



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



RISALDAR ACHHAR SINGH

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|---|---------------------------------|
| SERVICE NUMBER | JC-5234 |
| RANK | Risaldar |
| NAME | Achhar Singh |
| SON OF | Ishar Singh |
| RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE | Village Kaile, Ludhiana, Punjab |
| UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS | DECCAN HORSE |
| SERVICE | Indian Army |
| DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION | 12 July 1939 |
| AWARD/DATE OF ACTION | Vir Chakra / 07 September 1965 |
| WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION | 1965 Indo Pak War |
| OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE | |



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Risaldar Achhar Singh was born on 12 July 1922 in Kaile Village of Ludhiana District in Punjab. His father's name was Sardar Ishar Singh. Risaldar Achhar Singh was enrolled into 9 HORSE (Deccan Horse) of the Indian Army on 12 July 1939. During the 1965 Indo Pak War, he was part of an attack on the Rohi Bund near Khem Karan in Punjab where he displayed his skills and destroyed an enemy tank and damaged another.

The DECCAN HORSE was raised from two old Hyderabad raised Regiments the 20th ROYAL DECCAN HORSE and the 29th LANCERS (Deccan Horse). The Nizam of Hyderabad had been persuaded to have his Army officered by Britishers and this decision had been popular with the Army. It was in 1816 that Captain Evans Davies arrived in the State and four Cavalry Regiments were created which became the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Regiments Nizam's Cavalry. The 4th was to be raised in 1826. In 1854, the Cavalry force was reduced to four Regiments and had already won the approval of Lord Gough, then Commander-in-Chief, India who, in 1853, before a House of Commons Committee had called the Nizam's Cavalry 'the finest Irregular Cavalry in the world. Their new designation was to be the 1st to 4th Cavalry, Hyderabad Contingent. The Great Mutiny saw the Contingent on Service in Central India. In 1880, they were equipped with the lance but the designation was not changed until 1890 when they became the 1st to 4th LANCERS, Hyderabad Contingent. Until 1903, with the incorporation of the Hyderabad Contingent into the regular Cavalry, the contingents were designated as the 20th DECCAN HORSE (1st) and the 29th LANCERS (DECCAN HORSE) (2nd). Both the 20th and 29th served in France in the Great War and then and when the Indian Cavalry Corps moved to Palestine, both Regiments served in the Jordan Valley and in Allenby's final victorious campaign. 20TH DECCAN HORSE was titled 'ROYAL' for distinguished service during World War I. It was the only regiment to be so honoured.

In 1922, following amalgamation of the two Regiments; the ROYAL DECCAN HORSE (9 HORSE) came into being. During World War II, out of the four Regiments that were allocated tanks, PROBYN'S HORSE and the ROYAL DECCAN HORSE were the Indian Regiments of 251 Indian Tank Brigade.¹ During Partition, the Regiment was allotted to India and its name was finally changed to THE DECCAN HORSE (9 HORSE) in 1950. Since Independence, THE DECCAN HORSE has fought in the three wars with Pakistan; 1947-48, 1965 and 1971. The battles fought by the Regiment broke the back of the enemy Armoured and Infantry division. The Regiment has blunted and stalled the largest offensives mounted by Pakistan since Independence. In recognition of its distinguished service; The Deccan Horse was presented the "Guidon" by the President of India in 1978.² General AS Vaidya, PVSM, MVC & Bar, AVSM the twelfth Chief of

¹ Gaylor John, Sons of John Company: The Indian & Pakistan Armies 1903-1991. (1993) Lancers International, New Delhi.

² Deccan Horse. (Accessed on 24 May 2023)

http://www.indiapicks.com/stamps/Forces/1111_Deccan_Horse.htm



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the Indian Army belonged to the Deccan Horse and was also its Colonel of the Regiment. He commanded the Regiment in the 1965 War where he was awarded his first Maha Vir Chakra.



(Left to Right) Fig.1- A commemorative postage stamp on the presentation of Regimental Guidon to the 9 HORSE

Source: Fig.1- http://www.indiapicks.com/stamps/Forces/1111_Deccan_Horse.htm

Fig. 2 - Commemorative Plaque Plate, Guidon presentation by President of India in December 1978

Source: <https://www.collectorbazar.com/item/guidon-presentataion-by-president-of-india-in-dec-78-to-20th-lancers-brass-4-inch-dia-commemorative-plaque-plate-476747>

The ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir and Indian 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.



