



रक्षा मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
DEFENCE



**COLONEL SONAM WANGCHUK (Then MAJOR)**

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|---|------------------------------|
| <b>SERVICE NUMBER</b>                                     | IC-45952M                    |
| <b>RANK</b>   | Colonel (Then Major)         |
| <b>NAME</b>   | Sonam Wangchuk               |
| <b>SON OF</b>   | Sonam Wangyal                |
| <b>RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/<br/>DOMICILE</b> | Sankar, Leh District, Ladakh |
| <b>UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS</b>                                | 3 Ladakh Scouts (Indus Wing) |
| <b>SERVICE</b>  | Indian Army                  |
| <b>DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION</b>                      | 04 September 1987            |
| <b>AWARD/DATE OF ACTION</b>                               | Maha Vir Chakra/30 May 1999  |
| <b>WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION</b>                               | Kargil war/Op VIJAY          |
| <b>OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE</b>                             |                              |



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Major Sonam Wangchuk, son of Sonam Wangyal is a resident of Leh Ladakh. He was born on 27 January 1964 and completed his school education from Modern School New Delhi. A young charismatic man and an athlete, Major Wangchuk participated in cross country marathon before joining the army. While he was in the second year of his graduation at Sri Venkateswara College, he decided to join the Army. He was commissioned into the Indian Army on 4 September 1987 into the Assam Regiment. Later, he was deputed to the Ladakh Scouts.

The Ladakh Scouts known as the “Snow Warriors” were initially raised as a paramilitary force formed of the Ladakhi locals known as Nubra Guards to save Ladakh from intruders in 1948. It comprised of Ladakhi locals who are physically fit and attuned with the rugged terrain and hostile climate. The Ladakh Scouts was raised in 1963, following the Indo China War of 1962. It had two wings- the Karakoram Wing, defending the eastern front facing China and the Indus Wing facing Pakistan. The regiment currently consists of 5 battalions. The Ladakh Scouts had fought in the 1965 and 1971 India Pakistan War and were also part of Operation Meghdoot in 1984. Ladakh Scouts was converted into a regiment in the year 2000. The Ladakh Scouts played a significant role during the Kargil War of 1999 by marking one of the earliest victories and also received the Unit Citation from General VP Malik, the then Chief of Army Staff.

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 Kargil war of 1999 was fought 52 years after independence. The war commenced shortly after the signing of the Lahore declaration in 1999, when the Pakistan army surreptitiously occupied the winter vacated posts of the Indian Army. This act is thought to be the brain-child of General Pervez Musharraf, then chief of the Pakistan Army. On 03 May 1999, intrusions were detected. On 26 May<sup>1</sup>, the first air to ground strike was launched by the Indian Airforce (IAF), followed by Operation Vijay, by the Indian Army to evict the intruders from the Indian territory<sup>2</sup>. After two months of violent confrontation, the war came to an end on 26 July 1999.

The Pakistan’s military leadership had long planned for the occupation of the ridgeline dominating National Highway 1A on the Indian side of the LC, which they executed in 1998-1999. One such point on the ridgeline was Chorbat La in the Batalik sub sector at 18000 feet along the LC. Historically, Chorbat La was used as a gateway for intruders. The intrusion into the Batalik sub-sector was undertaken to ease logistics for the Pakistan army. It, therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Kargil 1999: The Impregnable Conquered Lt. Gen Y M Bammi. (2002) Gorkha Publisher

<sup>2</sup> From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report (2000) Sage Publications, New Delhi (Pg no 104-105)



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became imperative to secure Chorbat La before India could initiate operations in other sectors. Major Sonam Wangchuk was entrusted with the task of securing Chorbat La from the intruders and the mission began on 28 May 1999.

On 28 May 1999, Major Sonam Wangchuk was tasked to establish an Observation Post on Ring Contour in Chorbat La in Batalik sub-sector. Major Wangchuk joined the JCO and three jawans at the firm base of Ring Contour, and started climbing the feature as they moved through fresh snow. On 30 May 1999, at 0700 hours, the officer discovered about 3-4 enemy soldiers and killed two of them, while the other escaped. Following the successful establishment of the Observation Post, Major Wangchuk was assigned to reinforce another Observation Post along the LC, which was expected to come under attack from Pakistani troops. After moving all night, he arrived at the base of the Observation Post shortly before first light. He deployed his platoon of two JCOs and twenty-five jawans to deter the enemy as the Post came under enemy artillery bombardment and an attack was imminent. After nearly six hours of fighting, Major Wangchuk arrived with one JCO and eleven jawans to reinforce the Observation Post. Thereafter with a platoon, Major Wangchuk assaulted a feature near to the Observation Post held by the enemy and captured it by killing six enemy soldiers. *'Sonam 1' and 'Sonam 2' are two posts in this sector that have been named after him.*

Major Wangchuk is a living legend from Ladakh Scouts. He displayed exemplary valour, and courage in the face of the enemy in the most inhospitable weather and terrain conditions. He was awarded Maha Vir Chakra for his action.



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## CITATION

Major Sonam Wangchuk (IC-45952M), 3 Ladakh Scouts (IW)  
(Effective date of the Award: 30 May, 1999)

On 28 May 1999 he was ordered to establish an Observation Post on Ring Contour in Chorbatla sector. Moving through fresh snow of 1-2m, Major Sonam joined the JCO and three jawans at the firm base of Ring Contour, and started climbing the feature. At about 0700 h on 30 May, he noticed that 3-4 enemy soldiers and killed two of them while one of them managed to escape. After successfully establishing the Observation Post, Major Sonam was moved to reinforce another Observation Post on the Line of Control, which was expecting an attack from Pakistani troops. Moving at night, he reached the base of the Observation Post just before first light. As the Post was under enemy's artillery fire and the attack was imminent, he deployed his platoon (of 2 JCO's and twenty-five jawans) to deter the enemy. After facing enemy's fire for nearly six hours, finally the Observation Post was reinforced by Major Sonam, with 1 JCO and 11 Jawans. Major Sonam assaulted a feature next to the Observation Post held by enemy with about a platoon and captured it by killing six enemy soldiers. Two posts in this sector have been aptly named after him as 'Sonam 1' and 'Sonam2'. Major Sonam showed exemplary courage and bravery, for which he was awarded Maha Vir Chakra.

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



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## VIDEOS

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