

Key Events in Alexander's Military Career

Background Information About Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great was born in 356 B.C.E. in the kingdom of Macedonia, north of mainland Greece. Although he lived only to the age of 32, he ruled the largest empire the world had ever seen, stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus River. Alexander was a strong military leader, and he conquered many foreign lands with the powerful army his father had left to him. He failed to designate a legitimate heir to succeed him after his death. He died in Babylon (present-day Iraq) in 323 B.C.E. The divided empire he left behind quickly crumbled as various groups fought to control its vast lands.

Event A: Alexander in Thebes

In 335 B.C.E., the Greek city-state of Thebes revolted and declared its independence from Macedonian rule. Alexander the Great, ruler of Macedonia and all of Greece, traveled to Thebes with 30,000 troops to crush the revolt. Alexander's forces were more experienced than the Thebans, and also greatly outnumbered them. While the Thebans fought with determination, Alexander's army eventually defeated them. After the battle, Alexander's troops destroyed the city.

Event B: Alexander in Egypt

In 332 B.C.E., Alexander the Great and his forces arrived in Egypt. The Macedonian forces met no resistance when they entered the country, and the Egyptians enthroned Alexander as king, or *pharaoh*. In early 331 B.C.E., Alexander made a journey to a desert oasis, where he claimed the Oracle of Ammon identified him as the true son of the Greek God Zeus. Before he left Egypt, Alexander founded a new city northwest of Memphis, and named it after himself: Alexandria. The city later grew to become a center for culture and learning for several hundred years.

Event C: Alexander in Persia

In 334 B.C.E., Alexander the Great set out to conquer the Persian Empire, the most powerful empire in the ancient world. Thousands of Macedonians and Persians were killed in the numerous battles in Persia. At the Battle of Issus, Alexander's forces defeated the Persian army led by King Darius III. After capturing and destroying the Persian capital of Persepolis, Alexander became the unquestioned ruler of the Persian empire. While he ruled, he appointed many Persians as governors in his conquered territories and allowed the Persians to continue practicing their customs and beliefs.

Event D: Alexander in India

In 327 B.C.E., Alexander the Great led his forces across the Hindu Kush mountains and entered India. Over the next three years, his troops fought many battles to conquer various Indian rulers. Both the Macedonians and the Indians suffered heavy casualties. During his time in India, Alexander closely questioned the *Brahmins*, or holy men, to learn about Hinduism. After a victory at the Battle of the River Hydaspes, Alexander's troops began the long journey home to Macedonia.