



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



LIEUTENANT COLONEL DHAN SINGH THAPA (Then MAJOR)

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| SERVICE NUMBER | IC-7990 |
| RANK | Major |
| NAME | Dhan Singh Thapa |
| SON OF | PS Thapa |
| RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE | Lucknow |
| UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS | 1/8 Gorkha Rifles (now 3 MECHANISED INFANTRY) |
| SERVICE | Indian Army |
| DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION | 28 August 1949 |
| AWARD/DATE OF ACTION | Param Vir Chakra/20 October 1962 |
| WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION | 1962 Sino-India |
| OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE | |



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Dhan Singh Thapa was born on 28 April 1928, in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. His father Mr PS Thapa and mother were of Nepalese origin. Lieutenant Colonel Dhan Singh Thapa was commissioned into 1/8 GORKHA RIFLES of Indian Army on 28 August 1949. He was a devoted soldier and did his duty with great enthusiasm. Along with being a devoted soldier, he is remembered for being excellent sportsman who exhibited extraordinary football skills. After few years of his service in Indian Army he married his wife Mrs Shukla Thapa and had three children Poornima Thapa, Poonma Thapa and Param Deep Thapa. During the Sino-India of 1962, Major Dhan Singh was posted in Ladakh at Sirijap Post established by his battalion 1/8 GORKHA RIFLES.

The first battalion of Gurkha Regiment (now Gorkha Rifles) was raised in 1815 during the Anglo-Nepalese war. Impressed by the qualities displayed by Gurkhas during the war, the British started active recruitment of Gurkhas into the British Indian army. After the partition, in 1947 six Gurkha regiments viz, 1 GR, 3 GR, 4 GR, 5 GR, 8 GR and 9 GR remained with the Indian Army, while 2 GR, 6 GR, 7 GR and 10 GR were transferred to British Army as part of the Tripartite Agreement signed between India, Nepal and Britain. The 8 GR was raised in 1824 as a part of British East Indian Company and later was transferred to British Indian Army after the First War of Independence of 1857. The regiment participated in World War I and World War II. Since independence, the regiment has proved its mettle in Sino-India War of 1962 and Indo-Pak War of 1971. The regiment's motto is '*Kafar Hunu Bhandu Marnu Ramro*' (Better to die than live like a coward). The regiment has given India one of the two Field Marshals, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, of the Indian Army. In 1962 Sino-India war, Lieutenant Colonel Dhan Singh Thapa of 1/8 GR was awarded Param Vir Chakra for the display of conspicuous courage and exemplary leadership in the battle of Sirijap, Ladakh. The battalion was subsequently mechanised and later re-designated as 3 MECHANISED INFANTRY.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



Thapa with his battalion

Source: <https://wikibio.in/dhan-singh-thapa/>

Since its independence, India followed a foreign policy of maintaining cordial relations with China. It wanted to revive its ancient contacts with the people of China. Therefore, soon after its establishment on 01 October 1949, India was one of the first few countries to grant diplomatic status to the People's Republic of China (PRC). India supported the demand of state recognition of PRC on various international platforms. India took the initiative to enter into negotiations with China on the question of Tibet and entered into the Panchsheel Agreement in 1954. Within a few weeks of Chou Enlai's visit to India in 1954, the Chinese launched a protest against the presence of Indian troops in Barahoti, three kilometers south of a border pass, Tun Jun La in Uttar Pradesh. This was the first time, the Government of China laid claim to any part of Indian territory formally. The construction of the Tibet-Sinkiang Road in 1957, marked a turning point in the Sino-India relations as the Chinese occupied a large part of the Aksai Chin. This opened an opportunity for China to come out with territorial claims against India openly. By 1959, Chinese soldiers moved in further into Ladakh and established themselves at Chushul- Rezang La, and at Mandal, just south of Dambu Guru. On 08 September 1962, about 600 Chinese troops encircled the Dhola Post in the Eastern sector and began firing. The Chinese launched simultaneous attacks in the Eastern sector in Namka Chu sector as well as in the Western sector in Ladakh. The overwhelming number of the Chinese troops attacked the Indian soldiers but they fought the enemy with grit and



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

determination. The Chinese announced the cease-fire at midnight of 21/22 November 1962.¹ The war in the west was fought in Ladakh.

Ladakh, a part of frontier province of Jammu and Kashmir, is also part of the Greater Himalayan Range. The mountains of Ladakh, perhaps the most rugged and inhospitable in the world are formidable. On the night of 19/20 October 1962, the Chinese forces attacked Chip-Chap, Galwan and Pangong area of Ladakh. Despite the fact that these posts were isolated and lacked fire support, the Indian Army fought bravely but were overrun by the enemy who was superior in numbers.



