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Army Institute of Military History  
Pakistan

# ugle & Trumet

Summer  
2019



A Tale of Two Sultans  
Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sultan Mahmood Shaheed



### **Bugle & Trumpet**

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### **THE ARMY INSTITUTE OF MILITARY HISTORY**

Pakistan's military history stretches back into antiquity, as far back as our sturdy ancestors along the Mighty Indus, who tilled the land and defended themselves against invaders. Pakistan Army descended from the grand old regiments of the old Indian Army, some of whom predate Pakistan by nearly two hundred years, and has a rich and proud history extending both sides of Partition – again defending Pakistan. Taken together, Pakistan's military history and the history of Pakistan Army form a substantial part of our nation's history. Add to this the need for our officers to be well-versed in general military history - a matter very close to their hearts - and one can see the case for a focal organisation to handle these subjects taken together. The COAS, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) is credited with approving a proposal to establish the Army Institute of Military History (AIMH) on 2nd June 2017 – the day we were officially born.

Located in Rawalpindi and close to the Army Museum and the Army Central Library, the institute is mandated to archive, record, research and teach military history, along with handling allied subjects such as physical history, battle honours, regimental lineages, customs of the service, dress matters and so on. The institute also serves as a forum for veterans, academia, subject experts and concerned civil society members, to gather and air their learned views on subjects of interest to the Army. AIMH also encompasses outreach to academia and students. With a military history wing, composite wing and current affairs wing, the institute is emerging as a centre for both historical and current affairs; a melting pot for serving officers, retired officers and civilians to meet and exchange views. Our forte remains military history, with our research directors assigned to regularly visit the Army's schools of instruction, universities and colleges as visiting faculty. Military history buffs will also find themselves welcome in AIMH's lounges.

### **BUGLE & TRUMPET**

As a publication with the love of Military History at its very core, Bugle & Trumpet aims at providing readers with a diverse cross-section of articles, stories, anecdotes and narrations that showcase different aspects of military history. It attempts to do so in a readable manner that has little to do with ponderous tomes or heavy volumes of raw data. It tells the stories of unsung heroes and living legends. It celebrates individual acts of courage and valour. It attempts to stimulate intellectual probity and foster a fondness for this all-important yet oft-neglected subject. By means of its interactive nature, whereby readers may freely contribute their anecdotes, personal experiences, photographs, and musings, it aims at becoming a publication which is anticipated, and looked forward to; a place which every military history enthusiast in Pakistan might call "home".

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## From The Editor's Desk

*Dear Readers*

*The first ever issue of the Bugle & Trumpet (B&T) is in your hands. There may be hundreds of magazines of historical nature published and 'Bugle & Trumpet' may be one of them, but still I believe it is different. The present issue provides a comprehensive blend of thought provoking and interesting readings. The lead article in this maiden issue; 'A tale of two Sultans' is the first of two articles about the extra ordinary feats of Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Mahmood Shaheed. The second sultan will appear in the next issue. 'The siege of 634 AD' is another article (first of the two) included in the current number which encompasses the account of muslim conquest of Damascus; a turning point in the early Islamic history.*

*Finally, I wish the readers a pleasant journey through the leaves of B&T. Do enlighten us with your valuable comments which we will endeavor to incorporate in our forthcoming issues. From the next issue, the baton of stewardship of the magazine will pass on to the very accomplished hands of Lieutenant Colonel Ansar Jamil (Retired).*

*Looking forward*

**Brigadier Fouad Hafeez**



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## THE SIEGE of 634 A.D. (Part I)

By Brigadier Fouad Hafeez (Retired)

*(The events and circumstances --- and the tragic love affair --- that led to the Muslim conquest of Damascus)*

### The Buildup

On 21<sup>st</sup> August 634 A.D., 20<sup>th</sup> Jamadi-ul Akhir, in the thirteenth year of Hijra, and two years after the death of the Last Prophet (PBUH), Damascus the “Paradise of Syria”<sup>1</sup> was laid siege by one of the most formidable war machines of those times; the Muslim army of Rashidun Caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (R.A).



(Source: historyanswers.co.uk)

Owing to its strategic position at the confluence of many trade routes, Damascus had always been vital to maintaining control over the greater region of Levant.<sup>2</sup> At the time of the siege of 634 A.D. though, it had been under Byzantine (Roman) rule for the past seven centuries. Over many centuries, the inner city of Damascus had grown to well over a million square meters of fortifications, towers, firing bays, and outposts; surrounded by a massive wall that stood over thirty six feet tall. To retain control over this all-important city, Byzantines had fought many battles with the Persian Sassanid Empire, and had managed to keep them largely at bay. The Muslim army that descended on Damascus in the autumn of 634, just when the winds of the evening had started to turn their most pleasant, was a completely different breed of warriors, as the unsuspecting Roman and Greek soldiers of Thomas --- representative (and son-in-law) of the Emperor of Byzantium, Heraclius --- were soon to find out.



(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

The army was commanded by Hazrat Khalid Ibn al-Waleed; perhaps the most distinguished warrior-general of several generations before and after. Having cut his teeth in war against the Muslims during the Battle of Uhud, Khalid embraced Islam and became one of its most devout defenders. It

1 “The Sword of Allah”, Lieutenant General A.I. Akram.

2 Archaeological findings at Tell Ramad on the outskirts of the city suggest that Damascus may have been continuously occupied since 9000 B.C. It had existed – and still does – as a capital city since the 3rd Millennium B.C.



was only after the Battle of Mu'tah (629 A.D.) --- wherein Khalid broke nine swords during the fight --- that he was awarded the title of "Saif Ullah al-Maslul" (The Drawn Sword of Allah), or the shorter version "Saif Ullah" (The Sword of Allah). Having also played a significant role in the consolidation of the Muslim empire in Arabia, through the Ridda Wars of 632 and 633, Khalid was looking to add the conquest of Damascus to his already impeccable battlefield credentials.

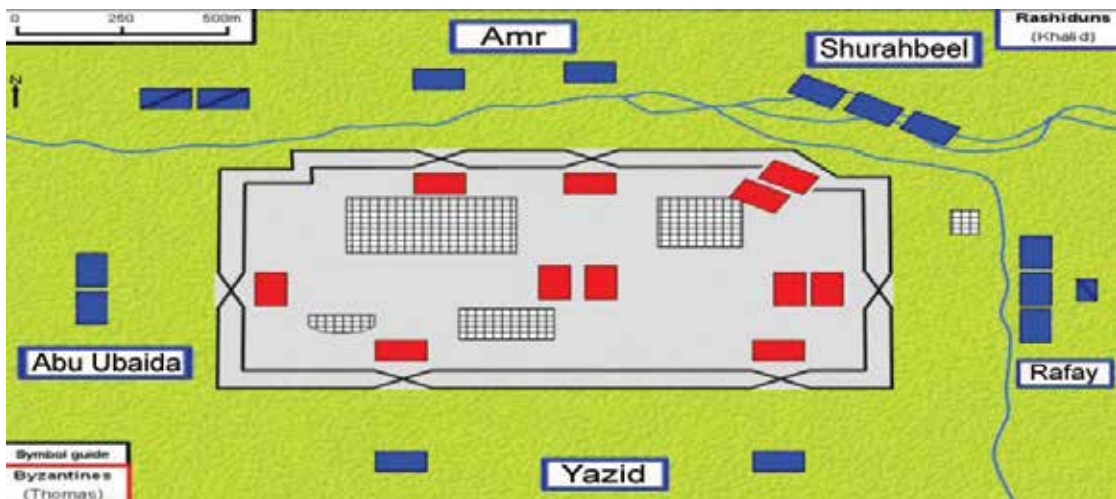


(Source: en.wikishia.net)

In this effort, he was ably supported by his second-in-command Abu Ubaidah Ibn al-Jarrah, and his corps commanders Shurahbeel Ibn Hassanah, Yazid Ibn Abu Sufyan, Amr Ibn al-Aas and Rafay Ibn Umayr; all of whom were themselves, respected and highly formidable military leaders. These five corps (commanded by Abu Ubaidah, Shurahbeel, Yazid, Amr and Rafay) available to Khalid, comprised of approximately four to seven thousand men, each. The members of the Mubarizun<sup>3</sup> comprised of warriors like Qa'qa Ibn Amr al-Tamimi, Abdelrehman Ibn Abi Bakr, and the legendary "Naked Champion"; Zarrar Ibn al-Azwar.

### Before the Siege

In the absence of dedicated siege equipment and munitions at the time, laying siege to a city was usually a long, drawn-out affair; that would often last weeks on end, if not months. Prior to encircling the city-fortress of Damascus, the Muslim army isolated it from a variety of directions (see Map 1).



Map 1

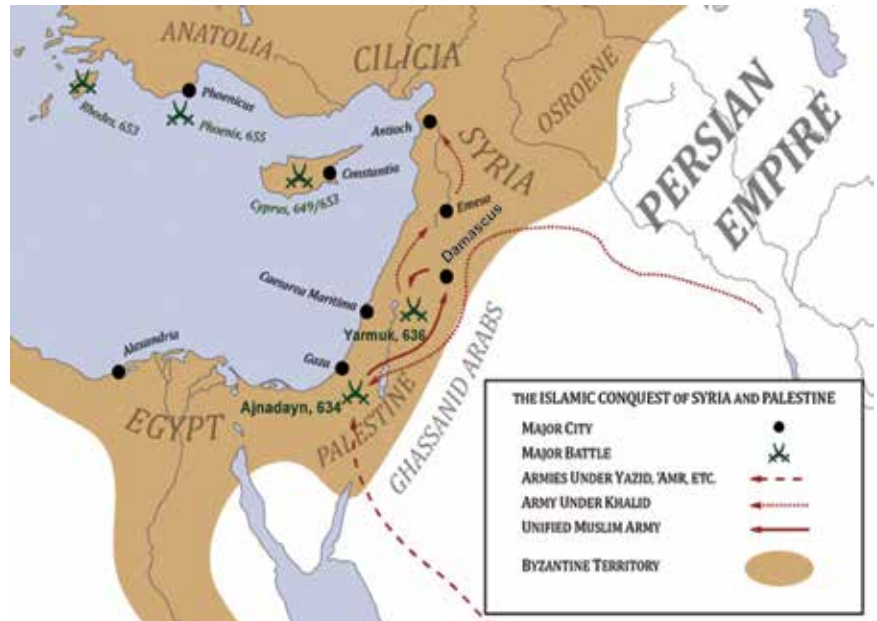
(Source: theartofbattle.com)

3 Literally meaning "champions" or "duelists"; were a special unit of the Muslim Army, comprising of members who were meant to meet opposing champions in single/mortal combat. Ali Ibn Abi Talib and Khalid Ibn al-Waleed were members of this unit too, at one time or another.



To the north, a cavalry detachment positioned itself at Bait Lahiya, some 150 kilometres away from Damascus, and some 15 kilometres away from Emesa.<sup>4</sup> Another detachment was positioned some 120 kilometres to the west of Damascus at Pella,<sup>5</sup> to keep the substantial Byzantine garrison there well-occupied, and cover the flanks of the main manoeuvre arm headed for Damascus. The latter mobile detachment also ensured that lines of communication between the army and its base at Medina, remained open.

Earlier on, the Byzantine outposts and desert forts at Arak, Palmyra, Al-Sukhnah, Al-Qaryatain, and Hawarin had been overrun without major effort. The major fortress at Bosra<sup>6</sup> had also been captured by the corps commanded by Shurahbeel Ibn Hassanah, assisted by those headed by Khalid and Abu Ubaidah. The Battle of Ajnadayn (fought in mid-July 634 A.D.); the first



(Source: discoveringancienthistory.wordpress.com)

major pitched battle between the Muslims and the Byzantines, had been a catastrophic defeat for the latter, and had left them reeling and completely unbalanced. Byzantine morale was at a low ebb. Conversely, the Muslims were hungry for more successes of the likes they had already met. The soldiers of the Muslim army had been lionized, glorified, and elevated to near-mythical status by their opponents, no less in terms of bravery, adroitness, war-fighting techniques, and physical abilities. The capital of Syria, guarded by no less than twenty thousand troops was thus, in a much-reduced state of military readiness; physically as well as psychologically. It was with this backdrop that one of the brightest jewels in the crown of Byzantium beckoned; Damascus.

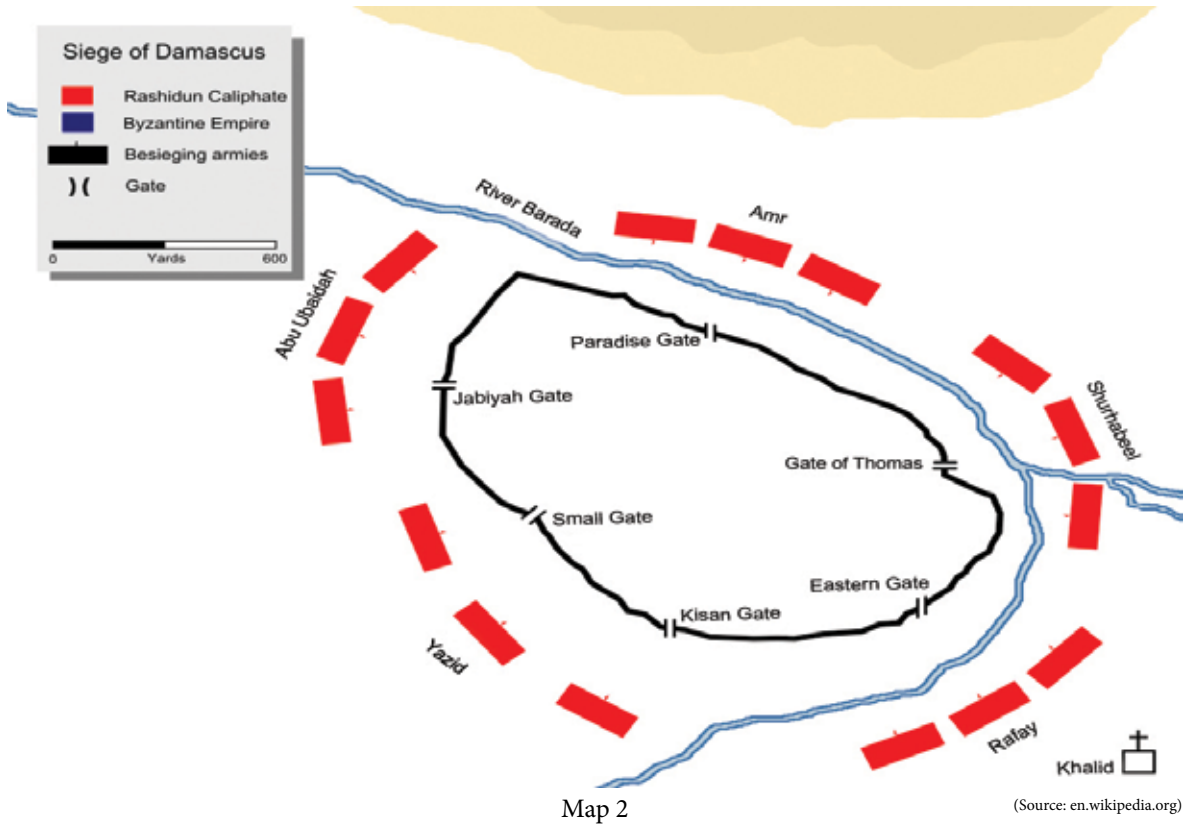
## The Stranglehold

With his mobile troops and flank / rear guards put into place, Khalid's isolation of Damascus was complete. The six gates; heavily manned, and elaborately fortified, leading in and out of the city-fortress, were invested by the available corps (see Map 2-next page); with the instructions that they

<sup>4</sup> The Byzantine / Graeco-Roman name for modern day Homs (or Hims) in northern Syria; which served as an important means of reinforcing Damascus.

