



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



MAJOR SHYAMAL DEV GOSWAMI (Then SECOND LIEUTENANT)

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| SERVICE NUMBER | IC-12665 |
| RANK | Major (Then Second Lieutenant) |
| NAME | Shyamal Dev Goswami |
| SON OF | Prof Priya Kumar Goswami |
| RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE | Meerut, Uttar Pradesh |
| UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS | Artillery |
| SERVICE | Indian Army |
| DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION | 11 June 1961 |
| AWARD/DATE OF ACTION | Maha Vir Chakra/ 18 November 1962 |
| WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION | Indo-China War of 1962 |
| OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE | |



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Second Lieutenant Shyamal Dev Goswami, was born in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh on 06 November 1938, to Prof Priya Kumar Goswami. He was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery on 11 June 1961. Soon, in October 1962, when the war broke out between India and China, his unit 13 Field Regiment was moved from Kashmir to Ladakh. During the 1962 Sino-India War, he was Observation Post Officer in the of Gurung Hill in Eastern Ladakh.



Shyamal Dev Goswami (2nd from right) with his parents and siblings.

Source: <https://www.indiasentinel.com/opinion/fire-till-eternity-the-story-of-major-shyamal-dev-goswami-5513>

The Regiment of Artillery was raised on 28 September 1827. It was initially raised as Bombay Artillery and was later renamed 5 Bombay Mountain Battery. In May 1857, the mutiny by Indian soldiers started in the Artillery of the Army of the Bengal Presidency. The incident prompted a complete ban on Indian Artillery units, except the Mountain Artillery Batteries in select Provinces. The decision was reversed in the mid-1930s when the first of the Field Regiments of the Indian Army were raised. The Field Regiments support the formations on the field. The Regimental motto of Artillery Regiment ‘Sarvatra Izzat-O-Iqbal’ which means ‘**Everywhere with Honour and Glory**’.¹ Amongst the Army Chiefs from the Regiment of Artillery are General PP Kumaramangalam, DSO, MBE, General OP Malhotra, PVSM, General SF Rodrigues, PVSM,

¹ Ballabh, Anand, Insights into Infantry Regiments: A Basic Factbook. Forward Books publications. New Delhi (2013)



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VSM General S Padmanabhan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM and General Deepak Kapoor, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM.

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 since both the countries shared political, geographical and cultural similarities. 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, 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 Plateau. 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- Rezag 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 NEFA in Namku Chu Sector as well as in Ladakh. The overwhelming number of the Chinese troops hit the Indian soldiers but they fought the enemy with grit and determination. The Chinese announced the cease-fire at midnight of 21/22 November 1962.²

² History of the Conflict with China, 1962. P.B Sinha. Col A.A. Athale (1992). History Division, Ministry of Defence, Government of India.



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China-India Border: Western Sector



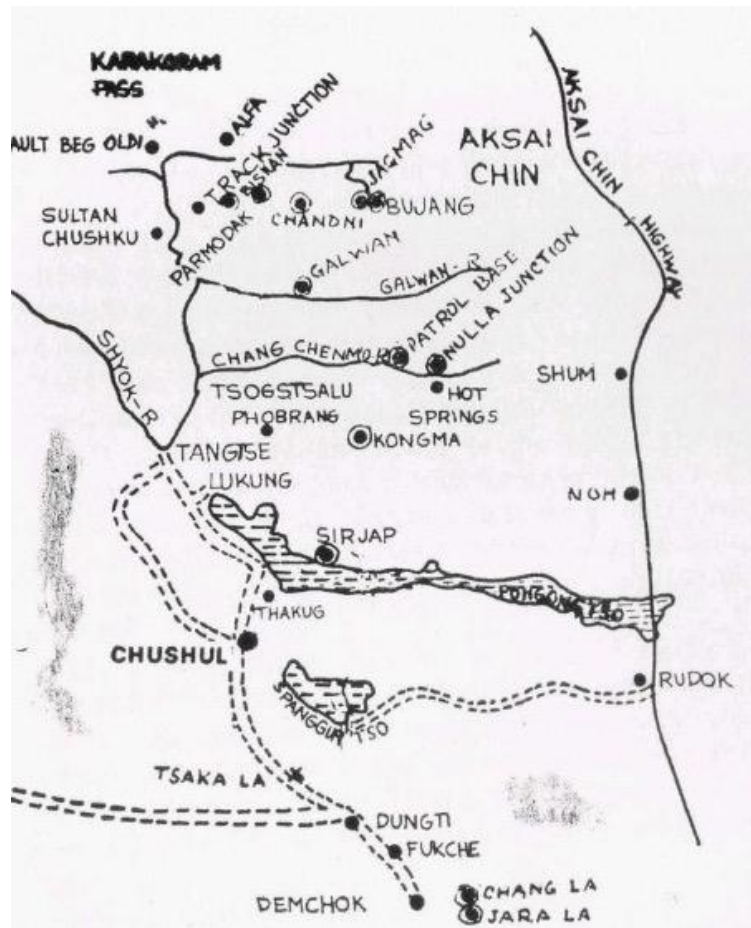
Source: Wikipedia

During the Sino-India War of 1962, Second Lieutenant Shyamal Dev Goswami was deployed in Ladakh and he fought valiantly in the battle of Gurung Hill. 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.

The fighting in Ladakh in 1962 was in three distinct phases. The first Phase began on 19 October night when Chinese commenced their attacks against the Isolated 'Forward Policy' Posts. This Phase lasted till 27 October between this time and 18 November there was lull in fighting. This period was utilized by both sides to build up their strengths, while Chinese build up was mainly opposite Spangur Gap, the Indian side strengthened defences in the depth. In third and final Phase the Chinese overwhelmed the Indian defences on the Eastern edge of Chushul airfield. The cease fire was declared on 21 November 1962, by when the Chinese had rendered the airfield unusable for Indians.



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A rough map of Ladakh front in 1962 by Maj Gen Jagjit Singh.

Source: <https://www.indiasentinel.com/opinion/gateway-to-hell-the-1962-operation-in-daulat-beg-oldie-5682>

In the early Phases of fighting in Ladakh Chushul defences were held by two Companies of 1/8 GORKHA RIFLES. After being relieved by 5 JAT in second week of October 1962, a Company less Platoon strength was deployed in Sirijap Complex North of Pangong lake. This Post was supplied by boats across the lake and had no land link with the Battalion. South of Pangong Lake was the Yula Complex consisting of three Posts manned by another Company 1/8 GORKHA RIFLES. Nearly two Companies defended the Spangur Gap. Both the hills on the Northern Shoulder named Gurung Hill and to the South Magar Hill, were held. In addition, there was a Post in the Gap itself.

On 18 November the Chinese attack in this Sector started, coinciding with their attack on Sela in NEFA. The Chinese were obviously working to a timetable. Chushul with its airfield and the Indian brigade was a thorn in the Chinese flesh as that provided a possible jump off point for an Indian threat to the Chinese occupied Aksai Chin and the highway running through it. In fact a cursory thought was given by the CGS to the possibility of offensive across Spangur Gap in order



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to relieve pressure in the Chip Chap valley. The idea did not progress any further, as the Indians did not have adequate strength for it.

The Chinese launched a two-pronged attack on Chushul defences. northern prong of attack and nearly regiment strength, attacked Gurung hill. Basically, the Chinese, lower half of Black Top Hill was under Chinese. The Chinese thus had the advantage of attacking down-hill, which always is a major consideration in mountains. The attack on Gurung Hill posed a direct threat to Chushul airfield.

The going for the invading Chinese was tougher at Gurung Hill. The Chinese attacked Gurung Hill complex simultaneously with their attacked Rezangla. the approach chosen was from Black Hill, that gave them an advantage of attacking from the ground. At 0530 Hours on 18 November, the Chinese began intense bombardment of Gurung Hill as well as the Indian posts located in the Spangur Gap and Magar Hill.

Two companies of 1/8 GORKHA RIFLES were defending the vast area of Gurung Hill. The troops had well dug positions protected by wire and some Anti- personnel mines. and the attack was expected from the direction of Black Hill; the defenses were therefore ready to face the Chinese. The first wave of attackers made contact with the northern company of the Gurung hill at 0630 Hours. Here the Chinese were in a surprise. When still outside the small arms range, they engaged the Chinese troops by accurate fire from the guns of 13 FIELD REGIMENT. Second Lieutenant SD Goswami did a commendable job of directing the fire. When Second Lieutenant S.D Goswami was wounded, Technical Assistant Gurdip Singh, though severely wounded himself, took over command of the Post and continued to direct the fire of our Artillery on the enemy thereby inflicting heavy casualties on them. In this action Technical Assistant Gurdip Singh displayed great initiative and courage of a high order and was awarded Vir Chakra Posthumously.

Second Lieutenant Shyamal Dev Goswami had fell unconscious and was lying there in pain, when the Chinese came to check the Post for survivors, they left him for dead and left the Post. The following day, Shyamal regained consciousness and managed to descend from his position, crawling and limping towards the emergency base camp. 2 Gorkha Soldiers noticed him and promptly escorted him to receive medical assistance. Initially declared deceased, a surprising movement in his body indicated otherwise. He was soon evacuated and sent to Military Hospital in Delhi. Second Lieutenant Shyamal Dev Goswami survived and was sent to Germany for his treatment and rehabilitation, which was funded by the Rotarian Club of India.



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Major Shyamal Dev Goswami after his treatment in Germany.

Source : <https://www.indiasentinel.com/opinion/fire-till-eternity-the-story-of-major-shyamal-dev-goswami-5513>

The brave Gorkhas were finally overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers, and the forward Platoon fell. Out of 17 men in this Platoon the every single one died fighting the Chinese. The Chinese launched a series of attacks and finally, after two hours, a detachment managed to occupy some portions of Gurung Hill, the energetic Platoon Commander there, Tej Bahadur Gurung got his men out from the trenches, and using, traditional Gorkha Khukri (a small curved knife) on the Chinese. The Chinese had to fall back fearing this fierce onslaught. By 1000 hours the situation stabilized and Gurung Hill remained firmly in Indian hands. In the meanwhile, Chinese were continuously shelling the Spangur Gap as well as airfield. The track between Gurung Hill and the Battalion Headquarters was no longer usable. The men on Gun Hill were asked to conserve their ammunition for second attack by the Chinese, which was expected soon. The second attack was preceded by even intense shelling.



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Second Lieutenant Shyamal Dev Goswami being awarded the Mahavir Chakra.

Source :- https://twitter.com/jai_samota/status/1707325467999826118

Second Lieutenant Shyamal Dev Goswami was discharged from the Army due to his disabilities, yet he was bestowed with an honorary rank of Major. Additionally, he was honored with the Maha Vir Chakra by then-President Zakir Hussain. Second Lieutenant Shyamal Dev Goswami passed away in Meerut in June 1992.

CITATION



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2/Lieutenant Shyamal Dev Goswami (IC-12665),
The Regiment of Artillery.
(Effective date of award– 18th November, 1962)

2/Lt. Shyamal Dev Goswami was observation post officer on Gurung Hill, an important defensive position guarding the airfield at Chushul. On 18th November, 1962, after a heavy barrage of artillery and mortar fire, the Chinese forces in overwhelming strength attacked this position.

Despite heavy enemy pressure 2/Lt. Goswami, continued to perform his duties of directing artillery fire on the enemy. He and the 4 ORs of the observation post were under constant enemy fire. All 4 ORs were killed and 2/Lt. Goswami himself seriously wounded, but he continued to perform his duty till he dropped unconscious. The enemy overran the position but left him apparently thinking that he was dead. Later he was picked up and evacuated.

Throughout this action, 2/Lt. Goswami displayed conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in the face of the enemy in the finest traditions of our army

Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No. 15-Pres./63 dated February 16, 1963



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VIDEOS

INDO-CHINA 1962 WAR|ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE (SOURCE: PRASAR BHARTI YOUTUBE)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl8exz7ifuw&t=123s>

DNA: Analysing the unforgettable India-China war of 1962 (Source: YouTube Zee News)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79-wYad_j9A

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