HISTORY OF PAKISTAN ARMY AVIATION





1947 - 2007



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This work is a tribute
to the hardwork, selfessness and indomitable spirit of
Army Aviators
which includes the pilots, technicians and all other personnel
who worked devotedly over the years
to build this Corps



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FOREWORD

FROM THE SENIOR MOST LIVING AVIATOR

Brigadier Gholam Jabbar was born in 1926 and was commisioned in the Army in 1943. He was the first Army Officer from the newly born Pakistan to undergo flying training in 1947 in UK. He later commanded thr first Aviation Squadron in 1956 and led the sole Army Aviation Base in 1965 and 1971 Wars. He retired in 1973 as the first director of Army Aviation and lives a retired life in his home in Islamabad. He is active and can be seen in all Aviation Gatherings.



Brigadier Jabbar in 2007

Army Aviation Started its journey as Number 1 Air Observation post (OP) Flight, Royal Pakistan Air Force (RPAF) in 1947 with four fabric covered Auster aircraft. These were left at Lahore Airport as Pakistan's share by the British 659 Air OP Squadron. Pakistan Army did not have any pilot or technician to handle these machines, as such help was sought from the RPAF. I recall with gratitude the help and assistance provided by the RPAF in those formative years. The two Air Marshals, Asghar Khan and Nur Khan, deserve a special mention in this regard. Pakistan Army was very fortunate to receive its first Pakistani pilot in shape of Captain Azmat Baksh Awan, who was the "Pioneer Aviatior" of Pakistan Army in the true sense and who played a significant role in the grooming and development of Army Aviation for a long time.

Late fifties saw the induction of L-19 aircraft while OH-13 helicopters arrived in the early sixties. This new equipment brought about new units and new roles. We were lucky to have such energetic and zealous unit commanders like Babar and Mahmud at this time. Similarly, Karim was busy in GHQ to bring about awareness with regard to the operational role of these flying machines.

1965 war was the first serious challenge for Pakistan Army and it was so satisfying to observe excellent performance by Army Aviators. Gallantry awards won by Army pilots speak of their commitment, devotion and bravery. Army Aviatiors once again gave an excellent account of their mettle in 1971. In the next two decades. this dynamic Arm not only gained the status of a "Corps" but also absorbed bigger helicopters and lethal machines to match the changing face of the modern battle.

It is amazing to see the professional robustness and versatility of its pilots, engineers and the Commanders in exterme demanding conditions of weather and terrain - may it be peace or war, within the country or abroad. It is heartening for me to see such an impressive growth from a modest beginning into a formidable Arm.

It will be unfair on my part if I do not make a very special mention of Lt Gen F S K Lodhi, who patronized the Corps and proved to be an exellent **Colonel Commandant**. Let me also commend various tiers of Army Aviators. who over the years zealously played their part to make Army Aviation what it is today.

In the end. I would like to appreciate the efforts of Maj Gen Muhammad Azam, Lt Col Mushtaq Madni and Maj Aamir Cheema on behalf of all Army Aviators for under - taking this colossal task and turning the **dream of Aviation History into reality**.

Keep up this excellent performance, Fly safe and may God be with you.



General Ashfaq Parvez, Kayani, NI(M), HI

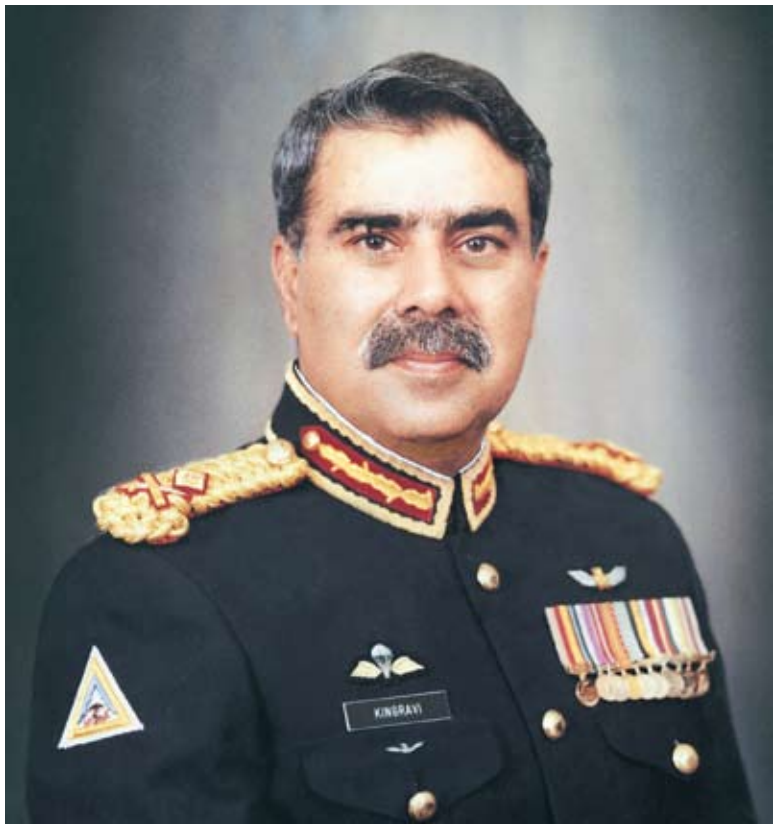
MESSAGE OF THE CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF

I am pleased to note that the History of Army Aviation is a comprehensive account of the development of the Army Aviation Corps since 1947 and covers all facets of its growth. The book will not only be beneficial to all Aviators but to the entire Army.

Army Aviation has grown exponentially not only in size but also in its role as a force multiplier of significance towards all commitments of Pakistan Army, Army Aviation in post 1971 emerged as a prominent and flexible arm, Raising of Aviation Corps in 1978 and induction of Gunship Helicopters in 1985 validates its significance. Army Aviation played a key role in the Siachen Conflict and later in Operation Lifeline in 2005. The present War Against Terror is an all arms team effort but for its success: **Army Aviation is the key**. Aviators have a very heavy responsibility on their shoulders as their role on the modern battle field will continue to grow and therefore, they have to focus on achieving professional excellence with requisite flight safety.

I appreciate the team work that has gone in the compilation of this book and hope that useful lessons will be drawn from the past to make future more secure and peaceful.

I wish all Aviators safe flying.



Major General Waqar Ahmed Kingravi

FROM THE COLONEL COMMANDANT

Army Aviation has developed into a potent component of the Pakistan Armed Forces during the past six decades. Large scale induction of helicopters, coupled with raising of new units, especially during the last three decades has transformed this fledgling Corps into a lethal, hard hitting war machine. In addition to providing a strategic punch to the land forces, tremendous flexibility of employment during peace as well as in war is now available to the field commanders.

Army Aviation has always responded to the clarion call with alacrity in the past and will Inshah Allah continue to do so in future also. May it be the external threat, Internal Security Duties, or providing succour during natural calamities, Aviators have always placed duty before self and played a vital role for the succesful completion of arduous tasks. Its annals are replete with stories of courage and sacrifice of its officers and men. We, the Aviators, are proud of our predecessors, who set such high standards of excellence and sacrifice.

This History of Army Aviation is deeply intertwined with the saga of Pakistan and its Armed Forces. The present book is a result of sweat and toil of numerous individuals, spread over more than ten years. The most conspicuous thread which provided continuity and momentum to the successful fruitation of this mammoth project remains to be Major General Muhammad Azam. He was ably assisted by Major Aamir Cheema, whose passionate involvement provided vivid colour and details to the book. There were many, many more, who made significant contributions, but it would not be possible to name them all over here.

I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to all serving as well as retired Aviators, who spared their valuable time to provide precious input for an accurate compilation of the History of Army Aviation covering its first six decades of existence

Wishing Pakistna Army Aviation continued success.

May Allah be our Guide and Protector.

PREFACE
History in the Making

Work on the history project of Army Aviation took a start in mid-nineties when the GOC, Maj Gen Rahmat Ullah tasked Aviation School to undertake the project. Maj Gen Arif Nazir (then serving as Lt Col in Tac Wing of Aviation School) produced what would be the first draft. Maj Gen Abdul Razzaq, the third GOC of the Corps, however, gave a boost to the whole effort in 1996 by incorporating a veteran Aviator, Lt Col (R) Mushtaq Madni to expand the work. Col Madni worked diligently for a number of years and a much expanded draft emerged from this effort. This second draft however could not be printed and the whole project stayed shelved for the next three years.



Major General Muhammad Azam HI(M)

It was in early 2002, when having taken over as the GOC, I decided to pursue the project. Existing draft was circulated among old Aviatiors and three meetings with the retired Aviatiors took place in Pindi, Lahore and Karachi. Based on observations of the veterans, a number of boards were formed to work on areas / aspects which needed more attention. At the same time, a dedicated History Office was formed in Aviation Command with Major Aamir Cheema deputed as the Project Officer. This officer worked with missionary zeal and commitment. Enormous help / participation was also visible especially form retired Aviators. Three ardent supporters of the Project left for their celestial abode while the work was still on; they were Brig Saleem Ullah, Brig HR Abbassy and Maj Manzoor Kamal Bajwa. I am deeply indebted to Brig Jabbar, Brig Mahmud and Wing Commander Nazir Siddiqui for their support / contribution. Brig Mahmud made remarkable addition to the entire work with his excellent recollection of the 65 war. I must express my gratitude to Mrs. A B Awan for having given us access to her late husband's pictures and documents. Group Capt Hussaini's credit is also acknolwedged for reproducing a number of his paintings. Incidentally, the proverbial last push was rendered by Maj Gen Waqar Kingravi and Maj Gen Taqi Naseer Rizvi.

In the end I would make two points - one that I wish to thank a host of other serving and retired Aviators who contributed immensely but could not be named due to space. Second, I must admit that **histories are never final**; some events and some narratives may not have been covered adequately in spite of our best efforts, please do send your observations to the Editorial Team or Aviation Directorate / Command for incorporation in the next edition.

Wishing you Happy Reading.

FIRST DAY OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE BIRTH OF



FIRST AIR OBSERVATION POST FLIGHT AT LAHORE



Morning 15th August 1947, Lahore Airport. Pakistan Army's share of 4 Auster Aircraft being painted with Pakistan insignias. This Flight over the decades has groomed into present day Pakistan Army Aviation



The Journey Begins

The story of Pakistan Army Aviation begins at the time of partition of the sub-continent. 659 British Army Air OP (Observation Post) Squadron which was deployed at Lahore in support of the Punjab Boundary Commission was split between the two new countries – Pakistan and India. Four Auster-V aircraft were the share of Pakistan and this became the nucleus on which was built No. 1 Air OP Flight-fore runner to present day Army Aviation. Pilots of Air OP Squadrons in British Army were from Royal Artillery and technical personnel were from Royal Air Force. Operational control was exercised by the Royal Artillery and technical control by RAF. Same pattern was retained in newly born Pakistan Army. At that time there was no Pakistan Army Pilot trained to take over the flight thus No. 1 Air OP Flight Royal Pakistan Air Force was managed temporarily by the Royal Pakistan Air Force. British agreed to leave behind a batch of four Auster pilots for few months to allow the newly born flight undertake the flying duties in a smooth manner. Major PD Morris thus became its first flight commander with Captain RD Raikes, Captain DS Murray and Captain GF Cox, all ex- Royal Artillery, as section pilots. Flight was organized into a flight headquarters and four sections, each having one aircraft. The Indian contingent of No. 1 Air OP Flight RIAF flew out to Amritsar on 7 September 1947. Four Auster-V aircraft inherited by Pakistan Army had the tail numbers 228, 271, 377 and 625. In October 1947 three officers from RPAF were hastily sent to the Air OP Flight to take over the flight from British officers. They were Flying Officer Nazir Ahmad Siddiqui, Pilot Officers Ashraf and Mahmood Jan. These officers quickly acquainted themselves with the operations and by November 1947 were ready to replace the British officers. Captain RD Raikes with all other ranks left the flight in October followed by Captain Murray and Captain Cox in November 1947. By mid November 1947 the flight was entirely manned by RPAF officers except the flight commander Major PD Morris, who was later relieved by Flying Officer M M Jaffery in May 1948.

FIRST PAKISTANI PILOT TO FLY ARMY AUSTERS

Flying Officer Nazir Siddiqui was the first Pakistani pilot to fly the 659 RAF Air OP Squadron Austers left at Lahore as Pakistan's share in 1947. He reported to the Flight in early October 1947 and flew his first dual mission on Auster - TJ 337 on 11th October 1947. He was cleared to fly solo on 16th October. He was part of the Royal Pakistan Air Force (RPAF) Pilots who were sent to the Air OP Flight to replace the British pilots. Once Army trained its own pilots, these RPAF pilots returned to their parent units. During the process of research for this book, Wing Commander (R) Nazir Siddiqui was traced to be living in his house next to the perimeter fence of Qasim Army Aviation Base, Dhamial. These two pictures show him in 1960 and in 2004. The second pilot of his batch was Pilot Officer Ashraf, who also retired as a Wing Commander. For a long time he served in Lahore and Multan Flying Clubs as a flying instructor. The third pilot was Pilot Officer Mahmood Jan, who later left the service and flew for PIA. The latter two are no more living. Incidentally, son-in-law of Wing Commonder (R) Ashraf, was an Army Aviator - Colonel (R) Liaqat Raja of the Combat Group.



1960



2004

Operation Curzon – Troops pull out from Tribal Area--1947

Waziristan Agency had remained a thorn in the side of the British Empire; the very first induction of aircraft in the sub-continent is attributed to the unrest in tribal areas along the Durand Line since 1919. British Army had formed a Waziristan Area Command, with 30,000 troops, which had its headquarters at Dera Ismail Khan, with brigade headquarters at Razmak, Bannu, Wana and Gardai. Quaid-e-Azam intended to withdraw this force as a sign of reconciliation towards tribesmen.In October 1947, No. 1 Air OP Flight was tasked to provide support for "Operation Curzon". Two Austers were immediately despatched to Razmak with a servicing station established at Peshawar. The flight was placed under command Wing Commander

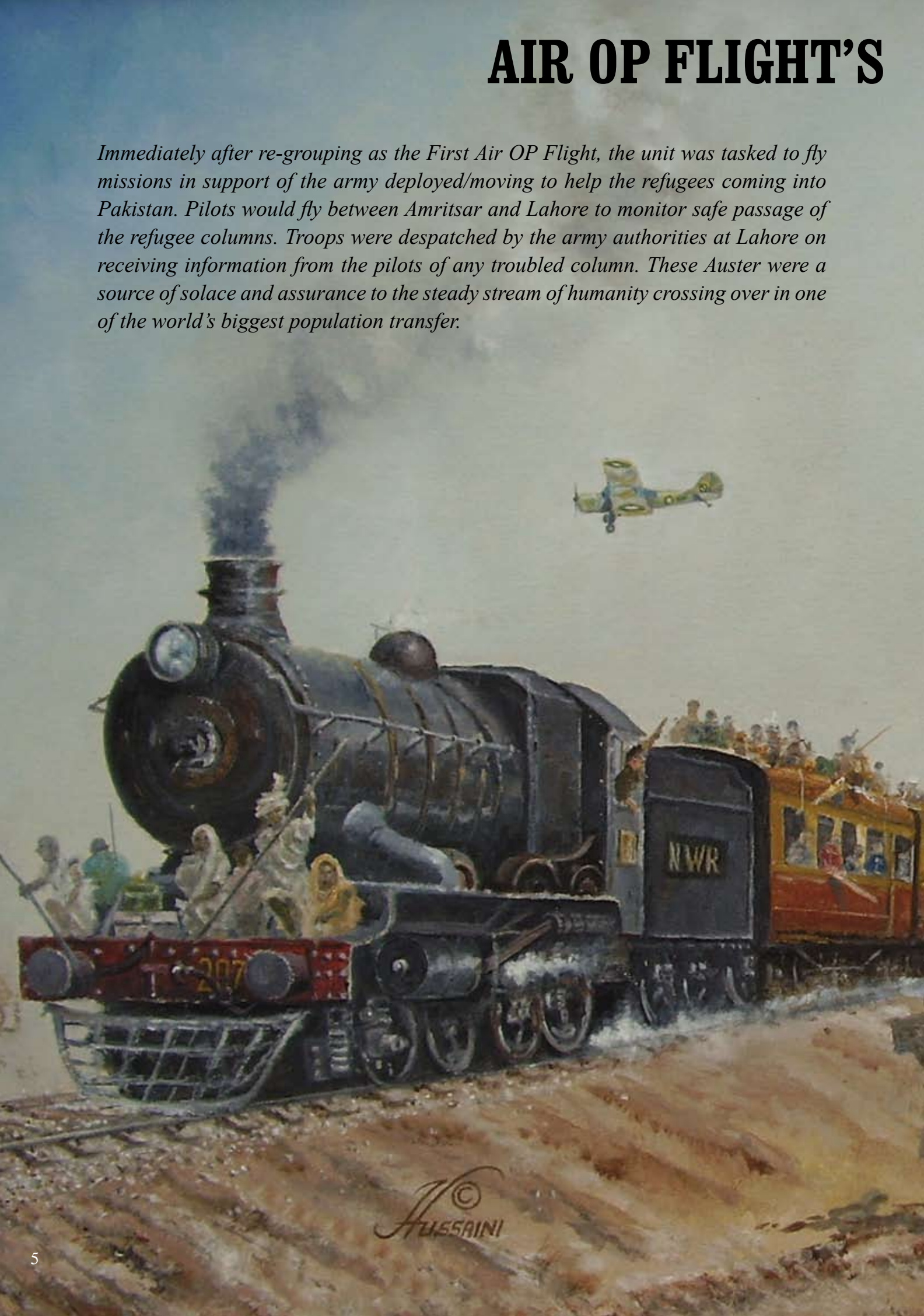


An artist's impression of Auster in the field operations

Nazir Ullah of RPAF. Captain DF Murray and Captain GF Cox were the pilots in the Razmak Section, where as Major Morris and Captain RD Raikes stayed back at Lahore with flight headquarters and two Auster for supporting the Punjab Boundary Force. Later, the flight headquarters and one Auster also moved to Peshawar on 7th October 1947. Air OP aircraft were used for communication and reconnaissance duties. During the troops pullout phase, tribal marauders, on being spotted would be reported by the Auster to main control station at Miran Shah and soon 'Tempests' of No. 5 Squadron RPAF would appear for strafing. Wing Commander Siddiqui remembers the flying of those days, *"We would fly the air force crew from Peshawar to Razmak, fly political agents, performed other tasks like casualty evacuation, road clearance and flying the commanders in various sectors. At times we also took artillery shoots over the attacking tribal who were ransacking, looting the evacuated garrisons and undertaking occasional hit and run attacks on the army convoys"*. 'Operation Curzon' terminated on 31st December 1947. The flight supported the operation with dedication and devotion and flew 115 hours. On completion of the duty, the flight reassembled at Peshawar.

AIR OP FLIGHT'S

Immediately after re-grouping as the First Air OP Flight, the unit was tasked to fly missions in support of the army deployed/moving to help the refugees coming into Pakistan. Pilots would fly between Amritsar and Lahore to monitor safe passage of the refugee columns. Troops were despatched by the army authorities at Lahore on receiving information from the pilots of any troubled column. These Auster were a source of solace and assurance to the steady stream of humanity crossing over in one of the world's biggest population transfer.



INITIAL FLYING





The First Army Pilot

A batch of five young Indian army officers proceeded to England in June 1947 to train as Air OP pilots. This group included one Muslim army officer as well who was Captain Azmat Baksh Awan, belonging to the Corps of Artillery. On completion of flying training this group returned to the respective independent countries - India and Pakistan. Captain Awan was thus destined to be the pioneer Pakistan Army Air OP pilot who joined the No.1 Air OP Flight located at Chaklala in June 1948. He also became the flight commander since at that time the existing flight commander, Flight Lieutenant M.M Jaffery left to attend Command and Staff College Quetta.

Captain Awan followed a distinguished career path and served with distinction in every rank. He was the spearhead of Army's flying force and led the force to grow in size and operational effectiveness. He rose to the rank of lieutenant General and commanded two corps, he also became the first Colonel Commandant of Army Aviation. After retirement he served the country as an ambassador to Sweden. He passed away in January 1996.



Capt A.B Awan standing third form left,

First Group of Pakistan Army Pilots

Realizing the future necessity, Director Artillery, Brigadier Harris selected five gunner officers in September 1947 to undergo Air OP training in UK. The officers were Captains Nasrullah Khan, Moin Ullah Kirmani, Gholam Jabbar, RIU Khan and MS Wazir. Only Captain Kirmani and Captain Jabbar came back with flying brevet in September 1948. The remaining three officers lacked flying aptitude and were returned to their units. Captain Kirmani soon left Army and It will not be out of place to mention that with the passage of time, **Captain Jabbar became a torch-bearer on the inclined path of growth and development of Pakistan Army Aviation and retired as a brigadier after serving at various tiers of command in this splendid outfit.**

Pilot Training Schedule at England

The Training was conducted in three phases:-

Phase 1. Pakistani students attended Artillery School Lark Hill. Gunnery procedures were refreshed, static observation post was used to practice Air OP procedures for shoots on ranges.

Phase 2. At Elementary Flying Training School R.A.F Bokker Hill. Students were given 45 hours dual and 30 hours solo on Tiger Moth aircraft including 4 hours of night flying.

Phase 3. Students were sent to 227 Officer's Conversion Unit Middle Wallop; where they were converted on to Auster -V and VI aircraft. This phase was combined with artillery shoots, aerial photography, surveillance and other tasks required of an Air OP.



Reminiscences of Flying Training In United Kingdom

Brigadier Jabbar the senior most living aviator leads a retired life in Islamabad. He remembers those days, "I was commissioned during World War 2 and served in Burma. On 14th August 1947, I was at Mardan serving in 3 SP (Self Propelled) Regiment when Pakistan became independent. I had already cleared my medical examination for the Air OP Course in May 1947 from Ambala and was later selected for the eleven months long flying course along with four other officers. We sailed for England in september and took 17 days to reach Liverpool.

England was damp, windy and rainy. Only Captain Kirmani had been in England before, in connection with an Ack Ack Artillery course thus he became our guide. We stayed in London for a week in a bed and breakfast hotel which was costing us around 17 Shillings a day. We were dependent upon the Indian Embassy for our pay and other administrative arrangements. Pakistan Embassy was yet to be established. Indian High Commissioner was Mr. Krishna Menon who later became Indian Defence Minister. There was an Indian restaurant by the name of 'Shafi', which we used to visit quite often. Our uniforms were still of the Indian pattern with Indian ranks and badges. It was a battle dress consisting of barathea cloth jacket and Van Heusen shirt with changeable collar. The buttons had the insignia of Royal Indian Artillery. We at our own had put on the Pakistani flag on the side arm. We first went to Lark Hill, the Royal School of Artillery, located in Salisbury Plains, south of London. In the course we were taught artillery procedures and tactics. Captain Nasrullah (uncle of late Lieutenant General Akhtar Abdur Rehman) was the course senior. In our course there were twelve British officers and a few Indian naval officers also. We were given independent single rooms and a British soldier as batman. Classrooms were near by but training area was bit far off and we would use bicycles for going there. We had one week break after the course which we used for travelling around. There was a town by the name of Warton close to Lark Hill where we would go frequently for food.

Our next stay was at Bokker Hill, a small town in Buckinghamshire County. Bokker Hill was mainly created by the RAF to take load off from Cranwell. It was RAF's war time training institute. There was no runway and elementary flying and glider flying was conducted on grassy strips. Our course duration here was of four months. There were classes on principles of flight, navigation, airman -ship etc. Accommodation was in wooden huts; we were given separate rooms with a batman. Our elementary flying training started on Tiger Moth, my instructor was Flight Lieutenant Depass who was a World War 2 veteran pilot. In Tiger Moth, communication was the major concern; instructor and students would talk to each other through Gospel tube. There was no radio set in the aircraft even for communication with ATC(Air Traffic Controller). Pre flight briefing was very comprehensive and covered all aspects mainly to over come this deficiency of communication. All manoeuvres including barrel roll, stall turns, and loop were taught and practiced in pre



Bokker Hill, (UK) April 1948. First Pakistan Army Batch.

Standing 2nd from left Capt Wazir, Last staning Capt Kirmani, & 2nd sitting on ground Capt Jabbar.



solo stage. It was at this pre solo stage that other three Pakistani students were dropped from flying despite best efforts of instructors. Solo flying was done in Tiger Moth from the rear seat. My self and Captain Kirmani flew seventy hours in this phase. Our final phase of four month flying was at Middle Wallop, which is located in Hampshire County close to Lark Hill. It was an army setup where commandant was a Group Captain from RAF. Main emphasis here was on the strip landings. There were two phases in this part of the course, in first phase, we converted on Auster Mark VI and in advance phase we learnt artillery shoots and other tactical aspects of flying. Later we were awarded flying brevets in a graceful ceremony".

The First Flying Instructor

Considering high attrition in which five students who were sent to UK for flying training, only two returned as qualified pilots. It was decided to request the British authorities to depute a flying instructor for training in Pakistan. Captain Awan recommended the name of his own instructor – Captain Gerald Terence Leworthy, a WW -2 veteran with a DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross). The major consideration in recommending his name apart from his flying skills was his sense of humour. Captain Leworthy (Major retired) arrived in Pakistan on 12 September 1948 and besides flying training, played an important role as an advisor on tactical matters pertaining to Air OP.



Major and Mrs Leworthy

The First Pilot Trained in Pakistan



Captain Saleem Ullah

Lieutenant Mohammad Saleem Ullah was the first army officer to have been completely trained in flying within Pakistan. He was selected for Air OP Course while serving in Kashmir with 2 Field Regiment Artillery during "Pandu Operations". He reported for basic training on Tiger Moth aircraft at Risalpur after undergoing medical examination conducted by the medical officer of 2 Field Regiment. On completion of basic training, he joined No. 1 Air OP Flight at Chaklala on 2nd December 1948 for advance training. Lieutenant Saleem Ullah retired as Director Aviation in 1974, he expired in 2006. He wrote about his Air OP days; "I had a long briefing from Major A.B Awan, the flight commander, on the training aspects. Captain Leworthy was a brilliant flying instructor and I was fortunate to be his student. His knowledge of ground subjects was excellent. My flying training schedule was easy. Two hours of flying, three hours of ground subjects which mainly included principles of flight and meteorology which was conducted by air force meteorological officer and then two hours of normal unit administration as quartermaster. Captain Leworthy was very particular about the air exercises and always made sure that I understood these on ground before going up in the air. Captain Leworthy used to lay great emphasis on map reading. He maintained that a pilot must know the relationship of map to ground all the time. Accordingly, he would conduct map reading exercise once a month. The flight was deployed with a spacing of approximately 1000 yards. They were given vary light pistols and cartridges with a timetable when they had to fire. The pilots were given a flight path 5000 yards away from the troops with different heights. When the pilot was positioned at the flight path, troops would fire and the pilot had to record the location. Initially the results were not very encouraging but soon we improved. The pre and post flight briefings were comprehensive. My flying with Leworthy was of great help to me during my flying instructor course in UK".



First Brevet Ceremony

Lieutenant Saleem Ullah was awarded the much-coveted flying brevet by General Sir Douglas Gracey, Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan Army, on 3 March 1949 at Chaklala. Brigadier Jabbar recalls the event "We had sent the typed card to the C-in-C through the Aide De Camp(ADC). General Gracey all along had been taking a personal interest and keeping himself abreast of the training progress. It was an important milestone in the history of Pakistan Army. The gracing of the ceremony by the C-in-C also highlighted the importance of Air OP which was still in its infancy amongst the other senior arms "



Temporary Move to Dhamial – April 1949

The Air OP Flight had hardly settled in the new environments of Chaklala Base when it had to vacate the allotted RPAF hangar to accommodate No. 6 Squadron of RPAF. Air OP Flight had to move temporarily to Dhamial till the time the army constructed its own hangar at Chaklala for which Air Headquarters had allotted suitable space (present PIA Domestic Lounge site). Dhamial was constructed in 1941 during Burma Campaign and was initially used as the Para Training Centre later it was abandoned in 1945. In 1949 Dhamial was occupied by the Vehicle Sub Depot, which had to be shifted before flight moves in and funds were to be allotted for the speedy construction of hangar at Chaklala.Thus army had to construct two hangars for the flight, one at Chaklala and the other at Dhamial. In December 1949 the hangar at Chaklala was completed by the army and the flight moved back to Chaklala in comfortable surroundings

Induction Of Four New Austers

In April 1949, No. 1 Air OP Flight received four new Auster aircraft from No.101, RPAF Depot Drigh Road. From the old stock, two had been damaged and the fresh arrivals added to the pride of the Air OP community. In 1949 Lycoming Engines were no longer available and the British modified the Auster - V by fitting a "Gipsy Major" Engine. It was called Auster V-(D). It had a metal propeller and self-starter. RPAF forward repair unit at Chaklala carried out this modification for Air OP.

Ferry of Four Austers (Chaklala To Dacca) - 1949

The first big challenge, to navigate over a long distance, with just the magnetic compass and a map, came in the winter of 1949. The requirement was to ferry four Auster aircraft to the former East Pakistan. The aim was to set-up University Air Squadron at Dacca in order to start initial flying training for prospective candidates of that region for possible induction in RPAF. Lieutenant General Azmat Baksh Awan recalls. "I arrived at the Air Headquarters where I was ushered into the office of Air Commodore Mcdonald, Officiating

10th November 1949 - The First Cross Country Navigation

Four Auster aircraft of Pakistan Army Air OP Flight overhead Taj enroute to Dacca from Rawalpindi. The first night stay was at Agra, second at Gaya, and on 12th November the formation landed at Dacca. It was led by Major Azmat Awan with Captain Jabbar and two Polish officers, one Dakota of RPAF was also part of the formation.

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415



Air Chief RPAF. I was awed by what seemed to be a long walk to the table where he sat at the opposite end of the hall."

"We have a mission for you. A pilot training programme in East Pakistan must be set up the soonest. The Indians would not allow over flying of armed aircraft but have conceded safe passage of few light planes. That is where we need you. Four Auster aircraft are to be ferried to Dacca. We would give you Polish pilots (There were quite a few Polish pilots in RPAF in those days). Convert them and also tame them to fly light planes. A Dakota would accompany you to carry maintenance crew, enough fuel, some spares and the like. I have spoken to my counterpart Mukerji. He has agreed to your night stay at Agra. A second stop at Gaya may be necessary. Agra is Indian Air Force transport base. There may be some night flying in progress, in case you arrive late. Also Agra onwards, you may expect strong winds, almost matching forward speed of your aircraft. The station commander has been instructed to supervise early morning Meteorological briefing himself so that you set off under favourable weather conditions". After this narration Air Commodore Mcdonald looked at me for any query and I asked, "Amongst the pilots, may I have one of my own, Captain Jabbar? I would feel more comfortable". "Yes, do that … the pilots and Dakota will report in due course, and my staff is available for any further assistance. "Good luck!"

"On 9th November 1949 Flight Lieutenants Mohawsky, Tronchinsky and Flying Officer Lanky Ahmad, the Dakota pilot reported to me and I converted Mohawsky on Auster -V (E604) in 50 minutes".

First Day – 10th November 1949

For all of them it was the first flying experience into India. Major Awan had 7 years of service. On 10th November 1949, his flying hours totalled 479 and he had been in command of Air Op Flight for 17 months. The route on first day was Chaklala-Lahore-Ambala-Palam-Agra. The formation flew in pairs with Captain Jabbar in the lead and Major AB Awan in the tail aircraft. This came handy at Palam. Major Awan narrates, "First two aircraft took-off. Mohowsky's aircraft was stubborn to start. I went to help, in the process I lost time. Half way through the leg Palam-Agra, darkness descended and soon it was pitch black. It was an eerie feeling. Luckily, the shimmer of Jumna River down below was a boon and I would not let go of it. Suddenly, I sighted Agra Beacon and then some lights over the Airfield. I made a short approach and landed. Shortly, the Station Commander arrived and escorted me to the dispersal. We were looked after well by the Indian Air Force (IAF). We had a long flight, were tired and wanted to sleep but on host's insistence were driven for a brief visit to Taj Mahal. That remains a memorable interlude".

Second Day 11th November 1949

"The route on second day was Agra-Amousi (near Lucknow)-Bebopper (near Banaras) -Gaya. The Station Commander was there early to check on the meteorological forecast. We had to wait several hours before the winds turned favourable for take-off. We were prohibited to fly over Lucknow. We were to land at a small airfield at Amousi. However, this leg was somewhat long and at the close end of our aircraft's endurance. At Gaya, we landed in fading light. We were received by a police officer and slept in a rest house".

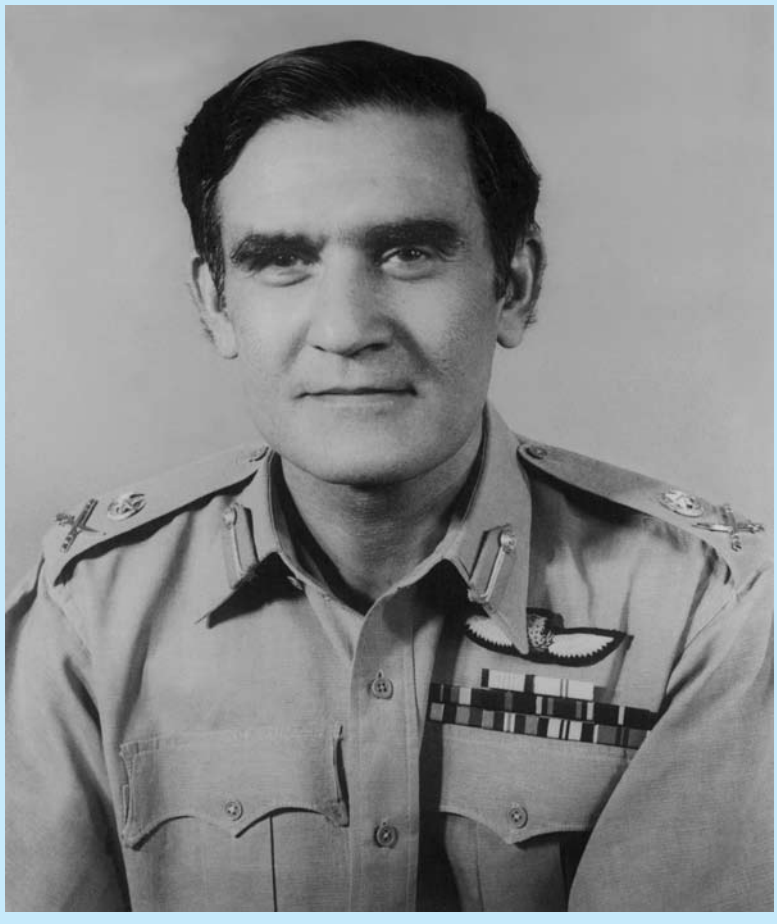
Third Day 12th November 1949

"The route on last day was Gaya-Asonsol-Dumdum (Calcutta)– Dacca. Asonsol was hazy with smoke due to the presence of coal fields. Dumdum was the last leg in India. The leg to Dacca was difficult from navigation point of view. It had rained and the whole countryside looked like one sheet of water and therefore only a few landmarks were available. I worried that we may stray into Burma. Dacca had the tiniest of landing strip, half submerged in water and surrounded by few thatched huts. I landed first and the others followed. With some relief we ended our historic Journey".

Pilots spent 4 to 5 days in Dacca and met Major General Muhammad Ayub Khan, then the General Office Commanding (GOC) 14 Division. Before taking a flight back to Karachi in the comfort of a 'Constellation'.



Lieutenant General Azmat Baksh Awan



Lieutenant General Awan had many historical distinctions to be termed as the father of Army Aviation Corps. He was the first Muslim Air Observation Post (AOP)pilot to be selected from Indian Army for flying course at England in March 1947. He was the first Army Flight Commander of the AOP Flight ,later he had the distinction to be the first Pakistan Army Flying Instructor as well. He was the first aviator to undergo Course at Command and Staff College, Quetta and then the first Platoon/Company Commander from Air OP in Pakistan Military Academy. He was the first commandant of the Aviation School and Dhamial Base. Thus it was natural that he became the first Colonel Commandant of Aviation Corps as well

Born on 4th April 1923 at Peshawar to doctor Allah Baksh Awan. He was commissioned in 6 Royal Artillery Regiment on 6 September 1942. A graduate of Government College Lahore where along with his brother Izzat he formed an all India Table Tennis champion pair. He appeared for his flying aptitude test in 1946 at Mauripur, got his flying training from Middle Wallop in 1947/48, and Instructor Training in 1949 from same place. He remained as flight commander of No.1 Air OP till 1951 when he proceeded to attend Command and Staff College Quetta. He later served as company commander in Pakistan Military Academy. He commanded 8 Field Regiment before raising Air OP School in 1959. In 1961 he went to Turkey as Military Attaché. He commanded the Dhamial Base or rather the Army Aviation in 1965 War and in the dying days of war also commanded 12 Divisional Artillery. Later as brigadier he headed the military intelligence for some time before being promoted and appointed as Commandant Command and Staff College. After the war of 1971 he commanded 18 Division and then raised 5 Corps. He also commanded 1 Corps. He was also Commandant National Defence College. In 1982 after retirement he was appointed as Pakistan's ambassador to Sweden. General died peacefully in 1996 and according to his wife, whom he married in 1950 "General's last words were for the welfare of Army Aviation."

A born aviator and a gifted orator, who had a sickle for perfection and manners. He remained on flying status throughout his career, irrespective of his appointments to the extent that he was the only Military Attaché allowed to fly on L-20 in Turkey as well. An officer and gentleman in the true and literal words, a man of words and deeds.

General left behind a widow, two sons and a daughter apart from a legacy of dedication, honesty, humbleness, and love of flying.

THE FIRST PARADE



ON 12th JANUARY 1951 AT RPAF BASE CHAKLALA, GENERAL SIR DOUGLAS GRACEY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PAKISTAN ARMY, AWARDED FLYING BREVETS TO THREE ARMY PILOTS. NAMELY CAPTAIN BLAKER, CAPTAIN AHMED AND CAPTAIN KARIM. GENERAL MUHAMMAD AYUB KHAN, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DESIGNATE, WAS ALSO PRESENT ON THE OCCASION. AFTER AWARD OF FLYING BREVETS THE MARCH PAST WAS LED BY MAJOR AWAN THE FLIGHT COMMANDER OF AIR OP FLIGHT. CAPTAIN JABBAR WAS THE PARADE SECOND IN COMMAND. MARCHING COLUMN WAS LED BY THREE NEWLY GRADUATED OFFICERS. CAPTAIN KARIM IS THE LEFT FRONT GUIDE, CAPTAIN AHMED IN THE CENTRE AND CAPTAIN BLAKER THE RIGHT FRONT GUIDE. GENERAL AYUB IS SITTING SECOND FROM RIGHT IN THE FRONT ROW.

OF THE AIR OP *CHAKLALA-12th JANUARY 1951*



MAJOR AWAN RECEIVING THE CHIEF GUEST. FOLLOWED BY SQN LDR A.K.MALIK OF RPAF AND ADC CAPT WAHID QADIR.



C-IN-C WITH THE FLIGHT COMMANDER.



REVIEWING THE PARADE



GENERAL AYUB TALKING TO THE DIRECTOR ARTILLERY BRIGADIER MORLEY.



CAPTAIN AHMED BEING AWARDED THE FLYING BREVET.



GENERAL GRACEY AWARDING FLYING BREVET TO HIS FORMER ADC CAPTAIN KARIM.



General Gracey's Last Parade – 12th January 1951

On 12 January 1951, General Sir Douglas Gracey awarded flying brevets to three officers in an impressive ceremony. General Muhammad Ayub Khan, the Commander-In-Chief designate, was also present on the occasion.

Captain Karim had joined the Military Academy Dehra Dun in August 1947 and migrated to Pakistan on 14 October 1947, was commissioned in 2 Field Regiment and was later posted to 3 SP Regiment in 1949. He remained as ADC to C-in-C General Gracey from 1 April 1949 to 19 October 1950. Captain Karim had already flown 200 hours in India at Bihar Flying Club, Patna. He had served in RIAF and Navy as commissioned officer the only instance of an officer serving in all three services. At the end of his tenure with General Gracey, as per custom in vogue, the chief asked for his choice posting, on which Captain Karim requested for Air OP Flight, thus he underwent flying course from 20 October -20 December 1950. At the graduation parade which was Gracey's last as the C-in-C, he consented to be the chief guest, more as an affiliation to his ADC.The other two officers who received the flying brevet that day were Captain Blaker and Lieutenant Ahmed.



Top: Captain Karim - Captain Ahmed

In early 1949 General Headquarters selected Captain Blaker an Anglo-Indian officer of 8 Medium Regiment to undergo flying training. Captain Percy Joseph Blaker, was known for his lively demeanour; he gained an instant popularity with the rest of the community. He completed his basic flying course at RPAF College Risalpur and reported to the flight for further AOP training in March 1949. It took him another year and half before he got his brevet. He was all alone in Pakistan as rest of his family was in England. He later rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel and commanded 2 Squadron apart from being the Aviation School Commandant. A cool, composed and an extremely popular commanding officer. He later left the army and settled in Australia where he took his last breath in the company of his wife Irene in February 2003.



Captain Blaker

Lieutenant A.M.S. Ahmed was from Bengal. He joined Air OP Flight in June 1950 from 1 AGRPA where he was an intelligence officer (IO).He completed 14 hours of training with University Air Squadron and rest of training within the flight. He later got married to a medical college student and had two kids. Sadly he died soon in an air crash. His wife later completed her studies in medicine and raised both children, She lives in Dhaka.

Brigadier Karim recalling that day narrates."We all three stood at attention, the C-in-C walked in along with few army officers. Some air force officers and civilians were also invited. After the brevet ceremony; the flight consisting of fifty five all ranks gave a smart march past. A demonstration of short landing and take off was also shown. Lady Gracey also graced the occasion and while having light refreshment in the hangar remarked." This place looks cleaner than a hospital". It really showed how the gunners and airmen worked to keep a place like hangar so neat and tidy



Instructor Training

RPAF was getting their flying instructors trained from England at Central Flying School (CFS) Little Risington located near Oxford. These instructors in turn trained the students at Risalpur. Pakistan Army also adopted this pattern and was allotted one vacancy every year at CFS. Major Awan availed the vacancy in 1949, Captain Saleem Ullah in 1950 and Captain M. M. Karim was the last one to undergo training in 1953. Captain Mahmud (brigadier retired) became the first army flying instructor to graduate from RPAF Flying Instructor School (FIS) Chaklala, In 1954. He stood first in the course. The RPAF instructors at Chaklala included Flight Lieutenants Rahat Latif, Inam and Wing Commander Siddiqui.



Major Mahmud

Surveillance Pakistan - Afghan Border

The Afghans had never really accepted the Durand Line. In May 1951, the 2/16 Punjab Regiment was stationed at Chaman commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Akhtar Malik (Later Lieutenant General). One day the patrolling party of 2/16 Punjab was lured by Afghans into Spin Baldack, where they were invited for tea etc. As per tradition own soldiers left their arms outside, later on they were made hostage and then set free without their weapons. A tussle thus erupted in which exchange of fire also took place and situation became grim. Two aircraft of Air OP Flight were directed to move from Chaklala to Chaman in support of field formation and carry out reconnaissance, aerial photography, apart from directing artillery and tank fire. On 1st & 2nd July 1951, Captain Karim with Captain Hamza of an infantry regiment flew inside Afghanistan and reported hostile activities at Shin Naisi Than, Agha Jan and Dobandi. They also observed a concentration of about 200 Afghan soldiers dug inside Pakistan territory. The information was promptly passed onto 9 Squadron of RPAF through the brigade headquarters. Flight Lieutenant Saeed Ullah and Squadron Leader Zafar Choudhry took off in a "Fury" fighter from Samungli Airfield and fired on these entrenched Afghans. RPAF aircraft were in communication with Captain Karim on CN 348 set and were directed on to the target. This was followed by a ground attack in which the Afghans suffered heavy casualties and withdrew

Escalation - 1951

Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan paid a visit to Quetta and Chaman. At Chaman along with Brigade Commander Brigadier Altaf Qadir and Wing Commander Zafar Chaudhry, Officer Commanding 9 Squadron (later C-in-C PAF). Prime Minister directed that Afghans should be taught a lesson. In the words of Brigadier Karim who was also present there with his Auster. 'Prime Minister made a punch and said "*in logon ko maza chakadu"* (Teach these people a lesson). On 18 July 1951 Prime Minister held a cabinet meeting to raise a tribal *lashkar* of 20,000 for defence against Afghanistan. While Pakistan was busy at the western border, India amassed her forces at the eastern border. Although the build-up was going on since January 1951 but it reached the point where flight of two Austers was recalled hurriedly on 20th July 1951. On the way back Captain Karim's aircraft forced landed at Multan. ''I failed to locate Multan due to severe dust storm and forced landed at Shershah as I was running short of fuel". Flight was assigned the additional task of monitoring the blackout drills in Rawalpindi during this escalation.

Naval Air Shoots

In October 1951, Pakistan Navy carried out a study on the naval battle procedures which included development of an efficient target engagement system to reduce the engagement time. The navy asked Pakistan Army to provide a pilot and an aircraft to participate in the exercise. The army agreed and Captain Saleem Ullah was detailed. On October 13, 1951 at 0700 hours Captain Saleem Ullah took off from PAF Base Chaklala in Auster Mark VI (E654) alongwith one technician. The aircraft had to be refuelled enroute at Sargodha, Multan, Khanpur, Jacobabad, Nawabshah and Hyderabad.



The navy decided to station the Air OP aircraft at RPAF Base, Drigh Road Karachi since it was more convenient as compared to Mauripur.

The background of this exercise was that some time back a senior naval officer had witnessed a firepower demonstration at Tilla Ranges (Jhelum), which included a shoot by an Air OP. When Air OP got airborne; he established the radio contact with the firing unit on ground. He took two ranging rounds and ordered the fire for effect. The shoot took about ten minute. The naval officer was extremely impressed by the speed at which the target was engaged. He wanted to know if the navy can make use of the Air OP. Navy arranged the exercise and asked for Air OP pilot and aircraft participation. Between October 17-22, 1951, Captain Saleem Ullah carried out target engagement and flew sorties for various ships. The shoots were generally successful but took more time as compared to the ship

Flight Exercises

The routine working in the flight was very enjoyable. Flying in the early hours of the day followed by administrative work and games especially hockey in the afternoon. In the evening, there used to be table tennis matches. Major Awan, the flight commander, was very keen on the professional matters. He always maintained that a pilot must be the most wanted person in the whole formation and his usefulness depends on the thorough professional skill and knowledge of the operational area. Exercises were therefore set, in which each pilot in turn had to take his section out in the operational area, to establish Advance Landing Grounds (ALG) for three to four weeks and prepare the road reconnaissance reports. His other area of interest was the aerial photography. He thought these to be of great help to the formation commanders. In the flight various kinds of exercises were conducted to generate healthy flying activities. On 21 November 1951 flight held its forced landing competition. Signal exercise was also carried out apart from routine advance landing ground exercises at Fateh Jang, Basal, Pindi Gheb, Campbellpur area. Each section had one pilot, one aircraft, one jeep, one 1.5 ton vehicle, one operator communication unit, two drivers and two aircraft technician. There was no cook and pilots had to cook themselves. Overall there was a great sense of unity in the section.

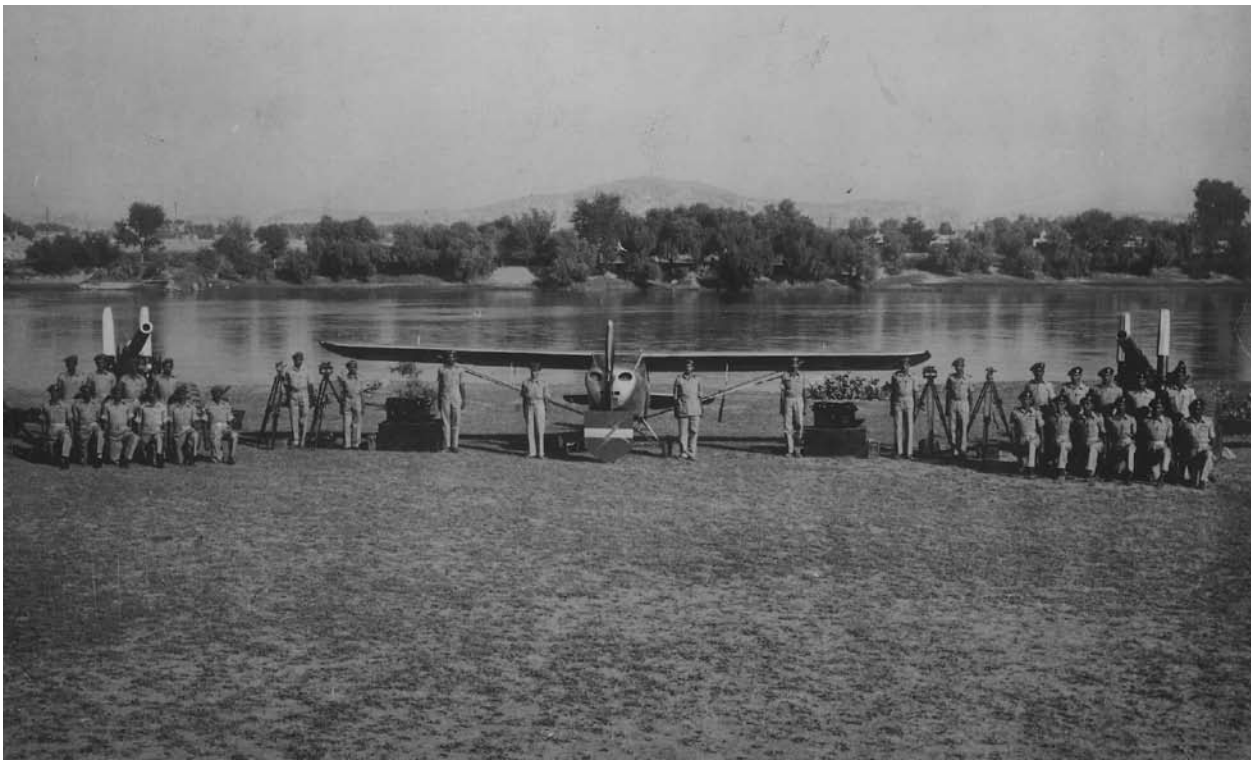
1 Air OP Flight had inherited the photographic equipment. In October 1948 Pilot Officer Ashraf was the first one to undertake aerial photography mission for 10 Division. The basic role of air observation pilots



Air OP Pilots in Tribal Area with Locals - 1951



was to take artillery shoots in the war. They could call upon the divisional or corps artillery as the case may arise. For this they had to be excellent gunners on ground. Thus there were regular classes of gunnery in the flight followed by aerial artillery shoots at Nowshehra Ranges.



Auster at Nowshehra

Latha Phairo

On 27 November 1951 Captain Saleem Ullah went to Bahawalpur to cooperate with 6 Bahawalpur Field Regiment. He came back with new ideas and new fire discipline orders. The few terms he learned during his stay at Bahawalpur included "Latha Phairo" meaning Fire. "D,One, Ka Latha Phairo" meaning one round gun fire. '"Chir Chir Pai Hovee" meaning scale two. All shoots were successful and he wondered whether the fire discipline that emanates from Lark Hill is more correct or the one from Bahawalpur.

Sargodha – 18 Miles Away

Captain Blaker was one day sent to photograph two bridges, one near Jhelum City and the other at Marala. After photographing the first one, he flew for the second but on a wrong heading. By the time he realized this error, it was rather late and in view of shortage of fuel, he forced landed at Bhagtanwala, a disused airfield. After landing he wanted to inform the concerned authorities. But the nearest place having a telephone was Sargodha about 18 miles away. There was no transport visible for quite sometime so he asked a cyclist to give him lift to Sargodha. This was accepted magnanimously but with a condition that Captain Blaker drives the two-wheeler. When asked later, Blaker replied, "Chum, it just happened but the long cycle ride has taught me an unforgettable lesson."



Capt Blaker

Tiger Moth

In 1953, Air OP got one Tiger Moth aircraft from the air force. It was a biplane having an open cockpit and a skid instead of the tail wheel. The instructor would operate from the back seat while the student



occupied the front one. It had no radio and intercommunication system. Pilots were issued with two rubber tubes to be connected to a pipe for intercommunication. It was more aerobatic than the Auster and proved useful for basic training. Major Saleemullah was given instructor rating on this aircraft and he trained few pilots. Later basic training was conducted on Auster V and Tiger Moth was returned to the RPAF. The normal establishment of flight was four Auster- V and two Auster -VI aircraft.



Prime Minister's First Air Ride In Auster

RPAF was looking after the air transportation aspect of the Prime Minister. In 1951, Prime Minister Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan was touring Punjab.He was at Gujrat and had to reach back to Rawalpindi for an immediate concern and RPAF aircraft deputed for Prime Minister was unable to land at Gujrat due to limited space. Lieutenant Colonel Habibullah (Lieutenant General retired) was Grade Staff Officer-1 (GSO-1) of 7 Division, in order to save time requested Air OP to fly the Prime Minister to Chaklala. Major Awan the flight commander had the honour of flying Head of State in an army aircraft for first time. Years later Army Aviation would have the honour of flying almost all the Heads of the States.

The Fatal Summer of 1953

On 2nd May 1953, **Captain Vajid Ali** was returning from Lahore and close to Chaklala he flew over his house at Connaught Road, his wife was standing on the rooftop and saw him do a slow roll. He was un-strapped and fell off his seat and crashed 4 miles from his home. Brigadier Karim remembers, "It was evening and I was in the RPAF Mess when someone told me of the crash, I reached the crash site on bicycle, by this time other officers including the station commander were already there. Captain Vajid was taken to the hospital where he died; he is buried at RPAF cemetery Chaklala". This was the first fatal crash which spread much gloom. It was followed by one more accident on 11 June 1953 in which **Captain A.M.S. Ahmed** lost his life while carrying out formation flying.He collided with Captain Mahmud's aircraft and crashed just about three miles east of Chaklala. Luckily Captain Mahmud landed safely.



The Commander-In-Chief General Ayub Flies In An Auster - 1954

In March "Exercise Vulcan" was conducted in Mianwali –Bhakkar area. The flight was operating from a strip near Bhakkar. Major Awan who was in Pakistan Military Academy as an instructor was attached with the flight for the duration of the exercise. On the afternoon of 15 March 1954, three aircraft took off from the ALG including Captain Nasir Ullah Babar, Captain Mahmud and Major Karim who was having Colonel Ashworth, the American Military Attaché with him on board. All three aircraft were caught in an unexpected dust storm. Captain Babar landed safely on a quickly chosen strip followed by Captain Mahmud who slightly damaged his aircraft in the process. Major Karim however landed at a curved road near Sarai Krishna. As he stepped out of the aircraft he was welcomed by all the senior officers including General Ayub who was standing there with the umpires of the exercise. On 16 March 1954 General Ayub, the C-in-C, flew in Auster- V(E623) with Major Karim from Bhakkar Strip to Dera Ismail Khan where he visited Military Police Centre. He again flew on 17 March for reconnaissance of exercise area and landed at Mianwali Base whereas the aircraft returned to Bhakkar. In the words of Major Karim, "It was important because by this General Ayub showed his confidence in Air OP Flight and praised the flight for good handling in bad weather".

In November 1954, flight participated in **"**Exercise November Handicap" which lasted till mid December in general area Jhelum, Kallar Kahar, Sohawa. It was a two sided exercise, the biggest of its nature in subcontinent till that time. Air OP Flight was split into two sections, Captain Zaffar and Captain Naseer Ullah Babar were attached with 7 Division, west of Murid Airfield and other section (Karim) was with 15 Division. During the exercise night flying was also conducted with improvised jeep lights along with artillery observation and aerial photography.

Flood Relief Employment - 1955

Monsoons brought floods in Punjab, worst affected areas were Sialkot-Narowal sector. Sections of Flight took part in flood relief operation. Aircraft after spotting the stranded people would pass the information for rescue.

The Fraternity Enlarges

1953 brought in two new faces amongst the fraternity. Captain Muhammad Zaffar Khan performed his solo on 4th August 1953. Captain Zaffar retired as a lieutenant colonel and is currently pursuing a successful business in London. Captain Naseer Ullah Khan Babar earned his first solo on 8th September 1953. Babar established himself as a daring pilot from the very start of his flying career - Brig. Mahmud remembers an interesting incident of those days; "Babar was sent one day to Sialkot to develop a strip, later when rest of the flight reached there they found the strip to be small. Any how after landing with great difficulty when asked about the length, he replied that the strip had another 200 yards of length available but it has a 90 degrees turn". Captain Babar left a deep mark of his boldness and courage wherever he went. He later commanded the first Rotary Wing Squadron (3 Squadron). He earned his first Sitara-i-Jur'at as an OH-13 pilot in Chhamb area during 1965 War when he rounded fifty five Indian soldiers as Prisoners Of War and making them march for miles. Incidentally during the entire episode Lieutenant Colonel Babar was not even carrying his personal weapon. **He is also remembered for his assertiveness and dedication with which he led the aviation contingent in East Pakistan during Cyclone Relief Operation of 1969-70.** He earned his second Sitara-i-Jur'at during 1971 War while leading the attack of 111 Infantry Brigade. He rose to the rank of Major General. He later entered politics and served as Governor of NWFP, he has also been a Federal Minister for Interior.

The year 1954 received two young subalterns from Artillery, Lieutenants Asad Ullah Khan and U.A. Isani, for flying training. Lieutenant Isani developed Asthma and was boarded out in 1955. Lieutenant Asad Ullah later joined Special Services Group, there are quite a few aviators who started flying after their stint in SSG, but Lieutenant Asad is the only aviator who left flying to don the commando jacket. He later went over to the civil services and retired as Commissioner Quetta.

The second batch of 1954 trainees included Captain Muhammad Khan (later retired as brigadier) and Lieutenants Faiz ud Din Brandon and Khawaja Shahbaz Ghalib (both retired as lieutenant colonels). These officers completed their course by 1955 and were cleared for flying solo by Squadron Leader C.R. Nawaz,

Chief Flying Instructor at the RPAF Flying Instructor School. Another batch of artillery officers comprising Lieutenants Mumtaz Baluch, Latif Awan and 2/ Lieutenants Qayyum, Nazar and Hameed Abbasy arrived for flying training in mid 1955. These officers were trained by University Air Squadron on Tiger Moth (DH-82) aircraft after which they shifted to No.1 Air OP Flight for advance training on Auster aircraft. Number of new faces like Captain Riaz, Hashmi, Mustanir Tirmizi, Saqlain, Rabbani, Nazir, Aslam Janjua, Raja Wali and Shafaat joined in after the aptitude test. This brought a sense of satisfaction to those who could see a positive growth in the flying community of the Army.



Standing Left-Right: Javed, Hashmi, Iqbal, Mirza and Riaz Ahmad
Sitting: Nazir Ahmad, Liaquat Bokhari and Siddiqui



In Between the Sorties



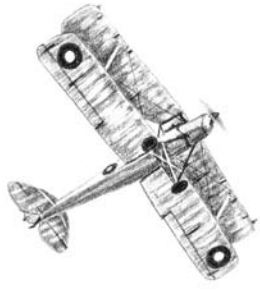
The Days Of Leather Jackets And Fur Lined Shoes

2nd Lieutenant Hameedul Haq Riazul Haq Abbasy (brigadier retired) was one of the last one to join Air OP Flight before it became a squadron. In 1956, he came for the aptitude test as a second lieutenant. His reminiscences encompass the view point of a junior officer. "In 1956 University Air Squadron was disbanded and Light Aircraft Training Flight was formed. It had DH-82 Tiger Moth as the primary trainer and we had to earn our solo on it before we could enter the fraternity of Air OP family. DH-82 did not have any self-starter neither it had any brakes. Moreover, it would land only on grassy strips. We the students had its photographs in our rooms and used to wonder how on this God's earth we are going to get solo. It was sheer dedication of my instructor Flight Lieutenant Nisar ul Haq that I was able to do my solo. Although I nearly finished his flying career in one landing.I came out scratchless from that crash whereas he had to remain hospitalised for weeks. In post solo stage we were introduced to aerobatics in which almost every student over-stressed the aircraft.



Left Brigadier Abbasy and on Right General Awan

We were issued with an Irwin Leather Jacket, fur lined shoes and cold weather trousers as part of flying kit for DH-82. In Auster we would fly in normal uniform and jacket. During our flying on Tiger Moth we would go to Rawal Nullah.It was a nullah then and carry out unauthorized beat ups. Auster Mark VI had a smooth engine but still we were scared of flying it mainly because of its trimmer's adjustment during landing. Aiglet as compared to any other aircraft was a Rolls Royce and only flight commander would fly it. **Once during artillery shoots at Nowshera Ranges, Lieutenant Nazar took off and swung the aircraft which hit the other two aircraft parked there, with this all aircraft of Air OP located there were out of action and we came to Rawalpindi by road in a truck.** Last two weeks of the course would be spent on Nowshehra Ranges. One interesting and useful exercise was message pick and drop. In this a rope of thirty feet would be dropped from the aircraft window and then we had to pick up the message bag and retrieve it to the cockpit. In the same time period the engines of Auster Mark-VI were modified at Drigh Road, Karachi. We would go by train and air test the aircraft there, before flying back. Our route would be Karachi-Nawabshah-Jacobabad-Kashmor-Khanpur-Multan-Sargodha and Chaklala.





Life of the Air OP Days

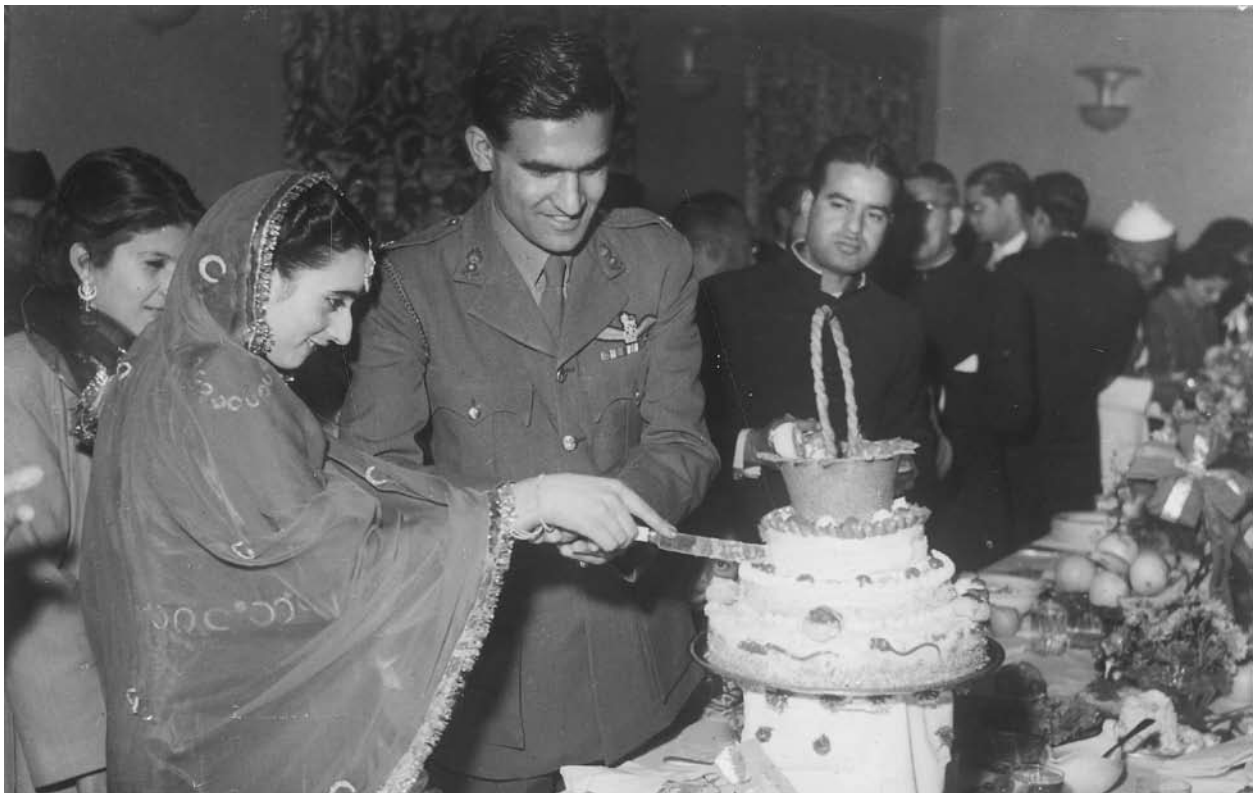
Officers were living in the RPAF Mess Chaklala, a hutted building in the domestic camp. Between 1947-57, Army pilots were dining in the RPAF Mess Chaklala. Major Awan got married in December 1950. Soon Awans were given a three room hutted accommodation on 14 Connaught Road. Captain Jabbar was also married and was given a two room hut. Captain Saleem although married since 1946 but he brought his

Sketch courtesy Gp Capt Hussaini (PAF Over the Years)

Glimpses of Air OP Days



Captain Karim - Major Awan and Station Commander Razmak- 1951 Captains Jabbar and Ahmed



30 December 1950, Major Awan's Marriage at Karachi

family a bit later. Out of the first three ladies only Mrs. Awan is alive. Captain Karim remained bachelor for a long time. Captain Blaker was a lively and jolly fellow especially on week end nights, He got married to his sweetheart Irene an Anglo Indian working as secretary in the Technical Branch of RPAF Base Chaklala. There were four dinner nights in a week and once a month there used to be a guest night in which married officers along with their lady wives were also invited. Customarily newly married officers along with their lady wives were dined in or dined out in the mess. The new mess building came up in 1955. Major Karim's wife who later designed the Army Aviation Brevet was chiefly responsible for the interior decoration of the mess

The First Squadron Is Born – 20th June 1956

Mid fifties saw major cooperation developing between Pakistan and USA. Defence was one of the main areas where both the countries were probing for collaboration. The initial package agreed by both the countries included a sizeable fleet of fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft. GHQ decided to upgrade and enlarge the Air OP setup. No. 1 Air Observation Post Flight was thus decided to be converted into a squadron. It was on 20th June 1956, that, No. 1 Air OP Squadron was raised with Major Mukhtar Karim as the Officiating Commanding Officer. Lieutenant Colonel Gholam Jabbar was posted as the first Commanding Officer and he took over in January 1957 on promotion.

Last Hurrah For The Auster

The First Squadron continued flying old machines till the arrival of new American equipment. In October 1956 a requirement came to ferry two Austers from Karachi to Chaklala, which proved the last "hurrah" for the old birds. Major N.U.K. Babar and Captain H.R.H. Abbasy were despatched for the purpose. They successfully accomplished the mission on 1st November 1956, which took a little over eleven hours of flying time.



Front Row Captain Jabbar, Major Awan, Flight Sergeant, Mrs Leworthy, Flight Sergeant, Major Leworthy, Captain Saleem Ullah and Captain Blaker at the Annual Flight Family Day 1951.

1958



Formation of L-19 "Bird Dog". Pakistan Army Aviation received over 62 Bird Dogs between 1958 - 1962. Bird Dog remained the backbone of Pakistan Army Aviation till phased out three decades later.



Bracing Up For The L-19s

It was in 1954 when USA offered L-19 fixed wing aircraft and OH-13S helicopters as part of foreign military assistance programme. Necessary preparations were undertaken to absorb this new equipment. General Headquarters planned to equip three full-fledged squadrons with expected sixtytwo L-19s and eighteen OH-13S helicopters. Raising of aviation maintenance battalion and other related services including Ordnance and Medical were also part of this mutual aid programme. Artillery Directorate GHQ, exercised complete operational control over the existing Air OP unit i.e. 1 Squadron. Appointment of General Staff Officer Grade 11 (GSO-II) Aviation was sanctioned in the Artillery Directorate and Major M M Karim was posted in this vacancy. This appointment was a great help in resolving the raising problems in 1959.



L-19 Formation of 31 Aircraft led by Lt, Col M M Karim on 23rd March Parade - 1964

Pioneers

In 1957 the first batch of pilots selected to undergo L-19 conversion left for USA. This batch had already flown solo on Auster with the 1 Air OP Squadron at Chaklala. Solo flying was the pre-requisite for training in USA. The pioneers who were trained in USA on L-19 included Captains Qayyum, Riaz, Hashmi, Gilani, Nazar, Nazir, Tirmizi, Saqlain, Rabbani, Shafaat, Aslam and Raja Wali. In 1958, more officers proceeded to USA – Captains Sultan, Fazal, Rafique (lovingly called "Rafique Bhai" for his all time brotherly behaviour). Latif, Madni, Subhan, Sarfraz, Shams, Naeem, Younis, Sultan Mahmood, Akram and Kallue. Two Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (EME) Captains - Maqbool and Majeed Ullah were also sent for maintenance training as well as pilot training. Unfortunately Captain Majeed Ullah did not qualify. Captain Maqbool thus became the first EME officer to put on the flying brevet. These two officers later underwent Maintenance Course together. The basic idea behind was to have an engineer who could understand the aircraft problem, rectify it and air test it.



From Left: Captains Hashmi, Qayyum, Commandant, Major Hussain, Major Nazir, and Captain Riaz

L-19 Training in USA

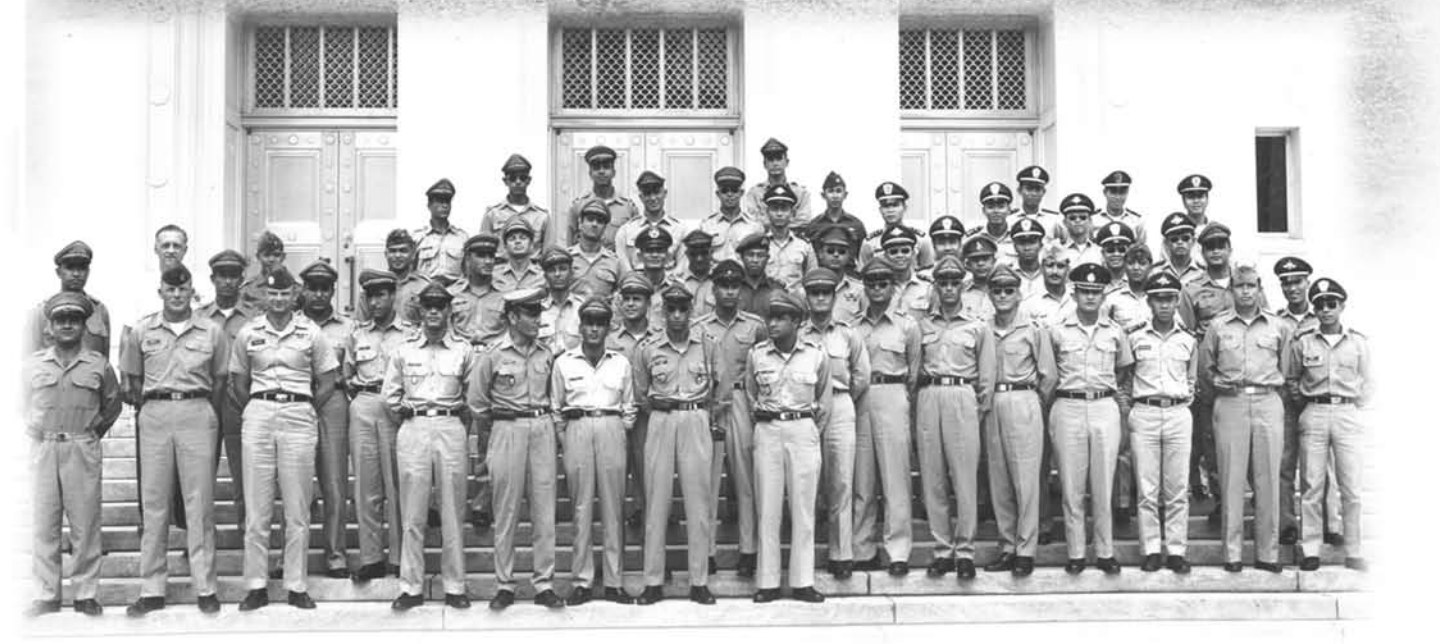
Initial phase of four months was conducted at Camp Gary Texas, under US Army training detachment. Instructors were civilians including Mr Avill, Mr King, Mr Cuthhart, and Mr Green, supervised by an army team including Captain Rudder, Lieutenant Passano and Captain Feurest. Under-training pilots got solo after 4-5 hours of flying. These pilots flew navigation missions between Camp Gary and Clear Springs. 25 hours check was given by Captain Rudder which included stall. Later 50 hours check was given by Mr Coleman. Flight Commander at Camp Gary was Edward King. Night flying, instrument flying, powered approaches, advance stalls, steep turns, night navigation were all carried out before 90 hours check. Students flew 90 hours on L-19 and 32 hours of instrument flying on TL-19. Pakistani Aviators holding instructor rating on Auster were also trained here on similar pattern. There were approximately fifty students including Americans. Pakistani students were being inducted at the rate of one new batch every four weeks, thus at one time there were twenty pilots from Pakistan Army. Classes were divided into two shifts, morning and evening.

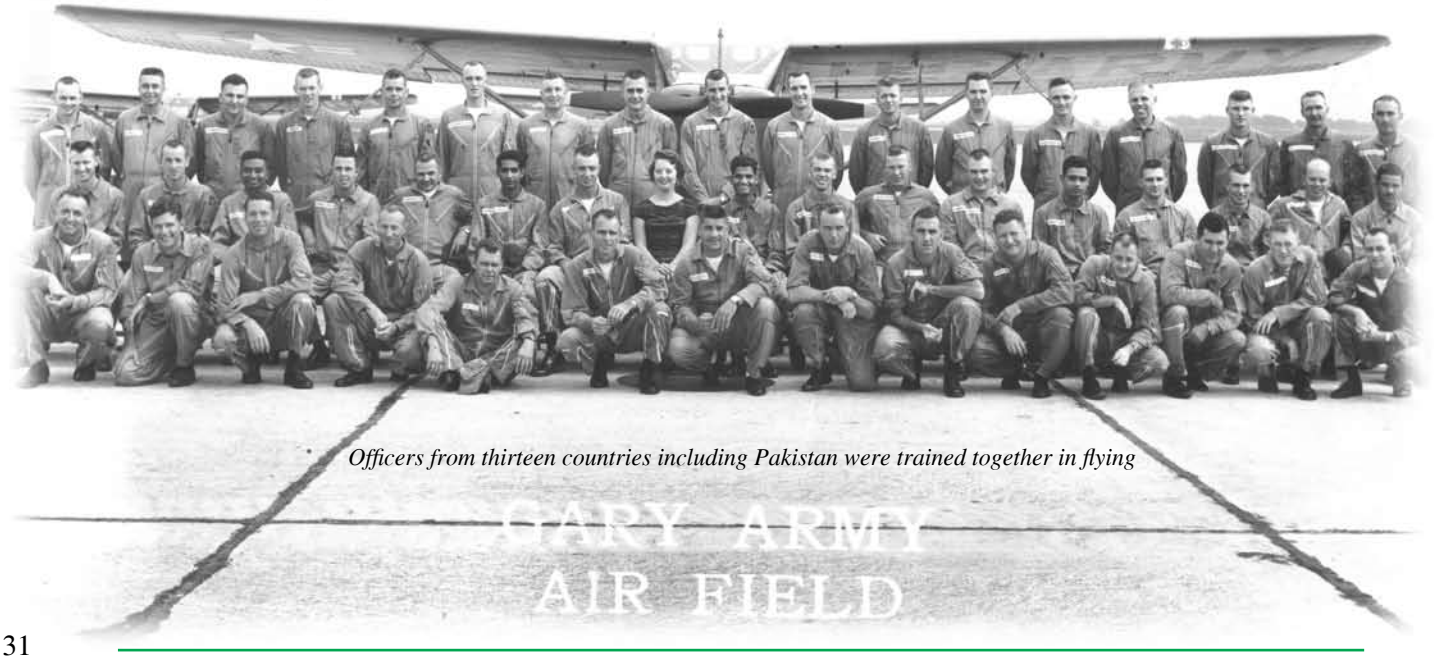
Advance Flying Training

It was conducted at Army Aviation Fixed Wing Department, Fort Rucker, Alabama. Instructors included Mr Lewis, Mr Rowlette, Lieutenant Hayes, Lieutenant Oneil, and Lieutenant Crusson. Tactical flying was conducted which included powered approaches to the panel, strip work, photo and surveillance missions, route reconnaissance, artillery shoots, message pick and drop. Night navigation to Mariana and back of two hours duration was an excellent experience. Students were also oriented with helicopter flying.

ALLIED OFFICERS GROUP PHOTOGRAPHS







Officers from thirteen countries including Pakistan were trained together in flying

L-19 TRAINING IN USA



School insignia



Captains Qayyum and Rabbani





Chevy was bought for $80, by Captain Riaz and Hashmi



Capt Aftab Iqbal is second from left and Capt Rabbani second from right



The Bird Dogs Arrive

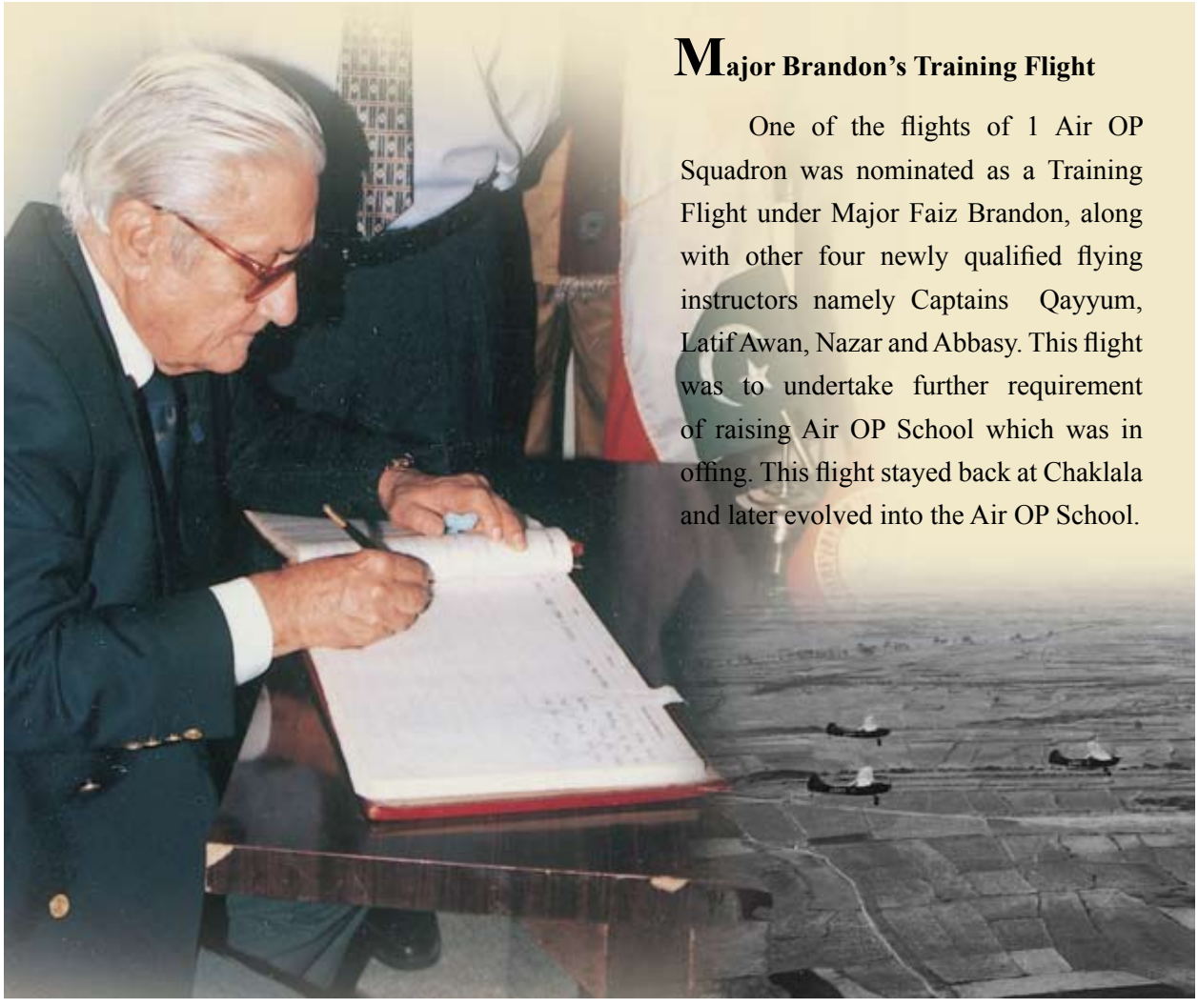


Right to Left: Staff Officer, Major General Yahya, Captains Brake, Thomas and Lieutenant Colonel Awan

L-19s arrived in April 1958 in crates and were assembled under the care of an American Mobile Assembly Team at Chaklala. The Army hangar was used to assemble these birds. PAF technicians were conditionally made available. GHQ at that point decided to train its own EME personnel to maintain this expanding fleet. Two American flying instructors, Captains Thomas and Brake started the instructor cadre for Pakistani pilots. This short course was termed as the "Pilot Conversion / Instructor Standardization Course". It was run in April-May 1958 with total flying of 60 hours.



General Ayub inspecting newly arrived L-19s on Dhamial Air Field



Major Brandon's Training Flight

One of the flights of 1 Air OP Squadron was nominated as a Training Flight under Major Faiz Brandon, along with other four newly qualified flying instructors namely Captains Qayyum, Latif Awan, Nazar and Abbasy. This flight was to undertake further requirement of raising Air OP School which was in offing. This flight stayed back at Chaklala and later evolved into the Air OP School.

The Maintenance Setup

Along with the raising of three aviation squadrons, a plan of action for maintenance of air machines was also conceived. To start with, integral light aid detachments (LAD) were raised with the squadrons. American experts advised, to have separate maintenance units and also to have engineers qualified as pilots. In 1958 along with the pilots a sizeable number of technicians were also sent to USA for maintenance training on L-19. Initially apart from LADs, 199 Aircraft Workshop Company was raised and on 31st December 1963 all these LADs and 199 Company were amalgamated to raise 199 Aviation Engineering Battalion. In the initial days PAF and PIA Workshop facilities located at Karachi were also utilized as Base Repair Workshops.

1 Squadron Moves To Dhamial-1959

Chaklala was now humming with all kinds of flying activities and became over crowded. The expansion of Air OP units now demanded a permanent home and Dhamial was the natural choice. Dhamial was earlier earmarked for housing the Air OP outfit and essential repair work was already in hand. In 1959, 1 Air OP Squadron moved from Chaklala to this deserted looking airfield with only sketchy facilities but soon it got shaped into a worthwhile flying base. The Army had to build three hangars to accommodate No 1 Air OP Squadron. The allied facilities like Air Traffic Control, Meteorology and Fire Fighting Section were provided by the PAF.

Dhamial In The Yester Years

Dhamial in 1959 was occupied by 11 Engineers Battalion which was tasked for construction of three hangars and some other buildings. The runway was damaged. The only structure which was intact, was the



ATC building. The commanding officer, second in command and adjutant offices were set up in the ground floor of this building. The area in front of ATC was grassy and was used for aircraft parking. In May 1959 the construction of glass structure on top of ATC building was undertaken and renovated by 11 Engineers Battalion. The domestic camp had a number of mud plastered bamboo huts. The quarter guard was located in front of the present day canteen. A mud track opposite the quarter guard was the main entry into the technical camp. The area around was occupied by the villages, who would cultivate their land next to the aircraft. A major graveyard was situated at the present day site of ordnance depot. Army Dog Breeding Centre was also located at Dhamial where the present day post office is housed.

First Operational Use of L-19

In 1959 Nawab of Kalat had almost revolted, therefore army decided to take action. In order to meet the immediate requirement of 52 Infantry Brigade ex 8 Infantry Division for this operation, a flight of two L-19 aircraft under Captain H.R Abbasy along with Captain Aslam Janjua was despatched to Quetta to support this operation. Later Captain Ghalib and Captain Akhtar relieved them and provided the aviation support to 8 Division from mid March to mid April 1959.



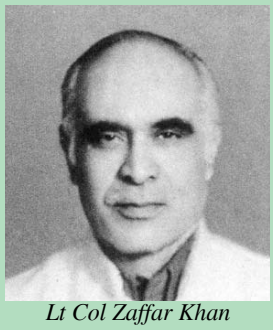
Capt Aslam Janjua



Capt HRH Abbasi

Raising Of The Second Air OP Squadron – 1959

On 20th June 1959, 2 Air OP Squadron was raised at Dhamial. The date coincided with the raising day of the first Air OP Squadron, which was exactly three year earlier. There was, however, a major difference, while the first squadron had five flights under its wings, the second squadron had only three to start with. Major M. Zaffar Khan became the Officiating Commanding Officer till replaced by Lieutenant Colonel P. J. Blaker on 6 August 1959.



Lt Col Zaffar Khan

Reconnaissance For The New Capital

President Ayub Khan decided to shift the capital of Pakistan from Karachi to the present location, soon after he took over the reigns of the country in 1958. For the purpose, a "Capital Commission" was formed. Pilots of 1 Air OP Squadron earned the historic opportunity of flying the members of this commission to have a bird's eye-view of the proposed area. On 7th October 1959, nine aircraft took this party for aerial reconnaissance of the area, which now forms Islamabad.

Dir – Bajour Operations

In early sixties, intelligence reports started trickling in regarding some anti state activities in the agency by Khan of Jandole, a prominent personality of the area, along with some other notables of Dir State. They were getting support from across the border to pursue a rebellious design. Since the reports from various agencies were not only sketchy but at times confusing as well, so the Special Service Group(SSG) was asked to send a team in disguise, to assess the real ground situation. For the purpose Captain Rauf (who later joined the civil service and became Home Secretary of Balochistan), along with a team of four to five SSG personnel was deputed to proceed to the region in the guise of local inhabitants and send their factual assessment for any future action. From Chakdara onward they were to cover the area on foot while carrying the required stores and communication equipment on donkeys to look like the ordinary folks of the area. However, after some time the communication was totally lost which created some panic in the concerned quarters. An urgent message was received from SSG to despatch two aircraft next morning to Peshawar for an important search mission. For the purpose Captain Mushtaq Madni and Captain A R Kallue (both retired as Lieutenant Colonels) were nominated. The mission revolved around an aerial search for the lost SSG detachment. Captain Kallue was selected for the mission as he was a good friend of Captain Rauf and could recognize him from some distance. Since the area was generally considered hostile so two promissory



notes, duly signed and sealed by the appropriate authority were also given to both the pilots. Each promising a cash reward of rupees one hundred thousand if the pilot was handed over to the political authorities in case of any mishap. From Peshawar, the pilots flew to Malakand and via Chakdara followed the only road leading to Khar area. Couple of miles short of Khar village, the group with two donkeys was spotted. Low passes were made and Captain Rauf was recognized by Captain Kallue without any doubt.

This was the beginning and soon after intense aerial reconnaissance of Dir-Bajaur area by 7 Infantry Division, based at Peshawer, Kohat and Bannu got underway. Initially aviation effort was provided from Dhamial on required basis. 2 Squadron provided the sorties between 11-14 August 1960 in general area Kabal-Buner-Kalam. On 19th September 1960, a flight of 1 Air OP Squadron under Major Nazar with Captains Riaz Malik, Shams Kureishy and Sultan Mahmood were placed at Peshawar to provide necessary support to 7 Division.

The First L-19 Fatal Crash

The operation in Dir-Bajaur also saw the first fatal crash of L-19 in Pakistan. It was preceded by a non fatal accident at a strip in the area. One aircraft piloted by Captain Masud ul Hassan (later retired as brigadier), carrying Inspector General of Frontier Corps, nosed over at Munda Qilla on landing. As the story goes, despite lying inverted the pilot showed immense courtesy to his red-ribboned passenger by opening the door with some difficulty and saying, "After you sir".



Capt Aziz Ul Hassan



Major Maqbul

To repair the aircraft on site or arrange its evacuation to the base, Captain Aziz-ul-Hassan was deputed to take Major Maqbul of EME to Munda Qilla to assess the damage and prepare a suitable course of action. However, on the way the aircraft crashed in Malakand Mountains near Dargai on 1 December 1960 and both occupants died due to burns.

L-19s Go to Gilgit

On 22nd August 1960, a formation of five L-19 aircraft ex 2 Squadron embarked on a historic flight towards Gilgit, led by Lieutenant Colonel Blaker, with Major Zaffar, Captains Younis, Ghalib, Mokeet and Lieutenant Nagy. Lieutenant Colonel Blaker had informed the Artillery Directorate of this venture and preliminary reconnaissance was carried out on 16th August when formation flew for an hour in the valley. Forced landing areas were discussed, Chilas was a natural choice and the strip there was cleared through personal liaison and before take off it was again confirmed through RR5 Radio Set. Meteorological brief was taken from Chaklala. Flying time was 02.30 hours. Flight during its stay in Gilgit ventured into Misgar, Passu, Shimshal Valleys and turned short of Khunjerab. Flight returned back to Chaklala on 23 August less Captain Mokeet and L-19 No 635, who had to carry out exercise with the Special Services Group(SSG). Captain Nishat (later lieutenant general), Captain Yaqoob and Captain Anwar Mustapha had brought their company of guerrillas for snow warfare; this was first such venture. Captain Mokeet along with Lieutenant Nagy flew a number of sorties in support of this SSG Company. At times rations were dropped from the pods of the aircraft, it was for the very first time that Army Aviation aircraft flew over glaciers. On 24 August they flew to Skardu and next day operated in Hunza Valley.



Captain Mokeet



President Lands at Dhamial

11th January 1961 brought an unusual surprise for all those present at Dhamial. On that day President Ayub Khan made an unscheduled landing on way from Fort Sandeman (now Zhob) to Chaklala. The aircraft could not land at Chaklala due to bad weather and touched down at Dhamial. All reception and security arrangements had been made at Chaklala, however, one of the presidential cars turned up at the base but without pilot jeep. The situation was quickly assessed and necessary arrangements were made. Major Nazar was detailed to lead the president's car in an open jeep and act as a pilot. One worth while effect was the rapid construction of present day bridge over the nullah, prior to this episode was a rickety affair.



Marriage – Aviation Style



Major Qayyum later rose to the rank of Brigadier and retired as Director Aviation

On a blessed day of October 1960, Major Qayyum, one of the flight commanders of the squadron, entered the office of the commanding officer with an invitation card for his marriage, "How many other squadron officers want to attend your marriage?". Colonel Blaker asked, "Almost everyone sir", was the reply. After a pause the colonel said, "OK Chum, let us establish an Advance Landing Ground close to your village and we would go flying." Villagers, however, were duly amused by the go-arounds of Captain Shafaat when the aircraft finally arrived on the wedding day.

Anti Locust Operation

On 22nd November 1961, four aircraft were detailed with Major Qayyum as the leader for the operation. The aircraft initially moved to Karachi from where two moved to Sukkur and two to Chhor and Mirpur Khas. Pilots' job was to fly and locate the swarms of locust. 2 Squadron was awarded the Commander in Chief's Commendation card by General Muhammad Musa for successful accomplishment of this feat.

One Wheeler – Awan/Masud Style

On 7th December 1961, Major Abdul Latif Awan, an instructor at the Aviation School, took Captain Masud-ul-Hassan of 1 Squadron for a night flying check- out at a strip near Sheikhupura where contingent of fliers had assembled to support exercise "Milestone". During approach Captain Masud undershot and some protruding object hit his left landing gear and broke it completely. Major Awan immediately took over the controls and declared the emergency. The aircraft was diverted to Lahore Airport where preparations were made to receive it. Pilots consumed major portion of the fuel and then made a perfect one wheel landing. No further damage was done to the aircraft and both the pilots walked away uninjured. For this cool handling Major Awan was awarded "Tamgha-e-Basalat". He was the first one to get an award amongst





Major Abdul Latif Awan and Captain Masud's one wheeler at night at Lahore

the army fliers. Also from then on, one wheel landing, became an essential and thrilling part of every air demonstration. Maj Minhaj thrilled many with his superb L-19 handling during flying demonstrations in 70's. **(His one wheeler and dead stick/prop stop landings are still talked about). Maj Minhaj is shown on the right proudly standing along-side his favourite Bird Dog/L-19 number 100 (this particular aircraft crashed a few days later).** Maj Minhaj retired as Lt Colonel after having been the VIP Flight Commander. Living a retired life in Rawalpindi.



The Second L-19 Fatality

At the fag-end of 1961, 10 Division conducted a training exercise "Milestone" in general area Sheikhupura. Flight of 1 Squadron was moved in support of it. Later one flight from 2 Squadron also joined up to get the much needed field experience. On 10th December 1961, Captain Ikram of 2 Squadron, while on a mission in Pindi Bhattian area crashed and was killed. This was the first fatal accident of 2 Squadron. Ironically the elder brother of Captain Ikram had also met the same sad end, some years back, while flying in the PAF.

Dhamial is for Army

In 1962, there was a high-powered meeting in the Ministry of Defence on the allocation of the airfields to various users. The Chief of General Staff detailed Major Saleem Ullah GSO-2 Aviation to attend this meeting. Since Pakistan International Airlines was shifting its operations to Islamabad from Karachi, it needed space. The proposal under consideration was that PAF should continue using Chaklala,. Dhamial should be given to Pakistan International Air Lines and the army should shift to Fateh Jang. It was very disturbing news since the army had done a heavy investment in developing facilities at Dhamial. In the meeting, no one paid any attention to the army point of view.

It was decided to meet again to resolve the issue. Major Saleem briefed the Chief of General Staff(CGS) and requested him for the intervention of Commander in Chief in this matter. CGS took him along to General Musa,who after listening rang up Secretary Defence and told him that army will not vacate Dhamial, both PAF and PIA should share the facilities at Chaklala as in vogue in many countries.



The First Army Aviation Base

By the beginning of 1962, Dhamial was buzzing with all sorts of flying and maintenance activities. Two Air OP Squadrons and the Air OP School made sleepy Dhamial, look like a beehive with busy bees all over. To establish a proper command structure for coordination of all flying and logistic requirements, the idea of raising a base at Dhamial was envisaged. This became a reality in October 1962 when Dhamial was initially raised as the Army Air Base with Lieutenant Colonel G. Jabbar as the first base commander. In February 1964 the designation was changed to Army Aviation Base. The post was upgraded to the rank of brigadier in July 1969.

Meteorology. The base also created a skeleton meteorological facility to keep in touch with other agencies and brief the pilots about the daily vagaries of weather. For the job came Flying Officer Majeed from the Air Force. In October 1963 added meteorological facilities at base were installed thus enabling it to provide local forecast on its own to the pilots. Similarly two teleprinter sets were also added in the same year.



Captain Dr. Tufail Qureshi, Major Masoom,W/C MM Ch & Captain Kureishy

Medical Setup. Initially a medical officer, Captain Khattak, nominated from the medical establishments of Rawalpindi Garrison, used to visit Dhamial for few hours on every working day to take care of the sick.. Then came Captain Tufail Qureshi in May 1964 as an assistant medical officer while senior medical officer was Major A. Q. Nazar (later lieutenant colonel) who with his disciplinarian approach organized the whole affair on strict lines. He was the first qualified Flight Surgeon to look after the peculiar problems of air jockeys. When Major Nazar was posted out in June 1966 and Major Tufail Qureshi again came back, with him around, the tea bar became a seat of learning for the most profound remedies of all sorts of ailments, both actual and imaginary.

Ordnance Support. An ordnance support section (Air) called the OSS (Air) was initially raised with CMTSD, Chaklala (CMTSD later shifted to Golra) with Capt. Asghar as the first OC (Capt. Asghar, a 10th PMA Engineers officer who later shifted to Ordnance. He retired as a Major and lives in Chaklala Scheme II). This section moved with I Air OP Squadron and in 1959 Lt. Iftikhar Hussain Shah took over as the 2nd OC. *Lt. Iftikhar later rose to the rank of Colonel and lives a retired life in Nazir Apartments in Rawalpindi.* In 1961 he brought this section to Dhamial and started construction of first three sheds. Capt. Aman Ullah was the next OC followed by Capt. Latif Ch, Capt. M L Niazi and Maj. Yousaf. During the early sixties another Ordnance Section was raised with COD Karachi to handle arriving US Aid and repair of assemblies with PIA workshop. One of the OCs, Maj. Yousaf-A World War II Veteran is still remembered for his interesting war stories which he so fondly narrated in his peculiar style in the Dhamial Tea Bar.



Capt. Asghar

The "SATCO" Of Dhamial. Late Flight Lieutenant Farooq was the first qualified Senior Air Traffic Control Officer (SATCO) at Dhamial. He was a fighter pilot grounded for the sin of beating up over his native town and pushed into this oblivion. His friendliness and charm made him a popular member of the flying family in no time. His initial contribution laid the foundation of ATC at Dhamial on firm footing. Captain Irshad Gull was the first Army Pilot who underwent Air Traffic Course at Karachi and performed the duties of SATCO.



FIRST TWIN ENGINE AIRCRAFT, L-23 F."SEMINOLE"U-8F

Pakistan Army Aviation's first twin engine aircraft was inducted in May 1963. Major Zaffar Khan was the first twin engine pilot of the Army followed by Major Mohammad Khan (brigadier retired) and Captain Shams Ul Haq Kureishy(lieutenant colonel retired). Both went to America in February 1961. Pilots flew thirty hours on U8-D, (The training version) and later flew another thirty hours on L-23F.Training was conducted in United States Army Aviation Centre, Fort Rucker, Alabama.

L-23F is the military version of Queen Air 65.It is also known as U8-F and Seminole. This aircraft was shipped to Karachi. From Karachi, the American crew flew it to Dhamial. Initially it was in grey colour and later it was painted green by the Pakistan International Airline. In the initial days there was no formal set up and the aircraft was operated by these two pioneer pilots. Later Major Mushtaq Madni underwent conversion along with Major Amanullah of EME in USA. Crew was designated as Commander-in-Chief's Pilots. This arrangement continued till 1965 War. VVIP Flight was formally raised in 1966 under Lieutenant Colonel Zaffar. L-23F remained in use of subsequent Commander in Chiefs namely General Musa,General Yahya and General Tikka,before it forced landed on 4th February 1983 near Okara with Major Ayaz and Major Javeed on controls (This aircraft met with a very unfortunate ending-though having survived the forced landing it was written off during sling lifting from the site by a helicopter having gone into oscillation).

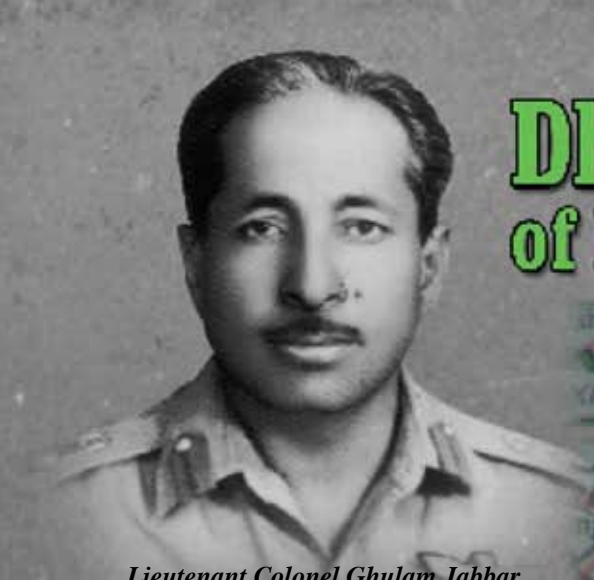


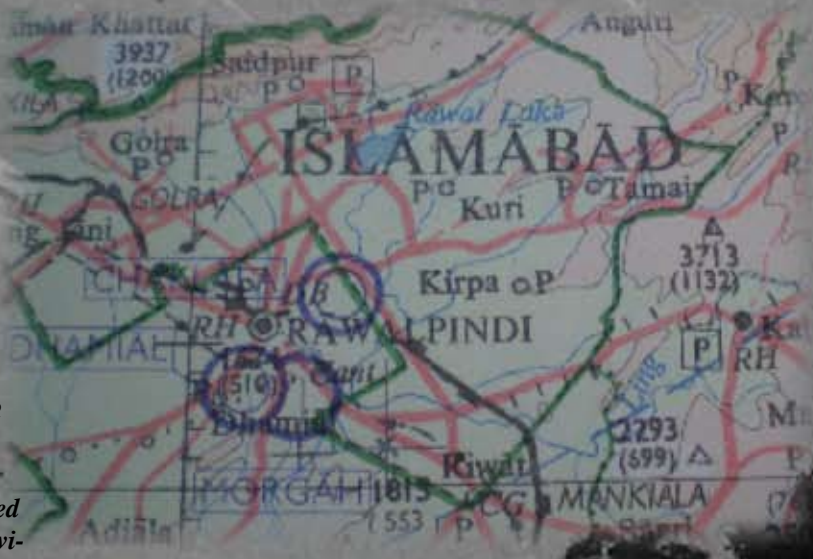
Major Mohammad Khan *Captain Shams Ul Haq Kureishy*



General Musa with American Training Team for U-8 F

Dhamial, the First Air Base of Pakistan Army





Lieutenant Colonel Ghulam Jabbar was the First Base Commander from 15 October 1962 - 29 July 1963 and again commanded the Base from 16 September 1965 - 2 September 1972 Brigadier Ghulam Jabbar later became the first Director Aviation and retired in 1973. One senior Aviator beautifully summed up Brig Jabbar's role/contributions to Army Aviation - "Brig Jabbar has been to Pakistan Army Aviation what Nile has been to Egypt".





Colonel Awan the second Base Commander along with Maj. Aftab Haider, Maj. Nazir and Maj. Khalid Kamal visiting 1 Squadron

Raising Day 15 October 1962 as Dhamial Army Air Base. On 3rd October 1964, it was redesignated as Army Aviation Air Base and renamed as Qasim Army Aviation Base on 12 December 1972.



Dhamial ATC

1964 - OH-13S

The First Helicopter of Pakistan Army





Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar the Pioneer Commanding Officer of First Rotary Squadron of Pakistan Army. He was decorated with Sitara-i-Jur'at in 1965 War and again in 1971 War. He rose to the rank of Major General and later became Governor of NWFP. In 1990 he was also decorated with Sitara-i-Shujaat



THE START OF HELICOPTER FLYING

Post World War II period saw the vertical lift machines making serious debut in the world conflicts. The British used helicopters in the jungle warfare raging in Malaya and the French used these in their counter insurgency operations in Algeria. Americans fielded the Bird Dog and along with the newly developed Bell OH-13S (Sioux) popularly called "The Bubble" in the Korean conflict. The Bubble proved so useful in various combat roles, especially the casualty evacuation that it was aptly called "The Flying Angel".

Planning For The Helicopters

When sizeable L-19 fleet was operational and the army pilots had attained reasonable experience, it was considered prudent by GHQ to usher into yet another dimension of aerial support - the helicopter. Americans responded positively to the idea and promptly offered training assistance

Three batches of eight pilots each were sent to USA for helicopter training during the year 1962-63. The eighty hours course was conducted at Fort Wolters, Mineral Wells, Texas, USA. Initial seventy hours training was conducted on OH-23(D) Hiller helicopter at Camp Wolters Texas under "Southern Airways School" a civilian contractor, who was training the Army Pilots. Followed by ten hours of conversion and advance training at Fort Rucker Alabama on OH-13. Out of the twenty four pilots sent for helicopter conversion, only one pilot i.e. Captain Anwar Hussain was unlucky not to qualify and was dropped. Remaining twenty three completed their conversion successfully and returned to Pakistan as trained helicopter pilots.

Training At Fort Wolters, Mineral Wells, Texas

The class comprised of eighty five students of various nationalities, with 50% Americans. The entire Pakistani contingent passed well above the class average. The average flying experience of Pakistani pilots was about 300 hours on L-19. Nevertheless, Captains Sajjad and Bajwa scored second position in the class, while the American who topped with a margin of only 1% overall marks, was a master aviator with 3500 hours and had gone through a helicopter pre-course training in Vietnam. Most of the Pakistanis had not even seen a helicopter from close quarters.



Allied Rotary Pilots including Pakistani Pilots (last five on the right standing)



The Maintenance Crew

During the second half of 1963, the maintenance crew was also being trained. Batch of technicians including Fazal Karim, Bakhtiar, Malang Shah were sent to USA from 20th July to September 1963. Original duration of this qualification course was six months but due to Vietnam involvement, the US Army was running short courses of three months duration. There were a total of twenty four students in each class.Fazal Karim and Bakhtiar both retired as honorary captains, while Malang Shah retired as a major.



Malang Shah Bukhari

Formative Years of Aviation Concept

This is the time when Aviators were making an hectic effort to introduce the operational role/potential of flying machines. Awan, Jabbar, Karim and Saleem Ullah were in the vanguard of this drive. Karim's efforts deserve special mention in this regard. He was constantly writing articles in Army Journals for recognition of this Concept.



M M Karim

3 Squadron is Raised.

3 Squadron was raised on 1 January 1964 at Dhamial and OH-13s were inducted under the command of Lieutenant Colonel N.U.K. Babar with Major Faizuddin Brandon as second in command. The induction of helicopters was expected to enhance the operational capabilities of the Army Aviation in peace and war.

OH-13 Helicopters Arrive In Pakistan

The crated helicopters arrived in Dhamial on 27 June 1964 and were assembled by an American team during September 1964. American test pilot carried out the air test and also gave currency checkouts to the already trained pilots. The flying started on 24 September 1964 and the CGS was present to witness its inaugural flight. The addition of eighteen noisy choppers at Dhamial Base created a lot of commotion in the air on radio transmission and on ground as well. Few realized at that time that this would be the beginning of a long and meaningful relationship between the helicopters and Pakistan Army.

The Pioneer Days Of Helicopter Flying (Babar Trains the Force)

The initial days of helicopter operations were very challenging and adventurous. **Pakistan Army had made an excellent choice of appointing Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar as the first commanding officer of 3 Squadron which was to train and operate the newly arrived helicopters.** One most memorable long training navigation was flown from Dhamial to Quetta from 5 – 13 March 1965. Eight choppers took over six hours to reach Quetta with refuelling stops at Daud Khel, Manzai, Fort Sandeman (now Zhob) and Hindu Bagh(now Muslim Bagh). From Quetta these eight Choppers flew short navigations to Ziarat, Chaman and some other locations.

Immediately on return from Quetta, 3 Squadron got on with the task of preparing for the 23 March formation flying. On the final day Lieutenant Colonel Babar achieved, what he was trying for weeks, to put up in air the entire fleet of eighteen OH-13 helicopters.





Lieutenant Colonel Babar along with Major Tirmizi on first cross country heli navigation

1965



Colonel Azmat Baksh Awan

Lieutenant Colonel
Naseer Ullah Babar

Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Khan



Lieutenant Colonel MM Karim

Lieutenant Colonel
Saeed Qadir

Lieutenant Colonel Mian Mahmud

Colonel Ghulam Jabbar



THE 1965 WAR

1965 was a watershed year in the history of Pakistan and its armed forces. The newly born state was able to challenge the bigger rival India for the hegemony of the subcontinent through a fine blend of diplomacy, strategic planning, deception and above all determination of entire nation. Her soldiers, airmen and sailors fought bravely against a bigger adversary.

Pakistan Army despite sharing same lineage as of Indian Army had one remarkable tactical advantage over the foe, by virtue of its Aviation Wing comprising sixty odd Bird Dogs (L-19) eighteen Bubble (OH-13) helicopters in addition to one twin engine Beech Craft. They were all unarmed but their value was in collection of intelligence regarding enemy's next move, detection of forces, timely dissemination of data to subordinate formations, raising of morale by virtue of casualty evacuation even in the midst of fire, allowing commanders to visit the front line and watch the battle from the third dimension.

Indians on the other hand were still following World War era doctrine of having all that could fly in the air under their air force. As we follow the epic year this advantage becomes more pronounced, in certain cases even becoming battle winning.

RANN OF KUTCH

Rann was the first armed conflict between Pakistan and India after the Kashmir campaigns of 1948.

Topography

Roughly north of parallel 24 degrees east of Karachi, a desolate area of mud, swamp and salt stretches eastward for almost 200 miles into India. For much of the year the great Rann of Kutch (Rann means battlefield in Sanskrit) remains submerged in sea water. In summer it becomes one of the hottest places on earth, it is not a desert but then neither it is a plain or sea. Bhits are few feet of raised grounds and population is scarce, only around brackish water holes. Their only living is making salt from sea water.



The Rann

Chronology

The international boundary between India and Pakistan was never really demarcated in this area. Even during the reign of Raj the boundary between Sindh and princely state of Bhuj was undetermined mainly due to its vastness and absolute dearth of life. The weather phenomenon receded the sea to an extent that 3500 square kilometers area became disputed. In 1951, Sindh Police and Rangers established a few posts along southern edge of Pakistan side of Rann. In 1953, these posts were abandoned due to cyclone, which were later claimed by the Indians. In 1958, Prime Minister Noon and Nehru discussed these posts and matter was put into cold till 1965.

The Story of Dwarka Reconnaissance - 1964

A year before the conflict, two L-19s carried out first ever cross border aerial reconnaissance. Captain Mir Saadat Ullah of 1 Army Aviation Squadron joins the Rann of Kutch conflict on 18th April 1964 when he took off from Dhamial Base in L-19 No.984 with him in another L-19 was the formation leader Captain Subhan Baig. Both pilots reached Hyderabad after flying eight hours and fifteen minutes having

refuelled at Multan and Jacobabad en-route. Captain Saadat Ullah narrates. “In February 1962 a flight of 2 Squadron had co-operated with 19 Baloch Regiment in Hyderabad area in which Captains Nazir, Younas, Subhan Baig and Sarfraz took part. Back in 1961 Captain Rafiq and Captain Siraj had also flown to Karachi for co-operation with 19 Baloch Regiment. The background of these missions was to facilitate the 19 Baloch Regiment in preparing contingency plans involving commando raids on Indian naval installations. 19 Baloch Regiment later evolved into present day Special Services Group, at that time was also responsible for training of naval commandos. I had three hundred hours of flying experience. We both were briefed by our Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Zafar regarding the secrecy and sensitivity of the mission. Our aircraft were fitted with Air Control Traffic sets for communication with PAF fighters and ground communication. The mission was to support the Special Services Group in carrying out the reconnaissance of Rann of Kutch. At Hyderabad we landed at Combined Military Hospital Strip(no more existing) and were received by Captain Vardag and Captain Sadiq of Special Services Group(SSG). Captain Vardag of Pakistan Army was commanding PNS Himalaya for over four years and was the brain behind these plans. He had been trained in America for underwater commando operations. He had convinced the higher authorities on the feasibility of destroying certain Indian naval installations by using his elite naval commando force. He had also been practicing jumps from the amphibious aircraft of PAF, Albatross SA-16. This company of SSG was stationed at Bholari Airfield for secrecy. Captain Vardag informed us of carrying out aerial photography of the Dwarka radar station located at the edge of Rann of Kutch. Subsequently Captain Subhan Baig planned the mission for the next morning and co-ordinated with Mauripur and Drigh Road Airbases apart from Badin radar station. We were given the ACT frequencies and were instructed to keep listening watch and in case of emergency to give them a SOS call.

Preliminary Reconnaissance. On 19th April 1964 we took off from Hyderabad with Captain Vardag and Captain Sadiq on board for preliminary reconnaissance of the target area. We flew to within one mile of the target area maintaining 15 feet of height. We could have flown even more low as Rann is as flat as a billiard table with scanty bushes here and there. After two hours and fifteen minutes of flying we returned to Hyderabad. We found the general target area clear, without any movement. Both guerrilla captains left for Bholari to brief their company. SSG at that time was tasked to prepare contingency plans for all disputed territories. With the help of Army Aviators these two commando officers wanted to have a close look at the radar and carry out photography. Pilots and commandos discussed all eventualities including reaction of Indian Air Force and ground based weapons, thus an outline plan was conceived for the reconnaissance. The general outline of the plan revolved around SSG infiltrating on the same night (19 April 1964) and placing themselves close to the target. They were to provide physical cover to pilots in case of any emergency. These SSG troops also had the ACT sets”.



Lieutenant Colonel (R) Mir Saadat

Overhead Dwarka

Lieutenant Colonel retired Saadat Ullah further narrates “ On 21st April 1964, Captain Baig with Captain Vardag and myself with Captain Sadiq got airborne from Hyderabad Strip at 0600 hours. We were in communication with SSG troops who had infiltrated close to the target area apart from Badin and Karachi Air Bases. At 0730 hours we reached Dwarka area maintaining tree top level, we were 500 yards away from the radar station. Close to the radar Captain Baig pulled up to 300 feet above ground level and I followed him. Simultaneously both SSG officers started taking photographs. We made West to East runs and later North to South runs. The enemy on ground did not react although army vehicles were visible. Probably Indians were too surprised to react. After three minutes of photography we rushed back. Flying at ten feet, we first hit Rahim Ki Bazar and later reached Hyderabad. Squadron Leader Butt



officer incharge at Badin Radar rang us and informed, as soon as we left the target area two Indian jets were spotted on the radar screen for over fifteen minutes.

Mission Not Yet Over. Same day, we flew to Drigh Road where films were developed and at night Captain Vardag and Captain Sadiq gave the bad news that western side of the target area has not been photographed and it is vital for any successful raid on the target. Captain Baig without any hesitation agreed to undertake the mission again on 22nd April. Captain Baig sensing that enemy is alerted wisely changed the take off time to 0430 hours, he also altered flying routes. Now instead of coming to Hyderabad we would be landing at Mauripur Air Base. Flying over sea for over forty minutes for a non swimmer like me was horrible thought, SSG officers assured me, come what may they will swim me to the shore.

Final Run. On 22 April 1964, we took off from Hyderabad in dark at 0430 hours and planned to reach target area by 0600 hours. Everything went as planned and we hit the south-eastern side of the radar station keeping a distance of 800 yards from it. SSG officers took the requisite photographs. On the third run we were fired upon by the ground troops, meanwhile Badin Radar also came on the air and advised us to exit the target area as two Indian jets were approaching from a distance of 200 miles. We immediately went down to the sea level and headed for Karachi, Captain Baig was maintaining 10 feet and I was slightly higher than him. The total flying time from Dwarka to Somiani was about 35 minutes and after 15 minutes of flying Mauripur Base came on air to tell us that two Sabres of PAF were airborne to provide us the cover. We landed safely at Mauripur. On 25th April, we both proceeded to Jacobabad and on 26th April we reached back Dhamial."

Events of 1965

In January 1965, Indians started probing forward. They reached our posts at Mara, Rahim ki Bazaar, Ding, Kanjarkot and Surai. Indians also reinforced the area with 2 battalions of Border Security Force. On 19th February, Indian aircraft violated our airspace. On 6th March, General Headquarters ordered Major General Tikka Khan to allow no further violation of own territory. General Tikka had following troops under his command:

6 Brigade	Brigadier Iftikhar Janjua (6 Punjab, 15 Punjab, 2 Frontier Force).
51 Brigade	Brigadier KM Azhar (18 Punjab, 6 Baluch, 8 Frontier Force).
52 Brigade	Brigadier Sardar Ismail (7 Punjab, 17 Baluch).

3 Engineers Battalion, 14 Signal Battalion, 24 Cavalry (joined later from Lahore) and 12 Cavalry (one squadron). Divisional Artillery was commanded by Brigadier Aslam, 14 Field, 25 Field, 38 Field, 12 Medium, 83 Mortar Battery and 88 Mortar Battery.

Indian Troops

31 Brigade	Area Sardar Post - Ggid Kot - Karim Shah.
50 Para Brigade	Area Dharm Sala - Biar Bhit.
AMX Tank Regiment	Karma- Biar Bhit - Dharm Sala.
Artillery	11 & 167 Field Regiments and 71 Medium Battery.

Army Aviation Build Up

To support the forthcoming operations in the area, General Headquarters decided to inject and aviation effort in the area. Two sections of L-19 piloted by Captain Zafar and Captain Mir Saadat were rushed in on 8th April. They reached in the nick of time to support the operations of 51 Brigade.

10th April, onwards General Headquarters supplemented the aviation effort with additional L-19s. Major Fazal subsequently built up a full fledged fixed wing flight with Captain Hesam (who earned the distinction of being the first non-gunner flight commander in Army Aviation, commanded an infantry battalion in 1971 War against India and was wounded as well, before his repatriation to Bangladesh). Others were Captains Khalid Saeed, Farooq, H.U.K. Niazi and Jaffar. Maintenance support was provided by 199 EME Battalion.

51 Brigade

51 Brigade launched attack at 0200 hours on 9th April, with an objective to capture following:-



Phase I – Capture of Sardar Post (18 Punjab & 8 FF). At 0330 hours, 8 FF was halted 500 yards short of post and by 0530 hours assaulting companies were pulled back from the objective.

Phase II – Capture of Jungle Post (6 Baluch). At 0445 hours, battalion had captured an out post and at 1130 hours, they were 2000 yards short of the enemy post, having difficulty in getting fire support from 14 Field Regiment.

At 1400 hours, Brigadier Azhar was informed by the Air Observation Post (OP) regarding Indian reinforcement of 70-80 vehicles on their way to Sardar Post. Therefore at 1530 hours, attack was called off.

First Operational Use of Helicopters

On 18th April GHQ ordered the move of two helicopters to Badin for Rann of Kutch Operations. This was the first operational use of the choppers by Pakistan Army. Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar, the Squadron Commander and Captain Manzoor Kamal Bajwa scrambled to support the operation with two OH-13(S) helicopters, No. 143 and 144. It was a long hop; they took off from Dhamial Base at 1330 hours on 18th April and reached Badin at 1740 hours on 19th April 1965 with refuelling at Sargodha, Multan, Khanpur, Sukkur and Nawabshah. Major Bajwa recalls that, "It was Sunday and I was the duty officer at Dhamial when at 1100 hours, I got a call from GHQ that two helicopters are on 6 hours notice. After some time I got the call to take off in 30 minutes. Weather was inclement, Lieutenant Colonel Babar who was living in Lalazar Estate, decided to come along as most of other pilots were busy in promotion examination. Helicopters zigzagged through thunderstorm and rain. At Sargodha we were briefed by the met officer. We eventually had to pass through two fronts before we reached Badin. At one point we decided to force land but there was no dry place visible and entire landscape was submerged in 2 feet water. We flew at tree top level, luckily avoiding poles and high tension wires." Maintenance crew included Havildar (Major retired) Malang Ali Shah and other technicians reached Badin by train next day.

Field Conditions at Rann

During April it was rather hot and humid and the salt laden sand in windy conditions was a challenge for the machines not equipped for prolonged operations in the desert. One OH-13(S) No.143 was fitted with two litter pods for casualty evacuation. The choppers and L-19s were kept busy and proved very useful since there were no roads. The sandy tracks were boggy, warranting slow movements over land. The choppers were mostly used for field reconnaissance and critical casualty evacuation. Senior commanders and staff officers were extensively flown for visits, liaison and reconnaissance missions.



OH-13S at Rann

Conditions in the field were rather tough with no shade and abundance of snakes in the sand dunes. The heat, humidity and dust created difficult environment for the doctors, at the field hospital located at Diplo. The critically wounded patients lay in the sweltering heat. The heat stroke centre had no ice. Being along the usual route to the front line, every morning, pilots would voluntarily pick up one full size ice block in the small bubble canopy of OH-13(S) and deliver it to the hospital at Diplo. It provided great relief to the patients and the doctors.



An Aviator's Commitment and Spirit of Sacrifice

During the deployment, one of the pilots, Captain Farooq fell sick with serious kidney ailment but refused to leave the operational area. The flying posture further aggravated his condition but he continued flying with the help of pain killers till the very end of the operation. By the time the operation finished and he reported for medical help the very next day, the damage was already done and this dedicated and spirited aviator could not recover from serious renal complications. Such is the blazing trail of sacrifice and professional commitment which was left as the proud legacy, to be followed by coming generations wherever and whenever Army Aviation is called upon to serve the mother land in peace and war.

First Trans - Frontier Rotary Reconnaissance

6 Brigade had information of major Indian build up across the enemy side of the Rann of Kutch. The brigade commander desired to ascertain correct enemy strength before launching the offensive at Biar Bhit. Being a hazardous mission it was not meant for an unarmed helicopter. The target to be reconnoitred was approximately 20 kilometres away from own brigade headquarters. The pilot (Captain Bajwa) was informed that, reportedly there were no anti-aircraft guns at the enemy location, but small arms fire from the ground could be expected.

On 22nd April, Captain Bajwa along with Brigadier Janjua and Lieutenant Colonel Nagi proceeded for the reconnaissance. In order to shorten the enemy reaction time, the pilot proceeded towards north along the border, concealed behind the sand dunes. When abeam the enemy location the pilot crossed over to the Rann. The dry Rann was flat and smooth like a tabletop. The helicopter dashed across, barely 20 feet above the flat dust free bed, heading for the location barely 13 kilometres from our Forward Defensive Localities (FDL). When in sight of the enemy location the pilot pulled up to 3500 feet just before overhead the enemy. "Two hasty figure 8 turns were executed to look around before heading back. Surprisingly we did not encounter any ground fire. The force on the ground was much below expectations. It turned out to be less than a company.

Once out of enemy range the pilot descended to the deck level and dashed towards the nearest FDLs, and disappeared among the bushes and the high sand dunes. Minutes before crossing the home boundary he noticed two Indian jets at approximately 3000 feet. Fortunately the jets turned back short of the border. This reconnaissance was useful as the ultimate direction of the successful offensive was diverted to the right, towards Chad Bet and Point 84.

Capture of Point 84

On 23 April 1965 at 1700 hours, Brigadier Janjua gave the orders to capture Point 84 on 24 April mainly due to the aerial reconnaissance. On 24 April, from 1100 hours to 1430 hours the area was kept under observation by pilots in L-19 and gave vital information regarding the enemy dispositions. 3 Squadron War Diary records the fact, "The helicopter took part in the attack and capture of Point 84 position. One Indian Canberra bomber dived and made feint attack on our helicopter."

Biar Bet Operation

Aviation was tasked to undertake another reconnaissance mission, immediately after the successful attack on Point 84. The mission was to locate the enemy gun positions in the proximity of the area for a night operation. One commando officer also accompanied the pilot, Captain Bajwa in OH-13(S) for reconnaissance. Major Bajwa recalls, "Over the objective while flying a figure 8 within clear sight of the enemy artillery gun emplacements, suddenly the chopper rocked violently. The commando officer out of excitement shook my wrist, holding the delicate and sensitive cyclic control of the helicopter. The officer excitedly shouted, "You are on fire." I immediately turned homewards and simultaneously glanced at the instruments and looked for any traces of smoke or fire. I asked, "Where is the fire?" The officer calmly pointed to the gun emplacements, from where the Indian guns had just fired a salvo, at our positions or may be tried to engage us with direct fire. Being a gunner, I could understand the direct hit by a field gun was a rare possibility, thus I turned back again to have a good look". The attack was carried out on the same night by 2 FF and 15 Punjab on Biar Bet, which was captured by 0800 hours.

At 1000 hours, aviators who were in the air from dawn to monitor the area, saw cloud of dust and reported movement of 40 tanks towards Biar Bhit area from south west. General Tikka immediately moved 24 Cavalry located at Rahim Ki Bazaar to concentrate in area Jatrai. However, no enemy tanks appeared on the scene. Later while walking through the over run Indian position, Captain Bajwa picked up about a dozen of brass '*Gadwis*' an integral part of an Indian soldier, like mugs are to our soldiers. The officers at Badin loved these rare war trophies and each one of them wanted one. So the entire collection disappeared the same evening.

Casualty Evacuation In The Darkness

During operation at Point 84 and Biar Bhit many casualties were evacuated from the frontline to Badin and Hyderabad. In one case, despite the approaching darkness, one OH-13(S), piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar and Captain Bajwa stayed on till the arrival of the wounded soldier and then took off in pitch dark carrying one lying and one sitting wounded soldier. Since night navigation was problematic so the party at Badin was asked to fire Very-light shots at regular intervals for helping the pilots to home-on. This helped tremendously and the final touch down was made at 2130 hours. There being no litter, a 6 feet bed was made from a long crate and made comfortable with pillows and blankets.

Getting Wiser and Learning The Ropes

Some good lessons were learnt. A truly operational pilot who desires to stay fit and operational, must be self-sufficient for all provisions of water, food and adequate protective clothing to sustain himself independently. Lapses are liable to ground the pilot and the machine. At times end of the day might be the beginning of one's longest and the most demanding mission of the day. Pilots tied conventional canvas water bag "Chagall," filled with water on the helicopter skid, for cold and safe drinking water; it worked miraculously well and even helped the pilot making friends.



Casualty Evacuation at Rann

Aviation Performance in The Rann

Both L-19 and OH-13(S) flew extensively in the poorly mapped region of Rann of Kutch with hardly any worthwhile ground object to navigate. Maps were of the scale of 1:250,000 which for Rann amounted to plain sheets. 8 Division Artillery had mixture of British, American and French equipment. Main wireless set with 14 Field, 38 Field and 12 Medium Regiments were Type 62 British Sets, whereas forward observers had PRC-10, an American Set and both did not overlap with the aviation radio sets. Regular reconnaissance of operational sectors by various commanders, helped in formulating the plans and also for any subsequent modification. During the attack of 6 Brigade, which ultimately rounded the enemy, these flying machines were invariably seen buzzing around and acting as the eyes of the commanders, directing artillery fire and performing other assigned missions. They played a significant role in the capture of Biar-Bet, Chad-Bet and Point 84.

Total sorties flown in this conflict were 746 with 864 flying hours, twenty two casualties were evacuated.



OPERATION ABLAZE

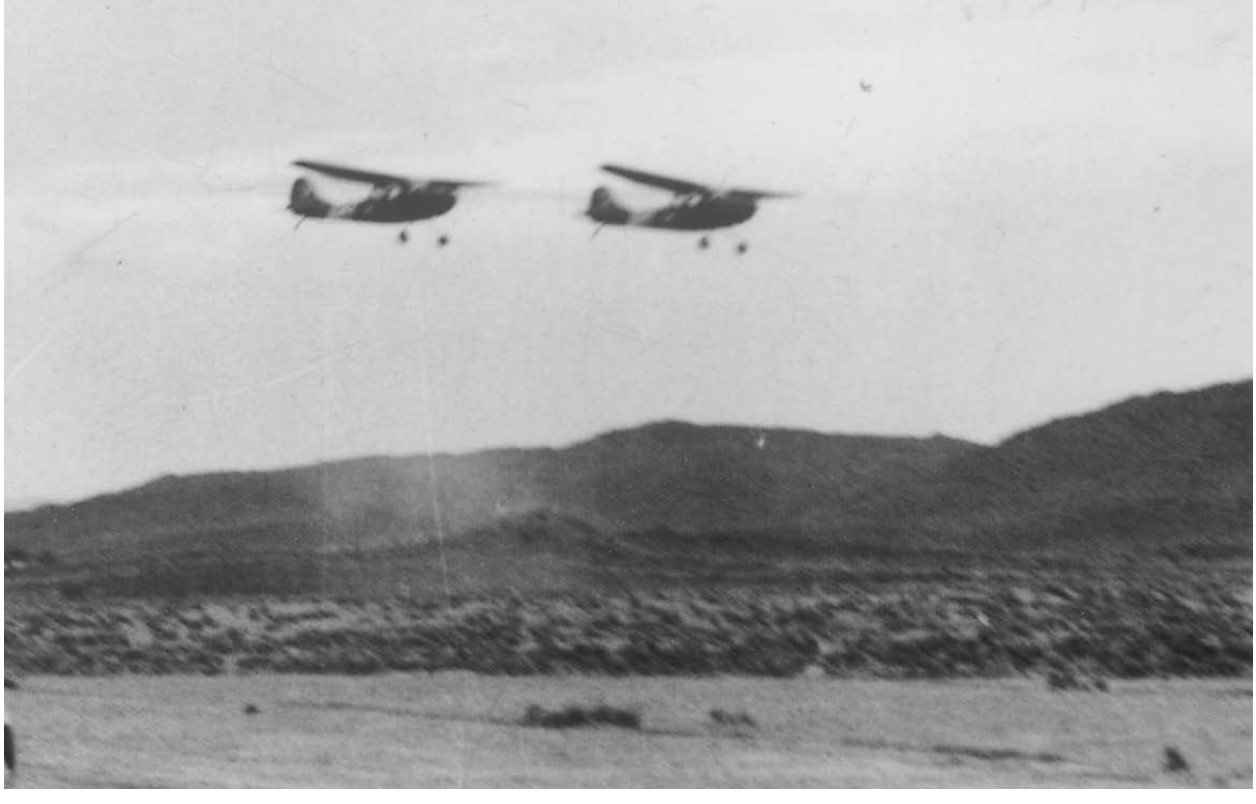
Background of The Operation

Military setbacks in Rann of Kutch had demoralized the Indians to an extent that the then Indian Premier Shastri ordered "Operation Ablaze." It was meant to increase pressure on Pakistani Forces in the Northern Areas. He also moved formations into their battle locations in May and captured three outlying posts in Kargil area on 16 May 1965. Pakistan took preventive measures and deployed its field formations to prevent any Indian misadventure.

Deployment of Aviation Assets

Army Aviation Base Dhamial, also took the requisite steps which included deployment of squadrons with affiliated formations resultantly on 6th May 1965, 2 Army Aviation Squadron moved out in support of 1 Corps and On 28th May 1965, 1 Army Aviation Squadron also moved in 1 Corps area. To asses the feasibility of helicopter operations in the Northern Area a ground reconnaissance was also carried out between 21-24 June 1965. Dhamial Base had its assets dispersed from Badin to Sialkot in June 1965 as follows:-

		L-19	OH-13
1 Squadron			
In support of 7 Division	Balloki	9	3
8 Division	Badin	2	
2 Squadron			
In support of 1 Corps	Kharian	3	
	Lahore	4	
	Sialkot	2	2
	Rahwali	4	3
3 Squadron			
In support of 18 Division	Badin	10	5



L-19 of 2 Squadron during Operation Ablaze



OPERATION GIBRALTAR

Pakistan's Answer to Operation Ablaze

In the spring of 1965, simmering agitation in occupied Kashmir intensified due to arrest of Sheikh Abdullah and Hazaratbal incident. Pakistan Army was watchful of the events that were unfolding as a result of Indian aggression, in curbing the freedom movement. In the summer of 1965 the tactical situation in upper Kashmir due to "Operation Ablaze" warranted a quid pro quo in lower Kashmir. Operation Gibraltar was thus aimed at balancing the tactical situation apart from exploiting the unrest in occupied Kashmir, both politically and militarily.

Role of Army Aviation in 'Operation Gibraltar'

3 Squadron was the mainstay in the initial phase of this operation. Pilots would fly to Murree or Muzaffarabad in pairs, there the flight crew chief would get down and general officer commanding(GOC) and brigade commanders would carryout the reconnaissance of the area, at times pilots stayed days in divisional headquarters and flew the commanders to monitor the Cease Fire Line(CFL). Squadron utilized this opportunity in getting necessary training for mountain flying. At times three pilots would sit in one helicopter, while commanders would be taken as passengers in the other.

Commanding Officer- 2 Army Aviation Squadron's Account



Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan, was commanding 2 Army Aviation Squadron during "Operation Gibraltar**."** It would be just appropriate to reproduce some relevant portions, from his hand written diary.

"At about 1500 hours on 13th August 1965, I received a call from Major Abdul Qayyum, the General Staff Officer, Grade-2 of Dhamial Base who told me to proceed to Bhimber next morning to attend an important conference at the sector headquarters at 1000 hours in connection with an operation."

"I decided to take a flight commander along to put him in picture straight away. I rang up the Aviation Officers Mess where only Major Sarfraz Rabbani was available and I asked him to accompany me the next day in a separate aircraft to Bhimber. There next day, after waiting for some time in the office of brigade major (BM) where we caught our breaths back not because of thrilling flight but rather due to the fact that the jeep which was bringing us from the landing strip had brake failures at one of the sharp high bend. I was taken to the commander who spelled out details about the operation commencing on 15th August 1965.

In specific terms we were to fly within our own airspace and engage some already known targets and also engage any impromptu ones. We were not allowed to carry out any aerial observation that day to avoid Indians getting any inkling, so we decided to go to a dominating forward post to recognize the possible targets and familiarize ourselves with the area. The trip was useful as it helped us to get introduced to enemy positions around Lalleal Feature, Red Hill, Mango Hill, Dewa, Chamb, Sakrana, Munawar etc."

"Since Bhimber was in Azad Kashmir so to avoid any hostile air attack, which was a great possibility under the escalating confrontation, I decided to position my aircraft at Gujrat Airfield. Accordingly orders were passed for the required ground party which arrived there on 14th August**,** led by Captain Muazzam Ali Shah and in good time established the camp and I returned to Dhamial."



The First Aerial Shoot

On 15th August 1965 Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan took off from Dhamial with his Second-in-Command, Major Akhtar and reached Bhimber by about 0545 hours. Artillery had already opened up as planned and after a visit to the brigade majors' office he took off for the war zone. Major Sarfraz Rabbani accompanied him as the observer. Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan writes

"We brought Artillery Fire on the enemy positions around Dewa and a huge cloud of black smoke started rising from the area. Subsequently it became known that an ammunition dump has been hit, a petrol depot was set on fire and some soft vehicles were also destroyed.". 4 Corps Artillery War Diary records 'The Air OP directed our fire with such telling effects that this Indian Regiment never recovered from the punishment". Colonel Khan further narrates, "Later I took Captain Muazzam Ali Shah to familiarize him with the area and Major Rabbani flew Major Akhtar. The day was clear with no clouds anywhere but suddenly a squall hit the area in the afternoon and one aircraft at the Bhimber Strip got damaged because of poor picketing. Luckily I managed to fly it to Gujrat for necessary repairs and from then onward proper picketing arrangements were made at the strip. Realising the scope of future activities, on 16th August, I moved Captain Anwar and Captain Anis Akram Beg to join Major Rabbani. In addition, Major Ayub and Captain Ross Mahmood were also sent to establish rapport with the field commanders and get to know the area of operation. Now I had a full flight there with an additional flight commander to plug in, if and when required."

Both the flight commanders formed part of "O"(Orders) Group of Major General Akhtar Malik. Comprehensive orders were received and necessary instructions were issued with regards to the impending operation. A comprehensive Fire Support Plan was given by Brigadier Amjad Ali, Commander Artillery. A high degree of secrecy was maintained and emphasized thus obscuring use of Air OPs till launching of the 'Operation Grand Slam.'



Gujrat and Munawwar Area



OPERATION GRAND SLAM

Operational Concept

Operation Gibraltar fell short of its objectives. In order to relieve the pressure on 12 Division, Pakistan Army launched pre-planned contingency 'Operation Grand Slam**.'** The operation envisaged crossing the cease fire line, capturing Akhnur via Jaurian, with the additional employment of 7 Strike Division. This would cut the Indian Main Supply Route(MSR) to Jammu, thus paving the way for liberation of Indian Held Kashmir(IHK). Grand Slam was so well conceived, directed and executed that it almost delivered the knock out punch.

Dhamial Base Gets Ready For The War

At about 1230 hours on 30th August 1965, new base commander, Colonel Azmat Baksh Awan held a conference which was attended by all commanding and staff officers. Base Commander briefed the officers on the conduct of 'Operation Gibraltar' and the future plans. Colonel Awan had attended the coordination conference of 12 Division on 29/30 August 1965. 1 Army Aviation Squadron was already placed on 6 hours notice since 28th August. Anticipating developments, some restructuring was done for the aviation support being made available to various formations. At Dhamial OH-13s, Beavers, L-19 and L-23 were dispersed under trees and adjoining open area. Aircraft would also fly out in the morning to Fateh Jang and were flown back to the base in the evening.

Operational Affiliation Of The Army Aviation Squadrons

1 Army Aviation Squadron. commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Mian Mahmud was grouped with 7 Infantry Division. Squadron Headquarters along with one flight consisting of four L-19s moved to



Lt Col Babar with Gen Musa, Commander In-Chief, Pakistan Army. Lt Gen Bakhtiar Rana is on the right



Gujrat, two L-19s were also placed at Kharian. The officers at Kharian included:- Lieutenant Colonel M M Mahmud, Major Nazir Ahmed, Lieutenant Muhammad Qasim, Captain M Saeed (EME) and Captain Khalid Saeed Khan. In addition, three OH-13(S) helicopters from 3 Squadron were also placed under command 1 Squadron. Two helicopters were placed at Kharian(Major Bokhari with helicopter No.148 along with Captain Askree in helicopter No.140). Captain Aftab with his helicopter No.136 was to remain at Gujrat. The designated elements of 1 Squadron arrived at Gujrat on 31st August at 1000 hours, where a detailed briefing was given by Major Rabbani in the evening, with the flair of a war veteran.

2 Army Aviation Squadron, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan already had its one flight (No.6) operating from Bhimber in support of 12 Division. This Flight No. 6 consisting of Major Sarfraz Rabbani (flight commander), Captain Pervaiz Zaka, Captain Anis Akram Beg and Captain Anwar Hussain, were now placed under command 1 Squadron, and rest of the 2 Squadron was placed at 6 hours notice. Some pilots were exchanged between 1 and 2 Squadrons to utilize the benefit of the acquired battle experience and the knowledge of the terrain gained.

3 Army Aviation Squadron, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Babar was placed at Dhamial with few of its helicopters placed in support of field formations. Squadron's primary task was to look after the Kashmir Sector.

The Operational Plan

7 Division was part of Army Strike Force, it had arrived in the area at 2340 hours 30 August 1965 and established its tactical headquarters at Jalalpur. At some stage it had to take over the operational charge from 12 Division.

H –Hour 0500 hours, 1st September 1965

Phase-1. Securing of the line River Munawar Tawi, with the destruction of enemy forces west of Tawi in Laleall, Dewa, Sakrana area by 4 Sector (ex-12 Division) and 102 Brigade(ex-7 Division).

Phase-2. Capture of Akhnur by 10 Brigade Group(ex-7 Division).

1st September 1965, a Historical Day

Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud, Commanding Officer 1 Squadron, carried out a dawn reconnaissance and gave orders for the occupation of a strip near village Guliana. The squadron headquarters and part of Flight No. 2 moved to Guliana

Commanding Officer 2 Army Aviation Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan narrates: "On 1st September 1965, I took-off from Dhamial very early and landed at Bhimber Strip at about 0530 hours, by that time Captain Anis was already airborne but could not engage any target due to poor visibility. On his return, I took-off along with Major Rabbani and on reaching the line of contact I saw own tanks, some bogged down on the left flank, while others in battle position on the right flank in front of Moel. There I recognized Brigadier Hameed, wearing steel helmet and holding field glasses while conducting the operation. He waved at us and we continued in the haze of war to pick up any worth while target. In the meantime a message from 4 Corps Artillery came that Chamb had fallen and we were asked to confirm it.

I immediately changed my course and headed towards Chamb. I was following the track leading to Chamb from **M**oel. On the approach I saw a burntout jeep with some dead bodies around it but could not recognise them. However, as we approached nearer we came under heavy automatic fire. We informed the artillery headquarters but were told emphatically that these were own troops and would be directed not to shoot at own aircraft. This was actually an incorrect assessment, which later sadly resulted in destruction of own tanks. I wish credence had been given to our observation. To be sure we, then approached Chamb from the south and clearly observed two brick kilns on the south and south-east of it. The one on the right was almost on the river edge and the other was on the left of the road joining Munawar with Chamb. On reaching the top of them we saw huge stack of stores, ammunition boxes and other military equipment along with three or four 3-ton trucks and a tank in depression of the kiln. Further on the left I could see some recoilless anti-tank guns, very well camouflaged and facing our line of advance. We passed the information and wanted to engage them with artillery fire but were again stopped because of the earlier wrong information. After some time as we were running low on fuel, we landed back, and I rushed to the headquarters to brief them about the actual situation "

Major Rabbani's Marathon Aerial Shoot

Major Rabbani was the first flight commander who operated in Indian Held Kashmir during 'Operation Gibraltar' and later during 'Operation Grand Slam' as well. No. 6 Flight (ex- 2 Squadron), was based at Gujrat Airfield for night and in the day it operated from Bhimber Strip. With the launching of operation 'Grand Slam' this flight was the first to get committed in the actual operations. On 1st September 1965, during the Battle of Chamb, enemy guns were hindering the advance of own forces, Major Rabbani soon after his first mission was again tasked to locate these guns. He narrates:

"While going around I saw some Indian guns in action deployed in an island west of Tawi. The gun positions had a good crest due west and could only be seen from the south or while on top of it. Normal reaction would have been to go for the guns and silence them. But I decided to go first for the bivouac area and wagon lines. The aim was to capture the guns intact while making the enemy run; thus getting memorable war trophy, it might look strange today but forty years ago at the peak of my youth I had this idea. I called the artillery fire and while flying my L-19 in a pattern to avoid the enemy ground fire directed at me. In the bargain some vehicles exploded and apparently heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy. Then necessary fire correction was given, soon guns and the entire area became a scene of destruction and confusion. The sortie lasted for about three hours and I returned fully satisfied."

1 Army Aviation Squadron War Diary records. "Earlier in the day Major Rabbani who was commanding No.6 Flight, took a very successful artillery shoot. Just east of Chamb on the western bank of Munawar Tawi, where he saw a concentration of enemy vehicles. Major Rabbani thus over rode caution and flew over head the guns and directed own fire to an extent that not only the guns were silenced but enemy fled leaving behind 14 guns just 1 mile north of Chamb. It later transpired that it was the wagon line of the enemy guns operating west of Munawar Tawi."



Major Sarfaraz Rabbani SJ



Major Rabbani was later decorated with Sitara-i-Jur'at for this action. He rose to Lieutenant Colonel's rank and commanded 2 and 3 Army Aviation Squadrons.

Colonel Babar Bags 55 Sikhs

Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Babar, Commanding Officer 3 Squadron on the same very day had flown towards the Kashmir Sector. He recalls (at Peshawar in 2004):

"On 1st September 1965, as per recent pattern, I took Brigadier Ishaq the Sector Commander from Rawalpindi to Murree and onwards to Rawalakot. These were the initial days of helicopter flying thus currency and check-outs for mountain flying were also amalgamated into operational flying. I had three pilots in the other OH-13. On arrival at Murree, I learnt that Chamb had been attacked and our forces were outside Chamb. On reaching Rawalakot, we heard the same news and kept hearing so while we were there till about mid-day. On completion of his work, I suggested to Brigadier Ishaq that we should visit Chamb and see what the impediment was. Brigadier Ishaq readily agreed and we departed for the brigade headquarters at Bhimber. On arrival, we heard the same news vis-à-vis Chamb. After a quick lunch we decided to make best use of the available hours and departed for Chamb. We were totally unprepared as we neither had weapons nor quarter inch maps. In order to ascertain the general direction of Chamb, in the absence of maps, we landed in the gun area, in Padhar Nullah. Brigadier Ishaq decided to go back and did so in the OH-13, now we were three pilots (myself, Major Latif Awan and Captain Akram) in the helicopter.

After having ascertained the general direction we took off for Chamb. It was getting late afternoon. Soon we saw a post and I asked Major Latif Awan to land near it. Being an avid collector, the intent was to pick up a couple of weapons, from what we perceived was an abandoned post. Major Awan told me that it was getting late and we should indulge in the weapon picking later after our return from the forward area. While we were flying, we learnt on radio set ARC-44, that brigade commander, Brigadier (lieutenant general retired) Abdul Hamid Khan had been ambushed. I began to get in touch with the ground troops and asked them to direct the helicopter, if they could see it, so that we could pick up the brigade commander. We flew in this manner for some time but failed to get any correct information about the location of the ambushed brigade commander, further the information about the ambush itself was confusing on the radio thus we decided to head back.

It was then that I saw the post again and told Awan to land. Since I was busy in conversation on radio with the ground troops, I did not see any personnel in the post. However, Major Awan informed me that there are apparently some men. Presuming they must be dead/wounded, I asked him to land and on touching down I got out of the helicopter along with Captain Akram and marched towards the post. As we got closer it dawned that it is a light machine gun out post. There were three Sikhs inside who were bewildered.

Had the Sikhs just pressed the trigger the story would have ended there. Why they failed was directly related to their low morale which had sapped their will to fight and what little they had was overawed by the helicopter and my uniform. I seldom flew in coverall and my Peak-Cap and stick must have been the last nail on the Sikhs imagination. It was no more 'souvenir hunting' now it was a matter of our survival. In a flash many thoughts occurred to me, the most paramount was the safety of my officers and helicopter. I had been at Dehra Dun where some of my best friends were Sikh officers, so I asked him in Punjabi about Colonel Sukhwant Singh which baffled the Sikhs. Before he could mentally assess the situation, I told him that your forces have surrendered and tribal lashkar is on its way, since I knew your Sikh officers and have served with First Sikh Battalion(a lie) therefore I have come to take surrender, thus ensuring your safety.

One Sikh soldier told me about large number of people in the Main Post, which was few hundred yards in the rear. By that time few Sikh soldiers from the Main Post all brandishing new rifles, some still having chindi in the muzzle, led by a Junior Commissioned Officer, joined in with quizzical looks towards the helicopter still with running rotors. Hats off to Captain Akram for keeping his nerves, he walked among these Sikhs as a conqueror. At that moment, I saw two Indian fighter aircraft heading towards the post (possibly having sighted the helicopter), they were coming in to attack. They made a pass over so as to align themselves for an attack. I immediately indicated to Major Awan about air threat and that he should take off. He did so just when the IAF aircraft were coming in for an attack. Simultaneously, some PAF Sabers also appeared on the scene. I knew that on the outcome of this dogfight rests the fate of myself and Captain

Akram. Both the Indian aircraft were shot, the debris fell near the post. That sealed the fate of the Sikhs, had the result been other way around, I am sure they would have shot us then and there.

Keeping my nerves, I walked towards the Main Post led by the Sikhs through the minefield. Once inside the post I was informed that they had received some shelling in the morning and two jawans have been wounded (then dead) and their company commander, Major Nagi had left them in the morning on pretext of getting supplies. I then realized that it was a Company Post of 5 Sikh Light Infantry with heavy weapons like 106 millimeters recoilless rifle, a mortar and medium machine gun detachment from a support battalion (pattern in Indian Army). I asked them to place their weapons on the parapet and move out and kept pushing them, Captain Akram was of a great help in all this happening."

"Once they were out I asked the Junior Commissioned Officer(JCO) to "fall them in," he did so. I then asked two jawans to carry a rifle each. I told Captain Akram to take the wounded soldiers towards own area



Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Babar SJ with captured Sikh POWs

and also to inform and seek help from own formation, he was reluctant to leave me alone, but did as told."

Rest of the Sikh Company was made to march under their own escorts with Lieutenant Colonel Babar in the rear pushing them. Meanwhile Captain Akram marched and after few miles came across own advancing troops, to whom he told all that had happened and got a jeep for the wounded prisoners. In the jeep still worried about his commanding officer, he inquired from the Sikhs, "Would your comrades dare to shoot my commanding officer?" The answer was a cheerful 'No'.

By now it was near nightfall, Lieutenant Colonel Babar further narrates, "Enroute, I met Major (major general retired) Abdullah Saeed and asked him to relieve me of the burden, he refused. Moving on I met Major (lieutenant general retired) Faiz Ali Chishti, 2nd in Command of an artillery unit, I asked him for transport, he refused as they were re-deploying. We moved on and at nightfall reached Moel Post, there I informed them of the event and also asked them for some tea for the Prisoners of War and also informed Kharian (where Major Latif Awan had proceeded) that I was safe.



After tea and in the dark (blessed it was the full moon) we moved towards Padhar**.** On arrival at Padhar (Corps Artillery Mess) at 2000 hours, I asked the POWs to sit in the volleyball ground and informed them that I was proceeding for dinner and that they would get their meal at Bhimber. When I entered the mess and informed Brigadier Amjad Chaudhry, (Commander Corps Artillery) and his staff, they did not believe me and came out to see for themselves. After a quick dinner, I requested for transport as by now I was fairly tired having walked for 7-8 miles or more. I was once again refused and was informed that the vehicles would be free once the bridging equipment had been delivered at Tawi. At about 0230 hours, I was provided the transport and some munching for POWs, after which I asked them (POWs) to demonstrate their battalion embussing drill. They did so in exemplary fashion and we left for Bhimber.



Major Latif Awan

At about 0500 hours, we arrived at Bhimber and the panic started about escorts/guard for the Sikhs prisoners. However, I handed them over to the brigade headquarters, after assuring them that I would look after their interest. I was picked up at 1000 hours, along with the souvenirs (two G-3 rifles) and returned to Dhamial to receive a dressing down from Colonel A.B Awan for having involved myself in the venture."

When the POWs were interrogated, they narrated the incident. Late General Riaz Hussain (the then Director General ISI) informed President Ayub Khan at a briefing in the evening on 2nd September 1965 and sought his permission to publish the item in the newspapers as it would raise morale of our troops. Resultantly, it was published in all newspapers on 4th September 1965. On same very day Lieutenant Colonel Babar was at Kharian Strip to take General Musa, who had arrived in the L-23 from Rawalpindi, onward to forward area. General Musa asked him if he had seen the day's newspapers.



Major Akram

Colonel Babar further narrates: I said, "No" and he asked me to get the newspapers from his L-23 aircraft. The newspapers carried the story. General Bakhtiar Rana gave me a dressing down that the army has spent so much money on my training and I was involving myself in such frivolous activity. I was awarded Sitara-e-Jur'at for this action."

First Air Battle

Air Marshal Nur Khan,C-in-C PAF, arrived at Gujrat Airfield in a PAF aircraft. He was flown in an L-19 to the forward line of troops near Chamb. As soon as he landed back at Gujrat, the first ever dogfight between the IAF and the PAF aircraft started.(The one described by Lieutenant Colonel Babar). At about 1600 hours on 1st September 1965, four enemy aircraft appeared and started attacking our ground troops. As these aircraft were in their attack runs, our fighters picked them up. Within a very short span of time all the four Indian aircraft were shot down. The thrilling encounter of the First Air Battle, was witnessed from an L-19 by Air Marshal Nur Khan, the C-in-C of PAF and Lieutenant Colonel MM Mahmud. Later Captain Askree, the pilot of OH-13 helicopter landed at one of the sites of the crash and picked up a piece of the wreckage. It was the insignia of the IAF. This was kept as a War Trophy.

2nd September 1965- Major General Yahya Takes Over the Command

The operations in Chamb Sector were launched on 1st September 1965. By the afternoon the leading elements had reached Chamb. By the morning of 2nd September 1965, Chamb was captured, River Tawi was crossed and the enemy positions at Troti Feature and other resistant pockets were under attack.

General Musa, along with Major General A.A. Bilgrami arrived at Kharian. They were picked up



General Musa and Major General Yahya Khan

by helicopters and brought to the tactical command post of 102 Brigade. Major General Yahya, General Officer Commanding 7 Division, was also there. As per original planning but much against his wishes Major General Akhtar Malik, was to hand over the command of the operation to Major General Yahya and re-assume command of his own 12 Division. Initially efforts failed to locate Major General Akhtar Malik and it was not feasible to pass him the orders on telephone. Captain Mir Saadat Ullah was personally briefed by General Musa and was given a sealed envelope to be handed over to Major General Malik personally. Captain Saadat's only query from the C-in-C was regarding the disposal of the envelope in case of being shot down by the enemy. Captain Saadat landed the envelope at the designated area in L-19 amidst enemy fire. Later Major General Yahya, hurriedly held his 'O'(Orders) Group and gave orders to attack Troti Feature on first light of 4th September 1965.

By last light 2nd September 1 Army Aviation Squadron Headquarters, No. 2 and No.6 Flights were concentrated at Gujrat Airfield. A strip was marked on the taxi track with night landing facilities. These two flights were to operate during daylight from field strips in support of 7 Division and 4 Corps Artillery respectively and to fall back at Gujrat. Next day a strip was prepared after quite an effort in the north west of Jalalpur, to support 7 Division, Captain Mir Saadat Ullah and Captain Zafar Aqeel manned it, skeleton squadron headquarters was also shifted there.

3rd September 1965- Move of 2 Army Aviation Squadron

In the morning C-in-C arrived again and was taken to the tactical headquarters at Chamb. The long awaited Warning Orders came around mid-day for the move of 2 Army Aviation Squadron. It was Major Muhammad Ayub who rang up the adjutant and directed him to move one flight and the squadron headquarters



as soon as possible. At 1445 hours 3rd September 1965, the ground party consisting of the squadron headquarters elements, No.7 Flight and the maintenance platoon from 199 Aviation Engineering Battalion left the Dhamial Base in a convoy, led by Captain Jamil of 199 Aviation Engineering Battalion, he had been attached as a maintenance officer. Air Party comprised of three officers and two aircraft. Major Muhammad Akhtar, the 2nd in command was the incharge of the air party while Captains Jamil Akhtar Khalid and Muazzam Ali Shah were the other officers to follow. The Air Party landed at Kharian Strip approximately at 1900 hours. Major Mansoor Ahmad Sial was at the strip to receive them. At 2030 hours 3rd September 1965, the ground party also reached Kharian and soon the camp was established. Following helicopter pilots from 3 Army Aviation Squadron were placed under command 2 Army Aviation Squadron:-



L-19

Helicopter No.	Pilot
135	Captain Siraj
139	Captain Manzoor Bajwa
132	Captain Sajjad Nazim

Captain Khalid Saeed Neutralises an Enemy Artillery Regiment

Towards the evening of 3rd September when the advance of own troops towards Jaurian was held up due to heavy enemy artillery fire, Headquarters 4 Corps Artillery gave Captain Khalid Saeed the mission to locate these guns. He observed that the fire was coming from a nullah near Kalit.

Immediately own guns were directed onto this area. After the ranging was complete and the 'fire for effect' was being ordered, a doubt arose in the minds of the staff of Headquarters 4 Corps Artillery. They somehow maintained that the reference being given by the pilot is incorrect. Own troops, as believed by them, had already crossed that line. But Captain Khalid Saeed still maintained that the fire which was holding the advance of own troops, was coming from that area.

To resolve the controversy Captain Khalid Saeed decided to fly to the area again to reconfirm as to whether they were the hostile guns or not? As he approached the area, he came under heavy enemy ground fire. A few bullets hit the left fuel tank of L-19 aircraft No. 57-5986, petrol gushed into the cockpit. Still unperturbed Captain Khalid Saeed, remained cool and calm despite risk of the aircraft catching fire. With singleness of purposes he called for 'fire for effect'. With most accurate observation of fire hostile guns were not only silenced but later the enemy fled, leaving guns behind. By the time pilot finished the shoot it became dark and he made emergency night landing at Gujrat Air Strip where arrangements had been made earlier. 1 Army Aviation Squadron, War Diary records this shoot in following words``Captain Saeed set a pattern which was soon to become the by words for the squadron and adopted as the spirit in which all pilots operated later throughout the war``. The Squadron observers role was complimented upon by Brigadier Chaudhry, Commander 4 Corps Artillery. He remarked that **"As long as a Pakistan Army Pilot is up in the air, the enemy guns would stay silent."**



4th September 1965-Army Aviation and Push towards Akhnur

Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud Commanding Officer 1 Army Aviation Squadron narrates: "Early morning of 4th September, Major General Yahya GOC 7 Division, flew with me and Captain Askree to Chamb and landed at the helipad. There Brigadier Amjad Chaudhry, Commander Corps Artillery, briefed him about the Artillery Fire Plan and since its lifting, no attack by own ground troops was launched. Major General Yahya was totally surprised at this. Brigadier Chaudhry suggested that aircraft should go up to see the effect of own fire over enemy positions and report if any movement was observed. I suggested that myself and Captain Askree would go forward and carryout a detailed aerial assessment of the situation.

Captain Askree and myself first landed near 3 Frontier Force Regiment just short of Troti Feature. I met Major Anwar-ul-Haq (N.D), the second in command of the battalion. He told me that the attack did not proceed as the 'A' Echelon of the battalion had lost its contact with the battalion headquarters. We next visited Brigadier Azmat, Brigade Commander 10 Brigade. He explained that one of his Punjab Battalion, which was advancing along the river had lost its contact with the brigade headquarters and as such was not in a position to advance further. On the other side of Troti, we met Lieutenant Colonel Sher, Commanding Officer 13 Lancers. The tanks were lined up in a nullah and were not proceeding forward as there was fire coming from the Troti Feature. Further on to the left flank, we reached the headquarters of Brigadier Zafar Ali Shah. It was the same story of them showing their helplessness to start the advance. We told them that we had just flown over and around the Troti Feature, own artillery fire had already caused enormous damage and we further explained to them that small pockets of enemy are all that is still holding on.

We returned to the helipad at Chamb. Major General Yahya was anxiously waiting there and inquired about the situation. I briefed him about the position on the ground. We later flew out and met all the unit/ formation commanders. In his typical style General Yahya told them that rather than attacking Troti and other pockets of resistance they should by pass those. From the right, Brigadier Azmat was ordered to by pass these positions through the gap from Troti and River Chenab. Brigadier Zafar Ali Shah was to by pass from the enemy left flank. Both brigades were ordered that after by passing Troti they should gallop towards Akhnur. Within a few hours Troti and other pockets were by passed and troops started their advance to Akhnur. By the time the troops reached the foot hills of Akhnur, it was dark and the L-19s could not support the efforts of the ground troops any more. The infantry units that reached there, after the full day's advance, were handicapped in carrying out aggressive patrolling. They stayed short of the foot hills of Akhnur".



Akhnur and surrounding areas

5th September 1965-Capture of Jaurian

Jaurian fell due to Pakistani assault launched at 0700 hours on 5th September 1965. With moving of 7 Division Headquarters to area Munawar, No. 2 Flight(1 Squadron) also moved forward. Since own forces had moved as far forward as Jaurian, own aircraft also started operating much beyond Jaurian, in fact in certain cases Akhnur was over flown. On the evening of 5th September 1965 Pakistan Army was only 4 miles short of Akhnur. After the fall of Jaurian, Major Akhtar flew Lieutenant General Rana from Kharian to Lahore. From Lahore he(General Rana) was taken by a helicopter to the forward areas.



17 DAYS OF SEPTEMBER 1965

Casus Belli

At 0300 hours on 6th September Indians delivered a riposte and launched attack across the international border towards Lahore. Indian aim was to divert our focus from Akhnur and make Pakistan react to this new situation. This move was not a surprise. Indian attack on 6th September, was well anticipated by our higher headquarters. 1 Corps had already informed formations under its command to be prepared to deploy at short notice, troops were deployed by first light 2nd September. 15 Division was already ordered to take up defensive positions on 3rd September. The events of last 9 months had prepared Pakistan for such eventuality.

