

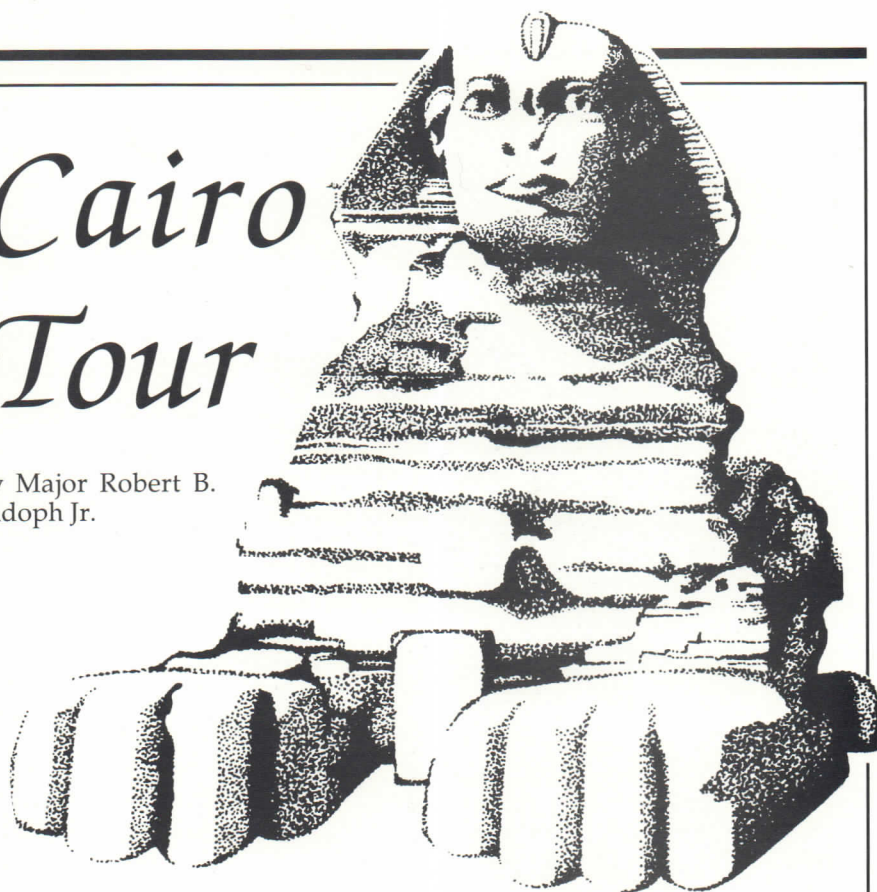
If you are touring the Middle East, a "must" stop on your itinerary is Cairo in the land of Egypt. Cairo has been the capital of this fascinating country since 969 AD. Visitors should be aware that the most conservative estimate places Cairo's population at over 12 million people. That is a population density of 50,000 per square kilometer, which makes it the densest in Africa.

Cairo sits astride the major crossroads linking Africa with the Levant. For well over 1,000 years this city of enormous dimensions has been the cultural, religious, academic and economic center of north east Africa as well what most westerners consider to be the Middle East. It is an incredible cornucopia of peoples and histories which has to be experienced.

An excellent place to begin your tour of Cairo is the Citadel of Saleh El Din, the legendary political, military and religious leader. He built this fortress approximately 900 years ago on a hill, that even today dominates the city's skyline. Inside the fortress, among other things, is the Grand Mosque built by Mohamed Ali Pasha who governed Egypt from 1805 to 1848. The most notable features of a real-

Cairo Tour

by Major Robert B. Adolph Jr.

