

RAJPUTS IN 1971 OPS

The 1971 War was sparked by the Bangladesh Liberation War and the Pakistan military's widespread genocide in erstwhile East Pakistan. On the Eastern front, the Indian Army launched a swift, three pronged offensive, which exploited weaknesses in the Pakistani positions and bypassed minor opposition to converge on Dhaka. Faced with insurmountable losses, the Pakistani military capitulated in less than a fortnight, thereby leading to the birth of 'Bangladesh'. The Western and Northern theatres too witnessed some splendid operational victories resulting in major territorial gains for the nation.

During the Indo-Pak War of 1971, Fifteen Rajput Battalions participated in various operations and gave an excellent account of their valour and gallantry. Eight Battalions took part in the liberation of Bangladesh and remainder in the Western and Northern sectors. The Regiment won five Battle Honours of 'Belonia', 'Akhaura', 'Khinsar', 'Khansama' and 'Madhumati River' and also the Theatre Honours 'East Pakistan' and 'Sindh'.

EASTERN FRONT

1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS) & 18 RAJPUT (AKHAURA)

Akhaura, being located in vicinity to Agartala air field and the Sylhet-Chittagong-Dhaka Railway Link was a strategic objective. The capture of Akhaura was entrusted to 311 Mtn Bde, which had two Rajput Battalions, 1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS) & 18 RAJPUT. The capture of Akhaura entailed crossing of ditches & marshy patches culminating into an assault on a determined enemy occupying defences based on the built-up area and the Titas River to the West. 1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS) infiltrated through the enemy lines and cut off the township from the West & North to facilitate the capture of Akhaura by the other two battalions including 18 RAJPUT. The entire battalion waded through waist deep water and slush to complete the given task. Akhaura fell to the Rajputs on 05 December through a tactically sound attack plan, which had the enemy confused, isolated, and finally over run. This was followed by the historic Heli-Bridge Crossing by 4 Corps across River Meghna, finally resulting in capitulation of Dhaka. Both the battalions were honoured with Battle Honour 'Akhaura' for the exemplary operations.

2 RAJPUT (BELONIA)

In Oct 1971, the battalion moved out for 'Operation Cactus Lily', and it was soon launched into operations. As part of 83 Mtn Bde, the battalion's task was to initially establish a road block in Pakistan held territory south of Belonia, thereafter capture it and then advance to Metical. At this very location, Pakistani troops had run over the defences held by Mukti Bahini soldiers; the Rajputs were tasked to launch a counter-attack and recapture the area. In true Rajput spirit, the battalion charged through accurate enemy automatic & artillery fire, and cleared the Belonia Bulge by 10 Nov 1971 in a swift offensive. 'Kali Chindi' continued the momentum and captured Chaudagram and Parikot within the next month. The battalion was further tasked to capture Chittagong, however before the offensive could be launched, the Pakistanis had surrendered. In recognition of the unit's performance, it was awarded its ninth Battle Honour - 'Belonia' and the Theater Honour 'East Pakistan'.

4 RAJPUT (BHURANGAMARI)

4 RAJPUT under Lt Col PL Kurkrety was part of 9 Mtn Bde under 6 Mtn Div. On Night of 14/15 Nov 1971, Battalion was tasked to clear the enemy at Bhurangamari, a defended locality held by a company of 25 PUNJAB of Pak army sp by a section of Mortar, two 105 mm guns, elements of recce and support Battalion along with irregulars. Instead of launching a conventional attack, Lt Col Kurkety, the CO, decided to send the companies in group of four personnel with each advancing and clearing enemy position from FUP itself. Unit cleared Bhurangamari successfully after stiff resistance from enemy killing two Pakistani regulars and capturing 14 Razakars and 43 Regulars of 25 PUNJAB. The Battalion cleared Raiganz, the next pocket of resistance on the night of 20/21 November. The next operation of 4 RAJPUT was the launching of a raid on enemy gun position at Chandipur. The task entailed raiding enemy's gun position with two companies and eliminating the enemy defending the gun position area. The raid was successfully conducted on the night of 27/28 November. On 05 December, 4 RAJPUT advanced on Bhotemari-Kaliganj axis and contacted enemy defences at Bhotemari which were held by approximately a company of regulars and Razakars supported by artillery. The enemy used his artillery very effectively to stall the advance. However, the valiant Rajputs attacked the position in broad daylight and cleared Bhotemari and Kaliganj the same day. On 10 Dec 1971, 4 RAJPUT was placed under command of 20 Mountain Brigade and captured village Bisapara after enemy withdrawal. Next day Battalion as part of 165 Mountain Brigade cleared the villages of Matihara and Banial. In this theatre, various awards were conferred on the unit to include two VrC, three SM, one VSM and two Mentioned - in - Despatches.

