

# CHURCHILL BOOK COLLECTOR

For five extraordinary years he led wartime Britain. He also wrote. 58 books. 260 pamphlets. 840 articles. 9,000 pages of speeches.  
And won the Nobel Prize in Literature. Our job is to help Churchill's words find your shelves.

## An Extraordinary Signed WWII Photograph

**Prime Minister Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill visiting the First Canadian Army  
and General Henry Duncan Graham "Harry" Crerar  
at the Western Front inside the German border  
accompanied by Field Marshal Alan Francis Brooke  
and Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery**

*Signed by Churchill, Crerar, Brooke, and Montgomery*

**Taken on 4 March 1945, a Canadian Military photograph  
marked "SECRET NOT TO BE PUBLISHED"**



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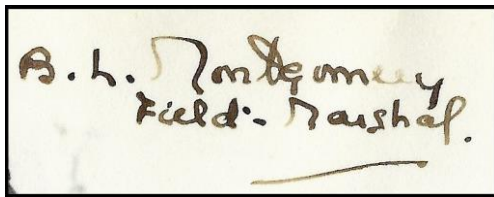
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## The Image

Taken on 4 March 1945 on the western front inside the German border near the Siegfried Line, this image is signed by each of the four wartime leaders it captures, each of them essential to the Allied victories that put them there, on German soil, on the cusp of winning the war.

Here bundled against the cold first days of the final Spring of the Second World War, are British Prime Minister Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, Field-Marshal Alan Francis Brooke, Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, and Canadian General Henry Duncan Graham "Harry" Crerar.

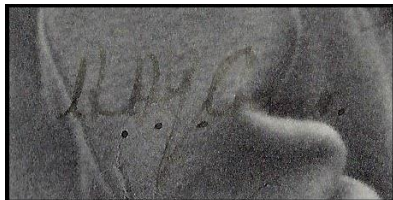
The image features the four standing beside the car ostensibly used to transport the visiting dignitaries. Bare trees and a gray sky are visible in the background and all four men are dressed to ward off the chill. Montgomery faces the camera in the background center while Churchill (cigar in his mouth) and Crerar are in profile, facing one another, Crerar apparently in the process of speaking to Churchill. Brooke stands, hands clasped in front of him, behind and to the left of Crerar.



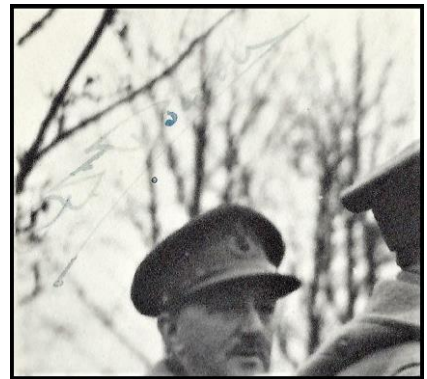
Montgomery signed in black ink "B .L. Montgomery | Field-Marshal." at the upper center of the image. Churchill's signature, "Winston S. Churchill", is



at the lower center-right of the photo, the "S." and



"Churchill" extending into the bottom of his overcoat. Crerar signed "H. D. G. Crerar" across his own right elbow. Brooke signed at the upper left background above his own head.



Montgomery's signature, inked in black on the gray sky background, is clearest. Churchill's signature, heavily inked in black, is distinct, but on a darker background. Crerar's signature, also on a dark background, has faded, but remains clearly legible. Brooke's signature is still readily apparent, but considerably faded and more difficult to decipher than those of the other three.



