

EIGHTH ARMY

It is less than fifteen months since the Eighth Army, after repulsing attacks on the night of November 1-2, 1942, launched a strong offensive on a 4,000-yards front west of El Alamein. This was the beginning of the final advance

THIS BREAK-THROUGH remains the most spectacular achievement of the Eighth Army while commanded by General Sir Bernard Montgomery, who is now commander of the British group of armies under General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the British and United States forces in the west for the liberation of Europe, but the Eighth Army has taken a leading part in every important phase of the Mediterranean war since then. The New Zealand forces in the Middle East were a part of the Eighth Army in its drive from El Alamein through Tripolitania and Tunisia. They were not with the Army when it landed in Sicily and southern Italy, but they have since rejoined it and are assisting in the drive up the Italian Adriatic coast.

Telling the story of the Eighth Army's advance, the military correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald* remarked that military history could produce few cases of such spectacular and continuously successful progress under so varied circumstances. In the space of a single year General Montgomery's men had to fight under almost every conceivable set of conditions, except those of a tropical jungle.

Losses and other factors have led to inevitable changes and replacements. The Ninth Australian Division, which played so big a part in cracking the El Alamein Line, had not, for example, the satisfaction of participating in the victorious advance, owing to its recall home. But the 51st Highland Division, which was re-formed after the Battle of France, and joined the Eighth Army shortly before El Alamein, where, in Mr. Churchill's words, it "bore the brunt" of much of the fighting, has been in the

which enabled G.H.Q. to announce, on the evening of November 4, that "the Axis forces in the Western Desert, after twelve days and nights of ceaseless attacks by our land and sea forces, are now in full retreat."

To Officers and Men of Eighth Army

SPECIAL MESSAGE

1. The enemy is now attempting to break through our positions in order to reach CAIRO, SUEZ, and ALEXANDRIA, and to drive us from EGYPT.

2. The Eighth Army bars the way. It carries a great responsibility, and the whole future of the war will depend on how we carry out our task.

3. We will fight the enemy where we now stand; there will be NO WITHDRAWAL and NO SURRENDER.

Every officer and man must continue to do his duty as long as he has breath in his body.

If each one of us does his duty, we cannot fail; the opportunity will then occur to take the offensive ourselves and to destroy once and for all the enemy forces now in EGYPT.

4. Into battle then, with stout hearts and with the determination to do our duty.

And may God give us the victory.

B. L. Montgomery,

Lieutenant-General.

forefront of every major engagement since. The 50th (Northumbrian) Division, the 44th (Home Counties) Division, and the Fourth Indian Division have similarly gone through the whole campaign, as have also certain armoured units.

After their defeat at El Alamein, Rommel's twelve divisions were driven rapidly westwards. By November 11, following the capture of Sidi Barrani