Pakistan Army Dispositions

On the eve of war Pakistan Army was commanded by General Musa Khan

1 Corps (Army had only one corps at that time)

Corps Headquarters at Gujranwala	Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana
7 Division at Jallalpur.	Major General Yahya Khan
15 Division at Sialkot.	Brigadier Ismail (Later Major General Tikka)
6 Armoured Division at Daska.	Major General Abrar Hussain
(It had only one armoured brigade)	

General Headquarters Formations

11 Division at Kasur.	Major General Hamid
10 Division at Lahore.	Major General Sarfraz
12 Division at Murree	Major General Akhtar Ali Malik
1st Armoured Division at Raiwind.	Major General Nasir
18 Division in Sind.	Major General Azhar
4 Corps Artillery.	Brigadier Amjad

Army Aviation Assets

Army Aviation at that stage consisted of Dhamial Base Headquarters and three squadrons - 1, 2 & 3 Army Aviation Squadrons. The entire Army Aviation had an integrated maintenance & logistic support, consisting of 199 Aviation Electrical Mechanical Engineers Battalion, and an Ordnance Depot. Colonel A B Awan was commanding the Dhamial Base, in the last days of the war, he was posted to command an Artillery Brigade and was replaced by Colonel Jabbar. In the General Headquarters Lieutenant Colonel Saleem Ullah was the Principal Staff Officer on aviation matters, his General Staff Officer, Grade – 2, Major Wali was at Army Tactical Headquarters at Kharian. Additionally four Beaver aircraft were requisitioned from Plant Protection Department for war effort. On the onset of the war Army Aviation did not possess the capability of night operations, it also lacked the requisite communication sets to act as Forward Air Controller and neither it had any aerial fire power. All aviation resources to field formations were controlled by the Chief of General Staff(CGS). There were total of 63 pilots available including those performing staff work as well. Out of eighteen helicopters three helicopters were unserviceable and over forty L-19 were serviceable.

The positive aspect was that all the commanding officers and pilots had a long period of mutual understanding among each other. They all had bond of instructor-student relationship, they knew each other's weak and strong points. Thus there was a sense of harmony from top to bottom. In the end this proved to be the decisive factor.

Aviation Redeployment

With the Indian invasion of Pakistan on night 5/6 September 1965, the entire complexion changed resulting in fresh deployment of army aviation aircraft, in conjunction with the move of certain field formations.



1 Army Aviation Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel M.M. Mahmud

In support of 6, 7 and 15 Division. Under Command: No. 6 Flight ex-2 Army Aviation Squadron, and one flight of OH –13(S) helicopters ex- 3 Army Aviation Squadron. The squadron supported the operations in Sialkot Sector, its flights were located at Sialkot, Adamke, Pasrur and Gujrat. During the course of battle in this sector the flights shifted their locations. Company of 199 Electrical Mechanical Engineers Battalion was located at Sambrial to support the squadron.

2 Army Aviation Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Khan

In support of 1 Corps, 1 Armoured Division, 10 and 11 Divisions. Its No.6 Flight was later reverted from 1 Squadron. It also had one flight of helicopters under its command.

Squadron moved from Kharian to Rahwali Strip at 1845 hours 6th September, next day at 0445 hours they flew to the football ground of Government High School Gujranwala. The airstrip was prepared on the night of 6th September concealed by high trees on both sides. The officers mess was located in a temple. Its flights were distributed as under:-

No.7 Flight. Major Taleh Mohammad Mian, got entrenched at Walton in support of 10 Division.

No.8 Flight. Major Mansoor Sial to support 11 Division at Lulliani. Two Sections with Captain Sheraz and Captain Hamid Chaudhry were sent to Sulemanki to support the operations there.

No.9 Flight. At Chander Airfield under command Major Hissam, consisting of Captain Zafar and Captain Nouman, was placed to support 1 Armoured Division.

Squadron Headquarters along with one composite flight consisting of three helicopters and two sections of L-19 at Gujranwala.

3 Army Aviation Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Babar

The only Rotary Wing Squadron. Its two flights were detached to the Fixed Wing Squadrons, one flight remained at Dhamial to support the efforts in Azad Kashmir area.

199 Electrical & Mechanical Engineering Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Qadir

One company was located at Sambrial, other at Gujranwala, few elements were also present at Gujrat, and Multan. A Forward Base was also established at Baghtanwala with Major Aftab and Major Burki.

Indian Army - Order of Battle

The Indian Army had eleven divisions and three independent brigades:-

Chief of Army Staff -	General J.N. Chaudhry.
Western Command	Lieutenant General Harbaksh Singh.
1 Corps	Lieutenant General P.O. Dunn (Sialkot Sector).
	1 Armoured Division, 14 Division,16 Division and 26 Division,
XI Corps	Lieutenant General J.S. Dhillon (Lahore Sector).
	4 Mountain Division, 7-15 Infantry Division, and 2 Independent Armoured Brigade.
XV Corps	Lieutenant General K.S. Khatoch (Kashmir Sector)
	6 Mountain Division, 10 and 11 Infantry Division.
Reserves	19-25-26 Infantry Divisions, 68 Independent Infantry Brigade and 121 Independent Infantry Brigade.

Note: Indians did not have independent Air Arm for army, they had few Auster aircraft and helicopters for Artillery Fire Observation but they were all manned and controlled by IAF.

Birds Eye View of The War

The September War was mainly fought in Lahore-Kasur-Sialkot Sector with subsidiary efforts taking place in Sulemanki and Kashmir Sectors. Kashmir remained relatively calm with fighting going on for passes and posts in a prolonged time frame. War had three distinct phases**:**



Phase 1 (6-8 September 1965)

Indian X1 Corps mounted three-pronged offensive on a 50 miles front in Lahore - Kasur Sector. Indian 15, 7 and 4 Division launched the attacks, which were all blunted by our 10 and 11 Divisions. Indians also launched simultaneous attack towards Sialkot Sector. Own forces remained in defensive posture and some bold actions coupled with luck ensured that Indian attack should run out of the steam after 48 hours. Own 105 Brigade launched attack and captured Indian posts in Suleimanke Sector.

Phase 2 (8-12 September 1965)

Pakistan riposte with the rolling off of 1st Armoured Division poised for Amritsar. Its initial success was heartening. However, Indians responded by employing elements of their strike force, the 1st Armoured Division in the Sialkot Sector, where own 15 Division and 6 Armoured Division (two tank regiments) held the fort, at times outcome hanging by thread.

Phase 3 (13-17 September 1965)

Fierce tank battles raged in Philloura - Chawinda area. The attacker (Indian Forces) throwing in every thing and the defender (Pakistani Forces) holding on to every inch. Own 1st Armoured Division was also rushed in, from Kasur Sector. In the dying moments of the war, Indians made moves to recapture lost territories in Kasur, Sulemanki and desert area without success.

KASHMIR SECTOR



OH-13S

On the night of 5th September 1965, Major Tirmizi (retired as Director Aviation) being a neighbour of Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Babar, got a chit as per routine of last few days, that he had to go to Jura Sector for casualty evacuation. There were 8-10 casualties and three helicopters were detailed. Next morning Major Tirmizi took off with Captains Sagheer and Zia Ud Din Javeed in helicopters No. 144, 142 and 143. They carried out refuelling at Muzzaffarabad. On reaching Jura (Titwal Sector) they found that instead of 8 casualties they had to evacuate more than 20. It was at Muzzafarabad that Major Tirmizi got the news that India had attacked Lahore, now it was an all out war.

Brigadier Tirmizi recalls almost 38 years later, "I briefed Captain Sagheer on the situation and decided to fly low and on the home bank. To get the casualties from Jura, pilots had to initially fly along the Kishen Ganga upto Danni, and then steep climb to 9,500 feet so as to cross Chunj Feature. On the far side, pilots were required to rapidly descend down in area Choa Ghali as the height of Jura is only 4000 feet. For the return journey with a full load of two litters, pilots had to execute two 360 degrees turns to attain the necessary height, these turns are in full view of Sanjoi Feature and Mirpur Ridge with enemy observing. In the end pilots evacuated all casualties despite coming under enemy fire".

On 7th September Captain Akram and Captain Naeem flew to Rawalakot in helicopters No. 142 and

143, they evacuated 8 casualties. To ensure maximum utilization they also carried 400 pounds of rations for the posts. Similar missions were also flown on 8th and 9th September. On 9th, Captain Akram evacuated 6 casualties from Palangi, in order to reach the area from Bagh pilot had to cross Toli Pir Feature 8,000 feet high and then descend down in full view of the enemy position, but Captain Akram evacuated the casualties right through the fire.



Casualty Evacuation in an OH-13S Helicopter (Capt Aftab)

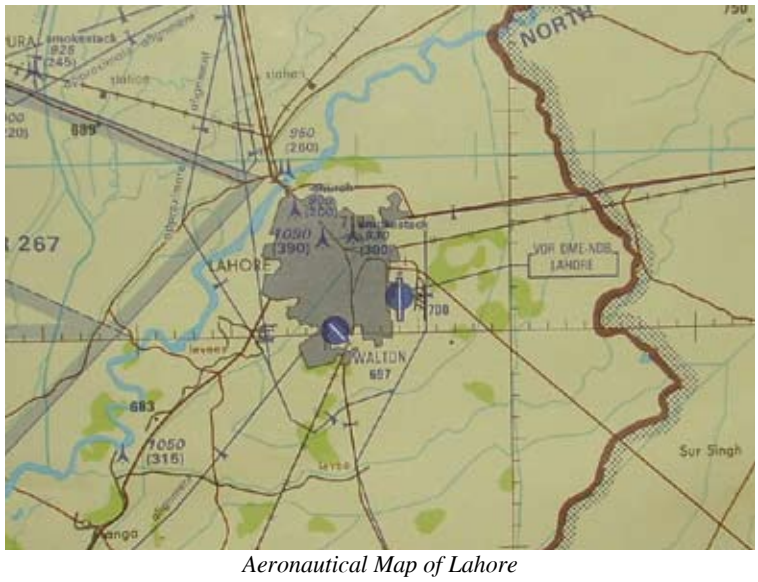
On 16th September Colonel A B Awan was posted to command Artillery 12 Division for likely offensive, he was dropped at Murree in a helicopter, his subsequent reconnaissance of the area along with other commanders was facilitated by the 3 Army Aviation Squadron pilots.

On 22nd September major casualty evacuation missions were carried out involving three OH 13(S), crew included Captain Akram, Major Awan and Captain Sagheer. Aviators evacuated 12 casualties from Badhal, in view of the conditions of patients they were brought to Rawalpindi Combined Military Hospital despite having low fuel warning.

On 23rd September, the last day of the war, Captain Sagheer and Major Awan were involved in the operation in area Badhal and Palanghi in 2 Sector (AK). This last mission was carried out in the face of enemy's small arms fire.

LAHORE-KASUR SECTOR

Captain Sirajuddin of 3 Army Aviation Squadron flew General Rana, the Corps Commander from Gujranwala to Lahore and then to Kasur on the evening(1600 hours) of 6th September, in OH-13(S) helicopter. This allowed the commander to have first hand knowledge of the situation. Pilot flew low from Lahore to Kasur, the General wanted to fly as close to the forward lines as possible. Visibility was not that clear, however they could see the smoke and fire enroute. Pilot recalls, "My main concern was own artillery fire. We were not in communication with the ground troops, further more in case of crash it would have been a great loss to lose the commander so early. He was carrying important documents including the Corps Operational Instructions." They landed safely at Kasur.



Aeronautical Map of Lahore

2 Army Aviation Squadron's flight under Major Taleh Mian was at Walton Airfield. Divisional Headquarters were in the out skirts of Lahore. On the very first day, Air OPs were to concentrate observation in area Rampur for which they were also provided with quarter inch scale map sheets. Flying was conducted at low level. On 7th September, Major Taleh Mian and Captain Jawahar were chased by the Indian aircraft. Next day Captain Ishaq faced the same scenario.



For coming days pattern remained the same. For Artillery shoots pilots had to carry extra radio set for communicating with the guns. Aviators daily had to go to respective HQs for briefing and debriefing, it was a time consuming exercise. Aviation efforts were tasked by the respective Colonel Staffs.

Aviation Support to 105 Infantry Brigade

This brigade was located at Haveli and was assigned to look after the Suleimanke Head Works. The very first attack of the war on Indians was launched by this Brigade at 1830 hours on 6th September, spearheaded by 10 Punjab and 4 Punjab supported by 32 Medium Regiment. By 1850 hours Sadiqia and Jhanger Posts were captured. On 8th September at 1020 hours brigade requested Military Operation Directorate for an Air OP Flight.

On 9th morning Captain Hamid Choudhry arrived from Lahore with his L-19 and established strip in Okara Military Dairy Farms area. On 10th September according to Brigade War Diary, they received a message from GHQ; "Use L-19 in your own area, keeping in view its limitation. No unnecessary risk." On 14th September Captain Khalid Kamal (KK) also joined in with another L-19. Both the pilots carried out aerial surveillance and took artillery shoots. They used air bursts as well to disperse enemy infantry hiding in village. Both pilots along with maintenance crew remained at Haveli Strip till 4th October 1965.

Mailed Fist



Mailed Fist

One flight of 2 Army Aviation Squadron was in support of 1st Armoured Division. One of the best kept secrets of the war, was the location of this Mailed Fist. Captain Zafar(later brigadier retired) writes, "On the evening of 6th September, Major Hissam, and my self were ordered to move to Chander Airfield, in support of 1st Armoured Division. When we arrived there from Kharian in our L-19s, there was no one there except few scattered logistic elements. We again flew in search of division, to the place we were told by the staff officers. We could not locate it and came back to Chander; here we spent the night in open with our aircraft. Next morning we were given the wake up call by the four low level Indian jets heading for Sargodha.

We hurriedly put our L-19s under trees, soon the Indians came back, I counted and they were two aircraft short,it raised our morale.We were stranded here at Chander with no communication and decided at our own to fly towards Changa Manga Forest, to locate the Armoured Division, it was not there, we remained in air for over three hours and finally landed back at Chander where we received a message to proceed to Walton."

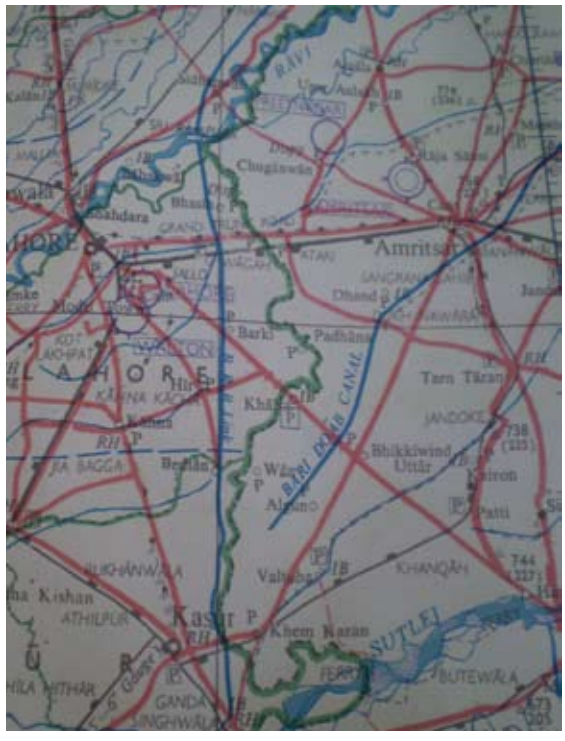
On 7th September 1965 own 11 Infantry Division launched attack for the capture of Khem Kharan and Valtoha. 1st FF and 6 Lancers reached Khem Karan by last light. On 8th September, 6 Lancers captured Valtoha Railway Station and 24 Cavalry reached village Asal Uttar, later to fall back on orders to Leaguer at Khem Karan. In the afternoon of 8th September, Chief of the General Staff(CGS) Major General Sher Bahadur was flown from Kharian to Kasur by Captain Siraj in an OH-13. Captain Siraj had to make few landings to facilitate the CGS for update from ground commanders. There were Indian jets in the air also. The ground formations were constantly moving and changing their positions thus it was an effort to locate the desired commanders, so fluid was the battle. At 2300 hours CGS and Major General Hameed flew back from Khem Karan to Luliani. It was Captain Siraj's first nocturnal cross-country mission. He writes, "Noise



of the helicopter created a lot of fire works and illuminated the battle field area. The helicopter lights were switched off completely and the tracers fired eased navigation to the destination." The helicopter later went back to Lahore.

Battle of Asal Uttar

On 9th September 1965, own Armoured Division initiated break-out across Rohi Nullah. Indians hastily occupied defensive positions around Asal Uttar & Cheema Village, the main hurdle in our thrust towards Amritsar. Advance Landing Ground (ALG) was established on the east of Rohi Nullah near Tactical Headquarters 11 Division.



Kasur and surrounding areas

Captain Ziauddin narrates: "On 9th September, myself and Major General Hamid played hide and seek with 4 Indian Hunters for nearly seven minutes. Indians were after the Bridgehead of 11 Infantry Division and 1st Armoured Division". Captain Asghar Aziz was also attached with 1st Armoured Division with his OH-13. On 9th September when the all-important battle across Rohi Nullah was about to take place he under took route reconnaissance with Lieutenant Colonel Altaf Hussain of 1st Engineers Battalion for the leading 4 Brigade along Axis Rohi Nullah. They were almost seven miles ahead of own leading tanks when three Indian tanks astride the axis opened machine gun fire. During this sortie landings were made to check the soil and unattended Indian bridging equipment was also inspected. He further undertook a sortie with Brigadier Lumb for getting first hand information.

On the same day in the battle for Asal Uttar Village, it had been planned that 4 Armoured Brigade would out flank the Indian positions from the north west and then cut them off in the rear. 4 Cavalry led the advance but lost it's way and was duly placed on the correct axis by Major General Naseer, GOC 1st Armoured Division, from the helicopter in which he was monitoring the advance. Early in the morning Major Hissam and Captain Raza flew towards Khem Karan. They saw own tanks crossing over Rohi Nullah and few getting bogged down.

Artillery 1st Armoured Division's War Diary records: "Divisional Artillery engaged targets called by Air OP, registration of some important targets was also carried by Air OP on the orders of the commander."

Landing at Khem Karan

On 10th September 4 Cavalry was at Mile Stone-32 on Kasur-Amritsar Road where it suffered heavy losses. Enemy regained it's balance and fierce tank battles were fought.

Two L-19s piloted by Major Hissam, Captain Zafar and Captain Nouman landed at Khem Karan Strip, they reported to General Officers Commanding 11 Division and 1st Armoured Divisions. Captain Zafar writes: "Infantry had gone across Khem Karan but tanks had been very gradual in crossing the Bridgehead. Enemy was bringing concentrated artillery fire and regular air sorties over the Bridge Head. We flew in between and engaged enemy positions with own Artillery guns. At dusk we flew back to Walton."

By 11th September own armoured attack had lost its momentum and simultaneously the reports from Pasrur Sector had forced the necessary redeployment of strike force, however, another major battle took place when Indians realizing this move, mounted an attack on 11th September whose brunt was borne by the 21 Brigade. Battlefield was kept under surveillance from dawn to dusk by the L-19s and OH-13.



Indian Counter Attack

On the morning of 12th September 1965 major Indian counter attack towards Bridgehead came in full swing. The Air OPs were in the air. Their efforts were recorded by War Diary of 1st Armoured Division as under;

"Air OP had been flying reconnaissance missions since early morning. At 0800 hours, Air OP reported considerable vehicular traffic on Road Asal Uttar-Valtoha, targets were engaged with field and medium artillery guns."

"At 0900 hours, some tanks were observed moving in general area Asal Uttar and were engaged by Air OP."

"At 1000 hours Air OP reported concentration of tanks and approximately one battalion plus of infantry in general area Asal Uttar, forming up for the attack. It was bombarded with 21 Medium Regiment. Visibility improved at 1100 hours, Air OP reported seeing 17 tanks(later reported to be considerably more) and numerous enemy dead in Mile Stone-36 and Mile Stone-38 area."

Brigadier Zafar recalling above event narrates, "Shoot was carried out for 2 hours and 30 minutes. Own artillery fire was very effective, damaging about 20 enemy vehicles some were carrying the fuel and ammunition, few were seen burning. Three tanks were also disabled. Enemy withdrew towards Valtoha."

Capture of Lieutenant Colonel Anant Singh

On 12th September 1965 few troops of the Sikh Battalion had successfully infiltrated through our lines and were poised to encircle the 3 Self Propelled (3SP) Artillery Regiment's guns area. As own Air OP was already monitoring the area thus pilots reported about the scattered movement of the enemy, eventually the Sikhs were hauled by a squadron of 15 Lancers, commanded by Major Mokeet and a battery of 3 SP. Later own helicopter being flown by Captain Zia along with Lieutenant Colonel Karim as observer were tasked to provide aerial escort. 1st Armoured Division War Diary records; "At 1100 hours Air OP reported battalion attack from the right flank, on guns area of 3 Self Propelled Regiment. The regiment was alerted and the enemy was surrounded and 136 POWs were captured including their Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Anant Singh".

The Second Indian Wave

1st Armoured Division's War Diary further records that epic day, "At 1500 hours, Air OP reported approximately a squadron of tanks and some infantry in Mile Stone-36. General Officer Commanding was informed about this. Target was engaged and dispersed. Intercepted enemy wireless indicates that the H-Hour was disrupted due to Air OP". "At 1700 hours Air OP again pointed out the tank squadron and infantry advancing towards Mile Stone-27 from Mile Stone-36. Air OP now reports advance of two more squadrons of tanks and some infantry in Mile Stone-36 area. At once guns put down heavy concentration of fire controlled by Air OP, wireless intercept revealed that enemy infantry was unwilling to resume the advance."

The Indian attack which had fizzled out on 12th September 1965 still carried on till 14th September. On 13th September according to Captain Zafar. "Whole day we carried out battlefield surveillance by then perhaps it was decided to halt the operations in this sector. On 14th morning our original flight of Major Hissam, Captain Nouman, Captain Khalid Kamal and myself, was ordered to move back to Gujranwala and join 2 Army Aviation Squadron. Whereas Lieutenant Colonel M M Karim with 2 Squadron's Flight consisting of Major Taleh Mian, Captain Ishaq and Captain Ali Jawahar stayed back at Lahore to support 11 Division".

11 Division's War Diary

11 Division Artillery was coordinating the flying of 2 Army Aviation Squadron, its War Diary reveals;

"On the night of 13/14 September 11 Division Artillery ordered first light Air OP sorties to observe enemy movement around Hussainiwala Headworks. At 1530 hours 11 Division's Operations Room was informed that large forward movement of vehicles was reported from Bhikkiwind – Khem Karan Bridge.



Air OP was tasked to carry out surveillance at once of these areas."

"At 0830 hours on 16th September enemy radar at Ferozepur Landing Ground became active, Air OP was sent and the radar was engaged with 35 Heavy Artillery Regiment."

"At 1030 hours on 16th September enemy moved his tanks from direction of Ghawind Jhaman towards BRB, four Sherman tanks got bogged down, Air OP engaged and two tanks were destroyed."

"At 0830 hours on 18th September - "Air OP engaged concentration of enemy tanks and vehicles on track Ghawind-Jhaman, one tank was seen burning."

"On 21st September Air OP carried, observed shooting of enemy tanks and soft vehicles in area Rajoke and Wan."

SIALKOT SECTOR



Sialkot and surrounding areas

On the first light of 6th September 1965 Commanding Officer 1 Army Aviation Squadron, who had stayed the night at the Headquarters 7 Division at Chak Pandit where his No. 2 Flight was supporting the 7 Division operations, was going to the mess to have his breakfast, when General Officer Commanding 7 Division came rushing out of his caravan. On seeing Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud, General Yahya told him that the C-in-C General Musa was on the line a short while ago. He(General Musa) had just told me the Indians have attacked Pakistan across the International Border. The attack had come at the Jassar Bridge, Burki and Kasur Sector. General Yahya further told that C-in-C had informed him that the enemy had captured Jassar Bridge. Before deciding to rush in some reinforcements or to organize a full-fledged counter attack, a clarification was very much needed. Lieutenant Colonel M M Mahmud flew back to his squadron headquarters at Lakhnwal in helicopter, which was under enemy air attack.

1 Army Aviation Squadron Readjusts

On the same very day (i.e. 6th September) Major Latif the No. 1 Flight commander of 1 Squadron at Dhamial, was told to proceed to Sialkot. No. 3 Flight of 1 Army Aviation Squadron commanded by Major Hissam was ordered to report to 2 Army Aviation Squadron at Kharian in lieu of No. 6 Flight which was under command 1 Squadron, they were also told to leave two aircraft (piloted by Captain Anwar and Lieutenant Qasim) at Bhimber in support of No. 4 Sector. No. 6 Flight was initially moved to Gujrat and then to Adamke on Daska-Sambrial Road to support 4 Corps Artillery and 6 Armoured Division.

Jassar Bridge

Lieutenant Colonel M M Mahmud along with his second-in-command, Major Nazir and adjutant, Captain Khalid Kamal immediately took off to confirm news about Jassar Bridge. Short of Jassar, adjutant was told to land at Sialkot for latest update from Headquarters 15 Division. Commanding officer and second-in-command flew over the Jassar Bridge, they flew low to clearly see the fighting taking place across the bridge, beyond our enclave on the Indian side of the bridge. They flew over the positions of own 115 Brigade. The close aerial view gave a very re-assuring picture. The bridge was intact and in firm control of



own brigade. Later this news was conveyed to General Officer Commanding 15 Division, Brigadier Ismail and Colonel Staff 15 Division, Colonel Mehdi after landing at Sialkot.

Inside Tactical Headquarters 7 Division at Chak Pandit, Major General Yahya was waiting very anxiously for the news. When informed that his appreciation of own strength at Jassar was correct and that the bridge was intact, he very excitedly exclaimed, " Did not I tell you that?" He further informed that he as General Officer Commanding 15 Division had walked the entire area on foot and conceived and planned the defensive plan of the area to the minutest details. Emphatically he explained that the logical line of the enemy attack would be on Charwa-Chobara-Phillorah-Chawinda Axis.

It was further revealed that on 5th September a Despatch Rider(DR) of the enemy was captured by 15 Division. In the mail being carried by the DR, there were some letters addressed to the Indian 1st Armoured Division. Colonel Staff gave some important letters and documents in support of it to the Commanding Officer 1 Army Aviation Squadron and asked him to fly these to General Headquarters. It was done promptly. General Headquarters now had the information on 6th September that Indian 1st Armoured Division was in the area Samba. But there were some apprehensions, lest it was a ploy.

24 Brigade along with 25 Cavalry had been positioned in area Charwa as part of the defensive plan of 15 Division. They were the committed reserves of the division. But because of the conflicting and confusing picture emerging at Jassar, by the evening of 6th September, 24 Brigade minus 3 Frontier Force Regiment(FF) and 25 Cavalry had been ordered to move to the area Jassar for any possible counter attack. The sensitive corridor of Maharajke-Charwa- Chobara had been denuded of troops.

On the night of 6-7 September 1965, enemy moved in this sector, the entire area which was the defensive position of 24 Brigade Group, was held by 3 FF Regiment. 1 Army Aviation Squadron's War Diary records, " 7 September 1965. No. 2 Flight was reporting increasing enemy activity in area Charwa-Chobara. Indians having captured a firm base in area Charwa, had now broken through, with armoured formations." "24 Brigade Group had been moved towards Jassar the previous evening. The whole sector right from Phillaura-Chawinda-Pasrur had practically no troops, situation most confusing, enemy out of reach of our guns."

There was not much of activity in the way of adjustment of artillery fire. This was essentially because the units of 4 Corps Artillery kept shuttling between Pasrur and Narowal in response to the confusing picture at Jassar.

"**H**ar Dam Tayyar " The officer's field mess was in a temple about two km west of Gujranwala city. Over 500 wild pigeons messed up the place but were effective for keeping the hostile aircraft at bay. It required a spirit of being ever ready. After a few days experience, Captain Sajjad and Captain Bajwa got their heads shaved off on the plea that it would reduce the time on personal grooming and maintenance. The fad caught up like wild fire. Major Shafaat and Major Subhan Baig followed suit . So 'Tinds' were the fashion, with " Har Dam Tayyar " as the motto. It was quite amusing when one of the skin headed pilot rescued one downed Indian pilot from Sialkot Sector, the pilot seeing the skin head remarked, " We know that you all are Chinese trained." So the effect was desireable after all.

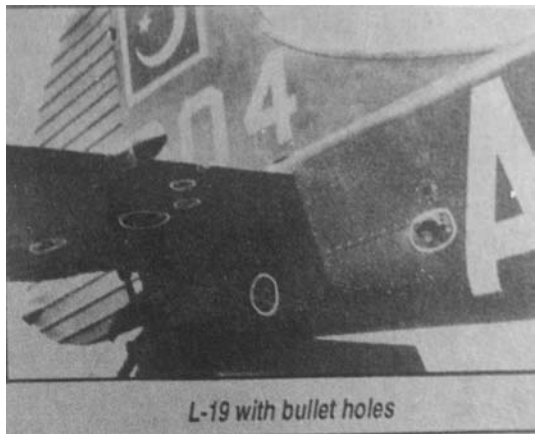


Major Sajjad Nazim and Captain Manzoor Bajwa



Pilots getting headshave

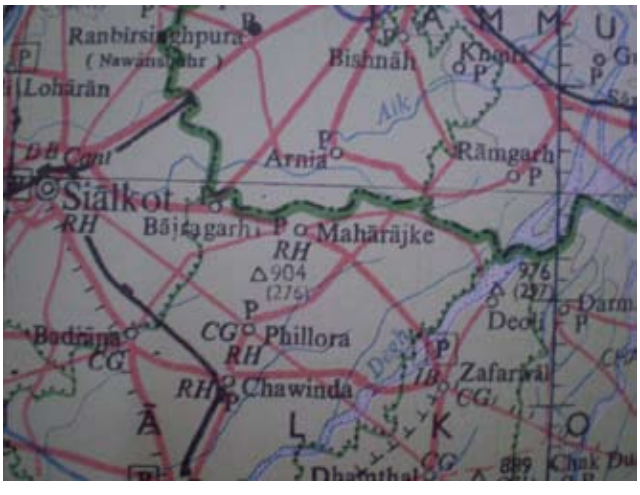
Maharajke-Sialkot Axis



H.U.K. Niazi's L-19 with Bullet Holes

On the evening of 7th September, 15 Division asked for a sortie of the L-19 aircraft along the International Border. Orders were given that without crossing the boundary the area across the Indian side should be observed. The Army Aviator was to specifically look for any major concentration and movement of the enemy in the area. Captain Niazi was detailed on this mission. He flew all along the boundary from Sialkot all the way to River Chenab. He noticed no movement or concentration of the enemy. He went to Headquarters 15 Division and briefed Colonel Staff, Colonel Mehdi. At mid night 7th September a call came from Headquarters 15 Division, Colonel Mehdi told commanding officer 1 Army Aviation Squadron that enemy had launched its attack. The main axis was Gadgor-Charwa-Chobara-Phillarauh.

Commanding Officer detailed Captain Niazi to fly on first light 8th September to confirm this news. He was also told to observe the strength and the direction of the enemy attack. Captain Niazi again flew along the boundary from Sialkot to River Chenab. He noticed no movement or concentration of the enemy. Pilot recalls"I crossed the border about 10 miles deep into the Indian territory but still could not locate any enemy armour. Must say they were well camouflaged." On his way back, ground controller warned him that Indian fighter aircraft were crossing back into India from the same direction. He was flying at 100 feet above ground level. Pilot narrates "The next moment these were over me. To escape, I pushed my aircraft towards the ground. As I had gone into nose dive my controls became ineffective. The earth was fast coming towards me and I prayed, "Oh God! Don't let me die a useless death, I have yet not seen any action?" Sure! Allah heard it and responded; the nose of the aircraft picked up a little and he made a smooth half loop at tree top level. That was his first brush with death and both made friends. Captain Niazi did not abandon the task given to him.He again flew to area Maharajke where he noticed an enemy column of tanks moving towards Sialkot, on the track Maharajke - Sialkot. He saw the leading tank reach the vicinity of Aik Nadi near Faizabad. Major General (retired)Niazi SJ writes; "I was on the reconnaissance mission and I saw 15-16 tanks moving from Charwa towards Sialkot. For positive identification I flew low over these tanks. These tanks opened up with their 50 mm machine guns. I could feel that bullets were hitting the aircraft around the wings and fuselage and the fuel also started to leak. I continued to fly and communicated enemy location to the base. I landed back. The aircraft had received 32 bullets, how did these missed me is again a miracle?". Captain Niazi returned to Sialkot Strip and gave the news to Colonel Staff 15 Division personally. 15 Division immediately sent some anti tank weapons to Aik Nadi. As the enemy tanks arrived near Aik Nadi, these weapons(RR) fired upon them. Under the fire they turned back. Bullet riddled aircraft was later flown by Major Burki for repairs at Dhamial.



Chawinda-Maharajke area

Chawinda-Phillaura Axis

Indian move on Maharajke-Sialkot axis turned out to be a diversionary move. But where was the main attack coming from? On 8th September 1965, commanding officer and second-in-command of 1 Army Aviation Squadron flew out in a L-19. They first reached Chawinda and then started flying towards Phillaurah. There were no signs of any of our troops on the ground,. It was clear that 24 Brigade Group had not yet arrived back in that area. At a distance they saw a cloud of dust on the track Charwa-Chobara-



Phillaurah. charging along that track towards Phillaurah at a high speed. Suddenly the second-in- command gave a shout of bandits to the commanding officer on the wireless. The L-19 was already flying low and the pilot braced himself for any evasive action that might be required. Suddenly he saw those aircraft diving towards the enemy column. The rockets fired were very accurate and a number of enemy vehicles were seen on fire. There were puffs of fire and smoke coming out every time these aircraft were diving in their attack runs and firing their rockets. There was a great excitement and the sight was very re-assuring. The pounding of our Air Force on the attacking columns of enemy armour had its telling effect. Between 10-15 of the enemy armoured vehicles were on fire. The attack had halted and the enemy tanks and other vehicles were hurriedly dispersing. Enemy again started its dash soon after the air attack was over.About twenty AMX tanks in line astern were charging towards Phillaura, they by passed it and headed for Chawinda. The L-19 kept flying alongside the Indian advancing armoured vehicles and tanks. The need for integral fire support capability with the Army Aviation was never so acutely felt before. So far there was no resistance or opposition to the Indian advance on the ground. Suddenly from the direction of Chawinda signs of movement on the ground appeared, they were our own Patton tanks of 25 Cavalry. It was reminiscent of charge of Light Brigade at Balaclava. After a short but fierce fight the advancing Indian columns turned around on the same track that they came on.

Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud flew back to Sialkot and went straight to Headquarters 15 Division. His arrival was most anxiously awaited. The first accurate news and account of the arrival of 24 Brigade Group in the area of Chawinda, brought a sigh of relief. The account of rapid thrust of the Indian columns, the action of own Air Force, the enemy re-grouping and resumption of advance to Chawinda and the climax of sudden appearance of own Patton tanks, was both chilling and exhilarating**.** Later captured Operational Orders of Indian 17 Cavalry revealed that 17 and 16 Cavalry were part of Indian Armoured Division. Whole operation had been stalled within 3-4 miles of launching by 24 Infantry Brigade and notably by 25 Cavalry Regiment. Commanding Officer 25 Cavalry, Lieutenant Colonel Nisar was awarded Sitara-i-Jur'at. Later these papers were were handed over to Captain Askree for onward deliverance to General Headquarters. Command of 15 Division was also handed over to Major General Tikka**.** For the second time in two days, the accurate and authentic information provided by Army Aviation proved salutary. The first regarding Jassar Bridge the second one about 24 Brigade

9th September was relatively quiet. The enemy was licking his wounds inflicted by PAF and 25 Cavalry. The 4 Corps Artillery covered the entire front, stretching from Badiana to Deg Nadi (Zafarwal) and beyond. Any enemy attack or manoeuvre would immediately attract the fire of nearly ninety guns, field, medium and heavy calibre. 2 Army Aviation Squadron's War Diary records: "Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan took off at 0500 hours with Captain Muazzam to cooperate with Headquarters 15 Division for Artillery shoots. Enemy air force was active against them and they were also fired upon by the ground enemy guns. "On the evening of 9th September, 24 Brigade Group positions were attacked by the enemy tanks and infantry, it was repulsed by the 25 Cavalry supported by Artillery, Air OP also conducted shoots during its defensive action".



Captain Zafar Askree, later GOC Army Aviation extreme left during 1965 War

Air Control Team (ACT) Radio Sets in L-19

Army Aircraft did not have the requisite radio sets to communicate with the PAF jets at the start of war. It was Colonel Muhammad Khan's brain child to use the army aircraft fitted with ACT sets. 6

Armoured Division had only six sets out of which, two were out of action from the start, two were with Army Aviation, one was unserviceable and one was with the Divisional Headquarters. On 8th September Division Headquarters handed over two VRC-24 radio sets to 2 Army Aviation Squadron. Captain Jamil and Major Akhtar flew from Gujranwala and brought them back. They were fitted in aircraft and later one was handed over to No. 6 Flight at Sialkot.

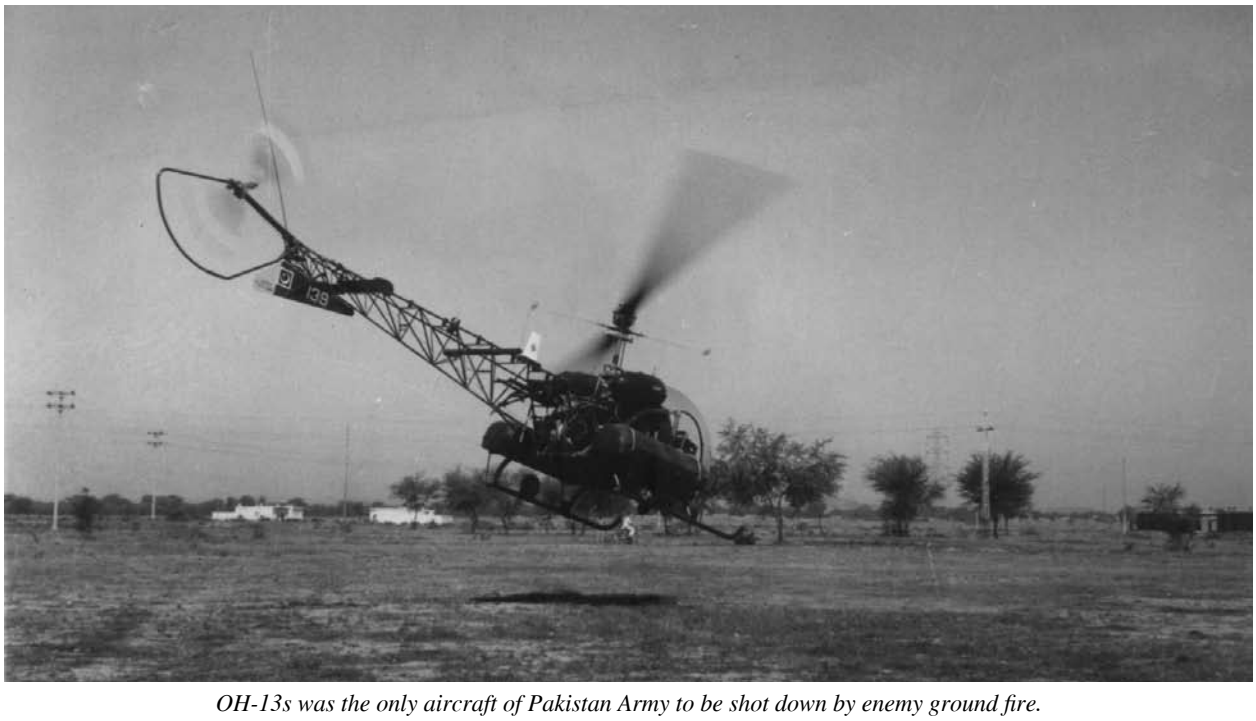
The sets did not respond as desired, therefore on 9th September, Captain Muazzam flew with a signal technician from Gujranwala to Sialkot and landed back at 0100 hours with news of good communication established. Next day at 0445 hours Captain Jamil and Captain Sajjad took off for Sialkot from Gujranwala to hand over the sets fitted in L-19 to the flight. It was still dark at the strip, when pilots came for landing they hit the embankment and crashed. Set VRC 24 was brought back to Gujranwala and fitted in other aircraft and flown back to Sialkot. At 1000 hours same day another aircraft stalled and crashed at Adamke Strip with Major Rabbani and Captain Nagy on board.

11th September 1965 - Gadogar

By first light 11th September 1965 the full weight of the Indian Armoured Division's attack came at Gadgor. The Gadgor and Phillaurah positions were overrun by the advancing enemy armour. To stem the enemy advance, Guides Cavalry counter attacked and relieved pressure on 11 Cavalry. With the counter attack of Guides Cavalry from the location at Rakh Baba Bhure Shah towards Bhagowal and Phillaurah, an intense tank battle ensued. The Army Aviators were operating on the wireless nets of the artillery formations. This was only useful for quick adjustment of artillery fire. There was no direct contact with own armour and infantry units.The information to our field units had to be relayed through the artillery nets. Sometimes it caused delays and on occasions confusion. There were queries and counter queries, to clear the conflicting interpretations and descriptions. War Diary of 2 Squadron records: "They (pilots)returned in the evening bringing back the news of heavy fighting in Sialkot Sector. Many enemy tanks were damaged and other military equipment and vehicles destroyed. Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan with artillery fire blew two enemy tanks up, Major Akhtar and Captain Muazzam claimed another one. Good job done by our bold pilots."

12th September1965-OH-13 Shot Down

Soon after sunrise, Captain Bajwa of 3 Squadron attached with 2 Squadron, landed at the Headquarters 6 Armoured Division in Sialkot Sector. He took off with GSO-1 (Operations) Lieutenant Colonel Nazir



OH-13s was the only aircraft of Pakistan Army to be shot down by enemy ground fire.



Ahmed towards Chawinda where own cavalry regiments were engaged with the enemy and some important orders had to be conveyed in person. The fluid battle situation had no clear cut demarcation of the troops.

As the helicopter was crossing Phillaurah it was fired upon by the Indian tanks. Pilot landed the helicopter safely just a few hundred meters away from the tanks. Immediately on landing Captain Bajwa switched off the helicopter and before dashing to safety burnt the operational map. As a precaution both the officers ran in different direction with bullets from tanks chasing them. Captain Bajwa reached own troops after hours of crawling and walking through sugarcane fields. Lieutenant Colonel Nazir also made it to the safety in the midnight hours.

1 Army Aviation Squadron had to change it's location as strip was becoming nuisance. It was hemmed in by a Medium Regiment on one side and a Heavy Battery on the other. Enemy air and counter bombardment was equally shared by all three. Only once an L-19 got the splinters. After the intense fire of 10/11 September, squadron reshuffled it's deployment at the landing ground. Pasrur Airfield was also scene of intense aerial and ground activities. Own 1st Armoured Division also joined there. A good number of Army aircraft operated around and an Officer's Mess was established in the vicinity of the World War- II vintage airfield at Pasrur. Although strip was established on 16th September but airfield was under use from the beginning. On 12th September at 0630 hours when pilots after landing were in the process of covering their aircraft they were attacked by the IAF, heavy bombs were dropped apart from strafing.

13th September 1965 - Zafarwal

On 12th September 1965 Army Aviators noticed enemy movement towards Zafarwal and the information was passed to 6 Armoured Division. They reacted and Zafarwal was occupied on the night 12th /13th September 1965. On the morning of 13th September 1965 the enemy main attack came at Zafarwal. The biggest tank battle since WW-2 was unfolding. In the face of the enemy attack, own infantry positions were holding ground. Situation was turning favourably however a squadron of 32 Tank Delivery Unit (Sherman Tanks) under fog of war withdrew from its position. The pilot of L-19 operating in the area, Captain Niazi, was told on the wireless net to give the message to the squadron to immediately return to Zafarwal. The pilot flew over the tanks moving towards Dhamtal. He gestured and kept indicating to them to return to Zafarwal. There was no response. He wrote a message and dropped it but to no avail. Sensing that all efforts had failed, the pilot landed the L-19 on the road in front of the tanks. The squadron at that time was commanded by a Risaldar. Captain Niazi personally explained the position to him and ordered to return back to Zafarwal. The tanks were thus successfully sent back. They later effectively participated against the enemy at Zafarwal Sector.

Captain Zafar was carrying out the reconnaissance mission in Pasrur area when his L-19 was hit by the ground fire, he never knew about that and it was only after landing that he was shown the holes. Intensive flying was kept up despite the activities of IAF. Increasing demands of artillery shoots were met by pooling all resources of pilots and aircraft

Major Akhtar's Decisive Shoot

On 13th September 1965, Major Akhtar, second-in-command of 2 Army Aviation Squadron flew in the Pasrur area for aerial observation. He spotted enemy infantry pausing under cover, due to communication problem he gained height and was easily picked up by the enemy fighter. Despite enemy fighter, Major Akhtar brought own artillery fire on enemy and completed the shoot successfully. Later own fighters shot down the intruder.



Major Mohammad Akhtar

Major Mohammad Akhtar of 2 Army Aviation Squadron was flying in Pasrur Sector on 13 September 1965. Indians were attempting to break-out with infantry in this sector, inspite of Indian preponderance in fighter cover, Major Akhter continued flying boldly and brought effective artillery fire on to the enemy which proved so successful that resulted in stalling the enemy advance. His courageous and timely action inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy.



First Air Support Request Through L-19

On 13th September 1965 for the first time Army Aviation called upon air support successfully through ACT fitted in L-19, piloted by Captain Jamil. Through air action five enemy tanks were burnt. Under the intense fire of own guns, the enemy tanks would disperse and bury themselves in the mud houses for their camouflage. The same practice they would follow, whenever our Air Force pounded them. Own Air Force was doing sorties very regularly and effectively. The ACT set carried in the L-19, was proving to be very helpful. The aerial observers were most efficiently directing our aircraft on to the enemy tanks. "Five enemy tanks were destroyed and later another three were seen burning due to air force attacks conducted by airborne control team." (War Diary 2 Army Aviation Squadron).

On 14th September one Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio set was provided by 1 Corps Headquarters to 1 Army Aviation Squadron and on the same very day at 0700 hours Major Rabbani along with Captain Jamil directed own aircraft towards enemy tanks with remarkable success. At 1330 hours Captain Muazzam and Captain Jamil again undertook this mission. They stayed for over four hours and twice directed own aircraft onto the enemy. Despite all the confusion of the intense battle on the ground, the close range engagements of our tanks, there was not a single case where own aircraft attacked any of our own tanks as of mistaken identity. This does reflect the professionalism of our Air Force pilots but also the fact that Army Aviators were very useful in guiding our own pilots. The knowledge of the ground, the exact location of the enemy armour and the full familiarity of own positions greatly helped them in meeting that role. Lieutenant Colonel Saleem Ullah later rang Colonel Mohammad Khan and conveyed PAF's appreciation.

14th September, Captain Niazi and "The Destruction of Indian 14 Mountain Division"



On 14th September 1965 Captain HUK Niazi was sent for a surveillance mission around Zafarwal. He did not return for another four hours which was causing commotion at Adamke Strip. As soon as Captain Niazi landed. He explained his prolonged absence. "After take off I gained height and started flying towards Zafarwal, I saw no enemy activity in the area so I decided to fly north of our positions at Deg Nadi. It was 0815 hours, the sun was in the east. Looking at some distance, I noticed very flashy reflections of the rays of the sun. This was over a fairly large area. This greatly intrigued me and I kept flying in that direction. I crossed the International Boundary, west of Deg Nadi. Getting nearer to these reflections, I saw a huge concentration of enemy vehicles some 4 miles west of Samba. I had a very careful look, that was why I took so long in coming back, my estimates are 2000-3000 vehicles." He further informed his commanding officer that he had passed that information to divisional headquarters on the artillery net, requesting for Air Force strike.

Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud immediately flew to Headquarters 1 Corps. He conveyed the information personally to Lieutenant General Rana, the corps commander. Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud further very strongly suggested to him that he should himself request the Air Headquarters for an air strike. He did that very promptly. The Air Headquarters was very reluctant to accept the authenticity of the news. Under insistence from the Corps Commander initially only two fighter reconnaissance aircraft were sent. Arriving overhead, they confirmed that news. On the air they requested for all available aircraft to be sent for strike in that area. Soon four F-86 of 18 Squadron, led by Squadron Leader Alau Din 'Butch' arrived. They kept pounding them with all the weapons available, including the napalm bombs, used for the first time in war. Squadron Leader 'Butch' on the same noon, destroyed ammunition train at Gurdaspur. Lion hearted 'Butch' never returned from that sortie.

The prisoners belonging to this formation captured later disclosed that Indian reinforcement (14 Infantry Division) had arrived in Samba area on 14th September. While still in their concentration area, they were spotted and very badly mauled by Pakistan Air Force. They ceased to exist as a proper fighting formation after that. From the captured enemy 1 Armoured Brigade "OO No. 3", which was signed on 13th September at 1315 hours, it was clear that the main Indian Armoured Division's attack was planned to be launched sometimes on or after 14th September 1965.


VISION COURAGE SKILL
004
ARMY
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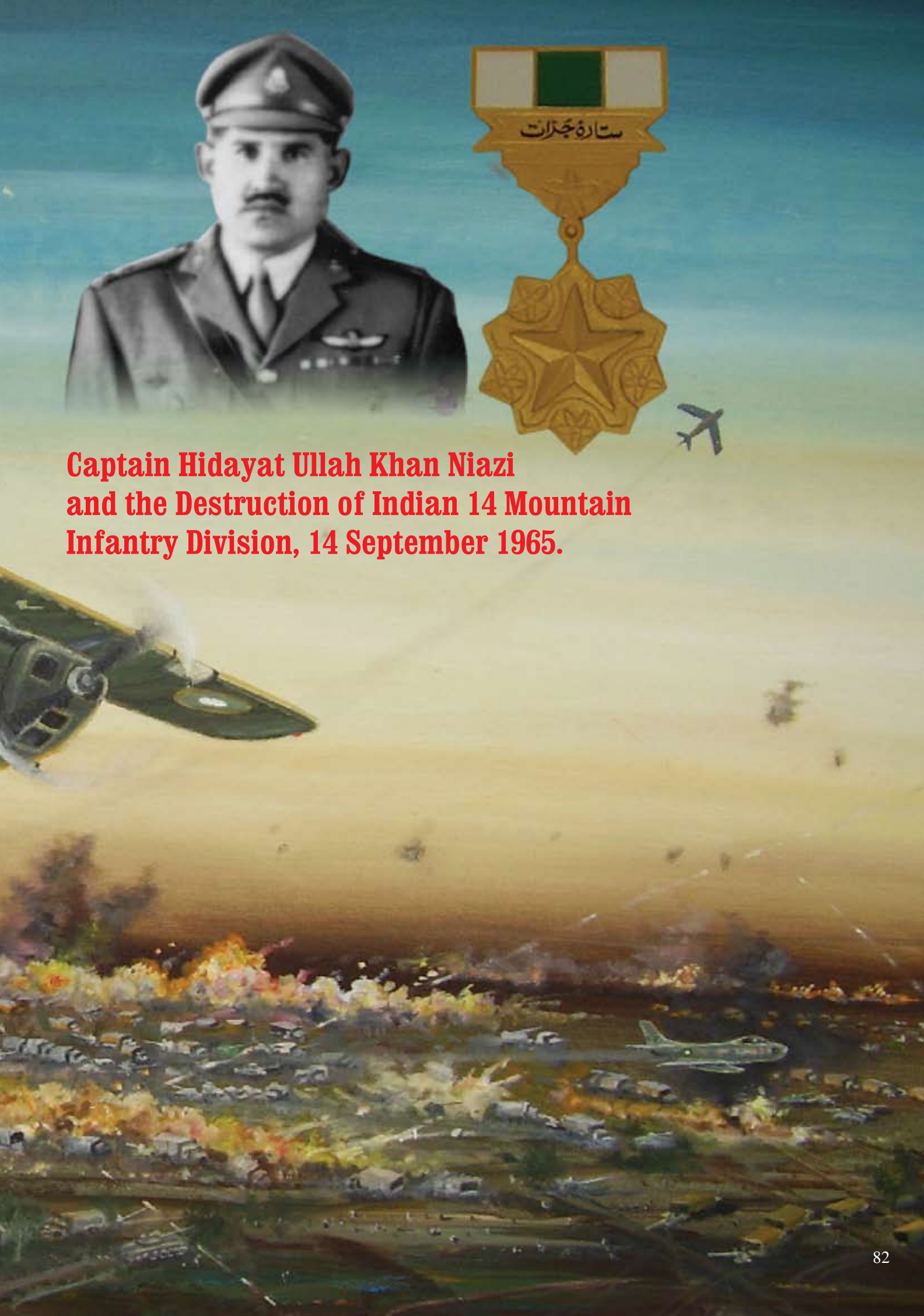


Captain Hidayat Ullah Khan Niazi and the Destruction of Indian 14 Mountain Infantry Division, 14 September 1965.



16th September - Climax

Indian attack did not proceed as planned. The fierce tank battle which started on 13th September reached its climax on 16th September. From the early morning of 16th September, the L-19 aircraft were observing clearly the three main enemy columns of attack. One column was directed towards Chawinda, the centre column was making its thrust between Chawinda and Rakh Baba Bhuhre Shah and the third enemy column was directing its attack west of the Rakh towards Badiana. The Army Aviators kept informing the details of this operation to the relevant formations. The heroic and bold fight of our tank crews blunted a very determined attack of the enemy.

Army Aviators were assisting own troops by reporting enemy movements, directions of attack, reinforcements, losses and also directing own artillery fire on enemy troops, concentration areas and rear areas. The battlefield littered with twisted steel, fire, smoke and stench of burnt human flesh also reflected the grit and determination of those who would not giveup even an inch of Pakistani land and the stubbornness of attackers who wanted to achieve a break-through to the Grand Trunk Road**.** The effective concentration of all available guns, on the attacking enemy armour columns coupled with the accurate and effective direction of our air force, through the ACT sets fitted in the aircraft, did highlight the humble contribution of the unarmed L-19 aircraft.

Captain Akhtar (lieutenant colonel retired) has profound memories of one such sortie. “We were flying over Chawinda and directing the fire of own artillery guns as Air OP. On the front seat was Captain Niazi, I was in the rear. We looked around and saw two Indian Mystere aircraft overhead. Indian aircraft took a turn and aligned their machines to attack our unarmed, slow moving L-19. Niazi once again put the nose down but could not escape fast enough; the bullets started to go through the aircraft. The enemy fire failed to kill us but crippled the aircraft. With controls damaged, we could not fly straight, one wing of the aircraft was down so we could only go round and round in circles. We managed to reach Sialkot Strip and tried to put the aircraft down. It was one wing landing. The wing first touched the ground and the aircraft started to somersault. The aircraft broke into pieces and we came out of the cockpit without a scratch. The aircraft was littered with bullet holes. Surely, one would only die when destined by Allah.”

18th September - Captain Muazzam Conducts Airborne Shoot by L-19

On 18th September 1965 the Battle of Chawinda was in the final phase with enemy craving for a break through but own troops determined not to give an inch of the motherland. Captain Muazzam took off at 0630 hours with Captain Jamil as co-pilot to act as Forward Airborne Air Controller, target was enemy heavy guns, 6 miles inside enemy territory close to Nawan Shehr.Time over target for own fighters was 0700 hours. Visibility was poor and observation difficult. As they flew forward for better observation they came under enemy anti aircraft fire but Captain Muazzam boldly and skilfully directed own fighters amidst this panoramic fire. He flew up till 500 yards of enemy guns, 3 out of 6 guns were destroyed.



Captain Muazzam Ali Shah

Captain Muazzam Ali Shah of 2 Army Aviation Squadron was flying in Sialkot Sector during war in September 1965. On 18 September when critical battle ensued in this sector, Captain Muazzam was tasked to destroy hostile heavy artillery deployed deep in enemy area. He flew boldly close to the enemy guns inspite of heavy anti aircraft fire and managed to guide own fighter jets effectively on to enemy. The enemy guns were silenced for ever.

ARMY AVIATION BASE DHAMIAL

Aircraft were dispersed at the base, L-19s and few OH-13 were camouflaged under the trees near present day Fauji Factory. Air Defence elements were also placed at the intersection consisting of 37 mm and 14.5 mm four barrel guns.



Lieutenant Colonel M.M. Karim
Aviation School Commandant

First Operational Night Mission - Night Flight To Sargodha

Brigadier retired Hamid Chaudhry writes, "In 1965 when war broke out, I was in Army Aviation School as a Qualified Flying Instructor. On 7th September night flying was scheduled for P-7 Course. When I reached the school at night commandant Lieutenant Colonel M M Karim called me and Captain Rasheed Beg (Qualified Flying Instructor) in his office. He briefed us regarding a night mission to Sargodha and back. PAF on the instructions from General Headquarters had flown a photo reconnaissance mission over Jammu area and the photographs were to be picked up from operations room at PAF Base Sargodha and flown to General Headquarters for operational planning. The photographs were to be brought as soon as possible, therefore we were ordered to take off immediately. I filed a flight plan with the tower, the only briefing I got from Air Traffic Controller consisted of the following three sentences:-

"Sargodha Base has been informed of your mission. Sargodha Base is likely to be attacked by Indian Air Force tonight therefore keep your navigation lights off and keep radio communication to bare minimum. On arrival at Sargodha you might not get the runway lights for landing therefore land in total darkness."

"We took off at around 2030 hours on the 7th September 1965 in L-19 No. 013 for Sargodha Base.



Captain Hamid Choudhry

L-19 getting Airborne from Dhamial Army Aviation Base during 1965 War



We had just crossed Salt Range and started descending when we got a short call from Sargodha. "L-19 approaching Sargodha stay to the North, Sargodha under air raid." The next thing we saw was an umbrella barrage being fired by own Anti Aircraft Regiments. I am myself an Anti Aircraft Gunner and had read about "Umbrella Barrage" but seeing one was really believing it. We started circling over Jhelum River and after ten minutes were cleared to approach Sargodha Airfield for landing. We headed towards the airfield and according to time flown should have been overhead the field but not a single thing was visible on ground due to complete black out. Sargodha runway had a black surface, which added to our difficulty of recognition. Sargodha controller was hesitant to talk to us and not prepared to give us runway lights for landing. In the meantime to our good luck we saw two jets taking off from the runway. We were at such a position that we could see the flames coming out of their tail pipes. We immediately headed for the runway, informed the ATC and made a safe landing.

We were still rolling on the runway and happily discussing our safe landing that we got another short call from the air traffic controller "L-19 get off the runway, switch off and take cover." We immediately pulled off towards the fair weather strip and went close to the tree line. Within seconds we saw the Anti Aircraft Regiment firing another Umbrella Barrage. At the same time we heard a formation of Indian Jets drop two heavy bombs at the airfield at low level. The only damage caused was to a taxi track and luckily there was no loss of life or aircraft. Witnessing an umbrella barrage is one thing but penetrating it requires a lion's heart, the devil must be given his due, they were brave pilots. Later we learnt that they were four aircraft and one was hit.

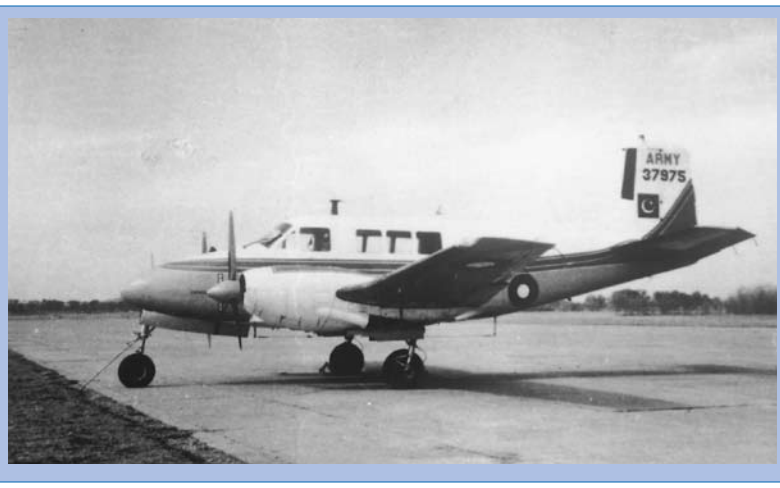
Once that raid was over, we started the aircraft and taxied to the parking area. We called for the required documents from PAF Operations Room and headed back for Dhamial. We reached Dhamial past the mid night where representatives from General Headquarters were eagerly waiting." This was the first operational night mission of 1965 war by an Air OP.

Turning into a Bomber Base

On some nights, Dhamial Base was utilized by the PAF to launch couple of their improvised strategic bombers to take care of the suspected enemy concentrations behind the front-lines. For the purpose, the fleet of lumbering C-130 was utilized with ingenuity and imagination. Such actions always created some excitement at the base. Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Babar was the duty officer at the base when the sortie of C-130 was conducted. He recalls: "It was the policy of PAF to disperse their aircraft in anticipation of Indian air attacks. My office was at the present day tea bar. At night I received a call from a Grade-1 staff officer at Lahore in which he mentioned about the reports of Indian concentration close to BRB Canal. Wing Commander Eric of PAF was also listening and he inquired about the situation on which I mentioned the conversation. The original task of C-130 was somewhere but Wing Commander Eric insisted on taking up that task in addition to the already designated targets and after lot of coordination the mission was finally approved. The bombing was accurate and deadly and later Wing Commander Eric was awarded with Sitara-I-Jurat.

L-23 Missions

During the daylight hours, some missions were undertaken by the solitary L-23, piloted by Major Shams Kureishy and Major Mushtaq Madni, to take General Musa to Lahore, Hafizabad and Pasrur during the war.





Beavers arrived at Dhamial Base



Captain Abdul Rasheed Baig with Beaver

Four Beaver(L-20) aircraft were requisitioned from Plant Protection Department. These six-seater, single-engine aircraft arrived at Dhamial Base on 27th July 1965. On 6th September evening there were two of these aircraft at the Base. On 8th another Beaver was flown in by Mr. Zaka Ullah Khan and remained so till 24th March 1966. Selected officers, including Majors Ayub, Fazal ur Rehman, Mansoor Sial, Aftab, Masoom, Saqlain and Captain Abdul Rasheed Baig underwent conversion from 14th June-26th June and from 2nd July to 17th July 1965. These officers had been familiar with the Beaver aircraft by virtue of undergoing instrument flying on it either at Stuttgart (Germany) or at Fort Rucker (America). Instructor was Mr. Zaka Ullah Khan, the Chief pilot of Plant Protection at Karachi ; all Beavers were in Yellow Colour.

The first operational sortie was under taken By Major Ayub and Major Fazal ur Rehman on 7th September 1965. It flew to Quetta and brought Major General Shahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan and Colonel Sawar Khan(later Vice Chief of Army Staff). Both the officers were urgently required at General Headquarters; as Command and Staff College had been closed. On 20th September 1965, two Indian pilots (POWs) were flown from Rahwali to Rawalpindi. Mr. Zakaullah Khan also flew operational sorties. He writes, "For days I would fly from Dhamial to Karachi, Hyderabad, landing down on the way at various places(HQs), delivering critical ammunition, medicines, mail and surveillance. I flew first Indian POW from Chhor to Rawalpindi, he was Colonel K.K.V. Nimba. Army Commander, General Musa was also flown by me on 18th September 1965 from Rawalpindi to Suleimanke." Colonel Awan, Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Khan the base second-in-command along with Lieutenant Colonels Mahmud and Saeed Qadir, planned to turn Beaver into a light bomber aircraft. Trials were conducted at Bara Khau at the end of war. Bombing was to be done by a little modification, installing a commode like structure with an aperture for dropping an appropriate size bomb manually on selected target. Beavers flew 377 operational hours.

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan, after consultation with the technical staff, improvised a pod for mounting a medium machine gun(MMG) on the OH-13 helicopter skids but it was bit too late as the war was about to terminate.

Local Defence At Dhamial

Local defence of the huge perimeter was organized with the available left-over units and obviously the main chunk came from the maintenance side responsible for base-repairs. For the purpose, services of available infantry officers were utilized to the maximum. Captain Khalid Javed Janjua (later Lieutenant Colonel retired) from Punjab Regiment, sited the trenches and weapons. He also tried to train the available technicians as infantry men. Captain Irshad Gul, from Piffer Battalion was made responsible to organize and lead a reserve force in case of an unforeseen eventuality.

Enemy Paratroopers

On 7th September Lieutenant Colonel Saleem Ullah was in the General Headquarters to attend the



daily briefing. Army Chief General Musa was also present. Colonel Saleem narrates: "I was standing in one corner when telephone rang, since General Musa was close by he picked up the telephone and talked. Later he told us that Indian paratroopers had landed in Sargodha area and inquired about own troops in the vicinity, there were none, so he ordered the Station Commander Jhelum to stand on the road and divert Commando Company who were to pass through and then he looked at me and ordered to have aircraft sweep the area." The base was put on red alert that night, to search the area around the airfield especially the likely places considered as the suitable sites for rallying of enemy's paratroopers.

A fighting patrol was pushed out under the command of Captain Irshad Gul (brigadier retired). He combed the suspected corners successfully but on return the patrol was fired upon by a jittery defender who had not become really proficient in the art of challenging and differentiation between friend and foe. Luckily the trigger-happy soldier was not a marksman and no one was hurt.

Subsequently Captain Shafaat and Captain Sheraz went in the L-19 to Chiniot area for the search of enemy paratroopers; they did not find any thing. Again on 9th September Major Sultan and Captain Sagheer flew in OH-13(S) No. 143 and 139 to search enemy paratroopers but returned in vain.

2 Army Aviation Squadron's War Diary also records that "At 2230 hours on 8th September, an alarm was raised in the camp that some enemy paratroopers had been dropped near by. Captain Jamil, Muazam and Salim took few soldiers to find them out. The search was of no avail."

At Sialkot 1 Army Aviation Squadron was also not immune from rumours, on the evening of 10th September, few civilians informed Headquarters 15 Division of seeing enemy tanks all around them, Squadron was put on general alert, second-in-command Major Nazir alerted the Squadron for possible move to Gujrat Strip, less one aircraft. Later, Major Nazir and Captain Askree flew around to find the truth, it was a false alarm. On 13th September driver Dost Mohammad of 1 Squadron was shot fatally by the own guard commander, it was dark and with rumours of enemy paratroopers still in the air, guard commander challenged him and on not receiving the proper pass word, fired. Dost Mohammad was buried with full military honours. He was the only war casualty of Army Aviation.

Last Day Of The War

At 0300 hours on 23rd September 1965, ceasefire was declared between Pakistan and India. It was a hectic day for all the three squadrons. Captain Jamil and Muazzam flew and landed at Khem Karan where 2 Squadron Flight was placed on a dusty strip, Captain Nagi took General Attique to Pasrur and back to Gujranwala, Captain Askaree evacuated Captain Nisar of Special Services Group from Narowal to Sialkot, he was wounded by a bullet. Colonel Babar and Major Tirmizi of 3 Squadron flew liaison sortie in 7 Division area. Pilots of 3 Squadron were still busy in evacuating casualties from Palangi.

Major Nazir, Captain Khalid Saeed and Captain Baig of 1 Squadron had narrow escape, while coming from Sucheet Garh, they were short of fuel, and home-base was covered in a layer of cloud.There was quite a gale blowing at Sialkot Strip when they landed. Perhaps an appropriate anti climax to the war.



The
34,427 MELBOURNE, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1965

INDIANS FORCED TO RETREAT

Staff man covers war

Peace talks continue

From Australian Associated Press

RAWALPINDI, September 10.—The United Nations Secretary-General (U Thant) continued his efforts here today to halt the Pakistan-Indian fighting as India admitted a Pakistani success in the Punjab.

"Big advance"

Bravery Awards For Army Aviators

In all, during the War, four Sitara-i-Jur'at were awarded to the aviators for bravery in the air in addition to the one bagged by Lieutenant Colonel N.U.K Babar earlier in Chamb for rounding up a good number of Indian Infantry., Captain H.U.K Niazi of 1 Army Aviation Squadron, Major Rabbani, Major Akhtar and Captain Muazzam from 2 Army Aviation Squadron earned these honours. 3 Squadron alone flew 1249 sorties, flying 1348 hours and evacuating 145 casualties.



Lieutenant Colonel
Naseer Ullah Babar



1965 War



Major Sarfraz Rabbani



Captain
Muazzam Ali Shah



Captain
Hidayat Ullah Khan Niazi



Major Akhtar



First Use Of Two MI-4 Helicopters

The war ended on 23rd September 1965 but the demand for aviation effort increased further for reconnaissance and liaison missions. The quantum of troops in Kashmir during and after the 1965 War, was almost doubled, particularly the infantry battalions and artillery regiments. Previously only a thin line of infantry troops with scarce artillery support was deployed on the cease fire line before the commencement of the conflict. The rapidly advancing autumn/ winter season made logistic support a nightmare for the commanders at all levels. Rations, ammunition for the troops and fodder for pack animals was essential. The transportation of ration, ammunition and fodder through porter parties between the road heads and forward locations would only be a trickle. The logistic situation, particularly in Nelum, Jhelum Valleys, Bagh and Rawalakot Sectors was really desperate.



MI-4

The story as narrated by brigadier retired Syed Mustanir Tirmizi, then a major, deserves to be told in his own words "While returning from a mission in Azad Kashmir in OH-13 helicopter, one late September evening, I spotted two junkish looking large helicopters parked on the strip at Dhamial Airfield. After switching off my helicopter, I walked over to these machines out of sheer curiosity. I had not seen such helicopters during my basic helicopter training in USA. In any case, our ally USA, had already put a ban on arms supply to Pakistan. I circled around the nearest helicopter. As compared to OH-13 it was a giant, a bit ugly looking and much rugged as compared to the American helicopters. On enquiring I was told that those were the Russian MI-4 helicopters belonging to Oil & Gas Development Corporation (OGDC) and had been requisitioned by the Army. It did not arouse any enthusiasm or excitement in me as a pilot. I was wondering whether those ugly birds could ever take off and fly. Next morning the indomitable Lieutenant Colonel NUK Babar, introduced us to Mr. Bashar and retired Flight Lieutenant Bokhari, the two Oil & Gas Development Corporation (OGDC) pilots along with their co-pilots. A draconian order was issued to us i.e. Majors A L Awan, S L A Bokhari, Muhammad Naeem and myself, to fly and get acquainted with the two MI-4 helicopters, by local flying in Dhamial circuit for two days and next two days to be spent for the area familiarization of Oil & Gas Development Corporation (OGDC) pilots in 1, 5 and 6 Sectors and as usual flight safety be damned. Army Aviation would not let down the men and animals located on the Line of Control. The actual logistic operations would start after four days. Such an order would have raised many eye brows under normal conditions but all of us were cognizant of the desperate logistic situation in AK where we were operating for the last couple of months.



Brig Syed Mustanir Tirmizi

Landing at Leepa Valley helipad was particularly a trying experience since it entailed spiraling down in tight cup shaped valley from ten thousand to seven thousand feet with trigger happy Indian infantry occupying the heights. The first trial landing was carried out very gingerly with thumping hearts. We, the squadron pilots, were in no position to control the helicopter, not being fully operational while sitting in the co-pilot seat. Our functions were confined to navigation and sweating only. All credit to Captains Bashar and Bokhari of Oil & Gas Development Corporation (OGDC), who completed this difficult transition with aplomb."

"Needless to say, the mere appearance of two big helicopters was immensely morale boosting for the

beleaguered troops. They were assured of their logistical sustenance during the next six winter months when road / porter operation would come to a halt due to snow. These two MI-4 helicopters provided the necessary logistic support admirably in four out of six AK Sectors. Bhimber and Kotli Sectors were relatively more accessible by existing road network. In addition, parachutes used to air drop supplies by the transport planes of the PAF and collected by the recipients, were also brought back for reuse from inaccessible areas."

"Throughout the winter of 1965-66 we were busy like bees in logistic flight operations. Kel was to be supplied from Muzaffarabad, Leepa from Garhi Dopatta and Bagh, Rawalakot Sectors from Moong Bajri. As per the schedule worked out with Headquarters 12 Division, we would operate from Muzaffarabad, Garhi Dopatta and Moong Bajri, for ten to twelve days in rotation. By that time we had become fully operational on MI-4 helicopter. Hence after a farewell dinner in the Army Aviation Officer's Mess, we relieved Basher and Bukhari and started independent operations with a skeleton Oil & Gas Development Corporation (OGDC) maintenance crew." Full credit goes to Lieutenant Colonel Babar who in his own style caught the bull by the horn and his officers who zealously and devotedly tamed it and undertook many missions without any hesitation. Dumping operation was carried out from 30th October 1965 to February 1966 and following tonnage of ration and ammunition was lifted:-

Leepa	99 tons in 15 days
Kharsan Dhara	32 tons in 10 days
Dhok Panjal	25 tons in 15 days
Sheru ka Dhera	24 tons in 30 days
Kel	6 tons in 10 days
Kahuta Hajipir	8 tons in 4 days
Hajipir	2 tons in 2 days
Serai Hyderabad	6 tons in 6 days
Total	202 tons



MI-4



MI-4 with Russian and Pakistani Crew (Maj Naeem 2nd from left and Maj A L Awan Last from left)

Sadhewala Post- December 1965

When 1965 War ended, Pakistan was holding a sizeable chunk of Indian territory, in the southern desert Pakistan Army along with Rangers had Kishengarh Fort, Tanot, Longanewala, Ghutara and area right down to Shahgarh. In the line of posts from Islamgarh to Ghultara being held by own Rangers, there was one post Sadhewala being held by Indians. Movement of troops from Longanewala to Tanot and Kishengarh thus required long detours. That Indian post was getting reinforcement from Ramgarh.

L-19 Arrives in Sadhewala

On 20th October 1965 Captain Hamid Chaudhry and Captain Muazzam were ordered to fly from Gujranwala to Rahim Yar Khan and operate with the Rangers. They arrived there via Multan on the same day and reported to Headquarters Rangers. Rangers Force was commanded by Brigadier Khuda Dad. In the desert the ground movement was difficult and time consuming, therefore aerial reconnaissance proved to be very useful both in planning and execution phase of this operation. From 27th November 1965 onwards, Aviation effort was mainly diverted towards reconnaissance of Sadhewala. Officers of the rangers and infantry battalion which were to take part in the attack were flown. They include Major Tariq Rasul (father of Brigadier Arif Rasul), Brigadier Khuda Dad, Lieutenant Colonel Majid, Lieutenant Colonel Talib and Lieutenant Colonel Toni Mahmood. Desert features present different perspective early morning and changes with passage of day and position of sun. Pilots flew early morning and then late in the afternoon, they also helped rangers in making a sand model of the Sadhewala Post at their headquarters. D-Day was fixed on 2nd December 1965.

1st December 1965

Three reconnaissance sorties were flown in the area. Withdrawl route from Sadhewala led to Ramgarh via Morgich Ka Dera and Miraowala Tibba. The routes of the enemy as pointed by the Air OP were blocked by having blocking positions on the same night.



D-Day 2nd December 1965

Captain Hamid Chaudhry writes: "A dawn attack was planned, I took off before first light. The flying time from Rahim Yar Khan to Sadhewala via Sandh was about 40 minutes. I was on target 20 minutes before the first light. As planned earlier, I started with an Artillery Shoot as part of pre H-hour bombardment.

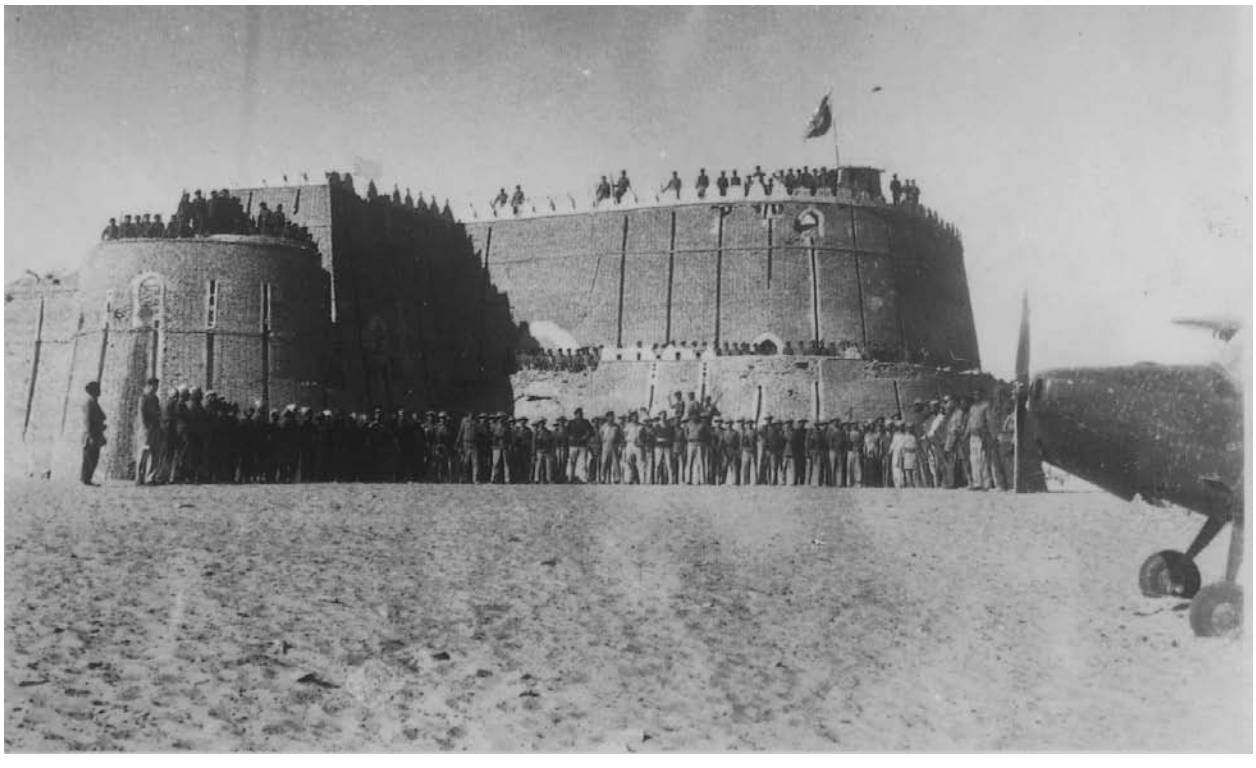
Sadhewala Post was located in a large bowl of sand with high brims. Enemy was sitting on the high ground. By this time extensive flying had made me familiar with the area. Enemy was pinned down by own accurate artillery fire and own troops reached assaulting position. The moment own artillery fire was lifted the Indians were able to open heavy machine gun fire on our assaulting troops. I, from the air, guided the battalion of Lieutenant Colonel Toni to move behind the Sadhewala and reach the track, thus cutting off the withdrawal route. I had Lieutenant Colonel Majid with me in the L-19. Indians after some time, started withdrawing, I could see them running back on camels, foot and in the lone jeep. But they were nipped by the battalion of Colonel Toni Mahmood. By 1000 hours the post had been captured.

Later I landed in the bowl of Sadhewala. The whole post was littered with dead bodies. Indian Post commander, Lieutenant Paraveen Kumar was captured, he had thick eye glasses. When one of our soldier tried to blind fold him, Paraveen Kumar said, " Just take the glasses off, without them, I am blind." I saw a dead body of a Second Lieutenant with his steel helmet lying on his side, inside the helmet was the photograph of a beautiful smiling girl."

Epilogue

. The War of 1965 with India was the first challenge faced by the Pakistan Army, so was the case with air arm of the army. L-19 were already here for last over six years and pilots were pretty confident about their operational use. OH-13 helicopters, however, were a recent acquisition and their appearance on the battlefield was to a large extent a surprise for even own soldiers. The pilots were not very experienced but the whole force entered the war with excellent frame of mind. No body could have prepared the aviators better than it was done by the senior aviators of that time. A lot of credit goes to Colonel Awan, Lieutenat Colonels Jabbar, Salimullah, Karim, Mahmud, Babar, Mohammad Khan and Saeed Qadir.

Five Sitara-i- Jur'at conferred upon the new force is a convincing credential of their contribution, in the final outcome of the battle field.



L-19 at Sadhewala

Glimpses of





Captain Bajwa the only Pilot to be shot down by enemy fire





Maj Farhat Burki and Maj Jamil Ahmed





199 EME Battalion

1965 War

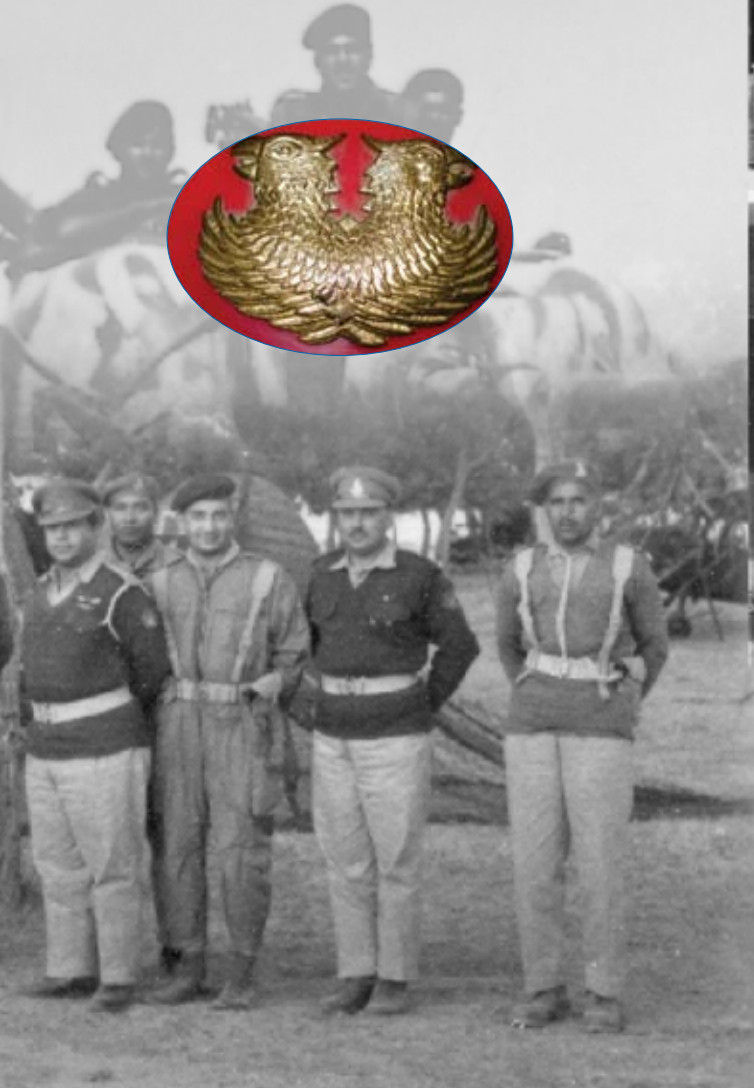


Officers' Field Mess at Gujranwala was established in a temple





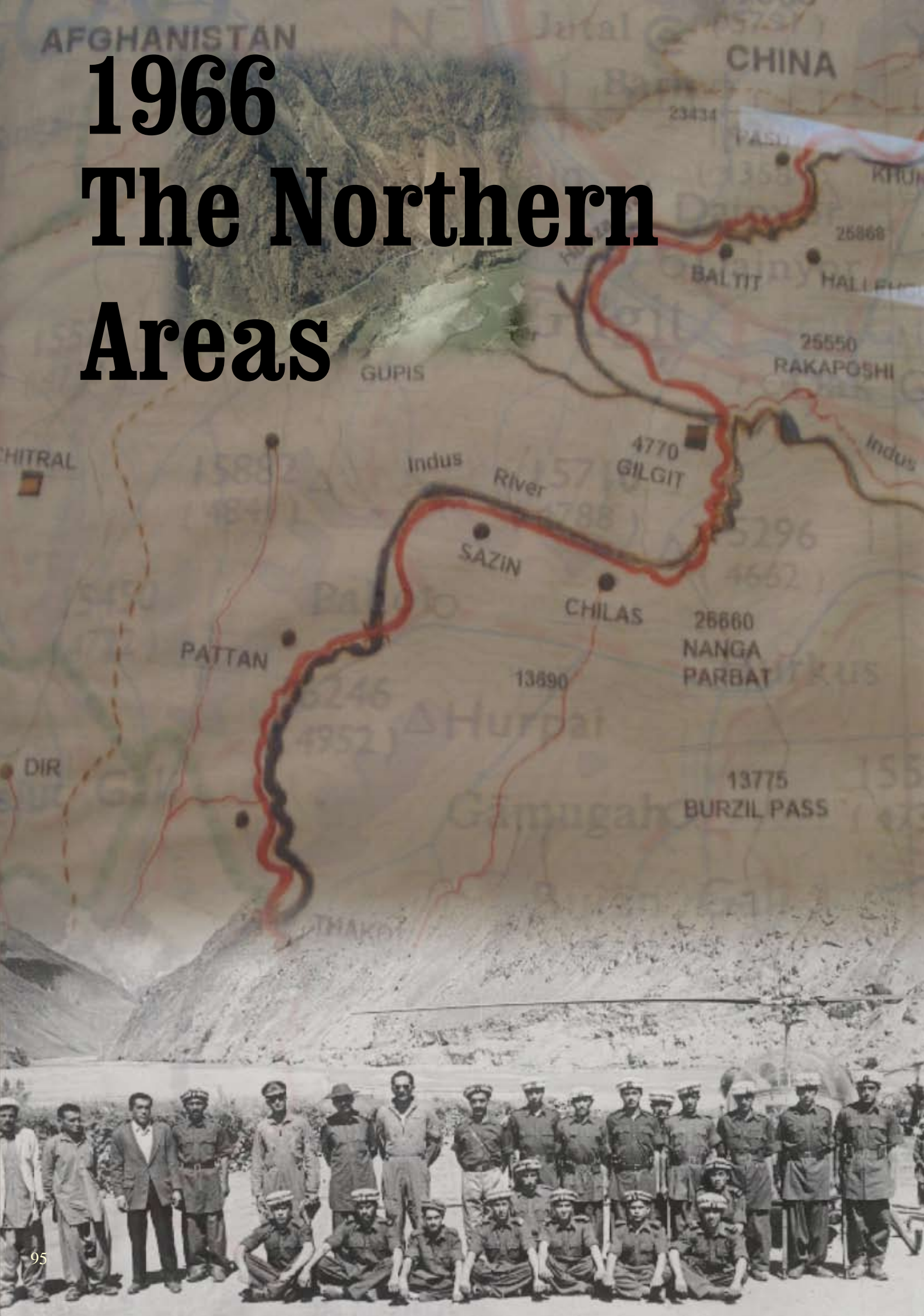
Capt Ikram Ullah first on the left and Capt Rasheed Beg fourth from right





Capt Aftab, Maj Tirmizi, Maj Askree & Capt Ross

1966 The Northern Areas




Sat
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Taisot
Bilchhār
Shauki
Chhamongar
Parri
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Shimrot
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Bhola
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Patuakhali
Hathazari
Chittagong
Dakhin Shahbazpur
Island
Kutubdia
Island
the Ganges

INTO THE NORTHERN AREAS

Immediately after the 1965 War, GHQ started contemplating use of OH-13 helicopters in Northern Areas. On 17 September 1966 the proving sorties in OH-13 were flown by Lieutenant Colonel Babar and Major A.L. Awan in Gilgit and surrounding areas. Further proving flights were made by the helicopters in Khunjerab, Hunza, Passu and Skardu area between 17-20 September 1966. Resultantly flight of two OH-13 helicopters was positioned at Gilgit during early May 1967. OH-13s went by C-130. Major M.K. Bajwa took over the flight during late May and stayed on till the flight was closed down in September 1967. This flight was pioneer in crossing Burzil for Gultri on 16th August 1967, when it took Colonel R.B. Baluch of Northern Scouts. He was back in Gilgit after his inspection of troops at Gultri in six hours instead of usual nine days, much to the astonishment of locals. Earlier flight commander had wisely checked the high altitude performance of OH-13 on 1st August 1967, when he took off from Shimshal Post(10,000 feet) with Major Riaz Ahmed of Army Medical Corps a bulky surgeon at General Hospital Gilgit and in the process set a new altitude record of 17,200 feet.

In August 1967, eight officers each of 1 and 2 Squadrons under Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Khan went in with eight aircraft on familiarization and reconnaissance of Gilgit, Passu, Hunza, Khunjerab area in L-19s, they flew over 14,000 feet and also landed at Passu.



OH-13S at Gultri - 1969



Allouette at Dhamial Base

In Comes The Allouette – III

OH-13 helicopter provided excellent support during the 1965 War. Some shortcomings were however felt with OH-13. Major concern was the passenger carrying capacity and the limited higher altitude performance of OH-13. Colonel Jabbar the Dhamial Base Commander and Lieutenant Colonel Babar SJ, discussed these and recommended French Allouette helicopters.

Allouette helicopters were approved for Pakistan Army mainly due to the fact that PAF was also inducting Allouettes. On 19th April 1967, sanction of Commander in Chief was received for training of three pilots (captains / majors), in France for a period of four weeks and two of the pilots were to receive the instructor training as well. Selected officers were Major Ziauddin Javed of 11 Cavalry, Captain Khalid Sagheer of 3 Squadron and Captain Asghar Aziz from Aviation School. Pakistani pilots finished their training by end June 1967 and the first three Allouettes arrived by C-130 aircraft along with a French Test Pilot, Mr. Schiano. On 18th October 1967 first Allouette III was assembled and air tested and on 17 January 1968 third Allouette III arrived at Dhamial Base.

These helicopters were inducted in 3 Squadron. In 1970, second batch of almost 25 technicians went to France for overhauling training, one of them was Captain Ijaz Minhas, he spoke of training being conducted at three places relating to engine, airframe and rotors. There was a requirement to induct more of these bird, thus on 30th May 1970 Brigadier Jabbar went to France for the procurement of further Allouettes which included helicopters for PAF as well.



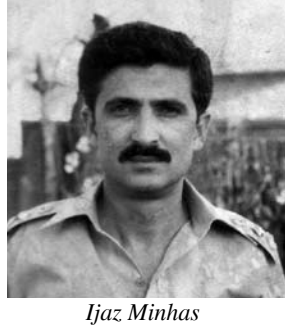
Zia ud Din Javed



Khalid Sagheer



Asghar Aziz



Ijaz Minhas



Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) Aviation Flight

In 1967 Pakistan and China agreed to construct nine hundred kilometres long road.linking Pakistan with China through Khunjerab Pass. Project to construct a road linking northern areas with the rest of the country was already underway as 'Indus Valley Project' but with the signing of the contract with China the design and magnitude of the project underwent drastic changes. Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) was raised in 1967 for KKH Project and it was decided that due to inaccessible terrain an aviation set-up integral to FWO would be raised. Initially PAF was looking after the aviation requirements. Two Allouettes of PAF after their induction were placed at Gilgit. PAF also got one MI-6 on trials basis for this purpose, but soon it met with accidents, first at Gharial and later a fatal accident at Gilgit, in which apart from Russian crew, PAF pilots undergoing training also perished. On 5th April 1969 FWO Flight previously flown by PAF was taken over by Army Aviation and re-organisation took place on 26th July 1969.

KKH built through the towering heights of Karakorum Mountains was opened for traffic in 1977 is a feat of engineering skills backed up by superb determination and persistent efforts of ten years. Thousands of brave men of Engineer Corps of Pakistan Army and Chinese worked day and night on precipitous rocky cornices to translate this dream into reality. Hanging onto fragile ledges with mighty River Indus snaking its way through narrow gorges, thousands of feet below. These dedicated men defied all fears and went about dauntlessly completing their work inch by inch. The only link these fearless workers deployed in such inhospitable and remote terrain with civilization were the Allouette–III Helicopters of Pakistan Army Aviation. The distinct whine of Allouette- III turbine was such a welcome sound to these men on KKH, since it would bring their mail, carry sick and wounded to hospitals and at times fly in the ration and supplies, if other means were blocked, which was quite common. At every new cut which these men made in the rock a new helipad would also be made to allow Allouette-III operations.

The First Flight Commander Remembers



Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Ziaudin Javed

Major Ziaudin Javed was the first flight commander of Frontier Works Organization Karakorum Aviation Flight (FWO, KKH Flight). He narrates," One day in February 1969, I was called by the Director Military Intelligence, Brigadier A.B.Awan and asked, "Can you handle it ?" I replied in affirmative. First I went alone by PIA to Gilgit, to assess the situation. I got briefing from the PAF Flight Commander, Squadron Leader Basit. They (PAF pilots) were operating for a year. I flew with them, to Khunjerab and other places on Allouette. I studied more about the area on the map as well and prepared a feasibility report in consultation with Brigadier Saeed and Director General FWO Brigadier Riaz. Rules and regulations were charted out. All manpower went by PIA or C-130. FWO was in tents, only Northern Scouts were in Pucca building. The first batch of pilots included Majors Ikramullah, H.U.K Niazi, Nauman and Captain Qayyum. Later Majors Farrukh, Naseem, and Javed also joined in. Two of PAF Allouettes, which in fact were purchased by the FWO, were also taken over along with the spares. Manpower was controlled by the EME. Havildar Nazar was one of the pioneer flight engineers there. Pilots were living in canvas and crew chiefs were attached with the Northern Scouts. Ration was drawn on Last Ration Certificate (LRC) from FWO; we had one jeep for the flight commander, a Chinese BJ.

Extensive flying training was carried out in narrow valleys. It was quite demanding due to lot of

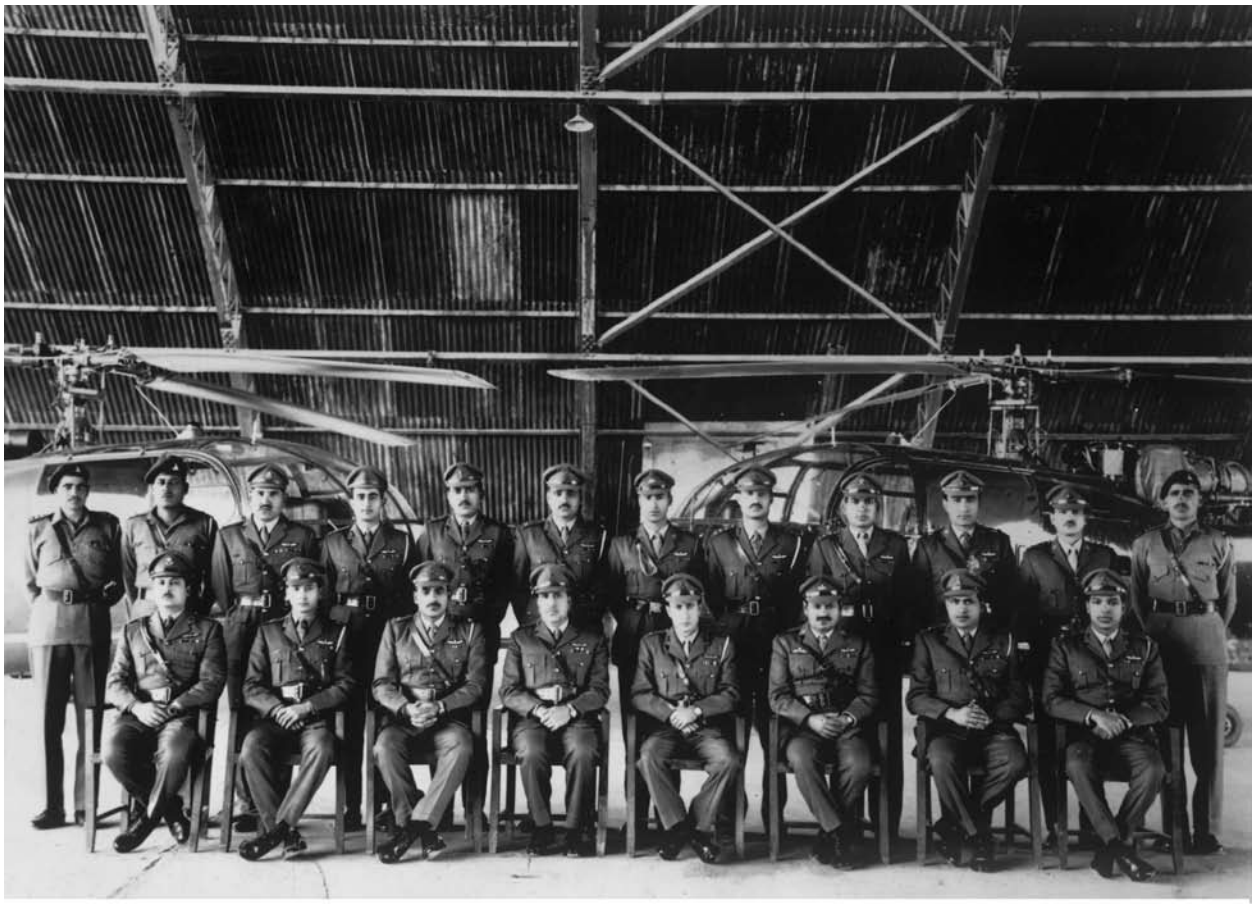


updrafts and physical disillusion. Pinnacle landing was practised near Hunza and we would daily fly from Gilgit for training and would make the pinnacle approaches from different angles due to constant veering of wind. Flying techniques were adopted out of experience like it is always safe to fly in the center of the valley; lot of emphasis was laid on weight and balance. Daily briefing and debriefing would be carried out. As there was not much to do so most of the time would be spent on the helicopter. After refresher training I would send the pilots for solo flying in Chilas Valley etc.

Gilgit was a small place; there was one cinema which would play three hours movie in seven hours. Electricity was there till 2200 hours. Agency Hospital looked after all medical problems. It was in a small shed with different wards. Brigadier Habibullah was the resident and pilots were known as the 'Flying Residents'.

Engineer battalions on wireless would send the message to the headquarters giving location, and number of casualties. There were helipads marked at company, battalion and group headquarters location. The reaction time would be ten minutes during working hours and add another ten for off working hours. We had a telephone at our residence. The two Allouettes were always ready with the stretcher and were parked in the open.".

3 Army Aviation Squadron, February 1968



Sitting — Maj ZD Javeed (Flt Comd.), Maj PC Tierney (Flt Comd.), Maj MA Qayyoom (2IC), Lt Col NK Babar (CO), SJ, Maj MF Brandon (Ofig CO), Maj IM Syed (Flt Comd.), Maj Sirajuddin Ahmed (Flt Comd.), Maj SZM Askree

Standing — Sub Fazal Ellahi, N/Sub Asghar Ali, Maj HUK Niazi, SJ, Maj MK Bajwa, Maj MK Sagheer, Maj CH Hamid Hussain, Maj Sajjad Nazim, Capt Ikram Ullah Khan, Capt Jawaid Hameed, Maj Aftab Ahmed, Capt Ali Jawahar Khan, N/Sub Allah Ditta



The First Cut of KKH



Casualty Evacuation on KKH

Here Come M I – 8 Helicopters

On an eventful day in 1966, the Soviet Trade Mission in Pakistan came with a proposal of making its MI series of helicopters available to Pakistan for sale. The offer was accepted in quick time as the Soviet machines were not only sturdy and reliable, with the capability of meeting our requirements, but were also less expensive. In the dumping operations in Azad Kashmir, at the end of the 1965 War, the two big choppers (MI-4) made us realize the value of such a machine. By then the concept of vertical envelopment was also gaining popularity. The experience of dropping para-troops behind the enemy lines in 1965 War had indeed tilted the thinking in favour of bigger helicopters for such missions. Initially Pakistan wanted these choppers to be evaluated in Pakistan but the proposal was not agreed to. So a delegation was sent to Russia in July 1967 to evaluate the machines and the related training facilities. It was headed by Brigadier Shah Nawaz, the then DCGS, with Colonel Jabbar, Lieutenant Colonel Naseerullah Babar, Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Burro of Aviation Section at General Headquarters, Lieutenant Colonel Amanullah Chaudhry as the maintenance expert and Major Yousaf from Ordnance. This was followed by another delegation from Pakistan, with Brigadier A.B. Awan, Maj Abdul Latif Awan, Maj Farhat Burki and Major Malik Naeem in January 1968 for its evaluation and flight tests in mountainous terrain.



Army Aviators in Russia - Brigadier Awan, Lt Col Aman Ullah, Majors Awan, Barki & Naeem

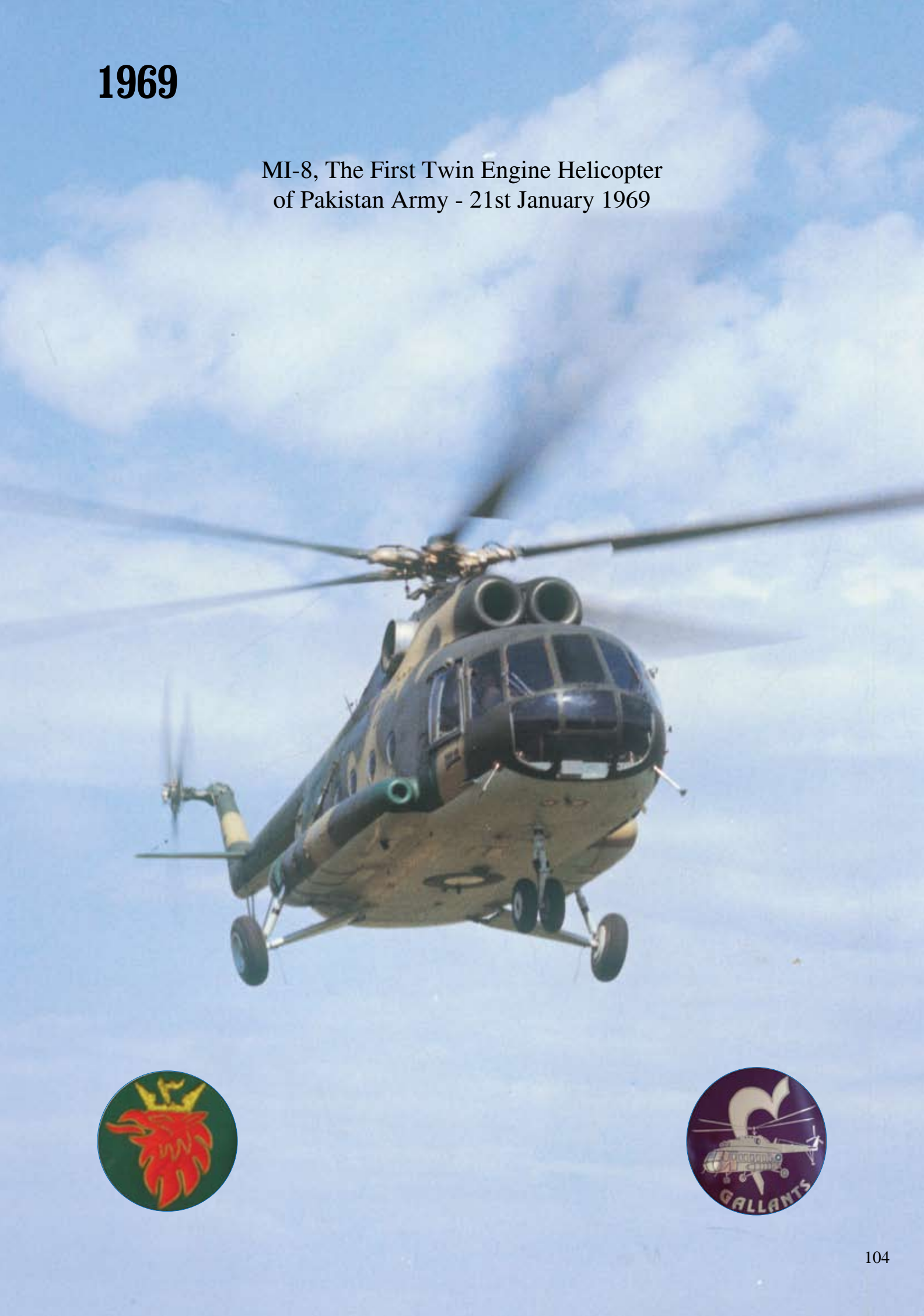
MI-8 Conversion In USSR

For the conversion training a substantial number of pilots and flight engineers proceeded to former USSR in May 1968. The first batch had 8 officers and 25 other ranks. Pilots were to undergo three and half month's course with additional two weeks for instructor pilots while technician's course was of twelve weeks. All ranks were given additional five hundred rupees as outfit allowance which was to be spent in Pakistan for dress etc. The list included the names of Lieutenant Colonel N U K Babar, Majors A L Awan, Muhammad Naeem, Syed Mustanir Tirmizi, SLA Bokhari, Mohammad Akram, Faiz-ud-Din Brandon, Sultan Mahmood, Siraj-ud-Din Ahmed, Syed Zafar Mehdi Askree, Aftab Ahmed, Manzoor Kamal Bajwa for the flying conversion and Lieutenant Colonel Aman Ullah Chaudhry, Majors Pir Daud Khalid Shah, Farhat Ali Burki, Noor Haider Shah, Mir Salim Ullah for the maintenance conversion along with eight Junior Commissioned Officers and fiftytwo technicians of different systems, who were sent in batches.

Pilots namely Lieutenant Colonels A.L. Awan and Faiz ud Din Brandon with Majors MM Naeem and

1969

MI-8, The First Twin Engine Helicopter
of Pakistan Army - 21st January 1969



Manzoor Kemal Bajwa were also trained as the instructors. From 1968 till January 1970, three batches went to Russia, the last batch had Majors Patrick, Ali Jawahar, Daud, Ali Kuli Khan, Riaz and Zahoor in the list. This batch did not undergo flying training, but only ground schooling, they did their flying in Pakistan.

The ground subjects training was at the Aeroflot School of Civil Aviation at Globino. Each class had English speaking, friendly female interpreters, who would translate sentence by sentence, the lectures delivered in Russian. When stuck up with the technical vocabulary the pilots would come to their assistance. The short breaks in between the periods were used for learning useful phrases, to be used in the evening.

Flying Training was carried out at MI-8 factory in Kermenchingchock a small town which is also the rail head of Trans Siberian Railway. Training was conducted through the interpreters. There were certain areas which were out of bound for army aviators but overall people were hospitable and warm. Flying was taught in a professional manner. The Russian instructors had vast experience of flying and were happy to transfer their skills which were aptly picked up by own pilots. There was a difference in teaching styles of Americans and Russians whereas American would go by the book the Russian would go by the instincts. This is what aviators felt, especially as they were the same batch who had done training in America also.



First MI-8 at Dhamial 21st January 1969

Pakistani officers were being paid around $ 13.00 per day whereas this was the monthly wage of average white collar Russian worker. In the evening when Pakistani crew would come out of the hotel there would be always few people standing just to admire their dress even the JCOs / NCOs used to put on the tie and suit. Crew room was a portable cabin which also housed the tea bar, specializing in "Krolley," roasted pieces of rabbit meat. Before their departure, officers as a mark of respect presented small items like ties, socks, old radio sets to their trainers and all these were very rare things as they were all made in America but it was the gesture of respect that brought tears in one of the instructor's eyes and he invited his students to his house.

4 Squadron was raised for MI-8s with Lieutenant Colonel AL Awan as the Commanding Officer. Subsequently the first consignment of three helicopters out of six MI-8s landed at Dhamial on 21st January 1969. They were flown by the Russian crew and own liaison pilots sat with them from Zahidan[Iran] onwards for security and airport assistance. The

last of the six helicopters came on 18th March 1969. All these choppers were, fitted with transponders. Four Russian specialists, (flight engineer, airframe, engine mechanic and special equipment) and two test pilots Mr. Morozov and Mr. Kokerov stayed for three months, one was with his family, he was blessed with a son at Holy Family Hospital. Technicians stayed for 12 months. The training flights started by end of January and the advanced training continued till late May 1969, when the Russian instructors departed.

Kel-Leepa - 1969

Within two months of the induction of the MI-8 helicopters, the training for mountain operations started. The Russian instructors supervised flights to Abbottabad, Muzafarabad, Kel, Leepa, Gilgit and Skardu. The first ever dumping mission was carried out from Abbottabad to Kel from 27 March to 2 April 1969. This later became a regular seasonal logistic commitment. Army Aviation started regular heavy dumping missions of supplies in Leepa Valley from 5th to 13th April 1969.



MI-8 at Astor - Maj Riaz Ul Haq and Maj Tasnim Hyat Malik

Heavy Sling Load KKH

Heavy machinery was required for KKH construction. Heavy bulldozers were airlifted to Gilgit in C-130 by the PAF, less the D shaped yokes weighing three tons each. These would not fit inside the C-130 transport plane. The same were positioned at Abbottabad through tank transporters from where, Lieutenant Colonel Awan and Major Bajwa heli-slung these six loads from Abbottabad to Sazin, Chillas and Gilgit areas between 3 to 9 December 1969.

Missing C-130

On an early March morning in 1970, FWO Allouette took-off from Gilgit for Rawalpindi with 'Engineers in Chief' (E in C), Maj Gen Iftikhar Ahmed Kingravi (father of Maj Gen Waqar Kingravi) on board. At Pattan Major Zia Ud Din after switching off the helicopter, was having a cup of tea when he noticed kids playing with strange things which were not toys, he saw one kid rolling an aircraft wheel as well. He inquired and was told that these and many other similar things had come down from the top of mountain and were found in the riverside.

Few months back one C-130 aircraft of the PAF while coming back from China had gone missing. A frantic search was conducted for many weeks in which KKH Flight also participated but to no avail. Lieutenant Colonel Zia narrates;

"I got the permission from the 'E in C' and flew with children for almost thirty minutes before we found the village. From there I inquired the villagers and they confirmed that since the onset of spring they had seen strange items coming down with glaciated water. I got an old man onboard and went to another village following the path of the glaciated river; there they not only confirmed that but one old man also talked of a blast few months back. I got him on board and climbed to almost 17, 000 feet and there I saw the debris of crashed C-130. The nose of C-130 had smashed into the top, few feet high and it would have cleared the top. I made one circle and saw the wings as well. Then I descended and landed at Pattan, duly informing the E in C.

We landed at Dhamial and I rang Brigadier Jabbar, he was not at his residence so after some time I left for my place. After two hours his official transport came to pick me up. He was waiting for me in his office,



presumably E in C had rang him and put him in picture. I explained to him and soon he informed PAF. Next day I again took off with PAF team which included Group Captain Callaghan and Wing Commander Shah Khan with me and rest of the PAF team in their helicopter. We first landed at Pattan from there I took them to the crash site which was at 14,000 feet. At site I hovered and put my right wheel on the space available and then repelled Wing Commander Shah Khan. Later four locals were also repelled.Thereafter own MI-8s were also used. There was no survivor.

Re-organisation of Army Aviation

Army Aviation in last two decades had progressed from a flight to a full fledged base. With the induction of modern and bigger helicopters came new responsibility. The General Headquarters (GHQ) Training Directive of 1968, emphasized not only on 'Heliborne Operations' but also on 'Anti Heliborne Drills' with field formations. This was the subject of special study for the year 1970.In 1969, 1, 2 and 3 Squadrons were moved to Mangla, Lahore and Multan respectively. Now there was one Fixed Wing Squadron with each field formation. On 26th July 1969, following reorganisation /new raisings took place:-

Re-organisation

HQ Army Aviation Base	Dhamial
1 Squadron	Mangla
2 Squadron	Lahore
3 Squadron	Multan
Army Aviation School	Dhamial
199 EME Aviation Battalion	Dhamial
Ordnance Aviation Depot	Dhamial

New Raisings

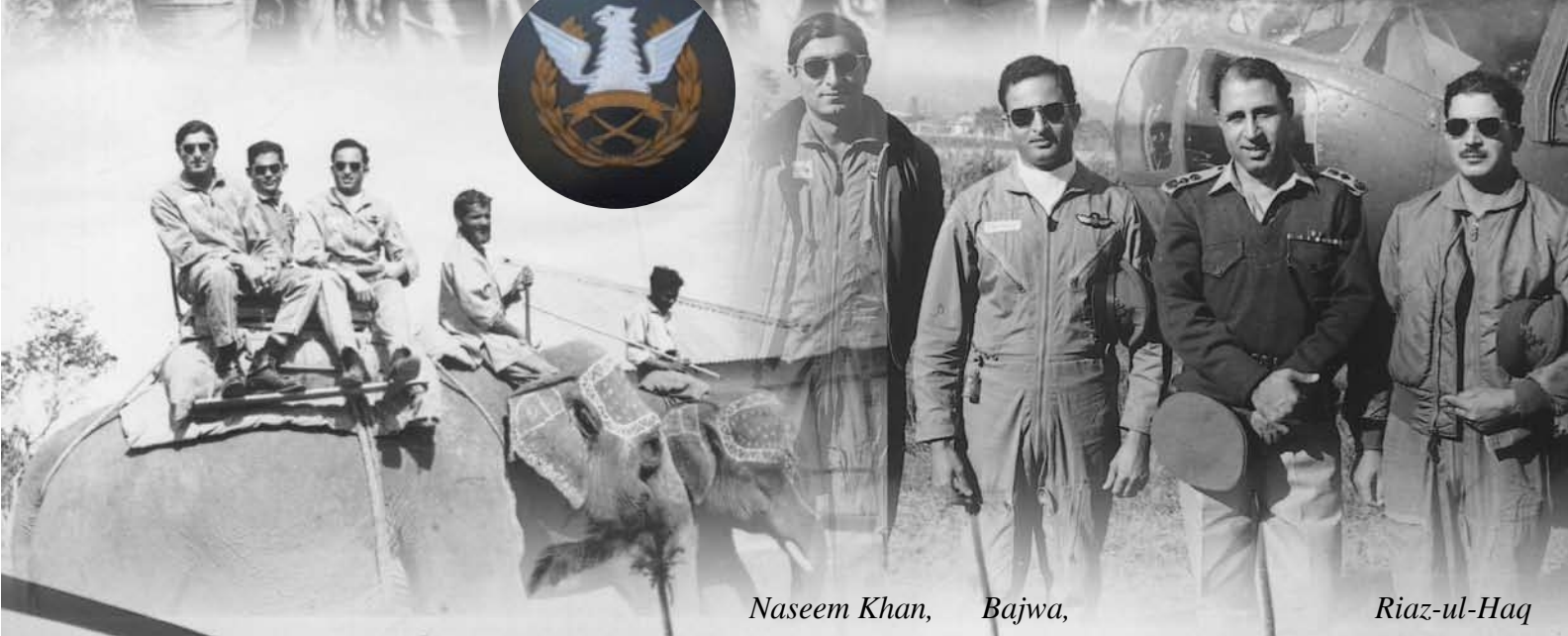
4 Aviation Utility Squadron	Dhamial
299 Aviation Engineering Battalion	Dhamial
503 Aviation Base Workshop	Dhamial

INTO EAST PAKISTAN

1970



Riaz ul Haq , *Rasheed Beg,* *Naseem Khan,* *Manzoor Kamal Bajwa*



Naseem Khan, *Bajwa,* *Riaz-ul-Haq*



Ikram Sehgal

Bajwa

INTO THE EASTERN WING

Forming Up of The Eastern Command Logistics Flight

The Eastern Command Headquarters at Dacca, which in reality was a division plus, totally lacked the aviation support. Commander Eastern Command, Major General Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan requested for some Army Aviation support in view of the gathering storm. General Headquarters decided to send a flight of two MI-8 helicopters to East Pakistan. Towards the end of January 1970, Major Syed Mustanir Ahmed Tirmizi and Major Manzoor Kamal Bajwa were assigned to proceed to East Pakistan with two MI-8 helicopters Numbers 524 and 624 to establish Logistic Flight for the Headquarters Eastern Command. The MI-8s had to be shipped because India declined permission for over fly. The two choppers flew to Karachi from Dhamial on 6th February 1970, arriving there after 5 1/ 2 hours of flying, with only one refuelling stop at Multan. MI-8s landed at East Wharf, where their rotors were dismantled and prepared for sea journey.

The First Flight Commander in East Pakistan



Brigadier Mustanir Tirmizi

Major Mustanir Tirmizi was the first flight commander to lead the aviation effort into East Pakistan. His story, in his words, as follows, "I was one of the flight commanders in 4 Army Aviation Squadron, while playing a hockey match at Dhamial Base, Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar, (Sitara-i- Jur'at) then General Staff Officer-Grade One (Operations) and second in command of Dhamial Base, inquired if I would like to command the MI-8 Flight earmarked for East Pakistan. Without a second thought I said, "Sir, Why not, but are you aware that I am not a captain on MI-8 Helicopter?" He replied, "Do not worry; you will have your check-out soon". I was declared captain on MI-8 helicopter after check ride on 30th and 31st January 1970, by Lieutenant Colonel Faiz Ud Din Brandon.

The Crew Reaches Dacca

"On a sunny morning of February 1970, the designated crew of the MI-8 Flight, took-off in a Pakistan International Airlines, Trident Jet, from Karachi Airport under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Babar and landed at Tejgaon Airport, Dacca, after approximately four and half hours of flight via Colombo. I had taken my family with me despite an advice to the contrary by near and dear ones. We were accommodated in a magnificent red brick building of the Members of National Assembly Hostel. We had a total complement of approximately twenty personnel including the pilots and the technicians. Major Manzoor Kamal Bajwa was the second pilot and constituted the flying crew, Captain Yusaf Anwar alongwith two subedars, Haq and Sarkar were the flight engineers with another dozen or so technicians.

Within two days of our arrival in Dacca, we made a presentation to Commander Eastern Command and his staff on the capabilities of MI-8 helicopter and its possible operational role. Then we proceeded on a whirl wind tour of our area of operations by PIA, covering Sylhet in the north, Chittagong in the south, Comilla in the east and Jessore in the west, which also enabled us to call on the four brigade headquarters at these places. Weather in February was absolutely marvelous. Blue skies and down below the riverine terrain between the two mighty rivers of the sub-continent, Ganges and Barhamputra. A carpet of velvety green between countless river-lets and streams with hardly a speck of brown visible, interspersed with small hamlets, villages, banana and coconut groves. It was a beautiful and picturesque landscape as viewed from the air which completely veiled the political undercurrent which was gradually eating the foundation of joint Pakistan.



Maj Yusaf Anwar

Lieutenant Colonel Babar flew back to Rawalpindi after a week, leaving us at our own to establish and assemble the MI-8 helicopters. On the arrival of the ship which docked at Chittagong on 26th February

1970, rotors were fitted to the fuselage at the jetty, air tested and we flew them to their new base in Dacca and were operational by end of February 1970."

Army Aviation Base, Dacca is Established

"Due to limited space, parking could not be managed for our helicopters at Tejgaon Airport. Hence the two MI-8 helicopters, having a rotor diameter of sixty feet plus were to be parked and operated from a Vehicle Supply Depot (VSD) located across the road from the airport terminal. The space was no larger than a hockey ground surrounded by VSD Hangars, buildings and a jungle of high tension wires. A one and a half room administrative office was provided to house the flight commander's office, crew room and orderly. One half trained store-man was attached from 299 Aviation Engineering Battalion, to act as clerk; with a pre-historic vintage typewriter. The technicians were attached with VSD for food, accommodation and pay".



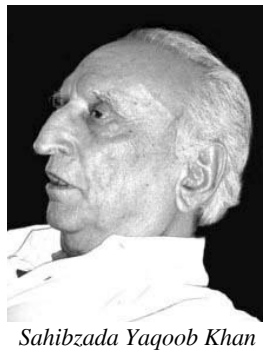
MI-8 at Dhaka

Bracing Up For The Operations

"From January to May 1970 was basically a period of getting to know each other. We were a new operational capability of the Eastern Command which had to be demonstrated to all the brigade headquarters, spread very thin all over East Pakistan. This enabled us to familiarize ourselves with the new operational environment as well as the terrain, which was totally different from that of the West Pakistan. Navigation was tricky business in the absence of road and rail network. The network of rivers and streams kept on changing its course, providing bright chances of straying over to the Indian territory, especially in the Eastern Border with Assam and Tripura."

Major General Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan Visits The Flight

General Yaqoob after having first look at helicopter at the helipad inquired about the Russian markings on the wheels, pilots had no answer to this. General who knew Russian apart from many other languages including Bangla, had a grin, and explained the words, that was his way of keeping every one on guard. He was of great help to the aviators in coming days, through his interest, many logistics hiccups were solved apart from obtaining comfortable living environments for the flight.



Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan

MI-8 Ride For The Diplomats

Forty one Military Attachés accompanied by their wives, went on a four days tour of East Pakistan from 11-14 March 1970. The tour mainly covered the southern part of East Pakistan, concentrating mostly at Chittagong, Karnafuly Paper Mills, Rangamati and culminating with a feast and a huge bonfire on the sprawling moonlit beach of Cox's Bazaar.

The MI-8 Flight Prepares Itself

Major General Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan and Major General Khadim Hussain Raja utilized MI-8 for extensive reconnaissance. After take off, one would find the commander or the senior most passenger occupying the flight engineer's seat. Extensive exercises and demonstrations with almost all the brigades, enabled pilots to know the whole of East Pakistan like the palm of their hand. This flight basically meant

for logistic support to the army, also supported the air force, navy, civil government and other agencies.

Flight was a great morale-boosting factor, as the flight assured easier and faster evacuation in case of serious casualties or to meet other emergencies. From certain garrisons without airfields, it would take better part of two days to travel to Dacca, whereas no location was beyond ninty minutes with the MI-8s.

The Crew is Beefed Up

During the first three months, only one of the two helicopters could fly at a time, because there were only two pilots available. Major Jawahar and Major Riaz joined the flight by end of May 1970, after conversion at Dhamial Base. Major Jawahar was newly wed, after arrival at Dacca Airport, he saw the anti-mosquito coil for the first time while shopping and he also had the first taste of Dacca before reaching MNA hostel, when all of a sudden he heard fire shots while still shopping for coils. He too got a two rooms accommodation in the hostel.



MI-8 at Dhaka

Pakistan Air Force at Dacca

PAF had a full-fledged squadron at Dacca. The Logistic Flight was also of great consolation for the PAF. It ensured more reliable means of rescue operations. Towards the end of August 1970 the PAF, H-19 helicopter had forced landed close to the airport. The PAF required recovery of the H-19 to the base as it could not be rectified on location. The Logistic Flight obliged and recovered the H-19 as slung load to the base on 29th August 1970. All the fighter pilots at Dacca PAF Base were practiced in hoist rescue operations with the MI-8.

Monsoon of June 1970

June 1970 brought floods of unprecedented magnitude. With the arrival of monsoon it looked like the whole country between Ganges and Barhamputra was covered by vast sheet of water with cities and towns popping up like marooned islands. Rail and road traffic had come to a stand still and the only communication was by boats or air. The MI-8 Flight operated almost non-stop, during this period, providing logistic support, and evacuation of casualties and ferrying central and provincial VIPs for a view of the extent of the flood. President Yahya Khan and the Minister of Information Major General Nawabzada Sher Ali Khan utilized these choppers to take them to various flood stricken areas.

Cyclone

On the morning of 14th November 1970, Major Tirmizi and Major Bajwa conducted the first sortie to survey the affected coastal areas of East Pakistan hit by the big cyclone during night 12/13 November 1970, in Hatiya-Chittagong area, with the press reporters from several countries, who had landed in Dhaka the previous night. Brigadier Tirmizi narrates:-

"After the first reconnaissance flight, which was a frightening nightmare, one could hardly see any human or animal life in a ten miles wide coastal strip and three islands of Bhola, Hattiya and Sandip. One could only see thousands and thousands of bloated human and animal corpses floating in the sea and streams with some cement buildings still standing partially damaged. The remaining 90% of bamboo and thatched huts had been swept down to the sea. The civic facilities and communication network had been completely destroyed. The administration had been caught completely unprepared. The only means of communication



available were the two MI-8 helicopters, few Plant Protection fixed wing Beaver aircraft, naval and civilian boats. Speed of succour was the key to the survival of millions of people who somehow had escaped from this awesome tidal wave. Boats were too slow; Plant Protection aircraft had very little lift capacity and could land only at Chittagong Airport. Hence the main burden fell on the aerial workhorse i.e. the MI-8s."

Aftermath of The Cyclone



Cyclone Relief Work - 1970

Unprecedented calamity claimed two hundred thousand human lives and a greater number of animals, leaving rest of the population of the coastal areas with little food, shelter and potable water. The seawater and sewerage contaminated all the wells and ponds. There was grave danger of an epidemic. The relief work was a big challenge for the administration. The early morning flight revealed bloated human bodies and animal carcasses strewn all over. These were particularly concentrated on the coastline after having been washed ashore. The press and the TV crew also got equally sick of the gory sight. The relief work started immediately.

Army Aviators Respond to the Challenge

Helicopter number 624 was grounded on 15th November 1970, warranting replacement of transmission, which was being shipped from West Pakistan. However, the only MI-8 now available continued relentless dawn to dusk operations in the affected areas. Everyone was aware of the gravity of the situation during the initial critical days that could spell death for all those not rescued, treated and fed. The areas most devastated were islands of Hatiya, Sandwip, Bhola, Patuakhali, Char Alexander, Char Lal Mohan, Kukri Mukri, Char Jabbar, Majoridi, Manipur, Begum Ganj, Dhali, Char Laky, Char Ellahy and Char Fasoom. The relief work continued from 14th November till end of February 1971.

Recalls Brigadier Tirmizi "Suffice to say the next month was the most tiring, trying and frightening flying experience of my 27 years stay in Army Aviation. We became flying robots devoid of physical and emotional feelings in the performance of rescue and logistic support missions. Taking off at sunrise from Dacca with food and medical supplies, we used to land at Noakhali football Ground after one hour's flight. Then endless flights to the stricken area and back to Noakhali for refuelling and some refreshments and then return flight to VSD Landing Pad by the sunset. We must have been logging approximately over eight hours of flying a day. With the passage of time the enormity of the disaster was known all over the globe. By end of November the 2nd MI-8 also became operational. By beginning of December there was a fleet of 33 helicopters from different countries. A welcome addition was three MI-8s from Russia that arrived in the fourth week of December 1970."

The International Relief Fleet

Late Major Bajwa wrote in his memoirs "The first relief work to arrive, even before own, were the Americans with their fleet of UH-1H Helicopters, which were airlifted from Vietnam, quickly assembled and moved to the forward base for independent operations. The Americans established their independent and most efficient network of relief operations. The performance of American pilots carrying overloads was excellent. From hover, the heavily loaded choppers would bounce off the ground before losing the ground cushion and getting airborne. Their relief goods comprised of small composite bags with provisions for immediate survival needs and were air dropped for direct delivery to the consumers, it included down to ladies under garments. Within one week, a fleet of helicopters arrived from Saudi Arabia, Libya and other friendly countries. Finally there were a total of thirty six helicopters involved with the cyclone relief work, including our own".

Reinforcement from Dhamial

Pilots and spares were rushed from West Pakistan on priority. Three MI-8 and three Allouettes airlifted through C-130 were flown in, following world wide criticism of the disparity and the comparison in the face of the disaster. Within a week Colonel Babar, Lieutenant Colonel Latif Awan and Majors Bokhari, Patrick Tierney, Khalid Sagheer, Naseem Khan, Tauheed, and Captain Sehgal arrived to supplement the relief effort. These machines with their crew, were rushed into the relief operations immediately. Allouettes, because of the limited load carrying capacity, mostly operated to provide a bird's-eye-view of the horrible havoc to local and foreign dignitaries, which released the MI-8s from these duties to a great extent.

Colonel Babar takes Control



Major General (Retired) Naseer Ullah Khan Babar SJ Bar. April 2007

Brigadier (Retired) Tirimzi has fond memories of Colonel Babar, SJ, who on arrival took over the relief operation, "Month of Ramadan had set-in. He fasted while the crew did not. He would fly each day with us to the afflicted area, haggle and cajole with the civil administration and the stricken population, at time using his swagger stick to control the unruly mob trying to snatch the supplies and then return to Dacca with the last flight, while the crew members retired for meals and sleep, he and I had to be in civil secretariat by 2000 hours, to attend the Cyclone Coordination Meeting, presided by Major General Rao Farman Ali for allocation and distribution of the effort for the next day's operation. We seldom returned before midnight from the conference. I still recall one night-marish mission over Bay of Bengal with red fuel warning light on and Colonel Babar telling me not to worry about. Colonel Babar and flight safety were always the two worlds apart. I landed at the beach with empty fuel tanks. The fuel had to be ferried in barrels from the



Logistic Area to the beach, for refuelling my MI-8 Helicopter. With the arrival of helicopters from USA, UK, France and USSR, I requested Colonel Babar to slow down the tempo of MI-8 helicopter flying, in the interest of flight safety but to no avail. Over a month of non-stop dawn to dusk flying was manifest in the dark shadows under the crew eyes and inelasticity creeping into our muscles."

It was interesting to note that during the relief work; the goods donated included ladies stockings, Italian fashion shoes, non-residue astronaut space food and toilet papers. The city market of Calcutta got flooded with most of the fancy stuff like tents, blankets and the shoes. Most of the medical aid was for upset stomachs, for incorrect use of donated foods, like making 'chappatis' out of powdered milk. The locals would not bother to bury the dead. When the corpses started rotting the Army was deputed to start burying the bodies wherever found. Major Ali Ahmad from Army Aviation, who belonged to the area and had arrived from the West Pakistan on compassionate grounds, was dropped in his village a week after the disaster. When asked why his folks would not bury their dead he was shocked at the question and explained "we never bury our dead with our own hands".

With the only limited hours for maintenance during the night time only. It was a big challenge for the maintenance personnel who did the most commendable job of maintaining these heavy workhorses after extensive flight operations under most difficult conditions in marshy areas. The choppers usually returned to base badly messed up with mud and slush from inside out.

A week after the cyclone the situation became less critical as the land and water routes were established and most of the channels of supply and distribution were well organised. Yet all the choppers that came for assistance were utilised round the clock.

President Visits Cyclone Hit Areas

President Yahya Khan visited East Pakistan during the last week of November 1970. The following day on 25th, Lieutenant Colonel Awan and Major Bajwa flew the President along with other high ranking Army and Naval officers on board to survey the cyclone affected areas to assess the relief work. Another MI-8 followed with the media personnel on board.

PIA's Hiller Helicopter Acquired

Considering the nature of the crisis due to cyclone the PIA's Hiller helicopter was also attached with the flight. Captain Bokhari of PIA transitioned Major Bokhari and Major Bajwa to "Hiller the Killer" on 20th December 1970. The helicopter became operational on 28th December. Because of the availability of 36 helicopters by now, the Hiller did not get much flying. Captain Bokhari was however kept attached to the flight for over a month.

The Russian MI-8 Relief Flight

In the 4th week of December 1970, the Russians also responded by sending in three MI-8 helicopters that were flown in a giant transport plane. The Russian pilots Captain Nicolai, Captain Ardenov and Captain Igor, along with some co-pilots arrived with MI-8 Numbers R-41, R-42 and R-59, stayed on until early March 1971. The first flight was operated on 24 December 1970 and the last one on 28th February 1971.

Epilogue

The Army Aviation contingent operated as a well-knit force with the rest of the aviation efforts, provided by the international community, for the cyclone relief operation. It was also utilized extensively during the December 1970' general elections. In March 1971, before the Army clamp-down began, the two pilots returned but the two Allouette were kept there and ultimately became part of 4 Squadron for the subsequent employment. Army Aviation pilots flew relentlessly stretching own and helicopters limitations to the maximum.

1971


Gujrāt
Kunjāh
Maggowāl
Khānki
Ahmadnagar
Ghakhar
Hardo Warpāl
Kilāske
Goindke
Daska
Jāmki
Mundeke
Othiān
Wadāla Sandhuān
Gujrānwāla
Butāla Sharm Singh
Narsinghdi
Manikganj
Zia
Brahmanbaria
Agartala
Comilla
Belonia
Chandpur
Meghna
Feni
Sitakunda
South Hatia Island
Sandwip Island


Kalān
Shahdara
Sharqpur
KOT LAKHPAT
Chung
Power line
Mānga
JIA BAGGA
Ramzān ki Dhāni
Wand Samund
Wand Bādul
Bhagu Thakūr-ji Wand
Akli
GADRA ROAD
Gadra
Shakarbo
Asrālia
Sakna
Mahendro jo Pār
Kheme ka Pār
Naya Chhor
Goth Akherāj
Khāruro Chāran
Goth Khafrai
Goth Diatria
Umarkot
Ratnaur
Lālābha ji Dhani
Pārno
Dāli
Khīnsar
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Rohar Chāran
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FATEFULL EVENTS OF MARCH 1971

East Pakistan Was Slipping Away

By last week of March 1971, President General Yahya Khan's effort failed to broker a political solution between divergent political parties emerged after the general elections of December 1970. Having reached a political impasse and to control the worsening law and order situation in East Pakistan, President General Yahya Khan ordered army action on 25th March 1971 named "Operation Search Light."

Army Aviation Eastern Logistic Flight was commanded by Major Liaqat Bokhari. He had Major Jawahar, Major Patrick and Major Riazul Haq as the pilots of two MI-8s. Captain Sehgal and Captain Sagheer were the pilots of two Allouette helicopters under his command. Maintenance of the helicopters was the responsibility of a company of 299 EME Battalion.

Revolt of East Bengal Regiments (EBR)

Majority of civil population was hostile. Awami League workers were organized into Mukti Bahini and over 30,000 rifles had been issued to them by the Indians. East Bengal Regiments were the first to revolt and started ambushing army units. Major Zia Ur Rehman, the second in command of 8 EBR at Chittagong revolted on 26th March 1971 with entire battalion after killing his Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Rashid Janjua along with other West Pakistani personnel posted in the unit and proclaimed himself as the Commander-in-Chief of Bangladesh Army. Reportedly, Zia made Lieutenant Colonel Janjua sit on the commanding officers' chair and made his batman fire the fatal shot. His speech was broadcast from All India Radio the same evening. He later became the President of Bangladesh and was eventually assassinated.

Chittagong 25–31 March 1971

On 25 March soon after General Yahya's speech, rebels took control of Chittagong Airport. On the same night (25/26 March) 53 Brigade Headquarters and 24 Frontier Force, under Brigadier Shafi were ordered to move from Comilla to Chittagong. On the morning of 26th March, there was no contact with them. Same day, two MI-8 helicopters flew from Dacca to Comilla and landed on a ground adjacent to 53 Brigade Headquarters.



Chittagong-Khulna-Comilla and surrounding areas



Forty Special Service Group (SSG) troops were heli-lifted from Comilla to Chittagong to regain speedy and successful control of the civil airport. This was vital for the quick build-up of troops by the PAF C-130s and PIA Fokker aircraft. En-route, helicopters flew along the main road Comilla-Chittagong, looking for the missing brigade, but there was no sign of it. The whole town except cantonment, naval headquarters and part of airport was under control of the miscreants and fighting was going on in the city. Brigadier Bokhari recalls, "I was flying the leading MI-8 at 100 feet above ground level, prior to our landing at Nautonpara Cantonment, Chittagong. I made a circling approach in order to land into the wind. As I was parallel to adjoining hills, small arms fire came onto us, but we safely landed between two barracks.". On their way back to Dacca both the helicopters evacuated about eight casualties, some families, and other West Pakistan officers who had been evacuated from EBR Center. The first helicopter was piloted by Major Liaqat and Major Patrick Tierney the second helicopter was flown by Major Ali Jawahar Khan and Major Riaz Ul Haq. The helicopters again flew along the road detected 53 Brigade near Fenni, and landed. Brigade Commander informed General Mitha, who was on board, that they had to resort to minor roads as bridges were blown on the main road. He also informed that commanding officer of 24 FF, Lieutenant Colonel Shahpur had been shot dead by snipers. He also apprised General Mitha about the resistance from East Bengal Regiments. Helicopters finally landed in darkness at Dacca. Meanwhile 2 Commando Battalion which had just arrived from West Pakistan on 26th March was ordered to link up with 53 Brigade, still held up on the road. At 1100 hours on 27th March, 2 Commando Battalion was ambushed one mile outside Comilla, 23 commandoes died including commanding officer and 19 were seriously wounded.

Brigadier Bokhari further narrates, "On 28th March 1971, myself and Major Riaz went to Chittagong with some ammunition for 20 Baloch Regiment. As we were descending and trying to locate own troops, we were fired at from the hills down below. One bullet hit the tail and other bullet went through the floor in front of Major Riaz."

The flight flew 51 missions to relieve 20 Baloch Regiment, which was cut off by the rebels and were surrounded by the enemy. Tanks/small arms ammunition, reinforcement and rations were flown in for 20 Baloch which was isolated in north east of the town and other friendly forces in port area and Naval Base. Each time helicopter flew over the town between the cantonment and Naval Base, the miscreants opened up with all their weapons. The helicopters carried out their missions without any mishap. 20 Baloch finally linked up with relief forces and on 30th March 1971 last aviation mission was flown by Major Jawahar and Major Riaz. By then the civil airport had been cleared from the miscreants. PAF C-130s and PIA Fokkers had started bringing the reinforcements and supplies from Dacca. Thereafter the helicopters were pulled out of Chittagong Sector and diverted to Rajshahi Sector.

Rajshahi Relief Mission 1st – 6th April 1971

Towards the end of March 1971, when the army went into action against the rebels, the Mukti Bahini along with the police encircled the small garrison at Rajshahi. The rescue missions entailed rushing in the armaments and evacuating the families. Major Bajwa along with Major Zahoor Ahmed operated daily missions to Rajshahi between 1- 6 April. After the first two days the rebels encirclement closed on to an



extent that the local commander requested pilots not to risk the MI-8 any more as the enemy had closed on to within 800 meters of the landing spot in the centre of the own position. However, the daily missions continued with the regular F-86 fighters cover. The fighters overhead would help keep the enemy heads down, while the MI-8 would drop and pick up the back load. On return from every sortie from Rajshahi the pilots would be required to rush to the headquarters to brief General Tikka Khan and the senior staff regarding the latest position on the garrison. After the last sortie on 6th April, the helicopter flights had to be discontinued, on insistence of the commander at Rajshahi, in view of the increased risk in spite of the regular fighter cover provided to the helicopter.



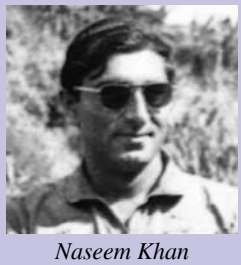
MI-8 Helicopter

Aviation Reinforcement Arrives 14th April 1971

Aviation reinforcements were mobilised for East Pakistan. Four additional MI-8 helicopters, serial numbers 324, 924, 933 and 1133, along with six Allouette helicopters numbers 054, 425, 454, 821, 823 and 825 reached Dacca on 14th April 1971. The pilots were Majors Askree, Aftab Ahmed, Nauman Mahmood, Yasin, Daud, and Ali Kuli. Lieutenant General (retired) Ali Kuli narrates, "I went to Dacca in the first week of April 1971 by PIA via Colombo. From airport, we first went to our offices which were located across the Dacca Airport. Before our departure, the general image which we had was something like that the moment we are going to get out of the aircraft we will be attacked by hostile Bengalis. We were issued with revolvers, which we concealed in our clothes and carried them on board. No such thing happened and Dacca was very peaceful." Naib Subedar Malang Shah arrived with 40 other ranks, they included three technicians for L-19 aircraft as well. There was a thinking to utilize light aircraft for artillery observation and communication.L-19 however never arrived in East Pakistan. For reinforcements the PIA flights were rushing in the troops from West Pakistan. The MI-8s were used to pick up the troops from the airport and rush them to their respective stations at the borders. Mostly reinforcements were ferried to Rajshahi, Rangpur, Manikganj and Munshiganj on the western border.

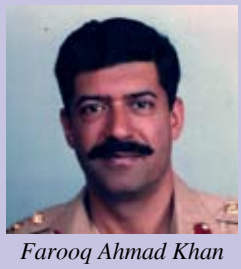
Sri Lanka - 1971

The first opportunity to provide a helping hand to a friendly country came in May 1971. At that time Sri Lanka was facing an uprising and to combat the same, a request for some aviation support was made to Pakistan. Keeping in view the help provided by the Sri Lankan Government after the famous "Ganga" hijacking episode of 1971, which severed the direct flying operation between two wings of Pakistan, this request was immediately acceded to.



Naseem Khan

Two Allouette-III helicopters with Major Muhammad Naseem Khan and Major Farooq Ahmed Khan (both retired as brigadier) were despatched to Colombo in a C-130 aircraft along with the required team of technicians. Soon after their arrival, the machines were employed for various operational tasks. Missions like aerial observation of miscreants, carriage of critical supplies to various isolated posts, casualty evacuation and help in restoring communication etc were carried out on regular basis. This lasted for about four weeks in which 4-5 hours of daily flying was logged by both the pilots. The work of this contingent was highly appreciated by the Sri Lankan authorities and it returned in June 1971.



Farooq Ahmad Khan

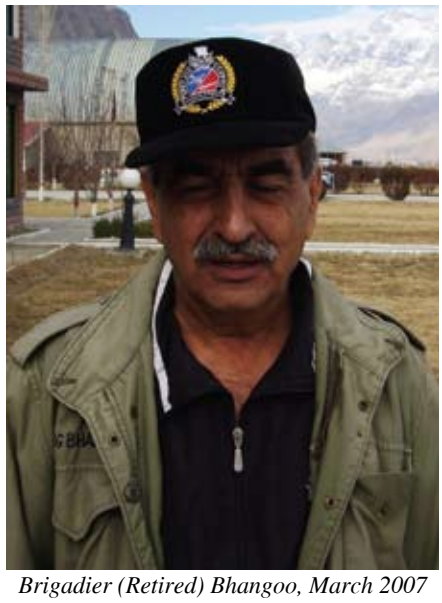


Faridpur & Daal Roti Runs

During the advance to Faridpur, the MI-8's were used to support the troops on the constant march towards the western border. The marshy conditions did not permit operation of the cook houses while on the move. Alternately "Dal Chappaties" were cooked well in the rear and on 31st May 1971 Major Bajwa along with Major Zahoor ferried and distributed a few tons of Dal Rotis, all day long.

Fixed Wing Flying in East Pakistan

There were few fixed wing aircraft of Dacca and Chittagong Flying Clubs available. Major Ishaq was the flight commander. Major Sarfraz Rabbani SJ, Major Fayyaz Ibrahim and Major Maqbool, all flying instructors in Army Aviation School Dhamial were utilized to fly these machines. They apart from communication sorties also participated in few operations and at times took artillery shoots as well. All these pilots returned to West Pakistan in October 1971. In September 1971, Army Aviation initiated training of pilots with Civil Flying Clubs. Dacca Flying Club was also part of it and a batch of 6-10 army pilots were attached with it. They however, never got the chance to complete the training as flying course was terminated in November 1971. Captain Zakaullah Bhangoo and Captain Javeed were part of this batch and during 1971 War they fought with ground troops and later spent over two years in a prisoner of war camp. Both these students resumed their flying training in 1975(P-18). Captain Bhangoo rose to the rank of Brigadier and retired in year 2000, while Captain Javeed retired as Lieutenant Colonel after having flown the Sind Government twin engine aircraft.



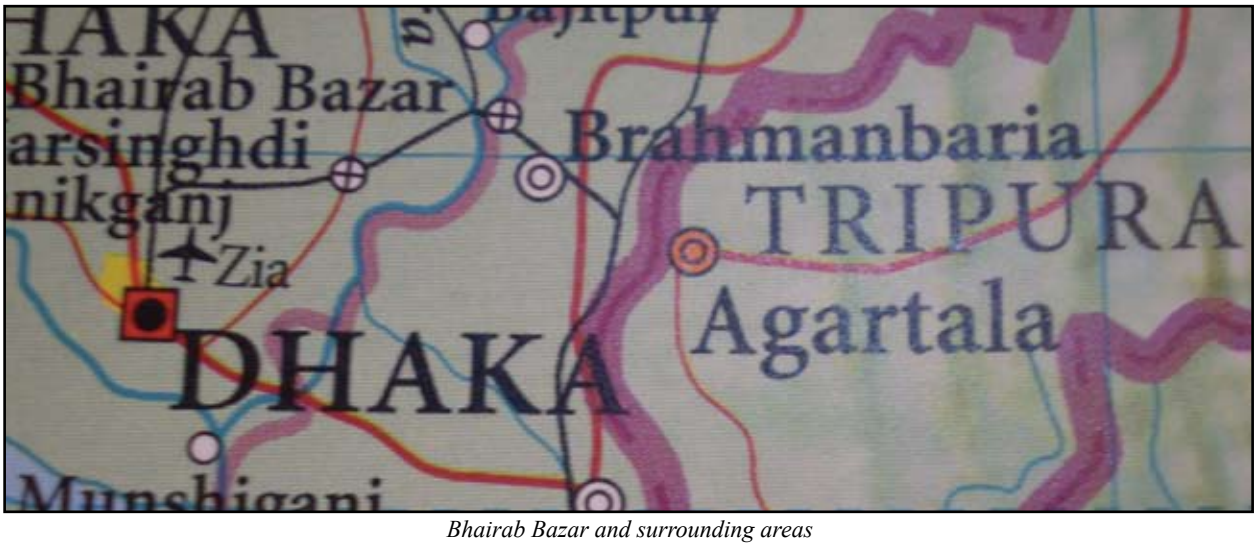
Brigadier (Retired) Bhangoo, March 2007

Challenging Flying Conditions

After the army went into action, the threat of ground fire made low flying very risky. With the on set of monsoon, flying became even more difficult and challenging. The worst period for flying was from June to September. With almost constant overcast sky the cloud base would invariably be as low as 500 feet, even when it was not raining. The low level flights were subject to ground fire and flying above the clouds would make navigation to field locations very difficult.

First Heliborne Operation of Pakistan Army Aviation - 15th April 1971

By mid April 1971, Major General Rahim took over the command of 14 Division from Major General Khadim Raja. He had the responsibility of Mymen Singh-Dacca-Jessore area. Bhairab Bazaar Bridge was



Bhairab Bazar and surrounding areas



a vital railway bridge on River Meghna which linked Chittagong Port with Dacca and controlled the main line of communication of entire East Pakistan. This bridge fell in to the hands of rebels supported by Indian regular troops on the breakout of the hostilities in East Pakistan. It was prepared for demolition in case Pakistan Army tried to capture it. 14 Division was given the mission to capture this bridge intact. There were approximately 1000 renegade troops of EBR it was also reported that the area around the bridge had been mined and high bamboo stakes were also planted to avoid landing of helicopters in the area. 14 Infantry Division had 34 Brigade, Army Aviation Logistics Flight Eastern Command and one company of SSG for this mission. The far bank was under the control of 4 East Bengal Regiment, parental regiment of Captain Ikram Sehgal, an Allouette pilot of Pakistan Army Aviation.

34 Brigade Moves towards The Bridge

34 Brigade columns had started from Narshingdi towards Bhairab Bazaar along railway line. The rate of advance was slow due to rebel resistance and hard going. The rebels also blew up a number of small bridges. 34 Brigade was ordered to stop approximately 6-8 miles short of Bhairab Bazaar till Shaheen and Mahmood Forces (SSG Commandoes) were launched from the far bank and then the link up of both forces was to be achieved.

14 Division Plan to Secure Bridge

Plan conceived by Major General Rahim General Officer Commanding 14 Division was to para drop Jangju Company and secure the bridge. It had to be executed swiftly without giving any reaction time to enemy for detonating the bridge. However, memoirs of late Brigadier Z.A. Khan reveal that para drop zone was too narrow and paratroopers dropped via aircraft would take 30 minutes to gather, thus surprise would be lost, only solution was to drop them with the helicopters. Since the operation had to be conducted in darkness, therefore selection of landing site was paramount. On D-2 during the reconnaissance from Allouette, three likely landing areas were selected which met technical and tactical requirements. The tactical requirement given by the commandoes was that it should be as near the bridge as possible so that less time is taken by them to reach the bridge and to remove the charges. While flying overhead to assess the flying aspect, number of weapons opened up and two heavy machine guns were located in area Ashuganj Railway Station and the bridge. There were high-tension wires next to the bridge, this called for extreme pilotability.

Weather Plays an Important Part

Weather played an important role in this operation because during this period it remained marginal. Although own helicopters could operate in limited weather conditions but PAF fighters needed minimum of 3000 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) clearance from clouds for effective strafing and rocketing. The D-Day was 14th April 1971 for this operation, but weather on 14th April remained below minima's thus General Officer Commanding 14 Division decided to postpone the operation to next day, i.e. 15th April 1971. H-Hour (the time helicopters were to land on objective) for the operation was fixed at 0630 hours.

Aviation Effort for The Operation

In this operation only three MI-8 and two Allouette helicopters were available and there were no reserve helicopters available. Additional MI-8s had not yet docked, they were en-route. However, 4 Squadron Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Awan had reached Dacca and was the leader of this formation. In order to achieve surprise no ground fire support was planned for this mission. It was planned that PAF would commence fire support ten minutes prior to landing and provide Combat Air Patrol for approximately four hours over the target. MI-8 helicopter crew consisted of Lieutenant Colonel Awan, Major Riaz, Major Bokhari, Major Ali Kuli Khan, Major Bajwa and Major Ali Jawahar.

Conduct of Bhairab Bazaar Operation

Two MI-8 helicopters (20 SSG troops in each helicopter) and two Allouette helicopters (5 SSG troops in each helicopter) took off from Dacca at 0600 hours on 15th April. The weather was clear with



Sketch of Bhairab Bazar Operation

scattered clouds over 6000 feet. Rotary flying time was 25 minutes. Two F-86s ex 14 Squadron commanded by Wing Commander Afzal Choudhry, took off from Dacca at 0615 hours and reached objective area at 0620 hours. They commenced strafing-rocketing of Grajo-Silo Rest House area and interdiction of Bhairab Bazaar and Kishore Ganj areas, ten minutes prior to the H-Hour. At approximately 0625 hours helicopters were flying abeam the objective area and saw own air force in action. MI-8s flew low level over the river and at 0633 hours the first MI-8 piloted by Major Bokhari with Major Ali Jawahar, landed east of objective. "The helipad selected was a paddy field with about two feet of water. Area all around was about the same type. The rebels had started firing from village, factory and riverbank areas. Pilots wanted the troops to land as close to the bridge as possible. They landed not as close as they would have preferred but it achieved the purpose." Troops disembarked quickly and rushed towards the bridge, under the command of Major Tariq Mahmood. The second MI-8 piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Latif Awan and Major Riaz ul Haque, along with Subedar Malang Shah as flight engineer landed north of objective and disembarked troops under command Lieutenant Colonel Shakur Jan. After the second MI-8 took off, first Allouette piloted by Major Tauheed Ul Haq landed with five commandoes just next to the bridge under heavy enemy fire and lastly second Allouette piloted by Captain Zareef Bangash landed with five more commandoes. During planning it was emphasized that only one helicopter would land at a time, secondly it was planned that each helicopter should not land at the same spot to avoid mortar and machine gun fire. The commandoes assaulted the bridge with such speed and surprise that the enemy did not get any time to react. The bridge was captured intact. One thousand Indian and EBR soldiers were routed by seventy Pakistani SSG troops, who were dropped at the target by these bold aviators.

Second wave's return route though normally would have been different than the inbound route; in this case tactical situation dictated that flight path must be over the known cleared areas for safety reasons. After the first wave was disembarked at the objective, all helicopters returned to Narshingdi which was organized as advance base for this operation. After landing the rotors were kept running to board troops. After third mission, helicopters were switched off for refuelling and servicing. During the refuelling, it was discovered that a bullet had hit one MI-8 main rotor and main spar was damaged. The helicopter was grounded at the advance base and operation continued with the remaining choppers. After the fourth mission message was received that own casualties were required to be evacuated, including Major TM who was shot in the leg, from objective area to the helipad. The Allouettes were given this mission and six casualties including one dead body were evacuated. The operation continued till 1800 hours on 15th April 1971. The damaged MI-8 was checked and tested at Narsingdi and it was decided that it was safe for one time flight to Dacca. So MI-8, while returning to Dacca brought all casualties collected at Narsingdi.

Army Helicopters flew fifty one missions to support this operation. Approximately over hundred Indian soldiers were killed, one major, one captain and one hundred other ranks were taken prisoners and large dumps of arms, rations, four recoilless rifles and three machine guns were seized. Casualties on our side were only one killed and five wounded. Bhairab Bazaar Bridge was captured intact as planned.

Bhairab Bazar - The first heliborne operation of Pakistan Army 15th April 1971

This operation was conducted by 4 Army Aviation Squadron to clear the Bhairab Bazar Railway Bridge of the miscreants in East Pakistan



Ali Kuli Khan

Zareef Bangash

Khalid Sagheer

Ali Jawahar

Tauhid Ul Haq



Major Syed Liaquat Bukhari **Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Latif Awan** **Major Riaz Ul Haq**

Patrick Tierney **Ijaz Minhas** **Wali ur Rehman** **Yusaf Anwar**

Barisal – Patuakhali Operation

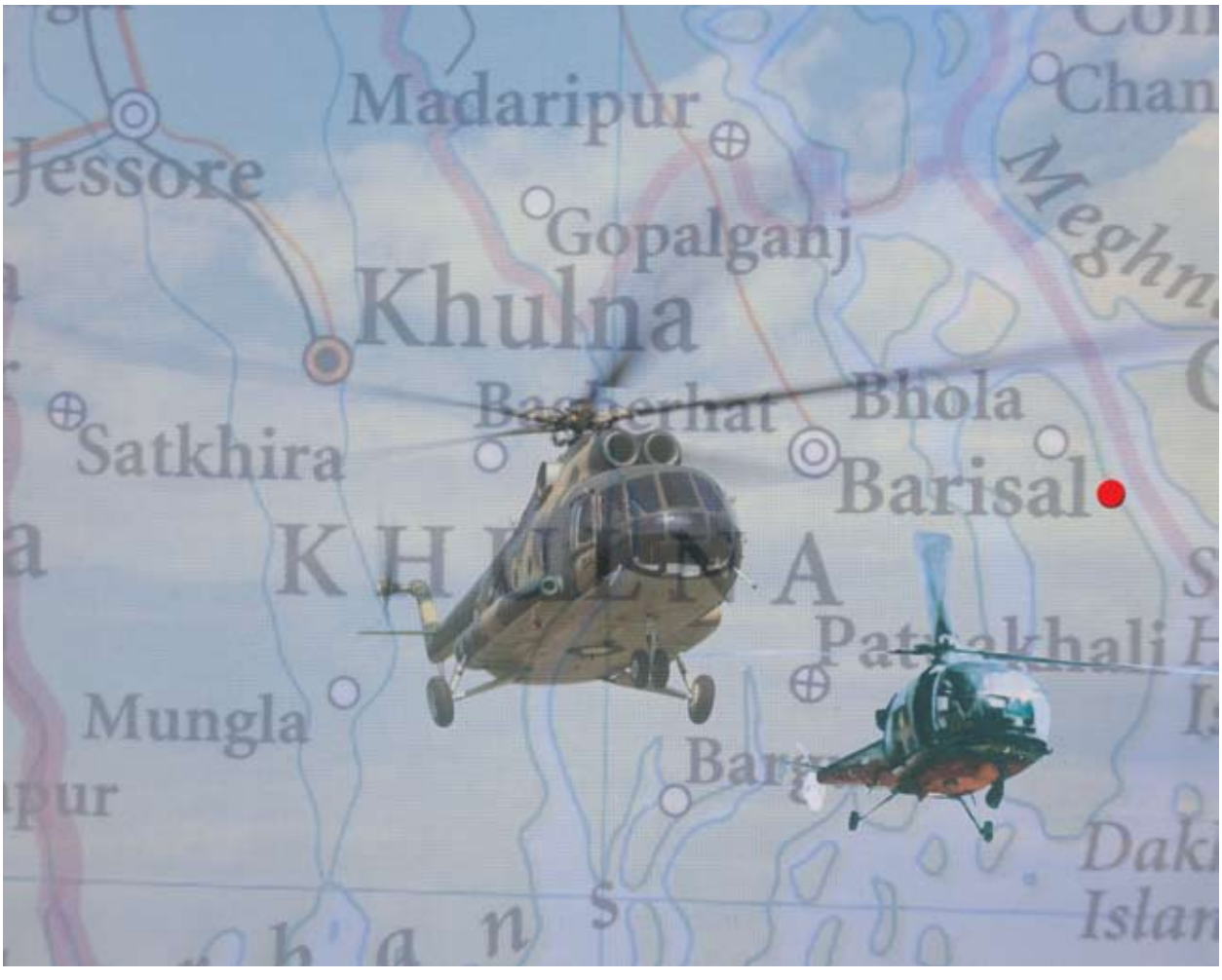
The deserters and miscreants after having been ousted from the important areas of Dacca, Jessore, Comilla and Chandpur found a sanctuary in far fledged area of District Barisal-Patuakhali. Barisal in 1969 had population of 69,936. It was a key town on the river–sea route to the port of Chittagong. Most of the jute and rice from the east of Brahamputra River was shipped to sea going vessels for Chittagong. It was also a great market for betel nuts and exported large quantities of fish. It was connected by river and sea to Khulna. There were no loyal troops in this area. The area was in the shape of small islands inaccessible from ground.

On 23rd April 1971, Commanding Officer 4 Army Aviation Squadron was called to Headquarters Eastern Command and was briefed about the plan to deal with Mukti Bahini in this area. Lieutenant Colonel Awan had flown in the area and he recommended landing of force simultaneously on two major islands, he further promised to locate the positions of rebels through aerial reconnaissance. Major Tauheed and Captain Nauman along with Lieutenant Colonel Awan and representatives of ground forces carried out the reconnaissance on the same day. Allouette flew low over the sea and zoomed up close to the islands. They found the proposed islands deserted, however, after 10 minutes of flying they located the exact locations of the rebels.

Heliborne Force

Troops earmarked for the Barisal Operation were:- 6 Punjab Regiment, one company of SSG, two gun boats, four MI-8 and two Allouette helicopters.

On 23 April 1971, three companies of 6 Punjab Regiment were to move by river towards troubled



MI-8 and Allouette helicopters played a pivotal role in Operation Search Light



area in boats, with gun boats 'Rajshahi' and 'Comilla', providing them protection from Chandpur onwards. They were to land in Barisal island complex on the morning of 24th April 1971.

On the morning of 24th April 1971 one company of 6 Punjab and one company of SSG were to be lifted by MI-8s from Dacca to reinforce the river borne force. The force was to be lifted in two phases; one Allouette was detailed for search and rescue.

Conduct of the Operation

On 24th April 1971 four MI-8s carrying commandoes took off under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Awan at 0600 hours from Dacca Airfield for their objective, Allouette followed them. They flew overhead Narayangang, Chandpur and then over the delta. Visibility was exceptionally poor that day; formation was in loose vick, maintaining 50 feet height above water. Short of the target area they were informed on radio that the captain of 'Rajshahi Boat' along with six soldiers were ambushed and got injured. The captain of the leading MI-8 helicopter located own gun boats and shortly Allouette followed. MI-8 helicopters were directed by the Allouette about the location of the enemy, there was change in their locations as a result of previous day flying, and they seemed to be well educated about aviation affairs. Lieutenant Colonel Awan directed two helicopters to land in the close vicinity of rear elements of rebels while other choppers landed in front. The enemy was well entrenched but due to surprise and timely reinforcement delivered by Army Aviation, the enemy was paralysed. Rebels were completely routed and suffered heavy casualties.

Second wave landed on the escape routes of rebels, seeing the helicopters most of them surrendered on the spot. Allouette kept on flying in the area and directed ground troops about the where-abouts of hiding miscreants. The Barisal area was cleared of all Mukti Bahini miscreants within two days thereafter peace prevailed in the area with Pakistan flags flying on all the buildings of the town.

