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Introduction.

In November of 1893 the renowned Egyptologist Lord Conway made an amazing discovery in the Qattara Depression. It was in a previously unsurveyed temple complex, buried beneath the floor of what appeared to be a great tomb. In his journal he described the artefact as 'a giant quoit of an unknown metal, some 8 yards across. Accompanying it were a number of other artefacts also of great antiquity.'

Lord Conway arranged for the artefacts to be taken secretly to his estate in Yorkshire via Tobruk, to avoid the attentions of the antiquarian community, until he could decipher their purpose. He quickly came to the conclusion that it pre-dated any previously known Egyptian finds and that it was a machine of some description. In order to further his research he engaged the brilliant young Scottish engineer John Macfarlane. Over the next year Macfarlane laboured day and night until he worked out how to power the quoit up. Conway meanwhile, with the help of his daughter Felicity, had set about deciphering the many inscriptions upon the quoit and ancillary equipment.

From here on in the story is somewhat confusing and is based on the somewhat unreliable evidence of a surviving footman, one Joseph Higgins, and Macfarlane's hurried notes. Late in the evening of 19th December 1894 Macfarlane powered up the gate and Lord Conway pressed several of the panels on the circular control device. A 'pool' appeared vertically in the quoit and after a few seconds the generators overloaded and the quoit went dark.

The following evening, after Macfarlane had repaired the generators, Lord Conway prepared to make a second attempt. Before he was able to press any panels the quoit lit up on its own and after that there was chaos. Apparently a number of large men in ancient armour, with the heads of Eagles, came through the quoit. They blew a hole clean through Macfarlane and took Lord Conway, Felicity and several of the staff captive, departing to whence they came.

Baffled the police alerted the Government who in turn handed the situation to a Special Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, one Mycroft Holmes. He has seized control of the estate and has summoned a number of eminent scientists and others to his aid.

The newly formed Office of Exploratory Studies has recruited the players as an exploratory team. Their first mission will be to follow the Eagle-headed men, and to attempt to recover Lord Conway and his daughter.

It is March 21st, 1895.

Throughout the game the player characters are referred to as 'Explorers'.

Game Philosophy

This is an abridged version of the D20 rules that has been designed to be quick and easy to play. The goal was to create a simpler game, but one where all of the resources of core D20 (creatures, skills, adventures and equipment) could be used without any serious conversion.

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Character Creation

Attributes

There are 3 attributes - Strength, Dexterity and Mind. These are abbreviated as STR, DEX and MIND.

Roll 4d6, drop lowest dice. Total remaining 3 dice and allocate to one of the attributes. Repeat for remaining attributes.

Attribute bonus = (attribute-10)/2, round down.

Professions

The explorers have been recruited from a range of useful professions by Holmes and his assistants. Each profession brings with certain trained advantages, particularly regarding the various skills. It should be noted that this is the explorer's background. Once in service he can learn and improve skills beyond his initial portfolio.

The professions are Soldier, Criminal, Scientist, Clergy and Hunter.

Characters begin at Level 1.

Soldier.

The officers and other ranks of Her Majesty's armed forces are tough, well-trained and self-confident. They form the backbone and tactical leadership of the explorer companies. Given the opposition they are expected to face no explorer company can deploy without military support and protection.

Soldiers add +1 to all attack and damage rolls. They can use any weapons. They have a +3 bonus to the Physical skill.

Criminal.

Although opposed by the Army, Holmes has decided that there may be situations where the more subtle skills of the career criminal may come in very useful. Each of the criminals recruited by Holmes are men who face long sentences for their crimes in the rather grim Victorian prison service. The reward for their participation, other than serving Queen and Country, is a conditional pardon. For each mission they undertake a number of years will be deducted from their sentences. Players should roll 5D6+5 to determine the original length of their sentence.

Criminals can initially use any light weapons. They have a +3 bonus to the Subterfuge skill and +2 bonus to the Communication skill.

Scientist.

It is extremely likely, given the devices so far recovered, that the explorers are going to come into contact with advanced cultures. The role of the scientists is to recover, analyse and reproduce this technology on behalf of the Empire. They must also assess the threat these devices pose to the Empire, and indeed to the Earth.

Scientists can initially use revolvers and shotguns. They gain a +2 bonus to the Knowledge and Engineering skills. They may also choose a 'speciality' - a single area of scientific knowledge in which they get a +4 bonus (i.e. A Doctor is a scientist who has specialised in medicine).

Clergy.

In the Victorian period most of the foremost antiquarians, ancient cultural scholars and archaeologists were members of the Clergy. It is also considered important that a man of God accompany missions to bring an alternative viewpoint to first contact opportunities. Thus, just maybe, turning potential military engagements into opportunities for alliance and the sharing of knowledge.

Clergymen can box, adding +1 to attack and damage rolls when using the noble art. They initially have no other trained weapon skills. They gain +2 bonus to the Communication and Knowledge skills. They may also choose a 'speciality' - a single area of knowledge in which they get a +4 bonus. This should be one of the classics or an archaeological or anthropological area of study.

Hunter.

This was the age of the great white hunter. Holmes wants each explorer team to be accompanied by a man who is an expert at field craft and scouting. The Army at least agree on this choice, where they are dubious about the others.

Hunters can use any weapon. They add +1 to ranged weapon attack and damage rolls. They gain a +2 bonus to the Survival and Perception skills. They gain a further +2 bonus to the Perception skill when tracking.

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Social Class.

The British Empire has a well-defined class structure. Exceptional people could overcome this and rise to greatness. Class will, however, help to determine many of the benefits and disadvantages available to a new Explorer:

Class	Benefits	Disadvantages
Working	Add one to initial STR attribute.	Deduct one from Knowledge skill.
Middle	Add one to Knowledge skill.	Deduct one from initial STR attribute.
Upper	Add one to Knowledge & Communication skills.	Deduct one from Subterfuge skill.
Foreigner or Colonial	Choose one of the above classes' advantages and disadvantages, and add the language of the native country.	Deduct one from the Communications skill when dealing with British people.

A player who wishes to play an Army Officer cannot choose the Working Class background. The example set by Major Richard Sharpe in the Peninsula War was a one-off.

Gender.

