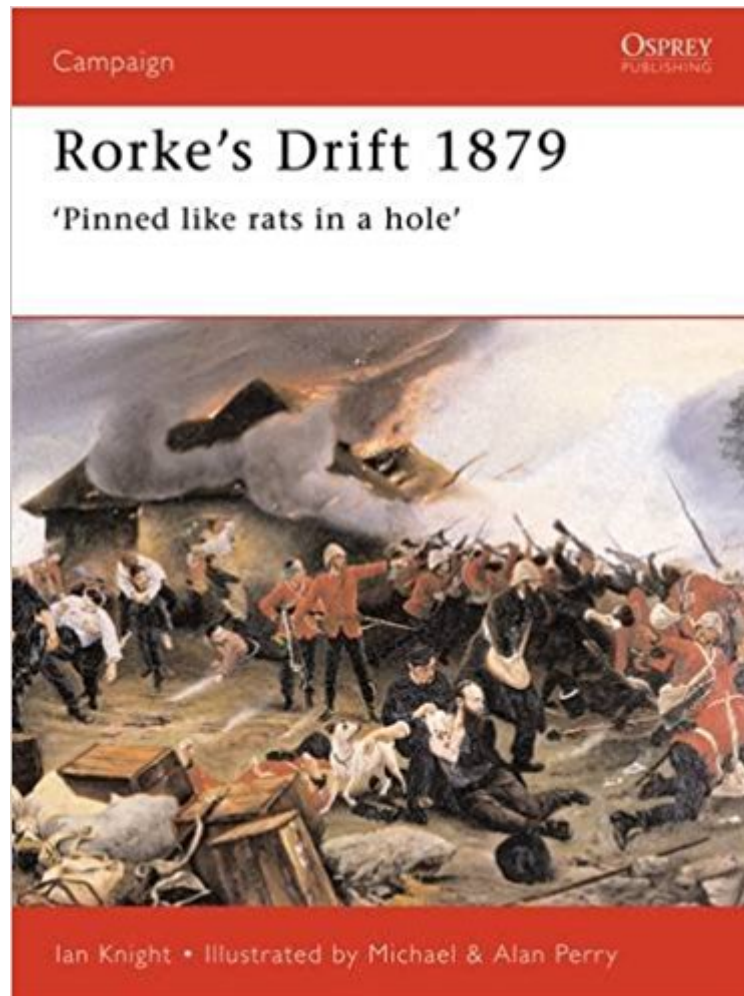




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Rorke's Drift 1879: 'Pinned Like Rats In A Hole' (Campaign)



Synopsis

Rorke's Drift sums up some of the best traditions of the British self-image: steadfastness against the odds, victory in adversity and the thin red line. The British stand deserves to go down in history as one of the most heroic actions of all time. The story of a mere 150 British and Imperial soldiers defending an isolated outpost against over 3,000 Zulu warriors summed up the experience of the colonial adventure for the Victorians and remains part of our heritage even today. Ian Knight recounts the course of this famous conflict in which no less than 11 Victoria crosses were won.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Highly visual guides to history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics, and experiences of the opposing forces throughout each campaign, and concluding with a guide to the battlefields today.

Ian Knight was born in 1956. He was a freelance writer on military history for ten years before studying Afro-Caribbean History at the University of Kent. He has written widely on Zulu history and travelled extensively in Zululand. Ian was the editor of the Victorian Military Society journal for many years, and has written several books for Osprey.