<sup>5</sup> The Byzantine / Graeco-Roman name for modern day Fabel in north western Jordan; which was one of the ten cities of the Decapolis; a group of ten city-states that flourished as centres of culture, arts, and military might.

<sup>6</sup> Capital of the Arab-Christian Ghassanid dynasty; which came to an end after its capture by the Muslims.



were to repulse any counter-attacks or sallying-out manoeuvres that might originate from their respective areas. A two thousand men strong cavalry detachment under Zarrar Ibn al-Azwar was earmarked as the Mobile Guard;<sup>7</sup> to patrol gaps, provide quick-time reinforcement to any corps coming under attack, and ward off any infiltration / exfiltration attempts.

The largest fighting corps under Rafay Ibn Umayr, was deployed opposite the Eastern Gate; which is where Khalid positioned himself. His headquarters was set up in an abandoned monastery, situated a little distance from the Gate,<sup>8</sup> from where he could oversee and direct operations. An elaborate system of link patrols, horseback messengers, and audio-visual signals using flags and conch-horns were put into place, to ensure all the Muslim troops deployed were in some form of communication with one another. All of this meant that the thriving, populous garrison city was slowly deprived of supplies and logistics and means of maintenance, while Khalid's army continued to draw sustenance, food-supplies, and other essentials from the area of al-Ghouta; an oasis of the Barada River that was a short ride away from Damascus.

7 This was perhaps the first example of Khalid using what would later become the *Tulay'a Mutaharrika*, or *Jaish al-Zahf*; an elite light cavalry detachment of 4000 men that remained under Khalid's independent command during the conquest of Syria. The Mobile Guard was used to devastating effect, during the most critical stages of most of Khalid's operations waged as commander of the Muslim army.

8 Since that time, and to this day, the place has been known as "*Deir al-Khalid*" or the "Monastery of Khalid".





## Enter, Heraclius

At the time of the siege, Emperor Heraclius had positioned himself at Antioch.<sup>9</sup> Hearing of the siege of the city-fortress, he immediately ordered a force comprising of twelve thousand Byzantine warriors<sup>10</sup> to depart for Damascus and attempt to break the choke-hold around it. The foresight of Khalid; by means of which he had placed scouts to the west and north, must be appreciated here. Fast galloping messengers returned to inform him of these developments, and a five thousand strong detachment under Rafay Ibn Umayr was despatched to counter it, some 32 kilometres north of Damascus. When both columns physically clashed, though, Rafay's force proved insufficient, and Khalid was forced to vector in another four thousand strong detachment (the Mobile Guard) which he himself led against the Romans, before they could defeat Rafay's column. During the subsequent Battle of Uqab Pass,<sup>11</sup> the relief force despatched by Heraclius was routed, decimated and scattered.

Historians opine that this was a defining, calculated risk taken by Khalid. Had the besieged Byzantine forces sallied out against the depleted Muslim army encircling Damascus, they might have succeeded in defeating the siege. They did not. The brilliant tactical acumen of Saif Ullah al-Maslouh--- the Drawn Sword of Allah, prevented them from being able to seize the opportunity that presented itself so fleetingly, too. After routing the force attempting to intervene, the Muslim columns returned to their original positions at a blistering pace;<sup>12</sup> like the maelstrom they were soon to become for the Damascenes.

## The Romans React

By the time Thomas realized that no reinforcements were coming, the narrow window of opportunity to sally out against the siege forces had all but shut; even though Thomas was still unaware of this. The imbalance created by Khalid and Rafay's protective manoeuvre; temporarily leaving the balance of forces along the Eastern Gate tipped towards the Romans, had been speedily redressed by the mad dash of the very same Muslim forces from Uqab Pass back to Damascus.

It was probably sometime after the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of September that Thomas resolved to attempt a breakout from the stranglehold of the siege.<sup>13</sup> After withdrawing troops from all sectors of the city, he formed a group which he hoped would be large enough to break out of the siege forces, from Thomas Gate, opposite the corps of Shurahbeel Ibn Hassanah. He was not successful, and was in fact, blinded

<sup>9</sup> Modern day Antakya, in the Hatay province of Turkey. A city of great relevance to the Romans, Greeks, and Christianity; which, according to *Encyclopaedia Biblica (online edition, Volume 1, Page 125)* was a "mixture of Roman, Greek, and Jewish elements" that "admirably adapted Antioch for the great part it played in the early history of Christianity. The city was the cradle of the church". According to *Acts of the Apostles, 11:26*, "*The Church at Antioch*"; the phrase "Christian" originated from Antioch.

<sup>10</sup> "*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*", Edward Gibbon and Henry Hart Milman.

<sup>11</sup> "Uqab" meaning "eagle". Named so, after the eagle adorning Khalid's banners. "*The History of Prophets and Kings*", Volume 26 "*The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate*", al-Tabari.

<sup>12</sup> "*The Sword of Allah*", Lieutenant General A.I. Akram.

<sup>13</sup> "*Yarmuk 636 A.D.: The Muslim Conquest of Syria*", David Nicolle.



in the right eye by an arrow, during the engagement. The archer who shot him, coincidentally, was Umm Aban bint Rabi'ya; a Muslim war-widow<sup>14</sup> whose husband had been killed by Thomas earlier. An enraged and wounded Thomas is said to have vowed to exact a terrible revenge, and take “one thousand eyes” for the one he had lost.<sup>15</sup> A second breakout operation was planned the very next night.

The second sallying-out of the Byzantine troops was spread over a wider area and multiple points of attack were chosen. While the main force led by Thomas concentrated on Thomas Gate against Shurahbeel's now-depleted corps, simultaneous attacks were also launched against the Jabiya Gate (Abu Ubaidah's corps), the Small Gate (Yazid's corps) and the Eastern Gate (Rafay's corps). The



(Clockwise) Thomas Gate, Jabiya Gate, Eastern Gate, Small Gate

(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

objectives behind this were two-fold; to tie down the Muslim forces at multiple points and prevent them from mutually supporting one another, and to allow success at any single point to be exploited by reserves that were kept located within the besieged fortress. In practical terms, this was a vastly superior plan than the earlier foray, and almost succeeded at two points; the Thomas Gate and the Eastern Gate. It is perhaps a testament to the will-to-fight of the Muslim troops at both attack sites, the timely interdiction by the Zarrar-led Mobile Guard at the Small Gate and other points<sup>16</sup>, and Khalid leading the charge of a 400 men cavalry detachment<sup>17</sup> at the Eastern Gate that kept the stranglehold around Damascus intact.

14 “The Islamic Conquest of Syria”, Suleyman al-Kindi.

15 “The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”, Edward Gibbon and Henry Hart Milman.

16 “The Islamic Conquest of Syria”, Suleyman al-Kindi.

17 “The Islamic Conquest of Syria”, Suleyman al-Kindi.



This was the last attempt by a discouraged Thomas to break out of the siege. With thousands of his men having been put to sword over the weeks, he simply did not have the numbers to confront the Muslim army in open battle.<sup>18</sup> The Byzantine troops --- beaten, battered, and broken --- now hunkered down within the fortress; waiting for a miracle to happen.

### Jonah; the Lovesick Greek

That miracle did happen; albeit, not quite the way the Romans might have wished for it to. The miracle we all know as “Love”.

A Greek priest by the name of Jonah lived in Damascus, who had been betrothed to a woman of his region. The marriage had been carried out but not consummated, and despite the carnage and mayhem that had been raging around them, Jonah was forlorn without the woman of his dreams. Many a time had he met with his bride’s father and pleaded with him to allow his wife to proceed to his home, but to no avail. “We are at war” the bride’s father would state. Or “how could you even think of marriage at a time like this?” he’d question. Jonah had had enough of these delays. He decided to take matters in his own hands.

Quite how he came to meet with Khalid Ibn al-Waleed on 18<sup>th</sup> September 634 A.D. is uncertain, and there are a multitude of scenarios that have been posited.<sup>19</sup> What is not disputed, though, is that Jonah indeed did meet and make a deal with the Muslim commanding general; offering intelligence pertaining to a little-known point of ingress, troop dispositions within the fortress, and the best timings for such a foray into the city, in exchange for a vow of immunity for him and his beloved. This was also when Jonah --- a Syriac monophysitic priest; rather than an adherent to the belief of Trinity that most Christian orders followed --- accepted Islam.

### The Breach

The slender window of opportunity that Jonah had mentioned meant that there was hardly any time to formulate a coordinated plan of attack. In a display of the daring that was his wont, and swayed by his tendency to fly headlong into danger with scant regard for his personal safety; Khalid decided to storm the Eastern Gate himself.

Accompanying him on this nigh-suicidal mission were Qaqa Ibn Amr and Mazur Ibn Adi; who free-climbed the eleven-meter-high wall at its most-difficult --- hence, most lightly-guarded

18 “*The Sword of Allah*”, Lieutenant General A.I. Akram.

19 Al-Waqidi in “*Futuh us Sham*” states: “I (al-Waqidi) have been informed...that night a Roman Priest, Jonah son of Murcius, dug a hole from his house to outside the city, and unknown to his family, went to the Muslim Camp”. In the same book he goes on to quote Wathilah Ibn al-Aqsa; who had served in Zarrar’s cavalry in the army of Khalid Ibn al-Waleed: “One day before the conquest of Damascus, we heard the Eastern Gate screech open. A horseman emerged, who we allowed to approach near, until we then captured him”. Lieutenant General A.I. Akram in “*The Sword of Allah*” states that Jonah climbed down the wall surrounding Damascus, and made his way to the Muslim camp. From all three accounts, though, it can be surmised that Jonah made his way over to Khalid, deliberately.



point. Upon reaching the top, they fastened ropes for one hundred men waiting on the ground to climb up, and abseiled into the city on the other side of the wall, themselves. The few guards present there were despatched in short order, following which, they flung open the doors of the Eastern Gate; allowing a swarm of Muslim warriors to drive into the city, for the very first time. A surging mass of Byzantine warriors were taken by surprise by the very audacity of this manoeuvre, rushed to stem the ingress of Khalid's men into the now-breached fortress. Too late. A foothold had been established.

### **Thomas Capitulates and Damascus is Taken**

As reports filtered in to Thomas of the catastrophe waiting to unfold at the Eastern Gate, he weighed in on what could be done to save Damascus from being sacked and pillaged, completely. Being fully aware of the creed of his enemies: "embrace Islam, pay the jizya (tax), or prepare for war", he knew that he had invited the latter, by scoffing at the earlier two. Frantically, he sent envoys to the second-in-command of the Army --- Abu Ubaidah Ibn al-Jarrah --- to sue for peace, and to offer to pay the jizya in lieu of safe passage. Even while the commander of the army --- Khalid Ibn al-Waleed, was poised to put the remainder of the Byzantine army to sword, within the boundaries of the city-fortress itself.

Khalid's surprise and consternation can well be imagined, when at dawn the next morning --- just as he was preparing to renew the final thrust into the belly of Damascus via the Eastern Gate --- he saw Abu Ubaidah and Thomas, accompanied by priests, patriarchs, and nobles of Damascus; enter the city from the Jabiya Gate. In the last-gasp death-throes of his command, the wily Thomas had chosen the peace-loving, ascetic, soft-spoken Abu Ubaidah to negotiate with; rather than the fiery-tempered, hot-blooded Sword of Allah. After much discussion between the victorious Muslim generals, though, Khalid (somewhat reluctantly) proclaimed: -

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is given by Khalid Ibn al-Waleed to the people of Damascus. When the Muslims enter, they (the people) shall have safety for themselves, their property, their temples and the walls of their city, of which nothing shall be destroyed. They have this guarantee on behalf of Allah, the Messenger of Allah, the Caliph and the Muslims, from whom they shall receive nothing but good so long as they pay the Jizya."<sup>20</sup>

Another concession that Thomas had succeeded in obtaining from Abu Ubaidah --- which was also confirmed after the corps commanders' discussion with Khalid --- was that Thomas and anyone wishing to leave the city without accepting the terms of the treaty, would be granted three clear days,<sup>21</sup> to make it to wherever he might wish to. In the desert wastes, amidst the rocky peaks, and in the heavily-forested vales of Syria; three days grace, meant almost-certain escape.

This episode --- how Thomas negotiated the surrender, and made good his escape --- was the

20 *"The Islamic world in Ascendancy: from the Arab Conquests to the Siege of Vienna"*, Martin Sicker.

21 *"The Sword of Allah"*, Lieutenant General A.I. Akram.



only downside, to what was undeniably, a historic victory. Damascus was now the northern-most extent of the burgeoning Muslim empire.

*(to be continued in Part II...)*

### **About The Author**



*Brigadier Fouad Hafeez is a retired mechanized infantry officer who served on various command, staff and instructional appointments during his illustrious military career. He commanded an infantry battalion and an Infantry Brigade. He also served in Pakistan Military Academy as Adjutant and remained Defence Attaché in Jordan. The officer is presently serving in the Army Institute of Military History as Director, Contemporary Affairs Wing.*



## A TALE OF TWO SULTANS (Part-I)

*Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sultan Mahmood Shaheed*

*By Brigadier Nasir Shafiq (Retired)*

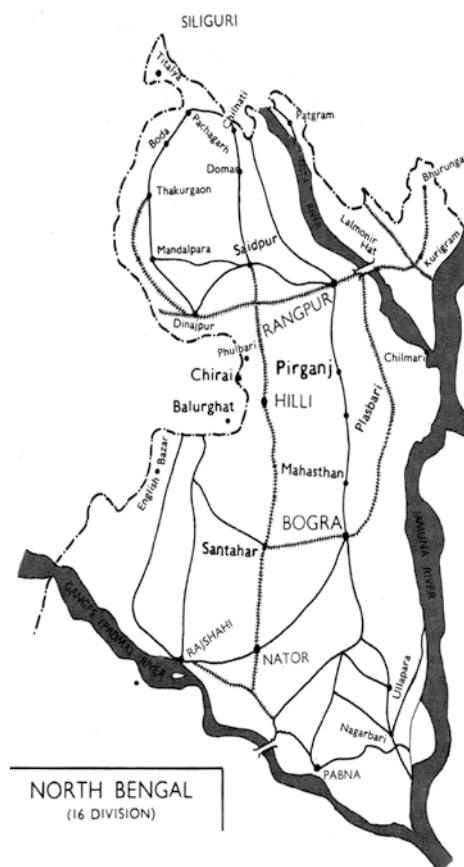
*Sometimes by losing a battle, you find new ways to win a war....*

Leadership and soldiering are regarded as two slightly different attributes and virtues of humankind, but produce marvelous results once combined in one person. Soldiering is a way and technique of fighting the enemy, while leadership is inspiring the led to fight hard hitting battles by leading from the front. History is replete with examples wherein ordinary trained soldiers, having average physical capabilities and equipped with no high-quality war machines, but led by men of character and courage, did wonders on the battlefield, otherwise not expected out of them.

