## THOSE WE LOST

**Members of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course who have passed away**

- Brigadier General Md Akbar Yousuf
- Brigadier General Md Jalal Uddin Siddiqui
- Brigadier General Md Khurshid Alam Basunia
- Brigadier General Md Zillur Rahman
- Brigadier General Mohammad Abdur Rab
- Lt Col Chowdhury Mohammad Ali
- Major Md Muqtadir Ali
- Major Md Latiful Alam Chowdhury
- Major Md Shah Alam Talukder
- Major Md Liaquat Ali Khan
- Major ABM Shamsul Alam
- Major Kazi Mominul Haque
- Major Md Bazlur Rashid
- Major Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, BB
- Major Rowshan Yazdani Bhuiyan, BP
- Major M Asadul Haque
- Major Md. Fazlul Haque
- Captain Jahangir Osman Bhuiyan, BP
- Captain Anowarul Haque Bhuiyan
- Captain Md Sarwar Jahan
- Captain Md Ali
- Golam Noor
- Md Issa Gazi
- Rezaul Ahmed
- Zulfiqur Ali Selim
- Munshi Atiqur Rahman
- Anisur Rahman
- Abdul Jalil
- Kazi Kamal Uddin Ahmed, BB



Brigadier General Md Akbar Yousuf



Brigadier General Md Jalal Uddin Siddiqui



Brigadier General Md Khurshid Alam Basunia



Brigadier General Zillur Rahman



Brigadier General Mohammad Abdur Rab



Lt Col Chowdhury Mohammad Ali



Major Md Muqtadir Ali



Major Md Latiful Alam Chowdhury



Major Md Shah Alam Talukder



Major Md Liaquat Ali Khan



Major ABM Shamsul Alam



Major Kazi Mominul Haque



Major Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, BB



Major M Asadul Haque



Captain Jahangir Osman Bhuiyan, BP



Captain Anowarul Haque Bhuiyan



Captain Md Sarwar Jahan



Captain Md Ali

Despite our best efforts, photographs of all members who have passed away could not be obtained.

## Message from the
# First Chief of Army Staff of the Bangladesh Army

On the night of 25–26 March 1971, the Pakistan Army unleashed hell on the people of this land. That army—of which we too were a part—also attacked Bengali service personnel and all paramilitary forces. This included the border guards (EPR), Police, Ansars, Mujahids, etc., and they did so with great savagery. Resistance to these cowardly attacks was spontaneous everywhere. Although outnumbered and outgunned, our forces fought back valiantly and exacted a heavy toll on the Pakistan Army. Finally, they crossed the border to regroup before returning to liberate their occupied motherland.

In our temporary sanctuary in India, we reorganised and began inducting thousands of able-bodied men eager to strike back at the Pakistan Army. The Mukti Bahini was born. However, we, the senior Army officers of the Mujibnagar Government in exile, together with our allies—the Indians—soon realised the need to recruit and train potential officers to mount a long-term campaign and lead the highly motivated liberation forces.

These officer cadets came from among the educated young men who had crossed the border to fight the Pakistanis. The first batch—the 1st Bangladesh War Course, as it was later named—began training in June. Sixty-one of them were commissioned in October. We were then able to place one officer in each company in the sectors as well as in the regular infantry units. Before that, many companies had been commanded by JCOs, but now officers led the sub-units, playing a key role in the Liberation War. The next batch, the 2nd Bangladesh War Course, was still undergoing training when the Pakistanis surrendered on 16 December, bringing the war to an end. But it is not as though they missed the war. After all, they earned eight gallantry awards—three Bir Bikrams and five Bir



Protiks. In fact, many of them had been fighting the Pakistan Army from the very beginning. Several led platoons and even companies, while others served as urban guerrillas in the cities, especially Dhaka.

After the war, a new challenge faced us: we had to build the Army. I assumed charge as Chief of Army Staff in early April 1972. Many of these young officers had come from different walks of life, and it was only natural that many of them would wish to return to the professions they had pursued before the war. However, although some did leave, most remained in the Army out of a sense of duty to help build the new country and its new Army.

