



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



COLONEL KRISHNA GOPAL CHATTERJEE (Then MAJOR)

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-36449
RANK	Colonel (Then Major)
NAME	Krishna Gopal Chatterjee
SON OF	Shri A K Chatterjee
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Varanasi/ Uttar Pradesh
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	3/ 4 GORKHA RIFLES
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	23 March 1975
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Maha Vir Chakra/23 September 1987
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	Operation Meghdoot
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Colonel Krishna Gopal Chatterjee (Then Major), MVC was born on 15 August 1951 and studied in St. John's School, Meerut and Meerut College, Meerut with Bachelors in Sciences. He was commissioned into the Indian Army on 23 March 1975 into the 3/4 GORKHA RIFLES. He was posted to the Indian Military Academy as a Company Commander in 1990. Later, he married and settled in Delhi. His younger brother is also a decorated officer and was awarded the Sena Medal.

The 4 GORKHA RIFLES was raised in 1857 as part of British Indian Army but after independence in 1947 it was one of the six Gurkha Regiments transferred to Indian Army. The battle cry of the 4th GORKHA RIFLES is- *Kafar Hunu Bhandu Marnu Ramro*. The 3/4 GORKHA RIFLES (3/4 GR) was raised in the Leslie Lines, Bakloh, on 1 October 1940. The nucleus of the new battalion was formed by drafts of 3 officers and 200 men each from the 1st and 2nd Battalions. The remainder of the battalion was formed from recruits and 'recruit boys'. In March 1944 the battalion was called to provide nucleus for the raising of the 4th Battalion. On 16 June the battalion was ordered to form part of 111 Independent Brigade, under Brigadier Joe Lentaigne, as part of the Chindit, which was being concentrated in the area of Saugor for training. The 4 GORKHA RIFLES has an enviable war record. It remains one of the most decorated units in the Indian army.

The Siachen glacier is the second longest glacier in the world. The scroll of honour at Indian Army's Siachen base camp reads, "Quartered in snow, silent to remain. When the bugle calls, they shall rise and march again."¹ Beneath the veneer of this bleak beauty lie menacing hazards that snatch away human lives if one is not careful. Given the vivacity of this glacier, it provided a strategic importance to India, Pakistan and China as it served as a hub for Shaksham Valley and Karakoram Pass.² Siachen area has been a bone of contention between Pakistan and India for many years. The root cause of the issue can be traced back to the Karachi Agreement of 1949. The representatives of both the nations drew the 'Ceasefire Line' across maps of Jammu and Kashmir from Manawar in the South, to Khor in the North and thence 'North to the glaciers' through NJ 9842. Presumably when the discussion came up on the glaciated wilderness of snow

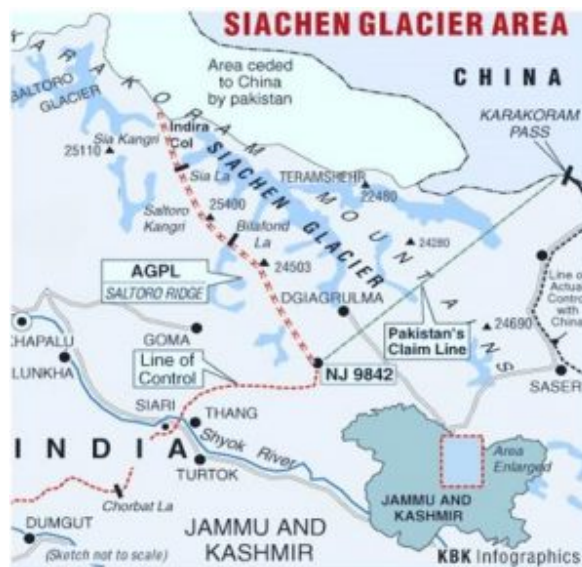
¹ The Story of Bana Singh, The hero who helped Win the 1987 Siachen Standoff. The Better India. (Accessed on 06 February 2023) <https://www.thebetterindia.com/123693/bana-singh-indian-army-param-vir-chakra-hero-1987-siachen/>

