

#TIGER STRIPES

A Masterpiece of Concealment

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When we think of tigers, the first thing that often comes to mind is their stunning, orange-and-black striped fur. But what many people don't know is that these stripes are not only found on the tiger's fur, but also on its skin underneath. This unique pattern plays a significant role in helping tigers blend into their environment, offering them an edge in their wild habitats. Here's why tiger stripes are so special, and how they help these majestic creatures survive.

Stripes: A Genetic Blueprint

The stripes of a tiger are not merely superficial designs painted onto its fur; they are an integral part of its skin, shaped by its genetics. Every tiger has a distinctive pattern of stripes, much like human fingerprints. These stripes appear as a series of dark vertical lines against the tiger's orange background. However, it's important to note that the stripes are genetically encoded beneath the surface.

This characteristic is the result of the tiger's skin pigmentation, where specific areas are darker, and others are lighter. The fur simply grows along the lines of this

underlying pattern, giving the tiger its iconic appearance. This skin-based design is present from birth, which means that the fur patterns are not just a superficial feature but an essential part of the animal's camouflage system.

The most crucial role of a tiger's stripes is for concealment in its natural habitat. Tigers are solitary hunters, and they rely heavily on stealth to stalk their prey. The vertical stripes break up the tiger's outline in the wild, especially in areas with long grasses, dense foliage, or the dappled sunlight found in forests. This makes it much harder for prey animals, like deer or wild boar, to spot them until it's too late.

In particular, the alternating light and dark patterns of a tiger's stripes help it blend with the natural patterns of shadows and light that play on the ground and plants. This is especially effective in forests where the sun shines through the canopy in streaks. As the tiger moves through such environments, the stripes mimic the patterns of sunlight filtering through leaves, allowing the tiger to stay hidden.

This camouflage system is crucial for the tiger's survival. The ability to stay hidden allows the tiger to approach prey more closely, without alarming it. In fact, tigers often prefer to hunt at dawn or dusk when the lighting conditions are ideal for them to use their stripes effectively.



● Bulbul Joshi

After the Chinese People's Liberation Army or PLA launched an attack against India in October 1962, India's brave soldiers fought against all adversities to protect the country. Some went much beyond the call of duty to protect India's territorial integrity. Subedar Joginder Singh fought valiantly when the PLA launched an attack through the Bum La Pass, sparking a battle named after the location; the Chinese soldiers, as they advanced, met with a few more valiant Indian soldiers. These heroes went on to etch their names in the annals of history as they fought against all odds.

The structure is built in the memory of Jaswant Singh Rawat, a rifleman of 4 Garhwal Rifles. This was the spot where the 21-year-old took a heroic stand against the Chinese, creating the impression of a full contingent of Indian soldiers while fighting single-handedly.

Subedar Joginder Singh was born on 26th September 1921 in Mahakalan village, located in the Moga district of Punjab, into an agricultural Saini Sikh family. He was the son of Shri Sher Singh Saini and Smt Bibi Krishnan Kaur. From a young age, he displayed qualities of sincerity, determination, and an eagerness to learn. He went to primary school in village Nathu Ala and to village Daroli for his middle school. He was unable to pursue further studies due to the modest financial condition of his family. Determined to build a meaningful life through service to the nation, he joined the British Indian Army on 28th September 1936 and was enrolled in the 1 Sikh Battalion of the Sikh Regiment, a renowned



regiment of the Indian Army known for its valour, discipline, and glorious battle traditions. As a young soldier, he saw active combat during World War II on the Burma front, where Indian troops played a decisive role in halting the Japanese advance. Later, following India's independence, he also participated in the Indo-Pak War of 1947-48, fighting bravely in the defence of Srinagar. His battlefield experiences during these operations shaped him into a seasoned and composed soldier, known for his courage under fire.

In his personal life, Subedar Joginder Singh married Ms. Bibi Gurdyal Kaur Banga, who hailed from a Saini family of Kothay Rara Singh village near Kot Kapura. The couple was blessed with a son and two daughters, and he remained a devoted husband and father, deeply rooted in family values even while serving in demanding field conditions. A man of perseverance, Subedar Joginder Singh continued his education within the Army by passing several professional examinations and qualifying as a unit instructor, a role that required deep knowledge, leadership, and dedication. His commitment to excellence, uncompromising discipline, and genuine concern for the welfare of his men earned him immense respect among both his peers and subordinates. Known for his integrity and unwavering sense of duty, he became a role model within his regiment, embodying the true spirit of a soldier who lived and served with honour.

