

BATTLES OF BELONIA BULGE



Maj. Zafar Imam, CO, 10 E. Bengal introduces his officers to Maj. Gen. RD Hira, GOC, 23 Mountain Division at Ctg University Campus after defeating 24 Frontier Force Regiment. From left to right: Capt. Baizid, Capt. Mokhlesur, Lt. Imamuz Zaman, 2/Lts Didar & Syed Mizanur Rahman.

SOURCE: "JUDDHYO KORECHI, BIJOY ENECHI" BY GHULAM MUSTAFA

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November 8 witnessed a desperate and determined attack by the enemy from the north with the aim of penetrating our defences and break out of the siege but all of their attempts were faced by the freedom fighters with tremendous bravery under the courageous and determined leadership of Capt. Helal Morshed, Lt. Imam, 2/Lt. Mizan and 2/Lt. Didar.

At about 10:30am on November 8, Brigadier B.S. Shandhu, the Brigade Commander of 83

Mountain Brigade of Indian army, along with his Brigade Officers arrived at the Command Post of Maj. Jafar Imam at Anantapur, had elaborate discussions on the battlefield situation and visited the defensive position despite great risk. He assured of necessary artillery support on call of the task force commander. As per the plan, Task Force Commander Maj. Jafar Imam called for artillery support on enemy positions both at Parshuram and Belonia after midnight between November 9 and 10. In the first phase, the divisional artillery of 23 Mountain Division started rapid shelling on enemy positions for about 30 minutes, followed by intense shelling which caused devastating consequences for the enemy.

In the early morning on November 10, the freedom fighters and 3 Dogra Regiment of Indian Army carried out a concerted attack and started advance towards the enemy positions. The morale of the enemy forces broke down completely with huge casualties and fresh thrust of attack. They

immediately raised a white flag and after brief formalities a Pakistani captain along with 72 soldiers gave up arms and surrendered to the Mukti and Mitro Bahini (joint forces). Maj. Jafar Imam hoisted the Bangladesh Flag at Parshuram and Belonia while the freedom fighters and a few local residents beaming with pride sang our national anthem 'Amar Sonar Bangla, Ami tomæ bhalobashi'. The entire area of Parshuram and Belonia was thus liberated on November 10, 1971. This was the first major setback for the enemy and surrender of such a large number of Pakistani forces to the freedom fighters and a major strategic victory of the Bangladesh Liberation Forces. In fact, this was the beginning of the end for the Pakistani occupation forces.

The techniques applied by freedom fighters in this historic battle were a gross violation to tactical teachings and conventional military ethics. There was no depth between the two defence lines which, in fact, were back-to-back! It was also not only a battle of brawn but also a battle of brain and wisdom. There is an expression: "Nothing succeeds like success." In the year

1973, a good number of senior army generals from around the world visited the battlefield of Belonia with a lot of curiosity. The new technique, so successfully applied by the freedom fighters during the second Battle of Belonia Bulge, has been recognised and accepted as a war technique. In between the First and Second Battles of Belonia Bulge, 10 East Bengal Regiment under the command of Maj. Jafar

Imam and his officers demolished bridges, laid anti-tank and anti-personnel mines on the roads frequently used by the Pakistani forces, conducted many ambushes and raids on enemy positions by inflicting heavy casualties to them. The First, Second and Third Battles of Belonia Bulge including innumerable ambushes and raids resulted in about 1,000 casualties to the enemy forces.

Third Battle of Belonia Bulge

After the surrender of Pakistani forces at Belonia, 'K' Force was reorganised and renamed as 'Kilo' Force under the command of Brig. Anand Swarup of Indian army comprising of 4 East Bengal Regiment and 10 East Bengal Regiment including 31 Jat Regiment and 32 Mahar Regiment from Mizo Hill Range. Kilo Force started advance to liberate Feni but faced stiff resistance from the enemy forces near Feni at a place called Pathan Nagar and its surrounding areas. Sporadic and heavy battle continued between the Kilo Force and the Pakistani forces from November 20 up to December 5. Kilo Force attacked the Pakistani positions with new vigour. Facing heavy casualties, the defeated remnant Pakistani forces abandoned Feni and disgracefully fled towards Comilla and Chittagong cantonments. With unprecedented joy of the local population and with the thunderous 'Joy Bangla' slogan, Feni and Noakhali were liberated on December 6 and 9 respectively. Kilo Force continued their advance towards Chittagong. After reaching Kumira, Maj. Jafar Imam left

Charlie Company there under the command of 2/Lt. Didar and started a difficult advance towards Hathajari through the hills and jungles by the left side of Dhaka-Chittagong highway. At Hathajari, his forces along with the forces of 4 East Bengal Regiment under the command of Capt. Gaffar Halder attacked the 24 Frontier Force Regiment and defeated it. At Kumira Bazar, 2/Lt. Didar and his troops had a fierce battle with the Pakistani forces. At one stage of the battle, the demoralised enemy forces fled towards Chittagong Cantonment. And the hostilities ended on December 16, 1971 with the surrender of Pakistani forces to the joint command of freedom fighters and the Indian Army at Natun Para Cantonment at Chittagong.

The regular and citizen soldiers together ended the war. The battalion was thus rightly conferred with the nom de plume 'Durdhorsho Dosh' (The Daring Ten) of the 10th Battalion of the East Bengal Regiments.

The patriotism, heroism and immense bravery of all ranks of 10 East Bengal Regiment in defeating the Pakistani forces and in liberating the Feni-Belonia Bulge shall always imbue the nation and successive generations with pride and patriotism.

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