² What is the Strategic importance of Siachen from the Indian point of view. IDSA. (Accessed on 06 February 2023) <https://idsa.in/askanexpert/strategicimportanceofSiachen>



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and ice the representatives stopped at grid point NJ 9842 on the presumption that neither side would be interested in contesting an area where not a blade of grass grows nor even breathing is a problem. The problem started when Pakistan decided to explore their ambitions and complicated the issue. They illegally ceded some 5180 square kilometers of Indian Territory to China in the area where the boundaries of India, Pakistan and China meet thereby altering the geo-strategic importance of this area. Secondly, by permitting and assisting foreign mountaineering and scientific expeditions in the area it raised the issue of 'rights' in an area that did not belong to them. The cartographic ambiguities of 1962 and Pakistan's growing devious nature had concerned the Indian Army and in 1984 took pre-emptive action and occupied Saltoro Range.



Map of Siachen Glacier

Source- <https://www.civildaily.com/news/what-is-operation-meghdoot/>

Operation Meghdoot was the codename for the Indian Armed Forces' operation to seize control of the Siachen Glacier in the then state of Jammu and Kashmir (now in Ladakh), precipitating the Siachen conflict. Executed in the morning of 13 April 1984 in the highest battlefield in the world, Meghdoot was the first military offensive of its kind. The operation preempted Pakistan's impending Operation Ababeel (which was intended to achieve the same objective as Meghdoot) and was a success, resulting in Indian forces gaining control of the Siachen Glacier in its entirety.³⁴

³ Op Meghdoot, Indian Army. (Accessed on 06 February 2023)

<https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplete/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=0gmQNTAjBJivMiPVgCWpSA==&ParentID=>



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Currently, the Indian Army remains the first and only Army in the world to have taken tanks and other heavy ordnance up to such an altitude (well over 5,000 m or 16,000 ft.). Up to ten infantry battalions each of the Indian Army and Pakistan Army are actively deployed at high altitudes of up to 6,400 metres (21,000 ft.) throughout the region of the glacier.

Over the period 20–24 September 1987, during Operation Meghdoot in Saichen, 3/4 GORKHA RIFLES, while relieving 8 J&K LIGHT INFANTRY in Bialafondla, at heights of nearly 20,000 feet (6,100 m), participated in the defence of Bialafondla beating back repeated Pakistan Army attacks, which ended on 24 September morning in failure and retreat. In the battle of Bialafondla, from 20 to 24 September, the 3/4 GORKHA RIFLES lost 13 soldiers and 23 were wounded. The defenders for their courage, steadfastness, and resolution against heavy odds, were awarded 3 Maha Vir Chakra (MVC), 5 Vir Chakras (VrC), 2 Sena Medals (SM), 1 Chief of Army Staff's Commendation card, and 3 Army Commanders Commendation Cards. MVC, India's second highest award for valour, was awarded to Major Krishna Gopal Chatterjee, Havildar Nar Bahadur Ale (Posthumous), and Naik Prem Bahadur Gurung (Posthumous). MVC, equivalent to Military Cross, was awarded to Second Lieutenant AK Sharma, AOC, Second in Command Charlie Company, Naib Subedar Bhim Bahadur Thapa, Platoon Commander, C Company, Lance Naik Hira Bahadur Thapa (Posthumous), Medium Machine Gun (MMG) Detachment commander, Rifleman Sanjeev Gurung (Posthumous), and Naik Hom Bahadur Thapa, MMG Detachment Commander.

Major Chatterjee belonged to the 3rd BATTALION OF 4th GORKHA RIFLES. The battalion was deployed in Siachen in September 1987. He was commanding a Company which was to take over the defences of Bialafondla Complex, which included the three forward Posts called Saddle, "U" Cut and Ashoka. While taking over the charge of the complex, his Company was subjected to heavy firing by enemy on the morning of 21 September 1987.⁵

From the pattern of enemy shelling, Chatterjee deduced that the main target of the enemy was Ashoka Post. He therefore, decided to stay on at Ashoka Post to supervise and direct the defences personally. The expected attack on the Post came on the night of 23 September with heavy shelling. Major Chatterjee directed artillery fire on enemy concentration opposite the Ashok Post and broke the enemy assault.

