

PAKISTAN ARMY LEGENDS

Aleen Fatima

BFA, Department of Fine Arts,
Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi (Pakistan)

Research Article

Corresponding Author*

Aleen Fatima

Article History

Received: 15.03.2020

Accepted: 19.03.2020

Published: 31.03.2020



Abstract: Pakistan possesses a huge list of people who are honored as the National heroes because of their relentless and unsurpassed services for protecting and safeguarding the motherland. The sacrifices made by these daring people have ensured the long term existence and prosperity of the country in a world where there are continuous challenges and threats from other power. The majority of these national heroes belong to the Armed Forces of Pakistan as they are always on the front line while shielding the country against foreign enemies. This series of sacrifices started soon after independence in 1947 and is still continued. The major acts of bravery and valor were witnessed at the times of war when the blood of these brave people irrigated the fields of prosperity and wellbeing for the country. There are other heroes too who acted courageously at the times other than war and made histories due to their bold actions in the face of death. This paper presents a brief overview of all the heroes who made sacrifices for the country and made it safe against the internal as well as external intrusions. The lives of these heroes are a real role model for the people of the new generation who want to dedicate their lives and services for the protection and safety of their motherland.

Keywords: National heroes, War, Sacrifices, Terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

The armed forces are Pakistan's strategic assets and the first line of defense. Whether it be fighting off internal potential enemies or countering enemy's despicable designs along the borderlines, the bold soldiers have always provided the motherland with their relentless services and there are numerous who have laid their lives too (Higham, 2003). The brave sons of the soil have always ensured the safety of the common public by keeping the frontiers safe and impenetrable. The country has many potential enemies since it came into being in the year 1947. The armed forces have played a major role in countering those enemies and making the state survive in the tough politics of the international world. This would not have been achieved without the sacrifices made by the brave soldiers who preferred the lives of common people over them and their families. There is an unending list of such heroes whose acts of bravery and courage are still remembered.

The blood of thousands of brave heroic people who preferred the well being of their motherland over their lives should become a guiding light for the Pakistanis in order to find ways through dark times of agony and suffering. The examples of such heroes give a lesson that if they could offer their lives to

serve the country, so could each one of us for the betterment of our homeland. The services and sacrifices of our soldiers are self-sacrificing and they sadly never get the chance to wear their decorations on their uniforms but become an inspiration for thousands of others.

These brave sons of the soil are always alert in looking out for all the internal and external enemies round the clock (Butt, 2013). They are always ready to face the pandemonium of drastic conditions in the determination to ensure safety for other people of the country which makes them the real national heroes. These conditions can be icy glaciers or hot deserts with scorching heat where human survival is not among the normal cases. Most of the lives of such heroes are lost during the war times whether its internal war against terrorism or its external along the borderlines. The ongoing war against terrorism which started since the beginning of this century has proved that the new generation of our soldiers today belongs to the same breed of warriors which produced icons like Major Aziz Bhatti, Major Shabbir Shareef, Rashid Minhas, Havaladar Lalak Jan, and numerous others. This new generation of heroes includes much younger officers like Lieutenant Faiz Sultan, Lieutenant Faraz Malik, Captain Junaid Khan, Captain Najam Riaz, Captain Bilal Zafar and many others. Similarly, the senior officers are having the same spirits and the officers like Colonel Anwar, Colonel Haroon, Brigadier Moin Anwar and Brigadier Hussain Abbas have added their names in the evergreen list of national heroes.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research is about the heroes of the Pakistan Army who laid their lives for the sake of long term sustainability and progress of their motherland. The research revolves around a soldier who soon after the establishment of the Pakistan Army in 1947 joined it and laid his life while bravely defending his motherland in the Indo-Pak war of 1948. He was awarded the greatest bravery award of Nishan-E-Haider due to his relentless services.

Data Collection

The data collection methods used in this research is of typical nature like interviews and surveys owing to the fact that there is very little information about the soldier available in the published literature and other sources over the internet.

Research Participants

The primary participants included in the research belonged from various cadres of the Pakistan Army and their families. Moreover, the relatives of the soldier Saif Ali were also contacted in order to gather information about his early life. Some of the surveys were also performed in order to know about the perception of people regarding Saif Ali Janjua and Pakistan Army.

Story:

Akseer was a very bright and intelligent student in his class. He passed every exam with flying colors and was much cherished in the eyes of his teachers. He had a story narrating class which was held on a weekly basis in which each student had to narrate a story having solid morals and based on some real-life incident or personality. Akseer was much anxiously and readily waiting for his turn of story narration as he had to narrate a heroic story of a brave soldier who laid his life for the motherland while fighting with the enemy on the borderline. This hero was none other than his own grandfather who was awarded the highest military award for his heroic and inexorable services at the time of war.

