

# Queen Victoria's Enemies (3): India

Osprey Men-at-Arms 219 (paperback, published 1990)

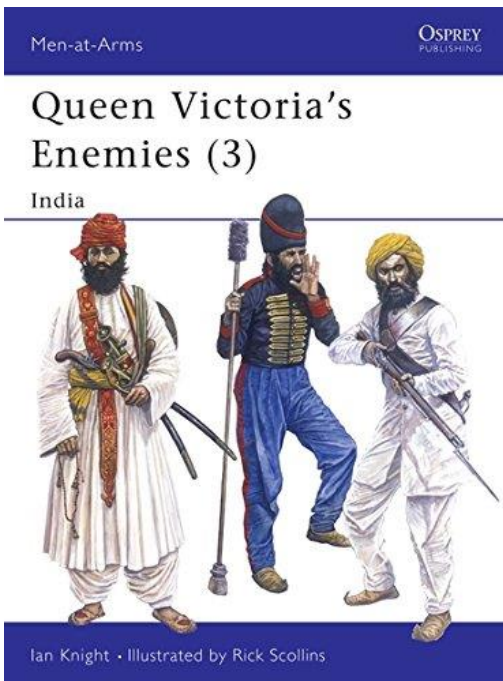
Text by Ian Knight. Illustrations by Richard Scollins

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Review by Martin Smith

This is the third title by Ian Knight in the 'Victoria's Enemies' series and deals with British conflicts in the Indian sub-continent during her reign, as Queen and later Empress of India. The introduction describes the establishment of British influence, initially in the guise of the British East India Company, and the sheer enormity and diversity of the lands which came under British control. It also highlights the constant fear of foreign interference, primarily from Russia via the north-western borders of the region.



The chapters which follow cover the major conflicts during Victoria's reign, each giving a brief description of the local political situation and a resumé of the campaigns which ensued. They deal briefly with Afghanistan 1839-42, and Sind and Gwalior 1843-45, followed by longer sections on the Sikh Wars 1845-49 and then the Indian Mutiny 1857-59 after which control was ceded by the BEIC directly to the Crown. The last sections go on to discuss the troublesome North-West Frontier from 1849 to 1900, with more detailed coverage of Afghanistan and the Second Afghan War, 1878-81.

In addition to a large number of carefully selected black and white period illustrations and photographs there are eight beautifully presented colour plates by Rick Scollins, which provide flavour and would help any wargamer planning on venturing into this period. Note: These show opponents of the British, rather than British troops themselves, although one plate is of locally raised BEIC troops at the start of the Mutiny in 1857.

This came across as an informative and well-illustrated Osprey, which while necessarily brief succeeds in addressing a vast subject in a comprehensive manner. It would be thoroughly recommended as an introduction to 19th Century conflicts in the area.