

Revisiting the 1965 War

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The Monsoon War: Young Officers Reminisce, by Amarinder Singh and T.S. Shergill, New Delhi: Lustre Press, Roli Books, 2015, pp. 528, INR 1995

1965 Turning the Tide: How India Won the War by Nitin A. Gokhale, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd, 2015, pp. 242, INR 320

Brave Men of War: Tales of Valour 1965, by Rohit Agarwal, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd, 2015, pp. 239, INR 320

The 1965 war was an unexpected one, forced on India by Pakistan. Yet, India rose as one to face the threat to her safety and integrity, and defeated the designs of Pakistan to wrest Kashmir. Fought mainly on our western border, the geopolitical ramifications of the war attracted international attention and reactions of the major world powers, mainly for ending the war. While the actual fighting stopped on 23 September 1965 (there were a few actions after it also), the final curtain was drawn in January 1966 at Tashkent.

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Initially caught by surprise, the Indian forces responded with speed and vigour and fought with courage and determination. Though the war was mainly fought by the army and the Indian Air Force (IAF), the Indian Navy was fully geared up and played a silent part. Besides the Indian Armed Forces, the paramilitary forces, civil administration, Indian Railways and the people of India (especially those of Punjab living near the border areas), including the youth, all contributed to the war effort, often at great personal risk.

The war was covered extensively by print and radio media, and a number of books were published. Military units also recorded their participation in their regimental histories, highlighting the sacrifices made and the bravery of their men. The Historical Division of the Indian Ministry of Defence also brought out a very well-researched account.

This article reviews three of the latest books on the war. *The Monsoon War* is a holistic account of how the Western Command fought the war successfully, bringing pride and glory to the nation. The book is also unique in that it covers, in detail, the role played by the air forces and navies of both India and Pakistan during the war. Therefore, this book is being accorded more attention in this review essay.

The other two publications, *1965 Turning the Tide* and *Brave Men of War*, have been sponsored by the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, with a view to enable a common reader to know about the war. In *1965 Turning the Tide*, the author brings out lucidly the major events of the war and actions taken by India to defeat Pakistan. He establishes beyond doubt that though initially at a disadvantage, slowly and gradually India turned the tide and defeated Pakistan's designs in all facets of warfare. The important battles and actions have been covered in some detail, which are easy to follow, along with a number of maps and photos.

As the title indicates, *Brave Men of War* highlights the acts of valour, bravery, and sacrifice of the Indian soldiers. It is an inspiring record of events not very well known, and also pays a tribute and homage to our soldiers.

THE MONSOON WAR

This book is an account of events as observed by Amarinder Singh (then a young captain in the Sikh Regiment) who was aide de camp (ADC) to Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Harbakhsh Singh, Army Commander of Western Command, in whose area of responsibility the war was fought.

As a young tank commander, Lt Gen T.S. Shergill, the co-author, fought the war in the battlefield. Thus, the book captures Amarinder's close observations of events at tactical level as also the decision-making process, and of handling of difficult (at times, critical and adverse) situations at Command level, involving complexities of Higher Direction of War. Shergill's participation in the actual combat enabled him to feel and observe the fighting valour, sacrifices and guts of soldiers at unit and sub-unit level. It is painstakingly researched and covers events not only from an Indian perspective but also from those of Pakistan and other countries.

The book is divided into eight chapters, which cover the geopolitical scenario of India and Pakistan in the early 1960s and the military aspects of the operations in each theatre, including the Rann of Kutch, XV Corps in Kashmir, Operation Riddle in XI Corps, operations of I Corps (Operation Nepal) in Rachna Doab area, among other events.

Chapter 1, 'Introduction', covers the prevailing strategic situation in the region during the early 1960s. It brings out that while India, having suffered a humiliating defeat in the 1962 war with China, was still recovering and restructuring her armed forces, Pakistan had bolstered her offensive capabilities due to the massive military aid received from America. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had much influence on the policy and decision makers, and had established friendly relations with China by transferring a portion of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to her. Meantime, the sudden demise of Jawaharlal Nehru created a political vacuum in India. Also, India was isolated due to her non-alignment policy. The situation in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) continued to be unstable, with substantial increase in firing incidents across the ceasefire line (CFL) from Pakistan side. Local issues had given rise to agitations, which Pakistan took a sign of unrest and anti-India sentiments. Pakistan felt confident that the time was ripe to apply her newly acquired military might to wrest Kashmir, as they felt that India would not be able to withstand a surprise hard blow.