Patuakhali

Patuakhali was part of Barisal District; however it was in the process of being declared an independent district. It was reported that the enemy in Barisal area after having been defeated would try to make for Patuakhali, Bagherhat area. The Barisal force was ordered to pursue them. 4 Army Aviation Squadron with four MI-8 helicopters was to transport one SSG Company and some troops of 6 Punjab in Patuakhali area. This force was to act as an anvil for the force approaching from Barisal area. The PAF Squadron at Dacca was to provide fighter cover to the MI-8 helicopters at the time of their landing. It was reported that enemy had been reinforced with heavy machine guns to counter heliborne force.

Conduct Of Operation

On 26 April 1971 at 0730 hours, four MI-8 helicopters took off under the command of Major Liaqat Asrar Bokhari for Patuakhali where the helipads had been selected a day earlier. On reaching the target area they found that the PAF had done the damage. Helicopters landed at the Patuakhali helipad. They were later informed by the SSG troops that the heliborne operation had achieved complete surprise and the rebels ran out of the battle area after suffering heavy casualties. There were no casualties of own troops.

Belonia - First Ever Night Heliborne Operation

Belonia Operation (also known as Feni Operation) has a very special place in the history of Pakistan Army and 4 Army Aviation Squadron, because it was for the first time, that helicopters were used to drop troops behind the enemy at night. It was an operation that was novel in its concept and highly successful in its outcome. It shows very vividly how the wits and imagination of a commander with a bold plan, when well executed can change the whole complexion of a battle.

Near Feni, there is a salient about eight hundred yards wide and about two miles long protruding into Indian territory of Tripura called Belonia Salient, it is at this point that Pak-India border was thinnest; the major rail-road between Dacca-Chittagong is only few miles away from border. Thick jungles and hillocks were all under rebels control and within range of Indian artillery, supporting them. 24 Frontier Force and 20 Baloch Regiments were tasked to clear the area.



Belonia Operation

Situation

On 18 June at 1000 hours MI-8 piloted by Major Bokhari and Major Ali Jawahar, with General Rahim, General Officer Commanding 14 Division on board, were flying to Cox's Bazaar on a routine inspection. En-route, he decided to stop at Feni the tactical headquarters of 53 Brigade, to get the latest briefing on the brigade advance in Belonia Bulge. General was informed that two pronged advance of two battalions (24 FF and 20 Baloch) started on the morning of 18th June 1971. The advance was restricted to the road due to water and mines laid all over the area. As soon as they started their advance, both the battalions faced stiff opposition by the well-sited enemy positions. The leading company of 24 FF was caught in the middle of a minefield and very accurate artillery fire had been brought on them. They suffered twenty eight casualties and the advance was halted by 1000 hours. The general after some thought told Major Bokhari to proceed to Chittagong hill tracts and collect all available SSG troops located there; and get the other helicopter from Dacca to evacuate the casualties.

Major Syed Liaqat Asrar Bokhari and Major Ali Jawahar Khan flew to the Chittagong hill- tracts, Mahal Chiri, Rangamati, from where they collected twenty two SSG personnel and brought them to Feni. It was a frantic mission, as commandoes were spread in varying places and manning important posts, they were to be replaced with the loyal Chakma tribals, and it took almost the whole day. They also registered a bridge en-route as checkpoint, little knowing, that it would play such an important role later on in the day. One major reason for this delay in collecting commandoes was the lack of communication between 14 Division and Headquarters Eastern Command. According to the then SSG commanding officer Brigadier Z.A.Khan, "Major Nadir sent me a signal message, about the use of commandoes, I rang up the Chief of Staff Eastern Command who informed that permission had not yet been granted for their employment. I sent a signal message to Nadir to refuse their use. They were later flown to Feni after dark." This delay almost proved fatal as helicopter had to make two sorties to fetch the force and landed back at Feni at 1700 hours. The other MI-8 helicopter, piloted by Major Ali Kuli Khan and Major Patrick Tierney was summoned from Dacca to evacuate the casualties and then be available at Feni for further commitments.

At 1630 hours only Major Ali Kuli and Major Patrick went for brigade commander's orders as other helicopter had not yet landed back. After a drive of about twenty minutes the pilots arrived at the headquarters. The commander, after seeing them inquired about the other helicopter which had not yet arrived from its collection mission. Since the time was running short, General Rahim said, "Well they can



be briefed later. They will be arriving shortly; I told them to collect as many commandoes as possible." Brigade Commander started giving his orders off a quarter inch map. he pointed to a place on the map apparently at rear of enemy positions and said, "Here helicopter force will land." After the orders, pilots met a lieutenant of the Baloch Regiment, looking bewildered and learnt that he was the commander of the troops they were to carry. He was a liaison officer in the brigade and the troops that he was to command belonged to the Frontier Force Regiment and the wireless set that they were going to carry was operated by crew of the brigade signal company. In short every one in the force was unknown to each other. The entire group was bundled into vehicles once again and brought to the helipad at Feni. At this time it was approximately half an hour to last light and while the pilots hurriedly took some bearings and distance from borrowed maps, the helicopter from the Chittagong hill-tracts arrived with its assortment of SSG troops.

Brigadier Bokhari, SJ recalls, "After I landed I saw General Rahim at the helipad. General in his peculiar style, explained the latest situation, then he looked at the captain of the MI-8, and said, "I have devised heliborne operation, Major are you ready?' and I said, "Yes Sir, after all we are prepared for such eventualities." General explained the operation; aviators suggested that the force should be split in a way that helicopters should land between the forward and rear of enemy. "Okay" General said,, we all have great expectations from you all."

A brief conference took place among the pilots, Major Bokhari got the briefing and devised the plan. He decided to adopt the dead reckoning method for aerial navigation, he also devised signals and various procedures for en-route and landing. The experience of Bhairab Bazaar came handy. PAF support was out of question due to close proximity of border, any violation would give the Indians excuse which they were looking for. As the darkness approached both helicopters took off. Major Bokhari and Major Jawahar were in the first helicopter along with Malang Shah(flight engineer). Second helicopter was piloted by Major P. C. Tierney and Major Ali Kuli. After take off the helicopters followed the road going from Feni to Chittagong till they hit the bridge in darkness. The bridge was important because it was from here that the two helicopters were to navigate to reach their objectives. Both helicopters climbed to about 3000 feet above ground level and after making a wide circle over the bridge they started their journey into the unknown. From the bridge, they were to fly for about three minutes on a bearing and than hoping that they were over the target they were to descend and land. The three minutes flight from the bridge proved uneventful, but once the descend started the nightmare began. The experience of descending down into the dark night, where pilot does not know what to expect coupled with the fact that the helicopters lost sight of each other, as there were no navigational lights on, added hazard of air collision.

Major Syed Liaqat Asrar Bokhari and Major Ali Jawahar Khan were the first to land and disembark the SSG troops. Brigadier Bokhari still remembers, "In East Pakistan, area was full of tall trees, landing in darkness was like getting down in a well at night. I mostly relied on the altimeter and set the voice warning at five meters, also the crew chief had the doors open and was reporting the tail clearance, suddenly there was machine gun fire with tracers going all round, altimeter was at four meters. "SSG troops off-loaded in a minute under command of Major Nadir, it took 97 seconds to get airborne again. The second helicopter was not as lucky with its assorted troops, because it took them exactly twenty minutes of "convincing" before the troops got off the helicopter. This helicopter kept hovering for twenty minutes and went to about six places within a radius of a thousand yards but every time they selected a place they got the same answer from troops, "There is water here." Eventually the pilot convinced them that the entire area is waterlogged. During this process when the helicopter was hovering in that area, they saw and heard quite a lot of gunfire and vary lights being fired. As luck would have it, this landing was made right in the centre of the Indian position. Forward company thought that their rear had been over-run by Pakistani heliborne force and the rear company assumed that both their forward companies were captured. In the panic they started firing at each other and suffered heavy self-inflicted casualties. The prolonged hovering of helicopter also caused confusion in the enemy's rank and file; they thought that quite a force had landed. The enemy, which had thwarted the advance of a complete brigade, got so frightened and jittery by this helicopter landing that they vacated the entire Belonia Enclave and withdrew to the Indian territory. Next morning, 24 FF and 20 Baloch resumed the advance without any resistance and captured the Belonia Bulge without any further loss.

This heliborne operation had been an unprecedented success. There was no casualty on own side.

Those Were the Days

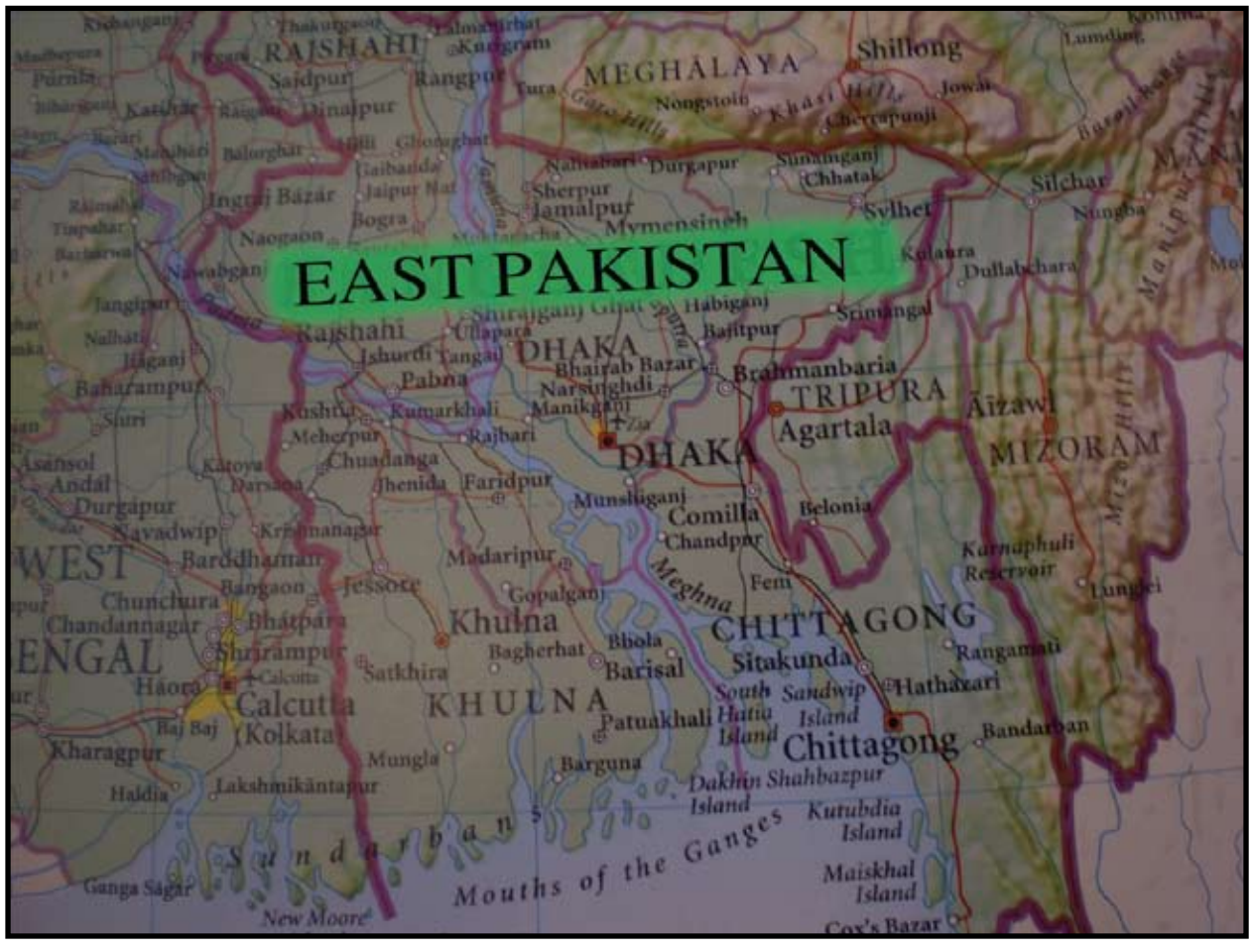


Lt. Col. & Mrs Patrick Tierney at home Toronto-2010

Initially Army Aviation pilots dined in the Eastern Command Mess. The Beaver pilots had permanent accommodation at Dacca while PAF had its own mess. Among Army Aviators, Major Ali Jawahar and Major Patrick had families at Dacca. Mrs Patrick remained at Dacca till the very end and on 14th December 1971 left for Burma. Maj. Patrick Tierney was promoted next year ie 1972 and took over as CO 3 Squadron in Multan. An extremely affectionate and a friendly CO who is still fondly remembered by his officers. Lt. Col. and Mrs Patrick Tierney left Pakistan and live in Toronto, Canada.

In June – July 1971, 4 Army Aviation Squadron moved to Dacca from West Pakistan. They established independent mess in one of the vacant bungalows, it was probably the only time in pilots military career when married accommodation was in abundance but none was willing to take it. The squadron routine was simple and to the point. Flying was the only major activity but other military events like small arms firing and physical fitness were duly looked after. Squadron had a Land Rover as an administrative vehicle.

There was an unknown fear about the future. In the mess sometimes pilots would sit whole night in the lawn discussing policies and strategies. Leave was rotated for all ranks. Telephone calls to West Pakistan were cumbersome so letter writing was a good pastime. There was one cinema hall in the cantonment which was frequently visited. Lieutenant Colonel A L Awan remained in Dacca till September 1971 when Major Bokhari was promoted to take over the command. The contributions of Major Akram second in command, "The mother of the unit," were commendable as he listened to all kind of suggestions and heart burning from all corners and still behaved like a mother i.e. to cool down the father.



Dhaka and surrounding areas



EASTERN FRONT

Low intensity conflict was going on in East Pakistan since March 1971. From 21st November 1971 onwards it became a Limited War along the border belt involving air forces of Pakistan and India. Indians were looking for an excuse for their expansion, whereas Eastern Command was stern in its objective of not giving up an inch of territory. There was apprehension that if Mukhti Bahini got enough of territory it might establish free Bangladesh.

Military Geography

East Pakistan had 4000 kilometers long border with India in the east, west and in the north. Only in the south, apart from Bay of Bengal, a narrow strip joins it with Burma. The tract along Pakistan-Burma is hilly and thickly forested. Airfields in East Pakistan were of World War-II era and situated at Dacca, Chittagong, Comilla, Shamshernagar, Sylhet, Jessore, Ishurdi and Lal Munir Hat. Lack of communication in the province were blessing in disguise for the defender. Grain of the soil is from north to south. Terrain is plain except hilly area in the east. Vehicular movement was restricted to the roads even in dry season. Dacca was the capital and strategic target for any invader. It was connected with the rest of province through roads, rail and ferries. The three major rivers namely Ganga, Madhumati and Meghna divide the province into four distinct military sectors. There was no rail or road bridge connecting any of the sectors, except Harding Bridge over Ganga and the bridge over Meghna at Ashugang.

North Western Sector.	Major Indian communication life line runs precariously narrow.
Eastern Sector.	The shortest approach to Dacca from India.
South Western Sector.	Indian state capital of Bengal, Calcutta is just 90 miles from border.
Central Sector.	A combination of Northern and Western Sector.

Lieutenant General Niazi's Strategy

"Troops on the border would fight on, until ordered to withdraw, while withdrawing to the fortresses; they would fight delaying actions in an attempt to exchange space for time. Finally they would occupy and defend the fortresses till the end". Fortresses, Niazi referred were towns of Bogra, Rangpur, Mymen Singh, Jessore, Jhenid, Sylhet, Kamalpur, Bhairab Bazaar, Comilla, Chittagong and Dacca. For deception purpose he created adhoc divisional headquarters and brigades by removing staff and units from other formations. Thus almost all the formations were under strength. Niazi had ordered that withdrawal from the front would not take place unless 75% casualties occurred to the units.

Eastern Command

Formation	Location	Commander	Task
9 Division	Jessore	Major General Ansari	Defence of Jessore
16 Division	Nator	Major General Nazar Shah	Defence of North Bengal
14 Division	Dacca	Major General Qazi Majid	Defence of Eastern Border
39 Division	Comilla	Major General Rahim	Defence of Comilla
36 Division	Dacca	Major General Jamshed	Defence of Dacca
97 Independent Brigade	Chittagong	Brigadier Atta Ullah	North/Central Sector

Armour

No.3 Independent Squadron (8 tanks)
29 Cavalry (Bengal Tigers)
Total: 64 tanks (including 12 x PT-76)

Air Force

No.14 Squadron PAF (16xSabres F-86E). They lasted till last light of 6 December 1971. (On 8 & 9 December pilots left for Pakistan via Burma).

Army Aviation Contingent in East Pakistan

4 Army Aviation Squadron was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Syed Liaqat Bokhari, SJ (who was promoted in August 1971 and took over the command of the squadron from Lieutenant Colonel Latif Awan) narrates, "On my promotion, the squadron in Dacca was comprising of six MI-8s and four Allouette-III helicopters. However, keeping in view the operational requirements on the Western theatre, one MI-8 helicopter was shipped back. The five MI-8 and four Allouette-III helicopters remained actively engaged till the end. There were also three Beavers of the Plant Protection Department in Dacca; Major Sultan of Army Aviation was their commander. Last reshuffling of pilots took place on 21st November 1971. Fixed wing pilots including Majors Ishaque, Sarfraz Rabbani SJ, Fayyaz Ibrahim, Maqbool "Mac" along with MI-8 pilot Major Askree went back to West Pakistan and from Dhamial Major Masood Anwar an Allouette pilot joined at Dacca. Pilots who took part in the war were:

MI-8 Pilots

Lieutenant Colonel Liaqat Bokhari, SJ, Commanding Officer
Major Akram, Second in Command
Major Manzoor Kamal Bajwa
Major Ali Jawahar, Adjutant
Major Zahur Ahmed
Major Riaz ul Haque, SJ
Major Ali Kuli Khan Khattak

Allouette Pilots

Major Zareef Bangash, T.Bt
Major Khalid Sagheer
Major Patrick Tierney
Major Nauman Mahmood
Major Tauheed ul Haq
Major Masood Anwar



Brigadier Bokhari SJ

Company ex 299 EME Battalion with Major Yusaf Anwar, Major Wali and Major Ijaz Minhas.

Saluting the Maintenance Effort in East Pakistan.

The heroic flying done by Army Aviators during 1970-71 in East Pakistan would be remembered for a long time. This extra-ordinary flying was not possible had it not been for the **excellent professionalism, dedication and commitment** displayed by the maintance back-up. This motivated group was led by **Majors - Yusaf Anwar, Wali Ur Rehman and Ijaz Minhas**. Equally spirited were the **JCOs - Bashir, Zulfiqar, Nazir, Malang Bukhari, Arif, Baz Khan** and some superb **NCOs/craftmen - Mustafa, Bashir, Ashiq, Nazir Pehlwan, Haider Zaidi, Waris, Raza, Shaukat, Saleem, Askari and Munshi Khan**.





Conduct of Operations

General Arora's opening move of 21 November 1971, was in the North Western Sector, there by he secured his fragile logistic tail apart from a check on the Chinese in Tibet. The pitched battle in the Hilly Sector where 4 FF put up brave resistance forced Arora to change his game plan, instead of clearing every pocket, he resorted to, by passing the strong points. When all out war erupted on 3 December, Arora had his forces 10-15 miles inside East Pakistan in almost all the sectors. From western approach he reached up till Jessore within three days. Arora initially had no plan to capture Dacca; they had plans to capture the territory up till the river banks. General Niazi also had fragile forces to defend Dacca, because for him it was not plausible that Indians could cross over three major rivers. Towards the end Indian paratroopers and heli borne landings made a significant difference.

War Begins and First Two Missions

Soon after PAF air attacks on Indian airfields from West Pakistan on the evening of 3 December 1971, an all out war broke out which was heard on MI-8 radio by Lieutenant Colonel Bokhari, he was conducting the squadron night flying at Dacca. He passed the information to air traffic controller, and called off his night flying. Sure enough the Indian aircraft attacked Dacca Airfield at midnight. The war was on.

One Allouette with Major Masood Anwar and Major Tauheed had just touched Chittagong with GOC 39 Division on board, when it received this news. At 2300 hours Major Ali Jawahar and Major Zahur flew to Maulvi Bazaar in a MI-8 with one platoon of SSG troops, and reached safely back home at 0015 hours. Another Allouette piloted by Major Nauman and Major Zareef proceeded to Rangpur with Brigadier Shafi.

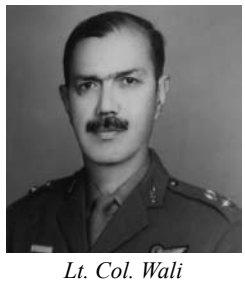


Allouette at Chittagong

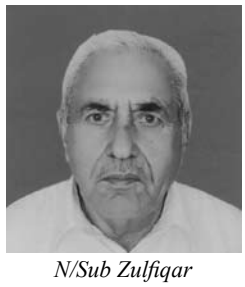
Aviation Hangar Attacked at Dacca

On 4th December 1971 at about 0900 hours, hangar and office area of the aviation element in Dacca was subjected to enemy's strafing. One MI-8 was damaged and Major Wali Ur Rehman (EME) with six other ranks were injured. Naib Subedar Abdul Jalil, Naik Lutuf Ur Rehman and Sepoy Ramzan later embraced shahadat. Flight Engineer Naib Subedar Zulfiqar was also injured.

Same day at about 1000 hours the enemy carried out a massive air raid to render the Dacca Airport inoperative. Anti aircraft gunners(6 Light Ack Ack) and the small flock of Sabre fighters went into action. Some of the most spectacular dog fights were witnessed over Dacca. The large number of foreign reporters present in the city recorded a good account of the vintage Sabre F-86 aircraft of the PAF wrecking havoc on the best of the Russian fighter aircraft of India. As claimed, 17 Indian aircraft were shot down as against two of the PAF. One Allouette-III(Major Sagheer) immediately took off for search and rescue mission to recover own bailed-out pilots. But before the chopper could reach the area, the Mukti Bahini had taken the pilots away.



Lt. Col. Wali



N/Sub Zulfiqar

Army Aviators 'Night Warriors'

Due to Indian air superiority after the first three days the MI-8 and Allouette operations were conducted mostly during the night. The air strikes during the first three days were mainly concentrated on the airfield, which was being hit more frequently. The squadron pilots flew some of the most hazardous missions at a time when PAF was neutralized due to enemy air superiority in the province. Flying low in pitch dark night without proper navigational instruments and equipment, was most dangerous; but the pilots were brave, they undertook missions like shifting of troops, ammunition, rations, evacuation of casualties and flying the commanders from one sector to another at night.

On 4/5th December at 2300 hours one MI-8, Major Jawahar & Major Riaz with Subedar Malang as the flight engineer proceeded to Maulvi Bazaar with some troops and ammunition as reinforcement. The MI-8 was fired upon from the ground once it was short of landing area. A post flight amidst enemy fire revealed a bullet hole in the hydraulic tank. Flight engineer rectified the fault with the help of a wooden stick. After successful completion of the task, the helicopter returned to Dacca at 0300 hours. Similarly on the very next night one MI-8 (Major Jawahar & Major Zahur) was sent to Bogra with Major General Jamshed on board. Close to Bogra it faced very heavy ground fire and had to turn back to Dacca.

Ali Kuli's Nocturnal Forced Landing

On 7th December 1971, one MI-8 took off at 0100 hours to go to Khulna with machine guns, mortars and a heavy load of ammunition. Lieutenant General Ali Kuli narrates, "I and Major Jawahar were detailed for an ammunition dumping mission to Khulna. We went low level. It was 45 minutes going and 45 minutes coming back, the endurance of the helicopter was 2 hours. We drifted and could not find Khulna. After few minutes we started flying back and again drifted and lost our track. We gave call to Dacca radar which was known as 'Ginger Control' but to no avail. We spotted Chandpur which was lit up, a sign that this town was held by Mukhti Bahanis. It was 58 miles south east of Dacca. Soon 20 minutes fuel remaining warning light came on and also we heard the 'Ginger Control' directing us to Dacca but it was too late. We made a forced landing near Naryangang forest area. After landing we quickly camouflaged the helicopter and waited for the worst. We had personal weapons with us so we took positions. After some time we heard a voice and never before in my life I had heard such a soothing Punjabi "Kehra Hai' (who is it?). It was a local Punjabi officer who later narrated that the rumours of Indian para troops was quite high and he was leaving his office to sort us out when telephone rang and he reluctantly turned back from the door to pick it up, it was about us from Dacca. That is how we were saved." Fuel was immediately despatched by road and the aircraft came back to Dacca the same morning.



Lt. Gen Ali Kuli

MI-8 Survives Own Ack Ack

On 8 December one Allouette-III(Major Zareef and Major Sagheer) took off at 0145 hours to take some officers to Chittagong and accomplished the mission safely. Major Bajwa and Major Zahur, on same night 8/9 December 1971, were returning from Madaripur at 0400 hours after a mission. When the MI-8 was passing over Narayanganj, close to Dacca, own Ack Ack guns opened up all of a sudden, despite the known flight plan. Fortunately there was no hit as the guns were firing on fixed lines at night.

More Endurance for Helicopters

Number of forced landings and low fuel warning lights forced the Army Aviators in East Pakistan to increase the endurance by fitting MI-8 helicopters with additional fuel tanks. For Allouette-III, no such facility was available thus when going on long trips, extra jerricans of fuel had to be carried in all Allouette Helicopters.



Brigadier Muhammad Akram



Major Manzoor Bajwa

The First MI – 8 Crash

On 9th December 1971 at 0300 hours, Major Muhammad Akram with Major Manzoor Bajwa took off for Comilla from Dacca with ammunition on board. As the helicopter took off, it hit a wire running closely and crashed to the ground. In the process the main rotors hit one huge banyan tree and half of the nearest barrack was missing.The lone soldier who was sitting on top of the ammunition boxes remained seated during this crash, unaware of all what has happened, he left his post only when captain of the helicopter, Major Akram came running and ordered him to run for safety. It was just a miracle that the crew and passengers came out safe. The helicopter was completely destroyed, but still it did not catch fire. Very next night, these two pilots again undertook missions. Major Akram flew with Major Riaz at 0200 hours, they flew to Khulna and dropped much needed ammunition and machine guns. Major Bajwa flew with Major Ali Kuli to Brahman Baria to drop troops.

Indian Paratroopers

During night 10/11 December 1971 the Indian 2nd Para Battalion troops were dropped at Tangail, 40 miles from Dacca. Brigadier Qadir's 93 Brigade of 36 Division was fighting a rear guard action involving 33 Punjab and 31 Baloch Regiments. At night when Brigadier Qadir and his staff were in the rest house they got the news that Chinese paratroopers have landed in aid, in fact they were the Indians who were dropped from Fairchild Aircraft. The Indian forces just got the tail of the force, but psychological impact was gained. The Indians later captured Brigadier Qadir and his staff. Same night one Allouette (Major Sagheer &Major Tauheed) at 0300 hours proceeded to Bogra and Rangpur to evacuate Major General Nazar. On 11th December, Major Jawahar and Major Ali Kuli proceeded to Khulna on a MI-8 with mortars and ammunition. At 0245 hours when they were short of Dacca intense enemy aerial bombing took place, a one thousand pounds bomb fell on the helipad; luckily the MI-8 diverted and landed after the raid was over.

Aricha Ferry Site - 13th December

In link with the Indian para troopers, Major Tauheed ul Haque and Major Masood Anwar proceeded same night at 0300 hours to Aricha Ferry Site with sole engineer soldier on board, he had to operate the ferry for getting the troops across the river to counter Indian Paratroopers. As the helicopter was returning to Dacca it was caught in the own Ack Ack fire, since enemy air raid had come suddenly.

Comilla 'Save Our Souls Mission' - 14th December 1971

117 Brigade commanded by hockey Olympian Brigadier Atif was in Comilla Garrison located on the eastern border. Brigade was almost encircled by Indian forces and pounded day and night, Indians had further dropped heliborne forces near by. Despite Indians overwhelming majority the garrison stood to its flag. Ultimately there was an SOS call as the small arms ammunition was nearly depleted.



On the night of 13/14 December Major Bajwa and Major Zahur took off from Dacca after midnight with a load of ammunition. Flying time was about 30 minutes, there was no question of having any sort of navigation light on board or on ground. The procedure was to follow dead reckoning and then look down and find suitable place for landing. The peace time drills of having communication with the formation on ground was almost non existent in the last days of the war. Pilots were not even sure whether they would find own troops or enemy on landing. At a distance they could see the tracers and muzzle blasts in and around Comilla but where to land? As the pilots descended down they got the first burst of machine gun, the stadium in the middle of garrison was lighted to indicate the landing ground, MI-8 dashed to it before it is extinguished for the fear of air raid. There was constant shelling going on. Ammunition was off loaded and twenty eight causalities were hastily loaded in the MI-8. There was no time to check the helicopter for any damage during the shelling. They took off after a hasty start. Short of Dacca at 200 meters above ground suddenly a salvo of what seemed an Ack Ack fire passed close to the helicopter. Both pilots even to this day remember every second of that eventful flight. From about 15 miles Dacca was seen clearly under air attack. When only ten miles out the radar controller repeated the pre-designated danger warning code word. MI-8 was over the vast spread of the river bed and resorted to flying a figure 8 at barely 50 meters height, yet the controller Flight Lieutenant Ishtiaq would not stop repeating the warning. After holding for about 30 minutes, the pilot proceeded towards Dacca despite refusal of permission by the controller, as the fuel was running low. The landing was made while the Ack Ack guns were still active during another air strike. Major Bajwa recalls "After landing I phoned the controller as he had requested. He conveyed that we were lucky to leave the holding area, contrary to his directions. He stated that Agartala Radar Controller had directed one MIG-21 from the strike over Dacca to engage us. We could not be located due to our very low level. Later one transport plane, which used to do blind bombing for nuisance over Dacca, was guided to our holding position. Fortunately we pulled out before its arrival at the site. The Indian reportedly dropped several flares trying to locate us. The 28 critical casualties ostensibly Saved Our Souls."

MI-8 Prepared for Bombing

As the news of Indian paratroopers started pouring in from various sectors. General Niazi directed that MI- 8s be prepared for bombing the enemy para troops at Tangail. The pilots were excited at the prospects of this unusual fighting role. Most were aspiring for the first mission.

At 0300 hours 13th December one MI-8 was fitted with the rollers on the floor for easy dispensing of the bombs. When the squadron commander, requested for the targets quadrants or the specific area required for neutralisation, he was told to locate and engage the enemy on his own. The entire night was spent in suspense. 4 Squadron War Diary has following entry, "Lieutenant Colonel Bokhari, SJ and Major Riaz Ul Haq, SJ prepared one MI-8 for bombing mission at 0300 hours with Rollers fitted. 500 pound bombs were to be dropped at Tangail and Narsingdi by MI-8 helicopter, which was never done before. But at the last moment the mission was cancelled. Again the same MI-8 was ordered to proceed for bombing but on the eleventh hour the mission was again cancelled."

On 15th December 1971 once again MI-8 was ordered by Commander Eastern Command himself to bomb Indian troops at Narsingdi at 1830 hours but as Lieutenant Colonel Bokhari and Major Riaz Ul Haq were about to take off, it was cancelled by commander. During the last enemy air raid, 7 bombs fell only about 100 yards away from one of the MI-8 helicopter parked at 19 Signal Battalion ground. The rotor blade buckled slightly. It was made fly worthy after necessary hammering to streamline the buckled blades.

General Niazi Declines Permission for Escape

Lieutenant Colonel Bokhari, Commanding Officer 4 Army Aviation Squadron, daily attended the evening conference at Headquarters Eastern Command, chaired by General Niazi. On 14 December 1971 it was apparent that General Niazi had decided to accept Indian offer of surrender. This decision was communicated to squadron officers, in the daily briefing of the squadron which was held after return from Eastern Command by the colonel. It was also conveyed that General Niazi had declined our request for escape with the helicopters to Burma. As the writing was already on the wall, squadron officers had discussed the possibility of escaping, instead of surrender. Escape after surrender is the right of every



soldier as given by Geneva Convention, so why to destroy or hand over our helicopters to Indians. Why not to take them back to Pakistan and use them to fight for another day, after all the war in West Pakistan was still going on. However as luck would have it, the formalities for cease-fire could not be completed and the process was delayed by one day.

Decision for Helicopters Escape Obtained

In 15 Decembers' conference, it was officially conveyed that the high command at Dacca had accepted the Indian offer of a cease fire and the surrender was scheduled for 16 December morning. It did not come as a surprise because the Headquarters Eastern Command had become quite unnerved since the Indians had on 7 December night dropped heli-borne troops at Tangail, some 40 miles north of Dacca. On the same night of 15 December 1971 Chief of Staff Eastern Command (Late Brigadier Baqar Siddiqui) while passing the instructions for the unfortunate surrender, ordered the destruction of all heavy equipment including guns, tanks and helicopters. Brigadier Bokhari narrates, "I persuaded and managed to get permission from Lieutenant General Niazi, to fly out the helicopters to Pakistan via Burma. General Niazi was reluctant in giving the permission to army helicopters flying out of Dacca to Akyab (Burma). Vice Admiral Sharif, the Naval Commander supported the idea and matter was referred to General Gul Hassan, Chief of General staff, who promptly agreed.

However one Allouette-III Helicopter along with two pilots and one engineer had to stay behind in Dacca to be at the disposal of the Eastern Command. It was further directed that only ladies nominated by the Eastern Command, would be taken along, including the fifteen nurses of Combined Military Hospital, Dacca.

Planning the Escape Flight

The load capacity of MI-8 with additional fuel tanks was ten passengers each. It was a difficult task nominating people under such conditions. Brigadier retired Bukhari continues "I being the commanding officer decided to draw lots amongst the Allouette pilots. Names of Major Tauheed and that of Major Zareef were drawn while Major Ejaz from EME was an obvious choice being the only engineer officer for Allouette-III helicopter. The escape was planned for early morning during darkness. The three serviceable MI-8 helicopters and the four Allouette-III were positioned and dispersed at sunset, in the golf course, parallel to the Dacca Airport.

During the briefing pilots were tasked to take off between 0300 hours and 0335 hours on 16 December 1971. The helicopters were to take off individually at five minutes interval. The MI-8s were to take off following Beavers of the Plant Protection Department, followed by slow flying Allouettes. The Allouettes were to carry additional fuel for en-route refuelling. Normal route from Dacca to Chittagong and along the straight coast up to Akyab in Burma was the easiest route, which pilots did not wish to follow for obvious reason of safety. It was decided that from Dacca helicopters will proceeded south for 20 miles to avoid Ack Ack guns at Narayanganj. Next in order to get away from Agartala Radar they were to turn south east and intercept Feni River to follow upstream, leading them across the mountain range running parallel to the coastline. From this point they were to head for the prominent railway bridge over River Karnafhuli, in the valley. This railway bridge was the last check point, from where pilots were to fly on magnetic compass bearing

All other much shorter routes passed over much higher mountains covered with thick forests and hostile tribes. It would not facilitate refuelling of Allouettes on the way. Major Bajwa was detailed to fly last and was made responsible for providing search and rescue cover to anyone forced landing enroute. Strict wireless silence was to be observed. No internal or external lights of any kind were to be used. The crew would carry weapons and dump them along with, cameras, identification documents including flying log books and passports into the sea, shortly before landing at Akyab on the western coast of Burma. The minimum flight time of MI-8 would be over 2 hours and 30 minutes, therefore requiring at least three hours fuel endurance. After the briefing pilots were all dispersed at 2100 hours to make preparations for the departure.



Havildar Malang Bokhari was one of the flight engineers in this formation. He narrates, "At around evening we got the rumour of escape, later we were told to hide the helicopters marking, which we did by applying what so ever we could find to do so. There were families of squadron troops still residing at Dacca, naturally parents were quite worried, especially about their young girls. Many had already briefed them what to do in case of being captured, which was suicide."

The Escape Night

At 0200 hours pilots proceeded to the golf course. It was impossible to gain access although the helicopters were parked at different locations in the golf course and cantonment, yet each helicopter had a big crowd around it. The news of escape had spread like a jungle fire in the cantonment. Lieutenant Colonel Atif Alvi was a boy of seven years, his father was a lieutenant colonel in the Eastern Command, he narrates, "We were six brother and sisters, around midnight my father came in a hurry and told my mother to pack up. My mother packed few bags and I before leaving grabbed my cricket bat. In the jeep we reached a school where one big helicopter was parked, it was night and people were shouting and crying, there was no space available on the helicopter. My father took us in jeep to another place and there we got a place on the helicopter, we had to leave everything before boarding including my bat. My father stayed back". Another family, who also luckily escaped on the same night, unknown to the girl, years later she got married to an aviator (Brigadier Mohammad Tahir). She writes, " At night some one knocked at our door, my father told us (three sisters and mother)to pack, we went in an army truck, in which many people were seated, we reached a forest (golf course). My mother tied mine and my other sisters frock together, there was hue and cry, later we sat in a cramped helicopter and my father's parting words were, "Allah Kay Hawalay."

At 0300 hours on 16 December the pilots and engineers who were to leave, prepared in the stillness of the night. It was a dramatic sight to see more than 200 people some even with heavy luggage in the vicinity of the helicopters. Each helicopter exceeding their capacities were loaded with women and children cuddled with each other having strange expressions of scare and fright.

Major Bajwa recalls: "Due to long range and expected three hours of flying, internal fuel tank was installed containing one ton extra fuel. The ferry tank warranted removal of 11 seats. Even load wise the helicopter retains configuration of 10 passengers and a crew of three, a total of 13 persons capacity. When I managed to get to my MI-8 helicopter, I was shocked to see the rear half of the cabin full of trunks, suitcases and bags, piled up to the ceiling and only a handful of passengers on the seats. I ordered all baggage to be taken out. Ultimately it was the crew that had to physically throw it out personally. Requesting for peace, I announced that only ladies were to board and no individual was to carry any baggage, as we intend to carry an overload of passengers to save maximum lives. The crowd was naturally unmanageable as would be expected under such conditions. There were hundreds of hysteric passengers, each one trying to get in first. We proceeded to load the passengers. There was an uncontrollable stampede, despite two of us at the door. Each passenger carried dry food items like biscuits, which mostly dropped, while milling through the door and were crushed on the floor in the rush. Once full to the top it was dilemma to close the sliding door with so many ladies still stuck in the door, desperately trying to board. I managed to push the remaining female crowd with my back, taking support of the helicopter and help from the crew. With difficulty the crew managed to slide the door shut. It was not possible to estimate the number of passengers. I urged everyone to remain calm through the flight, not to light matches, smoke or to draw curtains from the windows. The glass windows were blinded with mud for safety. The passengers were briefed not to panic or shuffle around in case of ground fire or consequent injury, but remain calm and composed in the interest of flight safety. Major Zahoor Ahmed the co-pilot was on the ground trying to manage the crowd.There was no way for him to get in except the cockpit window. He was helped in".

One Allouette Failed to Start

Meanwhile, Major Sagheer and Major Masood Anwar along with the crew chief and two others, arrived at the site, North of Dacca City, where their helicopter was parked. Lieutenant Colonel Masood writes, "We settled in our seats, strapped, Major Sagheer and myself kicked the starter. Oh hell! The battery did not respond. In desperation, Major Sagheer made 2-3 attempts in quick succession. By now whatever



little strength the battery had was totally drained out. The show was over. We abandoned our efforts of attempting any further restarts. We stepped out of the helicopter, took a deep breath and drove back to the living quarters."

Nurses Remained Seated, in The Ambulance

Brigadier Bokhari narrates, "It was 0330 hours and time was running short, but there was no news of nurses, I waited for another five minutes and then ordered start up of the helicopters. It was revealed years later that they (nurses) came but remained seated in the ambulance waiting for guidance. To this date I regret that they were left behind". Starting the chopper was an ordeal as the crowd was still under the main and the tail rotors and nothing would deter them. After start up when ready to take off, one couple approached cockpit window with a fervent request. The young captain and his wife begged, to take their only son to safety. Already overloaded, child was pulled in through the window.

Flight to Freedom

To pilots great disadvantage the sky was covered with 8 octa clouds, completely overcast. Major Bajwa further recalls, 'Being the last one to take off at 0335 hours I briefly used the landing light, to enable me to take off most gingerly over the trees. I realised I had no margin for error, for lifting off from the fairly confined location and grossly overloaded. The night was fairly cool and the take off over the tall trees was a great problem. **Leaving Dacca after spending the last two years of extensive flying was a strange experience loaded with the feelings - that of sadness, helplessness and dejection.** Once established at 500 feet I handed over the controls to my co-pilot Major Zahoor, in order to relax my nerves and be readily available for an emergency. Major Zahoor had been my most frequent co-pilot over the last one year, enough to develop a strong mutual bond. With complete overcast sky and consequent pitch darkness, nothing was visible through the windscreen. We partly slid opened both side cockpit windows, hoping to be able to get some visibility through the corner of the eyes. Our instruments panel was very dimly lit to give us better vision outside. We had expected to be engaged by the small arms ground fire, from the enemy as well as our own troops, particularly during the first ninety minutes of the flying up to Chittagong. All along the way the crew kept exchanging notes by guessing the type of small arms fire we were occasionally drawing due to flight at low level. The passage of every minute was bringing greater hope, as the chopper was guzzling fuel and getting lighter and more easily manageable.

In pitch darkness due to overcast sky, we missed the bridge over Karnafhuli River, passing barely at 800 yards distance and had to make a 360 degrees turn to locate and set for final course.

Between the bridge and the border there were two small detached hills, which had to be circum-navigated without any chance of being able to see the features. During the first one hour of our flying we were to fly below 500 feet above ground level to avoid Indian interception as we were in the close range of Agartala Radar on our left flank. Cox's Bazaar Radar was under enemy occupation with the aircraft carrier Vikrant positioned in the vicinity. We were not certain about the night interception capability of the enemy's carrier borne fighter aircraft. Nevertheless we could not avoid Cox's Bazaar due to higher hill features towards the East and had to pass within 10 miles of the radar, relying on our low level flight and hoping for the best.

Beyond Cox's Bazaar we were to pass through low hill features running parallel to our flight path. At 0515 hours we crossed the border into Burma. As the passengers were conveyed the good news they all heaved a sigh of relief. At around 0545 hours, gradually there was beginning to be some light on the horizon. I pondered for a few minutes in disbelief. We seemed to have drifted well into the sea. Where did we went wrong? How come the sea has a few pointed pinnacles jutting out? If we were not on the correct route despite our best navigation, where the hell were we? We did not have more than 45 minutes of remaining fuel, with so many lives at stake. I carried on in good faith assuming the sea had flooded the shore in unusual high tide. A few minutes later I saw a sizable hole through it. Soon I realised the surface was rather whiter than water. Soon it came to light that we were flying over a neatly compressed and continuously spread out layer of fog on the coastal areas. After a while, it started thinning and breaking up in patches, to disclose the isolated habitation, with early morning smoke emerging from most farmhouses. It turned into a most



soothing sight for the remaining 15 minutes of flying before landing at Akyab, which is a manned airport with regular commercial flights and a small naval base. Before landing we veered off into the sea to dump all our weapons, cameras and everything that could identify us".

On Finals for Akyab

We continued maintaining radio silence for fear of refusal of landing permission. When I turned into the finals at Akyab, the sun was rising from behind the low hills to the East. It was a clear morning and some sense of relief was now over taking us. But this relief was a strange phenomenon, it was with a very heavy over tone of sadness. Losing half of the country to our arch rival India was very disappointing and dejected feeling. Who was responsible? Where did we go wrong? Would we be together again? How would we avenge this ignominy and fall from grace? What impact was left on the historical canvas of India by Tipu Sultan, Ghauri, Ghaznavi and what impact we are now making? These questions hurt me, some feeling of guilt overtakes me but sight of Akyab Airfield brings me back to immediate reality. All the other helicopters had already landed safely.

As the helicopter landed the authorities rushed to the helicopter and instructed everyone to remain on board. When allowed to disembark a manifest was prepared. I looked at the crowd of passengers in disbelief as the list ended on Serial 43. It seemed like a miracle how the MI-8 carried all the forty three souls to safety with over three hours of fuel and reduced space in the cabin."

Lieutenant General Ali Kuli narrates, "Myself, Major Akram and Major Jawahar were to take off as number 2 in the formation at 0330 hours. Our helicopter had dented rotors which restricted the pay load. There were families with luggage but in the end we had only ladies and one odd young boy. This young boy is a major in the army now and every year without fail he rings or meets me in December.

We somehow were the first to land at Akyab Airport, Burma. As we switched off at intersection a Burmese soldier approached and asked us in Urdu, "Are you Pakistani? We replied yes, we are. He inquired are you Muslim? We replied in affirmative. He then said my name is Mustapha Kamal and I am a Muslim too."

The other two MI-8s had carried thirteen souls and twenty eight souls (including 8 infants)respectively. One Army Allouette piloted by Major Nauman and Major Patrick Tierney along with one PAF Allouette piloted by Squadron Leader Sultan and Flight Lieutenant Rashid also landed safely. The total number of the passengers came to 123, including those flown in other two Allouettes and three Beavers of the Plant Protection Department. They were all taken to a rest house with hurriedly spread out concertina barbed wire and armed guards, all around the rest house.

The only aircraft to hit by ground fire was a Beaver, whose pilot got a bullet hit on his leg. This Beaver landed at Akyab with eleven souls on board. The Beaver Flight was commanded by an Army Aviator, Major Sultan, who was on a deputation with Plant Protection Department. PIA Twin Otters had already reached Akyab from Dacca on the night 13/14 December, Mrs. Major Patrick Tierney escaped on this night from Dacca. It was she who rang the Burmese authorities at Akyab and innocently informed them that her husband is an Army Major and not a civilian as they perceived.

Remaining Two Allouettes Also Leave Dacca

As per original planning only one Allouette was to stay behind at Dacca; however the second Allouette after failing to start also stayed back at Dacca. Lieutenant Colonel Masood Anwar writes, "Once we reached back our mess after abortive start, while we sat, trying to draw inspiration from each other, some of our technical personnel belonging to aviation detachment walked over. They knew all but two helicopters had flown to Burma the previous night. They showed inquisitive concern for this sudden development and obviously the anguish that flowed across their faces was starkly meaningful. They had come in search of that leadership which they so hopefully and wittingly needed at that moment of trial. One could sense the subservience and instant expectation upon their faces. The fact that they did not declare was even more painful. Today when I write, the thought of that instance makes my face flush with a feeling of guilt, a sense of failure in doing my duty of leading my men through the distress of war".

Around 1130 hours on 16 December 1971 we decided to pay a visit to the Eastern Command Headquarters. On reaching there we found the staff in a state of haste and confusion. Apparently there was some kind of negotiations in progress with the United Nations officials regarding surrender proceedings.



Later we learnt that surrender was planned to take place at Dacca Stadium at about 1300 hours. The Indian General in Command, General Arora was due to fly into Dacca and supervise this ceremony. The time was 1230 hours. In the midst of this confusion, we decided to drive back to the mess and wait."

"Enroute our jeep crossed a flagged jeep. We recognized the occupant to be Air Officer Commanding PAF. He too, noticed and waved at us to stop. We stopped. The Air Vice Marshall said, 'What are you doing here?' Sir, we are at the disposal of the Eastern Command and so far there are no orders for us, Major Sagheer replied. **'Look surrender is going to take place within an hour from now. Nobody is going to give any orders to you. Get out as quickly as you possibly can'**. Before he drove away he asked us to carry along Squadron Leader Masood of the PAF Helicopter Squadron. The squadron leader joined us at that moment. We looked at each other and in a split second reaction we decided to leave. There was rush of energy and we felt re-energized with the thought that there was a escape chance we could avail with the will of ALLAH. The drive through the streets of Dacca Cantonment was in a noticeable hurry. Suddenly to our surprise, we sighted an open jeep with an Indian flag. There were 4-5 Indian soldiers dressed up in commando uniforms seated with an air of arrogance visible. They were surely the advance party who had arrived to secure Dacca Airport.

We arrived at the location of the first helicopter. Major Tauheed, Major Zareef and Major Ejaz Minhas were there and we conveyed them the message too. Major Zareef Bangash had already gone in the morning to the Eastern Command, where initially he was told to wait, as he would be flying the both generals, one conqueror and other conquered, later no more was told thus they were waiting at the helipad.

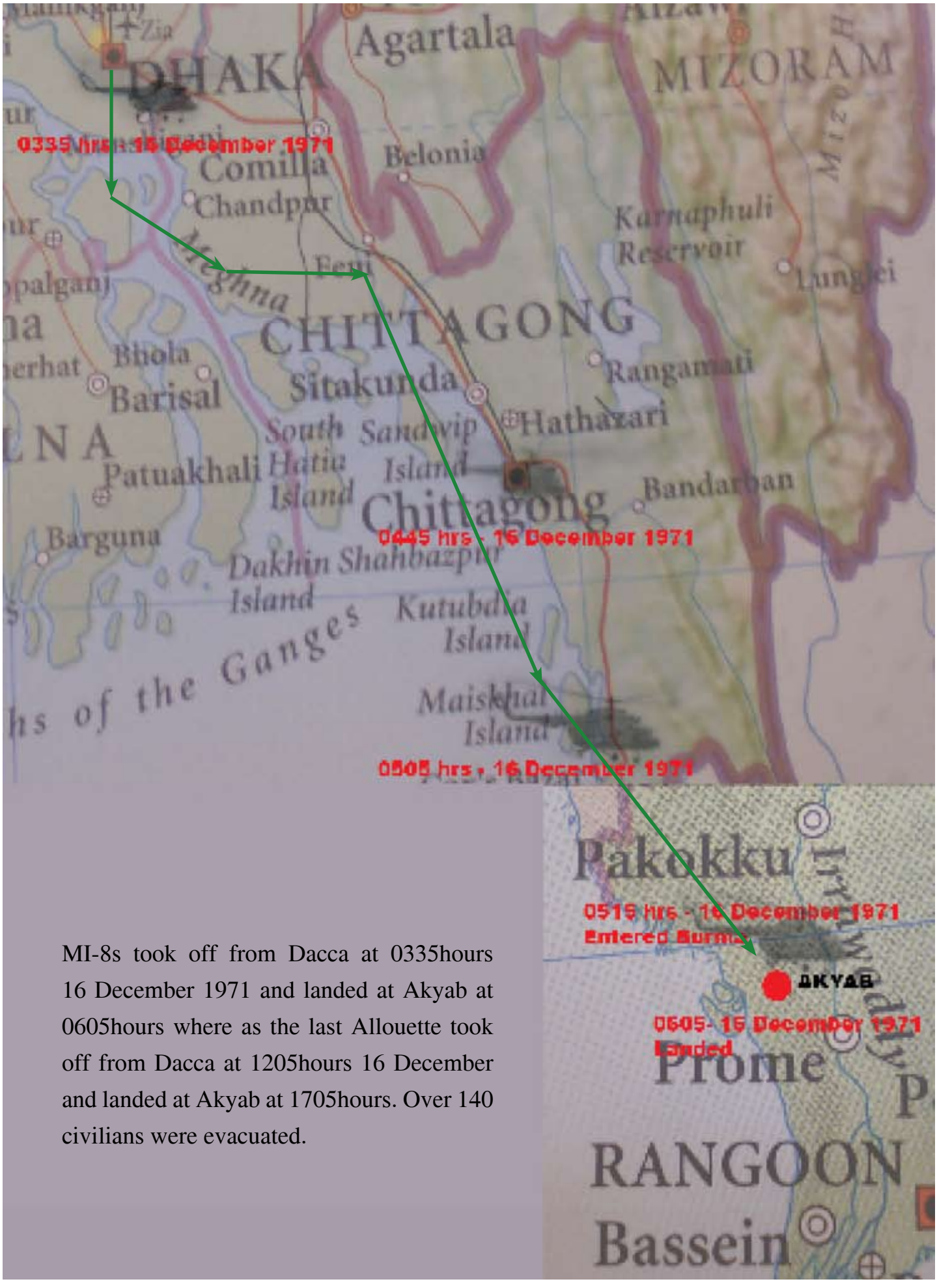
Major Sagheer and I proceeded ahead towards Kurmitola where our helicopter was parked. On arriving there, we were lucky to have found it intact. While I prepared for take off, I silently admired the thoughtfulness of Major Sagheer, who had remembered to procure a serviceable battery from the squadron technical store. With battery replaced, the engine responded at the very first attempt and with in minutes we were airborne. More than flying, I was keeping a hard look outside, watching out for enemy jet aircraft. Since Major Sagheer flew quite low, might be 40-50 feet above the ground, my eyes began to strain from watching the flow of objects passing by in quick succession. ***Those fleeting scenes were the last glimpses of Combined Pakistan which I knew would stay in my memory for a very very long time.***

After take off, we followed a southerly bearing. Within 30 minutes of flying we were clear of inhabited area and flew over marshy terrain, which lay on the fringes of the Bay of Bengal. All effort was afoot to avoid as much of built-up area as possible against the instinct of most helicopter pilots of flying close to built-up area, but here we were trying desperately to avoid habitation. With no untoward incident between then and the time we left Dacca, some of the tension eased out and we felt relatively relaxed. Major Sagheer handed over the controls to me and stretched himself to squeeze some of the stiffness out from his body. I must admit, he had a sharp sense of judgment for navigation, because even at that low level we made random turns to the left and right to avoid habitation and after 30/40 minutes flying due South, we made a 90 degrees turn to the left and headed due East. Between here and up to about 45 minutes of flying was the most difficult phase of our mission. The main reason was the area underneath was relatively clear and afforded less cover and secondly, we were to pass quite close to the site of Indian radar installed on a high ground towards the left of our flight path.

Over three decades have passed but whenever I think of time I always imagine, the finiteness and the insignificance of human beings in relation to time and space. It makes me wonder how fear of death acts as a purifier and makes one noble. By then, we had flown almost 2 hours and 15 minutes. About that time we must have entered the Burmese Territory.

We felt relieved. There was sense of achievement. While I enjoyed and wondered at the denseness of the forest, I observed low fuel warning light flickered on the instrument panel. No sooner did the light turn steady then we started manoeuvring in search of a suitable space to land the helicopter. Believe it or not, it took us nearly ten minutes to locate a suitable site. Helicopter was not switched off. Two persons were posted as guards around the helicopter with their loaded weapons, while we did refuelling from jerry-cans placed earlier in the helicopter. Within minutes helicopter was ready to fly off and once again we set course for our destination Akyab. We must have arrived fairly close to Akyab when radio contact was established with the control tower. For the first time, after Dacca, we heard radio transmission of the second Allouette helicopter. It was really heartening to hear them. Evening was approaching and we were hurrying to get to Akyab before sunset. About 10 minutes short of the town, we decided to abandon our weapons since these would have created serious complications had the Burmese authorities received us with weapons. Therefore in a nearby lake, helicopter was brought to hover over water and everyone threw his weapon, ammunition

The Escape Routes



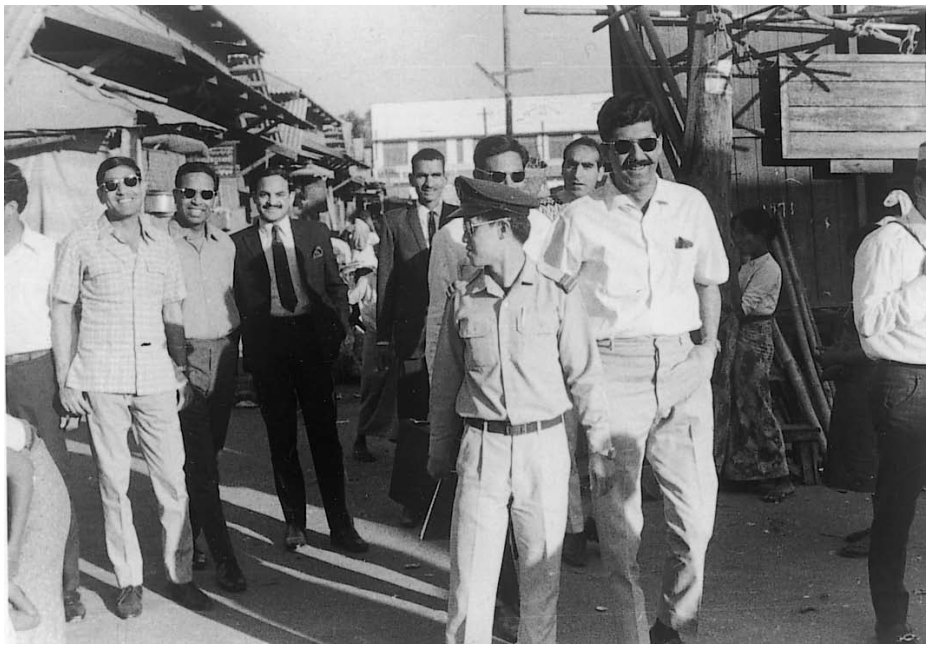
MI-8s took off from Dacca at 0335hours 16 December 1971 and landed at Akyab at 0605hours where as the last Allouette took off from Dacca at 1205hours 16 December and landed at Akyab at 1705hours. Over 140 civilians were evacuated.

and any other military equipment including flying coveralls etc, so that upon arrival at the airport we could declare ourselves as civilians. This was part of the instructions received during briefing for this mission.

At last the moment had come, the control tower cleared us for landing. We had the second chopper in sight. Both landed one after the other and were directed into the parking area where helicopters which flew in the previous night, had been parked. At Akyab, since morning the already landed crew of Army Aviators had a depressing day, the uncertainty about the missing Allouette (Major Sagheer and Major Masood) caused panic which over took every one at Akyab. **In the evening when the typical Allouette turbine whine was heard, it turned into a pleasant surprise**.

Land of Buddha

Within hours of landing, the Pakistan Embassy staff arrived from Rangoon for supervision. All Pakistanis were fairly well looked after. After four days the families were separated and taken to another house. On the same day the pilots were taken to the airport to have a look at their helicopters parked on the apron. To their dismay they discovered that three days of parking in the sun had partly melted the camouflage on the markings on the helicopters. Disguise of civilians was no longer valid. All the defence personnel were taken to the naval base where they were asked to disclose personal identifications. When pilots returned after interrogation there was a lot more barbed wire and the guards around their rest house however living conditions and food got better after identification.



Pakistani pilots in Burma, December 1971

The Contingent Reaches Rangoon

On the tenth day after arrival at Akyab ie on 26 December 1971, the families were moved to Rangoon and airlifted by PIA for Karachi. On 27th December Army Aviators were directed to ferry the helicopters to Mandalay located in the North Central Burma. After landing at Mandalay pilots were flown to Rangoon by a Burmese Air Force aircraft and handed over to Pakistani Embassy. They were lodged in the empty house of a Bengali First Secretary, who had defected. During the following two weeks stay in Rangoon Army Aviators experienced the hospitality of the local Muslims. They would invite the whole lot of them for community functions and frequent feasts. Pilots were free to move around and mix with the locals. Living conditions in Burma were down to earth, entire population slept on floor mats or hard beds and were healthy with simple diet and habits. It was quite surprising to see large families living in what must have been sprawling shops and show rooms in the city centre. Before the World War II, Rangoon was called Paris of the East.



Lieutenant Colonel Bokhari and Major Zafar Askree

Major Bajwa narrates 'Most of the muslim population requested for religious books,



medicines, cosmetics and food colours from Pakistan. Local consumer goods were of poor quality and foreign goods were highly valued and sought after. Though free to move around, we were getting anxious with the passage of time. New passports were prepared for all of us. We obtained books on the international law. The law gives the neutral country the option to maintain us till the cession of hostilities or repatriate us to the country of departure. Burma being a neutral country and now neighbour of new Bangladesh came under a lot of pressure. After evacuation of families to Karachi, the PIA crew which had entered Burma at the beginning of the war was also evacuated to Pakistan by early January 1972. Army Aviators status as armed forces personnel was in doldrums and new fears were added with the passage of every day'.

The Final Home Run

On 14th January 1972 Burma recognised Bangladesh. Suddenly passports were returned and Army Aviators were directed to be prepared to depart at short notice. Same evening one PIA flight was directed to make a technical landing and all of them were flown to Karachi during the same night. At Karachi they were received by the Base Commander Brigadier Jabbar and other senior aviators.

Retrieval of Helicopters from Burma

On arrival at Rawalpindi after few days for recouping, orders were given to proceed to Burma for retrieving the helicopters. The next day, Lieutenant Colonel Bokhari, Majors Askari, Aftab, Bajwa, Zahoor, Jawahar and Lieutenant Colonel Noor Haider Shah from EME along with the flight engineers and some technicians, had arrived at Rangoon by PIA via Karachi.

Preparing For Flight into China

Aviators were briefed before departure, indicating that the helicopters would be shipped out of Rangoon. However upon arrival at Rangoon the story changed. military attaché informed them that the Burmese Government had already faced enough opposition and did not want to scandalize the issue by allowing shipping the helicopters from Burma. Pilots were therefore directed to proceed to Mandalay and prepare the machines to fly for Kunming in China and then await further instructions for shipping out of Shanghai. The helicopters had earlier been painted white for disguise. It was mid winter which did not require any woollies in Burma and pilots were therefore, equipped only with light clothing. The thought of going to a cold country in midwinter, over flying high mountains, sent a chill down the spine. Maps were supplied and they were all set for departure to Kunming the next morning.

To Karachi via Bangkok Not Shanghai

On the morning of 16th January 1972 three MI-8s after air tests at Mandalay were getting ready for China when a small military plane of Burmese Air Force landed and Pakistani Military Attaché informed that, "Now the helicopters would be flown to Bangkok. Same day helicopters were flown to Hmbai a Burmese Air Force Base near Rangoon. After overnight stay they flew to Moulmein (2 hours and 30 minutes). They landed at Bangkok after another hour and 45 minutes of flying. On 23rd January 1972, these MI-8 helicopters were flown to the Dockyard and same day sailed off to Karachi. Allouettes were flown out of Burma on a PAF, C-130 aircraft. Beavers and Twin Otters had already flown to China.

Those Who Were Left Behind

The entire Army Aviation Contingent did not fly out of East Pakistan. Those who could not be accommodated in the helicopters stayed back and had to go through the suffering and pain of surrender/ captivity.

4-Squadron in Burma December 1971



Helicopters were painted in white colour

Pilots of 4-Squadron at Moulmein Airport Burma



WAR IN THE WEST





Bird's Eye View

War in the East Pakistan had started on 21st November 1971. At 1745 hours 3rd December 1971, own jet fighters attacked forward Indian Air Bases; War in the West Pakistan had also started.

Pakistan Army's Strategy

Pakistan Army's Strategy in 1971 according to Lieutenant General Gul Hassan contained two ingredients; 'First, formations other than those in reserve were to launch limited offensives, secondly a major counter offensive was to be launched concurrently in to India.' The first ingredient of launching limited offensive went as per plan; however the master stroke of counter offensive never materialized**.**

8 Division (Major General Malik)

It captured a small enclave 'Dharm' on the River Ravi during night 4/5th December 1971 as part of the 'Offensive-Defensive' operations in Northern Punjab. India reacted by launching corps size attack in Shakargarh area. Pakistan's 8 Armoured Brigade was employed on 13th December onwards to stem the Indians tanks moving towards Gujranwala.

11 Division (Major General Majid)

Moved across the border on the night of 3rd December, took the bridge over the River Sutlej and captured Hussainiwala. In retaliation Indians captured Sehjra Enclave, thus creating a stalemate in this sector.

23 Division (Major General Iftikhar Janjua)

23 Division's operations were the silver lining of Pakistan Army operations in Western Theatre during 1971 War. 23 Division under Major General Iftikhar Janjua, fought an intense and high casualty battle in the Chamb area and put Indians on defensive. Lodgment was made on the far bank of Munawar Tavi. Chamb was taken on 8/9th December, unfortunately on 10th December 1971, General died as a result of burns/ injuries sustained in a helicopter crash. Sector became stale.

18 Division (Major General Mustafa)

18 Division was tasked to venture into the desert and go for Jaisalmer town in Rajasthan. Lack of air cover resulted in disaster for this formation. Story of Pakistan Army records: "Ill fate had nothing to do with the failure of 18 Division's attack against Ramgarh (45 miles north of Jaisalmer). The Air Chief was in General Headquarters on the morning of 4th December when he heard that 18 Division was to launch an attack towards Jaisalmer. He asked the CGS, Lieutenant General Gul Hassan, 'Why the Army was springing the sudden surprise on the PAF, Gul Hassan replied, "Divisional Commander had a good plan and that, he will jump into Ramgarh one day and the next day will be in Jaisalmer. The disaster was nothing to do with terrain; it was entirely to do with lack of air cover by the PAF, which had warned against the very situation that occurred'. Chief of General Staff Gul Hassan wrote in his memoirs: "For the debacle in the desert, I hold myself blameworthy as the Chief of General Staff."

DEPLOYMENT OF ARMY AVIATION

Dhamial Army Aviation Base

Dhamial Army Aviation Base was commanded by Brigadier Jabbar, under his wing were three Composite Squadrons of four flights each, located at different stations, with a part of 5 Army Aviation (Rotary Wing) Squadron (KKH) at Dhamial, 4 Squadron was in East Pakistan. 199 and 299 EME Battalions along with 503 Aviation Base Work Shop were also under his command. Unlike previous war, the Composite Squadrons were now under the operational command of the corps. Since early November 1971, all the Composite Squadrons were in operational areas.

At 0730 hours on 24th November 1971, state of emergency was declared. Dispersal of aircraft and stores was carried out at Dhamial, Fateh Jang and at Ranial Strip to avoid pre-emptive air strike. On 26th



Brigadier Jabbar

November 1971 at Dhamial, civil aircraft including one Aero Commander (Governors' Fleet) and two Beaver from Plant Protection Department arrived on requisition for use in emergency along with pilots, maintenance crew and spares. Second batch of Allouette helicopters already under contract, were waiting transportation from France. As the war clouds appeared, the need was felt to expedite the delivery of these useful machines. Brigadier Jabbar made hectic efforts to tide over problems and dispatched Major Farhat Burki (199 EME Battalion) to Karachi to resolve the transportation issue with PIA. Major Burki met Chairman PIA Mr. Rafiq Sehgal and resolved the issue in one meeting. The entire batch was airlifted in 24 hours and by end November 1971 these new Allouettes were air tested and ready to go into battle.

1 Army Aviation Squadron

1 Army Aviation Squadron was located at Mangla and it moved to Rahwali by 9th November 1971. It was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Aslam Janjua and its one flight and the squadron headquarters remained at the beckoning of Headquarters 1 Corps.

At Rahwali, squadron headquarters and one flight with three L-19s and two OH-13(S) helicopters was deployed as under:

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Aslam Commanding Officer
Major Riaz Ud Din Ahmed
Major Abdul Razzaq
Major Javed Ahmed Minhas
Major Khalid Masud
Major Tariq Shah Khan

No.1 and No.2 Flights with three L-19s each were located near Qila Soba Singh to support 8 Division and 6 Armoured Division.
Major Anwar Mohiuddin – Flight Commander
Major Shah Alam
Captain Abid Hussain

No.3 Flight with two L-19s was located at Ugoke Village to support 15 Division.
Major Zafar Hussain Siddiqui -Flight Commander
Captain Imtiaz Alam
Captain Aftab Ahmed Khan

No.4 Flight with two L-19s and one OH-13 (S) was located near Kotla to support 23 Division. It later moved to Padhar.
Major Saeed Ismat Chaudhry – Flight Commander
Major Muhammad Shahbaz Khan
Major Sajid Islam

2 Army Aviation Squadron

2 Army Aviation was located at Lahore before the start of war and was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Mir Hujjat Saqlain. In November 1971 its headquarters moved to Miraka near Manga Mandi to provide support to Headquarters 4 Corps. One of its flight moved to Bonga Hayat to support an independent brigade. The second flight was deployed east of Lahore in the general area of Rangers Headquarters to support 10 Division. Its third flight was located at Kasur Strip.



Squadron Headquarters at Miraka (near Manga Mandi)

Lieutenant Colonel Hujjat Saqlain	Commanding Officer
Major Shafaat Hussain	Second in Command
Major Raza Mahmood	Adjutant
Major Tayyab Jalil	Quartermaster
Major Jaffer Hussain	Allouette pilot
Major Hameed Ullah	OH-13 pilot



No. 5 Flight This flight before the war had moved to Bahawalpur and supported the operations of 25 Brigade and on 18th November 1971 it moved to Wasalewala.

Major Jamshed Niazi-Flight Commander
Major Muhammad Umar

No.6 Flight East of Lahore in support of 10 Infantry Division.

Major Tayyab Ahmed- Flight Commander
Major Moeenuddin
Captainl Anwar Ul Haq

No.7 Flight Gujranwala in support of 6 Armoured Division and 17 Infantry Division:

Major Khalid Saeed Khan- Flight Commander
Major Muhammad Qasim
Major Ikram Ullah
Major Tasnim Hayat Malik
Major Zahir Shah

No.8 Flight Rukhanwala Strip in support of 11 Infantry Division:

Major Saleem Mirza
Major Humayun Malik

Note: Major Minhaj and Major Qurban of 2 Squadron were attached with Frontier Corps at Peshawar.

3 Army Aviation Squadron

3 Army Aviation Squadron was located at Multan before the start of the war. Lieutenant Colonel Taleh Mohammad Mian commanded it and moved to battle location on 14th November 1971. Headquarters and one flight remained close to Headquarters 2 Corps at Sahiwal for its support. One flight was in support of 1 Armoured and 7 Infantry Division. One flight remained at Multan and fourth flight had moved to Rahim Yar Khan on 27th October 1971 and operated from Goth Machi, in support of 18th Division. Two sections of this flight went to support the actions of 55 Brigade at Chhor.

On 3rd December 1971, the following officers from Army Aviation School were posted to 3 Squadron:-



Major Ross Mahmood
Major Khalid Kamal
Major Saeed-Uz-Zaman
Major Javaid Mahmood
Major Zafar Ullah Khan
Major Riffat Beg Humayun
Major Muhammad Iqbal Ali Mirza
Major Fahim Shah
Major Javaid Ahmed Khan

Lieutenant Ali Shafi of Pakistan Navy was also attached with the squadron; he was with Army Aviation for helicopter training.

5 Army Aviation Squadron

A new flying unit 5 Army Aviation Squadron was raised on 31st January 1971. It had three MI-8 and three Allouette helicopters. Following officers were posted from 4 Army Aviation Squadron:-

Lieutenant Colonel	S M A Tirmizi, (On promotion to the new unit)
Major	Nauman Mahmood
Major	Anwar Hussain Shah
Major	Ikram Ullah Khan
Major	Syed Mushtaq Ahmed Shah
Major	Aftab Ahmed
Major	Khalid Yasin
Major	Muhammad Daud
Major	Sultan Mahmood
Major	Zia Uddin Javeed

5 Army Aviation Squadron, was split up. Its Allouette Flight was sent to Gilgit where as its MI-8 Flight stayed at Dhamial and was the reserve force of the aviation effort as and when required. It had three MI-8 on its strength.





Northern Sector

The first sortie took place on 4th December 1971 at 0655 hours in Allouette-III No. 1456 piloted by Major Badr; it was a casualty evacuation mission. On the same very day 4 more sorties were flown from Gilgit to Astor, Humzigund and Dhamial, mainly for casualty evacuations. From 4th December till the last day of war, pattern remained same, although General Officer Commanding 12 Division was also flown in Hajira area. MI-8s did not fly a single sortie except on 14th December when they flew from dispersal area back to Dhamial.

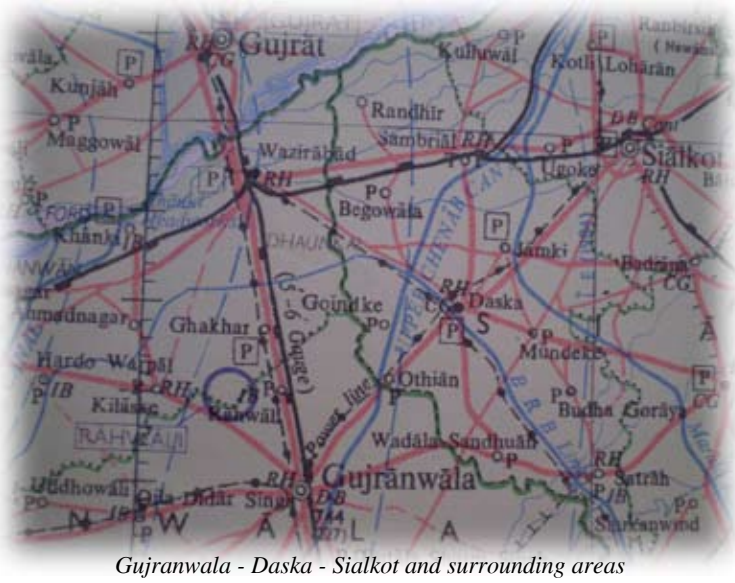


CENTRAL SECTOR (SIALKOT-KASUR)

Dharam Enclave - First Day of War

At 0600 hours 4th December 1971 No.2 Flight's pilots learned about the developments of night 3/4 December from 8 Division Operations Room, regarding capture of Dharam Enclave.

Major Anwar proceeded in a L-19 to the area at 0645 hours for artillery shoots; he came back after 1 hour as he could not establish communication. Major Anwar after changing his aircraft flew another sortie of 3 hours and 15 minutes over Dharam Enclave. He observed enemy tanks at three different places and engaged them effectively with artillery fire.



Gujranwala - Daska - Sialkot and surrounding areas

At 1315 hours, Captain Abid Hussain went on a mission to go over the Forward Defensive Localities to locate enemy tanks. When he had gone 3 miles inside Indian territory, he was located by enemy fighter aircraft. Captain Abid was without an observer and he was attacked three times by a jet and it chased him up to 10 miles inside our territory, he remained safe mainly because of calm and skilled handling.

Dera Baba Nanak Railway Station is Engaged

At 1310 hours on 5th December 1971, in retaliation to the IAF bombing of Narowal Railway Station, No.2 Flight was asked to engage Dera Baba Nanak Railway Station. Flight Commander and observer Major Anwar and Captain Abid, flew across River Ravi to accomplish the mission. Major Anwar commenced ranging of railway station with medium guns and during the process two enemy jets appeared in the area. These jets were spotted well in time. Railway Station was damaged badly and the L-19 aircraft landed back safely after 2 hours and 15 minutes of flying.

Kasur

At 0730 hours on 6th December 1971, Major Saleem and Captain Humayun took off from Kasur, after getting briefing from divisional headquarters and coordination of frequency with divisional artillery. Their task was to locate the enemy armour. They flew along the Forward Defended Localities at tree top level. Abeam Mehdipur pilots detected tanks through kicking of dust. Major Saleem called medium artillery fire.

Ugoke

At 0700 hours on 6th December 1971 at Ugoke, Major Siddiqui and Captain Imtiaz Alam got airborne for a mission of dropping message to our unlucky infantry company in Phuklian area surrounded by enemy. The message was to indicate the escape route to them. The pilots wanted to give cover to the company by artillery fire but could not establish communication with guns. They flew along the river through shelling and reached Khoje Chak. There the message was dropped successfully to our troops, majority of them managed to extricate themselves.

At 1100 hours on 6th December 1971 at Ugoke, Captain Imtiaz and Captain Aftab were tasked to locate enemy armour. The pilots flew over Chaprar and climbed high to observe as the visibility was bad, but it did not help. Captain. Imtiaz keeping in view formation headquarters concern for the enemy tanks, decided to fly overhead area Chanor. He twice flew over this village remaining 20 minutes in enemy area but did not see any tanks instead he was fired upon by small arms..

Captainl Aftab Engage Wires and Crashed

In continuation of the search for enemy armour Captain Aftab met with a tragic end on 7th December 1971. While returning to Ugoke after having flown a reconnaissance mission with Havildar Ashraf; to confirm the presence of enemy tanks in area Chanor. It was evening and Captain Aftab could not see the wires since he was facing the sun. Both the occupants died on spot and their bodies were recovered the next day.

War Exploits of a Dashing Aviator

Major Saeed Ismat Choudhry, a graduate of Sandhurst Military Academy and Flying Instructor School Risalpur, an extremely bold aviator was the flight commander with 23 Division. He was awarded Sitara-i-Jur'at in Chamb Sector. His highly promising military career came to an abrupt end when he unfortunately developed a heart ailment while performing as chief of staff in a corps headquarters. Having retired in 1992, Brigadier Ismat also served as Ambassador of Pakistan in Baku. An impressive defence analyst, he frequently appears in media doing tough talk shows. He writes about the 1971 War "No.4 Independent Flight comprising three L-19 aircraft and one OH-13 helicopter was raised from Aviation School Instructors and placed under command of 1 Army Aviation Squadron to support the operations of 23 Division in Chamb Sector. I was designated as the flight commander. I moved the flight to occupy an Advance Landing Ground (ALG) near Kotla where 23 Division was located. On 2nd December 1971, I decided to move the flight in close proximity of divisional tactical headquarters in Padhar.



Major Saeed Ismat SJ

On my very first mission, I ventured in the enemy area. Observation was seriously hampered by haze and smoke generated by very heavy artillery fire on both sides. The visibility was restricted to 1000 meters. I located an Indian heavy artillery regiment across Tawi and suggested to the division to call for an air strike. Initially they were skeptical of my adventure and doubted the veracity of the information and my report of flying so deep inside enemy territory. When I volunteered to act as a forward air controller (FAC) to lead, guide and direct PAF aircraft inside the enemy territory, the credibility was restored. As an airborne forward air controller I effectively engaged two Mike Targets well inside enemy area. Next day was also very eventful when I engaged enemy positions and tanks concentration by artillery shoot, my first Uniform Target.

On 5th December 1971, the leader of six PAF aircraft established communication with me to take on the Indian artillery regiment located by me a day earlier. The first run did not yield results as they failed to recognize the target. I decided to improvise and told the leader that he should keep me in sight and I shall approach the target and when I say "Target-Target" the guns would be up 12 O'clock 500 meters straight ahead. We managed to coordinate our respective positions but in the process we attracted a lot of flak to the extent that some enemy tanks seeing me so close to ground even fired at me with main gun. When I called out "Target-Target' the leader said negative, target not identified, I decided to continue getting closer to the enemy gun position. When my aircraft was as close as 100 meters, he recognized the target and asked me to get out of their flight path. So I did and witnessed a most spectacular aerial attack. All the guns were



virtually destroyed and some blown out of their pits. This was all over in minutes and the leader asked me if I had any other target for them. I had identified an ammunition dump in area north east of Palanwala the day before on my return trip from Jaurian. This was indicated and recognized with ease and destroyed.

At this time I observed four Indian MIG-21 Aircraft on the horizon. PAF jets left the area as they had successfully accomplished their mission and were at the edge of their fuel endurance limits. The Indian fighter aircraft pounced at me. No one had ever taught me the evasive actions under such a situation. I was like a mouse being hunted by wild and hungry cats, I luckily escaped unscathed but when I was entering back in own territory, our own troops fired at me indiscriminately. I landed back at my ALG with six bullet holes on the aircraft including the fuel tank and fuselage. Having replaced my aircraft I got airborne again. I noticed that the enemy had abandoned their positions in general area south of line Moel-Chamb and practically there was no enemy to be seen there. I now carried out an in-depth study to reconfirm the findings of my surveillance. Equipped with that very vital information I went to the tactical headquarters. As the enemy had identified the direction of our main effort, he had pulled out the troops from the southern sub sector to reinforce the defence. Our division was way behind in the implementation of its operational plan and was not getting the breakthrough. The situation at the headquarters was very grim and tense. After a lot of assurances and persuasion, I managed to convince the divisional commander to accept my report as authentic. Quickly the brave, determined and sharp General Iftikhar devised a new manoeuvre plan basing on the information provided by me. Next day 2 Armoured Brigade commenced its advance towards Chamb from the right in a southerly envelopment movement."

1 Squadron War Diary records, "At 1300 hours on 5th December 1971, Major Saeed got airborne to direct PAF jets. Enemy artillery regiment located earlier by the pilot was indicated to strike leader. 11 guns were destroyed. While directing the jets Major Saeed got hit at three different places on his L-19 aircraft No 013. It was for the first time that divisional headquarters realized the importance and usefulness of Army Aviation aircraft not only to augment their efforts but as versatile part of war machinery. Information was passed to divisional headquarters that area south east of Chamb was not held strongly by enemy and attack from that direction would enhance our chance to reach Tawi."

2 Armoured Brigade Moving into Missile Trap

Brigadier Ismat narrates "I was gratified to observe from the air the brigade conducting a set piece attack like a demonstration in peace time with preliminary artillery fire and smoke on its flanks and they did not encounter any opposition. I noticed the brigade had stretched itself and was going a bit too south in their advance towards Chamb. I was in the air, observing area ahead and to the flanks of their manoeuver. Suddenly, I noticed some movement and a closer look revealed a well dug in position by a company of anti tank missiles (later confirmed as SS-11 Guard Company). I was alarmed and alerted. I tried to warn the armoured brigade commander of the impending danger by wireless. When I failed to establish communication I panicked because the lead tanks were getting closer and closer to the missile company. In desperation I decided to land my aircraft in front of the leading tank. The squadron commander, Major Shamshad came out and I gave him the information and asked him to change the intended path of manoeuver. The brigade complied without fuss. Major Shamshad told me that I had landed my aircraft in a minefield. He helped me in turning around my L-19 to take off on my old tracks made by the landing. I had never thanked him formally and I would like to do so now. To protect the flanks of the moving armoured brigade, I took several artillery shoots that day neutralizing potential threat with success and satisfaction."

First to Enter Chamb-An L-19

Maneouver Plan had 2 Armoured Brigade carrying out a right enveloping move while 111 Infantry Brigade (commanded by Brigadier Naseer Ullah Babar, SJ) was to push frontal for the division's objective, Chamb. The minefield had slowed down the move of the armoured brigade and by last light it was on the banks of River Tawi in area Chak Pandit. Headquarters had already given out the news to the nation that Chamb had fallen to our valiant forces. Brigadier Ismat further narrates.

"I was not to give up that easily and finally though very reluctantly Captain Tariq (GSO-3) was sent with me to verify the information. While flying over the area of operations, we found own troops digging

two miles south-east of Chamb. The small town of Chamb was deserted and 2 Armoured Brigade was nowhere near it. Communication let me down once again. I landed the aircraft in a dusty field and told the Commanding Officer 10 Baloch Regiment to occupy Chamb as the enemy had vacated it. We took off and the young Captain Tariq was really excited and asked me if I could land somewhere in Chamb. I landed the aircraft in a grassy field in Chamb, switched off the engines and started a long wait for own troop to arrive. We entered the Indian brigade command post and when we came back to the aircraft, four Indian SU-7s were on us throwing all sorts of munitions. It was a miracle that my little L-19 standing proud in the middle of the ground remained intact. I took off to urge 10 Baloch and 2 Armored Brigade who had stopped in their tracks after the air attack to resume their advance. I landed back at Chamb. It was in the late afternoon that 10 Baloch entered Chamb."

General Iftikhar Janjua's Helicopter Crash

At 1500hours on 9th December 1971 at Padhar, Major Sajid Islam flew Major General Janjua in operational area. This was Major Sajid's 19th mission in the last four days. After flying about 1 hour and 20 minutes, the pilot went for landing near a brigade headquarters. It was dusty and dust engulfed the aircraft. Before the helicopter could properly settle down, General Janjua attempted to get down and in the process his leg entangled with the cyclic control. This being a dual control helicopter, got out of control and the tail rotors hit a near by tree. Then for some time the helicopter was thrown around. The helicopter was still intact when it became motionless.

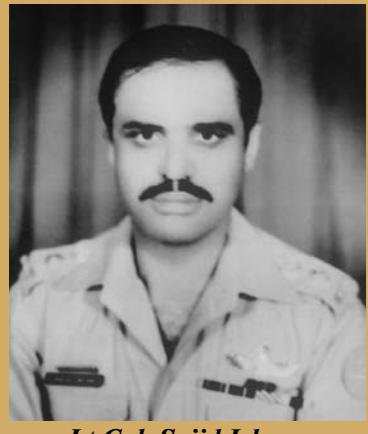


OH-13S at Padhar

The pilot unfastened his seat belt and came out of the wreckage. General's leg was stuck in the damaged helicopter and while he was still struggling, helicopter caught fire. The pilot got blinded and he found himself in fire. By this time officers and soldiers standing at helipad came forward. Next thing Major Sajid remembered was his treatment in Combined Military Hospital (CMH), Kharian.

Night Rescue by Major Saeed Ismat and Superb Gallantry of Sajid Islam

At 1635hours 9th December 1971 at Padhar, Flight Commander Major Saeed learnt about the accident and he rushed to the scene and landed there. He learnt that both - General and Major Sajid had been evacuated by road to Padhar, at 1725hours. General was in precarious condition and Major Saeed volunteered flying him to Rawalpindi, a stretcher was improvised and fitted in L-19. At 2000hour from Padhar, Major Saeed got airborne with injured Major General Janjua on a pitch-dark night. Pilot had an awful journey and after 50 minutes of flying he landed in Kharian. Major General Iftikhar Janjua was rushed to Combined Military Hospital(CMH) Kharian. Major Sajid was evacuated to CMH Kharian by road. The General later expired in CMH Kharian on 10th December 1971. Major Sajid Islam recovered, rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel and unfortunately died in another air crash of Puma helicopter near Skardu. Ironically the second helicopter accident also ended in fire and brave Sajid Islam could not survive this one. Lt. Col. Sajid Islam was an icon of professionalism, bravery and sacrifice - **he refused to leave the burning helicopter till all his passengers and crew were out before him.** He kept guiding and helping others but gave his life in the best tradition of leadership. **Acts like these make Pakistan Army Aviation a proud Corps.**



Lt.Col. Sajid Islam



SOUTHERN SECTOR (RAHIM YAR KHAN-CHHOR)

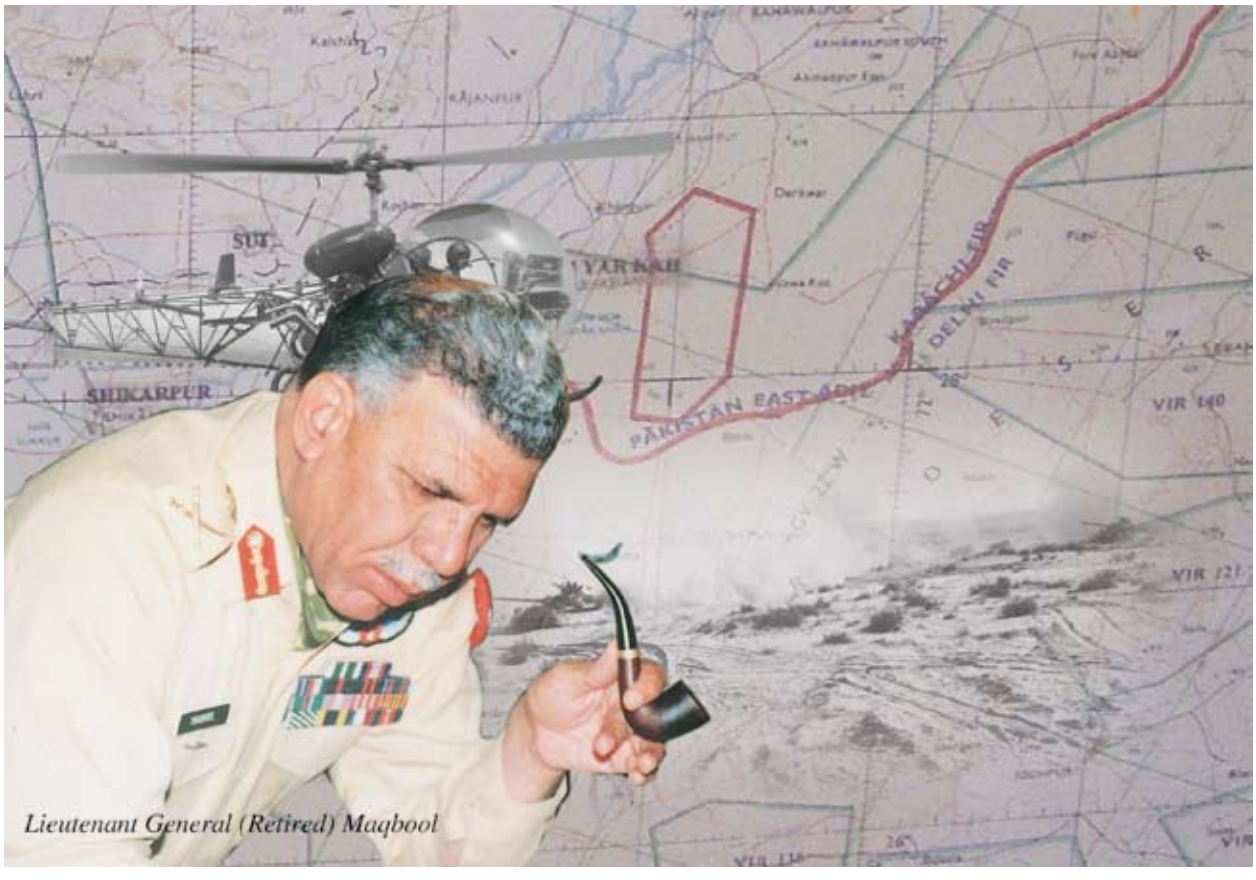
On 4th December 1971, the day had started at Rahim Yar Khan with an enemy air raid. At this time 3 Army Aviation Squadron Headquarters was located at Sahiwal Race Course Ground. One flight was at Rahim Yar Khan and six pilots with L-19s attached from Dhamial, were located at Multan, awaiting attachment to their affiliated formations.

Major Moaziz Hussain undertook the first operational sortie in an OH-13 helicopter to Dipalpur where he had gone to bring Major General Akram, General Officer Commanding 7 Division to Sahiwal. Major Javaid Hameed under took second operational sortie of the day in an Allouette-III. He took the Corps Commander Lieutenant General Tikka Khan to Pakpattan.

Lieutenant General "Mac" Remembers 18 Division Operations

Major Maqbool was the lone OH-13 pilot attached with the 18 Division. He recalls in year 2003, "On 3rd December 1971, I took Major General Mustafa on a reconnaissance mission. Next morning, I took off with the general for Gabbar, which was the launching pad. On the way back we saw echelons of vehicles stranded on the track and troops standing by, trying to pull out the vehicles. General was annoyed and directed me to get closer, general then waved his Peak-Cap in a circular motion (indicating troops to move forward)and troops responded.

On the morning of 5th December I took the general from Goth Machi to Gabbar. General revealed that there was no communication link between the division and the advancing brigades, he asked me, "How far can you fly?" then said, "Can you go to Jaiselmair? I said, "It is out of endurance now, Sir. "He said, "Okay take me to Ramgarh, on our right side on the track near Masitwali Bhit and Longanewala, the speed of troops was very slow. There were tractors pulling the vehicles, we got closer to the track. I saw smoke in the distance and general asked me which was that place and I replied it is Jaiselmair, but general corrected me that it was Ramgarh. But it turned out to be Longanewala. These were own tanks on fire, we landed there (Longanewala), General had a hasty and hot discussion with the brigade commanders. There was a casualty lying, an officer from Baloch Regiment. I put the casualty on the litter and then along with the general set

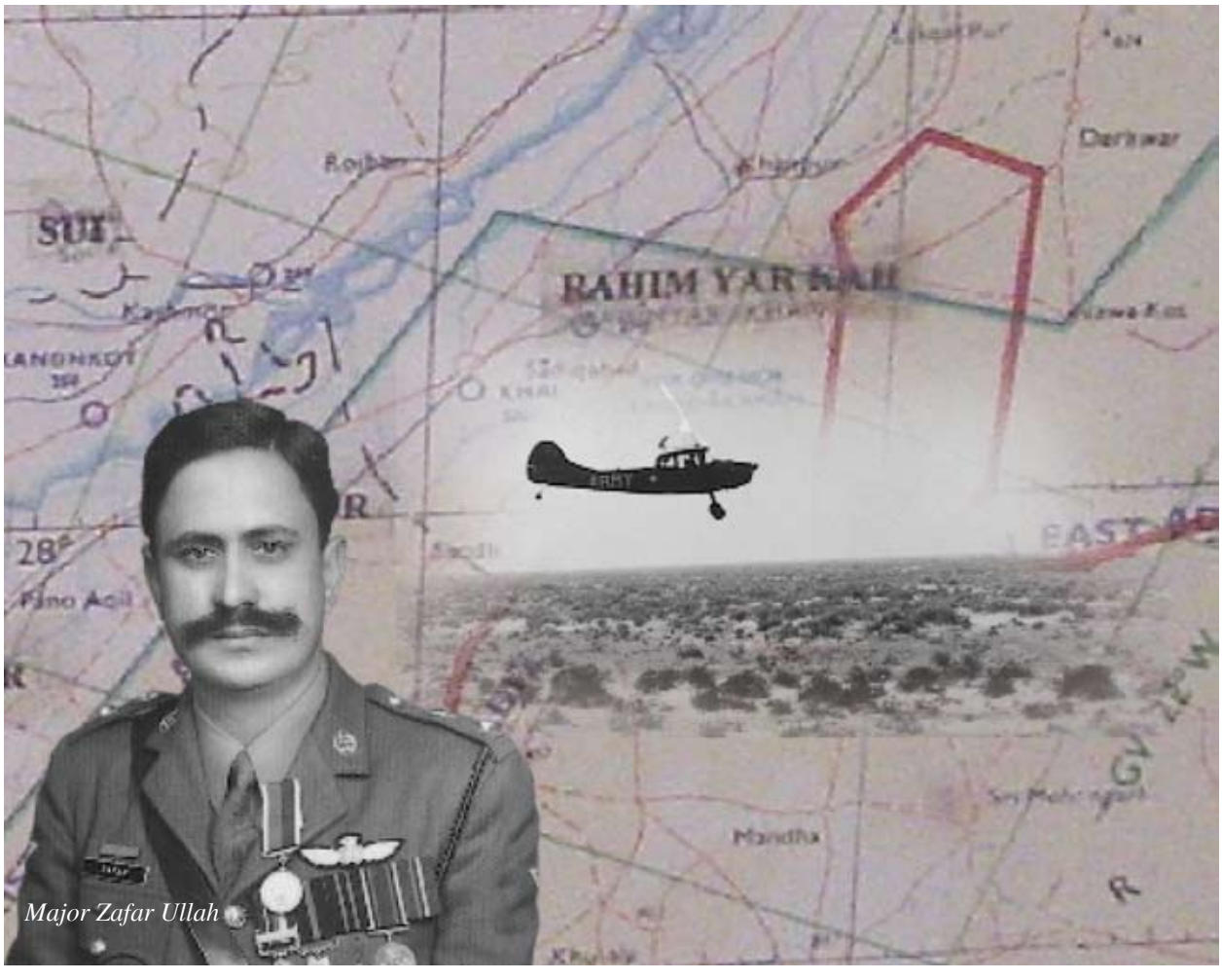


Lieutenant General (Retired) Maqbool

course for Sadiqabad. General while in the helicopter asked for paper which I did not have, so I gave him the wrapper of the cigarette packet, he wrote something and handed me over, with words to pass this back to the commanders at Longanewala. First we landed at the Main Dressing Station (MDS) at Dharki, dropped the casualty, got fuel and then dropped the general at Sadiqabad. I then flew back to the Longanewala, gave the message and further picked two more casualties on my OH-13 and landed back at Advance Dressing Station (ADS).My flying for the day was 7 hours. Next day I again flew another five hours.

Missions were not specific in nature, I flew ammunition, water, medicines, operational orders and evacuated casualties on OH-13 as well. Few days later the command of the division was changed and Major General Hameed took over; I flew him around for reconnaissance as well". Major Maqbool was later awarded with Sitara-i- Basalat for his boldness and contributions to 18 Division's operations. He rose to the rank of Lieutenant General and commanded a strike corps apart from being the Commandant National Defence College before his retirement in 1998. Presently he is running a charity school in Lahore.

Rahim Yar Khan On 5th December 1971, Headquarters 2 Corps informed 3 Army Aviation Squadron that two L-19s were required to undertake a surveillance mission to Islamgarh, in the Rahim Yar Khan- Khanpur area to assess the strength and deployment of enemy forces which were operating in that area. Major Zafar Ullah Khan and Major Fahim Shah were detailed to fly the mission from Rahim Yar Khan. Major Zafar (Colonel Retired) narrates, "At around 1430hours I got the orders for surveillance across the border to asses the enemy dispositions. I as a flight commander decided to undertake this mission my-self and told Major Fahim Shah to be stand-by for any other task from the formation. I flew at low level, following the lone track towards the border and soon had own troops in sight, they were bogged in sand. I flew looking for the enemy and after some time I could see them in the distance. I flew in a pattern where I was able to monitor the enemy in relative safety but soon I discarded that and dashed over the Indians hoping to get away before they could react. I was successful in my intelligence gathering but I had my share of the war when a burst of ground fire from the hostile troops ruptured the aircraft. It was getting late and slowly I realized that I would



Major Zafar Ullah



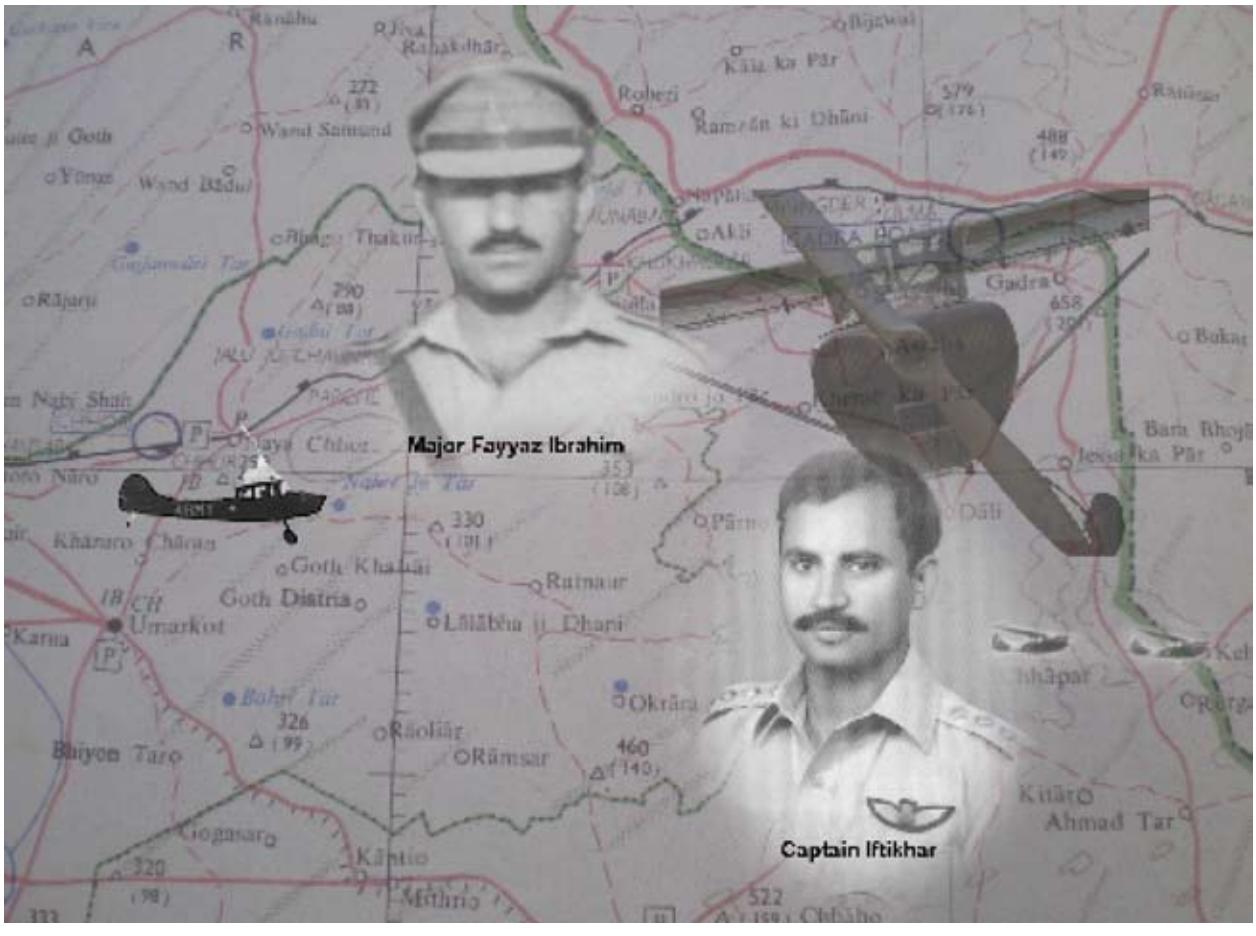
not be able to make it to the strip at Rahim Yar Khan, by the time I reached overhead Rahim Yar Khan it was dark and I was unable to find the strip. I searched in near panic for any place to land but my instincts were the hindrance in taking such a suicidal step, later when my fuel was almost consumed, I was left with no other option but to land and I vainly followed a light and landed safely. It was the main road and to my good luck there was no traffic at that time."

Major Zafar was awarded Tamgha-i-Jur'at for his part in 1971 War. On promotion he commanded an Azad Kashmir Regiment. He later returned to aviation, started the Tactical Courses in Aviation School. Presently he is settled in England, his two sons are flying in Army Aviation.

The Two Aviation Heroes of Chhor Sector (An Eye Witness Account)

Captain Iftikhar had only 50 odd hours on L-19 when in the last week of November 1971 he landed at Chhor Strip along with Major Fayyaz Ibrahim of 3 Squadron. He narrates, "Period prior to out break of war was utilized for area familiarization. On the eve of war we had shifted our location from Chhor to Dhoro Naro approximately 15 miles short of Chhor. Colonel Bashir was manning the skeleton divisional headquarters and on first day of war we were not given any mission. On the second day of war, I was to fly inside the Indian territory and to locate the Indian Armour. At dawn I took off and after 2 hours when I was coming back, I spotted Indian tanks on the move. I was flying low at Dhar level(Dhar is flat hard ground in between sand dunes) and it was easy to pick up armour in desert due to immense dust raised by them.

As I was heading back with that information so vital for the defence of Chhor, I spotted hostile aircraft at one'o clock position to me, this was my first encounter with Indians. I froze on the controls and kept staring at the aircraft which was heading towards me. At mid range, he opened fire and I saw tracers whizzing past me, on getting closer, I had an eye contact with the pilot who would be my killer, his visor was up. All this took few seconds but I was perspiring. I thought this is how it goes, and decided to look back at my stalker; he was turning, so I also decided to turn in the same direction. Now we both were circling and I discovered that he cannot get me if I remained in this pattern, soon he left me and I landed back.





It was our drill that after landing we would park the aircraft under the trees and placed sugar cane stack on the strip to hide it. Indians did bomb Chhor Strip and attacked railway station which was nearby but they never found our location".

An Aviator meets Two L-19 Accidents in a Day

Major Iftikhar continues "On 7th December 1971 we had similar sorties; we both, myself and Major Fayyaz Ibrahim took off at dawn. Mine was an uneventful sortie and after 2 hours of flying, I landed back. Strip was vacant, after some time I realized that Major Fayyaz's aircraft was missing. I got worried and started ringing through field line to forward units and came to know of his being shot by the Indian aircraft. I was informed that he was alive and being transported back to Main Dressing Station on a railway engine. I got hold of the ambulance and rushed towards the railway station by the time I reached there, he had already arrived. His head was swollen and he was unable to talk. After first aid the doctor told me that he should be moved to Hyderabad. On road it would take 7 hours, so I got permission from Colonel Bashir for his evacuation by L-19 to Hyderabad.

By this time it was close to sunset. I put Major Fayyaz Ibrahim in the rear of L-19 in lying position and took off for Hyderabad. It was dark and the city was under total black out, over the bridge at Hyderabad I was fired upon from the ground and that's how I ascertained my position and aligned myself for landing. The phenomenon of sea breeze was too much for the aircraft or perhaps my inexperience accounted for that but I was unable to land. On my second attempt the aircraft was comfortably put on the parallel fields by the winds. On third attempt I landed but aircraft swung and the landing gears broke. Luckily the aircraft did not catch fire. I got out and pulled Major Fayyaz Ibrahim out of the aircraft, soon ambulance also arrived.

We were rushed to a Civil Hospital and after examining Major Fayyaz, the doctors told us about severe head injuries sustained by him and that he needed to be immediately evacuated to Karachi. I called Mauripur Base Commander who was helpful and promised that helicopter would take off at dawn for evacuation. It was getting close to the dawn when I informed Dhamial for the first time about this mishap and I was directed to proceed back to Chhor after evacuation.

Before the termination of war I went for a sortie, as I was over own forward defended localities, I saw own infantry withdrawing and heard an Artillery Junior Commissioned Officer, probably an observer, passing the observation to Captain Sarfraz of 11 Field Regiment. I came on air and confirmed it, I passed the correction. Since I did not have the appropriate map I told Captain. Sarfraz to fire two rounds in general direction so that I could give correction from that reference; in that way I kept firing for over 2 hours in which I had the 'Uniform Target'. We stopped firing only when we thought it was enough and enemy had really suffered, which was evident from the fact that the positions remained intact till the cease fire".

Major Fayyaz Ibrahim died on 15 December at Naval Hospital Karachi and was awarded Sitara-i- Jur'at. Captain Iftikhar, was awarded Tamgha-i-Jur'at for his bold efforts in Chhor Sector.

Last Day of War

At 1230 hours on 16th December 1971, at Qila Soba Singh, an emergency air request was made by divisional headquarters to locate the enemy tanks which had penetrated our positions. Captain Abid with Major Riaz got airborne at a short notice to conduct forward air controller mission. A trail of smoke was observed behind own aircraft but the pilots ignored it, in view of the importance of mission. Communication was established with own fighters and with the help of smoke round, target area was indicated to our Sabres. Our jets destroyed the target, in the meantime the L-19 engine had deteriorated considerably. Fumes entered the cockpit, leaving no choice to the pilot except to force land.

At 1530-1545 hours on 16th December 1971, probably the last sortie of the war in West was flown by Major Badar, when he took Allouette No. 1456 from Dhamial helipad to the dispersal area.

War Diaries and personal accounts of all aviators have one thing common on the last day. The sheer pain, anguish, frustration and deep sense of loss apart from betrayal. All ranks especially the officers were under shock and having low morale, due to the loss of East Pakistan. Every face in uniform appeared to be asking others the reasons for this ignominy.



Aviation Missions

During the period of open hostilities, quite a number of missions were executed proficiently in the West by the Army pilots. A total of 118 Battle Field Surveillance and Reconnaissance missions were conducted with positive results. Thirty two Artillery Shoots were taken and over a dozen times own jet fighters were guided on to the ground targets. Twenty six sorties were generated for Command and Liaison purpose. In addition six Search and Rescue and thirteen Casualty Evacuation missions were undertaken. Also twice Column-Control duties were performed and thrice Aerial Photography was done. This might not look an overbearing performance but remember no major offensive was launched except in Chamb, in other areas only small-scale efforts were undertaken for some minor gains.

C-130 operates From Dhamial

PAF Air Base Chaklala had been the main target of IAF initially and to avoid damage from their sneak raids own C-130 sorties were accommodated at Army Aviation Base Dhamial. The details of C-130 operations from Dhamial are as under:

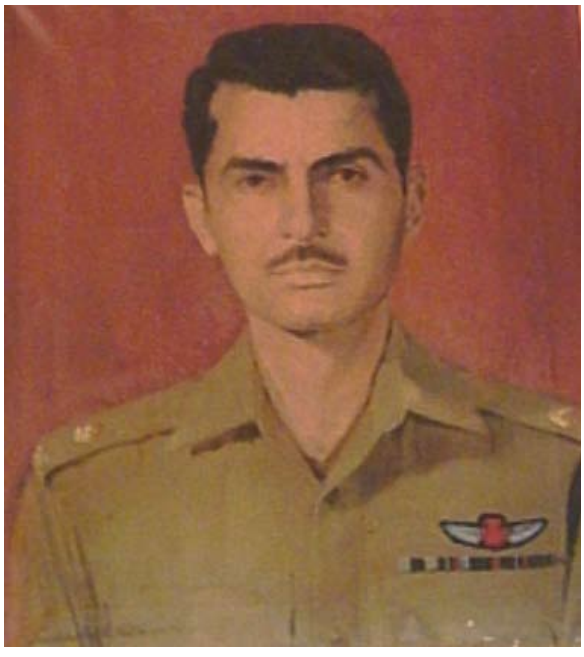
6th December C-130# 143 Group Captain Choonara landed at 0851hours and took off at 1120 hours.
9th December C-130 Group Captain Choonara landed at 1642hours and took off at 2159hours.
10th December C-130# 140 Squadron Leader Sohail landed at 0915 and took off at 1441hours.
10th December C-130 # 143 Squadron Leader Sohail landed at 1558 hours and had a night stay.
11th December C-130 # 143 Squadron Leader Sohail took off at 0548hours.
11th December C-130# 491 Squadron Leader Sohail landed at 0930 and took off at 1157hours.
11thDecember Call Sign Khalid 34 landed at 1822hours and took off at 1845hours.
12th December Call Sign Khalid 16 landed at 0013hours and took off at 0602hours the same day.
13th December Call Sign Bais 19 landed at 0848hours and took off at 1016hours the same day as Call Sign Khalid 48.





Major Qasim

Major Muhammad Qasim was born on 1st October 1939 in Village Adina, District Mardan. He was commissioned in the Corps of Signals in October 1960. He attended Basic Flying Course P-6 in 1964 and was posted to 1 Army Aviation Squadron. He took active part in 1965 War and flew many operational sorties. In 1969 he qualified as Flying Instructor on L-19 from Flying Instructor School, PAF Academy. Major Qasim served as instructor in Army Aviation School from 1969 to 1971, in the last week of November he was attached with 2 Army Aviation Squadron.



Major Qasim

It was early morning of 4th January 1972 when Major Muhammad Qasim took off from Gujranwala Strip (a flight of 2 Army Aviation Squadron had been moved to Gujranwala to support the operations of field formation). It was late in the afternoon when flight headquarters at Gujranwala received a telephone call from GSO-2, the caller wanted to talk to Major Qasim and apologized for not sending the vehicle at Satrah Strip where Major Qasim was to land. He was surprised when informed that Major Qasim had not returned, as according to him Major Qasim had left an hour ago.

It was then that the search for the missing aircraft started. All the inquiries revealed that Major Qasim last took off from Satrah for Gujranwala at 1200 hours on 4th January 1972, in L-19 (No-003) with 2nd Lieutenant Muhammad Humayun Raza, a Bengali officer of 24 Signal Battalion, on board. The air force agencies and the troops on the Forward Defended Localities were contacted but nothing was known except Major Qasim had taken off from Satrah. Soon after, the British Broad Casting (BBC) and the All India Radio broke the news of the hijacking and that Major Qasim has been shot dead.

It was revealed later, that when Major Qasim landed at Satrah, 2nd Lieutenant Humayum Raza contacted him and requested for a lift to Gujranwala. This Bengali officer had appeared for the aviation aptitude test before the war. Major Qasim in his usual helpful attitude and politeness promised to pick him up after he completes his mission. He however also advised him to get permission from the divisional headquarters for the airlift. After dropping the brigade commander in Pasrur, Major Qasim, on his way back landed at Satrah to pick up this officer, not knowing that the passenger had different plans and was going to be his assassin.

According to the team responsible for maintaining the strip, Major Qasim took off and then made a circuit as if to land back but went around on finals. This information and the position of the wounds after post mortem revealed that one bullet was fired at the right cheek which went through the left cheek and the second bullet was fired from the right ear which penetrated the brain.It indicates that 2nd Lieutenant Muhammad Humayum Raza probably had threatened Major Qasim to turn towards India soon after take off, but on refusal and seeing him attempting to land back, fired the first round.This first round was not fatal and Major Qasim still attempted to land back. This is also validated by the accounts of eye witnesses on ground, who described the aircraft banking and then straightening up. It is at this stage that Humayun fired the second fatal round. After shooting Major Qasim this officer knowing a bit of flying, flew towards India. A few words about the assassin. More than the so-called patriotism, assassin Raza wanted to avoid the punishment he was to receive from the divisional commander the following day for driving without license and over running an old woman.

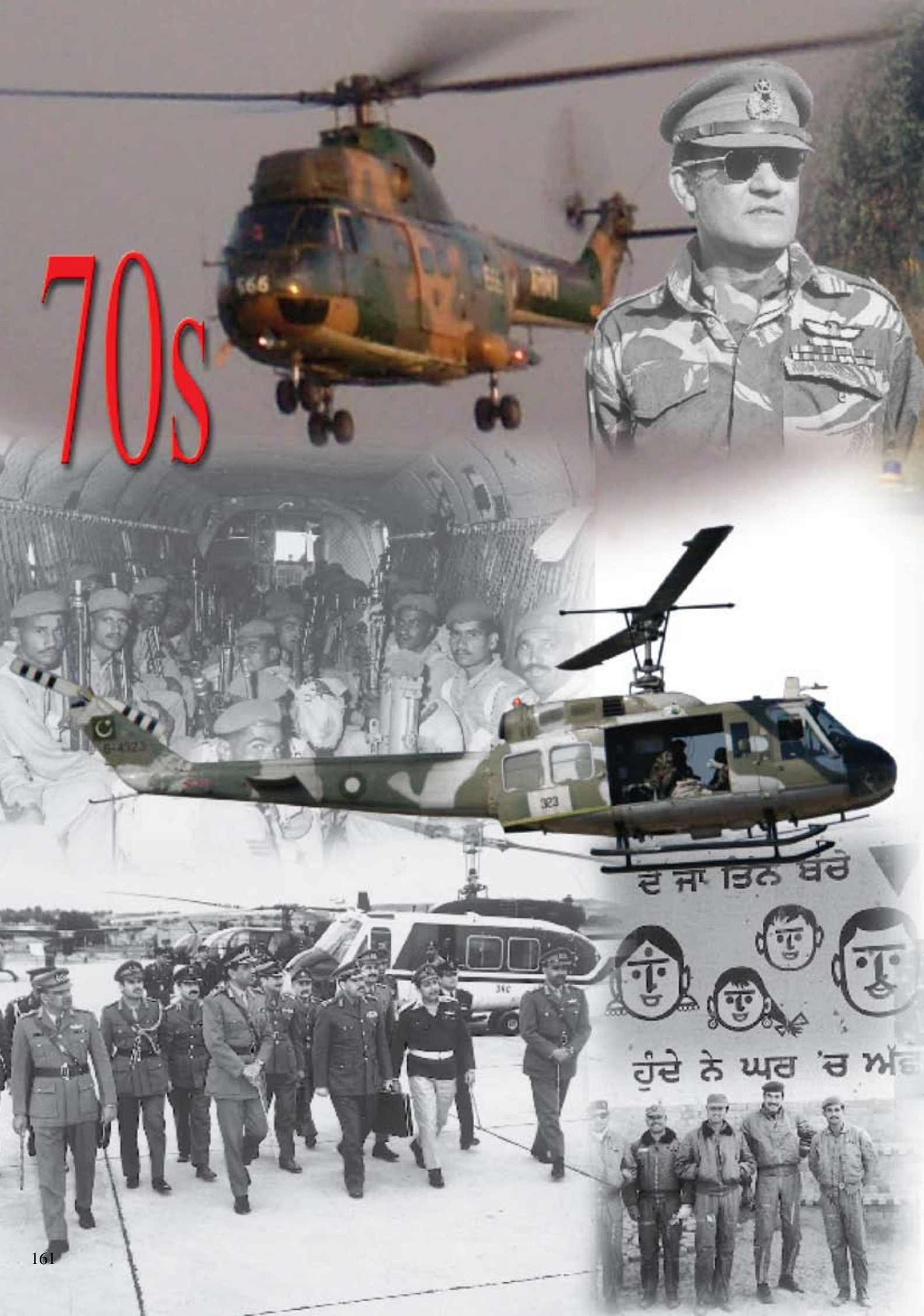
Major Qasim's body was received from India on 7th January 1972 i.e. after four days of his shahadat. Major Qasim was awarded Sitara-i-Jur'at for the act of bravery and supreme sacrifice in an effort to uphold the honour of his motherland. Later, **Army Aviation Base Dhamial was named after Major Muhammad Qasim. It is to be known as Qasim Army Aviation Base.**



General Tikka Khan and Brigadier Mehmud, Commander Dhamial Base on the Dedication Ceremony of Qasim Army Aviation Base, 12th December, 1972.



70s




088
ARMY
ANY TIME E R C

SEVENTIES

The morale of the Pakistan Army was down due to fall of Dhaka, which was recorded by then Army Chief General Gul Hassan as "There were troubles at Gujranwala and Kharian, even in GHQ auditorium the officers were rowdy and later few were court martialed". Army Aviation was no exception. Due to unrest in 199 EME Battalion a court of inquiry was held under Lieutenant Colonel Sher Khan and few individuals were court martialed. In 1 Army Aviation Squadron one of the officer removed all the photographs from the crew room citing them as the major cause of defeat. Most of the pilots in the crew rooms or in the field were in a state of shock. The result of this war was depressing especially when every one felt that Indians are no match to us on the basis of one to one or unit to unit. However, Indians proved exceptionally cunning and manipulated the political situation in East Pakistan to their advantage.

1972 - Squadrons Remain Deployed

All the squadrons remained deployed at operational areas till mid 1973. Army Aviation School started functioning from mid January 1972 onwards. As the snow started melting the dumping of supplies in northern areas resumed. In February 1972, two MI-8 (524 and 933) were positioned at Garhi Dupatta for five days dumping in Leepa valley. Each helicopter would make five round trips every day carrying full loads. The critically loaded helicopters had to follow a tight pattern to loose height, immediately after clearing the mountain passes and land on the terraced fields, going around with full load was very risky, hence decisions to land or abort had to be made well in time. During these five days 50 full loads were delivered. These choppers were then moved to Gilgit for dumping in Minimarg from 14-22 March 1972. The critically loaded MI-8 would follow Astor valley, cross over Burzil Pass above 14000 feet and land at Minimarg in deep snow. Despite being a short run only two trips per helicopters were possible in a day, largely due to poor visibility. For the first time portable oxygen bottles were provided on board.



From left Major Naseem, Lieutenant General Gul Hassan Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant Commander Shafi, Captin Anwar Shah, Major General Zia Ul Haq who later became Army Chief is standing behind General Gul Hassan.



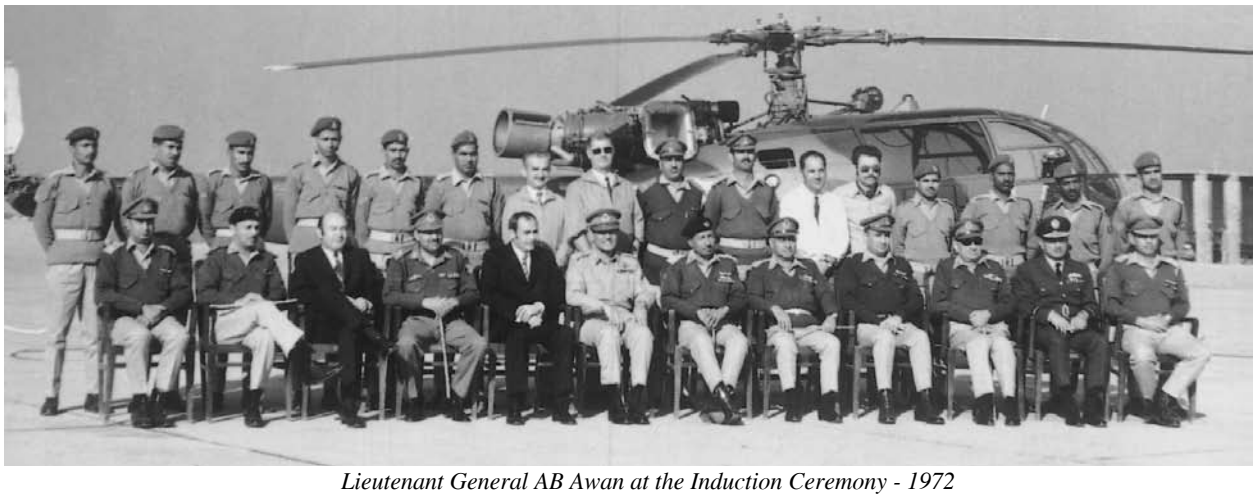
From left. Lt Col Saqlain, Mr. Khar, Major J. Humayun, President Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Major K Mirza, Lt Cdr Shafi, Major Jawed and Major Raza - 1972

Special Services Group Training

On 24 March 1972, three MI-8 moved to Mianwali for eight days of exhaustive training in the Mianwali and Kundian desert areas. Besides day time missions, each night commando raids were also practiced. The three choppers would pick up thirty fully equipped commandoes and drop them in the desert in close formation, without using lights. These nocturnal formation landings were stressful as the dust kicked by the heavily loaded MI-8 blinds the pilot, leaving no margin for errors. Pilots discovered that under the circumstances the best thing was not to plan any hovering at all. Each night an average of five hours were logged by each helicopter.

Induction of Additional Allouettes

On 30 June 1972, a deal was signed between the Government of Pakistan and Societe Nationale Industrielle Aerospatiale to supply six SA 316 B Allouette-3 helicopters with relevant equipment and tools including the manufacturing licence of airframe components in 503 Aviation Base Workshop. Pakistan Air Force also bought four Allouette helicopters in the same deal. The price of one helicopter was worked out as

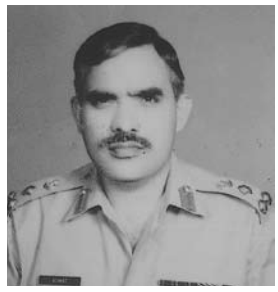


Lieutenant General AB Awan at the Induction Ceremony - 1972

17,81,560 Francs (Rupees 3,830,354), Two years spares were provided at 20% of the total cost thus the price of one Allouette with 2 years spares was Rs 459,642,400. One Allouette helicopter was also purchased by the FWO in September 1973. French guaranteed the spares for another 10 years, they also despatched a team of experts in various trades to remain in Pakistan for 18 months at their expense. Subsequently a team of experts from EME including Majors Asmat ullah Khan, Sher Khan, Ghalib Saeed, and Naib Subedar Ghulam Muhammad Khan were sent to France for training and conversion purposes on engine overhaul.



Sher Khan



Asmat Ullah

White Puma

In 1971 prior to the war, efforts were made to procure a Puma for the movement of VVIP and flying trials were carried out by the PAF. Since PAF was responsible for the air movement of Head of the State therefore it was taken as granted that they will operate the rotary machine as well.



The White Puma

Major General Imtiaz Ali, a graduate of P-6 course was the Military Secretary to the President Bhutto. He suggested that newly inducted Puma should be operated by the Army Aviation. Thus the induction of Puma was transferred from PAF to Army Aviation.

In November 1972 Lieutenant Colonel Tirmizi was tasked to ferry the aircraft from France to Pakistan. He along with Major Naseem Khan and Major Jalil ur Rehman under went training at Aerospatiale training centre at Marignane in February 1973. Ferry of Puma to Pakistan was finally undertaken in March 1973. During their stopover at Amman, King Hussain of Jordan also flew the helicopter for thirty minutes.



Chief of Army Staff General Tikka Khan with Lieutenant General Zia on his right

BALOCHISTAN INSURGENCY (20 May 1973 - 5 July 1977)

The Land and The People

Balochistan is Pakistan's largest province and geologically it's the oldest tracing its origin to the ice age. Baloch literary means wanderer and beyond doubt only he would have settled at a place which many historians have termed as the living hell. Balochistan covers an area of 347,188 square kilometers (larger than England) with a population of 4.3 million (5.14% of Pakistan's total population). The average population density of 12 persons per kilometer is one of the lowest in the world. Province is mainly barren, rugged, desert, and mountainous. Annual rain fall is 2-4 inches and temperature soars to 55 degree celsius in summers and dropping to below zero in winters. In north it is bounded by North Western Frontier Province, on the west is Afghanistan and Iran, in the south a coastline of over 470 miles with Arabian Sea and towards east are Sind and Punjab. Balochistan is like a big bowl protected by mountain ranges all around varying from 2000 meters to 4000 meters and only through passes military forces can enter. Province can be divided into three distinct linguistic groups namely Pakhtuns in the North and along Durand Line having a population of 0.8 million with their chief tribes settled in Zhob and Chaman. Brahuis are about 0.9 million and occupy coastline and central area including Kalat, Kharan, Makran and Bela they speak Brahui. The third is the Baloch tribes from which the province derives its name, are settled along the western mountain ranges of Indus Valley. They claim their descent from Aleppo of Syria and have population of 0.7 million. The chief tribes are 'Bugtis' and 'Marris'. Some of Baloch tribes are also settled in Iranian province of Siestan. Baloch are tall, strong, having long well oiled hair and curly beard**.** They put on white long flowing robes accompanied by arms and are excellent riders. For over two centuries they resisted British and retained their independent way of life. In the absence of agricultural land they live nomadic life. All along Balochistan they follow tribal bond of honour.



Eastern Balochistan

Army Aviation Enters Balochistan

In 1965 disturbance arose in Bugti and Marri Tribes area. 2 Army Aviation Squadron Digest of Service has preserved the event in following words' "A significant day in the history of squadron as it was called upon to provide a flight of L-19 in support of civil power in Sibi area against unruly Marri Tribe. Orders were received on the night of 4/5 January 1965 with all preparations completed at night and aircraft were airborne at first light for Quetta".

On 7th January 1965 pilots including Major Sial, Captain Rizvi and Captain Zaka flew to Sibi and camped there after getting briefing from the Commissioner Quetta and Deputy Inspector General of Frontier Corps(FC) on the situation. On 14th January 1965 major operation took place against the tribes which included air strikes by Pakistan Air force. Sixteen platoons of Zhob Militia along with eight platoons of Pishin Scouts and thirteen platoons of South Waziristan Scouts were also employed. 2 Army Aviation Squadron Digest of Service further records" One of the most eventful day in the history of squadron. Major Sial directed the air strikes over hostile area. Captain Rizvi and Captain Zaka dropped most needed food supplies to Frontier Corps (FC)platoons operating in Bhambore Range. The platoon was on the verge of starvation due to hunger and thirst, it was the resolve and efforts of L-19 pilots that they survived ". Food and water drops from L-19 was quite a tricky affair as the area was stony and food packets dropped from aircraft used to burst as they hit the ground. Same was the case with water pukhals. Pilots later evolved the

novel idea of dropping these items through parachute. L-19 had very little capacity for extra luggage but these food supplies from the air was the only chance of FC platoons survival. 2 Squadron flight remained at Sibi till May 1965 while pilots kept rotating on regular basis.

Beginning of The Next Wave of Trouble

This disturbance was a cumulative result of past events and actions, however, this time its scope and duration was much longer than the past. It all started on 28th November 1972 when Bugti and Marri armed tribes attacked settlers in Temple Dera and killed five persons. There were reports of hostile activities in other areas as well forcing Civil Armed Forces(CAF) to intervene.

1973 - First Aviation Flight Reaches Balochistan

On 1st February 1973, Captain Humayun and Captain Saleem Zaidi *(he left army and is living in Las Vegas, USA pursuing a successfull business)* of No.10 Flight ex 3 Army Aviation Squadron stationed at Chhor were tasked to proceed to Bela in two L-19s. There was not much of flying in early days. They were mainly flying in and around Bela to monitor the rebels who were hiding in the mountains and after spotting them they would report the location to the FC and army. At that time it was primarily the FC under Brigadier Naseerullah Babar(SJ and bar) which was looking after the affairs. On 12th February 1973 FC moved to Uthal.



Maj Saleem Zaidi & Brig Humayun with GOC Maj Gen Azam and Base Comd Qasim Brig Arif Nazir -2003

Raising of 5 Corps

New corps was raised in Karachi having responsibility for internal security in Balochistan as well. Its first commander was none other than Lieutenant General Azmat Baksh Awan. He rightly increased the aviation resources for the operation and got additional four L-19s for his corps. Qasim Base made 3 Squadron still having its headquarters at Multan responsible for coordinating all flying in Balochistan. 3 Army Aviation Squadron apart from having No 10 Flight at Quetta also moved another flight on 17th February 1973 to Khuzdar under Major Rahmat Ullah.



Operation Maiwand

The first phase of army operation lasted from May 1973-July 1974. Army Aviation supported field formations mainly in logistic support, casualty evacuation, command and liaison. The major heliborne operations in Maiwand area and operation Brown River, both failed to apprehend any worth while rebel but the psychological impact was created. Aviation assets were distributed at Quetta, Sibi and Khuzdar. Articulation of command was a tricky affair. On adhoc basis helicopters were attached from 4 Squadron (M1-8) and Allouette from 5 Squadron. These varying flying machines had their own maintenance procedures to be followed along with variety of spares. MI-8 were due for the overhaul as well and were flying on extensions of hours.

On 10th May 1973 troops marching in Marri area for the protection of railway line were ambushed at Tandoori, eight soldiers were killed. Now there was no going back and 33 Division less two brigades was committed for counter insurgency**.** 70 Brigade was tasked to look after Khuzdar and 313 Brigade in Kohlu area. The first push on the miscreants, code-named "Operation Maiwand" in the heart of Marri Tribe East of Sibi was launched on 22nd May 1973.

In support of Army deployment against Marri, Bizenjo, and Mengal Tribes, 4 Army Aviation Squadron was ordered to move to Sibi immediately and provide aviation support to 30 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier Abdul Rehman Choudhry. The initial message received on 18 May 1973 from GHQ, estimated

the duration of this duty for about five days, but as it turned out subsequently, it lasted for almost five years. The first batch of four MI-8 along with two Allouette helicopters under the command of Lieutenant Colonel SLA Bokhari SJ left Dhamial on 20 May 1973 and got into position at Sibi on 21st May. Majors Naeem, Aftab Ahmed, Muhammad Daud, Abdul Razzaq, Muhammad Tariq, Khalid Masud, Ali Jawahar, Riaz ul Haque SJ and Tasnim Hayat Malik were other member of the team. Brigadier M M Mahmud then Base Commander Qasim Base also accompanied them. Lieutenant Colonel Masoom of Army Aviation who was commanding the 40 Field Regiment at Sibi provided the administrative support to the aviation elements for their operations in the area.

Lieutenant Colonel S.L.A Bokhari SJ who led the helicopter formation narrates. "According to the intelligence reports, a large number of Balochi tribesmen had gathered at Maiwand and surrounding peaks and were planning to lay ambushes on the Pakistani troops**.** Lieutenant General A.B. Awan commander 5 Corps and the senior most aviator of Pakistan Army wanted to commit troops once he was sure of the exact location of tribals. Entire aviation effort was located at Sibi apart from two L-19s ear-marked for Kalat area and stationed at Khuzdar. Troops committed were the 4 Army Aviation Squadron and company SSG(Special Services Group). Lieutenant Shaffi and Lieutenant Rehman of Pakistan Navy also flew a



Chief of Army Staff General Tikka Khan with Lieutenant General A.B. Awan. U8-F is in the background

number of reconnaissance sorties in Allouette helicopter prior to launching of this operation to gather information and monitor rebel activities. PAF was also put on 72 hours alert at Jacobabad.

Operation was launched at first light on 22nd May 1973 to make the best use of the low temperature of the morning which enhanced the carrying capacity of MI-8 helicopters to the maximum. SSG Company was heli-lifted from Sibi Airfield for the objective in four MI-8 helicopters led by myself in MI-8 No. 0624 with Major Abdul Razzaq as the co-pilot. Commander 5 Corps General Awan and Base Commander Qasim Aviation Base Brigadier Mahmud were also in air and monitored the progress of operation from Allouette helicopter. To the delight and surprise of everyone they were greeted by a crowd of civilians with a cheering warm welcome majority had seen the helicopters for the first time in life. It transpired later that the hard-core rebels, having got the inkling of the operation, had melted into the surrounding hills couple of days back.

30 Infantry Brigade was to follow up and join the SSG troops. 44 Punjab while advancing from Sibi suffered heavy causalities, all related to weather. The approach road was littered with them and between 22-24th May over fifteen sorties were flown for casualty evacuation by 4 Squadron. Later 45 Punjab Regiment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Younis was ordered to advance from Kohlu to Maiwand in a very difficult track to marry-up with the SSG troops, which they accomplished very skillfully. The corps commander was so happy with the successful conduct of the heliborne operation that he installed a permanent stone at the site of first MI-8 helicopter landing at Maiwand with the inscription "The site where first MI-8 helicopter No. 0624 landed on 22nd May 1973". The troops in Maiwand were supported through helicopters stationed at Sibi for another few days with water, critical supplies of food, arms and ammunition.

Meanwhile on 4th July 1973, 10 Flight moved to Khuzdar to supplement 11 Flight in support of 70 Brigade which was also engaged in the counter insurgency operations.

Operation Brown Arrow

On 25th August 1973 tribals attacked the piquet of Punjab Regiment at Hosri Killi killing seventeen soldiers and taking away twenty-three weapons and one wireless set. Counter Insurgency Force consisting of two infantry battalions supported by two artillery regiments set on hot pursuit of rebels.

All available army helicopters at that time were being employed for flood relief duties in Punjab. Therefore for this operation aviation support was in the form of one MI-8, two L-19 and one Allouette. L-19 were mainly tasked to adjust the artillery fire. Major Razzaq was in the MI-8 and he recalls. 'When the infantry started advancing on two prongs they lost direction while going uphill and we had to relay the information via artillery net as we did not have the direct communication with the infantry. Allouette was in air as well, it spotted few rebels getting away through the dry river bed and landed at the mouth, it remained in hovering state for some time but then got airborne mainly due to fuel limitation".

One MI-8 with Major Aftab(Colonel retired) and Major(Lieutenant Colonel late) Khalid Masud tookoff from Sibi with full fuel and eighteen troops on board, it was able to do so because of running take-off otherwise the load was much more than allowed by the manufacturer. Pilot thought that he would be able to land as the fuel consumed would have reduced the weight. After seven minutes of flying they were directed to land at a narrow ridge to block the escape routes of rebels. Pilot initiated the approach and selected the landing spot, on short finals a gust of tail wind engulfed the spot in a cloud of dust. Troops and crew were safe but helicopter was damaged. Same troops were employed for the protection of the helicopter in a hostile environment for another three days and then one MI-8 was pulled out from the flood relief works in Punjab to bring the maintenance personnel and spares. It goes to the credit of our technicians that they made it serviceable and also highlights the advantage of rugged Russian helicopter technology that it got repaired in nomadic conditions. This helicopter was later hoisted by the Iranian CH-47 and air tested by Colonel Bokhari and Colonel Burki of E.M.E. Operation ended with only one rebel killed and seventy five apprehended.

Enter the Iranian Helicopters

On 27th September 1973, General Tikka Khan issued his directive for counter insurgency operations in Marri area code named Operation 'Red Hot'. It was a three phase operation in which six armed Bell UH-1H helicopters of Iran along with one Chinook CH-47 were also made available to Lieutenant General Awan. These helicopters initially came to Pakistan for flood relief assistance in August 1973. Iranian pilots namely Major Haqi, Captain Daud, Lieutenants Artum, Mahmood and Mabzoom operated from Dhamial and were later shifted to Quetta. Iranian helicopters reached Quetta on 20th September 1973. They were lodged in EME Mess and helicopters were parked at Samungli. It was same time when Gurkha Airfield was being expanded to accommodate bigger helicopters. On 23rd November 1973 these helicopters took part in the operation when they lifted the troops from Quetta to Sibi area. According to Major Zareef Bangash who was the Allouette pilot. "A firing demonstration was held at the PAF firing ranges near Quetta which was witnessed by the senior army commanders. This was the first exposure of Pakistan Army with the gunship". The very first Pakistani aviator to fly with these Iranians was Captain Ashraf of 3 Squadron. He recalls; "One



Iranian Chinook with Pakistani and Iranian Pilots

day I was sitting in the mess when Colonel Bokhari told me to go and act as a safety pilot with the Iranians, at that time there was no specific chain of command thus I in my heart cursed the mission but went to the Samungli Base where I had to guide the CH-47 to the proposed target area for reconnaissance. During the sortie there was not much of talking and quietly we went to the area and came back, contrary to the common belief the Iranians were not that good in English and I gave all the calls". These helicopters also took part in humanitarian relief work. Brigadier Qurban who was then major recalls 'I was part of 3 Squadron and we were living in the Mental Ward of Combined Military Hospital Quetta where we had a long barrack at our disposal. I Once flew as a liaison officer with these Iranians to drop relief goods at Gwadar, my role was to coordinate the air traffic communication."

These helicopters were also employed at Khuzdar, where the Brigade Commander was Brigadier Fazle Haq(later lieutenant general &Governor Frontier Province). Major Zareef has something to add in this regard "One CH-47 attached with Khuzdar Brigade one day took off and went missing, it was real crisis to locate it, after some time it was reported that it had landed at Karachi International. Next morning they flew back to Quetta later it was revealed that they got the permission from the local battalion commander for weekend and proceeded to Karachi."

Operation Brown River (Kohlu-Sibi Sector)

To keep the area open to communication, a road had to be constructed which was to pass through the stronghold of Marri and Kahan tribes. An operation was undertaken on 23rd November 1973 in which a major force was lifted by means of helicopters. 4 Squadron Digest of Service records "All pilots with two MI-8 of the squadron flew to Sibi. It was a large concentration of helicopters, two CH-47 Chinooks, three Jet Ranger, three UH-1D of Imperial Iranian Air Force apart from two MI-8, three Allouette and two L-19 of Pakistan Army Aviation took part in this operation".

Four infantry battalions were employed to clear Kahan and Kala Khu. In the evening the force was

again heli lifted back to the base. Colonel Zareef Bangash was around and remembers; "All the aircraft including the Iranians were parked at Sibi. Less the CH-47, all the other Iranian choppers were armed with the cannons and rockets. At 0500hours I tookoff from Sibi having Chief of Army Staff(COAS) General Tikka on board with me. It was quite demanding to control all these helicopters. We had the briefing a night ago on the flying sequence, thus we had red, green, and blue formation of aircraft and we were heading for a mission which was not pleasant from any aspect. After the ordeal of East Pakistan it was not only my endeavour but of all the aviators who had served there to make sure that there was no innocent casualty. I had given the firm orders on behalf of field commander that Iranians will not open fire without our orders but in a fluid situation any thing could happen and that was precisely my worst fear. It was a sight to see almost a dozen aircraft flying in formation towards the target, we had the Pakistani pilots sitting in all the Iranian helicopters. The plan was that the gunship would encircle the habitat and if they found the rebels, would open fire and then the assaulting troops would land there. As we crept close to the target the first burst was fired by the Jet Ranger on a mud plastered house and I think this came as a shock to the locals as never before they had been fired upon from helicopters. Soon I could see the dust rising and then few more rounds were fired, after the main troops landed we found the area totally destroyed but surprisingly there were very few casualties".

3 Squadron Deployed. 3 Squadron was called in support of 18 Division for internal security at Hyderabad due to linguistic riots in the province. Two flights of 3 Squadron, No. 12 and No. 9 remained there till 24th September 1973. Eventually No. 9 Flight flew to Peshwar to support 7 Division in internal security.

Ferry of MI-8, Pakistan to Russia

Russian helicopters were inducted in 1969 and they performed good services in all spheres of life. By 1973, MI-8 had reached a stage where they were required to undergo the major technical inspection. In March 1973, two Russian specialists came to Pakistan for such purposes and recommended helicopters inspection at the factory. Resultantly all MI-8 were flown to Russia for inspection. The first one was MI-8 No. 0424, which was flown in August 1973 by own crew, on route Quetta-Zahidan-Kirman-Isfahan-Tehran-Tabriz-Tiblisi. At Tiblisi, Russian crew took over the helicopter and own crew less the technicians flew back to Pakistan. Crew would go again after six weeks to Russia for ferry back of helicopter to Pakistan. Pilots who flew the first ferry were Major Aftab, Major Daud and Major Abdul Razzaq, where as flight engineer was Lieutenant Colonel F.A.Burki and technicians included Subedar Major Ali Zar and Murid Hussain while Subedars Muhammad Khan, Abdul Ghafoor, Sardar Khan and Ghulam Nabi were other members of the crew.



MI-8

The Two Nasrullahs in Afghanistan

In 1974 one Allouette helicopter with Director General, Frontier Works Organisation on board lost its way while flying in Chitral Valley and landed in Afghanistan due to fuel starvation. The Afghans asked the first pilot "What's your name" and answer was "Nasrullah". Afghan asked the other pilot and answer was same, "Nasrullah". After an hour the Afghans lost their temper and thought that both pilots are playing tricks. Finally Afghans accepted the fact that both had same name, Nasrullah.

Rescue Missions in Balochistan



Major Aftab



Major Moaziz

In February 1974 Balochistan was hit by a cold wave, heavy snow had disrupted the road and railway communication between Quetta and Muslim Bagh. Some civil vehicles were stranded on the road and few villages were also cut off. Major Aftab and Major Moaziz Hussain flew rescue missions(MI-8) in snow covered areas of Khanozai and Muslim Bagh. Pilots dropped bags of ration over these villages. Another mission was undertaken on a L-19 when Major Qurban evacuated an Oman Army jawan who was on leave in his village near Gwadar, having been wounded in an accidental bullet shot. He was airlifted from his village with L-19 landing on a pucca ground and in the absence of any communication flew to Pasni where it was refuelled and then reached Karachi in a day.

In July 1974, 45 Baloch Regiment met a road accident close to Muslim Bagh. Message was relayed to the pilots at Quetta through wireless and at 1330hours one MI-8 took off in dusty and windy conditions and set course for the accident spot which was not exactly known. Pilots flew along the road and as they spotted the point, they were engulfed by the dust storm and with great difficulty, they managed to land and waited for the weather to clear. Meanwhile doctor who had accompanied them, gave the wounded first aid and in marginal weather pilots took off and landed next to hospital with 16 wounded soldiers. Major Aftab rose to the rank of Lt Col and comanded 4 & 3 Sqns. He is presently living in America. Major Moaziz also retired as Lt Col after having comanded 6 Aviation Sqn and migrated to Canada after retirement.

Insurgency at its Peak (August 1974-December 1975)

In July 1974, Prime Minister Bhutto visited Baluchistan. On 7th August 1974 Prime Minister directive was given regarding the employment of helicopters in Marri/Mengal area. "Helicopter is known to be great enemy of guerrillas and insurgents. If we exploit its inherent flexibility we should certainly succeed in a short time. Unfortunately army does not have enough helicopters. But as the need is inescapable we must mobilize our resources and provide army with the essential requirement. Besides using our existing fleet and six helicopters given by the American Government, we expect some more from Iran. It will be necessary to spend whatever is needed for this national objective now rather than save now and lose in long run".

Subsequently Military Operation Directorate allocated following assets to 5 Corps in Quetta. 3x UH-1Hs, 3x MI-8 and 6xL-19. Reserves at Qasim Base were 2x MI-8, 2xUH-1H and 2x Allouette.

Operational Strategy

To counter hostilities 5 Corps strategy was to eliminate / disorganise the fighting elements and isolate them from their support. With this in view small scale search and domination operations, ambushes utilizing helicopters were to be conducted. Through sustained pressure and presence, the insurgents were to be kept on run so as to tire them out. Troops were deployed as under:-

16 Division, Bugti area
33 Division, Marri area
37 Division, Sarawan / Jhalwan area

Army Aviation Assets in Balochistan

3 Army Aviation Squadron Headquarters along with 3 Light Repair Company moved to Quetta on 4th September 1974 to coordinate all the aviation efforts there. It had flights at Khuzdar and Quetta. Other aviation effort namely MI-8 were also placed under command 3 Squadron. The L-19 aircraft took part in many

operations enabling own ground troops to wipeout insurgent elements. Among the numerous insurgency operations in which the squadron pilots and aircraft participated, following are worth mentioning:-

a. Operation-Harook Thal (Khuzdar)
b. Operation -Bhambore Search (Bhambore)
c. Operation -Hot Chase (Sibi)
d. Operation- Zarger (East of Quetta)
e. Operation -Khoar Sibi (Sibi)
f. Operation-Treasure Hunt (Diao Thin Nallah)
g. Operation -Gypsy Trail (Shahrig Area)
h. Operation- Zattar (31 Brigade)
j. Operation -Spring Board (33 Division)

Induction of UH-1H



UH-1H

Americans were the first one to send their relief team during 1973 floods which consisted of 6 x UH-1H helicopters, their crew carried out the relief work mainly in the southern part of Pakistan in an extremely professional manner. At the end of their work they left their machines at Dhamial for future relief work. These machines remained idle for another couple of months before they were gifted by the American government to Pakistan. Brigadier Jabbar who was then Director Aviation recalls "Prime Minister Bhutto was leaving for state visit to America, the Prime Minister secretariat asked for agenda points and we proposed that these machines should be gifted to Pakistan''. In 1974, American mobile training team came to Pakistan for training purposes under Captain Whitley and CW3 William More.

Army Aviators who were trained on these machines included, Major Hamid Choudhry who was the senior most aviator among them, he was also given the instructor rating. Following officers were trained as captain on the aircraft:-

Major Tariq Akbar
Major Sajid Islam
Major Riaz
Major Hameedullah

Co pilots were Captain Ashraf, Captain Kashmiri, Captain Afzal Tufail and Captain Iqbal Hussain. All the co-pilots were students of basic rotary conversion and after their basic flying on OH-13S they were converted to the UH-1H. During the training which started from April and lasted till May 1974, highest ever landing of UH-1H was carried out at Khunjerab Pass.

Raising Of 6 Army Aviation Squadron and its Move to Quetta



6 Squadron was raised on 29th June 1974 along with 599 Independent Aviation Engineering Company and 62 Aviation Ordnance Company for maintenance and supply of stores. Posting of officers started from 12 August–September 1974. Lieutenant Colonel Hamid Choudhry who had already completed his training on UH-1H was posted from 13 Light Ack Ack as the first commanding officer. On 6th October 1974 the newly raised squadron moved to Quetta for internal security duties.

Iranian Gift of Bell - 205

Iran had actively participated in the counter insurgency during phase one, but now Shah of Iran instead of committing his own pilots decided to gift ten Augusta Bell –205 helicopters to Pakistan. On 5th October 1974 Colonel Hamid and Major Kazi Jamil of EME went to Iran for conversion training on AB-205 and on 5th November 1974,10 x AB-205 were ferried to Quetta by pilots of 6 Squadron who had also gone to Iran alongwith few Iranian technicians. The following pilots proceeded to Iran on 30th October 1974 to ferry helicopters:-

Major Sajid Islam
Major Hameed Ullah
Major Nawazish Ali Khan
Major Riaz Hussain
Major Muhammad Farooq
Captain Mirza Iqbal Hussain
Captain Muhammad Afzal Tufail
Captain Iqbal Kashmiri
Captain Muhammad Ashraf

Operation Red Beret

In August a convoy of troops was ambushed near Duki killing five troops and injuring twelve. MI-8 evacuated all the injured to Quetta. In retaliation to the ambush an operation was launched. This operation was conducted by 3 Special Services Group Battalion in area Jandran Range. There was a deviation from the initial tactics instead of force being inserted by helicopter from the onset, it was decided that troops would march and MI-8 would reinforce the battalion at dawn with rations, ammunition, troops and would also pick the casualties. There was no pre planned landing site designated thus it was decided that flares would be fired for the landing. Every thing went like clock work and tribal casualties were also evacuated in the MI-8.

This operation was undertaken by aviators and SSG, as both had long and professional intimacy developed especially due to close cooperation in East Pakistan. General Awan from the beginning had vision of combining these troops together under one command. He was of the view that they should live and work together to have a better understanding of each others capabilities and limitations.

Operation Golden Arrow

This operation was carried out in area around Bala Dhaka Road Mile 40. On 7th August L-19 was flying in the air with the task to keep an eye on 10-15 miles both side of the road and to clear any ambush site. Every thing was normal until pilot spotted a flash which was the reflection coming from the glass embroidered clothes of a girl from a hillock. Had the girl and her mother gone about with their chores it would have been normal but they ran. In the initial days it was a common phenomena as locals had never seen an aircraft before but by now it was unusual to run for cover, pilot informed the Headquarter on likely ambush site, which later proved correct. In the ensuing operation company of commandoes was heli-lifted from Quetta in two MI-8. Later two companies of 11 Baloch and 45 Baloch supported by a battery of 26 Field Regiment participated in this operation. Seven rebels were killed and two rifles along with eighty rounds were captured.

Operation Golden Rush, 11/12 August 1974

Conducted in area Mast Tawakli in which 3 Commando Battalion, 11 Baloch and 35 Azad Kashmir Regiments participated. Nine rebels were killed, 11 wounded and 47 were captured. Aviation effort was to provide supplies and evacuate causalities.

Operation Chamalang, 25 August-2 September 1974

This operation was launched to search and apprehend hostiles from area Chamalang, Kharlakgarh, and Garwadda Garh. Brigadier Ali Jawahar ex 4 Squadron was the acting brigade major in the same area and highlights the operation. “By this time the hostiles were cordoned off and pushed towards their grazing areas on the border of Baluchistan and Punjab. Chamalang was their main grazing field for summer, I was

previously performing the duties in 45 Baloch and hence was familiar with the operations. Now my brigade was to keep an eye on the passes leading to the grazing plateau. Our battalion 45 Baloch was equipped with recoilless rifles but still we were unable to penetrate their safety cordon. I must confess that Baloch tribes were brave and master of the fieldcraft, there was a broken ground leading to the grazing field which our jeeps could not cross and rebels held the far bank". One flight consisting of one MI-8, three Allouette, and two L-19 were placed at Kohlu for this operation. Allouette did the reconnaissance of the area and located the main rebel hideouts, as a deceptive measures landings were made in the opposite directions, MI-8 then helilifted the Special Services Group troops and landed them at important dominating grounds whereas Allouette carried the assault teams and rebels were fired from the helicopter. One chopper pilot narrates "I felt bad in shooting on the human running around from the air, but it was either them or end of us. By this time it was common knowledge that any captive in the hand of tribal especially uniform personnel had little chance of survival". As the operation progressed the flying activity increased, there was shifting of troops, evacuation of casualties, replenishing the rations and ammunition, apart from transporting the captured hostiles. This was the most successful operation of the whole campaign with over 125 hostiles dead, 900 captured with own casualties of 3 dead including one officer from Special Services Group.

The Busy November

November 1974 was an extraordinarily busy month as a record number of counter insurgency operations were conducted, Army Aviation took part in all the operations which were, Operation Turn Table 6-11 November, Operation Scorpio 28-30 November, Operation Strike-one and two. Four UH-1H Helicopters were again used in operation Strike three (20-27 November) was a search mission in village Gagg reportedly a hiding force of hostiles. 31 Brigade took part in this operation. Helicopters lifted this force from Kalat which later captured seventy four rebels and twenty seven rifles. Another major operation 'Heavy Stakes' was launched by 60 Brigade in area Dungar on 13th November, two MI-8 alongwith two UH-1H and lone L-19 took part resultantly eighty seven hostiles were apprehended and thirteen were killed. 6 Squadron Digest of Service highlights the flying environments prevailing at that time. "On 8 November 1974 four AB- 205 helicopters with essential elements for mission moved to Khuzdar to participate in operation Strike-I. On 19 November 1974, four AB-205 helicopters with essential items moved out to Kalat to participate in Strike-III. On 27 November 1974 Squadron moved to Sibi. On 30 November 1974, Squadron completed 225 sorties and 267 hours of flying in Balochistan during November 1974". Such hectic operations against tribal provided one big advantage; the next year stayed completely peaceful and it was only in the beginning of 1976 when the rebel activities again surfaced.

1976 -Operation Bhambore Search

60 Brigade conducted this search operation which involved company of 26 Punjab and 3 commando battalion(CO along with 2 platoons of Ebrahim Company in area Jharwali) supported by two MI-8 one UH-1H, one Allouette and one L-19**.** Operation resulted in apprehending seventeen rebels and recovering two rifles. One MI-8 and a UH-1H were hit with the bullets, both helicopters managed to land safely at Lehri. 6 Squadron Digest of Service records the event: "On 6 January 1976 Major Syed Mahmood Rizvi and Major Iqbal Kashmiri flew a mission in order to drop Infantry at Hora Ruk Jhal. While landing the aircraft was subjected to heavy fire by the rebels. Major Kashmiri, while in the air, was hit by a bullet



on his thigh. On 16th January 1976 Major Muhammad Farooq and Major Nawazish Ali Khan flew a mission to drop the Special Services Group in area Bhambore Range. Prior to landing, helicopter was subjected to fire by miscreants. Pilot using his wits changed the landing site and managed to drop the troops nearby, thus ensuring the success of operations. Helicopter was also damaged due to fire. The pilots flew the damaged helicopter to Quetta. Major Muhammad Farooq was recommended for award of Tamgha-i-Basalat".

Operation Hot Chase *23-25 January*

It was a search operation conducted by 315 Brigade in area Nuri, participating troops included 26 Punjab, 52 Baloch and 40 FF Battalions supported by two MI-8, one Allouette and one L-19 aircraft. Thirteen rebels along with four rifles were apprehended. On 5th February 1976 one platoon of Ebrahim Company carried out heliborne operation in general area Bhambore and returned back to base at 1515hours same day.

Operation Dungan One, *11 March*

This operation was conducted in area Qut Mandai and supported by one MI-8 and one UH-1H. No contact could be made with the rebels and operation terminated at 1300hours on 12 March. On 25th March another major operation was launched in area Zargun code named Operation Zargun by 31 Brigade Group involving 12 Punjab, 13 FF and 11 Baloch supported by one MI-8, one UH-1H, one Allouette and two L-19. Resultantly five hostiles alongwith one rifle were caught. Another search operation supported by one MI-8 and one UH-1H was launched on 5th April, in this operation SSG apprehended eight suspects along with two hundred sheep and goats.

Sui

On 13th May 1976 law and order situation at Sui turned ugly when locals fired upon law enforcing agencies. Troops of 19 Punjab, 6 Frontier Force and 2 Baloch Regiments were supported by one MI-8, one UH-1H and one Allouette helicopter. These aviation elements also supported another search operation in area Charin Mir Ghat on 16th May 1976. Three officers with thirty soldiers were dropped by helicopters to block hostiles escape route. Later 33 Division requested two more sorties for further reinforcement of the force.

Operation Treasure Hunt - *2 - 8 June*

On intelligence reports that 20-25 Marris are hiding in area Diajo-Ghari nullah, a search operation was launched by 22 Baloch and 3 Commando. Army Aviation efforts were in the shape of two MI-8, two L-9 and two Allouette. Eight Marris were apprehended alongwith five cattles as they were trying to cross over into Afghanistan. Army Alouttes after extensive flying detected the hostile elements when ground formation had given up any hope of finding them. Resultantly commandoes were heli lifted by MI-8 and dropped at critical points to establish blocking position.

Operation Tail Star -*12th June*

It was another search operation involving 33 Azad Kashmir, 38 Frontier Force and 1 Commando Battalions supported by one MI-8, one UH-1H, and a L-19 aircraft. It was conducted in area Surf Nullah-Tadri-Khatran River on 12th June. Another operation was conducted on 14th June in area Siah Kach-Waghi by 10 Baloch Regiment

1977 - Forced landing of MI-8 in Khuzdar

Lieutenant Colonel Ashraf Waraich narrates "We used to take-off at the first light from Gurkha Airfield at Quetta, and used to fly almost the whole day invariably logging 6 to 7 hours before coming back for a well earned night rest. On 23rd January 1977, I as the co-pilot of one MI-8 with Major Farouk Hamid as the captain of the helicopter with fifteen soldiers of SSG on board, took off for Wad area in pursuit of a notorious gang of rebels and were accompanied by one UH-IH. The weather was marginal but because of the urgency of the mission it had to be undertaken. While some distance away from the destination we encountered

heavy cloud covering the hill tops and the UH-1H leading us decided to make a U-turn. We also followed suit but in the process we inadvertently went into the clouds which in fact was a billowing thunderstorm. To stay safe from the mountain tops we initiated a climb hoping for the best. Praying silently, we managed to reach 3200 meters, which was a little higher than the heights around but we were still engulfed in clouds lashing a heavy downpour. Then came another terrible twist. One of the engine packed up because of icing and we started looking for some opening in the cloud. We spotted a small hole in the cloud base and dashed for it. After breaking the clouds, we realized the only spot available to put the chopper down was in the bed of gushing nullah called 'Sun' by the locals. With no other choice available we forced-landed in about three feet deep water with rain still pouring heavily. Luckily no one was hurt and the helicopter also did not suffer any major damage despite boulders all around us."

Siege of Sindhri Police Station

Major General Abdul Razzaq recalls**.** "One night it was reported that a far flung police station at Sindhri was surrounded by hostile tribesmen and immediate help was needed. I tookoff with a contingent of troops early next morning along with a local guide who was supposed to help us in finding the unmapped location. On the way the guide was disorientated and was of no help. On reaching the general area, number of attempts were made to put the chopper down but had to be abandoned because of dusty conditions and very poor visibility. Finally landing was made in a farm where it became known that the siege of the police station had already ended. In fact our attempts for landing were taken by the hostile tribesman as positioning of troops to surround and attack them and they took to their heels displaying discretion as the better form of valour".

Donkeys Had Joy-Ride.

In June 1976, while operating around Bhambore, near Lehri area, one MI-8 piloted by Major Ashraf spotted a group of miscreants. The SSG troops on board netted them well and proper. The news flashed to the concerned authorities, who ordered to bring all the captured to the headquarters immediately. There was, however, a slight comical snag. The group also included two donkeys, used as beasts of burden by the rebels. Not to be caught on the wrong foot, in violation of an executive order, headquarters were contacted again and the funny situation explained. To the amazement of all at the receiving end, the previous clear-cut order was repeated with unambiguous emphasis to bring along the four legged animals also. Thus the donkeys were also made to ride in the helicopter along with others.

Brigadier Tariq Mahmood's Jump

Major Farouk Hamid, an MI-8 veteran remembers one particular flight with late Brigadier Tariq Mahmood SJ & Bar, "We were flying towards a particular area where it was reported that one local rebel sardar was seen in his native village, as we neared the lonely mud house, I saw one white horse standing outside and the sardar on hearing the MI-8 noise was hurriedly saying farewell to his family, as we approached, he mounted his horse and galloped. TM was sitting on the flight engineer's seat keenly observing all this. He requested me to take him over the horse, to my bewilderment he later jumped onto the rider from the hovering helicopter and got hold of him". TM was known for such bold actions. Incidentally, Brig TM's elder brother was an Army Aviator-Brig. Masud ul Hassan from P-2.



Brig. Tariq Mahmood SJ & Bar

Epilogue

The insurgency operation came to an end in July 1977 when General Zia Ul Haq took over the reins of the country and declared general amnesty to all the hostile elements. Army Aviation elements returned to their parent bases less No. 9 Flight of 3 Aviation Squadron which later became the nucleus for raising of 10 Aviation Squadron at Quetta.