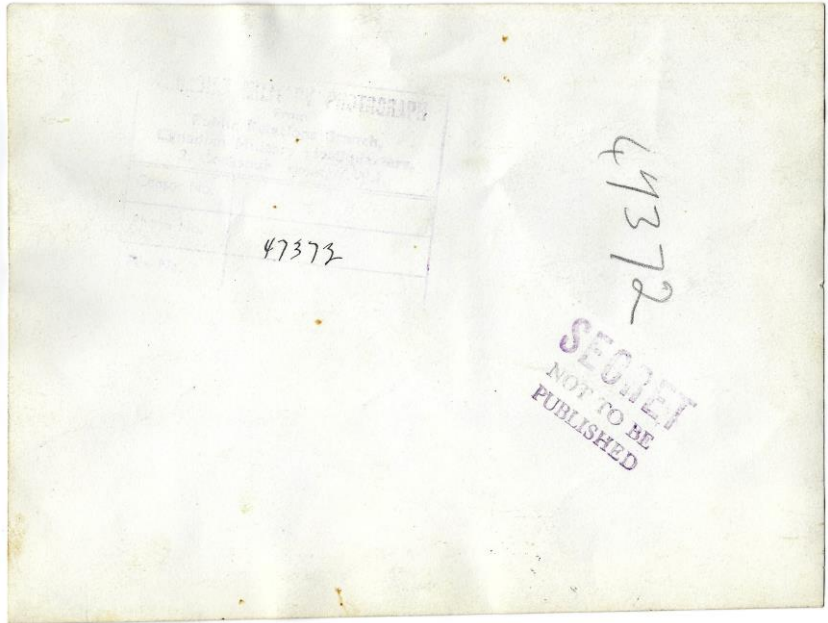
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## Condition and provenance

The silver-gelatin print measures 8.25 x 6.125 inches (21 x 15.75 cm). The verso is stamped "SECRET | NOT TO BE | PUBLISHED". A second, fainter, ink stamp reads: "CANADIAN MILITARY PHOTOGRAPH | From | Public Relations Branch, | Canadian Military Headquarters, | 2 Cockspur Street" and specifies a "Photo No." of "47373" hand-written in ink. Hand-written in pencil elsewhere on the verso is the number "47372".



Condition of the photograph is very good. There are no losses or tears and the surface is clean, free of spotting, soiling, or appreciable abrasion. The lower left edge and bottom edge show some minor rippling. This photograph came to us from the nephew of a Swiss collector, from whom it was inherited and whose collection held several vintage photographs of Churchill, some of them with letters of provenance.

## The moment

After the critical German losses in the Battle of the Bulge, which had ended a little more than a month before this photo was taken, the remaining German forces were pushed back to defend the Siegfried Line. This system of pillboxes and strong points built along the German western frontier fell to the Allies in early 1945.



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On 2 March 1945, Churchill flew to Brussels with Field Marshal Brooke and General Ismay. On the morning of 3 March these three accompanied by Field Marshal Montgomery walked along the "dragon's teeth," the anti-tank obstacles that formed part of the Siegfried Line.

Photographs were not the order of the day. Brooke later recalled of Churchill and the moment: *"As the photographers had all rushed up to secure good vantage points, he turned to them and said, 'This is one of the operations connected with this great war which must not be reproduced graphically.' To give them credit they obeyed their orders and, in so doing, missed a chance of publishing the greatest photographic catch of the war! ...intense satisfaction... spread all over his face as he looked down at the critical moment."* (Brooke recollections: Bryant, *op. cit.*, volume 2, page 423)

On March 4, the camera did capture Churchill. On that day, Churchill continued his tour of the Western Front, visiting the First Canadian Army and lunching with General Crerar. (Gillbert, Vol. VII, pp.1239-40) It was during this meeting that this photo was taken.



At the time, Montgomery and Crerar were in the midst of Operation Veritable, the northern element of an Allied pincer movement, focused on clearing German forces from the area between the Rhine and Maas rivers.

The Canadian and British forces under Crerar's command were plagued by rain, cold, mud, and rough terrain. The struggle of balancing continued pressure on the Germans against the human and material cost of maintaining that pressure fell squarely on Crerar, his commanders, and his soldiers.



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The successful end of Operation Veritable came a few days after Churchill's visit when, on 10 March, the Germans abandoned their last bridgehead on the west bank of the Rhine at Wesel. In a 26 March letter of congratulations to Crerar, Eisenhower wrote *"Probably no assault in this war has been conducted under more appalling conditions of terrain than was that one. It speaks volumes for your skill and the valor of your soldiers that you carried it through to a successful conclusion."*

