SA Heritage Register

Nomination form

South Australian HERITAGE COUNCIL

To help your nomination be successful, please fill out this form with as much information as possible.
Feel free to expand the answer fields as much as you require or append information to the form.

Please note that places which have been nominated during past three years will not be reconsidered by the South Australian Heritage Council unless you can provide significant new information not provided through the previous nomination and assessment.

For assistance with this form you may contact:
Your local historical society or heritage adviser may be of assistance OR you may telephone an assessment officer in Heritage South Australia on (08) 8124 4960.

A. Nominated Place

1. Name	
Name of Place / Object:	**AVIEMORE**
Any other or former name(s):	
Is the place already on another heritage list?	No. It was listed as a "Contributory Item" by the Town of Walkerville following its heritage survey in 2007.

2. Location					
Street Address:	158 Stephen Terrace				
	Suburb / Town: GILBERTON			Post Code: 5081	
Local Council Name:	Walkerville Council				
Land Description: (if known)	Title: CT	Volume: 5673	Folio: 727	Parcel Type:	Parcel No:
	Plan Type: DP	Plan No: 15207	Section: 475	Hundred: Yatala	
GPS Location/s: (If known)	Longitude / Easting / X 138.8110281		Latitude / Northing / Y (Datum =) -34.8947127		

3. Ownership	
Name of Owner(s):	[redacted]
Contact person: (if different from owner explain relationship)	
Postal Address:	
Phone Number:	
Ownership History:	

4. Nominator (your details)	
Your Name/s:	[redacted]
Organisation/Position:	
Daytime Phone:	
Fax:	
Postal Address:	
Email Address:	

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B. Description

5. Description of nominated place or object	
Description of the nominated place or object and its current condition:	A substantial historic residence and grounds in original condition in need of renovation. If sold, it would, in all probability, be highly sought after, and be purchased and renovated due to its nature and location.
Are you aware of any modifications or additions to the place or object? Can you provide dates for these changes?	No
Do you believe there may be historical items under the ground? Should an archaeological investigation be considered?	No
Date you inspected the place or object:	17/1/2021
Have you had any contact with the Owner?	No
Current use of the place or object:	Vacant house
Original or former use(s):	House
Are there any current or long term threats to the nominated place or object?	The building is in imminent danger of demolition and requires urgent interim listing. The current owner's brother, a licensed builder, intends to demolish the house. See Development Application ID 21023431/Town of Walkerville
Name of Builder:	[redacted]
Any other information:	

C. History

6. Origins and history	
Years of Construction:	**Start:** 1886 – 1887 **Finish:**
Name of Designer / Architect:	Not known to the nominator
History of the nominated place or object:	The property is of immense historical importance to South Australia as it was the home of Captain Sir Ross Smith and his brother, Lieutenant Sir Keith Smith, and their parents and brother. These men are amongst the most iconic South Australians for their trailblazing aviation exploits. The property is also associated with the Goyder family, and most recently, was owned by the Reid branch of the Kidman family. The Kidman empire was split in two circa 1957 between the Reid and remaining Kidman family. It is not possible to identify a more important historical figure in South Australia's history than Sir Ross Smith. As can be seen from the attachments, 100,000 people attended his funeral at St Peter's Cathedral, and followed his procession, which represented one fifth of the state's population.

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Historical sources used to support your nomination: Please attach copies of pages from publications or newspaper articles as appropriate.	• Article: "*End looms for slice of aviation history*" in *The Advertiser* on Sunday 2 January 2022 at page 22, written by Celeste Villani, Urban Affairs • Article: "*Sad state when relics of our heroes are ancient history*" in *The Advertiser* on Sunday 2 January 2022 at page 64, written by Lainie Anderson • Wikipedia article: "Keith Macpherson Smith" (obtained 17 January 2022) • Wikipedia article: "Ross Macpherson Smith" (obtained 17 January 2022) • State Library South Australia article: "*Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith, Pioneer Aviators*" (obtained 17 January 2022) • State Library South Australia digital collection: "*Arrival in Adelaide after England-Australia flight*" (obtained 17 January 2022) • History Trust of South Australia object: "*Adelaide – North Terrace Plaque*" – "Smith, Sir Keith Smith KBE, Sir Ross Smith KBE MC DFC AFC" (obtained 17 January 2022) • State Library South Australia digital collection: "*First England-Australia flight*" (obtained 17 January 2022) • Article from *Weekend Notes* on 15 June 2019, "*Sir Ross Smith Commemoration Service: Honouring the man and his epic flight*" (obtained 17 January 2022) • Google search printout: "Kidman and reid pastroal family" (obtained 17 January 2022) • Article in *X99 News* on 1 January 2022: "*Trash or Treasure – Does this Gilberton House Need to Be Saved*?" (obtained 17 January 2022) • Article from *The Australian Financial Review*, Companies, on 6 April 1990: "The Kidman Family" (obtained 17 January 2022) • Printout from *The Nook Yamba* (obtained 17 January 2022), under Australian Books, detailing the book "Kidman – the Extraordinary life of Sidney Kidman" by Christo Reid in 2012 • Article in *The Advertiser* on 23 August 2012: "*Unravelling the legacy of Australian cattle king Sydney Kidman*", by Deborah Bogle (obtained 17 January 2022)

South Australian
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D. Heritage Significance

7. Statement of State Significance - Why is the place or object important to South Australia?
It is of State heritage significance because it is an important substantial 19th century large house set in grounds with very important historical associations with iconic aviation pioneers, the Kidman pastoral family and the Goyder family.

8. Significance Criteria	
The South Australian *Heritage Places Act 1993* lists seven criteria by which places are assessed as 'State significant.' Please tick the criteria you feel the place demonstrates and explain your reasons.	
☒	**It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.**
☒	**It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.**
☐	**It may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.**
☒	**It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.**
☒	**It demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.**
☒	**It has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.**
☒	**It has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.**

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E. Additional Information

9. Images/Maps/Diagrams/Site Plans

A full range of images including maps, site plans, and photographs will help your nomination.
Please provide:

- a clear outline of the place or object being nominated within any maps or plans provided
- high quality images of the place or object (please list the total number of images being provided)
- the subject of each image
- the date each image was created
- the author of each image, and
- the copyright holder of each image (if known)

Paste images here:

Attachments:

1	**Google Maps image of the area and the property**
2	**Google Maps Aerial view of the property**
3	**Photograph contained in *The Advertiser* article 2 January 2022**
4	**Certificate of Title 5673/727 (current) – 3 pages**
5	**Certificate of Title 4244/536 (cancelled)**
6	**Certificate of Title 1289/165 (historic)**
7	**SAPPA Planning Atlas report**
8	**Email from Plan SA Admin t[redacted] regarding Public Consultation Submission – Development Application ID 21023431. Applicant: [redacted] Address: 158 Stephen Tce, Gilberton. Town of Walkerville.**
9	**Development Application ID 21023431, details of Plan SA website.**

SA Heritage Register

Nomination form

South Australian
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The South Australian Heritage Council is committed to transparency in relation to the listing process and wishes to enhance public confidence in the nomination, listing and decision-making process. The Council's policy is to make nominations for State heritage listing and submissions on provisional entries publicly available via webpage or to interested parties. The Council will adhere to the Privacy Principles and your name and personal details will not be released.

I, [redacted] nominate "*Aviemore*", 158 Stephen Terrace, Gilberton to be heritage listed.

The information I have provided is correct to my knowledge.

Your Signature: [redacted] **Date:** 18 January 2022

Nomination Form Checklist

Please check that your nomination includes:

☐ A clear indication of the location of the place or object (including map/s). Where a number of features are nominated, show the location of each and/or a boundary surrounding the significant elements of the site.

☒ A history of the place or object explaining important aspects relevant to the nomination. This should generally help support arguments of cultural significance.

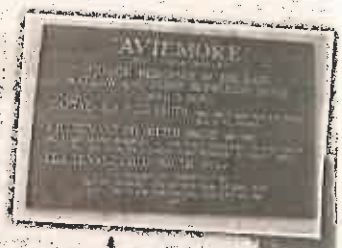
☒ A clear description of the nominated place or object/s.

☐ A statement of significance and indication on how the place or object satisfies one or more of the significance criteria.

☐ Have you taken the opportunity to discuss the nomination with a heritage assessment officer? It is strongly advised you to do so prior to submitting this nomination.

Email: DEWHeritage@sa.gov.au
Post: Executive Officer, South Australian Heritage Council
Department for Environment and Water
GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001

Calls to save family home where Smith brothers epic flight was celebrated



Dilapidated historic mansion Aviemore, former family home of Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith, inset on the verandah with their parents, faces the wrecking ball. Pictures: Dean Martin, State Library of SA

End looms for slice of aviation history

CELESTE VILLAGE
URBAN AFFAIRS

THE historic family home of South Australia's famed aviator brothers Sir Ross Smith and Sir Keith Smith – where their triumph in the Great Air Race of 1919 was celebrated by their friends and loved ones – is facing the wrecking ball.

Heritage campaigners are adamant the Stephen Tce, Gilberton, home must be saved, arguing its connection to the brothers, who won 10,000 pounds for their historic flight from England to Australia, makes it a vital piece of the state's history.

But George Vanco, who lodged the demolition application on behalf of his brother Con, said despite every effort to find a viable way to restore it, its "significant structural failings" meant it simply was not possible.

He said the home was not heritage-listed, lacked its original facade, and its cracked swimming pool risked a sink hole forming. Repairs would cost more than $2m.

Con Vanco bought the property in 2019, with realestate.com.au showing a $2.2m sale price.

A planning document commissioned by George Vanco said while conservation would have been ideal, "rehabilitation is not viable".

South Australian Aviation Museum president Nigel Daw said the house played a significant part in South Australia's aviation history and it warranted keeping.

"I believe it is a failure of both the state government and local council (Walkerville) that this property was not declared a heritage house because of what Ross and Keith Smith did for Australia 100 years ago," Mr Daw said.

A plaque commemorating the Smith family's connection to the home was installed at the property in 1997.

Mr Vanco said original parts of the home, as well the plaque, would be salvaged and reused at the property when a new home is built.

Local resident John Crawford, who has joined the fight to save the house, said its history was not being respected. He also feared the block would be left empty after demolition.

The home also has a link to another prominent South Australian family. It was occupied by George Arthur Goyder, son of surveyor general George Woodroofe Goyder – after whom Goyder's Line was named – before coming into the Smith family in 1911.

Set on 2693sq m block, the home has six bedrooms, two bathrooms, a swimming pool and tennis court.

The planning document labels the currently vacant property "derelict", with falling ceilings and uneven floors. There is also evidence of damage by thieves or squatters. It says underpinning the house would be difficult because its bluestone footings are in poor condition.

George Vanco, a licensed builder, said he had spent "quite a lot of time" exploring options to save the home but it was "not economically viable".

He said his brother now planned on building a stately home to complement others in the area.

"There is no way I would be putting down a building that could be saved," he said.

"We don't intend on putting some modernesque garbage there ... whatever happens we need to make sure it fits in."

Public consultation on the demolition application ends on January 19.

WHY DON'T WE HAIL OUR HEROES? LAINIE ANDERSON (P64)

ADELAIDE brothers Sir Ross Smith and Sir Keith Smith flew into the history books in 1919 when they took on one of the most ambitious flights in aviation history – the 18,500km trip from England to Australia. In doing so they won a national aviation competition launched by Prime Minister Billy Hughes in the wake of World War I, offering a 10,000 pound prize for the first Australians to make the trip.

THEY landed in Darwin on December 10, 1919, less than 28 days after their departure from London. Their total flying time was 135 hours.

AVIEMORE, in Gilberton, the grand home owned by their parents, Andrew and Jessie Smith, was the place family and friends gathered to celebrate their success – and later mourn the loss of Ross.

THE Vickers Vimy aircraft is preserved at Adelaide Airport. It will be relocated by mid-year to a purpose-built display space in the revamped airport terminal thanks to $6m in funding from the commonwealth and state governments, and Adelaide Airport Ltd.

Seaweed hub opens

A NEW seaweed research and production hub has been unveiled at West Beach as part of an ambitious plan to put South Australia at the centre of a burgeoning, multimillion-dollar seaweed industry.

CH4 Global, led by Adelaide expat Steve Meller who is based in Silicon Valley, has opened the hub at the South Australian Aquatic Sciences Centre, where it will grow, test, analyse, process and manufacture seaweed products for local and export markets.

The company has been developing a seaweed-based feed product which, it says, can reduce the methane emissions by up to 90 per cent when fed to cows.

It has been growing the seaweed strain, asparagopsis armata, at sites including Port Lincoln, Kangaroo Island and Yorke Peninsula.

Dr Meller, who visited the new West Beach hub this week, said the emerging industry presented a huge economic opportunity for the state.

Delania Marundrury.

Makeup artist fights bank

A MAKEUP artist studying in Australia and her Indonesian family are suing the Commonwealth Bank in a David and Goliath case over an international money-laundering scam.

Delania Marundrury and her mother Widyia and family have lost millions of dollars sent to Australia to buy land, build a house and pay for her education and living expenses.

And they are arguing it was the CBA's fault they lost as much money as they did.

Solicitor Gabriel Kuek from Access Law has launched an action in the Federal Court saying the bank breached its anti-money laundering obligations by not immediately reporting suspicious activity in their bank account.

The family say they were unaware anything was amiss, and continued to send money – all of which was later seized by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) as the suspected proceeds of crime.

The Marundrury family have never been accused of any crime nor charged. Yet they have lost all the money they sent to Australia.

The family's lawyers argue they have been victims of "cuckoo smurfing", a simple but clever criminal activity that involves making dirty money clean.

Federal Court Judge Mark Moshinsky dismissed an application by the CBA to have the matter thrown out.

Peter Goers

peter.goers@news.com.au Follow Peter @busbygoers

Why I'm just a rebel about a causeway

Jessica and Stan White with Indie, Maia and River at the Victor Harbor causeway. Picture: NCA NewsWire/Naomi Jellicoe

THE new and controversial Granite Island causeway opened 11 days ago. Unfortunately, 500m of art, beautiful Ngarrindjeri-Ramindjeri Dreaming stories sandblasted into the concrete on which we walk, have been instantly stained, scratched and covered in bird poo from the local terns who prefer the new causeway to the old. Everyone's a critic. Clearly, one good tern does not deserve another.

The new causeway is for the birds. They prefer it more than the people using it.

The new super duper causeway to Granite Island off beautiful downtown Victor Harbor is all concrete and steel. It's big but bigger isn't always better. It's schmick, brutalist and has all the charm of a freeway overpass in Dubai. It looks like a bad Jeffrey Smart painting. But it's supposedly more useful. It's wider still and wider than the much-loved, noble old causeway which has staunchly served the world since 1864.

The new causeway replaces a jetty-like structure with a road. The surface is baby bottom smooth. It's serviceable but more bland than grand. The old causeway, 10 metres west of the new one, is still extant and still safely usable and people are voting with their feet and using it in preference to the new.

Even though the White Rabbit Adult Boutique was closed last week, Victor Harbor is coming apart with deliriously happy holiday makers and visitors all contributing to the pensions of the majority of the residents. Good.

If you want a last sashay, jaunt or perambulation along the old heritage-listed causeway of soon to be blessed memory, you have until sometime in February when the government destroys it. There will be two 20m bits left to remind us of what has been sacrificed. The new structure does – usefully – have a tactile paving strip so the blind are led to and fro to land on the bland causeway. It's much more inclusive for prams and wheelchairs, and there's a lovely new rubber strip for the horses pulling the trams. But it ain't charming.

It's modern, new, solid and boring – which sounds like a firm of architects. The concrete is also harder to walk on than ye olde timber. It's harder on feet and joints.

The really good news is that there's no bike lane. Yet.

Of course it's really all about cruise ships. The plan is that cruise ships will moor off Granite Island and disgorge many thousands of cashed-up passengers by tender on to the island into a fleet of waiting buses which will whiz people across the causeway to McLaren Vale. Why, I'll never know. Local pollies have promoted this.

A few years ago the government spent a motza restoring the old causeway which will now be demolished. The government ignored two of its own reports recommending the further restoration of the causeway and ignored the evidence of the beautiful restoration of a railway bridge at Port Adelaide and the Busselton Jetty.

The new causeway was budgeted at $31.1m in 2020 and has now opened at the cost of $43m. Oops.

The old causeway was never unsafe. It's still safe and in use.

Victor Harbor is a glory, and a key part of the charm of Victor and Granite Island is that old causeway.

Granite Island is the rock of all South Australian ages. Seals, people and a name change have killed off lots of the penguins. They disappeared when someone changed their name from fairy to little.

And did these feet in ancient times walk upon the well-worn timber of the causeway? Yes. Now you can buy the timber from the government. It'd make a wonderful decking and talking point for your patio.

As a kiddie I was never allowed to use the dinky tractor-drawn train across the causeway because my grandmother said it was a waste of sixpence. The horse-drawn tram is now $15 one way. That's inflation.

But is the $43m new causeway a waste of the taxpayers' sixpence?

PETER GOERS CAN BE HEARD WEEKNIGHTS AND SUNDAYS ON ABC RADIO ADELAIDE.

Hot/not

HOT

RECOGNISING the heritage value of 20th Century architecture

A pastie and a bun in a country town

NOT

BLOODY COVID

HOSPITALITY industry ruined while 10,000 people can go to the fake cricket on New Year's Eve

GETTING rid of the Torrens Parade Ground over my dead body.

I LOVE ham but enough is enough

VALE

ARCHBISHOP Desmond Tutu, top.

GEOFF Williams - a fine journalist and mentor and a lovely man.

Lainie Anderson

lainie.anderson@news.com.au
Follow Lainie@anderson_lainie

Sad state when relics of our heroes are ancient history

WHEN Adelaide's Sir Ross Smith died in a plane crash 100 years ago this April, reporters knocked on the door of his Gilberton family home, Aviemore, to seek a comment from his devastated mother.

Jessie Smith had already lost one son to war and a daughter in infancy but remained gracious in her heartbreak, saying: "Before Ross died he belonged to us, but now he belongs to Empire."

She was right. Across the planet, people were mourning the loss of Sir Ross, who'd been hailed by The New York Times as the world's foremost living aviator after leading his brother, Sir Keith, and two mechanics on the pioneering flight from England to Australia in 1919.

The feat, achieved at a time of open cockpits and few airfields after India, was as awe-inspiring in its day as man landing on the moon 50 years later. So now we hear that Aviemore, the turn of the century family villa of these outstanding South Australian sons at 158 Stephen Terrace, Gilberton, is proposed for demolition without so much as a nod to its part in our state's story. It begs the question, again, whether we really care about cherishing our history at all?

The house and its address are listed on the History Trust of SA's "SA History Hub" website. It was also thought significant enough for a bronze plaque to be placed on the front façade in 1997, funded by then mayor George Robertson and the Civil Aviation Historical Society of SA.

Yet the Smith brothers' connection seems to have been ignored when it comes to consulting the community about knocking the building down.

I need to declare a conflict here. I travelled on a Churchill Fellowship to study the England-Australia flight, wrote a novel based on the race and co-produced a documentary. I also know our state faces far more dire challenges right now than an ageing villa being torn down, and I'm not in any way suggesting that public funds should be used to preserve Aviemore.

The good news in all of this is that the Smith brothers' historic Vickers Vimy biplane will be relocated by mid-year to a purpose-built display space in the revamped airport terminal. This is thanks to $6m in combined funding from the commonwealth and state governments and Adelaide Airport Ltd.

But when significant homes like Aviemore are gone, they're gone forever, so communities deserve to know all the facts when they're consulted about letting in the bulldozers.

Imagine Americans demolishing the family home of pioneer aviators Wilbur and Orville Wright without even mentioning its provenance when seeking public consultation. (The Wright brothers' Dayton home and bicycle shop were actually bought as historic artefacts by automotive giant Henry Ford in 1937 and moved in their entirety to Michigan, where they remain open to the public as part of his vast 80-acre (32.27ha) Greenfield Village complex celebrating US ingenuity.)

And we've shown it can be done well in SA, too. There's the rustic 1800s homestead of SA explorer Sir Hubert Wilkins restored at Mount Bryan East, north of Burra, thanks to entrepreneur Dick Smith and friends.

There's SA artist Hans Heysen's family home and art studio The Cedars, so beautifully preserved near Hahndorf that it feels like he just stepped out for a minute.

The public notification documents for Aviemore show a home that's been extensively modified and is now in sad repair. The developer has also told the Sunday Mail some original parts of the house and the plaque will be salvaged as a nod to the Smith family. But for me the most depressing aspect is not so much the bricks and mortar.

It's that we're so apathetic about celebrating awesome South Australians (the sporting field being the exception) that their achievements aren't held up to inspire new generations to greatness. As I've written before, we need something like a Museum of Firsts where kids can be blown away by the many South Australians who have punched above their weight on the national and international stage.

We should be shouting this stuff from the rooftops, not burying it under rubble.

WIKIPEDIA

Keith Macpherson Smith

Sir Keith Macpherson Smith, KBE (20 December 1890 – 19 December 1955) was an Australian aviator, who, along with his brother, Sir Ross Macpherson Smith, Sergeant James Mallett (Jim) Bennett and Sergeant Walter (Wally) Shiers, became the first people to fly from England to Australia.

Contents

Early life

Smith's father emigrated from Scotland to Western Australia, and later became a pastoralist in South Australia. His mother was born in Western Australia, daughter of a Scottish pioneer. Both boys boarded at Queen's School, North Adelaide, and for two years at Warriston School, in Scotland.[1]

He flew in the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Air Force as a pilot between 1917 and 1919.[2]

The Great Air Race

In 1919 the Australian government offered a prize of £A10,000 for the first Australians in a British aircraft to fly from Great Britain to Australia. On 12 November 1919, the brothers, along with Sergeant Jim Bennett and Sergeant Wally Shiers, departed from Hounslow Heath Aerodrome, England, in a Vickers Vimy aeroplane, eventually landing in Darwin, Australia on 10 December, having taken less than 28 days with an actual flying time of 135 hours. The four men shared the £10,000 prize money. Keith and Ross Smith were immediately knighted, while Shiers and Bennett were commissioned and each awarded a Bar to their Air Force Medals.[1]

The aircraft is preserved in a museum at the Adelaide Airport in South Australia.

Later life

Keith Macpherson Smith

Capt. Ross (left) and Lieut. Keith (right) Smith in 1921.

Born	20 December 1890 Adelaide
Died	19 December 1955 (aged 64) Sydney
Nationality	Australian
Known for	First flight from England to Australia
Relatives	Sir Ross Macpherson Smith (brother)
Awards	Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire
Aviation career	
Full name	Sir Keith Macpherson Smith
Famous flights	The Great Air Race
Air force	Australian Flying Corps
Battles	World War I
Rank	Lieutenant

Smith planned an around-the-world flight in 1922, but abandoned it after his brother Ross was killed during a test flight. He then lived and worked in Sydney as an agent for Vickers, vice-president of British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines (taken over by Qantas in 1954), and as a director of Qantas Empire Airways and Tasman Empire Airways Limited (a subsidiary of Imperial Airways which was the forerunner of British Airways).[1]

References

1. McCarthy, John (1988). "Smith, Sir Keith Macpherson (1890–1955)" (http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/smith-sir-keith-macpherson-8478). *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. 11. Melbourne University Press. ISSN 1833-7538 (https://www.worldcat.org/issn/1833-7538) – via National Centre of Biography, Australian National University.
2. "Flying home from war" (https://ntl.nt.gov.au/story/great-air-race). *The Great Air Race*. Library & Archives NT. Retrieved 15 July 2020.

External links

- Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith, pioneer aviators (https://digital.collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/pages/smith-brothers), State Library of South Australia website including personal papers of Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith
- Bio entry (http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/bsparcs/biogs/P003959b.htm), Encyclopaedia of Australian Science at Melbourne University
- The Development of Air Transport: The Trail Blazers (http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/tia/505.html#2079), *Technology in Australia 1788-1988*, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering
- The Services (http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/tia/507.html#2094), *Technology in Australia 1788-1988*, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering
- Scholarships (https://web.archive.org/web/20110706104729/http://www.hotcourses.com.au/australia/scholarships/sir-ross-and-sir-keith-smith-civil-aviation-scholarships-university-of-south-australia/2051-72237-all/scholarship.html)

WIKIPEDIA

Ross Macpherson Smith

Sir Ross Macpherson Smith, KBE, MC & Bar, DFC & Two Bars, AFC (4 December 1892 – 13 April 1922) was an Australian aviator. He and his brother, Sir Keith Macpherson Smith, were the first pilots to fly from England to Australia, in 1919.

Contents

Early life

Smith's father migrated to Western Australia from Scotland and became a pastoralist in South Australia. His mother was born near New Norcia, Western Australia, the daughter of a pioneer from Scotland. The boys boarded at Queen's School, North Adelaide, and for two years at Warriston School in Scotland.[1][2]

Military service

Capt. Ross Smith (left) and observer with their Bristol F.2B Fighter, in Palestine, February 1918.

