

INDIAN XI CORPS AND BATTLE OF ASAL UTTAR (1965)

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BACKGROUND

In conformity with the Government's decision in 1965 that Pakistan's aggression against Jammu and Kashmir would be treated as an invasion of India, Army Headquarters had decided to launch a limited offensive in Punjab, by XI Corps in Lahore Sector and by I Corps in Sialkot Sector. General Harbaksh Singh as Army Commander, Western Command, had felt that our offensive should have the dual aim of inflicting attrition on sizable forces of Pakistan's army along with the acquisition of a large chunk of Pakistan's territory which would give our country a bargaining lever after the war was over. It was a sensible aim keeping in view the fact that with Pakistan having an edge over us in armour and artillery, it was not logical to aim at destruction of Pakistani forces, which is of course, the ideal in any war to aim at. In XI Corps sector, the plans initially were purely defensive.

However, during the period of Kutch confrontation in April-May, 1965, information regarding Ichhogil canal was obtained. During this period we had deployed our forces in Amritsar-Lahore Sector, while Pakistan had also deployed their forces on their side of the border. A close study of Pakistani deployment during the period indicated that Pakistan's forces were likely to remain on the defensive, basing their defences along Ichhogil canal with very little forces deployed ahead. In a series of war games held in June in 1965, it was felt that it should be possible for XI Corps to advance upto Ichhogil canal and secure the east bank. The Corps was therefore, ordered to plan for such an offensive while at the same time ensuring that balance was retained at all times to counter the likelihood of a major Pakistani offensive in the corps sector which was expected to be launched in Khem Karan area. It was a thoughtful appreciation on our part, as an offensive from Khem Karan would if successful, pose a threat to our rear from the left flank and seriously threaten our forces deployed in Amritsar Sector.

Keeping in view the alignments of various canals and drains, an offensive by Pakistan in Khem Karan sector would conform to the grain of the country and would thus facilitate their operations. Since there would be no requirement to bridge any canal enroute, no time would be wasted on any engineering effort. Earlier, our appreciation was that Pakistan may launch its main offensive along G.T. Road, Lahore--Amritsar, but General Harbaksh shifted the bias

from G.T. road axis to Kasur -Khem Karan -Khalra axis. General JS Dhillon, Commander XI Corps was also of the same opinion and so our detailed planning and preparation for the projected offensive were carried out keeping these broad based conceptions in view. When situation in the Chhamb sector became very serious, XI Corps was given order to launch its offensive which had a limited aim only, but then Pakistan could not possibly guess it.

In order to capture some of Pakistan's territory and in the process also inflict attrition on the Pakistani forces, XI Corps was instructed to carry out limited offensive operations in Punjab. It was to advance upto Ichhogil Canal only, using 15 Division on Amritsar – Lahore axis, 7 Infantry Division was to advance on Khalra-Barki axis while 4 Mountain Division, comprising two brigades and a regiment of armour was to secure area upto Ichhogil canal along Asal Uttar-Khem Karan – Kasur axis, as indicated on the sketch attached as Annexure-A. 4 Mountain Division was to destroy the Bridge on Ichhogil Canal on the Khem Karan – Kasur axis. Later it was to occupy a defended sector to contain possible Pakistani offensive consisting of one armoured division and two infantry brigades. For this, support of an armoured brigade was to be given on priority basis. However, no additional troops were to be given to occupy a defended sector or even to establish a firm base for future operations. Keeping in view the tasks given to 4 Mountain Division, the allocation of troops was indeed inadequate.

The Indian military leadership had correctly appreciated that Pakistan was likely to launch its main offensive in Punjab on Kasur – Khem Karan axis. If successful, Pakistani forces could advance upto Beas Bridge and cut-off the Indian forces in Amritsar – Lahore area. The Indian appreciation that Pakistan's offensive forces would consist of an armoured division with at least two infantry brigades was found correct subsequently. It would have been therefore appropriate that the Indian armoured brigade should have been located in 4 Mountain Division's operational area to start with, as Pakistan was expected to launch its main offensive in this area. But for reasons not clear, it was not done. It was instead located in 15 Divisional sector.

PAKISTAN'S PLANS

Pakistan had planned to remain on the defensive in Lahore sector except for Khem Karan where it wanted to launch the biggest offensive of 1965 war, using 1 Armoured Division and two Infantry brigades. The offensive plan was obviously prepared well in advance, for Pakistan selected its axis of attack with great care. Pakistan had located 1 Armoured Division near Kasur primarily for

this purpose. Their security measures were obviously good, for nobody on our side was aware of its location. If our military commanders had any inkling of probable location of Pakistan's 1 Armoured Division, they would have either altered 4 Mountain Division's attack plans or provided it with an extra brigade to have a proper firm base on the ground, on which the division could build up a coordinated defence, to deal with the Pakistani offensive.

