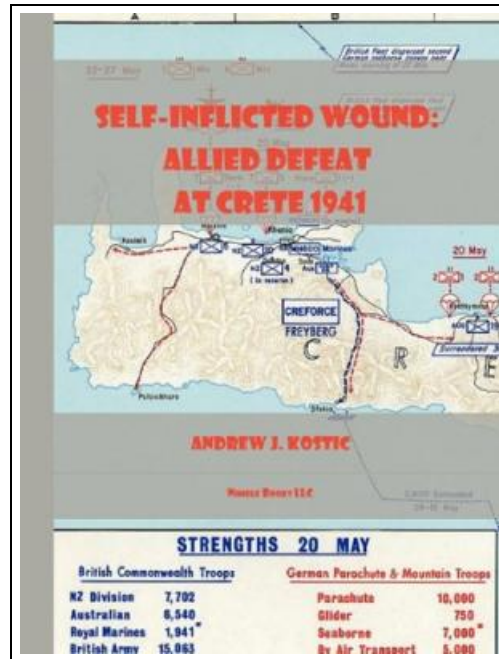


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Nimble Books, United States, 2010. Paperback. Book Condition: New. New ed.. 279 x 210 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.Leadership failures in the defense of Crete were essential factors contributing to Allied defeat on the island in May 1941. The Germans appeared unstoppable during the early stages of World War II. Inexperienced Allied forces were willing to fight, but the sentiment was the Germans were too powerful. Defeat became a foregone conclusion. To defend at all costs no longer appeared viable. Withdrawal and evacuation seemed almost commonplace in Allied strategy. Great Britain and Germany identified early in the war the strategic importance of the island of Crete for conducting military operations in the Mediterranean. Operationally the British maintained naval supremacy in the Mediterranean, while the German Luftwaffe ruled the skies. The Allies began defending Crete in November 1940. However, the Middle East Command put little effort into defending the island and changed Crete Force Commanders on a monthly basis. Allied intelligence uncovered the details of the German invasion plan for Crete. In a last ditch effort, forces evacuated from Greece were sent to Crete to bolster the defenses. This brought the total number of Allied defenders to 42,500 to repel an estimated enemy assault of 5,000 men. The German plan for the occupation of Crete, Operation MERCURY, called for gliders and Hitler's elite paratroops to conduct the largest airborne operation to date. The plan pitted 22,000 men and 1280 aircraft against an erroneously estimated enemy strength of 5,000 men. The success of this plan relied upon surprise and the paratroops securing one of the three airfields on the island so reinforcements could be flown in. A reluctant Crete Force Commander set the tone for subordinate commanders leadership failures. The invasion began the morning...



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