

THE NATIVES ARE RESTLESS TONIGHT

Simple Rules For A Colonial Siege Skirmish Game

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Princess Gertrude's North West Frontier Rifles Edition
By Doug Kendrick (April 2009)

This game is designed to recreate a beleaguered colonial garrison under attack by ferocious natives. The defenders must try to survive until the relief column arrives, while the attackers must attempt to wipe out the defenders and free their country from the Imperialist overlords. The game is designed for 28mm figures and all ranges and distances are given with this in mind.

The game can be played with virtually any figures from the colonial period, though originally intended for a Boxer Rebellion siege: Zulu War, Foreign Legion, North West Frontier, Indian Mutiny, etc. would all work.

EQUIPMENT

- 4' x 4' Playing area
- Normal D6
- 2 Average dice (DAv)
- Figures, based individually
- Buildings and barricades to represent a defensible structure in the center of the playing area and to provide some cover for attackers
- A deck of normal playing cards with 2 Jokers
- Counters to represent ammunition supplies for the defenders

SETUP

Place the buildings and walls/barricades that will make up the defenders' area in the center of the playing board; this should cover an area roughly 18" x 18". There should be at least two entry/exit points. Place some other terrain pieces (bushes, trees, walls, hasty barricades, etc.) around the rest of the table to give some cover to the attackers. The area outside the defenders' compound should provide sparse cover—the attackers should have to cross areas of open ground to reach the defenders. The defending player places his forces inside the compound. The attacking player rolls to determine his starting forces.

DEFENDING FORCES

The Colonial forces should consist of 4-6 squads of men. A squad is composed of six men and an Officer/NCO. The more squads the defender is allowed, the easier his task will be. Squads must be placed so that it is clear which figures are in which squads. The defender should also have a machine gun or small field gun with a crew of 4 figures. The defending player will need 20 rifle ammunition counters and 5 machine gun/field gun ammunition counters. He will also need a marker figure to represent the relief column—a mounted officer, standard-bearer or bugler figure is recommended.

ATTACKING FORCES

The attacking player needs lots of natives armed with melee weapons. Some natives need to be better equipped than the standard troops—either with guns, mounted or fanatical.

- Basic natives operate in groups of 4-10 figures
- Better troops operate in groups of 2-5

At the beginning of the game, the attacking player rolls randomly for his starting forces. He may roll once for each board edge to determine what figures enter from that side. The attacker rolls 2DAv and 1D6 (2 average dice and 1 six sided):

- **If the D6 is a six**, the group of figures is made up of better quality troops. The unit's size will be a number of figures equal to the higher of the two average dice.
- **If the D6 is not a six**, the group is regular figures equal to the sum of the average dice totals.

The groups of natives may be placed anywhere along their starting board edge so long as they are kept together as a group (2 figures deep with bases touching).

Example:

The average dice are rolled and come up with the scores 4 and 3, and the D6 is a 6. The attacker will get a group of 4 better quality troops. If the dice had scored the same but the D6 was not a 6, he would get a group of 7 regular quality troops.

UNIT ACTIVATION

Drawing a card from the face down deck activates groups of figures, either a defending squad, a group of natives or a machine gun/field gun. Defenders are activated by red cards; natives by black cards.

A **numbered card** (2-10) allows any single group of the controlling player's choice to take an action. Basic actions are *move* or *fire*. **Special Actions** can be carried out as circumstances dictate, for example setting fire to a building, forcing a gate, climbing an undefended wall or pulling down a barricade; each of these would be a single action.

A **face card** allows the player to take two actions, either a single action taken by each of two groups or one group may do two actions consecutively. After the player has finished carrying out his actions any melees are resolved. If there are no melees to resolve, the native player rolls for reinforcements regardless of whether the face card was black or red.

An **ace** allows three actions to be taken and then either melees are resolved or the native player rolls for reinforcements as above. If the **Ace of Hearts** is drawn, everything happens as above. In addition, the defender places his relief column marker on the board to signify that the column has been sighted or heard (this is purely a status marker and cannot attack or be attacked). If the Ace of Hearts is drawn again, the column arrives and the defending player has won the game.

If a **Joker** is drawn, neither player may take any actions and melees are not resolved. The attacking player gets automatic reinforcements on each side of the board, determined in the same way as at the start of the game. In addition, the deck of cards is reshuffled.

If the relief column has been sighted and the relief column marker is on the board, only the next Joker to be drawn causes a reshuffle so that the Ace of Hearts is returned to the deck. Subsequent Jokers allow reinforcements for the Native player but do not initiate a reshuffle.