Jet Ranger

On 7 May 1975 contract was signed between director of procurement Brigadier Muhammad Yousaf representing the Ministry of Defence and Azhar Wali Muhammad on behalf of Messer Mohammad Baksh and Sons Limited 23 Wharf Road Karachi, the sale agents of Bell Textron of America for the purchase of six Bell helicopter model 206 B Jet Ranger. The price of one helicopter with accessories installed was $ 201,080.00, the total cost of the contract was $ 14,23,607. The first batch of officers went to America in February 1975 even before the contract was signed, including Major Kashmiri, Captain Ashraf from 6 Squadron and Majors Riaz ul Haque SJ, Zafar Iqbal, Khalid Masud from 4 Squadron. Six technicians and two maintenance officers were also trained there. Captain Ashraf narrates of his training in America "The Bell factory was located on one side of the Dallas city and in between factory and airport was our hotel. My self and Major Kashmiri were room-mates. Our instructor was a veteran of Vietnam War, a professional man who would pick and drop us from the hotel to the training facility. We did 5 hours of flying and apart from the first half an hour of conversion and feeling of controls the rest of time was utilized in autorotation practice, including night practice as well".

Helicopters arrived at Dhamial in December 1975. One helicopter was earmarked for the Coast Guards, one for the Frontier Corp and one for the Rangers, the balance of three helicopters were utilized for training in the Army Aviation School.



Jet Ranger

Aero Commander No 1369-140

On 12 October 1974, Aero Commander aircraft stationed at Karachi was shifted to Qasim Base along with ownership rights from Survey of Pakistan to Army Aviation. Aviators took up the responsibility of servicing, maintenance and operation thus becoming wholly responsible for providing pilot, navigator for aerial photographic work of Survey of Pakistan, cameras and photographers remained the responsibility of Survey of Pakistan. Army Aviation gave the binding of making aircraft available for Survey of Pakistan on first priority but were not obliged to provide any alternate in case this aircraft becomes unserviceable for any reason. Survey of Pakistan was bound to give their mission at least eight days in advance at Karachi.

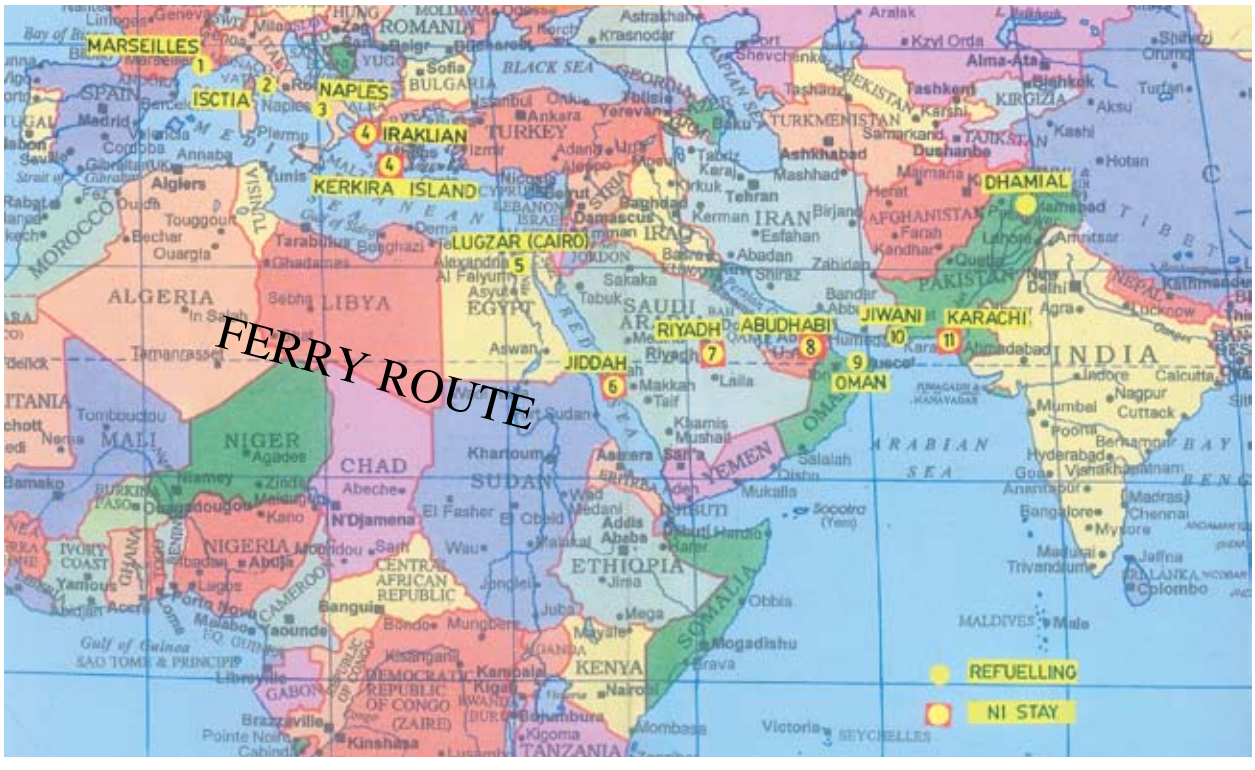
Aero Commander 680 F was known as the King of Emergencies. This aircraft always used to give jitters to the flying crew but still pilots were enthusiastic to fly this twin engine machine, this aircraft had an reputation of taking off on both engines and landing back on one.

Puma

In 1975 sale of Puma helicopter in the world was not very encouraging. Only a few helicopters were either used in France (Army and Air Force) or a limited number in executive class. In 1975 Pakistan government showed its interest in purchase of 900 MW nuclear processing plant. The French government connected the deal with purchase of Puma helicopters. In early 1976 deal was signed for purchase of 30 x Puma, which was considered a "Lucky Deal" for the manufacturer since "Aerospatiale" propagated this deal so much, that in a very short time a large number of combat version puma helicopters were sold to other countries. The rapid sale can be judged from the fact that Ist Puma given to Pakistan was tail No. 1398 in 1977 and the last was No. 1580 in 1979. Within two years approximately 200 helicopters were manufactured and handed over to other countries. Aerospatiale of France contract with the Pakistan Army stated that it would deliver two helicopters per month. In addition pilots would be converted on the machines in the factory at Marignane, a facility located a few miles north of the city of Marseille.

First batch of pilots selected for training in France were Lieutenant Colonel Zia ud din Javed, Major Qurban Hussain, Major Sajid Islam and Captain Shafiq. After ground and flying training, the first flight took off from France on 13 July 1977 in helicopter tail No 1398 and 1401. The crew in helicopter tail No 1398 was Lieutenant Colonel Zia Ud Din Javed with a French pilot and French flight engineer where-as in the other helicopter was Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Akram as captain of the aircraft and Major Qurban as co pilot with Major Hisam ullah Baig as flight engineer. Helicopter 1401 was leading, it met an emergency over the Mediterranean sea after 30 minutes of take off from Crete island, further three hours of flying over sea and two hours of flying over Egyptian desert was required, so the pilots decided to return to Iraklian. During post flight it was revealed that hydraulic pump had failed, new pump was flown from France. This was the longest ferry stretched over thirteen days, since hydraulic pump was changed after seven days because the custom staff at Iraklian were on strike. The first combat Puma arrived in Pakistan on 23rd July 1977. In subsequent ferry flights the route adopted remained the same. All helicopters were installed with ferry tanks thereby increasing endurance to five hours and thirty minutes.

Selection of Pilots **-** Keeping in mind the expected shortage of cargo pilots, students of P-20 were given an option to convert on to Puma. The course was split into two halves (P-20 and SE 2A). The SE students were flown 80 hours on MFI-17, 40 hours on OH-13 and rest of flying training on Puma at France. The training of each batch of pilots lasted for a period of four - six weeks, at the end of which two helicopters were flight tested, and ferried to Pakistan.



INDUCTION OF COMBAT PUMA, 23rd JULY 1977



Instructor Pilots

Pilots of 'White Puma' VIP Flight were declared as Instructor Pilots and they trained students pilots in Pakistan, pilots were:-

Lieutenant Colonel Tirmizi (Brigadier Retired)
Lieutenant Colonel Akram (Brigadier Retired)
Lieutenant Colonel Naseem Khan (Brigadier Retired)
Major Pervaiz Iqbal (Lieutenant Colonel Retired)
Major Khalid Masood (Late Lieutenant Colonel)
Major Moeen

Ist Batch of Instructor Pilots

Following were the IPs on other helicopters, who were converted as IPs on Puma helicopter:-
Major Hamid Choudhry
Major Riaz Hussain

Major Shafiq and Major Arif Rasool (both brigadier retired) were the first pilots from the Puma Group to attain Instructor Pilots rating. IP course started in October 1978.

Ist Puma Converted Captains

Experienced Rotary Wing Pilots were converted as Captains on Puma after five hours of flying, pilots were:-

Major Sajid Islam (Late Lieutenant Colonel)
Captain Shafiq (Brigadier Retired)
Major Qurban (Late Brigadier Retired)
Major Zia uddin Javeed
Major Jawed Saeed
Major Javed Jahan (Lieutenant Colonel Retired)
Major Sajid Ali (Late Colonel Retired)
Captain Kaleem Bukhari
Major Zaka Ullah Bhangoo (Late Brigadier Retired)
Major Arif Rasool (Brigadier Retired)
Major Riaz (Colonel Retired)

First Puma Co-Pilots - Ex P-20 (SE 2A Course)

Major Sibte Rasool
Major Khurshid Ahmed
Captain Tahir Raja
Captain Ahsan Janjua
Captain Nasir Malik
Captain Sikander Ghumman
Captain Omar Jalal

Maintenance Set Up

Puma Company. On the induction of VVIP Puma no 1194, a Puma company was raised under Major Mumtaz Siddique at Rawalpindi to look after the maintenance of Puma Helicopter. With the arrival of almost 30 Puma helicopters the EME underwent major organizational changes to cater for the new machine.

Puma Wing



Brigadier Qurban

By the end of 1978 all the helicopters had arrived. There were 30 helicopters and about 40-45 captains and majors who had been trained as either pilots or co-pilots. Since this conglomerate had no official designation, for want of a better name, it was labelled as the Puma Wing. The overall incharge was Colonel Muhammad Akram with Major Riffat Beg Humayun as the second in command and operations officer.



Brigadier Naseem

Flying Training

Initially permanent crews were formed for better understanding and integration. Flying training was conducted in tactical formations using only the formation lights for maintaining position at night. The other important feature was that all the missions were conducted at tactical heights. The radio transmission procedures were shortened to the bare essential. Night training was conducted on the first three nights of every week irrespective of the moon phase. Another important aspect of this training was mountain flying. From Monday through Saturday one helicopter was scheduled, on alternate days to cover the Kel Sector while another Puma, again on alternate days covered the the Lipa Valley. This arrangement ensured that the troops were kept supplied and had a link with the outside especially in the winter months. It also provided the pilots with sustained high altitude flying training.

Bifurcation Of Puma Wing

By the middle of 1979 the Puma Wing was bifurcated into two, the parts being designated as Puma 1 and Puma 2 with Lieutenant Colonel Naseem Khan and Lieutenant Colonel Qurban Hussain as the commanding officers respectively.

According to late Brigadier retired Qurban: 'It was difficult period to control 25 pilots, there was only one room close to present day FSIR, which had one table and two chairs for the two respective commanding officers, there was one more room for both squadrons to be used as crew room and offices. There was no transport or manpower etc. In spite of this operational flying continued and one puma was placed at Gilgit for Force Command Northern Area(FCNA). Most of the pilots had never flown in such environment and they all had to be trained and declared operational in these areas, thus training hours were touching the highest permissible limits. New standing orders were made, discipline was kept strict and one odd officer was reverted back to the parent arm on disciplinary grounds". Present day Puma Squadrons were raised from these two Puma Groups.

First Monetory Prize. In 1978, President General Zia was flown by Colonel Akram and Captain Bukhari at "Khunjrab Pass". On return at Gilgit during dinner, the president praised the pilot ability. He was informed that aviators are getting less flying pay (Rs. 400 pm) as compared to PAF pilots (Rs. 600 pm). The president during the dinner ordered and the flying pay was brought at par with PAF.

INDUCTION OF SAAB - 1978











Mushak 'MFI-17'

SAAB Safari "Mushak" MFI –17

In the early 70s both Pakistan Army and Air Force were looking for a suitable replacement for their basic trainer. In 1974 both services agreed on SAAB MFI-17, a Swedish aircraft manufactured by SAAB Scania Company. In view of the substantial combined requirement it was decided that progressive assembly and manufacturing of the aircraft should take place in Pakistan under project P-751. In June 1974, a contract was signed with the SAAB. In November 1975 the project was launched under Air Commodore M.A.Mirza at PAF Academy for progressive assembly, while manufacturing facilities were being constructed at Kamra. In 1975-76 few SAAB aircraft were on the inventory of the school, mainly for trial purpose. In June 1976 Semi Knocked down Kits (SKD) and Complete Knockdown Kits (CKD) were provided.

Army Aviation School started getting the aircraft in 1977 and pilot course P-20 was the first regular flying course to under go the flying on this machine. SAAB elementary courses were also run on the Mushak to overcome the shortage of pilots in the rotary wing. The squadrons started getting these aircraft in 1979-80. 3 Squadron Digest of Service records 14 January 1980 as the date when first three officers were made operational on MFI-17. 2 Army Aviation Squadron was lucky as their commanding officer and four officers had converted onto SAAB in April 1979.

Induction of a dozen MI-8s

In 1978, before the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan Government concluded a deal with Russia for purchase of additional twelve MI-8 helicopters. Colonel Mokeet headed the team. Team later went to Kazan where they were lodged in the Volga Hotel, they had one Muslim by the name of Saleem as the interpreter. Team helped in the opening of the local mosque for Friday prayer. One day Saleem the interpreter requested Colonel Mokeet to procure him a copy of Koran for his religious minded mother, which Colonel Mokeet did so by taking one Koran from the mosque. In return Saleem gave a copy of a technical amendment to him which helped Pakistan getting a better bargain. In the end all the twelve helicopters reached Pakistan via Iran only one helicopter met an occurrence when its main rotors struck an electric pole during taxi at Zahidan Airport.



Lieutenant Colonel Razzaq (second from left) Brigadier Mokeet (extreme right) 1978

Arrival of Afghan MI-8

In 1978, the first defected helicopter landed at Samungli. Routine flying was going on in the circuit and since MI-8s were already present at Gurkha Airfield thus PAF controller did not pay any attention. As the helicopter made finals, the controller gave him a piece of mind for non adherence to the rules. When MI-8 landed at the mid of runway, a fire crash tender was tasked to inquire about any assistance. Soon air traffic controller saw all the Firemen standing next to the helicopter with their hands up. Base Commander and other officers reached the spot and realised that it was an Afghan helicopter and its crew was armed with weapons seeking asylum. This helicopter was later flown by the pilots of 4 Squadron and was baptised with No. 1133.



Defected MI-8 with Army Aviation Pilots at Quetta

Mineral Research

6 Squadron in 1979 was tasked to operate with Oil and Gas Development Corporation(OGDC) missions were to be flown in the hilly terrain of Dhodak and Karak (Kohat) where temperatures are very high during summer. These missions required extensive sling load operations. All pilots were given practice with sling load and the squadron started undertaking the sorties at Dhodak in January 1979. In the beginning the weather was very bad and very little flying was possible due to winter rains. But when the operation got in full swing, flying missions were carried out in the mountainous area of Dhodak. In May 1979, the temperatures rose so high that the OGDC seismic party had to close up their work at Dhodak and they proceeded to Sohawa. In October 1979, when weather became tolerable, the squadron again started flying with OGDC. This time the work was carried out in mountainous area of Karak. In November 1979, after completing the Karak task the squadron again under took the sorties at Dhodak. This work continued till the end of the year. This seismic survey was carried out for finding the exact location of oil fields and their subsequent drilling. In such difficult terrain OGDC seismic party would have taken years to complete the survey without the help of helicopters. 6 Squadron finished their task in a very short time. During the entire year squadron pilots flew 266hours with OGDC.

Rescue at American Embassy

In 1979, American Embassy at Islamabad came under severe mob protest. Brigadier Mokeet commander Qasim Base received an emergency call from GHQ for the intelligence gathering and possible evacuation of Americans. He narrates; “I alongwith Lieutenant Colonel Rahmat and Major Nafees flew immediately in a Puma towards Islamabad. Colonel Noman was also directed to be airborne in an Allouette. The mob had gathered around the embassy, trying to scale the building, they had started arson and smoke was engulfing the building. We hovered at the roof top but none came up, we later also hovered in the embassy compound but still no American came out. We landed at foreign office compound and gave the briefing, we were told to go again for any likely evacuation. When we flew back to the embassy, few Pakistani youngsters had reached the top. We positioned the Puma in a way to use its rotor wash to disperse the crowd. We were successful in doing so. I used the same tactics to disperse the crowd in the street”. The crew was awarded with Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card.

Formation of Army Aviation Corps

In the initial days of the Air Observation Post, officers were selected from the Artillery Regiments. From 1959 onwards officers from all arms and services were inducted in the basic flying course, under overall control of the Artillery Directorate. Flyers serving in the Aviation units had two channels available for promotion to the next rank. First, within the aviation, if a vacancy is created and second in parent arm on the overall seniority basis. The policy in those days used to be, to rotate Air OP pilots between Air OP and the parent units. With the passage of time aviation became a highly specialized field where the experience counted a great deal. The rotation created a break in the flying experience and the pilots had to refresh basics of flying techniques.

The First Attempt - 1964

Colonel A.B Awan, the senior most aviation officer started contemplating formation of a Corps but he was apprehensive of certain aspects. He discussed the issue with the Military Secretary (MS) and found no favourable response. Colonel Awan was of the view that if the aviation is to attract good officers, an equally good career has to be ensured for them. He wanted a reasonable number of vacancies on various all arms courses including Command and Staff College and Extra Regimental Employment (ERE) slots in the operational vacancies like Brigade Major, General Staff Officer Grade I. Without an assurance, the proposal was shelved for the time being.

Second Attempt - 1968

Brigadier A.B Awan was working as Director Military Intelligence General Headquarters (GHQ) and Colonel M Saleem Ullah was his Deputy Director Military Intelligence. Though they had nothing official to do with Aviation but were consulted within the General Headquarters, on all matters pertaining to aviation. The Chief of the General Staff (CGS) used to pass on the important Aviation cases to Brigadier Awan for comments. This is how the Aviation Section maintained link with the Military Intelligence Directorate.

Brigadier Awan, thought the time was suitable for the launching of an Aviation Corps proposal and directed Colonel Saleem Ullah to prepare the case. It was done and a date was fixed for its presentation to the CGS. Brigadier Saleem Ullah recalls "The meeting was well attended. The CGS Major General Sahibzada Yaqub Khan was in chair and all concerned with the proposal were present. Brigadier Awan gave the presentation. On completion, the CGS asked MGO Major General Khawaja Wasi-Ud-Din if he has any observations on the proposal. MGO replied that Ordnance and Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (EME) do not support the proposal and came out with long list of objections. Brigadier Awan was disappointed and that was the end of the second attempt to form the Aviation Corps."

Raising of Corps - 1976

It was however as late as 1976 in the wake of Puma induction that fresh thinking again surfaced for formation of an Aviation Corps. Brigadier Abdul Qayoom was the Director Aviation and he made a presentation to COAS General Zia Ul Haq on 28th April 1976. All principal Staff Officers were present and the issues debated were mainly concerning pilots induction. The idea, however, was approved.

Ministry Of Defence issued formal orders on 3rd July 1976 vide letter No.0845/9/Aviation /1821/d-1[a-1]/76. with orders of precedence immediately after Special Services Group and above Army Services Corps. Lieutenant General A.B.Awan was installed as the first Colonel Commandant on 27th February 1978 and a raising day parade was held at Qasim Base on 2nd March 1978 which was reviewed by the COAS and President General Zia Ul Haq.



Lieutenant General A.B. Awan, President General Zia Ul Haq, extreme right Brigadier H.R.H. Abbassy

Aviation Corps Raising Day Parade



Major Javed Aslam Tahir (later Major General and General Officer Commanding Army Aviation) leading the parade



2nd March 1978 at Qasim Base



80s


HONGTAR GL.
Saddle
NEGROTTO GL
PRAQPA GL
SAVOIA
ARMY AVIATION


ARMY AVN SQN
5 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON
VIII
700
ARMY

EIGHTIES

New Raising

The induction of thirty Puma helicopters coupled with an acquisition of a dozen MI-8 helicopters from Russia enabled Pakistan Army Aviation to take a quantum leap towards expansion and modernization, much before other arms and services. On 17th May 1981, informal orders for raising of Multan Army Aviation Base and various other cargo and composite squadrons were issued by General Headquarters. These orders solemnized the raising of four cargo squadrons (three Puma, one MI-8) and four caderized composite squadrons. This was after a lapse of almost a quarter of century that new Fixed Wing Squadrons were being raised, 3 Squadron gave birth to 7,9 and 10 Squadron. 1 and 2 Squadron also parted with a flight each in these raising.

Maintenance Set Up

On induction of VVIP Puma No 1194 in 1973, a Puma Company was raised under Major Mumtaz Siddique at Rawalpindi to look after the maintenance of Puma Helicopter. In order to give dedicated maintenance support to Puma Squadrons at Rawalpindi and Multan, the Puma Company was split into Puma Groups as under:-

Group-III	21 & 24 Army Aviation Squadron Multan
Group-II	One Wing of Group III was attached with Group II to give maintenance support to 25 Army Aviation Squadron

7 Squadron

It became the first squadron to be raised with MFI-17 aircraft. This squadron was raised at Logistic Area Headquarters Karachi. On raising the pilots were accommodated in the Baloch Mess on the Elphinstone Street. Squadron offices were pitched in the Logistic Area compound. The soldiers were residing at the Transit Camp and the aircraft were at PAF Base Shahra-I-Faisal(old Drigh Road). First Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Humayun, made efforts and finally got the present accommodation from the corps headquarters. Brigadier Humayun in his own words narrates; "Commander gave an open cheque for the selection of site for officers and troops accommodation. I visited the Central Ordnance Depot Drigh Road which was one of the preferred choices because of its proximity to the PAF Base. The COD staff, however, did not give any positive response but this was expected as no unit



7 Squadron Officers past and present at Qasim Aviation Mess April 2007

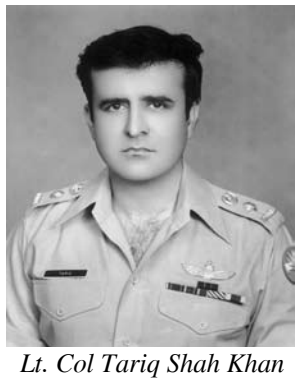
wants to give away any area willingly. There were complete empty barracks in COD Estate which I mentioned to the COD staff but they were not convinced. Corps staff when told of this, arranged the visit of corps commander. Smartly, when the corps commander visited the area all the empty barracks appeared genuinely occupied. 7 Squadron was thus told to look for some other area. Corps staff, thereafter, asked us to consider the area next to the cement factory. After couple of weeks Major Baqui, the second in command of the squadron, found out that the COD barracks were back to the normal emptiness. Next time when I returned from a sortie with the corps commander, I asked him to have a relook at the COD area. This move completely surprised the COD staff and the matter was decided in favour of 7 Squadron. Overnight we shifted and that is the background of 7 Squadron having excellent location right on the main Shahra-I-Faisal".



Lt. Col Humayun Malik

8 Squadron

It was raised by Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Shah Khan with one L-19 and two MFI-17 aircraft. It was initially set up in the side rooms of Murad Ali Hangar but subsequently shifted to a hired house on Tulsa Road in December 1982. Later special grant was sanctioned by Ministry of Defence for the construction of accommodation and the squadron occupied present area on 31st October 1984. In June 1981, strips at Kotli, Bhimber and Jhelum were proved fit for MFI-17 operations. In December 1981, maiden squadron exercise 'Rising Star' was conducted at Bhimber Strip, Involving 1xL-19, 3xMFI-17 and 1xAllouette-III helicopter of Qasim Base. The first accident unfortunately occurred on 1st January 1982. MFI-17 piloted by Captain Fazal-Ur-Rehman forced landed at Kotli Strip due to shearing off of half length of propeller in flight over Nikial. Pilot made safe landing. Squadron first time participated in Joint Services Parade fly past with 3xMFI-17 on 23 March 1983. The first long navigation was conducted by the squadron in April 1984 in which 4xMFI-17, seven pilots and one crew chief took part. In October 1984 squadron was upgraded to 100% strength. In April 1986 Lama helicopters were inducted and from then onwards squadron remained in support of Northern Areas. 8 Squadron is the only outfit of Army Aviation to be given a Battle Honour.



Lt. Col Tariq Shah Khan



Lieutenant General Imran Ullah shaking hands with Major Tariq Saleem on his visit to 8 Squadron

9 Squadron

Since raising of 11 Corps and up to late seventies, aviation support was provided to this corps by a composite flight of Qasim Army Aviation Base comprising of two MFI-17 aircraft and one Allouette-III helicopter. On 15 May 1981, 9 Army Aviation Squadron was raised. The existing fight at Peshawar was supplemented by pooling up four MFI-17 and one Bird Dog from various squadrons to raise this squadron. The advance party, came from 1 Army Aviation Squadron Mangla consisting of a few men, four officers and some essential equipment. Major Sibbit Rasul, assumed the officiating command. In August 1981 Lieutenant Colonel Masood Anwar was posted from 5 Army Aviation Squadron as the 1st Commanding Officer of the squadron. At the start, on the arrival of the advance party, the men and equipment were accommodated in MODC, SSG Para School lines and in a local signal unit of the corps. Initially, Headquarters 11 Corps provided two rooms for the office purpose in its premises. Out of these two rooms, one was converted and utilized as CO's office/ crew room/staff officers office whereas the second room was given to unit's clerks. The squadron operated in these peculiar conditions for about 8 months and finally 89 LAA Regiment gave half barrack for temporary arrangement. The first batch of officers from Aviation School ex Pilot Course-23 joined the squadron on 15th December 1981. It was during this year that the squadron made its maiden flight to Chitral with three MFI-17 aircraft. On 29th May 1982 Lieutenant Colonel Imtiaz Alam was posted as 2nd CO of the squadron. He was tasked to select a site for construction of the squadron complex within specified limits. After a lot of deliberation present site on Khyber Road was selected. The squadron shifted to present location on 1st March 1984.



9 Squadron 'Flying Sentinels of Khyber' in the early years

10 Squadron

3 Squadron left Balochistan in May 1979 leaving behind one of its flight at Quetta. The same flight was organized into a Caderised Squadron on 1st July 1984 and raised to full strength on 16th September 1984 under Lieutenant Colonel Khurshid Iqbal. Squadron received its first MFI-17 in 1989 and another batch was inducted in 1991 and 1993. Squadron building and crew room was constructed in 1984. Prior to that on raising the squadron was housed in a hutted barrack of an infantry battalion close to present day location. The present mess accommodation was also allotted in 1981 which in years to come became an apple of discord with subsequent Cargo Squadrons.



Lt.Col Khurshid Iqbal



Major Sikander, Major Iqbal, Major Arif Aziz, Major Zaeem and Captain Qadir of 21 Squadron early Eighties

21 Squadron

This squadron was raised around the nucleus of No. 1 Puma Wing Pilots. The first Puma Squadron to arrive at Multan. Its digest of service records, "14th August 1981, Multan Cantt, Squadron was raised and stationed at Multan". Squadron conducted its first exercise 'Trial Run' in June 1982. This squadron played a pivotal role in the development and establishment of Multan Aviation Base. Pilots from this squadron also flew in Northern Areas for short durations. It moved to Qasim Base in 1990. It flew over two hundred hours during operation 'Koh Paima'. Squadron was honoured with an Imtiazi Sanad during this operation. In 2004 it became a 'Quick Reaction Force', and in 2006 was bestowed with nine gallantry award.

24 Squadron

Raised in Dhamial, from the Puma Group although squadron was supposed to be raised at Multan, but due to lack of accommodation the move was delayed for three months. Even at Dhamial, the squadron had only one room as office. All the squadron officers including the commanding officer used it for multi purposes, including as crew room. Squadron moved to Multan on 24 August 1981, it has the longest stay at this station and has contributed a lot for the up keep and expansion of base.

Squadron from its inception had taken part in all major exercises. They had also flown extensively in Siachen glacier on short tenures. In late 80s, when the MI-8s were down, the squadron carried out intensive flying. 24 Squadron remained an icon of Puma, in later years when all other Puma Squadrons were re-organized with other machines only this squadron remained loyal to Puma.

25 Squadron

It was raised at Dhamial. Squadron had its first feather in the cap on 11th June 1981 when Major Shoukat Ibrahim executed a safe Puma landing near Abbottabad and was decorated with Tamgha-I-Imtiaz for professional handling of the emergency. Major Shoukat Ibrahim is also credited for designing the insignia of the squadron. Squadron also participated in the earthquake relief operation of Darel Valley in September 1981, flying over 90 hours and delivering 90,000 kilogram of relief goods. The rescue operation of hijacked Indian aircraft at Lahore was also facilitated by the pilots of this squadron in September 1981, when they landed with commandos in darkness at Lahore Airport. Initially due to non availability of accommodation, manpower was not called in, however on allotment of one barrack the first batch of manpower arrived on 25th December 1981. Whereas the first vehicle had arrived on 1st November 1981. On 20th April 1982 earth-breaking ceremony for construction of offices and store on self help basis took place, which were completed on 1st June 1982. The installation ceremony of the Colonel Commandant of Army Aviation was held on 16 October 1982. Despite being a year old only, squadron was given the responsibility of presenting salute at the quarter guard to Lieutenant General F. S.K. Lodhi. The drill and turn out of the quarter guard made a very pleasant impact on the General, who later in his demi official letter to Commander Qasim Aviation Base described it as "Excellent turn out and drill".

The officers who had the honour to be the first flight commanders are as under :-

Major Abdul Jamil	Headquarters Flight.
Major Ejaz Sadiq	No 1 Flight.
Major Shaukat Ibrahim	No 2 Flight.
Captain Azkar Ahmed Lodhi	No 3 Flight.



Officers of 25 Squadron

27 Squadron

It was the second squadron in Pakistan Army Aviation, which was equipped with MI-8 helicopters. The first flying mission assigned to the squadron was on 21st August 1981 when MI-8 took off from Gorkha Airfield for Sheila Bagh. The entire MI-8 fleet was grounded in 1984, and squadron remained at idle. Later with the help of Chinese efforts MI-8 fleet was put back on flying status, in 1989-90. This squadron later became the flag bearer of MI-17 helicopter and first one to fly them in Northern Areas. Squadron took active part in 'Operation Koh Paima' and was honoured with a Sitara-I-Jurat. Gorkha Airfield is named after Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Masood the first Commanding Officer, who died in a road accident in Punjab while on leave.



27 Squadron at Quetta

First Jet Propellor Commander Flies Home - Dec - 81

JPC was purchased new and a team of pilots headed by Lieutenant Colonel Pervaiz Yousaf with Major Minhaj, Major Salim 'Saqi', Captain Asif Mukhtar 'Big Wing' and Captain Abid Nadeem as maintenance engineer four technicians with a civilian manager Mr Salman 'Sallu' proceeded to Oklahama. Mr Sallu on the very first day bought a car for the crew by showing his national identity card to the American company who were unable to read the Urdu and took it as an International Driving License. American instructors who conducted training included Mr Bob Davy and Mr Oliver.

Second Jet Propellor Commander

This JPC was purchased in December 1984. The ferry of this aircraft commenced on 26 December 1984. Lieutenant Colonel Minhaj Ali was accompanied by Major Ashraf and an American pilot Captain Jannack. Route adopted was Washington-Goose Bay-Ice Land-Prestwick- Nice-Athens-Bahrain-Dubai-Karachi-Qasim. It landed at Qasim Base on 3rd January 1985. At Nice the entire crew was put behind the bars, the reason was their visa has expired. In fact aircraft windscreen had developed a crack on landing and replacement was made after the weekend during which the visas expired.



Headquarter Qasim Army Aviation Base 1982. Qasim Base acted as the motherboard for the new base.

RAISING OF MULTAN ARMY AVIATION BASE

The First Aviation Flight -1966

Lieutenant General Attiq-ur-Rehman (Late) Commander 4 Corps located at Multan had been requesting for the placement of a unit of Army Aviation at Multan on permanent basis. GHQ therefore decided to evaluate pros and cons of this requirement by placing a Composite Flight at Multan for co-operation and conducting trials to formulate recommendations for permanent location. Major Muhammad Ayub (later brigadier retired, Joint Secretary Federal Government and Secretary to Governor Sindh) was the pioneer flight commander. He narrates, "I flew to Multan on 29th June 1966 via Lahore in L-19 E No. 004 and after picking up Naib Subeder Muhammad Yusuf of 199 Aviation Electrical Mechanical Engineers Battalion (located with a detachment at Lahore) landed at Multan well after dusk. Preliminary meetings were held with the corps staff and various options were explored in the purview of administrative arrangements for the reception and location of the flight. Composite Aviation Flight comprising two Fixed Wing L-19 and a Rotary Wing OH-13 helicopter were assembled at Dhamial from 2 and 3 Squadrons along with requisite number of pilots, administrative and technical personnel. Apart from myself, the section pilots included Captain Ali Jawahar Khan, Captain Muhammad Akram, Captain Mahmood Rizvi and Captain Asghar Aziz, all of fixed wing with Captain Manzoor Kamal Bajwa, and Captain Siraj, both of rotary wing. Luckily my well-knit team of both air and ground crew comprised of very efficient and dedicated pilots and men. We moved to Multan in the first week of July 1966 and were accorded a very hearty welcome by the corps staff".

Arrival of 3 Army Aviation Squadron

Flight remained at Multan till 10th September 1966. During this stay it carried out operational reconnaissance of the border areas of the corps, selection, preparation and occupation of small field strips, tying up of communication networks, drills and homing procedures in the event of poor visibility conditions.

Corps Commander himself utilized the aircraft for reconnaissance of the border areas in Multan-Sulemanki-Kasur-Lahore Sector and the Muzaffagarh Ranges. Major Ayub recommended a permanent squadron at Multan. Thus 3 Squadron (No. 9 Flight) arrived by train from Dhamial on 16th December 1970 along with 3 Light Workshop Company ex 199 Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Battalion. Other two flights (No.10 and No.11) followed shortly. 3 Squadron thus became a kind of Southern Aviation Base, looking after all flying down to Karachi, Quetta and Gwadar.

A Board was detailed for a Southern Base - 1976

Brigadier H.R.H Abbasy Qasim Base Commander(1976-78) recalls few months before his eternal flight, "In 1976 then Army Chief General(late) Zia ul Haq had finalized the deal of Puma Helicopters. In one of the presentations, I raised the point of their stationing at Qasim Base due to limited space. General Zia had a deep knowledge of aviation because when he was the corps commander at Multan, there would be a weekly tea break and all brigade commanders would be invited, I was also one of the brigade commander there. It was General Zia who proposed and advocated Cobra Helicopter induction apart from the need of a separate Aviation Base in the south. It was in this background that in 1976 a siting board was assembled to select the place for new Army Aviation Base with Lieutenant General Azmat Baksh Awan as president of the board.

Selection of The Site-1977

Various sites considered for this southern base included Sukkur, Hyderabad, Chuk Jhumra and Multan. Sukkur was rejected due to inadequate administrative backup, while Hyderabad was considered to be far too south. On 16-17 September 1977 siting board had its final meeting and on 23rd September General Awan alongwith Qasim Base Commander Brigadier Abbassy visited the place and Multan was finally chosen due to its central location, availability of Multan Airfield and considerable administrative facilities. They proposed a base twice the size of Qasim Base. It was proposed to have a complete independent complex located within the Multan Cantonment and adjacent to the airport. Civil litigation in acquiring the land became a major point which initially steered the site towards the wastage disposal and later reduced the size.This was finally resolved in 2003 when base was able to acquire the additional 112 kanals of land which was proposed in the master plan.

The Deliberations Continues-1978

Brigadier Tirimzi (Director Aviation between 1978-81) has following to add in this regard. "One day I was coming back from Quetta via Karachi for Qasim Base, after I landed at Multan. Next to PIA tarmac and close to the old hangar, I saw few buntings and fresh limed trees and one Junior Commissioned Officer standing. Out of curiosity I asked what is this all about and he informed me about new Aviation Base being constructed. This is how myself, Director Aviation came to know about the actual construction phase. This base was already in the air for some time but to start construction without the knowledge of concerned aviators was a bit too much. Same day on reaching Rawalpindi I gave ring to then Chief of General Staff(CGS) Major General F.S.K. Lodhi and shared my apprehension about the new base. My point of view was that, it is the first base after two decades for Army Aviation since Qasim Base, therefore we must now keep the future in mind. This proposed base should cater aviation expansion for at least another 25-30 years and the



Puma Pilots with President General Zia Ul Haq

space earmarked is insufficient. Quarter Master General (QMG) at that time was Lieutenant General Saeed Qadir who himself had raised 199 EME Battalion and 503 Aviation Workshop. He is widely respected in the aviation circles for his contributions apart from his all loving personality, but I had my difference of opinion on this affair. After 2-3 days CGS, QMG, myself and few other officers went to Multan on a Puma. I still remember seating arrangements for 20-30 officers were made under a shamiana and apart from Logistic Area Commander, there was Brigadier Shamim Alam(Chief of Staff 2 Corps), later Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee (CJCSC), Multan Airport manager and few other concerned officials were present. We highlighted the rotary wing operation effects on the civil flying operations through Puma landing and take off. Any body who has been near a Puma can visualize the dust raised on the tarmac which was otherwise quite sandy. The airport manager had no other option but to admit that such kind of affairs would definitely hamper the civil flying and can create flight safety hazards. It became clear to all, that aviation needs more space. Resultantly another board was sited with Brigadier Mokeet and other officers forming part of it and present location was approved".

It was in 1980 that contract for the construction of one hangar and tarmac was awarded and funds were released.

Second in Commands land at Multan

Apart from Multan Base Headquarters, 21 and 24 Squadron were also to be raised at Multan thus sorties from Qasim Base for Multan were going on in irregular pattern to monitor the progress of work. On 5th May 1981, 21 Squadron Puma piloted by Major Masood Pervaiz and Major Sajid Islam second in commands of 21 and 24 Squadron alongwith Captain Taqi Rizvi Quarter Master of 21 Squadron, took off from Dhamial and landed at Multan PIA tarmac. The aim of this sortie was to monitor and carry out home work for the subsequent move of respective squadrons. However, only one hangar was partially constructed

and rest of the Base was near its completion. Therefore, the move of the squadrons kept lingering. Another major factor was the lack of hangers for the Pumas. Therefore for the time being, the Puma was moored in the open. Brigadier Mokeet admits that "It finally got on to my nerves that the squadrons were not moving out due to obvious reasons, so finally on 12th August 1981, I decided to move 21 Squadron so the progress should start at Multan". On 13th August 1981 one Puma took off for the official raising of new base, on board were Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Iqbal the GSO-1, Lieutenant Colonel Sajid Ali of 21 Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan the AQ, Major Akram, Captain Sarfraz, Major Sajid Islam, and Major Wali Ur Rehman of EME, apart from the crew members. After landing at Multan these officers reported to station headquarters and over a cup of tea the modalities of raising were discussed. The major problem area still was the accommodation of the advance party and safe parking environment for the helicopters. The discussion also enveloped the siting board directives and rulings which encompassed the future base. As these issues became outside the domain of station headquarters thus it was decided to pay the visit to the Multan Logistic Area. In the words of AQ Multan Base Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan; "As we drove into the logistic area headquarters and marched towards the AQ office. The AQ then was Lieutenant Colonel Raza who informed the Multan Logistic Area Commander Brigadier Ali of artillery on intercom, "Sir Woh Aa Gaye Hain (Aviators Have Arrived**).** Multan Logistic Area was helpful but showed its inability in accommodating large number of aviators. Relevant letters of GHQ were shown, in the end it was promised that ten houses and ten bachelor officers quarters would be given with office accommodation when available. At Dhamial the matter was discussed and next day a conference was held in Aviation Directorate in which future course was charted apart from updating the CGS on the issue, who ordered one artillery regiment to move from Multan to Okara thus creating accommodation for the base. It was also decided to station the designate AQ at Multan for speeding up the affairs".

24 Squadron Also Arrives at Multan

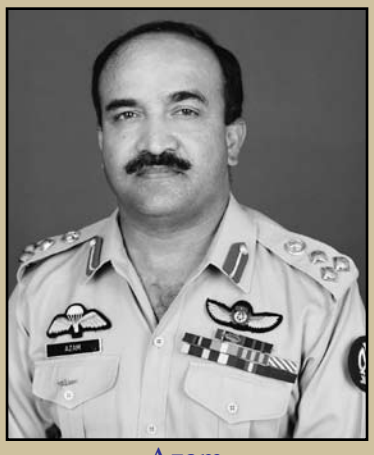
On 24th August 1981 at 1000hours one Puma and one Mushak were airborne with the advance party of 24 Squadron from Dhamial towards new abode at Multan. The scene at Dhamial was nothing less than a bride leaving her *maika*, and in this case the *susral* was not even rumoured to have a green garden. Pioneers were:-

Lieutenant Colonel Rahmat Ullah (TBt)	Commanding Officer
Major Muhammad Asghar Akram	
Major Muhammad Zafar Iqbal	Quartermaster
Major Mansoor Saeed	Adjutant
Major Muhammad Farooq	
Clerk Zain Ul Abideen	

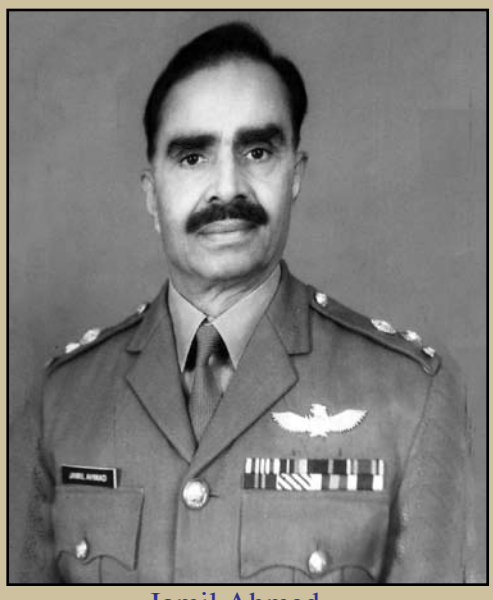


Pumas of 24 Squadron during field exercise - 1981

Army Aviation Launches a Professional Magazine-1980



Azam



Jamil Ahmed



Ijaz

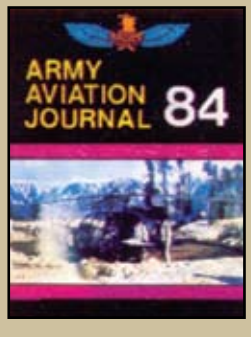
It was middle of 1980 that Muhammad Azam a young Flying Instructor in Army Aviation School fresh from FIS, Risalpur approached the Chief Flying Instructor, Lt. Col Riffat Beg Humayun and spoke to him about the need for starting an Aviation Magazine on the lines of US Army Aviation Journal. The idea was later broached with the Base Commander Brig Abdul Mokeet Khan who gave a very positive response and asked formation of a board to immediately pursue the matter. Interestingly, that very year, Aviation Engineering School which was being commanded by Lt. Col Jamil Ahmed had already published their maiden issue of Engineering School Magazine.

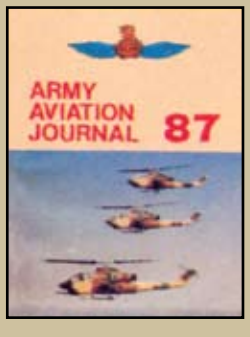
Brig Mokeet wanted to combine both the efforts and thus a board was formed under Lt. Col Jamil with two Editors–one from flying side, Maj Azam from Army Aviation School and the other from the Engineering School, Maj Ijaz Ashraf Toor.

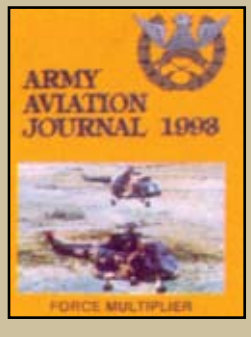
This duo immediately joined forces and initiated the task. Maj Azam's room in the Aviation Mess became the hub of this project and the inmates of Aviation Mess still remember the late night marathon sessions of those days which continued with endless cups of coffee and tea. Maj Azam and Maj Ijaz Toor's effort resulted in the publication of the first issue of Army Aviation Journal in 1980. The first issue was very well received by the Army and earned a special commendation from COAS/President Gen Zia-Ul-Haq. This Issue literally changed the looks/professional substance of all Army Magazines.

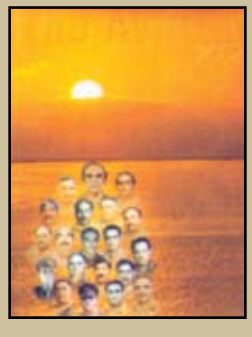
Major Azam later rose to be the General Officer Commanding of Army Aviation and Major Toor retied as Colonel after having Commanded the Aviation Engineering School.



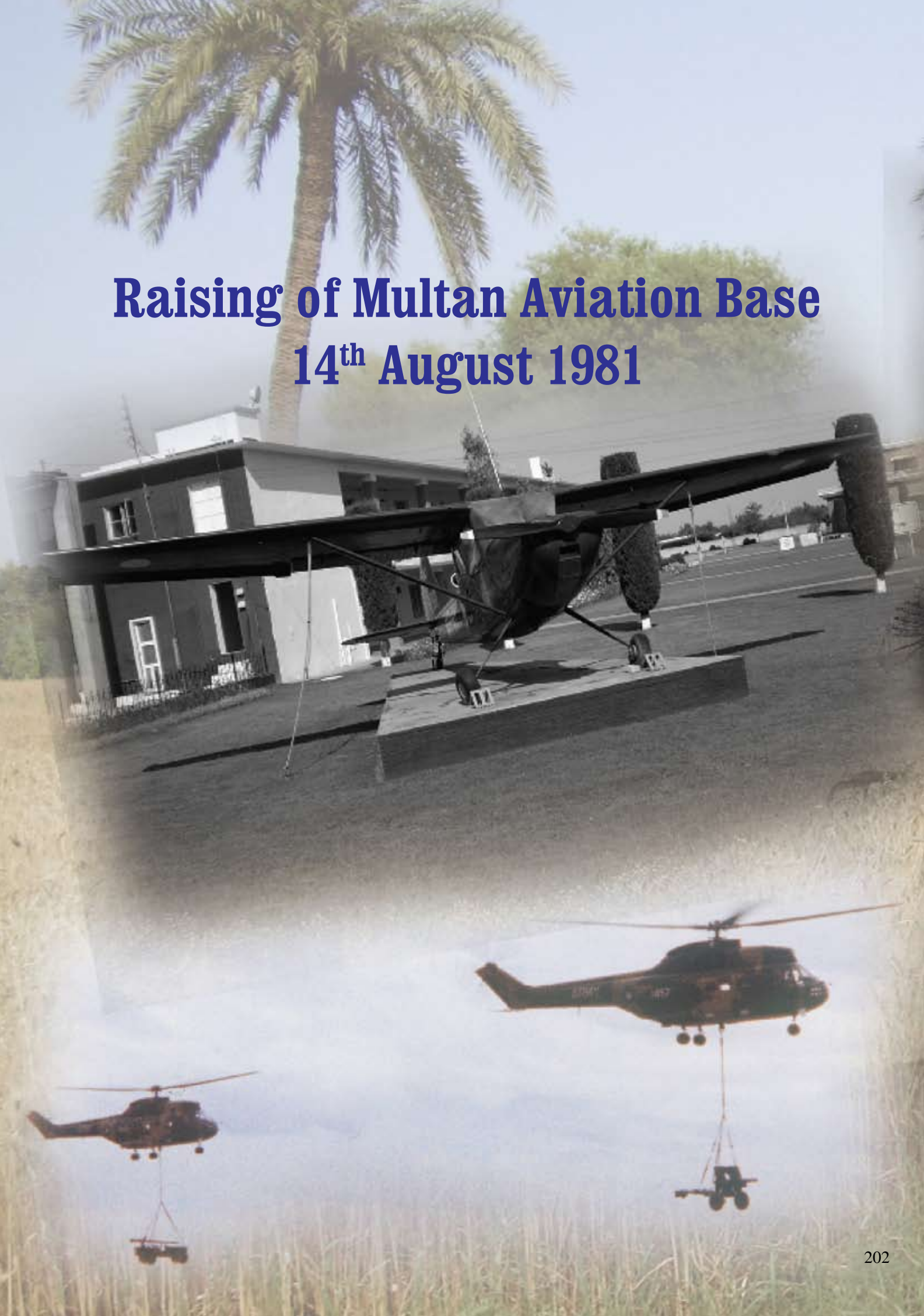








Raising of Multan Aviation Base
14th August 1981



Commanding Officer 24 Squadron Remembers

Major General(Retired) Rahmat, was the first commanding officer of 24 Squadron, He narrates. "I was performing the duty of General Staff Officer Grade-One at Qasim Base. Previously I had served in Aviation Directorate as well so I was quite familiar with the raising of the new base. In 1979 at Qasim Base the storm damaged few helicopters which were parked outside due to lack of hangar space thus the raising of new base was expedited. I was initially earmarked to take over 2 Squadron but then one day I was told to raise 24 Squadron. The initial raising was done at Qasim Base that included collection of officers and next day Brigadier Mokeet the Base Commander told me to shift to Multan Base as soon as possible. Between 2nd-17th August 1981, I flew to Multan in Puma for liaison. Already troops earmarked for new squadrons had started arriving at Multan and were attached with 3 Squadron. Colonel Staff of 1st Armoured Division, Colonel Saeed Uz Zaman Janjua (Major General retired and aviator) was very helpful and gave us one Dodge vehicle, My parent unit 21 Baloch was located at Okara and they gave us the necessary furniture for office. I am also in debt to Artillery Centre for their support. On 23rd August 1981, I finally got the movement order from Qasim Base and relieved of my duties as GSO-1 operations.

Major General Rahmat further highlights early days. "I had my office at the aircraft pen. Officers were staying with 3 Squadron Officers. The parade used to be held in the 3 Squadron area and own troops were also initially put up with them. It was after a fortnight that we moved to the divisional artillery area. We were utilizing the 3 Squadron flying training area. There used to be a Puma sortie to Rawalpindi on alternate week-ends. In the beginning there were only two helicopters with the squadron due to parking area restriction and fear of constant dust storms. My other helicopters were at Qasim".

Tent City

In the words of Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan the AQ of the base, the situation on 27th August 1981 was as follow " One hangar and two side office block were in final phase but there was no accommodation for the officers and same was the case for soldiers barracks. It should be kept in mind that almost 250 soldiers had already reported and were attached with the 33 Heavy Regiment. Brigadier Farrukh (ex pilot course-9) gave the vehicle on personal net but told me to arrange the fuel on *Ukhpal Bando Bast.* For the time being, area next to divisional artillery was ear marked for our future needs where we put up the tents and started collecting the troops. Okara bound Heavy Regiment Artillery was in no mood to leave the Multan station due to the same reasons for which aviators were not moving out of the Dhamial. After hectic efforts rolling stock was arranged for the regiment and things started looking bright. In those days there was no direct dialling army communication system and one had to pass all the information through booking of call which was very time consuming. First few days were spend at the Heavy Regiment Artillery area where tents were placed to act as the officers mess and accommodation, troops remained in one barrack. Office which consisted of one clerk was also there. It was decided that all movements of troops should be stopped forthwith from Artillery Centre till the arrangements of accommodation is solved.

Captain Rizvi(Later Director General Army Aviation) was in 21 Squadron, when the squadron moved to Multan. After spending two nights at Multan in the artillery mess he was detailed on an Infantry Company Commander Course, thus becoming the first officer from the new base to attend any course. After attending the course he reported back to the squadron and assumed the duties of Quartermaster. He narrates the early days. "We were living in the barrack next to the Artillery Mess. In the morning there would be physical training period which was carried out religiously in the training area next to the library. After the PT period we would come back to our rooms and half an hour later would reach our offices in uniform. Our offices were in the model room adjacent to divisional artillery. One barrack was partitioned in a way that two squadrons could operate from there. We had one changing room kind of thing. In the morning there would be ritual of Meteorological/Air Traffic Control brief. Flying would be conducted from the main airport where we would go in squadron transport. Our helicopters were parked in the PAF area. Flying was a serious business although the hours were bit restricted. Lunch would be consumed in the squadron premises and in afternoon we would have the compulsory games four times a week. Later in the evening almost everybody would be



3 Squadron provided the initial support including moral in the establishing of the Multan Base.

seen strolling in the Sadder area including the Base Commander Colonel KK and Lieutenant Colonel Abid of OAD. The area around our mess and barrack was void of any electricity thus any late comer had to tackle the stray dogs roaming around and it was not a pleasant sight".

First Ration Drawn

On 26th September 1981, 35 Heavy Regiment Artillery showed inability to serve food to Aviation units, thus the responsibility of running a combined cook house for all aviation units was given to 24 squadron. It was on 27th of September that the ration were drawn for the first time and cook house was established along with dining hall for all the new units at Multan. It is a custom in rural areas where newly wed bride is not allowed to work in the kitchen and on 40th day she is supposed to take over the responsibility, probably that was the intention of heavy gunners.

First Visitors

On 30th September 1981, Director Army Aviation Brigadier S.M.A Tirmizi, along with Brigadier Abdul Mokeet Khan Base Commander Qasim Army Aviation Base visited the base.

Flight Safety

On 5th October 1981, first Flight Safety Meeting was held in 3 Army Aviation Squadron, which was attended by all COs/OCs and flight safety officers.

First Accommodation Constructed

On 13th October 1981 the tarmac and one hangar along with the soldiers barrack was constructed and handed over to the Aviators.

First Base Commander 'Colonel KK'

Colonel Khalid Kamal ex 11 Medium Regiment is a graduate of 8 Officer Training School(OTS) Course and Pilot Course-4. He did his Flying Instructor Course in 1966 and was appointed as the first Base Commander of Multan Base. He has a unique habit, he speaks very fast, so fast that at time it is difficult to understand what he had said. This created many amusing episodes in the early days, like once night flying was cancelled because of this. He narrates of early days, "I concentrated on the flying aspect and with support from commanding officers evolved drills and procedures for safe flying. I am a firm believer that one needs deterrent to get the best out of a flyer and the best one is fear of being grounded therefore with this background a series of tests, of both ground and flying were conducted to make sure that flyers pay due attention to up keep their knowledge. The scattered layout of the Base was a recipe for any accident and it took many sleepless hours pondering over this aspect. Officers were living at different places so were the other ranks. Aircraft were parked in pens and in open, but it goes to the credit of all aviators that they came out of this period safely. We were new in the cantonment and it is but natural that it takes time for the dust to settle down and more so in this case when the already established formations had to part away from their comfort to make way for us. I had to make them realize the benefits which this base can provide both professionally and administratively. We integrated ourselves into their professional routine although our pattern of living and working at Dhamial was quite different. Morning physical exertion is part of all the army and we are no exception, it is the intensity which is different".



Colonel Khalid Kamal - Colonel Hamid Choudhry - Lieutenant Colonel Aijaz Akram & Major Tasneem Hayat Malik

First Year at Multan

1982 was devoted to the practice of dispersal exercises, perfection of drills, procedures, formulation of standing operating procedures(SOP) and move exercises, etc. The pilots of different squadrons including Qasim Base carried out exercises in Tharparkar area. 25 Squadron moved by road and rail to the designated area. Area familiarisation missions including coastal belt were carried out. First ever demonstration on camouflage and concealment of Puma Helicopter was also arranged. 24 Squadron was tasked to conduct central study period covering heliborne operations, carriage of infantry battalion in heliborne role and evaluation of Indian and Afghan heliborne capability. 21 Squadron was tasked to carry out study of capabilities and limitation of cargo helicopters, aircraft and crew, selection and preparation of landing zone. Group 3 was tasked to arrange lectures on aircraft maintenance system, their capabilities and limitations. It was in this period that aviation cadres for all junior commissioned officers and other ranks were arranged by both the squadrons including air traffic controlling in the field. After having gone through the teething process the first ever squadron level exercises at Multan was conducted by 21 and 24 Squadrons. On 13/14 April 1982, 24 Squadron moved out in dispersal area and later joined by one flight of 21 Squadron. Later on 19th June 1982, 21 Squadron with three Puma participated in exercise 'Trial Run' which involved move to dispersal area and advance landing ground occupation.

First Exercise at Muzzaffargarh Ranges

The first ever Artillery Shoot from helicopters was conducted at Muzzaffargarh Ranges on first and second November 1982. Multan Base moved out in the field for test exercise in the third week of December 1982. It conducted low level navigation, homing, casualty evacuation and dawn/dusk operations. Field Formations at Multan never had an opportunity in the past to have cargo helicopters being integral to their planning and exercises. Now the interest was intense in utilizing these versatile machines in offensive and defensive operations. 1 Armoured Division carried out study of heliborne forces in capturing and securing bridge head in enemy areas, later emplaning and deplaning drills including path finders were also presented by 24 Squadron to the formations. On the administrative side there were weekly Puma sorties from Multan to Rawalpindi and many a times serious causalities were evacuated through the choppers thus saving precious lives and raising morale of the troops.

Mess of "Mess" at Multan

This Mess has a chequered history as it was never intended to be here and definitely not in this size. When Multan Base was raised the land close to the Fort Colony was earmarked as the site for the mess. In the master plan there was an exclusive colony of aviation base which was supposed to be situated close to the Fort Colony. Now when Aviators started pursuing the project it was revealed that the proposed area is not cleared by a sensitive agency which had communication setup in the close vicinity and they wanted a minimum of 1200 yards separation from the living quarters. This was unexpected as all plans including the mess hinged around this. Brigadier Mokeet adds, 'Puma pilots resorted to extensive night flying which invariably involves flying overhead the Fort Colony. After a week I received a call at mid night from Commander Multan Corps whom I knew earlier, he said "Mokeet I have not slept for last one week, you take what you want but please let me have few hours of sleep". Thus as a substitute additional houses were offered in the Fort Colony with promise to construct more houses for the aviators but mess now became a thorny issue as none was willing to give an inch to the other. Chain of events left no other choice to Colonel Khalid Kamal but to settle for present site. It was constructed in 1983-84. Presently it houses two blocks of accommodation.

Redesignation of Ordnance Aviation Depot (OAD)

The Ordnance element at Multan Base was initially designated as Ordnance Support Wing. However, in 1982, this wing was re-designated as Ordnance Aviation Depot Multan (OAD) with a Lieutenant Colonel as the Chief Ordnance Officer (COO). The good work done by Captain Khalid Munir was taken over by Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Abid Haider and later by Lieutenant Colonel Mohy-ud-Din.

Golden Eagle – May 1982

This was the first ever General Headquarters controlled joint Army Aviation and Special Services Group exercise named' Golden Eagle' conducted by Chief of General Staff. It involved dawn-dusk heliborne operations with SSG troops. This exercise was held in area Haripur and Mansehra with participation by 4 Army Aviation Squadron (MI-8); 25 Army Aviation Squadron along with additional crew from 21 Aviation Squadron. Reconnaissance started on 5 May 1982 and verbal orders were given on 13 May. Squadrons moved out on 28 May in area Haripur. The first mission of re-supply to commandos was carried out on 1 June 1982. On 4 June Lieutenant Colonel Shah Alam(25 Squadron) gave the verbal orders. Between 9 -11 June 1982, Army Aviation flew over eleven helicopters simultaneously for commando heliborne drops.

Gurkha Air Field Renamed.

The newly raised 27 Army Aviation Squadron received a tragic blow in early 1982, when its first commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Masud met an unfortunate and deadly road accident. Army Aviation thus lost a very brilliant and a capable officer. Gurkha Army Airfield of Quetta was later renamed as Khalid Airfield in the memory of this stalwart of Army Aviation.



The Doaba Tragedy - December 1983

Exercise Doaba was linked with the operations of Army Reserve North (ARN) comprising 1 Corps elements. The large scale heliborne operations involved night landings. 4 Squadron along with crew ex 27 Squadron, 24 and 25 Squadron took part in this exercise. Tragedy befell upon Army Aviation when a MI-8 helicopter of 4 Army Aviation Squadron piloted by Major Mehmood and Captain Shafqat along with an anti tank detachment ex 17 Punjab met a fatal crash near Gujranwala, leaving no survivors. It led to a re-appraisal of the training standards and the proficiency required for the safe conduct of night heliborne operations.

First Puma Crash

On 13 December 1984 Puma helicopter No. 1531 piloted by Major Ijaz Sadiq and Major Tipu Sultan of 21 Squadron experienced tail rotor failure short of Multan while returning from a mission. Pilots skilfully managed the helicopter till finals before it crashed on the runway, both pilots and crew survived but helicopter received major damages.



Puma on Finals

MI-8 Grounded

All MI-8 helicopters of 4 & 27 Squadron were grounded on 6 September 1984 due to expiry of airframe life and non availability of spares from Russia. As there was no prospect of making these helicopters serviceable due to ongoing conflict in Afghanistan therefore almost all the pilots were dished out to various other squadrons and few MFI-17 were made available to the squadron for flying.



Eagle's Hunt - February 1987

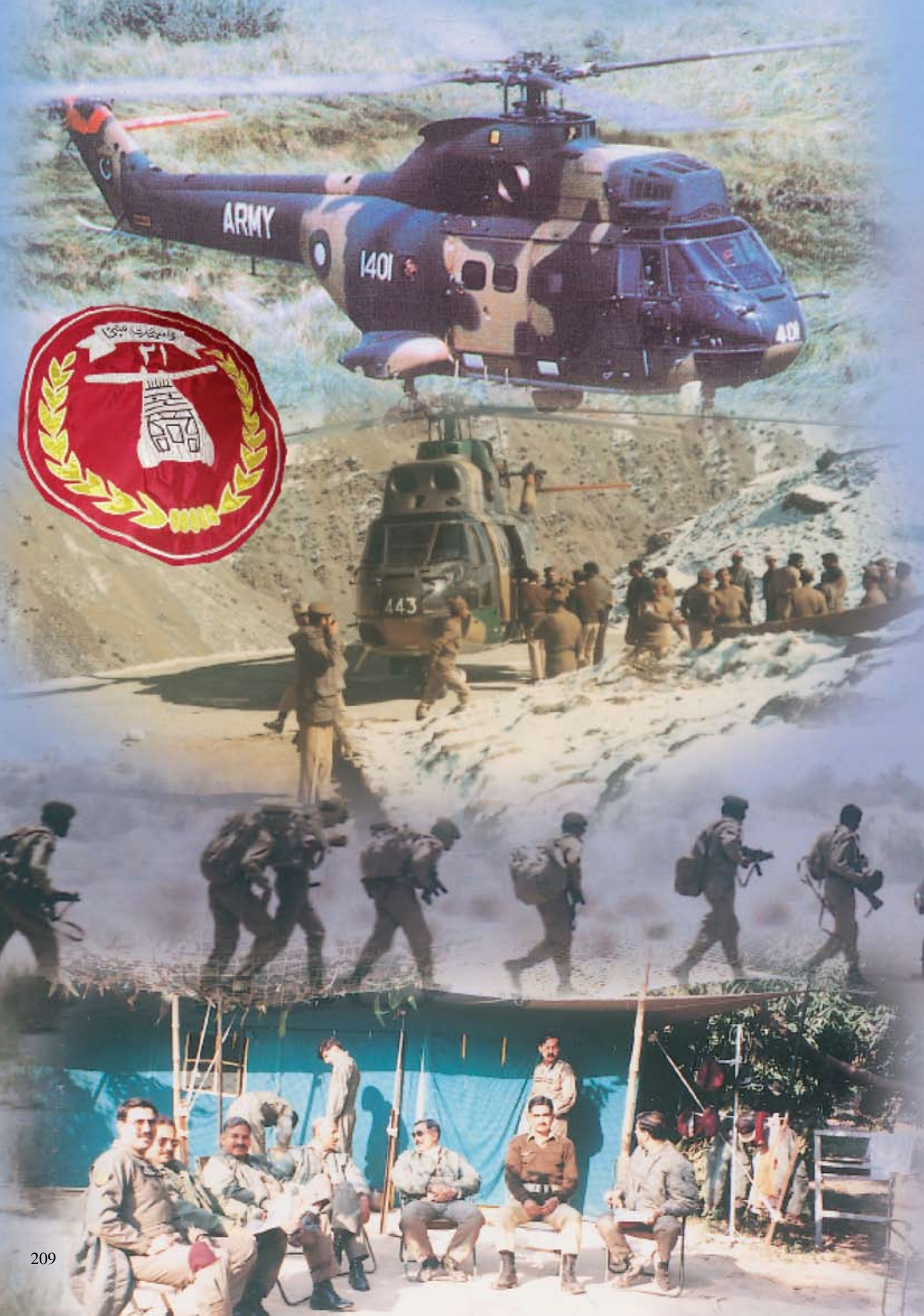
Army Aviation and SSG carried out a major exercise in area Fateh Jang/Jhelum. 24 and 25 Army Aviation Squadron along with the Puma pilots serving in the Combat Squadrons participated in this exercise, which involved dropping of SSG teams behind enemy lines at night. The exercise was carried out successfully under Brigadier Nauman Mehmood Commander Qasim Army Aviation Base. Aviation Engineering Group-III did a commendable job and made 22 Pumas available for this exercise.

Al Rahbar-I (27–30 October 1987)

This exercise was conducted in local dispersal area with an aim to exercise Multan Army Aviation Base and its under command units including the Combat Group. Exercise concept involved 1 & 2 Aviation FAAR Companies to provide prompt and sustained Aviation Support to the field formation. The exercise covered planning/conduct of heliborne operation, provisioning of attack helicopter, planning/conduct of attack helicopter escorts to the heliborne forces. It was a one sided Aviation exercise without troops in defensive operation of Corps.



Formation of MI-8 and Puma during Exercise Golden Eagle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PUMA'S EARLY YEARS





11 Army Aviation Squadron

11 Army Aviation Composite Squadron was raised on 1 October 1987 at Gujranwala. On raising squadron had three L-19 apart from five MFI-17.

Rachna Eagle may be having the smallest area of operation but never the less one of the most vital. Very rightly, the pilots of this squadrons are even familiar down to the each village and nullah of their area. Squadron's efforts of face lifting and improving the life quality of its personnels are worth praising.



12 Army Aviation Squadron

In 1988 raising of new corps necessitated raising of a new squadron, thus 12 Squadron was raised at Multan in two rooms. Initially two pilots were attached from 10 Squadron. Later a flight of 2 Squadron was rotated to provide the aviation support to the corps. Squadron despite being handicapped by the manpower conducted ten instrument flying courses under Major Rasheedi. Squadron moved to its present location on 30th June 1996 and was finally upgraded to full strength on 3 October 2001.



13 Army Aviation Squadron

Squadron was raised at Qasim Base, and placed under Headquarters Aviation Command. On 15 November 1989 squadron moved to Baghtanwala to participate in the Army exercise Zarb-e-Momin. Squadron had 21 aircraft and 20 pilots attached to it. Squadron is the first aviation squadron to induct and ferry Chinese twin engine aircraft Y-12. Squadron apart from its routine flying also conducts conversion cadres on twin engine.

A Great Loss

Army Aviators received the shocking news in the early morning hours of 7 November 1989, when the death of the Base Commander, Multan was known. Brigadier Nauman Mahmood, SI (M) ex Guides Cavalry, veteran flyer of both Wars, died after a sudden cardiac arrest. He was a kind human being, gentleman and a true professional who was deeply loved, respected and admired by all.



Nostalgic Visit

Major (Retired) Gerald 'Jerry' Leworthy the very first Army Flying Instructor of No. 1 Air OP Flight visited Dhamial in 1989 after a lapse of 39 years.



Major General Zafar Askree, General Officer Commanding Army Aviation presenting an insignia to Major Leworthy.

RAISING OF THE HEADQUARTERS ARMY AVIATION COMMAND

In 1982, Army Aviation had over 285 aircraft of 13 different origin, apart from a manpower of 8,000, all ranks. Brigadier Abdul Mokeet Khan (Director Aviation) made a presentation to the President of Pakistan. General Muhammad Zia Ul Haq. Requirement of raising a separate Army Aviation Command Headquarters was highlighted to overcome the current problems faced by the Army Aviation Corps namely lack of operational coordination/integration with the field formations, monitoring, training, managing flight safety and ensuring better maintenance and logistics.

A Board is Formed

The COAS and the President General Zia Ul Haq, gave principle approval for the Command Headquarters. It was, followed by forming of a board by the Chief of General Staff, Major General Mirza Aslam Baig on 29th November 1982. The board was tasked to validate a complete re-appraisal of the command structure of the Aviation Corps. The composition of the board was as under: -

Chairman	DCGS
Members	Director Aviation
	Commander Qasim Army Aviation Base
	Director O&M
	Representative of EME Directorate
Secretary	GSO-1 (b) Army Aviation Directorate

Brigadier Abdul Mokeet Khan as Director Army Aviation floated a statement of the case on 25th June 1984.

Interim Aviation Command

Pending the formal decision, an interim Aviation Command Headquarters was raised within General Headquarters. The existing directorate was converted into the interim headquarters in May 1985. Brigadier Abdul Mokeet Khan assumed the duties of Officiating General Officer Commanding Interim. Following officers were attached with the Headquarters Interim Army Aviation Command:-

Lieutenant Colonel Shah Alam	Officiating Colonel Staff
Lieutenant Colonel Humayum Malik	GSO-1 (Operations & Training)
Lieutenant Colonel Zaka Ullah Bhangoo	GSO-1 (Flight Safety)
Lieutenant Colonel Riaz Hussain	AA& QMG
Lieutenant Colonel Ijaz Ahmed Minhas	ADEME
Major Javed Aslam Tahir	GSO-2 (Operations & Training)

Selection of The Site for The Headquarters

Various possibilities were considered for the location of Command Headquarters. Efforts to get some accommodation on hire failed mainly due to non-availability of suitable location and prohibitive rental demands. However, some of the possible locations considered within the army accommodation were:-

Qasim Base

GHQ Lecture Hall

Few Buildings of 111 Brigade/MES Chowki near Westridge market.

Final Site

After lot of deliberations, discussions and visits to the sites by staff officers, the area near Westridge Market was selected as the site for the construction of building where HQ Army Aviation Command was to be housed. Quartering Directorate earmarked a sum of Rupees two Million on 13th July 1986 for the construction of Headquarters Army Aviation Command.

Formal Raising of Headquarters Army Aviation Command

On 13th November 1988 Ministry of Defence issued the government letter for formal raising of Headquarters Army Aviation Command. Officers posted to Headquarters Army Aviation command after its formal raising were Major General Syed Zafar Mehdi Askree as the First General Officer Commanding Army Aviation. General was already commanding 33 Infantry Division

On 21 December 1988 Colonel MTK Dotani took over as Colonel Staff.

On 22nd January 1989, Major Muhammad Ashraf Waraich reported as GSO-2 (Operations)

On 23rd June 1989, Lieutenant Colonel Javed Aslam Tahir reported as GSO-1 (Operations)

On 3rd March 1989, Lieutenant Colonel Mirza Iqbal Hussain was posted in as GSO-1 (Training)

On 9th March 1989, Captain. Muhammad Mujahid Asad was posted as GSO-3 (Operations).

On 13th December 1988, Major Javed Akhtar joined as Officer Commanding Field Security

On 10th July 1989, Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Bashir Baz reported as GSO-1 (Operations) alongwith Group Captain Muhammad Salim as Maintenance Advisor

Assisstant Director Ordnance Services(ADOS)Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Ahmed Qureshi and Deputy Assistant Adjutant General (DAAG) Major Muhammad Din were the last one who reported.

Dhamial Days

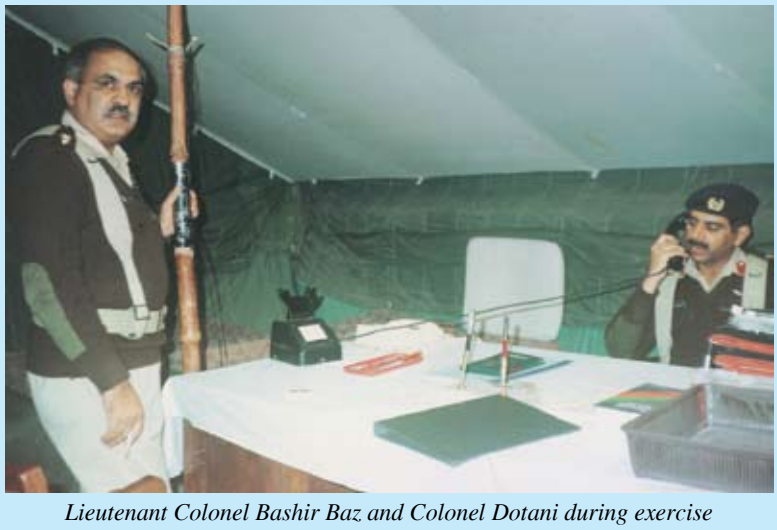
After formal raising the Command was initially established at Dhamial in the present day 399 Aviation Engineering hangar and later shifted to the present day COAS Flight offices. It was here that the first commanding officers conference was held on 29-30 October, 1989. Meanwhile search for appropriate place continued.



Qasim Base in 1989

Exercise Sky Guard

This was the first ever exercise conducted by Headquarters Army Aviation Command from 22-29 September, 1989. This exercise was planned to evaluate the Air Space Management Concept and to streamline its drills and procedures before the Exercise Zarb-e-Momin.



Lieutenant Colonel Bashir Baz and Colonel Dotani during exercise

RAISING OF



Headquarters Army Aviation Command at Dhamial - 1989

Foundation Stone. *On 4th April 1989, the GOC Major General Syed Zafar Mehdi Askree laid the foundation stone.*

Construction. *The construction work started during April 1989 and the Building was completed in May 1991 and this HQ started functioning from its present location. Major General Rahmat was the first occupant of the new setup.*





All serving and retired General Officers of Army Aviation with Staff Officers at Headquarters Army Aviation Command Westridge, 20th April 2007 From Left Seated Major Generals Ashraf, Razzaq, Rahmat, Askree, Javed, Kingrivi, Taqi, Arif, Nasir, (Azam not present).

Inauguration ceremony *was held on 31st December 1992, Lieutenant General Farrakh Khan was the Chief Guest.*





COMBAT GROUP



Colonel Riffat Beg Humayun

COMMANDERS





PIONEERS













ACQUIRING THE PUNCH

Genesis

In the wake of 1979 Russian invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan emerged as a front line state against the communist expansion. Europeans and the Americans were now trying to win over Pakistan to their side in this Great Game. American President Jimmy Carter (former peanut farmer) first offered $ 40 million of military and economic aid which was refused by President Zia-Ul-Haq terming this as 'Peanuts'. President Reagan however improved the offer by raising it to $3.2 billion. As Pakistan joined the US camp against Communist Block, it started drawing up a list of equipment to prepare itself.

Selection of Cobra Helicopter

The two important items on the Pakistan wish list were F-16 for PAF and Cobra helicopters for the army. There were at that time three schools of military thought. One lobbied for raising another armoured division, other supported multi-mission helicopter and then there was a strong side for a dedicated anti-tank platform. Army Aviation was with the last group spearheaded by Brigadier Mokeet. He prevailed upon others and managed to convince the decision makers in GHQ to opt for AH-1F dedicated anti-tank helicopter popularly known as Cobra.

The Contract

In the last week of 1981 a high ranking military team including technical and ordnance officers apart from army flyers arrived in America. They went around different training facilities and finalized the modalities of training. It was on the last day of 1981 when Major General Aslam Beg signed the contract on behalf of Pakistan Army. The deal was worth $300 million.

Pioneers

In the Year 1983, after the deal was finalized, paper work on organizing the Cobra Combat Group started. In later part of the year, pilots and maintenance crew started departing for USA for training. The first four batches consisting of two pilots each, were earmarked for instructor rating as well. These pilots did thirty additional hours on Cobra apart from the basic thirty hours. Major Ashraf Chaudhry and Major Issar Hussain Jafery were the first pair who besides doing Cobra conversion also got instructor rating and qualified as instrument rating examiner(IRE) as well. They were followed by Colonel Riffat Baig Humayun, Major Salim Akhund SJ, Major Hashim Khan, Major Asad Kamal, Major Wahid Khan and Major Shahid Kureshy. The first pair of test pilots were Major Shahid Jameel and Major Shaukat Ibrahim. Along with the pilots, the maintenance personnel comprising of officers, junior commissioned officers and non commissioned officers were also trained in USA. From this group, Lieutenant Colonel Nafees Ul Haq and Major Asif Javed Ghori led the way in the maintenance field of the armed helicopters.

Training Pattern in The USA

Training was conducted at US Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker, Alabama in three phase. The first phase was Rotary Wing Instrument Course of six weeks, consisting of 40-50 hours on simulators and 10 hours of actual flying on UH-1H. It should be noted that Pakistani pilots were given flying training or experience on UH-1H for 4-5 hours in Pakistan before they left for America. In this phase all instructors were civilians and the atmosphere was informal. Pilots had to log 1-2 hours of simulator flying daily and would be free by mid day. After the first phase, there was a break of one week and then six weeks Cobra conversion in second phase. In the last phase 'On Job Training' was carried on with an American Squadron for six weeks.

Fort Rucker Days

Lieutenant Colonel Riffat Beg Humayun, who later retired as a colonel, earned the honour of being the first Commander Combat Group. His views about training in America are.

"Initially Americans had suggested to run a conversion course exclusively for Pakistani students



but we wanted to have an integrated training with the Americans as there was much more to learn from old hands. At Fort Rucker initially myself and Major Akhund were the only two students in the American Regular Army Course. The next phase was actual conversion or basic course on Cobra. Fort Rucker Aviation School is a huge air base. Helicopters were parked in rows after rows. At school, our class was in a two storied building. The first two periods would be about morning brief, emergencies, technical or any other subject pertaining to the day. The major worry was the "Dog Tag" which was compulsory to be worn around the neck, any body failing to do so had to go back to his living area and get it back. Americans were very particular about this tag and no flying was allowed without this. In the classroom all instructors would also be present and one of the instructor would carry out the meteorological (Met) brief and Notams (Notice For Airmen). We both had one CW3 as our instructor and Captain Panny was incharge of the course.

On the very first day, we had the familiarization of helicopter and very next day the flying commenced. American's did not believe in mugging of checklist rather they performed the actions strictly according to the checklist. The training area was quite big and green, we had to do about 30 hours which included firing of rockets and cannon as well. We also practiced auto-rotations both by day and by night.

My check out was conducted by the standardization team instructor. This team basically keeps an eye on the flying training in American Army. The checkrider was a CW3 who walked in for the pre flight brief and opened the checklist. "First thing written is that I should introduce myself, okay my name is Brown, sir".

There was a break of 2-3 weeks after this phase and before the start of instructor rating course. By this time other Pakistani officers had also arrived in batches. We did not have any tandem seat helicopter in Pakistan, it was a new experience but the training pattern was similar to ours. I would fly mutual with my stick buddy and later with the instructor, who would at times simulate follies expected from a student. After the termination of the course there was a big ceremony where everybody wore their ceremonial dresses and we were handed over quite a few certificates. It seems American are quite fond of certificates and medals.

In the last stage of our course we were attached with an American Aviation Battalion. We went out for an out door exercise. As we approached the area we saw a tent and company commander told us that this was our living, where apart from us three, company sergeant was also sharing the tent. The reason given by the American was, "If I need him in the middle of the night for operational reasons, then it is handy to have him here, few minutes can make hell of difference in victory or defeat". There were no thunder boxes and open community area were used for this purposes. One day myself and Akhund decided to take a bath, we walked with our soap and towels toward the designated area, as we took the turn we were frozen because there was a "common shower" and two Americans were taking bath, both stark naked. We quietly walked back to our tent".



Eid Ul Azha & Halal Meat

Major General Taqi Rizvi (than a Major) recalls. "We had reservations regarding American food mainly due to 'Halal meat'. I used to cook not only for myself but also for Major Shafiq and Hadeed. On the occasion of Eid-Ul-Azha we planned to perform the ritual of sacrifice. We coordinated with the owner of a ranch almost 40-50 miles away. On Eid day we were ten officers who arrived at the ranch in three vehicles (we bought the cars there). We bought seven lambs for 20 $ a piece. When it came down to slaughtering, most of the budding combateers lost nerves. Consequently myself, Major Hadeed and Major Zulfiqar had to slaughter, skin and cut all the lambs. Ranch owner was quite perplexed by our enthusiasm and wisely sent his wife to the town."

On Job Training

As per the training schedule Pakistani aviators were supposed to remain attached with the American Army Aviation Squadrons for six weeks, Major Kaukab Aziz Bhatti (brigadier retired) was one such officer to undergo attachment. He narrates "The Air Cavalry Squadron, I was attached with, had recently undergone some organizational changes and thus had to be deployed in the field for evaluation process. The second in command of American squadron is called executive officer (XO). In the camp myself, XO, CO and one more officer shared the office area which consisted of a circular tent. I did not see the loading drills however the routine was quite tough. Mission planning was carried out a day earlier and next day the debriefing would be discussed. For food there was a central mess and everybody had to line up including the commanding officer. We would get the food in our mess tins and then consume it on wooden benches. In short there was very less class difference. The American officers and particularly the aviators are mixed breed of people. Some were very knowledgeable regarding the international affairs and some were totally blank in this field. Most of them had a tenure of duty abroad thus they were financially well off, however most were just meeting the ends. All in all it was a good experience".

Production Monitoring of Pak Cobras.

Cobra Helicopters for Pakistan were produced by Bell Helicopter Plant, Fort Worth, Texas, USA in two batches- 1st batch of ten helicopters in 1984/85 for which Lt. Col. Samee-ur-Rehman and Lt. Col. Mumtaz Siddique were deputed to oversee production and the second batch was supervised by Lt. Col. Ijaz Minhas and Maj. Asif Mukhtar - both teams stayed in Texas for almost a year.



Lt. Cols Samee & Mumtaz - the first production monitoring team.

The First Pair Reports For Duty At Multan

On 22nd August 1984 the first set of two Pakistani officers trained on Cobra helicopters at Fort Rucker Alabama reported back on duty at Multan Base, they were Lieutenant Colonel Riffat Beg Humayun and Major Saleem Akhund SJ. By the end of 1984, trained Cobra pilots in the absence of machine were posted for interim period with the cargo squadrons.

Arrival of Cobras, Dawn of a New Era

On 9th January 1985, the first batch of AH-1F Cobra helicopters arrived at Karachi by a special



Cobra Pilots with American Instructor after Eid Prayer at Fort Rucker - 1985



Pakistani Cobars under assembly in Texas, US Lt. Col. Ijaz Minhas and Capt. Asif Mukhtar supervising the production of second batch 1985-86.

Cobra Helicopters at Karachi Airport

chartered flight in a semi-knocked down (CKD) state. A team of four officers, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Nafees Ul Haq, four junior commissioned officers (JCO) and twenty non commissioned officers with assistance of a group of US experts, carried out the re-assembly. The task was accomplished in a PIA hangar at Karachi and flight testing was completed by the first week of February 1985. American team was led by Mr Sidney Lyons and other members included CW 4 Montelongo, Ryan and Harford. The first helicopter to be flight tested was No.786-007 on 31st January 1985. Combat Group Digest of Service records its appreciation to agencies for their help and assistance which includes PAF, Civil Aviation Authority, Pakistan International Airline, Central Ordnance Depot, 2 Armoured Brigade and 7 Aviation Squadron. On 15th February helicopters were shifted to the Faisal Base from where on 16th February 1985 all the choppers in two batches of five each were airborne at 0705hours proudly led by Colonel Riffat Beg Humayun, after refuelling at Sukkur, Cobras landed at Multan at 1300hours. A warm welcome headed by the Chief of General Staff Major General Aslam Beg, awaited them. Cobras initially flew a march past and then Colonel Beg was the first one to land, followed by Majors Hashim, George, Zulfiqar, Shahid Qureshy, and Shafique. Later General Beg sat in the cockpit and was briefed on the machine.

Raising of Squadrons





31 and 33 Squadrons were raised on 12th March 1985. Both squadrons remained under officiating command, 31 under Major Saleem Akhund and 33 under Major Asad Kamal. 33 Squadron Digest of Service records "On 25th April 1985 Sepoy Mohammad Shafiq and Clerk Mohabat Khan were the first soldiers to report to this new outfit. It was on 9th May 1985 that squadron moved to their present office accommodation next to the hangar which was previously with the ordnance branch". 31 Squadron by virtue of its numerical seniority got the ground floor and in Multan ground floor occupation is something worth cherishing. Soldiers living accommodation were in the U shape barrack next to the road.

Dawn Of a New Era



Cobra taking off from Karachi



Cobra landing at Multan

Arrival Of Cobras

at Multan, 0800GMT, 15th February 1985



Lieutenant General Mirza Aslam Beg shaking hands with Pilots (Saleem Akhund, Shahid Kureshi & Hashim)

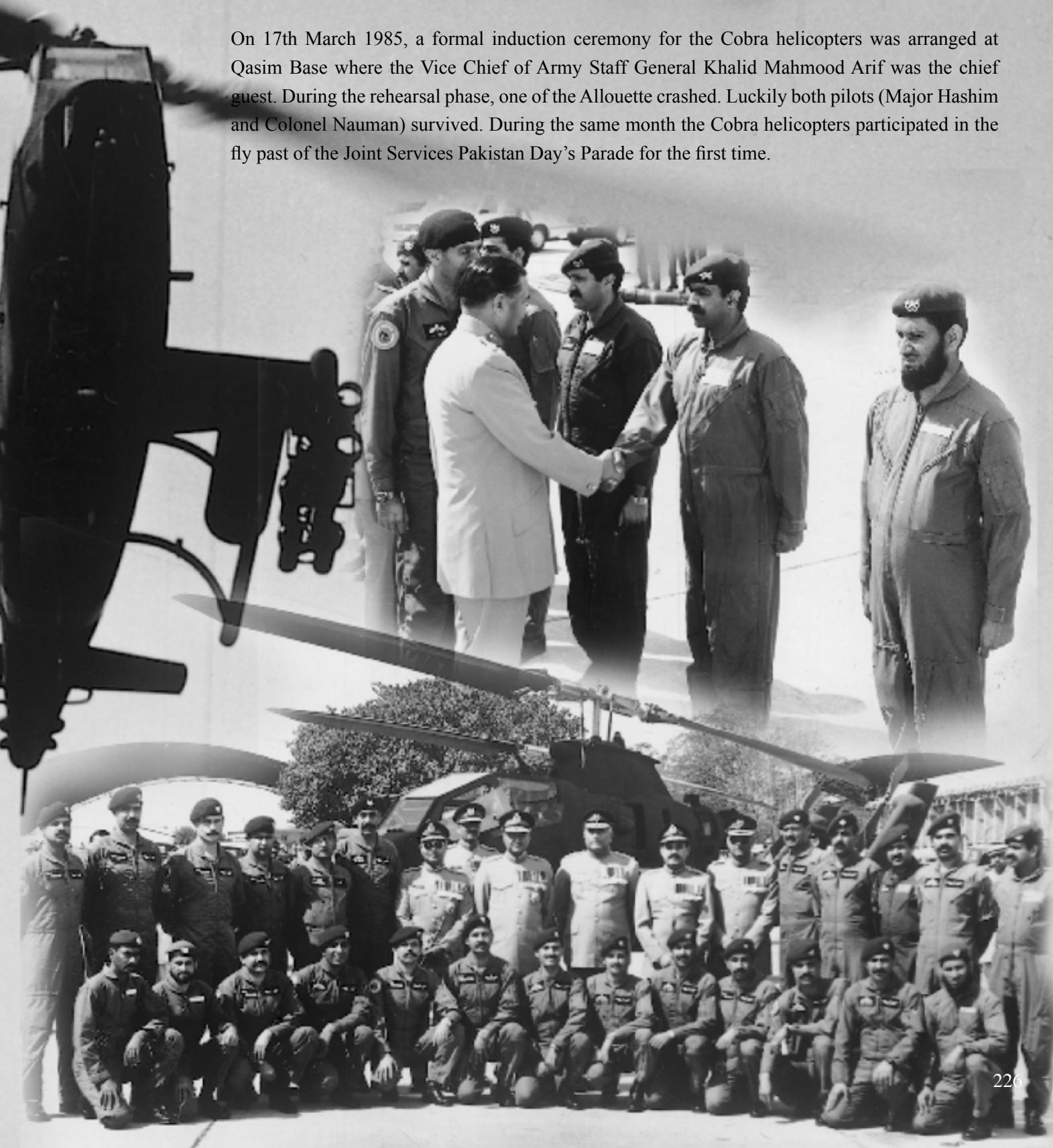
Induction Ceremony



17th March 1985



On 17th March 1985, a formal induction ceremony for the Cobra helicopters was arranged at Qasim Base where the Vice Chief of Army Staff General Khalid Mahmood Arif was the chief guest. During the rehearsal phase, one of the Allouette crashed. Luckily both pilots (Major Hashim and Colonel Nauman) survived. During the same month the Cobra helicopters participated in the fly past of the Joint Services Pakistan Day's Parade for the first time.



Simulator Training

In July 1985, simulator training started for the Cobra pilots at Hanau Germany. For next five years, this small town became a second home for aviators, till simulation was closed due to American embargo. Hanau is a small town about 30 minutes drive from Frankfurt. Germans by nature are friendly and helpful people in all aspects of life. Their precision and adherence to timings is legendary. Aviators had to make their own accommodation arrangements, one German hotel owned by a middle aged lady Ingrid Anna Mort was quite favourite. Lady was quite strict in discipline and offered only bed and breakfast but all in all she was well liked for her manners. There are unconfirmed reports of her not even charging the room rent from one particular aviator.

First Exercise

Between 21-23 April 1986, 33 Squadron moved out to Mailsi along with elements of 31 Squadron for the first ever exercise of Combat Group. “Squadron moved out to its first tactical exercise, and had to establish a camp twice in those two days. Every one put up a very good show, troops enjoyed sandstorm for about five hours. All their tents were affected except ‘Langar’. The field- mess was also put to test as it was catering for well over thirty officers”. Records 33 Squadron Digest of Service.

A US contingent known as the Technical Assistance Field Team(TAFT), under Major Panky of US Army Aviation, arrived to stay for about a year to provide the required assistance in the field of flying and maintenance. This team was accommodated in five bungalows at Multan Cantonment. Brigadier Sirhindi then major was the liaison officer with them. According to him “In America we had very good relationship with these instructors, they would invite us at their homes and picnics etc. Now we wanted to reciprocate their hospitality but were under the vigil of intelligence setup which was there for their protection. During working hours it was comfortable as they would remain with us in the squadron but to visit them afterwards was cumbersome. Cobra was a big sensation and intelligence reports indicated that Indians were eager to know more about this machine. They had launched female agents for this purpose, thus intelligence and security was high”.



From Left Colonel Rahmat, Major General Askari, Colonel Riffat and Lieutenant Colonel Ashraf



The TAFT training schedule was on the similar lines as in USA. The flying crew would come early in the morning at 0600hours and after a thorough morning brief of one hour, start flying at 0700hours. The training crew was kept free from administrative duties and would pack up by 1200hours. This one year training was extremely beneficial in evolving combat drills and procedures.

Trials of Scout Helicopters, 1-14 July 1985

Three Scout helicopters namely BO-105, Bell 406 and Hughes 530-MF were brought to Pakistan. Army was looking for a suitable "Scout Helicopter" for Cobras and simultaneously hunting for a helicopter which can look after the operational requirement in Siachen Glacier as well. If one helicopter can do both the jobs, that would be an icing on the cake. Responding to the General Service Requirement (GSR) multiple companies entered the field and after short listing, one German and two American companies were invited. The team detailed to evaluate these helicopters comprised of following officers:-

Brigadier Sajjad Ahmed Nazim	Officer In Charge Trials
Lieutenant Colonel Shah Alam	Evaluation Team Leader
Lieutenant Colonel Mumtaz Siddiq	Member Technical
Major Pervaiz Iqbal	Member Flying
Major Iqbal Kashmiri	Member Flying
Major Arif Rasul Qureshi	Member Flying

These helicopters arrived in Pakistan (Karachi) between 30th June and 1st July 1985 and were flown to Multan on 3rd July 1985. Later on Gazelle helicopter also joined in. Lieutenant Colonel Shah Alam, the team leader who had witnessed Gazelle trials and had flown this machine in Saudi Arabia in July 1984, utilized his previous knowledge of the machine to test and complete the comparative assessment. It was unfortunate that during the course of these trials one of the helicopters namely BO-105, crashed and burnt out at Gilgit.

First Firing

First aerial firing of AH-IF in Pakistan was carried at Muzzaffargarh Ranges between 13th November – 6th December 1985. Exclusive firing range was selected for this purpose. There were four Cobras who took part in this firing, two each from each squadron. The first tube launched optically tracked wire guided(TOW) missile was launched by the following crew of 33 Squadron:-

Major Wahid Khan	Pilot
Captain Zafar Ahmed Saleem	Gunner

Every body held up their breath till the missile blew up the target, it hit the bull.



Major Wahid Khan *Capt Zafar Saleem*

Arrival of Second Batch of Cobra Helicopters (October 1986)

The second batch of ten Cobra helicopters arrived at Karachi in semi knocked down(SKD) condition. After assembly by the team headed by Lieutenant Colonel Asif Javed Ghori, helicopters were ferried to Multan in two batches on 10th and 18th October 1986, respectively. This time ferry team consisted mainly of 31 Squadron pilots.



Lt. Col. Asif Ghori

General Zia Ul Haq

Group in its infancy was visited by a large number of senior officers and dignitaries. Among them was the then CGS Pakistan Army, Lieutenant General Muhammad Safdar, who was briefed about the helicopter after which the group commander, Colonel Riffat Beg Humayun took him up and demonstrated the capabilities of the machine.

In December 1987, the Combat Group Headquarters, 31 Combat Squadron supported by the Maintenance element and the Forward Area Arming and Refuelling (FAAR) Company took part in a major exercise 'Knight Rider' of the Ist Armoured Division. Tactical deployment was resorted to and a large number of missions were undertaken leading up to the main exercise in which the Aviation Combat elements used the FAARP Company for its refuelling and simulated rearming. The exercise was in two distinct halves. In the first half the COAS Pakistan Army, General Zia Ul Haq, was shown the tank movement from an aero-scout (Jet Ranger) while during the second half he was taken up in a Cobra helicopter. During both halves of the exercise the Commander Combat Group, Colonel Riffat Beg Humayun, piloted the COAS.



Colonel Ashraf explaining Cobra Systems through the checklist to General Zia. Painting made by Major Naeem Khattak

Brass Tacks

The year 1987 also saw the largest Indian exercise 'Brass Tacks' near Pakistan borders. It was conceived by General Sunder Jee, the Indian Army Chief. Quick mobilization by Pakistan Army followed by the famous "Cricket diplomacy" offset the danger temporarily. Aviation Combat Group readily adjusted to the new concept of Air-Land Operations, The role of Combat Group stood prominent as firepower and manoeuvre was the primary means to challenge and fight the enemy.



Cobras - 1987

First Accident

On 31st December 1988, AH-1F # 020 of 33 Aviation Combat Squadron, piloted by Captain Nayyer Iqbal and



Major Mahmood Ul Hassan crashed in the training area, while carrying out autorotation. Miraculously both the pilots suffered no major injuries but the helicopter was damaged extensively. Well-earned credit must be given to the Engineering Group for rebuilding the smashed attack helicopter with intensive care and single-minded effort. It took some time but the mission was accomplished with ease and efficiency. To show the immense confidence in his engineering team, the rebuilt Cobra was test flown in 1991 by none other than the incumbent commander of the Combat Group, Colonel Ashraf Chaudhry. The first ground accident also occurred in the same period when towing tractor driver accidentally put the reverse gear instead of forward gear.

Aero Scouts

In February 1989, an American Mobile Training Team headed by Major Chappel alongwith CW4 Terry Marc and CW4 Anderson, arrived at Multan. The purpose was to train Aero-Scout pilots for the Combat Group. These pilots were selected for scout training in early 1987 and 1988 and were given initial training on Jet Ranger helicopters at Qasim Base and later on were posted back to the fixed wing squadrons. They finally got the chance to complete the training in 1989, after which they were posted to the combat squadrons. These specially trained aviators go a long way in helping and guiding the employment of Cobra in battle for optimum results. Two batches were trained, out of the sixteen officers earmarked for this training, only one did not make it i.e. Major Khalid Bin Fareed, however his namesake Major Khalid stood first in the course. To impart this skill in future, without outside help, three instructors namely Major Niaz, Major Zafar Iqbal Niazi and Major Wahid Khan were given the instructor rating.

Jordan

In October 1988, Colonel Syed Sajid Ali, alongwith Lieutenant Colonel Ashraf Chaudhry and Lieutenant Colonel Asif Javed Ghori visited Jordan with an aim to see the Jordanian way of handling their Cobra helicopters and to learn from their experience. This was in response to an earlier visit of a Jordanian delegation to Pakistan in March 1987, for the same purpose. The visit further improved the existing cordial ties and it was decided to establish a formal affiliation between the units of attack helicopters of the two countries. 31 Army Aviation Combat Squadron of Pakistan Army Aviation and No.10 Squadron Royal Jordanian Air Force were selected for tying this knot.



Col. Sajid Ali

Native Cobras

When the First Cobra pilots came back from USA, they had done only 30 hours flying and remained de-current for over a year before the first of Cobras arrived along with American instructors pilots (IP). These IPs gave currency to the own instructors who in turn made other pilots current. The first Cobra Conversion Course (CQC) within Pakistan was run in 1990 converting four aviators, namely Major Tahir Akram, Major Kayani, Major Kundi and Major Imtiaz Anjum. These officers were later tagged as “Native Cobras”.

Pressler Amendment

At the close of decade the World in general and Pakistan in particular underwent dramatic changes whose vibrations are still being felt. In 1988 President General Zia was killed in an air crash at Bahawalpur, resulting in political changes which brought Mrs Benazir Bhutto as the first ever female Prime Minister of not only Pakistan but of Muslim World. When she went on her first visit to America, she signed what was at that time considered to be the biggest arms deal in the history of Pakistan. It included another 20 Cobras for Army Aviation, unfortunately Americans later on imposed sanctions in the form of Presseler Amendment which not only put this newly agreed arms deal into forlorn but also put an end to Cobra conversion and simulator training abroad.

Years later, on a holiday, Major Mirza Aslam landed near Samundri, to drop Major Hameed. Unluckily he transmitted on Guard Frequency which was monitored by the American satellite and through American Military Attaché, Pentagon informed out of goodwill, to General Headquarters about this emergency. When Major Aslam landed back at Multan, almost whole base was there to receive him. This affair is known as ‘Clinton-Pressler’ saga.

From the Album



Cobra Pilots during exercise Knight Rider, November 1987



Prime Minister Junejo with the Cobra of 31 Squadron, 2nd December 1986



Cobra Pilots at Muzaffargarh Ranges, 1987



Cobras waiting for Indian Armour 'Brass Tack' - 1987

EXERCISE ZARB-E-MOMIN

Headquarters Army Aviation Base Multan was designated as 66 Aviation Brigade and grouped with 11 Corps for this exercise. The Base Headquarters along with 21 Army Aviation Squadron, 31 Army Aviation Combat Squadron, 3 Army Aviation FAAR Company, 352 Aviation Field Supply Platoon and Maintenance wings ex Aviation Engineering Group-III and Group-IV were concentrated in area Pir Mahal (West of Kamalia) in November 1989. 66 Aviation Brigade was tasked to support operations of 18 Blue land Corps. A flight ex 31 Army Aviation Squadron along with 1 Army Aviation FAAR Company was detached to support 4 Corps (Foxland) at Bhakkar. Night operations were also conducted by 21 Army Aviation Squadron to drop SSG elements behind enemy lines. Brigadier Rahmat who was performing the duties of Director Aviation met a ground accident when the stove in his tent burst while he was adjusting its filament. He was engulfed in flames and remained hospitalized for over six weeks. Aviation Engineering Group-III made eighteen Puma helicopters along with all Cobras and several Jet Ranger helicopters serviceable for this exercise.



Major General Zafar Mehdi Askree briefing the media.



Commanding Officers preparing for the exercise.

Headquarters Army Aviation Combat Group was designated as 88 Aviation Combat Brigade, comprising 33 Army Aviation Squadron, Headquarters Aviation Engineering Group-IV, No 2 Combat Maintenance Wing, 2 Army Aviation FAAR Company and 351 Aviation Field Supply Platoon. The Group was tasked to support operations of the main effort of Blue Land. The Group was detached from Multan Army Aviation Base and thus located in enemy area Bandial/Adhi Sargal for subject exercise.



Army Pilots during Exercise "Zarb-e-Momin"



From Right in the front. Lieutenant Colonels Azam and Javed, both later commanded Army Aviation.



‘Zarb-e-Momin’ 1989



The Gulf Crisis - 1991

The year 1991 was characterized with the continued shortage of training hours in the backdrop of the Gulf War and the shortage of spares for US origin helicopters. Therefore, the year was largely spent in the indoor activities. Restriction on training hours and low serviceability of Cobra helicopters badly affected training of pilots specially the combat pilots. Restrictions on TOW enforced by the GHQ resulted into a precarious situation, where Cobra pilots inducted after year 1987 had no experience of the actual TOW firing. It was an alarming state for the combat squadrons.

Somalia - 1994

Somalia, the horn of Africa, became the focal point of the UN operations from September 1992, due to an ongoing civil war resulting in indiscriminate killing of thousands of Somalis. Responding to the UN call, Pakistan sent a brigade size force of ground troops to Somalia. In an encounter, on 5th June 1993 twenty three Pakistani peacekeepers were killed in an ambush followed by shooting down of two American Black-Hawk gunships. Therefore it was decided to have a combat squadron from Pakistan Army Aviation.

After completing formalities within the country, the advance party consisting of eleven officers and 146 other ranks left Rawalpindi on 4th March 1994 for Mogadishu via Dijibouti on a special UN flight. They were seen off by Major General Rahmat Ullah (General Officer Commanding Army Aviation) and other senior officers. On the same day a US Mobile Training Team (MTT) also went into position for necessary training even before the arrival of Pakistani Advance Party. The flying training commenced on 7th March 1994 and six pilots of Advance Party were trained by the US MTT and remaining pilots were trained by Pakistani instructors. The maintenance training was also imparted by the US experts on the aircraft and armament systems to the technicians of the advance party.



Major General Rahmat meeting the departing contingent



First Mission

On 8th March 1994, own pilots undergoing conversion training were being flown on an area-familiarization sortie in a UH-60 (Black Hawk) helicopter around Mogadishu city. This by chance provided the first feel of impending tasks when the mission was abruptly converted into an aerial support sortie to rescue a truck being hijacked by Somali gunmen. Subsequently the pilots of the advance party flew the first mission on 9th March with the MTT instructors and first night mission was undertaken on 10th March. On 14th March, under-training pilots came under indiscriminate Somali fire while returning to the home base. Only one engine was damaged with no other casualty. On 18th March, the graduation ceremony of flying and technical trainees was held in the US camp and on 25th March, first operational mission was undertaken by Pakistani pilots after the withdrawal of US troops.

The main body of Combat Group with 17 officers and 244 other ranks left Rawalpindi for Mogadishu on 26th March. The transition training of pilots and maintenance technicians commenced on 27th March. Sufficient practice was given in aerial firing. In this regard a special mention must be made about the dedicated efforts made be Lieutenant Colonels Arshad Farooq and Dawood Ahmed, the two instructor pilots converted by the American MTT, had to fly almost non-stop to accomplish the assigned task of making all other pilots operational within ten days of their arrival.

Kiowa

In April, five OH-58C Kiowa scout helicopters were acquired on lease by the UN from USA for increasing the daylight scout and reconnaissance capability of the UN troops. The helicopters were to be airlifted from Ramstien Air Base in Germany to Mogadishu after initial training of instructor pilots and maintenance team in Germany. To undertake this additional responsibility, ten scout pilots with the required team of technicians joined the combat group on 2nd and 3rd May by special UN flight. Scout pilots included Majors Razaq Chaudhry, Muhammad Tahir Raja, Tariq Saleem Khan, Syed Tassalimoon Tauqir, Muzzamil Tajmmul, Mirza Muhammad Aslam, Basharat Aman and Captain Anjum Hussain. Originally the training was scheduled from 14th June to 7th July in Germany. But due to certain sensitive issues, it could not be under taken and the UN decided to organize it at Mogadishu under a civilian contractor. On 30th August, three Pakistani pilots started their training and also qualified as instructor pilots, They later converted seven other pilots and within ten days all pilots became proficient to carry out mission on this new type of helicopter. Their task was clearance of main supply routes, keeping an eye on suspected hostile groups and acting as eyes and ears of the gunship in addition to liaison functions.

Assistance for Moroccan Troops

On 10 April, a combat mission was sent to Marka to help Moroccan troops busy in controlling the law and order situation in the city. Arrival of the armed helicopters had an instantaneous effect and the situation was restored to normal in no time.

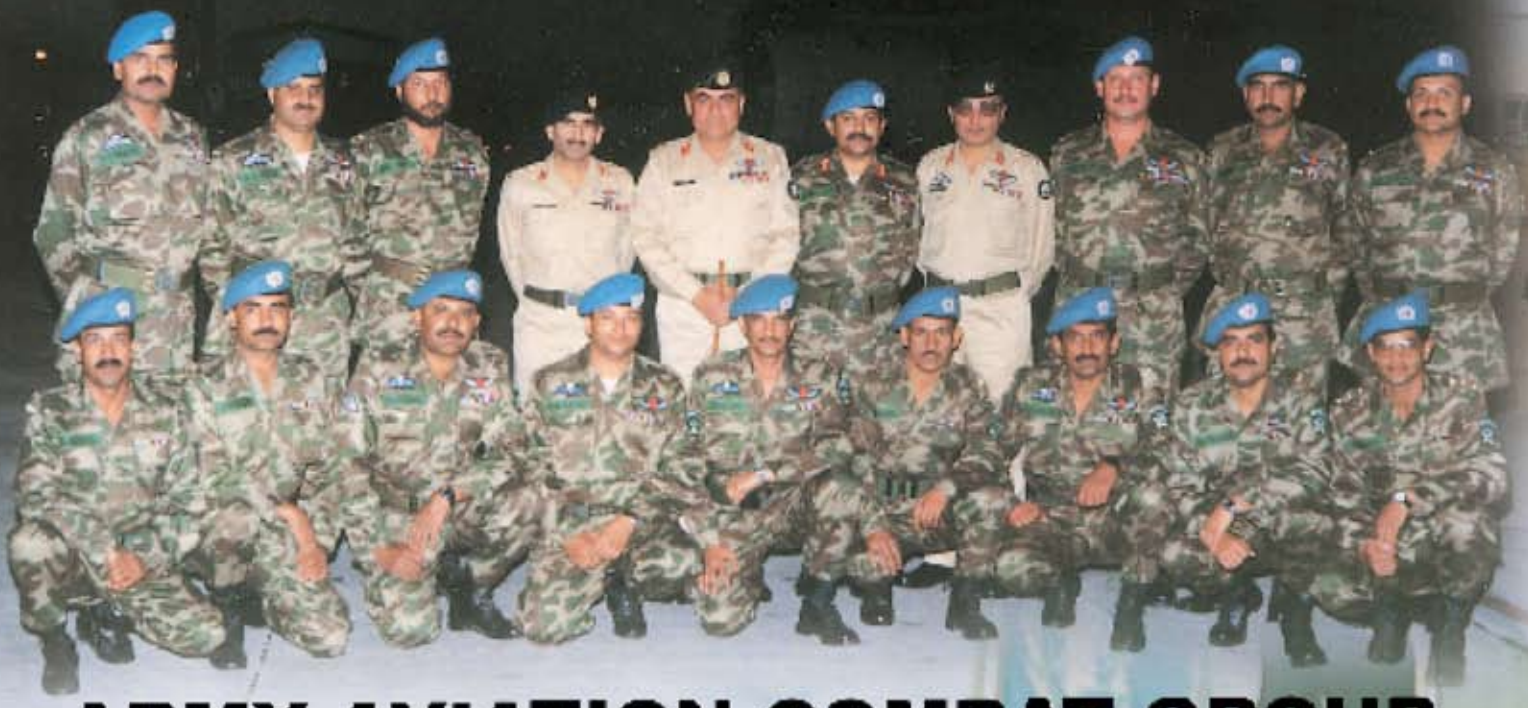
On 25 May, a UN Bell-212 forced-landed in an area of hostile Somalis which could have resulted in an ugly situation if not reacted swiftly. Helicopters of the Combat Group moved quickly and cordoned off the area till the technicians repaired the fault on the ground and then all returned safely together.

Zimbabwean need Assistance

On 9th September, the Combat Group helped to extricate a battalion of Zimbabwe which was encircled by hostile militia near Balad while in the process of undertaking its withdrawal to Mogadishu. The withdrawal was accomplished without any casualty to men or equipment under the protective cover of the Cobras.

First Blood

On 21st September, two Cobras and two Scouts of the Combat Group were given the task to locate and destroy the militia jeeps mounted with anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons which had earlier fired at a Pakistani convoy in Mogadishu City. The mission was successfully completed and one jeep was destroyed and other damaged. This was the first engagement carried out by Cobras.



ARMY AVIATION COMBAT GROUP IN SOMALIA - 1994







Air Wolves & First Indian Bihar Regiment

On 19th April 1994, 33 Army Aviation Combat Squadron was assigned the responsibility to support Indian Contingent south west of Mogadishu for rescue of seven UNHCR personnel held as hostages by Somalians. Two AH-IS helicopters participated in the operation. Operation was planned in the Indian First Bihar Regiment operations room at Kismayo. The Cobras proceeded on site and cleared the area. On clearance by the Cobras, four Bell 212 helicopters with Bihar Regiment troops landed outside the UNHCR compound and rescued the seven UNHCR personnel, while the Cobras provided air cover. Operation lasted for over 2 hours. During this mission the Cobras flown by own pilots crossed the Equator for the first time. From dawn to dusk the cobras flew nine hours in one day.

Another mission was flown to support Indians on 22nd August 1994, who were ambushed near Bald Eagle, resulting in death of nine Indian soldiers. Indians had gone to rescue some personnel but they themselves became the prey to the ambush. Indians later gave SOS message. The operation was planned in detail with the Indian force. Two Cobras were detailed to cordon the area near the ambush site, search and destroy the hostile militia vehicles. Cobras, with their weapons blazing, went in first and cleared the area, thereby making it possible for two other UN helicopters to land in the compound of UNHCR building and complete the rescue operation. As a result four Somali gunmen along with one 23 mm ack ack gun were captured. Lieutenant Colonel Jamshed Bajwa narrates “Due to low fuel we had to make a landing in the Indian camp. They were quite hospitable and we had lunch with them. It came as a surprise when their commanding officer a Jat was from my village. His family had migrated in 1947”.

Again, on 23 September 1994, a Panzer Formation of three Cobras and two OH-58C was tasked to extricate a Botswanian contingent. The UNOSOM had planned the refuelling at Badoa. Panzer formation completed its task and successfully extricated the besieged Botswana troops, on their way back formation again landed at Badoa for refuelling. The Indian Contingent Commander who was at the strip later invited all Pakistani pilots for a cup of tea in his camp. Major Mirza Aslam was one of the pilot he recalls “Indians had intentionally selected the movie ‘1942 a love story’ a movie with a united India as the theme. As it was Assar time, thus I gave the Azzan in the open and all Pakistani pilots offered their prayers. One of the Indian Muslim officer later confessed that it was the first time that Azzan has been given in their camp. Later we took off but as luck would have it my Cobra developed a fault and I had to land back at the Indian camp, thus I was lucky that I gave three more Azzans in their camp. During Fajar prayers the whole Indian night guard got into panic shouting “guard shoo”(guard get alert) thinking it as an attack by the Somalians”.

Bangladeshi Troops - 1995

Our cobras were employed on 6 December 1994 to extricate a Bangladeshi Infantry Company from Afgooye. This company was made hostage by Somalian war lord Mikitia. Rescue operation was executed early in the morning. Cobras fired 4500 rounds, two Somalian tanks were destroyed and area was secured. On first February 1995, withdrawal of own 4 Sindh and 19 Lancer Regiments were given Cobra cover from Mogadishu city to airport.

Last Mission

On 26th February 1995, last mission was flown over Mogadishu by Colonel Akhund and Lieutenant Colonel Hashim Khan on a OH-58 along with Major Mahmood Ahmed, Captain Anjum, Major Tehseen and Major Raza.

The entire Combat Group operated for over a year under extremely hostile conditions and returned to Pakistan in March 1995. During this period some pilots were rotated after completing six months of tenure but Colonel Salim Akhund stayed there for the entire duration. In the first six months more than 1300 hours were flown which included 400 hours of training as well. Subsequently in the remaining period over 1250 hours were flown mostly operational. Neighbouring Kenyan city of Nairobi was earmarked as the rest and recreation centre. UN flights used to take the troops for such purpose. To sum up the contribution of this group, it would suffice to quote a recorded remark of General Aboo Samah, the commander of UN force, “The task given is immense but the Combat Group has done a wonderful job to support the UN mission”.

Pakistan-Jordan Affiliation Ceremony

Keeping in view the existing brotherly relations between the two Muslim countries, it was decided to establish a board of mutual cooperation between the Attack Helicopter units of both the countries. For this, a Jordanian delegation visited Pakistan in March 1987. This was reciprocated by a delegation from Pakistan Army Aviation in September 1988. During these visits, it was decided to affiliate one attack helicopter unit of each country with the other. 31 Army Aviation Combat Squadron was chosen from Pakistan for this affiliation, while from Jordan it was 10 Attack Helicopter Squadron of Royal Jordanian Air Force.

To formalize the affiliation between these two elite squadrons, a Pakistani delegation visited Jordan in June 1994. Major General Rahmat Ullah, then GOC Pakistan Army Aviation led along with Lieutenant Colonel Kaukab Aziz Bhatti, the commanding officer of 31 Squadron, Captain Muhammad Nabeel Khan the adjutant and Captain Hassan Sikandar Rana, the maintenance officer of the unit. An impressive parade was held at Amman Air force Base and Lieutenant Colonel Kaukab presented the Regimental Colour to his Jordanian counter part. Prince Abdullah now the King, Commander Special Forces Jordan was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

In order to complete the link in this chain of events, a Jordanian delegation visited Pakistan for presenting the Regimental Colour of No. 10 RJAF Squadron to 31 Army Aviation Combat Squadron. The delegation consisted of the following members :-

Brigadier General Sameh Sulieman Hajjat	Leader of Delegation
Major Zaid S. Ayad	Commanding Officer
Major Muhammad Yousaf. F. Ibrahim	Second In Command
Major Yousif A. Shehadeh	Adjutant
Captain Muhammad Ali Kaed	Staff Officer to the Leader
First Lieutenant Taha.M. Mushtaq	Maintenance Officer



Major General Rahmat with Jordanian Crown Prince (Now King) Abdullah. Major Nabeel is also standing behind the General - 1994


HANGAR
I





COLOUR PRESENTATION

24th February 1997 was a momentous day in the history of Army Aviation Combat Group. An impressive ceremony was arranged for the Regimental Colour presentation by 10 RJAF Squadron to 31 Army Aviation Squadron. It was also a unique honour for 31 Army Aviation Squadron to become the only unit of Army Aviation which was granted permission to carry the National Standard and Regimental Colours. Lieutenant General Iftikhar Ali Khan, the CGS was the chief guest on this historic event. The parade was led by Major Javed Iqbal, while the colour party was led by Captain Rana Ghulam Abbas. During the parade, Major Zaid. S. Ayad presented the Regimental Colour of his squadron to Lieutenant Colonel Sayed Ali, who graciously accepted the same. The ceremony was crowned by the fly past of a combat flight composed of two scout and three Cobra helicopters. This was led by Major Mehmood of 33 Army Aviation Squadron.



Cobra Attains Night Strike Capability - 2002

In 1997, America released some equipment for Cobras, under Brown Amendment. The most important item was the C-Nite kits. Twenty seven of these kits when later received were without any proper literature and moreover only eight telescopic sights had been modified with C-Nite Forward looking Infra Red Radar(FLIR). These kits were vital to attain the capability of firing at night. Modification process started on 11th February 1998 and after years of hard work and ingenuity of mind from all concerned, the very capability was achieved on 28th February 2002. On 27th February, a night prior to final demonstration, a full dress rehearsal was arranged at Khudai Ranges all preparations were good except the firing result. Out of four only one TOW hit the target. This last minute performance shocked everyone as VCOAS (Gen. Yousaf) and 16 other senior officers of army were to witness it. Consequently complete headquarters alongwith GOC, Maj. Gen. Azam remained awake and tense till small hours of the morning while technicians worked on the C-Nite system of Cobras. Problems were mainly due to bore sighting of the C-Nite which were duly resolved.

On 28th February at 1730hours before the arrival of guests the weather started getting bad to worst with every passing moment and started drizzling. However, keeping in view the historic value of the moment and proficiency level of his pilots, commander combat group decided that 'demo' will continue. Combat Group digest of service records "every passing moment was increasing the heart beat of Combat pilots, everyone was sitting finger crossed and gazing in the dark, only helicopter sound was audible. Initially three cobras displayed nap of earth flying with NVGs, next came cannon firing which made the night colourful with the tracers drawing beautiful lines in the pitch dark night and bursting on impact like fire works. One cobra got disoriented and came very close to the stand. Then came the final moment, targets were made visible by hurricane lamps. The first TOW was fired by Lieutenant Colonel Wasim Akhtar Malik, the bulls eye impact was greeted by a loud applause and Nara-e-Takbeer. With each hit the emotions of combat pilots and all present were getting more and more visible, when all four hits were achieved the VCOAS and other senior officers congratulated everyone and a festive and jubilant mood prevailed. Same night it was flashed across all TV channels and a strong message was conveyed across the border".



Vice Chief of the Army Staff General Yousaf being briefed by GOC Maj. Gen. Azam during the historic first ever Night Firing of Cobra Halicopters. Lt. Gen. Amjad, Brig. Taqi Naseer Rizvi, Comd. Cbt-Gp, Lt, Gen Mushtaq and Lt, Gen Shahid Aziz, CGS can also be seen



This was achieved through the hard work put in by joint collaboration of AWC, 509 Electrical & Mechanical Workshop and 499 Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Battalion. Night Vision Goggle specially designed for the aviators along with compatible helmets were procured for combat pilots. The Night Vision Goggle (A) are portable self contained electro optical device that provides night vision capability to aircrew. Despite known constraint, effective training was imparted to achieve the desired results.
The crew combination on this historic demonstration was

Lieutenant Colonel Waseem Akhtar Malik, Lieutenant Colonel Anjum Irshad Khan, Major Mohsan Khan Major Nabeel Khan, Major Naeem Khattak, Major Tehseen Khan, Major Raza Farooq and Captain Hamid Ali

Fighting Tenacity

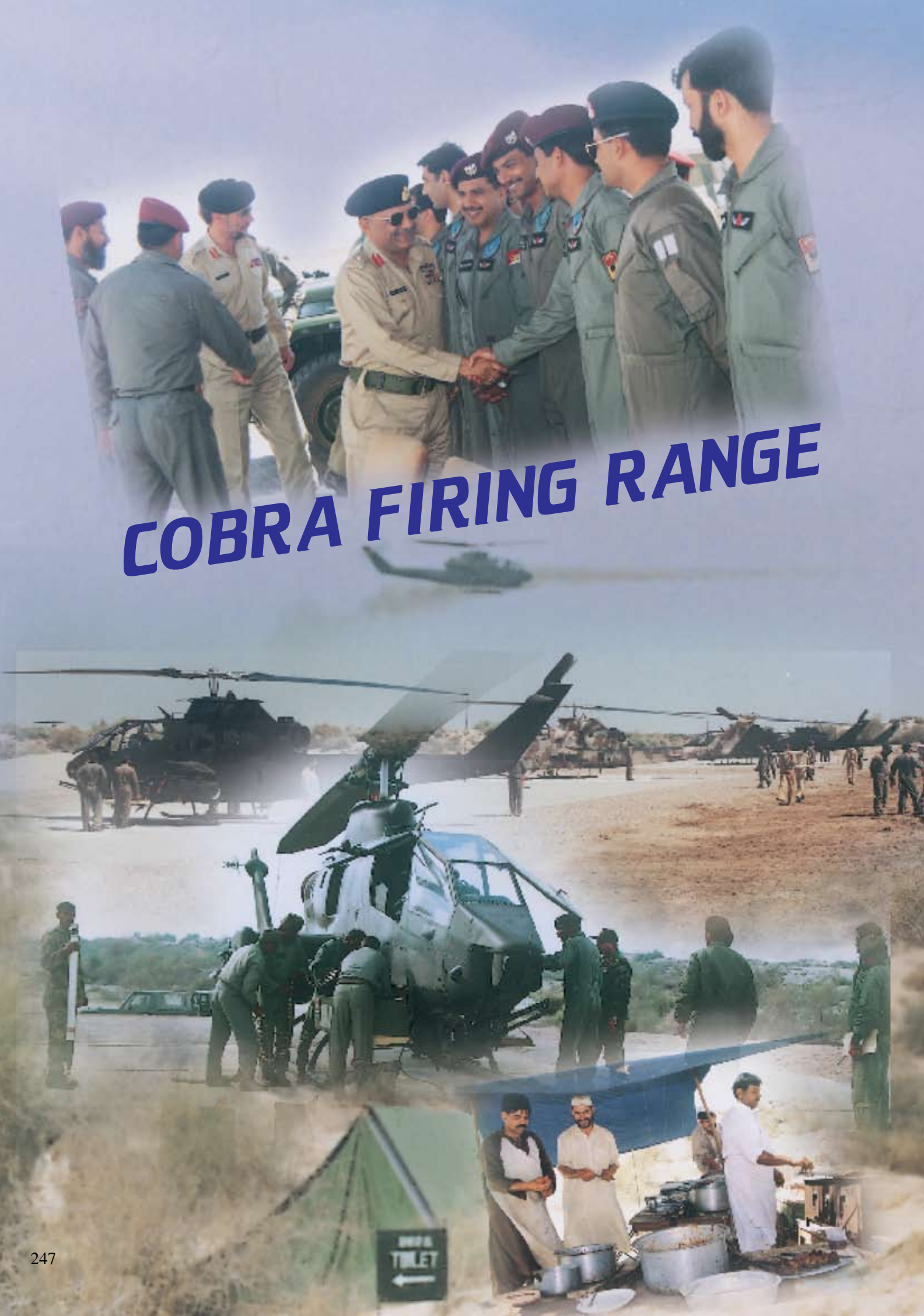
Combat Group has fighting tenacity in all spheres of military life. Both combat squadrons from day one made each other their nemesis. Any thing which 31 or 33 does the other follows with a spirit to do it better. One of the historical football match was played between two squadrons in 1991 which even surpassed the FA Cup in the spirit displayed, however the enthusiasm was a bit too much for the military norms and as a result both squadrons were put on the route march for a week. Again in 1999 another historic basket ball match took place between Combat Group and Qasim Base. Words cannot express the fervour and charged atmosphere that persisted that evening. Combat Group had to win to stay in line for the trophy but were loosing despite having employed a civilian coach and such were their tactics that match had to be postponed till next day due to bad light. It was one of the longest basketball match ever played not only in the history of Army Aviation but also in army as a whole. Eventually Combat Group lost. In 2002 the football finale involving combat elements against EME (which brings the best out of Cobras) resulted with a warning for the commanding officer. Whether it is sports, firing or quality of life the competition goes on between these two fine out fits. Interestingly the pilots revolved around both squadrons as cobra pilots are seldom posted out of the Combat Group. Once Major Tughril Bashir was posted from 31 Squadron to 33 Squadron he protested to the highest pedestal for this posting although it just involved moving from ground floor to the first floor, this event is commonly referred as 'Battle of Grass'. 31 Squadron at one time had the largest Cobra poster in Pakistan. This poster was presented by many aviators as it consisted of different parts which were transported from abroad in pieces by the officers. The rivalry is so intense that during one of the aerial firing which was being conducted by 31 Squadron, it was noticed that whenever they (31 Squadron) helicopters used to come for firing their religious teacher was seen praying for accurate hit, but he was seen relaxing on the 33 Squadron turn. Combat Group has produced two fine artists - Major Naeem Khattak and Lieutenant Colonel Amar Raza. The latter specialized in calligraphy and has painted whole of Koran in colours, where as the former paints aviation aspects. **Combat Group is a trendsetter in many ways for instance commanding officer of 31 Squadron Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Tahir handed over the command at midnight after performing the cockpit checks of Cobra and Jet- Ranger.**

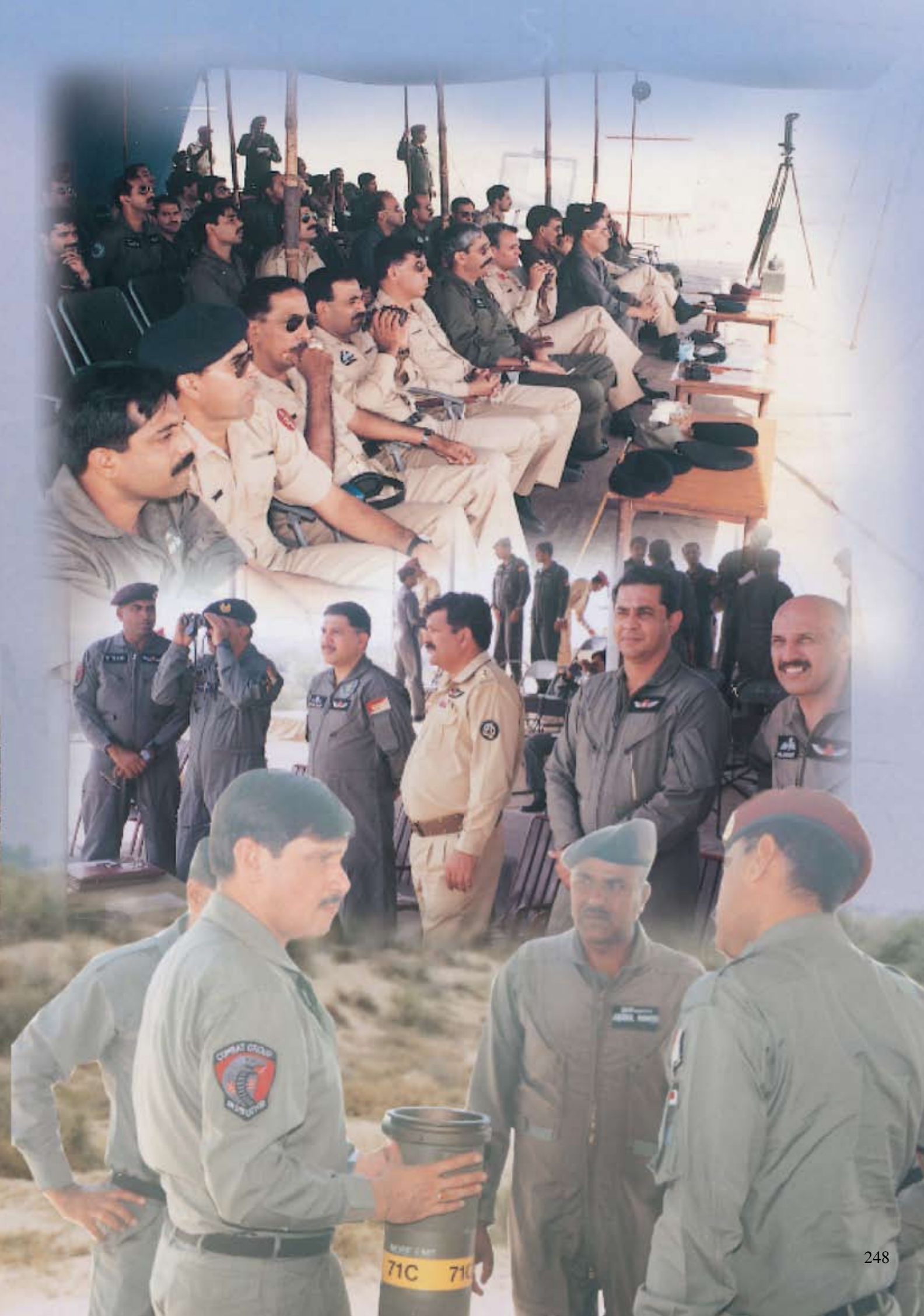
Enhanced Status

In June 1996 the command of Combat Group was upgraded to the rank of Brigadier and Colonel Tipu Sultan, already in the chair as the fifth commander, became Brigadier Tipu Sultan Commander Combat Group. Simultaneously the group became independent and placed directly under Aviation Command. Site for new office complex was selected and on 26th May 2003, the Combat Group shifted to its present office complex.



COBRA FIRING RANGE

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COBRAS FLIGHT LINE









Millennium Cobras





SIACHEN


Sella Pass
Tsung Suket
Matherbrum
Shaksgam Pass
Kande
Khorkondus
Tagas
Dansam 21870
(6666)
Khapalu
Goma
Lunkha
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South Rima Gl
24216
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25110
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24280
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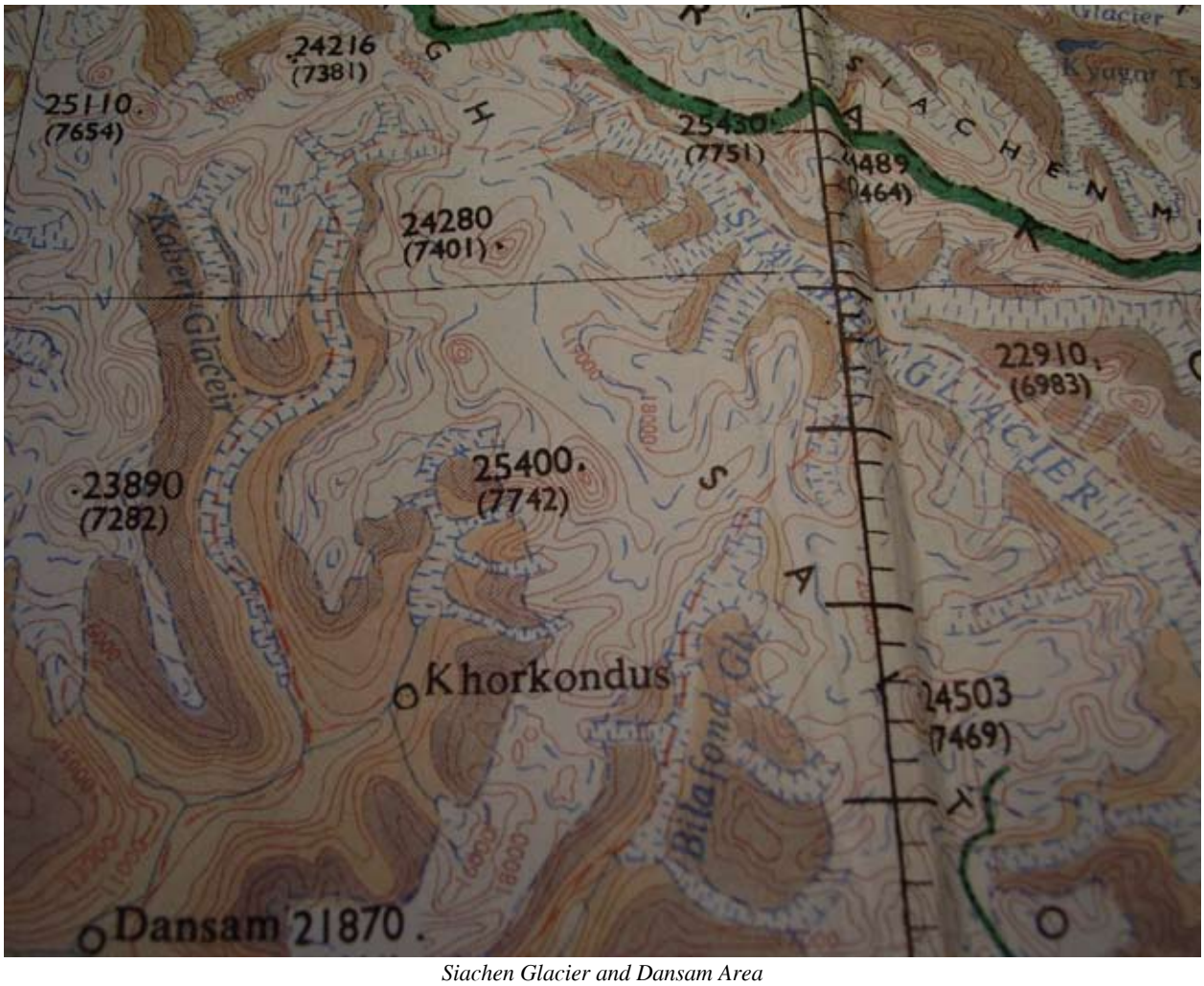


Siachen Glacier and Dansam Area

Early Eighties confronted Army Aviation with a daunting flying challenge of operating at dizzying altitudes where men and machines would be stretched to their maximum endurance and limits capability. This is Siachen, the ice bound wilderness of the Northern Karakorum Mountain Range where the two armies of Pakistan and India got locked in a fierce conflict. The highest and most inhospitable battlefield in military history, where soldiers from both side choke to death from blood and fluid in their lungs, get buried alive beneath tons of snow during frequent avalanches or disappear forever into hidden bottomless crevasses. Eight out of ten casualties are caused by the unforgiving terrain and climate. Soldiers must brave myriad dangers including lack of oxygen, temperatures which fall below minus 30 degrees Centigrade, crevasses riddled icy slopes, frequent avalanches and rock slides.

Siachen Glacier

Lies between the great Karakorum and Saltoro Ranges. It separates both like a long white snake descending from north-west to south-east with its head resting at the bottom of Conway Saddle and rest of the body entwined with tail resting in the Nubra River. Siachen Glacier contains important passes which links Sub Continent to Central Asia. To the west lies Siala Pass, to the north-west lies Indra Kuli Pass(19,360 feet) and in north-east Turkistan La Pass(18,520 feet), both leading to the Chinese territory. On the eastern side of the Siachen Glacier lies Teram Kangri, Teram Sher and Terang mountain groups. Total length of the glacier is 72 kilometers with a maximum width of 3-4 kilometres. It is completely covered by the snow except in summer when along its western edges from the point where Lolofond Glacier joins it till it terminates in Nubra River, there are 2-3 lanes of black stone which makes foot movement possible. It is along these tracks that ancient people used to traverse the area.



History of Glacier Control

At the time of partition of the subcontinent; the Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh announced accession of the Muslim majority state to the India; triggering a freedom movement in the state which was later joined by the tribal lashkars. In 1948 the cease fire was agreed upon at Karachi, the agreement drew a Line of Control (LOC) from Chenab River towards north covering 830 Kilometres up till Point NJ 9842. Ahead of this point area was not surveyed since it was inaccessible at that time, thus agreement just stated that 'LOC ahead of NJ 9842 would run north towards Karakorum Range'. The area practically stayed under control and sway of Pakistan and all foreign mountain expeditions attempting scaling peaks in the area had to get permission from Pakistan Government.

Beginning of The Conflict - 1977

It was in 1977 that a German rafter intending to undertake the first descent of Nubra River from its origin that is Siachen Glacier, approached the famous Indian mountaineer Colonel Narinder Kumar, of Indian Army. The German had a 1967 American printed map of the area which showed the Siachen as part of Pakistan. Narinder took these details to Lieutenant General Chibber, of Indian Military Operations, who gave permission to Narinder for launching of an expedition. Colonel Narinder later took a 70 members team and reached mid point of Siachen Glacier. He also climbed 24,297 feet Teram Kangri. During this expedition Indians discovered Pakistani cigarette packs on the glacier which were taken back and showed to Chibber as proof of Pakistani intrusion. In 1981 Kumar went back to the Siachen and completed a snout to source survey of the glacier apart from ascent to the Sia Kangri, he also skied down the glacier and later wrote all this in 'Weekly Illustrated India' magazine. He wrote "There was not a soul there, there was so much to climb, the view from Sia Kangri looking down on the Siachen Glacier is so beautiful just like a great white snake…. going, going, going, I have never seen anything so white and so wide".

Pakistan's Response - 1981

This Indian venture did not go unnoticed, there were reports and rumours circulating in the Skardu city of Indian adventure. On 17th August 1981 Skardu Superintendent of Police, Mr Ali Ahmed Jan reported about 15 Indian soldiers in Chumik and Chulling area. He later searched the area between 26th August - 6th September 1981 but to no avail. In the early summer of 1982 there were reports of Indians again in the area with rumours of their raping four Balti womenfolk.

Enters Army Aviation - First Helicopter in Siachen, Allouette-III #1457 - 1982

Pakistan Military Operation Directorate however decided to probe this more seriously and asked Army Aviation to despatch one helicopter in the area. The aim was to show physical activity and observe any Indian presence. It was later in the day on 24th August 1982 that a sortie was received by 5 Army Aviation Squadron, Dhamial, to send a helicopter next morning to Skardu.

Major Azam was sitting in the crew room when he got the message for the sortie to be undertaken He recollects that historical sortie "Our squadron was already employed in the Northern Areas and I, like many other pilots had fair experience of mountain flying in the area. My co-pilot was Captain Sami. On receipt of the mission the usual procedures started like collecting weather details, fuel, overnight kit and sorting out few domestic chores in the short time available. The flight to Pattan and then to Gilgit was usual. In our jargon if you land safely that means everything is okay. At Gilgit we met our squadron officers and talked to them about this mission into unknown valleys, so little did we realize at the time that it actually is the beginning of a long and hazardous adventure. Next day on 26th August 1982, we flew in Allouette No. 1457 to Skardu where we met Brigade Major 62 Brigade, Major Hamid Nawaz (later rose to Secretary Defence) who briefed us on the motives of the sortie. It was basically an aerial reconnaissance cum confirmatory mission which was to be taken on 27th August 1982. Whole day was spent in coordination like collecting of suitable maps, making sketches, placing of the fuel at Khaplu, from where we intend starting our mission".

Thus the saga of Army Aviation at Siachen started on 27th August 1982 which till to date remains the

high mark of aviation support to field formations in which Army Aviation proved not only their flying skills but above all displayed an extraordinary attitude of commitment and dedication to help their brethren in arms deployed in an inhospitable terrain. Major General Azam further narrates.

"When we reached Goma we again refuelled the helicopter and took off for the historic sortie about which none of us could have predicted at that time. We flew in two sectors on that day totalling over three hours of flying, we flew towards the passes and adjoining heights looking for Indian troops which were not there. It was windy and helicopter was difficult to control at such heights, we did not venture over the passes although we tried to fly over them but controls became sluggish. It was my first sortie in this particular area, the excitement of flying over a new territory has its own charm and challenge. I had just finished reading 'The Great Game' and while flying I could not resist paying homage to the pioneer travellers who ventured through these uncharted passes a century ago in search of adventure fuelled with nothing but the **pioneering spirit**.

Next day we undertook mission in Khaplu Sector and flew towards Baltoro Glacier, looking for the intruders, meanwhile Major Hamid Nawaz kept making his own notes about the area. I still remember that people on ground would run and take cover on hearing the helicopter noise. At refuelling site many of locals admitted coming from far distance to see the helicopter, it was the first time that local inhabitants had ever seen a helicopter". The major findings of the sortie were:-

Routes- There are two major routes available from Khaplu to Siachen Glacier, The important features on the first route are Khaplu – Dansum – Kurma Ding – Kondus – Kondus Glacier – Siala (17,100 feet) – Siachen Glacier. The flying distance on this route is about 145 Kilometres and 2/3rd is covered by Kondus and Siachen Glaciers. The last place of habitation on this route is Kurma Ding and no vegetation is available beyond this place. Second route is from Khaplu –Dansum – Goma –Gyari – Bilafond Glacier – Ali Brangsa – Bilafond La (17,000 feet) – Lolofond Glacier – Siachen Glacier. The flying distance on this route is about 110 Kilometres and 3/5th is covered by Bilafond, Lolofond and Siachen Glaciers. The last place of habitation on this route is Goma.

Weather- In this area weather is quite unpredictable, but the valleys normally remain open as the clouds usually cling to the mountains on either sides.



Allouette-3 of 5 Aviation Squadron at Siachen Glacier



First Pakistan Army Expedition - 1983

Sequel to the first sortie it was decided to despatch a ground expedition 'Ababeel' as show of force on the glacier. Early part of 1983 was used for planning and in July –August 1983 one Special Services Group(SSG) Company ex 1st Commando Battalion was sent to the area. An Allouette helicopter along with two pilots Major Naqvi and Captain Shabab were also despatched from Dhamial to Khaplu via Gilgit. At Gilgit Major Naqvi was replaced by Major Shoukat Masood. The Special Services Group Company was placed under command Major Aslam with Captain Arshad Rafiq as the second in command with Captain Doctor Aftab as the medical officer. This commando expedition was supported administratively by the lone Allouette helicopter operating from Khaplu. The Special Services Group strength was approximately 70 all ranks. Two Puma helicopters also took part in the operation when they helilifted this company from Khaplu towards Sia La in successive sorties. This expedition being the pioneer was handicapped by lack of high altitude equipment such as boots and tents. All their rations were placed on two sledges and unfortunately one oil Jerri-can leaked and soaked all the ration less tea.



Allouette of 5 Squadron taking off from vacated Indian Post at Siachen Glacier

On 31st July 1983 Major Naqvi and Captain Shabab dropped fuel and other edibles at Sia La while hovering. This was the highest hovering at that time under taken by Army Aviation. As the expedition moved forward, progressively their administrative demands increased. Whole expedition was now divided into three groups, one moving forward and the other two platoons started supporting this move.

Indians Detected 16th August - 1983

Indians were present on the Siachen and were just few kilometers ahead of own troops but both were unaware of each other's presence. On 16th August 1983, Major Shoukat Masood and Captain Shabab were on a re-supply mission with Lieutenant Colonel Munir the commanding officer of the SSG battalion. Supplies were dropped at Camp No. 4, the new forward location of the expedition. After dropping the loads the pilots flew forward out of curiosity towards the Nubra River. In general area around HJ 9995, Captain Shabab spotted two men walking on the stone lane, another person was detected by Major Shoukat Masood in area NK 0194. He was standing near a trench and on seeing the helicopter jumped into the trench. On the return flight the aviators flew straight towards Gilgit and informed Commander Force Command Northern Area(FCNA) about this latest situation.

Special Services Group had established five camps on the glacier and in next few days Allouette flew extensively in the area to observe the Indians but now the pilots were cautious about the Indians as they had seen their Ack Ack machine guns. Despite all this, own pilots were able to detect a number of enemy posts with proper helipads. On 21st August 1983, Brigadier Tariq Mahmood(TM) was also flown in the area and it was revealed that Indians had vacated their camps. Further Allouette sorties confirmed that Indians had ventured as far as Bila Fond La and had prepared small posts in the stony part of the glacier.

Landing on Vacated Indian Post - 23rd August 1983

Early morning both pilots Captain Shabab and Major Shoukat took Commander SSG, Brigadier TM along with the commanding officer of the battalion to Piun, the eastern extreme edge of the Siachen Glacier where the passengers were dropped and Allouette flew back bringing back one own frost bite casualty from Camp 5. At 1430 hours Commander FCNA Major General Pir Dad Khan and Brigadier TM were flown over the glacier and were shown the vacated Indian camps. They also landed at the forward enemy camp which was already secured by own troops. Pakistan launched protest to United Nations(UN) and on 24th August 1983 two United Nations Observers along with Brigadier TM were flown by own pilots including Major Azam and Captain Shabab followed by Commander 62 Brigade in another helicopter being flown by Major Naqvi and Major Shoukat Masood

Vacation of Siachen by Pakistani troops. *By end of August 1983, the weather started getting worse and chilly with snow fall being experienced at night. Commander FCNA ordered the expedition to withdraw. Army Aviation flew last sortie on Aloutte III helicopter on 27th August 1983 piloted by Major Masood and Captain Shabab.*

Plan For The Future

Immediately after the withdrawal of own troops from Siachen by end of August 1983 Military Operation Directorate(MO), Headquarters 10 Corps and Commander FCNA got busy in evolving future course of action. In this situation following conclusions were drawn. First, Indians would pre-empt own occupation of the glacier. Secondly they will come in bigger force to rule out the stepping back on seeing Pakistani troops. Further analysis led to believe that only the passes allow Indian Force to step onto the habitat from glacier and vice versa. Holding of these passes by Pakistani troops can effectively seal the fate of any conflict, thus passes became vital. Finally, own forces needed special equipment to operate in such hostile terrain.

A meeting was held on 8th October 1983, in GHQ, presided by the President General Zia Ul Haq which reviewed the whole situation. It was decided to prepare well for the next year's venture, also support of own air force in logistic supply of the troops was probed. It was also directed that no effort and expense be spared for this venture and subsequently orders were placed for special snow equipment.

Race For The Passes - 1984

Both the adversaries prepared hard for the campaigning season of 1984. On Pakistani side the two major towns of Gilgit and Skardu were experiencing hectic activities. There was a marked increase in the troops movement. Higher Headquarters had prepared well by buying latest equipment for this purpose. Shops in twin cities were selling all kinds of equipment mostly the left over of foreign expeditions. In early April 1984 the joint expedition of Special Services Group and Northern Light Infantry (NLI) whose troops are all locals thus more sturdy and hardy, had concentrated at Khaplu. Following resources were allotted and earmarked for this purpose including Head Quarters 62 Brigade, two SSG Companies, one NLI battalion, two Puma and three Allouette helicopters



Allouette was the lifeline for troops during early days of conflict.

Just before the Pakistani troops could start climbing the passes that



would ensure their control over the glacier Brigadier Ghulam Mohammad Director Military Operations and Brigadier Ajmal Commander 62 Brigade, planned an aerial reconnaissance to iron out last minute details. On 17th April 1984, two Allouette helicopters flown by Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan the Commanding Officer 5 Squadron along with Captain Shabab as co-pilot and second helicopter had Major Farooq Altaf and Captain Jamshed Bajwa. These two helicopters made a plan, to enter Siachen from Sia La after flying over the glacier; planned to return via Bilafond La-Gyari-Goma and Khaplu. On reaching Sia La, Major Farooq noticed some troops on the pass and he talked to the lead helicopter, which also noticed the troops at another camp. They decided to return back after making low passes over the camps. The lead helicopter of Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan returned back to Dansum whereas the wing-man followed the original itinerary and found more Indian troops at Bilafond La as well. It was thus clear that Indians had reacted more quickly and were able to reach the passes before Pakistani troops. Furthermore Major Farooq's helicopter on landing was inspected as per procedures, few bullet holes were observed at the tail. These were the first shots fired by the enemy in Siachen Glacier. DGMO rushed back to the GHQ and informed the higher ups about this new development. It was decided to push ahead own troops as far forward as possible and occupy the heights opposite the Indians. FCNA acted on its contingency No. 2 which was hatched for such a catastrophe, which envisaged occupation and defending the next line of defences. Composite SSG Platoon was sent to occupy defensive position in general area Kundus Bend in Sia La sector. One Composite Company of SSG in Ali Brangsa was deployed to check enemy in Bila Fond sector. One Composite Platoon at Gyong and one Platoon of NLI was to defend area in Chulung, Gyong La was occupied by the SSG on 15th May 1984 and first ever exchange of fire in same sector took place on 25th May 1984.

The Line Of Contact. By end May 1984, Indians had occupied all the possible passes leading to Siachen Glacier from Pakistan or China.

Indian Dispositions

Sia La. Kilo Company of Laddakh Scouts at pass(post), company minus in depth(camp) and a platoon at Indira Koli (post)

Bila Fond La. Two companies of 4th Kumaon Regiment were at the pass.

Gyong La. Two companies of 9th Kumaon located at Dzingrulma.

Pakistani Deployment

Ali Brangsa. SSG Company ex 1st Commando supported by Section 120 mm Mortars, 105mm Howitzer and Section 81 mm Mortars (later 21st Azad Kashmir Regiment came in winter)

Gyong La. Company SSG supported by Section 120 mm Mortars, 105 mm Howitzer and section 81 mm Mortars

Yarma La (Layogma). Platoon SSG which was supplemented by another platoon supported by one 105 mm Howitzer and 81 mm Mortars

Chulung La. One company of 1st NLI supported by Section 3 inch Mortars

Kundus Bend. Platoon 1 NLI supported by two - 81 mm Mortars.

Goma. Battalion HQ of 1st Commando and 1st NLI Battalion

Dansum. Tactical Head Quarters of 62 Brigade. On 16th November 1984, 323rd Brigade took over the responsibility.

Exercise Yarmuk

The other traditional approach towards Skardu from Siachen Glacier, emanate through Shigar Valley, thus 62 Brigade was ordered to send troops to occupy Conway Saddle, this exercise was code named "Yarmuk". 323 Brigade was totally committed in "Exercise Ababeel" which was looking after the passes.

Indians Also Reach Saddle

By the end of January 1985, own troops consisting of an infantry battalion and commando platoon were concentrated at Skardu, this force was called "Zarrar Force". Reconnaissance for Baltoro Glacier started in February 1985. On 3rd March 1985, one officer and four Jawans were helilifted by Lieutenant Colonel Kamal and Major Khalid of 5 Squadron and dropped at the base of Conway Saddle. On 17th April 1985 the post at Conway Saddle was established, coincidentally Indians also reached the Saddle same day and occupied the forward edge, hence known as Forward Saddle.



Conway Saddle the highest post in the world

Flying Across Conway Saddle

First ever crossing from Baltoro to Kundus over Conway Saddle was made by Major Khalid Salim and Captain Ifzaal on 6th May 1985. Second time it was done on 20th May 1985 by Major Khalid Salim and Captain Inam Karim with Captain Rashid following in another helicopter, Commander FCNA was on board in both the sorties. On 22nd May 1985 Major Khalid Salim and Captain Inam Karim landed at Conway Saddle with Commander FCNA. This was the first ever landing at Conway Saddle. The highest ever military post (20,000 feet) in the world.



Khalid Saleem



Ifzal Ahmed

Aviation Logistic Plan

Aviation played an important role in providing not only the logistic support to the out posts but also in aerial observation and gathering of intelligence. Ground movement would normally take 7-10 days for any commander to see one sector only, however it took under an hour of flying to have a birds eye view of the entire area.

In the early days the troops despite all precautions and preparations were still not geared for the extreme winter hazards of the area thus bulk of casualties were weather related including frost-bite and pulmonary oedema (water filling up in lungs) both requiring immediate evacuation to lower altitudes. It was Army Aviation which despite all technical odds rose to the occasion and after GOD were the only hope of troops survival. Army Aviation had Allouette and Puma helicopters (One Puma was permanently placed at Gilgit) to carry out aerial dumping of the rations and casualty evacuation. Director Army Aviation in the initial presentations pointed out that two Pumas can effectively provide logistic support to a company strength at an altitude of 5000 meters, provided these Pumas are fitted with high altitude kits. In the absence of such kits, Pumas can only operate till 4000 meters, from where upward Allouette helicopters would be employed. The troops for operations exercise Yarmuk were logistically supplied on weekly basis, as follows:-

From Skardu to Gore - Puma. helicopter

From Gore onward - Allouette helicopter

It was also pointed out that para dropping of supplies could not be done from helicopter because the equipment packed by air despatch unit was meant for C-130 aircraft only. The pellets were of large size and could not be used in helicopter. Helicopter could deliver the loads only by dropping or landing. However, the load carrying capacity of Puma (700 kg) and Allouette (120 kg) was restricted and the total amount to be lifted in a year was 1,08,984 lbs. Therefore, to undertake all supplies by helicopters was too demanding. In comparison 14,000 lbs could be carried in a single C-130 sortie. The problems foreseen by PAF was the suitability of the area for safe para/free drop operations and availability of manoeuvring space for C-130.



5 Squadron Gears Up For Siachen

5 Squadron pilots flying the Allouette-3 helicopter had fair amount of experience in mountain flying. They were supporting the Frontier Works Organisation at Gilgit and Chitral, but they had seldom operated over the glaciated terrain especially in winter. Thus new procedures and techniques were adopted for this purpose. As a thumb rule the senior pilots would fly on to any new post and they would clear the junior pilots for independent missions after requisite checkouts. In the same time period, many experienced pilots were posted out for the conversion on Cobra helicopters thus the pilots shortage became a serious issue which was tackled by having more students in Rotary Courses and their further conversion on Allouette helicopter for high altitude operations.

25 Aviation Squadron

Digest of Service records, "Squadron took part in Exercise Ababeel which started in April 1984. Beside operational environment, the area was most hazardous and full of all types of weather phenomenons. The pilots met the challenges with complete devotion and dedication to accomplish their assigned tasks. A total of 640.05hours were generated with 39,125 kilogram of cargo consisting of weapons, ammunition, guns, mortars and special equipment for snow bound area carried without any minor occurrence". Digest of Service further records; "Between January-March 1985, dumping of equipment and stores to a tune of 84,000 kilogram was done by Captain Ehsan Qadir Khan and Captain Sayed Ali during their tenure. Running drops of ammunition and critical supplies were provided at an altitude of 4800 meters. The co-operation to own troops was extended for the first time in Baltoro Glacier area (Exercise Yarmuk)". All the operations in this area were based upon Aviation effort. Initially dumping was carried at Paiju. Aerial reconnaissance was also done up till 5000 meters which is the maximum service ceiling of Puma helicopters.



25 Army Aviation Squadron

Mapping of The Glacier

No reliable maps of the area were available and Army Aviation through its Turbo Jet aircraft was able to carry out the entire mapping of the glacier. Lieutenant Colonel Minhaj of VVIP Flight narrates; "One day I was called by Brigadier Mokeet, Director Aviation who took me to the Chief of General Staff(CGS) where the requirement was given to me. An earlier attempt was made by the PAF but it did not meet the army requirement. CGS decided to use proper mapping equipment of Survey of Pakistan. We immediately got busy in detailed planning and started the task. I would take-off from Dhamial and climb to 29,000 feet, there was one helicopter standby at Skardu for Search & Rescue. A total of 17 sorties were flown and the task was completed".

Enters Lama

Allouettes were inducted primarily to support the Karakorum Highway construction and was the only helicopter of Pakistan Army which was capable of operating and supporting troops at such altitudes. Puma & MI-8 helicopters were not suitable for any operation above 4,000meters. Taking lead from the Indians who had a big fleet of Lamas(It was this very helicopter which had facilitated the Indians in reaching the passes earlier). Pakistan Army also decided to induct these helicopters for exclusive employment in the Siachen Glacier. Lieutenant General Zahid Ali Akbar Commander 10 Corps supported Army Aviation to obtain GHQ's approval for induction of Lama helicopters.



First Batch of Lama Pilots Trained in France - 1986

Six pilots were selected in December 1985 to proceed to France for training and conversion. They flew eight-ten hours each.

Major Javed Ahmed
Major Shoaib Awan
Major Asghar Abbas Naqvi
Captain Muhammad Ahmed Raashid
Captain Muhammad Ifzal
Captain Inam Karim

Arrival of Lama Helicopters - 1986

The first batch of four Lama helicopters was air lifted by C-130 from France to Chaklala Airbase in April 1986 and two more were flown in May same year. The very first accident of the Lamas occurred while being transported from Chaklala to Qasim Base in a tank-transporter when the driver applied harsh brakes to save a bicyclist resulting in the two Lamas (No.2673 & 2678) having broken canopies

Lama Flight and The Famous Lama House

A flight of 8 Squadron moved to Skardu (Gamba) which is now popularly known as Lama Flight in whole of the 10 Corps. The helicopters were placed at Gamba strip and pilots were housed at Skardu, in a private accommodation hired by the squadron. This house was famous in whole Skardu as "Lama House". There was another house which 8 Squadron hired later for the married officers who would bring their families with them for the tenure. Years later when flight was moved back to Qasim Base, the owner



politely refused to rent it again to MI-17 Flight because of his attachment with the Lama Flight. The Lama Flight comprised of 6-8 pilots at all times under a flight commander. Officers strength would be increased as and when operational situation warranted. The pilots had to stay for 30-45 days of tenure at Skardu in rotation and average flying per day used to be 4-6hours. At time the pilots had to fly 8-10 hours per day due to operational requirement.

Puma Flight

Apart from the Lama Flight at Skardu the FCNA had one Puma Flight at Gilgit as well. The Puma pilots also came on rotation from 21,24 and 25 Squadrons stationed at Qasim and Multan Bases. Puma would operate from Gilgit to Skardu and then onwards carry out the dumping in forward areas, falling back to Gilgit in the evening. In extreme weather and other unforeseen hazards they would stay at Skardu. This flight had accommodation at Gilgit.



Air Operations in Northern Areas (Extract from No. 6 PAF Squadron History)

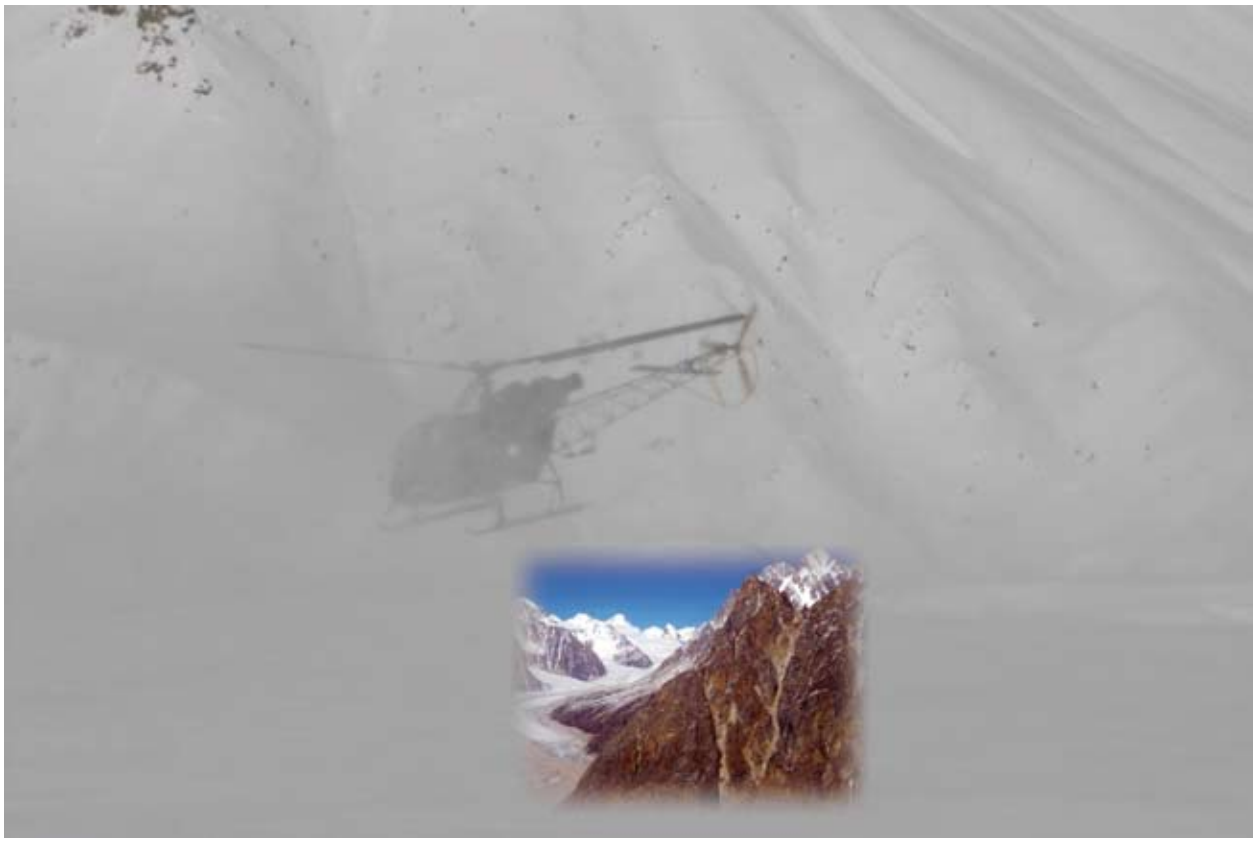
"During this time, since Pakistan Army's Artillery had difficulty in communication with each other and with various command posts due to the terrain effect, C-130s were used as relay stations. At sunrise the first C-130 would be in position near K-2 for a six hour sortie where it would fly a racetrack pattern, provide communication link, apart from detecting visual and electronic threat to own forces. Jamal and Mustansar carried out most of these missions with Moazzam and Ejaz Minhas as Navigators. The last aircraft were used to leave station at sunset. At least once the C-130 crew sighted a pair of Indian MIG-21s.

