

Montgomery and Eisenhower's British Officers

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ABSTRACT

When the British and American Governments established an Allied Expeditionary Force to liberate Nazi occupied Western Europe in the Second World War, General Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander and General Montgomery appointed to command British ground forces and, for the initial stages of the operation, all ground forces. Senior British Army officers, Lieutenant-General F. E. Morgan, formerly Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC), and three officers from the Mediterranean theatre, Lieutenant-General K. Strong, Major-General H. Gale and Major-General J. Whiteley, served at Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the aggressively hostile attitude of Montgomery towards the British officers, to analyse the reasons for it and to consider whether it was justified.

The entry of the United States into the Second World War in December 1941 provided an opportunity for a joint command to undertake a very large and complex military operation, the invasion of Nazi occupied Western Europe. Britain would be the base for the operation and substantial British and American forces would be involved.

At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt set up an integrated Allied planning staff with a view to preparing the invasion. In April 1943, Lieutenant-General Frederick Morgan was appointed Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC) for the operation, an appointment approved by Churchill following a lunch with Morgan at Chequers. Eight months later, in December 1943, General Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander and the staff at COSSAC, including Morgan, merged into Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). That raised the possibility of British Army officers owing their loyalty not to a British commander but to an American Supreme Commander. General Montgomery became commander of British ground forces for the operation (OVERLORD) and overall ground force commander for its initial stages.

The object of this paper is to describe the hostile attitude of Montgomery to the British Army officers at Eisenhower's headquarters, to analyse the reasons for it and to consider whether his attitude and criticisms were justified. That first requires some consideration of the wartime roles of Montgomery and Morgan, along with the structure and work of COSSAC under Morgan and of SHAEF under Eisenhower. Primary sources include the autobiographies of Montgomery,¹ Morgan,² and Eisenhower,³ accounts from other British officers at SHAEF and 21st Army Group, from Captain Butcher, Eisenhower's aide⁴, interviews conducted after the war by Forrest C. Pogue, US Official Historian,⁵ interviews of Morgan by Chester Wilmot,⁶ the Alanbrooke diaries,⁷ Montgomery's papers at the Imperial War Museum (IWM) and The National Archives (TNA), papers deposited by Morgan's family at the IWM, other records at the Liddell Hart Centre (LHC) and Morgan's correspondence.

After the war, a war of words developed about some aspects of the campaign but, save for Montgomery's *Memoirs*, and to some extent Nigel Hamilton's biography of Montgomery it does not much relate to the present topic which is not considered specifically in them. Because there is little that is self-serving in Morgan's autobiographical works and virtually no criticism in other works of the accuracy of his detailed accounts of events, they are a valuable source.

An attempt at a joint allied command had been made during the First World War when, during the German offensive in 1918, Marshal Foch was appointed Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Allied forces on the Western Front on 14 April, with a small staff. However, it gave him 'no real powers of command'. General Pershing, the

¹ *Memoirs of Field-Marshal Montgomery*, (London: Fontana, 1960). (1st ed. London: Collins, 1958).

² Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Morgan, *Overture to Overlord*, (New York: Doubleday, 1950; and *Peace and War: A Soldier's Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961).

³ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, (London: Heinemann, 1948).

⁴ Captain Harry C. Butcher, *Three Years with Eisenhower*, (London: Heinemann, 1946).

⁵ Interview of Morgan kindly supplied by Dr Michael Neiberg, United States Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, (USMHI). Other interview records, held at USMHI, are cited in published works, including D.K.R. Crosswell's *Beetle, The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010) and Nigel Hamilton's three volume biography of Montgomery: Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: Master of the Battlefield 1942-1944*, (London: Sceptre, 1987).

⁶ Liddell Hart Centre (LHC), King's College, London.

⁷ *War Diaries 1939-1945, Field-Marshal Lord Alanbrooke*, ed. Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001).

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American C-in-C, in practice 'continued to keep a tight hold over his troops'.⁸ When Foch reminded Pershing that his appointment had been sanctioned by the President of the United States, Pershing was 'immune against intimidation' and said that he 'will not be coerced'.⁹

During, and even before, his appointment as COSSAC, Morgan was highly regarded in the British Army and in the United States. A former gunner officer, he was first responsible for the defence of the coastlines of Devon and Cornwall and then successively commander of 55th (West Lancashire) Division and 1st Corps. The Corps had a contingent role in the invasion of North West Africa (Operation TORCH). Eisenhower was Commander-in-Chief for TORCH, an early test for the alliance, and Morgan met Eisenhower during its planning. 1st Corps, to be named 125 Force, was to invade Spanish Morocco in the event of the Germans, with or without Spanish connivance, attempting to close the Straits of Gibraltar.

A visit to North Africa as Corps Commander had given Morgan an opportunity to see the combined Anglo-American war machine in action and he claimed to have caught 'the spirit of the thing' from dealing with British colleagues at Eisenhower's headquarters.¹⁰ Prior to his appointment as COSSAC, he had emphasised to the British Chiefs of Staff 'the necessity for complete British-American amalgamation of staff, effort, troops and everything else from the very beginning'.¹¹

The Straits contingency not having arisen, Morgan was told to prepare 1st Corps for the role of 'spearhead of attack against Europe'.¹² He 'astonished [his officers] by expounding upon future landings across the Channel'.¹³ On 6 1944, 1st Corps performed that role and was by then under the command of Lieutenant-General Crocker. A Directive, approved by the British and American Chiefs of Staff, was issued to Morgan, as COSSAC, on 26 April 1943.¹⁴

⁸ B. H. Liddell Hart, *History of the First World War*, (London: Pan Books, 1972), pp. 370-371.

⁹ B. H. Liddell Hart, *Foch: Man of Orleans*, vol. 2, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1937), pp. 330-331.

¹⁰ *Morgan, Overture*, p. 14.

¹¹ *Morgan, Overture*, p. 22.

¹² Pogue interview with Morgan, 8 February 1947, p.3, USMHI.

¹³ Max Hastings, *Overlord*, (London: Book Club Associates by arrangement with Michael Joseph Ltd., 1984), pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ *History of COSSAC*, (USMHI, HMC file no.8-3 6A CA), pp. 2-3.

In spite of his strenuous and persistent representations to have a Supreme Commander appointed, 'a vital necessity', he wrote, he was, until December 1943, a Chief of Staff with a staff but without a Supreme Commander.¹⁵ Morgan had to plan, as Eisenhower later recognized, with the limited means 'specifically allocated by the Combined Chiefs of Staff' (CCS), including as to landing craft.¹⁶ Montgomery too recognized the unfairness of Morgan's situation, later writing that '[Morgan] had to work on information supplied by the Combined Chiefs of Staff as to the forces which would be available; he had no alternative'.¹⁷ A commander would have been, and in the event was, in position to insist upon greater resources.

In the work of COSSAC, Morgan was gratified to perceive 'the speed with which every individual from whatever origin, became seized with the COSSAC spirit as soon as he or she joined us'.¹⁸ 'It was a grand party', said Morgan 'and went with a swing from the start'. He claimed that, by the end of 1943, all remaining traces of national subdivision had been eliminated. Morgan's deputy, Major-General Ray W. Barker, US Army, also encouraged that spirit at all times. Some in the British Army regarded Morgan as having 'sold out to the Yanks'; Barker faced the accusation in the US Army that he had sold out to the British.¹⁹

COSSAC's outline plan for the invasion was approved by the CCS at the Quebec Conference in August 1943 and Churchill accepted that the Supreme Commander should be an American, given the 'very great preponderance of American troops that would be employed after the original landing with equal numbers had been successful'.²⁰ Morgan was then invited by General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff US Army, who became Chairman of the CCS, to visit Washington and he spent six weeks in the United States. His assumption at that time, shared by most in authority, was that Marshall would become Supreme Commander for the invasion.

