



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



PARATROOPER SANJOG CHHETRI

SERVICE NUMBER	9423984
RANK	Paratrooper
NAME	Sanjog Chhetri
SON OF	Shri Kamal Chhetri
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Shillong, Meghalaya
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	5/11 GORKHA RIFLES 9 PARA (Special Forces)
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/COMMISSION	31 Mar 2001
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Ashoka Chakra (Posthumous)/ 22 April 2003
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	Operation Sarp Vinash
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri was born on 26 June 1982 at Bomtal Village, in South Sikkim, and studied and completed his classes 10+2 in Namchi in Sikkim¹. His father's name was Shri Kamal Chhetri. Sanjog's father passed away when he was five years old and his mother had remarried and settled in Nepal. He is survived by his younger sister, Mrs. Sangeeta Rai, who is married to an Indian Army officer. He was brought up by his Uncle. Sanjog Chhetri had always wanted to be a soldier and had joined the Army when he was still in his second year at the Government College in Namchi. On 31 March 2001, at the age of 19, he was commissioned into 5/11 GORKHA RIFLES. A year later he joined the exclusive 9 PARA (Special Forces), also considered as the elite force of the Parachute Regiment.² 9 PARA has been responsible for carrying out actions in Jammu and Kashmir since the beginning of the militancy there in the late 1980s.

The Indian Parachute Regiment, also known as the Para Regiment is known for its versatility, bravery, and demanding training and widely recognized as one of India's most prestigious and elite combat units of the Army. It plays a major role in India's defense strategy. Since its inception, during the historical events of Second World War in 1941, Para Regiment aimed at catering the British Indian Army's need to create a force capable of airborne operations. In its past, the Regiment saw action in various Theaters of war. During the Burma campaign, the regiment gained reputation for bravery and effectiveness.

Post independence, there was a merger of forces and the Parachute Regiment was integrated within the Indian Army. While the Regiment played a key role in several operations since, including the Indo-Pak wars and other Counter-Insurgency Operations, it has successfully retained its distinct identity. The key structure of the Regiment includes multiple Battalions, each specializing in different aspects of Airborne and Special Operations. The key Battalions are Parachute (Airborne) Battalions and the Para (Special Forces). The Para SF is highly trained to carry out covert operations deep behind enemy lines and are mostly deployed in high stake missions including counter-terrorism and hostages rescues. Further, the Parachute Regiment, elite volunteer force of Indian Army is conferred the "Bravest of the Brave" distinction wherein, the Regiment has been awarded with 08 Ashok Chakras, 11 Maha Vir Chakras, 21 Kirti Chakras, 106 Shaurya Chakras, 63 Vir Chakras and 491 Sena Medals and the list continues to grow.

While conventional war remains central in the construct of the spectrum of operations, the Indian Army continues to prosecute effective Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism Operations to ensure deterrence through punitive responses, against state sponsored proxy war.

¹ The Darjeeling Chronicles, "Shame: Sikkim Yet to Acknowledge and Honour Ashoke Chakra Awardee- Sanjog Chhetri", 27 June 2018

<https://thedarjeelingchronicle.com/sikkim-yet-to-acknowledge-and-honour-ac-winner/>

² Bravery Badge for Martyr, the Telegraph of India, 24 August 2024 <https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/bravery-badge-for-martyr/cid/808913>



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Further, the Government of India has adopted a well-coordinated and multi-pronged strategy to tackle the cross-border infiltration. This includes tactical deployment of forces at International Border (IB)/Line of Control (LoC), use of technology like Surveillance Cameras, Night Vision Cameras, Heat Sensing Gadgets, etc., multi-tiered deployment along IB/LoC, border fencing, deployment of intelligence personnel to collect advance and target-oriented inputs on infiltration, ambushes and foot-patrolling by Army/Border Security Force (BSF), establishment of Border Police Posts for generating local intelligence and taking pro-active action against infiltrators.³

The Indian Army today is engaged in the management of complex and active land borders coupled with ongoing Counter Insurgency (CI)/ Counter Terrorism (CT) Operations leading to a ‘No War No Peace’ Scenario. The primary role of the Indian Army is to preserve National interests and safeguard sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of India against external threats and internal subversion by deterrence or by waging war.⁴ Additionally, the Army is also geared to provide assistance to civil authority when required.

Operation Sarp Vinash was one of the major operations conducted by the Indian Army during the peak of insurgency in the Valley. Operation Sarp Vinaash was carried out in the Hill Kaka Poonch-Surankote area of the Pir Panjal Range in Jammu and Kashmir during 22 April 2003. Such operations are aimed at eliminating terrorists who exploit the remote and rugged terrains like Hill Kaka and ideally, use such places for hideouts and caches for weapons. For the Army, in terms of logistics or operations, setting up permanent Counter Insurgency networks are impractical in these areas. In fact, most cases, periodic Counter-Terrorist operations based on intelligence inputs are carried out in such remote regions for greater efficiency.

