

PORTRAIT OF AN ARMY PARADE IN JAIPUR.



Pushpendra Bhargava (Owner of Jaipur Inn)

Jaipur has never needed loudness to understand power. It learned the language of assembly in enclosed courtyards and ridgeline forts, places where inspection, order, and discipline were not performances but governance. That's why the city's hosting of Army Day on public roads in January 2026 is not merely a 'big event.' It is a new stage for an old habit: Jaipur has been assembling around military service for centuries, first through empire, then through fortification and statecraft, and finally through the modern Indian Army's regiments and officers.

Historian Dr. Abhimanyu Singh Arha offers a clean frame for telling this story without turning it into a museum label. Speaking of Jaipur's standout military rulers, he insists we read them as more than warriors: "Both were astute politicians. Strong generals and Pan India Figures."

That line matters because it keeps the story grounded. In Jaipur's lineage, the sword is rarely separate from the mind behind it.

### The early signature: Mirza Raja Man Singh I

If Jaipur's military story has an 'early grandeur,' it begins in Amber's place inside Mughal power.

Published summaries describe Mirza Raja Man Singh I as the 24th Kachhwaha ruler of Amber who served Akbar's Mughal Army and held major provincial commands, including Bihar, Bengal (across multiple terms), and Kabul.

Popular accounts, often repeated in public history, credit him with 'sixty-seven important battles' and



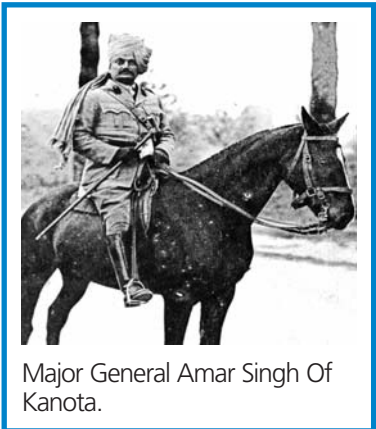
THE SAWAI MAN GUARDS AT AMBER FORT, 1939 .



HH MAHARAJA SAWAI MANSINGHI, COLONEL, SAWAI MAN GUARDS, REVIEWS THE UNIT PARADE IN FRONT OF THE UNIT BARRACKS-THE PRESENT DAY SECRETARIAT, 1935.



Raja Man Singh I Of Amber.



Major General Amar Singh Of Kanota.

describe him as among Akbar's Navaratnas (nine gems). The exact arithmetic matters less than the reputation: Man Singh becomes Amber's emblem of imperial-scale command.

And Jaipur still remembers him not only through campaign maps, but through a symbol you can actually see: the Pachranga flag. Accounts connected to Man Singh's northwest expedition describe crossing the Khyber Pass, defeating five Afghan tribes, and Amber's flag being changed to five colours to commemorate that victory.

Man Singh and his father Bhagwant Das are reputed to have brought cannon-production know-how to Amber. So, the memory begins the Jaipur way: flag, fort, artillery symbols that outlive the speaker.

### When defense becomes architecture: Jaipur as planned survival

The next shift is quieter but decisive: military thinking becomes city-making. Mirza Raja Jai Singh I was a military and diplomatic genius who served under Jehangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb. He was famously instrumental in the Treaty of Purandar (1665) with Shivaji.

Jaipur was founded in 1727 under Sawai Jai Singh II, and Nahargarh Fort, built mainly in 1734, formed part of the defensive ring above the city. One of the most revealing facts about Nahargarh is

not a battle at all: during the 1857 uprising, it was used as shelter for the European population of Jaipur, including the British Resident's wife. This is where Arha's insistence on 'astute politicians' matters. Jaipur's martial inheritance is not only about charge and clash. It is also about protection, planning, and decisions that keep a city intact.

### The institutional bridge: when lineage becomes regiment

If Jaipur's pride is to remain credible today, especially to serving officers and veterans, it must rest on institutions, not only ancestry.

Sawai Man Singh II, the last ruling Maharaja of the princely state of Jaipur, held the rank of Major General in the British Army and was noted for having 'fought handsomely' during World War II. Trained at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, England, he rendered valuable wartime service and later reorganised the Imperial Service Troops, into the elite Sawai Man Guards of Jaipur State Forces, earned the battle honour Ledi Gali during 1948 operations which were subsequently merged into the Purandar (1665) with Shivaji.

