

Obituary

Major L. Jyotin Singh, AC

(14 May 1972–26 February 2010)



The Armed Forces are unique in many ways. To some, they are unique because of a disciplined life, and to others, the glamour of uniform is overwhelming. But behind these two emotions is the inspiration and frenzy generated by the thought of being in league with scores of extraordinary men who have achieved impossible results by sheer determination. Some scaled the peaks of Kargil in the face of enemy bullets; others have gone on to win

Olympic medals. The Army Medical Corps has also produced men who ought to be worshipped, and they are. We have talked about Major Ronald Ross and Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi on several fora, but Major L. Jyotin Singh, Ashok Chakra, is the hero of today.

Laishram Jyotin Singh was born at Nambol in Bishnupur district of Manipur on 14 May 1972. He did his early schooling from Manipur Public School, Imphal and MB,BS from the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal in 1996. He loved sports and completed his 2-year Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Medicine from Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Patiala in 2001. He joined the Army Medical Corps on 15 February 2003 at Military Hospital, Silchar.

On completion of his basic military training, he was posted to a high altitude area with 'Border Roads Organization' in a medical unit of the General Reserve Engineering Force (GREF) on 8 July 2003. Here, he not only looked after the GREF personnel but also provided medical care to civilians and their families in remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

He joined the Military Hospital, Agartala on 9 February 2006 and literally ran the hospital single-handedly. Apart from routine hospital work, he shared his experience as a 'Sports Medicine' expert with jawans training in that area. He would spend his evenings playing as he was a keen football and badminton player. The inter-unit football and badminton matches helped him to interact with troops and he became popular in the social circle of the garrison within no time. His expert advice was frequently sought after by one and all in the garrison, as almost all Army personnel are fitness freaks. Major L. Jyotin was invited to be a part of the Fourth CISM (International Military Sports Council) Military World games organized by the Indian Armed Forces at Hyderabad in 2007. Here he worked as medical officer in charge of the anti-doping unit. He was also invited to attend the Commonwealth Youth Games at Pune in 2008.

Jyotin was a sincere and diligent worker and was always ready for any task even beyond the call of his regular duty. While working as medical officer at the military hospital he provided specialist services to the Government Hospital and College,

Agartala, and helped many patients to get relief of their ailments due to sports injuries. He earned his Sainya Sewa Medal in 2006 and High Altitude Medal in 2007.

On completion of his tenure at Agartala, he was transferred to the Army Recruiting Office, Amethi on 14 July 2008. Being among the best medical officers of the Army Medical Corps, he was selected for foreign mission posting and was deputed to the Indian Medical Mission in Kabul on 13 February 2010, where he started looking after patients flocking to the Indian Mission Hospital.

On the fateful morning hours of 26 February 2010, the Noor Guest House at Kabul (which housed officers of the Indian Medical Mission and Indian Medical Training Team) was subjected to a suicide-bomb attack. Terrorist suicide-bombers carried out a multi-target attack on the guest house, a residential compound housing 6 Army doctors, 5 paramedics and other officers.

Terrorists commenced the attack by exploding a vehicle rigged with approximately 500 kg of explosive material at the boundary wall of the guest house. The explosion demolished the boundary wall, killed private security guards and blew open the iron gates of Park Hotel Residency adjacent to the guest house. A big crater (3.5 m in diameter and 2.5 m deep) was created which destroyed the residential compound and building of the guest house due to this powerful explosion. The terrorist subsequently lobbed hand grenades on the guest house to set it ablaze. Two other terrorists provided sporadic cover fire from other buildings surrounding the guest house. The unarmed occupants exhibited great courage and determination and rushed towards safety taking cover of the compound wall and unoccupied gutted rooms of the guest house.

The terrorists noticed a group of men rushing towards a room of the guest house, and opened indiscriminate fire and lobbed grenades at them. The entire room was soon engulfed by fire and several men were killed instantly, while others sustained burn injuries of various degrees.

On hearing shouts for help, Major L. Jyotin Singh came out of his gutted room and bare handedly moved towards a terrorist who was lobbing grenades. In a flash, Jyotin pinned the terrorist down and grabbed his arms to ensure that the terrorist could no longer lob any grenade or use his AK-47 rifle. The casualty figures in this terrorist attack would have been much higher had it not been for the extremely bold, gallant and brave action by Major L. Jyotin Singh.

Despite being unarmed, he defied all odds and thwarted the attempts of the suicide bomber to enter the guest house by pouncing on him and pinning him down. The tussle that ensued gave valuable time to other inmates of the guest house to take refuge. The terrorist, finding it impossible to break free from Major L. Jyotin Singh's firm grip and due to the fear of being caught, detonated his explosive jacket, killing both instantly. Major L. Jyotin Singh attained martyrdom while struggling till his last breath to save the lives of 10 other colleagues of the Indian Medical Mission. For this act of raw courage, indomitable spirit, conspicuous gallantry and selfless supreme sacrifice in the face of superior adversity, Major L. Jyotin Singh was conferred with the highest peace-time gallantry award Ashok Chakra (posthumous) on 15 August 2010. He is survived by his mother Mrs L. Ongbi Ibeyaiha Devi and father Mr Laishram Markando Singh, who reside in their village Nambol in Manipur.

The Armed Forces Medical College, Pune has inaugurated the new Central Library named in his honour on 18 August 2010. The medical fraternity and Indian Armed Forces will remember him for his dedication and contribution to the Service of the Nation. We all salute the superhuman and extraordinarily brave effort of

Major L. Jyotin Singh and pray for peace to the departed soul.

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India's first online e-forum for Ethics Committees launched

With the rising number of research projects being conducted in India, Institutional Ethics Committees (IECs) have been set up in various institutions. Research into the functioning of the committees has revealed that there is a need for accreditation and experiential sharing within the committees for them to be able to function better.

India's first online e-forum for IECs has been recently launched after a workshop for ethics committees conducted in May 2010 in Pune. This e-forum is called IEC-Exchange and is hosted on googlegroups (<http://groups.google.com/group/iec-exchange>)

This group is specifically targeted at IEC members, and those interested in the functioning of IECs in India.

IEC-Exchange serves as a discussion forum for ethics committees in India to exchange experiences, network and identify solutions for commonly encountered problems or concerns in the functioning of ethics committees. This group is moderated and membership requests need to be referred by existing members or sent to the moderator (dranantbhan@gmail.com) directly with a note explaining the reason for interest in joining the forum and institutional affiliation (if applicable).

IEC-Exchange is affiliated with the Forum for Ethics Review Committees in India (FERCI).

(Information provided by moderator of the online e-forum, Dr Anant Bhan)