Marshall was very supportive of Morgan including telling him that, 'If only' Field-Marshal Haig and Foch had 'taken time out' in the First World War to do as Morgan was now doing, things might have gone very differently. He attended Marshall's staff conferences daily and had a one-hour audience with President Roosevelt during which he pleaded that a Supreme Commander be appointed promptly. Morgan was struck by the 'spirit

¹⁵ *History of COSSAC*, p. 37.

¹⁶ Eisenhower's Foreword to *Morgan, Overture*, p. vi, 13 March 1947.

¹⁷ *Montgomery, Memoirs*, p. 224.

¹⁸ *Morgan, Peace and War*, p. 160.

¹⁹ *Morgan, Peace and War*, p. 158.

²⁰ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War, Vol. 5*, (London: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1952), p. 76.

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of victory' he sensed in the United States and the 'colossal force that was being generated'. He returned home 'with a wonderful feeling of uplift'.²¹

With Eisenhower's appointment as Supreme Commander for OVERLORD, came the appointment of General Montgomery as overall Ground Force Commander for the initial stage of the invasion. Lieutenant-General Omar Bradley was to command the US forces. Eisenhower understandably wanted Bedell Smith, who had with served him in the Mediterranean theatre, as his Chief of Staff and Morgan agreed to serve as Bedell Smith's deputy. Air-Marshal Tedder, described by Harry C. Butcher as 'thoroughly Allied',²² became Eisenhower's deputy at SHAEF. Butcher, a US Navy officer, was Eisenhower's aide and confidant throughout the campaign and published diaries soon afterwards.²³

A 'triumvirate' of British officers who had served Eisenhower in the Mediterranean theatre, Lieutenant-General Humphrey Gale, Major-General Whiteley and Major-General Strong were, at Eisenhower's bidding, appointed along with Morgan, to senior positions at SHAEF.²⁴ Gale and Major-General Crawford, US Army, were the principal logistic officers at the Headquarters (G-4, administration), Whiteley, senior British operations officer as deputy to US Major-General Thomas Betts (G-3, operations), and Strong was appointed head of intelligence (G-2). Strong's appointment required persistent representations, including political representations, by Eisenhower and Bedell Smith.²⁵ Montgomery took with him to 21st Army Group his planners and personal staff from 8th Army, with Brigadier later Major-General, Belchem, as head of operations staff.²⁶

Montgomery and Morgan had had dealings before the war while Morgan was GSO I of 3rd Division on Salisbury Plain and Montgomery commanded 9th Infantry Brigade in the Division. At Montgomery's invitation, Morgan lodged alone with him for a week at his headquarters at Government House, Portsmouth and Morgan wrote that it was 'inspiring beyond word to meet this single-minded zealot'. A Divisional invasion exercise was 'meticulously organized' by Montgomery. When asked by Morgan for his ideas on inter-service co-operation, Montgomery said: 'No problem there. I tell them

²¹ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 172 and *Morgan, Overture*, p. 212.

²² Butcher, *Three Years with Eisenhower*, p. 698.

²³ Butcher, *Three Years with Eisenhower*

²⁴ Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 538.

²⁵ Crosswell, *Beetle*, pp. 552-553 and p. 568.

²⁶ Montgomery, *Memoirs*, p. 228.

what to do and they do it'.²⁷ Subsequently, Montgomery rang Morgan 'almost nightly'. Conversations would conclude with 'his recommendations, in full particular, as to what should be done next by myself, our General and the rest of our Division'.²⁸

Of Montgomery's appointment as British Commander and Ground Force Commander for the invasion, Morgan later wrote that he was the 'obvious choice'. He had 'exceptional qualities' and was 'capable of inspiring the whole national effort'.²⁹ Interviewed by Chester Wilmot in August 1944, Morgan said that he had seen the need to 'get rid of people' who saw only difficulties in planning the invasion.³⁰ Interviewed again by Wilmot in November 1945, Morgan said that he had recommended a change of leadership in British forces in the UK: 'Felt that country needed someone to get them over their feeling of complacency. For that reason was willing to have Monty. Went to P.M. Needed someone to arouse British without alarming Germans'.³¹

On arrival in the UK, in January 1944, Montgomery was 'idolized wherever he went' after his victories in North Africa and Italy. With the increasing publicity, added Johnny Henderson, his ADC, 'went what amounted to a growing obsession that he must always be right'.³² Morgan's assessment of Montgomery proved correct; his 'exceptional qualities' took the mainly citizen 21st Army Group through the European campaign, and as far as the River Elbe, with its morale substantially maintained. It emerged from the campaign 'intact and undiminished in size' and Montgomery conducted the campaign, says Stephen Hart, in a 'highly competent manner'.³³ Criticism of aspects of his conduct does not undermine that achievement.

In a radio broadcast to mark the tenth anniversary of the invasion, Morgan said that his first recollection of 1944 was 'a sensation of intense relief that at last I could shed some of the burden of responsibility and that, moreover, into hands of whose competence there could be no doubt'.³⁴ Montgomery's insistence that far more resources be provided for the initial assault than COSSAC had been permitted to

²⁷ Morgan, *Peace and War*, pp. 128-130.

²⁸ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 196.

²⁹ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 185.

³⁰ Wilmot interview with Morgan, August 1944, LHC, LH 15/15/24.

³¹ Wilmot interview with Morgan, November 1945, LHC, Wilmot notebook XXIV.

³² J. R. Henderson, article in *Monty at Close Quarters*: (ed.) T. E. B. Howard, (London: Leo Cooper, 1985), p. 40.

³³ Stephen Hart, *Montgomery and 'Colossal Cracks'*, (Westport, Connecticut, 2000), pp. 185-191.

³⁴ Major John North Papers, LHC, II/3/274.

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deploy was welcomed by COSSAC. Morgan stated that 'the belated arrival of those who were able to wield the necessary priority made possible the expansion we had advocated'.³⁵ His chief planner Brigadier McLean, who had presented COSSAC's plan at Quebec, said that a 'wave of relief came over us'.³⁶

COSSAC's positive attitude to Montgomery was not reciprocated. Though years later he wrote that Morgan had done 'a good job',³⁷ at the time he described Morgan's outline plan as 'useless, quite useless'.³⁸ It was not a 'sound operation of war' and was 'thoroughly bad'.³⁹ At a meeting on 3 January, Montgomery 'gave his harangue on the narrow front'.⁴⁰ 'In grandiose style he said the plan was too restricted', though the next day he moderated his views, agreeing 'that we could not go to Brittany, Dieppe, and West of the Cotentin'.⁴¹ Views critical of COSSAC were expressed by Montgomery at a Supreme Commander's Conference on 21 January 1944. His biographer Alistair Horne considered that he treated Morgan and his team 'in an unfairly dismissive manner'.⁴²

There was undoubtedly merit in some of Montgomery's proposals but his style of presentation was a repeat of his treatment of General Auchinleck when succeeding him as commander of 5th Corps in July 1940 and again as commander of 8th Army on 13 August 1942. His treatment of Auchinleck on the latter occasion 'besmirched', in the opinion of Montgomery's biographer Ronald Lewin, 'what should have been a day of triumph'.⁴³ In all three cases, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that notions of accuracy and of fairness to his predecessor took second place to Montgomery's determination to make clear to all that a new broom was at work.

³⁵ Morgan, *Overture*, p. 253.

³⁶ Pogue interview with McLean, 13 March 1947, USMHI.

³⁷ *Montgomery, Memoirs*, p. 224.