MOVEMENT

Figures can move in any direction and may end up facing in any direction. Native figures in a group may not combine with other groups, and their bases must be touching. Colonial groups that have become too small to be effective may be combined as an action if they are within 6" of each other. One Officer/NCO must be replaced permanently with a normal figure and the resulting group cannot number more than six men and a single Officer/NCO. Mounted figures may combine in this way with an infantry squad, but they become infantry too (but not the other way round—infantry cannot be converted to cavalry).

Colonial figures on foot move 6". Movement is carried out by measuring the move for the Officer/NCO and then arranging the members of his squad around him as necessary. Figures should be kept together so there is no difficulty in determining which squad they belong to. They may be grouped to occupy a room or spread out to man a section of wall, etc., but they must remain within 1 base width of each other. Moving from a floor in a building to any other floor in the same building (or the roof) is a full move. Figures in the same room as a door may leave a building, if they do so the move is measured from the door. It is a full move to cross a linear obstacle such as a barricade or wall. A defended obstacle cannot be crossed until all defenders are removed, either killed or pushed back.

Mounted colonial troops move 12", measured from the Officer/NCO. It costs 6" of their move to cross an undefended linear obstacle. Any obstacle higher than a figure such as a high wall is impassable to mounted troops.

Defender's machine guns or field guns may not move position during the game. They may change their facing to any direction as a move action if they are fully crewed. If one or more crewmembers have been killed, the defending player may use one Special Action to remove a figure from a squad and replace one of the missing gun crew. This figure may be "teleported" from any colonial squad on the table. A crewman may use a Special Action to become an infantryman if the gun is out of ammunition and there is a squad with room for him.

Native troops move 8". Their movement is carried out by measuring the move distance of a single figure and grouping the rest around him at the end of the move. Any figure can be chosen as the initial mover, and it doesn't have to be the same one each time. Native movement is more 'elastic' than that of Colonial troops.

Mounted native troops move 12". It costs 6" of their move to cross a low undefended linear obstacle (less than the height of a figure). Their movement is carried out by measuring the move for any figure of the controlling player's choice and grouping the rest around him.

The attacking player may use an action to remove any one of his groups from the playing area. The figures are immediately removed and become available to be deployed again.

SHOOTING

Figures (except a machine gun/field gun) may fire in any direction. Machine guns/field guns have a firing arc of +/- 45° from their facing. Figures may shoot at any enemy they can see—the game is set in a small area and everything is considered in range. High walls, buildings, trees, etc. block line of sight. Figures behind a stand of trees cannot be seen, and figures in a stand of trees receive the benefits of hard cover. Friendly forces cannot be fired through but figures in the same group do not block each other's fire. Line of sight is determined for the defenders by tracing it from the Officer/NCO to any member of the target group. LOS for the attackers is from any member of the shooting group to the enemy Officer/NCO.

Firing is carried out by selecting an enemy group to shoot at. A D6 is rolled for every figure in the firing group and these dice are added together. The results are applied as follows, with the non-shooting player deciding which particular figures are removed. Officers/NCOs are always the last figures to be removed from a squad.

Machine guns and field guns roll 8 dice when they fire. This is reduced by two dice for each crewman lost.

- **Each multiple of 6** kills an enemy in the open
- **Each multiple of 9** kills an enemy protected by ‘soft’ cover (bushes, dead animals, fences, etc.)
- **Each multiple of 12** kills an enemy protected by ‘hard’ cover (inside a building, behind a barricade or wall, in trees, etc.)

All casualties are removed immediately. Native units that have taken casualties must immediately test morale (see below).

Optional Range Rule

Any target that is 24” or more away counts as long range and requires the following totals to kill:

- **Each multiple of 9** kills an enemy in the open
- **Each multiple of 12** kills an enemy protected by ‘soft’ cover
- **Each multiple of 15** kills an enemy protected by ‘hard’ cover

Example:

A full squad of colonial troops defending a wall decides to shoot at a group of nine natives running towards them across open ground.

The squad rolls 7D6 (six men and an Officer) and scores 6, 5, 2, 2, 3, 4, 1, a total of 23—that’s 3 multiples of 6 with 5 left over. Three natives hit the dirt dead. One more point and another would have joined them. If the natives had been hiding in some rocks (hard cover), only one would have died (one multiple of 12) with a remainder of 11—not enough for a second kill. One ammunition marker is discarded.

AMMUNITION USE

Ammunition supplies are limited for the defenders. Each time a squad fires—regardless of the number of figures in it—the defending player must surrender an ammunition counter.

Each time the machine gun or field gun fires, one of those ammunition markers must be discarded.

