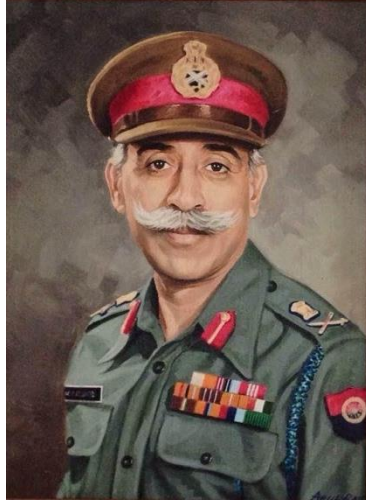




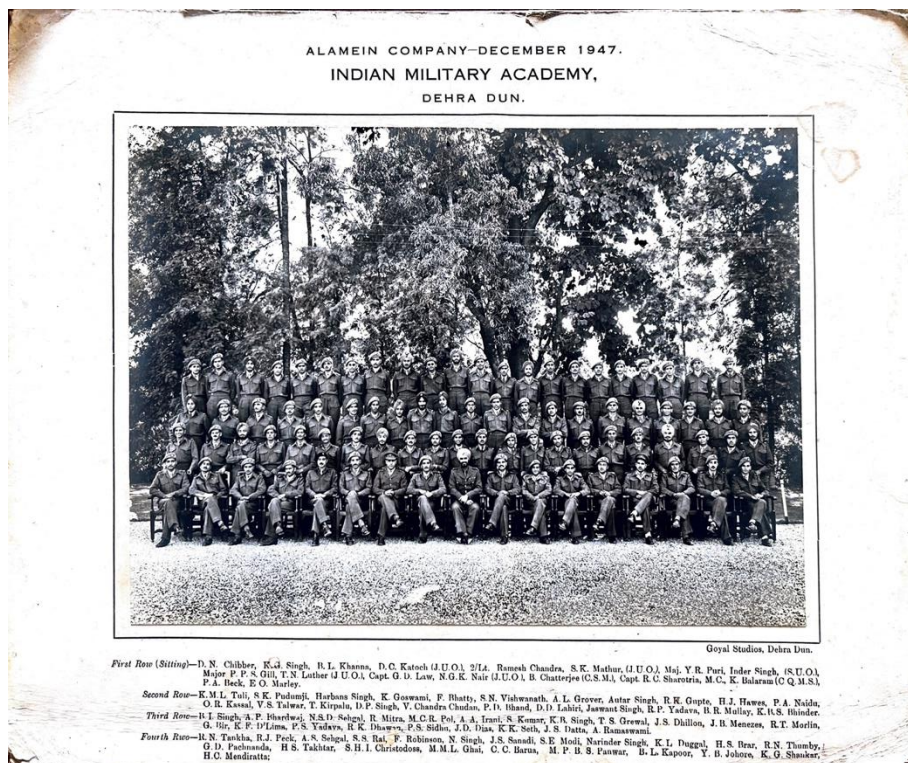
रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



**LIEUTENANT GENERAL KRISHNASWAMI GOWRI SHANKAR (Then
BRIGADIER)**

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-3999
RANK	Lieutenant General (Then Brigadier)
NAME	Krishnaswami Gowri Shankar
SON OF	Pinayur Krishnaswami Sastri
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Chingleput, Tamil Nadu
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	Corps of Signals
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	12 September 1948
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Maha Vir Chakra/ 05 December 1971
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	Indo-Pak War 1971
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	

Lieutenant General (then Brigadier) Krishnaswami Gowri Shankar was born on 16 October 1927, to Shri Pinayur Krishnaswami Shastri and Kamakshi Shastri, at Chingleput, Tamil Nadu. He completed his education from St Joseph's High School, Chingleput, Tamil Nadu, Madras Christian College, Chennai and graduated from Pachaiyappa's College, Chennai. He was commissioned in the Corps of Signals on 12 September 1948 as part of Third Course of the Indian Military Academy. Lieutenant General Gowri Shankar was married to Radha Gowri Shankar and had two children, a son, Lieutenant General Gautam Ravindranath, PVSM, VSM, SM who retired as the DGMS (Army) and a daughter, Matangi Gowri Shankar. Lieutenant General Gautam Ravindranath, PVSM, VSM, SM (retd) passed away in 2018, a few years after his retirement.



Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar

In 1960, Lieutenant General Krishnaswami Gowri Shankar attended the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and on graduation was posted as Brigade Major (BM) – a coveted post, to 191 Inf Bde. In 1964, as 2IC, he raised 9 Infantry Division Signal Regiment (Pine Tree) and subsequently commanded the Regiment. In 1965 as 2IC of the regiment he was responsible for securing communications for the entire eastern sector during the 1965 aggression by Pakistan. He was amongst the very few Signals officers who went into the general cadre and held very significant roles in the Indian Army. In 1966, he was posted as GSO 1 Ops - 5 Mountain Division. 1967, as an Instructor at DSSC Wellington, he worked closely with Field Marshal Manekshaw, then Commandant DSSC. In 1968, he commanded Eastern Command Signal Regiment. In 1969, he was Col GS, 2 Mountain Division in North East. In the year 1971, he was promoted as Brigadier and assumed charge of 86 Infantry Brigade (now known as the DBN Brigade).¹

¹ @ The GAP team is deeply grateful to Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar for providing us with documents, information, and photographs of Lt Gen Krishnaswami Gowri Shankar, MVC.



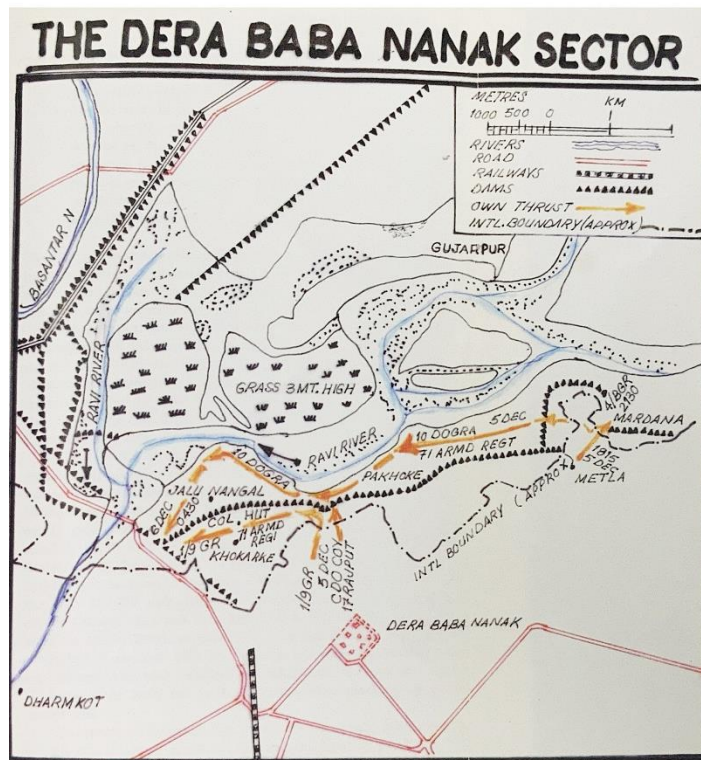
Major KG Shankar as a student at the Defence Services Staff College
 Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar

The Corps of Signals was formed after a notification was issued as a Special Army Order dated February 3, 1911, for the Organisation of two Signal Companies, this led to the formation of first Signal Units, 31st and 32nd Divisional Signal Companies. The Units were raised at Fatehgarh in present day Uttar Pradesh. Lieutenant Colonel SH Powell, Royal Engineers, was the founder and first head of the Indian Signal Service, which later became the Indian Signal Corps. Previously, battlefield communications were managed by the Sappers within the Indian Army Corps of Engineers, established in 1777. The Corps expanded with the formation of the 33rd and 34th Divisional Signal Companies in Ahmednagar, and the beginning of the 41st Wireless Squadron in Roorkee on March 1, 1911. Following India's independence in 1947, Brigadier CHI Acehurst became its first head. Post the wars of 1965 and 1971, the Corps underwent significant growth, receiving regimental colours on February 20, 1965, and again on February 15, 1981.

