FIELD MARSHAL EARL ALEXANDER of TUNIS

Died: Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis, 77, imperturbable, troubleshooting British general in World War II, after which he served as Governor-General of Canada from 1946 to 1952, then as Britain’s Minister of Defense for the next two years; of a ruptured aorta, in Slough, England, June 16. "Attack, attack, attack --even if you are on the defensive," was Harold Alexander's war cry. Last man off the beach in the 1940 evacuation from Dunkirk, he fought another rear-guard action in Burma before doing his attacking from the winning side, first as Bernard Montgomery's unheralded boss in the North African Campaign, then in Sicily and Italy, where he was Dwight D. Eisenhower's deputy with the title of Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater. Ike called Alex "the ace card in the British Empire's hand." (from TIME Magazine, June 1969)

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Born as Harold R.L.G. Alexander, the 3rd son of the 4th Earl of Caledon, "Alex" was commissioned to the Irish Guards in 1911. His exploits in the First World War are too numerous to describe here but suffice it to say he bore a charmed life and became a legendary figure of courage and leadership. He ended the war as a lieutenant colonel with a French Legion of Honor (1914), the Military Cross (1915), and the Distinguished Service Order (1916). He was wounded twice and mentioned in dispatches four times. Two of his three brothers, Herbrand and William, also received DSO's.

The 21 years between the wars allowed him further action; first as Commander of the Landeswehr in Latvia (1919-20), in which he received The Baltic Cross of Honour and the Order of St. Anne with swords, and later in Constantinople and in India (1921-38), the latter involving two campaigns on India's Northwest Frontier in the rank of brigadier.

In 1938 Alexander was given command of the 1st Division at Aldershot with the rank of major general. This was a most coveted appointment. The 1st Division went to France at the outbreak of war in September 1939 with Alex in command.

He brilliantly extricated the British Forces from the continent and was the last man off the beach at Dunkirk in 1940. In 1942 he was sent to Burma to command the retreating British Forces once again with great skill.

Appointed C in C Middle East in August 1942 he directed the great campaigns in North Africa. He became Ike's deputy and commanded the new 18th Army Group made up of the 1st and 8th Armies from which the "18" was derived. He commanded the Sicilian Invasion in 1943 (once again the unheralded boss -- this time of Patton and Montgomery!)

Promoted Field Marshal to become Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater (1944-45) he saw the war to its close.

Although his official career ended with his retirement in 1954 he continued to lead a full and active life until a heart attack claimed him in 1969.

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FIELD-MARSHAL EARL ALEXANDER
OF TUNIS

Knight of the Garter
Knight Grand Cross of the Bath
Order of Merit
Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George
Commander of the Order of the Star of India
Distinguished Service Order
Military Cross

Knight of the Order of St. John
1914 Star with Bar
War Medal 1914-1919
Allied Victory Medal 1919 (with Mention in Despatches)

India General Service Medal 1936
1939-1945 Star
Africa Star with 2 Clasps (8th and 1st Army)
Burma Star

Italy Star
War Medal 1939-1945 (with Mention in Despatches)
Jubilee 1935
George VI Coronation 1937

Elizabeth II Coronation 1953
Canadian Decoration
Legion of Honor, Grand Cross-France
Croix de Guerre with Palm-France
Order of St. Anne, 2nd Class, with Swords-Russia

Order of Svovorov, 1st Class-USSR
Royal Order of George I, Grand Cross-Greece
Order of the Redeemer, Grand Cross-Greece
Order of Virtuti Militari, 5th Class-Poland
Legion of Merit, Chief Commander-USA

Distinguished Service Medal, Army-USA
European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal-USA
Order of Leopold I, Grand Cross-Belgium
Croix de Guerre with Palm-Belgium
Order of Military Merit, Grand Cross-San Marino

Order of Trishakti Patta, Grand Cross-Nepal
Order of Merit of the Knights of Malta, Grand Cross
Order of Nichan Iftikhar, Grand Cross-Tunisia
Order of Ouissam Alaouite, 2nd Class-Morocco
Order of Military Merit, 2nd Class-Brazil

Campaign Medal-Brazil
Order of the White Lion-Cze$hoslovakia
War Cross-Czechoslovakia
War Cross (Soldier's Medal)-Italy
Order of the Star of Africa, Grand Cross-Liberia

Compiled from various sources by Haskell D. Richardson, 1974
FIELD MARSHAL
EARL
ALEXANDER
OF TUNIS

FIGURE 13
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