



# WORLD WAR ONE AND INDIAN SOLDIERS



Cover image: Scouts of the 9th Hodson's Horse, an Indian cavalry regiment, pause to consult a map, near Vraignes, France. (Source: *Imperial War Memorial Q2061*)

## COMPILED BY:

Neera Sahni, Research Services Leader

Research & Collection Services

Parramatta Heritage Visitor & Information Centre

346A Church Street, Parramatta 2150

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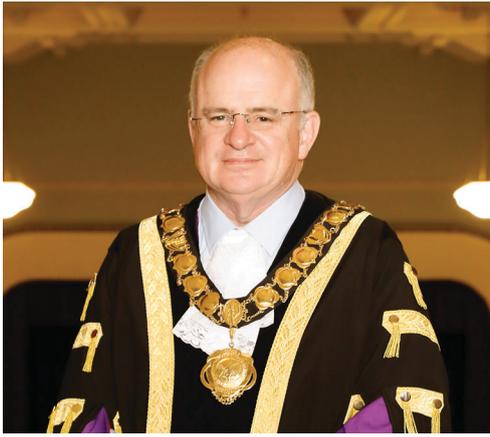
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## MESSAGE FROM THE LORD MAYOR

The City of Parramatta commemorates the Centenary of World War One, also known as 'The Great War,' which lasted from 4 August 1914 to 11 November 1918.

Our City honours the thousands of young men and women around Australia who rallied to serve in the war effort, including the 1,962 volunteers from the Parramatta District, who went on to become soldiers, pilots, seamen, munitions workers, transport drivers and nurses, mainly deployed across Europe and the Middle East.

In 2018, the City of Parramatta has compiled hundreds of stories about the involvement of the Parramatta community in World War One, sharing these significant histories in many forms, including a series of publications, which focuses on various aspects of the war.

I hope the experiences of individuals will help to honour their sacrifice and connect you with our community's history. By preserving the contributions and memories of all those brave soldiers, sailors and aviators for future generations we show our respect for those who made such a sacrifice for our nation.

**Andrew Wilson**

Lord Mayor

City of Parramatta

*Photographer: Jason Nichol Photography*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is compiled from the articles written by the Research and Collections team at the City of Parramatta. Substantial research was undertaken by the team and valued volunteers who compiled hundreds of stories about the involvement of the Parramatta community in World War One.

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- *Parramatta and District Soldiers in the Great War. 1914-1919.* Parramatta, N.S.W., The Cumberland Argus Limited, 1920.
- *The Australian War Memorial (AWM)*
- *The National Archives of Australia (NAA)*
- *The National Library of Australia (NLA) 'Trove'*
- *Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)*

More information and Parramatta Soldier stories can be found on our website  
[www.arc.parracity.nsw.gov.au](http://www.arc.parracity.nsw.gov.au)

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We thank everyone who has helped in any way to bring about this book.

# INTRODUCTION

India played a significant part in World War One. The normal annual recruitment for the Indian army was 15,000 men. During the course of the war over 800,000 men volunteered for the army and more than 400,000 volunteered for non-combatant roles. In total almost 1.3 million men had volunteered for service by 1918. One million Indian troops served overseas during the war, of these 62,000 died and another 67,000 were wounded.

*'Do not think that this is war. This is not war. It is the ending of the world. This is just such a war as was related in the Mahabharata [the Indian epic] about our forefathers',* wrote a wounded Indian soldier from a hospital in England on 29 January 1915.

Anonymous Sepoy (Soldier)

The Indian Corps won 13,000 medals for gallantry including 12 Victoria Crosses. Khudadad Khan won the Corps first Victoria Cross. Due to the massive cost of the war, India's economy was pushed to near bankruptcy.

The Research Services team have prepared and posted hundreds of biographical stories and accounts of events which relate to the actions of Indian servicemen during World War One.

We hope you enjoy reading about these amazing people and the terrifying and sometimes awe inspiring events which carried them across the globe to fight against Germany and her allies.

**Neera Sahni**

# World War One Timeline

Neera Sahni

## 1914

- 28 June 1914** Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria assassinated in Sarajevo, Bosnia
- 5 July 1914** Kaiser William II promised German support for Austria against Serbia
- 28 July 1914** Austria declared war on Serbia
- 1 August 1914** Germany declared war on Russia
- 3 August 1914** Germany declared war on France and invaded Belgium. Germany implemented the Schlieffen Plan
- 4 August 1914** Britain declared war on Germany
- 23 August 1914** The British Expeditionary Force started its retreat from Mons. Germany invaded France
- 26 August 1914** Russian army defeated at Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes, East Prussia
- 9 September 1914** Battle of the Marne, France commenced
- 26 September 1914** The Lahore and Meerut Division of Indian Troops arrive at Marseilles, France
- 18 October 1914** First Battle of Ypres, Belgium
- 29 October 1914** Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany Trench warfare started to dominate the Western Front

## 1915

- 19 January 1915** The first Zeppelin raid on Britain took place
- 19 February 1915** Britain bombarded Turkish forts in the Dardanelles
- 10 - 13 March 1915** Battle of Neuve Chapelle in Artois region of France
- 25 April 1915** Allied troops landed in Gallipoli, Turkey

## 1915

7 May 1915	The 'Lusitania' was sunk by a German U-boat
23 May 1915	Italy declared war on Germany and Austria
5 August 1915	The Germans captured Warsaw, Poland from the Russians
25 September 1915	Start of the Battle of Loos, France
19 December 1915	The Allies started the evacuation of Gallipoli

## 1916

27 January 1916	Conscription introduced in Britain
21 February 1916	Start of the Battle of Verdun, France
29 April 1916	British forces surrendered to Turkish forces at Kut in Mesopotamia (now Iraq)
31 May 1916	Battle of Jutland in the North Sea
4 June 1916	Start of the Brusilov Offensive
1 July 1916	Start of the Battle of the Somme, France
10 August 1916	End of the Brusilov Offensive
15 September 1916	First use en masse of tanks at the Somme
7 December 1916	Lloyd George becomes British Prime Minister

## 1917

1 February 1917	Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare campaign started
6 April 1917	United States of America declared war on Germany
16 April 1917	France launched an unsuccessful offensive on the Western Front
31 July 1917	Start of the Third Battle at Ypres, Belgium
24 October 1917	Battle of Caporetto, now in Slovenia – the Italian Army was heavily defeated
6 November 1917	Britain launched a major offensive on the Western Front
20 November 1917	British tanks won a victory at Cambrai, France
5 December 1917	Armistice between Germany and Russia signed
9 December 1917	Britain captured Jerusalem from Turkish forces

## **1918**

<b>3 March 1918</b>	The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between Russia and Germany
<b>21 March 1918</b>	Germany broke through on the Somme
<b>29 March 1918</b>	Marshall Foch was appointed Allied Commander on the Western Front
<b>9 April 1918</b>	Germany started an offensive in Flanders, Belgium
<b>15 July 1918</b>	Second Battle of the Marne started. The start of the collapse of the German army
<b>8 August 1918</b>	The advance of the Allies was successful
<b>19 September 1918</b>	Turkish forces collapsed at Megiddo, Palestine
<b>4 October 1918</b>	Germany asked the Allies for an armistice
<b>29 October 1918</b>	Germany's Navy mutinied
<b>30 October 1918</b>	Turkey made peace
<b>3 November 1918</b>	Austria made peace
<b>9 November 1918</b>	Kaiser William II abdicated
<b>11 November 1918</b>	Germany signed an armistice with the Allies – the official date of the end of World War One

## **Post war: 1919**

<b>4 January 1919</b>	Peace conference met in Paris, France
<b>21 June 1919</b>	The surrendered German naval fleet at Scapa Flow was scuttled
<b>28 June 1919</b>	The Treaty of Versailles was signed by the Germans

# World War One: Financial Cost

Neera Sahni



Bullecourt, From A Sunken Road near Noreuil  
(Source: Charles E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War, of 1914-1918*,  
Volume 12 *Photographic record of the War*)

Allied Powers	Cost in US Dollars in 1914-18
Great Britain	35,334,012,000
France	24,265,583,000
United States	22,625,253,000
Russia	22,293,950,000
Italy	12,413,998,000
Canada	1,665,576,000
Romania	1,600,000,000
Australia	1,423,208,000
Belgium	1,154,468,000
India	601,279,000
Others	500,000,000

<b>Allied Powers</b>	<b>Cost in US Dollars in 1914-18</b>
Serbia	399,400,000
New Zealand	378,750,000
South Africa	300,000,000
Greece	270,000,000
British Colonies	125,000,000
Japan	40,000,000
<b>Total of all Costs</b>	<b>125,690,477,000</b>

## World War One: Indian Soldiers

Neera Sahni



Victoria Cross Medal (Source: Wikipedia)

During the First World War, over 160,000 Indian soldiers served in France.