India gained Independence in 1947, and the partition resulted in the creation of Pakistan. The foundation of Pakistan was laid by the Muslim League based on the two-nation theory. Pakistan comprised two wings- East and West Pakistan which were geographically separated by 1600 kms Indian territory. The two wings of Pakistan were culturally and linguistically different and the diversities between the two wings could not be bridged by an emotional appeal to religion. Consequently, fissures started erupting in the political body of Pakistan soon after the Independence and with each passing year it widened. In the absence of appropriate defence arrangements, the people of East Pakistan felt isolated and abandoned. Finally, the malfeasance of Pakistani leadership during Cyclone Bhola and the overwhelming support for the Awami League in the 1970 elections, proved the proverbial last straw on the camel's back.² The Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (of East Pakistan) secured an absolute majority in the general elections held in December 1970. This entitled the League to form a Government in Pakistan. However, Pakistan's military rulers denied this democratic right to the Awami League, in connivance with the PPP, led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This arbitrary act of

government caused deep resentment among the population of East Pakistan resulting in widespread protests. When the slide became unmanageable, the Pakistani rulers resorted to a midnight crackdown on 25 March 1971. The government ordered a military crackdown and the Pakistan army under Lieutenant General Tikka Khan unleashed a reign of terror and massacred thousands of Bengalis in a genocide codenamed ‘Operation Searchlight’. Pakistan launched its attack against India on 03 December 1971. The Indo-Pak War of 1971 was the first war when the Indian Government engaged all three services on a large scale.

On 05 December, 1971, the 86 Infantry Brigade, led by Brigadier Gowri Shankar, received orders to eliminate the Pakistani bridgehead across the River Ravi, North of Dera Baba Nanak. Dera Baba Nanak, situated approximately 40 kilometers North of Amritsar, holds strategic significance due to Indian and Pakistani enclaves located North and South of River Ravi. The Indian enclave is called Kasowal and the Pakistani enclave is called Jassar.



Map

Source: The India - Pakistan war of 1971 A History

The Pakistani enclave of Jassar encompasses the southern end of the Ravi road-rail bridge, crucial for integrating Pakistan's communication network with Punjab. It lies close to Dera Baba Nanak, offering strategic routes to major Punjab towns like Gurdaspur, Batala, Beas, and Amritsar. A decisive armored advance from this enclave could potentially capture Gurdaspur, flank defenses of Amritsar and Pathankot, and exert pressure towards Jammu and Kashmir. The Pak occupation of the town could, therefore, disrupt the Indian defence.

Similarly, the Indian Kasowal enclave provides a significant bridgehead for operations against Jassar and Narowal defenses. Jassar serves as a pivotal railway station and communication hub on the Pasrur-Narowal-Shakargarh road. Both enclaves are fortified with defenses to prevent surprise attacks, including Dhussi and ring bunds used for flood control and defensive barriers.

After the preemptive strike by Pakistan on 03 December, India decided to eliminate the Pak enclave there. As the area was marshy and covered by thick growth of elephant grass, kikar and shisham trees, the strength and disposition of Pak forces could not be assessed accurately. However, it was estimated that there were three Ranger Posts in addition to a network of defences occupied by units of the regular army. At Dera Baba Nanak, where India launched the operation (OP Akal), the layout of the terrain was as follows:

At the Eastern end of the Dera Baba Nanak bridge, there were four bunds: the Depth Bund, Rail Bund, Road Bund, and River Bund. Pakistan had positioned one company of soldiers there, along with their headquarters and heavy guns.

Branching off from the Rail Bund was Dhussi Bund, which stretched eastward towards a ranger post named Mardana. This area had several fortified positions with concrete defenses, including a small building known as the Colonel's Hut. The Pakistani commander stationed a company here, supported by machine guns and recoilless guns.

South of the Dhussi Bund were seven smaller mounds covered in scrub vegetation, known as the Ring Bunds. The same Pakistani Company defending the Dhussi Bund also protected this area. Further West, on the opposite bank of the Ravi River, were the Western End and Dry Tree End. Pakistan had fortified these areas heavily with concrete defenses along the riverbanks and two embankments near the bridge. They had deployed two Companies of regular army troops in this area, showing its importance in their defensive strategy.

