The Stand at Badgam

How Major Somnath Sharma and 90 men of the 4th Kumaon Regiment saved the Kashmir Valley, November 3, 1947.

A TACTICAL BREAKDOWN AND HISTORICAL DOSSIER

Gemini Notebook

Operation Gulmarg and the Threat to Srinagar

- **August 1947:** Pakistan launches **Operation Gulmarg**, violating the existing agreement with Maharaja Hari Singh.
- **October 22:** ~1,000 Pakistani-trained and equipped invaders cross into Kashmir. Objective: Engineer a revolt, overthrow the government, and capture the territory.
- **October 26:** The Princely State officially becomes part of India.
- **October 27:** Indian troops are airlifted to Srinagar due to impassable land routes via Pathankot.



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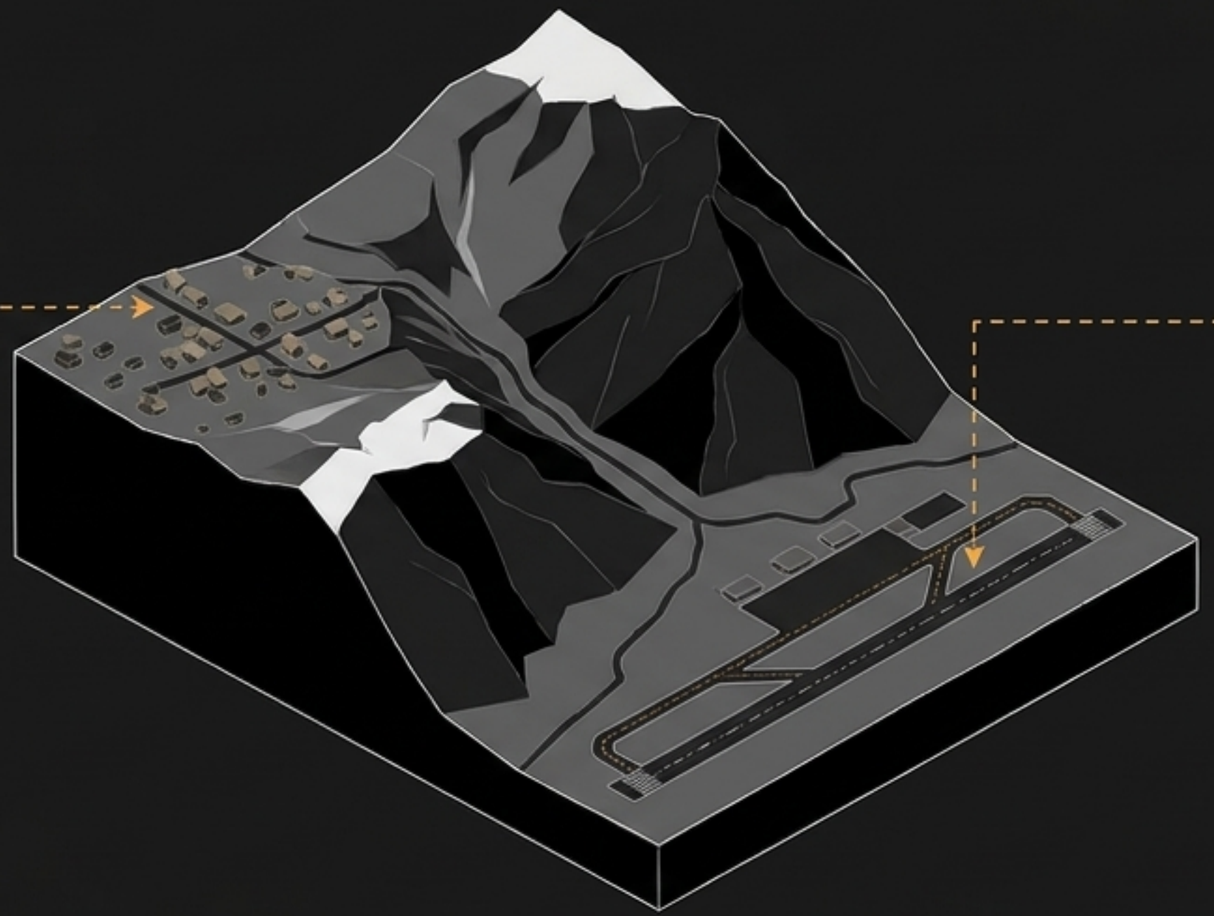
Badgam: The Strategic Chokepoint

The High Ground:
Badgam Village (Less than 5km from the airfield). Access to the airfield runs directly through here.



