



SIEGE OF JADOTVILLE, SEPTEMBER 1961 THE IRISH ARMY'S FORGOTTEN BATTLE

With outnumbered United Nations troops left in the lurch by higher command, Robert Giglio and Dennis O'Toole present a Modern Warfare scenario for re-fighting a fascinating 'incident' in the Congo bush.

"By sending troops to the Congo in 1960, the United Nations averted, or helped the major powers to avert, an occasion of international war."

Conor Cruise O'Brien, Personal Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General to Katanga

This article is the result of a response to friend and longtime HMGS Cold Wars Convention Director, Frank Preziosa's request for me to develop a game based on an historical action in a Netflix movie he had seen. The 2016 movie; *The Siege of Jadotville*, follows a group of Irish

UN soldiers who end up in a desperate gunfight thousands of miles from home, without any prospect of assistance.

Let's begin with the history behind the movie, before we move on to how to represent both on the tabletop.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"We will hold out until our last bullet is spent. Could do with some whiskey."

Irish radio reply to U.N. headquarters

Under U.N. command, Company A, 35th Irish Infantry Battalion of the Irish Republican Army, led by Colonel Patrick Joseph Quinlan, was assigned to Jadotville, Katanga, a former province of the Belgian Congo. The mandate given to Commandant Quinlan of Company A and his force of 155 soldiers and officers was to, "protect the European residents of the area," since the Katanga Province was breaking away from the Congo Republic. The U.N. perceived that the white population's presence there was at risk from both the rebellious Katangans and, more likely, the local Luba tribe overseeing security for the mining company.

PROVISIONS

Upon meeting with the Burgomeister (Mayor) of Jadotville, Pat Quinlan discovered that there was no fear or animosity between the local white and African populations, both of which had a long history of making the mining operation into a stable source of income for the area. In fact, the Burgomeister and populace perceived the U.N. to be the problem.



and had demonstrated outright hostility to their presence. Quinlan advised his commanders of the facts on the ground; he was instructed by the U.N. to obey his orders, whereupon he organized defensive positions against any possible Katangan attack.

During the visit into Jadotville itself, the Irish discovered that the Katangan Gendarme was present in force. Unexpectedly, large numbers of European military, including some former French Foreign legionnaires, Belgian paratroopers, mercenaries, and soldiers from neighboring Rhodesia and South Africa, were also present and at the ready. Apparently, the Katangan Gendarme was not the only presence demonstrating contempt for the U.N. and Irish military.!

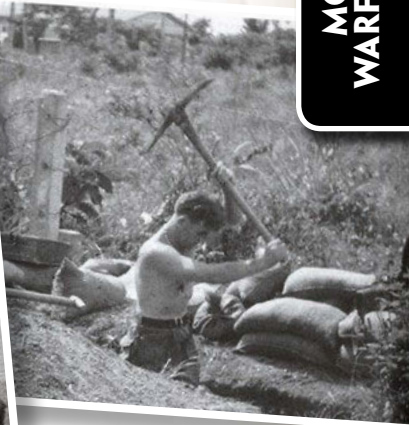
Supplies were a concern for Company A. The U.N. had insufficient transports to carry more than the basic provisions and equipment; 60mm mortars and .303 Vickers MGs were the heaviest weapons brought with the command, as well as two WWII-era armored cars (Ford Mk VI). Typical of a British-stylized army at the time, the radios were inadequate for the distance and atmosphere. A telephone was available at the Purfina garage – the primary structure/asset of the encampment – however, its lines crossed through the center of Jadotville, as did the pipes for the water supply. Commandant Quinlan immediately made purchases of as much food as possible from a local store, which was subsequently closed, the shopkeeper having been arrested by the Katangans.



Left: A Carl Gustav 84mm recoilless rifle in use by A-Company.

Below left: Members of A Company outside the Purfina garage.

Below: An Irish Bren gun crew digging in.



THE ATTACK

The Katangan Gendarme attacked Jadotville at 7:35a.m. on 13 September 1961.

