

# FIRST WORLD WAR

PART FIVE: A WORLD WAR

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War in the furthest corners of the Empire

➤➤➤ **NICK LLOYD**  
Amritsar massacre that marked the end of British rule in India

➤➤➤ **TIM BUTCHER**  
How brutal battles on the Eastern Front changed history

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WELCOME

The archetypal image of the First World War is of the fields of Flanders and the horrors of trench warfare. Yet for two million soldiers in Britain's Commonwealth nations, their war took place thousands of miles from the Western Front, in African bush and Middle Eastern desert, while on the 1,000-mile Eastern Front that crossed Russia and Eastern Europe, millions more died in the clash of old against new orders.

In this issue, we look at what drove so many to fight in a conflict not of their making and the indelible legacy of these battles on 20th-century history. As Nick Lloyd writes about Amritsar, more than a million Indian soldiers volunteered to fight in the West and Middle East – but the impact on India's economy and the fervour of its nationalists led to a massacre that would mark the beginning of the end of the Raj.

Also we have readers' moving stories of combatant relatives as well as the Imperial War Museum's regular features on wartime art, poetry and letters from the front. And find out which famous playwright, who served in the trenches, waited 50 years to call the war a "huge, murderous public folly".

Zoe Dare Hall  
Series editor



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Front cover: Camel Corps in the Middle East, 1918  
Left: an Australian soldier writes home from the Somme front in 1916

⇒ **CALL OF EMPIRE**  
**Patrick Bishop** explores how, when the West went to war, so did nations from all corners of the Empire. **P4-5**

⇒ **OUT OF AFRICA**  
**Anthony Richards**, IWM head of documents, on a soldier's letter home telling of a close shave in German East Africa. **P6**

⇒ **GLOBAL WAR**  
**Alan Wakefield**, IWM's head of photographs, illustrates how Europe's colonial interests became a global struggle. **P6-7**

⇒ **LAMB'S VIEW**  
**Richard Slocombe**, IWM senior art curator, on the Renaissance influence behind *Irish Troops in the Judean Hills Surprised by a Turkish Bombardment* by Henry Lamb MC. **P8-9**

⇒ **ACT OF A HERO**  
**Michael Ashcroft** relates the story of Commander Loftus W Jones VC, who put duty and honour first. **P10-11**

⇒ **POST BOX**  
Readers' letters recounting bravery from Russia to the Middle East. **P12-13**

⇒ **BALKAN BLOOD**  
**Tim Butcher** analyses the clash of old against new and chaotic battles on the Eastern Front. **P14**

⇒ **END OF THE RAJ**  
**Nick Lloyd** on how an "error of judgment" marked the start of the end of British rule in India. **P14-15**

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to remember those who gave their lives in the conflict. Lord Ashcroft has established himself as a champion of bravery, building up the world's largest collection of Victoria Crosses (VCs), Britain and the Commonwealth's most prestigious award for courage in the face of the enemy. He has also written four books on bravery: *Victoria Cross Heroes*,

*Special Forces Heroes*, *George Cross Heroes* and *Heroes of the Skies*. In each of the 12 new supplements, Lord Ashcroft tells the incredible stories behind First World War VCs from his collection. He purchased his first VC in 1986 and currently owns more than 180 of the decorations. Three years ago, he began collecting George Crosses (GCs), Britain and the Commonwealth's most

prestigious award for courage not in the face of the enemy. He currently owns 14 GCs. Lord Ashcroft's VC and GC collections are on display in a gallery that bears his name at IWM London, along with VCs and GCs in the care of the museum. The gallery, built with a £5 million donation from Lord Ashcroft, was opened by HRH The Princess Royal in 2010. Lord Ashcroft has been a successful

entrepreneur for the past four decades, launching, buying, building and selling companies – both private and public – in Britain and overseas. He is a former Treasurer and Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party. In September 2012, he was appointed a member of the Privy Council and was made the Government's Special Representative for Veterans' Transition. He is Treasurer of the

International Democratic Union (IDU) and one of Britain's leading experts on polling. Lord Ashcroft has donated several million pounds to charities and good causes. He founded Crimestoppers (then the Community Action Trust) in 1988. He is the founder of the Ashcroft Technology Academy and Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University. His numerous other charity roles

include being Vice Patron of the Intelligence Corps Museum, a Trustee of Imperial War Museum, an Ambassador for SkillForce and a Trustee of the Cleveland Clinic in the US. For information about the Lord Ashcroft Gallery, visit [www.iwm.org.uk/heroes](http://www.iwm.org.uk/heroes). For information on Lord Ashcroft, visit [www.lordashcroft.com](http://www.lordashcroft.com). Follow him on Twitter: @LordAshcroft



AN EMPIRE AT WAR



# The call of Empire, the call of war



FOR SOME OF THE IMPERIAL NATIONS, IT WAS A MATTER OF HONOUR AND A RITE OF PASSAGE, WRITES **PATRICK BISHOP**

**W**hen the war trumpets sounded in Britain in August 1914, the echoes carried to the corners of the Empire. The call brought forth an extraordinary display of solidarity. In New Zealand, the “university classes emptied... sports fixtures were abandoned. To be left behind was unthinkable. If your mate was going, then somehow you had to get away too,” wrote New Zealand historian Christopher Pugsley. The reaction was similar in Australia and Canada and even Boer leaders in South Africa rallied to the Allied cause. On its own, Britain’s role in the war would have been limited. To make an impact it needed the resources of its vast overseas possessions, and above all their manpower. The remarkably generous response of the colonies ensured that it punched its full weight.

More than two million served in the armies of the dominions (self-governing British Commonwealth nations). At least a quarter of those who laid down their lives in Britain’s cause were not British. Their skin tones varied from pale and freckled to black and their spiritual beliefs covered a spectrum from Presbyterianism to paganism.

What made them cross the oceans to fight in a conflict not of their making and not directly threatening their own security? In the “white” dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, distance did little to diminish ties with the mother country. In schoolroom and home, boys and girls were brought up to feel a strong sense of loyalty and

obligation to a place whose memory was still often comparatively fresh in the minds of their parents or grandparents. Pugsley wrote that “to be a New Zealander in 1914 was to be taught that ‘the Empire looks to you to be ready in time of need, to think, to labour and to bear hardships on its behalf’”.

These “colonials” had the status of kith and kin. The inhabitants of India and elsewhere were “natives” who had no ties of blood and place with their rulers. The Empire’s demands were equally pressing, however. In the case of India, the locally raised army was a vital element in the imperial military structure. There, the sepoy – Indian soldiers in the British Army – simply obeyed orders, heading off to Flanders in the same dutiful spirit as if they were being sent to put down a border revolt.

For everyone – the soldiers and those they left behind – the war was, in varying degrees, a transformative experience. It changed the way they felt about themselves and their relationship with the imperial centre. After it was over, things would never be the same again.

Britain’s declaration of war on Germany automatically committed the dominions to the conflict. Most Canadians were of British descent and felt shaped by a dual identity at once national and imperial. Within two months of the recruiting stations opening, 32,000 men had joined up and, by the end, 600,000 men and women would serve. The troops saw action in many major battles including Neuve Chapelle, the Somme and most famously at Vimy

Ridge where, in spring 1917, they captured a vital high feature, suffering more than 10,000 casualties.

The enthusiasm was not shared by French Canadians. Their resistance to the notion of blindly following British interests reached a climax in 1917 when the Government was forced to introduce conscription to make up for heavy losses. Their attitude poisoned relations. “The consensus seems to be that the fewer French Canucks the better,” wrote Ted Sproule, an eager 21-year-old from Ottawa who volunteered for the Royal Navy in 1916. “They have done all that [can] be done to blacken a name that our ‘white Canadian boys’ have been writing into the hearts of the English people in letters of gold... and blood.”