³⁸ Quoted by Alistair Horne, with David Montgomery, *The Lonely Leader, Monty 1944-1945* (London: Pan Books, 1995), p. 77, (without identifying the source. Montgomery's papers at the IWM are included in the bibliography).

³⁹ Hamilton, *Monty: Master of the Battlefield*, pp. 480 and p. 502, referring to Montgomery's notes of 3 January, 1944.

⁴⁰ Pogue interview with McLean, 13 March 1947, USMHI.

⁴¹ Pogue interview with Barker, 16 October 1946.

⁴² Horne, *The Lonely Leader*, p. 77.

⁴³ Ronald Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, (London: B. T. Batsford, 1971), p. 46.

Montgomery's successes with 8th Army, at El Alamein and subsequently, increased the confidence in his own abilities with which he approached the planning of OVERLORD. The successes also confirmed the high regard in which the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), F. M. Brooke, held Montgomery, and that support was important to him in later operations. The high regard had been expressed in 1940. When writing to congratulate Montgomery on his appointment to command 5th Corps, Brooke wrote on 5 August of his 'complete confidence' and stated, 'I have backed you strongly and shall go on doing so'.⁴⁴ He added a 'word of warning': 'You have a name for annoying people at times with your ways and I have found difficulties in backing you at times against that reputation'. He asked Montgomery 'not to let me down by doing anything silly'. Brooke understood Montgomery's failings or, as Montgomery put it, 'he was well tuned to my short-comings'.⁴⁵

The validity of Montgomery's criticism of COSSAC's plans and the extent to which he adopted them or departed from them, and then departed from his own plans, during the Battle of Normandy are contentious issues and are for separate treatment.⁴⁶ Montgomery's claim, in a diary entry of 12 June 1944, to have 'torn-up and disregarded all the previous plans',⁴⁷ is seriously disputed. His claim that everything in Normandy had gone according to his plan, was described by Stephen Hart as 'totally specious'⁴⁸ and one by which Montgomery, in the opinion of Max Hastings, 'did himself a great disservice'.⁴⁹ To the contrary, it was his flexibility that was his 'real genius as a commander'.⁵⁰

What cannot be disputed is that Montgomery, as Ground Force Commander, inflicted a 'stunning' defeat on the German Army in Normandy and achieved a 'crushing triumph'.⁵¹ Allied forces reached the River Seine on a broad front by 26 August, within 90 days of 6 June as contemplated in the planning. A substantial lodgment area had been won. Because of Hitler's insistence on counter-attacking west of the Seine, a

⁴⁴ Nigel Hamilton, *Monty, The Making of a General*, (London: Hamlyn, 1982), p. 433.

⁴⁵ *Montgomery, Memoirs*, p. 541.

⁴⁶ The merits and demerits of the plans considered are debated in Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, (London: Penguin, 2001), pp. 62-68.

⁴⁷ IWM, *Montgomery Papers ('MP')*, Part II, LMD 59/5.

⁴⁸ Hart, *Colossal Cracks*, p. 87.

⁴⁹ Hastings, *Overlord*, p. 142.

⁵⁰ Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, (London: The Reprint Society, 1954), pp. 372-373. (First published London: William Collins and Sons, 1952)

⁵¹ Carlo D'Este, *Eisenhower*, (London: Cassell, 2004), pp. 585-586.

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manoeuvre described by Montgomery as ‘madness’, a substantial part of the German Army in the West was destroyed in Normandy.⁵²

Eisenhower had entrusted the battle strategy in Normandy to Montgomery and throughout the long battle remained supportive of him, though in a letter of 21 July,⁵³ he did express disappointment at the outcome of Operation GOODWOOD in the British sector of the lodgment area, given the high expectations Montgomery had created for it.⁵⁴ There were complaints at SHAEF about Montgomery’s allegedly ‘defensive mentality’⁵⁵ and, on 26 July, Eisenhower spoke to Churchill of Montgomery’s ‘stickiness’⁵⁶ but in August Montgomery and his 21st Army Group emerged triumphant.

SHAEF moved to the Continent in August 1944, first to the Cotentin Peninsular and then successively to Versailles and Rheims. It became an immense organization with 1200 officers and 4000 other ranks.⁵⁷ Bedell Smith had argued successfully for a big staff on the premise that functions ‘wouldn’t be as well done elsewhere’.⁵⁸ After Normandy, there was no overall commander of ground forces, Montgomery commanding 21st Army Group (Canadian 1st [Lieutenant-General Crerar] and British 2nd [Lieutenant-General Dempsey] Armies) and Bradley the newly constituted 12th Army Group [US 1st (Lieutenant-General Hodges) and 3rd [Lieutenant-General Patton] Armies). Montgomery and Bradley thus had the same status in the command structure, under the overall command of Eisenhower.

An important ingredient contributing to Montgomery’s attitude to SHAEF, including the British officers there, was his continuing close relationship with the CIGS, Field Marshal Brooke. He was ‘in awe’ of Brooke but knew he could rely on his support.⁵⁹ On 6 August 1944, he wrote to Brooke: ‘I would like to thank you for your firm support at all times. It makes a great difference to me to know that you stand like a

⁵² Field Marshal Montgomery, *A Concise History of Warfare*, (London: Collins, 1972), p. 331.

⁵³ IWM, MP, BLM Part 1, 126/14.

⁵⁴ IWM, MP, BLM Part 1, 108/7 (letter to Eisenhower, 12 July), 109/3 (letter to Tedder), 108/8 (Eisenhower’s reply of 13 July).

⁵⁵ Wilmot interview with Morgan, November 1945.

⁵⁶ *War Diaries 1939-1945, Field-Marshal Lord Alanbrooke*, p. 574.

⁵⁷ Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954).

⁵⁸ Pogue interviews with Smith, 8, 9 and 13 May 1947, cited in Crosswell, *Beetle*, pp. 568-569.

⁵⁹ Henderson, *Monty at Close Quarters*, p. 40; Horne, *The Lonely Leader*, p. 266.

firm rock behind us, and your faith in what we are trying to achieve is constant'.⁶⁰ Brooke replied on 14 August: 'You can go on relying on my firm support, my dear old Monty... I have complete confidence in your ability to beat the Boche'.⁶¹ Horne comments that the letter may well have 'additionally fired' Montgomery's self-confidence.

Operational planning after Normandy was inevitably influenced, first, by the change in command structure and, secondly, by the dramatic change in the relative British and American contribution to the ground forces employed. In Normandy, there had been a rough parity between the size of the British and Canadian contribution to ground forces on the one hand and the American on the other and the Royal Navy provided the bulk of the naval support. Of the 91 Allied divisions in Europe by May 1945, fewer than 20 were British and Canadian.⁶² The American contribution became overwhelming, as Churchill had anticipated at the Quebec Conference.

Morgan, Gale, Whiteley and Strong served Eisenhower at SHAEF until its disbandment after the end of hostilities on 14 July 1945. Another British officer at COSSAC, Major-General Whitefoord, said by Morgan to have been 'wished off' on him,⁶³ 'got the ax' from Bedell Smith, who did not like 'his insistence on preserving close ties with the War Office'.⁶⁴ Whitefoord's attitude may have arisen from his previous position as Deputy Director of Military Intelligence at the War Office. He appears to have been banished first to West Africa and then to Scottish Command.⁶⁵

Bedell Smith thus shared Morgan's view about the attitude required at SHAEF. 'The spirit of the thing', as Morgan had described it, was initiated by Eisenhower in North Africa, developed by Morgan and Barker at COSSAC and implemented by Eisenhower at SHAEF. 'We were all', Morgan wrote in notes deposited at the IWM, 'whatever our nationality, when it came to the point neither British nor American which enabled us – compelled us – to adopt in many respects a highly impartial point of view'...'We were able to attend the birth of a new gospel in the matter of international combination'.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Alanbrooke Papers, LHC 6/2/29.