The Katangan command had been alerted that the Irish were away from their trenches attending morning Mass, held by the Chaplain, Father Thomas Fagan (a “stay behind” employee of the Purfina garage made the Gendarme Command/

Burgomeister aware of the Irish activities by phone). Irish sentries, however, were on-duty and able to give the alarm, and luckily the Irish had their weapons with them at Mass.

Although the initial Katangan attack was small and poorly planned, it began a four-day siege and assault. European civilians joined in the attacks on the U.N./Irish, demonstrating that the U.N. had no concept of the political conditions in Jadotville. Its slow response meant the U.N. military command was unable to assist the Irish. In one of the radio communications that did get to U.N. military command, Quinlan states facetiously, “...could do with some whiskey.” Water was sent instead.

THE SURRENDER

After four days of assaults, out of ammo and water and following negotiations with the Burgomeister, Colonel Quinlan agreed cease fire terms. The Katangan force had been badly bloodied - up to 300 killed, including 30 mercenaries, and an indeterminate number wounded (with figures ranging from 300-1,000). The Irish on the other hand had been incredibly lucky, with only five wounded in total.

Despite Quinlan’s agreeing favorable terms with the Burgomeister, when it came to it, the leader of the Katangan Gendarme demanded that the Irish store and secure their arms and they were taken prisoner. The Irish were held for a month during negotiations for their release. Apparently, the Katangan government

Below: Company A defend the barricades. Figures by Grubby Tanks.



had intended to use Company A's capture as bargaining power with the U.N. for recognition of the break-away province. The Katangan military objective had been achieved.

Although A Company, 35th Battalion had tactically defeated a larger enemy force at Jadotville, the Irish Defence Forces did not overtly acknowledge the battle. In fact, "Jadotville Jack," a term for surrender, was sometimes applied as a term of derision among the Irish Defence Forces. The veterans of Jadotville were dissatisfied with the Defence Forces' refusal to acknowledge the battle, and the resulting "black mark" on the reputation of their commander. In 2004, an Irish Defence Forces inquiry cleared Quinlan and A Company of allegations of soldierly misconduct. In 2016, the Irish government awarded a Presidential Unit Citation to A Company, the first in the State's history.

WARGAMING THE SIEGE

The siege lasted four days, with various actions and assaults occurring during that time. For gaming purposes, we have combined these into three 'Attacks,' to represent the first three days, with the fourth day being the Irish forced surrender. Several of the historical events are used in the scenario, but the results depend on tactics, and of course die rolls. The following details are given for *Force-on-Force (FoF)* rules, but are easy to modify for any comparable rules set.

While there are no records of the Katangan strength, minimal estimates are that they numbered 2,000-3,000, which meant that Company A was outnumbered at least over 10-to-1. The Katangan Gendarme was commanded by known European veterans of colonial conflict, and the support weapons were operated by trained Europeans, rather than entrusted to local Luba tribesmen.

U.N. / IRISH FORCES

The company commander and all officers are rated Veteran, but Quinlan counts as Elite (for FoF, and all add one additional die of fire to any unit they attach to; FP 1D10). All Irish are rated as Experienced (TQ 8; MQ 8).

- Company Commander - Commandant Patrick Joseph Quinlan: (FP 1D10; MQ 12)
- Three Platoon Officers - Cpt. Dermot Byrne (Second-in-Command), Cpt. Thomas McGuinn, Cpt. William "Liam" Donnelly: (FP 1D10; MQ 10)
- Six Fire Teams: four figures each (including one Bren Gun in each)
- Two Vickers MG Tripod Teams: two crew
- Two 60mm Mortars: two crew; one shot per turn

28MM MINIATURES FOR THE IRISH FORCES IN CONGO

Bo Angelstrand offers some thoughts on figures to be used or created for gaming The Siege of Jadotville.

