



# NMWMT

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## The National Muslim War Memorial Trust



## OBJECTIVES

The erection and maintenance of a national war memorial to commemorate the services of Muslim personnel to Britain's Armed Forces during the two World Wars and subsequent conflicts.

The Trust will also undertake an educational role to promote in schools, colleges and the wider public arena the contribution of Muslims to Britain's Armed Forces.

The initiative is supported by the British Government and the Chief of the Defence Staff.

Forgotten Muslim soldiers of WW2 who fought to keep the Union Jack flying.  
©Imperial War Museum

## Muslims in Britain's Armed Forces

Muslims were a significant part of the British Armed Forces during both World Wars and played a pivotal role in shaping the country's history, but their heroic contribution has been undervalued.



Muslim soldiers on the front line fighting for the Allied forces in WW1.

# World War One

At least

## 2.5 million

Muslim soldiers and labourers from all over the world fought with the allied forces with dignity and honour.

During WW1, the British Indian Army numbered over 1.3 million, and at least **400,000** were Muslims.

The British Indian Army was composed of volunteers who served in France, Belgium, Gallipoli, Salonica, East Africa, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Persia.

From the British Indian Army, over 53,000 were killed, 65,000 injured and 3,800 were missing or taken prisoner.

A significant number of Muslims served in the British merchant navy, over 50,000 by the beginning of WW1. They came from India, Yemen, British Somaliland and other countries.

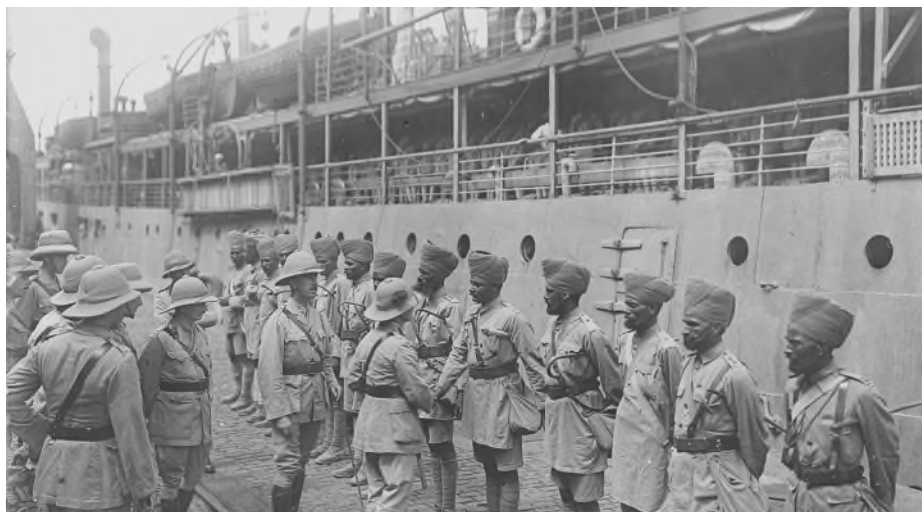
More than 15,000 merchant seamen lost their lives, which included Muslims. It is estimated that 3,427 Indian seamen were killed and 1,200 taken prisoner.

Britain ordered the invasion of German colonies in West Africa. The West African Frontier Force, drawn from Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria and Gambia played a key role in the campaign.

British colonial forces fought a 4 year guerrilla campaign in East Africa.

Although the exact numbers aren't known, the King's African Rifles was said to contain a large percentage of Muslims. During this period, British forces lost 10,000 men.

*Although the NMWMT commemorates the contribution of Muslims to Britain's Armed Forces, we would also like to recognise the service of **800,000** Muslims from North, West and East Africa who fought in the French Armed Forces. There were **1.3 million** Muslims in the Russian Army and **5,000** Muslims in the American Forces who also fought the Germans.*



Muslim soldiers in the British Indian Army sent abroad to fight on the front lines. ©Imperial War Museum



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## The Beliefs of Muslim Soldiers

One of the tenets of Islam is that Muslims should treat enemy soldiers with respect and look after them.

Reports and letters mention that Muslim soldiers shared their food with the local people who were suffering from famine in Europe. This, despite the fact that they knew it would weaken their own strength, needed for the fierce fights to come.

# World War Two

It is said that

## 5.5 million

Muslims participated on the allied side of the war during WW2. Nearly **1.5 million** Muslims were killed in action.

By World War Two, the British Indian Army had grown significantly to 2.5 million. Of this approximately **1 million** were Muslims.



Reinforcements sent to Singapore and Malaya in November 1941.

"We must not on any account break with the Moslems, who represent a hundred million people, and the main army elements on which we must rely for the immediate fighting"

Winston Churchill, 4th March, 1942, in his letter to Franklin Roosevelt, President of the United States.

