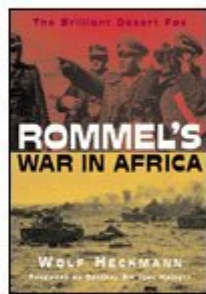
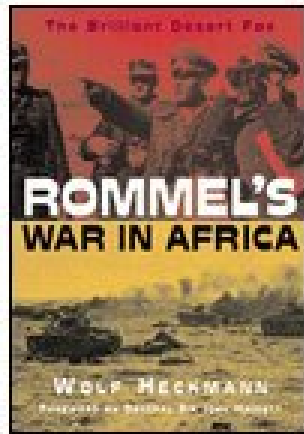


ROMMEL'S WAR IN AFRICA BY WOLF HECKMANN



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Language Notes

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Rommel's War In Africa is a vivid and detailed account of the fighting between the German Afrika Korps and the British 8th Army during WWII. It details the war itself and the man behind the battles, Erwin Rommel. The information is solidly based on accurate historical research, using interviews and archival material from both sides.

- Sales Rank: #4115282 in Books
- Brand: Historical Books Doubleday
- Published on: 1981
- Dimensions: 1.60 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 366 pages

Language Notes

Text: English, German (translation)

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3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Rommel's African War Revealed

By Readalots

Wolf Heckmann's "Rommel's War In African" (1981 translation from the original German) is a masterpiece. It tells the complex story World War II in North Africa from the German (not necessarily Nazi) point of view.

This hardback version's 353 pages is divided into 3 books (about Erwin Rommel's 1941 posting to the Afrika Korp., his 1941-42 Nile campaign, and the 1942 advance on and withdrawal, before Montgomery's attacking British army, from El Alamein). Because Berlin recalled Rommel to build "Fortress Europe" before the N. African war's end, no information is provided about Kasserine Pass.

Although the text is somewhat technical (possibly due to its translation into English) it is readable. Following Heckmann's chain of events is often a challenge. The book has extensive maps (unfortunately untitled) for following the flow of campaigns and battles.

Although he does not like the Field Marshall, Heckmann showcases Rommel's tactical brilliance (his Clausewitz-style of military leadership) and foibles (i.e. the General often disregarded personal/staff safety before the enemy). The author provides many soldierly anecdotes. These are entertaining, and enlightening, as they bring color to the N. African spectacle of 1941-42.

More biographical information for the great German Field Marshal would have made this book better. The few pages (pp. 25-27) which speak to Rommel's life are not exhaustive and barely informative. A discussion of Rommel's pre-African days would have only enhanced this narrative. Photographs would have, also, made a significant difference for Heckmann's presentation.

This book is recommendable to WWII buffs, military enthusiasts, and battle strategists. If you like military history you will find Heckmann to be a real page-turner. His is Rommel's African war revealed.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

"wolf heckman's book, 'Rommel's war in Africa'"

By victor bebe

I was very curious about the great German general, Rommel. This book helped me understand how he got his stature and reputation. The German author points out that he wasn't invincible, and that circumstances and his own egocentrism, battlefield courage, physical stamina, ambition and luck got him the reputation. Still while he was certainly overrated, he was a great military man. As a human being, he was less than great because he owed his stature within the Nazi army to his close relationship to Adolf Hitler. He shared Hitler's dreams of great conquest and to the end and failure of his Africa campaign had unrealistic expectations of conquests beyond Europe and North Africa. He showed no remorse for working to extend a truly evil regime.

Heckman points out that Rommel was a favorite of Hitler, and he played his favor in the dictator's eyes to get promoted higher and more rapidly than he would otherwise have been...much to the dismay of his older, more conventional superior officers. Still he must have had some greatness in him, not only to be effective while his life on the line in many battles. Rommel ultimately was forced to take his own life when it was found that he was in contact with key members of the failed plot to kill Hitler. He was according to this book not an active member of that plot but there is no evidence presented that he betrayed its members.

The author interviewed dozens of men of high and low rank from both sides of that war among those who managed to survive. From the men who fought for one or the other of both the great adversaries, Germany and Britain. Thus there is some feeling of how it must have been for the men who were there. Rommel's early victories were mostly due to the failure of Britain to provide adequate armour to counter the German higher powered and heavier projectiles and also to the slowness of the British high command to understand the limitations of their armoured forces. Thus they repeatedly got to close range, and neglected or were unable to improve their weaponry on the home front, and were slow to recognize the aspects of desert warfare which were similar to warfare at sea except in the case of protected fortifications. These deficiencies were overcome some months after America's entry into the war at the end of 1941 and the tide of battle turned against Rommel well into 1942.

There is none or little discussion of how it must have been for the sparse civilian (probably mostly Arab) inhabitants around whom the battles took place. Also although the book is unique in giving some feeling of those times with realistic descriptions of injuries etc, and how fearful and miserable it was to be a tank soldier on either side when water was so scarce that washing was often prohibited either by conditions or by order of the commander. The book is poorly edited in the respect that one had to run constantly to the maps, and to an atlas, to see roughly where the battles were taking place. Also, in the dozens of characters interviewed, if one survived long enough to be mentioned in more than one section, one had to go to the book's index to see whether he was German or British.

Still, it gave a unique idea mainly from the first hand accounts by men who were there about how it was to be a soldier in the desert in those days. (review by bvbronk)

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

a great book on Rommel and WWII

By JCB

Rommel's War in Africa is a vivid and detailed account of the fighting between the German Afrika Korps and the British 8th Army during WWII. It is really a book with two themes, one about the war itself and the

other about the man behind the battles, Erwin Rommel. The writing is solidly based on accurate historical research, using interviews and archival material from both sides. It was originally written in German and then translated into "British" English, so there words here and there that surprise the American reader, e.g. Germans referring to each other as "chaps". However, this does not take away from the reader's experience at all. Heckmann was one of the first authors to step beyond the glorified myth of Rommel and consider the man as he actually was. Both his courage and ingenuity, and his vanity and miscalculations are thoroughly explored. The narrative covers the back-and-forth nature of the fighting as each side maneuvers through the desert, suffers setbacks, and deals with the challenges of supply on a remote front. In the end, Rommel is defeated in Africa, and Germany itself reaches a turning point in the war. I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in this theater of WWII.

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