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GENERAL ARUN SHRIDHAR VAIDYA, MVC**

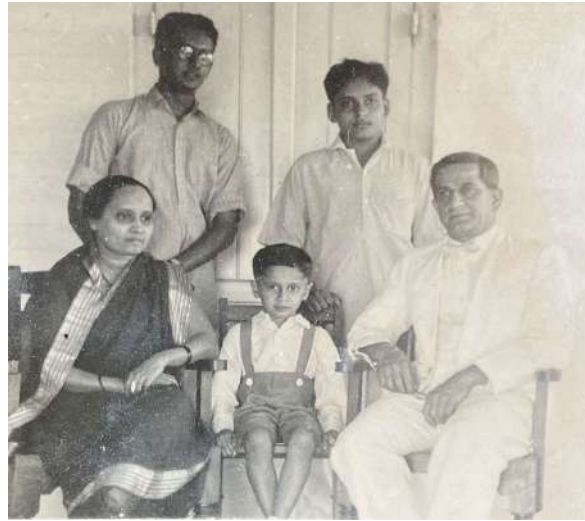
SERVICE NUMBER	IC-1701H
RANK	General
NAME	Arun Shridhar Vaidya
SON OF	Shridhar Balkrishna Vaidya
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Pune, Maharashtra
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	9 HORSE (Deccan Horse)
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	20 January 1945
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Maha Vir Chakra** / 16 September 1965 and 05 December 1971
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	1965 Indo Pak War 1971 Indo-Pak War
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	Padma Vibhushan (1987) PVSM (16 April 1983) AVSM (26 January 1970)



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General Arun Shridhar Vaidya, MVC**, was a highly decorated military officer and the Chief of Army Staff of India (1983-1985). Renowned for his remarkable leadership skills, strategic acumen, and unwavering dedication to the defense of nation, General Vaidya played a pivotal role in shaping the modern Indian Army. Throughout his illustrious career, he exhibited exceptional courage, resilience, and commitment, earning him numerous accolades and the respect of his peers and subordinates alike.

General Arun Shridhar Vaidya was born in Bombay on 27 July 1926 in a Marathi Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu (CKP) family, to Shridhar Balkrishna Vaidya, a barrister and Indira Shridhar Vaidya. He had two brothers Prabhat Kumar and Nanda. After his early education at Pune, Arun Vaidya studied at Elphinstone High School in Bombay before joining Elphinstone College and later the MTB. Arts College at Surat, presumably transferring due to his father's posting there as District Collector. At Elphinstone College, Arun Vaidya joined the 1st Bombay Battalion of the University Training Corps (UTC) and was awarded the Best Cadet in 1942 before transferring to the MTB College, where he also joined its UTC and attained the rank of Company Quarter-Master Havildar (CQMH).



General Arun Shridhar Vaidya with his Parents and Brothers

Source: Personal Archive of Gen Vaidya's daughter Neeta Kochhar

On 30 March 1944, he joined the Officers' Training School at Belgaum as a Cadet. He was selected for the Armoured Corps and underwent further training at Ahmednagar where he received an Emergency Commission in the Royal Deccan Horse (or 9 HORSE) of the British Indian Army on 20 January 1945 and was granted Regular Commission on 07 May 1945.¹ In the

¹ Remembering Gen. A S Vaidya (Accessed on 15 May 2023)
<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/features/remembering-gen-as-vaidya-mvc-and-bar-287989>



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Second World War, General Vaidya fought in the Burma Campaign with the 14th Army during the final months, including at the Battles of Meiktila and Rangoon.



Photograph of General Vaidya addressing audiences at an event.

Source: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/features/remembering-gen-as-vaitya-mvc-and-bar-287989>

In September 1948, General Vaidya was involved in Operation POLO as a member of the ad hoc Armoured Force organised from the Armoured Corps Centre and School. The Force captured the Daulatabad Fort, the Ellora Caves area and Parbhani. In 1958, he was selected to attend the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, having secured a competitive vacancy. He was subsequently appointed Brigade Major of the 70 Infantry Brigade and served in this appointment in Ladakh during the Sino-Indian War in 1962.



General KM Cariappa being received by the Chief of Army staff, General Arun Vaidya at an Army Day Reception in New Delhi in 1985.

Source: <https://timescontent.com/tss/showcase/preview-buy/117366/Feature/General-K.M.-Cariappa-General-Arun.html>



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On promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, he took over command of DECCAN HORSE and was the seventh post-independence Commandant, one of the oldest Armoured Regiments in the Indian Army. He commanded this Regiment in the Battle of Asal Uttar during the 1965 Indo-Pak War and 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade in the Battle of Shakargarh during the 1971 Indo-Pak War. He was decorated with the Maha Vir Chakra twice — the first time in 1965 War and the second in 1971 War that earned him a Bar to the Maha Vir Chakra.

