



Primer: Burial Ceremony of Two WW-I Martyred Indian Army Soldiers on 12 Nov at Military Cemetery, La Gorgue, France

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On 20th Sep 2016, during an excavation work on southern side of the village of Richebourg near Laventie Military Cemetery approximately 230 Kms away from Paris, two human remains were found. On examining their belongings, they were identified as casualties of 39th ROYAL GARHWAL RIFLES. The office of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWWGC), which is curator of the graves of these unsung heroes, in consultation with the French Government and the Indian Embassy in France decided to hold a burial ceremony at Laventie Military Cemetery, with full military honours for these martyrs alongside the Annual Memorial Service to commemorate the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in France and Belgium. On behalf of the Indian Army, a delegation comprising of the Commandant and the Subedar Major of the GARHWAL RIFLES Regimental Centre, two bagpipers from the GARHWAL RIFLES Regimental Pipe band and Colonel Nitin Negi, grandson of late Naik Darwan Singh Negi, Victoria Cross, the gallant hero in the battle of Festubert, were nominated to attend the Ceremony. In a symbolic gesture the soil from the graves of these soldiers would be brought back to their homeland.

During World War I, the GARHWAL Brigade comprising of 1st/39th and 2nd /39th ROYAL GARHWAL RIFLES showed unparalleled bravery in those treacherous trenches of France and Flanders. The British and the Indian soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder and attained martyrdom in the call of duty. The GARHWAL Brigade earned six Battle Honours and two Victoria Cross in France and Flanders Theatre.

On the solemn occasion, homage will also be paid to the martyrs of Indian Meerut Division at Nueve Chapelle War Memorial by laying wreaths on behalf of the Chief of the Army Staff, Indian Army by Brigadier Indrajit Chatterjee, Commandant and Subedar Major Trilok Singh Negi of the GARHWAL RIFLES Regimental Centre.

Col Aman Anand PRO (Army)

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