



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



LIEUTENANT COLONEL SARDUL SINGH RANDHAWA (Then MAJOR)

SERVICE NUMBER	IC-8164
RANK	Lieutenant Colonel (Then Major)
NAME	Sardul Singh Randhawa
SON OF	Lieutenant Colonel Jiwan Singh
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Dehradun, Uttarakhand
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	14 J&K Militia (Rajput) (Presently, LADAKH SCOUTS)
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/ COMMISSION	28 April 1946
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Maha Vir Chakra/20 October 1962
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	1962 Sino-India War
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	Ati-Vashisht Seva Medal Sena Medal



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Lieutenant Colonel Sardul Singh Randhawa was born on 10th October, 1925 in Ambala Cantonment. His grandfather and father, both had served in the Army. He joined his father's Regiment as 'Y' Cadet and got his commission on 28 April 1946. Later he joined the 16 Punjab Regiment (now in Pakistan). He served with a Gorkha Battalion in 1948 and 1949 and was awarded 'Mention-in-Dispatches'. He was subsequently posted to 14 Jammu & Kashmir Military (Ladakh), now known as 14 Ladakh Scouts. He served in Ladakh until 1969 and later served in Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram from 1970 to 1973 and retired from the Indian Army in 1973. He shifted to Faridabad (Haryana) after retirement, and got a job in a Public Limited Company.

The Ladakh Scouts known as the “Snow Warriors” were initially raised as a Paramilitary Force formed of Ladakhi locals known as Nubra Guards to save Ladakh from intruders in 1948. It comprised of Ladakhi locals who are physically fit and attuned with the rugged terrain and hostile climate. The Ladakh Scouts was raised in 1963, following the Indo China War of 1962. It had two wings- the Karakoram Wing, defending the eastern front facing China and the Indus Wing facing Pakistan. The regiment currently consists of five battalions. The Ladakh Scouts had fought in the 1965 and 1971 India Pakistan War and were also part of Operation Meghdoot in 1984. Ladakh Scouts was converted into a regiment in the year 2000. The Ladakh Scouts played a significant role during the Kargil War of 1999 by marking one of the earliest victories and also received the Unit Citation from General VP Malik, the then Chief of Army Staff.¹

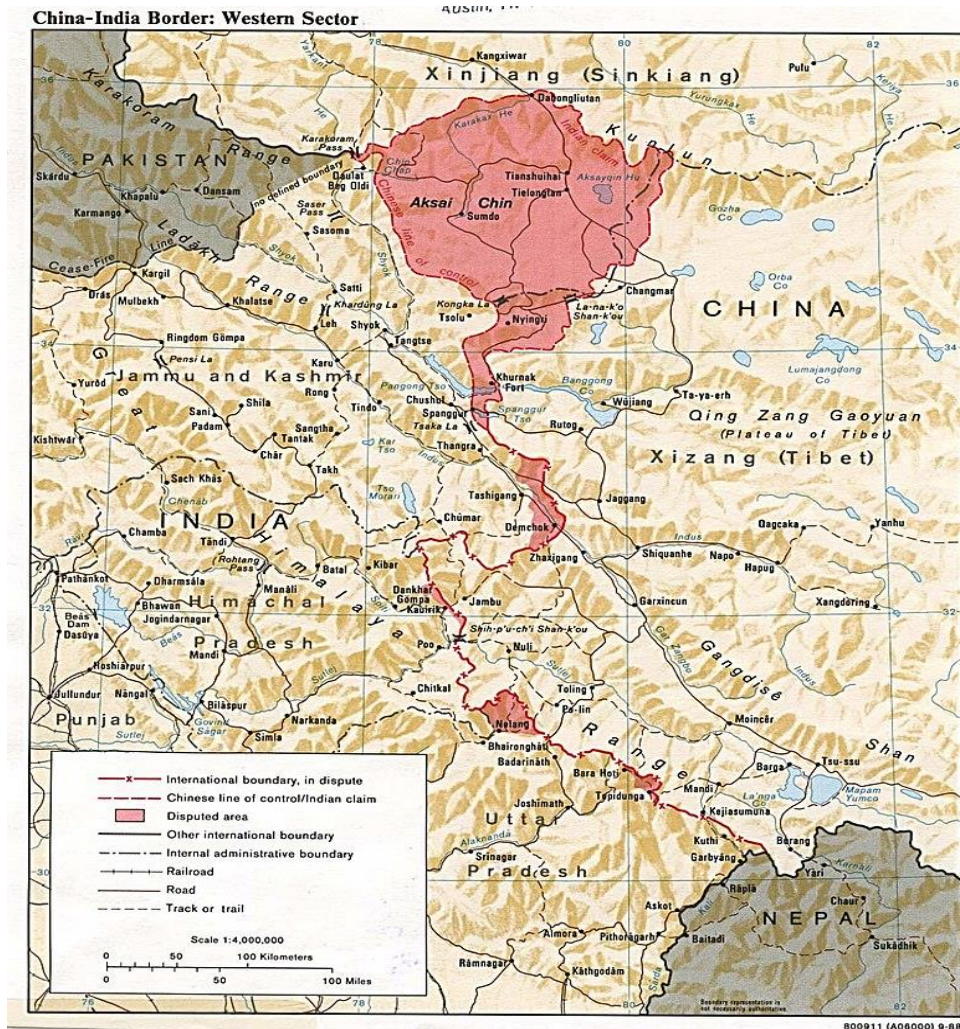
Since its independence, India followed a foreign policy of maintaining cordial relations with China. It wanted to revive its ancient contacts with the people of China since both the countries shared political, geographical and cultural similarities. Therefore, soon after its establishment on 01 October 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 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- Rezang La, and at Mandal, just South of Dambu

