

**COMPREHENSION****INDIANS' DARING FEATS BY DONALD A. MACKENZIE****SECTION I**

WHEN the Germans first heard that Indian soldiers were to take part in the great war they spoke with contempt regarding them. But it was not long before they changed their minds. Our fellow-subjects of Empire  
5 from ancient India are magnificent fighting-men. Here is a vivid description by a German soldier of an attack they made on one occasion on the German trenches:



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"With fearful shouting, in comparison with which our hurrahs are like the whining of a baby, thousands of those brown forms rushed upon us as  
10 suddenly as if they were shot out of a fog, so that at first we were completely taken by surprise. At 100 metres (108 yards) we opened a destructive fire, which mowed down hundreds; but in spite of that the others advanced, springing forward like cats and surmounting obstacles with unexampled agility.

"In no time they were in our trenches, and truly these brown enemies were not to be despised.  
15 With butt-ends, bayonets, swords, and daggers we fought each other, and we had bitter hard work—which, however, was lightened by reinforcements, which arrived quickly—before we drove the fellows out of the trenches."

Soon after the Indians arrived at the front the Germans attempted to play tricks on them, so as to cause confusion in their lines. One night a crafty soldier of the Kaiser, who could speak  
20 English, attired himself in the uniform of a **Gurkha** officer and crept towards a trench occupied by a Gurkha regiment. Then he stood up in the faint moonlight and said, pretending to deliver a message from a superior officer: "The Gurkhas are to move farther up the trench. Another Gurkha contingent is coming along."

Evidently the Germans had plotted to make a night attack. If they could get the Indians to  
25 move they would be able to seize part of the trench without opposition.

An officer who heard the order was puzzled by it, so he asked the stranger: "Who are you, and where do you come from?"

The only answer he received was a repetition of the order to move his men along the trench. This aroused his suspicions. Before obeying the command he thought it best to make sure  
30 that it was genuine. So he said to the disguised German: "Answer me at once. If you are a Gurkha, tell me by what boat you came across."

This was a question the stranger could not answer. He was completely outwitted, and, turning quickly, at once ran away. As he did so the Gurkhas opened fire and brought him down. His body was riddled with bullets.

Glossary

**Gurkha** - a soldier from Nepal in the Indian army. They were famous for being very good fighters.

## SECTION 2

The story of another night attack made by Indians is at once as amusing as it is wonderful. The French and British troops had captured a village in southern Belgium, and the Germans occupied a wood in front of it. After a day of stiff fighting darkness fell, leaving both sides almost equally strong. The German leader, fearing a night attack, protected the wood, with a  
5 double line of sentinels, and his main force lay down to snatch a few hours of sleep.

A British and a French officer discussed the position with one another.

"A night attack would be hopeless," said the French officer.

"Not at all," the other answered. "I have just received word that an Indian regiment is coming up to reinforce us. The wood will soon be captured without much loss of life."

10 The Frenchman shook his head. "The Indians," he said, "will never get near the sentries without being observed." As he spoke, an orderly brought in word that the Indians had arrived, and were ready to go anywhere and do anything.

"Now," remarked the British officer to his ally, with a smile, "I will bet you a sovereign that the Indians will remove the double line of German sentinels, watchful although they may be."

15 "I'll bet you a sovereign they won't," laughed the Frenchman; "nor will I be sorry if you win it."

About eleven o'clock silence reigned in village and wood. All the Germans were sleeping soundly except their sentries, who kept a sharp lookout, listening intently in case an attack should be made. Then a number of Indians went out. The French officer who had taken up the bet waited beside his British friend, and gazed through the darkness towards the wood.

20 But he neither heard nor saw anything unusual. There was no indication that an attack was in progress. The minutes went past, and seemed very long.

Then suddenly a frightful din was heard from the wood. A few shots were fired, and one or two cries of alarm rang through the air. But soon all was silent again, and the slumbering Germans were not awakened to go into action. What had happened? The French officer

25 looked at his companion and whispered: "Have the Indians failed?"

"Wait a little and you'll find out what has happened," answered the British officer. "I think I have won my bet."

Not long afterwards the Indians began to return. They came in two by two, carrying something between them. "They are bringing back their wounded," the French officer said.

30 But he was mistaken. What the Indians really brought back were the German sentries. They had caught thirty of them alive, and gagged and tied them up like sausages. Smiling, and showing their gleaming white teeth, the wonderful soldiers of India laid down on the ground before the British and French officers the German pickets who were supposed by their commander to be still guarding the wood. No one could resist the humorous aspect of the  
35 proceeding. The Frenchman promptly paid up his bet.

But no time was lost in taking advantage of the success achieved by the brave Indian warriors. A strong force crept swiftly towards the wood, and ere day dawned it was cleared of Germans. The losses sustained by the Allies were insignificant.