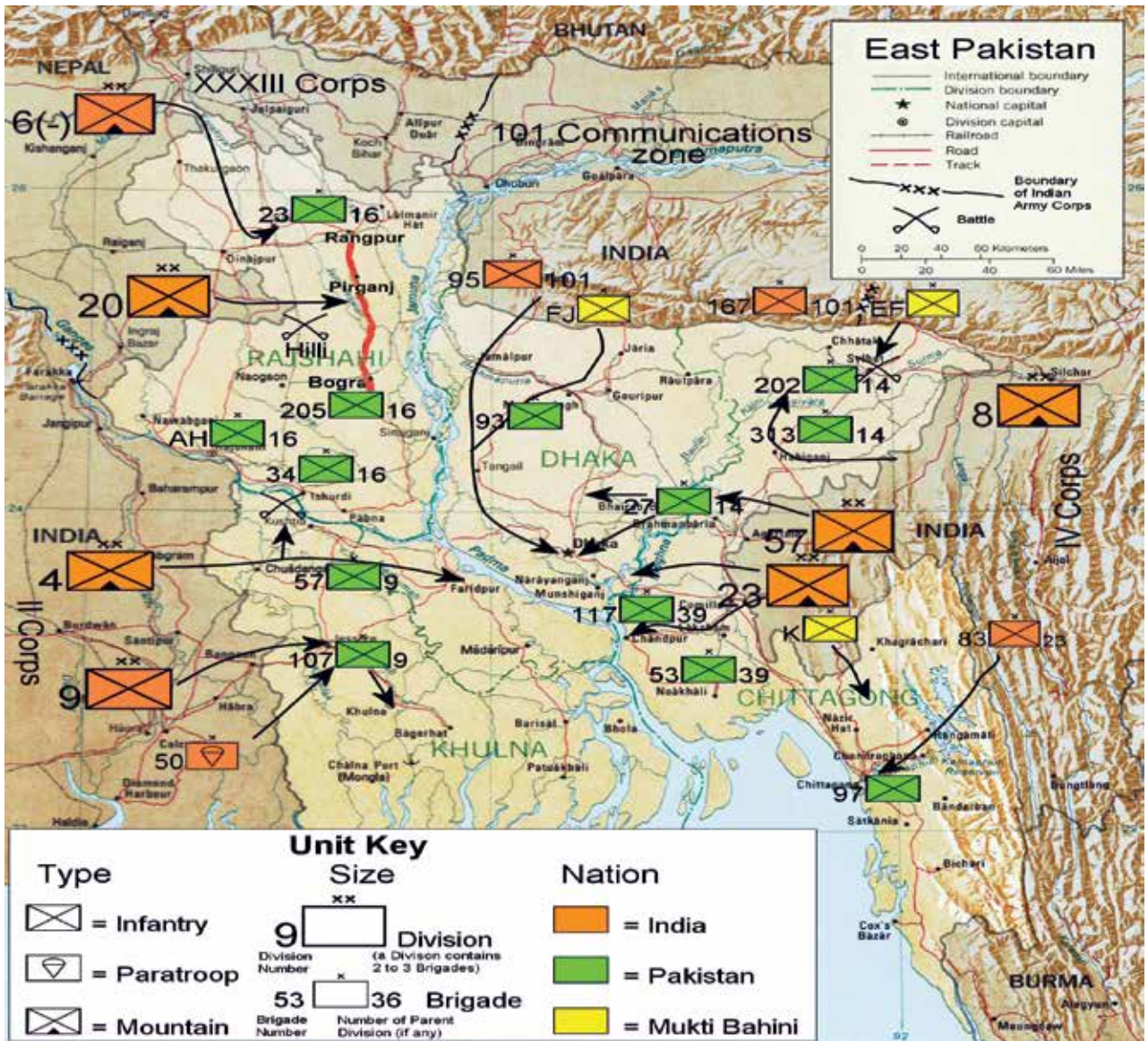
East Pakistan War of 1971, though a national tragedy, humiliation and convincing defeat for Pakistan at the military, diplomatic and political levels, still gave birth to stories of courage, valour, patriotism and unmatched leadership, rarely found in the history of warfare. Nowhere in the world an army 1000 miles away from its home base, without heavy equipment, nearly completely devoid of air and naval support, surrounded by sea on one side and a five times stronger force having full international and diplomatic support on three sides, fought so well for complete nine months against all odds, including major portion of local population turned hostile. This saga of complete nine months, day and night without any lull, is a case study for research itself, by students of warfare.

Although the East Pakistan tale is full of such examples, if I were to talk about two at a time, let's talk about two SULTANS, who stood head and shoulders above the others, to set an example of courage, loyalty, soldiering and leadership. One of them is Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sultan Mahmood Shaheed, an illustrious son of 22 and 32 Baloch Regiments.

The tale of this SULTAN who lived up to his name "King or Lord" goes back to 7th December 1971. The place is Pirganj, 65 kilometers north of Bogra, a major city of erstwhile East Pakistan. He was commanding 32 Baloch Regiment, bitterly engaged against Indian forces advancing into Rangpur-Bogra Sector, being led by Indian 20th Mountain Division with all its military might including tanks, air support and above all, Mukti Bahini. Mukti Bahini, organized and trained by India, were mainly the former Pakistan Army and civil armed forces soldiers and officers who revolted and were involved in



(Source: witness to surrender, page 148)



(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

sabotage, killings, looting and other subversive activities inside East Pakistan. At about 5 pm on 7th December 1971, 16 Divisional Headquarters informed 32 Baloch Regiment (reserve battalion) that Major General Nazar Hussain Shah, General Officer Commanding (GOC) 16 Pakistani Division, had been ambushed and abducted<sup>1</sup> by Mukti Bahini at Pirganj, located on Bogra-Rangpur road. The unit was tasked to proceed immediately and rescue the general. Colonel Sultan Mahmood didn't waste a single moment and ordered the battalion to carry out the assigned task. The battalion less a company was located at that time at Masthan on road Pirganj-Bogra, approximately five kms from Bogra. Alpha Company led by Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Salim Raza Khan, left immediately to the reported ambush site.<sup>2</sup> Colonel Sultan Mahmood also decided to proceed along with the leading company. Remaining two companies of 32 Baloch also moved under command Major Ajmal, Second-in-command of the Battalion.<sup>3</sup>

The leading component of the battalion reached around Palashbari, disembarked from their vehicles and started marching towards Pirganj on road Bogra-Rangpur. It was nearly dark when



they first encountered fire from Indian troops already deployed and well dug in on both sides of the road. The accurate enemy fire did not deter this force and they continued fighting gallantly.<sup>2</sup> Due to prevailing darkness and in the absence of prior ground reconnaissance, it was getting difficult to dislodge the well-entrenched enemy. Around 4 am on 8th December morning, a situation came when the point platoon (leading troops) under Subedar Jalal Khan was completely pinned down due to firing by enemy tanks, mortars, machine guns and all other weapons available. This was the time when Colonel Sultan Mahmood, the proud son of Pakistan, decided to exemplify the deadly combination of soldiering and leadership - leading the point platoon himself in a bitter hand-to-hand fight and bayonet charge against enemy fire-spitting machine guns and other weaponry. The whole platoon gave a good account of themselves, suffering heavy casualties in dead and wounded. Platoon commander Subedar Jalal Khan was also seriously wounded<sup>1</sup>, and embraced Shahadat the next day. Setting the highest standards of courage and leadership, Colonel Sultan Mahmood led the charge himself and jumped into an Indian trench engaging in hand-to-hand fight with an Indian Captain Jatandar Nath Sood of 2/5 Gorkha Rifles.<sup>4</sup> Colonel Raja shot the captain with his pistol, injuring him seriously. Sensing the criticality of the moment and seeing the marvelous charging spirit of Colonel Sultan Mahmood, an Indian havildar pumped his sten gun burst into the Colonel, killing him on the spot in the Indian trench.<sup>1</sup> This brave soldier of the Baloch Regiment offered the ultimate sacrifice for his motherland, but never chose to turn his back to the enemy.



Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sultan Mehmood (2nd from right) as Brigade Major of 1 AK Brigade with his Commander Brigadier Shinwari (1969-Muzaffarabad)  
(Source: www.imgrumweb.com)

Meanwhile, the rest of 32 Baloch troops took up defensive positions on Karatoya River, effectively blocking enemy's further advance towards Bogra. It is worth mentioning here that GOC 16 Division ambushed the night before, had managed to reach his Divisional Headquarters at Bogra safely. However, this information could not be passed down to 32 Baloch due to a complete absence of communication, and haze of battle. The story of the valiant charge of 32 Baloch, coupled with leadership qualities of Colonel Sultan Mahmood, was later narrated to 32 Baloch officers by the Indian brigade commander Brigadier Joginder Singh Bakhshi, with soldierly integrity, after the surrender.<sup>2</sup> This action has also been mentioned in a book "Indian Sword Strikes in East Pakistan" authored by Major General Lachhman Singh Lehal, who commanded 20 Indian Mountain Division in this battle.<sup>5</sup> Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Itbar Singh, 2/5 Gorkha Rifles, the Indian company commander in this battle who was personally present in the forward platoon under attack by 32 Baloch led by Colonel Sultan, later wrote a letter<sup>6</sup> in 2012 to Colonel Sultan's son Brigadier (now Lieutenant General) Nauman Mahmood of Pakistan Army. He gave a first hand account of this





battle by writing *“I would like to assure you, and through you your brother and sister, that your brave father Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sultan Mahmood died while leading his troops from the front. He died hardly five yards away from our forward trenches when shot through his chest by a burst of MMG fire. 32 Baloch did make valiant attempts to retrieve the body of their fallen Commanding Officer but in vain”*. It bears testimony to this proud son of the soil’s heroic and daring soldierly and leadership qualities, who displayed unmatched courage, in keeping with the tradition of leading from front alive, and truly living up to his name “Sultan”.

This amazing tale of supreme sacrifice found an appropriate place in the Indian press as well, that deeply appreciated Colonel Sultan’s leadership qualities and his unmatched courage. The famous Indian newspaper THE HINDU<sup>7</sup> wrote: -

*“During the Bangladesh Liberation War (1971), one intrepid Pakistani officer leading a bayonet charge into the guts of 2/5 GR (FF), was slashed with “kukri” by an equally brave officer Captain Jatandar Nath Sood. The Pakistani officer’s body and identity was completely smeared with blood and he was mistaken for Brigadier Tajamal Hussain Malik, commander of 205 Pakistan infantry brigade. It was at his funeral that the documents found with him as well as his blood-soaked epaulettes correctly identified him as PA-4863 Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sultan Mahmood, commanding officer of Baloch Regiment. As his body was lowered into the grave, one Gorkha JCO (junior commissioned officer) threw in Sultan’s badges of rank, looked up towards the heaven and muttered, “let him also know this sultan bahadur was a lieutenant colonel”. Raja Sultan Mahmood is called by all friends and foes “sultan of lieutenant colonels”. In this action the CO died a heroic death in a hand to hand fight with the enemy. 60 other ranks were also lost in this action. His valour was also recognized by the Indians”*.

Another Indian newspaper THE STATESMAN<sup>8</sup> also mentioned the incident; -

*“Old days hand to hand fight’s memories come to mind once commanding officer of one of the Baluch regiments of Pakistan Army had a hand-to-hand fight with an Indian captain. Lieutenant colonel got martyrdom at the spot whereas the Indian captain died in the hospital, who could not bear the wounds slashed by the colonel. The colonel was equipped with a pistol and the Indian captain with a sten. A JCO said. “he was sultan of kings and king of sultans”*.

That’s the amazing tale of one “Sultan”, we will talk about the other Sultan in the next issue of Bugle & Trumpet.

## Notes

1. War Diary of Major Muhammad Munir Azam, 32 Baloch Regiment, Pirganj battle, 1971 East Pakistan War. He was interviewed by the author as well.
2. Major (later lieutenant colonel) Salim Raza Khan, OC Alpha Company 32 Baloch, Pirganj battle, 1971 East Pakistan War. He was interviewed by the author on phone.



3. Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Yousaf, OC Bravo Company 32 Baloch, Pirganj battle, 1971 East Pakistan War. He was interviewed by the author.
4. Published in “The Hindu”, as quoted in “Indo-Pak Army Regimental History Group” blog (<http://csio-ops-csio.blogspot.com/2018/10/lieutenant-colonel-raja-sultan-mahmood.html>). Copy of the same was shown to 32 Baloch officers by Indian army officers during their captivity as POWs.
5. “Indian Sword Strikes in East Pakistan” by Major General Lachhman Singh Lehal, 1979, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 20/4 Industrial Area, Sahibabad, Distt Ghaziabad, U.P (India).
6. Copy of the letter provided to the author through kind courtesy of Lieutenant General Noman Mahmood (Lieutenant Colonel Sultan’s son), Pakistan Army.
7. Published in “The Hindu”, as quoted in “Indo-Pak Army Regimental History Group” blog (<http://csio-ops-csio.blogspot.com/2018/10/lieutenant-colonel-raja-sultan-mahmood.html>). Copy of the same was shown to 32 Baloch officers by Indian army officers during their captivity as POWs.
8. Published in “The Statesman”, as quoted in “Indo-Pak Army Regimental History Group” blog (<http://csio-ops-csio.blogspot.com/2018/10/lieutenant-colonel-raja-sultan-mahmood.html>). Copy of the same was shown to 32 Baloch officers by Indian army officers during their captivity as POWs.

### About The Author



*Brigadier Nasir Shafiq, Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) was commissioned in Armoured Corps in September 1987. The Officer is a graduate of Command & Staff College Quetta and Air War College PAF Base Faisal, Karachi. His Staff Appointments include General Staff Officer Grade -3 (operations), Brigade Major of an Armoured Brigade and General Staff Officer Grade - 1 of a Mechanized Division. Apart from a stint at Siachen Glacier, the Officer has been on the faculty of School of Armour & Mechanised Warfare, Nowshera twice. He has commanded his parent regiment 38 Cavalry and 2 Independent Armoured Brigade Group. He holds Master’s degrees in Political Science, International Relations, Defence & Strategic Studies and Business Administration (Human Resource Management). Moreover, he also holds MPhil degree in International Relations and is currently pursuing his PhD in Management Sciences. Presently, the officer is serving in Army Institute of Military History as Director Research.*



## **ACT OF VALOUR By RISALDAR MUHAMMAD KHAN *Shaheed***

*By Muhammad Zarrar Saeed (Based on events narrated by Brigadier Nauman Saeed)*

Many people have seen Brad Pitt's hit, "Fury". The story of Don Collier and his crew facing off against seemingly impossible odds struck a chord with people the world over. Whereas that was a work of fiction, there is a story of even greater bravery that is not. Very few know of Pakistan's own, real life Don Collier; his name is Risaldar Muhammad Khan and this is his story.