Australians and New Zealanders, on the other hand, entered the war in a near unanimous fervour of imperial patriotism. The Australian prime minister Andrew Fisher declared that they would rally to the mother country “to our last man and our last shilling”. It was more than rhetoric. Of the 380,000 Australians who served overseas, nearly 200,000 were killed or wounded and the economy suffered drastically under the strain of war. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) was at the heart of the disastrous 1915 Gallipoli campaign and the survivors shipped off to the Western Front. By then, the home front’s initial zeal was beginning to fade. Recruiting slackened in 1916 and attempts to introduce conscription were defeated in two plebiscites.

Democratic considerations played no part in the



Indian contribution to Britain’s war. The 1914 Indian Army was only slightly smaller than the British and represented a vital element of the Empire’s military resources. Mobilisation began immediately and sepoy arrived in France in time to take part in the first battle of Ypres in October. They were a richly variegated bunch of Mahrattas, Rajputs, Pathans, Sikhs, Jats, Punjabi Muslims, Dogras, Garhwals and Gurkhas, officered in the main by Britons. The conflict, wrote Gordon Corrigan, wrenched them from a familiar world and thrust them “into a country of which they knew nothing, subjected to a climate never before experienced, fighting an enemy the like of which they had never imagined, in a cause of which [they] knew little”.

“Native” troops were thrown into the sideshow wars that broke out where Britain attacked German colonies in Africa. The British recruited from tribes that they considered possessed the necessary martial qualities. In some cases, the experience of soldiering alongside them would dispel reflexive prejudices and generate admiration and respect. Captain WD Downes, author of *With the Nigerians in German East Africa*, dedicated the book to the “memory of all Nigerians, irrespective of colour, race, creed and rank”. Of one of his men, CSM Belo Akure, he wrote: “I have never seen a braver man... his one idea is that his officers must on no account risk unnecessary danger; on no account will he let an officer go in front of him on a road.”

Why CSM Akure felt his life was of less account

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**A COMMON CAUSE**  
Clockwise from main picture: soldiers from the West Indies Regiment, circa 1917; Nigerian Brigade soldiers disembarking at Lindi in East Africa; an Indian soldier is taken to hospital; Australian recruitment poster, referring to the Gallipoli campaign; Maori in the trenches in 1915

than that of those who commanded him, or what he made of this quarrel between white men, we have no way now of knowing. But the fact was that Britain’s overseas soldiers fought with at least the same vigour as home-grown troops.

The Canadians and Anzacs in particular distinguished themselves by their courage and fortitude. Like most soldiers, they were too busy fighting to spend much time analysing their own thoughts and motivations. Later, though, attempts would be made to give meaning to sacrifices that seem staggering today. Just over 100,000 New Zealanders served the British cause out of a population of a few more than a million. Of those, 16,697 were killed and 41,312 were wounded. This is an astonishing casualty rate and one that would surely be unacceptable today in anything other than an existential war – which, for New Zealand, “strategically the least vulnerable settled place on earth”, in John Keegan’s words, it was not.

Nor were Australia and Canada directly threatened, yet their losses – roughly 60,000 dead each – were also extremely painful. What gave them the strength to carry on? After the war, the idea gained ground that, for these adolescent nations, participation was somehow a rite of passage. The efforts of their young men on the battlefield had proved they were the equal of the mother nation. Gallipoli and Vimy Ridge were spoken of as heroic episodes at which Australia and Canada “came of age”.

Certainly, the dominions’ contribution forced Britain to treat them with greater respect and grant them a louder voice in decision-making. In spring 1917, Lloyd George created an Imperial War Cabinet whose members included the prime ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa and various Indian officials and potentates. There was also a pledge to readjust imperial relationships to create a “commonwealth” of autonomous nations. It was India that stood to gain

“**CANADIANS AND THE ANZACS DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES BY THEIR COURAGE AND FORTITUDE**”

the most. Unlike the others, she was completely under British control.

At the start of the war, the independence movement including Gandhi offered tactical support in the hope that Britain would feel morally obliged to offer significant concessions when it was over. As it was, the 1919 Government of India Bill fell below expectations, granting only a partial franchise. India lost more than 50,000 men, while at home the poor (but not Indian manufacturers and businessmen) had endured even greater than usual hardship. With peace, militancy intensified.

The dominions’ initial enthusiasm for the war wore off long before the end. After the disastrous battle of Passchendaele in the second half of 1917, wrote Christopher Pugsley, “the New Zealand public believed that the country was being bled white of the best of its manhood”. Dean Oliver of the Canadian War Museum judged that in 1918, while “Canada was scarcely a defeated nation... it was a disillusioned one”. Almost half of the eligible male population of Australia enlisted during the war and almost two-thirds of those who served abroad became casualties. As elsewhere, the intensity of their experience made the thought that it had been for nothing all but unendurable and the evidence of their writings suggests most felt they had fought in a just cause.

Yet the war left a legacy of sorrow. “Thousands of families were left with only the memories of men – husbands, fathers and sons who would never return,” wrote historian Ashley Elkins. “Many grieving widows never remarried. War-damaged veterans were a visible reminder of war in Australian society throughout the interwar years.”

The overwhelming poignancy of the event was felt as acutely in the dominions as it was at home. A Canadian gunner and medical officer, John McCrae, wrote the lines forever associated with the tragedy of the Western Front: “In Flanders fields the poppies blow/Between the crosses, row on row”.

The symbolism is perpetuated on Remembrance Day. For all the trauma the dominions suffered, it was not enough to undermine their loyalty to Britain. When, 21 years later, the trumpets sounded again, almost all – India among them – rallied to the cause.

● Patrick Bishop is a historian and author



FROM IWM'S ARCHIVE - LETTERS HOME

## 'Hit, I went spinning down the hill like a top'

The campaign in German East Africa was a war of skirmishes and constant movement. Hot jungles, cool mountains and wide savannahs meant the fighting was markedly different from the more familiar Western Front. In late 1915 Cecil Hilton was serving with the East Africa Mounted Rifles, an infantry unit that included a large number of British settlers who had volunteered at the outbreak of war. On September 20, Hilton set out on a moonlit ride through the bush, his unit's orders being to surround a German patrol that was supposed to be camped in the mountainous region of Longido.

*"A rattle of bayonets being fixed told every man that his neighbour was getting ready to make holes in a Hun if opportunity offered. By this time it was getting light enough to see things, and we commenced to climb over rocks..."*

*"Up we went without the sound of a shot, and I had almost decided that the Germans had nipped out, as they often do without letting us get at them. I say 'almost' because just as I was running down a slope something weighty, apparently a ton or so, knocked away my left leg. Being on a slope I went spinning down the hill like a top - my helmet flying away to the left and my rifle to the right."*

*"After about 10 yards I found myself on the ground. One of the fellows crawled up to me and cut away my riding breeches and I found that I had a small hole in front, just above the knee-cap, and one about the size of a half crown behind where the bullet had come out. I found that I had no use in my leg and, as a fellow quite close to me got shot through the head, I kept pretty quiet for the time being, after having it bandaged."*

*"It was about 7 o'clock by this time and there was a most unholy noise of Maxims and rifles, each report sending a twinge through my leg. I drank some brandy and felt pretty fit. About seven hours after I had been hit, a corporal came along and told me they had orders to retire and would have to leave me. I managed to crawl behind a rock, so that I got some shade and lay down to wait events. I waved a white towel in the air, as it was obviously not much use trying to do anything else. The towel apparently made an excellent mark and bullets flew this way and that off my rock until I decided to haul it down and 'wait and see'."*

*"Several Askaris came running up, followed by a white man who knew enough English to say 'hands up', which we promptly did. He treated us to a bit of knock-about show by shaking his fist in our faces and repeating the time-honoured Gött strafe England [May God punish England]. In justice to the Germans I must say this was the only time any hostility was shown to me after I was taken prisoner. This one evidently thought he'd made rather a fool of himself, as he was very pleasant when he came to see us in hospital and brought us cakes and things several times."*

Taken prisoner and given medical treatment by the Germans, Cecil Hilton would eventually be liberated when Korogwe was captured by the British the following year. On June 25, 1916, he was finally able to write to his family to tell them of his traumatic experience.