However, to test the status of Indian capabilities, in April 1965, Pakistan first launched a limited offensive in the Rann of Kutch, while simultaneously planning for a large-scale infiltration in Kashmir, as Operation Gibraltar.

Chapter 2, 'The Kutch Affair', talks about the offensive in the Rann of Kutch. This area of operations has been included as it provides a prelude to the 1965 war at the national level. Besides historical

background and terrain, the nibbling actions initiated by Pakistan in the desolate salt desert from February 1965, leading to an open military aggression in April–May 1965, have been mentioned sequentially. The Indian response has also been covered in adequate detail, along with the reactions of international powers, the ceasefire arranged by Britain and the assessment of the incident by Ayub. The fact that Bhutto was able to convince Ayub that the Indian Army had come out second, and would not be able to face the re-energised and equipped Pakistani Army, led him to authorise launching of Operation Gibraltar in Kashmir.

Chapter 3, 'The Kashmir Theatre: XV Corps—Operations in J&K', gives the details of the Gibraltar Force raised by General Officer Commanding (GOC) 12 Division of Pakistan Army. Its tasking, organisation, concept of operations and area of infiltrations have been well documented and explained with maps. The reservations and views of Commander-in-Chief, General Musa, to the plan, and even of Ayub, have been mentioned.

The authors mention that Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Harbaksh Singh appreciated the threat of infiltration by Pakistan via Haji Pir into the Valley because of his prior experiences in J&K. Hence, he tasked Lt Gen Katoch, GOC XV Corps, to plan for its capture. Gen Katoch assigned the task to GOC 19 Div, who in turn ordered Brigadier (Brig) Z.C. Bakshi, VrC, to plan the operation. During his visit to the Valley, General (Gen) J.N. Chaudhuri, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), gave his approval for the operation. The Army Commander also gave orders for drawing up plans for clearing of the Uri–Punch Bulge, which involved coordinated operations by both 19 and 25 Infantry Divisions.

While anti-infiltration operations were launched in the Valley and Jammu region south of Pir Panjal, simultaneous planning was started for launching trans-CFL operations in Tithwal (opposite Neelam Valley) and in Kargil (feature Pt 13620). Adequate forces like 2 Sikh were also moved to Punch, for these operations.

As is well known now, though Operation Gibraltar was well conceived and launched, it failed miserably from the start. Instead of supporting the Pakistani infiltrators, the people of Kashmir did not give them any help and there was no 'uprising'. In fact, they were the first ones to detect them. They alerted the police and the army, who reacted with speed and vigour to round them up. Thus, by third week of August 1965, the situation had been stabilised in the Valley, and the forces were ready to switch to the offensive across the CFL. The deliberations and

finalisation of details of the offensive plans of XV Corps have also been narrated in the chapter.

The execution of various operations, for example, OP BAKSHI and OP FAULAD (the attack on Haji Pir and its capture by brave troops of 1 Para), has been very well covered with the help of maps. Reactions of Pakistan troops, counter-attacks launched by them and the gallantry and leadership shown by officers like Major (Maj) Ranjit Singh Dyal and Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) N.C. Khanna, all have been mentioned in detail. The role played by other units (like 19 Punjab), including the artillery and other supporting arms, has also been covered. The narrative is coherent and enables the reader to follow the events as they took place.

The battle account then shifts south to the Chhamb Sector, where OPERATION GRANDSLAM—the Pakistani offensive with tanks was launched in September 1965, in the plains sector—for the capture of Akhnoor Bridge on the vital communication link. To enable a non-military reader to follow the actions and events, a brief terrain analysis has been given along with maps, showing initial deployment and subsequent actions of opposite forces. While the threat perception of Indian military leaders has been given, the reasons for Pakistan's achieving strategic and tactical surprise in this sector could have been brought out as well. The gallant actions fought by Indian troops, especially by C Squadron of 20 Lancers, under Major Bhaskar Roy, are well covered. The prompt and bold decision of India's national leadership to employ IAF in the war that, despite a few initial mishaps, blunted the Pakistani offensive and greatly enabled turning of the tide, has also been addressed.

