



रक्षा मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
**DEFENCE**



**LIEUTENANT GENERAL (Then, BRIGADIER) JOGINDER SINGH  
GHARAYA**

<b>SERVICE NUMBER</b>	IC-1984
<b>RANK</b>	Lieutenant General (Then, Brigadier)
<b>NAME</b>	Joginder Singh Gharaya
<b>SON OF</b>	Deva Singh
<b>RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE</b>	Chandigarh, Punjab
<b>UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS</b>	1 BIHAR
<b>SERVICE</b>	Indian Army
<b>DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION</b>	20 January 1946
<b>AWARD/DATE OF ACTION</b>	Maha Vir Chakra/ 06 December 1971
<b>WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION</b>	1971 Indo-Pak War
<b>OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE</b>	Kirti Chakra/ Vishisht Seva Medal

Lieutenant General (then, Brigadier) Joginder Singh Gharaya was born on 31 July 1926, to Sardar Deva Singh, in Montgomery, now in Pakistan. He did his schooling from Kings George Royal Indian Military School (Now, Rashtriya Military School, Chail). He was commissioned into the Frontier Force Regiment on 20 January 1946. He was transferred to 1 BIHAR post partition as the Frontier Force Regiment was allocated to Pakistan. In 1948, during Hyderabad annexation Lieutenant General (then, Captain) Gharaya displayed exemplary leadership and conspicuous courage. For his contribution he was awarded Kirti Chakra (then, Ashok Chakra II). As a Lieutenant Colonel, in 1969 Gharaya was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) for distinguished service of a high order.



*General Manekshaw with recipients of Medals*

Source : Sainik Samachar

The recruitment of soldiers from the region of BIHAR dates to the days of the British East India Company, which raised the 'Bengal Native Infantry' as a force. The BIHAR Regiment's origin can be traced back to the sepoy battalions raised in 1775 by Lord Clive for British East India Company at Patna. The present BIHAR Regiment took its initial form in 1923 when an Indian Territorial Force Battalion (which was named 11/19 Hyderabad Regiment) was formed with headquarters at Dinapore Cantt (now Danapur Cantt, the home of BIHAR Regiment). This battalion consisted of Rajputs, Brahmins, Ahirs and Muslims of BIHAR. A decade later Adivasis were also enrolled into this battalion making it truly representative of BIHAR province. The name BIHAR regiment was born soon after World War II broke out and the 11/19 Hyderabad Regiment (Indian Territorial Force) was renamed 1 Battalion the BIHAR Regiment. This was on September 15, 1941.<sup>1</sup> Despite being among the youngest, it has displayed exemplary valour and strength on various occasions. Their participation in World War II, Indo-Pak 1965 and 1971 is regarded highly in the annals of history of the Indian Army.

In 1948, Lieutenant General Gharaya (then Captain) was serving with 1 BIHAR during Operation Polo. The 1 BIHAR had spear-headed the infantry elements in the Hyderabad police action in 1948. On 18 August, the Razakars attacked Shinur village and killed one policeman and two civilians. D Company reinforced by A Company under Capt. JS Gharaya went to the village and chased away the marauders.

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<sup>1</sup> Sainik Samachar, Volume 17 1970, Director of Public Relations, Ministry of Defence.

On 21 September, A Company under Capt. Gharaya who was the quarter master left for Bhongir. When it arrived near the bridge at Bibinagar, it found that the bridge was mined and blown up. It crossed the mullah with difficulty and harboured at Bibinagar for the night. The next morning it went to Bhongir where it recovered about 500 muzzle-loaders. In the meanwhile, C Company and Lt. Col. B.P. Singh's party who were on their way to Bhongir were fired upon near Bibinagar as a result of which two Razakars were killed.

On 24 September 1948, two truckloads of Razakars fired upon Captain Gharaya as he was leading his company into the village of Puchanapet. The Razakars immediately fled the scene. Captain Gharaya confronted them right away from his vehicle, and he started chase while being closely pursued by a few of his troops in a truck. He continued to pursue and return fire despite being continuously under fire. He eventually succeeded in taking down two Razakars. Later, the truck came to a stop and the driver also died. But the Razakars regrouped and carried on the battle. The Razakars were then attacked by Captain Gharaya with just one Section, killing twelve of them.

