



The Last Stand at Zandvoorde

30th October 1914

A bloody last stand in the opening months of the First World War that saw nearly 300 men of the Household Cavalry give their lives in a desperate defence against increasingly furious enemy attacks.

104 years ago, October 30th, 1914, a combined force of the **1st and 2nd Life Guards**, as well as the **Horse Guards**, died fighting to the last man as they held off a German attack on their position at **Zandvoorde**, Belgium. On 29th October 1914, the village of **Zandvoorde** was being held by the dismounted cavalymen of the **7th Household Cavalry Brigade** from Major General Julian Byng's **3rd Cavalry Division**. To their left was the **1st Battalion, the Royal Welch Fusiliers** of the **22nd Infantry Brigade, 7th Division**. The **Household Cavalry** held the trenches that were located on the forward slope of the grassy knoll at the southern end of the village astride the **Zandvoorde to Tenbrielen** Road.

On their left was Captain Lord Hugh Grosvenor's **C Squadron 1st Life Guards**, reinforced by Lord Grosvenor's men was Lord Charles Sackville Pelham Worsley's machine gun team from the **Royal Horse Guards**. Worsley and his men had already been in the line for seven days when the **1st Life Guards** had replaced the **Royal Horse Guards** and they had been detailed to remain to support them as one of the **Life Guard's** machine guns was out of action.

At 6am on 30th October 1914, the German guns opened fire, initially further to the left against the **1st and 2nd Divisions** in front of **Gheluvelt** and **Zonnebeke** respectively. About 45 minutes later, 260 guns of the German artillery turned their attention to the defenders in the vicinity of **Zandvoorde**, their shells falling on the men of the **Life Guards** and the **1st Royal Welch Fusiliers**. This artillery bombardment was followed at around 8am by an infantry attack by the German Infantrymen of the **39th Division**.

The Germans attackers drove into the defending British. In front of **Zandvoorde**, the **Life Guards** were hit hard, and Lieutenant Lord Worsley's machine gun team was in the thick of the fighting. An order to withdraw to the second line of defences was issued, but this did not reach the two Squadrons to the left of the road or Lord Worsley's machine gun team. The heavy shelling and sheer weight of enemy numbers being thrown against the **Household Cavalry** defending **Zandvoorde** resulted in Lord Grosvenor's C Squadron and Lord Worsley's machine gunners being overrun as their fellow cavalymen withdrew to their second line. The Household Cavalrymen who had remained at their posts were virtually annihilated; only 10 survived the battle to make it back to their own lines.

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What actually happened:-

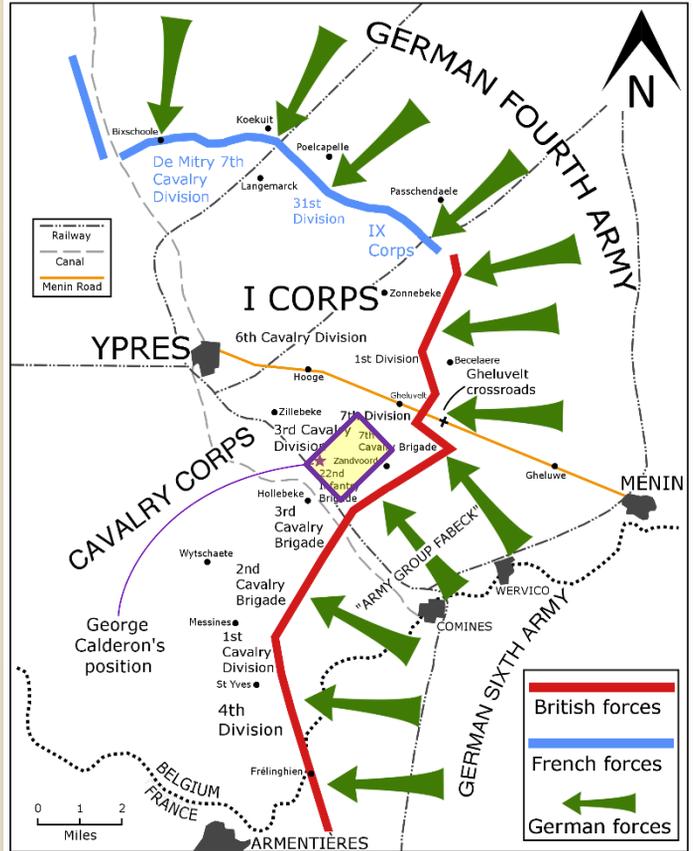
Following a heavy artillery bombardment on **Zandvoorde** and the **Household Cavalry** positions to the East, the German **82nd Infantry Brigade** (Infantry Regiments 171 & 172) attacked.