The progress of the battle, which saw many swings, has been chronologically and systematically narrated, down to sub-unit level. After the initial surprise achieved and success gained, the two-day pause in Pakistani operations (due to change of command of GOC) resulted in their offensive losing its speed and momentum, while it gave Indian troops an opportunity to reorganise their second tier of defences. At the national level, the decision-making process of Indian leadership under Prime Minister (PM) Lal Bahadur Shastri and Defence Minister Y.B. Chavan, to launch an offensive across the international border, into Pakistan, has been well covered.

The Indian offensive action, declaration of an all-out war, resolute political leadership and the bravery shown by her armed forces came as a surprise to Pakistan's leadership. However, Pakistan's offensive in Khem

Karan sector, which is covered in the next chapter, also took the Indians by surprise.

The next chapter is 'Operation Riddle: XI Corps Defensive and Offensive Battles in the Punjab' (Chapter 4). After the Rann of Kutch episode and the infiltration attempts followed by attack in Akhnoor sector, it was the plains sectors of the Punjab and Jammu region which saw bitter fighting, from 5 September 1965 to 23 September 1965. Both sides fought with determination, employing all weapons and aircrafts in their inventory, in their attempt to capture strategic obstacles and objectives and stretches of fertile land.

The chapter covers the terrain, obstacle system, cultivation pattern and road communications linking important towns and villages (often with built-up areas). The ORBAT (order of battle) of 11 Corps, defensive and offensive tasks allotted to it, the threat analysis and the relationship between higher commanders have been well covered. At the strategic level, the chapter brings out that while, initially, offensive of 11 Corps from Punjab and by 1 Corps (covered in the next chapter) from Jammu area had been planned for simultaneous start, due to the extra time required for concentration by units of 1 Corps, 11 Corps was allowed to launch the offensive independently, in advance. This decision was taken to reduce the threat to Akhnoor.

The possibility of a Pakistani offensive from Kasur, along and between Beas–Ravi corridor towards Harike, and the suitability of terrain for tank warfare had been kept in mind while allocating armour to XI Corps. Yet, how the concentration of a major Pakistani force at Kasur (opposite Khem Karan)—enabling them to initially achieve a tactical surprise (just as a week earlier in Akhnoor sector)—went unnoticed, could have been explained. Fortunately, Pakistan's intelligence was no better as they were equally surprised when 11 Corps went on the offensive across the international border on the morning of 5 September on three axis towards Lahore, achieving tactical surprise and initial successes, including a bridgehead across the Ichhogil Canal (by 3 JAT near Batanagar, opposite Lahore). Absence of the IAF to support the Indian Army initially (which gave much advantage to the Pakistan Air Force [PAF]) has also not been explained.

The 11 Corps offensive has been explained in detail by means of maps, separately for each thrust line, by 15 Infantry Division (Amritsar–Lahore), by 7 Infantry Division (Khalra–Barki) and by 4 Mountain Division (Taran Taran–Khem Karan–Kasur). Operations by Indian

forces grouped for capture of Sulemanki Headworks and desert sectors in the south, have also been covered. Events and actions of frequent redeployment of armoured sub-units/units and their good gunnery resulted in a distinct advantage for India, resulting in the destruction of a large number of superior Patton tanks of the Pakistan Army. The determined defensive battles fought by 4 Grenadiers and the gallantry shown by unit's anti-tank detachment under Company Quartermaster Havildar (CQMH) Abdul Hamid have been vividly described. Two events, that is, how the unintentional flooding caused by a damaged drain slowed down the advance of Pakistan's armoured division and how the ambush of the Pakistan GOC impacted on the offensive plan, have been well narrated.

The chapter concludes that the Army Commander went wrong in his assessment in sending 4 SIKH on a mission behind the enemy lines without adequate planning and preparation, and the unit paid a heavy price by being taken prisoner. Though the Corps lost Khem Karan, it secured all territories between the international border and Pakistani obstacle system, as tasked. It also created the largest graveyard of Patton tanks witnessed in the modern history of warfare.

The offensive of India's 1 Corps, OPERATION NEPAL, threatening the heartland of Pakistan—which forced Pakistan to pull out his 1 Armoured Division from Kasur–Khem Karan sector, to fight the Indian armoured division which was threatening Sialkot from area Pasrur–Chawinda—is described in Chapter 5, '1 CORPS: Operation Nepal, Operations in area of Rachna Doab'.

