Cassala 1894 - Tucruf 1896

Dervisci

SI · VIS · PACEM
PARA
BELLVM
XVII

by Marco Campari

1. INTRODUCTION
1.1. Game scale
1.2. Game Components
1.3. Rounding
2. COUNTERS
2.1. Combat Units
2.2. Commanders
2.3. Information Markers
3. GAME SEQUENCE
4. ORDERS
4.1. Order Types
4.2. Out of Command Units
4.3. Rub
5. MOVEMENT
5.1. Terrain costs
5.2. Entering Melee
5.3. Movement and Fire
5.4. Ambush
5.5. Stacking
5.6. Terrain Effects Table
6. FIRE COMBAT
6.1. Range
6.2. Opportunity Fire
6.3. Fire
6.4. Melee Fire
6.5. Artillery
6.6. Fire Results
6.7. Line of Sight
7. MELEE COMBAT
7.1. Procedure
7.2. Results
7.3. Leaders
7.4. Artillery
7.5. Cavalry
7.6. Retreat
8. ADMINISTRATIVE PHASE
9. SCENARIOS
9.1. Cassala, July 16, 1894
9.2. Tucrùf, April 3, 1896
10. BIBLIOGRAPHY
11. CREDITS

1. INTRODUCTION

Dervisci simulates at battalion level two colonial battles fought by the Italian army near Cassala in eastern Sudan against the Mahdi's troops, who were commonly (and incorrectly) referred to as Dervisci.

In Europe, the Mahdists are commonly referred to as "Dervisches," and we have used this term, but the name is inappropriate. The Dervisches were a Muslim sect of Turkish spiritualists devoted to meditation and prayer. The followers of the Mahdi were Sudanese converts to Islam and followers of Muhammad Ahmad, who they called the "Mahdi".

1.1. Game scale

- Each infantry or cavalry unit represents a number of men ranging from 125 to 300 per Combat Point for the Italian and between 200 and 500 per Combat Point for the Dervish.
- Each artillery battery represents 4-6 guns.
- A hexagon is approximately 900 meters long.

1.2. Game Components

Each copy of the game includes:

- An A2 map (42x60 cm).
- This set of rules.
- A sheet of die-cut counters.
- Two game tables.

The game requires a six-sided die (1d6) which is not included.

1.3. Rounding

When halving is necessary, the result is always rounded to the next higher whole number.

2. COUNTERS

There are three types of counters in the game: Combat Units, Commanders and Information Markers.

*The last four rows of counters are for the **Sonnenblume** scenario of the game Compass; they are not used in Dervisci.*

2.1. Combat Units

Each combat unit has its Combat Points (CP) and Movement Points (MP) shown.

Combat Points (CP)

Movement Points (MP)

Italian combat units are infantry companies, cavalry squadrons and artillery batteries.

Infantry *Cavalry* *Artillery*

Most Italian units are printed on both sides; the reverse side shows the unit's Reduced status; these units must receive two hits to be eliminated.

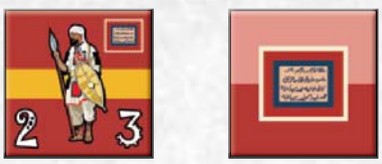
Front *Back*

The Dervish's combat units are cavalry or infantry units (of two types depending on whether they are armed with rifles or lances) and groups of non-combatants (warriors' families, captured slaves, villagers, etc.).

Infantry *Cavalry* *Non-combatants*

All Dervish units have a flag on the reverse.

Spear units (who cannot fire) have a yellow horizontal stripe on the middle of their counter.



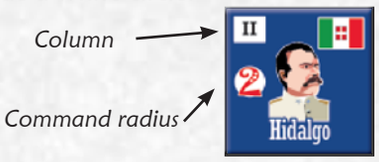
Front *Back*

2.1.1 When Italian units suffer a hit, they flip to their reduced side or are otherwise eliminated. If they are already on their reduced side, they are eliminated when they suffer a second hit.

