



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



MAJOR RAM SWARUP SHARMA

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-10025
RANK	Major
NAME	Ram Swarup Sharma
SON OF	Prabha Dyal Sharma
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Hoshiarpur, Punjab
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	18 RAJPUTANA RIFLES
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	15 December 1957
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Vir Chakra/21 September 1965
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	1965 Indo-Pak War
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	

Major Ram Swarup Sharma was born on 15 December 1931, to Prabha Dyal Sharma, in Lahore, Pakistan. He was commissioned into the 18 Rajputana Rifles on 15 December 1957. During the 1965 Indo-Pak war, Major Ram Swarup Sharma was awarded the Vir Chakra for conspicuous bravery and courage. He later settled in Hoshiarpur, Punjab.

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. During the 1965 Indo-Pak war, the RAJPUTANA RIFLES displayed exemplary valour and determination especially in the Khem Karan Sector.

The genesis of the 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 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 began on 24 April 1965, when the Pakistan Army attacked Indian 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 the Indo-Pak Border Agreement, 1960 and the international law as per the United Nations Charter. The Pakistani forces subsequently intruded in Kashmir with the launch of Operation Gibraltar. The 1965 War was fought in various Sectors including in Khem Karan which was the area of responsibility of 4 Infantry Division and 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade.

Historians consider this to be the greatest tank battle since the Battle of Kursk, fought during World War II— The Battle of Asal Uttar, a pivotal engagement in the 1965 India-Pakistan war, unfolded from September 8 to September 10, 1965. Positioned near Khem Karan, the Indian resistance played a crucial role in shifting the balance of power in India's favour during the conflict. The Pakistani Army's Battle Group, composed of the 1st Armoured Division and 11 Infantry Division, had crossed the International Border, and captured the Indian town of Khem Karan.

Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, the Major General Gurbaksh Singh, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the 4 Mountain Division ordered the Division to withdraw and establish "Horse Shoe" shaped defensive position centered on Asal Uttar. Three Indian Army units, namely the 18 RAJPUTANA RIFLES, 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES, and 4 GRENADIERS, were strategically positioned to cover three axes leading to Khem Karan, providing depth to the 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES. The 9 JAK RIFLES were deployed in the rear, while the Deccan Horse commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later General) AS Vaidya, was positioned ahead, to the South East of the Division's defences. In a well-executed tactical manoeuvre, Indian troops breached the Rohi canal at night, flooding the sugarcane fields. When morning came, the M-7

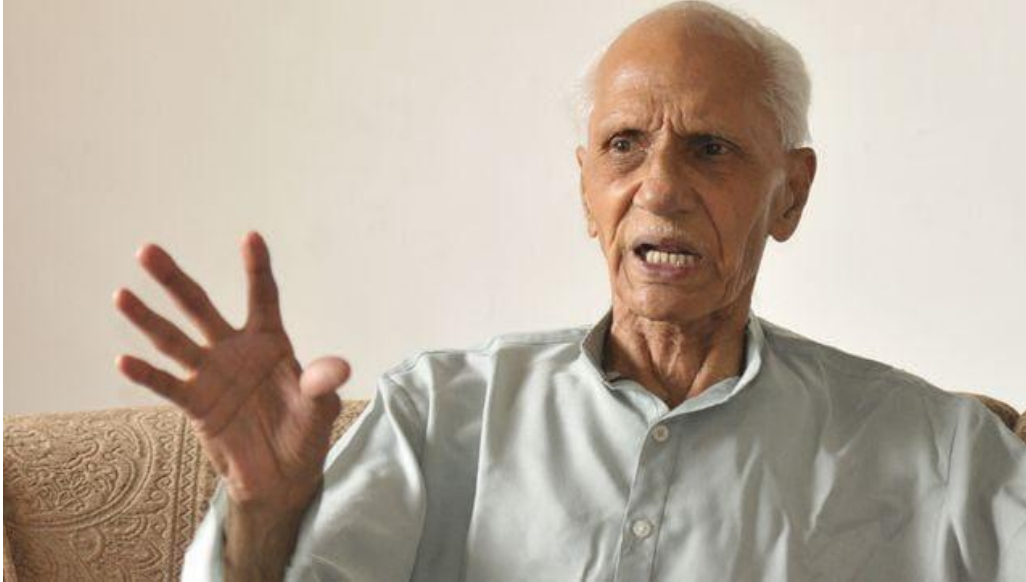
and M-48 Patton tanks of the 1st Armoured Division of Pakistan were lured into the horse-shoe shaped defensive position with the intention of overwhelming Indian defences. However, the swampy terrain slowed down the advance of the Pakistani tanks, which ultimately became immobilized in the muddy slush.

