

LAST STAND AT KHARTOUM 26th January 1885

It is the afternoon of Tuesday 26th January 1885 in the fortified Sudanese city of Khartoum. The small British garrison under the command of General Gordon has no longer been able to stem the flood of thousands of native attackers unleashed by "The Mahdi", the leader of the rebellion against British rule in the Upper Nile region. The situation is awesome as the Mahdists give no quarter. The warcry "kill the infidels" echoes through the narrow lanes of Khartoum and it seems there is no escape from this massacre.

A small group of defenders has managed a fighting retreat to the fortified harbour of Khartoum. These brave "diehard" troops consist of the survivors of Captain Killmaine's irregular skirmish company (Killmaine is an Irish soldier in British service), a bugler of the 25th foot, the remains of a squadron of the Royal Camel Corps, the Egyptian Pasha Selim Bey and one of his guards, a German military observer namely Feldwebel (Sergeant Major) Otto, as well as Mrs. Gordon and her pack camel loaded with valuable antiques and jewellery. These survivors have taken their last stand in the harbour fortifications in the furthest tip of Khartoum at the confluence of the White and Blue Nile. There seems to be no escape as the Mahdists are closing in from the land side. The options are massacre or drowning in the river Nile, unless a vessel of the Royal Navy manages to slip by the Mahdist river defences and rescue the handful of survivors. The sun is about to set and the last stand defenders are anxiously looking out from their fortifications whether rescue is on the way. Will the Royal Navy arrive on time before the Mahdists take their bloody tribute?

, commander of the brig H.M.S. "Assumptious" had received the urgent request from Khartoum on the evening of Monday 25th January to reinforce the defenses with his company of Royal Marines (equipped with the new trench regulation uniform) against an imminent native attack. By Tuesday midday H.M.S. Assumptious has reached a location several miles north of Khartoum and Lieutenant Smythe (nicknamed the "mad cow") and his Marines become aware of massive smoke rising from the city. It seems that the defenses are under heavy attack and possibly have already been overcome. Lieutenant James B.S.E. Smythe looking back on his ancestry of great soldiers (his father commanded a supply frigate during the Crimean War and lost one arm at Sevastopol, while his grandfather won great fame at the Battle of Trafalgar back in 1805) decides to take up the challenge and rescue whatever is possible from the inferno at Khartoum. By late afternoon he spots a Union Jack on the foremost harbour fortifications which seem to be under constant attack. However to reach this position it will be necessary to circumvent the Mahdist river blockade. Will Lieutenant Smythe achieve to arrive on time for the rescue of the last survivors?

The Game

H.M.S. Assumptious will only arrive when the British player picks a Joker from a pack of six (each time one card removed). The Mahdists continue attacking. The British player must evacuate the maximum of troops possible. Victory conditions: The Mahdists win if >75% (see points) of British are massacred. Points: Rank = 1, Sergeant = 2, Officer = 3, Mrs. Gordon = 5, Pack Camel = 10. (Add total points of British troops. Divide casualties by total for %)

Fighting points: The "Mahdi" +2, Officer & NCO's +1, Mounted +1, Marines +1