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The infiltration of the Gibraltar Force at various points across the 750-km long Cease-fire Line and the International Border between Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir began on 05 August 1965. It covered areas of Jammu, Punch and Uri in the West, Tithwal in the North-West, Guraiz in the North and Kargil in the North-East. Initially, about 1,500 infiltrators crossed over in small batches, and concentrated at selected points inside Kashmir to organise themselves into larger groups. They were equipped with light automatic weapons and their aim, apart from sabotage, was to indoctrinate the Kashmiris so that they could revolt against India.³ The period of the infiltration campaign was characterised by intense, hectic activity throughout the J&K Theatre with special emphasis in the Valley. The raiders and own forces marched and counter-marched all over the inhospitable terrain in a vast grim game of hide and seek. Several times during the day the opponents met, clashed and reeled apart in a series of bloody actions, weaving a confused pattern hard to unravel.⁴

³ The Indian-Pakistan War of 1965: A History. S.N. Prasad. U.P. Thapliyal (2011). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India

⁴ War Despatches: Indo-Pak Conflict 1965. Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh, VrC (1991). Lancer International, New Delhi



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Source: <https://www.firstpost.com/opinion/war-in-our-times-india-pakistan-war-of-1965-the-great-indian-fightback-in-kutch-and-kashmir-13065762.html>

The second batch of infiltrators, comprising some 6000 men, was pushed into Jammu and Kashmir in the third week of August. Taking into account the replacements for those who "exfiltrated", it is estimated that on the whole, about 8,000 infiltrators participated in these operations. By the first week of September 1965, a third batch of infiltrators, approximately 5,500 strong, was ready in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir for induction. But it could not be sent across the border due to the counter offensive launched by India in Punjab.⁵ The plan failed with their early detection and lack of support from the locals, who gave away their positions.

⁵ 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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In sheer desperation, Pakistan also employed its artillery in support of guerrilla operations in the Chhamb area. India grasped the criticality of the ongoing plan, repulsed the attacks and cut off the entry and exit points into the Kashmir Valley. A quick and firm response by India took Pakistan by surprise and thwarted their well laid out plans. India reacted almost immediately by recapturing Kargil heights which had been returned in Jul 1965, a limited offensive in the Tithwal Sector and most importantly, the capture of Haji Pir Pass in a daring operation by 1 PARA by Major (later Lieutenant General) Ranjit Singh Dayal under 68 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier (later Lieutenant General) ZC Bakshi on 28 August 1965. This was one of the most notable achievements of the riposte. The capture of Haji Pir and loss of key positions in the Kishenganga Bulge were a severe setback for the Pakistanis which put them in a state of shock. Thus, by the end of August 1965, Pakistan's plans for quick annexation of the Valley had been squarely defeated.