Smith enlisted in 1914 in the 3rd Light Horse Regiment, landing at Gallipoli 13 May 1915. In 1917, he volunteered for the Australian Flying Corps. He was later twice awarded the Military Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross three times, becoming an air ace with 11 confirmed aerial victories.[1][2]

Ross Macpherson Smith

Born	4 December 1892 Semaphore, South Australia
Died	13 April 1922 (aged 29) Weybridge, England
Cause of death	Aviation accident
Nationality	Australian
Known for	Flying ace, pioneering aviator
Relatives	Sir Keith Macpherson Smith (brother)
Awards	Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire Military Cross & Bar Distinguished Flying Cross & Two Bars Air Force Cross
Aviation career	
Famous flights	Pioneer flight from Cairo to Calcutta Pioneer flight from England to Australia
Air force	Australian Flying Corps

Smith was pilot for T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) and fought in aerial combat missions in the Middle East. He is mentioned several times in Lawrence's book, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Chapter 114.

Battles	First World War ▪ Gallipoli Campaign ▪ Sinai and Palestine Campaign ▪ Battle of Romani
Rank	Captain

The Great Air Race

In 1919 the Australian government offered a prize of £A10,000 for the first Australians in a British aircraft to fly from Great Britain to Australia. Smith and his brother Keith, Sergeant James Mallett (Jim) Bennett and Sergeant Wally Shiers, flew from Hounslow Heath Aerodrome, England on 12 November 1919 in a Vickers Vimy, eventually landing in Darwin Australia on 10 December, taking less than 28 days, with actual flying time of 135 hours.[3] The four men shared the £10,000 prize money put forward by the Australian government.[1][2]

Later life

Smith was killed (along with the recently commissioned Lieutenant Bennett) while testing a Vickers Viking amphibian aircraft which crashed in Byfleet soon after taking off from Brooklands on 13 April 1922. The same aircraft type had also killed John Alcock, another WW1 veteran and pioneering long-distance aviator. Captain Stanley Cockerell, test pilot for Vickers, had flown Smith and Bennett as passengers on the aircraft's maiden flight earlier that day and testified to the inquest that the machine seemed to be in perfect working order. The jury returned a verdict of death by misadventure.[4] The bodies were transported to Australia and Smith was given a state funeral and later buried on 14 June at the North Road Cemetery, Adelaide.[1][2]

Legacy

The Australian cricketer Keith Ross Miller (born 28 November 1919) was named after Smith and his brother.

Ross Smith Avenue in the Darwin suburb of Parap is on the alignment of the airstrip that completed the journey from England to Australia. Their aircraft is preserved at Adelaide Airport. There is a statue of him near Adelaide Oval.

Sir Ross Smith memorial statue in Creswell Gardens, Adelaide

References

1. John McCarthy. "Smith, Sir Ross Macpherson (1892–1922)" (http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/smith-sir-ross-macpherson-8529). *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. This article was first published in hardcopy in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 11, (MUP), 1988.
2. John McCarthy. "Sir Ross Macpherson SMITH KBE MC & bar DFC & 2 bars AFC" (http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-heroes/smith.htm). Digger History.
3. "The Great Air Race" (https://ntl.nt.gov.au/story/great-air-race). Library & Archives NT
4. "Sir Ross Smith's Death: No Failure of the Machine", *The Times*, 17 April 1922

External links

- Pilot record at Australian Flying Corps (http://www.australianflyingcorps.org/2002_1999/afc_aces_smith.htm)
- Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith, pioneer aviators (https://digital.collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/pages/smith-brothers), State Library of South Australia website including personal papers of Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith
- Sir Ross Smith Memorial Collection (http://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/collection/Sir+Ross+Smith+Memorial+Collection), State Library of South Australia
- Album of photographs taken on the first flight from England to Australia, 1919 (https://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibraryofnsw/albums/72157712126795033), State Library of New South Wales.

Vickers Vimy, G-EAOU, the aircraft flown by Smith in 1919

First UK-Aus Flight monument in Darwin

Ross Smith memorial statue in the Adelaide Parklands

1922, seated in the plane in which he died

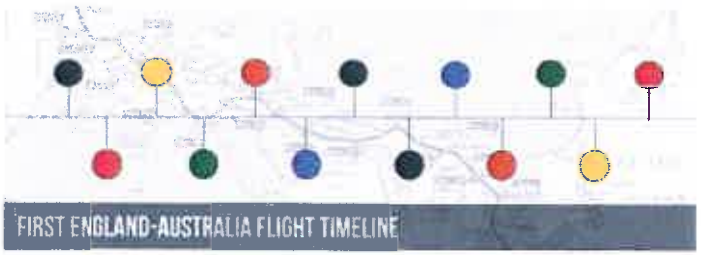
State Library
South Australia

Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith, pioneer aviators

On 19 March 1919 Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes announced a competition for the first Australian aviators to fly from England to Australia within 30 days with a prize of £10 000. South Australian brothers Ross Smith (pilot) and Keith Smith (navigator) with engineers Walter Shiers (SA) and James Bennett (Vic) were the first successful crew.

In 2019, the centenary year of the prize-winning flight, we celebrate them and their significant achievement which paved the way for postal and commercial flights to Australia. For more information about the commemoration of this event in South Australia see the Epic Flight Centenary website.

The personal papers of Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith held by the State Library of South Australia have been digitised and are now available through this website.




SIR ROSS SMITH


SIR KEITH SMITH


WALTER SHIERS


JAMES BENNETT


ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

State Library South Australia

Arrival in Adelaide after England-Australia flight

Date
23 March 1920

Location
Northfield Aerodrome


Smith brothers arriving

RELATES TO

Person
Sir Ross Smith
Sir Keith Smith
Walter Shiers
James Bennett

Event
First England-Australia fl

Photograph

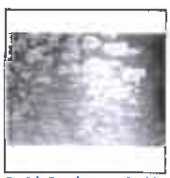

The end of the great flight


Sir Ross Smith and his parents


Crowds running to welcome the Smith brothers


Ross and Keith Smith


Smith brothers arrival at Northfield


Smith Brothers arrival in South Australia


Crowds welcoming Keith and Ross Smith at Northfield


The arrival of Keith and Ross Smith and their aircraft at Northfield


Ross and Keith Smith landing at Northfield


Sir Ross and Keith Smith after arrival in South Australia


The Smith brothers arriving at Northfield


Crowds surrounding the Vickers Vimy plane


Crowds surrounding the Vickers Vimy plane


Crowds surrounding the Vickers Vimy plane


The arrival of Ross and Keith Smith at Northfield


The arrival of Ross and Keith Smith at Northfield


The arrival of Ross and Keith Smith at Northfield


Sir Ross and Keith Smith landing at Northfield


Sir Ross Smith's Aeroplane


Arrival from England


Sir Ross and Keith Smith


Vickers Vimy Approach


Sir Ross Smith's Approach

Person


Walter Shiers


James Bennett


Sir Ross Smith


Sir Keith Smith

Event


First England-Australia flight

Map or Plan


Topographic map of

Semaphore [cartographic material]

Knowledge page

Air race competitors

FORMAT: EVENT

LINKED TO

Person
- Sir Ross Smith
- Sir Keith Smith
- Walter Shiers
- James Bennett

Event
- First England-Australia flight

Photograph
- Related photograph (27)

Person
- Related person (4)

Map or Plan
- Related map or plan

Knowledge page
- Related page

MAP

no geotags or polygons yet

RECOLLECTIONS

no stories yet

OBJECT

← BACK TO ALL OBJECTS

ADELAIDE – NORTH TERRACE PLAQUE

As part of South Australia's 150th birthday celebrations in 1986, a series of "SA Greats" plaques was laid along Adelaide's North Terrace cultural boulevard to commemorate the contribution of 169 eminent South Australians.

The inscription reads:

SMITH
SIR KEITH SMITH KBE
1890 – 1955

ADELAIDE – NORTH TERRACE PLAQUE

As part of South Australia's 150th birthday celebrations in 1986, a series of "SA Greats" plaques was laid along Adelaide's North Terrace cultural boulevard to commemorate the contribution of 169 eminent South Australians.

The inscription reads:

SMITH
SIR KEITH SMITH KBE
1890 – 1955

SIR ROSS SMITH KBE MC* DFC** AFC
1892-1922
PILOTS ON FIRST ENGLAND –
AUSTRALIA FLIGHT 1919
SPONSOR: AUSTRALIAN AIRLINES

Photo courtesy of Helen Stein.

State Library South Australia

First England-Australia flight

Date
Between 12th November 1919 and 10th December 1919

Description
Brothers Captain Sir Ross Smith K.B.E., M.C., D.F.C., A.F.C. and Lieutenant Sir Keith Smith K.B.E. were aviation pioneers, famous for their epic flight from England to Australia in 1919. Born in metropolitan Adelaide the brothers both served in World War I where they gained their flying experience. Keith Smith joined the Royal Flying Corps in Britain in 1914. Ross Smith first served with the Australian Light Horse at Gallipoli. While recovering from injury he learned to fly, and subsequently transferred to the Australian Flying Corps in 1916.

In 1919 the Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes announced an air race, offering a prize of 10,000 pounds for the first aviator to fly from London to Australia in 30 days or less. Ross as pilot, Keith as assistant pilot and navigator and their two mechanics James Bennett and Wally Shiers, decided to compete. The flight was made in a Vickers Vimy plane; a former bomber with an open cockpit. Their route began in Hounslow, England on 12 November 1919 and took them across parts of Europe, the Middle East, India and south east Asia to the finish in Darwin. The enormous challenge the trip presented is evident in the notebook kept by Ross in which he made detailed notes and sketches regarding potential landing sites during the flight. Included here are notes and sketches made by Ross of a possible landing field on a racecourse in Singapore. The flying conditions were poor throughout the trip with many hazards including extreme weather conditions encountered along the way. A diary of the trip was kept by Keith and recorded that conditions and visibilty were poor right from their take-off in England. With an open cockpit plane, it was also very cold and they were soon glad of their sheepskin boots and fur gloves and face masks.

On the 10 December, almost 28 days after leaving England, the Vickers Vimy landed at the newly constructed Darwin Aerodrome to win the race. Despite the heroic nature of their achievement, upon landing the crew still had to take time to fill out the required quarantine and customs reports. These make interesting reading as they record the names of the places where the plane landed along the route. As recognition for their amazing success Ross and Keith received knighthoods, while the mechanics, Sergeants W.H. Sheirs and J.M. Bennett, were commissioned and awarded Bars to their Air Force Medals. The 10,000 pounds prize money was divided equally among the four men.

The crew were much in demand around Australia after the race with special events and appearances organised around the country. Commemorative items were also produced such as the hand fan by John Martin & Co. On the 23 March 1920, the crew flew the Vickers Vimy to Adelaide to be welcomed home by a huge crowd. A panoramic photograph taken from the plane captured their flight over the city. In the photograph the plane is flying over the intersection of North Terrace and King William Street with the partially completed Parliament House visible to the right of the plane.

The brothers planned more flights, but these came to an end when Ross Smith and James Bennett were killed in a test flight on 13 April 1922 in front of a crowd of onlookers.

Sir Keith married and during his career provided valuable service to Australian aviation eventually serving as a director of Qantas. He died in Darlinghurst, New South Wales at the age of 64 on 19 December 1955.

The Vickers Vimy aircraft in which the crew accomplished their landmark flight is exhibited at Adelaide Airport.

Ross and Keith Smith v
PRG 18/7/51]

RELATES TO

Person
Sir Keith Smith
Sir Ross Smith
Walter Shiers
James Bennett
Cedric Ernest Howell

Event
Arrival in Adelaide after E

Collection
Ross and Keith Smith Co

MORE INFORMATION

More information
SA History Hub: Epic Flig
(http://sahistoryhub.com.a
History Trust of South Au
South Australian Aviatior
(http://www.saam.org.au/v
Profiles-ROSS-SMITH-and-t
Wikipedia: 1919 England

Photograph


Ross Smith's mascot


Map of the London-Adelaide flight


Vickers Vimy and crew


Hauling Bennett on board

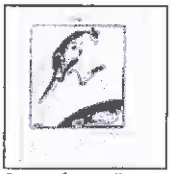

Vickers Vimy at Rangoon


Bogged in Surabaya


Bamboo runway


Arrival in Darwin


Ross Smith with Sir Hudson Fysh and Thomas Dunbabin


Cartoon from Daily News


W.M. Hughes presents the £10,000 cheque


Collage of England-Australia flight


Captain Frank Hurley and Keith Smith on the Vickers Vimy


Vickers Vimy and crew arriving in Darwin


Vickers Vimy arriving in Darwin


Vickers Vimy and crew arriving in Darwin


Vickers Vimy and crew at Cobbs Creek


Ross and Keith Smith and Vickers Vimy


Vickers Vimy at Singora


Vickers Vimy in Delhi


Street


Entrance to a building


Countryside

Manuscript


Letter from Sir Roland Wilson


Letter from Prime Minister Menzies


Letter to Ross Smith from the Department of Defence


Letter to Minister for Defence


Letter from George Matthews


Letter written from Gilberton, Adelaide


Letter written from Bellevue Hotel, Brisbane


Letter written from Dehli

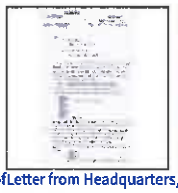

Proposed timetable


Approximate local clock time


Contact details for Vickers' representative


Estimation of Vickers Vimy range

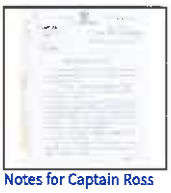

Letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs


Letter from Headquarters, RAF, India


Memo authorising flights


Written instructions handed to Ross Smith


Provisional rules governing the flight in India


Notes for Captain Ross Smith


Letter from A.F.C.


Letter authorising a landing at Bangkok


Cablegram from the Australian Prime Minister's Department


Memo from British Air Ministry


Cable from Holland

Publication


Wally Shiers wedding


Programme of the official reception to Capt. Sir Ross Smith, and party, at Flemington Racecourse, Melbourne, on Tuesday, 24th February 1920


Last flight of the late Capt. C.E. Howell, and his mysterious death at Corfu


Poster of the Vickers Vimy


Elder, Smith & Co. Welcome Social programme


'The First Aeroplane Voyage from England to Australia' by Sir Ross Smith.


Lowell Thomas Travelogues present 'The Ross Smith Flight: England to Australia'


Dinner menu of the Hotel Australia in honour of Sir Ross Smith, Sir Keith Smith and crew


Dinner menu commemorating the first England-Australia flight


Programme of a gala performance of 'The Sleeping Beauty'


Luncheon menu of Federal Parliament House in honour of Sir Ross Smith and crew


Programme of an evenings entertainment at the Tivoli Theatre, Grote Street, Adelaide


Table plan of a luncheon at the Hyde Park Hotel, Knightsbridge


Menu of a luncheon at the Hyde Park Hotel, Knightsbridge


Menu of a luncheon at the Hotel Cecil, London


Copy of a commemorative aerial stamp


Service leaflet commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the landing at Darwin by Sir Ross Smith


Service leaflet commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the landing at Darwin by Sir Ross Smith


'10th December 1919' by Sir Hudson Fysh, K.B.E., D.F.C., M.Inst.T., F.R.G.S. (Aust)

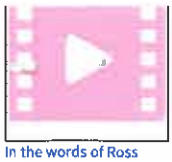

Inaugural Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith Memorial Lecture


Air race announcement


Programme of the official reception to Capt. Sir Ross Smith, and party


The Unveiling of the Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith War Memorial at Adelaide Airport

You Tube video


In the words of Ross Smith : en-route to Lyon, November 12, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : in Pisa, November 15, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : flying over Naples, November 16, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : approaching Cairo, November 18, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : en-route to Bandar Abbas, November 23


In the words of Ross Smith : in Karachi, November 24, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : Delhi, November 25, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : departing Calcutta, November 29, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : en-route from Rangoon, December 1, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : Singapore, December 6, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : in Surabaya, Indonesia, December 7-8, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : in Timor, the night before departing for Darwin, December 9, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : over Bathurst Island, December 10, 1919


In the words of Ross Smith : on arrival in Darwin, December 10th, 1919


Pioneer pilots honoured


First Flight from London to Australia, 1919

Person


Cedric Ernest Howell


Walter Shiers


James Bennett


Sir Ross Smith


Sir Keith Smith

Transcript


Notebook of Keith Smith [transcript]


Diary of Keith Smith covering the England-Australia flight [transcript]


Letter written from Gilberton, Adelaide [Transcript]


Letter written from Bellevue Hotel, Brisbane [Transcript]


Letter written from Dehli [Transcript]

Object


Pistol


Hand fan commemorating the first England-Australia flight


London to Adelaide souvenir


The Sir Ross Smith aeroplane race game

Collection


Correspondence related to the England to Australia flight


Items commemorating the first England-Australia flight


Ross and Keith Smith Collection

Artwork

Sir Ross Smith Commemoration Service

Home > Adelaide > Churches | Community Events | Free | Memorials | Places of Worship

by Jenny Esots (subscribe)
A freelance writer and traveller who likes to explore the spiritual, literary and hidden gems of Adelaide and beyond.

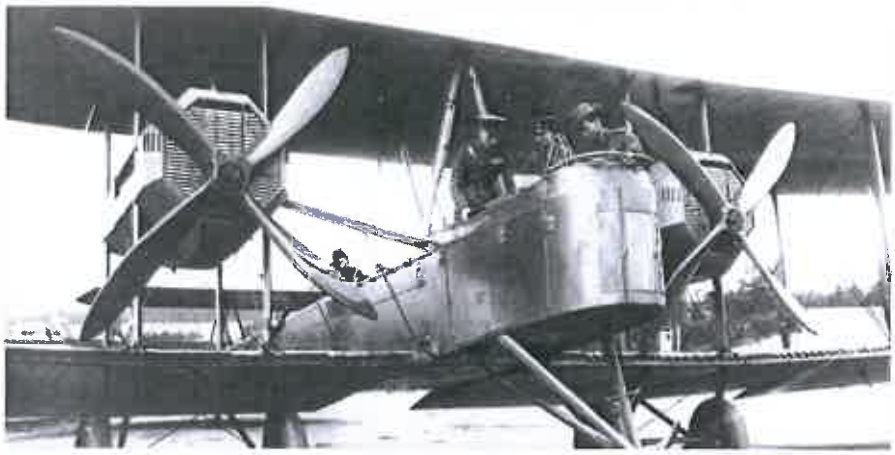
Event: 15/06/2019

Honouring the man and his epic flight

Sir Ross Smith shot to international fame after winning the 1919 Air Race from England to Australia with his pioneering 28-day flight across the globe.

Sir Ross Smith Commemoration Service - Photograph courtesy of the State Library of South Australia large image

Just two and a half years later, South Australia lost its favourite son when Sir Ross was killed while test flying another aircraft ahead of an attempt to circumnavigate the globe. More than 100,000 people (one-fifth of the state's population) lined the streets to pay their respects as the funeral cortege travelled from St Peter's Cathedral to North Road Cemetery.



Sir Ross Smith Commemoration Service - Photograph courtesy of the State Library of South Australia large image

The Royal Australian Air Force, RAAF Association (SA), and the History Trust of South Australia invite you to join them on Saturday 15 June for the Sir Ross Smith Commemoration Service - honouring the man and the epic flight from England to Australia in 1919.

Saturday 15 June 2019, 11am - 12pm
St Peter's Cathedral
North Adelaide, SA 5006

Free parking in the University Lane car park, entry off Pennington Terrace, directly opposite the Cathedral.

Please RSVP via Eventbrite here or phone 08 8203 9888.

January Events
February Events
March Events
April Events
May Events
June Events

Why? Commemorating Sir Ross Smith
When: *Saturday, June 15 at 11am*
Website: https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/sir-ross-smith-commemoration-service-tickets-59361069557
Where: *St Peters Cathedral North Adelaide*
Cost: *Free*
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Yankalilla
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153

Pennington Gardens West: setting for Adelaide Oval

Pennington Gardens (Park 26)

B 60354/41

The Kaurna people are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Adelaide Plains. This area around Adelaide Oval and the River Torrens / Karrawirra Pari has particular importance to the Kaurna people. This area was a camping ground and Gladys Elphick, a Kaurna elder, recalled her Grannie Amelia, known also as Ivaritji, saying she camped in the Adelaide Oval area.

Adelaide Oval is located on a place where Kaurna people celebrated life through public ceremonies, games, religious observances and palti (corroborees). It is also seen as a symbol for race relations in sport with football matches between Point McLeay Mission and local Adelaide teams amongst some of the earliest matches held here. In 1885 two large Kaurna cultural performances of song and dance were held which attracted 25,000 people.

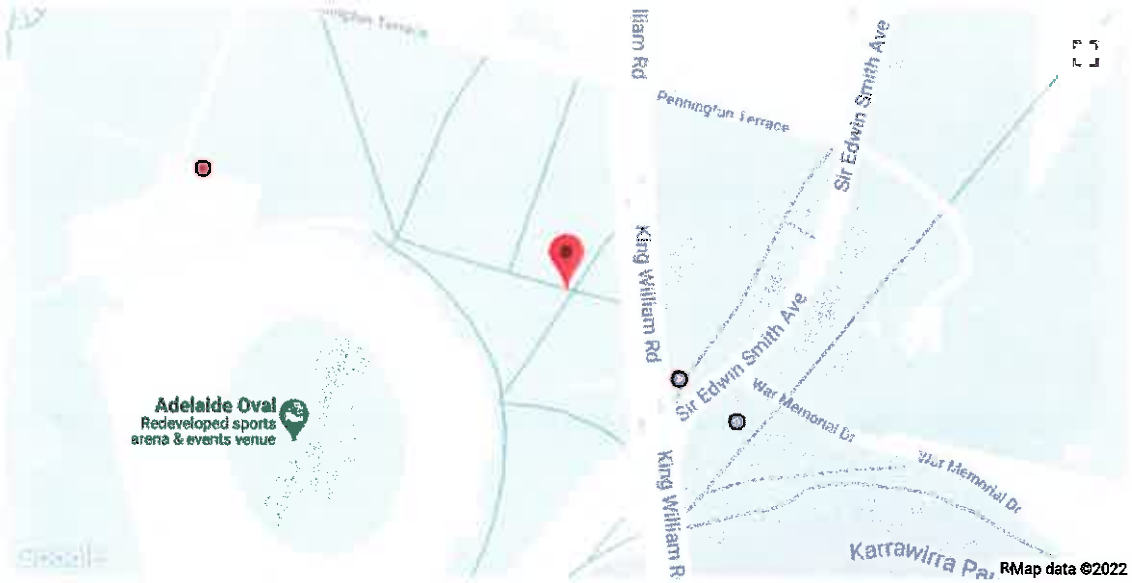
Pennington Gardens West is part of a park called Tarntanya Wama which means 'Adelaide Oval' in the Kaurna language. The Gardens were designed by August Pelzer, City Gardener from 1899-1932, in the gardenesque style, with formal paths and garden beds. The redevelopment of Adelaide Oval has changed the layout but it retains its

'Hercules' is a life-size bronze copy of Glycon's Farnese Hercules in Naples, Italy. It was unveiled on 4 October 1892 by the Mayor of Adelaide, F.W. Bullock (1851-1931). 'Hercules' was donated by William Austin Horn (1841-1922), a mining magnate, pastoralist and politician. Originally situated in Victoria Square, the statue was moved to North Terrace in 1930 and then to Pennington Gardens in 1960. It has been in its present site in the Gardens since the Oval was redeveloped in 2013.

The Gardens also feature one of a pair of cast iron fountains. The other fountain now stands in Rundle Mall. This fountain was known as the Creswell Gardens Fountain (when it was set further south in this Park) and was moved to this site in 2014.

'The Don' celebrates the famous Australian cricketer, Sir Donald Bradman (1908-2001), widely acknowledged as the greatest batsman of all time.

'Captain Sir Ross Smith' (1892-1922) stands further south of the Oval in celebration of Smith's feat of flying from England to Australia in 28 days. The statue was unveiled on 10 December 1927, the anniversary of the landing of Sir Ross and his crew in Australia. In 1919 the aeroplane had only been invented for 20 years, so the flight was seen as incredible and Smith was hailed a hero. The four sides of the pedestal contain images of incidents that occurred during the flight.



City of Adelaide acknowledges the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today. We also extend that respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations.

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THE KIDMAN FAMILY - AFR

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Cattle King - Landline - ABC

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Rediscovering Kidman | Farm Online | Australia

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Kidman, Sir Sidney South Australian History - Flinders Ranges ...

The Greatest **Pastoral** Landholder in Modern History. George and Elizabeth **Kidman** arrived in South Australia with their two sons in 1851.

https://adb.anu.edu.au › biography › kidman-sir-sidney...

Sir Sidney Kidman - Australian Dictionary of Biography

This 'corner' country of New South Wales later became the heartland of **Kidman's pastoral** empire. The boy shared a dug-out in the bank of a dry creek with an ...

Missing: reid | Must include: reid

https://www.wakefieldpress.com.au › product

History :: Kidman - Wakefield Press

The extraordinary life of Sir Sidney Kidman. Christo **Reid.** Kidman ... and with single-minded determination - he would create a **pastoral** empire the size of ...

Missing: family | Must include: family

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25 pages

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Trash or Treasure – Does this Gilberton House Need to Be Saved?