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



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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



Source: Wikipedia

During the Sino-India War of 1962, Major Sardul Singh Randhawa, was in commanding troops in Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO-26) Sub-Sector of Northern Ladakh. DBO was a vitally important post since four tracks radiated from it. The old Silk Route went north, crossed the Karakoram Pass (5575 metres) and went on to Yarkand in Sinkiang. The other two routes connected DBO to Leh,

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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over 200 kilometres away, and requiring at least twelve days of long and difficult marching to reach it. The Eastern or Winter route went due south from DB05 crossing the Track Junction, Chip Chap river and the Dapsang Plains to reach the Murgo post. 14 J&K Militaria (Now LADHAK SCOUTS) was responsible to defend the DBO area and a company of 5 JAT was deployed alongside. On October 17, 1962 reports of heavy Chinese concentration opposite our post Chandani started coming in. This concentration of Chinese was so heavy that it posed a threat to entire area of Chip Chap and Kara Koram.



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>



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DBO itself had the Battalion Headquarters and nearly a Company strength. The rest of the available force was distributed on two possible approaches. Chip Chap River valley had a total of ten Posts. Chip Chap were located north of the river Chip Chap, while posts 5 to 10 were to the south. Posts 10 to 14 guarded the approach from an uncharted river valley further south. In addition, there were some troops in Murgo, Sultan Chushku, Track Junction, and all the way down to Shyok village, to provide staging posts for supply as well as the columns that regularly moved between the main base at Leh and DBO. Out of these twenty-one posts, DBO had a Company strength and also posts 1 and 4 on the North of Chip Chap River had a Platoon each (roughly 25 to 30 men). Posts 5, 7 and 14 also had Platoon each. Rest of the Posts had Section strength (between 10 to 15). These Posts were dependent upon DBO for their supply. All the Posts were equipped only with small arms with the exception of Post 1 that had a Section of 3-inch mortars. The Posts thus were not in a position to dominate more than 500 meters distance around them, this being the effective range of the Light Machine Guns. average distance between the Posts was 2 to 3 kms and some like Post 14 were nearly 10 to 12 kms away from nearest Indian Posts. There was thus no possibility of mutual support.

