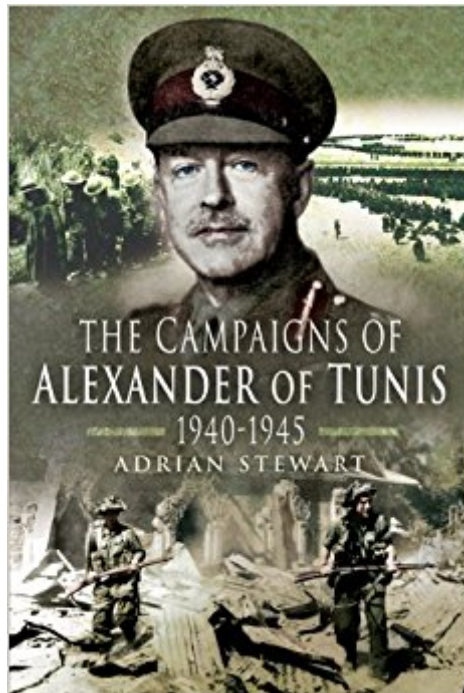




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Campaigns Of Alexander Of Tunis 1940 - 1945



Synopsis

Alex, as he was known whether by Prime Ministers or the rank-and-file, was a legendary figure. A hero from the Great War he saw active service in Russia in 1919 and against the Pathans on the North West Frontier in 1935. By 1940 he was a divisional commander with the B.E.F. in France. His conduct during the withdrawal through Dunkirk where he took over the British 1st Corps in the crisis confirmed his outstanding ability. In the dark days of 1942 by now a full general he was sent to Burma with orders to hold the Japs at Rangoon. Just in time he realizes it was impossible and his decision to withdraw prevented a total disaster. Despite this defeat he retained Churchill's confidence and he was appointed C in C Middle East. While eclipsed in PR terms by his subordinate Montgomery many felt that Monty owed his success to Alex by protecting him from an increasingly impatient Churchill. Alexander went on to command the invasion of Sicily and as Army Group Commander masterminded the long slog up through Italy. His charm and easy nature were his greatest strengths as others worked enthusiastically with him, but critics have sought to prove that he lacked true ability and steel.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Adrian Stewart is an author and historian.

I would recommend this book to those wishing to learn more about General Alexander with three comments: nothing at all . . . nothing . . . is mentioned about General Alexander before Dunkirk. Nothing about where he was born, his activities or interests as a child, his intellectual development,

war colleges, activities in WW I . . . nothing. Even though this book does not propose to be a biography, knowing some of these details would certainly have helped to understand the man and his Campaigns. The second thing that I found extremely surprising was the authors belief in the desert war as essentially a tank battle on the ocean . . . and he argues extensively in support of this analogy. Most readers of desert warfare will be familiar with this argument and also that this argument is easily refutable . . . tank warfare is NOT equivalent to ships at sea for a variety of basic tactical facts such as the ability to "dig in" however hard it is in the desert. Third, the maps, and there are many of them, are extremely simplistic showing at most a land mass, a few cities or towns and rivers . . . no elevation marks, no swamps, strong points, etc, and even more inexplicable . . . no notations as to troop dispositions. In this day, with computer imaging so accessible, I find this absolutely inexcusable. For a book which supposes to explain the Campaigns of Alexander to lack good maps is stunning to at least me. A good edit of this book with a few additions would make this a first rate work! I would mark any other book down one star for each of the above but I ended up giving a three star which I would really like to make a 2 and 1/2 star. Other than these very considerable shortcomings, the assessment of General Alexander and his Campaigns seem logical, forthright and honest. The author does not seem to be a Fanboy of the General. All the General's activities during and after Dunkirk are covered in adequate detail (but certainly not extensive detail) up until the end of the war as far as I can tell. I was drawn to this book because of General Alexander having Montgomery under his command during the "Desert War" and wanted to know more about him. In this I was certainly not disappointed. I regret however that this is the only book on the General that I could find. My suspicion that the General was a great General and only unrecognized because he did his job without great fanfare or causing great notice in others like Monty and is therefor quite possibly overlooked. My admiration for him only increased. Hope this review will encourage others to read this book but be forewarned about the substantial shortcomings of it. Good reading.

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