

Laudatio by the University Orator, *pro tem.*, of Field Marshal  
The Lord Bramall KG, GCB

Vice-Chancellor,

ὡς ἔρις ἔκ τε θεῶν ἔκ τ' ἀνθρώπων ἀπόλοιτο  
καὶ χόλος...<sup>1</sup>

[I wish that strife would vanish away from among gods and  
mortals...]

So said Achilles on the shore of Troy; and so might we all concur. But until that longed-for moment we all have need of the honourable profession of arms; and few have professed that calling more devotedly in their country's service, or more honourably, than Field Marshall Lord Bramall.

For more than seven decades, as a soldier in the field, as a general in command, and as source of wisdom in the counsels of government, Edwin Bramall has served his nation with distinction.

The places of this service are many and various. He fought on the beaches of Normandy in June 1944 as a twenty-year-old second lieutenant. He served on the battlefields of north-west Europe in the latter stages of the Second World War, where, barely four months after his twenty-first birthday, his gallantry earned him the Military Cross. He served with General Macarthur's occupation forces in post-war Japan; he was on the staff of Earl Mountbatten of Burma; he served in Libya and in the Canal Zone and worked on the planning staff for Suez. He commanded his regiment in Borneo during the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation, where the distinction of his service was acknowledged with a Mention in Despatches.

Yet, for all this, his attainments have never been confined to the service of Mars. Apollo and the Muses have also favoured him with their gifts, and such was the precocious evidence of this that he could easily have opted for a career as a painter. While still a schoolboy, two of his paintings were chosen for exhibition by the Royal Academy — an attainment that remains unique in the annals of British generalship.

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<sup>1</sup> *Iliad*, 18.107-8.

It was his country's immense good fortune, however, that he chose as his career, not art, but the arts of war. And hence, when the nation confronted its greatest military crisis since the Second World War, the head of the British Army was Edwin Bramall. The judgement of Sir John Nott, Defence Secretary at the time of the Falklands War, has become the judgement of History: 'The key person on the War Cabinet, apart from obviously the Prime Minister, was the Chief of the Defence Staff'.<sup>2</sup>

His personal courage, inspired leadership and cool head were decisive in securing victory in the Falklands War — a service to a grateful nation that was acknowledged that same year by the award of a Field Marshal's baton and appointment as Chief of the Defence Staff. A grateful Sovereign recognised his service by investing him in 1990 as a Knight Companion of the Order of the Garter.

These had been perilous times, when the lives of servicemen and the fortunes of the nation depended on wise and effective generalship. And well may we say with the author of the Book of Job, that: 'He has been tried in the fire, and he came forth as gold'.<sup>3</sup>

Thus has Edwin Bramall come forth from all the challenges of a long, generous, and illustrious career.

Vice-Chancellor, the University of Buckingham takes pride in Britain's Armed Forces; in their devotion to duty, in their professionalism, and in their courage. We honour our soldiers. And today, as a University, we rejoice in one of the finest. It is my honour to present, for the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*, Edwin Noel Westby Bramall, Field Marshal The Lord Bramall of Bushfield.

Friday 5 August 2016

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Dorman, Michael D. Kandiah, and Gillian Staerck (eds.), *The Falklands War* (London: Centre for Contemporary British History, 2005), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Job 23:10