The area between rivers Ravi and Chenab—called Rachna Doab—is the heartland of Pakistan (all its major important rail and road communications run through this area), facing Jammu down to Gurdaspur. Both countries have small enclaves across the river Ravi, and the area is most suitable for tank warfare. Having advantage of the United States (US)-supplied modern tanks and artillery, India appreciated that Pakistan could launch her offensive through this area aimed towards Jammu or Gurdaspur districts. To forestall such an offensive, India had planned to employ her 1 Corps (still under rising) by grouping 1 Armoured Division and two to three infantry or mountain divisions under it, to take the battle into Pakistani territory. The authors narrate the planning process and the differences of opinion between the higher commanders on which sector or thrust lines should the offensive be launched. The problems faced by the corps in mobilising its divisions

(14 Infantry Division and 6 Mountain Division), lack of logistic support (including vehicles for carriage of ammunition and other war-like stores) and the support extended by civil truck drivers have been highlighted in the chapter. The fourth formation, 26 Infantry Division, deployed in situ in area Jammu came under the corps and provided it the firm base for launching of the offensive.

The authors have highlighted the personalities and war experiences of Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh and Gen J.N. Chaudhury, which, they feel, resulted in inherent differences in their approach to the war. The planning process on the Indian side has been explained in some detail.

The terrain of the Sialkot sector has been explained in detail, along with its communication and obstacle systems. Strength and locations of opposing troops holding the defences has been shown on a series of maps. The plan of Pakistan's 1 Corps has been covered, in detail. Aspects decision-making and higher direction of war of India have been analysed. This brings out the political directions (IAF to avoid engagements of civil population centres) and the 'go ahead' for crossing the international border given on 1 September by PM Lal Bahadur Shastri after reviewing the situation resulting due to Pakistani offensive in Chhamb sector, have been covered.

Also significant is the account of offensive by 1 Armoured Division under Maj Gen Rajinder Singh ('Sparrow') on 8 September. The progress of operations on both thrust lines and subsidiary/flanking operations has been narrated with details extracted from war diaries and published material of the war from India and Pakistan. The fluid battle situation, attacks by infantry and tank-to-tank engagements, impact of artillery fire and minefields laid around defensive positions and evacuation of civilian population, bring out the audacious and determined actions fought by the opposing troops.

As the initial punch by India's 1 Armoured Division could not achieve the desired results, a pause was given for additional reconnaissance, planning and regrouping, after which the offensive was recommenced. This enabled Pakistan to reinforce the sector from Kasur/Khem Karan sector, which further increased the stiff resistance faced by the Indian forces. Indian infantry also faced problems in keeping-up with their armoured counterparts, as unlike Pakistan, they were not equipped with track vehicles. Yet, it is to the credit of Indian units that they advanced up to line Chawinda–Phillora and threatened Sialkot, clearing and capturing villages and obstacles en-route.

Due credit has been also given to heroic deeds of the Pakistani soldiers. On the Indian side, the exemplary leadership and bravery displayed by all ranks (especially those of 17 Poona Horse, 4 Hodson's Horse and 5/9 Gorkha Rifles, has been covered. As earlier, in this chapter too, credit for the Indian success has been attributed to leadership of a very high order at unit and lower level.

Chapter 6 covers operations in Hussainiwala and Sulemanki areas. The southernmost sector of Western Command stretched from area south of Harike to Anupgarh, approximately 320 km, and was the area of responsibility of 67 Infantry Brigade being commanded by Brigadier (Brig) Bant Singh. While its troops were located at Rajasthan, for operations, he was allotted independent armoured squadrons of Deccan Horse, 61 Cavalry (mounted on horses), units of Rajasthan Police and territorial army, besides other supporting arms and services. Its task was to defend important towns like Fazilka and Ganganagar and the vital headworks at Hussainiwala.

On Pakistan's side, the area was held by 105 Infantry Brigade. It was appreciated that Pakistan would attempt to capture important places, while defending their Sulemanki Headworks against an Indian attempt. The war in this sector commenced on 6 September evening, when Pakistan artillery shelled border posts held by Punjab Police and then launched her regular troops, who succeeded in capturing areas on the road to Fazilka. Here, their advance was stalled by a company of 14 Punjab. A counter-attack was launched to recapture the area, which partially succeeded. Though tracts of Indian territory remained under Pakistan's control till end of the war, 67 Infantry Brigade defended Hussainiwala Headworks with grit and determination.

