



रक्षा मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
**DEFENCE**



**SUBEDAR AND HONORARY CAPTAIN (THEN HAVILDAR) BIR BAHADUR  
PUN**

<b>SERVICE NUMBER</b>	5032571
<b>RANK</b>	Subedar and Honorary Captain (Then Havildar)
<b>NAME</b>	Bir Bahadur Pun
<b>SON OF</b>	Dete Pun
<b>RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE</b>	Piuthan, Nepal
<b>UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS</b>	5/1 GORKHA RIFLES
<b>SERVICE</b>	Indian Army
<b>DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION</b>	12 November 1956
<b>AWARD/DATE OF ACTION</b>	Maha Vir Chakra/ 04 December 1971
<b>WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION</b>	Indo-Pak War of 1971
<b>OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE</b>	

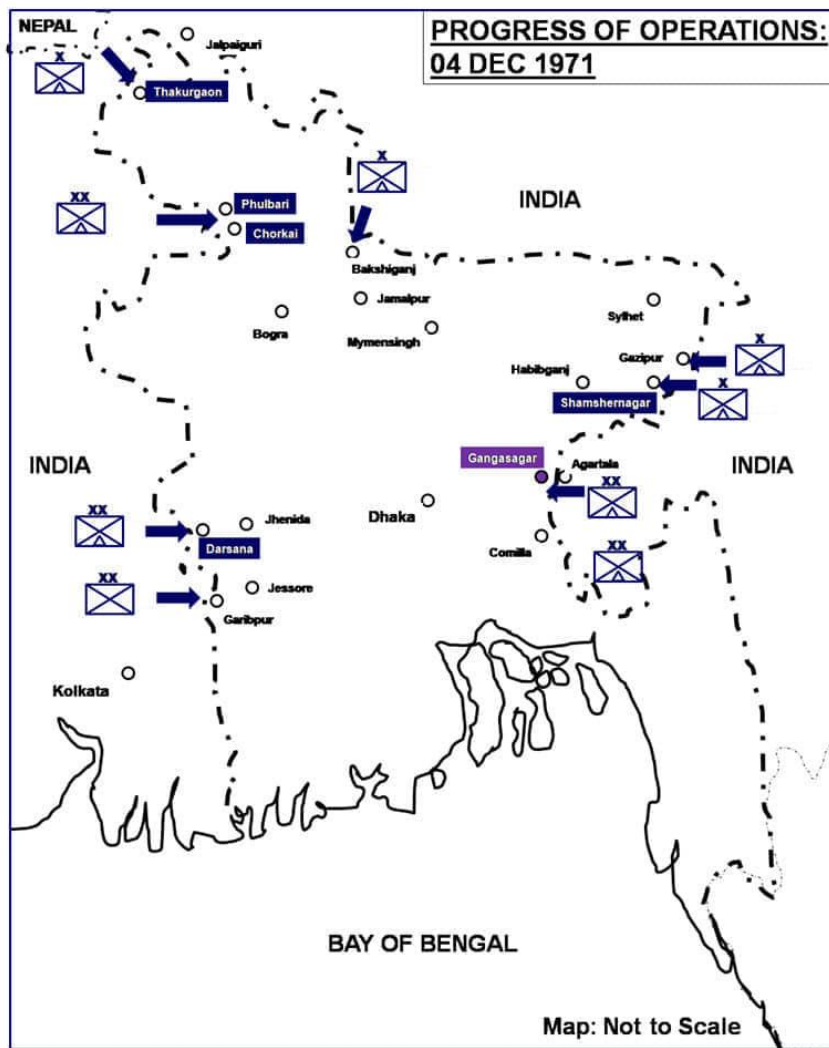
Subedar and Honorary Captain (Then Havildar) Bir Bahadur Pun was born on the 01 July 1939, to Shri Dete Pun, in Piuthan District of Nepal. He was enrolled in the 1st Battalion of the 1st Gorkha Rifles Regiment on 12 November 1956. He was later transferred to 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES. By the year 1971, he rose to the rank of Havildar, commanding a Platoon in one of the Rifle Companies of the 5th Battalion. Back then, the 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Chittoor Venugopal, MVC

