

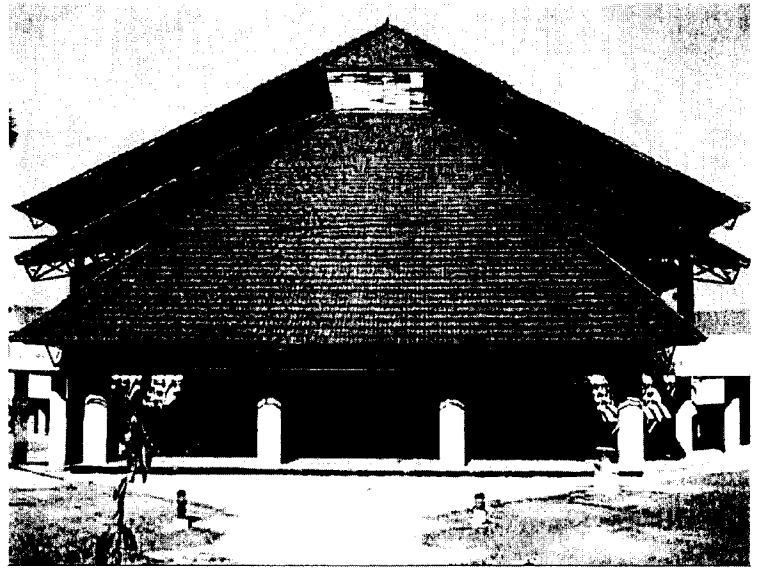
## The Brave Soldier



Most sixteen year olds were in high school preparing for a test, while my great uncle was saying his last goodbyes to his family. Jaswant Singh Bawa was a soldier in the Indian Army about forty years ago. His bravery and willpower set an example for the Indian Army and showed them what a true soldier is capable of. Mr. Bawa was a young and skilled man and always reached for greater heights, no matter the cost, which even led him to face consequences. Jaswant's life as a soldier in the navy will be brought to light, including his life before the war, the training he had to withstand, and what he experienced during the Indian-Portuguese war.

Jaswant Singh Bawa was born in Lahore, India on February 27th, 1941. He was born and raised in a middle-class family with his dad being a doctor and the only income provider in the household. As a child, Mr. Bawa was very disciplined and intelligent, and his teachers and relatives praised him for his determination and willpower. Slowly as he went into his teenage years, he became more aware of his family's financial position every day and wanted to help out. Jaswant Bawa wanted to join the Indian Navy as he thought it was a superior career opportunity; he wanted to help out his father and his country at the same time. However, his family didn't approve as they couldn't bear the thought of losing their son. After some explaining and convincing, Jaswant enlisted in the Navy in 1956 at the age of sixteen as a Seaman.

Mr. Bawa soon had to leave home and go to the Indian Naval Academy located in the Kannur District of Kerala, India. This time period was a very hard one for Jaswant since it was the first time he had been away from his family for so long and he needed to change his life routine a lot. Here Jaswant was surrounded by many disciplined and knowledgeable trainees from all over India. Training in the Navy was not a piece of cake; meal portions



were small and training levels were high. Mr. Bawa had to complete many medical, physical, and HQ tests. Some of the medical tests included checking your height, weight, blood, and eyes. The physical tests and routines consisted of doing as many push-ups and sit-ups you could in two minutes, being timed while running a 1.5-mile run, and swimming one hundred metres. Being the smart young man he was, Jaswant successfully completed his training in four years and was ready for his first war.

The first war Jaswant Bawa participated in began on December 17th, 1961. This battle was between India and Portugal for the liberation of Goa. Jaswant and his fellow soldiers were very nervous, and their families' fear for their safety increased. In this operation, the Indian military was going to conquer the Portuguese from three sides: air, land, and sea. Jaswant was going to be attacking from the sea armed with only a Bren machine gun which could fire about 1850 yards. At 9:45 pm on December 17th, the

hostiles began to fire, and the Indians attacked soon after. Mr. Bawa proceeded to his post courageously and faced a whole swarm of Portuguese seaman alone. This resulted in Bawa getting shot in the right limb numerous times with a gun burst. Even after his dreadful wound, Bawa displayed willpower and remained at his post while retaliating until backup arrived. This act set an example for many soldiers in the military showing them what a soldier is capable of. Many people were injured, including Bawa and twenty-two Indians, and thirty-three Portuguese soldiers were killed - all in this two-day war. India was victorious, and Goa was free from 450 years of captivity, and this fact helped Jaswant fight through his injury which caused him to lose his bottom



right leg.

Jaswant Singh Bawa, my great uncle, risked his life and sacrificed his leg for his country. He was awarded many medals including the Ashoka Chakra and the Shaurya Chakra for his bravery. At the age of seventy-five, Mr. Bawa has experienced a life in and out of the war and is currently living a happy and peaceful life in Jalandhar, India. I, Amika Anand, fully respect my uncle. He is one of most admirable heroes

I know.