

## **Grand Battery Battles in India Part One**

### **The Second Anglo-Maratha War**

The war started as a result of faction fighting in the Maratha Confederacy. Officially, Baji Rao II was the head of the Marathas, but he was under challenge from Doulut Rao Sindhia (Gwalior) and Jaswant Rao Holkar (Indore). Other leaders also fancied their chances including Gaekwar and Ragoonjee Bhonsla.

A civil war broke out which led to the defeat of Baji Rao II's forces at the Battle of Poona on October 25 1802. He fled into exile under the protection of the British, subsequently signing the Treaty of Bassein in which he ceded territory to the British and agreed to have no external dealings with other powers (notably the French).

Wellesley was then determined to support Baji Rao II's claim to the throne and re-installed him at Poona on May 13 1803. Negotiations opened with the leading contenders for the throne, but with no breakthrough in sight, Wellesley moved against the combined forces of Sindhia and the Raja of Berar.

The two Maratha armies were a considerable force to be reckoned with. The Raja of Berar could muster around 10,500 regular infantry and upwards of 40,000 other troops. The Scindia army was around 35,000 strong and commanded by the Hanoverian Pohlmann.

Wellesley mustered two armies of his own. In the north was a force under General Lake and in the south a combined force under Wellesley himself. His army consisted of some 11,000 troops, supported by the Hyderabad Contingent of 9,400 and around 5,000 light horse (Mysore and Maratha allies).

By the beginning of August 1803 it was clear that a negotiated settlement was doomed to failure. As a result, Wellesley heads for Ahmednagar, a heavily fortified position. He stormed the city on August 8 and then besieged the fort itself, forcing the garrison to surrender on August 12.

The major battle of the campaign took place at Assaye on September 23. The Maratha army was between 40-50,000 with a backbone of three regular brigades under a former Hanoverian sergeant called Pohlmann. Wellesley had found the main enemy force at a point where the Hyderabad Contingent was too far away to be of much use to him. As a consequence he faced this massive force with just 7,000 men. Of this force, just three of the regiments were British regulars (19<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons and the 74<sup>th</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Foot). Wellesley did not trust the allied light cavalry.

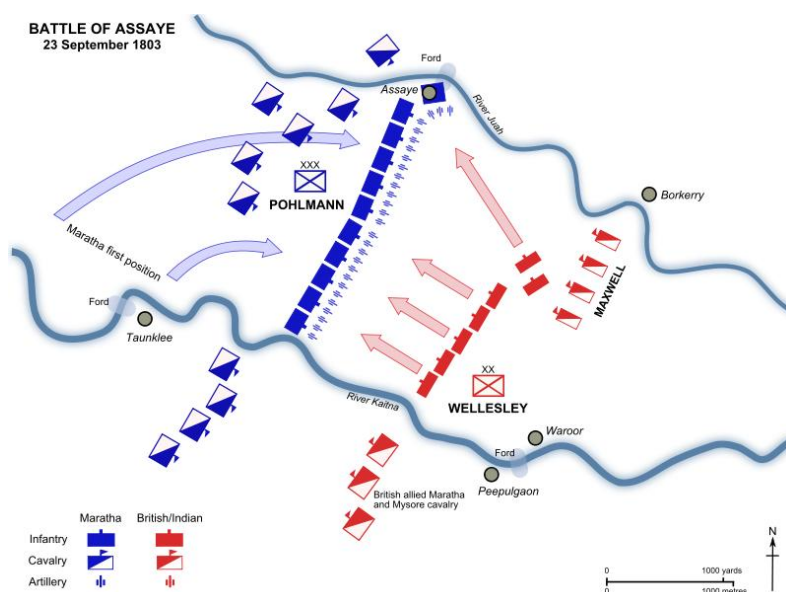
Incredibly, he launched a frontal attack at the cost of 650 British and 900 Indian casualties. He overwhelmed the enemy, forcing them to abandon nearly 100 artillery pieces. Exhausted, his army was forced to pause, but he finally chased after the remnants of the enemy catching up with them at Argaum on November 29 1803. Wellesley mustered around 10-11,000

men against an estimated 30-40,000 which included a large number of cavalry. Again Wellesley went for a frontal attack, again the Maratha army broke and another 38 guns were taken. By December 15, Wellesley had taken the fortress at Gawilghur by assault. The Raja of Berar sued for peace the very next day. On December 17 the Raja was forced to cede territory to the British and their allies.

