



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



BRIGADIER (then MAJOR) PATINHARE VEETIL SAHADEVAN

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| SERVICE NUMBER | IC-22366 |
| RANK (At the time of Award) | Brigadier (then Major) |
| NAME | Patinhare Veetil Sahadevan |
| SON OF | KV Krishna Nair |
| RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE | Cannanore, Kerala |
| UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS | 16 MADRAS |
| SERVICE | Indian Army |
| DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION | 02 August 1964 |
| AWARD/DATE OF ACTION | Vir Chakra/ 16 December 1971 |
| WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION | 1971 Indo Pak War |
| OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE | Ati Vishisht Seva Medal |

Brigadier (then Major) Patinhare Veetil Sahadevan was born on 05 February 1943, to Shri KV Krishna Nair, in Cannanore, Kerala. He was the eldest amongst the six siblings. Major Sahadevan completed his early education from Queen Mary's School - later renamed as Kamala Nehru Upper Primary School followed by Chirakkal Rajas High School and subsequently graduated in Mathematics and Statistics from Government Brennen College, Dharmadam in Kannur District in 1963. He was an NCC cadet for seven years in school and college, the Best Cadet and Senior Under officer in 1962-63. After training in the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Major Sahadevan was commissioned into the Madras Regiment on 02 August 1964.

He was posted from the Madras Regimental Centre, Wellington to 4 MADRAS during the 1965 Indo-Pak War, and joined the unit in Maharajke, Sialkot Sector in Pakistan. In 1966, he became ADC to Maj Gen KAS Raja GOC, 2 Mtn Div. Two years later, he was posted to 16 MADRAS, located in a high-altitude area in the Subansiri Division of NEFA (Presently Arunachal Pradesh), bordering China. In the 1971 Indo-Pak War, his Battalion, 16 MADRAS, fought the Battle of Basantar with valour and distinction.



Brigadier (then Major) Sahadevan with his wife

Source: Major Sahadevan

Major Sahadevan married Ms Indira Nair on 18 April 1971, they have two daughters.

The Indo-Pak War of 1971 was the first war when the Indian Government engaged all three Services on a large scale. In the Western Sector, an important battle took place in the Shakargarh area during the 1971 War. The Battle of Basantar, fought from 15 to 17 December 1971, emerged as one of the most intense tank battles of the conflict. Pakistan's strategy on the Western Front during this war aimed to capture significant Indian territory to offset anticipated losses on the Eastern Front. This strategy aimed to secure a stronger bargaining position for

Pakistan in post-war negotiations with India. India was concerned that Pakistan might launch an attack opposite the Shakargarh Bulge, targeting Pathankot and the Jammu-Pathankot Road, to achieve this objective.

The Battle of Basantar, many acts of courage were performed. Major Hoshiar Singh of 3 GRENADIERS and Second Lieutenant Arun Kheterpal of POONA HORSE were awarded the Param Vir Chakra. While Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Hanut Singh and Major Amarjit Singh Bal of POONA HORSE, Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) RM Vohra of HODSON'S, Lieutenant Colonel Ved Prakash Ghai and Horse Havildar Thomas Philipose of 16 MADRAS, Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Ved Airy of 3 GRENADIERS and Major Vijay Rattan Choudhry of 9 Engineers Regiment were awarded the Maha Vir Chakra. Brigadier (later General) Arun Vaidya was awarded a Bar to Maha Vir Chakra for his bold leadership while commanding the 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade at Zafarwal and Basantar.

The Shakargarh Bulge, the area where Pakistan was likely to advance into India, is situated between the Chenab and Ravi rivers. To the North, the Bulge runs parallel to the hills, with its tip pointing towards the Madhopur Headworks and the Pathankot military base on the opposite side. In the South, it borders the Ravi River, across which lie the Indian cities of Amritsar, Batala, and Gurdaspur. Several nullahs, including Aik, Degh, Basantar, Bein, and Ujh, flow generally from north to south through the area. A network of roads and rail tracks originating from Sialkot, Gujranwala, and Lahore and running west to east towards Shakargarh connected important communication centers such as Pasrur, Chawinda, Zafarwal, Dhamthal, and Narowal. The terrain in the area was suitable for the use of armored vehicles.

I Corps commanded by Lieutenant General KK Singh, MVC was deployed by the third week of October in the area as a defensive measure.

