

# REMEMBERING INDIAN SOLDIERS

1.4m Indian Soldiers: The Forgotten Heroes of WW1

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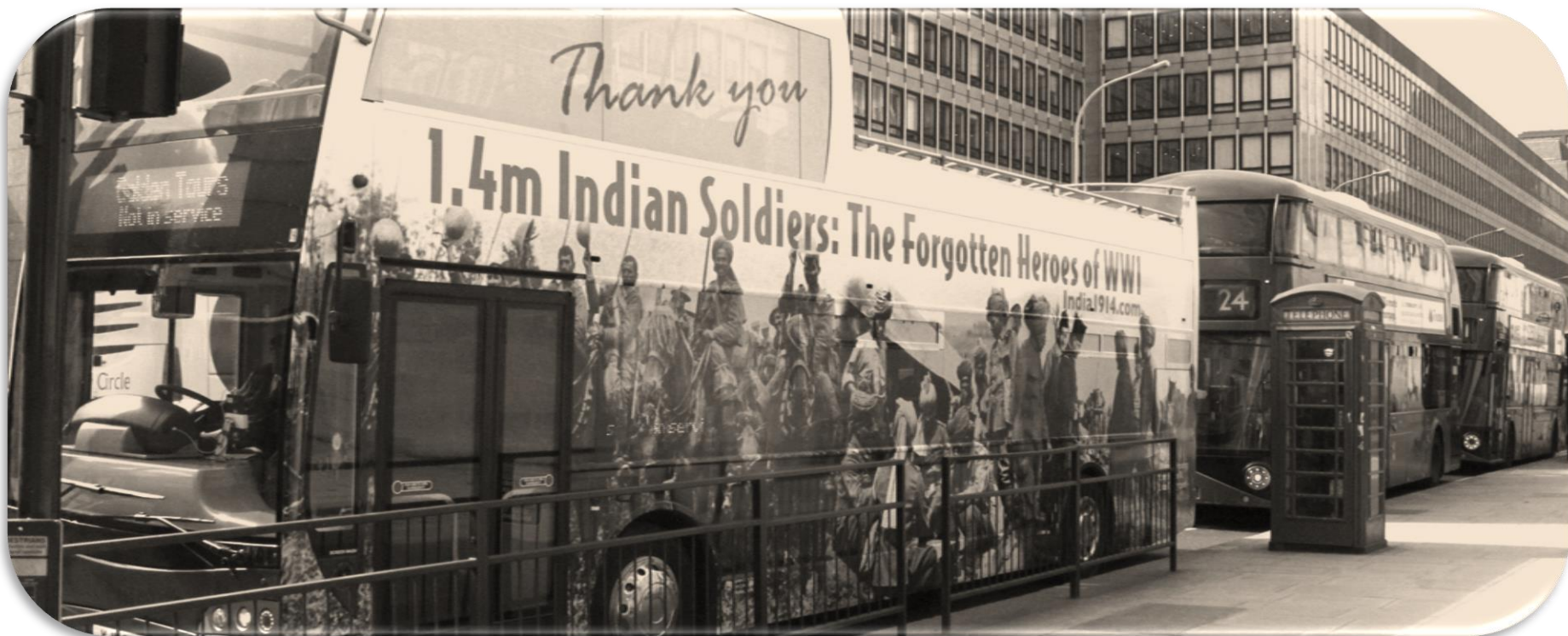
ALL WHO SERVED, SACRIFICED,  
AND CHANGED OUR WORLD  
**1918-2018**



*Thank you*

**1.4 MILLION INDIAN SOLDIERS  
1914-1918**

THE INDIAN REMEMBRANCE MARIGOLD



# Pre 1914



By the mid-19th Century, the Indian soldiers was well versed in warfare and saw service in other regions including Egypt, Sudan, Abyssinia, British Somaliland, Jubaland, British East Africa, Aden, the Persian Gulf, Persia, Afghanistan, the North-East Frontier, Tibet, Burma, Malaya and China.

[Click Here >> Pre1914](#)

# The Trigger



- Many people would be aware of the reasons behind WW2, but few people know what triggered off WW1.
- It started with Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir apparent to the Austria-Hungarian throne who was assassinated in June 1914. This set in motion a dangerous set of events culminating into WW1 or as it is sometimes referred to as the Great War. Lasting for four years, it cost the lives of over 13 million people and millions more injured. The brutality of the conflict is even harder to count.