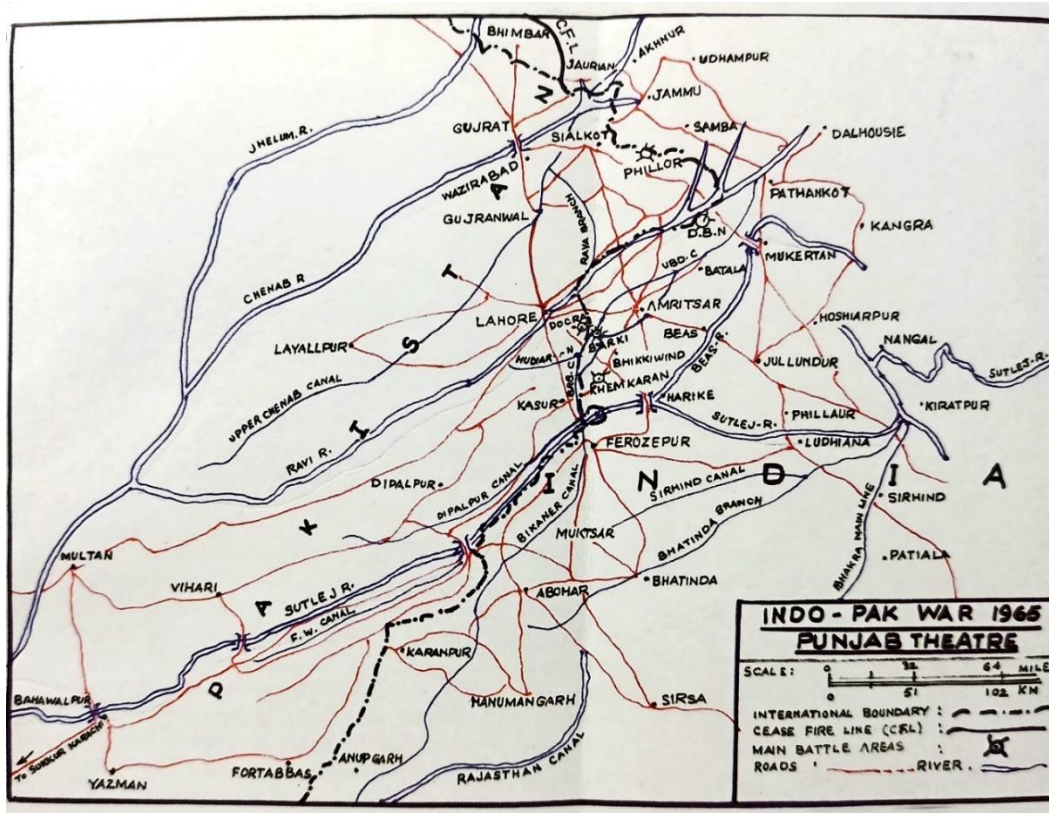
The failure of Operation Gibraltar saw the last Phase, Operation Grand Slam put into effect by General Ayub Khan on 01 September 1965. A massive attack was planned in the Chhamb-Jaurian Sector aimed at capturing Akhnur, which would sever communications and cut off supply routes to Indian troops. In desperation, Pakistan played its hand by launching Operation 'Grand Slam' on 01 September 1965. It was launched across the Southern most portion of the CFL and was aimed at Akhnur; thus, Pakistan aimed at cutting of Indian positions in Naushera, Rajauri and Punch. Thereafter, as a part of Operation Grand Slam, an armoured thrust could be developed towards Jammu, the capture of which would have severed all land communications to Jammu & Kashmir.⁶ This would place Pakistan in a position to dictate terms to India.

Pakistan did not call off Operation 'Grand Slam' despite the Security Council's call for an immediate cease-fire on 04 September 1965. It even carried out an air raid on Amritsar the next day. The Indian warning that an attack against Jammu and Kashmir would be treated as an attack against India was also ignored by Pakistan. Meanwhile, apprehending a Pakistani attack, India had also formulated a contingency plan to meet the situation militarily. The Indian plan visualised a limited offensive intended to cover the area from Dera Baba Nanak in the North to the Sutlej in the South.

⁶ 1965 Indo-Pak War – A Critical Appraisal (2015) Major General PJS Sandhu, (Retd) (Accessed on 8 September 2022) <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/1965-indo-pak-war-a-critical-appraisal/>



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Punjab Theatre: 1965 Indo Pak War

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

The objective of the retaliatory Indian plan was to threaten Lahore, drive a wedge between the Pakistani forces deployed in the Lahore and Sialkot Sectors and destroy their war potential. The offensive was to serve the dual purpose of ensuring the security of Punjab by advancing the Indian defence line to the Ichhogil Canal and to capture some Pakistani territory to serve as a bargaining lever in the political parleys, on the conclusion of hostilities.

In view of the above plan, XI Corps under Lieutenant General Joginder Singh Dhillon was assigned the tasks on August 1965 to destroy the enemy forces which might enter Punjab and Ganganagar Sector in Rajasthan. Also, on orders from GOC-in-C Western Command, the Corps was to undertake the following measures simultaneously:

- a. To advance to the Ichhogil Canal along the axes GT road, Bhikkiwind-Khalra and Bhikkiwind-Khem Karan, to secure Pakistani territory from opposite Ranian inclusive to



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- its junction with Dipalpur Canal opposite Hussainiwala. Also to capture intact Ichhogil Uttar road bridge, GT road bridge, Jallo road bridge and Barki bridge on Ichhogil Canal
- b. To eliminate the Pakistani bridge-head at the Dera Baba Nanak and if possible, capture the bridge on the Ravi River, intact.



Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh, VrC Western Army Commander during the 1965 War, being shown around by Brig Zoru Bakshi.

