



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



MAJOR GENERAL SUSHIL KUMAR MATHUR (Then MAJOR)

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-6622
RANK	Major General (Then, Major)
NAME	Sushil Kumar Mathur
SON OF	Shri S B P Mathur
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Dehradun, Uttarakhand
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	1 AIR OP FLT / 76 MED REGT / ARTILLERY
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	13 December 1953
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Maha Vir Chakra / 15 April 1965
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	1965 Indo Pak War
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Major General (Then, Major) Sushil Kumar Mathur was born on 01 July 1934 in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. His father's name was Shri SBP Mathur. Major Sushil Kumar Mathur did his schooling and college from AP Mission High School, Dehradun and DAV College, Dehradun respectively. He was commissioned on 13 December 1953 from the Indian Military Academy Dehradun and joined Regiment of ARTILLERY and was posted to 39 Medium Regiment. In December 1959, Major Mathur qualified for the Air OP and was posted to 859 Air OP Flight and then after two years to 2 Air OP Flight. In October 1964, after qualifying on the QFI course he was promoted to the rank of Major. He took over the command of 1 Air OP Flight. When hostilities broke out in April 1965 between Pakistan and India in the Rann of Kutch, 1 Air OP flight equipped with the Krishak aircraft moved to the operational area. In this war, Major Mathur distinguished himself with high risk, deft and skillful flying. His multiple functions during the operations included bringing down accurate artillery fire, aerial reconnaissance of the ground and the enemy intrusions and dispositions. For his outstanding performance and gallantry, then Major Mathur was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra.



After his tenure with the Air OP, Major Mathur attended the Staff College course at the DSSC Wellington and this was followed by a mix of staff and command appointments. He was Brigade Major of an Infantry Brigade from 1969 to 1971, commanded 55 Light Regiment from February 1971 to March 1973 and was later posted as a Directing Staff (DS) at DSSC Wellington. From November 1975 to Dec 1977, he was the Military Attache at the Embassy of India in Cairo. His subsequent appointments were 1977-79, Commandant Artillery Centre at Hyderabad, 1979-81 as Artillery Brigade Commander on promotion to Brigadier. He then attended the National Defence College during 1982-83 and thereafter was posted as Deputy Commandant School of Artillery, Deolali. He was Commandant Artillery Centre Nasik during 1984-85. On 10 December 1985, he was promoted to Major General's rank and was posted as ADG Arty (A&M), Directorate General of Artillery at the Army Head Quarters, New Delhi. This was his last posting. Major General



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Mathur retired from service on medical grounds on 16 December 1987. He settled down at Roorkee near Haridwar in UP which now falls in the state of Uttarakhand. He passed away in 2005.¹

The Regiment of Artillery was raised on 28 September 1827. It was initially raised as Bombay Artillery and was later renamed 5 Bombay Mountain Battery. In May 1857, the mutiny by Indian soldiers started in the artillery of the Army of the Bengal Presidency. The incident prompted a complete ban on Indian artillery units, except the mountain artillery batteries in select provinces. The decision was reversed in the mid-1930s when the first of the Field Regiments of the Indian Army were raised. The Field Regiments support the formations on the field. The regimental motto of Artillery Regiment ‘Sarvatra Izzat-O-Iqbal’ which means ‘Everywhere with Honour and Glory’. The regiment has given Indian Army five chiefs, General Paramasiva Prabhakar Kumaramangalam DSO, OBE (07 June 1966 – 07 June 1969) General Om Prakash Malhotra PVSM (31 May 1978 – 31 May 1981) General Sunith Francis Rodrigues PVSM, VSM (30 June 1990 – 30 June 1993) General Sundararajan Padmanabhan PVSM, AVSM, VSM (30 September 2000 – 31 December 2002) General Deepak Kapoor PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (30 September 2007 – 31 March 2010).

The genesis of Indo-Pak conflict can be traced back to the year 1947. The bone of contention between India and Pakistan are the attempts by Pakistan to annex the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir by any means. The ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir and our frontiers with Pakistan have remained a sensitive zone for years. Pakistan has on and off resorted to firing, incursions and intrusions at several points of these frontiers, compelling India to adopt defensive measures. These attempts of Pakistan have been met by the Indian Armed Forces with commendable bravery and steely resilience, but always with great restraint to not escalate the conflict. The Indo-Pak war of 1965 was the second war fought between these two bordering countries. While India was still recovering from the damages of Sino-India war of 1962, Pakistan saw it as an opportunity to acquire Jammu and Kashmir with might, presuming India to be weak in terms of defence preparation. The war initiated on 24 April 1965, when Pakistan Army, attacked our territory in the Rann of Kutch and penetrated six to eight miles inside the Indian territory. This act of illegal occupation of Indian territory constituted violation of Indo-Pak Border Agreement 1960 and international law as per the United Nations Charter. The Pakistani forces subsequently intruded in Kashmir with the launch of Operation Gibraltar.

Despite the build-up of tension during March, Pakistan claimed it was the creation of new Indian Posts inside the Rann that led to the first outbreak of fighting. Major General Tikka Khan ordered Brigadier Azhar on 06/07 April to carry out the removal and destruction of the Indian Post at

¹ Khullar, D. K. Themes of glory: Indian artillery in war. New Delhi, (India): Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, 2017.



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Sardar and other smaller Posts. The attack was supposed to be launched on 07/08 April but was delayed owing to movements of Pakistani troops to the required positions, and so it commenced at on 09 April. 18 PUNJAB was ordered to take Sardar Post and 6 BALUCH was to capture the Indian Posts named Jungle and Shalimar.

Pakistani troops advanced in the dark and achieved the desired surprise factor they had hoped for, and with covering fire from Medium Machine Guns, Heavy Mortars, 51 Infantry Brigade attacked India's Sardar Post. The Shalimar Post was first to fall in the action but Sardar Post saw heavy fighting during the night and through to the next afternoon. The attack did not lead to the swift success that 51 Infantry Brigade had hoped for and despite mortar and artillery fire which became heavier during the afternoon of 09 April, the Indian defenders succeeded, in holding their position.² This Operation was code named “Desert Hawk”. The Sardar Post was garrisoned by a CRPF Battalion.



Source: <https://www.dailyo.in/voices/crpf-pakistan-army-bsf-border-security-force-1965-india-pakistan-war-23129>

After facing the first Pakistani attack boldly, many CRPF personnel defending Sardar Post withdrew to two miles south to their Vigikot Post. Having succeeded in driving the Indians from Sardar post, the Pakistani forces did not realise it had been vacated and were already in the process of their own withdrawal to their original positions. By the evening of 09 April, after a day of heavy fighting, the Indian forces realised that Sardar Post was still unoccupied by Pakistan and then reoccupied it without any fighting.³ The AOP which had arrived at Bhuj to take the Brigadier Artillery Southern Command to Field Regiment's practice in the Rann now came in use. It flew over Sardar Post and saw no sign of Pakistani movement. A patrol from the leading Battalion,

² Farooq Naseem Bajwa. 2013. From Kutch to Tashkent: The Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. London, England: Hurst.

³ Ibid.



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confirmed that Sardar Post had not been occupied by Pakistani troops. The patrol firmed in at Sardar post and stayed there until an Infantry Company relieved it.

In anticipation of a possible attack on the Vigokot Post, on 09 April, 'C' Company 17 RAJPUTANA RIFLES arrived at the Vigokot Post. Soon after, 2 SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY also joined in. On 11 April, a Battery of 11 Field Regiment had also been deployed at Vigokot. On 11 April, a standing patrol (of a Company strength) of 2 SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY was sent to Sardar Post. Simultaneously, 1 MAHAR commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later General KS Sunderji) stationed at Khavda was also ordered to move to Sardar on 12 April. The anti-tank mine laying was completed at Vigokot on 17 April and in Sardar Post area⁴.

Pakistani troops were already established along the border opposite Sardar Post and Vigokot. Patrol actions followed in the no man's land separating the two sides. The patrols were supported by the artillery. An artillery duel developed. Retaliatory fire was succeeded by counter-bombardment ordered by AOPs on both sides. While patrolling and artillery activity went on, Pakistan brought up Patton tanks and began to move them a Troop at a time to the North of Biar Bet. By this time, a Medium Battery had been added to their artillery component in the region. An AOP took on a Pakistan tank group, knocked out one tank and destroyed and damaged a number of accompanying soft vehicles. It was a photograph of this knocked-out tank that was used to convince the Americans that Pakistan was using their aid equipment against India.⁵

Our infantry strength had been increased by the addition of a second Brigade and a Divisional Headquarters. The second Brigade a Para Brigade, with 17 Para Field Regiment in support, was employed to secure the approach to the island of Kutch in the vicinity of Khavda. Biar Bet was located some 20 miles to the North of Khavda. The guns of 17 Para Field Regiment could not reach the area opposite Biar Bet where Pakistan appeared to be building up strength. Pakistan built up strength to a division's worth including a regiment of Pattons. The Pakistani infantry also intruded into our area-especially in Biar Bet area. The fire from the Troop of 17 Para Field Regiment in support came down on the intruders accurately and quickly. Next, Pakistan launched a properly mounted attack on Biar Bet in overwhelming numbers supported by armour and artillery. The fire from the troop of 17 Para Field slowed down the Pakistan advance but could not stop it. None of the other guns of the artillery with the division were within range. The Troop of 17 Para Field stayed in its temporary position. The Pattons approached Point 219 the Troop position and fired into the gun area. The fire from one of the Pakistani tanks demolished the overhead cover of the gun position officers' bunker. The Troop kept responding to the calls for fire until ordered to

⁴ The Indian-Pakistan War of 1965: A History. S.N. Prasad. U.P. Thapliyal (2011). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India

⁵ Palit, D. K. History of the regiment of Artillery: Indian Army. Leo Cooper, 1972.



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withdraw. The withdrawal was carried out ably. Throughout the operation, an Air OP Squadron commanded by Major Sushil Kumar Mathur did excellent work and Major Mathur was awarded Maha Vir Chakra.⁶

Major Sushil Kumar Mathur was in command of an Air Observation Post Flight during the operation against Pakistani intruders in the Kutch area. Because of the nature of the terrain and lack of suitable landmarks, artillery fire for the operation had to be directed from the air and this task was carried out almost entirely by Major Mathur and his flight. Under his leadership, the unit was always in a very high state of readiness and successfully carried out its manifold duties including artillery observation, aerial reconnaissance of the ground and the intruder's disposition and inter-communication. Major Mathur personally flew 45 operational sorties. On 15 April 1965, Major Mathur effectively engaged a convoy of intruders in the Kanjarkot area and destroyed three vehicles and damaged others. Again, on 30 April 1965, he directed artillery fire towards the intruders in the Biar Bet area and compelled them to withdraw in haste. In this action, a field ammunition dump and three vehicles belonging to the intruders were damaged.

Throughout the operation, Maj Mathur displayed great courage, technical skill and leadership in the best traditions of the Indian Army. He was awarded Maha Vir Chakra for his gallantry.

⁶ ibid



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CITATION

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(Effective date of award- 15 April 1965)

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Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No._____ dated_____



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