

**Colonel Ibrahim Abdul Rahman Al Hussein
Syrian Officer and Arab Nationalist**



(1911–1968)

Career Highlights, Decorations and Distinctions

Ibrahim Al Hussein was born in 1911 to Abdul Rahman ibn Othman Al Hussein and Lam'an Arnaout, who lived in Acre (Akka) in Ottoman Palestine. Abdul Rahman and his family moved to Lebanon in the early 1900s where he worked in the Ottoman Ministry of Finance in Ba'albeck. After the Ottomans retreated from the Levant in 1918, Abdul Rahman settled his family in Homs as citizens of what was to become the future state of Syria.

In November 1919, at the conclusion of World War I, France occupied Lebanon and in June 1920 occupied Syria and imposed mandates on both that lasted until 1945. During these mandate years, Al Hussein attended the Frerés Secondary School in Homs and graduated in 1934, after which he enrolled in the Homs Military Academy from which he graduated in 1937.

Upon graduating from the Academy, Al Hussein was assigned to the Troupes Spéciales du Levant with the rank of Second-Lieutenant and Platoon Commander in the Light Cavalry. The Troupes were tasked with supporting France's Army of the Levant and Al Hussein was attached to the Troupes in northeastern Syria where he rose to the rank of First-Lieutenant in March 1941.

During World War II, in June 1941 the Allied forces invaded Syria and Lebanon from Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine and defeated the Army of the Levant in Syria. Al Hussein and the Syrian troops in the Army of the Levant were transferred to the command of the Free French authorities in the Middle East.

In May 1945, at the conclusion of the war, Syria's President Shukri Al Quwatli led a popular uprising against the French occupation and demanded full independence for Syria.

Al Hussein joined this uprising and in June 1945 he led his troops in the Al Jazira Province in an open rebellion against the French military.

His troops secured a number of outposts and army barracks and clashed with the French occupation forces in Al Hasakah and Al Derbasiyah. After Syria gained its independence in 1945 Al Hussein's leadership role during the uprising was recognized by the Syrian government and he was promoted to Captain and placed in command of the Syrian forces in the Al Jazira Province.

At the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War on 15 May 1948, Captain Al Hussein led his Badiyat Al Jazira Company into the front lines and distinguished himself for exceptional valor on both the Lebanese and Syrian fronts. Throughout the war, however, his troops took heavy casualties and found themselves continuously short of ammunition and supplies.

The war ended with the Syrian forces only succeeding in protecting their own and Lebanon's territories and with Israel occupying the entire Galilee.

This poor military outcome led to widespread unrest in Syria which was exacerbated by an economic breakdown and civilian and military recriminations in regards to Syria's state of affairs. An attempt by President Shukri Al Quwatli to undermine the authority of General Husni Al Zaim, the Syrian Army's Commander-in-Chief then led to a coup against the civilian authorities.

To execute the coup, Al Zaim recruited Al Hussein, who was then a Major and the Chief of Military Police into the small circle of key officers. Al Hussein was tasked with arresting President Al Quwatli and his cabinet on 30 March 1949.

These arrests were accomplished within one night in a precise operation with no violence or loss of life.

A few months later, on 14 August 1949, Al Zaim was himself overthrown and executed in a counter-coup led by Generals Sami Al Hinnawi and Adib Al Shishakli. Al Hussein was also attacked in his home but after an intense, single-handed, fire fight throughout the night, he was given safe conduct and agreed to a military detention. The detention lasted one month and he was exonerated by a military tribunal from any wrongdoing associated with Al Zaim's leadership.

On 19 December 1949, Al Shishakli overthrew the civilian government of Hashim Al Atassi which had then taken office because of plans to unify Syria with Iraq's monarchy. Al Shishakli recalled Al Hussein from a field command assignment on the Israeli border and promoted him to Lt. Colonel and Chief of Military Police and Head of Army Intelligence.

In 1951, as a result of continued subversion by Israeli infiltrators, Al Hussein was given a special assignment to re-organize and modernize the Syrian Army's School of Commandos and its Special Forces.

In early 1952, Al Hussein attended an extended military course in armor and air force coordination tactics in France and upon his return in late 1952, was promoted to full Colonel and Head of Police and Chief of National Security.

In January 1954, President Al Shishakli assigned Al Hussein to the Syrian diplomatic mission to the U.S. as Military Attaché but himself resigned as president within two months due to an open rebellion by the Druze in southwestern Syria and turmoil elsewhere triggered by followers of former President Hashim Al Atassi.

In August 1954 Al Hussein requested a closer assignment to Syria and he was reassigned as Military Attaché to Italy. In August 1957 while serving in Italy, Al Hussein was accused of planning a coup with U.S. support to overthrow the Syrian government. The allegations were fabricated by a Syrian army faction that sought a union with Egypt under the leadership of Gamal Abdul Nasser. Al Hussein was tried in absentia and although the accusations were proven false, it was clear that his life was in jeopardy and he chose to remain in self-imposed exile in Rome.

