

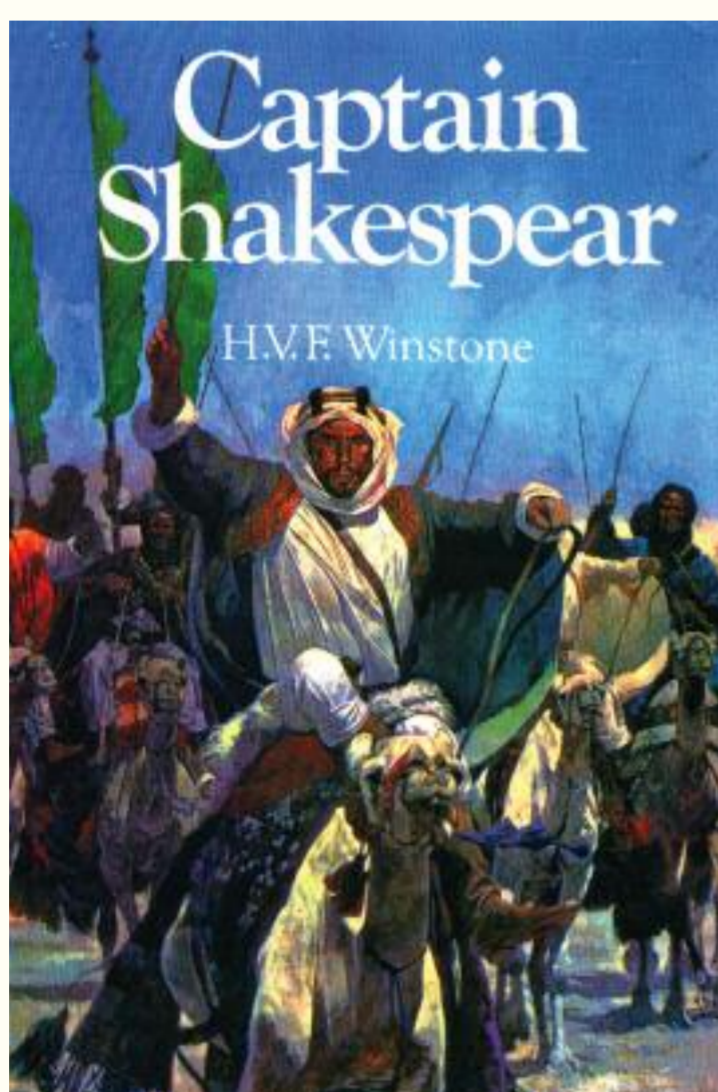
Captain William Shakespear C.I.E. (1894-96)

Captain Shakespear was a man of immense capability and incredible energy. He worked for the foreign and political department as the political agent in the vicinity of Kuwait. He was immensely popular with the Arab tribes and was the first official British contact with Ibn Sa'ud, the future king of Saudi Arabia. He spoke Urdu, Pushtu, Persian and Arabic fluently. Shakespear performed a memorable journey across Arabia for which he was decorated with the C.I.E. He began the 1,800 mile journey in Kuwait and made his way to Aqaba via the Nafud Desert.

Using his knowledge and his friendship with Ibn Sa'ud, Shakespear secured Arab support for the British-Indian Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. In January, 1915, at the Battle of Jarrab, Shakespear was struck by a bullet and killed. His helmet was handed over to the Ottoman authorities and hung on one of the main gates of Medina as proof of the Al Sau'd's collaboration with the British.



Shakespear in the dress uniform of the Bengal Lancers
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"His death ... was a great loss to his country, but it was a disaster to the Arab cause. It must certainly be reckoned in the small category of individual events which have changed the course of history. Had he survived to continue a work for which he was so eminently suited, it is extremely doubtful whether subsequent campaigns of Lawrence would ever have taken place in the West .."

Arabia. H.St. John Philby, London (1930, pp233-234.)