

# Pushpindar Singh Chopra

Founder & Editor, **VAYU** Aerospace & Defence Review



**P**ushpindar Singh is internationally well-known for his research and writing on Indian aviation matters for over five decades, being regarded as virtual chronicler of India's aviation history and present times.

His 'Aircraft of the Indian Air Force 1933-73' became standard reference book on the IAF and was followed by an account of the Service on its Golden and then Diamond Jubilees. The definitive three-volume History of the Indian Air Force 'Himalayan Eagles' was officially released at the IAF's Platinum Jubilee in 2007.

His various publications include 'The Battle Axes', 'Fiz'aya', 'History of Aviation in India: Spanning the Century of Flight', 'Fly Navy', 'Diamonds in the Sky', 'Tigers in the Sky', 'Valiant to the Last', 'The Black

Archers', 'The Fighting Fourteen', 'On the Wings of Gold', 'Dragon Fire', 'First to the Last', 'The First Supersonics', 'Tusker Charge', 'Fly Navy' plus two dozen more on military aviation history subjects. He also wrote many books on other matters including a biography of his late father Major General Mohinder Singh Chopra (1947: A Soldier's Story), a book on 'Neuve Chapelle' & The Jullundur Brigade, 'Portrait of Courage: Century of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Sikh Regiment' amongst many others on varied topics.

He was the Founder-Editor of the Vayu Aerospace and Defence Review, now in its 47<sup>th</sup> year of publication and was Indian editor for the Air International, World Air Power Journal, Asian Defence Journal, Jane's Defence Weekly and Aviation Week

& Space Technology. During an earlier Farnborough Air Show, he was given a special award for his breaking news story on the Indian LCA programme from the Royal Aeronautical Society of the UK. In 2015, at the Aerospace Media Awards held at the Paris Air Show, he was awarded 'Lifetime Achievement Award' for Outstanding Contribution to Aviation Journalism'.

In the year 2000, he also started another magazine The Nishaan, a non-political journal on Sikh culture, history and heritage.

Indeed, Pushpindar Singh's writings on the Indian aviation and defence matters, impacting too on the international stage for over five decades, have inspired and encouraged generations of those who later joined the industry and are continuing to serve the profession with honour.



एयर चीफ मार्शल आर के एस भदौरिया  
पविसेमे अविसेमे वामे एडीसी  
*Air Chief Marshal R.K.S Bhadauria*  
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05 May 2021

Mrs Deepak Chopra  
E-52, Sujan Singh Park  
New Delhi - 110003

*Dear Mrs Deepak Chopra,*

1. Please accept my deepest condolences on the sad demise of your husband, Mr Pushpinder Singh Chopra. It is a tragic loss and we have you and your family in our thoughts during this hour of grief.
2. Mr Pushpinder Singh was a highly acclaimed aviation historian and commanded great respect in his field. Over the past several decades, his path-breaking research and accounts of the history of air power in India and abroad, made him an authority on a subject; which characteristically is both technology-intensive and fast-evolving. He left an indelible mark with his works and I, on behalf of the Indian Air Force, pay tribute to his life and his accomplishments.
3. In this hour of sorrow, my wife Asha joins me in offering our deepest sympathies to you and wish you a speedy recovery.

*In grief,*  
*Periyar*





## Encyclopedia of Indian aviation

**P**ushpinder ‘Pushy’ Singh Chopra. The name brings to mind a range of reference books scripting the aviation history of the subcontinent, capturing generations of aircraft flown, recording treasured history for posterity. It would not be an understatement to say that the work of Pushpinder Singh has been regularly used as official reference material by officers and airmen of all generations, looking to learn about the IAF’s past and its journey. A renowned aviation historian, Pushpinder Singh’s association with the IAF dates back to the period soon after the Indo-Pak war of 1965, when he interviewed aviators and IAF personnel in an effort to record the air operations as they happened, and also to refute enemy propaganda.

His write-ups and records of the air battles of 1965 are a valuable source of information for various authors who have written about the war. One recalls his article, ‘Laying the Sargodha ghost to rest’, in Vayu Aerospace Review in November 1985 as being a trailblazer amongst others, which led to debunking the myth of PAF’s claim of shooting down five IAF Hunters on 7 September 1965. In the numerous books he wrote on the IAF, starting from Aircraft of the Indian Air Force: 1933-1973, and the coffee table books of squadrons, one finds diligent professional research on facts, anecdotes, pictures from archives, summing up history in a nutshell, which

is something every official historian would aspire to deliver.

To converse with him was akin to engaging with a human encyclopedia of Indian aviation. It was perhaps for this reason that one mistook him for an Air Force veteran at many of the demi-official and social gatherings of the IAF that he was invited to. To his distinction, he published books on the occasions of IAF’s Golden Jubilee, Diamond Jubilee and Platinum Jubilee. The definitive three-volume magnum opus titled Himalayan Eagles: History of the Indian Air Force, written for the Platinum Jubilee in 2007, occupies pride of place in every Air Force library and

squadron crew room. His pioneering work, Vayu Aerospace Review, was one-of-its-kind aerospace journals when launched in 1974 and it continues to dominate readership amongst air warriors of today. The contribution of Pushpinder Singh towards recording the history and air wars of the IAF cannot be contained in a single article. He belonged to a rare category of passionate aviation enthusiasts, who of their own reckoning decided to become a part of the men and women in blue. We shall fondly remember him and treasure his works for future generations.

**Air Marshal Anil Chopra (Retd)**



*Air Marshal Anil Chopra (Retd) and Pushpinder Singh along with DRDO scientists at Dexexpo 2020*

# Farewell Pushpindar ‘Pushy’ Singh Chopra

The sudden passing away of Pushpindar, better known as ‘Pushy’ to all his friends, on 3 May, 2021 was most unexpected and shocking, to say the least. He was so full of life and energetic despite his age; running up the steps instead of taking the elevator, that I personally never expected him to succumb to corona virus. Pushy always lived up to his shortened name and pet name; gently pushing everyone around to get things done in a hurry, particularly in aviation and military matters, all with the good intent of getting the right message to all concerned quickly for the benefit of the armed forces with special reference to the IAF. His bi-monthly magazine, Vayu Aerospace and Defence Review, was the vehicle he largely used to convey all the news and views for which he was always in a hurry to get folks to write, debate and discuss but contribute. That is how he got professionals like Air Marshal Brijesh Jayal, Admiral Arun Prakash and Air Vice Marshal Cecil Parker and many others to regularly contribute to the magazine to make it that much richer. In the early days before the internet, this was one indigenous homegrown magazine that we all looked forward to for catching up with the latest in aviation. The other magazines like Aviation Week & Space Technology, Jane’s Defence and Air Clues et cetera were difficult to come by in Air Force libraries or prohibitively expensive to afford for individuals and, in any case, had a different and more western perspective.

I met Pushy a little late perhaps in 1988 when I was commanding 28 Squadron on the new MiG-29s in Poona. Pushy was obviously visiting and I got a call one afternoon from then Group Captain ‘Mike’ McMahon, commanding 6 Squadron on the base, that Pushy wanted to see me. Quite obviously, having heard of him and all that he had done for the Golden Jubilee of the IAF a few years before, I invited him home. He was with me in a jiffy and after gulping down the cup of tea that Malini made in a hurry, he said he wanted me to take him to the squadron and show him around. Once in the squadron, out came his camera and he clicked the MiG-29 from every possible outside angle including one with me in front of the aircraft. Cockpit photography then was a big NO-NO. We came back home to spend a little more time together and he borrowed a number of slides from me that I had personally clicked of the MiG-29 in various formations.

Those days, all my squadron pilots got lots of formation flying practice in every ferry flight instead of just doing boring straight and level navigation while I carried my Cannon with a zoom lens clicking pictures for the squadron. With his affable personality, our friendship thereafter just grew and every time I dropped in on him in Delhi or we met somewhere, he behaved as if he was meeting a long lost friend and was quickly into a conversation about aircraft and aviation. On a personal level, his wife, Deepak, and Pushy were great hosts whenever I visited their home and both just bowled you over with their warmth and hospitality. The added advantage of visiting him was also that often you met one of his international friends and aviation enthusiasts with something new to hear and learn from them.

