



रक्षा मंत्रालय
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RIFLEMAN MAHILAL SINGH

SERVICE NUMBER	2853735
RANK	Rifleman
NAME	Mahilal Singh
SON OF	Shri Suraj Mal
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Village Banchari, Gurgaon, Haryana
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	4 RAJPUTANA RIFLES
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	17 January 1963
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Vir Chakra (Posthumous) / 07 September 1965
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	1965 Indo Pak War
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Rifleman Mahilal Singh was born on 17 January 1941 in Banchari Village of Gurgaon District in Haryana. His father's name was Shri Suraj Mal. Mahilal Singh was enrolled into 4 RAJPUTANA RIFLES on 17 January 1963. During the 1965 Indo Pak War, he was deployed in Sialkot Sector with his Battalion to capture village of Charwa. Rifleman Singh was leading a Light Machine Gun Detachment which was part of the attacking Platoon. Disregarding his safety, Rifleman Mahilal approached the enemy gun, threw grenades into the Post and silenced it and sacrificed himself for the nation contributing largely to the success of the assault.

The RAJPUTANA RIFLES is the senior most Rifle Regiment of the Indian Army. Its first battalion was raised in January 1775. The RAJPUTANA RIFLES has a long and glorious history. The regiment took part in some of the bloodiest battles in many theatres of the world. During World War II, the battalions of this regiment fought in every theatre in which the Indian Army was involved. Three of them, the 1st, 4th and Medium Machine Gun Battalions fought in Eritrea in North Africa and Italy as part of the famous 4th Indian Division, whose fighting record was one of the finest in World War II. Post-independence the regiment took part in many battles and operations including the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Congo. The RAJPUTANA RIFLES fought gallantly in the 1965 and 1971 India Pakistan wars. The Regiment has also been part of the Counter Insurgency operations. Furthermore, During the Kargil War, the 2 Rajputana Rifles displayed exemplary valour and determination in Tololing.

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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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 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.¹ 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

¹ 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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opponents met, clashed and reeled apart in a series of bloody actions, weaving a confused pattern hard to unravel.²

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.³ The plan failed with their early detection and lack of support from the locals, who gave away their positions. 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.

To ease Pakistan's pressure on Chhamb, India opened a second front in Sialkot Sector. It was strategically a vital area and a threat to it was likely to hurt Pakistan most. Loss of Sialkot would have made Pakistan's position in Chhamb untenable and therefore, any Indian move in that direction would have created a great scare in Pakistan. On the other hand, it would have served the Indian interest very well indeed. This second diversionary move was launched by I Corps, led by Lieutenant General PO Dunn, on 08 September, 1965.

² War Despatches: Indo-Pak Conflict 1965. Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh, VrC (1991). Lancer International, New Delhi

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



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Indian Army Centurion Tanks rolling up dust as they blitz past the Sialkot Sector during 1965 Indo-Pak War.

Source: <https://x.com/indiandefence11/status/1020141926736060416>

The Operations in Samba-Jammu-Sialkot Sector covered the area between the Ravi and the Chenab Rivers, with the Indo-Pak border running close to the foothills in the East. The road-link between J&K and the rest of India runs through a narrow stretch of the lower foothills, parallel to the border. The International Border is 28 km from Jammu and 14 km from Sialkot, a major Pakistani communication centre. Sialkot was connected with Lahore by rail via Wazirabad-Gujranwala, and also via Pasrur-Narowal and Pakistani supplies to the Chhamb sector passed through it. The Sialkot- Pasrur stretch of this railway line was a vital link in the Pakistani defence system. Chawinda was a small town of strategic importance on the Sialkot- Pasrur railway line.

HQ I Corps under Lieutenant General PO Dunn had been located at Kaluchak (near Jammu) by 04 September. Troops made available to the Corps included the following:



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- a) 1 Armoured Division (Major General Rajinder Singh, MVC)
- b) 6 Mountain Division (Major General SK Korla, DSO, MC)
- c) 14 Infantry Division (Major General RK Ranjeet Singh)
- d) 26 Infantry Division (Major General ML Thapan)

I Corps was assigned the task of securing area Pagowal (Bhagowal), Phillora (Phillaurah), Chawinda, and the Cross Roads with a view to advancing towards the Marala-Ravi Link Canal, and eventually to the line of Dhallewali-Wuhilam-Daska-Mandhali. The operation was code-named 'Operation Nepal'.

