

ZULU WAR

Battles For Empire, 1870-1902 scenarios PART II: Battle of Nyezane, 22 January, 1879

by Chris Leach

While the Zulu War Battles of Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana gain all the attention of the popular imagination, the Battle of Nyezane is another hard-fought and tactically interesting battle that could have added to the imperial and military woes of the British on 22 January, 1879. The following scenario has been devised for BFE but, as noted in the previous article on Isandlwana, the level of play and unit organizations should make this easily convertible to *Principles of War* or even *The Sword and the Flame*.

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.

SITUATION



The British invasion of Zululand involved three main offensive columns and two more that provided a strategic reserve and security to Natal and Transvaal. While the Centre Column (Number 3) penetrated Zulu territory en route to the Royal Kraal at Ulundi, Colonel Charles Knight Pearson's Number 1 or Coastal Column advanced in the south-eastern territories to force the Zulus to disperse their military resources and also protect the approaches to Natal.

This strategy seemed to be failing when Pearson's column advanced unopposed towards Eshowe. Finally, on that fateful 22 January, 1879, a Zulu force attacked the Coastal Column while it crossed the Nyezane River. With his force divided on two sides of the river, some of Pearson's irregulars inadvertently sparked a Zulu attack. Historically, the British were saved only by the premature and consequently uncoordinated Zulu attack, and by the quick wits of junior British officers. Will your re-fight reflect these same circumstances or will you face the prospect of massacre as Puleine experienced at Isandlwana on the same day?

ORDERS OF BATTLE

BRITISH: 2 commanders: Colonel Charles Knight Pearson (Commander of the "Buffs" and the senior commander of the Coastal Column) and Colonel Welman (Commander of the 99th Foot)

North of the river:

3 companies (units), British Infantry (3rd Foot "Buffs") regs, 1st rate
1 company (unit), Naval Brigade, regs, 2nd rate
1 MG (Naval Gatling gun)
1 Royal Artillery section (single model gun - 7 pdr), 2nd rate
2 Volunteer mounted units (Use British charts) 2nd rate

1 company (unit), Natal
Native Contingent
(represented as "green"
Zulus in all respects)
1 ammo mule
Wagon park of 6 wagons

South of river:

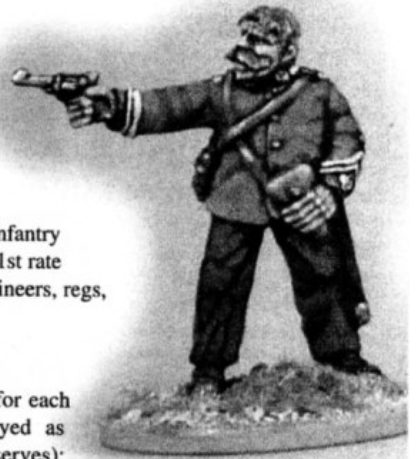
2 companies (units) British Infantry
(1/99th Foot, 1/Buffs), regs, 1st rate
1 company (unit) Royal Engineers, regs,
2nd rate
2 wagons
1 ammo mule

ZULUS: 4 commanders (1 for each

Zone; 1 commander deployed as
desired arriving with reserves):
Godide kaNdlela, Mbilwane kaMahlanganisa, Masegwane
kaSopigwasi, and Matshiya.

30 units of Zulus available

Break point 10 or 17 (see victory conditions);
use Floating Break Point rules



SCENARIO NOTES

BRITISH

The British foot on the north side of the river must be deployed in company columns inside their deployment area. British may not move beyond their deployment zone until one of the following occurs:

1. British spot Zulus
2. All British forces from south of the river have crossed to the north

If no Zulus have been spotted, the British must advance down the centre of the table (the track) once their force has crossed to the north side of the river.

British south of the river arrive one unit per turn starting turn 6. The two wagons are one unit and must cross before the last infantry unit, otherwise, the order of crossing is up to the British player. The ammo mule is attached to a foot unit.

The Kraal

The British can stop the arrival of off-board Zulu reinforcements by destroying the Kraal. To destroy the Kraal a British foot unit or dismounted horse unit must remain stationary, not fire, and be unengaged in melee for one complete turn. Once the Kraal is destroyed, Zulu reinforcements cease starting on the following turn. If the British have already destroyed 10 or more Zulu units, the game ends when the Kraal is destroyed (note Victory Conditions below).

Wagons

A wagon contacted by a Zulu unit unengaged in melee for the entire turn is destroyed. The destroyed wagon affects the Floating Zulu Break Point.



WI DEC 2002

183