The first time I met him, he came across as a typical Sargodha-born Armoured Corps Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO), the type that do justice to the title of "Sardar Sahiban". To be clear, his being Sargodhian was an initial assessment that stuck with me and to this day, I am not sure if he was actually from Sargodha. His skin was taut, eyes wide and beaming with courage, and to complete the package, he also sported a heavy moustache. If there was anyone who could personify cavalry, it was Risaldar. Muhammad Khan.



Risaldar M Khan

My first impression of him was cemented when we were preparing to initiate our first attempt to make a breach into militant-controlled territory. The tank crews had never experienced war before and they had never been taught to expect using tanks in such terrain, they were tentative and unsure. It was under these circumstances that I found myself mounting Risaldar Muhammad Khan's tank to lead the column in an encounter that can only be described as fateful. He struck me as of a rare breed of soldiers who showed complete disregard for the sombre environment and welcomed me on board, he was eager to get in the fight; a fact he demonstrated when his crew laid their gun, on my command, in a moment's instant before Muhammad Khan almost jubilantly sounded his ready report in his billowy voice, and typical Armoured Corps fashion "Ruddy Sir!" (Ready Sir), he shouted each time as he waited for my command to let loose on the enemy.



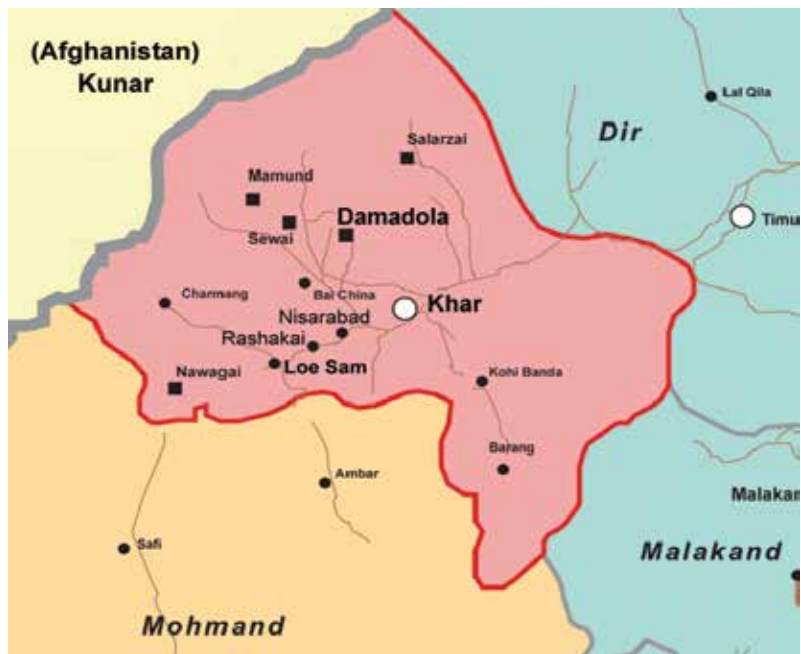
(Source: defence.pk)

On another occasion, I was accompanying the Inspector General Frontier Corps (IGFC), to the line of contact, when we were ambushed at Nisarabad. The general insisted on travelling with his flag flying and stars visible, to rile up the troops. The miscreants also knew they had managed to find an important target, and the intensity of fire the enemy brought to bear seemed to reflect just how terribly determined they were to ensure that they did not let this opportunity slide. However, we were successful in breaking through the ambush despite all their attempts. A single vehicle was hit and along with three individuals, was left stranded at the site of the ambush. The IG made it very



clear that he wanted the stranded soldiers to be extricated and the site punished, but the tanks were being replenished and it was going to be some time before they would be ready to head out. I stood near the tanks and shouted if there was anyone who would be ready to leave, and in response to my challenge, I heard a very familiar voice bellow from one of the tanks “Ruddy Sir”! It was Risaldar Muhammad Khan once again, he popped out of his cupola with the same determination in his eyes. We took the tank into the heart of the enemy’s ambush, rescued the stranded soldiers and were able to return them to safety despite sustaining three hits from rockets and another from a recoilless rifle. He had won my trust earlier but now he also had my respect.

At Rashakai, brigade tactical headquarters as well as two units were encircled by the enemy, who numbered approximately over 1500 strong. They had pinned down the troops and numerous attempts at linking up with them had proven unsuccessful. It was here that the tankers truly had a chance to demonstrate how invaluable they were to low intensity conflict (LIC) operation. The terrorists were at a loss as to how they could deal with the tanks, which became the only means of communication between



Map of Bajaur

(Source: www.criticalthreats.org)

Rashakai and Khar. They could break through the enemy lines, guns blazing, and carry the injured, ammunition, food and supplies between the encircled troops and headquarters.

On one such cavalry dash, Risaldar Muhammad Khan’s tank received a hit from a recoilless rifle near Nisarabad, where Muhammad Khan had earlier extricated that stranded crew from. His tank was left immobile and his driver was martyred on the spot. The remaining two tanks of the troop (a unit of three tanks) stood by and supported him, but eventually even they had to leave to replenish ammunition and fuel. A determined and fearless attempt to rescue the crew was



Armoured Recovery Vehicle

(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

also made by Second Lieutenant Saqib who was considered too young to be trusted with a tank at the time and was thus given the command of an armoured recovery vehicle (ARV), but the heart of a soldier is never bound by the machine he is limited to. Using a smokescreen, Saqib tried to recover



the tank or at least save the crew, but the intensity of the fire was so great that the men could not be rescued and the ARV had to withdraw again.

In the meanwhile, a quick reaction force (QRF) had been assembled and dispatched from headquarters to relieve the stranded tank crew. Under the command of the brigade general staff officer (grade-3), the QRF put up a fierce fight, but eventually had to withdraw unsuccessfully as well, after taking an enormous amount of fire. The brigade general staff officer (grade-3) was also injured in the attempt. In a last ditch effort before evening gave way to the pitch darkness of night, the tanks from Risaldar Muhammad Khan's troop attempted another dash for rescuing the stranded crew, and were supported by an effective aerial effort by Pakistan Air Force aircrafts. However, once again, the intense fire discharged by the miscreants from hidden positions, and fast approaching dusk, forced the aerial effort to be suspended and the supporting tanks also had to withdraw once again, for replenishment. This is the last time that the crew of the stranded tank would be seen alive.



(Source: www.nytimes.com)

In the small window of time from this moment when the troop withdrew, to when he embraced martyrdom, Risaldar Muhammad Khan and his crew exhibited the type of bravery that is rarely seen in a lifetime. Sepoy Raza of 34 Baloch had become separated from the QRF under fire and had fallen behind, Risaldar Muhammad Khan placed him in the driver's compartment to protect him from enemy fire while he himself geared up to make his last stand.



(Source: defence.pk)

The miscreants had surrounded the tank by that time and were preparing to mount. They intended to capture the tank intact and the crew alive in order to be able to use the tank against the Army and be able to train their own tank crews, who could then commandeer other tanks that they would try to capture. It was an ambitious plan that rested entirely on the fate of this one tank crew.

Risaldar Muhammad Khan told his crew to relax and accept that whatever will come, will come but the least they can do is to die fighting like true men, and leave a good account of themselves for their comrades and the enemy. From that moment onwards, Muhammad Khan slid into the commander's seat and prepared the main gun. Whenever the enemy would try to take the tank or assemble to reorganize, he would fire in their direction and force them to disperse. The enemy was becoming frustrated by being denied the opportunity to take the tank, as their casualties continued to mount, but the tank crew showed no intention of yielding.



Inevitably, the ammunition for the main gun was soon exhausted, and it became difficult to engage the enemy at an extended range. Risaldar Muhammad Khan moved to using the coaxial machine gun in order to engage the enemy. The enemy were not allowed to raise their head from cover as Muhammad Khan kept a vigilant eye out for them and was determined to keep them away from his tank as long as it was possible.

Muhammad Khan was running out of ammunition and knew that his options were limited. Realizing the gravity of the situation and assessing his best course of action even under such grim circumstances, he kept his wits about him and gathered the hand grenades from the entire tank crew. Then, when the ammunition from his coaxial machine gun had also finished, he waited for the miscreants to try to take the tank again, before he could attack them with the few hand grenades he had left. One by one, he tossed them out of his cupola and towards the enemy who had already suffered extensive damage to their fighting strength, whereas their own attempt at attrition had failed.

Now down only to his personal sidearm, Risaldar Muhammad Khan patiently waited for the miscreants to open his cupola before he could put up his last moments of resistance against an enemy that he had antagonized for over three hours. He had realized from the very onset that fighting on would mean certain death, whereas the miscreants would take him and his crew alive if he surrendered his tank, but it was beneath his dignity and sense of honour to even consider this option as a possibility. The moment his tank had been hit, Risaldar Muhammad Khan and his crew's options had always been to become Shaheed or Ghazi, they were not going to disgrace themselves and their regiment (21 Horse) with the unsightly stain of surrender.

The miscreants had been exhausted by now, their resolve had been shattered and they were fighting desperately. Out of fear for Muhammad Khan's tenacity, they dared not approach the tank even after the crew had run out of any sort of ammunition, and when they finally did get the confidence to approach the tank, the miscreants could not bring themselves to crack open the hatch and face their tormentors in hand to hand combat. They realized that they could never take this tank, its crew would not allow it, they had fought with everything they had and even if they were to face them, outnumbered as they were, the tank crew would continue fighting on like lions and cause further losses to the miscreants.

With this in mind, as the tank crew waited patiently under the heroic command of Risaldar Muhammad Khan to engage their enemy in close combat, the miscreants decided that trying to take the tank intact was no longer worth the losses they had faced, and after withdrawing once more, they chose to fire an RPG rocket at the cupola, which resulted in the death of the crew but also destroyed the tank



(Source: newschoolers.com)



and rendered it unusable for the enemy. Their ambition had been crushed by a defiant Muhammad Khan and his valiant crew who had proven beyond the shadow of a doubt that a good fighting force is not made by circumstance, weapons and numerical strength, it is made of the indomitable spirit of men like Risaldar Muhammad Khan and his crew, which included Gunner Ahmed Nawaz, Operator Khalid Saifullah and Driver Rasheed.

Injured Sepoy Raza was taken into custody by the terrorists. He remained in captivity for 18 months and had been considered martyred during this episode. His return was a surprise for everyone when the enemy released him as a gesture of compromise when the tables had turned, and the terrorists faced imminent defeat at Damadola. It was Sepoy Raza who narrated the exact story of Risaldar Muhammad Khan's last stand at Nisarabad. By that time, Muhammad Khan had already been awarded Tamgha-e-Basalat posthumously.

### About the Author



*Zarrar Saeed holds a bachelors in social sciences with majors in international relations from Bahria University Islamabad and has worked with the Islamabad Policy Research Institute, The Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Strategic Studies Institute Islamabad. He has written quite extensively in defence and policy journals / magazines on topics ranging from foreign and defence to civic and social policy. Presently, he is pursuing his Masters in Political Science from Simon Fraser University, Canada. He is Brigadier Nauman Saeed's son.*



*Brigadier Nauman Saeed (Retired) Sitara-e-Basalat, Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) was commissioned to the 20<sup>th</sup> Lancers Armoured Regiment of the Pakistan Army. In a career spanning about 30 years, he served on various command, staff and instructional appointments which include command of his parent unit, 20<sup>th</sup> Lancers (Haidri), a Mujahid Battalion in Kashmir and commander of an independent armoured brigade. He also commanded Bajaur Scouts to spearhead OPERATION SHERDIL, an effort to drive Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants out of Bajaur Agency. It was during this campaign that he was awarded a Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card and decorated with Sitara-e-Basalat for acts of gallantry and extraordinary service.*



## 'TICH' COWAN – THE FIGHTING ADMIRAL

*By Major General Syed Ali Hamid (Retired)*

I recently came across a set of photographs sourced by Lieutenant Colonel Zahid Mumtaz, 54th Cavalry of the installation ceremony of the Colonel of the Regiment of 18th Cavalry in Risalpur, in 1947. This ceremony marked the culmination of a very unusual and unique association that developed in North Africa during the Second World War, between an Admiral of the Royal Navy and a regiment of the Indian Armoured Corps.

The Admiral was Sir Walter Henry Cowan, 1st Baronet, KCB, DSO & Bar MVO. He was known as 'Tich' Cowan because of his short height and was a gallant officer and a legend in the British Armed Forces.

Born in 1871, he joined the Royal Navy at the age of 15 and took part in a number of colonial skirmishes. In 1898, he earned a DSO while commanding the Nile Gunboat Flotilla. During the First World War, he commanded a battle cruiser in the famous Battle of Jutland. In 1921, Cowan was appointed to command the Battle Cruiser Squadron, flying his flag in HMS Hood which for 20 years, was the largest and most powerful warship in the world. Her prestige was reflected in her nickname "The Mighty Hood". Unfortunately, it was sunk during the Second World War by an equally famous German battleship "Bismarck". Cowan retired as an Admiral in 1931 but nine years later at the age of 71, he was back in service. His old friend Admiral Keyes was in charge of training of the newly formed Commandos and Cowan (who voluntarily took the lower rank of commander) was attached to this force during its training in Scotland. He then managed to accompany the commandos to Egypt as a liaison officer and went with them on a couple of raids on the German-held coast of North Africa. These raids were unsuccessful and this is where Cowan's wartime history and that of 18th Cavalry merge.



Walter Henry Cowan  
(Source: www.hmshood.com)



HMS Hood (Source: en.wikipedia.org)

The regiment of the Indian Armoured Corps was 18th Cavalry which traces its origin to the 8th and 16th Regiments of Bengal Irregular Cavalry which were raised in 1842 and 1846 respectively. They were later re-designated as 6th Bengal Cavalry and 7th Haryana Lancers, which in 1922 were amalgamated to form the 18th Cavalry. At the opening stages of the



(Source: en.wikipedia.org)





Second World War, the regiment was part of the famous 3rd Indian Motor Brigade. Having mechanized as a motor cavalry regiment, it arrived in Egypt in February 1941 and within two months had its first encounter with the newly formed Afrika Korps at Mekili. Mounted in trucks and armed with only small arms and 2 pounder antitank guns, the brigade broke out of encirclement with great difficulty and substantial losses. While its other two regiments withdrew eastwards, 18th Cavalry went north to become the reserve of the Australian division defending Tobruk. The regiment was caught in the siege and occupied a 5 km section of the perimeter from north of Derna road to the sea. For the next four months, it was constantly engaged with Axis troops while fighting defensive actions, conducting raids, patrolling, etc.



