



रक्षा मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
**DEFENCE**



**CAPTAIN BALBIR CHAND CHOPRA**

<b>SERVICE NUMBER</b>	MR-6455
<b>RANK</b>	Captain
<b>NAME</b>	Balbir Chand Chopra
<b>SON OF</b>	B R Chopra
<b>RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE</b>	Meerut, Uttar Pradesh
<b>UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS</b>	ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
<b>SERVICE</b>	Indian Army
<b>DATE OF ENROLMENT/COMMISSION</b>	20 September 1959
<b>AWARD/DATE OF ACTION</b>	Vir Chakra / 14 November 1962
<b>WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION</b>	1962 Sino India War
<b>OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE</b>	



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Captain Balbir Chand Chopra was born on 14 March, 1935 and belonged to Meerut in Uttar Pradesh.<sup>1</sup> His father's name was B R Chopra. Captain Balbir Chand Chopra was an alumnus of KG Medical College and was commissioned as a Doctor in the Army Medical of the Indian Army on 20 September 1959. During the Sino India War of 1962, he was deployed in the area of Tawang District in the NEFA Sector, where he displayed commendable courage, and great devotion to duty rendering first aid to his comrades till the post was overran by the Chinese.

The Army Medical Corps (AMC) in India boasts a legacy deeply rooted in the nation's military history, evolving to meet the dynamic challenges of healthcare in the context of armed forces. Established on 01 January 1764, the Bengal Presidency Medical Service, which was the first military service of the three Presidencies in India. The Indian Army Medical Corps came into existence as a homogeneous corps of officers and men on the pattern of the Royal Army Medical Corps on 03 April 1943 by the amalgamation of the Indian Medical Service (IMS), the Indian Medical Department (IMD) and the Indian Hospital & Nursing Corps. It was renamed as Army Medical Corps after the Independence. The Corps was formed as a wartime necessity for attracting suitably qualified men for service in a rapidly expanding army.<sup>2</sup> The Army Medical Corps has been a part of all combat and active operations that Indian Army was involved in. It has excelled in providing both peace time and combat health care to the defence forces, medical services to UN peace keeping forces in foreign missions and during disaster management to civil authorities.<sup>3</sup> The Corps has the motto of “Sarve Santu Niramaya” meaning “Let all be free from disease and disability”.

Since its independence, India followed a foreign policy of maintaining cordial relations with China. It wanted to revive its ancient contacts with the people of China. Therefore, soon after its establishment on 01 October 1949, India was one of the first few countries to grant diplomatic status to the People's Republic of China (PRC). India supported the demand of state recognition of PRC on various international platforms. India took the initiative to enter into negotiations with China on the question of Tibet and entered into the Panchsheel Agreement in 1954. Within a few weeks of Chou Enlai's visit to India in 1954, the Chinese launched a protest against the presence of Indian troops in Barahoti, three kilometers South of a border pass, Tun Jun La in Uttar Pradesh. This was the first time, the Government of China laid claim to any part of Indian territory formally. The construction of the Tibet-Sinkiang Road in 1957 marked a turning point in the Sino-India relations as the Chinese occupied a large part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Heroes of 1962 war in Arunachal: Col Balbir Chand Chopra (Accessed on 10 January 2024)  
<https://arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2022/08/28/heroes-of-1962-war-in-arunachal-col-balbir-chand-chopra/>

<sup>2</sup> Army Medical Corps celebrates 252nd anniversary (Accessed on 28 November 2023)  
[https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/army-medical-corps-celebrates-252nd-anniversary-116040300491\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/army-medical-corps-celebrates-252nd-anniversary-116040300491_1.html)

<sup>3</sup> PIB (Accessed on 28 November 2023)  
<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1812958>



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Aksai Chin. This opened an opportunity for China to come out with territorial claims against India openly. By 1959, Chinese soldiers moved in further into Ladakh and established themselves at Chushul- Rezag La, and at Mandal, just South of Dambu Guru. On 08 September 1962, about 600 Chinese troops encircled the Dhola Post in the Eastern Sector and began firing. The Chinese launched simultaneous attacks in the Eastern Sector in Namka Chu Sector as well as in the Western Sector in Ladakh. The overwhelming number of the Chinese troops attacked the Indian soldiers but they fought the enemy with grit and determination. The Chinese announced the cease-fire at midnight of 21/22 November 1962.<sup>4</sup> During the war, the NEFA was a hub of enemy invasions.