Six Henry Martini rifles, six .303s, and one pistol were taken into custody. Captain Gharaya demonstrated outstanding leadership, bravery, and initiative in rounding up armed Razakars during this action as well as on the other many times during the Police Action. His utter disregard for his personal safety coupled with his cheerfulness were an inspiration and example to all who met him. He was Awarded Kirti Chakra for displaying conspicuous gallantry during the Police action against the Razakars in Hyderabad.

On the 28 September, Bhongir was reinforced with D Company which with A Company next moved to Jangaon where the 6 Kumaon arrived at about the same time from Warangal. The search of the villages continued in earnest thereafter. In one such search of Arvapuram by B Company it recovered a large number of arms which included 48 rifles of sorts and a number of swords, daggers and a large quantity of explosives. In the next few days, there was a further haul of more weapons, and so it went on. Once the uprising was successfully curtailed, the unit facilitated the merger of the state into the Union of India.

During the 1965 war, the trouble in the Rann of Kutch had its repercussions in 5 BIHAR then in Gaya. On 25 April 1965, Lt Col JS Gharaya, AC sent letters to officers and men on leave asking them to rejoin the unit forthwith and prepared the battalion to move to Barrackpore. On 28 April Lt. Col. Gharaya led the advance party with 2nd Lts K C. Singh and P. Basu accompanying him. Major R.C. Sharma, the Second-in-command, brought the main body by road and reached Barrackpore on 30 April. The intention was to guard the East Pakistan border in case of any conflict with Pakistan due to trouble brewing then in the Rann of Kutch.

The 9 BIHAR was raised by Major SK Sharma on 15 October 1965 at Danapur. Lt Col JS Gharaya, KC took over command of the battalion on 01 November 1965. The first subedar major of the battalion was Marcus Manna who took over his duties on 15 November 1965.

During the turbulent insurgency period in Manipur in the 1960s, Lt. Col. J.S. Gharaya was involved in counter insurgency operation in the region. 9 BIHAR commanded by Lt Col JS Gharaya KC, moved to Churachandpur in Manipur where it came under the 59 Mountain Brigade and took over picquets on the tracks to the west leading into north-east Mizoram. The battalion next moved to Khawlian in the north-east Mizo district in August/September 1966. On 24 November 1966, when Lt. Col Gharaya, Major K.G Singh, Capt. R.P.S Awanindra, Capt. S.P Bhatnagar and 43 ORs were crossing the Tuivai, the hostiles who laid an ambush on the western bank of the river opened fire. In this ambush Major KG Singh, one Capt an Naik Shaphal Hembrom

L/Nk Suresh Upadhyay, Seps. Sheo Shankar Sundi and Lai Chand Shah were killed. Four hostiles were killed in the ensuing fire fight.

In 1968, although the cease-fire had been announced, the Chinese aid to Naga insurgents was continuing. The Divisional Commander selected the 9 Bihar for the task of raiding Naga hideout of Chinese trained insurgents. The battalion was de-inducted from Mizo Hills and stationed in Thakhama for the purpose. The 9 BIHAR under Lt Col. Gharaya was put in assault role with the 17 MADRAS and Assam Rifles battalions used for blocking the exits from the hideout.

The 1971 Indo-Pak War began with Pakistan launching pre-emptive air strikes against 11 Indian airbases on 03 December 1971. The war was forced upon due to widespread genocide of people of East Pakistan carried out by an oppressive military regime under General Yahya Khan of Pakistan. The war, which was short and intense, was fought on both Eastern and Western fronts. The 13 days war resulted in complete surrender of Pakistan forces and the creation of Bangladesh. The Indian Armed Forces reigned supreme over the Pakistani military in the battle field. The Battle of Poonch is one of the most notable battles which were fought on the western sector.<sup>2</sup>

In 1971, Brigadier Gharaya was commanding the 42 Infantry Brigade. 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 direction and in a lightning, attack captured East Pakistan in 13 days. To begin with, the Indian II Corps was pitted against the Pakistani forces in Jessore-Jhenida sector. II Corps was under the command of Lieutenant General TN Raina.