1 Corps offensive plan was as under: –

The firm bases and defences of the area were to be held by 168 Infantry Brigade ex 26 Infantry Division, 323 Infantry Brigade and 87 Infantry Brigade ex 39 Infantry Division, and 18 Infantry Brigade ex 36 Infantry Division. 62 Cavalry and one Armoured Squadron ex 14 Independent Armoured Brigade was the armour allotted to the defensive forces at the scale of one squadron per brigade.

36 Infantry Division under Major General BS Alhuwalia was without two of its Brigades. It had only one Infantry Brigade 115 Infantry Brigade with only two Infantry Battalions. The Division was not committed to battle till 12 December. Thereafter it was deployed along with 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade for the Battle of Shakargarh.

39 Infantry Division under Major General BR Prabhu did not have any of its Brigades for the operation. One of its Brigades had been sent to reinforce Poonch and the other two were deployed for holding the firm base. For its operation 72 Infantry Brigade with four Infantry Battalions, 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade less one Armoured Regiment and 1 DOGRA (Mechanised) were placed under its command along with an Artillery Brigade for fire support.

The Division was given the task of advancing between Basantar and Karir Nadi and capturing Dehla – Chakra by D plus 2 and thereafter capture Shakargarh.

54 Infantry Division under Major General (later Lieutenant General) WAG Pinto comprised three Infantry Brigades (47, 74, and 91 Infantry Brigades) and 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade, less 62 Cavalry, 18 RAJPUTANA RIFLES (Mechanised) less two Companies, 90 (Independent) Reece Squadron (AMX), and two Engineer Regiments. Additionally, the Division had four Medium Regiments, in addition to the Divisional Artillery, for providing fire support. The Division's task was to advance in the area between Degh Nadi and Karir Nadi, capture Zaffarwal – Dhamtalline, and then prepare for the capture of Deoli and Mirzapur.

The offensive commenced on 05 December, with troops advancing on a broad front between Degh Nadi and Basantar River as follows:

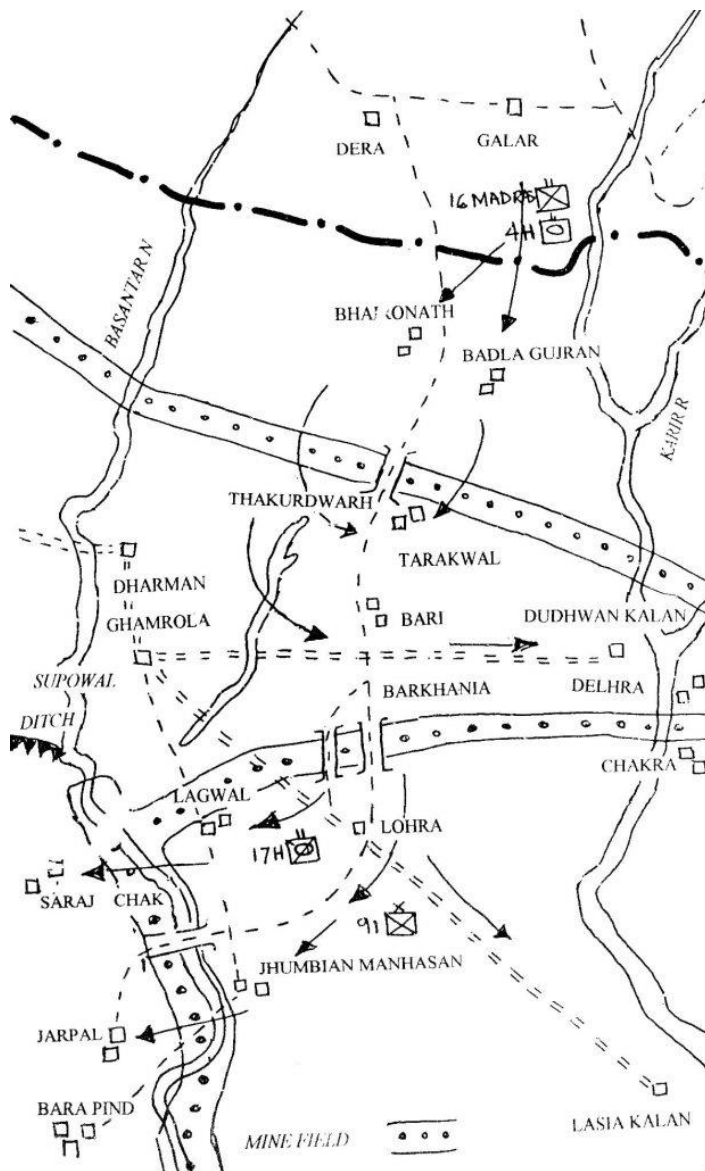
- 54 Infantry Division supported by 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade (less one Regiment) from the general area Mawa-Galar;

- 39 Infantry Division and 72 Infantry Brigade (four battalions) of 36 Infantry Division supported by 2 (independent) Armoured Brigade (less one Regiment) from the general area Londi-Chak, Dolna-Mangu Chak.