The Lahore and Meerut infantry divisions of the British Indian Army were selected for service in Europe. In October, shortly after they arrived, they were involved in some of the fiercest fighting around Ypres, Belgium. The Indians took heavy losses at the battle. The average Indian battalion had 764 men when it landed in France. By early November the 47 Sikhs had only 385 men fit for duty. One soldier wrote home

*"this is not war; it is the ending of the world".*

Indian soldiers made a significant military contribution on the Western Front but at the end of 1915 the majority of infantry brigades were withdrawn and sent to the Middle East. A small number of the cavalry brigades (who fought as infantry) remained in France for the duration of the war.

The Indians wounded in the trenches at the Western Front were sent back to hospitals in Marseilles, France and England where Indian civilians (including medical personnel, clerks, store keepers and cooks) were also working.

At the beginning of the War, under Captain Evelyn Berkeley Howell's command, a censor office was set up in response to an Indian 'revolutionary' distributing 'subversive' literature. All outgoing as well as in-coming letters, both from the front and from the hospitals in England were subject to inspection.

The two Indian infantry divisions were withdrawn from France in December 1915, and sent to Mesopotamia (now Iraq). Two Indian cavalry divisions remained on the Western Front until March 1918, when they were transferred to Palestine to take part in the offensive against the Turks.

By the end of the war in 1918, a total of 47,746 Indians had been reported dead or missing and 65,126 were wounded. Participants from the Indian subcontinent won 13,000 medals, including 12 Victoria Crosses.

In 1914, Khudadad Khan of 129 Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis became the first Indian to win a Victoria Cross. Other Indian Victoria Cross recipient soldiers are listed below:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Place of Action</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
Khudadad Khan	129 Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis	Hollebeke, Belgium	1914
Darwan Negi	39 Garhwal Rifles	Neuve Chapelle, France	1914
Gabar Negi	39 Garhwal Rifles	Neuve Chapelle, France	1915
Mir Dast	55 Coke's Rifles	Wieltje, Belgium	1915

<b>Name</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Place of Action</b>	<b>Date of Action</b>
Chatta Singh	Garhwal Rifles	Battle of the Wadi, Mesopotamia	1916
Lala	41 Dogras	El Orah, Mesopotamia	1916
Shahamad Khan	89 Punjab Regiment	Beit Ayeesa, Mesopotamia	1916
Gobind Singh	Garhwal Rifles	Peizieres, France	1916
Badlu Singh	14 Murray's Jat Lancers	River Jordan, Palestine	1918

## World War One – Indian Troops – Lahore Division

Neera Sahni



III. MEN OF THE 14TH SIKHS

Men of the 14 Sikhs at ANZAC Cove, Turkey. (Source: Charles E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War, of 1914-1918, Volume 12, Photographic record of the War*)

The Lahore Division or Third British Indian Army Division of Indian troops was one of the two divisions sent to France with their artillery and other arms. On the 26 September 1914, a little over seven weeks after the declaration of war, the Lahore Division of Indian troops arrived at Marseilles.

The following was the composition of the Lahore Division of Indian troops which left India:

### LAHORE DIVISION

Lieutenant General Henry Buckley Burton Watkis, Companions of the order of the Bath (C.B.)  
(Indian Army)

### **FEROZEPORE BRIGADE:**

Brigadier General Raleigh Gilbert Egerton, Companions of the order of the Bath (C.B.) (Indian Army)

1 Connaught Rangers

57 Rifles (Frontier Force)

9 Bhopal Infantry

129 Baluchis

### **JALANDAR BRIGADE:**

Major-General Phillip M. Carnegy, Companions of the order of the Bath (C.B.) (Indian Army)

1 Manchesters

15 Sikhs

47 Sikhs

59 Rifles (Frontier Force)

### **SIRHIND BRIGADE:**

Major-General James Milford S. Bruncker (late Royal Artillery)

1 Highland Light Infantry

1 Battalion 1 Gurkhas

1 Battalion 4 Gurkhas

125 Rifles

### **DIVISIONAL TROOPS:**

15 Lancers

Headquarters Divisional Engineers

20 and 21 Companies Sappers and Miners

Signal Company 34 Sikh Pioneers

Headquarters Divisional Artillery

### **ARTILLERY:**

5, 11 and 18 Brigades Royal Field Artillery

Ammunition Columns

109 Heavy Battery

# World War One – Indian Troops – Meerut Division

## Neera Sahni



Gurkha and Indian Troops with camels, Egypt.  
(Source: *Australian War Memorial P00196.015*)

Two divisions of Indian troops, the Third Lahore Division were sent to France with their artillery and other arms. By the 26 September 1914, Meerut Division and Lahore Division of Indian Troops arrived at Marseilles, France.

The following was the composition of Meerut Division Indian troops which left India:

## **MEERUT DIVISION**

Lieutenant-General Charles A. Anderson, C.B. (late Royal Artillery)

### **DEHRA DUN BRIGADE:**

Brigadier-General Charles E. Johnson (Indian Army)

1 Seaforth Highlanders

1 Battalion 9 Gurkhas

2 Battalion 2 Gurkhas

6 Jat Light Infantry

**GARHWAL BRIGADE:**

Major-General Henry D'Urban Keary, C.B., Distinguished Service Officer (Indian Army)

2 Leicesters

2 Battalion 3 Gurkhas

1 Battalion 39 Garhwal Rifles

2 Battalion 39 Garhwal Rifles

**BAREILLY BRIGADE:**

Major-General Forbes Macbean, C.V.O., C.B. (late Gordon Highlanders)

2 Black Watch

41 Dogras

58 Rifles (Frontier Force)

2 Battalion 8 Gurkhas

**DIVISIONAL TROOPS:**

4 Cavalry

3 and 4 Companies Sappers and Miners

107 Pioneers

Headquarters Divisional Engineers

Signal Company

**ARTILLERY:**

Headquarters Divisional Artillery.

4, 9 and 13 Brigades Royal Field Artillery

Ammunition Columns

110 Heavy Battery

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## World War One – Indian Soldier – Subedar Manta Singh Neera Sahni



Subedar Manta Singh in *Empire, Faith and War*  
(Source: <http://www.empirefaithwar.com/tell-their-story/citizen-historians-in-action/soldier-stories-blog/manta-singh>)

Manta Singh was born in the Punjab, northern India, in 1870. After finishing school, he joined the 2 Sikh Royal Infantry in 1907. By August 1914, when the German army invaded Belgium and France, Manta held the rank of Subedar, and his regiment was part of the Indian Expeditionary Force sent to France.

In March 1915, the Allies attacked Neuve-Chapelle and broke through the German front line. On the first day of the battle, British and Indian troops captured the town. Then the Germans counter-attacked with 16,000 reinforcements. In three days' fighting, the British and Indian troops suffered 13,000 casualties. The Allies' ammunition ran out, and the troops had to retreat. About 20 per cent of the Indian contingent (5,021 Indian soldiers) were killed in heavy fighting. Manta Singh was injured in action, a heroic act to save the life of seriously injured officer, Captain George Henderson by pushing him in a wheelbarrow out of no-man's land to safety.

Manta Singh was seriously injured while carrying out this selfless act. He was sent back to England, to a hospital in Brighton. The doctors told him that he would have to lose both his legs, as they had become infected with gangrene. Manta refused to think about going back to India with no legs. Unfortunately, he died from blood poisoning a few weeks later on 15 March 1915. He was cremated in a ghat, according to Sikh beliefs.

During the Second World War, the sons of both of these men served side by side and became lifelong friends.

In 1993 Manta Singh's son, Lieutenant Colonel Assa Singh Johal, was part of a delegation of the Undivided Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association that visited the Indian war memorial at Neuve-Chapelle.

*"It was a moving visit of great sentimental value to us. We were able to remember and pay homage to the fallen in foreign lands."*

Assa Singh

## World War One – Indian Soldier – Hardit Singh Malik Neera Sahni



Hardit Singh Malik had a special helmet made to fit over his turban.  
(Source: Imperial War Museum ©IWM (HU 63209))

Hardit Singh Malik was born on the 22 November 1894 in Rawalpindi, West Punjab (now Pakistan) and was the first Indian to fly into combat with the Royal Flying Corps.

Hardit was educated at a public school, Eastborne college and went on to Balliol College Oxford. Malik was a student at Oxford when the war broke out and, like many of his fellow students, decided to sign up for the Royal Flying Corps. Initially he was denied a commission by the Royal Flying Corps and so instead made an application to the French Red Cross and later the French Air Corps where his application was accepted.

Malik's tutor Francis Urquhart at Oxford thought it scandalous that the British Corps should refuse commission to a subject of the Empire, especially as the French were willing to oblige. He therefore took it upon himself to write to Major General David Henderson, the head of the Royal Flying Corps, pleading Malik's case and as a result a Malik was offered a cadetship.

The Honorable Second Lieutenant H. S. Malik reported to 1 Armament School on 5 April 1917, and was commissioned into 26 Squadron on 22 June 1917. Malik's days with 26 Squadron were relatively uneventful but once transferred to 28 Squadron, he saw plenty of action in the skies above Flanders, Belgium. A specially designed helmet was worn by Hardit over his turban.

The following is an account from the colonial troops who fought the Allies' war in 1917. Indian pilot, Hardit Singh Malik is guiding his single-seater biplane fighter up through thick cloud behind his renowned Canadian flight commander, William 'Billy' Barker, in search of enemy aircraft.

