Excerpt from Lions of a Great War from The American Sikh Association

You may not have heard of our association before but we represent thousands of American Sikhs. We are:

· Very proud of our religion and culture;

· We are also proud to be American citizens, sharing in the destiny of our great nation marching forward in the world as a beacon of liberty to all peoples.

However, many Americans and indeed very few American Sikhs know anything about how American Sikhs fought for freedom during World War One.

· In 1913 our home country of India was in darkness, oppressed and exploited by the mighty British Empire.

· Yet many Sikh migrants to the United States at that time shared the same dream of an independent India free from British rule where all Indians, whatever their caste or religion could be equal citizens.

These heroic Sikhs, following in the finest traditions of Sikhs down the centuries of resisting oppression and persecution, took up arms to free their country.

· They formed the Ghadar Party which campaigned for Indian independence throughout World War One.

· Thousands of its members, American Sikhs among them, risked everything by returning to India in secret to win over their fellow Indians to their cause.

· Just like the first Americans who started their revolution against the British Crown in 1776, American Sikhs faced betrayal and capture, some were imprisoned and some martyred.

· What they did was a shining example to their fellow Indians.

India finally did win its independence in 1947 and the governments of modern India have frequently honoured the heroic martyrs of the Ghadar movement.

We are planning a touring exhibition about the Ghadar movement and World War One which will visit different gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) in many different US cities and we also hope to display our panels in city and town halls. Through the exhibition we aim to:

· make American Sikhs aware and proud of their shared Ghadar heritage;

· make Americans aware of, and proud of, the Ghadar movement’s contribution to freeing India from British rule.

As a way of testing your design skills we would like you to write and design an exhibition panel dealing with the Sikh soldiers who mistakenly fought in World War One for the British-Indian Army. This forms part of the exhibition on the Ghadar movement because it was these soldiers that Ghadar members were trying to convert to the cause of Indian independence.