



What is this project about?

This project aims to increase public awareness of South Asian soldiers of the British Indian Army who won the Victoria Cross during World War One.

Thanks to the support from Heritage Lottery Fund for allowing the project to be able to stage a free public exhibition at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The images and artefacts have been kindly loaned from National Army Museum in London and Imperial War Museum.

This leaflet is designed to accompany the exhibition and some of its text and details can also be found on exhibition panels and labels.

Please note that information in the booklet and on the exhibition boards might be different. The information on soldiers, in this booklet, has been provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The original documents regarding the Indian Army were destroyed.

How do the Victoria Cross and the Indian Order of Merit compare to each other?

(Victoria Cross, National Army Museum, London)



Victoria Cross

(Indian Order Of Merit, National Army Museum, London)



Indian Order of Merit

The Victoria Cross is Britain's highest award for military gallantry for soldiers (or civilians under military command) "in the face of the enemy" and was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856 during the Crimean War against Russia. Only 1,358 medals have ever been awarded to 1,355 individual recipients.

According to tradition the medals are forged from melted down iron from captured Russian cannons. Until 1911 Victoria Cross was only open to British Soldiers (and some other soldiers from the British Empire) but in that year it became possible for South Asian soldiers of the British Indian Army to win it for the first time. Until then the equivalent was the Indian Order of Merit (the medal was introduced by the East India Company in 1837 as 'the Order of Merit', taken over by the Crown in 1858 and renamed the 'Indian Order of Merit' in 1902).

How did the British Indian Army develop between 1858 and 1914?

During the 18th and 19th centuries the British East Indian Company came to dominate South Asia (what is now modern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), ruling two thirds directly and one third through client princes.

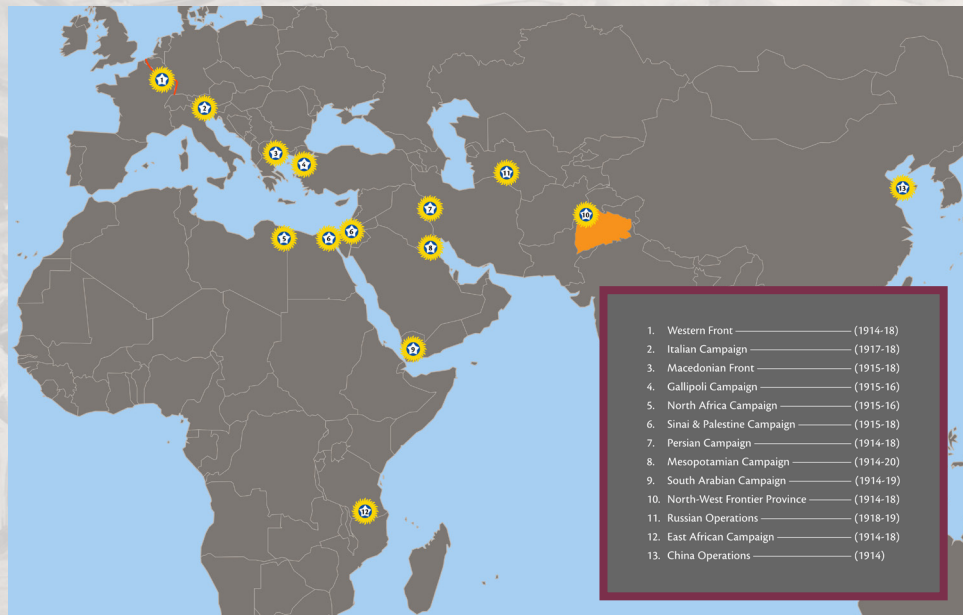
In 1857 a major revolt by South Asian soldiers employed by the Company was crushed ruthlessly by the British (it is traditionally known as the Indian Mutiny in Britain). The Company's lands were transferred to the Crown and Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1877. A new British Indian Army was formed, carefully recruited from South Asian peoples the British regarded as most warlike with numbers balanced so that no one religion dominated.

Soldiers mostly came from rural areas and most could not read and write. In return for regular pay and pension they kept peace on the borders of the unruly North West Frontier Province. The British Indian Army numbered some around 195,000 in 1914.



Reinforcement proceeding to Delhi. Coloured lithograph from 'The Campaign in India 1857-58 from drawings made during the eventful period of the Great Mutiny, illustrating the military operations before Delhi and its neighbourhood'. By W Simpson and others, after G F Atkinson, published by Day and Son, 1857-58. Courtesy National Army Museum.

Where was the British Indian Army deployed during the First World War (1914-1918)?



Credit: UK Punjab Heritage Association/Juga Singh

In August 1914 the First World War was triggered by the German invasion of neutral Belgium. The small British expeditionary force of professional soldiers was outnumbered and the British Indian Army was rushed to the Western Front in order to help stem the rapid German advance. By the time the stalemate of trench warfare set in, in December 1914, around a third of British troops on the front line were South Asians.

The British Indian Army served on the Western Front until October 1915 (although some cavalry remained for the rest of the war). An important source of information about the emotions, attitudes and experiences of these soldiers are the letters they sent which were censored by the British. By 1918 the army had swelled to around 1.5 million men. As well as Europe, they were deployed in other campaigns theatres around the world including Gallipoli (Turkey), Mesopotamia (Iraq) and East Africa.

In total, eleven South Asian soldiers were awarded the Victoria Cross including two Gurkhas.

Indian Soldiers Awarded the VC in World War One



Khudadad Khan



Credit: Portrait by Henry Charles 'Han' Bevan-Petman, 1935
Courtesy National Army Museum

The 129th Baluchis faced the advancing Germans in the village of Hollebeke in Belgium under terrible condition; water logged trenches, insufficient hand grenades and barbed wire, and gaps in the line due to a shortage of soldiers. In fact, the 129th Baluchis were out numbered five to one. The Germans attacked on 30 October, and many Indian soldiers were killed or wounded. Khudadad Khan's machine gun crew, along with one other, carried on fighting until they were overrun by Germans and everyone was bayoneted or shot. Khan was the only survivor. He pretended to be dead and then managed to crawl back to his regiment under the cover of darkness.