Commentary by Anthony Richards, IWM head of documents



➤ **OUT OF AFRICA**  
Soldiers of the King's African Rifles near Mssindyi, East Africa, in September 1917

➤ **FALLEN CITY**  
Indian troops marching through Baghdad after the city was captured in March 1917



➤ **DESERT FORCE**  
A TE Lawrence photo of Emir Feisal and Sherif Sharraf leading the Ageyl Bodyguard, 1917



➤ **ISLAND BOOTY**  
A German landing party seizes stores from the British cable station in the Cocos Islands, 1914

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GLOBAL WAR

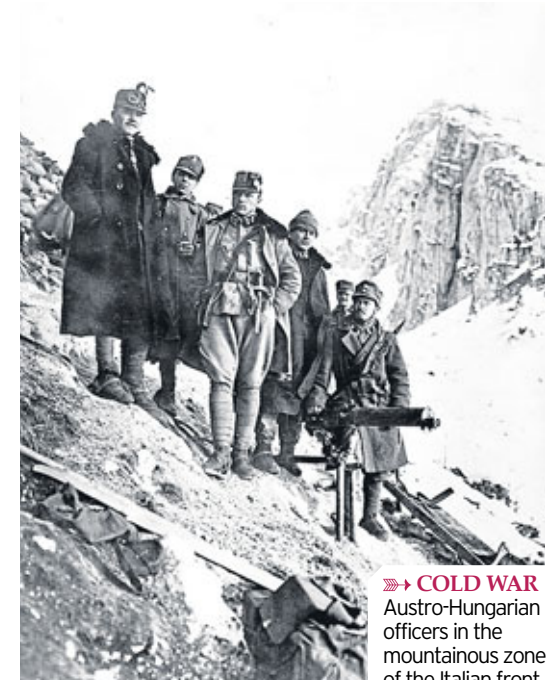
Although the First World War was primarily a conflict fought between European great powers on the Western and Eastern Fronts, the economic and colonial interests of these nations ensured the conflict became a global struggle.

Britain's need to secure oil in Mesopotamia and safeguard Egypt and the Suez Canal from Turkish attack spread the war into the Middle East. German attacks on British shipping around the world brought the war into the Indian Ocean and Pacific. In Africa, British, French, Belgian and even Portuguese forces fought to overrun Germany's meagre empire.

Much of the fighting outside of Europe was undertaken by African and Indian soldiers. Closer to home, Britain, France and Germany all committed troops to Italy and the Balkans to assist allies and pursue alternative strategies.

The nature of this global aspect of the First World War is well illustrated by the photographic collection held at Imperial War Museums. Alongside British official photographs are images captured by equivalent photographers working for allied and enemy states. There are also numerous collections of amateur photographs taken by servicemen on both sides of the conflict. Together these images cover aspects of the world at war on land, sea and in the air.

Alan Wakefield, IWM's head of photographs



➤ **COLD WAR**  
Austro-Hungarian officers in the mountainous zone of the Italian front





## HENRY LAMB: IRISH TROOPS IN THE JUDEAN HILLS SURPRISED BY A TURKISH BOMBARDMENT (1919)

On the evening of May 3, 1918, Turkish artillery opened fire on British positions close to the village of Jijilya in Palestine. Targeted were the 5th Inniskilling Fusiliers who, in the course of the bombardment, lost five men along with eight wounded.

The incident was of minor significance in the course of the Judean campaign and engagements of this kind were commonplace. But the episode would become the subject of one of the most expressive and exhilarating paintings of the First World War. For present at the scene was an army doctor and

accomplished artist, Henry Lamb. Before the First World War, Lamb had been associated with the Bloomsbury Set, having abandoned medical training to follow a career in art. But his medical background proved useful when war broke out, enabling Lamb to enlist with the Royal Army Medical Corps when his weak health would have made a fighting role impossible.

Eventually stationed as a medical officer with the Inniskillings, Captain Henry Lamb served in Macedonia before being transferred to Palestine in 1917, where his "magnificent bravery" tending to the wounded during the Jijilya attack earned him the Military Cross.

Such active service provided little opportunity for Lamb to practise art, yet in January 1918 he was approached by his friend, artist Francis Dodd, and offered work as an official war

artist. This was followed by an invitation from the British War Memorials Committee to contribute a canvas for its Hall of Remembrance scheme. Unfortunately for Lamb, the committee was unable to secure his release before he was posted to France and he was badly gassed just days before the Armistice. As a result Lamb was only able to begin his painting after his demobilisation in March 1919.

*Irish Troops in the Judean Hills* was one of only a few Hall of Remembrance scheme paintings not to feature a Western Front subject, another notable exception being Stanley Spencer's *Travoy's Arriving with Wounded at a Dressing-Station* (featured in last issue and online at [telegraph.co.uk/insidethewar](http://telegraph.co.uk/insidethewar)). The similarities between the paintings were noted at the time: the artists were close friends and shared an admiration of the art

of the early Renaissance. The Renaissance influence can be seen in *Irish Troops in the Judean Hills* in the elevated viewpoint and the arcing rock formations, reminiscent of representations in Dante's *Circles of Hell*, that capture the tumult and panic felt by the shelled Irishmen taking cover.

● Richard Slcombe, senior art curator, IWM

● *Irish Troops in the Judean Hills Surprised by a Turkish Bombardment* will feature in IWM's *Truth and Memory: British Art of the First World War* exhibition, opening in summer 2014, along with new First World War galleries. [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

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## WAR POEM

# An echo of Rupert Brooke and a hint of tension in AP Herbert's 'The Bathe'

To the generations born before the internet, AP Herbert was well known both as a man of letters and one of the last independent MPs for Oxford University. Poet, novelist, playwright and wit, his easy and engaging poems were published in *Punch* magazine for more than 60 years until his death in 1971. His poems are sometimes described as "light verses". But Herbert protested "against the distinction commonly made between 'light' and 'serious' poetry", adding: "For myself, I am for poetry that sings, that could, you feel, be set to music."

Born in 1890, Herbert had just graduated from Oxford when the First World War began. He quickly enlisted as an ordinary seaman in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. By the new year, he had

become an officer in the Hawke Battalion, part of the idiosyncratic Royal Naval Division.

On May 27, 1915, the Hawke Battalion landed at Gallipoli, a month after the original landings. It established its camp a short distance inland from the beaches at Cape Helles. The British position was already hot, dusty and overcrowded. A week later, the battalion suffered heavy casualties during the Third Battle of Krithia. Herbert survived, but was evacuated sick at the end of July. In summer 1916, he rejoined his battalion in France and on the Somme was one of only two Hawke Battalion officers to emerge unscathed from the Battle of the Ancre. He was badly wounded at Gavrelle outside Arras in April 1917 and remained in Britain for the rest of the war.

