



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



MAJOR SOMNATH SHARMA

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-521
RANK	Major
NAME	Somnath Sharma
SON OF	Major General Amar Nath Sharma
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Dadh, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	4 KUMAON
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	22 February 1942
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Param Vir Chakra (Posthumous)/03 November 1947
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	1947-48 Indo-Pak War
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Major Somnath Sharma was born on 31 January 1923 at Dadh, Kangra, then in the Punjab Province of British India (now, Himachal Pradesh). His father, Major General Amar Nath Sharma, was also a military officer and retired as Director, Army Medical Services as were his brothers Lieutenant General Surindar Nath Sharma (who retired as Engineer-in-chief) and General Vishwa Nath Sharma (who was the Chief of Army Staff, 1988–1990), and his sister Major Kamla Tewari was an Army Doctor. Major Sharma's family had a long tradition of military service – his uncle, Captain K D Vasudeva, had died defending a bridge on the River Slim against the Japanese during the Malayan Campaign in World War II. Vasudeva's gallantry had made it possible for hundreds of his jawans to cross over to safety, a fact that greatly influenced Major Sharma throughout his career. He attended Sherwood College in Nainital before joining the Prince of Wales Royal Military College in Dehra Dun and subsequently joining the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. On 22 February 1942, he received his commission into the 8th Battalion, 19th Hyderabad Regiment (later, 4 KUMAON). During his early career, he served under Colonel K S Thimmayya (the only Indian to command an Infantry brigade in battle during the World War II and Chief of the Army Staff, 1957–1961) during the Arakan Operations in Burma. For meritorious action in the face of the enemy, Somnath Sharma was awarded a 'Mention-in-Despatches'. He was awarded Param Vir Chakra for display of exceptional valour and conspicuous courage during the Indo-Pak war of 194-48. His actions made him the first recipient Param Vir Chakra.¹



Major Somnath Sharma at Srinagar Airfield. Possibly his last photo.

Source: <https://cestmoizblog.com/2017/11/03/maj-somnath-sharma-pvc-p-and-the-battle-of-badgam/>

¹ A hero for generations of soldiers : Major Somnath Sharma (Accessed on 20 October 2022)
<https://www.aviation-defence-universe.com/a-hero-for-generations-of-soldiers/>



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The Kumaon Regiment traces its origins to the 18th century and has fought in every major campaign of the British Indian Army and the Indian Army, including the two world wars. During World War I, a Kumaon battalion was raised at Ranikhet on 23 October 1917 as 34/39th Kumaon Rifles. In 1918, it was redesigned as 1st battalion, 50th Kumaon Rifles and a second battalion was raised. These were merged with Hyderabad contingent into the 19th Hyderabad Regiment in 1923. On 27 October 1945, the 19th Hyderabad was renamed as 19 Kumaon Regiment. Post-Independence, it is known as the Kumaon Regiment. Staying true to the regimental motto of ***Parakramo Vijayate (Valour Triumphs)*** the regiment has proved its mettle in Indo-Pak war of 1947-48, Sino-India War of 1962, Indo-Pak war 1971, Kargil War of 1999 and had been a part of India's Peace-keeping force in Sri Lanka. During the first war of Kashmir, 4 KUMAON displayed exceptional combat skills in the battle of Badgam².