86 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier Gowri Shankar planned to attack the enemy from the rear with infantry and armour. The operation involved a long march through an unknown area covered by sarkanda grass and also crossing of the river. The plan was put into action at 1700 hours on 05 December, when a Company of 4/8 GORKHA RIFLES moved towards the Metla enclave, and secured it by 1815 hours, despite Pak interference from Gujartur and Mardana. Simultaneously, 17 RAJPUT and a Brigade Commando Company, captured area '7r' by 1840 hours and then, pressing on towards Colonel's Hut, cleared the area Copse by 2230 hours. They secured the crossing site for armour and infantry columns on river Ravi, early in the morning.

Night Of Fall Of A 'Fortress'

From Our Special Representative
 DERA BABA NANAK, Dec 27.—
 The Indian Tricolour today flutters
 proudly atop the hillock adjacent
 to the Dera Baba Nanak bridge
 across the Ravi from the very
 place which the Pakistanis had
 built into an impenetrable fortress.
 And this sleepy village scene of a
 heroic night's battle three weeks
 ago, has suddenly become the
 show-piece of Punjab after Indian
 forces led by the recipient of the
 Maha Vir Chakra, Brig Gowri
 Shankar, imposed a crushing de-
 feat on Pakistan and seized 4
 sq km of its territory.

The Pakistanis took five years
 to build their defences in the
 Dera Baba Nanak (or DBN) as the
 Army refers to it) enclave and
 had entrenched themselves there
 securely. If logic has any place
 in war, there was no reason for
 them to have fled as they did on
 the night of December 5.

They had 28 fortifications, spread
 over 10 miles in a line across the
 boundary. No hastily improvised
 dug-outs these. Each of them a
 concrete structure, well camouflaged
 under thick mud roofings, with
 long brick tunnels connecting

bunkers and pillboxes. Special
 tank guns which never had to sur-
 face on the ground. Every con-
 ceivable approach area heavily



Brig Gauri Shankar

mined. A first rate communication
 system. Long lines of mud bunds
 well concealed under thick bushes
 of wild grass. Two pairs of mortar

posts and any number of defence

posts.
 Yet, when the Indian forces
 mounted the attack in the evening,
 the battle was over before dawn.
 Pakistani officers were the first
 to flee, quickly followed by the
 troops. And repeating the 1965
 pattern, the retreating troops blew
 up two western spans of the DBN
 bridge fearing that the advancing
 Indian troops would rush along
 deeper into their territory across
 the Ravi.

Why did they give up when they
 had apparently entrenched them-
 selves so well? "Sheer tactical sur-
 prise", said Brig Gowri Shankar.
 For one thing, the Pakistanis never
 expected the Indians to attack;
 they themselves were planning to
 mount an offensive the previous
 night.

Secondly, the attack came from
 two unexpected directions. In a
 neat flanking operation, Brig
 Gowri Shankar marched a section
 of his infantry and a handful of
 tanks through a circuitous route
 made them cross the river at a
 strategic point, cut through the
 eight-foot wide earthen bunds

manually, and surprised the enemy
 from his rear. And through another
 column, he kept up the pressure
 from a forward position simul-
 taneously. Badly trapped, and with
 all their vantage points blocked,
 the Pakistanis' initial resistance
 collapsed in a matter of hours.

However, the battle itself was
 not all that simple as it sounds.
 Though Brig Gowri Shankar had
 to employ a novel strategy of
 stack, the course of battle called
 for several modifications in plans.
 This he was able to do because
 he was in the thick of the fight in
 the frontline while enemy tanks
 and MMG and artillery were firing
 all round him, with shells falling
 within inches of his command
 position.

Undaunted, he kept up a barrage
 of orders and instructions to his
 men till the enemy had been com-
 pletely encircled. His initial plan
 of attack had to be changed half
 way through battle when the ex-
 istence of enemy fortifications was
 discovered.

Brig Gowri Shankar swiftly made
 modifications without losing the
 momentum of attack and ensured
 that his advancing column reach-
 ed the enemy's rear positions and
 surprised him.

Brig Gowri Shankar, a dapper
 young officer who is easily identi-
 fied by his bushy moustache, is a
 Signals man who perfected an in-
 genious communication system
 through which he could simul-
 taneously direct a three-pronged
 attack on the DBN enclave.

