

A Solo wargamers glimpse of the Third Afghan War.



After a while you lose count with Afghan Wars. But the third was different, in that the Afghans invaded us in 1919. It's different in another way as well, because my Grandfather was involved in it. He had finished the First World War in Mesopotamia and then just as they were sending people home, he was 'invited' to be part of a Lancashire Provisional Battalion. So he fought in the Third Afghan War and the Revolt in Waziristan.

After the end of the fighting with the Afghans (where Imperial forces halted them and drove them back) the Wazir and Mahsud tribes of Waziristan revolted. Apparently they were angered by false rumours that Waziristan was to be handed over to Afghanistan in post-war talks. One assumes that they preferred ignoring the Imperial government and looting Imperial citizens to having to get used to ignoring the Afghan government whilst looting Imperial citizens.

The war was a mixture of cutting edge conflict with air support and armoured cars, and the classic conflicts of the North West Frontier. So when Major Guy Hamilton Russell, commander of the South Waziristan Militia, fell back from Wana to Fort Sandeman between 26 and 30 May 1919 his account sounds like something from the previous century. During the retreat, of his force there were 40 men killed and wounded. Of the eight British officers, five were killed and two were wounded.

His diary account, voiced by an actor is at

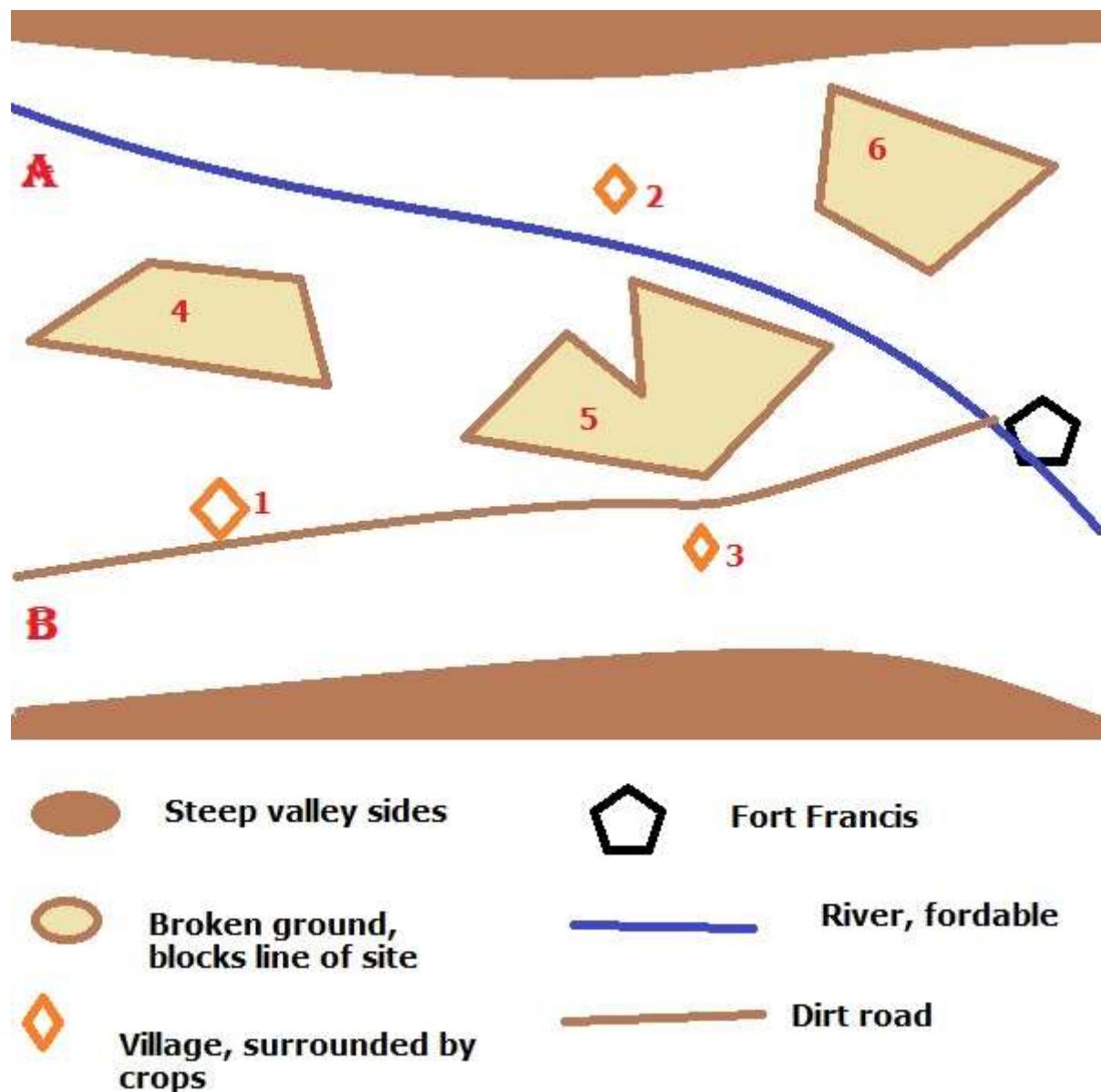
<https://soundcloud.com/national-army-museum-uk/major-guy-hamilton-russell>

This scenario is an attempt to capture a feel for the war rather than to refight a particular operation.

