

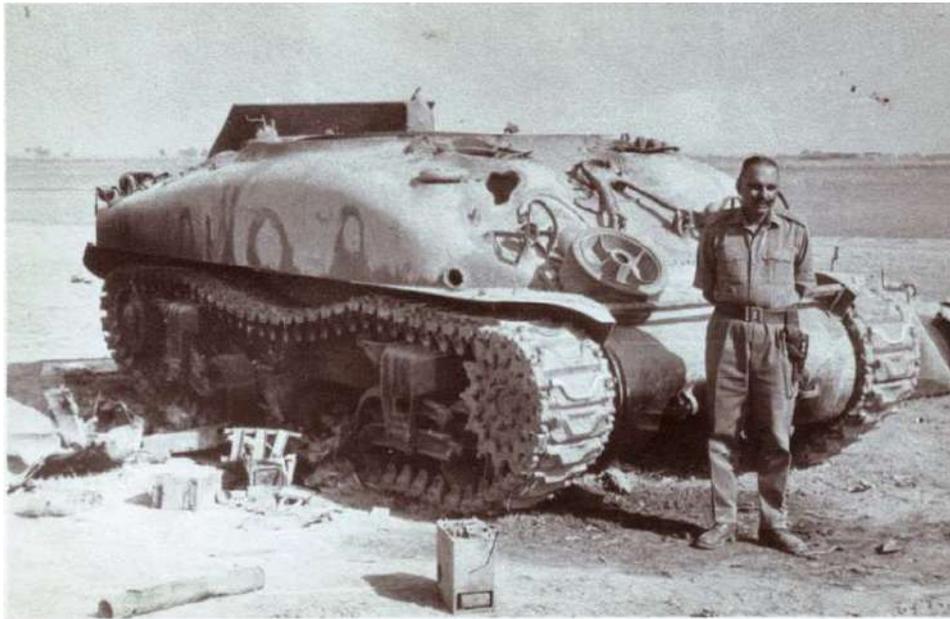


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DEFENCE

INDO-PAK WAR 1965: A VICTORY THAT SHATTERED THE ILLUSIONS OF PAKISTAN

INTRODUCTION

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 ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir and our frontiers with Pakistan have remained a sensitive zone for years. Pakistan has on and off resorted to firing, incursions and intrusions at several points of these frontiers, compelling India to adopt defensive measures. These attempts of Pakistan have been met by the Indian Armed Forces with commendable bravery and steely resilience, but always with great restraint to not escalate the conflict. The Indo-Pak war of 1965 was the second war fought between these two bordering countries. While India was still recovering from the damages of Sino-India war of 1962, Pakistan saw it as an opportunity to acquire Jammu and Kashmir with might, presuming India to be weak in terms of defence preparation. The war initiated on 24 April 1965, when Pakistan Army, attacked our territory in the Rann of Kutch and penetrated six to eight miles inside the Indian territory. This act of illegal occupation of Indian territory constituted violation of Indo-Pak Border Agreement 1960 and international law as per the United Nations Charter. The Pakistani forces subsequently intruded in Kashmir with the launch of Operation Gibraltar.



Lieutenant Colonel (Later Brigadier) Hari Singh in front of captured Pakistani Tank

Source: <https://thewire.in/external-affairs/looking-back-at-the-1965-war-with-a-more-objective-eye>



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

BACKGROUND

The build-up to a full-fledged armed confrontation of 1965 between India and Pakistan can be traced back to various historical conjunctions. When Pakistani diplomacy failed to convince Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir to become a part of Pakistan, a tribal invasion was engineered, leading to widespread of mutinies which endangered the state's sovereignty. Hard-pressed from all sides, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir signed the instrument of accession with the Indian government on 26 October 1947 and appealed for assistance to secure the territorial integrity of Jammu and Kashmir. Abiding by the clauses of Instrument of Accession, the Indian Army rushed to rescue the state. Infuriated Pakistan waged a war against India, which is known as the first Kashmir War (Indo-Pak War 1947-48). Soon after, United Nations (UN) intervention put an end to the conflict and asserted that both the nations must observe cease-fire. UN intervention did not achieve much of a success, Pakistan did not withdraw the troops and continued to commit cease fire violation. In 1965, strengthened by its friendship with China, Pakistan devised an ingenious military strategy to push Kashmir question into the centre stage by invading Rann of Kutch and successively launching Operation Gibraltar in Kashmir. ¹