The Vulnerable Target:
Srinagar Airfield. The only lifeline for Indian troop reinforcements and supplies.

The Tactical Reality:
If Badgam falls, the airfield falls.
If the airfield falls, the Kashmir Valley falls.

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Forging a Leader: The Foundation of Major Somnath Sharma



Lineage

Born Jan 31, 1923. Carried the military legacy of his father, Major General Amar Nath Sharma.



Ideology

Deeply inspired by the valorous tales of the Mahabharata, imparted by his grandfather.



Discipline

Rigorous training at Sherwood College (Nainital) and the Royal Military College (Sandhurst).



Combat Experience

Commissioned in 1942. Served with distinction in WWII's Arakan Campaign (Burma), earning mentions in despatches for bravery.

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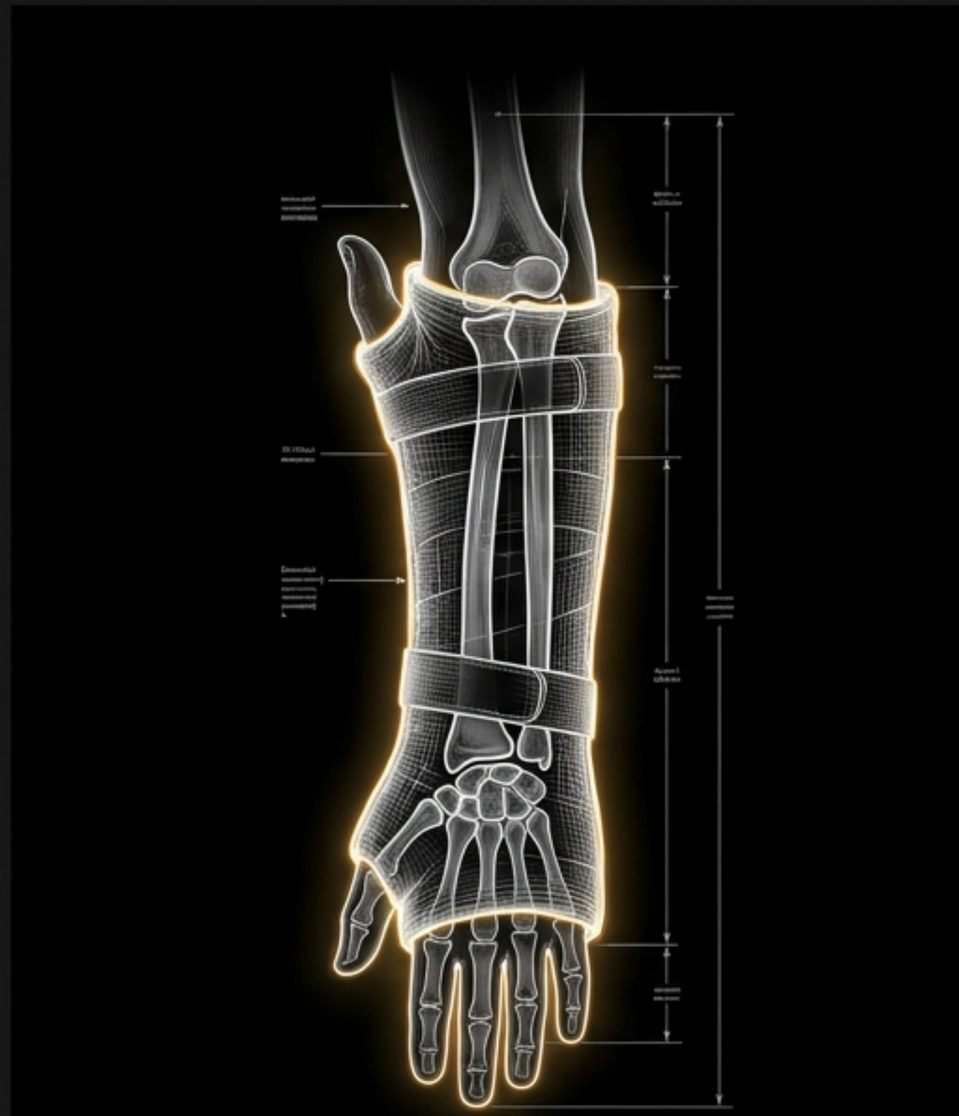
A Leader Defined by Commitment, Not Condition

> I know my men better than anyone else, and if they are going into action, they are not going in without me.