Their dangerously blind ascent finally ends as they emerge into clear blue sky — and into a formation of German planes, which immediately start firing. Malik's plane is hit, and pain rips through his right leg.

Amazingly both Barker and Malik survived to tell their stories, a testament to both pilot's courage and skill. As the first Indian to fly into combat with Britain's Royal Flying Corps, Oxford-educated Malik was a trailblazer and was the only Indian aviator to survive the First World War.

After the war, he joined the Indian Civil Service and later the Indian Foreign Service and eventually served as Indian Ambassador to France. For the rest of his life Malik proudly carried the remnants of the bullets firmly embedded in his leg. The "Flying Hobgoblin" died in New Delhi, three weeks short of his 91 birthday.

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## **World War One – Indian Soldier – Badlu Singh Neera Sahni**



Badlu Sighn and Victorian Cross medal  
(Source: *Imperial War Museums*, VC 46)

Badlu Singh was a Hindu Jat born in Dhakla Village, District Haryana, India on 13 January 1876 and died in action on 23 September 1918.

He was a Rissaldar (commander of a risala – mounted troop) in the 14 Murray's Jat Lancers, attached to the 29 Lancers (Deccan Horse)

The 29 Lancers were sent to France as part of the 8 (Lucknow) Cavalry Brigade of the 1 Indian Cavalry Division. They served, at times, in the trenches as infantry before being withdrawn to fight in Palestine.

Badlu Singh was posthumously awarded a Victoria Cross which is displayed on rotation at The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes exhibition in the Imperial War Museum, London.

*"Risaldar Badlu Singh was attached to 29th Lancers when "on the morning of the 23rd September 1918, his squadron charged a strong enemy position on the west bank of the river Jordan, between the river and Khes Samariyeh village. On nearing the position, Risaldar Badlu Singh realised that the squadron was suffering casualties from a small hill on the left front occupied by machine guns and 200 infantry. Without the slightest hesitation he collected six other ranks and with the greatest dash and total disregard for danger, charged and captured the position, thereby saving very heavy casualties to the squadron. He was mortally wounded on the very top of the hill when capturing one of the machine guns single handed, but all the machine guns and infantry had surrendered to him before he died. His valour and initiative were of the highest order."*

Extract: London Gazette, 27 November 1918.

He was cremated where he fell but his name is inscribed on the Heliopolis (Port Tewfik) Memorial in Egypt which commemorates the names of 4,000 men who served and died with the Indian Army during World War One in Egypt and Palestine, and who have no known grave.



Heliopolis (Port Tewfik) Memorial in Cairo, Egypt  
(Source: Commonwealth War Grave Commission)

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## World War One – Indian Soldier - Mir Dast Geoff Barker



Lord Herbert Kitchener (left), Jemadar Mir Dast and Sir Walter Lawrence, the commissioner of Indian Military Hospitals, at the Royal Pavilion, 1915  
(Source: *Photo Courtesy of Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton & Hove*)

Mir Dast's family were of the Afridi tribe of Pathans, and grew up in Maidan, Tirah, a North-West Frontier Province of British India. At the age of 20 years, he enlisted in the 1 Punjab infantry, an Indian regiment whose roots lay in the Punjab frontier force. In 1903, the regiment was renamed the 55 (Coke's) Rifles as a part of Lord Herbert Kitchener's reorganisation of the Indian army. In 1909, he was promoted jemadar, this rank had been adopted by the British from its traditional role for men who organised fighting for a local Indian zamidar or lord.

The first divisions of the Indian Army (3 Lahore and 7 Meerut) arrived in France on 26 September 1914 under the command of General Willcocks and served on the Western Front until October 1915, mainly in the Givenchy/Neuve Chapelle sector. Indian losses were very heavy, and men, like Mir Dast, were drawn from regiments in India to fill the depleted ranks of those in France. In Mir's case he was one of those cross-posted from Coke's to the 57 Wilde's Rifles (frontier force) in the 7 (Ferozepore) Brigade of the Lahore Division. On the 26 April 1915, some seven months after arriving on the front, and the day after the Gallipoli landing, the Lahore Division was ordered to counter-attack in conjunction with the French at Ypres, Belgium. The shelling was heavy on both sides and the Indian troops suffered a number of casualties as they moved into position for the daylight attack. It was 2 o'clock in the afternoon when Mir Dast and the Wilde's Rifles surged forward along the Ypre-Langemarck Road and started their advance across 1500 yards of "shell swept front line".

As the Ferozepore Brigade advanced, they were decimated by German shells and rifle and machine-gun fire. Within 15 minutes, the front-line survivors of the 57 Rifles, under the wounded Major Williams, had made it to within 90 or so yards of the German trenches but there they were pinned down. Major Duhan, Captain Mackie, Subadar Badawa Singh and Jemander Kirpa Singh were all killed near the enemy trenches.

A severely wounded orderly, Bhan Singh attempted to carry Captain Banks through a storm of bullets and when unable to carry the body any further took his accoutrements and carried these back to safety. He received an Indian Distinguished Service Medal (ISDM) for these actions.

It was at this time that nozzles of what looked like fire hoses were lifted over the edge of the trenches and through these the Germans began to pump a deadly cloud of yellow mustard gas, which drifted with the wind across the allied positions, including those of Ferozepore.

Only four days earlier, the Germans had made their first gas attack at Langemarck but already the Indian troops had improvised a solution. Instead of gas masks they dipped the ends

of their turbans in chloride of lime, and tied them over their mouths, unfortunately, in practice this offered little protection as the gas also affected the eyes. As the deadly cloud enveloped the French, British and Indian troops confusion and panic started to spread and they rapidly withdrew. One Indian havildar was reputed to have shouted out "Khabardar, Jehan Na pahunche" (look out we have arrived in hell).

As a result of the attack most of the brigade fell back down the slope in some confusion and Mir Dast was one of a handful of British and Indian soldiers who attempted to hold their ground. Recovering from the immediate effects of the chlorine gas, and finding the British Officers were all either killed or wounded, he then rallied a small group of survivors, which although driven back slightly by German counter-attacks held on until nightfall, when he was ordered to retire.

As they withdrew, Mir Dast led his own men to safety along with others found sheltering in old trenches along the way. He again risked his life by going out into no-mans' land and helping to carry back eight wounded British and Indian officers, while doing so he was wounded a second time. The 57 Rifles suffered 370 casualties, including 3 British and 3 Indian officers killed.

For these actions, Mir Dast, who had already received the ISDM in 1908, was recommended for the Victoria Cross (VC) which was announced on the 29 June 1915. It was the fourth VC awarded to an Indian since they had become eligible for the award in 1911. King George V, formally presented Mir Dast with his VC in the grounds of the Brighton Pavilion on the 26 August 1915.

At the second Battle of Ypres in April/May 1915, some 3,888 men of the Lahore Division's 15,980 were killed, wounded, or missing. Many of the wounded, including Mir Dast, were sent for treatment to Brighton, England where the Pavilion and several other buildings in the town had been converted into hospitals for Indian soldiers. In early July, Kitchener and Sir Walter Lawrence, the commissioner of Indian Military Hospitals met a group of wounded Indian

officers, including Mir Dast, on the lawn outside the Pavilion. The accompanying image was taken at this time when Mir Das was still suffering from the effects of gas poisoning.

*"The Victoria Cross is a very fine thing, but this gas gives me no rest. It has done for me".*

Mir Dast

In 1916, Mir Dast was awarded the Order of British India, second class, making him one of India's most-decorated soldiers, however he never fully recovered from his injuries and was removed from the Indian Army's active service list in 1917. He died in his home village sometime around 1945.

