

Lawrence of Arabia



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T. E. Lawrence, the illegitimate child of Sir Thomas Chapman and Sarah Junner, was an Oxford graduate who later became known as "Lawrence of Arabia" for leading the Arab Revolt against the Turks during WWI. Lawrence spent many years in the Middle East studying the Arabic language and ways. He became an authority on his areas of study. Lawrence didn't consider himself a soldier, but he did spend a lot of time thinking about war. Although he was thought odd by some because of his ways, I think he was a genius.

During WWI, Lawrence was sent to lead the Arabs against the Turks. The British leaders thought that he was entirely too small of a person to withstand any military fighting. He may have been lacking in strength due to his small size, but his intelligent mind proved to be very strong. He won the hearts of the Arabic people who only knew tribal ways and taught them modern ways of war. I found it interesting that the Arabic people were not afraid of gunfire or dying, but were terrified of dying by gunfire. I think Lawrence was an amazing strategist when it came to his idea of warfare. Attacking the enemy's materials was genius and proved more successful than straight up bloody battles.

The British leaders didn't want Lawrence and his group to attack Aqaba because of the city's strong seaside command. Lawrence decided to do what he wanted without the approval of the British concerning Aqaba and led the Arabs

across the desert to attack the Turks in Aqaba from behind on the landside. The trip across the desert was very tough, but they made it. They succeeded in their attack against the Turks in Aqaba with the loss of only two men. Also, the number of Arabic men Lawrence lead was small, but the pinprick attacks they made on the railroad through Damascus against the Turks' supplies helped a great deal.

I recently watched part of the movie "Lawrence of Arabia" with Peter O'Toole playing the part of Lawrence. I don't know for sure if this movie portrays exactly how each event happened, but I would think that it would be close. I remember one part of the movie where one of the Arabic men would always say, "it is written". Lawrence finally told him that nothing is written for a man unless he writes it himself. I found that statement to be quite intriguing.

For someone who has been so many places, learned so many things, and survived so many dangerous situations, during which time he was wounded many times, it amazes me that he died in a mere motorcycle accident. It just doesn't seem right. As successful as he was in the Middle East for the Arabic people and for Britain, and the fact that his guerilla warfare and counterinsurgency tactics are still used today, I think his title should have been "Lawrence the Great of Arabia".