### The Men



#### **General Henry Duncan Graham "Harry" Crerar**

(1888-1965) Born into an upper-middle-class family in Hamilton, Ontario, the future General Crerar's early life was characterized by lavish parties, society column appearances, trips to the family's ancestral home in Scotland and tours of the Continent. Crerar attributed his early attraction to the military in part to his fond memories of engaging in horsemanship at his family's summer getaway, the sportsmanship he inherited from his father, and the example of his mother, who participated in local philanthropy and was a great supporter of the British Empire. A graduate of the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Crerar was commissioned into the artillery in 1910 and was quick to volunteer for the Canadian Expeditionary Force when war was declared against Germany in 1914. His experiences in the European trenches dispelled any hints of his early romantic notions of military life. In his

diary of 15 June, 1914 he wrote, "war is so very truly hell... it just resolves itself into a case of counting corpses, if we have fewer than they, it's a 'victory.'" The First World War also gave Crerar a deep, enduring enmity for Germany; "in 1945 he would refuse to meet any of the German commanders, allowing his subordinates to accept their surrender." During WWI he rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel of artillery. After the war Crerar remained in the military, and became Commandant of the Royal Military College of Canada in 1939. In 1940 he became chief of the general staff. By 1941 Crerar was in command of I Canadian Corps in the UK, which he took to Italy in 1943. He led the First Canadian Army in the invasion of France and became a full general by November of 1944, spending the duration of the war in field command in northwest Europe. He



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is perhaps best remembered for the critical role he played in Operation Veritable, an operation to remove German armies east of the Rhine. From 8 February to 10 March 1945, Crerar led a command of 13 divisions, of which 9 were British, the largest force ever commanded in the field by a Canadian. The operation was plagued by harsh weather and rough terrain. The campaign was successful, pushing the German forces across the Rhine, and earning Crerar Eisenhower's praise. Crerar retired in 1946. "As hostilities drew to a close, Crerar ordered negotiations for local ceasefires so that food could be transported to the Dutch." Despite his relative post-WWII obscurity, "His role would not be forgotten. On his return in 1948 to represent Canada at the coronation of Queen Juliana, he was greeted everywhere by parades and cheering crowds."



## **Field Marshal Alan Francis Brooke, 1st Viscount Alanbrooke**

(1883-1963) Alan Francis Brooke was born to a family with a centuries-long and distinguished record of military service to the crown and served as the foremost military advisor to Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the coordinator of British military efforts during the Second World War. At the apex of a distinguished and decorated military career, in December 1941, Brooke became chief of the Imperial General Staff (IGS) "in place of Dill, who had been no match for Winston Churchill. Soon thereafter Brooke became, in addition, chairman of the chiefs of staff committee and effectively the principal strategic adviser to the war cabinet as well as the professional head of the army." (ODNB) When Brooke accepted Churchill's appointment to serve as chief of the Imperial General Staff in November 1941, Churchill commented: "He is a combination of wisdom and

vigour which I have found refreshing." Churchill also had a personal connection with Brooke through "his two gallant brothers - the friends of my early military life", Victor and Ronald. Victor was befriended by Churchill in 1895 and killed during the retreat from Mons in 1914; "Ronnie" was a comrade in arms and friend from the Boer War who also died prematurely in 1925. (Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*, pp. 233-4) By all accounts, Brooke proved a pivotal part of the British war effort, coordinating, commanding, consensus building, "and, often above all... contriving] that Churchill's indispensable and magnificent energies were not misdirected towards



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unsound and erratic strategic schemes." (ODNB) Brooke was promoted to Field Marshal in 1944 and after the war handed over office to Montgomery, subsequently serving as Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast, holding various ceremonial posts, among them being nominated Lord High Constable of England and commander of the parade for the 1953 coronation of Elizabeth II, as well as holding directorship of numerous companies and engaging in philanthropic causes. In the First World War, Alanbrooke had been appointed to the DSO and had received the bar and six mentions in the dispatches. In 1940 he was appointed KCB, received the grand cross of both the Bath (1942) and the Royal Victorian Order (1953). He was created Baron Alanbrooke in 1945 and Viscount Alanbrooke in 1946, the year in which he was also created KG and admitted to the Order of Merit.



