

THANK YOU FOR BEING OUR FRIEND IN NEED

Tribute to the Indian War Veterans who fought for and with us in 1971

A soldier's oath is to lay down his or her life for their own country. In 1971, the Government of Bangladesh estimates, 1,984 Indian soldiers got killed and thousands suffered serious injuries so that we could have our INDEPENDENCE—our Sonar Bangla. Dying for somebody else's freedom, however idealistic, is not very common in the annals of history especially for professional soldiers whose oath, ideological orientation, training and lifelong dream, centre around making that supreme sacrifice for his or her own country and be remembered and honoured for their patriotism.

That is where the Indian Army's role is so unique and deserves to be remembered by us with the highest respect and honour.

As a commissioned officer cadet in the second short service course -- 2nd SS -- I am a personal

witness to the role Indian officers played in training us to fight the occupation Pakistan Army. And of course we know the sacrifices made by India during the frontal war with Pakistan both in the western and the eastern fronts in December, 1971.

Whatever may be the nature of our subsequent bilateral relations and irrespective of the serious nature of some of our differences (there are no neighbours in the world whose interests do not or will not clash at some point or on some issues. The wisdom lies in solving them in a win-win manner and peacefully), we must always remind ourselves of the sacrifices the Indian people, India's leaders and especially its armed forces made for our freedom.

This paper has unequivocally supported this government's policy to honour all those Indians--uniformed and civilian--who risked their lives to help

realise our dream of freedom. So far, 217 Indians have been honoured with the highest award -- "Bangladesh Freedom Honour," given to the war time Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The second highest award -- "Bangladesh Liberation War Honour," was given to two Indian Presidents--Fakruddin Ali Ahmed and Pranab Mukherjee, and to three Indian Prime Ministers--I.K. Gujral, Gulzarilal Nanda and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The award "Friends of Liberation War Honour," has so far been conferred on 211 Indian leaders, veterans and soldiers.

Today we feature a group of 27 army war veterans, currently visiting Dhaka, who played important roles in 1971 when millions of our freedom fighters and civilian population were laying down their lives for the freedom and independence of the motherland.

--Editor

Pakistan's Lt Gen AAK Niazi at the signing of the Instrument of Surrender with commander of allied forces Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora in Dhaka's Suhrawardy Udyan on December 16, 1971.



PHOTO: ARCHIVE

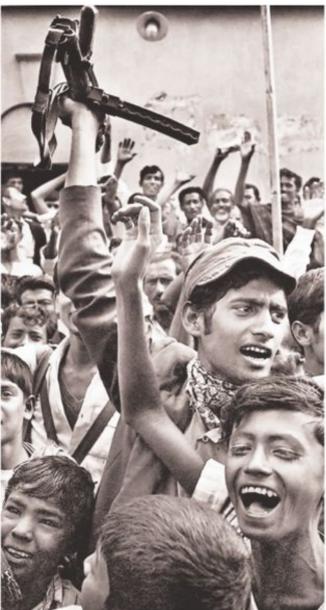


PHOTO: ARCHIVE



BRIGADIER DULLA MALKIAT SINGH (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war he was a pilot in 10 Air Operational flight of 659 Air Operations Squadron. He saw action in general area Jessore-Khulna and Faridpur-Darsana. He was awarded Sena Medal for his gallantry during the war.



BRIGADIER KUSHWANT SINGH (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war he was a pilot in 11 Air Operation flight of 659 Air Operations Squadron. He saw action in general area Jessore-Khulna and Faridpur-Darsana.



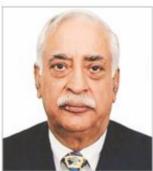
BRIGADIER RAJ BAKHSH SINGH (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war he was second in command of the Field Park Company of 235 Engineer Regiment. In the initial state, he was involved in training of MuktiJodhas. During the war he saw action in general area Hilli-Saidpur-Rangpur-Dinajpur. After the war he was also involved in clearing the road to Dhaka and reconstruction of bridges. He was awarded Mention in Despatch for his contributions during the war.



BRIGADIER MOHAMMAD AZIZULLAH SIDDIQUI (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war he was Adjutant of 15 Engineer Regiment. He participated in the war general area Agartala-Akhaura-Brahmanbaria-Narsingdi-Dhaka.



BRIG KRISHNA NATH MEHRA (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war he was Mortar Platoon Commander of 2 PARA. He was para dropped with his battalion at Tangail and was involved in capture of crucial bridge on Pongli river. His unit won Battle honour 'Pongli' and Theatre honour 'East Pakistan'.



BRIGADIER RAJEEV SARIN, VSM (RETIRED)

As a Second Lieutenant during the war he was a Platoon Commander in 3 DOGRA as a part of 83 Mountain Brigade. He saw an action in the Belonia bulge-Chandagram and Chittagong sector. His unit was awarded Battle honour 'Chandagram' and Theatre honour 'East Pakistan'.



COLONEL MAHINDER PAL SHARMA (RETIRED)

As a Captain he was instructor and coordinator of a sector of Mukti Bahini in the Murti Camp. During the war he saw action along Akhaura-Brahmanbari --Ashugang sector.