There were no roads beyond Dassu and carriage of supplies on mules or porters was very slow. Therefore, the squadron was tasked to conduct aerial delivery missions at Paiju. Many evaluation flights were flown to assess the correct speed, height and route for the drop. Crew used to go to Paiju on helicopters to physically see the drop execution and the results. Gradually the heights were reduced, keeping in mind the safety of the aircraft and the success of the mission. Flying through the most difficult valleys in the world and carrying out operations in such a terrain speaks of very high professional standard of our transport crew. Najmi, Zubair and Gultasab were involved in the selection of Drop Zone (DZ)".

No.6 Squadron developed a procedure where the C-130 used to fly a high out bound pattern, turn from Concordia, maintain a steep descend, configure for the drop and then drop at 14,000 feet. It was very tricky and only experienced and seasoned pilots could do the drop, it was really a difficult DZ.

- On 11 December 1988, the first para drop mission (dummy drop) sortie was carried out as a trial in the general area Paiju.
- On 18 January 1989, a trial drop was carried out in the general area Paiju. All the parachutes were opened with no loss to the stores, however one parachute was slightly damaged and all the skid boards were cracked.
- On 06 March 1989, a para drop was carried out at Sakrdu DZ. All the parachutes opened and there was no loss of stores.
- On 13 April 1989, a trial para drop was carried out in the general area of Paiju; all parachutes opened.

MAJOR OPERATIONS IN SIACHEN



Lama during Operation Quaid Post

Quaid Observation Post- June 1987

In 1984 the Indians had occupied the Bilafond La and established one Bunker Post right in the middle of the pass on the glacier, on the western side of the pass Indians had two posts named Rana and Akbar, Pakistan Special Services Group established Quaid observation post on the eastern wing of the pass (which is like a butterfly) in April 1986, at an altitude of 21,000 feet. Quaid stands out as the loftiest feature in Bilafond la overlooking Rana and Akbar tops in the west and Prem Post in the north. Its base camp is at four hours foot journey from Ali Brangsa. The post takes eight hours to climb as it involves technical climb through ice screws, crampons and ropes. The observation post was another 100 yards up involving rope climb. This post was a thorn in the enemy side. Post itself had just two high altitude tents and one 12.7 Machine Gun in a radius of ten feet. It was an isolated perch like an eagle's nest notched in the overhang of a cliff that apexed to the summit. Post used to be manned by the regular and Special Services Group Officers. Quaid Top from air looked like a swelled Octopus with its three major tentacles spreading and sloping down. Every third day depending upon the weather it used to be replenished with provisions.

Army Aviation used to supplement the Quaid complex by dumping food, ration and ammunition at the Quaid base camp, evacuation of casualties also took place from Quaid base camp.

On 20th June 1986 weather was bad, Naib Subedar Atta along with, Naik Younis, Lance Naik Jahanzeb, Sepoys Nasrullah, Fiaz, Tahir, Allah Yar, Sher Ali, Arshad and Zulfiqar were holed into their igloo by persistent snow blizzard for two days. Major Shoaib Awan was the Aviation Flight Commander in the area, he narrates; "We had only one Lama and one Aloutte operating in the area, other four Lamas were all in Rawalpindi undergoing periodic inspection. Daily we would come from Skardu to Gyari and Ali Brangsa. There were reports of likely Indian attack on the post. Indians had stepped up their artillery fire which was a constant danger for the helicopters especially the air burst. We had been flying over the Quaid OP in the past, sometimes it was just to cheer their morale other times it was in connection with aerial reconnaissance. Due to limited space at the Post we had never landed there, moreover we used to be in the line of sight and



fire of Indians". On 22nd June 1987 Indian 4th Jammu & Kashmir Battalion supported by artillery opened fire on the post, Indians had made full use of their MI-17 transporter helicopters who would stack the heavy load near front line from where Cheetah(Lama) helicopters would transport them to the edge of glacier.

On the night 23/24 June 1986, Indians led by Captain Partap Singh attempted to come on the top but failed, however on 26th June after a fierce battle which had already wounded Subedar Atta and killed all his companions less Sepoy Arshad and Zulfiqar who jumped from 300 feet and miraculously survived the ordeal. Indians under Subedar Bana Singh crept to the top where Naib Subedar Atta of Special Services Group resident of Chak No.125 Sargodha was alone and wounded, waiting for the enemy to come on the top with probably last round in his chamber. Subedar Atta, continued to fight till overwhelmed by the Indian assault. Loss of Quaid OP was a major blow suffered by Pakistan Army.
Subedar Atta later, was awarded Sitara-i-Jur'at

OPERATION QIADAT
27 September 1987

An assault on Akbar and Rana posts in the Bilafond La Sector on 22nd September 1987 was planned as a retaliation. These two posts located at a height of 19000 feet are not straight in line with each other rather a Saddle joins them. Both had sharp gradients towards own side but gradual slope on the enemy side. This operation was code named 'Operation Qiadat'.



Lama during Operation Qiadat

Aviators did all that could possibly be accomplished by helicopters. All available and additional resources in the form of Puma, Allouette-III and Lama helicopters were mustered, under command Lieutenant Colonel Bashir Baz. From 1st July 1987 onwards Army Aviation started logistic buildup which included shifting of guns, ammunition, fuel, mortars, anti tank rockets and heavy machine guns. Like wise additional Allouette-III pilots were pooled in. Helicopters were tasked exclusively to transport and airlift artillery guns and artillery ammunition to the forward locations. Allouette-III and Lama helicopters were the main flying assets to shift stores, artillery pieces, ammunition and other equipment ahead of main bases. Although Puma helicopter could not land beyond 4,000meters altitude but still they helilifted two 5.5 inch medium guns at Naram gun position. A 120 mm mortar was slung and transported by Lama to Camp-II area ahead of Ali Brangsa along with its ammunition. This mortar and medium guns at Naram gun position played havoc with the Indian positions at Akbar-Rana, La Bunker and Bana positions. Similarly two, 105 mm pack howitzers along with their ammunition were air lifted in pieces to Gyong Camp-1 position. Simultaneous dumping of ammunition was undertaken in the three sectors i.e Bilafond, Gyong and Chullung La Sectors. Even TOW were helilifted to Rahbar Post at 16,000 feet.

The most vital role which Lama pilots played was the conduct of aerial recce of the area for all the concerned officers. Sitting at Ali Brangsa one could only plan what was visible but in glacier where weather remains unpredictable and terrain so treacherous that nothing can be planned off the map; aviators flew like eagle and became the eyes of the force. Routes were selected basing upon these aerial reconnaissance and all these helicopter borne operations had to be coordinated in the over all deception plan which envisaged extensive flying in all the sectors.

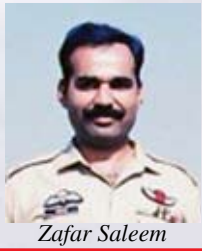
Shifting 5.5" Artillery Guns to Naram

The bold and brave Puma pilots who when confronted with an extremely difficult task of shifting 5.5" Artillery Guns to Naram (4300 M) on Bila Fond La Glacier, resorted to innovation and reduced weight of the Puma by removing cowlings, seats, doors and radio/navigational equipment. After nerve wrecking and tense trials the team got ready to undertake this hazardous but extremely important operational tasking. These four bold Puma pilots added another chapter of bravery and commitment. This was yet another bold feat and demonstration by Army Aviators that they were willing and ready to go to any extent of human/machine capability to support their comrades on ground.


Ajmal


Sarfaraz


Haider


Zafar Saleem

Operation Starts For Rana and Akbar Posts

At 2000hours on the night 20/21 September 1987 troops of 3 Commando Battalion(commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Safdar Attique) in groups moved forward under Company Commander Major Sana. Captain Raheel Sehgal was one of the Lama pilot. He narrates; "The force had gone forward and there was no wireless communication with it. I was ordered by the commander to pass the message to the force commander to fall back, I flew over them and tried to convey the message through hand signals but to no avail, later I landed, wrote the message and dropped it from the helicopter with the help of a stone. It was duly recovered and force came back".

Next day the first group moved out followed by other two groups. First group was tasked to capture the Akbar Post after scaling an Ice Wall of over 100 feet. simultaneously another group was to move up through Rahbar Post around Tabish feature and capture the Rana Post by 0300hours same night. The third group was to follow the Second Group and operating though Rana Post it was to capture Akbar Post by 0500hours, if it was not already captured by the first group.

On 22nd September 1987 at 1800hours several TOW missile were fired to demolish bunkers at Rana, Akbar and La Post alongwith intense artillery bombardment. Captains Nazaret, Imran and Akbar moved forward for the Akbar Post. Navigation on glacier is not a piece of cake and nobody can foresee the difficulties that will be encountered enroute. A small crevice can disrupt all planning and same happened in this venture. The force lost its way and after night long wandering they decided to attack Rana post instead of Akbar. While they were regrouping a Vickers opened fire and killed Sepoys Younis and Razzaq.

A Bold Assault by Two Officers. Captain Iqbal and Captain Salik Cheema were at the La Base and were supposed to follow as and when required. However sensing that assault party had been pinned down due to the enemy fire from the left (Akbar Post) and from the right by La Bunker apart from the Rana itself, these two commando officers decided that the only way to the top was now through the direct route which was the most difficult one. They reached their comrades at Rana Top after traversing, climbing, hanging, scaling ice, rocks and icewalls. Once at the top they realized that as long as the machine gun is there, the assault would remain pinned down, meanwhile the defender realizing that he is loosing the game brought defensive fire on his own location. Captain Iqbal despite being injured due to shelling, fired the fatal missile that wiped out the enemy machine gun. Captain Salik Nawaz Cheema moved up and as he got close to the igloo where the enemy small arms were firing in a disciplined manner, he realized and decided to take out the position through assault, He assaulted with the Allah o Akbar slogan with grenade in his hand towards the igloo where defender was holding his nerves and fired the killing rounds. Salik fell down forever, with it came the end of Operation Qiadat. Captain Iqbal was awarded Hilal-I-Jurat and Captain Salik Cheema was awarded Sitare-I-Jurat.

Army Aviation effort in this operation consisted of 1,872 flying hours, ammunition dumping of 14,774 rounds in all sectors, 72 casualties evacuated, 22 dead bodies and 115 personnel heli lifted.



CHUMIK OPERATION - April 1989



Lama of 8 Army Aviation Squadron near Chumik Feature

Chumik Glacier lies within Bila Fond Sector and bifurcates from it at a distance of approximately 4 kms ahead of Gyari. It lies in easterly direction surrounded by two unassailable features. The glacier is terminated by series of heights that lie oblique and are named as Tiger and Panther Series joining a high feature to the south at Point 22,158. Any body holding this point dominates the glacier by observation and through artillery fire. Therefore this feature later became the focal point in the battle.

Indians Intentions Detected

Signal detachment at Dansum, one day in March 1989, intercepted an Indian message showing the intention of capturing a vantage point in Chumik area. Army Aviation went in for reconnaissance and confirmed the establishment of a camp "Banya Camp", on the reverse slope of a feature having a height of 22,158 feet.

Own Plans



Lt. Col. Hasnain Mehdi

Chumik Operation was our reaction to the enemy buildup to capture highest feature which would have jeopardized our forces in Sher Complex, neutralizing our vantage observation post named Victor which was established in 1985 to monitor the Indian approach to Siachen Glacier. These posts were abandoned in 1986 due to extreme weather but again were reactivated by Commander FCNA Major General Ayaz (Lieutenant General retired). In early April 1989 enemy started extensive aerial recce coupled with heavy artillery shelling to establish post overlooking the Chumik so that they could deny Pakistani forces concentration and lodgement. They also had a desire to compel own troops to withdraw from Victor and Sher complex which virtually now remained under their observation. Foot movement was possible only during poor observation days. On 12th April 1989 Brigade Commander Brigadier Asif Riaz Bukhari was taken on an aerial recce aboard a Lama helicopter piloted by Major Mehdi the flight commander. They were airborne because one of the Lama pilot had earlier in the day spotted Indian helicopters making extensive dumping in the area. Since pilots were flying extensively in the area thus they were in a better state to notice any abnormality in the enemy camp and layout. This observation was supplemented by the Shikari Signal Detachment and artillery observers who noticed marked accuracy in the Indian shelling thus they reached the conclusion that some observer is sitting on the top of the Chumik Feature.

Commander was able to make his plan due to the courageous aerial recce afforded by the Army Aviation, who went overhead the enemy camp despite threat of anti air craft weapons. Brigade Commander wasted no time and in consultation with the commanding officer of 9 Azad Kashmir Regiment Lieutenant Colonel Naqvi conceived the plan of action. Meanwhile own Shikari detachment intercepted Indian signal which confirmed that "2 Dogra Battalion was on their way to the top with an aim to 'detect enemy' (Pakistan) observation in Chumik and other details about the area". Own plan contemplated simultaneous advance

along two different routes namely Kilo and Tango. After establishment of intermediate administrative camp they were to reach and occupy the Saddle of Chumik located in the south western fringes of the point 22,158 and then they were to evict the enemy through physical attack from the Saddle and from T-route.



Colonel Raheel Sehgal SJ

Captain Sehgal, The Aviation Hero of Chumik

Captain (Now Colonel) Raheel Hafeez Sehgal was one of the Lama pilots who remained associated with this action from the beginning and was later awarded the SJ for his heroic act. He narrates "The reconnaissance of 12th April had revealed that Indians had already established five new posts including one on the off shoot of Point 22,158 and had attained the predominant position with deep observation of glacier. Own troops were engaged by the enemy artillery fire which became deadly after this occupation and it was matter of time before all these own posts would have been reduced to nothing. Even flying became extremely suicidal due to the fact that now own Lama helicopters were in the range of Indian shoulder fired missile and all those own posts in the region which were supported by the aviation were now looking desperate. Immediately ground parties from own posts were sent to check this Indian move. On 16th April another aerial reconnaissance was carried out to see the progress of these ground parties which were sent to capture the saddle of Chumik Glacier. Due to extreme bad weather and razor edged sharp climb, little progress was made by the troops. Time was running short, it was extremely important that enemy should not be allowed to strengthen at the top and contact should be made as early as possible".

Helicopter Sling Operation is The Only Solution

"On 19th April 1989 it became clear that ground troops would take time in scaling these heights and only way to reach at the top is through helicopters. Earlier a courageous attempt was made to give a drop to the special services group persons but after seeing the configuration of the ground the drop was discarded and special services group persons were brought back to the base camp. It was now obvious that banking upon ground troops advancing towards the top for eviction of enemy would be fatal in terms of time. Commander FCNA had the same feeling. We all were sitting at the base camp and discussing the future path. Junior pilots were relaxing on one end and flight commander was in the company of commander FCNA who said; "You got to do something, this nation is looking towards you, we do not want that Quaid OP history should be repeated". After spending some time with the commander, Major Mehdi came towards the pilots and said, "gentlemen time is running out of hands, we have to respond to the situation, we have to drop a person to achieve victory because even one person now can effectively hold the enemy, we will drop the person at any cost".

The Crew Is Selected

Captain Zia Ud Din a Lama pilot was on his second tenure in the Siachen glacier he further elaborates; "After this motivating speech we all were fired up. Among the pilots who were sitting included Major Hashim, Major Safdar, Major Ali Abbas, Major Jaffery, Captain Naeem, Captain Mahboob apart from the Captain Sehgal and myself. All in all there were over twenty pilots attached with the Lama Flight. After lot of deliberations and keeping in mind the aviation aspect of operation it was decided by the flight commander that



He who reaches the top first, controls the Chumik Glacier



Captain Sehgal would be the captain in command of the operation, Captain Sehgal had already volunteered for this operation. The reason being that he was more familiar with the lay out of the Chumik Feature, he was light weight and this tipped the scale in his favour. He also had the maximum flying hours in the area. Captain Sehgal declared that I will have the copilot of my own choice and he selected me. I had flown numerous sorties with him and we both had reached a stage of understanding where without saying a word we knew what other wants. I had full trust in his capability in carrying out such suicidal mission. We got down to our planning of fuel, weight calculation, consultations of flying performance charts but we also realized that never before in the history of helicopters had ever been an operation of such magnitude carried out. We had to under sling an officer, Captain Naveed to the top of this feature. All details had to be sorted out leaving nothing to the chance. We did not have any proper sling for this purpose so we made one of rope. Next was the safety of the officer while hanging with the rope under the Lama. The chilling winds with freezing temperature can make ones body numb within minutes, the flying aspect of controlling the helicopter in such configuration demands extreme pilot-ability. Already it was known that Indians are also on the move for the top, their team was led by a Captain Vijay Kumar.

Colonel Sehgal further narrates "I had selected Captain Zia Ud Din because he used to be very gentle on the controls. I was sitting in the helicopter when I saw Captain Naveed who was a lean and thin officer. I could see the anxiety on his face I called him and said "Brother do not worry, I am not going to dump you, either we all are going to live or we will die together". The length of rope was measured, all doors were removed along with the seats and other equipment. Captain Zia Ud Din grew as a professional aviator and later commanded 21 Army Aviation Squadron at Dhamial. After his command tenure, he led the Pakistan Aviation Contingent in Sierra Leone. He was to return to Pakistan in August 2004 but unfortunately he embraced shahdat in July 2004 while travelling in UN MI-8 helicopter in Sierra Leone. He stood approved for colonel rank and would have been promoted on his return. It was a great loss for army and Army Aviation

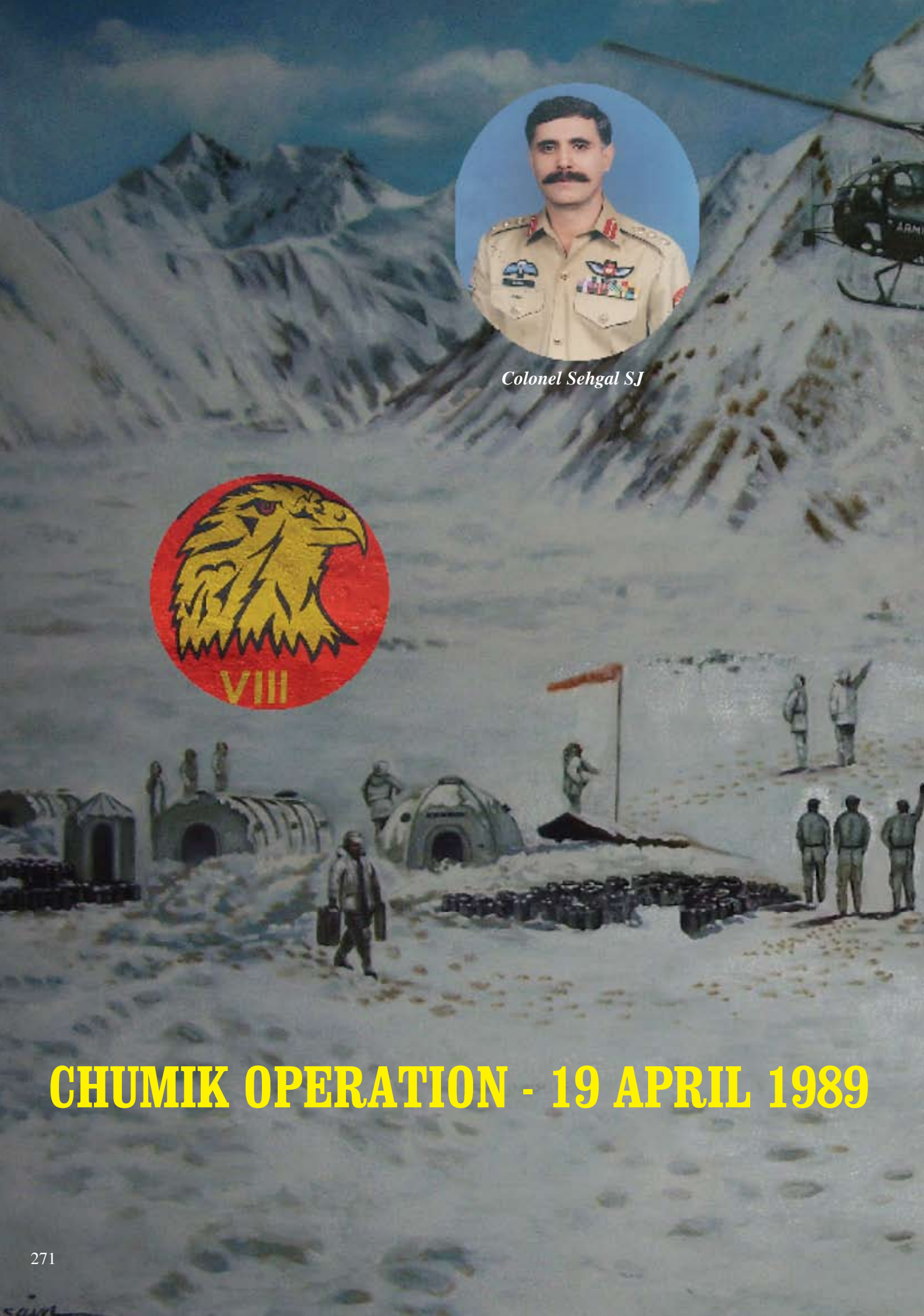


Colonel (Late) Zia Ud Din

Lama Gets Airborne with Captain Naveed, Under Slung

Colonel Sehgal narrates; "At 0930hours we started the helicopter amidst prayers and hovered to few feet. I had my movie camera with me which I gave to one of the colleague Captain Aamir Zafar who recorded this historic sortie. Slowly we lifted Captain Naveed and got airborne. In Lama there are two ways to drop a sling load, one is mechanical and other is electrical, to avoid any accident we disconnected the electrical sling drop fuse because there is a chance that captain of the aircraft may accidentally press the button. Our flight commander Major Mehdi and Major Hashim were also in the air to guide us. As we got airborne and started climbing up gradually the winds started getting nasty. Captain Naveed felt the lashing winds, already rope had tightened around his waist with his machine gun tucked under his chin jabbing its butt.

As the helicopter reached the desired height and initiated its approach towards the ridge line I got a call from my flight commander cautioning me about the Indian post which had Fired a missile towards the helicopter, and then the winds started playing. Captain Naveed was oscillating left and right, one moment I would see him on my right and next moment he would be on my left, as I reached the top I heard a banging sound and controls became sluggish despite my best effort they refused to act. Suddenly we started loosing height and controls became sluggish it was Blade Stall. As I was descending I put the helicopter towards a gap in between the peaks, altimeter was showing maximum rate of descend.



Colonel Sehgal SJ

CHUMIK OPERATION - 19 APRIL 1989



Colonel Zia Ud Din Tbt

Major Naveed SJ

Safe Drop Accomplished



Captain Naveed was 'Slung'. It was the only way to reach the top before Indians

As we were flying towards the gap a patch of cloud obscured it and we went right through it, it was at this stage that I left the controls and sat back thinking that it is all over. There was near panic in the cockpit and Captain Zia admits that he had offered his last prayer. In the second helicopter which had the flight commander and Major Hashim, both instructors on helicopters, and in radio communication with Captain Sehgal, were motivating and directing him. Colonel Sehgal further narrates; "After few seconds which looked like eternity, we came out of the cloud, it was like getting a new life, slowly I touched the controls and they responded so I came out of dive and turned around to set course again for the post. As we entered own side from the Indian, I recalled the conversation which brigade major had on the day with one of the ground- detachment at the Chumik Helipad in which he scolded them for not firing on enemy helicopters. True to their words as we entered I saw the fire coming towards the helicopter, I frantically shouted to the other helicopter to stop this firing. There is a mirror in the Lama helicopter through which I could monitor Captain Naveed being slung. Now when I looked at the mirror I saw Captain Naved almost unconscious, that was the breaking point. In despair I handed over the controls to Captain Zia, later when I saw again through the mirror I realized that Captain Naveed is alive and was adjusting his gear, I again took over the controls, at that time we were about to overshoot the intended dropping point which I had selected contrary to the recommended place for the reason that after extensive flying around this feature I was more knowledgeable about the terrain also from aviation point of view I selected a place where future operations could be attempted. I immediately lowered the collective and released the sling load, by the grace of GOD the landing was safe and we headed back towards own position amidst enemy fire".

Second Sling Drop

As per planning, another soldier Naik Yaqub from Special Services Group was also to be dropped at the Saddle which was done promptly as Sehgal and Zia were now more confident. Colonel Sehgal adds further; "When we landed after second drop we got the message that batteries for radio set had to be dropped, so we went for the third time and dropped the batteries. This shuttle service was to continue, we were told that a ruck-sack has also to be dropped at the peak, that was the last mission which we flew on that day before weather became so bad that no flying was possible for next 48 hours". Hats off to Captain Naveed and Naik Yaqub for making history and writing a new chapter in the annals of not only Pakistan Army but also in the journals of military profession all over the world.

The Three A's of Strength

On 21st April 1989 two days after the first drop, the weather did not permit another helicopter sortie but action was already underway at the highest battlefield in the world where Captain Naveed after retrieving the bundle and Naik Yaqub who was blue with cold, had already opened fire at the Indian posts of Sadhu and Ganga. His only lifeline was the wireless set through which he transmitted signals intending to confuse the enemy. He succeeded, regarding the quantum of troops, but situation was precarious; if he did not get the supplies within next 24 hours all this effort would go in vain with his own and Naik Yaqub's survival at stake.



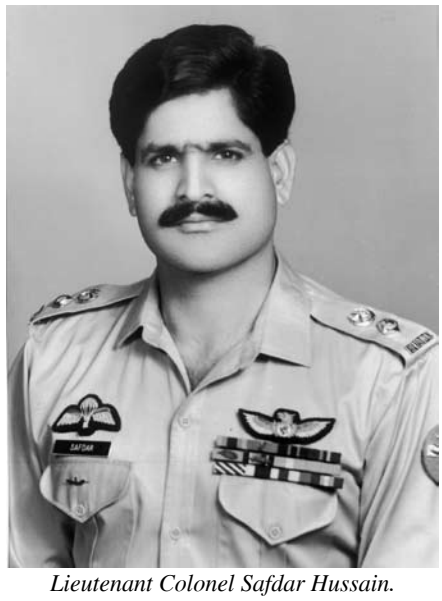
Night 21/22nd April 1989 was very tense and tough for all the inmates at three bunkers at Dansum, the brigade headquarters. There was no communication with Captain Naveed and Naik Yaqub dropped at Chumik Peak, they were at their own. Reports of enemy climbing to dislodge them were pouring in. No body slept that night. The air inside the bunkers was filled with cigarettes smoke, even non smokers were puffing. The discussions in these three bunkers revolved around what next to do and praying for weather to give a break.

Interestingly in year 2003 Major Naveed SJ, served as an Adjutant in 503 Aviation Base Workshop. When asked about the feelings on that day when he was at the peak with bad weather and no hope of supplies. His immediate response was a gaze in the sky as if thanking the Almighty and after a pause of trance replied 'There were three 'A' which gave me strength-ALLAH, Army Aviators about whom I was confident will come the moment there is tinniest of break in weather and third A was the 'Aan', the pride of being a Pakistani soldier. This pride was built on my 'Qasam' which I took years ago in Pakistan Military Academy's black top parade ground and the respect given to us by our country-men and the prestige of my regiment".

Keeping Alive

On 22nd April 1989 Major Safdar, took off to ascertain the situation at Naveed Top and relayed the good news regarding their being alive. Captain Kamran was the next one to be slung by helicopter to the top. As the helicopter got airborne his harness gave way resulting in his being somersaulted. From a distance it looked as if he is doing aerobatics, all his big pack contents flew away, in the end he was safely dropped at the post. By the end of the day a total of eight persons along with supplies were dropped at the top and situation was under control now. Major Nihal Jaffery made valiant attempts and finally dropped igloo hut parts. Troops had to be supported at the top for whom after God their only hope lay in Army Aviation. As narrated by Major Safdar.

"The method of dropping supplies was interesting. The packets of rations, tent, kerosene oil, stove and ammunition would all be bundled. The helicopter would take off and unload in the air at a certain height, Since these drops were carried out in motion, most of the time the bundles would roll down the precipitous slopes and would be irretrievable. Some method had to be devised to prevent this wastage and to ensure that the supplies were delivered intact. One ingenious method adopted was the insertion of a bamboo pole inside the bundle. This ingenuity worked, whenever a bundle would start rolling down; the jutting end of the extended bamboo pole would get stuck in the fresh snow. It would take a couple of rolls but by then the momentum of the fall would peter out and it would stop. At such an altitude of over 22,000 feet, with cliffs going vertically upwards, the risk of bringing the helicopter to a complete halt was a dangerous feat. I tried it tentatively, the engine sputtered but responded, it had sustained the pause and could manage the final ascent. I then put this thought into practice. I had a rope hanging from the load, through the mirror, when I saw the warrior at top tugging at the rope, I unhooked the load. It fell like a ripe plum at Captain Naveed's feet". Colonel Sehgal adds following on supplies; "Extreme low temperatures at altitudes above 6,000 meters rendered the troops incapable of opening of loads(bundles), thus large knives would accompany each luggage consignment to enable cutting of ropes by the recipient. At such altitude it was not possible to cook food therefore cooked food had to be helilifted and dropped at the top".



Lieutenant Colonel Safdar Hussain.

Naveed Top was about 150 meters short of Kamran Top and from Kamran Top the distance to the summit was another about 150 meters. The commander wanted to know about the enemy dispositions on the reverse slope so that troops, who were being slung and lifted to the Naveed Top were made well aware of what lay in store for them. Major Safdar was told to fly a mission over enemy lines and to reconnoiter the area. The suggested route was to take off from the base and then a straight eastwardly flight to Point.

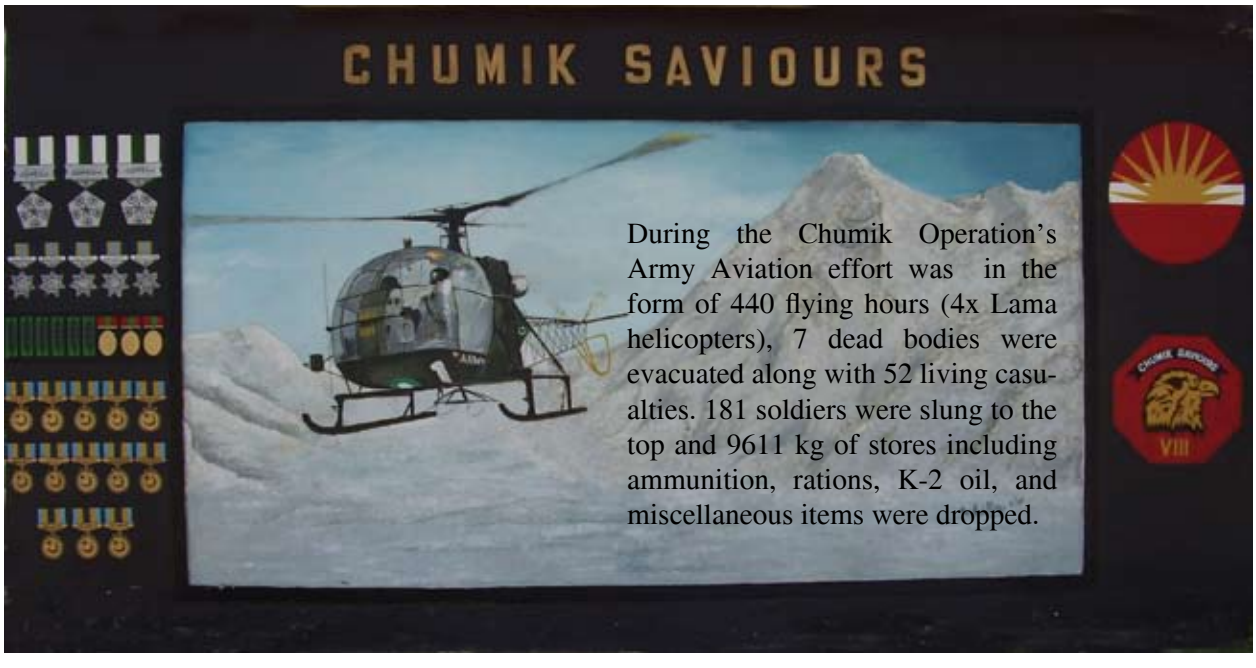
22,158, up and across it. As he soared high up, he decided to follow another route; he could count on his luck and fly over the enemy from their rear. The first approach was more perilous because the enemy gun positions at Agra I and Agra II would straight away spot him, and the chance of completing his mission looked highly impossible. He flew towards the south and going deep down Gyong, he swerved to the east and took the northerly heading over enemy deployment at Sadhu. Straightaway he spotted an enemy helicopter pad, made of wooden planks that could be assembled, put together and installed at any place of choice. In close proximity of the helicopter pad he noticed five tents of the enemy and he could count eight enemy soldiers who had become dumb-founded on seeing him. His copilot Major Jaffri spotted a well dug bunkered machine gun position in the eastern margins of Point. 22,158. Before the enemy could collect their wits about, he had whirred up the chopper over the peak, taking a sharp but measured dive into the depth of the clearance, he made it home accomplishing his mission most fruitfully.

Casualty Evacuation

At Chumik when the feature 22,158 was occupied there were casualties to be evacuated. For this an innovative plan was hatched. The helicopter would take a load of 25 kilogram in a basket, this basket would be attached at one end of the rope, suspended from the belly of the helicopter. Load would be unhooked, while the helicopter hovered above Naveed Top and in place of load, the casualty would be duly harnessed, hitched, and flown back to the base camp. Major Safdar on one such mission had a close call. Casualty was hitched to the helicopter, he(Safdar) could see the heavy back pack bulging on the back of the casualty, on the signal to move, Major Safdar pulled the collective but Lama remained unmoved and drifted to the left and started sinking, from his vast experience of flying in the Siachen Glacier, Major Safdar realized that end is near and only way to survive is to unhook the casualty, co- pilot shouted and informed him of impediment but Major Safdar was adamant and replied “either we are going to make it together or die with him”. Using all his experience Major Safdar was able to inject the life into the Lama just a few feet short of the sheer fall.The casualty had already collapsed as reported by the second helicopter following, and was limping on one side. Major Safdar headed for Skardu where medical facilities were located, when he landed there, already the Low Fuel warning light was on, casualty survived. Later it was revealed that he had more than 60 kilogram of load in his back pack.

Epilogue

Chumik operation was the first major triumph of Pakistan Army in the glaciated conflict, it also marked the end of Siachen conflict for some time as both countries announced cessations of hostilities during a meeting which took place between 17-19 August 1989 at Rawalpindi.





CHULLUNG OPERATION - July 1992

Chullung

A track connects Goma with Chullung from Chullung the route leads to Adil Post which is the sector headquarters. Between Chullung and Adil Post, the helicopters had to operate for 70 seconds in enemy line of sight and within the effective range of shoulder fire, surface to air missile(SAM). The highest own landing point in this area was Chullung at a height of 4,000 meters.

Headquarters Force Command Northern Areas(FCNA) planned an offensive operation in 'No Man's Land' in the Chullung Sector of 323 Brigade. The operation was aimed at establishing a new post, called "Panther Post" at an altitude of 5,300 meters. The operation was kept under secrecy and aviation was not incorprated in the planning phase. On night 30/31 July, 1992 Lama Flight received a reconnaissance mission in the area of operations. Resultantly, next day Lama helicopter No 2686 piloted by Major Khalid Sohail Sultan and Lama helicopter No 2689 piloted by Major Muhammad Mujahid Asad reached the brigade area of operations. Initially both helicopters were utilized for routine sortie. It was during the later part of the day, that Lama Flight Commander was instructed to drop 6-8 soldiers in the vicinity of Commando Ridge located in the 'No Man's Land'. Major Khalid debated with the commander that it would be more appropriate if a reconnaissance sortie is flown over the intended landing spot. Brigade commander after weighing up the pilot's logic versus the secrecy and surprise, rejected pilot's idea. Both Lama helicopters took off with one soldier on board each. First Major Khalid went for the landing and establishing of Panther Post at 5,300 meters, when Major Asad came for landing, enemy fire came in, Major Asad dropped the soldier safely and put the helicopter into a dive and escaped. Both helicopters were refuelled at Chullung, where post flight inspection revealed that helicopter No 2689 had been hit by a bullet which had passed through the main rotor blade. As it was getting dark so no more sorties were conducted for the day. Both Lamas returned back to Skardu after 2000hours.

Next day (1st August 1992) two Lamas, helicopters No 2692 piloted by Major Khalid Sohail Sultan with Major Babar Ramzan as copilot. Lama helicopter No 2694 piloted by Major Safdar Jananzeb and co-



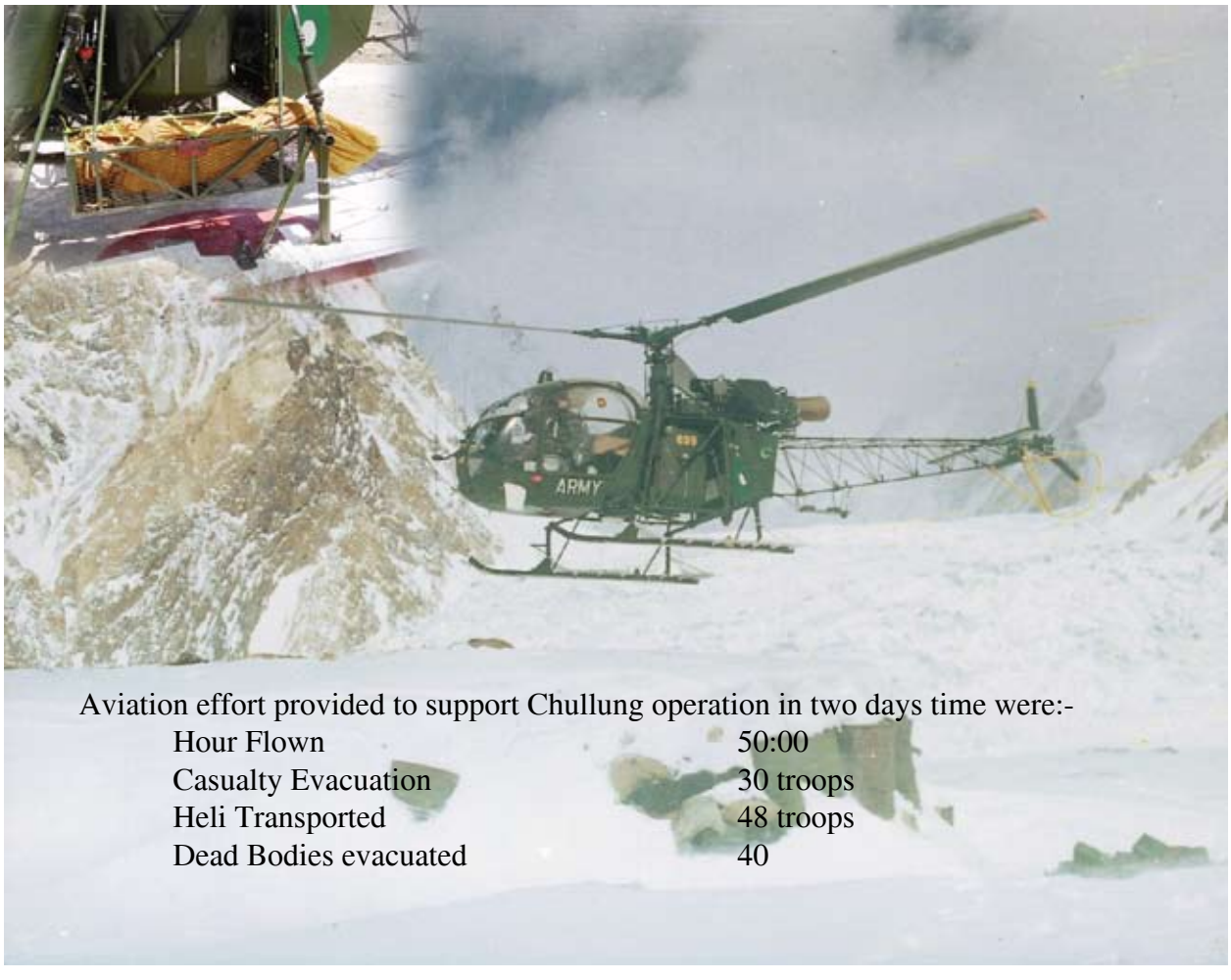
Lama landing after reconnaissance mission in Chullung Glacier

pilot Maj Asad reached Chullung at 0810hours. At 1030 hours Commander 323 Brigade contacted the flight commander and briefed him about the tactical situation, which was well under control, however, it seems that an unseen enemy observer post, is bringing fire. Situation warrants that this enemy post must be located immediately. Moreover own troops are in the process of completing Panther Post despite suffering heavy casualties mainly due to this enemy post.

At 1105hours the brigade intelligence officer received the information from Baqir Post that enemy helicopters are flying behind La Bunker area. At 1125hours, own helicopters took off for Panther Post, with lion heart brigade commander Brigadier Masood Anwari on board as well, knowing fully well that enemy is waiting for them. The observation was so vital for the forthcoming operation that this threat was put aside. When approximately ½ km short of Panther Post, Lama helicopter No 2692 was hit by a missile fired from enemy post. The missile hit the tail rotor of the helicopter and Major Khalid Sohail Sultan, the pilot gave a call on radio; "I have been hit and going down". The helicopter crash landed in area Chullung La. 1/3 of the tail boom had flown away after impact of the missile and was found lying 1.5 kms from the main wreckage. The impact of the helicopter with the ground resulted in the shahdat of all the occupants: -

Brigadier Masood Naveed Anwari
Major Khalid Sohail Sultan
Major Babar Ramzan

In recognition of their dedication, courage and bravery. All three officers were conferred with Sitara-i-Jur'at. In ensuing operation 50 of our valiant soldiers embraced shahadat.



Aviation effort provided to support Chullung operation in two days time were:-

Hour Flown	50:00
Casualty Evacuation	30 troops
Heli Transported	48 troops
Dead Bodies evacuated	40



IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Siachen was a new frontier and a new challenge for Army Aviators, which is still going on. This forays into the demanding altitude of Siachen has its own share of cost; the flying accidents. Almost all accidents took place due to bad weather and operating beyond safe limits for operational necessity.

Gyong (Allouette No.5188)

On 16th June 1986 Captain Nasir Zaidi was detailed on a mission in Gyong Sector and other helicopter in the formation was flown by Captain Rashid. Captain Zaidi was No 2 in the formation and he had not seen this area earlier. After getting the weather clearance both helicopters took off from Gyong and after dropping load at rear saddle while coming to Lazwal-II found scattered clouds enroute.



Flying in Northern Areas

Captain Lilla was the copilot on this flight he recalls; "It was a common phenomenon to take the chances with the weather, so far we have been lucky in this regard. Right from our training in school we have been hammered to respect the weather but situation here was different, it was always our endeavour to get the maximum out of the sortie for the posts. On this day we had gone to drop two commandos at a forward area to establish a post. I had to help them in getting out of the helicopter thus my straps were unbuckled, real panic set in after we had entered the haze and our contact with ground was lost. It was like flying in a white sea, area is such where even in broad day light pilot has to be careful in flying due to the close proximity of peaks. After the impact rather a split second short of it I inadvertently grabbed the magnetic compass which is placed in front of pilot, impact was so severe that I was pushed to the rear seat with compass in my hand. After we regained senses we asked about each other's safety and miraculously we both were fine. As we got out of the Allouette the sudden cold and altitude started telling. Moreover we were in the normal coverall and simple shoes thus even few feet walk was tiring. We were not sure of our exact location and when we saw the troops coming towards us we thought that they were Indians and my captain asked me 'do you think they know any thing like Geneva Convention'?".



Mountains in Summer

Lazawal - Allouette

Commanding Officer 5 Army Aviation Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan had gone to see the site of Captain Nasir Zaidi's crashed helicopter to inquire into the circumstances that caused it and to make sure that it is not repeated again. After having done so, he took off from crash site with three passengers on board. One minute after takeoff a loud thud was heard, which jolted the helicopter, and then it progressively started loosing height and could not sustain a level flight. There was a big boulder about 50 feet high in

the flight path. In order to avoid this he pulled the cyclic back, though the helicopter cleared the boulder but could not sustain the flight any more and after skidding through some distance it finally toppled over to the left and came to a halt. The helicopter was completely wrecked, miraculously with no major injuries to the crew or passengers on board.

Allah Din (Lama No. 2677) 26th August 1986



On 26th August 1986, Major Naqvi and Major Shah Nawaz Badar were detailed for an ammunition dumping mission in Dansum area in Siachen. They took off from Kurmading around 1130hours and gave one drop of artillery ammunition at Allahdin Post, which is located at 5,300 meters. After about half an hour this crew made attempt to drop load but had to turn back due to weather. At about 1345hours the crew made another attempt and on reaching the Allahdin Post found tail wind in the only available direction. The pilot started the approach in tail wind and two panel short pilot felt rapid sink. It was a steep approach with no forward speed. The pilot tried to manoeuvre the helicopter towards left to clear the helipad while doing so the main rotors engaged the boulders on the slope of the ridge followed by fuselage hitting and rotating anti clock wise The helicopter crashed about 50 meters north west and 100 feet lower than the helipad on the mountain slope. Luckily both pilots survived.

Ambush Post 23rd March 1987(Lama No. 2676)

On 23rd March 1987, Lama helicopter No 2676 piloted by Major Azhar Akbar and Major Muhammad Iqbal (both course mates) was detailed on a mission in Gyong Valley, Dansum Sector for the evacuation of two dead bodies and to look for a party of 4 Sind Regiment which was not traceable for over nine hours between Ambush Post and Camp-I. The pilot after a short time spotted a party of men walking on the glacier and they decided to land there to confirm whether they are the same lost troops. The spot of landing was sloping forward with a telephone wire hardly 5-10 feet from the rotor tip. The party was tied with a rope as per the SOP while moving on the glacier, the distance between each individual soldier was approx 20-25 feet.



Majority of the helipads are like this

On approaching the helicopter all the four individuals wanted to be evacuated simultaneously so each wanted to get in first. Two of them rushed in the helicopter while the other two were forcing their way in when the helicopter started creeping forward on the slope. Because of the telephone wire in close proximity the helicopter was abruptly picked up by Major Iqbal without informing the captain, with two individuals inside the helicopter and two hanging out side all tied with the same rope. This take off led to an abrupt change of centre of gravity both laterally and longitudinally, the nose

attitude exceeded beyond permissible limits and the bank to the left further aggravated, finally resulting into a crash on the glacier resulting in the destruction of helicopter and loss of two lives (individuals hanging out side). Pilots remained scratchless.

Saddle - Lama No 2678 11th April 1987



Saddle Post 'If you have not been here, you have not been to Siachen'

Lama helicopter No 2678 piloted by Major Safdar and Major Ifzal of 8 Army Aviation Squadron was on a routine dumping mission in Baltoro Sector. This helicopter had already made two trips to the Conway Saddle and on the third trip it was safely loaded with 1,490 kg of all up weight and had a out of ground effect margin of 140 kg.

On reaching the Conway Saddle at 6,050 meters an approach was initiated by Maj Safdar from south easterly direction. Once on finals Major Safdar realized that the rate of closure was faster than normal so he came up on the collective pitch. This act resulted into a higher rate of descend and the co-pilot told his captain that the helicopter is sinking so he must go around.

The captain of the helicopter initiated a go around at a time when helicopter had already started sinking. The correction applied did not have any effect on the helicopter and it hit the ground uncontrollably. The helicopter engine kept running after the impact. The helicopter was completely destroyed.

In the other helicopter following them were Major Javaid and Captain Sehgal and he (Sehgal) narrates; "It was my first day in Siachen glacier, in the morning myself and Major Javaid had landed at Skardu in a PIA flight, as we were still in the aircraft when captain of PIA announced that Army Aviators to please report to ground staff. Later we met Major Safdar and Captain Ifzal who were waiting for our arrival they told us to change into coverall immediately which we did in a corner of airport and then started the helicopter and started following the leader for the dumping mission. At Saddle I saw the lead helicopter going down and then saw them alive, later Major Javaid got Major Safdar and Captain Ifzal onboard, the takeoff was very marginal and I think I took my first breath when we got airborne. That was my first day in Siachen".



Dansum, Allouette No. 1953

On 24*th* February 1988 Allouette-III helicopter No 1953 piloted by Major Ijaz Haider Zaidi and Captain Waqar Baig was on an operational mission in Dansum Sector. After completing the mission the pilots refuelled the helicopter at Dansum and got ready to takeoff with five persons on board (3x crew persons and 2 x passengers).

The helicopter took off in a

very gentle headwind and gained a height of 200-300 feet. Suddenly the pilot noticed RPM fluctuation but there was no change in engine noise. On seeing this the pilot increased the collective pitch from 0.85 to 1.0, moments after which the needles split and loss of power was experienced. The pilot immediately executed an autorotation, which was not successful due to high attitude 9,140 feet. and type of terrain at the accident site. All occupants of the helicopter died instantly except the Crew Chief Havildar Riasat who jumped out during the autorotation and sustained minor injuries.

Gyari- Lama No. 2683

Lama helicopter No 2683 piloted by Major Shakeel and Captain Nadeem was on a routine dumping mission in Dansum Sector. After about 3:20 hours of flying they picked up some load from Goma helipad and set course for Gyari.

At Gyari helipad the pilot initiated the approach which was high and over shooting. Close to the helipad the pilot realized that the aircraft was too high and the rate of descend was already fast. He came on the controls and tried to avoid sink by applying the available power but he could not check the sink because of high altitude and the fact that the aircraft was overloaded. Its all up weight was in excess by 30 kilograms, however the captain managed to avoid the live ammunition, explosives, fuel and other material placed around the helipad by drifting to left. The helicopter made contact with the ground with nose high attitude and the main rotors chopped off the tail rotor and tail boom. The helicopter was completely destroyed but the pilots sustained only minor injuries.

Bashu -Puma No. 1988

On 31st July 1988 Puma helicopter No 1406 piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Sajid Islam and Major Khalid Akhtar (copilot) of 25 Army Aviation Squadron took off at 1230hours from Qasim for Gilgit. The helicopter arrived Gilgit at 1450hours. After refuelling at Gilgit the helicopter took off for Skardu at 1630hours. The mission was to replace the Puma helicopter already stationed at Skardu which had become due for periodic inspection. Other than pilot and copilot the following six persons were on board:-

Subedar Muhammad Rafique	Flight Engineer
Havildar Abdul Haq	Crew Chief
Havildar Muhammad Arshad	
Havildar Zahoor Ahmed	
Havildar Muhammad Yousaf	
Havildar Liaqat Ali	

After thirty minutes of flight enroute to Skardu when the helicopter arrived near village Bashu, Lieutenant Colonel Sajid observed abnormal noise from the engine compartment and sensed unusual smell, also oil was detected leaking from the right engine and the crew experienced failure of right engine. The most probable cause to which failure of right engine can be attributed is the failure of rear bearing of axial compressor.



Upon encountering the emergency the pilot decided to make immediate landing close to village Bashu located at an altitude of 2,000 meters. He initiated the approach for landing, the landing pattern and approach was as per teaching. With single engine he could not check the rate of descend and the helicopter contacted the ground with severe impact and

bounced 20-25 feet off the ground, this opened the passengers door and two passengers namely Arshad and Zahoor were thrown out of the helicopter further more the impact broke the neck of a full oxygen cylinder(large size) and caught fire. Puma Captain Lieutenant Colonel Sajid Islam true to old tradition remained seated on his seat and ordered the rest of crew to jump out. Copilot Major Akhtar and crew chief Havildar Khaliq jumped out from Puma engulfed in flames while Colonel Sajid died on his seat with his hands gripping the cyclic control along with flight engineer Subedar Muhammad Rafique. Havildar Muhammad Yousaf and Havildar Liaqat Ali died on the spot. Copilot Major Khalid Akhtar and crew chief Havildar Abdul Haq were seriously burnt as a result of post crash fire. They were evacuated to Combined Military Hospital, Rawalpindi on the following day but they also succumbed to burn injuries and died a fortnight after the crash. Persons who were thrown out of the helicopter received minor injuries and survived.

Dansum Lama No.2690

On 7th August 1989, Lama helicopter No 2690 piloted by Major Ahmed Nehal Jafri with Captain Wasem Malik as the co pilot was on a reconnaissance mission from Dansum to Yasin Post. After starting the helicopter, pilot picked it up to hover at a slightly higher altitude due to dusty helipad. After carrying out routine pre-take off checks he initiated the take off. As soon as the helicopter moved forward, severe yawing movement was experienced coupled with loss of power and abnormal engine noise. Helicopter started loosing height. Pilot applied collective to arrest the descent but there was no response and helicopter crash landed in a close by Nullah. Both pilots survived



Empty Fuel Jerri cans are used to make helipads

Saddle Again - Lama No. 2693

On 13th March 1991, Lama helicopter No 2693 piloted by Captain Pervaiz Mahmood Butt and Captain Shahid Ahmed Gulzar, flew to Conway Saddle (Baltoro Sector) for a casualty evacuation mission. While putting down the helicopter on the snow covered helipad, it developed severe ground resonance. Pilot Captain Butt immediately picked up the helicopter to hover and initiated a right paddle turn to take off for International Himalayan Expedition Camp. During the process the helicopter sank abruptly with a pronounced





unusual engine noise which resulted into an uncontrolled hard landing on the helipad. Pilots immediately switched off the helicopter by adopting the emergency switching off procedure to avoid any fire hazard. Crew escaped unhurt, however, both shock struts, rear tube and skids of helicopter were damaged. Although the helicopter had sustained minor damage, yet due to high altitude (6,050m) and extreme weather conditions, it was not technically possible to rectify and repair it at Conway Saddle. It was, therefore, stripped and retrieved in parts except the canopy and centre structure which got buried under the snow in the process.

Colonel Pervaiz Butt recalls that event; "After the accident we came out of the helicopter and by this time the troops also arrived. The radio sets of the helicopter were working so, I gave the call to Major Mahmood who was in the other helicopter at the base camp, he asked 'when are you coming'?. I had to tell him that we have crashed, he evacuated us in few minutes and also evacuated the casualty. Next day our Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Safdar and General Officer Commanding Army Aviation Major General Rahmat also arrived to visit the accident site. General made me fly the helicopter and sat with us. He also remained at Saddle Post for over two hours. Simultaneously salvage operation started in which two crew chiefs were helilifted to the Saddle where they took all that was possible in a day. Next day weather turned bad and when after five days we went back to the top there was no sign of the helicopter. The Post told us that they had erected a 8 feet bamboo for sign posting but now both have sunk under the snow".

Arif Post - Lama No. 2673, 21st March 1992

Sepoy Wali Muhammad of 5 Northern Light Infantry (NLI) Battalion, on duty at Arif Post developed sickness during early days of March 1992. His condition became critical by 15 March and he expired on 18 March 1992 at 0700hours. Arif Post is located in Piun Sector at an altitude of 19,300 feet. It is on a ridge line with a almost razor sharp edge, post has been created by improvement of the ridge line and making small living bunkers for 5-6 men and two small bunkers for machine guns. The sick Jawan could not be evacuated because of the difficult climb of over 70 degree. Therefore the only alternative to recover the dead body was through a helicopter. The Lama Flight Commander detailed two Lamas to undertake this mission, Lama 2673 with Major Tahir Ali and Captain Nawaz and Lama No 2689 with Major Aman Ullah and Captain Anjum Enayat as the crew. Major Syed Tahir Ali was on his 4th tenure and Captain Muhammad Nawaz was on his first tenure in northern area.

The helicopters arrived in the Arif Post area at 1115hour and carried out high reconnaissance by making one left hand orbit remaining south of the ridge line and approximately 100 feet above the helipad surface. In the second orbit the mission leader announced his intention for a landing while the No 2 continued to orbit overhead. After crossing the ridge line from east of helipad. Major Tahir Ali made a slow controlled approach from north-east and seemed to pause for a moment just short of entering the helipad. He placed the helicopter left of the 3 feet x 3 feet letter 'H' in an effort to accommodate his rotor disc in the marginal clearance available. At this stage the main rotor blade tips were passing only 1½ to 2 feet from the boulder. The sequence of events occurring this moment onwards happened in quick succession. The snow under the heals which were right on the edge of the helipad gave away when the pilot unloaded the rotors partially. The Lama's tail boom rocked backwards over the 2,000 feet fall on the northern edge of helipad. The pilot instinctively moved the cycle forward to counter this unexpected sudden situation. As a consequence, the helicopter skidded forward 1-2 feet on its toes. As a secondary measure this remedial action was aided by the pilot by giving slight collective. The helicopter broke ground and while doing so, the, main rotor engaged the boulder on the west which was obscured from pilots view after entering the helipad. As a result the tail boom, swinging left, hit the same boulder.

The helicopter after being destabilized cleared the helipad and started an uncontrolled right spiraling descend. It hit the mountain slope 60-70 meters below the helipad and continued downwards accompanied by an avalanche. It finally fell on its left side in the glacier down below. Both the pilots Major Tahir Ali and Captain Nawaz expired due to injuries received in two thousand feet fall.

Eggs For Saddle. Lama No.2678

On 14th May 1993 two Lama helicopters were on a routine dumping mission to Baltoro Sector. Helicopter No 2678 which was piloted by Major Nadeem Khattak and Captain Khusro, picked up a sling load of 60 kilograms from IHEC well within its permissible weight limits.

The helicopter initiated the approach in 6-8 Knots of tail wind with no turbulence or drafts. The pilots did not observe any abnormality or change in engine noise till helicopter reached short finals. When the Lama was only 20 meters high and about 50 meters short of helipad, suddenly the pilots experienced an unusual feeling of sink. Although at an altitude of 6,000 meters there was not much of collective pitch margin available to the pilot but still he tried his best to control the last sink by using maximum permissible collective pitch. The helicopter did not respond to any of the actions done by the pilot and hit the ground cutting its tail pylon. The helicopter sustained substantial damage whereas the pilots escaped unhurt. Later the helicopter sank and got buried under the snow.

Lieutenant Colonel Khusro Habib narrates the accident; "It was my first mission in the area, we had to pick up the sling load of igloos for the Conway Saddle from the IHEC. The problem was that pieces of load were not in conformity to our load table. We wanted to take the maximum load allowed to the peak thus we attached the 60 kg piece with us, we also had boiled eggs for the post as a gift from the Lama Flight. In addition there was a casualty waiting for the evacuation. After the crash in which helicopter got toppled and I was on the upper side, it was with great difficulty that we came out of the helicopter and felt the lack of oxygen. By this time soldiers also joined us from the post and took us inside and offered us tea and cigarettes, the most worried person was the casualty who thought that now he would be left at the post but I assured him that he would be the first one to go down which he did. Last but not the least the eggs were handed over to the post, unbroken".

Hit Over Conway Saddle

Major Ubaid was posted to 8 Army Aviation Squadron from 5-Army Aviation Squadron (KKH) with an experience of 312.4 hours on Allouette-III. After necessary conversion and a number of tenures he achieved the milestone of captaincy of Lama on 17th October 1994. Here he narrates an unusual experience of Conway Saddle.

"On 12th August 1995, I was detailed to fly a routine dumping mission at Conway Saddle with Major Muhammad Sagheer Chaudhary as my copilot. Major Babar Faroqui and Major Shahid Baloch were detailed in the second Lama. I ensured detailed planning of the mission through my co-pilot thus training him in this aspect. I briefed him about various features enroute and peculiarities of flying at 6,000 meters. During the first sling drop, I indicated the Lama that had crashed on Conway Saddle earlier. It was our fourth sling drop of the day; all things were smooth, apart from the constant chatter of wireless operator at IHEC and Conway Saddle. They were consequently passing information about our position and



Troops at Conway Saddle, helipad is mark with 'H'

the type of load we were carrying under our helicopter. After the drop once I turned back for IHEC and was about 200-250 feet above ground, we heard a loud bang along with flashing light and the helicopter gave severe jerk. I immediately realized that we have been hit and gave a call "I'm hit, I'm hit' I am hit'. Major Shahid, co pilot of the other helicopter, advised me to turn for the helicopter pad at Conway Saddle. Meanwhile I had lowered the collective to full down position and established auto-rotative flight and head towards the helicopter pad. Major Sagheer gave a pat on my left knee and calmly said, "You are handling it, Sir' He started to monitor the Instruments and apprised me of the damage caused by the blast. The rear portion of the cockpit plexi had been shattered. There was a hole in both the doors just behind our heads. Only Allah Almighty knew what all damage had been caused outside.

As I had initiated a turn towards the helicopter pad but soon it was clear that the helicopter shall hit ground much before that. The vertical velocity indicator indicated maximum rate of descend and the ground seemed to be coming upwards at a tremendous rate. Another worry, which came to our mind was the chance landing on top of the previously crashed helicopter that was lying there with it skids towards the sky. There I flared the helicopter at about 50 feet above ground and tried to cushion the landing as always taught. But no sooner did I apply the collective that the helicopter gave a very vicious yaw to the left and turned 360 degrees. This was indication enough that the tail rotor was not working. I again dumped the collective while maintaining a level platform. The helicopter hit the ground with quite a force and the skids sank in the loose snow. I asked Major Sagheer if he was all right and I gave a call to the other helicopter that we were safe. To my amazement, I saw my co-pilot carrying out the normal shut down procedure. And to this day, it if is possible people can see that he stopped one blade in front just according to the check list. I pulled back the fuel shut off lever and told him to exit the helicopter.

As we came out of the helicopter we saw officers and jawans of Saddle Post rushing towards us. They took us to the igloo and gave us oxygen. After about 25-30 minutes, Major Babar Farooqui and Major Shahid Baloch evacuated us".

Gultri, Lama No.2691

On 23rd September 1995, Major Ibrar and Major Amir Ayub were on reconnaissance mission from Dumba Bhao to Gultri. At 4,600 meters abeam Gultri the helicopter experienced severe jerk coupled with a loud noise. Lama descended at high speed and close to the ground the pilot raised the attitude of the Lama to reduce speed. Major Ibrar and crew chief received minor injuries where as Major Amir Ayub was seriously injured. Both the pilots remained hospitalized for a prolonged period and by the grace of Allah both are now Lieutenant Colonels.



Lama is being guided to the helipad, amidst bad weather



REMEMBERING SIACHEN



It is almost two decades when the first sortie for Siachen was flown. Out of the pioneer Aloutte pilots presently only Major General Azam and Brigadiers Rashid, Tahir, Inam Karim, and Ifzaal, are still flying. Most of the original breed of Lama pilots have retired and the young ones have now risen to the ranks of lieutenant colonel and above. Name of every pilot who has ever flown in Siachen and every technician who has made it possible needs to be written in gold.

Reminiscences Of A Squadron Commanding Officer



Lt. Col Kamal Khan

Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan of 5 Squadron was at the helm of affair in the initial days. His recollections include following; "I was commanding the squadron when it was the sole operator in those lofty mountains. In 1984 Lieutenant General Zahid Ali Akbar was the corps commander and Major General Javed Nasir the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) Commander. Both mutually decided to close the FWO Flight at Gilgit to make all resources available for the Northern Area operations. My squadron had its one flight at Chitral looking after the Lowari Tunnel project, other flight was at Gilgit for KKH and rest of the elements at Skardu. We were having trouble sailing in two boats. Technically the squadron was under command unit of the FWO. I being the senior aviator present, apprised the commanders of the technical limitations of Allouette helicopter and suggested that like India we should employ Lama helicopters.

Till 1984 there was no oxygen equipment for the pilots. It was purchased in the same year but there was no proper place in the helicopter for its installation and it was a make shift arrangement as pilots had to constantly undergo rapid altitude transitions from 20,000 feet and below. Within the helicopter, there would be one cylinder with two pipes jutting out, the pilots would inhale the oxygen in gulps whenever they reached the desired height over 12,000 feet. For the first time physiological impact of high altitude on pilots was addressed and courses were given at PAF School Karachi which we all including myself attended where we under went chamber tests. Limits of 60 hours of flying or 21 days was imposed which ever comes earlier. Regarding operations, Puma used to carry the supplies up till 4000 meters and Allouette would start dumping from there up till 5,500 meters carrying 20-30 kilograms of weight.

In July 1985 Vice Chief Of Army Staff(VCOAS) General Khalid Arif came to the visit of Northern Areas. It was the same time when 323 Brigade was raised. Coming back to the visit, VCOAS was there to assess the feasibility of maintaining present posts. He was accompanied by the Qasim Aviation Base



Lama





Allouette

Pilots flying in northern areas were issued with special high altitude dress including thermal undergarments, furlined shoes, gloves, Jackets and special glare sun glasses.



The Pioneers 'Major Sami and Major Azam'



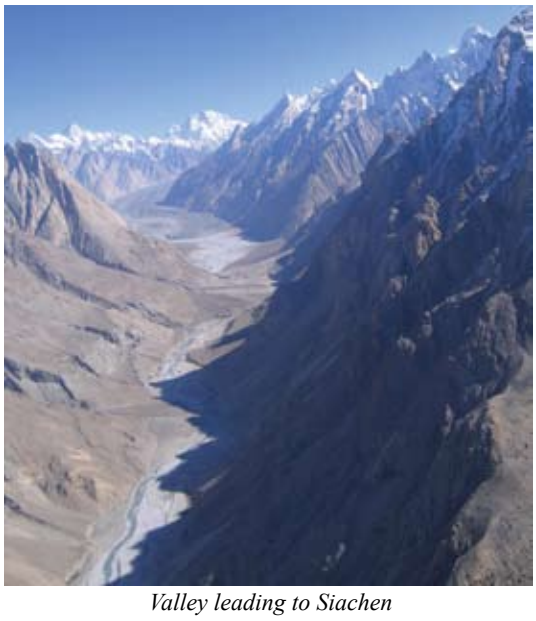
Soldiers living is an Igloo



Colonel Mazhar

Commander, Brigadier Nauman. During the presentation VCOAS asked the base commander: "What can you do for the sustenance of the posts"?. Brigadier Nauman replied: "We can do all that army requires us to do but it would take time in dumping". I was asked to produce exact weight calculation and present it next day.Next day VCOAS went to Saddle with me and landed at International Himalayan Expedition Camp(IHEC), where after getting down he felt the strain of lack of oxygen due to non acclimatization. Later VCOAS complained of head ache for two days but he was more wise on the area. The requirement was to dump 450 tons of logistics till 30th September 1985 at forward posts. I calculated the loads in terms of trips and made the presentation to the VCOAS, later all Allouettes were attached from all over the country including Corps Composite Squadrons for this purpose. There were 8 Allouettes operating at one time with four on flying service and other four on rotational maintenance. At Conway Saddle Captain Yaseen an infantarian was dropped in a fast taxi for the first time, in second sortie fuel was dropped and in the third his tent-age was dropped. With me on the controls was Major Khalid (later Brigadier)".

Colonel Mazhar admits that while flying towards Skardu from Qasim on his first tenure he kept on asking his captain about the K-2 peak as that was the only name which he knew. Once he became captain of the Lama he got a chance to fly around K-2 not as an operational necessity but out of inquisitiveness. "I was part of a two Lama formation and somehow the other I ventured around K-2 and went towards the Chinese side so far so good but when I tried to turn around towards own side the helicopter refused to climb the reason was the cloud cover which had obscure the sun light. After few minutes the real panic sets in as fuel was running short and in case if I force land then there was no chance of my rescue as nobody would look around for me in this area. After some time I got a lucky break as there was a gap in the clouds which allowed the sun light to pass through. I made use of that and came back safely". He further narrates, "in the beginning local population used to duck and run for cover when ever there was noise of helicopter but later they got used to it. As a policy of squadron we would carry sweets and edibles and would throw them towards the children. Later the local population would put up a white cloth which indicated that some one needs medical evacuation and majority of time we would pick them up while going back towards Skardu. It should be kept in mind that where Lama would take only 10-15 minutes to reach Skardu, the road transport would take 8-10 hours. Initially one house was requisitioned from



Valley leading to Siachen



Troops at Siachen



Shigar Valley in Autumn



Conway Saddle

Northern Area Works Organisation(NAWO). At the end of 1988 we had an eye on a house near mosque road and it was christened as the new Lama House. Its rent was Rupees 7000. Squadron used to pay the 2000 and corps used to pay the balance amount. Electricity was very low thus squadron bought a generator and a 26 inch television along with Video Cassette Recorder. Another house was also requisitioned for married officers".

A six hours conversion on Lama helicopter was conducted either at Qasim Base or at Skardu. Lieutenant Colonel Talat Sheikh did his conversion on Lama while flying from Qasim to Skardu with Major Javaid "after landing at Skardu, Major Javaid told me to go solo and I did so" narrates Lieutenant Colonel Talat and he further highlights that this was the confidence which instructor pilot had in himself and his student. In 1995 autorotation on Allouettes were taught to youngsters at Skardu by Lieutenant Colonel Bhangoo. There was limit of 60 hours of flying or 21 days whichever comes first. Copilots and captains would remain together 24 hours; they would dine and walk together thus understanding each other in totality. Major Khalid Rana commented that even dances on television would be discussed in terms of 'Flare'.

Lieutenant Colonel Zia Ur Rehman narrates that the only painting which he has ever made in his life was at the Lama House when the bad weather suspended flying for over a week, his colleague Lieutenant Colonel Anees learnt cooking at Lama House and became so good that in the end he had to cook in all squadron parties which were quite frequent. He also planted lot of roses as a hobby. Lieutenant Colonel Zia Uddin was addicted to Tolkiens and finished many of his books at Lama house. Most common feature was the regular walk in the evening and weekly fishing trips towards the Satpara Lake.

There was an invisible relationship between pilots and the troops at the posts. It was the policy of Lama Flight to take the freshly cooked flying meal for the posts apart from cigarettes and magazines which are most wanted items in Siachen. Most of the officers at the posts were volunteer from varying arms and luckily if they had their unit officer in aviation then he would be looked after. Like Lieutenant Colonel Hidayat would take fresh cake from Rawalpindi for his Piffer officer at the post and when he completed his tenure even then "Hiddy" would take the cake for the post. Lieutenant Colonel Alamgir remembers one Captain Jawad Aslam who was in Piun Sector and had come as a volunteer. His mother from Lahore sent a parcel for him care of 8 Squadron and that was duly delivered to the officer at the far flung post. Alas the officer died in an avalanche few days later and when his dead body was recovered a diary was found in his parka in which he had



Point NJ-9842 in the far distance



Trango Towers



Lama engine in winters, early morning



Colonel Sehgal (Sitara-i-Jur'at)

vowed to join aviation after his tenure of duty.

In mid eighties as a policy young officers after passing out from PMA went to Siachen and many of them remember the days when after GOD they had faith in the Army Aviation only. In 1988 one engineer officer while descending down from Yousaf Post lost his crampons and shoes and had to walk for hours on snow in socks. His only hope of survival according to him was "to reach the Ambush Post because from there I knew I would be heli lifted" and he was.

In the beginning the troops were not educated about the helicopters resultantly many accidents took place like Captain Farooq who after getting down at Dansum raised his hand to thanks the pilot but instantly got his fingers chopped off by the rotors, same holds true for aviators like Major Danyal of Puma who after getting on board threw the walking stick back to the soldier and the stick got into whirlwind of the rotors, the helicopter resultantly had to be stranded at the post for a day before repairs could be under taken. Brigadier Kaukab joined aviation in 1978 and later served in northern areas as part of 5 Squadron before proceeding to America for cobra conversion. He later served again in Siachen as part of 8 Squadron in 1988 and 1989 when he was the flight commander of Lama Flight. His reminiscences of those days are; "While undergoing cobra conversion and later as part of on job training with Americans I noticed that they would daily have the mission debrief in the evening, same I applied at Lama Flight. In those days we were getting the missions at odd hours regarding dumping etc. These missions when performed in hurry would always leave room for improvements so we started with daily brief and debrief in the evening. I met Commander FCNA and apprised him of the situation. My stance was that we can give better out put provided his staff gives the mission in advance. They should only tell us the task and leave rest to us. Moreover FCNA staff should co ordinate with subordinate formations for fuel and other details. Once these things were ironed out then pilots were able to concentrate more on flying aspects. In the briefing session we tried to keep it as informal and informative as possible. As a flight commander it was my responsibility to ensure that pilots are not over fatigued and are getting proper rest. As a policy at times pilots were given forced rest and days off. Equal flying distribution was also my domain. It was in this time (1989) that we shifted our accommodation in the famous Lama House from commissioners residence. The major flying hazard was the ego and enthusiasm of the pilots. Senior pilots may be able to undertake a certain mission and earn laurel but then it becomes precedence for the field formation to quote this thus putting extra pressure on the junior and

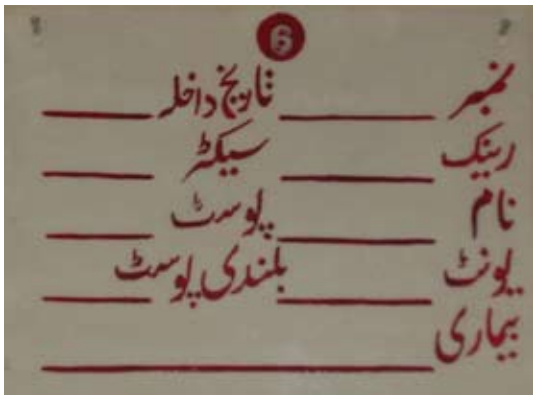




Brigadier Tahir



Gashabrum series, the right track leads to Siachen



Post height is very important in medical treatment



From left K-2 and Broad Peak

inexperienced pilot. The scarlet thread was to accept own and aircraft limitation. It was not easy to establish the authority of flight commander in accepting or rejecting a mission on the basis of technical viability".

Brigadier Tahir had his taste of Siachen flying as a young captain in 1985 and in 1987 both in his words were taken as enjoyable activity. He further narrates; "The culture prevailing was of flying oriented, there was a sense of pride in what we were doing. Even off time the aircraft limitations used to be discussed. Then there were constant mutual exchanges of views about approaches which at that time revolved around climbing or normal. Aircraft technical book dash 10 was part of bed side library and religiously consulted by all pilots before sleeping and in any case it was a good remedy for any new comer complaining of amnesia. Regarding Fog of War which persisted between 323 and 62 Brigade he adds 323 Brigade was commanded by Brigadier Mushtaq and Major Munir Akbar was the brigade major. On other other hand 62 Brigade was commanded by Brigadier Rehman with Major Javaid of artillery as the brigade major. Lieutenant Colonel Jamil was the Commanding Officer of 5 NL I and Lieutenant Colonel Julian Peter was the grade one staff officer for operations at FCNA. The locations of posts of both brigades in Chullung Sector were such that their artillery firing over each other was taken as the Indian shelling so much so that when Pakistan Ordnance Factory shells were shown to the concerned officers it was passed off as Patiala Ordnance Factory. Aviators were the only one who were operating in both brigades and for some time we were not in picture of what all is going around however when this issue reached to a point where a force under Major Lone known as Lone Force was made ready by one of the brigade for an attack. Aviation was incorporated in the operation. With the progress of time it was noted that whenever own helicopters went for dumping in the area the other post would pass off them as the Indian and vice versa. At times we were fired upon as well but slowly when we discussed the matter among ourselves it was revealed that own helicopters operating between two posts had been reported as the enemy. The final countdown in this saga reached when Major General Safdar, Commander FCNA reached on spot for giving final touches for the attack. At that time our Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan took him to one side and explained the phenomena and as a final proof Captain Mahmod and Captain Azhar Akbar flew with the commander towards the Adil Post and landed there. Meanwhile one artillery officer Major Rehman of Survey Group also detected anomaly in the reports and wisely no fire orders were given although shells were coming in



Puma Pilots - 1985



Hidden Peak





Conway Saddle as seen from east

from Adil Post on Sind Langar Post which were taken as the enemy post.Thus this fog of war was removed mainly due to the aviation efforts". He further elaborates the living conditions; "There was no recreation, flying itself was recreation, in the initial days there was no restriction on the flying and 6-8 hours daily was normal. Captain Inam Karim once flew 11 hours out of 12 light hours later it was regulated to maximum of 60 hours in a month, good meal was the only recreation. I still remembers that on Eid ul Azha day we had some problem with our kitchen and went to K-2 Motel for breakfast and on next Eid when we went for collective outing with the families, we took our coveralls with us and it proved handy because we got an emergency request for a casualty evacuation. Flying was challenging from technical aspect. Once myself and Captain Mahmood had Brigadier Tariq Mahmood with us on board, it was a good day for flying we got into strong tail wind but suddenly helicopter had a severe yaw and turned into wind and got static. To me if I have to give words of advice to newcomer in the arena then it would be, to check his rate of descend at all times. It should be so controlled that needle should remain static especially 4,000 meters and up, secondly one must make use of sunny side in mountain flying. It is better and safe to fly at one side of mountain rather than flying in the centre and last but not the least is the crew co ordination among captain and co pilot".

Lieutenant Colonel Shoaib Awan**,** remained in 5 Squadron from 1978-1982, he went to France for first Lama conversion and later flew in Siachen and commanded 8 Squadron as well. He recalls "In September –October 1984, I was the flight commander and Major Khaliq Anjum was the second in command of 5 Squadron and Majors Irfan Bhatty, Khalid, Rashid,Shaukat, Nofal, Nayyar, Alamzeb, Inam Karim, Mahmood and Tahir were the pilots. There were four Allouettes out of which two would operate in Gyong Sector and two in Ali Brangsa Sector. Main dumping was in Bila Fond La and Gyong Sector involving gun parts where as in Ali Brangsa – Gyari Sector it was K-2 oil, gun ammunition, casualty evacuation, command / liaison and reconnaissance. We were living scattered in Northern Light Infantry Mess and 62 Brigade Mess. There were 2-3 jeeps at our disposal on loan from formation. After Maghrib prayers we would gather in the anteroom of NLI Mess and planned the next day mission, which would reach us quite late. Our discussions covered all aspects of flying including types of approaches to be made, procedures for sling drop and routes leading to peculiar posts. After induction of Lama helicopter I was again posted as the flight commander and had Majors Azhar Akbar, Naqvi, Rashid, Mahmood



Lt Col Israr, Brig Munir, Lt Col Asif, Lt Col Daud, Brig Inam, Col Alamgir. veterans of Northern Areas

and Safdar as the pilots. We used to take extra care in landing with skis, as imperfect landing would lead to ground resonance, at Conway Saddle. As a precaution we would operate without doors and copilot would drop the load".

One of the difficult duty which aviators had to perform was to say no to the leave party. For troops going on leave from Gore especially during Eid, helilift means saving almost two days of walk up till Skardu. Aviators had their own labyrinth of weight calculations to look after. Experienced pilot may over ride few kilograms of weight but same cannot be expected from all.

In the beginning there were no high altitude kits for the pilots and they would fly in normal cover all. The bulky North Face parka was an hindrance in flying thus pilots would only wear the woollen under garments and self procured gloves. Lieutenant Colonel Irfan, narrates an interesting event in this regard; "On one of my first winter tenure I was flying as a copilot, we were heading towards the Saddle the helicopter was warm with its own heater and suddenly the captain in command opened the window to get the fresh air and within minutes I was freezing and told him so. Later I came to know that one of the un-written convention was to follow what captain wears, who in this case was putting on local Peshmina and Hunza socks". This problem used to be aggravated in winter especially when pilots coming from Skardu had to land at Gore for refuelling, the sudden and prolonged exposure to minus temperature from hot cabin was too much and resulted in headaches.

Lieutenant Colonel Rashid Baig has one casualty evacuation mission as his most memorable part of memory; "In 1996 at the end of our day long dumping mission I alongwith Captain Niazi had to evacuate a 18 years old Sepoy of Chitral Scouts who was hit by an enemy bullet and was bleeding to death at the Post. I had not even seen this post located at 15,000 feet but we were briefed at Piun about the general direction. We reached the post and it took fifteen minutes for the casualty to reach the helipad. He was literally red with blood. We were running short of time and on assessing the conditions of the casualty, I decided to proceed direct to Skardu. Abeam Khaplu it was dark and I could only see the reflection of river at Karpok Bend. Soon the river also disappeared and we were flying now on heading at 4,000 meters. I was now maintaining direction with occasional vehicles light moving on track below, finally this ordeal finished when I saw the lights of Skardu and landed at city helipad".

View From The Post

One of the Ghazi officer who remained at Haji Post (17,800 feet) in the winter of 1988 disclosed.



Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto with pilots of 8 Squadron, Siachen Glacier



Aerial view of K-2 and surrounding peaks



A pass (La) leading to Siachen

"There were many myths of glacier warfare especially of winter in which temperature drops to record zero. One such myth which circulated among the newcomer was that it is so cold at the post, that urine gets frozen the moment it leaves and had to be broken. On the contrary it is the warmest thing at such heights and its prints on snow remains for hours. However constipation was a common ailment and one of its remedy was to drink the Apricot Oil which was also used for bathing. The major worry at post was to attend the call of nature. In the absence of any regular bathroom or water it was bit unhygienic but the real ordeal was putting on the high altitude shoes which totally drains out energy at such altitude. The helipads at posts used to be fresh up prior to the arrival of helicopter with the help of Rafhan Energile or egg pudding both of these items were in abundance at posts. Bathing was not possible at posts but at sector headquarters after a fortnight some body would indulge in this luxury by heating the snow. Within the igloo the only way of keeping warm was through the oil burner which would remain operative till the time its oil ran out or something goes wrong with its filament. Many accidents of fire took place while refuelling it. Its constant black smoke would turn the snow white kit into crow black within days and noise would hammer the brain thus it was nick named as Brain Hammer. The major cause of frost bite was heating body parts especially feet



Chief of Army Staff General Jehangir Karamat visiting troops in Siachen. Major Anees is the pilot.



Balti women folk looking at helicopter



Lower Himalayas

and hands directly over the burner fire. The pain of frost bite is bearable but toothache at these heights is killing. Two jerri-cans put together with a mattress over it along with sleeping bag served as the sleeping cot, needless to say that it was like sleeping on snow. At times for days the snow storm would prevail and sometimes even in the mid of night snow has to be shovelled from the igloo to allow air for breathing. You cannot stand up in the two men igloo and some time days would be spent in lying position. In all this helicopters and pilots were most revered and talked people with every soldier and officer having one odd incident and tale to narrate about the time when he had a ride in helicopter or met a pilot".

For the families there would be outing in the form of camping or brunch at Shangrilla. During summer the incoming helicopter from Qasim would invariably bring the mango crate which would be shared with the troops at the posts.



H for helipad

Epilogue

To highlight the magnitude of aviation support rendered by Lama Flight to FCNA during its employment period i.e. December 1986 to July 1996.

Flying hours per year	1500-2000 hours
Casualty Evacuation	530/Year
Dumping of stores (all kind)	234 Ton/Year
Transportation of personnel	720/Year

Awards

3 x Sitara-I-Jurat.
5 x Sitara-I-Basalat
15 x Tamgha-I-Basalat



Veteran Allouette Pilots, Qasim Aviation Mess, 20th April 2007



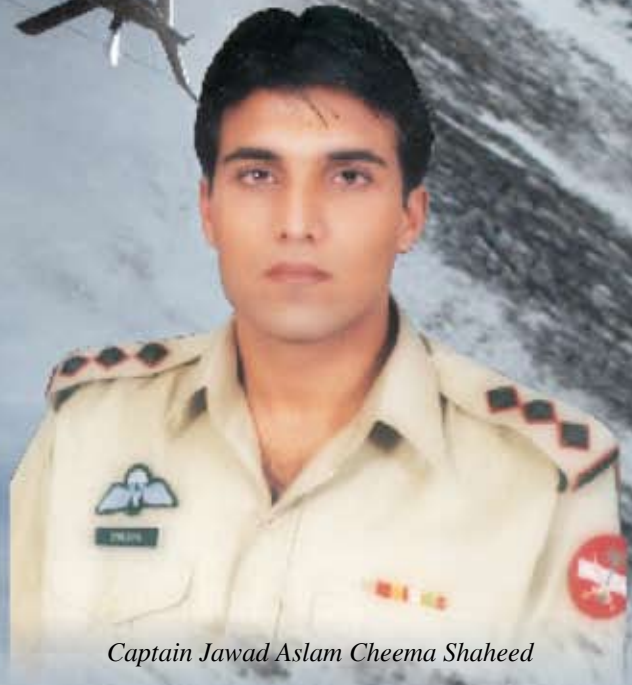
AVIATOR WHO ATTAINED ETERNAL PEACE IN EXCHANGE OF THEIR LIVES WHILE SERVING IN FCNA AOR

S/NO	RANK	NAME	DATE	PLACE	A/C
1	MAJ	NASRULLAH	16 4 76	ASTORE	ALT III
2	MAJ	KHALID MEHMOOD	16 4 76	ASTORE	ALT III
3	CPN	NASEEM ALI SHAH	16 4 76	ASTORE	ALT III
4	MAJ	IJAZ AHMED ZAHID	24 2 88	DANSUM	LAMA
5	CAPT	WAQAR HUSSAIN BEG	24 2 88	DANSUM	LAMA
6	LTCOL	SAJAID ISLAM	31 7 88	RONDU	PUMA
7	MAJ	KHALID AKHTAR	31 7 88	RONDU	PUMA
8	SUB	MUHAMMAD RAFIQUE	31 7 88	RONDU	PUMA
9	HAV	ABDUL HAQ	31 7 88	RONDU	PUMA
10	NK	YOUSAF KOKAB	31 7 88	RONDU	PUMA
11	MAJ	SYED TAHIR ALI	12 3 92	ARIF POST	LAMA
12	CAPT	MUHAMMAD NAWAZ	12 3 92	ARIF POST	LAMA
13	MAJ	BABAR RAMZAM	01 8 92	CHULANG	LAMA
14	MAJ	KHALID SOHAIL SULTAN	01 8 92	CHULANG	LAMA
15	MAJ	MUHAMMAD HANIF	12 6 99	SATTPARA	MI-17
16	CAPT	MUHAMMAD UZAIR	12 6 99	SATTPARA	MI-17
17	HAV	MUHAMMAD SHABBIR	12 6 99	SATTPARA	MI-17
18	HAV	BASHIR AHMED MALIK	12 6 99	SATTPARA	MI-17
19	NK	NASIR AHMED MALIK	12 6 99	SATTPARA	MI-17
20	MAJ	IMTIAZ AHMED	24 4 03	BURZAL	MI-17
21	MAJ	SYED NAQEEM ALI	24 4 03	BURZAL	MI-17
22	HAV	MUHAMMAD NAWAZ	24 4 03	BURZAL	MI-17
23	NK	MUHAMMAD NAWAZ	24 4 03	BURZAL	MI-17

Rescue at Seven Stars (6030 meters)

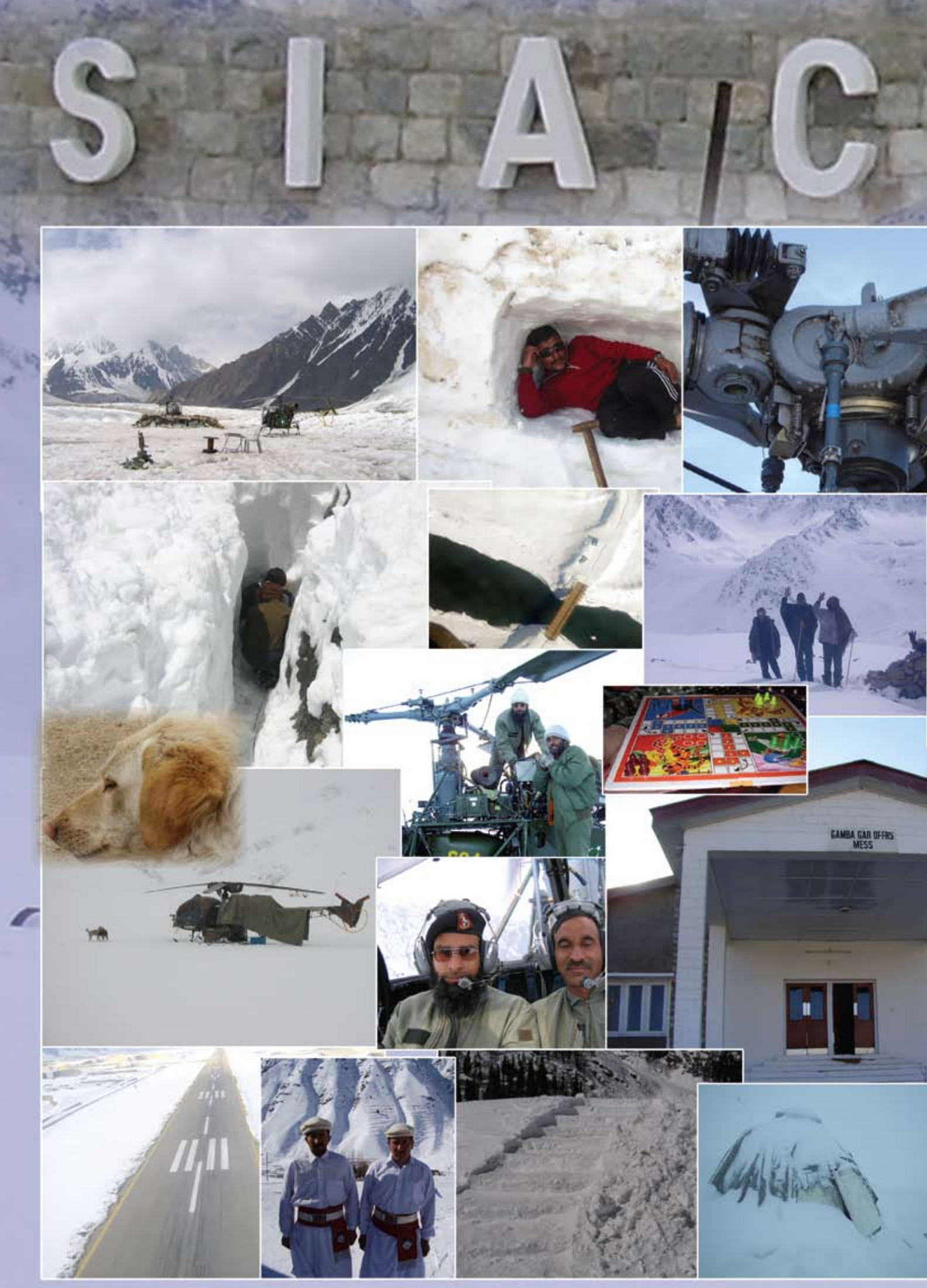


Captain Tipu Awan of 66 Medium Regiment was seriously ill since 8th January 2007 at Observation Post. Due to heavy snow and bad weather all tracks going down were blocked. On 11th January his condition became precarious, at 1000 hours 5 Aviation Squadron received the signal for evacuation. At 1100 hours Captain Jawad and his co-pilot Major Bangash reached the post. The post did not have enough space for heli landing. The pilots devised a plan to sling the officer. At 1252 hours the officer was slung from the post and after seven minutes was safely landed at the base.



Captain Jawad Aslam Cheema Shaheed

The post is named after him for his valiant act in 2002, when he embraced shahadat alongwith six other soldiers who came under an avalanche while attempting to locate a missing party.


S I A C
GAMBA GAR OFFRS
MESS


H E N
ARMY
PIA


90s
KARGIL


Dum
Lalu
Latsun
Wokha

NINETIES

Nineties saw Pakistan Army Aviation in a different sphere what a decade earlier had been perceived. The American military aid which had remained the major source of aviation refurbishment in eighties was under embargo. On top of it the Gulf War had serious implication for the aviation in terms of fuel supply which became so meager that long navigation of basic pilot course at aviation school remained suspended for well over five years. MI-8 fleet was almost on the verge of becoming showpieces. With the passage of time these hard moments became blessing in disguise as Army Aviation started exploring new avenues and vistas for its survival and lethality.

Mushaks for Iran (Kamra – Tehran)



Brigadier Munir

In February 1990 Iranian Revolutionary Guards purchased twelve Mushaks from Pakistan. These aircraft were initially to be transported by C-130 but later ferried by the pilots of Army Aviation. In the first ferry were Lieutenant Colonels Abid, Anwar "Commando", Salman, Majors included, Munir Ahsan, Rasheedi and Samuel. Brigadier Munir Ahsan narrates; "In the middle of night I was awoken by the Chief Flying Instructor Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Imran Farooqui and he informed me that in the morning I have to go to Iran, later we went together to Major Samuel's house who opened the door after some time with a shot-gun in his hand. Next day we were to go for Artillery Shoots and flight commander initially laughed when I told him that instead of Tilla Ranges I am going to Iran.The background of such a hurry was later revealed that Chief Of Army Staff General Aslam Beg was in Iran and he wanted to be present at the ceremony of handing over of the aircraft". On 16th February Mushaks took off from Kamra for Quetta in a bad weather, bad enough to force two nights stay enroute at Sibi. On 18th February the MFI-17 formation took off again and reached Quetta. On 19th February they got airborne for Zahidan and reached there after 4 hours of flying having refuelled at Dalbandin. On 20th February the formation got airborne and first landed at Kirman for refuelling and later at Yazd before making full stop landing at Isphehan. On 22nd February the aircraft were air tested. Lieutenant Colonel Abid and Major Rasheedi stayed at Isphehan for some time as part of training team and rest of the ferry members later returned from Tehran via PIA but not without a last minute tale. Brigadier Munir recalls; "First our confirmed seats were given to Pakistani delegation and we were to stay another week as the State Guest. On the day of our return on a PIA flight we were told at the ticket counter that our visas had expired, after hectic efforts these were renewed while PIA Boeing was just waiting for us. At the last minute the official gift of Iranian Army Chief for his counterpart which was a sword became a Sword of Damocles as its length was more than what was authorized in International rules, finally after delay of more than three hours PIA Captain took the responsibility and we got airborne".

Incomes a MI-17

On a fine day of March 1990, one Russian built MI-17 defected to Pakistan from Afghanistan and landed at Peshawar, where it was impounded by the PAF. Some efforts were made to get it going but all came to a dead end. Finally in August 1992 it was offered to the Army Aviation. This was taken as a challenge and Lieutenant Colonel Ashraf Waraich then commanding 4 Army Aviation Squadron was deputed to undertake the assignment, alongwith Major Najam Ul Arfin and flight engineer Major Shafqat.

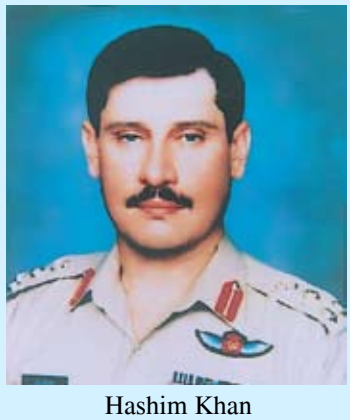


Lieutenant Colonel Ashraf garlanded after landing at Multan from Peshawar

An interpreter, with good knowledge of Russian language was acquired and to start with, all the available literature found in the cockpit and the printed instructions posted on various panels were translated into English. Then attempts to start it, were made by trial and error and ultimately the bird got woken up from a long slumber of over two years. It was lifted from the ground and made to obey while in the air. From Peshawar it was flown to Qasim Base and ultimately to Multan, where it was received with a rousing reception. For next couple of years it really was the workhorse of the squadron, it was flown without any check-list or emergency manual. It used to haul the biggest load and never for once got grounded because of any malfunctioning.

Sri Lanka

In October 1991, Sri Lankan Government requested Pakistan to provide some helicopters for use by various dignitaries participating in the sixth SAARC Summit at Colombo. Two Allouette-III helicopters were despatched under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Hashim Khan. Other team members were Majors Javed Ahmed, Pervaiz Mahmood Butt, Waseem Akhtar Malik, Tahir Maqsood Khan and Captain Muhammad Mudassar Hashmi from EME. The contingent carried out all the assigned tasks from 1st November to 12th November 1991 and safely returned on completion of the mission.



Hashim Khan

Induction of Schweizer

In 1992 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif allotted a sum of US $12 million exclusively to Army Aviation for financial year 92/93 on account of its out standing performance in flood relief operations. On 17 February 1993 a conference was held in GHQ chaired by the Chief of General Staff(CGS) Lieutenant General Farrukh. The agenda was the utilization of this amount. The conference was attended by Vice Chief of General Staff(VCGS), GOC Aviation Command and Director Aviation. The distribution of amount was as under, $ 3.85 million for the repair of five damaged Puma helicopters (3x Pumas were damaged heavily when they got toppled at Dhamial and two at Rahwali due to storms) $ 5.5 million for the procurement of

TH



300C

November 1993. Arrival of The First Dedicated Trainer Helicopter of Pakistan Army Aviation.



spares for aviation and 3 million $ for the purchase of 10 training helicopters. In the conference a sum of 5 million US $ were also earmarked for the purchase of a fixed wing aircraft for the use of Chief of Army Staff**.** In this regard Army Aviation Command was authorized to induct either 2x jets of same type or one jet and one turboprop or one jet along with 2-3 turboprop aircraft. It is to be kept in mind that before the Prime Minister package only a sum of $ 1.177 million was earmarked for the aviation from the army budget which was to be consumed for the purchase of only three training helicopters. Tenders for this were opened at DGDP on 6 June 1993. Main competitors for training helicopters were Robinson, Enstrom and Schweizer.

TH-300 of Schweizzer was finally selected as the future training helicopter of Pakistan Army Aviation. Schweizer was the primary American army training helicopter between 1970-1988. It had trained over 6,000 pilots logging over 400,000 flight training hours including 12000 autorotations touch downs with only one category A accident since 1970. The total cost of 13 helicopters came to US $ 2.8 million. 11 Pakistani instructor pilots were to be provided with the conversion and transition training at firms facility at Elmira which is at two hours drive from New York. Duration of training 2 weeks inclusive of ground schooling along with 5-6 hours of flying with one hour solo, all this training to be conducted on the buyers helicopters.

Pilots, all instructors and majority from rotary wing crew room of Aviation School went to America in three batches starting from October 1993 and last one going in December 1993. First batch of 4x helicopters arrived in November and last batch of 3x TH-300 arrived Pakistan on 31 March 1994. These helicopters were taken on inventory by 199 EME Battalion, which also underwent certain organisational changes for this purpose.

Raising Of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Flight

Super King Air B-200 aircraft serial no 927 was inducted in PAF in 1988. Aircraft remained with air force till 1992 when the DG Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Lieutenant General Javed Nasir decided to



ISI Flight in Year 2005



transfer it to Army Aviation on 15 September 1992. On 11 October 1992 B-200 aircraft flown by Squadron Leader Cheema with Major Azad Kayani (presently serving as Brigadier, Chief Pilot), took off from Chaklala and landed at Qasim Base, thus laying the first stone for the creation of ISI Flight. For a brief period, this aircraft remained as a part of VIP Flight. In 1993 it was decided to create ISI Flight. Since its inception on 7 October 1993, flight has flown 4,891hours without any accident. The aircraft has touched down in various capitals of Central Asia, Gulf Region and Europe. In 2003 the flight inducted MI-171 and later in the years also inducted Cessna Citation 5 and King Air-350.

Army Aviation Enters Jet Age

In 1991 a need was felt to have a better and fast executive aircraft for the COAS. Army Aviation was tasked by the late COAS General Asif Nawaz to evaluate executive jet, as the existing JPC aircraft was old vintage, having increased maintenance problems and lack of spare support. Numerous aircraft were evaluated and air tested. These included Citation II, Citation V, Citation VI, Beech 400A, BAE 800 and Learjet 31A apart from a Fokker F-27 purchased from MSA (Maritime Security Agency) which was ultimately sold to the PAF. Lieutenant Colonel Shoaib Idris, Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf and Major Iftikhar Ahmed conducted these trials.

All these aircraft were flown extensively and tested under variable conditions of altitudes, temperature and runway lengths. After detailed tests and trials Citation V and Beech 400A were earmarked for final selection. In the face of better economical package offered by Cessna, Citation V was selected. The aircraft was taken over by Army Aviation in December 1993.

Cessna Citation -V (America-Pakistan)

A team of four officers was selected to proceed to USA for initial simulator training, on the job training, acceptance of aircraft and ferry to Pakistan. The team comprised of following officers and non commissioned officers (NCO).

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf	Chief Pilot
Major Abdul Rasheed Khan	Copilot
Major Iftikhar Ahmed	Copilot
Major Shahid Hamid	Maintenance Officer
Major Syed Tahir Zaidi	Maintenance Officer
Havildar Zulfiqar	
Havildar Sultan	
Naik Lateef	
Naik Akram	

Bringing The New Citation Home

In November 1993 ferry team started preparation to fly home the new Citation. A ferry pilot from Cessna Aircraft Company, by the name of Bob Mitchell, assisted the Pakistani crew. After the detailed planning and necessary briefing, Citation V 0233 took off from Wichita Mid Continent Airport at 2300 hours for its new home at Dhamial. The first destination was Goose Bay in Canada 1800 Nautical Miles away. Bob Mitchell and Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf rolled off on Runway 19R of Wichita Mid Continent Airport and climbed to cruising altitude of 41,000 feet. The weather was fine in the Mid Continent area but Chicago was reporting isolated thunderstorms south of Great Lakes. Goose Bay received them with freezing temperature at 0230hours. After a brief stop over for refuelling, Major Iftikhar took over from Colonel Ashraf for the next destination, Iceland. The aircraft took off at 0400hours for Keflavic about 1300 Nautical Miles away. The weather all along was reported fair and fine however Keflavic had received snow a day before and landing runway was covered with 9 inches of snow. An unusual phenomenon to which our crew was not accustomed but still an excellent landing was made on a white shed runway. The aircraft was refuelled for onward journey. Here onwards Major Abdul Rasheed Khan took over to fly with Bob Mitchell on a leg of 1900 Nautical Miles to Zurich, Switzerland. After three and a half hours of flying the aircraft touched down at Zurich, Kloten Airport.

Next morning at 0900 hours the crew again embarked on a flight that took them to the bright sunny


0233
HDG
ALT
AQA
300 DH
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CAS
340
MAG2 232
VOR2
77.0NM
TX
TERR
FMS
VOR2
HDG
231
GSPD
1 KTS
Bravo


JET AGE
1993

resort of Rhodes in Greece. Same evening, Citation touched down on Runway 36 R of King Abdul Aziz International Airport at Jeddah. This was a rare opportunity for the crew to thank Allah almighty by performing Umrah, where all prayed for the Pakistan Army Aviation and the success of the mission itself. Next morning again they set course for Dubai in UAE. A night stop was planned here. A good night rest in the hotel and excitement to reach home after a long journey once again rejuvenated the crew. Colonel Ashraf took off for home and entered Pakistan Airspace at Jiwani. It was a feeling of joy and pride when the aircraft first entered into homeland airspace. Finally it was in the evening when the first jet of Army Aviation touched down at Dhamial adding a new chapter in the history.

Bob Mitchell stayed back to fly the pilots on instructional mission for sometime. Now the aircraft was all set to fly its first mission with the Chief Of Army Staff General Abdul Waheed. From Qasim Base to Karachi on 9th January 1994 flown by Lieutenant Colonel Ashraf and Major Abdul Rasheed Khan.

Raising Of Aircraft Investigation Board (AIB)



Col Azam

Every accident is the end result of a chain of events, and if at any stage the chain can be broken then an accident can be avoided. Army Aviation had its fair share of all type of accidents ranging from mid air collision to helicopters getting toppled on ground. Therefore in 1993 AIB was raised, in one of the dilapidated hangar rooms at Dhamial with Colonel Azam as the first OC. Other members were Lt Cols Zafar & Maroof with Maj Tanveer Ullah as G-2. Major contribution of AIB are the compilations of accident reviews of almost all the aircraft on inventory. Even among these reviews the one dealing with mountain flying analysis is a mandatory reference in this field. In 2007 under Brigadier Munir, AIB published a detailed and analytical record of accidents and occurrences from 1953 till to date.

MI-17, Prague - Quetta

In 1995 Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) purchased two MI-17 helicopters through a donor country from Czechoslovakia. A team of Pakistan Army Aviation pilots was inducted in ANF and later with additional crew these two helicopters were ferried to Pakistan. Pilots were Lieutenant Colonels Ashraf Warraich, Zafar Niazi and Pervaiz Sultan along with Majors Zahoor Malik, and Mumtaz Zia. Brigadier Bashir Baz was the mission in charge.

Helicopters took off from Prague on a sunny morning of August 1996 and had first night stay at Budapest. Next day they entered Polish airspace and second night was spent at Warsaw. Turkish airspace was entered on the third day and two night stay was arranged at Istanbul. From Istanbul the formation headed for Dyar Bakar a Kurd stronghold on the Turkish-Iraqi border. Before landing at this place the formation had inadvertently entered into a Turkish Air Force firing range where F-16 were conducting the fire. The formation next halt was at a Iranian border town for refuelling later they reached Tehran for the night stay. Next day they reached Kirman and than after another night stay at Zahidan the formation arrived at Quetta.



COAS Visit to Bosnia

In August 1995 Chief of Army Staff General Waheed was to visit Pakistan Army Contingent stationed in Bosnia under the auspices of United Nations. It was an extremely important visit to the war torn area where own troops were heavily committed in peacekeeping efforts.

On the morning of 28th August 1995, Major Rasheed and Major Iftikhar, along with Havildar Riasat Ali as crew chief were all set to embark on this historic flight. The call sign was "Pakistan Army One" After three and a half hours of flying the aircraft touched down at Mehrabad International Airport Tehran. The next destination was Istanbul, Turkey. The flight from Tehran to Istanbul was uneventful. After a stretch of three and a half hours the aircraft touched down at Istanbul as planned. The delegation was received by Turkish Armed Forces and lodged in "Herbia" a chain of five star hotels exclusively run by the defense forces. The night stopover was comfortable but the crew remained busy till late night, planning and coordinating the most difficult part of the flight; flying over Adriatic Sea into former Yugoslavia.

At 0600hours on 29th August 1995, Citation was rolling for take off at Istanbul for its destination Split, a seaside town in Croatia. The flight was conducted over Greece, then entered the Italian airspace. The European skies were unexpectedly clear and flying in clear blue skies with unlimited visibility was a real treat. As "Pakistan Army One" turned towards Croatia, the air defence controllers challenged the flight. The aircraft was mistaken as an intruder but necessary coordination and timely passing of flight details solved the hitch. Around 1130 hours the COAS landed at Split airport.

On 31st August 1995 the return journey on the same routing commenced. They took considerably less time on each leg on the way home because of strong tail winds blowing west to east. The aircraft was flown at 41000 feet to get maximum benefit of the jet streams. On 1 September 1995 the COAS was back home touching down runway 32 at 2010hours. The overall trip was executed in a most professional manner which was highly appreciated by the COAS personally.



Chief Of Army Staff General Abdul Waheed and Major General Abdul Razzaq with Crew of Citation at Qasim Base

Y-12 The Chinese Work Horse



Y-12 inducted in 1997

Y-12 is a Chinese built aircraft designed for cargo and passenger carrying. The aircraft is a true example of Chinese workmanship. It is rugged, strong and crude looking but is a true workhorse. Y-12 aircraft serial No 045 flew into Pakistan on 31 May 1995 for trials by Army Aviation. Extensive flying was carried out for three months by the trial team comprising of Lieutenant Colonel Shoaib Idrees, Major Habib Ur Rehman Khanzada and Major Muhammad Abbas along with Chinese pilots.

The aircraft was tested to the limits. Aircraft number 045 is the first twin-engine aircraft to land at Chhor, Pano Aqil, Khalid (Quetta), Badin and Kharian airstrips. Initially two aircraft were inducted in 1997 and 1998. Later the fleet was expanded to four by 2000.



13 Squadron - 2000, Group photo taken during the visit of Major General Ashraf



Induction Of MI-17 Helicopters

MI-17 was a natural choice as it is a improved version of legendary MI-8. The airframe remains the same but with better engines and additional avionics, it incorporates the best of Russian military doctrine and European commercial technology. MI-17 need not to undergo the trials as it was a proven name and its performance at high altitudes was duly demonstrated by the Afghan pilots in the flood relief operations of 1991-92. In 1996 officers were selected for the training at Russia. Aviation command had already initiated the additional input of rotary pilots by running the elementary courses at Aviation School, majority of these young pilots were posted to the Gallants and King Birds.

Twelve MI-17 cost Pakistan 34 million US$ in FY 95/96. Its offer was given on 13th January 1995 and deal was signed on 28th November 1995 with Avia Export of Kazan helicopter plant. The schedule of MI-17 arrival in Pakistan spread over from April till October 1996. A total of 36 pilots were to be trained along with 60 technicians. Due to Russian government ban on transfer of military equipment to Pakistan, only civil version were purchased.

After quite a suspense when rumours are in abundance in all aviation messes and crew rooms about who all are being selected and who are left out, the final group arrived in Russia in May 1996 for 4-6 weeks of training. The officers went in batches of 6-8 pilots out of which few were earmarked to ferry the helicopters back and rest were free to enjoy leave. In the words of Lieutenant Colonel Masud who was in the first batch; "There were lot of things to be coordinated before our departure from Pakistan, like collection of international maps which we did not have, plan the ferry routes and get it approved. Team leader Lieutenant Colonel Najam ul Arifin had designated one officer to act as the bank of the team".

Kazan situated in Tataristan 750 miles east of Moscow is a heaven on earth with natural beauty abundance in all forms of life, according to Lieutenant Colonel Suhail Ekram, "Factory routine was simple yet heavy in schedule, the classes started at eight in the morning and continued till five in the evening, with a tea and lunch break in between. In flying the Russians were really good, they had vast experience of flying and demonstrated their skills whole heartedly to Pakistani pilots. They demonstrated auto rotation landings with both engines shut down. Mr. Dimitri and Mr. Yadev were especially very knowledgeable and helpful, o ne new technique was the use of throttle to optimize fuel consumption. What they were doing was that in long sorties the throttle was reduced by 2 to 3 %, this gave substantial fuel economy especially in fuel critical missions. Another example was the technique of stopping even very heavy helicopters quickly in air. This they achieved by using the main rotor blades like eagles use their wings for thrust reversal. They used and manipulated the collective control stick smoothly yet quickly many times with effective result. One day one of our technician ticked one Russian for slamming the helicopter door, the Russian got surprised and asked 'you never ticked me before why today' and our technician replied; "Before today they were yours but now they have been handed over to us, so be careful".

MI-17's – Bringing The Birds Home

The first ferry of three MI-17 helicopters after final acceptance at Astrakhan commenced on 8th May 1996. Team consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Najam ul Arifin, Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Iqbal, Major Masud Akhtar, Major Nasir Iftikhar, Major Mumtaz Zia and Major Naveed Akbar planned ferry route from Astrakhan - Atrau-Aktau - Turkamanbashi - Ashakbat - Mashad - Birjand - Zahidan - Quetta.



On arrival at Zahidan the

ferry team was received by Pakistan's Counsellor along with Iranian authorities. Passports of the entire team were collected by Iranians on the apron and the team was taken to the arrival lounge of the airport. After an hour stay in the lounge the Pakistani Counsellor sought the permission to take the team to a local hotel for the night stay which was regretted. Meanwhile the Iranians posted a guard on the gate thus forbidding any exits from the arrival lounge. After a while the Pakistan Counsellor informed the ferry leader that Iranians are not conceding to the group's stay in a private hotel. Instead the arrangements for night stay are being made in government building named "Tourist Inn". The team was taken in a bus to the said accommodation.

The next morning i.e on 12th May at about 0730hours the team was taken back to the airport by bus and instructed to stay in the lounge till further orders. The ferry leader had planned a 0930 takeoff for Quetta, meanwhile number of guards at the gates of lounge were increased. At 1430hours the counsellor informed the ferry leader on telephone that the team had been cleared to proceed to Pakistan. At 1500hours the team was handed over their passports and access to the apron was allowed which had earlier been denied. The formation took off for Pakistan at 1530hours the same day and after night stay at Quetta they landed at Multan where after a night stay they flew to Qasim**.** Second ferry flight landed at Pakistan on 20th June 1996. Fourth and last one landed on 20th August 1996.

During ferry a sum of US$ 8.37 per day per person was given as flying meal, furthermore the expenditures incurred on each ferry were around US $ 21,000. Different airports had varying charges like Ashkabad charged $ 7,040 for refuelling and parking whereas Atrau charged $ 1,170 for the same.



MI-17



1997 - Australia & Back

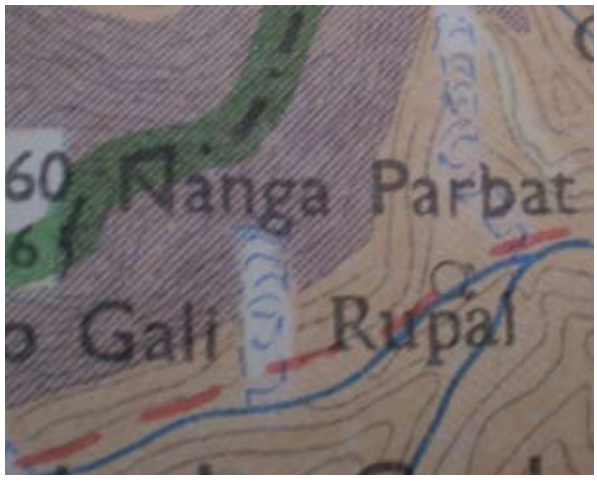
Jet Prop Commander 690 C which was inducted in Army Aviation on 14 April 1981 was due for a major guide I and II inspections. Aircraft was flown to Australia on a routing Qasim-Multan-Delhi-Dacca-Rangoon-Bangkok-Bali-Perth. Crew consisted of Colonel Ayaz and Major Samuel along with Major Shahid Hamid as the flight engineer.

After these inspections were over the aircraft was to be brought back to Pakistan. Lieutenant Colonel Qasim Hameed and Major Habib Ur Rehman Khanzada were sent to Perth, Australia to ferry the aircraft. The team assisted by Major Shahid Hamid who had stayed back after the first ferry conducted number of air tests at Perth International Airport, Australia. On 28th March 1997 they took off on a long journey to Pakistan. The route adopted was Perth to Bali (Indonesia), Kuala-Lumpur (Malaysia), Bangkok (Thailand), Xian - Lanahou - Urumqi (China) to Dhamial. On 4th April 1997 at 1700hours the aircraft landed back at Qasim Base.

Fairy Meadows

In June 1997 one MI-17 helicopter belonging to the prime minister secretariat crashed at Ferry Meadows located at the base of Nanga Parbat at an altitude of 3350m. Initially efforts were made to recover the crashed helicopter by MI-6 helicopter, but Russian pilots refused to undertake the mission due to weather and terrain hazards. Finally 27 Army Aviation Squadron was assigned this mission with the assistance of 503 Workshop and 399 EME Battalion. On 9th October 1997 the complete team that is Lieutenant Colonel Zulfiqar, Major Suleman Bashir "Chiefy', Major Muhammad Hanif, and Captain Khalid Ahmed flew to Gilgit for the assigned task. Base Camps were selected at Gilgit and Jaglot for recovery operation. Total of 50 sorties were flown during the complete operation. In each sortie 20-23 persons or recovery equipment or equivalent weight was transported to the crash site on daily basis. In first phase complete recovery equipment including four field cranes were shifted to Ferry Meadows. Thereafter the MI-17 which had toppled after the crash was to be pulled up by the cranes so as to straighten the fuselage. This challenging task was accomplished by the team of engineers and technicians led by Major Suleiri with desired safety. In second phase the complete helicopter was disassembled and its parts were shifted to Jaglot. In third phase the helicopter fuselage was slung and brought back to Jaglot. Its weight was about 1650 kgs. In the last phase the recovery equipment, which had been shifted to the crash site was brought back and with the grace of Almighty Allah the mission was accomplished successfully.






GALLANTS
ARMY AVIATION

MI-17

Induction - May 1996





Afghanistan Earthquake Relief Operations

Consequent to earthquake of 1998 in Rostak, Tahar province of Afghanistan. Government of Pakistan decided to reciprocate good will gesture of Afghan Government when they despatched four MI-17 helicopters during 1992 floods in Pakistan for relief purposes. On 4th June 1998 at 1600hours, 27 Squadron was assigned the mission to heli lift relief goods from Rawalpindi for the affected people. Take off time given was 0800hours the next day i.e. 5th June 1998. It was decided to undertake the mission with three MI-17. Mission varied from one day quick go and come back to a week long operation. It had to be self supported and self sustained. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs along with other twelve members were to accompany the flight. Initially the total weight of relief goods planned was 11 tons. The helicopters took off from Islamabad Airport at 0800 hours on 5th June 1998 for Peshawar from where they took off with full fuel. Each helicopter had approximately 700 - 800 liters of fuel on landing at 1215hours at Faizabad. It was fortunate enough that the weather over Lowari Top, Chitral Valley, and Faizabad Valley was favourable and the destination was made good with out any diversion. On board weather radar was a great help.

Faizabad

It was confirmed during planning phase that fuel will be available at Faizabad. Accordingly it was planned that after refuelling, helicopters were to be brought back on the same day. Non availability of fuel left the contingent stranded at Faizabad. On landing at Faizabad the representative of UN relief operation contacted the mission leader and requested for joining in relief operation for 2 to 3 weeks. Understandably it was not possible in view of the shortage of fuel and the directive of Headquarters Army Aviation Command. Resultantly entire set up at Faizabad Airport adopted an indifferent attitude towards the contingent and tried to aggravate the problem for fuel by adopting unreasonable approach. Afghans were hospitable and made their best effort for the comfortable stay of Pakistani crew during their stay in the province. Pakistani crew later dropped the essential goods in the affected area and after three days returned back to Pakistan having logged 26.0 hours.

Flying Crew

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Zulfiqar.
Major Suleman Bashir.
Major Ihsan-Ul-Haq.
Captain Abdul Rahim.
Captain Amer Muhammad Khusro.
Captain Ovais Ahmed.
Captain Babar Saeed Butt.

Never Give In, Resuscitation of MI-8

By 1994 batch of seven MI-8 purchased in 1969 had completed their 25 years of life, out of the total of fourteen helicopters of MI-8 series, only one or two MI-8 would be serviceable on any given day. Between 1992-1996, a total of 34 engines were due for overhauling in China. Nine MI-8 engines earmarked for overhaul in China or Russia, at a cost of US $ 170,000 each, were made serviceable within country. This was achieved by finding the fault of excessive leakage from engine bearings and also its remedy and recommending it as a standard maintenance procedure. Army's maintenance authorities, accepted it as a technical order to correct the engine problem. Saving has been to the tune of 1.7 million US Dollars so far. A new main gearbox inspection procedure was laid down in country for MI-8 helicopters, for which the Russian manufacturer was charging US $ 69,000 per inspection per helicopter every 250 hours. This saved 4.7 Million US Dollars.

These helicopters after being made serviceable have flown more than 2,000hours safely. Colonel Sohail writes; "Credit goes to my senior officers specially Major General Razzaq who himself is a MI-8 pilot, Brigadier Qayum Sher, Brigadier Hisam ullah Beg, Lieutenant Colonel Hafiz for allowing me the freedom of working on these helicopters and managing in country resources. My contribution only was, that I tried and put in my best effort, in the process I was able to create a team of professionals headed by Havildar Javed, Naik Saleem, Naik Sarwar, Captain Noor and Major Daud along with 22 pilots of 4 squadron, who



Lieutenant Colonel Sohail highlighting the work done on Russian engines

put their mind and soul into the task of making the helicopters they loved so much, serviceable and air worthy again".

Badin Cyclone Relief Operation

In the month of May 1998 a severe cyclone hit Badin and surrounding area. Immediately two MI-8 were moved from Quetta and two Puma's were moved from Multan. A UH-1H of 6 Squadron and an Allouette of 7 Squadron also arrived on the spot. Other relief agency involved was Pakistan Navy. The area was worst hit on the east and south east of Badin. The town of Badin was surrounded by water. Electricity was out of order, trees were gone, roofs of houses were also swept away by the wind. At Badin Airfield, a kind of field headquarters was established under a tent.

On the very first evening relief sorties were flown. One post of Coast Guard had been swept by the tidal waves, and all efforts made to locate any survivor resulted only in locating the dead bodies floating. All the crew members were housed at Badin Officers Mess. Next day relief goods were helilifted from Thatta Cricket Stadium and each helicopter was designated an area of responsibility for search and rescue alongwith the dropping of goods. The tension between Pakistan and India was almost on the brink of war over Kargil thus flying along the Zero Line was very risky; still pilots flew along the border. There were few boats which had gone for fishing but never returned. Helicopter flew in the sea and spotted one such boat, provision were dropped to them. Area around Keti Bandar was totally cut off from the main land with around 1,000 people in the enclave. Helicopter landed amidst pool of water, keeping wheels off the ground and with the help of aircrew unloaded the relief goods. There was persistent danger of people who were rushing towards the helicopter getting maimed by the rotors. The other dilemma was the relief packages, which in the initial days were packed in the plastic bags, they would burst open on contact with ground.

For many people on ground it was the first ever contact with the helicopters. Young people on hearing the helicopter noise would run frantically for cover. Major Ikram on MI-8 witnessed one grown up girl

running and taking cover under a cart with her head down and remained motionless for some time. Same was the case with the animals, especially the cows and buffaloes who would even break the Gordon Knot in despair. Aviators remained in the affected area for well over a fortnight and once life became normal they returned to their bases. While coming back, Major Jehangir Badshah in a MI-8 got lost and forced landed due to fuel starvation.

Defection of MI-24, HIND - Miran Shah to Qasim


Major Iftikhar

On 13th July 1985, Major Iftikhar TJ, was flying in the circuit of Qasim Base, when he got a call to make full stop landing and immediately report to base commander. He was told that two MI-8 helicopters of Afghan Air Force had landed at Miran Shah. After some time Major Iftikhar alongwith Major Khalid Nawaz, Major Tariq Choudhry, and Captain Shahnawaz Badr landed at Miranshah Air Field in a UH-1H helicopter. The two helicopters were camouflaged under 'Saroots'. When these were removed, Pakistani pilots were completely surprised. They had never seen these helicopters before. They were not the MI-8s but the renowned MI-24, fully loaded with rockets, missiles and guns There were Afghan pilots as well on board. Local commanders wanted these helicopters to leave quickly, due to threat of Russian air attack.

Major Iftikhar narrates; "The scary part was the tandem seat arrangements the good point was that cyclic, rudder, pedals and flying instruments were similar to MI-8. We could not trust the Afghan pilots and neither we had the time to undergo any kind of conversion on these MI-24s. I thus decided to fly them". Meanwhile Major Tariq got one MI-24 started by the Afghan pilot, and then taxied for some time and later hovered it, before switching it off. He announced that he was ready to fly. One Combat Air Patrol (CAP)of Mirages was scrambled from Mianwali Air Base to provide cover to these helicopters.

In One MI-24 tail No.28 the crew consisted of Major Iftikhar and Major Khalid Nawaz and the other helicopter tail No. 12 had Major Tariq and Captain Badr. Afghan pilots were told to sit in the cargo compartment but they refused when they saw Pakistani pilots getting ready to fly these machines without any conversion, they were made to sit on gun point. Major Iftikhar further narrates; "Cyclic had lot of buttons, I was unaware of any of them thus I flew without any trimmers, we were maintaining 1000 feet above ground level. After take off a strange female voice came on the radio transmission. I asked Major Tariq about this and he also confirmed this. We thought that Russians were searching us (Russian female voice in fact is a recorder which announces certain checks and procedures). After 25 minutes of flying, I got a call from Major Tariq that fuel is dripping in his cockpit and rest of the engine instruments are in green limits. There was no landing site available. We kept on flying on five minutes basis, thus we flew one hour before we came out of mountain ranges, we were left of Kalabagh. We landed across the River Indus in an open field. Major Tariq's cock-pit had half inch of fuel inside. We left that helicopter there and took off in the other helicopter (024)for Mianwali, which was another 30 minutes flying".

Major Tariq flying the other MI-24 narrates 'I was flying it like a MI-8, I kept the gauges especially the RPM within green limit, The Mirages were over head, around mid-way the Afghan Pilot announced on inter communication about "Benzi" dripping, I did not pay any heed, after some time the Afghan Pilot got panicked and announced "Benzi Boom, Boom". On a suitable site I landed".

Next day Afghan engineers, pilots and Major Tariq Choudhry went to the forced landed helicopter (Guard was placed there)and brought it to Mianwali. Same day these two MI-24s landed at Dhamial after one hour and ten minutes of flying. There was a big reception waiting for them.

It was a historic event. First time that MI-24 had landed in a non communist country. Most importantly the Pakistan Army Aviation pilots have shown their prowess to the World. They had successfully flown these state of the art helicopters without any conversion or training, just relying upon their instincts. All the four pilots belonged to the 4 Squadron. These two helicopters were locked in a hangar. On 17th July 1985, President General Zia visited the hangar. There was a stream of visitors, American, British and Chinese even Russian Ambassador requested to see the new machines. Later Americans helped in unloading the rounds from the gun and accidentally one round was fired. Next flight of these defected helicopters took place on 19th August 1985, when Major Iftikhar and Major Khalid flew them for thirty minutes. Check -list of these helicopters was made with the help of defected pilots. On 7th November 1985



one MI-24 was successfully flown to Chaklala despite suffering hydraulic emergency by Colonel Razzaq and Major Iftikhar with Colonel Yousaf as flight engineer. This helicopter was later flown out in a Galaxy. Other MI-24 on 18th January 1986 was flown by Major Tariq Choudhry to Murid Base.This helicopter remained there for another seven years before its next flight.

Another Pair Lands at Chitral

On 4th October 1987 another pair of MI-24 (tail no.63 and 64)landed at Zivergul near Chitral. This pair was on a routine hunting mission of Mujaheedin and lost its way. This pair belonged to the Spetsnatz unit of the Russian Army and crew was also Russian. They after landing as per their drill waited for the rescue and when it was late they started destroying the helicopters. One shepherd was watching all this.He walked many miles and told the Frontier Constablury(FC) about these helicopters, who reached the spot. Russians initially offered combat to the FC but soon raised white flag.

Qasim Base was task to retrieve these helicopters. Team headed by Colonel Razzaq visited the site in a Puma helicopter. Initial plan envisaged the sling lift of the MI-24. However due to height and load factor it was disregarded. On 7th October 1987, a ground team reached there. Pakistan Television made a movie of this, which was shown all over the world same night.

Major Malang Bukhari was the ground team member and flight engineer of MI-8 with almost two decades of experience. He narrates ”It was extremely cold at night, there was a constant danger of Russians rescue team as well. At times Russian jets and MI-24 were seen prowling in their own area. We started looking at the helicopter and realized that it would be unwise to start it. Russians had already fired many rounds in the cockpit and secondly one could not over-rule the possibility of some explosive devices for self destruction. We started dismantling the helicopters, so they could be slung with a Puma. The location of forced landing was such that Puma could not hover there, moreover the threat of flying Russian MI-24s dictated that fuselage should be taken by ground to a safe place.

On 14th October 1987 a British team also arrived for assistance. This operation lasted till 21st December 1987 when all parts were removed from the site. All this was done in freezing cold.



Defected Russian MI-24 being flown from Multan Base to Khalid Base

MI-24 flown to Multan

After a lapse of seven years Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Iqbal and Captain Mumtaz Zia flew MI-24 for thirty minutes on 29th January 1993. Lieutenant Colonel Mumtaz recalls; 'This MI-24 was parked in an isolated corner of the base,one tyre was flat, there were honey combs made in the undercarriage, nests in the engine exhaust, and all types of reptiles were seen crawling in and out. We cleaned it with the help of water bowzer. On the third day we put on the battery, flight engineer was Subedar Major Mir, The moment we switched on the circuit breakers, the 70 Kilogram blister canopy flew off twenty yards away, we switched off the helicopter. With the help of National Institute of Modern Language(NIML) we got the manual translated and then meticulously disarmed all the circuits of the MI-24. On 30th January 1993, we hovered it for 30 minutes and on 1st February we flew it in circuit for one hour and ten minutes. On 4th February 1993 we got airborne from Murid for Multan, after 30 minutes we landed at Sargodha, where F-16 pilots were curious to have a look at it. unfortunately ten minutes short of Multan, smoke started coming out of cockpit due to some short circuit and we made a precautionary landing. After rectification of the fault we landed at Multan".

Interlude at Multan

For next four years it remained parked in a hangar at Multan on the inventory of No.4 Squadron. Lieutenant Colonel Suhail Ekram narrates; "When I saw the MI-24, it gave a real pathetic look, it seemed to be just a piece of junk, due to non maintenance, birds had made nests in its cowlings and it was full of dirt. It was standing tilted with one tire removed, rim and the wheel drum were also missing. After a week's effort it was located in a shop at 503 Workshop at Rawalpindi. Lieutenant Colonel Zulfiqar, then incharge of the Anti Narcotics Force was requested to allow his spare auxiliary unit to be used for our MI-24. That left only one problem and that was, main wheel tyre. My operation officer Major Daud accidentally bought the tyre from Quetta market for 700 Rupees (14 US Dollars)

First a general maintenance team of all trades under Havildar Javed cleaned the helicopter and installed the new auxiliary starting unit and the acquired tire. In a few days the technicians had checked all systems relating to their own trades, found every system serviceable and in working condition. Crew later deciphered all switches and instruments.

The next week was spent in ground testing the helicopter for two hours and then air tested the helicopter for ten hours. The helicopter flew like a dream come true although I did not dare retract the wheels. I then requested permission to fly this helicopter to Quetta, a flying of more than four hours was involved. After a lot of deliberation at every level we were permitted and we (Lieutenant Colonel Suhail and Captain Basit Durrani) flew the helicopter to Quetta safely.



Major Nadeem Ali in MI-35 at Quetta. It was revealed that this is a MI-35 which is an export version of MI-24

5 Squadron was raised in 1971 with Frontier Works Organization funding, with the passage of time after completion of FWO projects namely KKH the squadron became a white elephant for the FWO. In 1997 the squadron was put into suspended animation. On 8 July 1999 the squadron was resuscitated at Skardu.



Left - Lieutenant Colonel Jamshed Bajwa Commanding Officer and on Right First Commanding Officer and Colonel of the Squadron Brigadier (Retired) Tirmizi lowering the flag of the Squadron at Qasim Aviation Base - 1997.

6 SQUADRON MOVES TO ISLAMABAD

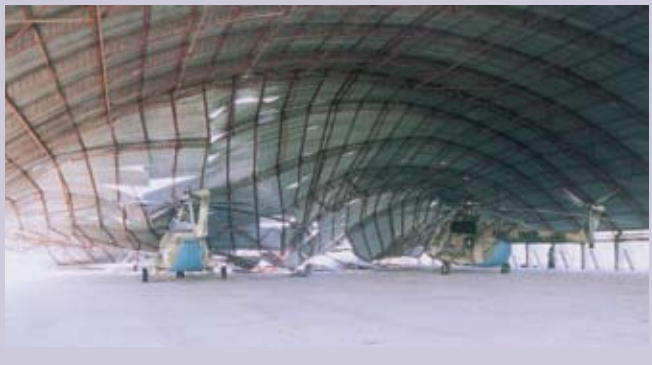
6 Squadron was raised at Mangla, disbanded in 1985 and re-raised in 1987 for Anti-Narcotics Control Board, and it moved to Rawalpindi in eighties. At Dhamial 6 Squadron was given only two rooms. Finally in 1993 Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Wahid Khan was able to acquire 200 acres of land in Islamabad and construction of present site started. Brigadier Tariq Hussain then a major played a major role in the designing and construction of the site. Presently the squadron area is one of the most beautiful and compact in the town.



Lieutenant General Farrukh Khan was the Chief Guest on the inauguration ceremony.

STORM WREAKS HAVOC AT DHAMIAL

In the dying moments of 1999 a severe storm almost crippled the entire fleet of MI-17 helicopters. Hats off to our maintenance set up which were able to put them back on flight line within couple of years.



ANTI-DACOIT OPERATIONS IN SINDH



A Captured Dacoit

From mid-eighties till early part of nineties Pakistan Army Aviation, Multan Base supported the anti-dacoit operations conducted by 16 and 18 Infantry Divisions supported by SSG troops and newly raised Sindh Rangers in Sindh. Puma, MI-8, Jet Ranger and UH-1H Helicopters were placed at Hyderabad, Panu Aqil and Karachi for the conduct of operations. Mushak aircraft of 7 Squadron were used for surveillance. The tempo of operations varied, at times the flying crew flew few hours in a month and at others in excess of laid down regulations. Major General Taqi Rizvi then Major narrates; "In June 1992 with Captain Nasir Zaidi as my copilot, we flew 57 hours in one month. We were on the hunt of dacoit gangs, who had abducted 14 persons from Panu Aqil area. Our task was to helilift infantry troops from Panu Aqil to the cordoned area. Infantry and SSG were combing the area for dacoits. On 23rd June 1992, the dacoits were finally detected in a small island in River Indus, which had numerable small islands near Sukkur. While flying low I spotted two dacoits swimming away with the help of a log. I hovered the Puma and the infantry officer on board after firing one magazine finally got a hit on one of the dacoits. Later after a week of hide and seek we finally captured the gang and it was revealed by them, that they had a rocket launcher and many a times they decided to fire on Puma while it was on ground. But somehow they did not have the courage".

During these anti-dacoit operations twice own troops inadvertently fired in the cargo compartment of Puma and MI-8 helicopters. With the passage of time drills and procedures were evolved to prevent accidental fire. These helicopters were also employed for casualty evacuation of own troops, at times the lives of dacoits were also saved by providing immediate medical help by these helicopters.



MARQA-E-BAQA

Pakistan Becomes a Nuclear Power

In May 1998 India provoked Pakistan by conducting nuclear tests. The relationship between Pakistan and India were at their lowest ebb, limited war was already underway in Kargil sector. On 28th May 1998 Pakistan conducted a series of nuclear tests at Chagai in Balochistan. Army Aviation played a key role in the conduct of these tests. 4 Army Aviation Squadron was given the responsibility of coordinating all flying in this regard. Scientists, commandos and sensitive equipment was transported from Rawalpindi to Quetta in Y-12 and MI-17 of 13 and 27 Squadrons. From Quetta 4 Squadron helilifted them to the test sites. After the tests the debris and other equipment was retrieved from the desert, it was like finding a needle in a hay stack.



Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif with pilots of 4 Army Aviation Squadron at Chagai



During Marqa-e-Baqa, 13 Army Aviation Squadron was assigned the responsibility of ferrying sensitive equipment and material and scientists from Rawalpindi to Quetta, two Y-12 and one JPC were utilized for this task. During the operations, the squadron ferried approximately 8,000 kg of highly sensitive equipment from Rawalpindi to Quetta on Y-12 aircraft. The pilots of the squadron flew approximately 110.00 hours in support of Marqa-e-Baqa. Colonel Qasim Hameed and Lieutenant Colonel Haider Raza Bangash flew Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed in JPC from Rawalpindi to Quetta on D-day. Major Nadeem and Major Nizam flew 35 hours each in this operation on Y-12.

In this operation Havildar Flight Engineer Muhammad Tariq flew 42 hours on MI-17 and was awarded Imtiazi Sanad.

FLYING BREVET

The Biggest Flying Exercise Of The Decade



A collective exercise of all the Aviation Bases was conducted by headquarters Army Aviation Command between 21st November - 6th December 1997. Over 52 helicopters including 12 Cobras, 13 MI-17s, 11 Pumas and a dozen Mushaks took part in this exercise. The aim of the exercise was to practice commanders and staff in planning and conduct of Aviation support to affiliated formations and Army Field Headquarters under close to actual operational environments. In the last phase dawn and dusk heliborne operations involving SSG Battalion were conducted and concept of 'Pathfinder' were employed. General Jehangir Karamat COAS also witnessed the heliborne operation. Major General Abdul Razzaq GOC Army Aviation appreciated the high standard of flying training and discipline displayed during exercise by the pilots and maintenance elements.





General Officer Commanding
Army Aviation
Major General Abdul Razzaq

KARGIL

Kargil is a small mountainous town located in occupied Kashmir on Indian National Highway No 1; which links and sustains Indian troops deployed at Siachin. This town is close to the Line Of Control



(LOC).On a clear day Indian military traffic passing along it, can be sniped from any one of the innumerable, nameless mountain peaks which are between 15,000-18,000 feet high. Indian troops used to occupy these in summer and vacate them in winter. Kargil is the neck of all Indian forces deployed in the head, that is Siachin. If neck can be choked, than 30,000 Indian forces in the head will suffocate.

Kargil And The 1948 Campaign

Kargil was first occupied by Gilgit Scouts under Major Aslam (Brigadier retired and owner of Shangrila hotel in Skardu) in May 1948. The 250 men Eskimo Force led by Second Lieutenant Sher Khan, started from Chilam on 1st May 1948 crossing Burzil, encountering snow blizzards, frost bites, wading through fifteen feet of snow they reached Gultri after covering sixty miles on 3rd May 1948. Gultri is the mid point between Burzil and Kargil. On the night of 9/10 May 1948, platoon size dawn attacks captured Dras and Kargil. Indians later tookback the towns in November 1948.

Line Of Control (LOC)

LOC was accepted as a kind of working boundary in Simla accord of 1972. LOC divides Kashmir in a treacherous manner, following innumerable rivers, ravines, spurs, saddles, peaks, passes and mountain hamlets across tree and snow line area. In various sectors like Kargil, it is so close that at times Pakistani and Indian troops often resort to verbal assault if not engaged in firing and shelling. Pakistani line of



communication also runs precariously close to the Indian observation and vulnerable to shelling especially on clear days. In winter when snow blocks almost all vehicular traffic then only Army Aviation sustains the troops deployed in the area. In summers aviation choppers fly almost daily to carry out the dumping of rations, critical ammunition and supplies sometimes amidst enemy fire. Lieutenant General(retired) Ali Kuli Khan, himself a chopper pilot, was Commanding 10 Corps in 1995-96, he exploited the situation and narrates; "When Indians started shelling our troops in Neelum Valley then I started looking at other areas where I could settle score with them and Kargil was a natural choice from where over the heights we could fire upon their convoys moving up north, thus we moved special weapons to these peaks with the help of Army Aviation and made Indian movement difficult for considerable time".

Induction of MI-17 Helicopters in Northern Area

To sustain a major operation in these far flung mountains required mammoth amount of food, fodder, ammunition, weapons, shifting of troops to the posts and their eventual survival. To accomplish all this, new roads had to be constructed to increase capacity and density of wheeled and hoofed transport. Army Aviation was the only answer, as it could reach and land at any place from Gilgit within an hour which would have taken at least weeks for any other means of transport.

In the summer of 1996, MI-17 helicopters were inducted in Army Aviation. After assessing the performance of MI-17 helicopters in Azad Kashmir area these machines were flown to Gilgit on 22nd June 1996 for the advance phase of mountain/high altitude flying. Initially pilots were familiarized with the surrounding valleys of Gilgit. On 26th June 1996, loaded operations were undertaken in 80 Brigade area successfully. There after flight moved to Skardu on 29th June 1996. On 1st July 1996 a successful landing was made at International Himalayan Expedition Camp, IHEC(5050 meters) in Baltoro Sector by Lieutenant Colonel Tughral Bashir and Lieutenant Colonel Niazi. This historic landing was the highest



MI-17 at International Hiking Expedition Camp (IHEC)

ever landing undertaken on a twin engine helicopter in Pakistan. It changed the complexion of helicopter warfare supporting these far flung and remote areas. Now MI-17 in one sortie could haul the load equivalent to 10 sorties of Lama in the sector. Subsequently MI-17 helicopters were flown to 323 Brigade area for the proving missions of existing helipads as well as the performance of the helicopters. On 4th July 1996, the flight came back to Qasim Base after successful completion of the mission, having flown 136.5 hours in the process. Pioneer crew included, Lieutenant Colonel Tughral Bashir, Major Nasir Iftikhar, Major Naveed Akbar, Major Jehangir Bhatti, Major Ihsan-Ul-Haq, Captain Naeem Masood Khan, Captain Jehanzeb, and Captain Murtaza Saleem. Major Naeem Masood remembers the first landing at IHEC with Colonel Tughral; "when after landing I opened the cola tin the whole cola simply gushed out spraying the whole cockpit".

Shifting of Guns to Shaqma & Olding

The next phase after successful trials of high altitude landings was the transportation of 130mm arty guns to Shaqma and Olding Sectors from Skardu. Lt. Col Tughral Bashir Commanding Officer 27 Squadron alongwith his team of pilots, Maj Nasir Iftikhar and Capt Naeem Masood Khan reached Skardu on 26 July 1996. At Shaqma the ground was descending all along after crossing Bari La at 16000 feet density altitude over Deosai into a narrow valley. Helicopter approach had to be terminated on a critically located helipad with no room to go-around. This place is known as Fultukush. There was a stream of water just short of helipad which would take away the ground cushion as well. Where as at Olding the ground was rising with terraces every 25 to 30 feet. Two terraces were cut and made one making it big enough for MI-17 helicopter to land. It indeed was a challenging task, Guns were disassembled and the heaviest part was the barrel which had to be transported in one piece of course. And it had to be put inside the cargo compartment in asbence of sling eqpt. The weight calculcations necessitated that least quantity of fuel with no reserve be filled in the fuel tanks and even the crew chief and the ladder to climb into and come out of the helicopter be left behind. When cg of barrel including breach block was adjusted inside the cargo compartment the barrel remained 6 feet out from rear cargo door. Lama pilots were tasked to give the wind direction before descending from Deosai. Because without favorable wind landing was not possible and MI-17 could not climb out of valley



Lt Col Tughral Bashir



Maj Nasir Iftikhar



Capt Naeem Masood

with the load of barrel once descend had been initiated. With all the factors are calculated and taken care of three 130mm guns were flown to Hassan Gun Position from 27 July to 8 August 1996 in eight sorties. After this preparations were made to fly remaining three guns to Olding Sector.

Dozer Across Burzil

One dozer was required by the engineers for the improvement of track in Shaqma Sector. Shifting of the said dozer was not possible by road due to snow bound areas en route. The only possibility left to shift the dozer was through heli lifting by MI-17 helicopters. The mission was assigned to MI-17 Flight Skardu during Ist week of May 1997. After desired deliberation, it was recommended to Headquarters FCNA that the said dozer be stripped in parts prior to shifting. On 15th May 1997 the shifting of dozer to Dheri started

and the mission was completed on 11th June 1997. Major Naveed Akbar and Major Warraich were the crew members and flew a total of 17.4 hours in this mission.

Skardu Aviation Base

In October 1997, Skardu Aviaton Base was raised with Colonel Khalid as the commander and Major Daud as the only Staff Officer. It had following assets:-

Lama Flight (Skardu)	Four Lamas: One Allouette-III :
Puma Flight (Gilgit)	One Puma:
MI-17 Flight (Skardu)	Two or Three MI-17 helicopters at Skardu.

Reconnaissance & Secrecy

During winter of 1998 Indians had vacated the posts overlooking Kargil. This was detected and confirmed by own aviation elements who operate in this area freely. Pilots of 8 Army Aviation Squadron later undertook operational recce and peep through missions along and across LOC. Pilots not caring for their lives carried out these sorties right under the watchful and hostile eyes of Indians. Major Khalid Rana was one such Lama pilot. " Reconnaissance and surveillance missions by helicopters were also undertaken in other sub sector as per routine activity". Due to this factor secrecy of the operation was maintained till first week of May 1999. Secrecy was the hallmark of this operation so much so that even the Qasim Base Commander and commanding officers of aviation squadron were not in picture of the whole affair and neither were the pilots.



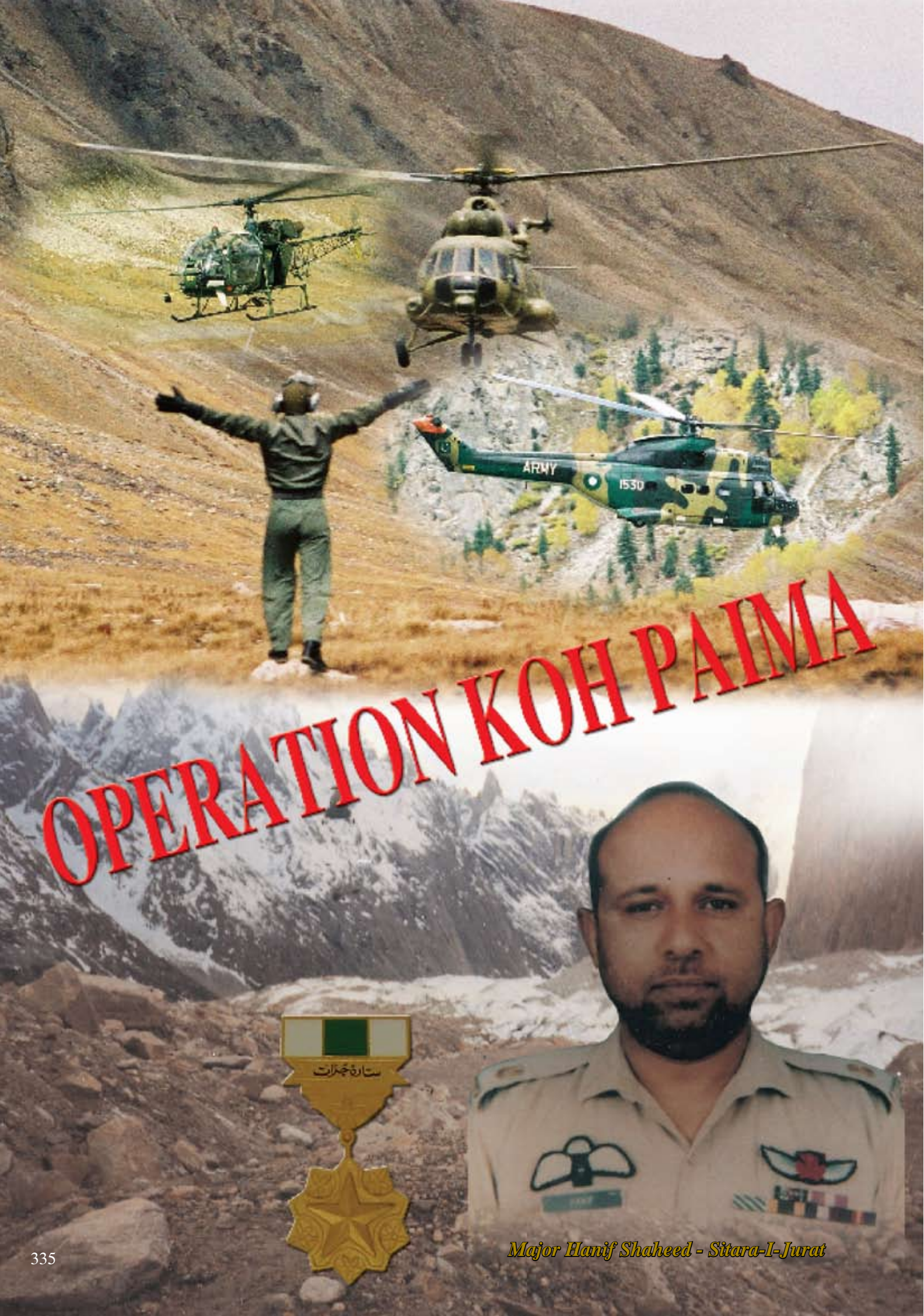
Troops and fuel were transported in MI-17 helicopter

More Guns

After successful gun transportation by helicopter in Shaqma sector FCNA planned to shift more artillery guns to different sectors. The weight of one gun was approximately 7500 kilograms. MI-17s proved equal to the task and 1x57mm, 15x105mm and 43x130mm guns along with crew and ammunition, defence stores, troops, overhead protection, engineers stores were successfully transported to the desired locations.

PAF Radar Shifted Over Deosai

It was the first time that PAF Radar was helilifted from Skardu to Deosai plains along with its allied equipment.



Major Hanif Shaheed - Sitara-I-Jurat



OPERATION KOH PAIMA

Kashmiri freedom fighters since 1989 were engaged in an 'Intifada'. With the passage of time, it gained momentum and reached its zenith in 1998. These freedom fighters were the third generation of the same very brave people, who had captured Kargil in 1948. These fighters enjoyed the local support across the LOC as well. In the winter of 1998, posts were vacated as per routine by the Indian troops due to cold, and freedom fighters occupied them just before the return of the Indian troops. A bitter fight for the control of these heights started between the freedom fighters and the Indian Army. It was replica of Siachin conflict but this time Pakistan had turned the table on the India. India planned Operation Vijay to recapture the lost posts and Pakistan responded with operation Koh Paima, to maintain the integrity of LOC. On 5th May 1999 the hostilities along the LOC turned into a Limited War between Pakistan and India. On this very day firing between Pakistani and Indian troops in Piun Sector took place. Indians employed over three division of infantry supported by over hundred Bofors guns and almost seven squadrons of Indian Air Force. The continued presence of enemy air force in this area resulted into frequent delay/cancellation of own aviation missions. After shooting down of MIG-21 and MIG-27 on 28th May, enemy aircraft activity subsided in crossing of LOC. The IAF subsequently adopted the technique of engaging the targets by remaining in their own area, which gave freedom of operation to own aviation helicopters to a great extent. Ground based air defence weapons did not pose any worthwhile threat to own aviation operations. However own activities were continuously monitored by the enemy radars deployed in support of this operation.

Role Of Army Aviation

Operation Koh Paima was supported by 8 Squadron(Lamas/Allouette-III), 27 Squadron(MI-17) and 21 Squadron(Puma). Helicopters were placed in Skardu and Gilgit respectively. Puma helicopters assisted the aviation support in this operation up to the limit of 14,000 feet where as the mission above this altitude were undertaken by MI-17. Lama were used for missions close to the enemy. Daily flying during the operation was approx 6-7hours per pilot. The major tasks were, replenishment of artillery ammunition to the forward gun positions, replenishment of critical supplies, casualty evacuation, command and liaison.

These missions were carried out under adverse environments. The locations of certain posts were such that own helicopters remained under hostile fire for certain duration of flight time. As the intensity of operation increased the logistic requirement of ground troops also multiplied. Most critical requirement was the artillery ammunition, and it was heli lifted and delivered to gun positions amidst falling Indian artillery shells.

Aviation Fuel was abundantly available only at Gilgit, Skardu, Jaglot and Astore. During the peak of operation when the aviation was being employed at intense rate, the requirement of fuel increased manifold which diverted some of aviation effort for the transportation of fuel to forward areas.



Pre-flight of MI-17 during winter

First Line Maintenance. This maintenance support was provided by the respective light aid detachments(LAD) of squadrons at Skardu and Gilgit. The dedicated effort of the LAD persons ensured the serviceability of helicopters as per the intended operational requirement. However in case of any component becoming unserviceable replacements were arranged from squadrons/ EME battalions located at Qasim Base. The 25 and 50 hours inspections of Puma and Lama helicopters were regularly carried out by the LADs at Gilgit and Skardu which avoided the grounding of helicopters.

All experienced MI-17 pilots were pooled at Skardu, in one instance Major Basharat

RESUSCITATION OF 5 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON - 5 July 1999



Major Daud
The First and
the Only Staff Officer
of Skardu Base



Colonel Khalid
The First Base
Commander





Major General Ashraf
GOC Army Aviation

Lieutenant Colonel Tanveer
CO 5 Squadron

Noor and Major Ikram who were on a routine squadron navigation flew from Turbat to Skardu in a single day. It was the same period when cyclone relief operation was also being undertaken simultaneously at Badin. PAF fighting Falcon F-16 were also stationed at Skardu in anticipation of enemy air attack. Articulation of command was a major hurdle in aviation affairs, pilots were under various tiers of command.

Major Hanif - The Aviation Hero Of Kargil



Call sign "Daud 19" the flying legend of Kargil arrived at Skardu on 4th June 1999 and by virtue of his experience and seniority took over the command of MI-17 Flight. The mission detailing was done by Major Daud Tariq daily by 2200-2330hours. Same was passed to the flight along with the weather forecast. Weather was generally taken by the base from forward posts or from the brigade headquarters.

On 9th June 1999, one such mission for carrying of artillery ammunition to Gultri Post was passed at 2330hours. Major Hanif "Daud 19", not only accepted the mission but keeping in view the hazards decided to go himself along with Captain Uzair. Before hitting the bed he rang Naib Subedar Khurshid in charge of light aid detachment to make ready the MI-17 # 58611 of 4 Squadron that had arrived at Skardu on 8th June. Havildar Shabbir Aassi was detailed as the flight engineer and Havildar Bashir along with Naik Naseer were to act as the crew chief.

At 0345hours Major Hanif and his co pilot got up from Gamba House amidst pile of pilots who were sleeping at whatever space there was. The mess staff made a hasty standard break fast of paratha and omelette. Captain Uzair since time immemorial had never missed his prayers. They reached the dispersal area which was a nullah and started the helicopter and brought it to airfield and then got airborne at 0430. By the time sun rays reached Skardu, almost all the helicopters were airborne heading for various sectors.

At 1600 hours "Daud 19" landed at Gultri after dumping and sling operations. He shared the helipad with Puma, captained by Major Sabah ud Din, who had Commander FCNA with him for briefing and visit to the forward areas. Both pilots before taking off checked the weather, Puma had to go back to Gilgit and Major Hanif to Skardu.

Brigadier Nusrat Sial the Commander of 62 Brigade, Captain Saeed Ahmed of 13 Northern Light Infantry, Captain Jamil Akbar of 13 Azad Kashmir Regiment along with Subedar Nazir and Clerk Karim of same paltan, Gunner Abdul Rehan of 215 Medium Regiment were all to accompany Daud 19 to Skardu for varying reasons.

At 1700hours Major Saqib Qayyum observed the first lightening and flash over the valley, simultaneously Major Daud Tariq and Colonel Khalid Mahmood all started inquiring about the where about of Major Hanif. Major Sabah ud Din who took off after Major Hanif decided to proceed back to Gultri as it was near impossible to fly ahead, he gave calls to "Daud 19" but there was no response. Major Shahid Nazir who was in air while coming back from Piun was directed by ground staff to go and search "Daud 19", but the entry to Deosai plains was blocked.

Wing Commander Bashir Ahmed of Pakistan Air Force had arrived at the Deosai plains at 1545 hours and within hours he made the radar operational. At 1730hours when winds outside were lashing at 60-70 knots, he saw a slow moving helicopter on his radar screen, it took him some time to identify it from clutters



of surrounding mountains. At 2000hours when weather became absolutely clear, he saw a fire burning on the top of a peak. Next day weather remained bad and finally ground parties which were searching the missing 'Daud 19', located the wreckage, all souls on board had departed.

Major Hanif the legendary "DAUD 19" was awarded Sitara-i- Jur'at for his commitment and dedication, Captain Uzair and Naik Aassi were bestowed with Tamgha-i-Basalat. The unpredictable weather did not give Major Hanif a chance even to turn back for safety.

Casualty Evacuation Missions

On 16th June 1999, when Operation Koh Paima was at its peak, team of two Lama helicopters were assigned task of evacuating 19 causalities from a post which was under enemy artillery and air attack. The post was so located that in order to approach it, the helicopter had to give forty seconds exposure to another enemy post. Furthermore it was like a bowl and helicopters had to make a rapid climb to 5,200 meters and then descending to 4,700 meters. Major Qaiser the mission leader had not even seen this post before. The two Lama helicopters inspite of all these odds made three trips to this post amidst enemy shelling and successfully evacuated all the causalities.

On 18th June 1999, another mission was assigned to evacuate a casualty with back bone injury. Keeping in view that in Lama lying casualty could not be evacuated, but crew Major Daud & Major Qaiser were determined to evacuate him, they removed the seats and placed a wooden plank of about 5 feet in the helicopter. After landing at the post the casualty; Major Wali was laid on the plank and placed inside the helicopter, the legs of Major Wali from knee onwards were out of chopper. Lama flew in this manner to Skardu. Later on Major Wali remained admitted in CMH for over one year. By the Grace of Allah Almighty Major Wali is walking now.

The Flying Hours generated by 5 Squadron are as under:-

Puma	-	536.3 hours
Lama/Allouette	-	1835.6 hours
MI-17	-	1823.1 hours
Total	-	4261.0 hours

The details of logistic support provided to the field formations are as under:-

Dumping	-	251,183.0 kg
Persons Lifted	-	7037
Casualty Evacuated	-	882

Honours And Awards

Lieutenant Colonel Hanif	Sitara-I-Jurat(Posthumous)
Captain Muhammad Uzair	Tamgha-I-Basalat(Posthumous)
Havildar Shabbir Aassi	Tamgha-I-Basalat(Posthumous)
Naik Naseer Ahmed Malik	Tamgha-I-Basalat(Posthmous)
Major Qaiser Yaqoob	Tamgha-I- Basalat
Major Nawazish	Tamgha-I-Basalat
Major Sabah Ud Din	Imtiazi Sanad
Major Shahid Nazir	Commendation Card
Major Anwer Iqbal	Commendation Card
Major Khalid Ahmed	Commendation Card

MEMORIES OF NORTH











MILLENNIUM

Army Aviation stepped into the new millennium full of pride and zeal. It had delivered the goods in last decade despite being severely affected by the sanctions, still a lot of home work was to be done. Out of existing fleet of two hundred and ninety seven aircraft of nineteen different types, only one hundred and forty seven were serviceable against an operational requirement of one hundred and ninety three. Twenty eight aircraft were under overhaul and sixty eight were grounded for want of spares. Combat helicopters lacked the requisite spares for maintaining venom, notably the capability to strike at night apart from certain dynamic components. Cargo helicopters fleet was on the verge of getting obsolete.

The major decisions taken were: initiating induction process of attack and scout helicopters, serviceability of Puma helicopters, establishing facilities for overhauling major assemblies of certain helicopters, development of night capability for combat fleet, induction of more MI-17 helicopters along with phasing out of Puma and MI-8 helicopters to overcome the imbalance in lifting capability. Other than material requirement it was also felt that Army Aviation needs certain re-organisation to meet the challenges of new era. Computerisation of entire corps and relocation of certain aviation assets were also pondered. Army Aviation thus was fully mentally geared for this historic event of stepping into new Millennium.

Nation Building

Country was in severe grip of drought and other than hope and prayers the only viable solution was offered by the Army Aviation. Lieutenant Colonel (then Major)Nouman Sial indigenously developed salt and dry ice dispensers and silver iodide flare cartridges. These were later installed on six MFI-17 and two Y-12 aircraft. Out of forty-eight summer trials, thirty were successful and out of twenty three winter experiments, fourteen were found useful. These dispensers also proved useful in strategic afforestation carried out in the country especially in Cholistan area. Houbara Foundation was also helped in preserving the nature. With effect from July 2001, Aviation Command was tasked to act as garrison commander of all M.E.S works in Rawalpindi. Army Aviation was also tasked to lookafter the affairs of Central Board of Revenue at Rawalpindi and Lahore.

