

## **ALL PROTOCOLS DEEMED DULY OBSERVED**

My Lords Spiritual, my Lords Temporal, Your Royal Majesty, Soun of Ogbomosoland, Oba Alayeluwa, Oba (Dr.) Jimoh Oladunni Oyewumi, Ajagungbade III, heavyweights and juggernauts of Nigeria's past, present and future, distinguished ladies and gentlemen here present. You are all welcome to this unique celebration of a folk hero and a Nigerian icon. He is a famous person whom many people admire, respect and see as a symbol of excellence. Benjy, as he is often fondly called, has proved himself to be a soldiers' soldier to all and sundry in this country. Excellence can certainly be attained in any field of human endeavour. Adekunle has attained this in soldiering. In a way this is hardly surprising.

To appreciate his talents and success, you must have a close look at his background. His father is Yoruba, Ogbomoso. His mother is Bachama from the sugar growing Numan in Adamawa. The Bachamas are noted for their fighting abilities. Traditional Yoruba history has it that Ogbomoso has always 'produced an almost continuous stream of iconic leaders and natural high fliers in virtually every field of human enterprise. I have repeatedly pointed this out in the past.

Such people include Professor Oyerinde, Professor Ayandele, Premier S. L. Akintola and his children, Air Force Head Alao, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Federal and State Legislators, the redoubtable former Inspector General of Police, Sunday Adewusi, Military Governors and MILADS like General Oladayo Popoola, Akintonde, Ibrahim Taiwo. So also are the old guards like Federal Minister Oladejo Adigun, N. A. Adibi, Victor Lajide, the first Asiwaju of Ogbomosoland. Along with all these comes a surprise, the incomparable Herbert Macaulay is also partly from Ogbomoso. Chief S. A. Ogundipe, Magistrate Adeniran Atiba of the Lagos judiciary, Alagba, Joseph Ladipo of Hadeija Road, Kaduna, who was for over 25 years the Baale of the Yorubas in Kaduna, Baba Olopa Emmanuel Lawuyi Ladipo, first Nigerian policeman in Ogbomoso and Inspector of Police, Reverend J. Adediran, Mr. Samuel Akinwale Oduntan, Ghana Police and later Nigeria Police, Chief E. L. Gbenro Laogun, as well as a colourful bevy of PLOs, Chief of Staff, Permanent Secretaries, SSGs, etc. Vice Admiral Akinwale Wey is also another Ogbomoso gem.

I have also had cause to point to the rise of a new constellation, including Christopher Adebayo Alao-Akala when he was Chairman, Ogbomoso North Local Government at the funeral of my late Deputy, Alhaji Olatunji Mohammed. As to the topmost warrior class in northern Yorubaland, Samuel Johnson's '**History of the Yoruba**' shows that the largest contingent of holders of the coveted and dreaded Aare Ona Kakanfo come from Ogbomoso. Here we remember the likes of Toyeye, Ojo Abunimaku and Ladoke Akintola, Ajala Agbe, omo Jalodo. Ogbomoso people litter West Africa being in large numbers in Jos, Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire.

To be sure, there are very many great and good features of our wonderful country christened 'NIGERIA' by Lady Lugard. We sometimes derisively call it 'NAIJA.' Good people. Great Nation. Dora Akunyili knows she cannot replace hard work, honesty and solid achievement with a BIG LIE in a Gobbelian style. Advertisement in most cultures deemed low-level economic activity. It does not produce. It publicizes what others produce. Propaganda is about psychological warfare. No amount of re-branding would turn plonk into fine wine. A good wine needs no bush. A rose by any name will smell sweet. In most African and other

economically less developed parts of the world, there is mutual distrust between the military and civilians. The military who incidentally are usually trained very carefully; often allude to us civilians as 'bloody civilians' who in turn tend to see military personnel as zombies.

Now, much or even all of this is derogatory and must be condemned in no uncertain terms. It happens that in the last six thousand five hundred (6500) years, there seem to have been only 292 devoid of war. Defense and protection is a very essential aspect of modern nation building. War is in man's blood. It almost always starts from the mind of men.

