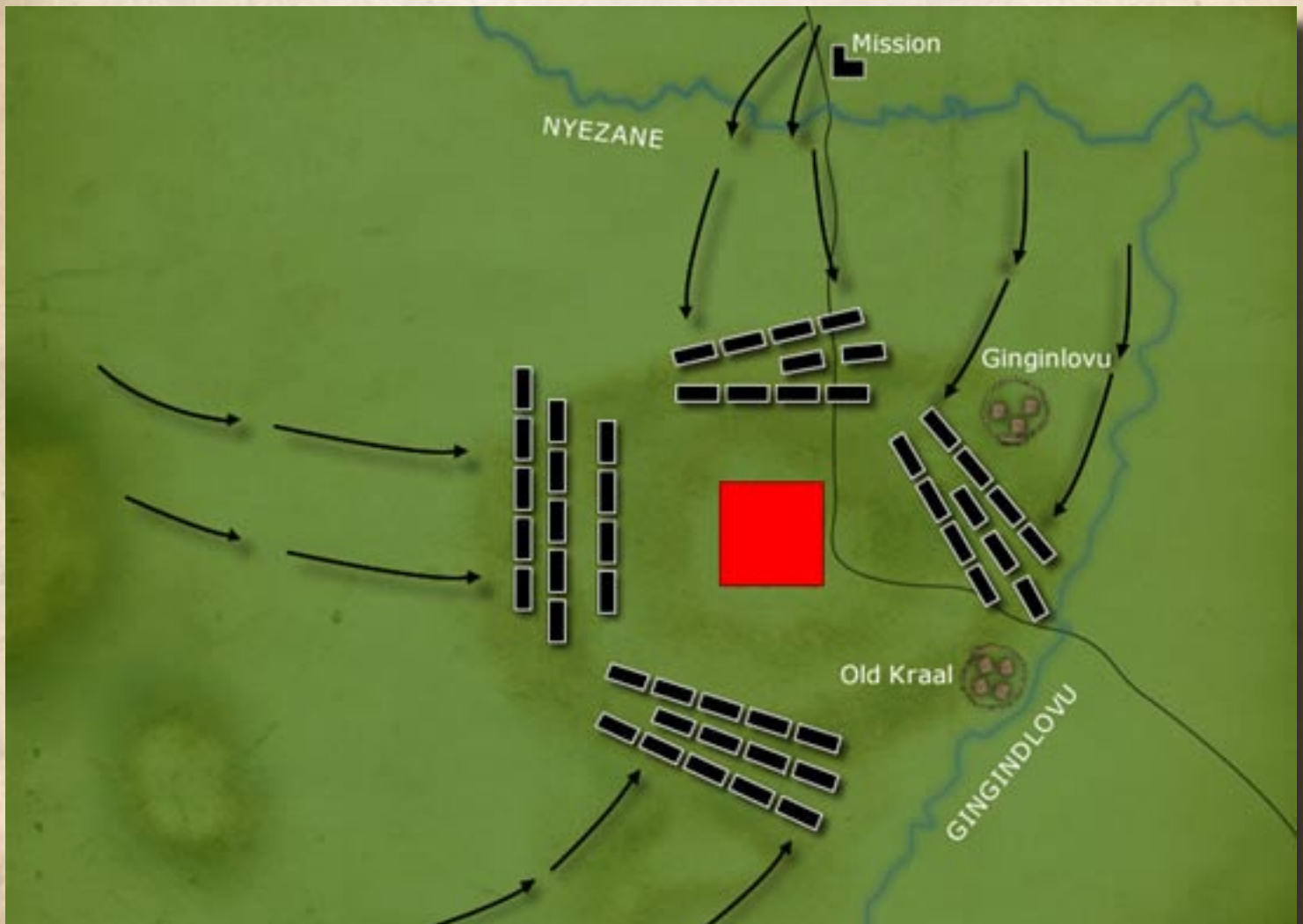
Lord Chelmsford's relief column crossed the Tugela River on 29th March 1879 and began its march to Pearson's force. The country was literally covered

by Zulu scouts and signals flashed from Pearson's camp at Eshowe. What became eminently clear to Lord Chelmsford was that his advance would be fiercely contested, and on top of this the poor weather conditions further impeded progress.

THE BATTLE OF GINGINDLOVU

On 1st April 1879, Chelmsford's column reached the Royal Kraal of Gingindlovu and laagered for the night. Again heavy rainfall made it hard for the troops. Many lessons had been learnt following the tragedy of Isandlwana and at every encampment the wagons were positioned to create an unbroken laager wall, a defensive position to give cover. Troops were also required to dig sections of trench around the laager.

