

## #INSIGHT

# Facts About Snowflakes

Snowflakes have always fascinated the math and science world



Snowfall is beautiful and magnificent and snow is formed by an amazing process. Snowflakes have always fascinated the math and science world. They are just such neat little structures with so many varieties. However, some scientists and mathematicians have devoted their lives to studying this natural phenomenon. Learn a few interesting snowflake facts.

### Snowflakes Are Made of Ice Crystals

Snowflakes are made up of ice crystals. They form in the sky around bits of dirt. Depending on where they go in the atmosphere, snowflakes can fall to the ground as single ice crystals or they can be made of 200 or more crystals. The shape they take and how they grow is determined by temperature and humidity. So, when it's really cold, the designs are simple.

### Snowflakes Have Six Points

Typically, snowflakes will have a hexagonal shape and six points. But you can find other varieties of snowflake shapes. There are snowflakes with 12 sides, and even some in the shape of bullets. Irregular crystals of snow can also come in some unique shapes.

### There Are Several Types of Snowflakes

Generally, you will hear about five types of snowflakes: plates, columns, prisms, dendrites, and needles. But it depends on where you look. Not all scientists agree on the types of snowflakes. There is also the *Magono and Lee* classification with 80 different types. So, depending on where you look, you can find different types of snowflakes.

### Most Popular Snowflake Shape: Stellar Dendrite

Most snowflakes are pretty



unique. But, when you think of snowflake decorations, you are typically thinking of stellar dendrites. These snowflakes have six points and lots of unique patterns. They are, by far, the most popular snowflake, you'll come across in the winter.

### Snowflakes Can Get Big

Most snowflakes aren't giant. They are typically between .02 and .5 inches wide. However, snowflakes can get pretty big. In fact, the Guinness World Record holder for the largest snowflake was a whopping 15 inches wide. It was measured in January 1887 in Montana. That's bigger than a frisbee!

### Snowflakes Have Symmetry

Mathematicians and scientists alike have always been fascinated with the formation of snowflakes. Mathematicians like snowflakes because they are a wonderful example of symmetry in nature. Due to the way they are structured, you could fold a snowflake in half, and the two sides would nearly match. That's why you always create a paper snowflake by folding the paper first.

### Each Snowflake Is Unique

You might have heard that snowflakes are like fingerprints, and every one of them is unique. Well, it's true. Each snowflake takes a different path from the sky to the ground. So, each one is formed in a unique pattern that makes it one-of-a-kind. However, scientists have been able to make twin snowflakes in controlled conditions, so it is possible.

### Snow and Snowflakes Hold Most of the Fresh Water on Earth

Scientists have found that a lot of the freshwater around the world is in the form of snow. In fact, Antarctica holds about 80 percent of the world's fresh water in the form of ice and snow.

# THE JONGA, THE TANK AND THE TRAIN

Being too intelligent, and wanting to present a clean record to his superiors, he categorized the Jonga as Cat "E" (Beyond Economical Repair) and consigned to salvage. The problem now was – what to do with the Jonga which has surfaced suddenly, after more than a decade! It puzzled all the Commanders and was finally left to our tea Club Major Domo Balbir, who advised that the Jonga be pushed further into the growth. This was done promptly. Out of sight, out of mind. Balbir was awarded a bottle of rum for his brilliant consultancy. Quite possibly, the Jonga is still there, hidden in the thicket of Hasimara, more than half a century later.



Wg. Cdr. CSV Ramany, VM (G)  
The author is a retired IAF fighter pilot

## THE "HOPE YOU DISAPPEAR OUT TO NOWHERE" JONGA

Hasimara is an Air Base in the East of India, almost on the border of Bengal and Assam. Being in the East, it also had the distinction of being a part of the Eastern Air Force, which once upon a time was more of the "rowdy stepson" of its parent, the Indian Air Force. The pilots were a very boisterous lot, who, in the Hunter Aircraft, would deliver their weapons with pin-point accuracy. In the caste system of the Air Force, the ground attack pilots always considered themselves as the "upper caste", since they would be tasked to penetrate deep into enemy territory and deliver weapons. Lower in the caste system were the Air Defense boys, whose main job was to circle the Indian skies and look for enemy aircraft that may or may not appear earning them the distinction of being "lower caste".

