

# The Zulu Wars

*By Will McNally*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Zulu War is an excellent example of the small wars fought by the British (and other colonial powers) against native rulers. They are mostly characterised by the contrast between the technologically superior but small in numbers European troops and the Native hordes. Unless the objectives of a game are very carefully set the wargamers playing the natives have very little chance of winning and the game becomes unplayable. Rather than keep to the normal two-sided competitive game the players all play the parts of British officers commanding parts of one of the columns advancing into Zululand and the appearance of the Zulu's and their actions are determined at random. If the players wish to add a competitive element then they can calculate the Daring-Do scores of their officers to determine their chances of promotion or even a VC.

An earlier version of the rules were published in "Lone Warrior" the journal of the Solo Wargames Association.

## **Scales**

Ground scale

1" = 10 yards (for combat etc.)

1" = 100 yards (for campaign purposes)

Time Scale

1 Tactical Move = 5 minutes

1 Non tactical Move = 10 minutes

Figure Scale

1 figure = 10 men

1 gun = 2 guns

## **Organisations**

### **British**

The British Line Infantry are normally organised in 4 company battalions. Each company comprises 1 officer and 10 other ranks. The Battalion HQ consists of the colonel, major, 2 colour bearers and a RSM. Optionally a gatling gun detachment can be added.

Mounted troops which comprises cavalry as well as volunteer light horse and mounted infantry is organised in troops of 1 officer (or leader) and 5 other ranks.

Gatling or Gardiner gun detachments comprise the gun and limber and an NCO/petty officer and 2 other ranks.

Artillery detachments comprise the gun and limber and an officer and 3 other ranks.

A suitable early war British column for these rules would be made up of: 2 infantry battalions, 4 troops of volunteer light horse, 1 field gun, 1 Gardiner gun, and 8 ox wagons.

### **Zulu**

Strictly Zulu regiments consisted of warriors of a single age group and included those both with and without firearms for simplicity I have split those armed with rifles etc. into a separate category and these represent either that part of a regiment armed with firearms or some of the minor bodies of Zulu's encountered by the column's.

Regiments consist of 24 warriors all armed with shield and assegai (in ancient terms A/B class warband).

Rifles consist of 12 warriors equipped with rifle, shield and assegai.

A suitable force to oppose the above British column would consist of 16 regiments and 4 groups of rifles

## **MOVE SEQUENCE**

### **No Zulu's in sight**

- (1) Test Small Units Nerves / Observation
- (2) Move British Troops - Non Tactical
- (3) Test for Zulu's
- (4) If Zulu's appear go to (5) below

### **Zulu's in sight**

- (1) Test all British Troops Morale
- (2) Move British Troops - Tactical
- (3) Test for Zulu's Morale
- (4) Move Zulu's as determined by (3)
- (5) Test for additional Zulu's and location
- (6) British Troops not in contact with Zulu's may fire
- (7) Zulu's not in contact with British Troops may fire
- (8) Melee

### **Small Units Nerves / Observation**

Scouting parties are useful for determining the lie of the land and giving advance warning of any Zulu's. However they can give false alerts e.g. Clouds of dusts, cattle, "friendly" natives etc.

Any group of less than 15 figures who are more than 12" from the main column must test as follows.

Roll percentage dice and add the following as appropriate:-

1 - 3 figures 20%

4 - 6 figures 10%

7 - 9 figures 5%

No Officer or Leader Present 10%

More than 24" away from main column 10%

More than 36" away from main column (etc.) 20%

Dismounted 10%

NNC 10%

Within 36" of a Zulu Kraal 10%

Within 24" of a Zulu Kraal 15%

Within 12" of a Zulu Kraal 20%

If the score is 96% or higher they have spotted something suspicious and will return to the column as fast as possible. The effect of this alert is to increase to chance of Zulu's appearing.

