DORKING 1875

THE GERMAN CONQUEST OF BRITAIN

1. INTRODUCTION

You ask me to tell you, my grandchildren, something about my own share in the great events that happened fifty years ago. 'Tis sad work turning back to that bitter page in our history, but you may perhaps take profit in your new homes from the lesson it teaches. For us in England it came too late. And yet we had plenty of warnings, if we had only made use of them. The danger did not come on us unawares. It burst on us suddenly, 'tis true; but its coming was foreshadowed plainly enough to open our eyes, if we had not been wilfully blind. We English have only ourselves to blame for the humiliation which has been brought on the land. Venerable old age! Dishonourable old age, I say, when it follows a manhood dishonoured as ours has been. I declare, even now, though fifty years have passed, I can hardly look a young man in the face when I think I am one of those in whose youth happened this degradation of Old England – one of those who betrayed the trust handed down to us unstained by our forefathers. - The Battle of Dorking

Thus starts a remarkable short story, written by G.T. Chesney and first published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1871, that was to have a long-lasting impact both on military strategy and popular literature.

George Tomkyns Chesney was an interesting figure, and in *The Battle of Dorking* he brought together three of his key attributes: the experience of a serving officer in the Royal Engineers, a political awareness of the need for reform in the British Army and, not least, the ability to write an entertaining piece of fiction.

The British Army of 1871 had a very different role to those of the other European powers. It was tasked chiefly with policing Britain's extensive overseas empire, with national defence largely entrusted to the Royal Navy. The shortcomings of the army during the Crimean War (1853-1856) had been plain to see. A Royal Commission report into that war was published in 1862 and largely ignored: not until 1868 were the wide-reaching Cardwell Reforms put forward. These were an attempt to modernise the structure and practises of the army. By 1871 these reforms were being pushed through, but – resisted as they were by senior figures in the army – at too slow a pace for men like Chesney.

By contrast, the army of the newly formed German Empire was large, well-organised and had swept all before it in previous years. The dominant component of both the Empire and its army was supplied by Prussia. The Prussian Army had taken a leading role in the German Confederation's victory over Denmark in the Second Schleswig War of 1864. The ambitious northern kingdom had then made itself the dominant Germanic power by securing victory in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. This led to the formation of the North German Confederation and ultimately the loss of all Austrian influence over the other Germanic states. The Prussian-led Confederation routed the French in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. On 18th January 1871 the German Empire was proclaimed, ruled from Berlin by the Prussian monarch.

Frustrated by what he saw, Chesney took up his pen and wrote a story he hoped would shake Britain out of its complacency. He told of a fictional invasion by the all-conquering Germans, seen through the eyes of a volunteer fighting at the key battle. His genius was to set the narrative far in the future, allowing his narrator to speak wisely with hindsight and adding an authoritative historical tone to the work.

The Battle of Dorking worked both as a piece of fiction and as a means of furthering Chesney's zeal for reform. It created an entirely new sub-genre termed 'invasion literature', and profoundly influenced H.G. Wells in his science-fiction classic *War of the Worlds*. It also poses the fascinating question of what would have happened if these two very different armies had clashed. We will never know for sure, of course. But maybe this game will help give you some insight into what might have happened had a Victorian Era Anglo-German War really occurred.

This game is an attempt to simulate the fictional battle described by Chesney. As no such battle took place, assumptions have had to be made about the relative merits of the tactics and weaponry each side would have used. The scale of the game is such that one counter represents one infantry battalion, one artillery battery or two cavalry squadrons. The entire game lasts just six turns: on a first play it should take a maximum of two hours, reducing to about 90 minutes as you get familiar with the rules. Using the 'Quick Start' option will reduce these times by about 10 minutes.

The game is played over six turns. Chronologically, a turn corresponds to about an hour. The action starts quite late, about 3:00 pm, and lasts until the light fails at around 9:00 pm. At the end of the 6th turn the battle ends and the situation will be assessed using a scoring system. The resulting score will determine the outcome.

Combat results are resolved by the rolling of two six-sided dice, with various modifiers applied as detailed in these rules. Different types of unit have different characteristics, with terrain affecting how far a unit can move, how easy it is to break and its ability engage in either melee, rifle fire or artillery fire.

While Chesney does not specify a year, from the dates mentioned in his story it is very likely that he set the invasion in 1875. However, as he would have based the story on what he knew about the two armies at the time, for the purposes of this game the opposing armies are equipped and organised as they would have been in 1871.
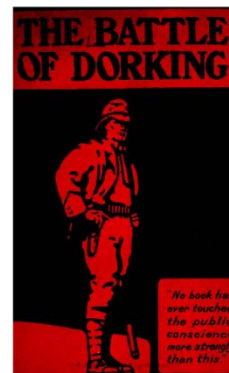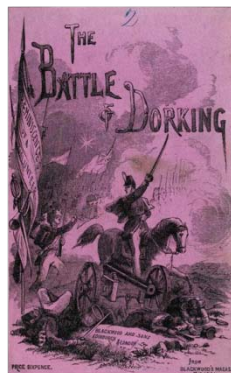
2. COMPONENTS

The game is played with (1) 17x22 inch map, (88) die-cut counters, and these rules. You will also need some six-sided dice.

The map represents the area in which the fictional battle took place. A hexagonal grid has been super-imposed over the terrain to regulate movement and combat by the units.

Each unit is represented by a counter that summarises its attributes and identifiers. Counters with a red background represent British troops and belong to the British Player; counters with a gray background, the Germans, and the German Player. Infantry and Cavalry Units have similar counters; Artillery are somewhat different.
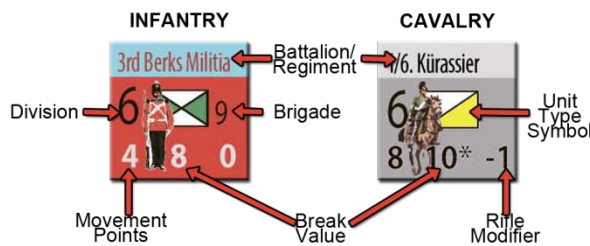
Unit Identification. Units are identified by the Division, Brigade, and specific Battalion/Regiment when applicable.

Unit Type Symbol. Indicates whether it is an Infantry, Cavalry, or Artillery Unit. Unit Type Symbols are color-coded to demarcate types of Units:

- *Gold:* Guard Unit (Infantry or Cavalry). Elite Units, made up of experienced soldiers. Guard Cavalry Units are armoured and ride large steeds.
- *Rose:* Light Infantry or Jaeger. Specialist soldiers, more mobile and better shots than standard infantry.
- *Green:* Militia Infantry (part-time defence force, reasonably well-trained); Volunteer Infantry (local, part-time defence force, poorly-equipped and minimally trained); Yeomanry (volunteer cavalry, with minimal training).
- *Gray:* Line Infantry and Cavalry. Standard Units.

Movement Points (MP): Represents the Unit's basic ability to move.

Break Value (BV): The Unit's ability to withstand the vicissitudes of combat. Cavalry Units have an asterisk next to their BV as a reminder that its BV is reduced during Melee in a wood/town hex.

Rifle Modifier (RM): Represents the Unit's proficiency when using Rifle Fire. Artillery Units, which cannot use Rifle Fire, have an "X" instead of a Rifle Modifier.
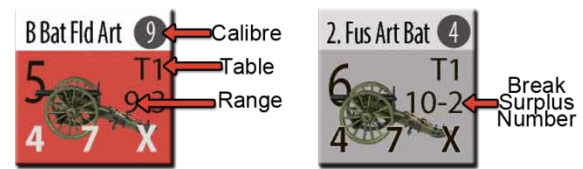
Calibre: The calibre of the artillery gun.

Table: Indicates which of the two numbered Artillery Tables the Unit will utilize when conducting Artillery Fire.

Maximum Range: In hexes.

Break Surplus Number: If an Artillery dice roll exceeds its to-hit number by this amount, it breaks the target unit.

Unit counters have two sides. The obverse side represents a fresh or full-strength Unit. When the Unit is Disordered, it is flipped to its reverse side. Units remain Disordered until the end of the current Game Turn. In this state, the Unit has a reduced BV; the reverse side of the counter lists both the reduced and full-strength BV for ease of reference.

In addition to the counters representing units, there are also markers used to keep track of various aspects of the game. The use of these counters is described later in the relevant sections.

These counters comprise:

- 24 'Fired' counters
- 4 Dispersal Markers
- 1 Turn Marker
- 1 Phase Marker
- 1 Initiative Indicator Marker

3. TERRAIN

There are three levels of terrain: low, mid and high. Two further features, woodland and towns, may occupy one of these terrain levels. Moving over these terrains and fighting on them will have a range of effects. These are summarized on the *Terrain Effects Chart*. In addition there are stream and river features: these run between hexes. They impede progress and can assist in defending a hex.
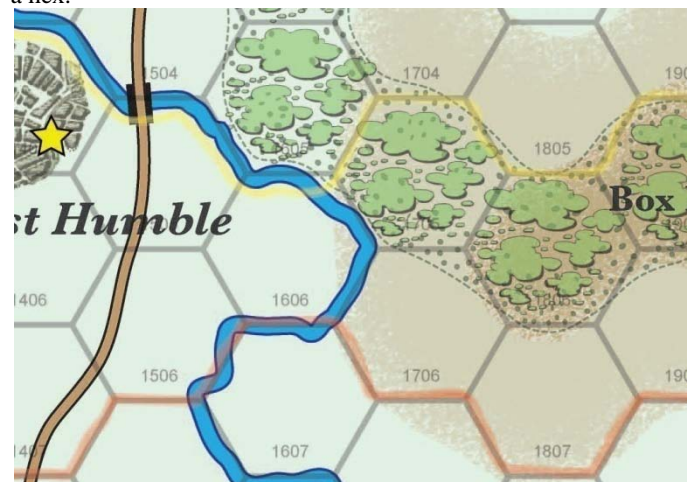
4. SET-UP

The game starts with both players deploying all their units. The British player deploys first. Deployment limitations are given below. These limitations apply only when setting up and do not apply once the battle has started. **Note that no two units may occupy the same hex at any stage in the game**.