Heritage activists are adamant that Stephen Tce's house, Gilberton, should be saved, arguing that its connection to the brothers, who won £10,000 for their historic flight from England to Australia, makes it an essential piece of the state's history. . But George Vanco, who filed the scrapping application on behalf of his brother Con, said that despite all efforts to find a viable way to restore it, the "significant structural flaws" meant it just wasn't possible. He said the house was not an inheritance. classified, the original facade was missing and the cracked pool threatened to form a sink hole. Repairs would cost more than $2 million. Con Vanco bought the property in 2019, with realestate.com.au posting a sale price of $2.2 million. Nigel Daw, president of the South Australian Aviation Museum, saic

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'We escaped. We Were Not Liberated': Rabbi

in South Australia's aviation history and should be preserved. "I believe it is a failure of both the state government and the local council (Walkerville) that this property has not been declared a heritage site because of what Ross and Keith Smith did for Australia 100 years ago," said Mr Daw. A plaque commemorating the Smith family's connection to the home was installed at the property in 1997. Mr Vanco said original parts of the house, as well as the plaque, would be salvaged and reused at the property when a new house is built. Local resident John Crawford, who has joined the fight to save the house, said its history was not respected. He also feared that the block would be empty after demolition. The house also has a link to another prominent South Australian family. It was occupied by George Arthur Goyder, son of Surveyor General George Woodroofe Goyder – after whom Goyder's Line was named – before passing into the Smith family in 1911. The house is on a block of 2693 sqm and has six bedrooms, two bathrooms and a swimming pool and tennis court. The planning document labels the currently vacant property as "neglected", with sloping ceilings and uneven floors. There is also evidence of damage from thieves or squatters. It says it would be difficult to support the house because the bluestone foundation is in poor condition. George Vanco, a licensed builder, said he had spent "a fair amount of time" researching options to save the house, but it was "not economically viable". He said his brother now plans to build a stately home to complement others in the area. "I would in no way knock down a building that can still be saved," he said. The demolition request ends on January 19. Colonist Lainie Anderson has weighed in on the matter and asked if we really care about our history. In a column in the Sunday Mail, the journalist who traveled on a Churchill Fellowship to study England-Australia flight, wrote a novel based on the race and co-produced a documentary speaking out in defense of our history. She is not suggesting that public funds be spent on the house, but says the public deserves to know all the facts. "For me, the most depressing aspect is not so much the bricks and mortar. It's that we are so apathetic about celebrating grea

Recounts Deadlock in Texas Synagogue

Heidi Klum says her legs are insured for $2 million and one is 'more expensive than the other'

A search is under way for a man shot dead in northern Hobart

The Senegalese goalkeeper has won the award for the best player in the world

is the exception) that their achievements are not held up to inspire new generations to greatness," she writes. Anderson praised the new housing of the historic Vickers Vimy Smith brothers biplane in the revamped airport terminal, suggesting: "We need something like a Museum of Firsts where children can be blown away by the many South Australians who are above their weight on the national and international stage. "We should be shouting this stuff from the rooftops, not burying it under the rubble."

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Trash or Treasure - Does this Gilberton House Need to Be Saved? 2

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THE KIDMAN FAMILY

Apr 6, 1990 – 10.00am

RURAL (beef cattle). South Australia. The Kidman-Ayers-Reid empire (Ayers and Reid were added by marriage) owes its wealth primarily to cattle king Sir Sidney Kidman. Kidman, who died in 1935, ran a pastoral empire that covered 3.5% of the Australian continent. The family's holdings are only half that size today, covering about 11 million hectares. The largest property is Anna Creek, west of Lake Eyre in South Australia. Its area is about one-fifth the area of Britain. The family company, Kidman Holdings, is run by Sidney Kidman's great-grandson, John Ayers. The family is selling its historic Riverina sheep station, Murray Downs, just north of Swan Hill. It is adjacent to the site of the proposed Murray Downs township being developed by the Kidman family. Estimated minimum net worth: $51 million.

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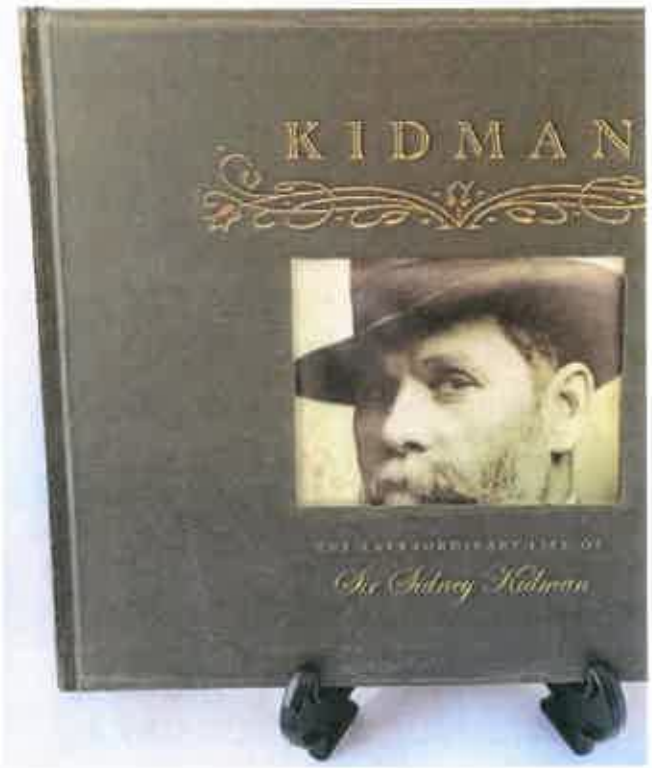

Kidman – The Extraordinary Life of Sidney Kidman by Christo Reid 2012

$200.00

Kidman

The Extraordinary Life of Sidney Kidman

by Christo Reid

Published by Strangelove Press 2012

In 2011, author and photographer Christo Reid inherited the personal belongings of his Aunt, who died at the age of 98. Amongst her belongings were a collection of photograph albums, journals and newspaper cuttings from Sidney Reid, her father. Sidney Reid was the son-in-law of Sir Sidney Kidman, the greatest single landowner in modern Australian history and a grazier dubbed 'The Cattle King'. Sidney Reid managed Kidman's Adelaide office from 1912 to 1935 and throughout that time was involved intimately in both business and family life, travelling extensively with Kidman on tours of all his properties and sharing in family celebrations. Reid was also an avid photographer, and arguably Kidman's greatest admirer. He left behind an extensive collection of photographs, clippings and 16 mm back and white film meticulously documenting the harsh reality of life in the outback of the early 1900s, as well as the life of one of Australia's most prolific pioneers. Kidman. The Extraordinary Life of Sir Sidney Kidman presents over 500 never-before-seen images and documents of Australia's 'Cattle King', taken from the family

archives of Sir Sidney Kidman. Designed in a sumptuous 240-page hardcover edition, with images that could be right off the set of Luhrmann's Australia or from the pages of Mary Durack's Kings in Grass Castles, as well as first account stories of life on the land, Kidman The Extraordinary Life of Sir Sidney Kidman is a true collector's edition.

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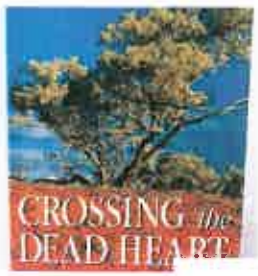

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Unravelling the legacy of Australian cattle king Sydney Kidman

THE Kidman legacy was of little interest to Christo Reid until he discovered a rich family archive of photos, newspaper clippings and film footage.

Deborah Bogle

6 min read August 23, 2013 - 11:30PM

THE Kidman legacy was of little interest to Christo Reid until he discovered a rich family archive of photos, newspaper clippings and film footage.

As a teenager, Christo Reid's complete absence of curiosity about his family history was hardly unusual. Genealogy tends to be a hobby of late middle age. The fact that his great-grandfather was the legendary Cattle King, Sidney Kidman, was only of passing interest.

He'd heard the stories, was aware of the Kidman legacy but took for granted the life of privilege it had bestowed upon his descendants. It wasn't until the death in 2011 of his beloved aunt and Kidman's granddaughter, 98-year-old Joan Hopkins, that his interest stirred, spurred by the discovery of a treasure trove of photographs, journals, newspaper clippings and 16mm film footage documenting the life and times of Kidman and his empire.

By then, Adelaide resident Reid was nearing his 60th birthday and in search of a new project following the publication of his book *Cactus: Surfing Journals from Solitude*.

"When I was growing up the last thing I wanted was to be a Kidman," he says. "It was something you'd

avoid, because you'd be cast as a silver-tail, a rich kid. So the first time I really read anything about Sidney Kidman was a year and a half ago."

The collection was the work of his grandfather, Sidney Reid, who had been taken into the business by Kidman after he married his middle daughter, Elma, in 1911. Sidney Reid went on to manage the vast Kidman enterprise until 1935. His son Reg, Christo's father, also worked in the business until his early death at 56.

Working with his friend Graeme Davey, who was designer on the *Cactus* book, and using excerpts from Jill Bowen's 1987 biography *Kidman – The Forgotten King*, Reid has put together a handsome large format book with more than 500 photographs, newspaper clippings and snippets of correspondence from the family archive.

"It's a work of art, packaged as a book," says Reid. An exhibition of the photos will follow, and a film – using the 16mm footage shot by Sidney Reid and other cameramen hired by him – will be screened at the Adelaide Film Festival in October.

Together they tell the story of an extraordinary man, an Australian legend who left his home at Payneham aged 14, barely literate and with a single horse to his name. His first job was as an odd-job boy at a grog shanty in SA's far north. His story has faded from public memory but his legacy lives in the S. Kidman and Co pastoral company, still family-owned, still in control of pastoral leases covering 110,000sq km in SA, Qld, WA and the Northern Territory.

"Grandpa Kid" as he was known to his descendants, was a charismatic figure who inspired fervent loyalty from his men and more than a little controversy during his life. On his death, aged 78 in 1935, he was remembered in obituaries in newspapers across the world, from The Advertiser to The Times, London, The New York Times and The Manchester Guardian.

Kidman's great achievement had been to identify the potential in the flood plains below Queensland – the Three Rivers area that eventually became known as the Channel Country – and to gradually buy up land to secure his "chain of supply", allowing him to drove cattle on good country from north to south to market in Adelaide. By the time he died, he controlled 68 stations covering nearly 260,000sq km and carrying 200,000 cattle and 250,000 sheep.

In his years as a drover and a horse and cattle trader, Kidman had travelled widely in the northern outback of SA around the Barrier Ranges and the Border Country.

"He knew the country intimately and he observed patches of green feed in areas where you wouldn't expect it," says Reid. "He realised that this Channel Country up in southwest Queensland, if it rained up in the Gulf, water would come down, floods would come down, even though there might not be any rain anywhere near there. And he realised that if he could have corridors of land, he could rest the country, instead of flogging it, he could move his cattle around depending on droughts and rainfall."

Apart from his unflagging work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit, Kidman's early prosperity was aided by the older brothers he'd set off to find as a young runaway. From their jobs as jackaroos on Outback stations, the older Kidmans, led by Sackville, identified the potential in the burgeoning mining town of Broken Hill. With a stock-dealing business based at Silverton and a butcher shop in Broken Hill they were in the box seat to keep the miners supplied with meat and transport. Sid Kidman was the roving partner whose job it was to buy the stock and oversee its move to market.

By the turn of the century, Sackville had died and Sid was on his own. He was only 43, but already he owned, controlled or had an interest in nearly 30,000sq km of country. "He also had a coaching business," says Reid. "When the Cobar mines started up – well, the miners needed things out there, so he'd take goods out there, set up a butcher shop, anything they needed, he'd supply. Then, when gold was discovered in Western Australia, the coaching business moved there."

The photographs from the time show a prosperous, confident figure. His growing family, based at Kapunda, now included three daughters and a son. Kidman's wife, Isabel, had been a schoolteacher at Kapunda when he met her during a stop-over on a droving trip south. Reid's own daughter is named in her memory, although he changed the spelling to Isobel.

One of the most entertaining passages in the book is an account of the public celebration to mark Kidman's 75th birthday. Organised by Sidney Reid as a "Tribute to the Boss", it was a rodeo staged at the Jubilee Oval on Frome Rd, on land now occupied by the University of Adelaide.

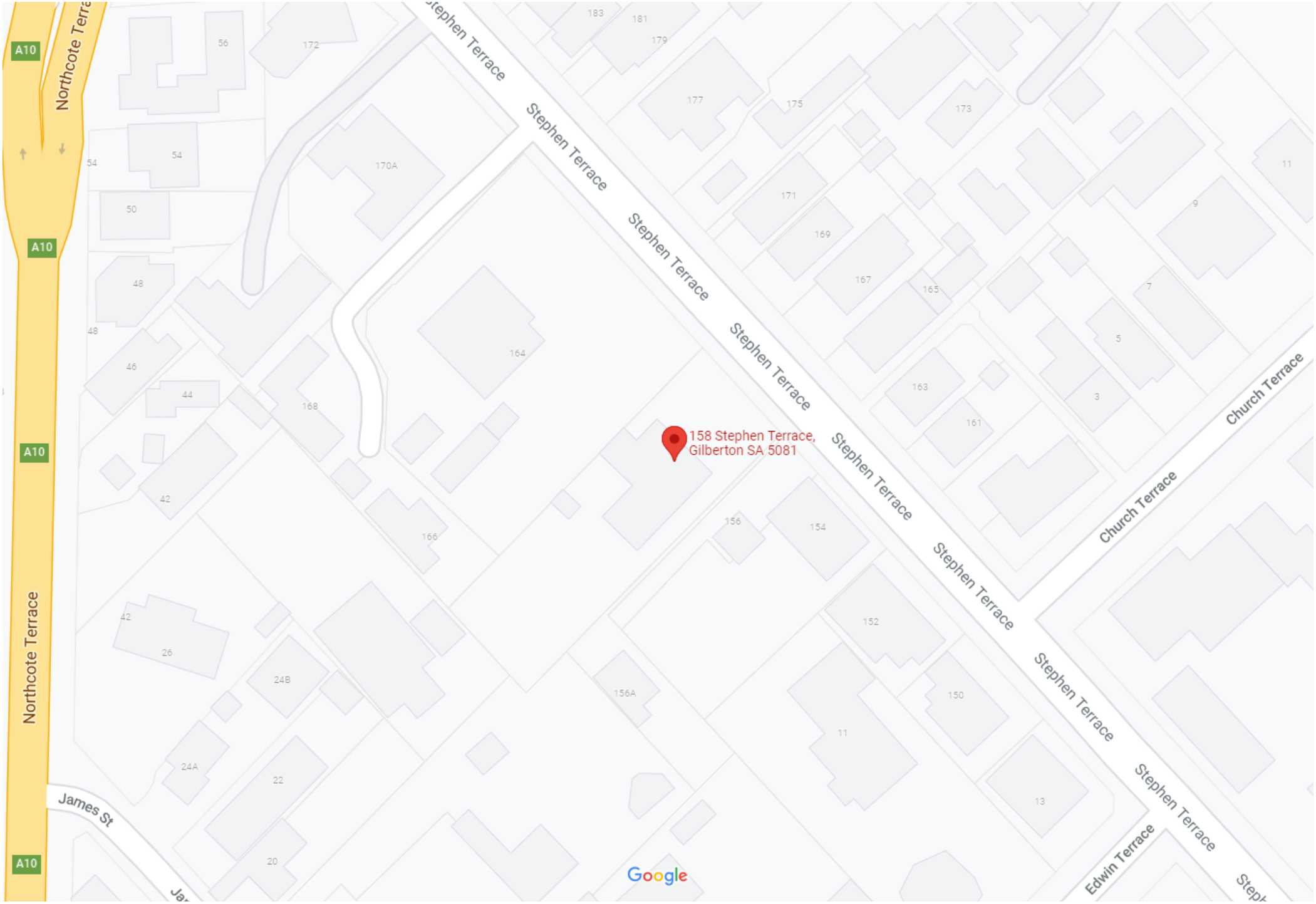
Sid Reid seriously misjudged the crowd-pulling potential of an inner-city buckjump show. An estimated 40,000 people crammed into the grounds. Fences were broken down as people rushed to secure a place. Those who missed out on seats climbed trees and buildings to gain a vantage point. People fainted in the crush and others fell from rooftops. The roof of a building collapsed, causing further injuries. Buckjumpers threw their riders and careened into the crowd. Steers bolted and came dangerously close, but were headed off by the Kidman stockmen in attendance.

"It was complete chaos," says Reid. "A hundred people were injured." One of the photographs from the day shows Reid's father, the boy Reg, astride his horse at the front of a line-up of the Kidman stockmen. Many of the photographs and a good deal of the 16mm footage were taken by Sidney Reid, Kidman's right-hand man, a meticulous record-keeper who had an eye to posterity. "He documented everything," says Reid. "I've got his journals – you know, how many sheep, how much everything sold for, every property, every year, it was all tallied up. He liked to keep records."

The project has given Reid not just an appreciation of his forebears' achievements, but also some insight into the forces that have shaped him. "I was trying to find out what was Kidman's character, what were his values, and I was amazed at recognising a lot of the family traits – that I have, that my Dad had, that my grandfather had, just things that were, obviously, to some extent genetic, but there were the values…they were good, strong values."

He also recognised some aspects of himself, such as fastidiousness and frugality tempered by generosity to others. "And a certain sort of groundedness," he says. "You know, airs and graces – he could do them but they were meaningless to him. He was more comfortable out bush, but he could be with the Queen."

Kidman: The Extraordinary Life of Sir Sidney Kidman by Christo Reid and Graeme Davey (and excerpts by Jill Bowen), Strangelove, $90.


158 Stephen Terrace,
Gilberton SA 5081
Stephen Terrace
Church Terrace
Northcote Terrace
James St
Edwin Terrace
A10
Google


Stephen Terrace
158 Stephen Terrace
Gilberton SA 5081

Decimal Degrees
Lat :-34.8947127
Long:138.6110281

Degrees. Minutes, Seconds
Lat : -34° 53' 40.97",
Long: 138° 36' 39.70"

MGA 94 Zone 54
281701.5 E
6136028.4 N

SA Lamberts Conformal Conic
1329618.7 E
1674076.6 N

[redacted]

Public Consultation Submission - Development Application ID 21023431

Applicant: George Vanco

Address: 158 STEPHEN TCE GILBERTON SA 5081

[redacted]

Thank you for your submission on Application ID 21023431 proposed at 158 STEPHEN TCE GILBERTON SA 5081 .

Should you have any questions or require more information please contact us.

[redacted]

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PlanSA

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158 STEPHEN TCE GILBERTON SA 5081

UNDER ASSESSMENT

Description
Demolition of existing dwelling, ancillary building and swimming pool

Application ID
21023431

Overview

Assessment

Documents

This application requires

- Planning Consent
- Building Consent

Planning Consent
Under assessment

Date lodged
06 September 2021

Date verified
06 September 2021

Date submitted
12 August 2021

Decision authority
Council – The Corporation of the Town of Walkerville

Contact
83427100

Decision
Under assessment

Date
TBA

Building Consent
Still required

158 STEPHEN TCE GILBERTON SA 5081

UNDER ASSESSMENT

Description
Demolition of existing dwelling, ancillary building and swimming pool

Application ID
21023431

Overview

Assessment

Documents

Documents

Document type	Date	Document link

There are no *Documents* currently associated with this application

NAME: *Dwelling, 'Aviemore'* **PLACE NO:** *DPLG ID: 8658*

LOCATION: *158 Stephen Terrace, Gilberton*
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: *Town of Walkerville*
LAND DESCRIPTION: *Section 475, Hundred of Yatala*
CT 5673/727

OWNER:

REGISTER STATUS: *Contributory Item*
HERITAGE BRANCH FILE NO.: *NA*

PHOTOGRAPH:

'Aviemore', 158 Stephen Terrace, Gilberton

NAME: *Aviemore* **PLACE NO:** *DPLG ID: 8658*

DESCRIPTION:

C.1900-01 Federation residence with extensive c.1925-6 'Arts & Crafts' additions constructed of rough-cast rendered masonry with smooth rendered quoins, surrounds and reveals and bluestone plinth. Hipped and gabled roof with early corrugated galvanised iron sheeting with painted brick chimneys. Combination of masonry and timber 'Arts & Crafts' gables with timber bargeboard and half-timber infill with 'pebbledash' render infill. Roofline extends to verandah with painted timber posts, friezes and handrails with replacement cast aluminium balustrading. Several windows to Stephen Terrace elevation have been modified or replaced.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The c1900-1901 Federation dwelling with c.1925-6 'Arts & Crafts' style additions at 158 Stephen Terrace, Gilberton, is representative of the residential consolidation of the area known as Gilberton North which followed the early settlement. It is associated with the 'gentrification' of the northern part of Gilberton as a desirable and popular location for grand houses built for Adelaide city-based trade, finance, government, professional and political families from the late 1870s to the early 1900s.

The dwelling is of added significance for its association with Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith and their parents. The 'Arts & Crafts' style additions likely commissioned by Jessie Smith, are of architectural merit.

RELEVANT CRITERIA (Under Section 23(4) of the *Development Act 1993*):

(a) *It displays historical, economic or social themes that are of importance to the local area, (land and settlement), as a surviving dwelling of relatively high integrity built during the period of the 'gentrification' of North Gilberton as a desirable and popular location for grand houses built for Adelaide city-based trade, finance, government, professional and political families from the late 1870s to the early 1900s.*

NAME: *Aviemore* **PLACE NO:** *DPLG ID: 8658*

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

'Aviemore', 158 Stephen Terrace, Gilberton was built in 1900-01 for Harriet Wimble, a divorcee. Wimble acquired allotment 46 of Section 475 of Gilberton in January 1899.[1] The Town of Walkerville rate assessment records describe a 'residence in course of construction' by 1900; an eight roomed residence assessed at £60 per annum was completed by 1901.[2] Wimble sold the residence to Florence Hicks in February 1903, who subsequently sold the house to Florence Martha Goyder, wife of George Arthur Goyder, assayer in May 1905.[3] By 1906 'Aviemore' was valued at £1400 with an annual rate of £70. By 1911 the house was sold to Andrew Smith, station manager who resided at the property until his death in 1925;

'Aviemore' then valued at £1900.[4] Smith's wife Jessie inherited the property and likely undertook the extensive 'Arts & Craft' additions to 'Aviemore' between 1925-6, as valuation of the property greatly increased to £2500 by 1926 with an annual assessment rate of £125.[5] Jessie Smith resided at the property until her death in 1941.[6] Subsequent owners of 'Aviemore' include the Reid family (1948-).[7]

Despite the long occupancy of the Reid family from the mid-20th century, the most significant owners of 'Aviemore', 158 Stephen Terrace, Gilberton are the Smith family, Andrew & Jessie Smith being the parents of Sir Ross Macpherson Smith and Sir Keith Macpherson Smith; significant figures in aviation history having completed the first flight from England to Australia in 1919.[8] The Smith brothers, along with Sergeant James Mallett Bennett and Sergeant Wally Shiers, flew from Hounslow Heath Aerodrome, England on 12th November 1919, flying their Vickers Vimy aircraft to Darwin, Northern Territory by 10th December; a journey of less than 28 days with 135 hours of flight time.[9] The Smith brothers and their co-pilots shared a £10,000 prize money sponsored by the Australian Government, receiving knighthoods for their achievement. An 'ace' pilot and distinguished war veteran of the First World War, Sir Ross Macpherson Smith was pilot of T. E. Lawrence (known as 'Lawrence of Arabia'), fighting in several combat missions in the Middle East. Sir Ross Smith is mentioned several times in T. E. Laurence's book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Sir Ross Smith was tragically killed during aircraft testing in England in 1922 and was given a state funeral in Adelaide.[10] Following his brother's death, Sir Keith Smith became an agent for Vickers, later becoming vice-president for British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines, a director of Qantas Empire Airways and Tasman Empire Airways before his death in Sydney in 1955.

Architecturally, the c.1925-6 'Arts & Crafts' additions appear to consist of most of the Stephen Terrace frontage, the older c.1900-01 property sitting behind the additions to the south-west, as indicated by the roofline and chimney stacks. The architect of either periods of construction have not been identified, though the attractive c.1925-6 additions are likely the work of a leading practitioner.

NAME: *Aviemore* **PLACE NO:** *DPLG ID: 8658*

EXTENT OF LISTING:

External form, materials and detailing of the c.1900-01 dwelling and c.1925-6 additions including masonry walls with pebbledash render and smooth rendered details, hipped and gabled roof, timber battened gables with pebbledash infill, brick chimneys, timber framed verandah and timber joinery.

REFERENCES:

[1] CT Vol. 641, Fol. 198.
[2] City of Walkerville rate assessment records, 1900, 1901.
[3] CT Vol. 641, Fol. 198.
[4] CT Vol. 1289, Fol.165; City of Walkerville rate assessment records, 1926.
[5] City of Walkerville rate assessment records, 1926.
[6] CT Vol. 1289, Fol. 165.
[7] CT Vol. 1289, Fol. 165; CT Vol. 4244, Fol. 536.
[8] http://sahistoryhub.com.au/places/aviemore, accessed 19/4/2020.
[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ross_Macpherson_Smith, accessed 19/4/2020.
[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ross_Macpherson_Smith, accessed 19/4/2020.

Book Ten. The House Is Perfected

CHAPTERS 107 TO 122

Our mobile column of aeroplanes, armoured cars, Arab regulars and Beduin collected at Azrak, to cut the three railways out of Deraa. The southern line we cut near Mafrak; the northern at Arar; the western by Mezerib. We circumnavigated Deraa, and rallied, despite air raids, in the desert.

Next day Allenby attacked, and in a few hours had scattered the Turkish armies beyond recovery.

I flew to Palestine for aeroplane help, and got orders for a second phase of the thrust northward.