In late 1961 Colonel Al Hussein accepted an invitation by the Saudi Arabian government to serve as Security Advisor to the Council of Ministers under its Prime Minister Prince Faisal ibn Abdul Aziz. He also took on a post as Special Military Advisor to Prince Abd Allah ibn Abdul Aziz in the formation of the modern Saudi Arabian National Guard. This task was completed with exceptional success within 4 years as demonstrated by high visibility military exercises outside of Ar Riyadh in 1966.

In 1968 as a result of the disastrous setbacks in Syria following the Six Day War of June 1967, Al Hussein decided to create and lead a Syrian government-in-exile with the intent of toppling the Ba'athist regime in Syria. These plans were in an advanced stage of execution when they were derailed by his death on 18 December 1968 in a car accident in northern Saudi Arabia.

Colonel Al Hussein's body was flown to Al Madina Al Munawwarah on Friday 29 Ramadan in a private flight provided by the Saudi Royal Court and was buried with honors in the Janatu'l Baqi Cemetery.

At the time of his death, Colonel Al Hussein was survived by his wife Myassar Bach Imam, his daughter Najat, and sons Hassan, Sadad, Haitham, Moujahed and Ihsan, all of whom remained in Saudi Arabia as Saudi Arabian citizens.



17 April 1953, Damascus, Syria.
Colonel Ibrahim Al Hussein at National Day Parade.

Colonel Ibrahim Al Hussein's Military Awards and Distinctions





Syrian Order of Honor medal.

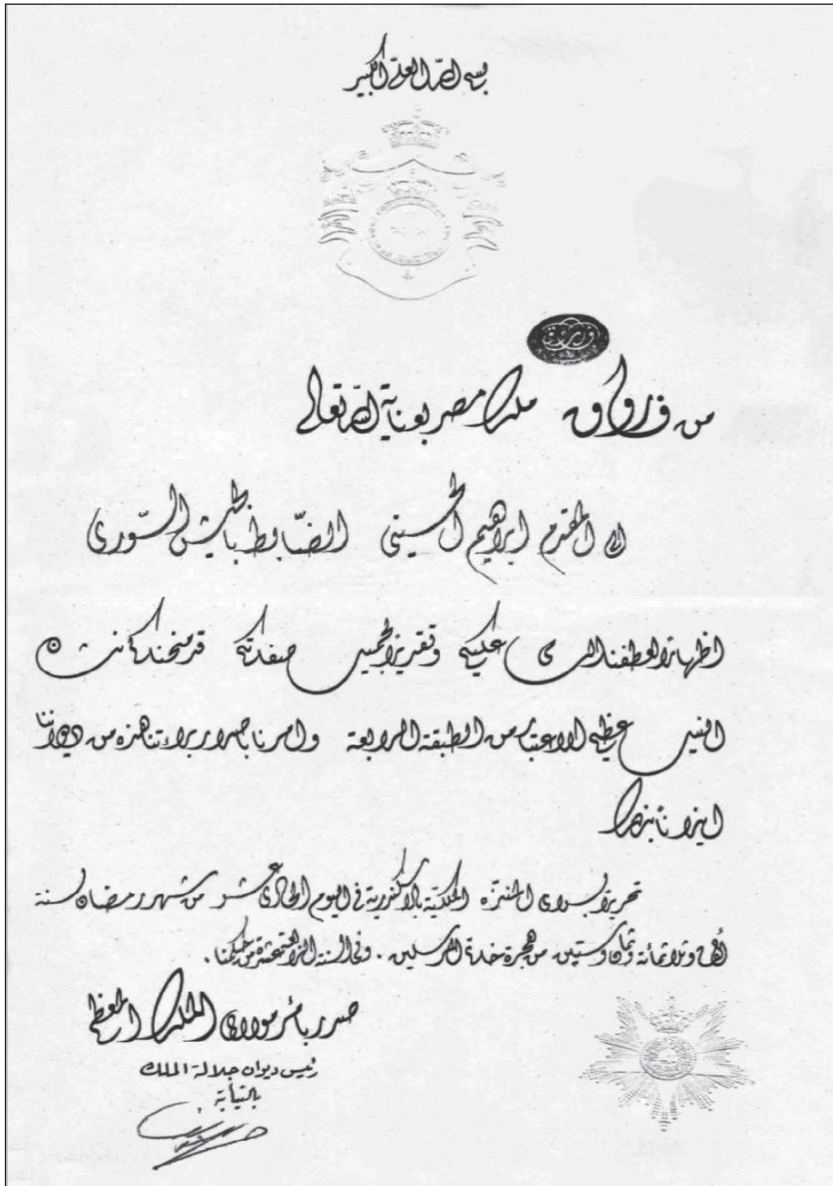
6 December 1948, Syria. Certificate accompanying Syria's Silver medal of Honor in the Third Grade awarded on the recommendation of the Prime Minister Jamil Mardam Bey by President Shukri Al Quwatli to Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini.



Syrian Palestine Campaign medal.

Syrian Order of Military Merit medal.

In December 1948 Syria's President Shukri Al Quwatli, based on the recommendation of Prime Minister Jamil Mardam Bey, awarded Captain Ibrahim Al Husseini the Order of Military Merit and Order of Palestine Campaign medals.