At that time, I had just over 200 officers, and more than half of them were graduates of the two War Courses. We had very little experience and even fewer resources. We literally had to start from scratch. There were no training institutions, and we had no idea when the Bengali military personnel of the Pakistan Army, who were imprisoned in Pakistan, would return. Yet these new officers, imbued with an abiding love for their motherland, enthusiasm for work, and intelligence, never allowed our severe shortcomings to be felt. Many of them had to shoulder more than one responsibility and performed exceptionally well without complaint. Indeed, many were eager to undertake whatever additional responsibilities were assigned to them. They discharged their duties with distinction and were duly commended by me on many occasions. Their contribution during the formative years of the Bangladesh Army was nothing short of exemplary. What stood out above all was their indomitable spirit. They worked day and night—in their own units, in peacetime soldiering, in operations, in support of the civil administration, in relief operations, against miscreants in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in arms recovery, in disaster management—whatever they were called upon to do.

In a battalion, apart from two or three senior officers, the remainder were War Commissioned officers. Their contribution during the Liberation War and in the years that followed was immensely significant.

**MAJ GEN K M SAFIULLAH, Bir Uttom**

# The enduring legacy of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course

FROM PAGE 6

The Battle School successfully carried out its immediate mission. The officers, men, and all support staff deserved appreciation for this accomplishment under very trying conditions. It also provided ample food for thought for the Army leadership as to how and when to organise and establish the required training institutions in the Bangladesh Army. The Battle School stood as a model of a successful initiative and the precursor of the military academy that was to come.

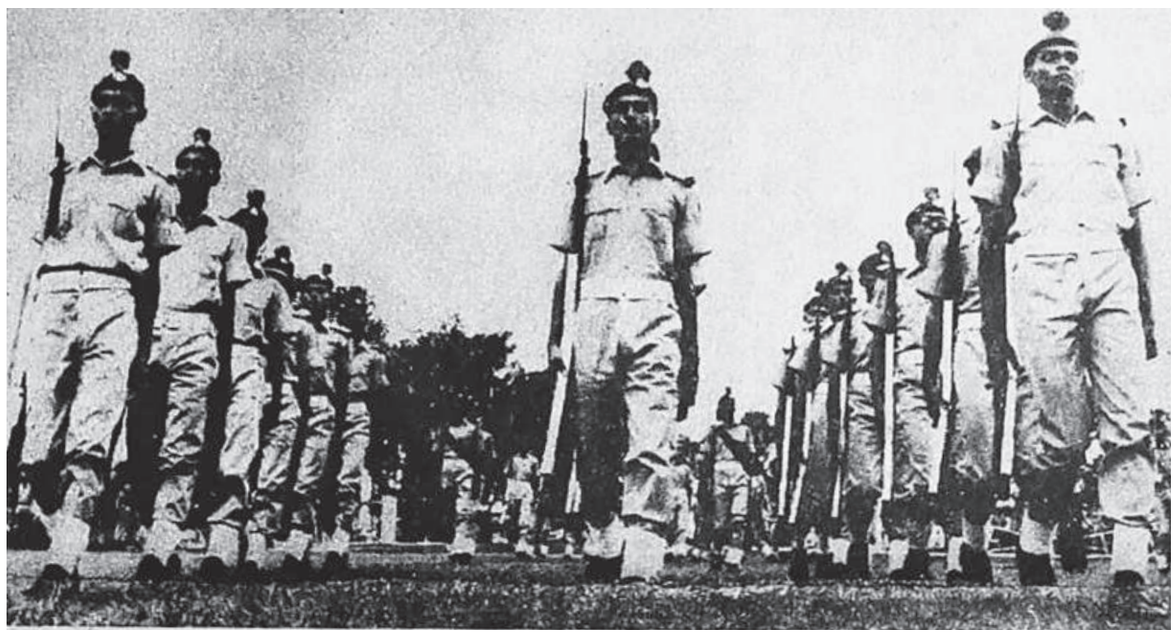
A total of 64 officer cadets, including six cadets who had escaped from the Pakistan Military Academy and participated in the Liberation War, joined the training at the Battle School. After eight weeks of rigorous training, 47 cadets took part in the passing-out parade and were granted commissions on 05 August 1972. Cadet Muddassir Hussain Khan was the Senior Under Officer (SUO) who received the Sword of Honour.

