

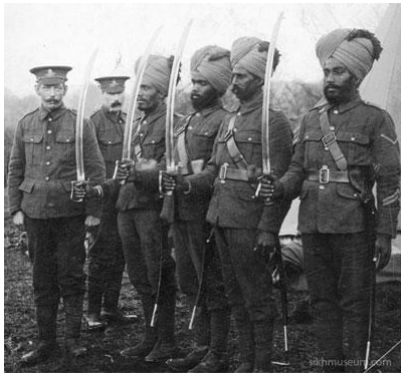


# Private Buckam Singh: The Forgotten Hero Who Became a Canadian Legend

When we think about Canada's soldiers in the First World War, we often picture rows of young men in brown uniforms standing in muddy fields far away from home. What we don't always realize is that some of those brave soldiers were newcomers to Canada, people who had come from far-off lands to start new lives and who still chose to serve their new country.

One of those remarkable heroes was Private Buckam Singh, a young Sikh man from Punjab, India, whose story was nearly lost to time, until a historian uncovered it decades later.

## A Journey from Punjab to Canada



Buckam Singh was born in 1893 in a small village called Mahilpur, in Punjab, India. When he was only 14 years old, he left his home and traveled across the world to Canada. He first lived in British Columbia and later moved to Ontario, where he worked on farms.

Life for immigrants from India at that time was very difficult. Canada had strict immigration laws, and people from Asia often faced racism and unfair treatment. But Buckam Singh worked hard and built a life for himself, showing great courage and determination.

## Serving in the First World War

In 1915, when the First World War was raging across Europe, Buckam Singh joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force, the group of Canadian soldiers who fought alongside Britain and its allies. He was only in his early twenties.

Buckam Singh became part of the 20th Canadian Infantry Battalion and was sent to fight in the dangerous battlefields of Flanders, Belgium. There, he showed extraordinary bravery but was wounded twice in battle. After being injured, he was treated in a hospital by Dr. John McCrae, the famous Canadian doctor who wrote the poem "*In Flanders Fields*."

## **A Life Cut Short**

While recovering from his wounds, Buckam Singh became very ill with tuberculosis, a serious disease at that time. He was brought back to Canada for treatment, but sadly, he passed away in 1919 in a military hospital in Kitchener, Ontario. He was only 25 years old.

Buckam Singh was buried at Mount Hope Cemetery in Kitchener. His resting place is now known as the only First World War Sikh Canadian soldier's military grave in Canada. For many decades, his story was forgotten, his name missing from history books, until one man made a life-changing discovery.



## **The Forgotten Grave and the Historian Who Found It**

Many years later, a Canadian historian named Sandeep Singh Brar came across a war medal for sale in England. The medal had the name Private Buckam Singh on it. Curious about who this soldier was, Sandeep Brar began researching the name. He searched archives, military records, and old newspapers to learn

more.

His research led him to Kitchener, Ontario, where he discovered Buckam Singh's grave, which had been nearly forgotten for a very long time. This discovery did more than reveal the life of one soldier — it opened a hidden chapter of Canadian history. It showed that Sikh Canadians had served bravely in the First World War, even though their stories were not widely known. Thanks to Sandeep Brar's dedication, the country now honours Private Buckam Singh, and his gravesite has become a place of remembrance and respect.

## **Honouring His Memory**

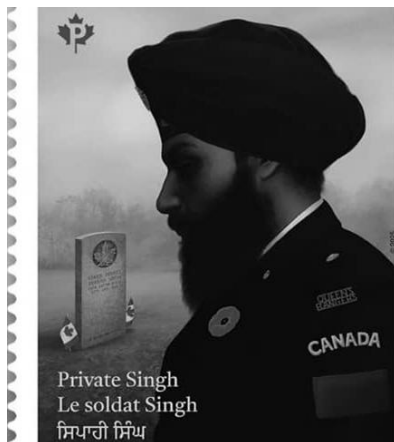
Today, every November, people gather at his grave in Kitchener for the Sikh Remembrance Day Ceremony. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces, veterans, families, and students attend to honour not only Buckam Singh but also all Sikh Canadians who have served in the military.

A lasting tribute to his life is the Private Buckam Singh Public School in Brampton, Ontario. The school proudly carries his name, reminding students every day that courage, sacrifice, and inclusion are at the heart of Canada's story. Students from the school often visit his grave during Remembrance Day to lay wreaths and reflect on the example he set.



## **“Private Singh” — A Stamp to Remember**

In November 2025, Canada Post released a special postage stamp called “Private Singh” to honour Sikh soldiers who have served in the Canadian military. The stamp was issued just before Remembrance Day to help Canadians remember the courage and sacrifices of Sikh men and women in uniform.



More than a hundred years ago, during the First World War, only a few Sikh Canadians were allowed to join the army because of unfair rules and racism. Even so, they proudly served Canada, and this stamp recognizes their strength, bravery, and dedication over the past century.

The design of the stamp shows a Sikh soldier wearing a Canadian military uniform, standing respectfully to honour the fallen. The name “Private Singh” doesn’t represent one person; it stands for all Sikh soldiers who have served Canada in times of war and peace. It reminds us that being

Sikh and being Canadian are both important parts of who these soldiers were, and that their contributions deserve to be remembered.

This stamp is part of Canada’s effort to make sure that everyone’s stories are included in our history. It teaches us about the diversity of those who fought for peace and freedom. By releasing the “Private Singh” stamp, Canada is showing appreciation for Sikh Canadians and their role in protecting the country, helping all Canadians learn about and celebrate this proud part of our shared history.

## **Why His Story Matters Today**

Private Buckam Singh’s story teaches us that heroes come from many backgrounds, cultures, and faiths. At a time when he and other immigrants faced unfair treatment in

Canada, he still stepped forward to serve the country he called home. His bravery and faith show that true courage knows no boundaries of race or religion.

By remembering him, Canadians celebrate not only a soldier's bravery but also the diversity that strengthens our nation. His life reminds us that every act of service — big or small — helps shape the story of who we are.

## **In the End**

Private Buckam Singh was more than just a soldier. He was a pioneer, a believer, and a proud Sikh Canadian who fought for freedom and justice. Though he died young, his memory continues to live on — in our classrooms, at his gravesite, and in the school that bears his name.

When we wear a poppy on Remembrance Day, we can also think of Private Buckam Singh, the young Sikh boy from Punjab who journeyed across the world, fought with courage, and became a symbol of equality, honour, and hope for generations to come.

### **Please answer the following questions in complete sentences**

1. Who was Private Buckam Singh, and where was he originally from? **Private Buckam Singh was a Sikh soldier who fought for Canada during the First World War. He was originally from a small village called Mahilpur in Punjab, India.**
2. What challenges did Buckam Singh face when he first came to Canada? **When Buckam Singh arrived in Canada, life was very difficult for immigrants from India. Canada had strict immigration laws, and people from Asia often faced racism and unfair treatment. Despite this, he worked hard and showed great determination.**
3. How did historian Sandeep Singh Brar help bring Buckam Singh's story back to life? **Many years later, historian Sandeep Singh Brar found a war medal with Buckam Singh's name on it and started researching him. His work led to the discovery of Buckam Singh's forgotten grave in Kitchener, Ontario, which helped Canadians learn about the contributions of Sikh soldiers in World War I.**
4. What does the "Private Singh" postage stamp represent, and why was it created? **The stamp, released by Canada Post in November 2025, honours all Sikh soldiers who served in the Canadian military. It shows a Sikh soldier in uniform and symbolizes bravery, equality, and the importance of remembering the contributions of Sikh Canadians throughout history.**