Hit By a Storm

On the night of 28th -29th August 2000, a storm lashed Qasim Base, resultantly two hangars collapsed, two MI-17 were damaged and two were made partially unserviceable. This strange phenomenon only devastated Qasim Base and nothing was damaged in the adjoining area.



Damaged MI-17



OPERATION LABBAIK

On 13th December 2001, Indian Lok Saba was subjected to a heinous terrorist attack for which India as usual blamed Pakistan. By end December 2001, India had brought its armed forces on the border, a Nuclear War became imminent in the sub-continent. Pakistan now faced a two pronged threat on its Eastern and Western borders. The operation to counter the Indian threat was code named "Labbaik".

Qasim Base, First January 2002

A conference was called upon in the Qasim Base Headquarters after which all the commanding officers along with the base commander, Brigadier Arif Nazir went for an aerial reconnaissance of their dispersal areas in the Ravi-Chenab Corridor. Next day the second in commands of the squadrons were helilifted to the area as part of the advance party. Second in Command(2IC) of 27 Squadron recalls.

"On 3rd January 2002 Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Nazir called me in his office and briefed me to go to Rahwali to mark the camp area, which he had reconnoitred a day before. He generally gave me the map square in which he wanted the squadron to be deployed and left other details to me. I was supposed to be back by evening. Gujranwala was damp and foggy. By evening weather turned so bad that we had to stay there. Meanwhile I got a message that advance party is reaching tomorrow; which they did by the noon next day led by the General Staff Officer Grade One Lieutenant Colonel Raja Shoukat. Advance parties consisted of 20 men of each squadron. Punjab was in grip of severe cold and fog, it was so thick that, second seater marched in front of vehicles to guide them through.

Our area was a small wood with field of potatoes all around, all wet and ploughed. Without wasting time we got down to the job of digging. Laws of physics are as applicable on humans as they are on machine and the foremost is law of inertia. Till the arrival of main body on 10th January, we worked around the clock. Life started revolving around how many bunkers are still left without over head protection cover. Weather was cold with mercury dropping down to zero at night along with fog phenomenon which persisted at times for days. In preparing the helipads the major irritant other than the potato fields were the pleas of farmers. Hot tea and halwa was the only entertainment for us. On 5th January 2002, General Officer Commanding, Army Aviation, Major General Azam visited us in the field, briefing was given to him under pouring rain.

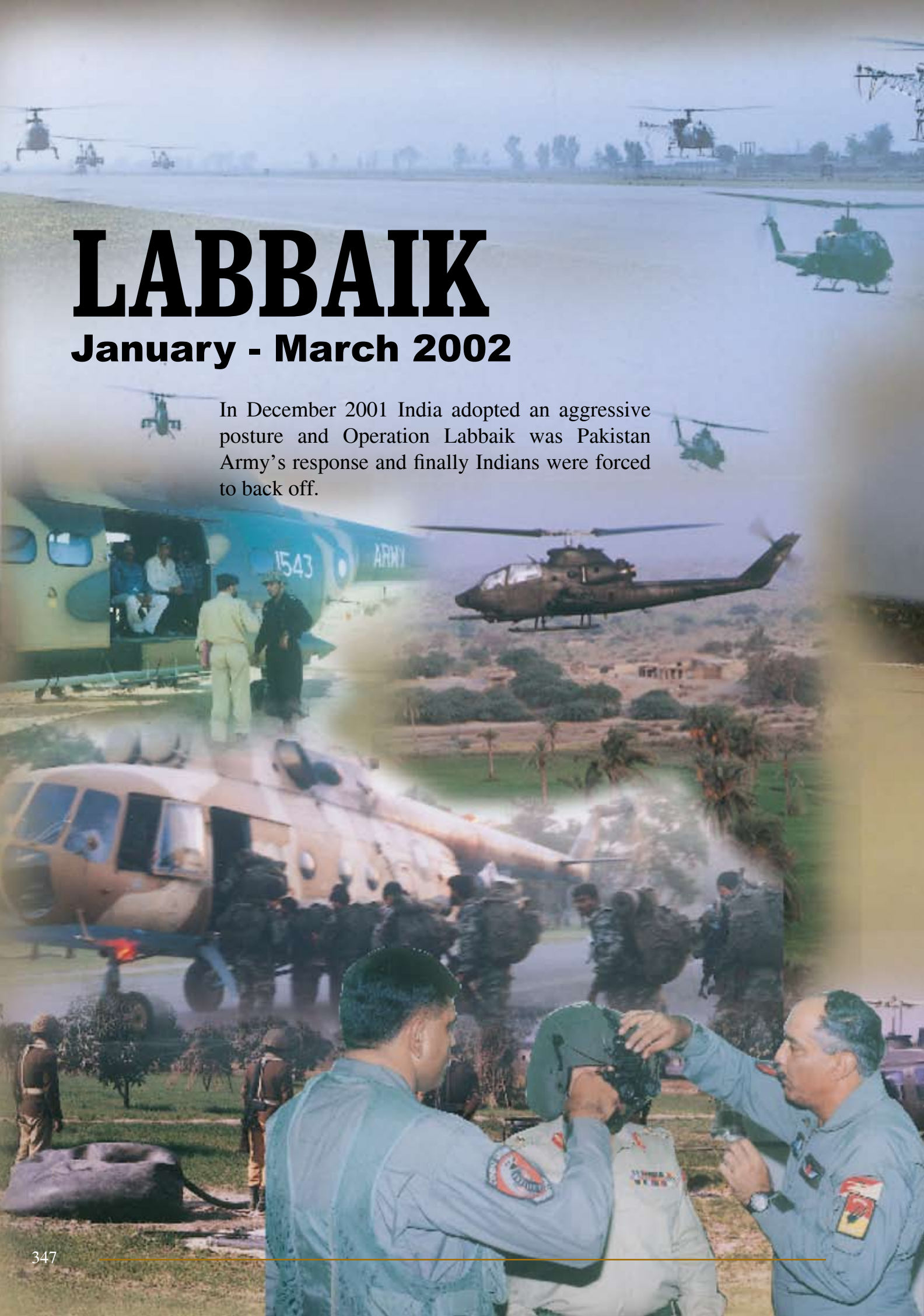
After one week the main body arrived and life started taking more routine pattern. There would be morning parades, flying check outs, captaincy checkouts, durbar and route marches of 12-14 kilometres added zen to the military life. The inter squadron small arms firing competition was of great thrill in which our squadron stood second. Daily routine started with Stand-To and later Meteorological /Air Traffic Control Brief. After this brief, the breakfast would be consumed which invariably had some kind of potatoes in it. In the day, pilots would spend the time in the cockpits going through the technical details. General Officer Commanding again came for an address, the highlight was the induction of new weapon systems and generally updating the pilots. These addresses were useful as they kill rumours which are always in abundance in any such scenario.

With the passage of time our area had to be reoriented due to climatic changes. Fields were now baked and the potatoes had to be taken out. We had so much potatoes that adjutant used to send the messages to the flight commanders by writing it on potatoes. We had a company of commandos attached with the formation. They would spend the day with us discussing tactics and carrying out model discussions. In the end we would have a verbal orders drill and then actual flying of the exercise. There was an urgency in every thing, we also carried out night flying, rapidly progressing from operating on the nearby Rahwali Airfield to gradual operations in the field. There was a blend of experience among the pilots, few were captains on the helicopter, others were yet to be declared operational. There was a pair of night vision goggles of latest generation which we employed for the first time. It was fabulous because we could see in the darkness, the tents, power lines, landing areas and troops guarding them. Same goggles would be used by the sentries for night patrolling. Our squadron had full equipment of nuclear, chemical and biological equipment thus we drilled this equipment and made all our camp according to laid down drills of NBCW due to which it started giving very conspicuous look, a kind of Star War. We also had central tactical exercises without troops (TEWT) for our intended missions of raiding Indian bridges, airfields, and headquarters. These exercises

LABBAIK

January - March 2002

In December 2001 India adopted an aggressive posture and Operation Labbaik was Pakistan Army's response and finally Indians were forced to back off.




ADC



were more realistic and every one had the opportunity to speak one's mind out. By end February we were told to be ready for move back and then suddenly one day we were given the instructions to fall back to Dhamial."

Multan Army Aviation Base

High alert for Multan Base came on 3rd January 2002. On 9th January advance party of Multan Base left for their operational area led by Major Farhat and Major Rizwan. By 10th Aviation Base was deployed in its area of operation. On 10th January 2002 all Aviation Bases were re-designated with Group Numbers in line with the deployment of the rest of Army. All aviation concepts practiced during 'Zarb-e-Momin' and 'Flying Brevet' were now being tested in actual scenario.

Army Aviation Combat Group

This group was deployed near Lodhran. 4 Aviation Squadron moved by road from Quetta and reached operational area. 33 Combat Squadron was placed in support of Multan Base at Rahim Yar Khan. Initially the Cobra helicopters remained at Multan to give currency to attached Cobra pilots, who were posted at various formations. On 31st January 2002**).** At 0800 hours, one combat flight of 33 Army Aviation Combat Squadron reached exercise area to conduct battle drill in the perceived areas of employment. First night battle drill was conducted by the same squadron on 1st February 2002. Certain aspects to improve recognition of FAARPS were highlighted in these drills. Like siting FAARP with reference to some conspicuous landmark, firing of flares on arrival of combat helicopters and indications with the help of flags etc. It was concluded that there is a need to ensure more coordination between Combat Squadrons and FAAR Company as well as the concerned formation.

Army Aviation School

It also moved out in support of affiliated formation. The training helicopters were attached with the formations.

Electronic Eye

Army Aviation played a vital role in the collection of signal intelligence data about the enemy by flying for the first time its electronic warfare equipped MI-17 along the eastern border. This helicopter logged over 100 hours within a week. Major Imtiaz remained its captain during this time whereas the co-pilots included Majors Umar, Chanzeb and Ahmed. He narrated; "We would get airborne from any of the desert airfield at night and then climb to 10.000 feet, after that we had a tiring flight of three and half hour. Landing in the dark again taking off and following same route we would fly back to the point of origin and this lasted for over ten days at a stretch. It required a lot of planning and coordination between various flying and ground formations. Once we were challenged by own fighters as our all navigational lights were off. Once I saw a hostile aircraft making passes, but to top it all we narrowly escaped own Ack Ack fire. All field formations were deployed and unprecedented secrecy and security was observed, no one knew where the other was. After landing we would find some place for sleep. A signal detachment which was deployed around a tube well was our abode. Signal Corps were operating the sets mounted in the helicopter. I also listened to the tapes which signals had deciphered, one Indian Major Nagra was having an affair with some Colonel Malhotras wife at Bombay".

Anti Remotely Piloted Vehicle(RPV) Operation.

On 24th January 2002, during the daily evening brief in the field area, Captain Amir of 499 EME Battalion pointed out that he had observed an Indian RPV making patterns overhead the camp. The news was both interesting and alarming The staff of the headquarters and other officers remained concerned during the evening walks but overruled it as an illusion later the threat proved to be real. All concerned were alerted and course of action to shoot an RPV was decided. To thwart reconnaissance missions of hostile RPVs likely to intrude into Pakistan air space, combat elements remained on Air Defence Alert for 60 hours at a stretch. Two scramble practices were also conducted with the PAF. One Puma No.1528 of 21 Army



Aviation Squadron was modified to carry machine gun and be able to fire from air. One Allouette was also similarly tasked for this. Later these helicopters were placed at Sialkot and Bahawalpur for this purpose. 33 Squadron also flew Ground Control Interception missions during this time. However, coincidentally no RPV came during this period.

Indians Backed Off

India lost its nerves and finally backed off, Army Aviation Groups moved back to peace locations on 7th March 2002. Corps Composite Squadrons remained deployed in the field for another two months. 9 Army Aviation Squadron under Lieutenant Colonel Nasir Dilawar developed first ever dummy aircraft for deception purposes. Y-12 flew regular morale boosting sorties from Qasim to Karachi via Mangla, it also flew regularly to Quetta. The formations from distant stations were deployed along the eastern borders thus these sorties were much looked for and appreciated by all ranks. Troops were able to visit their families and be back after a long weekend. Causality evacuations were also carried out by the aircraft in all sectors. It is worth mentioning that operational orders were delivered to all formations by Y-12 aircraft despite heavy fog prevailing on that day. During this escalation period retired aviators pleaded to be included in the war machinery. They met GOC Aviation and volunteered to look after the camp and administrative affairs as the minimum, thus freeing the pilots exclusively for flying.

In escalation along Eastern Border Army Aviation flew 1,853 missions and generated 6190 flying hours

WAR AGAINST TERROR

Aftermath of 11th September 2001(9/11) made Pakistan once again a front line state, to fight the terrorism.

Army Aviation

On 10th October 2001, one Puma helicopter of 21 Army Aviation Squadron was placed at Peshawar and within a week a Composite Rotary Flight was stationed at Kohat consisting of Jet Ranger and MI-17. Later two more Pumas were despatched from Qasim Base in support of 11 Corp. The task was to keep the Durand Line under observation. Major(Late)Imtiaz of 27 Squadron narrated; “We were at Peshawar, the corps headquarters after carrying out aerial reconnaissance would direct us to drop the infantry troops at prescribed heights to block the routes of infiltration. All such posts were established with the help of Army Aviation. Till a certain height the infantry troops would come on vehicles but to reach the heights would involve time. The tops were all covered with snow; thus essential rationing was also heli-transported to them”.

Combat Group was extensively used in the early stages with both the squadrons moving out to the Western border. 33 Combat Squadron was deployed at Quetta whereas 31 Combat Squadron with its two Cobras and two Jet Rangers was at Kohat.

Major Khattak of 31 Squadron was sent to Kohat on 12th December 2001, mainly because he belongs to that area and had flown before, he recalls, “I flew with the divisional commander and showed him all the valleys and routes coming from Afghanistan. We saw the people coming in from across the Durand Line. During one of the reconnaissance mission we also saw B-52 Bombers dropping their loads. In another sortie I flew few miles across the Durand Line, I saw a detachment of Afghan troops digging their positions, they waved at me and I replied accordingly”.

President of Pakistan Flies to Kabul

On 1st April 2002 Chief Pilot Lieutenant Colonel Waqar Muhammad Khan was given a highly important mission to fly the President of Pakistan General Pervez Mussharaf, to Kabul and Bagram. Lieutenant Colonel Waqar narrates; “On 1st April at 1500hours we were told to fly to Kabul and drop Colonel Stanton of US Army to coordinate the visit of President of Pakistan. We took off at around 1700

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM



Troops being deployed along Durand Line



Cobra of 33 Squadron along Durand Line



Command and Communication



Logistic Support to Deployed Troops

THE STORY OF RAZMAK & THE UNFORTUNATE CRASHES

Geography

"Razmak Plateau" affectionately known by the British as "Little London" has an attitude of 6600 feet. Shoran Algad, 3 Km South of Razmak is the boundary between North and South Waziristan. November to March is the winter while remainder of the year is well known for the pleasantries of summer. It rains almost every third day at Razmak as clouds mask the sky in the afternoon, rain pours in gently followed by pleasant and clear evenings. Snowfall occurs from December to February.

Historical Significance

Razmak was chosen in year 1922 by the British Army as Forward Strategic Location to divide/entrust area to different commanders for smooth administrative/operational reasons and to further the policy of controlling Wazirs and Mahsuds tribes on both side of Shoran Algad (North and South Wiziristan). Human cost paid by the British for its occupation can be noticed from two small British cemeteries at Razmak.

Razmak Airstrip and the Crash

Airstrip was constructed in year 1935, at a site creating a bowl in the valley where unpredictable/difficult wind phenomena is experienced. Due to peculiar hazards, the strip remained disused for most of the period. However, in the year 2000, two Mushak aircraft piloted by experienced instructors flew for a proving sortie of the disused runway of Razmak. During the trial go around at the take off leg, leading aircraft started sinking suddenly and crash landed on a small hill. The following aircraft also felt the same sink with the loss of height at take off leg. This aircraft continued ahead into the nullah till it crash landed at a distance of approx 3.5 kms. Both aircraft toppled over and sustained major damage while the four pilots suffered minor injuries. The strip remains disused til 2007 after these unfortunate crashes.













Operation Enduring Freedom is the civilised world's response to curb terrorism, emanating from Afghanistan. From 10th October 2001 onward Pakistan Army Aviation started monitoring the western border.





hours for Kabul. This was our first exposure into Afghanistan Air space. Beyond Peshawar the lay of ground is mountainous and known for turbulence. The reported weather at Kabul was clear skies with cross-wind of 30-35 knots and severe wind shear warning on approach. We landed on Runway 29 of Kabul airport under extreme conditions.

Kabul Airport was giving a deserted look. Effects of war were visible. There were destroyed aircraft scattered all around the tarmac area. I.S.A.F. Headquarters was visible with bunkers and British soldiers on ground. This mission provided us an opportunity to do proving for the next days mission. On 2nd April 2002 we flew to Kabul along with two C-130 aircraft on historical visit of President of Pakistan to Afghanistan. This provided us an opportunity to visit ISAF HQ at Kabul and meet foreign troops. The visit was fruitful, educational and enjoyable as well.

After dropping the President of Pakistan at Kabul we flew to Bagram Air Base with Colonel Stanton of US Army. Bagram is an operational base, 25 nautical miles north of Kabul. We were really excited seeing the number of US Helicopters, large fleet of cargo aircraft and fighters. Colonel Stanton was our host at Bagram. He was worried on two accounts, one for his hospitality to give us lunch and secondly the hostile environment around Bagram Air Base. We were requested to stay on the aircraft with detailed instructions of not to walk on ground other than taxi- ways because of land mines. At 1400hours Colonel Stanton brought us lunch that is called ready to eat meals in US Army. The high technology ready to eat meals was more of fun for us. The pack contained every thing from chewing gum, steaks, to Chinese food. You could warm the food in special envelopes by pouring small amount of water in it, make instant tea, juice etc. The quality of food was exceptionally good but not to our taste buds, never the less we enjoyed it. The day was spent interacting with 10 Mountain Division staff and people of special forces. Women of special forces carrying complete field services equipment and weapons especially impressed Major Adnan. It was a classical example of women, hand in glove with men fighting war on terrorism".

First Anti Terrorist Training

This exercise was conducted at Pishin Ranges between 26th May to 29th May 2003. 33 Combat Squadron and 4 Squadron participated. Vice Chief of Army Staff General Yousaf witnessed it along with senior army officers. The exercise setting depicted air assault concept. MI-17 helicopters, helidropped the Special Services Group troops near target area, which had been cordoned by 41 Infantry Division troops. Cobras provided escort and aerial fire support. 400 cannon rounds and 26 rockets were fired in this exercise.

Night Vision Goggles(NVG) Training

NVG flying was initiated by Cobra pilots when 25 NVGs were handed over to them at Kohat by Americans. Combat Group started training at its own, Lieutenant Colonel Waseem, Major Khattak and Major Nabeel were the pioneer instructors. Finally a night battle drill was conducted which was attended by commander 2 Corps also. Collaboration with Americans later resulted in joint training of NVGs with them. The first such training exercise was conducted at Pasni from 20th to 26th September 2002. The training was co-ordinated at Joint Services Headquarters level and the purpose at aviation level was to train nucleus of few officers who would subsequently be instrumental for training all Aviators. Own pilots stayed at Pasni and American crew along with a Black Hawk helicopter used to come from the Carrier for exercise purpose. Americans made our pilots familiar with the NVGs and scanning techniques. One day one American was asked why he is collecting sand before their daily departure back to carrier and he replied; "One of our colleague is having her birthday today, she has been on the carrier for quite long and has requested mud as a birthday gift". Another similar training with Americans was conducted at Jacobabad Airfield between 20th October - 20th November 2002. Ground Training followed by 20-25 hours of flying training comprised the syllabi. Eight pilots (2xMI-17, 2xPuma and 4xY-12) were trained. Later on, the cadres were planned by Aviation Command to be held under groups. Lieutenant Colonel Irfan narrates; "Mr Tiernney was my American instructor on Puma, he was a Vietnam veteran, and had over 3600 hours which included only 40 hours on Puma (Irfan himself an instructor, with over 4000 flying hours which include hours in excess of 2000 on Puma). Initially I gave him currency and later we flew together with NVGs. We both would wear the goggles apart from two scanners, flight engineer would remain normal. NVG training was carried out



relentlessly. Mr Tiernney would always fly with his regulation gear that included one rifle, one pistol and dagger apart from few pouches. When I inquired what all is in it, he replied 'All junk, mate, but regulations are regulations'. One exercise at night was conducted near Pano Aqil that involved realistic planning and conduct. Later in one of the training exercise one MI-17 of 4 Squadron was fired upon by the Bugtis. Army Aviation on emergent basis procured NVGs and squadrons conducted hectic training on them. This was a major achievement, fear of night had been conquered.

Exercise Fox Hunt

As the tempo of war against terror intensified, it was felt at highest level that desired results are viable if terrorist strongholds are struck with speed and ferocity; and that is possible only by utilising the medium of air. Thus the concept of air assault and Special Operation Task Force was evolved. Army Aviation did not have integral troops for such kind of operations and Special Services Group does not have the air wing, there fore these two elite corps were married. Exercise Fox Hunt was the culmination stage of their integrated training. It was the largest ever mutual interaction between these two and it validated the concept of air assault.

The exercise preparation, briefing and planning started in the first week of August 2003. On 9th August 2003 Commander SSG and on 11th August Commander Qasim Base Brigadier Arif Nazir gave verbal orders.

Aviators underwent a lot of effort and training. Since the beginning of the year night vision goggles and nocturnal flying was carried out extensively. It became routine to hear the helicopters getting air borne before Fajr prayer from Qasim Base endlessly for weeks preceding the D-day. Crew was made to operate at night and during day they would rest. Training involved night navigations from Qasim Base to Tarbela and hours long night training sorties in the training area. Never before any of the serving aviator had gone through such a heavy dose of night flying.

Cobra pilots stayed at Aviation Mess and practiced mountain flying around Muree. Secrecy and security was maximum. No one knew what this is all about, on the other hand morale was looked after through hosting of dinner by the GOC for the pilots and recreation trips.

Air Assault Concept

Aviation was to helilift the Special Services Group troops from a pick up zone (PZ) and drop them in a landing zone (LZ) in dark, around the target area to establish the cordon and blocking position. This ground force was to be provided protection by attack helicopters. These attack helicopters were also to engage fleeing target.

On 13th August 2003, first wave of eleven cargo helicopters helilifted 256 combat soldiers of 1st and 2nd Commando Battalions alongwith Zarrar Company from Tarbela at 0430 hours. Their designated exercise target was depicted in Maroba Valley, a stretch of 4-6 kilometers located south east of Cherat. The formation led by Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Nazir of 27 Squadron flew along unreconnoitered route of Gurghashti - Attock Fort without any NVG or enroute terminal guidance and dropped troops in eleven different landing zones at 0500 hours. Second wave of another 220 combat soldiers was dropped by a wave of 11 cargo helicopters at 0600 hours, third wave of 11 cargo helicopters dropped 220 combat soldiers at 0930 hours. Attack helicopters provided escort to all the formations and further cordoned the area. These attack helicopters remained in the area to deter any threat to the ground forces. Forward Area Arming and Refueling was provided at Nizampur. Before last light de-induction of troops was carried out and all helicopters reached back Qasim Base by 1800 hours.

Total of 25 helicopters including Puma, MI-171, Jet Ranger, Cobra and UH-2 of 4, 21, 27, 31 and 50 Squadrons participated. There were 48 pilots and a further 134 all ranks took part in this exercise. 399 Electrical and Mechanical battalion did a commendable job when they put nine MI-17 and four Puma helicopters on flight line within a span of 10 days. A total of 193 flying hours were generated during this exercise and 1696 troops were helilifted. Chief of General Staff Lt Gen Shahid Aziz and GOC Army Aviation Maj Gen Azam monitored the progress of the exercise. This exercise set the pattern of aviation operations in days to come.

NIGHT VISION GOGGLES TRAINING

From September 2002 onward Pakistan Army Aviation with the help of American friends embarked on attaining nocturnal capability. Initial training was held in Pakistan and later pilots were trained in America.











Training in America



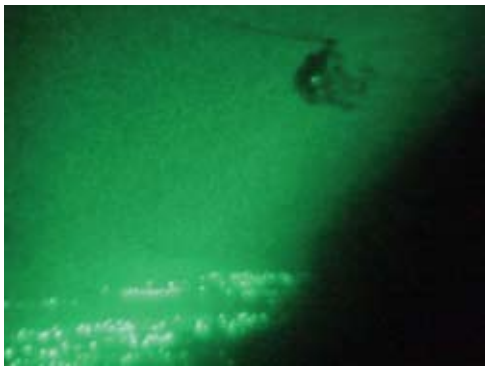



















OPERATION AL-MIZAN

Pakistan Army after securing the borders with India was able to fully concentrate on western borders. The foreign terrorists after fleeing from Afghanistan sought sanctuary in the border area of South Waziristan near Wana. Army Aviation support in the form of one flight of helicopters was in action since 2001. Aviation efforts were primarily utilised in establishing of blocking positions, shifting of troops, dumping in remote areas and evacuation of casualties apart from aerial reconnaissance. A series of operations were conducted from mid 2002 till 2007 with varying intensity and code names but all are part of 'Al-Mizan'.

On 8th August, a mission was received by Headquarters Aviation Command to support 9 Division. Infantry Division had intelligence reports of 60-70 armed operatives residing in an isolated double storey hut located at the northern edge of village Main Toi. Plan was to cordon the area and then search the village. Eight helicopters (three MI-17, four Puma, one Jet Ranger) were earmarked for this operation.

Aviation had to helilift a company size force of 71 Punjab Regiment with heavy weapons from Wana and drop them on heights over looking the target, an aerial command post for divisional commander was also established. One Puma helicopter armed with two machine guns was to provide the aerial combat support. During the planning phase, the sites for landing were selected off the map. At last moment, intelligence officer revealed that latest reports have confirmed that target is in village Shingi approximately four Kilometers north of previous site. Fresh planning was carried out and aerial reconnaissance was also conducted. Bad weather on 9th August prevented aviation elements from reaching Wana. However on 10th August 2002, all helicopters along with the tactical headquarters comprising Brigadier Arif Nazir and Lieutenant Colonel Pervaiz Butt reached Wana.

On the morning of *10th August,* police, militia and infantry moved from Wana and established inner cordon around village Shingi. At 1230hours one Jet Ranger and two Pumas carried out aerial reconnaissance of the target. At 1300 hours seven helicopters started lifting the infantry company along with 75 millimeter recoilless rifle from Wana and dropped them on pre –reconnoitered sites around the target area. The force was heli-lifted in three trips. The ground troops started the search and after pitch battle, few foreigners started fleeing from the target area. Puma helicopter was in air to monitor the operation. At 1800 hours the operation was terminated and all troops were again helilifted from the target area.

Helicopters remained at Wana and on *11th August* they took off at 1500 hours for Qasim Base. One Puma helicopter No.1528 piloted by Major Asad Mujahid and Captain Satti while taking off from Wana made a hard landing and sustained substantial damage.

Raising of 50 Border Security Patrol (BSP) Squadron (11th November 2002)



Brig Shafiq ur Rehman

In view of the terrorist threats and other linked problems on the western border, 50 BSP Squadron comprising newly inducted Huey helicopters and Caravan aircraft was raised under Ministry of Interior. Brigadier Shafiq ur Rehman was made incharge of the BSP setup. 50 BSP Squadron was raised by Colonel Shahid Sardar, Lieutenant Colonel Hafiz Nasir was given the command of Rotary Flight and Major Masood later promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel was commanding Fixed Wing Flight.

Officers were selected to undergo flying training at Flight Safety International, Wichita. The pioneer pilots of Caravan are. Majors Masood, Abid Jamil, Tahir Kiani and Captains included Haroon Ansar, Nadeem Khan, Naveed Anwar, Ali Azad and Shahzad Farooq.

Pilots had a good experience at America, despite all the misgivings about security environments prevailing there especially with regards to Muslims. One of the instructor at Cessna was none other than Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Abdul Rasheed 'Rasheedi'. Caravan was ferried by American pilots to Pakistan



OPERATION TIGHT NOOSE

This was the first major operation against terrorist undertaken by Army Aviation in Waziristan Agency. The target area was located few kilometers south west of Angoor Adda, close to Durand Line and north west of Wana. Two valleys approach the target area namely Niza Algad and Manta Algad. The preparation for this operation started in August 2003 and Exercise Fox Hunt was the training for this operation. Lessons and shortcomings felt during the Fox Hunt were overcome in the preceding time. The main emphasis was on formation flying. It was carried out both in day and at night. Night training was paramount as the operation was envisaged in hours of darkness. Extensive night flying employing night vision goggles was carried out. It initially came as surprise to the residents of Rawalpindi to hear the helicopter noise in hours of darkness but gradually this noise became part of the daily life.

Crew from all corners were collected at Qasim Base. Details of operation were not disseminated to the crew due to secrecy but squadron commanders were alerted well in time.

First Attempt - 5th September

Aerial reconnaissance of the target area was, provided to all Aviation Squadron Commanders. This was done despite the reservation of Military Intelligence Directorate of giving away the surprise. Entire mission was simulated repeatedly at similar areas. Imageries of the area along with weather details were frequently updated. On 4th September Aviation Force along with Special Services Group comprising 14 helicopters with one Y-12 as stand by at Qasim Base flew to Bannu at dusk where last minute coordination and planning was conducted. Before first light 5th September, the helicopters took off for target area in varying formations. The weather turned bad and all formations entered clouds. The valley was narrow and on both side of the flight path were high mountains. Major Kayani of Combat Group was flying the Cobra and he vividly remembers; “There was no contact with the lead helicopter, I glued onto the instruments and maintained heading”. His namesake Lieutenant Colonel Kayani was flying the MI-17 helicopter and he had the similar experience. Brigadier Rashid the Base Commander was flying a Lama helicopter but there was nothing, which he could do at that time. The mouth of the valley is narrow and not more than two formations can enter together. The follow up formations took up holding position and waited for the clearance from lead formation. This spell remained for some time and wisely pilots forced landed at suitable areas and waited for the weather to get clear. It was a miracle supported by the extensive training which saved the day.

Next attempt was made on 6th September but again bad weather (dust storm) forced the helicopters to abort the mission. The operation got delayed. These abortive missions were a blessing in disguise as they helped in overcoming the shortcomings observed. Aerial reconnaissance was conducted for establishing of forward base in three sectors namely Razmak-Wana, other being Thal-Spinwan-Mir Ali- Miram Shah-Khajuri and Sanwakai-Jandola- Tank. In the end Jandola and Miram Shah were earmarked.

2nd October 2003

On 1st October 2003 a formation of four MI-17 and one Puma picked up ninety two commandos from Tarbela and dropped them at Mianwali. Four Cobras and one MI-17 helicopter along with maintenance crew also reached Mianwali from Multan. Target area consisted of few scattered compounds located approximately 2 kilometers south of confluence of Niza Algad and Manta Algad Valleys. The only approach to the target area forms a stretch of 4-6 kilometers of undulating and broken area littered with Pine trees at the confluence. Field elevation is 6,500-7,500 feet, surrounded by mountains ranging from 8,000-10,000 feet. Average temperature in the area is 15-35 degrees celsius.

Reportedly a group of 30-35 foreigner terrorists supported by locals were based here. They were carrying out the terrorist activities not only in Afghanistan but also in Pakistan.

On the night of 1st and 2nd October 2003, Special Services Group and infantry moved from Wana and Anghoor Adda through Niza Algad valley. They reached the target area at around 0430 hours and established a cordon

At 0430hours 2nd October 2003, Alpha Formation comprising two Cobras and one MI-17 tookoff

2003

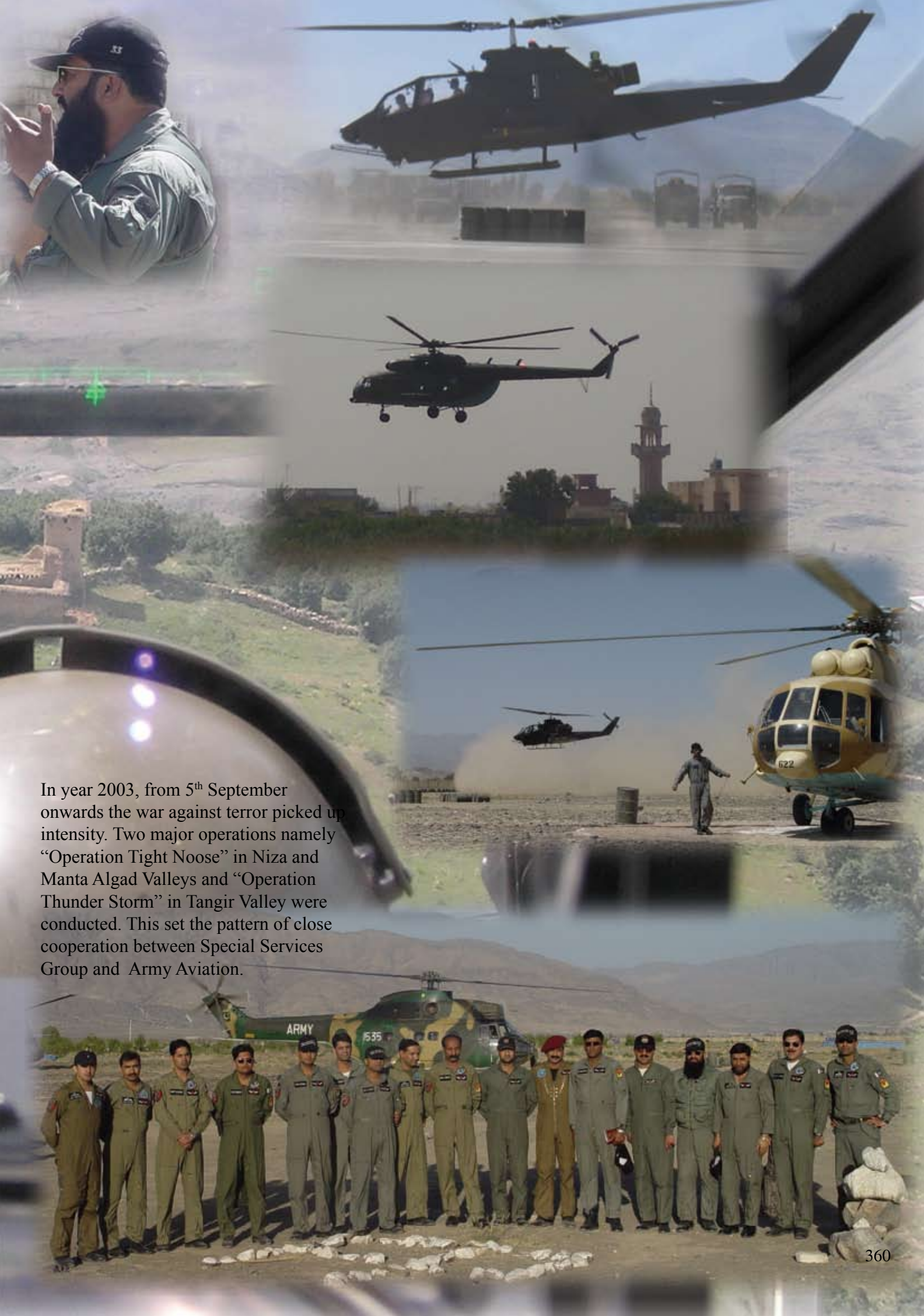
WAR AGAINST TERROR



Brig. Raashid

Maj. Gen. Azam

Brig. Nadeem



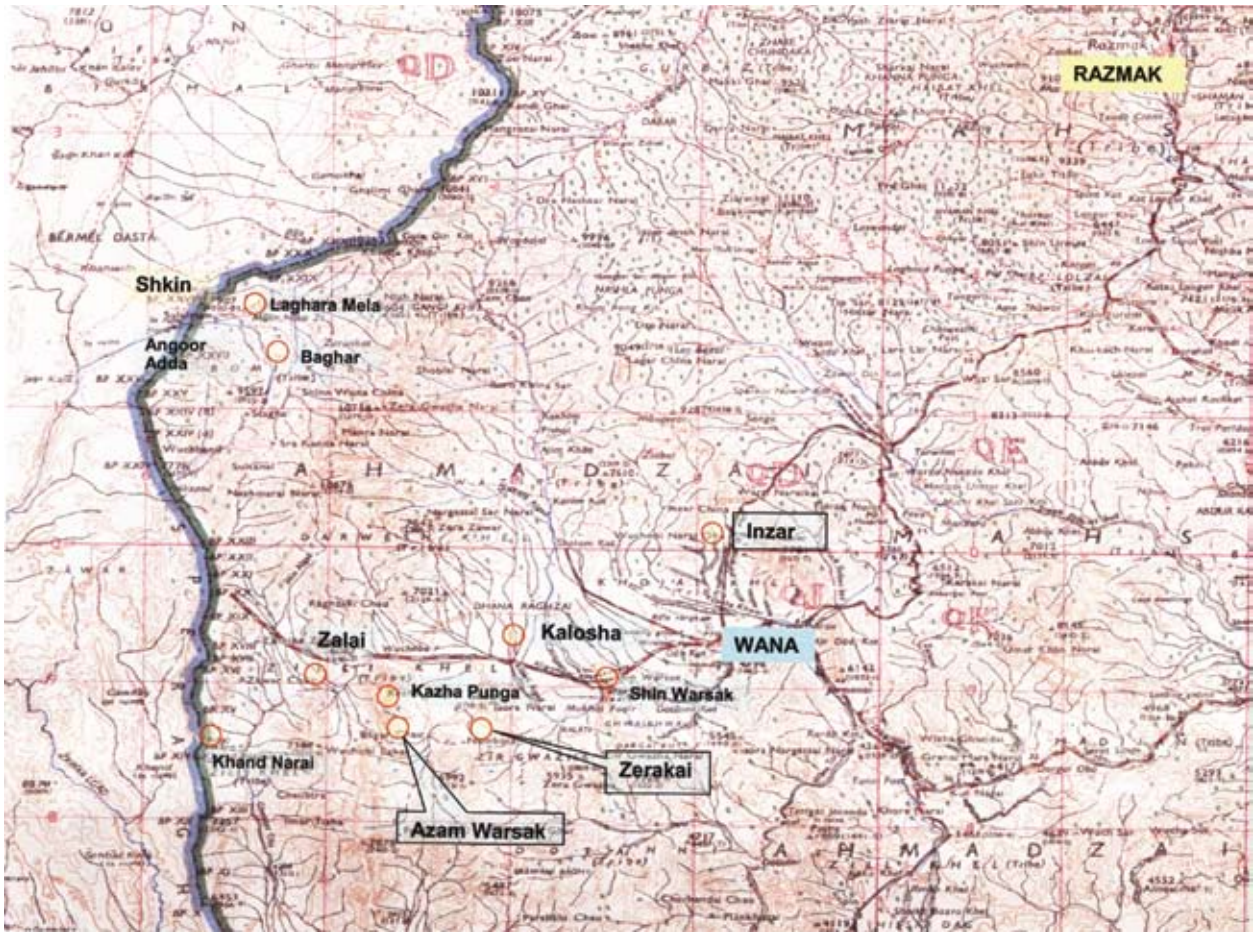
In year 2003, from 5th September onwards the war against terror picked up intensity. Two major operations namely "Operation Tight Noose" in Niza and Manta Algad Valleys and "Operation Thunder Storm" in Tangir Valley were conducted. This set the pattern of close cooperation between Special Services Group and Army Aviation.

from Mianwali for Wana, followed by Bravo Formation of three MI-17, one Puma helicopter alongwith 90 Commandos of SOTF on board. This formation landed at target area at 0615hours. Meanwhile Cobras of Alpha Formation had already landed at Wana and were waiting for the orders. The Special Operation Task Force (SOTF) commander immediately after landing asked for the Cobras, which responded and opened fire at the target area. These Cobras engaged the target area round the clock and kept replenishing from Wana.

First TOW Fired

During this operation the first ever operational TOWs were fired. Major Khattak and Major Kayani were the crew members. Major Khattak narrates. "The target was a compound designated as target No.5. It was a strong point at an elevation of 5,500 feet and terrorist were firing from this point. Hovering fire was not possible, Major Kayani the gunner had never fired the TOW before. I made the first run over the target at 150 feet above ground level and opened up the cannons and in next run, at 700-800 meters away from the target, Major Kayani fired the TOW which hit the main complex, and desired results were achieved." In the same operation one Cobra suffered compressor stall and made emergency landing, later it was rectified and crew flew it back to Wana. Four MI-17 of Bravo Formation after dropping commandos, flew to Wana, and waited for any impromptu requirements. They were later utilised to helilift 70 troops before last light from Wana to target area. That night four Cobras, two MI-17 and one Puma remained at Wana whereas two MI-17 and one Puma remained at Bannu.

On 3rd October 2003 combing and sanitization of the target area was carried out. Cobras were again called to engage the targets. By 0900hours operation was successfully completed and by 1000hours 170 Special Services Group troops were de-inducted by the Army Aviation helicopters. Later one Puma and two MI-17 were utilised for the transportation of the prisoners. A total of 139 flying hours were generated and 400 troops were helilifted.



Angoor Adda - Zerakai - Kalusha and Wana Area.

THUNDER STORM

In the first week of October an operation was under taken in northern areas in Tangir Valley to flush out the terrorists. Target was located east of River Tangir, sited on a flat ridge, which remains obscured from ground till one climbs up the ridge. It was a complex of mud huts, bunkers and firing range located at an altitude of 2000 meters, surrounded by mountains ranging from 3,000-3,500 meters. Only one helicopter can approach and exit the valley at one time.

Major Khalid Amir Rana and Major Tariq Butt of 8 Squadron carried the first reconnaissance with Commander FCNA and SSG on board. Major Rana narrates, "We took off from Gilgit in a pair and entered the narrow valley. As per our routine flying while going from Qasim to Gilgit at times we used to make this shortcut, so locals were used to helicopter flying once in two month times otherwise this area was hardly ever flown. In order to maintain the surprise, we flew at normal altitude and I pointed out the target area to the commanders, I intentionally slowed the helicopter, to give more time to commanders to make the plan".

One infantry brigade, Frontier Corps Wing and troops of Force Command Northern Area moved from Gilgit to Sazin. Special Services Group troops were located at Pattan, these were to establish the cordon around the target area and carry out search operation by first light 3rd October 2003. 14 helicopters including seven MI-17s, two, Allouettes, one Lama and four Hueys-2 were to drop air borne reserve force of 78 SSG troops in the target area, provide aerial fire support, causality evacuation and de induction of troops.

On 3rd October 2003, the SSG troops were helilifted from Cherat to Qasim and subsequently to Gilgit and Jaglot by 1730hours. There were four Hueys at Pattan, while four MI-17s were at Jaglot, three MI-17s were at Gilgit along with two Allouettes and lone Lama. General Officer Commanding Aviation Major General Azam along with Base Commander Brigadier Rashid and Colonel Shahid Sardar remained in air to monitor the operation.

There was no resistance from the target area and as such no action took place. Later aviation effort was utilised for deinduction of the troops.

Between October 2001 to October 2003 Army Aviation generated a total of 66,930 flying hours and executed 6,869 missions in 2002 and 4,198 missions in 2003. In war against terror Army Aviation from 10th October 2001-10th October 2003 transported a total of 2548 troops and 1,32,545 kilogram of load and flew 1,660 hours. Four TOW were fired along with 2200 rounds of 20 millimeter cannon apart from two rockets.



MI-17 and Lama at Gilgit

From left Lieutenant Colonels Noman and Babar, Brigadier Rashid and Colonel Sehgal



OPERATION KALOSHA

In continuation of war against terrorism on our western border another air assault operation "Kalosha" was conducted in the second week of January 2004. With the experience of previous air assault operations, the importance of weather became paramount for the success of aviation assets.

The area of operation was bounded by the Line Miram Shah - Bannu in the north/north east, Tank in south and Durand Line in the west. Target was located in the general area Kalosha and Shin Warsak approximately 10 kilometers west of Wana. By this stage few aviation assets were permanently placed at Mianwali Base for any urgent requirement and rest of the crew and helicopters would be called up from Qasim, Multan and Quetta at short notice. All operational planning was conducted by the Military Operation Directorate which was attended by staff officers from Aviation Command and on receipt of their orders the Aviation would start planning. Training was conducted continuously. Pilots at Mianwali were circulated after certain time period. Bannu was also established as a forward base with Forward Area Arming and Refuelling Company. Shortage of crew and pilots remained a sore point. At the need of hour crew would be mustered from all over Pakistan but this had a short coming in terms of crew co-ordination, but there was no immediate answer to this.

On 7th January, all pilots and helicopters were mustered at Qasim Base. Mobile phones were of great help in getting the crew, like Lieutenant Colonel Adil Shahzad was driving near Mandra when he got the General Officer Commanding call on his cellphone to cancel his leave and report to Qasim Base. A total of 23 helicopters including nine MI-17s, five Pumas, six Cobras, two Allouettes and one Lama were earmarked for this operation along with 210 Special Services Group troops. Necessary information and imageries of target area were provided by the Military Operation Directorate well in time.

This force was helilifted by seven MI-17s and five Puma helicopters to Mianwali Base by 1800 hours 7th January 2004. Six Cobra helicopters also arrived at Mianwali Base before last light. In the mean while 3 FAAR company moved from Multan and established Forward Area Arming and Refuelling Point(FAARP)at Bannu by 0800 hours, on 8th January 2004. The night of 7th /8th January was spent for marrying up and arming the helicopters, meanwhile additional requirement came from 9 Division to helilift 60 combat troops from Razmak to Wana and another 130 troops from Miram Shah to Wana.

Operation Commences

By first light the ground troops cordoned the target area. Helicopters got airborne at 0700hours. The formation was led by attack helicopters for route clearance. The force reached Wana, one officer from 9 Squadron was stationed at Wana for air traffic controlling and coordination. Pilots were briefed by the ground commanders on the conduct of operation. Later five MI-17 and four Puma helicopters took off for Razmak and Miram Shah to helilift the additional force. At 0915hours General Officer Commanding 9 Infantry Division and Brigadier Shoukat Sultan Commander 116 Brigade were flown to the target area.

At 0930hours the attack helicopters were called by the ground commander for fire support. These Cobras then remained in air till 1500 hours. Lieutenant Colonel Raza Farooq and Captain Khawar made the first engagement from Cobra. Later Major Hameed and Major Butt and then Major Asim, Major Zahid and Major Farrukh engaged the target.

At 1615 hours the operation was called off and all helicopters less one Allouette flew back to Mianwali. Later on 9th January 2004 all Aviation helicopters flew back to Qasim Base at 1700hours.



A total of 180 hours were flown consuming 80,000 litres of fuel, lifting 653 troops and 685 rounds of cannon were fired.

OPERATION ZERAKAI

The biggest operation conducted so far against the anti state elements involving thirty three helicopters including sixteen MI-17, five Puma, six Cobras, three Huey, one Lama, and One Allouette. It was conducted on 23rd /24th February 2004 in an area 12 kilometers south west of Wana. The target area was a complex of 5-6 mud walled huts located in the foot hills of a valley.

On *22nd February 2004* a force of 300 Special Services Group troops was concentrated at Qasim Base. Meanwhile all aviation assets were also collected at Qasim. Necessary intelligence and imageries were provided by Military Operation Directorate. On *23rd February* by 1800hours all the helicopters and troops were flown to Mianwali Base. 3 FAAR established FAARP at Wana and 2 FAAR Company established FAARP at Bannu.

On *24th February 2004,* the intended start up time of 0540 hours was delayed by Military Operation Directorate for the want of latest intelligence report. At 0605hours the first wave of helicopters carrying 180 troops in nine MI-17 and three Huey took off supported by six Cobra helicopters. This force dropped the troops at target area at 0710 hours. The Hueys and Cobras provided aerial support around the clock for this force. second wave carrying 120 troops in six MI-17 took off from Mianwali at 0700 hours and landed near target area at 0805hours. All cargo helicopters later flew to Bannu for refueling.

At 1300hours the ground operation was completed and de-induction of troops started which was completed by 1400 hours. These helicopters remained standby at Mianwali Base till 29th February. In the same time period, one section consisting seven Special Services Group soldiers was dropped at Miram Shah by Huey on 26th February 2004.

Army Aviation flew 257 hours and lifted 337 troops in this operation.

14 October: **Operation Shengai.** It was conducted at Jandola for release of Chinese hostages, four MI-17 participated. Operation was a success.



Cobra of 31 Squadron during Operation Zerakai

2004


OPERATION BAGAAR CHINA
OPERATION SHAKAI
OPERATION KALOSHA-II
OPERATION ZERAKAI

OPERATION KALOSHA-I









INDUCTION OF









'BELL-412'

August 2004













2005

January 2005, Sui. To protect strategic installations and established states writ in general area Sui, dedicated combat and cargo aviation support was provided from 12 January to 24 August 2005. Though extensive flying did not take place, however mere presence of aviation assets created the requisite deterrence for the miscreants and radiated strategic effects. 21 Squadron digest of service records "Squadron participated in Operation Al-Hifazat. Pilots were the first one to reach Sui, throughout the operation squadron ensured its participation".

March 2005, South Waziristan. 'Operation Mana' conducted with fifteen MI-17 helicopters spear headed by 21 Aviation Squadron, operation was a success.

July 2005, Miran Shah. 'Operation Mana II' was conducted with eight MI-17 helicopters led by Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Nazir of 21 Squadron.

1st October 2005, Khatta Khilli, North Waziristan. An army brigade was trapped in village Khatta Khilli. Aviation based operation was conducted with five MI-17 and two Cobras. Army Aviation was able to ease brigade out, Aviation efforts were appreciated by all and sundry.

Operation Destiny - 2006

Nawab Akbar Bugti former Governor of Balochistan had been challenging the writ of the state for sometime. His activities reached to a level where assassination attempts were made on the President of Pakistan during his visit to the area. State after failure of talks decided to impose its writ. It was code named as **'Operation Destiny'**. A series of operation starting from January 2006 till death of Akbar Bugti were conducted.

Aviation assets were placed in support of 12 Corps and Frontier Constabulary Balochistan to carry out operation against Ferrari camps in Balochistan since 14th December 2005. 202 Aviation Group was assigned the overall responsibility. With the integration of 50 Aviation, Squadron (BSP), FLIR system installed in Cessna Caravan was effectively utilized for the first time.

4 January 2006. **'Operation Sia-koh'** eight Cobra helicopters participated. Five Tows and Seven Rockets were fired during this operation

4-7 February 2006. **'Operation Al-Sart'** and **'Operation Chashma Camp'** (9th February 2006) were aimed at reduction of miscreants camps near Dera Bugti and clearance of route. Aviation assets for these operations were placed at Sukkur. Deputy Commander 202 Army Aviation Group, Colonel Raheel Hafeez Sehgal Sitara-i-Jur'at, led the operation as ABC (Air Battle Captain).

12-13 February 2006. **'Operation East'** and **'West Hill'** was also planned to clear Dera Bugti – Sangsila axis. During a reconnaissance/surveillance mission own helicopter had a near miss from a surface to air missile fired on their Bell-412 helicopter.

13 June 2006. **'Operation Al-Barq'**. State tightened its grip on the miscreants around Dera Bugti and surrounding area. Finally an authenticated report about the presence of Bahram Dagh, grand son of warlord Akbar Bugti was received. A massive operation consisting of six Cobras, four Bell-412 & eight MI-17 helicopter took part in it. Commander 202 Army Aviation Group, Brigadier Tariq Hussain Khan acted as ABC (Air Battle Captain). The location of Behram Dagh was named as BD Banglow. Panu Aqil was selected as Forward Area Base and Sui became Forward Operating Base. The operation was a partial success as the hide out was completely destroyed and a number of miscreants were either killed or captured. During the operation one MI-17 piloted by Major Basharat Noor and Captain Bilal Hussain met an emergency just eight miles short of target, after a safe landing, quickest possible recovery was made and the helicopter flew back to Sui. The dismal part of the operation was that due to improper search done by the ground forces, Behram Dagh managed to slip away. However, the daring action of Cobra and ABC on Bell-412 helicopter (Major Khattak) six miscreant were captured by SSG troops.

1st July 2006. **'Operation Al-Nasr'**. Akbar Bugti's location was confirmed in the hills north of Sangsila near the Marri Bugti tribal boundary. One company of regular infantry and 4 Commando Battalion were picked up from Panu Aqil and after refueling at Sui were dropped in the target area. Eight Cobras, six Bell-412, eight MI-17 and two Puma helicopters were used in this operation. Force was landed after PAF Fighters had softened up the target. Operation was delayed due to bad weather. The target area was full of

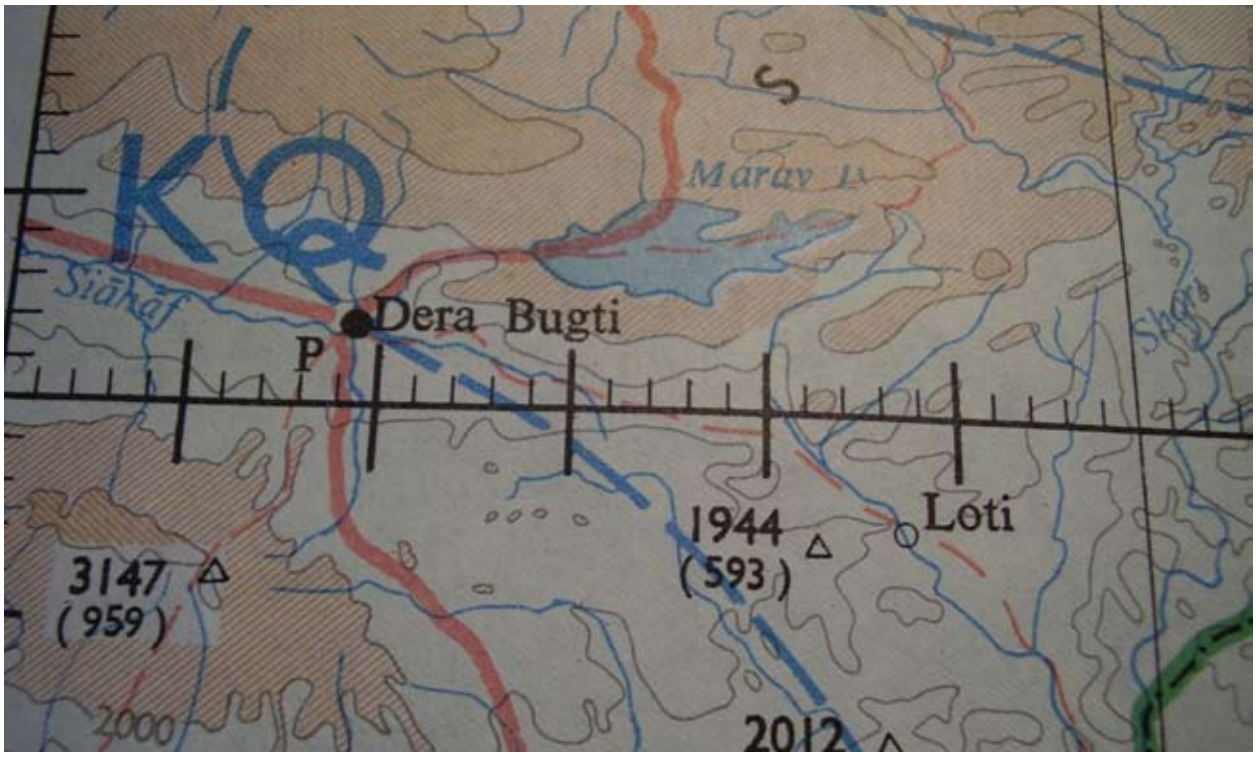
resistance and many helicopters received bullets hit, out of which. Lieutenant Colonel Abid Ali, CO 4 Army Aviation Air Assault Squadron had a near miss when fifteen bullets hit his helicopter while he was landing two bullets hit his seat but due to armour protection he remained safe. Due to extreme bad weather on 4 July force could not be picked up and on 5th July the de-induction took place Akbar Bugti and Bahram Dagh both managed to escape taking the cover of darkness.

8th July 2006. **'Operation Al Fateh'**. Bahram Dagh's location was once again confirmed in general area Lehri. 15 miles west of Sangsila. Tactical Headquarters was established at Sangsila. There was no time for reconnaissance or detailed briefing. six Cobras, four Bell-412, six MI-17 and one Puma immediately took off for Sangsila. As there was no prior planning and the target was on the run. It was a near catch as the vehicle of BD was located but he managed to escape on foot. On 9th Jul 2006 the force was de-inducted and helicopters flew back to Panu Aqil.

22-27 July 2006. **'Operation Sun Rise'**. The base of operation was Sibi, four AH-1F, four Bell-412 and five MI-17 helicopters participated in the operation. One company each of 40 Baloch and 28 Azad Kashmir Regiment was heli lifted from Sibi and dropped at target area.

23 August 2006. Successfull operations in Dera Bugti tribal areas compelled miscreants to move further towards north. Akbar Bugti. Bahram Dagh and Balach Marri flee to Kohlu. After confirmation of their position, Law Enforcing Agencies planned to strike the final blow by the name of **'Operation Rahbar'**. Six Cobras, five Bell-412 and six MI-17 helicopters were planned to undertake the mission. Lieutenant Colonel Abid Ali CO 4 Army Aviation Air Aslt Squadron conducted the operation as ABC. Akbar Bugti was expected to be in general area Kalgir-I-Daman near Karmo Wad while Cobras and Artillery provided fire support, MI-17 and Bell-412 helicopters dropped the task force in target area. Akbar Bugti's cave was surrounded and on 26 August he was killed when this cave collapsed after a blast, probably some timed explosive was planted by Akbar Bugti in the cave. Dead body of Akbar Bugti was recovered on 30th August and on 31st August he was buried in Dera Bugti. Due to the collapsing of caves four officers including Commanding Officer 2 Commando Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Aamir) embraced Shahdat and two officers and two other ranks were seriously injured. All these casualties were evacuated by helicopters.

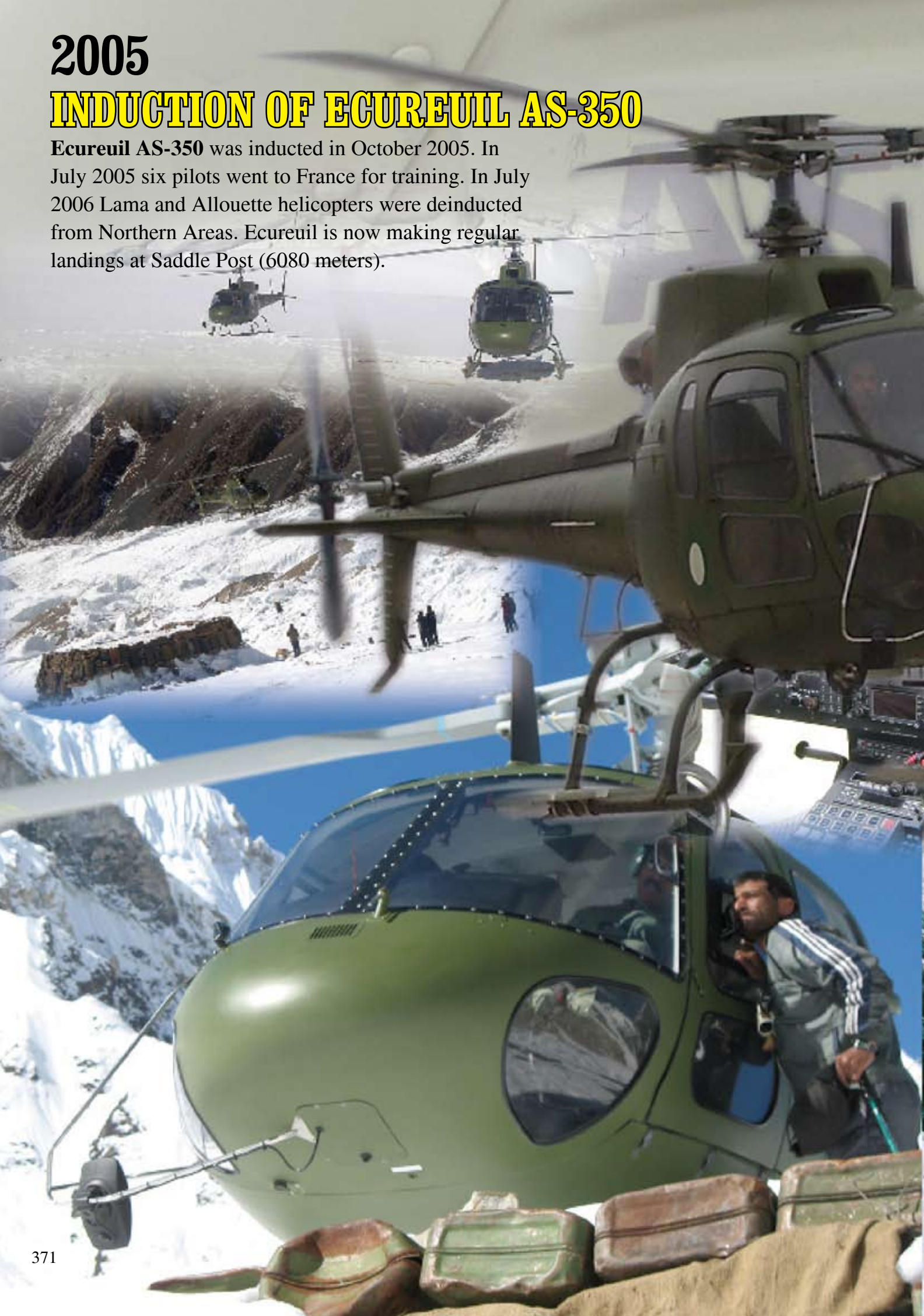
21-23 September 2006. **'Operation Nagau Ghar'** was planned to capture Bahram Dagh. The operation was conducted from Sibi. The operation got delayed as the cobra's got some technical problems due to the height of the target. However, later that day the operation went as planned and the force was inducted. Bahram Dagh, however could not be located.



2005

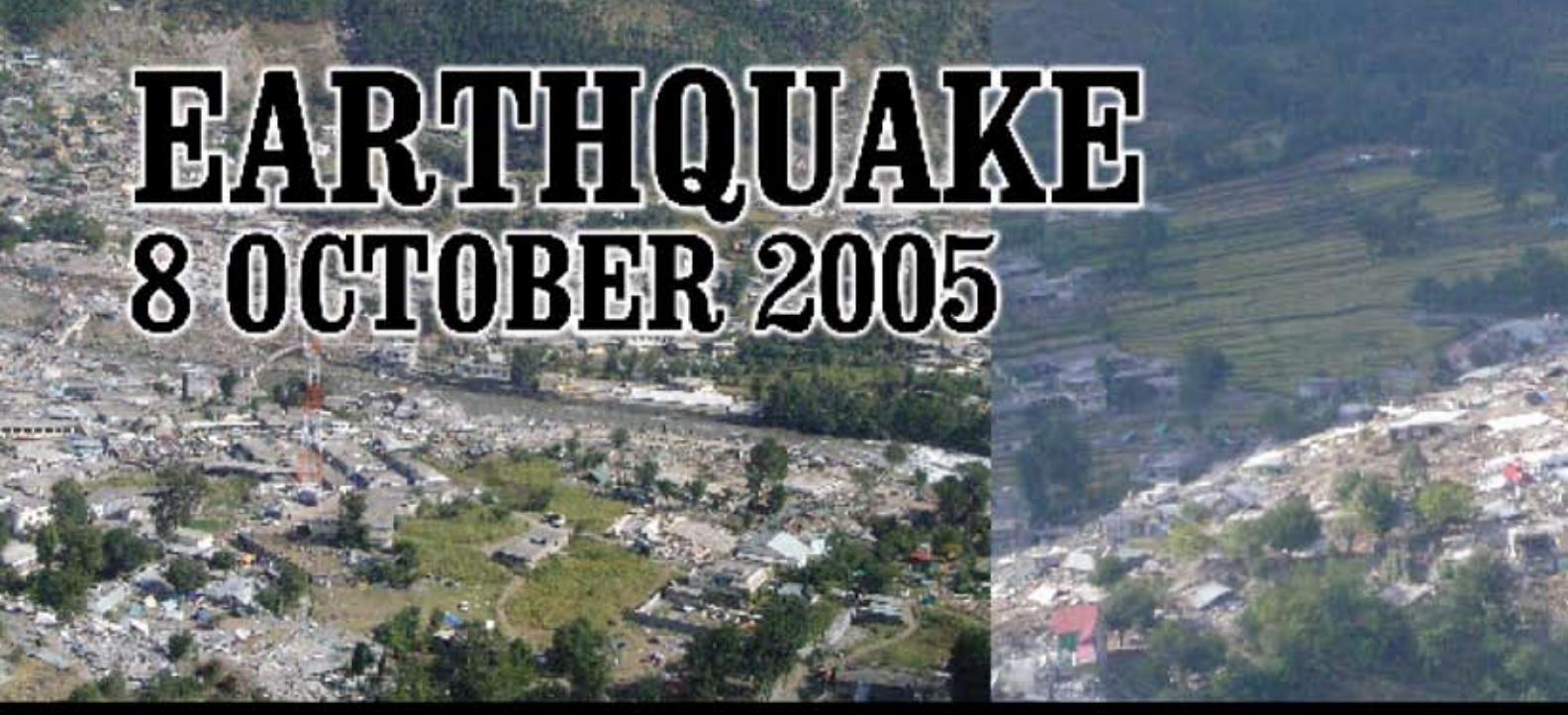
INDUCTION OF ECUREUIL AS-350

Ecureuil AS-350 was inducted in October 2005. In July 2005 six pilots went to France for training. In July 2006 Lama and Allouette helicopters were deinducted from Northern Areas. Ecureuil is now making regular landings at Saddle Post (6080 meters).




VIII
ARMY

EARTHQUAKE
8 OCTOBER 2005



8th October 2005 at 03:50:38 (GMT) hours, an Earthquake measuring 7.6 on Richter scale jolted Northern Areas of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. The area affected included Mansehra, Batgram, Jura, Chakothi and Rawalakot covering about 30,000 square Kilometers. The epicenter of the main earthquake was located at latitude 34 degrees 29 minutes 35 seconds N and longitude 73 degrees 37 minutes 44 seconds E. The focal depth of the main earthquake was determined to be 26 kilometers. As per United States Geological Survey (USGS), this was the deadliest earthquake in the recent history of the world, resulting in more than 73,000 dead and 200,000 injured. More than 4 million people were left homeless. The major affected cities were Kaghan, Batgram, Balakot, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Rawalakot and Islamabad.





















8th October 2005 Saturday, being holiday for Pakistan Army, most of the pilots of Army Aviation were on a weekend. However at 0900 hours Lieutenant Colonel Arshad Amin 6 Army Aviation Squadron was scheduled to fly the Prime Minister of Pakistan, as he felt tremors, he decided to get airborne and have a first view of the city. At 1030 AM, the first Allouette helicopter of Army Aviation, piloted by Major Khalid Amir Rana, landed at Bagh to evacuate the injured brigade commander. He narrates "We landed at Murree and met General Officer Commanding, Major General Khalid Nawaz Janjua. He told us to immediately reach Bagh and evacuate the brigade commander' as we headed towards Bagh the scenes of destruction started coming into view. As we reached Bagh, the scene was beyond my wildest imagination. There did not seem to be any building intact! The mighty hand of the Almighty had dealt a severe blow. The destruction was everywhere. The scenic and serene Bagh Valley was in a ruinous state. Everywhere dead bodies were lying and injured people were in a state of extreme shock. I could not recognize the area of helipad, where I had landed so many times".

By 1100hours, the same day, two Lamas of 8 Squadron, one MI-17 of 21 Squadron and one UH-1H were in the air to ascertain the extent of damage. By evening, the news of devastation started arriving, the whole world was horrified and the nation was left stunned.

Just after "Sehri" of Ramadan the fifth. The entire serviceable fleet of Army Aviation was in full swing, all day long, bringing down serious casualties from Muzaffarabad to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Rawalpindi. The CMH helipad was so busy that number of helicopters had to orbit overhead to find their turn. The doctors and paramedics were on run to receive and treat the unending lines of patients.

Within few days, all available fly worthy helicopters alongwith crew, from all over Pakistan arrived. By late October 2005, it was world's largest rescue operation in progress which was named **"OPERATION LIFE LINE"** in which over one hundred Pakistani and Allied helicopters were taking part. By 30 November 2005, over 10,000 sorties were flown.





















"VIGIL FORMATION" of four Huey-II helicopters took off from Quetta at 1200hours on 8th October for Rawalpindi. After refueling at Pakistan Air Force Base Mianwali and flying on Night Vision Goggles from Mianwali onwards, the formation was in position at Qasim Base by 2000 hours the same day. Working from sun rise to sun set and at times even after sunset, the "VIGILs" were soon found shrieking through the valleys of Muzaffarabad and Mansehra. All day, one could see the pilots scurrying around and helping to embark and disembark casualties, whereas, few of them running to expedite refueling and reloading, while others rushing to get coordinates of the next landing site. At the end of the day, generally each pilot would have flown for eight hours or more and still thought that he could have done more. All in all, commencing from 8th October 2005 and ending on 18th January 2006, the rotary wing flew over 1100hours, lifting over 350 tons of cargo, evacuating 828 casualties and transporting 3134 stranded people". **50 Squadron Digest of Service.**



Army Aviation pilots write another tale of gallantry

ISLAMABAD: The gallant pilots of Army Aviation, Sunday night successfully flew yet another almost impossible mission to save the precious lives of two innocent children from the quake-afflicted areas.

According to details fire broke-out in a tent of Mir Zaman, a victim of earthquake who was residing in a tent village at Baisan, near Balakot. His two children Saad, 12 and Maria 14 got sever burn injuries and were required to be evacuated to Burn Centre Kharian for necessary medical treatment.

Two Bel-412 helicopters were flown from Abbottabad to rescue the seriously injured children to Kharian Burn Centre. Helicopters flown by Lt Col Abid and Maj Khattak and Maj Usman and Maj Salahuddin immediately took off to undertake the ardous task of rescue in pitch-dark. The daring pilots airlifted the children and evacuated them to Burn Centre Kharian after midnight at 2.45 am, and set another example of service without caring for own life.— APP



Lt-Col Abid Ali, wearing night vision goggles, stands by his helicopter as Army Aviation's Major Khattak briefs newsmen about the first night flight to the quake-devastated Balakot. — APP

Relief Effort Statistics
(Up to 31 May 2006)

Helicopter	Hours Flown	Load in Tons	Casualities	Dead Bodies	Persons
BELL-412	5,251.1	5,264.98	5,066	65	2,217
MI-17	2,206.0	2,261.6	6,368	39	22,000
PUMA	144.7	64.43	236	25	487
ALLIED	15,028.17	52,915.705	5,507	04	26,946
TOTAL	**22,629.97**	**60,507.37**	**17,177**	**133**	**51,650**





Phase-I

First four weeks were characterized by the intense rescue operations. Between 8-12 October a total 44 helicopters were employed.

MI-17	19
Puma	2
Bell-412	7
Huey-2	4
Allouette/Lama	10
Sea King	2

From 13th October onward helicopters from all our friends started arriving.

USA	30
England	3
Japan	4
Germany	4
Canada	1
UNHAS	15
NGOs	8

Phase-II 9th November - 13th January 2006

To articulate a large multi-national aviation fleet, an Aviation Operation Center was established by Headquarters Army Aviation Command to integrate under a single roof to plan and conduct relief operation



Phase-III February 2006 onward

Aviation operations were scaled down and utilized as and when required. Still 43 foreign helicopters and seven own helicopters were utilized.

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA-ALLIED
(UP TO 31 MAY 2006)

Operator	Total Flying Hours	Total Sorties Flown	Total Tonnage
UNHAS	4,947	11,849	23,786.577
NATO	646	1,038	1,747.7
US MIL	5,354.8	5,575	13,431.75
ICRC	3,086.6	4495	12,965.762
IFRC	88.1	114	71.33
MSF	419.4	1,004	14.405
JSDF	31.5	27	14.8
LAF	51.8	53	141.5
OXFAM	13.2	15	14.1
MERLIN	110.5	348	40.559
GERMAN	300.3	302	683.16
USAID	54.3	83	0

Safety Pilots

Own fixed wing pilots were utilized as safety pilots with foreign aircraft. Moreover extra security precautions were taken for the foreigners.





Maintenance

In any hectic operation, the job of maintenance personnel increases manifold. The extensive flying leads to quicker routine inspections with a pressure of early completion so that aircraft comes back to flying status swiftly. Crew chiefs definitely remained over burdened. They really deserve appreciation for accomplishing the challenging task of picking up the casualties, loading / dropping the relief goods, refueling the helicopters and assisting the pilots in all phases of flying.



PILOTS FLYING STATE 21 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON FROM 01 OCTOBER 05 TO 15 NOVEMBER

Ser	Rank ad Name	Oct	Nov	Total
1.	Brig Nadeem	21.8	4.6	26.4
2.	Lt Col Safdar	71.2	24.6	95.8
3.	Maj Safdar	4.8	16.1	20.9
4.	Maj Ihsan	64.5	22.5	87.0
5.	Maj Tufal	92.1	5.1	97.2
6.	Maj Irfan	82.8	38.4	121.2
7.	Maj Shahid	93.6	61.5	155.1
8.	Maj Tauqeer	57.3	26.8	84.1
9.	Maj Suhail	97.4	30.1	127.5
10.	Maj Babar	1	1	1
11.	Maj Mumtaz	79.8	8.4	88.2
12.	Maj Arsalan	97.8	14.0	111.8
13.	Maj Syed Azhar	123.4	17.8	141.2
14.	Capt Jawaid Siddique	2	2	2
15.	Capt Nadeem	105.5	26.1	131.6

FLYING HOURS - OCT 2005, BELL-412, PILOTS 4 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

Ser	Rank	Name	Pilot	Hours Flown
1.	Lt Col	Abid	Pilot	30
2.	Maj	Ahmer	Pilot	82
3.	Maj	Bukhari	Pilot	117.2
4.	Maj	Khattak	Pilot	130.0
5.	Maj	Najeeb	Pilot	120.0
6.	Maj	Usman	Pilot	125.4
7.	Maj	Khalid	Copilot	107.6
8.	Capt	Shahzad Alam	Copilot	85.0
9.	Capt	Shahzad Ali	Copilot	25.2
10.	Capt	Haider	Copilot	60.0
11.	Capt	Fahad	Copilot	43.2
12.	Lt	Saqib	Copilot	50.7



DATE WISE MISSIONS/SORTIES OF MANSEHRA SECTOR

Date 2005	Sorties on the Day	Evacuation of Casualties	Evacuation of Persons	Relief Goods (kgs)
10 Oct	58	235	125	32400
11 Oct	61	248	132	30600
12 Oct	94	336	172	45400
13 Oct	174	295	153	93600
14 Oct	181	328	175	97200
15 Oct	143	10	62	73800
16 Oct	86	112	64	48800
17 Oct	112	125	65	57600
18 Oct	110	108	59	57600
19 Oct	97	44	40	58650
20 Oct	82	27	-	90002
21 Oct	114	87	-	93670
22 Oct	72	19	86	69270
23 Oct	36	147	195	76960
24 Oct	26	1	34	49130
25 Oct	13	1	34	37190
26 Oct	41	111	270	33580
27 Oct	67	10	606	39200
28 Oct	59	58	462	40500
29 Oct	53	55	511	46800
30 Oct	98	37	645	54150
31 Oct	63	28	236	48500
01 Nov	52	40	180	21020
02 Nov	38	34	267	18650
03 Nov	49	8	191	35600
04 Nov	61	3	185	38250
05 Nov	59	35	508	54500
06 Nov	59	35	441	45500
07 Nov	55	51	478	45500
08 Nov	52	32	399	31320
09 Nov	50	11	348	23140
10 Nov	13	5	82	6250
11 Nov	-	-	-	-
12 Nov	36	9	105	19750
13 Nov	60	3	349	30300
14 Nov	78	4	320	55800

OPERATION LIFE LINE









"The role of the Army Aviation stood out in reaching the needy, evacuating the injured and providing succor to wherever and whenever required in the most trying conditions. This, they did to the peril of their lives. One but cannot forget the heroism of Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Ali Roghani and Captain Abdul Rahim who died while making an attempt to reach out to the "waiting" when lesser men would have given up. May God bless their souls. Aviation flew around 20,000 hours, evacuating over 17,000 injured and transporting 1,32,000 tons of relief goods. These statistics speak for the Herculean effort and more so, when it comes through limited resources in men and material. You have deservedly earned the nation's applause and brought credit to the country amongst the international community."

Vice Chief of Army Staff











"Army Aviation has always been in forefront, whenever the nation has needed its support. In the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquake in 2005, Pakistan Army launched "OPERATION LIFE LINE" to provide immediate relief to the affectees in NWFP and Azad Kashmir. It was a matter of great satisfaction to see the prompt response of the Army Aviation to the call of the nation. It saved precious lives and ensured timely supply of urgently needed relief goods. I have witnessed the selfless devotion of the pilots during the peak hours of relief operations; they indeed deserve my appreciation for their unflinching commitment, and response even beyond the call of duty. On a similar note, I would also like to compliment the Army Aviation for coordinating, perhaps the largest international aviation support most effectively. This has earned the nation much praise and respect of the participating countries."

President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf









Major General Javed Aslam Tahir



Major Naeem Khattak



Major Naveed Qadir



Lieutenant Colonel Arshad Amin



Lieutenant Colonel Waheed Khan



Lieutenant Colonel Sana Ullah



Lieutenant Colonel Tariq



President of Pakistan and Chief of the Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf conferring Sitara-e-Esaar on Officers of Pakistan Army Aviation in an impressive and simple ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadar, Islamabad in August 2006.



General Ahsan Saleem Hayat Vice Chief of Army Staff shaking hands with Lieutenant Colonel Sardar Sajjad Commanding Officer 9 Army Aviation Squadron, after visit of Earthquake areas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BRIG TANVEER ULLAH KHAN
HAR TAUQEER
MAR RASHEED
HEADQUARTERS
QASIM AVIATION BASE


2006



Between January - October 2006 series of operations were conducted in Balochistan (Bugti Area) to apprehend Nawab Akbar Bugti, code name "Operation Destiny".

1st ***March 2006***. 'Operation Noor Payo Khan' was conducted at Saidgi, to eliminate foreign terrorists. Major Altaf narrates; "This operation was initially planned during hours of darkness but later changed due to non-availability of NVGs with SSG troops. At 0645hours I landed alongwith other 5 MI-17 helicopters around target area. The locals had erected bamboo poles in the field to thwart heli landing. After dropping SSG troops all MI-17 landed at Miran Shah, 2xCobras remained in air and provided combat air support. As per plan we kept rotor running and were supposed to de-induct the troops after half an hour. However, a pitch battle took place and the Cobras came back for rearming and refuelling. After an hour we were called in for de-induction. As I approached the area I could see firing, blasts and rockets being fired in all directions. Under these environments the helicopters landed and picked up the SSG troops. One rocket hit one MI-17. 21 Squadron participated with eight MI-17 helicopters out of which seven were hit with bullets and rockets. Captain Nadeem Raza and Major Sohail Sadiq were injured in this operation. Major Mumtaz Malik with his copilot Major Arslan received a burst of 12.7 mm gun on their wind screen while picking up own troops. Major Umar Faroq Ranas heroic efforts of evacuating the Special Services Group troops from the heat of battle was applauded by all. Helicopter piloted by Major (now Lieutenant Colonel) Najeeb Ahmed was severely damaged and scanner Havildar Naeem of 599 EME Battalion was seriously injured, with the blessing of Allah both scanner and the helicopter survived the bullets/injuries. Major Altaf further narrates that after landing at Miranshah, half an hour later the airfield was attacked by the tribals, I was sitting in the open and my copilot had gone to the mess. The ground fire was so intense that it was difficult to reach own helicopter. Later I took off without co-pilot and started the second engine in air, all helicopters flew to Kohat".

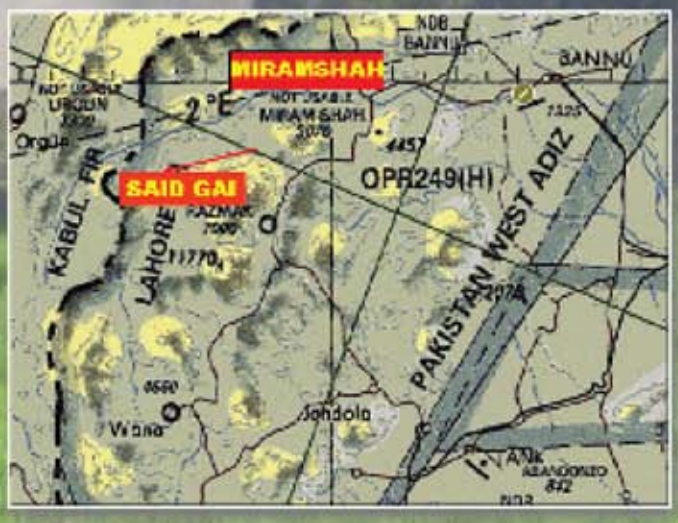
In recognition of heroic efforts of aviators, eight of them were decorated with operational awards including three Tamgha-i-Jur'ats on 14th August 2006.



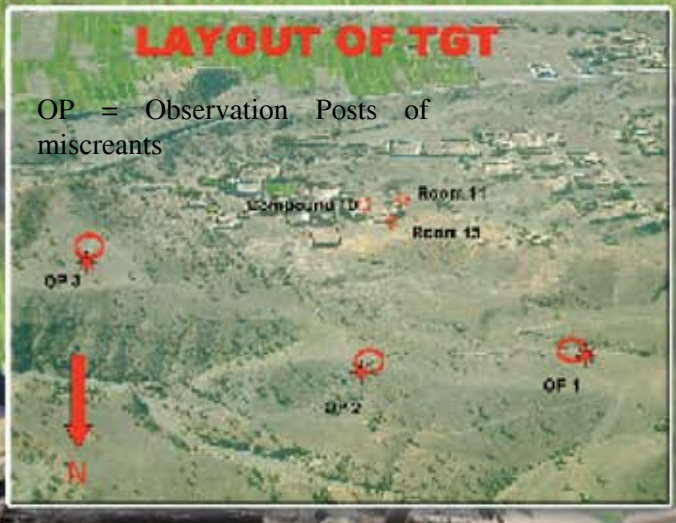
Colonel Nadeem

Flying Crew of 21 and 27 Squadrons

OPERATION SAIDGAI
March 1, 2006











Major Sohail - TJ



Major Umar Rana - TJ

AVN CO's CONF 2006

Aviation Commanding Officers Conference is held once ever two years











Pakistan Army Aviation



in Africa - 2001-2007

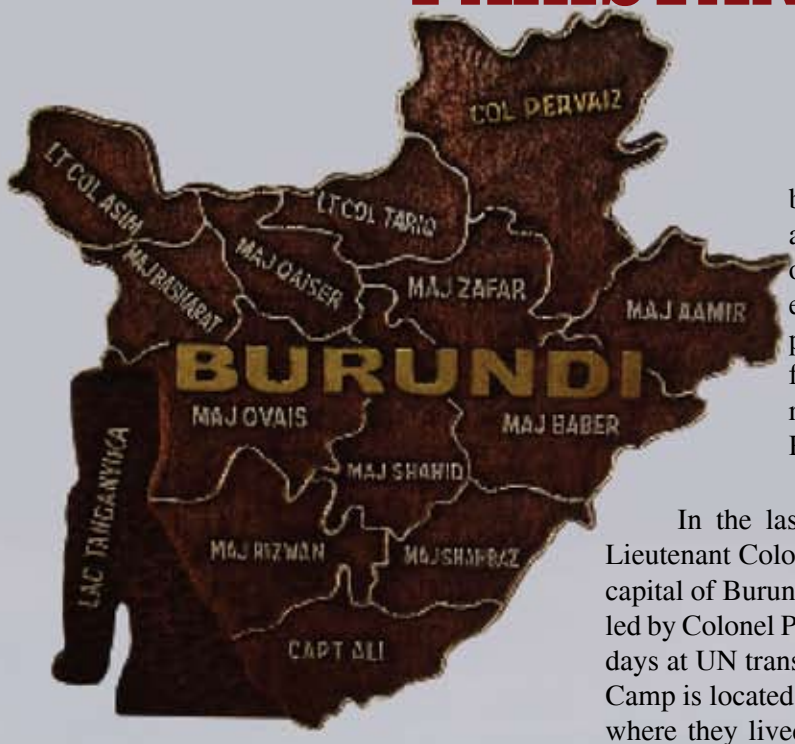


Sierra Leone is located in the West Africa with 40 % of population being Muslim. English is the official language and Krio is the local dialect. Decades of civil war and tribal feuds have left over 50,000 people dead and over a million displaced along with arson, looting, rape, and murder. The United Nations decided to field a strong 17,000 peace keeping force, largest in its history for restoration of peace known as United Nation Assistance Mission Sierra Leone(UNAMSL). A total of 37 officers from Pakistan Army Aviation were therefore selected under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Mahmood with Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Sardar as 2nd in Command. It consisted of Puma and Jet Ranger helicopters. On 23rd August, 2001 the Puma Flight of Pakistan Aviation Unit boarded Kras Air and landed at Lungi Airport on 24th August. In coming days numerous reconnaissance missions were carried out by the Sector Commander Brigadier Ahmed Shuja Pasha and his team to Kailahun and Pendembu areas. These areas were the hub of Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Our Pumas and Jet Rangers remained the main source of conveyance in this operation. After every twelve months the change over of officers and troops took place. Major General Azam General Officer Commanding Army Aviation along with Major Shahid Latif visited the aviation unit in 2001. On 30th June 2004, one MI-8 helicopter of UNO crashed in Sierra Leone due to jungle thicket killing twenty four peacekeepers on board including fourteen Pakistanis. It included Colonel Zia as well who was commanding the Pakistan Aviation Squadron at Sierra Leone.



Sudanese women folk

PAKISTAN ARMY AVIATION BURUNDI - 2004



Burundi is small country in Central Africa. It became independent in 1962. The civil war between Hutu and Tutsi tribes dates back to 14th century. Since 1993 over 1,50,000 people have died due to this conflict. In early part of 2004 UN requested Pakistan for assistance in peace keeping. Pakistan Army Aviation was required to furbish a squadron strength. By July all officers and other ranks were selected for this mission and concentrated at Rawalpindi.

In the last week of July 2004 the advance party consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Asim and eight other ranks arrived at Bujumbura the capital of Burundi. On 9th September 2004 the Army Aviation contingent led by Colonel Pervaiz Butt landed at Burundi. Initially they stayed for ten days at UN transit camp and with the help of engineers made their camp. Camp is located few miles north east of Bujumbura Airport. It is a jungle where they lived in tents however cemented helipads were constructed for MI-17 helicopters. Daily routine starts with physical training and then routine work till 1300hours with games in the evening. Almost daily it rains.





In 2005 the civil war in Sudan forced United Nations to deploy Peace-keeping Force there. Pakistan Army Aviation in 2006, seconded one composite Rotary Squadron comprising three MI-17 and three Puma helicopters. Lieutenant Colonel Irfan and Lieutenant Colonel Babar Farooqi commanded respective flights. Both flights were deployed separately whereas the MI-17 were located in the north of Sudan, the Pumas placed in south of Sudan. The Pumas were placed at Damazin, capital of Blue Nile State, about 240 nautical mile north-east of Khartum.

PAKISTAN ARMY AVIATION IN SUDAN - 2006-07



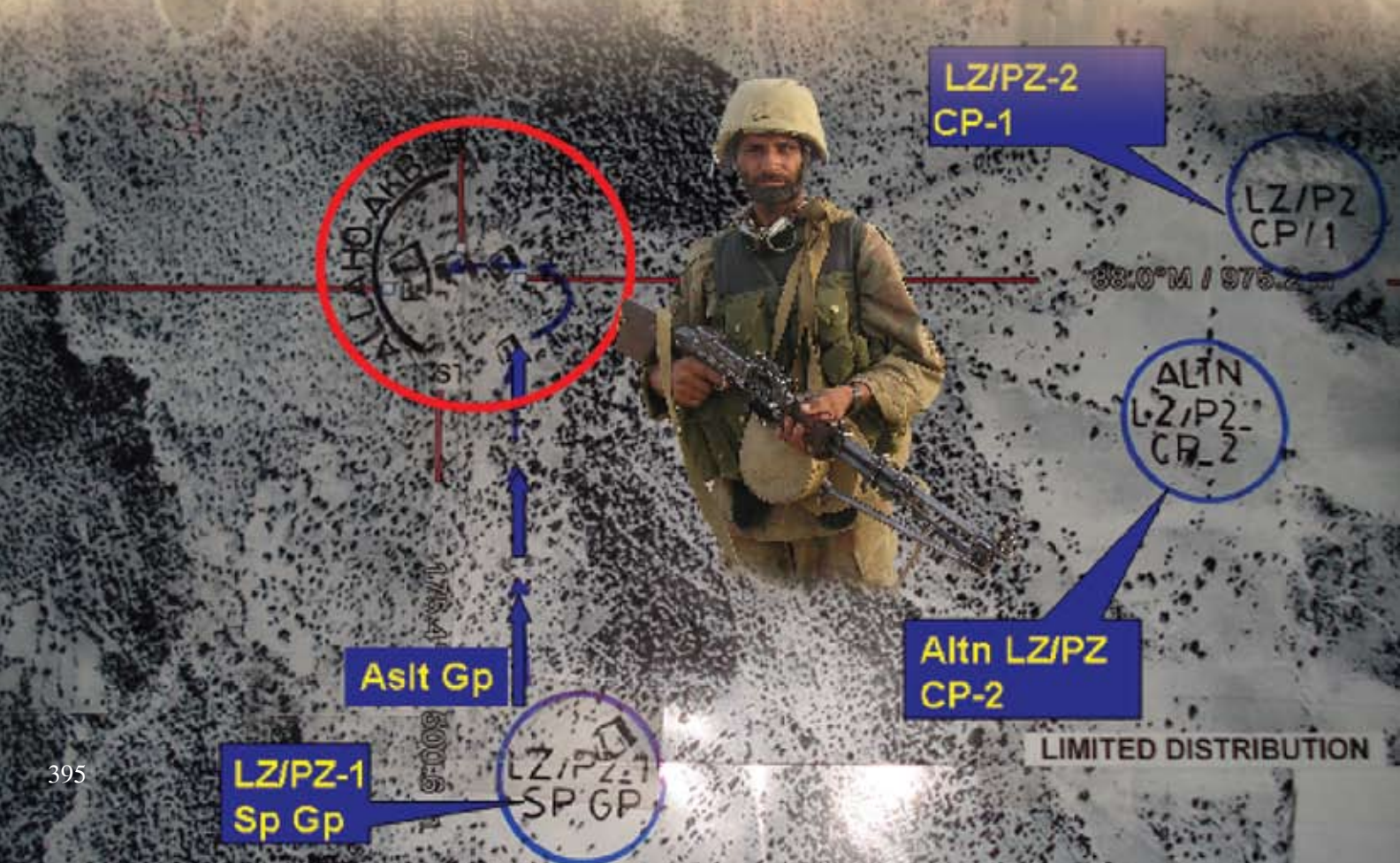


2007

OPERATION ZAMZOLA (16th January 2007)

Zamzola compound, (5000 feet) a complex of six scattered compounds located on a knoll, 24 kilometers east of Razmak was being used as a training centre for VIP assassination and suicide bombing. Reportedly there were 30-50 individuals living in these compounds. These compounds were located inside thick vegetation, with trees of 20-25 feet all around, perimeter walls were higher than the ceiling of the rooms. Target compound was surrounded by village Zamzola, Pasalkot and Zarinai Killi all located within 1-2 kilometers. After deliberate planning it was decided to eliminate the terrorist on 16 January 2007. The plan was to carry out kinetic strike at 0650hours, then three Cobras to engage compound number 3, 4 and 5 with two TOW missiles each, two BELL-412 along with SSG troops to remain in air for any unforeseen, two MI-17 with 20 SSG troops to remain stand by at Miran Shah.

Conduct of Operation. 3 Cobras and 2 BELL-412 reached holding area at 0648, kinetic strike started at 0655 hours on compound number 5, target area was cleared at 0712hours for Cobra strikes. Cobras reached target area at 0717 hours and fired three TOWs on compound number 3, 4 and 5. Second wave of three TOWs were fired at 0721, one TOW missile misfired. At 0728hours the compound number 4 was engaged with cannon fire for seven minutes. SSG troops then assaulted the compounds and carried out the search of the compound, they segregated women and children and were able to capture and kill few terrorist. Meanwhile cobras provided air cover.



OPERATION SHABKHOON

7th August 2007

On 7th August 2007, intelligence reports highlighted the presence of foreigner terrorists in a small village near Miran Shah. 33 and 35 Combat Squadrons with a flight each alongwith 21 Squadron participated in this operation and successfully engaged the three mud complexes. The first fire was opened at the first light.



Brigadier Khalid



Target Area

Target Area being hit with TOWs



Cobra, Head Up Display









WAR AGAINST TERROR



































COBRA INDUCTION FEBRUARY 2007



After almost 23 years the fresh batch of Cobras were inducted in Pakistan Army. A new outfit, 35 Army Aviation Combat Squadron was also raised for this induction. The ceremony was held at Aviation Base Multan.







October 2007

On 7th October 2007 an impressive handing over ceremony of additional Cobras and 412 helicopters was held at Qasim Base. Defence Secretary Mr. Kamal, Director General Army Aviation Major General Rizvi, Brigadier Tanveer Ullah and American Ambassador Madam Patterson graced the occasion.





ARMY AVIATION ELECTRICAL & MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



299 EME BN

شہداء

۱	بریگیڈیئر عبدالجلیل	دسمبر	۱۹۷۱	۸ لانس نائیک ذاکر حسین	جنوری ۱۹۷۷
۲	نائیک صادق حسین	دسمبر	۱۹۷۱	۹ حوالدار محمد انور	دسمبر ۱۹۸۳
۳	نائیک لطف الرحمٰن	دسمبر	۱۹۷۱	۱۰ سپاہی خدادادخان	دسمبر ۱۹۸۳
۴	سپاہی غریب	اکتوبر	۱۹۷۱	۱۱ نائیک محمد سلیم	دسمبر ۱۹۸۳
۵	سپاہی محمد رمضان	دسمبر	۱۹۷۱	۱۲ حوالدار لیاقت علی	اگست ۱۹۸۸
۶	نائیک نسیم علی شاہ	اپریل	۱۹۷۶	۱۳ نائیک سلطان احمد	مارچ ۱۹۹۵
۷	سپاہی سردارخان	جنوری	۱۹۷۷	۱۴ نائیک فیاض خان	مارچ ۱۹۹۸
				۱۵ حوالدار ولایت خان	مارچ ۱۹۹۸
				۱۶ نائیک رب نواز	مارچ ۱۹۹۸




684




KNOWLEGE WILL TRIUMPH
ARMY
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EME




THE PIONEERS


499




599

ELECTRICAL & MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
ARMY AVIATION

Early Days

At the time of independence maintenance responsibility for Auster aircraft rested fully with the Royal Pakistan Air Force as they also inherited over a dozen Auster aircraft. Prior to the induction of L-19 aircraft PAF was requested to allocate more technicians for maintenance. This however, was not viewed favourably as the air force was also in the process of its own expansion. Major Saleem Ullah made a quick dash to Air Headquarters at Karachi and managed an audience with the then Air Chief Air Marshal Asghar Khan, with whom he had an earlier acquaintance and got an understanding on increased number of PAF technicians for transition period. An important lesson was brought home and along with the raising of 1 Squadron, a Light Aid Detachment (LAD) was also raised with Captain Majid Ullah as its first officer commanding. Soon technicians started arriving from the centre, they all were excellent in their own trade which was vehicle mechanic. Very few, however, could read or write English.



Colonel (Retd) Majeed Ullah

First EME Officer to Become Pilot



Captain Maqbul

Soon L-19s started arriving from various parts of Europe. Some were new, majority of them were reconditioned. With aircraft came American team which included Captain Carney, one pilot and a maintenance officer. Aircraft arrived in crates at Karachi from where they were loaded on trains for Rawalpindi railway station and were then transported to Chaklala, to be reassembled by the Americans with our technicians helping and getting on job training. One day a technician asked the American sergeant about the tyre pressure in the wheel, instead of replying such simple answer, the sergeant replied "Look up in the book". Such was their approach in teaching and emphasizing on the use of book instead of memory. Americans did not like the constant air force intervention and proposed that EME officers should be trained both as pilots and maintenance officers. Meanwhile Captain Maqbul was also posted in.

Forthcoming training in America was a major incentive for the EME soldiers. The only pre requisite was, to be able to read English and pass the tests, thus it was healthy to see them working extra hard in this field. Captain Majeed Ullah and Captain Maqbul were the first EME officers to put through flying cadre. however, only Captain Maqbool got his flying brevet. Later both attended over six weeks maintenance course at Fort Eustis, Virginia. About two dozen technicians were also trained there. Captain Maqbul later left for Germany to undergo instrument flying course.

Dhamial Days

In 1959 the Air OP Squadrons had shifted to Dhamial. Flight Lieutenant Islam was still there along with 5-10 technicians of PAF. Their dedication and hard work cannot be expressed in words. Now our own trained personnel started coming back from America and slowly took over the assembly and maintenance of aircraft. Captain Majeed Ullah was the Light Aid Detachment(LAD) officer with the 1 Squadron whereas Captain Maqbul was the LAD officer of newly raised No.2 Squadron and Captain Dawood Shah was the

LAD officer of the AOP School. There was a difference in the way PAF was working and the way American system worked. PAF maintenance system was based upon the British Form-700, in which five tradesmen had to sign, where as the American system envisaged only one crew chief signing and making an aircraft fit for flying. Initially there was resistance from the pilots on this system but Americans were adamant on their working ethics.

199 Aircraft Workshop Company

From this pioneer nucleus, in November 1959, 199 Aircraft Workshop Company, fully capable of looking after the technical needs of the army flying machines was raised with Major Ansar Ahmed Zuberi as its first officer commanding. The Americans provided the necessary tools and expertise and the PAF was not found lacking in giving meaningful assistance whenever required. At that time the only aircraft being operated by the army flyers was L-19 so the company was tailored to look after same.

Pioneer Battalion

With the raising of additional flying units and appearance of OH-13 helicopters on the horizon, it became necessary to review this setup. It was ultimately decided to raise an Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Battalion to cater for all the projected tasks in a centralized manner. 199 Aviation Engineering Battalion was raised in February 1964. The 199 EME Battalion later named as, "The Pioneers", had four companies. One company was meant for flight-line operations, one for training the technicians, one as the field repair company and one to act as the base repair company. Major Majeed Ullah remained as officer commanding of training company till the time Army Aviation Engineering School was raised and he became its first commandant. This battalion also looked after the lone twin-engine Beech aircraft (L-23F) after its induction in 1963. Major Amanullah went to America in 1964 and did flying and technical course on L-23. The battalion performed admirably well during the 1965 War, when the aviation assets were spread all over the country. Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Qadir was able to test fire a 500 pound bomb from a Beaver aircraft and also carried out successful trials of firing from L-19 aircraft.

299 EME Battalion is Raised



The arrival of Russian MI-8 and French Allouette-III helicopters created dilemma. So far all the equipment was of US origin but these two new machines were poles apart. To cater for this, an additional maintenance organisation became inevitable. For the initial training, a good number of officers, junior commissioned officers(JCO) and non commissioned officers(NCO) were sent to these two countries, and on return they organized the subsequent work. To support these new inductions, 299 EME Battalion was raised at Dhamial in 1969. Company of this battalion took part in operations in former East Pakistan.

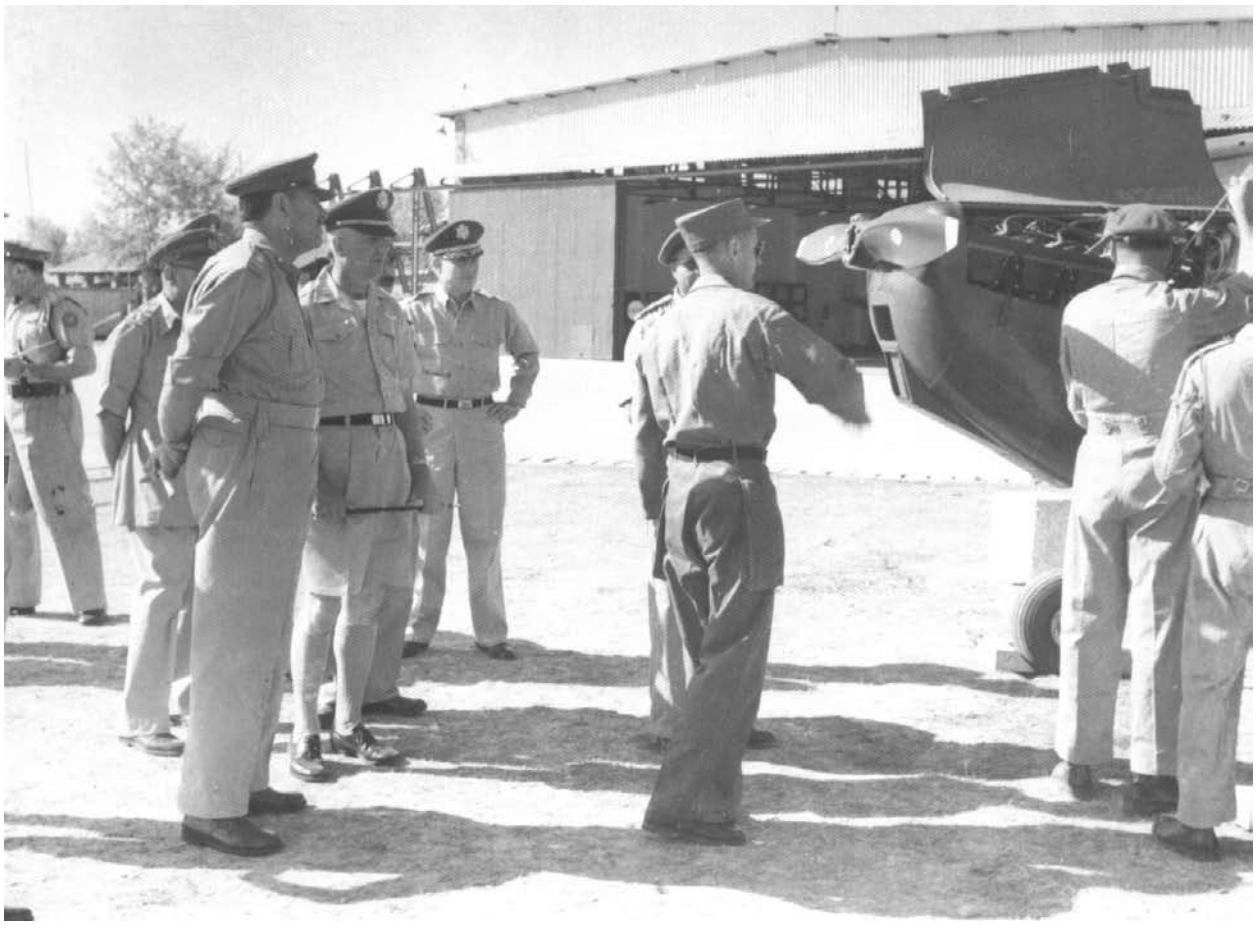
503 Aviation Base Workshop



By 1968-69 over two dozen Allouettes and MI-8 apart from OH-13s and L-19 were flying.There was a dire need to have one dedicated organization which not only look after these helicopter but should also act as a nucleus around which future aircraft industry in Pakistan should grow. 503 Aviation Base Workshop was raised on 29th July 1969 for providing major repairs and overhaul of Army Aviation aircraft and other equipment with Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Qadir as the commandant. The heavy repair company of 199 Engineering Battalion was the nucleus around which it was raised.

First Major Project

The first major project of 503 Aviation Base Workshop was assembling Allouette-III helicopter from Semi Knocked Down (SKD) kits and later from Completely Knocked Down (CKD) kits in 1970. These helicopters arrived in crated from and were reassembled by the 503 Workshop, at a rate of one helicopter



General Ayub visiting 199 Aircraft Workshop Company

per week. 503 Workshop and its technicians put up a fine display of professionalism under the project leader Major Saeed. All in all approximately 16-20 Allouettes were assembled and air tested in two months i.e. between August-October 1971. Same year the first overhauled Allouette tail number 1976 was handed over to PAF. In January 2005 the Workshop rolled out the 100th overhauled aircraft in an impressive ceremony.

Trojan Horse

According to Major General retired Burki who was commandant of workshop in post 1971 War scenario "Newly graduated batch of aeronautical engineers joined from Korangi which included Captains Ghalib Saeed, Asmatullah and Sami ur Rehman. Proposal of building a L-19 from scratch was hatched and given to these officers. It took them almost a year but they made an aircraft out of existing parts and requested me for air test. It was a successful venture and we made about five aircraft in similar manner (tail numbers 50301-50305). At that time Ministry of Defence commissioned John Fricker a renowned writer on aviation matters, to write two articles for a magazine by the name of Air Enthusiast. He wrote that ''Pakistan Army Aviation has assembled over 100 L-19s and is in process of manufacturing them at 503 Work shop''.

Overhauling of Helicopters

The facilities for overhaul of Allouette airframe and Lycoming Engine (OH-13S Helicopter) were established in 1974. In 1979-80 entire fleet of OH-13s was grounded and all were made serviceable by the 503 workshop under Lieutenant Colonel Suhail Qureshi and his team. Further expansion encompassed creation of MI-8 overhaul facility in 1982. First batch of six helicopters was overhauled with Russian assistance from 1982 to 1985. After discontinuation of Russian support due to the Afghan war, the overhaul of MI-8 helicopters was undertaken with Chinese assistance and first MI-8 helicopter tail number 24519 was rolled out on 29th May 1988. Brigadier Sher Khan ex pilot course P-8, who was the commandant

recalls; “Chinese came to our help in 1987 for the over hauling of some MI-8 helicopters, initially team went to Sinkiang in C-130 aircraft and later some of our technicians also went there and in 1988 the first MI-8 was overhauled”.



(Right) Lieutenant General Saeed Qadir

Refurbishment of ten AB-205 started in 1984 and the first AB-205 tail number 6-4322 was completed on 27th December 1984. Puma Airframe Overhaul Group was established in February 1984 and in the same year the facility for Artouste-III Turbine engine overhaul was also setup. In 1983, Puma helicopter No 1194 completed its 10 years of service and was due for overhaul but it had not completed its hours thus its aging inspection was carried out and it was cleared for flying subject to yearly inspection. Puma metal rotor blades were also replaced by composite blades Puma Dynamic Components Overhaul Group was created in 1990. Turbine Engine Test Facility was upgraded to accommodate testing of engines installed on Bell helicopters.

The role of workshop has not been limited only to aviation activities. It has played active role in response to the operational requirements of the country by undertaking various projects like manufacturing of igloos, anti mine shoes, firing targets, helmets and hoods/shields for vehicles. Along with the addition of new capabilities, allied universal facilities for Non-Destructive Inspection (NDI), Spectrometric Oil Analysis, Electroplating and manufacture of Glass Reinforced Plastic parts were also established. Precision Measuring Equipment Laboratory is the latest addition, which has the capability to calibrate hundreds of electronic gadgets, tools and equipment.



First Overhauled Allouette handing over ceremony August 1971

Year 2001 has been the hallmark of major achievements in 503 Aviation Base Workshop EME in which most of the facilities were upgraded. Modernization of entire workshop facilities was undertaken which include uplifting of workshop area, epoxy treatment of aircraft hangar and shop floors, procurement of the latest aviation tools and gadgets, improvements in environmental control and establishment of new shops. The workshop achieved Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) certification in 1997. Yet another milestone has been the certification of piston engine and accessories overhaul group against ISO-9002 standard in March 2001 and that of entire workshop against the same standard in March 2002. The workshop achieved prestigious Aerospace Standard 9000 (AS 9000) certification in April 2002 from world's leading certification agency "French Association for Quality Assurance".

Since the date of its raising, this workshop has expanded enormously. A number of additional facilities have been added over the years. It has rebuilt 35 and overhauled 23 L-19 aircraft from 1970 to 1992. By now it has overhauled 140 engines of Allouette-III, 123 of Puma, 159 of Mushak, 30 of OH-13 and 95 of L-19 over the period. In addition airframes of six MI-8, 9 of Puma, 38 of Allouette-III and 2 of AB-205 helicopters have also been overhauled. Apart from this, the Research and Development outfit of this workshop has also developed 328 non-critical items of various helicopters indigenously. Airframe overhaul of Allouette-III which was started in 1974 and so far 33 of these helicopters have gone through this process. It also started a refurbishment programme for UH-IH and AB-205 helicopters in 1984 and almost the entire fleet has been taken care of. In addition it looks after the requirements of Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan Navy's Allouette-III fleet for repair and overhaul. This help is also provided for the helicopters of Civil Armed Forces as well. Other agencies like WAPDA, Plant Protection Department, Edhi Welfare Trust and Civil Flying Clubs are also dependent on the workshop for various repairs and overhauling support. Even Syria and Islamic Republic of Iran have shown interest to use this facility for their particular brand of aircraft.

The workshops most latest achievement is the overhauling of first of two Russian MI-171 helicopters, tail No.58602 and 58604 with Russian technical assistance in year 2003.

Aviation Engineering School

Initially training company of 199 Aviation Engineering Battalion catered for training requirement of Aviation EME technicians. The total strength of the company at that time was 46 including two officers. In 1969 the training company was upgraded and Army Aviation Engineering School EME was formally established in a separate location with Major Majid Ullah as the first commandant. He narrates; "This job was of my liking, I love teaching but again the process of raising something from nothing takes heavy toll on every body. I went to Karachi to study the existing training facilities of PAF where Group Captain Akram was the PAF School Commandant and I borrowed syllabus and few training aids. We also had old L-19s as the training aids apart from generous help given by the GHQ. Wing Commander later Air Commodore retired Choudhry was the ADEME in the Qasim Base and was of great help. I would also like to name the services of former Army Chief (late) General Asif Nawaz then a Major in sparing his drill instructors for our school. He himself visited many times to see the progress.

In 1974**,** the faculty was upgraded with a lieutenant colonel as commandant and the school became a fully self sustaining and self accounting unit. In 1980**,** the TO&E of the school was revised and the strength of school was increased to 100 including eight officers. The school at that time housed independently in one portion of 503 Aviation Base Workshop EME. In 1985 independent accommodation for the school was constructed and the school moved to its present campus. Due to increased sphere of activity rank of commandant was raised to colonel in 1990 and to brigadier in 1995**.** Some of the courses which it runs are as under:

Basic course for recruits.
Conversion courses on all fixed and rotary wing aircraft.
Crew Chief courses on all aircraft.
Flight Engineer courses on cargo helicopters.
Armament artificer course for non commissioned officers.
Aviation Officers equipment courses.
Quality control courses.

Aviation Engineering Groups

These Groups were raised in 1981 to provide field level maintenance support for Army Aviation. Headed by colonels, these Groups essentially performed the same task as the maintenance battalions. Short life span of these groups of about ten years was attributed to their over-centralisation. The field EME support to Army Aviation was reorganized in 1990 mainly for two reasons, namely making it responsive to the operational requirements and for bringing it in line with maintenance system prevalent in the army. The heavy command structure was actually the main reason for which a system adopted after deliberation was, consigned to history.

The Reorganized EME Battalions

On 1 August 1991, three Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Battalions were raised. Without additional influx of resources, both men and material, the existing resources of the four Aviation Engineering groups were re-organized / re-distributed. The commanding officers who raised these units were:-

199 EME Battalion	Lieutenant Colonel Anwar Ali Pervaiz
299 EME Battalion	Lieutenant Colonel Qazi Iftikhar
399 EME Battalion	Lieutenant Colonel Suhail Qureshi
499 EME Battalion	Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Jamil
599 EME Battalion	Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Mushtaq

Induction System

Officers. The basic qualification is Fellow of Science (FSc) pre engineering with minimum 65% marks. Candidates selected as aeronautical engineer are initially sent to Pakistan Military Academy(PMA) for six months and then to PAF Academy Risalpur in the College of Aeronautical Engineering(CAE) for a degree course of three and a half years. They are commissioned as captains, as many as seven officers who have joined Army Aviation as maintenance officers have won the coveted Sword of Honour from the Academy. Officers after passing out undergo 44 weeks basic course at EME College in the second year of their service and later another course of 32 weeks at the Aviation Engineering School in the third year of service. These are two mandatory technical courses for aeronautical engineers. After completion of aviation equipment course the officer becomes associated with one or two particular type of aircraft in the respective field unit.

Technicians. They are recruited as per the existing rules, minimum qualification required is Matric with science. Recruits are then trained in basic military skills for 16 weeks at EME Centre at Quetta. Recruits first under go 18 weeks(class 4) of training at Aviation Engineering School which is designed to impart academic training in English, Mathematics and Physics. Class 3 course is of 30 weeks and is conducted separately for all five aircraft trades. Specialization courses have 8-12 weeks duration aiming at technicians to be capable of field level inspections, repairs and recovery of a particular aircraft selected as his primary or secondary specialization. Crew Chief courses have duration of 4-6 weeks, this being an additional qualification for the technician, enables him to establish airworthiness of the aircraft and its mission equipment. Flight Engineer course is of 12 weeks duration for selected officers /JCOS/NCOS.It includes 8 weeks ground schooling and 20 hours of flying.

CHRONOLOGY

March 1958.	Flight Lieutenant Islam along with team of PAF Airmen reported to Air OP at PAF Base Chaklala as first maintenance officer of Pakistan Army Aviation.
April 1958	Lieutenant Majeed Ullah raised the first maintenance outfit of Army Aviation
December 1958.	Captain Majeed Ullah and Captain Maqbool proceeded to United States for Basic Flying Course and Aviation Maintenance Officers Course (AMOC).
July 1959.	The First Fixed Wing Basic course trained at Air Observation Post School graduated. The coveted flying trophy went to an EME officer, Major Amanullah Chaudhary.
1959.	506 Aviation Workshop Company was raised with the induction of L-19 in Army Aviation.
November 1959.	199 Aircraft Workshop Company was raised with Major Ansar Ahmed Zuberi as first Officer Commanding.
1960.	Captain Majeed Ullah introduced the concept of U.S documentation system and crew chiefs



Overhauled Puma (No. 1566) dated 29-3-02



The first overhauled MI-17 dated 25-12-2003



Newly Refurbished AB-205 Helicopter (No. 401) dated 20-9-03. Work Shop personnel with GOC Aviation Maj Gen Azam.

1960.	Captain Maqbool became first EME officer to embrace shahadat in an air crash. He was flying L-19.
July 1961.	With the shifting of Army Aviation School to Dhamial two EME officers, Major Amanullah Chaudhary, and Captain Majeed Ullah were posted as maintenance officers.
January 1964.	199 Workshop Company was upgraded into 199 Aviation Engineering Battalion with Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Qadir as first commanding officer.
1966.	Wing Commander M..M Chaudhary was posted as the first ADEME of Dhamial Army Aviation Base.
1969.	299 EME Battalion was raised.
April 1969.	Training company of 199 Aviation Engineering Battalion was reorganized into Army Aviation Engineering School EME with Major Majeed Ullah as the first commandant.
Jul 1969.	503 Aviation Base Workshop raised with Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Qadir as first commandant.
1970.	The first major project of assembling Alloutette-III helicopter from Semi Knocked Down (SKD) kits and from Completely Knocked Down (CKD) kits was undertaken.
1973.	Lieutenant Colonel Majeed Ullah took over as ADEME Qasim Army Aviation Base Dhamial form Wing Commander MM Chaudhary.
1974.	The facilities for overhaul of Allouette-III helicopter airframe and Lycoming Engine (OH-13s) were established.
1974.	To cater for maintenance requirement of ever increasing fleet of Army Aviation the school was reorganized in 1974 and was given the status of a self sustaining installation and commandant was upgraded to Lieutenant Colonel.
1981.	For providing aviation engineering support to field units, four Groups were raised.
1982.	MI-8 overhaul facility was established.
1984.	First AB-205 helicopter tail number 6-4322 was refurbished.
1984.	Facilities for Puma airframe overhaul and Artouste-III B engine were established.
1985.	Aviation Engineering Group-IV was raised to cater for maintenance/repair of Cobra fleet of Army Aviation.
1986.	After discontinuation of Russian support, due to Afghan War, the overhaul of MI-8 helicopter was undertaken with Chinese assistance.
1986.	Second batch of 10 x Cobra helicopters were received by team led by Lieutenant Colonel Asif Javed Ghori of EME.
1990.	Dynamic Components Overhaul Group for Puma and Allouette fleet was established.
1990.	The Aviation Maintenance System underwent a structural re-organisation. Five Aviation EME Battalions were raised out of resources of four Aviation Engineering Groups.
1997.	503 Aviation Base Workshop EME obtained Civil Aviation Authority certification.
Mar 2001.	Piston Engine and Accessories Overhaul Group of 503 Aviation Base Workshop EME earned ISO 9002:1994 certification.
Apr 2002.	503 was awarded prestigious Aerospace Standard 9000 certification from world's leading certification agency.
Dec 2002.	503 Aviation Workshop holds first Research and Development display at Rahwali Aviation base. Chief of Army Staff General Pervaiz Musharaff was the chief guest.
Nov 2003.	503 Aviation Workshop organized the second display. This time chief guest was Vice Chief of Army Staff, General Yousaf.
Jul 2005.	EME took charge of all the Aviation Ordnance Stores Depot.

SWORDS MEN

Till December 2007, following seven officers have joined Aviation EME after earning the coveted Sword of Honour from College of Aeronautical Engineering:-

Rank & Name	**PAF Academy Course**
Major General Jamshed Riaz	G-9
Brigadier Akhtar Nawaz	G-15
Brigadier Rehan Abdul Baqi	G-20
Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Shoaib	G-29
Major Zahid Mahmood Malik	G-41
Major Sayed Abrar Hussain	G-48
Major Imran Shafi	G-50



Foreign delegation visiting 503 Aviation Base Workshop 1976



Work in progress



President General Musharraf visiting EME stall at Rahwali 2003



Hundredth helicopter overhauled ceremony 2004

AVIATION EME GENERAL OFFICERS



Lieutenant General Saeed Qadir



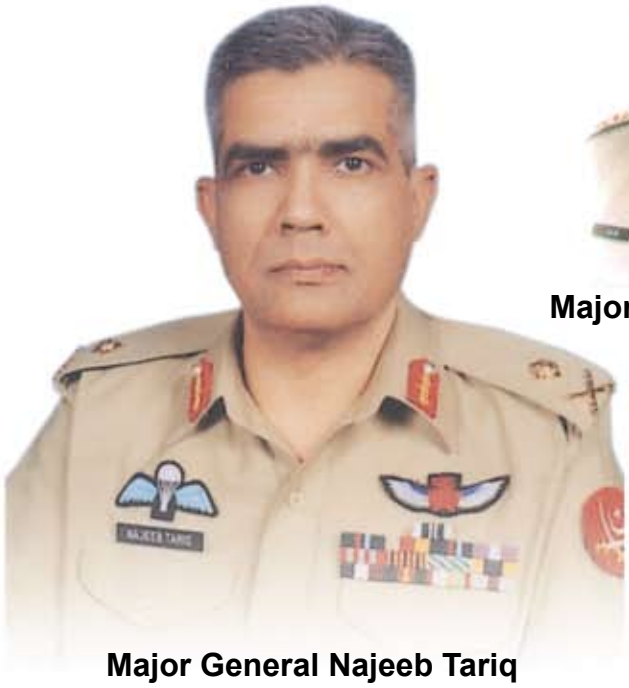
Major General Farhat Burki



Major General Khalid Mushtaq



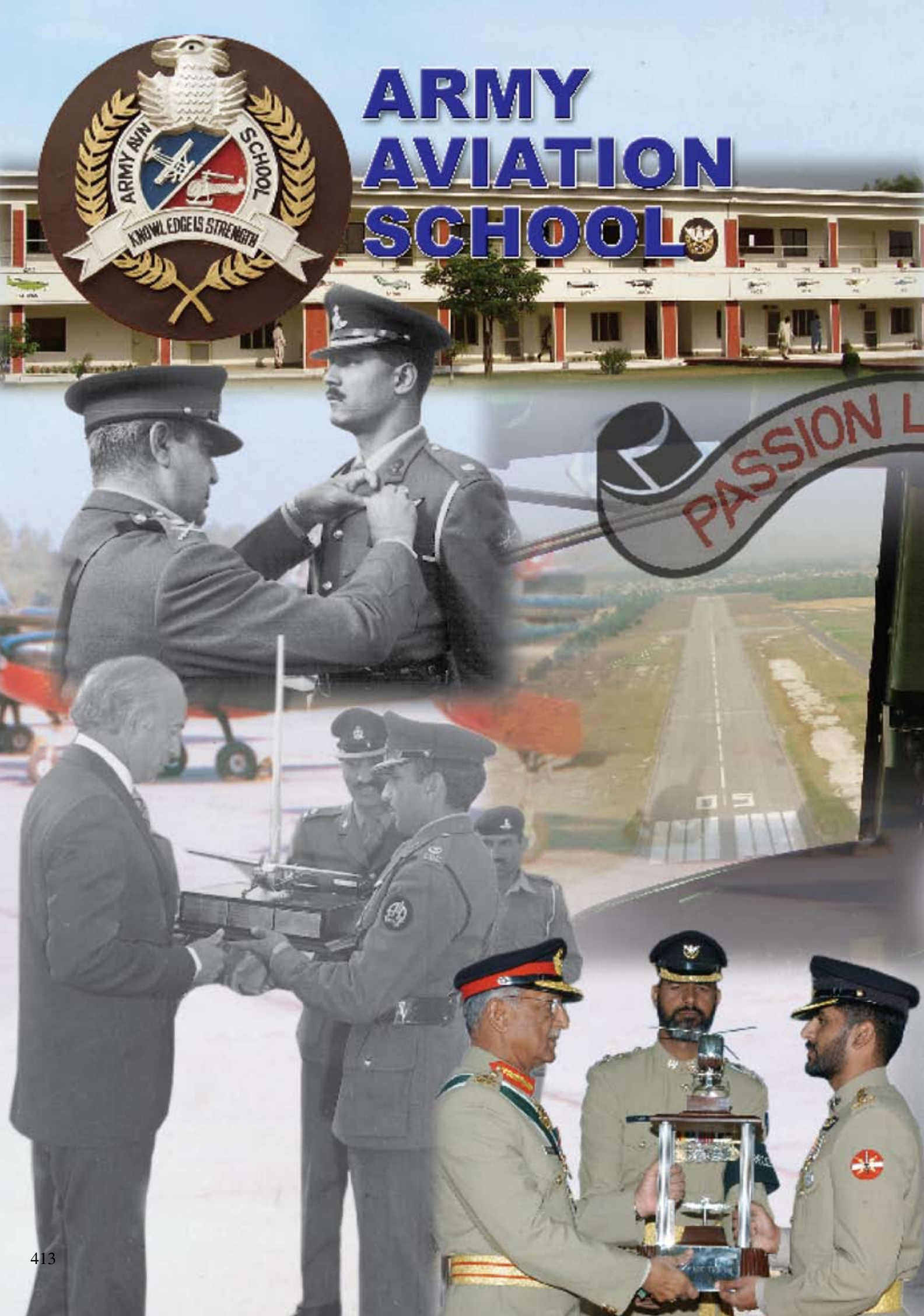
Major General Salim Ud Din



Major General Najeeb Tariq



Major General Jamshed Riaz


ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL
KNOWLEDGE IS STRENGTH
ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL
PASSION


IVES HERE
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IP
ARMY AVIATION
ARMY

Raising Of Air Observation Post School

The arrival of American equipment in 1958 opened a new vista, and during subsequent conferences held at General Headquarters it was decided to have an independent flying school for the training of Army Aviators. Air Observation Post (Air OP) School was established on 1st January 1959 at Chaklala. This was a significant step, which laid the foundation for becoming self sufficient in flying training.

Pioneers

Responsibility of raising was entrusted to 1 AOP Squadron. No.5 Flight of the squadron was earmarked for this and school was raised around its nucleus. In the table of organization and equipment(TO&E) of Aviation School, initially only six L-19 were earmarked for training, later they were raised to twelve. The following staff was posted to raise the school at Chaklala in the same hangar/premises where 1AOP Squadron was located.

Lieutenant Colonel Azmat Bakhsh Awan Commandant, Major M. Saleem Ullah Chief Flying Instructor and Captain Abdul Qayyum, Captain A.L Awan, Captain Nazar Hussain, Captain Aftab Iqbal, Captain HRH Abbasi, Captain Nazir Ahmed, Captain Riaz Ahmad were the flying instructors and Captain. Ghulam Mohammad was the adjutant.

Early Days

The task assigned to the school, was to conduct two basic flying training courses yearly, each of five months duration with a course intake of about twelve officers. The first irritant was shortage of accommodation. The whole hangar and side offices were all in possession of 1 Air OP Squadron. Three rooms were given to school. The second problem was that seven captains posted to school had no valid instructor category and without the category they could not be allowed to impart flying training. Only the Chief Flying Instructor had a current B-I category. They worked hard and in about three weeks time they were ready for the categorization test by Central Flying School (CFS), PAF. The CFI had brought a complete set of précis from British Air OP School Middle Wallop. These became very handy. Subject-wise these were given to the instructors for updating. The Air OP School was ready to function in March 1959 with one instructional wing and school headquarters.



Chaklala - 1957

Basic Fixed Wing Course Serial-1

The first flying course is known as the Basic Fixed Wing Serial -1. A group of eleven trainees arrived on 16th February 1959 for the first Basic Fixed Wing Course and eight graduated on 14th July the same year including two officers from Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (E.M.E) branch of army. L-19 was difficult to teach as instructor sitting in the rear seat had no instruments to read he had only stick and pedals. If the student was bulky then instructor had to scan the instruments from sideways.

Last Days at Chaklala - 1960

Chaklala was getting congested as two PAF Squadrons were moving in and capital was also being shifted from Karachi to Islamabad. Possibility of shifting the school to Walton - Lahore and Multan were considered as a stop gap measures. Fateh Jang Airfield was also activated for this purposes and Pilot Course-2 consolidated their flying phase there. The first two courses did not conduct night flying for the reason that existing L-19s were not equipped for this. It was only when two L-19 specifically designed for nocturnal flying were given by the Americans that this aspect of training was conducted from Pilot Course-3 onwards.

Air OP Tactical Course

P-1 and P-2 only did their basic flying. These two courses were later combined together before the arrival of P-3 and an advance flying phase known as tactical course in which aerial artillery shoots, strip landings and advance landing ground (ALG) occupation techniques were imparted. The first Air OP Tactical Course was launched on 4 April 1960. It was planned for duration of twelve weeks with 90 hours of flying. However, afterward it was realized that the tactical syllabus should be integrated with the basic flying training to make it more comprehensive and produce pilots all set to go into action soon after their graduation. It was decided that from P-3 onwards there would be one course of 36 weeks encompassing both legs of flying training having 200 flying hours and renamed as Air OP Pilots course.



Captain Qayyum with a student at Chaklala

Air OP Pilot Course No. 3

P-3 Course also had the distinction of being the first course which was conveyed the sanction of President General Ayub Khan authorizing a visit of eleven days for long cross country navigation to Karachi and visits to naval, civil and air force installations.

Instructor Pilot Course No. 1

In 1960, Army was facing the shortage of flying instructors, although there were 2-3 seats available with PAF for training of instructors in Flying Instructor School, but still it was short of meeting the army requirement. Thus first instructor course to be run in Aviation School was conducted at Chaklala.

Move To Dhamial

On 30th December 1961 Aviation School was shifted from Chaklala to Dhamial, the move was completed within three days. On 30th July 1961 school organization came under review and its Digest Of Service records "We emerged with unchanged mission, functions and officers establishment also remained same however there was a significant reduction in the soldiers strength and all our vehicles were withdrawn".

First Pilot Course at Dhamial Base

The P-4 Course was the first one conducted at the new location. Major Manzoor Bajwa narrates; "Major Riaz was our instructor. The solo stage is usually a crucial stage, full of tension and critical supervision. It was the day for the solo flights. The instructor, Major Riaz was at the control tower to observe the performance and guide his student, Captain Zafar Naqvi, going solo. Captain Naqvi took off and entered the circuit and made a go around and proceeded for another circuit. No one was really concerned. Captain Naqvi went around once again and all of us at the tower were slightly concerned. Major Riaz passed on some briefing to infuse confidence in the student, who promised to make a smooth landing next time. By now the instructor who was standing on the balcony of the control tower, seemed a bit concerned. As soon as he realised the pilot was aborting landing for the third time there was an action. Major Riaz had grabbed the bird shooter shot gun and the mike. As Captain Naqvi went past the tower at a slow climbing speed, Major Riaz pointed the gun and declared war by announcing. "Naqvi do you see this gun in my hand? If you do not land next time, I am going to shoot you down". Major Naqvi, a very obedient student, surely made a perfect three pointer smooth landing next time".

Army Aviation School

On 1st February 1964 School was re-designated as Army Aviation School, simultaneously Army Air Base Dhamial was also re-designated as Army Aviation Base Dhamial. School along with the 199 EME Battalion were placed as GHQ troops under command base for all purposes.

POST 1965 WAR

Helicopter Training Starts

Rotary Training Cell was raised under Major Abdul Latif Awan in the School on 10th October 1966. Major Faiz Brandon and Captain Syed Liaqat Asrar Bokhari were entrusted to prepare the syllabus for rotary courses at School. As a policy it was decided to run it on following parameters. Duration 10 weeks with an intake of 4-6 students (Fixed Wing pilot). In May 1969 sanction was granted in the provisional establishment of Aviation School for the increase of instructors in rotary training cell authorizing one major and three captains. Further amendments were made in July same year allowing clerks and wireless operators.

First Rotary Wing(RW) Course



First Helicopter Pilot Course (Sitting: Maj Asghar Aziz , Lt Col. Mahmud, Maj AL Awan and Maj Naeem. Standing: Capt Ali Jawahar, Capt Akhtar Malik & Capt HUK Niazi

RW-1 commenced on 17th October 1966 and successfully finished on 17th December 1966. Following four officers underwent the training namely, Captain Akhtar Malik, Captain Hidayat Niazi SJ, Captain Ali Jawhar and Captain Qasim, he wanted to go for Flying Instructor Course but as aviation life goes, he was detailed for rotary conversion and as per his colleagues he had no other option than to show unsatisfactory performance. Thus he became the first officer to be dropped from Rotary Wing. Later he became a Fixed Wing Instructor and was awarded Sitara-i-Jur'at in 1972, posthumously.

RW-4 had two historical distinction, it was first one to be extended for two weeks but importantly it was in this course that first time an officer from sister service that is Pakistan Air Force was trained on helicopter. He was Pak No. 4344 Flight Lieutenant Daud Sajid. He was followed by Flying Officer Akhtar Butt in RW-5 helicopter conversion course.

Allouette Conversion

The school undertook the first ever transition course on Allouette-III from 6th December 1967 - 10th February 1968, officers who attended this historical course were:-

Major Nauman Mahmood
Major Patrick Tierney
Captain Ikram Ullah Khan
Major Sajjad Nazim

MI-8 Training

From 20th January to 4th February 1968, a team of officers, from the school, including Colonel Faiz Brandon and Major Abdul Latif Awan went to Russia for the evaluation of MI-8 helicopter. On 23rd September 1969 it was Colonel Brandon who proceeded to Russia from school for their acceptance. Later batches of officers went to Russia for training and above mentioned officers were awarded instructor rating on the type.

Pilot Course -9 'The Generals' Course

Aviation School has produced many gallant and professional aviators and many of its students have risen to enviable dizzy heights. The illustrious list is long but in particular stands out the Basic Pilot Course No.-9 course (17th April 1967 - 20th January 1968), which trained future five Lieutenant Generals all retired now, namely, Major Farrukh Khan, Captain Muhammad Maqbool, Captain Hamid Niaz, Captain Ali Kuli Khan and Captain Iftikhar Hussain Shah who later became the Governor of N.W.F.P.

P-9 has many other historic distinctions as well, the intake of pilots was increased from 18 to 28, the duration of the course was also enhanced to 40 weeks instead of 36 weeks.









Lieutenant General Hamid Niaz



Lieutenant General Farrukh Khan



Lieutenant General Ali Kuli Khan





Lieutenant General Maqbool



Lieutenant General Iftikhar Hussain



Rotary Instructors

From 5th January to 31st January 1970, First Instructor Pilot course was conducted on OH-13S and following officers underwent training:-

Major Mustanir Tirmizi, Major Zia Ud Din Javeed, Major Manzoor Kemal Bajwa and Major Jafar Hasan Humayun.

Bifurcation of Basic Fixed Wing Course

On 21st November 1970, for the first time, Basic Fixed Wing Course was bifurcated after seventy five hours of initial flying on L-19. One portion continued with the Advance Fixed Wing Training while the other was given the Rotary Wing Conversion. The first batch which was handled as such was the P-12 course.

Students from Pakistan Navy

On 19th April 1971, for the first time, two Pakistan Navy officers Lieutenant Kamal Fayyaz and Lieutenant M.Iftikhar Shafi also arrived to attend a flying course. Lieutenant Iftikhar Shafi was the student of Major 'Mac' Maqbool. This made the school somewhat an inter-services institution.

1971 War

With the outbreak of hostilities with India in December 1971, the school ceased functioning once again and all the instructors and students of P-14 course were sent to operational units. From the Fixed Wing Instructors Flight No. 4 was formed which included initially Major Saeed Ismat and Major Shahbaz and were joined later by Major Hamid Choudhry. During the war, two Sitara-i-Jur'ats were conferred upon the instructors of school. They were Major Fayyaz Ibrahim and Major Saeed Ismat.Two more instructors namely Major Zafar Ullah Khan was awarded with Tamgha-i-Jur'at and Major Maqbool was awarded Sitara-i-Basalt.

1972 - Reactivation

On 24th January 1972 the school was reactivated like a phoenix with Lieutenant Colonel HRH Abbasy in the chair, and on 26th January students of P-14 course reported back, their graduation was held on 25th March 1972. The first rotary course to be undertaken in the school after war was the conversion of pilots on MI-8 from 28th February 1972 till 3rd June 1972.

1973 - Bifurcation of Basic Course

The Basic Course was bifurcated into two flights one remained at Qasim Base and the other went to Mangla for solo and solo consolidation. This arrangement of bifurcating the basic course in pre solo stage is still practiced, P-28 went to Okara from Qasim and P-42 came to Qasim from Rahwali.

Training from Civil Flying Clubs

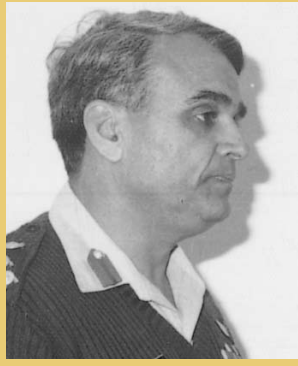
In September 1975 it was decided to train twelve army officers from civil flying clubs of Lahore and Multan at a total cost of Rupees 468,000. School was authorized to negotiate with the clubs for the number of intakes and duration of the course. The experiment did not prove very successful as pilots were without any check. They completed their training as per the given requirements but they lacked the military aspect of flying and moreover they had good time more than what was desired. Major(retired) Tanveer Talat was one such student, he narrates; "We



Army Officers being trained at Flying Club Multan.

were living in the Artillery Mess at Multan and our flying training was with Multan Flying Club, we were at our own to choose when to fly and when to go on leave". Major Tanveer could not earn brevet, and was dropped after 120 hours. Though this initiative was later dropped but it should be remembered that a number of Club trained pilots did well in the Army and some reached very high ranks as well.

1975 - Up Gradation



Brigadier Hamid Chaudhry

In December 1975 a Research and Development Flight was created in the school to undertake single-mindedly this intricate task. The instructional wing was bifurcated to cater separately for the fixed and rotary type of flying. The post of the commandant was upgraded in March 1976 and Colonel Mohammad Yunus become the first commandant to run the school in the new rank. The post of commandant was later upgraded to the rank of brigadier on 28th June 1984. Brigadier Choudhry Hamid Hussain became the first one to wear the new rank in this assignment. **History of Army Aviation School will remain incomplete without recording the contributions of Brigadier Hamid Choudhry. He remained its longest serving commandant spanning over 8 years from 1978 till 1986 apart from remaining on its faculty for over sixteen years as flying instructor. He retired from service in 1989 with over 5,750 accident free hours, which continues to be a record, not yet surpassed.** January 1989 saw the creation of the post of deputy commandant and Colonel Zareef Bangash became its first incumbent.

1976 - Induction of Jet Ranger

In 1976 Jet Ranger helicopter was inducted as the basic trainer in the school, although it was not an ideal arrangement but still it eased the training parameters. In 1975 two officers namely Major Riaz Ul Haq SJ and Major Khalid Masud underwent instructor course in America, while Major Iqbal Kashmiri and Captain Ashraf got the conversion. The IP-7 was the first instructor course on Jet Ranger in Aviation School conducted from August 1978 - October 1978.

1977 - Mushak as The Basic Trainer

MFI-17 were inducted in 1976 and P-19 was the last course to be conducted on L-19. First the instructors were converted onto the nose wheel aircraft. From teaching point of view it was easy to teach on the Mushak as compared to the tail dragger L-19 which had a vicious yaw on landing if not corrected timely. Mushak had more to offer in terms of aerobatics and advanced avionics. However it could not compete with the Bird Dog in terms of strip and short landing. One more advantage now was to have the joint trainer in both PAF and Army Aviation. Previously when army pilots used to go to FIS they were always accompanied by the army instructors and own L-19. For final check out the air force instructors were given currency on the L-19. Till August 1977 instructors were trained at FIS on L-19 and first flying instructor training exclusively conducted on Mushak started in February 1978.

SAAB Elementary Course(SE) No.1

In order to overcome the shortage of rotary pilots these courses were conducted from 26th August 1976 onwards. These officers were not part of the P-Course although they attended the classes together. When SAAB-1 was initiated, already P-20 course was in progress which had completed half its flying on L-19 and during the course. They also got training on SAAB Safari. SAAB Elementary completed 75 hours on the fixed wing aircraft and then another 40 hours on OH-13S before they were sent to France for training onto Puma. Selected officers from P-20 were formed into another course known as SAAB Elementary Alpha. After conversion on OH-13 they were also detailed for the Puma course in France. Within three years seven elementary courses were graduated to provide the nucleus of pilots for the Puma squadrons. These courses were again initiated in 1994 for a couple of years.



On Right Lieutenant Colonel Percy Joseph Blaker, the School Commandant. Blaker was a very popular and well liked Commandant



Hamid Ch, KK, Sajjad Nazim, Janjua & Khalid Sagheer (Flying Instructors - 1974)



Flying Instructors - 1963



Flying Instructors - 1975



Army Aviation School Instructional Staff with Base Commander Brigadier Mokeet 3rd from Left and Director Aviation 4th from Right Brigadier Tirmizi - 1982



General Tikka Khan Chief of Army Staff meeting Flying Instructors - 1974



Flying Instructors - 1963



Brass made L-19 'Best Pilot Trophy'

Glimpses of Aviation School at Dhamial 1962-1988



Instructor Pilot Course on Graduation

SHIFTING OF ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL TO RAHWALI

The requirement of training pilots, with the rapid expansion of Army Aviation Corps increased manifolds during seventies and eighties. Army Aviation School which was tasked on inception to produce 8 to 10 pilots in a year was producing 70-80 pilots on various type of aircraft by early eighties. With the passage of time and raising of new flying units, Qasim Base started looking over congested in early eighties. It was also felt that flying training at Dhamial was being adversely affected due to Limited Air Space.



Major Naveed M G Kiani

After lot of deliberations and physical reconnaissance of many likely sites like Rahwali, Mangla, Tarbela, Fateh Jang, Okara, the Chief of General Staff finally approved Rahwali on 24th March 1984, as the future location of Aviation Training Base. Rahwali Airfield was constructed in 1940s during British era. After the independence in 1947, this airfield remained abandoned and disused till 1985.

A board for siting of Army Aviation School in Gujranwala Cantonment was ordered by GHQ on 24th March 1984 with Brigadier Abdul Mokeet Khan as President and Colonel Hamid Hussain Commandant Army Aviation School as a member. The project of the Rahwali Base started on 12th February 1985. In order to expedite/supervise the construction work. Major Naveed M.G Kiani was attached with Station Headquarters Gujranwala. He narrates; "I was detailed to act as the project officer for the construction of the Rahwali Base. Rahwali Airfield was nothing more than brick strip with rice fields all around. The work had started but the pace was slow so I was moved to Gujranwala. Major General Sajjad Hussain was the GOC of an infantry division and the garrison commander as well. He helped a great deal in increasing the work tempo and also flexible enough to accept our reasons and demands for selection and allotment of land. Major General Askree also paid flying visits to oversee the developments. Later when school shifted then the School Commandant Colonel Razzaq was instrumental in setting the pace".

Major Kiani's efforts in maintaining the tempo of work for Rahwali would be remembered.



Rahwali Cantonment

Construction Was Planned In Three Phases :-

Phase-I included Runway, fair weather strip, taxi track, technical and training buildings. Cost for this phase was approximately Rupees 83.6 Millions.

Phase-II included approximately 50% of married as well as single officers, JCOs and other rank accommodation. Its cost estimated as Rupees 62.2 Millions.

Phase-III included approximately 50% of married/single officers, JCOs and OR accommodation. Its cost estimated as Rupees 55.0 Millions

Pioneers

Army Aviation School was shifted to Rahwali in various groups as and when required basis. The pioneers of Army Aviation Base Rahwali are as under :-

26th July 1987 - Maintenance Wing
Captain. Tariq Javed, Subedar Muhammad Bashir and Naib Subedar Muhammad Aslam

29th August 1987 - Fixed Wing Flight
Major Dilshad Muhammad, Major Muhammad Ikram Cheema, Major Ghulam Raza Jaffery, Captain Tariq Hussain Khan, Captain Farooq Ahmed Asar, Captain Amjed Mehboob and 14 x students of P-29 Fixed Wing Basic Course.

13th December 1987 - Remaining Fixed Wing
Lieutenant Colonel Abid Hussain, Major Muhammad Ikram Niazi, Major Saleem Ahmed Abbasi, Captain Zahoor Ahmed Malik, Captain Abdul Rashid Khan, Captain Nadeem Kamal, Captain Nadeem Jan Khattak, Captain Munir Ahsan and 18 x students of P-29 Fixed Wing Basic Course.

27th December 1987 - Elements, School Headquarters and Rotary Wing
Major Muhammad Farooq, Major Dawood Ahmed, Major Rana Shahid Mahmood and Major Naeem Cheema.

January 1988 - School Headquarters & Remaining Rotary Wing
Colonel Abdul Razzaq, Lieutenant Colonel Pervaiz Iqbal, Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Ahmed Rana, Major Nowsherwan Khan, Major Nawazish Ali Khan, Major Iqbal Kashmiri, Major Zafar Ahmed, Major Muhammad Akram, Major Muhammad Tariq Pervaiz, Major Irfan Bhatty, Major Shaida Younis, Major Nofal Manzoor, Subedar Major Ghulam Muhammad and Naib Subedar Muhammad Rafique.

Tactical Wing
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and Major Zahid Hussain Tirmizi.

Shifting of School

Shifting of School from Rawalpindi to Rahwali was a daunting task. Additional manpower as an interim measure was acquired from Qasim Base and local formation till the TO&E of Aviation School at Gujranwala was approved. This was decided by the board before shifting of the School. **In this regard the help of Lieutenant General Pir Dad Khan Corps Commander at Gujranwala, who happened to be the elder brother of Colonel Razzaq and Major General Sajjad GOC of infantry division 'Sarhang' himself an aviator, are worth mentioning.** At the time of shifting P-29 course was in progress. It was decided to run half of the course at Rawalpindi and half at Rahwali. However passing out parade of P-29 was carried our at Rahwali.P-30 was the first course which joined the school at Rahwali.

Forced March To Rahwali

Captain Munir Ahsan now brigadier then a young instructor wrote; "The shifting of Army Aviation School to Rahwali was first received with the same reaction as the nation felt at the time of change over from "Zarda Pulao" to "cold drink" weddings. Initially the whole affair looked so glamourless and lacklustre. In the days of consideration, whether to shift the school from Rawalpindi the aviators were clearly divided into two groups of people, for and against this proposal and each having its own set of reasons. Finally, the

debate about the school tapered down to two phrases only, “Ja Raha Hai” and “Nahin Ja Raha” as it would suit each one individually.

Move To Rahwali

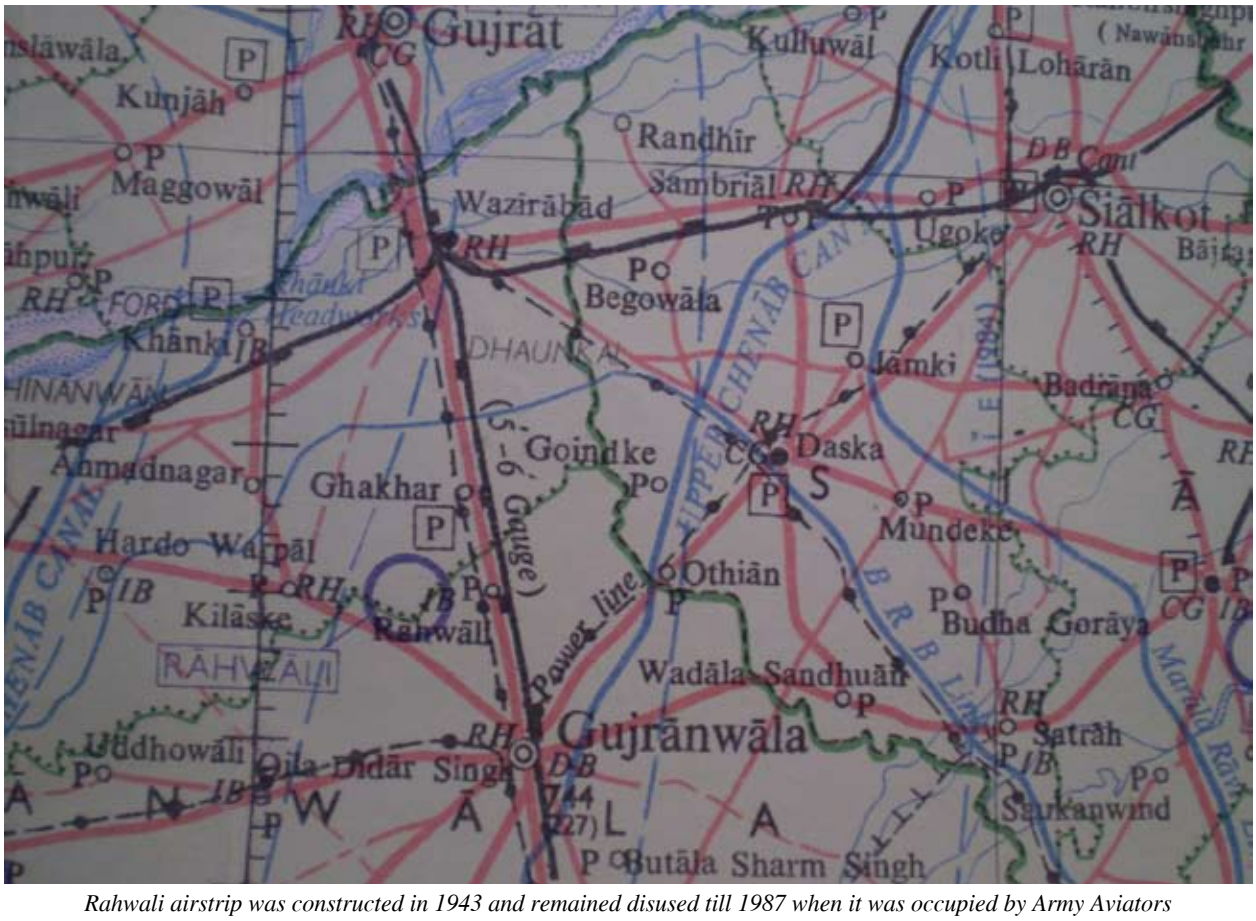


Brigadier Munir

Finally the word “Go” came, bringing an end to all speculations and rumours. The shifting was ordered to Rahwali with the Fixed Wing Basic Course as the leading element. This was further divided into a skeleton flight moving ahead of complete fixed wing and completion was ordered by mid December 1988. The thirteenth day of December (unlucky for some) marked the move of complete fixed wing. As the formation touched down on the runway, it stopped before clearing to dispersal in front of the taxi track. The aviators found in front of them a fair weather track, its shoulders higher by 2-3 feet and loose earth controlled by spilling hundreds of litres of used engine oil (the audit objection of which lasted for quite long). As the formation taxied in, it was greeted by the Pipe Band of an infantry regiment playing half way down the tarmac as the other half was under construction. The then Flight Commander, Major Naveed M.G. Kiani, who received us with smiles and sighs, covered rest of the tarmac.

Main Road To Aviation School

There was virtually no road leading into the area. The instructors who owned private cars and the school bus drivers would happily enter Dumbbell -23 from main road and then gallop over the main runway testing the VNE (velocity never exceed) of their vehicles. The transport would then clear through the same katcha taxi track into the dispersal and park on one side, as an ox freed from its cart. The crossing of this



Rahwali airstrip was constructed in 1943 and remained disused till 1987 when it was occupied by Army Aviators

oil-laden katcha track by an aircraft after the rain was again a nightmare. So the practice remained that the aircraft were pushed ahead together by the instructor and student and then tyres were washed before take off by the crew chiefs standing across in the pocket equipped with "Balties and Lotas".

The Crew Room & Class Room

There was no structure present in the entire base premises less one hangar with the floor still under construction. Hence, the parked coaster used to serve as the instructor's crew room and the Bedford bus as the student's crew room. The changing of clothes when required was done much to the delight of onlookers. The classroom was not there at all. The ground schooling was completed at Qasim Base and no further showering of knowledge was deemed necessary but the individual short pilot briefs were done standing beside a pillar or a tree. Some of the tests as I remember, were also held at the BOQs.

Living

There was no mess initially. Only one double storied block of BOQs was made available. The instructors occupied the ground floor and the students were packed on the first floor. At Rawalpindi where the officers and men were sprinkled all over the city, this combined living at Rahwali gave a good feeling of cohesion and unity. Moreover, the presence of Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) in just the same conditions bolstered good feelings. The room was seen furnished with one bed in the middle of the room under the fan, a chair and a tiffin carrier over the chest of drawer. Here lived the CFI Lieutenant Colonel Abid Hussain Malik who joined straight from the comforts of five star, having participated in the "Singapore Air Show".

The Mess

The mess was really a mess. It started in the cookhouse of JCOs club building. The dinner when prepared was hand carried or over the head of the cook to the BOQs block more than a kilometre away. The mess havildar would remain engaged with the stray dogs following in trail with this food programme. Not bad, that the cook fumbled and tumbled only once enroute. The officers had to wait another three hours and the cook had to recook. The present 'A' class mess came up much later than the orderly's block and shops that are seen today. The luxuries of a dinning hall and an ante-room were first established in today's batman accommodation and the washer man's domain. The approval of an 'A' class mess (instead of an insisted 'B' class mess) at the most prestigious location in Gujranwala Cantonment, opposite the Nishan-e-Manzil, was greeted with big applause.

The Office Block

There was no office whatsoever, that is perhaps why there were less of directions and more of work. The total office establishment was two MES issued office tables. One was shared by two OCs, a flight commander and officer commanding fuel storage platoon. Their clerks shared the other table with two typewriters writing letters to each other, through signal centre. The two OCs as remembered today would only mean business and why not so, they were the best officers in their weight category. The same tables would serve as dinning tables during lunch break and after necessary cleaning the sanctity of office would restore.

The First Instructor Pilot Course

Upon shifting of Rotary Wing Flight and its basic conversion course there was no accommodation left at the BOQs. Therefore, the first Instructor Pilot Course had to per force live in the same JCOs club where the food was cooked for entire school officers. No wonders that the enjoyment of hot meals brought with it the creeping of other qualities inherent to that building and this lot was later found hard to crack.

Visibility Virus

The bug that was encountered since the first day was poor visibility at Rahwali. One could do nothing but to wait for hours together for its clearing off. The first day of flying gave the first and last lesson of weather minimas very clearly. The first take off of six MFI-17 took them into the blanket of mist and haze

hanging over the airfield appearing not so thick initially but obscuring the complete runway when gone across. The recovery when completed safely was coupled with the pledge not to repeat it in future.

Working Hours

The unpredictable weather and long spells of poor visibility virtually kept the students and instructors in the school till sunset. All we remember was coming to school in dark hours and returning home when the lights were on in the short winter days. Therefore, to compensate, the concept of five full fledged working days with two days of much awaited long weekend was introduced.

Jammu, not Sialkot

In the initial days one student Captain Naveed Khan was flying in the training area when he gave call of being lost and also described the airfield down below. Captain Tariq Hussain was in the air with another student and he directed him to fly towards west and hit the river and than fly south, which Captain Naveed did. After one month an air violation report came for comments and somebody recalled this incident and later after Captain Naveed's description of the airfield it was realised that he on that day was not reporting overhead Sialkot as he thought rather he was overhead Jammu Airfield. After this incident all students were flown for familiarisation with airfields in close vicinity.

Work Done Was Well Done

It was through the hard work of the students who aspired to gain knowledge and skill despite being faced with the brunt of lack of administrative facilities and the dedicated efforts of instructors that the school got well on its way of imparting training as an alma-mater. The fixed wing instructors in addition to their basic duties at school also participated in the fly past of 23rd March 1988 with a formation of seventeen Mashak aircraft. They won and received, for the first time, the fly past trophy from the Prime Minister. In this regard Major Samuel was left at Rahwali and to this date authorisation book bears a unique entry, name of eighteen students are written against him for training mission".

The establishment, which appeared feeble and destitute at the time of this birth in 1987, has grown into a sound training establishment.

P-30 was The First Course to be Run at Rahwali

A student of P-30 recalls; 'We were given the accommodation in the block next to corps mess; instructors living down stairs and students on the upper floor. There were three students per room, thus a load of six students per toilet. We were not allowed to dine in the corps mess rather breakfast would come from the makeshift aviation mess and lunch was consumed in the school and dinner in the adhoc aviation mess. In the school the present day fixed wing block was ready and our class room had one air conditioner as well. Later we shifted to forward block. Lunch used to come on the school truck and was consumed in the veranda. Initially our weekends were closed with punishments to write thousand times the checks. It was also first time after PMA that we under went "Fall-in" agony. It was done after every two hours on the week end by the Adjutant Captain Tariq Hussain.

One day while coming back from weekend we were given lift in a car by a gentleman and during next 5-7 minutes myself and my colleague impressed upon him our credentials as pilot and how difficult it is to fly. When we disembarked we asked as a matter of curiosity about him and he replied 'I am General Sajjad GOC of 37 Division', himself an aviator. For many days we both were on our toes whenever runner Iqbal came to class. The sight of Iqbal runner was not very welcome. He would enter the class and every one would get silent and waited for the dreadful news. If Iqbal asked for anyone's folder in which grade slips and our biodata was placed it was taken as a bad omen. The unlucky student would go over in his mind again and again as to what might have been his folly. Initially we did not pay any attention but then we made out that all those whose folder Iqbal asked for were either dropped out or remained in spin. Thus every body tried to be extra nice with Iqbal and asking him about the mood of flight commander and when certain instructors were planning leave.

First Two weeks were nothing less than the first term of PMA. Officers got warning for putting on

long hair, white socks under uniform, smoking in open, sitting cross legged and so on. But after this phase when we started flying, we were ready to act on the instructions given without any delay. Slowly and gradually a bond cemented between us and the instructors and they took us for post solo parties at home and at Lahore as well. Later on we realised how essential it was to have a blend of instructors some were real tough and others were gentle. Both the Chief Flying Instructors Lieutenant Colonel Abid and Shahid Farooqi were idolised by the students. In PMA they used to emphasise the dominating ground and vital area with the help of a woman's body and here they would stress that aircraft should be treated like a girlfriend, gentle and smooth. The other term often and repeatedly uttered was 'Body Problem'. It is difficult to explain in words but easy to identify, any body who has seen 'Johnny Bravo' cartoons can visualise it".

Tempo of The New Millennium

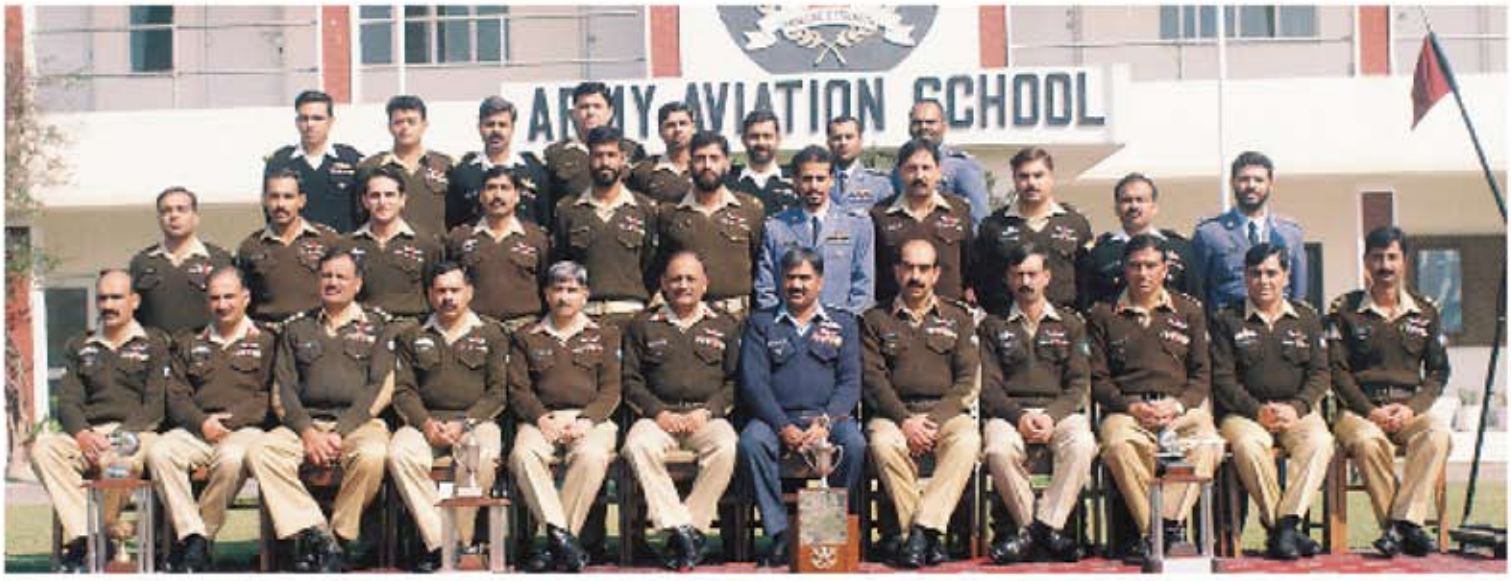
Initial few weeks in the school are regarded as ground schooling and pre solo stage which are tough days for young birds. There are lights off timing to ensure enough sleep. Good sleep and rest results in better flying coordination few officers learn this principle the hard way. There is no morning PT, however drill and dress inspections are regular feature. One myth which has prevailed in almost all courses is regarding the piling up of hours as a guarantee for graduation. There has been one student who was dropped after almost 150 hours and many others with over 100 hours. School has never lowered its standards however students own 'Attitude' can fetch him extra few sorties. This 'Attitude' is simply the 'Attitude' of an officer towards life in general and army in particular.