## **Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein**

(1887-1976) Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, passed through Sandhurst "without distinction but without difficulty also" and began what would be fifty years in the British Army. "It was the First World War that changed Montgomery from a bumptious, querulous infantry subaltern, constantly at odds with authority, into a decorated company commander, outstanding staff officer—and trainer of men." The First World War showed Montgomery 'that the whole art of war is to gain your objective with as little loss as possible.' This edict shaped Montgomery, who became "the outstanding British field commander of the twentieth century." Montgomery earned his fame in North Africa during the Second World War. In August 1942, Churchill gave Montgomery command of the Eighth

Army, where Montgomery famously beat Rommel and oversaw defeat of Axis forces in North Africa. He went on to command the Eighth Army in Sicily and Italy. Of his Eighth Army, Montgomery would say, with characteristic self-effacing modesty, "It went from Alamein half way up Italy without losing a battle or even a serious action, and without ever withdrawing a yard." Montgomery was recalled to England in December 1943 to become commander-in-chief of Allied ground forces during the D-day landings, responsible for two million British, American, Canadian, Polish, Free French, and other Allied troops. After the war he would rise to Chief of the



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Imperial General Staff and be elevated to Viscount Montgomery of Alamein. He retired in 1958 as deputy commander of NATO's European forces. Montgomery also served as Corps Commandant of the British Army Physical Training Corps (A.P.T.C.) at Aldershot from 1946-1960. Lines of Aldershot barracks bear the names of great British military leaders. In April 1965 Montgomery was at Aldershot to formally open the "Montgomery lines" which are still in use. Arrogant, outspoken, and politically inept, Montgomery seldom missed either controversy or opportunity for self-promotion. During the war he was often criticized by Allied commanders for his caution and slowness to strike. Montgomery's uncharitable accusations in his postwar memoirs lost him the friendship of President Eisenhower and forced Montgomery to publicly apologize to a fellow Field Marshal whom - ironically - he accused of being too slow to fight. Montgomery earned further criticism for declaring support for Apartheid and praising communist Chinese leadership. Irrespective of his political and diplomatic limitations, "Monty" remains iconic in his beret, the most readily recognized and widely lauded British military leader of the Second World War.



### Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill

(1874-1965) During his "remarkable and versatile" life, Winston Churchill played many roles worthy of historical note - member of Parliament for more than half a century, distinguished soldier and war correspondent, author of scores of books, ardent social reformer, combative cold warrior, painter, Nobel Prize winner. But more than anything else, it was Winston Churchill's leadership during the Second World War that made him a preeminent historical figure. After passing out from Sandhurst he obtained his commission (20 February 1895) as a cavalry officer in the Queen's Own Hussars. After an adventure in Cuba as a war correspondent, Churchill left England for India in 1896, where he would write his first book on the northwest Indian frontier, cementing the literary inclination that would become a financial, political, and expressive wellspring for the rest of his long life. Churchill would

next fight and write in the Sudan, but it was via the Boer War in South Africa that the soldier and war correspondent made the seminal jump to politics. There, on 15 November 1899, Churchill was captured during a Boer ambush of an armored train. His daring escape less than a month



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later made him a celebrity and helped launch his political career. Churchill was first elected to Parliament in October 1900 as a Conservative. He would cross the aisle to become a Liberal in 1904, and by 1908, at age 33, become both a Cabinet Minister and a husband. By 1911 Churchill was first Lord of the Admiralty. In 1915, after the failure in the Dardanelles and the slaughter at Gallipoli, Churchill was made the scapegoat and forced to resign. At the onset of his first political exile at Hoe Farm in Surrey he discovered painting, which would be a passion and source of release and renewal for the remaining half century of his long life. He spent the balance of his political exile as a lieutenant colonel leading a battalion in the trenches. Before war's end, Churchill was exonerated and rejoined the Government, a dramatic cycle of political ruin and rebirth that echoed the 1930s to come. In October of 1924 Churchill rejoined the Conservatives, elected to the Epping seat he would hold for the next 40 years, and joining the Conservative Government as Chancellor of the Exchequer. By the early 1930s, Churchill was beginning a decade out of power and out of favor that would be known later as his "wilderness years", substantially characterized by Churchill's "unceasing struggle in the face of resentment, apathy, and complacency" as he criticized British foreign policy and warned prophetically of the coming danger posed by Nazi Germany. When war came, Churchill was recalled to the Admiralty in September 1939 and became Prime Minister in May 1940. Churchill would remain wartime Prime Minister until July 1945 and then serve as Leader of the Opposition until his second and final premiership from October 1951 to April 1955. In the course of a lifetime Churchill was the recipient of myriad orders, decorations, and medals. Notably, in 1953 he was both invested as a Knight of the Garter and awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature "for his mastery of historical and biographical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values."



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