### **Movement - Non Tactical**

This is used for moves during which no Zulu's are in sight. The maximum move distances per move are:-

Dismounted Troops in Line	4"
Dismounted Troops in Column	6"
Mounted Troops	12"
Horse Drawn Wagon/Guns	6"
Ox Drawn Wagons / Guns	4"
Man Handling:	
Field Guns (Minimum of 3 figures)	2"
Gatling Guns (Minimum of 2 figures)	4"
Wagon (Minimum of 6 figures)	2"

The following actions all take 1 move stationary to complete:

- Forming line from column or vice versa
- Limbering/Unlimbering an Artillery gun or Gatling gun.
- Releasing/Attaching the teams to wagons.
- Loading/Unloading the contents of a horse drawn wagon by 10men.
- Moving the contents of a horse drawn wagon 6" by 10 men
- Building a 3" section of barricade by 10 men using the contents of a full horse drawn wagon.
- Climbing over a barricade.

Ox drawn wagons hold 3 x the contents of horse drawn wagons so multiply the times for horse drawn wagons by 3.

### **Terrain Effects**

Kops  
(Small Hills) Can only be crossed by dismounted troops at half speed.

Kopjes  
(Hills/Crags) Dismounted troops move at normal speed, Mounted and Horse drawn wagons and guns at half speed. Ox drawn wagons can cross at half speed with double teams.

Woods Can only be crossed by dismounted troops at half speed

Scrub Can only be crossed by dismounted troops at half speed.

Rivers Are crossed by foot and mounted troops at quarter speed

Drifts (Fords) Are crossed at half speed by all troops, wagons need double teams.

### **Testing for Zulu's**

Roll two percentage dice and add the following :-

Any troops within 36" of a Zulu Kraal 10%

Boers spotted something this move 15%

British troops spotted something this move 10%

Native troops spotted something this move 5%

If the score is between **91%** and **95%** an isolated unit of Zulu Rifles is found. If greater than **96%** a major body is found

If it is a major body roll 1d6 each move to determine the quantity of Zulu's appearing this move.

1 = 1 Unit of Zulu Riflemen this move

2 = 2 Units of Zulu's this move

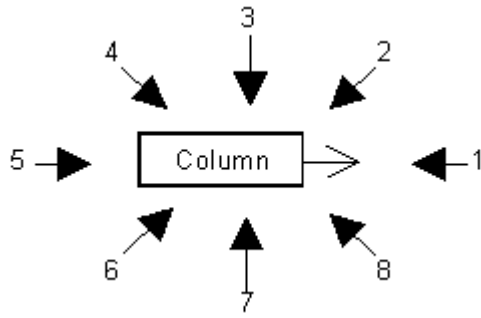
3 = 3 Units of Zulu's this move

4 = 4 Units of Zulu's this move

5 = 5 Units of Zulu's this move plus an Induna

6 = No more Zulu's(\*)

Then roll 1d10 to determine which direction they appear from. On a roll of 9 or 10 the Zulu's appear from the same direction that the scouts spotted something otherwise from a Zulu Kraal or if neither then roll again.



The Zulu's are positioned either at the nearest available cover in that direction or 32" away from the nearest troops.

\* If less than half the available Zulu's have appeared then treat as a roll of 1 and continue.

### **BRITISH MORALE**

Roll 1d6 for each company and add modifiers as below and compare with table for the appropriate troop type. If not playing solo and the company is within 12 inches of a player character then ignore any result other than rout.

Officer or Leader with unit +1/ - 1

Field Officer with unit +2/ - 2

Unit in defences - 2

Retired last move +1

Routed last move +3

Per figure lost last move from firing +1

Per figure lost last move from melee +2

	<b>Charge</b>	<b>Continue</b>	<b>Retire</b>	<b>Rout</b>
<b><u>Regular Infantry</u></b>				
Zulu's within 8"		0 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 12
Zulu's within 16"		0 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 12
Zulu's within 24"		0 – 5	6 – 8	9 – 12
<b><u>Regular Cavalry</u></b>				
Zulu's within 8"	0 – 3	4	5 – 6	7 – 12
Zulu's within 16"	0 – 2	3 – 5	6 – 7	8 – 12
Zulu's within 24"	0 – 1	2 – 6	7 – 8	9 – 12
<b><u>Natal Native Contingent</u></b>				
Zulu's within 8"		0 – 1	2 – 3	4 – 12
Zulu's within 16"		0 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 12
Zulu's within 24"		0 – 3	4 – 5	6 – 12
<b><u>Other Dismounted</u></b>				
Zulu's within 8"		0 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 12
Zulu's within 16"		0 – 3	4 – 5	6 – 12
Zulu's within 24"		0 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 12
<b><u>Others Mounted</u></b>				
Zulu's within 8"		0 – 3	4 – 5	6 – 12
Zulu's within 16"		0 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 12
Zulu's within 24"		0 – 5	6 – 8	9 – 12

## **Movement - Tactical**

this is used for moves during which zulu's are in sight and the movement distance are random to reflect the difficulty of coordinating the manoeuvring of bodies of troops. Depending on the troops action roll the appropriate number of dice shown to determine the distance the unit or individual must move in inches. This distance can be modified by the presence of officers or leaders with the unit.

