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This book is a collection of 50 obituaries originally published in The Times and covers the period from Waterloo (1815) to the South Atlantic conflict (1982). There follows short reviews of 20 of these obituaries selected at random, the other 30 obituaries are of no less valued leaders and are listed at the end with a brief statement of their personal distinction.

Wellington
Wellington has a justified reputation as a brilliant strategist and as an inspirational commander in chief. His conduct of the Iberian Peninsular war was characterised by a series of brilliant and audacious victories but was judged by some as being tarnished by reverses in Spain during a period of violent denunciation of the whole Peninsular war. By the triumphal end of this war he had soundly beaten the French led by Napoleon and returned to England in glory. At Waterloo Wellington was less a strategist and more a tactician. Although Napoleon had the strategic initiative he provided little leadership during the battle and suffered the consequences, although Wellington realised that "it was a close run thing". Wellington probably best understood the British soldier of the period; he encouraged them by his words before and after battle and inspired them by his presence in the saddle at the centre of the fight.

Garibaldi
Garibaldi was an Italian patriot and soldier of fortune. As a popular hero of a hundred fights he knew little of military matters but was an inspired leader of men. He was no strategist and cared little about organisation, equipment or discipline and never looked to matters of transport or supplies; he simply marched at the head of a few officers and expected the troops to follow. However, he was a tactician who had faith in himself and was blessed with the blind and passive obedience of his army. His orders were never questioned and never disregarded. As a military commander he had two great qualities that every soldier yearns to see in his leader; he knew what to do in every situation that confronted him - and he won.

Togo
Togo was the 'Nelson' of the Japanese nation, an admiral whom he venerated. He was first educated at a naval academy but his naval masters realised his potential and he was sent to England to study the art and science of warfare. He believed the Japanese navy should be closely modelled closely on that of the Royal Navy but for Togo promotion to a rank of influence was slow. It was a seemingly minor incident in the Yellow Sea that Togo's action protected the honour of his government that brought him to prominence. In the Russian war he served under Yamamoto where his operations were invariably successful. His strategy always reflected a combination of prudent reserve and resolute daring.

Fisher

Fisher is known as the father of the modern battle fleet. He spent his early years on operations, training and staff duties until chosen to revise the Gunnery Manual of the Fleet. As a consequence of his originality and high conception of duty he was chosen for command of the most well armed and capable ship in the fleet. Subsequently, whilst in command of the Navy's gunnery school, he inspired the publication of a work by Mr WT Stead called 'The Truth about the Navy' which resulted in a massive vote of funds for the Fleet and paved the way for the Naval Defence Act of 1889. When later he was given the Mediterranean Command, he engendered the spirit of Nelson in his officers and sought the highest efficiency possible for the Fleet. His watchword was 'the seagoing and fighting efficiency of the Fleet and its instant readiness for war'. He was truly both a desk-admiral and a sea-admiral. He transformed the Mediterranean Fleet from a 12-knot Fleet with breakdowns to a 15-knot Fleet without breakdowns, introduced long-range target practice; inaugurated war drills for officers and men, and trained the Fleet for anything. It was as Second Sea Lord that he wrote the memorandum on the entry and training of junior officers for the Fleet that was subsequently published and the principles it espoused were recognised worldwide. As First Sea Lord he left an indelible mark on the administration, organisation, disposition and equipment of the Royal Navy that is the most memorable in the modern history of that office. When he left office in 1910 he left behind a new Navy far stronger and better disposed for the defence of the UK and the Empire.

Foch

Foch was the most famous soldier of his generation and the man who will for all time be regarded as the principal instrument in the defeat of the Germans in the Great War. He had a marvellous vigour of mind and body, combined with indomitable courage, a supreme confidence in himself, and a through mastery of his profession. He rose from being a Corps Commander at the beginning of the war to be General-in-Chief of the Allied Armies on the Western Front. His reward, the greatest possible for a French soldier, was to avenge the defeat of 1870 and to dictate the terms of the Armistice. When Joffre lost the confidence of the French Government after the Somme operations, Foch fell with him. But when the 1917 offensive collapsed and Joffre's successor was removed, Foch returned as Chief of the Staff to Pétain. Following a series of military disasters, an Inter Allied Executive War Board was set up with Foch appointed as President. It was the political recognition by the Allies that some kind of unity of command was essential that led to Foch being appointed to the supreme command. Although Foch had little tactical ability he did have that essential strategic insight and will to win. Foch orchestrated a magnificent series of engagements that ensured that his campaign had a decisive effect culminated in Allied victory.