6 RAJPUT (SYLHET)

6 RAJPUT (MEIKTILA) was part of 57 Mtn Bde/ 8 Mtn Div and was dply in tackling Naga Insurgency in the Eastern borders in 1971. On 14 Aug 1971, the Battalion was mob on short notice and concentrated at Palel for move to Tripura border for impending operations. At CHURAIBARI, the battalion concentrated for the next two months to carry out training for offensive operations in low mountainous terrain, built up areas and reverine terrain. In December 1971, as part of the main operation to liberate Sylhet, the battalion was tasked to spearhead the advance along axis Dharmanagar – Gazipur – Kolaura – Fenchuganj – Sylhet. The advance was halted at GAZIPUR due to stiff en opposition and a night attack was launched to annihilate the enemy. The advance continued and after minor clashes at Kalaura, Brahminbazar and Halaichara, the battalion caught up with its adversaries at FENCHUGANJ. Here the enemy was strongly entrenched across river Khusiyara with a strong network of defences. It is here that on 11 December 71, the most fierce battles of the war were fought by the gallant RAJPUTS, which included a daring day light attack on fortified enemy defences across the river. Due to its audacity, the enemy was completely taken by surprise. Despite heavy casualties, the battalion liberated the village from 22 BALUCH.

The Battalion resumed its adv and soon secured the area of Mogla Bazar. The enemy had now concentrated their position at KOLABIL which was a consummation of water bodies and marsh lands. A major battle took place with the enemy who wanted to give it their full strength. A gallant day light attack by the Battalion led to the eviction of the enemy from Kolabil despite heavy casualties. For this heroic act Major SP Singh of the unit was posthumously awarded the 'Veer Chakra' and Subdar Kalika Singh the 'Sena Medal'. This action totally broke the back of the enemy and soon a linkup with 4/5 Gorkha Rifle was carried out near Sylhet across river Surma.

On 16 Dec at 0900h, seeing a hopeless situation ahead, the adversary raised the white flag. The ceasefire was ordered and a surrender conference commenced the same day. 22 BALUCH who the battalion fought from IB to Sylhet was to surrender to 6 RAJPUT. On 17 December at 1600hrs, 22 BALUCH commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Yaseen surrendered to the Meiktilians in the SYLHET public school. The Battalion crossed the SURMA river on 17 December and occupied the EPCAF HQ at SYLHET. For its gallant action in OP CACTUS LILY the Battalion was awarded the **Theatre Honour** of “**East Pakistan**”.

16 RAJPUT (HILLI)

The Bn took active part in ‘Op CACTUS LILY’ under Comd 202 Mtn Bde. The Battalion was deployed at Hilli, one of the sites of the most bitter fighting seen in Bangladesh. Early morning of 11 Dec 1971, saw A and B Coys poised for the attack on Hilli and as soon as go ahead sig was recd from the Bde HQ, the Battalion moved in for the kill. By 1100hr the same day, Hilli ceased to be a PAK stronghold. Duly impressed by the action, Battalion was asked to lead the Bde adv to Khetlal via Ghoraghat, two sqn of armr were also put under comd of the Battalion. Brushing aside opposition of Dangapara, the unit mov on to Khetlal. The speed of adv surprised the enemy and the Battalion succeeded in capturing large quantities of amn and eqpt at Khetlal. Thereafter, the unit advanced to Rangpur and when the Battalion was about 5 Kms short of town, ceasefire was announced. The task given to the Battalion after war was to assist the Bangladesh Govt in maintaining law and order in their Country.