THE BRITISH

The British units start the battle in the northern part of the battlefield. All British units must start north of the British Deployment Limit (they <u>can</u> cross it once the battle has started).

Units belonging to a Brigade must deploy within two hexes of another unit belonging to that brigade. Set up the 5th Division first; one unit belonging to the 2nd Brigade must start within four hexes of a unit belonging to the 11th Brigade. 5th Division cavalry and artillery units must deploy within four hexes of another 5th Division unit.

Next set up the 6th Division; again, units belonging to a Brigade must deploy within two hexes of another unit belonging to that brigade. One unit belonging to the 9th Brigade must start within four hexes of a unit belonging to the 12th Brigade. 6th Division cavalry and artillery units must deploy within four hexes of another 6th Division unit.

Finally, set up the 8th Division; units belonging to 16th Brigade must deploy within two hexes of another unit belonging to that brigade. 8th Division cavalry and artillery units must deploy within four hexes of another 8th Division unit.

THE GERMANS

German units start the battle in the southern part of the battlefield. All German units must start south of the German Deployment Limit (they <u>can</u> cross it once the battle has started).

Units belonging to a brigade must deploy within two hexes of another unit belonging to that brigade. One unit belonging to the 11th Brigade must start within four hexes of a unit belonging to the 12th Brigade. Divisional/Corps Reserves units may start anywhere within the German Deployment Limit. The two elements of a German cavalry regiment <u>may</u> be placed more than two hexes apart.

QUICK START OPTION

The deployment limits on the maximum distance between units in the same brigade and between brigades in the same division give a flavour of the problems faced by commanders as they try to retain cohesion, but they do complicate the deployment process. For a quicker start, you may wish to disregard these limitations and allow both British and German units to be posted wherever you wish within their deployment limits.

STRATEGIC & TACTICAL OBJECTIVES

The Germans need to push on quickly. For all their success so far in the campaign, they need to bring matters to a quick conclusion. Though they have their secret weapon, the German fleet has lost the element of surprise and will not relish keeping supply lines across the Channel open in the face of the return of further elements of the Royal Navy. Also, with the location of the invasion confirmed as the south coast, British units from the north can be expected to be released from their defensive role and mobilised to support the effort in the south.

Thus the Germans need to break through the British lines and press on to capture London, and with it as many of the functions of government and commerce as possible. A particular target is the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, cutting off the supply of new ammunition to the defending forces.

6th Division, plus the III Korps reserve, is tasked with breaking through at Dorking. The Germans' objectives are to weaken the defences there sufficiently to allow the 5th division held in reserve to break through and race towards the capital. To win, 6th Division must break as many British units as possible and push far enough through the line of defence to oblige surviving units to withdraw.

For their part, the British objective is simply to hold on: if at the end of the day they have enough units holding enough defensible positions, the Germans will fail to break through the line.

5. SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Each of the game's six turns are made up of the following fourteen phases, always performed in strict order. Use the green Turn Marker to keep track of the current Game Turn, and the purple Phase Marker to keep track of the current Phase.

1	Initiative Phase (pre-determined for first turn)
2	Cavalry Dispersal Phase (Germans only)
3	Artillery Fire phase for Initiating Side
4	Artillery Fire phase for Reacting side
5	Rifle Fire Phase for Initiating side
6	Rifle Fire Phase for Reacting side
7	Dispersed Cavalry Allocation Phase (Germans only)
8	Movement Phase for Initiating side
9	Attack Phase for Initiating side
10	Movement Phase Reacting side
11	Attack Phase for Reacting side
12	Dispersed Cavalry Attrition Phase
13	Dispersed Cavalry Muster phase (Germans only)
14	Marker Removal phase

INITIATIVE PHASE

Apart from the first turn (during which the Germans have automatic initiative), a die is rolled to decide initiative at the start of each turn. A roll of 1, 2 or 3 means the Germans have the initiative: 4, 5 or 6 means the British have the initiative. Place the Initiative Indicator Marker in the appropriate box on the Tracking Table to act as a reminder. The side with initiative is referred to as the Initiating Side for that turn, the other side being called the Reacting Side. The Initiating Side acts first in the artillery fire, rifle fire, movement and attack phases.

CAVALRY DISPERSAL PHASE

 During this phase the German player may choose to disperse some or all of his cavalry units that are currently deployed on the board. This represents the German cavalry's ability to act as a dispersed force in battle. To Disperse a cavalry unit, the German player simply places it in Column 1 of the Dispersed Cavalry Table, moving the Dispersal Marker that was there into Column 2.

ARTILLERY FIRE PHASES

During these phases, the indicated side's Artillery Units may fire at enemy Units. See Section 6.

RIFLE FIRE PHASES

During these phases, the indicated side's non-Artillery Units may conduct Rifle Fire against enemy Units. See Section 7.

BRITISH ORDER OF BATTLE

Fifth Division		Sixth Division	
2nd (Guards) Brigade	*11th Brigade*	*9th Brigade*	*12th Brigade*
1st Reg. of Guards • *1st Battalion* • *2nd Battalion* • *3rd Battalion*	*4th Surrey Militia Btn.* *1st Surrey Admin. Btn.* *7th Surrey Vol. Btn.* *3rd Surrey Vol. Btn.*	*52nd Light Inf. Reg.* *70th Regiment* *3rd Berkshire Mil. Btn.*	*2nd Btn., 4th Regiment* *1st Middlesex Mil. Btn.* *2nd Sussex Admin. Btn.*
The Life Guard *17th Lancers*		*Surrey Yeomanry*	
A Battery, Field Artillery (16 pounder) *B Battery, Field Artillery (9 pounder)* *A Battery, Horse Artillery (9 pounder)* *1st Surrey Volunteer Artillery (32 pounder)*		*C Battery, Field Artillery (16 pounder)* *B Battery, Horse Artillery (9 pounder)*	

Eighth Division (under strength)
16th Brigade
1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment *4th Surrey Volunteer Battalion* *1st Surrey Militia Battalion* *3rd Middlesex Volunteer Battalion*
City of London Yeomanry
D Battery, Field Artillery (9 pounder) *5th Surrey Volunteer Artillery (32 pounder)*

CAVALRY ALLOCATION PHASE

If the German player has no cavalry units on the Dispersed Cavalry Table, skip this phase. Otherwise, the German player may choose to commit one or more dispersed cavalry units to combat. To do so, the German player chooses which dispersed unit to deploy and removes the corresponding Dispersal Marker from Column 2 of the Dispersed Cavalry Table. Each removed Dispersal Marker is then placed on top of the British unit that the German player wishes to use dispersed cavalry against (only one Dispersal Marker may be placed on any unit). This does not count as a full attack, however it means the British unit affected counts as being Engaged even before the Attack Phase. The marker remains on the British unit even if it later moves that turn. The German cavalry unit committed in such a way is now at risk of being itself broken later in the turn.

MOVEMENT PHASES

During these phases, the indicated side's Units may Move so long as they are not Disordered and are not an Artillery Unit that Fired. See Section 8.

ATTACK PHASES

During these phases, the indicated side's Infantry and Cavalry Units that have not been Disordered and are adjacent to enemy Units may attack in Melee. (Artillery Units may not Attack in Melee but may fire defensively.) See Section 9.

CAVALRY ATTRITION PHASE

If the there are no Dispersal Markers on the board, skip this phase. If there are, then the German cavalry units represented by the markers will be subject to British defensive action, **even if the British unit targeted was broken**. For each allocated Dispersal Marker, the British player rolls a die: a roll of 6 means that unit has been broken while in its Dispersed state. In this case remove the cavalry unit corresponding to that Dispersal Marker from the Dispersed Cavalry Table. Do not return it to the board – it will take no further part in the battle.

A roll of 5 or less means the German cavalry broke off from the action successfully and was not Broken.

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE

Sixth Division				
11. Brigade			12. Brigade	
20. Infantrie	35. Infantrie	16. Infantrie	24. Infantrie	64. Infantrie
1st Battalion 2nd Battalion 3rd Battalion	1st Battalion 2nd Battalion 3rd Battalion	1st Battalion 2nd Battalion 3rd Battalion	1st Battalion 2nd Battalion 3rd Battalion	1st Battalion 2nd Battalion 3rd Battalion
Divisional Reserve			Corps Reserve	
3. Brandenburg Jaeger Regiment (Light Inf.) 1st element, 6. Kurassier Regiment 2nd element, 6. Kurassier Regiment			1st element, 1. Schlesien Hussars 2nd element, 1. Schlesien Hussars	
Field Artillery Battery No. 1 (4 pounder) Field Artillery Battery No. 2 (4 pounder) Field Artillery Battery No. 3 (6 pounder) Field Artillery Battery No. 4 (6 pounder)			Reit Artillery Battery No. 1 (4 pounder) Reit Artillery Battery No. 2 (4 pounder) Reit Artillery Battery No. 3 (4 pounder) Reit Artillery Battery No. 4 (4 pounder)	

CAVALRY MUSTER PHASE

If the German player has no cavalry units on the Dispersed Cavalry Table, skip this phase. If there are, the German player now has the option of recalling them from their Dispersed state and putting them back on the board, if so wished. To do so, the unit or units to be recalled are removed from the Dispersed Cavalry Table and placed on any vacant hex that is south of the German Deployment Limit (so long as no British unit occupies an adjacent hex). The corresponding Dispersal Marker is moved from Column 2 of the Dispersed Cavalry Table to Column 1.