There are unfortunately no dedicated 28mm miniatures for Irish troops during the Congo Crisis available, so to field Irish troops on the tabletop some conversions are required. The good news is though that the basic UN uniform is a short-sleeved shirt and the trousers are more or less the same as the ones used by British forces in World War II (but in lighter material). A good start is therefore to look for British World War II miniatures and/or post-war British troops in shirtsleeves armed with SLRs. If we look more closely at the different equipment used by the Irish UN forces, we can find the following options in 28mm scale:

SLR Armed Miniatures in Shirtsleeves

- Eureka's Aden 1967 range (available in Europe from Fighting 15s in the UK)

- Commando Miniatures
- Britannia Miniatures (Grubby Tanks) Congo Mercenaries
- Mongrel Miniatures had a nice range of Congo mercenaries sculpted by Paul Hicks that now seems to have vanished from the market. Badger Games have other ranges from Mongrel so hopefully they will also release the Congo range in the future

Miniatures with Support Weapons

Even though the SLR was introduced during the Congo mission, the Irish still used the Lee Enfield .303 No 4 rifle. Period photos show the two rifle types used in the same unit. Since also .303 Bren guns, Vickers machine guns and 60mm mortars were used, British for North Africa (or the Mediterranean), Chindit miniatures or Gurkhas can be used. These types are available in 28mm in both plastic and metal from several sources. Please note that they should be wearing battle dress (long) trousers and short-sleeved shirts. Make sure you stay clear of all Thompson or Sten SMG armed miniatures. Some options available:

- Warlord Games
 - Artizan Designs
 - Foundry Miniatures
 - The Assault Group
 - Perry Miniatures
- (somewhat smaller/slender than the other ranges listed)

Left: Corporal, 32nd Infantry Battalion; Congo, August 1960. Photos show that the first contingent at Albertville was ill prepared for the climate, and made a motley appearance. The coarse drab green denim blouse and trousers of home fatigue uniform served as makeshift tropical field clothing, with blouse sleeves (and often trouser bottoms) rolled. This NCO is from a photo of a platoon wearing a few of these blue UN caps, but mostly the lightweight plasticized liner from NATO steel helmets modelled on the US M1 (see Plate G2), some peaked service caps, and even 1940 serge tunics. Weapons were the .303in No.4 rifle, Bren LMG, and this Swedish 9mm Carl Gustav M1945 sub-machine gun (note the split-flap 4x magazine pouch); in 1961 the 7.62mm FN self-loading rifle would replace the No.4. Rank chevrons in the 'winged' shape are attached by an elastic loop around his left arm, above a white-on-blue French-language 'ONU' United Nations brassard. The tricolour brassard with blue 'IRELAND' was worn by 32 and 33 Bns in 1960-61. Later photos show the shield insignia on a khaki left sleeve brassard; this seems to have become standard by 1964. Unit titles were often worn above this, e.g. '38TH INF.BN.' in red on black in April-October 1963. Irish UN unit shoulder titles are a study in themselves; interested readers should visit the website: www.irishmilitaryinsignia.com

Illustration by Simon McCouaig from ELITE 54 - UN Forces 1948-94 © Osprey Publishing Ltd. www.ospreypublishing.com



- 2 Ford Mk VI Armored Cars: 3 crew each with a Vickers MG (FP 4d8)
- Carl Gustav 84mm man-portable reusable anti-tank recoilless rifle: Useable by any infantryman; assign to any Fire Team, and/or kept at HQ (AP 3D8, AT 2D8)

Deployment: Place six bunkers (each large enough for one fire team) within 8" of any building facing the field/plain, with two sand-bagged emplacements either in line or behind, and two mortar emplacements anywhere, but within visibility of the garage.

