

“THE THIRD OPIUM WAR”

The foreign devils’ involvement in the 1870’s Chinese “back of beyond”.



Lt-Col. Axel Red, China Station, officer commanding “1st Opium Brigade”. Whilst on half pay, he married the *Barones de Maisonjardin et Arbre*, but eventually returned to soldiering, as far away from Europe as possible...



Little is known about Khan Schmer Laph, the commander of the Dungan rebel army. Some claim him to be a “ladies man”, but this rumour might well be born out of pure envy...

Scenario 1 “CROSSING THE RUBICON” (forces of 5 SAGA-points).

The officer commanding the “1st opium brigade” (or what was left of it...), **Lt-Col. Axel Red**, took a long look through his binoculars at the distant village at the foot of the mountain.

It had been a long march from the Indian border to the heartland of Tibet, constantly trying to figure out from (not always) friendly natives the route the opium caravans took to transport their lucrative but poisonous load from the province of Xinjiang via Tibet to India.

But now it seemed that he had struck gold at last! He could clearly make out pack horses being hurdled into the village. “*In vain*”, he thought, “*In vain...*”; “*Soon we will be upon them...*”.



The battlefield viewed from the British starting position, stream in front, village at the foot of mountains.

He was about to give the order to advance to the village, when suddenly a dust cloud to the left of the village drew his attention. Could it be more animals packed with opium bound for the village? When taking a closer look he realized that he had been lured into a trap. He could now clearly make out several units of armed figures deploying in front of the village.

Damned! He wished the rest of the brigade & his cavalry had returned by now from their scouting mission, but that would not be the case before tomorrow morning at the earliest...

Quietly, he lowered his binoculars and addressed his company commanders: “*you may advance across this small stream, gentlemen, but careful (you are now “crossing the Rubicon”...) and keep the Gatling at hand...*”.

Emerging from the dust cloud, the opposing commander - **Khan Schmer Laph** - lost no time in deploying his Dungan rebels & Hui allies. He had been kept informed of the foreign devils’ movements for weeks now and had lured them to this exact spot by sending out a fake opium caravan and... the English had taken the bait! Better still: their commander had split his forces and now only part of them faced his *braves*!

Allah akbar! Time to learn the intruders a lesson they won’t forget! (he hopes...).

To the victor the spoils...

<i>Conditions:</i>	<i>Points won</i>
First to bring the enemy force down to 2 Saga pts = victor!	15
Per enemy “levy” figure (12 figs/unit) eliminated.	1
Per enemy “warrior” figure (8 figs/unit) eliminated.	1.5
Per enemy “hearthguard” or “artillery” figure (4 figs/unit) eliminated.	3
Per enemy officer eliminated. (both Lt-Col Axel Red & Khan Schmer Laph are present, but only as token figures: they do not take part in the game, nor can they be targeted).	4

Additional rules.

When crossing the stream, movement stops mid way and a second activation is needed to go ahead. However, the British may deploy on the right bank of the stream, nearest to the village.
Mounted archers/firearms range = 2x S (20cm).

“CROSSING THE RUBICON” – the battle.



The village seemed deserted, an obvious easy target for the British and a great place to serve as a base for their coming operations...



After leaving camp crossing the stream: the British left & centre.



The British right flank, soon to bear the brunt of the fighting...

No sooner had the British deployed across the stream, ready to march towards the village in line, strengthened by their Gatling gun and Highlander Guard infantry (Indian infantry on both flanks) or the Dungan/Hui force emerging from behind the village deployed in the same fashion, blocking the British advance. Lt-Col. Axel Red was confident his superior firepower would soon break the rebel line.



Whilst the British were crossing the stream, the Dungan/Hui forces deploy in front of the village.



The opening stage of the battle, viewed from the British line.

It looked as if the British commander was about to be proven right, because the Dungan/Hui force started to fall back in the direction of the village as soon as the British line advanced. Little did the Brits know that the rebels were only trying to stay out of gun range, whilst waiting for the right moment (*read: dice/abilities combination*) to launch an attack with their off-table cavalry unit, commanded by a high ranking officer (= +3 attack dice in close combat).