Pakistan started its offensive in Khem Karan sector only after our operations in both 4 and 15 Division sectors had come to a halt with very minor gains by way of capture of Pakistani territory. Pakistan had not located any armour east of Ichhogil canal to start with, but inducted it later, once XI Corps offensive started. On the whole, XI Corps offensive had a limited aim of leaning on Ichhogil canal and in the process to capture some territory. This limited offensive can also be termed as a defensive measure. On the other hand, the aim of the Pakistani offensive in Khem Karan sector was much more ambitious and bold and entailed trapping of XI Corps west of Beas River. It was perhaps at the back of XI Corps Commander's mind that by achieving surprise, his troops would reach the Ichhogil canal on a very broad front-nearly 45 miles from north to south and consolidate the positions quickly before Pakistan could retaliate in any strength. But things are never so simple in war, as they look while discussing plans on the sand model. That is why, after initially surprising the enemy, the Corps was itself surprised by the slow progress of its operations, and later by Pakistan's offensive.

It was expected by us that initially Pakistan would remain on the defensive in this sector, like in other sectors of XI corps. Pakistan had 11 Division of two brigades and one armoured regiment opposite 4 Divisional sector. Major General Abdul Hamid Khan GOC, 11 Division, was an aggressive commander. He had actually decided to fight ahead of the canal and carry the battle into the Indian territory as soon as the opportunity arose. After all, Pakistan had decided on its most important offensive in this sector which meant provision of a firm base on the Indian territory by 11 Division. As we shall see, General Hamid reacted sharply as soon as 4 Division started its operations. Unknown to the Indian intelligence, Pakistan's 1 Armoured Division was behind Kasur ready for its offensive on axis Kasur-Khem Karan with deep objectives. It was commanded by Major General Nasir Ahmed who had throughout been an Infantry officer. He was given command of the prestigious formation either because he was considered a very competent commander or he had necessary influence in the Pakistani military hierarchy.

Asal Uttar where the major battle took place lies about 60 kilometres south west of Amritsar and is

connected by a road. Another road running north east from Khem Karan connects it by way of Taran Taran to Harike – Amritsar highway. Asal Uttar lies five kilometres north east of Khem Karan. The area is flat and tankable and portions of it can be flooded due to the canals that run parallel to the road.

PAKISTAN'S OFFENSIVE AND BATTLE OF ASAL UTTAR

By morning of 8th September, 4 Division had hastily occupied a defended sector at Asal Uttar with three and a half battalions while the engineers were busy laying mines, along the main approaches. The Pakistani forces were getting ready for their master stroke in this sector. The Pakistan's plan came to light when operational orders and other secret documents were later on captured during the battle. The Pakistanis had made a bold plan which seemed to be patterned after Rommel's deep thrusts in the North African Campaign. Rommel after inflicting a tactical defeat on a British force used to make a wide encircling movement to cut off other forces in the area. The Pakistanis perhaps wanted to repeat his performance in Khem Karan sector. The prime aim of the operation was to break out along axis, Kasur-Khem Karan and encircle XI Corps, by capturing the bridges at Harike and Beas. This would enable Pakistan to encircle and later destroy XI Corps by attacking it from the rear, as well as from the flanks. This would give Pakistan not only all the territory west of Beas river but also provide a free run towards Delhi. We had hardly one armoured unit between Beas and Ambala at that time. Our only armoured division was engaged in bitter fighting as part of 1 Corps offensive in the north, in Phillora-Sialkot area, while the 2 Armoured Brigade was engaged in a battle in the XI Corps sector. Perhaps Field Marshal Ayub Khan was dreaming of entering into Delhi exactly as Mussolini had dreamt of entering Alexandria in North Africa in 1941!

The plan envisaged establishment of a bridge head by two brigades of 11 Infantry Division with 5 Armoured Brigade in area Mastgarh-Bhura Kuhna which was very close to Asal Uttar where 4 Division had already taken up a defended sector. Then 1 Armoured Division was to break out as under:

(a) 3 Armoured Brigade with two armoured regiments and an infantry battalion in armoured personnel carriers would advance astride Kasur Branch. It will then capture Jandiala Guru on the main GT road, connecting Amritsar with Jullundur, thus cutting off Amritsar from the east.

