

South Africans versus Rommel: The Untold Story of the Desert War in World War II By David Brock Katz Those who hail from the military have a keen sense of the culture and a firm grip on the inner working and mechanisms that make for comradeship and the ability to function under the most adverse and challenging situations. A government unsympathetic to the country's war effort came to power in 1948 and was so obsessed with the imposition of rigid racial segregation through its policy of apartheid and foisting an Afrikaner nationalism on the nation that it virtually ignored South Africa's role. Kindle Firstly a big thank you to the author for keeping the memories of those men and women alive who served in a war that the general public and Britain have chosen to forget their sacrifices. Again his is awarts and all view and helps the reader to understand the source of some of the negative opinions held at the time by British and New Zealand military leaders. The author not only talks about the personalities and heritage of the Union Defense Force.

After bitter debate South Africa a dominion of the British Empire at the time declared war on Germany five days after the invasion of Poland in September 1939. Thrust by the British into the campaign against Erwin Rommels German Afrika Korps in North Africa the South Africans fought a see saw war of defeats followed by successes culminating in the Battle of El Alamein where South African soldiers made a significant contribution to halting the Desert Foxs advance into Egypt. This is the story of an army committed somewhat reluctantly to a war it didnt fully support ill prepared for the battles it was tasked with fighting and sent into action on the orders of its senior alliance partner. It took Katz's unstinting research to find not only the South African divisional war diaries but also the war histories of German and Italian units that were the South Africans' and Commonwealth troops' enemies in the desert fighting. This has enabled Katz to put together a most readable book on part of the Allied war effort that is often subsumed by the stories of others but those vets have begun to die out. One gripe about the book is that it could have done with maps and devoid of the romanticized version of SA's performance in the Western Desert that seems to still plague our thinking. My late father was captured at Tobruk and Katz captures almost word for word what my father had felt about the debacleI cannot recommend this book highly enough to anyone who wants an unjaundiced view of the performances of SA's forces in North Africa. Kindle A very good and unbiased account of the South African (SA) 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions in Africa focused on the loss of 5th Brigade during Operation CRUSADER the surrender of 2nd Division during the Gazala battles and the stand of the 1st Division at 1st Alamein. Whether or not that section of the book led Katz to rely heavily on Italian sources than most English language accounts is a moot point as this book is set apart from others by the author's willingness to treat the Italian Army as an opponent that cannot be dismissed as easily as other accounts tend to do. In fact not only does Katz rely on Italian sources but he also delves into German sources to give a fuller perspective to engagements between South African and Afrika Korps units. This account is set further apart from its predecessors (which discuss the North African campaign from various aspects) because Katz also goes down a less well travelled path to show how differences in doctrine tactical handling of units and personalities resulted in a deep erosion of mutual trust between the pre Montgomery British leadership of Eighth Army and its subordinate South African divisions. The latter bore a heavy price for what Katz describes as British ineptitude resulting in an entire brigade (5th) and a reinforced division (2nd) destroyed between the period November 1941 and June 1942. This is somewhat of a harsh verdict but understandable as Katz's military background perhaps leads him to be less sparing of a modern army that does not understand combined arms and the principals of concentration on the battlefield. As noted above the author's experience as a soldier might lead him to unsparing judgments of British generalship and tactical abilities during the 1941 1942 timeframe but he also applies that same strict ruler to South African brigade and divisional commanders. He also goes into great detail on the origins of the Union Defense Forces which some readers might find a bit superfluous but I changed my mind after delving deeper into the book whereupon his reasons for including that material became apparent. South Africans versus Rommel: The Untold Story of the Desert War in World War IISoldiering and history are two pursuits close to heart: The South African

National Defence Force and the Saldanha Military Academy have facilitated both. Being a serving member of the Citizen Force in the South African Irish Regiment has provided an advantage when writing military history: The way of the military can be a confusing mystery to civilians who have never served: The military is all about preparing for a situation that may never and most probably will never arise. It is one of the few professions where its practitioners will seldom find a chance to exercise their trade in a real life situation. The Australians and New Zealanders have done their bit in writing up their efforts on behalf of the Allies and lately Indian historians have come to the rescue of that nation: South Africa's last comprehensive book on its desert campaigns was published in 1957, So Katz has revived the story of South Africa's forgotten war: The flame was kept alive by the veterans who held annual wreath laying ceremonies.

A crucial addendum to any book on military campaigns, I was very happy to finally find a book that gave the S. African viewpoint about a part of the war that has been forgotten by the latest generation of young S: Also a book that gives a true perspective of good and bad regarding the decisions made by the leaders of the day: What I found refreshing is it gives the perspective of battles like Sidi Rezegh from an unbiased S: account where the British were quick to blame everyone except themselves for failures (in some of the books I have read). I found the book informative in its lead up to the war and S. Africa's situation on the home front regarding changing attitudes to the powers of the day, All in all a good book and one that my grandfather who served in the 8th Army would probably agree with and find worth its weight in gold: Kindle Superbly written.

Especially Pienaar (CO 1st Brigade at CRUSADER and GOC 1st Division at Alamein), Kindle Touches upon the great struggle of WWII and issues of Colonialism along with the overlooked contributions of Africa to WWII Kindle This book tells the history of all events. What happen and the infighting of the British Generals and SA General The SA Had in 1939 Inf Div Like the US would create. The British would not use it like it was created and divided it into parts, Kindle One disclaimer up front: The only reason this review doesn't show verified purchase is because I received this book as a father's day gift from my youngest daughter. You might be fooled (as I was) into thinking this book focuses on the performance of South African units in the North African campaign against the Afrika Korps. At its heart however the study of history and battles long past forms an integral and fundamental part of the soldier's battle toolkit, It is through history that soldiers learn about what is possible what can be avoided and how to act under a similar set of circumstances, (Although no two battles are ever fought under the same circumstances) In the absence of the real thing history can provide important lessons of war. David Katz uncovers new information of South Africa's involvement in the desert fighting during World War 2 through diligent research, Well not exactly new because the information has always been available mostly in South Africa's military archives, Not only that he has examined critically the fraught relationship between South African and British commanders over the esoteric topic of military doctrine, Katz however makes the debate an easily accessible one for even the most cursory of readers: Katz brings a soldier's eye to unpicking the subtleties of the battlefield as well as a keen and practiced historian's sense of balance and analysis: He deals with the personalities involved without the much seen need to idealise them instead making them relatable in their flaws and idiosyncrasies, While specifically an account of the SA forces it does provide sufficient detail of the mentioned battles for the general reader, The book discusses the political difficulties of South Africa's declaration of war in 1939 and her woeful state of preparation in all things military, The author also delves into the personalities of the relevant SA military leaders but his narrative also encompasses the East African campaign: As a result this narrative comes across as an objective account of difficult times for both armies. The book is well researched with some truly ground breaking material on the fall of Tobruk in June 1942 that alone makes it well worth acquiring: The only drawbacks are a few technical mistakes (British heavy AA guns are 3: 5 inch) and a writing style that tends to be repetitive at times. Highly recommended for serious students of the North African campaign[1]

This is the story of men at war. Therefore.

Notably the British effort. Up to a point this neglect is understandable. A great book from a South African perspective. Africans. A. Something these UK authors are very good at doing. His History was a bit off in some minor parts. Very interesting. It does not but that is a good thing. Katz has breathed new life into the story. 7 inch or 94mm not 3. Kindle