## The Indian Mountain Battery and Mule Corps, Gallipoli, 1915

Geoff Barker

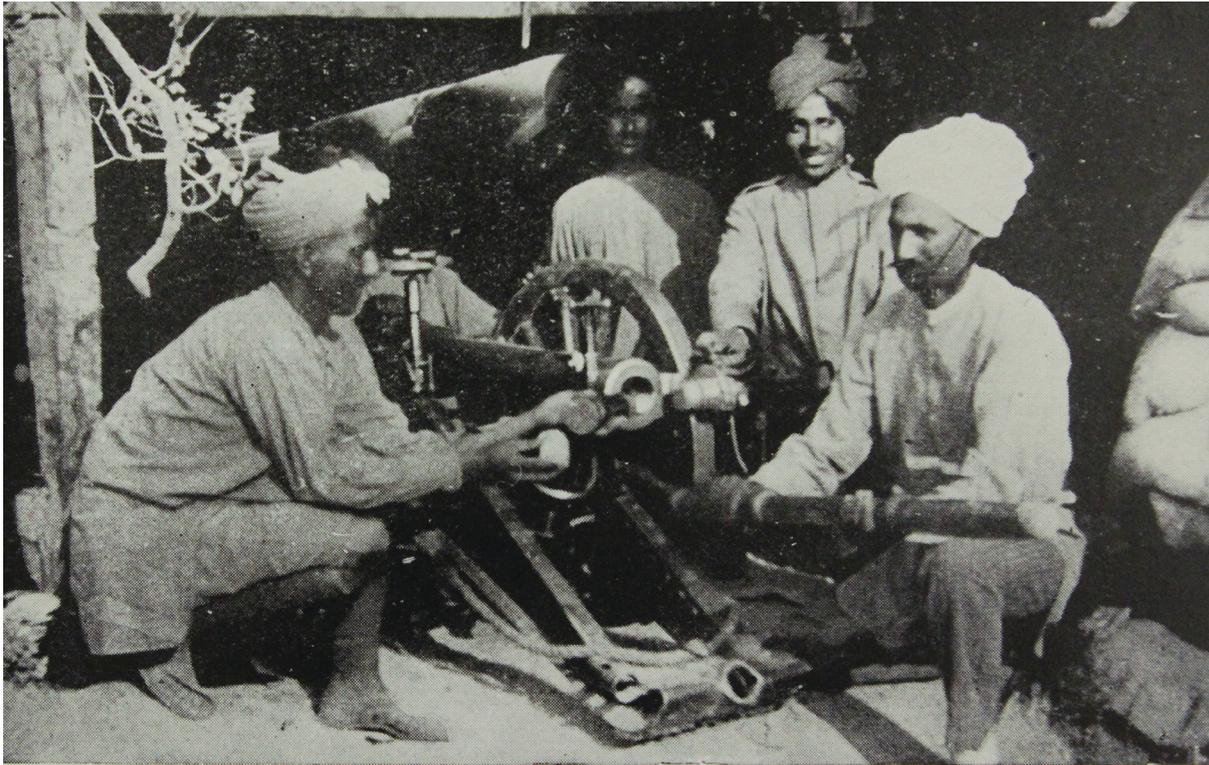


An Indian Mountain Battery in action at the back of Quinn's Post at Anzac Cove.  
(Source: *Australian War Memorial A03150*)

One of the lesser known facts of the Australian and New Zealand engagement at Gallipoli is that these troops fought alongside a small contingent of soldiers from the Indian Army. Over the course of the Gallipoli campaign General William Birdwood's Anzac force actually included a small contingent of men from the 7 Brigade of the Indian Mountain Artillery and Indian Transport Corps.

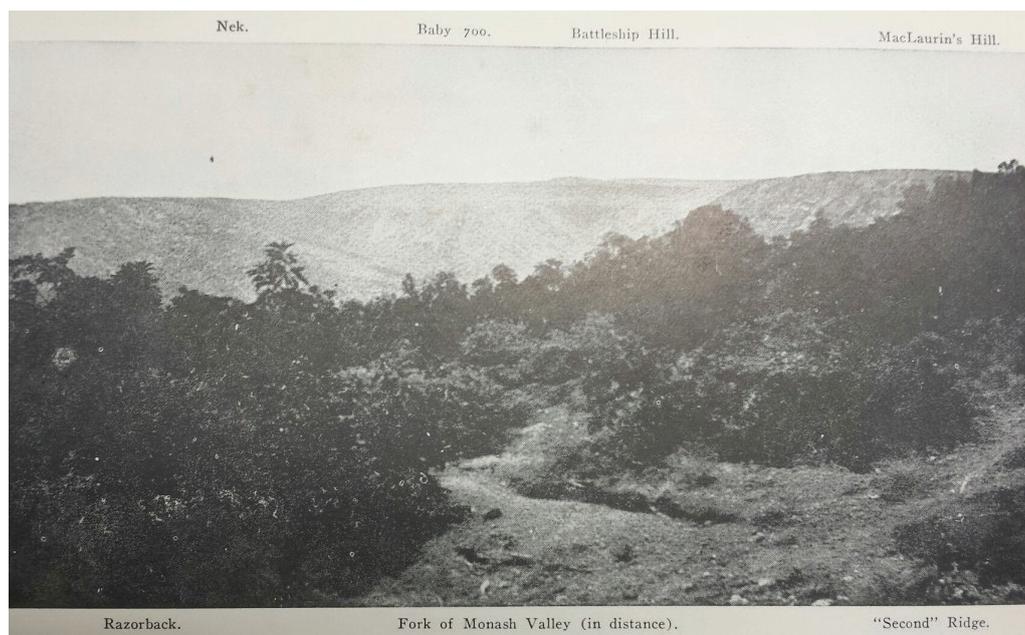
When the war broke out Indian troops were among the first to be drafted into action as a part of the British Imperial Forces and by April 1915 had already been tested in the trenches in France and had fought off an attempt by Turkish Forces to take the Suez Canal. In the original plans the 29 Indian Infantry Brigade, garrisoning at the Suez Canal was to have left with the ANZAC troops as reinforcements. But this never eventuated and the troops that landed at ANZAC consisted of the 21 (Kohat) Mountain Battery (raised in 1851) and 26 Mountain Battery (origins in Golandauze Battalion 1826) made up of 12 small guns, 13 officers, 820 rank and file and over 500 mules.

While the 3 Australian Infantry Brigade was the first to land on the 25 April it was closely followed by five transports holding the men of the 2 Brigade and the Indian Mounted Batteries. The objective of this Indian battery was to land and push on to the 400 Plateau in the centre of the covering position where it was to be guarded by a platoon of the 12 Battalion. All three brigades were to be ashore by 8.30 am.



Men and gun of the 21 (Kohat) Indian Mountain Battery, at Gallipoli, near 'Reinforcement Green', 28 May, taken by Captain H. Jacobs  
(Source: Charles Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Volume 12, *The Story of ANZAC*, 11th Edition, 1941, plate 66)

Unfortunately, almost all the boats were landed at the wrong place and amid the chaos that followed, Lieutenant Rupert Rafferty of the 12 Battalion, who was to have escorted the Indian Mounted Battery to the 400 Plateau, was ordered by Colonel Clarke to move to the left to silence a machine gun near the Sphinx. At 10.30 am the 26 was the first of the two Indian Mountain Batteries to land. By an incredible stroke of luck, they were met on the beach by Rafferty's 12 Battalion returning from an encounter at Fisherman's Hut where the original force of 50 was reduced to Rafferty, a sergeant and 16 men. Nevertheless, they marched back up the hills with the guns.



Shallow pits scratched on 25 April by Infantry on Razorback near the Mountain guns. The line lay facing out of the picture with the valley in its rear and some of the distant heights in the possession of the enemy, taken on 25 October 1915 (Source: Charles Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume 1, The Story of ANZAC, 11th Edition, 1941, plate 391*)

The small gun wheels, trail and two parts of the barrel were packed on a string of mules and wound their way over the steep scrub-land of the Razorback. It remained here for the rest of the campaign, close to a point on the 400 plateau beneath the crest. Colonel Hobb reported that he thought field guns could be placed on the other side of their position and asked for them to be brought ashore.

By late morning, there were three guns on either side of White's Valley and at noon they opened fire to support the 10 and 11 Battalions on Battleship Hill and Scrubby Knoll. However, the main force of the Turkish Batteries quickly turned upon them silencing the small battery and wounding Captain P. C. Chapman and Jemadar Dulla Icha. Chapman was hit in the forehead and sent to Egypt where he later died.

By 2.25 pm the shrapnel fire from the Turkish artillery was so intense, men were dropping every minute and Kirby who had also been wounded in the head decided to withdraw the battery to shelter. The fire was too deadly to bring up the mules and corpses of the poor animals already filled the valley behind them. Consequently, he ordered the gun crews to drop part of the equipment and run the guns back off the plateau by hand.

The guns, men and mules were packed up and marched back towards the beach where they were reorganised. When they came into action again towards the end of the afternoon only four of the six guns could be manned and those with difficulty. Kirby who worked until he fainted from loss of blood was sent to a hospital ship, but waking on board the next day he found a boat moored next to the ship and promptly hitched a ride back to the battery onshore. At 6.00 pm on the eve of the landing the 21 (Kohat) Mountain Battery was finally landed. But as dusk settled into night the artillery on both sides ceased firing due to darkness. Over the course of the evening the ANZAC commanders decided to set up an inner line of defense to which they could fall back if the need arose. This was formed along an inner line of Plugge's Plateau and McLaughlin's Ridge and to enhance these defenses, two guns from each of the Indian Brigades were emplaced on the almost perpendicular edge of the plateau.

On the 1 May 1915, an Indian Transport Corps was landed on the beach between the colorfully named 'Brighton Beach' and 'Hell Spit'. They brought with them light two wheeled mule carts which were used to move the ever growing mountain of engineers stores, barbed wire, timber and tools. It was here with the Indian mule drivers that John Simpson camped along with his famous donkey 'Duffy', and it was the Indians who evacuated his donkey when the troops left in December.

These good relations obviously extended beyond Simpson as on the 9 August, 1915, the 'Warrnambool Standard' newspaper reported on

*"...the camaraderie and good feeling existing at the Dardanelles between the Australians and the soldiers of the Indian mountain batteries, who fought side by side in the famous landing at Gaba Tepe. The batteries did so well and gallantly that the Australians have metaphorically taken them to their heart. All are the greatest pals imaginable ..."*

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## World War One – Indian troops – action at Wytschaete Geoff Barker



Sepoy Khudadad Khan, VC, Hollebeke Sector, First Battle of Ypres, 30 October 1914.  
(Source: *Wilimedia Commons*)

On the 29 October 1914, the 57 Rifles suffered only a few casualties, but on the morning of 30 October, the Germans plastered the trenches of the 4 and 5 Cavalry Brigades with shrapnel and high explosive and attacked with infantry. About 2 pm, a portion of the troops north of the 5 Cavalry Brigade was compelled to fall back, Captain Forbes of the 57, with the 3 Company, did not receive the orders to retire in time and became isolated.

