

November 7, 2008

WWI Medal Discovery Reveals Story of Forgotten Sikh Canadian Hero

The story of one of the first Sikh Canadian WWI soldiers has been uncovered with the discovery of his Victory medal.

Sandeep Singh Brar an avid Sikh historian purchased the medal from a dealer in England and quickly realized its historical significance. The medal revealed a fascinating story of heroism and tragedy.

Buckam Singh came to B.C. from Punjab in 1907 at age 14 and eventually moved to Toronto in 1912/1913. He enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the spring of 1915. He's one of the earliest known Sikhs living in Ontario at the time as well as one of only 9 Sikhs that we know of that served with Canadian troops in WWI, says Singh Brar.

Private Buckam Singh served with the 20th Canadian Infantry Battalion in the battlefields of Flanders during 1916. He's a genuine Canadian hero because not only did he serve, but he was wounded twice in two separate battles says Singh Brar. One of the interesting discoveries included the fact that after being shot Private Buckam Singh received treatment at a hospital run by one of Canada's most famous soldier poets the Doctor Lt. Colonel John McCrae.

While recovering from his wounds in England Private Buckam Singh contracted tuberculosis and spent his final days in a Kitchener Ontario military hospital, dying at age 25 in 1919. His grave in Kitchener Ontario is the only known WWI Sikh Canadian Soldier's grave in Canada. It's sad that he never got to see his family again and died forgotten, but it is exciting that his heroic story is now being reclaimed and celebrated including an online exhibit at the sikhmuseum.com website and a wreath laying ceremony at the gravesite on Remembrance Day says Singh Brar.

Contact

Sandeep Singh Brar
Sikhmuseum.com Curator

Email: sandeep@sikhs.org
Website: www.sikhmuseum.com