

# TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORNS

LOW LEVEL BATTLES AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST  
AGGRESSORS IN ZULULAND 1879

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## Introduction

These rules are to provide a framework for wargames that simulate the wide range of small battles that were fought when the British Army launched an unprovoked invasion of Zululand in January 1879. The famous battles are well known, but the emphasis of this set of rules is on the smaller actions typically between 500-2000 Zulu and a company of 120 or so of British.

The game is intended for use with toy soldiers at the 1/300 scale, although it could just as easily be played at other scales or even with counters on a map.

The fundamental assumptions are that the firepower of a formed line of British infantry is very devastating, and that the determination and tactical handling of the fighters on both sides is critical to the outcome of each battle.



## Sequence of Play

All actions are simultaneous. Players either note down or tell the umpire their intended actions for the turn.

1. **Orders – players take one of their permitted actions (see ‘Command & Control’)**
2. **Hand to hand combat (any units in base to base contact)**
3. **Firing**
4. **Determination test**
5. **Movement.**

## Command And Control

Each player controls a single identified individual on the table top - the **Command Figure**. This is the only figure they can rely on to do exactly what they want - and it is important that they identify with that figure and its actions.

In most games, the players are organised into a **Command Structure**. This means that one player will be in charge, and command several subordinate player/commanders.

The Player/Command Figure can take ONLY ONE of the following actions in each turn - which must be announced to the umpire at the start of the turn:

1. **ENCOURAGE THE MEN:** This represents stirring speeches, conspicuous bravery etc. It goes without saying that this can only be done in full sight of the majority of the men under his command - and not from behind a nearby rock!. Done properly this will improve the determination of the men. It can also only be done if the men are not actually in combat (firing or melee) or moving. It can be done while under fire.
2. **ISSUE ORDERS:** The commander tells someone else what to do. In the case of most commanders this usually means telling the men under his command to take a *Battle Action* (see below). In the case of the overall commander, this is the only time they can



communicate their wishes to other players under their command.  
 Shouting range is 8" if there is no firing, or 4" if there is firing within 24"

3. **MOVE:** Simple enough really. But it only applies to your personal figure. Troops with you won't move unless they've had an appropriate order.
4. **SHOOT:** The commander joins in the firing of the men, or perhaps shoots at some other target of choice.
5. **FIGHT:** The commander engages personally in hand to hand combat.

**Personal Risk.**

If the unit the commander/players is with takes casualties, the player must roll 1d6 for personal risk

Casualties taken on the unit in this turn	Unscathed	Score to be lightly wounded	Score to be out of action (serious wound or killed)
Up to 25%	3+	2	1
26%-50%	4+	3	1
51%-75%	4+	3	1-2
Over 75%	5+	3-4	1-2

-1 from the die if player was 'Encouraging the Men' that turn.



## Representational Markers

On the table-top terrain model (or map etc.) the 1/300 figures are mounted on bases of five toy soldiers, each toy soldier represents one real-life soldier. The ground scale is also 1/300, which means that 1 mm on the model represents about 1 foot. Hence 12" is about 100 yards. British rifles of the time had a range of around 800 yards (96") on a good day. Losses taken in battle are always in terms of entire bases, as are all rule calculations.



## Battle Actions

The instructions that Command Figures issue to the troops fit into a number of standard types or *Battle Actions*. The number of Battle Actions are limited because the troops will only understand things they have been trained to do. There isn't the time in a battle to introduce radically new tactics or actions without risking disaster.

Command figures may order a Battle Action to all the bases under its command, or to only one base. In the event of confusing or contradictory orders, the umpire will interpret the orders and rule on the outcome.

### **Battle Actions Available to All**

**Follow Me:** The troops follow the Command Figure. If British they will attempt to remain in some sort of formation. If Zulu they will follow as a clump.

**Move:** This is accompanied by an indication of where to move to. In the case of British soldiers, this may involve a drill manoeuvre, such as wheeling etc. If in doubt the umpire will rule on what is necessary. Zulu will move as a clump.

**Charge!:** If British, they will fix bayonets and attack the nearest enemy to their front with the bayonet. If Zulu, they will run forward and attack the nearest enemy to their front. This can be at the run if allowed. (see Movement), and a charge can take several turns if necessary. Once issued this order cannot be rescinded until they have reached the enemy or been forced back by adverse Determination rolls.

**Rally:** Where troops are running away or retreating, this is an order given by a Commander to try to get them to stop running away.

**Form Up:** In the case of the British, this means reorganising into line - perhaps after running away or getting ready for battle. In the case of Zulu this is assembling into a rough line of about 3-6 bases deep (but not in neat lines).