Dervish units receive a -1 marker when they suffer a hit (they have their CP reduced by 1), when they suffer a second hit they are eliminated.

2.2. Commanders

Commanders have their command radius marked on their counter in red inside a white circle.



The Italian Commanders are marked with a colored box and the letters HQ which indicates the units belonging to their Column.

Commanders always have three MPs, pay infantry terrain costs, and are not affected by Order restrictions.

Commanders both trace command and give orders to their units so that they can be moved and employed according to the Orders received.

If a Commander receives a hit, their counter is flipped to the reverse, which shows a junior officer (Italians) or another Emir (Dervisches). If they receive another hit (or do not have a junior officer on the reverse), the Commander is eliminated and the Column/Rub will act without Orders (see 4.3).

Front *Back*

2.2.1 Some Commanders, (indicated on their counter) add a Dice Roll Modifier (DRM) to the die roll (MTD) on Fire (F) or Close Combat (C) to the value of the unit in the same hex (in stack).

2.2.2 Commanders have the ability to prevent infantry units they are stacked with from receiving certain markers (see 6.4 and 7.6.1).

Italian Commanders, if stacked with an Artillery unit, allow Opportunity Fire to the Artillery.

2.3. Information Markers

Dervisci uses various information markers; they're explained in this rulebook.

3. GAME SEQUENCE

Each Turn consists of a sequence that must be completed by each Column (Italians) or Rub (Dervisches), starting from the player indicated by the scenario as the first active player.

A. Command Phase

Assign Orders to the Active Formation or Rub (update orders in the Order Track on the map).

Check if all activated units are within the Command Range of their Commander and mark those out of command with the appropriate (No Com.) marker.

B. Movement Phase

Move units in the active formation/rub. Immediate resolution of any Opportunity Fire from the inactive player and Melee.

C. Fire Phase

The active player's Fire Combat Phase (Rifles and Artillery).

D. End Activation

Remove all Opportunity Fire (OPP. F.) markers.

Flip the Formation/Rub Marker on the Orders track on the map to indicate that it has been activated.

Column

Activated

Flip the "Turn" marker to the appropriate game turn box on the map to indicate the active player who then must activate one of their unactivated Columns or Rubs, if still available. The sequence resumes with the Command Phase.

E. Administrative Phase

When all Columns/Rub on the map have been activated, remove all Fire, Melee Fire, and No Comm. markers and RIT. markers from all units within the Command Range of their Commander (otherwise the marker remains on the unit).

Fire *Melee Fire* *Retreat*

Finally, advance the Game Turn marker one space.

4. ORDERS

All units belonging to a Column/Rub must be within the Command Range of their Commander to receive Orders, otherwise see 4.2.

Exception: Units adjacent to units in command of their own Column/Rub are considered to be in command.

Artillery units are never subject to Melee and Movement mandatory requirements.

4.1. Order Types

In ***Dervisci***, there are four types of Orders: Advance, Attack, Defense, and Maneuver. Italian columns can receive one of these four Orders, while Dervisches Rub can only receive Attack or Defense.

4.1.1. Advance

Each turn a Column receives the Advance Order, all of its units must move toward the enemy (the movement must end at least one hex closer to an enemy).

Units adjacent to the enemy are not required to initiate a Melee.

This order allows you to enter or remain in contact with the enemy, perform Fire, Opportunity Fire, Melee Fire, Melee as Active (with half CP).

4.1.2. Attack

Each turn in which a Column/Rub receives the Attack Order, all its units must move towards the enemy; if a unit starts in contact with the enemy, it must enter melee; if a unit is not in contact, it must move towards the enemy, trying to get in contact to fire or enter melee. If there is no possibility of entering contact with the enemy, the movement must end at least one hex closer to an enemy than the starting position.

This order forces you to make contact with the enemy and engage in melee combat if possible. You can perform Fire, Opportunity Fire, Melee Fire, or Melee as Active.

4.1.3. Defense

Each turn in which a Column/Rub receives the Defense Order, its units may move only 1 hex.

This order allows you to perform Fire, Opportunity Fire, Melee Fire, and stay in contact with the enemy.

