



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



Lieutenant General Hanut Singh

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-6126
RANK	Lieutenant General
NAME	Hanut Singh
SON OF	Lieutenant Colonel Arjun Singh
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Jasol/ Barmer/ Jodhpur State (now Rajasthan)
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	17 HORSE (POONA HORSE)
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	28 December 1952
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	16 December 1971
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	1971 Indo-Pak War
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	Param Vishisht Seva Medal



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

Lieutenant Colonel Hanut Singh was born on 06 July 1933 in Jasol, Barmer District, Rajasthan to Lieutenant Colonel Arjun Singh who had served in Jodhpur Lancers and commanded the Kacchawa Horse Regiment.¹ Jasol, is a village in Pachpadra Tehsil, Barmer District. It was established by Rathore rulers who are descendants of the 13th century Rawal Mallinath, a Rajput warrior-saint who was the eldest amongst all houses of Rathores in Rajasthan. The royal houses of Jodhpur, Bikaner, Ratlam, Sitamau, Sailana, Idar and Alirajpur trace their lineage to Rathore Rajputs. Jasol Rajputs have been historically fiercely independent, chivalrous, brave and proud. Jaswant Singh the former Minister was his first cousin.



Lieutenant General Hanut Singh, MVC as GOC 2 Corps

Source: Stars Unfolded

He did his schooling at Colonel Brown's School, Dehra Dun and as per his family tradition; he joined the Army as part of the first batch of the Joint Services Wing of the Indian Military Academy at Clement Town, Dehra Dun before the National Defence Academy moved to Khadakvasla, near Pune. He went to the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun where he was a Polo 'Blue'.and was commissioned in 1952 in 17 HORSE also known as POONA HORSE which he later commanded.² According to Major General Raj Mehta,

¹ "Hanut Singh Age, Family, Biography & More "Starsunfolded," StarsUnfolded, April 12, 2021, <https://starsunfolded.com/hanut-singh/>.

² "Gallantry Awards: Ministry of Defence, Government of India," Gallantry Awards | Ministry of Defence, Government of India, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://www.gallantryawards.gov.in/awardee/1397>.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

“His professional reputation; lean, wiry, physique; Caesar's nose, charisma and no-nonsense style of speech, deportment and body language mesmerized us. We saw him in the mould of the great Cavalry heroes of World War 2; Manstein, Guderian; Rommel; Patton. It helped that he was a Master Gunner; a tactician extraordinaire and was, in all senses; a Prussian General Staff Officer. We all thought he was special and he was. I had the privilege as a Squadron Commander, of participating in 1986 in a fascinating series of perceptively scaled operational discussions, followed by a map and sand-model discussions, Test Exercises Without Troops (TE'sWT) cumulatively called Brazen Chariots created by Hanut to bring all ranks of his Strike Corps on one operational-and-logistics grid for Exercise Brass- Tacks. Hanut had been specially selected by Army Chief, Gen Sundarji to be the Blue Land Commander for the exercise; then touted to be Asia's largest operational-cum-strategic level mechanised exercise since World War 2. Brass Tacks itself was itself scaled to end up in Brass Tacks-4; an exercise that almost went down to the wire, sending a shiver up Pakistan's spine till certain changes were done in its conduct modalities and the exercise ended as was perhaps visualized - to bring out some high-level conduct and conceptual lessons. One major validation that took place was of Hanut's and Sundarji's conceptual thoughts in handling large mechanised and other forces in free-flowing, multi-pronged, multi-objective deep thrust operations while retaining tactical cohesion at Unit and lower levels. In several ways, it was a logical operational level upgrade in “handling armour” since Hanut's halcyon Shakargarh days. “We rolled with Huntie” is and will remain for many of us, a life-long, professional and special feeling.”

