



रक्षा मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
**DEFENCE**



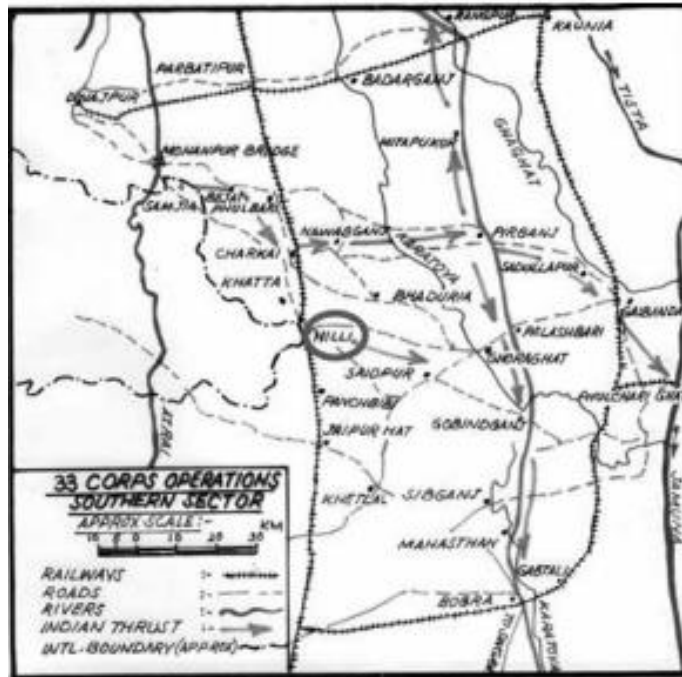
### SECOND LIEUTENANT SHAMSHER SINGH SAMRA

<b>SERVICE NUMBER</b>	SS-22826
<b>RANK</b>	Second Lieutenant
<b>NAME</b>	Shamsheer Singh Samra
<b>SON OF</b>	Gurdeep Singh Samra
<b>RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE</b>	Pakhoke, Punjab
<b>UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS</b>	Brigade of Guards
<b>SERVICE</b>	Indian Army
<b>DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION</b>	15 March 1970
<b>AWARD/DATE OF ACTION</b>	Maha Vir Chakra (Posthumous)/ 17 December 1971
<b>WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION</b>	Indo-Pak War of 1971
<b>OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE</b>	

Second Lieutenant Shamsheer Singh Samra was born on 10th June 1945, to Sardar Gurdeep Singh Samra, in Pakhoke Village of Tarn Taran District in Punjab. He did his schooling from DAV School Shimla. After his graduation he got selected to join the Army as a short service commissioned officer. He joined the No 08 SS course at Officers' Training Academy (OTA) and passed out on 15 March 1970 at the age of 24 years. He got commissioned into 8 GUARDS of the Brigade of Guards, an Infantry Regiment with a glorious history of valour and battle honours. Barely one and half years into service, Second Lieutenant Shamsheer Singh Samra got involved into thick of operations as his unit got deployed on the Eastern border, when the war with Pakistan became imminent.

The Brigade of The Guards is a Regiment of the Indian Army. The troops from all parts of the country serve in various battalions of this regiment. The regiment was formed in 1949 as the first mixed class Indian regiment by Field Marshal KM Cariappa OBE. The GUARDS Brigade was raised to implement the government's policy of encouraging army recruitment from regions under-represented in the forces. Three of Army's oldest battalions - 2 PUNJAB, 1 GRENADIERS, and 1 RAJ RIF were converted as the GUARDS Battalions in 1949. Though the Brigade of Guards is only 50 years old, its constituent battalions go back as far as 225 years. They also share 93 Battle Honours earned around the world. At the moment, the Regiment consists of 19 Battalions. The majority of these operate as Mechanised Infantry. During the first war of Kashmir 1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS) showed their mettle in the battle of Taindhar, where Naik Jadunath Singh fought valiantly and won the first Param Vir Chakra for his regiment. During the 1971 Indo-Pak War, the Regiment earned its second Param Vir Chakra through Lance Naik Albert Ekka of 14 GUARDS for heroism in Gangasagar in the Eastern Theatre in 1971.

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.<sup>2</sup> 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 codenamed '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.



*Map*

Source: [https://archive.claws.in/images/journals\\_doc/2131815590\\_AnuraagChhibber.pdf](https://archive.claws.in/images/journals_doc/2131815590_AnuraagChhibber.pdf)

20 Mountain Division, under the leadership of Major General Lachhman Singh Lehl, VrC, a distinguished veteran from the 1947 Indo-Pak conflict, was designated for operations in the Bogra Sector. The Division comprised several infantry formations including 66 Mountain Brigade, 165 Mountain Brigade, 202 Mountain Brigade, and 340 Mountain Brigade. Besides these they also had three Armoured Regiments under Brigadier Armour 33 Corps, 471 Engineer Brigade, and two artillery Brigades with additional support from 33 Corps Artillery. 202 Mountain Brigade was tasked with the strategic objective of capturing Hilli, a crucial border town in the western sector of East Pakistan.

The 202 Mountain Brigade was commanded by Brigadier Farhad Bhatti, VSM. Among its three Infantry Battalions, 8 GUARDS was tasked with capturing the Northern defenses of Hilli, specifically in Morapara village, with 5 GARHWAL RIFLES in reserve. The third Battalion, 22 MARATHA LI, later secured Biagram to the North of Hilli. Support for the attack on Morapara by 8 GUARDS included a Medium Artillery Regiment (less one Battery), two Field Artillery Regiments, a Light Battery, and a Squadron of 63 Cavalry equipped with T-55 tanks. Lieutenant Colonel Shamsheer Singh, who earned the Mahavir Chakra (MVC) for his actions during the Hilli operations, was the Commanding Officer of 8 GUARDS.

