

## Social Studies, Geography & History

### The Sikh Heritage Museum of Canada - OESSTA

Grade 8, Strand B – Remembrance Day for Sikh Canadian soldiers

Students will examine Sikh Canadian soldiers discuss their **historical significance**.

Inquiry question: Does a settler group's initial experience in a country continue to frame their future experiences as Canadian citizens?

Learning Goals	Success Criteria
<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare their own schema to a primary source image of soldiers during WWI</li> <li>• Learn information in an article and use that information to communicate informational text for others</li> </ul>	<p>Students will know they are successful when they....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can communicate their description of a WWI soldier effectively</li> <li>• Analyze informational text and draw conclusions about that information</li> <li>• Ask effective questions about future learning</li> <li>• Contribute effectively in small groups</li> </ul>

Connections	
Inquiry Learning Goal:	Students will analyze informational text, create effective questions and create an effective way to communicate findings for informational purposes
Social Studies/ Historical Thinking Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical Significance</li> <li>• Historical Perspective</li> <li>• Continuity and Change</li> </ul>

#### **Materials:**

- Access to laptops/personal devices
- <http://www.sikhmuseum.com/buckam/flanders.html> (image of Sikh Canadians marching in France)
- <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sikh-canadians-in-the-first-world-war/>
- One chart per student for information about Buckam Singh
- Important information at end of lesson about WWI from different perspectives (including on-line resources and background information)

***Differentiation:***

- put the Canadian Encyclopedia article into google read and write to have the information read to student.
- Fill in chart in partners instead of independently
- Answer the three sections in google read and write
- Only have the first and third column

***Minds On:***

Close your eyes and imagine a soldier during WWI. Describe what they look like in point form.

Make a list of the descriptions on the board.

Q: Where do these descriptions come from? Where are you getting your images?

Show students the pictures of Sikhs marching in France and explain that this picture took place in 1914.

Q: What is this picture showing us?

Q: How does this compare to your original image of a Canadian soldier?

Minds On, Part 2: Use the series of photographs found in the Appendix of this lesson and have students analyze them as a group and record their observations. You could show them another Canadian soldier's gravestone as comparison.

**Action:** <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sikh-canadians-in-the-first-world-war/>

Have students go on this Canadian encyclopedia website and read about Buckam Singh, then fill in the chart provided.

<i><b>Buckam Singh and his contributions to WWI</b></i>		
What did the article tell me about Buckam Singh? How does it reflect <b>continuity and change</b> ?	What have I already learned about from other information I have learned? How does it connect to the information in this article?	What do I still need to know about Buckam Singh?

Ask students where they can find the information they need to complete their 3rd column and look to see if the information will be credible.

You could give students all of the links found in the Appendix section of the lesson, which all have to do with those Sikh soldiers who sacrificed their lives for our country, including Buckam Singh.

**Consolidation:** Have students brainstorm in small groups how we can share the information learned about Buckam Singh with others and discuss why this is **historically significant**.

**Sikh Heritage Museum of Canada connection:**

<http://www.sikhmuseum.com/buckam/flanders.html>

Plethora of websites found in the Appendix section about Sikh soldiers during WWI

Images at the end of the Index of the memorialization of Sikh Canadian soldiers.

**Extensions**

Follow up/extension: Create a board/display somewhere in your school where there is high traffic and have class decide how they are going to share what they have learned about the contributions that Sikh Canadians made in the early 1900s and what they had to endure from a society who didn't want them, reflecting continuity and change.

(Students may also want to include information about the other Sikh soldiers mentioned at the bottom of the Canadian encyclopedia article).

***Alternate extension:*** continue learning about the other Sikh soldiers that were named at the bottom of the Canadian encyclopedia article and create a class display in a public area of the school highlighting Sikh Canadians' contributions to WWI, including:

- Names of the soldiers
- Where they were born
- Where they passed away
- What battalion they were a part of during the war
- What that battalion did during the war
- Why we need to understand their contribution to WWI

***Alternate extension #2:*** The story of Hardit Singh Malik

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccrw-ZtnjCI> (His commander was Canadian flying ace William Barker VC and his best friend and fellow Flying Officer was Lester B Pearson)

<https://sikhchic.com/books/a-little-work-a-little-play-the-autobiography-of-hardit-singh-malik>

## Connecting Past and Present through Primary Source Analysis

**Primary Source: Image -**

<http://www.sikhmuseum.com/buckam/flanders.html>

**Appendix:**

<i>Buckam Singh and his contributions to WWI</i>		
What did the article tell me about Buckam Singh? How does it reflect <b>continuity and change</b> ?	What have I already learned about from other information I have learned? How does it connect to the information in this article?	What do I still need to know about Buckam Singh?