After being commissioned, the officers were posted to their respective battalions, which were then in a deplorable condition. The soldiers lacked proper uniforms and had no boots. During the bitter winter, they had to perform night duty wrapped in blue blankets supplied by the Red Cross. Apart from their personal weapons carried over from the battlefield, the battalions possessed no heavy weapons or ammunition. There was virtually no furniture and no transport except for one or two old Jeeps dating back to the Second World War, one Dodge pick-up truck, and one or two three-ton trucks. Whenever the battalions had to be deployed outside the cantonments in aid of the civil power, the Army had to rely on civilian trucks for transportation. This was, by and large, the situation prevailing in almost all the battalions at that time. Each officer had to shoulder two or three responsibilities simultaneously, such as those of Adjutant, Quartermaster, Company Commander, and others.

To deal with the fragile circumstances following independence, the Bangladesh Army was deployed nationwide. The first operation involved anti-smuggling duties. Large quantities of jute were being smuggled from Bangladesh into neighbouring countries. Working alongside the then Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), the Army succeeded in bringing the smuggling situation under control.

This was followed by Food Movement Duty. The Army was deployed at Chattogram and Mongla ports, as well as along damaged roads, bridges, and ferry crossings throughout the country, to ensure that food supplies were transported swiftly and without disruption on a priority basis. This operation continued for approximately two months.

The most challenging assignment, however, was the campaign to recover illegal arms, known as Operation Devil's Due. It was launched, most likely, in December 1973. For this operation, the Police and the Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini were placed under the operational command of the Army. One infantry battalion was deployed in two or three districts. A maximum of six or seven officers, comprising PMA-commissioned freedom fighter officers and officers from the 1st and 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Courses, served in each infantry battalion. Despite these limitations, a large number of illegal weapons were recovered during the operation. As a result, the activities of various insurgent groups were substantially reduced and brought under control. Several thousand illegal firearms, along with a large quantity of ammunition, were recovered.



**Officer cadets march in the passing-out parade marking their commissioning into the Bangladesh Army on 5 August 1972.** PHOTO: THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER

In short, the members of the 1st and 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Courses devoted themselves wholeheartedly to building both the Bangladesh Army and the country. They devoted their labour, intellect, and unwavering dedication to overcoming countless hardships in the service of the nation.

It is important to remember that, unlike today, there was no modern equipment, no mobile phones, no wireless communication sets, and no proper road network. The officers themselves had yet to receive adequate professional training. Nevertheless, even before 1975, these 110 officers from the two Bangladesh Liberation War Courses, together with a handful of freedom fighter officers who had revolted from the Pakistan Army, played a pivotal role in safeguarding the country's independence and sovereignty. They laid down their lives, suffered permanent injuries, and worked tirelessly to protect the nation through some of its most difficult and uncertain years.

During the period from 1976 to 1981, officers from the First and Second Bangladesh Liberation War Courses undertook the demanding responsibilities of Grade-2 Staff Officers at various brigades, divisions, and Army Headquarters. At that time, Bangladesh did not yet have a Staff College. Consequently, most of these officers performed such important staff duties without having completed a Staff Course.

The officers of these two courses who had left the Army voluntarily, been denied commissions, or lost their jobs prematurely came together to establish a social platform to maintain close contact and camaraderie among themselves, while also providing financial support to fellow foundation members and the families of deceased members in need. With this objective in mind, they established an organisation, the Bangladesh Liberation War Courses Foundation (BLWCF), in the mid-1980s. The foundation has an executive committee elected every two years, and the posts of President and General Secretary rotate between the two courses.