As part of the Sarp Vinaash operation, although the troops were centered around the Hill Kaka region at as early as March 2003 but the launch of the Operation was done on 11 April 2003. Official records state a total of sixty-five terrorists were killed during the Operation and three were arrested. The Operation further resulted in busting of 119 hideouts and capture of 79 major weapons and vast quantities of war like stores.⁵ . On 24 July 2003, the then Defence Minister Shri George Fernandes spoke at the Lok Sabha detailing about the total casualties and Jawans injured during the operation. He said, “During the operations, five army personnels were killed and five were wounded. Details about the killing of all the terrorists by the Army were reported to the nearest police stations and FIRs were lodged.”⁶

³ Terrorist Violence and Infiltration, Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, 01 August 2023
<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1944716>

⁴ Land Warfare Doctrine 2018, Indian Army
<https://www.ssrij.com/MediaReport/Document/IndianArmyLandWarfareDoctrine2018.pdf>

⁵ Rajya Sabha Debate 30 July 2003
https://rsdebate.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/82472/2/IQ_199_30072003_S141_p1_p3.pdf

⁶ Government of India Defence Lok Sabha Starred Question No:74 “Operation Sarp Vinash” 24 July 2003
Chandra Nath Singh;V. Saroja <https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/451273/1/64216.pdf>



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Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri's unit was deployed in Jammu and Kashmir, and more precisely, near the Poonch area during the summer of 2003. The 9 PARA (SF) regularly participated in Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations. On 22 April 2003, the Battalion received information about terrorist activities in and around the region and were ordered to carry out a search Operation. A Team of 20 Paratroopers were tasked for the Operation and it was code named "Op-Sarp Vinaash" and Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri was also selected for this critical Operation.

During the conduct, there was heavy automatic fire while the Commandos were approaching the hideouts. This resulted in a fierce gun battle between the Paratroopers and the terrorists with heavy fire exchanges. The terrorists were heavily armed with automatic weapons and had an edge with access to safe hideouts, as compared to the Commandos firing from the open. At some point, sensing grave danger under which his unit was, Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri crawled 100 yards and charged into the mountain hideout killing a militant from point blank range. He got heavily injured during the exchange of fire, and was bleeding profusely but he kept on assaulting until he shot another terrorist who died at the scene. By this time, he was critically injured as a result of heavy firing and endured multiple gunshots.

Despite of his grave condition, Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri kept fighting back and his leadership at the field helped other Team members to extricate from the danger zone and maneuver to a safer position. Paratrooper Chhetri continued the fight and with a help of a commando knife, killed the third terrorist in a courageous hand-to-hand combat. Soon after this, he succumbed to his injuries but motivated by his courage, the unit launched a massive onslaught and killed nineteen terrorists.

Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri displayed most conspicuous bravery and made the supreme sacrifice in the highest traditions of the Indian Army. For his exemplary gallantry and display of conspicuous courage he was awarded Ashoka Chakra Posthumously. On the Republic Day Parade of 2004, his sister, Sangeeta Chhetri received the award from the President of India.



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Sangeeta Chhetri receiving the Ashoka Chakra from the President of India, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam
Source: President of India - Digital Library - Rashtrapati Bhavan



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9423984 PARATROOPER SANJOG CHHETRI
9 PARA (SPECIAL FORCES) (POSTHUMOUS)

(Effective date of the award: 22 April 2003)

Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri was part of a troop conducting search and destroy operations in Hill Kaka in Jammu and Kashmir. The terrain was mountainous with a number of steep cuttings, nullahs and two feet of snow, making movement extremely difficult.

After a long and arduous approach to the target area, at first light on 22 April 2003 the entire troop comprising of 20 personnel drew heavy volume of effective automatic fire from three directions from a terrorist hideout located above, thereby pinning the entire troop down for approximately 30 minutes. Sensing that any further delay in neutralizing the terrorist's fire would cause heavy casualties to own troops, Paratroopers Sanjog Chhetri broke cover and lobbed two grenades towards the terrorists thereby disrupting their fire. He started crawling up a steep incline towards the terrorists. Meanwhile, the terrorists re-grouped and re-commenced their effective fire. By now, Paratrooper Chhetri had run out of hand grenades. However, he managed to reach a flank and from that position he charged at and killed two terrorists. This took the other terrorists by surprise and they directed their entire fire on Paratrooper Chhetri. This facilitated the balance of the troops to extricate themselves from the pinning fire of the terrorists and manoeuvre itself to a position of advantage.

Undeterred by the concentrated firing of the terrorists and with an utter disregard for his personal safety, Paratrooper Chhetri continued to close in with the terrorists and killed one more terrorist at point blank range. In this action, he sustained multiple gunshot wounds to which he succumbed subsequently. The troops, inspired by this act of valor, went on to eliminate all the terrorists numbering thirteen besides apprehending one terrorist alive and a large number of arms, ammunition and explosives.

Paratrooper Sanjog Chhetri, thus, displayed most conspicuous gallantry and bravery beyond compare, concern for the fellow comrades and made the supreme sacrifice in the highest traditions of the Indian Army.



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सत्यमेव जयते

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