On a professional level, there was no denying that Pushy was a veritable walking encyclopedia on aviation matters in general and military aviation in particular. He always regaled one with nuggets of new information as also some of his stories about the various important personalities he knew, nationally and internationally or what he had picked up from his visits to various shows abroad. From his father, who was a senior army man, he obviously inherited a lot of knowledge about various arms and services of the Army including many individual regiments and their history. His first publication as a young aviation buff in the 1970s, ‘Aircraft of the Indian Air Force’, is still something worth referring to even today for information on the early days of the IAF. I still have personal copies of many of his publications including the ‘Himalayan Eagles: History of the Indian Air Force’, a trilogy that was published on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IAF in 2007, ‘First and the last: 50 Years of the MiG-21 in the IAF’ co-authored with Air Marshal Phillip Rajkumar, the squadron histories of the First Supersonics, 28 Squadron and the one on 47 Squadron The Black Archers amongst some others. His collection of books, photographs and other memorabilia was like a treasure trove that I tried digging into every time I could while in Delhi.

With Pushy’s untimely passing away, the aviation community in India has lost one of its most vocal stalwarts and he will be sorely missed by all of us even remotely connected with aviation in India. Om shanti, our friend.

**Air Marshal Harish Masand (Retd)**







# He left his Nishaan

## Sardar Pushpinder Singh Chopra 1943–2021

**P**ushpinder Singh Chopra (1943–2021), a bundle of energy bubbling with ideas—it is hard to write about him in the past tense. Yet, I must, because he is no more, another victim to the invisible enemy that is Covid 19.

A decades-long friendship and association is hard to sum up in a few words. A bon vivant, who lived life well, Pushpinder was a warm host and had a tremendous zest for life.

A proud product of the Doon School, where he was School Captain, Pushpinder seemed to know everyone and had a talent for putting together people and projects that he felt needed to be done.

He had graduated from Government College, Chandigarh. He worked with Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co Ltd in Calcutta, and later with Rallis, where he quickly made a name for himself. However, he would leave it all to devote time to his first love, aviation. He also headed Daimler Benz Aerospace in India.

For over four decades, since 1966, he had been engaged in researching, recording, and writing on the Indian Air Force, focussed on its history from the foundations till the present, virtually becoming the historian-emeritus of India's air arm. His books and papers on strategic issues are well known, not so well known is his role in the well-deserved recognition of Marshal of the Indian Air Force Arjan Singh.

He was the founder-editor of the well-regarded journal 'Vayu Aerospace & Defence Review', which is in its 47th year of publication now. Avi and Anne Sodhi were an integral part of Vayu.

His passion for the aerospace world and his journal took him places, especially to various international air shows, at some of which 'Vayu' would go on to win awards.

He was always a phone call away whenever a journalist wanted to check a fact, and you could rely on him, as I often did, to have the correct

information on his fingertips. He also wrote books about the Indian Air Force, of which he was an unofficial historian. He co-authored 'The Indian Air Force and its Aircraft: I.A.F. Golden Jubilee, 1932–82, and wrote 'History of Aviation in India: Spanning the Century of Flight' (2003).

A project that brought him joy was '1947, A Soldier's Story'. It narrated his father's experiences while heading the Wagah border post at the time of Partition. Major General Mohinder Singh Chopra (then Brigadier) had left written notes that Pushpinder turned into a book.

Major General Mohinder Singh Chopra was a King's Commissioned Officer of the Indian Army. After retirement, he became India's Ambassador to the Philippines and Taipei (as Taiwan was known). Later, he was Director, National Institute of Sports, Patiala.

Pushpinder founded 'Nishaan Nagaara', to highlight Sikh issues and heritage in April 1999. The inaugural issue was released by Dr Manmohan Singh. My friends, Dr Inderjit Singh of New York and Bhayee Sikandar Singh, guided the magazine, which is seen on many a Sikh home.

Pushi, my friend, we will remember you fondly and miss you a lot. You left your Nishaan in this world.

In remembrance  
**Roopinder Singh**

(Roopinder Singh is an Indian journalist and author of 5 major books. He retired as the Senior Editor from the Tribune, published from Chandigarh)



My day started with a very sad note when I learnt that my very close and dear friend, my senior from Punjab Engineering College, and my perhaps the biggest well-wisher has been snatched away from all of us. What a man, full of boundless energy, who breathed only aerospace. He brought his star publication Vayu to commanding heights and all of us looked forward to receive our copy. He would never miss a chance to meet me whenever he was visiting Bangalore and I would always see him in his office during my visits to Delhi and have delicious home-made lunch. He published my first book which created a record of sorts in response.



My heart-felt condolences to the bereaved family.  
Let his legacy move on with much more vigour.

**Yogesh Kumar**

Pushpinder Sir,

Thank you for the books, the stories, and for telling the Indian side of the story when so many others weren't - and above all, for making it clear that there is a body of such stories out of India, which can be told as well as any others. Blue skies always,

**K S Nair**

I am Philip Rajkumar, an old friend and admirer of Pushpinder's. My wife and I were very upset when we heard of his demise. Pushpinder and I go about 35 years to the early 1990s. I always considered him an authority on aviation history worldwide. He was a prolific writer and will be sorely missed by the aeronautical community in the world. I am happy he handed over Vayu to his son well in time and I am confident the magazine will improve on the high standards set by him.

Losing a father is always a wrenching event. Pushy was a proud father and loving husband and we understand what a bitter blow it must have been to the close knit family. Just a couple of months ago he called me from Kasauli where he and Deepak used to go to often for a break. We also enjoyed their parent's hospitality in 2013 when we stayed with them during the launch of the book Pushy and I compiled together on the history of the Mig-21 in the IAF. May Pushpinder's soul rest in everlasting peace.

**Philip and Sheila Rajkumar**



In 2015, at the Aerospace Media Awards held at the Paris Air Show, Pushpinder Singh was awarded 'Lifetime Achievement Award' for Outstanding Contribution to Aviation Journalism'.



**T**he guru of aviation history. The encyclopedia himself is gone. A kind person, a generous soul and the gentleman personified. You are with the clouds now Pushpinder Singh Chopra. Wish I had spent more time with you - the wonderful tales and anecdotes. It's the end of an era.

**Manu Pubby**



**T**ragic news. Pushpinder Singh Chopra, India's foremost Air Force historian & founder of Vayu Aerospace and Defence Review passes away in Delhi. A wonderful gentleman full of stories, insight & sparking wit. Entire generations will miss him. Blue skies, Pushi Sir!

**Shiv Aroor**

**A** giant tree has fallen and we are bereft of the shade of its knowledge and wisdom. RIP Pushpinder Singh Chopra (1943-2021) pioneering defence journalist, author, military aviation compendium and above all, a kind, gentle soul. Deepest condolences to his family.



**O**ne of my my most trusted friends, Pushy could generate a laugh in even the most trying circumstances. I can hardly believe he's gone. Pushy was a storehouse of military/aviation knowledge. We all relied on him for perspective RIP, Pushy. Heaven is the richer for your presence.

**Ajai Shukla**



**T**he greatest authority on Indian aviation with a canvas stretching across decades - without a shred of a doubt, our finest aviation historian. His contribution to the IAF over decades - simply phenomenal. Besides anything else, among the kindest souls, a guru for me.

**Vishnu Som**



**T**ime with him was hilarious fun, & an education. The unending number of stories he told & the context he supplied for current events is irreplaceable. Nice, gentle, kind, wise and full of energy; PSC will be terribly missed. "What have you heard? I'll tell you what I've heard."

**Saurabh Joshi**



Here he is, explaining to me the workings of the iconic Hawker Hunter- Swedish Air Force museum, Malmslatt, 2011.

**Sandeep Unnithan**



I cannot tell you how terribly saddened and shocked I was to hear that my dear friend, Pushpinder, had passed away. The international aviation and defence community, especially all his journalist and PR friends, will share my grief and greatly miss the warmth, humour and sheer depth of his knowledge on all things relating to Indian aviation. Pushpinder was a real joy to know, and made the global air and defence show circuit that much more endurable as he

always had something new to discuss and his interests covered every possible aspect of aviation history. I was pleased to have had the honour to show him our museum at Farnborough and to welcome him to the Guild of Aviation Artists Annual exhibitions in London.

