



## **MEDITERRANEAN AND MIDDLE EAST VOLUME II: “The Germans Come to the Help of their Ally” (1941): HISTORY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: UNITED KINGDOM MILITARY SERIES: OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN HISTORY (Volume 2)**

*By I.S. O. Playfair*

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The second of the eight volumes dealing with the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern theatres in the 18-volume official British History of the Second World War, this book is largely concerned with the consequences of Germany's decision to prop up its faltering Italian ally in North Africa in 1941. It opens with General Rommel reversing Britain's conquest of Italian Cyrenaica, and increasing Axis air attacks on the fortress island of Malta. Britain's naval victory against the Italians at Cape Matapan in March is swiftly followed by British reverses in the Balkans. A British-backed anti-Nazi coup d'état in Yugoslavia results in April in Germany's occupation of that country and Britain's retreat from Greece before a relentless German advance. Germany's airborne invasion of Crete sparks a fierce battle for the island, ending in a British evacuation. A pro-Axis coup in Iraq is followed by a successful British intervention, which deposes the pro-Nazi Rashid Ali regime in Baghdad. British and Free French forces also occupy Vichy French-ruled Syria. The book ends with more attacks on Malta, the building-up of Allied forces in the Middle East, and General Wavell's replacement by General Auchinleck as British Commander in North Africa. The text is supported by 10 appendices, 29 maps and diagrams and 44 photographs.

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