OPERATION DESERT HAWK



Rann of Kutch as the battle ground during 1965 Indo-Pak War

Source: Photo Division DPR MoD

¹ The Indian-Pakistan War of 1965: A History. S.N. Prasad. U.P. Thapliyal (2011). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

On 24 April 1965, the Pakistan Army attacked the Rann of Kutch and penetrated six to eight miles inside the Indian territory. The Great Rann of Kutch is a massive salt marsh located in the Kutch district of Gujarat, India. It is an 80 km wide and 515 km long stretch of land bordering on Sind in Pakistan and Gujarat in India.



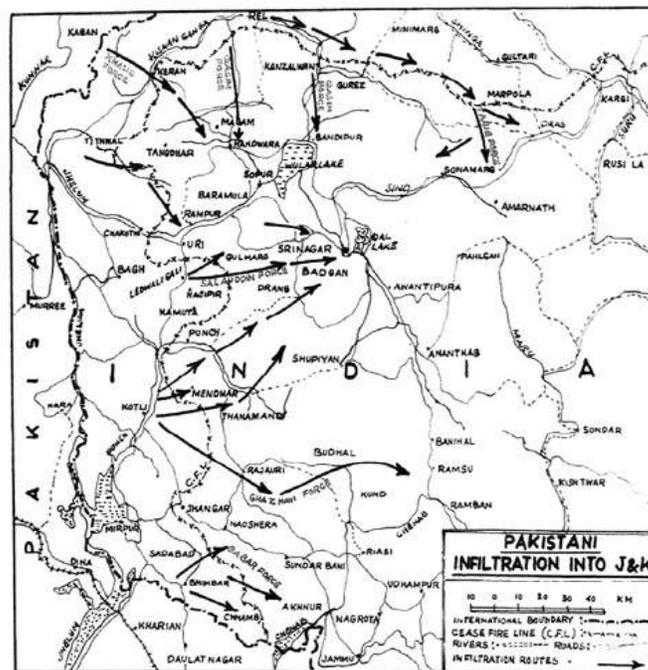
Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in_depth/south_asia/2002/india_pakistan/timeline/1965.stm

Pakistanis began patrolling in territory controlled by India in January 1965, which was followed by attacks on Indian posts. Initially involving border police from both nations, the disputed area soon witnessed intermittent skirmishes between the armed forces of both countries. Pakistan launched Operation Desert Hawk and captured a few Indian posts near the Kanjarkot Fort border area. When India moved 50 PARA to check the Pakistani intrusion, Pakistan strengthened its brigade with a tank regiment. Subsequently, Pakistan again attacked four border posts and captured Vigokot and Biar Bet. However, as a result of mediation by United Kingdom, the Pakistani forces withdrew from the Indian soil in the Kutch sector. In the interest of improving mutual relations and peaceful delimitation of border in this area, India agreed to ceasefire. On 01 July 1965, the 'Kutch Agreement' was signed. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson had successfully persuaded both nations to end hostilities and set up a tribunal to resolve the dispute and demarcate the boundary between both countries. Pakistanis mistook Indian restraint and maturity as a sign of weakness.