Since its inception, the foundation's members have gathered regularly four times a year: on Foundation Day on 9 October, commemorating the commissioning of the 1st BLWC; on Fellowship Day on 5 August, celebrating the commissioning of the 2nd BLWC; on Victory Day; and at the Independence Day dinner, where members of the foundation and Liberation War veterans attend with their families.

The Bangladesh Army, which today enjoys immense respect and has earned an outstanding reputation at home and abroad through its service in United Nations peacekeeping missions, stands on foundations laid in the 1970s through the courage, hard work, and sacrifice of the officers of the two Bangladesh Liberation War Courses. Despite immense odds and limited resources, they helped build the Army from its earliest days and defended the sovereignty of the nation against subversive and separatist forces. Their contribution deserves due recognition.

*The article is written by members of the 2nd Bangladesh Liberation War Course.*

## MEMBERS OF THE 2ND BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR COURSE

- Major General A.L.M. Fazlur Rahman ndc, psc
- Major General Jiban Kanai Das ndc, psc
- Brigadier General Md. Akbar Yousuf
- Brigadier General Mohammad Abdur Rab
- Brigadier General Md. Jalal Uddin Siddiqui
- Brigadier General Mohammad Khurshid Alam Basunia
- Brigadier General Miran Hamidur Rahman
- Brigadier General Md. Zillur Rahman, psc
- Colonel Mohammad. Aminul Islam
- Lieutenant Colonel Mudassir Hossain Khan, BP
- Lieutenant Colonel M. Zainul Abedin, psc
- Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Quader
- Lieutenant Colonel Chowdhury Mohammad Ali
- Lietenant Colonel Chandra Kanta Das
- Lietenant Colonel Harun or Rashid
- Major Khairul Alam
- Major Dost Mohammad Sikder
- Major A S M Shamsul Arefin
- Major Muhammad Abdus Salam
- Major Md. Quamrul Islam
- Major S.M. Habibullah
- Major Md. Muqtadir Ali
- Major S M Shahiduzzaman
- Major Md. Latiful Alam Chowdhury
- Major Md. Atiqur Rahman
- Major Syed Ekramul Haque Khandaker, BP
- Major Md. Shah Alam Talukder, psc
- Major Mofizur Rahman
- Major Md. Sulaiman
- Major Md. Fazlul Haque
- Major Mahmudul Masud
- Major Md. Liaquat Ali Khan
- Major M. Asadul Haque
- Major Mohd. Akhtaruzzaman
- Major Sk. Jamshed Hossain
- Major Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, BB
- Major Md. Ashrafuddoula
- Major Dr. Md. Rezaul Haque
- Major A B M Shamsul Alam
- Major Rowshan Yazdani Bhiuyan, BP
- Major Kazi Mominul Haque
- Major Md. Bazlur Rashid
- Captain Md. Humayun Kabir Chowdhury,BP
- Captain Mohd. Hafizullah
- Captain A B Tajul Islam
- Captain Mohammad Ali
- Captain Anowarul Haque Bhuiyan
- Captain Mohammad Sarwar Jahan
- Captain Jahangir Osman Bhuiyan, BP
- Abdul Halim Khan
- Adv. Abu Taher Basunia
- Abu Taher Sarker
- Abdul Hamid Chowdhury
- Dewan Gous Ali Sultan
- Firozur Rahman
- Golam Noor
- Md. Issa Gazi
- Dr. Jhulan Kanti Paul, PhD
- Kaiser M. Hussain
- Md. Motahar Hossain
- Mahfuz Anam
- Mosharraf Hossain
- Mustaque Uddin Ahmed
- Rezaul Ahmed
- Sheikh Ataur Rahman
- Siraj Uddin Ahmed
- Syed Abul Bashar
- Zulfikar Ali Selim
- Dr. Hasan Imam
- Prof. Md. Abdul Muktadir
- Kamrul Haque Sapan BB
- Md Akhtaruzzaman
- Anisur Rahman
- Munshi Atiqur Rahman
- Kazi Kamal Uddin Ahmed, BB
- Abdul Jalil