

YANK

THE ARMY



WEEKLY

As the curtain rose on the last act of the great drama, and the principal characters stepped into their roles, an expectant world audience rose to applaud the man who once said he had—

“...an urgent date with GERMANY”



OUT of this past week of war—a week whose great events included the relentless pounding of the Germans' winter defense line in White Russia, the bloody inch by inch advance of the 5th and 8th Armies in Italy, and the stepping up in pace and strength of Allied smashes on Japanese strongholds in the Pacific—came the announcement of the new top leadership which will direct the frontal assault on Hitler's European prison.

These are the names of a winning combination—General Dwight D. Eisenhower as supreme commander, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, deputy supreme commander, General Sir Bernard Montgomery commanding the British armies, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson in charge in the Mediterranean, General Sir Harold Alexander as over-all chief of operations in Italy, Lieutenant General Carl Spaatz in command of American strategic bombing against the German homeland.

These names belong to men who led armies to victory in Africa, and set the framework in Italy within which Germany faces defeat. They bridge the gap between the dark days of German advances deep into Russia and toward Alexandria, and the rounding-up of the remains of the Afrika Korps at Cape Bon. And eventually they may be the names of the men who will give Allied soldiers their last marching orders—toward home.

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GENERAL SIR HAROLD ALEXANDER,
Commander-in-Chief of Allied Armies in Italy.

In supreme command is General "Ike" Eisenhower, who, in his busier moments engineered the gigantic landing operations in North Africa and Sicily, who smoothed out the difficulties of cooperation among British, American, and French commanders. In his lighter moments this blond, friendly, yet absolutely professional soldier is something of a good poker player. Twenty-eight years is the span of his military career—from 1915 until today. And within that span he has risen from a 2nd lieutenant at the age of 25 to supreme commander, at 53, of one of the greatest military undertakings ever to confront any man.

In a superficial way, General "Ike's" advancement from a 2nd lieutenant in World War I to a supreme commander in World War II might be likened to the career of a certain corporal in World War I who rose to supreme command over the lives (and the deaths, millions of them) of the German Reich in World War II. But this unwelcome parallel in the careers of General "Ike" and Adolf Hitler ends with the contemplation of a single large fact—namely that "Ike" is going to win a war for democracy and the little corporal is going to lose a war for Fascism.

Essentially, the appointment of "Ike" Eisenhower embodies an enormous idea. For, as he steps into his new job, he becomes the first American ever destined to stand on the soil of Europe as a supreme commander of a military expedition that combines armies of our own and other nations.

In many, many ways the Nazis must find the new leader of the Allies in the west an extremely tough dose to swallow. First of all he showed them in Africa that there are brainy military strategists outside the Wilhelmstrasse. Secondly, the ancestry of General "Ike" is one of those mixed ancestries so distasteful to the Nazi "bloodline" experts. The General's family left Germany in the middle of the 17th century and lived in Switzerland for a while. "Ike's" own branch of the family then came overseas and settled in the Lancaster-York region of Pennsylvania. Later, the family went westward to Kansas in the 1870s and '80s where David J. Eisenhower, father of the General, married Ida Elizabeth Stover, who came of English stock.

With English, Scotch-Irish and German blood in his veins, General "Ike" becomes, by Nazi standards, one of the "inferior" men who is making life particularly difficult for the "Master Race."

WHAT must be even tougher for the Germans to take is that the General is not one of those traditional Army men such as the Germans have bred for hundreds of years in Prussia. It is even known that the General reads books—not only military stuff

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into which he has dug deeply enough, but also funny books, and books of a social character. Also he believes in allegiance to the democratic idea, in which no German general in his right mind has ever been known to believe.

This lean-faced, scholarly "Ike" Eisenhower with the eyeglasses and the smile that seems to come so easily is a professional, trained soldier, a West Pointer. But his father was no military man before him. David Eisenhower was a farmer, engineer and icemaker. And the General, as a boy, went through the public and high schools of Abilene, Kansas. He worked as a cowpuncher, ditchdigger, and farmer and took a turn at professional baseball.

But it isn't altogether true to say that the General does not come out of a military tradition. It's a tradition all right, but not of the German kind. At different, critical periods America has produced her first-rate military men. "Old Hickory" Andrew Jackson, a border Indian fighter and hero of the Battle of New Orleans, was one of them. Ulysses S. Grant, a West Pointer who went back to his father's leather business in Illinois, was another. Grant leaped with great speed from lieutenant to commanding general in the Civil War.

Our tradition has always produced first-rate commanders under the pressure of events. And that is the tradition behind General "Ike" who is "an affable and genial man . . . keenly and personally interested in waging war against the Nazis. Everything about Hitler is abhorrent to him."

As far as the American enlisted man is concerned, he will go into battle under the command of a winner. General "Ike" is the man who had the responsibility of planning the successful campaigns of North Africa and Sicily. In the two amphibious operations (the landings in North Africa and Sicily), he demonstrated his mastery of the details of modern warfare. These were operations which required the perfect co-ordination and timing of men, ships and planes on a scale never before attempted in military history.