What we have here is an overview of the Battle of Rorke's Drift, along with a brief examination of the proximate cause of it. The author has many other publications under his name on the subject of this and other actions in the Zulu War, and is an acknowledged expert of the Zulu War, and a keen

historian and collector of period materials, so the book is about as best as it could be, fact-wise, though the facts come often as second-hand "hearsay" accounts made years after the events themselves. Where there are discrepancies in source accounts, Knight went with Chard's version. The explanatory maps and diagrams are easy to understand, even for a new scholar of military actions. The only issue I have with them is that spanning the binding as they do makes them harder to examine. They would have been better as fold-outs, but you never see those these days. There are a welter of photographs, woodcuts, paintings, etchings and so on, both contemporary Victorian artifacts and modern renderings for illustrative purposes like the paintings by Michael Perry and the many more modern photographs from the author's collection. These show the people and places involved and demonstrate the propaganda value the victory had for a government reeling from the reversals at Isandlwana. You'll read of the real heroism involved in the defense of the mission and unlearn some of the things the movie 'Zulu' taught you. None of these will take away the enjoyment of the film, but they will show that the real story was possibly worth telling in an unalloyed fashion. What isn't in this book is any in-depth examination of the motivation and political machinations that drove the decisions on each side, or any speculation as to what could have been done differently and what the outcome would have been in that case. This is not that sort of study. The book is a paperback printed in full color on glossy paper. The binding is stitched and glued so it should last a long time. These Osprey books are well made.

In 1977, when I was 13 years old, I saw the movie "Zulu". I was surprised when at the ending the narrator explains it was a true story. Back in those days there wasn't much reference material on the subject. Skip forward to the present and there is now a plethora of information. The book is a good primer to explain the details of the battle. It led me to other resources that gave me a deeper understanding of the subject.

Highly attractive full color presentation coupled with detailed content make this a Must Have for those who want to know more about The Zulu Wars.

Ian Knight did an excellent job in presenting the famous battle of Rorke's Drift which pitted 150 British and Imperial Soldiers against over 3000 battle trained and tested Zulu warriors. Knight describes the circumstances that led to the battle beginning with the British having posts far within Zulu territory (present day South Africa) and having failed peace treaties between the British Crown and Zulu Kings. These treaties between the British Empire and Zulu Nation began with the great

King Shaka Zulu and newly crowned Queen Victoria, and as such previous times the British Empire wanted more land subjugated under their influence. Thus began the trouble. This book describes the background of this and also tells about the British loss at Isandlwana which is considered one of the worst defeats in British History. The battle at Rorke's Drift was fought due to one of the Zulu nobility wanting his warriors to fight and taste blood without realizing the tremendous loss of warriors would take place. The British and its Imperial Forces (Boers, and non Zulu tribesmen) did an outstanding job by defending the Rorke's Drift Outpost and thus gaining immortal glory. This is an outstanding book that is highly recommended to those who want to read about overcoming tremendous odds and bravery at all levels of both the British and Zulu Warriors.

Having read this book and enjoyed I feel I should pass on my thoughts. Firstly, and most importantly, this book appeared to me to be more of an overview of what took place hence it being only around 100 pages (minus many photos and maps ect...). If you are looking for a book that will give you an idea of what happened without the intricacies of the lead up and subsequent end to the wars then this will work for you. If you expect to read extracts from those who were there and a detailed account of the Zulu Wars then you will be disappointed. It mostly talks about Rorkes Drift, which is great and what many would like to read, but I felt like I had just read an introduction to the Zulu War campaign. This is probably a book that can whet your appetite for campaign before you find something with much more detail. As I said this still a good read!

This book is highly recommended for anyone who wishes to acquaint themselves with battles of Isandlwana, and especially, Rorke's Drift. The author gives a brief history of the British presence in South Africa that led to the events of 22-23 January, 1879. Knight gives a detailed and accurate account of the battle at Rorke's Drift using battlefield drawings showing the movement of both troupes, British and Zulu. The author also does a good job of dispelling many myths that have surrounded the battle for years. An added plus is the vast array of vintage photos of many of the key players in the Anglo-Zulu campaign. For anyone that wants to get a short(96 pages), concise, detailed history of Rorke's Drift, you will never need more than this book.

This was a wonderful read, informative, concise and clear. The explanations of the cause of the war, the cause of this battle, the tactics used, the actual ebb & flow of the combat and the aftermath are all very well presented. The illustrations and photographs add quite well to the written information. If your only information on this battle comes from the movie Zulu, you really should pick this up and

read it to get the real story, which is even more fascinating than the movie makes it out to be.

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