

PM

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The Man Who Stops Rommel



Lt. Gen. Sir Leslie Moreshead

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Exclusive

EL ALAMEIN, Aug. 8.—A gallant company of British, Australian, New Zealand, South African and Indian soldiers waits now in the hot yellow desert's strange silence for the next phase in the battle for Egypt and the Middle East. Who will start it we can only guess. We only know it will be most decisive.

The Australian commander is Lt. Gen. Sir Leslie Moreshead, a smallish, red-faced, leathernecked man who is beyond question one of the ablest fighting generals the United Nations have. He is the man who, with his troops, held Tobruk for eight months last year.

He entered the last war as a private and ended it commanding a battalion.

The Germans apparently are calling him "Ali Baba Moreshead." We were not able to mention the Australian's return to the desert early last month in our darkest hour until the enemy had learned of it. He learned with a shock. He expected exhausted men, but met fresh tigers. The German radio sneered:

"Ali Baba Moreshead and his 20,000 thieves have arrived in the land of the Pharoahs."

So now the Aussies sing:

"Old Jerry had us on the run, the news was far from hot;

He had his foot in Egypt and the sphinx was on the spot.

The C. in C. with back to wall sent signals out in sheaves

To Ali Baba Moreshead and his 20,000 thieves.

So Leslie called his general staff, he whispered in their ears.

His message went to Auchinleck, 'Drink and drown your fears,

We'll make that blanker Rommel think he's got the desert heaves

With Ali Baba Moreshead and his 20,000 thieves.'"

The word *thieves* derives from a slander assiduously spread by the Germans that these brown, tough, brave but actually very kindhearted men are looters and pilferers.