*The Namka Chu Battle: The inner and outer envelopment*

Source: <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/1962-war-the-chinese-invasion-i/>

On 09 September 1962, India's then-Defence Minister Krishna Menon decided to evict the Chinese troops stationed South of Thagla Ridge due to the increasing intensity of Chinese incursions into Indian Territory. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's then Prime Minister, who was in London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, agreed with this decision. The 7 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier JP Dalvi was then given the order to advance to Namka Chu, which was considered as an advantageous ground for the Chinese.

<sup>4</sup> History of the Conflict with China, 1962. P.B Sinha. Col A.A. Athale (1992). History Division, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.



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Being aware of this advantage, Chinese attacked the Indian Post at Namka Chu on 20 October 1962 with overwhelming strength. The Indian Army fought the assault but were soon overpowered by enemy's strength in number and superior weapons.

On the eve of their attack on 19-20 October night, the Chinese had about four Battalions South of the Thag La Ridge and two Companies in the vicinity of Khinzemane. They had also moved a Battalion to Shao and nearly another Battalion to the subsidiary passes between Thag La and Karpola II. The Chinese were also holding the rear positions between Thag La and Marmang in depth. By 20 October, the Chinese had built up their strength to an estimated one Division in the Thag La and Khinzemane areas. It was also reported that they had positioned an additional Division in Bum La area. They had access to three routes (tracks) to reach Tawang. The rapid and heavy build-up of the Chinese troops, armed with heavy mortars and Machine Guns and equipped with modern entrenching tools, had forced the Indian Government to postpone the operation to evict the Chinese from their illegal encroachment, North of the Namka Chu. It was felt that the task would, for the time being, have to be limited to holding the Namka Chu. 7 Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brigadier JP Dalvi, with its Headquarters at Rongla was provided with four Infantry Battalions, less two Companies. They were 9 PUNJAB, 4 GRENADIERS, 2 RAJPUTS AND 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES along with some Artillery.

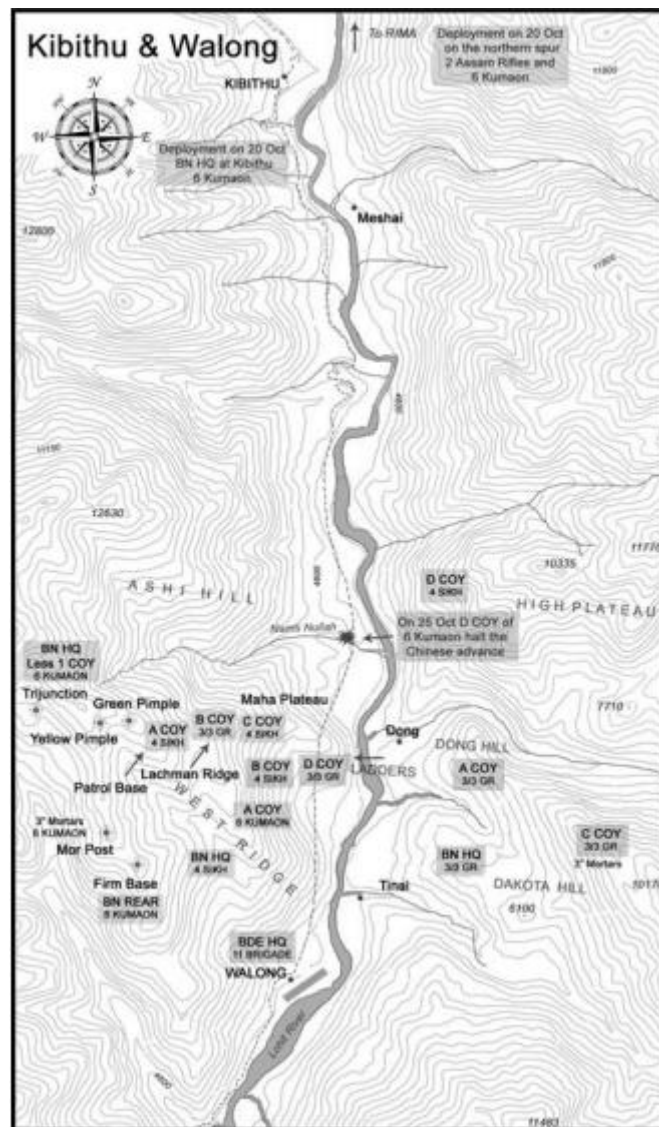
The Chinese, who had been subjecting the Indian Post at Tsang Le on the North Bank of Namka Chu, to heavy shelling since 17 October, but left this Post alone when at 0500 hours on 20 October, they engaged other Posts all along the Namkha Chu by heavy mortar fire. In the very first few artillery barrages, telephone lines, linking the Brigade Headquarters with the units, went dead, leaving the Units/Companies on their own and take any action they considered the best. Brigade Headquarters was informed by the Dholu Post had been completely over run by the Chinese.

Walong in the Lohit Frontier Division was another area in Arunachal Pradesh witnessing major and intense fighting. In march 1962, 6 KUMAON was ordered to relieve 2 RAJPUT and the complete operational responsibility was taken over by 6 KUMOAN on 21 April. During the War, in October 1962, Army Head Quarters asked the Eastern Command to consider withdrawing bulk of the troops from Subansiri, Siang and Lohit Frontier Divisions. They were also asked to consider using the entire 23 Infantry Division to contain the enemy thrust from Walong. 2 Infantry Division was formed to take over operational responsibility in Subansiri, Siang and Lohit Frontier Divisions of NEFA, its GOC, Major General M S Pathania, arrived at Walong on 26 October to the forward areas. With two battalions located at Walong but without a coordinating HQ located nearby, the new GOC found inherent problems of command and control of troops in the Walong Sector. Accordingly, on 29 October 1962, it was decided that operations in the Walong Sector would be looked after by an independent Infantry Brigade.



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For this purpose, first 181 Infantry Brigade and finally 11 Infantry Brigade (then located in Nagaland) was placed under 2 Infantry Division. The new Brigade Commander, Brigadier N C Rawley, MC, arrived in Walong on 31 October and the same evening he called for a conference of his COs and told them: “There was going to be no withdrawal from this place – everybody must get that straight”.



Operations in Walong Sector during 1962 Sino India War

Source: Shiv Kunal Verma. 2016. *1962: The War That Wasn't*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.

The presence of the enemy on the Green and Yellow Pimples in the sector was cause of concern as Green Pimple dominated Lachhman Ridge and Maha Plateau. The approach to Green Pimple was through Tri-junction and Yellow Pimple. Moreover, advance of another 3 km along that Spur by the enemy meant his domination of Walong Airstrip and Dropping Zone. Anticipating



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the danger from the enemy, 'A' Company of 6 KUMAON under Captain Ravi Kumar Mathur was sent on 05 November 1962 to clear the enemy from area Green Pimple and then to reconnoitre the route from Green Pimple to Ashi Hill. He was personally briefed by Brigadier Rawlley. The Company was to get fire support from heavy mortars of 71 Battery and on that day the Battery fired 110 rounds on Green Pimple, Yellow Pimple and left edge of Maha Plateau.

During the second phase, after a pause of about two weeks, the Chinese forces launched massive offensive on 14 November, 1962. The area defended by 6 KUMAON in Walong where Captain Balbir Chand Chopra's medical party was also attached came under heavy attack. After repulsing the initial attacks, 6 KUMAON launched a counterattack against the Chinese forces. During the intense battle, there were many casualties and injuries on both sides. Captain Balbir Chand Chopra established a Forward Aid Post immediately behind the leading companies near the Forward Observation Post position of 6 KUMAON. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Captain Chopra remained at the Forward Post and continued to treat casualties as they kept coming in. At night he remained at this Post when the Chinese launched fierce counter-attack. Even though they advanced close to his position and he was in danger from small arms fire and grenades, he continued to attend to the steady stream of casualties. Captain Chopra moved back only when his position was almost over-run.

Throughout the action, he set an outstanding example of courage and devotion to duty. He was awarded Vir Chakra.



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## CITATION

Captain Balbir Chand Chopra, (MR-6455), The Army Medical Corps  
(Effective date of award-14 November 1962)

Balbir Chand Chopra established forward aid post immediately behind the leading companies near the forward observation post position of Kumaon battalion when the unit launched counter-attack against the Chinese in NEFA on 14 November 1962. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Captain Chopra remained at the forward post and continued to treat casualties as they kept coming in. At night he remained at this post when the Chinese launched fierce counter-attack. Even though they advanced close to his position and he was in danger from small arms fire and grenades, he continued to attend to the steady stream of casualties. Captain Chopra moved back only when his position was almost over-run.

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Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No ..... dated .....



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