Optional Ammunition Rule

If you are playing a game with an Umpire, the Umpire should keep track of the ammunition usage and tell the defending player when it is getting low. To avoid the defending player having too much awareness of his ammunition supply, the Umpire may want to remove 1D6 counters before the game. Dropping expended ammunition counters loudly into a container as they are used greatly increases the tension for the defending player and encourages the attacker. You may like to use spent rifle casings as markers, they have an ‘authentic’ sound.

MORALE

The defenders never have to worry about their morale—they have nowhere to run!

Natives, however, must check morale each time they suffer casualties. The native player rolls 1D6 when a group suffers any losses and must roll greater than the number of casualties inflicted or the group will rout. If a rout occurs, the group is immediately removed from play and becomes available for recycling as reinforcements. Note that if several groups of natives joined together into the same melee and they fail the morale test, then *all* of the figures are removed. **NOTE:** Natives *always* pass if they roll a 6 on 1D6, even if they suffered more than six casualties.

Fanatical troops never test morale. This also means that any fanatical troops that joined in a melee and the rest of the figures rout, the fanatics *still remain* on the table, simply retreating a full move away instead.

MELEE

When opposing groups come into contact, a savage hand-to-hand battle ensues. Once engaged in a melee groups may not break off.

Melees are not resolved until a face card or an Ace is drawn—this adds to the uncertainty and allows participants with guns to maybe get off a shot or two before everything is decided. Groups outside a melee may not fire into it.

Once a melee has started, other groups may be fed into it to bolster numbers. Native forces combine into one big group and split into groups by type at the end—all basic troops form one group, all mounted form another and all special troops form groups according to type.

Colonial forces that survive form squads again composed as the controlling player wishes, and small units can be combined for free as long as a unit does not exceed the original 1 leader and 6 men squad composition.

Melees are resolved by rolling a D6 for each combatant and adding them up. Results are applied as follows:

- **Each multiple of 6** kills an enemy in the open
- **Each multiple of 9** kills an enemy defending a hasty barricade
- **Each multiple of 12** kills an enemy defending a building, wall or prepared position

Hand-to-hand fighting is considered to be simultaneous, so although it is recommended that you resolve a melee by one player rolling and then the other, casualties should not be removed until they've had a chance to roll their own attacking dice.

Native forces that suffered casualties must take a morale test *before* the winner and loser of a melee is decided. However, natives that have killed all the figures opposing them in hand-to-hand combat do not have to take a morale test.

If the natives flee, then the defending player's forces are considered to have won the melee and they do not have to retreat from their defensive positions.

If both sides have figures left after the melee and morale checks are resolved, then the side that lost the most figures is considered the loser and must fall back a full move and regroup. If both sides lost the same number, then the side with the least number of figures remaining is considered the loser. If both sides have taken equal casualties and have the same number of figures remaining then the defender is considered the winner.

The winner may move forward to occupy any positions that the loser previously held and form his groups there. This means a successful attacker will cross a previously defended barricade/obstacle.

Figures defending a building that are forced back must exit the building *away from* the attackers (possibly through windows, etc.).

Optional Cavalry Melee Rule

To give mounted cavalry a reason for being, give each cavalry figure in a melee 2 dice instead of one. This will reflect the shock nature and fighting height advantage of mounted troops. Note, however, that this is offset by the fact that mounted troops *cannot* fight against troops in defensive positions (heavy cover). Cavalry is thus only really useful against troops in the open (such as late in the game when the attacker gets inside the compounds) and marginally so against troops in light cover like scrub.

NATIVE REINFORCEMENTS

Each time a face card or an Ace is drawn and there are no melees to be resolved, the attacking player gets to roll for reinforcements.

Assign a number 1-4 to each table edge and roll 1D6. If you roll 1-4, that is the side reinforcements will appear on; if you roll 5 or 6 none appear. If reinforcements are indicated, then roll 2DAv and 1D6 as at the start of the game and place the resulting group (2 figures deep with bases touching) anywhere along their starting edge.

Reinforcement rolls are made after any actions, so they will not get to do anything right away when placed. Note that reinforcements are drawn from the overall total force of the natives and *not* a bottomless pool of troops. If there are currently no more figures of that type off-table in the “reserve pool”, then no reinforcements may be brought on. This is why a player may use a Special Action to remove smaller units from the table and return them to the pool.

When the Joker is drawn, it may be important which side to begin with when rolling for the reinforcement entry location—especially later in the game when the pool of regular boxers is depleted. You can do one of two things:

- Let the Chinese player choose which side to begin with, then roll for reinforcements going clockwise around the table from that edge.
- Determine the starting edge randomly by dice roll as above (re-rolling any 5s or 6s), then move clockwise around the table from that edge.