In a basic pilot course there are 525 periods of ground schooling, other than the upper air work, students are taught strip operations, instrument flying, night flying, artillery shoots at Tilla ranges and long cross country navigation. Every mission flown with instructor is graded by him in the form of grade slip, which highlights students performance during the mission and percentage of marks are given. Marks below 50% is a failed mission and after two such missions the student is flown by senior instructor including the commandant and if still there is no improvement in the skills of student, he goes back. There are different colours used for the grade slips in varying phases of course, however Pink Colour is the most deadly known as 'Pink Slip'. It can be given at any stage of course for flying discipline violation or poor airmanship, certain marks are deducted in the end, more importantly students gets into limelight which is not a good omen.



Army Aviation School, Headquarters Block

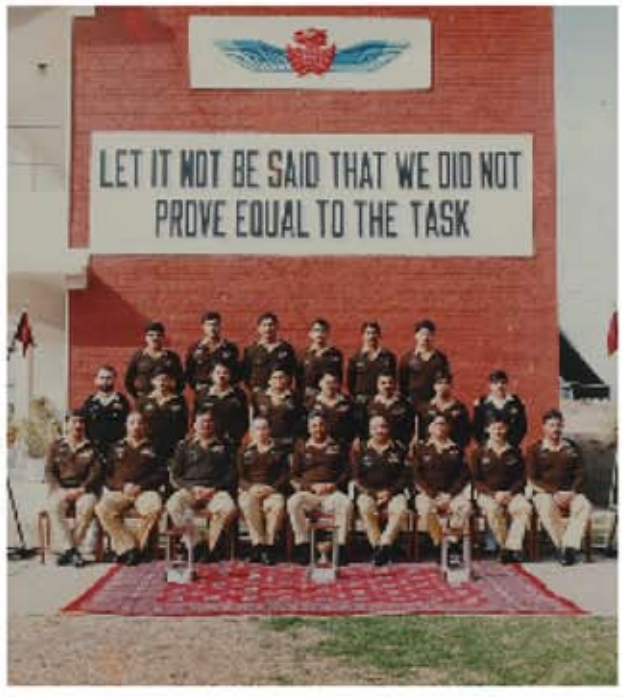
Army Aviation School at Gujranwala



Graduation Parade of Instructor Pilot Course - 1997



Rotary Wing Course Serial No. 50



Flying Instructors - 1995



 Army Aviation Fixed Wing Instructors after receiving 23rd March 1988 Fly Past Trophy with President General Zia and Prime Minister Junejo



School Auditorium



General Jehangir Karamat Chief of Army Staff visiting Army Aviation School - 1996



Unit Commander Course Serial No. 4



Instructor Pilot Course Serial 38 with CFI Colonel Mazhar

Rotary Wing Conversion

Fixed Wing pilots who have over 500 flying hours are selected for the Rotary Wing Conversion course. They are either nominated by the Headquarters Aviation Command or recommended by their commanding officers based upon their performance in the basic fixed wing course and on their aptitude. Course is conducted on Schweizzer TH-300C helicopter and duration is of 18- weeks.

Instructor Pilot Course (IP)

IP course is the senior most flying course that is run in the Aviation School and it has its own reputation. Its prerequisites is 500 flying hours on rotary wing. There is an entrance test, which consists of multiple choice questions, and after its clearance the list is affixed in the mess with the instructional practices topics written against each name. There has been variation in this regard, at times topics are given well in advance as in the case of IP-30 onwards or they may be given a day before.

Instructional practices are given in the class room and attended by the commandant as well. Computers have not been employed in this regard so far. It has to be with the help of view graph but script is desirable to be a computer laser print out. Selected officers after agony of 2-3 weeks in which seats are decided on merit gets the signal to join the Aviation School. Traditionally an officer does not get more than 48 hours to report.

The major event is auto-rotational stage. Instructor teaches this in 4-5 sorties and then clear the students to carry out mutual flying included autorotation, successful completion of this phase is celebrated with a grand party. Flying Instructor has 2-3 students which are again called "Stick Buddies". Traditionally there is a phase in this course on every student where he is in a spin for a week, in which, he apart from flying patter, examination, instructional practice, may also have to change the guest room or take his kids for dentist appointment. Rotary Wing ensures that all events should collide with each other.



IP Class in Progress

At the end of the course diploma ceremony is held and then students are treated with tea in the instructor's crew room which they are not allowed to enter less course senior during their course. Officers after successful graduation are authorized to put on IP badge on their coverall and hence are known as IP

Qualified Flying Instructors (QFI)

Fixed Wing pilots who have 500 hours on the Mushak MFI-17 are eligible to appear before the entrance exam for selection on flying instructor course at Flying Instructor School(FIS) under Pakistan Air Force. Entrance exam consist of three phases, first is written portion, after you clear this, one has to give an Instructional Practice in the class room which is graded and the last phase is the flying check out of an hour. Selected officers then proceed to Risalpur and under goes gruelling course. There are army instructors there as well but its air force ball and game and they mean business. It goes to the credit of army aviators that they have won coveted Best Pilot Trophy from there as well. Best in academics trophy is sponsored by Army Aviation Command. After successful completion of the course, officers are posted to Army Aviation school and further under goes consolidation stage and then they are entrusted with students. They put on badge of QFI on their coverall.

Crew Room Seniority

In the crew rooms of fixed wing and rotary wing, there are instances when an officer junior in Pakistan Army Seniority List has done his instructor course earlier than his senior. Thus within the affairs of the flying the officer who joins crew room first would be given the preference and all instructors who are senior to him will respect him. In all other military affairs the usual army seniority would be counted.

Twin Engine Conversion

First twin engine aircraft U-8 was inducted in 1964 and officers were trained in America. Inside the country army pilots were getting training in civil flying club. The first twin engine conversion in Pakistan was held in May 1966 when President's sanction was obtained for the aviators to be trained at Karachi Aero Club on Cessna 310 Twin Engine aircraft. Later army aviators were trained by the PAF also. Presently Army Aviation School either undertakes conversion courses itself or delegate the responsibility to squadrons maintaining fixed wing or rotary twin engines aircraft.

Elementary Course

At times to overcome the shortage of pilots in rotary wing these courses are conducted. The intake is usually 30-40 students and duration is of 40 weeks. Students after going through 60 hours of flying on fixed wing aircraft which is the primary phase, undergoes basic phase which consist of another 40 hours on TH-300 helicopter followed by advance stage of another 30 hours on twin engine or other helicopters.

Tactical Wing

Tactical Wing runs aviation based tactical courses as per army directive. It has a separate block and separate staff, who all are seasoned pilots having qualified from Command and Staff College. There is a directing staff from artillery as well.

Mid Career Course linked with Junior Staff Course (MCC)

All aviators especially the newly graduated officers having service uptill 7 years are earmarked by Military Secretary Branch for this course. Atmosphere is congenial and ideal for studies. Students are housed in the furnished rooms and follow set routine. Mostly there are 10-15 officers attending the course which is run once a year. They are divided into two syndicates and have separate class rooms and a combined model discussion room

Unit Commander Course (UCC)

This is the senior most course conducted in the school. Pattern is same as that of MCC with broad horizon. They are taken on visits to other faculties like air force bases, workshops and formations. Obviously their mode of transport is helicopters

Forward Air Borne Controller (FAC)

The first such course was conducted by the PAF at Peshawar from 29th July 1968-6 August 1968 and attended by 10 Army Aviators. Since then it is regular feature and pilot cannot claim to be operational without having the knowledge and practice of directing the jets onto the target. It is conducted by airforce but aircraft and instructors are from Army Aviation. It is carried out in two phases first is the ground studies and then flying

Air Traffic Controller (ATCO)

Army Aviation utilized this course for the first time in October 1959,when it used to be conducted at Karachi under Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) before CAA shifted the training infrastructure to Hyderabad. Presently aviators who are down categorized are detailed for these courses and after completion of course they supervise flying at army bases and also during exercises.

Flight Safety Course

Major Aslam, and Major Mokeet were the first Army Aviators to under go flight safety course at

Mauripur commencing from 13th February 1967. Since then three to four officers per course have been attending. Since 1983 students are awarded graduate diplomas in Air Safety from Karachi University.

R-Courses

This was the new idea to overcome shortage of helicopter pilots by starting Rotary Courses without any experience on fixed wing. GOC, Maj. Gen. Azam came up with a three step plan to handle this shortage and another worrisome situation where pilots were being permoted Lieutenant Colonels with very little helicopter experence due to staff course/employement etc, he claimed that training helicopter pilots direct will give us COs with over three thousand helicopter flying. Gen Azam's other two ideas were - **direct induction from PMA and lastly special aviation entry in PMA to undergo one year of military training and a year of flying.** It was in 2004 that first R-Course was run at Aviation School.



R-1 Course - January 2005

Graduation Parades

The high point of the year is the graduation parade of Basic Fixed Wing course. 'The first brevet' ceremony was held on ***2 March 1949*** and chief guest was Commander in Chief, General Sir Douglas Gracey and recipient was sole Captain Saleem Ullah. It was simple affair and wing was pinned on his chest.

Second ceremony took place at Chaklala on ***15th January 1951*** and chief guest was again General Gracey. He was accompanied by General Ayub the Commander in Chief designate. Recipients of brevet were Captain Percy Joseph Blaker, Captain Ahmed and Captain Karim. A parade was also held with demonstration of concealed approaches. Later General Ayub flew one circuit with Captain Saleem Ullah in the Auster.

On ***9th January 1957*** AOP course serial 8 and 9 graduated and for the first time present brevet designed by Mrs Saadia Karim wife of Lieutenant Colonel Karim was awarded by the Director Artillery Brigadier J.D.A. Lamont.

On ***14th July 1959*** the First Basic Flying Course was decorated with the Flying Brevets. General Musa was the chief guest. Due to weather seating arrangements were made inside the hangar. Course stood in U shape due to space restriction and General Musa pinned the brevet. Velcro was not yet invented thus behind every Brevet was a safety pin. Flying Trophies were all bought from the market few days prior.

General Musa again came as chief guest on ***3rd October 1964,*** for the brevet ceremony of Pilot Course Serial 6.This time it was sunny and General Musa also announced the re-designation of Army Air Base

Dhamial as Army Aviation Base. On the same day a dinner was hosted in the Aviation Mess 29 Peshawar Road. Dinner by this time had become a tradition.

General Yahya Khan had graced the occasions before as Chief of General Staff but this was his first visit as the Commander in Chief on ***20th January 1968*** for brevet ceremony of Pilot Course serial 9. It rained on that day and all preparation of air display went into vain. General Yahya arrived at Dhamial Base in Allouette helicopter. He was chief guest again next year for the graduation parade of Pilot Course serial 10. In one of his weekly conference in 1969, General Yahya directed that ambassadors should also be invited in future in addition to the military attaches.

General Tikka Khan was the chief guest on the first regular parade after the 1971 War, which was held on ***12th December 1972***. In this, he renamed Dhamial Base as Qasim Base and inaugurated the plaque of dedication.

Late **Prime Minister Bhutto** was the chief guest on ***15th December 1973***. President Bhutto came in Puma, which Army Aviation had recently acquired. There was an air display of Allouette helicopter which impressed him so much that over cup of coffee he directed that Sheikh Zaid of Arab Emirates should be shown this event on his forthcoming visit. Resultantly Arab students came for the first time in Aviation School.

General Tikka was the chief guest for subsequent parades in 1975 and 1976 as well. For graduation parade ceremony of P-19 the chief guest was Major General(retired) Naseerullah Khan Babar the Governor of Frontier Province and one of the pioneer aviator.

2nd March 1978 was another historic day when P-20 course graduated and chief guest was **General Zia Ul Haq.** After the ceremony of brevets a superb parade was also held. Lieutenant General Azmat Baksh Awan the pioneer aviator was installed as the First Colonel Commandant. General Zia was kind enough to present the existing flying trophies and directed that they should be made in pure silver

President General Zia was the chief guest again in 1979 and in 1981 as well. During tea break of P-21 Captain Najam Ul Arifeen who was performing the duties of Base Adjutant went to General Zia and requested. “Sir I am over age by few months to appear for the pilot course but I have keen desire to be a pilot”. General Zia true to his tradition granted the waiver and next year General Zia was happy to pin him the brevet with a smile. Najam later rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and commanded 4 Army Aviation Squadron.

Air Chief Marshall Anwar Shamim Chief of Air Staff was the chief guest for graduation parade of P-24 on ***4th November 1982***. Before him in 1970 for graduation of P-11, Air Marshall Rahim Khan then Air Chief graced the occasion. This time the highlight of parade apart from traditional air show and pomp was the brevet awarded to Lieutenant General Sardar Farooq Lodhi who later became the second Colonel Commandant of Army Aviation.

Naval Chief Vice Admiral Tariq Kamal Khan graced the ceremony next year for P-25 course. Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee General Rahim Ud Din was the chief guest in 1986.

P-29 was the first course to be graduated from Rahwali in May 1988. School Digest of Service records “We miss Dhamial for the cooperation we used to get from other aviation units”.

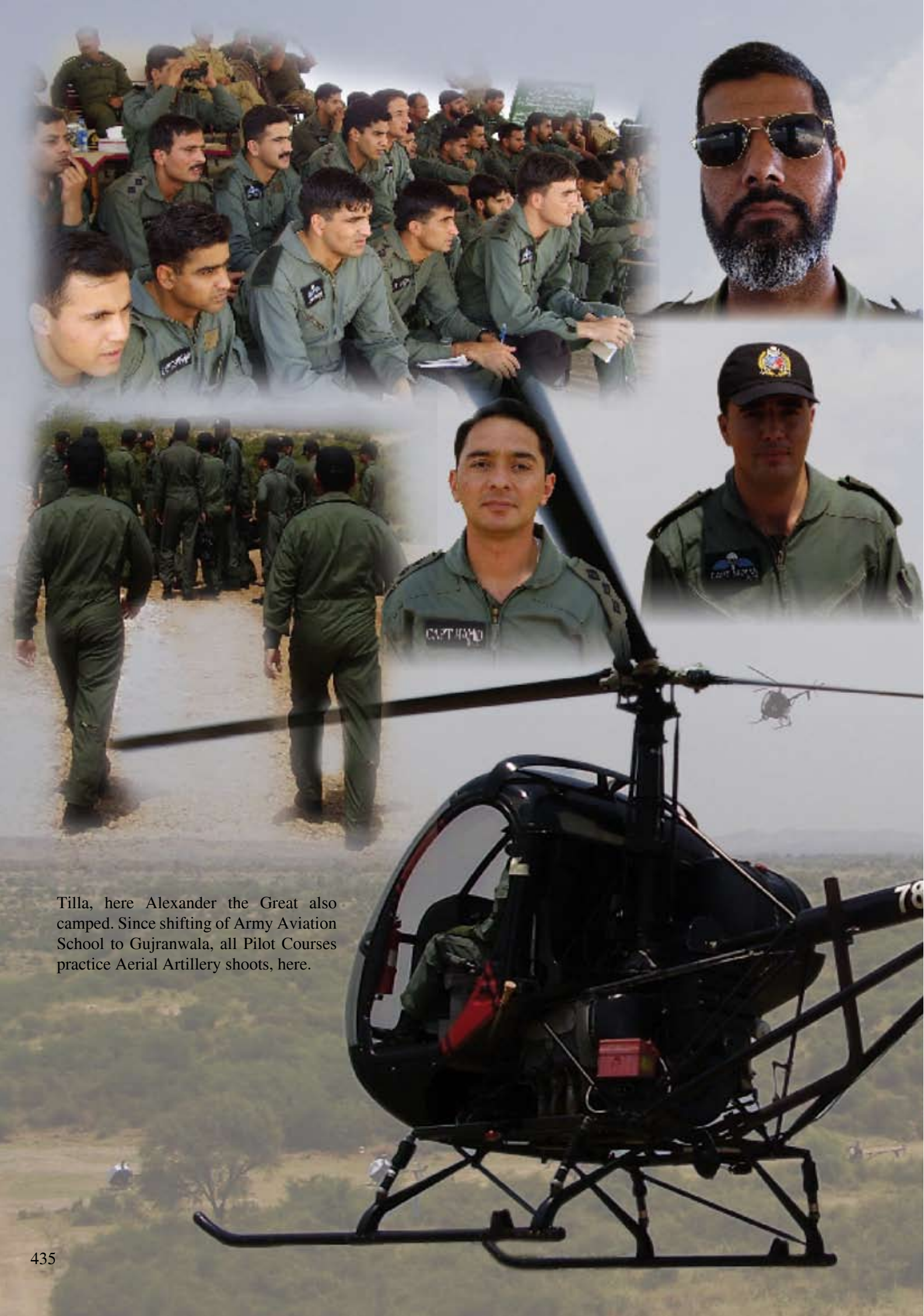
On 29th May 1989 the brevet ceremony of P-30 course had a tragedy when Brigadier Tariq Mahmood popularly known as TM made a free fall but his chute failed to open and he died on the spot.

P-37 graduation held on ***6th November 1996*** was nostalgic in nature as a large number of veteran aviators were present on the occasion.

The last parade of the millennium was of P-40 it was marred by the sad demise of Captain Masood Ullah Baig and Captain Shahid Aulakh who crashed a few days prior to graduation.

President General Pervaiz Musharraf graced the graduating ceremony of P-44. Parade was followed by an impressive air display duly appreciated by the President. Display of indigenous developed aviation related accessories by Army Aviation was highly appreciated by President.

There is one thing which remains unison in all graduation parades no matter who graces the occasion. All graduating pilots requests for additional invitation cards and from the faculty some one would be running around for the Service Dress.



Tilla, here Alexander the Great also camped. Since shifting of Army Aviation School to Gujranwala, all Pilot Courses practice Aerial Artillery shoots, here.





R-Course at Tilla Ranges, April 2007

Gala Night

The tradition of 'Golden Night' as in vogue in Pakistan Military Academy is not observed in Aviation School. However there is 'Gala Night" held on the eve of graduation in which a variety programme is performed by the students of graduating pilot course. It is their discretion whom they invite. Apart from the school staff and fixed wing faculty they do invite rotary wing and retired officers present on the station with their families.

How it started is difficult to trace out, but old timers do remember that once the school shifted to the Dhamial and annual dinner was conducted at Aviation Mess Peshawar Road. After dinner singing show used to be organised in which normally ghazals were the highlights. Singers like Munni Begum, Runa Laila, and Shehnaz have graced the event. Master of the ceremony would recall amusing incidents of the base and the course. Thus the tradition of gala night started.

The last gala night of the millennium was very hi-tech. It was a pleasant surprise to see the artistic potential of the student pilot. The only people with worried looks were the instructors. Commandant Brigadier Arif Rasul was quite popular among the students for his accessibility and concern for welfare, even he was not spared. There were video clips of all officers remixed with songs in back ground. On gala night there is music, jokes, skits, caricature, running late into wee hours. Guests generally depart around midnight.

Nick Names (Every Generation has its own share of Nick Names)

If you sit around with Army Aviators you can spend hours even years to know who is *Bomber, Solo, JJ, PP,KK, JK, Tank Pilot, Chiefy, Maharaj, Buddy, Funny, Hulla Gulla, Godda, Lotta, Kodu, Tarzan, Tangha, Doongha, Bonga, Machhi, Mandela, Bhai Jin, Mirza Clinton, Chacha Dinga, Makhan* and so on.These nick names are instantaneous and pilots till his last eternal flight is remembered as such.

Major(retired) Iqbal narrated this a few years ago "One day I was detailed for a mission in the basic course and like all the young ones I had prepared in detail with knee pad and gloves. Mission was cancelled and as I walked back to the students corner in the tea bar in same attire some one whispered; 'Are you back from bombing'. Even today I am known as Bomber". Mind you there were three, four Iqbals at that era and each one had a nick name for clarity purposes like Bala Canadian, Bala Chereet, Bala Baloch and so on.

These nick names are confined to the basic course only and is a closely guarded secret among the students. Even instructors cannot escape this wrath rather they are more prone to this syndrome. They normally get down to the bottom on 'Gala Night' and some even retired without knowing the slang. There was an instructor who would emphasize on giving rudders in the briefs by pressing his foot thus among students he was always referred as 'Pedal'. Then there was an instructor always carrying Jeppesen Manuals and is now referred as 'Jeppesen'.

For a youngster at times it creates a situation beyond his comprehension like 'Khitchi' which is a reputed caste in Seraiki belt. One young one who was tuned to listening Major Khitchi did so and so one day met him and said in the crowdy crew room 'Major Khitchi there is a call for you'. Khitchi was the nick name given by the P –course mates to him because of his eagerness to fly and log hours. His usual utterance after a mission used to be "Eik Ghanta aur Khich Aian".

At times there can be many officers of same name in one course, thus Mahmood with Alto Car would be remembered as 'Mooda Alto'.Then another Mahmood with large moustache would be 'Mooda Mouch', one Mahmood was known as 'Mooda Rocket' and so on.Now if even Mahmood changes car and other one gets clean shaved but they would be remember as such by their P-mates.Saleem was yet another common name and people added suffix to make it specific like Saleem 'Saqi'(for poetic pilot)and Saleem 'batwa' for no fault of the officer other than his goodwill to distribute wallets(batwa) - a souvenir of his father in law's factory among his P-course mates. Another Saleem sporting Bugti style beard was baptised as 'Saleem Bugti', Many new comers actually believed that he belonged to Bugti Tribe. There seems to be no dearth of ingenuity in specifying pilots of same names like Zafar. It is quite a common name thus for identification one with a tummy is called 'Thid' and other is known as 'Ghora'. Ranjha is a caste but it is associated in aviation for a love stricken pilot. Then there was a student who always complained about pain in his knee and now he his called 'Godda'. A student with heavy voice in his P-course days is lovingly referred as

'Bhagwan', Students with dark complexion are usually known as 'James', 'David' or 'Chitta'. One fair colour was known as 'Bagga'. There is no hard and fast rule in this baptizing. One student in the early days made his name tag in golden colour instead of black and over a decade has passed but he is known as 'Golden'. 'Chappu'(oar) must have been given for similar reason. 'Atheleta' was not given because of some feats on track rather it was knighted for extra curricular activities. One day Captain Samuel was taking the basic class and asked 'Has any body seen the movie "Monkey on the Donkey", and one student promptly said 'yes Sir', hoping to develop some kind of friendship around this movie. Sam very politely said there is no movie like this, and student got stuck with the aviation name.

Arms and corps do play significant role in this regard it is more likely that an armoured officer gets affixed with 'Cupola' and gunner with 'Toota' there has been one officer from the Corp of Military Police to under go the basic course and he is referred as 'Sir MP'. There are names which reflects the mood of student in his hay day like 'Disco' and 'Commando', certain names it seems were given under international duress. How else can one justify the name 'Carlos', after international renowned terrorist. Religious inclinations do have a bearing on nick names. In Taliban era few were named as 'Mullah Rockety'. Lieutenant Colonels Dilshad and Javeed were the first pair of brothers to join aviation and served in the school as instructors they are popularly known as "Wrong Brothers". Once Major Hadeed and his four friends namely Tahir Raja, Sarfaraz, Ibrahim and Liaquat Nabi were known as "Mao's Widow and her four disciples".

A Typical Day In Army Aviation School

First light. Aircraft are airborne, Fixed Wing are flying in their circuit and rotary wing in their hovering area. Flight Commanders of both wings are monitoring the progress. To fly at first light means that everybody was awake well before the dawn, because bus leaves on the dot from mess and picks up married officers enroute including SATCO and flight surgeon. Before flying there was briefing about weather and procedures in respective wings. The tea bar would be functional and serving hot tea, coffee and juices. There are few worried faces reciting checks and doing cockpit timings and one can even spot one odd individual making flying gestures sitting on a chair.

0800 hours. Motivational and religious period of ten minutes in the A.B.Awan Auditorium attended mainly by the tactical course students and deputy commandant. First report sick also from tactical wing student

0900 hours. First instructional practice of instructor pilot course, All rotary instructors are sitting in the rear of class. The student makes cardinal mistake of uttering the word "In the front and in the rear of helicopter" and out comes the query from instructor 'What do you mean by front and rear?'. Hour later class breaks with student sweating like a bull

1000 hours. Every one is rushing to the runway there is a mishap. One of the student has collapsed the under carriage of trainer and gone astray of runway. Thank god everyone is safe but work has started for the Flight Safety Branch and the doctor. That includes reporting the occurrence, collection of blood and urine samples, statements, record and so on.

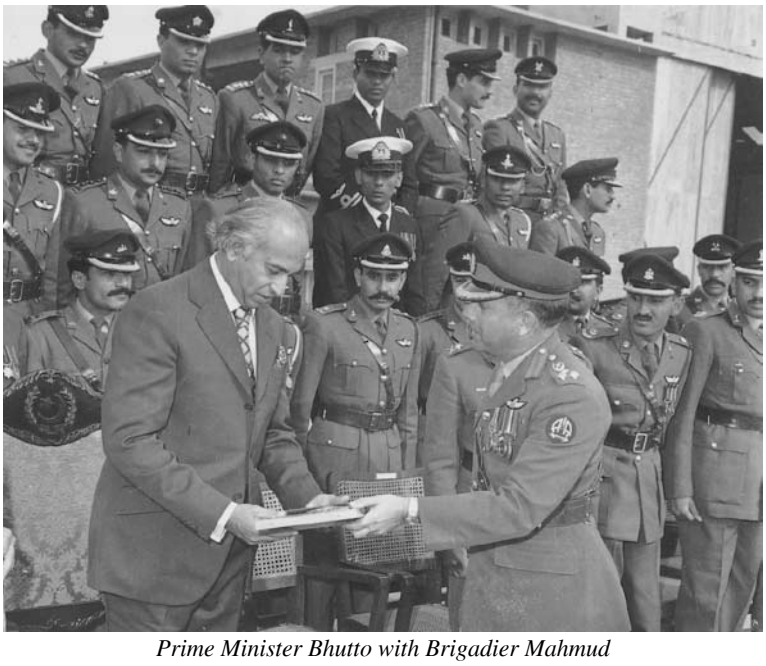
1030 hours. Tea break time. Traditional samosas. One students writes in suggestion book "I had samosas when I came for the aptitude test and then again throughout the course and now after lapse of years I come for Tactical Course and still samosas."

1100 hours. Flight Safety meeting. House is opened after progress of last Flight Safety meeting has been read out by the flight safety officer. Points from the house are sought. " One Basic Course officer gave the point of sun glasses for the course. Instructor Pilot Course student grumble about the kiln in the training area. Maintenance staff pointed out that head gear for sun protection demanded last year had not been received so far and summer is approaching again". Commandant summed up the meeting.

1200 hours. AQ Office tele battle is on since morning for fuel. Duty Officer proforma filled by the duty Officer has pointed about the lack of lighting facilities in the Duty Officer room and that has to be rectified today. Formation Commander is coming for a visit tomorrow with foreign delegation and security measures have to be taken as per the SOPs.

1230 hours. ATC issued weather warning and all aircraft landed back. Fixed Wing Flight Commander decided to hold the spot quiz test for the course.

PRIME MINISTER'S PARADE



Prime Minister Bhutto with Brigadier Mahmud



Prime Minister Bhutto writing in the Visitor's Book

15th December 1973, Pilot Course Serial 16
Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the first and to-date the only Prime Minister to grace the Brevet Parade of Army Aviation School.



Prime Minister Bhutto, Brigadier Mahmud and General Tikka Khan



Prime Minister Bhutto, on his right Lieutenant Colonel Riaz the School Commandant and on his left General Tikka Khan the Army Chief



Guests and Spectators at Dhamial on Prime Minister's visit - 1973

PRESIDENT'S PARADES



General Zia shaking hand with Flying Instructors (Bhangoo, Mahmood, Pervaiz & Dilshad)

1978, 1979 and 1981

President General Zia Ul Haq was the Chief Guest on the Graduation Ceremony of Pilot Courses Serial 20, 21 and 22. It was during tea break after graduation parade of P-21 *that the Qasim Aviation Base Adjutant Captain Najam-Ul-Arifeen from Azad Kashmir Regiment went to General Zia and requested; "I am over age by few months to appear for the pilot course but I have keen desire to be a pilot". General Zia was kind enough to grant the waiver. Captain Najam retired later as lieutenant colonel and commanded 4-Squadron.*



Best Pilot Trophy - Captain Ejaz Ahmed Lilla



Inter-Base Flight Safety Trophy



Overall Best Trophy

PRESIDENT'S PARADE



President Musharraf - Brigadier Nasir - Major General Azam



Brevet Ceremony

2002 - Pilot Course Serial 43

President General Pervez Musharraf graced the brevet awarding ceremony. It was after a lapse of 21 year that a head of the state visited the school.



Best Pilot Trophy - Captain Malik Khurram



Foreign Students



First Lady

Distinguished Guests

1300 hours. Commandant listens to the presentation of tactical course on heliborne operations and asked how much weight an infantry soldier carries in such operations.

1330 hours. Deputy Commandant coordinates the affairs between Fixed Wing and Rotary Wing(he does this mediation after every two weeks, on the average).

1345 hours. Weather is cleared and Fixed Wing have decided to fly till dusk. Rotary Wing has already packed up as they have their night flying today.

1405 hours. Bus leaves the school premises with only tactical course on board.

1700 hours. Bus arrives back in the school with rotary pilots for night flying and UCC course for their' Tele Battle Exercise'.

*1730 hours***.** Rotary Wing carries out pre-flight of helicopters after the briefing. Orders of Student Base Commander are being listened by the faculty including Base Commander in the Tactical Wing.

2030 hours. Weather approaches again and Chief Flying Instructor calls off night flying and helicopters make last landings. Orders of student Commanding Officer Composite Squadron are in progress.

*2130 hours***.** Every ones enjoys after dinner laughs with the CFI leading the pack on the jokes, UCC prepares the charts.

2200 hours. Lights off for Fixed Wing. Tactical Wing has just awoken for the night.

2330 hours. Two students of Basic Course have been checked by the Deputy Commandant at Rahwali Gate while coming from the city. UCC students have ran short of talc and shops are all closed.

0130 hours. Fixed Wing instructor gets a phone from the Co-ord Branch informing him about an out station mission at first light.

0200 hours. Duty Officers gets storm warning and UCC are handling the logistic problem of refuelling a Cargo Squadron in the field.

0300 hours. Heliborne operation of UCC are under progress and Commandant is present

*0400 hours***.** UCC is given a time jump of 6 hours, now they have to visualized working under day light.

0500 hours. Tea Bar ran out of coffee.

First Light. Another new day commences with new challenges.

Foreign Students

United Arab Emirates

Army Aviation School has been training students from friendly countries in flying and tactical aspect of aviation. The first such students were from United Arab Emirate in 1975 and unfortunately Lieutenant Joubini died in a training sortie with Major Tauhid in 1975. Students from UAE are a regular feature in rotary conversion courses and in 1999 Major Ali Obaid, Major Nabeel, Captain Naseer and Captain Khalid Khalifa came for Instructor Pilot course as well.

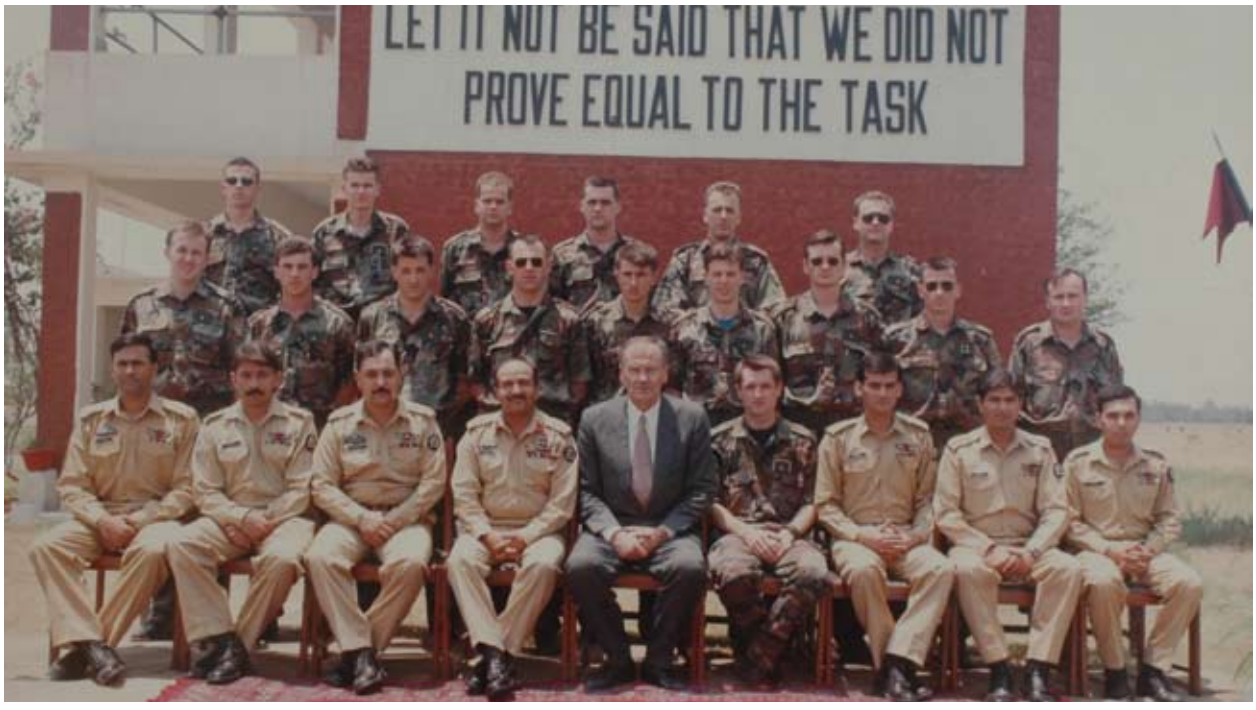
Sri Lanka

In 1993 students came from Sri Lanka for flying training on MI-8. The course was conducted from 3-22 April 1993 by 4 Aviation Squadron at Multan under Aviation School. Following officers of Sri Lanka were trained under auspices of Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Niazi:-

Flight Lieutenant Royce, Flight Lieutenant Samungla , Flight Lieutenant Sanjith and Flying Officer Chandinal.

Bosnia

On 26th April 1996, the Bosnian students came for flying. Bosnia was ravaged by the war and this was the first flying course of their Air Force. There were fifteen students and one interpreter. The composition of the course was mixed having officers and other ranks. They had no military background but had flying experience on UTFHA a Fixed Wing aircraft of former Yugoslavia, one of them Lieutenant Touchik Isabel had commanded a brigade during civil war. Before coming they had done course in English language thus



Bosnian students with their Ambassador and Flying Instructors - 1996

they could understand little bit of English and like all foreign students it is restricted mainly to conveying things that interest them, rest everything is Greek. They used to speak Russian. Lieutenant Colonel(retired) Talat was the Chief Flying Instructor he narrates; "The very first problem was the language. The Bosnian contrary to the instructions were totally blank in English and one could not teach them flying with the help of an interpreter. The School Commandant Brigadier Azam when told of this strange problem came out with a very unorthodox solution. Instead of sending these Bosnians back or even delaying the course, he arranged an education instructor from a local brigade and also ensured that all officers especially the instructors constantly speak English with them. Thus even in games period these Bosnians were given the English lesson. technical terms like 'I have the control or you have the control' apart from instrument nomenclature and emergency procedures were thoroughly drilled before they were sent for solo. A concentrated dose of around eight to ten hours of English language was resorted to. Aviation Mess in Gujranwala in those days used to give a look more of a English language Tuition Centre. All credit to the young flying instructors who took this as a challenge and patiently endured this language barrier but in the end none was more gleaming than these instructors".

Bangladesh

Bengali students came for the first time in 1996 for helicopter training. There were two of them and both were good in English and also in Urdu. They were disciplined and good flyers.

Saudi Arabia

Army Aviation School Commandant, Brigadier H.U.R. Abbassy was the first to visit Saudi Arabia in May 1978. Major General(retired)Razzaq had been instrumental in establishing Saudi Army Aviation when he was deputed there in 1979. However, first Saudi students came in 2002 for conversion onto the Rotary Wing including MI-17. After initial training at Rahwali they shifted to Qasim Base for mountain flying phase.

Palestine

Sole student was trained on MI-17 by Major Ikram Khan in 2001.

Training of Edhi Pilots

School also trained two pilots for Edhi Foundation in 1989, they were Mr Pereria and Mr Fahim Ud Din. The former later became the head of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation. They were initially trained on Mushak with P-30 course and after completing 60 hours they were trained on Jet Ranger Helicopter.

NURTURING NAVAL AVIATION

Pakistan Navy (PN), in late sixties, realized the necessity of its own integral air arm to augment its efforts to improve its war performance. For this purpose, Pakistan Army was approached for the help and it was agreed to provide the necessary assistance in training and for any other guidance.

In 1973, the Naval Headquarters asked for an immediate staff assistance to plan for establishing their rotary wing. For the purpose Lieutenant Colonel Faizuddin Brandon was sent, who remained attached with the Navy for almost a year and carried out the desired spade work. Naval authorities had decided to induct six "Sea King" helicopters and a procurement order to the effect was placed with Westland Helicopters, England.

Sea King Induction

At that juncture the navy had only few trained pilots and that too with less experience. Hence army's assistance was again called in. The first one to arrive for the new assignment was Lieutenant Colonel Naeem Ahmed who reported for the duties in March 1974. Lieutenant Colonel Naeem left for UK in later part of the year, Lieutenant Colonel Ayub took over as Director Naval Aviation and over watched the affairs of aviation efficiently and with dedication. He was later joined by Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Nazim, Major Muhammad Daud, Major Shah Alam and Major Mahmood Hussain in August, 1974. The batch of aviation engineers from the army comprised of Lieutenant Colonel Noor Haider Shah, Major Yusuf Anwar and Major Moazzam Khan.

In the same year this group was sent to UK for conversion on Sea King helicopters under the wings of the Royal Navy. Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Nazim and Lieutenant Colonel Noor Haider Shah were the first two, to proceed to UK and undertook acceptance of the ordered helicopters from Westland, Yeovil, Somerset, UK; the rest followed when the training commenced. It was at Westland that Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad had the singular honour of greeting Prince Charles under unusual environments, both were in under wears; they met in the changing room, each getting ready for flying.

Flying with Royal Navy was a challenge; nothing less than the best was accepted by the RN instructors. There was no moment of relaxation during flying on this highly sophisticated but demanding machine; one



Sea King Helicopter, England. Defence Attache Captain T.K. Khan, Extreme Right is Lt Tahir, Present Naval Chief.



(From Left) Lieutenant Colonels Sajjad Nazim, MM Naeem and Dawood. Standing, Lieutenant Sallahuddin, Majors Mehmood and Shah Alam

had to be on one's toe, as the instructor would introduce emergencies every few minutes. Hovering at 40 feet over sea on instruments, in pitch dark night, high winds and lashing rain, and handling single engine and other emergencies at the same time was no piece of cake. According to Brigadier Sajjad; "They had even taken away the pleasure of driving a car on the road, as one would tend to refer to the temperature and pressure (Ts & Ps) gauges of the car much too frequently".

The top two pilots, ie. Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Nazim and Major Shah Alam were selected to be trained as Instructors: they also underwent Instrument Rating Examiner course (IRE) and Maintenance Test Pilot course (MTP), respectively. Major Shah Alam also had the distinction of winning the Best All Round Trophy. Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Nazim earned Chief of Naval Staff commendation for topping the Instrument Rating Examiner's course. Both officers were retained as instructors till the completion of flying training of second batch of officers.

In the meantime all the deputed aviation engineers also completed their training successfully with the RN, lasting for over a year. This brought to the culmination of the major phase which contributed significantly in the development and progress of the Naval Aviation in years to come.

By December 1975 all the Pakistani pilots and engineers attending the training courses were back in Pakistan. The Naval Air Base PNS Mehran, had also been activated at Shahra-e-Faisal in Karachi.

During this time three naval chiefs, i.e. Admiral Sharif, Admiral Niazi and Admiral TK Khan followed the progress from training to establishment of the Naval Aviation. It goes to their credit that each chief had nothing but praise for those who represented Army Aviation. Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Nazim was given the command of the Sea King Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel M Naeem took over as Commander Air. The Fixed Wing Atlantic Squadron was to be organized by the PAF crew. It was a real tri-service establishment in the true sense. Shortly thereafter PNS Mehran, the home of Naval Aviation was established on the far side of the PAF Base at Shahra-e-Faisal.

Arrival of Sea King

Two "Sea King" helicopters arrived by a commercial ship in late December 1975 at Karachi. On 1st January 1976, the first "Sea King" flight was undertaken on the soil of Pakistan when helicopter No. 4510 was test flown at the PN Dockyard by Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad and Major Shah Alam and by February 1978 all the six "Sea King" were in position at PNS Mehran.

Mission Accomplished, Army Team Returns

From February 1978 onward, conversion training for the newly trained naval pilots, who had acquired the flying skill at the Army Aviation School, was undertaken. On completion of this onerous task the army contingent gradually started returning to the parent units and the process was completed by August 1979.

Setting Up The Police Air Wing In United Arab Emirates



Lieutenant Colonal Abdul Latif Awan

In 1972 the Government of UAE requested the Government of Pakistan for assistance to establish a Police Air Wing for the Ministry of Interior UAE. Government of Pakistan very kindly agreed to the request and entrusted the task to Army Aviation.

Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Latif Awan Sitara-I-Jurrat flew to Abu-Dhabi in March 1973. After ascertaining their requirements, role and mission a presentation was made on the role, type of helicopters and their positioning to the President of UAE Sheikh Zaid Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, who approved all the recommendations.

The team later selected for the task included Lieutenant Colonel A.LAwan. team leader, pilots Major Muhammad Ashraf, Major Ikramullah Khan and Major Masood Anwar, Flight Engineer Major Khalid Sikander, six helicopter technicians and a technical store-man. Other members who joined the team in the UAE included four local helicopter pilots who had got the training from America and two pilots from Jordanian Air Force. Ministry of Interior UAE selected Augusta Bell 212 helicopter for the task. Upon completion of necessary formalities, in February 1975 the team arrived in UAE and within a month of arrival, in March 1975 flew to Frosinone, Italy for helicopter training. In May 1975 after the completion of training, Lieutenant Colonel Awan, Major Masood Anwar, Major Taseer the Jordanian pilot and three ex US Army helicopter pilots who were contracted as the ferry pilots ferried the three helicopters from Milan Italy via Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran and on 17th May 1975 landed at Sharjah UAE where the Police Air Wing had been established at old Sharjah Airport building.

These Pakistani Pilots were also tasked to train local police officers in flying helicopters so that with experience they would take command of the Police Air wing. Few bright officers were selected and put through flying aptitude test and given extensive English language courses in UAE. In the first batch four officers were sent to Army Aviation School in Pakistan for basic rotary course out of which three qualified and one died in a helicopter crash. In September 1978, four, twin engine BO-105 German helicopters were added to the fleet of three Augusta



General Zia with Sheikh Zaid Bin Sultan, who was a true and sincere friend of Pakistan.

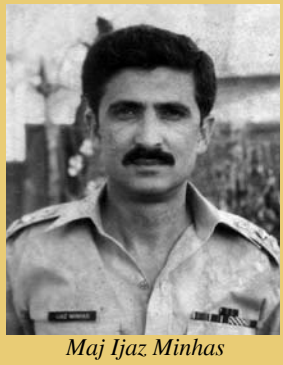
Bell 212 helicopters. After BO-105 induction four more pilots from Pakistan Army Aviation were seconded to UAE Pilots were Lieutenant Colonel (R) Naeem, Major Anjum, Major Sajjad, and Major Rizvi.

Raising and establishing Police Air Wing in the UAE was first of its kind assignment for Army Aviation in a foreign country. It was a challenging task. Flying Missions were of diverse nature, training, on-shore and over the sea flying during day and night., border surveillance, rescue over the sea, Police and VIP flying. This Pakistan Army Aviation team after spending five years at UAE returned to Pakistan in 1980.

Mozambique



Lt Col Naseem Khan



Maj Ijaz Minhas

In the summer of 1976, the Government of Mozambique asked for help in the field of aviation from Pakistan. The response was fast and quick. Within days a small delegation, consisting of one pilot, one engineer and technician, was dispatched to Maputo from Qasim Aviation Base. Without wasting any time the Pakistani team went to work in surveying the existing aviation facilities there.

At that time Mozambique Aviation consisted of a few small privately owned companies scattered around the country, equipped with Allouette-III French helicopters, in addition to a small airline which had become virtually inoperative due to complete desertion of the Portuguese personnel. The Pakistan group was given the mission of preparing a scheme to make all the grounded Allouette-III helicopters airworthy, which again was because of total defection of Portuguese pilots and technicians. Keeping this in mind, the team was constituted consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Naseem Khan, Major Ijaz Ahmed Minhas, and Subedar Sajjad Hussain of Electrical and Mechinal Engineering. The team not only prepared a comprehensive scheme but also made a number of grounded helicopters serviceable in a short period of seven weeks. This earned them a lot of respect from all the quarters but because of financial constraints, the prepared scheme could not take off in total and the delegation returned with a lot of well-earned praise. (Lt. Col. Naseem retired as a Brigadier and Maj Ijaz Minhas retired as a Colonel).

Helping PAF in MI-17

In 2001 PAF decided to induct MI-17 helicopters and requested Pakistan Army Aviation to train its pilots on the machine. 27 Army Aviation Squadron was tasked to do so. Major Nadeem Ghous conducted the course for six weeks and in the end trained PAF crew for MI-17. Later in the year Major Ihsan and Captain Rahim 'Baba' were seconded to PAF and they remained at Sargodha Base for over a year wearing PAF uniform and ranks.



Captain Rahim



Major Ihsan



Major Nadeem Ghaus

BEST FLYERS
BASIC FLYING COURSE

For first five courses only flying trophy was given. From P-6, it was bifurcated into flying, academic and overall best ,in the under mentioned list the best flyers are highlighted

P-1 Major Amanullah Chaudhry
P-2 Major Syed Aziz Ul Hassan
P-3 Lieutenant Esmond D Cunha
P-4. Lieutenant Khalid Javed Janjua
P-5 Captain Farhat Ali
P-6. Captain Muazzam Ali Shah
P-7. Captain Akhtar Mahmud Malik
P-8. Major Imtiaz Ali
P-9. Captain Ali Kuli Khan Khattak
P-10. Major Farooq Ahmed Khan
P-11. Captain Javed Ahmed Khan
P-12. Captain Abid Hussain
P-13. Captain Shah Alam
P-14. Lieutenant Syed Mahboob Ur Rehman
P-15. Captain Muhammad Saleem
P-16. Captain Farooq Dasti
P-17. Captain Khalid Mahmood
P-18. Captain Makhdoom Shah Roghani
P-19. Captain Tipu Sultan
P-20. Lieutenant Muhammad Ashraf
P-21. Lieutenant Shaida Yonus Yusufzai
P-22. Captain Ejaz Ahmed Lilla
P-23. Lieutenant Mahmood Ul Hasan
P-24. Lieutenant Habib Ur Rehman Khanzada
P-25 Lieutenant Muhammed Abbas
P-26. Captain Nadeem Jan Khattak
P-27. Captain Tahir Maqsood Khan
P-28. Lieutenant Khusro Habib
P-29. Captain Riaz Azim
P-30. Captain Mahmood Ul Islam
P-31 Captain Rizwan Qureshi
P-32 Captain Raja Shahid Rehman
P-33 Captain Nasir Ali Khattak
P-34 Captain Muhammad Tariq
P-35 Captain Sajid Sharif
P-36 Captain Asad Ali Khan
P-38 Captain Amir Shahzad
P-39 Captain Naveed Qadir
P-40 Captain Saeed Niazi
P-41 Captain Bilal Sarwar
P-42 Captain Faisal Umair Khan
P-43 Captain Malik Khurram
P-44 Lieutenant John Salamat
P-45 Lieutenant Maqsood Khan
P-46 Lieutenant Umar Jamal Kayani



FLYING INSTRUCTOR SCHOOL

Following Army Aviation Pilots stood first in the Flying Instructors Course at Flying Instructor School at Risalpur.

	S. No.
Captain Khalid Javed Janjua	28
Major Mohammad Younis	36
Captain Ashraf Choudhry	48
Major Qayyum Sher	59
Major Ahmed Salman	67
Captain Tariq	69
Captain Nadeem Zafar	88

5000 HOURS CLUB

There are only eight Army Aviators who have so far been able to cross the 5000 hours of flying while in service.

Brigadier Hamid Chaudhri
Brigadier Zaka Ullah Bhangoo
Lieutenant Colonel Javed Ahmad
Colonel Basharat Aman
Colonel Aman Ullah
Lieutenant Colonel Rasheedi
Lieutenant Colonel Sami Ullah
Colonel Muhammad Irfan

Rotary Courses

Best Pilot

R-1 Lieutenant Bilal Akhtar Mirza
R-2 Captain Adnan Habib
R-3 Captain Asif Ali
R-4 Captain Ahmad Arslan

Overall Best

R-1 Captain Usman Akram
R-2 Lieutenant Babar Younis
R-3 Captain Farhan Pervez
R-4 Captain Muhammad Ali

P-COURSE FROM 6 TO 46

	Overall Best	Best in Academics
P-6	Captain MA Pervaiz Zaka	Captain Muazzam Ali Shah
P-7	Captain Akhtar Mahmood Malik	Lieutenant Riaz Ul Haq
P-8	Major Muhammad Imtiaz Ali	Major Muhammad Imtiaz Ali
P-9	Captain Hamid Niaz	Captain Hamid Niaz
P-10	Captain Pervaiz Yousaf	Captain Pervaiz Yousaf
P-11	Captain Khalid Masud	Captain Khalid Masud
P-12	Captain Muhammad Taimur Khan Dotani	Captain Muhammad Taimur Khan Dotani
P-13	Captain Shah Alam	Captain Shah Alam
P-14	Major Muhammad Tariq Malik	Major Muhammad Tariq Malik
P-15	Captain Muhammad Saleem	Captain Muhammd Ashraf Chaudhry
P-16	Major Shafique Ul Hassan Burney	Major Shafique Ul Hassan Burney
P-17	Captain Muhammad Khalid	Captain Muhammad Naeem Malik
P-18	Captain Mustahsen Akhtar	Captain Mustahsen Akhtar
P-19	Captain Niaz Hussain Siddiqui	Captain Niaz Hussain Saddiqui
P-20	Captain Muhammad Ikram Cheema	Captain Bakir Khan
P-21	Captain Daud Ahmed	Captain Najeeb Tariq
P-22	Captain Pervaiz Sikandar	Captain Pervaiz Sikandar
P-23	Lieutenant Mehmood Ul Hassan	Lieutenant Fazal Ul Rehman Qureshi
P-24	Captain Qutaibah Saleem	Captain Tariq Hussain
P-25	Captain Ahmed Bilal Qureshi	Captain Sayed Naeem Raza Jafri
P-26	Captain Muhammad Amir Khan	Captain Muhammad Amir Khan
P-27	Captain Muhammad Naveed Adil	Captain Muhammad Naveed Adil
P-28	Lieutenant Nasir Iftikhar Ahmed	Lieutenant Nasir Iftikhar Ahmed
P-29	Captain Nasir Dilawar Shah	Captain Mian Irfan Ahmed
P-30	Captain Muhammad Zaigham Tayyab	Captain Muhammad Zaigham Tayyab
P-31	Captain Rizwan Hussain	Captain Rizwan Hussain
P-32	Captain Shahid Rehman	Captain Shahid Rehman
P-33	Captain Nasir Ali Khattak	Captain Nasir Ali Khattak
P-34	Captain Muhammad Tariq	Captain Fawad Ahmed
P-35	Captain Sajid Sharif	Captain Sajid Sharif
P-36	Captain Asad Ali Shah	Captain Asad Ali Shah
P-37	Captain Ghulam Yasin	Captain Abid Jamal
P-38	Captain Amir Shahzad	Captain Shahzad Naeem
P-39	Captain Waqar Qadri	Captain Sarfraz Khan
P-40	Captain Javed Iqbal	Captain Javed Iqbal
P-41	Captain Arfeen Ashraf	Lieutenant Asad Ullah Baloch
P-42	Captain Shahab Saqib Abbasi	Captain Shahab Saqib Abbasi
P-43	Lieutenant Sohail Bin Shafique	Captain Zahid Qayyum
P-44	Captain Muhammad Ibrahim Jan	Captain Muhammad Haroon Zeb
P-45	Captain Talal Akbar	Captain Abdul Ghafoor Fayyaz
P-46	Captain Haris Husain	Lieutenant Muhammad Amin

ROLL OF HONOUR

Mid Career Course (First Position)

Captain Abdul Ghaffar Safarzai	AFC-1
Captain Muhammad Mujahid	AFC-2
Captain Khalid Mahmood	Aviation-1
Captain Mumtaz Ali	Aviation-2
Captain Nadeem Jan	Aviation-3
Captain Munir Ahsan	Aviation-4
Captain Muhammad Naveed Adil	Aviation-5
Captain Nasir Dilawar Shah	Aviation-6
Captain Muhammad Alamgir Khan	Aviation-7
Captain Anjum Enayat	Aviation-8
Captain Amir Ayub	Aviation-9
Captain Syed Kamal Sabir	Aviation-10
Captain Ashfaq Ur Rehman	Aviation-11
Captain Shahid Rehman	Aviation-12
Captain Junaid Adeeb	Aviation-13
Captain Asim Mushtaq	Aviation-14
Captain Waqqas Saeed Niazi	Aviation-15
Captain Asim Razzaq	Aviation-16
Captain Sajjad Ahsan	Aviation-17
Captain Naveed Qadir	Aviation-18
Captain Arif Shafique	Aviation-19
Captain Ahsan-ul-Haq Qazi	Aviation 20
Captain Salah-ud-Din	Aviation 21
Captain Muhammad Saeed Anwar Khan	Aviation 22
Captain Shahzad Chaudhry	Aviation 23
Captain Faisal Umair Khan	Aviation 24

Unit Commander Course

Major Abdul Wahid Khan	Aviation-1
Major Shoukat Ibrahim	Aviation-2
Major Dawood Ahmed	Aviation-3
Major Pervaiz Sultan Khan	Aviation-4
Major Syed Ali	Aviation-5
Major Tanveer Ullah Khan	Aviation-6
Major Qutaibah Saleem	Aviation-7
Major Nadeem Jan Khattak	Aviation-8
Major Nadeem Aslam Khan	Aviation-9
Major Aman Ullah Khan	Aviation-10
Major Anwar Iqbal	Aviation-11
Major Raza Farooq	Aviation-12
Major Asim Mahmood Qureshi	Aviation-13
Major Aman Ullah	Aviation-14
Major Shahid Rehman	Aviation-15
Major Qaiser Zahoor	Aviation 16
Major Asif Iqbal Khan	Aviation 17
Major Rana Ghulam Abbas	Aviation 18

Instructor Pilot Course

IP-1	Major Manzoor Bajwa
IP-2	Major Jawaid Hameed
IP-3	Major Muhammad Tariq
IP-4	Major Abdul Razzaq
IP-5	Major Riaz Ul Haq SJ
IP-6	Captain Khalid Butt
IP-7	Major Saif ul Islam
IP-8	Captain Muhammad Ashraf
IP-9	Major Tariq Razi
IP-10	Major Niaz Siddiqui
IP-11	Major Farooq Altaf
IP-12	Major Zafar Ahmad
IP-13	Major Zafar Iqbal Khan
IP-14	Lieutenant Commander Nauman Bashir
IP-15	Major Muhammad Khalid
IP-16	Captain Rana Shahid Mahmood
IP-17	Captain Muhammad Tahir
IP-18	Lieutenant Commander Irfan Sheheryar,
IP-19	Major Muhammad Ahmed Raashid
IP-20	Major Raja Muhammad Arif Nazir
IP-21	Major Nasir Mian
IP-22	Lieutenant Commander Khawar Aslam
IP-23	Lieutenant Commander Zahid Majeed
IP-24	Major Tahir Maqsood Khan
IP-25	Major Pervaiz Mahmood Butt
IP-26	Major Waseem Akhtar Malik
IP-27	Major Nauman Ghafoor
IP-28	Major Syed Khusro Habib
IP-29	Major Nasrullah Khan
IP-30	Major Muhammad Alamgir Khan
IP-31	Lieutenant Commander Zain Zulfiqar
IP-32	Major Anjum Enayat
IP-33	Major Sadaqat Ali Khan
IP-34	Major Waqqas Saeed Niazi
IP-35	Major Ashfaq-Ur-Rehman
IP-36	Major Qaiser Zahoor
IP-37	Major Asim Mushtaq
IP-38	Major Riazat Ullah
IP-39	Un Graded
IP-40	Lieutenant Commander Arif Saeed
PI-41	Major Abid Aziz
IP-42	Major Muhammad Zubair
IP-43	Major Asim Razzaq

ROLL OF HONOUR

SAAB ELEMENTRY COURSES

The first SAAB Elementary Course started on 18th August 1976 and courses continued till 1982. The SAAB Elementary Course serial no. 10 to 15 were conducted between 8th January 1994 - August 1997

Captain Shaukat Ibrahim	SE-1
Captain Omar Chaudhry	SE-2
Captain Nasir Ahmed Malik	SE-2A
Captain Khalid Mahmood Salim	SE-3
Captain Syed Taqi Naseer Rizvi	SE-4
Captain Iqtidar Ahmed Farooqi	SE-5
Captain Waqar Ahmed Kingravi	SE-6
Captain S. Munawar Ahmed	SE-7
Captain Muhammad Ahmed Raashid	SE-8
Lieutenant Ifran Sheher Yar (Pakistan Navy)	SE-9
Captain Naeem Masood Khan	SE-10
Captain Junaid Adeeb	SE-11
Captain Muhammad Asim Mushtaq	SE-12
Captain Umad Ahmed Nazim	SE-13
Captain Syed Muhammad Ali	SE-14
Captain Malik Mumtaz Ahmed	SE-15

ROTARY WING

A-Grade in Rotary Wing Conversion

Major Tariq Hussain	RWC-42
Major Babar Farooqi	RWC-52
Major Riazat Ullah	RWC-65
Major Zaka Ullah Rahi	RWC-78
Major Mohammad Saeed	RWC-79
Captain Sajid Raza	RWC-79

Pilot Course-1 - 16th February - 17th July 1959



Sitting L to R: Maj Saleemullah. Lt Col Ghulam Jabbar. Gp/Capt Khyber Khan. W/C Aziz. Brig Khawaja Wasiuddin. Lt Col A.B. Awan. Foreign Guests. Major M.M. Karim.

Standing 1st Row: School Staff. School Staff. Maj M.M. Mahmud. Capt Nazar Hussain. Sqn Ldr Rahat. Capt A.L. Awan. Capt Abdul Qayyum. School Staff. School Staff.

Pilot Course-2 - 5th October 1959 - 5th March 1960



Sitting : Maj A L Awan, Maj M Saleemullah, Lt Col A B Awan, Maj Mohammed Khan, Capt H R Abbasy

Standing 1st row : Sub Nur Ahmed, Capt A H Dogar Capt M A Rahman, Capt Maqbul A. Mahmud, Capt Nazir Ahmed, Capt Riaz Ahmed, Capt Azizul Hasan, Jem A Khaliq.

Standing 2nd row : Lt M A R Beg, Lt R A Rashid, Lt P C Tierney, Lt Sheraz Khan, Lt S M J Nagy, Lt Sadiq Hussain, Lt Anwar Hussain, Capt Masudul Hasan.

Pilot Course-3 - 17th October 1960 - 29th June 1961



Sitting from left to right Capt Riaz QFI Arty 7th PMA, Capt M A Rahman Arty School DQ, Maj Saleemullah CFI IMA/PMA, Lt Col A B Awan Comdt, Maj Mian Mahmud Asst CFI 1st PMA, Capt Aftab Iqbal QFI 7th PMA and Capt HRH Abbasi QFI 7th PMA

1st Row Standing L to R. Capt Hesamuddin Ahmed 10th PMA FFR, Capt_Musharraf Sig 16th PMA, Capt Askaree Arty 18th PMA Capt Sirajuddin Ahmed Arty 17th PMA, Capt Aslam QFI 10th PMA, Capt Sarfraz Rabbani QFI 10th PMA,Capt Saqlain QFI 10th PMA and Capt Majeed Malick from EME 7th PMA

2nd Row Standing L to R. Subedar Major ex School Staff, Capt Ijaz Mustafa Syed, FFR 12th PMA,Capt Ziauddin Javaid AC 16th PMA, Capt Riaz Sig 15th PMA , Capt Esmund D'Cunha Arty 16th PMA, Capt Irshad Gul FFR 17th PMA, Capt Idris Mohsin Sig 14th PMA, Capt Bilal Amin Babar Engr 16th PMA, Capt Ikramullah 17th PMA and Subedar Major ex School Staff.

Pilot Course-4 - 29th January - 6th October 1962

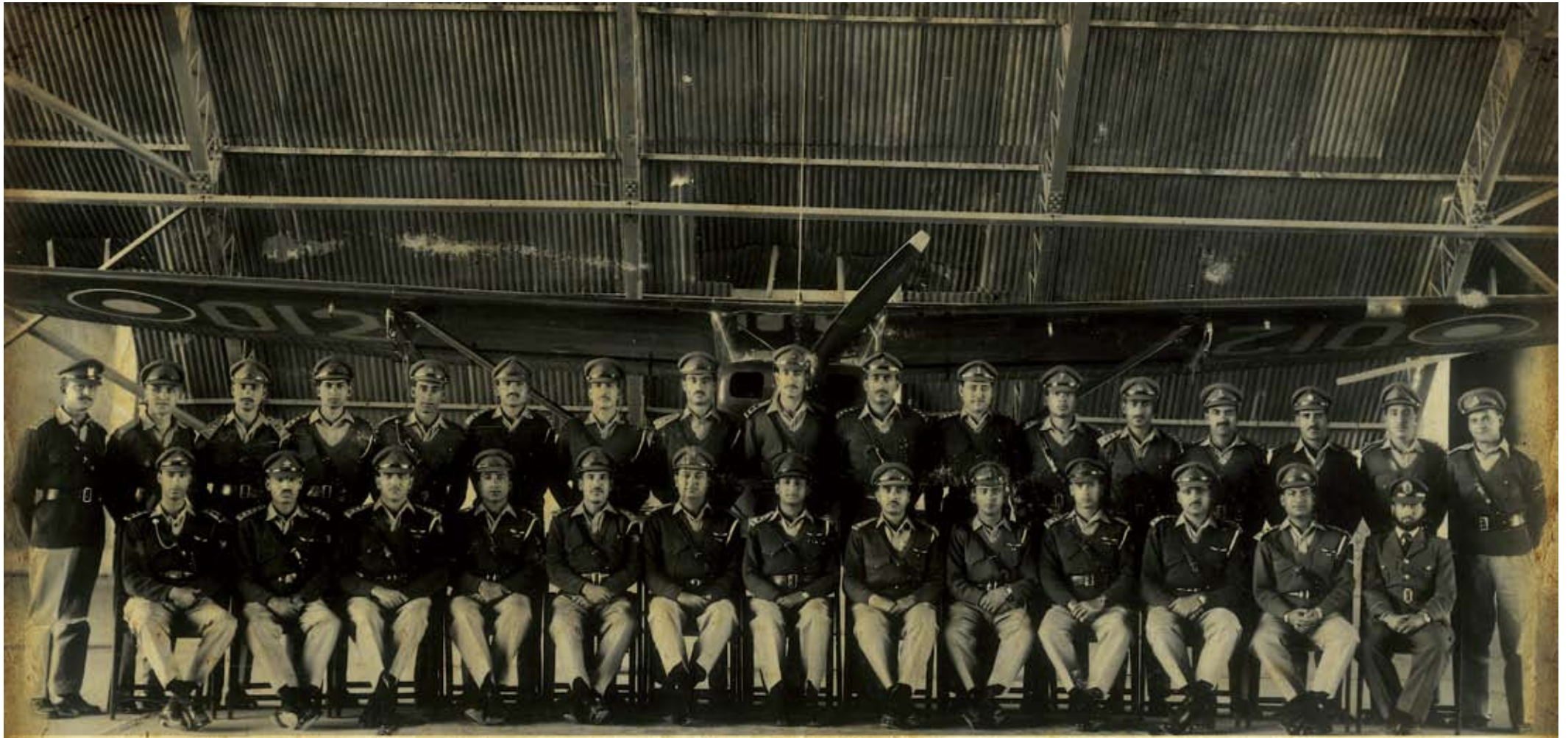


Sitting L to R: Capt Majeed Ullah, Capt M H Saqlain, Capt Muhammad Riaz Malik, F/Lt N A Khan, Major Muhammad Khan, Lt Col Ghulam Jabbar, Major Faiz Brandon, Capt M A Rehman, Capt Aftab Iqbal, Capt SLA Bokhari, Capt Mohammad Aslam,

Standing 1st Row: Lt Khalid Kamal, Capt M K Bajwa, Lt Jamil Akhtar, Lt Sajjad Ahmed Nazim, Lt S Aftab Haider, Capt Atta Ur Rehman Kallue, Capt Ch Hamid Hussain, Lt Zafar Hasnain Naqvi, Lt Asghar Aziz, Lt Mohammad Khalid Sagheer,

2nd Row: Lt B A K Khataek, Capt Naseer Ahmed Khan, Capt Mian Mohammad Aslam, Lt Saleem Inayat Khan, Capt Ross Mahmood, Lt M Arif Bangash, Lt Khalid Javed Janjuah,

Pilot Course-7 - 25th January - 10th September 1965



Sitting L to R : Capt Sajjad Ahmed Nazim, Capt Khalid Jawaid Janjuah, Capt Sheraz Khan, Capt MAR Kallue, Capt Nasim Ahmad, Maj Aftab Iqbal,
(QFI) (QFI) (QFI) (QFI) (Adjt) (Cfu)
Lt Col Malik Mokhtar Karim, Maj M H Saqlain, Capt MAR Beg, Capt P C Tierney, Capt Chaudhri Hamid Hussain, Capt M S Baig,
(COMDT) (FLT COMD) (QFI) (QFI) (QFI) (QFI)
Flt Lt Abdul Majid,
(Met Offrs)

Standing: Capt Basit Ali Khan, Maj Ghulam Hussain Malik, Lt Jamil Hasan, Capt M Afzal Khan, Maj Aziz ur Rehman, Lt Muhammad Azhir,
Lt Riaz-ul-Haq, Lt Ikram Ullah Khan, Lt Jafar Hasan Humayun, Capt Akhtar Mahmood Malik, Capt Shabir Ahmed Khan,
Lt Jawaid Hamid, Capt Ahmad Murtaza, Lt Abdul Majid, Capt Muhammad Daud, Lt M Akram Khan, Maj Waheed Hyder Khan,

Pilot Course-8 - 30th May 1966 - 4th February 1967



L to R
Sitting :—Capt Zafar Aqeel (QFI) Capt PC Tierney (QFI) Capt MAR Kallue (QFI) Major MH Saqlain (Flt Comd) Lt Col MM Mahmud (Comdt) Major Nazar Hussain (CFI)
Capt Sheraz Khan (QFI) Capt Chaudhari Hamid Hussain (QFI) Capt Khalid Kamal (QFI) Capt M A Pervez Zaka. (QFI)

Standing :—Major Mahboob Ali Baig Major Nasir Abbas Capt Muhammad Naseem Khan Capt Mohammad Arshad Malik Major Tufail Mohammed
Capt Mohammad Sher Khan Major Muhammad Imtiaz Ali Major Muhammad Saleem Zia Major Saadat Ali Khan

Standing :—Major Khalid Mahmud Capt Arshad Naseer Capt Mutahar Hussain Khan Capt Badr-ud-Deen Capt Nasim Mahmud
Capt Saiyed Raza Mahmood Capt Khalid Yasin

Pilot Course-9 - 17th April 1967 - 20th January 1968

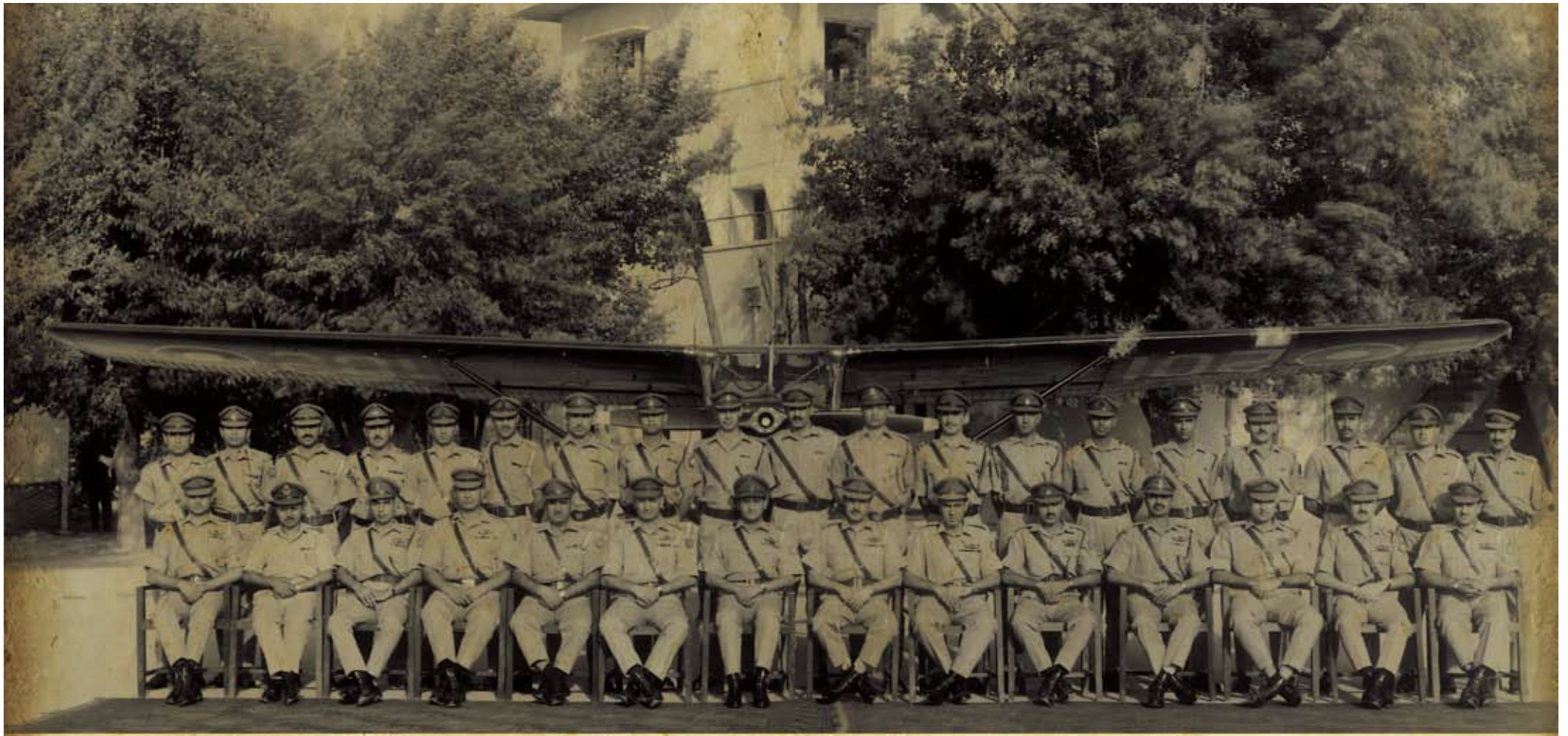


Sitting L to R: Capt M. A. Parvez Zaka, QFI; Capt Khalid Kamal, QFI; Capt Zafar Ahmed, QFI; Capt S. A. Nazim, QFI; Capt P. C. Tierney, QFI; Major A. L. Awan, QFI;
Lt Col M. M. Mahmud, Comdt; Capt K. J. Janjuah, QFI; Capt Riaz-ud-Din Ahmad, Adjt; Capt Ch Hamid Hussain, QFI; Capt Anis Akram Beg, QFI;
Capt Mir Saudat Ullah, QFI; Capt Zafar Aqeel, QFI.

Standing: Capt Syed Iftikhar Hussain, Capt Aman Ullah Khan Niazi, Capt A. H. Rathore, Capt Iftikhar Hussain Shah, Capt Ali Ahmed, Capt Muhammad Zareef, Major Nusrat Mahmud Malik, Capt Z. H. Siddiqi, capt Muhammad Yamin, Capt Zafar Iqbal, Capt Zahur Ahmed, Capt Qurban Hussain, Capt F. R. Adhami, Capt Sayed Tayeb Ahmed.

Standing: Capt M. Jamsheid Younis, Capt Mahmood ul Hasan, Capt Hamid Niaz, Capt Taubid ul Haq, Capt Ali Kuli Khan, Capt Zafar Ullah Khan, Capt Abdul Manan, Major T. M. Jiland, Capt Fahim ud Din Ansari, Capt Muhammad Yaqoob, Capt S Mushtaq Ahmed Shah, Major Farrakh Khan, Capt Jalil Ahmed.

Pilot Course-10 - 24th June 1968 - 26th February 1969

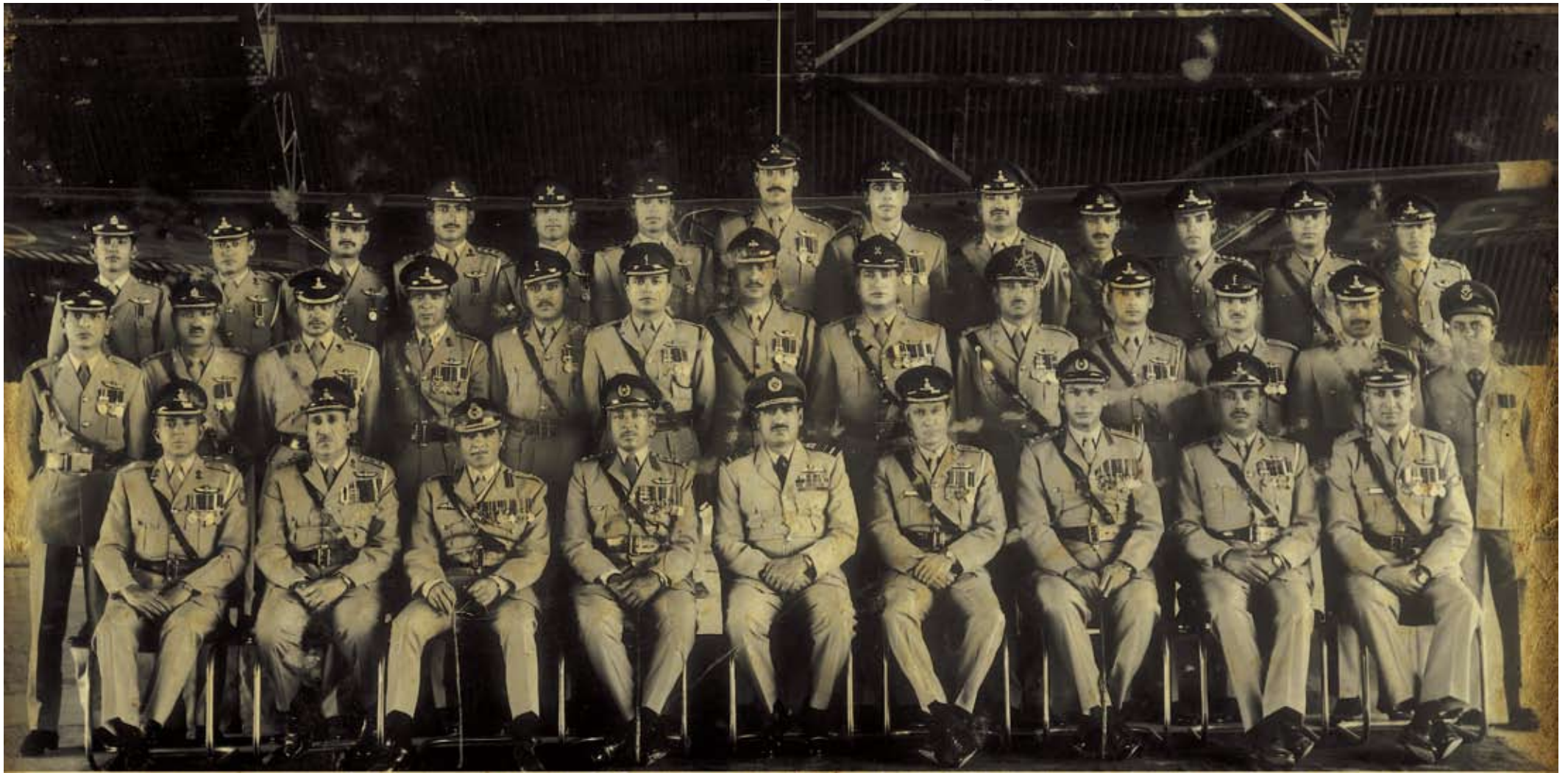


Sitting L to R: Capt Khalid Kamal, QFI. Flt Lt Dewan S. Raja, Met Offr. Maj Zafar Ahmed, QFI. Maj A Mokeet Khan, TQA, QFI. Maj Ghulam Mohammad, Adjt. Maj Mohammad Aslam, TQA, CFI. Lt Col M M Karim, Comdt. Maj S Rabbani, SJ, Flt Comd, Maj M Shafaat Hussain, QFI. Maj K J Janjuah, QFI. Maj Jamil Ahmad, Maint Offr. Maj M M Ishaq, QFI. Capt Mohammad Qasim, Capt Zafar Aqeel. QFI.

QFI

Standing: Capt Riaz ud Din Ahmed, Capt Muhammad Khalid, Capt Fayyaz Ibrahim, Capt Jamshaid Ahmad Khan, Capt Mohammad Iqbal Mirza, Capt Khurram Saleem, Capt Razi Ahmed Khawaja, Capt Ikram ul Majeed Sehgal, Capt Saeed Ismat Chaudhry, Maj Farooq Ahmad Khan, Capt Saeed uz Zaman, Capt Arshad Raza, Capt Muhammad Shahbaz Khan, Capt M A Hasnat, Capt Bashir ud Din Ahmad, Capt Masood Nisar Ali Beg, Capt Abdullah El Husain, Capt Pervez Yousaf, Capt Naseer Ahmad Khan.

Pilot Course-11 - 4th August 1969 - 11th April 1970



Sitting L to R: Maj Riaz Ahmed (Flt Comd FW), Lt Col N K Babar, SJ (Base 2IC), Maj Gen Gul Hassan Khan, SQA (CGS), Brig G Jabbar (Base Comd), Air Marshal A Rahim Khan, T.Pk, T.Bt (Cin C PAF), Lt Col M Faiz ud din Brandon (Comdt), Brig R D Shamim (DCGS), Maj H R Abbasy (CFI), Maj Mohammad Aslam, TQA (Flt Comd FW).

Standing L to R 1st Row Maj Ross Mahmood (QFI), Maj K J Janjuah (QFI), Maj Khalid Kamal (QFI), Maj Mohammad Yunus (QFI), Maj M K Sagheer (QFI), Maj Asghar Aziz (QFI), Maj Zafar Ullah Khan (QFI), Maj A Mokeet Khan, TQA (QFI), Maj Khalid Saeed Khan (QFI), Maj P C Tierney (Flt Comd RW), Maj Muhammad Qasim (QFI), Maj Mir Saudat Ullah (QFI), Flt Lt D S Raja (Met Offr).

Standing L to R: 2nd Row Capt Humayun Malik, Capt Moaziz Hussain, Capt M Tayyab Jalil, Capt Anwar Mohiuddin, Capt Masood Anwar, Capt Muhammad Tariq, Capt M Riffat Beg Humayun, Capt J A Khanzada, Capt Fahim Shah, Capt J A Minhas, Capt J A Khan, Capt Khalid Masud, Capt Imtiaz Alam.

Pilot Course-15 - 3rd April 1972 - 12th December 1972



Sitting L to R: Maj M K Sagheer, (Flt Comd RW), Maj Ghulam Mohammad, (Adjt), Brig G Jabbar, SK, (D Avn), Lt Col Riaz Ahmed, (Comdt) Gen Tikka Khan, HJ, HQA, SPK, (COAS), Brig M M Mahmood, TQA, (Base Comd) Maj KJ Janjuah, (CFI) Maj Anis Akram Beg, (Flt Comd FW) Maj Khalid Kamal, (Flt Comd FW).

Standing L to R:

1st Row (Instructors) Maj M Rifat Beg Humayun, Maj Fahim Shah, Maj Saeed Ismat, SJ, Maj Tauhid ul Haq, Maj Muhammad Iqbal Mirza, Maj Muhammad Shahbaz Khan, Capt Mirza Iqbal Hussain, (Student) Maj Muhammad Naseem Khan, Maj Zafarullah Khan, TJ.

2nd Row: (Students) Maj Javed Jahan, Maj R Sultan Parvez, Capt Muhammad Farooq, Capt Sajjad Ahmad Khan, Capt Nawazish Ali Khan, Capt Muhammad Saleem, Capt Muhammad Ashraf Ch, Capt M Afzal Tufail, Maj M Khurshid Iqbal, Capt Muhammad Ashraf, Capt Iqbal Kashmiri, Maj M Abdul Baqui Siddiqui.

Pilot Course-16 - 5th March 1973 - 15th December 1973



Sitting (L to R) :— Maj M Naseem Khan (IP RW) Maj Sajjad A Nazim (Flt Comd RW), Brig G. Jabbar (D'Avn), Lt Col Riaz Ahmed (Comdt.) Gen Tikka Khan, HJ (COAS) Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Prime Minister). Brig M M Mahmud (Base Comd), Maj Gen M Rahim Khan (CGS). Maj K J Janjuah (CFI). Maj MK Sagheer (IP RW) Maj Ghulam Mohammed (Adjt)

Standing 1st Row:— (Instructor) Maj MTK Dotani, Capt Khalid Saeed, Maj M Anwar Ul Haq, Maj Tauhid ul Haq. Maj Qazi Jamil. EME (Maint Offr), Capt M Iftikhar Ahmed, TJ. Maj M Iqbal Mirza, Flt Lt Safir A Khan, (Met Offr) Maj Syed Minahaj Ali, Maj Muhammad Umar, Maj Abid Hussain, Capt Tallat Aziz, Maj Muhammad Shahbaz Khan. Maj Saeed Ismat Ch, SJ. Maj M Riffat Beg Humayun.

Standing 2nd Row:— (Students) Capt Masood Pervaiz, Capt M Zafar Iqbal, Capt M Bashir Baz, Capt M Saleem Raza, Capt Mumtaz ul Haq, Maj S H Burney, Capt Kaleem Bokhari, Capt Farooq Dasti. Maj M Aijaz Akram Khan, Lieut M A Jan. Pak Navy, Capt Mansoor Saeed. Lt Sajid Nazir Chaudhry.

Standing 3rd Row:— (Students) Capt Khalid Nawaz Khan. Capt Mustafa Kamal Siddiqui, Lieut Muhammad Zafar, Pak Navy. Capt Ayaz Hussain, Sub Lieut M Farooq Khan Lodhi. Pak Navy. Capt Ijaz Sadiq. Lieut Abdul Latif Khan, Pak Navy, Capt Pervaiz Iqbal, Capt Imtiaz Akhtar Uppal. Capt Muhammad Anwar, Lieut Syed Asif Ali, Pak Navy. Capt Shahid Imran Farooki. Capt M Pervaiz Iqbal

Pilot Course-17 - 18th February 1974 - 15th February 1975



Sitting L to R : Maj Muhammad Naeem (Flt Surgeon), Maj Khalid Kamal (Flt Comd FW), Lt Col Khalid Jawaid Janjuah (CFI FW), Brig M M Mahmood (Base Comd), Lt Col Muhammad Aslam (Comdt), Gen Tikka Khan, HJ (COAS), Brig Abdul Qayyum (D Avn), Maj Muhammad Nasim Khan (Flt Comd RW), Maj JH Humayun (QFI), Maj Muhammad Riffat Beg Humayun (QFI), Maj Anwar Ul Haq (QFI).

Standing 1st Row : Maj Zareef QFI), Flt/Cdt Khalifa (UAE), Maj Minhaj (QFI), Maj Tariq (QFI), Maj Minhas (QFI), Flt/Cdt Masood (UAE), Capt Iftikhar (QFI), Capt Asghar (Adjt), Capt Sibbat (QFI), Flt Cdt Khamees (UAE), Maj Baqui (QFI), Maj Abid (QFI), Capt Khalid

2nd Row : Capt Ashraf (QFI), Capt Asad, Capt Luqman, Capt Talat, Capt Jamil, Capt Mahmood, Capt Qayyum, Capt Asad, Capt Dilshad, Capt Tahir, Lt Wakil (PN), Capt Naweed.

3rd Row : Sub Rehmat (HC), Capt Saleem, Capt Altaf, Capt Latif, Capt Kiani, Capt Yasin, Capt Farooq, Capt Beg, Lt Kamran (PN), Capt Barlas, Capt Arif, Capt Naeem.

Pilot Course-18 - 31st March 1975 - 14th February 1976



Sitting L to R: Maj A.K. Anjum, Maj Syed Sajid Ali (Flt Comd FW), Lt Col Khalid Kamal (CFI FW), Brig S.L.A. Bokhari SJ (Base Comd), Gen Tikka Khan HJ, (COAS), Lt Gen A.B. Awan, Lt Col Muhammad Aslam (Comdt), Brig M.A. Quayyum (D. Avn), Lt Col Muhammad Naseem Khan (CFI RW).

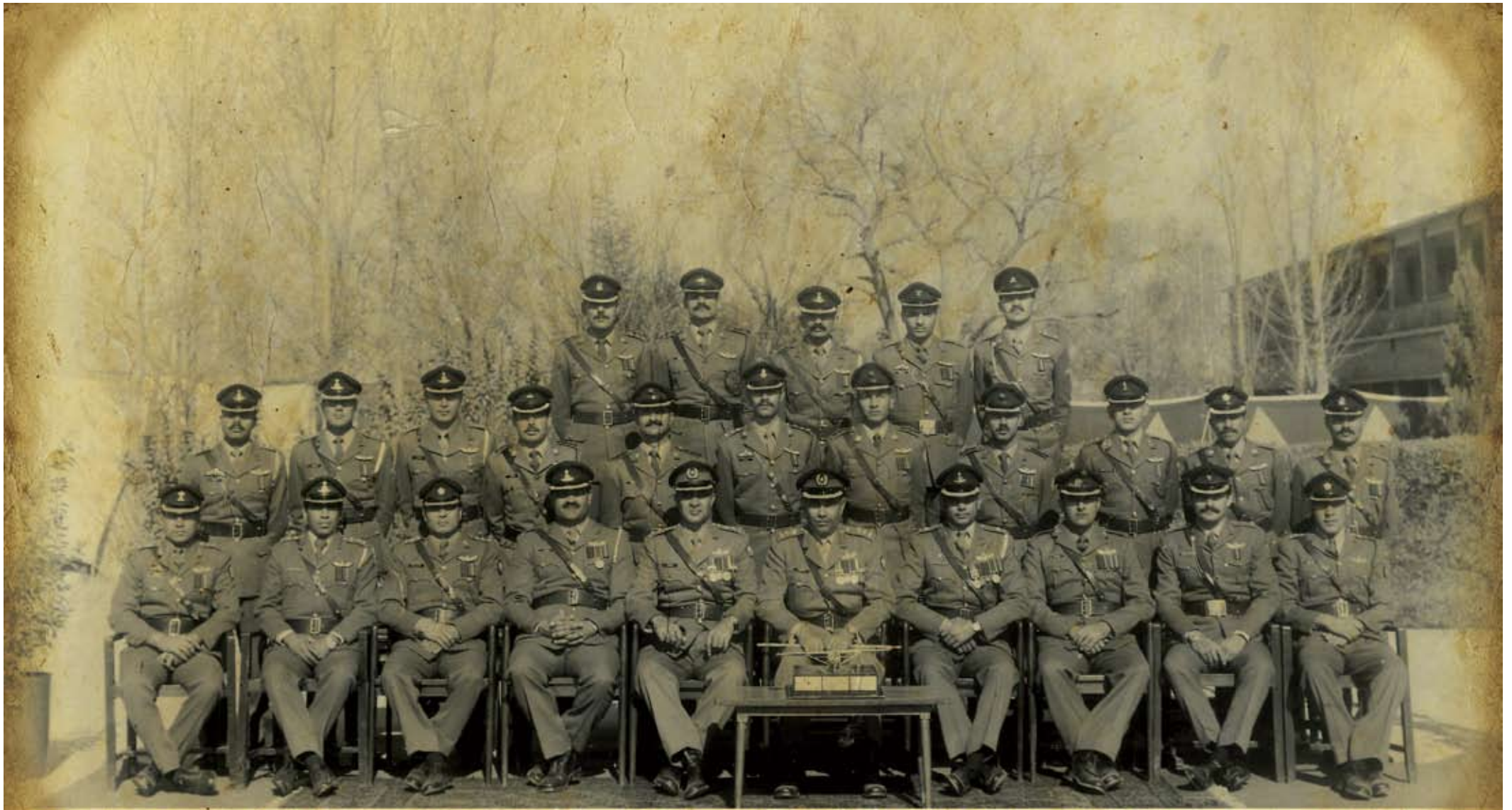
Standing 1st Row: Instructor Major Muhammad Zareef T.Bt (Flt Comd RW), Capt Muhammad Anwar, Major Muhammad Anwar Ul Haq, Major Shahid Imran Farooki, Major Tariq Shah Khan (Flt Comd FW), Capt Syed Ali Asghar (Adjt), Major Khalid Nawaz Khan, Major Syed Muhammad Saleem Zaidi, Capt Muhammad Nayeem (Flt Surgeon), Major Muhammad Saleem, Capt Kaleem Bokhari, Major Javed Jahan, Major Muhammad Zafar Iqbal (IP RW).

Standing 2nd Row: Students Capt Sami Ullah, Lt Humayun Javed, Capt Javed Iqbal, Capt Ansar Ahmed, Capt Muhammad Zahid Jadoon, Flt Cadet Sayed Muhammad Tajud Din (UAE),Capt Muhammad Ashraf, Capt Muhammad Aslam Noon, Capt Shafqat Ullah, Capt Muhammad Azam, Capt Shahid Ahmed Kureshi.

Standing 3rd Row: Students Capt Saleem Akhund SJ, Capt Tariq Razi, Major Zaka Ullah Bhangoo, Capt Shafiqur Rehman, Lt Suleman Pervez, Capt Khalid Hasan Butt, Capt Arshed Farooq, Capt M Abdul Wahid Khan.

Standing 4th Row: Students Capt Isar Hussain Jafery, Capt Mustehsen Akhtar, Capt Rashid Zia Cheema, Capt Tallah Ahmed Khan, Capt Mukhdom Shah Roghani, Capt Abdul Maroof Khan, Capt Arif Rasul Qureshi.

Pilot Course-19 - 23rd February 1976 - 5th January 1977

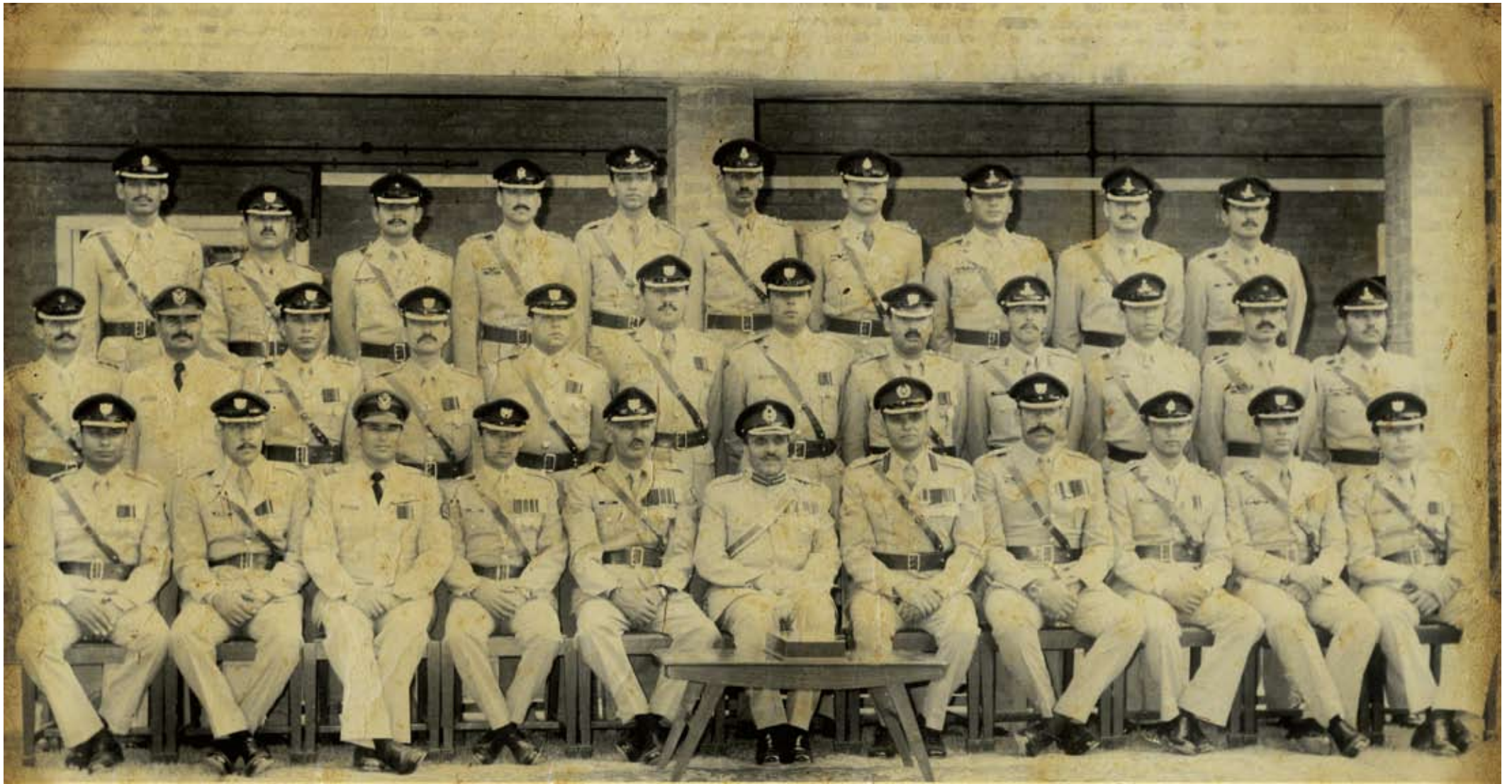


Sitting L to R: Capt Muhammad Anwar, Capt Ayaz Hussain, Capt Imtiaz Akhtar Uppal, Maj Fahim Shah, Col Muhammad Yunus, Brig HR Abbasy, Lt Col Khalid Kamal, Maj Tariq Shah Khan, Maj Shahid Imran Farooki, Capt Muhammad Zafar Iqbal.

Standing 1st Row: Capt Niaz Hussain Siddiqui, Capt Tanwir Ahmed, Capt Abul Hassan, Capt Khalid Mahmood, Capt Muslim Ghani, Capt Ilyas Ahmed Mirza, Capt Salim Khan, Capt Javed Iqbal, Capt Arif Sultan, Capt Shah Niwaz, Capt Zahid Hussain Shah.

Standing 2nd Row: Capt Muhammad Azad Minhas, Capt Safdar Hussain, Capt Aziz Ahmed, Capt Shuaib Idrees, Capt Liaqat Ali Raja.

Pilot Course-21 - 22nd March 1978 - 5th January 1979



Sitting: Maj Mansoor, Maj Zafar, S/L Wajid, Maj Imtiaz, Lt Col Khalid Janjua (CFI FW), Gen M Zia-ul-Haq (Chief Guest), Col Ch Hamid Hussain (Comdt), Lt Col Riffat (CFI RW), Capt Najam, Capt Najeeb, Maj Qayyum.

Standing 1st Row: Capt Zakria, F/L Shams, Capt Talhah, Maj Tabrez, Maj Jamil, Maj Kiani, Maj Arif, Capt Dilshad, Capt Dawood, Capt Shakil, Lt Nasir, Lt Tariq.

Standing 2nd Row: Lt Arshad, Maj Javeed, Capt Zulqadar, Capt Zaidi, Capt Tanveer, Capt Shafqat, Capt Azad, Lt Tariq, Lt Shaida, Capt Tahir.

Pilot Course-22 - 19th April 1980 - 17th February 1981



Sitting: Maj Kiani, Maj Javed, Maj Salim, Maj Khalid, Capt Sikandar, Lt Col Pervez(CFI), Gen M Zia-ul-Haq(Chief Guest), Col Ch Hamid Hussain(Comdt) Maj Dilshad, Maj Liaqat, Maj Azam, Maj Tipu, Maj Ikram.

Standing 1st Row: F/L Shams, Capt Najam, Capt Afzal, Maj Aziz, Maj Ilyas, Maj Safdar, Maj Minhas, Capt Talhah, Maj Hasan, Capt Azhar, Capt Iqbal.

2nd Row: Capt Shahzad, Capt Jafri, Capt Zahir, Capt Raza, Capt Naeem, Capt Tanveer, Capt Ejaz, Capt Javed, Capt Sultan, Capt Khalid.

Pilot Course-23 - 10th January 1981 - 3rd December 1981



Sitting L to R : Maj Javed Iqbal (QFI), Maj Aziz Ahmed (QFI), Maj Muhammad Ikram Ullah Niazi (QFI), Maj Tipu Sultan (QFI) Capt Shah Nawaz Badar, Lt Col Parvez Yousaf (CFI FW), Gen Sawar Khan (VCOAS), Col Ch Hamid Hussain (Comdt), Maj Liaqat Ali Raja (QFI), Maj Muhammad Azam (QFI), Maj Khalid Mahmood (QFI), Maj Safdar Hussain (QFI), Maj Muhammad Azad Minhas (QFI).

Standing Ist Row : Capt Atiq Ahmed, Lt Qasim Hameed, Capt Mumtaz Haider, Capt Alam Zeb Babar, Lt Mushtaq Hussain, Capt Muhammad Shafiq Ur Rehman, Maj Abul Hassan (QFI), Maj Muhammad Baqar Khan (QFI), Capt Babar Ramzan, Lt Nayyar Iqbal, Lt Tahir Yasin, Capt Sh Talat Mahmood, Capt Saleem Ahmed Abbasi, Maj Muhammad Ikram Cheema (QFI).

2nd Row : Capt Inam Karim, Lt Nadeem Ullah, Capt Syed Nasir Hussain Zaidi, Capt Zahoor Ahmed Malik, Lt Rasheed Mansoor, Lt Arshad Saeed, Lt Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Lt Mahmood Ul Hassan, Capt Safdar Jahan Zeb, Maj Arif Sultan (QFI).

Pilot Course-24 - 2nd January 1982 - 4th November 1982



Sitting Lto R : Maj Safdar Hussain (QFI), Maj Khalid Mahmood (QFI), Maj Saleem Akhtar (QFI), Maj Shahid Imran Farooqi (QFI), Lt Col Parvez Yousaf (CFI-FW), Air Marshal Anwar Shamim, NI(M) (Chief of Air Staff), Brig Hamid Chaudhry (Comdt), Maj Mumtaz Azeem Malik (QFI), Maj Sarfaraz (Arty Instr), Maj Tipu Sultan (QFI), Maj Javed Iqbal (QFI).

Standing(1st row): Capt Zahid Mahmood, Capt Tanveer Hasan (QFI), Capt Muhammad Tahir, Capt Tahir Ali (QFI), Maj Salman Ahmed (QFI), Maj Muhammad Baqar Khan (QFI), Maj Hasnain Mehdi (QFI), Maj Ikram Cheema (QFI), Capt Ale Haider Zaidi (QFI), Maj Liaqat Ali Raja (QFI), Maj Arif Sultan (QFI).

Standing(2nd row): Capt Azhar Aziz Kayani, Capt Tariq Hussain Khan, Capt Qutaibah Saleem, Capt Sohail Azad Kayani, Lt Muzzafar Ghani, Capt Nadeem Kamal, Lt Habib ur Rehman Khanzada, Lt Khalid Mahmood, Lt Raheel Hafeez Sehgal, Capt Waqar Beg, Capt Tariq Iqbal, Capt Abdul Rasheed Khan.

Pilot Course-25 - 8th January 1983 - 13th December 1983



ng left to right:Capt Tariq Mahmood, Capt Naeem, Lt Muhammad Abbas, Capt Bilal, Capt Naeem Raza Jaffery, Capt Tassalemoon Tauqeer, Capt Imt

ow left to right: Capt Samuel, Capt Tariq, Capt Tahir Akram, Capt Bisharat, Capt Shahid Abbas, Capt Mumtaz, Lt Farooq, Capt Tahir Naz, Capt S

ow Left to Right: Lt Mubashir Jamal, Lt Aziz, Lt Muzzamal Tajamal, Capt Aslam, Lt Amjad, Capt Azhar Capt Javaid Rasheed.

Pilot Course-26 - 7th January - 8th November 1984



Sitting: Maj Baqar, Maj Mehdi, Maj Arif, Maj Naeem Malik, Maj Salim, Lt Col Azeem, Brig Ch Hamid Hussain (Comdt), Gen K M Arif (Chief Guest), Lt Col Fahim (CFI), Capt Shahid, Maj Javeed, Maj Dilshad, Maj Kiani, Maj Khalid, Maj Sikandar.

Standing 1st Row: Capt Tahir, Capt Nasir, Capt Ikram, Capt Tanveer, Lt Qayyum, Capt Khalid, Lt Asim, Lt Shahid, Capt Iftikhar, Capt Ali, Capt Tanveer Hassan, Lt Aslam, Lt Aziz, Capt Nadeem Capt Nauman, Capt Ijaz, Capt Amir, Capt Farooq, Maj Shakil, Maj Zaidi, Maj Cheema.

Standing 2nd Row: Lt Hanif, Capt Aitezaz, Capt Ishtiaq, Capt Munir, Capt Shahid, Lt Aizaz, Lt Zia, Lt Tahir, Capt Khattak, Lt Waqar, Capt Cheema, Capt Nadeem, Capt Nasir, Capt Jamil, Lt Aman, Lt Kamal, Capt Tareen, Lt Asad.

PILOT COURSE-27 (17 AUGUST 1985 TO 08 MAY 1986)

Chief Guest. General Rahimuddin Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee

Captain Shahzad
Captain Abid Imran
Captain Pervez Mahmood Butt
Captain Abul Fazal
Captain Muhammad Daud
Captain Shahid Raza
Captain Syed Mahboob Haider
Captain Wasim Akhtar Malik
Captain Tahir Maqsood Khan
Lieutenant Syed Abrar Hussain
Captain Muhammed Naeem Khan
Captain Abid Ali
Captain Zahoor Ahmed Afridi
Captain Syed Karrar Husssain
Captain Asif Kamal
Captain Zaheer Ul Islam
Captain M. Naveed Adil
Captain Waqar Ahmed Abbasi
Captain Mumtaz Hussain Zia
Lieutenant Anwar Ahmed Khan
Captain Asad Aziz Khan
Captain Hidayat Ullah
Lieutenant Anjum Irshad Khan
Lieutenant Abdul Rahim
Lieutenant Tariq Naseem

Pilot Course Serial 27 was not photographed

Pilot Course-28 - 4th July 1986 - 9th April 1987



Sitting L to R: Maj Baqar. Maj Dilshad. Lt Col Javed. Lt Col Abid. Brig Rahmet. Lt Gen Aslam Beg. ACM Ahmed Javed Jamal (Chief Guest). Maj Gen Askree. Lt Col Nawazish. Lt Col Zafar. Capt Asif. Maj Niazi. Maj Nawsherwan.

Standing 1st Row: Capt Alamgir. Maj Jaffery. Capt Tahir Yasin. Lt Irfan. Lt Sohail. Capt Yousaf. Lt Sohail. Lt Rizwan. Capt Qasim. Lt Zia. Capt Anis. Capt Roghani. Capt Mahmood. Capt Mukhtar. Capt Raza. Capt Tariq. Capt Farooq. Capt Zahoor.

Standing 2nd Row: Lt Mahmood. Capt Sadaqat. Capt Shahid. Capt Mazhar. Capt Afzal. Capt Younas. Capt Sohail. Capt Hamid. Capt Saqib. Capt Khusro. Capt Meesaq. Capt Asad. Capt Nasrullah. Capt Shahid. Capt Fahim. Lt Shaukat. Lt Anwar.

Pilot Course-29 - 4th July 1987 26th May 1988



Sitting L to R	Capt Javed Rafiq, Capt Aftab Alam, Capt Munir Ehsan(QFI), Maj Nowsherwan(Instr), Lt Col Pervaiz, Lt Col Abid Hussain Malik(CFI FW), Maj Gen Syed Zafar Mehdi Askaree(GOC Army Avn), Lt Gen Imtiaz Ullah Waraich(Chief Guest), Col Abdul Razzaq(Comdt), Maj Gen Sajjad Hussain(GOC 37 Div), Lt Col Nawazish(CFI RW), Lt Col Zafar Iqbal(CI), Capt Zahir Rasul(QFI), Capt Samuel Aziz Bashir Din, Maj Tariq Chaudhary(IP)
Standing L to R 1st Row	Capt Mian Irfan, Capt Farhat, Capt Shahid Nazir, Capt Naveed, Capt Adnan, Lt Tasawer Hussain, Capt Akber Bandial, Capt Riaz Azeem, Muhammad Raza, Capt Muhammad Tufail, Capt Tahseen Khan, Capt Anjum Enayat, Lt Naeem Ullah Khattak
Standing L to R 2nd Row	Capt Mansoor Zia, Capt Ubaid ur Rehman, Capt Khaliq Khan, Capt Babar Farooqui, Capt Shujaat Qazi, Capt Abid Saeed, Capt Irfan Butt, Capt Nasir Dilawer, Capt Shahid Irshad, Capt Muhammad Nawaz, Capt Naveed, Lt Hassan, Capt Farooq Ahmed Khan, Capt Humayun Afzal Mirza, Capt Ahmer Dilshad

Pilot Course-30 - 21st July 1988 - 29th May 1989



Sitting	L to R		Capt Munir, Maj Raza, Maj Malik, Maj Farooq, Maj Bashir, Maj Nadeem, Capt Israr, Lt Col Shahid (CFI), Maj Rashid, Maj Saeed, Maj Shahid, Maj Aitezaz, Maj Mir, Capt Khattak, Capt Zahir.
Standing	L to R	1st Row	Capt Abbasi, Capt Waqar, Capt Abrar, Capt Asad, Capt Sabaa, Capt Raza, Capt Nabeel, Capt Cheema, Lt Asim, Capt Nisar, Capt Tariq, Capt Naveed, Lt Shujaat, Capt Altaf, Capt Naeem, Capt Daud.
Standing	L to R	2nd Row	Lt Naeem, Lt Amir, Capt Zaigham, Capt Mahmood, Capt Shahid, Capt Jaffer, Lt Nasir, Capt Muqqarab, Capt Baber, Lt Masud, Capt Rashid, Capt Tahir, Capt Safdar, Lt Ehtesam, Lt Naveed, Capt Asif, Capt Jehangir, Capt Daud, Capt Wasiq, Lt Khattak.

Pilot Course-31 - 16th July 1989 - 26th July 1990



Sitting L to R: Maj Waqar, Maj Munir, Maj Itezaz, Maj Shahid, Maj Qazi, Maj Farooq, Col Zareef, Lt Gen Pirdad Khan, Maj Gen Askari, Capt Arshad, Maj Zahir, Maj Kayani, Maj Amir, Maj Amjed, Maj Nadeem.

Standing 1st Row: Capt Nasir, Capt Abrar, Capt Daud, Capt Safdar, Capt Dawar, Capt Nasheed, Capt Kamal, Capt Noman, Capt Mahmood, Capt Aftab, Capt Tariq, Capt Nadeem Zafar, Capt Naeem, Capt Afridi, Capt Aslam.

Standing 2nd Row: Lt Anjum, Capt Rehan, Capt Nizam, Capt Bokhari, Capt Bangash, Capt M. Nadeem, Capt Adil, Capt Nadeem Sadiq, Capt Raza, Capt Khalid, Capt Dar, Capt Baig, Capt Rizwan.

Pilot Course-32 - 8th September 1990 - 28th September 1991



Sitting Lto R : Maj Waqar, Maj Naeem, Maj Amir, Maj Tahir, Lt. Col. Khalid, Capt Anique, Brig Dotani (Comdt), Lt. Gen. Farukh Khan (CGS-Chief Guest), Maj Gen Rahmat (GOC), Col Zareef, Lt. Col. Anwar, Maj Zahir, Maj Shahid, Maj Itezaz, Maj Saqib,

Standing(1st row): Capt Afridi, Capt Abid, Capt Adil, Capt Babr, Capt Maaz, Capt Irfan, Capt Farooq, Capt Asif, Capt Qasir, Capt Hameed, Capt Rehman, Capt Abrar, Capt Naisr, Maj Karrar, Capt Aslam

Standing(2nd row): Lt Haider, Capt Tahir, Capt Khalid, Capt Hamid, Lt Aman Ullah, Capt Ghaus, Capt Tippu, Capt Tariq, Capt Amer, Capt Shahid, Lt Adnan, Capt Asim, Capt Faisal, Capt Arjumnad, Capt Sagheer

Standing(3nd row): Capt Kayani, Capt Sanaullah, Capt Bajwa, Capt Pirzada, Capt Nadeem, Capt Najeeb, Capt Latif, Lt Tufail, Capt Raja,

Pilot Course-33 - 11th January 1992 - 12th November 1992



Sitting L to R — Capt Ahmer, Maj Abrar, Maj Saqib, Maj Tahir, Lt Col Khalid (FLT COMD), Col Zafar (DY COMDT), Maj Gen Rahmat Ullah (GOC AVN), Lt Gen Muhammad Asad Durrani (Chief Guest), Brig M T K Dotani (COMDT), Lt Col Safdar (CFI), Capt Ihsan, Maj Jafri (FLT COMD), Maj Mumtaz, Maj Karrar, Maj Abid.

Standing 1st Row : Capt Muqarrab, Capt Asim, Maj Babar, Capt Nadeem, Capt Qaiser, Capt Niazi, Capt Aziz, Capt Nasr, Capt Salman, Lt Imran, Capt Mansoor, Capt Khattak, Capt Irfan, Capt Waheed, Capt Rashid, Capt Asif.

Standing 2nd Row : Capt Fakhar, Capt Ashfaq, Capt Ejaz, Capt Sajid, Capt Taimur, Capt Naveed, Lt Shehzad, Lt Saqib, Capt Sajjad, Capt Azadar, Capt Ishaq, Lt Zain (PN).

Standing 3rd Row : Capt Faisal, Capt Ovais, Capt Zahid, Capt Waseem, Lt Rizwan, Capt Mueen, Capt Shafqat.

Pilot Course-34 - 9th January - 7th November 1993



Sitting L to R :- Maj Rizwan, Maj Shaukat, Maj Karrar, Maj Tahir, Lt Col Talhah, Col Zafar (Dy Comdt), Maj Gen Rahmat Ullah (GOC Avn), Lt Gen Farrukh Khan (CGS, Chief Guest), Brig Muhammad Ashraf Ch (Comdt), Lt Col Safdar (CFI), Capt Hameed (Senior Student), Maj Jafri (Flt Comd), Maj Mumtaz, Maj Raashid, Capt Ahmer.

Standing 1st Row :- Maj Ehtisham, Capt Zafar, Capt Naveed, Capt Bangash, Capt Nadeem, Lt Zahid (PN), Capt Atif, Capt Tariq, Capt Fawad, Lt Imran, Capt Kayani, Capt Imran Butt, Capt Asim, Capt Daud, Capt Muqarrab.

Standing 2nd Row :- Capt Jahangir, Capt Asif Jah, Capt Fazal, Capt Zahid, Capt Afzal, Lt Sajjad, Capt Asad, Capt Ashfaq, Capt Shuja, Capt Nawazish, Capt Zubair, Capt Aftab, Capt Maqsood, Capt Shahid, Capt Shahid Hyder, Lt Zaeem.

Standing 3rd Row :- Capt Mughees, Capt Zafar, Capt Azhar, Capt Naveed, Capt Tanveer, Lt Nadeem (PN), Capt Rana Abbas.

Pilot Course-35 - 8th January - 10th November 1994



Chairs : L. to R. **Maj Jahangir, Maj Ehtisham, Maj Hafeez, Maj Shoukat** (OIC Course), **Lt Col Fazal** (Flt Comd), **Lt Col Khalid** (Dy Comdt), **Maj Gen Rahmat** (GOC Avn), **Lt Gen Muhammad Tariq** (Chief Guest, Comd 30 Corps)
Capt Tanveer (Senior Student), **Brig Muhammad Ashraf Ch.** (Comdt), **Lt Col Talat** (CFI), **Maj Mumtaz, Maj Rizwan, Maj Bangash, Maj Daud**

Standing 1st Row. **Capt Naveed, Maj Khattak, Capt Farooq, Maj Nadeem, Capt Rehan, Capt Wajahat, Capt Sajid, Lt Anwar, Capt Shahid, Maj Asad, Capt Ali, Capt Haider, Capt Nizam, Capt Najeeb, Maj Zafar**

2nd Row. **Capt Kashif, Capt Nasir, Capt Yazdan, Capt Masud, Capt Modassar, Capt Kamran, Lt Wajeehi** (PN) **Capt Nazim, Lt Adnan, Capt Farid, Capt Munib, Lt Qamar** (PN)

Pilot Course-36 - 7th January - 9th November 1995



Sitting L. to R. L to R	Lt Col Fazal Flt Comd FW	Lt Col Jamshed CO 199 EME Bn	Lt Col Rahmani DS (Inf)	Lt Col Qazmi DS (Arty)	Lt Col Tirmizi CI Tac wing	Col Arshad Farooq Dy Comdt
	Maj Gen Rehmat Ullah GOC	Lt Gen Jehangir Karamat CGS	Brig Muhammad Azam Comdt	Lt Col Roghani GSO-1 (Coord)	Lt Col Sami Ullah GSO-1 (Trg)	
	Lt Col Arif DS Tac wing	Lt Col Sohail AA & QMG	Lt Col Saleem Abbasi OC R&D	Lt Col Tallat CFI (FW)		
Standing 1st Row L to R	Sqn Ldr Ejaz METCO	Lt Col Tahir Flt Comd RW	Maj Jamil	Maj Amir	Maj Bangash	Maj Asim
	Maj Nadeem	Maj Baluch	Sqn Ldr Naqvi SATCO			
	Maj Asad	Maj Khalid Ghani	Maj Butt	Maj Tareen	Maj Nadeem	Maj Khalid Mehmood
	Maj Jahangir	Flt Lt Tippu ATCO				
Standing 2nd Row L to R	Maj Mumtaz	Maj Syed	Capt Ali	Maj Aman	Capt Saqib	Capt Naveed
	Capt Adnan	Capt Shahzad	Capt Shahid			
	Capt Manzoor	Capt Khattak	Maj Butt	Capt Nizam	Capt Haider	Capt Faisal
	Maj Sana					

Pilot Course-37 - 5th January 1996 - 15th November 1996



Sitting Lt to Rt : Brig Humayun Malik, Brig Qurban Hussain, Brig Khalid Yasin, Brig Ch, Hamid Hussain, Brig H. R. Abbasi, Brig M. Saleem Ullah. Brig G. Jabbar, Maj Gen Abdul Razzaq, GOC Army Avn, Brig M. M. Karim, Brig Muhammad Azam Comdt, Brig M. A. Qayyoom, Brig A. Mokeet Khan, Brig M. A. Rasheed Beg, Brig Sajjad Ahmed Nazim, Col Khalid Kamal.

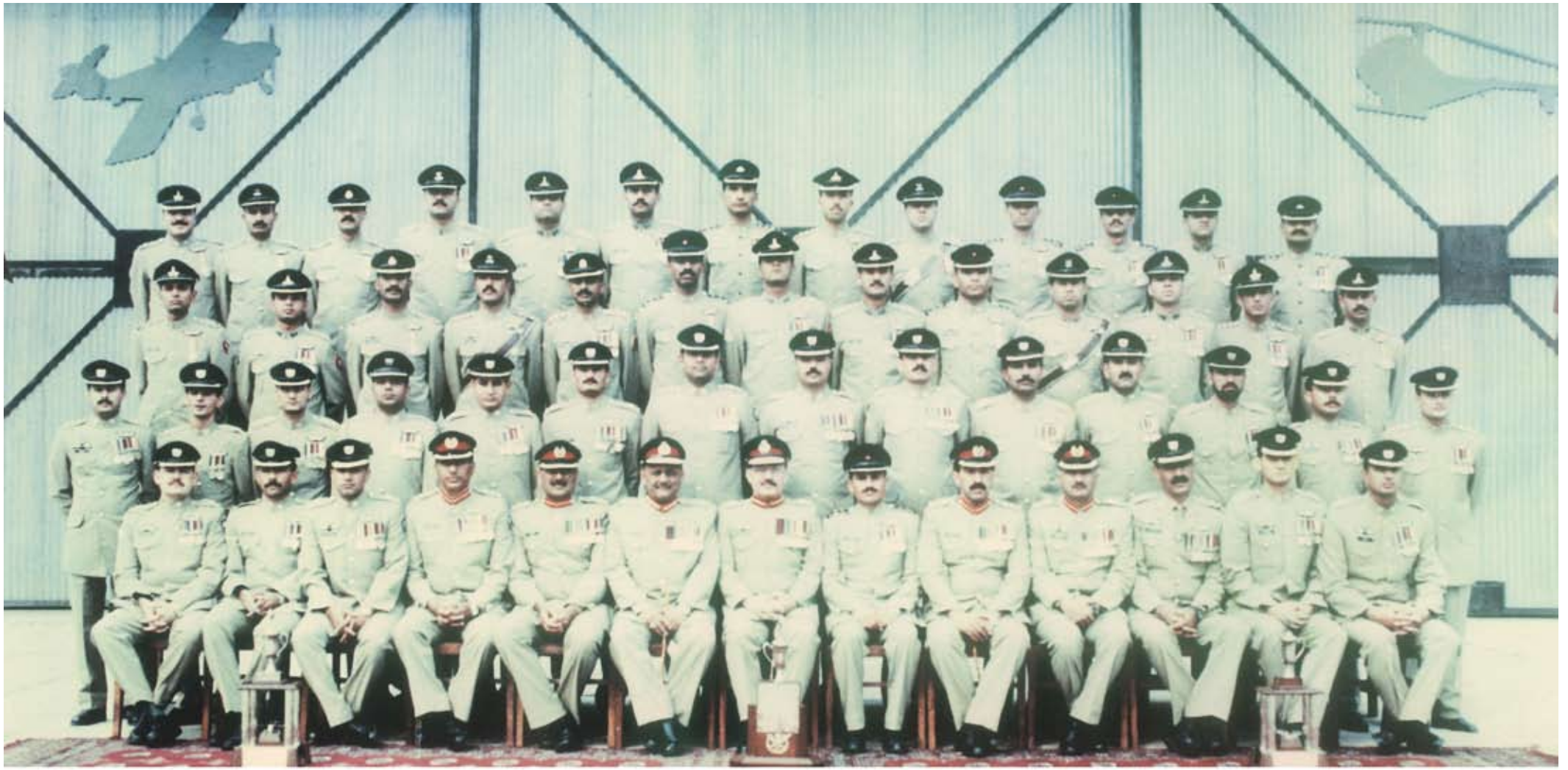
Standing Lt to Rt : Col Ayaz Hussain Malik, Lt Col Muhammad Khalid Mehmood, Maj Muhammad Akram Maj Sajjad Ahmed Khan, Lt Col Muhammad Saleem, Col Mumtaz Azeem Malik, Lt Col Imtiaz Akhtar Upal, Col Hadeed Anwar Malik, Dy Comdt Lt Col Muhammad Anwar, Maj Manzoor K. Bajma, Maj Tariq Razi, Lt Col Moaziz Hussain, Maj Farooq Hamid Khan, Col M. Yousaf Auwar, Maj Ahsan Ul Haq Chaudhry.

Pilot Course-38 - 18th June - 21st November 1997



Sitting Lt to Rt	:	Maj Najeeb, Maj Imran, Maj Kamal, Maj Sana, Lt Col Zahoor CFI (FW), Brig Arshad Farooq Comdt, Maj Gen Abdul Razzaq, Capt Khizar, Col Hadeed Anver, Col Shoaib Awan, Lt Col Mumtaz, Maj Waseem, Maj Kiani. GOC Army Avn Senior Student Dy Comdt CI Flt Comd (FW)
Standing 1st Row	:	Maj Ovias, Capt Zaeem, Capt Amjad, Maj Rehan' Capt Atif, Capt Abid, Capt Zahid, Capt Ayyub, Capt Lodhi, Capt Tariq, Capt Fawad, Capt Farid, Capt Kashif.
Standing 2nd Row	:	Lt Karki (Nepal), Capt Amir, Capt Asim, Capt Raja, Capt Hashmi, Lt Omer (Palestine), Lt Masud (Palestine), Capt Ehsan, Capt Afzal, Capt Khurram.
Standing 3rd Row	:	Capt Naeem, 2/Lt Kashif, Capt Bhatti, Capt Khurram, Capt Hilal, Capt Shahzad, Capt Omar, CaPt Rizwan, Capt Ashfiq, Capt Khalid.

Pilot Course-39 - 5th January - 6th November 1998



Sitting Lt to Rt : Maj Hameed, Maj Kamal' Maj Mehmood, Col Shoaib Awan CI RW, Col Hadeed Anver Dy Comdt, Maj Gen Muhammad Ashraf Choudhary, GOC Avn, Lt Gen Agha Jehangir Khan Corps Comd, Capt Pervaiz Senior Student, Brig Arshad Farooq Comdt, Col Tahir Ali CI FW, Lt Col Zahoor Ahmed Malik CFI FW, Maj Waseem, Maj Imran.

Standing 1st Row : Capt Zaeem, Capt Kashif, Capt Tanweer, Maj Ovais, Maj Masood, Maj Waheed, Capt Tariq, Maj Nadeem, Maj Nawazish, Maj Rehan, Capt Anwar, Capt Nazim, Maj Farid, Capt Hamid.

2nd Row : Capt Khawar, Capt Sarfraz, Capt Saeed Capt Najam - us - Saqib, Capt Afaq, Capt Khurram, Capt Kamran, Capt Arif, Capt Imran, Capt Aun, Capt Sohail. Capt Qazj, Capt Rafaqat.

3rd Row : Lt Aurangzeb, Capt Afzal Capt Mushtaq Capt Waqar Capt Ali Capt Kamran Capt Zafar Capt Fooad Capt Mehtab Capt Faisal Capt Saqib Capt Mobashir Capt Nouman.

Pilot Course-40 - 4th January - 6th November 1999



Sitting L to R: Maj Tanveer, Maj Rehan, Maj Masood, Maj Zaighum, Lt Col Zahoor, Col Arshad Iqbal, Brig Arif Rasool Qureshi, Comdt Avn School, Lt Gen Agha Jahangir Ali Khan (Chief Guest), Capt Asif (Senior Student), Col Tahir Ali (Dy Comdt), Lt Col Javed Lodhi (DS Arty), Lt Col Saeed Ahmed Sadal, Maj Hameed Ullah, Maj Muddasir, Maj Muneeb, Capt Ghayoor.

Standing 1st Row Capt Javed, Capt Kashif, Capt Tanveer, Capt Irfan, Capt Iftikhar, Capt Rehan, Capt Mustifa, Capt Shahid, Capt Anwaar, Capt Asif, Capt Imran, Capt Kayani, Capt Ijaz, Lt Shamas.

2nd Row Capt Abid, Capt Aslam, Capt Adil, Capt Kashif, Lt Rauf, Capt Kamran, Lt Farrukh, Capt Javed, Capt Zubair, Capt Naveed, Capt Habib, Capt Azhar, Capt Salahudin, Capt Kashif, Capt Solat.

3rd Row Capt Sameer, Capt Zahid, Capt Saeed, Capt Farooq, Capt Waseem, Capt Abbas, Capt Ibrar, Capt Siddique, Capt Shehzad, Capt Sami, Capt Haider, Capt Unka, Capt Dabir, Capt Mohsin.

Pilot Course-41 - 3rd January - 2nd November 2000



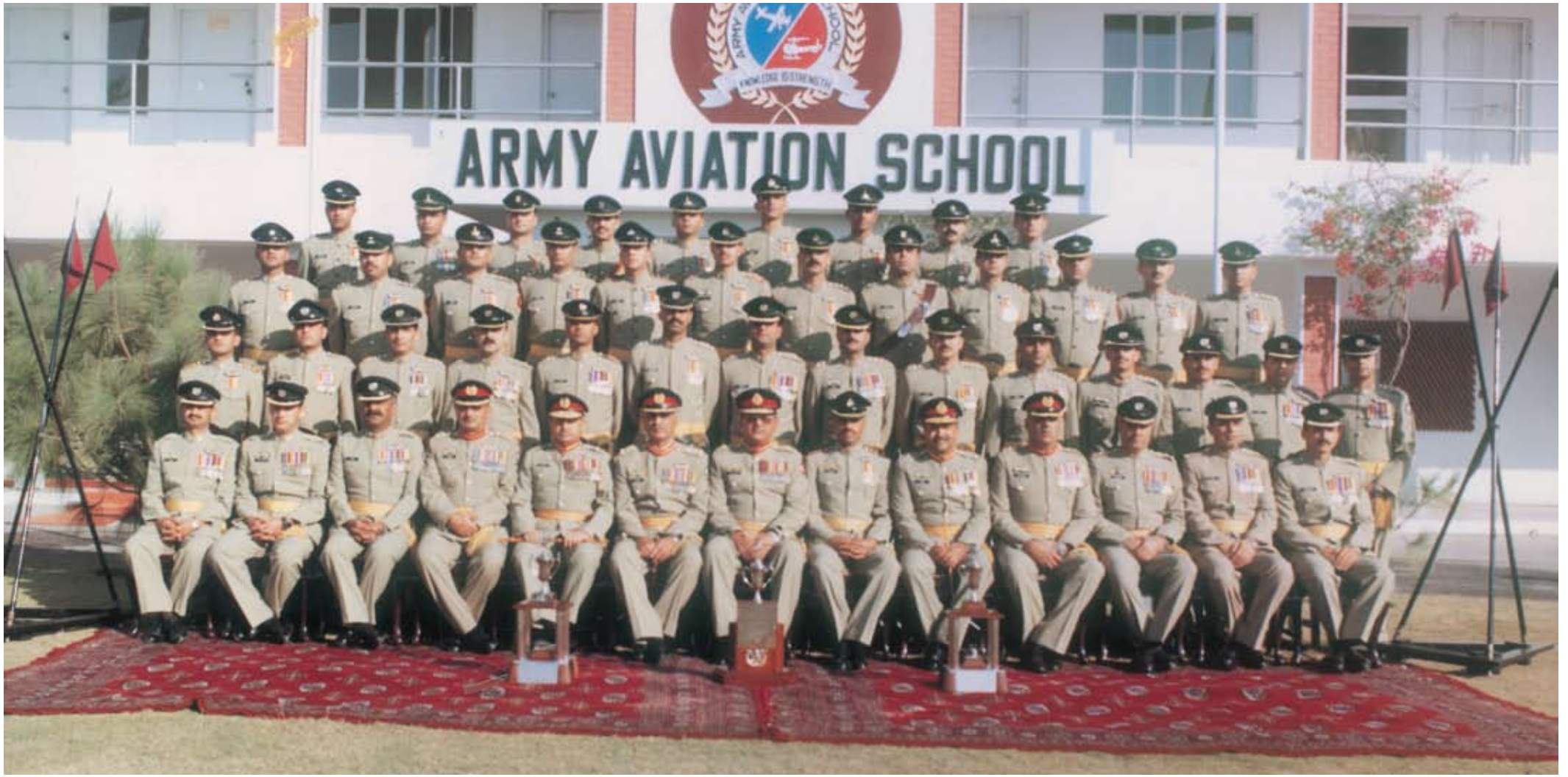
Sitting L To R : Maj Tahir, Maj Abid, Maj Mustafa, Maj(Javed), Cl (RW) Col Arshad Iqbal, Dy Comdt Tahir Ali,
: GOC Avn Maj Gen Muhammad Ashraf Chaudhary, Chief Guest Lt Gen Hamid Nawaz Khan, Senior Student Capt Jawaid,
: Comdt Army Avn School Brig Arif Rasul Qureshi, CFI (FW) Lt Col Saeed Sadal, Flt Comd (FW) Lt Col Zahoor Afridi,
: Lt Col Nasir Iftikhar, Maj Muneeb, Maj Moddasir.

Standing L To R : Capt Anser, Capt Amir, Capt Tanveer, Capt Umar, Capt Rizwan, Capt Asif, Capt Shahid, Capt Ibrar, Capt Iftikhar,
1st Row : Capt Khalid, Capt Rizwan, Capt Irfan, Capt Asim, Maj Imran.

Standing L To R : Lt Yousaf, Capt Usman, Capt Yasir, Capt Raza, Capt Iftikhar, Capt Kamal, Capt Bilal, Capt Shahid,
2nd Row : Capt Suleman, Capt Mansoor, Capt Nadeem, Capt Arifeen, Capt Naveed, Capt Ali.

Standing L To R : Lt Muzamil, Lt Shakeel (PN), Capt Asghar, Capt Faisal, Lt Zahid, Capt Haroon Lt Mannan, Lt Zahid (PN),
3rd Row : Capt Asghar, Lt Moteseum (PN), Capt Qasim, Lt Asad, Lt Babar.

Pilot Course-42 - 5th February - 8th December 2001



Sitting from left to right Maj Abid, Maj Tahir, Maj Daud, Col Tahir Ali (Dy Comdt), Maj Gen Javed Aslam Tahir (DG Avn), Brig Nasir Mahmood (Comdt Avn School), Chied Guest Lt Gen Faiz Ahmed Jilani (Comd 30 Corps), Capt Sajid (Senior Student), Maj Gen Muhammad Azam (GOC Avn), Col Zulfiqar (CI RW), Lt Col Basharat (CFI FW), Maj Javed Yasin, Maj Irfan.

1st Row Standing L to R. Capt Shahab, Capt Tanveer, Capt Ahsan, Maj Umar, Capt Hilal, Capt Khurram, Maj Mustafa Rais, Capt Zahid, Capt Rizwan, Capt Khalid, Capt Saqib, Maj Pervez, Maj Asim, Capt Khawar

2nd Row Standing L to R. Lt Amir, Capt Imran, Lt Umer, Capt Shahzad, Capt Zasir, Capt Asif, Capt Haq Nawaz, Lt Faisal. Lt Majid, Lt Khurrum, Capt Syed Yasir, Capt Faisal.

3rd Row Standing L to R. Capt Yasir, Lt Khalid, Lt Zeshan, Lt Faisal, Capt Mudassir, Lt Qazi Imran, Capt Irfan Aslam, Capt Ali Irtaza, Capt Farooq

Pilot Course-43 - 18th February - 31st December 2002



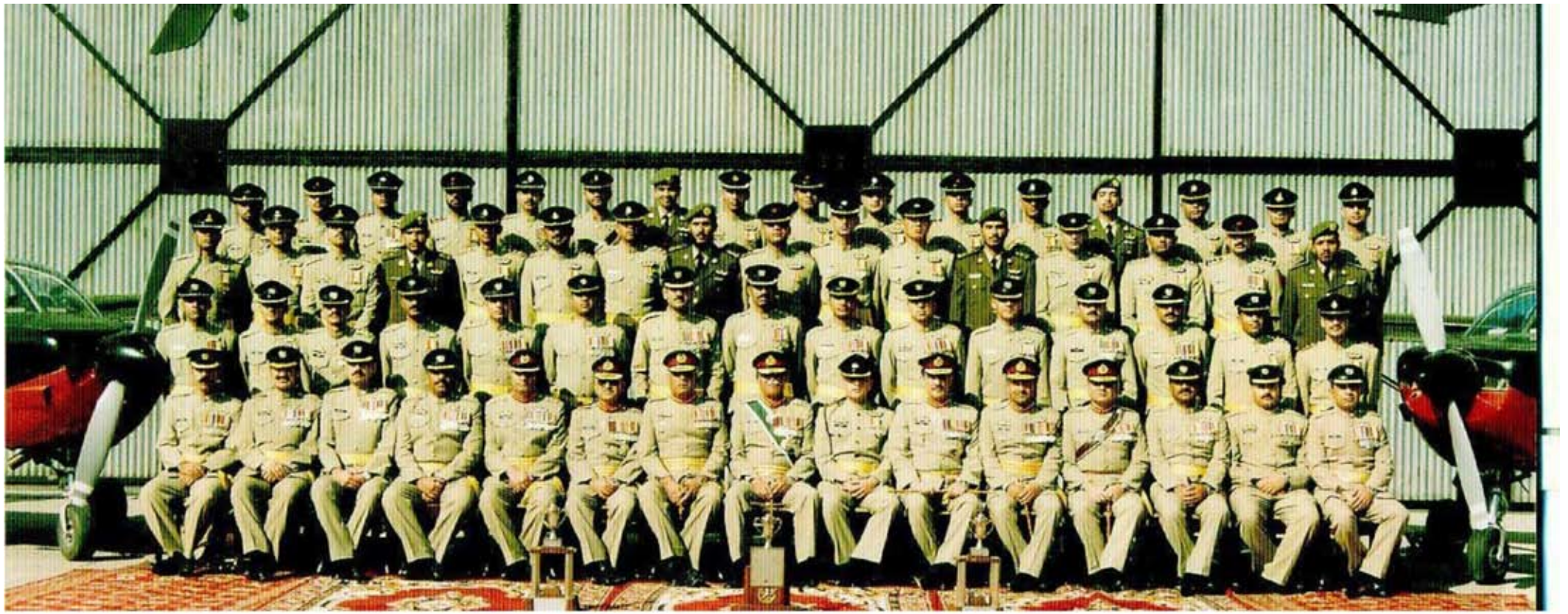
Sitting L to R : Capt Arif, Maj Umer, Maj Asim, Maj Javed, Maj Nawazish, Lt Col Naeem (CFI), Col Basharat (CI), Brig Nasir (Comdt), President Gen Pervaiz Musharaf, Capt Murtaza (Course Senior), Maj Gen Azam (GOC Avn), Col Zulifiqar (Dy Comdt), Maj Tanveer, Capt Khawar, Capt Ahsan, Capt Khalid, Lt Col Daud (Flt Comd).

Standing 1st Row : Capt Hashim, Capt Younas, Capt Umer, Capt Sarwar, Lt Mohammad (RSLF), Capt Saqib, Capt Faisal, Capt Zafar, Capt Rashid, Capt Sajjad, Capt Khurram, Capt Salman, Capt Hilal, Capt Zahid, Capt Imran, Lt Ali (RSLF), Capt Saeed.

Standing 2nd Row : Capt Yasir, Capt Attique, Capt Jamal, Capt Haroon, Capt Kashif, Capt Zahid, Capt Naveed, Capt Zia, Capt Tamseel, Capt Khurram, Lt Ahmed (RSLF), Lt Hider, Lt Sohail, Lt Ahmed (RSLF), Lt Zaka.

Standing 3rd Row : Lt Musa, Lt Faisal, Lt Abdur Rehman (RSLF), Lt Hamid, Lt Bander (RSLF), Lt Jawad, Capt Kamran, Capt Khalid, Lt Masood, Lt Ashfaq, Lt Shehzad, Lt Falah (RSLF).

Pilot Course-44 - 20th January - 21st November 2003



Sitting L to R: Maj Iftikhar, Maj Ghayyur, Maj Mawazish, Lt Col Naeem Cheema (CFI), Col Basharat (Dy Comdt), Lt Gen Khalid Munir (Corps Comd), Brig Zulfiqar (Comdt), Gen Muhammad Yousaf (VCOAS, Chief Guest), Capt Asad (Senior Student), Lt Gen Shahid Aziz (CGS), Maj Gen Muhammad Azam (GOC), Maj Gen Afzal Muzaffar (DCGS), Lt Col Daud (Flt Comd), Maj Khizar, Maj Yasin

Standing 1st Row: Capt Khalid, Capt Faisal, Capt Saqib, Capt Saeed, Capt Ahsan Qazi, Capt Hilal, Maj Arif, Capt Khurram, Capt Zafar Aqeel, Capt Aoun, Capt Niazi, Capt Zahid, Capt Kashif, Capt Kamran, Lt Shehzad

Standing 2nd Row: Capt Imran Ashraf, Capt Adeel, Capt Haroon Zeb, 2/Lt Abdul Hadi, Capt Zaryab, Capt Shahid, Lt Ali Imran, Lt Ali Bin Muhammad Al Arfooj (RSLF)*, Lt Imran Alarn, Lt Sajid Baig, Lt Musa, Lt Zamil (RSLF), Capt Umar Arshad, Capt Khalid, Capt Asim, 2/Lt Badar Bin Ali Al Hasboon (RSLF)

Standing 3rd Row: Capt Ansar,Capt Omar Talla, Capt Mudassir, Lt Tariq, Capt Nadeem, Capt Ibrahim, Lt Turki Bin Naseer Al Mezaini (RSLF), Capt Saad, Capt Babar, Lt Meraj, Lt Tallat, Capt Amir, 2/Lt Abdullah Bin Muhammad Al Hemdi (RSLF), Lt John, Capt Imran Zafar, Lt Zia

*(RSLF) *Royal Saudi Land Forces*

Pilot Course-45



Sitting L to R: Capt Waqar, Maj Sohail, Lt Col Asif, Lt Col M. Naeem CFI(FW), Maj Gen Javed Aslam Tahir DG Avn, Lt Abdullah (RSLF) Brig Inam Karim Comdt Avn School, Lt Gen Muhammad Sabir HI(M) Comd 30 Corps (Chief Gust), Capt Umar Course Senior, Maj Gen Muhammad Azam GOC Avn, Col M. Tahir Akram (Dy Comdt), Lt Col Daud Flt Comd (FW), Maj Kashif, Capt Arifeen, Capt Asif.

Standing 1st Row: Capt Raza, Capt Faisal, Lt Abdul Rehman (RSLF), Capt Bilal, Capt Mudassar, Capt Talal, Lt Awad (RSLF), Lt Immad, Lt Ali,
L to R Lt Suleman (RSLF), Lt Asad, Lt Waleed (RSLF), Lt Hamid, Lt Taimur, Capt Usman Dogar, Capt Atif, Capt Umair.

Standing 2nd Row: Lt Hussain (RSLF), Lt Waqar, Capt Umar, Lt Khalid (RSLF), Lt Muhalli (RSLF), Lt Aurangzeb, Lt Badar (RSLF), Lt Shair, Lt Imran ahmed,
L to R Capt Ghafoor, Lt Hammad (RSLF), Lt Mustafa, Lt Farhaj.

Pilot Course-46



Pilot Course-47



Pilot Course-48



P-5 and P-6 Course photographs are not traceable. These two courses were photographed but unfortunately none of the students have a copy. P-12, 13 and P-14 were not photographed, so was P-20.

Pilot Course-5 - 28th January - 5th October 1963

Captain Nauman Mahmood	Armoured Corps
Captain Syed Mushtaq Hussain Razvi	Artillery
Captain Mir Saudat Ullah	Artillery
Lieutenant Zafar Aqeel	Artillery
Lieutenant Anwar Hussain Shah	Artillery
Captain Zafar Ahmed	Signals
Captain Malik Muhammad Ishaq	Signals
Captain Farhat Ali Burki	EME
Lieutenant Muhammad Saeed	EME

Pilot Course-6 - 27th January - 3rd October 1964

Captain Khalid Saeed Khan	Armoured Corps
Captain Anis Akram Beg	Armoured Corps
Captain Muazzam Ali Shah	Artillery
Captain Khalid Farooq Khan	Artillery
Captain M A Pervez Zaka	Artillery
Captain M Salim Mirza	Artillery
Captain Hidayat Ullah Khan Niazi	Engineers
Lieutenant Muhammad Qasim	Signals
Captain Muhammad Nasim Khan	Frontier Force
Lieutenant Ali Jawaher Khan	Baluch

Pilot Course-12 - 4th August 1969 to 11th April 1970

Captain Syed Mahmood Rizvi	Artillery
Captain Moeen Uddin	Engineers
Captain Abid Hussain	Engineers
Captain M T K Dotani	Signals
Captain Syed Minhaj Ali	Frontier Force
Transferred to RWQ - 10	
Captain Abdul Razzaq	Signals
Captain Siraj Ul Mulk	Frontier Force
Captain Sajid Islam	Artillery
Captain Tasnim hayat Malik	Artillery
Captain Abdul Khaliq Anjum	Artillery
Captain Hameed Ullah	Ordnance

Pilot Course-13 - 4th December 1970 to 17th August 1971

Captain Ali Amin	Punjab
Captain Zahir Shah	Armoured Corps
Captain Shah Alam	Armoured Corps
Captain Tariq Shah Khan	Baluch
Captain Muhammad Umar	Artillery
Captain Muhammad Anwar Ul Haq	Signals
Captain Riaz Hussain	Signals
Captain Aftab Ahmed Khan	Engineers
Captain Muhammad Iftikhar Ahmed	Artillery
Captain Khalid Saeed	Punjab
Captain Khurshid Uz Zaman	Artillery
Transferred to RWQ – 11	
Captain. Farouk Hamid Khan	Artillery
Captain. Mahmood Hussain	Artillery
Lieutenant Kamal Fayyaz	Pak Navy
Lieutenant Iftikhar Shaffi	Pak Navy

Pilot Course-14 - 17th May 1971 to 25th March 1972

Major Rahmat Ullah	Baluch
Captain Kamal Khan	Baluch
Major Mumtaz Hussain Malik	Engineers
Major Tariq Malik	Baluch
Captain Sajid Ali	Artillery
Captain Muhammad Nasrullah	Artillery
Captain Muhammad Asghar Akram	Armour Corps
Captain Muhammad Saleem Zaidi	Engineers
Captain Muhammad Nasrullah Khan	Artillery
Captain Sibbit Rasul	Artillery
Captain Muhammad Salim Nasir	Artillery
Captain Tallat Aziz	Frontier Force
Captain. Mumtaz Azeem Malik	Ordnance
Lieutenant Mahboob Ur Rehman	Pak Navy
Lieutenant Muhammad Aslam Mirza	Pak Navy

SAAB ELEMENTARY COURSES

SAAB ELEMENTARY-1
From: (18 Aug 76 to 26 Dec 76)

Captain Saeed Ahmed Rana
Captain Shaukat Ibrahim Ist
Captain Muhammad Baqar Khan
Captain Abdul Razaq Chaudhry
Captain Iqbal Ahmed
Captain Danyal Naveed
Captain Muhammad Akram
Captain Khalique Akram
Captain Muhammad Saeed

SAAB ELEMENTARY-2

Captain Omar Chaudhry Ist
Captain Zafar Iqbal
Lieutenant Tariq Chaudhry
Lieutenant Azkar Ahmed Khan Lodhi
Lieutenant Irfan Bhatty
Captain Shahid Jamil

SAAB ELEMENTARY-2A

Captain Sikandar
Captain Ahsan Ud Din
Lieutenant Omar Jalal Qureshi
Lieutenant Muhammad Tahir Raja
Lieutenant Nasir Ahmed Malik Ist
Lieutenant Mian Ahsan Aziz

SAAB ELEMENTARY-3

Captain Nisar Ahmed Khan
Captain Hadeed Anver Malik
Captain Kaukab Aziz Bhatti
Captain Muhammad Shoaib Awan
Captain Muhammad Iftikhar Ahmed Khan
Captain Khalid Mahmood Salim Ist
Lieutenant Mian Nadeem Ijaz Ahmed
Lieutenant Muhammad Sarfraz
Lieutenant Syed Liaqat Nabi Shah

SAAB ELEMENTARY-4

Captain Javed Iqbal
Captain Zaeem Ur Rehman
Captain Zahid Hussain Tirmizi
Captain Muhammad Shahid Ansari
Captain Muhammad Anjum Raffi
Captain Syed Taqi Naseer Rizvi Ist
Captain Ibrahim Rehmat
Captain Tughral Bashir
Captain Ehsan Qadir Khan

SAAB ELEMENTARY-5

Captain Amir Sanjar Farouk
Captain Raja Muhammad Fakhar Ul Islam
Captain Muhammad Mumtaz
Captain Iqtidar Ahmed Farooqi Ist
Lieutenant Ajmal Abbas Siddiqui

SAAB ELEMENTARY-6

Captain Zahid Hussain
Captain Tariq Ahmed Khan
Captain Muhammad Musaddiq
Captain Waqar Ahmed Kingravi Ist
Captain Muhammad Iqbal
Captain Sohail Ekram Siddiqui
Lieutenant Nasir Mian
Lieutenant M.A.Z Khan

SAAB ELEMENTARY-7

Captain S. Munawar Ahmed Ist
Captain Shahid Saif Ur Rehman Bhatti
Captain Khalid Akhtar
Captain Zafar Ahmed Saleem
Captain Rana Shahid Mahmood
Captain Raja Arif Nazir
Lieutenant Zafar Junaid Usamni

SAAB ELEMENTARY-8

Captain Asad Sharif
Captain Shaukat Masood
Captain Muhammad Shabab Khan
Captain Tariq Salim
Captain Nofal Manzoor
Captain Muhammad Ahmed Raashid Ist
Lieutenant Jamshed Iqbal Bajwa
Lieutenant Tariq Mahmood Butt
Lieutenant Jamal Abdullah

SAAB ELEMENTARY-9

(16 Feb 80 to 10 Dec 80)

Captain Reginald George Foulds
Captain Muhammad Zulfiqar
Captain Pervez Sultan Khan
Captain Khalid Sohail Sultan
Captain Akram Mahmood Khan
Captain Syed Ali
Lieutenant Muhammad Sadiq
Captain Ifran Shaher Yar (PN) Ist

SAAB ELEMENTARY-10

(08 Jan 94 to 01 Dec 94)

Captain Amir Saeed Toor
Captain Ikram Ul Haq
Captain Naeem Masood Khan Ist
Captain Usman Shuja Muhammad Khan
Captain Mohsin Ahmed
Captain Basharat Ahmed Noor
Captain Muhammad Farooq Akram
Captain Muhammad Uzair
Captain Muhammad Salah Ud Din
Captain Sohail Sadiq
Captain Amir Mirza
Captain Basit Jamal Durrani
Captain Syed Nadeem Ali
Captain Chenzeb Khan
Lieutenant Syed Qasim Akbar
Lieutenant Jahanzeb

SAAB ELEMENTARY-11

From: (03 Sep 94 to 22 Jun 95)

Captain Irfan Hassan
Captain Muhammad Ahmed Khan
Captain Junaid Adeeb Ist
Captain Muhammad Umar Farooq
Captain Aamir Saeed
Captain Tauqeer Haider
Captain Ovais Ahmed
Captain Khalid Ahmed
Captain Faizan Ur Rehman
Captain Muhammad Farooq Ahmed Khan
Lieutenant Murtaza Saleem
Lieutenant Babar Saed Butt
Captain Amer Waqas
Captain Amjad Ahmed
Captain Syed Muhammad Salman Ali
Captain Mahmood Ahmed Khan

SAAB ELEMENTARY-12

LINKED WITH TE (RW) – 9
From: (07 Jan 95 to 26 Oct 95)

Captain Shahzad Manzoor
Captain Imtiaz Ahmed
Captain Tahir Mahmood
Captain Shahid Saeed
Captain Nayab Khan
Captain Muhammad Asim Mushtaq Ist
Captain Asif Bashir
Captain Ikram Khan
Captain Syed Azhar Hussain Rizvi
Captain Ameer Muhammad Khusro
Captain Shahzad Adnan Noor Sani
Captain Sajjad Ahsan
Captain Kafeel Ahmed Ch
Lieutenant Amir Raza
Lieutenant Ikram Tahir Khalili
S/Lieutenant Taufeeque Rauf Qureshi
S/Lieutenant Arif Saeed
Captain Muhammad Tariq Niaz
Captain Rizwan Ahmed
Captain Asad Ahsan

SAAB ELEMENTARY-13

LINKED WITH TE (RW) SPECIAL – 10
From: (06 Aug 95 to 06 Jun 96)

Captain Waqqas Saeed Niazi
Captain Rizwan Mahmud
Captain Nawazish Ali
Captain Zahid Anwar
Captain Muhammad Azam Khan
Captain Rehan Waheed
Captain Muhammad Babar Yousaf
Captain Asim Razzaque
Captain Habib Ullah
Captain Muhammad Atif Saeed
Captain Umad Ahmed Nazim Ist

SAAB ELEMENTARY-14

LINKED WITH TE (RW) SPECIAL – 11
From: (30 Mar 96 to 23 Jan 97)

Captain Farrukh Ejaz Tahseen
Captain Muhammad Zaheer
Captain Syed Muhammad Ali Ist
Captain Rashid Kafait
Captain Mazhar Ul Haq
Captain Omer Mehdi Warraich
Captain Hamid Ali
Captain Nadeem Yousaf
Captain Adnan
Captain Raja Muhammad Munir

SAAB ELEMENTARY-15

LINKED WITH TE (RW) SPECIAL – 12
From: (06 Oct 96 to 09 Aug 97)

Captain Malik Mumtaz Ahmed
Captain Abdul Mateen Bhatti
Captain Mansoor Fazal
Captain Kashir Anwar
Captain Azadar Hussain
Captain Jehanzeb Ahmed Satti
Captain Bilal Sarwar Kawish
Captain Adnan Qayyum Abbasi
Captain Asghar Khan
Captain Javed Iqbal
Captain Ahmed Mujtaba Azhar
Captain Sajid Sattar
Captain Farhan Gul khan

DEPARTED

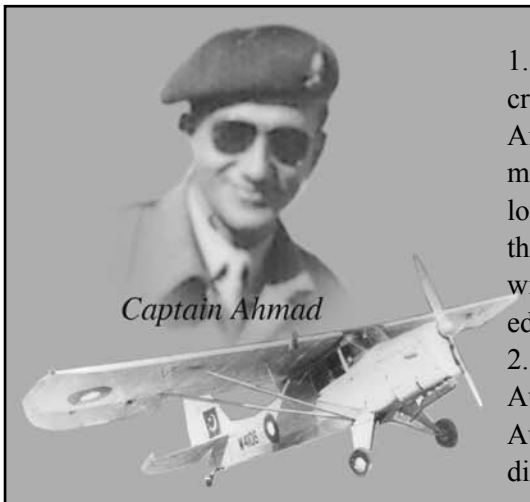


COMRADES



DEPARTED COMRADES

Flying has its own thrill but also carries an inherent danger. Orville Wright wrote in 1907; "If you are looking for perfect safety in air than it is better to sit on a fence and watch birds fly". Pakistan Army Aviation's ratio of one fatal accident per eleven thousand hours is lower than the universal rate of one accident per ten thousand hours.



1. 2nd May 1953 was the first black day. Captain Vajid Ali crashed in an Auster aircraft only miles away from Chaklala Airfield. He was coming back from aerial photographic mission from Rahwali. Prior to landing he got involved in low-level manoeuvres and crashed with his family witnessing the tragic crash. He left behind widow and two sons. His lady wife later migrated to East Pakistan where she completed her education in medical and brought up the kids.

2. On 11th June 1953, Captain AMS Ahmed died when his Auster had a mid air collision with Captain MM Mahmood's Auster, both were carrying out formation flying, at a short distance from the home field.


9 Squadron Monument

3. First fatal accident of L-19 took place on 1st December 1960 in Dargai Hills. Captain Syed Aziz Ul Hassan, the pilot and copilot Major Maqbool of EME, were burnt. Captain Aziz Ul Hassan was holder of the 'Flying Trophy' in P-2 course. He was born on 6th August 1934 and was commissioned in 15 Punjab Regiment on 13th March 1955. Both pilots had gone to Munda Qala from Peshawar to investigate the forced landing of another aircraft which had occurred a day prior. Weather was clear but they failed to clear a ridge and crashed about 50 feet below the top probably due to down draft. Major Maqbool was from EME and had done instrument flying course in Germany as well. His elder brother Flying Officer Zia Ul Haq who was in Royal Indian Air force had also died in an air crash on 6th January 1944 near Wazirabad.

4. The next tragedy took place on 10th December 1961 when Captain Ikram crashed in Pindi Bhatian area. He was there in connection with army exercise 'Milestone'. According to eye witnesses he made a low pass over the strip and hit the edges on the end of the field. As soon as L-19 crashed people ran and evacuated the passenger but before they could get Captain Ikram out, the aircraft caught fire and burnt him to death. He was buried in Rawalpindi. His passenger Major Khuda Dad Khan of Frontier Force Regiment survived.

5. On 28th February 1963, Captain Riaz Malik and Captain Raja Sarfraz crashed in a L-19 in the local flying area near village Dhudial and died on the spot. Captain Sarfraz was about to go for instructor course and was practicing for the same.

6. During the 1965 War, some aircraft were hit by the hostile fire but without any fatality. However after the cease fire, one L-19, on 7th April 1966, piloted by Captain Jurjees Nagi ex 5 Light Ack Ack Regiment strayed into the Indian territory due to thick fog around Lahore, and was shot down by Indian fighter near

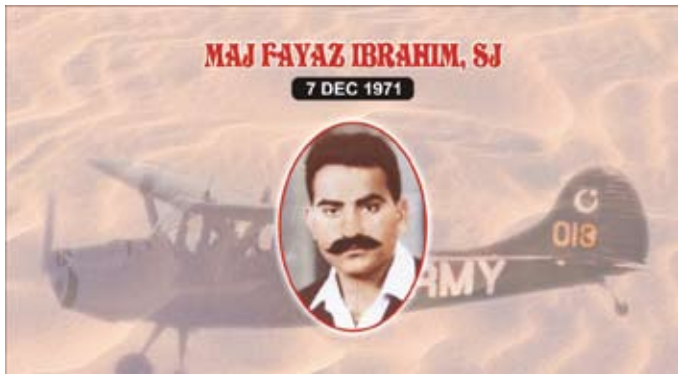
Amritsar. The pilot's body was later returned. Two roads one in Lahore and other at Rawalpindi are named after him.

7. In 1966, Captain Mirza Subhan Beg crashed over Chota Sargodha Airfield and both the occupants died. He was giving ride to an infantry officer for Air Control Training.

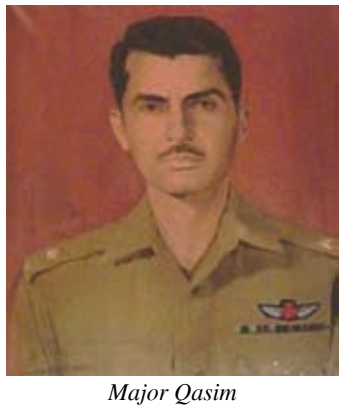
8. On 2nd December 1968 Captain Razi Ahmed Khwaja ex 23 Cavalry Regiment undergoing Pilot Course No. 10 died in an air accident while flying solo in Dhamial circuit at 1100 hours, he thus became the first casualty during P- course

9. On 27th June 1970 a strange kind of accident occurred. Major Tahir Mahmood Jilani along with a passenger Captain Noor Muhammad of 474 Engineers went for reconnaissance of Indus River near Khushal Garh Bridge and till to date neither any portion of the L-19 nor any part of the bodies have been recovered. Naval divers were also called for the search. Captain Gilani was commissioned in 4 Punjab Regiment in 1961 and had also served in 24 Punjab Regiment apart from 1 and 3 Squadron.

10. In the Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1971, two L-19's became the war victim. One, piloted by Major Fayyaz Ibrahim**,** went down in Chhor area on 6 December 1971. On the very next day, on 7th December one L-19 crashed in Sialkot Sector when it engaged low level wires with Captain Aftab Ahmed Khan and Havildar Muhammad Ashraf onboard.



11. After the 1971 War. on 4th January 1972, Major Mohammad Qasim gave a lift from Pasrur for Gujranwala to a Bengali Officer Second Lieutenant Humayun Raza, who turned out to be a hijacker. On resistance he shot Major Qasim in cold blood and then crash landed in India. Major Qasim was awarded SJ.



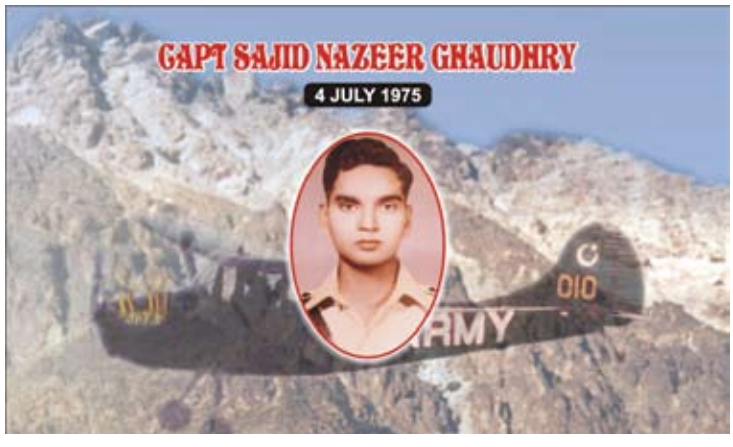
Major Qasim

12. On 20th April 1972, Major Zahir Shah of 2 Squadron crashed in area Mandi Sadiq Gunj while on a surveillance mission. He died on the spot and was buried in Kohat, his observer Major Fateh Mohhammad Khan ex 24 Baluch Regiment survived with a broken spine. Major Zahir Shah was commissioned in 4 Cavalry and later served in 28 Cavalry Regiment.

13. 23rd October 1974 saw the first fatal crash of Alouette-III No 1950. Major Tauheed Ul Haq became the first victim of this machine right over Dhamial Base. His student Lieutenant Ali Said Yabboni of United Arab Emirates also expired. Major Tauheed was practicing auto rotation.

14. Another Alouette-III No. 5189 crashed near Astore (in Northern Area) on 16th April 1976 and took the lives of Major Muhammad Nasrullah Khan, Major Khalid Mahmood and Naik Nasim Ali Shah. Pilot took off in tail wind from Astore with 6 persons on board and at 100 feet suddenly turned 180 degrees and hit the ground. Probable cause was Vortex Ring phenomena.

15. On 3rd July 1975 Captain Sajid Nazir Choudhry of 3 Squadron while performing the duty of flight commandeer at Khuzdar took his L-19 to Quetta for rectification. On 4th July after rectification he took off from Quetta Airfield (Gurkha) and after one circuit landed back due to engine vibrations. He again took off after rectification and seconds later he crashed while making an attempt to land back at Gurka. He was burnt and later died in CMH Quetta. He was the only sibling of his parents.





16. First fatal crash of MI-8 No 0424 took place around Sibi. On 22nd January 1977. Captain Shafqat Ullah, Captain Farooq Dasti, Captain Tahir Hameed, Subedar Sardar Khan and Naik Zakir Hussain perished alongwith eight other passenger on board. Crash took place due to bad weather near Sibi Hills. Captain Tahir Hameed was serving in 3 Army Aviation Squadron at Quetta. He was going on leave.