This order does not allow Melee as an active unit and nor can the unit come into contact with the enemy.

4.1.4. Manoeuvre

Each turn in which a Column receives the Manoeuvre Order, its units may use a March Step, adding one (1) hex to their Movement, regardless of the terrain crossed during the movement.

This order does not allow Fire, Opportunity Fire, Melee Fire, or Active Melee, or enter or remain in contact with an enemy. Units must move away from adjacent enemies.

4.2. Out of Command Units

After moving all command units of the activated Column/Rub, all units with a No Orders (No Com.) marker must make an Efficiency roll.

If the die result is less than or equal to the unit's Efficiency, it follows the same Column/Rub Order (remove the marker No Com.); if the result is higher the unit remains without orders.

In Dervisci the efficiency of the Cavalry units is 4, of all other units it is 3.

4.2.1. Units without Orders

This (non) Order allows you to perform Melee Fire (with a MTD of -1), Melee as Active (with halved CP), to enter or remain in contact with the enemy.

4.3. Rub

Dervish units always belong to two Rubs: Inner (Interno) Rub and Outer (Esterno) Rub.

All units present in the hexes of the settlement (Cassala or Tucrùf) belong

to the Inner Rub, the others are part of the Outer Rub.

Moving into or out of a town changes a unit's assignment and Order, but a unit can never be activated more than once per turn.

Inner Rub units are always considered to be "in command", regardless of distance from the Emir.

Inner Rub units may choose to remain stationary (without moving or firing) instead of following the Rub Order.

5. MOVEMENT

The active player moves the units of the Active Column/Rub one at a time from one hex to another. A unit can never exceed its MP limit (but see 4.1.4).

5.1. Terrain costs

The MP cost to enter a hex is shown on the Terrain Effects Table.

A unit must have enough Movement Points (MP) to enter a hex.

5.2. Entering Melee

If an active unit enters a hex occupied by an enemy unit, movement is interrupted and a melee occurs, which is resolved immediately (see rule 7.0).

5.2.1 Leaders alone in a hex are immediately eliminated if an enemy combat unit enters the hex. In this case, movement is not interrupted by melee and the active unit may continue its movement.

5.3. Movement and Fire

A moving unit may be attacked in any hex it enters that is within enemy fire range (one hex, except in the case of artillery), or it may be ambushed (see 5.4).

Fire or Ambush must be resolved as soon as the unit enters a new hex and before it moves to another.

Opportunity Fire cannot be conducted against units in melee or entering a melee hex.

If a moving unit takes a hit, its movement ends immediately.

5.4. Ambush

The Dervish player has a certain number of Ambush actions they can play. Before the game begins, they roll a die and the result is the number of Ambush actions (use the track on the map to mark them).

An ambush can be conducted during Italian movement by inactive Dervish units not in a clear hex. The ambushing unit moves one hex to enter the hex occupied by the active Italian unit in movement; a melee combat is resolved (without melee fire), and then the unit, if not eliminated, returns to its starting hex, regardless of the result of the melee combat.

An ambushed unit is always the inactive unit in the melee combat procedure and also gains 2 additional CP in its Melee Value (MVV).

Once an ambush is carried out, the ambush marker is lowered by one on the ambush track on the map. Ambushes can be carried out until all available ambush points are exhausted.

5.5. Stacking

There can be no more than one combat unit in a hex. Reduced units count as full units for stacking purposes.

Moving and retreating units may pass freely through other friendly units, but may not stop in hexes occupied by other units.

When Retreating on a friendly unit, the unit must retreat one additional hex (on any terrain type) chosen by the owner; if this is not possible, the unit is eliminated.

The stacking limit cannot be exceeded at the end of any friendly movement phase (or any melee phase).

Game markers and Commanders do not affect the stacking limit.

5.6. Terrain Effects Table

See the Terrain Effects Table for terrain costs (in MP) and combat effects.