9 Infantry Division, under Major General Dalbir Singh, was tasked to capture Jessore and then assist 4 Mountain Division in the capture of Magura. It was also to send a Brigade to capture Khulna. On 03 December, the Division had reached almost half way to Jessore (up to Arpora) on axis Chaugacha-Jessore and was in contact with Pak defences, West of Jessore. From the Indian base at Garibpur, the Jessore Cantonment was 11 km away as the crow flies. In view of the impending war, the Pak defences west of Jessore, had been strengthened by linking up various marshes, by pulling in troops from Chaugacha area and flying in a battalion from Rajshahi. Pakistan had deployed about four Battalions to defend the area.

The Indian objective was to seek a breakthrough at a suitable place. Consequently, pressure was maintained all along the front to keep Pakistanis guessing about the approach of the Indian troops. On the Northern axis, 42 Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier Joginder Singh Gharaya, spearheaded the attack. It had under its command 14 PUNJAB, 19 MARATHA LI, and 2 SIKH LI. 19 MARATHA LI supported by a Squadron of PT-76 tanks from 45 Cavalry advanced from Kayarpur to Jahinaikundu to cut off the Pak position at Sadipur-Jamira. Realising the threat, Pakistanis withdrew in disorder and suffered some casualties.

On 04 December 1971, the Brigade decided to clear the Northern approach at Durgabarkati. As a preliminary, Charbari was secured by 14 PUNJAB on 05 December. An attack on Durgabarkati with air support was scheduled at 0800 hrs on 06 December. But due to heavy fog, Indian aircraft could not take off, and the attack had to be postponed twice.

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<sup>2</sup> Vijay Diwas Celebration at National War Memorial Southern Command Pune, Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Defence, 16 December 2020. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1681094>



*Mukti Bahini Men Defending Jessore During Indo - Pak War*

Source: <https://x.com/IndiaHistorypic/status/1194665275762700293/photo/1>

However, in order to ensure surprise, the attack was finally launched at 0930 hours without air support by 2 SIKH LI, with Companies deployed one behind the other. Pak troops were holding the location with two Companies. As the area was very narrow, only one Company could be deployed at a time, and hence a frontal attack was the only option. The leading Company captured half of the objective by 1000 hours, while the second Company followed to capture the other half. The third Company pushed up to achieve the breakthrough. Indians suffered six killed, and twenty-four wounded as against six Pakistanis counted dead. Indians had started clearing the mines even before the objective was secured and were able to lay three safe lanes by 1230 hrs.

350 Infantry Brigade was ordered to advance on the central axis. 1 JAK Rifles attacked Burinda, but a Company of 12 (Pak) Punjab repulsed the attack. 4 SIKH was then asked to capture the objective. The Battalion, supported by 45 Cavalry and 96 Field Company captured Burinda and Matsyaramga on 05 December. Pakistanis fought courageously and 4 Sikh suffered casualties of two JCOs and 12 ORs killed, and two JCOs, 44 ORs and two non-combatants wounded. Besides, one OR each of 45 Cavalry and 96 Field Company were killed, and one officer, one JCO and three ORs of 45 Cavalry and one OR of 96 Field Company were wounded. Close air support missions by Hunters and Gnats operating from Dum Dum assisted these operations. As 350 and 42 Infantry Brigades were heavily committed and 32 Infantry Brigade was in reserve, no troops were available to press through the gap to secure Jessore. Therefore, 1/3 GORKHA RIFLES (ex-Bengal Area) was ordered to take over the southern Sector, and 32 Infantry Brigade less one Battalion was concentrated at Chaugacha to capture Jessore.

32 Infantry Brigade advanced through the gap, with 7 PUNJAB and one Squadron of T-55 tanks of 63 Cavalry in the lead. Although, due to the marshy nature of the terrain the progress was slow, Indians managed to secure road Chaugacha-Jessore between Jaghati and Sajiali. 13 Dogra also joined the Brigade by 1830 hours. At this stage, it was considered necessary to redeploy the guns as the leading troops were getting out of range. To this end 13 DOGRA, with a troop of T55 tanks, were ordered to clear Afra which they did by midnight. Meanwhile, the Pakistanis had mined the

area. By the morning of 07 December, the mines were cleared, and a bridge was constructed to send the guns across. Engineers had done a commendable work during the night.