He is one of only six soldiers to have got the distinction till date. General Arun Sridhar Vaidya assumed charge of the Indian Army, as the 13th Chief of Army Staff, on 31 July 1983. General Vaidya married Bhanumati nee Dharker on 05 December 1948 and had three daughters; Neeta Kochhar married to Brigadier Arun Kochhar, Parijat Belliappa married to DM Belliappa and Tarini Vaidya. His wife Bhanumati passed away peacefully on 26 January 2022.



General A S Vaidya's Wife; Bhanumati Bhanumati nee Dharker

Source: Personal Archive of Gen Vaidya's daughter Neeta Kochhar

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.



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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.² 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 1978.³



² Gaylor John, Sons of John Company: The Indian & Pakistan Armies 1903-1991. (1993) Lancers International, New Delhi.

³ Deccan Horse. (Accessed on 24 May 2023)

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



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(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>

Fig. 3 – 9th DECCAN HORSE silver Collar Badge

Source: <https://www.arcticmedals.com/catalog/item/3730573/9208177.htm>

During the 1965 Indo-Pak War, then Lieutenant Colonel Vaidya was commanding Deccan Horse which had been placed under command of 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade. From 06 to 11 September, the Regiment fought a series of actions in Asal Uttar and Cheema, both in Punjab. As Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Arun Vaidya was instrumental to a large extent in stemming thrusts by Pakistani armour in the battle of Asal Uttar and later at Cheema.

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 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. The 1965 war was fought in various sectors among which, CQMH Abdul Hamid fought in Khem Karan Sector of Punjab. received a Param Vir Chakra posthumously for knocking out multiple enemy Patton tanks.⁴

Khem Karan Sector (India) and Kasur (Pakistan), each five km from the border were connected by a road. Both the towns provide easy access to extensive road networks of their countries. The

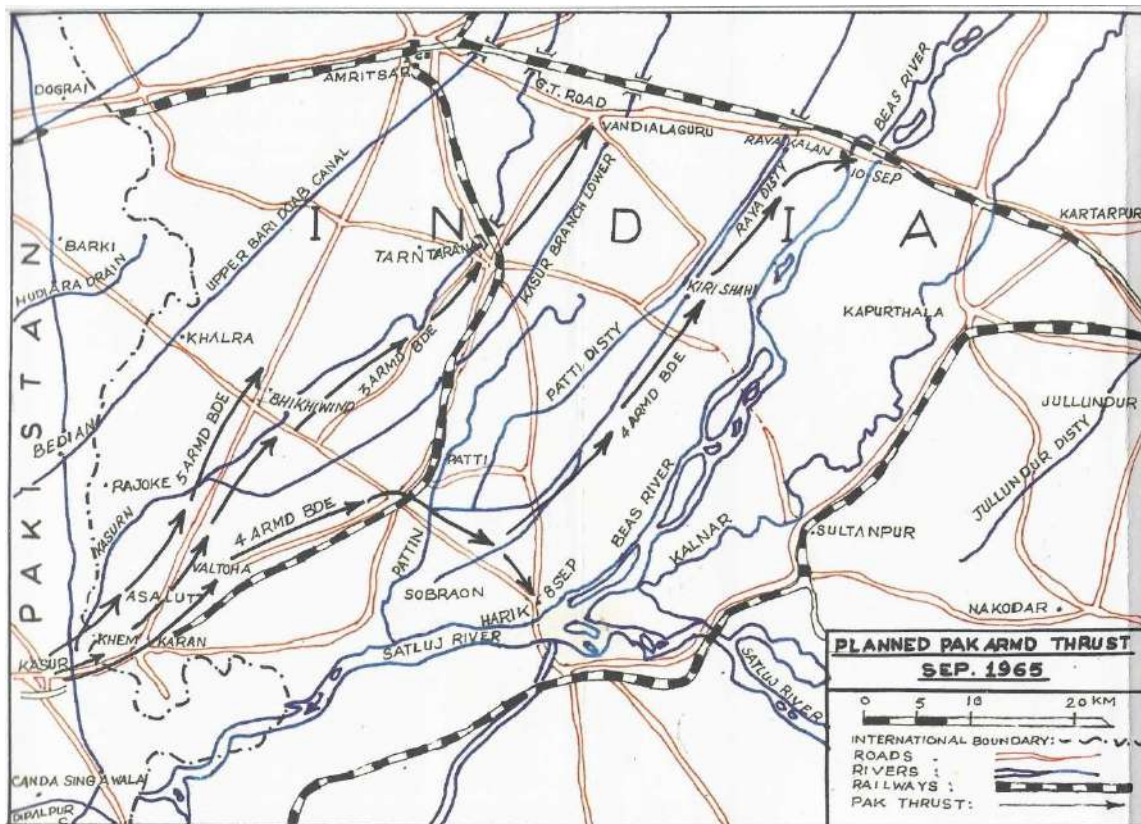
⁴ Sainik Samachar. Colonel Rohan Anand (2015). Vol 62 No 17. Ministry Of Defence Pg no. (7-9)



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main obstacles between the two sides were the Ichhogil Canal and Rohil Nala. On the Indian side road Khem Karan- Bhikhiwind leads to Amritsar and road Khem Karan- Patti goes to Harike, providing access to bridges over the Beas. Both these axes pass through a cluster of villages which include Asal Uttar.