It was a privilege to have enjoyed his company and wisdom over the years, and I will always remember and retain the fondest memories of this truly great journalist, amusing companion and creator of so many wonderful books on India's aviation history. His lasting legacy lives on, of course, in Vayu, which is in a class of its own.

My most sincere condolences to you and all the family and in the meantime keep safe during this challenging period.

**Richard Gardner**



## Eulogy for Pushy

### AN OLD SCHOOL GENTLEMAN

Pushy Chopra is no more. He had struggled with Covid. I anchored many of Pushy's seminars on defence.

He was not only a valued colleague but one of my closest childhood buddies since our schooldays.

He was ebullient, bubbly, outspoken, rambunctious, with a Falstaffian Hail of a voice. He suffered no fool gladly even while he remained ever the compassionate gentleman...and chivalrous to a fault.

He felt passionately for his family and was the eternal mother-hen. He adored his childhood home in the misty effervescence in Kasauli to which he summoned me for a first visit many moons ago, where we consumed gallons of good Scotch and barbecued pork chops with his beautiful wife Deepak and sister the vivacious Gugu and her gentle giant of a husband, the expansive Anup (now also gone) son of the legendary Sardar Karnail Singh, former chairman of the Railway Board who had the most amazing wooden bar laden with foreign wines tucked away in his luxurious railways saloon.

Pushy was a diehard liberal who detested political tyrants, bigotry, intolerance.

Do you know that he loved Shakespeare and could quote from John Donne?

In the Doon School Pushy (74-T), Askari Imam (68-T), and I (155-T) were known as the "Tata House Trio", all of us unregenerate rebels. 74 and 68 now both gone.

My youngest daughter Samira was married at Piffer Post, Pushy's get-away spot from Delhi's madness, small farmhouse in the capital's outskirts where generals, air marshals and admirals rubbed shoulders with ruffian writers like me and Ajay Shukla and Hari Dang and Dilip Bobb.

Just as Pushy and I grew up together and reunited after my 20-year sojourn in the US, so did my children Arjun, Ayesha and Samira grow up with Pushy's kids, the "Choppy" boys, Vikram, Karan and Prem.

Cheers, Pushy! May you ever keep raging against the dying of the light.

**Inderjit Badhwar**





Dear Colleagues,

I am sure I speak for a lot of people when I say that The Great Pushpindar (hereafter referred to as TGP) was a fixture in the lives of all of us who - at least before the COVID destroyed this business - trot around the world to one defence expo or air show after another. You could always spot him with his distinctive turban - showing pride in his heritage but also in the Indian Armed Forces that he was always pointing out when and where they were failing and how they could do better.

Several aspects of TGP that I was fond of:

- This business is full of people who are living proof that God in all of his bounty and generosity created more horses' asses that horses to wear them. TGP was not one of them. He was never a know-it-all and was never afraid to show there was benefit in asking what another person had to say on a given subject. I think the phrase I heard from him most often was "I want to ask you something, what do you think about..." The mark of a truly great man is that he realises we never, ever stop learning.
- He was never afraid to throw the bullshit flag on the table and tell it like it is.
- In the same vein he was never averse from telling truth to power - separating him from the many yes-men whose numbers at the higher levels of India's government and armed forces seem to multiply geometrically.
- He was a consummate gentleman who never shed his coat and tie - even in some of the most unbearable heat that air shows are legendary for taking place in.
- He always loved a good drink of whiskey.
- He always had great jokes. One of the more recent ones I really loved that he told was "come to Dubai - it is the best city in India."

I will miss him and places like Le Bourget, Singapore, Dubai, etc. will never be the same without him.

For sure everyone is going to miss TGP and he is another in a growing list of persons who have left us thanks to what I refer to as "the Great Gift From China."

I remember more than 11 years ago and during the time that I would spend weeks upon weeks of time in China I was sitting in a pub/restaurant in the Sanlitun section of Beijing (where most of the embassies are) with the Canadian Defence

Attache. As we were sitting there we reminisced about all of the examples of what we had seen in China which showed that they always operated on the basis of 80 per cent (or less) of what was considered the bare minimum safety margin anywhere else in the world was always regarded as adequate for their purposes. I remember him shaking his head and telling me "China is a disaster waiting to happen." I knew he was absolutely right at the time - what I did not know was that this disaster would take down the rest of the world in the process. I still cannot believe what we are living through these past 17 months now.

I pass on all of my very sincere condolences and ask for blessings for all of TGP's family and friends.



**Reuben F. Johnson**



We heard with deep sorrow the grave death of Pushpinder Singh. He was a wonderful and most appreciated person with whom we had the honour working closely for decades. He will be remembered as a great friend of Israel. Please pass our condolences to the dear family. Let us all cherish to what we have.

**Dubbie & Ilan Shifrin, Israel**



Brian made me aware of your Father's passing as well. He was a marvelous friend, always generous with his words and his smile. A very kind soul indeed. I hope this note finds you well. You and your family are in my thoughts.

**Chris Chadwick**



I just learned of Pushpinder's passing from Covid. I am truly sorry and my thoughts are with the family. I admired him very much, and recall being hosted in your family home in Delhi once along with Chris Chadwick. That was one of many fond memories I have which I treasure.

I pray that you can overcome the loss of this great man, and that you and your family stay safe during this terrible ordeal.

**Brian Nelson**



Journalist colleagues,

I have only just heard the sad news of Pushpinder's death and wish to convey to you my immense regrets at the passing of a fine gentleman and a thoroughly professional colleague.

Pushpinder was also a dear friend who, when we met at air shows around the world, was always full of enthusiasm for discussions on our favourite subject of aircraft. Never once did he give the impression that he was anything but overjoyed to see me again. Always a twinkle in his eye; always a happy or humorous remark to be made.

Our paths first crossed in the early 1980s when I was working for John Fricker—the author of a book on the 1965 air war with Pakistan. Pushpinder's view of events differed somewhat, but in public and private debates over the details, he argued his case with impeccable politeness and civility. In those pre-Twitter days, that is the way great men behaved.

So, farewell 'Pushy'. You elevated Indian aerospace journalism to world standards and lived a meritorious life which will be remembered by your many friends at home and abroad.

**Paul Jackson (United Kingdom)**





I was saddened to read today of the death of Pushpinder Singh Chopra. That tall figure with the turban was so much part of the airshow scene that Farnborough and Le Bourget will seem much smaller without him.

I have passed the sad news to our mutual friend Mike Gething. He and his wife were about to depart for a brief holiday, but he plans to get in touch with you as soon as they get back.

One of my amusing memories of your father was from Farnborough 2016 - the year that the opening day was washed out by heavy rain. He declared that the show was such a shambles that he'd never attend it again, and invited me to make the same pledge. If my memory is right (and given that I was born in 1943 it is getting a bit fallible) you, he, and I had met on the Saab exhibit, and your father declared that I was a near-perfect 'double' of some senior IAF officer whose name I have forgotten. But I can remember several of his fellow Indian journos agreeing, and a number of them wanted to be photographed next to me so that they could make jokes about it back home.

My wife was unwell in 2018, but I 'broke the pledge' and went briefly to Farnborough to get interviews for an article I'd been commissioned to write. I don't know if he was there, or had stuck to his idea of never returning...

I haven't done an air show since then. Jane's closed my magazine in 2013, and I parted company with them two years later. I did Eurosatory 2016 in order to let the industry know that I planned to work as a freelance specialising in missiles and defence electronics. But since magazines aren't commissioning enough show-related work to make a Paris trip economically worthwhile, I've been giving Le Bourget and Eurosatory a miss. I was at DSEI 2019, and will probably do future UK shows if they help to provide material for forthcoming articles. As Mike Gething says, there is little point in going round a show saying "Remember me? I used to be a Jane's editor". But hopefully we will meet at one of the UK shows.

**Doug Richardson**



I condole the irreparable loss of your father and our well loved acquaintance- I speak for me. A true giant in Indian aerospace his contribution will perhaps never be assessed save for a few. A true giant. An oak has fallen.