21 RAJPUT (KHANSAMA)

During the 1971 Operations, ‘Ekkis’ was first concentrated at Islampur on 30 Nov 1971, and spearheaded the offensive of 71 Mountain Brigade up to Saidpur in Bangladesh. Khansama, a small town on the banks of Teesta River, was defended by a well-fortified contingent of Pakistan Army and Razakars, supported by 82 mm Mortars and HMGs. After an aerial reconnaissance, the battalion launched an attack on the morning of 13 Dec 1971. After crossing the Teesta River, the leading troops encountered a dense minefield and heavy artillery shelling. Braving the odds, the battalion then launched a daring daylight attack with tanks in fire support role. After four hours of fierce combat, the Rajputs prevailed over the enemy and the Pakistanis surrendered. The Bn took a large number of prisoners of war & captured huge quantities of arms and ammunition during the operation, and won ‘Khansama’ as Battle Honour and ‘East Pakistan’ as the Theatre Honour.

22 RAJPUT (DARSANA & MADHUMATI)

22 RAJPUT was inducted for ‘Operation Cactus Lily’ in August 1971 and fought its first operations under 350 Infantry Brigade at Boyra, Chaugacha & Uthali, where they performed admirably. Thereafter, under 41 Mountain Brigade, the battalion undertook a valiant offensive to dislodge the adversary from Darsana, which fell on 04 December 1971. Yet again, on 09 December 1971, the battalion was re-orbated to 7 Infantry Brigade wherein, with the support of 45 Cavalry, they executed a swift and surgical daylight attack to capture Kushtia, an enemy District and Brigade Headquarters and an important communication centre. The battalion was then tasked to establish a road block at Atapur to facilitate capture of Kumarkhali, a critical town across Madhumati River. The operation

involved a cross-country move of approximately 27 kilometers and crossing of the mighty Madhumati River using country boats. The unit completed the operations by 15 December 1971, and the shocked Pakistani unit surrendered to avoid annihilation at the hands of Rajputs. For the indomitable courage and fortitude displayed during battle, the unit earned the Battle Honour of 'Madhumati River' and Theatre Honour of 'East Pakistan'.

WESTERN FRONT

5 RAJPUT (NATHUA TIBBA)

During the 1971 war, the Battalion was dply in 10 Inf Div Sect. On 02 Dec 71, The Battalion took up defs near Nathua Tibba along with 8 Jammu & Kashmir Militia. On 05 December, at about 6 am, movement of enemy tanks in Sukh Tau Nalah was reported. In a bid to prevent enemy armour from moving further into Indian territory, a platoon of C Coy of 5 RAJPUT along with troops of 8 Jammu & Kashmir Militia was dispatched towards area Mandiala Heights near Chhamb for tank hunting task. The platoon fought heroically. On 07 December, 8 Jammu & Kashmir Militia company at Dewa fell to the enemy onslaughts. A No of successful counter attacks were launched by the Battalion to evict the Pak marauders who had captured some of the fwd posts in the Bde Sect. The situation at Nathua Tibba was stabilised by the Battalion and it continued to dominate the line of control with its aggressive posture.

9 RAJPUT (RATNU CHAK)

The Battalion took part in the war under Lt Col (Later Maj Gen) Chandra Sinhji and carried out successful raids on Pak posts of Salims, Anula Harnawali and Zafarka Bagh. The Battalion successfully re-captured own borders outputs of Nekowal, Budhwar and Chauni in the Silakot sect for which Battalion was awarded one VrC and two Mention in Despatches. The war trophies incl an MMG captured from 30 BALUCH along with personal wpn by the Capt (later Lt Col) TR Sharma.