Hasimara, which abutted the Teesta and Torsa rivers, had extremely fertile soil (anything would grow), if someone just had the inclination to scatter a few seeds on the ground. The airfield itself underwent major expansion, Over a period of time, bushes /

foliage / overgrowth covered the Jonga, nobody knew about it, except for the birds and a few animals who made it their home, there. Many years later, an energetic Base Commander from the Indian Air Force arrived and wanted all the growth cleared for 50 yards on either side of the taxi track. It was, at this time, that the Jonga was discovered. An investigation was launched into the mystery Jonga. It came to light that the two pilots who had to walk back from the breakdown thought that the driver would report the breakdown. The driver thought the pilots would report it. The Jonga was not a very reliable vehicle, and generally was parked in some obscure corner of the Mechanical Transport Section, where everybody else thought it probably was, until a few years later, where an equally energetic MT officer insisted on an inventory of all vehicles, and found that a Jonga had been missing for several years. Being too intelligent, and wanting to present a clean record to his superiors, he categorized the Jonga as Cat "E" (Beyond Economical Repair) and consigned to salvage. The problem now was what to do with the Jonga which has surfaced suddenly, after more than a decade! It puzzled all the Commanders, and was finally left to our tea Club Major Domo Balbir, who advised that the Jonga be pushed further into the growth. This was done promptly. Out of sight, out of mind. Balbir was awarded a bottle of rum for his brilliant consultancy. Quite possibly, the Jonga is still there, hidden in the thicket of Hasimara, more than half a century later.



Jonga - A Nissan Patrol made for the Indian Army.

## #THE X-FILES

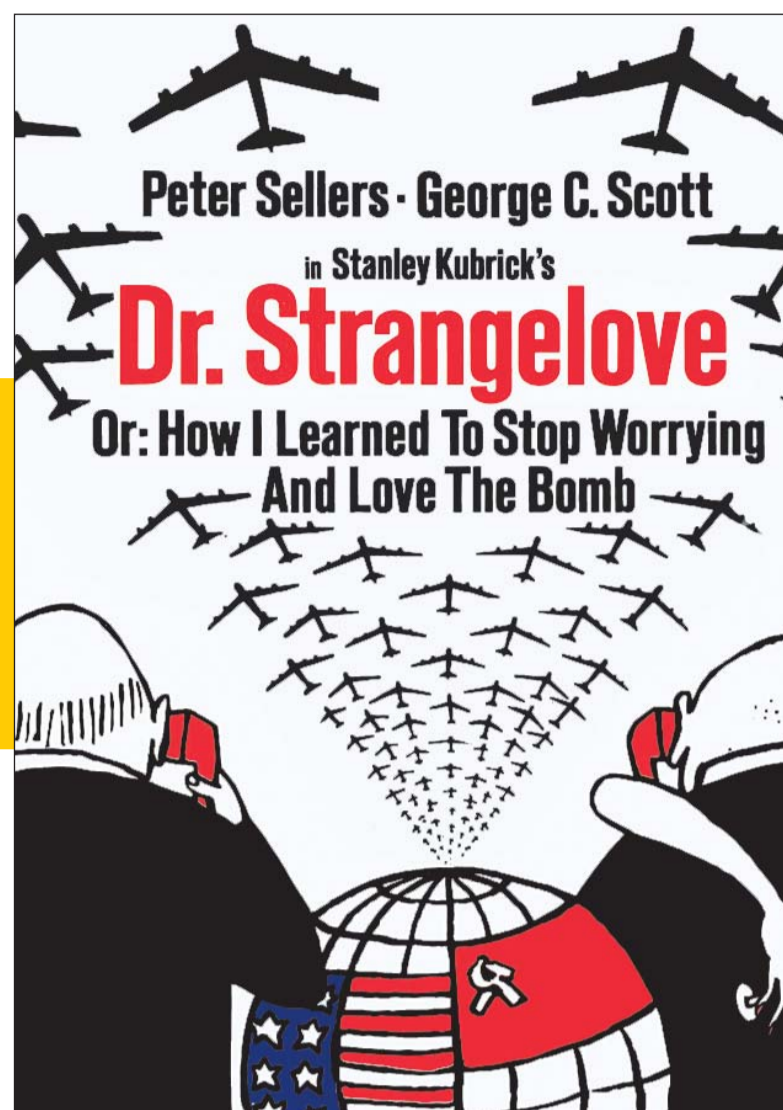
This particular tank was eventually "found" and brought back into service. The Armoured Corps Centre has its motto as "Shaurya Tejo Yudhe", taken from the Bhagavad Gita 18.43, translated into "Heroism and Boldness in Battle". It is in this Centre that a young soldier (called Sowar by the Tank men) begins his training in the Driving and Maintenance Regiment, where he earns his Driver's License after a series of stringent tests.