All units start entrenched; fire teams in the six bunkers (one platoon officer per two teams), the armoured cars in two sand-bagged emplacements (front defense; half attack dice vs bomb or mortar attacks), and mortars in the two rear emplacements. The two Vickers MG teams, along with Quinlan, may be



Plastic Miniatures for Conversions

The Warlord Games WW2 US Marines are quite useful for converting to Irish. The shirt is not tucked into the trousers as worn by the Irish, but this can be corrected with a sharp blade. The good thing with this set is that there are quite a few open hands that can be used together with loose SLR rifles, Carl Gustav recoilless rifles or SMG conversions. It also contains a lot of M1 helmet heads for head-swaps. Since the Irish at Jadotville fought from trenches, one option is to cut off the legs and put them into a scratch-built shallow trench.

The Warlord Games 8th Army and Afrika Korps sets can also be used, by matching the Afrika Korps legs to the 8th Army torsos, then using the British weapons from the 8th Army set or adding SLRs available from Minifigs, The Assault Group or Commando Miniatures. (See photos below).

Weapons for Conversions

The Carl Gustav SMG is not available in 28mm but one easy option is to use US M3 Grease Guns, German MP40 or French MAT49. If you are more into details, the best conversion option is to use MP40 and replace the barrel with an air-cooled barrel from a MAT49. All other weapons used are available in 28mm from a combination of these suppliers:

- The Assault Group
- Colonel Bill's Wargames Depot
- Miniatures Figurines/Matchlock Miniatures
- Crooked Dice

Heads for Conversions

You need US M1 helmets, berets, 'baseball' caps and bare heads. The most cost-efficient option is usually to buy plastic WW2 sprues containing the above head types. In metal, loose heads are available from many suppliers but some of the widest ranges are available from:

- Warlord Games
- West Wind Miniatures
- Gripping Beast

Vehicles

At Jadotville the Irish force had only a few vehicles, which are all available in 28mm or 1/50 scale:

- Two Ford Thompson MK6 armored cars with mounted Vickers machine guns - this is available from Special Artizan Miniatures Service (Kings Hobbies and Games)
- Two Willy's jeeps, available from many suppliers, including Warlord Games, Rubicon, Company B
- One Bedford RL Truck, a bit hard to find but Promod Ltd. manufacture a diecast model in 1/50 scale

Warlord Games 8th Army and Afrika Korps parts.
Plus SLR from Commando Miniatures.



The bodies and legs are switched.



The finished model.





Above: European Mercenaries and Katanga militia gather for the assault on the Irish held compound. Figures by The Assault Group and Warbanner.

emplaced atop or in the Purfina garage, with any of the fire teams, and/or in any other building.

Victory Conditions: Hold your position, a U.N. relief column is en route. Since you are outnumbered, do not let the Katangese ("Kats") get close to your position, otherwise you could be overwhelmed in hand-to-hand. Victory points are awarded as follows, after each "Attack".

- Each building held: One point
- Each pinned Gendarme or Civilian unit: One point
- Each pinned Merc unit: Two points

Special U.N. Rule: "The Folks back home won't like this": Historically, it was later reported that many white local people from the town took up arms and attacked the U.N./Irish position. They were NOT mercenaries. For the Irish to shoot at the Europeans, which the U.N. deployed them to protect, was a moral issue.

Each Irish unit must pass a morale test (MQ Test) the first time it targets a civilian unit. If the test fails, then they may not fire at any civilian unit for the rest of the current turn, even if fired on by the civilians (may retest the next turn it wants to fire at a civilian unit). However, once an Irish unit has passed this test, it will not have to test again.

Reinforcements: The following reinforcements are available for the Irish, one before each subsequent attack.

U.N. Helicopter: Historically, the U.N. helicopter arrived with a re-supply of water, but scarcely enough for 20 men.

Regardless, the water was useless; it was contaminated - petrol drums had been used to transport it!

Helicopter (four Norwegian and Swedish crew) arrives at start of second attack, landing near the garage, but outside the line of bunkers (TQ: 8; MQ: 8; Defense 3D8, and attackers have -1 FP die less when shooting at it if it is in the air).

Ten Explosive Charges (FP 1D10 each): These represent the desperate action in the movie, where the Irish were low on ammunition and gathered all the brass from spent rounds together after an attack. Using explosives, they fashioned makeshift charges to help against the final attack. These can be placed prior to the third attack, either individually or combined for larger charge(s). Placement should be treated as hidden (functioning as IED's for *Force on Force* rules' purposes).