The first Battalion of Gurkha Regiment (now Gorkha Rifles) was raised in 1815 during the Anglo-Nepalese war. Impressed by the qualities displayed by Gurkhas during the war, the British started active recruitment of Gurkhas into the British Indian Army. After the partition, in 1947 six Gurkha Regiments viz, 1 GR, 3 GR, 4 GR, 5 GR, 8 GR and 9 GR remained with the Indian Army, while 2 GR, 6 GR, 7 GR and 10 GR were transferred to British Army as part of the Tripartite Agreement signed between India, Nepal and Britain. Post-independence 11 GORKHA RIFLES was re-raised on 01 January 1948. Since independence, the Gorkhas have proved their mettle in Sino-India War of 1962 where a Gorkha Battalion fought under the most demanding conditions on the Namka Chu in NEFA (Now Arunachal Pradesh). Later, the Gorkha Battalions also involved in Indo-Pak War of 1965 and 1971. Their motto is 'Kafar Hunu Bhandu Marnu Ramro' (Better to die than live like a coward). In the Sino-India War of 1962, the regiment was posted in the North-East Frontier Agency Sector (NEFA) and fought valiantly in the crucial battles in Namka Chu Sector. The Gorkha's have contributed many Chiefs to the Indian Army these include General SHFJ Manekshaw, MC who went on to become India's first Field Marshal, General GG Bewoor PVSM, PB, General Dalbir Singh Suhag, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC and General Bipin Rawat PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, ADC who was India's first CDS as well as General Anil Chauhan PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, the present CDS.

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. 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 code-named '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. India unfolded its plan of attack in East Pakistan following pre-emptive air strikes from Pakistan on 03 December 1971. Jessore was one of the most fortified positions in East Pakistan. The Indian II Corps was pitted against Pakistan's force in the Jessore-Jhenida sector.

After pre-emptive Pakistan air strikes of 03 December, India unfolded its plan of attack in East Pakistan. Indian II Corps, IV Corps, XXXIII Corps and 101 CZA squeezed Pakistan from four directions and in a lightning attack captured East Pakistan in 13 days. To begin with, the Indian II Corps was pitted against the following Pak forces in Jessore-Jhenida sector.



Map

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4 Mountain Division, under Major General MS Brar, was given the operational responsibility of the Jhenida-Kushtia Sector, which was bound in the North by the Ganga, and in the South by the Jibannagar-Kaliganj-Jhenida-Faridpur road. The important North-South highway in this sector passed from the Hardinge Bridge in the North to Jessore in the South-East, via Kushtia and Jhenida.

The border area on the Indian side was well linked with a network of roads. While Hardinge Bridge provided the railway link between the North-Western and South-Western Sectors, the ferries at Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat located in this area, provided suitable approaches to

Dhaka. There were two main river obstacles in this Sector, viz., Ganga in the North, and Garai-Madhumati in the East. The latter had a span of approximately 1,200 feet, and a depth of 40 feet in December and was not bridged anywhere along its course. Although the border area from Meherpur to Chaugacha, along the general line Chuadanga-Kotchandpur-Chaugacha was dotted with bils (marshes) for about 20 km, this Sector was better suited for tank operations as compared to the 9 Infantry Division area, South of Jessore. Jhenida was the most important communication centre in this Sector, as it lay at the junction of the Kushtia-Jessore and Meherpur-Faridpur highways. It was built as a theatre fortress. Kushtia was another important nodal point, linking up Hardinge Bridge in the Northwest and Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat ferries in the East with railways. Besides, there were two main lateral roads running east-west to the main ferries on the Ganga.

4 Mountain Division less one Brigade had been tasked to capture the nodal points at Jhenida and Magura with a view to securing the ferry sites on the Madhumati River and thereafter, those on Padma River at Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat. It was to capture Jibannagar by D plus 2, Kotchandpur by D plus 4, Kalinganj by D plus 6, Jhenida by D plus 8, and Magura and ferry sites on the Madhumati River by D plus 11. Subsequently, the Division was either to secure Faridpur and the main ferry site at Goalundo Ghat, or to carry out mopping up operations in area Kushtia and Hardinge Bridge. If necessary, it could also be moved to Bogra Sector under XXXIII Corps for mopping up operations.

One Mountain Brigade, with a Mountain Battery was to act as Corps reserve. Initially, one Battalion each from this Brigade was to be deployed to guard the Shikarpur-Bheramara and Meherpur-Kushtia axes, and one Battalion was to be placed under command 9 Infantry Division for securing the Northern flank of its thrust. The latter Battalion was to revert to its parent brigade on the capture of Jhingergacha.



