

THE INDIAN RECCE COMMANDO

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THE JOURNEY OF LAREN KRISHNA



(Author)

INTRODUCTION

The story of an unknown Indian Recce Commando, one not previously narrated of a youngster who defied all probabilities based on a marginalised system dating back as far as the Anglo Boer War with ideologies of non-combat roles for Indians in military service. Laren Krishna went on to succeed to become the first and only Indian to qualify to become part of one of the most elite military units in the world, The South African Special Forces alias “The Recces”.

CHILDHOOD

Born into the community of Campbell’s Town in Mount Edgecombe, North of Durban, Laren Krishna was one of four siblings to Mr. and Mrs. Krishna, whose origins are of Indian descendant from the 1860 migrant indentured labourers. Growing up in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the characteristic Indian community, the vision to enlist into the military was not one generally promoted within the community or reaching the prestigious accolade of becoming part of an elite military unit was far-fetched. As a youngster Krishna attended government schools and spent much time playing informal sport activities along the cane fields of Kwa-Zulu Natal

EARLY MILITARY CAREER

The young visionary saw himself within the military and pursued his aspirations in January 1984 as part of the 2 year voluntary national serviceman program for Indians in the South African Navy. As a young naval recruit, basic military training had him walk the halls of the SAS Jalsena training unit, which translates from Hindi to “Sea Warrior”. The unit was originally formed in 1975 and named the South African Indian Training Corps Battalion (SAITCB) and later renamed to SAS Jalsena.

SPECIAL FORCES TRAINING

To participate in Special Forces Selection, an applicant needs to meet the very high psychological and physical requirements of the course. The Special Forces Cycle is a grueling 2 year course which sees more than 90% of the students drop off and only a selected few earning the prestige title of “Recce Operator”. The programme includes qualifying as a paratrooper, training in the field of demolition, advance medical training, urban warfare and bush warfare training. Krishna started his Special Forces cycle in 1985 and on 16 April 1987 he qualified to be the first and only South African Special Forces Operator of Indian descent.

SPECIAL FORCES

The South African Special Forces or Recces as they commonly known are rated amongst the best in the world, a special breed of men that are legendary and mentioned in many books across the world. On completion of the Special Forces course, Krishna joined 1 Reconnaissance Regiment previously situated on the Bluff, Durban and in qualifying as a Special Forces Operator defied the odds in proving the stereotype wrong with the regards the role of Indians in combat. While serving with the unit, speaking out against the injustices based on race under apartheid was dangerous, especially if one was part of an elite military unit. Under the difficult circumstances, Krishna persevered to be a professional soldier upholding his duty to the unit and organisation with unfaltering loyalty. Standing up and raising issues of injustice created hostility from colleagues which led to his phone being tapped and other sequence of events gave him good reason to believe that his personal safety and the well-being of his family was under threat.

OPERATIONS

At the age of twenty during the pinnacle of the Angolan bush war conflict, Krishna became operationally active in Angola with his involvement in the notable Operation Modular. He also participated in other covert cross border military operations during the South African Border War and in the build up to democratic change, transferred to the broader South African Army where he was involved internally and in the Black townships during the turbulent times prior to and after the first democratic elections in 1994.

THE INDIAN RECCE TODAY

Warrant Officer Laren Krishna is close to retirement and still a serving member of the South African National Defence Force, a proud soldier and family man. As he nears retirement he dedicates his time towards developing community uplift programmes, one in particular is an anti-bully program aimed at school children and designed at changing the lives of young victims of society.

The military memoirs of Warrant Officer Laren Krishna are currently being encapsulated in the form of a biography soon to be published. The novel forms part of the greater project to document and preserve the military contribution by South African Indians. Warrant Officer Laren Krishna is amongst the privileged few to have had the honour to served operationally within an elite military unit and to have earned the title of Recce Commando.

We Fear Naught But God