(Source: lindashentonmatchett.com)

Three months later, it received 78 reinforcements from the Commandos whose force had been disbanded and they were formed into an additional squadron. The soldiers were mostly from the British Guards Regiment and were accompanied by Sir Cowan who had persuaded the captain of a destroyer that was ferrying troops to take him to Tobruk where he managed to attach himself to 18th Cavalry. According to the war diary of 18th Cavalry, the Admiral was:

*“Just about the most unassuming and modest person one can meet with perfect manners which at all times are an example to us..... He is now a permanent member of the Regiment and goes everywhere with us, does everything with us and is forever proclaiming his gratitude for being allowed to be with us.”*

On the other hand, the regiment considered it a great honour to have in their midst an illustrious Admiral with a meticulous service record and who was present at Scapa Flow where the German Fleet surrendered in 1918.

The regiment was relieved in August 1941 and sailed to Alexandria accompanied by the Admiral and after being refitted, rejoined the brigade. The battle in North Africa ebbed and flowed and in May 1942 at the opening stages of the Battle of Gazala, the 3rd Indian Motor Brigade was thrust into the eye of the impending storm. Sir Cowan had now been with the regiment for nearly a year. Now better equipped with 6 pounder antitank guns and supported by the 25 pounders of 2nd Indian Field Artillery Regiment, the brigade took the brunt of the attack by the Afrika Korps on the first day of the battle. The brigade



(Source: en.wikipedia.org)



was overrun but not before it held part of the Korps for over two critical hours and in the process destroyed a large number of Axis tanks. One estimate places the figure at 60 of which 20 lay in front of or within the position of 18th Cavalry.

Over 20 officers of the brigade were captured including Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Fowler, the commanding officer of the 18th Cavalry who was subsequently awarded the DSO. The POWs also included the Admiral who refusing all cover, stood in the open engaging passing tanks and armoured cars with his revolver. An Italian armoured car stopped 40 yards in front of him and Cowan drew his revolver and fired till it was empty. A captain in the armoured car then fired at him with a machine gun and missed. With no cartridges left, Cowan dropped his gun and walked up to the Captain and asked him what he wanted and the Italian motioned to him to get in his car. In a letter to 18th Cavalry sent from a POW camp in Italy the following month, the Admiral wrote, 'I would like you to know I did not put my hands up, and did run out of cartridges – didn't want to disgrace the regiment. Walter Cowan.'

In 1943 on account of his age, he was released from Italy in a POW exchange, but the Admiral was not yet ready to go home. The motorized brigade had been re-assigned to the Middle East which was an inactive theatre and possibly for this reason the Admiral rejoined the commandos and was in action in Italy during 1944 where he was awarded a bar to the DSO. He retired again in 1945, being one of the oldest active duty servicemen.



(Source: csio-ops-csio.blogspot.com)

Admiral Cowan Colonel of the Regiment of 18th Cavalry with the CO Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Goring and the Second-in-Command Major Muhammad Yousuf, Risalpur, March 1947. Major Yousuf commanded the regiment when Lieutenant Colonel Goring left in May 1947.

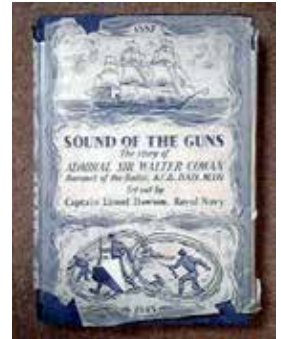
Admiral Walter Cowan reviewing 18th Cavalry at the Installation Parade in Risalpur, March 1947.

At the end of the war, 18th Cavalry arrived at Risalpur under the command of 3rd Armoured Brigade. The brigade was commanded by Brigadier Walter Loaring, ex 19th Lancers, and 18th Cavalry was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Goring. The regiment decided to invite Admiral Cowan to become the Colonel of the Regiment of 18th Cavalry. It was a great honour for



the regiment when the Admiral accepted his appointment and travelled from England to Risalpur for the Installation Parade in March 1947. As part of the ceremony, he took the salute at a march past, addressed the Durbar and met the veterans. On this occasion, he presented some of the flags he had flown on the ships he commanded in action. Throughout his stay at Risalpur, the Admiral wore the uniform of the Colonel of Regiment.

Admiral Cohan remained Colonel of the Regiment for the next ten years till he passed away in 1956. In accordance with his will, a silver salver that he had been presented by the regiment during the ceremony, was returned. His biography which was very appropriately named 'Sound of the Guns', was published in 1949.



(Source: amazon.co.uk)

### Notes

1. Sir Walter Cowan - HMS Hood Association ([www.hmshood.com/crew/biography/cowan\\_bio.htm](http://www.hmshood.com/crew/biography/cowan_bio.htm)).
2. Review: 'TICH' COWAN – THE FIGHTING ADMIRAL – CSIO [csio-ops-csio.blogspot.com/2018/12/tich-cowan-fighting-admiral.html](http://csio-ops-csio.blogspot.com/2018/12/tich-cowan-fighting-admiral.html).

### About The Author



*Major General Syed Ali Hamid (Retired) was commissioned into the Armoured Corps in 1968 and served with his regiment, 26 Cavalry in Chamb during the 1971 War. He is a graduate of the Staff College, Camberley and National Defense University, Islamabad where he remained instructor for four years. Besides his illustrious military career, he raised the Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO).*



## **BAKHTAWAR SHAH – A LEGENDRY CHARACTER OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN LIBERATION WAR**

*By Brigadier Imran Haider Jaffri (Retired)*

With the decision to divide Indian sub-continent into India and Pakistan, Britain also decided to terminate the suzerainty over princely states. Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) was also to be handed over back to Dogra Raja. Muslim majority of the Agency knew that after British departure, Dogra Raja would unleash a reign of terror in the Agency. The fear was compounded by the arrival of Brigadier Ghansara Singh as Governor of Gilgit, and decision to relegate Gilgit Scouts, a levy force, to a level lower than state forces. Six Viceroy Commissioned Officers (VCOs) of Gilgit Scouts decided to revolt against the tyranny of Dogra Raja.

GB Liberation War of 1947/48 against Dogra rule and Indian occupation forces by much smaller, ill-clad and ill-equipped Gilgit Scouts is indeed an epic story of courage and valour. It can be rightly equated with Battle of Thermopylae fought sometime in 480 BC, where a few thousand Spartans stood against the mighty Persian army of almost 150,000 men. The differences between Battle of Thermopylae and GB liberation war are the length of wars and the end result, when the earlier lasted for just a week with Greek city state's defeat and the latter continued for over a year with the liberation of GB due to unwavering determination of the freedom fighters.

Such battles revolve around gutsy, gritty and robust warriors who distinguish themselves by the heroic display of vigour and valour. King Leonidas of Sparta distinguished himself as a true warrior at Thermopylae. There are many such warriors in GB Liberation War, who distinguished themselves by sheer determination and will to wrest freedom from the tyrants. Mujahid Bakhtawar Shah was one such individual who was a natural warrior. He was among the few civilians who fought alongside Gilgit Scouts and Muslim segments of 6 J & K Light Infantry.

Bakhtawar Shah is credited with individual acts of valour which are hard to believe unless one goes through the merit certificates he earned as a result. He is a legendary and immortal character of GB Liberation War. His acts of valour have been acknowledged by many acclaimed writers of GB history to include Shamsheer Se Zanjeer Tak (Colonel Hassan), Tehreek Baltistan (Hussain Abdi), Jihad e Musalsal (Aman ullah) and Jang e Azadi Gilgit Baltistan by Moulvi Haq Nawaz. Tales of his individual bravery have been narrated in native poetry and are



War Memorial of Martyrs of GB  
(Source: pamirtimes.wordpress.com)



Bakhtawar Shah (Source: facebook.com)



often hummed by youngsters and oldies alike, to pay tribute to this brave soul. Succeeding paragraphs give a crisp account of Bakhtawar Shah's life to reveal a fascinating, hardy and an equally romantic character of Gilgit Baltistan.

## Early Life

Born in Khaltaro Harmosh in Raki family, a sub clan of vastly respected Sheen Tribe of Gilgit Baltistan, Bakhtawar received his elementary education from Bunji and later joined the police service in Gilgit, under Dogra rule. A well-built, strong and robust man with big waxed moustache, looked fearsome in his youth in the police service, despite the fact that he possessed a tender and loving heart. Playing with rifles was his favorite sport. Being a natural hunter and a marksman, he was handpicked as personal hunter by Colonel Cobb, the British Political Agent. He would often accompany Colonel Cobb on his hunting expeditions in the rugged and mountainous terrain of GB. His knowledge of terrain, stamina and marksmanship would become very valuable later, when he volunteered to fight alongside Scouts against the Dogra forces.



(Source: facebook.com)

A few years later, Bakhtawar Shah found himself entangled in a complicated issue. He was engaged to one of his cousins, whom he truly adored and was to marry her soon. Because of some family dispute, his uncle re-engaged the girl with another young man of the tribe, only to enrage the daring and stubborn hunter. Bakhtawar Shah could not digest the humiliation brought by this incident and went on to kill the very man who had gotten engaged with Bakhtawar's bride to be, on the pretext of honour killing. Although honour killing was a common practice at that time, still it was considered a heinous crime under the existing laws. Thus, he was charged with murder. In 1943, he got life imprisonment for this assassination. He was kept in Astore Police Station from where he and other capital punishment inmates were to be shifted to Srinagar jail.

However, Bakhtawar Shah managed to escape from custody and went into hiding in the rugged terrain of GB which he was so familiar with. He remained a fugitive until the beginning of freedom struggle in November 1947. He surfaced on the pretext that after the demise of Dogra rule, his sentence is no more valid, which was probably endorsed by many at that time. It should be noted that due to this particular incident, some writers have labeled him as a criminal which is probably unjustified, as avenging in the name of honour was a common and pardonable practice in those times, indeed a crime of passion. Moreover, with the collapse of Dogra rule, the sentence awarded automatically lapsed until re-trial by the newly formed GB Government which was never done.

## GB Liberation War

Major Hassan Khan, one of the prime movers of the revolt and a Muslim officer of 6 J & K Light Infantry, had liquidated the Dogra elements of his battalion in collaboration with Gilgit Scouts.



Some of the surviving Dogra soldiers managed to escape to Skardu via Astore. After the liberation of Gilgit and Bunji, a large number of people gathered at Bunji to wage jihad against the Dogras. Major Hassan Khan appreciated that Dogra soldiers who had escaped towards Skardu, were to be apprehended or killed at all cost before they could alert the Dogra garrison at Skardu. He asked for volunteers for this arduous task. Bakhtawar Shah was the only volunteer on the occasion.



Major Hassan Khan

Considering it a mission impossible, no one even volunteered to accompany Bakhtawar Shah. But Major Hassan Khan was fully aware of the lineage of Bakhtawar Shah, whose forefathers had fought gallantly during the wars of Chilas in 1853 and the fight of Pissan Fort Nagar in 1847 against the Dogras. Thus, he entrusted Bakhtawar Shah with the challenging chase.

### Ambush at Meindi / Rondu

Bakhtawar Shah, equipped with his favourite rifle, embarked solo on the mission to hunt down the escaping Dogra soldiers. He started the chase towards Rondu. After a day's hectic trekking and travelling, he spotted the Dogra soldiers moving towards village Meindi near Rondu. He very intelligently selected a position on the far bank of Meindi nullah, and waited



Map of Gilgit Baltistan

(Source: researchgate.net by David Butz)

for the arrival of his prey, which was a platoon-size force of Dogra segment of 6 J & K Light Infantry. He waited anxiously, staying motionless in his hideout. After having ensured that the last enemy soldier was inside the nullah; the hunting nest, he suddenly opened fire on the enemy. The Dogra soldiers quickly took up positions behind boulders and responded with fire. The exchange of fire continued for several hours. Bakhtawar Shah would change his position after firing a few shots, which made the Dogra soldiers believe that they were up against at least a section strength. The exchange of fire lasted for almost eight hours, and eventually the Dogra platoon surrendered to Bakhtawar Shah. During the encounter, two enemy soldiers got killed and four were left severely injured. He singlehandedly disarmed them, removed the bolts from their weapons, took the prisoners to Bunji and presented them to Major Hassan Khan.

This was indeed an unprecedented act of individual courage where a civilian singlehandedly forced a well-trained platoon of enemy soldiers, led by a captain, to surrender. Bakhtawar Shah was



later presented with a merit certificate for his bravery by Major Hassan Khan and others.

### **Surrender by Captain Karshan Singh with Troops**

It was 9th of February 1948 when Azad forces were fighting a platoon of Dogra forces led by Captain Karshan Singh, who had taken up a defensive position near the village of Saari (close to Skardu). Meanwhile, a Dogra loyalist Muslim spy, Ghulam Rasool spread a rumour that the enemy is planning a very heavy assault on Azad forces (Gilgit Scouts and volunteers). This created panic amongst Azad forces and the commander decided to withdraw his troops towards Soundas (close to Skardu). Everyone accepted the order less Bakhtawar Shah who believed that it was only a rumour and that the surrounded Dogra platoon under Captain Karshan should not be afforded a chance to flee. So he kept fighting the enemy for many days and ultimately forced them to surrender. Fifteen enemy soldiers including Captain Karshan Singh were taken into captivity. This act of Bakhtawar Shah is yet another feather in his cap, which was acknowledged by the then Wing Commander 'A' Wing, Azad Forces who presented him a merit certificate which validates the event.

### **Assault on Skardu Fort**

A Dogra force under Colonel Thapa Singh had been besieged in Skardu Fort, it was putting up stiff resistance, and had refused to surrender with the hope of fresh Indian troops to relieve them ultimately. Azad forces kept tightening the noose around the fort but felt frustrated due to lack of troops and heavy weapons. All efforts to assault proved futile. On 12th February 1948, the first attack on Skardu Fort was launched. 8 J & K Light Infantry



Skardu Fort (Source: en.wikipedia.org)

had taken up defensive positions in Kharphocho Fort on Dongsa Ridge. Bakhtawar Shah somehow managed to climb to the top of Dongsa Ridge and establish a bunker with the help of Balti volunteers. He started sniping at the Dogra battalion from this bunker, and disrupted their internal movement, thus contributing towards their surrender months later. Bakhtawar Shah was again presented with a certificate of merit which is a testimony of his contributions in the fall of Skardu.



Kharphocho Fort on Dongsa Ridge (Source: www.wikiwand.com)

### **Snatching of Rifle from Enemy Soldier**

One day Captain Babar Khan, another architect of GB revolt, was sitting along with Bakhtawar Shah in Nubra front, when he challenged Bakhtawar: if he considered himself so brave and courageous, he must go alone and snatch a rifle from an enemy soldier. Bakhtawar Shah accepted the challenge and went for the mission during the hours of darkness. He succeeded in snatching the



rifle of a Dogra soldier firing from a loophole. In recognition and as a reward for yet another act of bravery, he was presented the snatched weapon, which his family still keeps as a symbol of pride and honour.

