



14TH FEROZEPUR SIKHS . 1ST DUKE OF YORK'S LANCERS . 2ND LANCERS . 1ST KASHMIR MOUNTAIN ARTILLERY . 15TH LUDIHANA SIKHS . 36TH SIKHS . 1ST KING GEORGE'S OWN GURKHA RIFLES . 45TH RATRAY'S SIKHS . 1ST PATIALA INFANTRY . 25TH PUNJABIS . 47TH SIKHS . 2ND KASHMIR RIFLES . 2ND KING EDWARD'S OWN GURKHA RIFLES . 2ND QUEEN



HONOUR AND FIDELITY
INDIA'S MILITARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREAT WAR
1914-1918

AMARINDER SINGH

2ND KASHMIR RIFLES . 2ND KING EDWARD'S OWN GURKHA RIFLES . 2ND LANCERS . 2ND QUEEN VICTORIA'S OWN RAJPUT LIGHT INFANTRY . 2ND QUEENVICTORIA'S OWN SAPPERS AND MINERS . 3RD BRAHMANS . 3RD GAUR BRAHMANS . 3RD KASHMIR RIFLES . 3RD LANCERS . 3RD QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S OWN GURKHA RIFLES . 3RD SAPPERS AND MINERS . 4TH GURKHA RIFLES . 4TH INDIAN CAVALRY . 4TH PRINCE ALBERT VICTOR'S RAJPUTS . 5TH GURKHA RIFLES . 5TH INDIAN CAVALRY . 5TH LIGHT INFANTRY . 6TH GURKHA RIFLES . 6TH JAT LIGHT ROLI BOOKS
6TH KING EDWARD'S OWN CAVALRY . 7TH DUKE

Honour and Fidelity

India's Military Contribution to the Great War 1914-18

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The First World War is tremendously significant to India's history. Largely considered a European war, it actually involved the participation of more than a hundred countries, allowing for it to be also known as, The Great War. In 1914 it was thought by Indian political leaders that offering support to the British would further the cause of India's independence. Accordingly, Indian soldiers were sent to fight alongside the British in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), Egypt, Palestine, France, Aden, Belgium, East Africa, Gallipoli and Salonika. About twenty-five princely states contributed over 26,000 combatants. The Dalai Lama offered his support through Tibetan troops, and Gurkhas were deployed from Nepal as well. They accompanied Britain's soldiers in the artillery, cavalry, infantry, engineers, signals service, sappers, and miners, arms of the army. Indian services to Britain extended to the Royal Navy as well as the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. Indian troops who fought in Europe, had stepped outside their homeland, across the kala pani, for the first time. The sophistication of the artillery used abroad, required remarkable adaptation on the part of the soldiers. The drastically different landscape and colder weather was a shock as well. Socially too, they felt displaced among the Europeans, with their vastly different cultures and mannerisms. This was a very new scenario for Indian men; to fight side-by-side the people who were their colonisers back home. Though the Indian combatants received care matching their British counterparts, a close eye was kept on their outings, making them feel trapped. The entire experience of fighting overseas was culturally alienating for many Indians, as mentioned in their letters home, which were also often subject to military censorship. Though mentally ill-equipped to deal with an emotional and physical relocation as vast as this, Indian soldiers fought valiantly. Inder Singh, in a letter back home from the Somme in September 1916, wrote, 'It is quite impossible that I should return alive. [But] don't be grieved at my death, because I shall die arms in hand, wearing the warrior's clothes. This is the most happy death that anyone can die'. By the end of the war, about 60,000 troops from India had fought for Britain. Eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded and over 13,000 gallantry medals were earned. Despite India backing its efforts during the Great War, Britain's denial to grant India independence, created conflict and unrest among Indians, leading to the beginning of the uprising for independence. The author, Captain Amarinder Singh is himself a product of the Indian army. He served as ADC to the GOC-in-C, Western Command, during the 1965 war with Pakistan. A published military historian, he painstakingly retraces the footsteps of the Indian battalions during the First World War, using official battle details, war diaries, and maps.

Captain Amarinder Singh, who is from the royal family of Patiala, was educated at the Doon School. After graduating from the National Defence Academy at Kharakavasa and the Indian Military Academy at Dehradun, he was commissioned into the 2nd Battalion of the Sikh regiment. During the 1965 war with Pakistan, he was ADC to the GOC-in-C, Western Command, in whose theatre of operations the entire war was fought. Later, as member of Parliament, he was a member of Parliamentary Defence Committee. Amarinder Singh spent four terms in the Punjab legislature, during which time he served as minister in the Punjab government. He has served as the president of the Congress party in the state of Punjab. He was the chief minister of Punjab from 2002 to 2007. He is presently in the state legislature. His previous works include *The Last Sunset*.