We moved behind Deraa to hasten its abandonment. General Barrow joined us; in his company we advanced to Kiswe, and there met the Australian Mounted Corps. Our united forces entered Damascus unopposed. Some confusion manifested itself in the city. We strove to allay it; Allenby arrived and smoothed out all difficulties. Afterwards he let me go.

***

Chapter 107

It was an inexpressible pleasure to have left the mists behind. We caught at each other with thankfulness as we drove along, Winterton, Nasir and myself. Lord Winterton was our last-found recruit; an experienced officer from Buxton's Camel Corps. Sherif Nasir, who had been the spear-point of the Arab Army since the first days of Medina, had been chosen by us for the field-work on this last occasion also. He deserved the honour of Damascus, for his had been the honours of Medina, of Wejh, of Akaba, and of Tafileh; and of many barren days beside.

A painstaking little Ford hung on in the dust, behind, as our splendid car drank up the familiar miles. Once I had been proud of riding from Azrak to Akaba in three days; but now we drove it in two, and slept well of nights after this mournful comfort of being borne at ease in Rolls-Royces, like the great ones of war.

We noted again how easy their lives were; the soft body and its unexhausted sinews helping the brain to concentrate upon an armchair work: whereas our brains and bodies lay down only for the stupor of an hour's sleep, in the flush of dawn and the flush of sunset, the two seasons of the day unwholesome for riding. Many a day we had been twenty-two out of the twenty-four hours in the saddle, each taking it in turn to lead through the darkness while the others let their heads nod forward over the pommel in nescience.

Not that it was more than a thin nescience: for even in the deepest of such sleep the foot went on pressing the camel's shoulder to keep it at the cross-country pace, and the rider awoke if the balance were lost ever so little at a false stride or turn. Then we had had rain, snow or sun beating upon us; little food, little water, and no security against either Turks or Arabs. Yet those forced months with the tribes had let me plan in a surety which seemed lunatic rashness to new comers, but actually was an exact knowledge of my materials.

Now the desert was not normal: indeed, it was shamefully popular. We were never out of sight of men; of tenuous camel columns of troops and tribesmen and baggage moving slowly northward over the interminable Jefer flat. Past this activity (of good omen for our punctual concentration at Azrak) we roared, my excellent driver, Green, once achieving sixty-seven miles an hour. The half-stifled Nasir who sat in the box-body could only wave his hand across a furlong to each friend we overtook.

At Bair we heard from the alarmed Beni Sakhr that the Turks, on the preceding day, had launched suddenly westward from Hesa into Tafileh. Mifleh thought I was mad, or most untimely merry, when I laughed outright at the news which four days sooner would have held up the Azrak expedition: but, now we were started, the enemy might take Aba el Lissan, Guweira, Akaba itself — and welcome! Our formidable talk of advance by Amman had pulled their leg nearly out of socket, and the innocents were out to counter our feint. Each man they sent south was a man, or rather ten men, lost.

In Azrak we found a few servants of Nuri Shaalan, and the Crossley car with a flying officer, an airman, some spares, and a canvas hangar for the two machines protecting our concentration. We spent our first night on their aerodrome and suffered for it A reckless armoured-plated camel-fly, biting like a hornet, occupied our exposed parts till sunset. Then came a blessed relief as the itch grew milder in the evening cool — but the wind changed and hot showers of blinding salty dust swept us for three hours. We lay down and drew covers over our heads, but could not sleep. Each half-hour we had to throw off the sand which threatened to bury us. At midnight the wind ceased. We issued from our sweaty nests and restfully prepared to sleep — when, singing, a cloud of mosquitoes rolled over us: them we fought till dawn.

Consequently, at dawn we changed camp to the height of the Mejaber ridge, a mile west of the water and a hundred feet above the marshes, open to all winds that blew. We rested a while, then put up the hangar, and afterwards went off to bathe in the silver water. We undressed beside the sparkling pools whose pearl-white sides and floor reflected the sky with a moony radiance. Delicious!' I yelled as I splashed in and swain about. But why do you keep on bobbing under water?' asked Winterton a moment later. Then a camel-fly bit him behind, and he understood, and leapt in after me. We swam about, desperately keeping our heads wet, to dissuade the grey swarms: but they were too bold with hunger to be afraid of water, and after five minutes we struggled out, and frantically into our clothes, the blood running from twenty of their dagger-bites.

Nasir stood and laughed at us: and later we journeyed together to the fort, to rest midday there. Ali ibn el Hussein's old corner tower, this only roof in the desert, was cool and peaceful. The wind stirred the palm-fronds outside to a frosty rustling: neglected palms, too northerly for their red date-crop to be good; but the stems were thick with low branches, and threw a pleasant shade. Under them, on his carpet, sat Nasir in the quietness. The grey smoke of his thrown-away cigarette undulated out on the warm air, flickering and fading through the sunspots which shone between the leaves. 'I am happy', said he. We were all happy.

In the afternoon an armoured car came up, completing our necessary defence, though the risk of enemy was minute. Three tribes covered the country between us and the railway. There were only forty horsemen in Deraa, none in Amman: also, as yet the Turks had no news of us. One of their aeroplanes flew over on the morning of the ninth, made a perfunctory circle, and went off, probably without seeing us. Our camp, on its airy summit, gave us splendid observation of the Deraa and Amman roads. By day we

twelve English, with Nasir and his slave, lazed, roaming, bathing at sunset, sight-seeing, thinking; and slept comfortably at night: or rather I did: enjoying the precious interval between the conquered friends of Aba el Lissan and the enemy of next month.

The preciousness would seem to have been partly in myself, for on this march to Damascus (and such it was already in our imagination) my normal balance had changed. I could feel the taut power of Arab excitement behind me. The climax of the preaching of years had come, and a united country was straining towards its historic capital. In confidence that this weapon, tempered by myself, was enough for the utmost of my purpose, I seemed to forget the English companions who stood outside my idea in the shadow of ordinary war. I failed to make them partners of my certainty.

Long after, I heard that Winterton rose each dawn and examined the horizon, lest my carelessness subject us to surprise: and at Umtaiye and Sheikh Saad the British for days thought we were a forlorn hope. Actually I knew (and surely said?) that we were as safe as anyone in the world at war. Because of the pride they had, I never saw their doubt of my plans.

These plans were a feint against Amman and a real cutting of the Deraa railways: further than this we hardly went, for it was ever my habit, while studying alternatives, to keep the stages in solution.

The public often gave credit to Generals because it had seen only the orders and the result: even Foch said (before he commanded troops) that Generals won battles: but no General ever truly thought so. The Syrian campaign of September 1918 was perhaps the most scientifically perfect in English history, one in which force did least and brain most. All the world, and especially those who served them, gave the credit of the victory to Allenby and Bartholomew: but those two would never see it in our light, knowing how their inchoate ideas were discovered in application, and how their men, often not knowing, wrought them.

By our establishment at Azrak the first part of our plan, the feint, was accomplished. We had sent our 'horsemen of St. George', gold sovereigns, by the thousand to the Beni Shakr, purchasing all the barley on their threshing floors: begging them not to mention it, but we would require it for our animals and for our British allies, in a fortnight. Dhiab of Tafileh — that jerky, incomplete hobbledehoy — gossiped the news instantly through to Kerak.

In addition, Feisal warned the Zebn to Bair, for service; and Hornby, now (perhaps a little prematurely) wearing Arab clothes, was active in preparations for a great assault on Madeba. His plan was to move about the nineteenth, when he heard that Allenby was started; his hope being to tie on to Jericho, so that if we failed by Deraa our force could return and reinforce his movement: which would then be, not a feint, but the old second string to our bow. However, the Turks knocked this rather crooked by their advance to Tafileh, and Hornby had to defend Shobek against them.

For our second part, the Deraa business, we had to plan an attack proper. As preliminary we determined to cut the line near Amman, thus preventing Amman's reinforcement of Deraa, and maintaining its conviction that our feint against it was real. It seemed to me that (with Egyptians to do the actual destruction) this preliminary could be undertaken by the Ghurkas, whose detachment would not distract our main body from the main purpose.

This main purpose was to cut the railways in the Hauran and keep them cut for at least a week; and there seemed to be three ways of doing it. The first was to march north of Deraa to the Damascus railway, as on my ride with Tallal in the winter, cut it; and then cross to the Yarmuk railway. The second was to march south of Deraa to the Yarmuk, as with Ali ibn el Hussein in November, 1917. The third was to rush straight at Deraa town.

The third scheme could be undertaken only if the Air Force would promise so heavy a daylight bombing of Deraa station that the effect would be tantamount to artillery bombardment, enabling us to risk an assault against it with our few men. Salmond hoped to do this; but it depended on how many heavy machines he received or assembled in time. Dawnay would fly over to us here with his last word on September the eleventh. Till then we would hold the schemes equal in our judgement.

Of our supports, my bodyguard were the first to arrive, prancing up Wadi Sirhan on September the ninth: happy, fatter than their fat camels, rested, and amused after their month of feasting with the Rualla. They reported Nuri nearly ready, and determined to join us. The contagion of the new tribe's first vigour had quickened in them a Me and spirit which made us jolly.

On the tenth the two aeroplanes came through from Akaba. Murphy and Junor, the pilots, settled down to the horse-flies which gambolled in the air about their juiciness. On the eleventh, the other armoured cars and Joyce drove in, with Stirling, but without Feisal. Marshall had remained to squire him up next day; and things were always safe to go well where Marshall, the capable soul, directed them with a cultivated humour, which was not so much riotous as persistent. Young, Peake, Scott-Higgins and the baggage arrived. Azrak became many-peopled and its lakes were again resonant with voices and the plunge of brown and lean, brown and strong, copper-coloured, or white bodies into the transparent water.

On the eleventh the aeroplane from Palestine arrived. Unfortunately, Dawnay was again ill, and the staff officer who took his place (being raw) had suffered severely from the roughness of the air; and had left behind the notes he was to bring us. His rather concrete assurance, that regard upon his world of the finished Englishman, gave way before these shocks, and the final shock of our naked carelessness out there in the desert, without pickets or watching posts, signallers, sentries or telephones, or any apparent reserves, defence-line, refuges and bases.

So he forgot his most important news, how on September the sixth Allenby, with a new inspiration, had said to Bartholomew, 'Why bother about Messudieh? Let the cavalry go straight to Afuleh, and Nazareth': and so the whole plan had been changed, and an enormous indefinite advance substituted for the fixed objective. We got no notion of this; but by cross-questioning the pilot, whom Salmond had informed, we got a clear statement of the resources in bombing machines. They fell short of our minimum for Deraa; so we asked for just a hamper-bombing of it while we went round it by the north, to make sure of destroying the Damascus line.

The next day Feisal arrived with, behind him, the army of troops, Nuri Said the spick and span, Jemil the gunner, Pisani's coster-like Algerians, and the other items of our 'three men and a boy' effort. The grey flies had now two thousand camels to fatten upon, and in their weariness gave up Junor and his half-drained mechanics.

In the afternoon Nuri Shaalan appeared, with Trad and Khalid, Paris, Durzi, and the Khaffaji. Auda abu Tayi arrived, with Mohammed el Dheilan; also Fahad and Adhub, the

Zebn leaders, with ibn Bani, the chief of the Serahin, and ibn Genj of the Serdiyeh. Majid ibn Sultan, of the Adwan near Salt, rode across to learn the truth of our attack on Amman. Later in the evening there was a rattle of rifle fire in the north, and Talal el Hareidhin, my old companion, came ruffling at the gallop, with forty or fifty mounted peasants behind him. His sanguine face beamed with joy at our long-hoped-for arrival. Druses and town-Syrians, Isawiyeh and Hawarneh swelled the company. Even the barley for our return if the venture failed (a possibility we seldom entertained) began to arrive in a steady file of loads. Everyone was stout and in health. Except myself. The crowd had destroyed my pleasure in Azrak, and I went off down the valley to our remote Ain el Essad and lay there all day in my old lair among the tamarisk, where the wind in the dusty green branches played with such sounds as it made in English trees. It told me I was tired to death of these Arabs; petty incarnate Semites who attained heights and depths beyond our reach, though not beyond our sight. They realized our absolute in their unrestrained capacity for good and evil; and for two years I had profitably shammed to be their companion!

To-day it came to me with finality that my patience as regards the false position I had been led into was finished. A week, two weeks, three, and I would insist upon relief. My nerve had broken; and I would be lucky if the ruin of it could be hidden so long.

Joyce meanwhile shouldered the responsibility which my defection endangered. By his orders Peake, with the Egyptian Camel Corps, now a sapper party, Scott-Higgins, with his fighting Ghurkas, and two armoured cars as insurance, went off to cut the railway by Ifdein.

The scheme was for Scott-Higgins to rush a blockhouse after dark with his nimble Indians — nimble on foot that was to say, for they were like sacks, on camels. Peake was then to demolish until dawn. The cars would cover their retreat eastward in the morning, over the plain, upon which we, the main body, would be marching north from Azrak for Umtaiye, a great pit of rain-water fifteen miles below Deraa, and our advanced base. We gave them Rualla guides and saw them off, hopefully, for this important preliminary.

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Chapter 108

Just at dawn our column marched. Of them one thousand were the Aba el Lissan contingent: three hundred were Nuri Shaalan's nomad horse. He had also two thousand Rualla camel-riders: these we asked him to keep in Wadi Sirhan. It seemed not wise, before the supreme day, to launch so many disturbing Beduin among the villages of Hauran. The horsemen were sheikhs, or sheikhs' servants, men of substance, under control.

Affairs with Nuri and Feisal held me the whole day in Azrak: but Joyce had left me a tender, the Blue Mist, by which on the following morning I overtook the army, and found them breakfasting among the grass-filled roughness of the Giaan el Khunna. The camels, joying to be out of the barren circle of Azrak, were packing their stomachs hastily with this best of food.

Joyce had bad news. Peake had rejoined, reporting failure to reach the line, because of trouble with Arab encampments in the neighbourhood of his proposed demolition. We had set store on breaking the Amman railway, and the check was an offence. I left the car, took a load of gun-cotton, and mounted my camel, to push in advance of the force.

The others made a detour to avoid harsh tongues of lava which ran down westwards towards the railway; but we, Ageyl and others of the well-mounted, cut straight across by a thieves' path to the open plain about the ruined Um el Jemal.

I was thinking hard about the Amman demolition, puzzled as to what expedient would be quickest and best; and the puzzle of these ruins added to my care. There seemed evidence of bluntness of mind in these Roman frontier cities, Um el Jemal, Um el Surab, Um-taiye. Such incongruous buildings, in what was then and now a desert cockpit, accused their builders of insensitiveness; almost of a vulgar assertion of man's right (Roman right) to live unchanged in all his estate. Italianate buildings — only to be paid for by taxing more docile provinces — on these fringes of the world disclosed a prosaic blindness to the transience of politics. A house which so survived the purpose of its builder was a pride too trivial to confer honour upon the mind responsible for its conception.

Um el Jemal seemed aggressive and impudent, and the railway beyond it so tiresomely intact, that they blinded me to an air-battle between Murphy in our Bristol Fighter and an enemy two-seater. The Bristol was badly shot about before the Turk went down in flames. Our army were delighted spectators, but Murphy, finding the damage too great for his few materials at Azrak, went for repair to Palestine in the morning. So our tiny Air Force was reduced to the B.E.12, a type so out of date that it was impossible for fighting, and little use for reconnaissance. This we discovered on the day: meanwhile we were as glad as the army at our man's win.

Umtaiye was reached, just before sunset. The troops were five or six miles behind, so as soon as our beasts had had a drink we struck off to the railway, four miles downhill to the westward, thinking to do a snatch-demolition. The dusk let us get close without alarm, and, to our joy, we found that the going was possible for armoured cars: while just before us were two good bridges.

These points decided me to return in the morning, with cars and more gun-cotton, to abolish the larger, four-arched bridge. Its destruction would give the Turks some days' hard mending, and set us free of Amman all the time of our first Deraa raid; thus the purpose of Peake's frustrated demolition would be filled. It was a happy discovery, and we rode back, quartering the ground while the darkness gathered, to pick the best car road.

As we climbed the last ridge, a high unbroken watershed which hid Umtaiye completely from the railway and its possible watchmen, the fresh north-east wind blew into our faces the warm smell and dust of ten thousand feet; and from the crest the ruins appeared so startlingly unlike themselves three hours before that we pulled up to gasp. The hollow ground was festively spangled with a galaxy of little evening fires, fresh-lighted, still twinkling with the flame reflections in their smoke. About them men were making bread or coffee, while others drove their noisy camels to and from the water.

I rode to the dark camp, the British one, and sat there with Joyce and Winterton and Young, telling them of what we must do first thing in the morning. Beside us lay and smoked the British soldiers, quietly risking themselves on this expedition, because we ordered it. It was a thing typical, as instinct with our national character as that babbling laughing turmoil over there was Arab. In their crises the one race drew in, the other spread.

In the morning, while the army breakfasted, and thawed the dawn-chill from its muscles in the sun, we explained to the Arab leaders in council the fitness of the line for a car-raid; and it was determined that two armoured cars should run down to the bridge and attack it, while the main body continued their march to Tell Arar on the Damascus Railway, four miles north of Deraa. They would take post there, possessing the line, at dawn to-morrow, September the seventeenth; and we with the cars would have finished this bridge and rejoined them before that.

About two in the afternoon, as we drove towards the railway, we had the great sight of a swarm of our bombing planes droning steadily up towards Deraa on their first raid. The place had hitherto been carefully reserved from air attack; so the damage among the unaccustomed, unprotected, unarmed garrison was heavy. The morale of the men suffered as much as the railway traffic: and till our onslaught from the north forced them to see us, all their efforts went into digging bomb-proof shelters.

We lurched across plots of grass, between bars and fields of rough stone, in our two tenders and two armoured cars; but arrived all well behind a last ridge, just this side of our target. On the rise south of the bridge stood a stone blockhouse.

We settled to leave the tenders here, under cover. I transferred myself, with one hundred and fifty pounds of gun-cotton, fused and ready, to one armoured car; intending to drive passively down the valley towards the bridge, till its arches, sheltering us from the fire of the post, enabled me to lay and light the demolition charges. Meanwhile the other, the active fighting car, would engage the blockhouse at short range to cover my operation.

The two cars set out simultaneously. When they saw us the astonished garrison of seven or eight Turks got out of their trenches, and, rifles in hand, advanced upon us in open order: moved either by panic, by misunderstanding, or by an inhuman unmixed courage.

In a few minutes the second car came into action against them: while four other Turks appeared beside the bridge and shot at us. Our machine-gunners ranged, and fired a short burst. One man fell, another was hit: the rest ran a little way, thought better of it, and returned, making friendly signs. We took their rifles, and sent them up valley to the tenders, whose drivers were watching us keenly from their ridge. The blockhouse surrendered at the same moment. We were very content to have taken the bridge, and its section of track, in five minutes without loss.

Joyce rushed down in his tender with more gun-cotton, and hastily we set about the bridge, a pleasant little work, eighty feet long and fifteen feet high, honoured with a shining slab of white marble, bearing the name and titles of Sultan Abd el Hamid. In the drainage holes of the spandrils six small charges were inserted zigzag, and with their explosion all the arches were scientifically shattered; the demolition being a fine example of that finest sort which left the skeleton of its bridge intact indeed, but tottering, so that the repairing enemy had a first labour to destroy the wreck, before they could attempt to rebuild.

When we had finished, enemy patrols were near enough to give us fair excuse for quitting. The few prisoners, whom we valued for Intelligence reasons, were given place on our loads; and we bumped off. Unfortunately we bumped too carelessly in our satisfaction, and at the first watercourse there was a crash beneath my tender. One side

of its box-body tipped downward till the weight came on the tyre at the back wheel, and we stuck.

The front bracket of the near back spring had crystallized through by the chassis, in a sheer break which nothing but a workshop could mend. We gazed in despair, for we were only three hundred yards from the railway, and stood to lose the car, when the enemy came along in ten minutes. A Rolls in the desert was above rubies; and though we had been driving in these for eighteen months, not upon the polished roads of their makers' intention, but across country of the vilest, at speed, day or night, carrying a ton of goods and four or five men up, yet this was our first structural accident in the team of nine.

Rolls, the driver, our strongest and most resourceful man, the ready mechanic, whose skill and advice largely kept our cars in running order, was nearly in tears over the mishap. The knot of us, officers and men, English, Arabs and Turks, crowded round him and watched his face anxiously. As he realized that he, a private, commanded in this emergency, even the stubble on his jaw seemed to harden in sullen determination. At last he said there was just one chance. We might jack up the fallen end of the spring, and wedge it, by baulks upon the running board, in nearly its old position. With the help of ropes the thin angle-irons of the running boards might carry the additional weight.

We had on each car a length of scantling to place between the double tyres if ever the car stuck in sand or mud. Three blocks of this would make the needful height. We had no saw, but drove bullets through it cross-wise till we could snap it off. The Turks heard us firing, and halted cautiously. Joyce heard us and ran back to help. Into his car we piled our load, jacked up the spring and the chassis, lashed in the wooden baulks, let her down on them (they bore splendidly), cranked up, and drove off. Rolls eased her to walking speed at every stone and ditch, while we, prisoners and all, ran beside with cries of encouragement, clearing the track.

In camp we stitched the blocks with captured telegraph wire, and bound them together and to the chassis, and the spring to the chassis; till it looked as strong as possible, and we put back the load. So enduring was the running board that we did the ordinary work with the car for the next three weeks, and took her so into Damascus at the end. Great was Rolls, and great was Royce! They were worth hundreds of men to us in these deserts.

This darning the car delayed us for hours, and at its end we slept in Umtaiye, confident that, by starting before dawn, we should not be much late in meeting Nuri Said on the Damascus line to-morrow: and we could tell him that, for a week, the Amman line was sealed, by loss of a main bridge. This was the side of quickest reinforcement for Deraa, and its death made our rear safe. Even we had helped poor Zeid, behind there in Aba el Lissan: for the Turks massed in Tafileh would hold up that attack till their communications were again open. Our last campaign was beginning auspiciously.

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Chapter 109

Duly, before dawn, we drove upon the track of Stirling's cars, eager to be with them before their fight. Unfortunately the going was not helpful. At first we had a bad descent, and then difficult flats of jagged dolerite, across which we crawled painfully. Later we ran over ploughed slopes. The soil was heavy for the cars, for with summer drought this

red earth cracked a yard deep and two or three inches wide. The five-ton armoured cars were reduced to first speed, and nearly stuck.

We overtook the Arab Army about eight in the morning, on the crest of the slope to the railway, as it was deploying to attack the little bridge-guarding redoubt between us and the mound of Tell Arar whose head overlooked the country-side to Deraa.

Rualla horsemen, led by Trad, dashed down the long slope and over the liquorice-grown bed of the watercourse to the line. Young bounced after them in his Ford. From the ridge we thought the railway taken without a shot, but while we gazed, suddenly from the neglected Turkish post came a vicious spitting fire, and our braves, who had been standing in splendid attitudes on the coveted line (wondering privately what on earth to do next) disappeared.

Nuri Said moved down Pisani's guns and fired a few shots. Then the Rualla and troops rushed the redoubt easily, with only one killed. So the southern ten miles of the Damascus line was freely ours by nine in the morning. It was the only railway to Palestine and Hejaz and I could hardly realize our fortune; hardly believe that our word to Allenby was fulfilled so simply and so soon.

The Arabs streamed down from the ridge in rivers of men, and swarmed upon the round head of Tell Arar, to look over their plain, whose rimmed flatness the early sun speciously relieved, by yet throwing more shadow than light. Our soldiers could see Deraa, Mezerib and Ghazale, the three key-stations, with their naked eyes.

I was seeing further than this: northward to Damascus, the Turkish base, their only link with Constantinople and Germany, now cut off: southward to Amman and Maan and Medina, all cut off: westward to Liman von Sandars isolated in Nazareth: to Nablus: to the Jordan Valley. To-day was September the seventeenth, the promised day, forty-eight hours before Allenby would throw forward his full power. In forty-eight hours the Turks might decide to change their dispositions to meet our new danger; but they could not change them before Allenby struck. Bartholomew had said, Tell me if he will be in his Auja line the day before we start, and I will tell you if we will win'. Well, he was; so we would win. The question was by how much.

I wanted the whole line destroyed in a moment: but things seemed to have stopped. The army had done its share: Nuri Said was posting machine-guns about the Arar mound to keep back any sortie from Deraa: but why was there no demolition going on? I rushed down, to find Peake's Egyptians making breakfast. It was like Drake's game of bowls, and I fell dumb with admiration.

However, in an hour they were mustered for their rhythmic demolition by numbers; and already the French gunners, who also carried gun-cotton, had descended with intention upon the near bridge. They were not very good, but at the second try did it some hurt.

From the head of Tell Arar, before the mirage had begun to dance, we examined Deraa carefully through my strong glass, wanting to see what the Turks had in store for us this day. The first discovery was disturbing. Their aerodrome was alive with gangs pulling machine after machine into the open. I could count eight or nine lined up. Otherwise things were as we expected. Some few infantry were doubling out into the defence-position, and their guns were being fired towards us: but we were four miles off. Locomotives were getting up steam: but the trains were unarmoured. Behind us,

towards Damascus, the country lay still as a map. From Mezerib on our right, there was no movement. We held the initiative.

