

MEDITERRANEAN & NORTH AFRICA: WHAT KIND OF MAN WAS MONTY?

Examples of deception tactics used by Montgomery's forces in the Battle of El Alamein

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K.4201

Dummy GRANT Tank.



K.4207

Vehicles Loaded with Dummy Tanks.

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What is this source?

These photographs come from an official report into the use of deception in the North African campaign.

There were many other examples of deception. Other examples included dummy tents, dummy water reservoirs and even dummy soldiers operated by wires!

What's the background to this source?

North Africa was a key battleground in WW2. From 1940-42 British Empire forces fought against German and Italian forces to control the area. The decisive battle came in October 1942 at El Alamein in Egypt. British commander General Montgomery built up a large force of troops and equipment to attack the Germans and drive them out of Egypt. One of the main attacks by Montgomery's forces was to take place at the northern end of the battle area. As a result, his forces created large numbers of fake storage dumps, camps, tanks and other features to make the Germans think the British were building up their forces in the south.

The battle began on October 23rd 1942 and lasted 12 days. It resulted in a major victory for the British 8th Army. It was the first decisive defeat of German forces in WW2.

It's worth knowing that...

The main aim of the deception measures was to disguise the actual build up of forces taking place and also to make the Germans think that forces and supplies were being built up in the wrong area of the battle zone. From the air, it would be very difficult to tell that these dummy pieces of equipment were not the real thing.

Deception was found to be a very effective tactic in this battle, and it was used many times elsewhere. The Allies invested a huge amount of effort in deception measures in the run up to the D-Day invasion of France in June 1944.

Does this source help us decide if Montgomery is the right man to command the land forces in France?

1. Can you tell that the fuel dump is a fake?
2. Do you think these deception tactics are effective?

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3. Does the use of deception tactics tell us anything about Montgomery's qualities as a commander?
4. Does this source help you to answer any of the questions you have to tackle in your report?

Use the table to write your report.