The scenario is meant to be played with Hell and Uncivil Disorder rules. You can use any scale of figures. The basic unit is a 'bunch'. So if I describe a bunch as being 10 figures strong, that can be ten figures (15mm, 20mm, 28mm) or ten bases of 6mm figures.

It can also be fought solo if you want to.

The table

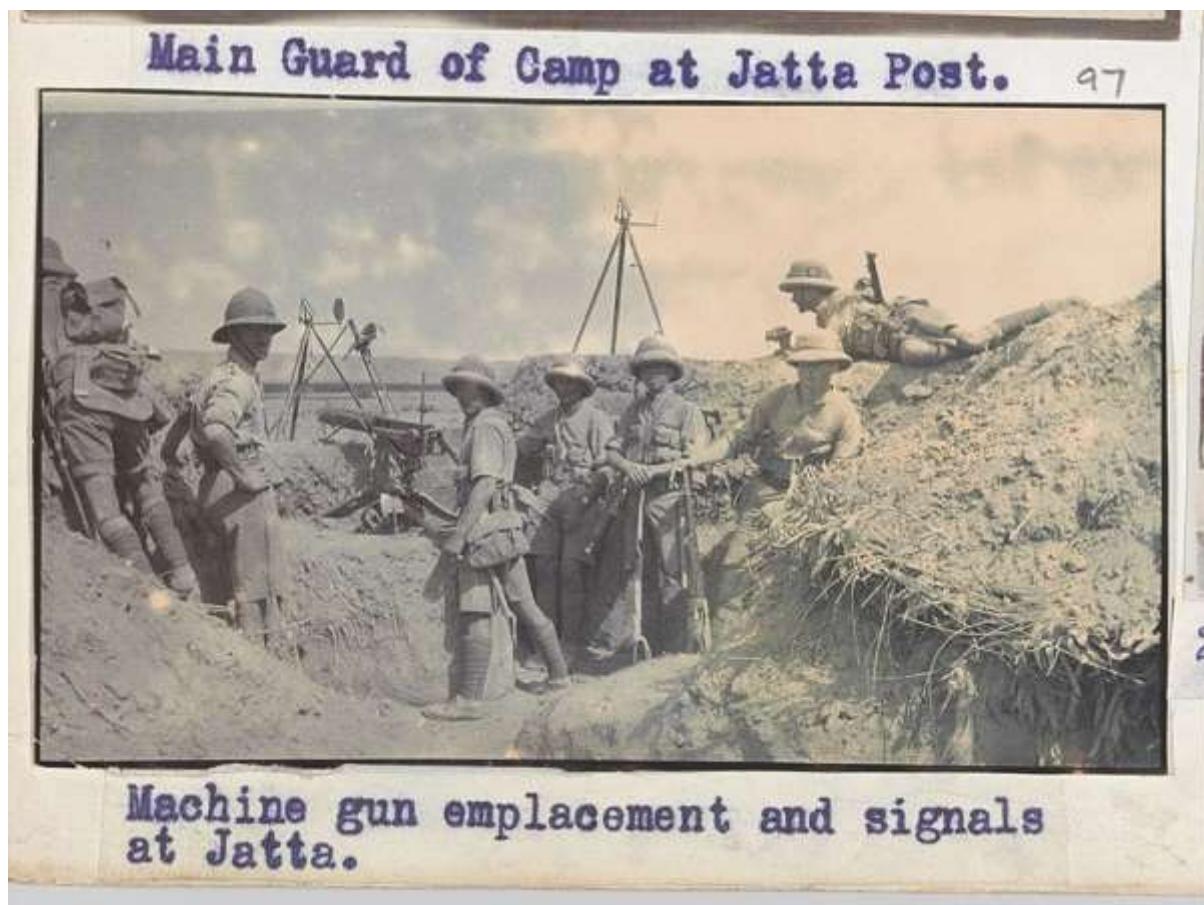


I'm assuming you're using a 6ft by 4ft table.

Lines of sight. Whilst there is obvious broken ground that breaks line of sight, the rest of the table isn't billiard table level. There's all sorts of dead ground. So when trying to shoot or spot a hostile bunch, toss a coin, and you cannot see them because they've obviously moved into a hollow or behind a low rise. If one of your bunches cannot see the potential target, then adjacent bunches cannot see them either. But more distant bunches might be able to see them. Given the range of long firearms in this game, fighting on a billiard table is lethal to all concerned.

Bunches in villages or Fort Francis can always be seen but at least have cover. Troops in the fort get an extra +1 to their survival on top of the +1 for cover.

Imperial Forces.