[Click Here >> TheTrigger](#)

# Theatres of War



The Indian Army fought around the world in aid of the British. Despite their bravery, much of their contribution has largely been forgotten. The Centenary commemorations of WW1 is helping remember the sacrifices of all soldiers who fought for freedom.

[Click >> Theatres of War](#)



# France and Flanders



At the outbreak of the First World War, the only professional army on the allied side was the British Army and the British Indian Army which comprised of Indian troops led by British officers.

[Click Here >> FranceAndFlanders](#)

# Egypt and Palestine



- Indian troops combating against Turkish attack.
- The Turkish forces suffered heavy losses with 2,000 casualties and were pushed back. The Allies suffered 163 casualties. After the success, most of the Indian troops were deployed to other regions as the chances of another attack was minimal.

[Click Here >> EgyptAndPalestine](#)



# Gallipoli



Empire & Commonwealth: Gallipoli / National Army Museum / CC-BY-NC-ND

[Click Here >> Gallipoli](#)

[Along with  
Australians, New  
Zealanders, Maoris,  
British, French and  
Senegalese, the  
Indians sent some of  
its troops to fight in  
Gallipoli.](#)

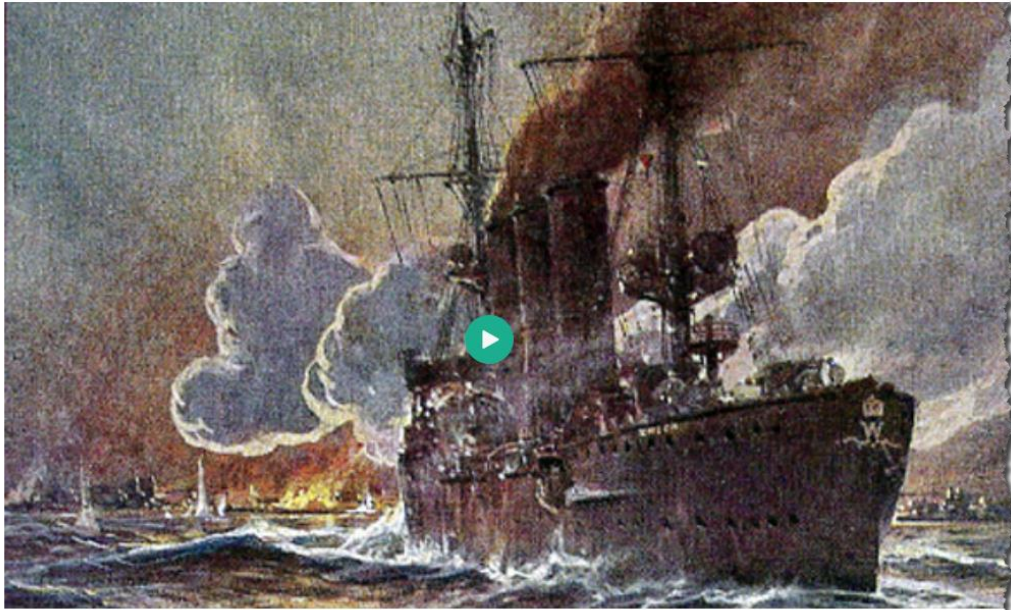
# Mesopotamia



An advance was made up the Euphrates in September 1917 by the 15th Indian Division which resulted in the Turkish defeat at Ramadi. By early November Samarra and Tikrit had been captured as well. Small actions continued to be fought until the end of the year.

[Click Here >> Mesopotamia](#)

# The Bombing of Chennai



The Sms Emden steams away after shelling Chennai 22-23 September 1914 - Source CAFHR-United Service Institution of India

On September 22, 1914, exactly a month after what is now celebrated as Madras Day, the city became the only Indian one to face an assault by Germany and its allies – Hungary, Austria, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria.

# The Indian Hospital, Brighton

Brighton & Hove during the First World war



By 1914 25% British Expeditionary Force was from India.