Many are not aware of the group of Sikh who enlisted to serve for Canada during WWI nor the fact that there are more Canadian Sikh War memorials in France than in Canada from WWI. This includes the grave headstones of Private Gouger Singh who was the first Sikh to enlist in Canada for WWI, and unfortunately the first Sikh to die in action on the western front in France. Private Lashman Singh who also died in action in France. From the group of Sikh Canadians that fought in WWI, eight served in England and France. Three of these men were wounded, two were killed in action.

**Private Gouger Singh (Goojar Singh)** was the first casualty. He was killed in action early in the war in the trenches near Kemmel, Belgium, just south of Ypres, in October 1915. He is buried in the La Laiterie Military Cemetery among 197 other Canadians, strangely, Private Gouger Singh's gravestone does not show the Canadian Maple Leaf, though his Canadian Battalion number is noted. The Sikh inscription is unusual for a Canadian gravestone. The Sikh script in Gurmukhi language reads: "God is one" and "Victory to God."

**Private Lashman (Laal) Singh** was killed in action late in the war, in October 1918, at or near the town of Bellaing, France where the Canadians were driving back the German army with ferocious, but costly, success that soon brought the War to an end. Private Lashman Singh was first buried in the churchyard at Bellaing. In the 1930s, his body was re-buried in the Arras Road Cemetery, near Roglincourt, France, along with over one thousand other First World War commonwealth soldiers. There is also a WWI memorial bearing Private Lashman Singh's name (L. Singh) in the town square in Bellaing, France.

Here are some good resources for WWI

### Canada

Attached is a letter of Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) Private Waryam Singh from WWI that was censored and then translated for archives and wrongly filed under the British Indian army files although he was Canadian. Also attached is a headstone request card for CEF Private Buckam Singh.

Also below is a link to the Attestation papers for the Sikh Soldiers fought for Canada in WWI

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/list.aspx?k=Surname%3a%22singh%22>

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/list.aspx?k=GivenName%3a%22santa%22>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/11/09/celebrating-sikh-soldiers-on-remembrance-day.html>

[https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/05/02/sikh\\_soldier\\_lays\\_at\\_rest\\_far\\_from\\_homeland\\_and\\_adopted\\_land.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/05/02/sikh_soldier_lays_at_rest_far_from_homeland_and_adopted_land.html)

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/soldiers-sikh-remembrance-day-1.3839312>

<http://ottawacitizen.com/storyline/meet-the-first-sikh-ceremonial-guard-standing-at-the-unknown-soldiers-tomb>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/harjit-sajjan-badass-canada-defence-minister-1.3304931>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/harjit-sajjan-badass-canada-defence-minister-1.3304931>

<http://shmc.ca/private-bukam-singh/>

<http://www.canadiansoldiersikhs.ca/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhW24MqDGTU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiIchoBxY9E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mswi99wZOR4>