On 08 September 1965, Pakistan launched its counter offensive by 1 Armoured Division towards Jandiala Guru, Beas Bridge and Harike. 4 Mountain Division had to occupy a hastily prepared Division defended Sector in Area Asal Uttar, in the face of this powerful offensive. The defended Sector had approximately three and a half Battalions of infantry (18 RAJ RIF, 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES less two Companies, 4 GRENADIERS and 9 JAK RIF) along with units of 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade (3 CAVALRY, 8 CAVALRY less a Squadron and DECCAN HORSE) and artillery guns deployed in Area Chittikhui-Valtoha. A few minefields were also laid and some areas were flooded. Fierce battles raged on 08-09 September in which Indian forces repelled repeated attacks by Pakistani armour and infantry.



Battle of Khem Karan: Planned Pak Armoured Thrust, September 1965

Source: S N Prasad, UP Thapliyal. *The India Pakistan War of 1965*. (2011) Natraj Publication, New Delhi.



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Indian troops held firm and the situation was stabilised by 10 September with heavy losses to Pakistani armour. The bravery of CQMH Abdul Hamid of 4 GRENADIERS and the outstanding handling of the armour by Brigadier TK Theograj Commander of 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade and by Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Salim Caleb, Commandant of 3 CAVALRY and Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Arun Vaidya, Commandant of DECCAN HORSE prevented any enemy ingress and resulted in severe attrition of the attacking forces.

While the Indian Army was busy establishing defences, the armour and artillery were planning how to stop the Pakistani attack. 9 HORSE, with a Company of 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES, was deployed to the South-West of Khem Karan to slow the assault and provide cover for the defence preparation. The tenacious resistance provided by these units significantly slowed Pakistan's progress. With the same objective, Indian artillery shelled the suspected crossing points over Rohi Nala and the Ichhogii Canal. Pattons were smashed. By the afternoon of 07 September, the Pakistani 11 Infantry Division had established a bridgehead across the Rohi Nala and it captured Khem Karan on 08 September.

On the night of 07/08 September, Pakistan's 1 Armoured Division began moving to the bridgehead, and by the next day, it was poised to launch an offensive to capture Harike and the Beas bridges on the Beas River. The division comprised 4 Patton Regiments and 5 Mechanised Battalions. One Patton Regiment from 11 Infantry Division was also made available to it. It was a formidable force by any yardstick. On 08 September, a Pakistani Reconnaissance Group approached the 4 Mountain Division position through Ballanwala while the 1 Armoured Division was still building up. The tanks surrounded the Indian-defended areas and sallied up to the gun area, approaching on a broad front. To halt the enemy assault, one Squadron of 9 HORSE moved quickly. Pakistan withdrew after losing two Chaffees in the succeeding combat. Meanwhile, the own troops continued to build defences. The Pakistanis conducted another reconnaissance with a Regiment of Pattons around 1445 Hours. The 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES position was overrun, but 9 HORSE attacked and forced the Patton Regiment to withdraw.

A strong Pakistani armour attack was expected on the following day. At 0200 Hours on 09 September, Pakistan's 4 Armoured Brigade attacked the 18 RAJPUTANA RIFLES position (with two Patton Regiments) utilising moonlight and infrared equipment. Even after making a breakthrough, the Patton's were unable to get past Indian defences and were forced to withdraw after sustaining casualties. On 09 September, at 0430 hours, 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade came under command of 4 Mountain Division. The deployment of troops in 4 Mountain Division Sector on the morning of 09 September was as follows:



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- Three and a half Battalions (out of six) with 9 HORSE less Squadron in the Asal Uttar area, of the Brigade Defended Sector.
- One Squadron 9 HORSE, in between the Brigade-defended Sector and the gun area.
- 3 CAVALRY less two Troops between Dibbipura and Chima. One Squadron 8 CAVALRY east of Valtoha to protect the Southern flank.
- 8 CAVALRY less two Squadrons deployed in the Warnala area in depth.



