

Brain Awareness Week

Understanding the intricate dance of neurons and synapses unravels the mysteries of cognition, revealing the brain's brilliance. Brain Awareness Week (BAW) has a background that can be traced back to 1996, when it was started by a charitable organization. The purpose behind this event was to encourage the public, by letting people know about the progress that is being done in brain research, as well as various updates on the ways that disorders of the brain are diagnosed, treated and prevented.



#COVID-19

Long COVID & Associated Risks

COVID-19 virus can stay in the body for more than a year after infection



The COVID-19 virus can persist in the blood and tissue of patients for more than a year, after the acute phase of the illness has ended, according to a new research from UC San Francisco, that offers potential clues to why some people develop long COVID.

The scientists found pieces of SARS-CoV-2, referred to as COVID antigens, lingering in the blood, up to 14 months after infection and for more than two years, in tissue

samples from people who had COVID. "These two studies provide some of the strongest evidence so far that COVID antigens can persist in some people, even though we think they have normal immune responses," said Michael Peluso, MD, an infectious disease researcher in the UCSF School of Medicine, who led both studies.

The findings were presented at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI), which was held from March 3 to 6, 2024, in Denver.

Evidence of long-term infection

Early in the pandemic, COVID-19 was thought to be a transient illness. But a growing number of patients, even those who had previously been healthy, continued having symptoms, such as, brain fog, digestive problems and vascular issues, for months or even years.

The researchers looked at blood samples from 171 people who had been infected with COVID. Using an ultra-sensitive test for the COVID 'spike' protein, which helps the virus break into human cells, the scientists found the virus was

still present up to 14 months later in some people. Among those who were hospitalized for COVID, the likelihood of detecting the COVID antigens was about twice as high as it was for those who were not. It was also higher for those who reported being 'sicker,' but were not hospitalized.

"As a clinician, these associations convince me that we are on to something, because it makes sense that someone, who had been sicker with COVID, would have more antigen that can stick around," Peluso said.

Virus persists up to two years in tissue

Since the virus is believed to persist in the tissue reservoirs, the scientists turned to UCSF's Long COVID Tissue Bank, which contains samples, donated by patients, with and without long COVID. They detected portions of viral RNA for up to two years after infection, although, there was no evidence that the person had become re-infected. They found it in the connective tissue where immune cells are located, suggesting that the viral fragments were causing the immune system to attack. In some of the samples, the researchers found that the virus could be active.

Peluso said more research is needed to determine whether the persistence of these fragments drives long COVID and such associated risks as heart attack and stroke.

But, based on these findings, Peluso's team at UCSF is involved in multiple clinical trials that are testing whether monoclonal antibodies or antiviral drugs can remove the virus and improve the health of people with long COVID. "There is a lot more work to be done, but I feel like we are making progress in 'really' understanding the long-term consequences of this infection," Peluso said.



4 GUARDS marching past the saluting base.



Lt. Col. Himmeth Singh commanding the parade.

DACCA 12 March 1972 FAREWELL PARADE



Lt. Gen. Himmeth Singh, the Parade Commander.

Because of 4th Battalion Brigade of Guards (1 Rajput)'s performance during Liberation War, the battalion was selected for the Victory Commemoration Parade by the Indian Army for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the President of Bangladesh. On being selected, the first task before the battalion was to fetch our ceremonial kit, band instruments and other ceremonial paraphernalia from our rear base, at the Guards Training Center, Kota. Then, the training started in earnest, under the personal supervision of our commanding officer. He had, during his own training days, served in the Maharaja of Jaipur's 'Sawai Man Guards,' under British Drill Instructors from the British Brigade of Guards, and later, when he was a gentleman cadet at the Indian Military Academy, from where he had passed out with the 'Sword of Honour,' and here too, his drill instructors had been 'Sergeants' from the Guards Battalions of the Royal Household Regiments. Under his watchful eye and his own immaculate bearing, we trained and polished our drill which, after four years in the field was sorely needed, but by the beginning of March, we had achieved a standard, which any battalion of the 'British Guards' would have been proud of. At the beginning of March, we were joined by a troop of 61st Cavalry, which is located in Col Himmeth Singh's own hometown. It is the only active service horse cavalry regiment in the world today. There can be no denial of the fact that even when the era of horsed cavalry is dead and gone, they are still used for ceremonial occasions in most countries. A cavalier on horseback is not only a visual treat and a magnificent sight, but also evokes feeling of romance and grandeur.



Maj. Chandrakant Singh Vrc (Retd.) Military Historian

part and only witnessed it, having been wounded in the leg and not yet fully recovered. The parade was widely covered in the international press and I reproduce below the New York Times report.