Dismounted Troops	-Walk	1d6
	- Running	2d6
	-Retiring	1d6/2 (round down)
Mounted Troops	-Walk	1d6
	-Trot	2d6
	-Gallop	3d6
Horse Drawn Wagons / Guns	-Walk	1d6
	-Trot	2d6
Ox Drawn Wagon / Guns	-Walk	1d6
Gatling Gun	-Man Handled	1d6
	-Minimum Crew and Fired	1d6/2 (round down)

Units are diced for and moved individually and cannot be moved again once another unit has been diced for. Any compulsory moves due to morale should be carried out first in the sequence Routing / Retiring / Charging / Advancing.

Note Only units standing / walking / retiring may fire.

Units with an Officer may add +1 / 0 / - 1 to the dice score as desired. If a Field Officer is present then it can add +2 / +1 / 0 / - 1 / - 2 as desired. The modified score cannot exceed the maximum or minimum possible for the number of dice thrown.

To carry out any action taking 1 move (see Non-Tactical above) roll 1d6 modified by officers as appropriate. If the score is less than 3 it has not been completed this move. Try again next move.

Zulu's always run except those armed with rifles who walk if between 8" and 24" of their target.

Zulu induna's move at the run to join the unit under their command that is furthest away from the British to rally or encourage them. Units under their command are all those within 24" of their current position.

## **ZULU MORALE**

Roll 1d6 for each Zulu unit and add modifiers as below and compare with table for the appropriate troop type.

Zulu morale should be tested in the starting from the nearest to the British first and. as each unit is tested it is moved as appropriate. Units at roughly the same distance are treated as testing simultaneously. The +2 bonus is only applied if at the time of testing the nearest British unit to the tester is nearer to another Zulu unit which is not retreating or routing. Zulu units will always attempt to move into contact with the nearest unengaged British unit e.g. they will move round any other Zulu unit in their way.

Other Zulu's closer to nearest enemy (before movement)	- 2
Induna within 6" of the unit	- 1
Nearest enemy is NNC	- 1
Nearest Enemy is Regular Cavalry	+2
Retired last move	+1
Routed last move	+3
Per two figures lost last move from firing ( round up )	+1
Per figure lost last move from melee	+1

	<b>Charge or Advance</b>	<b>Stand</b>	<b>Retire</b>	<b>Rout</b>
<u>Assegai and Shield Armed</u>				
Enemy within 8"	0 – 5	6	7	8 – 12
Enemy within 16"	0 – 4	5 – 6	7 – 8	9 – 12
Enemy within 24"	0 – 3	4 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 12
Enemy within 32"	0 – 2	3 – 6	7 – 10	11 – 12
Enemy over 32" away	0 – 1	2 – 6	7 – 11	12
<u>Rifle and Assegai Armed</u>				
Enemy within 8"	0 – 2	3 – 5	6	7 – 12
Enemy within 16"	0 – 3	4 – 5	6 – 7	8 – 12
Enemy within 24"	0 – 3	4 – 5	6 – 8	9 – 12
Enemy within 32"	0 – 2	3 – 5	6 – 9	10 – 12
Enemy over 32" away	0 – 1	2 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 12

Remove any Zulu unit under 1/4 strength.

### **FIRING**

Figures can fire if they remained stationary or walked, and they are not in melee contact with an opposing figure. The first two ranks of figures in melee cannot be fired at.

#### **Rifle Fire**

For each volley of 5 figures throw 1d6 less the following deductions to give the number of figures killed.