The **Royal Horse Guards** and two squadrons from each of the of **Life Guard Regiments** (together with their supporting MGs and Artillery) successfully withdrew. Leaving two squadrons of **Life Guards** and their remaining operable MG to face the onslaught.

The Germans succeeded in capturing the village and wiping out the remaining cavalymen defending it.

The Germans then moved their artillery into the village and proceeded to bombard the **1st Btn, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers**, who were positioned to the left of the household cavalry.

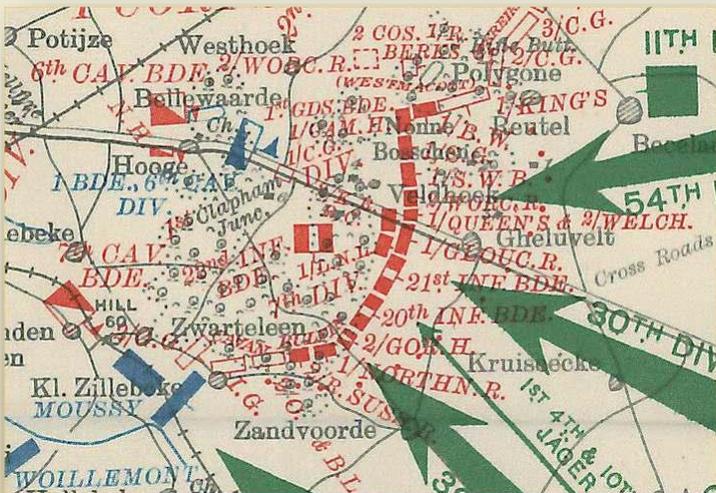
First Battle of Ypres
Approximate positions, nightfall 29 October 1914



Source: *Official History of the War* (1925)

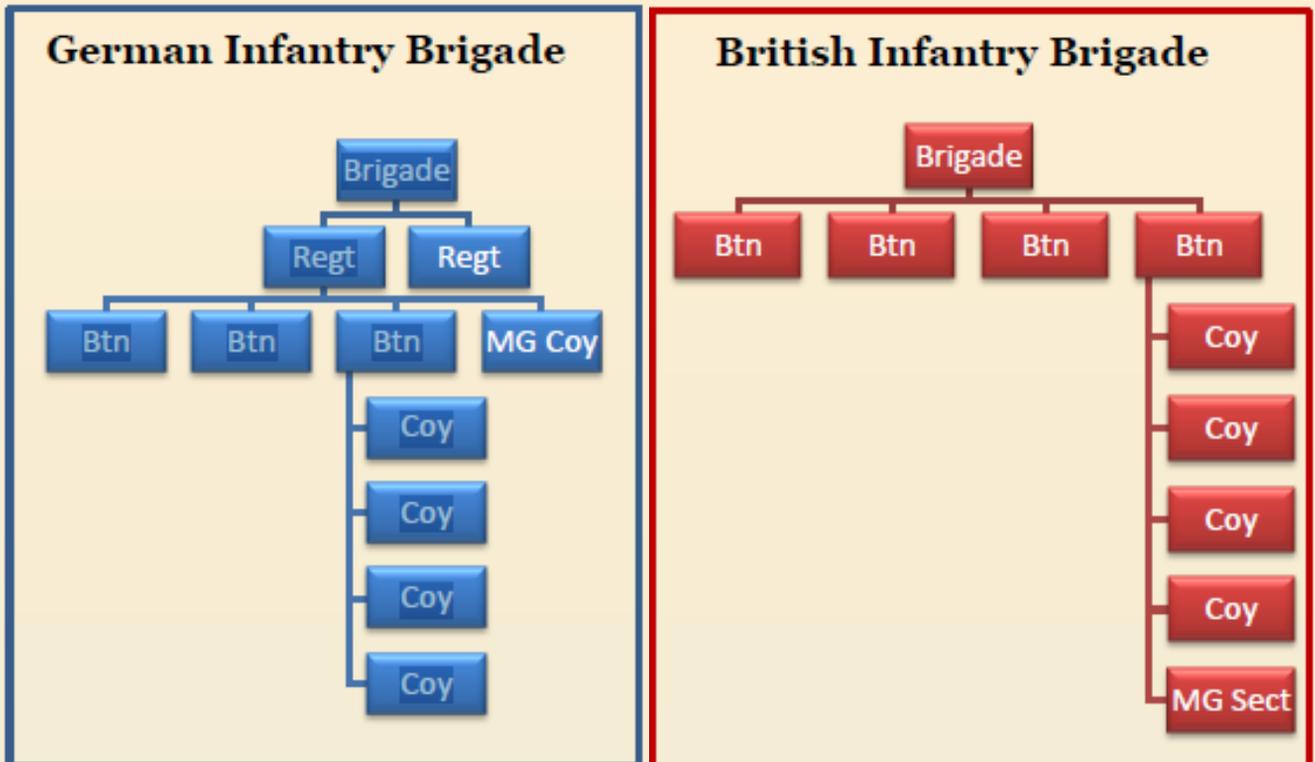
There then followed an assault on the Welshmen's right flank from the **82nd Infantry Brigade**, and frontally by the **1st, 4th & 10th Jaeger battalions** (under the command of a Major Petersen). The Welshmen fought bravely to the last man.

