

# Alexander The Great



Alexander Zachary 9E

# INTRODUCTION

This journey to meet Alexander the Great, is undertaken as a journey through time in a time machine as part of a top secret mission for the US Government in order to uncover the strategies that Alexander the Great used to conquer the world.

Alexander's feat was massive, as in many cases his army was outnumbered by many thousands and in one particular battle it was said he army was outnumbered ten to one. He however was able to use his strategies and tactics to his advantage by using the natural contours of the land and to give the impression of having many more men than there were. Military experts still consider him one of the most outstanding commanders ever. Arguably, there is no one else in history that could inspire and motivate his men like Alexander did. Many explanations have been suggested: he suffered the same wounds as his soldiers; he always payed attention to every single man in the army and he always led the attack in person. (Actually, he was the last great commander in history to take this personal risk.)

He was foremost a soldier, living the simple life all his men did. He ate, drank and slept in exactly the same conditions the soldiers did. During his 11 year campaign he conquered much of the known world having to fight off not only the enemy but also infections from unsanitary water and food, diseases spread by insects and exposure to the extremes of nature and of course many wounds (some serious) from battle.

Whilst his men where replenished from Greeks living in the conquered lands, they were not an extremely large army. This makes their conquests even more amazing and highlights Alexander the Great's brilliance in warfare.

## **OPERATION: TEMPORAL DISPLACEMENT**

Emanuel “Alexander” G. Grecia USMC had waited his whole life to be in this position. Grueling training at Quantico, numerous missions in the Middle East and the Pacific and hundreds of hours studying every military course there was. Starting out young and stupid as a private, he was now at the legendary rank of Brigadier-Captain, the highest rank a soldier could get to before retiring to a desk job in the Corps. He had grown famous amongst the soldiers for respecting his men and therefore got the best out of them in battle. He is not only one of the best strategic minds in the force; he is also the very best officer the Marines have had.

‘Alexander, the Boss would like to brief you now’ The Secret Service Leader said. Emanuel had acquired his official call-name ‘Alexander’ when he was a First Lieutenant. The commanding officer at the time called him Alexander the Great, because of his outstanding strategy and leadership in battle.

‘Thank you sir’ he replied with a salute

‘Alexander, how many times do I have to tell you, my name is Frank?’

‘Sorry, sir... Frank’ he said with a smile.

As he walked down the fuselage of Air Force One towards the Presidential Suite he started to think how important his mission was to be, because for the President of the United States to brief an enlisted soldier was something quite out of the ordinary.

When he got to the suite he was confronted by another Secret Service bodyguard, who let him straight through as if he were a General.

‘Brigadier, come in, please sit down’ the President said as he walked into the room. ‘Brigadier, we have called you here today because we have come to believe that you are the very best enlisted soldier our defense forces have to offer.’

‘Thank you sir’ sitting down

‘Yes and that being the case, we have a big mission for you to carry out’

‘Anything sir’

‘Good, then I need not say anymore,’ he said as he pulled a manila folder from his desk, ‘this folder has all your mission information and if you have any other questions ask them to me directly, understood?’

‘Yes, sir’

‘Good then, we have 12 more hours on the plane before we arrive, so read through your mission, rest and then read it again, we need you to have it imprinted in your mind.’

‘Yes, thank you sir’ he said as he was leaving

‘Oh, Brigadier, please send Frank in here’

‘Yes sir’

After talking to Frank, he sat down to his seat, asked the stewardess for a coffee and opened the folder.....

## **CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL: ONLY FOR EMANUEL G. GRECIA’S EYES**

“Brigadier Grecia, the schematics shown are the complete layouts of the highly classified project codename: *Temporal Displacement*. The machine is a project that has been in development for twenty years and is now ready for first operation, rest assured it has been tested many times. The machine is a half a trillion dollar project.

By reading the schematics you should see the general purpose of the machine, it is a Time Machine that creates a magnetic field so strong that it can split the forth dimension – time – and with the aid of a super computer installed into the unit and the accompanying wrist band, we can guide the machine into ‘time’ and replace it in a different space and time. The machine is portable (to an extent) with a separate power supply, the unit runs on U235 Uranium and the power supply has been cased in lead, so no radioactive emissions are emitted.