Dhan Singh Thapa commanding the 1st Battalion of 8 Gorkha Rifles at Pangong Lake in Ladakh

Source: <https://wikibio.in/dhan-singh-thapa/>

Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Dhan Singh Thapa was commanding the forward post in Sirijap. After receiving intensive mortar bombardment and artillery fire, the post was attacked by the Chinese on 20 October 1962 with overwhelming strength. Under his brave leadership, the heavily outnumbered position repulsed the attack, suffering severe losses at the hands of the attackers. After being heavily shelled by mortar and artillery fire, the enemy assaulted once more, this time in greater numbers. Major Thapa and his men successfully repulsed this assault while inflicting significant casualties on the enemy. The Chinese launched a third onslaught, this time with tanks backing up their infantry. The preceding attacks had left the post with a significant number of

¹ History of the Conflict with China, 1962. P.B Sinha. Col A.A. Athale (1992). History Division, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

casualties. Even though it was significantly weakened, it held out to the last. When the Chinese finally overran the post, Major Thapa emerged from his trench and engaged many enemy soldiers in a hand-to-hand combat until he was overpowered by the Chinese troops. On 21 October 1962, the Chinese switched their objective to the north of Pangong. 1/8 GORKHA RIFLES which was at the Sirijap fought it out to the end holding the enemy long enough to allow the Yula post to withdraw in storm boats. Except for one who escaped, and two who were later known to have been captured, the Gorkhas all died fighting till very last. Major Thapa's conspicuous bravery, evident fighting prowess, and exemplary leadership during the battle reflected the greatest ideals of the Indian Army.



Lt Col Dhan Singh Thapa receiving Param Vir Chakra from the President of India Dr. Sarvepalli Radha Krishnan

Source: <https://wikibio.in/dhan-singh-thapa/>

Major Dhan Singh Thapa was awarded Param Vir Chakra posthumously, later it was learnt that he was alive and was held captive by the Chinese. He was released in May 1963 and resumed his duty and got promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He retired as Lieutenant Colonel and passed away owing to natural causes at the age of 77 on 05 September 2005



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

CITATION

Major Dhan Singh Thapa (IC-7990)

1/8 Gorkha Rifles

(Effective date of award- 20 October 1962)

Major Dhan Singh Thapa was in command of a forward post in Ladakh. On 20 October 1962, it was attacked by the Chinese in overwhelming strength after being subjected to intensive artillery and mortar bombardment. Under his gallant command the greatly outnumbered post repulsed the attack, inflicting heavy casualties on the aggressors. The enemy attacked again in greater numbers after heavy shelling by artillery and mortar fire. Under the leadership of Major Thapa, his men repulsed this attack also with heavy losses to the enemy.

The Chinese attacked for the third time, now with tanks to support their infantry. The post had already suffered large casualties in the earlier attacks. Though considerably thinned, it held out to the last. When it was finally over-run by overwhelming numbers of Chinese, Major Thapa got out of his trench and lured several enemy soldiers in hand-to-hand fighting before he was eventually overpowered by Chinese soldiers.

Major Thapa's cool courage, conspicuous fighting qualities and leadership were in the highest traditions of our Army.

Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No._____ dated_____



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

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2. Stories of Heroism (PVC & MVC Winners) Dr B.C Chakravorty. Edited by Dr U.P Thapliyal (2005). Allied Publishers Limited and Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
3. Ballabh, Anand, Insights into Infantry Regiments: A Basic Factbook. Forward Books publications. New Delhi (2013)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Param Vir: Our Heroes in Battle. Maj Gen Ian Cardozo. (2003). The Lotus Collection, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, India.
2. Honourpoint: An Online Memorial for every Indian Soldier. (Accessed on 03 November 2022)
<https://www.honourpoint.in/profile/lt-col-dhan-singh-thapa-pvc/>
3. The War Decorated India & Trust (Accessed on 03 November 2022)
<http://twdi.in/node/1077>
4. Zee News: Lt Col Dhan Singh Thapa passes away (Accessed on 03 November 2022)
https://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/lt-col-dhan-singh-thapa-passes-away_239908.html



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

VIDEOS

Indo-China 1962 War | Archival footage (Source: Prasar Bharti Archives YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pL8exZ7iFUw>

Param Vir Chakra - Major Dhan Singh Thapa (Source: AAJ TAK YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vvdui-OBE2Q>

1962 India-China War: Major Dhan Singh Thapa मौत को मात देने वाला वो वीर सपूत | वनइंडिया हिंदी (Source: YouTube Oneindia Hindi | वनइंडिया हिंदी)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjGJ10wBYpQ>

Recounting Historic Battle Against China | Kumaon Regimental Centre | Patriot With Major Gaurav Arya (Source: YouTube Republic World)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0ohx-oxWp4>

60 years since 1962 India-China war — a look at the important battle points (Source: The Print YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtTRVEhknMs>

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रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

MEMORIALS

- A bust of Lt Col Dhan Singh Thapa installed in the Param Yodha Sthal at National War memorial New Delhi.