Haig

At the time of Haig's death, he was probably remembered as the greatest soldier that the Empire possessed. In active service, he shouldered the heaviest military burden any Briton had ever borne and afterwards devoted his energies to the service of his comrades in the field. His great characteristic was thoroughness and during his career he worked through every staff grade and commanded every unit; Haig's knowledge of his profession was unsurpassed. When he took control of British Armies in France he was faced with many problems. His main task being to reorganise, retrain and reinforce the British forces with the tenacity and single-minded purpose for which he had become known. After Passchendaele the Germans

overran large sectors of the British front but Haig was confidant that they would overreach themselves and that victory was within Allied hands. Haig had suggested that Foch be appointed General-in-Chief and his plans in almost every case were adopted by Foch. Victory was largely due to Haig's military achievement in the field and when the fate of nations was in the balance he never lost heart. Post war it is possible that the services he gave to the Empire were greater than his military service. There were many ex-Service organisations in 1918 and some had developed extreme political tendencies. Haig set about creating one organisation and in so doing changed the course of the ex-Service movement. The British Legion is essentially the outcome of the work of one man - Haig.

Jellicoe

It was once said of Jellicoe that he was the only man on either side who could lose the war in an afternoon. Of all the commanders on either side during the Great War he occupied a position that was unique. As Winston Churchill pointed out 'It might fall to him as to no other man - Sovereign, statesman, admiral or general - to issue orders which in the space of two or three hours might nakedly decide who won the war'. Jellicoe held the supreme command in the North Sea for over half the war. He suffered comparatively few losses and no battleship or cruiser was lost to submarines. It will be for the Battle of Jutland that he will be remembered. The action presented Jellicoe with a difficult decision that arose from differences in his navigation plot and the calculated positions and indications of the High Sea Fleet. On becoming First Sea Lord he applied himself to addressing the growing submarine threat and as a defensive measure introduced convoys to protect trade. His tenure as First Sea Lord was abruptly terminated without explanation although some took the view that it was a disgraceful concession to unscrupulous press agitation. In reality it is likely that he was in part to blame over an untimely 'bombshell' statement to the Cabinet regarding a shortage of shipping and Britain's ability to continue the war.

Allenby

Lord Allenby rendered invaluable service to his country both as a soldier and administrator. It was the campaign in France in the Great War that brought him to prominence as a gifted leader of men and led to his command of an army. He then became an independent commander-in-chief in Egypt and then to the open warfare of Palestine. He was a dignified man of tireless energy, boundless strength of purpose, and great moral and physical courage. His victory at Megiddo has been described as 'No more dramatic and crushing victory has been recorded in military history'. Allenby had a proper understanding of the use of cavalry in breakthrough and pursuit and was arguably the best of British commanders of horsed cavalry.

Trenchard

Trenchard is well known as the Father of the Royal Air Force - a sobriquet he hated. He was one of the earliest - and, by any measure the greatest - Air Force officers of any nationality. In a period of just 3 years he was seconded to the Royal Flying Corps and resigned on a matter of principle from the newly created post of Chief of the Air Staff. The level of dismay at his resignation resulted in a debate in the House of Commons. He returned as Chief of the Air Staff within a year and over the next 11 years he was to build the basic structure and preserve the integrity of the RAF that lead to victory in the Battle of Britain. He was the first man to articulate the principles of air power that are still accepted today. However, it was his

command of the Royal Flying Corps in the field where he had the good fortune to build up this fledgling service and to hammer out on the anvil of battle experience the new theory and practice of air warfare. In organising the newly formed RAF he recognised the need for a highly trained and efficient cadre of officers and men capable of rapid expansion should the need arise. This he achieved by opening the Cadet College at Cranwell, the apprentice school at Halton and the Staff College at Andover. Many features of the RAF today were innovations under Trenchard's regime and most have stood the test of time.