OPERATION GIBRALTER

Operation Desert Hawk was followed by second phase of Pakistani infiltration strategy in the form of Operation Gibraltar, which was designed to infiltrate forces into Jammu and Kashmir to precipitate an insurgency against Indian rule. This became the immediate cause of the war. Pakistani soldiers and irregulars dressed as tribesmen, infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir in August 1965 with an aim of joining a rally on 08 August 1965, to mark the festivities of saint, Pir Dastgir in Srinagar. The other columns of raiders operating in the South and North-East of the valley were to block the roads Srinagar-Jammu and Srinagar-Kargil to isolate Srinagar. The areas covered were –from Kargil in the North to Chhamb in the South. Thereafter, the Pakistanis planned to instigate and engineer an uprising in the state to spearhead a revolt in order to take control of the capital. Nearly 30,000 trained infiltrators were covertly deployed in multiple groups, each named after historical plunderers of the sub-continent. However, the plan failed with their early detection and lack of support from the locals, who gave away their positions.²



© GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, COPYRIGHT 2005.
□ BASED UPON SURVEY OF INDIA MAP WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF INDIA.
□ THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CORRECTNESS OF INTERNAL DETAILS RESTS WITH THE PUBLISHER.
□ THE TERRITORIAL WATERS OF INDIA EXTEND IN TO THE SEA TO A DISTANCE OF TWELVE NAUTICAL MILES MEASURED FROM THE APPROPRIATE BASE LINE.
□ THE EXTERNAL BOUNDARIES AND COAST LINES OF INDIA AGREE WITH THE RECORD/MASTER COPY CERTIFIED BY SURVEY OF INDIA.

Source: [http://indiastrategic.in/topstories4041 Operation Gibraltar was Fundamentally Flawed.htm](http://indiastrategic.in/topstories4041%20Operation%20Gibraltar%20was%20Fundamentally%20Flawed.htm)

² The Indian-Pakistan War of 1965: A History. S.N. Prasad. U.P. Thapliyal (2011). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

In sheer desperation, Pakistan employed its artillery in support of guerrilla operations. India grasped the criticality of the ongoing plan, repulsed the attacks and cut off the entry and exit points into the Kashmir Valley. A quick and firm response by India took Pakistan by surprise and thwarted their well laid out plans. India reacted almost immediately by recapturing Kargil heights which had been returned in Jul 1965, a limited offensive in the Tithwal Sector and most importantly, the capture of Haji Pir Pass in a daring operation by 1 PARA by Major (later Lieutenant General) Ranjit Singh Dayal under 68 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier (later Lieutenant General) ZC Bakshi on 28 August 1965. This was one of the most notable achievements of the riposte. The capture of Haji Pir and loss of key positions in the Kishenganga Bulge were a severe setback for the Pakistanis which put them in a state of shock. Thus, by the end of Aug 1965, Pakistan's plans for quick annexation of the Valley had been squarely defeated.



Indian troops set up the tricolour atop Haji Pir Pass, carried by assault on 28 August 1965.

The Uri-Punch road was open after almost 18 years.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

OPERATION GRAND SLAM

The failure of Operation Gibraltar saw the last phase, Operation Grand Slam put into effect by General Ayub Khan on 01 September 1965. A massive attack was planned in the Chhamb-Jaurian Sector aimed at capturing Akhnur, which would sever communications and cut off supply routes to Indian troops. In desperation, Pakistan played its hand by launching Operation 'Grand Slam' on 01 Sep 1965. It was launched across the Southern most portion of the CFL and was aimed at Akhnur; thus, Pakistan aimed at cutting of Indian positions in Naushera, Rajauri and Punch. Thereafter, as a part of Op Grand Slam, an armoured thrust could be developed towards Jammu, the capture of which would have severed all land communications to J&K. ³This would place Pakistan in a position to dictate terms to India.