brought back into service. The Armoured Corps Centre has its motto as "Shaurya Tejo Yudhe", taken from the Bhagavad Gita 18.43, translated into "Heroism and Boldness in Battle". It is in this Centre that a young soldier (called Sowar by the Tank men) begins his training in the Driving and Maintenance Regiment, where he earns his Driver's License after a series of stringent tests. One such young boy, aspiring to be a tankman, cleared all his tests and was awarded the new designation of Sowar. After passing the final test, the Sowar was to drive the tank to the Tank Washing Area to clean it. The washing area was overloaded and the new Sowar was told to come back the next morning and wash/collect the tank.

On return to his barracks, the new Sowar found a telegram waiting for him that his father had expired. His Commandant had already sanctioned his full annual leave and the Sowar left for his village by the night train. The Vijayanta Tank, a 40 ton monster lay forgotten in the Tank Washing Area.

The young soldier returned from his leave. In his absence, his test results had been forwarded up the ladder, and he found that he had been posted to a Premier Combat Armoured Unit. Proud of his achievement, the Sowar hurriedly collected his movement order and moved to his new unit. The Vijayanta lay forgotten.

However, this particular tank was eventually "found" and



only in the Eastern Air Force, this train too vanished from the Eastern Railway. This mystery train was discovered on 18 December 2019, on a small railway siding of a small platform of a small village about 40 kms, short of Tinsukia. Tinsukia is around 450 kms north-east of Guwahati and about 80 kms from the Arunachal border. Sometime in 1976, the train had been placed at one of the disused sidings temporarily, as there was no place available along the platforms at the station, which in any case, was a very small one. Railway Records show that the train had reached there at 11:08 AM on 16 June 1976. The engine was disconnected from the train and brought back to the station to assist in placing of several goods wagons.

Heavy rains and flooding took place from 11:31 AM on the same day. Enquiries ordered by the Railway Board reveal that, at that point of time, the Railway Staff was totally involved in maintaining track continuity, track repairs and tackling the immediate flooding problem, as almost the entire station had been submerged in 5 to 6 feet of water. The passengers had all alighted, and with great difficulty, made their way to their various destinations, with a lot of help from the villagers.

During this period, the Station Master moved out on posting, as also some of the staff. In this period, people forgot all about this train, as it was about 2 kms from the main station, at a limb and in a deserted place. Slowly, vegetation took over the entire area. The remnants of the track leading to the rarely used siding, which had not been washed away in the flood, soon disappeared under bushes, shrubs and weeds. Snakes, birds and wild animals found the train, an ideal home, just like in the Jonga at Air Force Station, Hasimara. Most of the older lot of railway men retired. Some passed away Daniel Smith, the engine driver, emigrated to Australia in 1976. No one remembered the train.

On 5th December 2019, a satellite picture by one of the NASA satellites, which was mapping forest cover of Asia, captured the somewhat obscure, hidden and not too clear pictures of this train under a thick forest canopy. NASA felt that this was the site of a very well-camouflaged "Rail Stable" ICBM platform, which nuclear India had developed. This report was forwarded to the Pentagon. Consequently, an abnormal activity of a number of American satellites over this area was noted by ISRO, NTRO and Indian Intelligence Agencies. In the meanwhile, Russian and Chinese double agents in the Pentagon, informed their handlers in their mother countries about the suspected ICBM train, discovered by NASA in India. In a bizarre sequence of events, RAW got this information from agents on their payroll in Russia and China.