### **Head Money on Bakhtawar Shah**

As narrated earlier, Bakhtawar had left four wounded enemy soldiers at Roundu and had moved the rest to Bunji. Those wounded soldiers were later shifted to Skardu by enemy forces for treatment. These soldiers narrated much about Bakhtawar Shah: that he was like a devil, a demon and an invincible superhuman who could not be killed. They narrated that they fired at him all day long, exhausting all their ammunition before surrendering, but the invincible Bakhtawar remained unscathed. After such stories, the Dogra regime placed a 10,000 rupees head money on Bakhtawar Shah, which was broadcast on official radio as well.

Bakhtawar Shah's war performance is unique and full of individual acts of valour. He had participated in the battle of Thorgo against forces of Brigadier Faqir Singh. He also participated in Parkuta action where there is a famous Bakhtawar Cave to his name. After Parkuta, he went into Kharmang area with Azad forces. He went as far as Shorbat region with regular forces and remained there until the cease fire in January 1949.

*(Narrated by Brigadier Basharat Ali, Grandson of Bakhtawar Shah)*

### **About The Author**



*Brigadier Imran Haider Jaffri (Retired), Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) was commissioned in 1987 in a self-propelled (medium) regiment Artillery. The officer had held various command, staff and instructional appointments during his military career. He has been on the faculty of School of Artillery and School of Armour & Mechanized Warfare. The officer is a graduate of Command & Staff College Quetta and Masters of Philosophy in International Affairs from National Defence University, Islamabad. The officer is also qualified in Overseas Joint Warfare Course from Australian Defence Warfare Training Centre. After retirement, the officer is serving as Director Research at Army Institute of Military History.*





## **105 mm PACK HOWITZER – The INFANTRYMAN’S FRIEND**

*By Lieutenant Colonel Imran Hassan Khan Niazi (Retired)*

Artillery played a significant part in the India-Pakistan War of September 1965 where Pakistani gunners won a clear edge over their adversaries. The capture of 18 intact 25 pounder guns of Indian Artillery near Jaurian raised a whole new unit.<sup>1</sup> The importance and immediate need of enhancing artillery firepower was felt during the war. After ceasefire, about a dozen new units were raised between September to November 1965 and formations' artillery was reorganized.<sup>2</sup> 105/14 Model 56, 105-millimeter (mm) Pack Howitzer, commonly known as Mod-56 or Modelo-56,<sup>3</sup> was also procured during the same time period. Its significance was in the backdrop of operations in Chamb-Jaurian sector and the requirements in mountainous terrain of Northern Areas (now Gilgit-Baltistan) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The gun is in service with Pakistan Artillery since October 1965 and has been active at Poonch and Chamb during War 1971, and has been in continuous use in Kashmir on the Line of Control, responding aggressively to Indian shelling.<sup>4</sup> It is serving well in Siachen conflict since 1984. ***In Siachen, it has the unique distinction of deployment at 17,000 feet above sea level - highest ever employment of any artillery piece in the most adverse temperatures below freezing point.***<sup>5</sup>



(Source: imfdb.org)



(Source: army-guide.com)

It was developed by OTO-Melara, Italy during 1950s and went into production in 1957. It was custom-made for the mountain artillery of the Italian Army's Alpini brigades,<sup>6</sup> but became a popular choice world-wide. It was one of the best light weight artillery pieces of 105 mm caliber in a pack version at that time. It was adopted by British and Australian armies in early 60s as L5 pack howitzer, but later the British developed L118 and the Australians shifted to US M2A2.<sup>7</sup> Its production became dormant in 1990s when the demand became occasional. However, manufacture continues on need basis.<sup>8</sup>

OTO-Melara is known to have produced nearly 2600 pieces since 1957. Over 2200 guns of Mod-56/L5 remained in use by over 40 countries world-wide, whereas around 200 pieces are also held by international arms distributors. Although many developed countries including Italy itself moved over to the US version, around 1100 are still in use by 20 countries or so. China was supplied with two guns and they directly copied Mod-56 to manufacture their own version by NORINCO. The gun remained a NATO weapon in the initial stages, and also became the



(Source: reddit.com)

standard equipment of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land) artillery, equipping the batteries provided by Canada, Belgium, Germany, Italy and the UK (until 1975). Over 150 pieces are held by Pakistan alone, which have been procured from time to time.<sup>9</sup>

The howitzer has an effective range of 10-12 km and can be dismantled into 12 light, manageable components, which can be carried by mules in the mountains. The advantage of light weight allows its transportation through helicopter while it can be towed as well, thus enhancing its versatility. With its shield removed, it can also be carried in APC M113. It is considered an infantryman's friend due to its ability to be relocated over short distances by the crew itself, without requiring any assistance.<sup>10</sup>



Dismantled and carried on a Mule

Mod-56 / L5 can be used with or without its shield and it can fire all types of US / NATO pattern 105mm M1 semi-fixed ammunition. It can be used as an artillery piece as well as indirect / anti-tank role.<sup>11</sup>



Carriage by Gun Tower

(Source: militaryfactory.com)

Loading howitzer inside APC M113 in Vietnam

(Source: www.pinterest.com)

Whereas the gun can be disassembled into twelve components within minutes, the light weight has its disadvantages too. It lacks the requisite robustness necessary for sustained operations, owing to its barrel's inability to undertake sustained firing. Australia and New Zealand replaced Mod-56 by the sturdy US-made M101A1 in Vietnam after it was found unsuitable for continuous operations.<sup>12</sup> This lack of durability also led to their being carried on trucks for longer distances outside the combat zone. **However, Pakistan during wars proved it otherwise. In Daruchian during**



*War 1971, one artillery regiment fired over 500 rounds in one night alone, while during intense operations in Kashmir during 1999, it was extensively fired with admirable success.*<sup>13</sup> The Mod 56 offers limited protection to its crew. Its original ammunition lacks range and punch which not only made it vulnerable to counter-fire, but also resulted in pre-mature explosion of rounds.



(Source: militaryfactory.com)

Identified combat use includes Australian Army during the Malayan Emergency in Borneo and Malaya, during the Vietnam War in 1965–67, New Zealand Army during the Vietnam War, British Army during the Aden Emergency in South Yemen and Borneo, Malaysian Army in Borneo and Malaysian Peninsula during the Second Malayan Emergency (1968–1989), Nigerian Army during the Nigerian Civil War (some were captured by Biafrans), Argentine Army during the 1982 Falklands War<sup>14</sup> and Pakistan Army during the India-Pakistan War 1971 and at Siachen / Line of Control.<sup>15</sup>



Line of Control - Kashmir 1999

(Source: parhlo.com)

As already mentioned earlier, the integral 6-7 men gun crew can dismantle and assemble the gun in 12 parts:



(Source: google.com)

Mod-56 has remained a main part of light weight artillery world-wide at one time. Despite being superseded by the better performing US howitzers, it still remains part of the inventory with many countries, especially in mountainous areas. It is a popular choice in the treacherous mountainous regions of Pakistan and commonly known as the artillery workhorse.



## Notes

1. Interview of Major General Syed Ithar Hussain Shah (R) by author on the history of Pakistan's artillery.
2. Ibid.
3. Archived Report in May 2003 by Forecast International.
4. Interview of Major General Syed Ithar Hussain Shah (R) by author on the history of Pakistan's artillery.
5. Ibid.
6. History of 5<sup>th</sup> Rt. Mountain Artillery - 'Gruppo Sondrio' at official Members' site of the 'Sondrio' Mountain Artillery Group Alpina OROBICA Brigade.
7. Article; '105mm Pack Howitzer' at [www.paradata.org.uk](http://www.paradata.org.uk), accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018.
8. Archived Report in May 2003 by Forecast International.
9. Ibid.
10. Notes by School of Artillery, Nowshera.
11. 'Twentieth-century Artillery' at [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org) accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
12. 'Artillery Register' at the site of Royal Australian Artillery History Company at [www.artilleryhistory.org](http://www.artilleryhistory.org) accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
13. Interview of Major General Syed Ithar Hussain Shah (R) by author on the history of Pakistan's artillery.
14. Article; 'OTO Melara Mod 56' at [www.militaryfactory.com](http://www.militaryfactory.com) accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
15. Interview of Major General Syed Ithar Hussain Shah (R) by author on the history of Pakistan's artillery.

## About the Author



*Lieutenant Colonel Imran Hassan Khan Niazi (Retired) was commissioned as a second-generation officer in a mechanized infantry battalion of the elite Frontier Force Regiment in 1987. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College Quetta and a recipient of Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Military). He has a diverse experience of various appointments including homeland security and counter terrorism. The officer has been a history student and has also compiled 150 years of his own battalion's history, in 1999. After retirement, the officer is serving as Director of Composite Wing in AIMH Rawalpindi.*



## HAL BEVAN PETMAN (1894-1980)

*By Romano Karim Yousaf*

Portraiture is rare in Pakistan. With the exception of military portraits, we rarely see civilian personalities painted. The photograph has replaced the paintbrush. However, we continue to see a tradition of portraiture in the Pakistan Armed Forces, and a visit to most officers' messes displays well executed portraits of generals, brigadiers and commanding officers. Let us look back in time to see where this all began.



Hal Bevan Petman  
(Source: facebook.com)

Portraiture in the Indian Subcontinent dates back to the earliest recorded dynasties and kingdoms. Prominent personalities had themselves painted, or sculpted, and these artworks now grace many private collections, museums and numerous archaeological sites of this part of Asia. The Subcontinent has always been a land of promise, frequented by numerous traders and invaders, writers, artists, travelers and men of fortune; all drawn here by stories of its fabled wealth and cultures. Portuguese traders first landed here in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, rapidly followed by the Dutch, English and French. All rapidly established registered trading companies, and later, as we all know, commenced acquisition of lands and political power. However, in the end, it was the British who truly and effectively colonised India, initially under the British East India Company, (Company Bahadur), and later, directly under the Crown.

This preamble is given to set the backdrop for influence of European art in the Subcontinent. Tilly Kettle (1735–1786) was the first prominent British artist to visit and paint in India. He was followed soon after by many seeking fame and fortune, painting the nawabs and maharajas of the land.

Fast forward to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Henry Charles 'Hal' Bevan Petman, (1894-1980), may be classified as the last of the Raj painters. Born to a family of lawyers, Hal and his younger brother were born in Bristol where his father, Bertrand Amor Bevan Petman, was a school teacher. Bertrand himself was born in India, where his father had arrived in the 1860s.

In the words of Hal's granddaughter Susan, taken from her blog, *The Chelsea Chameleons: 'Moving on with Hal'*, he attended Clifton College Bristol in 1908. He was in North Town (one of the boys Houses). He left Clifton in 1910 and travelled out to India to join his parents who had left England to live in India. This was to be the start of a life full of adventure, intrigues and scandals which had consequences on generations to come.

Hal was now 'home', and was to settle down to a life of comfort and privilege, but soon after tragedy struck, when he contracted polio, and suddenly, one would imagine, his career options in life became rather limited. We don't know who first suggested a career in art, but 1915 saw Hal and his



father set sail back to the UK, where Hal was enrolled in the Slade School of Art in Central London. He was then all of 19 years old. He must have had a flair for drawing, because he rapidly excelled at the school, and graduated with a 'first' in figure drawing. We have evidence that he was subsequently retained as a teaching assistant.

While at Slade, he met, and soon after, married a model employed there. The marriage was to fall apart after three short years, when his wife left, taking their one year old daughter with her. Hal returned alone to India in 1921, where he rapidly made a name for himself as a portrait artist, and art teacher, coaching both adults and children. He briefly coached a 9 year old, Amrita Sher-Gil in Shimla, who later was to become a famous painter herself.

The decade of the 1920s passed with Hal again returning to London, where he took up work as an illustrator for "The Spectator" and the Illustrated London News publications. Portraiture continued, as well as a second matrimonial foray. This too didn't last long. Hal returned to Lahore in the 1930s, and this time, though he did not know it himself, it was for keeps.



Landscape Showing Dal lake sunrise (Source: pinterest.com)

He again threw himself into his work, and life followed a familiar pattern. Summers in Simla, and winters in Lahore. The rich and famous took pride in having themselves painted in his signature style. Recognising human vanity early on, Hal would paint his female subjects in a way that flattered the sitter doubtless gaining him more clients, but later, also some critical flak for making them more beautiful than they were!

None of this was evident in his military portraits; the officers and jawans gaze down at you, confident, imperious. His portrait of Subedar Khudadad Khan, first Indian recipient of the Victoria Cross, now hanging in the British National Army Museum in London, is a classic study of martial spirit, with the subject in full uniform, turban, Sam Browne belt and medals. Hal painted this one in 1935. Many more were to follow, including dozens of portraits, landscapes and battle scenes for Nawab General Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi V, the last Nawab of Bahawalpur. The British Indian Army continued to commission Hal right up to Partition, and this 'tradition' carried on as he and his brother opted for Pakistan. Hal initially moving to Quetta, and later settling down in Rawalpindi, where he took up permanent tat bungalow number 8 in the Rawalpindi Club.



Subedar Khudadad Khan (Source: halbevanpetman.com)



Residence of Hal (Rawalpindi Club)



Rawalpindi may have been a cultural backwater in the early years, but Hal continued to receive a steady stream of commissions. Army portraits and battle scenes were painted in Rawalpindi and Abbottabad, Generals Ayub Khan, Iftikhar, Akbar, Musa, as well as his civilian or 'society' portraits, all done at his converted garage studio behind the residence, and during summers at the Lockwood Hotel Murree, and later on at the Gold Hotel Bhurban, where Hal was a regular. Families from all over Pakistan flocked to the cool of the hill stations, and Hal was ever willing to oblige. The numerous artworks now extant in private homes countrywide, give us a comprehensive feel of just how talented he was!



Hal in Bhurban  
(Source: halbevanpetman.com)

No article on Hal Bevan Petman would be complete without mentioning his invaluable contribution honouring the gallant soldiers and officers who laid down their lives for Pakistan. Hal's evocative and lifelike portraits of Major Aziz Bhatti, Major Tufail, and others, keep their visual memory alive for all in perpetuity. These portraits have since been (inexpertly) copied numerous times, both for wall display, and on the backs of trucks. In fact, the tradition of portraits as part of truck art, is huge, but that would be the subject of another article!



(Source: halbevanpetman.com)

Next time you see an expertly rendered portrait, landscape, still life, or battle scene, check the name painted in the lower right hand corner. It's probably Hal's!