Advance by 54 Infantry Division to Basantar

Operations of 54 Infantry Division also commenced simultaneously with those of 39 Infantry Division. The border outposts were captured on the night of 05/06 December. The advance commenced on 06 December. Pakistan had deployed one Squadron of their Reconnaissance Regiment, 20 Lancers (Chaffee tanks) and one Squadron of the Divisional Armoured Regiment, 33 Cavalry (Pattons) along with Infantry as Covering Troops. Pakistani Air Force was also quite active. 47 Infantry Brigade was ordered to advance and establish a Bridgehead in Thakurdwarh – Bari – Darman area. 16 MADRAS was placed under the command of 47 Infantry Brigade.

16 MADRAS, led by Lieutenant Colonel Ved Prakash Ghai and supported by 4 HORSE, initiated their attack at 0230 hours on 06 December 1971. Their advance was initially impeded by enemy resistance at Bhaironath and Badala Gujran, where tank and Machine Gun fire obstructed their progress. Despite this, 16 MADRAS pressed on with an assault, successfully securing the positions by 0700 hours on 07 December. This operation resulted in the capture of the first Pakistani Prisoner of War, a Chaffee tank, and a map detailing the layout of minefields in the area.



Advance of 47 Infantry Brigade

Source: <https://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/battle-of-basantar-1971-war/>

16 MADRAS continued their advance and encountered a deep minefield North of Thakurdwarh. Taking a calculated risk, the minefield's trawling was carried out by 405 Field Company and the trawls of 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade in a dust haze before sunset. Two Centurion tanks were positioned strategically on the home side of the minefield to provide covering fire, while another Centurion tank followed the Trawl Tanks to offer close fire support. During the trawling process, one of the tanks spotted three enemy tanks in hull-down position and engaged them. One enemy tank was disabled, and the others withdrew. By 1830 hours, the trawling was completed, and a Squadron of tanks was inducted into the Bridgehead. Impressively, 405 Field Company breached a 500-meter-deep minefield, 5 meters wide, in just one hour. This was the first time that trawls breached a minefield.

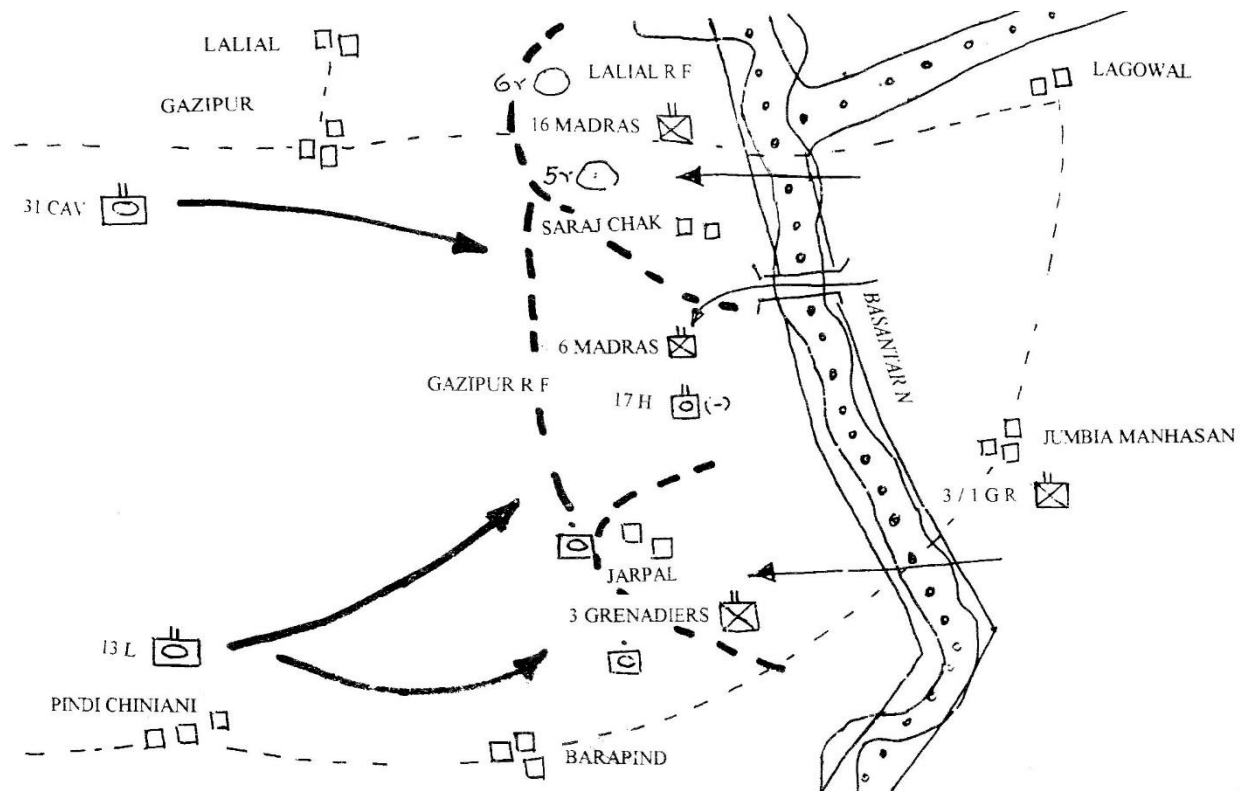
16 MADRAS proceeded to attack Thakurdwarh, with two Squadrons of 4 HORSE placed under their command. The attack was launched, and despite a fierce struggle, the objective was captured by 2230 hours on 06 December. During this action, they captured one enemy tank, two Machine Guns, and a map case showing the alignment of minefields. By 0200 hours on 07