Hilli town was divided by the International Border, with the Indian side housing the town itself and the Pakistani side consisting of sparse villages and open paddy fields. Surrounding Hilli were villages like Basudeopur, Chandipur, Moaoana, and Morapara. The defenses of Hilli were held by the 205 Infantry Brigade of the Pakistan Army. Specifically, 4 Frontier Force (FF) troops were stationed there along with a Reconnaissance and Support Platoon from 34 PUNJAB. They were supported by six field guns of 80 Field Regiment, three M-24 tanks from 29 Cavalry, two jeep-mounted anti-tank recoilless rifles, one Platoon of the East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces, and around 50 Mujahids. The Pakistani forces had extensively prepared and fortified their defenses over a long period, anticipating an assault from the Indian side. Their positions were well entrenched and stocked, ready to withstand an Indian

attack.

202 Mountain Brigade launched an attack on Hilli complex on 08 December. Held by Pakistan's 4 FF Battalion plus, the complex had concrete emplacements and well-coordinated defences. The IAF assisted the attack by strafing and rocketing the defences. By the evening of 11 December, the Pak troops were bottled up at Dangapara, just Southeast of Hilli, where they had withdrawn from the Hilli complex. 8 GUARDS supported by one composite Armoured Squadron, captured this position after a fierce fighting. Twenty Pak soldiers were killed, and one officer and two ORs were captured. Besides, two Chaffee tanks and three 105 mm Howitzers were destroyed. The planned link-up between 66 Mountain Brigade and 202 Mountain Brigade was effected on 12 December.

The presence of Indian troops in the Pirganj-Palashbari area had an unsettling effect on the border defences of Pak 205 Brigade. Figuratively, the extended Pak fingers in the north-west and northeast were expected to fold back into a fist at Bogra, but not many troops could manage to pull back. Similarly, the Pak Posts at Phulcharighat, Bonarpara and Gobindganj in the east were also evacuated. After the withdrawal of 4 FF from the Hilli area, Pak 16 Infantry Division stood divided, with 23 Infantry Brigade in the Rangpur-Dinajpur area in the North and 205 Infantry Brigade in Bogra in the South.



*A Historic Surrender: Major Niyazi, 38 Punjab Regiment (Pakistan Army) surrendering after the famous battle of Hilli.*

Source: <https://www.bharat-rakshak.com/galleries/picture.php/910/categories>

Lieutenant Colonel Shamsheer Singh, the Commanding Officer of 8 GUARDS, led his men boldly in this attack and was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra for conspicuous gallantry. In the same battle, Second Lieutenant Shamsheer Singh Samra, serving as a Platoon Commander under Major Hemant Manjrekar in A Company, faced intense and accurate enemy fire from automatic weapons during a battle. Despite the overwhelming gunfire, he fearlessly motivated his troops to continue their assault. Despite sustaining a serious chest wound from a Medium Machine Gun, he bravely charged forward and neutralized the gun emplacement using a

grenade. He then proceeded to attack a second bunker but was struck again by enemy fire. Despite his injuries, he fell on the battlefield still holding the grenade. Second Lieutenant Shamsheer Singh Samra, a courageous and determined leader, sacrificed his life at the age of 26 in the line of duty. In recognition of his extraordinary bravery, he was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra. Lance Naik RU Pandey was also awarded the Maha Vir Chakra for exceptional gallantry, posthumously.



*The Statue of Second Lieutenant Shamsheer Singh Samra*

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=shamsheer%20singh%20samra>

On the occasion of Golden Jubilee of their commissioning, alumni of SS-08 course and their family members came together at Officers Training Academy, Chennai and dedicated the statue of their coursemate Second Lieutenant Shamsheer Singh Samra.



*Battle of Hilli*

Source: <https://x.com/adgpi/status/1205410807653314560/photo/1>

The Battle of Hilli, which raged from 8 December to 12 December was one of the fiercest battles of the 1971 War. The then Army Commander, Eastern Command, Lt Gen JS Arora, PVSM, had called Hilli the bloodiest battle in the then East Pakistan. Indian casualties included four officers, two JCOs and 61 ORs killed and 3 Officers, two JCOs and 85 ORs wounded.



*Army commemorates victory in Battle of Hilli*

Source: <https://www.thestatesman.com/bengal/army-commemorates-victory-in-battle-of-hilli-1503251513.html>

## **CITATION.**

### **2nd/Lt SHAMSHER SINGH SAMRA (SS-22826), Guards. (Posthumous)**

Second Lieutenant Shamsheer Singh Samra was a platoon commander in a battalion of the Brigade of the Guards. His battalion was engaged in action in the Eastern Front as part of our defensive action. During the action our troops came under heavy and accurate fire from automatic weapons. Undaunted by the heavy volume of fire. Second Lieutenant Shamsheer Singh Samra encouraged his men to press home the attack. When the officer was about 25 yards from the position, he received a Medium Machine Gun burst in the chest. Undeterred, he charged and destroyed the Medium Machine Gun bunker with a grenade; he then rushed to a second bunker, when he was hit by another burst as a result of which he died with the grenade in his hand. His action inspired his command and ensured success on the objective.

In this action, 2nd/Lt. Shamsheer Singh Samra displayed conspicuous bravery and determination and made the supreme sacrifice.

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

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6. [https://archive.claws.in/images/journals\\_doc/2131815590\\_AnuraagChhibber.pdf](https://archive.claws.in/images/journals_doc/2131815590_AnuraagChhibber.pdf)

## Videos

- 1) Battle of Hilli (Source: Twitter– News Nation)  
<https://x.com/NewsNationTV/status/1470092916336967681>