Eventually, reserves from the **2nd Btn, the Royal Warwickshire Regt.** and **1st Btn, the South Staffordshire Regt.** were brought forwards and succeeded in stalling the German advance West.



Notes: -

Comparison of Infantry Brigade Organisations 1914



General Notes:-

- On the day of the battle, visibility was very poor (misty).
- Whilst the battlefield was basically flat, with extreme fields of fire in places, there were, in fact, numerous obstacles to movement. Everywhere there were hedges, copses and dense woods, whilst the ubiquitous Flanders drainage ditches of varying depth and width ran in all directions.
- The Household Cavalry order to retire was not received by all units as the runners were killed, which led to the situation described above (*Perhaps you could dice to see who got the message?*).
- Each battalion of the German 82nd Infantry Brigade. was supported by one field battery of artillery.
- The German Regiments attacked two battalions up and one behind, each supported by an MG platoon.
- The German attack was accompanied by martial music from the Regimental Band!
- To the North of this action a simultaneous action took place between the rest of the German 39th Infantry Division (supported by elements of the 30th Infantry Division) against the remainder of the British 7th Infantry Division (21st & 22nd Infantry Brigades)



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This historical scenario for **1914** broadly follows that of **Capture** from the main rule book. **Orders of battle** – see below.

Scenario Rules –

- No Cavalry reconnaissance – *the British cavalry were fighting dismounted and dug in. The Germans cavalry were occupied elsewhere.*
- Dug in waiting
- No hidden deployment – *the British positions were overlooked by the enemy as they advanced down a forward slope towards the British positions.*
- Standing Barrage – Attacker

Initiative – the attacker goes first.

Deployment – The defender deploys all their units as indicated on the scenario map. The attacker deploys up to one full move from their table edge.

Primary objective is to capture the village of Zandvoorde.

Secondary Objective is to capture Zandvoorde Chateau.

Length of Game The battle ends when:

1. One side has lost three battalions.
2. The attacker has lost half its bases (**23 bases**).
3. The defender has lost two-thirds of its bases (**21 bases**).
4. Eight turns have elapsed.

Victory Conditions – If none of the three conditions have determined the victor, score as follows:

- Each enemy base destroyed: +1
- Each enemy battalion wiped out (even if off table): +1
- Primary objective taken: +2
- Secondary objective taken: +1
- No objectives taken by attacker: -1

British Forces (Defenders)

7th Cavalry Brigade and elements of 21st & 22nd Infantry Brigades

Command Tokens: 24

Points: 392

Brigadier-General C.T.Mcm. Kavanagh (7th Bde) and
Major-General Thompson Capper (7th Div)

1st Life Guards (7th)
3 Elite bases cavalry + MG base
56pts

2nd Life Guards (7th)
3 Elite bases cavalry + MG base
56pts

Royal Horse Guards (7th)
3 Elite bases cavalry + MG base
56pts

K Battery, RHA (7th)
2 bases trained Artillery
22pts

1st Btn, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.
(22nd)
4 Trained bases infantry + MG Base
60pts

12th battery RFA (22nd)
2 bases trained Artillery
22pts

(Reserves) 1st Btn, the South
Staffordshire Regt. (22nd)
4 Trained bases infantry + MG Base
60pts

(Reserves) 2nd Btn, the Royal
Warwickshire Regt. (22nd)
4 Trained bases infantry + MG Base
60pts

**At the start of the game, place any reserves on this Order of Battle.
At the start of a turn, place at least one command token on each unit
and three command tokens on the General. Distribute your remaining
command tokens on the recipient units as required.**

German Forces (Attackers)

Elements of 39th Infantry Division (82nd Infantry Brigade)

Command Tokens: 33

Points: 444

General Max von Fabeck (Major Peterson-Jägers)

