

#ANCIENT HARMONY

The Hymn to Nikkal

3,000-Year-Old Syrian Hymn Matches Rig Veda Melodies Across Continents



In a revelation that's shaking the foundations of musical history, archaeologists and researchers have discovered a profound and unexpected connection between two of the world's oldest known musical traditions, those of ancient Syria and the Indian subcontinent.

A 3,000-year-old clay tablet unearthed from the ancient city of Ugarit (in modern-day Syria) holds what is considered the world's oldest notated song, the Hymn to Nikkal, a devotional piece dedicated to the goddess of orchards. This artifact, long studied for its significance in early musical notation, is now at the heart of a startling musical parallel: it shares rhythm and melodic structure with the Rig Veda, one of the oldest and most revered sacred texts of ancient India.

According to Archaeology Magazine, this discovery stems from a groundbreaking computational study conducted by Dr. Dan C. Baciú of the University of California, Santa Barbara. Using sophisticated analytical software, Dr. Baciú and his team examined the rhythmic patterns in verses of the Rig Veda and compared them to the cadences of the Ugaritic hymn. The results were nothing short of astonishing.

A Rhythmic Revelation

The study revealed that nearly 20% of Rig Vedic verses end with rhythmic cadences that perfectly match those found in the Hymn to Nikkal. Statistically, the chance of such a precise alignment occurring randomly is less than one in a million, an anomaly that defies mere coincidence. The findings point to a potential musical dialogue across civilizations, suggesting a shared or transmitted musical heritage.

Even more compelling is the discovery that melodic similarities also exist between the two traditions. The Hymn to Nikkal concludes with a cadence of alternating long and short notes, a structure mirroring the familiar rhythmic patterns of Vedic chants still used in

Hindu liturgical practices. While melodic matches between the two bodies of music occur less frequently, around 3%, this rate is still vastly higher than would be expected from randomized comparisons, reinforcing the theory of an intentional or culturally transmitted musical link.

A Shared Musical Legacy?

These findings prompt a re-evaluation of how ancient civilizations may have interacted, not only through trade or conquest but through the intangible thread of music. Scholars now hypothesize that the Mitanni kingdom, a powerful empire that stretched across parts of present-day Syria and Iraq during the Bronze Age, may have acted as a cultural and musical bridge between the Mediterranean and the Indian subcontinent.

Musical: The Oldest Universal Language

This unexpected resonance between two ancient musical worlds suggests that music may have been one of humanity's first shared global expressions. Before the age of written history, before borders divided cultures, music might have served as a common language, linking diverse people through song, rhythm, and sacred sound.



Reliving Kargil And The Boys We Lost



Param Vir Chakra Awardees

• Anusha Mishra

The Kargil War of 1999 lasted for a span of approximately two months in which the tri-services emerged victorious on 26 July 1999. However, as it is often said that the 'wars come at a cost,' the Kargil war also cost a number of lives of our gallant Indian soldiers. This was the war in which India lost the largest number of its young officers and soldiers.

The gallantry of Indian Soldiers stood out. A total of three-hundreds gallantry awards were awarded to the soldiers who fought in the Kargil War, out of which there were four Param Vir Chakras, nine Maha Vir Chakras and fifty-five Vir Chakras.

It has been twenty-five years since the War, and since then, the Param Vir Chakra awardees Captain Vikram Batra, Captain Manoj Kumar Pandey, Subedar Major Yogendra Singh Yadav and Subedar Major Sanjay Kumar have become household names for the display of unparalleled gallantry during the Kargil War of 1999. This article brings to you the story of their gallant actions and sacrifice which kept the Indian borders safe and secure during the war.



Captain Manoj Kumar Pandey 1/11 GORKHA RIFLES

Pandey was Number 5 Platoon Commander. His Platoon's mission was to eliminate the interfering enemy positions in order to keep his Battalion from being daylighted and being in a vulnerable position during its advance to Khalubar Ridge. As his Platoon reached close to its objective on the night of 02/03 July 1999, it came under heavy persistent enemy fire from the surrounding heights. Under heavy enemy fire, Captain Manoj Kumar Pandey quickly manoeuvred his Platoon to an advantageous position and ordered one Section of his Platoon to clear enemy positions on the right, while he cleared four hostile positions on the left. He attacked the first enemy position fearlessly and killed two enemy personnel.

