

The 1st Afghan War: 1839 -1842

1. Background:

- A) England wants to stop Russia's territorial ambitions:**
 - I. In Central Asia.**
 - II. Beyond Asia.**
- B) Fear Russia's ultimate goal is British India!**
 - I. England wants to deny them access to India from the sea.**
- C) England and Russia both compete for favoritism from the Shah of Persia(Iran):**
 - I. Both countries have Diplomatic Representatives in Tehran.**

2. 1837:

- A) Mohammed Shah of Persia attempts to seize the city of Herat in northwestern Afghanistan just across the border from Persia:**
 - I. City is held by Yar Mohammed.**
 - II. Russian military advisers back The Shah.**
 - III. On the other side.....British Lt., Eldred Pottinger supervises the defense of the city.**
- B) City beats off many attacks.**

3. January 1838:

A) British Governor General of India, Lord Auckland, sends a letter to The Emir of Afghanistan Dost Mohammed:

I. Demands he relinquish any claims to Peshawar.

II. Demands he stop communicating with the Russians.

III. Demands there be no more future episodes with them.

B) Auckland sends warships and marines to Herat:

I. Warns the Shah of Persia that any more fighting will result in a war with England.

4. September 9, 1838:

A) Shah of Persia returns to Tehran ending the siege.

5. Auckland is determined to teach Dost Mohammed a lesson!

6. October 1, 1838:

A) Auckland issues The Simla Manifesto:

I. Denounces Dost Mohammed for consorting with the Russians!

(1) Dost Mohammed has made himself an

enemy of the English Crown!
**(2) He is now considered a threat to
British interests.....And England will
not tolerate that!**

**7. Auckland sends a force to conquer
Afghanistan:**

A) Called "The Army of the Indus."

**B) Starts out as 15,000 men.....Swells to
39,000!!**

C) Commander is Lt. General John Keane.

D) Primary Officers are:

I. General Sir Alexander Burnes.

II. Major General Sir Willoughby Cotton.

III. General Sir William MacNaughton.

8. April 4, 1839:

**A) The Army of the Indus is ready to invade
Afghanistan.**

9. May 5, 1839:

A) Army takes Kandahar.

10. June 1839:

A) Ghanzi falls to the Army of the Indus:

I. They lose 17 killed and 173 wounded.

B) Afghan losses are:

I. 900 killed.....50 of the killed are captives

who are beheaded by the British Afghan allies.

II. 1,600 captured.

11. August 7, 1839:

A) Kabul.....The Capital.....Falls to the Army of the Indus.....No fighting!

B) Dost Mohammed is nowhere to be found or seen!

12. November 1839:

A) Most of the Army goes back to India.

B) General Sir William MacNaughton is now in charge in Afghanistan.

C) The Army moves out of Kabul and makes it's camp on the plains:

I. Beautiful setting.....BUT.....Not a good defensive position!

13. North of Kabul.....Dost Mohammed starts leading a series of raids!

14. November 1840:

A) Dost Mohammed surrenders to MacNaughton:

I. He is exiled to India.

15. Afghan people are unhappy with the British

“puppet ruler” – Shah Shuja:

**A) He has raised taxes to finance his personal
“tastes.”**

**16. Major General William Elphinstone takes
military command at Kabul:**

A) Elphinstone:

I. 60 years old.

II. Suffers from Gout.

III. Hasn't seen any action in 25 years.

IV. Is incompetent.

**V. Is the worst man possible for this job at
this time!**

17. November 1, 1841:

**A) Alexander Burnes is warned by one of his
servants that there is a planned attack
upon him and his house scheduled for the
next day:**

I. He shrugs it off!

B) Burnes:

I. Diplomat.....Afghans don't like him!

**II. Womanizer.....Afghans REALLY don't
like him!!!**

18. November 2, 1841:

A) Mob gathers.

B) Burnes orders them to disperse!

- C) He is ignored!**
- D) He offers them gold to go home!**
- E) The mob breaks into the Royal Treasury.**
- F) Again.....Burnes tries to reason with them.**
- G) His Secretary is shot and killed!**
- H) His Guards open fire on the mob!**
- I) The Guards are all killed!**
- J) Mob storms into the house!**
- K) Burnes is hacked to pieces!**

**19. Days pass.....The rioters grow in numbers.....
And become bolder!**

- A) Now.....Becomes open rebellion!**

20. November 5, 1841:

- A) At Charekam.**
- B) 849 British defenders plus women,
children, and other men:
 - I. Are overwhelmed by a force of 20,000!**
 - II. Only 4 escape.....Rest are killed!****

21. November 15, 1841:

- A) 4 survivors of Charekam reach Kabul:
 - I. Warn the garrison of the rebellion.****

22. November 23, 1841:

- A) At Kabul.**
- B) Force attacks the British:**

I. 300 British are killed.

C) Dost Mohammed's son, Akbar Khan, arrives with 6,000 more men to fight the British:

I. People flood to join him.

II. He will soon head an army of 30,000.

23. MacNaughton tries to play off one tribal chief against another:

A) They find out by comparing notes!