Jaipur was founded in 1727 under Sawai Jai Singh II, and Nahargarh Fort, built mainly in 1734, formed part of the defensive ring above the city. One of the most revealing facts about Nahargarh is

Brigadier HH Maharaja Sawai Bhawani Singh, son of HH Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II, enjoyed a distinguished career in the Indian Army marked by professionalism and leadership. Commissioned into the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, he went on to serve as Adjutant, PBG, and later as Adjutant to Major General Zoravar Singh at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, in 1965. His career reflected a rare blend of royal lineage and soldierly dedication, spanning active service from 1951 to 1975. His most celebrated contribution came during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, when he commanded the 10th Parachute Commando Battalion (now Special Forces). Demonstrating exceptional leadership and personal bravery during the famed 'Chachro Raid', his unit infiltrated nearly 80 km

deep into Pakistani territory in Sindh, capturing the town of Chachro and several surrounding areas, and sowing panic among enemy forces. For this audacious operation, he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra (MVC), India's second-highest gallantry award.

Following him, Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh, the present titular Maharaja of Jaipur, continues the family's long military tradition. He holds the rank of Honorary Colonel of the Sawai Man Guards (17 Rajputana Rifles), thereby preserving an unbroken 400-year association between the Jaipur royal family and the regiment.

### Families as archives: pride that lives at home, in records

#### Kanota: record as discipline

Thakur Man Singh Ji, speaking about Major General Amar Singh of Kanota, frames the diaries as a form of nation-making record.

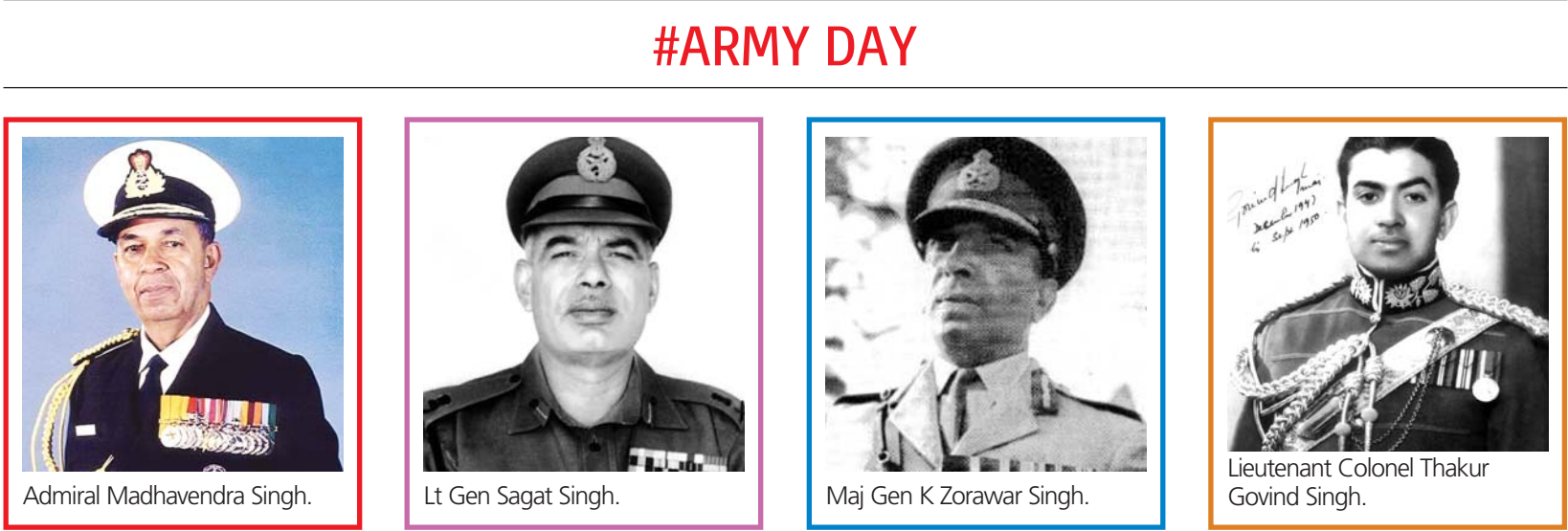
"The Legacy of Amer Singh Ji is not just the famous diaries but diaries of the first Indian Officer of the Indian army his commission date being 1905, hence making them a vital record of the making of the modern Indian Army and Indian Soldiers."