December, 405 Field Company completed the breaching and marking of the minefield.

The next objective was Bari. Brigadier (later Major General) AP Bhardwaj, VSM the Commander of 47 Infantry Brigade, which had moved up to Thakurdwarh, ordered 16 MADRAS to probe Bari and capture it if possible. The Combat Group departed Thakurdwarh at midnight and approached Bari from the West. By 0130 hours on 07 December, the tanks encountered a nala and became bogged down. However, all but two tanks were extricated, and the Combat Group launched an attack on Bari from the West. The enemy, taken by surprise, fled, resulting in the capture of Bari before the first light of 07 December.

16 MADRAS then captured Dodwan Kalan on the night of 07/08 December, while 18 RAJPUTANA RIFLES took possession of Ghamrola on 08 December. However, as both the flanks of the Division were now exposed, a decision was made to suspend the advance, till the Eastern flank was secured.

The Battle of Basantar River



Battle of Basantar River

Source: <https://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/battle-of-basantar-1971-war/>

The task allotted to 54 Infantry Division included the destruction of the Pakistan 8 (Independent) Armoured Brigade and the capture of Zafarwal. After capturing Lohara-Laisar, Kalan-Mehlwan Lagwal it decided to establish a Bridgehead to the South-West of Basantar. 47 Infantry Brigade was ordered to establish the Bridgehead, in the area Barapind-Sikandarpur-Lalial and SouthWest shoulder of the Supwal Ditch, while the 74 Infantry Brigade was ordered to capture the remaining part of the Supwal Ditch. The Pakistanis had predictably concentrated the bulk of their Armour to the West of the Basantar river in the area of the Supwal Ditch and

Zafarwal.

The terrain was devoid of roads and abounded in streams. The Pakistanis had sited obstacle belts in considerable depth, and had covered them by infantry, RCL guns and tanks. Medium Machine Guns and Infantry 'Nests' supported by automatics were positioned in between the minefields. The positions were fortified with bunkers, connected by a network of communication trenches and alternate positions. Gaps in Platoon localities and flanks were covered by elements of Recce and Support Battalions. Formidable mine barriers, approximately 1460 metres deep, were laid.



Field Marshal (then General) Sam Manekshaw addressing the men of 16 MADRAS.

Source: Brigadier Sahadevan

The Indian Engineers breached the minefield with considerable effort and skill. They also forged operational tracks in this dusty terrain and surfaced the roadways with elephant grass and Chari. Other arms too were well integrated. Major VR Chowdhary of 9 Engineer Regiment did a commendable job in clearing the mines but was killed in action while clearing a lane. He was decorated with the Maha Vir Chakra posthumously while their Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) BT Pandit was awarded the Vir Chakra. 54 Infantry Division chose the Sarajchak-Lalial RF-Jarpal-Lohal to cross the Basantar River, while the enemy expected it around Badwal.