John Dunn, a pre-war inhabitant of Zululand for many years, and chief scout to Chelmsford headed off across the Nyezane River to look for enemy forces. It was here that Dunn encountered the Zulu Army of 11,000 warriors. Dunn returned to the British camp and reported back to Chelmsford that the Zulus would attack in the morning – he was right.



The column was laagered on the top of a hill, the sides sloping away in each direction, which if you think about it is about as good a combat position as any for the battle. In accordance with the new standing orders issued after Isandlwana, the laager was entrenched in a square formation.

At the north face of the square was the 3rd Battalion, the 60th Rifles; the left by the 99th Regiment and the Buffs (3rd Foot) and the right face by the 57th Regiment. The corners of the square were reinforced by Gatling Guns, conventional artillery and rocket troughs. It was quite a formidable defensive position.

Sun rise saw Irregular Horse and infantry piquets patrolling towards the Nyezane River, scouting for the Zulu advance and ready to react should the need arise. The regiments in the camp stood to at 4am. Shortly before 6am, reports came in from the advanced scouts/piquets of the Zulu approach. Out of a movie script you can see the lone native warriors standing and pointing to the sky and then the immortal cry of “Impi” pierces the silence.

Then suddenly there is movement as the Zulu “chest” advances. The usual exchange of rifle fire from Zulu skirmishers gave way to a massed charge as the horde of warriors looked to overwhelm their enemy.

THE 60TH RIFLES

The first attack of this battle was received by the 60th Rifles, one of the newly arrived regiments, and it has to be said that the young soldiers of the 60th found the ordeal difficult to deal with. It took solid leadership from the battalion’s officers to keep the line steady and firing. It helped that the Gatling guns at the ends of the line spat death at a rate of knots.

Constant gunfire and the support of the Gatling guns meant the Zulu charge faltered and instead of the full frontal hit on the square the Zulus were forced around to the west flank of the square, where the attack was renewed against the 99th Regiment. In the face of the heavy weapons fire from the two sides of the square the Zulu “chest” assault failed.

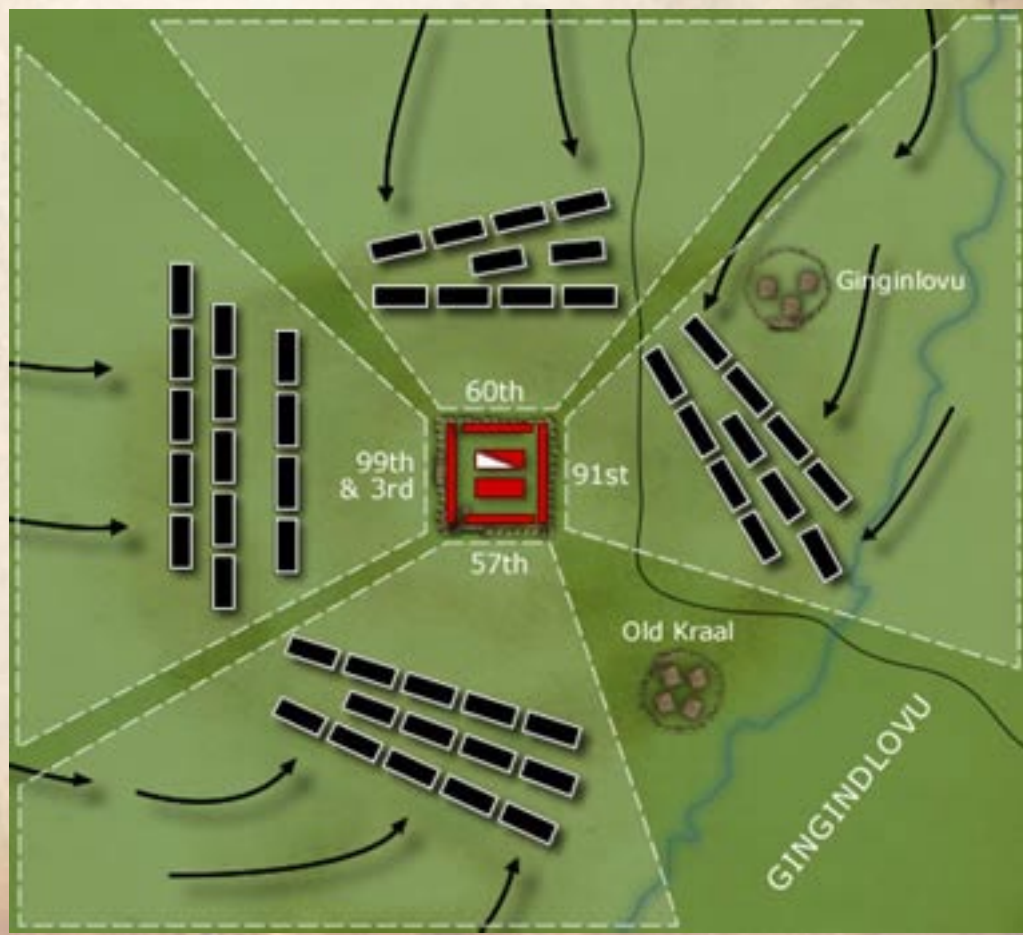
As to the other part of the assault, the “horns” of the army, the Zulu warriors rushed around the British position. At Isandlwana when this happened the rear of the British formation was weak – this was not the case at Gingindlovu . The warriors met the volley firing of the 91st Highland Regiment and this assault was also squashed and the Zulus were forced into cover.