14 RAJPUT (FEROZEPUR)

The Battalion saw action in Khalra sector in Ferozepur during Indo - Pak war of 1971. On 03 Dec 1971 at about 1730 hrs, the Pakistanis opened up the Khalra Sect with hy shelling. The Battalion was tasked to launch an attack to capture Chhina Bidi Chand vacated by the Battalion on 03-04 Dec 1971 on Bde instructions. Chhina Bidi Chand village was successfully captured by the Battalion in the attack that followed on the night of 07-08 Dec 1971. The coys gallantly withstood two en counter attacks. The Battalion inflicted hy cas to the enemy to the tune of 25 dead and about equal No wounded.

15 RAJPUT (FAZILKA)

At the outbreak of war, on 03 December 1971, the battalion was tasked to occupy Fazilka with battalion less one company and provide one company to Delta Force at Sathirwala for the protection of Takeoff Point and bridges over Sabuna Distributary. On 08 December, it was allotted the task to recapture an enemy held bund, approximately 450 m in length, outside Beriwala on Sabuna Distributary. The enemy had consolidated its position

and had fully coordinated its defences. On reaching the objective, intense fighting broke out which continues for two hours. One enemy tank was destroyed by RCL gun while another was abandoned by the crew with its engine still running. By first light, the situation was well under control and the unit took several Pakistani's, including three officers as POW. The battalion also captured one Pakistani Sherman Tank, an Anti Tank Gun, a jeep, 21 automatics, 34 assault rifles, a rocket launcher and other warlike stores.

17 RAJPUT (DBN)

Battalion was part of 86 Inf Bde in Dera Baba Nanak (DBN) sector. The unit was tasked by the Brigade to participate in an attack in DBN sector under the code name Operation Akal. The International Border (IB) runs to the north of DBN skirting the Ravi river. A destroyed railway bridge still stands over the Ravi. Cross country movement of armour and infantry was extremely difficult in the area between Ravi and IB. In addition, the Pakistanis had built a network of bunds with concrete bunkers, grouped in well defended and mutually supporting posts. As a preliminary operation to the main attack, the unit successfully captured enemy post 7r, which acted as a firm base for brigade attack for which Capt Nawal Singh Rajawat and Late Sep Satyawar were awarded VrC. Later in Brigade phase three unit captured Khokharke, Sadhuwan and Mardana posts of enemy and held onto them against repeated counter attacks.

19 RAJPUT (ABOHAR)

Following the outbreak of hostilities, the Rajputs were placed under 67 (I) Infantry Brigade Group and were deployed along the Gang Canal between Bakainwala and Hindumal Kot. The unit was tasked to act as covering troops. The deployment, based along the Gang Canal, ran parallel to but approximately 500 yards away from the Indo - Pak border. Due to an aggressive and dominating posture adopted by the unit, the enemy avoided Rajput's area of responsibility, but attacked the adjoining units of the brigade where intensive fighting took place.

20 RAJPUT (KHINSAR)

20 RAJPUT (Jodhpur) operated on familiar ground in the sands of Rajasthan during the 1971 campaign. The battalion was initially tasked to advance and capture Khinsar as part of 330 Infantry Brigade. With lightning speed, the unit marched a distance of over 30 kilometres and captured the Pakistani township of Khinsar by 05 December 1971. The unit continued its advance covering over 70 kilometres during first five days of the war and reached Chachro for its subsequent reduction by 08 December 1971. 40 Pakistanis were killed and 16 captured during the fight. For its gallant dash and daring operations, the battalion was awarded the Battle Honour 'Khinsar' and Theater Honour 'Sindh'.