The second part of Chapter 6 covers 'Sind and Rajasthan Sector', which initially was under Delhi Area (part of Western Command). However, soon after the operations commenced in Kashmir in August 1965, the responsibility of this vast area of approximately 1,000 km was given to 30 Infantry Brigade of 11 Infantry Division (under Southern Command), located at Barmer.

In Pakistan, 51 Infantry Brigade, along with Indus and Desert Rangers, was holding the international border, with HQs at Umarkot on axis Hyderabad (Sindh)–Barmer.

Following the dictum, 'offence is the best defence', both sides decided to launch offensive operations across the international border and capture as much territory as was possible with their meagre resources.

While 11 Division captured Gadra Road, Pakistan secured Munabao. Besides artillery, PAF also played a major role in the operations, which continued till the ceasefire. Local population was also recruited by both sides. While Pakistan collected 'Hurs' through an appeal to Pir of Pagara, India collected 'Sodhis' and formed them into groups as hammer and bull force, to clear the infiltrators from the villages.

Chapter 7, 'The Indian and Pakistan Air Force and Navy during the War', covers the role played by the air forces and the navies of the two countries. It narrates strategic and tactical combat actions/missions flown by each side, covers a few important air raids and air-to-air engagements and the impact of air power on the war. Relying on notes and papers of pilots and other officers, the narratives make very informative and interesting reading. Special operations, like the air attacks of 5 and 6 September and the raids at Sargodha and Pathankot, have been described in an objective manner. Details of the sorties flown and losses/casualties suffered have been listed, as have been the gallantry awards won by pilots of both sides. Reasons for not ensuring air support for the Indian offensive across the international border from the word 'go' should have been mentioned (as initially PAF had a free run on Amritsar–Lahore axis).

The efforts made by Vice Admiral D.S. Soman, Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), India, to take part in the war, and how he was denied permission by the highest authority (PM Lal Bahadur Shastri), have been covered in adequate detail. Despite his repeated efforts, even after the sneak raid by Pakistan Navy on Dwarka port, the Indian Navy was not allowed to participate in an offensive manner in the 1965 war, due to the threat visualised from Indonesia to the Andaman Islands.

However, it is to the credit of our sailors that they undertook offensive patrolling along the coast, forestalled operations of Pakistan's submarines and deterred her other ships from Indian waters.

Chapter 8, 'Epilogue', covers the Tashkent talks and the follow-up of the 1965 war. Besides reviewing the planning process and views of the personalities involved in higher direction of war in both countries, it covers the performance of commanders on both sides, which is often repetitive. Quoting extensively from various books, such as *War Despatches* by Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh, *From Kutch to Tashkent* by Farooq Bajwa and *My Version* by Gen Musa, the developments from both sides are covered in some detail, leading to the ceasefire which came into effect on 23 September 1965. President Ayub's visit to the US

in December 1965 and the January 1966 Tashkent Summit brokered by the Soviet Union are both covered.

The book has a number of annexure, photographs and maps, and a very well-documented bibliography. However, citations for views and comments (especially those on senior officers and relating to performance of troops) have not been given. Also, it is felt that considering the target audience, the account of actions fought by the opposing sides need not have been described in such minute details. Instead, the role played by supporting arms and services could have been analysed in separate chapters.

The authors and their team of researchers deserve credit and need to be complimented for collecting and sifting through a large quantity of data not only in India but also from Pakistan and other foreign sources. Their efforts in contacting actual participants who are still alive has also authenticated and enriched the narration. Their endeavour is a 'one-point source' for all actions fought by the gallant Indian soldiers during the 1965 Indo-Pak War, and will assist and encourage further research.

1965 TURNING THE TIDE

Nitin Gokhale's book provides a comprehensive account and analysis of important events of the 1965 conflict, and establishes beyond doubt that it was India which turned the tide on Pakistan and won the war. Produced in a short period of six months, within the limits of the official history, the author has sifted through published materials and interviewed actual participants. To get the feel of the operations, he has also visited the battle scenes in India.

Spread over 12 short chapters, the first three chapters describe the geopolitical situation prevailing in the Indian subcontinent during the 1960s; the brief conflict in the Rann of Kutch during May 1965; and the capture of Point 13620 by 4 Rajput in Kargil sector in May 1965 .

