

GB. 2172

Western Desert: Alamein Memorial

26th Oct. 54

October 1942. The Battle of El Alamein. The Eighth Army's last-ditch stand to save the Middle East was over. They were going forward - a 1300 mile advance, that brought Germany's first major defeat on land, and the turning-point of the war. Soon, the hard-pressed folks at home were sharing the joyous news with Sir Winston Churchill / SOUND.

It's twelve years ago now; but every year, the memories come flooding back to Eighth Army veterans at their London Re-union. At Wembley, they met again, to revive wartime friendships and, more especially, to remember absent comrades / And their leader, Field Marshall Montgomery read a message from the Queen.

During this week-end of remembrance, the thoughts of Eighth Army veterans; ~~at Wembley, London, and at the Alamein Memorial~~ were centred <sup>on the desert - and</sup> upon a white-stone memorial - at El Alamein.

Arriving to perform the unveiling ceremony - Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery inspects the Guard of Honour - men of the 1st Batt. The Seaforth Highlanders. (found)

The memorial - a cloister in African stone, forms part of the battlefield cemetery and is dedicated to 11,945 Commonwealth men, who fell in the Middle East - and have no known grave.

~~The Field Marshall placed a wreath on the memorial.~~ On tablets of Portland stone - their names are recorded - ~~of the Commonwealth who~~

After the ceremony, the Field-Marshal moved among those who mourned - the men with memories....and the many bereaved relatives, who had braved the long and arduous journey to this hallowed-place.

To-day - in the barren desert and beneath the burning sun where they fought and died - there stands a cool cloister of green memory....

A simple memorial - they would have preferred it that way.