### THE BATHE

COME FRIEND AND SWIM. WE MAY BE BETTER THEN,  
BUT HERE THE DUST BLOWS EVER IN THE EYES  
AND WRANGLING ROUND ARE WEARY FEVERED MEN,  
FOREVER MAD WITH FLIES.  
I CANNOT SLEEP, NOR EVEN LONG LIE STILL,  
AND YOU HAVE READ YOUR APRIL PAPER TWICE;  
TO-MORROW WE MUST STAGGER UP THE HILL  
TO MAN A TRENCH AND LIVE AMONG THE LICE.

BUT YONDER, WHERE THE INDIANS HAVE THEIR GOATS,  
THERE IS A ROCK STANDS SHEER ABOVE THE BLUE,  
WHERE ONE MAY SIT AND COUNT THE BUSTLING BOATS  
AND BREATHE THE COOL AIR THROUGH;  
MAY FIND IT STILL IS GOOD TO BE ALIVE,  
MAY LOOK ACROSS AND SEE THE TROJAN SHORE  
TWINKLING AND WARM, MAY STRIP, AND STRETCH, AND DIVE. —  
AND FOR A SPACE FORGET ABOUT THE WAR.

THEN WILL WE SIT AND TALK OF HAPPY THINGS,  
HOME AND 'THE HIGH' AND SOME FAR FIGHTING FRIEND,  
AND GATHER STRENGTH FOR WHAT THE MORROW BRINGS,  
FOR THAT MAY BE THE END.  
IT MAY BE WE SHALL NEVER SWIM AGAIN,  
NEVER BE CLEAN AND COMELY TO THE SIGHT,  
MAY ROT UNTOMBED AND STINK WITH ALL THE SLAIN.  
COME, THEN, AND SWIM. COME AND BE CLEAN TO-NIGHT.

Herbert commanded a platoon in the Hawke Battalion. His close friend William Ker commanded another. On May 30, 1915, Ker described a scene very like that of the poem in a letter home: "You should have seen me and AP Herbert the other evening bathing in the Dardanelles, with the Turkish lines in sight to our left, the Plains of Troy before us on the other side. The scene was a cross between Blackpool and the Ganges. The men think it is a fine picnic, but we are going into the firing line to-morrow night."

When Herbert joined the Royal Naval Division in 1915, a fellow officer was Rupert Brooke. They never met, but the end of Herbert's poem echoes many of the images in Brooke's sonnet *Peace*. But for Herbert the swim is no longer metaphorical but practical and spiritual. It offers liberation from the squalor of the battlefield and a moment of sensual consolation. Simple as it appears, *The Bathe* provides an insight into the conflicting emotions of soldiers facing imminent death.

Having only arrived at Helles at the end of May, the Hawke Battalion did not enter the firing line until June 2, two days before the next big battle. In his first stanza, Herbert deftly captures the tension and fearful expectation that would have hung over him and his men as they looked inland towards the menace of the trenches, knowing that soon it would be their turn to experience them.

Although Herbert had been at Gallipoli for only a few days, he had already discovered the debilitating nature of life there. In his memoirs, he confessed: "It was bliss unbelievable to our hot and dusty bodies to swim. Afterwards as we rested on the beach, democratically naked, it pleased me to think that we had been swimming in the Hellespont, in the blue channel the Greek ships had sailed in pursuit of Helen. Across the Narrows to our left, Leander swam — and Byron too."



## VC BRAVERY

# 'No finer act' had the Royal Navy ever known

**MICHAEL ASHCROFT**  
ON COMMANDER  
LOFTUS W JONES VC

Immediately the First World War began, it was clear that Britain's navy, for so many centuries the pride of the nation, would play a vital role and turn the war into a global conflict.

The Royal Navy is the oldest of the British armed services and it is therefore the most senior. Because of the Royal Navy's formidable reputation and its great strength built up over the preceding decade, Germany was reluctant to take it on in a head-to-head battle. However, there were several crucial naval battles over the four years of the conflict that resulted in acts of astonishing bravery displayed by Royal Navy personnel of all ranks.

One of the finest naval VCs of the Great War was the decoration awarded to Commander Loftus W Jones RN. Born in Petersfield, Hampshire, on November 13, 1879, he was the second son of Admiral Loftus Jones and his wife Gertrude. With his father being such a senior Royal Navy officer, it was not surprising that "Willie", as he was affectionately known, went into the senior service. Indeed, of the four brothers, three served in the Royal Navy (the fourth breaking with tradition and entering the Indian Army).

After being educated at Eastman's Royal Naval Academy in Fareham, Hampshire – which the young Jones never warmed to – he rose quickly through the officer ranks and, at just 21, was in command of his own small ship, the gunboat Sandpiper. In June 1914, he was promoted to commander. Following the outbreak of the conflict, Jones initially captained the destroyer Linnet which, along with three other destroyers, sank the German minelayer Königin Luise as early as August 5, 1914, in the first British action of the war. From October 11, 1914, Jones commanded Shark, a destroyer which, late in December 1914, clashed with the German High Seas Fleet, aggressively pursuing and helping to see off the superior force.

At 2pm on May 31, 1916, Shark, captained by Commander Loftus W Jones, was providing protection from enemy submarines, along with three other destroyers and two light cruisers, for the Third Battlecruiser Squadron as it headed south in the North Sea in advance of the British battle fleet. No enemy ships were known to be in the vicinity and the 91-strong complement of officers and men on the Shark were as relaxed as they could be two years into the First World War.

However, at 2.20pm messages were received that an enemy force was at sea and the ships' companies were ordered to action stations as they proceeded, at full speed, to intercept the enemy. At 5.20pm, the first sounds of fire were heard: no one knew it at the time but they were the opening salvos of the Battle of Jutland, the long-awaited battle between the main British and German fleets.

Twenty minutes later, German destroyers and light cruisers appeared. When 10 German destroyers launched a torpedo attack on the Third Battlecruiser Squadron, four British destroyers, including the Shark, broke up the offensive. Soon after the four destroyers had returned to join their two light cruisers, three German battlecruisers appeared and started firing on the six British ships.

Under a heavy fire, the Shark was hit and a shell fragment destroyed its bridge steering wheel. Commander Jones ordered the after steering wheel

to be manned and, along with the wounded coxswain and a signalman, he ran down the bridge ladder and along the upper deck.

The enemy fire remained intense and it was using shrapnel, some of which struck Commander Jones in the thigh and face, leaving him to stem the flow of blood with his hands. Meanwhile, the coxswain was hit a second time and lapsed into unconsciousness. Realising that the Shark had been largely disabled by heavy fire, the captain of the Acasta brought his destroyer between the stricken vessel and the enemy ships. Commander Jones was told by the signalman that his fellow captain had offered to assist. "No, tell him to look after himself and not get sunk over this," was the captain's firm and selfless reply.

As the Third British Battlecruiser Squadron disappeared from sight, the enemy closed in on the Shark: its after gun was put out of action almost immediately, and its crew killed or wounded, while the forward gun had already been blown away. The

situation was worsening by the minute although, even in a hail of shrapnel, the crew on the Shark were desperately trying to load their final torpedo into the tube. However, the torpedo itself was struck by an enemy shell and exploded, causing heavy casualties and leaving only one gun in action.

Petty Officer William Griffin, who had been wounded in the attack, later recalled the scene: "On all sides there was chaos. Dead and dying lay everywhere around. The decks were a shambles. Great fragments of the ship's structure were strewn everywhere."