In the next chapter, the scene shifts to Pakistan's campaign to wrest Kashmir, by infiltration across the CFL. The role played by the local population and operations undertaken by the army in rounding-up the infiltrators have been well brought out by narrating a few actions.

The following chapter, 'How India Went on the Offensive Across the CFL', forms the heart of the book. The author brings out that having adequately countered infiltration in the Valley, India 'Turned the Tide' by attacking and capturing Haji Pir pass (and later Raja-Rani and other

features). The brave and difficult operations of 1 PARA and 2 Sikh (besides other units) have been covered in detail in a simple-to-follow narrative.

The resultant offensive by Pakistan in Chhamb sector, which initially gained ground and threatened the vital communication arteries to J&K (but later got stalled due to inept handling of war), is well described. Events and actions fought by both sides and the decision-making process of Indian leadership to take the war across the international border have been explained. The role played by C Squadron 20 Lancers in countering Pakistan armour has been highlighted.

The offensives launched by the Indian forces in Lahore and Sialkot sectors created a serious threat to the hinterland of Pakistan, forcing her to pullout troops from Khem Karan and Chhamb sectors. The strong resistance put up by the Pakistani troops and the reasons why India's offensive could not achieve its full potential have been brought out.

As the fighting reached its peak, so did the mediation efforts by the international powers to end the war. The events leading to the Tashkent Agreement of January 1966 have been narrated, in brief. A special chapter on the patriotic and nationalistic fibre displayed by the Indian Navy to participate in the war has been included. Why the highest national leadership restrained the Indian Navy, and how the silent sea arm guarded the Indian coast, has been described vividly.

How the nation responded to the war thrust on India forms the subject of the next chapter. The role played by the civilian face of India (truck drivers, railway staff, villagers, cadets of the National Cadet Corps [NCC] and many others) has been brought to surface.

In the last chapter, the author establishes beyond doubt that India asserted her will, fought for her dignity and territory and decisively won the 1965 war. The book is well documented, illustrated with maps and photographs, and makes an absorbing reading. Brave actions by Indian troops (like 3 Jat, 4 Grenadiers, 3 Cavalry and 17 Poona Horse) have been covered, which will inspire all Indians.

BRAVE MEN OF WAR

Departing from the focus of the previous titles reviewed here, the author selects and narrates acts of valour by all ranks of the Indian Army during the 1965 war. The selection made by Rohit Agarwal merits special commendation, as it brings out the fighting spirit, grit and determination shown by Indian soldiers.

After giving a brief overview of the war, the first narration is of the May 1965 attack by 4 RAJPUT to capture the post at Point 13620 in Kargil sector. The detailed planning and conduct of surprise assault at night along the difficult ridge, intensity of enemy fire, difficulty of silencing enemy bunkers and the courage shown by the troops, so ably led by young Major Randhawa, bring out the ultimate in soldiering. Though wounded, he refused evacuation and continued to motivate his men to fight from bunker-to-bunker, till the enemy was finally driven away.

The scene then shifts to J&K, August 1965, where the Indian troops battled Pakistan infiltrators for nearly a month. The patrolling action by the ad-hoc company and the attack launched by Captain (Capt) C.N. Singh in Mendher sector, on a group of Pakistan company, brings out the ingenuity and leadership of a very high order shown by the officer. Though outnumbered, his patrol inflicted heavy casualties on the infiltrators and recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

This was followed by offensive actions across the CFL in Uri–Punch sector, in August 1965. Maj RanjitDayal led 1 PARA team successfully, in adverse weather and rugged terrain, facing heavy and accurate fire by enemy machine guns from dominating heights, to capture Haji Pir pass. The attack on Bedori feature (adjacent to Haji Pir pass) was launched by 19 Punjab soon after the capture of Haji Pir. Lt Col Sampuran Singh, the Commanding Officer (CO), personally moved forward with the assaulting troops, encouraging them to press on with the assault, despite casualties. When held up due to enemy fire and the going became tough, he invoked the *izzat* slogan of the unit and motivated his men, which finally resulted in the enemy being routed.