Hal Bevan Petman passed away in the Rawalpindi Club in May 1980. He is buried in the



Portraits by Hal (Clockwise- Quaid-e-Azam, Lieutenant General Aftab, Lieutenant General Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan, Major Tufail Shaheed, General Ayub, Major Raza Shaheed)  
(Source: halbevanpetman.com)



Rawalpindi Christian Cemetery. His gravestone lies forgotten under a carpet of dirt and dried leaves. He is now no more than a faint memory to the last who knew him. Soon they too will move on, and we will have no link to this 'official' portrait artist of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

I have been researching the man since 1989, and you can read up more on him and his work at my following pages:



(Source: pinterest.com)

- [www.halbevanpetman.com](http://www.halbevanpetman.com)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hal\\_Bevan-Petman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hal_Bevan-Petman)
- <https://www.facebook.com/HalBevanPetman/>

### About the Author



*Karim 'Romano' Yusuf is an active social person, with varied interests. He contributes articles to national dailies. He has also been associated with various international media organizations. Based in Islamabad, he is a long term researcher of Hal Bevan Petman and is always looking for overlooked cultural projects that warrant his attention.*

### Editor's Notes

- *Erstwhile Rawalpindi Club / Artillery Mess which now is Garrison Officers' Mess has a room named after 'Hal' as 'Petman Cafe'.*
- *Queen Elizabeth II was presented four paintings made by Hal in 1961 during her official visit to Pakistan. These paintings are on display at Sandringham House and are part of the Royal Collection.*
- *A privately funded documentary project was incepted to produce a snapshot of the Hal Bevan Petman, his work, and features some of his models giving their views on the experience they had with him whilst being painted. A preview of the production, called 'Discovering Petman', can be viewed on Vimeo, the documentary is directed by Taqi Shaheen, with research by Romano Karim Yusuf. The documentary in rough cut was premiered at Kuch Khaas as "Hal Bevan Petman - The Forgotten Society Painter" on 4 Sep 2012, receiving positive reviews. Kuch Khaas is a non-profit organisation promoting local art, artists and literary events in Islamabad, this rough cut also featured in "Migration Stories", a British Council Pakistan roadshow in 2013 as they also funded about 10% of the project.*





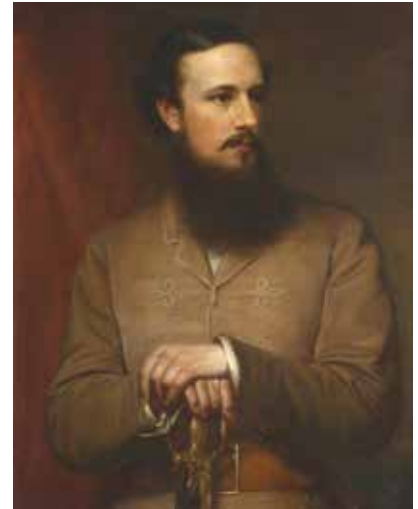
## THE NIKAL SEYN

*By Major Hassaan Javaid*

*The Story of a Colonial Era British Army Officer*

While travelling on Grand Trunk Road and passing through the narrow Margalla Pass near Taxila, one must have seen a tall obelisk standing on a ridge to the left. The monument was built by the British to pay tribute to Brigadier General John Nicholson (1821-1857), an officer of the British Army of East India Company who died in India during the War of Independence (aka Indian Mutiny) of 1857.

Nicholson had a charismatic personality who served under Sir Henry Lawrence and played a key role in the settlement of the North West Frontier Province, as well as suppressing the War of Independence of 1857.



John Nicholson  
(Source: independent.co.uk)

Nicholson was born in Armagh, Ireland. His father died in his childhood and young Nicholson was brought up by his maternal uncle. After studying in Royal School Dungannon, young Nicholson finally secured a cadetship in the East India Company's Bengal Infantry, and set out for a brilliant military career in India. On reaching India in 1839, he joined the 41st<sup>1</sup> Native Infantry at Benares and then finally transferred to 27th Native Infantry at Ferozepore. It was the time of the 19th Century when two great powers of that time, the British and the Russians were involved in a diplomatic war for spheres of influence in Asia known as the "Great Game" to the British, and the "Tournament of Shadows"<sup>2</sup> to the Russians. Young Nicholson saw fierce military action in the First Anglo-Afghan War in November 1840,<sup>3</sup> when his regiment was ordered up to relieve one of the infantry units already in Afghanistan. Nicholson was also present at the British garrison at Ghazni when it was attacked by Afghan tribesmen. Young Nicholson was held captive at Ghazni for a few months, along with some other British officers, and later was shifted to Kabul to join other British prisoners.

Upon his release and the consequent return of the British forces to India, he was posted to Delhi to join a new Force called 'Delhi Field Force'<sup>4</sup> which was being organized at that time to counter the neighboring Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab. The Sikh Kingdom of Punjab was established and consolidated by Maharajah Ranjit Singh during the early years of the Nineteenth Century. At the same time, the British were advancing towards the North-West of India, by conquest or annexation to the borders of the Punjab. After the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, his kingdom began to fall into disorder. Young John took part as a junior officer in the first Anglo-Sikh War that ended in a British victory after the battle of Sobraon.<sup>5</sup> Resultantly, The Treaty of Lahore was signed which allowed Dalip Singh to remain as maharaja with many restrictions; the British took over the administration



of the Khalsa kingdom and Henry Lawrence was made British representative stationed at Lahore to control and run the affairs of the region. Gulab Singh Dogra was made Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir in recognition of his services to the British.

The new resident picked a number of assistants to carry out his orders. This group of young officers known as ‘Young Men of Henry Lawrence’<sup>6</sup> in history included officers like Herbert Edwardes, James Abbott, and John Nicholson who all left their mark in history and the region. They were given sweeping powers as political officers, to establish order and the Company’s rule in the region. John Nicholson also took part in the Anglo-Sikh battles of Chillianwala and Gujrat before the final annexation of Punjab to the Company’s rule.

Later, Young John Nicholson was made District Commissioner in Bannu. He had a reputation of being foul tempered and too much authoritarian but he also gained the respect of the locals due to his fair-handedness and sense of honour. Nicholson was ruthless in bringing peace and order to the region with zero tolerance towards crime.

He inspired the *Nikal Seyn, or Nikal Seyni* cult,<sup>7</sup> which survived in different forms in some parts of North-West Pakistan, even during 1980s. The followers of this cult worshipped Nicholson as a living God who brought justice to the oppressed, by punishing the strong. Interestingly, Nicholson never liked this custom as he found his Christian beliefs offended by this worship.

## Events of 1857

Nicholson was best known for his action during the War of Independence of 1857 due to his role in planning and leading the final assault on Delhi known as the *Storming of Delhi*.<sup>8</sup> At the time of the uprising in Delhi, Nicholson was in the North- West Frontiers. He quickly marched towards Delhi. On his way, he successfully disarmed the “rebels” and neutralized them at Nowshera and Sialkot. As an architect of the final battle, Young Nicholson was always a great critic of the competence of his superiors. While on his deathbed, he said, upon hearing of Colonel (later General Sir) Archdale Wilson’s hesitancy “Thank God I have yet the strength to



Henry Lawrence  
(Source: victorianweb.org)



Battle of Chillianwala - 1849 (Source: pinterest.com)



Storming of Delhi - 1857 (Source: collection.nam.ac.uk)

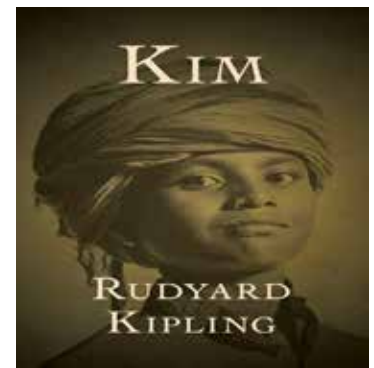


shoot him, if necessary”<sup>9</sup> John Nicholson was successful in the blockade of Delhi. He led his column to storm the breach at Kashmir Gate on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1857.

During this final assault, he was injured and finally died of wounds on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, nine days after he had led the assault on the city.<sup>10</sup> However, the British had taken the control of Delhi before his death. He was just 35. Nicholson never married, he was a great friend of Herbert Edwardes. At Bannu, Nicholson used to ride more than a hundred miles to spend a few hours with Edwardes on every weekend.

## Commemoration in Art and Literature

Nicholson became the Victorian “Hero of Delhi”<sup>11</sup> inspiring books, ballads and generations of young boys to join the British Army. He is referenced in numerous literary works, including Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim*, in which the Kim<sup>12</sup> traveling with his companion the Buddhist Lama, meets an aged Indian Risaldar-Major. The man turns out to be a veteran of the Great Uprising of 1857, and while travelling on the road, he sings the old “song of Nikal Seyn before Delhi”.<sup>13</sup>



(Source: amazon.com)

Nicholson features in a number of works about this period in history. He was remembered by the famous British Poet Sir Henry John Boly, who wrote *A Ballad of John Nicholson*<sup>14</sup> in his commemoration. He is also mentioned by George MacDonald Fraser in his book *Flashman and the Great Game*.<sup>15</sup>

## A Controversial Figure

Despite his charismatic personality and heroic figure as portrayed in Victorian history, John Nicholson is considered a problematic and psychologically imbalanced personality in modern eyes. A modern historian generally considers him a short tempered man who had an unforgiving attitude towards native Indians. He is also criticized for his handling of the local freedom fighters, as he ordered their killing without trial or legal procedure. He earned the reputation of a violent, bully and racist of local Indian life and dignity.<sup>16</sup>

## Nicholson’s Monuments

Nicholson’s dynamic service and untimely death are commemorated on a white marble memorial plaque at the 1857 Memorial, on the Ridge in New Delhi. A large statue of Nicholson was also erected in his honour in Delhi, but was taken down when India became independent, and later moved to the Royal School Dungannon,<sup>17</sup> his old alma mater in Ireland.



Nicholson’s Monument in Margalla Hills  
(Source: pakgeotagging.blogspot.com)



A granite obelisk and a small fountain below were erected in 1868<sup>18</sup> in the Margalla hills near Taxila, as a monument to commemorate his valour.

## Notes

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## About the Author



*Major Hassaan Javaid was commissioned in Army Education Corps in April 2001. Besides serving in brigade headquarters as general staff officer-grade III (education), he served as an instructor in Pakistan Military Academy Kakul for 8 years, and Military College Jhelum for 6 years. Presently, the officer is serving in the Army Institute of Military History, Rawalpindi.*



## THE ORDEAL OF LIEUTENANT WAIN

*By Rear Admiral Zahir Shah (Based on true events narrated by Admiral TK Khan and Captain Wain of Pakistan Navy - A tale of humanity, amidst the ravages of War)*

In March 1971, I flew to East Pakistan to take over command of the destroyer *PNS Jahangir*, then at Chittagong. Law and order had collapsed in the town and people were rioting everywhere. *Jahangir* was waiting for me out at the anchorage, but before I could go to her, NOIC (Naval Officer in Charge) Chittagong told me to go and see what was going on board *MV Swat*. She was the PNSC ship that had arrived with an important cargo of ammunition for the Army, but her unloading had become a bone of contention between the East and West Pakistanis.



(Source: quora.com)

It was about sunset time when I took a boat up river and clambered up on board *Swat*. There was no crew on board, and the ship was being guarded by Colonel Shigri with some Bengali soldiers. They hadn't been able to do any unloading because the soldiers didn't know how to operate the ship's cranes.

I got in touch with NOIC's CSO (Chief Security Officer), Captain Zamir, on the Motorola and told him that the immediate requirement was to arrange for food for the soldiers guarding the ship, and to have them replaced by West Pakistani troops. It took some time for the soldiers to arrive with the food, by which time everyone was nice and hungry. And while the Bengali soldiers were tucking into their food, their weapons were taken away and the West Pakistanis took control of the ship. Next, I asked Captain Zamir to send some men to help unload the cargo. Since his men were already spread very thin, I suggested to get some technical personnel from *Jahangir* to work the cranes.

They came next morning, Lieutenant A.H. Wain (rhymes with wine) and three or four engine room artificers (ERAs are petty officers of the Engineering Branch) from *Jahangir*. Between them and the soldiers, the unloading work started. The ship's crane was used for lifting the boxes of ammunition (probably of 106 mm recoilless rifles) out of the hold and placing them on the jetty.



*PNS Jahangir* (Source: en.wikipedia.org)

As the unloading work was going on, I especially warned Lieutenant Wain to watch out for the big gaping hole in the deck, the open hold from which the ammunition boxes were being lifted. However, as the work progressed, what I had feared happened; Wain walked backwards while giving



hand signals to the crane operator and fell into the deep hold. He landed on his back and lay spread-eagled at the bottom of the hold, paralysed.

Everything came to a halt and all our attention now was on how to lift an immovable Wain out of that deep hold. It wasn't easy, for we couldn't find a Neil Robinson Stretcher on board. I told the two men who were down in the hold to place Wain carefully on the platform that was being used to lift the ammunition boxes. That was how he was winched up from the hold. Wain was carried carefully out of the ship and taken to the nearby Port Trust hospital in the dock area. There was a Bengali doctor on duty there; he said he needed to take X-rays, but the machine there was not working. He said Wain had a serious back injury along with other fractures and needed to be shifted to the hospital in town right away.

It was a tricky situation. There was no point in taking Wain back to *Jahangir*, nor was there any point in taking him to the Naval Base. In both cases, they would send him to the main hospital in town. Sending him directly to the hospital was therefore the best solution. But how to get him there? There were roadblocks all over town and the Bengalis there were tearing West Pakistanis limb from limb. And who would go with him?



*Bell of PNS Jahangir*  
(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

Curiously, it was the Bengali doctor who suggested a way out. He said that the patient had the skin colour of a Bengali; if he could be dressed up as a Bengali worker, then he, the doctor, would accompany him to the hospital and get him admitted there.

The question now was – could I trust the Bengali doctor? I had to decide quickly. From the little I'd seen of the doctor I decided to put my faith in him. Wain was an officer of a ship I was to take over command of, so I felt responsible for him. The doctor had given him a shot of morphine for the pain and he was semi-conscious. I bent down and speaking very slowly, I explained to Wain what we planned to do, that it was the only way out, and that we had to trust the Bengali doctor. He nodded and said – whatever I thought best.

We took off Wain's uniform very carefully and dressed him in a vest and lungi. Then we got hold of a small open civilian van and laid Wain in it; the doctor climbed up and sat beside him. As I backed the van driver out of the dock area and into the hostile city, I wondered whether I had made the right decision; whether I would see Wain again. Then we returned to the business of unloading the ship. Later that day, NOIC recalled me to the naval base for some other work he had in mind for me.

For the next few weeks I had my hands full. I took over command of *Jahangir*, carried out bombardment of the rebellious East Pakistan Rifles Headquarters, and so on. After that, when Chittagong had been brought back under the control of the Army, *Jahangir* entered harbour for the first time, and the Bengali members of the ship's company were removed from the ship.



There were dead bodies everywhere in the harbour, the sight of them made me very worried about what had happened to Wain. I went to the Naval Base and enquired about him, and was very relieved to learn that not only had he been recovered, he had been evacuated to Karachi as well. I breathed a sigh of relief; my trust in the Bengali doctor had not been misplaced after all.

Wain's personal effects were still onboard *Jahangir*. About three months later, after *Jahangir* had been relieved by *PNS Badr* at Chittagong and we arrived back at Karachi, I took Wain's suitcase and went to see him in the Naval Hospital. He was recovering now, and he told me about the two weeks of living hell that he endured in Chittagong before he was flown to Karachi.



*PNS Badr* (Source: en.wikipedia.org)

After he and the Bengali doctor had left us in the van, the latter had been true to his word; he had talked his way through all the road blocks, and finally made it to the hospital. There also, the doctor had done all the talking and got Wain admitted as a Bengali dock labourer.