His citation reads:

On 31st October, 1914, at Hollebeke, Belgium, the British Officer in charge of the detachment having been wounded, and the other gun put out of action by a shell, Sepoy Khudadad, though himself wounded, remained working his gun until all the other five men of the gun detachment had been killed.

The bravery of Khan and his fellow Baluchis gave the Allies enough time for British and Indian reinforcements to arrive and stop the German army from reaching the vital ports. He was treated for his wounds at a hospital in Brighton and was later decorated with the Victoria Cross by King George V at Buckingham Palace.

Khudadad Khan continued to serve in the Indian Army, and he died in Pakistan in 1971. Some of his descendants now live in Leeds.

Information supplied from: Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Part of: Archive commemorating overseas WW1 Victoria Cross recipients and Pakistan

Name: Khudadad Khan

DOB: 20th October 1888

Place of Birth: Chakwal District, Punjab Province

Date of Action: 31st October 1914

Place of Action: Hollebeke, Belgium

Rank: Sepoy

Regiment: Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis

Khudadad Khan (Urdu)



نام: خداداد خان
تاریخ پیدائش: 20 اکتوبر 1888ء
جائے پیدائش: ضلع چکوال،
صوبہ پنجاب
واقعی کی تاریخ: 31 اکتوبر
1914ء
مقام شجاعت: ہولبیک، بلجئیم
عہدہ: سپاہی
رجمنٹ: ڈیوک آف کناٹ کے
اپنے بلوچی

خداداد خان ایک پٹھان خاندان میں پیدا ہوئے جو شمال مغربی فرنٹیر سے آیا تھا جس کی سرحد افغانستان سے ملتی تھی۔ وہ پہلی جنگ عظیم میں 129 بلوچی رجمنٹ میں شامل تھے اور بھارتی نژاد پہلے فوجی تھے جنہیں وکٹوریہ کراس کا اعزاز ملا

اکتوبر 1914ء میں خداداد خان جو مشین گنر تھے، فرانس پہنچے اور وہ ان 20 ہزار فوجیوں میں شامل تھے جنہیں تھکی ہوئی برطانوی فورس کی مدد کے لئے بھیجا گیا تھا۔ یہ فورس فرانس میں بولون اور بلجئیم میں نیو پورٹ کے تزویری مقامات کو جرمنوں کے قبضے سے بچانے کے لئے وہاں تعینات کی گئی تھی

اس رجمنٹ 129 بلوچی نے بلجئیم کے گاؤں ہولبیک میں جرمنوں کی پیش قدمی روکی جبکہ وہاں صورتحال بہت خراب تھی، خندقوں میں پانی بھرا تھا اور گرینیڈ اور خاردار نار ناکافی تھے اور سپاہیوں کی ناکافی تعداد کی وجہ سے صف میں خلا تھے۔ درحقیقت یہ بلوچی رجمنٹ تعداد میں 5 جرمنوں کے مقابلے میں 1 تھی۔ جرمنوں نے 30 اکتوبر کو حملہ کیا اور متعدد بھارتی فوجی ہلاک اور زخمی ہو گئے۔ خداداد خان کی مشین گن کے عملے اور ایک اور فوجی نے لڑائی جاری رکھی یہاں تک کہ جرمن ان پر غالب آ گئے اور انہیں گولی مار کر ہلاک یا زخمی کر دیا گیا۔ خداداد خان اب تنہا بچے تھے۔ انہوں نے مردہ ہونے کی اداکاری کی اور اندھیرے کا فائدہ اٹھاتے ہوئے رینگ رینگ کر پیچھے اپنی رجمنٹ سے جاملے۔ اس کی تفصیل یہ ہے

اکتوبر 1914ء کو بلجئیم میں ہولبیک کے مقام پر تعینات ڈیٹچمنٹ کے برطانوی افسر زخمی ہو گئے اور دوسری گن شیل لگنے سے ناکارہ 31 ہو گئے، سپاہی خداداد خان جو خود بھی زخمی تھے اپنی مشین گن سے فائر کرتے رہے یہاں تک کہ باقی پانچ ساتھی ہلاک ہو گئے

خداداد خان اور ان کے ساتھی بلوچوں کی بہادری نے اتحادیوں کو اتنا وقت فراہم کر دیا کہ برطانوی اور بھارتی کمک پہنچ کے جرمنوں کو اہم مقامات تک پہنچنے سے روک سکے۔ خداداد خان کا براٹھن کے ایک اسپتال میں علاج کیا گیا اور بعد ازاں انہیں بکننگھم ہسپتال میں کنگ جارج پنجم نے خود وکٹوریہ کراس ان کے سینے پر آویزاں کیا۔

خداداد خان انڈین آرمی میں خدمات انجام دیتے رہے اور پاکستان بننے کے بعد پاکستان میں 1971ء میں وفات پائی۔ ان کی نسل کے کچھ افراد اب بھی لیڈز میں آباد ہیں

Darwan Singh Negi



Credit: © IWM (detail of VC 305)

Darwan Singh Negi was born on 4 March 1883 in Karbartir Village, India. He was a Naik (equivalent of a Corporal) who served with the 1st Battalion of 39th Garhwal Rifles during the First World War.

On the night of 23 to 24 November 1914, his regiment was trying to retake the British trenches near Festubert from the enemy.

Despite being wounded twice in the head and the arm and coming under intense rifle fire and bomb explosions, Darwan Singh Negi was one of the first to push through the trenches to clear them of German soldiers. Singh Negi was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions.

His citation reads:

For great gallantry on the night of the 23rd–24th November, near Festubert, France, when the regiment was engaged in retaking and clearing the enemy out of our trenches, and, although wounded in two places in the head, and also in the arm, being one of the first to push round each successive traverse, in the face of severe fire from bombs and rifles at the closest range.