⁶¹ Cited in Horne, *The Lonely Leader*, pp. 242-243.

⁶² D'Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 681.

⁶³ Pogue interview with Morgan, USMHI, p. 4.

⁶⁴ Pogue interview with Smith, 13 May 1947, cited in Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 572.

⁶⁵ *Who Was Who*, (London, A & C Black), vol. VII.

⁶⁶ Morgan notes at IWM, p. 4 and p. 6.

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Admiration for Eisenhower at the head of this combination and evidence of his fair-mindedness comes from prominent British sources, in addition to Morgan, who described him as 'our great American leader' and referred to his 'inspired leadership'.⁶⁷ Harold Macmillan, Minister Resident at Allied Forces Headquarters in North Africa, described two great qualities of Eisenhower, 'First, he will always listen to and try to grasp the point of an argument. Second, he is absolutely fair-minded and, if he has prejudices, never allows them to sway his final judgment'.⁶⁸

De Guingand, Montgomery's Chief of Staff, was 'uncompromisingly loyal to his chief but claimed, with justification, to have known Eisenhower as well, if not better, than any British officer outside SHAEF. He said: 'More and more was I impressed with the greatness of this man. He was utterly fair in his dealings, and I envied his clarity of mind, and his power of accepting responsibility... A lovable, big minded and scrupulously honest soldier – a truly great American'.⁶⁹ Eisenhower was, in the opinion of de Guingand's biographer and subordinate at 21st Army Group, Charles Richardson, De Guingand's 'greater hero'.⁷⁰ Strong wrote that 'Eisenhower unceasingly and successfully strove to hold a fair balance between British and American national interests'.⁷¹ Lieutenant-General Horrocks, commanding British 30 Corps in 2nd Army, thought him 'a superb co-ordinator of Allied armies'.⁷²

In his post-war dispatch, published as a supplement to the London Gazette of 4 September 1946, Montgomery said of SHAEF that 'under General Eisenhower a strong, loyal team was quickly brought into being'. If loyalty to Eisenhower and SHAEF was the test, that was undoubtedly true of the British Army members of the team at SHAEF. Strains emerged, however, when serious disagreements arose between SHAEF and Montgomery as to how the campaign should be conducted. These must be considered as providing the context for Montgomery's attitude to the British officers at SHAEF.

⁶⁷ Morgan notes, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries*, (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 259-260.

⁶⁹ Major-General Sir Francis de Guingand, *Operation Victory*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), pp. 436-437.

⁷⁰ General Sir Charles Richardson, *Send for Freddie*, (London: William Kimber, 1987), p. 234.

⁷¹ Major-General Sir Kenneth Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, (London: Giniger, 1968), p. 171.

⁷² Sir Brian Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, (London: Magnum, 1979), p. 8.

First, Montgomery conducted a ‘long and insubordinate campaign’⁷³ to get himself reinstated as ground forces commander. The basic reason that could not happen has best been stated by his own loyal and admired intelligence officer, Brigadier Edgar (‘Bill’) Williams, an Oxford don in civilian life: ‘Even if the Americans thought him the best General in the world and this...was a doubtful proposition, he still wouldn’t be invited to remain Ground Forces Commander when our armies were shrinking and theirs growing daily’.⁷⁴ Williams told Pogue of a meeting between Eisenhower and Montgomery on 27 December 1944 at which Montgomery continued to advocate a single commander for ground forces. Williams reported that Eisenhower was not angry ‘just vexed at having to explain the same thing so many times’.⁷⁵

Not deterred, Montgomery wrote to Eisenhower on 29 December about the forthcoming Ruhr offensive, saying that ‘one commander must have power to direct and control the operations; you cannot possibly do it yourself, and so you would have to nominate someone else’.⁷⁶ That action provided the opportunity for the CCS to demonstrate their support for Eisenhower and SHAEF. Montgomery ate ‘humble pie’⁷⁷ but only after Marshall, as Chairman of the CCS, had sent a telegram to Eisenhower saying that he had their ‘complete confidence’ and instructing him: ‘Under no circumstances make any concessions of any kind whatsoever’.⁷⁸ When Eisenhower asked for Whiteley’s opinion, on 4 January 1945, whether there should be a ground commander, he ‘vehemently opposed the proposal’.⁷⁹ On 7 January, Churchill reported to Roosevelt: ‘His Majesty’s Government have complete confidence in General Eisenhower and feel acutely any attacks made on him’.⁸⁰

Secondly, a major dispute arose from Montgomery’s vigorous and persistent advocacy of a ‘single thrust into Germany rather than an advance on a broad front. The extent of Montgomery’s success in Normandy created a supply nightmare for the Allied forces. When the operation was planned, it had been assumed at all levels that, if and when a lodgement in France was established, any major clash of armies would occur east of

⁷³ Hart, *Colossal Cracks*, p. 65.

⁷⁴ Henderson, *Monty at Close Quarters*, p. 27.

⁷⁵ Pogue interview with Williams, 30-31 May 1947, USMHI, cited by D’Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 655.

⁷⁶ Nigel Hamilton, *Monty, The Field-Marshal 1944-1976*, vol. 3, (London: Sceptre, 1987), MP 540, cited at p. 266.

⁷⁷ Hamilton, *Monty, The Field-Marshal*, vol. 3, p. 279.

⁷⁸ Richardson, p. 170, Butcher, *Three Years with Eisenhower*, pp. 624-625, Hamilton, *Monty, The Field-Marshal*, vol. 3, p. 275

⁷⁹ Pogue interview with Smith, 8 May 1947, cited in Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 834.

⁸⁰ Cited in d’Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 666.

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the River Seine whereas the battle of France was won west of the River. The Allied forces were then able to race across France and Belgium thus greatly extending the length of their supply lines to the area where the next major confrontation with German forces occurred.

Bedell Smith thought the narrow front strategy ‘the most fantastic bit of balderdash ever proposed by a competent General’.⁸¹ The British officers at SHAEF agreed with Bedell Smith. Strong reported Gale, who was responsible for supplying the armies, as stating categorically ‘that the supply situation completely ruled out Montgomery’s proposal’.⁸² In his War Diary for 10 September, Gale recorded that Montgomery’s proposal for a single thrust was a ‘fantastic proposal’ and was ‘highly unsound logistically’. Asked by Eisenhower for their opinions, Morgan and Whiteley ‘derided Montgomery’s claims’.⁸³

Tedder’s view was that ‘it was fantastic to talk of marching to Berlin with an army which was still drawing the great bulk of its supplies over beaches north of Bayeux’.⁸⁴ Support for SHAEF’s view has come from important figures within 21st Army group. In his 1946 account of operations, de Guingand stated that he had always taken a view contrary to Montgomery on the single thrust issue: ‘Eisenhower was right when in August [1944] he decided he could not concentrate sufficient administrative resources to allow one strong thrust into Germany north of the Ruhr with the hope of decisive success’.⁸⁵ Horrocks said in his memoirs that ‘Eisenhower, as the Supreme Commander, was correct to turn it [the single thrust] down at his level’.⁸⁶

The difficulty of supplying the British Army was aggravated by the slowness with which the major port of Antwerp was rendered operational by 21st Army Group, a subject of friction between the two headquarters. Antwerp Docks had been captured intact by 30 Corps on 4 September 1944 but no immediate measures were taken to clear the Scheldt Estuary and the Germans were able to reinforce their defence of Antwerp’s approaches from the sea. No ship entered Antwerp Docks until 28

⁸¹ Pogue interview with Smith, 9 May 1947, USMHI, cited in *Eisenhower*, p. 606.

