



Germany and the Axis Powers: From Coalition to Collapse (Modern War Studies (Hardcover))

Richard L. DiNardo

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It seemed that whenever Mussolini acted on his own, it was bad news for Hitler. Indeed, the Fuhrer's relations with his Axis partners were fraught with an almost total lack of coordination. Compared to the Allies, the coalition was hardly an alliance at all. Focusing on Germany's military relations with Italy, Romania, Hungary, and Finland, Richard DiNardo unearths a wealth of information that reveals how the Axis coalition largely undermined Hitler's objectives from the Eastern Front to the Balkans, Mediterranean, and North Africa.

DiNardo argues that the Axis military alliance was doomed from the beginning by a lack of common war aims, the absence of a unified command structure, and each nation's fundamental mistrust of the others. Germany was disinclined to make the kinds of compromises that successful wartime partnerships demanded and, because Hitler insisted on separate pacts with each nation, Italy and Finland often found themselves conducting counterproductive parallel wars on their own.

DiNardo's detailed assessments of ground, naval, and air operations reveal precisely why the Axis allies were so dysfunctional as a collective force, sometimes for seemingly mundane but vital reasons—a shortage of interpreters, for example. His analysis covers coalition warfare at every level, demonstrating that some military services were better at working with their allies than others, while also pointing to rare successes, such as Rommel's effective coordination with Italian forces in North Africa. In the end, while some individual Axis units fought with distinction—if not on a par with the vaunted Wehrmacht—and helped Germany achieve some of its military aims, the coalition's overall military performance was riddled with disappointments.

Breaking new ground, DiNardo's work enlarges our understanding of Germany's defeat while at the same time offering a timely reminder of the challenges presented by coalition warfare.

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