KATANGA FORCES

The overall Merc commander and the Burgomeister are rated Veterans; other Merc leaders and all Mercs rated Experienced. All Katanga units (Gendarme Infantry) and Civilians/Europeans rated as Trained. The Burgomeister may not attach to any unit or enter combat; only useful for morale purposes. All Katanga forces are considered well supplied for the entire siege, unless otherwise noted.

- Commander - Overall Merc Leader: (TQ 10; MQ 10)
- Civilian Leader – Burgomeister: Should be dressed in a white suit with straw hat (TQ 4; MQ 10)
- 3 Merc Leaders: Add one additional fire die (FP 1D8) to any unit they attach to (TQ 8; MQ 8)
- Gendarme Infantry: Twelve Squads, six figures each; Africans dressed in fatigues (TQ 6; MQ 6)

HOW IT PLAYED

Force on Force rules were used for the three playtests with The Colonial Boys Club, as well as while running the game at the Cold Wars convention in Lancaster, PA (USA), in March 2017.

The Irish held out for two of the playtests, and the Katangese won the third. The Irish also held out at the convention game. In each of the playtests, the Fouga jet made one or two runs, but was hit, and each time the pilot failed morale and veered off. However, in all games, the jet managed to destroy the transports with a bombing or strafing run (and subsequently the waterline broke, as historically occurred).

Special thanks to The Colonial Boys Club members involved in the various playtests (and to Steve Hanson for edits), as well as David O'Toole, for additional input, and to help ensure this "Irish Army's forgotten battle" was not forgotten by wargamers.

- Civilians/Europeans: Three Squads, six Figures each, Whites dressed in civilian clothing (TQ 6; MQ 6)
- Mercs: Three Squads, six figures each (TQ 8; MQ 8)
- Three Land Rovers (Merc): one driver, one gunner and LMG each (FP 3D8; TQ 8; MQ 8). Moves 10" tactical, 20" rapid (-1D8 firing). Soft skin vehicle defense of 3D6, 4D6 if rapid move.
- Two 82mm Mortars (Merc): Two crew each; one shot/turn, but target may not be within 24" of friendlies (TQ: D8, MQ: D8)
- 75mm French Gun (Merc): Four crew; one shot/turn, direct fire only (FP 4D8; TQ 8; MQ 8)

Deployment: Forces are divided into three command groups: center, left, right. All forces deploy within 6" of table edge facing Jadotville. The left deploys within 6" of southern table edge up to 48" from the southwest corner; the right deploys behind the thick donga brush line along the eastern table edge; the center deploys between the other two forces within 6" of the table edge. Historically, the 75mm French gun was positioned at the golf course off table to the north, so could be considered off-table, but within Irish mortar range.

There will be three "Attacks," to reflect the main action over the siege. After each attack, most units are recycled as another "wave," as follows.

- All Gendarme squads are rebuilt to full strength
- Merc squads only use remaining figures (once you lose Mercs, they are gone for good)
- Add any reinforcements, and forces are reallocated for next attack

Victory Conditions: Victory points are awarded as follows, after each "Attack".

- Undo the U.N.: One victory point per pinned Irish unit; three points if routed.
- Capture the "Leprechauns" (Irish), as they will be useful as prisoners for bargaining: Five points per captured figure, one point if killed.
- Do not destroy the buildings: -3 points per building destroyed.

Reinforcements: Added at the start of second attack.

Machineguns (delivered by ambulance): Historically, the Burgomeister demanded that the U.N./Irish allow the Katangans to bring in ambulances to pick up their wounded and dead. However, while doing so, the Mercs also dropped off several mercenaries machine gun teams.

The teams fired on the Irish during the "Cease Fire" after the ambulances departed, apparently in conjunction with the civilians who fired from the adjacent building (see below).