The Pakistani offensive had achieved surprise and made good progress initially but had lost its momentum by 03 Sep 1965. The gallantry of Major Bhaskar Roy of 20 LANCERS who skilfully placed and manoeuvred his AMX-13 tanks in the face of superior enemy armour in Chhamb sector stands out in the annals of our military history. ⁴



The Indian Air Force played a major role in blunting the Pakistani offensive. The situation in Chhamb-Jaurian Sector was stabilised by about 10 Sep and Pakistan remained in control of the areas up to and including Jaurian. Pakistan's strategy to capture Akhnur was stalled. Attacking

³ 1965 Indo-Pak War – A Critical Appraisal (2015) Major General PJS Sandhu, (Retd) (Accessed on 8 September 2022)

<https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/1965-indo-pak-war-a-critical-appraisal/>

⁴ The Indian-Pakistan War of 1965: A History. S.N. Prasad. U.P. Thapliyal (2011). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India (Pg No 90)



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

with an overwhelming ratio of troops and technically superior tanks, Pakistan made initial gains against Indian forces. The resultant counter attack saw the focus shift to Punjab sector. Pakistan had probably not expected India to react with the determination and audacity that its leaders displayed.

Indian reaction to Pakistan's Grand Slam came by way of counter offensives across the international border in J&K, Punjab and Rajasthan, commencing on 06 Sep 1965. The 'go-ahead' for an all-out military response had been given by the Emergency Committee of the Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on 03 Sep 1965. The Indian strategy was to threaten Lahore and Sialkot, thus relieving pressure in Chhamb-Jaurian Sector and while doing so, degrade Pakistani armed potential and capture some territory which could be used for bargaining in the post-war negotiations.⁵

11 CORPS (OPERATION RIDDLE)

The objective of the retaliatory Indian plan was to threaten Lahore, drive a wedge between the Pakistani forces deployed in the Lahore and Sialkot sectors and destroy their war potential. The offensive was to serve the dual purpose of ensuring security of Punjab by advancing the Indian defence line to the Ichhogil Canal and to capture some Pakistani territory to serve as bargaining lever in the political parleys, on the conclusion of hostilities.⁶ The offensives commenced at 0500 hours on 06 Sep 1965 with 15 Infantry Division along Amritsar – Lahore Axis, 7 Infantry Division along Khalra – Barki Axis and 4 Mountain Division on Khemkaran – Kasur Axis. However, a major portion of 4 Mountain Division was also required to occupy defences in area Khemkaran to counter an offensive by Pakistani armoured division which was expected in this area.⁷

⁵ The Indian-Pakistan War of 1965: A History. S.N. Prasad. U.P. Thapliyal (2011). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India (Pg No 94)

⁶ Ibid (Pg No 131)

⁷ 1965 Indo-Pak War – A Critical Appraisal (2015) Major General PJS Sandhu, (Retd) (Accessed on 8 September 2022)

<https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/1965-indo-pak-war-a-critical-appraisal/>



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



Source: <https://indianarmy.nic.in/writereaddata/documents/Articles1965/PKChakravorty230915.pdf>

The Indian offensives achieved complete surprise and made good progress initially. Along the GT Road Axis, 3 JAT under the legendary Lieutenant Colonel Desmond Hayde crossed the Ichhogil Canal at Dograi and reached Batapore on the outskirts of Lahore. However, initial success was not exploited. The Jats, held on to their gains despite intense shelling by Pakistanis. But in absence of reinforcements and anti-tank weapons, they could not hold their ground for long. By afternoon they had expended most of their ammunition. There was also no hope for any air or artillery support. Unable to replenish or reinforce the Jats, the Brigade Commander ordered them to withdraw to firm base.⁸

In the 4 Mountain Division sector, Pakistan launched its counter offensive by 1 Armoured Division on 08 Sep towards Jandiala Guru, Beas Bridge and Harike. 4 Mountain Division had to occupy a hastily prepared division defended sector in Area Asal Uttar, in the face of this

⁸ The Indian-Pakistan War of 1965: A History. S.N. Prasad. U.P. Thapliyal (2011). Natraj Publishers and Ministry of Defence, Government of India (Pg No 139)



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

powerful offensive. The defended sector had approximately three and a half battalions of infantry (18 RAJ RIF, 1/9 GORKHA RIFLES less two companies, 4 GRENADIERS and 9 JAK RIF) along with units of 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade (3 CAVALRY, 8 CAVALRY less a squadron and DECCAN HORSE) and artillery guns deployed in Area Chittikhui-Valtoha. A few minefields were also laid and some areas were flooded. Fierce battles raged on 08-09 Sep in which Indian forces repelled repeated attacks by Pakistani armour and infantry.