PARTICIPATION OF RAJPUT UNITS

Ser No	Unit	Location
<u>Eastern Front</u>		
1.	22 RAJPUT	Chaugacha, Darsana, Kushtia
2.	16 RAJPUT	Hilli, Dangapara
3.	21 RAJPUT	Dinajpur, Khansama
4.	4 RAJPUT	Bhurangamari, Kaliganj
5.	2 RAJPUT	Belonia Bulge
6.	6 RAJPUT	Atgram, Zaki-Ganj, Sylhet
7.	18 RAJPUT	Akhaura
8.	1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS)	Akhaura
<u>Western Front</u>		
9.	5 RAJPUT	Nathua Tibba, Kalidhar
10.	9 RAJPUT	Ratnu Chak, Jammu
11.	17 RAJPUT	DBN
12.	14 RAJPUT	Khalra, Ferozepur
13.	15 RAJPUT	Fazilka
14.	19 RAJPUT	Abohar
15.	20 RAJPUT	Khinsar



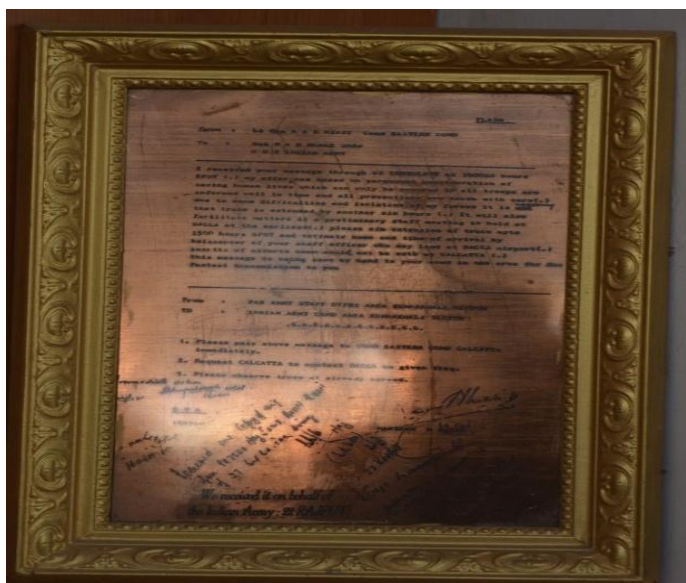
**20 RAJPUT TEAM AFTER CAPTURE
OF KHINSAR VILLAGE**