Muslims mainly from India and African countries fought on three continents and played a decisive role in Britain's first major land victory against Nazi Germany in North Africa.

They also fought valiantly in Somalia, Abyssinia and Madagascar.

The greatest Muslim contribution, as part of the British Indian Army, was fighting the Japanese in the Far East Campaign.

**9,000 - 12,000** Palestinians fought for Britain in WW2 in Egypt and Mesopotamia as did **1,500** soldiers from the Arab Legion (Jordan).



Jordanian Arab Legion serving with the British forces in WW2. ©Imperial War Museum

The exact number of Muslim casualties are not known, but 87,000 Indian servicemen died, 34,354 were wounded and 67,340 became prisoners of war.

## Awards & Honours

In both World Wars, Muslims were recognised with decorations for their bravery and valour in combat.

**6** of the 42 African Distinguished Conduct Medals were awarded to Muslims.

**Hundreds** of military awards were won by Muslims. **7** Muslims were awarded the **Victoria Cross**, the last ones being received by Lance Naik Shar Shah and Sepoy Ali Haider in 1945.

**Khudadad Khan VC** was the first non-white person to be awarded the Victoria Cross in 1914. He was a Muslim who came from Chakwal in

present-day Pakistan.



Khudadad Khan, VC

In total, **6 George Crosses** were awarded to Muslims, including **Captain Mateen Ansari GC** in 1946 who despite brutal torture, mutilation and starvation at the hands of his Japanese captors, refused to renounce his allegiance to the British and was beheaded by the Japanese.

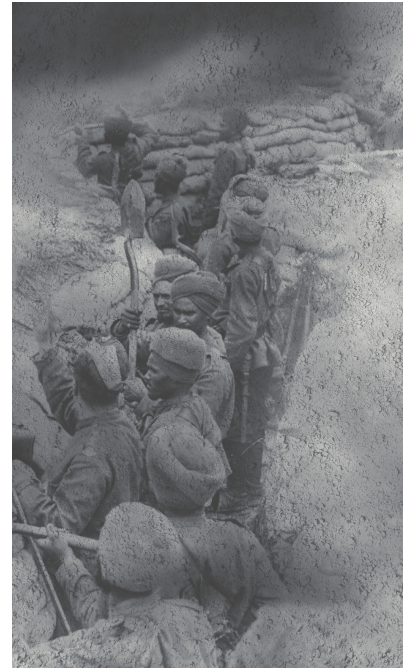
In World War Two, **Noor Inayat Khan GC** was the first female wireless operator sent by Britain to assist the French resistance in 1943. She was tortured by the Germans but never gave up any secret information and was executed at Dachau concentration camp in 1944. She was awarded the George Cross in 1949 and the French Croix de Guerre.



Captain Mateen Ansari GC



Noor Inayat Khan, GC



Muslim soldiers serving in the trenches. © Forgotten Heroes 14-19

## Contributions to the Trust

As a charity, we are incredibly grateful to all of our supporters and we would kindly ask you to make a donation to support our efforts.

If you would like to make a donation, please do so by making a direct payment using the details below:

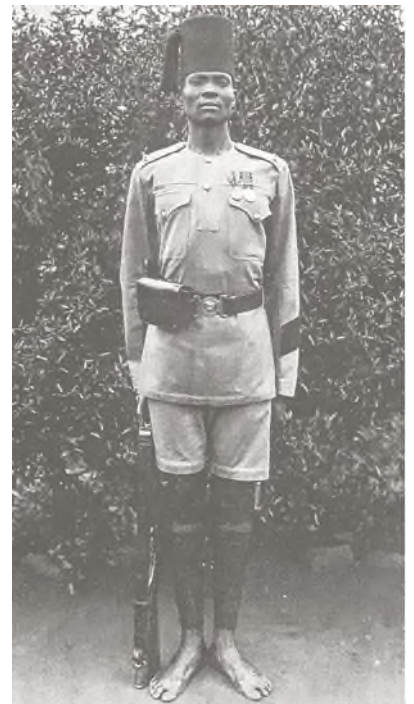
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Account Name: The National Muslim War Memorial Trust

Account Number: 83524768

Sort Code: 30-90-89

Please get in contact with us, so that we can express our thanks to you and visit our website below for more information.



Member of the King's Africa Rifles in WW2. © Forgotten Heroes 14-19

## Contact Us

 [www.muslimwarmemorial.org](http://www.muslimwarmemorial.org)

 020 8882 0227

 [mail@muslimwarmemorial.org](mailto:mail@muslimwarmemorial.org)

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