- A road is named after Lt Col Dhan Singh Thapa in Garhi Cantonment, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.



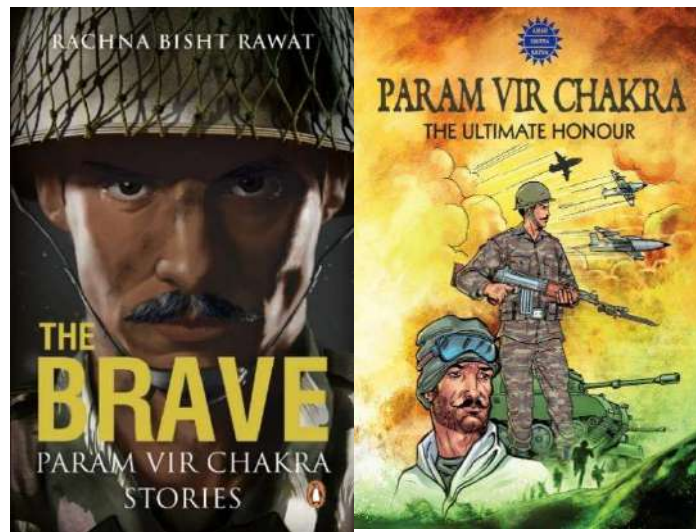
Source: Honourpoint



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

OTHER INTERESTING RESOURCES³

- 1) A dramatic depiction Major Dhan Singh Thapa life. It was televised by DD National and was directed by Chetna Anand.
Param Vir Chakra Dhan Singh Thapa (Source: Youtube Remember theirsacrifices1)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0hjvm_71a4&list=PLqMM_ipMmTS8iQ5nCZGpKfKwxYj5x3g-1&index=8
- 2) China से 1962 War में युद्धबंदी बनाए गए Indian Soldiers की दास्तां (Source: YouTube BBC Hindi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TwpwR0NJJE>
- 3) Book- A book titled ‘The Brave: Param Vir Chakra Stories’ by renowned author Rachna Bisht Rawat narrates engaging tales of valour of our twenty-one Param Vir Chakra awardees. It was published by Penguin, India in 2014.



Source: <https://www.amazon.in>

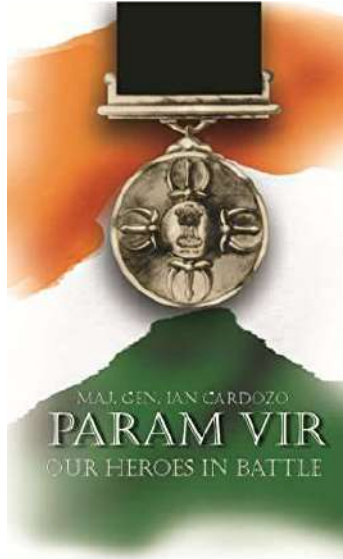
- 4) Amar Chitra Katha- To honour 21 Param Vir Chakra Recipients, a special comic titled ‘Param Vir Chakra: The Ultimate Honour’ was published on 1 January 2015. The book is the result of combined efforts by the Indian Army and Amar Chitra Katha Pvt. Ltd.
- 5) Book- Param Vir: Our Heroes in Battle by Major General Cardozo was published in

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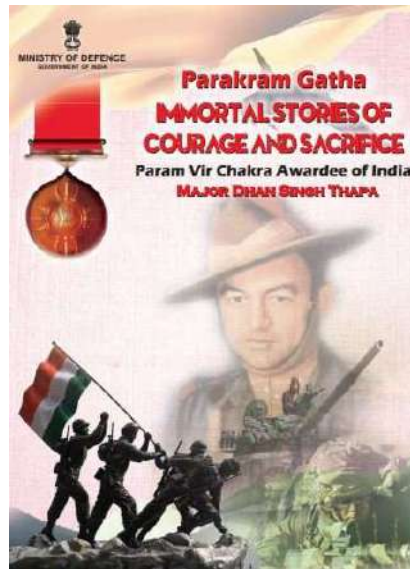
रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

2003 by The Lotus Collection, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi. The book provides its readers a vivid description of the gallant actions of India's Param Vir Chakra winners.



Source: <https://www.amazon.in>

6) Magazine: Published by Ministry of Defence on Lt Col. Dhan Singh Thapa



Source: https://www.gallantryawards.gov.in/digital_library