6. FIRE COMBAT

The Fire, Melee Fire and Opportunity Fire phases can only be performed by units armed with rifles,.Units with

melee weapons (the counters with a horizontal stripe) or cavalry units can only perform melee combat.
All Fire modifiers (terrain, markers, Commander) are cumulative.

6.1. Range

To fire, a unit must have the target within range of its weapons.
Count the number of hexes between the firing unit's hex and the target's hex. The number of hexes must be equal to or less than the firing unit's range, which is 1 hex for rifle units and 3 for cannons.
Units can always fire into the adjacent hex.

6.2. Opportunity Fire

Inactive units that have not yet fired during the current activation (do not have an Opp. Fire marker) may conduct Opp. Fire against an enemy unit moving adjacent to them. Each unit using Opp. Fire receives an Opp. Fire marker and may not conduct further fire during this activation.
Opportunity Fire is declared the moment the active unit enters a new hex and resolved immediately.
If the active unit is hit, it must stop its movement and cannot do anything else during the activation. If it was moving through a hex containing another friendly unit, it must move back one hex.
Opportunity Fire is not allowed against Melee hexes.
Artillery can only conduct Opportunity Fire if there is a Commander present in its hex.

6.3. Fire

Active units that have not yet fired during the turn (do not have an F marker) may make Fire on enemy units.
After firing they receive an F marker.

Remember: Units with a RIT. marker cannot conduct Fire, Melee Fire, or Op Fire.

6.4. Melee Fire

Melee Fire is resolved by both players before a Melee if they have units capable of firing.
As indicated on the Orders Table, only units with the order of Attack, Advance, Defend or Without orders (in this case with a negative modifier) can Melee Fire (at range 0).
Melee Fire is simultaneous
Each rifle unit can perform one Melee Fire attack for each melee combat it participates in, and after firing, it will receive a F -1 Melee Fire marker if it is not stacked with its Commander. Melee Fire markers are cumulative throughout the turn, so a unit that has performed two Melee Fire attacks will receive one F -2 marker (or two F -1 markers), and so on.

Example: A unit with an F -2 marker (or two F -1 markers) that performs a Melee Fire attack will have a MTD -2 and after firing will receive an additional F -1 marker.