### **As part of the British Commonwealth**

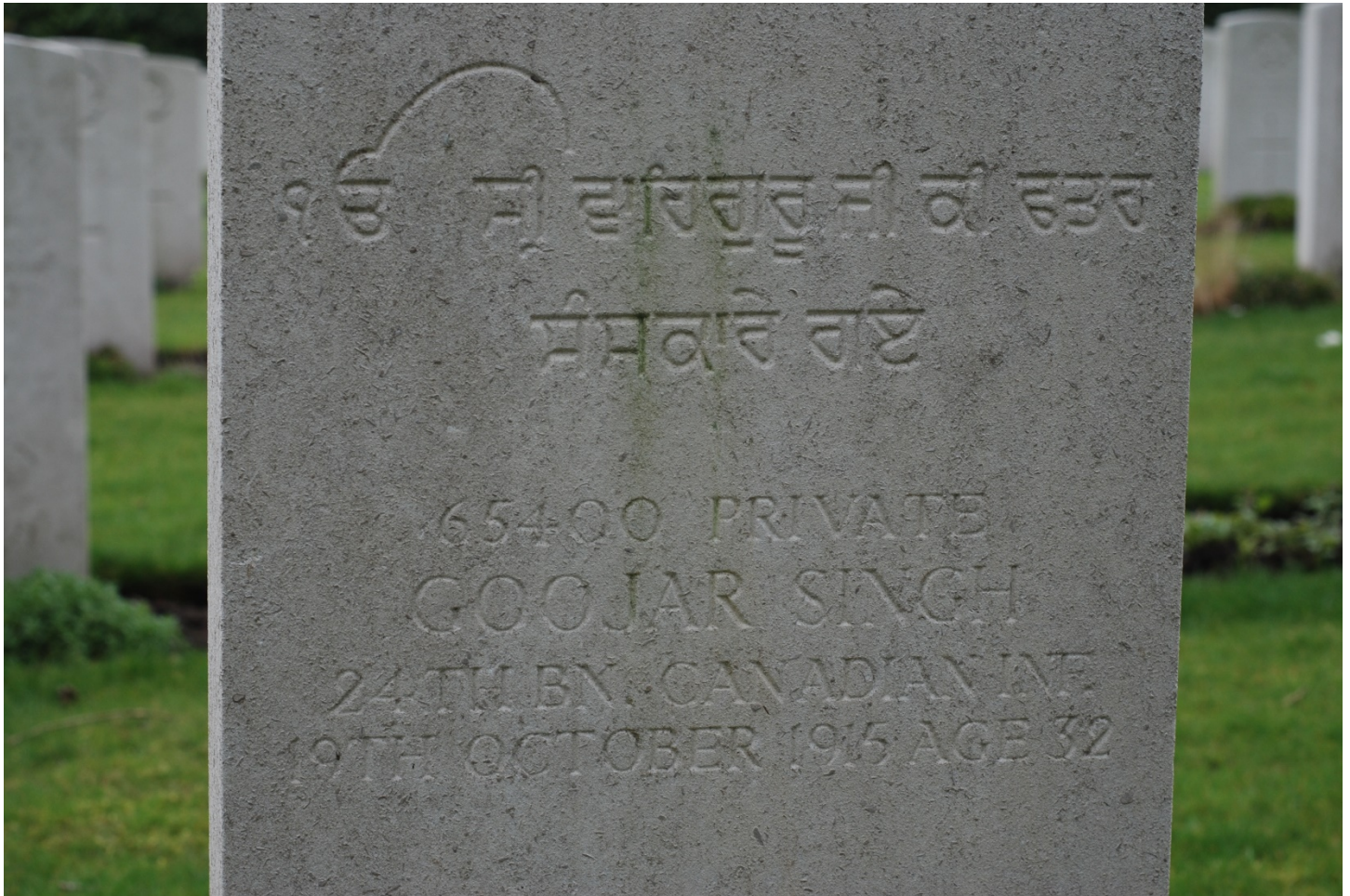
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0ck05givc4> (partial)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XIZDj9hiWc> (full)

### **Canada Related**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccrw-ZtnjCI> (His commander was Canadian flying ace William Barker VC and his best friend and fellow Flying Officer was Lester B Pearson)

[https://sikhchic.com/books/a\\_little\\_work\\_a\\_little\\_play\\_the\\_autobiography\\_of\\_hardit\\_singh\\_malik](https://sikhchic.com/books/a_little_work_a_little_play_the_autobiography_of_hardit_singh_malik)







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SIKH

From Private ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Singh, ~~C. Coy., 9th Platoon~~, 38th Battalion, <sup>alien /</sup> Canadian Expeditionary Force, France to ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~, Kapurthala, India (Gurmukhi dated the 23rd November, 1916) "I should like to tell you all about what happened on November 18th but I am not allowed to write. I can only give you some idea of what happened. On the 4th November there was a big fight, and much hand to hand fighting took place and many prisoners were taken. The dead were countless. Shells and bullets were falling like rain and one's body trembled to see what was going on. But when the order came to advance and take the enemy's trench it was wonderful how we all forgot the danger and were filled with extraordinary resolution. We went over like men walking in a procession at a Fair and shouting we seized the trench and took the enemy prisoners. I didn't think of our safety at all but felt that the Guru Maharaj was fighting in me. He is great and it is thanks to Him that I was able to do all I did. Pray to Him whenever you pray that He may deliver us all in such times of danger and bring us back again to you. When we took the trenches some of the enemy escaped and some were taken. The dead were countless. The bravery which we showed that day was the admiration of the British soldiers. After the fight they asked me how it was that I was so utterly regardless of danger."

## FOR REPLY.

(Please write clearly).

Date 18. 11. 1921.

Address *Pritam Kaur of Bhagwan Singh Gill*  
*Jamshar, District Tullundur, Punjab, India.*

(a) Verification and corrections.

*Inscription*  
~~*Bukhan Singh*~~ of Mahilpur, Punjab.

(b) Personal Inscription.

(c)

*Sat Sri Akal*

(d)

*English**no cross*

Relationship

*Wife*  
*Bukhan Singh* X

Signature

*Thumb impression*  
*of Pritam Kaur*

(Please write very clearly).