Capture of Pakistani posts, Raja and Rani, was carried out by the Punch brigade. As the initial attack on Raja had not succeeded, Lt Col N.C. Khanna, CO of 2 Sikh, a newly inducted unit, was tasked to capture it. After detailed planning, Lt Col Khanna positioned himself just behind the assaulting companies, so as to coordinate the assault. Col Khanna, though wounded, stood next to the wire and motivated his men into the attack. It was his sheer guts and daunting courage that propelled his men to press on with the assault, ultimately capturing Raja feature.

The next few incidents of valour relate to the Battle of Chhamb, where troops of 191 Infantry Brigade fought a delaying action against Pakistani offensive, Operation Grand slam. The first action described is of 3 Mahar, the unit occupying defensive positions across the river, which faced the brunt of Pakistan's offensive. How Lt Col G.S. Sangha

organised and led his troops initially in countering infiltrators and then occupying successive delaying positions, thereby allowing time for build-up of main defensive positions, is highlighted.

The resolute leadership shown by Lt Col Nandgopal, CO of 6 Sikh Light Infantry, brings out the stamina, ability to plan and execute orders at short notice, and also how to motivate troops. The bravery displayed by Naib Subedar Sarup Singh, who went out to silence an enemy machine gun (which was causing havoc), has also been brought out.

The last action covered in the Chhamb sector recounts the brilliant and courageous part played by Maj Bhaskar Roy and his C Squadron 20 Lancers. Though equipped with lighter AMX 13 tanks than that of the enemy, anticipating the enemy tank threat, he carried out detailed planning for delaying and destroying their tanks. Due to his leadership, the squadron not only inflicted casualties on Pakistan armour but also slowed down their advance, enabling more time for preparing depth positions.

Not known to many, a small force of commandos was formed by Maj Megh Singh (3 Guards), under the encouragement of the Western Army Commander. Designated as Meghdoot Force, it operated behind the enemy lines very effectively, in the Uri–Punch sector.

Next, the offensive launched by the Indian forces across the international border into the heartland of Pakistan is described. The surprise thrust of 3 Jat towards Lahore (which captured the village of Dograi and crossed the Ichhogil Canal), under the able leadership of Lt Col Desmond Hayed, has been explained. In the final stages, Pak troops were expecting the attack and gave stiff resistance, inflicting heavy casualties on the Jats, but the personal courage and bravery of Col Hayde ensured victory. Others who earned laurels for outstanding bravery which contributed to the Indian flag being flown at Dograi were Subedar Khazan Singh (who officiated as a company commander), Subedar Pale Ram, Capt Kapil Thapa, Maj Asa Ram Tyagi, Maj R.S. Sandhu and Sepoy Lehna Singh.

On the Khalra–Barki–Lahore front, 4 Sikh attacked and captured Barki after a stiff hand-to-hand fight. As the going became tough for his assaulting troops, Subedar Ajit Singh picked up a machine gun and charged the enemy bunker, silencing it. In another sub-sector, Lieutenant (Lt) Kanwaljit Singh led his soldiers in a surprise and bold assault over enemy trenches, forcing the them to withdraw.

The daunting and courageous spirit displayed by Subedar Major Kul Bahadur Thapa of 6/8 Gorkha Rifles has been narrated in the next chapter. He risked enemy fire but moved around in the operational area of his unit driving a jeep with trailer, and delivered hot food to his men.

Rightly titled 'Daring beyond Duty', the next chapter is the account of CQMH Abdul Hamid of 4 Grenadiers, who knocked out seven Pakistani tanks in defence of Khem Karan, which greatly blunted the Pakistani offensive in the sector. It is a just tribute to his bravery that a memorial for him has been erected by the villagers of the area.

The next account relates how three peacetime troublemakers of 4 Grenadiers, Shafi, Naushad and Suleiman, became war heroes. These Grenadiers, mounting a light machinegun position on the road from Khem Karan, noticed a convoy of Pakistani jeeps approaching. They engaged them effectively, and later it was revealed that the GOC of Pakistan 1 Armoured Division had been killed in this ambush. This caused disruption in their command and control set-up.

The next two narrations bring out feats of glory achieved by two armoured regiments in Khem Karan sector, which blunted the offensive of Pakistan 1 Armoured Division. Deccan Horse, under the leadership of Lt Col A.S. Vaidya, though equipped with Sherman tanks (inferior to Pattons of Pakistan), proved that better training and leadership are battle-winning factors even in an unequal match. The regiment accounted for 11 Pattons for the loss of four Shermans. Alongside, 3 Cavalry, commanded by Lt Col Salim Calib, fought with their Centurions and proved that their gunners were better than those of Pakistan tank regiments. Thus, along with 4 Grenadiers and Deccan Horse, he greatly contributed in creating Patton Nagar in Khem Karan.

