

3/9/43 - No. 32

Not on Any Account To Be

Published in British Evening Papers'

NOT TO BE BROADCAST BEFORE 00.30 B.S.T. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1943

HAPPY SOLDIERS SMOKE GENERAL'S CIGARETTES

By Alan Moorhead, representing the Combined British Press

At an Invasion Port

The team under General Eisenhower is the most experienced team yet we have sent to war. In the big hall of a mountain villa General Eisenhower pinned an American decoration on to General Montgomery's open necked shirt and then a cluster of generals got together over their maps. General Eisenhower stayed talking long after General Montgomery's usual time.

Every day General Montgomery has been out among the troops. He made eleven speeches one day. His usual method is to run down the road among the army camps until he sees something interesting. The troops swarm round his car at once. It is a simple business - just questions like, "What is your unit, and what have you been doing?" But the effect of it on the troops is astonishing. A senior American General said to me; "I believe Montgomery can get twice as much out of his men as any other Commander."

I cannot ever remember seeing before that look of shining excitement in the faces of the soldiers as they smoke the General's cigarettes and talk about the war. When everything in the army was set General Montgomery gathered his senior generals and staff officers and gave them a straight lecture on what was wanted and how it was to be done. Then he wrote and recorded his final order of the day to the troops.

Tonight both he and the army are ready for battle. The troops are not going in blind. The landing places are known and have been thoroughly charted. The commander of every invasion barge has most detailed maps. He knows pretty well just what his particular beach is going to be like and he may even have an idea of what sort of opposition he is going to strike.

The country we are invading is probably the most difficult and hazardous we have tackled this war. The majority of the sea plains are only a mile or two wide at the most. Every part of the pebbly beaches is overlooked by high ground within easy machine gun range of the shore. There are very few places in which an invading army can fan out to get defence in depth and the use of tanks.

The great brown bare backbone of the Appenines rises from the very toe of Italy and continues north indefinitely. At three places - on the toe, the ball of the foot, and in the ankle - the mountains rise to 6,000 feet. For the most part these mountains are passable only by narrow hill tracks, impossible for tanks and first rate for defence. The main road hugs the coast right round the peninsular. It runs over dozens of river beds and through scores of white stone villages. Half a dozen secondary roads cut across the foot, but they are very steep and sinuous.

For the most part the Italian civilians seem to have scattered to the hills. They have been up there for weeks past waiting in dread for the invasion. They will be safe enough provided they keep off the roads and out of the villages. This volcanic country is very dry at this time of the year. The rains do not