He later retired from the army with the rank of Subedar, (equivalent of Captain). Singh Negi died in India in 1950. The regimental museum of the Garhwal Rifles in Lansdowne, Uttarakhand is named in his honour.

Name: Darwan Singh Negi

DOB: 4th March 1883

Place of Birth: Karbartir Village, India

Date of Action: Night of 23rd to 24th November 1914

Place of Action: Festubert, France

Rank: Naik

Regiment: 1st Battalion, 39th Garhwal Rifles

Darwan Singh Negi (Hindi)



नाम: दरवान सिंह नेगी

जन्म: 4 मार्च 1883

जन्म स्थान: भारत का करबर्तिर गांव

युद्ध की तारीख: 23 - 24 नवंबर 1914 की रात

युद्ध का स्थान: फेस्तुबर्ट के निकट, फ्रांस

रैंक: नायक

रेजिमेंट: 1ली बटालियन, 39वीं गढ़वाल राइफल्स

दरवान सिंह नेगी का जन्म 4 मार्च 1883 को भारत के करबर्तिर गांव में हुआ था। प्रथम विश्वयुद्ध दौरान वह 39वीं गढ़वाल राइफल्स की 1ली बटालियन में नायक (कॉरपोरल पद के समकक्ष) थे।

23 की रात से 24 नवंबर 1914 को उनकी रेजिमेंट फेस्तुबर्ट के निकट दुश्मन से ब्रिटिश खाइयों को वापस हासिल करने का प्रयास कर रही थी। दो बार सिर और बांह में घाव लगने और राइफलों की भारी गोली-बारी और बमों के धमाके के बीच होने के बावजूद दरवान सिंह नेगी उन प्रथम सैनिकों में थे, जिन्होंने खाइयों में घुसकर उन्हें जर्मन सैनिकों से मुक्त कराया। दरवान सिंह नेगी को उनकी अनुपम वीरता के लिए विक्टोरिया क्रॉस से सम्मानित किया गया, उनकी प्रशस्ति में लिखा है:

23-24 नवंबर की रात, फ्रांस के फेस्तुबर्ट के निकट जब रेजिमेंट दुश्मन से अपनी खाइयों को वापस लेने का प्रयास कर रही थी उस दौरान, और दो बार सिर और बांह में घाव लगने और निकट से हो रही राइफलों की भारी गोली-बारी और बमों के धमाके के बीच होने के बावजूद खाइयों में घुसकर उन्हें जर्मन सैनिकों से मुक्त कराने में दिखाई गई उनकी अनुपम वीरता के लिए।

बाद में वह सूबेदार पद (कैप्टन के समकक्ष) से भारतीय सेना से सेवामुक्त हुए। दरवान सिंह नेगी की मृत्यु 1950 में हुई। उत्तराखंड के लैंसडाउन स्थित गढ़वाल राइफल्स के रेजिमेंटल म्यूजियम का नाम उनके सम्मान में उनके नाम पर रखा गया है।

Gabar Singh Negi



Image courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gabar Sing Negi was born on 21 April 1895 in Chambra, Uttarakhand in Northern India. He was a Rifleman with the 2nd Battalion of the 39th Garhwal Rifles during the First World War.

He was twenty one years old when he was part of the attacking force at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, France, in March 1915. Indian soldiers made up half of the attacking force and it was the first major action where the Indian Corps fought as a single unit. Despite heavy casualties they managed to take a key enemy position, and it was his bravery during this battle that led Gabar Sing Negi to be awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously. His citation reads as follows:

For most conspicuous bravery on 10th March, 1915, at Neuve Chapelle. During an attack on the German position, Rifleman Gabar Singh Negi was one of a bayonet party with bombs who entered their main trench, and was the first man to go round each traverse, driving back the enemy until they were eventually forced to surrender. He was killed during this engagement.

Gabar Sing Negi is commemorated on the Neuve Chapelle Memorial. The Indian Memorial at Neuve Chapelle commemorates over 4,700 Indian soldiers and labourers who lost their lives on the Western Front but whose last resting place is not known.

In his home town of Chamba every year he is remembered by The Gabar Singh Negi Fair which is held on 20 or 21 April, (depending on the Hindu calendar).

In 1971 the Garhwal Regiment built a memorial to him in Chamba where people pay their respects to his bravery. The area around the memorial comes alive with stalls during the fair.

Name: Gabar Sing Negi (also known as Gobar Singh Negi)

DOB: 21st April 1895

Place of Birth:
Chambra, Uttarakhand

Date of Action:
10th March 1915

Place of Action: Neuve
Chapelle, France

Rank: Rifleman

Regiment: 2nd Battalion, 39th
Garhwal Rifles

Gabar Singh Negi (Hindi)



नाम: गबर सिंग नेगी (गोबर सिंग नेगी के नाम से भी प्रचलित)

जन्म की तारीख: 21 अप्रैल 1895

जन्म का स्थान: चम्ब्रा, उत्तराखंड

युद्ध की तारीख: 10 मार्च 1915

युद्ध का स्थान: नेव चापेल, फ्रांस

श्रेणी: राइफलमैन

रेजिमेंट: दूसरी बटालियन, 39 वीं
गढ़वाल राइफलस

गबर सिंह नेगी का जन्म 21 अप्रैल 1895 में उत्तर भारत के उत्तराखंड राज्य के चम्ब्रा इलाके में हुआ था। प्रथम विश्व युद्ध के दौरान वे 39 वें गढ़वाल राइफलस की दूसरी बटालियन में राइफलमैन (बंदूकधारी) थे।

केवल 21 वर्ष की आयु में वे मार्च, 1915 के नेव चापेल के युद्ध में हमला बल का हिस्सा बने। उस हमला बल में आधे से ज्यादा सैनिक भारतीय थे और यह पहली बड़ी कार्रवाई थी जब भारतीय सैन्यदल एक इकाई के रूप में लड़ा था। भारी क्षति के बावजूद वे एक प्रमुख दुश्मन की स्थिति लेने में कामयाब हुए, और इस युद्ध के दौरान उनकी वीरता के कारण ही गबर सिंह नेगी को मरणोपरांत विक्टोरिया क्रॉस पुरस्कार से सम्मानित किया गया है। उनका प्रशस्तिपत्र इस प्रकार उल्लेख करता है:

10 मार्च, 1915 को नेव चापेल में सबसे विशिष्ट बहादुरी के लिए, जर्मन स्थिति पर एक हमले के दौरान, राइफलमैन गबर सिंह नेगी बम साथ लिए संगीन से हमला करने वालों का एक हिस्सा थे जो दुश्मन के मुख्य मोर्चे में घुसकर हर बाधाओं को पार करने वाले पहले व्यक्ति थे, जिस कारण दुश्मन पीछे हटकर आखिरकार आत्मसमर्पण के लिए मजबूर हो गया। इस कार्रवाई के दौरान वे वीरगती को प्राप्त हो गए।

गबर सिंग नेगी को नेव चापेल स्मारक पर श्रद्धांजली दी गई है। नेव चापेल में भारतीय स्मारक उन सभी 4,700 से ज्यादा भारतीय सैनिकों और श्रमिकों को श्रद्धांजली देता है जिन्होंने पश्चिमी मोर्चे पर अपनी जान गंवाई थी लेकिन उनका अंतिम विश्राम स्थान ज्ञात नहीं है।

उनके गृह नगर चम्बा में उन्हें प्रतिवर्ष 20 या 21 अप्रैल (हिंदू पंचांग के आधार पर) को आयोजित होने वाले गबर सिंह नेगी मेला के द्वारा याद किया जाता है।

1971 में गढ़वाल रेजिमेंट ने चम्बा में उनका एक स्मारक बनाया जहां लोग उनकी बहादुरी पर श्रद्धासुमन अर्पित करते हैं। इस स्मारक के आसपास का क्षेत्र मेले के दौरान बिल्कुल जीवंत हो उठता है।

Mir Dast



Portrait of Mir Dast © IWM (Q 80565)

Mir Dast was born on 3 December 1874 in Maidan Valley, Tirah, in the North West Frontier, (now Pakistan). He joined the British Indian Army in 1894 and served in the North West Frontier and Waziristan before the First World War. He arrived in France in March 1915 as part of a large contingent of Indian soldiers to fill the gaps left by the many soldiers who had already been injured or killed. He was a Jemadar (equivalent to a lieutenant) attached to the 57th Wilde's Rifles, 7th Brigade of the Lahore Division, when he was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery on 26 April, in the Second Battle of Ypres.

His Lahore Division were ordered to launch a counter attack with the French against the Germans on 26 April, and despite severe allied losses, Mir Dast and some others managed to get close to the German trenches. The Germans then released chlorine gas, and many soldiers retreated in confusion. Mir Dast was among a small number of British and Indian troops who stayed and held their position until nightfall when they were ordered to withdraw.

His citation explains further:

For most conspicuous bravery and great ability at Ypres on 26th April 1915, when he led his platoon with great gallantry during, the attack, and afterwards collected various parties of the regiment (when no British Officers were left) and kept them under his command until the retirement was ordered. Jemadar Mir Dast subsequently on this day displayed remarkable courage in helping to carry eight British and Indian Officers into safety, whilst exposed to very heavy fire.

Mir Dast himself was wounded and sent for treatment to the Brighton Pavilion, which had become a hospital. George V presented him with his Victoria Cross in the grounds of the pavilion. He died in 1945 in Peshawar.

Mir Dast (Urdu)



نام : میردست

تاریخ پیدائش: 3 دسمبر 1874ء

(جائے پیدائش: تیراہ (آج کا پاکستان

واقعہ کی تاریخ: 26 اپریل 1915ء

جائے وقوع : وائپرس، بلجئیم

(عہدہ : جمعدار(مساوی لفٹیننٹ

رجمنٹ : کوکڑ رائفلز، فرنٹیر فورس
جو 57 وائلڈز رائفلز سے منسلک تھی

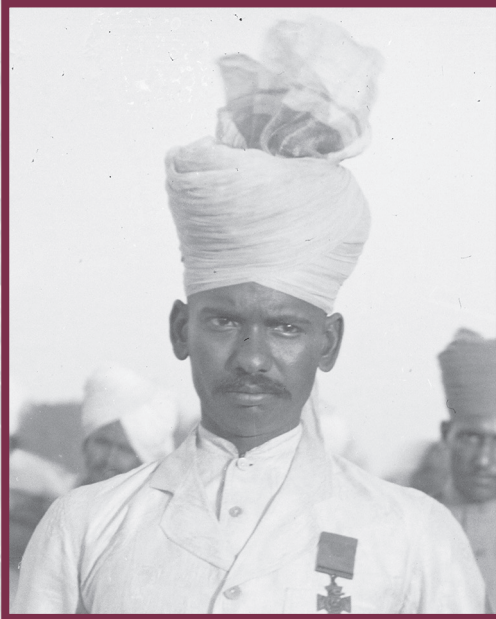
میر دست 3 دسمبر کو تیراہ کی وادی میدان میں پیدا ہوئے جو اب پاکستان کے شمال مغربی سرحدی صوبے خیبر پختونخواہ میں واقع ہے۔ انہوں نے برٹش انڈین آرمی میں 1894ء میں شمولیت اختیار کی وہ پہلی جنگ عظیم سے پہلے شمال مغربی سرحد اور وزیرستان میں خدمات انجام دے رہے تھے۔ وہ مارچ 1915ء میں فرانس پہنچے، میردست اس بھارتی فوجیوں کے ایک بڑے دستے کا حصہ تھے جو ہلاک یا زخمی ہونے والوں کی وجہ سے پیدا ہونے والے خلا کو پر کرنے گیا تھا۔ وہ 57 وائلڈز رائفلز، کی لاہور ڈویژن کی 7 ویں بریکڈ میں ایک جمعدار تھے جب انہیں یہ اعزاز دیا گیا

