



रक्षा मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
DEFENCE



**MAJOR RAJENDRA KUMAR BALI**

<b>SERVICE NUMBER</b>	IC-11178
<b>RANK</b>	Major
<b>NAME</b>	Rajendra Kumar Bali
<b>SON OF</b>	Mohkam Chand Bali
<b>RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE</b>	Jaranwala, Pakistan
<b>UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS</b>	2 SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY
<b>SERVICE</b>	Indian Army
<b>DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION</b>	14 December 1958
<b>AWARD/DATE OF ACTION</b>	Vir Chakra / 09 April 1965
<b>WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION</b>	1965 Indo Pak War
<b>OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE</b>	



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Major Rajendra Kumar Bali was born on 14 August 1937, in Jaranwala, Pakistan. After the partition of the subcontinent, his family settled in New Delhi. His father's name was Mohkam Chand Bali.<sup>1</sup> Major Bali was Commissioned into 2 SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY Regiment of the Indian Army on 14 December 1958 at the young age of 21. During 1965 Indo Pak War, he was deployed in the Kutch area when Pakistan launched an attack on Sardar Post on 09 April 1965. During the action, he displayed courage, organised the defences and captured four Pakistani intruders while encouraging the State Reserve Police personnel stationed there to keep fighting the enemy.

The SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY previously known as the Mazabhi and Ramdasias Sikh Regiment is a Regiment of the Indian Army. Its name was changed to the Sikh Light Infantry in 1944. It is the successor unit to the Mazabhi Sikh Pioneers 23<sup>rd</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Sikh Pioneers. The SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY inherited the battle honours, colours and traditions of the Mazabhi Sikh Pioneers on its merging with a few Ramdasias companies in 1941. After serving under the British Raj for nearly a century they distinguished themselves with loyalty to the British Crown and her Empire in numerous conflicts in and around the Indian Subcontinent including both the First World War and the Second World War. The SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY has displayed immense versatility as the regiment conduct operations from Siachen Glacier to Counter-terrorism. The regimental motto is 'Deg Tegh Fateh', meaning prosperity in peace and victory in war. Post Independence, the regiment has participated in 1965 Indo Pak War, 1971 Indo Pak War and IPKP operations. During the Indo-Pak War of 1971, 8 and 10 SIKH LI displayed exemplary courage and fortitude, wherein 8 SIKH LI was awarded the Battle Honour "Fatehpur" for their heroic action<sup>2</sup>. The Regiment has given the Indian Army three Chiefs- General Ved Prakash Malik PVSM, AVSM who was the 19th Army Chief, General Bikram Singh PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, who was the 24<sup>th</sup> Army Chief and General Manoj Mukund Naravane PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, who was the 28<sup>th</sup> Army Chief and retired on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Gandhi, S.S. (2006) Portraits of valour: India's highest gallantry awards and their recipients. New Delhi, India: Defence Review.

