

Reference code: GB165-0179

Title: Gerard Leachman Collection

Name of creator: Leachman, Gerard Evelyn (1880-1920) Soldier

Dates of creation of material: 1900-1920

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 1 box

Biographical history: Leachman, Gerard Evelyn (1880-1920) Soldier.

Born 27 Jul 1880 in Petersfield, Hampshire. Leachman attended Charterhouse school from Oct 1893 to Dec 1897 and from there he joined the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. He began his military service with the Royal Sussex Regiment on 10 Feb 1900 as Second Lieutenant in 'C' company, commanded by Captain Robinson in the South African War. Leachman returned to England on 15 Sept 1900 after being shot while on duty, he later returned to South Africa at the end of 1900 to begin his second year's service where he witnessed the end of the war on 1 Jun 1902. Leachman was then posted to India with his regiment having earned the Queen's Medal 4 clasps and the Kings Medal 2 clasps. In 1905 Leachman travelled into Tibet on one of his first expeditions, journeying through Kashmir, Persia, Iraq and Turkey. Leachman took military leave and travelled from India to England on 31 Jan 1907, travelling through Persia, Dubai, Baghdad and Aleppo before arriving in England on 18 Apr 1907. When Leachman returned to India, he began working for Military Intelligence; here he learnt Arabic and German and studied intelligence reports from around Arabia. In 1910 Leachman took part in his first expedition to the Arabian Peninsula travelling through Baghdad with his regiment, he documented his journey in great detail and was awarded the Macgregor Medal for Exploration in 1910 and in Mar 1911 was awarded by the Royal Geographical Society the Gill Memorial medal. As the Mesopotamia Campaign advanced northward towards Baghdad in 1915, Leachman was sent to Basra to work with tribes from Southern Iraq. In Mar 1917 Leachman was sent to Cairo to be briefed on London's plans for a post war Arabia, he returned to Mesopotamia as Lieutenant Colonel and was posted to Karbala and in Nov 1918 Leachman was awarded the DSO. A revolt in Iraq in Jun 1920 led to Leachman being murdered on 12 Aug 1920 by Khamis, son of Dhari al-Mahmud of the Zuba' tribe. Leachman's body was placed in the British Cemetery in Baghdad on 1 Mar 1921, he never married.

Scope and content: Diaries written by Lt-Colonel Gerard Evelyn Leachman from 1900-1910. Three diaries document his first military post with the Royal Sussex Regiment in South Africa during the Boar War. Leachman describes the landscape and places he travels through, the people he meets and the regiment's encounters with the Boar right through to when peace is declared and he is re-posted to India. Two further diaries document Leachman's journey from Iraq (Baghdad) to Syria (Aleppo) and from India to England while on military leave and his first expedition to the Arab Peninsula through Baghdad, for which he was awarded the Gill Medal by the Royal Geographical Society. The final diary consists of newspaper clippings reporting on Leachman's death by English and Arab newspapers, documenting his career and giving details of his murder and burial.

System of arrangement: Chronological

Access conditions: Open

Language of material: English

Conditions governing reproduction: No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

Custodial history: In the possession of Col. Leachman

Immediate source of acquisition: Received before 1978

Related Units of Description:

In MEC Archive

- GB165-0229 Philby Collection – 4/1/4 Legend of Lijman, unpublished biographical history of Leachman by Harry St John Bridger Philby.

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist

Publication note:

Biographies written of Lt-Colonel Gerard Evelyn Leachman:

- Bray, Major N. N. E., *A paladin of Arabia; the biography of Brevet Lieut.-Colonel G. E. Leachman, C.I.E., D.S.O., of the Royal Sussex regiment* (London: J. Heritage, The Unicorn press Ltd, 1936)

- Winstone, H.V.F., *Leachman : "OC Desert" : the life of Lieutenant-Colonel Gerard Leachman D.S.O.* London (New York : Quartet Books, 1982)

Archivist's note: Fonds and file and item level description created by Kate Rose, Feb 2012. Biographical history based on entry from Leachman's diaries, The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography on Leachman, Who's Who published by A & C Black and from the TS from 'The Legend of Lijman', an unpublished biographical history of Leachman by Harry St John Bridger Philby.

**SERIES AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE GERARD LEACHMAN
COLLECTION**

1	Diaries	1900 - 1920	6 volumes
1/1	<u>Personal Diary / Journal</u> TS Diary/Journal originally labelled VI, diary begins 10 Feb 1900 when Leachman departs on duty with the 1 st Royal Sussex Regiment, heading to South Africa to fight in the Boer War and finishes in the 22 Sept 1900. Within the diary Leachman writes of his military duties, the destinations the regiment travel through on route including Gibraltar, Malta, Tenerife and Cape town. It also includes details of the other regiments Leachman travels and fights alongside, his first encounter with the Boers and his stay in a field hospital after he was shot.	1900	1 volume
1/2	<u>Personal Diary / Journal</u> TS Diary/Journal originally labelled VII, diary begins 31 Dec 1900 when Leachman is about to depart Southampton on the S.S Oratava for Cape town, for his second trip and finishes Dec 1901. The Diary includes the travel with his regiment, including the places he marches through, his encounters with the Boer, the prisoners that are captured and the men in his regiment who are killed or wounded.	1901	1 volume
1/3	<u>Personal Diary / Journal</u> TS Diary/Journal originally labelled VIII, diary Begins 1 Jan 1902 continuing Leachman's journey with Royal Sussex Regiment during the Boer War in South Africa. Leachman documents the miles the regiment travel each day, where they set up camp and the number of prisoners and cattle captured each day. The diary also documents when peace was declared and how Leachman spent his free time before heading home to England on the 18 Jul on the S.S Bavarian, the diary ends 21 Jul 1902.	1902	1 volume

- 1/4 Personal Diary / Journal 1904 - 1910 1 volume
- MS Diary/Journal originally labelled IV, undated section at beginning of diary, first dated section begins 29 May 1910. The diary documents Leachman's journey from Baghdad to Aleppo and includes his journey in miles and time taken to travel, the agriculture, landscape and population of the areas he travels through. Also included are hand drawn map of his journey and Leachman's expenditures. Diary dated 1904 is read in reverse of diary dated 1910. Diary begins 8 Mar 1904 and finishes 11 Mar 1904, Leachman writes of being in Damlama – Turkey. The diary is then undated but documents Leachman being in Karama, learning Arabic.
- 1/5 Personal Diary / Journal 1907 - 1910 1 volume
- MS Diary/Journal originally labelled I & II. Diary dated 1907 is a travel journal which documents Leachman's personal opinions of his journey from India to England. The diary begins on 31 Jan in India and finishes on 18 Apr upon his arrival in England. Within in the diary are descriptions of the many destinations Leachman travels through on his journey including Persia, Dubai, the desert tribes of Arabia and Baghdad. Descriptions include ports, landscapes, population, communities and religion. Diary dated 1910 is read in reverse of 1907 diary, which begins in Nov 1909 and finishes 22 Jan 1910. During this time Leachman took part in his first expedition to the Arabian Peninsula. The diary includes his travel to Baghdad with other officers and his trip through the desert in Dec 1910.
- 1/6 Journal 1920 1 volume
- Newspaper clippings relating to Leachman's murder including clippings from the British newspapers The Times, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, clippings from The Bagdad Times and an obituary from the National

Geographical Society. The newspaper clippings and obituary document Leachman's career and give details surrounding his murder and his military burial.