Two tripod MMG teams with two mercenaries crew each (FP 3D8; TQ 8; MQ 8) are placed, hidden in cover. Placement is anywhere along the Katangan line as players desire, at the furthest advance line which the Katangans achieved during the first attack. If you have period ambulances, then they can be used to show this "truce".

Civilian "Snipers": Historically, several civilians "succeeded in gaining possession of a house about 300 yards in front of the Irish forward position and brought heavy fire to bear on the platoons nearby." The Irish anti-tank crew eventually destroyed the civilians in the house. Six figures taken from surviving available forces, start in a building on Irish right flank, and hidden until they fire or move (TQ 6; MQ 6).

Jet - Fouga Magister (Delen, Belgian Pilot; TQ 8; MQ 8): Defense 7D8, and attackers have -1 FP die less when shooting at it, since it is flying. Each phase can either perform a bombing run (dropping 1 or 2 bombs on same target) or strafe run (maximum two runs, then out of ammo).

- Carries two bombs: 8D8 each vs infantry or vehicles, 6D6 vs armored car or buildings
- MGs: 2D8 vs. armored car; hits deck, or 4D8 versus all other units, in 6" wide swath for 72" length

Enters from any table edge and exits opposite edge in same phase. For each turn jet is active, Katanga morale raises one level (e.g. MQ 6 becomes 8, or 8 becomes 10), and Irish morale is lowered one level (e.g. MQ 8 becomes 6). Additional Katanga objective is one victory point for each Irish transport destroyed.

If the jet is hit, and pilot fails morale (MQ), then he decides to cease close support. Historically, the jet was hit during its third pass - the fire being directed by Commander Quinlan - and thereafter only attacked from a higher altitude, and was virtually ineffective, but eventually broke off and attacked the U.N. relief column.

SPECIAL RULES

End of Turn: The following occurs at the end of each turn.

1) Morale Recovery: All units that are pinned become unpinned, and any that were forced to retreat, become pinned.

2) Casualty Check: Roll 1d6 per figure hit to determine wounds, as below.

- Irish: 1 = fatal (see 'Luck of the Irish,' below); 2-4 = wounded, remove to hospital; 5-6 = recovers, back on line.
- Katanga: 1-5 = removed; 6 = recovers, back on line.

Luck of the Irish: On Irish fatal wounds, re-roll once; 1-3 = killed; 4-6 = go to hospital (see 'Calling Dr. Clune,' below).

Calling Doctor Clune: Historically, Captain Joseph Patrick Clune was the doctor in the hospital set up in the Purfina garage. Prior to the start of each new 'Attack,' roll 1D8 per Irish figure that is in hospital; 4+ = figure recovers enough to be "fit for duty," and placed back in action.

TERRAIN

See map on page 18. The entire area beyond 6" from the outskirts of Jadotville is considered field/plain with 'close bush' scattered with patches of grass and the occasional African tree (use a tannish cloth or boards to reflect sun-scorched earth).

Within 6" of eastern table edge is a donga (dry river bed) behind which is a wooden building - used as the Katanga ammo depot.

Buildings reflect eastern outskirts of Jadotville itself, covering a footprint of about 48" long by 18" wide along the northern table edge. The Purfina garage should be a two-story building, and hard cover. Irish transport vehicles can be placed on the eastern side of the garage.

Other buildings are residences, noted as "villas" (one- or two-level houses with walled gardens), but any circa 1960 or later African building would suffice.

The six bunkers should be 6" from any building, with the two sand-bagged emplacements for the armored cars closer.

FURTHER READING AND VIEWING

- *The Siege of Jadotville* 2016 Netflix movie starring Jamie Dornan - the film that inspired the game.
- *The Battle of Jadotville* by Michael Whelan, 2006, available as a pdf online.
- *Heroes of Jadotville: The Soldiers' Story* by Rose Doyle, 2nd edition, 2016.
- *Katanga 1960-63: Mercenaries, Spies and the African Nation that Waged War on the World* by Christopher Othen, 2015.