"In retrospect", he says, "I think
 three things counted on that night.
 First, our strategy of tactical sur-
 prise overwhelmed the enemy.
 Second, our boys displayed enor-
 mous bravery and capacity for
 co-ordination. You
 should have been there that night
 to see the Dogras and the Gorkhas
 in action. They are the finest
 soldiers you can come across. And,
 third, our armour gave us first
 class support, and the best part of
 it is that though we pulverized
 many of their tanks, we came out
 unscathed."

THREE-PRONGED ATTACK

Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar

Phase I of the attack launched at 1700 hours on 05 December, also included the securing of FUP, about 180 meters to the North-East of Colonel's Hut and Ring Bund No 7, by 0300 hours on 6 December. But, 10 DOGRA and 71 Armoured Regiment could not advance swiftly due to marshy ground and mist and reached crossing site No.1 much behind schedule (2135 hours). The Dogras found the site inconvenient, and therefore, moved towards '7r' to attempt a crossing, which they reached by 2345 hours. As it would have taken 10 DOGRA two hours more to reach the FUP, 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES was ordered to launch Phase II of the attack, to capture Colonel's Hut and Ring Bund No 6. The Gorkhas launched an attack on Dhussi Bund, undeterred by incessant firing by the defenders entrenched in concrete pillboxes, bunkers and trenches. They captured the Colonel's Hut after hand-to-hand fighting by 0230 hours and cleared 'T' Junction by 0600 hours on 6 December, thus reaching up to the eastern end.

The capture of Colonel's Hut by the Gorkhas went a long way in helping the 10 DOGRA attack on the Eastern Bund at 0325 hours. The Dogra attack from the rear came as a surprise to the defenders but they gave a tough fight and at some places had to be silenced by lobbing hand-grenades into the pillboxes. The Eastern Bund was captured by 0430 hours on 06 December, with close fire support by 71 Armoured Regiment and 42 Field Regiment. This completed Phase III, that is the final phase, of the operation. 17 RAJPUT, who had provided the firm base for the operation, finally cleared the Khokarke and Sandhawan Posts.



Brigadier KG Shankar with his Soldiers

Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar

The Pakistanis made a counterattack on the night of 06/07 December, but the Indian troops foiled it with the help of concentrated artillery fire. Another Pak attempt on the night of 07/08 December was also foiled. In desperation the Pakistanis destroyed the first pier of the Dera Baba Nanak bridge. In this operation, the Pakistanis suffered 34 killed and 26 POWs. Indians suffered 10 killed, 32 wounded and three missing.

During the battle for the capture of the Eastern end of the bridge, Captain Devinder Singh Ahlawat displayed great courage in silencing a machine gun nest that was causing heavy casualties to his troops. With total disregard for his life, he charged the pillbox and threw a grenade inside it to destroy the gun crew. In this effort he lost his life. For his outstanding courage he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, posthumously.



MAHA VIR CHAKRA WINNERS: (left to right) Brig. Krishna Swami Gowri Shankar, Lt. Col. Kashmiri Lal Rattan and Lt. Col. Rattan Nath Sharma.



FIFTH LIST ANNOUNCED 3 more Maha Vir, 32 Vir Chakras awarded

Three army officers were decorated with Maha Vir Chakra and 32 more with Vir Chakra awards in the fifth list announced on Friday, reports PTI.

The first Kirti Chakra has been awarded to an engineer officer, Major Shaominia Kumar Sharma. The list of the awards by the President for gallantry during the 14-day war with Pakistan takes the number of MVC winners to 34 and that of VC winners to 28.

Three Sainya Chakra (with 24 Sena Medals, 3 Nazama) and 4 more Vayu Sena Medals were also announced on Friday. Eighty-nine men are mentioned in despatches.

Brig. Krishna Swami Gowri Shankar (IC-7641) & Sikh, Lt. Col. Kashmiri Lal Rattan (IC-7661) & Sikh and Lt. Col. Rattan Nath Sharma (IC-7641) & Sikh.

Brig. Krishna Swami Gowri Shankar (IC-7641) & Sikh, Lt. Col. Kashmiri Lal Rattan (IC-7661) & Sikh and Lt. Col. Rattan Nath Sharma (IC-7641) & Sikh. He organised the defence with great professional skill. When his battalion area was subjected to fierce enemy attacks, he moved from company to company, with total disregard to his personal safety, inspiring his men to hold their ground and beat back the enemy. His determination, courage and leadership were directly responsible for repulsing enemy attacks and inflicting heavy casualties to the enemy.