The Shark was still under fierce attack. Some shells exploded on the ship itself and others fell into the sea, throwing vast amounts of water on to the stricken destroyer. Unsurprisingly, the one surgeon on board was overwhelmed by his task. When he too was wounded, he was bandaged by a man who had lost an arm when the ship's torpedo had been struck.

By now the enemy was at close range and preparing for the kill. Commander Jones ordered the collision mats over the shot holes as attempts were made to keep the ship afloat.

When the crew of the last gun – the midship gun – was reduced to two men, the Shark's bloodied captain stood beside it, giving the range. As one of the two men fell, weakened by the loss of blood, the captain took his place.

However, moments later, Commander Jones was struck by a shell which blew off his right leg above the knee. As his men tied an improvised tourniquet – made from pieces of rope and wood – on his leg, Jones continued to direct the firing of the gun. As the German destroyers closed in, and the captain feared his ship would be captured, Commander Jones ordered the ship to be sunk. However, just at that moment the Shark's gun fired another round so he countermanded his order by shouting "Fight the ship", to encourage his men to carry on the battle.

At this point, Commander Jones, weakened by his own loss of blood and in great pain, noticed that the ensign had been shot away and ordered a new one to be hoisted. "That's good," was the captain's observation when he saw that the flag was flying defiantly once more.

The bows of the Shark were already disappearing below the waves and

other parts were awash with water as two German destroyers closed in to only a few hundred feet in order to finish off the stricken ship. "Save yourselves," was Commander Jones's final order to his men, shortly before he was eased into the sea and floated clear of his ship with the help of a lifebelt.

Some 20 survivors clambered on to two rafts and pieces of wreckage as two more torpedoes hit the Shark, blasting the dead and wounded into the water. Her stern rose up and she sank with her colours flying. Commander Jones, who had been placed on one of the rafts and propped in a sitting position, smiled and said: "It's no good, lads." Eventually, however, battlecruisers swept past in pursuit of the enemy. Jones sought confirmation that they were British ships and, when told they were, whispered: "That's good." Minutes later his head fell forward as he gave his final breath. Jones was 36 when he died.

Some of those who had made it on to the rafts also died from their injuries or fell into the water and either drowned or died from the cold. Shortly after midnight, however, a flare fired from the other raft was spotted and six survivors from the 91-strong company were eventually rescued by a Danish steamer, the SS Vidar.

Commander Jones's body was washed ashore off the coast of Sweden still in the lifebelt that he had donned after being forced to leave his ship. On June 24, 1916, he was buried in Fiskebäckskil Churchyard, Vastra Götaland. The funeral was attended by many local people and a monument was erected through subscriptions from local fishermen.

Margaret Jones, Commander Jones's widow, received letters from the Admiralty with information about her late husband's body and burial. Indeed, four years later, accompanied by their daughter Linnette, Mrs Jones visited her husband's grave in Sweden (although, in 1961, Commander Jones's remains were transferred to the British War Graves plot at Kviberg Cemetery in Gothenburg). Mrs Jones also retrieved some of his personal effects.

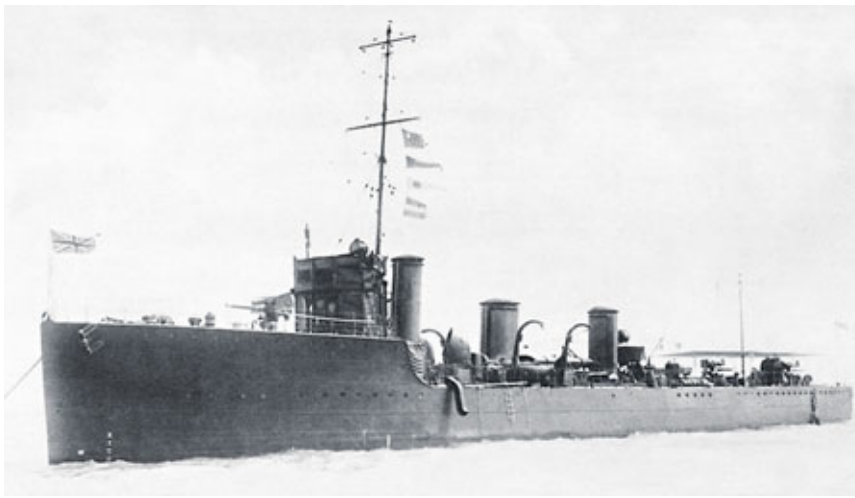
Mrs Jones made extensive inquiries into how her husband had perished during the Battle of Jutland. She discovered that one of her husband's last acts had been to say: "Let's have a song, lads." The first lieutenant started singing *Nearer, My God, to Thee*, and the survivors sang until they were exhausted.

Jones's posthumous VC was announced on March 6, 1917, when his citation said the decoration was "in recognition of his most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in the course of the Battle of Jutland. The full facts have only now been ascertained." Six survivors from the ship, including Petty Officer Griffin, received the Distinguished Service Medal.

Mrs Jones received her husband's VC from King George V at Buckingham Palace on March 31, 1917. The dramatic and moving account of the Shark's final hours was put together from interviews with the survivors, some of whom spoke to Mrs Jones.

I bought Commander Jones's VC and service medals last year in a private sale, along with a number of personal effects including his water-stained wristwatch, his smashed binoculars and the lifebelt he was wearing when he died. I am delighted that his VC (along with his damaged watch) have gone on display at the Imperial War Museum's Victoria Cross and George Cross gallery in London.

Over the years, many people have praised Commander Jones's bravery but perhaps the greatest compliment to his courage came from Admiral Beatty, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet during the war and later the first Earl Beatty. He said: "No finer act had been produced in the annals of Her Majesty's Navy."



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## BORN TO THE SEA

The Royal Navy's Grand Fleet off Jutland in the North Sea, May 1916, main picture; the destroyer Shark, far left; Commander Jones's medals, including his VC, left; Commander Loftus W Jones, inset



## HEROIC STORIES

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC is a Tory peer, businessman, philanthropist and author. He has written four books on gallantry including *Victoria Cross Heroes*. For more information, visit [www.victoriacrossheroes.com](http://www.victoriacrossheroes.com). Lord Ashcroft's VC and GC collection is on display at the IWM, London. For more information, visit [www.iwm.org.uk/heroes](http://www.iwm.org.uk/heroes). For more information on Lord Ashcroft's work, visit [www.lordashcroft.com](http://www.lordashcroft.com). Follow him on Twitter: @LordAshcroft.



## YOUR LETTERS

## POST BOX

We have received a magnificent postbag and inbox of letters, documents and stories in response to our request for readers' First World War memories. Here are just a few of the many we would like to share with you. Please keep them coming.

Write to: First World War, Telegraph Media Group, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0DT or email [firstworldwar@telegraph.co.uk](mailto:firstworldwar@telegraph.co.uk)

## WORLD TOUR WITH AN MP'S PRIVATE ARMY

John Ireland writes from Javea, Spain, about the time his father Alf (right) and uncle Joe spent with Huntingdon MP Oliver Locker-Lampson's private army, Armoured Car Squadron 15. "These campaigns have largely escaped the attention of war historians," says John, who has a trove of photos, maps and documents from his father's collection and is writing a book about their experiences.

"Locker-Lampson was an opportunist with friends in high places. He managed to persuade Tsar Nicholas II, no less, to

fund Armoured Car Squadron 15 to go to Russia and support its frontline armies.

"Things went from bad to worse. Throughout the war, they went from Turkey to Romania, back to Russia, into Galicia, back to Russia, got caught up in



the Bolshevik Revolution and ended up in Mesopotamia attached to Dunsterforce, supporting the loyalist Russian army in stopping the oilfields of Baku falling into pro-German hands. My father and his brother joined up in 1914 and only returned home in March 1919."

One typed document, dated June 13, 1916, is Alf's translation from a local newspaper of the moment his fleet of armoured cars arrived in Vladikavkaz in the Caucasus mountains. Placards, flags and flowers adorn the town to greet the English division.

"Dear Allies, you are the first ones of our friends who have walked through our streets. The first ones with whom we united on the battlefield, the first ones with whom our soldiers shook hands as brothers under the roar of cannons and the crackling of machine-guns."

John adds: "Shortly after my father's death in 1940, my sister found this neatly-folded document in his wallet. As he had carried it with him for nearly 24 years, it was clearly a treasured possession."

## A ROMANTIC PATRIOT

Lt Col (Retd) Godfrey Goodman, from Sheringham in Norfolk, has letters sent by his grandfather J Reginald Goodman while he was in hospital suffering from malaria during the Salonika campaign in 1916. So keen was Reginald, a professional watercolour landscape artist, to join up at the advanced age of 44, that he pretended he was 36.

Reginald wrote to his wife Kathleen on September 23, 1916: "By the time you get this, I shall be well and back with my men at the Rail Head, Karassouli, which is just behind the Firing Line. I saw a lot of captured Germans, the first to arrive in Karassouli. They were Prussians. They looked a sullen lot of brutes and caused some surprise as we were supposed to be dealing with the Bulgars."

Godfrey knew his grandfather well from

1934 until his death aged 91 in 1962. He explains: "With the British Expeditionary Force in Salonika, he was encamped in the valley of the River Vardar. He painted a landscape of the tents on a hillside which, unfortunately, was sold by my father after my



grandfather died. He survived the war without further injury or mishap, finishing his service as a captain in the Royal Munster Fusiliers in Ireland in 1918.

"I do not know exactly why he was so keen to be in the war. Possibly he did not want to seem conspicuous as an

unemployed, fit man not 'doing his bit' for the nation. He was both very patriotic and a romantic."

## VICTORY OVER THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Dr John Godrich from Minehead, Somerset, is the proud owner of a war diary that belonged to his father Victor Godrich (left). It was written from 1908 to 1919 while Victor was a TA volunteer in Gallipoli and the Middle East with the Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars. John wrote a book, *Mountains of Moab*, about his father's experiences.

Victor describes landing at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli, on August 20, 1915: "In Lemnos harbour we transferred to the paddle steamer Queen Victoria which took us across to Sulva Bay. We were packed like sardines into barges and towed to the wooden jetty recently built by the REs. I shall never forget the



## “ HIS PHOTOS WERE DEVELOPED IN HIS TENT USING THE MEAGRE RATION OF A PINT OF WATER A DAY

**IN THE SADDLE**  
A photograph by John Evans, a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps, of camel-mounted servicemen at the Great Sphinx of Giza in Egypt

mixed smell of scorched herbs, dust, cordite, smoke and the awful odour of dead bodies which pervaded the air."

The next day, "all hell was let loose" and his cavalry division saw 1,500 casualties. Victor was court-martialled for falling asleep standing up while on sentry duty. He was relieved from being shot at dawn due to his previous good conduct and evacuated to Alexandria suffering from typhoid. After recovery in England, he returned to Egypt and fought in battles for Gaza, Jerusalem and Damascus.

"This diary is from the point of view of the ordinary soldier. Heat, thirst, hunger, insect bites and sores in the hot plains and rain, frost and snipers' bullets up in the mountains of Judea were every man's lot," says Dr Goodrich.

## SMILE PLEASE

Rupert Holliday Evans, from Bath, has wartime photo albums that belonged to his grandfather, John Evans. More than 500 photos "tell the entire story of his daily life – the tanks, planes, trenches, Armenian POWs, all manner of portraits and archaeological sites – as a

member of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

"He served in Egypt, Sudan and Palestine for the entire duration of the war and, as a keen photographer, he supplemented his Army pay by taking shots of officers and men in front of the Sphinx, always in the same spot, holding the camels," says Rupert.

"He developed his photos in his tent using the meagre ration of water he was given – my father told me it was a pint a day, other than drinking water – and he would dry out his tea on stones so he could re-use it. He sent the extra cash he earned from photography back to his fiancée, Emily, in South Wales and they married on his safe return.

"My grandfather also



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sent home a number of negatives along with his pay, but the boat carrying the post was torpedoed and sank. Remarkably, most of the cargo was recovered, including the post, and the negatives all had a water mark on the image."

John and his old Kodak camera survived the war. "My dad used it when I was a kid," says Rupert. "My grandfather, who lived until 1972, was a keen Egyptologist and when I went to Cairo a few years ago, I took two photos that I later realised were in the exactly the same place he had stood nearly a century before."

## BETHLEHEM AND BEAUTY

Jean Brown, from Tamworth, Staffordshire, grew up listening to her father Allen Roland Sharp (left), tell stories from his time as a Royal Artillery soldier in the Red Sea, Turkey, Syria and Eastern Europe. "We were fascinated by his

descriptions of Bethlehem and the Wailing Wall. I find it amazing the great distances men travelled during this war," says Jean.

Allen joined up as an 18-year-old, "mainly to relieve his mother of the family burden. He told us he and his brother had to take turns to go out because they shared one pair of boots! So joining up and being given his own boots was wonderful to him. Yet little did he realise the horrors he would face."

Allen wrote to Jean's sister in 1979, recalling his memories of serving in the Middle East – the Jaffa oranges, green valleys and pretty villages. "I find it fascinating that he hardly mentions the horrors of war yet concentrates on the beauty of the sights he saw there," says Jean. "Here was a youth who had seen nothing of the world, so he was in awe of the sights he observed. Although he often told us, as children, of having to bayonet the enemy. He also said he did not believe the Middle East would ever see peace."

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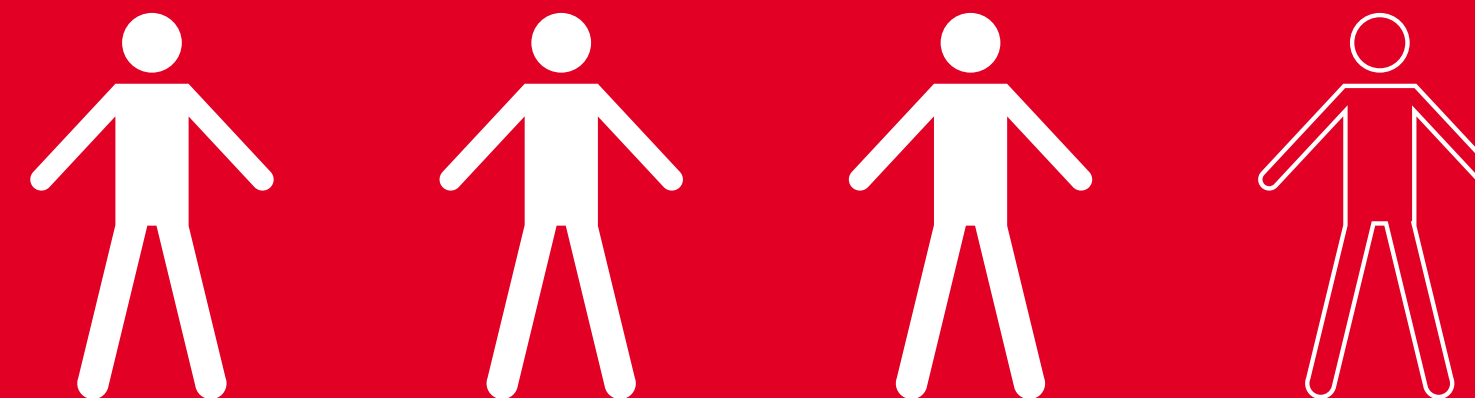
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## TURNING POINTS

# Amritsar: how Britain lost the will to rule

A PROPAGANDA GIFT TO NATIONALISTS, THE MASSACRE EXPOSED A LACK OF RESOLVE TO STAY IN INDIA, SAYS **NICK LOYD**



The First World War was a seminal moment in modern Indian history – a watershed that ushered in the final phase of Britain's 300-year involvement in the subcontinent. As part of the British Empire, India played an important role in the war effort and raised more than a million men for the Indian Army, most from the northern province of the Punjab.