Major General Amar Singh of Kanota was a distinguished military officer, nobleman, and scholar from the Jaipur State, best remembered for his extraordinary intellectual legacy. A pioneering figure in the Indianization of the British Indian Army, he began his career with the Jodhpur Lancers in 1886 and later joined the Imperial Cader Corps. His service spanned major global conflicts, including the Boxer Rebellion in China, World War I in France and Mesopotamia, and the Third Afghan War in 1917, he became one of the first four Indians to receive a King's Commission, marking a historic milestone. After retiring from the British Indian Army in 1923, he returned to Jaipur, where he raised and commanded the Jaipur Lancers and ultimately rose to the rank of Major General and Commandant of the Jaipur State Forces before retiring in 1936.

Often described as a "soldier-scholar," Amar Singh maintained a remarkable daily diary in English for 44 years, producing 89 folio volumes that now constitute one of the world's longest continuous personal diaries. These writings provide rare insider perspectives on colonial military life and the private world of Rajput royalty, and selections have been published in works such as *Between Two Worlds* and *Reversing the Gaze*. A voracious reader, he also built a personal library of more than 3,000 volumes covering military theory, history, and classic literature, which is preserved today at the museum in Castle Kanota, Jaipur.

### Royalty as hinge, not halo: Bhawani Singh as soldier first

Brigadier HH Maharaja Sawai Bhawani Singh, son of HH Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II, enjoyed a distinguished career in the Indian Army marked by professionalism and leadership. Commissioned into the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, he went on to serve as Adjutant, PBG, and later as Adjutant to Major General Zoravar Singh at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, in 1965. His career reflected a rare blend of royal lineage and soldierly dedication, spanning active service from 1951 to 1975. His most celebrated contribution came during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, when he commanded the 10th Parachute Commando Battalion (now Special Forces). Demonstrating exceptional leadership and personal bravery during the famed 'Chachro Raid', his unit infiltrated nearly 80 km



Admiral Madhavendra Singh.

Lt Gen Sagat Singh.

Maj Gen K Zoravar Singh.

Lieutenant Colonel Thakur Govind Singh.

### Chomu: judgement under pressure

Lt. Gen. Umarao Singh, as recalled by his great-grandson Bharat Singh, was a King's Commissioned Officer from the Royal Nathawat family of Chomu. Educated at Mayo College, the Royal Indian Military College, and Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, he was commissioned in 1932 and went on to build a distinguished career in the Indian Army. Rising to the rank of Lieutenant General, he served with distinction in the Rajputana Rifles and ultimately commanded XXXIII Corps, becoming part of a prominent military lineage rooted in service and leadership.

Bharat Singh remembers him in a concise line of family record: "He was a King's Commissioned Officer (having studied from Mayo, RIMC and Sandhurst)."

A senior figure of the Chomu Thikana near Jaipur, Lt. Gen. Umarao Singh was known not only for bravery but for principled judgment. During the 1962 conflict with China, he strongly opposed politically driven 'forward policy' orders, particularly the proposed attack on Thagla Ridge, warning that troops were inadequately prepared. Though this stance led to his being sidelined, it underscored his commitment to operational realism and the welfare of his soldiers.