The attack on Sicily which finally knocked out Italy and made a homeless wanderer of a certain Mr. Mussolini who could find hospitality only in the lion's mouth of Berlin, took 38 days. It was featured by tremendous and sustained aerial attack, by the follow-up of artillery, and then men and tanks on a scale never before mustered up by the Anglo-American forces. It must have told the Nazis that here at last was the successful combination of leaders, organization and materiel that would eventually destroy them.

This, then, is the new supreme boss, a man of decision, who knows and has said that men will be lost, but who also knows how to win, who "had to make up his mind on how he should dispose of his forces during the lull (during a critical battle in Tunisia). Should he hold on to what he had and make the Germans pay for every yard they advanced? Or should he clear out of Tunisia and regroup in Algeria? He chose to hold on to what he had . . . He went forward to the front many times in a Flying Fortress and held conferences under the wing of the plane on rainy days. On jeep trips to the front he sometimes covered as much as 200 miles a day."

The new supreme commander was, up to a year ago, a colonel. In one swift jump he became permanent major general; his temporary rank is full general. "Like Hollywood, the Army likes to type its officers." "Ike" was considered solely the "brainy" desk-type of general. But in North Africa and Sicily his desk was next door to the heavy guns.

From 1915 until December 7th, 1941, he was a quiet, unpublicized officer, deep in military studies mostly, with time out for training command posts. He never got overseas during World War I but commanded tank troops at Camp Dix, and the men whom he sent off to France were our first thoroughly trained tank units. He was slated to leave for France on a certain November 12th, but the Armistice took place November 11th.

After the war, he attended Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Army War College in Washington, and from this

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schooling he emerged with top honors.

In Manila he was adviser to General MacArthur. After Pearl Harbor all that long training and ability of General "Ike" came to the surface and showed. In the Louisiana maneuvers in the fall of 1941 he demonstrated field leadership in a manner that could not be ignored. Soon after, the plums began to fall.

On a single day's notice, General Marshall picked him as Commander of U. S. Forces in the ETO and he was off to London. The largest part of the ETO job at that time was to harmonize the mutual tasks of American and British top-officers. It was this diplomatic ability, among other things, which led to his selection as commander in charge of the Allied landings in North Africa. Three months after that day in November 1942, he was in supreme command in North Africa of all Allied operations. And in May, 1943, he was handing the peace terms to Marshal Badoglio.

He had led the Allies in the knockout of Italy from the war. With himself as co-ordinating head, and Montgomery, Alexander and Patton as the field generals, the seasoned Anglo-American Armies smashed Mussolini's dream of empire. General "Ike" had been in from the dark beginnings, to the time when seasoned American veterans marched with the skilled British 8th and 1st Armies through Sicily.

General Eisenhower's rise is surely without parallel in American military history. From colonel to supreme commander and full general in two years—from the "mock" war maneuvers in the delta country of Louisiana to the real maneuvers that face him now as he must figure out the when and how of the attack that must drive to the very heart of Nazi Europe—that is his story.

From North Africa and Italy, preceding the General, the enlisted man's grapevine has already brought the advance news that General Ike "ain't chicken," that he hates red tape and is an expert at getting things done quickly and to the point, that junior officers who dawdle at the door of his office instead of stating their business get hell bawled out of them, that he is an easily accessible general. This doesn't mean that a million G.I.s can beat a path to his door, because he's a pretty busy man. But it does mean that if you happen to run across him during one of those inspection tours that generals make once in a while, he will not bite your head off.

Now the last and toughest stage of the war is coming up. The General has said so, and he has seemed to know about things all along the way. There will be men going down and there will be awards—awards to the men of the line, for that is how the General has handed out awards in the past. Though General "Ike" has had experience in most of the branches of warfare, he has never lost sight of the fact that the soldier is the key figure in battle rather than the machine.

"You can fill a battlefield with all the goldarned machines that ever worked and you would still need tough human beings . . . It is making no odious comparisons with any other branch of the service to say that the dirtiest, hardest and most continuously dangerous duty is the job of the foot soldier . . . Every citizen of the United States has a right to know how important to our victories are the fighting



DRESS REHEARSAL. Remnants of Rommel's Afrika Korps, scrambling smartly to the rear of Allied lines in Tunisia last May, set the pace their goose-stepping comrades are doomed to follow in the month to come.

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spirit, the sense of duty and the gallantry and fortitude of our ground forces. More and more in modern warfare killing is done at a distance. But he (the foot soldier) is the only one whose business it is to close in primeval hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. Whatever other branches may do to soften up and break down the enemy, the war will be won when the infantry, en masse, enters the enemy's last stronghold. On the way to this victorious encampment the foot soldier fights and bivouacs in fearful heat or cold, in seas of mud, hurricanes of sand or dust, enduring hunger and thirst and cruel fatigue, torment of insects and the threats of wounds and death. For elite divisions there is little repose."

SOME correspondents have called the General "a partisan of air-power"—of "mechanized units"—but it appears clear that the General is really just a partisan of victory and of any and all weapons needed for victory.

"You have to accumulate power you need and hit the enemy at a crucial, vital point with everything you've got."

Now General "Ike" will again have his desk near the front line—near enough so that he can hear Joe's gripes through all the shuffling of official papers.

And so, chum, this looks like *it*.

"I have an urgent date with Germany," says "Ike" Eisenhower.



GENERAL SIR HENRY MAITLAND WILSON,
Supreme Allied Commander in Mediterranean.

YANK

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