His Majesty King Farouk of Egypt.



Egyptian Order of the Nile medal.

On 15 Ramadan 1368 AH (April 1949), Egypt’s King Farouk awarded Major Ibrahim Al Husseini the Order of the Nile of Great Distinction medal (Nishan Al Nil) in the Fourth Rank issued by royal command to the Head of the Royal Court.

General Order Number 13

The commander in chief of the army commends to the army the captain in the Syrian Army Ibrahim Al Husseini and awards him the war medal with frond commander of a company of troops who participated with his troops on June 5, 1948 in attacking and securing the fortifications of the enemy which had entrenched itself in Al Malikiya–Holy Land – and distinguished himself with bravery and outstanding determination during the entire encounter setting a superior example for his troops of valor and initiative thereby securing the objective that was set for him under a hail of enemy fire and was able to overwhelm the enemy's fierce resistance and force them to retreat after inflicting on it terrible losses.

(1) Beirut 11 July 1949

Commander in Chief of the Army

Signed Fouad Chehab

Copy of the Original

(2) The General, Chief of the
Lebanese Army





11 July 1949, Beirut, Lebanon. Lebanon's Order of the Cedars medal awarded personally by President Bechara Al Khouri to Major Ibrahim Al Hussein, Chief of Syria's Military Police. Certificate accompanying the medal signed on behalf of the President by Prime Minister Riad Al Solh.



11 July 1949, Beirut, Lebanon. Lebanese Prime Minister Riad Al Solh awarding Palestine War medal to Major Ibrahim Al Hussein.



Lebanon's Palestine War medal.

عبدالله
 ملك الأردن

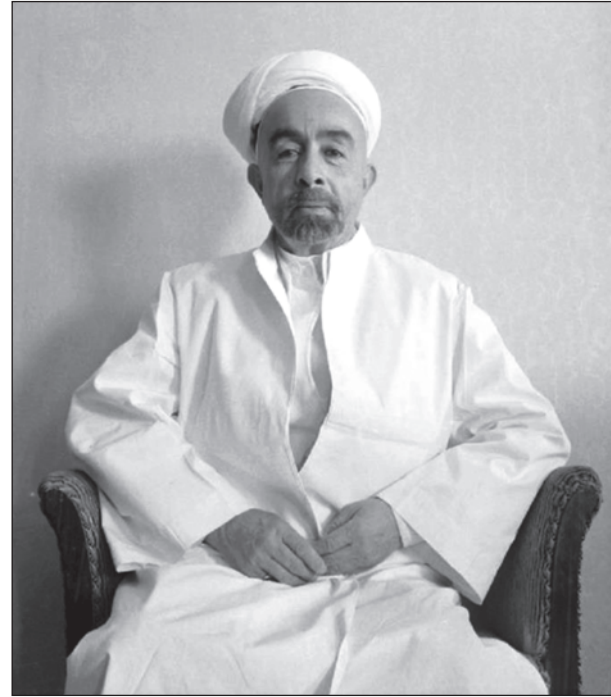
نحن وجه الملك الحسين ملك المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية

تفدياً لخدمته الجليلة والتميز بالنية التي اقصت بها المقدم الامير الحسين
 فقدرنا كونه الكعب للهدوى من الحربية الفاتية ولاننا باصله رضى
 البهوية من وفودك اننا نزلنا.

لمررنا بمرورنا منكم في عمان في اليوم الخامس من شهر شعبان سنة الف والاربع مائة
 وتسع مائة وخمسة عشر للهجرة النبوية في اليوم السادس والعشرين من شهر ربيع الثاني سنة الف
 وتسع مائة وخمسين ميلادية.

بأمر جلالة الملك
 الحسين
 رئيس الوزراء

الملك الحسين
 ملك الأردن



His Majesty King Abd Allah of Jordan.



26 May 1950. King Abd Allah awarded the Star of Jordan of the Second Grade (Wisam Al Kawkab) to Lieutenant-Colonel Ibrahim Al Hussein for military and civil merit.



Syria's Order of Civil Merit medal.



10 June 1952, Syria. General Fawzi Selu, Syria's President and Army Chief-of-Staff and Lieutenant-Colonel Al Hussein.

Ibrahim Al Hussein fought the French occupation forces from June 1945 until Syria's independence on 24 October 1945. He secured Syria's eastern borders through 1947 and led the Badiyat Al Jazira Company in the 1948 Palestine War. After the war he was Chief of Syria's Military Police until 14 August 1949, Commander of the Syrian Army on the Israeli border in late 1949, Chief of Military Police and Head of Army Intelligence from late December 1949 to 21 July 1950, and Head of Police and Chief of National Security from July 1952 to December 1953.



21 April 1953. Certificate accompanying Lebanon’s Order of Honorable Merit medal awarded to Colonel Ibrahim Al Husseini, Syria’s Chief-of-Police and National Security, by the Lebanese President Camille Chamoun.



Lebanon’s Order of Merit medal.