(b) 4 Armoured Brigade of two regiments and a motorised infantry battalion would advance along the Kasur-Khem Karan-Valtoha-Nabipur near Harike bridge axis, astride the Sabraon Branch Canal, and capture Beas on GT road. This thrust would cut off XI Corps. from Beas river, as

on the way it would have secured Harike bridge over Beas river while passing through Nabipur area.

(c) 5 Armoured Brigade with one armoured regiment and an infantry battalion in armoured personnel carriers would first help 11 Division in establishing the bridge head. It would then advance on the Khem Karan-Bhikhiwind axis to protect the left flank of the first two combat groups and also to isolate 7 Infantry Division, so that it could not send any troops to help 4 Division in its battle or interfere with Pakistan's offensive. According to the Plan, the attackers were to reach Harike Bridge by 8 September and at Beas Bridge by the evening of 9 September. It proposed to exploit the terrain in this sector where the canals and nalas run in the general direction of north east to south west. The thrust lines were matched to the grain of the country. It was an audacious plan. Only 4 Mountain Division or its routed remnants as Pakistanis wrongly believed stood in the way.

By morning of 8 September, 4 Division consisting of three and a half battalions had taken up a defended sector in Asal Uttar which mainly consisted of 62 Infantry Brigade troops. The Deccan Horse less one squadron had taken up positions in this defended sector in the anti-tank role to deal with Pakistani tank assaults. The third squadron was protecting the gun areas immediately behind this defended sector where one field regiment (25 Pounds), one medium regiment (5.5 inch guns), one light regiment (120mm mortars) and two mountain composite regiments (3.7 inch howitzers) had been deployed. The Divisional Headquarters was located behind the gun area, well away from the battle area for the reasons which are not clear. It should preferably have been located inside the defended sector. 3 Cavalry was deployed behind, covering the area Chima-Dibbipura while 8 Cavalry, the second regiment of the Independent Armoured Brigade, was deployed on the flanks. In all we had three regiments of armour, one had Centurions, the second had Shermans and the third had AMX-13 light tanks, to deal with the Pakistani armoured division with an additional regiment of tanks belonging to 11 Division, six regiments of tanks in all. Meanwhile, 4 Mountain Division had taken a useful step by breaching Rohi nalah and the distributory canals to flood the area to the south and south west of the Divisional defended sector. It curtailed the mobility of Pakistan's armour.

THE CRUCIAL BATTLE

On 8th September, enemy carried out what appeared to be probing cum-reconnaissance mission in strength. A combat group of two squadrons of Chaffee (light) tanks with squadron of Pattons and some motorised infantry made a bold infiltration attempt from the northern flank to attack the gun area, where a squadron of Deccan Horse was waiting for

them in a well concealed position. In a fierce tank battle, Pakistan lost 11 tanks while we lost four tanks. The Pakistani combat group withdrew in haste. As yet, the Pakistani commanders were not really aware of 4 Divisional defended sector in Asal Uttar area. Later in the evening, another armour cum infantry group consisting of a Patton regiment, a squadron of Chaffees of Pakistan's 5 Armoured Brigade assaulted 4 Division defended sector after a heavy artillery bombardment. It succeeded in over running a portion of 1/9 Gorkha Rifles' defended area. It later attacked 4 Grenadiers defended area from the northern flank which lay behind the 1/9 Gorkhas' defended area. During this move, it was fired upon by one squadron of 3 Cavalry which had taken position in the Bhikiwind area. The enemy was obviously enlarging its bridge head in Bhura Kuhna-Mastgarh area, for its armoured division to break out. Meanwhile, heavy fighting took place in 4 Grenadiers area where Pakistani tanks managed to over run some positions, in spite of effective fire of the battalion's 106mm anti tank recoilless guns. The anti-tank recoilless guns of other units particularly those of 18 Rajputana Rifles did a lot of useful firing and a few Pakistani tanks were destroyed and some others were damaged. The battle continued till last light when there was some respite.