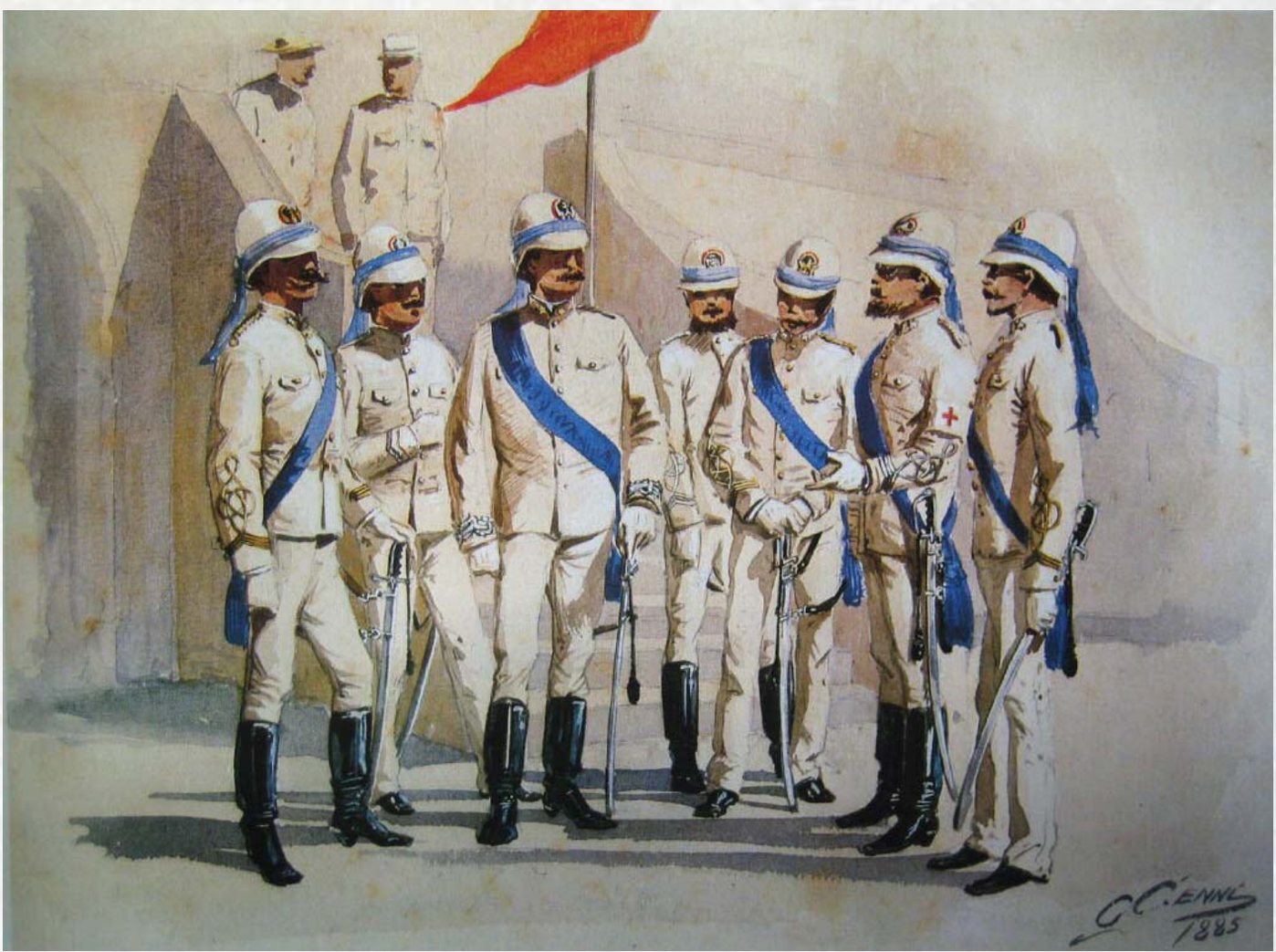
Melee Fire can always be performed if the order allows it, however if the unit already has a F or Opp. F. marker it will receive a MTD of -1.

6.5. Artillery

Artillery may fire at more than one hex only if there are no hexes blocking the Line of Sight (see 6.7).
Artillery units may only conduct Opportunity Fire if stacked with a Leader.
Artillery can conduct Melee Fire, but in that case in the next melee it will be considered to have a CP of zero.

6.6. Fire Results

If the Fire dice roll, after applying all the modifications, falls within the



values indicated on the Fire Table for the type of weapon and the range at which it was fired, the target unit has suffered a hit.
Results in red (the 6 at distance zero) indicate a double hit, all others indicate a single hit.
Most Italian units turn to their weaker side on the first hit and are eliminated on the second hit. Some units have only one level and are eliminated on the first hit.
Dervish units receive a -1 marker on the first hit (from now their CP will be reduced by one), on the second hit they are eliminated
If a target unit is stacked with a Leader and suffers one or more hits, roll a die; on a result of six the Leader suffers a hit (flip it onto its weak side or eliminate it if already hit or if it has no back).

6.7. Line of Sight

Units can always fire into the adjacent hex.
The following terrain types block Line of Sight: Towns hex, Amba, Woods, and any hex higher than the target hex. It is always possible to fire into a hex that blocks Line of Sight, but not through it.

7. MELEE COMBAT

If a moving unit enters a hex occupied by an enemy unit, melee combat occurs and is resolved immediately. Units may engage in melee fire if they have Orders that allow it; then, if neither unit is eliminated by the fire, their melee combat value (MCV) is calculated and both players roll a die to determine the result of the melee combat.

7.1. Procedure

To calculate the MCV of your unit add:
1) the Strength (modified according to orders) of the unit

The inactive player adds 2 PF in case of Ambush (see 5.4).

2) the MTDs (cumulative).
3) the result of rolling 1d6
The player whose sum is higher (the winner) subtracts the other player's (the loser) total from his own and checks the Melée table to see what effect the difference will have on the loser.