Our hope was to fire six hundred charges, tulip-fashion, putting out of commission six kilometres of rail. Tulips had been invented by Peake and myself for this occasion. Thirty ounces of gun-cotton were planted beneath the centre of the central sleeper of each ten-metre section of the track. The sleepers were steel, and their box-shape left an air-chamber which the gas expansion filled, to blow the middle of the sleeper upward. If the charge was properly laid, the metal did not snap, but humped itself, bud-like, two feet in the air. The lift of it pulled the rails three inches up: the drag of it pulled them six inches together; and, as the chairs gripped the bottom flanges, warped them inward seriously. The triple distortion put them beyond repair. Three or five sleepers would be likewise ruined, and a trench driven across the earthwork: all this with one charge, fired by a fuse, so short that the first, blowing off while the third was being lighted, cast its debris safely overhead.

Six hundred such charges would take the Turks a fair week to mend. This would be a generous reading of Allenby's 'three men and a boy with pistols'. I turned to go back to the troops, and at that moment two things happened. Peake fired his first charge, like a poplar-tree of black smoke, with a low following report; and the first Turkish machine got up and came for us. Nuri Said and I fitted admirably under an outcrop of rock, fissured into deep natural trenches, on the hill's southern face. There we waited coolly for the bomb: but it was only a reconnaissance machine, a Pfalz, which studied us, and returned to Deraa with its news.

Bad news it must have been, for three two-seaters, and four scouts and an old yellow-bellied Albatros got up in quick succession, and circled over us, dropping bombs, or diving at us with machine-gun fire. Nuri put his Hotchkiss gunners in the rock cracks, and rattled back at them. Pisani cocked up his four mountain guns, and let fly some optimistic shrapnel. This disturbed the enemy, who circled off, and came back much higher. Their aim became uncertain.

We scattered out the troops and camels, while the irregulars scattered themselves. To open into the thinnest target was our only hope of safety, as the plain had not overhead cover for a rabbit; and our hearts misgave us when we saw what thousands of men we had, dotted out below. It was strange to stand on the hill-top looking at these two rolling square miles, liberally spread with men and animals, and bursting out irregularly with lazy silent bulbs of smoke where bombs dropped (seemingly quite apart from their thunder) or with sprays of dust where machine-gun groups lashed down.

Things looked and sounded hot, but the Egyptians went on working as methodically as they had eaten. Four parties dug in tulips, while Peake and one of his officers lit each series as it was laid. The two slabs of gun-cotton in a tulip-charge were not enough to make a showy explosion, and the aeroplanes seemed not to see what was going on: at least they did not wash them particularly with bombs; and as the demolition proceeded, the party drew gradually out of the danger-area into the quiet landscape to the north. We traced their progress by the degradation of the telegraph. In virgin parts its poles stood trimly, drilled by the taut wire: but behind Peake they leaned and tottered anyhow, or fell.

Nuri Said, Joyce and myself met in council, and pondered how to get at the Yarmuk section of the Palestine line to top off our cutting of the Damascus and Hejaz Railways. In view of the reported opposition there we must take nearly all our men, which seemed

hardly wise under such constant air observation. For one thing, the bombs might hurt us badly on the march across the open plain; and, for another, Peake's demolition party would be at the mercy of Deraa if the Turks plucked up the courage to sally. For the moment they were fearful: but time might make them brave.

While we hesitated, things were marvellously solved. Junor, the pilot of the B.E.12 machine, now alone at Azrak, had heard from the disabled Murphy of the enemy machines about Deraa, and in his own mind decided to take the Bristol Fighter's place, and carry out the air programme. So when things were at their thickest with us he suddenly sailed into the circus.

We watched with mixed feelings, for his hopelessly old-fashioned machine made him cold meat for any one of the enemy scouts or two-seaters: but at first he astonished them, as he rattled in with his two guns. They scattered for a careful look at this unexpected opponent. He flew westward across the line, and they went after in pursuit, with that amiable weakness of aircraft for a hostile machine, however important the ground target.

We were left in perfect peace. Nuri caught at the lull to collect three hundred and fifty regulars, with two of Pisani's guns; and hurried them over the saddle behind Tell Arar, on the first stage of their march to Mezerib. If the aeroplanes gave us a half-hour's law, they would probably notice neither the lessened numbers by the mound, nor the scattered groups making along every slope and hollow across the stubble westward. This cultivated land had a quilt-work appearance from the air: also the ground was tall with maize stalks, and thistles grew saddle-high about it in great fields.

We sent the peasantry after the soldiers, and half an hour later I was calling up my bodyguard that we might get to Mezerib before the others, when again we heard the drone of engines; and, to our astonishment, Junor reappeared, still alive, though attended on three sides by enemy machines, spitting bullets. He was twisting and slipping splendidly, firing back. Their very numbers hindered them but of course the affair could have only one ending.

In the faint hope that he might get down intact we rushed towards the railway where was a strip of ground, not too boulder-strewn. Everyone helped to clear it at speed, while Junor was being driven lower. He threw us a message to say his petrol was finished. We worked feverishly for five minutes, and then put out a landing-signal. He dived at it, but as he did so the wind flawed and blew across at a sharp angle. The cleared strip was too little in any case. He took ground beautifully, but the wind puffed across once more. His under-carriage went, and the plane turned over in the rough.

We rushed up to rescue, but Junor was out, with no more hurt than a cut on the chin. He took off his Lewis gun, and the Vickers, and the drums of tracer ammunition for them. We threw everything into Young's Ford, and fled, as one of the Turkish two-seaters dived viciously and dropped a bomb by the wreck.

Junor five minutes later was asking for another job. Joyce gave him a Ford for himself, and he ran boldly down the line till near Deraa, and blew a gap in the rails there, before the Turks saw him. They found such zeal excessive, and opened on him with their guns: but he rattled away again in his Ford, unhurt for the third time.

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Chapter 110

My bodyguard waited in two long lines on the hill-side. Joyce was staying at Tell Arar as covering force, with a hundred of Nuri Said's men, the Rualla, the Ghurkas and the cars; while we slipped across to break the Palestine Railway. My party would look like Beduins, so I determined to move openly to Mezerib by the quickest course, for we were very late.

Unfortunately we drew enemy attention. An aeroplane crawled over us, dropping bombs: one, two, three, misses: the fourth into our midst. Two of my men went down. Their camels, in bleeding masses, struggled on the ground. The men had not a scratch, and leaped up behind two of their friends. Another machine floated past us, its engine cut off. Two more bombs, and a shock which spun my camel round, and knocked me half out of the saddle with a burning numbness in my right elbow. I felt I was hard hit, and began to cry for the pity of it: to be put out just when another day's control would have meant a vast success. The blood was running down my arm: perhaps if I did not look at it I might carry on as if I were unhurt.

My camel swung to a spatter of machine-gun bullets. I clutched at the pommel, and found my damaged arm there and efficient. I had judged it blown off. My left hand threw the cloak aside and explored for the wound — to feel only a very hot little splinter of metal, too light to do real harm after driving through the massed folds of my cloak. The trifle showed how much my nerve was on edge. Curiously enough it was the first time I had been hit from the air.

We opened out and rode greatly, knowing the ground by heart; checking only to tell the young peasants we met that the work was now at Mezerib. The field-paths were full of these fellows, pouring out afoot from every village to help us. They were very willing: but our eyes had rested so long on the brown leanness of desert men that these gay village lads with their flushed faces, clustering hair, and plump pale arms and legs seemed like girls. They had kilted up their gowns above the knee for fast work: and the more active raced beside us through the fields, chaffing back my veterans.

As we reached Mezerib, Durzi ibn Dughmi met us, with news that Nuri Said's soldiers were only two miles back. We watered our camels, and drank deeply ourselves, for it had been a long, hot day, and was not ended. Then from behind the old fort we looked over the lake, and saw movement in the French railway station.

Some of the white-legged fellows told us that the Turks held it in force. However the approaches were too tempting. Abdulla led our charge, for my days of adventure were ended, with the sluggard excuse that my skin must be kept for a justifying emergency. Otherwise I wanted to enter Damascus. This job was too easy. Abdulla found grain: also flour; and some little booty of weapons, horses, ornaments. These excited my hangers-on. New adherents came running across the grass, like flies to honey. Tallal arrived at his constant gallop. We passed the stream, and walked together up the far bank knee-deep in weeds till we saw the Turkish station three hundred yards in front. We might capture this before attacking the great bridge below Tell el Shehab. Tallal advanced carelessly. Turks showed themselves to right and left. 'It's all right,' said he, 'I know the stationmaster': but when we were two hundred yards away, twenty rifles fired a shocking volley at us. We dropped unhurt into the weeds (nearly all of them thistles), and crawled gingerly back, Tallal swearing.

My men heard him, or the shots, and came streaming up from the river: but we returned them, fearing a machine-gun in the station buildings. Nuri Said was due. He arrived with Nasir, and we considered the business. Nuri pointed out that delay at Mezerib might

lose us the bridge, a greater objective. I agreed, but thought this bird in hand might suffice, since Peake's main line demolition would stand for a week, and the week's end bring a new situation.

So Pisani unfolded his willing guns and smashed in a few rounds of point-blank high explosive. Under their cover, with our twenty machine-guns making a roof overhead, Nuri walked forward, gloved and sworded, to receive the surrender of the forty soldiers left alive.

Upon this most rich station hundreds of Haurani peasants hurled themselves in frenzy, plundering. Men, women and children fought like dogs over every object. Doors and windows, door-frames and window-frames, even steps of the stairs, were carried off. One hopeful blew in the safe and found postage stamps inside. Others smashed open the long range of waggons in the siding, to find all manner of goods. Tons were carried off. Yet more were strewn in wreckage on the ground.

Young and I cut the telegraph, here an important network of trunk and local lines, indeed the Palestine army's main link with their homeland. It was pleasant to imagine Linan von Sandars' fresh curse, in Nazareth, as each severed wire tanged back from the clippers. We did them slowly, with ceremony, to draw out the indignation. The Turks' hopeless lack of initiative made their army a 'directed' one, so that by destroying the telegraphs we went far towards turning them into a leaderless mob. After the telegraph we blew in the points, and planted tulips: not very many, but enough to annoy. While we worked a light engine came down the line from Deraa on patrol. The bang and dust-clouds of our tulips perturbed it. It withdrew discreetly. Later an aeroplane visited us.

Among the captured rolling stock, on platform trucks, were two lorries crammed with delicacies for some German canteen. The Arabs, distrusting tins and bottles, had spoiled nearly everything: but we got some soups and meat, and later Nuri Said gave us bottled asparagus. He had found an Arab prizing open the case and had cried 'pigs' bones' at him in horror when the contents came to light. The peasant spat and dropped it, and Nuri quickly stuffed all he could into his saddle-bags.

The lorries had huge petrol tanks. Beyond them were some trucks of firewood. We set the whole afire at sunset, when the plundering was finished, and the troops and tribesmen had fallen back to the soft grass by the outlet from the lake.

The splendid blaze spreading along the line of waggons illuminated our evening meal. The wood burned with a solid glare, and the fiery tongues and bursts of the petrol went towering up, higher than the watertanks. We let the men make bread and sup and rest, before a night-attempt on the Shehab bridge, which lay three miles to the westward. We had meant to attack at dark, but the wish for food stopped us, and then we had swarms of visitors, for our beacon-light advertised us over half Hauran.

Visitors were our eyes, and had to be welcomed. My business was to see every one with news, and let him talk himself out to me, afterwards arranging and combining the truth of these points into a complete picture in my mind. Complete, because it gave me certainty of judgement: but it was not conscious nor logical, for my informants were so many that they informed me to distraction, and my single mind bent under all its claims.

Men came pouring down from the north on horse, on camel, and on foot, hundreds and hundreds of them in a terrible grandeur of enthusiasm, thinking this was the final occupation of the country, and that Nasir would seal his victory by taking Deraa in the night Even the magistrates of Deraa came to open us their town. By acceding we should

hold the water supply of the railway station, which must inevitably yield: yet later, if the ruin of the Turkish army came but slowly, we might be forced out again, and lose the plainsmen between Deraa and Damascus, in whose hands our final victory lay. A nice calculation, if hardly a fresh one, but on the whole the arguments were still against taking Deraa. Again we had to put off our friends with excuses within their comprehension.

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Chapter 111

Slow work; and when at last we were ready a new visitor appeared, the boy-chief of Tell el Shehab. His village was the key to the bridge. He described the position; the large guard; how it was placed. Obviously the problem was harder than we had believed, if his tale was true. We doubted it, for his just-dead father had been hostile, and the son sounded too suddenly devoted to our cause. However, he finished by suggesting that he return after an hour with the officer commanding the garrison, a friend of his. We sent him off to bring his Turk, telling our waiting men to lie down for another brief rest.

Soon the boy was back with a captain, an Armenian, anxious to harm his government in any way he could. Also he was very nervous. We had hard work to assure him of our enlightenment. His subalterns, he said, were loyal Turks, and some of the non-commissioned officers. He proposed we move close to the village, and lie there secretly, while three or four of our lustiest men hid in his room. He would call his subordinates one by one to see him; and, as each entered, our ambush might pinion him.

This sounded in the proper descent from books of adventure, and we agreed enthusiastically. It was nine at night. At eleven precisely we would line up round the village and wait for the Sheikh to show our strong men to the Commandant's house. The two conspirators departed, content, while we woke up our army, asleep with the sleep of exhaustion beside their loaded camels. It was pitchy dark.

My bodyguard prepared bridge-cutting charges of gelatine. I filled my pockets with detonators. Nasir sent men to each section of the Camel Corps to tell them of the coming adventure, that they might work themselves up to the height of it: and to ensure their mounting quietly, without the disaster of a roaring camel. They played up. In a long double line our force crept down a winding path, beside an irrigation ditch, on the crest of the dividing ridge. If there was treachery before us, this bare road would be a deathtrap, without issue to right or left, narrow, tortuous, and slippery with the ditch-water. So Nasir and I went first with our men, their trained ears attentive to every sound, their eyes keeping constant guard. In front of us was the waterfall, whose burdening roar had given its character to that unforgettable night with Ali ibn el Hussein when we had attempted this bridge from the other wall of the ravine. Only to-night we were nearer, so that the noise flooded up oppressively and filled our ears.

We crept very slowly and carefully now, soundless on our bare feet, while behind us the heavier soldiery snaked along, holding their breath. They also were soundless, for camels moved always stilly at night, and we had packed the equipment not to tap, the saddles not to creak. Their quietness made the dark darker, and deepened the menace of those whispering valleys either side. Waves of dank air from the river met us, chilly in our faces; and then Rahail came down swiftly from the left and caught my arm, pointing to a slow column of white smoke rising from the valley.

We ran to the edge of the descent, and peered over: but the depth was grey with mist risen off the water, and we saw only dimness and this pale vapour spiring from the level fog bank. Somewhere down there was the railway, and we stopped the march, afraid lest this be the suspected trap. Three of us went foot by foot down the slippery hillside till we could hear voices. Then suddenly the smoke broke and shifted, with the panting of an opened throttle, and afterwards the squealing of brakes as an engine came again to a standstill. There must be a long train waiting beneath; reassured, we marched again to the very spur below the village.

We extended in line across its neck, and waited five minutes, ten minutes. They passed slowly. The murk night before moonrise was hushing in its solidity, and would have compelled patience on our restless fellows, without the added warnings of the dogs, and the intermittent ringing challenge of sentries about the bridge. At length we let the men slip quietly from their camels to the ground, and sat wondering at the delay, and the Turks' watchfulness, and the meaning of that silent train standing below us in the valley. Our woollen cloaks got stiff and heavy with the mist, and we shivered.

After a long while a lighter speck came through the dark. It was the boy sheikh, holding his brown cloak open to show us his white shirt like a flag. He whispered that his plan had failed. A train (this one in the ravine) had just arrived with a German colonel and the German and Turk reserves from Afuleh, sent up by Liman von Sandars, to rescue panic-stricken Deraa.

They had put the little Armenian under arrest for being absent from his post. There were machine-guns galore, and sentries patrolling the approaches with ceaseless energy. In fact, there was a strong picket on the path, not a hundred yards from where we sat: the oddity of our joint state made me laugh, though quietly.

Nuri Said offered to take the place by main force. We had bombs enough, and pistol flares; numbers and preparedness would be on our side. It was a fair chance: but I was at the game of reckoning the value of the objective in terms of life, and as usual finding it too dear. Of course, most things done in war were too dear, and we should have followed good example by going in and going through with it. But I was secretly and disclaimedly proud of the planning of our campaigns: so I told Nuri that I voted against it. We had today twice cut the Damascus-Palestine railway; and the bringing here of the Afuleh garrison was a third benefit to Allenby. Our bond had been most heavily honoured.

Nuri, after a moment's thought agreed. We said good-night to the lad who had honestly tried to do so much for us. We passed down the lines, whispering to each man to lead back in silence. Then we sat in a group with our rifles (mine Enver's gold-inscribed Lee-En-field trophy from the Dardanelles, given by him to Feisal years ago) waiting till our men should be beyond the danger zone.

Oddly enough this was the hardest moment of the night. Now the work was over we could scarcely resist the temptation to rouse the spoil-sport Germans out. It would have been so easy to have cracked off a Very light into their bivouac; and the solemn men would have turned out in ludicrous hurry, and shot hard into the bare, misty hill-side silent at their feet. The identical notion came independently to Nasir, Nuri Said, and myself. We blurted it out together, and each promptly felt ashamed that the others had been as childish. By mutual cautions we managed to keep our respectability. At Mezerib, after midnight, we felt that something must be done to avenge the forfeited bridge. So two parties of my fellows, with guides of Tallal's men, went beyond Shehab, and cut the

line twice behind it on deserted gradients. Their echoing explosions gave the German detachment a bad night. Flares were lit and the neighbourhood searched for some brewing attack.

We were glad to give them as tiresome a night as ours, for then they too would be languid in the morning. Our friends were still coming in every minute, to lass our hands and swear eternal fealty. Their wiry ponies threaded our misted camp, between the hundreds of sleeping men, and the uneasy camels whose great jaws were munching all night at the windy grass swallowed in the day hours.

Before dawn Pisani's other guns and the rest of Nuri Said's troops arrived from Tell Arar. We had written to Joyce that on the morrow we would return southward, by Nisib, to complete the circle of Deraa. I suggested that he move straight back to Umtaiye and there wait for us: for it, with its abundant water, splendid pasture, and equi-distance from Deraa and Jebel Druse and the Rualla Desert, seemed an ideal place in which we might rally and wait news of Allenby's fortune. By holding Umtaiye we as good as cut off the Turkish fourth army of beyond Jordan (our special bird) from Damascus: and were in place quickly to renew our main-line demolitions, whenever the enemy had nearly set them right.

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Chapter 112

Reluctantly we pulled ourselves together for another day of effort, called up the army, and moved in a huge straggle through Mezerib station. Our fires had burned out, and the place stood dishevelled. Young and myself leisurely laid tulips, while the troops melted into broken ground towards Remthe, to be out of sight of both Deraa and Shehab. Turkish aeroplanes were humming overhead, looking for us, so we sent our peasants back through Mezerib for their villages. Consequently, the airmen reported that we were very numerous, possibly eight or nine thousand strong, and that our centrifugal movements seemed to be directed towards every direction at once.

To increase their wonderment, the French gunners' long-fused charge blew up the water-tower at Mezerib, loudly, hours after we had passed. The Germans were marching out of Shehab for Deraa, at the moment, and the inexplicable shock sent these humourless ones back there on guard till late afternoon.

Meanwhile we were far away, plodding steadily towards Nisib, whose hill-top we reached about four in the afternoon. We gave the mounted infantry a short rest, while we moved our gunners and machine-guns to the crest of the first ridge, from which the ground fell away hollowly to the railway station.

We posted the guns there in shelter, and asked them to open deliberately upon the station buildings at two thousand yards. Pisani's sections worked in emulation so that, before long, ragged holes appeared in the roofs and sheds. At the same time we pushed our machine-gunners forward on the left, to fire long bursts against the trenches, which returned a hot obstinate fire. However our troops had natural shelter and the advantage of the afternoon sun behind their backs. So we suffered no hurt. Nor did the enemy. Of course, all this was just a game, and the capture of the station not in our plan. Our real objective was the great bridge north of the village. The ridge below our feet curved out in a long horn to this work, serving as one bank of the valley which it was built to span. The village stood on the other bank. The Turks held the bridge by means of a small

redoubt, and maintained touch with it by riflemen posted in the village under cover of its walls.

We turned two of Pisani's guns and six machine-guns on the small but deeply-dug bridge-post, hoping to force its defenders out. Five machine-guns directed their fire on the village. In fifteen minutes its elders were out with us, very much perturbed. Nuri put, as the condition of cease-fire, their instant ejectment of the Turks from the houses. They promised. So station and bridge were divided.

We redoubled against these. The firing from the four wings became violent, thanks to our twenty-five machine-guns, the Turks also being plentifully supplied. At last we put all four of Pisani's guns against the redoubt; and, after a few salvoes, thought we saw its guard slipping from their battered trenches through the bridge into cover of the railway embankment

This embankment was twenty feet high. If the bridge-guard chose to defend their bridge through its arches, they would be in a costly position. However, we reckoned that the attraction of their fellows in the station would draw them away. I told off the half of my bodyguard, carrying explosives, to move along the machine-gun crest till within a stone's throw of the redoubt.

It was a noble evening, yellow, mild and indescribably peaceful; a foil to our incessant cannonade. The declining light shone down the angle of the ridges, its soft rays modelling them and their least contour in a delicate complexity of planes. Then the sun sank another second, and the surface became shadow, out of which for a moment there rose, starkly, the innumerable flints strewing it; each western (reflecting) facet tipped like a black diamond with flame.

A very unfit afternoon for dying, seemed to think my men: for the first time their nerves failed, and they refused to quit their shelter for the enemy's clattering bullets. They were tired, and their camels so marched out they could only walk: also they knew that one bullet in the blasting gelatine would send them sky-high.

A try to stir them by jest failed; at last I cast them off; choosing only Hemeid, the young and timid one amongst them, to come up with me on the hill-top. He shook like a man in a sick dream, but followed quietly. We rode down the ridge to its furthest edge, to have a close look at the bridge.

Nuri Said was there, sucking his briar pipe, and cheering the gunners, who were keeping a barrage over the darkening roads between the bridge, the village and the station. Nuri, being happy, propounded to me plans of attack and alternative assaults against this station, which we did not wish to assault. We argued theory for ten minutes on the skyline, with Hemeid wincing in his saddle as bullets, some of which were overs, spat past us, or ricochets hummed like slow, angry bees beside our ears. The few proper hits splashed loudly into the flints, kicking up a chalk-dust which hung transparently for a moment in the reflected light.

Nuri agreed to cover my movements to the bridge as well as he could. Then I turned Hemeid back with my camel, to tell the rest that I would hurt them worse than bullets if they did not follow him across the danger-zone to meet me: for I meant to walk round till I could be sure the bridge-post was empty.

While they hesitated, there came up Abdulla, the imperturbable, improvident, adventurous, who feared nothing; and the Zaagi. They, mad with fury that I had been let

down, dashed at the shrinkers, who pounded over the shoulder with only six bullet-scratches. The redoubt was indeed abandoned: so we dismounted, and signalled Nuri to cease fire. In the silence we crept discreetly through the bridge-arches, and found them also evacuated.

Hurriedly we piled gun-cotton against the piers, which were about five feet thick and twenty-five feet high; a good bridge, my seventy-ninth, and strategically most critical, since we were going to live opposite it at Umtaiye until Allenby came forward and relieved us. So I had determined to leave not a stone of it in place.

Nuri meanwhile was hurrying the infantry, gunners and machine-gunners down in the thickening light, towards the line, with orders to get a mile beyond into the desert, form up into column and wait.

Yet the passing of so many camels over the track must take tediously long. We sat and chafed under the bridge, matches in hand, to light at once (despite the troops) if there was an alarm. Fortunately everything went well, and after an hour Nuri gave me my signal. Half a minute later (my preference for six-inch fuses!) just as I tumbled into the Turkish redoubt, the eight hundred pounds of stuff exploded in one burst, and the black air became sibilant with flying stones. The explosion was numbing from my twenty yards, and must have been heard half-way to Damascus.

Nuri, in great distress, sought me out. He had given the 'all clear' signal before learning that one company of mounted infantry was missing. Fortunately my guards were aching for redeeming service. Talal el Hareidhin took them with him up the hills, while Nuri and I stood by the yawning pit which had been the bridge, and flashed an electric torch, to give them a fixed point for their return.

Mahmud came back in half an hour triumphantly leading the lost unit. We fired shots to recall the other searchers, and then rode two or three miles into the open towards Umtaiye. The going became very broken, over moraines of slipping dolerite: so we gladly called a halt, and lay down in our ranks for an earned sleep.

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Chapter 113

However, it seemed that Nasir and I were to lose the habit of sleeping. Our noise at Nisib had proclaimed us as widely as the flames of Mezerib. Hardly were we still when visitors came streaming in from three sides to discuss the latest events. It was being rumoured that we were raiding, and not occupying; that later we would run away, as had the British from Salt, leaving our local friends to pay the bills.

The night, for hour after hour, was broken by these new-comers challenging round our bivouacs, crying their way to us like lost souls; and, peasant-fashion, slobbering over our hands with protestations that we were their highest lords and they our deepest servants. Perhaps the reception of them fell short of our usual standard; but, in revenge, they were applying the torture of keeping us awake, uneasily awake. We had been at strain for three days and nights; thinking, ordering and executing; and now, on our road to rest, it was bitter to play away this fourth night also, at the old lack-lustre, dubious game of making friends.

