

Glubb Pasha and the Arab Legion

During the 1950s, John Glubb and the Arab Legion became the ‘cornerstone’ of Britain’s imperial presence in the Middle East. Based on unprecedented access to the unofficial archive of the Arab Legion, including a major new accession of Glubb’s private papers, Graham Jevon examines and revises Britain’s post-1945 retreat from empire in the Middle East.

Jevon details how Glubb’s command of the Arab Legion secured British and Jordanian interests during the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, answering questions that have dogged historians of this conflict for decades. He reveals how the Arab Legion was transformed, by Cold War concerns, from an internal Jordanian security force to a quasi-division within the British Army. Jevon also sheds new light on the succession crisis following King Abdullah’s assassination, and uses previously unseen documents to challenge accepted contentions concerning King Hussein’s dismissal of Glubb, the 1956 Suez Crisis, and the nature of Britain’s imperial decline.

Previously a Tutor on the Stanford Program in Oxford (teaching third-year undergraduates from Stanford University), Graham Jevon gained his DPhil from the University of Oxford. His research interests centre on twentieth-century British imperialism and decolonisation. Currently, he is working on a new project analysing Britain’s construction and use of armies throughout the Arab world after the First World War.

Glubb Pasha and the Arab Legion

*Britain, Jordan, and the End
of Empire in the Middle East*

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It goes without saying, of course, that any errors and omissions are mine, and mine alone.

A Note on Transliteration

A formal method for the transliteration of Arabic names has not been rigidly applied. For individuals familiar with English readers, such as King Hussein and President Nasser, the common Anglicised form has been used. There are also occasional inconsistencies where adjustments have not been made to the transliteration in original sources. For example, in direct quotations Talal may be spelled Tellal and Tawfiq Abu al-Huda written as Tewfiq Abul Huda.

Abbreviations

AHC	Arab Higher Committee
AJJDB	Anglo-Jordan Joint Defence Board
ALA	Arab Liberation Army
BLPI	British Loaned Personnel (Iraq)
BMEO	British Middle East Office
CAB	Cabinet
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CO	Colonial Office
COS	Chief of Staff
DMO	Director of Military Operations
FO	Foreign Office
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GP1986	Glubb Papers (1986 accession)
GP2006	Glubb Papers (2006 accession)
HMG	His/Her Majesty's Government
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
MECA	Middle East Centre Archive, St Antony's College, Oxford
MELF	Middle East Land Forces
MOD	Ministry of Defence
RJAF	Royal Jordanian Air Force
SBO	Senior British Officer
SWB	Summary of World Broadcasts (BBC)
TJFF	Transjordan Frontier Force
TNA	The National Archives (UK)
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
VCIGS	Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff
WO	War Office