Listening to the ceasefire on a transistor radio at Dibbipura. From Left: Lt Col Arun Vaidya; Commandant Deccan Horse, Maj Reggie Christan; Brigade Maj, Lt Col PC Mehta; Commandant 8 CAV, Lt Col Salim Caleb, Commandant 3 CAV; Brigadier TK Theograj, Commader 2 (I) Armd Bde; and a FAC

Source: The Patton Wreckers: An account of the actions of 3 Cavalry in the Battle of Asal Uttar-September 1965

The enemy unleashed a powerful force to capture the Indian territory to the West of the Beas. According to their master plan, they were supposed to arrive in Harike by 1430 Hours on September 8 and at Beas Bridge by sunset the next day. However, this surge was delayed by twelve hours. On September 10 at 0830 Hours, the 4 (Pakistan) Armoured Brigade attacked the 4 GRENADIERS with a combat group. After navigating a sugarcane field, the Patton line exposed itself, and the Indian tank gunners retaliated with lethal precision. The 4 (Pakistan) Cavalry then made an outflanking move in the direction of Mahmudpura-Dibbipura. Indian 3 CAVALRY, focusing on the defensive area, followed the maneuver. fired on Pakistani tanks from three



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directions. In addition, these tanks got stuck in the flooded fields and were sitting ducks for Indian tanks and recoilless guns.

The Pakistani armour attempted three more attempts but lost tanks in the engagements. As a result, by dusk, the Pakistani assault had totally stopped. The Pakistan Army's 1 Armoured Division, which was its pride, limped back to Kasur in the hours of darkness after being ruthlessly battered. 9 HORSE played a crucial role in delaying the advance of the Pakistani armour on Asal Uttar-Cheema axis and inflicted heavy casualties on it.⁵



Lieutenant Colonel A S Vaidya, stands atop a destroyed Pakistan Army Patton tank in the Khem Karan Sector during the 1965 Indo-Pak War.

Source: <https://web.archive.org/web/20140110175835/http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/LAND-FORCES/Personnel/Chiefs/150-AS-Vaidya.html>

General Arun Shridhar Vaidya (then Lieutenant Colonel), CO of the Regiment, showed inspiring leadership and remarkable resourcefulness in organising his unit and fighting against heavy odds and inflicted severe casualties on the Pakistan Army's Patton tanks. With untiring effort, he moved from sector to sector with complete disregard for his personal safety, thereby inspiring his troops by his personal example. He was instrumental to a large extent in stemming thrusts by enemy armour in the battle of Asal Uttar and later at Cheema and delivered effective blows to the enemy tanks. He earned his first Maha Vir Chakra for exceptional leadership during this battle.

⁵ S N prasad, UP Thapliyal. The India Pakistan War of 1965. (2011) Natraj Publication, New Delhi.



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On 21 July 1969, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier and appointed Commander of 167 Mountain Brigade. Under him, the Brigade conducted operations against the Naga hostiles who were backed by China. Along with the leader, Mowu Angami, most of the hostiles were captured with their weapons and equipment. Brigadier Vaidya was awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal on 26 January 1970. On 02 November 1970, he was appointed Commandant of the Armoured Corps Centre and School at Ahmednagar after which he was selected to raise 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade at Pathankot.

General Vaidya earned his Second Maha Vir Chakra during the 1971 Indo-Pak War, then he was a Brigadier and was Commander of 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade in the Zafarwal sector on the Western front.

India gained Independence in 1947, and the partition resulted in the creation of Pakistan. The foundation of Pakistan was laid by the Muslim League based on the two-nation theory. Pakistan comprised two wings- East and West Pakistan which were geographically separated by 1600 kms Indian territory. The two wings of Pakistan were culturally and linguistically different and the diversities between the two wings could not be bridged by an emotional appeal to religion. Consequently, fissures started erupting in the political body of Pakistan soon after the Independence and with each passing year it widened. In the absence of appropriate defence arrangements, the people of East Pakistan felt isolated and abandoned. Finally, the malfeasance of Pakistani leadership during Cyclone Bhola and the overwhelming support for the Awami League in the 1970 elections, proved the proverbial last straw on the camel's back.⁶ The Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (of East Pakistan) secured an absolute majority in the general elections held in December 1970. This entitled the League to form a Government in Pakistan. However, Pakistan's military rulers denied this democratic right to the Awami League, in connivance with the PPP, led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This arbitrary act of government caused deep resentment among the population of East Pakistan resulting in widespread protests. When the slide became unmanageable, the Pakistani rulers resorted to a midnight crackdown on 25 March 1971. The government ordered a military crackdown and the Pakistan army under Lieutenant General Tikka Khan unleashed a reign of terror and massacred thousands of Bengalis in a genocide code-named 'Operation Searchlight'. Pakistan launched its attack against India on 03 December 1971. The Indo-Pak War of 1971 was the first war when the Indian Government engaged all three services on a large scale.