Although the Victorians had very closed views on the roles of the sexes, this situation is so far beyond their experience that such rules are suspended. Holmes and his team have recruited the best they can quickly find, regardless of gender. That said you are not going to get any female Soldiers. There was simply not the opportunity for a woman of the period to come from such a background. Female Hunters are likely to be colonials.

Nationality.

All explorers will be British, although this generalisation includes both the white and coloured peoples of the Empire's possessions and dominions. As quoted before Holmes' prime consideration is competence. That said any Officers will be white.

Exceptions.

There is no reason that the GM should not allow exceptions to these period specific rules on class, gender and nationality. However, the player will be expected to come up with a suitably convincing back-story.

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Skills

There are just seven skills:

Physical	This covers all the usual such as riding, climbing, jumping etc.
Subterfuge	This covers acts of stealth and deception.
Engineering	All practical mechanics and electrics is here. The late Victorians had a very pragmatic grip on the implementation of science.
Knowledge	This is broader and covers all areas of knowledge be it scientific, historical, medical, esoteric, anthropological and antiquarian.
Perception	The ability to perceive that which is not immediately apparent.
Communication	The ability to make oneself understood, and if played well, admired and persuaded by.
Survival	This covers those skills necessary to make the best of one's surrounding such as camping, tracking, hunting, identifying food and water sources etc.

These are fairly broad and generic categories, and it is up to the players to explore the breadth and depth of them in play.

Skills are used in two ways, opposed and unopposed. The former is where there is an active intelligence opposing the explorer. The latter is where there is not.

For an opposed roll compare the scores of the explorer against that rolled by the GM on behalf of the 'active intelligence' opposing them.

In the case of an unopposed skill use to succeed the player must score higher than the given Difficulty Class to succeed.

Skill Roll = D20 + skill rank + whatever attribute bonus is most applicable + situational modifiers

Skill Rank = The explorer's level + any bonus due to his profession or social class.

The GM will determine any suitable modifiers to this roll.

For example:

- Climbing would use Physical + STR bonus.
- Dodging a falling rock is Physical + DEX bonus.
- Finding a trap is Subterfuge + MIND bonus.
- Disabling a trap is Subterfuge + DEX bonus.
- Making or repairing a weapon or armour is Engineering + DEX bonus.
- Recalling an ancient legend would use Knowledge + MIND bonus.
- Treating a comrade who has been poisoned would use Knowledge + MIND bonus.
- Bargaining for provisions with tribesmen would use Communication + MIND bonus.
- Tracking a deer or finding water is Survival + MIND bonus.

Note that there are no class-based "saving throws" in this game. We use Physical + STR or DEX bonus for the equivalent of Fortitude and Reflex saves as appropriate. Saving against mental attacks (Will save) is usually MIND bonus + Level.

Re-rolls.

The Explorers are true British Heroes and as such have one or two abilities beyond the reach of normal men.

At first level each Explorer is allowed a single re-roll per day. A re-roll must be used immediately after the Explorer made a roll that failed or wasn't good enough, not ten minutes later when the consequences of the roll become clear.

A player can only re-roll dice for his own Explorer's actions, not for someone else's.

For game purposes the power to use a re-roll regenerates at dawn (or it's local equivalent).

At every third level the Explorer gets another reroll to use per day.

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Combat

Hit Points.

Hit Points = STR attribute + (Level x3).

Initiative

Roll D20 + DEX bonus for initiative order. Everyone can do one thing each turn; move, attack etc. The exception being when one moves up to an enemy with the intention of attacking them in close combat. Some call this a 'Charge'.

A turn is a period of roughly six seconds.

Attacking

Melee attack bonus = STR bonus + Level

Ranged attack bonus = DEX bonus + Level

Add attack bonus to D20 roll. If higher than your opponent's Armour Class (AC), it's a hit.

A natural 20 is automatically a critical doing maximum damage. A natural 1 is always a miss.

There are no attacks of opportunity.

Pistols and close combat weapons can be used against opponents in adjacent squares. Longer firearms need at least one square of empty space between the firer and their target, unless you are using them as clubs.

There is no such thing as subdual damage. In these rules it matters not if you beat a man unconscious with your bare fists or blast him with a shotgun, he can still die of it. There are weapons that are designed to render an opponent unconscious, such as the Zatnic'tl (see the section below on 'Knocking someone unconscious').

Also a character that is helpless, such as when pinned, kneeling in surrender or held by several burly Jafar can be rendered unconscious with the classic blow to the back of the head.

Weapon damage as per table in the Equipment Section. Add STR bonus to Melee damage. Double the STR bonus for 2-handed weapons.

Damage is deducted from Hit Points. If Hit Points are reduced to zero the victim is incapacitated and can no longer act or move. Further damage will kill the victim. Note a victim's Hit Points can only be reduced to zero, not below. There is no such thing as negative hit points. A victim who is left untreated for longer than (STR) minutes dies of shock and blood loss.

Armour as per table below. AC = 10 + DEX bonus + Armour bonus + Cover Bonus

Cover can be quite important, and complex. In SG1895 there are just two types of cover:

Soft Cover	Where at least 50% of the target is obscured by something that prevent vision but may not stop a bullet	+2 bonus to AC.
Hard Cover	Where at least 50% of the target is obscured by something that prevent vision and may not a bullet	+4 bonus to AC.

Given the weapons available to the explorers, and their enemies, combat can be seen to be quite dangerous. Explorers may have to balance their martial pride with the realisation that surrender is a pragmatic option. A live jackal is more use to Holmes than an dead lion. This is not Isandlwana.

Movement

Character's movement per round is measured in 5' squares, with bonuses for high DEX. Base movement for Humans is 6 + DEX bonus in squares.

Wearing medium armour reduces movement by 1 square, and heavy armour reduces movement by 2 squares.

Movement through or across difficult terrain is halved, as is movement through a square occupied by a friend who is not engaged in combat. A character cannot move through a square occupied by friend who is engaged in combat.

Movement through squares directly adjacent to an unengaged enemy are at half speed due to the need to avoid any attacks. There are no attacks of opportunity in these rules.

Climbing and swimming is at half speed.

An encumbered character moves at half speed. A character is encumbered when he is carrying more than STR/2 in encumbrance (see the Equipment section below for a description of encumbrance). The maximum a

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character can carry is twice this figure and the maximum he can lift is three times the figure, but he cannot carry it.