As the company retired, a half of it with its leader, Lieutenant I. H. Clarke, was mown down by machine-gun fire, only a few getting away. The bombardment of the trenches and

Wyttschaete continued during the 30 and 31 October, and on this latter night, between 3 and 4 am, the Germans made an infantry attack in overwhelming numbers. The 4 Company of the 57 was bearing the weight of a strong attack at the same time, and Captain R. S. Gordon commanding the 2 Company led them to its assistance.

As the Highlander leaped from his trench he was killed. Lieutenant Malony and his troops, notwithstanding that he was opposed by vastly superior numbers, kept up so heavy a fire that the enemy began to cry a halt and endeavour to dig themselves in. Meantime, half of 4 Company was nearly surrounded, and the detachment was left without a single British officer; but the occasion generally discovers the man, in this case Subadar Arsla Khan. He had won an Order of Merit on the North-West Frontiers of India, and would go on to add the Military Cross to his numerous decorations. Leading a counter-attack with the bayonet he gained sufficient time to pull his men together, and then, although vastly outnumbered, skillfully withdrew both companies to Messines.

The 129 Baluchis had, like the 57 Rifles, been doing its share in another place. After its first experience in the trenches it had a rest in billets on the 27 October, and was at work again on the 29 entrenching a position. Orders for relief had been issued for 7 am on 30 October, but at 6.30 am the enemy opened a heavy fire which continued throughout the morning. Lieutenant Colonel W. M. Southey was in command of the 129. It had in its ranks Mahsuds and some Mohmands who were now being for the first time tested in the regular Army. The 129 experienced varying fortunes during the 30 October as after reinforcing the firing-line with all available men, they were pushed back.

Detaching a portion of them to hold a wood to the right, the remainder were rallied in the vicinity of a chateau which was held by Lieut. H. Lewis and Subadar Adam Khan. Evening saw them still holding the wood and some trenches north of the chateau, and later three companies moved to billets near the canal bank, leaving one company to hold the trenches north of the chateau. The last bit of work that fell to the Baluchis is best told in the brief official report of Colonel Southey...

*"We formed up about 3 am and advanced on the left of the farm. Major Potter taking the right, and marched up to the farm. We killed about three and wounded three, and the remainder who had not bolted surrendered, fourteen in number... Lieutenant Lewis during this advance was twice shot at a distance of not less than fifteen yards yet both shots hit his field-glasses in front of his left hip and smashed them to bits, the second one glancing off and hitting his hand. Each battalion had two Maxim machine-guns".*

*"With one gun of the Baluchis were three men, Naik Sar Mir, Lance-Naik Hobab Gul, and Sepoy Redi Gul, who worked their gun until it was blown to bits by a shell and only retired under orders of their commander. They had lost one gun and the gunners (Colour-Havildar Ghulam Mahomed 2524, Sepoy Lai Sher 2813, Sepoy Said Ahmad 4182, Sepoy Kassib 103, Sepoy Afsar Khan, 3600) on the other were equally under pressure. But as each man fell another took his place until finally only one remained, and although severely wounded worked the gun till strength failed him and he lay unconscious and hence untouched by the enemy".*

*"This man was Sepoy Khudadad 4050, and he lived to wear the Victoria Cross, the first Indian soldier who ever won it. His home is in the village of Chakwal near Jhelum's River".*

## World War One – Indian Army – First action 57 Rifles and 129 Baluchis Geoff Barker



Indian Soldiers in France (Source: *Library of Congress*)

Starting on the 23 October 1914, the 1 Connaught Rangers, forming part of the Ferozepore Brigade and the 57 Rifles and 129 Baluchis (originally raised in 1846 and known as a 'Baluchi' Battalion) were the first battalions of the Indian Army Corps engaged in the war. The 129 Baluchis consisted in 1914 of two companies of Punjabi Musalmans, three of Mahsuds, and three of Pathan. They had already seen service in Persia, Afghanistan, and Egypt, with the Duke of Connaught as their Colonel-in-Chief.

However, the high casualties among the British troops in this early phase of the war meant these two Indian regiments were separated from their own brigade and put into different trenches along the front. Instead of fighting together they were split up into half companies, attached to various British corps of cavalry, infantry, artillery, and hurried from one trench to another, from one front to another, hardly realising the meaning or object of it all, and then fighting as they were driven from their trenches time after time by the Germans.

The 57 (Wilde's) Rifles on arrival found themselves in occupation of trenches near Oosttaverne and between Wytschaete and Messines, Belgium. Sepoy Usman Khan of the 55 (Coke's) Rifles (commonly known as 'Cookies') won the Indian Distinguished Service Medal for their first action with the 1 Connaught Rangers. He was the first Indian to gain a decoration in France. The 57 was composed of two companies of each of the following: Sikhs, Dogras, Punjabis and Pathans and their last active service had been in China in 1900.

Meantime, the 129 Baluchis operating on the left, had to advance over very bad ground and as a result found it difficult to make any progress. This battalion had taken over trenches on the 23 October, where it came under rifle and machine-gun fire for the first time. In the attack on Gapaard, a company of the Baluchis got to within 300 yards of the German trenches before being ordered to retire due to machine gun fire. They had fifty-nine casualties between the 23 and 30 October. Of the seven British Officers in charge of the Regiments six were either killed or wounded a great loss as many in the regiment could not speak English making the interpreting and initiating of orders extremely difficult.

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## World War One – The arrival of the Indian Army in France 1914 - 1915 Geoff Barker



Indian Cavalry on the Western Front (Source: *Library of Congress*)

The Indian Army Corps in France from 1914 to 1915 were among the first non-European combatants to fight on the fields of France. However, in this war no one country or creed worked alone on the allied front. Indians fought alongside the Scottish, Irish, and English battalions which formed part of each brigade and importantly, from an Australian perspective fought with Australian soldiers in the Territorial units at Gallipoli, Turkey and in the Middle East campaign.

Before the first Australian troop ship landed in Egypt, and many months before the landing at Gallipoli, Indian troops were already fighting on the Western Front in France. On the 5 September 1914, General Willcocks took command of the first divisions of Indian Army troops, on the 26 September, just seven weeks after the declaration of war, two brigades of the Lahore Division landed at Marseilles, France. This was notwithstanding the delays caused by the activities of the German raiders 'Emden' and 'Konigsburg' and the slow transport ships. The Sihind Brigade had been dropped off in Egypt to reinforce the garrison there and did not make it to the front until November 1914.

The Army of India was little understood by the general public and many thought that Indian brigades and divisions were composed of Sikhs and Gurkhas alone, without including the many other races of India. Nor were they aware that in each brigade was a British battalion. A paper writing of the arrival of the Corps at Marseilles, solemnly announced that

*"... this Corps has been raised and equipped entirely at the expense of three great Indian Princes, who are now occupying the finest hotels in Marseilles. Their names are Prince Sikya (evidently a corruption of Sikh); Prince Gorok (Gurkhas); and Prince Balukin (meant for Baluchis)".*

The Army of India in 1914 was trained for frontier war or minor overseas expeditions, and for these purposes was to a certain extent sufficiently well-armed and equipped, but it was by no means fully so. The two divisions which sailed from Karachi and Bombay had to have their equipment completed at Marseilles, at Orleans, and on the battle front itself. The artillery was only made up by denuding the guns of other divisions and the rifles could not fire the latest class of ammunition with which the British Army was supplied. As a result, both rifles and ammunition had to be handed in to the store at Marseilles and fresh arms issued making things difficult for the troops as most soldiers trained and practised with their former weapons to the exclusion of almost all others.

Making things even harder was the fact that while the Indian troops took with them machine guns with new tripods, there were no howitzer field guns, no mechanical transport, a scant supply of medical equipment and signalling apparatus, and innumerable other shortages which were essential to a force suddenly dumped down from rail head into the trenches.

However, the Indian Army did possess assets which according to their commander Willcocks never stood it in better stead than in France. These were the Indian Army officers who although small in number were comrades and friends of the sepoy, and sowars and were as loyal and brave as their soldiers.

Unfortunately, this proved to be a double-edged sword for although commanders would rely on them throughout the campaign in France, death took its heavy toll day by day and these well trained leaders could not be quickly replaced.

There were also problems inherited from the army's many years as a standing army of the British Empire. That almost all senior officers were British was one problem another was the low pay of the Indian officers compounded by the fact that at formal occasions, such as Durbars, they never received their proper share of what was referred to in North India as Izzat (honour). Many felt they were not treated with the respect which was their due and which had been earned in their long service on many fields before the outbreak of World War One. According to Willcocks this was a feeling very strongly held as Izzat was a great driving force because it raised men in the estimation of their fellows, whilst the loss of it had the opposite effect.

