

## On Wings of Courage

Air Force Marshal Arjan Singh, an icon of India's military history, will always be remembered as a war hero who had successfully led a young IAF during the 1965 Indo-Pak war.

The only officer to attain the highest post of Marshal, the Air Force equivalent to the Army's five star field marshal, Singh was a fearless and exceptional pilot who had flown more than 60 different types of aircraft.

He played a major role in transforming the IAF into one of the most **potent** air forces globally and the fourth biggest in the world. "His contribution to the Indian Air Force is **monumental** to the least. The IAF grew with him. He was the **epitome** of military leadership in classical sense and it is, therefore, not surprising that he was honoured with the rank of Air Force Marshal," former Vice Chief of IAF Kapil Kak said.

Singh was honoured with the rank of Marshal on the Republic Day in 2002. Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw and K M Cariappa were the only two army generals honoured with the rank of field marshal.

Known as a man of few words, Singh was not only a fearless pilot but also had profound knowledge about air power and applied it in a wide spectrum of areas. Singh had **assiduously** led the IAF during the 1965 war and denied success to Pakistani air force though it was better equipped with American support. "His most outstanding contribution was during that war," said Kak.

**Commending** his role in the war, Y B Chavan, the then Defence Minister had written: "Air Marshal Arjan Singh is a jewel of a person, quite efficient and firm; unexcitable but a very able leader."

In 1944, the Marshal had led a squadron against the Japanese during the Arakan Campaign, flying close air support missions during the crucial Imphal Campaign and later assisted the advance of the Allied Forces to Yangon (formerly *Rangoon*).

♦ *Why is Air Force Marshal Arjan Singh considered an outstanding military personality?*

- **potent** : powerful and effective
- **monumental** : of great importance, enormous.
- **epitome** : a perfect example

♦ *What personality traits of Arjan Singh are mentioned here ?*

- **assiduously** : working hard and showing careful attention to details
- **commending** : officially praising