MARKER REMOVAL PHASE

Remove any Dispersal Markers from the board and return them to Column 2 of the Dispersed Cavalry Table. Remove any Fired counters from the board. Turn over any Disordered units so that they are once more fully active.

This marks the end of the Turn.

After six Turns, the game is over, and the outcome of the battle is assessed. See Section 10.

6. ARTILLERY FIRE COMBAT

During a player's Artillery Fire Phase, he may conduct Artillery Fire with his Artillery Units against enemy Units that are within the Firing Unit's Range and Line of Sight, as defined below. The player will then roll two dice on the relevant Artillery Table to determine the result. Each Artillery Unit may only fire once in a Phase, but an enemy Unit may be fired on more than once in a Phase (by different Units).

DETERMINING RANGE

An Artillery Unit may fire on an enemy Unit that is within the maximum Range printed on the Artillery Unit's counter. The distance to a unit is measured as the number of hexes away that

unit is by the most direct route; note there may be more than one such route available. Count the target hex, not the Firing Unit's hex. Also note that the minimum distance between two units is 1 hex, in other words a target unit adjacent to the artillery unit is counted as being 1 hex away.

DETERMINING LINE OF SIGHT

Artillery must have Line of Sight (LOS) to fire at a target. To determine this, trace the most direct route, hex by hex, between the artillery and its intended target. Where more than one direct route is possible, all must be considered. LOS is only needed along *one* such route to allow the artillery to fire; so long as one route remains, it does not matter if the other routes to the hex do not have LOS. An Artillery Unit <u>always</u> has LOS to an adjacent target. The terrain of the target's hex does not block LOS to that hex.

LOS for a route is blocked if it passes through an intervening **woodland** or **town** hex, regardless of elevation. (Fig. 1)

If the Artillery Unit is on the same level of elevation as the target, LOS is blocked if the route passes through an intervening hex of a higher level of elevation. (Fig. 2)

If the Artillery Unit is on a Higher level of elevation than the target, LOS is blocked if the route passes through an intervening hex that is the same level or higher than the Artillery Unit. (Fig. 3)

If the Artillery Unit is on a Lower level of elevation than the target, LOS is blocked if the route passes through an intervening hex that is of the same level or higher than the target. (Fig. 4)

Note that artillery may fire over both friendly and enemy units, and they do not block LOS. *This is different than LOS for Rifle Fire; see Section 7.*

If there is no line of sight along any of the routes that trace out the minimum distance between the two units, then the artillery cannot fire at that target.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4
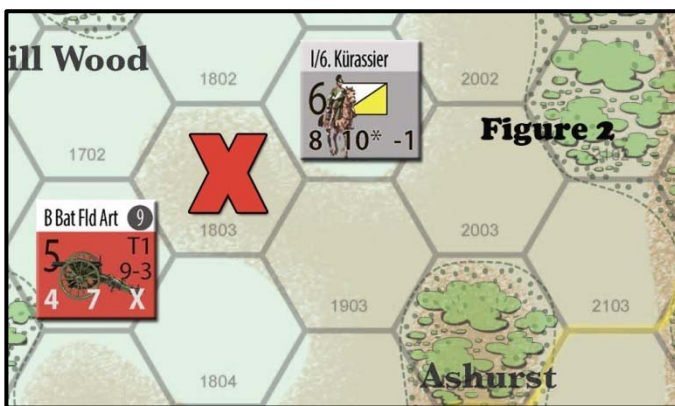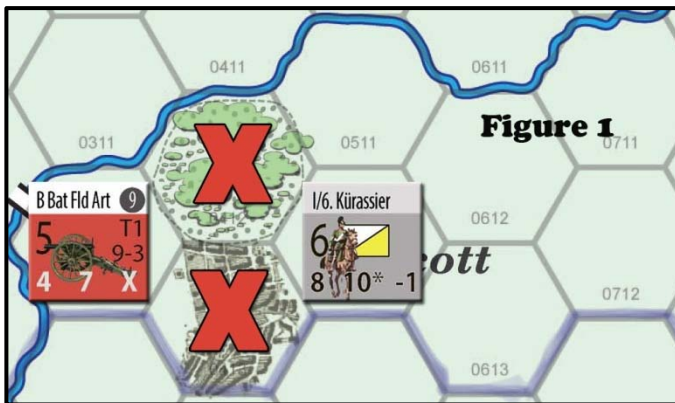
RESOLVING ARTILLERY FIRE

If it is possible to fire, determine the result by rolling two dice and referring to the relevant Artillery Firing Table for that unit (again, this is identified as T-1 or T-2 on the unit counter). The tables give the score needed at any given range to score a hit on the target and Disorder it.

- A +1 *bonus* is applied to the dice roll if the target unit is cavalry **in the open** (i.e. **not** in a wood or town hex).
- A -1 *penalty* is applied if the target unit is in cover (in a wood or town hex).

It is possible for artillery to Break a unit, **but only if it is in the open**. If the roll needed to hit is exceeded by a certain amount, and the target is not in woodland or a town, then the target unit is Broken and removed from the board. The surplus score needed varies according to artillery type and is indicated by the Break Surplus Number on the counter.

If the target is hit but not Broken, it is Disordered, even if it is in cover: **turn the counter over so that the 'Disordered' status is visible.** Note that artillery fire does **not** cause a unit to Retreat.

Example: An Artillery Unit is firing on an enemy Unit at a distance of 4 hexes. It uses Table 1 and has a Break Surplus Number of 2. To hit the enemy Unit, the owning player must roll an 8. If he rolls a 10, he will Break the Unit.

ARTILLERY THAT FIRES CANNOT MOVE

Artillery that has fired may not move that turn. Once fired – whether successfully or not – place a 'Fired' marker on that artillery unit to show that it must not be moved later in the turn. Artillery that has *not* fired may move normally, though note that artillery may only cross a stream or river by using a bridge.

7. RIFLE FIRE COMBAT

During a player's Rifle Fire Phase, he may conduct Rifle Fire with his non-Artillery Units that are not Disordered. The player must demonstrate that the enemy Unit is within the Firing Unit's Range and Line of Sight, as defined below. The player will then roll two dice to determine the result. Each Unit may only fire once in a phase, but an enemy Unit may be fired on more than once in a Phase (by different Units).

DETERMINING RANGE

With one exception, the targeted enemy Unit must be *exactly* two hexes away from the Firing Unit. Further, the Firing Unit must not be adjacent to any enemy Units.

However, if the adjacent enemy hex shares a stream/river hexside with the Firing Unit's hex, the presence of the enemy in that hex does not prevent the Firing Unit from conducting Rifle Combat, and indeed the Firing Unit may attack that "adjacent" Unit. The presence of a bridge has no effect on this rule.

DETERMINING LINE OF SIGHT

Line of Sight is determined for Rifle Fire in exactly the same manner as for Artillery Fire, *with one additional criterion:*

- For Rifle Fire only, LOS is blocked by the presence of a friendly/enemy Unit in the intervening hex.

RESOLVING RIFLE FIRE

The Rifle Fire Attack is made by rolling two dice and adding:

- The *Rifle Modifier* for the firing unit as indicated on its counter.
- A +1 *bonus* is applied to the dice roll if the target unit is cavalry **in the open** (i.e. **not** in a wood or town hex).

If this score equals the Break Value of the target unit, it is Disordered – **turn it over to show the Disordered status**. If it exceeds it, and the unit is on open ground (i.e. not in a wood or town hex) then the target unit is Broken and **removed from the board**. *Don't forget that target units already Disordered have their Break Value reduced by 2.*

Units in wood or town hexes **cannot** be Broken by rifle fire; they are Disordered instead. Unlike artillery fire, there is no penalty to the dice roll for firing at a unit in a wood or town – however, all such units benefit from a +1 bonus to their Break Value while under cover. Rifle Fire does **not** cause a unit to retreat.

RIFLE FIRE DOES NOT AFFECT MOVEMENT

Unlike artillery fire, attacking with Rifle Fire does not have any affect on a unit's later movement in the game turn.

8. MOVEMENT

During a player's Movement Phase, each of his Units may be moved up to the limit of its movement point allowance, stopping its Movement for the Phase if it moves next to an enemy unit that is not Disordered. Make sure the effects of terrain on movement are fully considered at all times. Units may not move through other units, so the order in which you move your forces may be worth some thought. Disordered units and artillery that has fired may not move.

Units never exceed their movement point allowance. If terrain's movement tariff means a unit does not have enough Movement Points left to move into the next hex, then the unit must remain where it is and forfeit the rest of its move. Remember, a unit may never end its move on a hex that is already occupied.

Units may not move off the map for any reason.

Units may not 'slide' around enemy units – they must first break contact (moving away) before continuing the rest of their move. There are two exceptions to this:

- If the stream or river is between the unit moving and the enemy unit, even if it is bridged at that point.
- If the enemy unit is currently Disordered.

9. MELEE

During a player's Attack Phase, his units that are in contact with (i.e., adjacent to) enemy units may, if he wishes, attack in melee. However, units that are Disordered may not attack. Nor may artillery units: **artillery units may be attacked but may never themselves attack an enemy unit.** Also, no unit may attack across un-bridged river if they do not have a high enough Movement Point allowance to cross it: in other words, only **cavalry and light infantry/jäger may attack across an un-bridged section of the River Mole**.

The player who is attacking decides each combat by rolling two dice. **A score equalling the Break Value of the enemy unit being attacked will cause that unit to retreat: a higher score will Break it (destroy it).** Before making the roll, the player must take into account any modifiers to the opposing unit's Break Value

and also any modifiers to his own unit's Attack Score.

These will usually be due to terrain considerations. There is another factor however: the status of the enemy unit at that point.

- If it has a German cavalry Dispersal Marker placed on it, its Break Value is reduced by 1.
- If it has already been engaged (attacked) that phase, its Break Value is reduced by 1.
- If it is currently Disordered, its Break Value is reduced by 2 – this temporary reduction is shown on the back of the counter as a reminder when units are turned to Disordered.

These modifiers are *not* cumulative. A unit with a Dispersal Marker on it that is then engaged remains with a -1 Break Value reduction. If it is later Disordered, its Break Value is reduced by just 2 **in total**: a unit never has its Break Value reduced by more than 2 due to dispersed cavalry/being engaged/being Disordered. Note that Dispersal Markers remain on the board for the rest of the turn even if the target unit was Broken.

Note that a roll of 12 will always be enough to force a retreat, even if the various modifiers total up to the attacking side needing 13 or more in theory.

The order in which attacks happen is important. Any general wants to concentrate his attacks on the weakest unit, but in practice nearby enemy battalions do not stand by and watch their comrades butchered. They will move up in support. To reflect this, the order in which an attacker can act is as follows:

1) Attacking units faced by only one enemy unit attack first.
2) The remaining attacking units may then act. They may only attack engaged or Disordered enemy units if they are **not in contact with another enemy unit that is not engaged or Disordered**. If such a unit is present, it **must** be attacked instead **unless is it behind an un-bridged section of the River Mole**.

If the fighting is intense it may be hard to keep track of which units have been engaged. As a mnemonic, players may wish to rotate such Units clockwise, rotating them back again at the conclusion of the Phase.

Remove destroyed units from the board immediately. The attacking unit responsible may move onto the vacated hex if desired, regardless of terrain.

RETREATS

Units forced to retreat must move away from the attacking unit one hex in any direction (of the defending player's choosing) *so long as* they do not end in contact with another enemy unit that is not Disordered.

- Light infantry/jäger and cavalry may retreat over any terrain.
- Volunteer infantry, militia and line infantry may not retreat over unbridged sections of the River Mole.
- Artillery may not retreat over unbridged sections of either the River Mole or Pipp Brook.

Note that if the attacker has further unused units in contact with the unit that is about to retreat, the attacking player may state that the retreating unit should stay in place until the other attacking units have had a chance to engage it. These later attacks will benefit from the defending unit's Break Value being reduced by 2, as it is Disordered even though it hasn't been

moved back in retreat yet. If these later attacks exceed the defending unit's new Break Value it is destroyed: if not it retreats as normal.

If a unit's retreat is blocked by a friendly unit, it may pass through it and travel to an adjacent hex, again so long as it does not end in contact with another enemy unit that is not Disordered. The confusion thus caused will however also Disorder the unit being passed through. Only one friendly unit may be passed through in this way: passing through two or more is not allowed. A unit that may only retreat to a vacant hex by passing through two friendly units is deemed to be unable to retreat.

A unit forced to retreat is **Disordered for the rest of that turn**. If it retreated by passing through a friendly unit, that unit is **also Disordered for the rest of that turn**. The attacking unit responsible may move to occupy the vacated hex if desired.

If a unit that has been obligated to retreat cannot, it is Broken and **removed from the board**.

10. OUTCOMES

At the end of the game, the German player must tally up the number of Victory Points he has gained.

- For each German unit that ends Turn 6 *north* of the German Objective line the German player earns **3 Victory Points**.
- If a German unit occupies the London Road hex at the northern edge of the map (marked by a star), the German player earns an additional **2 Victory Points**.
- If a German unit occupies West Humble, the German player earns **2 Victory Points**.

To the score amassed above, the German player
- **adds one point for every remaining German unit on the board (or on the Dispersed Cavalry Table)** and
- **deducts one point for every remaining British unit**.

This gives the final Victory Point total, and is used to determine the outcome:

16+: DECISIVE GERMAN VICTORY

The, ahem, "historical" result. The Germans break the line at Dorking and pour northwards. 1st and 3rd Corps are forced to fall back and away from each other. III Korps pushes on to London: some elements press towards the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, the rest pursue the surviving units of 2nd Corps. These turn to make a last stand on the south bank of the Thames at Surbiton. The fall of London and a subsequent total surrender by the British government are almost inevitable.

11-15: MARGINAL GERMAN VICTORY

The Germans break through at Dorking, but the British are able to fall back in good order. 2nd Corps anchors its right flank on the Thames and prepares to hold this new line. III Korps pursues and prepares to launch further attacks. The Germans have the advantage but the British defences are still reasonably strong and it is likely that negotiations will end the war. While it will be considered a German victory, the terms of peace will not be unduly onerous to Britain.

6-10: INCONCLUSIVE (DRAW)

The British line holds. The Germans pull back to their start positions in good order and regroup. Whatever reinforcing British units that arrive that night shore up the line while the Germans rotate 5th Division into the line, withdrawing 6th Division to act as reserve. The attacks will resume the next morning, but with a day lost the invasion is likely to lose momentum as more British units arrive from the north. The war is very likely to be ended by negotiation, with both sides claiming victory.

1-5: MARGINAL BRITISH VICTORY

The German attacks are repelled. While the British forces are not in a strong enough position to launch a counter-attack, the Germans are obliged to fall back to a defensible line as British reinforcements arrive from the north. The outcome of the campaign will largely depend on the ability of the invaders to maintain their supply lines, with a negotiated peace of no disadvantage to either side the likely outcome.

LESS THAN 1: DECISIVE BRITISH VICTORY

The German attack is repelled so decisively that the British are able to launch a limited counter-attack the next morning that captures Leith Hill. The entire German line is obliged to withdraw to prevent being split. As British reinforcements arrive, the Germans will be obliged to fall back upon their beachhead and sue for peace while attempting to evacuate as much of their force as possible.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

THE BRITISH ARMY IN 1871

The British Army of the time was small by European standards and mostly used to secure the far-flung British Empire. Personnel would spend much of their time posted, in small detachments, around the world, with training above battalion level rarely possible. Technical innovations were being adopted, but only fitfully. The infantry had just that year adopted a reasonable breech-loading rifle, but at the same time the Royal Artillery took the backward step of reverting to muzzle-loaded guns.

British forces had not faced those of a European power since the Crimean War of 15 years earlier, and that had hardly been an unqualified success. Senior army officers were stubbornly resisting the reforms recommended following that conflict.

Shielded by the Royal Navy, Britain's fixed defences on land were limited to coastal fortifications and gun batteries, with no fortified internal defensive lines.

BRITISH ARMY WEAPONS

Infantry

The Martini-Henry Mk.1 rifle

In June 1871 the British Army adopted its first true breech-loading rifle: the Martini-Henry Mk1. Firing a 0.45" calibre bullet with a muzzle velocity of 900 ft/s (270 m/s), it had a maximum range of 1,500 yards (1,400 m), with an effective range of 600 yards (550 m). It came equipped with either a standard spike bayonet or a sword bayonet for issue to non-commissioned officers.

It is proposed that all homeland regular army and militia units will be hurriedly issued with the new rifle in time for Dorking. Some volunteer units may be equipped with the new rifle, but most will be armed with a mix of the earlier Snider-Enfield 0.577" rifle, privately-owned hunting rifles and possibly even a few muskets.

Cavalry

The Snider Enfield carbine

The British cavalry of 1871 was still equipped with Snider-Enfield 0.577" carbines and the 1853 Pattern cavalry sword. Of the cavalry units at Dorking, only the Life Guards are armoured, while the Lancers are additionally equipped with, fairly obviously, lances. The Yeomanry will be mostly equipped with the same carbines and swords, though there is likely to be some variation.

While it was not unusual for cavalry troopers to fight as mobile infantry with their carbines, cavalry squadrons had significantly less firepower then their infantry equivalents.

Artillery

The Royal Artillery had just abandoned its Rifled Breech Loading (RBL) Armstrong 12 pounder guns in favour of simpler Rifled Muzzle Loading (RML) weapons. Teething problems with the more sophisticated breech loading mechanism led to a loss of confidence in the new technology and a decision to revert to easier-to-produce muzzle loading designs.
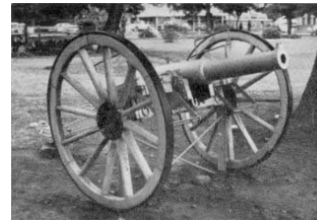
British 9 pounder field artillery gun

There were two new guns: a 9 pounder used by both field artillery and horse artillery, and a heavier 16 pounder for use by field artillery only. The weights refer to the approximate weight of shell that each gun fired. The 16 pounder had a range of some 4,000 yards, the 9 pounder a range of about 3,500 yards.

Whatever the arguments for the return to RML guns, they were slower to load and exposed their crews to more danger from small arms fire. For this reason the effectiveness of Royal Artillery batteries will be less than their German counterparts.

The volunteer artillery may have fielded a variety of guns. However, Chesney mentions only "heavy guns", so it is assumed that the volunteer artillery present at Dorking are equipped with obsolete 32 pounder smooth bore guns of *circa* 1860 vintage. An accurate bombardment from these would certainly have packed a punch, but being smooth bore guns accuracy was not their strong point, and they had a maximum range of only about 2,000 yards.

BRITISH ARMY ORGANISATION

For the defence of the nation there were three separate forces: the regular army, the militia and the volunteers. As these never actually fought together in this period, we can only conjecture how they would have been combined – though Chesney gives us some useful pointers.

The British Army rarely took the field in large formations. Its last massed deployment had been in the Crimean War. There, four infantry divisions were formed, each of two brigades, with each brigade comprising three (in one case four) battalions. Guards battalions were grouped together in a single brigade. The light infantry was grouped in its own division, again of two brigades. So was the cavalry, split into a heavy brigade and the notorious light brigade. Artillery was distributed between the divisions.

This gives us a model for the likely organisation of the British forces. Chesney tells of initial resistance to the invasion coming from the "Brighton camp". This implies that army and militia units were positioned at a number of temporary camps near the coast, supported by the local volunteers. Looking at British defences in the face of a real German threat the next century, we can deduce that such camps would have needed to guard long stretches of coastline, from the South East right up to the Scottish border. This coastal defence would tie up a considerable number of battalions along the length of the country, and would explain why no northern battalions appear in time to take part in the action at Dorking.

This would leave the defence of the line of the North Downs to units held in reserve. The army camps at Aldershot had been established with this purpose in mind. To these would be added the Guards units billeted in London along with those militia and volunteers raised in and around the city, plus whatever other units could be mobilised in time to join them.

Chesney refers to the British forces near Guildford as 'the first corps'. It is proposed that there are three British army corps defending London: 1st Corps, which will initially have mustered at Aldershot, 2nd Corps, in the centre, and 3rd Corps, which will have massed further east at Reigate. Each corps will be made up of several infantry divisions, and each division made up of two brigades. In the panic to throw these formations together, the mix of units in these brigades will be almost random. Three or four battalions will make up a brigade, with cavalry and artillery assigned in support at divisional level, more or less piecemeal.

Chesney's volunteer narrator speaks of being in a corps of three divisions. To hope to match a full German division attacking the gap in the downs, most of this corps would need to be massed at Dorking. Given that this is the obvious weak point in the line, this is not unreasonable. In this scenario, the line near Dorking is held by two full divisions: 5th Division, comprising the 2nd (Guards) Brigade and 11th Brigade; and 6th Division, comprising 9th Brigade and 12th Brigade. The other division in the corps, 8th Division, would initially have been deployed in extended order to hold the flanking downs, along with screens of skirmishers and light cavalry. When it becomes apparent that the full force of the German attack in the sector is focused on Dorking, one brigade (the 16th) of the 8th Division is redeployed here, along with accompanying artillery and cavalry.

Regular Army
The regular army was a small professional force with no conscripts. Senior regiments comprised two battalions, occasionally three. Most regiments however had just a single battalion. Even those with more than one battalion would rarely field them together: the practice was to disperse them individually around the empire. Chesney makes it clear in his story that there is one exception: a Guards regiment that fields all three battalions at the battle.

The elite among the British Army were the Guards regiments, extensively drilled and made up of experienced men: these are the hardest to break. Light infantry regiments had traditionally specialised in use of terrain and accurate shooting to disrupt enemy formations. The distinctions between them and line infantry were blurring, but for the purposes of the game the one British light battalion present is more mobile and more effective at rifle fire than any other infantry unit. The remainder of regular army infantry present are line infantry battalions, the standard infantry unit of the day.
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Cavalry regiments would typically field three squadrons. However, these squadrons were usually dispersed to separate depots around the country. Also, few regiments could get all three squadrons battle-ready at such short notice. Thus British cavalry regiments present at the battle will all be assumed to be at a strength of two squadrons only, and hence represented by one counter.

Two types of British regular cavalry are present: the Life Guards (the elite cavalry counterparts of the infantry's Guards regiments) and the Lancers. The Life Guards are more heavily armoured (a type of cavalry then known as cuirassiers) and harder to break than normal cavalry.

All artillery was part of one amalgamated force, the Royal Artillery. This comprised field artillery (drawn into battle by horse but with the crew on foot), horse artillery (served by mounted gun crew) and heavy artillery often called 'garrison artillery' – large guns for fixed defence or hauled into place for sieges. The basic unit of the artillery was the battery, a grouping of six guns.

The Militia
The militia was a voluntary force, raised locally and funded by the government. After an initial training period of several months, members of the militia would be released back into civilian life, paid a retainer on condition they reported back regularly for training and attended an annual camp. This pattern greatly appealed to casual workers such as labourers who could leave off and pick up employment as and when. Historically the militia had been solely an infantry force, but ten years earlier some regiments had converted to artillery. Chesney makes no mention of the latter at Dorking, so it is assumed all militia at the battle are infantry.

With an emphasis on drill and weapons training, and provided with the same equipment as the regular army, it is assumed that militia battalions can manoeuvre and fire as well as their regular counterparts, but will be less robust once taking casualties.

The Volunteers
The volunteers were also (obviously!) a voluntary force, of a much more recent pedigree than the militia. They were formed in 1859 and funded by private subscription, with members often expected to provide their own equipment. Unlike the militia there was no requirement for months of full-time training, with members meeting to train in their spare time only. This appealed more to those in a trade or profession, making the volunteers rather less plebeian than the militia. In rural areas, volunteer groups might only number 150 members, leading to the formation of Administrative Battalions into which these small units were amalgamated.

All arms were represented by the volunteers. Well-to-do horsemen preferred to form cavalry battalions, and the number of farmers who opted for these units led to them being termed Yeomanry. Volunteer artillery batteries were also formed. The standard of their equipment could vary widely, but it is assumed that the volunteer artillery at Dorking is equipped with obsolete smooth-bore guns.

It is probably fair to say that the volunteers were not well-regarded. The attitudes to them from the regular army ranged from hostility to, at best, amused tolerance. With their disparate equipment and limited training, one suspects they would have performed poorly, and as such are the weakest units at the battle.

BRITISH TACTICS
While we have much evidence for the performance of German forces in the European theatre at that time, we have none for the British. We have to conjecture, and look to Chesney for guidance.

Wellington's triumphs from the early years of the century still cast a long shadow over British military doctrine. Massed manoeuvre was still relied upon, with the cavalry keeping faith with the concept of the 'wall of steel' massed charge. However, the nature of the units deployed at Dorking would give the defending general some unfamiliar problems. Instead of a well-drilled professional force, he would be obliged to make do with large amounts of militia and volunteers.

With orders simply to hold at all costs, it is easy to envisage the tactics described in the story being used: the volunteer battalions largely static, making best use of cover, with regular units given a more mobile, aggressive role. It is unlikely that British cavalry could imagine any role in battle other than manoeuvring *en masse*, and as such they do not have the Dispersed Cavalry option open to the Germans.

THE GERMAN ARMY IN 1871

The core of the German Army was the Prussian Army. During the latter half of the 19th Century, the northern kingdom of Prussia had risen to eminence among the numerous Central European states that made up the German-speaking world. Under the guidance of its Minister-President, Otto von Bismarck, the state increased its influence over the rest of the German Confederation in a push towards a Prussian-led unified Germany. The Prussian Army was a key element in this process.

Unlike the British Army, the Prussian Army was born of defeat. The memory of conquest by Napoleon forged a nation and a military that was keen to avoid a repetition of the experience. It was a forward thinking army, developing the first true wargame (*kriegsspiel*, in German) as an officer training aid and producing one of the great military theorists in Carl von Clausewitz. At a time when military technology was developing rapidly, the Prussians were quick to adopt improved weaponry. Military service was compulsory: every Prussian man had to serve three years in the army, four years as a reservist and finally was eligible for call up to the national guard for a further five years. Prussia was, in the words of one of its Ministers, Friedrich Freiherr von Schrötter: "… not a country with an army, but an army with a country." Thus a very large number of conscripts and reservists would be on call for the invasion of Britain.

Following victory in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, the Prussian-led North German Confederation combined its armies. Broadly speaking, weaponry and organisation was the same across the Confederation, with some quirks from state to state. The Confederation soundly beat its chief Continental rival, France, in 1870-71, upon which the various states (plus the southern states not part of the Confederation) amalgamated under Prussia to form the German Empire. However, a level of state autonomy remained (for instance Saxony did not adopt the Mauser rifle in 1871). At the time of the Battle of Dorking, the German Army is integrated in name only, still taking the field as its distinct regional components.

As well as being large and well-organised, the German Army also had much combat experience. By 1871, Prussia and its allies had fought and won three wars inside seven years against European opposition.

German artillery on the move

GERMAN ARMY WEAPONS

Infantry

The Dreyse needle rifle

At the start of the Franco-Prussian War, infantry of the North German Confederation was armed with the trusty Dreyse 'needle' rifle. The Dreyse – which took its nickname from its elongated firing pin – had been a major step forward in rifle design and a war-winner against the Danes and Austrians, but by 1870 it was aging and was totally out-performed by the new French *Chassepot* rifle. This led to the adoption of the Mauser Model 1871 rifle by the German Empire (bar Saxony) in 1871. However, pending some modifications to the Mauser design, the new rifle was not actually in service that year. So the German Army at Dorking is still using the Dreyse rifle. The Dreyse had similar characteristics to the Martini-Henry, firing a 15.4 mm bullet at a muzzle velocity of 305 m/s (1,000 ft/s). It had an effective range of 600 m (650 yards), and could of course be fitted with a bayonet.

Cavalry

German cavalry, like their British counterparts, were armed with swords and carbines (in their case, Dreyse carbines). The Prussians did have Lancers, but none are present at Dorking. The Kürassiers were armoured and carried the straight *Pallasch* broad sword into battle rather than the lighter curved sword issued to the rest of the cavalry. Most Kürassiers carried pistols as side arms, with only 25 men per squadron armed with carbines. The *Pallasch*/pistol combination would give Kürassiers an advantage in melee and a disadvantage in firepower: for the sake of playability both these slight modifiers are ignored in this game.

Artillery

The real war-winner of the Franco-Prussian War had been the excellent German artillery supplied by Krupps. These modern state-of-the-art Breech Loading Rifled guns had easily out-performed their French counterparts, with better range, quicker rates of fire and firing shells with better fuses. Two types of gun were used: a '6 pounder' and a '4 pounder'. The 6 pounder was used as field artillery only: the 4 pounder had both a field artillery and a horse artillery version.

A quick word about the nomenclature: the weight designation here is different to that used when describing the British guns. Rather than describing the weight of the shell, it indicates the weight of a ball of solid shot that would fit into that gun's calibre. So while the German guns may sound lighter, they are in fact of similar size to those used by the Royal Artillery. It may be more helpful to imagine the 4 pounder as a gun of 78.5 mm calibre and the 6 pounder as one of 88 mm. However, the weight designations are the ones usually quoted, and so are used in these rules.

The effective range of both guns was 3,450 m (3,770 yards), with the better rates of fire allowed by their breech loading mechanism reflected in the greater firepower they have than the equivalent British guns.

GERMAN ARMY ORGANISATION

At Dorking, the British face an army corps that, while German in name, is to all intents Prussian. In direct contrast to the British Army, it belongs to an army consistently structured throughout. Each Prussian infantry regiment fielded three battalions. A brigade was made up of three regiments, a division was made up of two brigades, and a corps was made up of two divisions. In addition to the infantry brigades, a divisional commander had a divisional reserve to call upon: usually a cavalry regiment and artillery, or possibly specialist infantry such as jäger or pioneers. There was also a corps reserve, usually a mix of cavalry and artillery.

As with other European powers, the German infantry was broadly split into three types; elite Guard regiments, jäger (light infantry) and standard line infantry. No German Guard units are present at Dorking and just one battalion of jäger. In game terms, German line infantry has the same characteristics as British line infantry, with jäger being the same as British light infantry.

German cavalry regiments fielded four squadrons in battle, thus each German cavalry regiment at Dorking is represented by two counters. Each German cavalry counter will be referred to as an 'element' of that regiment. Two types of cavalry are present: elite armoured Kürassiers (equivalent to the Life Guards, and similarly stronger in combat) and the lighter Hussars. Cavalry could be deployed in brigades, but the corps at Dorking has only individual regiments at divisional and corps level.

As with the British, the Germans grouped their artillery in batteries of six guns. Batteries were grouped into artillery battalions: each comprised four batteries of field artillery and three batteries of horse artillery. Three such battalions made up an artillery regiment. Actually, the German artillery at Dorking is one battalion plus one extra battery of horse artillery: this very un-Prussian inconsistency is for reasons of game balance but in terms of the scenario can be put down to some organisational confusion due to the rapid German advance.

In our scenario, the task of breaking through at Dorking is given to the 6th Division of III Korps. The division comprises 11th and 12th Brigades. 11th Brigade has a full complement of three regiments, each of three battalions. 12th Brigade however has been obliged to leave one regiment guarding the lengthening supply line, and so fields two regiments of three battalions apiece. Cavalry and artillery have been assigned to support at divisional and corps level, plus one battalion of jäger in the 6th Division reserve. 5th Division is being held in reserve to exploit any break through, thus any German advantage in the battle will be exploited in full.

GERMAN TACTICS

Unlike the British at Dorking, we have a good idea how a German Army would have fought. They had recently prosecuted a successful war against another major power, and could be expected to use the same tactics.

In general, German tactics could be summarised as direct aggression from the infantry, closely supported by artillery that was pushed forward whenever possible. There had been little subtlety in the German assaults of 1870, using swarms of massed infantry in frontal attacks that bordered on the reckless.

Things were different with the cavalry. There seemed to be an appreciation that against improved artillery and rifles the role of the mounted soldier would have to change, but as with the British the notion of the massed charge was still dear to many a commander's heart. There is evidence on the one hand that German cavalrymen were willing and able to be deployed in small, mobile formations, pushing ahead, scouting and harassing with their carbines, or dismounting and fighting on foot if required. This would be a distinctly different way of thinking to that of the British cavalry, and is why there is a Dispersed Cavalry option in the rules that is available only to the Germans.

On the other hand, there was some criticism that when deployed *en masse* in 1870, the German cavalry was generally positioned too deep behind the lines and was not used enough to provide the killer blow to a French retreat. This must be balanced against the fact that there **were** massed German cavalry charges, and expensive ones too in terms of German casualties.

At Dorking, the Germans' remit is clear: to smash through a defensive line quickly. This does not leave much room for tactical finesse, which allows the German commander to act very much in the spirit of his historical predecessors.

THE ANGLO-GERMAN WAR

This section gives the background to the lead-up to the battle based on Chesney's story, along with additional specific inventions of my own.

FIRST PHASES OF THE CAMPAIGN

Following the unexpected defeat of the Royal Navy by means of some type of secret weapon, it is a matter of time before the German invasion fleet arrives. The theatre of the invasion is South East England.


The Theater of Operations

The eventual main invasion force lands at Worthing, on the south coast. The nearest British forces are camped at Brighton. Obstructing any advance north towards London are the North Downs, a long ridge of high ground stretching from close to Aldershot in the west to the north Kent coastline in the east.

Both Aldershot and Reigate had been identified as important points in defending London from the south, with a permanent army base established at Aldershot. Between these towns, just north of Dorking, the River Mole flows north through the downs, its valley creating a gap in them. From this gap rises one of the most prominent hills on the downs, Box Hill. The approach from the south is dominated by a still larger hill, Leith Hill. To the north lies the Thames Valley, and London. Some way east of London on the Thames' south bank stands the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, the nation's sole producer of military ammunition and a key objective for the Germans.

Feint and Invasion

Thus went on the weary hours, till suddenly the assembly sounded, and we all started up. We were to return to Waterloo. The landing on the east was only a feint – so ran the rumour – the real attack was on the south. Anything seemed better than indecision and delay, and, tired though we were, the march back was gladly hailed. - The Battle of Dorking
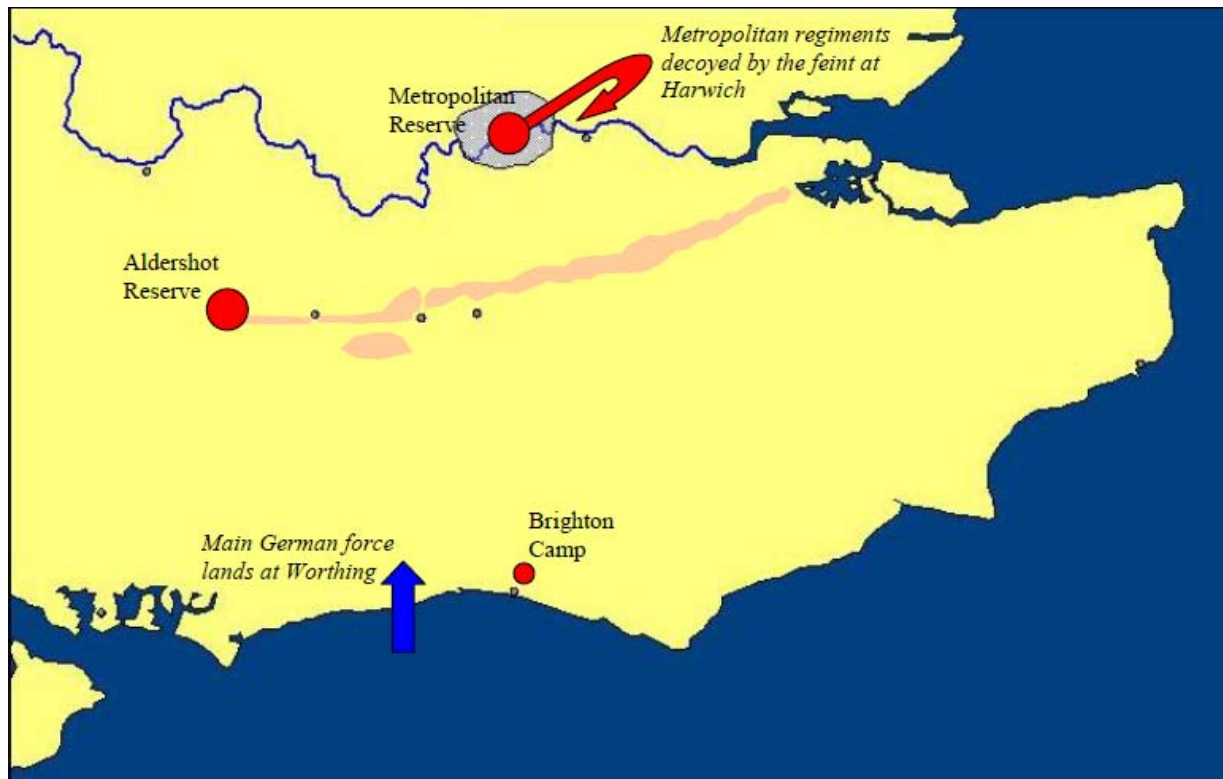

On Sunday 14th August the Germans land a decoy force on the Essex coast north east of London, at Harwich. The Metropolitan Reserve starts to deploy to meet this, only to be recalled when it is apparent that the main invasion force has landed at Worthing.