And their shaken morale impressed us worse and worse, till Nasir drew me aside and whispered that clearly there existed a focus of discontent in some centre near. I loosed out my peasant bodyguards to mix with the villagers and find the truth; and from their

reports it seemed that the cause of distrust lay in the first settlement, at Taiyibe, which had been shaken by the return of Joyce's armoured cars yesterday, by some chance incidents, and by a just fear that they were the spot most exposed in our retreat.

I called Aziz, and we rode straight to Taiyibe, over rough stretches of lava, trackless, and piled across with walls of broken stone. In the head-man's hut sat the conclave which infected our visitors. They were debating whom to send to implore mercy from the Turks; when we walked in unannounced. Our single coming abashed them, in its assumption of supreme security. We talked irrelevantly an hour, of crops and farmyard prices, and drank some coffee: then rose to go. Behind us the babble broke out again; but now their inconstant spirits had veered to what seemed our stronger wind, and they sent no word to the enemy; though next day they were bombed and shelled for such stubborn complicity with us.

We got back before dawn, and stretched out to sleep: when there came a loud boom from the railway, and a shell shattered beyond our sleeping host. The Turks had sent down an armoured train mounting a field-gun. By myself I would have chanced its aim, for my sleep had been just long enough to make me rage for more: but the army had slept six hours and was moving.

We hurried across the horrible going. An aeroplane came over, and circled round to help the gunners. Shells began to keep accurate pace with our line of march. We doubled our speed, and broke into a ragged procession of very open order. The directing aeroplane faltered suddenly, swerved aside towards the line, and seemed to land. The gun put in one more lucky shot, which killed two camels; but for the rest it lost accuracy, and after about fifty shots we drew out of range. It began to punish Taiyibe.

Joyce, at Umtaiye, had been roused by the shooting, and came out to welcome us. Behind his tall figure the ruins were crested by a motley band, samples from every village and tribe in the Hauran, come to do homage and offer at least lip-service. To Nasir's tired disgust I left these to him, while I went off with Joyce and Winterton, telling them of the landed aeroplane, and suggesting that an armoured car beat it up at home. Just then two more enemy machines appeared and landed in about the same place.

However breakfast, our first for some while, was getting ready. So we sat down and Joyce related how the men of Taiyibe had fired at him as he passed by, presumably to show their opinion of strangers who stirred up a hornet's nest of Turks, and then hopped it.

Breakfast ended. We called for a volunteer car to investigate the enemy aerodrome. Everybody came forward with a silent goodwill and readiness which caught me by the throat. Finally Joyce chose two cars — one for Junor and one for me — and we drove for five miles to the valley in whose mouth the planes had seemed to land.

We silenced the cars and crept down its course. When about two thousand yards from the railway, it bent round into a flat meadow, by whose further side stood three machines. This was magnificent, and we leaped forward, to meet a deep ditch with straight banks of cracking earth, quite impassable.

We raced frantically along it, by a diagonal route, till we were within twelve hundred yards. As we stopped two of the aeroplanes started. We opened fire, searching the range by dust spurts, but already they had run their distance and were off, swaying and clattering up across the sky over our heads.

The third engine was sulky. Its pilot and observer savagely pulled the propeller round, while we ranged nearer. Finally they leaped into the railway ditch as we put bullet after bullet into the fuselage till it danced under the rain. We fired fifteen hundred bullets at our target (they burned it in the afternoon) and then turned home.

Unfortunately the two escaped machines had had time to go to Deraa, and return, feeling spiteful. One was not clever and dropped his four bombs from a height, missing us widely. The other swooped low, placing one bomb each time with the utmost care. We crept on defencelessly, slowly, among the stones, feeling like sardines in a doomed tin, as the bombs fell closer. One sent a shower of small stuff through the driving slit of the car, but only cut our knuckles. One tore off a front tyre and nearly lurched the car over.

Of all danger give me the solitary sort. However we reached Umtaiye well and reported success to Joyce. We had proved to the Turks that that aerodrome was not fit for use; and Deraa lay equally open to car attack. Later I lay in the shadow of a car and slept; all the Arabs in the desert, and the Turkish aeroplanes which came and bombed us, having no effect upon my peace. In the clash of events men became feverishly tireless: but to-day we had finished our first round, fortunately; and it was necessary that I rest, to clear my mind about our next moves. As usual when I lay down I dropped asleep, and slept till afternoon.

Strategically, our business was to hold on to Umtaiye, which gave us command at will of Deraa's three railways. If we held it another week we should strangle the Turkish armies, however little Allenby did. Yet tactically Umtaiye was a dangerous place. An inferior force composed exclusively of regulars, without a guerilla screen, could not safely hold it: yet to that we should shortly be reduced, if our air helplessness continued patent.

The Turks had at least nine machines. We were camped twelve miles from their aerodrome, in the open desert, about the only possible water-supply, with great herds of camels and many horses necessarily grazing round us. The Turks' beginning of bombing had been enough to disquiet the irregulars who were our eyes and ears. Soon they would break up and go home, and our usefulness be ended: Taiyibe, too, that first village which covered us from Deraa — it lay defenceless and quivering under repeated attack. If we were to remain in Umtaiye, Taiyibe must be content with us.

Clearly our first duty was to get air reinforcement from Allenby, who had arranged to send a news machine to Azrak on the day after to-morrow. I judged it would be profitable for me to go across and talk with him. I could be back on the twenty-second. Umtaiye would hold out so long, for we might always fox the aeroplanes a while by moving to Um el Surab, the next Roman village.

Whether at Umtaiye or Um el Surab, to be safe we must keep the initiative. The Deraa side was temporarily closed by the suspicion of the peasants: there remained the Hejaz line. The bridge at Kilometre 149 was nearly mended. We must smash it again, and smash another to the south, to deny the repair trains access to it. An effort by Winterton yesterday showed that the first was a matter for troops and guns. The second was objective for a raid. I went across to see if my bodyguard could do it with me on our way to Azrak.

Something was wrong. They were red-eyed, hesitant, trembling: at last I understood that while I was away in the morning the Zaagi, Abdulla and their other chiefs had gone

mercilessly through the tally of those who flinched at Nisib. It was their right, for since Tafileh I had left its discipline to the company itself; but the effect for the moment was to make them useless for my purpose. Such punishment was preceded by fear: but the memory of its infliction provoked wilder lawlessness among the stronger victims, and a likelihood of crimes of violence among the witnesses. They would have been dangerous to me, to themselves, or to the enemy, as whim and opportunity provided, had we gone that night into action.

So, instead, I suggested to Joyce that the Egyptians and Ghurkas return to Akaba; proposing further that he lend me an armoured car to go down with them to the railway, their first stage, and do what could be done. We went up to Nasir and Nuri Said, and told them I would be back on the twenty-second with fighting machines, to deliver us from air-scouts and bombing. Meanwhile we would salve Taiyibe with money for the Turkish damage, and Joyce would make landing-grounds, here and at Um el Surab, against my return with our air reinforcements.

The demolition of that night was a fantastic muddle. We moved at sunset to an open valley, three easy miles from the railway. Trouble might threaten from Mafrak station. My armoured car, with Junor attendant in his Ford, would guard that side against hostile advance. The Egyptians would move direct to the line, and fire their charges.

My guiding fell through. We wandered for three hours in a maze of valleys, not able to find the railway, nor the Egyptians, nor our starting-point. At last we saw a light and drove for it, to find ourselves in front of Mafrak. We turned back to get into place, and heard the clank of an engine running northward out of the station. We chased its intermittent flame, hoping to catch it between us and the broken bridge: but before we overtook it there came flashes and explosions far up, as Peake fired his thirty charges.

Some mounted men galloped headlong past us, southward. We fired at them, and then the patrolling train returned, backing at its best speed from Peake's danger. We ran alongside, and opened on the tracks with our Vickers, while Junor sent a green shower of tracer bullets from his Lewis across the dark. Above our shooting and the noise of the engine we heard the Turks howling with terror of this luminous attack. They fired back raggedly, but as they did so the big car suddenly sneezed and stood still. A bullet had pierced the unarmoured end of the petrol tank, the only unarmoured spot of all our team of cars. It took us an hour to plug the leak.

Then we drove along the silent line to the twisted rails and gaping culverts, but could not find our friends. So we drew a mile back, and there at last I had my sleep out, three perfect hours of it before the dawn. I awoke fresh, and recognized our place. Probably it was only the fifth sleepless night which had made my wits woolly. We pushed forward, passing the Egyptians with the Ghurkas, and reached Azrak in the early afternoon. There were Feisal and Nuri Shaalan, eager to hear our news. We explained particularly; and then I went over to Marshall, in the temporary hospital. He had all our badly-wounded in his quiet care: but they were fewer than he had expected, so he was able to spare me a stretcher for my bed.

At dawn Joyce unexpectedly arrived. He had made up his mind that in this lull it was his duty to go down to Aba el Lissan to help Zeid and Jaafar before Maan, and to press forward Hornby among the Beni Sakhr. Then the plane from Palestine arrived, and we heard the amazing first chronicle of Allenby's victory. He had smashed and burst through and driven the Turks inconceivably. The face of our war was changed, and we

gave hurried word of it to Feisal, with counsels of the general revolt to take profit of the situation. An hour later I was safely in Palestine.

From Ramleh the Air Force gave me a car up to Headquarters; and there I found the great man unmoved, except for the light in his eye as Bols bustled in every fifteen minutes, with news of some wider success. Allenby had been so sure, before he started, that to him the result was almost boredom: but no general, however scientific, could see his intricate plan carried out over an enormous field in every particular with complete success, and not know an inward gladness: especially when he felt it (as he must have felt it) a reward of the breadth and judgement which made him conceive such unorthodox movements; and break up the proper book of his administrative services to suit them; and support them by every moral and material asset, military or political, within his grasp.

He sketched to me his next intentions. Historic Palestine was his, and the broken Turks, in the hills, expected a slackening of the pursuit. Not at all! Bartholomew and Evans were prepared to provision three more thrusts: one across Jordan to Amman, to be done by Chaytor's New Zealanders; one across Jordan to Deraa, to be done by Barrow and his Indians; one across Jordan to Kuneitra, to be done by Chauvel's Australians. Chaytor would rest at Amman; Barrow and Chauvel on attaining the first objectives would converge on Damascus. We were to assist the three: and I was not to carry out my saucy threat to take Damascus, till we were all together.

I explained our prospects, and how everything was being wrecked by air-impotence. He pressed a bell and in a few minutes Salmond and Borton were conferring with us. Their machines had taken an indispensable part in Allenby's scheme (the perfection of this man who could use infantry and cavalry, artillery and Air Force, Navy and armoured cars, deceptions and irregulars, each in its best fashion!): and had fulfilled it. There were no more Turks in the sky — except on our side, as I hurriedly interpolated. So much the better, said Salmond; they would send two Bristol fighters over to Umtaiye to sit with us while we needed them. Had we spares? Petrol? Not a drop? How was it to be got there? Only by air? An air-contained fighting unit? Unheard of!

However, Salmond and Borton were men avid of novelty. They worked out loads for D.H.g and Handley-Page, while Allenby sat by, listening and smiling, sure it would be done. The co-operation of the air with his unfolding scheme had been so ready and elastic, the liaison so complete and informed and quick. It was the R.A.F., which had converted the Turkish retreat into rout, which had abolished their telephone and telegraph connections, had blocked their lorry columns, scattered their infantry units.

The Air chiefs turned on me and asked if our landing-grounds were good enough for a Handley-Page with full load. I had seen the big machine once in its shed, but unhesitatingly said 'Yes' though they had better send an expert over with me in the Bristols to-morrow and make sure. He might be back by noon, and the Handley come at three o'clock. Salmond got up: That's all right, Sir, we'll do the necessary.' I went out and breakfasted.

Allenby's headquarter was a perfect place: a cool, airy, whitewashed house, proofed against flies, and made musical by the moving of the wind in the trees outside. I felt immoral, enjoying white table-cloths, and coffee, and soldier servants, while our people at Umtaiye lay like lizards among the stones, eating unleavened bread, and waiting for the next plane to bomb them. I felt restless as the dusty sunlight which splashed a diaper over the paths, through chinks in the leaves; because, after a long spell of the

restrained desert, flowers and grass seemed to fidget, and the everywhere-burgeoning green of tilth became vulgar, in its fecundity.

However, Clayton and Deedes and Dawnay were friendliness itself, and also the Air Force staff; while the good cheer and conscious strength of the Commander-in-Chief was a bath of comfort to a weary person after long strained days. Bartholomew moved maps about, explaining what they would do. I added to his knowledge of the enemy, for I was his best served intelligence officer: and in return his perspective showed me the victory sure, whatever happened to our strained little stop-block over there. Yet it seemed to me that in the Arab hands lay an option, whether to let this victory be just one more victory, or, by risking themselves once more, to make it final. Not that, so stated, it was a real option: but, when body and spirit were as wearily sick as mine, they almost instinctively sought a plausible avoidance of the way of danger.

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Chapter 114

Before dawn, on the Australian aerodrome, stood two Bristols and a D.H.g. In one was Ross Smith, my old pilot, who had been picked out to fly the new Handley-Page, the single machine of its class in Egypt, the apple of Salmond's eye. His lending it to fly over the enemy line on so low an errand as baggage carrying, was a measure of the goodwill toward us.

We reached Umtaiye in an hour, and saw that the army had gone: so I waved ourselves back to Urn el Surab; and there they were, the defensive group of cars, and Arabs hiding from our suspect noise here, there and everywhere; the cute camels dispersed singly over the plain, filling themselves with the wonderful grazing. Young, when he saw our markings, put a landing-signal and smoke bombs on the turf which his care and Nuri Said's had swept clear of stones.

Ross Smith anxiously paced the length and breadth of the prepared space, and studied its imperfections: but rejoined us, where the drivers were making breakfast, with a clear face. The ground was O.K. for the Handley-Page. Young told us of repeated bombings yesterday and the day before, which had killed some regulars and some of Pisani's gunners and tired the life out of everyone, so that they moved in the night to Um el Surab. The idiot Turks were still bombing Umtaiye though men went to it only in the neutral noons and nights to draw water.

Also I heard of Winterton's last blowing up of the railway: an amusing night, in which he had met an unknown soldier and explained to him in broken Arabic how well they were getting on. The soldier had thanked God for His mercies, and disappeared in the dark; whence a moment later, machine-gun fire opened from left and right! Nevertheless, Winterton had fired all his charges, and withdrawn in good order without loss. Nasir came to us, and reported this man hurt, and that killed, this clan getting ready, those already joined, but others gone home — all the gossip of the country. The three shining aeroplanes had much restored the Arabs, who lauded the British, and their own bravery and endurance, while I told them the scarce-credible epic of Allenby's success — Nablus taken, Afuleh taken, Beisan and Semakh and Haifa. My hearers' minds drew after me like flames. Tallal took fire, boasting; while the Rualla shouted for instant march upon Damascus. Even my bodyguard, still bearing witness of the Zaagi's severity in their muddy eyes and constrained faces, cheered up and began to preen a little before the

crowd, with a dawn of happiness. A shiver of self-assertion and confidence ran across the camp. I determined to bring up Feisal and Nuri Shaalan for the final effort.

Meanwhile it was breakfast time with a smell of sausage in the air. We sat round, very ready: but the watcher on the broken tower yelled 'Aeroplane up', seeing one coming over from Deraa. Our Australians, scrambling wildly to their yet-hot machines, started them in a moment. Ross Smith, with his observer, leaped into one, and climbed like a cat up the sky. After him went Peters, while the third pilot stood beside the D.H.g and looked hard at me.

I seemed not to understand him. Lewis guns, scarfe mountings, sights, rings which turned, vanes, knobs which rose and fell on swinging parallel bars; to shoot, one aimed with this side of the ring or with that, according to the varied speed and direction of oneself and the enemy. I had been told the theory, could repeat some of it: but it was in my head, and rules of action were only snares of action till they had run out of the empty head into the hands, by use. No: I was not going up to air-fight, no matter what caste I lost with the pilot. He was an Australian, of a race delighting in additional risks, not an Arab to whose gallery I must play.

He was too respectful to speak: only he looked reproach at me while we watched the battle in the air. There were one enemy two-seater and three scouts. Ross Smith fastened on the big one, and, after five minutes of sharp machine-gun rattle, the German dived suddenly towards the railway line. As it flashed behind the low ridge, there broke out a pennon of smoke, and from its falling place a soft, dark cloud. An 'Ah!' came from the Arabs about us. Five minutes later Ross Smith was back, and jumped gaily out of his machine, swearing that the Arab front was the place.

Our sausages were still hot; we ate them, and drank tea (our last English stores, broached for the visitors), but were hardly at the grapes from Jebel Druse when again the watchman tossed up his cloak and screamed, 'A plane!' This time Peters won the race, Ross Smith second, with Traill, disconsolate, in reserve: but the shy enemy turned back so soon that Peters did not catch them till near Arar: there he drove down his quarry, fighting. Later, when the wave of war rolled thither, we found the hopeless crash, and two charred German bodies.

Ross Smith wished he might stay for ever on this Arab front with an enemy every half-hour; and deeply envied Peters his coming days. However, he must go back for the Handley-Page with petrol, food and spares. The third plane was for Azrak, to get the observer marooned there yesterday; and I went in it so far, to see Feisal.

Time became spacious to those who flew: we were in Azrak thirty hours after leaving it. Ghurkas and Egyptians I turned back to rejoin the army, for new demolitions in the north. Then, with Feisal and Nuri Shaalan, I packed into the green Vauxhall, and off we went for Um el Surab to see the Handley-Page alight.

We ran at speed over the smooth flint or mud-flat, letting the strong car throb itself fully: but luck was hostile. A dispute was reported us, and we had to turn aside to a local Serahin camp. However, we made profit of our loss, by ordering their fighting men to Umtaiye: and we had them send word of victory across the railway, that the roads through the Ajlun hills might be closed to the broken Turkish armies, trying to escape into safety.

Then our car flashed northward again. Twenty miles short of Um el Surab we perceived a single Bedawi, running southward all in a flutter, his grey hair and grey beard flying in

the wind, and his shirt (tucked up in his belly-cord) puffing out behind him. He altered course to pass near us, and, raising his bony arms, yelled, The biggest aeroplane in the world', before he flapped on into the south, to spread his great news among the tents.

At Um el Surab the Handley stood majestic on the grass, with Bristols and 9.A— like fledglings beneath its spread of wings. Round it admired the Arabs, saying, 'Indeed and at last they have sent us *the* aeroplane, of which these things were foals'. Before night rumour of Feisal's resource went over Jebel Druse and the hollow of Hauran, telling people that the balance was weighted on our side.

Borton himself had come over in the machine, to concert help. We talked with him while our men drew from her bomb-racks and fuselage a ton of petrol; oil and spare parts for Bristol Fighters; tea and sugar and rations for our men; letters, Reuter telegrams and medicines for us. Then the great machine rose into the early dusk, for Ramleh, with an agreed programme of night-bombing against Deraa and Mafrak, to complete that ruin of the railway traffic which our gun-cotton had begun.

We, for our share, would keep up the gun-cotton pressure. Allenby had assigned us the Turkish Fourth Army, to harass and contain till Chaytor forced them out of Amman; and afterwards to cut up, on their retreat. This retreat was only an affair of days, and it was as certain as things could be in war that we should raise the plains between us and Damascus next week. So Feisal decided to add to our column Nuri Shaalan's Rualla camel men from Azrak. It would increase us to about four thousand strong, more than three-fourths irregular; but reliably so, for Nuri, the hard, silent, cynical old man, held the tribe between his fingers like a tool.

He was that rarity in the desert, a man without sense of argument. He would or would not, and there was no more to it. When others finished talking, he would announce his will in a few flat phrases, and wait calmly for obedience; which came, for he was feared. He was old and wise, which meant tired and disappointed: so old that it was my abiding wonder he should link himself to our enthusiasm.

I rested next day in Nasir's tent, among his peasant visitors; sorting out the too-abundant news furnished by their quick wit and goodwill. During my rest-day, Nuri Said, with Pisani and two guns, Stirling, Winterton, Young, their armoured cars, and a considerable force, went openly to the railway, cleared it by approved military means, destroyed a kilometre of rail, and burnt *the* tentative wooden structure with which the Turks were mending the bridge blown up by Joyce and myself before our first attack on Deraa. Nuri Shaalan, in black broadcloth cloak, personally led his Rualla horsemen, galloping with the best of them. Under his eye the tribe showed a valour which drew praise even from Nuri Said.

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Chapter 115

Nun's operation of to-day was the Turks' final blow, after which they gave up trying to restore the line between Amman and Deraa. We did not know this, but still had its bogy set over us, and were urgent to put out of action a yet longer stretch. Accordingly, next dawn, Winterton, Jemil and I went out on cars to examine the line south of Mafrak station. We were received with machine-gun fire of a vigour, direction and intensity beyond any of our experience. Later we captured the experts and found they were a German machine-gun unit. For the moment we drew out, puzzled, and went further to a tempting bridge. My plan was to run under it in the car till the vault enabled us to lay

the charge against the pier in shelter. So I transferred myself to an armoured car, put sixty pounds of gun-cotton on the back-board, and told the driver to push in under the arch.

Winterton and Jemil came behind in the supporting car. 'It's very hot,' groaned Jemil. 'It's going to be still hotter where we're going,' replied Winterton, as we drew in slowly over indifferent ground with aimless shells falling about. We were picking our way forward, about fifty yards from the bank, with enough machine-gun bullets for a week's fighting rattling off our armour, when someone from behind the line bowled a hand grenade at us.

This new condition made impossible my plan of getting under the bridge. For one thing, a hit on the back of the car would have set off our gun-cotton and blown us to blazes; for another, the car was helpless against a lobbed grenade. So we drew off, perplexed to understand this defence lavished on a bit of railway, and much interested, indeed amused, at worthy opposition after so long ease. In our imaginations, Check was a short, compact, furious man, darting glances every way from beneath tangled eyebrows, for an end to his troubles; beside him Victory seemed a lanky, white-skinned, rather languid woman. We must try again after dark. At Um el Surab we found that Nasir wished to fix camp once more at Umtaiye. It was a first stage of our journey to Damascus, so his wish delighted me, and we moved; winning thereby good excuse for doing nothing this night to the line. Instead, we sat and told stories of experience and waited for midnight, when the Handley-Page was to bomb Mafrak station. It came, and hundred-pound bomb after hundred-pound bomb crashed into the packed sidings till they caught fire, and the Turks' shooting stopped.

We slept, having given prize of the night to a tale of Enver Pasha, after the Turks re-took Sharkeui. He went to see it, in a penny steamer, with Prince Jemil and a gorgeous staff. The Bulgars, when they came, had massacred the Turks; as they retired the Bulgar peasants went too. So the Turks found hardly any one to kill. A greybeard was led on board for the Commander-in-Chief to bait. At last Enver tired of this. He signed to two of his bravo aides, and throwing open the furnace door, said, Tush him in'. The old man screamed, but the officers were stronger and the door was slammed-to on his jerking body. 'We turned, feeling sick, to go away, but Enver, his head on one side, listening, halted us. So we listened, till there came a crash within the furnace. He smiled and nodded, saying, 'Their heads always pop, like that.'

All night, and next day, the fire among the trucks burned greater and greater. It was proof of the breakdown of the Turks, which the Arabs had been rumouring since yesterday. They said the Fourth Army was streaming up from Amman in a loose mob. The Beni Hassan, who were cutting off stragglers and weak detachments, compared them to gipsies on the march.

We held a council. Our work against the Fourth Army was finished. Such remnants as avoided out of the hands of the Arabs would reach Deraa as unarmed stragglers. Our new endeavour should be to force the quick evacuation of Deraa, in order to prevent the Turks there reforming the fugitives into a rearguard. So I proposed that we march north, past Tell Arar, and over the railway at dawn to-morrow, into Sheikh Saad village. It lay in familiar country with abundant water, perfect observation, and a secure retreat west or north, or even south-west, if we were directly attacked. It cut off Deraa from Damascus; and Mezerib also.

Tallal seconded me with fervour. Nuri Shaalan gave his nod: Nasir and Nuri Said. So we prepared to strike camp. The armoured cars could not come with us. They had better stay in Azrak, till Deraa fell and we wanted them to help us into Damascus. The Bristol Fighters, likewise, had done their work, clearing the air of Turkish aeroplanes. They might return to Palestine with news of our move to Sheikh Saad.

Off they circled. We, watching their line of flight, noticed a great cloud of dust added to the slow smoke from ruined Mafrak. One machine turned back and dropped a scribble that a large body of hostile cavalry were heading out from the railway towards us.

This was unwelcome news, for we were not in trim for a fight. The cars had gone, the aeroplanes had gone, one company of the mounted infantry had marched, Pisani's mules were packed and drawn up in column. I went off to Nuri Said, standing with Nasir on an ash heap at the head of the hill, and we wavered whether to run or stand. At last it seemed wiser to run, since Sheikh Saad was a more profitable stop-block. So we hurried the regulars away.

Yet things could hardly be left like that. Accordingly Nuri Shaalan and Tallal led the Rualla horse and the Hauran horse back to delay the pursuit. They had an unexpected ally, for our cars, on their way to Azrak, had seen the enemy. After all, the Turks were not cavalry coming to attack us, but deluded elements seeking a shorter way home. We took some hundreds of thirsty prisoners and much transport; causing such panic that the main rout in the plain cut the traces of their limbers and rode off on the bare horses. The infection of terror spread down the line, and troops miles from any Arab interference threw away all they had, even to their rifles, and made a mad rush towards supposed safety in Deraa.