Short Range (0 – 8")	- 1
Medium Range (8 – 16")	- 2
Long Range (16 – 24")	- 3
Crack Shot	+1
Target in soft cover	- 1
3/4 figure volley	- 1
Target in hard cover	- 2
Firing Mounted	- 1
Zulu/NNC firing	- 2

Individual Firing roll 1d6 with the deductions as above a modified score of 3 or better causes one hit. i.e. you need a 4,5,6 at short range; a 5,6 at medium range; or a 6 at long range.

#### **Pistols**

Similar to individual rifle fire, but the ranges are half those of rifles. If firing left handed (sword in right) - 1

#### **Artillery**

The effect of artillery fire is affected by the choice of ammunition used. For simplicity only cannister and shell are considered.

#### **Cannister**

Maximum range 16" roll 1d6 + 2 for number killed. Deduct - 1 for each figure less than minimum crew. Soft Cover - 2 ; Hard Cover - 4

#### **Shell**

Maximum Range 60" roll 1d6 to hit aiming point. Deduct - 1 for each figure less than minimum crew. If score x 10 is greater than the range it is a direct hit. Otherwise it is off target by score x 3 inches ( use a 1d6 to determine which direction ). The area of effect is a 4" diameter circle, any figure within it needs to roll a 3 - 6 to survive, 2 - 6 if in cover. A quick method for a whole Impi is to roll 1d6 for the casualties.

## **Gatling Gun**

Roll 1d6. Deduct - 1 for each figure less than minimum crew. Add 1 to the score and treat as a rifle volley as above. If the die roll is 1 then the gun has jammed. This requires to be unjammed next move and it is tested as above for any action taking a whole move.

## **MELEE**

This is resolved on an individual basis. Roll 1d6 each, if the modified score is 2 or more higher than the opposition then that figure is a casualty.

Dismounted with rifle and bayonet 0  
Dismounted with rifle only - 1  
Dismounted with pistol only - 2  
Dismounted with sword only +1  
Dismounted with sword and pistol +2  
Zulu with assegai and rifle 0  
Zulu with assegai and shield +1  
Mounted with pistol / rifle +1  
Mounted with sword +2  
Mounted with lance +3  
Dice roll to arrive in combat 2d6 +1  
Dice roll to arrive in combat 3d6 +2  
(Ignore these if the target is behind an obstacle )  
Defending an obstacle +2  
Uphill advantage +1  
2nd melee this move for this figure - 2  
3rd melee this move for this figure - 3

To obtain a charge bonus the figures must have contacted the enemy during their move not the opposite e.g. cavalry galloping towards some Zulu's who fail to contact them who are then charged by the Zulu's who do contact them do not receive a bonus for galloping (3d6).

## **Hits on Officers**

If an Officer is hit either in melee or from firing roll 1d6 and divide by 2 rounding up. The severity of the wound inflicted is as follows:-, these wounds are cumulative .

### **Severity of wound / Effect**

1 Light wound - no effect  
2 Serious wound - move at half speed and - 1 on any firing and melee  
3 Mortal wound - totally incapacitated  
4 Dead

Anyone mortally wounded who is in contact with Zulu's for a whole move is considered dead.

## **Daring-do points**

To create the appropriate sense of Victorian valour and to create some competition between the players all officers (and the RSM) accumulate points for their actions in battle.

## **Individual Points**

Received a light wound +1  
Received a serious wound +2  
Received a mortal wound +4  
Killed in action +8  
Per Zulu killed using personal firearms +1  
Per Zulu killed in hand to hand combat +2  
Colour lost (the individual concerned) -5  
Colour lost (the colonel if not recovered) -5  
Colour recovered +10  
(only +5 if it was the same individual that lost it)  
Led a bayonet charge (most senior officer present) +2  
Seen in the back rank during a round of melee - 1

Captain/Ensign - 1

Major/Colonel/Colonial Leader - 2

Any officer scoring over 10 will be mentioned in despatches and any achieving over 20 will be recommended for the VC (even if posthumously).

### **Campaigns**

This assumes that the progress of a single British column is being represented. Its base is a small town in Natal just over the border from Zululand. It is assumed to have adequate supplies to support itself and the column.