Lieutenant General Hanut Singh was also known for his efforts to modernize and improve the Indian Army. He was a strong advocate for the use of technology in the military and made significant contributions to the development and implementation of new weapons systems and military equipment. He commanded Poona Horse, 14 (Independent) Armoured Brigade, 17 Mountain Division, 1 Armoured Division and 2 Corps during his career. He served in the Military Operations Directorate as a Brigadier was Director General Mechanised Forces and retired as Commandant Armoured Corps Centre and School. Much of what the Mechanised Forces are today is directly traceable to Hanut and the professional edge he gave them during the decades he was in service. General Hanut Singh was one of the key contributors to the warfighting doctrines that shaped the Corps and are in vogue today.

He was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra during the advance in Basantar in the 1971 Indo-Pak War. After the 1971 war, his Regiment was awarded the title of 'Fakhr-e-Hind' by the Pakistani soldiers for their valour and bravery. He remained unmarried his whole life and was also known as the 'Saint Soldier' as he devoted his spare time to spiritual readings and meditation. After retiring from active service on 31st July 1991, Lieutenant General Hanut Singh moved to



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

Dehradun to spend the rest of his life reading books and meditating in Shiv Balyogi Ashram, Rajpur, Dehra Dun. He passed away during his meditation session on 11 April 2015.



Lieutenant General Hanut Singh, MVC after retirement and settling into his ashram

Source: Stars Unfolded

Lt. Gen. Hanut Singh had three sisters younger than him. His eldest sister's son, Colonel Shambhoo Singh Deora, SM, also followed in his footsteps and joined the army and was part of 10 PARA, Special Forces, and his son Major Ajmal Singh is now serving with 15 RAJ RIF, making him the fourth generation to serve in the armed forces



Lieutenant General Hanut Singh, MVC with his Division Troops Commanding Officers in Sikkim


Source: Twitter Maverick Musafir @Maverickmusafir



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

When he died the Poona Horse put out an Obituary and Notice for the Prayer Meeting in a heartfelt tribute saying they had lost their Guru and Mentor. This is a testimony of the indelible impression that he left on all ranks and his enduring legacy. The words are poignant, and very well chosen because soldiers of his calibre are rare.

OBITUARY



Lt Gen Hanut Singhji, PVSM, MVC (Retd)
(06 Jul 1933 to 11 Apr 2015)

The Poona Horse Pariwar lost its GURU, Mentor and Architect of Victory of Battle of Basantar, Indo-Pak war 1971 on 11th April 2015. Lt Gen Hanut Singhji, PVSM, MVC (Retd) an iconic general of the Indian Army who held the mantle of a soldier's general, widely recognized as a Saint soldier "went to be with his lord" at his residence in Dehradun, with this the Great Soul has moved beyond the divide to merge with the "Hand" that has guided the PH destiny through the ages.

THE PRAYER MEETING
will be held on 27th April 2015 at his residence at 180C, Rajpur Road,
behind Shiv Balyogi Ashram, Dehradun.