Asal Uttar, a village in Punjab's Tarn Taran District, bears witness to the Battle of 1965 through its collection of memorials. These structures, both grand and modest, dot the landscape, serving as the sole remnants of the fierce tank battle fought between Indian and Pakistani armies. Each monument holds stories of courage, camaraderie, and sacrifice—a poignant testament to those who defended their homeland against insurmountable odds. They stand as eternal reminders of the legacy of the Battle of Asal Uttar, forever etched in history's pages.

The battle of Asal Uttar unfolded when Pakistani forces captured Khem Karan town, only to be pushed back by the 4 Mountain Division and ultimately decimated by the 2nd Armoured Brigade of the Indian Army in a decisive battle between 08 and 10 September 1965.

On 20 September, enemy tank activity was noticed at Lakhna and village Kalia to its North. The purpose of this activity around Lakhna was not clear. Enemy tanks, mainly Chaffees of the Reconnaissance Regiment would make an appearance, and on seeing the Centurion tanks, would hurriedly withdraw. No apparent tactics were displayed. The Centurions would drive out the Chaffee tanks as they would in a beat during shikar (hunt).

On 21 September, in one such beat by A Squadron under Surish Vadera, two Patton tanks were destroyed. Suddenly, from an unexpected direction, enemy tank fire opened up. No. 1 and 2 Troop of A Squadron under Capt RK Pandit, who had reported for duty the previous day, charged towards the enemy with 4 Troop giving fire support. The tanks of Captain Pandit and Second Lieutenant Baldev Bhangoo were hit and on fire but fortunately the crew managed to bale out unhurt. Two days before the ceasefire in 1965, the team of then Major Ram Swarup Sharma in the Khemkaran sector spotted some movement on the enemy side. A patrol came under heavy fire but the force decided to go for the kill. To fool the enemy, they advanced raising their battle cry one after the other to reflect big numbers. Four MMGs were firing at them. Just 200 meters from the enemy, their cover was given away and bullets rained on the bajra field where they lay hidden. But as they kept advancing while raising the slogan, the fire started reducing. The plan had worked; the enemy fled and its guns, ammunition, and wireless sets were seized. The captured post was a battalion headquarters. Two tanks were also destroyed.



Lt Col Ram Swarup Sharma

Source:- <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/tale-of-grit-and-glory-living-legends-of-1965-indo-pak-war/story-K7qLv4l6lNJx341sg4EF3O.html>

Lieutenant Colonel Ram Swarup Sharma is a veteran of the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars, who was awarded the Vir Chakra for his act of bravery on September 21, 1965, as company commander holding the rank of major. His company got three more Vir Chakras in the campaign. Retired since 1983, he lived in Chandigarh after retirement.

CITATION

Major Ram Swarup Sharma (IC-10025),
The Rajputana Rifles
(Effective date of award– 21st September 1965)

Ram Swarup Sharma was in command of a company during an attack on an enemy position in the Khem Karan Sector on 21 September 1965. Despite heavy enemy fire on the company, he moved forward and assaulted the enemy position with courage and determination. As a result, the enemy fled; two enemy tanks were destroyed and some arms were captured.

In this action, Major Ram Swarup Sharma displayed gallantry and initiative of a high order.

Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No. 72-Pres /66 dated October 8, 1966

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