However, this interruption delayed us; for we could hardly march a khaki-clad body of regular camel corps across Hauran at night without enough local cavalry to go bail to the suspicious villagers that we were not Turks. So late in the afternoon we halted for Tallal and Nasir and Nuri Shaalan to catch up.

This halt gave some people time to review the proceedings, and new questions arose as to the wisdom of crossing the railway again, to put ourselves in the dangerous position of Sheikh Saad, astride the retreat of the main Turkish forces. Finally, near midnight, Sabin appeared where I lay awake in the midst of the army on my carpet. He suggested that we had done enough. Allenby had appointed us watchmen of the Fourth Army. We had just seen its disordered flight. Our duty was completed; and we might honourably fall back to Bosra, twenty miles out of the way to the east, where the Druses were collecting under Nesib el Bekri to help us. We might wait with them for the British to take Deraa, and for our reward, in the victorious close of the campaign.

This attitude passed me by, since, if we withdrew to Jebel Druse, we ended our active service before the game was won, leaving the last brunt on Allenby. I was very jealous for the Arab honour, in whose service I would go forward at all costs. They had joined the war to win freedom, and the recovery of their old capital by force of their own arms was the sign they would best understand.

'Duty', like people who praised it, was a poor thing. Evidently, by thrusting behind Deraa into Sheikh Saad we put more pressure on the Turks than any British unit was in place to put. It would forbid the Turks fighting again this side of Damascus; for which gain our few lives would be cheap payment. Damascus meant the end of this war in the East, and, I believed, the end of the general war, too; because the Central Powers being inter-

dependent, the breaking of their weakest link — Turkey — would swing the whole cluster loose. Therefore, for every sensible reason, strategical, tactical, political, even moral, we were going on.

Sabin's stubborn resistant mind was not to be convinced. He returned with Pisani and Winterton, and began to debate; speaking slowly because Nuri Said was lying on the next rug only half asleep, and he wanted to include him in the conference.

Accordingly he stressed the military aspect: our fulfilled purpose and the danger of the Hejaz Railway. This delay made us too late to cross to-night. To-morrow it would be madness to attempt the operation. The line would be guarded from end to end by tens of thousands of Turks pouring out of Deraa. If they let us over we would only be in still greater danger. Joyce, he said, had appointed him military adviser to the expedition; and it was his duty to point out, reluctantly, that as a regular officer he knew his business.

Had I been a regular officer I might have found Sabin's upsetting the others irregular. As it was I endured his complaints, patiently sighing whenever I thought it would irritate the protestant. At the end wanderingly I said I wanted to sleep, since we would have to be up early to cross the line, and it was my intention to go in front with my bodyguard among the Beduin, wherever they were, for it was odd that Nuri Shaalan and Tallal had not overtaken us. Anyway, I was going to sleep now.

Pisani, whose long military life had been all as subordinate, said with correctness that he took his orders and would follow. I liked him for that, and tried to soothe his honest doubts by reminding him that we had worked for eighteen months together without his ever finding cause to call me rash. He replied with a French laugh that he thought it all very rash, but was a soldier.

Winterton's instinct joined him to the weaker and more sporting side in any choice but fox-hunting. Nuri Said had lain silently through our talk, pretending to be asleep; but, when Sabin went away, he rolled over whispering, Is it true?' I replied that I saw no unusual risk in crossing the line in mid-afternoon, and with care we should avoid traps at Sheikh Saad. He lay back satisfied.

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Chapter 116

Nasir, Nuri Shaalan and Talal had overshot us in the dark. Our joined forces marched, with a heady breeze in the teeth, northward across the ploughlands' fat, happy villages. Over the harvested fields, whose straw had been rather plucked than reaped, grew thistles, tall as a child, but now yellow and dried and dead. The wind snapped them off at the hollow root, and pitch-polled their branchy tops along the level ground, thistle blowing against thistle and interlocking spines, till in huge balls they careered like run-away haycocks across the fallow.

Arab women, out with their donkeys to fetch water, ran to us, crying that an aeroplane had landed a while since, near by. It bore the round rings of the Sherifian camel brand upon its body. Peake rode across, to find two Australians whose Bristol had been hit in the radiator, over Deraa. They were glad, though astonished, to meet friends. After the leak had been plugged, we levied water from the women, to fill them up, and they flew home safely.

Men rode up every minute and joined us, while from each village the adventurous young ran out afoot to enter our ranks. As we moved on, so closely knit in the golden sunlight,

we were able, in rare chance, to see ourselves as a whole: quickly we became a character, an organism, in whose pride each of us was uplifted. We cracked bawdy jokes to set off the encompassing beauty.

At noon we entered water-melon fields. The army ran upon them, while we spied out the line, which lay desertedly quivering in the sunlight ahead. As we watched a train passed down. Only last night had the railway been mended: and this was the third train. We moved without opposition upon the line in a horde two miles across, and began hastily to blow up things, anyone who had explosive using it as he fancied. Our hundreds of novices were full of zeal and the demolitions, albeit uninstructed, were wide.

Clearly our return had surprised the dazed enemy: we must extend and improve this chance. So we went to Nuri Shaalan, Auda, and Talal, and asked what local effort each would undertake. Talal, the energetic, would attack Ezraa, the big grain depot to the north: Auda was for Khirbet el Ghazala, the corresponding station south-ward: Nuri would sweep his men down the main road, towards Deraa, on chance of Turkish parties.

These were three good ideas. The chiefs went to put them into being, while we, pulling our column to its shape again, pursued our road past the ruined colony of Sheikh Miskin, very gaunt in the moonlight. Its obstacle of water ditches muddled our thousands, so that we halted on the stubble plain beyond, for dawn. Some made fires against the penetrating mist of this clay Hauran: others slept as they were on the dew-slimy ground. Lost men went about calling their friends, in that sharp, full-throated wail of the Arab villager. The moon had set, and the world was black and very cold.

I roused my bodyguard, who rode so briskly that we entered Sheikh Saad with the dawn. As we passed between the rocks into the field behind the trees, the earth sprang to life again with the new sun. The morning airs flashed the olive-yards to silver, and men from a great goat-hair tent on the right called us to guest with them. We asked whose camp it was. 'Ibn Smeir's' they replied. This threatened complications. Rashid was an enemy of Nuri Shaalan's, unreconciled, chance-met. At once we sent a warning to Nasir. Fortunately Ibn Smeir was absent. So his family would be our temporary guests, and Nuri, as host, must observe the rules.

It was a relief, for already in our ranks we had hundreds of deadly enemies, their feuds barely suspended by Feisal's peace. The strain of keeping them in play, and employing their hot-heads in separate spheres, balancing opportunity and service that our direction might be esteemed as above jealousy — all that was evil enough. Conduct of the war in France would have been harder if each division, almost each brigade, of our army had hated every other with a deadly hatred and fought when they met suddenly. However, we had kept them quiet for two years, and it would be only a few days now.

The parties of the night returned, full of spoil. Ezraa had been feebly held by Abd el Kader, the Algerian, with his retainers, some volunteers and troops. When Talal came the volunteers joined him, the troops fled, and the retainers were so few that Abd el Kader had to abandon the place without fighting. Our men were too heavy with their great booty to catch him.

Auda came, boasting. He had taken el Ghazale by storm, capturing a derelict train, guns and two hundred men, of whom some were Germans. Nuri Shaalan reported four hundred prisoners with mules and machine-guns. The rank and file of Turks had been farmed out to remote villages, to earn their keep.

An English aeroplane flew round and round, wondering if we were the Arab force. Young spread out ground signals, and to him they dropped a message that Bulgaria had surrendered to the Allies. We had not known there was an offensive in the Balkans, so the news came orphaned, and as it were insignificant to us. Undoubtedly the end, not only of the great war, but of our war, was near. A sharp effort, and our trial would be over and everyone loosed back to his affairs, forgetting the madness: since for most of us it was the first war, and we looked to its end as rest and peace.

The army had arrived. The groves became thronged as each detachment picked out the best vacant place and unsaddled, whether beside fig-trees, or under palms, or olives, from which the birds burst out in frightened clouds, with a multitudinous crying. Our men took their animals to the stream meandering through green bushes and flowers and cultivated fruits, things strange to us during the years of our wandering in the flinty desert.

The people of Sheikh Saad came shyly to look at Feisal's army, which had been a whispered legendary thing, and was now in their village, led by renowned or formidable names — Talal, Nasir, Nuri, Suda. We stared back, in secret envy of their peasant life.

While the men stretched the saddle-stiffness of riding from thin legs, we went up, five or six of us, above the ruins, whence across the southern plain we should see the measure of security in store for us. To our astonishment we perceived, just over the walls, a thin company of regulars in uniform — Turks, Austrians, Germans — with eight machine guns on pack-animals. They were toiling up from Galilee towards Damascus after their defeat by Allenby; hopeless, but care-free, marching at ease, thinking themselves fifty miles from any war.

We did not give an alarm, to spare our tired troops pains: just Durzi ibn Dughmi, with the Khaffaji and others of the family, mounted quietly and fell on them from a narrow lane. The officers showed fight and were instantly killed. The men threw down their arms, and in five minutes had been searched and robbed and were being shepherded in file along the water-paths between the gardens to an open pound which seemed fit for our prison. Sheikh Saad was paying soon and well.

Away to the east appeared three or four black knots of people, moving northward. We loosed the Howeitat on them, and after an hour they returned in laughter, each man leading a mule or pack-horse; poor, tired, galled brutes, showing all too clearly the straits of the beaten army. The riders had been unarmed soldiers fleeing from the British. The Howeitat disdained to make such prisoners. We gave them to the boys and girls of the villages for servants,' sneered Zaal, with his thin-lipped smile.

News came to us from the west that small companies of Turks were retiring into the local villages from Chauvel's attacks. We sent against them armed parties of Nairn, a peasant tribe which had joined us last night at Sheikh Miskin, as appointed by Nasir, to do what they could. The mass rising we had so long prepared was now in flood, rising higher as each success armed more rebels. In two days' time we might have sixty thousand armed men in movement.

We snapped up further trifles on the Damascus road; and then saw heavy smoke above the hill which hid Deraa. A man cantered in, to inform Tallal that the Germans had set fire to aeroplanes and storehouses, and stood ready to evacuate the town. A British plane dropped word that Barrow's troops were near Remtha, and that two Turkish

columns, one of four thousand, one of two thousand, were retiring towards us from Deraa and Mezerib respectively.

It seemed to me that these six thousand men were all that remained of the Fourth Army, from Deraa, and of the Seventh Army, which had been disputing Barrow's advance. With their destruction would end our purpose here. Yet, till we knew, we must retain Sheikh Saad. So the larger column, the four thousand, we would let pass, only fastening to them Khalid and his Rualla, with some northern peasantry, to harry their flanks and rear.

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Chapter 117

The nearer two thousand seemed more our size. We would meet them with half our regulars, and two of Pisani's guns. Tallal was anxious, for their indicated route would bring them through Tafas, his own village. He determined us to make speed there and seize the ridge south of it. Unfortunately speed was only a relative term with men so tired. I rode with my troop to Tafas, hoping to occupy a shadow position beyond it and fight a retiring action till the rest came up. Half-way on the road, there met us mounted Arabs, herding a drove of stripped prisoners towards Sheikh Saad. They were driving them mercilessly, the bruises of their urging blue across the ivory backs; but I left them to it, for these were Turks of the police battalion of Deraa, beneath whose iniquities the peasant-faces of the neighbourhood had run with tears and blood, innumerable times.

The Arabs told us that the Turkish column — Jemal Pasha's lancer regiment — was already entering Tafas. When we got within sight, we found they had taken the village (from which sounded an occasional shot) and were halted about it. Small pyres of smoke were going up from between the houses. On the rising ground to this side, knee-deep in the thistles, stood a remnant of old men, women and children, telling terrible stories of what had happened when the Turks rushed in an hour before.

We lay on watch, and saw the enemy force march away from their assembly-ground behind the houses. They headed in good order towards Miskin, the lancers in front and rear, composite formations of infantry disposed in column with machine-gun support as flank guards, guns and a mass of transport in the centre. We opened fire on the head of their line when it showed itself beyond the houses. They turned two field-guns upon us, for reply. The shrapnel was as usual over-fused, and passed safely above our heads.

Nuri came with Pisani. Before their ranks rode Auda abu Tayi, expectant, and Tallal, nearly frantic with the tales his people poured out of the sufferings of the village. The last Turks were now quitting it. We slipped down behind them to end Tallal's suspense, while our infantry took position and fired strongly with the Hotchkiss; Pisani advanced his half battery among them; so that the French high explosive threw the rearguard into confusion.

The village lay stilly under its slow wreaths of white smoke, as we rode near, on our guard. Some grey heaps seemed to hide in the long grass, embracing the ground in the close way of corpses. We looked away from these, knowing they were dead; but from one a little figure tottered off, as if to escape us. It was a child, three or four years old, whose dirty smock was stained red over one shoulder and side, with blood from a large half-fibrous wound, perhaps a lance thrust, just where neck and body joined.

The child ran a few steps, then stood and cried to us in a tone of astonishing strength (all else being very silent), 'Don't hit me, Baba'. Abd el Aziz, choking out something —

this was his village, and she might be of his family — flung himself off his camel, and stumbled, kneeling, in the grass beside the child. His suddenness frightened her, for she threw up her arms and tried to scream; but, instead, dropped in a little heap, while the blood rushed out again over her clothes; then, I think, she died.

We rode past the other bodies of men and women and four more dead babies, looking very soiled in the daylight, towards the village; whose loneliness we now knew meant death and horror. By the outskirts were low mud walls, sheepfolds, and on one something red and white. I looked close and saw the body of a woman folded across it, bottom upwards, nailed there by a saw bayonet whose haft stuck hideously into the air from between her naked legs. She had been pregnant, and about her lay others, perhaps twenty in all, variously killed, but set out in accord with an obscene taste.

The Zaagi burst into wild peals of laughter, the more desolate for the warm sunshine and clear air of this upland afternoon. I said, 'The best of you brings me the most Turkish dead', and we turned after the fading enemy, on our way shooting down those who had fallen out by the roadside and came imploring our pity. One wounded Turk, half naked, not able to stand, sat and wept to us. Abdulla turned away his camel's head, but the Zaagi, with curses, crossed his track and whipped three bullets from his automatic through the man's bare chest. The blood came out with his heart beats, throb, throb, throb, slower and slower.

Tallal had seen what we had seen. He gave one moan like a hurt animal; then rode to the upper ground and sat there a while on his mare, shivering and looking fixedly after the Turks. I moved near to speak to him, but Auda caught my rein and stayed me. Very slowly Tallal drew his head-cloth about his face; and then he seemed suddenly to take hold of himself, for he dashed his stirrups into the mare's flanks and galloped headlong, bending low and swaying in the saddle, right at the main body of the enemy.

It was a long ride down a gentle slope and across a hollow. We sat there like stone while he rushed forward, the drumming of his hoofs unnaturally loud in our ears, for we had stopped shooting, and the Turks had stopped. Both armies waited for him; and he rocked on in the hushed evening till only a few lengths from the enemy. Then he sat up in the saddle and cried his war-cry, Tallal, Tallal', twice in a tremendous shout. Instantly their rifles and machine-guns crashed out, and he and his mare, riddled through and through with bullets, fell dead among the lance points.

Auda looked very cold and grim. 'God give him mercy; we will take his price.' He shook his rein and moved slowly after the enemy. We called up the peasants, now drunk with fear and blood, and sent them from this side and that against the retreating column. The old lion of battle waked in Auda's heart, and made him again our natural, inevitable leader. By a skilful turn he drove the Turks into bad ground and split their formation into three parts.

The third part, the smallest, was mostly made up of German and Austrian machine-gunners grouped round three motor-cars, and a handful of mounted officers or troopers. They fought magnificently and repulsed us time and again despite our hardiness. The Arabs were fighting like devils, the sweat blurring their eyes, dust parching their throats; while the flame of cruelty and revenge which was burning in their bodies so twisted them, that their hands could hardly shoot. By my order we took no prisoners, for the only time in our war.

At last we left this stern section behind, and pursued the faster two. They were in panic; and by sunset we had destroyed all but the smallest pieces of them, gaining as and by what they lost. Parties of peasants flowed in on our advance. At first there were five or six to a weapon: then one would win a bayonet, another a sword, a third a pistol. An hour later those who had been on foot would be on donkeys. Afterwards every man had a rifle, and a captured horse. By nightfall the horses were laden, and the rich plain was scattered over with dead men and animals. In a madness born of the horror of Tafas we killed and killed, even blowing in the heads of the fallen and of the animals; as though their death and running blood could slake our agony.

Just one group of Arabs, who had not heard our news, took prisoner the last two hundred men of the central section. Their respite was short. I had gone up to learn why it was, not unwilling that this remnant be let live as witnesses of Tallal's price; but a man on the ground behind them screamed something to the Arabs, who with pale faces led me across to see. It was one of us — his thigh shattered. The blood had rushed out over the red soil, and left him dying; but even so he had not been spared. In the fashion of to-day's battle he had been further tormented by bayonets hammered through his shoulder and other leg into the ground, pinning him out like a collected insect.

He was fully conscious. When we said, Tlassan, who did it?' he drooped his eyes towards the prisoners, huddling together so hopelessly broken. They said nothing in the moments before we opened fire. At last their heap ceased moving; and Hassan was dead; and we mounted again and rode home slowly (home was my carpet three or four hours from us at Sheikh Saad) in the gloom, which felt so chill now that the sun had gone down.

However, what with wounds and aches and weariness I could not rest from thinking of Tallal, the splendid leader, the fine horseman, the courteous and strong companion of the road; and after a while I had my other camel brought, and with one of my bodyguard rode out into the night to join our men hunting the greater Deraa column.

It was very dark, with a wind beating in great gusts from the south and east; and only by the noise of shots it tossed across to us and by occasional gun flashes, did we at length come to the fighting. Every field and valley had its Turks stumbling blindly northward. Our men were clinging on. The fall of night had made them bolder, and they were now closing with the enemy. Each village, as the fight rolled to it, took up the work; and the black, icy wind was wild with rifle-fire, shoutings, volleys from the Turks, and the rush of gallops, as small parties of either side crashed frantically together.

The enemy had tried to halt and camp at sunset, but Khalid had shaken them again into movement. Some marched, some stayed. Many dropped asleep in their tracks with fatigue. They had lost order and coherence, and were drifting through the blast in lorn packets, ready to shoot and run at every contact with us or with each other; and the Arabs were as scattered, and nearly as uncertain.

Exceptions were the German detachments; and here, for the first time, I grew proud of the enemy who had killed my brothers. They were two thousand miles from home, without hope and without guides, in conditions mad enough to break the bravest nerves. Yet their sections held together, in firm rank, sheering through the wrack of Turk and Arab like armoured ships, high-faced and silent. When attacked they halted, took position, fired to order. There was no haste, no crying, no hesitation. They were glorious.

At last I found Khalid, and asked him to call off the Rualla and leave this rout to time and the peasantry. Heavier work, perhaps, lay to the southward. At dusk a rumour had passed across our plain that Deraa was empty, and Trad, Khalid's brother, with a good half of the Anazeh, had ridden off to see. I feared a reverse for him, since there must still be Turks in the place, and more struggling towards it up the railway and through the Irbid Hills. Indeed, unless Barrow, last reported to us as delayed in Remthe, had lost contact with his enemy, there must be a fighting rearguard yet to follow.

I wanted Khalid to support his brother. After an hour or two of shouting his message down the wind, hundreds of horsemen and camel men had rallied to him. On his way to Deraa he charged through and over several detachments of Turks in the star-blink, and arrived to find Trad in secure possession. He had won through in the later twilight, taking the station at a gallop, jumping trenches and blotting out the scanty Turkish elements which still tried to resist.

With local help the Rualla plundered the camp, especially finding booty in the fiercely burning storehouses whose flaming roofs imperilled their lives; but this was one of the nights in which mankind went crazy, when death seemed impossible, however many died to the right and left, and when others' lives became toys to break and throw away.

Sheikh Saad passed a troubled evening of alarms and shots and shouts, with threatenings from the peasantry to murder the prisoners as added price of Tallal and his village. The active sheikhs were out hunting the Turks, and their absence with their retainers deprived the Arab camp of its experienced chiefs and of its eyes and ears. Sleeping clan-jealousies had awaked in the blood thirst of the afternoon of killing, and Nasir and Nuri Said, Young and Winterton had to strain every nerve in keeping peace.

I got in after midnight and found Trad's messengers just arrived from Deraa. Nasir left to join him. I had wished to sleep, for this was my fourth night of riding; but my mind would not let me feel how tired my body was, so about two in the morning I mounted a third camel and splashed out towards Deraa, down the Tafas track again, to windward of the dark village.

Nuri Said and his staff were riding the same road in advance of their mounted infantry, and our parties hurried together till the half-light came. Then my impatience and the cold would not let me travel horsepace any longer. I gave liberty to my camel — the grand, rebellious Baha — and she stretched herself out against the field, racing my wearied followers for mile upon mile with piston-strides like an engine, so that I entered Deraa quite alone in the full dawn.

Nasir was at the Mayor's house, arranging a military governor, and police; and for an inquisition of the place; I supplemented his ideas, putting guards over the pumps and engine sheds and what remained of tool shops or stores. Then in an hour of talk I built up publicly a programme of what the situation would demand of them, if they were not to lose hold. Poor Nasir stared in bewilderment.

I inquired about General Barrow. A man just ridden in from the west told us he had been fired on by the English, as they deployed to attack the town. To prevent such an accident the Zaagi and I rode up the Buweib, on whose crest was visible a strong post of Indian machine-gunners. They trained their weapons on us, proud of such splendidly dressed prizes. However, an officer showed himself, with some British troopers, and to them I explained myself. They were indeed in the midst of an enveloping movement against Deraa, and, while we watched, their aeroplanes bombed the luckless Nuri Said as he

rode into the railway station. This was his penalty for losing the race from Sheikh Saad: but, to stop it, I hurried down to where General Barrow was inspecting outposts in a car.

I told him we had spent the night in the town, and the shooting he heard was joy-firing. He was short with me; but I had little pity for him, because he had delayed a day and night watering at the poor wells of Remthe, though his map showed the lake and river of Mezerib in front, on the road by which the enemy were escaping. However his orders were Deraa, and to Deraa he would go.

He told me to ride beside him: but his horses hated my camel, so the General Staff bucked along the ditch, while I soberly paced the crown of the road. He said he must post sentries in the village to keep the populace in order. I explained gently that the Arabs had installed their military governor. At the wells he said his sappers must inspect the pumps. I replied welcoming their assistance. We had lit the furnaces and hoped to begin watering his horses in an hour. He snorted that we seemed to be at home; he would take charge only of the railway station. I pointed to the engine moving out towards Mezerib (where our little Sheikh had prevented the Turks from blowing up the Tell el Shehab bridge, now become Arab property) and asked that his sentries be instructed not to interfere with our proper working of the line.

He had had no orders as to the status of the Arabs. Clayton did us this service, thinking we should deserve what we could assert: so Barrow, who had come in thinking of them as a conquered people, though dazed at my calm assumption that he was my guest, had no option but to follow the lead of such assurance. My head was working full speed in these minutes, on our joint behalf, to prevent the fatal first steps by which the unimaginative British, with the best will in the world, usually deprived the acquiescent native of the discipline of responsibility, and created a situation which called for years of agitation and successive reforms and riotings to mend.

I had studied Barrow and was ready for him. Years before, he had published his confession of faith in Fear as the common people's main incentive to action in war and peace. Now I found fear a mean, overrated motive; no deterrent, and, though a stimulant, a poisonous stimulant, whose every injection served to consume more of the system to which it was applied. I could have no alliance with his pedant belief of scaring men into heaven: better that Barrow and I part at once. My instinct with the inevitable was to provoke it. Therefore, I was very spiny and high.

Barrow surrendered himself by asking me to find him forage and foodstuffs. Indeed, soon we got on well. In the square I showed him Nasir's little silk pennon, propped on the balcony of the charred Government office, with a yawning sentry underneath. Barrow drew himself up and saluted sharply, while a thrill of pleasure at the General's compliment ran round Arab officers and men.

In return we strove to keep self-assertion within the bounds of political necessity. On all Arabs we impressed that these Indian troops were guests, and must be permitted, nay helped, to do anything they wished. The doctrine took us into unexpected places. Every chicken disappeared from the village, and three sowars carried off Nasir's pennon, having coveted the silver knobs and spike of its dainty staff. This pointed a contrast between the English General who saluted and the Indian trooper who stole: a contrast welcome to the Arab race — hesitation towards the Indians.

Meanwhile, everywhere we were taking men and guns. Our prisoners could be counted in thousands. Some we handed over to the British, who counted them again: most we

boarded-out in the villages. Azrak heard the full news of victory. Feisal drove in a day later, our string of armoured cars following his Vauxhall. He installed himself in the station. I called with my record of stewardship: as the tale ended the room shook with a gentle earthquake.