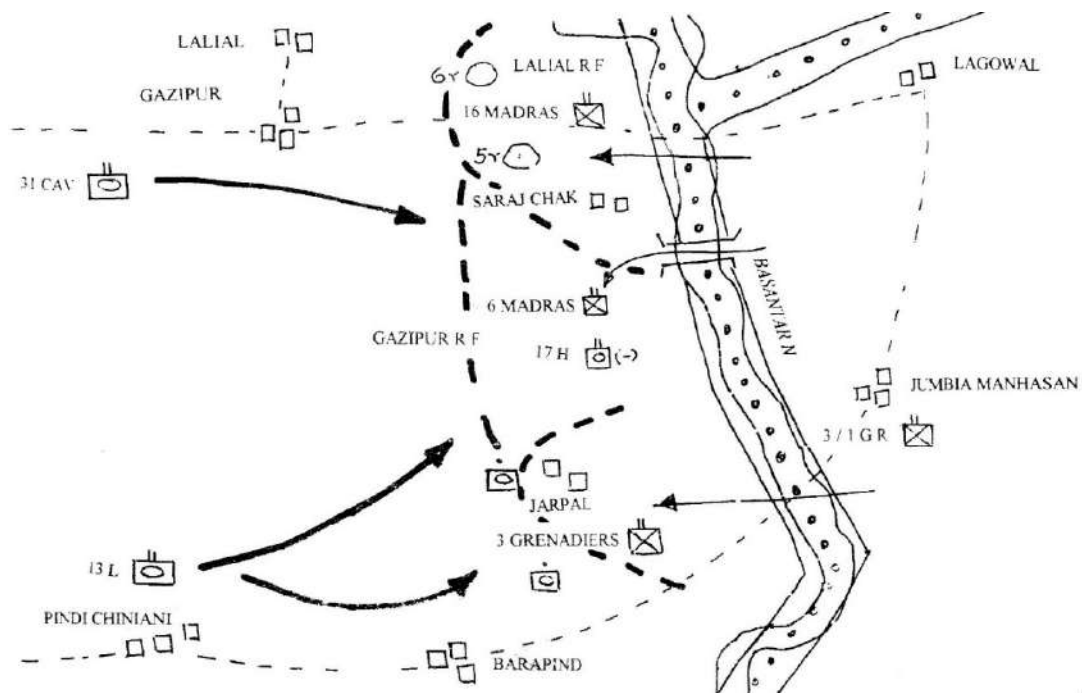
An important battle of the Western Sector was fought in the Shakargarh area. The Battle of Basantar was fought from 15 to 17 December turned out to be one of the fiercest tank battles of

⁶ The India-Pakistan War of 1971: A History. S.N Prasad and U.P. Thapliyal. (2014). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, India



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the 1971 War. The Pakistan strategy on the Western Front in 1971 War was to capture as much Indian Territory as possible, to compensate for the likely losses to be suffered on the Eastern Front. The objective was to obtain a better bargaining position vis-à-vis India, during the postwar negotiations. India felt that with this objective, Pakistan could launch an attack opposite the Shakargarh Bulge targeting Pathankot and the Jammu-Pathankot Road. Brigadier Arun Vaidya was commanding 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade, during the Battle of Basantar in the Shakargarh Sector, where he displayed outstanding leadership and was awarded the, Bar to Maha Vir Chakra.⁷



Battle of Basantar, 1971

Source: Battle of Basantar 1971 War, Indian Defence Review

<http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/battle-of-basantar-1971-war/>

As the Commander 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade in 1971, he was deployed with the 54 Infantry Division. 54 Infantry Division (BISON Division) occupied a defended Sector in Samba area. It was supported by the 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade commanded by Brigadier (later General) Arun Vaidya, MVC, 41 (Independent) Artillery Brigade and 9 Engineer Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Bhartruhari Trimbak Pandit. The Division plan envisaged launching of operations against Zafarwal-Rajian-Dhamthal

⁷ The 1971 War: An Illustrated History, 2021.



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from the Galar area, establishing of a Bridgehead across the Basantar River and capturing of the Supwal Ditch. The Division had the following three brigades under its command:

- 47 Infantry Brigade with 16 MADRAS, 3 GRENADIERS and 16 DOGRA;
- 91 Infantry Brigade with 3 GARHWAL RIFLES and 3/1 GORKHA RIFLES;
- 74 Infantry Brigade with 8 GRENADIERS, 6 KUMAON and 9 MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY.⁸

The Centurion Tanks' Brigade under Brigadier A S Vaidya, had on its ORBAT 16 Light Cavalry, 4 Horse (Hodson's Horse) commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) RM Vohra, 17 Horse (Poona Horse) commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Hanut Singh, 18 Rajputana Rifles (Topas APC) and 90 (Independent) Reconnaissance Squadron (17 Horse) with AMX-13 tanks. At the onset of war, 16 Light Cavalry was detached to Infantry Brigades of 26 and 39 Infantry Divisions for protection of the flanks of the offensive. 4 Horse was tasked to lead the advance of 54 Infantry Division with its Squadrons leading an Infantry Brigade each with a similar configuration for Squadrons of 17 HORSE.