⁸² Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, p. 147.

⁸³ Pogue interview with Smith, 9 May 1947.

⁸⁴ Air-Marshal Tedder, *With Prejudice, The War Memoirs of Marshal Lord Tedder*, (London: Cassell, 1966), p. 590.

⁸⁵ De Guingand, *Operation Victory*, p. 413.

⁸⁶ Lieutenant-General Sir Brian Horrocks, *A Full Life*, (London: Fontana Books, 1962), p. 172.

November 1944, 85 days after their capture. The capacity of Cherbourg as a port, as Montgomery had recognized, was very limited.⁸⁷

In a message to Montgomery as early as 7 September, Eisenhower stated that 'the ports of Havre and Antwerp are essential to sustain a powerful thrust into Germany. No reallocation of our present resources would be adequate to sustain a thrust to Berlin'.⁸⁸ Montgomery is recorded in Gale's War Diary for 10 September as having said that Antwerp 'would have to take its time'.⁸⁹ He 'could not hurry over it and it would be some weeks before it would fall'. Brooke recorded in his diary for 5 October 1944: 'I feel that Monty's strategy is for once at fault. Instead of carrying out the advance on Arnhem, he ought to have made certain of Antwerp in the first place'.⁹⁰

It is fair to add that Eisenhower had approved Operation MARKET GARDEN to be launched by Montgomery on 17 September with a view to securing a Rhine crossing at Arnhem. The operation was not supported by senior officers either at SHAEF or at 21st Army Group, Belchem later claiming that 'all of us from Dempsey downwards were against Arnhem'.⁹¹ Eisenhower had been under pressure from Marshall⁹² to make use of the magnificent 1st Allied Airborne Army: 'The paratroopers and glidermen resting and training in England became in effect coins burning holes in SHAEF's pocket'.⁹³ There was also 'an atmosphere of eagerness on the part of the new airborne force (eagerness shared by Army Commander, US Lieutenant-General Lewis H. Brererton) to initiate a valid mission'.⁹⁴

Montgomery's attention was throughout directed towards the Rhine as was that of Horrocks who said in his memoirs that 'his [own] eyes were fixed entirely on the Rhine and everything else seemed of subsidiary importance'.⁹⁵ He accepted that prompt action by him on 4 September to cut off the Beveland isthmus might have

⁸⁷ TNA, WO 205/118, Montgomery's instructions of 7 May 1944.

⁸⁸ Letter Eisenhower to Montgomery, 7 September 1944, cited in *Montgomery, Memoirs*, p. 282.

⁸⁹ Gale, *War Diary*, 10 September 1944, LHC, Gale II/22.

⁹⁰ *War Diaries 1939-1945*, Lord Alanbrooke, 5 October 1944, p. 600.

⁹¹ Belchem letter, Churchill College Archives, RLEW 2/13, cited in John Buckley, *Monty's Men*, (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 213

⁹² D'Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 611.

⁹³ Charles B. MacDonald, *The Siegfried Line Campaign*, (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1963), p. 119.

⁹⁴ D'Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 612, Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, (London: Coronet Books, 1974), pp.103-108.

⁹⁵ Horrocks, *A Full Life*, pp. 181-182.

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changed the situation dramatically.⁹⁶ By way of mitigation, he added that a Corps 'fights the tactical battle and is not concerned with strategical matters'.⁹⁷ Dempsey admitted to Ronald Lewin 'that his mind had been so set on Germany that he forgot about Antwerp'.⁹⁸

The friction between headquarters on the issue became such that, when Morgan was summoned in haste to Bedell Smith's office, he found him 'white with passion' with a telephone receiver on his desk. 'Look, boy', said Bedell, 'that's your bloody Marshal on the other end of that. I can't talk to him anymore. Now you go on'. Morgan listened to arguments for rushing on to Berlin. During a momentary pause, he told Montgomery, as instructed, 'that unless he immediately undertook the Antwerp operation, he would receive no more supplies along the tenuous lines still running right back to Cherbourg and the Normandy beaches'. All would be given to the other Army Groups.⁹⁹

Morgan wrote that Montgomery 'took more kindly than one would expect my brief communication of my Commander's orders'. In the event, Montgomery gave fresh orders to the Army Commanders in 21st Army Group on 16 October stating, 'The free use of the port of Antwerp is vital to the Allied cause, and we must be able to use the port soon'. He required that, 'Operations designed to open the port will therefore be given complete priority over all other offensive operations of 21st Army Group without any qualification whatsoever... I must impress on Army Commanders that the early use of Antwerp is absolutely vital'.¹⁰⁰

Montgomery's general attitude to Morgan, Gale and Strong was less favourable than the reaction noted by Morgan to the 'look boy' incident. He wrote to Brooke as early as 9 August 1944:

Rumours are reaching me of bad influences at work at SHAEF... I hear rumours that Gale is bad, that he openly runs down the War Office and the QMG [Quarter Master General] by name, at conferences at SHAEF. I shall check up on this, and if it is true I will tackle him on the matter. I believe that Morgan is suspect too *but have no evidence* [emphasis in

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Horrocks, *Corps Commander*, p. 72.

⁹⁸ Lewin, *Montgomery as Military Commander*, p. 233.

⁹⁹ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 199.

¹⁰⁰ Col. C. P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945*, (Ottawa: Ministry of National Defence, 1948), p. 222.

original]. The senior British officers at SHAEF must realise that, in addition to being good Allied chaps, they have loyalties to our own side of the house, and, on our side of the house, we must all pull together.¹⁰¹

On 7 September, Montgomery wrote to Brooke, 'I have recently come to the conclusion that GALE [capitals in original] is a man of no character and is useless in his present job – he is quite unfit for it. We knew his form very well in Italy; he was responsible for the bad administrative scandals we had there'.¹⁰²

On 21 September, Gale, by order of Eisenhower, attended upon Montgomery who again advocated a single thrust into Germany.¹⁰³ Gale 'did not much enjoy' his interview. Six days later, Gale was visited by Lieutenant-General Nye, Vice-CIGS. Gale recorded in his Diary, 'He had some very disturbing and what I consider unfair comments to make on our relations with the War Office and 21 Army Group... The British officers at SHAEF are in a very invidious position vis a vis the British authorities'.¹⁰⁴

Gale, who understandably thought that Montgomery was the source of the comments, spent 'a somewhat mentally disturbed day'. He discussed the comments with Morgan and with Bedell Smith, who was 'infuriated'.¹⁰⁵ Interviewed by Pogue after the war, Gale suggested the reason for Montgomery's criticism: 'I advised Gen Eisenhower as his subordinate against things Monty wanted. I told Gen E that there was no way we could comply with Monty's view to stop everything on the right while he went to Berlin...It was not sound to stop the American advance'.¹⁰⁶

Montgomery's only visit to SHAEF was on 10 June 1945, when hostilities were over and SHAEF was in Frankfurt. He attended to receive a decoration from another visitor, Soviet Marshal Zhukov, and the criticism of SHAEF continued. Morgan took Montgomery to and from the airfield and was told by him 'just what was wrong with Supreme Headquarters and what steps I should take to put things right'.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Alanbrooke Papers, LHC, 6/2/29.

¹⁰² Cited in Hamilton, *Monty, The Field-Marshal*, vol. 3, p. 52.

¹⁰³ Gale, *War Diary*, LHC, Gale II/22.

¹⁰⁴ Gale, *War Diary*, 27 September 1944.

¹⁰⁵ Gale, *War Diary*, 28, 29, 30 September.

¹⁰⁶ Pogue interview with Gale, 27 January 1947, cited in Hamilton, *Monty, The Field-Marshal*, vol. 3, pp. 52-53.