7.2. Results

The player compares his MCV with that of the opposing force and applies the results:
1) SAME VALUE: The active player retreats to his original starting hex, but does not receive a RIT. marker.
2) Higher MCV up to 2 points: the unit with lower MCV retreats 1 hex.
3) Higher MCV from 3 up to double the opponent's value: the unit with lower MCV retreats 1 hex and suffers 1 Hit.
4) MCV difference greater than double: The unit with the lower MCV is eliminated.

7.3. Leaders

If a unit that suffers a hit has a Leader stacked with it, roll a die; on a roll of 6, the Leader also suffers a hit. If the unit the leader is stacked with is eliminated, the Leader is also eliminated.
If a unit enters a hex containing a single enemy Commander, it must retreat one hex (this can happen multiple times during an activation).

7.4. Artillery

Artillery may only participate in melee combat as inactive units, never as active units.
If the artillery has performed Melee Fire before the Melee Combat it is considered to have a CP value of 0 (zero) in that combat.

7.5. Cavalry

A cavalry unit attacked in melee by enemy infantry may attempt to retreat before combat. It rolls a die and on a result of 3-6, it retreats one hex (without receiving a RETREAT marker). The active infantry, if it still has MP left, may continue moving and, if it wishes, re-enter the cavalry's hex, which may again attempt to retreat.

7.6. Retreat

When retreating, the active player's unit retreats to the hex from which it moved; the inactive player's unit retreats to a legal hex of the player's choosing.

The inactive player's unit cannot retreat to the hex from which the active player's unit entered the melee hex. If retreat is impossible due to terrain or the presence of enemy units, the unit is eliminated.

7.6.1 Retreating units receive a RETREAT (RIT.) marker, unless the result was even (SAME MCV).

Units with a RIT. marker cannot fire and have a negative MTD in Melee combat.

If a unit with a RIT. marker suffers another Retreat result, it retreats one hex, suffers a Hit and keeps the RIT. marker.

Units stacked with a Leader never receive the RIT. marker.

Units with a RIT. marker are not required to follow their Formation/ Rub Order, cannot enter Melee, and cannot Ambush.

7.6.2 After a victorious melee combat, the active player's unit that eliminated or caused the opponent's retreat may continue moving if it still has movement points available, and may also attack the same or another enemy unit again.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE PHASE

During this phase, remove all Fire, Melee Fire, and No Comm markers. Retreat (RIT.) markers may only be removed from units that are in command.

After removing the markers, advance one space on the turn track.

Cassala

Tucruf

If this is on the last turn of the scenario (see 9.0) roll a die, on a result of 1 the game is over, otherwise start a new turn.

9. SCENARIOS

There are two scenarios in ***Dervisci***: Cassala, July 16, 1894, and Tucrùf, April 3, 1896.

In Cassala, you start drawing for the end of the game from turn 18, in Tucrùf from turn 10.

9.1. Cassala, July 16, 1894

In this scenario the following units are used:

Italians. The Italians are commanded by General Baratieri, who also commands the First Brigade (I Brigata). The Second Brigade (II Brigata) is commanded by Major Hidalgo.

The first brigade is composed of I, III (two pieces) IV colonial battalion and the I mountain battery, the second brigade by the II colonial battalion (on two pieces)

The Cheren cavalry squadron and the Sabderat and Ad Omar bands can be assigned to one of the two brigades of the Italian player's choice. This decision must be made before the start of the scenario.

Dervisches. The Dervish player takes 4 riflemen, 7 lancers, 3 cavalry, and 3 non-combatants, places all these units in an opaque cup, and randomly draws 13 of them.

The zariba around Tucrùf is not present in this scenario.

9.1.1. Initial Set-up

The drawn Dervish units, plus Emir Mussaed Gaidum, are placed on their hidden side (the side with the flag) on the map. At least 6 counters must be placed in the Cassala hexes and at least 6 on the rest of the map.

The Italians enter from the map edge opposite Cassala and all Italian units must move onto the map in the first turn.