ان کی لاہور ڈویژن کو فرانسسیوں کے ساتھ مل کر 26 اپریل کو جرمنوں کے خلاف جوابی حملے کا حکم ملا۔ بھاری نقصان کے باوجود میردست اور کچھ دوسرے فوجی جرمن خندقوں کے قریب پہنچنے میں کامیاب ہو گئے۔ جرمنوں نے اسی وقت کلورین گیس فضا میں چھوڑ دی جس سے کئی فوجی پوکھلا کے پیچھے ہٹ گئے۔ میردست ان چند برطانوی اور بھارتی فوجیوں میں شامل تھے جو وہیں ڈٹے رہے یہاں تک کہ رات ہو گئی اور انہیں واپسی کا حکم دے دیا گیا۔ اس واقعے کی تفصیل کچھ یوں ہے

اپریل 1915ء کو وائپرس کے مقام پر اپنی نمایاں شجاعت اور زبردست اہلیت مظاہرہ کیا جب وہ 26 حملے میں اپنی پلاٹون کی قیادت کر رہے تھے اور حملے کے بعد بھی انہوں نے رجمنٹ کے مختلف فوجیوں کو (جب وہاں کوئی برطانوی افسر باقی نہیں بچا تھا) اکٹھا کیا اور انہیں زیر کمان رکھا یہاں تک کہ واپسی کا حکم ملا۔ جمعدار میر دست نے اس روز شاندار جرات کا مظاہرہ کرتے ہوئے آٹھ برطانوی اور بھارتی افسروں کو اپنی حفاظت میں لے لیا جبکہ وہ خود بھی بھاری فائر کی زد میں تھے۔

میر دست خود بھی زخمی ہوئے اور برائٹن ہولین میں زیر علاج رہے جو ایک اسپتال بنادیا گیا تھا۔ شاہ جارج پنجم نے انہیں خود وکٹوریہ کراس سے نوازا جو وہیں ہولین کے میدان میں دیا گیا۔ ان کا انتقال 1945ء میں پشاور میں ہوا

Chatta Singh



Name: Chatta Singh

DOB: 1886

Place of Birth: Cawnpore,
Uttar Pradesh, India

Date of Action: 13th January
1916

Place of Action: The Tigris
Front, Mesopotamia (now Iraq)

Rank: Sepoy

Regiment: 9th Bhopal Infantry,
Indian Army

Credit: © IWM (detail of Q 52598)

Chatta Singh was born in 1886 in Uttar Pradesh, India, and was a Sepoy (infantry private) in the 9th Bhopal Infantry of the Indian Army during the First World War.

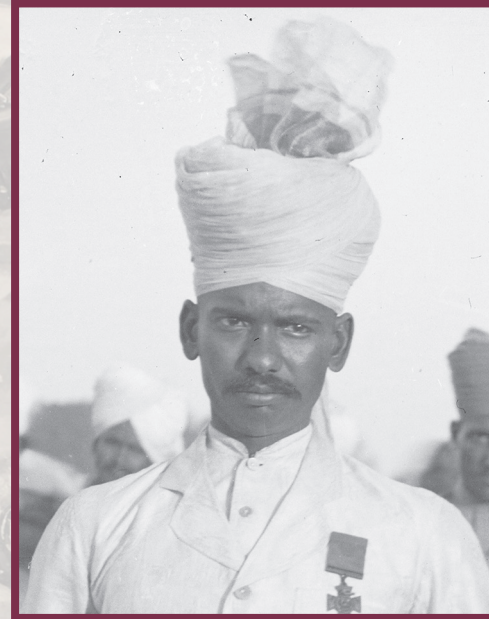
Singh was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on 13 January 1916 during the Battle of the Wadi, in Mesopotamia (present day Iraq). He left cover to rescue his Commanding Officer who was wounded and lying in the open. He treated his wounds and stayed with him for five hours until it was safe to move, all the time under intense fire.

His citation explains further:

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in leaving cover to assist his Commanding Officer who was lying wounded and helpless in the open. Sepoy Chatta Singh bound up the Officer's wound and then dug cover for him with his entrenching tool being exposed all the time to very heavy rifle fire. For five hours until nightfall he remained beside the wounded Officer, shielding him with his own body on the exposed side. He then, under cover of darkness, went back for assistance, and brought the Officer into safety.

Chatta Singh later achieved the rank of Havildar, (equivalent to a Sergeant). He died in 1961 in Tilsara, Kanupur, India.

Chatta Singh (Hindi)



नाम: चत्ता सिंह

जन्म: 1886

जन्म स्थान: कानपुर, उत्तर प्रदेश,
भारत

युद्ध की तारीख: 13 जनवरी 1916

युद्ध का स्थान: टिग्रिस (दजला) नदी
का तट, मेसोपोटामिया (आधुनिक
इराक)

##रेक: सिपाही

रेजिमेंट: 9वीं भोपाल इनफैंट्री,
भारतीय थल सेना

चत्ता सिंह का जन्म 1886 में भारत के उत्तर प्रदेश में हुआ था और वह प्रथम विश्वयुद्ध के दौरान भारतीय थल सेना की 9वीं भोपाल इनफैंट्री में सिपाही थे।

चत्ता सिंह को 13 जनवरी 1916 को मेसोपोटामिया (आज के इराक) में वादी की लड़ाई में दिखाई गई उनकी अद्भुत वीरता के लिए विक्टोरिया क्रॉस से सम्मानित किया गया। वह अपने कमांडिंग ऑफिसर को बचाने के लिए, जो खुले में घायल पड़े थे, कवर से बाहर निकल गए। उन्होंने उनके घाव का उपचार किया और पांच घंटे तक, जब तक कि उनके लिए चलना सुरक्षित न हो गया, उनके साथ रहे और इस दौरान भारी गोली-बारी होती रही। उनकी प्रशस्ति में आगे विवरण है:

खुले में घायल पड़े अपने असहाय कमांडिंग ऑफिसर को बचाने के लिए कवर छोड़ कर बाहर आने के अद्भुत वीरता और कर्तव्य के प्रति समर्पण के लिए। सिपाही चत्ता सिंह ने ऑफिसर के घाव पर पट्टी बांधी और फिर उनकी सुरक्षा के लिए अपने खाई खोदने वाले औजार से उनके लिए सुरक्षा गड्ढा खोदा और इस संपूर्ण कार्य के दौरान राइफलों से हो रही भारी गोली-बारी के बीच जानलेवा असुरक्षा का सामना करते रहे। रात होने तक, पांच घंटे वह अपने घायल अधिकारी के पास बने रहे और खुले हिस्से की ओर से उन्हें अपने शरीर की आड़ देकर बचाते रहे। फिर, रात के अंधेरे के आवरण में वह वापस जाकर मदद लेकर आए और अपने ऑफिसर को सुरक्षित ले गए।

चत्ता सिंह ने बाद में हवलदार (सार्जेंट पद के समकक्ष) का ओहदा हासिल किया। उनकी मृत्यु 1961 में भारत में कानपुर के तिलसरा में हुई।

Shahamad Khan



Photograph of Shahamad Khan, Courtesy of National Army Museum.

Shahamad Khan was a Punjabi Muslim who was born on 1 July 1879, in Rawalpindi (now part of Pakistan). He served as a Naik, (the equivalent to a corporal) in the 89th Punjabis (now 1st Battalion the Baloch Regiment, Pakistan Army), of the British Indian Army during the First World War.

Khan was awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery in Mesopotamia (now present day Iraq) on 12 to 13 April 1916. He was in charge of a machine gun covering a gap in the line very close to the enemy's trench.

His citation explains further:

He was in charge of a machine gun section in an exposed position, in front of and covering a gap in our new line, within 150 yards of the enemy's entrenched position. He beat off three counter attacks and worked his gun single handed after all his men, except two beltllers, had become casualties. For three hours he held the gap under very heavy fire while it was being made secure. When his gun was knocked out by hostile fire he and his two beltllers held their ground with rifles till ordered to withdraw. With three men sent to assist him, he then brought back his gun, ammunition, and one severely wounded man unable to walk. Finally, he himself returned and removed all remaining arms and equipment except two shovels. But for his great gallantry and determination our line must have been penetrated by the enemy.

He later achieved the rank of Subedar (equivalent of a Captain). Shahamad Khan died in 1947 in his ancestral village of Takhti, Pakistan.

Shahamad Khan (Urdu)



نام : شمشاد خان

تاریخ پیدائش: یکم جولائی 1879ء

جائے پیدائش: راولپنڈی۔ برطانوی
(برصغیر (اب پاکستان

واقعی کی تاریخ: 12 تا 13 اپریل
1916ء

مقام شجاعت : دجلہ محاذ ،
(میسو پوٹیمیا) اب عراق

عہدہ: نائیک

رجمنٹ: 89 پنجابی

شمشاد خان ایک پنجابی مسلمان تھے اور پہلی جنگ عظیم کے دوران نائیک کی حیثیت سے (کارپورل کے مساوی) 89 برٹش
. انڈین آرمی پنجابی رجمنٹ (اب پاکستان آرمی کی فرسٹ بٹالین ، بلوچ رجمنٹ) میں شامل تھے

شمشاد خان کوچنگ میں 12 اور 13 اپریل 1916ء کوشجاعت کا عظیم مظاہرہ کرنے پروکٹوریہ کراس دیا گیا تھا۔ وہ ایک مشین
گن کے انچارج تھے جو دشمن کی خندق کے بہت قریب ایک خلا کو زد میں رکھے ہوئے تھے۔ اس واقعے کی مزید تفصیلات
اس طرح ہیں

وہ جس مشین گن کے انچارج تھے وہ ایک کھلی جگہ میں نصب تھی اور ہماری نئی صف میں ایک خلا کو زد میں لے لے ہوئے
تھی اس کا فاصلہ خندق میں موجود دشمن سے 150 گز تھا۔ شمشاد نے تین حملے تو ناکام بنا دیے اور اپنے تمام ساتھیوں کی،
ماسوا دوبوردی موادبہرنے والوں کے، بلاکت کے بعد اکیلے مشین گن چلاتے رہے۔ انہوں نے مسلسل تین گھنٹے اس خلا پر
بھاری فائرنگ جاری رکھی جب تک کہ مزید کمک نہیں مل گئی۔ جب ان کی مشین گن کودشمن نے تباہ کردیا تو وہ اور ان
کے دونوں ساتھی اس وقت تک رائفلوں سے فائر کرتے رہے جب تک انہیں رک جانے کا حکم نہیں ملا۔ تین فوجی ان کی مدد
کے لئے بھیجے گئے اور وہ اپنی مشین گن، اسلحہ اور ایک شدید زخمی ساتھی کوجو چل نہیں سکتا تھا، اٹھا کے واپس آئے۔ وہ
دوبارہ واپس گئے اور بچا کھچا ہتھیار اور سازوسامان واپس سے بٹا دئے، اب واپس دو کدالیں باقی تھیں۔ اگر شمشاد خان اتنی
زبردست بہادری کا مظاہرہ نہ کرتے تو دشمن ہماری صفوں میں لازماً داخل ہوجاتا۔ بعد میں وہ صوبیدار (کیپٹن کے مساوی) کے
عہدے تک پہنچے۔ شمشاد خان کا انتقال 1947ء میں اپنے آبائی گاؤں تاختی، پاکستان میں ہوا

Gobind Singh



Credit: © IWM (detail of Q 80659)

Gobind Singh was born in Damoi Village, Rajasthan, India on 7 December 1887. He was a Lance-Daffadar (the equivalent of a corporal) in the 28th Light Cavalry attached to the 2nd Lancers (Gardner's Horse) during the First World War.

Lance Daffadar Gobind Singh was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at the Battle of Cambrai on 1 December 1917. It was in the midst of this battle that his regiment was surrounded by the enemy. It was imperative that a message be sent to the brigade headquarters to give their position. Despite the risks of carrying a message over open ground under constant fire he volunteered three times.

His citation explains further:

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in thrice volunteering to carry messages between the regiment and Brigade Head quarters, a distance of 1.5 miles over open ground which was under the observation and heavy fire of the enemy. He succeeded each time in delivering his message, although on each occasion his horse was shot and he was compelled to finish his journey on foot.

Gobind Singh survived the war. He died in 1942.

Name: Gobind Singh

DOB: 7th December 1887

Place of Birth: Damoi Village,
Rajasthan

Date of Action: 1st December 1917

Place of Action: Pieziers, France

Rank: Lance-Daffadar

Regiment: Light Cavalry,
Indian Army

Gobind Singh (Hindi)



नाम: गोविंद सिंह

जन्म की तारीख: 7 दिसम्बर 1887

जन्म का स्थान: दामोई गांव,
राजस्थान

युद्ध की तारीख: 1 दिसम्बर, 1917

युद्ध का स्थान: पेइजेर्स, फ्रांस

श्रेणी: लांस दफादार

रेजिमेंट: लाइट कैवलरी, भारतीय
सेना

गोविंद सिंह का जन्म 7 दिसम्बर 1887 में भारत के राजस्थान राज्य के दामोई गांव में हुआ था। वे 28 वें लाइट कैवलरी (घुड़सवार सेना), जो प्रथम विश्व युद्ध के दौरान दूसरे लांसर (गार्डनर्स का घोड़ा) का हिस्सा था, में लांस दफेदार (एक नायक के बराबर) थे।

लांस दफेदार गोविंद सिंह को 1, दिसम्बर, 1917 को हुए काम्ब्राई युद्ध में उनकी वीरता के लिए विक्टोरिया क्रॉस पुरस्कार से सम्मानित किया गया था। इस युद्ध के बीच में उनका सैन्य दल दुश्मनों से घिर चुका था। मुख्यालय में उनके सेनादल को उनकी स्थिति की जानकारी का संदेश भेजना आवश्यक था। खुले मैदान में लगातार गोलियों के बौछार के बीच संदेश भेजने के जोखिम के बावजूद उन्होंने तीन बार स्वेच्छा से प्रयास किया। उनका प्रशस्तिपत्र इस प्रकार उल्लेख करता है:

अपने रेजिमेंट और सैन्यदल के मुख्यालय, जो डेढ़ मील दूर था और लगातार दुश्मन के लगातार निगरानी और भारी गोलाबारी से घिरे हुए खुले मैदान से होते हुए जाना था, जिनके बीच तीन बार स्वेच्छा से संदेश भेजने की विशिष्ट बहादुरी और अपने कर्तव्य के प्रति समर्पण के लिए उन्हें पुरस्कृत किया जाता है। वे हर बार संदेश भेजने में कामयाब हुए, भले ही हर बार उनके घोड़े को गोली लगी थी और वे पैदल ही अपनी यात्रा तय करने के लिए मजबूर हो गए थे।

गोविंद सिंह युद्ध में बच गए थे। 1942 में उनकी मृत्यु हुई।

Badlu Singh



Name: Badlu Singh

DOB: 13th January 1876

Place of Birth: Dhakla, Punjab, India

Date of Action: 23rd September 1918

Place of Action: Kh. Es Samariyeh,
Palestine

Rank: Risaldar

Regiment: 14th Murray's Jat Lancers

Credit: © IWM (detail of VC 46)

Badlu Singh was a Hindu Jat, born on 13 January 1876 in Dhakla, in the Punjab, India. He was a Risaldar in the 14th Murray's Jat Lancers, attached to the 29th Lancers of the Indian Army, who were sent first to France before being withdrawn to fight in Palestine.

Risaldar Badlu Singh was awarded his Victoria Cross posthumously for most conspicuous bravery and self sacrifice on the banks of the River Jordan in Palestine on 23 September 1918.

His citation describes:

On the morning of the 23 September 1918, his squadron charged a strong enemy position on the west bank of the river Jordan, between the river and Kh. es 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.

Badlu Singh was cremated where he fell, but his name is inscribed on the Heliopolis Memorial at Heliopolis War Cemetery in Cairo. His Victoria Cross is part of the Lord Ashcroft collection at the Imperial War Museum.

Badlu Singh (Hindi)



नाम: बदलू सिंह

जन्म: 13 जनवरी 1876

जन्म स्थान: धकला, पंजाब, भारत

युद्ध की तारीख: 23 सितंबर 1918

युद्ध का स्थान: केएच. एस समारिए,
फिलिस्तीन

रैंक: रिसालदार

रेजिमेंट: 14वीं मुर्रेज जाट लैंसर

बदलू सिंह एक हिंदू जाट थे, जिनका जन्म 13 जनवरी 1876 को भारत में पंजाब के धकला में हुआ था। वह भारतीय थलसेना के 29वीं लैंसर से संबद्ध 14वीं मुर्रेज जाट लैंसर में रिसालदार थे जिन्हें फिलिस्तीन में लड़ने से पहले फ्रांस भेजा गया था।

रिसालदार बदलू सिंह को 23 सितंबर 1918 को जॉर्डन नदी के तट पर उनकी अप्रतिम वीरता और आत्मोत्सर्ग के लिए मरणोपरांत विक्टोरिया क्रॉस से सम्मानित किया गया। लंदन गजट के उनकी प्रशस्ति में उनके साहस का विवरण है:

