

The Death Followed

1962 War Series



General area Phobrang

It was a bitterly cold morning on 10 November 1962. As Major Sangram Singh, who would soon become a Lieutenant Colonel, drove his Jeep into Chang Chenmo Valley, he thought of his gallant troops who had fought so valiantly against the powerful enemy during the start of the Sino-Indian War in 1962.

The Chang Chenmo valley, also known as the Middle Sector, is situated east of Shyok and south of DBO. This section was under the 1/8 Gorkha Rifles until the Jats arrived. Posts at Phobrang, Hot Springs, and Galwan were part of this sector. Three of 5 Jat's companies, A, B, and D, were in charge of safeguarding the area, while C company was manning posts in DBO.

Dauntless Delta

Major Sangram had joined the fighting force of 114 Brigade as OC Delta Company, 5 Jat on 11 May. He along with his company had moved from Srinagar to Leh via air. On 10 June, D Company marched out for Shakti Camp under the command of Captain AK Anand, Lt Harji Ram, and Company Senior JCO Ram Mehar, having spent a month at Leh acclimating to the high altitude. On 1 July,



the column arrived in Phobrang from Shakti and relieved a platoon of 1/8 GR. Prior to this, CO Lt Col Bakhtawar personally conducted a reconnaissance mission to the area and on 1 July, he established a post at Ane La with a small party. Days went by, and patrols to locate enemy locations were conducted on a regular basis.

2/Lt HC Gujral was given instructions on 25 July to set up a section position at Barma with 12 ORs and 1 JCO. Following their overnight stay at Barma, they were instructed to withdraw the post. July 26th saw the withdrawal of Kongma in addition to Barma. However, Kongma was again established on 27 July, this time the enemy without interfering followed the party establishing the post. At 1000 hours on the same day, the enemy surrounded Ane La in force and opened fire; fortunately, no one was killed in the ensuing brawl. Bn HQs intended to strengthen Kongma following these events. 2/Lt. Gujral was assigned on 29 July to set up a helipad and dropping zone close to Kongma so that regular supplies could be dropped in the event that the enemy besieged the post. The enemy also set up a post in front of Kongma the very following day after observing all the activity. There were no reports of enemy activity for a month following this occurrence, until four enemy troops approached Kongma, remained for 1.5 hours, and then left.

Jats at Phobrang

Delta Company had Major Sangram Singh, Subedar Ram Mehar, at its HQs in Phobrang, and the rest of the company was divided into two posts:

1. 1 Platoon at Ane La under Jemadar Jai Lal
2. 1 Platoon at Kongma under Subedar Surjit Singh
3. 1 Platoon at Phobrang with Coy HQs/Map of Chang Chenmo valley