The size of the force is assumed to be:-

2 British infantry battalions of 4 companies each.

1 Artillery battery (one section of 2 guns and one section of 2 Gatling guns)

4 troops of colonial mounted infantry

1 Natal Native Contingent battalion of 4 companies

8 Supply Wagons

The Zulu capital Ulundi is assumed to be the objective of the column and it is 5 days march (for infantry) from the border. Given the lack of knowledge of the route and the exact geography the layout of each table is generated once troops enter onto it.

### **Modifications to basic game**

The major change is that the chance of meeting Zulu's is reduced. Rather than reducing the probabilities all movement is tripled for non-tactical moves (this is equivalent to testing for small units nerves and Zulu's every third move)

### **Rolling terrain generation**

Terrain is not generated until seen by scouts etc.

Divide the shortest side of the table into 6 equal lengths, use this length to split the length of the longest side of the table. Initially determine the terrain in the first three lines and deploy the British in the first line. As soon as any square of a new line up the table is entered generate the terrain for the next empty line up the table

### **Trails**

The position of the trail (or clear area) is determined first - roll 1d6 - this indicates the number of squares from the left that the trail lies. Re-roll if the square is not adjacent or diagonally adjacent to the previous trail square.

Where the trail passes through either the second or the fifth square it may fork and leave the table at the appropriate table edge square is clear of terrain.

### **Rivers**

Then check to determine if a river crosses the table - roll 1d10 on a score of 1 a river crosses the table between the old and new lines of squares and there is a drift (ford) where the trail crosses. Roll 1d10 again to determine the state of the river :-

1,2 Dried up - fordable at all points by all foot and mounted troops at normal speed, wheeled vehicles suffer no penalties while crossing at the drift.

3,4 Slow flowing and shallow - fordable at half speed by all foot and mounted troops at all points, wheeled vehicles move at half speed while crossing at the drift.

5,6 Slow flowing and deep - mounted troops can swim their horses across at all points at quarter speed. All foot and mounted troops cross at half speed at the drift, but wheeled vehicles need double teams and move at half speed while crossing at the drift

7,8 Fast flowing and shallow - All foot and mounted troops cross at all points at quarter speed. All foot and mounted troops cross at half speed at the drift, but wheeled vehicles need double teams and move at half speed while crossing at the drift

9,0 Fast flowing and deep - Unfordable by all troop types at any point including the drift. Roll 1d6 after 12 hours -

- 1,2 becomes Slow flowing and deep
- 3,4 becomes fast flowing and shallow
- 5,6 same the same roll again after 12 hours

### **Other Terrain**

Roll 2d10 per non trail square one dice to determine the level and the other the vegetation

#### Level

- 1 - 7 Flat
- 8 - 9 Kopje (small hill)
- 0 Kop (large hill/crag)

#### Vegetation

- 1 - 4 Clear (roll 1d10, 1 = Zulu Kraal)
- 5 Wooded
- 6 - 0 Scrub/Elephant Grass etc.

### **Typical campaign day**

Assuming the day is 12 hours long then

- 05:50 - 06:10 Stand to / Dawn alert
- 06:10 - 07:00 Cooking etc.
- 07:00 - 08:00 Breaking Camp / Loading Wagons
- 08:00 - 11:30 Movement (21 moves)
- 11:30 - 12:30 Rest / feed
- 12:30 - 16:00 Movement (21 moves)
- 16:00 - 17:00 Unload Wagons / Make Camp
- 17:00 - 18:50 Cooking etc.
- 18:50 - 19:10 Stand to / Dusk Alert

### **Battle casualties**

After a battle allocate all British casualties as follows.

- a) Officers as per wounds suffered
- b) Where no member of a company survives roll 1d6 per casualty:
  - 1 Light wound
  - 2 Serious wound
  - 3 Mortal wound
  - 4 - 6 Dead
- c) Where at least one member of a company survives then roll 1d6 for each casualty.
  - 1 - 2 Light wound
  - 3 - 4 Serious wound
  - 5 Mortal wound
  - 6 Dead

Roll 1d6 for each casualty each day and modify their status as follows:-

If a light wound or hospitalised:

- 1 increase severity by one level
- 2 - 4 no change
- 5 - 6 reduce severity by one level

If a serious or mortal wound and not hospitalised:

- 1 - 2 increase severity by one level
- 3 - 5 no change
- 6 reduce severity by one level