Though I have written for Pushpinder since 1990 we rarely met. I do not know if Pushpinder got any awards but his life merits remembering the old wisdom "it is perhaps better to deserve an award and not get it than get an award and not deserve it". The growth of Vayu from "Vayuyaana" to Vayu Aerospace of today is his monument.

**Prodyut Das**

I was saddened at the news of Pushy's passing, since we had been friends for over 40 years. One of my many happy memories of you all was a lovely dinner at Friends Colony, many years ago - I have much to thank your generous and kindly father; I shall miss him. Hopefully one day when this disrupted world eventually rights itself, we shall all meet again - it will be an occasion to treasure.

I hope you and the family are safe and well, the situation in India being so tragic and unrelenting.

Meanwhile, my kindest regards and love to you all.

**Mike Savage**



I have known Pushi for many, many years and always remember the first time I met him in my shop when I worked there as the boy! I was taken by his enthusiasm, knowledge, and passion for aviation and especially the India Air Force, which fascinated me. For many years he invited me to visit India and visit him and the air force...eventually I plucked up courage and packed up my cameras and film in those days and departed to India.



The first trip was a pioneering adventure, but was invaluable as we met many people and important Indian air force personal (as Pushi knew them all) who all helped pave the way for some 15-20 memorable trips to India to visit numerous Indian Air Force & Navy bases.

Whenever I visited Delhi, he always had time for me and insisted on meeting up (no matter what time of the day it was) and made me very welcome in the family home (and forced a vintage malt on me!)

I am so grateful for all the encouragement and support he gave me on my trips to India as without him none this would ever have happened.

May his legacy, passion and enthusiasm live on.  
R.I.P Pushpindar

**Simon Watson (The Aviation Bookshop, UK)**



I am sad to hear about your uncle. Not only was he a brilliant academic who made lasting contributions to history, but he was a joy to be around. Talking with him reminded me of the banter of a gregarious junior officer in a fighter squadron! He was much younger in spirit and energy than his age would reveal.

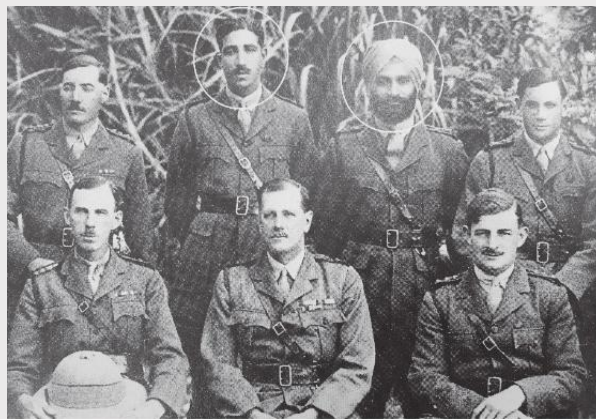


His path in life and mine were destined to cross. Before I ever heard your uncle's name, I wrote a short paper about the Wagah-Attari border crossing (pictures attached) and the involvement of Major General Mohindar Singh Chopra, his father (picture attached). I cited *A Soldier's Story* and watched an interview of your uncle at the Partition Museum in Amritsar. Later on, I read *Vayu* extensively for my dissertation and contacted your uncle for an interview. We ended up spending an entire afternoon exchanging stories and talking about fighter aircraft; it was wonderful.

Even though we only met for a short time, Pushpindar left a lasting impression on me. It was unfortunate that we were unable to get our families together before I left Delhi. However, if you are ever visiting central California, I would love to show you around. Best wishes.

Fly Navy!

**Lieutenant Commander Riley "Chlando" Walls, US Navy**



### How Uncle Pushi touched our lives

As a young schoolboy and an aspiring IAF pilot, one of the very first books I picked up was a second hand copy of "The aircraft of the IAF 1933 to 1973". That single book captured the ethos of the IAF so well, that it gave me the feel of almost actually being in the IAF. Over the years, even though I never actually flew with the IAF, I built up a considerable collection of aviation books including further books written by him on the IAF (including some very well produced squadron histories and unique tomes on indigenously built aircraft like the Marut).

But that original book continued to encompass my childhood aspiration to join the Air Force...and a journey that might have been. He provided a lot of us amateur/armchair "Air Warriors" a very significant virtual access to the IAF and I was definitely looking forward to it continuing for a long time to come. I guess now you folks at *Vayu* will have to carry forward that work.

Uncle Pushi ...you will be dearly missed by your innumerable nephews and nieces in the aviation community.

**Ivan Jalaluddin**



I no longer remember when I first met Pushpindar Singh Chopra, who for me was always Pushy. But he figures in the “Favourites” category of my mobile indicating our frequent interaction. He was a friend, though he was some years senior to me. But in terms of his enthusiasm for doing anything and everything, he was decades younger.

Our connect came through the ruling passion in his life—aviation. In the 1980s, two of my journalistic beats—defence and civil aviation—benefited immensely from Pushy’s knowledge. And yes, there were occasions where he tipped me off on good stories. At some point, I can’t recall when, I was drafted into the editorial panel of the *Vayu* magazine that he had founded half a century ago. Over the years, the magazine, now edited by Vikramjit Singh, has improved in quality and style and is the premier publication of its kind in the region if not the country.

Pushy was the ultimate gentleman—kind, never intrusive and ever-helpful and an impeccable host. He never showed off his enormous knowledge of matters aviation and was not the one who would bore you with stories about it. In fact, his style was often to get you talking about an issue which he was quietly absorbing.

He was what in UK would be called the grand amateur—someone who had no direct training or connection to an issue but yet had, through his passion, developed an expertise way



Manoj Joshi, Capt. Shakti Lumba and Pushpindar Singh

beyond what trained experts often had. The books Pushy has edited or written, if placed end to end would probably exceed a foot. He was currently working on a book on naval aviation which will now be completed by his son and nephew. Such people went out of style a long time ago. But India was fortunate to have Pushy till his tragic and sudden demise.

**Manoj Joshi**

Pushpindar Singh Chopra shaped my life long before anyone might realise. Growing up, “Pushi mamaji” was the fun uncle for all us cousins, but my fascination for aircraft and aviation meant we shared a special bond. He would always remember to come back from air shows around the world with gifts of posters, magnets and models. In hindsight, my choice of the aviation and defence world for a profession was inevitable. But again, it was he who gave me my break, bringing me into the *Vayu* fold, where around the office we always referred to him by his initials – ‘PSC’. Working with him on *Vayu* and the various aviation histories we published, from squadron books to the Battle of Laungewala, to the definitive history of the MiG-21 in IAF service, was the privilege of a lifetime.

His singular defining trait was a boundless reserve of energy and enthusiasm. One of my fondest memories was when just the two of us traipsed up and down the west coast of India covering Indian naval aviation in 2018. Those were long, humid, exhausting days, but he was a dynamo through them all, from sunup to late night shoots under stormy moonlit skies, and always, *always* closing the day out with a drink.

He nurtured my interests and skills, but also constantly pushed me to be better. The best of what I am is due in no small part to him.

Godspeed, and *ad astra*.

**Angad Singh**



### Shall always miss you Pushpinder Uncle

As humans we all need a hand to guide us in the various stages of life. This hand is initially our parents, then our teachers and many a times we are blessed with hands which recognise our potential and guide us to the path of success. These are the hands of true mentors. And Pushpinder Uncle was one such guiding force for me, who always appreciated my effort, showered me with praises and loved me as a father would his daughter. For the last two decades there was never an airshow or a defence exhibition where we did not rush between conferences, visited display areas, met exhibitors and had coffee breaks at the media centre together. I was always in awe of his vast knowledge bank, his palpable enthusiasm, his abundant energy and his long list of admirers. For him age was only a number and more than a dozen times I got reprimanded for quoting mine. When I started ADU at 51, he was one of the few who told me it is never too late to chase your dreams. There are thousands of memories and words will always be short. Thank you Vikramjit for letting me share his love and blessings. Death has snatched him away but reminiscences will always be in my heart. Will always miss his love, affection and guidance. I end with an unknown poet's lines, "Your life was a blessing, your memory a treasure, you are loved beyond words and missed beyond measures."