Indo-China War: 23 Oct 1962

A fierce and historic battle was fought at Tongpen La, near Bum La, in the Tawang sector during the 1962 Sino-Indian War. This region, known then as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), is today

When A Rifleman Fought The Chinese For 3 Days, Killed 300

As the final and most ferocious wave of the Chinese assault came, most of his men had either been killed or severely wounded. Subedar Joginder Singh himself was gravely injured but refused to give up. Taking personal control of a light machine gun, he continued to fire upon the enemy, inflicting significant losses. When the ammunition was completely exhausted, he and his remaining soldiers fixed bayonets to their rifles and charged out of their bunkers shouting their battle cry, "Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akaal!" In this desperate but valiant last stand, they fought hand-to-hand with the advancing Chinese, bayoneting many before being finally overpowered.



#REVISITING '62 WAR



the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. As tensions with China escalated and the possibility of war became inevitable, 1 Sikh battalion was urgently mobilized from its peacetime location in Jaipur to the eastern front. The movement to the forward area was arduous and physically demanding. The soldiers had to traverse dense jungles en route to Tenga Valley, negotiate the treacherous mountain paths of Bomdila, descend into Dirang, and climb again towards the frozen expanse of Sela Lake before finally reaching Tawang. Amidst the freezing temperatures and harsh terrain, Subedar Joginder Singh, who was then a platoon commander, stood out for his strength, composure, and unshakable resolve. A veteran of World War II and the 1947-48 war in Kashmir, he was deeply respected in the battalion for his discipline, tactical skill, and exemplary leadership in combat. Subedar Joginder Singh's platoon was tasked with defending a strategic ridge in the Tongpen La area along the Bum La axis in Tawang.

On 20 October 1962, the Chinese launched their first major offensive at Namika Chu against the 7th Infantry Brigade. Having prepared



meticulously for years and equipped with superior weapons and logistics, the Chinese forces swiftly overran the Indian positions and advanced towards Tawang, where Subedar Joginder Singh and his men were holding their ground. As the enemy began to gather across

morale unbroken despite overwhelming odds.

As the final and most ferocious wave of the Chinese assault came, most of his men had either been killed or severely wounded. Subedar Joginder Singh himself was gravely injured but refused to give up. Taking personal control of a light machine gun, he continued to fire upon the enemy, inflicting significant losses. When the ammunition was completely exhausted, he and his remaining soldiers fixed bayonets to their rifles and charged out of their bunkers shouting their battle cry, "Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akaal!" In this desperate but valiant last stand, they fought hand-to-hand with the advancing Chinese, bayoneting many before being finally overpowered. Ultimately, sheer numbers and superior firepower prevailed, and Subedar Joginder Singh was captured after being severely wounded. Even as a prisoner of war, he upheld his dignity and the honour of his regiment. His indomitable courage, leadership, and refusal to surrender became legendary. For his unparalleled bravery, leadership of the highest order, and supreme sacrifice in the defence of the nation, Subedar Joginder Singh was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra, India's highest wartime gallantry award. In a rare gesture of respect, the Chinese forces later returned his ashes upon learning of the honour conferred upon him.

The Jaswantgarh War Memorial, located in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, welcomes visitors year-round with a compelling tale of valour. The plaque at the memorial says that for 72 gruelling hours, he inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy entirely on his own before



making the ultimate sacrifice. He was posthumously awarded the *Maha Vir Chakra*.

According to the Ministry of Defence, in November 1962, Jaswant Singh Rawat and his two aides, Lance Naik Trilok Singh Negi and Rifleman Gopal Singh Gusain, had volunteered to destroy a Medium Machine Gun that was brought in by the Chinese.

Under the cover of boulders, scraggy bushes and trees, they crawled forward amid heavy enemy fire and reached within 10 to 15 yards of target. While Lance Naik Negi provided covering fire with his Sten gun, Rawat and Gusain hurled grenades on the enemy's Medium Machine Gun and managed to capture it.