Under the Indian officers were the Non Commissioned Officer's all of whom were in charge of a vast array of people from different backgrounds including: Rajputs, Jats, Pashtuns, Sikhs, Gurkhas, Punjabis, sappers from Chennai (Madras State), Dogras, Garhwalis and many others. Each had its own characteristics which needed to be recognised by anyone entrusted with the command of Indian troops. The colonial commander realised that they could not all be placed in one mould but unfortunately this was not so clear when it came to the supreme commanders on the western front. As a result, many of the clear roles and responsibilities which had been set up in India became confused and mixed-up as troops were split up and redistributed along the lines of the Western Front.

At Marseilles, the Indian troops were camped in their field service tents. Willcocks gave the following account to illustrate the strangeness of the situation both for the soldiers and the France locals.

*"... take a look at the race-course by the sea. Leaning on the rails are twenty or thirty French, men, women, and children, watching our Indian soldiers cooking their evening meal; these have*

*doffed their khaki uniform ... they exchange words, French and Hindustani; a French child offers one of them a sweet, the Indian gives a cha-patty in return; cigarettes are offered by a passer-by; a Mohammedan pulls out from his haversack a bamboo flute and plays a ditty; all laugh heartily. The West has already conquered the East; the East has sown a seed which gradually grew until within a few months Indians in Flanders were entering shops, bargaining and buying as if they were to the manner born, and the vendors were even more civil to them than to Europeans, and that is saying much for those fine people the French".*

Soon after landing the Indian troops were transferred to the sodden mud fields of Flanders, in the vicinity immediately west of La Bassee. The situation for the allies at this early stage of the war was bleak and the Lahore Division saw several battalions taken at once from their brigades and thrown in anyhow with cavalry and infantry to help stem the German rush between Ypres and La Bassee. For the rest of the troops the next hurdle they faced was the poor state of the mechanical transport which was to get them to the Front. The British retreat from Mons had taken a terrible toll and instead of motorised vehicles the troops were presented with a medley of carts of every description. A vast plain, now converted into a bog, was literally strewn with vehicles and horses; every species of conveyance found a place, and the baker's cart; structures on prehistoric springs; pole and draught horses in hundreds without collars, head or heel ropes in fact, just loose.

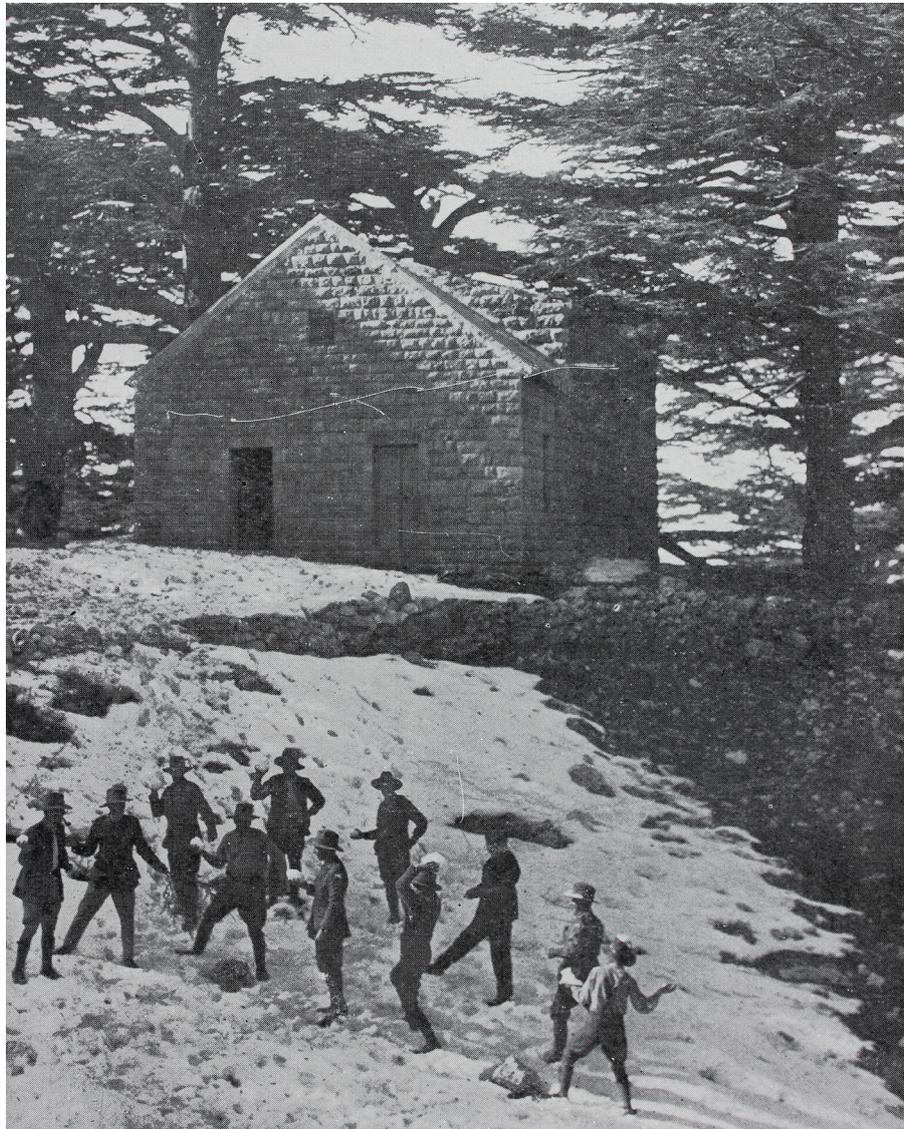
Notwithstanding these difficulties, by the 29 October two brigades of the Lahore Division and the Meerut Division were on the Flanders front in Belgium. These were soon followed by the rest of the force the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade and Jodhpur Lancers.

Once on the front-line the Indian troops needed to be looked after differently from the regular British troops. Among the most predominant of these were making sure, where possible, their religious needs were looked after and also catering for the variety of dietary requirements. While this could have caused almost insurmountable difficulties they had been preceded by Staff Officers conversant with all the requirements, and in a very few days, things were working reasonably smoothly.

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## World War One – Indian Relief of Beirut, Lebanon, 1918

Neera Sahni



Light Horse Soldiers of the Australian Mounted Division throwing snowballs on the Lebanon Hills during their journey from Homs to Tripoli (Source: *Charles Bean, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume 12, illustration 681.*)

In early 1915, the Turkish Jew, Alexander Aaronsohn, travelled to the independent province of Lebanon to visit his sister and also report on the locust plague which had just devastated the area. At this time, Lebanon was known primarily through the Bible and its references to the mountains on its border. In fact, it was at this time a beautiful province of about four thousand square miles populated mainly with a Christian sect called Maronites, and another sect, the Druses.

According to Aaronsohn, the Maronites were continually fighting against the Druses as a result of Turkish policy of "divide and rule." In 1860 Turkish troops joined with the Druses and committed wholesale massacres upon the Maronites that spread as far south as Damascus, where many thousands of Christians were killed in two days.

This resulted in the sending of 50 warships to Beirut by the European powers and the landing of 10,000 French troops. As a result of this intervention, Lebanon gained autonomy from Turkey and was instead led by a General Council which included representatives of all the different races and religions of the population.

Macadamized (tar sealed) roads were built all over the province. Aaronsohn describes how these changes had created across the Lebanon province peaceful and prosperous villages, schools filled with children, immense plantations of mulberry trees and olives, the slopes of the mountains terraced with beautiful vineyards, police on every road to help the stranger, and young girls and women with happy laugh and chatter working in the fields.

With a population of about six hundred thousand, this province exported annually two million dollars' worth of raw silk, silkworm raising being a specialty of the Lebanon.

When autonomy was granted the Lebanon, the French influence became predominant among the Maronites and other Christians of the province. French was spoken by almost all of them, and according to Aaronsohn a "love for France" was a deep-rooted sentiment of the people. On the other hand, the Druses embraced the English influence.

By 1915, however, the war had changed many things for Lebanon as Turkey was once again in ascendancy as French and British interests were forced to the periphery. Alexander Aaronsohn found himself being stopped by Turkish soldiers to ask for his papers on all roads and that Turkey had in fact occupied Lebanon.

As he entered Ed-Damur, one of the most prosperous villages in Lebanon he saw entire regiments of Turkish troops encamped in and about the village. When he explained he was also

*"... the son of an oppressed and ruined community, all the sadness and bitterness of their hearts was told me, how the Turkish soldiers had spread over the beloved mountains of Lebanon; how the strong, stalwart young Lebanese had been taken away from the mountains and forced into the Turkish army; how the girls and women were hiding in their homes, afraid to be seen by the soldiers and their officers; how the chieftains were imprisoned and even hanged; and how violence and pillage had spread over the peaceful country".*

Seeing these changes, Aaronsohn felt the allies missed a great chance to change the course of the war for if they had landed in Palestine he wondered whether the Lebanon and Syria would have raised an army to fight for their independence.

