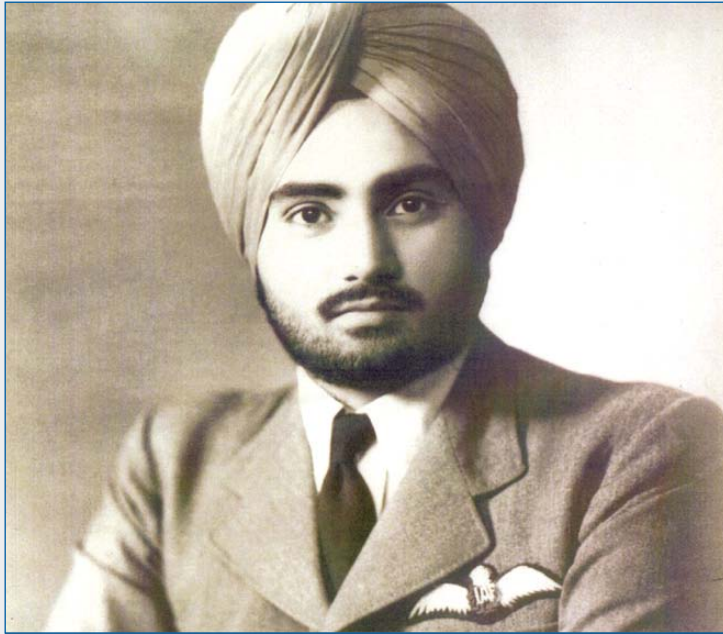


The Quintessential Aviator

Celebrating the Century of Dalip Singh Majithia



The Editors of Vayu are privileged to know Dalip Singh Majithia, that epitome of a gentlemen aviator whose total recall of seminal events in the last century is not only remarkable but a blessing for aviation historians in India – and the world! His personal flying log books have been generously handed over by him to the IAF Museum at Delhi which, one hopes, will be preserved not only for posterity but serve as an inspiration for today's and tomorrow's aviators.

This article is based on many years of knowing Dalip Singh Majithia as also viewing some of his interviews – and blurred reproduction of his precious log books, the originals now closeted with the Indian Air Force.

On 27 July 2020, Dalip Singh Majithia turned 100 years of age, the eldest, veteran Indian Air Force officer of the sub-continent extant. His is a story of faith, courage and adventure, joining the Indian Air Force in 1940 even as the Second World War was raging in Europe and the infant air arm was striving to expand.

After getting his wings, he flew a variety of obsolescent biplanes with which the Indian Air Force was then equipped, including the Wapiti, Hart and Audax, thereafter multi-engined Atlantas on maritime patrol in the Bay of Bengal, finally Hurricane fighter bombers, with which he went into action on the Burma front and later on watch and ward duties along the North West Frontier. After the Second World War was over, and serving in various staff duties, Dalip left the Air Force in August 1947 to join the family business – but continued his passion for flying! The saga of his continued romance with aviation is exemplified by his pioneering flight to the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal, landing at Kathmandu's parade ground on 23 April 1949 (see *Vayu Issue III/2010*).

Early Years

Dalip Singh Majithia was born at Simla on 27th July 1920 in a highly regarded family of the erstwhile undivided Punjab.

His grandfather was the venerable Sardar Bahadur Sardar Sir Sundar Singh Majithia who had schooled at the Aitchison College and Government College, both at Lahore.



Young Dalip Singh at Karachi Flying Club with Gypsy Moth in June 1940