In Grief
THE POONA HORSE PARIWAR
RANVIR IAI SADA

Lieutenant General Hanut Singh's obituary by the Poona Horse

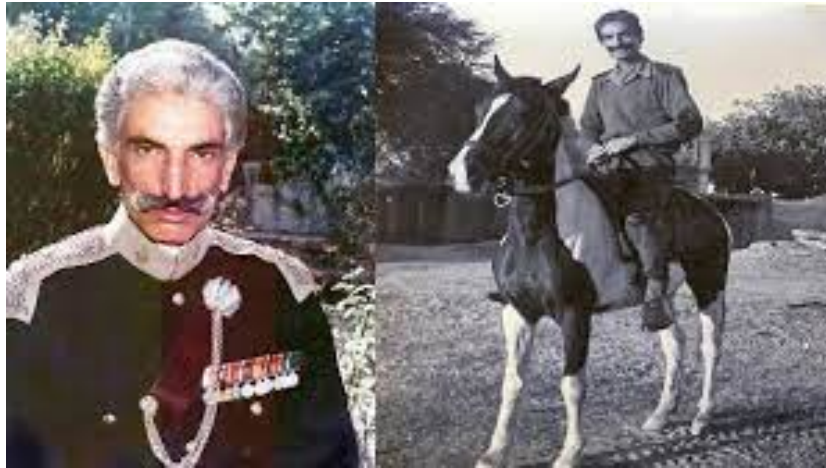
Source: Times of India

POONA HORSE is an Armoured Regiment of the Indian Army. It was raised on 15 July 1817, as a result of the Treaty of Poona, concluded on 13 June 1817 between Lord Hasting and Baji Rao II, the Peshwa. The Honourable Montstuart Elphinstone, who later became the Governor of Bombay negotiated the Treaty of Poona. It was formed from the 3rd Regiment of Bombay Light Cavalry, raised at Sirur on 04 May 1820 by Major Peter Delamotte. The Cavalry element of this Force, which was known as the Poona Auxilliary Horse was later designated as (Prince Albert Victor's Own) Poona Horse. It was amalgamated in 1921 as The Poona Horse (17 Queen Victoria's Own). In the First World War, the POONA HORSE fought in France, Palestine and Mesopotamia. During the Second War, the Regiment was part of the British Eight Army. Post-Independence, the Regiment was part of Operation POLO in Hyderabad in 1948, the India-Pakistan War of 1965 as part of 1 Armoured Division and in 1971 as part of 16 (Independent)



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

Armoured Brigade. The Regiment was equipped with Centurion tanks in both these wars and fought in the Shakargarh Bulge. During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, POONA HORSE displayed immense skill in the Sialkot Sector during the tank battle at Phillora, Wazirwali and Butur- Dograndi, and the Commandant Lieutenant Colonel AB Tarapore was awarded the Param Vir Chakra. In the 1971 War the Regiment fought at Basantar and Second Lieutenant Arun Kheterpal won the Param Vir Chakra and the Commandant Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Hanut Singh was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra. The Battle of Basantar is considered one of the fiercest tank battles in Indian military history and the unprecedented bravery shown by POONA HORSE earned praise from the Pakistan army and the title 'Fakhr-e-Hind'.³ The emblem of this Regiment is a 'hand' which protects and guides its men, 'The Hand of God Is Above All Things'.



Lieutenant General Hanut Singh, MVC

Source: OneIndia Hindi

The Battle of Basantar also known as the Battle of Shakargarh or Battle of Barapind (December 04–16, 1971) was one of the vital battles fought as part of the Indo-Pak War of 1971 in the western sector of India. The Indian troops won a hard-fought battle that secured this area in the Punjab/Jammu sector. The name Battle of Basantar actually encompasses the entire gamut of battles and skirmishes fought in the Shakargarh sector.⁴

³Fakhr-E-Hind: The Story of Poona Horse. Lt Gen. Hanut Singh, PVSM, MVC (Retd) (1993). Agrim Publishers, Dehradun.

⁴ "Battle of Barapind-Jarpal 16 Dec 1971," Battle of barapind-jarpal 16 Dec 1971, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20000829180557/http://www.defencejournal.com:80/oct99/barapind.htm>.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

The offensive in this Sector was launched a few days after war broke out between the two nations. The Indian I Corps commanded by Lieutenant General KK Singh moved into the sector to capture the key areas. The 54 Infantry Division and 16 Armoured Brigade moved into this area. As they advanced they were met by a series of minefields and by stiff Pakistani resistance. A troop of T-55 Tanks with trawls of the 7th Light Cavalry were attached for trawling with the 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade at the outbreak of hostilities on 3 December 1971, during the Indo-Pak war. The entire trawling ahead of the 54 Infantry Division, led by the 16 (Independent) Armoured Brigade was done by this Troop. This allowed the tanks to move ahead before the all-vehicle safe lane was cleared by the Engineers. Thus, while the Indian Division was facing resistance as the engineers had not cleared all the mines, C Squadron of Poona Horse crossed the minefield to secure the bridge head. A fierce tank battle ensued and a Pakistani tank was taken down. After suffering initial setbacks, the 8th Armoured Brigade of Pakistan was called in to help the Pakistani resistance in the area. When Pakistani counter attack was launched, Poona Horse in a famous action thwarted the same destroying ten enemy tanks. This was the action in which Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal with his two remaining tanks destroyed several Pakistani tanks before he was killed in action.