**Machine gun emplacement and signals
at Jatta.**

You are leading a mixed force of five bunches of men, initially they were 10 figures strong, but now, for each bunch roll a d6+4 and that is how strong the bunch is.

If you have the figures roll another d6 for each bunch

- 1,2 British Regulars
- 3,4 Indian Army Regulars
- 5,6 Local Militia.

If you haven't the figures then just use what you've got.

At the start of the game roll the Aggression for each bunch, this is to give the commander a chance to move among them and lift their aggression.

When a bunch comes under fire for the first time roll a d6 to see how good they are.

British regulars and Indian Army Regulars. (A lot had had enough of the war and just wanted to get home, but they were at least properly trained and experienced.)

- 1,2,3 Gunmen
- 4,5,6 Riflemen

For Militia, roll a d6

- 1,2 Thugs
- 3,4,5 Gunman
- 6 Riflemen

Your force starts 20 inches from either point A or point B. Your aim is to get as many men as possible to Fort Francis.

In Fort Francis there is a further bunch of Indian Regular Riflemen, 12 strong. It also has another commander, a technomage who has a Radio and can summon demons for you. They also have a daylight signal lamp so can talk to the column if it is in line of sight.

The fort also has a Vickers Machinegun. This counts as a stationary MGIAT and is mounted so that it can get as much coverage as possible. At the very least it can command Villages 2 and 3.

If you have a second player, then consider making them the fort commander rather than the Wazir and Mahsud commander.

Demons available.

The fort commander can call down artillery and can get the full range of sullen, truculent or psychotic demons, the latter is heavy artillery rather than rocket batteries. When working out how accurate the artillery fire is, if fort commander can see the target, use his techno rating. If he is reliant on messages sent by signal lamp from the column commander, use the column commander's techno rating.

Wandering Monsters.



Once the column commander has established contact with the fort, the rest of the world knows what sort of trouble the column is in. So there is a chance the rest of the world will do something to help.

Every move after that, roll a d6. On a 6 there is a wandering monster. This will normally be an air strike. It will act as the usual summoned demon, attack one bunch and leave.

If on rolling a 6 you then roll 4,5 or 6, an armoured car (Counting as a MGIAT) arrives at the fort and can be used by the fort commander to help keep the road open for the column. You get a plane every time but there is only one armoured car.



Magic.

You as commander of the column are a Shaman so your highest ability is Chutzpah.

Artefacts.

- You have an operator with a daylight signal lamp who can talk to the fort when it's within line of sight. You request the fort commander to summon demons and he will. Obviously with a move's delay.



Signalling lamp

- You have 'The Book.' This is, 'The King's regulations and orders for the army. 1912' and you can use it to cast the spell of 'True Faith'.
- You have 'mirror shades' or in your case your officer's uniform which allows you to cast the spell of 'Cool'.
- Your uniform also counts as Distinctive Garb and allows you to cast 'The fear of the known.'
- You can also cast the spell of 'Inner Harmony' without need of artefacts.

The Wazir and Mahsud fighters.



Assuming that you are playing solo, the fighters act as programmed. If you have a player who would prefer to command this force, the troops arrive as the dice dictate, but the other side has a general figure to represent the player.

Each move toss a coin. Heads a bunch of fighters, $d6+4$ strong, appear at A, on tails a bunch appear on B.



When these fighters first get within range roll for them as if they were British or Indian Army regulars to see whether they're riflemen or gunmen. Roll for aggression as normal.

The fighters will move towards the Column if they can see it, otherwise they will make their way to Fort Francis (because they know where it is.)

Villagers.

Every move roll a d6. If you look at the map each village and each patch of broken ground is numbered. When you roll that number of a d6, a bunch of villagers d6+4 strong, will appear on the number.

When these fighters first get within range of the column, roll for them.

1,2,3 They're Thugs

4,5,6 They're Gunmen

Roll for aggression as normal.

The first group on a number will stay there and open fire on the column from cover. If you get a subsequent group on the same number, they will move out to try and block the path of the column or at least get a better shot.

The Wazir and Mahsud Commander

The commander is an enigmatic figure on a white horse.

Each move roll a d10.

- 1 to 6 he appears on the village or area of broken ground and lifts the nearest sullen bunch from sullen to truculent. If all are truculent he will raise at least one bunch to psychotic. (Toss a coin, on heads he lifts one, on tails he lifts two.)
- 7,8 He appears in the middle of the largest group of bunches following the road and lifts one from sullen to truculent.
- 9,10 He appears in the middle of the largest group of bunches following the river and lifts one from sullen to truculent.

He then disappears again to be summoned by the dice in the next move.

Winning and losing.

The game ends successfully when you get all your men into Fort Francis. It ends in ignominious failure if you don't. Because, to put it bluntly, there is an element of chance in this game, it would be unfair to set scores. After all, if in one game you marched triumphantly into the fort having suffered only minor scratches, whilst in the next game you got bogged down among the villages before being overtaken and overwhelmed by the fighters following, it's all the fault of the dice. Or at least so you can assure yourself.