

**Grade: 8**

**Course: Virsa (ਵਿਰਸਾ)**

**Lesson Number: 7**

**Unit Name: Sikhs (ਸਿੱਖ) in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Title: Sikh Enlistment in the Army**

### **Standards**

#### **Standard 2: Sikh Tensions in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

- Students identify the uneasy relationship between the Rāj (ਰਾਜ) and the Khālāsā (ਖਾਲਸਾ).
  - Students will understand the uneasy relationship between these forces: Dalīp Singh (ਦਲੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ), Mutiny of 1857, Sikh enlistment in the army, Singh Sabhā (ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ) Movement, Gadar (ਗਦਰ) Movement, Babbar Akālīs (ਬੱਬਰ ਅਕਾਲੀ), Gurduārā (ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ) Reform Movement, Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh (ਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਉਧਮ ਸਿੰਘ), etc.
  - Students will understand the two forces within Sikh sociological history—resistance (Khālāsā) versus accommodation and connivance (Dillī Sarkār - ਦਿੱਲੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ/Outside Forces).

### **Objective**

1. Students will learn about early Sikh enlistment in the army during the World Wars and make suggestions as to how we can begin to make this history part of the history they study at school.

### **Prerequisites**

- Lessons 4-6.

### **Materials**

- Copy of the reading (in Teacher Resources)
- Chart paper or journals to write suggestions on

### **Advanced Preparation**

- The teacher should be familiar with the incident.
- A reading is provided but self-reading should also be done from ‘Warrior Saints’ (information on this book attached in Teacher Resources).

### **Engagement (15 to 20 min)**

- Review with students why the Sikhs fought with the British during the Mutiny of 1857.
- Ask students to think about whether they have ever studied or read about Sikh soldiers serving in World War I, World War II or any other time in their history classes.
- If they say no, ask them to think about why that might be.

### **Exploration (35 minutes)**

- Hand out reading on Sikh enlistment in the army.
- Let them read it silently.
- Ask them about how it makes them feel that Sikhs have made such a significant contribution to the British army but are hardly ever mentioned in history books.
- Monitor discussion on the above question.
- The teacher should be looking for how the students might be frustrated or upset because the contribution of the Sikhs is not usually mentioned. However, she or he should direct the

discussion towards what can be done so students in their classroom are aware of these contributions.

- The teacher might suggest talking to the classroom teacher and asking permission to discuss or present the information on Sikh contributions to both wars.
- There are some articles listed under Other Resources. It would be good to allow students to skim through these to get additional information.
- Have students write a letter to the publisher of a book or to their principal and teacher, expressing the contribution of Sikhs in the World Wars and why it should be included in their school curriculum.

#### **Explanation/ Extension ( 5-10 minutes)**

- Ask students to think of ways this history can be included in their regular schools or implemented as part of their history curriculum, besides writing of letters.
- The teacher might want to take this time to allow students to actually work on their suggestions. For example, a student might want to work on developing a power-point for other students in their class.
- Also recommend to students that they can bring up this information when they are actually discussing world history in their schools.
- Depending on the time available, the teacher may choose to show a video on Sikhs in World Wars by Vicky Singh <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKdOuP1Y-ig&feature=related>

#### **Evaluation (On-going)**

- The teacher should be able to evaluate if students are giving reasonable suggestions as to how Sikhs contribution as soldiers can become part of the history they study in school.
- Teachers should also make sure that the letter has the appropriate information about Sikh enlistment in the army.

## **Teacher Resources**

The World Wars of the Twentieth Century have defined the course of history and have had a huge influence on mankind today. However, the contribution and sacrifices of the Sikh (ਸਿੱਖ) troops is usually left out from this important part of history. Even though Sikhs are a highly visible minority throughout the world, and have shared a proud history over nearly 200 years with Britain, little is known about their contribution, sacrifices and their culture.

During the Jaṅg Hind-Paṅjāb (ਜੰਗ ਹਿੰਦ-ਪੰਜਾਬ) (commonly known as the Anglo-Sikh Wars) the British were impressed by the Khālsā (ਖਾਲਸਾ) Army because of their ability to raise battalion after battalion of Sikh forces. After that the British began to enlist Sikh men into their army. Thus, the Khālsā army, which was once a fire-enemy, became the most fervent of loyalists.