Lieutenant General Hanut Singh, MVC posing on top of a tank with his fellow soldiers after the Indo-Pak war of 1971



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

Source: <https://www.bharat-rakshak.com/ARMY/Galleries/Wars/1971/West/0084.jpg.html>

As the Commandant, Hanut Singh took the risk of sending the C Squadron to cross 600 metres of an unbreached minefield without a single casualty. Poona Horse fought like lions destroying numerous enemy tanks in a single day's battle. Pakistan's oldest & proudest Cavalry Regiment 13 LANCERS was decimated & crippled. The Battle of Basantar was without a doubt Lieutenant General Hanut Singh's finest moment. He took part in one of the bloodiest tank engagements on the subcontinent while leading his renowned Regiment, Poona Horse. His crucial choice to risk leading the unit across an unexplored minefield turned out to be the decisive element in the victory. The Centurions of Poona Horse shocked and defeated Pakistan's 13 LANCERS with Patton Tanks as they attacked the Indian stronghold at Jarpal.⁵



Lieutenant Colonel Hanut Singh receiving the Award of Maha Vir Chakra from President V. V. Giri

Source: Twitter Maverick Musafir @Maverickmusafir

His value systems, his integrity, and professionalism stood out he devoted his life to soldiering and spirituality. He stood out for his spartan outlook, mental grooming, discipline, intellect, and

⁵ Lt Gen. A.K. Singh (retd), "Lt Gen. Hanut Singh - Bold Commander Who Led from Front in 1971, but Was Never Made Army Chief," ThePrint, April 13, 2020, <https://theprint.in/opinion/lt-gen-hanut-singh-bold-commander-who-led-from-front-in-1971-but-was-never-made-army-chief/400625/>.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

character. General Hanut did not just set matchless standards of professionalism, probity, and character; he lived them daily.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

CITATION

Lieutenant Colonel Hanut Singh was commanding 17 Horse in Shakargarh Sector of the Western Front. On 16 December 1971, his regiment was inducted into the Basantar River bridgehead and took up positions ahead of the infantry. The enemy launched a number of armoured attacks in strength on 16 and 17 December. Undeterred by enemy medium artillery and tank fire, Lieutenant Colonel Hanut Singh moved from one threatened sector to another with utter disregard for his personal safety. His presence and cool courage inspired his men to remain steadfast and perform commendable acts of gallantry.

Throughout this period, Lieutenant Colonel Hanut Singh displayed conspicuous gallantry and leadership in keeping with the best traditions of the Army.

