



Indian Army (& Indian UN peace keeping forces) 1950's to 1960's

In 1960, Belgium terminated her 78 years of rule in the Congo and Patrice Lumumba formed the first national government.

Soon tribal violence erupted in the Congo and the provinces of Katanga & Kasai seceded.

To save Congo from a disastrous civil war, the UN Security Council by its resolution of 21 February 1961, decided upon military intervention in that country. India initially provided some logistics support units to the UN Command at Congo, but subsequently, this contribution was enhanced to a brigade on request from the United Nations.

The 99 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier K A S Raja was sent by air & sea to Leopoldville, the capital, from March to June 1961.

To end the secession of Katanga, UN forces launched two important operations, code-named Rumpunch and Marthor, in August-September 1961. The 99 Infantry Brigade consisting of battalions 1 Dogra, 2 Jat, 3/1 Gorkha Rifles, a squadron of the 63rd Cavalry (Armoured Regiment), 120 Heavy Mortar Battery, 13 Field Company, a company from 4 Mahar (Machine Gun) and 95 Field Ambulance made a substantial contribution in these operations.

Captain Gurbachan Singh Salaria [3/1 Gorkha Rifles] was killed on 05 December 1961, while clearing an enemy road-block. For his extraordinary leadership and devotion to duty, Captain Salaria was awarded India's highest wartime medal, Param Vir Chakra, posthumously. The last & most important act of the 99 Infantry Brigade in Katanga was the launching of Operation Grand Slam on 28 December 1962. It aimed at freeing Elisabethville and Jadotville from gendarmerie (Katanga groups) menace. Although Operation Grand Slam was a success, the 99 Infantry Brigade suffered 7 dead and 49 wounded.

There was a turnover of Indian troops subsequently and Brigadier R S Noronha took over as the Commander of the 99 Infantry Brigade. The replacement battalions were 4 Madras, 4 Rajputana Rifles and 2/5 Gorkha Rifles & fresh sub-units of 63 Cavalry and 4 Mahar.

The 121 Heavy Mortar Battery and the 22 Field Company also joined the brigade. Major General Dewan Prem Chand was appointed commander of the Katanga area.

The repatriation of the 99 Infantry Brigade which started on 1 March 1963, was completed on 30 June 1964. In all, 39 units of the Indian Army participated in the Congo operations during 1961-64.

During the three year service with the UN, 142 Indian Army Officers and men won awards for gallantry or distinguished service. The Indian forces earned tremendous goodwill from the UN headquarters and the world at large.



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Daimler armoured car F207293 in use by the Indian Army in the Congo for UN peace keeping duties



In 1961 the Indian Forces in Katanga had ten Daimler Armoured cars (see F20088 above) and Ferrets (approx 10) in Elisabethville were from Malaysia and attached to Ethiopian-Indian 2nd UN Brigade



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Daimler armoured car F208550 in use by the Indian Army in the foot hills of the Kashmir mountains