

ZULU WAR

Battles For Empire, 1870-1902 scenarios PART III: Battle of Intombe, March 12th, 1879

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In this third part of the Zulu war scenarios series for BFE I have chosen a rather unusual 'battle'. It might be better described as a massacre, but the tactical situation is nevertheless interesting and worth trying as a miniature wargame. It shouldn't take too long to play this one to a conclusion, so, trade sides with your opponent and try it a couple of times.

Questions about this scenario or *Battles for Empire, 1870-1902* can be directed to me via e-mail: cleach@sfu.ca
Errata, clarifications and optional rules for BFE are available at the official BFE sites at By Jingo or Small Wars on the web.

SCENARIO BACKGROUND

Supply columns sent from the Transvaal to the British forces in the Natal travelled a road that crossed the Intombe River and subsequently passed through the British garrisoned town of Luneburg. Being close to Zululand, supply columns were frequently threatened by Zulu raids. One such column found itself stranded at Myer's Drift on the north side of the rain swollen Intombe. The British Commander at Luneburg, Major Charles Tucker, ordered a company of the 80th Regiment of Foot to help the supply column across the river and to escort it to Luneburg. On 7 March, Captain Moriarty arrived with his company, and, with no chance of bringing the wagons of the supply column across the Drift, was forced to wait until the waters of the Intombe fell. While securing the south side of the drift with part of his small force, Moriarty accompanied the rest of the company to the north bank and established a camp.

Moriarty made few defensive preparations for his camp. The wagons were arranged in an inverted "V" laager anchored on the river. However, no effort was made to entrench the position, the wagons had large gaps between them, and, when the waters of the river began to subside, the laager became separated from the river; the soldiers' tents were erected in the gap. Moriarty was so confident that the Zulus would not attack his position, being so close to Luneburg, that he placed his own tent outside the laager at the apex of the inverted "V".

The local Zulu commander, Prince Mbilini kaMswati, saw the opportunity that Moriarty offered him. Mbilini was a bold commander and audaciously even reconnoitred the British position himself, disguised as a friendly commoner. Early in the morning on March 12, Mbilini ordered his force of 6-800 warriors forward. The discipline of the Zulus was evident as the impi crept to within 150 metres of the British laager, undetected, with the British garrison still in their tents blissfully ignorant of the fate that awaited them.

ORDERS OF BATTLE

Note that units in *Battles for Empire* generally represent companies - or Native equivalents - of 70-120 soldiers. For this scenario, the units represent approximately 15-25 individuals.

British: Captain Moriarty, command figure on foot;
Lieutenant Harward, command figure on horseback.
On table: 80th Foot: 6 units, British regulars, 1st Rate

Zulus: Prince Mbilini, command figure on foot, 2 other command figures on foot.

On table:

10 units, Zulu regulars
All three Zulu commanders are on-table.

Off table:

Up to 20 units, Zulu regulars

SCENARIO NOTES

British

The British force represents the ad hoc rifle sections of Moriarty's company. Four units are located on the north side of the river directly under Moriarty's control; two units are on the south side commanded by Harward.

This British force should have been strong enough to defeat the Zulus. However, Moriarty made several mistakes that rendered his garrison completely unprepared. Furthermore, the Zulus did not comply with the expected script of attacking when it suited the British.

All British units and commanders are in their tents at the start of the game. The tents are positioned as per the map - some historical liberties were taken in regards to the tent locations. Players should consider changing the placement of tents when replaying the scenario. Prior to every turn roll a D6 for each British unit and commander still in their tents to determine their reaction to the events unfolding rapidly around them. Compare the D6 result with the following chart for effects:

Die Result and Effects:

1-2 Unit/Commander still in tents.

3-4 Unit mustering. Replace tent models with the unit. The unit may be deployed in any formation, but may not subsequently move during that turn. At the end of the movement phase for that turn the unit becomes Shaken and Disordered (same effects as being hit in the flank during the current Movement phase). The unit may fire, but is not "fixed bayonets". Commander awake and ready.

5-6 Fully mustered. The unit may be deployed in any formation, but may not subsequently move during that turn. Replace the tent models with the unit. The unit may fire and is "fixed bayonets". Commander awake and ready.

D6 roll modifier: +1 for each turn starting on turn 2 (+2 on turn 3 etc.).

When a unit leaves its tents it no longer needs to roll.

A British unit "still in tents" that is contacted by a Zulu unit immediately suffers one "kill" (foot and mounted units can sustain 4 kills in *Battles for Empire*) and becomes Disordered and Shaken. These effects are applied at the end of the Movement phase. Replace the tent model with the unit of figures. A commander caught in his tent is automatically killed; Moriarty was killed at the start of this action and as he fell exclaimed, "I am done. Fire away boys!"

Note that the British do not have additional ammunition to use if they "rapid fire" and subsequently become "low on ammunition".

Zulus

All the Zulu units available at the start of the game are considered from the "Chest" of the Zulu attack formation. These units may be deployed anywhere beyond 8" from the British laager and the river on the north side of the Intombe. Note that with a 9" move the Zulus should be able to contact the British tents (or a unit activated in the tent location) positioned in the gaps between the river and the laager.

Off-table Zulu units arrive using the Zulu Arrival Charts. Chart I is not used; start on turn two rolling on Chart II ("Horns"). When a "Loins" result occurs immediately start using Chart III ("Loins"). Roll twice for Zulu reinforcements every turn until all available Zulu units have arrived or the game ends.

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