Finally the day came when it was the turn of Akseer to narrate his story. He was very pleased and happy as he was going to share the heroic actions and services of his grandfather with his teacher and fellow students. He started the story as follows:

“There was a boy named Saif Ali who was born in a small village named Kandhar situated in the Kashmir valley of today’s Pakistan. He was very audacious and bold by nature and loved to take part in the physical activities of his school. He desperately wanted to become a soldier by joining armed forces and serve his motherland. He started his desired career by joining the British Indian Army as a Sapper when he was only 18 years old. He rendered his relentless services for the next four years in World War II which was going on in different parts of the globe. After that, he came back to his country as his Unit was deployed in Lahore where he also completed his Bachelor’s degree in engineering. He further served the British Indian Army for the next two years and then came back to his native town after successfully completing his service tenure.

It was a time of great chaos and uncertainty in the region due to political advancements and modifications. The political and ideological differences were prevailing and the authorities decided to split India into two independent nations. The circumstances were critical and the demands of the situation were very much similar to that of war times. In the meanwhile, Saif Ali came up with an idea of forming a special force of fighter named as Haideri Force. He utilized his skills of war strategies and other related experiences which he gained during his service for the British Indian Army. The contribution and devotion of Saif made this small force soon transform into a proper military organization whose basic mission was to protect their homeland.

Saif Ali joined the army of Pakistan soon after it came into being. His military and engineering background played a vital role in his selection at the Pakistan Army. Meanwhile, the war of 1948 started between Pakistan and India and he was deployed in the Kashmir sector where this was not an easy task to perform the duty. The extraordinary skills, courage, intelligent planning and dedication- some among the many factors which distinguished Saif Ali from other soldiers and he was promoted to the rank of Naik before time.

The first success achieved by Saif Ali was in the region named Budha Khanna where he along with his sub-ordinates heavily defeated the forces of the enemy. The courageous acts of valor by Saif and his team made them defend their positions very well. The platoon led by Saif was 18 AK and this unit of the Pakistani army was playing a key role in defending the Bhimbar sector of the Kashmir valley. It was under heavy confrontation with two to three brigades of the Indian army but still the soldiers under the brave command of Saif Ali fought bravely and made the forces of the enemy suffer a huge setback.

The Indian army re-conquered the post of Budha Khanna which was extremely critical to the Pakistan’s side. Saif Ali ordered his soldiers to besiege the enemy with all the available ammunition and power so that it could be made to retreat. There was an open space form where the soldiers of enemy forces were continuously entering Pakistan’s side. Saif Ali took control of a machine gun himself and pointed the gun at that point from where the enemy was gaining entrance. This made the infantry of enemy retreat and the Indian Air Force was called upon to aid their army fighting on the ground. This caused a heavy attack from the Indian side again on the posts where Saif Ali and other Pakistani soldiers were fighting but again, for the third time, the Indian forces were made to retreat by making them suffer a huge blow at the hands of Pakistan Army’s valiant soldiers.

Saif Ali successfully defended the post despite having just a handful of men and surrounded by the heavily armed Indian forces that continuously attacked the post for two hours. Saif Ali was extremely injured at his chest due to the artillery fire but still managed to successfully defend his position and made the enemy retreat back. At last, he embraced martyrdom on 26th October and donated his blood for the prosperity and safety of his mother land. He was adorned with the award of ‘Hilal-e-Kashmir’ for

showing such relentless and courageous acts at the time of war. This award was later renamed as ‘Nishan-e-Haider’ which is the highest military award of Pakistan Army.

Story Boards:





Youm-e-Shuhada:

The Pakistan Army commemorates Martyrs Day each year on the 30th of April in order to pay tribute to the soldiers who have laid their lives for the safety and protection of their motherland (Defence). The whole nation participates to pay homage to the departed souls of those daring soldiers whose blood has nourished the roots of the prosperity tree. Numerous such ceremonies are held at the Cantonments all over the country with the main ceremony held at Yadgar monument in the General Headquarters. These ceremonies are attended by families and relatives of the martyrs, serving and retired officers, and people belonging to different segments of society to pay tribute to the brave national heroes. Likewise, a number of near and dear ones of the people who laid their lives while serving the motherland are invited to attend the ceremonial function at the Corps Headquarters.