Guderian

Guderian was Germany's dynamic panzer commander of WWII. He had one of the most creative military minds of the period to which were joined a dynamic energy and opportunism. He was responsible for building the mobile armoured army when Hitler gave him the authority and resources to put his ideas into practice. Being appointed general of Panzer troops his new army was tested in the invasion of Poland. The accuracy of his conception was immediately proved by the speed with which he broke through the 'Polish Corridor' and drove onwards to Brest. He was even more successful in the west where his panzers were allowed free rein. In the Russian campaign he enjoyed initial successes but in the end 'space and depth' defeated him. Moscow did not fall and he fell out of favour.

Alanbrooke

Alan Francis Brooke, 1st Viscount Alanbrooke, is recognised as one of greatest soldiers of his generation. He only held high command in the field for a short period but his intellect and military knowledge served him well as Chief of the Imperial General Staff during the greater part of WWII. Alanbrooke emerged from WWI with the reputation of a capable and promising staff officer. On the outbreak of war he went to France as Commander of II Corps. In the subsequent evacuation from Dunkirk he displayed consummate ability. After Dunkirk as C-in-C Home Forces he was faced with the enormous task of re-equipping, training, and the preparation of defence against invasion. He became Chief of the Imperial General Staff at a black moment as Singapore was doomed to fall. He was indefatigable in the post, discharging his burden with skill and determination. Alanbrooke had expected to be Supreme Commander for the invasion of Europe and it was a crushing blow when Churchill gave the post to the Americans at the Quebec Conference. He famously said of Churchill, 'He is quite the most difficult man to work with that I have ever struck, but I would not have missed the chance of working with him for anything on earth'.

Rommel

Rommel enjoyed an exaggerated reputation as a result of German propaganda after a series of successes in North Africa in WWII and was known by the British as The Desert Fox. The reputation was exploded with the battle of El Alamein but his conduct of the axis retreat to Tunisia proved beyond doubt his professional competence. He was indeed a masterly tactician and aggressive exploiter of success. It was his qualities of leadership and perhaps his taste for the methods of a gangster in civil war that brought him to Hitler's notice. When Hitler sent him to North Africa to organise the Afrika Korps, the desert campaign brought mixed fortunes for Rommel as the battle swung back and forth across the desert. As commander of the army group defending the Low Countries and France north of the Biscay coast he was caught largely by surprise by the Allied invasion. It was announced that he had died from injuries received

during the Allied invasion but in truth he had been persuaded to take poison by two German generals rather than face the consequences of an investigation into his implication in the Hitler assassination attempt in 1944. Rommel was undoubtedly a tactical genius but he was restless, arrogant and difficult to work with, as well as neglectful of the administrative side of the forces he commanded. He brought to modern warfare the methods of bluff and ambush; he was a master of tank warfare without knowing anything about a tank. Although disliked by those with whom he came in contact, he exercised an amazing influence over the troops from whom he exacted so much. He will be remembered as a brilliant though uncertain and uneven commander in the field rather than as a commander-in-chief.

Montogomery
Montgomery - the victor of El Alamein and a legend in his own lifetime. The great victory in the Western Desert in 1942 made him famous throughout the world. It is said that Montgomery never lost a battle and that is true although his offensives in Tunisia and Italy were checked and the failure of the airborne landing at Arnhem failed to crown with final success a well-conceived and skilfully conducted offensive. Although he had notable deficiencies in his political and strategic armoury, his skill and leadership on the battlefield and his unique leadership were unquestioned. Montgomery had the reputation of being a thorn in the side of the establishment and his career could have been in peril on many occasions. He played a major role in the European campaign and exercised his incisive mind and personality in modifying the invasion plan that he was determined should be cold, clinical and well thought-out. There was a long and bitter controversy between him and General Eisenhower as Supreme Commander over the strategic plan for the advance in Europe; Montgomery as always pressing for one bold decisive stroke as against a general advance on a broad front. Montgomery's military thinking combined immense conviction with clarity of expression and great simplicity. Asked once to name the three greatest generals in history he answered with impish imprecision, 'The other two were Alexander the Great and Napoleon'.

