

World War 1 : Wreath Laying Ceremony and Exhortation at the Menin Gate Memorial on 15 Oct 2015

Major Uday Sathe, VrC (Retd)[®]

The World War 1, also known as “The Great War for Civilisation 1914 -1919” was a remarkable event in the World History and that of India. In this War, 1.4 million Indian soldiers participated, of which more than 74,187 attained martyrdom, and over 1,37,000 were injured. Of all the tributes paid to the Indian Army, none was more poignant and heartwarming than the one by Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Commander of Allied Forces in France. He said, *“The Indian Troops were thus amongst the first to show the way to a victorious offensive!”* It would thus be an understatement to say that it was because of the exceptional valour and sacrifices made by the Indian soldiers that the British could manage to defend ‘The British Empire’ successfully.

The Last Post Ceremony has been conducted at the Menin Gate Memorial in Belgium continuously since 1928 without a break – even during the WW II. Menin Gate was chosen as the specific location for this ceremony because of its special symbolic significance; it was from this spot that countless soldiers set out for the front in the European Theatre of World War 1; many of them destined, never to return.

I had the singular honour to lay the wreath on 15 Oct 2015 in memory of my grandfather, Subedar Shripad Hari Sathe, ‘Bahadur’ OBI, IMSM of the Indian Subordinate Medical Department and also do “the Exhortation” – a singular honour which was bestowed upon me by the Last Post Association.

[®]Major Uday Sathe, VrC (Retd) was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery on 15 Jun 1966 and was decorated with Vir Chakra during the 1971 War. He belongs to a family which has served the Indian Army for five generations.



Major Uday Sathe, Vir Chakra (Retd) proceeding to lay the Wreath along with
his escort from Belgium Army, Airborne Commando Lt Col Christopher ONRAET

Exhortation of the Assembly by Major Uday Sathe, VrC (Retd)



*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary
them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the
morning, We will remember them."*

Letter to the Editor

Has Strategic Military Restraint during Most of the Last Six Decades Served India's National Interests? (Jan-Mar 2016 Issue)

Dear Editor,

Having read the edited version of the essay "Has Strategic Military Restraint during Most of the Last Six Decades Served India's National Interests?" written by Lieutenant General GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, I am reminded of the famous book "Rise and Fall of Great Powers" by Paul Kennedy; wherein, to the best of my recollection, the author traced the history of the countries, particularly European that were economically strong and whose population was well educated, were able to rise back to power even after their fall.

There is no gainsaying that a country's own economic strength in itself is a deterrence for the enemy planning to attack. Hence, along with being militarily strong, a nation also has to be economically powerful to face its adversary.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Somi Tandon, IDAS (Retd)
Former Secretary (Defence/Finance)