**Sangeeta Saxena**  
Editor, Aviation & Defence Universe (ADU)



Dear Sir,

On behalf of World Animal Protection, we offer our deepest condolences on the unfortunate demise of Pushpinder Singh Chopra, our founding Trustee and Chairman since 2007. During his Chairmanship, World Animal Protection has achieved many notable feats in the area of Animal Protection.

He was a philanthropist who had a great vision and under his guidance World Animal Protection achieved many milestones including interventions during many disasters, inclusion of animals in disaster management in the National Disaster Management Plan, the development of "The National Code of Practices for Management of Dairy Animals".

His support and thoughts to build a better future by raising awareness on the plight of animals and many other significant campaigns for ending the exploitation of wild animals in captivity and wildlife trade, will be always remembered.

The current pandemic has been devastating humanity and all of us are affected in one way or another. It is truly unfortunate that Mr. Chopra is no longer with us but his vision to protect animals will continue to inspire us to keep on the work to help and protect animals.

The Board of Trustee and staff would like to offer our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and pray to the almighty God that the great soul of Shri Chopra rests in eternal peace.

For and on behalf of Board of Trustee and staff,

**Lt Gen (Retd.) Devraj Singh,**  
Trustee, World Animal Protection  
**Gajender K. Sharma, World**  
Animal Protection

I was very sorry to hear that Mr. Pushpinder Singh is no more. I was introduced to the esoteric niche Asian Air Forces History especially the Indian Air Force of which very little data or literature is available here in the States, through the various works of Mr. Singh and I had become a collector of his books.

Mr. Singh was a minefield of data and facts on your aviation history and it was a great privilege to interact with him. He had informed me of many book projects in-flight when we last interacted and I do hope some of these get completed in his memory!! Once again my heartfelt condolences to the family.

**Robert Graeme**  
Chicago, USA



Pushpindar Sir “Uncle Pushy” was a trailblazer and a guru. I cannot forget the warmth and love he showed to us amateur historians or the encouragement he gave over the years. He was a doyen of Indian Aviation History and will be sorely missed.

Growing up in the 80s, with no internet and no good libraries to speak of in Hyderabad, it is easy to be ignorant of the body of work that Pushpindar Sir had generated over the 70s and 80s writing for noted publications for years. I came across my first reference to him in Air Chief Marshal P C Lal’s book in the mid-80s which mentioned his first book “Aircraft of the Indian Air Force 1933-1973”. Finding a reference to a “Civilian” who wrote a book about the Indian Air Force in itself was a fascinating fact. I subsequently found a copy of this book and it is not an exaggeration to say that I still keep referring to this book even to this day.

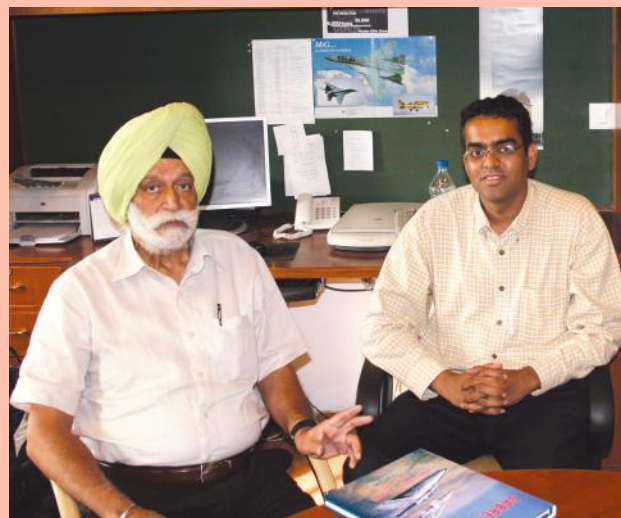
Ultimately, in the late 80s and early 90s, some stray copies of Vayu magazine made their way to local shops near me. Only then did I realise the groundwork Pushy Sir had laid in writing about Aviation in India and Aviation history. I was still unaware of his previous publications in Air Enthusiast, Air International, Air Forces Monthly etc - my respect for him increased exponentially when I ran into his articles later on.

My first contact with him started only sometime in 2000 or so, I mailed a printed draft of my first book dealing with the 1965 Air War to the Vayu address. Imagine my happiness when I got a glowing letter from him - he was thrilled that someone took an effort to put something about the war and though it needed more work, he encouraged me to continue working on it. For good measure, he added that he passed on the draft to Air Cmde Jasjit Singh and received positive comments about it. Needless to say, the boost that an amateur historian like me got out of that letter cannot be undervalued.

I met him in person for the first time at Aero India 2005, which is when I took this photograph. It was a moment that I cannot forget, framing two legends in the same photo. I have had the opportunity to interact subsequently multiple times. Once during a Delhi trip, while working on my second book, I gatecrashed the Vayu Office and I can never forget the warmth



Pushpindar Singh with Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh



with which I was received. Of course, I have had the pleasure of meeting him quite a few times after that and we always kept in touch.

It is easy to overlook Pushy Sir’s work. But put it all in one place, and it is astounding in the amount of work that went into it, and the size of shelf space it occupies. Apart from the numerous Squadron histories, the type histories on the Marut and Gnat, Who else can claim to have written a History of the Indian Air Force that spans nearly 700 pages? This is exactly what his 2007 magnum opus “Himalayan Eagles - History of the Indian Air Force Volumes 1-3” was about.

With his passing, We, the aviation historians, lost not only lost his vast knowledge but also his generosity and kindness. Rest in Peace - Pushpindar Sir.

PVS Jagan Mohan

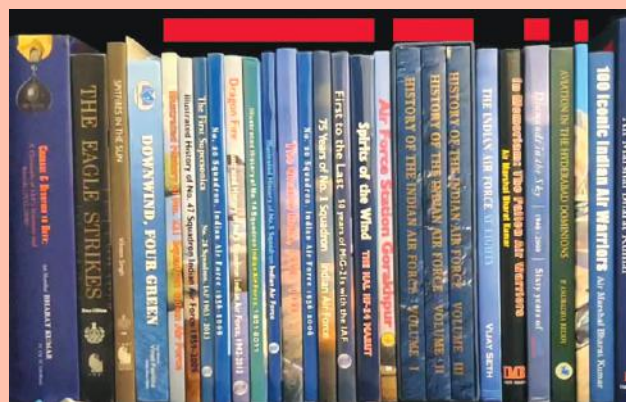


Photo shows the number of books authored by him on the shelf (As indicated by the Red Bar) and I am sure there are at least half a dozen other books that are not part of the collection here like the unofficial brochures, articles etc are not represented. It would be a task to list the complete bibliography that he had produced over the years. But let me try anyway.

Pushpinder Singh Chopra was one of the warmest persons I have ever met. He was larger than life with boundless energy & an unmatched zest for life! He worked on a dozen projects at a time and had the incredible knack of getting others involved and passionate about them. Incredibly generous with sharing his knowledge as well as opening opportunities for others, he loved connecting with people and also connecting people he knew to others he thought they might get along with. He was a strong proponent of good relations with Pakistan & had friends both sides of the border. He had no compunctions about calling a spade a spade, no matter who he was challenging.

PSC was also one of the most interesting people you could ever meet - he had so many stories and first hand experiences and he loved sharing them! And what a raconteur he was - quite like the 1001 nights, each story nestled another which led to another, until the original was almost lost many hours behind, and almost every conversation ended with "remind me to tell you about that next time!"

Unlike many good talkers, he was also a great listener. And he remembered. He would ask after family and friends that you had once mentioned in a conversation six months ago.

He told me to think of him and Deepak Ma'am as my family in Delhi. Last year when I had Covid and quarantined alone, they sent across food and checked in every day.

Last April, he was extremely disturbed by the rising hatred in India vis-à-vis Pakistan; his response was to dedicate a special Nishaan issue to Punjabiyaat-to celebrating cross-border connections and friendships & the oneness of our people and culture. Would I help him put it together?

It was a very delayed issue because of many reasons from both our ends, but we finally had it out in March this year (photo from that day)! I met him last in early April-we celebrated the



issue and the feedback we'd received and made plans for the future. Shall we cycle across Wagah? Knowing him, he would have made it happen.