Recovering Hit Points.

Hit Points represent more than just flesh and blood. They also include fatigue and shock. Initially the Explorer's only way to regain Hit Points will be through medical attention or rest & recuperation.

The use of a First Aid kit is based upon the Knowledge skill. After being wounded a successful Knowledge roll against a DC of 15 will allow an Explorer to restore 1D4 hit points.

A Scientist who has specialised in Medicine (a Doctor) can use a Medical Kit to restore 1D4+MIND bonus Hit Points. First Aid or Medical treatment can only be made for each 'set' of injuries.

For example if during a fight an Explorer takes three wounds for 3, 4 and 3 points of damage the First Aider/Doctor cannot treat each injury individually. However, if the Explorer has sought aid after receiving the first two wounds, and then later for the third wound then they could be treated in two 'sets'.

These skills take approximately ten minutes to use.

Each full day's uninterrupted rest will recover (Level x STR Bonus) hit points. This is always at least one per day. The attention of a Doctor doubles this recovery rate. Short walks and light camp activity (cooking etc) do not interrupt rest.

Knocking someone unconscious

The exception to the combat and damage rules is the act of knocking someone unconscious. If you have a prisoner or someone otherwise at your complete mercy you can render them unconscious with a pistol or rifle butt, club or other suitable heavy object. Jaffa are very adept at this as they like to take prisoners to display to their Lord/God.

The Zatnic'tl is a special weapon developed just for this purpose. However, to make it work the firer must effect a clear hit on the body of the target. Any form of cover may earth the charge before it affects the target. There is no saving throw against this weapon.

The victim will recover 'some time later' with a pounding headache (-1 modifier to MIND-related skills) for a number of minutes = (30-STR) but with no other after effects.

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Equipment

The lists below show the approximate encumbrances for commonly available equipment. Encumbrance is a value which represent not only the weight but also the bulk of an item. An Explorer can easily carry half his STR attribute without becoming encumbered. Each two points of encumbrance more than this reduces an Explorer's movement by one and places a penalty of -1 on all skills involving a physical component.

Please note that the standard set of clothes (boots, puttees, trousers, underwear, shirt, tunic, hat and gloves) do not count against an Explorer's encumbrance allowance. Soldiers may choose to wear khaki or red tunics, as well as regimental embellishments. Civilians are generally offered khaki tunics with plain buttons and no rank markings. Note that red tunics, while being impressive, may reduce attempts to hide.

You will see that there are no costs given. The Office of Exploratory Studies will ensure that Explorers have all the equipment they could need. They can also capture enemy equipment. A Vickers Machine Gun is not considered exploratory equipment, nor is a 6lb Mountain Gun.

Weapons

These are divided into Ranged and Close Combat types.

The ranges given are what are considered to be effective ranges, not the theoretical maximum, and take into account standard sighting mechanisms.

All ranges are measured in two yard squares. Thus a Military Rifle, usually a Lee-Enfield .303 has an effective range of 400 yards.

Ranged Weapons	Enc.	Type	Range	Damage	Notes
Bull Whip	1	Light	5	1D4	The choice of all would be Jones-boys.
Bullets, Revolver	¼	N/a	N/a	N/a	A box of 30 revolver rounds.
Cartridges, Rifle or Shotgun	¼	N/a	N/a	N/a	A box of 24 cartridges. Remember to get the right calibre.
Chakram	¼	Light	20	1D3	Indian throwing quoit
Derringer	¼	Light	5	1D6	A two or four-shot .22 calibre pistol.
Dynamite stick	¼	Light	10	3D6	It will affect anyone within a 2 square radius of its landing point.
Mills Bomb Mk1	¼	Light	20	2D6	An early version of the modern grenade. It will affect anyone within a 2 square radius of its landing point.
Machine Pistol [Mauser C96]	1	Light	50/ 75 with stock	2D6	An early automatic pistol, 7.63mm calibre, comes with attachable stock. Magazine carries 10 rounds, refilled by clip.
Service Revolver [Webley Mk1]	1	Light	50	2D6	A six-shot, .45 calibre, top-break pistol. Accurate at short range.
Elephant Gun [.416 Rigby]	3	Medium	300	3D6	A single shot, double barrelled large calibre heavy rifle.
Military Service Rifle [Lee-Enfield .303 Mk1, 1895 Pattern]	2	Medium	200	2D6	A single shot, bolt action .303 rifle. Has a ten round integral box magazine, which is loaded with 5 round clips. Can take a bayonet and marksman's sights.
Shotgun, [Purdey]	2	Medium	50	2D6/4D6	Normally double barrelled, 12 gauge smoothbore. If both barrels are emptied simultaneously then the larger damage applies.
Shotgun, sawn-off	1	Light	10	2D6/4D6	A more concealable version of the standard shotgun with stock reduced to a pistol grip and barrel length halved.
Throwing Axe	1	Light	15	+2	A tomahawk
Throwing Knife	½	Light	15	+2	Carefully balanced stiletto

Shotguns can be loaded with shot or ball. If loaded with shot they can hit up to three adjacent targets, all for 2D6 damage.

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Melee Weapons	Enc.	Type	Damage	Notes
Axe	3	Medium	1D8	The lumber or fire axe can cause serious damage if wielded well. Counts as a two-handed weapon.
Bayonet (on Rifle)	½	Medium	2D4	A favoured military weapon combining the bayonet blade with the club of the rifle butt. Quite deadly in the trained hands of a Soldier. Counts as a two-handed weapon
Bayonet/Dagger	½	Light	1D6	A strong combat knife is an excellent close quarters weapon.
Club/Truncheon	1	Light	1D4	Any simple bludgeoning weapon, including a rifle butt.
Cutlass	1	Medium	1D8	Heavy, but fairly short, curved fighting sword.
Hatchet	1	Light	1D6	This small hand axe is a common tool that doubles up as an effective weapon. Popular with men from Canada.
Machete/Parang	1	Light	1D6	A short, heavy-bladed tool for clearing brush, that makes a nasty weapon.
Rapier	1	Light	1D4	A light fencing weapon. Sharp, but ultimately weak.
Sabre	2	Medium	1D8	A true fighting sword with a long, slightly curved blade.
Spear	2	Medium	1D8	The chosen weapon of the native. A single-handed thrusting weapon often combined with a shield.
Sword Stick	1	Light	1D4	A concealed rapier.

