FIELD MARSHAL ERWIN ROMMEL, A MIRAGE IN THE AFRICAN DESERT

A Little More Than Mortal

The Rommel Legend Insures The Desert Fox His Niche In Olympus's Military Zone

By JAMES S. POPE

THE legend of Rommel is classic in the fullest sense. Nothing is lacking to insure the wily Nazi field marshal his place in the military zone of Olympus, now that Desmond Young has written his story with such Homeric gusto and such infinite detail.

First were the fabulous deeds in the African desert, always a little more than mortal, very like the Iliad. Then followed the bitter decline in Normandy, with undertones of demons as well as demigods. Finally came that fantastic and abortive plot against Hitler which brought Rommel in full panoply to his doom, a doom as darkly tragic as any the Greeks ever hatched up for an A-1 hero.

Rommel's mythological stature was made plain rather early in the game, when Field Marshal (then General) Sir Claude Auchinleck felt it necessary to post this order at his desert headquarters:

> There exists the real danger that our friend Rommel is becoming a kind of magician or bogeyman to our troops, who are talking far too much about him. Even if he were a superman it would be undesirable that our men should credit him with supernatural powers. . . . I wish you to dispel by all possible means the idea that Rommel represents something more than an ordinary German general. . . .

But he did. The stocky, cocky figure streaking through the dust in a staff car, appearing and disappearing like a mirage, leaving disruption and

ROMMEL: THE DESERT FOX. By Desmond Young. 264 pp. Harper & Bros. $3.50.

confusion behind him, was not easily to be reduced to earthly proportions in the minds of enemy troops. (In the back of this book is the master's complete set of rules for desert warfare, like Jones on golf or Culbertson on bridge.)

A Grim Melodrama

For readers who have no plans for desert fighting, the best of the book is the chapter dealing with the grim melodrama of that final day in October, 1944. Rommel was almost recovered from his dire battle wounds. To his home came two generals from Hitler. According to the author, who tells this part of the story with brilliant clarity of detail, and quite convincingly, they offered Rommel the choice of swallowing poison, so it could be called a natural death, or of having his family tortured. He got in the car with them, drove away and had taken the fatal dose in a matter of minutes.

And though that climax seemed a more absolute ending of an epoch than even Hitler's supposed suicide, the event had a curious afterglow in the news a few days ago.

In Bonn, our General Hays sat down to dinner with General Hans Speidel to talk about a new German army. The same Speidel, mind you, who was Rommel's chief of staff during the Normandy campaign, who backed Rommel's efforts to persuade Hitler to surrender, and who was mainly responsible for drawing Rommel into the plot to force a surrender.

Rommel Scorned Politics

Just how far Rommel went in his "disloyal" thoughts will remain in dispute. Brigadier Young thinks he was ignorant of a scheme to kill Hitler, and of the plan to make him (Rommel) the president of a new state. That is quite possible, as the Desert Fox was never smart politically, and indeed scorned political wiles.

The book raises many timely issues, and will bring some controversy. In England, where it was published a year ago and became a best-seller, many thought the author glamorized Rommel. This impression is easily gained because of the book's reverence for the old traditions of military chivalry.

Brigadier Young holds the view of the professional soldier, milleniums old. The war in North Africa was "a gentleman's war." Rommel "took pride in the clean record of his troops." When he thought the British Army was being unethical, he wrote indignant notes. And commanders of the two forces exchanged amenities like coaches at a bowl game.

Chivalry Would Help

This chummy attitude outraged General Eisenhower, and his view is quoted very fairly by Young. The notion that soldiers are comrades-in-arms was not for Ike, who had written in "Crusade In Europe" that "for me, World War II was far too personal a thing to entertain such feelings. . . . The forces that stood for human good . . . were confronted by a completely evil conspiracy."

The trend of modern opinion is against the military tradition. War generally is considered nowadays a high crime, and aggressive warriors criminals. But as long as we fight at all, it certainly can't hurt anything to have some chivalry involved. A little would have helped in Korea.

Brigadier Young and Mrs. Young (to whom he gives much of the credit for his book) have visited Louisville twice. They were here last May as Derby guests of Mr. and Mrs. Elbert Gary Sutcliffe. The brigadier was himself in the North African campaign, was captured and imprisoned in Italy for many months.

The introduction, which I liked very much, is from one soldier I know to be a great gentleman, Auchinleck. He suffered most from Rommel, and should have had the glory of frustrating him at last, when additional men and weapons made Rommel's position untenable.

