

Press release: Government backs new memorial to Sikh servicemen

Plans for a national memorial to honour the contribution Sikhs made to Britain and her allies has today (30 January 2018) received backing from Communities Secretary Sajid Javid.

He confirmed government support for campaign to erect a Sikh war memorial in London. Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The part played by Sikh servicemen really stands out – a contribution that's all the more remarkable when you consider that these brave men travelled thousands of miles to fight for a country that wasn't their own.

We are indebted to all those servicemen who volunteered to serve and fought to defend the freedoms we enjoy today.

That's why a Sikh war memorial in our nation's capital will honour their sacrifice and ensure that this part of our shared history is never forgotten. So I'm delighted to get behind this campaign and ensure its success.

Sikh servicemen in the British Armed Forces have displayed extraordinary acts of bravery and sacrifice in the service of Great Britain and her allies. Hundreds of thousands of Sikh soldiers saw active service during the First and Second World Wars and in subsequent conflicts. More than 83,000 turbaned Sikh soldiers gave their lives and more than 100,000 were injured during both Wars.

Despite making up only two per cent of the Indian population when the First World War broke out, Sikhs accounted for more than 20 per cent of the Indian Army's manpower. Sikh soldiers from the Punjab and surrounding states saw action in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, most notably on the Western Front and at Gallipoli.

On the Western Front Sikhs fought and died alongside their British, Indian and Commonwealth counterparts. Their contribution was essential to the war effort and of the twenty-two Military Crosses awarded to Indian soldiers, fourteen went to Sikhs.

As part of marking the final year of the First World War centenary commemorations, Government has extended support for a campaign led by Slough MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi to help set up a Working Group and support the campaign to find a suitable location. Once an appropriate site has been identified and a memorial agreed on, the Government has agreed to provide funding towards the project.

More information on government activity for the [First World War Centenary](#).