

Australia's Sikh Heritage



SIKH ANZACS



Private Saran Singh
1883 - 1917

**BATTLE OF MESSINES
FLANDERS, BELGIUM**

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Private Saran Singh

43rd Infantry Battalion
Service Number: 2255

How did a Sikh from Jandiala, Punjab enlist in the Australian Imperial Forces and end up dying in the Battle of Messines in Belgium on 10 June 1917?

Saran Singh was one of six sons of Sardar Kishan Singh Zaildar of Jandiala Manjki in District Jalandhar, Punjab, India. His family's clan name was 'Johal' and he was married to Partap Kaur from the village Chhokran of District Jalandhar. Saran Singh had no children.

Saran Singh was one of the 19 Sikhs that enlisted as Anzacs in World War One and one of five Sikhs living in South Australia. His fellow South Australian Sikh Anzacs were Desanda Singh, Ganessa Singh, Juwan Singh and Sirdar Singh. Upon enlistment Saran Singh was 33 years old.

Private Saran Singh, Ganessa Singh and Juwan Singh lived in Maggea, which is in the Murray Mallee area of South Australia, about 35 km south of Waikere. Ganessa Singh and Saran Singh farmed together on a piece of land Ganessa Singh was allotted in the Hundred of Bakara (Section 9) on February 1910.

The Karoonda to Waikerie railway line was opened in 1914, and the towns of Maggea, Mantung and Mercunda are

small towns along the railway line about 12km apart. At the time Saran Singh resided in this area, Maggea would have been considered a very remote area of South Australia.

On 15 May 1916 Saran Singh enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in Adelaide. On 12 August 1916, he boarded the HMAT A70 'Ballarat' for the UK.

He initially joined the 50th Infantry Battalion. However, due to sickness, when he left the UK for the battle front he was placed in the 43rd Infantry Battalion. Private Saran Singh saw action in December 1916, and in May and June 1917 in France and Belgium.

On 10 June 1917 Private Saran Singh was killed in action in the allied attacks on Messines Ridge, Flanders, Belgium. Partap Kaur received Saran Singh's British War and Victory medals posthumously.

A hundred years later, Australians remember all of those that sacrificed their lives for our future.

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