Inside the unit there is room for two people, an array of monitors and gauges, a keypad for entering desired co-ordinates and a socket for entering the wrist band, to upload any information about the time period you are in.

The accompanying wrist band is a feat of technology on its own. With a price tag of 10 million dollars, it contains a micro-supercomputer, a complete dictionary of every single word or sound *your* body can make in any situation or stress level, a titanium/diamond casing for added durability, a band that can resist over 20,000lbs of pressure (more than your own bones) and is resistant to all known acids, alkalis, fire and liquid nitrogen it *will not break*. The wrist band has a 2x2 inch screen that can resist direct bullet shots, the screen gives all information about, time, date, co-ordinates, year and also, information on the era you are maybe in (only for the history that we know of).

## OPERATION: THE ALEXANDER MISSION

As you well know, the USA is easily over 20 years ahead of the rest of the world when defense is questioned, although we fear that our ground tactics are being learnt by enemies and countered with severe losses, That is why we are sending our best ground tactician (yourself) to go back to the third century BCE (Before Common Era) and infiltrate the greatest tactician known – Alexander the Great.

When the mission is a go, we will give you a scroll, a scroll saying that you are a good friend of Alexander's mother (Olympias) and that you are asking him a series of questions for a biography his life and battles. Ask him the secret to his tactics in battle and then return to us and pass us the information for our ground armies to learn. You will arrive at Babylon and meet Alexander there. You have three months to learn ancient Greek, we have arranged the lessons. Learn the way of life, diet, hygiene and all aspects of the classical era. We have created a whole Ancient Greek city for you to learn how to live and act and for the next three months will be living there...

'Jesus H. Christ' Grecia whispered to himself, how the hell did they do it... a goddamn 'time machine' and half a *trillion* dollars–

'So, Alexander, you've read the mission?'

'Huh, oh Frank, sorry.' He had caught him a little off guard 'Yeah I have, you?'

'Hey, I didn't want to but I did, after all I had to check if someone put a bomb in the folder. Don't want anything to happen to the Boss.'

'Yeah, of course, but don't you find this kind of technology frightening? I mean what would stop a lab assistant looking for some fun going back to the past and changing some huge event and destroying humanity?'

'Good point, but remember you're the one whose gotta go to bloody Ancient Greece and 'ask' Alexander the Great how he wins battles, so you just watch yourself and keep a low profile, *you* don't wanna go ahead and change the world'

'Ha-ha, yeah don't worry; I'm just not sure about learning Ancient Greek, I never was good at LOTE at school.'

'Yeah well you've got three months, should be enough.'

'I guess so'

'Well then, how 'bout you get some rest and think a bit about the mission, I'll tell the Boss you're sleeping'

'Thanks Frank.'

## THREE MONTHS LATER

The day had come, after three months of studying and learning. Alexander was now ready for his mission; he had every aspect of Ancient Greek culture branded in his mind, and was now quite fluent while speaking Ancient Greek.

It was 11:30 and all the preparations were complete and with a quick good luck from Frank Bartley, leader of the Secret Service Presidential Detail (also good friend of Emanuel). Lastly the President himself gave him a small thank you and the 'all-important' handshake.

With all his mission objectives up-loaded into his wrist band, an ancient-look pack and one *very* important scroll; he was ready. Well at least physically.

He stepped into the time machine, hooked up his wrist band to the machine, and entered the destination and time: May 15 323BC, Ancient Babylon 33.2°N 44.26°E. There was an audible hum from the external power supply and then there was a huge gust of wind and then the world disappeared...

Alexander opened his eyes; only to see darkness, he felt around and found he was still inside the time machine, only there was darkness, complete and utter darkness. Before he could contemplate where he was, another great gust of wind came upon him and the time machine.\*

He opened his eyes yet again, half expecting to see nothing again, but saw the open country side and looming in the distance and grand city with massive walls, Babylon. He left the time machine, standing in awe taking in the scenery and how...how unbelievable it was, he was in the third century B.C.E.