SADDLE UP – AND END THIS BATTLE

The successful volley fire of the 91st gave Lord Chelmsford the chance to seize the initiative and he ordered his mounted units out of the square to complete the victory. The decision to move them out like this was a little premature, the battle was far from over, but he got away with it and eventually the Zulu forces withdrew.

The battle effectively ended around 7am with the Zulus in full retreat, pursued by the mounted troops and the native contingent. Lord Chelmsford was greatly relieved by the outcome of the battle, showing that his army’s confidence was re-established and thus it enabled him to continue his advance to Pearson’s camp. From here he was to head off to do battle with the Zulu King, Cetshwayo, at the Battle of Ulundi.

Battle Stats: *The British lost 6 officers and 55 men; among the dead was Lieutenant Colonel Northey of the 60th Rifles. Zulu casualties were calculated at around 1,000.*







ULUNDI

The Battle of Ulundi was the end of the Zulu Army and the end of the Zulu Wars of 1879. On July 4th in Central Zululand the British Army under the command of Lieutenant General Lord Chelmsford faced off against Cetshwayo, the Zulu King and his mighty army.

Around 17,000 British and native troops were to fight 24,000 Zulu warriors at this battle.

British Regiments:

Royal Artillery:

17th Lancers

1st Battalion, 13th Light Infantry

2nd Battalion, 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers

58th Regiment

80th Regiment

90th (Perthshire) Regiment

94th Regiment

The battles of Khambula and Gingindlovu inflicted heavy casualties on the Zulus, warriors that were lost and could not be replaced. The slaughter at Isandlwana led the British government to send out more reinforcements than could effectively be used. The area was awash with British major generals.

On route from England were Sir Garnet Wolseley and the Ashantee Ring who were to replace Lord Chelmsford in command of the British force in Zululand.

By the April of 1879, he had at his disposal a large force of highly trained soldiers that consisted of 2 cavalry regiments (the King's Dragoon Guards and the 17th Lancers), 5 batteries of artillery and 12 infantry battalions: which broke down into 1,000 regular cavalry, 9,000 regular infantry and a further 7,000 men with 24 guns, including in its ranks the very first Gatling gun battery to take the field for the British army.

The Zulu King had only 24,000 warriors who were suffering large losses and were demoralised. A rapid reorganisation of the army and Lord Chelmsford was prepared to invade Zululand – for the final time.

Evelyn Wood's force in the West was renamed the Flying Column and the newly arrived Major General Henry Crealock, who had served with the

90th Perthshire Regiment in the Crimea, took over Pearson's old command, which was now called the 1st Division.

A new command named the 2nd Division under the command of Major General Newdigate prepared to invade Zululand in the central area and join up with Wood. Lord Chelmsford attached himself to the 2nd Division.

By June 28th Lord Chelmsford's two columns were within 17 miles of the Royal Kraal of Ulundi. Cetshwayo attempted to negotiate with the British while his warriors gathered at Ulundi but the British terms were rejected.

Camp was struck and on the eve of the battle British troops listened to the Zulu war songs. The next day Lord Chelmsford took the majority of his force and crossed the river advancing towards the Zulu kraal, moving in a formation known as the hollow square, the mounted troops covering each side and the rear. It was just before 9am that the Zulus attacked the hollow square on all sides.

The amount of firepower that the British laid down on the Zulu warriors must have been immense. Compared to today's weaponry it was nothing, but compared to a stabbing spear and some rifles stolen at Isandlwana it must have seemed like hell on earth.

It took a mere half hour before the Zulus began to falter. At this point the 17th Lancers passed out of the back of the square and charged. The impact of the charge broke up what was left of the Zulu formations, dissolving the Zulu army.

The British casualties were 3 officers and 79 men. Zulu casualties were said to be 1,500. Following the battle the British burnt the military kraals in the area around Ulundi. The Zulu chiefs started to surrender across Zululand to the British forces. Cetshwayo was captured on August 28th and sent into exile in Cape Colony.

A new regime in Zululand was formed and Britain withdrew its military might from the area.

The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 was over ...

ZULUS

ULUNDI

Nondwengo

Indabakaombi

Whitemfolozi