The Commanding Officer 16 MADRAS Lieutenant Colonel Ghai, decided to carry out the assigned task as under: Phase 1– Capture of Lalial RF and Sarajchak by C and D Companies; Phase 2– Capture of 6r and 5r by A and B Companies.

The attack started at 1930 h on 15 December with C Company on the right under Major PV

Sahadevan was tasked to capture Lalial RF and D Company on the left under Major CBS Krishnia for Sarajchak. Soon after leaving the FUP, the enemy started engaging own troops with artillery fire. The MMGs from the enemy nests brought down menacing fire during the crossing of the Basantar river. During each stage of the battle, he made good use of his alternative positions.

On reaching the far side of the obstacle, C Company suffered very heavy casualties. Both the leading Platoon Commanders were seriously wounded. It was only at this stage that the Company Commander realised that the anticipated Pakistani defences based on Supwal Ditch were extended so much towards the Lalial RF as against the information available earlier. At least four MMGs including those from the concrete pill-boxes of Supwal Ditch opened up over a frontage of 1000 yards almost arresting the progress of the attack. The Forward Observation Officer was asked to direct artillery fire closer. Under its cover, the assaulting Platoons kept inching forward just 50 yards behind the artillery barrage. When within 400 yards of the objective, the enemy fire was so intense and accurate that move forward was almost stalled.

At this stage, the Company Commander, Major PV Sahadevan, maneuvered his No 8 Platoon from the flank. Havildar Thomas Philipose, having taken over the Platoon, as the Platoon Commander was wounded, led a fierce attack from the right (northern direction), and even after being wounded twice did not stop till his Platoon had captured four bunkers.

He refused to be evacuated and kept on holding the area of the captured objective. For this gallant action, Havildar Thomas Philipose was awarded the MVC.

During the final stages of the attack, the company faced intense enemy fire, wounding/killing a number of his men - including 2 of the platoon commanders, which threatened to impede the assault. Maj Sahadevan crawled up to the enemy bunker, lobbed a grenade, setting ablaze the RCL Jeep, fuel, ammunition, resulting in a massive explosion, which silenced the adjoining MMG. The brave action created the crucial breakthrough at the critical time. This created panic in the enemy. Second Lieutenant PA Somaiah, leading No 9 Platoon, was closely following the action of the Company Commander, and seeing an opportunity he cashed in on it by promptly pressing home the charge. The effect of enemy fire having been reduced thus, C Company pounced on the enemy with bayonets. Naik A Sahadevan rushed at the enemy MMG and silenced it by a grenade, but received a burst in the chest and was killed he was awarded the VrC posthumously. It took about an hour of severe hand to hand fighting to clear the entire objective, and C Company gave the success signal at 2130 hours 15 December. The resolute leadership of Sahadevan and the valour of his men prevailed as they engaged in a hand to hand fight with their fixed bayonets to beat the enemy. The Company Commander, Major PV Sahadevan, earned a VrC in this action. The Company in this engagement had accounted for 14 killed on the objective.



COAS talking to Maj Sahadevan

Source: Brigadier Sahadevan

D Company, assaulting on the left, ran into almost similar opposition. Hardly had they stormed the forward bunkers, they were up against the fire from well-concealed positions in the built-up area behind. Then onwards it turned an arduous battle of flushing the enemy out from one position after the other. Krishnia, the Company Commander, went about it clinically, employing one platoon at a time in flanking moves, exercising utmost fire discipline. It was slow going; still they made it in fairly good time, and Sarajchak had been cleared by 2200 hours, just half an hour behind the C Company at Lalial. A body count in the morning gave the enemy dead on the objective as 15. Own losses were 11 killed and 27 wounded.

C Company, far too close to the Supwal Ditch for comfort of the enemy there, was by now being targeted intensely by their guns. The Pakistanis, stunned by the ferocity of the assault, soon gathered their wits and launched a blistering counter-attack about an hour before midnight. They closed in employing a ruse of imitating shouts and cries of other Indian troops; but it didn't get them far as the company rallied to take them on. Thomas Philipose, still on his feet, trumped his own exploit earlier by gathering his depleted platoon to lead a daring counter-charge. Battered badly, the enemy fell back in confusion and then fled, leaving three of their dead behind.