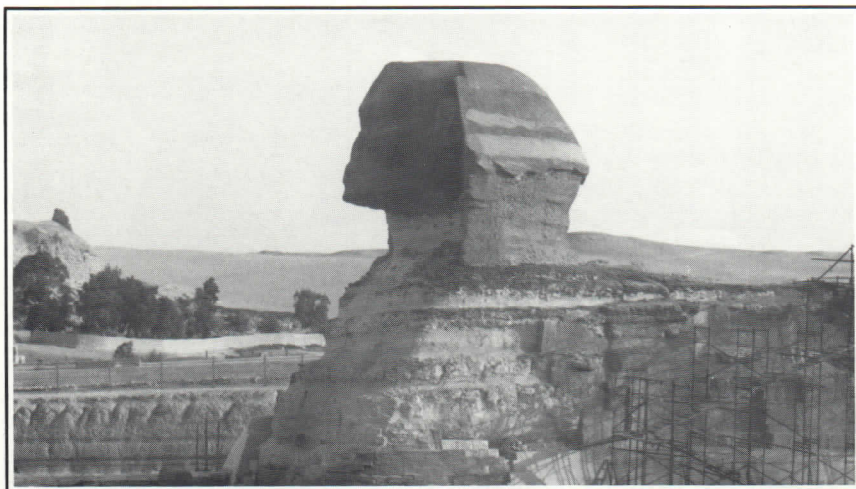


ly stunning architectural achievement are the twin minarets which rise commandingly over the fortress. Ironically, Mohamed Ali Pasha was an Albanian soldier originally sent to Egypt to eject Napoleon's occupation army. He stayed to rule.

While in the Citadel keep your camera at the ready, for some of the Arab world's most beautiful decorative art work

can be found in and around the fortress and mosques (there are more than one). Another excellent photo opportunity exist directly behind the Grand Mosque where a fantastic panoramic view of the entire city of Cairo lays at your feet. There is also a museum as well as other notable tourist attractions, to include the tomb of Mohamed Ali Pasha himself.

Following a trip to the Citadel your next stop could be the Cairo Museum. Located in the center of the city near the Nile River, the museum houses the world's largest collection of Pharaonic antiquities. Plan to spend a large part of your day walking the hallways of this cavernous building. The place is enormous. And, there is a great deal to see. Current exhibits include the sarcophagus and death mask of the famed Tuthankamen. The mask is fashioned from 9 kilograms of pure gold and the sarcophagus contains 450 pounds of the same. Possibly more amazing



Sphinx near sundown



UNMO Major Mark Sweberg riding the plateau of Giza

than the substance used to create these items is the artistry that went into their making. The artists and craftsmen of ancient Egypt produced some of the world's most remarkable art works and it is all there waiting for you to see.

A short walk from the museum and you will be on the banks of the Nile River. Large and powerful river boats ply the river for the tourists' delight, but, maybe, more fun can be had by taking a faluka ride.

Faluka boats are small Egyptian sailing craft that have been on the Nile as long as anyone can remember. A faluka ride is an extremely pleasant way to wind down an afternoon of busy sightseeing. Prices vary so don't be afraid to haggle.

Across the river is the plain of Giza and the Great Pyramids of Cheops, Kifran and Mycerinus. The Sphinx invites your attention at the same locale. Every evening the world famous "sound and light show" shows the Pyramids and Sphinx to best effect. It is a great evening for the whole family. Another, and possibly better way to experience the wonders of the ancient world, is on horse back. There are a number of excellent stables

behind the amphitheater where the sound and light show is exhibited. Horses and camels are available to riders of varying experience. Both English and American western saddles can be provided for the asking. The view of the pyramids from on-high, with Cairo in the background, is breath taking.

As a matter of particular interest, the Pyramid of Cheops (largest of the three) is considered to be the greatest of the wonders of the ancient world. It is estimated that it took over 20 years to build with the sweat of more than 100,000 men. The entire structure contains more than 200,500,000 blocks of limestone. Worn down over the centuries, Cheops originally stood 146 meters high. Its circumference at its base is an incredible 1,000 meters.

For all you shoppers out there, you have a treat in store for you. The Khan El Khalili is the largest suk (market place) in the Arab world. No matter what you are looking for you can probably find it here. There are over a thousand shops of all kinds and descriptions. Yes, credit cards are accepted at most of the larger shops. Prices at many of these shops are negotiable, so, hone your bargaining talents before

going. Although almost anything can be had at the Khan, of special note are leather goods, jewelry, carpets, brass work (made to order), inlaid mother of pearl, papyrus paintings, galabayas, silver and gold kartouches (your name in hieroglyphics), Pharoanic statuettes, ebony carvings and a plethora of other goods. If you have been looking for a place to buy a Christmas gift for a loved one, this is it!

I have only hit some of the high points of a Cairo tour, but there is much more than there is room for in this magazine. Quality restaurants and hotels abound. Taxis are reasonably priced, but, be sure to agree on a price before you get into the cab. Although Arabic is everybody's first language, English and French are commonly spoken by the shopkeepers in the Khan.

Quality tours with guides are available through all the major hotels. For those of you crazy enough to venture forth on your own, in a personal car, or liberty vehicle, be warned, Cairo driving is not for the faint of heart. But, if you are gifted with uncanny eyesight, nerves of steel and lightning fast reflexes, go-for-it. Bonne Chance!



Death mask of Tuthankamen, Cairo Museum