When he regained his senses he went to work hiding the time machine, and for a 350kg unit it took sometime and wearing a tunic did not help. After stashing it in a cave with plenty of covering, he started to make his way down to Babylon.

When he got to the gate he was confronted by an array of guards and sentries. When he showed his scroll, he was treated like royalty, and allowed free passage he was escorted to Alexander's palace. As he walked through the hall towards Alexander's room, he felt the same way

he did three months before (well the same way he'll feel in 1680 *years*) when he walked down the fuselage of Air Force One, going to meet the most powerful man in the world.

'Good Afternoon sir, I come as a messenger and a scholar.' Emanuel-Alexander says in perfect Ancient Greek as he enters Alexander's room. 'I have word that you are a messenger of my mother, how is she and what is her health?' The great conqueror replies.

'Sir, your mother is well and is in no danger, but it is I who comes with a message and task.'

'Fine, what is it you want with me?'

'This scroll here,' handing over the scroll, 'states the authenticity of my journey and what I ask of you, it is sealed by your mother Olympias.' Alexander takes the scroll and reads through it.

'Well then, if my mother has sent you all this way from Macedonia and you are her friend then you're my friend in confidence as well, so ask what you must, but you have only a short time, I am preparing an expedition in the near future.'

'Thank you so much sir, if you would not mind, could the questioning start from now?'

'Well... your name?'

'Oh, sorry sir my name is Emanuel, although my closest friends call me Alexander.'

'Well then – I shall call you Emanuel-Alexander- even though I am our friend, there is only one Alexander' with a smile 'come to my personal chamber, where we can talk more of my family.'

Alexander's personal chamber was smaller and had a low ceiling (much like a prison cell) with elegant decoration and the best furniture from around the world. The two men sat down and started to converse as if they were long lost friends, reuniting again.

Emanuel-Alexander pulls out a scroll with questions on it and space for writing and writing implement, but also pushes a button on his wrist band, activating the voice recorder, because he isn't going write down *every word he* says.

'Now, sir I am going to ask you're a few questions about your life and expeditions and because I am writing about your greatness, I want you to have complete confidence in me, for this book shall be used as an educator in the armies of Macedonia.'

'Very well, if it is for the empire, my wisdom is at your disposal.'

‘Thank you sir, now my first question is your closeness and rapport with your horse Bucephalas?’ This question was an icebreaker, one that would show Alexander the Great that Emanuel-Alexander was interested in not just the conqueror but the man too.

‘Well Bucephalas was around 30 years old when he died three years ago. A horse as black as soot with a white mark on his forehead. He was a brave and fearless horse. I first laid eyes on my faithful steed when I was a boy. A high spirited stallion who would not tolerate any master or rider. As soon as we set eyes on each other, Bucephalas and I, we knew we were destined to do great things together. The mighty beast sensed my awe of him and him of mine. I was the only person who could ride him. It is as if we were brothers, connected by blood. We shared the glory of many fine battles. That of Granicus, Issus, Gaugamela and the Jhelum. He and I would always share the final victory charge.

Bucephalas came with me to the ends of the world, far from the plains of Thessaly where he was born, and he died on the banks of the Jhelum, from the effects of old age and exhaustion. We had only been separated once since we had first laid eyes on each other in our youth. He had been stolen by Uxian horse thieves and my rage knew no bounds. I threatened to kill every living being in the land if my horse was not returned to me, and I would have done just that and the Uxian’s knew this and returned my faithful steed to me immediately. He had the heart of a true soldier even though he was a beast. I was plunged into untold grief at Bucephalas’ death; I had lost nothing less than a friend and comrade.

Bucephalas was buried with every honour and when I laid the foundations of the twin cities by the Jhelum River, I named one of them Alexandria - Bucephala so that he will always be remembered.”

Emanuel was very touched by the bond that he felt the horse and his master shared but wanted to get on with the true nature of his questioning.

“Sir”, he said, “It is without a doubt in anyone’s mind, that you are the greatest military mind of our time. Your country men pray and make offerings to the mighty Zeus every day for your continued success and crave to know your methods.”