23 सितंबर 1918 की सुबह उनके स्क्वाड्रन ने जॉर्डन नदी के तट पर नदी और Kh. es समारिए गांव के बीच स्थित दुश्मन के एक मजबूत ठिकाने पर हमला बोला। चौकी के निकट पहुंचने पर रिसालदार बदलू सिंह ने पाया कि स्क्वाड्रन को जिससे क्षति पहुंच रही थी वह मशीन गन और 200 इनफैंट्री के कब्जे वाले बाईं तरफ की छोटी पहाड़ी से होने वाले हमले थे। बिना थोड़ी भी झिझक दिखाए उन्होंने छह अन्य सिपाहियों को लेकर पूरी गति के साथ, बिना सामने के खतरे की परवाह किए हमला बोल दिया और ठिकाने पर कब्जा किया, जिस कारण स्क्वाड्रन भारी क्षति का शिकार बनने से बच गया। पहाड़ी की चोटी पर वह उस वक्त गंभीर रूप से घायल हुए जब वह एक हाथ से एक मशीनगन पर कब्जा कर रहे थे, लेकिन उनके वीरगति को प्राप्त होने से पहले सारे मशीनगन और इनफैंट्री ने समर्पण कर दिया। उनकी वीरता और उनके प्रयास उच्च कोटि के और वीरतापूर्ण थे।

बदलू सिंह की अंतिम क्रिया वहीं कर दी गई, जहां वह गिरे थे, लेकिन उनके नाम को कैरो स्थित हेलियोपोलिस वार सेमेट्री में हेलियोपोलिस मेमोरियल पर अंकित किया गया। उनका विक्टोरिया क्रॉस इम्पीरियल वार म्यूजियम में लॉर्ड ऐशक्रॉफ्ट संग्रह का अंग है।

Lala



Name: Lala

DOB: 20th April 1876

Place of Birth: Kangra,
Himachal Pradesh, India

Date of Action:
21st January 1916

Place of Action: Hanna,
Mesopotamia (now Iraq)

Rank: Lance-Naik

Regiment: 41st Dogras,
Indian Army

Credit: © IWM (VC 713)

Lala was born on 20 April 1876 in Himachal Pradesh, India, and served as a Lance Naik (equivalent of a Lance Corporal) in the 41st Dogras, Indian Army, during the First World War.

Lala was awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery on 21 January 1916 during the First Battle of Hanna in Mesopotamia, (present-day Iraq).

His citation reads:

Finding a British officer of another regiment lying close to the enemy, he dragged him into a temporary shelter, which he himself had made, and in which he had already bandaged four wounded men. After bandaging his wounds he heard calls from the Adjutant of his own regiment who was lying in the open severely wounded. The enemy were not more than one hundred yards distant, and it seemed certain death to go out in that direction, but Lance Naik Lala insisted on going out to his adjutant, and offered to crawl back with him on his back at once. When this was not permitted, he stripped off his own clothing to keep the wounded officer warmer, and stayed with him till just before dark, when he returned to the shelter. After dark he carried the first wounded officer back to the main trenches, and then, returning with a stretcher, carried back his Adjutant.

He set a magnificent example of courage and devotion to his officers. Lala died in India of polio in 1927 and his last words were said to be: "We fought true."

Karanbahadur Rana



Name: Karanbahadur Rana

DOB: 21st December 1898

Place of Birth: Mangalthan
Gulmi, Nepal

Date of Action: 10th April
1918

Place of Action: El Kelfr,
Egypt

Rank: Rifleman

Regiment: 2nd Battalion
Queen Alexandra's 3rd
Gurkha Rifles

Credit: © IWM (detail of VC 667)

Karanbahadur Rana was born on 21 December 1898 in Mangalthan Gulmi, Nepal. He was a Rifleman in the 3rd Gurkha Rifles. He was just 19 years old when he was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions in El Kelfr, Egypt on 10 April 1918.

His citation explains further:

For most conspicuous bravery, resource in action under adverse conditions, and utter contempt for danger. During an attack he, with a few other men, succeeded under intense fire in creeping forward with a Lewis gun in order to engage an enemy machine gun which had caused severe casualties to officers and other ranks who had attempted to put it out of action. No.1 of the Lewis gun opened fire, and was shot immediately. Without a moment's hesitation Rifleman Karanbahadur Rana pushed the dead man off the gun, and in spite of bombs thrown at him and heavy fire from both flanks, he opened fire and knocked out the machine gun crew; then, switching his fire on to the enemy bombers and riflemen in front of him, he silenced their fire. He kept his gun in action and showed the greatest coolness in removing defects which on two occasions prevented the gun from firing. During the remainder of the day he did magnificent work, and when a withdrawal was ordered he assisted with covering fire until the enemy were close on him. He displayed throughout a very high standard of valour and devotion to duty. Rana survived the war. He died in Litung, Nepal in 1973 at the age of 74.

Kulbir Thapa



Credit: © IWM (detail of VC 709)

Kulbir Thapa was born on 15 December 1889 in Palpa, Nepal. He was a 26 year old Rifleman in the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Gurkha Rifles of the Indian Army when he became the first Nepalese recipient of the Victoria Cross.

Kulbir Thapa was at Fauquissart, France on 25 April 1915 in a diversionary attack at the start of the Battle of Loos. He was in one of the leading companies attacking the German positions, and it was the first time he had been under fire. He found himself alone and wounded over the German lines when he carried out the heroic deeds which led to his award.

His citation reads:

For most conspicuous bravery during operations against the German trenches south of Fauquissart: When himself wounded on September 25, 1915, he found a badly wounded soldier of the 2nd Battalion, the Leicestershire Regiment behind the first line German trench and although urged by the British soldier to save himself he remained with him all day and night. In the early morning of September 26, in misty weather, he brought him out through the German wire and, leaving him in a place of comparative safety, returned and brought in two wounded Gurkhas one after the other. He then went back in broad daylight for the British soldier and brought him in also, carrying him most of the way, and being at most points under the enemy's fire.

He was personally awarded his Victoria Cross by King George V at Buckingham Palace, and is still remembered by the Royal Leicestershire Regiment at their regimental museum.

Name: Kulbir Thapa

DOB: 15th December 1889

Place of Birth:
Palpa, Nepal

Date of Action: 25th to
26th September 1915

Place of Action:
Fauquissart, France

Rank: Lance Naik

Regiment: 2nd Battalion,
3rd Gurkha Rifles

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Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

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Brighton Pavilion Museum

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