The Victory of Khem Karan: Euphoric Jawans rummage through an abandoned Patton near Khem Karan.

Source: <https://www.thebetterindia.com/82213/havildar-abdul-hamid-tanks-param-vir-chakra/>

Indian troops held firm and the situation was stabilised by 10 Sep with heavy losses to Pakistani armour. The bravery of CQMH Abdul Hamid of 4 GRENADIERS and the outstanding handling of the armour by Brigadier Theograj of 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade and by Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Salim Caleb, Commandant of 3 CAVALRY and Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Arun Vaidya, Commandant of DECCAN HORSE prevented any enemy ingress and resulted in severe attrition of the attacking forces.

Hereafter, there were no major battles fought in this sector. By the time of ceasefire, Indian forces were on the home-bank of Ichhogil Canal, while Pakistan remained in control of a small enclave in the Khemkaran Sector.

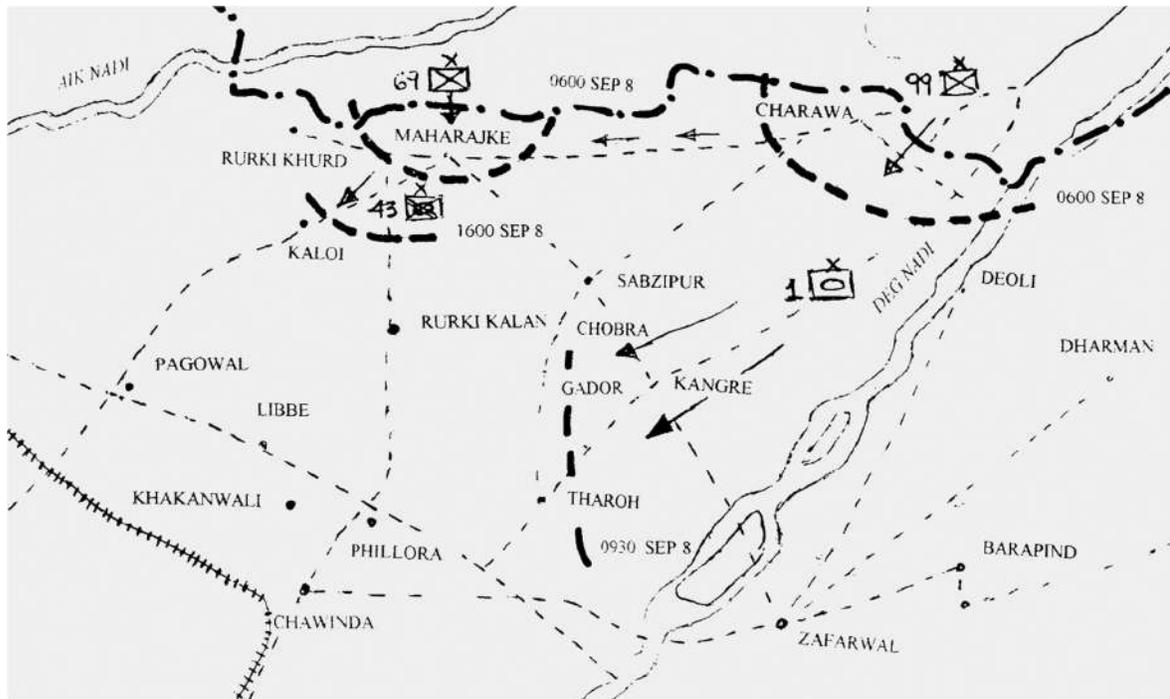
After the launch of Indian 1 Corps in the Sialkot Sector, Pakistan was forced to pull out and divert an Armoured Brigade from this sector to Sialkot Sector to stabilise the situation there.



