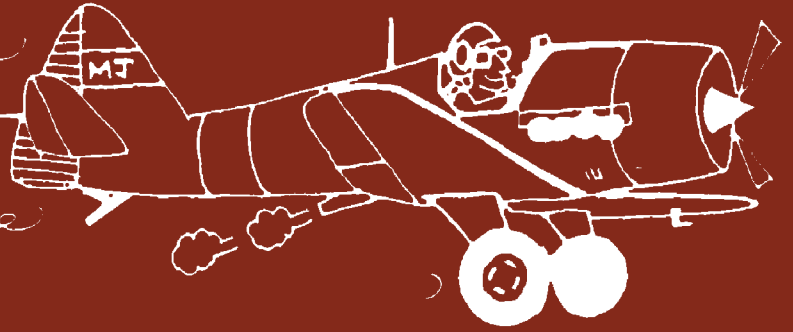


# Ancient Aviator Anecdotes



“The History Division of the MoD has decided to publish a book on “Winners of the MVC” and have requested the few surviving recipients of this gallantry award to provide a first person account of their individual activities in the 1971 Indo-Pak war in 300-500 words”.

## Air Vice Marshal CV Parker MVC VM (4346) F(P)



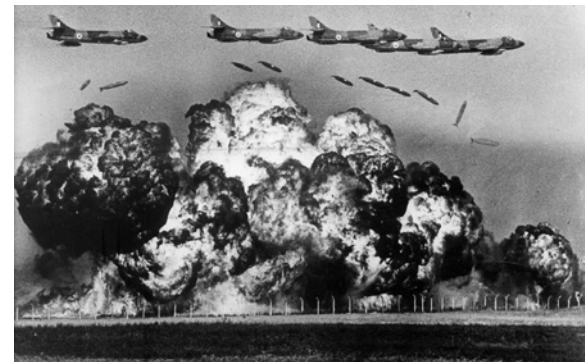
*Air Vice Marshal C.V. Parker (Retd) holds a picture of the president conferring him the Maha Vir Chakra award in January 1972. In the backdrop are his medals and a picture of the Hunter aircraft he flew when he attacked Pakistan's deepest air-base in Peshawar (photo: Deccan Chronicle)*

In 1971, as a Wing Commander, I was the Commanding Officer of No 20 Squadron AF, equipped with Hunter Mk 56A aircraft which had extended range. We had two such squadrons and both were relocated to Pathankot months before 1971 Indo Pak war. My squadron was tasked with counter air operations, targets of economic significance and close air support to our land forces; I trained my squadron accordingly. On the late evening of 3 December 1971 the PAF attempted a pre-emptive strike but all my serviceable aircraft were at safe night harbour at a rear base. I was alone in Pathankot with the young pilots and received the first mission orders to attack the PAF base at Peshawar at sunrise on 4 December 1971. This enemy air base had never been attacked before by our fighter aircraft. I was authorised to borrow two

aircraft from our sister squadron till my own aircraft returned. I selected one of the two young pilots, briefed him, and we were airborne in the dark for a gun strike.

We routed low level and came in for the attack from the west destroying a single aircraft linked to a refueling bowser; my wingman hit a fuel dump. The airfield was being defended by a CAP of two or more Sabre aircraft who followed us on our return leg; in a brief aerial encounter I managed a fleeting attack on one while my own aircraft was also damaged but we both landed back safely at our base. Late that evening I took off alone for the PAF base at Mianwali armed with two special container bombs on my outboard pylons. Due to a technical malfunction, one of them fell off and I had to jettison the other. On 6 December 1971 I led a four aircraft

gun strike on the PAF air base at Chaklala en route to the Attock Oil Refinery which was set on fire. On 7 December 1971 I led another four aircraft gun strike on the PAF airfield at Murid where we spotted only one aircraft but many vehicles which we destroyed. On 8 December 1971 Attock was revisited but the refinery was still a singed black area. On 10 December 1971 we switched to close air support and, in response to an SOS from our land forces I led a two aircraft bomb strike on an enemy gun position in the Chamb area which we neutralised. On 11 December 1971 I led an eight aircraft napalm bomb attack at last light in a forest area south of Akhnoor where enemy armoured vehicles had sheltered. On 12 December 1971 we received orders to return to a rear base for R & R while another squadron relieved us.



On our return to Pathankot after the cease fire on 16 December 1971, my MVC was announced which, added to the many honours and awards won by my officers and men, made No 20 Squadron the most highly decorated squadron in the IAF. ✈

*Text by Air Vice Marshal CV Parker,  
Secunderabad, October 2022  
(Photo of Hunters for representational  
purposes only)*