BILL LADD'S Almanac

Now it can be told: Autry's benefit show for March of Dimes is coming January 30

PROBABLY the largest "teaser" ad in history appeared in last Sunday's Courier-Journal.

The thing ran pretty wide and even deeper, and dealt with the impending appearance of Gene Autry, Smiley Burnett, Champion and Little Champ, the Jemez Indians from New Mexico and numerous other attractions.

They will be here for two shows, half the proceeds going to the March of Dimes fund. Shows are 2 and 8 p.m.

Aside from that, you had your choice, according to the ad. No date.

Well, we carried on great research, consisting of opening our mail from Florian E. "Sandy" Wood, in order to find out when the show was going to be here.

At Last, The Date

The date, we find, is January 30.

Autry does a television show weekly, and the film of this opera is telecast over WAVE-TV on Sunday afternoons. We have not exposed ourselves to it recently, having been confused by Hopalong Cassidy, "Gabby" Hayes and other ersatz cowboys to the point where we felt we were up to here in cow opera and couldn't go on.

The Autry films which are used on TV originate at a place called Pioneertown, Cal. This is only 30 miles from Palm Springs, where the wealthy stars roll in their lucre. Thus in a mere 30 miles, you can watch the stars at their various activities from whatever goes on in Palm Springs to seeing Autry kissing his horse and going off into each setting sun.

Pioneertown has some 75 souls. These double as weedy rustlers, murderers, fair maiden-slayers and worse during the day. At night, they repair to Los Angeles, Hollywood and possibly Palm Springs, where they are said to be very kind to their mothers.

There's Tumbleweed, Too

Pioneertown was built about three years ago in the image of a frontier joint of about 1880, and is used for locale of movies. There are some 80 acres in the limits, and tumbleweed is said to tumble about the alleged streets.

Dried and cracked arroyos are stashed about, pine forests, cactus (not Tom Brooks) and sagebrush. The only compromise with mid-Twentieth Century is a juke box in the Golden Stallion. On this are placed some of Mr. Autry's more sensational records. He can be heard bleating about getting back in the saddle at most hours of the day and night.

No automobiles are allowed in town. It is believed that a cayuse starting out on his day's work chasing down an 1880 rustler or being kissed by his chauffeur would be out of place alongside some extra hand's 1951 convertible.

Take Your Choice

In the center of the street is a rock trough. The horses drink here, though their operators prefer the Golden Stallion, having become immune to Mr. Autry's vocal art. In the middle of the trough is a pole with a weighty confusion of signs pointing off into all directions. It says, for instance, that Cape Horn is 7,000 miles; Cheyenne, 1,211; Sutter's Creek (or crick as in your back), 486; Virginia City, 529; Chisholm Trail, 1,196; Dodge City, 1,300, and Tombstone, 496.

No mention is made here of

AUTRY AND FRIEND

Palm Springs—or, for that matter, of Hollywood, which fathered the joint, although Pioneertown looks older than the old man.

There is a bowling palace with A.B.C.-approved alleys where the cowpokes can shoot the ten pin when it hangs. A Post Office was opened in the bowling alley last year.

Mr. Wood thinks this would be of interest to our reader. He thinks the March of Dimes should have a mention in our "august" column.

But will it do any good to wait until August?

The show is January 30.

U.S. Is Putting Jason In Shade

WASHINGTON—As the United States begins its partial mobilization program, Uncle Sam is loosening his purse strings to enter the international market in an expensive quest for large supplies of wool, which today is truly the "golden fleece."

A compelling reason for the intensive buying program is indicated by the recent disclosure that the country has failed to build an adequate stockpile of wool to meet the present emergency. Meanwhile, prices for this vital commodity have soared to the highest level in history, the National Geographic Society reports.

Although practically every nation grows some wool, most of it comes from Southern Hemisphere countries — Australia, Argentina, New Zealand, South Africa and Uruguay. Australia is the world's leader, accounting for about one fourth of the international supply. Large producers in the Northern Hemisphere are the United States, Great Britain, Spain, France and Italy.

But U. S. demand for wool has far outdistanced the domestic supply. The nation normally consumes about 800,000,000 pounds annually; domestic sources yield little more than a fourth of that amount. At Boston, long a center of wool-trade activity, prices in recent weeks have risen to as much as $3 a pound for certain good grades of cleaned wool.