The Chinese had been building up their strength in the Sector from July 1962 onwards. The vicinity of Indian Post No 4 enabled them to bring in their heavy weapons very close to our posts. On 19 October 1962, all the Indian Posts near Chip Chap were dominated by the Chinese in superior strength.



Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru with troops at a forward position during the 1962 India-China war.

Source: <https://www.indiasentinel.com/opinion/1962-india-china-war-how-scholars-misled-indians-a-case-study-5846>



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Around 0230 hours on 20 October, the Chinese brought pressure against Posts 2 and 3 manned by, 5 JAT located on the Northern bank of Chip Chap River and the personnel of these two Posts were asked to fall back on Post 4. Post 1 (Chandani) manned by a Platoon of 14 J&K Militia, was now isolated. This Post was well sited on high ground and was not easy to assault. On 20 October at 0600 hours Chinese commenced shelling Post 1. The bombardment continued for nearly one hour. After this the post was attacked by the Chinese. After this the Post was attacked by the Chinese. The Commander at DBO attempted to send reinforcements to it, but the Chinese, who had by then occupied Post 5, which effectively dominated the route, made it impossible. Finally, after resisting attacks by the Chinese in strength Post 1 fell. The fall of Post 1 had opened up the North Eastern, approach to DBO. The local Commander then sent two small patrols to occupy Point 18029 and Point 17911. Post 4 continued to hold in spite of incessant shelling. The situation at the end of the first day was that while the Chinese had gained important successes by eliminating Posts;1 and 9, the other Posts continued to resist.

Around 1900 hours, on 20 October, the Chinese recommenced the shelling of Post 4 seeing the grave threat, the Commander of the Garrison Major Sardul Singh Randhawa ordered the men of 5 JAT to withdraw to DBO. Assessing the gravity of the situation, 114 Infantry Brigade had informed 15 Corps that, since the Chinese were in a position to pose a threat to the sole line of communication, the Brigade felt that isolated Posts should be asked to concentrate at DBO. Post 10, after resisting for some time, was asked to withdraw to Burtse, a little to the North of Murgu. Over the period of two days, the Chinese attacks intensified and by the evening of 21 October 1962, all the isolated Posts except for Post No. 14 were ordered to fall back. On 22 October 1962, at around 1300 hours, the Platoon Commander of Post No.14 reported Chinese concentration, Lieutenant Colonel Nihal Singh, the Commanding Officer of 14 J&K Militia who had reached DBO just then, ordered a withdrawal of Post 14 from Nachu Chu Gorge to Sultan Chushku.

On 22 October, DBO, the Battalion seeing the grave situation requested the Commander's permission to withdraw the Brigade Troops to a more defensible position. At 1800 hours on 22 October 1962, the Commander 114 Infantry Brigade Brigadier (later General) TN Raina gave permission to 14 J&K Militia to commence withdrawal. The withdrawal started at 2100 hours. The only route available was the difficult Western track that went along the upper reaches of Shyok river and crossed the Karakoram Mountains at Saser La.

In battles of Daulat Beg Oldi Sub Sector, Indian troops fought valiantly despite having scarcity of resources and being outnumbered by the Chinese troops. In the fight of Post 1 (Chandani) or Post 4, Subedar Sonam Stobdan and Havildar Saroop Singh of the 14 J&K Militia made the supreme



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sacrifice after taking heavy toll of the enemy. Both were honored with the nation's second highest gallantry award, the Maha Vir Chakra. Major Sardul Singh Randhawa was decorated with the MVC for his inspiring leadership, courage, commitment, steadfastness and the manner in which he organized the retreat in the DBO Sub-Sector.



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CITATION

MAJOR SARDUL SINGH RANDHAWA
(IC-2651), 14 JAMMU AND KASHMIR MILITIA (Now LADHAK SCOUTS)

(Effective date of Award: 20 October 1962)

On 20 October 1962, during operations in the Daulat Deb Oldi Sub-Sector, Major S.S. Randhawa moved from one post to another in the face of enemy fire inspiring confidence in his men. He conducted operations creditably against over-whelming enemy superiority and displayed courage and leadership of high order.

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



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