Was it not Karl von Clausewitz who made the famous statement that war is continuation of politics by other means? Plato, centuries earlier asserted that man is a political animal War thus seems an essential feature of man in society. Both when we were young and later when we were no longer so young, as Professor Saburi Biobaku (121) would say, we came across a lot about wars that excited us. The war of Jen'in's ear, Battle of Zama (202 BC), Retreat and the nine days of Dunkirk, the Winston Churchill speeches of World War II, widespread Japanese at rockets In the far East, the bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Korean war, Ticonderoga, Somme (1916), Nigerian, Hannibal crossing the Alps with elephants, the near tactical perfection in the battle of Cannae, the Trojan Horse episode, Napoleon In Jerusalem, Rommel and Monty in the Western desert, Adolf Hitler's exploits in Czechoslovakia, Poland, France and the low countries, Julius Caesar in Gaul and Britannia, Horatio Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar, the Spanish Armada, Pirates rogues and rascals like Hawkins raiding the Spanish Main for gold, silver, spices and whatever, Clive in India, Douglas MacArthur, D. D. Eisenhower, the ultimate and out of this world Japanese ambush of the Americans at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 under Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto of the Navy and Vice Admiral Chukchi Nagumo of the Air force, King Henry V at Agincourt, Battle of Hastings, Dardanelles, General Giap at Dien Bien Phu teaching the French at Indo-China and later the American in Vietnam (same place, same lesson), the essence of extended guerrilla warfare and Vietcong pedal bicycle tactics.

All these and more, excited, impressed and inspired us. How can one forget Stalingrad! One relishes till today Hitler's stupid repetition in 1941 of a major error made by Napoleon in 1812 crossing overland over to Russia in very cold winter. The Russian classical music genius, Tchaikovsky, wrote a beautiful piece "Overture 1812" on this military blunder. The everlasting joke in military circles is that both Napoleon and Hitler got easily defeated by a certain GENERAL WINTER!

So very interesting also were the basic principles and arrangements of warfare or land, sea and air into wars, battles, sieges and reconnaissance (REECE). The role of signals, mathematical cryptography, encoding and decoding, Turing and the Enigma machine at Bletchley Park excited us. The ARMY is ordinarily the backbone of a defence system although the Navy and Air force add to it~ flexibility power and range in combined operations. Some of the most exciting! scenarios involve amphibious operations. Along with all these is the basic role of efficient and intelligent division of labour. The basic ingredients of strategy (major and minor), TACTICS (major and minor) and LOGISTICS (provision of men, money and materials) pervade all areas of competition and conflict whether in Politics, War, Commerce and Industry in the factory or Corporate Boardroom games. Hence, the relevance of writers like Sun Tzu till this very day.

Espionage, surveillance, counter-surveillance as practiced by the great services including our humble NSO, SSS, NIA, DMI are of worldwide interest. What with the MOSSAD, CIA, KGB of

old, MIS, MI6, Deuxieme Bureau et al etc. Military training has one central subtle ingredient. It directs your mind to the acquisition of an endless array of information to ensure you stay ALIVE in combat. Of great interest is military history, the developments of weaponry, land, sea and air, from ancient to modern times. There is infinitely a part of man that is inherently devilish and destructive. Advances in weaponry go hand in hand with advances in science and technology and of course mathematics.

The development of mechanized motorized Panzer machines utilized even in deserts excite the mind. A flame-thrower in Archimedean times are as interesting as German VI or V2, the unmanned bombers of WWII or indeed America] drones seeking Taliban or Al Qaeda position and camps in Pakistan 0 Afghanistan. Physical, Chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction submarines, missiles, Nuclear warheads, missile shields, ICBM's deadly plane various types of helicopter gunships, etc continue to excite the imagination.

Military career can be the most exciting thing on earth. However, amoral, the famous prescriptions of Niccolo Machiavelli might appear, one thing is clear about them, they are effective advice as to how men actually do behave as distinct from how they should. We can go on almost endlessly to display the splendours of the content of military training. Let us pause at this stage and return to base after this brief reconnaissance.

Our own Benji proved his class and mettle during the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970. The most unfortunate kinds of wars are of course civil wars. Brothers kill brothers. Bitterness, hatred and rivalry become the order of the day and linger almost indefinitely. The pangs of transnational wars get more easily dissipated by time. Warfare is both an art and a science. So also is History. Often what is written down and passed on to future generations is almost always inherently biased being limited naturally by which side of the divide the written belongs. History as an academic subject has its many subtleties and is definitely both an art and a science. When one gives deep and coherent thought to the case of the Nigerian Civil War, one discovers there is no definitive reliable, accurate account yet of this deadly experience in the history of Nigeria. History is probably open ended for those who reject the thesis that history repeats itself. What can surely repeat itself numberless times are the lessons history ought to have afforded us and to afford us even more at the very present time.