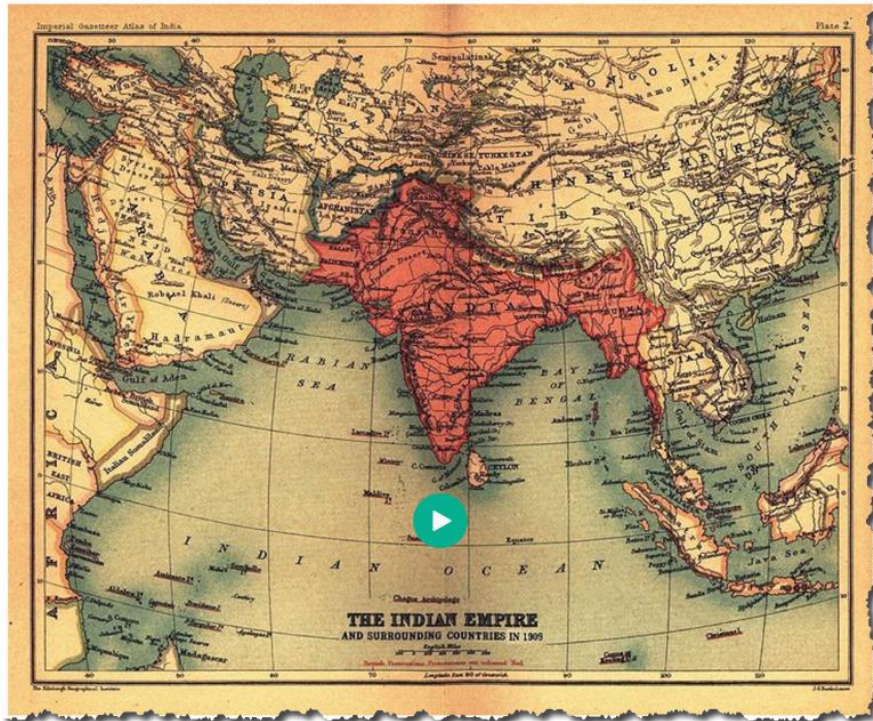
The British Government chose Kitchener Hospital, the York Place School, and the Royal Pavilion in Brighton to provide care to the wounded and sick soldiers of India.

[Click Here >> Indian Hospital, Brighton](#)



# Cost of WW1 to India in Today's terms.

## INDIA FACT SHEET



As a colony of Great Britain, India was already contributing people and goods to the war effort. In 1917, India offered a gift to its colonial rulers—an extra \$500m for the war. India also paid all the costs for its own troops throughout the war, about \$100m making a total of over \$600m.

[https://www.everettsd.org/cms/lib/WA01920133/Centricity/Domain/491/India\\_WWI.pdf](https://www.everettsd.org/cms/lib/WA01920133/Centricity/Domain/491/India_WWI.pdf)

# The Price of War

- Total number of Indians > **1.4m**
- Financial contribution in today's terms > **\$20b**
- Animal provided > **184k**
- Supplies **3.7m tonnes**
- Total True Cost to India in Today's Terms > **\$500b**



# Post 1918



Although the war may have been over for most of the world, Indian units were still serving overseas till as late as 1921 and the Indian Army was also engaged in the Third Afghan War in 1919.

# Post 1918



With what India had sacrificed for its colonial rulers, the British establishment had to offer something. The chances of independence were more on the back burner. However, It was also evident that substantial change was required in how the British Indian Army was developed and managed. This included: -

- ❑ - Officers of Indian origin were allowed to be trained
- ❑ - Enlisting of non-martial classes
- ❑ - Changes in the regimental structure
- ❑ - Changes in training and equipment
- ❑ - Birth of the Indian Air Force (IAF)

# Zoroastrians



During the First World War, the forgotten Zoroastrian community in India played a vital role in supporting the British. The Zoroastrians offered their service through money and material. Properties to treat the wounded, doctor, and positive vibes whilst the duration of World War 1.

# Gurkhas



At the outbreak of World War 1 the Gurkha community came forward and pushed its soldiers at the disposal of the Commonwealth. Over 16,000 Gurkha's were subsequently deployed on the operations of the North-West-Frontier and as Garrison Battalions in India to replace troops of the British Indian Army who had gone to fight overseas.

**The most famous Gurkha was Rifleman **Kulbir Thapa** who received a Victoria Cross for his valour in the Battle of Loos in 1915.**

# Rajputs



Most of the Rajput battalions saw action during World War 1. The 1st battalion fought at the Battle of Dujailah in Mesopotamia, where it was nearly annihilated. A large number of other awards and battle honours were won by the Rajputs and at the end of WW1, a total of 37 battle honours were on the colours of the Rajputs, which exceeded that of any other regiment of the Indian Army.

