

X-045050

CUT VERSION OF SPEECH BY FIELD-MARSHAL MONTGOMERY

AT

THE ALAMEIN DINNER.

23RD OCTOBER, 1945.

I would first of all like to say how glad I am that so many of you have managed to get here tonight and have thus enabled us to commemorate together the battle of Alamein which has meant so much to England and her Empire, [This is the third anniversary of the battle. I am particularly glad Mr. Churchill has honoured us by his presence, <sup>appear</sup> for you all know how he built and backed the Eighth Army:

I believe that when I arrived to take command of the Eighth Army there was a certain amount of speculation on how long some of you might hold your appointments, and rather more speculation on how long I would hold mine. <sup>laugh</sup> ~~In fact I was told by my A.D.C. that I didn't know the form: by that I suppose he meant I hadn't got brown knees and didn't wear corduroy trousers. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof, for not only did we all survive those days but many of us have remained together as a team ever since.~~

Let me tell you the design of the battle in case some of you did not know the bigger picture, or have forgotten it. My plan was to attack the enemy on the northern part of his front; to draw the main enemy German strength, and especially his armoured strength, up to the north and to fight it there; then to roll up the remainder of the enemy front with the N.Z. Division and other troops, working from north to south.

I well remember the evening when my Intelligence Staff told me that they had located the southern flank of the purely German troops; the remainder of the front to the south was held by Italians. This was exactly what we wanted. You know what happened.

Just as these Imperial soldiers had shared together the heat of battle, so were they and their homelands able to share the joys of victory - a victory not due to numerical superiority, but to the courage and skill of the sons of Britain and her Empire. This time the glory was all our own. Previous stains on our fame were effaced. Yet the pleasure with which the good news was received must not be ascribed solely or chiefly to national pride. Our island was safe. The corner had been turned. The black clouds had been rolled away and the future lay bright before us. When Mr. Churchill came out to the desert just as we were starting to prepare for our great task, I asked him to write in my diary. He wrote "May the Eighth Army have the fame and fortune it will surely deserve". I feel I can justly say it did deserve both the fame and the fortune that it won that day: and later.

B. L. M.

23 - 10 - 45.

x-247-050

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AT

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23RD OCTOBER, 1945.

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[I believe that when I arrived <sup>in Egypt</sup> to take command of the Eighth Army there was a certain amount of speculation on how long some of you might hold your appointments, <sup>(laughs)</sup> and rather more speculation on how long I <sup>might</sup> hold mine.] <sup>(laughs)</sup> In fact I was told <sup>I believe there was</sup> by my A.D.C. that I didn't know the form: by that I suppose he meant I hadn't got brown knees and didn't wear corduroy trousers. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof, for not only did we all survive those days but many of us have remained together as a team ever since.

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I well remember the evening when my Intelligence Staff told me that they had located the southern flank of the purely German troops; the remainder of the front to the south was held by Italians. This was exactly what we wanted. You know what happened.

Just as these Imperial soldiers had shared together the heat of battle, so were they and their homelands able to share the joys of victory - a victory not due to numerical superiority, but to the courage and skill of the sons of Britain and her Empire. This time the glory was all our own. Previous stains on our fame were effaced. Yet the pleasure with which the good news was received must not be ascribed solely or chiefly to national pride. Our island was safe. The corner had been turned. The black clouds had been rolled away and the future lay bright before us. [When Mr. Churchill came out to the desert] just as we were starting to prepare for our great task, I asked him to write in my diary. He wrote <sup>these words</sup> "May the Eighth Army have the fame and fortune it will surely <sup>and he wrote those words towards the end of August and -</sup> deserve". - I feel <sup>we</sup> can justly say <sup>that the 8th Army did deserve - -</sup> it did deserve both the fame and the fortune that it won that day: and later.

Now I was quite determined that we could not have had this dinner here tonight without Mr. Churchill (applause). Pan down to Churchill & back to Monty again. -

B. L. M.

Well now - we may have been the <sup>23 - 10 - 45.</sup> boulders of ~~the~~ victory but I think we would all agree that he was the architect. - the architect of victory (applause).