



BATTLE OF SARAGARHI: HISTORY

NEWS: Minister Baljit Kaur unveils Battle of Saragarhi Memorial a tribute to heroic sikh soldiers.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The Punjab government has inaugurated the Battle of Saragarhi Memorial at Gurdwara Saragarhi Sahib in Ferozepur Cantonment to honor the bravery of 21 Sikh soldiers who fought against Afghan tribesmen. The memorial includes a museum with artefacts and aims to inspire future generations while boosting tourism and economic growth in Punjab.

Date and Occasion: September 12, 1897, marks the Battle of Saragarhi, one of the greatest last stands in military history.

Participants:

- 21 soldiers of the **36th Sikh Regiment** (now 4 Sikh), led by **Havildar Ishar Singh**.
- They faced over **8,000 Afridi and Orakzai tribal militants**.

Importance of Saragarhi:

- Saragarhi was a **communication post** between two British forts, **Fort Lockhart** and **Fort Gulistan** (in modern-day Pakistan).
- On that day, only 21 Sikh soldiers and a non-combatant, **Daad**, defended the post.

Challenges:

- The Sikhs were **heavily outnumbered**.
- They had limited ammunition (400 rounds per man).
- Communication with the forts was cut off, leaving the soldiers isolated.

A shining moment in Indian military history, the **Battle of Saragarhi** took place on September 12, 1897

THE FORGOTTEN BATTLE

Fought between 21 soldiers of the 36th Sikhs - now 4th Battalion of the Sikh Regiment - & 10,000 Afghan tribesmen

Saragarhi was a post midway between Fort Gulistan & Fort Lockhart in the Hindukush mountains, in NWFP, Pakistan	Total casualties on the Afghan side: 600 dead	The day is commemorated as the Regimental Battle Honours Day by the Sikh Regiment
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All 21 Indian soldiers were awarded the Indian Order of Merit

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The Battle:

- The soldiers fought for **seven hours**, killed 200 militants, and injured 600.
- **Sepoy Gurmukh Singh**, the signalman, continued to send messages during the battle and fought until the last moment.

Havildar Ishar Singh:

- A brave and maverick leader, loved by his men, known for his rebellious nature but unparalleled courage.

Outcome:

- All 21 soldiers died in battle, but their bravery became legendary.

Recognition:

- The soldiers were awarded the **Indian Order of Merit** (posthumously) by **Queen Victoria**.
- The Punjab government declared **Saragarhi Day** on September 12 as a holiday in 2017.

Memorial:

- An obelisk was built at Saragarhi by the British using the fort's burnt bricks to honor the martyrs.

Source : <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/battle-of-saragarhi-21-sikhs-stood-against-10000-afghans-2598570-2024-09-12>