In the battle that followed, Rawat refused to give up his post. He displayed remarkable agility, shifting between bunkers to maintain the illusion of a full-scale Indian battalion. His only helpers were two local Monpa women, Sela and Nura. They provided him with food, supplied ammunition and loaded the guns at different posts to help Rawat create the illusion of a full contingent.

By the time he was done, around 300 Chinese soldiers were dead and he managed to delay the Chinese advance by around 72 hours.

Today, the Rifleman is remembered as Baba Jaswant Singh Rawat. His personal belongings have been kept at Jaswantgarh.

The Sela Pass is named after Sela and the Nuranang falls (Jang Falls) has been named after Nura to honour their sacrifice.

Both locations are located close to Jaswantgarh, which is adorned with a camouflaged temple-like structure to mark the bravery of Rifleman Jaswant Singh Rawat.

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By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

BABY BLUES



ZITS



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#THE PAST

Weird Traditions We Still Follow

Have you ever wondered why we do these things? Here's a look at some of the most bizarre customs that we still keep alive today



Some of the traditions we follow today have ancient origins, and while they may seem quirky or strange to us now, they carry centuries of symbolism and meaning. From throwing rice at weddings to knocking on wood for good luck, many of these practices have stood the test of time. But have you ever wondered why we do these things? Here's a look at some of the most bizarre customs that we still keep alive today, and their surprisingly fascinating origins.

1. Throwing Rice at Weddings

One of the most common wedding traditions involves guests tossing rice at the newlyweds as they leave the ceremony. While it may seem like a harmless way to celebrate, the origins are rooted in ancient fertility rituals. In many cultures, rice has been seen as a symbol of prosperity and fertility. In ancient Rome, for instance, wheat (often substituted with rice today) was thrown to represent abundance and to ensure the bride and groom would have many children. Some also believed that the rice, as a symbol of grain, could ward off evil

spirits and bring good fortune to the couple.

Interestingly, the practice of throwing rice has faced criticism in recent years, with some venues discouraging it due to concerns about littering or birds ingesting the rice, which is harmful to them. Some couples now opt for biodegradable alternatives, like flower petals or birdseed.

2. Blowing Out Birthday Candles

Blowing out candles on a birthday cake may seem like a fun and harmless activity, but it has a deep-rooted history that stretches back to ancient Greece. The tradition of lighting candles on cakes began with the ancient Greeks, who would make round cakes to honour Artemis, the goddess of the moon. They placed candles on the cakes to mimic the moon's glow. The custom of blowing out the candles comes from a belief that the smoke could carry wishes or prayers to the gods. It was thought that if you could blow out all the candles with one breath, your wish would be granted. In medieval Europe, blowing out candles was also associated with warding off evil spirits and bringing good fortune.

3. Knocking on Wood for Good Luck

Knocking on wood is a superstition many of us are familiar with, but have you ever wondered why we do it? This practice dates back to ancient pagan beliefs. The idea was that spirits or gods resided in trees, particularly oak trees, which were seen as sacred in many cultures. When someone wanted to avoid bad luck or invoke a bit of good fortune, they would knock on the wood of a tree to ask for protection or blessings.

The phrase "knock on wood" evolved from this custom, and even today, people knock on furniture or wooden objects as a way to ward off bad luck or to prevent jinxing themselves. Though the superstition is often seen as a light-hearted gesture, its ancient roots are tied to the idea of appeasing nature's spirits.

4. Carrying the Bride Over the Threshold

The image of a groom carrying his bride over the threshold is an iconic part of wedding ceremonies around the world. But where did this practice originate? It actually comes from a blend of superstition and old-world customs. In medieval Europe, it was believed that evil spirits could enter a home through the threshold, and that carrying the bride over it would prevent her from stumbling or falling, which was thought to be a sign of bad luck.

In some cultures, it was also believed that if the bride tripped or fell upon entering her new home, it would bring misfortune to the marriage. So, the groom carrying the bride over the threshold became a protective gesture. Additionally, it could be seen as a way to show that the groom was taking on the responsibility of providing and caring for his bride in their new life together.