The way Pakistan was using its armour to assault our defended areas came as a great surprise to us, for we had never used our armour in peace time exercises or in war in such a bold and audacious manner. The Pakistani method of attack on our defended areas needs to be described in some detail. A typical tank assault would commence with the approach of light tanks boosted by Shermans or Patton tanks. They would feel for the gaps in our defended areas and probe our flanks to find out the extent of our defences while their artillery would keep our suspected positions engaged so that our anti-tank guns were not very effective. After this reconnaissance, some of their tanks would move to a flank partly to lure our tanks and partly to divert our artillery fire. Then Pakistan's armour would assault our positions followed by their infantry in armoured personnel carriers. The tanks would assault with six to eight abreast firing their secondary and main armament and would be followed by the Infantry who would dismount from their armoured personnel carriers and attack our positions. All this time, their artillery would be neutralising our positions. Another method of assault was that Pakistan's assaulting tanks, normally six to eight abreast well spread out, would charge our positions firing their guns but stop short of our positions, just outside the range of our anti-tank guns. Meanwhile, other follow up tanks would come

up and try to envelop the defences and over run them from right or left flank. Their aim was generally to frighten our infantry and over run our positions.

A combination of above tactics had been tried by Pakistani forces against both 62 and 7 Brigade units who had gone on offensive on 6th September and captured Pakistan's forward positions. Before these units could dig in, the Pakistan had used their armour and infantry boldly in assault which had unnerved some of our troops, for we had not taught or practised such tactics in our army till 1965. However, our troops had discovered that Pakistan's armour assaults would fizzle out whenever our infantry stood its ground using its anti-tank guns and was supported by our artillery. The units of 4 Division were now getting accustomed to Pakistan's pattern of armour and infantry assaults and so were giving a good account of themselves.

The day long Pakistani armour assaults along with infantry had hardly any worthwhile success while quite a few of their tanks had been destroyed or damaged. The Pakistani commanders persisted in using the same tactics at night. If they had made full use of two brigades of I 1 Division to attack one or two of our battalion defended areas at night after proper reconnaissance, they would have achieved much better results. But flushed with their initial success against 62 and 7 Brigades on 6 and 7 September, they had decided to use the same tactics on 8 September. After midnight on 8 September, the Pakistani tank noises were heard and by 2 a.m. on 9 September, their 4 Armoured Brigade with two regiments of Patton tanks and a motorised battalion were attacking 18 Rajputana Rifles defended area making use of the moon light. The Pakistani Patton tanks were making full use of their infra-red equipment during their night assaults. Brigadier H.C. Gahlaut, Commander 62 Infantry Brigade was a capable and skilful commander and had instructed 18 Rajputana Rifles to hold fast even if some of its positions were over-run. The Pakistani tanks had to pass through mines and endure concentrated fire of five of our artillery regiments, which were firing on the unit's frontage. This fire was supplemented by unit mortars and anti-tank guns. The Pakistani tank assault therefore did not succeed.

18 Rajputana Rifles under brave leadership of their officers had held on to their positions in spite of heavy fire of Pakistan's tanks as well as their divisional artillery which was giving all out support. In a battle, it is the spirit which men bring to the fight that decides the issue. 18 Rajputana Rifles, 4 Grenadiers, 1/9 Gorkha Rifles, 9 J & K Rifles less two companies were displaying that spirit in plenty and consequently all Pakistani assaults were being defeated. In all Pakistan had made five assaults during the night. At the same time, Pakistan must be

given due credit for audacious use of such large number of tanks for a night assault on a battalion defended area which had mines on all important approaches. Though the unit had held on to its positions, it was obvious to Brigadier Gahlaut and General Gurbaksh Singh, the Indian GOC that the Pakistani troops would assault again in the day time making use of their tanks. It is well said that adversity reveals the true qualities of a leader. General Gurbaksh Singh, whose division had not only failed to achieve any of its objectives during its offensive but had fallen back in a disorderly manner, was now fighting very well. The leadership of General Gurbaksh Singh and Brigadier Gahlaut was having its effect on the units who were now ready to defeat the Pakistani designs. Gurbaksh had warned the division for the big battle that lay ahead and his men were ready for the challenge.

He had ordered 2 (Indep) Armoured Brigade to deal with the Pakistani tanks which would try to bypass the defended Sector by making out-flanking movements while Deccan Horse was to help the defended sector in repulsing Pakistani assaults, particularly those led by the tanks. Brigadier Theogaraj was a competent commander with a keen eye for the ground and had deployed 3 Cavalry in a skilful manner so as to destroy the maximum number of enemy tanks. 3 Cavalry was deployed in two semi circles in a wide horse shoe pattern. The mouths of these semi circles opened towards the west and so the Indian tanks waited with both the jaws wide open to devour the Pakistani tanks. Many tanks had been cleverly sited behind the standing tall crops of sugarcane so that the Pakistani tanks could not see them till it was too late. The light regiment of the brigade was deployed on the flanks of 3 Cavalry, to lure Pakistani tanks on to the killing ground. This skilful sitting of the two regiments along with high standard of marksmanship of our tank gunners and gallant infantry battalions were responsible for mauling 1 Armoured Division, which was Pakistan's elite formation.

