

THE PROPOSED AUSTRALIAN SIKH REGIMENT

Did you know:

- At least 19 Sikhs enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZE) in WWI.
- Approx 1.2 million Indians volunteered to fight for the British Indian Army in WWI, making them the largest volunteer army in the Great War. While Sikhs only make up 2% of India's population, 22% of the British Indian Army were Sikhs.
- In World War I and II, 83,005 Sikhs were killed and 109,045 wounded fighting for the allied forces.
- Sikhs continue to serve proudly in the Australian Defence Force today.



Sikh soldier holding the Australian Flag in his right hand, and a team of three tethered horses in his left.



Australian Sikh Heritage

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Whilst research continues, the information presented in this brochure is current as at 24 March 2015.

Cover Image: 21st Indian Battery Guard. Photograph taken in 1915 by Sergeant Charles Alexander Masters while on active service with the AIF in Gallipoli.



Sikh Anzacs



The Forgotten Sikh Anzacs

As Sikhs have been in Australia for nearly 200 years, it should come as no surprise to learn that the following Sikhs were enlisted as Anzacs in WWI:

Name	Age	Battalion	Enlistment	Trade	Prior service - British Indian Army	Origin
Amah Singh	34	29th Btn	Melbourne, VIC	Seaman	-	Cornwall, UK
Basant Singh	38	-	Foster, VIC	-	-	Hoshiarpur, PB
Davy Singh	34	33rd Btn	Inverell, NSW	Hawker	-	Lahore, India
Desanda Singh	38	3rd Light Horse	Adelaide, SA	Farmer	-	Sultanpur Lodhi, PB
Ganessa Singh	37	10th Btn	Adelaide, SA	Farmer	-	Nawashaar, PB
Goodger Singh	40	-	Geraldton, WA	Contractor	-	PB
Gurbachan Singh	40	3rd & 56th Btn	Sydney, NSW	Dealer	Tirah & Chitral Campaign, Boer War	Jandiala, PB
Hazara Singh	33	13th Btn	Sydney, NSW	Store-Keeper	32nd Sikhs Afghanistan, Waziristan	Nawashaar, PB
Jagt Singh	26	3rd WMR	Trentham, NZ	Sawmill Hand	5 yrs 10 mths, 20th Deccan Horse	Ludhiana, PB
Johar Singh	28	10th Btn	Melbourne, VIC	Contractor	-	Angledoon, QLD
Juwan Singh	41	3rd Light Horse	Adelaide, SA	Horse Dealer	-	Ladhran, PB
Linna Singh	45	44th Btn	Perth, WA	Traveller	6 yrs 7 mths, British Indian Army	PB
Nundah Singh	30	-	Sydney, NSW	Farmer	14 Punjab Lancers	Bungah, PB
Sarn Singh	33	50th Btn	Adelaide, SA	Farmer	-	Jundala, PB
Sham Singh	38	E Coy 14th Reinf.	Trentham, NZ	Labourer	-	Ferozepur, PB
Sirdar Singh	39	3rd Light Horse	Adelaide, SA	Merchant	4 yrs 7 mths, 16th Bengal Lancers	Doosanj, PB
Sunda Singh	35	-	Macksville, NSW	Farmer	-	-
Weer Singh	44	F Coy 14th Reinf.	Trentham, NZ	Labourer	British Forces in China	PB
Yaharra Singh	37	-	Horshams, VIC	Hawker	-	Jullundhar, PB
Note: Btn=Battalion, PB=Punjaab, India, WMR=Wellington Mounted Rifles, Reinf.=Reinforcements						



From the British Indian Army, no account of the Gallipoli campaign can ignore the contribution of the 14th Sikhs in the Third Battle of Krithia. On 4 June 1915 the 14th Sikh regiment was virtually wiped out, losing 379 men in one day's fighting. This group from the 14th Sikhs pose with a quiet determined look, all bearded save the young man on the left, probably still in his teens.

“Private Hazara Singh recently returned from the front and about to go back again.”



Photograph taken from the Saturday 24 November 1917 edition of “The Mirror” a newspaper in Sydney.

As shown in the picture above of Hazara Singh, the Sikh *dastaar/puggaree* (turban), a mandatory article of faith for Sikhs, replaced the Anzac slouch hat for those Sikhs that enlisted in the AIF. The turban denotes courage, compassion, honesty, equality and trust. As we learn more about these Sikh Anzacs and their stories, it becomes clear that these turbaned bearded Sikhs lived up to their name, fighting and dying together with their countrymen, as mates.



The Anzac slouch hat has a seven pleated cloth band that is called a ‘puggaree’. The puggaree is just one example of the great relationship between Sikhs and Australians that predates WWI.

All Sikh men share the last name “Singh” which translates to “lion” while Sikh women share the last name “Kaur” which translates to “princess.”