Lt. Col. Rattan Nath Sharma (IC-7661) & Sikh. He showed outstanding courage, initiative and leadership of a high order in his battalion's attack on an important feature the capture of which was considered vital. During the fierce fighting in the course of this attack, he set a personal example. Undeterred by heavy enemy fire, he was in the forefront and led his men to victory by exceptional courage and leadership.



Images of the Battlefield

Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar



Planners and executioners of the battle of Dera Baba Nanak on River Ravi: Lt Col NS Sandhu, MVC with Lt Gen KP Candeth GOC-IN-C, Western Command, Maj Gen BM Bhattacharya, GOC 15 Inf Div, Brig Gowri Shankar, MVC, Commander 86 Inf Bde Lt Col (later Brig) BS Chimni

Source: The Gallant Dogras: An Illustrated History of the Dogra Regiment by Shankar Prasad

Brigadier Gowri Shankar was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra for his outstanding leadership during the battle of Dera Baba Nanak. It was first time in the history of Indian Military Operations that the entire Brigade was awarded the Battle Honour. 06 December is celebrated as DBN day by all formations who participated in the war.



Brigadier KG Shankar receiving Maha Vir Chakra
Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar

In 1973, he attended the coveted National Defence College Course. In 1974, he commanded 31 Inf Bde in Jamnagar. He was promoted to Major General in 1975, and took over command of 39 Inf Division. He became the Chief of Staff Northern Command, and in 1977. In 1978 he took over as Director Military Intelligence and went on to become the first Director General, Military Intelligence. He was the one of the longest serving Director General, Military Intelligence until 1983.



Brig. K G Shankar in the National Defence College Course of 1973

Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar

He later rose to the rank of Lieutenant General in March 1981. Between 1983 to June 1985 he was the GoC XI Corps. He held dual responsibility as Corps Commander and Security Advisor to the Governor of Punjab, before he was appointed as a full time advisor in June 1985. He was responsible for Home Affairs, Law & Order And Justice. During the 1984 Operation Woodrose, he played a key role in securing the Indian Borders and was responsible for Internal Security. He was a key figure in Punjab in the post Op Bluestar phase working very closely with the then Prime Ministers.



Lt Gen Gowri Shankar's Medals were donated by Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar to the Corps of Signals Museum on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee in 1986

Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar



Lt Gen KG Shankar as GoC XI Corps & Advisor to Governor of Punjab
Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar

During the peak of insurgency, in September 1985, he ensured the safe conduct of free elections in the state of Punjab and went to Chennai on 06 October on a spot of leave. However, it was during his stay in Chennai when he breathed his last. He died on 10 October 1985 – while in service, three weeks before his retirement. At the time of his passing, he was the Col Commandant of the Intelligence Corps. He was cremated with full military honours on 10 October 1985 in Chennai.



1976 Yol Camp —Maj Gen KG Shankar, MVC with his Family
Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar



A New Bust of Lt Gen Gowri Shankar, MVC in the Heroes Corner in the Signals Museum at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh

Source: Mrs. Radha Gowrishankar and Ms. Matangi Gowrishankar

CITATION

Brigadier KRISHNASWAMI GOWRI SHANKAR (1C-3999)
{Effective date of award—5th December 1971)

Brigadier Krishnaswami Gowri Shankar was commanding an infantry brigade which was responsible for the defence of Dera Baba Nanak on the Western Front. His brigade was given the task of capturing a well prepared and heavily fortified enemy locality, which was held in strength by the enemy. He showed boldness and originality in the planning of the attack. During the attack he was always in the forefront, directing operations and exercising personal control, undeterred by heavy enemy tank, medium machine gun and artillery fire. By his presence with the forward troops, sharing their hardships and dangers, he not only inspired confidence but was able to modify the plans to ensure speed and maintain the momentum of the attack. His skill and inspiring presence ensured success of this attack with heavy losses to the enemy. During this action, Brigadier Krishnaswami Gowri Shankar displayed conspicuous gallantry, outstanding leadership and determination.

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