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⁴ "What Is Happening," Mahavir Chakra (MVC), Awardee: Col Krishna Gopal Chatterjee, MVC @ TWDI, accessed April 27, 2023, <http://twdi.in/node/1338>.

⁵ "Gallantry Awards: Ministry of Defence, Government of India," Gallantry Awards | Ministry of Defence, Government of India, accessed April 27, 2023, <https://www.gallantryawards.gov.in/awardee/1468>.



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The enemy attacked again and again and repeatedly attacked the post on the night of 23rd September. The defenders however fought with determination and foiled all attempts.

While directing these decisive battles, Major Chatterjee was severely wounded in the left arm by shrapnel from an artillery shell. But he refused to be evacuated and continued to lead and motivate his men to hold on the post. However, the enemy was not in a mood to accept defeat. They re-appeared on night of 24th sept to launch a major attack on Ashok Post with battalion strength.⁶

A severely wounded Major Chatterjee again motivated his men to repulse the attack. Two more determined attacks launched by the enemy on the night were also repulsed. Throughout the operation, Major Chatterjee motivated and guided his men against heavy odds. He beat back a determined enemy in hazardous glaciated terrain and adverse climatic condition, successfully.⁷

Later Colonel Chatterjee writes in a Newsletter in 1988,

“Bilafond La was the scene of one of the fiercest engagements in the ongoing struggle for the control of the Siachen Glacier. Men of my Battalion, whose predecessors were the veterans of the Chindit Operations, covered themselves with glory while fighting at dizzy heights on the highest battle field in the world. This defensive battle fought from 23 to 25 September '87 will remain an example of personal courage, valour, determination and sacrifice of our brave troops.”

He was awarded Mahavir Chakra for his outstanding leadership, professional competence, meticulous planning and bravery.⁸

⁶ “Major(Later Colonel) Krishna Gopal Chatterjee, MVC,” Rattibha, accessed April 27, 2023, <https://en.rattibha.com/thread/1573337270735749126>.

⁷ https://www.facebook.com/DefenceMinIndia/photos/a.1093593304117101/2162298003913287/?paipv=0&eav=AfbmS-81u5XUb7pKgulZ8qed1IW83LCkRCwq926ST-sjzI7lg17HAaUCgKg5GkxT6w&_rdr

⁸ “Gallantry Awards: Ministry of Defence, Government of India,” Gallantry Awards | Ministry of Defence, Government of India, accessed April 27, 2023, <https://www.gallantryawards.gov.in/awardee/1468>.



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CITATION

Major Krishna Gopal Chatterjee was inducted at Bialafondla Complex in the Siachen Glacier area, along with his battalion on 18 September 1987. In defence, the enemy started heavy shelling of the Bialafondla Complex on 21 September 1987. On the night of 23 September 1987, his post was subjected to shelling. Throughout the night, the enemy launched a series of assaults, which were successfully repulsed. Though injured in the left arm by a splinter of an artillery shell, he refused to be evacuated, continued to exercise his command and motivated his men to hold on. Again, on the night of 24 September 1987, the enemy launched a major attack in the evening. Major Chatterjee fought alongside his men, and repulsed three determined attacks by elite troops of the enemy's battalion.

Major Krishna Gopal Chatterjee displayed conspicuous gallantry despite grave danger to his life.

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



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सत्यमेव जयते

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3. ¹https://www.facebook.com/DefenceMinIndia/photos/a.1093593304117101/2162298003913287/?paipv=0&eav=AfbmS-81u5XUb7pKgulZ8qed1IW83LCkRCwq926ST-sjzl7lg17HAaUCgKg5GkxT6w&_rdr
4. "Gallantry Awards: Ministry of Defence, Government of India," Gallantry Awards | Ministry of Defence, Government of India, accessed April 27, 2023, <https://www.gallantryawards.gov.in/awardee/1468>.