Let us look first at the broad canvass of history as one of our founding fathers, Dr. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe would say in one of his many felicitous oratorical quips. We find quickly that the Mother of Parliaments is only some six hundred years old. Prior to House of Commons, House of Deputies, House of Representatives, Diets and Knesset, etc etc, there was long and often interrupted by monarchs and soldiers. Read through Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus up to and including Barbara Tuchman's 'The March of Folly.' Try to go through military science and theory of warfare generally. There is much to learn from Sun Tzu, Napoleon, Jo mini and of course Clausewitz.

The list of great and colourful generals is very long, Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, Adolf Hitler, Rommel, Genghis Khan, Douglas MacArthur, Chaka Zulu, Ulysses Grants, Horatio Nelson, 1.0. Eisenhower, V Nguyen Giap, Mustafa Kemal, Moshe Dayan, Saladin, George Washington, George Patton, Mao Zedong, Isoroku Yamamoto, Fidel Castro, Chiang Kai-shek, Charles de Gaulle, Nimitz, Duke of Marlborough, Bernard Montgomery, Garibaldi, etc, etc. It is to this list that we now seek to

add our own Brigadier General B.A.M ADEKUNLE, the Black Scorpion. I would like to justify adding his name to this illustrious pageant of military geniuses. This justification will be seriously prosecuted in this lecture.

Adekunle is a Nigerian hero who happens to be an Ogbomoso-Yoruba-Bachama hero. At Sandhurst, they don't select you based on your father's business empire or the height of your mother. They use merit. One man's hero is another man's villain. In this lecture, we are not concerned with rivalry, ambition, intrigues, name-calling, sheer abuse or petty polemics. We pry into a critical part of the history of this pastiche of a country. Some of our best leaders have probably mistakenly referred to it as a mere geographical entity. Rumour has it that men of such stature as AWOLowo and GOWON were once overheard saying something like this. These two persons, however, came together in a dream-team 1966-1971 to stop its disintegration. Bill Clinton, ex-President of United States, gave two important pieces of advice to Nigerians, the other day. One, we must try to tackle our various differences. The other was about the Niger Delta which we milk and kill daily. If we had been able to face our national problems honestly and sincerely, all of us, none excepted, would probably not have had to go through the tragedy of a horrible civil war.

If you ask some students of what I call Linear History; they would tell you that our trouble in 1962, between two politicians, both Action Group, both Yorubas, both Christians, both Lawyers, led to the Wild Wild West and unacceptable election of 1965 which in turn led to the seemingly one-sided Military take-over of Jan 1966 which, along with the return match of July 1966, led to the Biafra secession which then culminated in the civil war. That indeed is the outline but rather overlinearised history, indeed history in one dimension. If such a simplistic picture is adopted as a tool for analysis and a guide to the understanding of certain troubling complexities which till today remain in Nigeria, one must raise one unavoidably, inevitable twin-question. Was it then actually worthwhile to keep Nigeria one? Is it still worthwhile to keep Nigeria one? We shall not drift. I am persuaded here and now of the firm opinion that NIGERIA should forever be kept one. The motto, at the time, was felicitously coined from the name of the then Head of State and Commander-in-Chief, G.O.W.O.N meant Go On With One Nigeria. All of us here today must pause for one split second to think of this slogan of the time, "To Keep Nigeria One, Is A Task That Must Be Done." If it was indeed not an objective worth pursuing, then there is no further need to carry this lecture beyond this point. We chose, a vast majority to keep Nigeria one.

The civil war began rather insidiously as Police action! When full scale war was decided upon, part of the preparation was to appoint commanders. That was how orthodox Shuwa, maverick Murtala and Benji, Shaka, Napoleon, Patton and MacArthur mixed into one small compact lightweight lethal bomb came on the national scene.

The protagonist in our story of today, the hero and icon being celebrated at the grand reception staged by OCF and ODF under the able leadership of General Oladayo Popoola deserves a formal introduction. Who actually is this Brig-Gen Adekunle?

Sometimes around 1970, after the end of the civil war, one journalist described Brig-Gen. Adekunle thus:

Standing only 5ft 7in tall, weighing under 10 stone, he is a ruthless professional soldier, faultlessly dressed whether in uniform or in civvies. He eats little, is a chain-smoker, who drinks little and can get by with four hours' sleep a night. Explosive and impulsive,

with a mercurial temperament, during the war he was nicknamed "the Black Scorpion". The wartime stories told about him are legion. Behind the showy extrovert lies a quick, agile mind of a man of action who can grasp essential problems and make immediate decisions.

With that little appetizer, we go in extension to define our hero of today in great details. However, before proceeding further, we must state our mission, purpose, objective, policy, modus operandi and indeed, modus Vivendi. It is simply that Brig-Gen B. A. M. Adekunle is not just a hero and icon. We wish to emphasize and delve deeply into the fact that he is an unsung patriot. Let us start from the thin end of the wedge, his material circumstances.

