



## Honours, Titles and Decorations of Patiala State During 1<sup>st</sup> World War

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Salutes were fired when the ruler visited the Viceroy officially or in their own states on their birthdays, birth of a son and on the occasion of the Darbar. Everytime the Viceroy of India visited a state as a guest of the ruler, the Maharaja had to pay him an official visit, though he might be staying in the same palace where the Maharaja was residing and the Viceroy had to return the visit of the ruler and on both these occasions guns were fired 31 guns for the visit of the Viceroy and 21, 19, 15, 17, 13, 11 and 9 for the visit of the ruler according to the political status of the ruler<sup>2</sup>. The rulers with 21 gun salutes had special privileges and the ruler's status continued to be less privileged in accordance with the scale of salutes. A ruler enjoying 21 guns would receive the Viceroy of India at the door of the drawing room of his palace when he was paying a visit to the state, while the rulers of 19 gun salutes would meet the Viceroy at the porch and received him as soon as he alighted from royal carriage. This distinction was prevalent in almost all the ceremonies which the Viceroy attended. The rulers with 9 gun salutes had to go several miles out to receive the Viceroy, while the rulers with lesser number of salutes met the Viceroy at the boundary of their state's territory and escorted him to his palace.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these gun salutes, titles, medals and honours were awarded to the Maharajas for their loyalty. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was the highly decorated Maharaja among the Indian Princes. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh had been decorated by the British Empire with G.C.S.I. (1921), GCIE (1911), and GBE, i.e. Grand Cross of the Star of India, Grand Cross of the Indian Empire and Grand Cross of the British Empire, FRGS, FZS, MRAS, FRCI, LLD, the highest honours offer to a ruling Prince.<sup>4</sup> In addition to these Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was awarded with Lieut-General H.H. Farzand-i-Khas-i-Daulat-i-Inglishia Mansur-i-Zaman Amir-ul-umra Maharajadhiraj Raj Rajeshwar Yadu Vanshavatans Bhatti Kul Bhushan Shree Maharaja-i-Rajgan ia-i-Raigan Maharaja Sir Bhupinder Singh Mohinder Bahadur Maharaja Dhiraj. Ruling Prince of Tndia Patiala State and one of the ruling Princes of India, Chancellor (1926-30); Hon. Col. Patiala Infantry and an Hon. Lieut Genl. In the army; Member Imperial War Cabinet (1918) Hon. A.D.C. to the King from 1922; represented India at League of Nations Assembly at Geneva 1925; served with Indian Expedition Force during Great War 1914-18 on staff in France, Belgium, Italy, Palestine and received the following decorations.

- Grand Cordon of the order Leopold
- Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour, France,
- Grand Cross of the order of the crown of Italy
- Grand Cordon of the order of the crown of Roumania
- Grand Cordon of the order of the Nile
- Grand Cross of the order of St. Saviour of Greece (1926)
- Grand Cross of the order of St. Lazare
- Grand Cross of the order of St. Gregory the Great.

Maharani Victoria said once, "Maharaja Bhupin-

der Singh is my beloved son". Such types of high honours and decorations were received by the Maharaja from His Majesty the King of England and Emperor of India for his meritorious services which he had rendered not to the people of his own state and India, but to His Imperial Majesty and British Empire. There was a serious trouble when the ruling Princes of India entertained the Earl of Willingdon and the Countess at a banquet given at the hotel imperial New Delhi, on 18th April, 1936, Dewan Jarmani Dass was in charge of the arrangements for this banquet by His Highness the chancellor of the chamber of Princes.<sup>5</sup> Dewan Jarmani Dass made a table plan and it was necessary that the table plan should be approved by the Viceroy of India. Dewan had given precedence to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala over Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner, though both enjoyed 19 salutes. As soon as Maharaja Ganga Singh saw the table plan he got angry and went straight to the Earl of Willingdon to solve this tangle who called Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and Dewan Jarmani Dass. After heated discussions and arguments on both sides and finding that both the Maharajas were at fault, the Viceroy decided that both the rulers should not sit on the main table but should sit at the side tables. The table plan was changed to the disappointment of both the rulers.<sup>6</sup>

Brigadier General Reginald Dyer had killed 379 unarmed men at Jallian Wala Bagh in Amritsar on 13 April, 1919. It is among the blackest episodes in the history of British Empire. It was cold blooded murder by a callous, conceited, narrow-minded unimaginative man, who should have been court martialled and dismissed. Instead he was lionised and a fund was raised for him from England. In spite of Martial Law, disturbances took place in various parts of Punjab. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh gave full support to the Lt. Governor 'O' Dwyer, acknowledged this in his autobiography. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was not alone. All other Punjab Princes did the same servile loyalty of this kind did not do the princely order any good. Even Churchill condemned the Jallianwala Bagh killings. But not one Indian ruler. The order was committed to taking orders from their imperial Masters.<sup>7</sup>

The rulers struggled with each other in canvassing for honours and decorations from the King Emperor and used all means to secure from them and thus the political department and the Viceroy of India played havoc with the whims and feelings of the rulers. Whenever a ruler pleased the officer of the political department by entertainment, receptions or by other means, salutes were raised. Sometimes when a political officer found that it would upset the whole cadre of rulers by raising the salutes of a state they favoured their favourite rulers.<sup>8</sup>

Many plans were formulated how to please the King Emperor, the Viceroy and the Political Agents by the rulers. On many occasions, the rulers surrendered their dignity and self respect in pursuit of gaining and increase in their salutes and receiving decorations and special privileges.<sup>9</sup>

## REFERENCES

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