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Chapter 118

Barrow, now watered and fed, was due to leave for his meeting with Chauvel near Damascus, that they might enter the city together. He asked us to take the right flank, which suited me, for there, along the Hejaz line, was Nasir, hanging on to the main Turkish retreat, reducing its numbers by continuous attack day and night. I had still much to do, and therefore waited in Deraa another night, savouring its quiet after the troops had gone; for the station stood at the limit of the open country, and the Indians round it had angered me by their out-of-placeness. The essence of the desert was the lonely moving individual, the son of the road, apart from the world as in a grave. These troops, in flocks like slow sheep, looked not worthy of the privilege of space.

My mind felt in the Indian rank and file something puny and confined; an air of thinking themselves mean; almost a careful, esteemed subservience, unlike the abrupt wholesomeness of Beduin. The manner of the British officers toward their men struck horror into my bodyguard, who had never seen personal inequality before.

I had felt man's iniquity here: and so hated Deraa that I lay each night with my men upon the old aerodrome. By the charred hangars my guards, fickle-surfaced as the sea, squabbled after their wont; and there to-night for the last time Abdulla brought me cooked rice in the silver bowl. After supping, I tried in the blankness to think forward: but my mind was a blank, my dreams puffed out like candles by the strong wind of success. In front was our too-tangible goal: but behind lay the effort of two years, its misery forgotten or glorified. Names rang through my head, each in imagination a superlative: Rum the magnificent, brilliant Petra, Azrak the remote, Batra the very clean. Yet the men had changed. Death had taken the gentle ones; and the new stridency, of those who were left, hurt me.

Sleep would not come, so before the light, I woke Stirling and my drivers, and we four climbed into the Blue Mist, our Bolls tender, and set out for Damascus, along the dirt road which was first rutted, and then blocked by the transport columns and rearguard of Barrow's division. We cut across country to the French railway, whose old ballast gave us a clear, if rugged, road; then we put on speed.

At noon we saw Barrow's pennon at a stream, where he was watering his horses. My bodyguard were near by, so I took my camel and rode over to him. Like other confirmed horsemen, he had been a little contemptuous of the camel; and had suggested, in Deraa, that we might hardly keep up with his cavalry, which was going to Damascus in about three forced marches.

So when he saw me freshly riding up he was astonished, and asked when we left Deraa. 'This morning.' His face fell. Where will you stop to-night?' 'In Damascus,' said I gaily; and rode on, having made another enemy. It a little smote me to play tricks, for he was generous towards my wishes: but the stakes were high, beyond his sight, and I cared nothing what he thought of me so that we won.

I returned to Stirling, and drove on. At each village we left notes for the British advance guards, telling them where we were, and how far beyond us the enemy. It irked Stirling and myself to see the caution of Barrow's advance; scouts scouting empty valleys, sections crowning every deserted hill, a screen drawn forward so carefully over friendly country. It marked the difference between our certain movements and the tentative processes of normal war.

There could be no crisis till Kiswe, where we were to meet Chauvel, and where the Hejaz line approached our road. Upon the railway were Nasir, Nuri Shaalan and Auda, with the tribes; still harrying that column of four thousand (but in truth nearer seven) marked by our aeroplane near Sheikh Saad three busy days ago. They had fought ceaselessly throughout this time of our ease.

As we drove up we heard firing, and saw shrapnel behind a ridge to our right, where the railway was. Soon appeared the head of a Turkish column of about two thousand men, in ragged groups, halting now and then to fire their mountain guns. We ran on to overtake their pursuers, our great Rolls very blue on the open road. Some Arab horsemen from behind the Turks galloped towards us, bucketing unhandily across the irrigation ditches. We recognized Nasir on his liver-coloured stallion, the splendid animal yet spirited after its hundred miles of a running fight: also old Nuri Shaalan and about thirty of their servants. They told us these few were all that remained of the seven thousand Turks. The Rualla were hanging desperately on to both flanks, while Auda abu Tayi had ridden behind Jebel Mania to gather the Wuld Ali, his friends, and lie in wait there for this column, which they hoped to drive over the hill into his ambush. Did our appearance mean help at last?

I told them the British, in force, were just behind. If they could delay the enemy only an hour . . . Nasir looked ahead and saw a walled and wooded farmstead barring the level. He called to Nuri Shaalan, and they hastened thither to check the Turks.

We drove back three miles to the leading Indians, and told their ancient, surly Colonel what a gift the Arabs brought. He seemed not pleased to upset the beautiful order of his march, but at last opened out a squadron and sent them slowly across the plain towards the Turks, who turned the little guns their way. One or two shells burst nearly among the files, and then to our horror (for Nasir had put himself in jeopardy, expecting courageous help) the Colonel ordered a retirement, and fell back quickly to the road. Stirling and myself, hopping mad, dashed down and begged him not to be afraid of mountain guns, no heavier than Very pistols: but neither to kindness nor to wrath did the old man budge an inch. We raced a third time back along the road in search of higher authority.

A red-tipped Aide told us that over there was General Gregory. We blessed him, Stirling's professional pride nearly in tears at the mismanagement. We pulled our friend aboard and found his General, to whom we lent our car that the brigade major might take hot orders to the cavalry. A galloper hurtled back for the horse artillery, which opened fire just as the last of the light fled up the hill to its summit and took refuge in the clouds. Middlesex Yeomanry appeared and were pushed in among the Arabs, to charge the Turkish rear; and, as the night fell, we saw the break-up of the enemy, who abandoned their guns, their transport and all their stuff and went streaming up the col towards the two peaks of Mania, escaping into what they thought was empty land beyond.

However, in the empty land was Auda; and in that night of his last battle the old man killed and killed, plundered and captured, till dawn showed him the end. There passed the Fourth Army, our stumbling-block for two years.

Gregory's happy vigour heartened us to face Nasir. We drove to Kiswe, where we had agreed to meet him before midnight. After us came the press of Indian troops. We sought a retired spot; but already there were men by the thousand everywhere.

The movement and cross-currents of so many crowded minds drove me about, restlessly, like themselves. In the night my colour was unseen. I could walk as I pleased, an unconsidered Arab: and this finding myself among, but cut off from, my own kin made me strangely alone. Our armoured-car men were persons to me, from their fewness and our long companionship; and also in their selves, for these months unshieldedly open to the flaming sun and bullying wind had worn and refined them into individuals. In such a mob of unaccustomed soldiery, British, Australian and Indian, they went as strange and timid as myself; distinguished also by grime, for with weeks of wearing their clothes had been moulded to them by sweat and use and had become rather integuments than wrappings.

But these others were really soldiers, a novelty after two years' irregularity. And it came upon me freshly how the secret of uniform was to make a crowd solid, dignified, impersonal: to give it the singleness and tautness of an upstanding man. This death's livery which walled its bearers from ordinary life, was sign that they had sold their wills and bodies to the State: and contracted themselves into a service not the less abject for that its beginning was voluntary. Some of them had obeyed the instinct of lawlessness: some were hungry: others thirsted for glamour, for the supposed colour of a military life: but, of them all, those only received satisfaction who had sought to degrade themselves, for to the peace-eye they were below humanity. Only women with a lech were allured by those witnessing clothes; the soldiers' pay, not sustenance like a labourer's, but pocket-money, seemed most profitably spent when it let them drink sometimes and forget.

Convicts had violence put upon them. Slaves might be free, if they could, in intention. But the soldier assigned his owner the twenty-four hours' use of his body; and sole conduct of his mind and passions. A convict had licence to hate the rule which confined him, and all humanity outside, if he were greedy in hate: but the sulking soldier was a bad soldier; indeed, no soldier. His affections must be hired pieces on the chess-board of the king.

The strange power of war which made us all as a duty so demean ourselves! These Australians, shouldering me in unceremonious horseplay, had put off half civilization with their civil clothes. They were dominant to-night, too sure of themselves to be careful: and yet:— as they lazily swaggered those quick bodies, all curves with never a straight line, but with old and disillusioned eyes: and yet:— I felt them thin-tempered, hollow, instinctive; always going to do great things; with the disquieting suppleness of blades half-drawn from the scabbard. Disquieting: not dreadful.

The English fellows were not instinctive, nor negligent like the Australians, but held themselves, with a slow-eyed, almost sheepish care. They were prim in dress, and quiet; going shyly in pairs. The Australians stood in groups and walked singly: the British clung two and two, in a celibate friendliness which expressed the level of the ranks: the commonness of their Army clothes. 'Holding together' they called it: a war-time yearning to keep within four ears such thoughts as were deep enough to hurt.

About the soldiers hung the Arabs: gravely-gazing men from another sphere. My crooked duty had banished me among them for two years. To-night I was nearer to them than to the troops, and I resented it, as shameful. The intruding contrast mixed with longing for home, to sharpen my faculties and make fertile my distaste, till not merely did I see the unlikeness of race, and hear the unlikeness of language, but I learned to pick between their smells: the heavy, standing, curdled sourness of dried sweat in cotton, over the Arab crowds; and the feral smell of English soldiers: that hot pissy aura of thronged men in woollen clothes: a tart pungency, breath-catching, ammoniacal: a fervent fermenting naphtha-smell.

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Chapter 119

Our war was ended. Even though we slept that night in Kiswe, for the Arabs told us the roads were dangerous, and we had no wish to die stupidly in the dark at the gate of Damascus. The sporting Australians saw the campaign as a point-to-point, with Damascus the post; but in reality we were all under Allenby, now, and the victory had been the logical fruit solely of his genius, and Bartholomew's pains.

Their tactical scheme properly put the Australians north and west of Damascus, across its railways, before the southern column might enter it: and we, the Arab leaders, had waited for the slower British partly because Allenby never questioned our fulfilling what was ordered. Power lay in his calm assumption that he would receive as perfect obedience as he gave trust.

He hoped we would be present at the entry, partly because he knew how much more than a mere trophy Damascus was to the Arabs: partly for prudential reasons. Feisal's movement made the enemy country friendly to the Allies as they advanced, enabling convoys to go up without escort, towns to be administered without garrison. In their envelopment of Damascus the Australians might be forced, despite orders, to enter the town. If anyone resisted them it would spoil the future. One night was given us to make the Damascenes receive the British Army as their allies.

This was a revolution in behaviour, if not in opinion; but Feisal's Damascus committee had for months been prepared to take over the reins when the Turks crashed. We had only to get in touch with them, to tell them the movements of the Allies, and what was required. So as dusk deepened Nasir sent the Rualla horse into the town, to find Ali Riza, the chairman of our committee, or Shukri el Ayubi, his assistant, telling them that relief would be available on the morrow, if they constructed a government at once. As a matter of fact it had been done at four o'clock in the afternoon, before we took action. Ali Riza was absent, put in command at the last moment by the Turks of the retreat of their army from Galilee before Chauvel: but Shukri found unexpected support from the Algerian brothers, Mohammed Said and Abd el Kader. With the help of then-retainers the Arab flag was on the Town Hall before sunset as the last echelons of Germans and Turks defiled past. They say the hindmost general saluted it, ironically.

I dissuaded Nasir from going in. This would be a night of confusion, and it would better serve his dignity if he entered serenely at dawn. He and Nuri Shaalan intercepted the second body of Rualla camel men, who had started out with me from Deraa this morning; and sent them all forward into Damascus, to support the Rualla sheikhs. So by midnight, when we went to rest, we had four thousand of our armed men in the town.

I wanted to sleep, for my work was coming on the morrow; but I could not. Damascus was the climax of our two years' uncertainty, and my mind was distracted by tags of all the ideas which had been used or rejected in that time. Also Kiswe was stifling with the exhalations of too many trees, too many plants, too many human beings: a microcosm of the crowded world in front of us.

As the Germans left Damascus they fired the dumps and ammunition stores, so that every few minutes we were jangled by explosions, whose first shock set the sky white with flame. At each such roar the earth seemed to shake; we would lift our eyes to the north and see the pale sky prick out suddenly in sheaves of yellow points, as the shells, thrown to terrific heights from each bursting magazine, in their turn burst like clustered rockets. I turned to Stirling and muttered 'Damascus is burning', sick to think of the great town in ashes as the price of freedom.

When dawn came we drove to the head of the ridge, which stood over the oasis of the city, afraid to look north for the ruins we expected: but, instead of ruins, the silent gardens stood blurred green with river mist, in whose setting shimmered the city, beautiful as ever, like a pearl in the morning sun. The uproar of the night had shrunk to a stiff tall column of smoke, which rose in sullen blackness from the store-yard by Kadem, terminus of the Hejaz line.

We drove down the straight banked road through the watered fields, in which the peasants were just beginning their day's work. A galloping horseman checked at our head-cloths in the car, with a merry salutation, holding out a bunch of yellow grapes. 'Good news — Damascus salutes you.' He came from Shukri.

Nasir was just beyond us: to him we carried the tidings, that he might have the honourable entry, a privilege of his fifty battles. With Nuri Shaalan beside him, he asked a final gallop from his horse, and vanished down the long road in a cloud of dust, which hung reluctantly in the air between the water splashes. To give him a fair start, Stirling and I found a little stream, cool in the depths of a steep channel. By it we stopped, to wash and shave.

Some Indian troopers peered at us and our car and its ragged driver's army shorts and tunic. I was in pure Arab dress; Stirling, but for his head-covering, was all British staff officer. Their N.C.O., an obtuse and bad-tempered person, thought he had taken prisoners. When delivered from his arrest we judged we might go after Nasir.

Quite quietly we drove up the long street to the Government buildings on the bank of the Barada. The way was packed with people, lined solid on the side-walks, in the road, at the windows and on the balconies or house-tops. Many were crying, a few cheered faintly, some bolder ones cried our names: but mostly they looked and looked, joy shining in their eyes. A movement like a long sigh from gate to heart of the city, marked our course.

At the Town Hall things were different. Its steps and stairs were packed with a swaying mob: yelling, embracing, dancing, singing. They crushed a way for us to the antechamber, where were the gleaming Nasir, and Nuri Shaalan, seated. On either side of them stood Abd el Kader, my old enemy, and Mohammed Said, his brother. I was dumb with amazement. Mohammed Said leaped forward and shouted that they, grandsons of Abd el Kader, the Emir, with Shukri el Ayubi, of Saladin's house, had formed the government and proclaimed Hussein 'King of the Arabs' yesterday, into the ears of the humbled Turks and Germans.

While he ranted I turned to Shukri, who was no statesman, but a beloved man, almost a martyr in the people's eyes, because of what he had suffered from Jemal. He told me how the Algerians, alone of all Damascus, had stood by the Turks till they saw them running. Then, with their Algerians, they had burst in upon Feisal's committee where it sat in secret, and brutally assumed control.

They were fanatics, whose ideas were theological, not logical; and I turned to Nasir, meaning through him to check their impudence now from the start; but there came a diversion. The screaming press about us parted as though a ram drove through, men going down to right and left among ruined chairs and tables, while the terrific roaring of a familiar voice triumphed, and stilled them dead.

In the cleared space were Auda abu Tayi and Sultan el Atrash, chief of the Druses, tearing one another. Their followers bounded forward, while I jumped in to drive them apart; crashing upon Mohammed el Dheilan, filled with the same purpose. Together we broke them, and forced Auda back a pace, while Hussein el Atrash hustled the lighter Sultan into the crowd, and away to a side room.

Auda was too blind with rage to be fairly conscious. We got him into the great state-hall of the building; an immense, pompous, gilded room, quiet as the grave, since all doors but ours were locked. We pushed him into a chair and held him, while in his fits he foamed and shouted till his voice cracked, his body twitching and jerking, arms lunging wildly at any weapon within reach, his face swollen with blood, bareheaded, the long hair streaming over his eyes.

The old man had been hit first, by Sultan, and his ungovernable spirit, drunk with a life-time's wine of self-will, raved to wash out the insult in Druse blood. Zaal came in, with the Hubsi; and the four or five of us united to restrain him: but it was half an hour before he calmed enough to hear us speaking, and another half-hour before we had his promise to leave his satisfaction, for three days, in the hands of Mohammed and myself. I went out and had Sultan el Atrash taken secretly from the town with all speed; and then looked round for Nasir and Abd el Kader, to set in order their Government.

They were gone. The Algerians had persuaded Nasir to their house for refreshment. It was a good hap, for there were more pressing public things. We must prove the old days over, a native government in power: for this Shukri would be my best instrument, as acting Governor. So in the Blue Mist, we set off to show ourselves, his enlargement in authority itself a banner of revolution for the citizens.

When we came in there had been some miles of people greeting us, now there were thousands for every hundred then. Every man, woman and child in this city of a quarter-million souls seemed in the streets, waiting only the spark of our appearance to ignite their spirits. Damascus went mad with joy. The men tossed up their tar-bushes to cheer, the women tore off their veils. Householders threw flowers, hangings, carpets, into the road before us: their wives leaned, screaming with laughter, through the lattices and splashed us with bath-dippers of scent.

Poor dervishes made themselves our running footmen in front and behind, howling and cutting themselves with frenzy; and over the local cries and the shrilling of women came the measured roar of men's voices chanting, 'Feisal, Nasir, Shukri, Urens', in waves which began here, rolled along the squares, through the market down long streets to East gate, round the wall, back up the Meidan; and grew to a wall of shouts around us by the citadel.

They told me Chauvel was coming; our cars met in the southern outskirts. I described the excitement in the city, and how our new government could not guarantee administrative services before the following day, when I would wait on him, to discuss his needs and mine. Meanwhile I made myself responsible for public order: only begging him to keep his men outside, because to-night would see such carnival as the town had not held for six hundred years, and its hospitality might pervert their discipline.

Chauvel unwillingly followed my lead, his hesitations ruled by my certainty. Like Barrow, he had no instructions what to do with the captured city; and as we had taken possession, knowing our road, with clear purpose, prepared processes, and assets in hand, he had no choice but to let us carry on. His chief of staff who did his technical work, Godwin, a soldier, was delighted to shelve the responsibility of civil government. His advocacy confirmed my assumption.

Indeed, it was confirmed in Chauvel's next words, which asked liberty for himself to drive round the town. I gave it so gladly that he asked if it would be convenient for him to make formal entry with his troops on the morrow. I said certainly, and we thought a little of the route. There flashed into my head the pleasure of our men at Deraa when Barrow saluted their flag — and I quoted it as an example good to follow before the Town Hall when he marched past. It was a casual thought of mine, but he saw significance in it: and a grave difficulty if he saluted any flag except the British. I wanted to make faces at his folly: but instead, in kindness I kept him company, seeing equal difficulty in his passing the Arab flag deliberately not noticed. We stumbled round this problem, while the joyful, unknowing crowd cheered us. As a compromise I suggested we leave out the Town Hall, and invent another route, passing, let us say, by the Post Office. I meant this for farce, since my patience had broken down; but he took it seriously, as a helpful idea; and in return would concede a point for my sake and the Arabs. In place of an 'entry' he would make a 'march through': it meant that instead of going in the middle he would go at the head, or instead of the head, the middle. I forgot, or did not well hear, which: for I should not have cared if he had crawled under or flown over his troops, or split himself to march both sides.

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Chapter 120

While we discussed ceremonial antics a world of work waited, inside and outside, for each of us. It was bitter, playing down to such a part: also the won game of grab left a bad taste in my mouth, spoiling my entry much as I spoiled Chauvel's. The airy birds of promise so freely sent to the Arabs in England's day of need were homing now, to her confusion. However, the course I mapped for us was proving correct. Another twelve hours, and we should be safe, with the Arabs in so strong a place that their hand might hold through the long wrangle and appetite of politics about to break out about our luscious spoil.

We sneaked back to the Town Hall, to grapple with Abd el Kader: but he had not returned. I sent for him, and for his brother, and for Nasir: and got a curt reply that they were sleeping. So should I have been: but instead four or five of us were eating a snatch-meal in the gaudy salon, sitting on gold chairs, which writhed, about a gold table whose legs also writhed obscenely.

I explained pointedly to the messenger what I meant. He disappeared, and in a few minutes a cousin of the Algerians came up, very agitated, and said they were on their

way. This was an open lie, but I replied that it was well, since in half an hour I should have fetched British troops and looked carefully for them. He ran off in haste; and Nuri Shaalan asked quietly what I meant to do.

I said I would depose Abd el Kader and Mohammed Said, and appoint Shukri in their place till Feisal came; and I did it in this gentle fashion because I was loath to hurt Nasir's feelings, and had no strength of my own if men resisted. He asked if the English would not come. I replied Certainly; but the sorrow was that afterwards they might not go. He thought a moment, and said, 'You shall have the Rualla if you do all your will, and quickly'. Without waiting, the old man went out to muster me his tribe. The Algerians came to the tryst with their bodyguards, and with murder in their eyes: but, on the way, saw Nuri Shaalan's massed lowering tribesmen; Nuri Said, with his regulars in the square; and within, my reckless guardsmen lounging in the ante-chamber. They saw clearly that the game was up: yet it was a stormy meeting.

In my capacity as deputy for Feisal I pronounced their civil government of Damascus abolished, and named Shukri Pasha Ayubi as acting Military Governor. Nuri Said was to be Commandant of troops; Azmi, Adjutant General; Jemil, Chief of Public Security. Mohammed Said, in a bitter reply, denounced me as a Christian and an Englishman, and called on Nasir to assert himself.

Poor Nasir, far out of his depth, could only sit and look miserable at this falling out of friends. Abd el Kader leaped up and cursed me virulently, puffing himself to a white heat of passion. His motives seemed dogmatic, irrational: so I took no heed. This maddened him yet more: suddenly he leaped forward with drawn dagger.

Like a flash Auda was on him, the old man bristling with the chained-up fury of the morning, and longing for a fight. It would have been heaven, for him, to have shredded someone there and then with his great fingers. Abd el Kader was daunted; and Nuri Shaalan closed the debate by saying to the carpet (so enormous and violent a carpet it was) that the Rualla were mine, and no questions asked. The Algerians rose and swept in high dudgeon from the hall. I was persuaded they should be seized and shot; but could not make myself fear their power of mischief, nor set the Arabs an example of precautionary murder as part of politics.

We passed to work. Our aim was an Arab Government, with foundations large and native enough to employ the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of the rebellion, translated into terms of peace. We had to save some of the old prophetic personality upon a substructure to carry that ninety per cent of the population who had been too solid to rebel, and on whose solidity the new State must rest.

Rebels, especially successful rebels, were of necessity bad subjects and worse governors. Feisal's sorry duty would be to rid himself of his war-friends, and replace them by those elements which had been most useful to the Turkish Government. Nasir was too little a political philosopher to feel this. Nuri Said knew, and Nuri Shaalan.

Quickly they collected the nucleus of a staff, and plunged ahead as a team. History told us the steps were humdrum: appointments, offices, and departmental routine. First the police. A commandant and assistants were chosen: districts allotted: provisional wages, indents, uniform, responsibilities. The machine began to function. Then came a complaint of water-supply. The conduit was foul with dead men and animals. An inspectorate, with its labour corps, solved this. Emergency regulations were drafted.

The day was drawing in, the world was in the streets: riotous. We chose an engineer to superintend the power-house, charging him at all pains to illuminate the town that night. The resumption of street lighting would be our most signal proof of peace. It was done, and to its shining quietness much of the order of the first evening of victory belonged: though our new police were zealous, and the grave sheikhs of the many quarters helped their patrol.

Then sanitation. The streets were full of the debris of the broken army, derelict carts and cars, baggage, material, corpses. Typhus, dysentery and pellagra were rife among the Turks, and sufferers had died in every shadow along the line of march. Nuri prepared scavenger gangs to make a first clearing of the pestilent roads and open places, and rationed out his doctors among the hospitals, with promises of drugs and food next day, if any could be found.

Next a fire-brigade. The local engines had been smashed by the Germans, and the Army storehouses still burned, endangering the town. Mechanics were cried for; and trained men, pressed into service, sent down to circumscribe the flames. Then the prisons. Warders and inmates had vanished from them together. Shukri made a virtue of that, by amnesties, civil, political, military. The citizens must be disarmed — or at least dissuaded from carrying rifles. A proclamation was the treatment, followed up by good-humoured banter merging into police activity. This would effect our end without malice in three or four days.

Relief work. The destitute had been half-starved for days. A distribution of the damaged food from the Army storehouses was arranged. After that food must be provided for the general. The city might be starving in two days: there were no stocks in Damascus. To get temporary supplies from the near villages was easy, if we restored confidence, safe-guarded the roads, and replaced the transport animals, which the Turks had carried off, by others from the pool of captures. The British would not share out. We parted with our own animals: our Army transport.

The routine feeding of the place needed the railway. Pointsmen, drivers, firemen, shopmen, traffic staff had to be found and reengaged immediately. Then the telegraphs: the junior staff were available: directors must be found, and linesmen sent out to put the system in repair. The post could wait a day or two: but quarters for ourselves and the British were urgent: and so were the resumption of trade, the opening of shops, and their corollary needs of markets and acceptable currency.

The currency was horrible. The Australians had looted millions in Turkish notes, the only stuff in use, and had reduced it to no value by throwing it about. One trooper gave a five hundred pound note to a lad who held his horse three minutes. Young tried his prentice-hand at bolstering it with the last remnant of our Akaba gold: but new prices had to be fixed, which involved the printing press; and hardly was that settled when a newspaper was demanded. Also, as heirs of the Turkish Government, the Arabs must maintain its records of fisc and property: with the register of souls. Whereas the old staffs were taking jubilant holiday.

Requisitions plagued us while we were yet half-hungry. Chauvel had no forage and he had forty thousand horses to feed. If forage was not brought him he would go seek it and the new-lit freedom puff out like a match. Syria's status hung on his satisfaction; and we should find little mercy in his judgements.