**The First Kashmir War**

India has had a war with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, but the root cause of these wars lay in the year 1947 when India and Pakistan, were parted, and attained Independence from the British. The partition had the unforeseen issues hidden in itself. On 3 June 1947, after the news of independence was declared, the 22 states of the Indian Territory were given the option of either acceding to India or PakistanEvery other state except Hyderabad, Junagad and Kashmir decided to accede to India. Hyderabad, being a land bound country, since its in the middle of India, wouldn’t have been able to successfully accede to Pakistan or be an independent nation. While, Kashmir had the option to do so as it shared its boundaries with both India and Pakisan. Kashmir’s, then king, Maharaja Hari Singh was completely unaware of the fact that the Pakistan Jinnah was imagining had Kashmir as a part of it. They didn’t have any such terror from India’s side but Pakistan was not letting them stay peacefully. Lord Mountbatten spoke to Maharaja, but Maharaja didn’t incline towards taking any decision right away. He wished to be independent. But, Mountbatten tried explaining the reality to him by telling how Kashmir cannot be an independent nation, as it’s a land bound country, over-sized, under populated and that they’ll end up being a battle field. Karan Singh, Hari Singh’s son tells Aaj Tak that his father wrote a letter to Mountbatten stating that he was considering which of the two nations should he join, or would it be better for him to stay as an independent nation, he gave these three options – and such situations occurred that there was an attack as Hari Singh had no inkling of the circumstances around him while he was still weighing his decisions. Karan Singh also tells Aaj Tak how it was a very crucial decision to make as 80% of Kashmir’s population was muslim, all rivers, roads were going to towards Pakistan, so that’s why there was the apprehension.

Jinnah’s advisor’s came up with a master plan of creating a religious tension in border areas and rob the places by entering through different areas in small groups in order to involve the King’s men and break them apart. They also made Gilgit its territory (still POK) by force using propagandas. Attacks started from September on JK, the militants, included Pakistani soldiers. They successfully broke the Jammu and Kashmir army into fragments, exactly the way Jinnah wanted. The circumstances in Kashmir were degrading day after day.

October 24, he asked for help from India, Mountbatten advised them to not go ahead until Kashmir accedes to India. On 26 October, he agreed to be a part of India. Karan Singh says that after the attacks from Pakistan, his father had no other option left either. Situations in Baramulla worsened. It was wealthy town and it was torn apart by the enemies. The tribesmen robbed, raped, killed continuously for three days, they robbed so much that they forget about the orders from their lords to proceed to Srinagar as soon as possible, and instead went back home to keep all that they robbed. This mistake of theirs gave the Indian army the time to reach Kashmir, otherwise at the speed they were proceeding, ,Srinagar was just 3 hours away. While Jinnah was preparing for his victory march till the time he got the news that Indian Army is preceding towards Pak it was too late. Jinnah gave the then Pakistani army’s Commander in Chief, General Sir Douglous Gresi, a decree to immediately send the Pakistani army to Kashmir but the Supreme Commander of Pakistani Army, Field Marshall Sir Claude Aukinley denied this order saying that since Kashmir is a part of India now, Indian Army’s step is justified. In spite of that if Pakistan wants to send out their army then none of the British officials will be a part of that fight, and most were British in the Pakistani army then. The British came up with this policy, that the British officers in both the armies (Indian and Pakistani) won’t take part in any of the invasions from either sides.

The day Hari Singh asked for help from New Delhi, the Indian army was completely ready and put in all their efforts to take the necessary action to put the circumstances under control. Mahatma Gandhi was disturbed after listening to the situations in Kashmir and advised Nehru to send the army to save the lives of Kashmiri people. Delhi’s air force base sent out the best of their officers to Srinagar to fight their first war. This was their first chance to fight under their own flag and they had all the courage they needed to save their motherland. Brigadier Sen led the soldiers in Srinagar, he was just 27. He sent out two patrol parties as soon as he got the news that some tribesmen had been spotted in Batgaon. The tribesmen used to hide and attack and they were familiar with every corner of the place hence it was difficult to defeat them. Since they couldn’t find them, Sen called two parties back, the remaining was being led by Major Somnath Sharma who had a fractured hand but after much pleading was allowed to go for the war. The tribesmen had to break themselves into smaller groups to enter Srinagar to avoid being spotted by the Indian army. They mixed with the Indian villagers and deceived the army. And once the enemies saw that the Indian army soldiers were less in numbe,r they suddenly attacked. But the Indian army did not step back. Even the the ration between them and the tribesmen was that of 7:1, They were successful in keeping them engaged for almost 6 hours. Major Somnath Sharma sent out a message to the headquarters asking for more men to help them, but instead he was asked to return as the enemies were larger in number. But he did not to do so, as they were the only barrier between them and Srinagar. There was no open war, hence it was taking time for Indian army to take them down. The tribesmen were very well acquainted with the areas around, the weather and dressed no differently from the villagers around and thus could easily hide. While, the strength of the Indian army lay in the fact that they has the best officers who were seeking to learn from their defeats, and make amends immediately and with every win, put their motivation high and moved forward. They were at the important position to achieve victory.

On November 1, there was an India and Pakistan talk at Lahore. Nehru did not go for the talk but Mountbatten went. Jinnah advised that the war in Kashmir should end and both armies should back immediately pull out. Mountbatten asked him how would they ask the tribesmen to retreat and Jinnah assured that he will call the whole thing off if India does so. Whatever Jinnah meant by that, Pakistan’s role was slowly getting cleared in the entire situation.

According to Retired Colonel Anil Athale if in 1947/1948 India would have decided to destroy Pakistan, they easily could have and Jinnah was aware of that, hence he did not send in the army openly rather chose to attack through the tribesmen and staged the drama by saying they are voluntary attacking and he has no role to play in the same.