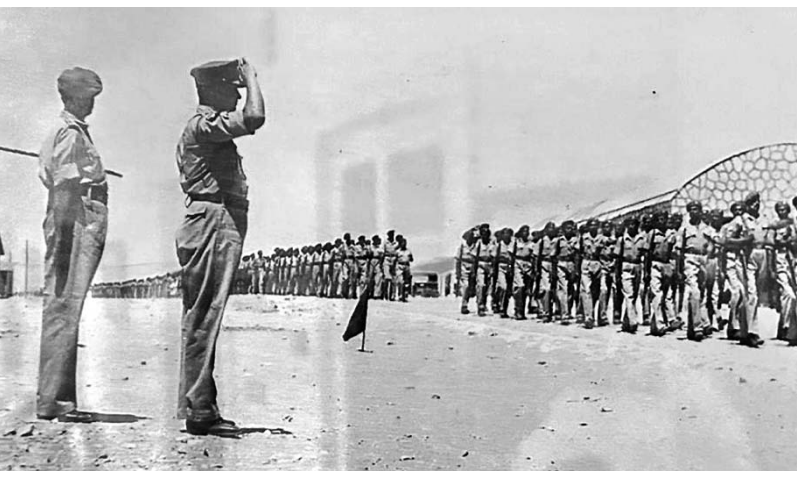
### The airborne question: building capability through study

Major General K. Bhagwati Singh was a pioneering figure in the Indian Army, historically significant as the holder of service number IC-1, marking him as the first officer of the Indian Commissioned cadre. A member of the inaugural 1934 batch of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, he was the first Indian to graduate under the permanent commission system. In recognition of his unique place in military history, he was nominated by Gen. K. S. Thimayya to review the IMA Silver Jubilee Parade in December 1957, an honour bestowed upon him as the Academy's first cadet.

Belonging to the Chomu Thikana of the Nathawat Kachhwaha Rajputs, he was the sixth son of Devi Singhi and carried forward a proud martial lineage. This legacy continued through his son, Madhvendra Singh, who went on to serve as the Chief of the Naval Staff of India. In an interaction, Admiral Madhvendra Singh Ji shared a poignant anecdote about his father, offering a glimpse into the values and character that shaped one of the earliest pillars of India's post-colonial armed forces.

At the end of World War II, and after independence, the government of India wanted to know what is to be done with the airborne forces then available... He made many recommendations, but the most important one is the first recommendation, which is 'please immediately form a parachute regiment.' In a way, he was the founder of the parachute regiment, which always was his first love. For 15 years, he was the colonel of the parachute regiment, perhaps, one of the longest-serving colonels of any regiment."

The words 'founder' or as 'an early architect' in the quote does the real work: it shows how national capability is built by study, attachment, report, recommendation, the patient side of courage.



HH MAHARAJ SAWAI MAN SINGH JI TAKES THE SALUTE FROM SAWAI MAN GUARDS, EGYPT, 1943.

### A legacy remembered in Jaipur: Lieutenant General Sagat Singh (PVSM)

Lieutenant General Sagat Singh Rathore, PVSM, is remembered as a legendary commander widely regarded as one of the greatest military minds of post-independence India. Famous for not having lost a single battle. His record is often recalled through three defining chapters.

**Liberation of Goa (1961):** As a Brigadier commanding the 50th Parachute Brigade, he earned his maroon beret at the age of 42. His troops were the first to enter Panaji, effectively ending 451 years of Portuguese rule.

**Nathu La and Cho La clashes (1967):** As the GOC of the 17th Mountain Division, he famously refused orders to vacate strategic heights during a Chinese ultimatum. His steadfast stand and use of artillery inflicted heavy casualties on the Chinese PLA, securing the border for decades.

**Bangladesh Liberation War (1971):** Commanding IV Corps, he executed the 'Meghna heli-bridge,' using IAF Mi-4 helicopters to transport thousands of troops and artillery across the massive

Meghna River. This manoeuvre bypassed Pakistani defences and contributed to the rapid fall of Dhaka in just 13 days and the reinstatement of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Bangabandhu) of the Awami League. Born in Kusumdesar, Rajasthan, he began his career in the Bikaner State Forces as a non-commissioned officer (Naiik) before being commissioned as an officer in 1941. For his distinguished service, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal.

**Discipline through rupture: 1947 and after - Lt Col Thakur Govind Singh**  
Lieutenant Colonel Thakur Govind Singh, as recalled by Thakur Inder Vijay Singh, is framed as a transitional figure, from Jaipur State Forces into elite ceremonial and combat institutions. Public profiles also describe him as the first Indian Commandant of the President's Bodyguard, placing Jaipur's military houses inside the Republic's most visible uniform.