By last light on 07 September, I Corps had made all preparations to cross the International Border on a frontage extending from Degh Nadi to Suchetgarh. All formations were deployed as per the plan, except for 14 Infantry Division, as its 58 Infantry Brigade, deployed at Madhopur Road Bridge and the Headworks, could not be relieved. 28 Infantry Brigade, which had been allocated to 6 Mountain Division, also could not join as it was deeply involved in Chhamb Sector. At 2300 hours on the night of 07/08 September, 6 Mountain Division and 26 Infantry Division crossed the International Border into Pakistan. 'Operation Nepal' was on the move.⁴



A newspaper cut out from 1965. Indian Forces advancing in Sialkot sector.

Source: <https://x.com/RareHistorical/status/651791478063280129>

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



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As stated earlier, the Indian 6 Mountain Division was tasked to capture Charwa and Maharajke with a view to establish a bridgehead for the break out of 1 Armoured Division by first light of 08 September, and then exploit further towards Pagowal. The operation was to begin at 2300 hours on 07 September and end by 0430 hours the next day. The Division assigned the task of capturing Charwa to 99 Mountain Brigade and Maharajke to 69 Mountain Brigade Group in Phase I of the Operation. 35 Infantry Brigade which joined the Division on 07 September, was asked to exploit further towards Pagowal in Phase II of the operation.



A Jawan gives refreshment to Pakistani women & children of Maharajke village, near Sialkot.

Source: <https://x.com/villagehistory/status/465390737157156864>

Charwa village, the objective assigned to 99 Mountain Brigade, was a built-up area. The Brigade appreciating that assault on the village would be hazardous during the hours of darkness, selected objectives on the flanks for initial attack. At 2030 hours on 07 September, two Companies of 6 GARHWAL RIFLES along with their Commando Platoons crossed the international border to secure the Brigades Forming Up Place. It was secured by 2030 hrs.⁵ 2/5 GORKHA RIFLES (FF) on the left and 4 RAJPUTANA RIFLES on the right crossed the Start Line (SL) at 2300 hours. Intense artillery shelling covered the assault, The Gorkhas in a swift action captured the objective

⁵ War Despatches: Indo-Pak Conflict 1965. Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh, VrC (1991). Lancer International, New Delhi



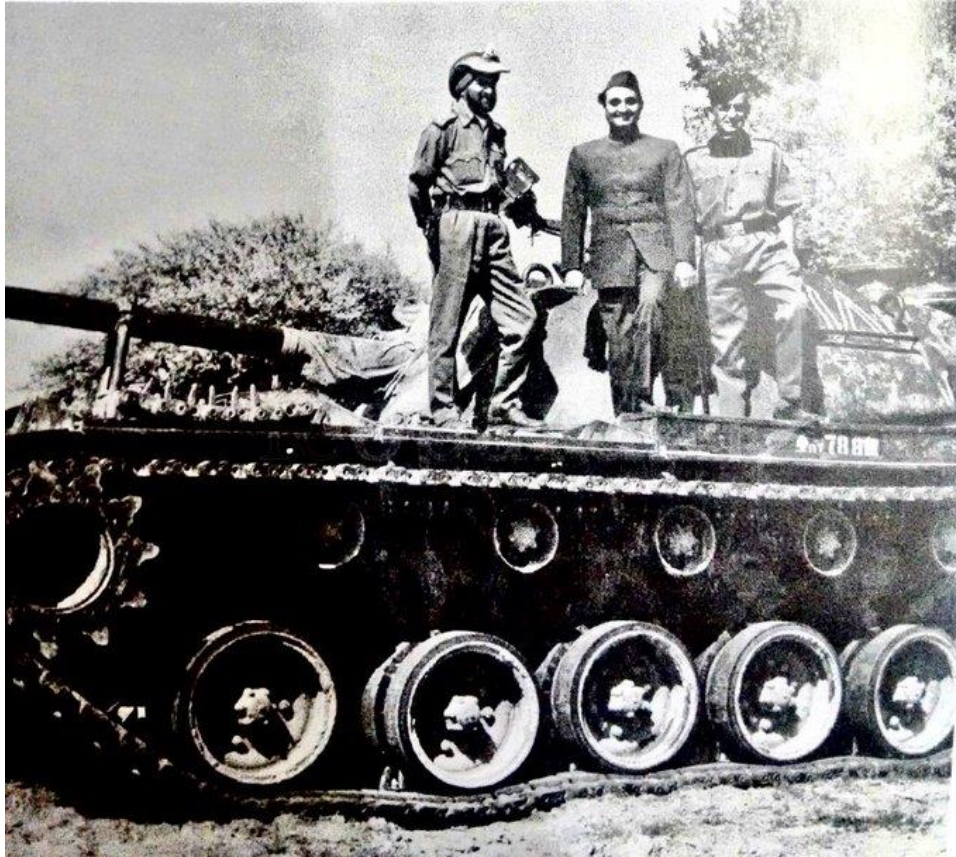
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after evicting a Rifle Company and a Company of Mujahids. 106 mm recoilless guns were effectively used to blast enemy strongholds, in the village school area. On the right flank, 4 RAJPUTANA RIFLES was successful in neutralising the opposition of a Rifle Company, and a Company of Mujahids. The opposition was cleared by both the Battalions by 0300 hours, well ahead of the schedule. Exploiting further, the Battalions pushed forward beyond their objectives to cover the roads coming to Charwa from Maharajke, Chobara and Ikhnal (Nakhnal) The battle for the village of Charwa was a grim one as it was a formidable stronghold fortified with elaborate defensive works including an intricate network of underground tunnelling. Moreover, the defenders fought with courage and determination. Though the main opposition was overcome by 5 GARHWAL RIFLES on the night of the attack itself, pockets of resistance lingered on for another two days.

