

Interview with Montgomery

Monty came into the house 10 minutes before his appointment with us. We were taken into his office and introduced to him. He is a slight man, thin, weighs about 140 pounds, height about 5' 6", sharp blue eyes, sharp features, age about 53. He was wearing tan corduroy trousers, a blue sweater over a tan Army shirt. His collar was open at the neck, no tie. After being introduced Monty walked over to a bird cage, opened the cage, and a canary perched itself upon his forefinger while Monty fed him lettuce.

During the bird feeding he turned to us and said, "What do you want of me?" We explained to him that we had called to pay our respects and would like to discuss the present situation in Germany.

When we were seated in comfortable chairs, Monty began to talk. He said, "We are facing the battle of the winter which we must win. We have 25,000,000 people in the British occupation zone, which, as you know, is the Ruhr. Ordinarily these people consume 12,000,000 tons of food yearly and gross 8,000,000 tons. To start off with, they are going to be 4,000,000 short this winter. These people must live off their fat. Their bridges, canals, and transportation system have been knocked out. Ike (meaning Eisenhower) has the scenery; I have the Ruhr.

"The displaced person problem is a serious one. We have 1,500,000 D.P.s (displaced persons) roaming the countryside. These people are Poles, Czechs, and other slave laborers who were brought into Germany from the conquered countries. They believe that they are entitled to live off the Germans. Accordingly there is loot, rape and murder ever present. This winter the problem will be intense, as the German soldiers who are being discharged and are returning home to their farms are bound to organize bands of brigands of about 50 men to repel the looting of the D.P.s. They will use knives, clubs, and, in many instances, cached forbidden firearms.

"We must feed the Germans, as they are human beings.

“An Army usually loots for 2 or 3 days after conquering a territory—Russia has been systematically looting Germany for 3 months.

“The Axis made two major mistakes:

- 1) The Germans invading Russia,
- 2) The Japanese war on your country.

“The Germans subsequently made three great battle mistakes:

- 1) After we landed in France, they should not have defended Normandy but should have dropped back behind the Seine,
- 2) They never should have created an offense at the Bastogne bulge,
- 3) They should not have defended the west bank of the Rhine but rather should have dropped back to its east bank and made their stand there.”

Montgomery on Battle of El Alamein

We asked him to tell us about the African battle of El Alamein.

He said that all of the writers of books and all of the so-called reportorial strategists had never given the true facts of this battle, that he alone had all of the facts.

“The German line,” he went on, “had integrated companies or divisions of Germans and Italians side by side. The Italians are notably bad fighters. Rommel was expecting an attack from his flank on the sea and this attack would have been tough on him. I hit him on his right, or sea flank. He pulled all of his good German fighters from out of his integrated line to his sea flank, then I gave him a left hook and ran around to the left. Rommel was not as good a General as von Runstedt, who is the best General I ever fought against.

“Generals must practice morale building. Before the invasion of France, everyone knew there was going to be an invasion, as it had been in the newspapers for three months. I rode on the hood of a jeep throughout England talking to troops, building confi-