The Internal War:

Pakistan's armed forces have been confronting a different kind of war where the enemy is also different. This enemy practices detrimental activities of various forms which include both internal and external challenges which make Pakistan going through a state of the new war. The internal insurgencies considerably increased after the 9/11 incident when Pakistan became the front line of the American war against Afghanistan. This resulted in a bulk inflow of migrants from across the border which consisted of many notorious terrorists who moved into Pakistan while seeking refuge from the American forces (Malik, Zhilong, & Rafay, 2019). These terrorists initiated their nefarious activities in Pakistan and terrorism reached its peak before the Pakistan Army started grand operations against them. In this regard, the Forces have successfully achieved their target in North Waziristan Agency and other affected areas of the Khyber Agency by conducting grand military operation termed as Zarb-e Azab (Shah, 2016). The Forces mainly targeted the terrorists who had challenged the writ of the state by conducted various acts of terrorism across the country which resulted in panic and frightened the whole nation (Malik & Zhilong, 2018).

The External War:

The Pakistan Army has been boldly responding to its neighbor country India's unprovoked use of ammunition at the LOC (Line of Control) situated in Kashmir and the Working Boundary situated in Sialkot. The history of heated relations among India and Pakistan dates back to 1947 when the two states came into being after independence from the British rule. Both have gone through several wars and deteriorated diplomatic relations. The very first war was fought only one year after independence that caused massive human destruction and made the two young states suffer huge economical losses. The soldiers of Pakistan Army played a crucial role and many lost their lives while fighting for the motherland. (Feroz Ahmed, 1971) After this, the series of war continued and both states were again in the fighting arena in the years 1965, 1971 and 1999 (Malik & Nawaz, 2014). The Pakistan Army has also faced cross-border attacks of terrorism from its western neighbor country Afghanistan by heavily armed militants. These militants target the Army check posts and other military installations from time to time.

Nishan-e-Haider Award:

It is the highest military gallantry award of Pakistan Armed Forces. The literal meaning of Nishan-e-Haider is 'Emblem of the lion'. The word 'Haider' is the title given to a valiant Muslim warrior and leader Hazrat Ali (A.S) which means the lion of God. This award was applied retrospectively from the day Pakistan came into being and takes precedence over all the military and civil awards that are awarded to people who show exceptional services in any field related to the safety and prosperity of the country. The award has been given to ten soldiers till date out of which nine were from Pakistan Army and one from Pakistan Air Force.

Nishan-e-Haider can only be awarded to those members of the armed forces who display the highest acts of exceptional bravery while confronting the enemy in air, land or water (Shaikh, 2000). The exclusive standard and criterion followed while awarding this accolade can be gauged from the fact that it has only been awarded to ten people till date. In practice, the award has only been awarded to those valiant warriors who acted bravely at the times of war despite high risks of life and laid their lives.

Role of Pakistani Nation:

The people of Pakistan as a nation have always stood by the armed forces in the fight against anti-Pakistan entities (Pakistan: democracy, terrorism, and the building of a nation, 2011). The moral support given by the people to the armed forces plays an important role in boosting up the courage of brave soldiers. The role of media is second to none in this regard who regularly covers and highlights the acts of valor by the armed forces and aids in casting a positive image of Pakistan across the borders. The different media channels play national songs on various occasions and cast dramatic plays based on the heroic acts of soldiers who laid their lives at times of war. These plays encourage the young youth to join armed forces by making them acquainted with all kinds of information related to the structure and operational modes of the forces. In short, the people and the Army are on the same page in all the important themes.

The commitment of Pakistan Armed Forces:

The armed forces of Pakistan have a dense commitment to the democracy and the Constitution which is a matter of huge significance. They have a firm standpoint on the issues of Kashmir and terrorism (Schaffer, 2007). The motto of these forces say that Pakistan is a peace-loving country and opposes oppression but if the country is ever made suffer through external or internal aggression which

can be a potential threat for the country's safety, then no holds will be barred and severe reaction can be prompted as they are fully capable of giving a befitting response. The forces always keep a close eye on all the internal and external challenges that can cause harm to the peace and long term survival of the country. In this process of protecting the homeland, numerous heroes have laid their lives both on the borders and inside the borders (Malik, Zhilong, & Ashraf, 2019).

General Retired Pervez Musharraf who remained the Chief of Pakistan Army for almost one decade mentions in his book 'In the Line of Fire' the heroic and courageous acts of brave Pakistani soldiers which they displayed at the time of Kargil War in 1999 (Musharraf, 2014). He has also mentioned the same acts of courage by the soldiers at the time of the 1965 and 1971 War. The bold performance given by the soldiers at the time of fierce wars showed that these men really possessed nerves of steel and were not reluctant to lay their lives for the protection of the motherland. The war of 1971 is worth mentioning when India attacked surprisingly on the Lahore city in the mission to conquer it. The uninformed and unprepared soldiers gave a befitting response to the Indian aggression and made her army to retreat back. Many brave sons of soil laid their lives while defending the country from foreign occupation.