For many days, Wain just lay there in the big general ward on the top floor of the hospital, surrounded by Bengalis. He couldn't dare talk to anyone. He had fused lumbar vertebrae, a fractured right arm, a fractured right leg; he couldn't move at all. A bundle of shooting pains, he kept passing in and out of consciousness. No surgeon came to treat him; the nurses kept giving him painkilling tablets for a while, till they ran out of those also.

While he was still there, three Sabre aircrafts of the *Pakistan Air Force (PAF)* came and carried out strikes on the radio station nearby (That was probably the time I was carrying out my bombardment from *Jahangir*). He could see the aircrafts through the windows of the big ward he was in. The Bengalis all around him were very upset and outraged by the strike. And it wasn't long before they found that they had a Punjabi in their midst.



*PAF Sabre Aircraft* (Source: en.wikipedia.org)

That night, soldiers from the East Bengal Regiment came to finish him off, brandishing knives and bayonets. But a young Bengali nurse stood in their way. She was like a tigress protecting her cub. "Bengali or no Bengali," she shouted at the soldiers. "He is my patient, and you can get to him only over my dead body!" They came for Wain three times, and luckily for him on all those three occasions that nurse was on duty. Wain owes his life to that brave Bengali nurse; she had become his guardian angel.

First, that Bengali doctor; and then this nurse. **It just goes to show that when the majority lose their heads, there are still some who keep theirs.** Such incidents had taken place during the carnage of Partition also, on both sides.



As the sounds of battle in the town came closer and closer, the doctors and then all the patients around Wain, started leaving the hospital one by one. And when the Pakistan Army finally entered the hospital and took over, Wain was the only patient in that big general ward. They carried him to one of their safe houses in Chittagong where he stayed for a few days. He made contact with the Naval Base, and an ambulance came and shifted him there. Thus, on 9 April he was flown to Dacca and finally to Karachi and *PNS Shifa*.

As related by Admiral (Retired) T.K. Khan, former Chief of Naval Staff (CNS); and Captain (Retired) A.H. Wain, the Navy had to place Wain in a low medical category. He walked with a limp, but continued serving in the Navy ashore for another twenty-one years, finally retiring as a Captain in 1992.

### About The Author



*The writer is a retired rear admiral of the Pakistan Navy. He received his basic training at the Naval College at Dartmouth, UK, and spent a major part of his service in submarines at home and abroad. He has held various command and staff appointments, and was also Defence Attache in Paris. His final appointment, as a rear admiral, was Chief Executive of the National Tanker Company. He is a graduate of the National Defence College and contributes regularly for Defence Journals. This article is taken from his book 'More Bubbles of Water'.*





## **KHUDADAD KHAN, VC** (1888-1971)

### *A Junior Leader Cast For A Bigger Role*

*By Brigadier Ghulam Jilani (Retired)*

In October 1914, 129<sup>th</sup> Duke of Connaught's Own (DCO) Baluchis, part of 20,000 Indian troops of British Expeditionary Force, was deployed in Ypres, Belgium. Who would have thought that this unit, which was fathered by Stringer Lawrence (first Commander-in-Chief after superseding Clive in 1752), would become such an asset for the British Empire?

Soldiers of 129<sup>th</sup> DCO Baluchis, officered by the British, kept falling on that day in the face of German attacks, but not Khudadad Khan, who as commander of his machine gun (MG) provided the leadership which was perhaps intrinsic, because in all fairness to the British system of training at that time, he was not trained as a leader. He held the German attack with his sole MG, being injured, while seeing other colleagues fall. This saved the day and sufficiently delayed the Germans, allowing the British to bring in reinforcements to prevent the Germans from reaching the vital ports of Boulogne in France and Nieuport in Belgium.

Khudadad was awarded the highest British military award, the Victoria Cross, by King George V, for his bravery. This valiant action of Subedar Khudadad Khan brings certain queries to mind, which require definitive answers. Khudadad was not a clairvoyant to know how he would be rewarded for his action, which definitely was beyond the call of duty. There are always different strands of motivation to fight on the battlefield, some of which are ideology, religion, love for the land and as of ancient times, fighting for supremacy of the clan. None of these was applicable to Khudadad Khan, and most of the Indian Army soldiers of different caste, religion, colour and creed, fighting in an alien land for their master's army. What indeed, was the inspiration for Indian soldiers to fight? Not to forget that the same Indian soldiers seldom successfully resisted foreign invader on its land, either coming from north or south, sea or mountains.

Men may join the colours for pay. But it is not for pay that they earn the Victoria Cross. There are some fundamental questions - why did the Indian soldiers in erstwhile Indian Army, fighting under the banner of Britain, give such rich services? Was it for personal honour, fear or shame of cowardice? Respect for their command? Or fear of iron discipline and



Khudadad Khan  
(Source: pakgeotagging.blogspot.com)



(Source: pakgeotagging.blogspot.com)



Victoria Cross  
(Source: pakgeotagging.blogspot.com)



long inculcated habit of endurance?

Time and again India was invaded, however it was beyond doubt that Indian soldiers were very skillful in the art of soldiery. They were as brave as any other soldiers who fought against them, were physically and mentally very robust, and also held as good equipment as any of their enemies, including long range artillery in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Yet they still lost on the battlefield to any and every invader of Indian territory. According to a fair analysis, perhaps they were not as organized, because the local armies were cobbled together from different areas, under different local chieftains who would raise their troops according to their status. The second most important failing was their inability to operate in a disciplined fashion on the battlefield, which is ingrained into each soldier through regular drill.



(Source: halalincorp.co.uk)

Identifying these two major concerns, initially the East India Company organized them into platoons and companies with a hierarchical system, and then converted them into battalions. After 1857 War of Independence, three armies created by East India Company went under the crown and became part of British Indian Army. Later under British Indian Army, the same battalions followed organizational structure of the army. However, every soldier would still take pride in the unit and company that he served in. This genetic engineering of the Indian soldier to love his battalion and live for his battalion, became the only ideology which prepared a soldier to lay down his life. And it is for this reason that the Indian Army produced envious results in both World Wars.

The first lesson drawn from the extraordinary and valiant action of Khudadad Khan in today's environment, is that for a junior leader and soldier to hold his ground in the face of enemy's attack, he needs to develop an innate love for the battalion wherein he serves, lives and has his small problems taken care of. Iman, Taqwa and Jihad fi Sabillillah, while reinforcing his ideology, but the Pakistani soldier placed in different ideological environment needs to go back to the basics and concept of "love and live for my unit," which can still, and has, produced desired results.



(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

The second important lesson from Khudadad Khan's action is the personification of the word leadership. There is no point in explaining Eisenhower's theory of "string and the one who pulls the string is leader". Essentially, leadership qualities can be created. A leader must have an ideology, character, unflinching trust of those under his command and taking responsibility. In this case Khudadad Khan, VC, despite being just an MG commander, provided leadership akin to a great warrior and commander, had an ideology of fighting for 129<sup>th</sup> DCO Baluchis (11 Baloch), showed



tremendous character and unflinching trust in his superior officers, organization, his colleagues and above all himself. Finally, a leader does not wait for orders all the time, but takes responsibility. Khudadad Khan did not budge from his position in the absence of orders, when his British officer Captain Dill was also wounded, but took charge of the situation when others were falling, and continued to fight.

There are two take away points for us from this great action of Khudadad Khan, VC. One, regimental spirit and love for the battalion, still holds the key to our locks of different internal and external ideological challenges that Pakistan Army confronts. And second, the most virtuous attribute of leadership is to act in the absence of orders and take full responsibility for all actions, irrespective of the step of the ladder you are standing on, to produce extraordinary results.



Statue of Khudadad Khan at Army Museum Rawalpindi

(Source: pakgeotagging.blogspot.com)

## Notes

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- <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/ww1-pakistani-vc-recipient-khudadad-khan>, accessed on 10 May 2019.

## About The Author



*Brigadier Ghulam Jilani, Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) was commissioned in 34 Punjab (LAT) Battalion in 1987. The officer commanded his parent battalion and an infantry Brigade. He also remained on the faculty of School of Infantry & Tactics. He served as a Grade-III staff officer in Brigade, Grade-II staff officer in Military Operations Directorate and Grade-I staff officer in a strategic formation. He is presently serving as Director Research in the Army Institute of Military History (AIMH) Rawalpindi.*



NEPAL

## THE SACRED VENDETTA

*Return of the Soldier (1971 War)*

*By Captain (now Lieutenant General -Retired) Sardar Mahmood Ali Khan, HI (M)*

INDIA

Unwavering lines reach the mound,

bugles blow, success signals sound

He holds the banner, rejoicing victory,

No doubt they had created history;

“Do not dread, O comrades”! He said,

Horrors of war, the agonies of death!

Through storms and seas, must we strive?

none must endeavor to stop our drive,

Neither an obstacle, nor a barrier,

but death may only end thy career!”

---

His words still echoing, across the skies

soon he was beheld by the distant cries,

Surrender! Surrender! The cursed news,

unbearable shame- the greatest abuse

Silence echoed as the news spread,

their joys crumpled and spirits dead

He plunged into thought sad and grieved,

no more to combat, no more to bleed;

---

BURMA  
(MYANMAR)



His head hung down, cold and tense,  
shamefully, he entered the towering fence  
His next abode-the prisoner's camp,  
dawn of slavery- liberty's end  
Waves of guilt swept his soul,  
death now seemed his only goal  
Thoughts of surrender- infinite pains,  
made his blood curdle in his veins  
His conscience pricked and soul tormented;  
thoughts of slavery, his mind resented  
"Do not break, do not bend,"  
messages of valour he would often send,  
Writhing and moaning, in utter despair,  
gusts of shame, he could no more bear  
Chains of slavery held him tight,  
suffocating, diminishing his will to fight

---

Then one morning, on a foggy day,  
he vowed to break these chains away,  
Soon he was hurdling the fenced-wall,  
to the gates of liberty, once for all,  
But destiny despised him once more,  
he suddenly heard a tremendous roar,  
The crack of guns, the hissing of lead,  
trapped him no sooner he fled  
Shot and wounded he fell to the ground,  
without a cry, without a sound  
Blood trickling out of every pore,  
he happily thought of living no more,  
But death still stood far way,  
never to end the shameful stay

---



Then came his turn to go back home,  
he knew not – to rejoice or mourn?  
Currents of guilt pierced his soul  
had he played a coward's role?  
Thoughts of revenge could little console,  
the aching conscience – the dying soul  
He could not bear, could not stand,  
his unwanted presence in his motherland,  
Yet the fragrance of the sacred soil,  
washed away his mind's turmoil  
Longing to breathe in free atmosphere,  
he trudged along under hidden fear  
There awaited the sons of soil!  
the mere sight made him boil  
Feeble and weak, broken and haggard,  
his pride killed and ego shattered  
Thus he stepped on the Holy Land,  
but alas! He could not stand  
Even the soil accepts me not,  
painfully and sadly, he thought  
There he fell and passed away,  
but before he parted, they heard him say,  
*“UNSHEATHE THY SWORDS! LOAD THY GUNS,  
REVENGE! REVENGE!,, REVENGE, MY SONS!”*

(Reproduced from Infantry Magazine – June 1979 Edition)



## “Military History Minestrone”

*(Our quiz; for the military history enthusiast and novice alike)*

**“Minestrone”; a thick soup of Italian origin has no fixed recipe as it can be prepared out of whatever vegetables one has.**

1. What is the name of Alexander’s most-beloved (and most famous war-horse)?
2. Major Aziz Bhatti, Nishan-e-Haider, was martyred in which sector during the 1965 Indo-Pak War?
3. The “AK” in the world-famous AK-47 assault rifle is an abbreviation of what nomenclature?
4. The Battle of the Trench, or Ghazwa al-Khandaq, or Ghazwa al-Ahzab, was an early Islamic battle that was waged in which Hijri year?
5. The Battle of Waterloo was fought between England and France, under the Duke of Wellington and Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte respectively; which brought an end to the latter’s reign and military capabilities. After the war, Napoleon was exiled to which island?
6. The phrase “Trojan Horse” is a universally used term, nowadays; taken from the War of Troy between the Greeks and Trojans. It was most notably mentioned, though, in which classic literature book by Homer?
7. Operation Barbarossa was the code name given to the World War II German invasion of Russia. Under Stalin, who was the Russian general commanding the Russian Army in this operation. Hint: he was also chosen to represent his country at the signing of the German Instrument of Surrender on 8th May 1945 (celebrated as Victory Day in Europe)?
8. Genghis Khan, also known as “Changez Khan”, or “Cingis Khan”; was a warrior, invader, and founder of the Mongol Empire; which became the largest contiguous empire in history after his death. His real name wasn’t this, though. What was it?
9. At the time of the Crusades of 1192 fought between the Muslim and Christian armies, the Muslim commander was Salah-ud-Din Ayyubi (Saladin, Salahedine). Who was the English King commanding the Crusader army of England?
10. The Hundred Years’ War was fought between the ruling houses of England and France but it didn’t last for a hundred years. How long did it last?

*(Answers on page 54)*



## Answers

1. Bucephalus.
2. Barki-Wagah (either/or both correct).
3. Avtomat Kalashnikova.
4. 5 Hijri.
5. Saint Helena; an English territory located in the South Atlantic Ocean.
6. The “Iliad”. Homer is famous for this book; an account of the war, and for the “Odyssey”; which chronicles the after-war journey of the Greek general, Odysseus.
7. Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov.
8. Temuijn, son of Yesugei. “Temujin” is a portmanteau name; likely based on the Mongol words “temur” (iron) and “jin” (agency); thereby meaning “blacksmith”.
9. Richard I, also known by his epithets “Richard the Lionheart” and “Richard Coeur de Lion”.
10. 116 years. Fought between the House of Plantagenet (England) and the House of Valois (France); it lasted from 1337 to 1453.





## GLIMPSES OF 'AIMH' ACTIVITIES

### **Curtain Raiser held on 23 Jan 2018**



Curtain Raiser was held on 23 Jan 2018 at Army Auditorium, to introduce AIMH and promote “The Veterans Forum” (TVF) for interaction between senior serving and retired officers. COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa, NI(M) graced the occasion.



## Foundation Stone Laying – 20 July 2018



Foundation Stone of AIMH building was laid on 20 Jul 2018, by the Inspector General Training & Evaluation (IGT&E) Lieutenant General Hidayat Ur Rehman, HI(M).

## Army Staff Ride - 18



Army Staff Ride - 18 was attended by AIMH delegation led by Colonel Fazal Wahab from 18 to 27 Oct 2018 at UK & France to commemorate 100 years celebrations of First World War (Western Front).



## Visit to National Army Museum Chelsea (UK) & Ministry of Defence Historical Branch (Army)



AIMH delegation led by Major General Agha Masood Akram (Retd), Director General AIMH visited UK from 18 to 20 Feb 2019.



## AIMH New Building (Under Construction)



Inauguration of the new building of AIMH is tentatively planned later this year.