54 Infantry Division's advance was planned to be between the Basantar and Karir rivers. The night of 05 – 06 December saw the start of the advance. For Indian tanks and men to reach their targets, including Barapind—Jarpal, they had to cross at least three minefield lines that Pakistan army had set up. Brigadier Vaidya was told that he, along with the 9 ENGINEER REGIMENT, whose Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) BT Pandit, would have to take the responsibility for the trawling and clearing operations. The advancing forces encountered fierce resistance to the East of the Zafarwal—Dhamtal line at Dehira and Chakra, not only from the mines but also from heavily constructed Infantry positions with concrete bunkers.

Brigadier Vaidya, who was battle hardened from earlier wars and campaigns since his commission, personally moved between the two arms of the 54 Infantry Division, encouraging his men. He moved his Brigade swiftly to get to grips with the Pakistan Army and took the enemy tanks by surprise. Employing his tanks relentlessly and aggressively, he helped the division to maintain constant pressure & momentum of advance against the Pakistan Army.

⁸ The India-Pakistan War on 1971: A History, 2014.



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File photo of General Arun Shridhar Vaidya

Source: <https://www.livemint.com/Multimedia/VbZ4deFl50xi9Bl1e1CcbM/The-scars-of-Operation-Bluestar-1.html>

In the battle of Chakra and Dehira, the going was difficult due to deep minefield and terrain. In a cool and confident manner, Brigadier Vaidya undertook the crossing through the minefield. He personally moved forward, disregarding personal safety. Through his inspired leadership, the entire squadron pushed through the lane and quickly deployed itself to meet the enemy's counter-attacks. During the Battle of Basantar, he again displayed his professional skill and superb leadership. He got his tanks through one of the deepest minefields, expanded the bridgehead and repulsed a strong enemy counter-attack. In this battle, 62 enemy tanks were destroyed.

Even though the 1971 Western front for India was primarily a "holding operation", General Vaidya was in the middle of some of the deadliest battles that still have lessons for integrated operations to this day. Throughout the War, General Vaidya displayed outstanding courage, great professional skill, indomitable will, foresight and imagination in fighting against the enemy in keeping with the best traditions of the Indian Army earning him his Second Maha Vir Chakra.

On 04 January 1973, Brigadier Vaidya was promoted to the rank of Major General and appointed General Officer Commanding (GOC) the elite 1 Armoured Division. On 1 April 1974 after command of the Division he moved to Army Headquarters as Director Military Operations (DMO). Promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General in January 1980, he held the appointment of Master General of Ordnance and later as the General Officer Commanding of 4 Corps before being elevated to the appointment of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Command in June 1981. His tackling of the insurgency problems in his command has been particularly praiseworthy. He was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM) in 1983 for distinguished service of the most exceptional order.



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In 1983, General Arun Shridhar Vaidya ascended to the pinnacle of his military career when he was appointed as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), the highest-ranking military officer in the Indian Army. General Vaidya took over as the COAS from 01 August 1983 to 31 January 1985.



General AS Vaidya, Chief of the Army Staff presenting award to an army official during the Army Day Parade in Delhi on 15 January, 1984.

Source: <https://timescontent.com/syndication-photos/reprint/feature/381095/the-army-day-parade-general-as-void.html>

During his tenure as Army Chief, he focused on modernizing the armed forces, enhancing combat readiness, and improving strategic capabilities. Under his visionary leadership, the Indian Army underwent significant reforms, adopting new technologies, refining doctrines, and strengthening defense infrastructure. He displayed exceptional vision and led the army with great determination and integrity. One of the most significant challenges Vaidya faced during his tenure as Chief of Army Staff was the growing militancy in Punjab. He planned Operation Blue Star in June, 1984, a military action against militant Khalistan separatists who barricaded themselves in the Sikh's shrine the Golden Temple in Punjab.



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General Vaidya during Operation Bluestar

Source: <https://www.opindia.com/2021/06/assassination-of-former-army-chief-general-a-s-vaitya-in-1986-operation-blue-star-khalistan/>

Operation Bluestar aimed to flush out Sikh militants who had taken refuge inside the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, Punjab. The operation was carried out in response to the growing Sikh separatist movement and the escalating militancy in Punjab region. Lieutenant General K Sundarji assisted General Vaidya in the planning and coordination of Operation Bluestar. Major General Kuldeep Singh Brar GOC 9 Division was responsible for clearing the Golden Temple.⁹ The main objective of the Operation Bluestar was to remove Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the leader of the Sikh extremist group 'Damdami Taksal', and his armed followers from the Golden Temple complex. The complex had become a stronghold for militants who had amassed a large ammunition and weapons and turned it into a fortified position. Under the command of General Kuldeep Singh Brar, the Indian Army launched the operation on 03 June, 1984. The operation involved a significant deployment of troops and heavy artillery, with the aim of neutralizing the militants while minimizing civilian casualties and damage to the sacred shrine.

