

The Battle Of Mehmandost

29th of September 1729

By Greg Savvinos

For Nader Qoli Khan the chaos that followed the fall of Isfahan to the Afghans was a great opportunity. In that time Nader rose from being a brigand chieftain to a regional warlord. In 1728 he had gained the confidence of Tahmasp II the heir to the Safavid throne who made him his generalissimo.

Nader's first major action was to secure the province of Khorasan and then bring the Afghans of Heart. Nader also recruited a new model army, one based on disciplined infantry and cavalry. The infantry were armed with large caliber muskets (jazayer) and trained in both aimed and volley fire. As one western observer noted, they bore "an imperfect resemblance to European infantry", an impression strengthened by their red uniforms.

At this time the Afghan rulers in Isfahan had been distracted by a power struggle that saw Mahmud overthrown and beheaded by his cousin Ashraf. This instability was followed by an Ottoman invasion which Ashraf was able to defeat. It was not until the second half of 1729 that the Afghan leadership felt able to deal with Nader and an army of 30,000 was duly dispatched from Isfahan.

Nader met them east of the caravanserai village of Mehmandost in the valley of the Shahrud river. Rather than attack the Afghans, Nader lured them on to his army which was deployed at the foot of the Tal hills. His position was supported by numerous cannon and zamburaks on the high ground.

The Afghans, full of confidence, expected this Persian army to scatter before them as so many others had done so before and went in to a headlong charge only to be greeted by a thunderous volley of musket, zamburak and artillery fire. The Afghans regrouped and attacked again, and again the Persians poured a hail of lead at them, shredding their bold horsemen. Finally the Jazayerchis advanced on the milling Afghan horse and drove them from the field.

The Afghans lost over 12,000, the Persians considerably less. By the end of the year and after another battle, Isfahan was again in Persian hands and Ashraf was a hunted fugitive whose days were numbered.

The Scenario:

The weather is sunny Start on Turn 3. Basic Length is 7 turns.

Terrain notes:

- The Shahrud river is treated as an obstacle by all troops (+ one extra BW).
- Hill Contours or elevations are treated as per the rules.
- High Hill areas are impassable to cavalry and reduce all other troops to half speed.

Each square on the map represents one foot of playing surface

Map Scale: 1:100

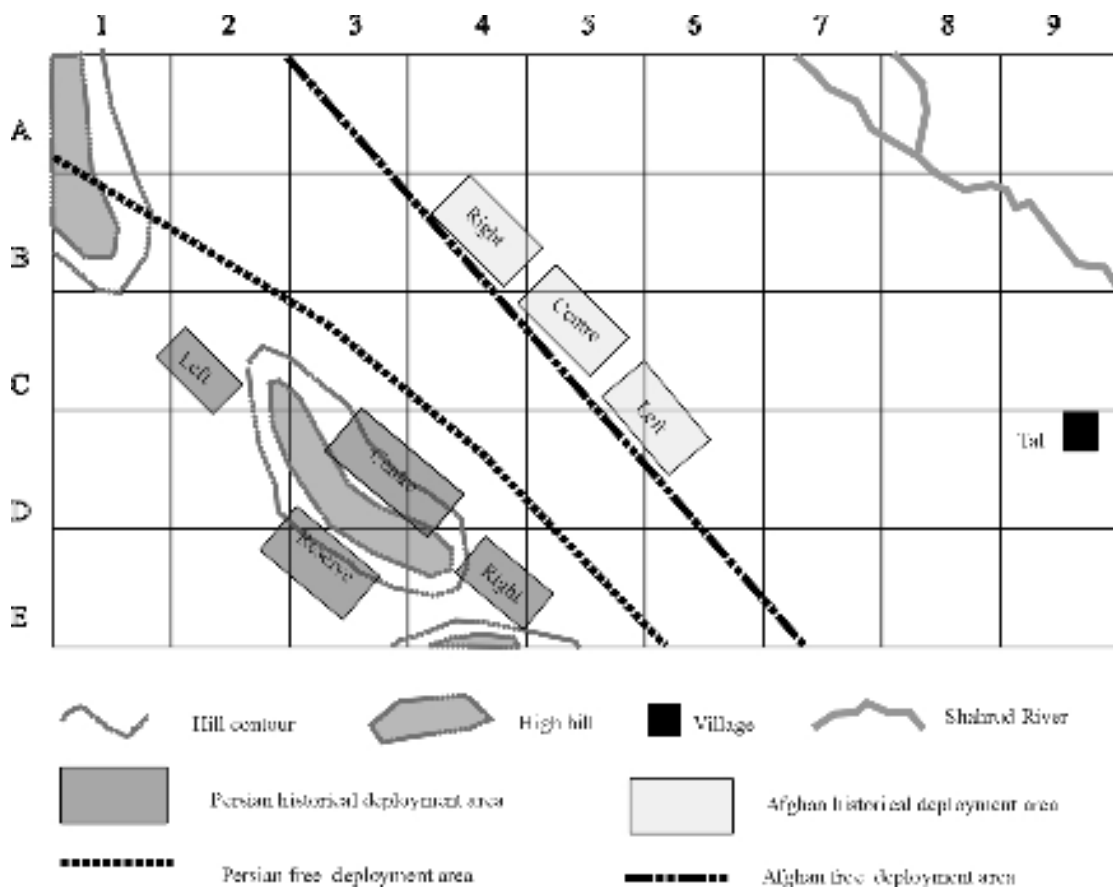
Deployment Rules

- For Historical Deployment set up the units for each force within the area indicated. Persian artillery and zamburaks may be deployed anywhere within the free deployment area.
- For Free Deployment place Persian units anywhere to the left of the line indicated and place the Afghan units anywhere to the right of the line indicated
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Special Rules

1. Leader's ratings have been adjusted to reflect their performance in the actual battle.
2. The Safavid command was deeply divided and at odds with each other. To reflect this the Safavid Commander may not use the "Grabbing the Lapels" rule (F 2.1)
3. The Safavid troops are rated as per page 5 *The Lion and the Crescent* module.
4. The Afghan troops are rated as per page 7 *The Lion and the Crescent* module.
5. Persian artillery and zamburaks deployed on High Hill areas may fire over the heads of friendly troops on a lower elevation.

The Mehmandost Battlefield:



The Mehmandost Orders of Battle

PERSIAN army:

Nadir Qoli Khan (Great)

Army Break point 7

3 x Zamburak

2 x Heavy artillery

Left

Letf Ali Khan +1

4 x Afshar Horse

Centre

Tahmasp Jalayer * V

5 x Veteran Jazayerchis

Right

Fath Ali Kayani V

4 x Afshar Horse

Reserve

Latif Khan

1 x Guard Horse

1 x Afshar Horse

TOTAL (for Free Deployment)

1 x Guard Horse (10)

9 x Afshar Horse (54)

5 x Veteran Jazayerchis (45)

3 x Zamburaks (24)

2 x Heavy Artillery (24)

Total points (157)

AFGHAN army:

Ashraf (Good)

Army Break point 8

3 x Zamburak

Left

Mohammad Seidal +2

6 x Afghan Horse

Centre

Nasrollah V +2

8x Afghan Horse

Right

Zeberdest Khan +2

6 x Afghan Horse

TOTAL (for Free Deployment)

20 x Afghan Horse (120)

3 x Zamburak (24)

Total points (144)