In Beirut he caught up with his sister who was being looked after by President Bliss, of the Syrian Protestant College. This college was the refuge for many but by 1915, the Turkish Government was increasingly dismissive of the autonomy of the college and had begun to enter the premises to search for refugees without troubling to ask permission from the American Consul.

By late 1918, the tables had been almost completely turned in Lebanon. In October of that year, the allies took Damascus after a long campaign that had started way back in 1915. Aaronsohn had seen the beginning of these operations when he was travelling through Beersheba and had seen the Turkish troops preparing to leave on their unsuccessful assault on the Suez Canal.

By October 1918, the Australian forces in Damascus had captured the town, and taken thousands of prisoners, but found themselves crippled by an outbreak of malaria and tuberculosis. So while the Australian 5 Cavalry under Major General MacAndrew continued to press towards Aleppo it was the 7 Meerut Indian Infantry which began its march from Haifa to attack Beirut on the 3 October 1918.

After marching through the 'Ladder of Tyre', where they were also forced to cut a roadway into the cliff face in order to move their wheeled transport, they arrived at Beirut on the 8 October. Here they found two French warships already in the harbour with the Turkish troops either departed or surrendered to the local inhabitants. These were handed over to the Indian troops who then pressed on toward Tripoli.

This action eased the transport problem for the Australian 5 Cavalry Division who were now more or less free to advance on Homs and then press on across the Lebanon mountain range to Tripoli as well.

## World War One – Food for Indian Soldiers

Neera Sahni



An unidentified Indian soldier minding the sheep that were supplied as part of the rations for the Indian troops on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey.

(Source: *Australian War Memorial C01662*)

The following is the list of rations what Indian soldiers were supplied to eat during World War One.

- 1/4 pound meat

(Non-meat eaters received 2 ounces of gur (coarse, unrefined sugar made from sugar cane juice) or sugar or 3 ounces of milk in place of 4 ounces of meat)

- 1/8 pound potatoes
- 1/3 ounce tea
- 1/2 ounce salt
- 1 1/2 pounds atta (flour)
- 4 ounces dhal (dried lentils, peas or beans which have been stripped of their outer hulls and split)
- 2 ounces ghee (clarified butter)
- 1/6 ounce chillies
- 1/6 ounce turmeric

- 1/3 ounce ginger
- 1/6 ounce garlic
- 1 ounce gur

Indian troops' iron rations (emergency supplies issued in case soldiers were cut off from regular rations) consisted of:

- 1 pound biscuit
- 8 ounces gur
- 1 ounce tea
- 6 ounces condensed milk or 2 1/2 ounces dried milk in lieu, when available.

## World War One - Mall Singh's truncated voice-recording during War Neera Sahni

Indian soldier Mall Singh was just 22 years old when he made this recording. He is now famous across the world for this heart-rending message. It tells the story of a man from Ferozepur district in undivided Punjab who wants to go back to his country for food. Mall Singh's truncated voice-recording on 11 December, 1916:

*There was once a man. He used to eat butter in his native Hindustan.*

*This man then came into the European war*

*Germany captured this man. He wishes to return to India.*

*If God has mercy, he will make peace soon.*

*This man wishes to go away from here.*

*If he goes back to Hindustan, he will again get the same food.*

*It is not known whether Mall Singh ever returned to his homeland – Hindustan or not.*

*Many did but badly traumatised and mutilated.*

### Punjabi Transcription:

ਏਕ ਆਦਮੀ ਸੀ.. ਮੱਖਣ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਹੀ ਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਮੇਂ.. ਦੋ ਸੇਰ ਦੂਧ ਪੀਤਾ ਸੀ..

ਇਸੇ ਆਦਮੀ ਨੇ, ਓਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਕੀ ਨੌਕਰੀ ਕੀ..ਉਹੋ ਆਦਮੀ ਯੂਰਪ ਕੀ ਲੜਾਈ 'ਚ ਆ ਗਿਆ..

ਓਸ ਆਦਮੀ ਨੂੰ ਜਰਮਨੀ ਨੇ ਕੈਦ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ.. ਓਸ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹਤਾ ਹੈ..

ਹੀ ਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਜਾਊ ਗਾ ਓਸਨੂੰ ਓਹੋ ਖਾਣਾ ਮਲਿੰਗਾ.. ਓਹੋ ਆਦਮੀ ਕੋ ਤੀਨ ਬਰਸ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹੈ..

ਖਬਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਬ ਸੁਲਾਹ ਹੋਏਗਾ.. ਜੇ ਹੀ ਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਮੈਂ ਓਹੋ ਆਦਮੀ ਜਾਏਗਾ ਉਸਕੋ ਖਾਣਾ ਓਹੀ ਮਲਿੰਗਾ..

ਜੇ ਦੋ ਸਾਲ ਓਹੋ ਆਦਮੀ ਏਥੇ ਹੋਰ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਓਹ ਆਦਮੀ ਮਰ ਜਾਊਗਾ..

ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੋ.. ਛੋਤੀ ਸੁਲਾਹ ਕਰ ਲਏ.. ਦੇਸ ਅਸੀਂ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਈਏ..

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## World War One - Deaths of Indians in Brighton Hospitals Neera Sahni



Indian troops in Dome Hospital (Source: *World Digital Library*)

Over one and a half million Indian Army soldiers served alongside British troops during World War One. Twelve thousand Indian soldiers who were wounded on the Western Front were hospitalised at sites around Brighton, England. These included York Place School, the Dome, the Corn Exchange and the Royal Pavilion.

The fifty-three Hindu and Sikh soldiers who died in Brighton were taken to a peaceful resting place on the Sussex Downs near Patcham for cremation, after which their ashes were scattered in the sea, in accordance with their religious rites.

The Muslim brothers in arms, totalling nineteen, were buried in a purpose built burial ground near to the Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking. Built in 1889, the mosque is the oldest of its kind in north-west Europe.

## Deaths of Indians in Brighton Hospitals:

### Kitchener Hospital:

36 deaths - 25 Hindus/Sikhs cremated at Patcham; 11 Mohammedans buried at Woking.

### Royal Pavilion:

18 deaths - 10 cremated at Patcham; eight buried at Woking.

### York Place Hospital:

20 deaths - 18 cremated at Patcham; 2 buried at Woking.

Total cremated on the Downs at Patcham	<b>53</b>
Total buried at Jehan Mosque in Woking	<b>21</b>
Total deaths	<b>74</b>

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## **World War One - Commemoration of Indian Soldiers in India Neera Sahni**

Over one and a half million Indian army soldiers served alongside British and Allied troops during World War One. Twelve thousand Indian soldiers were wounded on the Western Front.

### **India Gate, Delhi (India)**



India Gate (Source: Neera Sahni)

The India Gate situated in Delhi, India. The India Gate was originally called the All India War Memorial. It was part of the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission, for building war graves and memorials to soldiers killed in the First World War. The foundation stone of the All-India War Memorial was laid on the 10 February 1921. This memorial is a tribute to the memory of heroes, "known and unknown", 70,000 soldiers of the British Indian Army who died in the World War One.

## Bombay Memorial, Mumbai (India)



Bombay Memorial (Source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*)

The Bombay Memorial (1914-1918) commemorates more than 2000 sailors who died in the First World War and have no other grave than the sea.

Sailors from Undivided India, Aden and East Africa are commemorated here, and with them, those Indian dead of the Royal Indian Marine who fell in the First World War and whose graves are in Eastern waters.

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## **World War One - Commemoration of Indian Soldiers in Britain Neera Sahni**

Over one and a half million Indian army soldiers served alongside British and Allied troops during World War One. Twelve thousand Indian soldiers were wounded on the Western Front.

The fifty-three Hindu and Sikh soldiers who died in Brighton, England were taken to a peaceful resting place on the Sussex Downs near Patcham for cremation, after which their ashes were scattered in the sea, in accordance with their religious rites.

The Muslim brothers in arms, totalling nineteen, were buried in a purpose built burial ground near to the Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking. Built in 1889, the mosque is the oldest of its kind in north-west Europe.

### **Chattri Memorial, Brighton (United Kingdom)**



Chattri Memorial, Brighton (Source: *Wikipedia*)

The Chattri is a memorial tribute to more than 800,000 Indian soldiers who fought for Allied Powers during the World War One as India was part of British Empire. The memorial is located near Patcham, where 53 Hindu and Sikh soldiers who died in Brighton war hospitals between 1914 and 1915 were cremated.