1 CORPS (OPERATION NEPAL)

As part of the overall strategy, India decided to launch its main counter offensive by the newly raised 1 Corps in the Sialkot Sector in order to relieve pressure in the Chhamb Sector as also to degrade Pakistan's fighting potential.⁹ The offensive was launched on the night of 07 / 08 Sep 1965 on a frontage from Suchetgarh in the West to Degh Nadi in the East. The corps was commanded by Lieutenant General P O Dunn and had 1 Armoured Division, 6 Mountain Division, 14 Infantry Division and 26 Infantry Division.

The corps was tasked to secure areas Bhagowal – Phillaurah – Chawinda – Cross Roads (Badiana) with a view to advancing towards the Marala Ravi Link (MRL) Canal and eventually to the line of Dhaliwali – Wuhilam – Daska – Mandhali.¹⁰



1 Corps Operations, on 08 and 09 September 1965

Source: <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/battle-of-phillora-1965-war/>

⁹ 1965 Indo-Pak War – A Critical Appraisal (2015) Major General PJS Sandhu, (Retd) (Accessed on 8 September 2022)

<https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/1965-indo-pak-war-a-critical-appraisal/>

¹⁰ Ibid



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

The corps was opposed by Pakistan, 1 Corps comprising of 6 Armoured Division and 15 Infantry Division. Initially, the area into which Indian 1 Corps was launched was the area of responsibility of Pak 15 Infantry Division with its Headquarter in Sialkot. However, as the operations progressed, the Indian retaliation was countered by Pakistan's 6 Armoured Division and 24 Infantry Brigade of 15 Infantry Division, which had been deployed in this area and placed under its command. So, it was a contest between the Indian 1 Corps which was on the offensive and the Pakistan's 6 Armoured Division with attached troops, who were defending. The battles were fought in general area Bhagawal – Badiana – Pasrur – Zafarwal.¹¹

Indian 1 Corps offensive had achieved complete surprise but after initial success, operations came to a near standstill and there was no major operational activity on 09 and 10 Sep. This gave adequate time to Pakistan's 6 Armoured Division to organise their defences. They adopted the concept of mobile defence.

The Indian 1 Armoured Division under Major General Rajinder Singh Sparrow commenced its attack on Phillaurah at first light on 10 Sep from an unexpected direction. It was a well-coordinated between armour, lorried infantry and artillery. The high points of the battle were the manoeuvres of 1 Armoured Brigade commanded by Brigadier (later Lieutenant General) K K Singh, which included 4 HORSE commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier) M M S Bakshi and 17 HORSE commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Adi Tarapore, who were operating on both flanks of Phillaurah. They manoeuvred beautifully in a text book manner, thus drawing away the enemy armour (11 Cavalry) deployed at Phillaurah.

Pakistan suffered severe destruction during the battle of tanks. Pakistan accounts accept a loss of twenty-two tanks, i.e. sixteen tanks of 11 Cavalry and six of Guides Cavalry. As a result of this battle, Pakistan's 6 Armoured Division had to temporarily break up 11 Cavalry and its remaining M-48s tanks were formed into a squadron and transferred to the Guides Cavalry. Two units of the enemy (11 Cavalry and 9 Frontier Force) were now out of action with their remnants located at Pasrur and awaiting reinforcements and new equipment.¹²

After the capture of Phillaurah there was a lull in the battle on 12 and 13 Sep, till Indian 1 Corps renewed its offensive for capture of Chawinda on 14 Sep. Two attempts were made (the first one by 1 Armoured Division and the second one by 6 Mountain Division) but both were unsuccessful. By now, Pakistan had moved an armoured brigade from Khemkaran into this sector and forces, especially armour, were almost evenly matched.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² The Monsoon War: Young Officers Reminisce. Capt Amrinder Singh and Lt Gen Tajinder Shergill (2015). Roli Books, New Delhi



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

OPERATIONS IN BARMER SECTOR (Desert Sector)

In order to contain the Pak offensive in Chhamb Sector as also to pre-empt any Pakistani offensive in the desert sector, India launched a limited offensive by 30 Infantry Brigade of 11 Infantry Division on Axis Barmer–Hyderabad (Sind). 11 infantry Division was commanded by Major General (later Lieutenant General) NC Rawley. By the time of the ceasefire, India had captured 390 square km of Pak territory in this sector, while Pakistan held on to the Indian border Post at Munabao.