Patton
Known by the sobriquet 'Old Blood and Guts', Patton was a flamboyant and emotional character who was a born military leader. He was one of the most successful leaders produced by WWII; a cavalryman by training and instinct who became a tank expert. Brave, thrustful and determined in action he taught his men both to fear and to admire him. A serious and thoughtful soldier, he was an early advocate of the employment of armour in swiftly moving masses to exploit the break-through. He was famous for the speed of his operations. One of his most striking feats was in the advance to the Rhine when he caught the Germans wrong-footed by crossing the Moselle. In spite of many idiosyncrasies, Patton was fundamentally a serious officer, offensively minded and bent on the single object of defeating the enemy. He could find words to inspire, none better known than his message on leaving for France in 1944, 'You are not here to die for your country, but to make some other goddam son-of-bitch die for his country'.

MacArthur
MacArthur was recognised as a brilliant soldier but a controversial strategist, an American hero whose defiance of civilian authority during the Korean War led to his replacement. Described as 'the bloodiest fighting man in the Army', he was the most decorated American officer of

WWI. However, his greatest achievements came after his retirement when he was recalled at the age of 60 to defend his country's interests in the Far East. As Supreme Commander of all allied forces in the South West Pacific, MacArthur became one of the greatest military figures of the war. He subsequently became military governor of Japan and his sympathetic handling of the Japanese was a great asset to the free world. As was once said, 'he imposes democracy like a dictator'.

Nimitz
Nimitz was perhaps the greatest of the galaxy of talented flag officers produced by the American Navy during WWII. A submariner, ten days after the devastating Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Fleet. He quickly showed himself to be not only a resolute leader in adversity but also a master of the organisation of large naval forces and a supremely successful strategist. The battle of Midway transformed the whole strategic situation in a few hectic hours. Nimitz was not slow to take advantage of the change by assuming the offensive, realising that he needed to establish temporary advanced bases in the islands of the Central and South Pacific to enable naval forces to operate at the required distances from their home bases.

Zhukov
Zhukov was perhaps the most brilliant of the Soviet soldiers who fought in WWII. He was not a veteran of the Russian Civil War, his victories over the Germans at Moscow, on the Don, in the Ukraine, and finally in Berlin have guaranteed him a significant place in military history. A great popular hero he bulked too large on the political scene to suit either Stalin's or Khrushchev's brand of personal rule. He was accused of resisting party control of the armed forces and was even blamed for the unpreparedness of the Soviet forces when the Nazis invaded in 1941. As Chief of the General Staff he was responsible for the Soviet defence plan; he organised the last ditch defence of Leningrad and he was responsible for the defence of the capital. He was then appointed 'Commander of the Western Axis' he supervised the encirclement and destruction of the German Army Group Central. Zhukov's reputation was established by his redoubtable battlefield success, although it was built on a loss of lives in his huge armies.

Dowding
Dowding became Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command in 1936 and laid the plans for and directed the battle of Britain when the 'Few' won imperishable glory. 'Stuffy' Dowding as he was known - a nickname given to him by the artillery for reasons unknown, had grown up with the RAF but his nickname completely belied his gift of charm and accessibility. He served his early years in the army and at the Camberley Staff College he was struck by the prevailing ignorance of aviation. He learnt to fly and applied to join the Royal Flying Corps and served with squadrons in Belgium and France in WWI. Always outspoken, he clashed with Trenchard his then superior on a technical issue and was deprived of his command. When the RAF was formed, Dowding was not initially selected for a commission. He was not an outstanding pilot but he had a good grasp of the practical side of airmanship and a rare understanding of the limitations of air power. He was among the first to recognise the possibilities of radar and his work in the field of technical development would place him high amongst his country's saviours. He resisted the government's plan to deploy further squadrons to France in May 1940 as a

gesture of encouragement to the French. His advice that such a sacrifice would not save France and would mean defeat for his own country was tendered with an authority no other airman could command. He dared to question Whitehall and was overruled on a number of issues that led to his controversial removal as chief of Fighter Command. It is written of Dowding that 'Never in history has a commander won so signal a victory and been so little thanked by his country, and even in his own service. Even the barony was belated'.

