

Desert Exploration's Impact on the War
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(a) Objective Statement

My objective is to explore, through field research and local data collection, Desert Exploration in the middle east and northern Africa, and how it affected the outcome of the war and subsequently our present. I will focus on a few key geographers and scientists who were essential in the mapping of the various deserts in the region in the early twentieth century.

(b) Background

At the turn of the 14th century the only known publicised works of information on the Sahara desert was based on word of mouth knowledge from traders active in that region. As the Western world transition into imperialism, and it's desire to spread itself across the entire world increased, more and more expeditions were sent to Africa and the Middle East.

Due to interest in the major waterways of the region (the Nile River and Niger River), European exploration of the region exploded in the early 19th century. This included the mapping of the Niger River by British Explorers, their discovery of Lake Chad, and even a crossing of the entire Saharan desert by Scottish explorer Alexander Laing. The Germans and French also undertook notable expeditions, further mapping out the region.

By the end of the 19th century, most of its major features were known, and it became one of the fronts of the first world war. The major powers used their knowledge of the region, its climate, its people, and most of all its geography to give them an advantage in the fight. Even afterwards, there was even more detailed expeditions from renowned geographers and scientists who acquired information that was crucial in future conflicts and diplomatic objectives of several nations.

From the various members of the British Royal Geographic Society, to independently sponsored explorers from Spain and Germany, each expedition allowed the western world to gain valuable information that they would use to make important decisions. Even after the major global conflicts, this mapping of the region proved increasing useful as conflicts began to be centered around the middle east and all around Africa.

Some of the most important inventions of our time were created with the purpose of aiding in the exploration of this region, and their effects on history can still be felt today. The tale told by some of these accounts and autobiographies are edge-of-your-seat adventurous, epic, stories that can resonate with any admirer of the human spirit. And the vastness and pure scale of the desert dwarfs any other setting. It's serene beauty and awe-inspiring history makes it one of the most interesting regions to explore the history of; and I hope I can do my predecessors justice.

(c) Method

The primary method of research will be interviewing and reading past articles. I hope to do as many of the interviews as I can in person but as the community is so spread out now, some of the interview will have to be done online. I also plan on emulating one of these Saharan expeditions to gain new insight on their method as well as acquire some hopefully gorgeous photographs and B-roll that can be used in an article or video. The general timeline is to travel to London and pay a visit to the Royal Geographic Society as well as some of the museums there which will allow me to look at Primary Resources that came from this time of exploration, as well as talk to some of the leading current historians who are knowledgeable in the subject. The second half would be travelling to the desert itself, most likely basing in Cairo, and talking to the local

experts. I would then venture out into the desert, following in the footsteps of my subject matter and acquire new insight on how this exploration was done.

More in depth, I would start by travelling to London most likely in June of 2023. I would spend around 2-3 days there conducting research. This includes the following tasks: visiting the Royal Geographic Society and reading everything I can about the various expeditions to Northern Africa from a wide variety of its members, including some journals that were not published online. Interviewing members of the Royal Geographic Society who are knowledgeable in the area I am interested in, and get their perspective as well as any firsthand knowledge they have on the subject. I then have many Museums I would like to visit, especially the Imperial War Museum which contains actual weapons, vehicles, tools, and documents from the two World Wars.

After that, I would spend seven days in Cairo, Egypt. The first two days would be spent visiting any local experts and museums that are there. Specifically a building called the Geographical Association of Egypt, as well as Cairo University which has certain professors I would like to interview to get information about these expeditions.

The next 5 days would be spent venturing out into the desert from Cairo, visiting of the sites and land markers that were visited by previous explorers. This would be both to get a better idea of what it was like for them, the conditions they faced, the state of mind they would be in; as well as in hopes of collecting any physical evidence of the expeditions, and photographing any of the recognized sites.

Aside from the research I have already conducted online that would aid me in achieving said goals, I am more than physically prepared to take on the adventure. Having spent 5 years living in Saudi Arabia, I have a basic understanding of the Arabic language as well as Middle-Eastern culture which help me navigation my way through Cairo.

(d) Outcome

After the research is complete, I hope to have an article written ready for journal publication. This article would go in depth on the various stories, people, and events in the exploration of the Desert, as well as discuss my findings in it's impact on the war and history. There will also be an accompanying video published so that the subject may find a wider audience. The new insight gained will hopefully be an all encompassing yet concise look at the history of the desert and its impact on society. Currently it's impact is quite under-rated and it is barely talked about or covered in the education system. I hope that with the help of UCF we can change this as it is one of the most important regions in our world both in the past and certainly in the future.

References

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(e) Summary

This research would require IRB approval as it involves interviewing many experts and locals in the region to get as much information and perspectives as possible on the topic. Taking into account travel and accommodations the estimated budget of this research would be around \$2,000, I would ask that am I funded for half this amount, with the rest coming from my end. So my **final requested amount is \$1,000..**