



Lawrence at Akaba.

Pisani and his gunners, the British armoured car units and mountain artillery, Peake and his Egyptian Camel Corps, Scott-Higgins and a small number of Ghurkas, Joyce, Stirling, Hubert Young and Earl Winterton, a diverse group and a who's who of personalities.



The Sherif's Band. The band included some former members of a Turkish Army band so they could play many German and Turkish requests. The addition of bagpipes to the band may be traced to the small contingent of Scottish troops at Akaba. After the war, Peake incorporated bagpipes into the Arab Legion band and that tradition carries on today. The bass drummer, who rests his drum on a chair, appears to be using a drum that has been painted in the stripes of the Hejaz national flag.



Lawrence with Winterton and Young. The tall and thin Winterton was a veteran officer of the Imperial Camel Corps and a member of the House of Commons. He joined Lawrence for the advance on Damascus. Hubert Young took over the difficult task of organizing supplies. Both men took part in raids on the railway and remained friends with Lawrence after the war.

On September 14<sup>th</sup>, the force moved out for the Hejaz railway line and Deraa. Reaching the line Joyce and Lawrence destroyed a bridge, isolating Amman from Deraa. Peake and his Egyptians were madly destroying sections of track, planting hundreds of explosives. On the



German postcard showing Hejaz prisoners being escorted into Damascus.

17<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Junor, in his outdated BE 12 aircraft, attempted to fend off attacking Turkish planes. He got them to flee but at the cost of his own aircraft. The now grounded pilot joined Lawrence's force. Lawrence and Young took a small group from the main force and moved north attacking the station at Mezerib and destroying more track and yet another bridge, the 79<sup>th</sup>, by Lawrence's count.

Lawrence made his way back to Azrak and was able to get a flight over to Allenby's headquarters to coordinate the plans for the final push on Damascus. Lawrence wanted more air support and fuel for the armoured cars. He also had the Arab forces gather at Um el Surab, to await the plans. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Lawrence arrived with three Bristol Fighters and a Handley Page bomber, loaded with needed supplies, causing tremendous excitement amongst the Arabs. Two days later, the Turkish army was retreating out of Amman and making their way north to Deraa. Feisal and Lawrence and the 4000 troops were ready to pursue them. As the Arab army split up to capture villages, little resistance was made. Hundreds of Turks were surrendering. A retreating Turkish column leaving Deraa passed through the village of Tafas killing many civilians. When the Arab army entered the village and saw the atrocities, they attacked the retreating Turkish army and showed no mercy. Lawrence gave an order of no prisoners. Intervention by some of the British officers prevented the entire Turkish detachment from being massacred. The Arabs captured the main railway station at Deraa on September 28<sup>th</sup>. General Barrow and a group of British cavalry arrived to witness the Arabs pillaging the town and stripping the wounded Turks. Getting no help from Lawrence to restore order, Barrow ordered his men to put it to a stop. By now the Turkish army was in full retreat and were surrendering by the thousands. A column of Turks were trapped in a valley and subjected to

intense aerial bombing by the British. With Allenby's army steadily advancing to the north and western edge of Damascus, the Arabs were coming from the south and eastern side. By September 30<sup>th</sup>, the armies were on the outskirts of the city.



The British staff at Akaba had a number of pets including several salukis. This little monkey, usually tethered to a pole, was nicknamed "the Akaba ape."



J.A.L. Brown and H. R. Green at machine gun practice, Wejfi, 1917. Photograph shows a striped down armored car in the background.



Firing practice with the 10 pd. mountain gun. The battery was commanded by Lt. Samuel Brodie with Lt. George Pascoe. The guns were used effectively in attacking the Hejaz Railway stations. Harry Chase photo, April 1918.

An exceptional panorama photograph by Harry Chase showing the armoured cars, Talbot trucks and crews of the Hejaz Armoured Car Battery. Lt. Gilman is the first standing officer on the left, with Brodie and Pascoe standing in front of the Talbot truck.



Frederick Peake (1886-1970).

Peake was educated at Stubbington House, Fareham and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. He was commissioned into the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in 1906. He joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in India. He occupied much of his time studying the local languages and going hunting. At his own request, he transferred to the Egyptian Army in 1913. At the start of the war, many commissioned officers serving with the Egyptian Army tried to get back to their original regiments to serve at the front. Peake's commanding officer was able to do this while he was unsuccessful, now left in charge of his Egyptian Battalion in the Sudan. Peake's troops were active in fighting Abyssinian slave raiders and would have a role in the Senussi campaign in Darfur. By 1916, with extended leave due, Peake made his way to Cairo and secured a position with the Commanding Officer of 17 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. He went to Salonika for the next five months as an Observer and Wind Adjutant. He soon received official notice to return to the Egyptian Army and to explain himself why his leave was extended by two months. Accepting his explanation of events, Peake was sent back to Darfur to the Camel Corps. The next year he had a run of bad health including severely hurting his neck with a fall from a camel. He suffered from a liver abscess and was sent back to England to recover. Coming back to Egypt, his ship was torpedoed off Alexandria, but was able to bob in the sea with a beer and some sandwiches until he was rescued.



Peake in the service dress worn while serving with Lawrence. Photograph from Arab Command by C. S. Jarvis.

By early 1918, Peake was appointed command of the Egyptian Camel Corps Company at Beersheba. By April, this group was transferred to Akaba to be part of Feisal's Northern Army. Soon they were taking part in raids on the Hejaz Railway supporting the armoured car units. Their first attack was with Dawnay, Lawrence and Hornby on the station of Tell Shahm. Organized by Dawnay, with the timed precision of the Guards officer he was, Peake urged his Camel Corps on and the station was taken. Lawrence grabbed the station bell and Peake took the ticket punch, followed by Bedouin looting the stored rifles and ammunition. Peake soon had his Egyptians trained in the art of railway demolition. By the push to Derra in the fall of 1918, they were damaging extensive portions of the line. Peake and Lawrence perfected the "tulip technique" where placing the charge under the sleeper would cause the explosion to sleeper left up and bend the metal, not break it, distorting the rail, making it impossible for the Turks to repair. The men earned the sobriquet 'Peake Demolition Co Ltd.'

At early morning on 17 September, with the advance needing a final push to stay on Allenby's schedule, Lawrence arrived at camp anxiously wanting the day's demolition to start. He came across Peake enjoying a full



Camel saddle used by Peake. The saddle of Imperial Camel Corps pattern with Citadel Egypt and War Department stamps and markings.

breakfast 'with a certain amount of shiny plate and a box of Corona cigars.' Lawrence was stunned, caught off guard by the need of the Egyptian troop to get a good meal before a hard days work. Lawrence wrote,

*'I wanted the whole line destroyed in a moment: but things seemed to have stopped. The army had done its share... but why was there no demolition going on? I rushed down to see, and found Peake's Egyptians having breakfast. It was like Drake's game of bowls, and I was dumb with admiration: but they did not know they were magnificent, and so gained no merit.'*

Peake and his men continued their effective work until the fall of Damascus.

After the war, Peake stayed in Transjordan and raised the Arab Legion. He became a close friend of King Abdullah. He retired in 1939 leaving the command of the Arab Legion to Glubb Pasha. Though Peake originally planned to write his autobiography, C. S. Jarvis used his notes for his biography of Peake titled *Arab Command*.



Peake's valise bag used while in command of the Egyptian Camel Corps and one of his agals.



Peake on camel identified on the photograph by Lawrence.