



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



COLONEL LALIT RAI

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-37020L
RANK	Colonel
NAME	Lalit Rai
SON OF	Major T B Rai
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Pune, Maharashtra
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	1/11 Gorkha Rifles
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	03 September 1977
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Vir Chakra / 02 July 1999
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	Kargil War/ Op VIJAY
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Colonel Lalit Rai was born on 24 January 1956 to an ex-serviceman Major T B Rai. He is a resident of Pune, Maharashtra. He completed his secondary education from the Bishop Cotton Boys' school. Ever since his childhood he wanted to become an officer of Indian Army just like his grandfather and father. On 3 September 1977, he was commissioned into Indian Army's 7/11 Gorkha Rifles (GR). During the Kargil war, Colonel Lalit Rai was commanding 1/11 GR.

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 11 GR is the only Gorkha Regiment raised in Independent India. It was raised on 1 January 1948. Since independence, the regiment has participated in a number of wars and operations including the 1947 and 1971 wars against Pakistan. The battalion's motto is '*Yatraham Vijay Statra*' (*We are metaphors of victory*). During the Kargil war, 1/11 GR was tasked to clear the Kalubhar Ridge.

The Kargil war of 1999 was fought 52 years after independence. 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 war commenced shortly after the signing of the Lahore declaration in 1999, when the Pakistan army surreptitiously occupied the winter vacated posts of the Indian Army. This act is thought to be the brain-child of General Pervez Musharraf, then chief of the Pakistan Army. On 3 May 1999, intrusions were detected. On 26 May ¹, the first air to ground strike was launched by the Indian Airforce (IAF), followed by Operation Vijay, by the Indian Army to evict the intruders from the Indian territory². During Op VIJAY, Col Lalit Rai was tasked to lead the battalion of 1/11 GR and capture the formidable Khalubar Top.

¹ Kargil 1999: The Impregnable Conquered Lt. Gen Y M Bammi. (2002) Gorkha Publisher

² From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report (2000) Sage Publications, New Delhi (Pg no 104-105)



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Colonel Lalit Rai being decorated with Vir Chakra by President K R Narayanan

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lalit_Rai

Col Lalit Rai displayed conspicuous bravery and contributed significantly to the capture of Khalubar.³ The Khalubar is located at an altitude of 17,500 feet above sea level in a terrain which is really tough and compounded with most inhospitable weather. The enemy had prepared well-coordinated defences on the dominating heights of Kalubar. Due to the terrain advantage the enemy had; the advancing Indian Forces were under constant effective fire from a very initial stage. However, to reach the Line of Control (LC), it was extremely necessary to dislodge the enemy from Khalubar heights. Col Lalit Rai was tasked to accomplish this seemingly impossible task of capturing the Khalubar heights.

During the advance to capture formidable heights of Khalubar in the Batalik sub-sector, Colonel Lalit Rai of 1/11 GR noticed that his troops were hemmed down by effective and intense enemy fire. He was quick to realise the dangers of being daylighted in this vulnerable position and instructed the Number 5 platoon to clear the interfering enemy positions while he led a small group of troops to the top. Recognizing the threat, the enemy launched a counter attack from three sides on our forces, with 30-40 troops on each side. Colonel Lalit Rai was hurt in the knee during this counter-attack. Colonel Lalit Rai, despite his injury, exhorted and inspired his troops to fight bravely by setting a very high personal example. He refused to be evacuated until the target was achieved.

³ Tyagi, Satish Chandra. (2019). The Kargil Victory Battles From Peak to Peak. The Speaking Tigers in association with The United Service Institute of India (pg. no-138)



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This deed strengthened his troops' morale, allowing them to reorganise and capture the objective in a single charge. This capture proved to be a turning point in the Batalik sub-sector struggle. During this operation, 25 enemy soldiers were killed, and a huge number of arms and ammunition, including a Stinger missile, air defence guns, and crucial documents, were captured. Colonel Lalit Rai exhibited outstanding gallantry in the face of intense enemy fire and contributed significantly to the Batalik sub-sector's triumph.