While I mourn him and keep his family and Deepak Ma'am in my thoughts, remembering him & sharing a sliver of the incredible man he was is my tribute to him. Sir, you will be missed.

**Ganeev Dhillon**

## A MONUMENTAL LOSS

Pushpinder Singh Chopra is no more. The few years we knew each other were spent working and defining the role of the Nishaan magazine in the corporate life of Sikhs across the world -- irrespective of country, culture, language, and similar differences, even political that often define our communities. These different visions provide and enhance our strength, they are the base of Sikhi and its rich vision.

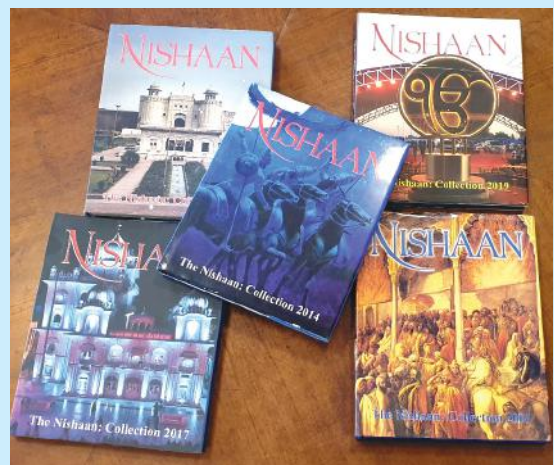


*Pushpinder Singh with his better half  
Mrs. Deepak Chopra*

The loss of Pushpinder Singh is critical and a painful one. But such is life. He is like a permanent and unforgettable stone in the worldwide modern reality of Sikhi. I was lucky to have been granted a niche in the works. And I will treasure my association with Pushpinder Singh Chopra.

Pushpinder began the magic of Nishaan. We need to continue and further develop the institution around the project.

**I.J. Singh (New York)**





# Messages from Pakistan

## PAF PRESS RELEASE

### AIR CHIEF EXPRESSES GRIEF OVER THE SAD DEMISE OF AVIATION AUTHOR/ JOURNALIST PUSHPINDER SINGH CHOPRA

06 May, 2021: Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force has expressed deep grief on the sad demise of renowned aviation author/ journalist Pushpinder Singh Chopra, who passed away in Delhi on 03 May, 2021 at the age of 77 due to Covid-19.

Pushpinder Singh was a renowned aviation author/ journalist and was famous for his dispassionate analysis. He was a great admirer of Pakistan Air Force and in 1991, he co-authored a book on PAF titled "FIZA'YA - PSYCHE OF THE PAKISTAN AIR FORCE" along with Ravirikhye and Peter Steinemann. Born in Sunny Bank Murree, he spent his early childhood in Lahore before his family migrated to India. In the year 2000, he visited Pakistan as a guest of PAF. Air Marshal Nur Khar former CAS, PAF also hosted a dinner in his honour at his residence.

The Air Chief has extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and acknowledged Singh's noteworthy contributions in the field of aviation journalism. He further said that his affiliation and admiration for PAF's professionalism would always be remembered.

## PAF SPOKESPERSON



Air Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Baber Sidhu  
Chief of Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force



**DGPR (AIR FORCE) @DGPR\_PAF · 2h ...**

Air Chf Mshl Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chf of Air Staff, PAF expresses grief on the sad demise of renowned aviation author/ journalist Pushpinder Singh Chopra, who passed away in Delhi on 03 May, 2021 at the age of 77 due to Covid-19.

A Requiem for Friend,

The invincible iconic intellectual, intrepid historian with a midas touch when it came to flushing truth from fabrication of episodes of wars from the opposing air forces.

His sudden transit from terrestrial to the celestial left me stunned, shocked just as thousands whose lives he touched.

Two of us, represented opposing antagonist nations and air forces, different faiths and cultures, and each passionately loyal to our respective countries. So how did this incredible synergy exist between us? One factor was mutual respect to level of admiration, in ideals for peace not war as the panacea to co-exist. Also because to me he was a legend who neither suffered fools nor was self-opinionated. His words spoken and written had inimitable veracity; his stellar character oozed out like flashing beacon on a dark night in the Indo-Pak desert with Sirroco winds screaming across the two nations. Because he was a man of peace, truthful to a fault in his treatise about senseless wars in his magnum opus, Fiza'ya reflected his propensity for facts and veracity as his unshakable credo. With us PAF veterans searching for history with veracity, Pushpindar stands very tall and credible in comparison with the versions chronicled here. Our versions of History of the Air wars falls way short in substantiation. Typically, his generosity in accolades for the adversary was unmatched by any chronicle by our writers. The man Pushpindar was, had branded 1988 'Story of PAF' as unmatched compendium by any military in India & Pakistan, and deservedly so. Pragmatically, he opted not to critique the brazen fault lines on facts from the fiction, the unending bragging on both sides. But he would never be deficient in giving a firm whack where falsehood was obvious.

Every time we met, it was like tranquility had possessed those hours. We agreed that wars had caused irreparable damage not only materially, economically and in precious lives, owing to ignoble acts of behemoths on both sides, but it injected the incurable virus of hatred between nations. With an archaic ring and poignance, we would reminisce why IAF and PAF could not have spent valuable resources in virtual war exercises for enduring peace and not sparring and sabre rattling ad infinitum.

Such an approach by statesmen could thwart any threat to our two countries, while prosperity through trade for benefit of common suffering millions would have been the fall out, not massive casualties and threat of nuclear apocalypse hanging like the sword of Damocles.

Dear Pushpindar, you leave a deep bruise in my heart by flying away to higher firmaments, in total surprise. My world has suffered an irreparable loss of your poignant wisdom, deep sincerity, so rare. Time heals but the scar remains. You will always be a shining beacon for generation of both IAF and PAF for your indelible zest for truth, moral integrity, equanimity, deep compassion, sensibility and probity as I experienced in decades of mutually exclusive friendship. May your noble soul be flying with celestial birds of heaven and fortitude for your beloved deeply grieved, sterling family.

**Air Commodore (R) Sajad Haider, Islamabad**

# FIZA'YA



## PSYCHE OF THE PAKISTAN AIR FORCE

PUSHPINDAR SINGH   RAVI RIKHYE  
PETER STEINEMANN



*In the photo: Pushpindar Singh flanked by Air Marshal (R) Malik Nur Khan and Air Commodore (R) Sajad Haider*



# Tributes from the Jullundur Brigade Association



Words by email cannot adequately cover the loss we all feel.

I must inform you that this loss is also most keenly felt by Members of The Jullundur Brigade Association worldwide and I am receiving their condolences at the loss of their dedicated Vice President hourly. Once I have collated these expressions of affection and respect I will forward them to you for the family to retain. But it will be some time before I can do this in order to allow the sad news to reach all corners of the JBA. I have, of course, published a simple immediate statement on the JBA website. Finally for now, our deep sadness at the loss of one of the finest of men who was also one of my dearest friends,

**Peter Davies**

**President, The Jullundur Brigade Association**



**The Inaugural Jullundur Brigade Association Dinner November 1989**

*Seated: Brig Fazle Qadir, Lt Col Roger Hislop, Lt Gen Ahmad Kamal, Maj Gen Peter Davies, Maj Gen Mohindar Singh Chopra, Brig Saeed Ismet, Lt Col Sadaqat Ali Shah*

*Standing: Maj L Taylor-Duff, Maj R Tranter-Owen, Gobindar Singh Chopra, Maj R Young, Capt Khalid Kamal, Maj BWR Baker, Capt D Chatterton, Capt Nadir Khan, Maj K Hastie, Maj FR Baker, Pushpinder Singh Chopra, Capt RA Bonner (photo: JBA)*

**P**ushy's sad demise was unbearable.

Not only was he a dear friend and highly respected professional colleague but the country has lost a worthy son. Pushy was undoubtedly one of India's best known authorities on aerospace, past and present, but also the Indian Air Force's trusted chronicler. Pushy's warm and humorous demeanor, on and off the field, won many hearts. I recall once, at Washington DC's new Air & Space Museum, how he regaled a whole bunch of American students on the history of aerospace - their minds boggled at this suave, turbaned gentleman displaying such a wealth of extempore knowledge.