Optional Reinforcement Composition

After several games, it became apparent that it is *really* difficult for the Chinese player to ever get any units of special troops. Normally, it's only a 1-in-6 chance (i.e. when the D6 comes up a 6 during the composition roll). An optional way to increase this chance is whenever the Joker is drawn, allow the Chinese player to receive a special unit if the composition roll D6 is a 5 or 6. This increases the chances, but not by too much too often during a single game.

Optional Reinforcement Scheme

Once the Chinese player's allocation of normal Boxers has been depleted, it may be that the Chinese player will not receive additional reinforcements because he only has special troop types left in the reinforcement pool. When this happens, an alternative would be to allow those reinforcements to *automatically* be treated as special troop choices. Roll normally, but treat the reinforcement roll as always having a 6 on the regular D6—simply choose a special troop unit based on the higher of the two DAv as normal. **NOTE:** this might unfairly skew the advantage to the Chinese, particularly late in the game.

WINNING

The defending player wins if the relief column arrives; the attacking player wins if he kills all the defenders. If at any time there are no native troops on the table due to having been eliminated or routed, the native player automatically rolls for 1 reinforcement unit (re-roll any 5s or 6s when rolling for the unit's entry point).

SAMPLE ARMIES

Here are examples of the figures needed for a game set in the Boxer Rebellion.

Attacking Forces

- 60 (70) Boxers armed with a variety of swords and pole arms
- 20 (15) Boxers armed with muskets, a better quality element of the force
- 20 (15) Tiger Men, a better quality element who are counted as fanatical
- 1 Field Gun with 4 crew, a better quality element that can be taken if there is a five on the “number of figures” die. This could also be represented as a unit of 4 *Jingals* each stand of which would roll 2 dice like an artillerist figure.

Special Rule For Attacker’s Field Gun

Field guns may move as infantry until they are fired. Once they have fired they may not move for the remainder of the game. Field guns roll 8 dice when they fire, losing 2 dice for each lost crewman. If they are contacted by the enemy and the entire crew is either dead or missing the gun is considered destroyed and is removed from play. The Native player may never use a Special Action to replace lost artillery crewmen.

Defending Forces

- 1 Squad of German Seebataillon consisting of 6 men and an Officer
- 1 Squad of Italian *Bersaglieri* consisting of 6 men and an Officer
- 1 Squad of Japanese Infantry consisting of 6 men and an Officer
- 1 Squad of Russian Infantry consisting of 6 men and an Officer
- 1 Squad of US Sailors consisting of 6 men and an Officer
- 1 USMC Colt machine gun and crew
- 1 Relief column marker consisting of a Japanese mounted standard-bearer

ADDITIONAL RULES

“Double-Sized” Battles

You should be able to fight double-sized battles by:

- Doubling the effect of the action cards: number cards give 2 actions, face cards 4, aces 6. The rules around drawing the Ace of Hearts and Jokers remain the same. However, no single unit can perform more than three actions in one turn.
- Providing 2 built-up legation areas, separated perhaps by a wide boulevard, maybe even with a ditch. The road ends between the two compounds could be joined by hasty barricades that may be defended at the defending player’s option.
- Expanding the playing area to 4’ x 6’, with the two legations placed toward the center.
- Doubling the forces involved on both sides.
- Doubling the amount of ammunition markers for the Colonial forces (40 rifle and 10 Machinegun/Field Gun).
- Doubling the native reinforcements: when drawing normal reinforcements, create *two* units to enter on that table edge. Drawing a Joker yields 8 units, 2 on each table edge.

Optional Fires And Fire Fighting Rules

If an attacker is in or touching a structure, he can use a Special Action to set fire to it. At that time, he rolls a DAv to determine the number of actions it will take before the fire catches hold and the building becomes untenable. This attempt can only be made on a building that is not already on fire (i.e. you can't "double ignite" a building). Mark the building to indicate the number of actions, perhaps with something like a wooden matchstick.

Each time the defender takes any action *other than* firefighting (such as moving or shooting), convert one of the matchstick markers to a smoke puff marker. If all markers are converted to smoke markers, the structure is engulfed in flame and must be abandoned. Any occupying figures must flee a full move and may suffer fire casualties. The attacker rolls 1D6 per original matchstick marker, with a casualty on the fleeing garrison for each multiple of 12.

If the defender has figures inside or within 2" of the structure, he may use a Special Action to fight the fire. This will either remove one matchstick marker or convert a smoke puff marker back to a matchstick. If all markers and smoke puffs are removed, the fire is out.

Only actual buildings may be set ablaze, not other structures like walls, gates, barricades, woods, etc. Each building must be set ablaze separately, even if they are adjacent and touching.

