

Name _____

Lawrence of Arabia

The person referred to as “Lawrence of Arabia” was actually a British World War I army officer named Thomas Edward (T.E.) Lawrence. A movie made about his adventures won seven Academy Awards.

Lawrence was an archeologist and had traveled extensively in the Middle East prior to World War I. When the war broke out, he joined the British army to do some survey work, including some intelligence work spying for the British.

During the war, Lawrence fought with Arab troops in guerilla operations against the armed forces of the Ottoman Empire. He helped develop strategies that were vital to an Arab revolt in the area.

In addition to guerilla operations, Lawrence arranged and fought in three major battles, including the Battle of Aqaba—the first major victory for the Arab guerilla forces. Other major battles include the battle of Tafilah and the Fall of Damascus. He was awarded medals and promoted to Colonel.

Despite his heroic exploits, Lawrence was mostly unnoticed. Even the Turks, who had a bounty for his death, did not know what he looked like. It wasn’t until an American war correspondent gave a lecture series about Lawrence’s achievements in the war that he became known as “Lawrence of Arabia.”

After the war, Lawrence refused a knighthood by the King of England. He became a close adviser to Winston Churchill and joined the Royal Navy under an assumed name due to all the publicity he received. Eventually, he had to resign due to spy activities attributed to him.

Lawrence had a love of motorcycles and owned many, but a motorcycle accident in 1935 took his life. He is considered the most famous British military figure in history.

Text Questions

- What background knowledge would be helpful for understanding this text?
 - an understanding of what it means to be a knight
 - an understanding of events during World War I
 - knowledge about motorcycles
 - a viewing of an Academy Award-winning movie
- What does the word *exploits* mean as it is used in the fifth paragraph?
 - deeds
 - speeches
 - profits
 - advertisements
- According to the text, which of the following was not one of Lawrence’s roles in the British military?
 - spy
 - colonel
 - developer of strategies
 - archaeologist
- What can you infer about Lawrence in this biographical sketch?
 - He was a courageous person.
 - He didn’t believe in fighting for the cause of the war.
 - He was loyal to the King of England.
 - He was a recluse.
- Based on what you read, what do you think was Lawrence of Arabia’s biggest contribution to history?