

- A Tale of Valour: Major Somnath Sharma and the Battle of Badgam

## A Tale of Valour: Major Somnath Sharma and the Battle of Badgam

**Summary:** This chapter narrates the heroic story of Major Somnath Sharma, the first recipient of India's highest military honor, the Param Vir Chakra (PVC). It focuses on his leadership and bravery during the Battle of Badgam in 1947, where he and his men defended the Srinagar airport against a much larger invading force. Despite being heavily outnumbered and wounded, Major Sharma's courage and strategic acumen delayed the enemy, allowing reinforcements to arrive and securing the region for India. His sacrifice remains a symbol of patriotism and valor.

### Key Elements

- **Themes:** Patriotism, sacrifice, courage, duty, leadership, and the defense of the nation.
- **Characters:** Major Somnath Sharma, his men of D Company, the invading tribal guerrillas backed by Pakistan.
- **Literary Devices:** Imagery (depicting the Kashmir valley and battlefield), symbolism (the tricolour flag, the National War Memorial), and direct quotes illustrating bravery.

### Textual Evidence

Major Somnath Sharma's words, "I know my men better than anyone else, and if they are going into action, they are not going in without me," highlight his leadership and

commitment. His famous quote during battle, "I shall not withdraw an inch but will fight to the last man and the last round," exemplifies his determination and valor.

## Solved Example

**Question:** Describe the significance of Major Somnath Sharma's leadership during the Battle of Badgam.

**Answer:** Major Somnath Sharma's leadership was crucial in defending Srinagar airport against a much larger invading force. Despite being outnumbered and injured, he motivated his men to hold their ground, coordinated air strikes, and personally assisted in combat. His actions delayed the enemy advance, allowing reinforcements to arrive, which ultimately saved the Kashmir Valley for India. His sacrifice exemplifies courage and patriotism.

## Practice Set

### Level 1 – Easy

- Who was Major Somnath Sharma?
- What is the Param Vir Chakra?
- Where did the Battle of Badgam take place?

### Level 2 – Moderate

- Explain the importance of the Srinagar airport during the 1947 conflict.
- What qualities did Major Somnath Sharma display during the battle?
- How did Major Somnath Sharma's actions impact the outcome of the battle?

### Level 3 – Challenging

- Analyze the strategic challenges faced by Major Somnath Sharma and how he overcame them.
- Discuss the significance of Major Somnath Sharma's legacy in the context of Indian military history.
- Evaluate the role of patriotism and sacrifice as portrayed in the chapter.

## Answer Key

- **Level 1 Answers:**

1. Major Somnath Sharma was an Indian Army officer and the first recipient of the Param Vir Chakra.
2. The Param Vir Chakra is India's highest military award for bravery.
3. The Battle of Badgam took place near Srinagar in Kashmir.

- **Level 2 Answers:**

1. Srinagar airport was strategically important as it was the main entry point for troops and supplies.
2. Major Sharma showed courage, leadership, determination, and selflessness.
3. His leadership delayed the enemy, allowing reinforcements to arrive and securing the region.

- **Level 3 Answers:**

1. Major Sharma faced overwhelming enemy numbers and limited ammunition but used tactical defense and called for air support.
2. His legacy symbolizes supreme sacrifice and inspires Indian soldiers.
3. The chapter highlights how patriotism and sacrifice are essential for protecting the nation.

## Quick Reference

- **Major Somnath Sharma:** First Param Vir Chakra awardee, led D Company in 1947.
- **Battle of Badgam:** Defense of Srinagar airport against invading forces.
- **Param Vir Chakra:** India's highest military honor for valor.
- **Key Quote:** "I shall not withdraw an inch but will fight to the last man and the last round."

## Glossary

- **Valour:** Courage in the face of danger.
- **Infiltrators:** People who secretly enter enemy territory.
- **Annex:** To take control of a territory.
- **Combat:** Fighting or battle.
- **Conspicuous:** Easily seen or noticed.
- **Posthumously:** After death.
- **Beacon:** A source of inspiration or guidance.
- **Tenacity:** Persistent determination.

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