The player with the initiative (the one who activates first) is the Italian.

9.1.2. Hidden Units

Dervish units start on their hidden side. Hidden units are revealed:

- if the Dervish player wants to activate them to shoot, ambush or start a melee
- if they move within 5 hexes of any Italian unit with a clear Line of Sight to the moving unit
- if they are in Clear hex and any Italian unit is within 2 hexes with a clear Line of Sight on the unit.
- if they are located in any terrain other than Clear and any Italian unit is adjacent.

Hidden units cannot be targeted by artillery if they have not yet been revealed.

Hidden units have 3 MP and are not subject to the Order of their Rub.

9.1.3. Cavalry

Cavalry may charge if they enter melee after moving at least one Clear hex. In this case, they gain a +1 bonus to their melee MCV.

Cavalry can never fire.

9.1.4. Carchidio

The Italian player receives the Francesco Carchidio dei Malavolti marker. After each melee involving the Cheren cavalry, the Italian player may play this marker to reroll the melee die. The marker is removed from the game and is considered an eliminated Commander for the purposes of victory conditions.

9.1.5. Victory Conditions

The Italian player must conquer all Cassala hexes by the end of the game. The Dervish must prevent the conquest of Cassala or eliminate six Italian counters (units or Leaders).

9.2. Tucrùf, April 3, 1896

In this scenario the following units are used:

Italians. The Italians are commanded by Colonel Stevani and have a single formation, the Stevani Column (Colonna Stevani).

The Stevani Column is composed of II, III (two pieces), VI (two pieces), VII (two pieces), VIII colonial battalion, 2 artillery batteries and the Cassala band.

Dervisches. The Dervish player takes 7 riflemen, 4 lancers, 3 cavalry, and 3 non-combatants, places all these units in an opaque cup, and randomly draws 14 of them.

9.2.1. Initial Set-up

The Italian player places first in Cassala or adjacent hexes.

The drawn Dervish units, plus Emir Osman Digna, are placed on the hidden side (the side with the flag) on the map. At least 6 must be placed in Tucrùf hexes or adjacent to Tucrùf, and at least 6 on the rest of the map.

The units adjacent to Tucrùf are considered to be part of the Inner Rub.

The Dervish places his hidden units and they follow rule 9.1.2.
The player with the initiative is the Italian and each turn he can decide whether to activate first or second.

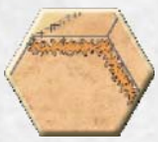
9.2.2. Cavalry

Dervish cavalry can charge if they enter melee after moving at least one Clear hex. In this case, they gain a +1 bonus to their melee MCV.

9.2.3. Artillery

In the Tucrùf hexes the Dervisci had built trenches, therefore the Italian artillery suffers a MTD of -2 (instead of -1) when firing into a Tucrùf hex.

9.2.4. Zeriba



The Dervish has no penalty when shooting through the Zeriba from a Tucrùf hex.

9.2.5. Cassala

Dervish units may never enter Cassala hexes.

9.2.6. Victory Conditions

The Italian player must control all Tucrùf hexes by the end of the game. The Dervish must prevent the conquest of Tucrùf or eliminate six Italian counters (units or Leaders).

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

AA.VV., *Fighting Techniques of the Colonial Era*, St. Martin's Press, 2009.

Mantegazza Vico, *La Guerra in Africa*, Le Monnier 1896.

Quirico Domenico, *Squadrone Bianco*, *Storia delle truppe coloniali italiane*, Mondadori, 2002.

Ruggeri Raffaele, *Le Guerre Coloniali Italiane 1885/1900*, EMI Serie Historica n. 4, 2003.

Whitehouse Howard, *Battle in Africa, 1879-1914*, Field Books 1987.

11. CREDITS

Author: Marco Campari
Development: Piergennaro Federico
Graphics: Giulia Tinti
Playtest: Giovanni Campari, Lucrezia Campari, Marco Rossi, Marco Villa, Cristina Vitali
Translation assistance and rules editing: John Morrison