17. One L-19 of 3 Squadron crashed on 27th March 1978, in Kohlu area, alongwith its pilot Captain Zahid Hussain Shah. He was born on 14th August 1952 and was commissioned in 55 Punjab regiment on 19th September 1971.

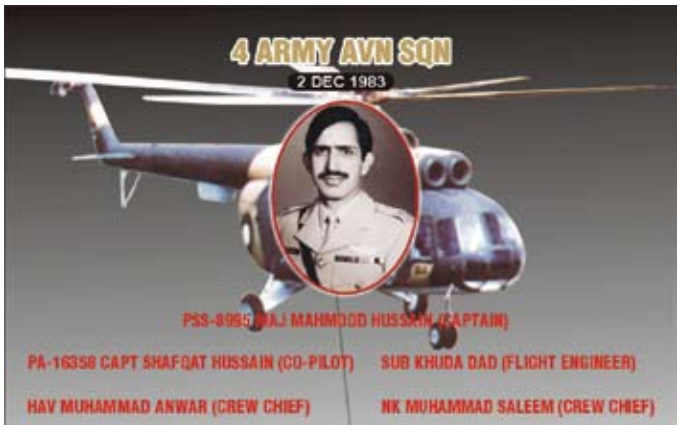
18. One more L-19, piloted by Major Tanveer Ahmed, of 2 Field Regiment met the same end on 7th May 1979 near Mirpur.

19. Two officers of 2 Army Aviation Squadron, Major Muslim Ghani and Major Ansar Ahmed in one L-19 died on 30th July 1979 at Lahore. They crashed on take off leg.

20. One more L-19 was lost at Kohat on 11th July 1980 due to poor weather, along with the pilot Major Shah Nawaz and his passenger Chief of Staff Brigadier Hasnain. Brigadier Huzoor Hasnain was SJ and Bar, and on his farewell visits.

21. First fatal crash of MFI-17 (Mushak) No 064 of 2 Squadron, occurred on 7th September 1980 at Lahore in which Major Zahid Jadoon lost his life. Weather was bad for last 10 days. At 1300hours Jadoon and Wing commander Pervaiz got airborne to check the weather. Jadoon however got into unauthorized aileron roll and crashed in front of spectators both occupants died on the spot. Ironically Jadoon's younger brother also died few years later in air crash.

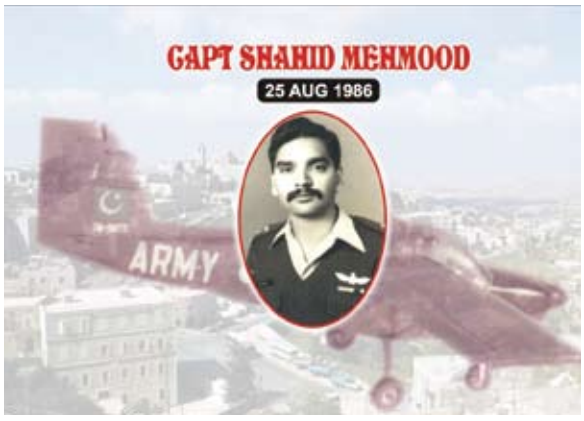
22. It was followed by one more crash of MFI-17 No. 5094, on 7th October 1982, near Sohawa, In which Major Aziz Ahmed instructor and Lieutenant Ijaz Ahmed student pilot perished, while on a low level navigation cum Artillery Shoots for P-24 course.



23. 2nd December 1983 was a sad day. One MI-8 No 24518 of 4 Army Aviation Squadron crashed near Manawala killing all its occupants which included Major Mahmood Hussain, Captain Shafqat Hussain, Naib Subedar Khuda Dad Khan, Havildar Muhammad Anwar and Havildar Muhammad Saleem. Helicopter was part of army exercise Zarb-E-Ahan. It was carrying a recoilless rifle mounted on jeep. While landing at night in the field simulating heliborne force it hit the ground, they all perished. Captain Shafqat's brother Major Shaukat also an aviator died in a road accident in 1998.

24. On 17 September 1984, Captain Tariq Mahmood Sheikh who was holder of Best Instructor Trophy from Flying Instructor School and Havildar Muhammad Hussain died at Tilla Ranges in MFI-17 aircraft No. 520. MFI-17 got entangled into wires during low flying. It is ironical that previously one helicopter and one Mushak had engaged wires at the same spot but were lucky to survive.

25 One more crash of MFI-17 No 5109, took place on 25th August 1986 at Muzaffar Garh, killing PA-20129 Captain Shahid Mahmood. Aircraft lost power while flying low over Muzzaffargarh city and during force landing it hit a lone date tree. The copilot Captain Abul Fazal survived.



26. Major Ahmed Bilal Qureshi was born on 26th October 1953 at Sargodha, he was commissioned in EME in 1978. He was holder of President Trophy for best all round performance during pilot course. He lost his life in a MFI-17 No 5067 on 2nd April 1987 at Dhamial while practicing inverted flying aerobatics for graduation parade.

27. On 3rd October 1987 Sub Lieutenant Rao Naeem Ahmed of Pakistan Navy undergoing pilot course died while force landing in aircraft No 5044, at short of finals at Qasim Base.

28. First fatal crash of Jet Ranger occurred on 14th December 1987 near Sambrial close to Sialkot. Captain Nadeem Ullah popularly known as 'German Soldier' and Havildar Muhammad Farid lost their lives. Crash took place due to bad weather. Pilot took off from field area for Sialkot and lost contact with ground due to fog, which was so intense that farmers 500 yards away from crash site just heard the sound but found the debris after 2 hours.



29. One MFI-17 No 124, crashed at Karachi on 10th January 1988 killing Lieutenant Colonel Saleem Raza and Major Arif Aziz. They were night flying at Faisal Base, commanding officer and second in command discussed the procedures to be adopted in case of engine failure on take off-leg. Both were instructors on the type. Finally they decided to put theory into practice and made three circuits and on the fourth, aircraft crashed while turning north in front of squadron officers.



30. On 22nd February 1988, in an operational sortie Major Ijaz Haider Zaidi and Captain Waqar Hussain Baig lost their lives in a Alouette-III No 1953. There were two passengers and the crew chief on board as well. Every body died except crew chief Havildar Riasat who jumped out of the helicopter during auto-rotation.PA18310 Captain Waqar was commissioned in 9 Signal Battalion in 1978, who graduated from Flying Instructor School in 1985.It was his first tenure in Northern Area.

31. On 31st July 1988, many precious lives were lost at Basha in Skardu Valley. Puma No 1406 Piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Sajid Islam (who had survived the crash of OH-13 in December 1971 at Chammb) and Major Khalid Akthar Minhas, Subedar Muhammad Rafique, Havildar Abdul Haq, Havildar Muhammad Younas and Havildar Liaqat Ali all aboard.



32. Captain Hamid Sarwar Jadoon(brother of Zahid Jadoon) died at Mangla on 18th January 1989. He died in aircraft No 5156 about 200 meters after take off, aircraft had developed some juddering and loss of power, Captain Jadoon tried to turn back the aircraft for landing but crashed. He was commissioned in 10 Signal Battalion.

33. Captain Tasawar Humayun died in a Mushak, while carrying out low flying over his home town on 24th May 1989. He was born on 23 Jan 1962 in Village Thoha Hamayoun near Chakwal. He completed his education in Military College Jhelum and was commissioned in 8 Medium Regiment Artillery Regiment on 17th May 1985. He joined Army Aviation on 4th June 1988. He left behind his widow and a son.

34. Captain Shahid Irshad ex 70 Long Course was commissioned in 39 Punjab Regiment. He joined Army Aviation Corps in 1987 and was posted to 9 Army Aviation Squadron in June 1988. In December 1988 he was posted to 4 Army Aviation Squadron(U). On 7th March 1989, he died in an unfortunate air crash in Mushak No 5173 with a passenger Captain Akhtar near Gujranwala.Most probable cause was the partial loss of power.



35. Captain Raza Ali Bacha and Captain Amir Yasin went on eternal flight due to bad weather at Kohat in a Mushak. They both were going to Peshwar from exercise area. The weather was so bad that their wreckage was found after two days.

36. First fatal accident of Lama occurred on 5th March 1990 at Dhamial, in which Captain Abdul Qayyum and Captain Syed Kamal Masood left this temporal abode. Both were carrying out the air test of helicopter No 2685. They took off at 1330 hours for air test, two technicians Naik Bahadur and Naik Sultan were also on board. Helicopter crashed in football ground on take off leg killing all occupants. Major cause was main rotor blade hitting horizontal stablizer in the air. Captain Qayyum was commissioned in 60 Field regiment where as Captain Kamal was commissioned in 44 Signal Battalion.


Captain Qayyum

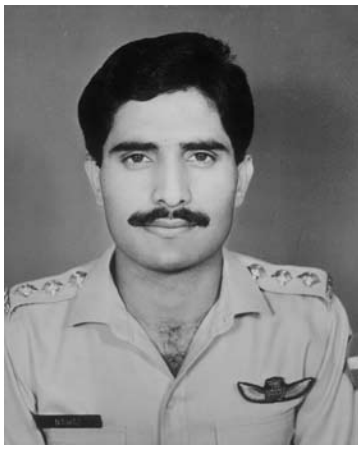

Captain Kamal Masood

37. On 17th July 1990, one MFI-17 overhead Gujrat Strip, took Captain Waqar Ahmed Abbasi and Captain Zaigham Abbas Jaffri to the shores of eternity. Captain Waqar Ahmed Abbasi was born on 10th March 1962 in a village near Murree. He was commissioned in the 99 Medium Regiment Artillery on 18 March 1983 and joined Army Aviation on 18th May 1986. Captain Jafri had attended the P-30 course but could not finish it due to illness. He was called again in P-31.

38. On 28th November 1991 Captain Naveed Khan lost life in Mushak No 182, overhead his relatives house in Sector G-10 while carrying out low level manoeuvres.

39. On 9th January 1992 crash of one more MFI-17 resulted in the sad demise of Major Naveed Adil near Okara. Weather was foggy and Major Adil had to bring Director General E.M.E from Okara as a passenger. Near Renala Khurd he lost contact with ground, inadvertently he pulled his aircraft up and rammed into high tension wires. He died on the spot. Unknowingly his family kept waiting for him at Lahore to join them in the birthday party of his daughter.

40. In Piun Valley, on 21st March 1992, one Lama No 2673 was lost along with Major Tahir Ali and Major Muhammad Nawaz. These brave aviators had gone to pick up Sepoy Wali Muhhamad ex 5 Northern Light Infantry from the Arif Post and due to close proximity of boulder, crashed and perished. Major Tahir



Captain Mohammad Nawaz



Major Tahir Ali







was awarded Sitara-I-Basalat for his courageous effort in rescuing 13 Jawans at a height of 21,000 feet.

41. The crash of one MFI-17 No. 157 at Gujrat on 17th June 1992 killed Captain Shahid Rehman Tariq. He was on a normal training mission, which had no provision for beat ups over home.

42. Lama No. 2692 became the target of an enemy missile in Chulung Valley in which Major Babar Ramzan and Major Khalid Sohail Sultan embraced Shahdat along with Brigade Commander 323 Brigade, Brigadier Anwari.

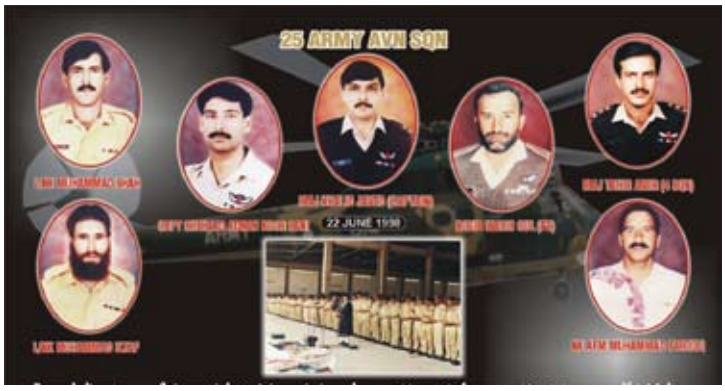
43. On 2nd September 1992, Taraki Hills were the scene of a ghastly accident involving one MFI-17 No. 071 in bad weather carrying Major Safdar Jehanzeb and Major Rasheed Mansoor. Both pilots were seasoned flyers. 2 September was Chehlum ceremony of Major Babur Ramzan and Khalid Sultan. Both were keen to pay respect to their departed comrades.

44. First accident of AB-205 helicopter happened on 24th April 1993 near Gujranwala. Captain Nasir Hussain Bangash and Captain Raja Shahid Rehman were the unfortunate victims. Instructor Major Javaid and another student pilot Major Arshad Amin came out with minor injuries.

45. 14th September 1994 saw the crash of one more MFI-17 No 086 near Gakkhar Mandi and Captain Waqar Saeed student pilot, perished while performing un authorized manoeuvres over his home.

46. On September 1996, a Puma was flying over Islamabad when the door inadvertently opened in flight. Havildar Muhammad Aslam crew chief was sucked out and had a fatal fall.

47. On 4th March 1998 Lieutenant Colonel Nayyar Iqbal took off in bad weather in an Alouette-III from Qasim Base at 1519 hours and crashed two miles west of Sohawa town. All the four occupants including three belonging to maintenance setup sustained fatal injuries. Lieutenant Colonel Nayyar was commanding 1 Squadron at that time.



48. On 22nd June 1998, Puma piloted by Major Khalid Javed and Captain Shahzad Adnan as the co-pilot crashed at 2247 hours inside the Multan Base premises due to sudden development of a dust storm reducing the visibility to almost zero. All the occupants which included five other passengers died in the crash. One of them Major Tahir Amir was from 4 Squadron who was there on attachment and got on board at the last moment. Puma was on a routine night flying mission. It had gone 30-40 miles out when sudden dust storm engulfed Multan. It tried to land but lost contact with ground. Squadron Commander was in touch with the Puma and gave directions for landings, ultimately it ran short of fuel and crashed inside the base premises.



Major Hanif Captain Uzair Havildar Shabbir Naik Nasir

49. On 10th June 1999 Major Muhammad Hanif as pilot, Captain Muhammad Uzair as co-pilot, Havildar Shabbir as flight engineer and Naik Naseer the crew chiefs of 27 Squadron were returning from Gultari(operational area), after completion of dumping mission in MI-17. They met with a fatal accident at Deosai Plains. Sudden development of high intensity winds and poor weather blocked all the exit routes thus closing all options of diversion.

50. On Ist July 1999 on a training navigational mission from Rahwali to Multan in a MFI-17, Major Muhammad Waseem Bukhari, an instructor pilot with Captain Kanwar Rashid Imran, a student pilot met a fatal accident near Qadirpur Ran, 20 Kilometres north east of Multan. At approximately 0800 hours engine failure occurred and while attempting a forced landing, Major Bukhari hit an embankment .Had he been few feet high he would have survived. He left behind a widow and a toddler.



Captain Waseem

51. On 31st October 1999 while carrying out aileron roll on a MFI-17 during rehearsal for air display on the graduation ceremony of P-40, Captain Shahid Nasir Aulakh as pilot and Captain Masood Ullah Baig as copilot(both instructors) crashed and were killed. Masood's elder brother Lieutenant Colonel Rashid Ullah Beg is also in Army Aviation.

52. On 24th April 2003 at 1706 hours, MI-171 helicopter No.58614 of 5 Squadron crashed in an operational area, killing four crew members and nine passengers. Captain of the aircraft Major Imtiaz Ahmed and Major Nadeem Ali co pilot with Havildar Nawaz as flight engineer and Naik Muhammad Nawaz as crew chief. Both pilots were from Sind Regiment(Major Imtiaz from 17 Sind and Major Nadeem Ali from 8 Sind Regiment).



Major Nadeem



Major Imtiaz

53. On 30th June 2004, one MI-8 helicopter of UNO crashed in Sierra Leone in the jungle thicket killing twenty four peacekeepers on board including fourteen Pakistanis. It included Lieutenant Colonel Zia-Ud-Din as well who was commanding the Pakistan Aviation Squadron at Sierra Leone.

54. On 5th August 2004 Lieutenant Colonel Nauman Ghafoor, Commanding Officer of 27 Squadron alongwith Captain Imran Wasti his adjutant and copilot, Havildar Rabnawaz the flight engineer and Naik Farman the crew chief all perished in MI-17 helicopter near Karak. Accident took place due to technical reasons.



Lieutenant Colonel Ziauddin



Lieutenant Colonel Nauman



Captain Imran Wasti



Havildar Rab Nawaz

55. On 15th October 2005, Captain Abdul Rahim "Baba" of 27 Squadron and Lieutenant Colonel Roghani of Anti Narcotics Force were busy in saving lives of people affected by the earth quake. They took off from Qasim Base at 0658 hours in MI-17 helicopter no 153. Same day while trying to drop relief goods to the people they both crashed near Sher Camp when the helicopter went into low clouds. Flight Engineer Saleem and crew chief Jahanzeb also perished alongwith Major Umar Mirza of 11 Punjab Regiment, Captain Alamdar of 833 Mujahid Regiment and Mister Hameedulah a civilian geologist.



Ahmad Shah Roghani



Rahim Baba



Captain Faisal



Lieutenant Shams

56. In June 2006 the first fatal accident of Bell 412 took place in which Captain Shams and Captain Faisal of 25 Squadron perished near Banda Dam.

SITARA-I-JURATs AND



Lt. Col Naseer Ullah Babar SJ



Major Sarfraz Rabbani SJ



Captain H.U.K. Niazi SJ



Major Moazzam SJ



Major Akhtar SJ



Lt. Col Abdul Latif Awan SJ



Major Syed Liaquat Bukhari SJ



Major Riaz Ul Haq SJ



Major Saeed Asmat SJ



Major Fayaz Ibrahim SJ (Shaheed)



Major Qasim SJ (Shaheed)

TAMGHA-I-JURATs



Colonel Sehgal SJ



Major Khalid Sultan SJ (Shaheed)



Major Babar Ramzan SJ (Shaheed)



Major Hanif SJ (Shaheed)







Major Zafar TJ



Captain Iftikhar TJ



Major Suhail TJ



Major Umar Rana TJ



Captain Nadeem Raza TJ

HONOURS AND AWARDS

TAMGHA-I-BASALAT

Major Abdul. Latif Awan	1961
Major Zareef Bangash	1969
Major Zia Ud Din Javed	1969
Major Rizvi	1975
Major Rahmat Ullah	1975
Lieutenant Colonel Hamid Hussain	1976
Major Muhammad Farooq	1976
Naik Riaz	1976
Major Zahoor	1976
Major Ashraf Warraich	1977
Major Riffat Baig	1981
Major Shahid Nazir	1992
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Shoaib Awan	Siachen
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ahmed Raashid	Siachen
Lieutenant Colonel Inam Karim	Siachen
Major Hasnain Mehdi	Siachen
Major Safdar Jahan Zeb	Siachen
Major Rashid Mansoor	Siachen
Major Syed Tahir Ali	Siachen
Major Khalid Saleem	Siachen
Captain Muhammad Ifzal	Siachen
Captain Mahmood Ul Hassan	Siachen
Captain Waqar Hussain Baig	Siachen
Captain Azhar Akbar	Siachen
Captain Abdul Qayyum	Siachen
Captain Muhammad Nawaz	Siachen
Captain Zia Ud Din	Siachen
Captain Ijaz Haider Zaidi	Siachen
Captain Uzair	Siachen
Havildar Shabbir Aasi	Siachen
Major Qaiser	Siachen
Major Nawazish	Siachen
Brigadier Nadeem Aslam Khan	Al-Mizan
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Raza Farooq	Al-Mizan
Lieutenant Colonel Abid Saeed	Al-Mizan
Major Naeem Ullah Khattak	Al-Mizan
Major Muhammad Nabeel Khan	Al-Mizan
Major Araslan Shaheen	Al-Mizan
Havildar Muhammad Asif	Al-Mizan
Lieutenant Colonel Tehseen Khan	Al-Mizan
Major Altaf Ur Rehman	Al-Mizan
Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Ali Shah	Life Line
Captain Abdur Rahim	Life Line



SITARA-I-BASALAT

Major M Maqbool	1971
Major Mohammad Akram	1973
Major Ali Jawahar	1973
Major Aftab Ahmad	1973
Brigadier Syed Mustanir Tirmizi	1977
Lieutenant Colonel Safdar Hussain	Siachen
Major Zahoor Ahmed Malik	Siachen
Major Tahir Ali	Siachen
Major Muhammad Alamgir Khan	Siachen
Captain Abdur Rahim	Siachen
Lieutenant Colonel Nauman Ghafoor	Al-Mizan
Captain Muhammad Imran	Al-Mizan
Major Malik Mumtaz Ahmed	Al-Mizan
Captain Irfan Aslam	Al-Mizan
Havildar Muhammad Rafique	Al-Mizan
Major Naeem Ullah Khattak	Al-Mizan
Major Basharat Noor	Al-Mizan



FOREIGN AWARDS



Order of Leopold {Belgium}
Major Muhammad Azam
Major Hashim Khan



Golden Order of Service (Slovenia)
Lieutenant Colonel Rashid Ullah Baig
Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Amir Rana

TAMGHA -I-SHUJAAT

Major Safdar Hussain	1989
Lieutenant Colonel Rashid Ullah Baig	2006
Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Amir Rana	2006



8 Army Aviation Squadron is the most decorated squadron of Pakistan Army Aviation. It is the only squadron which is bestowed with Battle Honour.



21 Squadron



Chivalrous and daring deeds displayed by pilots and crew in various operational assignments have earned them coveted 8 operational awards on Independence Day 2006. This singular honour is unrivalled in the annals of military history of Pakistan Army.



IMTIAZI SANADs

1965 War
Major Abdul Latif Awan
Major SMA Tirmizi
Captain Syed Zafar Mehdi Askree
Captain Aftab Ahmed
Captain Nouman Mahmood
Captain Khalid Saeed Khan
Captain Akhtar Mahmood

1971 War
Major Sajjad Nazim
Major Khalid Kamal
Major Kamal Mirza
Major Iqbal Mirza

Siachen
Major Safdar Hussain
Major Akram Mahmood
Captain Zia Ud Din
Captain Mehboob Haider
Havildar Pervez Akhtar
Captain Abdul Rahim
Major Nawazish Ali
Major Sabah Ud Din
Lieutenant Colonel Tanveer Ullah

Marqa-e-Baqa
Lieutenant Colonel Sohail Ekram Siddiqui
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Zulfiqar
Major Ekram Ul Haq
Major Nizam Ud Din
Havildar Muhammad Tariq
Major Naveed Akbar
Major Jafar Iqbal
Major Adil Shahzad
Major Irfan Mahmood Waraich
Captain Abdur Rahim
Major Naeem Masood
Major Nadeem Bhatti

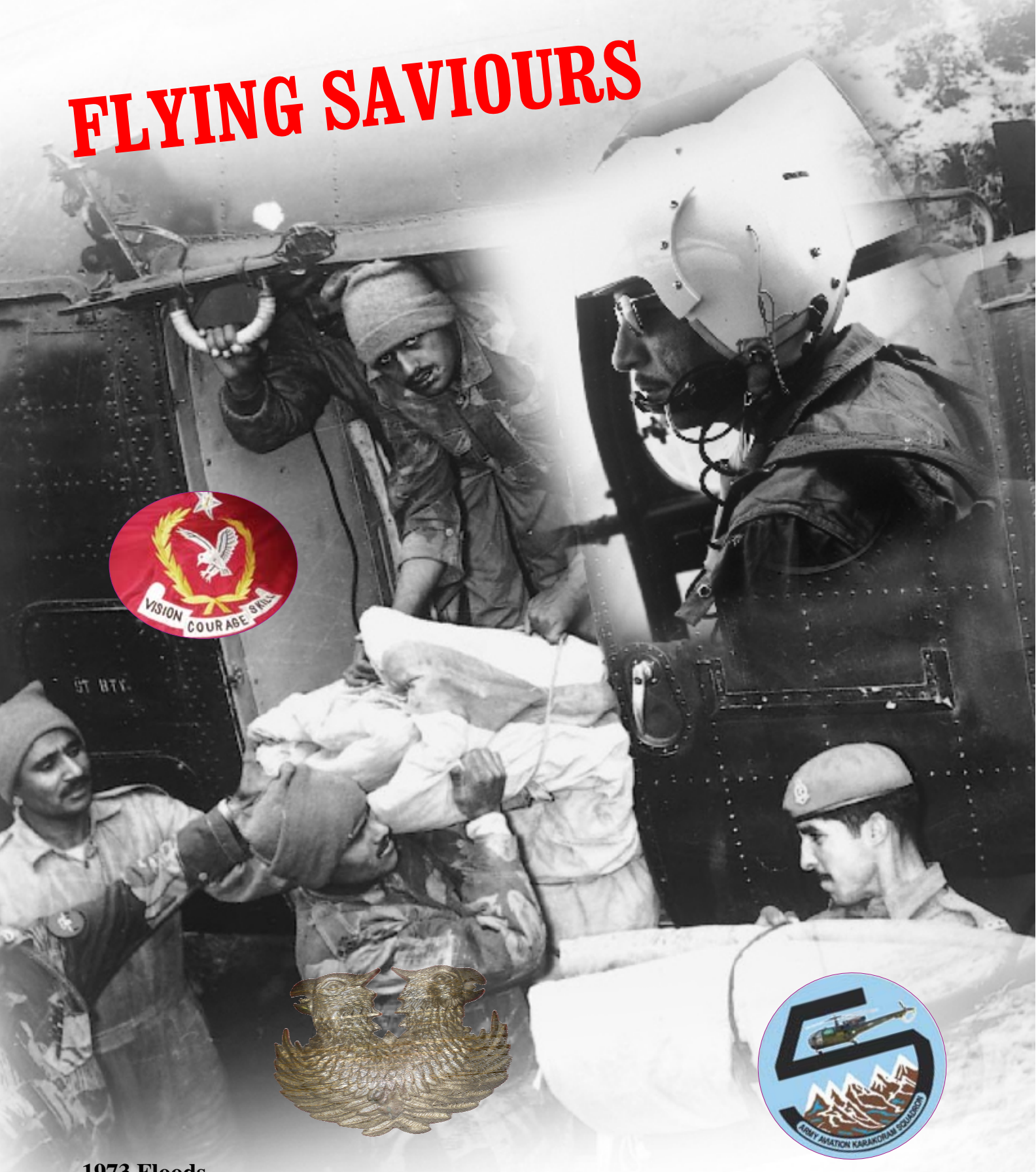
2004
Major Altaf Ur Rehman
Major Shafaqt Ali

2005
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khalil Dar
Major Abdul Hamid
Major Muhammad Naeem Aamir Azim

2006
Brigadier Muhammad Tahir
Colonel Tahir Maqsood Khan
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Irfan
Major Javed Iqbal
Brigadier Muhammad Ifzal
Lieutenant Colonel Anis Ur Rehman
Lieutenant Colonel Ubaid Ur Rehman
Major Ihsan Ul Haq

2007
Major Kashif
Major Mujtaba Athar

FLYING SAVIOURS



1973 Floods

Biblical floods created a state of emergency in 1973. Worst hit areas were of upper Punjab and Sind. Army Aviation was called in aid of civil power. Army Aviation setup two command and control centres one at Lahore and the other at Multan. At Multan apart from the integral fixed wing aircraft 4x Alouette were also put under command of 3 Squadron for flood relief works, 4 Squadron and 5 Squadron were the mainstay of the flood relief work, an average of 24000 pounds of rations were dropped daily. 5 Squadron Digest of service records '5th August, 1800 hours-1840 hours flood area 5 children rescued from River Ravi by Major Riaz'. 5 Squadron alone flew a total of 102 sorties encompassing 127 hours in this operation. Fixed wing pilots also utilized L-19 for food dropping. The flood relief operation lasted till 25 August 1973.



1974 - Earthquake

On 29th December 1974 the country was faced with a serious natural calamity. Pattan and Basham towns located approximately 90 miles north of Abbottabad on the Indus River were hit by a very severe earthquake. Besides the two major towns of Pattan and Basham, other small connected villages like, Bana, Dubair Qila, Pushto, Shangrial and Banial were also badly affected. Relief work in the earthquake affected areas started on 29th December 1974. By 31st December 1974 four UH-1H helicopters of 6 Squadron along with three MI-8s of 4 Squadron were committed for earthquake relief operations. Squadron pilots were already busy in Internal Security operations at Quetta, from where they flew to the affected area in a day.

6 Squadron under Lieutenant Colonel Hamid Choudhry safely accomplished 302 sorties with a total of 209.3 flying hours dropping 52 tons of relief goods. Rescue operation continued till 14 January 1975. All the Squadron pilots of 4 & 6 Squadron showed a great degree of patience, stamina and flying skill throughout the relief mission. A total of 100 tons were lifted in eighty two sorties of MI-8.

1976 - Floods

Floods again struck and again Army Aviators rose to occasion, 6 Squadron carried out 475 sorties of 499.30 hours dropping 100.2 tons of relief goods and evacuating 78 stranded people.

FLYING



In the winters of 1987 the first ever an international winter expedition for K-2 started. After a fortnight two members of the expedition got stranded between camp 1 and camp 2 of K-2 mountain. One member became critically ill and his only hope of living was a rapid descend, which was humanly not possible. Major Safdar was called for aerial rescue. Colonel (Retired) Safdar narrates; “We landed at K-2 base camp in an Alouette, the climber was stranded between 6000-7000 meters, after assessing the limitations of helicopter I decided to fly solo. In the second attempt I located the climber and then after a nerve wrecking approach I was able to touch down at 6200 meters, climber was good enough to board the heli, and I initiated take off, instantly the aircraft lost power and descended into the bowl. Luckily the sun rays came out and helped me to gain some power. I was able to land safely at base camp, and then onwards to Skardu”.
Major Safdar was decorated with Tamgha-I-Shujaat.

Jet Ranger Saves Four Fishermen

In November 1980 Major Maroof while flying Jet Ranger of Coast Guard near Karachi spoted four fishermen, 5 nautical miles away from the coast clinging to a wooden log. In next one hour he along with his Crew Chief, arranged a rope from a coastal town and then one by one picked up all four fishermen alive. When he finally landed he had fuel for just another 3 minutes.



Major Maroof

SAVIOURS

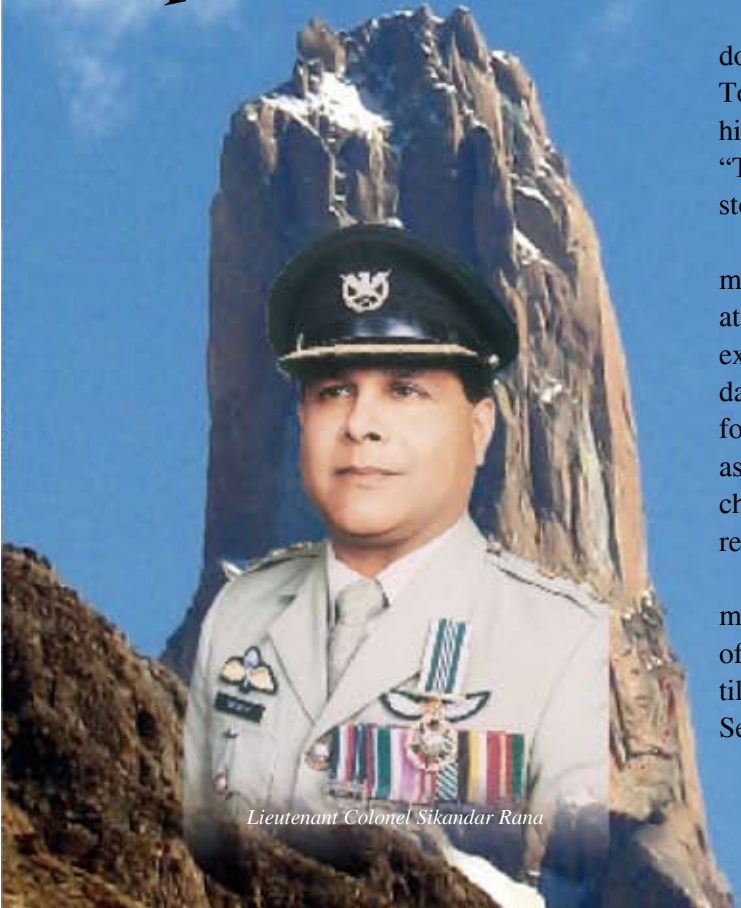


Rakaposhi

Rakaposhi is one of the world most beautiful peaks near Gilgit with a height of 7900 meters.On 4th August 1983 a message was received in the KKH Flight for evacuation of a Belgian named Bodart who while descending from the top was wounded and could not be carried on a stretcher. After getting necessary briefing from the local administration Major Hashim along with Major Azam carefully planned the mission, they took off from Gilgit for the base camp for further briefing and co-ordinaton regarding whereabouts of Micheal Bodart. Major Hashim envisaging a landing at a height where no Alouette had landed before planned accordingly and took off. After a few minutes he was landing at 20361 feet, making a record landing of Alouette III and also saving the life of a foreigner in distress. In recognition to this excellent performance both the pilots were awarded "The Order of Leopold" by the Belgian Government.

On 10th August 1983 Major Hashim Khan undertook another daring rescue mission for Italians with Captain Asghar Naqvi on Amrisar Peak (19500 feet).

Trango Towers



Lieutenant Colonel Sikandar Rana

On 14th September 1990, a Japanese mountaineer jumped down with a hang glider after reaching at the top of "Trango Tower" a gust of wind threw him back towards the peak. After hitting against the rock, he slid down in the craggy depression of "Trango Tower" peak and got entangled with a boulder, which stopped him further falling down the ridge.

On 15th September 1990 the mountaineer was spotted after many futile efforts. Due to awkward location and deep gorge at a height above 5000 meter, the evacuation by helicopter was extremely difficult. Weather continued to be worst for next two days. Pilot, Major Sikander Rana devised a method of dropping the food by wrapping two packets together. Again it required precision as not to hit the climber. Finally air crew managed to drop a tin of cheese over injured Japanese, trapped in that confined terrain and it reached the required person.

The rescue efforts continued but bad weather remained the main impediment. However, individual remained alive on that tin of cheese and food for nine days which was dropped by helicopter till his companions managed to surmount Trango Tower on 23rd September and recovered him to the base.

FLYING SAVIOURS



1991 - Bangladesh

On night 29/30 April 1991 a cyclone having speed of 280 kilometers per hour, with temperature of the eye of cyclone in region of 300 Degrees Centigrade and tidal surges of 15-18 feet accompanied with lashing rain hit the coastal areas of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, over running Hatia Island and contacting Noakhali. Within minutes the entire coastal area lay buried under an unending sheet of swirling water 15 to 18 feet high. The ferocious tidal bore took with it 150,000 people never to see the light of the day again and same number of people were injured.

6 Aviation Squadron (ERC) was to be in position by 5th May 1991 in Bangladesh to carryout cyclone relief operation with two UH-IH helicopters along with crew and maintenance persons. One C-130 along with two tail booms and four maintenance persons were airborne at 2300 hours 4th May 1991. 6 Aviation Squadron team arrived Dhaka at 1130 hours on 5th May. Helicopters were reassembled on 6th May 1991 and were ready for move to operational area by 1430 hours 7th May 1991.

Pakistani team was the first foreign team to arrive at Chittagong. Major General Mehmood Ul Hassan General Officer Commanding 24 Division briefed the team leader and pilots on areas requiring immediate dropping of relief goods, medical teams, medicines etc. The relief operation was to be carried out along with the two BAF helicopters that were already operating in the area which were Anowara, Bahskhali, Kutubdia Island,Matarbar Island, Moheshkhali Island, Chakoria, and Raj Khali

In this relief operation, six other countries, India, USA, Japan, China, Thailand and England also participated. They all employed twin engine helicopters. The squadron crew included Lieutenant Colonel Wahid Khan, Majors Iqbal Kashmiri, Hafiz Nadir, Arshad Tareen, and Captains were Abid Ali and Asad. Subedar Jehan Dad, Havildars Rafique,Ijaz, Abdul Rehman, Munnawar Hussain, Abdul Razzaq, and Naiks Shabbir,Zaman and Shafi Nazir were part of team.

Load carried	77.45 Tons of relief goods.
Person transported	152
Hours flown	82
Sorties under taken	*123*

Neelum River and Soldier Siddique

A detachment of 65 Pakistani muleteers at Nekrun were living in a camp to deliver supplies to other army units in the area by mules. The camp was in a narrow gorge on a piece of elevated land shaded by tall pine and willow trees. On 9th September 1992 after raining for two days, the camp suddenly got cut off from the rest of the area due to a torrential surge of water. Huge logs swept through the flooded camp carrying away tents, crates of supplies and the mules. Colonel Zakaullah Bhangoo at Qasim Base was informed on



Major Shahid Rana

Brigadier (Late) Zaka Ullah Bhangoo

telephone by Brigadier Qadir with news of the trapped muleteers. By 1600 hours Puma(Colonel Bhangoo and Major Shahid Rana) reached the muddy riverbank after having landed at Kel where they were briefed and also picked up a rope ladder. Only way to rescue trapped jawans was by using the rope ladder but pilots needed weight on the rope to hold it steady. A volunteer was required to hang at the end of the rope ladder.

Soldier Chaudhry Siddique had never been on a helicopter. But for nearly 36 hours he had endured the agony of watching the men in the trees grow weaker and weaker. Stepping forward, he snapped to attention. Later far below the Puma, Siddique worked tirelessly. Many of the remaining men were deep inside the trees. Sometimes it took a dozen attempts to reach one, for many were scared to let go off the tree branches.

At 1730 hours in the failing light, pilots peered grimly down from the Puma. Five men still remained trapped below a willow, other trees nearby left little room for manoeuvre. Using all their experience pilots settled the Puma onto the top of the tallest tree, pressing into the branches until the rope ladder reached the level of the men below, where Siddique using his weight like a pendulum swung back and forth until he had enough momentum to sweep deep into the branches. When he had rescued the last man, Siddique's comrades lifted him from the ladder, His bloodshot eyes seemed to pop from his deathly white face, while his teeth chattered uncontrollably. "I am fine", then immediately collapsed. He was quickly wrapped in a blanket. In all, the helicopter team had saved 34 men. Not one, said the military doctor, would have survived another frigid night. Both the pilots and Siddique were decorated with Tamgha-I-Basalat.



Brigadier Zaka Ullah Bhangoo
March 2007, at Skardu Airfield

An Aviator Extraordinary

A proud Gallian cum Piffer from 38th PMA Long Course, Brigadier Zaka Ullah Bhangoo lost his life on 13th May 2007 in the mountainous region on the Turkish-Iranian border in an Ultra Light Aircraft while flying from UK to Pakistan. Bhangoo was truly 'The Pride of Pakistan Army Aviation" and demonstrated an excellent combination of sterling qualities. He was an icon of integrity, honesty, professional competence, comradeship, leadership and boldness. A gentleman to the core who was an affectionate father, a reliable friend, a responsible colleague, a superb flying instructor, bold, brave and a proud regimental soldier, above all an excellent human being. He will be missed for a long time but like a true legend he leaves behind a blazing trail which makes Pakistan Army Aviation proud and tall.



Pilots of 5 Squadron who took part in the relief operations

Al Madad

Gilgit and surroundings were struck by a severe earthquake on the night of 2/3 November 2002 which continued in the forms of after shocks and tremors till 5th November 2002. In the past Darrel Valley was hit by a severe earthquake on 12th September 1981. 25 Army Aviation Squadron lifted some 9,000 kilograms of goods in Chilas-Darrel area and flew over 90 hours in 5 days.

Headquarters Frontier Command Northern Areas, immediately called 5 Army Aviation Karakorum Squadron. The Squadron responded with the vigour of an eagle and immediately two MI-17 and two Lama helicopters were despatched to the affected area. Initial damage assessments were carried out on Lama helicopter by Commander FCNA Major General Nadeem Ahmed who remained a motivating force to all. Commander sensing the possibility of likely coming devastation decided to helilift the entire population of the Valleys of Tatto and Muthath to safer places of Chilas. Immediately a helicopter refuelling point was established at Jaglot along with an operation room and supply centre.

This operation continued for three days starting from 3rd November to 6th November 2002 in which 2159 persons were successfully helilifted from the affected areas to safer places of Chilas (Gunar Farm).

The area was again hit by yet another earthquake. Astore Valley had been affected severely resulting in the loss of 40 people in the villages of Dashkin (2500 meters), Mashkin 2600 meters), Turbaling (2750 meters), Doian (2000 meters) Harchu (2200 meters) and Astore. Due to the blockage of the Karakorum Highway, relief goods started pouring in from the capital on C-130s at Gilgit Airport. From where these were directly picked up by MI-17s and Puma and delivered to the effected areas. Another supply setup was established at Chilas which received the relief goods coming from Rawalpindi by road transport. A supply and refuelling point was also established at Astor. Largest supply setup and refuelling point was also established at Jaglot where the relief goods were sorted and assigned to different affected places before being loaded into the helicopter.


Lieutenant Colonel Nasir Iftikhar

Kuran Bar Glacier,
On Tuesday evening the 25th July 2006 five member mountain climbing expedition from France was coming back to their camp on Kuran Bar Glacier, where they were struck by an avalanche resulting in slipping of one member who dragged rest of the climbers tied with a rope. On 28th July 2006 at at 1500 hours 5 Army Aviation Karakuram Squadron two Ecureuil Helicopters took off for Gilgit. Kuran Bar Glacier is located on Pakistan and Afghanistan border. The camp was located at 5500 meters (18200 feet) inside a bowl with 20 meters high ice slopes on eastern and western side. Miss Gerin Julie and Mister Constant Walfroy were evacuated, the pilots displayed high degree of professionalism to undertake this mission successfully despite bad weather. Later both were flown to Gilgit and were admitted in hospital for some days. Both have recovered and intend climbing again.



Captain Amer, Major Jawad, Major Afaque, Major Afzal and Havildar Loyal



Major Qaiser

Aviators Sail to Save Lives

On 5th August 2002, sudden high flood in Jhelum River marooned a post of own troops on the border. 27 Army Squadron was tasked to evacuate the troops, as MI-17 reached overhead post it was fired upon by the Indians, MI-17 landed with bullet holes on home bank. However, the troops were still in danger of drowning. Major Altaf who has won 13 medals in sailing volunteered to sail the boat and make a try. Major Qaiser Zahoor also a good swimmer joined him. Major Altaf after an hour of tireless effort was able to reach the post and evacuate all the troops safely. Major Altaf was decorated with Imtiazi Sanad for this heroic act.

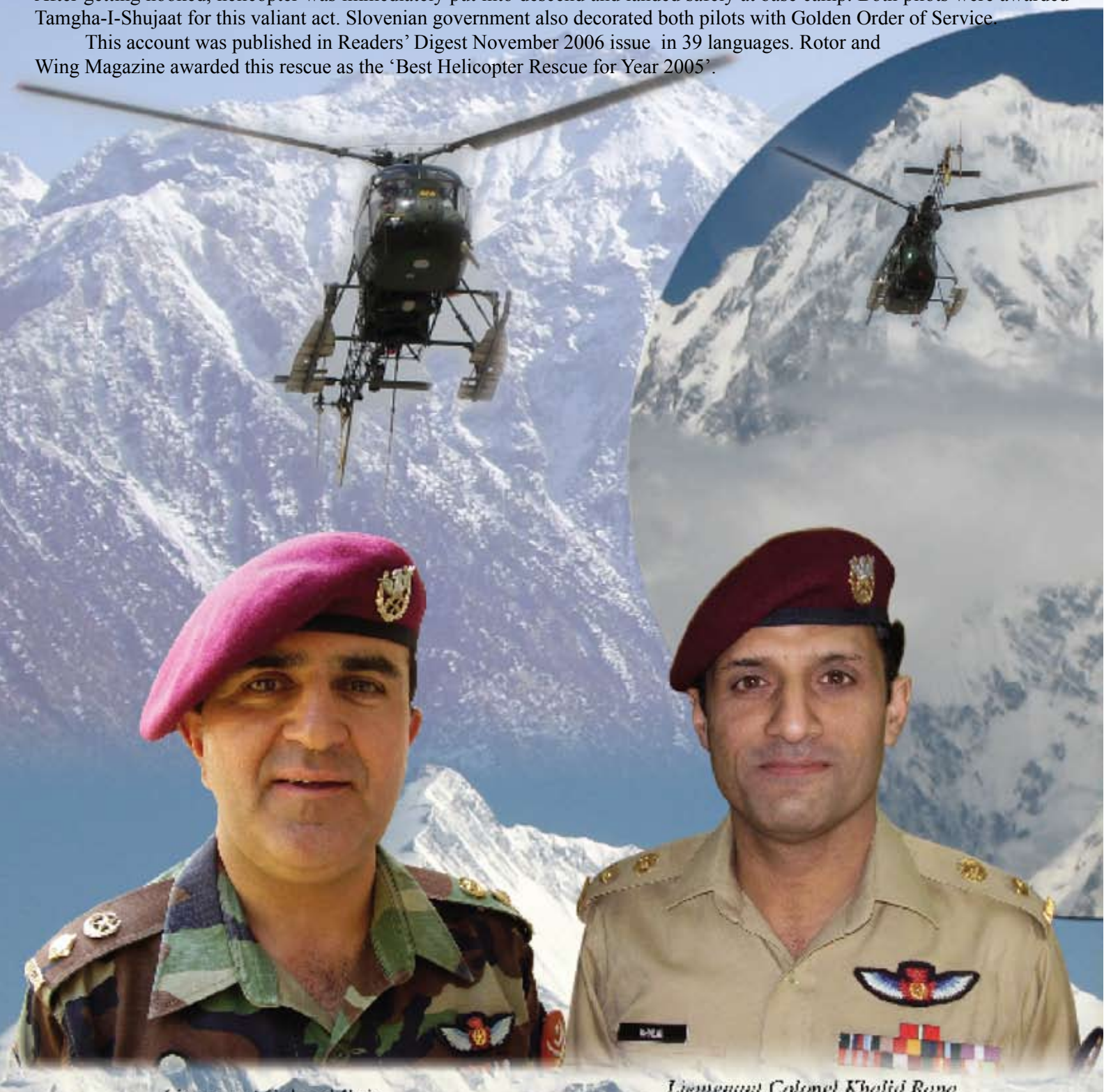


Major Altaf

Rescue of Slovenian Climber

Nanga Parbat is regarded as one of the most difficult and challenging mountain. Reinhold Messener was the first person to climb solo. In 2005 Mr. Humar was also attempting to conquer Nanga Parbat solo. On his way up he got stranded between Camp-III and Camp-IV. His ordeal was reported in newspapers and all of a sudden he became an international headline. Each day world awaited for his destiny. From 3rd August 2005 onward rescue attempts were made by pilots of 5 Squadron and Lieutenant Colonel Rashid Baig and Major Khalid Rana of 8 squadrons but these were hampered by the bad weather. However on 4th August Humar was located perched in his bivouac at 6000 meters, he was all alone. On 5th August Lieutenant Colonel Rashid Baig and Major Khalid Amir Rana decided to launch the rescue sortie .The technical aspect was alarming and demanded extreme pilotability. Humar was located in such a spot that only way was to sling him up as there was no space to even touch the landing skids. The other angle to consider was the technical limitation of the Lama helicopter. To get the maximum out of the chopper, pilots removed almost everything from it to reduce the weight. Major Rana recalls; 'The major worry was how to sling him up, we hovered as close to the perch as possible, everything came to slow motion, Humar luckily picked the sling and was able to buckle it up. The most dreary part was that Humar had anchored himself and it goes to his credit that he had tied it with Bow Knot thus as he was picked up the anchor gave way, had it been the other way round the story might had a different end'. After getting hooked, helicopter was immediately put into descend and landed safely at base camp. Both pilots were awarded Tamgha-I-Shujaat for this valiant act. Slovenian government also decorated both pilots with Golden Order of Service.

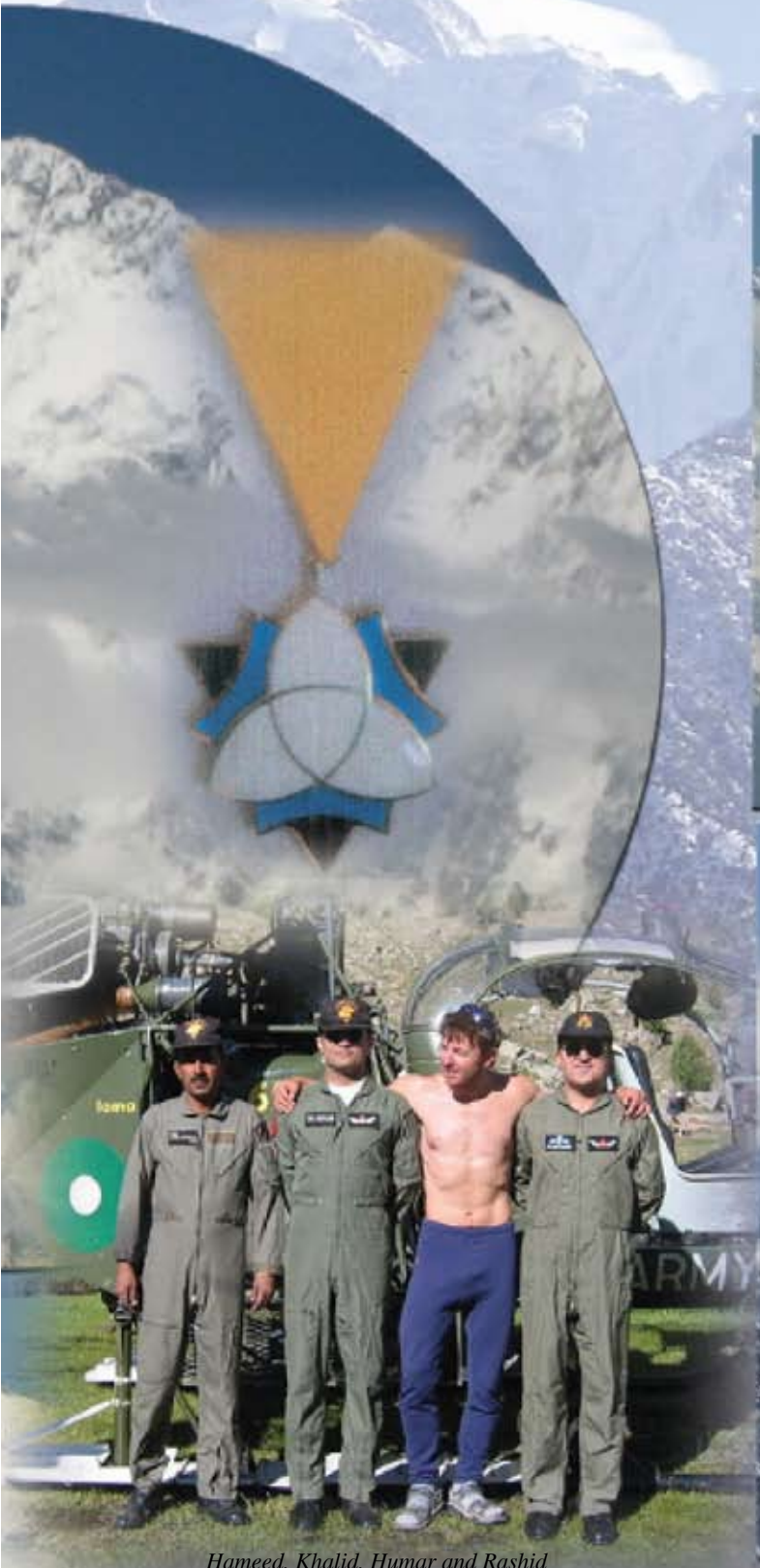
This account was published in Readers' Digest November 2006 issue in 39 languages. Rotor and Wing Magazine awarded this rescue as the 'Best Helicopter Rescue for Year 2005'.



Lieutenant Colonel Baig

Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Rana

Nanga Parbat 'The Killer Mountain' (8125 meters)



Hameed, Khalid, Humar and Rashid





The Hidden Peak 8,034 Meters

Gasherbrum-II (G-II) also known as Hidden Peak is one of the five 8,000 meters and above peaks of Pakistan, located in close vicinity of K-2, Broad Peak and Gasherbrum-I



On 18th July 2007 four climbers of the AMICAL alpin Gasherbrum II, 2007 expedition started climbing from Camp II towards Camp III on Gasherbrum II (G-II) mountain 8034 meters (26516 feet). During their ascend they were swept down by an avalanche resulting in the immediate death of two climbers, two others Mister Hirotaka Takeuchi from Japan and Mister Dirk Groeger from Germany survived, but heavily injured. Both the climbers were carried down by the members of another expedition team to Camp II located at an altitude of 6600 meters (21780 feet). Bringing them further down was impossible because of the steep cliff between Camp II and Base Camp, and was especially dangerous for the Japanese climber's life as he had a comminuted fracture of the 3rd lumber, six broken ribs and a left lung pneumothorax.

To undertake this life saving task at 1615 hours Ecureuil-B3 helicopters took off from Skardu for International Hiking Expedition Camp (IHEC) on Baltoro Glacier, piloted by Major Ahmad Jawad Khan along with copilot Major Sami Ullah Khan Bangash. They first picked the German guide from IHEC on Baltoro Glacier for Camp II. The G-II Mountain and the glacier was reconnoitred and the stranded causalities were located. The Camp II was located at 6600 meters (21780 feet) inside a re-entrant with a ridge bulging out from within, and thousands of meters high Gasherbrum II mountain on the northern side. The entire area was cluttered with crevices

The pilots initially tried to hover the helicopter in open air, but the helicopter did not sustain the hovering flight due to the evening catabatic winds and high temperatures. It seemed that both the injured climbers had to be brought down to a place where a helicopter can land and pick them up. The major worry remains how to move down the climbers. Time was running short. Major Jawad devise a plan, a stretcher was helilifted from IHEC. and dropped on Camp II. This precision drop of stretcher at an altitude of 6600 meters by opening the door of the helicopter in slow forward speed and on the three square meter spot speaks itself of pilot's professionalism. The provision of stretcher made it possible to bring both the seriously injured climbers further down and next day they were helilifted by the same crew from Camp-I.

Both climbers survived and later wrote emotional thankful letters

At the time of the accident, my spinal column was severely damaged and it was thought that the after effects of the injury would be serious. Had it not been for the courageous and fast rescue by Major Jawad Khan and Major Sami Ullah Khan, I would not have survived.

Sincerely,



Hirotaka Takeuchi

Helicopter dropping the Stretcher

Stranded and injured climbers

FLYING MACHINES OF



Auster
1947-1957



L-19 Bird Dog
1957-1990



U-8F Queen Air
1963-1983



OH-13s SIOUX
1964-1990



Alouette-III
1967

PAKISTAN ARMY AVIATION




JPC
1980
ARMY
AH-1S Cobra
1985
Lama
1986
700
ARMY
Cessna
Citation-5
1993


Schweizer
TH-300C
1993
ARMY
MI-17
1996
Y-12
1999
Bell-412
2004
Ecureil
2005

THE FLYING BREVET

The Inherited Brevet



After the birth of Pakistan along with raising of Air OP Flight, the flying insignia worn by the pilots continued to be the same as used by the British Air OP pilots. It was blue, shaded with a golden crown and a lion on the centre top of it and made in cloth.

When Pakistan became an Islamic Republic efforts to change the old badges, emblems and insignias went underway all over the country. Madam Saida Bano, wife of Major M. M. Karim, who was then commanding No.1 Air OP Flight, also volunteered to contribute and came up with a number of designs. Ultimately one of her contributions was selected and got duly approved by the General Headquarters. On 23rd March 1956 the present day brevet was approved. In 1973 this cloth wing was replaced with metallic wing and again in 1985 the old cloth wing was reintroduced.

Efficiency Wing

In 1966 various flying proficiency awards for aviators were first initiated vide Pakistan Army orders 317/66. Miniature metallic brevet, called "Flight Safety Wing"' is earned after fifteen hundred hours of accident-free flying.



Cap Badge

Cap Badge

Cap badge depicts, eagle with spread wings. It stands for flying. Arabic inscription 'Ayun Sahira' translates 'The watchful eyes of the commander' Cross swords represent Aviation Corps affiliation with Army. The golden wheat wreath around the badge has been borrowed from the National Emblem. This badge is worn on Maroon Beret and Service Dress Peak Cap.



Mrs. Saida Karim

The New Design

The triple shaded blue spread wings of a red eagle reflects the flying and vigilance in the personality of the wearer. The red and blue shades over black background represented the artillery colours to which the Air OP inherently belongs. The black manifested the colour of the flag carried in battles by our ancestors. On 19th January 1957 the new trainees, having qualified the basic course of Air OP, were awarded this new brevet, at a parade held at Chaklala, by the chief guest, Brigadier J.D.A. Lamont, then Director Artillery.



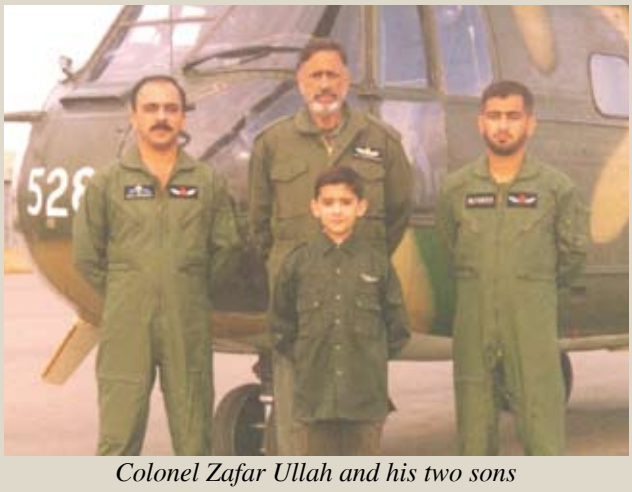
Mrs. Saida Karim and her designed Flying Brevet.

FLYING PAY

Brevet is always associated with an increase in pay, thus flying brevet entails flying pay. Conditions relating to entitlement to air observation post additional pay were first incorporated in 1942, when Royal Artillery officers selected for training as an air observation post pilots were granted additional pay of Rupees 2 per day during the period they were attached to the Royal Air Force for training. When Pakistan Army Air OP started flying they were not given any flying pay. In 1950 it was authorised under a Pakistan Army Order (PAO) with Rupees fifty per month. This was later increased in 1958 to Rupees one hundred per month. In 1990 flying pay was converted into allowance to the extent of 40% of basic pay till the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and then kept constant for higher ranks

THE SECOND GENERATION OF AVIATORS

There are officers who followed their father's footsteps and earned the coveted flying brevet. Desire alone is not good enough, there is a tedious process of selection and not many make it to the gates of Army Aviation School.



Colonel Zafar Ullah and his two sons
Lieutenant Colonel Nadeem and Major Naveed



Brigadier Zahoor Ahmed and his son
Major Farooq



Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Rana and
his son Lieutenant Umar



Major Nisar and his son
Captain Taimoor



Major Farooq and his son Captain Umer



Col. Yousaf Anwar with his son Lt. Col Nadeem



Lieutenant Colonel Ikram Niazi
and his son Capt. Jahanzeb



Major Ghulam Yasin and his son
Captain Najam Us Saqib

THE SECOND GENERATION OF AVIATORS



Colonel Safdar and his son
Captain Haroon



Brigadier Qurban Hussain and
his son Lieutenant Colonel Irfan



Brigadier Sajjad Ahmed Nazim and
his son Major Ummad



Lieutenant Colonel Niaz Siddiqui
with his son Captain Bilal



Major Mohammad Abul Hasnat and
his son Major Hilal



Major General
Ashraf Chaudhry
and his son
Captain Arifeen

THEY CAME *a bit* LATE

These general officers were awarded the flying brevet after they underwent flying training.



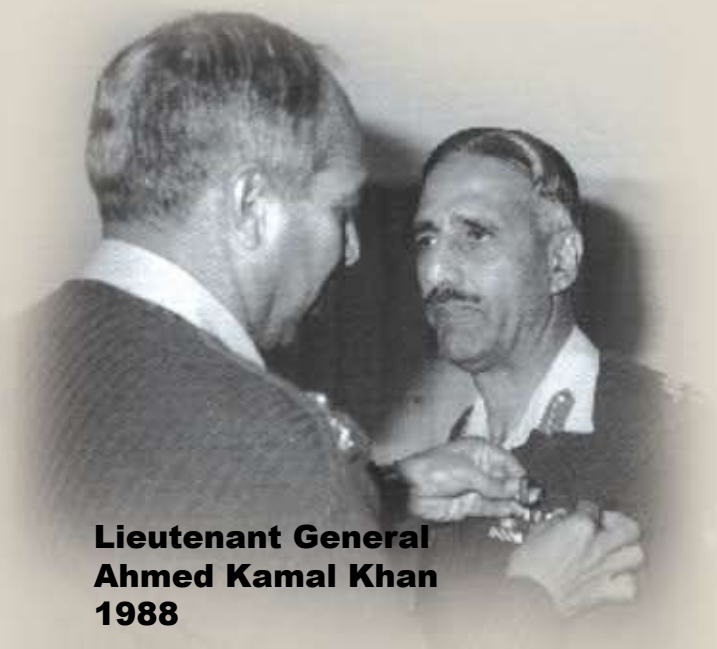
Lieutenant General
Sardar Farooq Shaukat Khan Lodhi
1982



Lieutenant General
Raja Saroop Khan
1985



Major General
Sajjad Hussain
1985



Lieutenant General
Ahmed Kamal Khan
1988



Major General
Shujaat Ali Khan
1999

OUR **HOMES**

Aviation Mess Rawalpindi

Army Aviation Officers Mess 29 Peshawar Road is the oldest Army Aviation Mess in Pakistan. The first recorded history of this mess indicates that it was constructed in 1939. This mess remained as an Artillery Regimental Mess for all the regiments of No. 1 Army Group Royal Pakistan Artillery(AGRPA). In 1956 when No.1 Army Aviation Squadron was raised and subsequently Aviation School was also established thus the mess was handed over in 1959 to the Army Aviation, which technically was still taken as an extension of artillery.

The Artillery Directorate as a good will gesture had also given four horses which were stabled within the mess where present day General Officer Quarter(GOQ) is located. There were wooden barracks at the present site of block no. two and three. One squash court was also functional at the site of present day reception room but it was not adjacent to the main mess. The kitchen was bit far away from the main dinning room and a corridor linked it. There was a bar and a ladies room as well. Major Mushtaq Madni was the first Mess Secretary of this Mess. First construction was carried out in 1961-62 in the shape of four cemented rooms.

Mess subscriptions in 1974 were as under

Mess funds	Rs 08.00
Library	01.00
Garden	01.00
Breakages	02.00
Table money	01.00
Late meal charges	01.00
Dhobi charges	17.00
Sweepers	05.00



Original Huts Circa 1940, still functional



Constructed in 1961



Constructed in 1975



Present Day Mess

New Mess Building -1978

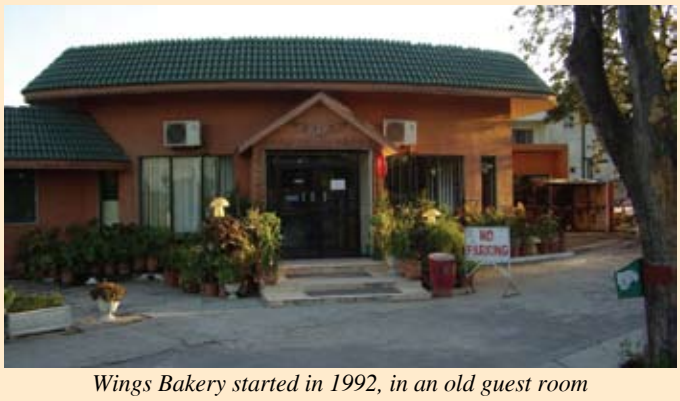
In 1978 ' Army Chief General Zia on his visit to the mess had promised the construction of new mess, initial cost was Rupees Twelve Hundred Thousand In 1980 the new mess was inaugurated. Apart from the new building the present day Block No.2 and 3 were also constructed. A sum of Rupees 3,85,000 was approved for its furnishing and decoration. A music library was also established. In 1981 a sum of Rupees 1,00,000. were given by the President Zia Ul Haq for the decoration of the mess. He also approved a sports complex that will include two squash courts and one tennis court. Lieutenant General F.S.K Lodhi presented mess with quite a number of books that helped in establishing the first ever library in Army Aviation. It was the only mess in Rawalpindi that used to serve food in Ramadan ,thus in that month there used to be an extraordinary influx of visitors.



Ladies room constructed in 2005



Dine out 1977



Wings Bakery started in 1992, in an old guest room

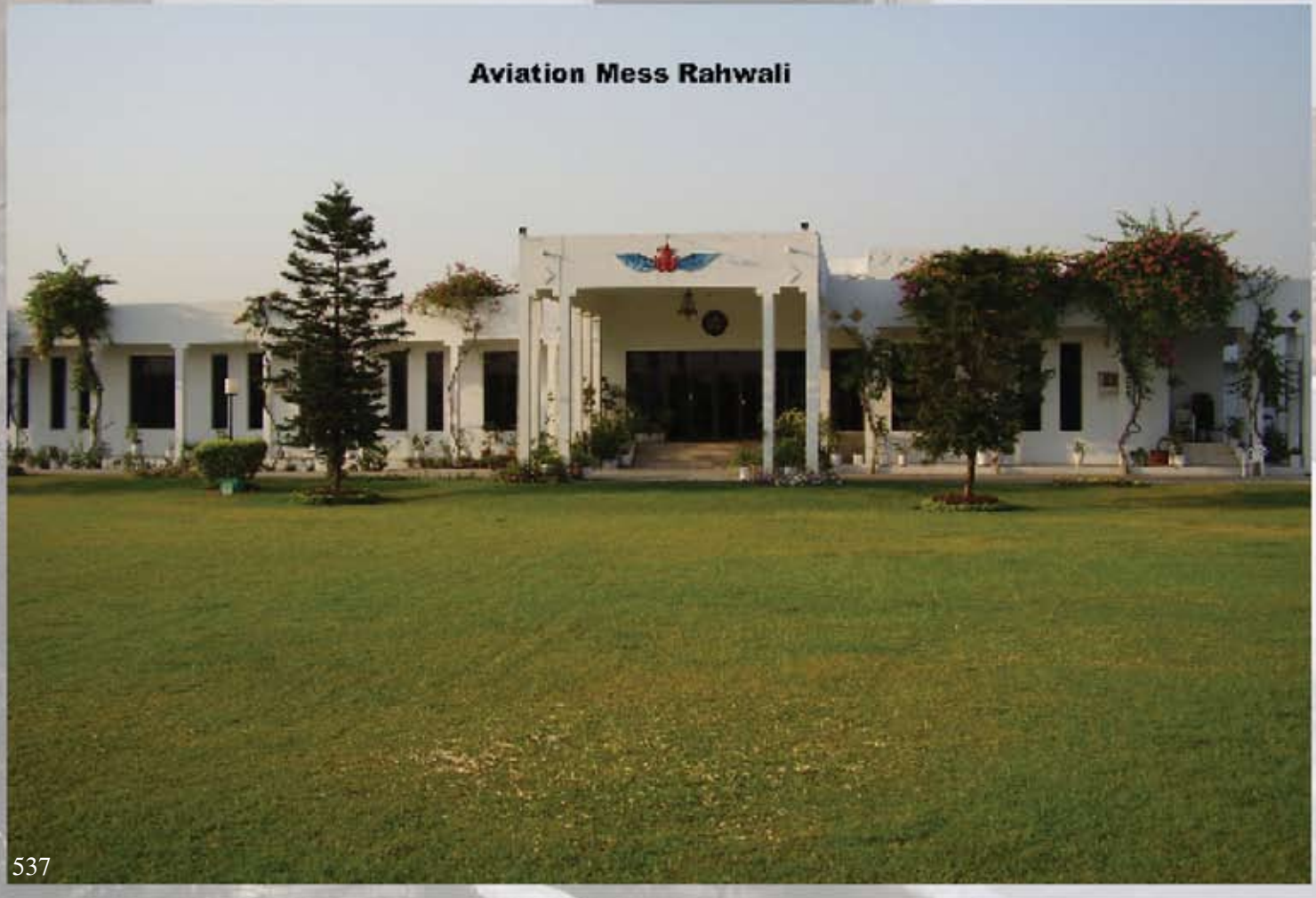


Dine out 1968

AVIATION **MESSES**



Ante Room Aviation Mess Multan



Aviation Mess Rahwali


Aviation Mess
Karachi

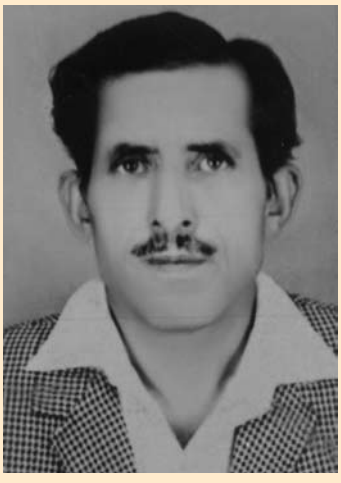

Aviation Mess Quetta


Aviation Mess Skardu


Lieutenant General Sardar Lodhi Commander 4
Corps and Colonel Commandant Army Aviation
2 Squadron Mess

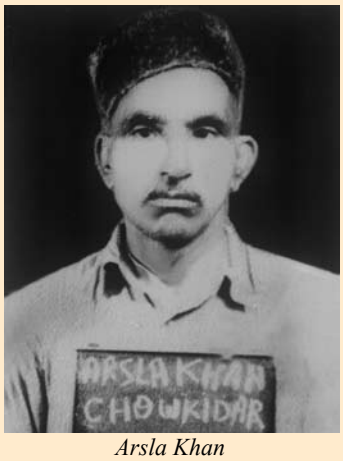
CIVILIANS

Kallan Khan (called Kallan Mian), was probably the oldest office runner in the First AOP Flight. He was a resident of Central India but while serving at Lahore with the only AOP Squadron, he opted for Pakistan and trailed behind the 1 AOP Flight, after the partition, till he landed at Chaklala. The title of "Mian" was given to him unwittingly by all because of his ripe age and the way he carried himself with dignity and affection. Darkish in complexion and short statured, he invariably knew the flight schedule of the day. With the raising of the First AOP Squadron he took his post with it and for some years served in the newly raised Dhamial Base till he left this temporal abode permanently. May his soul rest in eternal peace.



Ghulam Nabi

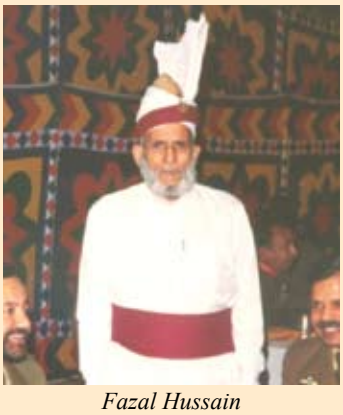
Another personality was **Ghulam Nabi** who operated in different fields. He was the bar-man in the Air Force Officer's Mess at Chaklala and followed the AOP, after the establishment of its own mess on Peshawar Road. He served as the head-bar man for a long time till his meritorious retirement. He had the knack of knowing the limits of all the members visiting his domain and invariably put his foot down whenever he spotted someone crossing the limit. Many a time some great go-getters and guzzlers had to eat a humble pie with him around.



Arsla Khan

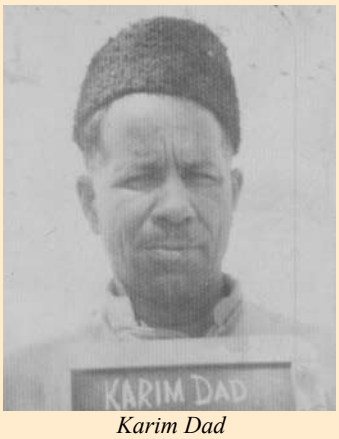
Arsala Khan was a thorough-bred Pakhtoon whose manner of speech, laced with his peculiar dialect and his over-bearing approach to all, left much to be desired. But after knowing him a bit no one could question his sincerity of propose and loyalty to the service He was an upright man who, believe it or not, used to regularly cycle down to his native village Pir Piyae (over 60 miles from Dhamial) on Saturday afternoon and return the same way on Monday morning without ever complaining of being tired.

Fazal Hussain (called "Chacha" by all), was inducted into 2 Squadron as a mess waiter. He proved himself a good and conscientious worker. In time to come he became indispensable there and took over the entire affairs of the mess with a gusto and unblemished honesty. With him around the mess really turned into the eagle's nest.



Fazal Hussain

Hajji Muhammad Siddique, joined 503 Base Workshop as a civilian cook in 1971. Later he landed in the Officer's Mess and the magic of his cooking made many spell-bound. His dishes became the delight of every gourmet. Having retired after a long meritorious service, he was reemployed to cater for the culinary delight of all. He performed Hajj mainly from his own savings but some aviators did contribute, on the quiet, for his pilgrimage.



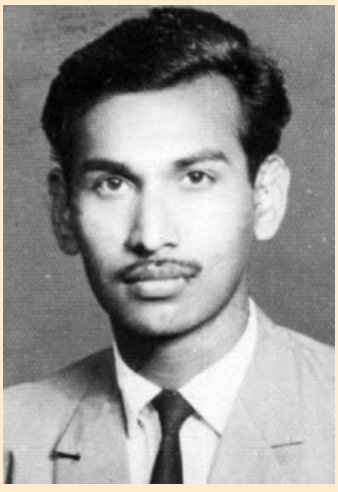
Karim Dad

Karim Dad was another character of his own kind. He was an office runner at Dhamial Base but with his overbearing zeal he was visible all over, looking always busy like a bee. Karim Dad remained a prisoner of war during World War-II. He knew few words of English and would always talk with the officers in English. He had the knack of making tired students walk smartly by saluting their regiment.



Agha Asghar Mirza

Agha Asghar Mirza Qazilbash joined as a draftsman but he had many artistic talents which blossomed with the passage of time. He was fond of communicating with everyone on a wide front. In no time he became an integral part of many dramas and skits organise on certain selected occasions. He also had a literary flair, which made his personality more likeable at least to the intellectually inclined flyers. He is still perusing his inclination by running a small mobile library and remembers his days at Dhamial with immense nostalgia.


Hashmat Ullah Khan Ghori

Hashmat Ullah Khan Ghori joined Aviation as a photographer and gradually became an eager participant of major events with or without his camera. He has probably captured every important occurrence, from crashes to ceremonial fly-pasts and all kinds of get-to-gathers, on his celluloid films. Because of his association with pictures, his mind is like an accomplished historian.


Mahboob

Mr. Mahboob of Ordnance Depot Qasim Base is serving since 1971. Almost every aviator has come across him in terms of getting flying kit issued and replaced. He is a walking encyclopedia on issue and replacement of flying clothing. Due to his hardwork he has been promoted to officer cadre in 2005.


Aviation Mess Waiters

SQUADRONS



ALMANAC



1 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

Pseudonym	The Pioneers
Raising Day	20th June 1956.
Motto	Vision, Courage, Skill
Flight Safety Trophy	Year 2000 and 2001



RAISING TEAM

Major M M Karim
Major Naseerullah Babar
Major Mahmud
Major Zaffar Khan
Captain K. Ghalib
Captain Mohammad Khan
Captain Faiz ud Din Brandon

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Major Hidayat Ullah Khan Niazi	Sitara-i-Juraat
Major Saeed Ismat	Sitara-i-Juraat
Lieutenant Colonel M M Mahmud	Tamgha-i-Quaid Azam
Captain Nauman Mahmood	Imtiazi Sanad
Captain Khalid Saeed Khan	Imtiazi Sanad
Captain Akhtar Mahmood	Imtiazi Sanad
Captain Aftab Ahmed	Imtiazi Sanad

SHAHEEDS

Captain Aziz Ul Hassan
Captain Maqbool
Captain Riaz Malik
Captain Sarfraz
Captain Jurjees Nagi
Captain Mirza Subhan Baig
Captain Aftab Ahmed Khan
Havildar Ashraf
Major Anwar Mohi-Ud-Din
Major Tanveer Ahmed
Major Shah Nawaz
Captain. Nadeem Ullah
Captain. Hamid Sarwar Jadoon
Driver Muhammad Qadeer
Clerk Tilla Muhammad
Lieutenant Colonel Nayyer Iqbal
Driver Dost Muhhamad

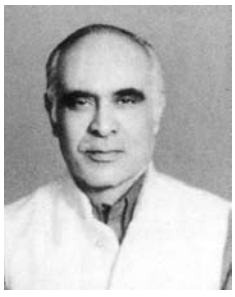


1 Army Aviation Squadron on the occasion of Colonel of the Squadron Ceremony - 1992

COMMANDING OFFICERS 1 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON


Jabbar - 1957


Karim - 1961


Zaffar Khan - 1964


Mahmud - 1964


Hashmi - 1966


Akhtar - 1970


Aslam - 1970

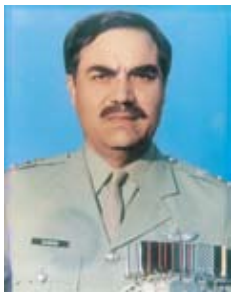

Naeem - 1973

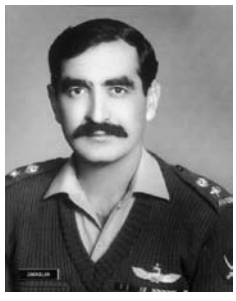

Kureishy - 1974


Janjua - 1975

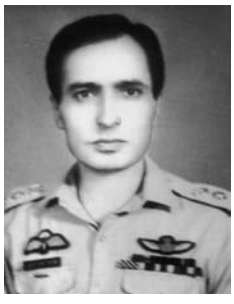

Raza - 1977


Ashraf - 1979


Naseem - 1981


Bhangoo - 1983


Sajid - 1986


Mahsud - 1988


Ayaz - 1990


Sikandar - 1992


Salim - 1995


Nayyer - 1997


Tariq - 1998


Nadeem - 2000


Shaukat - 2002


Tariq - 2003


Waheed - 2006

2 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

Pseudonym	Above The Best
Raising Day	20th June 1959

HONOURS

Major Akhtar	Sitara-i-Jur'at
Major Rabbani	Sitara-i-Jur'at
Major Muazzam	Sitara-i-Jur'at
Major Qasim	Sitara-i-Jur'at

SHAHEEDS

Captain Ikram
Major Muhammad Qasim SJ
Major Zahir Shah
Major Muslim Ghani
Major Ansar Ahmed
Major Zahid Jadoon

RAISING TEAM

Major Zaffar Khan
Major Khawaja Shahbaz Ghalib
Captain Muhammad Rafique Khan
Captain. Mansoor Ahmed Sial
Captain. Fazal ur Rehman
Captain. Syed Mustanir Tirmizi
Captain. Muhammad Ayub
Captain. Muhammad Younis
Captain. Abdul Mokeet Khan



2 Squadron Officers with Major General Javed Aslam Tahir - June 2007

COMMANDING OFFICERS 2 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON


Blaker - 1959

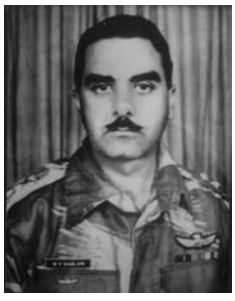

Saleem Ullah - 1962


Jabbar - 1963


M. Khan - 1965


Ghalib - 1968


Nazar - 1970


Saqlain - 1971


Rabbani - 1972


Mokeet - 1975


Fazal - 1976


Khalid - 1977


Aijaz - 1981


Naseem - 1983


Imran - 1986


Jamil - 1988


Ilyas - 1991


Salman - 1993


Kingravi - 1994


Arshad - 1996


Shahid - 1998


Afridi - 2000


Waqar - 2002


Nasir - 2004


Kiyani - 2006

VVIP FLIGHT

Raising Day	23rd August 1963
Amalgamated in 13 Squadron	15th August 2006

CHIEF PILOTS

Major Shamas Ul Haq Kureishy	23 August 1963
Major Muhammad Khan	3 February 1964
Major Muazzam Ali	3 March 1967
Major Pervez Zaka	29 January 1969
Major Arshad Raza	14 January 1971
Major Pervez Yousaf	26 September 1972
Major MTK Dotani	15 April 1978
Major Syed Minhaj Ali	20 February 1980
Lieutenant Colonel Syed Minhaj Ali	18 July 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Shuaib Idrees	29 August 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf	5 September 1994
Major Abdul Rasheed Khan	7 August 1995
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Rasheed Khan	13 August 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Waqar Khan	3 November 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Nadeem Zafar	21 September 2003
Lieutenant Colonel Ali Arjumand	20 September 2005

RAISING TEAM

Major Shams Ul Haq Kureishy
Major Zafar Khan
Major Muhammad Khan
Major Mushtaq Madni



President and Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf with pilots of VVIP Flight - 2004



President with MI-17 Pilots - 2002



Prince Karim Aga Khan, Prince Charles and Duchess Camilla Parker with Army Pilots - 2006



President with Puma Pilots - 2001

3 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

Pseudonym	Daring Three
Raising Day	1st January 1964
Motto	Daring Three

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar
Major Muhammad Faiz Ud Din Brandon
Major Ashraf
Captain Sultan Mahmood
Captain Muhammad Akram
Captain Patrick Tierney
Captain Sajjad Nazim

Flight Safety Trophy June 1997.

SHAHEEDS
Major Tahir Mahmood Jillani
Major Fayyaz Ibrahim SJ
Captain Sajid Nazir Ch.
Captain Zahid Hussain Shah
Captain Shahid Mehmood
Captain Tahir Hamid
Captain Shahid Nisar Chaudhry

HONOURS

Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar	Sitara-i-Jur'at
Major Fayyaz Ibrahim	Sitara-i-Jur'at
Major Maqbool Ahmad	Sitara-i-Basalat
Major Zareef Bangash	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Major Rahmat Ullah	Tamgha-i-Basalat

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar	1 June 1964
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Faiz Ud Din Brandon	13 February 1968
Lieutenant Colonel Naseer Ullah Khan Babar SJ	28 February 1969
Lieutenant Colonel S.H Gillani	2 September 1969
Lieutenant Colonel T.M. Mian	5 January 1971
Lieutenant Colonel Patrick C Tierney	2 December 1972
Lieutenant Colonel Zia Ud Din Javeed, S, BT	22 April 1974
Lieutenant Colonel Sarfraz Rabbani SJ	22 April 1975
Lieutenant Colonel Aftab Ahmed, S, BT	6 August 1977
Lieutenant Colonel Qurban Hussain	2 August 1978
Lieutenant Colonel Fahim Shah	7 July 1979
Lieutenant Colonel Abid Hussain	7 December 1982
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Imran Farooqi	18 November 1984
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Anwar	25 November 1986
Lieutenant Colonel Mansoor Saeed	25 November 1988
Lieutenant Colonel Javed Iqbal	4 December 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khalid Mehmood	14 November 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Tahir Ali	18 August 1993
Lieutenant Colonel Iqtidar Ahmed Farooqi	25 June 1995
Lieutenant Colonel Arshad Saeed Kundi	27 June 1997
Lieutenant Colonel Munir Ahsan	30 October 1999
Lieutenant Colonel Babar Mazhar Baig	12 October 2001
Lieutenant Colonel Asim Ghani	10 October 2003
Lieutenant Colonel Tahir Hameed	July 2006

3 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON





3 Army Aviation Squadron 2007

4 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

Pseudonym	"Gallants"
Raising Day	26th July 1969.
Motto	We Never Surrender
Flight Safety Trophy	4th July 1991

RAISING TEAM

Major Abdul Latif Awan SJ
Major S M A Tirmizi
Major SLA Bukhari
Major MM Naeem
Major Sultan Mahmood
Major Muhammad Akram
Major Zia Ud Din Javed
Major SZM Askree
Major Aftab Ahmed
Major HUK Niazi SJ
Major Nauman Mahmood
Major MK Bajwa
Major Muhammad Naeem Khan
Major Anwar Hussain Shah
Major Jawaid Hameed
Major J. Humayun
Major Mutahir Hussain Khan
Captain. Tauheed ul Haq

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel AL Awan	4 November 1969
Lieutenant Colonel Liaqat Bukhari	18 September 1971
Lieutenant Colonel Aftab Ahmed S.Bt	18 September 1973
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Daud	28 August 1975
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Razzaq	2 April 1979
Lieutenant Colonel Tasnim Hayat Malik	25 July 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Razaq	7 November 1985
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Umar	25 July 1986
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Amjad Barlas	28 December 88
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf Waraich	28 December 90
Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Iqbal Khan	6 October 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Najam Ul Arifin	29 September 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Sohail Ekram Siddiqui	28 July 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Azhar Ansari	31 August 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Syed Khusro Habib	15 January 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Naseem Mughal	6 November 01
Lieutenant Colonel Sagheer Choudhry T.Bt	11 October 03
Lieutenant Colonel Abid Ali	November 05
Lieutenant Colonel Aftab Ahmed	July 2007

SHAHEEDS

Major Mahmood Hussain
Captain Shafqat Hussain
Captain Shafqat Ullah
Captain Farooq Dasti
Captain Shahid Irshad
Major Tahir Amir
Subedar Khuda Dad
Havildar Muhammad Anwar
Havildar Bashir Ahmed
Naik Muhammad Saleem

HONOURS

Brigadier S.L.A. Bukhari	Sitara-i-Jur'at
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Latif Awan	Sitara-i-Jur'at
Major Riaz Ul Haq	Sitara-i-Jur'at
Major Akram	Sitara-i-Basalat
Major Aftab Ahmed	Sitara-i-Basalat
Lieutenant Colonel Sohail Ekram	Imtiazi-Sanad
Major Ikram Ul Haq	Imtiazi-Sanad
Havildar Muhammad Tariq	Imtiazi-Sanad
Major Naeem Khattak	Sitara-i-Basalat, Sitara-i-Esar
Major Basharat Noor	Sitara-i-Basalat



4 Army Aviation Squadron - 2007

5 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

RAISING TEAM
Major Nauman Mahmood
Major Anwar Shah
Major Ikram Ullah Khan
Major Aftab Ahmad
Major Mushtaq Ahmad
Major Khalid Yasin
Major Mohammad Daud
Major Sultan Mahmood
Major Zia Ud Din Javed

RESUSCITATION TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Tanveer Ullah Khan
Major Shahid Nazir
Major Babar Mazhar Baig
Major Muhammad Irfan Khan
Major Altaf Hussain

SHAHEEDS
Major Nasrullah Khan
Major Khalid Mahmood
Major Imtiaz Ahmed
Major Syed Nadeem Ali
Havildar Muhammad Nawaz
Naik Muhammad Nawaz

Pseudonym
Fearless Five
Raising Day
31st January 1971
Resuscitation Day
8th July 1999

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel S.M.A Tirmizi	31 January 1971
Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Ahmed Nazim	18 March 1974
Lieutenant Colonel Nauman Mahmood	5 November 1974
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Zaffar Iqbal	17 June 1977
Lieutenant Colonel Ikram Ullah Khan	12 April 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Khan	12 July 1984
Lieutenant Colonel Saif Ul Islam	1 November 1989
Lieutenant Colonel Hashim Khan	1 October 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ali Asif	2 September 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Talhah Ahmed Khan	4 October 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Kaukab Aziz Bhatti	8 October 1995
Lieutenant Colonel Jamshed Iqbal Bajwa	26 September 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Tanveer Ullah Khan	5 July 1999
Lieutenant Colonel Nasir Iftikhar Ahmed	6 August 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Babar Farooqi	22 November 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Ubaid Rehman	1 October 2004
Lieutenant Colonel Mueen Ud Din	06 July 2006



5 Army Aviation Squadron - 2002

6 EMERGENCY RELIEF CELL SQUADRON

Motto Any Time, Anywhere
Flight Safety Trophy (1975,1976 and 1977)



RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Hamid Hussain
Major Muhammad Tariq
Major Sajid Islam
Major Hameed Ullah
Major Nawazish Ali Khan
Major Riaz Hussain
Major Muhammad Farooq
Major Mirza Iqbal Hussain
Captain. Muhammad Afzal Tufail
Captain. Iqbal Kashmiri
Captain. Muhammad Ashraf

Raising Day 29th June 1974

HONOURS

Lieutenant Colonel Hamid Hussain	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Major Muhammad Farooq	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Major Mahmood Rizvi	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Naik Riaz Hussain Shah	Tamgha-i -Basalat


Hamid Chaudhry


Zareef Bangash


Moaziz Hussain


Mirza Iqbal


Khalid Butt


Abdul Wahid


Omar Qureshi


Arif Nazir


Atiq Ahmed Malik


Arshad Khan Tareen


Arshad Amin


Asad

7 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

Pseudonym Scorpions.
Raising Day 1st June 1981

COMMANDING OFFICERS

RAISING TEAM
Major Saleem Raza
Major Saleem Khan
Major Hasnain Mehdi
Major Muhammad Akbar Khan
Captain Muhammad Zakria
Captain Shaida Younis Yousaf Zai
Captain Shafqat Hussain
Captain Nasir Mahmood

SHAHEEDS
Lieutenant Colonel Saleem Raza
Lieutenant Colonel Arif Aziz


Humayun - 1981


M. Farooq - 1984


Saleem - 1987


Qazi - 1988


Azam - 1990


Roghani - 1992


Naqvi - 1994


Azhar - 1995


Qutaibah - 1997


Farooq - 1999


Amir Khan - 2000


Wasiq - 2002


Aman Ullah - 2004


Usmani - 2006

8 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

Motto	Honour, Integrity and Vigilance
Battle Honour	Chumik Saviours
Raising Day	14th May 1981

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Shah
Major Imtiaz Alam
Major Ayaz Hussain
Major Muhammad Saeed
Captain. Muhammad Ashraf

SHAHEEDS
Major Ejaz Haider Zaidi
Major Khalid Sohail Sultan
Major Babar Ramzan
Major Safdar Jahanzeb
Major Rasheed Mansoor
Major Abdul Qayyum
Major Syed Tahir Ali
Captain Waqar Baig
Captain Syed Kamal Masood
Captain Muhammad Nawaz
Naik Bahadar Khan
Naik Sultan Ahmed

HONOURS

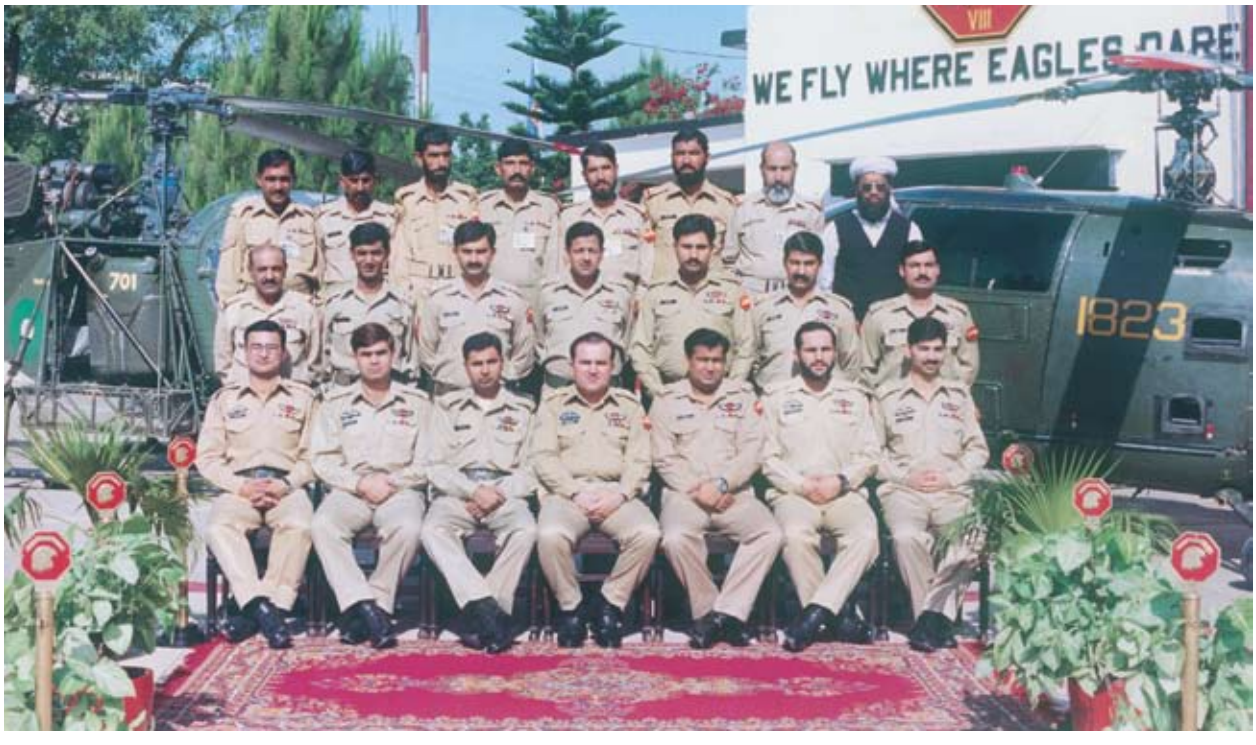
Sitara-i-Jur'at
Major Khalid Sohail Sultan
Major Babar Ramzan
Captain Raheel Hafeez Sehgal

Sitara-i-Basalat
Lieutenant Colonel Safdar Hussain
Major Zahoor Malik
Major Syed Tahir Ali
Major Alamgir Khan
Captain Abdul Raheem

Tamgha-i-Basalat
Lieutenant Colonel Shoaib Awan (BAR)
Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Raashid (BAR)
Major Husnain Mehdi
Major Azhar Akbar
Major Ejaz Zaidi
Major Safdar Jehanzeb
Major Rasheed Mansoor
Major Abdul Qayyum
Major Syed Tahir Ali
Major Zia Ud Din
Major Qaiser Yaqoob
Major Nawazish Ali
Captain Waqar Baig
Captain Mohammad Nawaz
Major Mohammad Afzaal
Major Inam Karim
Major Mehmood

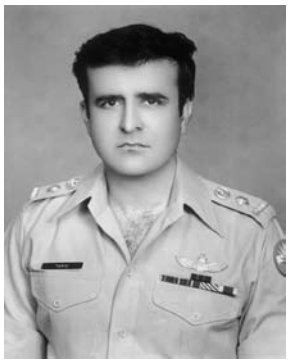
Tamgha-i-Shujaat
Major Safdar Hussain
Lieutenant Colonel Rashid Baig
Major Khalid Rana

Imtiazi Sanad
Lieutenant Colonel Safdar Hussain
Major Zia Ud Din
Major Tariq Jamil
Major Mehboob Haider
Major Akram Khan
Havildar Pervez Akbar



8 Army Aviation Squadron - 2002

COMMANDING OFFICERS 8 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON



Tariq - June 1981



Qurban - August 1984



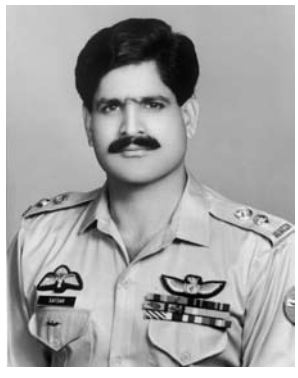
Iqbal - August 1985



Bashir - April 1987



Farooq - June 1989



Safdar - July 1990



Shoaib - August 1992



Raashid - November 1994



Inam - August 1996



Sehgal - November 1998



Sadaqat - October 2000



Rashid - October 2002



Azadar - October 2005



Khalid - 2007

9 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

RAISING TEAM

Lieutenant Colonel Masood Anwar
Major Sibbat Rasool
Major Zafar Iqbal Malik
Major Ilyas Ahmed Mirza
Major Ahmed Salman Malik
Major Javed Ahmed
Major Abdul Jamil
Major Javed Aslam Tahir
Major Sami Ullah
Captain Shahid Ahmed
Captain Tanveer Hussain
Captain Raja Muhammad Azad
Captain Talat Mahmood
Captain Nofal Manzoor
Captain Shakeel Ahmed

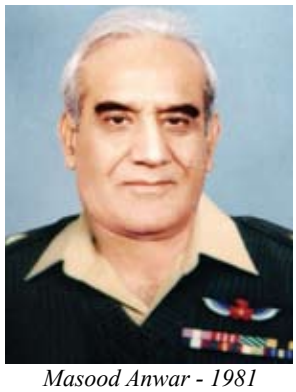
SHAHEEDS

Sepoy Muhammad Tufail
Captain Amir Yasin
Captain. Raza Ali Shah

Raising Day

13th May 1981

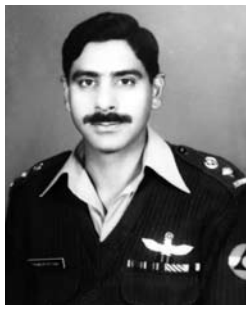
COMMANDING OFFICERS



Masood Anwar - 1981



Imtiaz Alam - 1982



Taimur Dotani - 1984



Imtiaz Uppal - 1986



Javed Tahir - 1989



Azad Minhas - 1991



Nasir Mahmood - 1993



Sarfaraz Khan - 1995



Qasim Hameed - 1997



Shahid Pervez - 2000



Nasir Dilawar - 2001



Khalil Dar - 2003



Sardar Sajjad - 2005

SILVER JUBILEE MARK & COL OF THE SQN INSTL CEREMONY
9 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON - 3/4 DEC 2006



MAJOR GENERAL NASIR MEHMOOD, SI (M)
" THE COLONEL OF 9 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON "



Left to Right

Sitting Row : Brig(R) M M Karim, Brig Tariq Hussain, Lt Col Sajjad, Maj gen Javed Aslam Tahir, Lt Gen Mohammed Hamid (Comd 11 Corps), Brig Nasir Mehmood, Maj Gen Waqar kingravi, Brig(R) Ghulam Jabbar, Brig Ameer Khan

10 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

RAISING TEAM
Major Khurshid Iqbal
Captain Syed Ale Haider Zaidi
Captain Dawood Ahmed
Captain Tahir Ali
Captain Asghar Abbas Naqvi
Captain Ejaz Haider Zaidi
Captain Arshad Iqbal
Naib Subedar Muhammad Rafique

Pseudonym BLOCHIS
Raising Day 4th May 1981

Flight Safety Trophy 2001

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel Khurshid Iqbal	16 August 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Anwar Ul Haq	October 1983
Lieutenant Colonel Javed Iqbal	29 April 1987
Lieutenant Colonel Dilshad Muhammad	30 October 1987
Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Iqbal	1989
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Ahmed Kureshi	9 June 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Azkar Ahmed Lodhi	22 September 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ifzal	21 August 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Mumtaz Ali	17 August 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Mahmood Ul Islam	26 October 2000
Lieutenant Colonel M Ehtasham Amir	11 October 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Nasir Dilawar	September 2004
Lieutenant Colonel Haider Ali	August 2006
Lieutenant Colonel Nasir Ahmad	July 2007



10 Army Aviation Squadron - 2007

11 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

SHAHEEDS
Captain Tassawar Hussain Humayun
Captain Shahid Rehman Tariq
Captain Masood Ullah Baig

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Asad Mahmud Khan
Major Talhah Ahmed Khan
Captain Jahangir Badshah
Captain Syed Kamal Masood
Captain Syed Tahir Ali
Captain Aman Ullah Khan
Subedar Muhammad Yasin

Commendition Card
October 1997 for Military Transport Discipline

Pseudonym RACHNA EAGLES
Raising Day 1st October 1987

COMMANDING OFFICERS


Asad - 1987

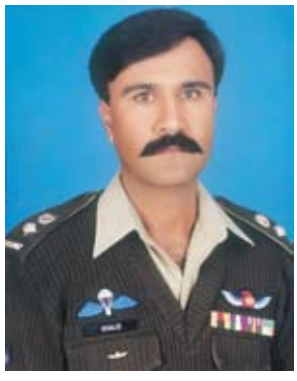

Niazi - 1989


Javed - 1991


Tanveer - 1993


Ajmal - 1994


Abbasi - 1996


Khalid - 1998


Saddal 2000


Anjum - 2002


Hamid - 2003



Qaiser - 2005


Asim - 2007

12 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON



RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Anwar
Major Rasheed
Captain Khan Aziz Ur Rehman
Captain Mahmood Ahmed
Captain Wasiq Khalil Mahmood

Pseudonym Desert Reckoner
Raising Day 10th September 1988

COMMANDING OFFICERS



Anwar - 1988



Mehdi - 1990



Sami - 1992



Dawood - 1995



Akram - 1997



Aetizaz - 1999



Farooq - 2001



Sana - 2003



Shahid - 2005



Fawad - 2007

13 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Nawaz Khan
Major Muhammad Tahir Akram
Captain Zahoor Afridi
Captain Asad Zahoor
Subedar Muhammad Akbar



HONOURS

Major Nizam	Imtiazi Sanad
Major Muhammad Nadeem.	Imtiazi Sanad

Pseudonym Mujahid
Raising Day 10th September 1988

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Nawaz Khan	26 November 1988
Lieutenant Colonel Tipu Sultan	20 November 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Niaz Hussain Siddiqui	29 December 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Shuaib Idrees	8 July 1993
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf	18 July 1995
Lieutenant Colonel Sohail Azad Kayani	1 May 1997
Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Aziz Bashir Din	1 April 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Haider Raza Bangash	5 February 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Rizwan Qureshi	10 February 2004
Brigadier Waqar Ahmed	April 2005



13 Army Aviation Squadron - 2002

21 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Syed Sajid Ali
Major Masood Pervaiz
Major S Mustafa Kamal Siddiqui
Major Muhammad Arif Aziz
Major Iqbal Ahmed
Major Sultan Sikandar
Captain Zaeem Ur Rehman
Captain Omer Jalal Qureshi
Captain Ajmal Abbas Siddiqui
Captain Taqi Naseer Rizvi
Captain Ehsan Qadir
Subedar Nazir Ahmed

HONOURS

Major Sohail Sadiq	Tamgha-i-Jur'at
Captain Nadeem Raza	Tamgha-i-Jur'at
Major Umar Rana	Tamgha-i-Jur'at
Major Malik Mumtaz	Sitara-i-Basalat
Havildar Rafique	Sitara-i-Basalat
Colonel Nadeem Aslam	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Major Arslan	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Havildar Asif	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Colonel Tahir	Imtiazi Sanad
Major Sabah Ud Din	Imtiazi Sanad

Pseudonym	Jabir
Raising Day	14th August 1981
Redesignated	Quick Reaction Squadron - 14th August 2004

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel Syed Sajid Ali	13 August 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Javed Jahan	25 June 1984
Lieutenant Colonel M Saleem Nasir	1 April 1985
Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Ahmed	27 November 1988
Lieutenant Colonel Pervaiz Iqbal	11 May 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Zahid Tirmizi	18 June 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Hadeed Anwar Malik	30 June 94
Lieutenant Colonel Zahid Iqbal	22 August 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Sardar	16 July 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Zia Ud Din	6 November 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Asif Jah	28 October 2002
Colonel Nadeem Aslam	August 2004
Colonel Tahir Maqsood	August 2006



21 Army Aviation Squadron - 2002

24 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

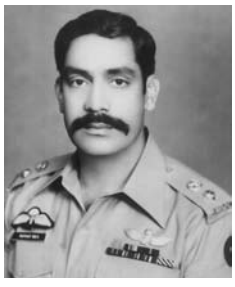
RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Rahmat Ullah
Major Asghar Akram
Major Zafar Iqbal
Major Mansoor Saeed
Major Zafar Ahmed
Major Ahsan Ul Haq
Major Hadeed Anwar Malik
Major Muhammad Farooq
Captain Zahid Tirmizi
Captain Sarfraz Khan
Captain Liaqat Nabi Shah

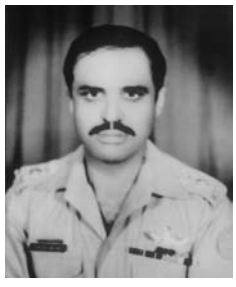
Pseudonym Desert Hawks
Raising Day 24th August 1981

Flight Safety Trophy
1983, 1984 ,1985

COMMANDING OFFICERS


Rahmat - 1981


Riffat - 1982


Sajid - 1983


Fahim - 1986


Farooq - 1987


Tipu Sultan - 1989


Shafiq - 1990


Saif - 1992


Javed - 1994


Mussaddiq - 1996


Basharat - 1998


Nadeem - 2000


Tippu - 2002


Ashfaq - 2004


Nadeem - 2006

25 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Shah Alam
Major Abid Hussain
Major Ashraf Choudhry
Major Shaukat Ibrahim
Captain Waqar Ahmed Kingravi
Captain Iqtidar Ahmed Farooqi

Motto	Azam-O-Laggan
Pseudonym	Flying Dolphins
Raising Day	16th June 1981

SHAHEEDS
Major Khalid Akhtar Minhas
Major Khaliq Javed
Captain. Schehzad Adnan Noor Sani
Naib Subedar Waris Gul
Naik Muhammad Farooq
Lance Naik Muhammad Iltaf
Lance Naik Muhammad Shah
OCU Zia Ullah Khan

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel Shah Alam	21 June 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Riaz Hussain	6 July 1984
Lieutenant Colonel Pervez Iqbal	4 November 1986
Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kamal	7 December 1987
Lieutenant Colonel Naveed Kayani	30 September 1988
Lieutenant Colonel Arif Rasul	14 October 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Shaukat Ibrahim	6 July 1992
Lieutenant Colonel M Ikram Cheema	16 November 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Shaida Younis	1 November 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Nasir Mian	30 September 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Javed Rasheed Sajid	26 September 1998
Lieutenant Colonel M Alamgir Khan	29 September 2000
Lieutenant Colonel M Irfan Khan	22 October 01
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Tariq	12 October 2003
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Latif	August 2005
Lieutenant Colonel Toor Ahmad	2007



25 Army Aviation Squadron - 2006

27 ARMY AVIATION SQUADRON

RAISING TEAM

Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Masood
Major Moaziz Hussain
Major Iftikhar Ahmed
Major Muhammad Anwar
Major Amjad Barlas
Major Luqman Aziz Qazi
Captain Zafar Iqbal Khan
Captain M Tariq Pervez
Captaint M Shahid Azhar Ansari
Captain Raja M Fakhar Ul Islam
Captain Muhammad Mumtaz Kanju
Captain Tughral Bashir
Captain Muhammad Iqbal

HONOURS

Major Hanif	Sitara-i-Jur'aat
Captain M Uzair	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Havildar Shabbir Aasi	Imtiazi Sanad
Major Naveed Akbar	Imtiazi Sanad
Major Jafar Iqbal	Imtiazi Sanad
Major Adil Shahzad	Imtiazi Sanad
Major Irfan Mahmood Waraich	Imtiazi Sanad
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Zulfiqar	Imtiazi Sanad
Major Naeem Masood	Imtiazi Sanad
Lieutenant Colonel Nauman Ghafoor	Sitara-i-Basalat
Captain Imran Wasti	Sitara-i-Basalat
Captain Abdur Rahim	Sitara-i-Basalat, Tamgha-i-Basalat
Major Irfan Aslam	Sitara-i-Basalat
Major Altaf	Imtiazi Sanad, Tamgha-i-Basalat

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Masood	14 August 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Umar	13 April 1982
Lieutenant Colonel Nawazish Ali Khan	5 December 1983
Lieutenant Colonel Mumtaz Azeem Malik	17 January 1987
Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Ahmed Rana	1 January 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Maruf Khan	16 December 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Tariq	28 September 1993
Lieutenant Colonel Tughral Bashir	15 July 1995
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Zulfiqar	23 May 1997
Lieutenant Colonel Pervez Mahmood Butt	6 October 1999
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Nazir	18 October 2001
Lieutenant Colonel Nauman Ghafoor	30 September 2003
Lieutenant Colonel Masud Akhtar	20 September 2004
Lieutenant Colonel Ikram Khan	29 September 2006

Motto Al-Najam-Us-Saqib
Pseudonym King Bird
Raising Day 14th August 1981

Shaheeds

Major Muhammad Hanif
Captain Muhammad Uzair
Havildar Shabbir Ahmed Asi
Naik Naseer Ahmed Malik
Lieutenant Colonel Nauman Ghafoor
Captain Imran Wasti



27 Army Aviation Squadron - 2002

31 ARMY AVIATION COMBAT SQUADRON

The Spirit of Attack is Every Thing

Pseudonym PANZER
Raising Day 12th March 1985

COMMANDING OFFICERS



Javed - 1985



HONOURS

Major Naeem Khattak	Tamgha-i-Basalat-
Lieutenant Colonel Abid Saeed	Tamgha-i-Basalat

RAISING TEAM

Major Saleem Akhund SJ
Major Shahid Ahmed Kureshi
Major Shaukat Ibrahim
Major Shafique Ur Rehman
Major Azkar Ahmed Khan Lodhi
Major Shahid Azhar Ansari
Major Tughral Bashir
Major Muhammad Zulfiqar



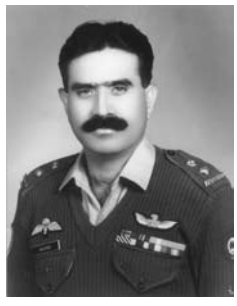
Ashraf - 1987



Liaquat - 1988



Jafery - 1991



Kaukab - 1993



Taqi - 1995



Sayed Ali - 1997



Tahir - 1998



Anjum - 2000



Abid - 2003



Ejaz - 2005



31 Army Aviation Combat Squadron - 2002

33 ARMY AVIATION COMBAT SQUADRON

Courage Arms us

RAISING TEAM
Majors Asad Kamal, Abdul Wahid, Taqi Rizvi, Sirhandi, George, Pervez Sultan and Zafar Saleem

Pseudonym
Air Wolves
Raising Day
12th March 1985

SHAHEED
Captain Rashid Kafait

COMMANDING OFFICERS



Asad Kamal - 1985

HONOURS

Lieutenant Colonel Raza Farooq	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Major Nabeel Khan	Tamgha-i-Basalat



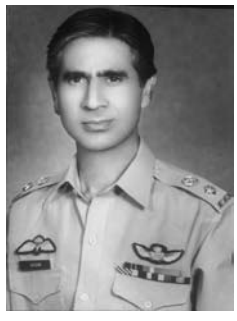
Akhund SJ - 1989



Saleem - 1991



Arshad - 1992



Ahsan Janjua - 1994



Parvez - 1996



Abid - 1998



Waseem - 2000



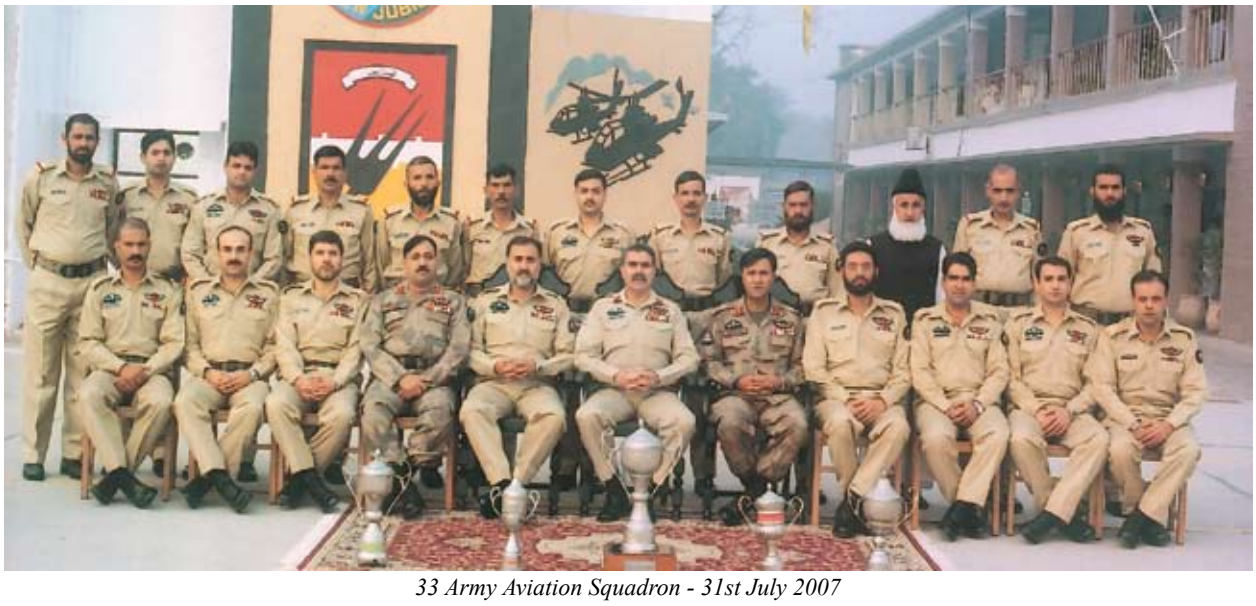
Raza - 2002



Hamid - 2004



Irfan - 2007



33 Army Aviation Squadron - 31st July 2007

35 ARMY AVIATION COMBAT SQUADRON

Raising Date: 14th August 2005

HONOURS

Lieutenant Colonel Tehseen Khan	Tamgha-i-Basalat
Major Kashif	Imtiazi Sanad

RAISING TEAM

Lieutenant Colonel Tehseen Khan
Major Nadeem Kayani
Major Shahid Butt
Major Sohail Khan
Major Waseem Hayat
Captain Kamran Ahmad

COMMANDING OFFICERS



Tehseen - 2005



Wajahat - 2007



35 Army Aviation Squadron - August 2007

50 BORDER SECURITY FORCE SQUADRON

Raising Date: 2002



Brig Shafiq ur Rehman
DG Air Wing, Ministary of Interior

COMMANDING OFFICERS



Shahid Sardar - 2002



Javed Sajid - 2003



50 Border Security Force Aviation Squadron - 2007

199 EME BATTALION

Pseudonym	PIONEERS
Raising Day	November 1959

RAISING TEAM
Major Ansar Ahmed Zuberi
Captain Majid Ullah

SHAHEED
Havildar RT Muhammad Ashraf

HONOURS
COAS Commendation Card - 126

COMMANDING OFFICERS	
Major Ansar Ahmed Zuberi	November 1959
Major Aman Ullah Khan	September 1962
Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Qadir	February 1964
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Saeed Khan	January 1966
Lieutenant Colonel Aman Ullah Khan	July 1966
Lieutenant Colonel Ansar Ahmed Zuberi	August 1969
Lieutenant Colonel Majid Ullah	October 1971
Lieutenant Colonel Ansar Ahmed Zuberi	August 1974
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Sher Khan	January 1975
Lieutenant Colonel Qazi Muhammad Jamil	July 1977
Lieutenant Colonel Salim Ullah	September 1979
Lieutenant Colonel Burhan Shah	October 1980
Lieutenant Colonel Qazi Muhammad Jamil	October 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Jalil Ur Rehman	March 1982
Colonel Ghalib Saeed	June 1984
Colonel Muhammad Akram Khan	July 1987
Colonel Abid Saeed	November 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Anwar Ali Pervaz	August 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Najeeb Tariq	August 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Jamshed Riaz	October 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Munzim Ahmed Vahidy	September 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Syed Wajid Hussain Tirmizi	September 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Amin Ur Rashid	November 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Rafiq	October 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Nasir	2004
Lieutenant Colonel Shahzad Ahmed	2006



199 EME Battalion - 2007

299 EME BATTALION

Raising Day	28th August 1969
Motto	Striving For Perfection.





COMMANDING OFFICERS	
Lieutenant Colonel Noor Haider Shah	28 August 1969
Lieutenant Colonel Farhat Ali Burki	21 December 1972
Lieutenant Colonel Pir Daud Khalid Shah	28 June 1975
Lieutenant Colonel Jalil Ur Rehman Khan	1 April 1977
Lieutenant Colonel Samee Ur Rehman	10 April 1979
Lieutenant Colonel M Yousaf Anwar	17 February 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Sikandar	1 July 1981
Colonel Burhan Shah	13 August 1988
Colonel Hisam Ullah Beg	20 October 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Qazi Muhammad Iftikhar	1 August 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Khaliq	4 February 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Saud Khan	5 September 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Zahoor Sultan	15 September 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Hafiz Sibghat Ullah Fazil	29 September 96
Lieutenant Colonel Mansoor Ahmed	25 September 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Azmat Ullah	31 October 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Amer Zafar	5 September 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Sharaff Rabbani	October 2004
Lieutenant Colonel Salman	January 2007



299 EME Battalion - 2002

399 EME BATTALION



Raising Day 1st August 1991

SHAHEEDS
Subedar Muhammad Rafique
Havildar Abdul Haq
Havildar Muhammad Aslam
Havildar Muhammad Shabbir
Naik Naseer Ahmed Malik

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Sohail Qureshi
Major Syed Ali Tariq
Major Syed Sikandar Ahmed
Major Mushtaq Ahmed
Major Rashid Ahmed
Captain. Muhammad Bilal Arif
Captain Qaiser Mehmood
Captain Muhammad Riaz
Subedar Major Younis Raz

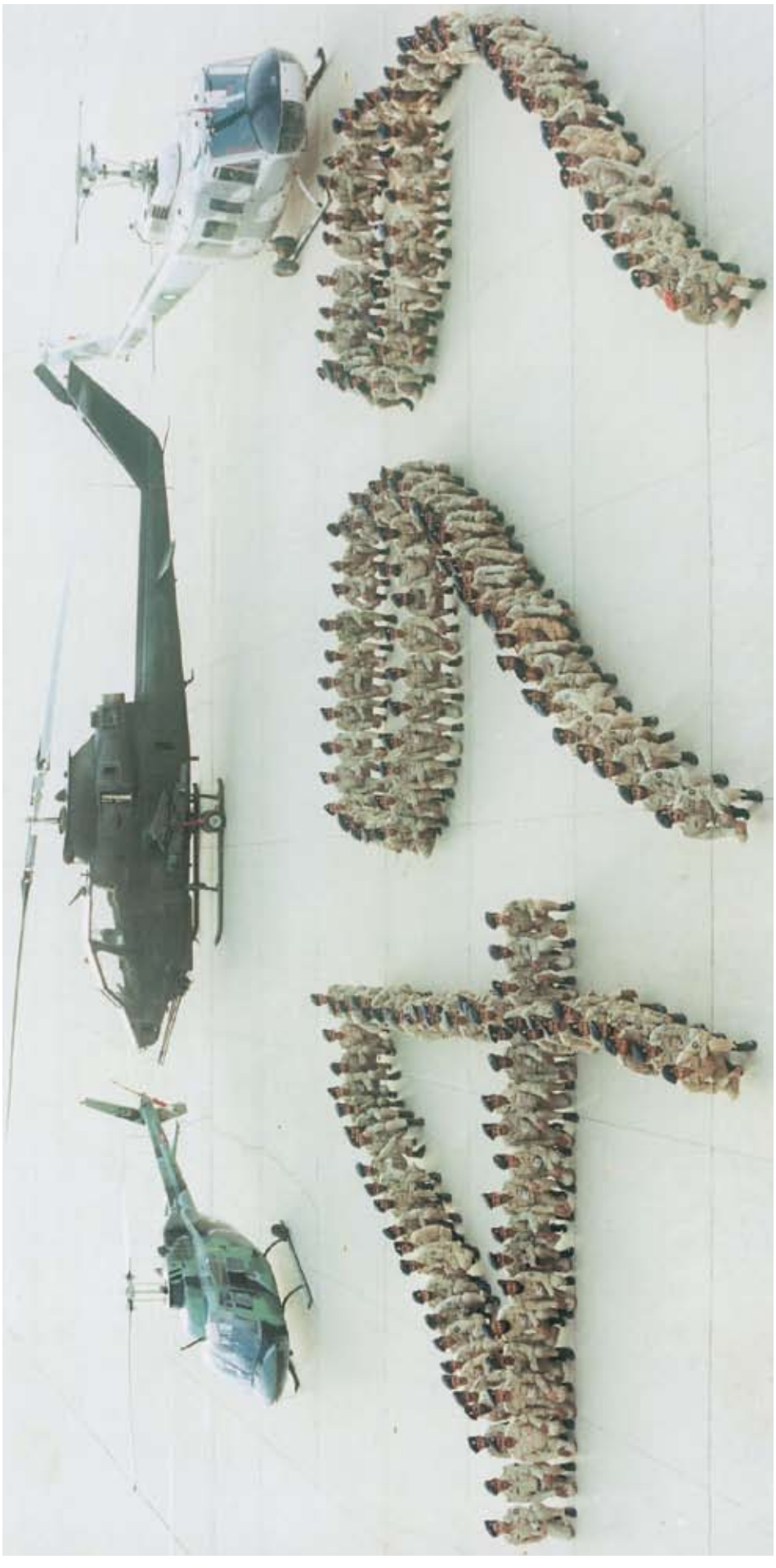
COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel Sohail Qureshi	1 August 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Farooq Hameed Khan	25 August 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Qazi Muhammad Iftikhar	26 September 94
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Shahid	25 July 1995
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Bashir	10 July 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Iftikhar Ahmed Malik	31 October 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Shaukat Rabbani	2002
Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Iftikhar	2004
Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Jalil	2007



399 EME Battalion - 2002

499 EME BATTALION





Raising Day 1st August 1991

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Jamil
Major Sibghat Ullah Fazil
Major Syed Wajid Hussain
Captain Muhammad Younis
Captain Tariq Jalil
Captain Malik Shahid Nawaz
Captain Aamir
Captain Nabeel Ahmad
Subedar Major Mehmood Ahmed
Subedar Major Muhammad Shafi

COMMANDING OFFICERS
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Jamil
1 August 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Faridoon
4 December 1992
Major Hafiz Sibghat Ullah
6 March 1994 (Officiating)
Lieutenant Colonel Majeed Ullah
29 September 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Mehmood Ahmed
4 March 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Mansoor Akram
29 June 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Nasir Maqsood Sulery
31 October 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Waqar Muhammad
17 September 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Nauman Hashmi
2004
Lieutenant Colonel Ansar Ali
2007

599 EME BATTALION



Pseudonym	OPTIMISTS
Raising Day	5th March 1991

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Mushtaq	1 August 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Syed Mukhtar Asif	20 July 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Sohail Nasir	28 September 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Qaiser Hamid Malik	29 September 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Qamer Masood Pasha	1 September 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Naveed Zafar	15 November 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Mirza Munir Baig	1 October 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Nadeem Yousaf	2005
Lieutenant Colonel Mudassir Hashmi	2007



599 EME Battalion - 2007

CENTRAL ORDNANCE AVIATION DEPOT, DHAMIAL

Raising Day 5th December 1963 **Renamed:** Central Aviation Spares Depot - 30th December 2005


Asghar


Iftikhar


Aman Ullah


Latif Ch.


ML Niazi

Yousaf Khan


Inayat

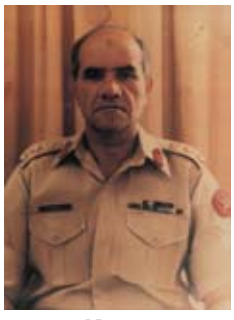

Saad Ullah


Jivandaham


Siraj ud Din


Ijaz Ahmed


Hamid Ali


Naseer


Berqi


Sajjad


Anwar

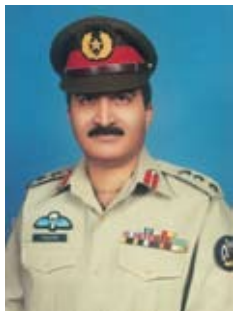

Naushad


Javaid


Bashir


Anwar Sher


Mehmood


Manzoor


Aziz


Wajid


Iftikhar

ORDNANCE AVIATION DEPOT MULTAN

Raising Day 7th December 1982

RAISING TEAM
Major Syed Muhammad Tariq
Captain Khalid Nasim
Lieutenant Basharat Aman
Subedar Ghulam Haider

CHIEF ORDNANCE OFFICER

Captain Khalid Munir	25 September1981
Major Syed Tariq	22 November 1981
Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Abid	4 January 1982
Lieutenant Colonel Mohy ud Din	24 November 1982
Lieutenant Colonel Hakim Khan	2 January 1985
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashfaq	26 April 1986
Lieutenant Colonel Abdus Salam	17 September 1988
Lieutenant Colonel Pervez Zafar	22 November 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Asif Ikram	1 March 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Akhtar Abbas Janjua	28 October 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Aziz	30 September 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Zahid	2 October 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf	28 December 2002
Lieutenant Colonel M. Younas (EME)	2005
Lieutenant Colonel Farooq Khan (EME)	2007



Ordnance Aviation Depot Multan - 2002

1 ARMY AVIATION FORWARD AREA ARMING REFUELLING COMPANY

RAISING TEAM
Major Jawed Saeed Khan
Subedar Ghulam Muhammad
Naib Subedar Fiaz Muhammad
Naib Subedar Muhammad Ramzan

Raising Day 12th March 1985

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Major M Jawed Saeed Khan	7 June 1985
Major M Iftikhar Ahmed Khan	16 December 1986
Major Arif Sultan	1 October 1988
Lieutenant Colonel Saleem Khan	1 October 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Rehmat	24 September 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Junaid Usmani	30 September 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Imtiaz Ahmed Anjum	25 August 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Syed Muhammad Mazhar	7 November 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Asim Mehmood Qureshi	8 October 2002
Major Irfan Ahmad	2005
Major Imran Ashraf	2007



1 Army Aviation Forward Area Arming Refuelling Company - 2002

2 ARMY AVIATION FORWARD AREA ARMING REFUELLING COMPANY

RAISING TEAM
Major Arif Sultan
Subedar Ayaz Khan Rahi
Naib Subedar Mulazim Hussain
Naib Subedar Abdul Sattar

Raising Day 20th April 1985

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Major Arif Sultan	2 May 1985
Major Khalid Mehmood	14 October 1988
Major Mubashar Jamal	19 August 1989
Lieutenant Colonel Javed Jahan	21 January 1991
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Jamil	21 December 1993
Lieutenant Colonel Ikram Cheema	9 November 1994
Lieutenant Colonel M Iftikhar Ahmed	14 June 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Ghaffar	1 September 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Tahir Maqsood Khan	11 January 2001
Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Ali Shah Roghani	6 January 2003
Major Salah ud din	2005
Major Kamran Ahmad	2007



2 Army Aviation Forward Area Arming Refuelling Company - 2002

3 ARMY AVIATION FORWARD AREA ARMING REFUELLING COMPANY

COMMANDING OFFICERS	
Major Asad Sharif	22 May 1985
Major Zahid Mehmood	26 October 1988
Major Muhammad Abbas	8 July 1990
Lieutenant Colonel Pervez Sultan Khan	30 August 1993
Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Hassan Butt	26 January 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Nofal Manzoor	30 July 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Tassalimoon Syed	29 December 1998
Lieutenant Colonel Hidayat Ullah	29 November 2000
Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Nadeem	13 October 2002
Major Asrar Ahmed	2 February 2006
Major Abdul Basit Khan	21 September 2006

RAISING TEAM
Major Asad Sharif
Subedar Muhammad Yousaf

Pseudonym	THE FEEDER THREE.
Raising Day	13th March 1985



3 Army Aviation Forward Area Arming Refuelling Company - 2002

301 FUEL STORAGE PLATOON

Raising Day 19th July 1985

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Major Tahir	19 July 1985	Major Farid Butt	10 September 1997
Major Muhammad Tariq	5 August 1989	Major Akram Raza	6 August 1999
Major Tajdar Iqbal	17 September 1991	Major Shakil Ahmed	25 March 2000
Major Zaffar Warraich	21 April 1993	Major Ejaz Ahmed	4 April 2003
Major Jamil Bajwa	11 June 1995	Major Mukarram	2005
Major Ijaz Hussain	25 May 1997	Major Tariq	2007



301 Fuel Storage Platoon - 2002

302 AVIATION FUEL STORAGE PLATOON

Raising Day 25th March 1985

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Major Khalid Asghar	July 1985	Major Rafaqat Mehboob	November 1994
Major Zulqarnain Mehdi	June 1986	Major Akram Imtiaz	April 1997
Major Masood Ahmed	March 1990	Major Atique Awan	August 2001
Major Abdul Malik	November 1992	Major Zaheer Babar	March 2004
		Major Naseem Malik	2006



302 Aviation Fuel Storage Platoon - 2002

303 AVIATION FUEL STORAGE PLATOON

Raising Day 1st January 1985

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Major Taj Ahmed	Major Rohail Malik
Major Mubarak Ahmed	Major Abdul Sattar Khan
Major Ahsan Ahmed	Major Faisal Butt
Major Jamil Ahmed	Major Khalid Mir
Major Muhammad Afzal	Major Shoaib

351 FIELD SUPPLY PLATOON

Raising Day March 1985

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Captain Naveed Akhtar	23 July 1985	Major Muhammad Akram Raza	22 October 1997
Captain Syed Sajid Pervez	1 February 1988	Captain Muhammad Shahid Sabir	15 November 2000
Captain Ghulam Abbas	14 January 1989	Captain Maqsood Ali	7 August 2002
Captain Imran Ahmed Rana	2 October 1991	Captain Azhar	2004
Major Ijaz Hussain	12 November 1994	Captain Faisal Bhatti	2006

352 FIELD SUPPLY PLATOON

Raising Day 25th March 1985

Motto We Never Fail.

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Captain Riffat Mahmood	14 May 1985	Major Khalid Mahmood	5 May 1996
Captain Zafar Ullah Khan	7 December 1986	Major Muhammad Ishtiaq	2 October 1998
Captain Amir Hafeez	16 February 1989	Major Tamiz Ud Din	20 April 2001
Captain Tariq Mahmood	15 October 1990	Major Safdar Hayat	2003
Captain Naeem Jan	26 December 1992	Captain Akhtar Ali	2005

353 FIELD SUPPLY PLATOON

Raising Day 25th March 1985

Motto We Never Fail.

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Captain Syed M Iqbal Hashmi	May 1985	Captain Syed Ahtesham Ul Abbas	April 2000
Captain Syed Basharat Ali	June 1987	Captain Mehar Gul Sumbal	December 2001
Captain Abid Ali	July 1989	Captain Abdullah Zaman	2003
Captain Tariq Mahmood Malik	August 1992	Captain Nadeem Abbas	2005
Captain Muhammad Sohail	March 1995	Major Nigar Wadood	2007
Captain Zaheer Bashir	September 1997		

PAKISTAN RANGERS (PUNJAB)

Raising day 3rd July 1977

RAISING TEAM
Captain Tariq Razi
Havildar Muhammad Mushtaq
Havildar Muhammad Pervez
Naik Ahmed Saeed
Naik Muhammad Yaqoob

CHIEF PILOTS

Captain Tariq Razi	3 July 1977
Major Muhammad Ashraf TBt	3 July 1978
Major Tariq Razi	12 December 1978
Major Muhammad Farooq Altaf	21 August 1980
Major Muhammad Shah Roghani	21 May 1984
Major Sajjad Ahmed Khan	3 November 1986
Major Omer Jalal Quereshi	25 April 1990
Major Zafar Iqbal Khan	24 November 1990
Major Razzaq Choudhry	16 October 1991
Major Ijaz Lilla	1 February 1993
Major Amir Sanjar Farouk	9 July 1994
Major Muhammad Naeem	1996
Major Naeem Jaffery	1999
Major Zaheer	2002
Lieutenant Colonel Javed Rafiq	2004

FRONTIER CORPS NWFP AVIATION FLIGHT

Raising Day 17th November 1981

RAISING TEAM
Major Khalid Hassan Butt
Havildar Mohammad Sarwar
Havildar Muhammad Akram
Havildar Noroz Khan
Naik Ghulam Rasool Rehmani
Naik Fateh Muhammad
Naik Muhammad Mumtaz
Naik Muhammad Anwar

CHIEF PILOTS

Major Khalid Hassan Butt	12 November 1981
Major Tariq Khan	7 April 1985
Major Najam Ul Arifin	23 April 1988
Lieutenant Colonel Ajmal Khan	8 July 1992
Lieutenant Colonel Sohail Ekram Siddiqui	28 September 1994
Lieutenant Colonel Ijaz Ahmed Lilla	7 September 1996
Lieutenant Colonel Shahid Abbas	1997
Lieutenant Colonel Tahir Hameed	1998
Major Javed Rafique	1 November 2002
Lieutenant Colonel Qaiser	2006

PAKISTAN RANGERS SINDH

Raising Day 20th August 1994

RAISING TEAM
Naib Subedar Nasrullah Khan
Havildar Muhammad Saghir Ahmed
Naik Manzoor Ahmed
Naik Ghulam Rasul
Naik Sher Gul
Tahir Mehmood

CHIEF PILOTS

Maj Ijaz Lilla	Aug 94	Sep 96
Maj Mahmood Ahmed	Jan 97	Mar 99
Maj Nasheed Iqbal	Mar 99	Mar 2000
Maj Rizwan Saleem	Mar 2000	Aug 03
Maj Abid Aziz	Aug 03	Nov 05
Lt. Col Raza Farooq	Nov 05	Aug 08
Lt. Col Shahid Butt	Sep 08	-

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BOARD

Raising Day 17th July 1993



DIRECTORS

Colonel Muhammad Azam	17 August 1993
Colonel Shafiq ur Rehman	21 July 1995
Brigadier Shafiq ur Rehman	15 July 1997
Colonel Syed Ali	1999
Brigadier Hadeed Anwar Malik	21 December 2001
Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Ahmed Sadal	15 July 2002
Brigadier Tanveer Ullah Khan	18 Dec 2004
Brigadier Munir Ahsan	Agtust 2005

ARMY AVIATION CELL ARTILLERY CENTRE

Raising Day 1st August 1994

RAISING TEAM
Lieutenant Colonel Tughral Bashir
Major Benson Waris
Major Sher Afzal
Naib Subedar Muhammad Anwar

OFFICERS IN CHARGE
Lieutenant Colonel Tughral Bashir
Lieutenant Colonel Abid Malik
Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Iqbal
Lieutenant Colonel Zahid Iqbal
Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Jamil Khan
Lieutenant Colonel Abid Imran
Lieutenant Colonel Amir Ayub

1 LIGHT COMPANY (DSG)

Defence Services Guards

Raising Day March 2002

OFFICERS COMMANDING

Major Aslam Malik	23 May 2002
Major Gulzar Gondal	2 January 2004-

ARMY AVIATION ENGINEERING SCHOOL

COMMANDANTS

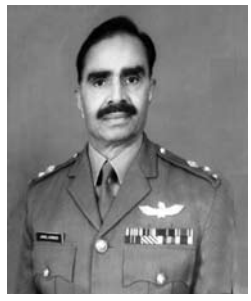
Raising Day
29th April 1969



Majeed Ullah - 1969



Daud - 1971



Jamil - 1975



Wali - 1986



Akbar - 1990



Toor - 1993



Hisam - 1995



Nafees - 1998



Najeeb - 2001



Hafiz - 2002



Zafar - 2004



Waqar- 2006



Aviation Engineering School - 2006

ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL

Raising Day
1st January 1959 as Air Observation Post School at Chaklala redesignated as Army Aviation School on 01 January 1964

COMMANDANTS


Awan - 1959


Jabbar - 1961


Blaker - 1962


Karim - 1964


Mahmood - 1966


Brandon - 1969


Abbassy - 1970


Riaz - 1972


Aslam - 1974


Younis - 1976


Mokeet - 1978


Hamid - 1978


Rahmat - 1986


Razzaq - 1987


Dotani - 1990


Ashraf - 1993


Azam - 1995


Akhund SJ - 1997


Arshad - 1997


Arif Rasul - 1999


Nasir - 2001


Zulfiqar - 2003


Inam Karim - 2004


Shahid Sardar - 2006

QASIM ARMY AVIATION BASE

Raising Day: 15th October 1962
Renamed: Qasim Base 12th December 1972

COMMANDERS


Jabbar - 1962


A.B. Awan - 1963


Jabbar - 1965


Mahmud - 1972


Qayyoom - 1975


Bukhari SJ - 1975


Abbassy - 1976


Mokeet - 1978


Nauman - 1984


Sajjad - 1987


Rahmat - 1990


Razzaq - 1991


Qazi - 1996


Isar - 1997


Kaukab - 1999


Arif - 2001


Raashid - 2003


Tanveer - 2004


Amir Khan - 2005


Tanveer - 2007


Headquarters Qasim Army Aviation Base - 2002

MULTAN ARMY AVIATION BASE

Raising Day 14th August 1981

COMMANDERS



Khalid Kamal - 1981



Sajjad Nazim - 1984



Rahmat Ullah - 1987



Nauman - 1988



Fahim - 1989



Humayun - 1990



Bashir Baz - 1992



Liaquat - 1994



Qayum Sher - 1995



Javed - 1997



Javed Iqbal - 1999



Waqar Kingravi - 2001



Ifzal - 2003



Tariq - 2006



Nadeem Aslam - 2007



Multan Army Aviation Base - 2003

ARMY AVIATION COMBAT GROUP

Raising Day
15th February 1985

COMMANDERS

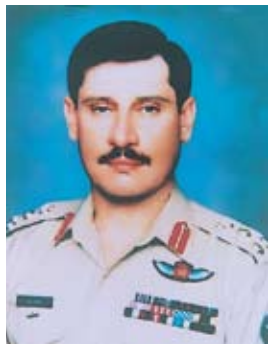

Riffat - 1984


Sajid Ali - 1988


Ashraf - 1991


Liaquat - 1993

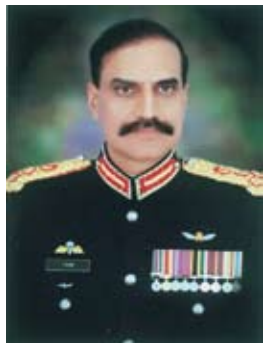

Tipu - 1995


Hashim - 1998


Dawood - 2000


Taqi - 2001


Pervez - 2003


Tahir - 2004


Khalid - 2006


Headquarter Army Aviation Combat Group 2002

503 ARMY AVIATION WORKSHOP EME

COMMANDANTS

Raising Day
29 July 1969


Saeed Qadir - 1969


Farhat Burki - 1970

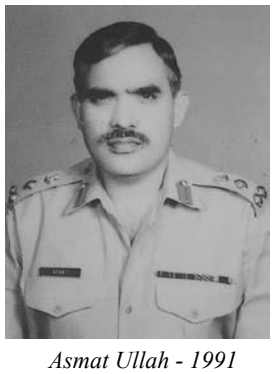

Aman Ullah - 1972


Abdul Majeed - 1982


Saeed - 1982


Sher Khan - 1984


Salim Ud Din - 1988


Asmat Ullah - 1991


Akram Khan - 1995


Shahid Jamil - 1998


Sohail Nasir - 2000


Farooq - 2002


Mansoor - 2004


Afzal - 2006

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AVIATION COMMAND

Raising Day 13th November 1988



RAISING TEAM

Colonel Taimur Dotani
Lieutenant Colonel Javed Aslam Tahir
Lieutenant Colonel Mirza Iqbal Hussain
Lieutenant Colonel Bashir Baz
Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Qureishi
Group Captain Muhammad Saleem
Major Ashraf Warraich
Major Javed Akhtar
Major Din Muhammad
Captain Mujahid Asad

COLONEL STAFF

Colonel Shah Alam	06 May 1986
Colonel Taimur Dotani	21 December 1988
Colonel Riaz Hussain	13 August 1990
Colonel Ayaz Hussain	1 June 1992
Colonel Qayyum Sher Mahsud	16 July 1993
Colonel Hashim Khan	8 July 1995

GENERAL OFFICERS COMMANDING

Major General Syed Zafar Mehdi Askree	5th August 1986-18th June 1991
Major General Rahmat Ullah	18th June 1991-9th May 1996
Major General Abdul Razzaq	9th May 1996-28th August 1998
Major General Ashraf Choudhry	28th August 1998-1st November 2001
Major General Muhammad Azam	I November 2001- 19 December 2004
Major General Javed Aslam Tahir	20 December 2004- 30th June 2007
Major General Waqar Kingravi	1st July 2007

CHIEF OF STAFF

Brigadier Arif Rasul Qureshi	July 1997
Brigadier Javed Aslam Tahir	September 1999
Brigadier Javed Iqbal	September 01
Brigadier Taqi Naseer Rizvi	August 03
Brigadier Arif Nazir	July 05
Brigadier Nasir Dilawar Shah	April 2007



Officers of Headquarters Army Aviation Command with Vice Chief of Army Staff - October 2007

AVIATION DIRECTORATE

Raising Date 3rd July 1976

DIRECTORS AND DIRECTOR GENERALS



Jabbar - 1972



Saleem Ullah - 1974



Mahmud - 1974



Qayoom - 1975



Bukhari SJ - 1977



Trimzi - 1978



Mokeet - 1984



Nauman - 1987



Rahmat Ullah - 1987



Sajjad Nazim - 1990



Humayun - 1992



Bashir Baz - 1994



Ashraf - 1995



Tipu - 1998



Razzaq - 1998



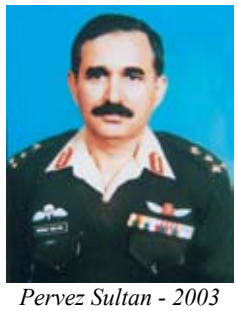
Qazi - 1999



Javed Tahir - 2001



Ifzal - 2003



Pervez Sultan - 2003



Arif Rasul - 2003



Javed Tahir - 2004



Shahid Sardar - 2004



Azkar - 2004



Taqi Rizvi - 2006

GENERAL OFFICERS



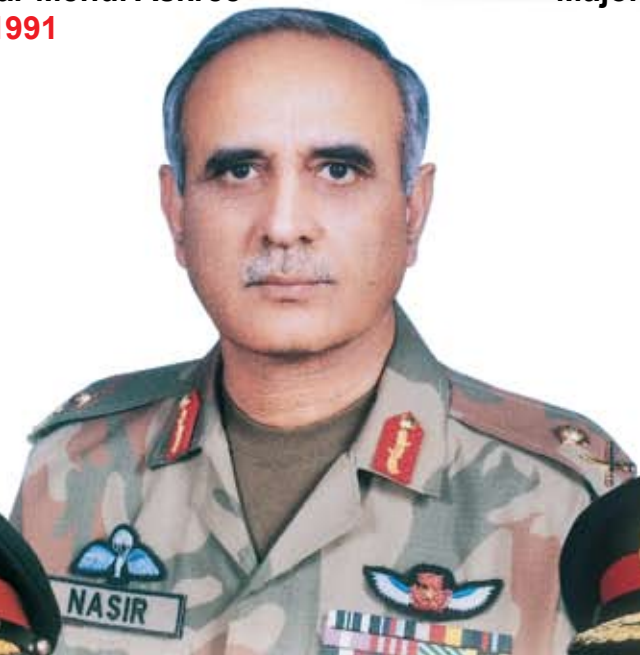
Major General Syed Zafar Mehdi Askree
GOC 1986-1991



Major General Rahmat Ullah
GOC 1991-1996



Major General Tanveer Ullah Khan
GOC -2008



Major General Nasir Mahmood



Major General Muhammad Azam
GOC 2001-2004



Major General Javed Aslam Tahir
GOC 2004-2007
Director General: 2001-2002

OF ARMY AVIATION



Major General Abdul Razzaq
GOC 1996-1998
Director General: 1998 - 99



Major General Muhammad Ashraf Choudhry
GOC 1998-2001
Director General: 1998



Major General Arif Nazir

Major General Waqar Ahmad Kingravi
GOC - 2007

Major General Taqi Naseer Rizvi
Director General - 2006

COLONEL COMMANDANTS



Lieutenant General
Azmat Baksh Awan
27 February 1978- 14 May 1982



Lieutenant General
Sardar Farooq Shaukat Khan Lodhi
15 May 1982- 10 June 1986



General Jehangir Karamat
December 1993-February 1998



Major General Rahmat Ullah
3 February 1998-18 April 1998

PAKISTAN ARMY AVIATION



Lieutenant General Muhammad Safdar
1987-1989



Lieutenant General Farrakh Khan
11 December 1989- 10 December 1993



Major General Abdul Razzaq
29 December 1998-8 May 2000



Major General Javed Aslam Tahir
May 2000-June 2007

HISTORY OF THE BOOK

In 1990 the concept of preserving and promoting Army Aviation History took firm roots, resultantly Army Aviation School was tasked to start the work. In 1995 the first ever 30 pages draft was prepared. The work however continued and to give more impetus to the whole project. Colonel (Retired) Mushtaq Madni was incorporated in 1996. He was given an office in Dhamial Tea Bar with some clerical staff and telephone support. He worked on the this project for over 2 years and came up with the much improved draft of around 170 pages. Army Aviation History was to be published by Qasim Army Aviation Base in Golden Jubilee year 1997. Second draft could not meet the GOCs approval in 1997 and the whole project stayed shelved for another four years.

In 2002 Major General Azam after assuming command revived the project and put up the draft to retired aviators at meetings held at Rawalpindi, Karachi and Lahore. The unanimous verdict of retired officers was for the upgradation of the draft specially the role of Army Aviation during 65 and 71 War. Retired aviators also volunteered to write their accounts for the book. Between 2002-2004 Major General Azam and Major Aamir Cheema worked as a team for the finalization of the draft. The team also undertook several other steps for the promotion and preservation of Aviation History, notably making of paintings, history galleries and posters. By end 2004 a 500 pages draft was ready but was not approved by General Azam for publishing; since there still existed some blank areas. In December 2004 General Azam was posted out and the history project, though almost complete, once again went onto the back burner.

In March 2006 Major General Taqi Rizvi on taking over as Director General Army Aviation, again revived the book. Major Aamir Cheema, now in Skardu was attached with Aviation Directorate and by end 2006 with the help of Major General Azam the book was upgraded to 650 pages. In the last quarter of 2007 the book was given the present shape with the assistance of Verve Communication especially Mr. Mumtaz Ahmad who worked tirelessly and with dedication.

MAKING OF THE BOOK

Collection of Data: The guidance of Brigadiers Jabbar, Saleem Ullah, MM Karim, MM Mahmood and Tirmizi were of great help. The official records including digest of services, war diaries, citations, personal log books, publications and memoirs of aviators were taken into account. The assistance of historical section and defence archive in GHQ were of great help. For Siachen chapter Military Intelligence and Military Operation Directorate offered great assistance. Annual Aviation Magazine the Aviator also provided a lot of material.

Photographs: Initially there were no photographs available however by stroke of luck an archive of aviation related photographs were unearthed in Inter Services Public Relations Department. Retired and serving aviators especially Brigadier Riaz, Lieutenant Colonel Sarfraz Rabbani SJ, Major Manzoor Kamal Bajwa, Major Jawad, Major Altaf, Major Mehdi and Major Khattak provided pictures from their personal collection. In year 2006-2007 the digital photography was fully utilized.

Paintings*:* The first ever aviation related painting was commissioned during Major General Razzaq's tenure later Major General Azam commissioned ten more paintings including four made by Group Captain Hussaini.

Proof Reading: From 2003 onwards regular proof reading was carried out by officers of Headquarters Army Aviation Command, notable were Colonel Waqar Ahmad and Brigadier Tariq Hussain. In 2007 final proof reading was conducted by Major Tahir Kayani. The language is easy: Military English and accepted spellings have been used.

Cost: Army Welfare Trust sponsored the project with half a million rupees out of which 0.2 million rupees were utilized for the composing and print outs. The cost kept on rising due to increase in paper price. In 2002 the estimated price of 1 copy was rupees five hundred which increased to rupees one thousand in year 2007.

PICTORIAL GALLERY OF 'MAKING OF THE BOOK'

The retired Army Aviators remained a major source of information and verification. Almost all available books, publications, magazines, War Diaries, Digest of Service and official record in Defence Archive was consulted.



Brig M.M. Karim proof reading



Brig Riaz and Maj Gen Azam



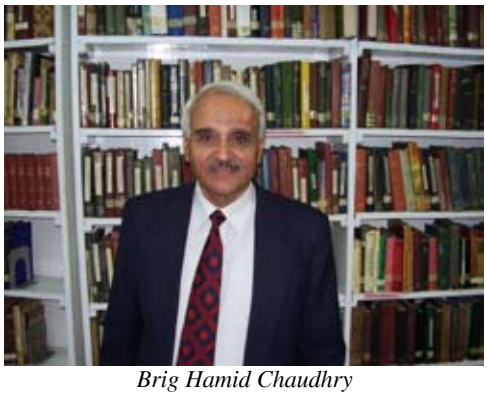
Brig Jabbar - Maj Cheema - Brig Karim



From Right Brig Mokeet



W/Cdr Nazir, The First Pakistani AOP Pilot



Brig Hamid Chaudhry



Maj Cheema and Maj Gen Babar SJ BAR



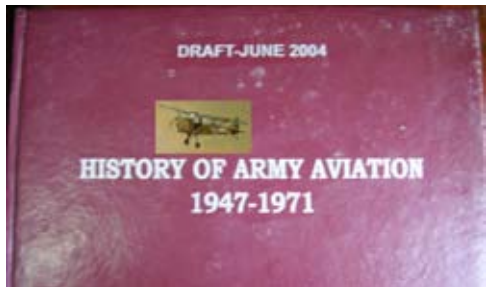
Maj Cheema and Maj Gen Azam, proof reading



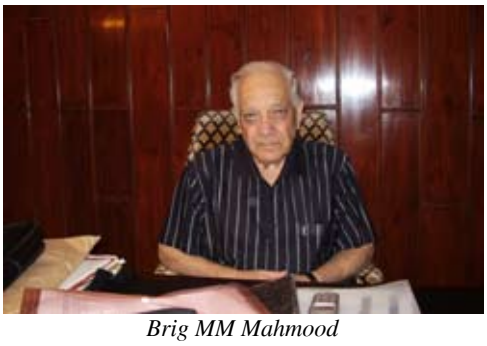
Brig Dawood - Maj Gen Taqi



Maj Gen Azam with Maj Ikram Sehgal



Draft June 2004



Brig MM Mahmood



Brig Bhangoo



Retired aviators at Eid Milan, Qasim Avn Mess, 1991. Gen A.B. Awan third from right



Maj Gens Ashraf, Rahmat, Javed, Zafar, Razzaq



Maj Gen Azam and Col Rabbani SJ



Some of Reference books



Maj Gen Azam with retired aviators, 2002



Maj Tahir Kayani



Maj Bajwa



Mumtaz, Composer



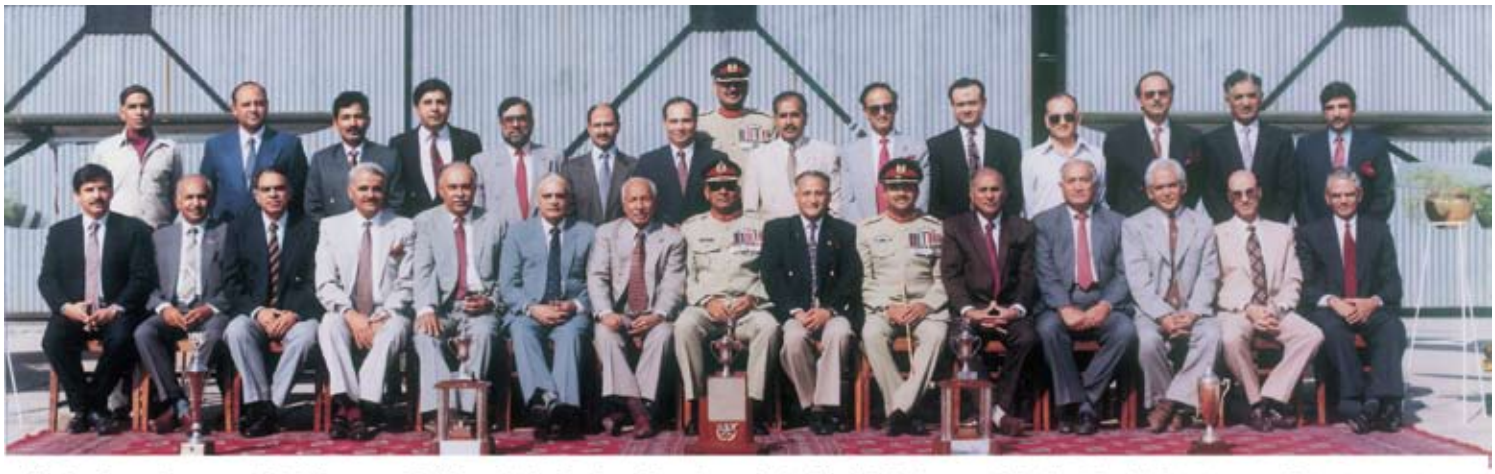
Naik Mehboob



Lt Col Sajjad



Colonel Riffat



Sitting Lt to Rt : Brig Humayun Malik, Brig Qurban Hussain, Brig Khalid Yasin, Brig Ch. Hamid Hussain, Brig H. R. Abbasi, Brig M. Saleem Ullah, Brig G. Jabbar, Maj Gen Abdul Razzaq, GOC Army Avn, Brig M. M. Karim, Brig Muhammad Azam Comdt,

Standing Lt to Rt : Brig M. A. Qayyoom, Brig A. Mokeet Khan, Brig M. A. Rasheed Beg, Brig Sajjad Ahmed Nazim, Col Khalid Kamal, Col Ayaz Hussain Malik, Lt Col Muhammad Khalid Mehmood, Maj Muhammad Akram Maj Sajjad Ahmed Khan, Lt Col Muhammad Saleem, Col Mumtaz Azeem Malik, Lt Col Imtiaz Akhtar Upal, Col Hadeed Anwar Malik, Dy Comdt Lt Col Muhammad Anwar, Maj Manzoor K. Bajma, Maj Tariq Razi, Lt Col Moaziz Hussain, Maj Farooq Hamid Khan, Col M. Yousaf Auwar, Maj Ahsan Ul Haq Chaudhry.

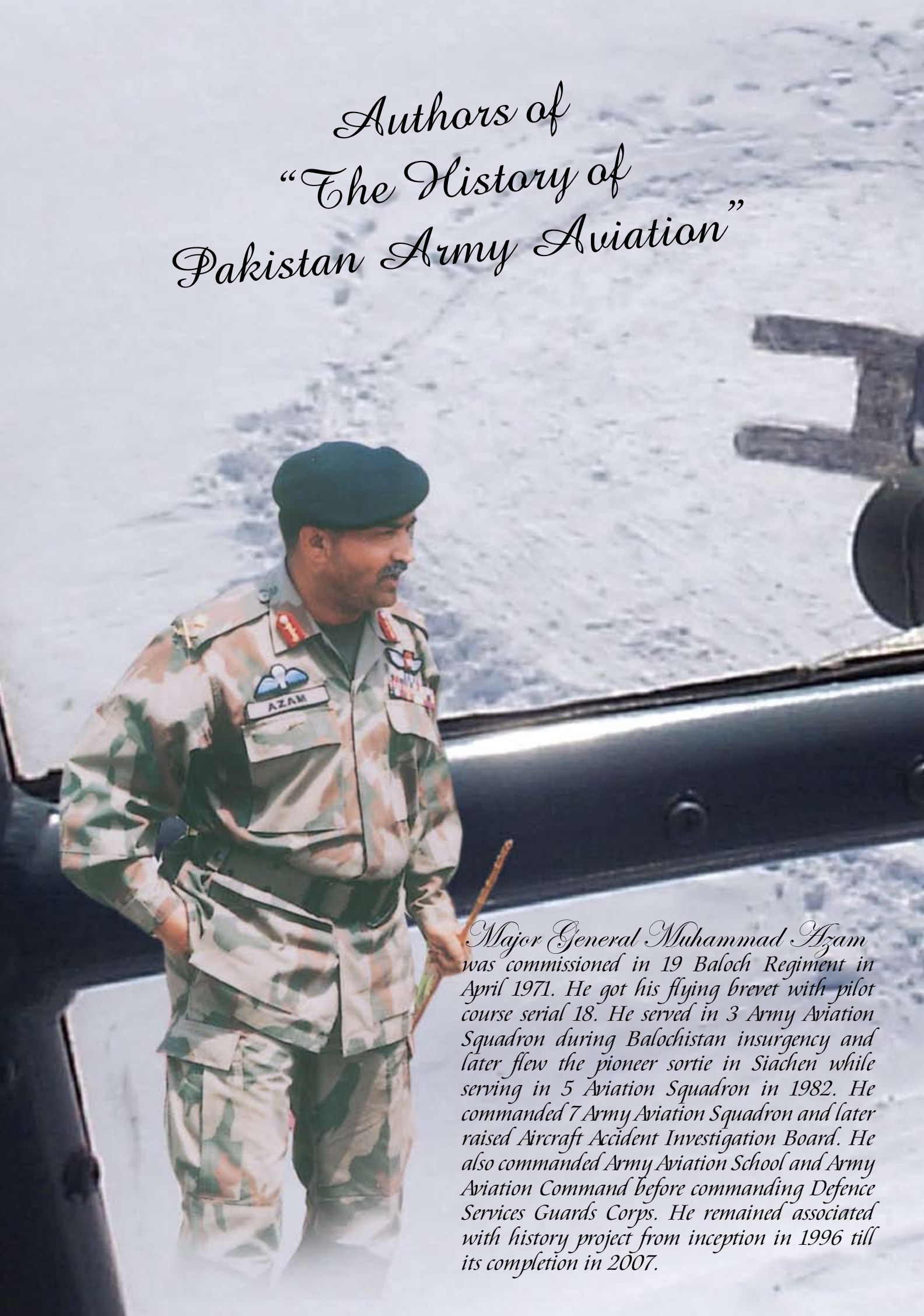
Retired aviators with Major General Razzaq and Brigadier Azam, on a passing out in 1996, Army Aviation School, Gujranwala.



Army Welfare Trust

Army Aviation Directorate on behalf of all Army Aviators express deep gratitude to Army Welfare Trust in general and lieutenant General (retired) Zarrar Azim in particular for financial assistance for the publication of Army Aviation History.

Authors of "The History of Pakistan Army Aviation"



Major General Muhammad Azam was commissioned in 19 Baloch Regiment in April 1971. He got his flying brevet with pilot course serial 18. He served in 3 Army Aviation Squadron during Balochistan insurgency and later flew the pioneer sortie in Siachen while serving in 5 Aviation Squadron in 1982. He commanded 7 Army Aviation Squadron and later raised Aircraft Accident Investigation Board. He also commanded Army Aviation School and Army Aviation Command before commanding Defence Services Guards Corps. He remained associated with history project from inception in 1996 till its completion in 2007.



Colonel (Retired) Mushtaq Madni was commissioned in 1955 in 1 mountain Regiment Artillery. He joined Army Aviation in 1957. He underwent flying training on L-19 in America and later served as flying instructor in Army Aviation School. He is also one of the pioneer twin engine fixed wing pilots and served in Commander-in-Chief Flight before being posted back to artillery to command 30 heavy regiment during 1971 War. He bid farewell to arms in 1977. He compiled the second draft of Aviation History in 1997 and laid the foundation with very serious and meticulous collection/compilation.

Major Aamir Mushtaq Cheema

ex-70th Long Course was commissioned in 58 Ack Ack Regiment in September 1984. He joined Army Aviation in 1989 (P-30). He has served in 7, 9, 3, 4, 27 and 5 Squadrons apart from Rotary Faculty. He was leader of Army Mountaineering Expedition in 1998. He holds a Masters Degree in History. He dedicates his efforts to the patience and love of his parents and wife.


فوق الكرامة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ARMY