However, Headquarters. XI Corps did not take any other effective measure to reinforce Khem Karan sector except to place 2 Independent Armoured Brigade under the command of 4 Division. Yet XI Corps had deployed four Infantry brigades and two regiments of armour in 15 Divisional sector to safeguard that sector while there were only three and a half battalions and two medium armoured regiments and one light regiment to fight in Khem Karan where main Pakistan's offensive was expected to come, according to its own appreciation. This shows that XI Corps commander was over cautious in his assessment as regards 15 Divisional sector while he was comparatively speaking

neglecting Khem Karan sector where the enemy's main offensive was expected. The Indian military leaders at times display an over-cautious attitude during war which needs to be corrected. It is strange that Headquarters Western Command did not react either. Luckily, the brave infantry battalions of 4 Division supported well by our efficient artillery and the well led armour rose to the occasion and dealt the prestigious armoured division of Pakistan a blow which was perhaps the highlight of 1965 war.

On 9 September, Pakistan made use of its air force to soften up defended sector both in the morning as well as in the afternoon along with heavy artillery fire. The Pakistani troops attacked with armour, 4 Grenadiers positions which fought back under the spirited command of Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Farhat Bhatti and repulsed the attack. In the afternoon, Pakistani armour and infantry fiercely attacked 18 Rajputana Rifles position after heavy artillery fire. The unit fought bravely and repulsed the attack with effective support of our artillery and the tanks of Deccan Horse. In these attacks, Pakistan lost quite a few tanks as they persisted in assaulting and at one place managed to over run some defences of 18 Rajputana Rifles. But the unit held on to its positions. The enemy broke off the attack finally at 10 p.m. at night when the area around the Rajputana Rifles' forward defended localities was littered with burning Pakistani tanks. Colonel Raghubir Singh of the unit was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra for his inspiring leadership in which his men and officers had fought so gallantly. The Pakistani commanders had persisted in attacking the Divisional defended sector with tanks and infantry but had achieved no success at all. So it was expected that after having failed to over run the Divisional defended sector, Pakistan would now make a final effort to break out by making outflanking thrusts on 10 September. 2nd Independent Armoured Brigade was precisely deployed to deal with such thrusts.

On 10th September, the Pakistani armour and infantry attacked 4 Grenadiers from the north which was repulsed after a fierce battle in which Havildar Abdul Hamid knocked out two Patton tanks and damaged one more, as the Pakistani tanks charged his defended locality and destroyed his gun and its detachment. The gallantry of this brave soldier was recognised by a posthumous award of the Param Vir Chakra. By mid day, the combat group which was attacking 4 Grenadiers from the north was also trying to make a northern outflanking movement. Here a squadron of 3 Cavalry was waiting for the kill in a sugarcane field. As the Pakistani tanks appeared, they were hit by well camouflaged and hidden tanks which took the Pakistani combat group by complete

surprise. The tanks of Deccan Horse also fired on Pakistan's tanks from the flank as they were heading east. The Pakistani combat group was caught in crossfire. After losing many tanks, the combat group turned back to lick its wounds.

Foiled in the northern hook, the Divisional Commander tried a wider southern out-flanking move towards Dibbipura-Mahmudpura area. Pakistan sent 4 Armoured Brigade with 4 Cavalry in the lead with motorised infantry battalion following behind. The Centurion tanks of 3 Cavalry were waiting for this southerly hook behind the cover of high crops. The Shermans of 9 Horse were also able to bring down fire from the northern side on this tank column. This southerly outflanking movement had been visualised by us earlier and some areas had been flooded 24 hours earlier which was of course not known to the Pakistanis. The Pakistanis were moving into the mouth of the semi circle where our tanks could fire from three directions. It was an ideal trap. Our divisional artillery was ready to bring down maximum concentration in this area too. As the Pakistani Patton tanks moved into the trap, they were fired upon from cleverly sited hull down positions of our tanks. A better part of 4 Cavalry regiment was shot to pieces by our tanks aided by effective artillery fire.