This loyalty among the Sikh forces became evident when the Sikhs refused to join the Mutiny of 1857. While the majority of the Indian army revolted against the British army, Sikhs remained loyal and fought besides the British. In these four, extremely tense months, the British raised 18 new regiments in Paṅjāb, mostly Sikhs. “Paṅjāb became and remained the sword arm and breadbasket of British India.” (Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail, [www.asht.info](http://www.asht.info))

In 1914 as the war began to unfold, the drive began to enlist Indian troops to support the war effort, Sikhs joined the ranks of the British Army en-masse. The Anglo-Sikh relationship was to witness the pinnacle during the gloomiest days of the Great War.

“In the depressing trenches of the German and Turkish fronts, thousands of young Sikh volunteers fought and laid down their lives, defending a land unknown to them, against an enemy that was no threat to India, for an ally that occupied their own country.” (Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail, [www.asht.info](http://www.asht.info))

The world was to behold the largest volunteer army ever in action. Sikhs made up nearly 20% of the British Indian army. Even though Sikhs made up only two percent of the Indian population, it was the estimate of Sir John Maynard that the contribution of the Sikhs in men and material was ten times that of any other community of India.

However, at the end of the World War I the relationship between the British and the Sikhs began to deteriorate. Sikh men who had fought for Britain to free occupied lands in Western Europe were now to return to their own occupied country. The call for independence began.

During the Second World War Sikhs once again stepped forward against the Japanese and German soldiers. Sikh soldiers were once again the mainstay of the British army. With only voluntary recruitment, young Sikh men helped to swell the ranks from 189,000 at the start of the war to over 2.5 million at the end. Sikh soldiers were deployed to most of the active fronts during the Second World War. However, it was in Burma where the Sikhs made their mark.

By 1944, Sikh soldiers were well entrenched in the hot swaps of the Burmese jungles. The Japanese were strongly pushing through Burma and had driven their combined forces to the eastern edge of India. They were ready to proceed forward into the plains of India and westward to Kalkattā (ਕਲਕੱਤਾ), but the Sikh Regiment was too strong for them. The Sikh regiment, here, played a vital role in arresting the Japanese and forcing them to retreat.

Even with the end of the Empire, the Anglo-Sikh connection continued. In fact, Sikhs were encouraged to settle in the United Kingdom and become a part of their society. Today, an estimated 450,000 Sikhs live in the United Kingdom.

*Adapted from: Warrior Saints by Amandīp S. Madrā and Paramjīt Singh and Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail, [www.asht.info](http://www.asht.info).*

#### Other Resources

- Amandīp S. Madrā and Paramjīt Singh. Warrior Saints: Three Centuries of the Sikh Military Tradition. 180 pages, 110 duo-tint images, I.B. Tauris Publishers in association with the Sikh Foundation ISBN: 1-86064-490-2.
- [http://www.sikhnet.com/Sikhnet/Register.nsf/Files/Poster/\\$file/SikhsTrueFace.pdf](http://www.sikhnet.com/Sikhnet/Register.nsf/Files/Poster/$file/SikhsTrueFace.pdf)
- [http://www.sikhspectrum.com/122002/soldiers\\_ww.htm](http://www.sikhspectrum.com/122002/soldiers_ww.htm)
- <http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/sikh-history/historical-sikh-events-sikhs-in-world-war-i.html>
- <http://www.allaboutsikhs.com/sikh-history/world-war-i-sikh-cavalry-in-france.html>
- <http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/lionsofthegreatwar.htm>
- [http://www.sikhspectrum.com/122002/soldiers\\_ww.htm](http://www.sikhspectrum.com/122002/soldiers_ww.htm)
- <http://www.bhagatsinghind.com/index01.html>

**Evaluation of Presentation Skills**

<b>Point</b>	<b>Poor</b>				<b>Satisfactory</b>			<b>Outstanding</b>	
<b>Timing</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Maintaining attention</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Personal Approach</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gesture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Voice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Eye contact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Visual aids</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Simplicity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Amount of text	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Font	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Clarity of key points	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Use of visual aids	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Comments</b>									
Strengths									
Weaknesses									

**Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_**Evaluator:** \_\_\_\_\_

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