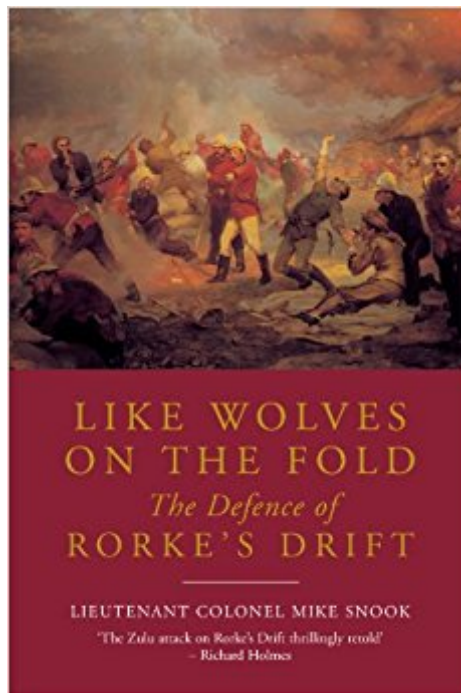




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Like Wolves On The Fold: The Defence Of Rorke's Drift



Synopsis

Wednesday 22 January 1879 was one of the most dramatic days in the annals of military history. In the morning, a modern British army was swept aside by the onset of a seemingly unstoppable host at Isandlwana. Nearby, at a remote border outpost on the Buffalo River, a single company of the 24th Regiment and a few dozen recuperating hospital patients were passing another hot, monotonous day. News of the disaster across the river came like a bolt from the blue. Retreat was not an option. It seemed certain that the Rorke's Drift detachment would share the terrible fate of their comrades. Colonel Snook brings the insights of a military professional to bear in this strikingly original account. It is an extraordinary tale of a victory largely achieved by the sheer bloody-mindedness in adversity of the British infantryman, fighting at the remarkable odds of over thirty to one. The heroics of all eleven VC winners are recounted in detail, and we are offered new insights into how the Zulu attack unfolded and how 150 men achieved their improbable victory. The author describes the remainder of the war, from the recovery of the lost Queen's Colour of the 24th to the climactic charge of the 17th Lancers at Ulundi. We return to Isandlwana to consider culpability, and learn of the often tragic fates of many of the war's participants.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Frontline Books; Revised edition (February 8, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1848325835

ISBN-13: 978-1848325838

Product Dimensions: 1 x 6.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 53 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #632,501 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #136 in Books > History > Military > Regiments #274 in Books > History > Africa > South Africa #1241 in Books > History > Europe > Great Britain > England

Customer Reviews

A lieutenant colonel in the Royal Regiment of Wales, Snook offers a blow-by-blow account of the heroic defense of Rorke's Drift during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, made famous by the 1964 British movie classic Zulu. Rorke's Drift was an "isolated, lightly held, and completely unfortified" garrison on the edge of Zululand and served as a depot for the advancing British army. On January 22,

1879 – "one of the most calamitous... and one of the most renowned days" in the history of the British Empire – a British column was decimated by a Zulu army at the Battle of Isandlwana, the subject of Snook's earlier volume *How Can Man Die Better*. Late that afternoon, a force of some 4,500 Zulus who had missed the earlier action descended on the garrison at Rorke's Drift – finding it "too tempting a target to resist." The 150 men at the garrison held their ground against wave after wave of frontal attacks – the fighting often hand-to-hand. The battle raged into the night before the Zulus finally withdrew. Seventeen defenders lost their lives, while 13 received the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest honor for valor. The story of Rorke's Drift is well documented, and Snook adds primarily "a soldier's perspective," recreating the battle in scrupulous detail and high drama. The climax comes early, however, and much of the final third of the book – such as an extended analysis regarding responsibility for the disaster at Isandlwana – feels extraneous. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

– Intriguing new facts about what, up to now, has been the generally accepted account – extremely readable, well illustrated and informative. (Toy Soldier and Model Figure)