Sardar Patel visited Srinagar on the 4th of November and met up with Brigadier Sen. Till then India was on standby to send more men for the war. With the recent separation, a lot of other places were under disturbances and required army help, but Sardar understood the importance of Kashmir and how it was necessary at any cost. They needed more men as the attacks were happening simultaneously from different side. Sardar told them to keep an eye on the situations and always be prepared, and promised them with more men by November 7th. On November 7, the Vayu Sena air craft while doing their air recee found that the tribesmen were hiding in the Shalteng area together. Brigadier Sen was awaiting more men, and he had to decide either to wait for the help or attack, as the more its delayed the enemies would become that stronger. He decided to immediately attack and planned such a strategy which was never implemented before. Tribesmen excelled at guerilla war, but were not acquainted with fighting in the open. Brigadier Sen used this weakness of theirs to the Indian Army’s advantage as that area was open. Brigadier Sen surrounded them from two sides, and even from the back and the air force aircrafts did the rest from above. From afternoon till 5PM – all the enemies were wiped off. This was the biggest achievement as the enemies never ever even tried to reach Srinagar after that. This victory at Shalteng motivated them to go ahead to capture back Baramulla.

On November 8, morning, when they reached Baramulla, the city was covered with complete silent and it had traces of robbery and inhumanity all over. But no trace of the enemies could be found anywhere, nor of the people there. It was only the silence and smell of death. People had left the place and hidden in the mountains when the attack happened. After they saw the soldiers they slowly started coming out thinking it’s their King’s army but slowly got to know that it’s the Indian army, and breathed a sigh of relief. On November 11, Nehru himself came to Kashmir. By 13th all the militants were wiped off from the Srinagar valley. Even though Pakistan had started this war by deceiving India in the first place, but even after that they continued with their actions, they increased and speeded up their actions to create religious tension. In the areas of Kashmir with Pakistan as its border, a rebellious organisation was started, who called themselves the ‘Govenment of Azaad Kashmir’, and even an Azad Kashmir army was set up. Though they were funded, and their weapons were provided by Pakistan themselves but that mask was protecting them from the allegation of starting the war. It was necessary for India to seal the entrance to enter India through Kashmir, but while the army was busy removing the enemies from the valley, a lot had changed in the border areas. Militants were another name for danger in these areas. Around 30,000 muslims were either killed or kidnapped. In Jammu, the situations were getting worse. Kotli and Poonch needed desperate help. Poonch alone was a home to 40,000 refugees , a big operation was taken up in order to take them out from there but it was unsuccessful. Firstly the peak winters and on top of that the intruders. Indian army didn’t even have appropriate clothing for such an extreme weather.

Indian Army commander Gen Sir Francis Robert Roy Butcher and Lt Gen Deadly Russel were the major advisor of the Indian Army. They advised that whichever areas had been captured back, it should be kept strongly and the other areas should be let go as the enemies were strong enough to intrude those areas. They had two options – either to send in more men or abandon Poonch, and even if they sent in more men they may not be able to maintain them in the extreme cold and hence advised to abandon Poonch and cut down on their commitments . But they also couldn’t leave the refugees there. On the other hand, the enemies were moving towards Naushera after capturing Mirpur and Jhangar. According to the rules of war any British official wasn’t allowed to go to the war zone and it was getting difficult to strategise for them without doing so. General Russel gave the suggestion that its time that an Indian officer takes the role up. On January 20, the first Indian to be the Army’s Commander in Chief, Lt Gen KM Kariappa was appointed. General SK Singh speaks about the same by saying that “Russel advised it was time as they had already broken the rule by being there but couldn’t continue that any longer. Hence Kariappa became the army commander, and the chief an year later.”

Once Kariappa took charge he moves towards Kashmir, his first vision bent towards Naushera and then everything fell into place. Pakistan was dipped in hatred was trying to claim the war to be because of religious differences among Hindus and Muslims which they called ‘jihaad’. But their downfall was destined to happen by Indian Army itself, where there was no religious difference but all were fighting for their Motherland . Naushera’s Brigadier Mohammed Usmaan was one of the them. SK Singh says that Kariappa’s eyes fell on this hill, Kot. He asked Usmaan if its in their control, he said no. So he pointed out that it’ll become a weakness for the Indian Army as if it gets into the enemies hands they’d be able to see the entire defence pattern of the Indian army from there, and they can set up their OP (observation post) there and start bombarding the Indian Army. That is why it was necessary to capture Kot immediately. So, he planned to capture the Kot district as that would open their way from Naushera to ahead but told Mohammed Usmaan to make sure that the attack should be so fast and sudden that the enemies don’t get a chance to retaliate. Brigadier Usmaan went ahead with the exact plan and easily captured Kot. The enemies hiding there had no clue about the attack and hence were defeated by the Indian army. During this time, the war-prone nation got an internal shock as MG was murdered. A lot of places in the country suffered violence, though it was overpowered, the country had lost its leader.

On February 6, Pakistan retaliated by attacking Naushera. The enemies put in all their strength and effort. It was the biggest fight of the 1947-48 war. Naushera was attacked from all the four sides (15000 enemies), and Tangdhar inspite of being the highest region had the worse attack. 1000s of men were going up. From the 27 army men only one was left, Jadunath Singh, who was injured as well. And enemy was 15 steps away. He just got out of hiding and started shooting which took the enemies aback and by that time another battalion had come in for rescue, which defeated the enemies. The same day,bvy 3PM the attacks from the enemies were subdued. In Kot, the fight went on till late at night, but even then all the enemies were wiped off from there as well. India lost 33 soldiers, while 102 were injured.