Alarm bells started ringing in the PMO (Prime Minister's Office), DIS (Defense Intelligence Agency), NIA (National Investigation Agency), the MOD (Ministry of Defence) and the CCS (Cabinet Committee on Security). All these functionaries met in a secret conclave. By an internal memo, the IHQ (Integrated HQ of Armed Forces), the Military Space Command and the SFC (Strategic Forces Command), all denied that they had placed any such ICBM loaded train at that location.

The Intelligence Bureau felt that his could be a "Dr. Strangelove Operation." This refers to a 1964 war/comedy movie, directed by Stanley Kubrick, in which a rogue US Air Force General puts the world on the verge of a nuclear catastrophe when he orders an attack on the Soviet Union. This General was Brigadier General Jack D. Ripper, commander of a B-52 Base loaded with Hydrogen bombs, who had lunatic delusions brought about by sexual impotence. Possibly, the Intelligence Bureau checked on the "sexual mores" of various Air Marshals and Generals, to find a similarity.

Ultimately, a very covert and fully armed patrol of troops from Special Forces, Marine Commandos of the Navy, Garud Commandos of the Air Force and Intelligence Officers of the National Security Agency made their way through the thickest growth and found that this was indeed the missing train from 1976. American Satellite Capacity and indeed Indian Satellite capability has increased many folds since those years. Possibly, they could locate Balbir's Jonga in Hasimara now.

(Train Story courtesy: CP Narayana) | 1111 |  
rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com

## International Mountain Day



International Mountain Day has been created so that we can embrace the wonder and magic of mountains around us. There are some truly spectacular mountains all around the world. You may have even had the pleasure of climbing one or several of them. Some of the most famous mountains include Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Fuji, and Mount Everest. It is also a good day to take some time to reflect on those who have lost their lives while attempting to do dangerous mountain climbs and to pay tribute to them.

## #J'ADORE

# Elevate Your Cold-Weather Outfits

Boots become essential with the first nip of fall and can transform the gray, blah-tinged winter months into a time of frosted exhilaration and sartorial delight.

Boots are the nuclei of cold-weather outfits. A melding of form and hardcore function, boots become essential with the first nip of fall and can transform the gray, blah-tinged winter months into a time of frosted exhilaration and sartorial delight. Despite the fact that boots are a constant winter staple, every year we see innovations that keep them feeling fresh, and this year's styles have options to capture any and every eye. If you're on the hunt for some new footwear to get you through the coldest season, you've come to the right place. Read on for the top winter boot trends of 2023-2024, all of which are sure to have you on the right foot through all the cold weather.



### Kitten Heels

Kitten heels are arguably one of the most underrated shoe styles. They're an elegant, slightly playful alternative to flats, and they're much more comfortable than their skyward cousins.

### Square-Toed



### All About Red



### Riding Boots



It's forever hip to be square, and with other square-toed shoe styles like flats trending these days, it's no wonder that boots are following suit. A strong set of right angles peeking out from underneath a pair of pleated trousers or straight leg jeans, feels modern and cool.

Shades of red — from bright candy apple to carmine and maroon — are everywhere this season, especially when it comes to shoes. No matter the hue you choose, red boots can infuse an outfit with emotion: Deep, cranberry tones are moody, while tomato red brings a shot of playful brightness to the grayest of winter days.

A longtime favourite of a slew of celebrities, tall riding boots are practical, polished, and sleek. They're a reliable go-to because they're comfortable and work with anything from slim-fitting jeans to knee-length dresses.

### Chelsea Boots



### Sock Boots



Chelsea boots look simultaneously tough and refined. Their superpowers are durability and strength, so they're ideal for stomping through icy streets, snow, and piles of leaves and they're perpetually in style. Wear them with loose-fitting jeans and an oversized button-down.

