



# **British Naval Power in the East, 1794-1805 (Worlds of the East India Company)**

*Peter A. Ward*

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When war broke out with France in 1793, there immediately arose the threat of a renewed French challenge to British supremacy in India. This security problem was compounded in 1795 when the French overran the Netherlands and the extremely valuable Dutch trade routes and Dutch colonies, including the Cape of Good Hope and what is now Indonesia, fell under French control. The task of securing British interests in the East was a formidable one: the distances were huge, communication with London could take years, there were problems marshalling resources, and fine diplomatic skills were needed to keep independent rulers on the British side and to ensure full co-operation from the East India Company. The person charged with overseeing this formidable task was Admiral Peter Rainier (1741-1808), commander of the Royal Navy in the Indian Ocean and the East from 1794 to 1805. This book discusses the enormous difficulties Rainier faced. It outlines his career, explaining how he carried out his role with exceptional skill; how he succeeded in securing British interests in the East - whilst avoiding the need to fight a major battle; how he enhanced Britain's commanding position at sea; and how, additionally, in co-operation with the Governor-General, Richard Wellesley, he further advanced Britain's position in India itself. Peter Ward completed a PhD in naval history at the University of Exeter after a career in international personnel management, working for Californian high technology companies in the United States, Hong Kong and Europe.

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