INDIAN AIR FORCE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE VICTORY OF 1965 INDO-PAK WAR



Source: <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/iaf-defeated-paf-in-1965-war/>

The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 saw the Indian and Pakistani Air Forces engaged in large-scale aerial combat against each other for the first time since the partition of India in 1947. The air war took place during the course of September 1965 and saw both air forces conduct



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

defensive and offensive operations over Indian and Pakistani airspace. The aerial war saw both sides conducting thousands of sorties in the month.¹³

The aerial phase of the war began on 01 September 1965 when the Indian Air Force (IAF) responded to an urgent call for air strikes against the Pakistani Army, which had launched Operation Grand Slam. The IAF launched 26 aeroplanes (12 de Havilland Vampires and 14 Dassault Mystère IVs) to blunt the Pakistan Army's offensive in Chhamb. The IAF's 45 Squadron was tasked to carry out close air support missions in support of Indian troops. These planes strafed Pakistani positions and attacked Pakistani tanks and ground targets. When these Indian aircraft were sighted, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) scrambled two F-86 Sabres to intercept the aircraft.



The Indian Air Force launched the Vampire jet in support the Indian Army.

Source: <https://theprint.in/defence/1965-india-pakistan-war-how-iafs-heroes-slayed-pafs-superior-sabre-fighter-jets/287642/>

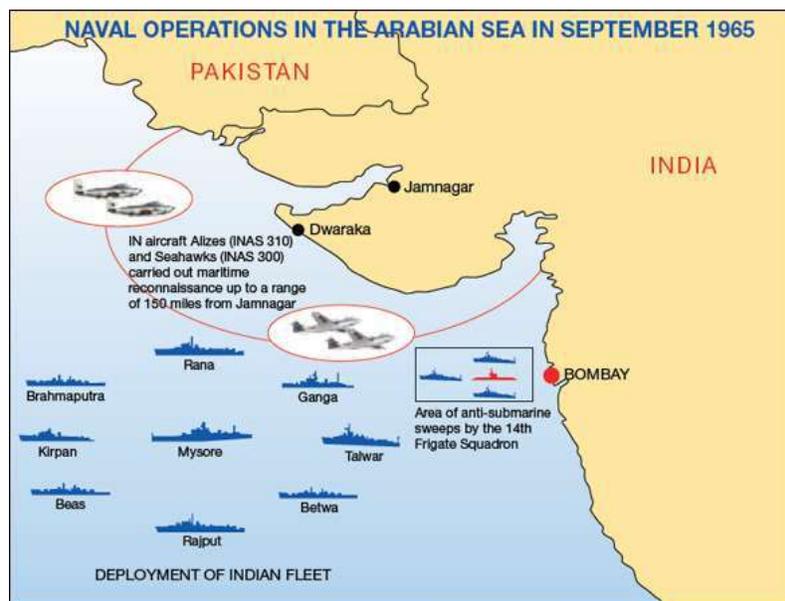
As a reaction to Pakistani offensive in the Chhamb Sector, India launched its counter-offensive by 11 Corps in Lahore Sector on 06 Sep 1965. In accordance with their war plans, Pakistan Air Force responded by a pre-emptive strike on Indian air bases at Pathankot, Adampur, Halwara and Amritsar.