### **Actions Available to British Soldiers Only**

**Form Line:** Form up in two ranks of bases. This is the standard formation of the British Army.

**Fire!:** The whole unit will open fire on the targets to their front. This will mean, in some cases firing on more than one enemy group. They keep firing at the most obvious target until told to *Cease Fire or until the targets go away*.

**Cease Fire:** Getting them to stop firing can be a problem. Roll 1d6 for the unit and score 4,5,6 to get the firing to stop.

### **Actions Available to Zulu Warriors Only**

**Wait out of Battle:** In this case the force will sit down with their backs to the battle (so as not to become too excited and want to join in). A common order given to reserves (loins).

### **Actions Not Allowed**

The Zulu do not have an 'open fire' order because individual Zulu will fire such firearms that they have when they feel like it. The effects are factored into combat. The same applies to the Zulu throwing spears.

Similarly, the Zulu do not have formation orders, but will maintain contact with neighbouring groups, and attempt to carry out the standard doctrine. Zulu Commanders may move bases, but may not line them up into neat, regular formations.

**Other Actions**

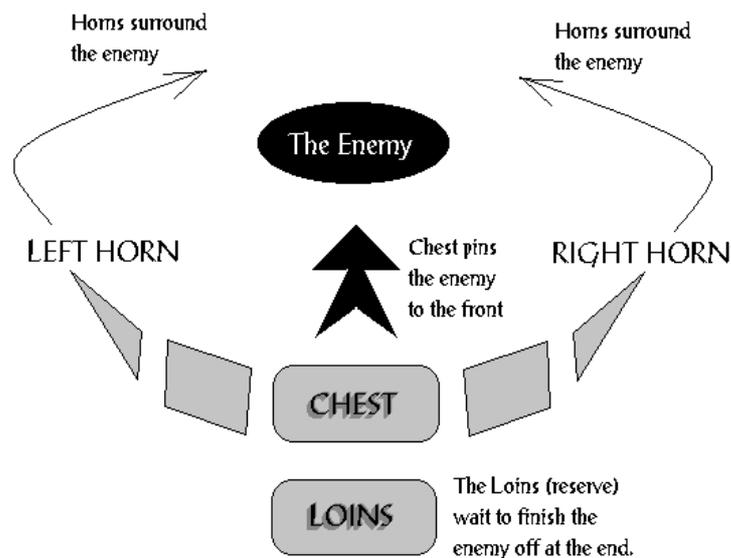
The umpire will rule on any scenario specific additional Battle Actions that might be necessary.



**Movement**

<b>Zulu Warriors</b>	Creeping & trying to hide	5cm
	Normal Jogging speed	15cm
	Running	20cm
For Zulu Running is allowed only 2 turns in 6.		
<b>British Soldiers</b>	Normal March	10cm
	Marching in Line	7cm
	Run away/Charge	15cm
<b>Mounted Soldiers / Boers</b>	Normal Move	15cm
	Run away / Charge	30cm
For Europeans / Boers charging is only allowed for 1 turn in 3, <i>run away</i> is permitted every turn if appropriate		
<b>Wagons</b>	Normal speed	5cm

**ZULU TACTICS**



**"The Horns of The Buffalo" Tactics**



# Determination

This is a measure of how ready a group or unit is prepared to get closer to the enemy. Very low levels of determination cause the troops to run away.

Roll 1d6 every time the group is:

- ordered to move closer to the enemy
- or the enemy move closer to them,
- Zulu sighting enemy for the first time
- or at the end of any turn that the group has been fighting hand to hand
- or the group is under fire\*

\* Under fire is defined as when the unit or its immediately adjacent unit is a target for firing. It does not have to receive casualties to be eligible for the test.

Score	Result
Over 8	<b>Over enthusiastic</b> - will advance towards the enemy - charge them if possible.
3 to 8	<b>Determined</b> - will obey orders
0 to 2	<b>Unenthusiastic</b> - will not move closer to the enemy this turn. Zulu are allowed to extend their frontage sideways though.
-1 to -3	<b>Extremely Nervous</b> - instead of obeying orders, will move away from the enemy for half a normal move.
-6 to -4	<b>Terrified</b> - will run away from the enemy until rallied or a new determination test improves things.
-7 or less	<b>Run For Their Lives</b> - unit disperses off the battlefield at the run. It does not return.

**FACTORS:**

- +1 British Solders in line
- +1 British soldiers / Boers behind cover
- 2 British Soldiers in line being outflanked
- 1 Each base of casualties this turn
- 1 Each 20% casualties since the start.
- 1 *Extremely nervous*
- 2 *Terrified*
- +1 Commander is *Encouraging The Men*
- 1 Unit Commander not in sight (not Boers)
- 1 A neighbouring unit ran away last turn
- +2 *Over enthusiastic*
- +2 Zulu on first sighting the enemy.
- 2 Natal Native Contingent (NNC) at all times
- 1 Swazi auxiliaries at all times.