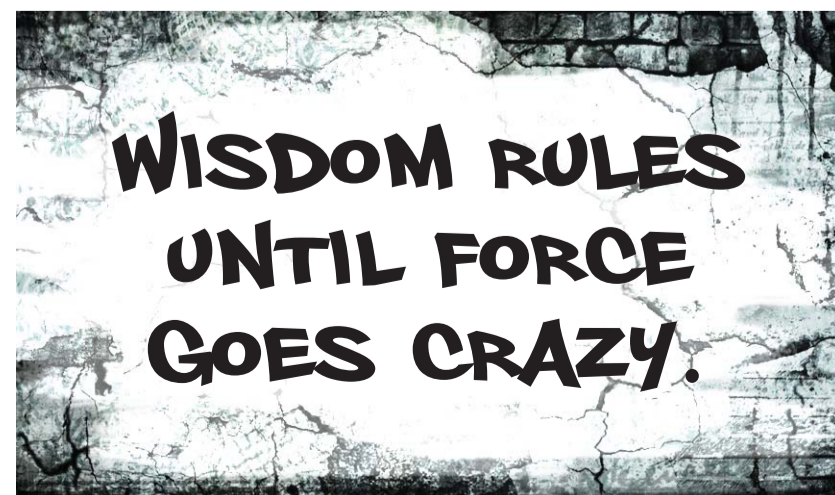
If there was a Rorschach inkblot test of winter boot trends, we imagine this style would be perceived as elf boots or sock boots, depending on the person. Either way, they're graceful and ideal for evening outings. Think of them as the cold-weather equivalent of ballet flats, and wear them with opaque tights and a dress of any length.

### Buckled In



Whether you go for motorcycle, combat, or a different direction entirely, buckled boots can infuse any outfit with a bit of attitude — in a good way.

## THE WALL

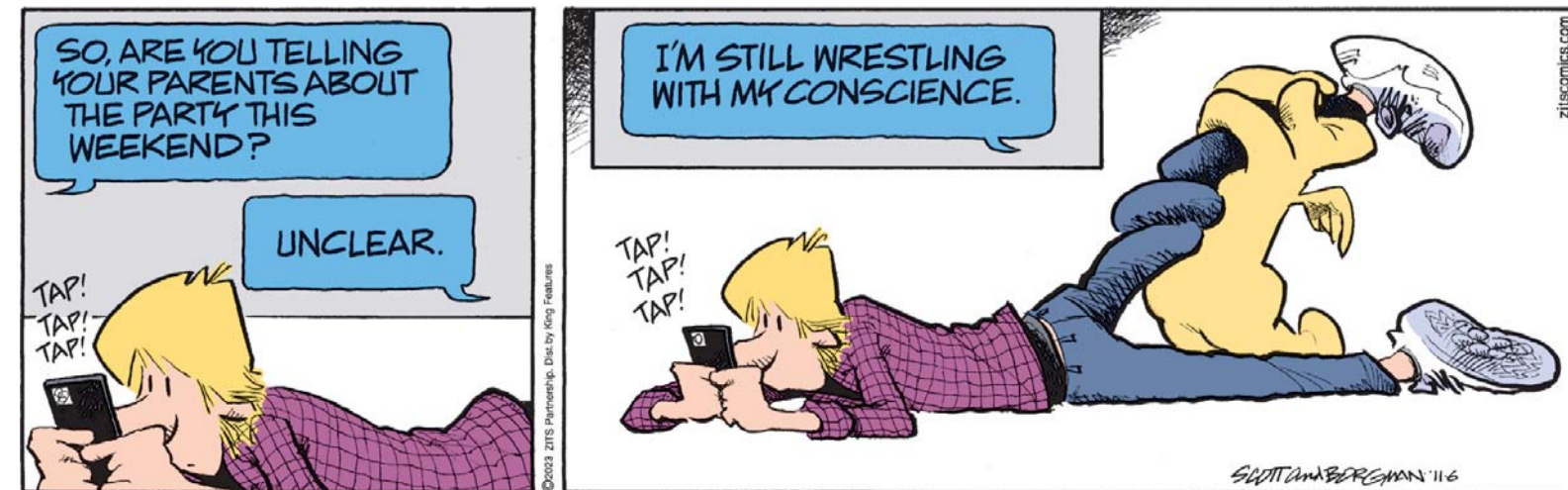


## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman