

Twitter Thread by Vibhu Vashisth ■■



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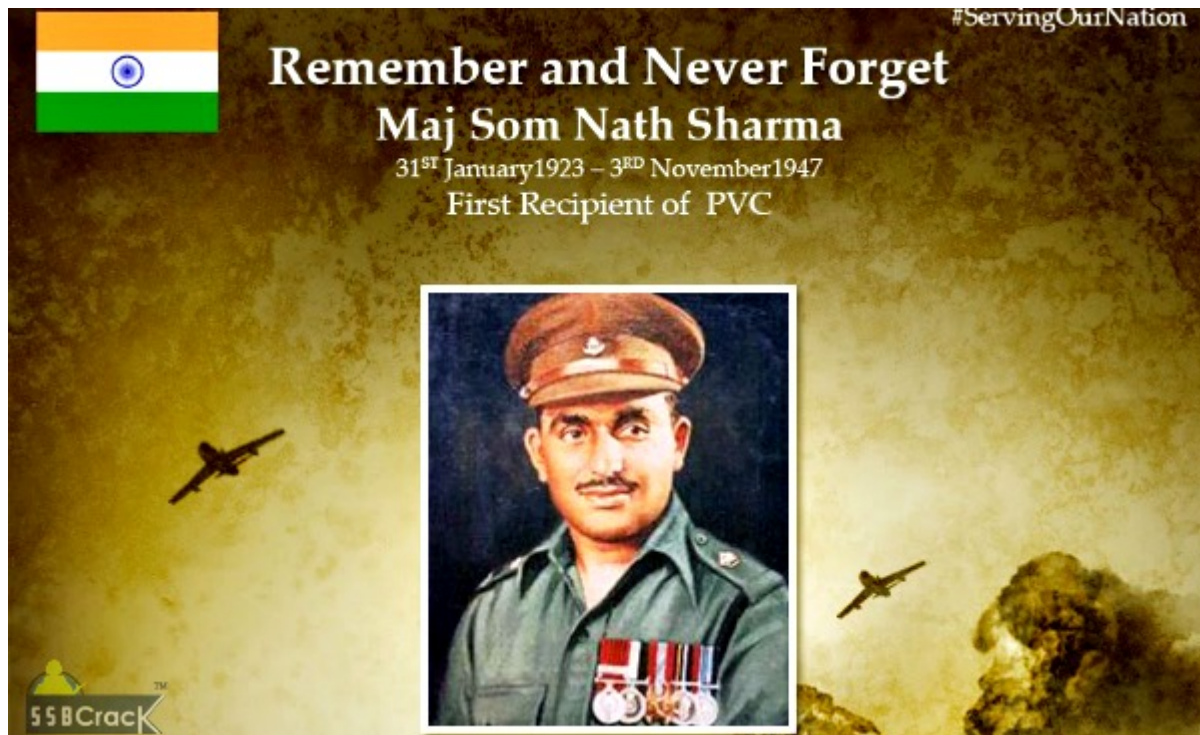
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Do u know?

Major Somnath Sharma was the first recipient of Param Vir Chakra, who died while fighting in the Battle of Badgam during 1948 war with Pakistan

Co-incidentally, he was the brother-in-law of Savitri Bai's elder daughter Kumudini & Savitri Bai was a woman who designed PVC



The Param Vir Chakra was designed Savitri Khanolkar, who was a Swiss national and whose real name was Eve Yvonne Maday de Maros. In 1929, she met Vikram Khanolkar, a young Indian Army cadet who had come to Switzerland for a break.



She was still a teenager then, however, both fell in love. Although Vikram was much older than her but she still came to India in 1932 and married Vikram in Lucknow.
She changed her name to Savitri Bai after marriage.



In spite of her European background she quickly adapted to Hindu tradition. She became a vegetarian, learnt to speak fluent Marathi, Hindi & Sanskrit. Also learnt Indian music, dance & painting. She called herself an European with an Indian soul and never liked being called a foreigner.



सावित्री खानोलकर



जन्म
20 जुलाई 1913



जन्मस्थान
स्विट्जरलैंड



निधन
26 नवंबर 1990



असली नाम
इव योवने माडे



पति
मेजर जनरल विक्रम
रामजी खानोलकर



खास बातें

- विक्रम रामजी से शादी के बाद उन्होंने हिंदू धर्म अपनाया
- उन्होंने ही सर्वोच्च सम्मान परमवीर चक्र डिजाइन किया था
- महावीर चक्र, कीर्ति चक्र, वीर चक्र और शौर्य चक्र भी उन्होंने डिजाइन किया
- खानोलकर दरअसल एक पेंटर और आर्टिस्ट भी थीं

She had a deep interest in Hindu Puranas, which she read extensively, and also studied India's ancient history and its legends. It was due to this that Major Hira Lal Atal, the first Indian Adjutant General of independent India, asked her help in designing the Param Vir Chakra.



Drawing on her extensive knowledge of the Puranas, Savitri Bai thought of Rishi Dadhichi, who had given up his own body for Indra to make the deadly Vajra, or thunderbolt. She came up with the design of a double Vajra.

The Param Vir Chakra is cast in bronze. In the centre, on a raised circle, is the Ashok stambh, surrounded by four replicas of Indra's Vajra and flanked by swords.



परम वीर चक्र

After her husband passed away in 1952, Savitri Bai sought refuge in spirituality and spent her later years with the Ramakrishna Math.

She also wrote a book on the Saints of Maharashtra. She passed away on 26 November 1990 at the age of 77 after leading a truly remarkable life.

A Swiss national of mixed Hungarian-Russian descent, married to an Indian Army officer had designed the 'Param Vir Chakra,' the highest military award in India, which was first received by someone who was related to her.

Isn't it some incredible coincidence?



The Hungarian with an Indian soul

Nandita Menon

Illustration: Ankur Mitra

IT WAS just after India gained Independence. The entire country was celebrating its freedom from the English crown. Accolades, awards and recognitions were being given to everyone who had helped win the long-fought battle.

The Indian Army, however, had not formed any kind of award for its soldiers. Seeing as they were forebearers of any war, Major General Hira Lal Atal decided to get awards designed for the Army. After much consideration, the person who was chosen to design the awards was Savitri Bai Khanolkar, the wife of Major General Vikram Ramji Khanolkar.

Born on July 20, 1913 as Eve Yvonne Maday de Maros in Switzerland to a Hungarian father and Russian mother, Savitri Bai met Captain Ramji in Geneva in 1929 when he was visiting during a term break while undergoing his army training at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, United Kingdom. Their age gap proved no barrier and the two fell in love.

When Ramji went back to India, Eve followed him a few years later, against her father's wishes. In 1932 they married in Lucknow. She became a Hindu and acquired Indian citizenship. Eve changed her name to Savitri Bai Khanolkar. Once in India she fell in love with her culture to such an extent that she claimed



Shaurya Chakra



Ashok Chakra



Maha Vir Chakra



Vir Chakra



Paramvir Chakra



Kirti Chakra

she was 'born in Europe by mistake!' She read extensively from Hindu scriptures and had a deep knowledge and understanding of India's ancient history. In no time she had learnt Hindi, Sanskrit and Marathi and became fluent in all three languages. Seeing her passion for India, along with her understanding of our culture, Major General Atal chose her to design the highest degree of honour to an Army personnel for bravery in wartime, the Param Vir Chakra.

Her design for the gallantry award was inspired by the story of sage Dadhichi who made the ultimate sacrifice in the fight of good over evil. When Gods asked

his help to kill a fearsome demon Vrutasur, Dadhichi gave up his body to help the Gods create the deadliest weapon, the Vajra or thunderbolt, from his spine. The medal of Param Vir Chakra has a double Vajra.

Savitri Bai went on to design the Maha Vir Chakra, the Kirti Chakra, the Vir Chakra, the Shaurya Chakra and the Ashok Chakra (the highest peacetime gallantry award). A social worker, Savitri Bai worked with the refugees who were displaced after the Partition.

After her husband's death in 1952, Savitri Bai retired to the Ramakrishna Math. She passed away on November 26, 1990.

With the PVC, Savitri Khanolkar also designed the Mahavir Chakra, the Vir Chakra and the Ashok Chakra, the highest peacetime gallantry award. In India's official order of precedence, the PVC is second only to the Bharat Ratna.



PARAM VIR CHAKRA



MAHAVIR CHAKRA



VIR CHAKRA



ASHOKA CHAKRA



KIRTI CHAKRA



SHAURYA CHAKRA