“Emanuel-Alexander, I thank my people for their prayers and offerings and thank the mighty Zeus for hearing their prayers. Zeus does favour my deeds and instils in my mind all the abilities I possess. My mother has told me that I am his son and not Philip’s; because of this bond I too honour him with offerings. My strategies are simple, they come to me because my role in this life is not only to unite all the city states of Greece, but to expand her, and this role is mine through my divine father Zeus. I speak to my soldiers; I inspire them with words from the mighty



Gods of Olympus. I assist them with overcoming their fears of battles and in doing so they are fearless. I would never ask of them anything that I would not do with them myself. I am always at their side, in each and every battle we fight. They know that unlike Darius of Persia, I will not turn and run but will fight alongside them. They are faithful to me because I am faithful to them. I eat what they eat, I drink what they drink, I sleep where they sleep, I fight where they fight and I share with them the plunders of war. There is not a man amongst these men that would not forfeit his life to save mine because they know that every time we go to battle my life is as much at risk as theirs.”

“That is a wonderful method sir, but you also are renowned for your battle strategies, your campaign has lasted nearly 11 years so far, during this long time you have shown us that it is not only your relationship with your men that conquers lands but also your military mind; what processes do you use to draw up your battle plans?”

“I am very fortunate in having with me General Parmenio, my confidante Hephaestion, as well as Craterus my third in command. They know what is required to plan battles and are excellent military minds themselves. I send out scouts to map out an area and I am then able to study these maps in advance. There are always vulnerable areas in battle, and these are to be avoided at all costs but these same spots are the areas where it is fortunate to place those you wish to conqueror. With correct placement of my own troops, the enemy is forced to retreat to the vulnerable areas. They are then ready for the taking. Allow me to add to this, that I do not always fight battles in order to conqueror. I always send out diplomats to request their surrender, when this is refused, then the battles are fought. It is their choice - surrender or fight. My battle plans are ready and I move my troops to my chosen place and wait for the enemy to set up their troops. I may sit and wait for days, this unnerves the enemy, and not knowing when battle is to take place is very unnerving. Many times the battle has been won in the heads of the enemy whilst we are waiting. The fear of the unknown is very powerful. Being too sure of yourself can also work against your goal. I remember one battle at the Granicus River; the Persian enemy thought that by our placement in front of the river, we would be attacked from behind whilst being unable to retreat through the river as the remainder of the Persian army was on the opposite bank. They were sure that they had won the battle. Did they think that a little trickle of water like that were too much for the army of Alexander?” he asked, not expecting an answer, but continuing. “Half the troops turned to fight the enemy from behind; led by Parmenio my trusted General, and the other half, led by Bucephalas and I, plunged into the raging river and

attacked the troops on the opposite side. It never pays Emanuel to think that the battle has been won, before it has started, Darius who was watching the battle from the safety of a small hill, far from the battle, fled away in fear, like a dog with its tail between its legs.”

“Emanuel-Alexander, my friend, the secret to a good leader is this, be one with your men, never ask of them what you would not do yourself, never do battle without thorough knowledge of the area, never think this battle is won, or this battle is lost, what we think can tempt the Fates and that leads to disaster, praise and encourage your men, they will fight all the harder for a leader they love and respect and most importantly, give offerings and thanks to the almighty Zeus, his patronage will be assured if he is properly administered too. Now Emanuel-Alexander, I must ask your leave, eat and rest, and then tomorrow a fresh horse along with trustworthy escorts will be at your disposal to return you to my beloved mother and Macedonia. I have a very important battle to plan after spending some time with my men. They have requested my presence this evening and have opened some new wine which I long to sample, you may join us when you are rested, and I feel that there will be plenty of wine for all.”

“Thank you sir, goodnight and may Zeus continue to protect you and your men.” Replied Emanuel-Alexander, knowing that the wine that Alexander drinks tonight will be the beginning of the end for him, it will bring on a type of dysentery, which in battle will allow his concentration to lapse and cause the fatal wound which ends his invasion of the then known world. He wishes he could say something, but knows that this is impossible.