Thakur Inder Vijay Singh captures his father's early service in two short, direct lines: "My father commissioned into the Jaipur state forces' Rajendra Hazari guards and went to 2nd world war as Jaipur Guards which amalgamated into Indian Army as 17 Rajputana Rifles (Sawai Man Guards)" and "A prominent military figure known for his role during the Partition of India and as the first Indian Commandant of the President's Bodyguards. Lord Mountbatten selected him as a commandant of governor general's bodyguards which became PBG under his command, 1947-50."

Commissioned into the Jaipur State Forces' Rajendra Hazari Guards, he served during the Second World War when the Jaipur Guards were deployed to Italy (1944-45) to protect key allied installations. Following the war, he served as Aide-de-Camp to Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, of the Supreme Commander of the British Raj, at Teen Murti House

between 1945 and 1947. In recognition of his leadership and bearing, Lord Mountbatten selected him in 1947 as the first Indian Commandant of the Governor General's Bodyguards, a role in which he oversaw the unit's historic transition into the President's Bodyguard upon India becoming a republic in 1950.

And then comes the kind of detail families preserve because it captures history's strange intimacy: "The Famous Coin Toss: During the partition of the GGBG's assets in 1947, my father and his Pakistani counterpart, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, famously decided the ownership of the Viceroy's gold-plated ceremonial buggy via a coin flip, which India won."

After independence, Lt Col Govind Singh continued to shape India's mounted and armoured traditions. He served as Military Advisor to Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II, the first Rajpramukh of Rajasthan, and as Second-in-Command of the Mysore Lancers in 1951, before being specially chosen to command the newly raised 61st Cavalry. Under his leadership, the regiment upheld the legacy of India's last active horse cavalry and saw action during the 1965 war against Pakistan. He hailed from an illustrious military lineage: his father, Major General Bhairon Singh of the Jaipur State Forces, and his brother, Major General Kanwar Zoravar Singh, both held senior commands, reinforcing a family tradition of distinguished service to the nation.

### Lieutenant General Himmeth Singh (PVSM): competence as pride

Lieutenant General Himmeth Singh (PVSM) COMMISSIONED 1949, was a highly distinguished Indian Army officer, widely recognised for his command of the 4 Guards battalion during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War.

Lieutenant General Himmeth Singh began his military journey with distinction, winning the prestigious Sword of Honour at the Indian Military Academy in 1949. Prior to commissioning, he served in the Jaipur State Forces and was later absorbed into the Indian Army following Independence and the integration of princely states. He hailed from the Ajairajpura Thikana of the Nathawat clan of Kachhwaha Rajputs; his father was Major General Amar Singh of the Jaipur State Forces, and his uncle, Baulat Singh of the 31 Lancers, was martyred in World War II. His wife, Jane H. Singh (also known as Prafulla Kumari), later documented the exploits of the 4 Guards in the 1971 war, while the book *The Garud Strikes* by Mukul Deva chronicled the same campaign.

During the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, then Lieutenant Colonel Himmeth Singh played a pivotal role, commanding a unit that was the first to enter and the last to leave Dhaka. He led the Indian



'AT HOME ON JAIPUR STREETS' PARADE MARCH PAST REHEARSAL.



Lieutenant Colonel Himmeth Singh.

Army's official farewell parade at Dhaka Stadium, an event marked by his presence immediately behind Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the salute was taken, and was later photographed shaking hands with General (later Field Marshal) Sam Manekshaw at the Dhaka Golf Course. Over his career, he held several prestigious appointments, including Commandant of the College of Combat, Mhow; General Officer Commanding of 10 Corps, Bhatinda; Commandant of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun; and Commandant of the National Defence College, Delhi. He also served as a military advisor to Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and, after retirement, to Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar, helping modernise that nation's defence forces. For his exceptional service, he was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal.

And then, there's Jane Himmeth Singh, speaking about mechanisation not as a slogan but as lived learning. "I remember how Himmeth spent hours learning about tanks, for three months, thereby the 31 Armoured Div was raised... it was actually tough learning..."