In autumn 1914, the Indian Corps, comprising two Punjabi divisions, arrived in France in time to play a key part in holding the line – with the first Indian soldier to receive the Victoria Cross, Khudadad Khan, being recognised for his selfless bravery during the fighting around Ypres in October 1914.

Yet the Western Front was unremittingly hard on Indian troops and by the end of 1915, the Indian Corps had sustained more than 32,000 casualties, including hundreds of highly trained officers, which imperilled its viability. So it was redeployed to the Middle East, where Indian troops made a major contribution to the war against Ottoman Turkey.

Indian soldiers – Rajputs, Sikhs, Gurkhas and Punjabi Muslims – fought for many reasons including pay, *izzat* (honour), adventure and a desire to protect their country. In the Punjab, military service was a hereditary profession and serving the Sirkar (ruler) was a valued and highly profitable occupation. The Indian Army was made up of volunteers and although the efforts of Britain's recruiters intensified during the war, conscription was never introduced nor

compulsion ever employed. Yet while India's response to the war effort had been encouraging, the war dislocated its economy and stimulated demands from nationalists for a say in how the country was run.

In August 1917, long before Mahatma Gandhi would make his mark on Indian history, Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, made a historic announcement in the House of Commons. A liberal, naturally uncomfortable with imperialism, Montagu wanted to harness nationalist support for the war effort and proposed that Britain begin the process of gradual self-government, with Indian politicians taking an increasing role in the administration. Disregarding the sacrifices and loyalty that significant sections of the Indian population had shown towards the empire, Montagu focused his efforts on winning the support of those nationalists who had often been hostile to the Raj. It would be a fatal mistake.

Before Montagu's reforms could come into being, an event took place in Amritsar in northern India that would reshape the political landscape and wipe out any public relations gains Montagu had made with his announcement. On April 13, 1919, five months after the end of the war, Indian troops under the command of Brig Gen Reginald "Rex" Dyer fired on demonstrators in a walled garden (the Jallianwala Bagh) in the city of Amritsar in the Punjab.

In up to 10 minutes of firing, 379 people were killed and more than 1,000 wounded in an episode that became known as the Amritsar Massacre. This

was the culmination of three days of rioting, arson and anti-government activity across northern India. Brig Gen Dyer had found himself in a hostile city where civilian rule had been overthrown and the prospects of bloodshed – perhaps even a second "Indian Mutiny" – were growing by the day. He would later describe his actions as "my duty, a very horrible duty" and that he fired to restore order and send a message that revolt would not be tolerated.

Amritsar soon become enshrined in Indian

## “ IN EDWIN MONTAGU'S NEW AGE OF CONCILIATION, A SACRIFICE WAS DEMANDED

national myth as a moment of unparalleled barbarity. Dyer had fired into a gentle and unarmed crowd of men, women and children from a combination of racism, aggression and revenge, so it was said, symptomatic of the bankruptcy of imperial rule.

This view – which the nationalists were quick to propagate – was recreated to high acclaim by Richard Attenborough in *Gandhi* (1982). But the massacre was a freak event: the unexpected result of a collision

between a nervous and insecure officer operating in a claustrophobic city with little or no intelligence.

In an earlier age, Dyer's actions would have been seen as a necessary response to the threat of widespread disorder. Yet in Montagu's new age of conciliation, a sacrifice was demanded. After an inquiry ordered by the Secretary of State, Dyer was criticised for making an "error of judgment" and retired on the grounds of ill health. His treatment sent a clear message to those upholding British power overseas that they could no longer count on their government's automatic support and sympathy.

When Montagu's reforms were introduced in December 1919, the landscape of British imperial rule had altered unmistakably. Instead of witnessing a new imposition of imperial strength, the events of 1919 sapped the will of Britain's Indian administrators and undermined their control of the subcontinent. By handing over significant responsibilities to Indian politicians – with the naive hope that this would not destabilise the Raj – Montagu inadvertently opened Pandora's box and began the process that would end in the communal slaughter of partition in 1947.

For Sir Michael O'Dwyer – Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab throughout the Great War (and often erroneously conflated with "Rex" Dyer) – Montagu's reforms, combined with his squeamish handling of the shooting in Amritsar, were symptomatic of an empire that had lost its nerve. Criticising Montagu for giving control of the administration "of 250



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### RETREAT FROM EMPIRE

Clockwise from bottom left: an artist's view of the massacre; "Rex" Dyer; Khudadad Khan; Edwin Montagu; the 29th Lancers (Deccan Horse) on the Somme; a gate at Jallianwala Bagh through which protesters tried to escape

## The forgotten struggle in the East that changed the world

While the Western Front has been the focus for many historians, the colossal clashes in the East could be argued to have had the greater impact on 20th-century history. The Eastern Front was longer, with German and Austro-Hungarian forces lined up against Russia and its allies such as Serbia along a front of almost 1,000 miles from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

Although not as static as the trench line in France and Belgium, the Eastern Front saw clashes just as bloody and chaotic, with cavalry officers leading suicidal mounted charges against dug-in machine-guns and modern artillery.

Casualty numbers in the East remain disputed but one modern historian estimates Russia to have lost around two million men, almost three times British losses. And it was this clash of old against new that characterised the Eastern Front best, with the imperial order of Romanov Russia weakened so dramatically that it could be swept away by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, setting the stage for decades of confrontation between communist East and capitalist West.

The first artillery barrage of the war took place in July 1914 when Austro-Hungarian gunners fired into Belgrade, capital of Serbia, at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers. Eastern Europe was then largely divided between the great empires and Austria-Hungary held the north and west river banks, meaning the city was separated from their guns by only a few hundred yards of water.



**OLD AGAINST NEW**  
Russian gunners manning light field guns on the Eastern Front in 1914

Russia's willingness to back Serbia spun a potentially limited Balkan confrontation into a global conflict as the mobilisation of the Tsar's army presented a threat to Austria-Hungary's ally, Germany. Germany tried but failed to avoid a war on two fronts by enacting the Schlieffen Plan, which envisaged a swift and successful attack on France before all of its troops could be redirected east.

As would be the case during the Second World War, Germany would eventually be defeated by logistical overstretch across a landscape of monumental scale. Ultimately, however, the imperial powers that launched the war out East would both lose: Tsarist Russia being destroyed not just by the external enemy but by socialist revolutionaries from within, and the Kaiser's rule being dismantled at the Paris peace negotiations of 1919.

● **Tim Butcher** is the author of *The Trigger, the story of the assassin who sparked the First World War*, to be published in May by Chatto & Windus

### WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR?

## JB Priestley: the officer class killed most of my friends

A "huge, murderous public folly" is how JB Priestley described the First World War. But the writer most famous for his play *An Inspector Calls* waited nearly half a century before recounting his harrowing experiences of life in the trenches.