In the Sialkot sector, 69 Mountain Brigade was assigned the task of capturing Maharajke village. In phase two of this attack, 4 Madras, under command of Lt Col H.L. Mehta, was tasked to capture a portion of the enemy position. While initially the attack went smoothly, the enemy reacted with intense artillery fire and put up a stiff resistance, stalling all efforts to capture the feature. Located well forward, Lt Col Mehta realised that daylight was fast approaching and his own troops will be caught in the open. Hence, he personally rallied reserve troops and motivated them to follow him in the assault. Seeing their CO in the lead, 'Tumbis' responded with vigour and speed and the enemy were routed just before first light.

The leadership provided by Lt Col A.B. Tarapore, while leading 17 Poona Horse in Sialkot sector, is the topic of next chapter. Given the task of leading the Indian offensive into Pakistan territory, the regiment fought close and intense battles with Pakistan tanks at Chawinda and Phillora. Even during intense enemy shelling, Lt Col Tarapore would open the cupola of his tank and look out, so that his troops could see him. He inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, destroying nearly 60 tanks against a loss of nine. Though wounded, he refused to be evacuated and continued to lead his regiment from the front, till he was fatally wounded.

Amongst the other brave actions during the Indian offensive, those of Lt Col M.M.S. Bakshi and Maj Bhupinder Singh (both of 4 Hodson's Horse), and of Maj M.A.R. Sheikh (16 Cavalry), also merit mention. During the advance of 1 Armoured Brigade to Phillora, Lt Col Bakshi's able guidance resulted in his own tank crew destroying three Pakistan tanks, before his tank was hit and set on fire. Abandoning his tank along with his crew, he moved to another tank and continued to lead his regiment in the intense, sharp battle. In the Battle of Chawinda, Maj Bhupinder's tank was hit by a Patton and caught fire. Showing presence of mind and courage, he extinguished the fire and continued to fight till his tank was again hit, this time by a Cobra missile. Though wounded, Bhupinder continued to encourage his troops to engage the enemy, till he was evacuated.

On 8 September, 16 Cavalry was assigned the task to lead the advance into Pakistan territory. Maj M.A.R. Sheikh was commanding the leading squadron, which encountered stiff resistance from Pakistan Patton tanks. Though wounded twice, he refused to be evacuated till there was a lull in battle.

The last action of the war was fought on 2 November, for capture of feature OP HILL in Mendher sector. As Pakistan refused to vacate the feature despite the ceasefire having come into effect on 23 September, an attack was launched by 120 Infantry Brigade with 5 Sikh Light Infantry (under command of Lt Col Sant Singh), 7 Sikh and 2 Dogra. Though the enemy offered stiff resistance and the assaulting troops suffered heavy casualties, the boldness and courage infused by Lt Col Sant Singh in his troops resulted in victory. Capt Mubayi, Naik Darshan Singh and Subedar Piara Singh displayed bravery of high order. The contribution of 7 Sikh and 2 Dogra in the overall successes was also immense.

The vital role played by Capt Chaudhury of 2nd (Independent) Air Observation Flight, (Air OP Flt) initially in detecting the infiltrators and later during the tank battles, highlights his ingenuity and skill both in acting as an observer for artillery shoots and for gaining information of the enemy tanks.

The contribution of artillery in the war has also been highlighted through two case studies, namely, the role played by 1642 Battery of 164 Field Regiment in the attack of 1 PARA on Haji Pir and by 14 Field Regiment in their attack on Kalidhar Ridge by 6 Sikh Light Infantry.

The significant part played by Gen J.N. Chaudhuri and Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh in evolving and implementing the war strategy, resulting in the Indian victory, has been covered. Also, a special tribute has been included for the ordinary people of India (especially the youth), without whose voluntary support, goodwill and contribution, the soldiers in the war would not have succeeded.

The book ends with a good bibliography and pictures of a few heroes. The author needs to be complimented for selecting case studies very objectively, and narrating the heroic deeds imaginatively, in a simple, easy-to-read language. The book will be of interest to readers in all walks of life. For wider reading audience, publication in Hindi and regional languages may also be considered.