The Battle of Worthing and the Deployment of Reserves

There was an up-train returning to town, and some persons in it were bringing up news from the coast. We could not, from our part of the train, hear what they said, but the rumour was passed up from one carriage to another. The enemy had landed in force at Worthing. Their position had been attacked by the troops from the camp near Brighton, and the action would be renewed in the morning. The volunteers had behaved very well. This was all the information we could get. So, then, the invasion had come at last….

At last we reached the top of Leith Hill. It is a striking spot, being the highest point in the south of England. The view from it is splendid, and most lovely did the country look this summer day, although the grass was brown from the long drought. It was a great relief to get from the dusty road on to the common, and at the top of the hill there was a refreshing breeze. We could see now, for the first time, the whole of our division. Our own regiment did not muster more than 500, for it contained a large number of Government office men who had been detained, like Danvers, for duty in town, and others were not much larger; but the militia regiment was very strong, and the whole division, I was told, mustered nearly 5,000 rank and file.- The Battle of Dorking
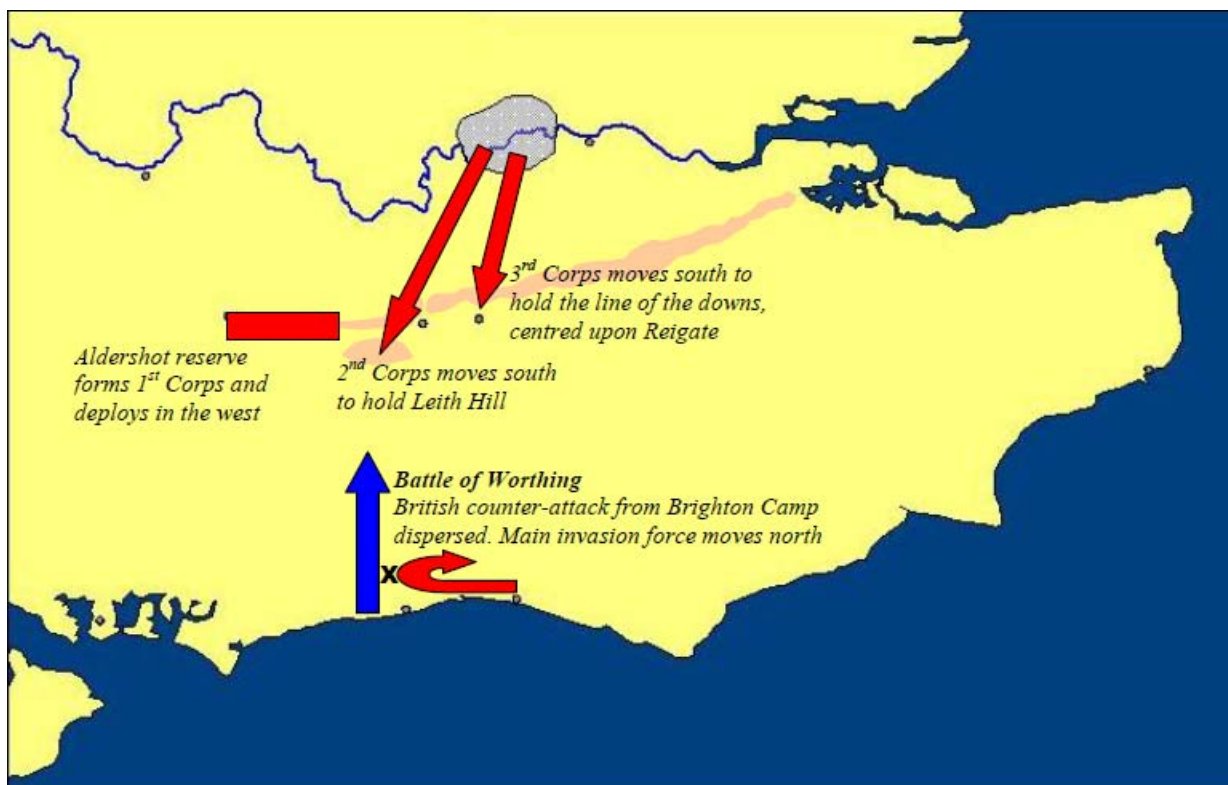
One battalion, of rifles, halted for a few minutes at the stream to let the men drink, and I had a minute's talk with a couple of the officers. They had formed part of the force which had attacked the enemy on their first landing. They had it all their own way, they said, at first, and could have beaten the enemy back easily if they had been properly supported; but the whole thing was mismanaged. The volunteers came on very pluckily, they said, but they got into confusion, and so did the militia, and the attack failed with serious loss.
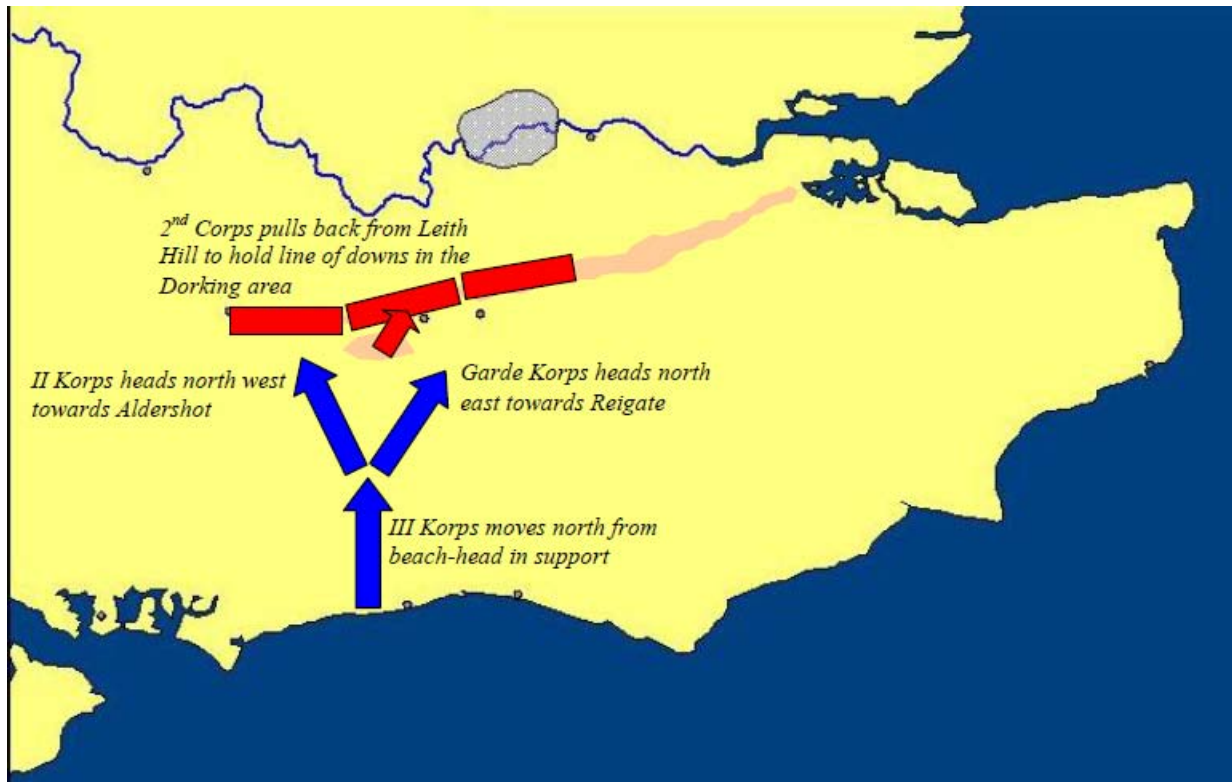*- The Battle of Dorking*

Following a failed British attempt to throw back the invasion, Garde Korps and II Korps secure the beachhead and move north. The reserves based at Aldershot form 1st Corps and deploy eastward along the downs. The Metropolitan Reserve is formed into two corps: 3rd Corps is deployed along the downs near Reigate, while 2nd Corps pushes south towards Horsham before being diverted to Leith Hill late on the morning of Monday 15th August.
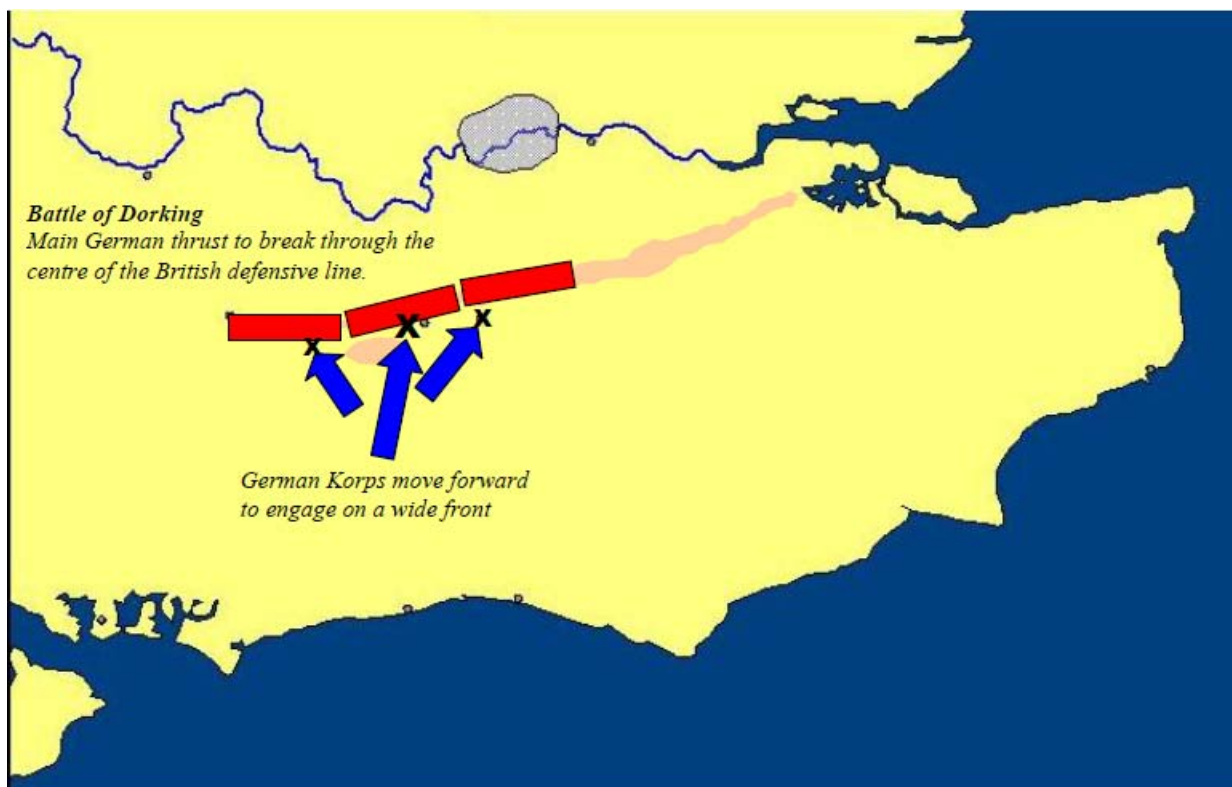
The Line is Formed

