

MEDALS AND MEMORIES MINUTES



The Mighty Eleven

The names of Khan, Negi and Thapa appeared in the Reading for WWI. Another eight Indian names are among the roll call for Victoria Crosses, the highest British Commonwealth award, during WWI. **Sepoy Chatta Singh** of

the 9th Bhopal Infantry was awarded the V.C. for his devotion in protecting his commanding officer. Sepoy Singh bound up his C.O.'s wound, dug cover for him with his entrenching tool and remained with him for five hours until nightfall, shielding him with his own body, until eventually under the cover of darkness he was able to take the officer to safety.

Lance Naik Lala dragged a British Officer of another regiment lying close to the enemy to a temporary shelter which he had made and in which he had already bandaged four wounded men. When Lala heard calls from the Adjutant of his regiment who was lying severely wounded in the open, he wanted to go to him even though the enemy was no more than 914 metres distant. Denied permission to rescue the Adjutant, Lala stripped off his own clothing to keep the wounded officer warm and then stayed with him until dark. Under cover of darkness, Lala carried the wounded officer to safety in the main trenches and then returning with a stretcher, brought his Adjutant to safety.

Lance Dafadar Gobind Singh volunteered three times to carry messages a distance of 2.4 km over open ground under heavy enemy fire. Each time his horse was shot and Singh had to finish his journey on foot. Singh received his Victoria Cross from King George VI at Buckingham Palace.

Rifleman Gobar Singh Negi (1894–1915) of the 2nd Battalion of the Garhwal Rifles won his V.C. on March 10, 1915, at Neuve Chapelle. Ten V.C.'s were won in this battle, the first of which went to this Rifleman.

Naik Shah Ahmad Khan in charge of a machine gun section, **Jemadar Mir Dost** at Ypres, **Rifleman Karan Bahadur Rana** of the 14th Gurkha Rifles and **Risaldar Badlu Singh** of the 29th Lancers—all Victoria Cross recipients—deserve their own recognition. Research their acts of valour. As you explore your own character development, the self-sacrifice, tenacity, loyalty, daring and courage of these men serve as good discussion starters.