Source: 1965 War: The Battle for Haji Pir (Accessed on 01 August 2024)

<https://stratnewsglobal.com/pakistan/1965-war-the-battle-for-haji-pir/>

On completion of above, they were to be prepared to advance on Lahore. 4 Mountain Division (less 33 Mountain Brigade) was part of the XI Corps and was to secure Pakistani territory up to the east bank of the Ichhogil Canal from the Canal Junction near Bedian (exclusive) to the Pt 798439 at Ganda Singhwala (inclusive). It was also to destroy the bridge over the Ichhogil Canal on Road Khem Karan – Kasur and occupy a defended sector to contain possible Pakistani offensive particularly along the Kasur - Khem Karan and the Ganda Singhwala - Khem Karan axes. For this,



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the support of 2 Independent Armoured Brigade would be made available on priority.⁷ The Khem Karan Sector was a complex labyrinth of roads and water channels, where, on the face of it, Pakistan had a distinct advantage should it go on the offensive. Khem Karan and Kasur were virtually twin townships. The Ichhogil in this sector was at an average 2 to 3 km from the border and along with the Rohi Nullah was an obstacle for any offensive towards Kasur.

4 Mountain Division planned to carry out the allotted tasks in two phases. In the first phase, territory up to the East bank of the Ichhogil Canal from Ballanwala to Ganda Singhwala was to be captured by a Brigade group. In the second phase, territory up to the East of the Ichhogil Canal from Canal junction at Bedian to Ballanwala was to be captured by another Brigade group less Battalion. At 0330 hours on 06 September, HQ XI Corps ordered that the territory to the east of the Ichhogil should be secured with utmost speed, unmindful of casualties. It also clarified that the compact defended sector should be occupied covering the Kasur-Khem Karan and Ganda Singhwala-Khem Karan axes. The intelligence available to the Division indicated that Pakistan had deployed only the Sulej Rangers and Mujahids to the East of the Ichhogil Canal and that at the most, one Infantry battalion held hastily prepared positions from Bedian to Ganda Singhwala. In fact, India did not expect a quick major counter-offensive from Pakistan. In view of this, it was concluded that quick occupation of the east bank of Rohi Nala would delay a Pakistani armour thrust, enable Indians to cause more attrition and economise troop involvement on various axes of the Pakistani advance. The Division plan, therefore, envisaged:

Phase 1

- (i) Securing of Pakistani territory upto the east bank of the Rohi Nala from Road-Nala junction to the Rohiwal area by 62 Mountain Brigade Group.
- (ii) Occupation of the defended sector by 62 Mountain Brigade Group with an additional battalion under command, in the west and south-west of Khem Karan area covering Kasur-Khem Karan and Ganda Singhwala-Khem Karan axes.

Phase 2

- (i) Capture of Ballanwala-Theh Pannun and securing of Pakistani territory east of the Ichhogil Canal from Ballanwala (including) to 162 Canal junction near Bedian (excluding) by 7 Mountain Brigade Group less one battalion.
- (ii) Securing of the east bank of Ichhogil Canal from Ballanwala (excluding) to Ganda Singhwala by 62 Mountain Brigade and destruction of the bridge over Ichhogil Canal on the Khem Karan-Kasur Road.

⁷ 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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In view of the impending operations, a firm base was established in the South- West of Khem Karan by 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES, 18 RAJPUTANA RIFLES and 9 HORSE less two Squadrons. At 0500 hours on 06 September, 62 Mountain Brigade advanced to secure area Rohiwal and the road crossing over Rohi Nala. 9 JAK RIFLES, which had captured Rohi Nala on the main axis at about 0915 hours was directed to push through and destroy the bridge on the Ichhogil and occupy its nearest bank. But the Battalion came under heavy artillery and MMG fire from the Canal area. 13 DOGRA, however, succeeded in securing the Rohiwal area by 1030 hours, despite mortar and MMG fire. It suffered two killed and seven injured (including two officers) in the encounter. Two Battalions of 7 Mountain Brigade, viz 7 GRENADIERS and 4 GRENADIERS, advanced on Ballanwala and Theh Pannun respectively. By 1130 hours on 06 September, 4 GRENADIERS secured the line of Rohi Nala and the East bank of the Ichhogil southwards of Theh Pannun. But the attack of 7 GRENADIERS on Ballanwala failed.

During this action, on 07 September 1965, when the Deccan Horse took part in an attack on the Rohi Bund near Khem Karan on the India-Pakistan border, Risaldar Achhar Singh of 9 HORSE handled his troop with skill and courage. He destroyed an enemy tank and damaged another inspiring his comrades to attack the enemy making the operation a great success.

Throughout the action, Risaldar Achhar Singh displayed courage and devotion to duty of a high order. He was awarded Vir Chakra for his gallantry.



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CITATION

JC-5234 Risaldar ACHHAR SINGH, The Deccan Horse (9 Horse).
(Effective date of award-7th. September 1965)

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Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No. 132-Pres./65 dated 01 January 1966.



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