Commanding officers were called out by the General, and received some brief instructions; and the column began to march again towards London, the militia this time coming last in our brigade. A rumour regarding the object of this counter-march soon spread through the ranks. The enemy was not going to attack us here, but was trying to turn the position on both sides, one column pointing to Reigate, the other to Aldershot; and so we must fall back and take up a position at Dorking. The line of the great chalk-range was to be defended. A large force was concentrating at Guildford, another at Reigate, and we should find supports at Dorking. The enemy would be awaited in these positions. Such, so far as we privates could get at the facts, was to be the plan of operations. - The Battle of Dorking

The two German corps in the vanguard diverge and head towards Aldershot and Reigate. Threatened with being outflanked, 2nd Corps is ordered back north of Dorking, arriving there on the evening of Monday 15th August. III Korps has been landed at Worthing and moves up in support.

The Battle of Dorking

Our regiment was drawn up on the extremity of the ridge which runs from Guildford to Dorking. This is indeed merely a part of the great chalk-range which extends from beyond Aldershot east to the Medway; but there is a gap in the ridge just here where the little stream that runs past Dorking turns suddenly to the north, to find its way to the Thames. We stood on the slope of the hill, as it trends down eastward towards this gap, and had passed our bivouac in what appeared to be a gentleman's park. A little way above us, and to our right, was a very fine country-seat to which the park was attached, now occupied by the headquarters of our division. From this house the hill sloped steeply down southward to the valley below, which runs nearly east and west parallel to the ridge, and carries the railway and the road from Guildford to Reigate; and in which valley, immediately in front of the chateau, and perhaps a mile and a half distant from it, was the little town of Dorking, nestled in the trees…. Immediately on our left the park sloped steeply down to the gap before mentioned, through which ran the little stream, as well as the railway from Epsom to Brighton, nearly due north and south, meeting the Guildford and Reigate line at right angles. Close to the point of intersection and the little station already mentioned, was the station of the former line where we had stopped the day before. Beyond the gap on the east (our left), and in continuation of our ridge, rose the chalk-hill again. The shoulder of this ridge overlooking the gap is called Box Hill, from the shrubbery of boxwood with which it was covered. Its sides were very steep, and the top of the ridge was covered with troops. The natural strength of our position was manifested at a glance; a high grassy ridge steep to the south, with a stream in front, and but little cover up the sides. It seemed made for a battle-field. The weak point was the gap; the ground at the junction of the railways and the roads immediately at the entrance of the gap formed a little valley, dotted, as I have said, with buildings and gardens. This, in one sense, was the key of the position; for although it would not be tenable while we held the ridge commanding it, the enemy by carrying this point and advancing through the gap would cut our line in two. - The Battle of Dorking

Battle of Dorking
Main German thrust to break through the centre of the British defensive line.

German Korps move forward to engage on a wide front

The Germans attack the British positions at several points during the afternoon of Tuesday 16th August. Garde Korps attacks 3rd Corps around Reigate, with II Korps engaging 1st Corps near Guildford. The major thrust is aimed at the central part of the line, with III Korps clashing with 2nd Corps near Dorking.

Dorking and the Surrounding Area

Dorking is a Surrey market town at the foot of the North Downs. It stands on the southern bank of a stream called Pipp Brook, a short distance from its confluence with the River Mole. At the time of our battle it was surrounded by farmland, woods and parkland (as it still is, indeed). To the north, the River Mole cuts a gap in the downs. To the west of this gap the land rises up to the wooded heights of Ranmore Common. To the east of the gap rises Box Hill.

In the 1870s the town's population was about 10,000. Two railway lines met at a junction just north of Pipp Brook, with an out-of-town railway station built there. The railways brought with them increased prosperity, and a number of landowners built impressive houses in and around the town.

The Game Map

The map is based on the Ordnance Survey map of Surrey from 1871. Obviously there have been some simplifications to fit in with the hexagonal grid. Low-lying ground is shown in green. There are two levels of higher ground: tan coloured hexes are of middling height (which corresponds to land between the 300' and 500' contour lines, approximately) and brown coloured hexes represent the highest ground (above 500').

The London to Worthing road and the two railway lines are shown but have no effect on the game, though the bridges that carry them over the rivers assist movement as described in Table 2. Also note that the hex in which the road exits the northern edge of the map is a major objective for the Germans. Railway stations are shown along the rails, for information only. Denbies House (the "fine

country seat" on the heights described by Chesney) is also shown for interest, in hex 0707.

EPILOGUE

Happy those whose bones whitened the fields of Surrey; they at least were spared the disgrace we lived to endure. Even you, who have never known what it is to live otherwise than on sufferance, even your cheeks burn when we talk of these days; think, then, what those endured who, like your grandfather, had been citizens of the proudest nation on earth, which had never known disgrace or defeat, and whose boast it used to be that they bore a flag on which the sun never set….

Truly the nation was ripe for a fall; but when I reflect how a little firmness and self-denial, or political courage and foresight, might have averted the disaster, I feel that the judgment must have really been deserved. A nation too selfish to defend its liberty, could not have been fit to retain it. To you, my grandchildren, who are now going to seek a new home in a more prosperous land, let not this bitter lesson be lost upon you in the country of your adoption. For me, I am too old to begin life again in a strange country; and hard and evil as have been my days, it is not much to await in solitude the time which cannot now be far off, when my old bones will be laid to rest in the soil I have loved so well, and whose happiness and honour I have so long survived. - The Battle of Dorking

Of course we will never know the consequences of a successful German invasion as described by Chesney. His story was intended as a warning, and so he paints a grim future for a defeated Britain. When we look at the actual fate of France when defeated in 1871, we see that the Germans had neither the will nor, most likely, the capability to permanently subjugate their foe. Within just a few years France would recover, and before too long would be talking of revenge.

The publication of *The Battle of Dorking* had just the effect Chesney wanted. There was alarm and outrage that anyone could envisage such a defeat. No less than 20 ripostes were written, telling various versions of how Britain somehow rallied to defeat the invaders after all. Chesney's story was reprinted several times in pamphlet form and was even discussed in the House of Commons.

The furore was generally seen as aiding those wishing to reform the army. In any event, the reforms continued, culminating in a decisive restructuring of the army in 1881. This resulted in the regimental structure that was to see the British army through the bloody wars of the 20th Century, with two regular battalions per regiment, based at a depot and identifying with a defined locality. The militia was attached to these regiments, trained to act as reserve battalions in time of emergency. The volunteers carried on as a separate organisation until their funding failed in 1907: at this point they were invited to join the new body that was replacing the militia: the Territorial Force. The Force served with distinction throughout World War One, later becoming the Territorial Army – in which form it continues today.

For all the delay and frustration, the British Army had achieved something unusual for a military force: it had reformed itself without the prompting of a defeat in war.

Chesney's career was not impeded by the controversy he had caused. He published several novels, but more notably continued to serve in the army with great success, rising to the rank of general. He was knighted in 1890, and in 1892 was elected as the Member of Parliament for Oxford, standing for the Conservative Party. He died in 1895, aged 64.

The Battle of Dorking is widely credited with establishing a sub-genre, termed 'invasion literature.' It is believed to have greatly influenced HG Wells' *War of the Worlds*. Wells' use of familiar English towns as the setting for a vain struggle against an invincible invader certainly echoes Chesney, and indeed the first Martian cylinders in that novel land in Surrey, just a few miles from the places described in *The Battle of Dorking.*

Later defensive strategists concurred with Chesney's views of the importance of Dorking. In the early 1890s, Britain finally constructed a defensive line against invasion: a string of forts (in reality militia depots/muster points) guarding the southern approaches to London. Maybe the planner concerned had *The Battle of Dorking* in mind when he placed one atop Box Hill. Midway through the next century Britain would indeed be threatened by a German invasion: among the hastily-built network of defences the gap at Dorking was well guarded, with anti-tank trenches and obstacles, machine gun bunkers and an anti-tank gun bunker. But warfare had changed and there was a new 'high ground' – one held by Spitfires and Hurricanes. The invasion never came.

Fortunately, the Battle of Dorking remains a fictional one to this day.

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