¹⁰⁷ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 217.

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In his memoirs, Strong wrote that ‘relations between Montgomery’s Army Group and SHAEF were never very easy, but they were never as bad as some have alleged’.¹⁰⁸ Strong said that during meetings at SHAEF, ‘British visitors obviously displayed their lack of confidence in Eisenhower’.¹⁰⁹ That is not surprising when the CIGS himself had recorded in his diary on 27 July 1944, ‘Ike knows nothing about strategy and is quite unsuited to the post of Supreme Commander as far as running the strategy of the war is concerned!’ (Emphasis and exclamation mark in original.)¹¹⁰

Bedell Smith and de Guingand did ‘good work to surmount the differences’.¹¹¹ They became ‘great friends’.¹¹² Strong addressed satirically the canard publicized in Montgomery’s *Memoirs* that, with his arrival in January 1944, ‘the Gentlemen are out and the Players are just going in to bat’.¹¹³ ‘There tended to be a “Gentlemen v Players” atmosphere between the two [headquarters]’, Strong agreed, ‘but which of the two was which I have never discovered’.¹¹⁴

Montgomery resented the role Strong played in operational planning at SHAEF. On 24 February 1945, he wrote: ‘...it really is monstrous that the head “I” chap should be allowed to get up and express strong views as to what our own operational strategy should be’.¹¹⁵ It was, however, the ‘head “I” chap’, with Whiteley, who had previously risked dismissal on 19 December, by proposing to Bedell Smith, that Montgomery should take command of the substantial US forces, 1st and 9th Armies, on the northern flank of the bulge created by the German advance in the Ardennes.

On hearing the proposal, Bedell Smith told Strong that neither he nor Whiteley ‘would any longer be acceptable Staff Officers to General Eisenhower. Next day we would be relieved of our appointments’. Strong told Chester Wilmot that Bedell had called them ‘damned Englishmen’¹¹⁶ or, as another report put it, ‘limey bastards’.¹¹⁷ Next day, however, Bedell Smith took Strong by the arm and said that he proposed to put the proposal to Eisenhower as his own, telling Strong that what had made him really mad

¹⁰⁸ Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁹ Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, p. 170.

¹¹⁰ *War Diaries 1949-1945*, Lord Alanbrooke, p. 575.

¹¹¹ Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, p. 151.

¹¹² De Guingand, *Operation Victory*, p. 437.

¹¹³ Montgomery, *Memoirs*, p. 222.

¹¹⁴ Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, p. 151.

¹¹⁵ IWM, MP ACIGS (o)/I/M, cited in Hamilton, *Monty, The Field-Marshal*, vol. 3, p. 388.

¹¹⁶ Wilmot interview with Strong, LHC, Wilmot notebook XXIV.

¹¹⁷ Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 814.

was that he 'knew you were right'.¹¹⁸ Eisenhower accepted the proposal, over Bradley's objection. It was, Bedell Smith later told Pogue, 'an open and shut case'.¹¹⁹ The proposal was made by Strong and Whiteley, not out of deference to Montgomery, but in the interests of sound Allied strategy. Montgomery was pleased with the outcome notwithstanding its genesis with the 'head "I" chap' at SHAEF. He proceeded to create 'order from disarray in the north'¹²⁰ but gave a press conference on 7 January 1945 which 'turned possibly his finest hour as a military commander into an unmitigated disaster'.¹²¹ While 'rather innocuous' his statements were thought to imply, amongst other things, that American troops fought better under his leadership than under their own Generals. Brig. Williams said: 'The text in a sense was innocuous; the presentation quite appalling'.¹²² 'The wounds inflicted on the sensibilities of the American Generals' says Crosswell, 'never healed'.¹²³

Montgomery was blunt in his criticism of Morgan. In addition to his scathing comments in January 1944 about the results of Morgan's work as COSSAC, Montgomery said, in a letter to the Secretary of State for War, Sir James Grigg, on 11 February 1945: 'Morgan at SHAEF is...as you know, useless'.¹²⁴ In his autobiography,¹²⁵ Grigg does not claim the knowledge or express the view attributed to him.

Whiteley, who had been Chief of Staff in the 8th Army before joining Eisenhower's headquarters in North Africa, was condemned by Montgomery when he first met Bedell Smith in North Africa: 'He is no good ; he proved a failure here'.¹²⁶ The British readily accepted his reassignment to SHAEF, Butcher noted, adding that neither General Alexander nor Montgomery liked an officer 'whom we have regarded as a most conscientious and effective officer'.¹²⁷ In Europe, Whiteley appears personally to have escaped the wrath of Montgomery who told Brooke that he kept 'in close touch

¹¹⁸ Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, p. 166.

¹¹⁹ Pogue interview with Bedell Smith, 8 May 1947, cited in Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 816.

¹²⁰ Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 825.

¹²¹ D'Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 664

¹²² Hamilton interview with Williams, 20 December 1979, Hamilton *Monty, The Field-Marshal*, vol. 3, p. 304.

¹²³ Crosswell, *Beetle*, pp. 835-836.

¹²⁴ IWM, MP 21 A Gp/1064/5/C-C.

¹²⁵ P. J. Grigg, *Prejudice and Judgment*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1948).

¹²⁶ Crosswell, *Beetle*, pp. 389-390.

¹²⁷ Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 538.

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with [Whiteley]'.¹²⁸ Described by Bedell Smith as the 'wheel horse of G-3', Whiteley was in effect Smith's operations chief. His SHAEF loyalties were clear from his work but he was trusted at both headquarters.¹²⁹

Tedder, himself an airman and not a soldier subject to Montgomery's discipline, actual or prospective, 'enjoyed the trust and friendship of Eisenhower'¹³⁰ and was beyond Montgomery's reach. He brought, wrote Strong, 'an intellectual brilliance to Supreme Headquarters'.¹³¹

Other evidence must be considered when assessing the merits of Montgomery's condemnation, particularly of Morgan as 'useless' and Gale as 'useless in' and 'quite unfit for' his job at SHAEF. Gale was described by Eisenhower as 'widely experienced and extremely able'¹³² and by US Brig-General Betts as 'a first class manager...practically a genius'.¹³³ Of Strong, Butcher said he was the 'G-2 of G-2s'.¹³⁴

Commendation of Morgan and his work was comprehensive. He was described by Brig-General Gavin, senior airborne adviser to COSSAC, and later commander of US 82nd Airborne Division, as 'a quiet, scholarly type of officer and an excellent chief of staff'.¹³⁵ Vice-Admiral Mountbatten, who had worked with Morgan when Head of Combined Operations in 1943, made a deliberate attempt to 'rally support for Morgan'.¹³⁶ His confidence in Morgan was such that when appointed to South East Asia Command, he asked Morgan to prepare a 'treatise' on 'what a young Supreme Commander should know' and received 'most relevant counsel'.¹³⁷

¹²⁸ IWM, MP LMD 67/67, letter of 22 January 1945, cited by Buckley, p. 269. Buckley's description of Whiteley as the 'senior British Army liaison officer at SHAEF' did less than justice to his role there.

¹²⁹ Pogue interview with Smith, 9 May 1947, and with Whiteley, 18 December 1947, cited by Crosswell, *Beetle* p. 611.

¹³⁰ Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 570.

¹³¹ Strong, *Intelligence at the Top*, p. 127.

¹³² Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, (London: William Heinemann Limited, 1948), p. 259.

¹³³ Betts oral history, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, cited by Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 574.

¹³⁴ Butcher, *Three Years with Eisenhower*, p. 488.

¹³⁵ James M. Gavin, *On to Berlin*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1985), p. 83.

