

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 1.7 Param Vir Chakra : Our Heroes ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

You may have heard about legendary heroes of the past and their extraordinary acts of bravery. But even today many brave soldiers of our country sacrifice their own lives for our safety. Their brave deeds are honoured by bestowing military decorations on them.

Param Vir Chakra is India's highest military decoration. It is awarded for the most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, in the presence of the enemy, whether on land, at sea or in the air.



The medal itself is very simple in appearance. It is made of bronze, and is fitted with swivel mounting and has a plain purple ribbon. On the obverse, it has the Indian national emblem at the centre, surrounded by four replicas of 'Indra's Vajra'. On the reverse, the words Param Vir Chakra are engraved in Hindi and English, with two lotus flowers in between.

The Param Vir Chakra medal was designed by Savitribai Khanolkar. She was a European lady, who married Vikram Khanolkar, an Indian Army Officer. Savitribai loved India and took Indian citizenship. She spoke Marathi, Sanskrit, Hindi fluently and had studied Indian arts and traditions in depth.

The Param Vir Chakra is a very rare honour. So far, it has been awarded only 21 times. Fourteen of these awards were given posthumously.

Indra's vajra or thunderbolt is supposed to be a matchless weapon. But what makes the weapon invincible is the supreme sacrifice of the sage Dadhichi.

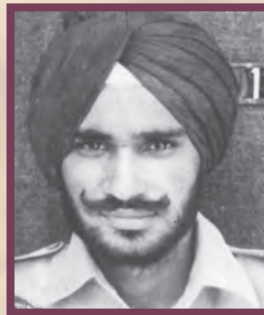
According to legend, thousands of years ago, a demon had stolen all the water in the world. Innocent people were suffering and dying without water. This demon could not be defeated by any ordinary weapon made of ordinary material like wood, metal, etc. Something extra-ordinary was required. It was learnt that the sage Dadhichi had bones of such extra-ordinary power. But how could one ask for the bones of a living man? Sage Dadhichi was a noble person. He himself laid down his life and gave his own bones to help the people. Indra-vajra, Indra's weapon of thunderbolts, was fashioned from these bones and the demon was defeated.

Just as the Indra-vajra derived power from Sage Dadhichi's bones, the Indian military derives its strength and power from the sacrifice of the bravest of the brave — the Param Vir Chakra holders.

The 21 Bravest of the Brave Param Vir

- ★ Major Somnath Sharma
- ★ Lance Naik Karam Singh
- ★ 2nd Lieutenant Rama Raghoba Rane
- ★ Naik Jadunath Singh
- ★ Company Havildar Major Piru
- ★ Captain Gurbachan Singh Salaria
- ★ Major Dhan Singh Thapa
- ★ Subedar Joginder Singh
- ★ Major Shaitan Singh
- ★ Company Quarter Master Havildar Abdul Hamid
- ★ Lieutenant-Colonel Ardeshir Burzorji Tarapore
- ★ Lance Naik Albert Ekka
- ★ 2/Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal
- ★ Major Hoshiar Singh
- ★ Naib Subedar Bana Singh
- ★ Major Ramaswamy Parameswaran
- ★ Lieutenant Manoj Kumar Pandey
- ★ Grenadier Yogender Singh Yadav
- ★ Rifleman Sanjay Kumar
- ★ Captain Vikram Batra
- ★ Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon

Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon 10877 F (P), PVC Squadron No 18 : The Flying Bullets



On the 14th of December 1971, Srinagar Airfield was attacked by a wave of six enemy Sabre aircraft. Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon was on readiness duty at that time. He could not take off immediately because of clouds of dust raised by another aircraft. By the time the runway was clear, the enemy aircraft were overhead. They were flying low, firing and attacking the airfield with bombs. Even then Flying Officer Sekhon took off in his Gnat fighter the moment he could. He began to combat the powerful Sabre jet aircraft of the enemy. He damaged two of them. His fight with the attacking aircraft now continued at tree-top height. At last, the enemy aircraft fled from the scene of battle. The airfield and the town of Srinagar were saved. But alas! Flying Officer Sekhon's aircraft, too, crashed and he was killed.

Flying Officer Sekhon displayed great flying skill and determination in the face of certain death. He showed unmatched heroism above and beyond the call of duty! Salute to the bravest of the brave – Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon!

Do read more on the internet at www.paramvirchakra.com, about the gallant PVC awardees who laid down their lives in the service of the country. You will see that they belong to various communities and religions. Do find and read the inspiring accounts of how they faced the enemy without any regard for their fatal wounds and physical pain.

- **legendary** : very famous and admired
- **conspicuous** : outstanding
- **posthumously** : after a person's death
- **fitted with swivel mounting** : fixed in a way which allows it to move freely
- **obverse and reverse** : the front and back sides (of the medal)
- **emblem** : symbol; an object that represents something
- **thunderbolt** : a flash of lightning with a clap of thunder that strikes at something
- **invincible** : impossible to defeat
- **determination** : strong resolve, perseverance
- **gallant** : brave, courageous
- **inspiring** : motivating
- **account** : a description of an event
- **fatal** : causing death

POINTERS

1. Read the passage and answer the following questions :
 - (a) What is 'Param Vir Chakra' ?
 - (b) What is seen on the obverse and reverse of the PVC medal ?
 - (c) Who designed the PVC medal ?
 - (d) What makes Indra's vajra or weapon invincible ?
2. Write the story of Sage Dadhichi's sacrifice in your own words.
3. Read aloud the account of how Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon sacrificed his life to defend our country.
4. Find more information about other Param Vir Chakra awardees. Prepare a collage using photographs, pictures and text matter written in beautiful handwriting.
5. Find more information about the Indian Armed Forces – the Army, the Navy and the Air Force with the help of your teacher.
6. What can you do to show your love, respect and support to the soldiers who fight for the country? Discuss this in the classroom. For example, you can send greeting cards to them on various occasions, with the help of your teacher.



Sometimes, we use two or three adjectives together to describe a noun. In such cases, the order in which adjectives are used depends on the meaning. The adjectives that express/show your opinion about something are usually put first. The other adjectives are normally put in the following order :

size, age, shape, colour, origin, material, use or purpose.

Examples : ● a *nice little* basket ● a *brave young* woman,
 ● a *big red, plastic* bag ● a *noisy, old, drilling* machine.