Meanwhile, 7 PUNJAB patrolling Southwards, secured Asannagar and its leading elements reached Jessore airfield by 0800 hours. On 07 December, 32 Infantry Brigade secured Jessore Cantonment by 1230 hours. Soon after, 14 PUNJAB advanced to Abdulpur and then to Jessore along the Churamankati-Jessore road. As the Cantonment and the airfield had already been vacated by the Pakistanis, the Indians entered Jessore without encountering any opposition. In the meantime, houses and the local police armoury in Jessore Cantonment had been looted by the civilians. The arrival of Indian troops saved much of the Jessore town from loot and massacre.



*Brigadier JS Gharaya pictured on top of a Chaffee tank of Pakistani 3 (Independent) Armoured Squadron*

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/sit-rep-for-a-lion-hearted-commander/story-rhwwfuit8Ym72skYWO5s8L.html>

Brigadier JS Gharaya, KC planned the operations with great professional skill and launched his Brigade into operations with commendable swiftness. His Brigade was attacked on four successive occasions and despite heavy casualties, his troops stood the ground due largely to his excellent tactical handling, outstanding courage, constant presence and guidance. His conduct of this operation was responsible for heavy enemy losses and their withdrawal. During the subsequent offensive operations, Brigadier Gharaya was with the leading troops when he was severely wounded by enemy fire. He refused to be evacuated till he had seen the attack through as the success of this attack was vital to our further advance in Bangladesh. Throughout this operation, Brigadier Gharaya conducted himself with extraordinary courage and through his personal example inspired such spirit and confidence among troops that led to the complete success of the difficult operations. He was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra.

It can be concluded that in the eastern theatre, our troops made swift progress in all sectors causing confusion in enemy ranks. In the Jessore Sector, Brigadier J.S. Gharaya led his brigade with extraordinary courage. The brigade withstood four attacks. The enemy suffered heavy losses and

subsequently withdrew in disorder. The success of this attack was vital to our further advance in Bangladesh. Brigadier JS Gharaya caused heavy attrition on enemy forces and spearheaded his brigade to final success.



*Lieutenant General JS Gharaya*

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/sole-officer-with-second-highest-war-peacetime-medals-dies/articleshow/70209877.cms>

Brigadier Joginder Singh Gharaya was then promoted to Major General on 30 December 1976 and subsequently commanded both the 9 and 7 Infantry Divisions. He was promoted to Lieutenant General on 01 July 1982 and served as Chief of Staff, Central Command before his final appointment as Director-General, Infantry, from which post he retired from the Army in 1984. Lieutenant General Joginder Singh Gharaya died at the age of 92 in Chandigarh on 13 July 2019.

## **CITATION**

Brigadier Joginder Singh Gharaya (IC-1984), KC, VSM.(Effective date of award – 06 December 1971)

Brigadier J.S. Gharaya was commanding an infantry brigade in the Eastern Sector on 06 December 1971. As Brigade commander he planned operations with great professional skill and launched his Brigade into operations with commendable swiftness. His brigade was attacked on four successive occasions and despite heavy casualties, his troops stood the ground due largely to his excellent tactical handling, outstanding courage, constant presence and guidance. His conduct of this operation was responsible for heavy enemy losses and their withdrawal. During the subsequent offensive operations, Brigadier Gharaya was with the leading troops when he was severely wounded by enemy fire. He refused to be evacuated till he had seen the attack through as the success of this attack was vital to our further advance in Bangladesh.

Throughout this operation, Brigadier Gharaya conducted himself with extraordinary courage and through his personal example inspired such spirit and confidence among troops that led to the complete success of the difficult operations.

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



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6. The War Decorated Trust Lt Gen Joginder Singh Gharaya, VSM, KC, MVC (Accessed on 12 December 2022) <http://twodi.in/node/1146>

## VIDEOS

City Of Jessore Falls to The Indian Army (Source: YouTube AP Archive)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7kdVezRX68>

India-Pakistan War (Source: YouTube AP Archive)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVQ6xGoDwJE>