### **Wargaming the Battle of Assaye September 23 1803**

The battlefield is essentially flat ground with fields of crops. The rivers should be fordable at all points. The Juah River is only a shallow stream and the Kailna River is not a formable obstacle.

The Marathas main force must deploy between the two rivers, with troops occupying the village of Assaye. The Maratha army is split into four distinct divisions (Compoo).



## Maratha Army

Pohlmann and Dupont must deploy in line between the two rivers.

Historically, Pohlmann was deployed in the line nearest Assaye. In the battle, the Begum of Sumroo had taken away the bulk of his forces leaving the rump of his Compoo with the main army. The small force in the army list is meant to represent the remnants.

Unit	Grade	Notes
Pohlmann	Able	Forces must be deployed between the two rivers
1 <sup>st</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Trained Steady	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Trained Steady	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
4 <sup>th</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
5 <sup>th</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
6 <sup>th</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
7 <sup>th</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
8 <sup>th</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
Irregular Infantry	Novice Steady	
Regular Light Cavalry	Trained Impetuous	
Irregular Light Cavalry	Novice Impetuous	

Each Regular Infantry unit has a single light battalion gun attached to it.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Major John Dupont (Filoze's Compo)	Cautious	Forces must be deployed between the two rivers
1 <sup>st</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Trained Steady	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Trained Steady	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
4 <sup>th</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
Irregular Infantry	Novice Steady	
Irregular Light Cavalry	Novice Impetuous	

Each Regular Infantry unit has a single light battalion gun attached to it.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Colonel Saleur (Begum of Sumroo's Compo)	Cautious	Forces must be deployed between the two rivers
1 <sup>st</sup> Regular Maratha Infantry	Trained Steady	
Irregular Infantry	Novice Steady	
Irregular Light Cavalry	Novice Impetuous	

The Regular Infantry unit has a single light battalion gun attached to it.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Beny Singh (Maharaja of Berar's Compo)	Cautious	Forces must be deployed in and around Assaye
1 <sup>st</sup> Irregular Maratha Infantry	Trained Steady	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Irregular Maratha Infantry	Trained Steady	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Irregular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
4 <sup>th</sup> Irregular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
5 <sup>th</sup> Irregular Maratha Infantry	Novice Steady	
Siege artillery (2 heavy guns).	Novice Impetuous	Once deployed they cannot move

Each Irregular Infantry unit has a single light battalion gun attached to it.

### **Wellesley's Army**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Wellesley	Gifted	Commander in Chief
Harness	Gifted	Brigade commander
78 <sup>th</sup> Highlanders	Veteran Confident	
8 <sup>th</sup> Madras	Trained Confident	
10 <sup>th</sup> Madras	Trained Confident	
Wallace	Gifted	Brigade commander
74 <sup>th</sup> Highlanders	Veteran Confident	
4 <sup>th</sup> Madras	Trained Confident	
12 <sup>th</sup> Madras	Trained Confident	
Maxwell	Gifted	Brigade commander
19 <sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons	Veteran Arrogant	
4 <sup>th</sup> Native Light Cavalry	Trained Confident	
5 <sup>th</sup> Native Light Cavalry	Trained Confident	
7 <sup>th</sup> Native Light Cavalry	Trained Confident	

Each unit has a single light battalion gun attached to it.

### **Victory Conditions**

Marathas- remain in control of the village of Assaye, no enemy units in or beyond your start line positions.

British – occupy Assaye and the main Maratha battleline.