

The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy (War, Culture and Society)

By Gajendra Singh

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In the two World Wars, hundreds of thousands of Indian sepoys were mobilized, recruited and shipped overseas to fight for the British Crown. The Indian Army was the chief Imperial reserve for an empire under threat. But how did those sepoys understand and explain their own war experiences and indeed themselves through that experience? How much did their testimonies realise and reflect their own fragmented identities as both colonial subjects and imperial policemen?

The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars draws upon the accounts of Indian combatants to explore how they came to terms with the conflicts. In thematic chapters, Gajendra Singh traces the evolution of military identities under the British Raj and considers how those identities became embattled in the praxis of soldiers' war testimonies – chiefly letters, depositions and interrogations. It becomes a story of mutiny and obedience; of horror, loss and silence. This book tells that story and is an important contribution to histories of the British Empire, South Asia and the two World Wars.

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The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy (War, Culture and Society) By Gajendra Singh Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4929033 in Books
- Published on: 2015-07-30
- Released on: 2015-07-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.21" h x .64" w x 6.14" l, 1.05 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 312 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“The book is a breakthrough in the historiography of Indian armed forces, for its tone, approach, methodology and contents are unique. The author deserves praise for his innovative reading of the sources, and with this book he has successfully filled a long-standing gap in the historiography of the Indian armed forces.” ?*Reviews in History*

“Singh's brave attempt to uncover the thinking patterns of the jawans has been successful to a great extent . . . *Between Self and Sepoy* succeeds in opening up a new vista as regards the mental outlook of the Indian colonial soldiery.” ?*Journal for the Society for Army Research 92*

“An important addition in the study of the colonial Indian armed forces since it goes beyond the usual colonial archives to capture and decipher often unheard voices in military history. … Singh deserves compliments for this very interesting book.” - *Itinerario*

About the Author
Gajendra Singh is AHRC Early Career Fellow at the University of Oxford, UK, and Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of Defence Studies at King's College London, UK.

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