Armour

Although outmoded for modern military use the Office of Exploratory Studies expects its Explorers to come up against a number of cultures that still use old-fashioned, yet effective weaponry against which armour would be useful.

Armour Type	Enc.	AC Bonus	Notes
Jack	1	+2	A stout leather tunic with padding at vital points.
Brigandine	2	+4	A leather tunic with steel plates inserted over vital organs.
Breastplate	3	+6	Shot-proof, steel breast and back plates. The Office has these with a khaki canvas covering or black enamelled.
Pith Helmet	1	+1	This is thick Cork covered in leather. It can absorb a pretty solid blow.

Brigandine is considered to be medium armour and a Breastplate is Heavy.

General Equipment:	Enc.	Notes
Artificer's Tool Roll	½	Basic tools for mechanical repair and maintenance of weapons & equipment. Adds +2 circumstance bonus to appropriate skills rolls.
Backpack (cap: 6 enc.)	1	Canvas with side pockets and straps for bedroll etc.
Bandolier	¼	Will hold 10 clips of rifle ammunition
Bedroll	1	Two quilted blankets with an oilskin cover
Belt pouch	¼	Will hold 6 clips of rifle ammunition
Crowbar	1	Can double up as club
Fish-hook & 30' line	0	Basic survival tool
First Aid Kit	½	Comes in its own satchel and includes field dressings, basic surgical tools, iodine and morphine.
Gas Mask	½	Very basic charcoal impregnated hood with glass eye pieces.
Grapnel	1	Steel, three pronged
Hammer (masonry)	1	Solid tool, with metal haft
Hammer (sledge)	2	Solid tool with 3' long wooden haft
Lamp, Carbide	¼	Small pocket lamp, burns carbide gas and lasts two hours
Lantern, Storm	½	Paraffin lamp, gives off plenty of light and lasts six hours
Lighter, Petrol	0	Gives a reliable flame even in rain a stormy conditions.
Lock Knife	0	Small, but very useful folding pocket knife.
Map case	¼	Leather, water-resistant tube, or a flat leather folder.
Medical Kit	1	The classic doctors bag. Contains a large First Aid Kit, plus emetics, a

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		better range of instruments, carbolic acid and soap.
Mess tins, folding	¼	A set of three galvanized steel tins.
Mirror, steel, 6" diameter	¼	Can be used for signalling and shaving, slightly concave
Notebook & Pencil	¼	Standard Officer's Pocketbook, comes in a leather cover.
Oilcloth (10' square)	1	To make impromptu bivouacs or picnic upon.
Oilstone	¼	To sharpen blades.
Paraffin (1 pint)	½	Will refuel a Storm Lantern
Pick	2	Solid Tool with 3' wooden haft.
Pocket Bible	0	Army Issue version of the KJV. Pages make good cigarette papers.
Pocket watch – hunter	0	Accurate to three seconds a month. Needs daily rewinding.
Rations (dried - 1 day)	¼	8oz. Biscuit, 8oz. Dried Meat (Biltong/Pemmican), 4 oz. Hard Cheese, 4oz. Tea, 4 oz. Chocolate, 4oz. Tobacco. All in a waxed paper parcel.
Rolls Razor	0	Self-sharpening safety razor, with brush, in a pocket-sized tin.
Rope (Hemp - per 10')	½	Will support three men safely.
Sack (large)	¼	Usually hemp, may also be cloth or canvas.
Sack (small)	1/8	Usually hemp, may also be cloth or canvas.
Spade, folding	1	16" wooden haft. Useful for digging foxholes and latrine pits.
Spikes (Iron per 6)	½	Each has a piton ring for erection of shelters and securing of ropes and horses.
Tent (1 man)	2	Oiled canvas ridge tent with flysheet, but no groundsheet.
Tent (3 man)	4	Oiled canvas ridge tent with flysheet, but no groundsheet.
Tobacco Pouch	¼	Will hold enough for fifty smokes.
Water-flask (2 pints)	½	Galvanised steel with a canvas cover and strap. Officers flasks have a leather cover and strap.
Weapon care tools	¼	Small tin including cloth, oil and brushes.

A Mule can carry 20 enc without trouble, and 25 if pushed.

Specialist Kit	Enc	Notes
Binoculars	¼	30x magnification, German Zeiss. Have padded leather case and strap.
Camera	1	Small camera with delicate cellulose backed film (12 shots)
Compass	0	Comes in pocket watch-style metal case.
Dynamite, Box of 24 sticks	2	Wooden box with 10" sticks packed in waxed paper.
Fuse cord, 30'	¼	In waxed paper packet.
Lock-picks	¼	Small canvas tool roll. Easily concealable.
Reel of telegraph cable – 200 yds	2	Large wooden reel on stand.
Sextant	1/4	Can be used to determine relative position
Telegraph transmitter kit	2	Box including transmitter key.

The explorer team will also be given a money belt containing two hundred solid gold guineas and fifty cut diamonds for use as currency wheresoever they end up. The enc of this is 1. The explorers must choose who carries this. An expenses report will have to be filled out when they return.

Level Advancement

There are no Experience Points in this game. Add up the Encounter Levels (EL) of every person or creature defeated in an encounter the character takes part in. Divide this total by the number of characters, round down and award to each character still alive at end of encounter. When the total = 10 x the character's current level, they've advanced to the next level. Reset the total to 0 after advancing.

Each level adds:

- +1 to all skills, or +2 to two chosen skills
- 3 Hit Points
- +1 to all attack rolls
- If the Explorer's level divides by three (i.e., level 3, 6, 9, etc.) then add one more re-roll per day.
- If the Explorer's level divides by six (i.e., level 6, 12, etc.) then add 1 point to either STR, DEX or MIND.

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Appendix 1 – In the beginning

The situation as you find it...

Arrival

The exploratory team have been fully briefed by Holmes' second-in-command, John McKay, on the train journey to the Conway estate in Yorkshire. Nothing though prepares them for the actual sight as they alight from the carriages that brought them up from the small station.

