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Monty allegedly fell in love with many boys

Official biographer agrees Monty was gay

Richard Brooks, Arts Editor



FIELD Marshal Montgomery, Britain's most famous second world war commander, was a repressed homosexual who fell in love with young men, according to his official biographer.

Nigel Hamilton has written a book named *The Full Monty* in which he claims that the man who conquered the German army in north Africa in 1942 had a passion for many boys, some not yet in their teens.

Hamilton said he had long suspected the soldier's sexual leanings but did not mention them in his earlier work - a three-part authorised biography published in the 1980s - out of respect for his subject. Now he feels compelled to tell the full story, revealed in a series of letters from Montgomery to young men, and to Hamilton.

Aspersions have previously been cast on Monty's sexuality, but



Montgomery, victor of north Africa, showed many traits of repressed homosexuality



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Hamilton's claims will have force because of the author's reputation. He says he has gained access to hundreds of letters.

He now feels released from the arrangement with Montgomery's family that gave him access to material for his earlier work. That arrangement, Hamilton said, "tied my hands".

The author said he had no proof of a physical relationship between Montgomery and the many boys he befriended, though he has no doubt that he was passionately in love with them. One was Lucien Trueb, who Montgomery met in 1946 when the Swiss boy was just 12, and they corresponded over many years.

The new book will cause controversy despite earlier rumours about his sexuality. Monty's only son, David, the current Viscount Montgomery, speaking this weekend from Jamaica where he is on holiday, denied his father was homosexual.

"Hamilton is only writing this book in the hope of getting some headlines," he said.

He denied suggestions by Hamilton that his parents' marriage was a sham.

"All I can say is that to my knowledge it was a very happy marriage," he said. However, Montgomery confirmed his father never had a close relationship with any woman during his almost 40 years as a widower.

"He did not consider remarriage. He was very shy of women," the viscount said. His father would never allow women into his headquarters.

Hamilton, a visiting professor at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, says his new book, to be published this summer, has not been written to destroy but to explain the reputation of a man he regards as a "revolutionary" commander.

"I've been curious to find out why he was such a revolutionary leader. I believe his sexuality is a key. His passion for young men helped him relate to his liaison officers and young staff. He felt a real concern for their welfare," said Hamilton.

Hamilton admitted his own father, Denis, a former editor of The Sunday Times, may not have approved of the claim. "Such revelations would have upset him," he admitted.

Denis Hamilton served under Montgomery during the war and afterwards became his media adviser. When he worked on The Sunday Times in the 1950s, he bought the serialisation of Montgomery's war memoirs for the paper.

Montgomery became a national figure after leading the 8th Army to victory against Rommel at El Alamein, and taking British command at D-Day. Born in 1887, he was said to have been unhappy as a child. He had a poor relationship with his mother and his brother died when he was only 13. He served in the first world war and devoted the rest of his life to the military.

He married in 1927, but his wife Elizabeth died suddenly in 1937, leaving a son. Montgomery's relationship with his son was remote for many years and it was only in his old age that they were reconciled.

Hamilton believes Montgomery's passion for young boys may have been an attempt to "reconstruct his youth". He justifies his new book as "relevant", since homosexuals have been allowed to serve openly in the army since last year.

Hamilton said he himself had "a homoerotic" relationship with Montgomery, though it was not physical. "He called me 'son number two'," said Hamilton. "But it was also not just what you might call a father-son relationship."

Other Montgomery biographers have dismissed Hamilton's work. Alistair Horne, who wrote *The Lonely Leader*, said the book was "psychobabble".

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