Other Heroes of the Nation:

Pakistan has also witnessed many great and daring people who were not part of armed forces but acted the same way as soldiers do to guard their homelands. These include people for Law Enforcement Agencies, NGOs, Political workers and even common citizens like Aitzaz of Swat valley who laid his life to save thousands of lives of his fellow students at school. Similarly the people of Police force have also made their mark by laying their lives for the safety of the country including junior as well as senior officials. The name of Abdul Sattar cannot be ignored while discussing the heroes of Pakistan as he provided living and support to thousands of poor and shelterless people. He gave up the amenities of his personal life and dedicated his power and money for the betterment and well-being of others (Abdus Sattar Edhi, 2001).

Conclusion

The services rendered by the brave people of armed forces for the country are difficult to explain in words. They have made the whole nation proud and able to survive in a peaceful environment where there is no threat from any kind of internal as well as an external enemy. Such heroes have always stood in the leading rows at the time of national crises and other natural calamities. The untiring and sincere efforts of these people have made the defense of Pakistan ultimately assured that the country is safeguarded at all the corners and heads. These men of steel in uniform were sons, brothers and fathers but they ranked being the sons of the country as their top priority and beyond their personal relationships and responsibilities. The families of these national heroes deserve the prayers of finding peace and prosperity from the whole nation who owe them this to ensure the prosperity of the country for which their loved ones laid their precious lives.

The whole nation is proud to have such brave sons of the soil and these are the real heroes who make astonishing history and decorate it with their acts of fearlessness and audacity at fierce times of war. The sacrifices made by these heroes have made the defense of Pakistan unconquerable both by external and internal anti-state entities. The whole nation is standing by the soldiers who are always there to guard the border and the time has proved that terrorism cannot finish them as it is the terrorists themselves who are eliminated along with their nefarious anti-state designs. The desire to be martyrs and no fear of death has made the caravans of Shuhada continued forever. The whole nation salutes such national heroes who are sacrificing their today for the better tomorrow of their homeland.

References

- i. Ahmed, F., & Maxwell, N. (1971). The Secret History of the 1962 War. *Pakistan Forum*, 2(1), 27. doi: 10.2307/2569113
- ii. Butt, M. (2013). Heroes of the World : Professor Rizwana Chaudhri , the Pride of Pakistan. *Middle East Journal Of Business*, 8(3), 41-47. doi: 10.5742/mejb.2013.83286
- iii. Defence, S., Defence, S., Defence, S., FIGHTER, D., FIGHTER, D., & FIGHTER, D. (2018). Youm-e-Shuhda 2013. Retrieved from <https://defence.pk/pdf/threads/youm-e-shuhda-2013.249185/page-2>
- iv. Edhi, A., & Durrani, T. (2001). *Abdul Sattar Edhi*. Karachi, Pakistan: A. Sattar Edhi Foundation.
- v. Higham, R. (2003). The Armed Forces of Pakistan (review). *The Journal Of Military History*, 67(3), 1002-1003. doi: 10.1353/jmh.2003.0225
- vi. Musharraf, P. (2014). *In the line of fire*. [Place of publication not identified]: Free Press.
- vii. Pakistan: democracy, terrorism, and the building of a nation. (2011). *Choice Reviews Online*, 48(07), 48-4120-48-4120. doi: 10.5860/choice.48-4120
- viii. Schaffer, T. (2007). Putting the Kashmiris Into the Kashmir Issue. *Asia Policy*, 3(1), 192-195. doi: 10.1353/asp.2007.0022
- ix. Shah, A. (2016). Pakistan in 2015: Fighting Terror, Pakistan Army Style. *Asian Survey*, 56(1), 216-224. doi: 10.1525/as.2016.56.1.216
- x. Shaikh, F. (2000). Pakistan between Allah and Army. *International Affairs*, 76(2), 325-332. doi: 10.1111/1468-2346.00137
- xi. Malik, Z. U. A., & Nawaz, A. (2014). Kashmir Conflict And Foreign Policy Of Pakistan. *International Journal Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(5), 179–188.
- xii. Malik, Z. U. A., & Zhilong, H. (2018). Present Scenario of Central Asia with respect to Pakistan and Afghanistan in the light of Security Challenges. *International Journal of Political Science*, 4(3), 1–4. <https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.20431/2454-9452.0403001>
- xiii. Malik, Z. U. A., Zhilong, H., & Ashraf, D. I. (2019). Terrorism: The Biggest Security Challenge to the Integrity of Pakistan. *Orient Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(1), 96–106.
- xiv. Malik, Z. U. A., Zhilong, H., & Rafay, M. (2019). War on Terrorism in Pakistan : Challenges and Strategic Steps. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*, 19(4), 625–631. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2019-19-4-625-631>