

# A HERO FROM THE GRAVE



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By Vince Wall

Each year on ANZAC Day we remember those who gave their lives on the battlefields of the nations. Throughout the world many have benefited from the courage and self-sacrifice of the men and women of the armed forces of Australia.

**It is a fact of history that a number of war heroes have had an association with Australia and one such man was Bernard Montgomery.**

Montgomery was born on November 17th 1887 at Kennington in London before his parents moved to Australia where his father became the Bishop of Tasmania. As a child Bernard would watch soldiers



in Tasmania depart for the Boer War and inspired by the troops Bernard informed his mother that when he grew up he was going to be a soldier.

Bernard indeed became a soldier, first fighting in **WWI** and then again in **WWII** rising to the rank of Major General. On the battlefields of both wars Montgomery was intimately acquainted with the reality of the horrors of war and the death and destruction that it brings upon the nations. He was also acquainted with heroic deeds of sacrifice when men laid down their lives for each other in the arenas of battle.

At the start of World War I Montgomery was a full lieutenant and his battalion the Royal Warwickshires were posted to France. In October 1914 the battalion engaged the German Army in battle on the outskirts of the village of Meteren. After the village was seized Bernard Montgomery was shot through his lung by a sniper but was saved by another soldier who courageously gave his life in order to rescue him.

Montgomery wrote in his memoirs; "My life was saved that day by a soldier of my platoon. I had fallen in the open and lay still hoping to avoid further attention from the Germans. But a soldier ran to me and began to put a field dressing on my wound; he was shot through the head by a sniper and collapsed on top of me".

***“Greater love hath no man than this, that  
a man lay down his life for his friends”.***

**(John 15:13)**

“The sniper continued to fire at us and I got a second wound in the knee; the soldier received many bullets intended for me. No further attempt was made by my platoon to rescue us; indeed, it was presumed we were both dead. When it was dark the stretcher-bearers came to carry us in; the soldier was dead and I was in a bad way. I was taken back to the Advanced dressing Station; the doctors reckoned I could not live and, as the station was shortly to move, **a grave was dug for me**. But when the time came to move I was still alive; so I was put in a motor ambulance and sent back to a hospital”.

Few men in the First World War escaped the grave that was prepared for them. Though surviving his injuries Montgomery's wounded lung left him short of breath for the rest of his life.

**Bernard Montgomery's military career did not conclude at the end of WWI for he continued serving on the battlefields of the Second World War becoming one of the British Army's greatest generals. Montgomery became an inspiring leader who cared for his soldiers.**

In 1942 Winston Churchill appointed Montgomery as the Commander of the 8th Army in the Western Desert. He restored the army's morale and ensured

that his men received adequate supplies. He was affectionately known as Monty by his troops. On the 13th of August Montgomery addressed the officers and men of the Eighth Army at Cairo in Egypt and his speech, ***“WE WILL STAND AND FIGHT HERE”*** was credited as one of the turning points of the war. The 23rd of October was eventually set for the commencement of the great assault against the German Afrika Corps and Montgomery said to his assembled officers and men, ***“Let us all pray that The Lord mighty in battle will give us victory”*** (fieldmarshalmontgomery.com).

With Montgomery in command, troops from Britain, Australia and New Zealand entered the Second Battle of El-Alamein defeating German and Italian troops. On November 2nd 1942 the famous German General Rommel known as the Desert Fox notified Adolf Hitler that the battle was lost.



History records that Hitler had planned another holocaust for the Jews who were living outside Europe and Russia. He fully intended to annihilate 500,000 European Jews who had taken refuge in Palestine. The victory at El-Alamein under the leadership of Bernard Montgomery prevented the deployment of Hitler's Middle East death squad from conducting their intended holocaust of the Jews in Palestine.

The Jewish community presented a Jewish Bible after the war to Bernard Montgomery. It records the "Everlasting gratitude of Palestine Jewry to the gallant leader of British Forces by whose hand God has placed salvation in Zion in the days of El Alamein" ([eternitynews.com.au](http://eternitynews.com.au)).

**The boy who spent his early years on the island of Tasmania became one of the greatest generals of all history.**

What made Bernard Montgomery such a great leader? It was the knowledge that he was in constant need of Divine wisdom that could only come from God. Bernard could overcome the trauma and tragedy of two world wars because from a young age Bernard Montgomery was taught to pray and to read the Bible. As a soldier on the battlefield Bernard continued to find that the Bible was a constant source of strength and

encouragement to him. One journalist wrote of Montgomery after El-Alamein "... As is well known, the two books he carries with him are the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress" (The Armidale Express, April 20th 2018).

**Bernard read two chapters of the Bible each day** and would quote Bible verses to his men which would help them in the trauma that they faced. He also prayed privately in his tent morning and evening and was known to mingle with his troops and would lead them in prayer before every battle.

The course of WWII was altered because an **unknown soldier**, years before, **gave his life** in France in order to save Bernard Montgomery on the battlefield. Without Montgomery and his leadership the Allied Forces may never have had the victory over the German and Italian forces at El Alamein.

Our world today is engaged in a spiritual battle of immense proportions that affects every human being on the planet. The forces of evil are at war with all of mankind resulting in death, destruction and depravity... But there is hope.

***"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly".***

***(Romans 5:6)***

True hope is found in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son who stepped into our world some 2000 years ago. Jesus Christ gave his life as the greatest sacrifice, shedding His blood on the cross of Calvary for our sins, escaping the grave and rising again on the third day.

The Lord Jesus brings forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the grave, a home in Heaven and eternal life to all who would trust in Him. When we place our faith in Jesus Christ He can give us the spiritual weapons to enable us to walk in victory in every battle that we face throughout our lives. Jesus Christ is the **greatest hero** and the **greatest healer** who can bring strength and serenity to wounded souls who **surrender to Him**.

***“The Lord will give strength unto his people;  
the Lord will bless his people with peace”.***

***(Psalm 29:11)***



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