The parade was commanded by Lt. Col. later Lt. Gen Himmeth Singh, whose family is from Jaipur, and who had led his battalion, during the war. He was recommended for a Maha Vir Chakra, which however did not materialize for reasons which I have no hesitation in mentioning. Gen. Aurora had developed an intense jealousy and dislike for Gen. Sagat, the chief architect of our victory. Aurora had his revenge by not forwarding to Army HQ most of the citations for gallantry, sent to him by Gen. Sagat.

Even before the surrender of Pakistan Army on 16 Dec 71, the Indian Army had started pulling units out of Bangladesh, and sending them to the Western Front and the process was completed by the end of January 1972, except for a few signals and engineer elements and my unit, 4th Battalion Brigade of Guards (1 Rajput). We had been in a field area separated from our families and comforts for over four years, and were anxious to return to India. However, we were held back in Dacca. Because of its performance during Liberation War, the battalion was selected for the Victory Commemoration Parade by the Indian Army for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the President of Bangladesh. On being selected, the

first task before the battalion was to fetch our ceremonial kit, band instruments and other ceremonial paraphernalia from our rear base at the Guards Training Center, Kota. Then, the training started in earnest, under the personal supervision of our commanding officer. He had, during his own training days, served in the Maharaja of Jaipur's 'Sawai Man Guards,' under British Drill Instructors from the British Brigade of Guards, and later, when he was a gentleman cadet at the Indian Military Academy, from where he had passed out with the 'Sword of Honour,' and here too, his drill instructors had been 'Sergeants' from the Guards Battalions of the Royal Household Regiments. Under his watchful eye and his own immaculate bearing, we trained and polished our drill, which, after four years in the field was sorely needed, but by the beginning of March, we had achieved a standard, which any battalion of the 'British Guards' would have been proud of. At the beginning of March, we were joined by a troop of 61st Cavalry, which is located in Col. Himmeth Singh's own hometown. It is the only active service horse cavalry regiment in the world today. There can be no denial of the fact that even when the era of horsed cavalry is dead and gone, they are still used for ceremonial occasions in most countries. A cavalier on horseback is not only a visual treat and a magnificent sight, but also

evokes feeling of romance and grandeur.

On the morning of 12 March, when the battalion escorted by the horses of 61st Cavalry marched into the jam-packed Dacca Stadium, with its two colours unfurled and the bands playing, it was a sight to behold. The reverberations from the roar of welcome, from the cheering crowd could be heard even miles away. When the Sheikh accompanied by the Army Commander Lt. Gen. Aurora and the Division Commander Maj. Gen. Ben Gonsalves walked in, to take their place on the saluting dais, the crowd erupted in frenzied cheering, which continued for so long that it disrupted the parade schedule for Col. Himmeth Singh had to wait several minutes till the cheering stopped, before he could give the command for the 'General Salute.' The rest of the parade, including the march-past, went off like clockwork, the clapping and cheering of the crowd making the men put their best performance. The highlight was the speech by the Sheikh before the conclusion of the parade. His speech was like the 'roar of a lion' and he thanked India and the Indian Army for our help in liberating his country. The Sheikh was an orator, unmatched by anyone, Churchill included. His speech was inspiring, emotionally charged and very moving.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman takes the salute of Farewell Parade by 4 Guards (1 Rajput)



Presented by Major Chandrakant Singh Vrc. The only document to have the signatures of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina on the same page. Contersigned by Mr Abdul Hamid and all service chiefs of Bangladesh.

The Parade programme signed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, later by Sheikh Hasina and Mr. Abdul Rahman, President of Bangladesh and all the service Chiefs of Bangladesh. Programme in authors collection. A copy of this was presented by me to Mr. Rakesh Sharma in recognition and thanks for the coverage of '1971 War accounts' in *Rashtrdoot*.



Maj. and Mrs. Chandrakant present a collage of photos of the parade to HE Sheikh Hasina in Dacca.



Regimental Colours of 4 Guards on parade. Lt. Yadav and second Lt. Javeer Singh are the colour party. 4 Guards is the only unit of the Indian army, which carries two colours, in recognition of its exceptional service, during more than two hundred years of its history.

#UNMATCHED

NEW YORK TIMES

Indian Army mounted a ceremonial parade to commemorate the withdrawal from Bangladesh today, bidding farewell to the nation it helped create.

The withdrawal sets up a test of the new government's ability to control its countryside and opened the way to diplomatic recognition by the United States.

Troops of India's First Rajput Regiment (4 GUARDS), wearing scarlet turbans with golden tassels, staged a retreat parade in a packed Dacca stadium, at which the Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, took the salute.

"In our hearts and minds, we don't want you to leave," the Prime Minister said as the troops on parade stood at ease. "But as ours is a free and sovereign country and we must run our own affairs, you leave as 'friends.'" Sheikh Mujibur Rahman praised the Indian Army for helping the Bengali freedom fighters during the nine-month revolution.