In a deep quarry, behind Lord Conway's large gothic mansion, a military camp has been set up, far from prying eyes. The quoit has been re-erected in a 60' deep pit at the centre of the quarry and the rim of the pit has been fortified with three Lewis gun positions and a series of odd-looking tanks. Access to the pit is via a cage hanging from a quarrymen's steam crane.

It is explained that the enemy have made two further forays through the quoit, the second time in considerable strength. Both were repelled with few losses on the British side due to the Phosgene Gas pumped from the tanks you observed, hand grenades and the judicious application of Lewis Gun fire. The only way out of the pit is via an elevator at the end furthest from the Quoit itself. No attacks have been made in the last three days and Colonel Chalmers (Officer in Charge of the guard companies) believes that as no one came back the enemy have given them up for dead and cut their losses.

The bodies of the dead have been retrieved and a mortuary has been established in Lord Conway's Ice House. You are to join Dr. Elias Merchant, an anatomist in the employ of the Foreign Office, for the post mortem in the morning. The attacker's strange equipment has been stored in the Armoury and that will also be available for you to examine.

The Conway Mansion

The main building of the mansion has been taken over by a wide range of staff reporting directly to Mycroft Holmes at his club in Horse Guards. Holmes never leaves his club, but is in constant communication by telephone and telegraph. The east coast main rail line runs within five miles of the estate and so photographs and artefacts can easily be couriered to him within 4-5 hours.

The exploratory team are given rooms on the second floor of the mansion, overlooking the rear gardens. Already there is a busy telephone exchange and telegraph office on the ground floor, a surgery with a twelve bed ward attached in the ballroom, a canteen in the former billiards room, laboratories in the outbuildings, and a host of rooms housing offices and accommodation for scientists, diplomatic staff and military officers.

The army seems as concerned with keeping the public out as keeping the enemy in. Barbed wire is being set up around the quarry, mansion and gardens, and all entrances are controlled. A stable has been fitted out as a temporary gaol. A local poacher and a journalist from the Yorkshire Herald are presently cooling their heels there until it can be decided what will be done with them.

At dinner the team are introduced to all key members of the Office of Exploratory Studies rapidly assembled force. Most seem intelligent and excited at the prospect of exploring the quoit. There is one, Abraham Malinowski, who is introduced as the team's Cosmologist. Through a thick Yiddish accent he tries to explain that it is most likely that the quoit actually transports those who pass through it to other planets around other suns. This kicks off a huge debate, and a couple of short fistfights, that lasts well into the wee small hours.

The Post Mortem

Bright and early next morning, and far too soon after breakfast (kippers and eggs, with lashings of toast, marmalade and tea), you are taken to meet Dr. Merchant at the Ice House.

In front of you on slabs of ice are the bodies of fifteen men. You deduce that five of them are South American in origin and the others of a more near eastern type, though hard to pin down exactly which. All are tall; probably over six foot and well muscled.

In clipped tones the good doctor explains he has already carried out a peremptory examination of the cadavers and has found out a few interesting, and maybe extraordinary facts about them.

Besides the obvious wounds they have suffered from gunfire every man has a number of scars indicating previous combat wounds. Some of these would have easily killed an ordinary man, but these men seemed to have survived to fight again.

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All but one of the men has a snake tattoo emblazoned on their foreheads. The last man, a large Turk, has the same design but in solid gold. Dr. Merchant believes this may have been made by pouring liquid gold into a mould on the man's forehead, an immensely painful operation.

Each man also has an identical and unusual cruciform scar, 9" across, on his abdomen. Initial probing shows that this may still be open, though there is no sign of infection or healing around the scar.

As you watch Dr. Merchant presses a pair of surgical callipers into the cross on the large Turk with the gold 'tattoo'. After some prodding and pulling he removes what can be best described as an 18" long centipede from the hole. This he places in a Wellington jar full of formaldehyde.

Quickly Dr. Merchant goes to each cadaver and pulls a similar beast from each one. He declares that these seem to be parasites of some description and he must retire to the laboratory to study them further.

The Armoury

After a fine lunch of cold cuts and cheese, and a couple of stiff ports, you move onto the Armoury. This former estate farrier's workshop now houses the equipment taken from the enemy. You note that a group of soldiers have just finished building an earth bank some fifty yards behind the workshop and are erecting some wooden posts in front of it. It looks suspiciously like a firing range.

RSM Davies greets you. This enthusiastic Welshman quickly invites you inside and shows you what they have recovered. He keeps referring to them as the 'spoils of war' and 'my loot', but he seems honest enough all the same.

First he shows you the enemy's armour. It seems archaic and very heavy. Davies has weighed a set and it comes in at sixty pounds, five ounces.

You ask about the 'eagle-headed helmets' that the reports Holmes showed you had mentioned. There are certainly no such items anywhere in the farrier's workshop. Davies breaks into a huge grin and says, "Watch this". He presses a small button on the gorget of the armour and suddenly the helmet folds out of the rear of the armour just like the folding roof on a Surrey. The reports are right, it does look like a stylised Eagle's head.

Next he gets out the weaponry. Every man except the leader was carrying a six-foot heavy staff. Each end is bulbous like an Indian club, though one is rounded and the other pointed. Although a ferocious-looking close quarters weapon you cannot imagine it would threaten a man with Martini-Henry rifle at more than twenty yards. Davies looks at you and begins to grin again, "Come with me he says" and strides outside.

"I've had a little practice with this he says". He levels the staff, directing the more pointed end at the makeshift range. Depressing a button midway up the shaft makes the pointed end split into to four parts, between them writhes what looks like lightning. Activating a second button causes a bolt of light to speed out of the end and explode in the earth bank with a deafening crack.

With a second shot Davies manages to hit one of the targets. The five-foot fence post, some 8" in diameter disintegrates into a cloud of splinters. Davies' squad look dumbstruck and you reckon you probably look little better.

"I used the first one out in the woods." Davies declares. "I must have cleared half an acre in under two minutes". As far as I can tell you get about fifty shots out of one before it goes dead. One of the boffins up at the house reckons they run on electricity and is trying to work out how to 'recharge' it, whatever that means. Anyway this boyo is accurate, with a bit of practice, up to about 75 yards, after that the recoil makes it difficult to get a good shot in. I have seen a round hit a tree at over four hundred yards, but that was more luck than judgement. I expect these men were trained with it and so will be a bit better than me."