⁹ <https://www.opindia.com/2021/06/assassination-of-former-army-chief-general-a-s-vaitya-in-1986-operation-blue-star-khalistan/>



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General Arun S Vaidya, Mahavir Chakra and Bar, then Chief of the Army Staff, third from right, forefront, flanked by then Lieutenant General Krishnaswamy Sundarji, second from right, and then Major General Kuldip Singh Brar, fourth from right.

Source: <https://m.rediff.com/news/interview/operation-blue-star-most-difficult-op-done-by-any-army-in-the-world/20230320.htm>

On 31 January 1986 after completing forty years of distinguished service General Vaidya retired to a quiet life in Pune. The aftermath of Operation Bluestar had witnessed a significant escalation in Sikh militancy, including the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. General Vaidya had been well aware of the potential threats to his life due to his prominent role in Operation Bluestar. His response was straightforward and soldier like: "After seeing two wars I can't run away from danger. If a bullet is destined to get me it will come with my name written on it."¹⁰

Tragically, on 10 August 10, 1986, General Arun Shreedhar Vaidya's life was cut short when he was assassinated in Pune by Sikh militants of Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), Harjinder Singh aka Jinda and Sukhdev Singh, aka Sukha. At the time of assassination, he was riding in a car in the western city of Pune. General Vaidya was driving with his wife seated next to him in the car. His security officer Baburao Kshirsagar was sitting in the back when the militants fired three bullets from a close range.¹¹

¹⁰ <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/19860831-former-army-chief-general-as-vaidya-assassinated-by-sikh-militants-in-pune-801208-1986-08-30>

¹¹ <https://www.indiatimes.com/culture/who-we-are/7-facts-everyone-should-know-about-the-man-behind-operation-blue-star-general-vaidya-245076.html>



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The assassination of General Vaidya caused widespread shock and had a profound impact across the nation. It shed light on the serious challenges and dangers confronted by military officers engaged in counter-insurgency operations. The nation expressed widespread condemnation of General Vaidya's assassination, mourning the loss of a highly decorated and esteemed military leader. General Vaidya's untimely demise was a profound loss to the Indian Army and the nation as a whole. His assassins, Jinda and Sukha were sentenced to death in 1989 and executed on 09 October, 1992.

General Vaidya was posthumously awarded the Padma Vibhushan - India's second highest civilian honour - for his tireless service to the nation. Despite his premature departure, General Vaidya's contributions and legacy endure. As an outstanding military leader, General Vaidya's life exemplifies the values of courage, sacrifice, and commitment to the nation, serving as an inspiration to future generations of military leaders.



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CITATION

Lieutenant Colonel Arunkumar Shridhar Vaidya (IC-1701) The Deccan Horse (9th Horse)

Lieutenant Colonel Arun Shridhar Vaidya was in command of Deccan Horse in the series of actions fought by his unit from the 06 to 11 September 1965 in Asal Uttar and Cheema (Punjab) in the operations against Pakistan.

In the battle he showed inspiring leadership and remarkable resourcefulness in organising his unit and fighting against heavy odds and inflicted severe casualties on the Patton tanks of the enemy.

With untiring effort, he moved from sector to sector with complete disregard for his personal safety thereby inspiring his troops by his personal example. He was instrumental to a large extent in stemming thrusts by enemy armour in the battle of Asal Uttar and later at Cheema and delivered effective blows to the enemy tanks on 10–11 September.

Reference: Gazette of India, Notification: 9 Pres/66,1-1-66

Brigadier Arunkumar Shridhar Vaidya, MVC, AVSM (IC-1701) 9th Deccan Horse (Effective date of Award: 05 December, 1971)

Brigadier Arun Shridhar Vaidya was commander of an armoured brigade in the Zafanval sector during the operations against Pakistan on the Western Front. He moved his brigade swiftly to get to grips with the enemy, and took the enemy tanks by surprise. He employed his tanks relentlessly and aggressively and helped the division to maintain constant pressure and momentum of advance against the enemy. In the battle of Chakra and Dehira, the going was difficult due to deep minefield and terrain. In a cool and confident manner, Brigadier Vaidya undertook the crossing through the minefield. He personally moved forward, disregarding personal safety. Through his inspired leadership, the entire squadron pushed through the lane and quickly deployed itself to meet the enemy's counter-attacks. During the battle of Basantar he again displayed his professional skill and superb leadership. He got his tanks through one of the deepest minefields, expanded the bridgehead and repulsed a strong enemy counter attack. In this battle, 62 enemy tanks were destroyed.

Throughout, Brigadier Vaidya displayed outstanding courage, great professional skill, indomitable will, foresight and imagination in fighting against the enemy in keeping with the best traditions of the Army.