¹³ The 1965 India-Pakistan War IAF's ground reality, Air Commodore Jasjit Singh (retd) (Accessed on 08 September 2022)
<https://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070506/spectrum/main1.htm>



From 07 Sep onwards the air war intensified and both the air forces were carrying out air operations in support of ground forces, counter air, air interdiction and air defence tasks. Indian Air Force carried out a number of attacks against Pakistani air bases, railway yards, logistics installations, radar sites and even a train carrying tanks. A number of search and destroy, and tactical reconnaissance missions were also flown by the Indian Air Force. By the end of the war India's greater numbers were beginning to tell and Pakistan Air Force was shying away from aerial combat.

INDIAN NAVY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE VICTORY OF 1965 INDO-PAK WAR



Source: <https://www.spsnavalforces.com/story/?id=384>

The Indian Navy's was responsible for the maritime defence of the Western and Eastern Coasts and the island territories. The tasks envisaged were: first, to carry out sweeps off the West Coast of Pakistan to disrupt the Port of Karachi and inflict heavy damage on port installations; next, the destruction of Pakistan Naval Forces if ordered; third, provision of general support for the defence of the major ports on the West Coast; and fourth, the provision of general cover and protection to our merchant ships in the Arabian Sea, especially those plying to and from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.¹⁴

¹⁴ Indian Navy and the Indo-Pak War of 1965 (Accessed on 08 September 2022)

<https://indianarmy.nic.in/writereaddata/documents/Articles1965/PKChakravorty230915.pdf>



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



Source: <https://www.spsnavalforces.com/story/?id=384>

TASHKENT AGREEMENT

Hostilities between the two countries ended after a ceasefire was declared through UNSC Resolution 211, following a diplomatic intervention by the Soviet Union and the United States, and the subsequent issuance of the Tashkent Declaration. The Tashkent Agreement was signed on 10 January 1966 between Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri who had a 'frame of steel' and Pakistani President General Ayub Khan with both sides agreeing to observe the Cease Fire Line as it existed before 05 August 1965.



President of Pakistan Muhammad Ayyub Khan, Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU Alexei Nikolayevich Kosygin before the start of the Tashkent meeting.

Source: Valery Shustov/RIA Novosti (https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2015/12/29_a_8002691.shtml)



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

CONCLUSION

The seventeen-day war caused many casualties on both sides and witnessed the largest engagement of armoured vehicles and the largest tank battle since World War II. The Indian Armed Forces had acquitted themselves admirably. The determination, courage, valour and steadfastness were visible throughout the war. The soldiers and junior leadership displayed all the values of the Armed forces and put the interests of the nation before all else and many made the ultimate sacrifice. The bravery of Lieutenant Colonel Adi Tarapore while commanding POONA HORSE in Shakargarh and CQMH Abdul Hamid of 4 GRENADIERS in the battle of Asal Uttar, where he destroyed several Pakistani tanks with his RCL gun continue to inspire the future generations. Both were awarded the PVC. However, it can be said beyond doubt that members of the Armed Forces performed admirably throughout the war and responded magnificently to meet any crisis.

During the war the Defence Minister was Shri Y B Chavan, the COAS was General J N Chaudhari, the CNS was Vice Admiral B S Soman and the CAS was Air Marshal Arjan Singh. The Western Army Commander responsible for Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and parts of Rajasthan was Lieutenant General Harbakhsh Singh.

The conflict is seen as a strategic and political defeat for Pakistan, as it had neither succeeded in fomenting insurrection in Kashmir, nor had it been able to gain meaningful support at an international level. Thus the 1965 War ended with total and complete failure of Pakistan in achieving its strategic objectives. On the other hand, India came out of the shadows of the 1962 defeat to regain confidence, honour and self-esteem. However, it can be said without hesitation that the Indian soldiers, sailors and airmen had once again given off their best in service of the nation. They were brave, resolute and steadfast in battle, and units sought to achieve their missions relentlessly against heavy odds. The nation too rallied and stood behind its soldiers in a magnificent manner. In the final analysis, the outcome of the war is a tribute to the Indian soldier.



रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE

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