Infantry Regiment 171 (82nd)
9 Regular bases Infantry + 3 MG
120pts

Infantry Regiment 172(82nd)
9 Regular bases Infantry + 3 MG
120pts

1st Jäger Battalion HKK
4 Regular bases infantry + MG
50pts

4th Jäger Battalion HKK
4 Regular bases infantry + MG
50pts

10th Jäger Battalion HKK
4 Regular bases infantry + MG
50pts

Field Artillery Regiment 66
3 bases Regular Artillery
27pts

Field Artillery Regiment 80
3 bases Regular Artillery
27pts

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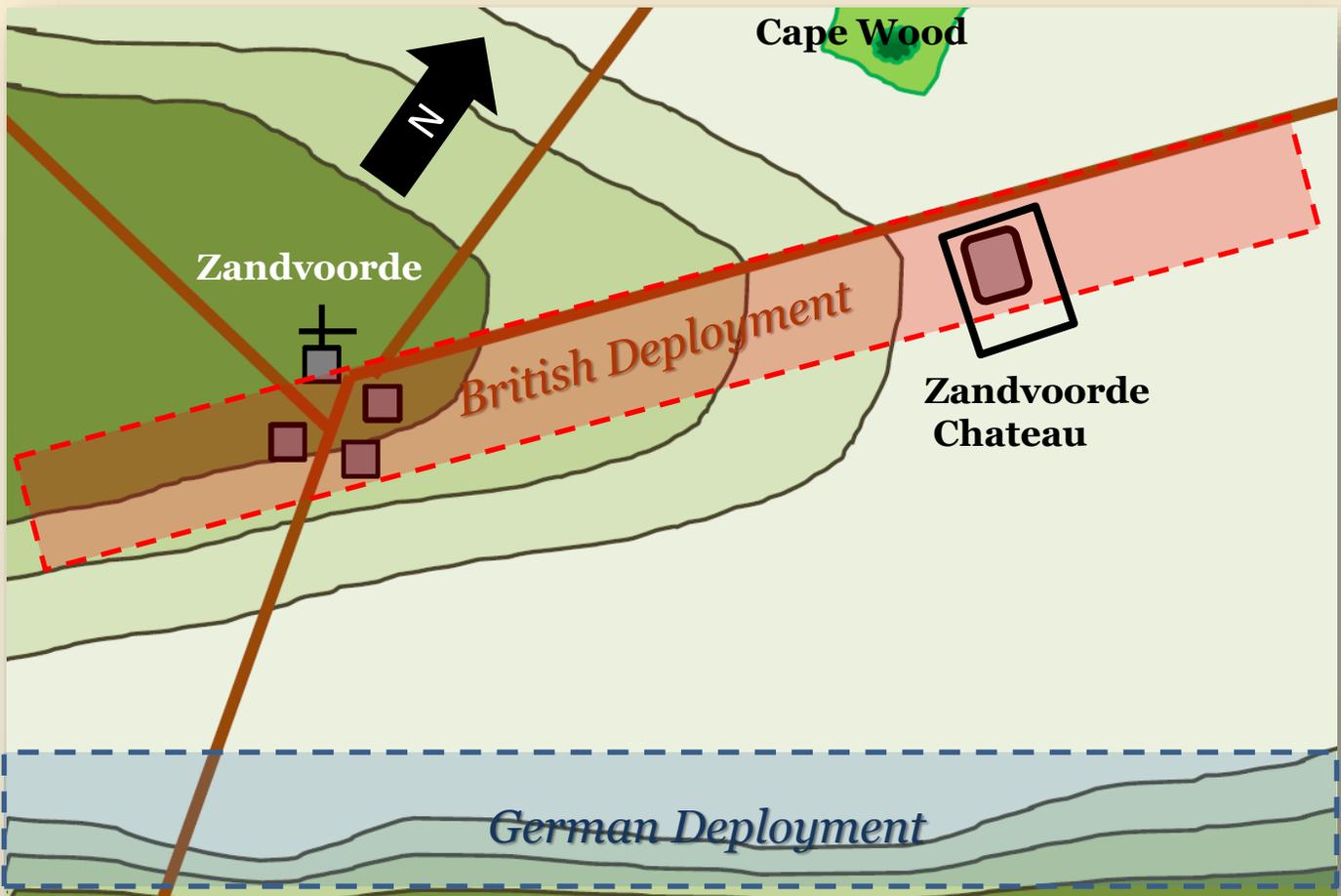


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Table Size: 180 x 120cm.

Historic Order of Deployment

1st Life Guards Royal Horse Guards 2nd Life Guards 1st RWF



171 Regt

172 Regt

1st, 4th & 10th Jäger

Historic Order of Deployment