Reference: Gazette of India, Notification: 22 Pres/72,12-2-72



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VIDEOS

- Arun Shridhar Vaidya - Lieutenant General (Source: YOUTUBE RashtraKathaShibir Pransla)
<https://youtu.be/tkxTlandNQg>
- General Vaidya, General of the Indian Army, in Pune (Source: YOUTUBE WildFilmsIndia)
<https://youtu.be/Q8anQcm2ydQ>
- General Arunkumar Shridhar Vaidya || MAHA VIR CHAKRA || DEFENCE STORY (Source: YOUTUBEDEFENCE STORY)
<https://youtu.be/R-OzB7Uwado>
- Who Killed General Arun Sridhar Vaidya | 1984 Operation Blue Star | Indian Army | Khalistan (Source: YOUTUBE Shivalik journal)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAGZLXHGEHc>
- Pakistani Tanks को तबाह करने वाले लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल Arun Shridhar Vaidya (Source: YOUTUBE Bharat Tak)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vscybYAaLJs>
- The Indian Army paid tribute to the late General Arun Kumar Vaidya at his memorial (Source: YOUTUBE Daily City News DCN)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gnOeDoFjTY>

Disclaimer**¹²

¹² Disclaimer: Photos, links to publications and videos presented here are not intended to serve as a substitute for consultation and should only be used at the user's own risk. These are primarily shared because of the extensive coverage available on the subject. No copyright infringement is intended and it is not intended to hurt anyone or make sales of any sort. All copyright belongs solely to the relevant owners/creators. Usage here is purely for Fair Usage in accordance with the Indian Copyright Act 1957.



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MEMORIALS

- General Arun Kumar Vaidya's memorial at the Queen's Garden Road, Pune



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gnOeDoFjTY>

- A ground in Mumbai was named Gen. Arunkumar Vaidya Ground after him



Source: https://www.justdial.com/Mumbai/General-Arun-Kumar-Vaidya-Playground-Bandra-West/022PXX22-XX22-180117100133-E1E3_BZDET

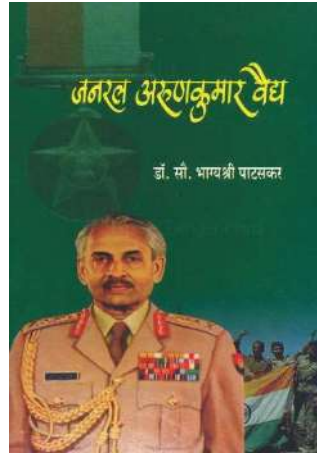
- A street in Goregaon (E) in Mumbai was renamed General Arun Kumar Vaidya Marg
- A stadium in Pune was named 'Arun Vaidya Stadium' after him.
- An area in Nashik was renamed General Arun Kumar Vaidya Nagar



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OTHER INTERESTING RESOURCES¹³

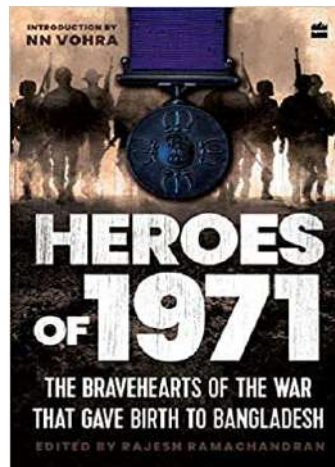
- Book: General Arun Kumar Vaidya



Source:

<https://www.bookganga.com/Preview/BookPreview.aspx?BookId=300612010507&PreviewType=ebooks>

- Book: HEROES OF 1971: The Bravehearts of the War That Gave Birth to Bangladesh



Source: <https://www.amazon.in/HEROES-1971-Bravehearts-Birth-Bangladesh/dp/935489321X>

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- An article published in Tribute on Gen A S Vaidya on 25 July 2021.

Gen AS Vaidya, MVC and Bar

SHYAM DEORA

On a cold winter night when his young British overlord called him to review a map through which the British had to march, the Brigadier turned from one machine to another, looking at the head of a column when a road lead was in the lead, he spoke a few words with another officer, a Major, as he walked the last risky path would be.

There was an assurance that the last night march it would also be risk. This would be the final march in a row. The general history of the war would have recorded as 1971 year's end.

In the middle of the night of a winter who could remember, who was identified to become the Chief of Army Staff. The commission in the army was operational that it still debated and whose life threw up more questions in its death, who comes into the forefront of the war.

Through his life and career, he demonstrated a determination that determined over dangerous paths. He demonstrated a determination that determined over dangerous paths. He demonstrated a determination that determined over dangerous paths.

General Anjan Scidhar Vaidya was decorated with the same gallantry award twice — the first time in 1965 and the second in 1971 that earned him a Bar to the Maha Vir Chakra. He is one of only six soldiers to have got the distinction.



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Source: Personal Archive of Gen Vaidya's daughter Neeta Kochhar