Besides, Pushy and I shared a passion for military history, particularly the Indian Army. It was he who encouraged me, besides Peter Davies of course, to join the Jullundur Bde Assn. Here I am, a Hodsons Horse officer, with only a small link to the JBA (Hodsons were part of the Lahore and Ambala Bdes in France and Flanders) but it was Pushy's persuasive charm that won me over! He was so passionate in encouraging me to join this year's visit to the Battlefields. Alas!

Wonderful times!

Rest in peace good friend

**Karun Khanna (Kinny)**

Extracts from some of the many letters of condolences from members of the Jullundur Brigade Association on the announcement of the death of Pushpinder Singh. I send them to you in no particular order in the hope that they will give you an idea in what respect and friendship he was held by so many. You will, I am sure, have received many, many more.

1. From: Maj Gen AJS Sandhu Indian Army via Maj Mahin Malik late The "Piffers"  
"Even now it is difficult for me to accept that Pushy is no longer with us. Such an ebullient, kind and helpful person, full of zest. I loved my interactions with him. May his soul rest in eternal peace."
2. From: Maj Gen Mike Tennant CB late Royal Artillery  
"He was central to the JBA. He was utterly charming."
3. From: Rick Holt Late RAF  
"He was such a remarkable man. We were fortunate to have known him."
4. From: Christian Wragg  
"Terribly sad news. He was a lovely man. My thoughts are with his family."
5. From: Philippa Davies Widow of Lt Col Paul Davies The Kings Regiment (who first introduced Pushy to his brother Peter, now the JBA President, whilst being the British Assistant Military Attache in Delhi  
"I remember him as an outgoing, energetic and helpful person - he was the sort of person who made things happen. What resonated with me was his kindness and love of family, he was devoted to all of them."
6. From: Maj Mahin Malik late The "Piffers" Pakistan Army  
"I express, to his JBA colleagues, the condolences of all "Piffers" who knew him."
7. From: Rana Chhina  
"Pushy was a larger than life figure in many ways. Extremely knowledgeable, generous, a wonderful host and a good human being. He was the foremost historian of Indian Aviation."
8. From: Col Martin Amlot OBE OSJ DL Late The Kings Regt  
"I am very proud to have known him. We all owe him a debt

for that he consistently promoted understanding between us all."

9. From: Clare Gorst  
"He was a man of such dignity, full of great intelligence and humour."
10. From: Maj Stephen Wright Late The Kings Regiment  
"The loss of Pushpinder is dreadful news".
11. From: Col Barrie Fairman late The Kings Regiment  
He was clearly a very special human being who made a great difference to the World."
12. From: Brig Peter Rafferty MBE DL late The Kings and Duke of Lancaster's Regiments  
"Pushy leaves a huge gap in our ranks; he had such a positive impact on all who knew him. His dedication to defence now and in our shared history was an inspiration to us all. India has lost one of its finest gentlemen."
13. From: Maj Leslie Fox late The Kings Regiment  
"I am very saddened to hear of his passing."
14. From: Mrs Gita Bagai JBA Member and Family Friend  
"We are all devastated to hear the news."
15. From: Maj Taff Gillingham  
"What terrible news. I send my condolences and those of the Ipswich and Suffolk Regiment Association."
16. From: Iain Smith Secretary and Editor The Sikh Pioneers and Sikh Light Infantry Association  
"Terribly sad news."
17. Mr Peter Ginger JBA Member and Colleague  
"Sincere condolences."
18. Brig TIM Waugh late Royal Signals  
"The JBA Tour to India gave me an insight into an unique individual, respected and revered by all who met him."
19. From: Col Ian Paterson OBE TD late The Kings Regiment  
"So incredibly sad to read of his passing. Words fail me. How cruel this is. We are heart broken."
20. From Paddy Singh late Indian Army  
"We have lost a great colleague."

**Peter Davies**

**President, The Jullundur Brigade Association**



### **Association Meeting New Delhi 2009**

Brig Clive Elderton UK DA India, Pushpinder Singh Chopra, Maj Gen Ashok Mehta 5RGR (FF), President, Lt Gen M.S. Bhuller former Colonel The Sikh Regiment, Sqn Ldr Rana Chinna, Mr Peter Williams. (photo: JBA)



Words cannot describe what I and Pushie's friends went through and are going through right now after hearing of what happened. No words can describe our feelings at his loss and even more that of you and your brothers. I can only recall the words of Elizabeth Frye, that so aptly mirror Pushie and our loss of him -

I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the Gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the mornings hush,  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
of quiet birds in circled flight,  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there, I did not die.

I pray, and we, all his friends pray that your mother comes out of it and home to you all.

In sadness

**Paddy Singh**

Jacquie and I were so sad to receive your devastating news and have been in a state of shock really ever since. Please accept our most sincere condolences. I first met 'Pushy' many years ago at a JBA gathering in the North West when I commanded the Kings Ist Battalion and although I met him only on a few occasions since, he was the formidable link the Association needed to ensure it became such a successful and enduring organisation. Pushy epitomised all the best qualities we have come to admire and like so much in our Indian JBA friends. We will all miss his gentle charm and innate courtesy. He was a wonderful and fun companion.

**Jeremy and Jacquie Gaskell**

I do not think we ever met when I was in India, but I just want to tell you how sad I am to hear of the untimely death of your father. Have met your father on many occasions in London, Ypres and then in India when he arranges a JBA tour, it is hard to envisage that he has left us. I was always remember him as an individual with energy, respected by all and a real gentlemen. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

**Brigadier Tim Waugh**

## HRH the Prince of Wales - Sikh Reception 2008



*HRH the Prince of Wales speaking to Pushpinder Singh Chopra and Major General Peter Davies, both wearing the association tie, at a reception for members of the British Sikh community. Clarence House, London. (photo: JBA)*

How does one pay tribute to a Jovial Giant of the obscure hobby that one pursues?

Someone who has been a Pathfinder, has laid foundations and offered solace?

Pushpinder Singh Chopra is that precise person who actually cannot be boxed in.

I met him at Aero India 2001- I was covering my first Air Show from Bharat-Rakshak.com, gaped at him because we sat next to each other at one of the Press Conferences, he asked a probing question about the LCA. I walked up to him later and introduced myself. He enveloped me in a hug, offered me refuge at the Vayu Stall and he was just a hover away. And then I ran into him at the International Fleet Review in Mumbai. Side by side seating again on the Presidential Yacht- and he asking me, a 22 year old goofy kid about ship names and making notes. I grew two sizes taller.

The next meeting was in June in Delhi. I rang him up and he invited me over to a house party. That was him - always there, always providing succour and shelter to whoever took the Indian Armed Forces seriously.

His work, his research, his efforts paved the way for so many. Today when everyone has a website, a blog, a social media blowhorn, it is significant to acknowledge and adore what Pushy Uncle did for everyone who has followed in his wake. His legion of admirers is multicultural, diverse and truly global. I was part of a Doordarshan panel show with him on the eve of Air Force Day in 2006. And before we could start recording- he told me that he will talk about the past- the RIAF- because he is from the past. I should talk about the IAF's future because I will be around to watch it.

I gaped again.

Farewell Pushy Sir- I can imagine the twinkle in your eyes as you wear your trademark bush-shirt and hang out with your friends in heaven's Great Fighter Pilot Squadron.

**Kapil G Chandni**



### **Tribute to Pushy**

I'm going to miss Pushpindar. I didn't see him that often but when I did, it was always a great occasion. He was a man of style who endeared himself to anyone he spoke to, during any occasion.

Despite my many visits to the Pakistan Air Force he always remained fair-minded, which is what really caught my attention. Instead of treating me like the enemy, like so many of his compatriots Pushy would show me the utmost respect. Whenever we met he would always probe me about the JF-17 Thunder, for no other reason than his admiration for the PAF, which he had written about glowingly in the past. Yep, Pushy was in a class of his own.

It won't be me of course that misses this great man, there will be his family, his colleagues and of course his friends, like me. RIP Pushpindar.