Many Pakistani tanks had got bogged down in the flooded terrain and became easy targets for our tanks. Now the Pakistan southerly out-flanking move had been blunted the same way, as was their northern hook a few hours earlier. Major General Nasir, Commander of the Pakistani Armoured Division, had been watching the battle from his helicopter and was very disappointed, as the outflanking moves had failed. It was a critical situation that his division was facing. He came down and moved forward with his reconnaissance group to mile-stone 37 on Khem Karan-Bhikhiwind road to push forward his armour by a last ditch personal effort. The following conversation between the Divisional Commander and his armoured brigade Commander illustrates the true conditions of the battle:

"Brigade Commander to Divisional Commander:

It is not possible to advance due to stiff resistance. Heavy enemy shelling has completely pinned us down."

"Divisional Commander to Brigade Commander:

It is most important that the advance continues. Therefore, in the name of Islam, Pakistan and the Hilal-e-Jurat, I command you to get up and go forward."

"Brigade Commander to Divisional Commander:

"I will do my best but as things are how the hell I am going to do that? The bloody enemy artillery is knocking the hell out of us and I am afraid I cannot do any better than this."

Major General Nasir then moved forward and talked to the commanding officer of 4 Cavalry impressing upon him the dire necessity of advancing regardless of casualties. At 6 p.m. General Nasir and his reconnaissance group came under our heavy artillery fire in which Brigadier Shammi, the artillery commander of the Pakistani armoured division was killed, General Nasir was wounded along with a few other personnel. That was the end of Pakistan's offensive. In the battle lasting 8 to 10 September, the pride of Pakistan's army, their armoured division was humbled by the combined efforts of our infantry, gunners as well as armour. The battle-field presented the picture of a grave yard of tanks. Pakistan lost 97 tanks including 72 Pattons, though a fairly large number must have been damaged also. Our losses were 10 tanks of Deccan Horse and only two tanks of 3 Cavalry. Lieutenant Colonel AS Vaidya, the gallant Commander of Deccan Horse which gave such excellent support to Divisional defended sector was decorated with the Maha Vir Chakra and so were Brigadier Theogaraj and Lieutenant Colonel Salim Calib, Commanding Officer of 3 Cavalry.

The Pakistan's plan of the offensive was bold but its execution was poor. The Pakistani Commanders should have used two brigades of 11 Division to deal with our defended sector which was mainly 62 Infantry Brigade sector and used its powerful armoured division in an outflanking move and spend its force in defeating Indian tank regiments. We had only one Centurion regiment which was equivalent to the Patton tank while the other one had only Shermans, a much inferior tank to the Patton while the third regiment was a light regiment of AMX-13 tanks which was no match to the Pattons. The Pakistan had five Patton regiments and one Chaffee regiment, an overwhelming superiority over our tanks. But they wasted most of their efforts in assaulting the defended sector in which they sustained unnecessary losses and wasted time. There is no substitute for superior military leadership which was the main reason for complete failure of Pakistan's offensive plan.

4 Mountain Division had met with initial reverses in the Khem Karan Sector, but the division under General Gurbaksh Singh and Brigadier Gahlaut had not only retrieved its honour on the battle-field of Asal Uttar but had defeated a concerted and well planned effort of the Pakistan Army to launch a Blitzkrieg type of offensive which if successful could have had dangerous consequences for us. So General Gurbaksh Singh was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, and Brigadier Gahlaut was given the AVSM. The Pakistanis on their part were greatly worried by our I Corps offensive in the Sialkot-

Shakargarh sector and after the battle of Asal Uttar; they left behind 5 Armoured Brigade in support of their 11 Division and moved the rest of their armoured division to that area to deal with the Indian offensive. Their interior lines of communications were of great help to them.

At the end of war, about 100 Pakistan destroyed or damaged tanks were collected at a place which was named 'Patton Nagar' (near Bhikkiwind) where foreign military attaches were invited to visit the battle as well as see the Pakistani tanks at 'Patton Nagar'. The German military attaché remarked that the Pakistan's plan was bold and sound but perhaps only the German Army could carry it out!

It is interesting to note that this crucial offensive of Pakistan's Army was not fully supported by its Air Force. If Pakistan had used its Air Force in strength to give close support to its offensive, it could have achieved much better results. On the Indian side, our Air Force also gave only limited support to 4 Infantry Division in this important battle. So Pakistan and India had both failed to make use of their Air Force to give proper support to their fighting forces. Both India and Pakistan had learnt nothing from Second World War where the Air Force was used extensively to help the land forces. Land Battle is an integrated affair which concerns both Army as well as Air Force, which needs to be understood by the Indian Armed Forces.



