

**India and the Great War Centenary Commemoration Project - An Update**  
**Mr Adil Chhina@**

The Joint MEA-USI Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research's (CAFHR) 'India and the Great War Centenary Commemoration Project' has lately been focussed on producing a number of publications that are in the pipeline and will be published in the coming two months. These include a boxed set of eight booklets on the theme 'India and the Great War', edited by Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina (Retd). The subjects/authors of the individual booklets are:

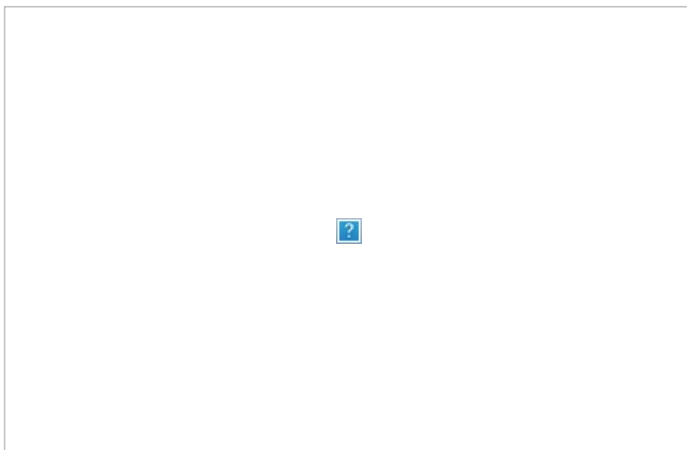
- (a) An Overview by Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina (Retd)
- (b) France and Flanders by Tom Donovan
- (c) Gallipoli by Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina (Retd)
- (d) Mesopotamia by Harry Fecitt
- (e) Egypt and Palestine by Harry Fecitt
- (f) East Africa by Harry Fecitt
- (g) Indian State Forces by Tony McClenaghan
- (h) Indian VCs 1914-18 by Adil Chhina

In addition the following Coffee Table Books are being produced:

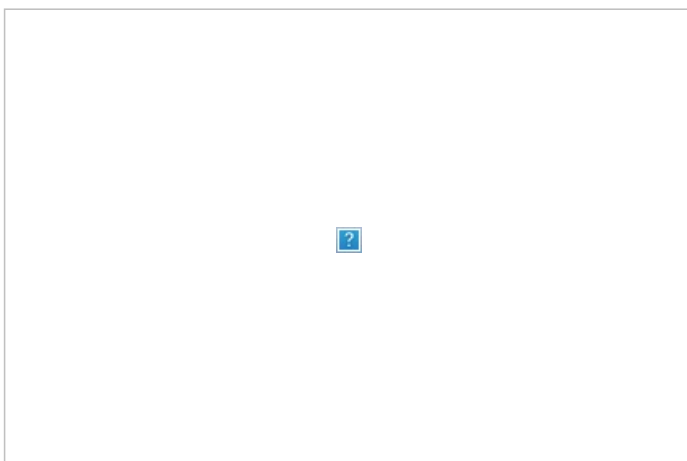
- (a) India and the Great War
- (b) Indian Army on the Western Front

The USI CAFHR team has also contributed articles on India and World War One for a special commemorative issue of the magazine produced by the Indian embassy in France. It is not often realised that India's first ambassador to France Hardit Singh Malik, was also the first Indian to be commissioned as an officer in a combat arm. He flew as a fighter pilot in the Royal Flying Corps and ended the war with a German bullet in his leg which he carried till the end of his days. Work is also progressing on the academic volumes focussing on various aspects of India's involvement with the War, including the theatre histories.

**Commemoration Ceremony for the  
Centenary of World War I in Paris**



**Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina, Secretary CAFHR addressing the  
UNESCO delegates**



**The Panelists**

Other than the planned publications, a commemorative event was organised by the permanent delegation of India to UNESCO in Paris to mark the centenary of the Great War and the role played by India in it. The Secretary CAFHR addressed the assembled UNESCO delegates as well as members of the diplomatic corps and French college students and school children who were present for this event, and highlighted the sterling performance of the Indian armed forces in preserving world peace a century ago. The talk was very well received. Another talk was also given on the subject at the 'India and the Great War' seminar organised by the Alliance Francaise in Pondicherry on 7th February 2015, as part of Pondy Partages 2015 Festival. The French Embassy in New Delhi has dedicated a page on its official website, recognising the valour and sacrifice of India's soldiers in WWI, on the eve of centenary of Battle of Neuve Chapelle. The page may be accessed at the following location :

**<http://www.ambafrance-in.org/Centenary-of-World-War-I-1914-1918>**

There are a number of events and talks taking place during Mar-Apr 2015. Squadron Leader Chhina presented a paper titled From the jewel in the crown of empire: the Indian army on Gallipoli on 19th March 2015 at Llewellyn Hall Australian National University (ANU) at an International Conference - 'Gallipoli 1915: A Century On', which was jointly organised by the Australian War Memorial and the ANU, Canberra between 18th and 20th March 2015.

Another event commemorating the centenary of the start of the Gallipoli Campaign was organised on 24-25 Mar 2015 by the Turkish Consulate in Hyderabad in collaboration with INTACH-Hyderabad, where talks were delivered by Professor Kahraman Sakul, a Turkish historian and Squadron Leader Rana Chhina (Retd).

A seminar on the 'Use of Chemical Weapons' is being jointly organised by the USI and the Embassy of Belgium, New Delhi on 24 April 2015 at USI to mark the centenary of the second battle of Ypres (now Ieper), where poison gas was first used by the Germans and Indian troops were amongst the victims. In addition to this a joint USI - Belgian Embassy reception is likely to be held at the Belgian Ambassador's residence in New Delhi on the evening of the same day. This reception will showcase an exhibition depicting the role of Indian and Belgian soldiers during the Great War curated by the USI-CAFHR team.

On 25th April a joint USI - Australian High Commission exhibition 'Gallipoli One Hundred' will be displayed at a reception likely to be held at the Australian High Commissioner's residence in New Delhi to commemorate the centenary of the landings at Gallipoli, in which the Indians and ANZACs fought side by side as comrades in arms. The exhibition will have a central element - 'Camera on Gallipoli' accompanied by a supplementary exhibition - 'Indians and ANZACs'. The New Zealand High Commission is an active participant in these ANZAC Day commemorative activities being planned in April, 2015.

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