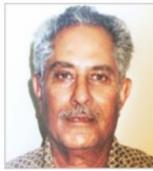
COLONEL LEKHENDRA BAHADUR MALLA (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war, he was Battalion Intelligence Officer and Company 2 IC of 1/3 Gorkha Rifles. He saw action in general area Sunderbans-Jessore- in the initial stage and later in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar area.



COLONEL KOIKAL SATISH VAYALARIKAM MADHAVAN (RETIRED)

As a Second Lieutenant during the war he was Gun position officer of 198 Mountain Regiment of 23 Artillery Brigade. He saw action in Belonia, South of Agartala.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL NARPAT SINGH SHEKHAWAT (RETIRED)

As a Major during the war he was Company Commander of 1/11 Gorkha Rifles. He saw action in the general area Comilla, Chandpur and Narayanganj. His unit was awarded the Battle honour 'Bogra' and Theatre honour 'East Pakistan'.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL RASAM CHAND KATOCH (RETIRED)

As a Major during the war he was Adjutant of 13 DOGRA. His unit was involved in famous Battle of Siramani in the Jessore sector and subsequent operations in capture of Khulna. The battalion was awarded Battle honour 'Siramani' and Theatre honour 'East Pakistan'.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL YADU KUMAR (RETIRED)

As a Lieutenant during the war, he was Tank troop leader of 63 Cavalry. His squadron saw action as part of 20 Mountain Division in the Eastern Sector. His unit was awarded Battle honour 'Bogra' and Theatre honour 'East Pakistan'.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHASHI SHEKRA NAND JOSHI (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war, he was Adjutant and Intelligence officer of 20 Mountain Division Signal Regiment. He saw action in the general area Bogra-Rangpur-Balurghat-Dinajpur.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL PRADEEP GOYAL (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war, he was Mortar platoon officer of 2/9 Gorkha Rifles, 2nd in Command of Brigade Mortars and training in charge of 'MuktiBahini' Camp 'Banpur'. He saw action in general area Krishnanagar, Jibannagar, Darsana, Khalishpur, Kisenganj, Ghigatti, Jhenida, Kushtia and Kumarkhali.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL RAGHUNATH PRASAD CHATURVEDI, Vrc (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war, he was Forward observation officer of 6 Field Regiment. He saw action in the Jessore sector and participated in the famous battle of Garibpur. His left leg was injured during these operations. He was awarded 'Vir Chakra' for gallantry during the war.



MAJOR CHANDRAKANT SINGH, Vrc (RETIRED)

As a Major during the war, he was the Company Commander and 2nd in Command 4 GUARDS. He saw action in the general area Tripura. He was wounded during the war and was awarded 'Vir Chakra'.



MAJOR MRINAL CHAUDHURI (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war, he was Adjutant of 198 Mountain Regiment. He saw action in the general area Tripura-Laksham-Chandpur in Comilla sector.



COLONEL BALDEV SINGH GREWAL (RETIRED)

As a Major during the war, he was the Company Commander of 6 JAT. He saw action in the general area Jessore. He was wounded during the war and was awarded Mention in Despatch for gallantry.



CAPTAIN BHAGAWAN SINGH JODHA (RETIRED)

As a Captain during the war, he was the Intelligence officer of 4 KUMAON. He was involved in famous for capture of battle of Shamsheer Nagar town and airfield. He was wounded in the legs by a burst of machine gun fire, which led to amputation of his leg. He was awarded Sena Medal for gallantry.



COMMANDER SATYA PAL VOHRA (RETIRED)

As a Lieutenant during the war, he was Operations officer on board of INS Vikrant. The aircraft carrier played a pivotal role in the Bay of Bengal in enforcing the Naval blockade and operations in the Chittagong sector.



COMMODORE RAVINDRA NATH SHARMA (RETIRED)

As a Lieutenant Commander during the war, he served as Fleet communication officer on the operational staff of the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet. After the war ended, he played a significant role in minesweeping at Chittagong Port and was responsible for clearing the harbor shipping channel of mines to ensure safe passage of ships in and out of Chittagong port.



WING COMMANDER VINOD NEBB, Vrc (RETIRED)**

He was a young Flight Lieutenant of Indian Air Force in 1971. On 04 December 1971 he was part of a combat formation that was attacked by three Sabre jets over Dhaka city. In the ensuing dogfight he shot down one Sabre jet. Later, he flew a number of fighter missions in Comilla, Chittagong and Sylhet sectors. He had also earlier participated in 1965 war against Pakistan. He is the proud recipient of Vir Chakra twice for his gallant actions in 1965 and 1971 wars.



WING COMMANDER DEVENDER JEET SINGH KLER (RETIRED)

As a Flight Lieutenant during the war, he took part in air operations as part of 22 Squadron. Piloting the Gnats he destroyed a number of ships carrying troops out at Khulna. He was also involved in escorting the airborne stream for para drop of troops at Tangail.