*Indian troops in front of the Darsana railway station*

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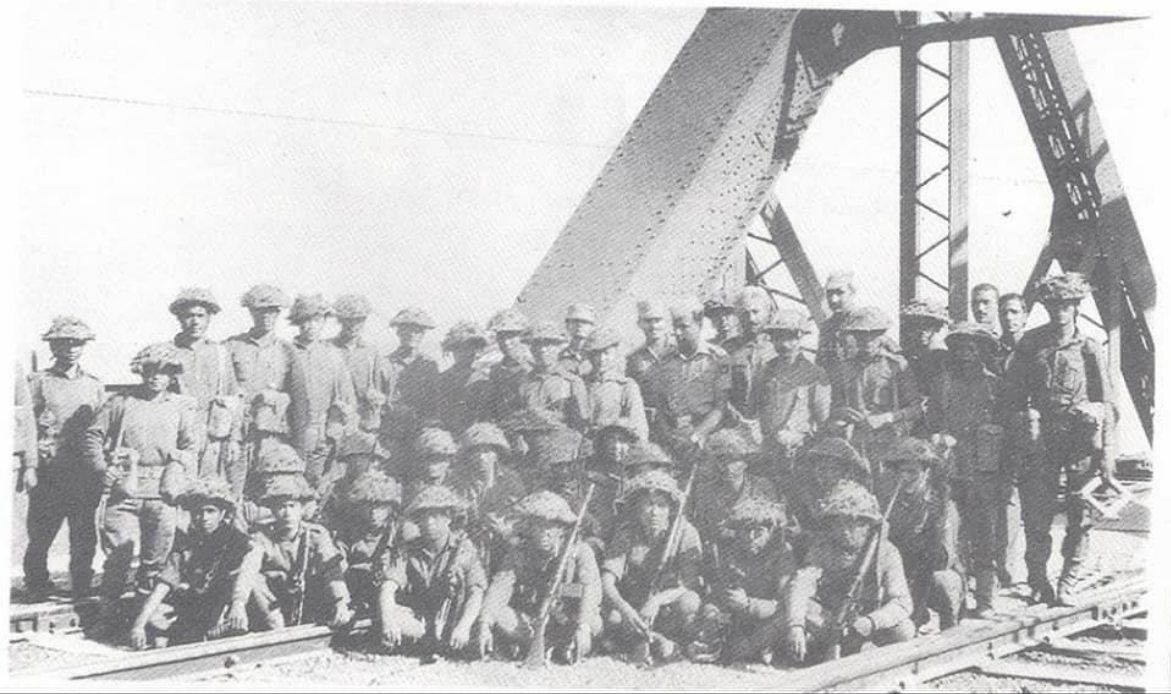
4 Mountain Division had secured some Pak BOPs, East of Karimpur before 03 December. Reacting to this, Pakistanis reinforced their positions covering the approaches to the Hardinge Bridge. There were two axes available to Major General Brar to reach the ferry sites of

Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat:

Meherpur-Chuadanga-Jhenida-Faridpur.

Jibannagar-Kotchandpur-Kaliganj-Jhenida-Faridpur.

As the latter was shorter of the two, the Divisional Commander decided to launch his main thrust along this axis. But to advance on this axis, the Darsana BOP had to be neutralised. The Division Commander, therefore, ordered 41 Mountain Brigade, under Brigadier AHE Michigan, supported by armour, to reduce Darsana by last light on 04 December. The 41 Mountain Brigade had three Battalions, 5 GUARDS, 9 DOGRA, 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES, including the allotment of a Troop of PT-76 light amphibious tanks from the 45 Cavalry, and one of these three Battalions was the 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES—commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Venugopal.



*Gorkha Regiment in Darsana*

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1511574812372476&set=pcb.1511574922372465>

As 62 Mountain Brigade aimed to capture Kotchandpur and push towards the city of Faridpur and Magura further East, The 41 Mountain Brigade was tasked to crack the Pakistani defenses in the town of Uthali and then was ordered to capture the border town of Darsana inside Bangladesh—just opposite to the town of Gede in West Bengal. On the 4th of December, the 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES, led by Lieutenant Colonel Venugopal led the Brigade's dash towards Darsana—and luckily, the town was also under siege by the 22 RAJPUT as well. The 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES also had PT-76 tank support from the 45 Cavalry, getting involved in the heavy fighting in capturing the town.

As the 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES advanced towards their objective of capturing the village of Chandpur, located east of Darsana, on 04 December 1971, Havildar Bir Bahadur Pun was part of the Rifle Company tasked with this mission. The Company faced intense enemy Artillery fire and Heavy Machine Gun fire, which caused several casualties. Despite the deadly barrage, Havildar Pun led his men forward, seeking cover as they approached the enemy

position. Determined to neutralize the threat, he identified the source of the machine gun fire and, instructing his men to stay put, he crawled forward, taking cover in a nearby nullah. Under continuous enemy fire, he made his way about 100 yards towards the enemy's machine gun post, where he finally reached a sandbag emplacement. Once close enough, he threw two grenades, silencing the enemy gun.

The Pakistani HMG crew was obliterated in a fiery explosion, scattering remains everywhere. With the enemy's HMG silenced, Havildar Bir Bahadur Pun's platoon surged forward, their morale soaring. They charged ahead, swiftly overpowering the Pakistani defense and cutting down the enemy. Darsana fell to the 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES, followed by the capture of Chandpur village. Lieutenant Colonel Chittoor Venugopal praised the courageous Platoon Commander for their remarkable achievement in liberating Darsana—marking the beginning of the 41 Mountain Brigade's heroic efforts in the liberation of Bangladesh.