¹³⁶ Philip Zeigler, *Mountbatten*, (London: Fontana, 1966), p. 214, quoting Harold Werner of Mountbatten's staff.

¹³⁷ Zeigler, *Moutbatten*, p. 225.

Interviewed at the end of the war, Bedell Smith said that, as time went on, he 'delegated more and more responsibility to Morgan'.¹³⁸ He was a man, Bedell Smith said, he would not 'willingly have dispensed with'.¹³⁹ Barker said that 'nobody knows how much we owe Freddy Morgan for his level-headed handling' of Bedell Smith,¹⁴⁰ whose health was poor and inclined him to be short tempered. Smith and Morgan had first 'established an understanding' when planning for the North African landings in 1942.¹⁴¹

Butcher wrote that 'everyone recognised the basic, brilliant strategy of General Morgan's work'¹⁴². In presenting a war survey to the House of Commons on 2 August 1944, Churchill said that 'General Morgan of the British Army was primarily responsible for the invasion plans'.¹⁴³

Eisenhower's praise was fulsome. On D-Day, he reminded Morgan 'that he had done much of the work on the Great Plan'.¹⁴⁴ In *Crusade*, he described Morgan as 'an extraordinarily fine officer and had, long before my arrival, won the high admiration and respect of General Marshall. I soon came to place an equal value upon his qualifications'.¹⁴⁵ He had written earlier that Morgan 'served brilliantly to the end of Nazi Germany'.¹⁴⁶ There is nothing which suggests that these favourable American views of British officers at SHAEF were influenced by antipathy felt towards their critic Montgomery.

Eisenhower expressed his General view of the British officers at SHAEF in a personal letter to Marshall (marked 'for his eyes only') written on 7 April 1945 following a suggestion that he, at SHAEF, had not been entirely candid with the higher members of the British Command:

'I hope it will not be forgotten that some of the ablest members of my staff are from the British army. Such men as Tedder, Morgan, Whiteley

¹³⁸ Ruppertal interview with Smith, 14 September 1945, USMHI, cited by Crosswell, *Beetle*, p. 572.

¹³⁹ Pogue interview with Smith, 9 May 1947.

¹⁴⁰ Pogue interview with Barker, 15 July 1972.

¹⁴¹ Morgan, *Overture*, p. 9.

¹⁴² Butcher, *Three Years with Eisenhower* p. 393.

¹⁴³ Obituary of Morgan, *Daily Telegraph*, London, 22 March 1967; Butcher, *Three Years with Eisenhower*, p. 543.

¹⁴⁴ Butcher, *Three Years with Eisenhower*, p. 488.

¹⁴⁵ Eisenhower, *Crusade*, p. 253.

¹⁴⁶ Morgan, *Overture*, Foreword, p. vii.

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and Strong possess great ability and are absolutely unimpeachable in their objective approach to every question.’¹⁴⁷

Such evidence cannot be ignored and runs entirely counter to Montgomery’s descriptions. Reasons must be sought why Montgomery, usually complimentary about and loyal to his own staff, condemned their colleagues at SHAEF. It has been suggested that their attitude at SHAEF, and particularly that of Morgan, but also of Gale, was based on enmity towards Montgomery.¹⁴⁸

That there had been an issue between him and Montgomery, Morgan accepted in a letter to Major L. F. Ellis, British official historian of the campaign in North West Europe. When invited to comment on a draft of Ellis’s work on 30 September 1956, he added in a covering letter: ‘There was, at the time, quite a situation between myself and him who is now Lord of Alamein’.¹⁴⁹ Montgomery replied to Ellis on 4 March 1960 that ‘most of [his] views’ had been expressed in *Memoirs*.¹⁵⁰ Morgan was certainly critical of Montgomery. Interviewed by Wilmot in November 1945, when Montgomery’s fame was at its height, he dared to describe Montgomery as ‘disloyal and dishonest and dictatorial’.¹⁵¹

Whatever situation there was, it may be difficult, on the evidence now available, to sustain the thesis that Morgan’s views on strategy at SHAEF were attributable to personal animosity towards Montgomery or to Morgan’s ‘ruthless’ consignment to ‘the backwaters of the war’,¹⁵². That, however, is a topic for separate treatment. Morgan considered his appointment as Deputy Chief of Staff at SHAEF ‘a high honour’,¹⁵³ though after 1st Corps, COSSAC and Washington, there may have been undisclosed and growing frustration at being in a subordinate position. His work, his views on the main issues, and indeed his criticisms of Montgomery, have since been well supported in British and American sources. What is now for analysis, however, is what Montgomery expected of the British officers at SHAEF and by what criteria he assessed their usefulness and competence.

¹⁴⁷ Cited in *On to Berlin*, p. 307.

¹⁴⁸ Hastings, *Overlord*, p. 268.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, CAB 101/309.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Wilmot interview with Morgan, November 1945, LHC, LH 15/15/24.

¹⁵² Hastings, *Overlord*, p. 58.

¹⁵³ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 179.

Montgomery's attitude was frankly expressed in the letter to Brooke on 9 August 1944 already quoted, 'The senior British officers at SHAEF must realise that...they have definite loyalties to their own side of the house'. He also threatened to 'tackle [Gale] on the matter'.¹⁵⁴ Montgomery apparently believed that he could 'tackle' a British officer whose loyalties were to Eisenhower and to the international headquarters established by the British and US Governments. In the event, Gale was 'tackled' during the following month by the Vice-CIGS who made comments about the British officers' 'relations with the War Office and 21 Army Group', that 'disturbed' Gale and 'infuriated' Bedell Smith.¹⁵⁵

In spite of his closeness to Montgomery, there is nothing in Brooke's diaries to suggest that he himself became involved in attempts to 'tackle' the British officers, or to question that their loyalty was to Eisenhower. On 30 May 1943, Gale had taken him to Eisenhower's headquarters in North Africa. In his diary for that day, Brooke described the Headquarters Office as 'a wonderful example of what can be done in the way of close cooperation between Allies'. As early as that, he clearly understood the SHAEF concept but he does not appear to have conveyed that understanding to his protégé Montgomery.

It was at about the same time as the suggestion about 'tackling' in September 1944, a critical time in the 'single thrust' or 'broad front' debate, that Montgomery described Gale as 'a man of no character' and as 'useless' in his present job. Gale accepted, when interviewed by Pogue, that he 'advised Gen Eisenhower as his subordinate against things Monty wanted'.¹⁵⁶ That has been cited as evidence that 'Gale was out to obstruct Monty'.¹⁵⁷ Of course, his advice on the single thrust was contrary to Montgomery's wishes but there is no reason to doubt that it was military advice given in good faith by the officer responsible to Eisenhower for supplying the Allied armies. It was advice with which Montgomery's own Chief of Staff agreed. Compliance with Montgomery's wishes was not a part of Gale's job description or loyalties.

Tedder's aide, Wing-Commander Leslie Scarman, who subsequently achieved the highest ranks in the judiciary, put it this way when interviewed by Pogue: 'True we were anti-Monty at SHAEF but he created the situation. No one could get at

¹⁵⁴ Alanbrooke Papers, LHC 6/2/29, *Montgomery and the Battle of Normandy*, Ed. Stephen Brooks, (Stroud, UK: History Press for the Army Records Society), p. 281.

¹⁵⁵ Gale, *War Diary, September 1944*, LHC, Gale II/22.

¹⁵⁶ Pogue interview with Gale, 27 January 1947, cited in Hamilton, *Monty, The Field-Marshal* vol. 3, pp. 52-53.

¹⁵⁷ Hamilton, *Monty, The Field-Marshal*, vol.3, p. 52.