Born in Bradford in 1894, John Boynton Priestley joined the infantry on the outbreak of war, serving immediately on the Western Front with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding). He didn't expect to survive and wrote a book of verse, *The Chapman of Rhymes*, "entirely at my own expense when I felt, foolishly, I ought to leave something behind". His letters to his father in September 1915 told of his sleeplessness – "In the last four days in the trenches, I don't think I'd eight



hours sleep altogether" – and the impossible mud. One morning, his regiment was bombed by shells. "One shell burst right in our trench and it was a miracle that so few – only four – were injured. I escaped with a piece of flesh torn out of my thumb. But poor Murphy got a shrapnel wound in the head – a horrible great hole – and the other two were the same."

Despite bombardments, being wounded in the Battle of Loos and then returning to the front in 1917 to endure a German gas attack – after which he was declared unfit for service and transferred to the Entertainers Section of the British Army – Priestley, against all his expectations, survived. He became a famous novelist and dramatist, writing *An Inspector Calls* – which was set in a pre-

First World War Midlands town – in 1945. It wasn't until the publication of his memoirs *Margin Released* in 1962 that Priestley said what he really felt about the Great War. "The British command specialised in throwing men away for nothing. The tradition of an officer class, defying both imagination and common sense, killed most of my friends as surely as if those cavalry generals had come out of the chateaux with polo mallets and beaten their brains out. Call this class prejudice if you like, so long as you remember... that I went into that war without any such prejudice, free of any class feeling. No doubt I came out of it with a chip on my shoulder; a big, heavy chip, probably some friend's thigh-bone."

Of that unparalleled "public folly", he wrote: "I felt as indeed I still feel today and must go on feeling until I die, the open wound, never to be healed, of my generation's fate."

**Zoe Dare Hall**

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### NEXT ISSUE

● The Making of the Middle East. The First World War marked a pivotal time for the Middle East and the redrawing of the map of the Ottoman Empire. But what were we fighting for? Read more about the importance of 1917 in the Muslim world and how TE Lawrence pioneered guerrilla warfare in the region.

● Please write to us with your First World War photos and memories. Send your letters to: First World War, Telegraph Media Group, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0DT or email [firstworldwar@telegraph.co.uk](mailto:firstworldwar@telegraph.co.uk)

### BACK ISSUES

● Inside the First World War is a compelling 12-part series which will run monthly up to the centenary of the war's outbreak. To catch up with any of the four parts published so far, visit [telegraph.co.uk/insidethewar](http://telegraph.co.uk/insidethewar)





# Ashcroft Technology Academy



## Ashcroft Academy: Educating sixth formers for the future

**A**s you walk through the reception area in Ashcroft Technology Academy you would be forgiven if you thought you were entering the doors of a top flight commercial enterprise. Guests are greeted by a spacious and welcoming reception gallery adorned with stunning art work that would be at home in any public exhibition. The plasma screens gaze down at you outlining achievements of another outstanding year at the Academy. Being a student at the school is a privilege; being a student in the sixth form provides a springboard to lifelong opportunities.

Sixth Form students are housed in purpose built accommodation comprising seminar rooms, common room and a study area with 50 computer work stations. Being a member of Ashcroft sixth form provides students with the very best opportunities that an outstanding school provides along with the independence afforded by a university style setting. Ashcroft Sixth Form has grown from strength to strength now attracting students from other schools and colleges as well as being the sixth form of choice for students who have attended Ashcroft in Year 11.

The sixth form at Ashcroft provides a framework for success and equips students with qualifications and skills needed in an increasingly technological society. Students leave the sixth form articulate, confident, accomplished young adults who are not afraid of rigour and high standards.

### Why students choose Ashcroft sixth form?

A levels, IB and BTEC are delivered in a challenging and stimulating learning environment creating a compelling point of differentiation for students in the local area and results continue to be significantly above local and national averages with 65% of A level grades at A\*-B and 100% Distinction\*/Distinction success rate in BTEC. Now the IB is playing an important contributory role, attracting high quality ambitious students whose results reflect their high aspirations. The

sixth form is results driven; it has to be in an increasingly competitive educational climate. In sixth form briefings, raising standards and celebrating achievement are regular themes. Students work hard to get their results and are rewarded for their efforts throughout the year with "student of the week" awards and prizes for those appearing in the study area league tables.

What seems quite remarkable is the high proportion of students securing places at top universities. But when you dig deep this is not surprising given that the sixth form has a dedicated management team with responsibility to support students in their learning and a fundamental belief in the abilities and potential of its students. Students also attend higher education and guidance sessions with a senior tutor covering a range of topics relating to making important decisions such as where and what to study at university. The sixth form also has dedicated UCAS days and takes all lower sixth students annually on a university open day. In addition the sixth form dedicates 2 weeks in the lower sixth to work experience, closely linked to university choices.

Staff are dedicated, highly qualified, motivated and skilled and know their students well. A passion for learning pervades all aspects of sixth form life and there is a noticeable unreserved belief in the potential of young people.

The range of enrichment opportunities available to students is impressive. As well as taking part in visits both home and overseas, it would not be uncommon to see over 60 sixth formers helping others in the lower school with their reading or leading school assemblies. In addition students can apply for scholarships to enhance their learning and the student support at Academy open evenings is overwhelming. Students can apply for positions of responsibility such as House Captain in a truly thriving house system or for the most senior position of Head Student and run a prefect system to support the overall leadership and management of the Academy.

**There is so much to say about the Sixth Form at Ashcroft but the last words will be those of Ashcroft's students:**



*"Ashcroft sixth form treats everyone as an individual and strengthens their potential on a daily basis. The school has been so supportive of putting me on the right path to become a journalist". Ieva Asnina (student from a neighbouring school)*

*"Choosing the IB has given a totally different dimension to my life" Bianca Costa Sales (overseas student from Brazil).*

*"I have supported all school open evenings and am now a student ambassador. Ashcroft has given me so many opportunities". Tubba Anwar (student from a neighbouring school)*

*"As a Music student I have so many opportunities to develop my talent. Performance has boosted my self confidence. I can record my original songs in our new studio". Esther Okenla (former student)*

*"The wide variety of resources available have enabled me to add far more depth and breadth to my studies". Ewan Laws (former student)*

*"The Ashcroft Sixth Form Scholarship has really enriched my life. I took a course in British Sign Language which will help me in my ambition to work in the education sector". Savannah Morrison (former student)*

*"I moved to Ashcroft because of its fantastic reputation and its facilities which I knew would aid me in achieving my goals and aspirations". Nhoon Ahmed (student from a neighbouring school)*

*"Having been at Ashcroft for almost 5 years, I chose to stay on at the sixth form because of the excellent teaching and superb study facilities. This combination will help me achieve the necessary grades for the next stage in my life". Monet Norman (former student)*

*"The EPQ has given me the opportunity to explore an area of the law. I am researching the factors affecting the reliability of child testimonies and plan to study law at university". Samar Choudhry (student from a neighbouring school).*

*"Once I walked through the doors I knew Ashcroft was right for me". Tashina Maksud (student from a neighbouring school)*

*"I plan to read history at university. I have received so much help and support from the school in writing my personal statement. Teachers have a genuine interest in my future". Rebecca Davies (student from a neighbouring school)*

*"Volunteering in Kenya was certainly a heart rendering and very rewarding experience". Ahmed Bashir (former student)*