The A and B Companies then swiftly captured the twin feature 5r and 6r beyond Lalial and Sarajchak. The Grenadiers also captured their objective during the night. The Poona Horse later showed exemplary bravery, where Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal was the awarded the Param Vir Chakra.

The Battle of Basantar exemplified courage and determination, with the success of the battle hinging on the troops' ability in the bridgehead to repel expected enemy counterattacks. The preservation of the bridgehead can largely be attributed to the remarkable actions of 4 HORSE, 17 HORSE, 16 MADRAS, and 3 GRENADIERS and 9 Engineer Regiment. 17 HORSE notably neutralized a significant portion of Pakistan's 8 Independent Armoured Brigade during the battle. The timely breaching of the minefield by 9 Engineer Regiment facilitated the induction of armor into the bridgehead. The Regiment of Artillery also played a crucial role in this remarkable victory.



Defence Minister of India, Jagjivan Ram examines the captured weapons

Source: Brigadier Sahadevan

The 16 MADRAS was later honoured with Battle and Theatre Honours 'Basantar & Punjab' respectively.

Major Sahadevan was posted as an Instructor in Infantry School Mhow in 1975 and later in 1980 as DAA and QMG of a Brigade in the high altitude area of Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. He took over command of 28 MADRAS in 1982 in Mon, Nagaland. In 1985 he was selected for the Higher Command course, on completion of which, he was posted as Colonel GS (Planning) of a Strike Corps.



Brigadier Sahadevan with the Defence minister of India, Rajnath Singh.

Source: Brigadier Sahadevan

In 1988, he was posted to 122 Infantry Brigade TA, Kerala. As the Battalion was soon deployed in Sri Lanka, as Colonel, he played important role in Operation Pawan. His was the only unit of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) that returned home without any casualties. A year later, the unit was again mobilised and moved to Srinagar for internal security duties, including the protection of vital areas, demonstrating its continued operational readiness and versatility. In 1992, being promoted to the rank of Brigadier, he sidestepped from Srinagar to Zamindar Khan Gali to command the Machchal Sector.

Brigadier Sahadevan was then appointed as the Chief Instructor/ Commandant of the National Security Guard (Black Cat Commando) in Manesar. On superannuation, in 1997, he was re-employed by the Border Security Force (BSF) under the Home Ministry, where he played a pivotal role in commanding the prestigious Training Centres in Hazaribagh and Bangalore. He was honoured with Vishisht Seva Medal, and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in recognition of his exemplary service before retiring.



Brigadier (then Major) Sahadevan being awarded the Vir Chakra.

Source: Brigadier Sahadevan

For his valorous actions during the 1971 Indo-Pak War, Brigadier (then Major) Sahadevan was awarded Vir Chakra.



*Felicitation of veteran Brigadier PV Sahadevan, AVSM, VrC, VSM was carried out by Brigadier Sunil Sheoran, SM**, Comdt PRTC*

Source: <https://x.com/laSouthern/status/1367475490571788289/photo/2>



Brigadier Sahadevan with veterans at the National War Memorial, Delhi

Source: Brigadier Sahadevan



Brigadier P.V. Sahadevan speaking at the press meet to announce the veterans meet of 122 Infantry Battalion of Territorial Army in Kozhikode on February 12

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/veterans-of-indian-peace-keeping-force-at-sri-lanka-to-meet-in-kozhikode/article67838700.ece>

Citation

Major Patinhare Veetil Sahadevan (IC-22366), The Madras Regiment
(Effective date of award– 16th December 1971)

On the night of 15th/16th December 1971, Major Patinhare Veetil Sahadevan who was commanding a company of a Battalion of the Madras Regiment was given the task of establishing a bridge-head in an area in the Western Sector. This involved an attack across a minefield of over 800 yards depth. During this assault, his company suffered casualties while in the minefield. Major Sahadevan, with utter disregard for his safety, moved ahead and inspired his men to follow him. On reaching the far end of the minefield the company encountered stiff opposition. An enemy Medium Machine Gun firing from a bunker nearby was causing casualties on our troops. Major Sahadevan immediately crawled upto the enemy bunker and lobbed a grenade in it. This set ablaze fuel and ammunition in the bunker and the enemy started fleeing in confusion. During the attack, he moved from trench to trench, unmindful of the heavy shelling to encourage his men to hold their ground and repulse the attacks.

Throughout the action, Major Patinhare Veetil Sahadevan displayed gallantry, leadership and devotion to duty of a high order.

Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No 94-Pres./72 dated August 19, 1972

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