# Shooting

Roll 1d6 per British base shooting

Roll 1d6 per Zulu / Swazi base throwing spears

Roll 1d6 per 10 NNC Bases shooting

Only the first two ranks can shoot.

Score to 'hit' (ie. remove one base of the target force)



Range up to...	10cm	30cm	60cm	120cm	Over 120 cm
<b>British Riflemen</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>10 x NNC bases</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Command figure</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Zulu spears *</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Boers on foot</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Boers on horseback</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>

\* Zulu will automatically shoot if stationary and with 10cm of the enemy. Since this is mostly thrown spears, a Zulu group may only 'shoot' once per game.

## **FACTORS:**

Target stationary	+1
Target mostly in cover	-1
Firer under fire	-1
Moving and firing	-2

# **FIGHTING**

Roll 1d6 per base in contact with the enemy. Add up the total and divide by 10 (halves rounded up) and that is the number of bases killed on the enemy side.

## **Fighting Factors.**

If attacking an enemy that is defending a field defence or laagered wagon or the equivalent, then divide score by 20 rather than 10.

If the British are ordered to charge with bayonets, they get +1 to each die roll for the first round of combat only.



**Example:** 4 bases of British vs 7 bases of Zulu in melee in the open.

### **Turn 1**

British roll 4 x d6      2 + 5 + 5 + 2 = 14      divided by 10 = 1 Zulu base killed

Zulu roll 7 x d6      3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 1 + 4 = 15 divided by 10 = 2 British bases killed

### **Turn 2**

British roll 2 x d6      6 + 5 = 11 divided by 10 = 1 Zulu base killed

Zulu roll 6 x d6 1 + 1 + 3 + 6 + 5 + 5 = 21 divided by 10 = 2 British bases killed, thus finally wiping out all the British for 2 bases lost.

## QUICK REFERENCE PLAYSHEET

<p><b>Command Options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the Men</li> <li>• Move personal figure</li> <li>• Shoot personal weapon</li> <li>• Fight in hand to hand</li> <li>• Issue Orders</li> </ul>	<p><b>Order options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow me Move</li> <li>• Charge!</li> <li>• Rally</li> <li>• Form Up</li> <li>• Form Line (British only)</li> <li>• Fire! (British only)</li> <li>• Cease Fire (British only)</li> <li>• Wait out of battle (Zulu only)</li> </ul>	<p><b>SEQUENCE OF PLAY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Command Options / Orders</li> <li>• Hand to hand combat</li> <li>• Firing</li> <li>• Determination test</li> <li>• Movement.</li> </ul>																																																		
<p><b>Movement</b></p> <p>5 Zulu creeping          15 Zulu Jogging          20 Zulu Running (only 2 in 6)          10 British March 7 in Line          15 British Run away / charge          5 Wagon on trail</p>	<p><b>HAND TO HAND FIGHTING</b></p> <p>Roll 1d6 per base in contact. Add scores and divide by 10 for enemy killed. (divide by 20 if enemy defending a field defence).          +1 per die, first round only, if British given Charge order.</p>																																																			
<p><b>Determination</b></p> <p>1d6 if ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zulu sighting enemy for first time</li> <li>• Ordered to move closer to enemy</li> <li>• Enemy move closer to you</li> <li>• End of any turn of hand to hand</li> <li>• Under fire</li> </ul> <p><b>Factors</b></p> <p>+1 British in line          +1 British in cover          -2 British in line outflanked          -1 each base of casualties in turn          -1 each 20% casualties since start          -1 Extremely Nervous          -2 Terrified          +1 Commander Encouraging his men          -1 neighbouring unit ran away last turn          +2 Over-enthusiastic          +2 Zulu on first sighting the enemy          -2 NNC</p>	<p><b>Determination Results</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">Score</th> <th>Result</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>9+</td> <td><b>Over Enthusiastic</b> – advance towards enemy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 - 8</td> <td><b>Determined</b> – carry on</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0 - 2</td> <td><b>Unenthusiastic</b> – no closer to enemy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-1 to -3</td> <td><b>Extremely Nervous</b> – move away for half move</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-4 to -6</td> <td><b>Terrified</b> – run away until rallied</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-7 or less</td> <td><b>Run For Their Lives</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Score	Result	9+	<b>Over Enthusiastic</b> – advance towards enemy	3 - 8	<b>Determined</b> – carry on	0 - 2	<b>Unenthusiastic</b> – no closer to enemy	-1 to -3	<b>Extremely Nervous</b> – move away for half move	-4 to -6	<b>Terrified</b> – run away until rallied	-7 or less	<b>Run For Their Lives</b>																																				
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