THE LATIN NAME for the cacao tree—from which chocolate is derived—is Theobroma cacao, meaning "food of the gods."

The Neighbors

By George Clark

"Well, what is our next little patient—a hitter, spitter or biter?"

It's Time Truman Felt Some of This Tax Pain

By ROBERT C. RUARK

NEW YORK.—"Taxing until it hurts" is a relatively empty phrase, since I never knew a man to squirm with pleasure when suddenly chopped off at the hip pocket. But as an individual, you find it easy to resent the use of that phrase in Harry Truman's mouth.

The man wants another 16 billion extra. This drives the annual tax nut to beyond 70 billion skins. These dollars come, directly or indirectly, from individuals. I am an individual. You are an individual. And so is Harry S. Truman.

In his recent budget speech, Mr. Truman has exhorted the people to pare another necessity off the weekly cash outlay in order to meet the fresh demands of Government and defense. I will be pleased to break out the peeler and pare with the other kids, but in this instance I want it unanimous.

Fee 'Off The Top'

Unanimous includes Mr. Truman, who knocks off a cash grab of 50 lovely G-notes each and every—gorgeous thousand-dollar bills because they are subject neither to scrutiny, account, nor the itching palm of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

This is a fee the gamblers describe as "off the top," meaning that it is literally in large, coarse bills and therefore is not liable to the tax take. It is the exempt tip they voted Harry a couple of years back, and which he eagerly endorsed.

The way we heave the scratch around, I do not care if they pay Harry a million a year, because the lumps of being President demand a big salary. They can give him another million in expenses, if needed, and no squawk. But tax him they must.

Truman Must Ache, Too

As the symbolic man—as Mister America, as the leader, the boss, the mirror of us all—the fellow has just plain got to be subservient to the laws that govern us all, or admit that no American can subsist on his earnings. If you and I are to be taxed until it hurts, then Mister Truman has some aches coming, too. Such as making that tax-free, nonaccountable $50,000 a year—which he receives in addition to his salary and equipment and expenses—subject to the same laws on income that afflict everybody else in the land.

If Mr. Truman draws a gun, in a fit of anger at a critic, and shoots him dead, then you would expect the law to take its course, with an indictment for murder, a trial by jury, and a just and honest sentence by a judge who awaits the beck of the 12 good men. This is law—"all men are created free and equal."

The free and equal business includes Presidents, and it works both ways. For the boons you accept the penalties; and it seems to me you cannot except in any case, including the case of the President of the United States. Soldiers pay taxes on their earnings, too, you know.

Saying he survives his term, Mr. Truman will have been able to squirrel away $200,000 of nontaxable money for the four years, outside his salary, expenses and perquisites—yachts, trains, cars,

'FEED THE KITTY!'

planes and such similar truck. Nobody else alive can line up that much from earned income under the current tax structure, which the beamish boy is shouting to increase.

Let Everyone Hurt

Except, of course, General of the Army Eisenhower, who was allowed a capital-gains interpretation on about $750,000 revenue from a book he wrote about the war. Other ex-soldiers who wrote books got slashed for the regular earned-income percentage.

Both Truman's free $50,000 annually, and Eisenhower's allowance of capital gains, represent a gross insult to the other people who work at all trades, pay taxes, and now are told to take another reef in their belts.

We'll haul taut joyfully, if it applies to all. But if they tax me till it hurts, I want the hurt spread out to everybody. Including Harry. Including Ike. We're all in the same business. American citizenship.

"THE JEWELRY TRADE feels the tin shortage." And if worse comes to worst the dressy miss may be asked to flatten her old costume pieces and set them out for the salvage pickup.

Today's Opinion

Understanding Britain Is Part of Our Headache

By JOSEPH and STEWART ALSOP

WASHINGTON—One of the chief responsibilities (and worst headaches) of leadership in a grand alliance is trying to understand what makes your allies tick. The Korean cease-fire resolution of the United Nations, which our diplomats rather feebly accepted as a concession to our allies' feelings, strongly poses the problem.

Everyone in America is asking, "Why the devil should everyone else hanker to appease the Chinese Communists in this groveling way, when Chinese troops are attacking our forces in Korea?"

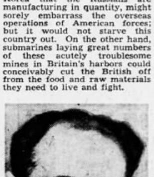
But take the case of the British. This is the simplest case and also the most important to us, since the British control about three fourths of the air bases we must use, in event of war, to send our strategic aviation against the Soviet Union.