“Goodnight friend, it has been a pleasure meeting you.” Said Alexander and with that left the room.

Emanuel-Alexander knew that the pleasure was all his. He made his way to his quarters and rested for a short time. He then quietly slipped away from the palace, as he could not risk being accompanied by Alexander’s men the next day.

Under cover of darkness, and using the homing device in the watch band, he made his way quickly to the cave where the time machine was hidden. By early morning, he still had many kilometres to cover. As he rounded a small forest, he saw a donkey grazing on the mosses that grew at the base of the trees. He also noticed the donkey’s owner fast asleep under one of the trees. Quietly, so he wouldn’t wake the owner, he walked up the donkey and led it away. Once he was a fair distance from the forest, he

mounted the donkey and resumed his journey, a little more quickly than if on foot. When he finally reached the cave, three hours later, he released the donkey and made his way into the cave. It was undisturbed.

Once again he stepped into the time machine and hooked up his wrist band to the machine. He entered the coordinates into the machine that would return him to the present time. The familiar hum from the external power supply soothed his anticipation of the journey home and then there was a huge gust of wind and then the ancient world disappeared, he was going home.

When he opened his eyes, he was back at head quarters. There were his colleagues, all with very worried expressions, which instantly changed when they saw that he was back.

After being debriefed by the President and his commanding officer, he went to the dining room for a meal and the sleeping quarters for some well earned rest. The mission was a complete success and an experience few men have had.

## ILLUSTRATIONS AND APPEARANCE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT:



*Alexander in the battle, detail from the monument.  
Taranto, 3rd. century BC., Museo Archeologico Nazionale*

This is a statue of Alexander in battle on his horse Bucephalus. According to Arian he was ‘the strong, handsome commander with one eye dark as the night and one blue as the sky, always leading his army on his faithful Bucephalus.’ He was believed to be not very tall, around 160cm tall, he had blondish-red hair and was muscular.

In the above illustration, we can see that he is wearing the battle tunic which was made of thick leather to protect the wearer.

The head is exposed but the

Ancient Greek soldiers were known to wear helmets. Alexander himself did wear head dresses as has been depicted in coins minted in ancient and modern times. It is usually in the shape of a ram’s head complete with horns, although he is also depicted wearing a lion skin head dress (which is probably a reference to his half god status as Heracles also wore a lion skin head dress).



Alexander in a Lion’s Skin Head Dress from an ancient coin made around the time of his death.



Alexander the Great in Ram's Head Dress from modern coin dated 1990.



A Mosaic here shows the leather armor clearer and the lack of head protection.

From what we can see from these illustrations, he was a risk taker in battle with his own safety. This could be to show his men that he was not afraid and therefore neither should they. It could also show his belief that he was a demi-god and therefore would not die.

These illustrations show how very differently the people dressed in that time. Even if we were to compare with the uniforms of today's soldiers there would be no similarity whatsoever. The methods of transportation and the tools of war were also crude but required great skill, it's not easy to steer a horse and wield a sword!

## **AFTERWARD**

After researching the life and times of Alexander the Great, I have come to the conclusion that his life would not have been a good one. Regardless of the fact that thousands of men followed him on his quests and that he was genuinely loved by his men, the life he lead them to was a harsh and often fatal one.

The sanitary conditions were practically non existent. They were plagued by many skin diseases simply from lack of hygiene and the climatic conditions they fought in. These conditions were nothing like those of Northern Greece where most of the men came from.

There were many casualties from the lack of clean water, Alexander himself suffering from gastroenteritis many times over the eleven year campaign. Many soldiers died from insect-spread diseases such as yellow fever and malaria. This was common in the more humid, wet areas in the Asia Minor continent.

Whilst the Ancient Greeks were advanced in medicine, they relied heavily on herbal cures, many of the flora used in remedies were not available in the lands they conquered. This led to a quicker death for sick soldiers because the cures even in their own land didn't always work. Wounds from battle infected easily in humid and unsanitary conditions which also lead to the death of many men. Alexander himself was wounded between the ribs which punctured his lung; the doctors said that when they were treating the wound, they could hear the hissing of air as it escaped from his lung. Even in modern times with up to the minute medical advances, quick intervention is needed to prevent the injured person from drowning in their own blood. He eventually died from malaria.