### **Alan Warnes**

Group Editor, Modern Military Air Forces Monthly, Air International (military) and Combat Aircraft Journal



**T**he sad untimely demise of Pushpindar Singh, the doyen of Indian Aviation historians, is a big shock for us. His myth busting of the Sargodha incident was seminal and in a way coming of age of IAF historians. Uncle Pushy as he was affectionately known, was a big influence on how the global aviation enthusiasts perceived the IAF in the absence of published official IAF history. Many of his works grace my bookshelves including the first ever Aircraft of the IAF 1933 onwards. We will miss his generous and witty personality.

**Krishna Jaga**



# Tributes from the “Dornier family”



of his magazine “Vayu” without mentioning that another Dornier 228 has been handed over to the Indian Air Force, the Navy or the Coast Guard.

We all have lost a great man, an aviator, a historian. I have lost one of my best friends. He will live on in our memories.

**Peter Klonk**

**W**e went a long way together. When I met Pushpinder Singh Chopra first, it is now nearly 40 years ago, my colleges at Dornier introduced me to “Pushy” and I soon understood that this nickname had a good reason. He pushed when others rested, he fought when others gave up, when there was success he planned already the next action.

He was obsessed with knowledge and with passing on this knowledge, I remember us visiting an aerospace museum in Bangalore and there was this class of 8 year old boys and girls with a teacher who obviously was not very knowing about the aircraft on display. Pushy took over and I have never seen young children listening with more attention to this man who was a stranger to them five minutes ago and explaining to them now not only technical items but also teaching them history.

Pushpinder was known not only all over India but also highly respected as aviation and history specialist in Europe and Germany. Without him the success story of the Dornier 228 would never have happened. This aircraft was his “baby” and there was no edition



**M**y deepest and heartfelt condolences to the entire family. Most shocking is your message and for the time being I cannot find any words. I will write you a letter soon. However I found a beautiful photo from around 1999 when your father visited us in our house in Stockdorf. See him smiling, such a beautiful smile and character, I will never forget him!

I will always remember Pushpinder as a cheerful enthusiastic friend and colleague, dedicated to his family and to the world of aviation. During and after our intensive ‘Dornier days’ together, it was always a pleasure and a highlight to meet him during the airshows here and there.

I have also informed the ‘Dornier gang’.

**Thomas Friedberger**



Helga forwarded your e-mail to me, and I'm glad to have a direct way now to get in touch with you. Yet, it has taken me some time to write – it's not easy to find words in a situation like this.

I knew that your parents had fallen ill with Covid as I had been on a Whatsapp chat with your father just recently. But he sounded very optimistic: "... on the way to recovering soon". So it really came as a shock when Parbeen sent word of his passing away.

I'm still grappling with these sad news and I wish all this was just a bad dream that will vanish when you wake up. Yet I know it IS real and that for you and the family this nightmare is by far not over yet. Quite to the contrary, as you have to shoulder this double burden of coping with the loss of your father and at the same time fearing for your mother and fighting for her reconvalescence.

I do hope that she has improved by now and is out of hospital. She will need all your care and attention to get back to her old self.

You say that you are "trying to make sense of what is going on around" you. Actually, it does not make any sense, unless you believe in a kind of superior will. Who knows what the higher purpose of all this is...

With this in mind I wish you and your brothers as well as your families the strength it takes to overcome these bleak times. And – also on behalf of my husband and son as well as my sister, who all met your father at some stage and were impressed by him – I would like to express my/our sincere condolences to you all.

I'm proud to have known this wonderful person Pushpinder Singh Chopra and I will always keep him in my memory.



**Martina Brückner**



These are sad and difficult times to write to the family. They have kept me informed of the sad fate of my dear colleague of 40 years, best friend and older brother, and the terrible loss to your family. It is so shocking and we just couldn't believe it, especially as Peter said he was feeling better in late April. I considered your father as my brother in arms, fighting odds, laughing, drinking and dancing at all these weddings in the past, introducing me around his many Coast Guard, Navy and other friends, always there. But no more.

**Helga Driesen**

Thinking of your dear father, whom we all from the "Dornier gang" and especially the Schönbuchners, loved and respected so much: we are extremely sad.

After all the turbulences of the last decade and in spite of them, the words your father found for Gerd, when he was gone, gave me so much of consolation - you cannot imagine. Only a noble heart like his could do so.



The last sentence in an email he sent me after Gerds passing away, was "...and, God willing, we will meet again." God was not willing. We have to submit. But every time I read these words since, grief came like a wave. And tears. I hope your family slowly can recover from that heavy blow. Please accept our deepest sympathy and warm regards from all of us!

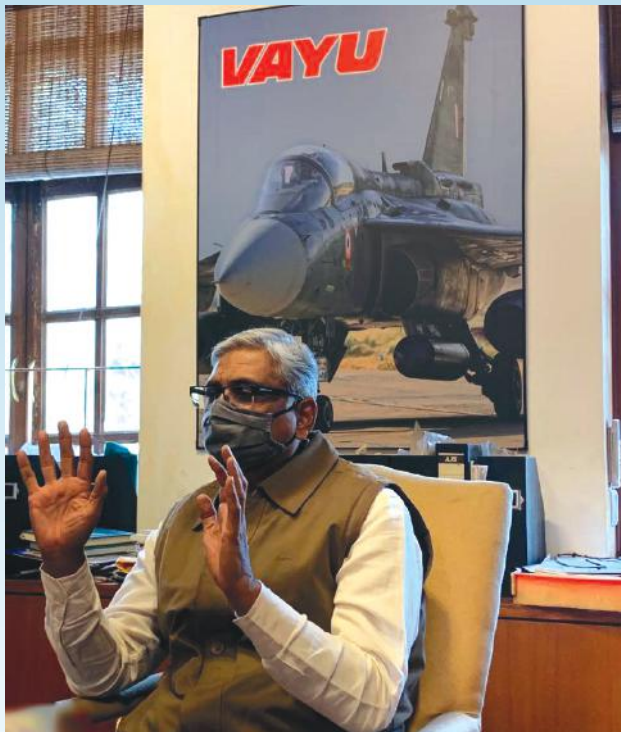
**Gisela and children**





### TO SIR WITH LOVE

It was in September 1986 when we first met. A tumultuous beginning resulting in an incredible journey of 35 years. PSC made me an integral part of Vayu Aerospace Review for which I am ever grateful.



*Photo by PSC in Vayu office, November 2020*

In over three decades of our association, PSC played different roles in my life.

As a mentor, he was an inspiration. I imbibed his tenacity for hard work and his unwavering doggedness in pursuit of excellence.

He was a friend and a father figure. He graciously assimilated my family into his own. We admired not just his humility and generosity but his effortless ways of making you feel valued.

PSC was my benefactor. What I am today is in large measure because of him. I am forever indebted to his magnanimity. For that I salute him.



Personally, this loss has left a deep chasm. An emptiness which can never be filled, like a loss of a parent.

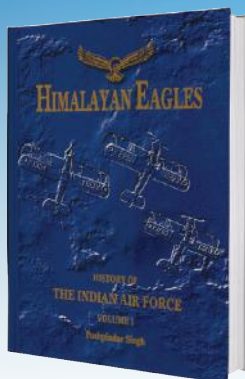
Sir, your influence in my life will remain unparalleled. I truly did enjoy and appreciate your Friendship.

With Respect, Gratitude And Affection

**Arun Singh**

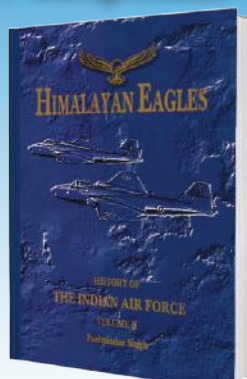
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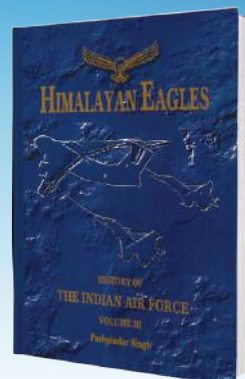
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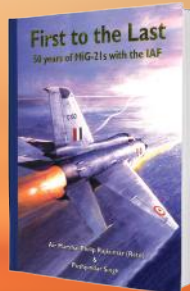
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