



Second Front: The Allied Invasion of France, 1942-43 (An Alternative History)

Alexander Grace

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One of the great arguments of World War II took place among Allied military leaders over when and where to launch a second front against Germany in Europe. Stalin, holding on by his teeth in Russia, urged a major invasion from the west as soon as possible. The Americans, led by Marshall and Wedemeyer, argued likewise. It was Churchill who got his way, however, with his Mediterranean strategy, including a campaign on the Italian peninsula, which he mistakenly called the “soft underbelly of Europe.” This realistic, fact-based work posits what would have happened had Churchill been overruled, and that rather than invading North Africa in the fall of 1942, thence Sicily and Italy, the Allies had hit the coast of southern France instead. The key element that enables the alternative scenario is the cooperation of Vichy, which was negotiated at the time but refused. If the Allies had promised sufficient force to support the French, however, the entire southern coastline of France would have been undefended against a surprise invasion. In this book, once the Allied armies are ashore, German stream toward the front, albeit through a gauntlet of Maquis, Allied paratroopers and airpower. Meantime the Allied forces push up the Rhône Valley and titanic armored clashes take place near Lyons. Already in desperate straits at Stalingrad, where they had committed their air and armored reserves, the Germans had also yet to switch to a full total-war economy, with tanks like the Panther and Tiger not yet deployed. This fascinating alternative history comes close to informing us exactly what might have happened had D-Day in Europe come as early as some had wished. Alexander M. Grace is the author of a number of well-received novels including Holy War, Hegemon, Coup and Sky Blue. When not writing he is a professor and former Foreign Service officer.

REVIEWS

What if Vichy France cooperated with the Allies to invade the undefended southern coastline of France? A thorough alternative history. World War II Magazine This fascinating alternative history comes close to informing us exactly what might have happened had D-Day in Europe come as early as some had wished. Books Monthly UK The case he invites the reader to examine here is plausibly presented, well articulated, sound in terms of methodology and, ultimately, disturbing because it does look so promising. Of all the players, Churchill would probably have the most to answer for. The book deserves to be read with serious intent and rapt attention. Speed Readers Reviews "...uses historical facts and details to energize this work of fiction with realism. His spirited writing propels the warfare vividly chronicled ... intriguing alternative history leaves the reader wondering "what if' D-Day had happened elsewhere and earlier...' Toy Soldier Grace presents readers with an alternate history of the allied invasion of France based on options explored and debated but ultimately ruled out in the preparations to open a second European front in World War II. The author has organized the main body of his text in eleven chapters, beginning with what would have most likely occurred had the Allies elected to invade the south of France first rather than North Africa and proceeding through the likely evolutions of the battles of the war in Europe from there to the ultimate conclusion. Alexander M. Grace, Sr., is an author, retired diplomat, Foreign Service officer, and teacher working in Florida. Protoview

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