



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



BRIGADIER PRADEEP SINGH BHANDARI (Then SECOND LIEUTENANT)

SERVICE NUMBER	JC-12322
RANK	Brigadier (Then Second Lieutenant)
NAME	Pradeep Singh Bhandari
SON OF	Kuldip Singh Bhandari
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Chandigarh
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	ARTILLERY
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/COMMISSION	18 December 1960
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Vir Chakra / 04 November 1962
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	1962 Sino India War
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Brigadier (then Second Lieutenant) Pradeep Singh Bhandari was born on 02 November 1940, in Lahore, now in Pakistan. His father's name was Kuldip Singh Bhandari and his family is now settled in Chandigarh, India. Second Lieutenant Bhandari was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery of the Indian Army on 18 December 1960 at the age of twenty-one. During the Sino India War of 1962, Second Lieutenant Bhandari was deployed in the forward areas of Arunachal Pradesh (then NEFA), where despite the heavy odds, he collected valuable information regarding the concentration and movement and brought back his patrol back to the base safely.

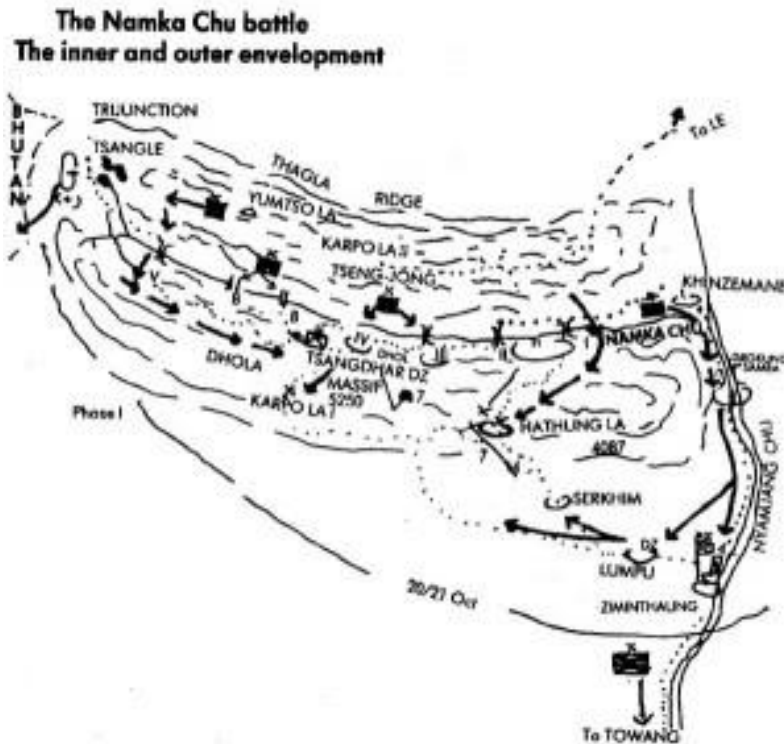
The Regiment of Artillery was raised on 28 September 1827. It was initially raised as Bombay Artillery and was later renamed 5 Bombay Mountain Battery. In May 1857, the mutiny by Indian soldiers started in the artillery of the Army of the Bengal Presidency. The incident prompted a complete ban on Indian 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'. The regiment has given Indian Army five chiefs, General Paramasiva Prabhakar Kumaramangalam DSO, OBE (7 June 1966 – 7 June 1969) General Om Prakash Malhotra PVSM (31 May 1978 – 31 May 1981) General Sunith Francis Rodrigues PVSM, VSM (30 June 1990 – 30 June 1993) General Sundararajan Padmanabhan PVSM, AVSM, VSM (30 September 2000 – 31 December 2002) General Deepak Kapoor PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (30 September 2007 – 31 March 2010).

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- Rezag La, and at Mandal, just South of Dambu Guru. On 08 September 1962, about 600 Chinese troops encircled the Dholu 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



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troops attacked the Indian soldiers but they fought the enemy with grit and determination. The Chinese announced the cease-fire at midnight of 21/22 November 1962.¹ During the war, NEFA was a hub of enemy invasions.