**MR LAKSHMAN SINGH SODHA
WHO GUIDED THE UNIT
ACROSS IB**



**ACCOUTREMENTS OF PAK OFFR
TAKEN DURING OPS BY 20 RAJPUT**



**SURRENDER CERT FROM
LT GEN AAK NIAZI, RECD BY
22 RAJPUT ON BEHALF OF IA**



**VICTORIOUS TEAM OF 22 RAJPUT UNDER
COL BHUPAL SINGH AT BARISAL**



**PAK TPS SURRENDERING TO
22 RAJPUT**



**GOC 16 DIV SURRENDERING TO
16 RAJPUT**



**ENEMY MOUNTED DETATCHMENT
DESTROYED BY 21 RAJPUT**



**GHAZIPUR CAPTURED BY
6 RAJPUT**



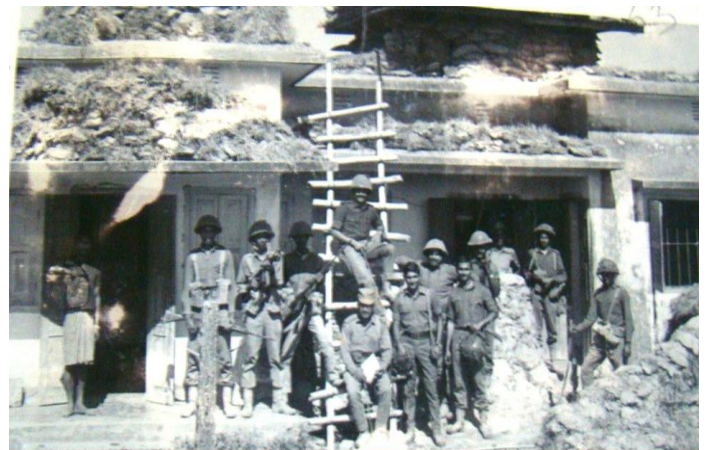
18 RAJPUT MARCHING INTO DACCA



AKHAURA RLY STN : AFTER BEING CAPTURED BY 18 RAJPUT



2 RAJPUT OFFRS WITH TIGER SIDDIQUI



CAPTURE OF CHAUDARGRAM BY 2 RAJPUT



CAPTURED PAKISTANI FLAGS



CAPTURED PAK WEAPONS
5 RAJPUT



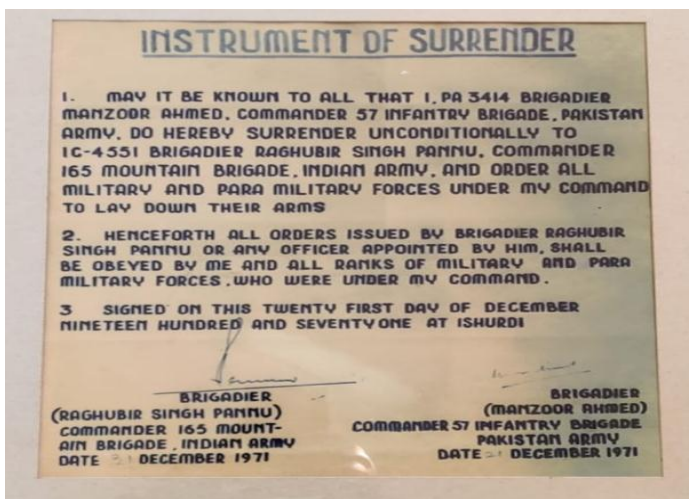
SHERMAN TANK CAPTURED BY
15 RAJPUT



**SIG EQPT CAPTURED BY
15 RAJPUT**



**SIX POUNDER GUN CAPTURED BY
15 RAJPUT**



**INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER FROM
BRIG MAMZOOR AHMED, CDR 57 INF
BRIGADE OF PAKISTAN ARMY RECD
BY 16 RAJPUT ON BEHALF OF IA**



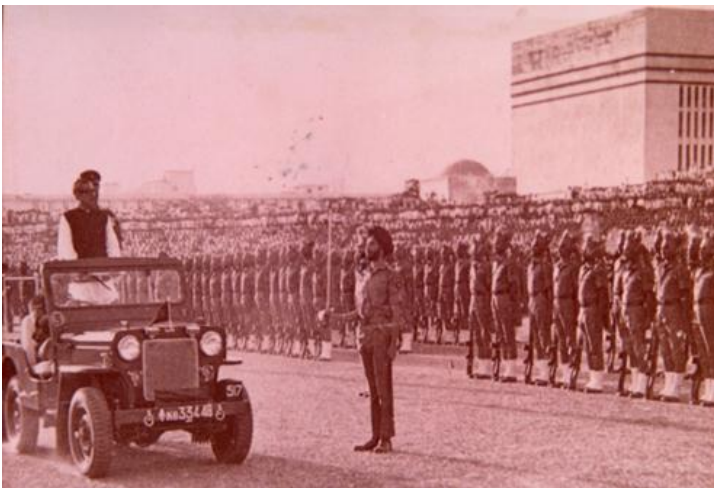
**LT GEN KP CANDETH, WESTERN
ARMY CDR VISITING TEAM - 15**



**LT COL HIMMETH SINGH, COMDT
1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS) OBSERVING THE
ENEMY DEFENCES THROUGH BINOCULARS**



**MEGHNA RIVER BEING
CROSSED BY 1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS) IN
HELICOPTERS ON 9TH DECEMBER 1971**



**GUARD OF HONOUR BY 1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS)
TO SHEIKH MUJIBUR REHMAN : DACCA 1972**



**SOLDIERS OF 1 RAJPUT (4 GUARDS)
BEING ADDRESSED BY THEN COAS**