This account of the defense of Rorke's Drift is better than any I have read. As a career Marine, with time as a combat rifleman, and always outnumbered, I have always paid particular attention to accounts of determined defenses. Rorke's Drift is a classic of that genre. LtCol Snook goes beyond the acts of individual heroism to reveal the teamwork of the officers and men, which in the end saved the day. Nor does he leave out the bravery of the Zulu warriors either. (If you don't think they were brave, try charging into the face of a 45 caliber Martini-Henry rifle operated by a trained soldier who can get off an aimed round every 7 to 8 seconds. And do it carrying a leather shield and a spear!) If all you know of Rorke's Drift comes from the Sir Stanley Baker movie "Zulu", then you don't know the true story. There was no bickering between Lts Chard and Bromhead, there were no Welsh singers competing with the Zulu impi's chants. It was raw, it was deadly and most of all, it was a very close thing. Defeat was always near at hand. Read this book and also LtCol Snook's "How Can Man Die Better?" about the disaster at Isandlwana and you will come away with a better understanding of the Anglo-Zulu War. Mike Snook has walked the ground and used both his military experience and familiarity with the latter day version of the "24th of Foot" to tell B Company's story. I salute you sir for helping to keep the memory of those brave men on both sides alive.

A splendid book by a true expert. Well researched and engagingly written. Many details I was not aware of from other books. It really should be read after the author's book on Isandlwana, otherwise some of the individuals and actions mentioned here will seem out of place and disconnected. Only one very cautious criticism of Colonel Snook's analysis, offered in the knowledge that I have nowhere near his expertise: it does seem to me that he lets Pullein -- the on site commander at Isandlwana -- off pretty easily. The commander did not fortify his camp in any way, and did overextend his line pretty badly. Perhaps Pullein did not anticipate Durnford's sudden withdrawal, which turned his right flank, and perhaps he did not anticipate the collapse of the weak native troops in the center, but perhaps he SHOULD have anticipated these events. Durnford was known to be, shall we say, mercurial, and the NNC was poorly equipped and psychologically overwhelmed. Other than this quibble, again offered deferentially, Col. Snook's analysis seems sound and insightful. His account of Rorke's Drift is marvelous.

"Like Wolves" was an awesome read. While I was disappointed that the cinema version had little bearing on the truth, the actual events were an even better story. I hope someone converts Colonel Snook's book into a movie someday soon. The American civil war hero of Gettysburg, Joshua Chamberlain said that soldiers leave a part of themselves at every battlefield that those who come behind can feel. I certainly felt a part of those men in this book. I have placed Snook in company of my other favorite military authors such as Douglas Freeman, Bruce Catton, and Charles MacDonald. I am looking forward to reading more of his work.

If you want to understand what happened at both Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift you need to read both books by Mike Snook. "Like Wolves on the Fold" and "How can Man Die Better" are without doubt some of the best analysis on both the battles. For marketing reasons a single book was split into two books, and to get the most out of either you need them both. If you have the opportunity to walk the battlefields and understand how military organisations actually work you will understand that these books are arguably the best written on the actions.

used this for a paper for a college class. It is a nice addition to what happened at Rorke's Drift.

A completely factual and captivating telling of the Battle of Rorke's Drift by a thoroughly studied military historian. Probably the best of many versions ... and a second volume to the same author's excellent telling of the same-day Battle of Isandlwana, which occurred a few hours earlier about 10

miles from Rorke's Drift. Both books present both sides of the battles -- and describe the epitome of human heroism. Masterfully compiled histories; hard battles fought to their brutal ends.

A really interesting book but written from a partisan perspective as the author is a former commanding officer of the 24th Foot. A significant part of the book covers the battle at Isandwana and seeks to justify the 24th's massacre by blaming everyone else. Given that perspective, it is a fascinating book and well worth the read. If I were to visit the area, which I would like to do, I would take this book with me.

Excellent book! Excellent research by an author who is both an active duty soldier and scholar. The author has in most cases visited the battlefields. The author has reviewed and read after action reports and first person accounts of the participants. There are many citations of books and personal journals by participants of the battles that should anyone wish to do additional reading and research they may do so. I would heartily recommend any and all the works by this author.

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