*Brigadier Anthony Harold Michigan and the troops of 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES in front of the Darsana Railway Station during the Bangladesh Liberation war of 1971.*

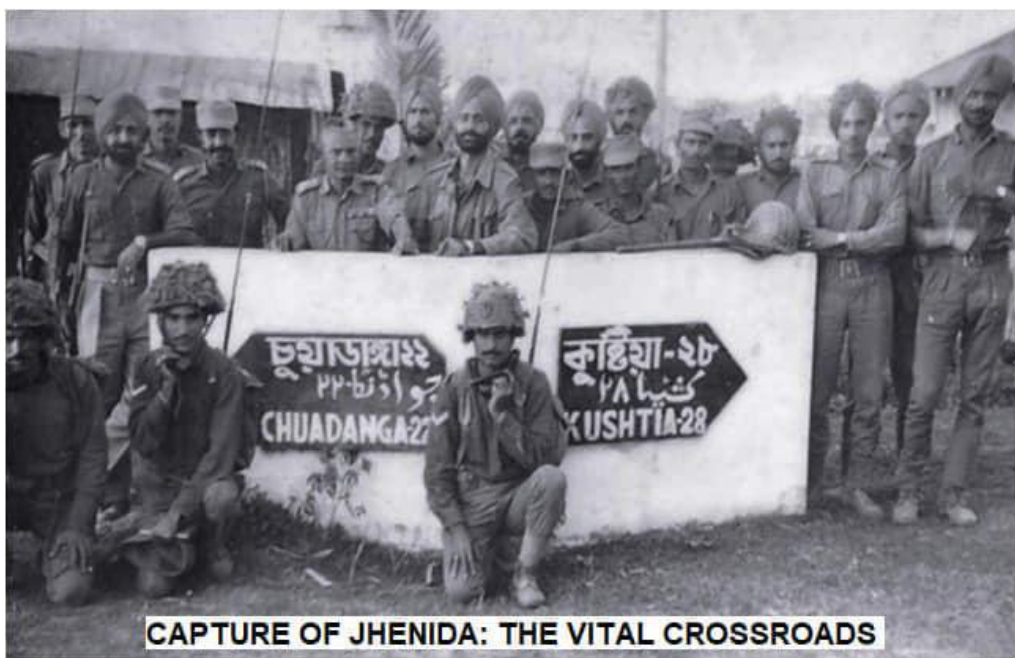
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*Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC Eastern Command, visiting the border town of Darsana, following its liberation by the 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES during the Bangladesh Liberation war of 1971.*

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The Pakistani casualties were reportedly 29 killed. During this battle 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES earned two Maha Vir Chakras. When Brigadier Manzur Ahmed of Pakistan's 57 Infantry Brigade learnt about the loss of Darsana, he ordered his troops to fall back on Chuadanga and hold it firmly as its fall would open the road to Jhenida or Kushtia to Indians. He moved his tactical HQs from Jhenida to Chuadanga to personally supervise operations around Darsana and Chuadanga.



**CAPTURE OF JHENIDA: THE VITAL CROSSROADS**

*Capture of Jhenida*

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*Havildar Bir Bahadur Pun being awarded the Maha Vir Chakra by the President of India.*

For his display of valiant courage, leadership and outstanding devotion to his duty, Havildar Bir Bahadur Pun was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra. He went on to fight in the rest of the fighting of the 5/1 GORKHA RIFLES, going on to even liberate the city of Jhenida!

Havildar Bir Bahadur Pun rose to the rank of Subedar Major, before retiring from active service.



## CITATION

503257 Havildar BIR BAHADUR PUN  
Gorkha Rifles  
(Effective date of award—4th December, 1971)

The 1st Gorkha Rifles were assigned the task of capturing the enemy positions at Darsana on the Eastern Front. The enemy was holding well-fortified position reinforced with machine guns and extensive mine fields. Havildar Bir Bahadur Pun was part of a Company who were given the task of capturing village Chandpur East of Darsana. On the 4th December, 1971, as the assaulting troops were moving towards the objective, they came under heavy enemy artillery and small arms fire from the entire frontage inflicting heavy casualties on own troops. Havildar Bir Bahadur Pun moved ahead of his platoon inspiring and motivating his men to advance towards the objective. On seeing the heavy machine gun post of the enemy which was responsible for causing most of the casualties amongst his men he rushed towards it through a nullah, crawled about 100 yards under heavy enemy fire, closed on to the bunker, lobbed two grenades and silenced the post. This act so inspired and motivated his men that the objective was taken within minutes.

In this action, Havildar Bir Bahadur Pun displayed conspicuous bravery, outstanding devotion to duty and complete disregard of his personal safety in the face of the enemy in keeping with the highest traditions of the Army.

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Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No. 18-Pres./72.—dated FEBRUARY 12, 1972

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