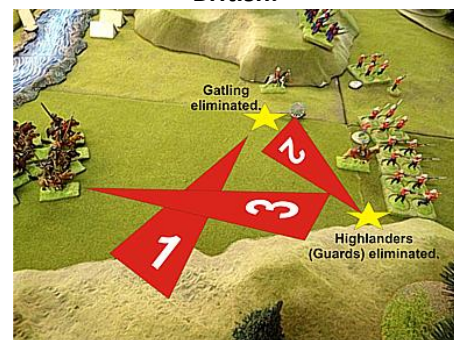
The rebels, falling back in front of the British.



Khan Schmer Laph was a lucky general indeed! (exactly on the right moment he casted six upon six, thus gaining 8 Saga Dice in total to launch his off-table cavalry and adding powerful abilities to the attack). The Indian infantry unit was totally taken by surprise and lost melee after melee...



When the rebel cavalry attacked, Axel Red choose to eliminate the cavalry's fatigue again & again to bring down its armour. In vain: it only resulted in the cavalry winning melee after melee without accumulating fatigue and finally the Indian infantry holding the British right flank was as good as gone. The rebel cavalry had gained the high ground and the British right flank lay wide open...



Khan Schmer Laph's luck held: he gained again the initiative the next turn and was able to sweep down the hill with his cavalry unit, killing the Gatling team to a man (1) and - whilst retreating to the river - eliminating one of the British Highland (Guard) units as well, firing arrows from the saddle (2). His cavalry ended with its back to the river (3) and although completely fatigued, it now had time and space to recuperate...



Lt-Col. Axel Red realized that – once the rebel cavalry would have recuperated (in 2-3 turns time) – his remaining forces would be sandwiched between the arrows of the horsemen and the enemy infantry. He therefore decide to press on and nearly succeeded in annihilating the crossbow unit on the enemy's left flank by well-aimed fire, but he was far less successful on his left flank where enemy second-line troops not only withstood the fire of his line infantry, but the rebs' muskets also nearly broke his line (or what remained of it). (Now down to 2 SAGA points) the British – licking their wounds - had to break off the engagement, return to camp and leave the town in the hands of the victorious rebels. Khan Schmer Laph smiled...

“CROSSING THE RUBICON” – aftermath.

After a cold night in the British tent camp across the stream, Lt-Col. Axel Red did not very much enjoy his breakfast. His force had suffered a thorough beating at the hands of the inferior enemy forces and the wounded casualties of his command had been under the surgeon's hands all night. However, things were not as bad as he had figured last night: although the 2nd Indian Infantry had been virtually wiped out as well as the Gatling crew, most of the Highlanders and his regulars had been only more or less slightly wounded and most of them would again be fit for service in a couple of days. Fortunately, the sergeant in command of the Gatling gun had survived and was already training a new crew.

Axel decided to take his staff across the stream to scout the enemy positions, but after looking for 15 minutes through his binoculars he could only conclude that the village seemed deserted, but was it? Only one way to find out: a section of line infantry – under a young Lt. - was sent to investigate. They returned soon after, reporting that the enemy had abandoned the position. His wounded in need of a roof above their head, Axel Red decided to take the risk and occupy the village. The enemy was indeed gone. Time to write his dispatches. (Sigh...) What would he tell the General?...

At that very moment, the lancers and infantry he had sent on a scouting mission two days ago entered the village. Their commander, Major Wilhelm Fuckingman rode straight up to him, jumped from his horse and started shaking Axel's hand vigorously. “Colonel!” he said, “Colonel, what a great victory! You have chased the enemy clear from the field and the village, congratulations, sir, my respect, sir, my respect!”.

Axel Red nodded and smiled... This is it! He now knew how to write his report to the General, who was hundreds of miles away. He did take the village in the end, after all, didn't he? The general would none the wiser. “Pen and paper, if you please, Sgt-Major!” he shouted as he sat down at his writing desk. “Now, how would dear uncle Flashman go about this?...” he thought, whilst picking up his pen.