

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

b. August 16, 1888

d. May 19, 1935

BRITISH
MILITARY
OFFICER

*“Truly, for some men nothing is written
unless they write it.”*

T. E. Lawrence, “Lawrence of Arabia,” was a British archeologist, Army colonel and intelligence officer famous for helping the Arabs win key victories over the Ottoman Turks during the First World War.

Born in Wales, Lawrence was the second of five illegitimate sons. His unmarried parents and their boys settled in Oxford, England, where Lawrence attended university and graduated with high honors.

**He helped Arab rebels
win key victories over
the Ottoman Turks
during WWI.**

As a student, Lawrence spent the summer of 1909 walking nearly a thousand miles through Syria and Palestine, surveying castles. Though he was robbed and beaten, his passion for Arabian culture only deepened.

Lawrence returned to Syria the following year for an archeological expedition. During this time, he reportedly formed a romantic relationship with an Arab water boy who became his assistant and traveling companion.

When World War I broke out, Lawrence took a map-making job with the government. By 1914 he was serving as a British Army intelligence officer in Cairo, where he developed a handbook on the Turkish Army.

In 1916 the military dispatched Lawrence as a liaison officer and coalition builder to aid Prince Faisal with the Arab Revolt. Lacking formal military training, Lawrence daringly commanded guerilla attacks and sabotaged more than 75 bridges to undermine the Turkish forces. In 1917 he led Arab rebels hundreds of miles to capture the strategic port of Aqaba, contributing to the liberation of Arabia.

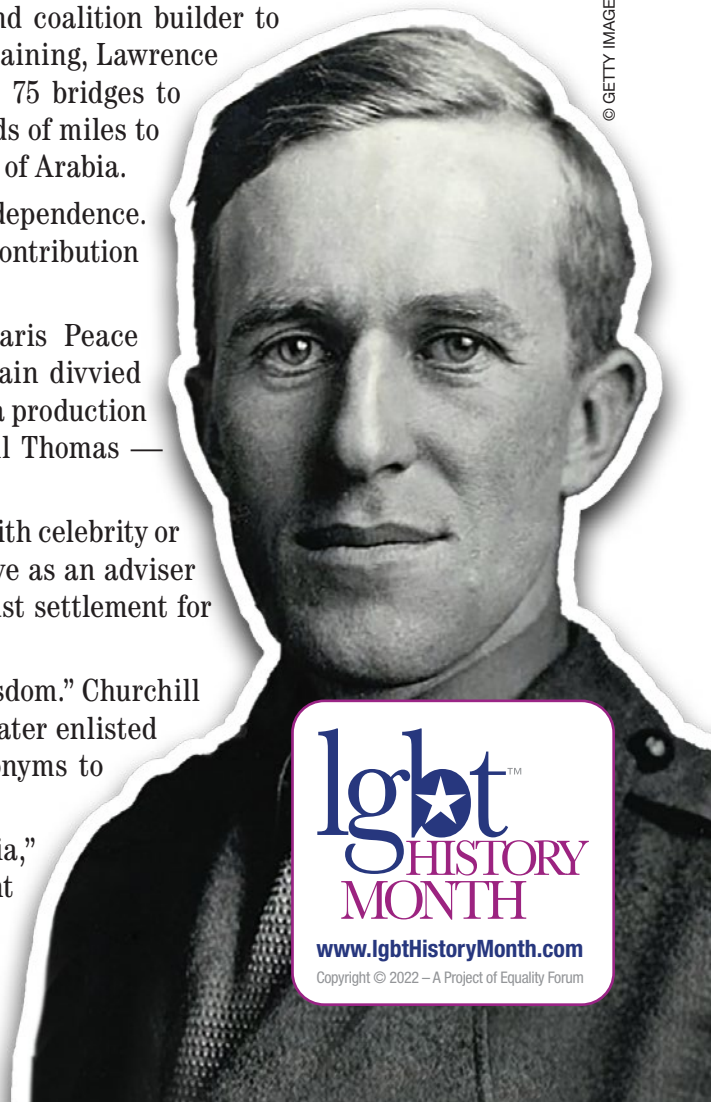
After the war, Lawrence persistently supported Arab independence. Disillusioned by the region’s divisiveness and his own country’s contribution to it, he refused to accept military medals from King George V.

In 1919, wearing Arabian robes, Lawrence traveled to the Paris Peace Conference as Prince Faisal’s translator. When France and Britain divvied up Arabia, Lawrence was devastated. The same year, a multimedia production about his exploits — created by the American Journalist Lowell Thomas — premiered at the Royal Opera House. It made Lawrence a legend.

Bitter over the Paris agreement, Lawrence wanted nothing to do with celebrity or government. Eventually, Winston Churchill convinced him to serve as an adviser to the Middle East Department, where they negotiated a more just settlement for the Arabs in 1921.

In 1926, Lawrence published his war memoir, “Seven Pillars of Wisdom.” Churchill praised it as “one of the greatest books ever written.” Lawrence later enlisted in the Royal Air Force and the Royal Tank Corps under pseudonyms to protect his privacy. He died in a motorcycle accident at age 47.

Based on Lawrence’s book, the epic film, “Lawrence of Arabia,” premiered in 1962. It is regarded as one of the most important works in cinematic history.



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