

Australia's Sikh Heritage



*Man Mohan Singh*

# HONOUR & DUTY

Manmohan Singh  
1905-1942

BROOME AIR RAIDS



AUSTRALIAN SIKH HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

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*Right:  
Flying Officer Manmohan Singh 1905 - 1942  
Died in Broome, Western Australia on 3 March 1942  
One of the first Sikh pilots. British Indian Air Force*



## How did a Rawalpindi (present-day Pakistan) born boy come to breathe his last on 3 March 1942 on the beaches of Western Australia?

At the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Manmohan Singh was selected leader of a British Indian Air Force batch of pilots sent to England for training and active duty.

While studying and training in England Manmohan Singh was known to have a cold shower every morning and not to eat anything until he had recited the Sikh morning prayer of *Japji Sahib*.

As the oldest of the group he was affectionately known as *Chachaji* (Punjabi for Uncle).

During the war, Manmohan Singh first commanded a Sunderland flying boat with the RAF Coastal Command, hunting submarines during the battle for the Atlantic. He was later promoted to flying officer and given the command of a Catalina flying boat in the No. 205 squadron for operations in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Having suffered heavy losses during operations to locate Japanese invasion fleets, No. 205 squadron withdrew from Singapore and retired to Australia.

The flying boats arrived at Broome on the morning of 3 March 1942. At 9:50am, a Japanese air attack consisting of nine Mitsubishi Zeros destroyed all fifteen flying boats still on the water in Broome harbour. Manmohan Singh was in his Catalina at the time the attack occurred.

Manmohan Singh died far away from his homeland however he has not been forgotten by Australia, his final resting place.

Manmohan Singh is commemorated at the Broome Memorial and in Darwin as part of the 'Memorial Wall to the Allied Dead of World War II in Northern Australia'.

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