

Shaheed Udham Singh's fingerprints



Jupinderjit Singh

Shaheed Udham Singh's fingerprints

discovered at

Punjab Police Academy, Phillaur

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FINGER PRINT SLIP.				
CLASSIFICATION No.				
RIGHT HAND.				
Right thumb.	Right index.	Right middle.	Right ring.	Right little.
				
Fold				Fold
LEFT HAND.				
Left thumb.	Left index.	Left middle.	Left ring.	Left little.
				
Fold				Fold
LEFT HAND.		RIGHT HAND.		
Plain prints of the four fingers taken simultaneously.		Plain prints of the four fingers taken simultaneously.		

The fingerprints of the martyr.

As the nation observes the 84th martyrdom year of Shaheed Udham Singh and a film on his life won five national awards on Thursday, the freedom fighter's fingerprints lie hidden from the public eye in the closets of the Punjab Police Academy (PPA) at Phillaur.



Shaheed Udham Singh

The fingerprints were captured in 1927 when Udham Singh was arrested for holding a gathering of Ghadar Party activists. This correspondent, with the help of the Punjab Police, came across the rare document while searching for the fingerprints of Shaheed Bhagat Singh. The academy has been a repository of police case files, documents and weapons since 1860s, then known as the Military Police Force. It was rechristened the PPA in 1891. It's the first time a photo of Udham Singh's fingerprints has been published. Udham Singh had famously avenged the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of April 1919 by assassinating Michael O'Dwyer, a former colonial-era lieutenant governor, on March 13, 1940, in London.

Udham Singh, who insisted his name was Ram Mohammad Singh Azad—to show his secular preference—turned a hero back home after the assassination. He has since been a subject in books, songs, plays and films. Every year on his martyrdom day, there is a call to collect things attached to him and display those in a museum. However, many things like the fingerprints are lying hidden in government files or archives.

Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav said he was excited to know about the “discovery” of the fingerprints and happy that the PPA had preserved such an important document all these years. He assured the prints would be displayed suitably soon.

Earlier, a research from the same academy had led to the discovery of martyr Bhagat Singh's lost pistol.

While being arrested in 1927, Udham Singh was shown to be in the possession of unlicensed arms and ammunition by the British police. The copies of "prohibited" Ghadar Party paper called "Ghadr-di-Gunj" (Voice of Revolt) were also recovered. He was prosecuted and sentenced to five years in prison, a period when the fingerprints were captured.

Udham Singh's real name was Sher Singh and he belonged to Sunam. Born on December 26, 1899, to Tehal Singh and Narain Kaur, he had an elder brother, Sadhu Singh. The martyr's mother died when he was three years old and his father too passed away after some time. The brothers were adopted by the Central Khalsa orphanage and baptised as Mukta Singh and Udham Singh. The elder brother too died a few years later due to an ailment.

As per the information form, the fingerprints list the bearer's name as Sher Singh, son of Tehal Singh. These were taken on October 10, 1927. Interestingly, the prints bear a noting of April 1, 1940, also, where it seemed the prints were taken from the academy for verifying the identity of Udham Singh, who was under arrest in London on March 13, 1940, when he killed O'Dwyer.