In modern warfare, even with the recent events in Iraq, the soldiers very rarely engage in face to face combat, with long range missiles, the enemy can be eliminated from many miles away. In the time of Alexander, the act of not facing the enemy was considered cowardly. In fact they didn't even use arrows or spears as this too was cowardly.

Certainly after looking at these few examples there is no comparison to life then and now. Whilst the opportunity to fight alongside the greatest conqueror would be tempting, the risks of death (not just in battle) would outweigh that temptation.

There is certainly no time like the present when it comes to comfort, medical treatment and the knowledge of the spread of diseases.

## **SELF EVALUATION**

For my English Creative Research Project I have chosen the second option, The Time Machine. The task involves, creating a time machine that will take you back in time to meet an historic character, while there you are to interview the person and find out how he/she lived and why he/she is famous.

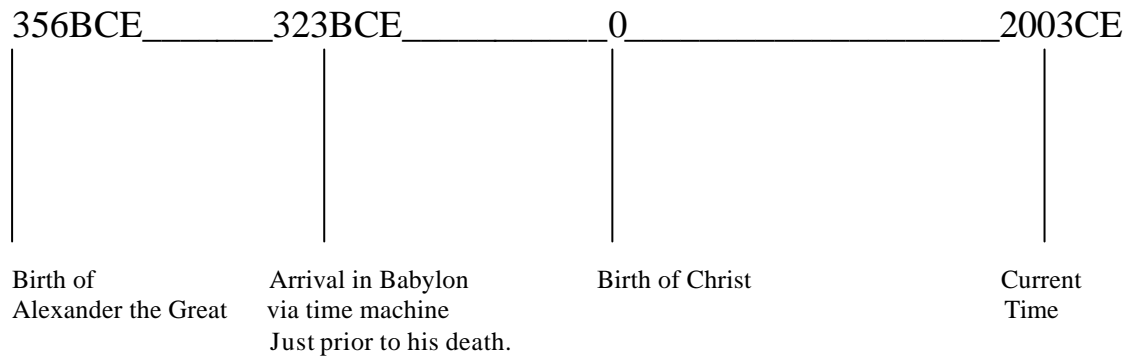
When I started the research project I already knew a little about Alexander the Great, but was eager to learn *a lot* more, this included how he lived, the finer points of his strategy in battle and his famous relationship with his horse.

My first instinct when I started this project was to write a full informative report on his life, but after consulting with the teacher I realised it had to be done in some sort of creative manner (hence the name: Creative Research Project). So I decided to write a short story. Being a bit of a 'book worm' myself; I took tiny bits and pieces from my favourite adventure books and compiled them into a non-fiction short story.

In order to find my information, I knew that the most reliable sources would be books and CD-ROM Encyclopaedia, but used a little bit of the internet, for finding pictures and maps.

While doing this project I learnt that I knew so much than I thought I did, I found out a lot more information and details about Alexander the Great's childhood and that he was educated by the one and only Aristotle.

# TIME LINE



## MAP SHOWING TIME TRAVELLER'S DESTINATION FROM HOME BASE.





# Bibliography

## **Web Sites**

[http://www.livius.org/aj-al/alexander/alexander\\_pic/alexander\\_pics.html](http://www.livius.org/aj-al/alexander/alexander_pic/alexander_pics.html)

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~cfford/342worldhistoryearly.htm>

## **CD-ROMs**

World Book Encyclopaedia 1997

Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia 2000

## **Books**

Fildes Alan, Fletcher Joann. Alexander the Great: Son of the Gods, Duncan Baird Publishers, London, 2001

March, Jenny. Dictionary of Classical Mythology, Cassell Publications, London, 1999

Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopaedia Volume 1 A-Ameri

This project is posted on my personal website, the address is:

<http://www.angelfire.com/ok5/greciakennels/work.htm>