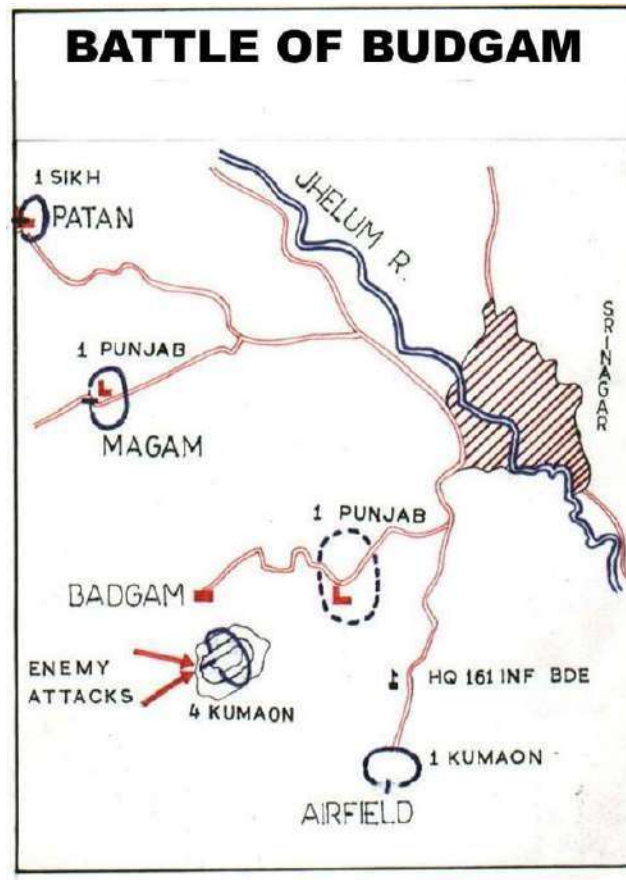
The first Indo-Pak war fought between the independent countries of India and Pakistan began in 1947. The bone of contention between India and Pakistan were the attempts by Pakistan to annex the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir by any means. On the map of India, the state of Jammu and Kashmir appeared as a somewhat rectangular projection in the extreme North-West corner of the sub-continent. In size it was the largest of the Indian 'Princely States' during the pre-independence era. It was 222,870 sq km or roughly double the area of Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg combined. The state was important because of its strategic location. Even before the birth of Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir was surrounded on almost three sides by foreign states. Today, its importance has been accentuated by recent international developments. To the East lay Tibet; to its North lies Chinese Turkestan or Sinkiang (Xinjiang); to West is Afghanistan; to South-West and South was Pakistan; and to the South and South-East lay the states of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh of India.³ The narrow Wakhan corridor, a narrow strip of territory in Afghanistan, extending to China and separating Tajikistan from Gilgit-Baltistan, was to the North West. Some of the significant battles that took place in Jammu and Kashmir were, the Battle of Badgam, capture and recapture of Jhangar, battle of Naushera, the advance to Tithawal, the relief in Punch and the fight of Chhamb to Tithwal.

² Ballabh, Anand, Insights into Infantry Regiments: A Basic Factbook. Forward Books publications. New Delhi (2013)

³ Operations in Jammu and Kashmir S.N. Prasad. Dr. Dharam Pal (2005). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India



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Sketch showing operational plan for the battle of Badgam

Source: Twitter Indian Army @ADGPI 30 November 2020

While elements of 161 Infantry Brigade were sent out to guard the various approaches to Srinagar, the reports were being received that the raiders were infiltrating towards Srinagar from different routes and one of the columns was heading for Badgam, a village about eight miles South-East of Srinagar. The village was less than two miles from the airfields. An enemy force lodged there could easily threaten it. ⁴

At that time, Major Sharma's left hand was in a plaster cast due to a fracture he had suffered while playing hockey. Though he was advised rest due to his injury, he insisted on being with his company in the battlefield and was given permission to command his sub unit. Their mission was simple – hold the valley of Kashmir, repel all invaders, defend the newly independent state of India. His company was airlifted to Srinagar on October 31, 1947.

⁴ Param Vir: Our Heroes In Battle. Maj Gen Ian Cardozo. (2003). The Lotus Collection, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, India.



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On 03 November, three companies of 4 KUMAON were deployed in the Badgam area on patrol duties. Major Somnath Sharma's company was ordered to go on a fighting patrol to Badgam in the Kashmir Valley. He arrived at his destination by the first light and took up position about 1100 hours south of Badgam. It was at 1430 hours in the afternoon when a 500-strong force of tribal lashkars (raiders), supported by mortars, attacked the 50 Indian jawans of Major Sharma's company. Surrounded by the enemy from three sides, 4 KUMAON began sustaining heavy casualties from the ensuing mortar bombardment. Outnumbered by 10 to 1 he immediately sent a request to Brigadier LP 'Bogey' Sen for reinforcements.

The enemy, attacked the position from three sides, resulting in significant casualties for the company. Major Sharma urged his company to fight the enemy tenaciously. Realising the seriousness of the situation and the direct threat that would result to both the aerodrome and Srinagar if the enemy's advance was not halted until the time reinforcement from 1 KUMAON could be rushed to close the gap leading to Srinagar via Humhama.

He repeatedly ran across the wide terrain, exposing himself to heavy and precise fire, to his sections, urging with them to hold on. He skillfully targeted the constantly moving attacker with his section's fire while maintaining his composure. He frequently put himself in the line of fire of the enemy and spread-out cloth strips to direct our aircraft onto their objective while the enemy was watching. The officer, whose left hand was in plaster, started manually filling magazines and giving them to light machine gunners after seeing that casualties had reduced the efficacy of his light automatics. He was killed in an explosion that was caused by a mortar round that fell directly in the middle of the ammunition. His last words were "The enemy is only 50 yards from us. We are heavily outnumbered. We are under devastating fire. I shall not withdraw an inch but will fight to the last man and the last round."⁵

However, his sacrifice did not go in vain. Inspired by their leader's gallantry and tenacity, the soldiers continued to fight the enemy for six hours after Major Sharma had been killed. The spirited defense by 4 KUMAON delayed the enemy for six crucial hours, thus gaining time for reinforcements to get into position. However, by the time the relief company of 1st Battalion Kumaon Regiment reached Badgam, the position had suffered heavy damage. Along with Major

⁵ Param Vir: Our Heroes in Battle. Maj Gen Ian Cardozo. (2003). The Lotus Collection, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, India.



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Somnath Sharma, one Junior-commissioned officer and twenty other soldiers of the D company of 4 KUMAON had been killed in battle.⁶

Despite the fact that 4 KUMAON had suffered over 20 casualties, it had inflicted much heavier losses on the enemy. The raiders had lost over 200 men and their leader had been incapacitated, resulting in their advance losing its impetus. This also bought time for additional Indian troops to land at the airport, reorganize and block all routes of ingress to Srinagar.

His heroic example caused the attackers to be held up for six hours gaining us more time to position our reinforcements at Humhama, where the raiders advance was to be countered. His men were motivated to battle the enemy seven to one for one hour after this brave officer was killed. He has set an example of courage and qualities seldom equaled in the history of the Indian Army.

⁶ The Little Known Story of Major Somnath Sharma, India's First Param Vir Chakra Recipient (Accessed on 08 October 2022)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/73888/major-somnath-sharma-first-param-vir-chakra-recipient/>



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CITATION

CITATION IN RESPECT OF IC-521 MAJOR SOMNATH SHARMA

On 03 Nov 1947, Major Somnath Sharma's company was ordered on a fighting patrol to Badgam in the Kashmir Valley. He reached his objective at first light on 03 Nov and took up a position south of Badgam at 1100 hours. The enemy, estimated at 500, attacked his company position with three sides, the company began to sustain heavy casualties.

Fully realizing the gravity of the situation and the direct threat that would result to both the aerodrome and Srinagar if the enemy attack was not held until reinforcements could be rushed to close the gap leading to Srinagar via Humhama, Major Sharma urged his company to fight the enemy tenaciously. With extreme bravery, he kept rushing across the open ground to his sections exposing himself to heavy and accurate fire to urge them to hold on. Keeping his nerve, he skillfully directed the fire of his section into the ever-advancing enemy. He repeatedly exposed himself to the full fury of enemy fire and laid out cloth strips to guide our aircraft onto their target in full view of the enemy.

Realising that casualties had affected the effectiveness of his light automatics, this officer, whose left hand was in plaster, personally commenced filling magazines and issuing them to light machine gunners. A mortar shell landing right in the middle of the ammunition resulted in an explosion that killed him.

Major Sharma's company held onto its position and the remnants withdrew only when almost completely surrounded. His inspiring example resulted in the enemy being delayed for six hours. Thus, gaining time for our reinforcements to get into position at Humhama to stem the tide of the enemy advance. His leadership, gallantry and tenacious defence were such that his men were inspired to fight the enemy by seven to one for six hours, one hour which was after this gallant officer had been killed.

He has set an example of courage and qualities seldom equaled in the history of the Indian Army.



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2. Param Vir: Our Heroes in Battle. Maj Gen Ian Cardozo. (2003). The Lotus Collection, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, India.

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- 1) The Honourpoint: online memorial for every Indian Soldier (Accessed on 20 October 2022)
<https://www.honourpoint.in/profile/major-somnath-sharma-pvc/>
- 2) Defending Kashmir (Written by Official History of the Jammu & Kashmir Operations) (Accessed on 08 October 2022)
<https://www.bharat-rakshak.com/ARMY/today/254-defending-kashmir.html>
- 3) India's Wars since Independence: A Concise History by Lieutenant General Vijay Oberoi, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd) (Accessed on 08 October 2022)
<https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/indias-wars-since-independence-a-concise-history/>
- 4) Indo-Pakistani Wars (Accessed on 08 September 2022)
https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Indo-Pakistani_Wars
- 5) Indo-Pak War, 1947-48: The History and its Current Ramifications by Col Jaibans Singh (Accessed on 08 October 2022)
<http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/indo-pak-war-1947-48-the-history-and-its-current-ramifications/>
- 6) The little known Story of Major Somnath Sharma, India's First Param Vir Chakra Recipient By Sanchari Pal (Accessed on 08 October 2022)
<https://www.thebetterindia.com/73888/major-somnath-sharma-first-param-vir-chakra-recipient/>



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VIDEOS

Tales of Valour Episode 03 Battle of Badgam Major Somnath Sharma (Source: Youtube Kumaon Warriors)

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

Indian Army pays tribute to Major Somnath Sharma, India's 1st recipient of Param Vir Chakra (Source: Youtube ANI News)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPHo_kxtC40

Major Somnath Sharma Biography | India's First Param Vir Chakra Recipient Major Somnath Sharma PVC (Source: Youtube defence Squad)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0M_G4KkqEE

DNA: Major Somnath की शौर्य गाथा | जरा याद करो कु बानी | 3 November पराक्रम का दिन | Hindi News (Source: Youtube Zee News)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7A_0qKcX6Po

भारत के असली हीरो | Biography of Param Vir Chakra Vijeta Major Somnath Sharma (Source: Youtube Kissa TV)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYXFgtaJZ8k>

Disclaimer**⁷

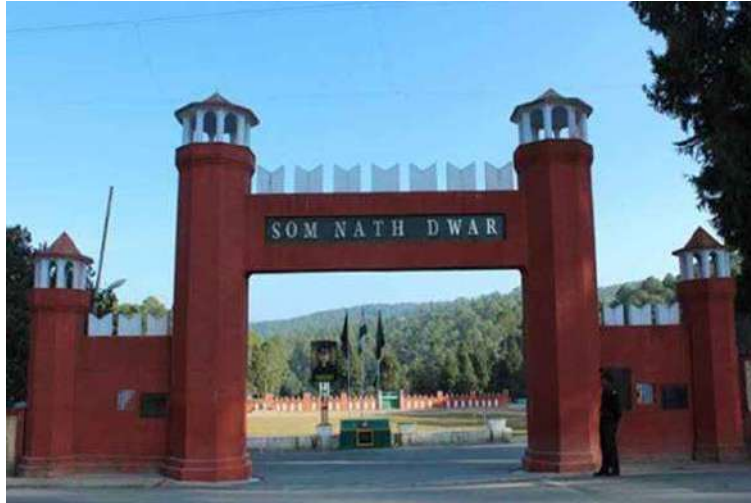
⁷ Disclaimer: Photos, links to publications and videos presented here are not intended to serve as a substitute for consultation and should only be used at the user's own risk. These are primarily shared because of the extensive coverage available on the subject. No copyright infringement is intended 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

- An army ground has been named after Major Somnath Sharma in Ranikhet Uttarakhand.



Source: <https://www.sirfsach.in/brave-hearts/uttarakhand-somnath-army-ground-learn-its-specialties/41069/>

- Bust Statue of Major Somnath Sharma at the Param Yodha Sthal in National War memorial New Delhi.



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Source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:National_War_Memorial_India,_Param_Vir_Chakra_section,_Major_Somnath_Sharma.jpg

- Wreath Laying Ceremonies in the honour of one of the most gallant warriors of the Indian Army, Major Somnath Sharma, PVC was organised at Major Somnath Sharma Memorial located at the Srinagar Airport.



source: <https://www.scoopnews.in/m/newsdet.aspx?q=72428>

- A park in Rama Krishna Puram area of South Delhi district of Delhi is named after Major



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Somnath Sharma, PVC

- A road is named after Major Somnath Sharma in the South Delhi district of Delhi, India.
- A housing society Som Vihar in, Rama Krishna Puram, New Delhi, is named in memory of brave warrior Major Somnath Sharma.

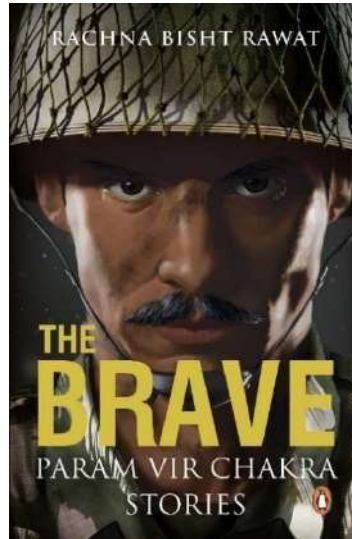
OTHER INTERESTING RESOURCES⁸

- 1) A dramatic depiction Major Somnath Sharma's life. It was televised by DD National and was directed by Chetna Anand.
Param Vir Chakra Episode 1 Major Somnath Sharma (Source: Youtube The Militararians)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEdo9kinnYM>
- 2) Ep - 1 | Battle of Badgam 1947 | आज़ाद भारत का पहला यु5 | Desh Ke Rakshak (Source: Youtube JK Cement Ltd.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqLkLkOeihI>
- 3) An animated illustration of the Battle of Badgam
Battle of Badgam: Major Somnath Sharma (Source: Youtube Wondering Minds Sid)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-NKinlSnio>
- 4) 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.

⁸ Disclaimer: The content mentioned under the Listicles constitutes fair-use of any copyright material and is used for information and research purpose only. The content is in no way promoting or branding an individual, organisation, book or film.

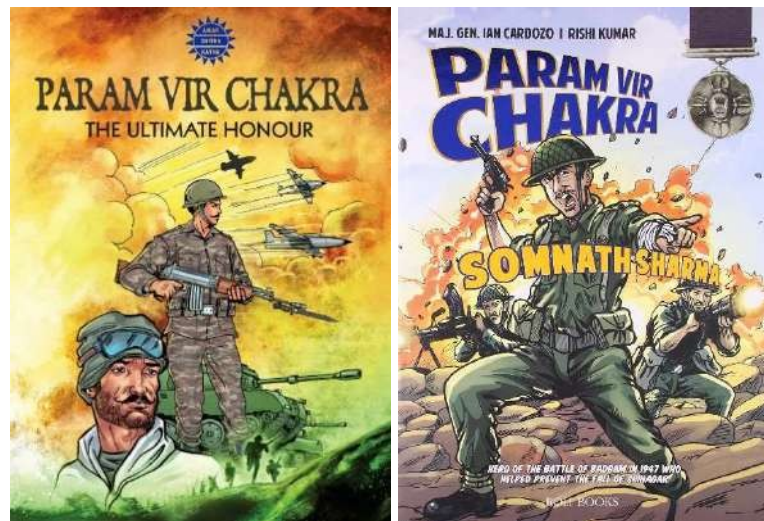


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Source: <https://www.amazon.in>

- 5) 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.



Source: [Source: https://www.amazon.in](https://www.amazon.in)

- 6) Roli Comics- 'Param Vir Chakra Major Somnath Sharma: Hero of the battle of Badgam in 1947 who helped prevent the fall of Ssrinagar' is comic by Major General Ian Cardozo and Rishi Kumar. It was published in 2021 by Roli Books, India.



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- 7) Book- Param Vir: Our Heroes in Battle by Major General Cardozo was published in 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: Source: <https://www.amazon.in>

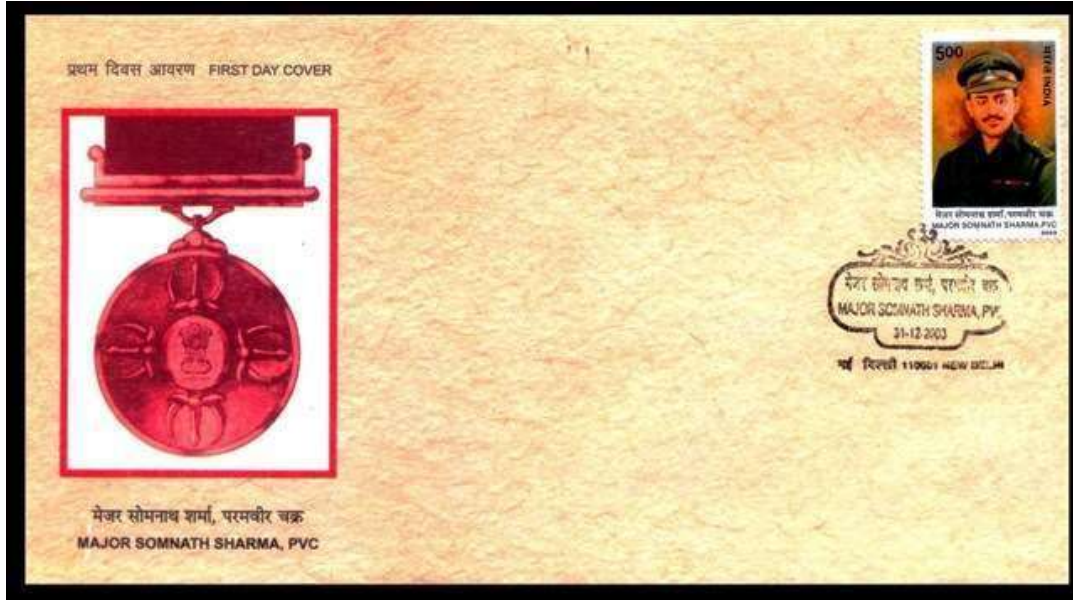
- 8) To commemorate the gallant actions of Major Somnath Sharma, a stamp was released by Indian Postal Service in 2003



- 9) First day cover released by Indian Postal Service in 2003 to commemorate the first Param Vir Chakra recipient of India, Major Somnath Sharma



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Source: <https://www.stampexindia.com/product.php?proId=472>