Successively, he charged at the second position and captured it by killing two more enemy personnel. While clearing the third position, Captain Manoj Kumar Pandey was hit in the shoulder and legs by enemy fire. Undaunted and unconcerned about his serious wounds, he led the assault on the fourth position, rallying his men and destroying it with a grenade. During this attack, he got a fatal medium machine gun burst on his forehead. It is this singular daredevil act of the officer, which provided the critical firm base for the Battalion to finally capture Khalubar.

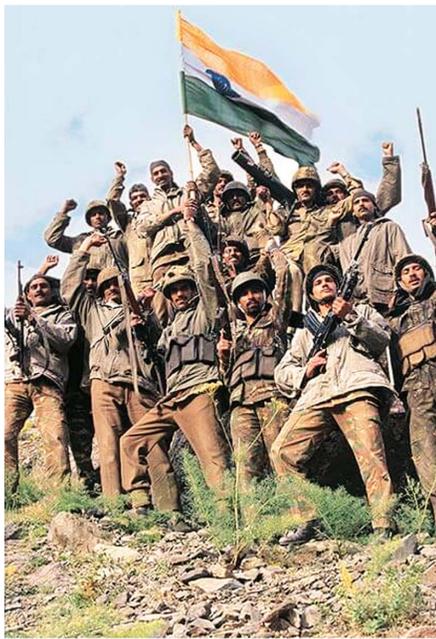
He displayed most conspicuous bravery, indomitable courage, exemplary personal valour, outstanding leadership and devotion to duty of an exceptionally high order and received country's highest gallantry award Param Vir Chakra posthumously. An entry from his personal diary vividly reflects the undaunting spirit of the immortal hero.

Captain Manoj Kumar



Spanish Civil War Ends as Franco Claims Victory

On April 1, 1939, General Francisco Franco officially declared victory, bringing an end to the Spanish Civil War, a brutal conflict that had lasted nearly three years. The war, fought between the Nationalist forces led by Franco and the Republican government, resulted in massive destruction and the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. With the Nationalist triumph, Spain came under Franco's authoritarian rule, marking the beginning of a dictatorship that would last until his death in 1975. The end of the war also reshaped Spain's political landscape and left deep social and economic scars on the country for decades.



#SALAAM



Subedar Major (Honorary Cap.) Yogendra Singh Yadav (Then Grenadier), 18 GRENADIERS

Tololing, a desolate mountain, stands imposingly at 16000 feet near the town of Drass. One of Pakistan's primary objectives during the Kargil War was to obstruct India's access to the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway. To achieve this, maintaining control over Tololing held great significance for the Pakistan Army. Pakistani forces, sitting on dominating heights, commanded an unobstructed view of every inch of the track. Following the capture of Tololing, the focus shifted to Tiger Hill. Among the many battles that took place between Indian troops and the enemy, the battle for the recapture of the Tiger Hill can be considered as the most difficult one.

Tiger Hill gains importance from the fact that it towers (16,500 feet), above all, the other mountains in its vicinity of Drass valley. Brigadier MPS Bajwa received orders to relocate the 192 Mountain Brigade to Drass. Assigned to his command were 8 SIKH, 18 GRENADIERS, 13 JAK RIF and 2 NAGA. A multi-directional attack plan was devised, encompassing three strategic approaches. On 03 July, the soldiers of 18 GRENADIERS embarked on their mission. Due to bad weather and extreme conditions, the progress was very slow.

