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978-0-521-50971-8 - Rommel's Desert War: Waging World War II in North Africa, 1941-1943

Martin Kitchen

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Rommel's Desert War

At the height of his power in January 1941 Hitler made the fateful decision to send troops to North Africa to save the beleaguered Italian army from defeat. Martin Kitchen's masterful new history of the Axis campaign provides a fundamental reassessment of the key battles of 1941-3, Rommel's generalship and the campaign's place within the broader strategic context of the war. He shows that the British were initially helpless against the operational brilliance of Rommel's Panzer divisions. However, Rommel's initial successes and refusal to follow orders committed the Axis to a campaign well beyond their means. Without the reinforcements or supplies he needed to deliver a knockout blow, Rommel was forced onto the defensive and Hitler's Mediterranean strategy began to unravel. The result was the loss of an entire army which, together with defeat at Stalingrad, signalled a decisive shift in the course of the war.

MARTIN KITCHEN is Professor Emeritus in the Department of History, Simon Fraser University. His previous publications include *The Third Reich: Charisma and Community* (2007), *A History of Modern Germany, 1800-2000* (2006) and *Europe Between the Wars* (second edition, 2006).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ra	chief of operations
AA	Reconnaissance Group
ACV	armoured command vehicle
ADAP	Published papers of the German foreign office
Amt Ausl./Abwer	Counter-intelligence
AOK	Army High Command
AP	armour piercing
BAMA	Military Archives of the Federal Archives
BdU	Commander-in-chief of the submarines
BZG	Library for Contemporary History, Stuttgart
DAF	Desert Air Force
DAK	German Africa Corps (Afrikakorps)
Delease	Delegation of the Supreme Command in North Africa
DIPA	German–Italian Panzer Army
DRZW	Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg
EK	Einsatzkommando (special unit)
Flak	anti-aircraft gun
GRT	gross register tonnage

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HE	high explosive
Ic	intelligence officer
JIC	Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee
Kasta	Main Support Group
KTB	War diary
LRDG	Long Range Desert Group
NFA	Radio Intelligence Company
ObdM	Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy
OBS	Supreme Commander South
OKH	High Command of the Army
OKL	High Command of the Luftwaffe
OKW	High Command of the Armed Forces
PAAA	Political Archives of the Foreign Office
PRU	Photographic Reconnaissance Unit
RAD	Reich Labour Service
RSHA	Reich Security Main Office
SD	Security Service
Sigint	Signals intelligence
SkI	German Naval Command
SiPo	Security Police
Stuka	dive-bomber
VAA	Foreign Office Liaison Officer
WFSt	Armed Forces Command Staff



Map 1. Middle East theatre of war

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