The Namka Chu Battle: The inner and outer envelopment

Source: <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/1962-war-the-chinese-invasion-i/>

On 09 September 1962, India's then - Defence Minister Krishna Menon decided to evict the Chinese troops stationed South of Thagla Ridge due to the increasing intensity of Chinese incursions into Indian Territory. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's then Prime Minister, who was in London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, agreed with this decision. 7 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier JP Dalvi was then given the order to advance to Namka Chu, which was considered as an advantageous ground for the Chinese. Being aware of this advantage, Chinese attacked the Indian Post at Namka Chu on 20 October 1962 with overwhelming strength. The Indian Army fought the assault but were soon overpowered by enemy's strength in number and superior weapons.

On the eve of their attack on 19-20 October night, the Chinese had about four Battalions South of the Thag La Ridge and two Companies in the vicinity of Khinzemane. They had also moved

¹ 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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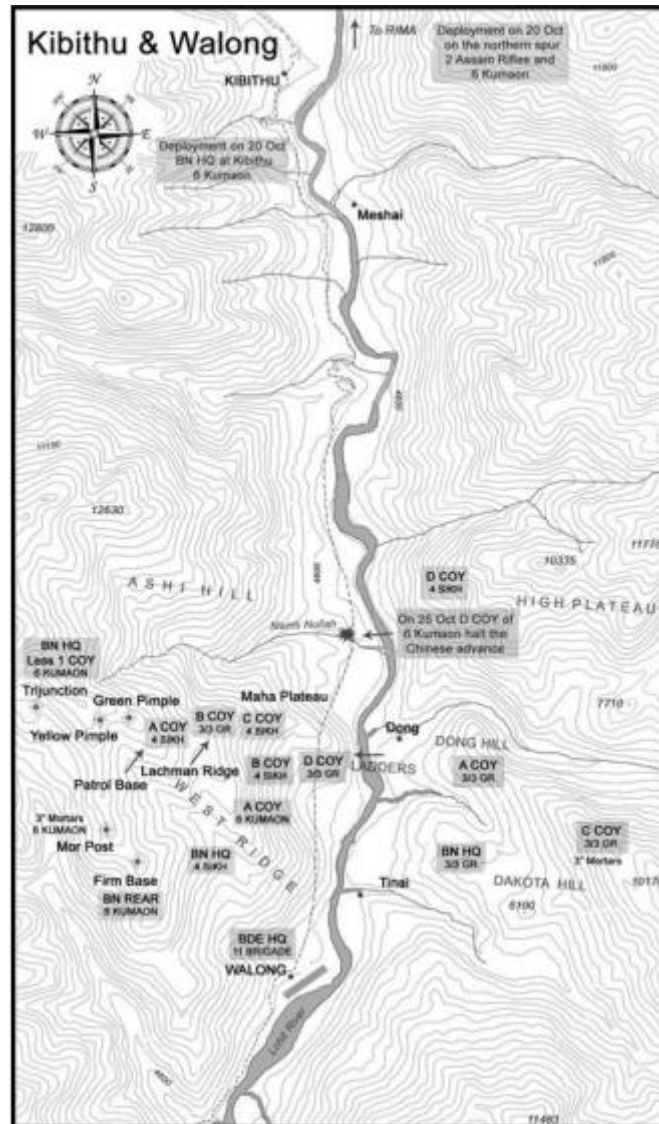
a Battalion to Shao and nearly another Battalion to the subsidiary passes between Thag La and Karpola II. The Chinese were also holding the rear positions between Thag La and Marmang in depth. By 20 October, the Chinese had built up their strength to an estimated one Division in the Thag La and Khinzemane areas. It was also reported that they had positioned an additional Division in Bum La area. They had access to three routes (tracks) to reach Tawang. The rapid and heavy build-up of the Chinese troops, armed with heavy mortars and Machine Guns and equipped with modern entrenching tools, had forced the Indian Government to postpone the operation to evict the Chinese from their illegal encroachment, North of the Namka Chu. It was felt that the task would, for the time being, have to be limited to holding the Namka Chu. 7 Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brigadier JP Dalvi, with its Headquarters at Rongla was provided with four Infantry Battalions, less two Companies. They were 9 PUNJAB, 4 GRENADIERS, 2 RAJPUTS AND 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES along with some Artillery.

The Chinese, who had been subjecting the Indian Post at Tsang Le on the North Bank of Namka Chu, to heavy shelling since 17 October, but left this Post alone when at 0500 hours on 20 October, they engaged other Posts all along the Namkha Chu by heavy mortar fire. In the very first few artillery barrages, telephone lines, linking the Brigade Headquarters with the units, went dead, leaving the Units/Companies on their own and take any action they considered the best. Brigade Headquarters was informed by the Dhola Post had been completely over run by the Chinese.

