

The tangail landings: a signal for victory

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By that evening, the whole town stood liberated. By now, tens of thousands of people had begun assembling around the

As we walked on the road to Pungli Bridge, I came face to face with the bone-chilling scenes of last night's battle. Corpses of hundreds of enemy soldiers littered the road; the bodies sprawled from one side of the bridge to the other. We walked with care so as not to step on the dead. All around was a mass of twisted mangled bodies and body parts.

Awami League premises to see Kader and to celebrate our victory. Brigadier Klair then came over to join in the celebrations.

This for me was the last major action of the war. The Pakistan army was on the run and its eventual defeat was now simply a matter of time.

Reflecting on the War, I think Captain Peter's infiltration deep inside the enemy territory reveals a well thought out deception plan that has not been fully appreciated by analysts.

to mislead the enemy into thinking that the Indian Army advance into Dhaka would take place through the Comilla border.

Meanwhile, on December 11th, General Jacob, the Chief of Staff of the Indian Army,

Jacob reluctantly disclosed that a division of joint forces had surrounded Dhaka city.

However, in reality, the division he referred to was actually only single battalion of paratroopers who had landed, not in Dhaka, but rather some seventy miles to the north, in Tangail district.

Pakistani command was distressed by this bluff. It created a tremendous amount of psychological pressure on General Niazi to surrender. The joint force strategy worked just as planned.

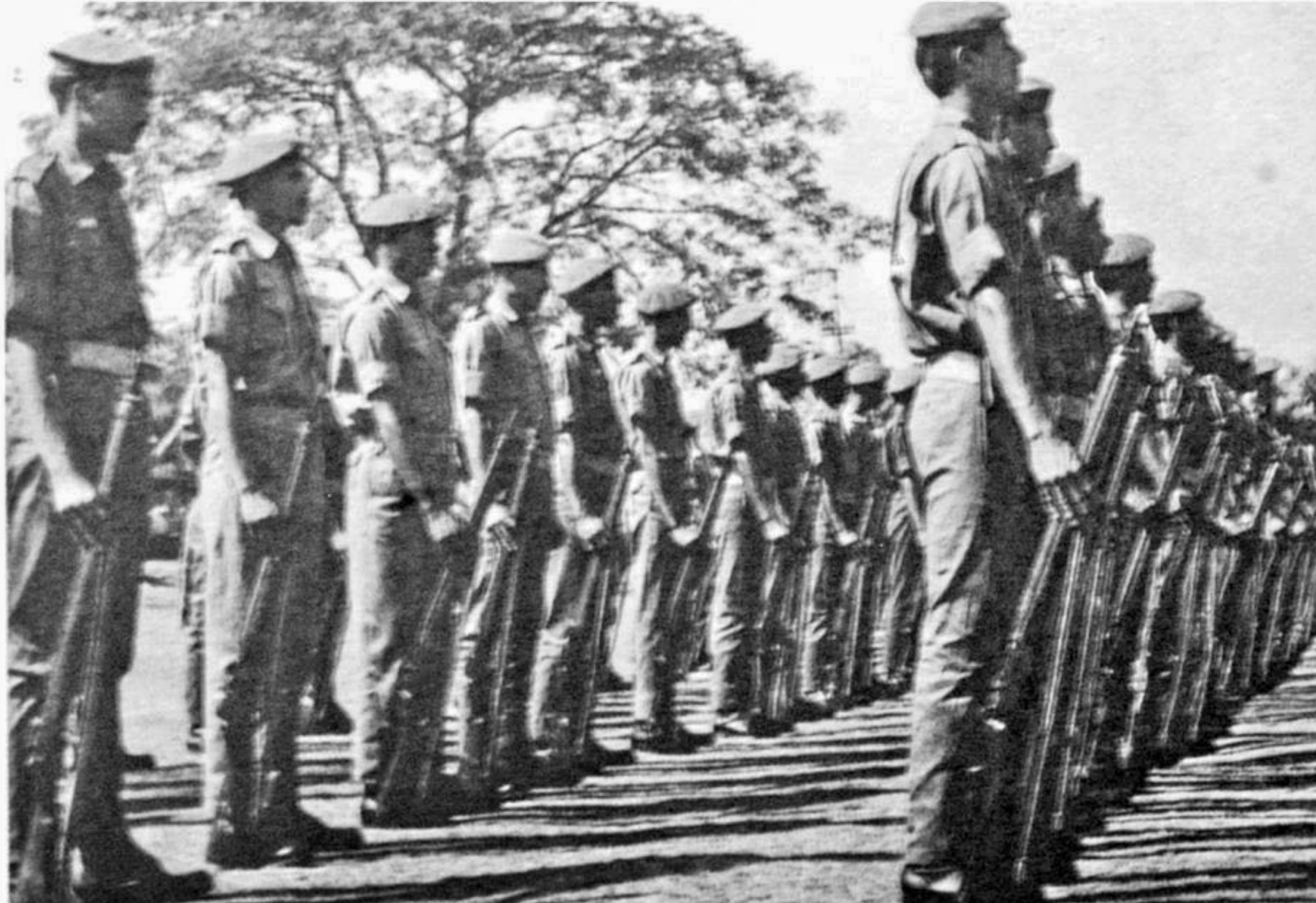
This Para drop at Tangail caught the Pakistani leadership on the wrong foot and hastened the end of the war. For Brigadier Khan, this was the second surrender of his military carrier. During our interrogation, we came to know that he had also surrendered to the Indian Army on the West Pakistan border during the India-Pakistan War of 1965.

The inclusion of the Tangail Mukti Bahini in the original war strategy to conquer Dhaka was an important historical event. One of the most significant components to this plan was the landing of a battalion of paratroopers in Tangail.

Arguably, I was the first person in Bangladesh to have had the privilege of knowing this vital secret plan.

I was lucky and honoured to be associated with such a clever war strategy. It was also a great testament to Kader as well as to the Tangail Mukti Bahini.

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As Indian forces were not concentrated here, the Pakistani leadership presumed that no major attack was envisaged by the Indian Army through this sector and so an elderly Pakistani officer, Brigadier Kader Khan was left in charge. In my view, this was an intentional move by General Aurora

arranged a press conference in Calcutta. He declared to the national and international press that the night before, Indian paratroopers had landed surrounding Dhaka city. He claimed that Dhaka was then a besieged city, waiting to fall any day.

On the insistence of reporters, General

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