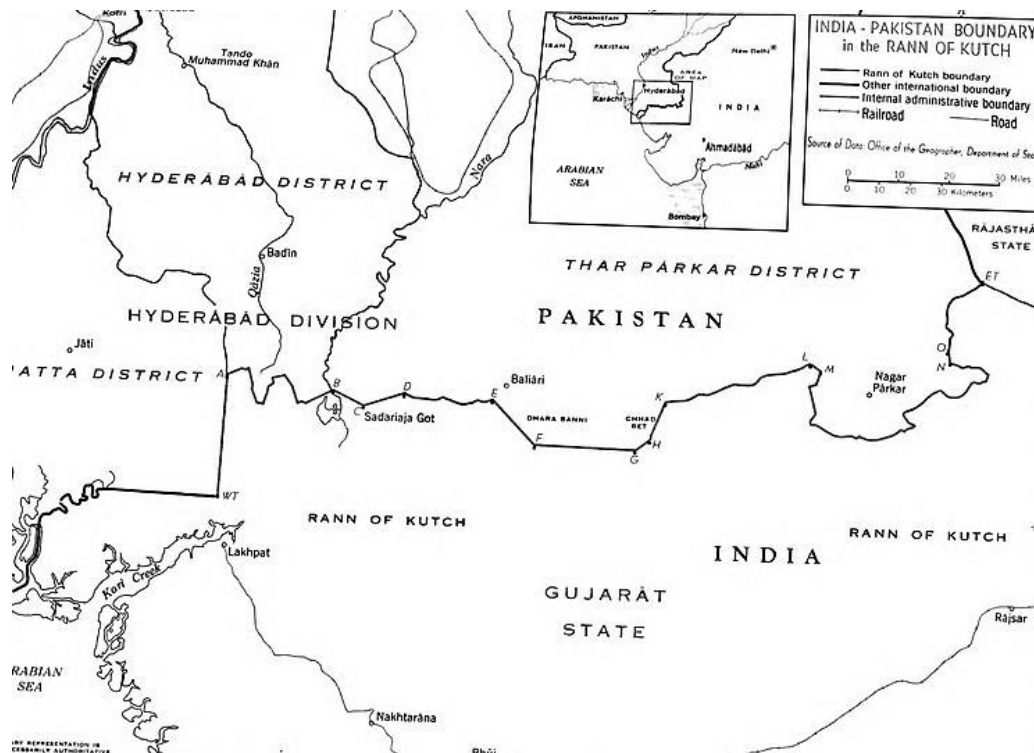
<sup>2</sup> Ballabh, Anand, Insights into Infantry Regiments: A Basic Factbook. Forward Books publications. New Delhi (2013)



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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 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.



*Map of the India-Pakistan border in the Rann of Kutch*

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:India-Pakistan\\_Boundary\\_in\\_the\\_Rann\\_of\\_Kutch.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:India-Pakistan_Boundary_in_the_Rann_of_Kutch.jpg)



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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.<sup>3</sup> This Operation was code named “Desert Hawk”. The Sardar Post was garrisoned by a CRP Battalion.



*Sardar Post, Rann of Kutch*

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 CRP personnel defending Sardar Post withdrew to two miles south to their Vigokot 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.<sup>4</sup>

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)

<sup>3</sup> Farooq Naseem Bajwa. 2013. From Kutch to Tashkent: The Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. London, England: Hurst.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



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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 area<sup>5</sup>.

After an unsuccessful attempt at Sadar Post, Pakistan inducted more troops in the area. Between 10-19 April, both sides engaged in patrolling and artillery exchanges. On 12 April, a Pakistani patrol was engaged by the Indian artillery to the North of Sardar Post and suffered at least six casualties. In another patrol clash on 15 April, some fleeing Pakistanis suffered casualties to the South of Kanjarkot. It is significant that these activities were confined to the Vigokot-Sardar Post area till 19 April.

Major Rajendra Kumar Bali of 2 SIKH LI was on a liaison visit to the State Reserve Police Post in Vigokot in the Kutch area when Pakistani intruders launched an attack on Sardar Post in the early hours of 09 April 1965. After the attack, wireless and telephone communication between Sardar Post and Vigokot failed. Soon after, it was reported that Sardar Post had been overrun. Major Bali helped to reorganise the defences in the Vigokot area and encouraged the State Reserve Police personnel stationed there. After two Police patrols had failed to reach Sardar Post due to shelling by the intruders, Major Bali volunteered to take out a patrol although he knew that the Post might be in the hands of the intruders.

On reaching Sardar Post, he assisted in organising the defences. He arranged to collect the arms, equipment and documents left behind by the intruders. Subsequently, with three Riflemen, he captured four Pakistani intruders and a loaded Light Machine Gun. Again, on 15 June 1965, disregarding his personal safety, Major Bali courageously went through his own minefields and captured two intruders who had been trapped there.

Throughout the action, Major Rajendra Kumar Bali displayed cool courage and devotion to duty in the best traditions of the Indian Army. He was awarded Vir Chakra for his gallantry.

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<sup>5</sup> The Indian-Pakistan War of 1965: A History. S.N. Prasad. U.P. Thapliyal (2011). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India



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## CITATION

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Throughout, Major Rajendra Kumar Bali displayed cool courage, determination and devotion to duty in the best traditions of the Indian Army.

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





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