He leads you back into the Armoury. Off the bench he picks up what looks like three rounded cigar cases, hinged together so they form a 'Z'.

"The leader of the enemy squad had this, but never used it, took me a devil of a time to work it out." He explains. "Hey Collins, stand to attention".

"Oh no, not me again RSM", the pale young Private replies.

"Stand up boyo or I'll shoot you with the staff!" Davies bellows.

Slowly the Private stands to attention visibly shaking. Davies grips the lower arm of the Z like a pistol and points the device at Collins. He depresses a small stud and a bolt of what can best be described as lightning arcs across the room and hits the unfortunate man. He jerks briefly and then slumps to the ground.

"Don't worry gentlemen, he's just unconscious. He'll be up in about a quarter of an hour, right as rain." He folds the pistol away and continues. "We tested it out first on a horse. The first bolt knocked it out, just like Collins here. A second bolt, while unconscious, killed the beast, and a third, well the third turned the body to fine powder. A real officer's weapon." He smiles ruefully. "I've had thirty shots out of this so far and it's still going."

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"The rest of the kit," he waves at a pile of stuff on the bench top, "we haven't been able to work out how to operate so far. But we will keep on trying".

The First Operation.

After dinner you are summoned to the Library. There McKay and Chalmers have arranged the armchairs in a semi-circle around the fireplace. Malinowski is already recumbent in one of them partaking of the brandy and cigars on offer on a side table. Dr. Merchant walks in behind you drying his hands on a towel, he looks decidedly pensive.

Once seated McKay brings you to order:

"Gentlemen, you have now had time to observe pretty much all we know about our new enemies. Feel free to ask any questions you like of Chalmers, Merchant, Malinowski and myself at the end of this briefing." He pauses to allow Chalmers to pass him a brandy.

"The situation, as you know, is grave. Lord Conway and his daughter may be in great peril and we have to do something quickly. Tomorrow you will be the first team to venture the quoit..."

"Star-gate McKay." Interrupts Malinowski. "It's a star-gate."

McKay stops, stares at the old cosmologist for a minute, seems to make a mental decision then yields the floor. Puffing non-stop on his cigar Malinowski stands up and strides to the fireplace. There he unrolls a plan of the quoit and holds it up so you can all see it.

"Chalmers, hold it for Abraham will you." Requests McKay. Chalmers leans over and takes it from Malinowski who begins jabbing his finger at it.

"Each of the symbols on the star-gate's circumference is a constellation. Before you ask they are no constellations you will have ever seen, but careful study of ephemeris tables for the period in which it was buried in Egypt, show that they were common constellations at that time." He waits for you to take this in, but goaded by your puzzled indifference he continues.

"You have to press seven symbols to get the star-gate to operate. From Macfarlane's notebooks, and the observations of a bright signals officer during the enemy's escape in the last attack, we have concluded that six symbols represent the address you wish to connect to, and the last is your point of origin." He beams at you, knowing he now has your interest.

"More importantly my brave friends that officer jotted down the symbols the enemy used, so we know where they went. You can follow them." Malinowski waits and then goes on, "The problem is that when you get to wherever you are going the symbols could be different so you will have to get the return address from the enemy. I have written some notes for you to study in a pocket book."

"I call it a star-gate because it uses stars to navigate the heavens by." McKay rises and thanking the old man signals him to sit down. Malinowski could obviously have gone on for some time but sits down anyway. He looks at Dr. Merchant who doesn't rise but leaning forwards shares his latest findings.

"You will remember gentlemen, the parasites I took from the enemy corpses?" You nod and he continues. "From my examination of their physiology and their place in the enemy's bodies it is my conclusion that they were one, deliberately implanted, and two, shared a symbiotic relationship with their hosts".

"I cannot be sure, without examining a live one in a breathing host, but I would think it likely that the symbiotes may be the reason these men survived their many serious previous injuries. The observations of our soldiers is that they were very hard to kill, indeed one took eight bullets to the body before a ninth took out half his brain and dropped him."

He lets this sobering thought sink in for a minute, and lights a cigar.

"I am a military surgeon gentlemen, I fought both the Zulus and the Pathans. I know what is it you wish me to say. If you want to kill these men quickly then only two shots will work. The first is a clean headshot, you cannot heal a man with no brain. The second is a major wound to the abdomen, specifically just behind the sternum where the symbiote and the man's heart resides. It seems very likely the enemy would otherwise survive lesser wounds."

"Bring me back a live specimen and likely I will be able to tell you more."

McKay now steps forwards and addresses you all.

"Holmes has considerable faith in each of you and we will equip you as best we can, but what you will find beyond the quo... star-gate, none of us can guess."

"You will be behind enemy lines gentlemen", interjects Chalmers, "living on your wits. You have permission to use whatever means you deem appropriate to rescue and return Lord Conway and his daughter. Davies will

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equip you with anything you require and we have two mules for you to take with you loaded with supplies for seven days.”

“Thank you Chalmers” says McKay “Right gentlemen any questions....”.

Appendix 2 – A Letter from the Royal Armouries

Col. Sir Angus Fraser (Retd), MC, VC, KCBE.

Royal Armouries - Special Operations Division,

Woolwich Arsenal,

London.

The Twenty-fourth of March 1895.

Sirs,

I have been asked to report to you the status of our supporting unit with regards to the equipping of the Explorer teams.

We established the division two weeks ago and have taken over the underground ranges at the Arsenal. There has been some unhappiness amongst the Arsenal's chain of command, but nothing a note from Horse Guards and Mr.Holmes has not been able to solve.

From our examination of the captured equipment we have been able to deduce the following:

1. Much of the technology is so far advanced as to be beyond our present capabilities to reproduce or even repair.
2. The purpose of the weapons and armament is not War, but the occupation and intimidation of civilian populations and the suppression of technologically inferior hostiles.
3. Enemy soldiers (warriors?) are not invulnerable and we have our own technology that is capable of dealing with them most effectively.

Unfortunately the first point is indisputable and, unless considerable resources are forthcoming, likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

The second point though is far more interesting. From the experience that we have obtained from the expansion and maintenance of the Empire we know that certain archaic weaponry is often most effective against lower order opposition. For instance the use of Lancers to pursue Zulu foot, and in crowd dispersal in India. A point on a pole often has a far more terrifying morale effect than a Lewis Gun.