24. December 23, 1841:

A) Banks of the Kabul River.

B) Meeting between MacNaughton & 3 aides, Akbar, and Chiefs:

I. MacNaughton is confronted with his treachery!

II. He and the 3 aides are killed and dismembered.

III. The body parts are exhibited in the Kabul Bazaar.

25. Elphinstone orders Eldred Pottinger to negotiate a surrender to Akbar:

A) British will leave Afghanistan at once.

B) British will surrender their treasury.

C) British will leave almost all of their artillery.

D) Dost Mohammed will be returned from exile in India:

I. British officers will voluntarily remain as hostages until he returns.

26. January 6, 1842:

A) 9:00 – Morning – British column heads out of Kabul:

I. 700 British Soldiers.

II. 34 British women and children.

III. 2,000 Indian Infantry.

IV. 1,400 Indian Cavalry.

V. 400 Servants.

VI. 12,466 Followers.

B) Total in the column.....17,000!

C) Winter is setting in.....Will have to travel through bitter cold and snow through the icy mountains.

D) Destination is Jalalabad.....90 miles away!

E) Afghans on horseback begin attacking the column immediately!

F) Nightfall:

I. Have covered only 5 miles.

II. All the tents and needed camp gear have been lost in fleeing from the day's attacks.

III. 100's will freeze to death during the night.

27. January 7, 1842:

A) Those who cannot continue are left behind to be killed or taken into captivity as slaves:

I. Most are killed!

B) Snipings and attacks all day!

C) Akbar sends a messenger to Elphinstone:

I. Proposal.....Stop the march so he can try to guarantee the safety of the column:

(1) Eldred Pottinger and others argue against it!

(2) BUT.....Elphinstone agrees to stop for the remainder of the day.

(3) Pottinger and 2 others become Akbar's hostages.

D) The Afghans use the time to get into positions for the next day!!!

28. January 8, 1842:

A) March continues.

B) Column reaches the 4 mile long Khurd Kabul Pass:

I. Fired down upon from all sides.

II. Total terror!

III. At one point 500 Regulars and 2,500 camp followers are slaughtered!

IV. 1,000's of stragglers are unmercifully killed!

29. January 9, 1842:

A) Same!

B) Weather, bullets, and the sword take a big toll.

30. January 10, 1842:

A) Same!

B) By the end of the day:

I. Only 4,750 left alive from the original 17,000!!!

31. January 11, 1842:

A) Same!!!

32. January 12, 1842:

A) Same!!

B) Only 2,200 left alive!!!!

C) Akbar offers to talk:

I. Elphinstone and his officers meet with Akbar.

II. Seized as prisoners!!!

D) What is left of the column reaches the pass at Jagdalak:

I. Ambushed!

II. Becomes every man for himself.

III. Only 80 men will get through the pass.

IV. Split into 2 groups.....One on horseback and one on foot.

33. January 13, 1842:

A) Foot group is surrounded on a domed hill above the town of Gandamak:

I. All killed except one taken prisoner.

B) Horseback group is ambushed in the village of Futtehabad:

I. All killed except one who gets away.....

Surgeon, Dr. William Brydon:

(1) Will reach Jalalabad later in the day.

34. England decides to abandon the occupation of Afghanistan:

A) Will leave only 2 forces in the country:

I. Jalalabad.....Under the command of General Robert "Fighting Bob" Sale.

II. Kandahar.....Under General Nott.

35. Akbar opens a siege on Jalalabad:

A) Will last till April!

36. April 16, 1842:

A) Major General Pollock and a large force relieve the siege of Jalalabad.

37. England now decides that the only way to salvage any prestige is to launch a punitive expedition and reoccupy Kabul!

38. July 1842:

A) Pollock at Jalalabad and Nott at Kandahar are given orders to advance on Kabul!

39. End of August 1842:

A) Nott takes Ghazni.

40. September 12, 1842 – Battle of Tezin:

A) Pollock's forces vs. Akbar:

I. Akbar is forced to retreat losing 1,000 killed!

B) Pollock loses 32 killed and 130 wounded.

41. September 16, 1842:

A) Pollock enters Kabul.

42. September 17, 1842:

A) Nott enters Kabul.

43. September 20, 1842:

A) British prisoners held by the Afghans are liberated in a daring raid led by Sale:

I. 12 European Women.

II. 22 British Officers.

III. 2 Clerks.

IV. 25 British Soldiers.

V. 22 Children.

**44. Retribution for the annihilation of
Elphinstone's Column:**

**A) Pollock blows up the bazaar in Kabul and
burns several villages!**

45. October 12, 1842:

A) British leave Kabul!

46. War ends.....For the British.....It is a failure!