Britain's Danger Acute

First of all, Britain is a small, crowded island, just off the shore of the Eurasian land mass. We are a continent with two oceans between us and any potential Soviet base.

The existing estimated Soviet stockpile of about 25 atomic bombs, and the existing Soviet long-range air force of about 500 imitation B-29's are enough to damage this country but not enough to do us in. Even now, however, the atomic bombs in Soviet hands already constitute a fearful danger to the British Isles.

Again the German pressure-mine, which we have learned in Korea that the Russians are manufacturing in quantity, might sorely embarrass the overseas operations of American forces; but it would not starve this country out. On the other hand, submarines laying great numbers of these acutely troublesome mines in Britain's harbors could conceivably cut the British off from the food and raw materials they need to live and fight.



JOHN STRACHEY
Patted Mao's back

In short, although the British have lost none of the courage that made the world their debtor in 1940-41, there are excellent reasons why the British people and the British leaders are markedly less hot-tempered than the American people and the American leaders.

Second, the nature of Britain's situation directly influences their attitude toward the Chinese Communists, encouraging what looks to us like a strong tendency to self-deception.

Because their own danger is so great, they naturally tend to hope that the Chinese are more peaceable and more possible to deal with than any available facts suggest. Because this British danger is in Europe, they inevitably have the most lively horror of any moves that would embroil their main ally, the United States, in a full-scale war with China.

Britain Hopes for Split

These strong, fundamental influences on British views and policy are strengthened in turn by the survival in the Cabinet of the old half-baked "progressive" attiude toward the Chinese Communists. Only a year ago, the Secretary for War, John Strachey, could acutally say that the regime of Mao Tse-tung would "probably be the best Government China had had in 5,000 years."

For all these reasons, the British cling to the opinion that Chinese Communism is "national Communism" and not "Moscow Communism," and that a split between Moscow and Peking can somehow be encouraged. They will not change their minds on this point unless and until the Chinese launch their expected onslaught against Southeast Asia.

Korea Explained

Third, the British explain away the rather glaring evidence of Korea by saying that we touched the Chinese on their most sensitive strategic spot, by allowing General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to drive to the Korean border.

They argue that the original Chinese intervention in October (after which, the Chinese forces rather surprisingly recoiled without exploiting their victory) was in the nature of a sharp warning to keep away from the border.

Fourth, and finally, the former close Anglo-American collaboration has dangerously lapsed, for many reasons and in many different ways, during the past two years. Thus British understanding of American motives and purposes has weakened to the point disclosed by Prime Minister Attlee's hasty trip to prevent President Truman from casually dropping any atomic bombs.

None of this means that the British viewpoint is right, or that these reporters in any sense agree with it. Unfortunately, however, it is necessary to remember General of the Army Marshall's favorite warning against "fighting the problem."

Copyright, 1951

YOUR DOLLARS are WORTH MORE on

SUMMERS-HERRMANN

A-1 Used Cars!

WINTERIZED!

In beauty, in quality, in performance, in value . . . you'll find nothing better on the market than a Summers-Herrmann A-1 Used Car. Come in, let us prove it!

From $399 To $1899

Engines tuned for top winter performance. Winter lubrication and oil. Anti-freeze. Tires, lights, glass safety-checked.

1949 WILLYS JEEPSTER—Heater, overdrive; yellow; with white side-wall tires ________ $1299	1949 COMMANDER STUDEBAKER 2-door sedan; radio, heater and overdrive; green; this car is like new with 6,900 actual miles; spare tire never been on the ground; you must see it.	1950 BUICK SPECIAL; robin egg blue 2-door sedanette; radio, heater, plastic seat covers; white wall tires and low mileage $1899 COME IN AND STEAL THIS ONE
1949 FORD 2-Door Sedan—Heater; 8 cylinder ___ $1099	1941 FORD 2-Door Sedan—Radio and heater; V-8 super de Luxe _______ $399	1941 PLYMOUTH 4-Door—Metallic blue; heater ________ $449
1950 STUDEBAKER 2-Door Sedan—Heater and like new; special _____ $1499	1946 FORD 2-Door—8-cylinder; radio and heater; a real nice buy ____ $799	1950 FORD ½-Ton Pickup—V-8, with radio and heater; low mileage; front and back bumper; can't beat this for _________ $1299

SUMMERS-HERRMANN INC.

Open Eves. Till 9:00 WA 3351 Sundays Till 6:00 WA 3355

3rd and Breckinridge

FORD CORNER