Harris
'Bomber' Harris as CinC Bomber Command had a total belief in the bombing policy of WWII. The sobriquet of 'Bomber' is indicative of the single-minded passion with which this iron willed officer pursued the goals and bombing policies in which he believed. In particular the 'area bombing' whose most devastating monument was the destruction of Dresden. He objected strongly to any attempt to divert his force on to other objectives. The effectiveness of the bombing campaign will doubtless continue to be debated but at the time the bomber force was the only weapon that could strike back at Germany. When he took over Bomber Command in 1942 he realised that the assumptions on which the concept of strategic bombing were fallacious and set about improving the ability of the force to penetrate and accurately bomb its targets. Harris took a demoralised command and forged it into an instrument whose operations eventually played their part in bringing German military resistance to an end.

Wingate
Wingate will be remembered for the guerrilla operations that he led in Burma during WWII. He had an unusual military career of exceptional distinction initially gaining fame for his exploits in Palestine, played a major role in the campaign that led to the restoration of the Emperor in Abyssinia before leading two expeditions in Burma prior to dying in an aircraft accident. When sent to Burma to take charge of guerrilla warfare there was probably no man in the allied forces more fitted than he to organise and lead the 'Jungle Commando'. His presence there and the nature of his operations were among the best kept secrets of the war until his successes were announced in May 1943. His death on an operational flight was a grievous loss to allied arms as his greatest campaign had fired the imagination with its blend of science and sheer daring. Wingate combined the qualities of a guerrilla leader and the scientist; he was a solitary, elusive figure and his disregard for convention fitted ideally into his orthodox military caution. His characterisation of himself as 'boot up the backside of mankind' in his advocacy of irregular warfare is probably the best description of the man.

The obituaries of the other great military leaders included in this book are listed below.

Raglan - British Commander-in-Chief in the Crimea.
Grant - Master strategist of the Union Army.
Lee - An American soldier: 'one of the noblest soldiers who has ever drawn a sword in a cause which they believe just'.
Sitting Bull - Chief of the Prairie Sioux.
Moltke - Organiser of victory.
MacMahon - Descendant of a distinguished Irish family in the service of France.

Cetywayo - King of the Zulus.
Roberts - 'He may be tiny, but he's wise, he's a terror for his size.'
Hindenburg - Father of the Fatherland.
Ludendorff - Hindenburg's right hand man and confidant in the First World War.
Beatty - A great sea commander.
Scheer - High seas Fleet Commander.
Atatürk - Maker of modern Turkey - soldier, organiser and administrator.
Mannerheim - Marshal of Finland, patriot and statesman.
Rundstedt - Orthodox strategist and father figure of the German officer corps.
Wavell - Soldier and man of letters.
Auchinleck - Architect of a defensive strategy that led to victory in the desert.
Cunningham - The greatest Royal Navy commander of the Second World War.
Horton - An architect of victory in the Battle of the Atlantic.
Donitz - Architect of German wartime U-boat strategy.
Eisenhower - Modern America's soldier statesman.
Kesselring - One of Germany's most accomplished commanders in the Second World War.
Manstein - An outstanding German soldier.
Rokossovsky - Master of the counter-offensive.
Galland - The Luftwaffe's fighter commander.
Slim - Soldier of indomitable spirit who defeated the Japanese.
Ridgway - United Nations Supreme Commander in Korea.
Gorshkov - Mastermind of global Soviet sea power.
Walker - Fighting general of uncompromising methods.
Fieldhouse - Falklands commander-in-chief.