The enemy Staff Weapon is just such an item. Despite its very impressive firepower it is nonetheless an archaic weapon for the following reasons:

1. It's very restricted effective (i.e. accurate) range. Any British infantryman with a Lee-Enfield could pick off an enemy so armed long before they could return fire. Such a short range weapon could only be considered useful when you intend to close with a foe who has weapons of an even shorter range, such as civilians armed with stones.
2. The noise and light emitted by the weapon during firing is obviously designed to cow an enemy. It certainly doesn't add to its ability to hit or kill.
3. It's sheer size (over six foot long) and weight (13lbs), as well as its extensive decoration, indicates that this is meant to impress an inferior enemy. It's unwieldy nature makes rapid target acquisition a problem. It's shape could also make accurate aiming a problem, but only if you are using it against an equally armed foe. Against crowds of civilians it would not be.
4. In hand-to-hand combat it could likely prove dangerous, but as a double-ended club it seems better designed for either ritual combat (duelling) or the capture of enemies. Against a soldier trained in the use of the rifle bayonet this lack of a killing blade could prove highly disadvantageous.

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If we needed convincing of this conclusion though, the enemy's armour is the best example. Like the staff weapon it is very well made. Although heavy it allows a good range of movement, a bit like late medieval plate armour.

The helmet though is seriously problematical. When down the enemy soldier has a full range of vision, but when erected he loses about half his peripheral vision immediately. During their incursions through the Stargate it was noted that most enemy soldiers preferred to fight with the helmet down, especially after they found themselves under fire. Our conclusion is that the helmet is mostly ceremonial and intended, again, to impress or cow a civilian population.

In tests the armour has proved capable of resisting some of the effects of other staff weapons until you close to less than thirty yards. There is some property in the armour that allows it to dissipate the intense heat a staff shot can generate. We have measured this heat at about twelve hundred degrees Fahrenheit at the muzzle. The temperature obviously reduces with distance.

More interesting are the results of the ballistic tests we have performed. From these we have concluded that this armour was not designed with high velocity bullets in mind:

1. A standard lead rifle or revolver bullet can penetrate the armour at the shorter ranges nine times out of ten.
2. At longer ranges you either have to use a heavier charge or a specialised round to penetrate it.

With this in mind we have provided some cases of our new steel jacketed bullets, for both rifle and revolver. These have been designed to penetrate the enemy armour and then split into three parts inside their body causing maximum internal damage. Initial tests on an enemy corpse in full armour show that we can get a lethal penetration up to normal effective ranges of these two weapons. Ammunition for the Stargate Garrison's Maxim Guns is also on its way.

Mr. Quartermain's suggestion of using a double-barrelled elephant gun seems sound. We carried out a test with a Purdey and its penetration was impressive. Taking one such weapon along may prove very useful, especially at long range, though it's a bit unwieldy at close quarters.

From what you reported it seems that RSM Davies and his team have proven that the standard issue bayonet is more than capable of penetrating the enemy armour with a determined thrust. Given the anatomical information provided we would suggest that the men restrict their thrusts to the upper abdomen, below the shoulder and neck armour.

We would also like to offer the Explorer team the Mills-Fraser Mk1 grenade. Unlike the standard fragmentation grenade this has segments made of tempered and annealed steel points. It is heavier than the Mills Mk2, weighing about six pounds, but it should be able to shred the enemy's armour. Tell the men to be careful and get behind solid cover though, as the segments will pass through doors, and lath and plaster walls, like a knife through butter.

In a few weeks we should have a three inch mortar available that can propel a streamlined version of this grenade up to three hundred yards. We are just calibrating the ranging system before we offer it for field trials. At under twelve pounds in weight (including the base plate) we think this will give your Explorers a useful level of light support.

We are sending up a case of satchel charges. These contain fifteen pounds of gelignite with a mercury fulminate timed trigger. Should be enough to penetrate a fortress door, or blow an enemy encampment to kingdom come. The triggers come in thirty second, one minute and five minute variants.

We have not yet found an effective armour against the Staff Weapon. However, both the padded gambeson and brigandine combination, or the steel breastplate should offer good protection in close combat. They can help deflect some of the energy of a long range staff weapon attack, but at the closer ranges they are all but useless.

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Some of our more creative chaps are trying out a tunic with pockets in which to insert solid ceramic plates. As you may realise ceramics can resist high temperatures, but are pretty useless against bullets. If the enemy only use the staff weapons then this might be an advantageous avenue to pursue. One of our chaps, Hawkins (son of the Admiral) is pursuing a theory of mirrored deflection, but this seems to have limited effectiveness as yet.

More promising are trials of an earthing suit against the effects of the electric gun. By encasing a man in a Faraday Cage (like a copper bird cage) it is possible to resist the electric gun's stunning effect. Unfortunately the cage is pretty big and not yet man portable. We shall persist.

Please let me know how the chaps fare on their first expedition. And remember to tell them to pick up any new technology or devices they may come across.

Appendix 3 - The Enemy's Weapons

The following is based upon RSM Davies' observations.

Ranged Weapons	Enc.	Type	Range in squares	Damage	Notes
Staff Weapon	2	Medium	75	3D6	A staff weapon can fire 50 times before requiring recharging.
Electric Pistol	1/2	Pistol	10	Special	Stuns/Kills/Disintegrates

Melee Weapons	Enc.	Type	Damage	Notes
Staff Weapon	1	Medium	2D4	Two-handed.

During their attacks the enemy soldiers also seemed highly capable of also using a form of Savate or Jiu-Jitsu. They certainly were not afraid to engage a soldier armed with rifle and bayonet in hand-to-hand combat. Thus you should consider an unarmed enemy to be dangerous.

All of them carried a heavy-bladed knife, but none were observed using one.

Appendix 4: Late Victorian England

What follows are a series of short observations about the period in which SG1895 is set, just to get you 'in the mood'.