That sentence is pure institutional pride: not loud, not decorative, earned through competence under pressure. Another fine Army history snippet shared by Jane Himmeth Singh:

In 1949, General (later Field Marshal) K. M. Cariappa raised the Brigade of the Guards, marking a historic shift in the Indian Army as its first 'all-India, all-class' regiment. Conceived as an elite formation, the regiment broke away from traditional region- or caste-based recruitment to foster national unity. Cariappa drew inspiration from the British Coldstream Guards and personally selected some of the Army's oldest and most battle-hardened battalions to form the nucleus of this new force.

The original units redesignated as Guards battalions were: 1 Guards from the 2nd Battalion, Punjab Regiment (raised in 1759); 2 Guards from the 1st Battalion, The Grenadiers (converted in 1952); 3 Guards from the 1st Battalion, Rajputana Rifles (raised in 1775 and converted in 1949); and 4 Guards from the 1/7 Rajputs, formerly the 1st Battalion, 7th Rajput Regiment

(converted on 26 January 1950). The regiment proudly carries the motto *Pahla Hamesha Pahla* (First Always First) and the war cry *Garud Ka Hun Bol Pyare* (I am the son of Garuda, say O my friend).

She also shares a tradition-anchored story of military ethos. "Lt. General Nathu Singh was suggested as a possible choice for the 1st general of the Indian Army, but he declined, stating that General K. M. Cariappa was senior to him and therefore deserved the position. As a result, General Cariappa was nominated. This story is often cited as an example of respect for seniority, selflessness, and the warrior ethos traditionally associated with Rajputs, as well as the core values of the Indian Army."

**Major General Kanwar Zoravar Singh through his daughter, Ms. Mandakini Singh Guraya's eyes**

Major General Kanwar Zoravar Singh was born in Jaipur on February 14, 1920, to Maj. Gen. Sir Bhairon Singh Khatipura of the Jaipur State Forces. He was educated at the Rashtriya Indian Military College and the Indian Military Academy, where he earned the prestigious Sword of Honour in 1941. Commissioned into the 16th Light Cavalry alongside native Indian officers, he later transferred to the Central India Horse (CIH) driven by

Das Barracks (Secretariat). So, the contrast is not simply 'old vs new.' It is a continuity of purpose, changed in form: from courtyard to roadway, from restricted assembly to public witness. The city has been rehearsing this for centuries. First through empire, then through statecraft and forts, and finally through units and institutions that outlast any single ruler.

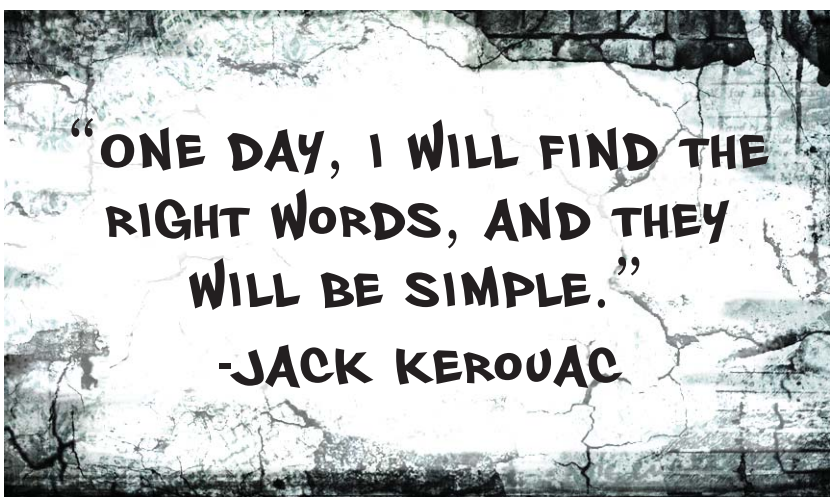
Army Day is a parade, yes. But Jaipur is not only hosting a parade, it's hosting a mirror.

Army Day is a parade, yes. But Jaipur is not only hosting a parade, it's hosting a mirror.



HH MAHARAJA SAWAI BHAWANI SINGH JI OF JAIPUR WITH 10 PARA COMMAND TEAM 1971 WAR.

## THE WALL



HH MAHARAJA SAWAI MANSINGHI, COLONEL, SAWAI MAN GUARDS, REVIEWS THE UNIT PARADE IN FRONT OF THE UNIT BARRACKS-THE PRESENT DAY SECRETARIAT, 1935.

## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman