



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



COLONEL JOJAN THOMAS

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-45618
RANK	Colonel
NAME	Jojan Thomas
SON OF	Late Captain PA Thomas & Mrs. Aleyamma Thomas
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Kuttoor, Kerala
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	45 Rashtriya Rifles / 11 JAT
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	March 1986
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Ashok Chakra / 22 August 2008
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	Operation Rakshak
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Colonel Jojan Thomas was born on 22 July 1965 in Kuttoor village, Thiruvalla District of Kerala to an Army veteran Captain PA Thomas. He was the eldest among the four brothers. Colonel Thomas's family had deep roots in the military, with his two brothers also serving in the Armed Forces. He was commissioned into the Indian Army in March 1986. Colonel Thomas was married to Mrs Beena Jojan Thomas. They have two children— a daughter Meghana Jojan Thomas, who is a Commercial Pilot, married to an Army Officer, and a son Philemon Thomas. He did his early schooling from Kendriya Vidyalaya, Meerut, and later joined DAV College Meerut. ¹

During the Counter Insurgency Operations in Jammu and Kashmir, he was deployed as the Commanding Officer of 45 Rashtriya Rifles. Col Jojan Thomas was commissioned into 11 JAT of the famed JAT Regiment and was sent on deputation to 45 Rashtriya Rifles in 2008 to undertake anti-terrorist operations.² Before moving to 45 RR, he already had 20 years of experience of serving in various operational areas. He had been in Army Aviation as a Helicopter Pilot, as well as served as a Senior Instructor in Army Service Corps Centre and College. He had also been posted as the General Staff -1, (Operations) in the Corps Headquarters at Dimpur.

Pakistan has been, since independence, aiding and abetting terrorism in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Since 2019, Jammu and Kashmir is a region administered by India as a union territory. The role Indian Army is mandated to safeguard National Interests from External Aggression and Internal Subversion. The Indian Army is committed to bringing down the levels of violence to "manageable levels" in Jammu and Kashmir so as to restore the confidence of the people and create a secure environment to facilitate smooth governance and socio economic development. Army's focus is on conducting of surgical and professional operations based on hard intelligence, while cause minimum inconvenience to the local populace. Simultaneously, the focus has been on destruction of terrorist infrastructure, resulting in a large number of hideouts being busted and recovery of huge caches of arms and ammunition.³

The continuous employment of Army in Counter Insurgency duties along with existing conventional threat, warranted a specially structure and organised force to deal with India's Internal Security situation. Rashtriya Rifles was raised on 01 October 1990 by then Chief of Army Staff General VN Sharma as the premier fighting force of Indian Army. The Force is engaged in constant counter terrorism operations. The Force has fully justified its deployment in Jammu and Kashmir by creating secure environment leading to incident free elections, carried out flood relief

¹ Mrs Been Thomas, Email to the Gallantry Awards Portal, 29 August 2023

² The Gallant Hero of the "OP NAO NAR" Colonel Jojan Thomas, AC (Posthumous), Sainik Samachar, 04 August 2023
<https://sainiksamachar.nic.in/press-realease-details/5941>

³Counter Terrorist Operations in Jammu and Kashmir, Indian Army <https://indianarmy.nic.in/KnowYourArmy/know-your-army-main/counter-terrorist-operations-in-jammu-and-kashmir-operations-un-mission>



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operations, impacted the quality of life of locals in addition to have been involved in continuous operations against terrorists. The personnel in Rashtriya Rifles units come on deputation from all arms and services of Indian Army. Till 2017, the units of Rashtriya Rifles have repeatedly proved their mettle and have earned 7 Ashok Chakras, 34 Kirti Chakras, 238 Shaurya Chakras, 1637 Sena Medals and 67 Chief of Army Staff Unit Citations. ⁴

On 22 August 2008, around 0330 hours, Colonel Thomas received information about the presence of terrorists in the dense forests of Machhal, located in the Kupwara District of Jammu and Kashmir. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, a decision was made to launch an operation to swiftly apprehend or neutralise the terrorists. Understanding the significance of the mission, Colonel Thomas opted to personally lead the operation, accompanied by his unit's troops.

The team swiftly located the terrorists, leading to an intense and fierce exchange of gunfire. In the course of the operation, Colonel Thomas eliminated two terrorists from close quarters. Despite sustaining severe gunshot wounds, he showed absolute disregard for his own safety and engaged in a fierce hand-to-hand combat with a third terrorist, successfully neutralising him. During the operation, Colonel Thomas and his team managed to eliminate a total of six militants.

Colonel Thomas eventually succumbed to his injuries, making the ultimate sacrifice in service of the nation. In recognition of his exceptional courage, unwavering leadership, and supreme sacrifice, Colonel Jojan Thomas was posthumously honoured with the *Ashoka Chakra*, the highest peacetime gallantry award bestowed by the nation. Mrs Beena Thomas, wife of the gallant officer, received the Ashok Chakra from President Pratibha Patil on 26 January 2009.

⁴27th Raising Day Rashtriya Rifles, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Defence
<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=171314>



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CITATION

Colonel Jojan Thomas (IC-45618), 45 Rashtriya Rifles (Posthumous)

(Effective Date of Award: 22 August 2008)

On 22 August, 2008, at about 0330 hours, Colonel Jojan Thomas, Commanding Officer of 45 Rashtriya Rifles Battalion deployed in Jammu and Kashmir established contact with a group of terrorists. He immediately rushed to the area with available troops in pursuit of the terrorists in the thick forests.

Soon a fierce firefight ensued between the terrorists and the pursuit parties. Leading from the front, Colonel Thomas eliminated two terrorists from close quarters. In the process he sustained severe gunshot wounds. In spite of this, he refused to be evacuated and in a daring act, rolled down the cliff to surprise a terrorist who had taken a concealed position and was attacking with effective fire. In a fierce hand-to-hand fight, he eliminated the third dreaded terrorist. However, he later succumbed to his injuries.

Colonel Jojan Thomas displayed exemplary leadership and exceptional gallantry in eliminating three hardcore terrorists and made the supreme sacrifice for the nation.