The attack on Maharajke by 69 Mountain Brigade was planned in two phases. In Phase I, 3 MADRAS and 9 KUMAON, were to capture the right half of the objective and block the road to Pagowal/Badiana and Sialkot. In Phase II, 4 MADRAS was to capture the left half of the objective, and block the road to Charwa and Zafarwal. By 1700 hours on 07 September, two Companies of 4 MADRAS secured the Forming Up Place to the South-East of Jabwal Kalan. At 2250 hours 3 MADRAS and 9 KUMAON formed up and launched the operation at 2300 hours. The right half of the objective was secured against light enemy opposition (Company Plus) by 0130 hours. Phase II of the operation was launched by 4 MADRAS at 0300 hours. But soon heavy MMG and small arms fire held up the assault. At this stage, Lieutenant Colonel HL Mehta, the Commanding Officer, rushed forward to lead the assault and the objective was secured by 0530 hours. In this battle, Lieutenant Colonel Mehta led one of his reserve Companies in person. Inspired by his presence in the in a tactically sound outflanking move. foremost line of attack, the men pressed home the attack with fierce determination. The enemy stronghold could not withstand the gallant charge of the Madrasis and collapsed. Lieutenant Colonel Mehta, who fell to an enemy bullet was decorated with the Mahavir Chakra for exceptional courage and leadership, posthumously.



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Dr. Karan Singh, then Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, along with General Rajinder Singh Sparrow on a captured Pakistan Army Tank during the 1965 war in Sialkot sector.

Source: https://x.com/vikramaditya_JK/status/1052164867887652864

During this attack, Rifleman Mahilal Singh of 4 RAJ RIF was the leader of a LMG detachment detailed to assault Pakistani position at village Charwa on 07/08 September 1965. The assault was temporarily halted by intense firing from Pakistani MMG from the right flank. The fire was so intense and accurate that the attack came to a halt. With total disregard to his safety and on his own initiative, Rifleman Mahilal crawled up to the Medium Machine Gun bunker, lobbed a hand grenade inside and destroyed the machine gun along with the enemy. After accomplishment of the most daring mission, while he crawled back to his Section, the enemy spotted him in the open patch and fired a machine gun burst at him due to which, Rifleman Mahilal was fatally wounded and died on the spot. Inspired by the gallantry and supreme sacrifice of their comrade, the entire platoon charged and overran the objective.

Throughout the attack, he displayed exemplary courage and determination of a high order. He was awarded Vir Chakra posthumously.



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CITATION

2853735 Rifleman Mahilal Singh, 4 RAJPUTANA RIFLES (Posthumous)
(Effective date of award — 07th September 1965)

Rifleman Mahilal Singh was the leader of a LMG detachment detailed to assault Pakistani position at village Charwa in the Sialkot Sector on 07/08 September 1965. The assault was temporarily halted by intense firing from Pakistani MMG from the right flank. Completely disregarding his personal safety, Rifleman Mahilal approached the enemy gun, threw grenades into the post and silenced it. Rifleman Mahilal's courage and dedication to duty were an inspiration to his comrades and contributed largely to the success of the assault

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



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