The memorial was unveiled by the Edward VIII, Prince of Wales on the 21 February 1921. The plinth bears an inscription in English, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu. It reads as follows:

### English:

*To the memory of all Indian soldiers who gave their lives for the King-Emperor in the Great War, this monument, erected on the site of the funeral pyre where Hindus and Sikhs who died in hospital at Brighton passed through the fire, is in grateful admiration and brotherly love dedicated.*

### Hindi:

महान युद्ध में राजा-सम्राट के लिए अपनी ज़िंदगी देने वाले सभी भारतीय सैनिकों की याद में, यह स्मारक, अंतमि संस्कार की जगह पर बनाया गया जहां ब्राइटन में अस्पताल में मारे गए हिंदू और सिख आग से गुजर चुके थे, आभारी हैं प्रशंसा और भाई प्यार समर्पित है।

### Punjabi:

ਮਹਾਨ ਜੰਗ ਵਚਿ ਰਾਜਾ-ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਪਿਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਚਿ, ਇਸ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਮਿ-ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਤੇ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਵਚਿ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਵਚਿ ਦਮ ਤੋੜਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਗ ਵਚਿ ਲੰਘਣਾ ਸੁਕਰਗੁਜ਼ਾਰ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਸੰਸਾ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਕ ਪਿਆਰ ਸਮਰਪਤਿ।

### Urdu:

کے لئے انہوں نے اپنے جانیں قربان کر کے ان کے لئے ایک یادگار بنائی ہے۔ ان کے لئے انہوں نے اپنی جانیں قربان کر کے ان کے لئے ایک یادگار بنائی ہے۔ ان کے لئے انہوں نے اپنی جانیں قربان کر کے ان کے لئے ایک یادگار بنائی ہے۔ ان کے لئے انہوں نے اپنی جانیں قربان کر کے ان کے لئے ایک یادگار بنائی ہے۔

## Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking, Surrey



Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking, Surrey (Source: *Shah Jahan Mosque*)

Muslim soldiers who died in English hospitals also received burial rites according to their religion. Some were taken to Woking - to a new cemetery near to the Shah Jahan Mosque and some were taken to Brookwood Military Cemetery. There, in a fusion of Muslim practices with British military traditions, they were interred and a bugler played 'The Last Post'.

Mahomed Sarwar grew up in Punjab and joining the 19th Lancers (Fane's Horse). His regiment went to France in October 1914 as part of the Sialkot Brigade of the 1st Indian Cavalry Division.

In April 1915, Mahomed Sarwar was fighting in the trenches and was admitted to the Kitchener Hospital in Brighton. He died two months later from typhoid, aged 19 years. On his headstone in Brookwood Cemetery, it says:

*"For God we are and to God we go" ... (Qur'an)*

# World War One and Images of Indian Soldiers

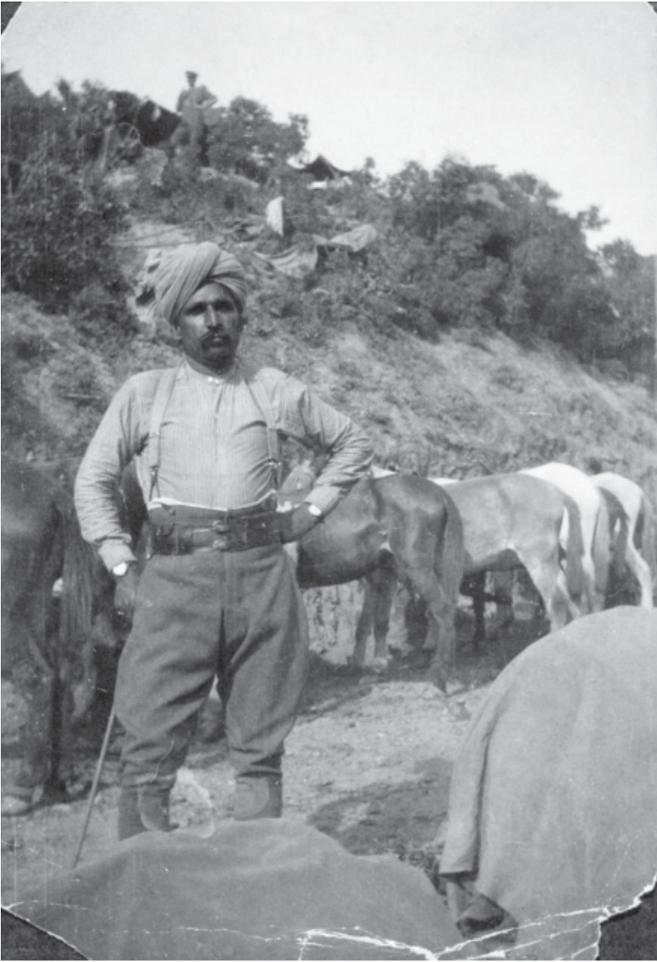
Neera Sahni



Indian Stretcher Bearers during World War One (Source: *Australian War Memorial P01116.055*)



Men of the Indian Mule Corps on the beach at Gaba Tepe, Gallipoli, 1915  
(Source: *Australian War Memorial P00229.005*)



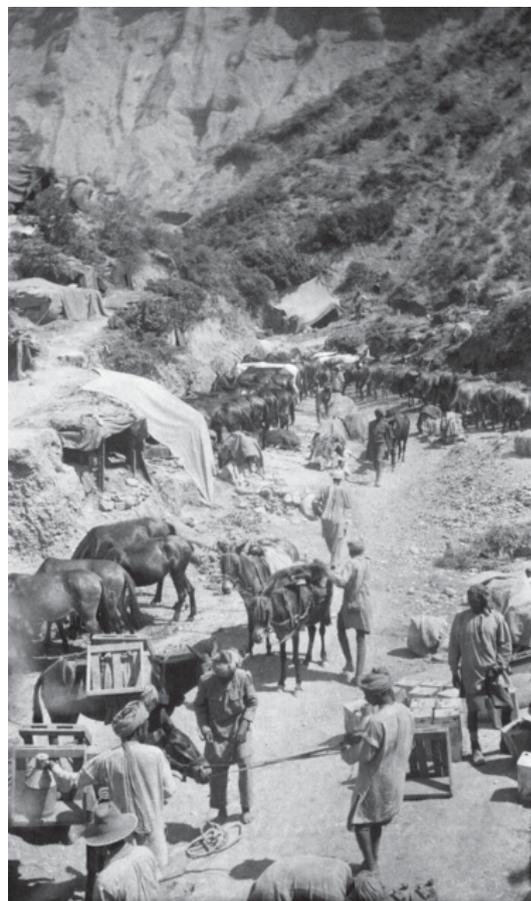
Indian Mule Corps  
(Source: Australian War Memorial P00229.004)



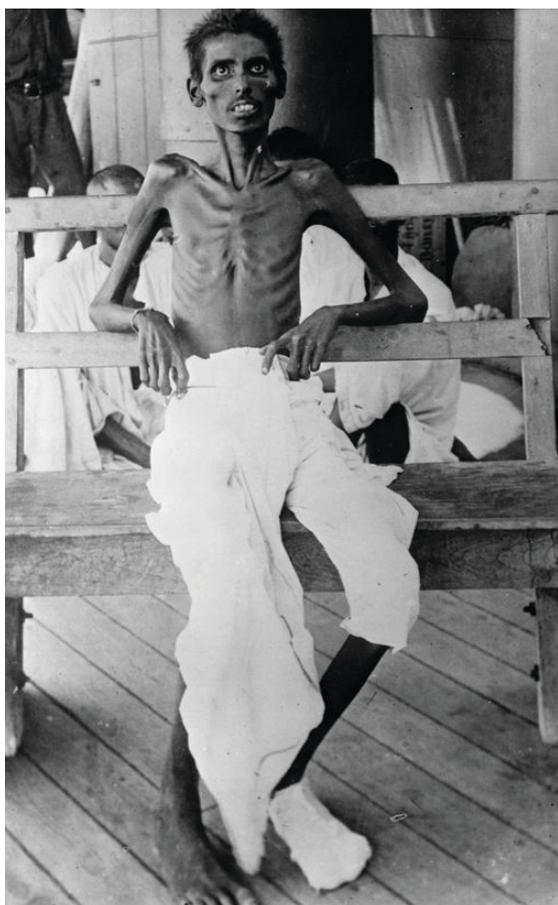
Mules Carrying Water  
(Source: Australian War Memorial P11235.022)



Indian bicycle troops at a crossroads on the Fricourt-Mametz Road, Somme, France.  
(Source: *Imperial War Memorial Q3983*)



Indian Mule Drivers  
(Source: *Australian War Memorial J02706*)



An emaciated Indian army soldier who survived the Siege of Kut, 7 December 1915 – 29 April 1916 (Source: *Imperial War Memorial Q79446*)



A hero - Bal Bahadur

A hero - Bhar Gul of the 56th Sikh Rifles, who was promoted in the field for gallantry at Neuve Chapelle. The story of his gallant exploit is as follows. With an officer and two other men he was in a captured German trench at Neuve Chapelle, when volunteers were called for to rescue some wounded men who were in front of the trench. He volunteered and although exposed to a heavy fire, succeeded in rescuing one man, and went back again to rescue a second, then he was hit by a German bullet, and severely wounded.

Bal Bahadur, who was wounded while rescuing fellow soldiers (Source: *British Library*)



Indian infantrymen training in case of a gas attack  
(Source: *British Library*)



Indian Soldiers Digging Trenches  
(Source: *British Library*)



Indian military engineers in Mesopotamia  
(Source: *Imperial War Museum Photographic Archive*)



Wounded Indian Soldier on Western Front  
(Source: *Imperial War Museum Photographic Archive*)

Back cover image: Indian bicycle troops at a crossroads on the Fricourt-Mametz Road, Somme, France.  
(Source: *Imperial War Memorial* Q3983)