A tale of Two Prime Ministers. This era could be subtitled 'The Gladstone and Disraeli Show' for the two politicians who dominated it. The two men, Gladstone and Disraeli, could not have been more dissimilar. Gladstone was liberal, humanitarian, and devout. Queen Victoria found him stuffy. Disraeli, on the other hand, was imperialist, nationalistic, and charming to boot. The Queen enjoyed his company, for he could make her laugh.

The Irish Question. This was also the age of the 'Irish Question', the question being whether or not the Irish should be allowed to rule themselves. Gladstone was a constant activist for increased Irish autonomy, but his views were not widely supported, and Irish extremists (called 'Fenians') began a campaign of terrorism, mostly through assassination.

The Law. Legal reform proceeded slowly. Education was made more accessible for the lower classes (after 1891), and the Ballot Act of 1872 made voting a private affair for the first time. Women, prisoners, men under 21 and those without property still could not vote.

The Army Regulation Bill abolished the practice of purchasing commissions in the armed forces. Though this had little effect on officers serving at the time as it was not retrospective. It was also unlikely that a man from the lower middle or working classes could demonstrate the education considered necessary for a commission.

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Christianity. This was the zenith of power for the Anglican Church. Generally no man of stature could endure unless he was visibly a good Protestant Christian. There were some notable exceptions, some Catholics and Jews made their mark, but they were widely distrusted.

There were a huge amount of clergymen in academia. Indeed many of the colleges were dominated by ministers. The clergy was seen as a decent career for the second sons of the aristocracy and those without independent means.

On the streets Christianity was very strong. Local people often banded together under the leadership of their ministers to campaign for improvements or Christian values. Temperance leagues and Relief committees for various causes, were all popular, and the whole country ground to halt on Sunday Morning.

A lot of nonconformist Christian movements, often with charismatic evangelical leaders, formed and grew, challenging the primacy of the Anglican communion.

Victorian literature. In this age the most common form of entertainment for the middle and upper classes was reading aloud. Writers like Dickens, Tennyson, and Trollope were widely read and discussed. The advent of universal compulsory education after 1870 meant that there was now a much larger audience for literature. Disraeli himself, when he wasn't locking horns with Gladstone, was a very popular novelist.

The newspaper had become established as the most common form of regular reading for the great Victorian public. From the grandeur of the Times and the Telegraph, all the way down to the penny broadsheets that were entertaining if not always particularly accurate.

The growth of serial magazines was also popular. Authors such as Dickens, H.G.Wells and Arthur Conan Doyle all sold their works through these magazines at a chapter a week.

Entertainment. For the less literate, entertainment might be taken in any one of the hundreds of variety theatres. These were very popular and often ran several shows a day at weekends. The theatre was still extensively censored by the Lord Chancellor's department.

Practically every street in the inner cities was dominated by its pubs. These varied from well heeled drinking establishments to a variety of low dives and gin emporia. For those with more exotic tastes the newly arrived Chinese had brought their opium dens with them. Gambling was rife though there were few legal establishments for this except at the races.

On the darker side poverty drove a huge amount of women onto the street. The philanthropist Joseph Rowntree calculated there might be as many as 150,000 prostitutes working the streets of London.

Urbanization. On the home front the Industrial Revolution had gathered steam, and accelerated the migration of the population from country to city. The result of this movement was the development of horrifying slums and cramped row housing in the overcrowded cities. By 1895 80% of the population lived in cities. These cities were 'organized' into geographical zones based on social class - the poor in the inner city, with the more fortunate living further away from the city core. This was made possible by the development of suburban rail lines. Some suburban rail companies were required by law to provide cheap trains for workers to travel into the city centre.

Urban poverty was quite disgraceful. This was an age where the workhouse was the standard government reaction to the needs of the 'undeserving poor'. As a result street crime was commonplace from pick pockets to armed robbers. It paid to carry a revolver or a swordstick if going out at night in the city.

Despite this there were a significant number of wealthy philanthropists who campaigned for better housing and wages for the poor.

There was no system of personal healthcare for the poor. Although issues of Public Health were taken very seriously by the Urban Corporations, they expected each man to look to his own pocket for doctors and medicines. There were some charitable, mostly Christian, attempts to provide free healthcare, but these were limited.

The new aristocracy. The Industrial Revolution also meant that the balance of power shifted from the aristocracy, whose position and wealth was based on land, to the newly rich business leaders. The new aristocracy became one of wealth, not land, although titles, then as now, remained socially important in British society.

Respectability and deference. This was the age when many people really cared about being 'respectable' and most showed deference to their social superiors.

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Victoria's Empire. Much of the attention of the country was focussed abroad during this era. In 1876 Victoria was declared Empress of India and the British Empire was constantly being expanded. The prevailing attitude in Britain was that expansion of British control around the globe was good for everyone. A quarter of the peoples of the earth looked up each morning to see a British flag flying over them.

Colonial wars

From the end of the Crimean war until the time of this game, Britain was not engaged in a war with any of its European rivals, however, it was involved in a long series of colonial wars. Some of these wars were wars of conquest, such as the Zulu war in 1879. Other wars were fought to suppress rebellions such as the Indian mutiny in 1857.

An army regiment or corps might see action in a dozen or more different places in a forty-year period. Charles Gordon's career from 1854 to 1871 typified the world wide nature of military service. When he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1854, he served in Wales, he moved on to service in the Royal Engineers depot in Chatham in Kent. Next, he saw service in the Crimea, from there he served as a boundary commissioner in Turkey. He then went to China with the Allied Expeditionary force. Then he returned to Gravesend to supervise the building of defensive works from 1865 to 1871. Gordon's subsequent career consisted of service on the Danube, India, Southern Africa and in the Sudan. This mixture of combat duty, administration and home defence can be observed in the career of other prominent Victorian officers such as Kitchener and Baden-Powell.

Colonial policemen

When not engaged in combat, the Army was frequently used as armed police in the colonies. The Indian Army was often used to suppress uprisings and keep order, as well as guarding the frontiers.

With modern weaponry, the army was easily able to deal the threat posed by native armies. For example, although they met initial success against Lord Chelmsford's army in 1879, the Zulu armies were eventually defeated by the British. The defence of Rorke's Drift, during which 11 Victoria Crosses were won, was successful because the 2nd Warwickshires (later known as the South Wales Borderers), commanded by Lieutenant's Chard and Bromhead, were able to effectively deploy their repeating rifles against the charging Zulus.