"You trained them. You gave them arms. Our country had no fighting machine, and you came to our help." The Parade, based on British tradition, lasted forty-five



Sheikh Mujib inspecting the parade.

minutes, before a crowd of twenty-five thousand Bengali spectators in the cricket stadium in Dacca's center. Ceremonies were shortened by almost half-an-hour, with the omission of some of the programme, including the scheduled playing of the Christian Hymn 'Auld Wath Me' to a predominantly Muslim population. The Hymn, a feature of similar British ceremonies, was a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi and has been till recently a part of the music programme every year at the 'Beating of Retreat' ceremony at Vijay Chowk, New Delhi. Now, Bangladesh has an army of twelve to fifteen thousand men, from the

former Pakistan army units of the East Bengal Regiments and the East Pakistan Rifles, who had defected and joined the freedom struggle last year. The pull out of the Indian Army came thirteen days ahead of schedule, hurried along by the planned visit of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India, next Friday. The number of Indian soldiers dwindled to a force of five thousand from a peak of one hundred fifty thousand, during the two-week war with Pakistan, which ended on 16 December.

Now, the new government had the job, with the country's disorganized police and militia of keeping order among seventy five million Bengalis. Many feared that the departure of the Indians might lead to violence between Bengalis and Biharis-non-Bengali Muslims, who generally supported the Pakistanis. Fighting between the two communities broke out on Friday night in the town of *Khulna*, eight miles south-west of Dacca and reports said that total casualties ranged from two hundred to eight hundred but the official figure is only of sixty killed or wounded.

REPORT IN THE DAILY STAR, DACCA

A report, dated '12 March 1972' in the 'Daily Star,' the leading English daily of Bangladesh has this to say about the parade and the Bangabandhu's speech, "Bangabandhu, today, expressed his confidence that the *Friendship and brotherly ties between Bangladesh and India* will be everlasting and no power on Earth can drive a wedge between them. Addressing the farewell parade of the *Indian Army in Bangladesh*, at Dacca stadium, the prime minister said that the people of Bangladesh may not possess enough resources to present to you but we have 'endless love' for you. We want to bid farewell today, with the love that we have, and please accept it."

Bangabandhu, in his seven-minute speech, recalled with gratitude the all-out help, assistance and cooperation extended to the struggling people of Bangladesh, for their liberation by the people, government and armed forces of India, and said, "The assistance, that you have given, has no parallel in history."

The programme of the parade by 4 GUARDS and a troop of 61st Cavalry was signed by the Sheikh, at the conclusion of the parade. On 7 April 2017, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, the Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, visited India to honour our veter-



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman taking the salute.

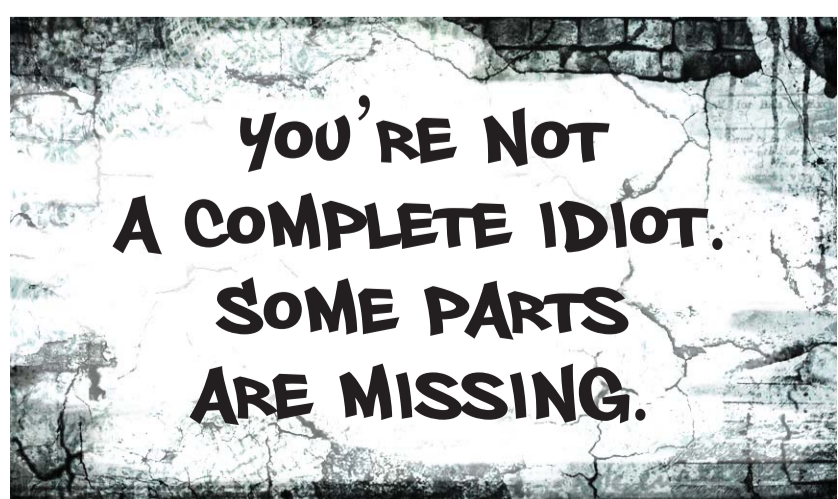
ans and the widows of the soldiers, who had died in the Liberation War. We showed her the programme with her father's signature. When requested to sign the programme, she did so but turned very emotional. She said that this is the only document that has 'her's and her father's' signatures. Subsequently, the programme was signed by HE Abdul Hamid, the President of Bangladesh, and all the chiefs of their armed forces. This programme and copies of it will be presented to institutions in India and Bangladesh, where it will occupy the 'pride of place' in all military museums.

Many formations, units and individuals have laid 'claim' to being the first to enter Dacca. This is the account of Schanberg (New

York Times), who was accompanied by other foreign correspondents, who have corroborated his account. Then, there are the photographs by Jay Ullal (Stern magazine), who has also given his own separate account of the events, and the final battle, leading to the formal surrender on 16th Dec's evening. All these newsmen were the most credible and respected news professionals of the time and were witnesses to the events described, and there is no way that can be considered biased or partisan. In their accounts, they have mentioned units and individuals by name, which puts to rest any controversy about who fought the last battle and who was the first to enter Dacca.

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THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