For the display of conspicuous bravery and exemplary leadership skills, Col Lalit Rai was awarded Vir Chakra on 15 August 1999.



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CITATION

Colonel Lalit Rai (IC - 37020) 1/11 Gorkha Rifles
(Effective date of the Award: 02nd July 1999)

During OPERATION VIJAY, Colonel Lalit Rai was tasked to capture the strategic and formidable heights of Khalubar in the Batalik sub-sector. During the advance, own troops were pinned down by effective and heavy volume of enemy fire. Realising the danger of getting daylighted in this vulnerable position, Colonel Lalit Rai ordered the Number five platoon to clear the interfering enemy positions while he himself led a handful of troops, available in front, to reach the top. The enemy, realising the danger, counter-attacked our troops from three sides with 30-40 personnel. During this counter attack, Colonel Lalit Rai was injured in the knee. In spite of the injury, Colonel Lalit Rai exhorted and encouraged his troops to fight courageously by setting a very high standard of personal example. He refused to be evacuated till such time the objective was captured.

This act boosted the morale of his troops, who regrouped and captured the objective in one charge. This capture turned out to be the turning point in the battle of the Batalik sub-sector. This operation accounted for killing of 25 enemy soldiers and capture of large amount of arms and ammunition including a Stinger missile, air defence guns and important documents.

Colonel Lalit Rai displayed conspicuous bravery in the face of heavy enemy fire and made a very significant contribution to the success in the Batalik Sub-Sector.

Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No. _____ dated _____



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3. From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report (2000) Sage Publications, New Delhi (Pg no 104-105)

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2. Singh, Amarinder. (2001). A Ridge Too Far: War in the Kargil heights 1999. Patiala: Motibagh Palace.
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<https://assn11gr.org/index.php?do=menu3&lmid=36&lm2id=14&banner=yes>
4. The War Decorated India & Trust (Accessed on April 4, 2022)
<https://twdi.in/node/3051>
5. Undiluted Heroism (Accessed on April 15, 2022)
<https://web.archive.org/web/20141103172403/http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/LAND-FORCES/History/1999/304-Undiluted-Heriosm.html>
6. Official Indian Army Website (Accessed on April 15, 2022)
<https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplete/frmTemp1P2C.aspx?MnId=xMINPfn8mnN2AVfuCTFONw==&ParentID=Q87WU247zkqRnjaUei8Dgg==>



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VIDEOS

Saluting Kargil heroes with Colonel Lalit Rai | EXCLUSIVE | The Urban Debate With Faye D'souza (Source: Mirror Now)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNj20b-Nix0>

Kargil Stories: What Happened When Gorkha were surrounded by Pakistanis by Colonel Lalit Rai (Source: Youtube channel Nationalist Indian)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wB2L3l0ew-Y>

Col. Lalit Rai VrC of the Indian Army -- Kargil War Story (Source: Youtube Channel Charudatta Galande)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1rlkwAoZGg>

Kargil Stories: A Gorkha Soldier Who Asked for Water as His Last Wish (Source: Youtube channel Nationalist Indian)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NHfQN6U04Q>

Kargil Story: Brigadier Amul Asthana | Leading Bravest of the Brave | TFC Amar Jawaan (Source: Youtube The Fourth Column)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6TD56cRpY0>

Audio Interview: When It's High Time, Give A Resounding Reply To Enemies (Source: Red FM 93.5 Bangalore)

<https://audioboom.com/posts/5111271-when-it-s-high-time-give-a-resounding-reply-to-enemies>



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OTHER INTERESTING SOURCES

Article- Citation of Colonel Lalit Rai Vrc, commanding officer of 1/11 Gorkha Rifles during Kargil 1999 (Source: Indian Gorkhas)

<https://www.indiangorkhas.in/2015/07/lalit-rai-vrc-kargil-war-1999.html>

Article- BATTLE FOR BATALIK : During the Kargil conflict, it was in Batalik that the Indian Army faced its toughest challenge. It was also here that it won its first and finest victories by Vijay Mohan (Source: Tribune India)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/2010/20100710/saturday/main1.htm>

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