**During World War 1 the Rajput community was sent to serve India in Mesopotamia**



# Dogra community



The Dogra community was among the best fighting material to be found in India during World War 1. As Indians, they had a keener sense of national pride and a higher feeling of national integrity than other communities.

**His Majesty the King, has been graciously pleased to confer the Victoria Cross on No. 501 Lance Naik Lala, 41st Dogras, Indian Army, for most conspicuous bravery.**



# Bengal Ambulance Corps (BAC)



The work of 'Bengal Ambulance Corps (BAC) Committee' was universally appreciated. On 5th September 1916, the Viceroy said, "The Bengal Stationary Hospital recently has broken up rendered admirable service in Mesopotamia and its record there was one of which the promoters of the scheme may well be proud of."

# Bengal Ambulance Corps (BAC)

## Letter from the Trenches

**Captain Kalyan Mukherji, 6th  
Ambulance Corps attached to 6th  
Division in Mesopotamia**

"Ma it's been almost 5 months since I sat down to write to you. I've often thought of writing in these months but since nothing was known about when we would be able to send letters, I never got around to it. Since yesterday people here have come to accept that we will not be relieved. The troops have been on half rations for the last month and even those have been steadily cut over the last 15 days, but despite these measures, there's only enough food to last three more days. In the last 15 days, many have died for lack of food."

# Garhwalis



The Garhwalis are hill people and a martial race but were less good known than other martial races like the Sikhs, Gurkhas, Pathans and Dogras. However, the Garhwali contribution impressed the British with their fighting abilities on the Western Front.

**Gabar Singh Negi of the Garhwali community was 19 years old and a Rifleman in the 2/39th Garhwal Rifles, Indian Army, when he was awarded the highest gallantry award at Neuve Chapelle, France.**

# Jats



**One such brave Jat was Badlu Singh VC (13 January 1876 – 23 September 1918) who was an Indian recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces**

The Jat community originates from the plains of Panjab, Pakistan and Haryana. Despite being known for their agriculture expertise they are also considered a martial race. During World War 1 the Jat communities were first to participate with the Indian Army due to a long history of previous invasions.

<http://india1914.com/Jats.aspx>

# Marathas



The Maratha soldiers served in different locations across the globe during the First World War. Several battle honours have been conferred on many units for their outstanding operations during WW-I. These include Basra, Ctesiphon, Kut-al-Amara, Defence of Kut-al- Amara, Baghdad, Sharqat, Mesopotamia (1914-1918), Persia (1918), Megiddo, Nablus, Sharon, Palestine and North West Frontier (1914-17).k

**In fact, such was their reputation that once a senior British officer was asked, “Who do you think were pick of your lot?” “The Mahratta”, came the unhesitating reply. “I would always like to have a Maratha with me in any scrap.”**

# The Jews of India



The entire Jewish population probably numbered in the region of twenty thousand persons at the outbreak of the First World War. This very small number in comparison with the total population of India and the eventual massive wartime size of the Indian Army should be born in mind when considering the scale of the Indian Jewish contribution to the war effort and what was possible for Indian Jewry.



# Victoria Cross Winners

During World War 1 11 Indian Soldiers received a Victoria Cross medal for their bravery. Here is a list of the 11 that fought

- ❑ Mir Dast
- ❑ Khudabad Khan
- ❑ Naik Darwin Singh Negi
- ❑ Gabar Singh Negi
- ❑ Chatta Singh
- ❑ Kulbir Thapa
- ❑ Dafadar Gobind Singh
- ❑ Naik Lala
- ❑ Ressaidar Badlu Singh
- ❑ Karanbahadur Rana
- ❑ Naik Shahamad Khan

# Other Resources

- ❑ **National War Museum** > <https://www.nam.ac.uk>
- ❑ **Imperial War Museum** > <https://www.iwm.org.uk>
- ❑ **Commonwealth War Graves** > <https://www.cwgc.org>
- ❑ **Brighton Royal Pavilion** > <https://brightonmuseums.org.uk>
- ❑ **Gurkha War Museum** > <https://thegurkhamuseum.co.uk>
- ❑ **Royal Airforce Museum** > <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk>
- ❑ **British Museum** > <http://www.britishmuseum.org>
- ❑ **National Archives** > <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>
- ❑ **National Maritime Museum** > <https://www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum>

# Suggested Read

## Honour and Fidelity: India's Military Contribution to the Great War 1914-1918

> <https://tr.im/HonourAndFidelity>

