



# Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome

By Carlo D'Este



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*Fatal Decision* is a powerful, dramatic, moving, and ultimately definitive narrative of one of the most desperate campaigns of World War II. In the winter of 1943-44, Anzio, a small Mediterranean resort and port some thirty-five miles south of Rome, played a crucial role in the fortunes of World War II as the target of an amphibious Allied landing. The Allies planned to bypass the strong German defenses along the Gustav Line and at Monte Cassino sixty miles to the southeast, which were holding up the American and British armies and preventing the liberation of Rome. By taking advantage of Allied command of the sea and air to effect complete surprise, infantry and armored forces landing at Anzio on January 22 were expected to secure the beachhead and then push inland to cut off the two main highways and railroads supplying the German forces to the south, either trapping and annihilating the German armies or forcing them to withdraw to the north, thus opening the way to Rome.

But the reality of one of the most desperate campaigns of World War II was bad management, external meddling, poorly relayed orders, and uncertain leadership. The Anzio beachhead became a death trap, with Allied troops forced to fight for their lives for four dreadful months. The eventual victory in May 1944 was muted, bitter, and overshadowed by the Allied landings in Normandy on June 6. Mixing flawless research, drama, and combat with a brilliant narrative voice, *Fatal Decision* is one of the best histories ever written of a World War II military campaign.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

In January 1944 an Allied task force landed at Anzio on Italy's west coast, its mission to draw German forces away from the Cassino bottleneck and open the way to Rome. The landing was only lightly opposed but the Germans soon counterattacked, and for five months U.S. general John Lucas's Anglo-American VI Corps fought desperately to retain its fragile beachhead. D'Este's account of this bloody struggle and the subsequent capture of Rome is well researched and vividly told. The political, strategic and tactical aspects of the campaign are carefully reviewed, as are the dynamics of leadership on both sides. D'Este ( *Decision at Normandy* ) sorts out the still-simmering controversy over whether Lucas missed a great opportunity by not attempting to capture Rome early in the campaign when it was presumably undefended. First-class military history. Illustrations.

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From Kirkus Reviews

A meticulous audit of Operation Shingle, the WW II campaign designed to win Rome for Allied forces at an acceptable cost. D'Este (*Bitter Victory, Decision in Normandy*) provides a panoramic overview of the planning, preparation, and execution of the 1944 assault on Anzio, a Mediterranean port about 30 miles south of Rome. The aim of the amphibious thrust was to bypass strong German defenses along the so-called Gustav line and at Monte Cassino, which had stalled American and well as British armies in their drive to liberate Rome. In D'Este's persuasive view, the strike failed in its objectives for lack of decisive leadership. For example, instead of issuing firm orders, General Sir Harold Alexander made gentlemanly instructions which Mark Clark (commander of the US Fifth Army) often ignored. Nor did Clark prod subordinates to seize highways and rail lines that supplied Wehrmacht forces under the able command of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring. At any rate, the Anzio beachhead became a death trap in which Allied troops fought for their lives in rain and mud for over five dreadful months. When opposition finally crumbled under air and sea pounding, Clark neglected to pursue, let alone destroy, retreating German soldiers, so great was his ambition to be the first man into Rome. In a crowning irony, the recapture of Italy's capital was almost wholly overshadowed by the D-day landings in France. In D'Este's book, blame for the botched Anzio expedition is widely shared. Among others meriting censure, he singles out a meddling Winston Churchill, who sowed confusion in the Allied ranks and raised unrealistic expectations. A vivid account of a campaign that attests to the high cost of miscalculation and overconfidence in matters military. (Sixteen pages of maps--not seen.) -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

About the Author

Carlo D'Este, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel and a distinguished military historian, is the author of the acclaimed biographies *Patton: A Genius for War* and *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*, among other books on World War II. He lives in Massachusetts.

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Janice Oconnell:**

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with pals is thing that

usually you might have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome, it is possible to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its called reading friends.

### **Kelli Valverde:**

This Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome is great reserve for you because the content which can be full of information for you who always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. This specific book reveal it information accurately using great coordinate word or we can point out no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read it hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only provides you with straight forward sentences but tough core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome in your hand like finding the world in your arm, details in it is not ridiculous one particular. We can say that no reserve that offer you world in ten or fifteen moment right but this guide already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hey there Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt which?

### **Mary Stone:**

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### **Carl Johnson:**

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