Walong in the Lohit Frontier Division was another area in Arunachal Pradesh witnessing major and intense fighting. In march 1962, 6 KUMAON was ordered to relieve 2 RAJPUT and the complete operational responsibility was taken over by 6 KUMOAN on 21 April. During the War, in October 1962, Army Head Quarters asked the Eastern Command to consider withdrawing bulk of the troops from Subansiri, Siang and Lohit Frontier Divisions. They were also asked to consider using the entire 23 Infantry Division to contain the enemy thrust from Walong. 2 Infantry Division was formed to take over operational responsibility in Subansiri, Siang and Lohit Frontier Divisions of NEFA, its GOC, Major General M S Pathania, arrived at Walong on 26 October to the forward areas. With two battalions located at Walong but without a coordinating HQ located nearby, the new GOC found inherent problems of command and control of troops in the Walong Sector. Accordingly, on 29 October 1962, it was decided that operations in the Walong Sector would be looked after by an independent Infantry Brigade. For this purpose, first 181 Infantry Brigade and finally 11 Infantry Brigade (then located in Nagaland) was placed under 2 Infantry Division. The new Brigade Commander, Brigadier (later Lieutenant General) N C Rawlley, MC, arrived in Walong on 31 October and the same evening he called for a conference of his COs and told them: "There was going to be no withdrawal from this place – everybody must get that straight".



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Operations in Walong Sector during 1962 Sino India War

Source: Shiv Kunal Verma. 2016. *1962: The War That Wasn't*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.

The presence of the enemy on the Green and Yellow Pimples in the Sector was cause of concern as Green Pimple dominated Lachhman Ridge and Maha Plateau. The approach to Green Pimple was through Tri-junction and Yellow Pimple. Moreover, advance of another 3 km along that Spur by the enemy meant his domination of Walong Airstrip and Dropping Zone. Anticipating the danger from the enemy, 'A' Company of 6 KUMAON under Captain Ravi Kumar Mathur was sent on 05 November 1962 to clear the enemy from area Green Pimple and then to reconnoitre the route from Green Pimple to Ashi Hill. He was personally briefed by Brigadier Rawley. The Company was to get fire support from heavy mortars of 71 Battery and on that day the Battery fired 110 rounds on Green Pimple, Yellow Pimple and left edge of Maha



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Plateau. Brigadier Rawley had ordered another wide recce patrol to set off from the Maha Plateau under the command of Second Lieutenant Pradeep Singh Bhandari, who was occupying an observation post of 71 Heavy Mortar Battery. His party, consisting of his own men supplemented by Assam Rifles troops, camped for the night just below the crest of the West Ridge. The next morning, they skirted past Green Pimple—so named because of the colour of the vegetation that covered it—and spent the night on Yellow Pimple.²

On 03 November 1962, Second Lieutenant Pradeep Singh Bhandari was detailed to go out with a patrol to a position in NEFA, outflanking the Chinese main defences and to act as the Forward Observation Officer for a period of three days. The aim of the patrol was to bring down observed artillery fire on enemy positions and to gain the maximum information regarding the concentration and movement of the enemy. The patrol travelled over very difficult terrain, operating at height of over 14, 000-ft. It spent two nights behind enemy positions and collected very valuable information. On the return journey the patrol was ambushed on the 04 November 1962 by a numerically superior Chinese force. The patrol assaulted the enemy four times but each time was driven back by heavy enemy fire. Realising the vital necessity of getting the information of the presence of enemy forces on the flank, to the Brigade Headquarters, Second Lieutenant Bhandari decided to fight his way through to the base. He kept the patrol on the move throughout the night over difficult and rugged terrain and brought it back to the base safely. During the night the enemy attempted to intercept Second Lieutenant Bhandari and his party several times, but did not succeed due to his determination. After further night's march the patrol finally reached the brigade headquarters on 05 November 1962.

Throughout the action, Second Lieutenant Pradeep Singh Bhandari displayed considerable presence of mind, leadership and courage of a high order. He was awarded Vir Chakra for his great devotion to duty.

² Shiv Kunal Verma. 2016. *1962: The War That Wasn't*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.



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CITATION

Second Lieutenant Pradeep Singh Bhandari (JC-12322), The Regiment of Artillery
(Effective date of award- 04 November 1962)

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Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No dated



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सत्यमेव जयते

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