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him...[We] were appalled by his actions...Used everyone he could against someone else'.¹⁵⁸

Montgomery continued his criticisms in *Memoirs*, and the publicity that surrounded their publication in 1958. Morgan and those around him were the 'displaced strategists'.¹⁵⁹ On 1 March 1959, Morgan wrote to Liddell Hart: 'We who were Ike's British staff officers at SHAEF have suffered a lot lately from Montgomery's impertinence. Personally, I was delighted at Ike's dignified silence...I cannot go into detail regarding Montgomery's recent publicity stunts. As smart a mixture of '*suppressio veri*' with '*suggestio falsi*' as ever was'.¹⁶⁰

Late in his life, Eisenhower 'stopped communicating' with Montgomery because of his perceived untruthfulness.¹⁶¹ Brigadier Williams, having said that he liked Montgomery 'very much indeed', added the qualification that his 'idea of fairness, and more particularly of truth, did not always march in step with mine'.¹⁶²

Morgan considered relations between Montgomery and SHAEF in his published works and also in undated notes deposited at the IWM. 'As the campaign progressed', wrote Morgan, 'it became more difficult for us British at SHAEF to provide explanation...for the attitude and behaviour of the British authorities as exemplified by their chosen representative in the field... [I]t was depressing at times to feel there was at least reluctance on British account to acknowledge any American virtue'.¹⁶³

Morgan wrote: 'It seemed that their [British] idea of co-operation was that others should co-operate with them and not vice versa'¹⁶⁴ which resonated with Montgomery's view of inter-service co-operation expressed to Morgan at 3rd Division before the war. The British officers at SHAEF 'were able to perceive and appreciate the understanding American attitude towards the self-evident change in our respective stations in life'. Morgan did recognize that 'acceptance of a lowered status is a bitter business'.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ Pogue interview with Scarman, 25 February 1947, cited in Norman Gelb, *Ike and Monty, Generals at War*, (London: Constable, 1994), p. 430.

¹⁵⁹ *Montgomery, Memoirs*, p. 262.

¹⁶⁰ Morgan correspondence with Liddell Hart, LHC.

¹⁶¹ Cornelius Ryan interview with Eisenhower, cited in Ryan, p. 82.

¹⁶² Henderson, *Monty at Close Quarters*, p. 16.

¹⁶³ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 211 and p. 216.

¹⁶⁴ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 184.

¹⁶⁵ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 216.

In his notes, Morgan wrote: 'SHAEF had given the world a demonstration of combined international effort at its brightest and best...We were all [at SHAEF] whatever our nationality his [Eisenhower's] staff officers when it came to the point neither British nor American which enabled us – compelled us – to adopt in many respects a highly impartial point of view...We were able to attend the birth of a new gospel in the matter of international combination'.¹⁶⁶ Morgan acknowledged that 'in the eyes of some of our compatriots the behaviour of the British party at General Eisenhower's Headquarters must have appeared almost un-British' and 'rendered [Morgan] suspect from a purely British point of view'.¹⁶⁷

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Montgomery's condemnation of Gale, Morgan and his attitude to Strong and Whiteley were based on his inability to accept that British officers at SHAEF were not obliged to carry out his wishes. He failed to influence their views as he would have wished but their usefulness could not properly be judged by their willingness to serve his interests. Montgomery's judgment on their usefulness depended on their usefulness to him.

At least three interlinked factors were at work in determining Montgomery's attitude to the British officers at SHAEF. The first was his difficulty in accepting, after Normandy, that, beyond 21st Army Group, he was not in command. His ADC, Captain Johnny Henderson, wrote, after Montgomery's death, that Montgomery 'always had to be in command'.¹⁶⁸ John Buckley refers to his 'grip and dominance over the Command Structure in 21st Army Group'¹⁶⁹ and to his 'tightly imposing his will'.¹⁷⁰ Beyond the Army Group, he was subordinate to a Supreme Commander who enjoyed the confidence of both British and American Governments and the CCS, whatever Brooke or Montgomery thought of his strategies. Pershing's defiance of Foch in 1918 was not to be repeated.

The second was the change in the British and American 'stations in life' during the campaign. As the American contribution to the Allied force became overwhelming, Montgomery's views as to how the campaign should be conducted inevitably carried less weight with the Supreme Command, however good his general-ship.

¹⁶⁶ Morgan notes at IWM, p. 4 and p. 6.

¹⁶⁷ Morgan notes at IWM, p. 5 and p. 6.

¹⁶⁸ Henderson, *Monty at Close Quarters*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁹ Buckley, *Monty's Men*, p. 303.

¹⁷⁰ Buckley, *Monty's Men*, p. 32.

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Thirdly, these factors combined to increase Montgomery's frustration arising from the British officers at SHAEF often not supporting his views and plans. Given his self-confidence, bolstered as it was by the 'firm support' of the professional head of the British armed forces, the CIGS, he had difficulty in understanding and accepting that the loyalties of the British officers at SHAEF were to the Supreme Command established by and supported by the British and American Governments and the CCS. An Allied outlook had been developed in the Command since the days of COSSAC, as has been demonstrated. Montgomery could not expect the support of British officers on the ground that they were British.

The loyalty of those officers was to Eisenhower and not to Montgomery and his 'side of the house'. Montgomery's belief that he could 'tackle' a British officer about his conduct at SHAEF demonstrated his lack of understanding. The concept of British officers owing their loyalty to an 'international combination', the 'new gospel', in so far as it was understood by Montgomery, was not acceptable to him. His frustration led him mistakenly and unfairly to categorize British officers who failed to do his bidding as 'useless'.

At the end of the war, Morgan sensed that the services of British officers at SHAEF was 'not entirely to the satisfaction of our national authorities to whose tender mercies and protection we were now once more committed'.¹⁷¹ Neither Morgan nor Gale nor Strong received any appointments in a post-war army in which Montgomery was CIGS. Any such appointments would have been uncomfortable on both sides. Moreover, Morgan accepted his disadvantage in that 'as luck had had it, I had arrived in senior rank without the experience of command in battle'.¹⁷²

Morgan and Gale received American and French honours but neither received a British award for work at SHAEF. Each had been knighted previously, Morgan for services 'in connection with the invasion of Normandy'. Each was honoured by his Regiment, Morgan as Colonel Commandant of the Royal Regiment of Artillery from 1948 to 1958 and Gale as Colonel Commandant of the Royal Army Service Corps from 1944 to 1954. Strong was appointed Companion of the Bath (CB) and received American, French and Soviet honours. Only Whiteley survived, becoming Vice-CIGS after Field Marshal William Slim had succeeded Montgomery as CIGS.

It is added, by way of postscript, that, after the war, Morgan was asked personally by Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary, to accept a role with the United Nations Relief and

¹⁷¹ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 217.

¹⁷² Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 219.

Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) in Germany. He did so to find that the Foreign Office view was that 'universal incompetence...existed throughout the organization'.¹⁷³ He did not fit easily and, when relieved of his duties, accepted the view of his Public Relations Officer that 'to serve such an outfit is degradation beyond description'.¹⁷⁴ He later was Controller Atomic Energy, which became a figurehead position, retiring in 1956. Morgan found that in the post-war world, 'the simpler virtues of honesty, truthfulness, loyalty and discipline' had decreased value.¹⁷⁵ Strong became a civil servant, Director General of Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence, retiring in 1966. He was knighted in 1952. Gale also worked for UNRRA and then, at the invitation of Harold Macmillan, who had worked with him when both were serving in North Africa, became Chairman of the Basildon New Town Development Corporation, retiring in 1964.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 251.

¹⁷⁴ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 262.

¹⁷⁵ Morgan, *Peace and War*, p. 266.

¹⁷⁶ *Who Was Who*, vols. VII and VIII.