18 GRENADIERS, which had already lost two valiant officers, Lieutenant Colonel R Viewanathan and Major Rajesh Singh Adhikari during Tololing Operations, was given the near impossible task of capturing the Tiger Hill on the night of 03/04 July 1999. 8 SIKH, which was occupying dominating heights around the South-Eastern and Northern part of Tiger Hill, was tasked to provide the firm base. At 1900 hours, the multi-direction attacks began in freezing rain, commencing with a nearly 12-hour vertical climb from Southern and North-Eastern approach using fixed ropes. Lieutenant Balwan Singh led the Ghatak Platoon of 18 GRENADIERS from the dangerous North Eastern approach. Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav was the lead Ghatak. He had eagerly volunteered to lead the attack. To reach the objective, his team had to fix the ropes on the cliff face for his Platoon to climb. As his leading team climbed to reach enemy position, heavy fire from the enemy

fatally wounded his Team Commander and two teammates and almost stalled the advance. Grenadier Yogendra was also severely wounded, but knowing the gravity of the situation, he continued to climb towards the enemy positions. He crawled towards the enemy position but sustained multiple bullet injuries.

Unmindful of his injuries and hail of enemy bullets, he continued pushing towards the enemy position and lobbed grenades inside enemy bunker and fired with his weapon, killing four enemy soldiers in close combat and thus silenced the automatic weapon fire. During the charge to clear the enemy bunkers, he again sustained multiple bullet injuries but refused to be evacuated even in critical condition. This heroic deed of Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav motivated his Platoon to capture Tiger Hill Top, and thus, the vital objective was achieved. This decisive victory sealed the fate of Pakistan's Kargil misadventure.

Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav was honoured with the Param Vir Chakra for his extraordinary gallant act. He is the youngest recipient of this coveted award till date. He retired from army on 31 December, 2021 in the rank of Honorary Captain. 18 GRENADIERS won unit citation for the Battle of 'Tiger Hill'.

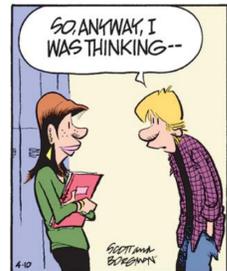


By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

BABY BLUES



ZITS

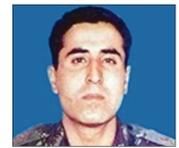


By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

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Mushkoh Valley is situated at an elevation of around 16,000 feet in Drass—the second coldest inhabited place in the world.



CAPTAIN VIKRAM BATRA 13 JAMMU & KASHMIR RIFLES

Among the numerous acts of valour during the war, one that stood out and gained immense popularity among the masses was the supreme sacrifice of Captain Vikram Batra, a young valiant officer of 13 JAK RIF, whose sacrifice numbered the eyes of the whole country.

In continuation to the operations in Mushkoh Valley, Lieutenant Colonel Yogesh Kumar Joshi had tasked B and D Company, under Captain SS Jamwal and Captain Vikram Batra, for capturing Point 5140 on 20 June 1999. Under Captain Vikram Batra, the D Company reached close to the objective despite the treacherous terrain. He, along with his Company, moved from the East while maintaining absolute silence achieving complete surprise. Captain Batra reorganised his column and displayed exemplary leadership as he fought the enemy from the forefront. The officer's action motivated his men to physically attack the enemy positions. In an act of formidable courage, Captain Batra pounced onto the enemy and killed four intruders in the physical combat. It was after the success at Point 5140 that Captain Batra delivered his iconic success signal

'Yeh Dil Mange More.' After Point 5140 was captured, 13 JAK RIF was tasked to capture Point 4875. On 07 July 1999, he and his Company were tasked to clear enemy defences from a narrow feature with sharp cuttings on both the sides leading up to Point 4875 and Area Ledge. Captain Batra led the assault from the front and engaged with the enemy in a physical fight. He killed five enemy soldiers at point blank range and he himself sustained serious injuries. Despite his injuries, he moved towards the next enemy sangar and threw grenades to clear the enemy position. His dauntless determination inspired his men to clear the enemy from a dominating position. Later, he succumbed to his injuries. His fearless determination and leadership encouraged his company men to avenge his death and finally capture Point 4875.

Captain Batra's inspiring leadership, dedication to duty and steadfast love for his country continue to be an inspiration to the young generation. He attended the call of duty with absolute disregard of his personal safety. He was awarded the Param Vir Chakra posthumously.

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THE WALL

