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August 19, 1947.

"MONTY" TO GIVE HIS DIGGER HAT TO AUSTRALIA.

Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein will come to Australia House at 3 p.m. on Thursday (August 21) to present to the High Commissioner for Australia (Mr. J.A. Beasley) the Australian hat which was given to him by the Australian 9th Division in the Western Desert on August 14, 1942.

The hat was given to Viscount Montgomery when he first visited the headquarters of the Australian General, Sir Leslie Morshead. He had only arrived in the Desert from England the day before and he found he could not stand the sun on the back of his neck, so he asked General Morshead to give him one of the Australian hats. General Morshead did this and put the Australian badge on it.

Viscount Montgomery visited the New Zealand Division the next day, wearing the hat. The New Zealanders said he ought to have one of their hats. He refused to change his hat, but said he would wear the New Zealand badge on it. From that day onwards every unit he visited asked him to put its badge on the hat, and he did this. Eventually he got used to the sun and discarded the hat, taking to a beret. He kept the hat and has it here in London. It is covered with unit badges.

When he was in Canberra recently he told the Prime Minister (Mr. Chifley) that he thought the proper place for the hat was in the National War Memorial in Canberra.

In a public speech in Sydney he said he would present the hat to Australia, and on Thursday he will formally hand it over to Mr. Beasley.