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



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

REFERENCES

1. "Hanut Singh Age, Family, Biography & More " Starsunfolded," StarsUnfolded, April 12, 2021, <https://starsunfolded.com/hanut-singh/>.
2. "Gallantry Awards: Ministry of Defence, Government of India," Gallantry Awards | Ministry of Defence, Government of India, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://www.gallantryawards.gov.in/awardee/1397>.
3. Fakhr-E-Hind: The Story of Poona Horse. Lt Gen. Hanut Singh, PVSM, MVC (Retd) (1993). Agrim Publishers, Dehradun.
4. "Battle of Barapind-Jarpal 16 Dec 1971," Battle of barapind-jarpal 16 Dec 1971, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20000829180557/http://www.defencejournal.com:80/oct99/barapind.htm>.
5. Lt Gen. A.K. Singh (ret), "Lt Gen. Hanut Singh - Bold Commander Who Led from Front in 1971, but Was Never Made Army Chief," ThePrint, April 13, 2020, <https://theprint.in/opinion/lt-gen-hanut-singh-bold-commander-who-led-from-front-in-1971-but-was-never-made-army-chief/400625/>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Battle of barapind-jarpal 16 Dec 1971. Accessed March 13, 2023. <https://web.archive.org/web/20000829180557/http://www.defencejournal.com:80/oct99/barapind.htm>.
2. "Gallantry Awards: Ministry of Defence, Government of India." Gallantry Awards | Ministry of Defence, Government of India. Accessed March 13, 2023. <https://www.gallantryawards.gov.in/awardee/1397>.
3. "Hanut Singh Age, Family, Biography & More " Starsunfolded." StarsUnfolded, April 12, 2021. <https://starsunfolded.com/hanut-singh/>.
4. Lt Gen. A.K. Singh (ret), "Lt Gen. Hanut Singh - Bold Commander Who Led from Front in 1971, but Was Never Made Army Chief," ThePrint, April 13, 2020, <https://theprint.in/opinion/lt-gen-hanut-singh-bold-commander-who-led-from-front-in-1971-but-was-never-made-army-chief/400625/>.
5. Fakhr-E-Hind: The Story of Poona Horse. Lt Gen. Hanut Singh, PVSM, MVC (Retd) (1993). Agrim Publishers, Dehradun.
6. Stavka. "General Hanut Singh MVC A.k.a Hunty's Maruti 800 Still Stands in Glory. A Bold Commander & A Legendary Cavalry General, He Led Poona Horse into One of the Fiercest Tank Battles, in Which Lt Arun Khetarpal Posthumously Won A Param Vir Chakra, & Comdt Hanut, a Maha Vir Chakra. Pic.twitter.com/iHbl9edktz." Twitter. Twitter, April 6, 2022. <https://twitter.com/Maverickmusafir/status/1511727140969930763>.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

VIDEOS

Title of Fakhr-E-Hind (Source: Twitter @rajrifofficial)
<https://twitter.com/rajrifofficial/status/1603636658691518464?lang=en>

1971 India Pakistan War: Lieutenant General Hanut Singh (Source: Youtube BBC News Hindi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGJvtajdFXw>

Lt General Hanut Singh (Source: Youtube OneIndia Hindi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvn2RGKS74M>

Disclaimer**⁶

⁶ 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.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

MEMORIALS

1. A block named the "Hanut Block" which includes a Library as well as a housing complex, has been constructed in the Armoured Corps Centre and School at Ahmednagar.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

OTHER INTERESTING RESOURCES⁷

1. Lieutenant General Hanut Singh wrote a book titled- "Fakhr-e-Hind", the Story of the Poona Horse, which tells us about the courage and valour of the 17 HORSE also known as the Poona Horse. (Fig 1)

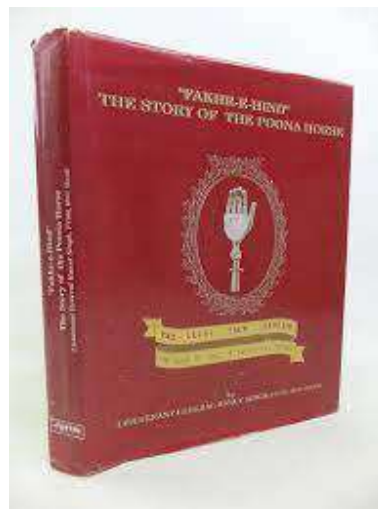


Fig 1

2. Book- Leadership in the Indian Army by V.K. Singh which covers the life and service of Lt Gen Hanut Singh. (Fig 2)

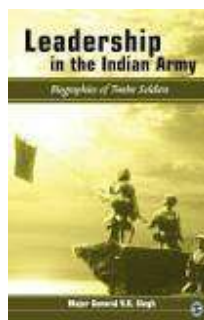


Fig 2

⁷ 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.