The dwelling circumstances of any national hero should never be as poor as this. Those who have worked very hard and selflessly for the safety continued unified existence of their country, putting their own very life on the line should be made ,somewhat very comfortable in their autumnal years. Benjy would be 73 in June. Benjy should not live in discomfort or from hand to mouth. We must remind ourselves of the way many top Nigerians who claim to serve GOD and COUNTRY have done so well in this respect. Many of these have actually done better for themselves than for their country.



In a case such as this, honest reasoning reveals that the blame of the plight of this unsung hero falls on both the Military class and the civil society. We have a warped sense of values most of the time. A durable equitable SYSTEM OF REWARD has always collectively eluded us. What we call CORRUPTION is just another general lame or symptom of a disorderly system which encourages self evaluation and self reward. If the country would not remember to honour or reward you, do it yourself. Crown yourself, fill your pockets, fill your belly, suppress your conscience and make hay, public hay, for the rainy day.

The civil society appreciates Adekunle's role in the history of Nigeria. On the other hand, the military is supposed to pride itself in the existence of a spirit of esprit-decorp. Alas, alas, BENJY is a hero whose praises Nigeria should sing heartily forever. He deserves special national decoration. His name should adorn some of our streets, institutions and public buildings therein. We should serve him adequate means of livelihood to ensure a befitting standard of living.

Today, we shall review the story of his life in more ways than one. We shall attack our problem using a carefully contrived assault plan! My choice of strategy is something like a slight variant of "ENVELOPMENT OF BOTH FLANKS"! This as many of you familiar with basic military science, history or practice know is a plan that can quite well lead to the total annihilation of a trapped opponent. What the enemy is or who the enemies are would be absolutely manifest as we go along. Dora says: "Good People, Great Nation," we shall see.

DAILY SUN says: "Good People, yes; Great Nation, No."

I say here that some of Adekunle's problems come from a nation partly defective on its organisation and full of too many highly-placed small minded who would wittingly or otherwise breed or encourage what A WOLOWO used to call the 'deliberate enthronement of mediocrity.' These ideas, arrangements and people conjoined into one constitute the adversary, the opponent, the enemy who must be encircled, exposed and topologically squeezed into a vanished point. Our star, hero and patriot shall then shine, shine and shine forever illuminated by our love, admiration and appreciation, material and otherwise.

As Julius Caesar would say in his written preparations and reconnaissance for the Gallic Wars and his inimitable and frequent use of the ablative absolute: With all these things have been said and done, we must move to our campaign theatre! Here comes my special military plan for today's five part Benjy Rescue Assignment Plan.

- I. We hear Benjy introduce himself, directly and through his resourceful son.
- II. We hear of Benjy from the mouth of honest, objective and respectable peers in his military constituency.
- III. We hear of Benjy from the civil society.
- IV. We take on Benjy's critics, from whatever location, and examine their motivation and complexes.
- V. We evaluate both BIAFRAN and NIGERIAN sides to identify the true heroes and men of exceptional talent.

By the time all these have been done, we may move to a domain of feigned withdrawal. Perhaps we should mention the propaganda and real painful issues of the catch phrases of 'pogrom', 'genocide', 'starvation as weapon of war', 'banning of okrika/second hand clothing', 'Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction,' 'abandoned properties issues, Biafran currency and general marginalisation of the Ibo.

We shall have to visit "Prohibitions and Restraints in Wars," and "War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity." We shall finally move on to present our hero, icon and genius as a genuine citizen of a united Nigeria worthy of the encomiums, care, respect and honour we claim for him.

Forward we go! You people here today are lucky to be present at this bold, honest exercise in repositioning Brigadier General Benjamin Adesanya Maja ADEKUNLE to his rightful position in the historical firmament of Nigeria. I take this opportunity to inform this august gathering that Benjy has arranged for publication a rich 300-page book titled "THE NIGERIA BIAFRA WAR LETTERS: A SOLDIERS STORY," VOL I, Edited by ABIODUN ADEKUNLE, Phoenix Publishing Group, Atlanta. GA. USA. 8725 Roswell Road, Suite 0 # 115, Atlanta GA 30350. ISBN 0-9740761-0-4. Library of Congress Number 2003094202. Contact 1-866-710-8180. E-mail: [info@blackscorpion.org](mailto:info@blackscorpion.org) Website: [www.blackscorpion.org](http://www.blackscorpion.org)