On October 31 , D Company (4th Battalion, Kumaon Regiment) is flown into Srinagar. Major Sharma's left hand is in a plaster cast, but he refuses to be left behind.



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The Tactical Reality at Badgam

	D Company (India)	Operation Gulmarg Infiltrators
Force Strength	90 soldiers	~500 trained invaders
Objective	Defend the Srinagar airfield	Capture the airfield and overthrow the government
Commander Status	Major Sharma (operating with a broken arm in plaster)	Covert Pakistani Army leadership
Combat Posture	Defensive position, rationing dwindling ammunition	Offensive assault, heavily armed and outnumbering defenders 7-to-1

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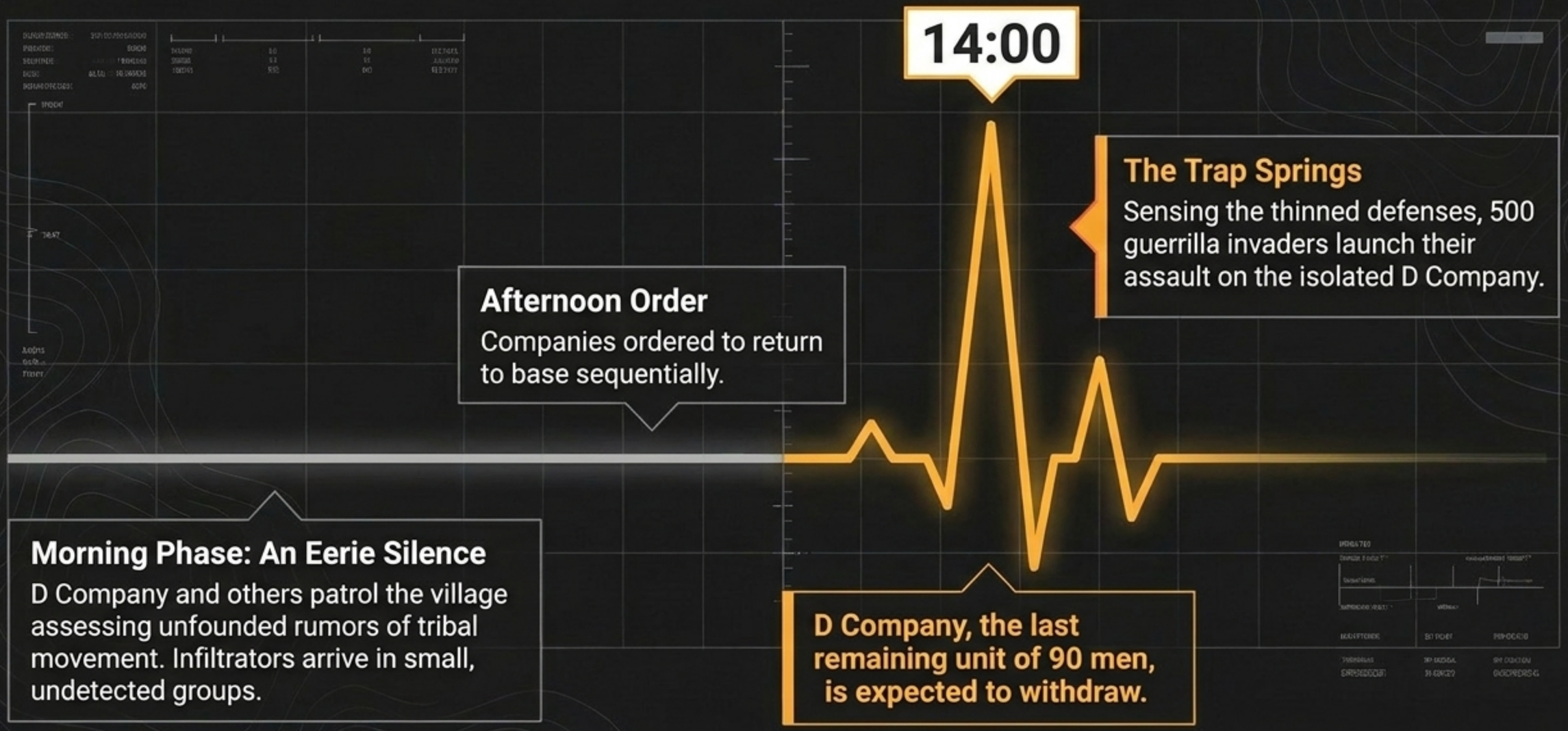
November 3: The Ambush at 14:00 Hours



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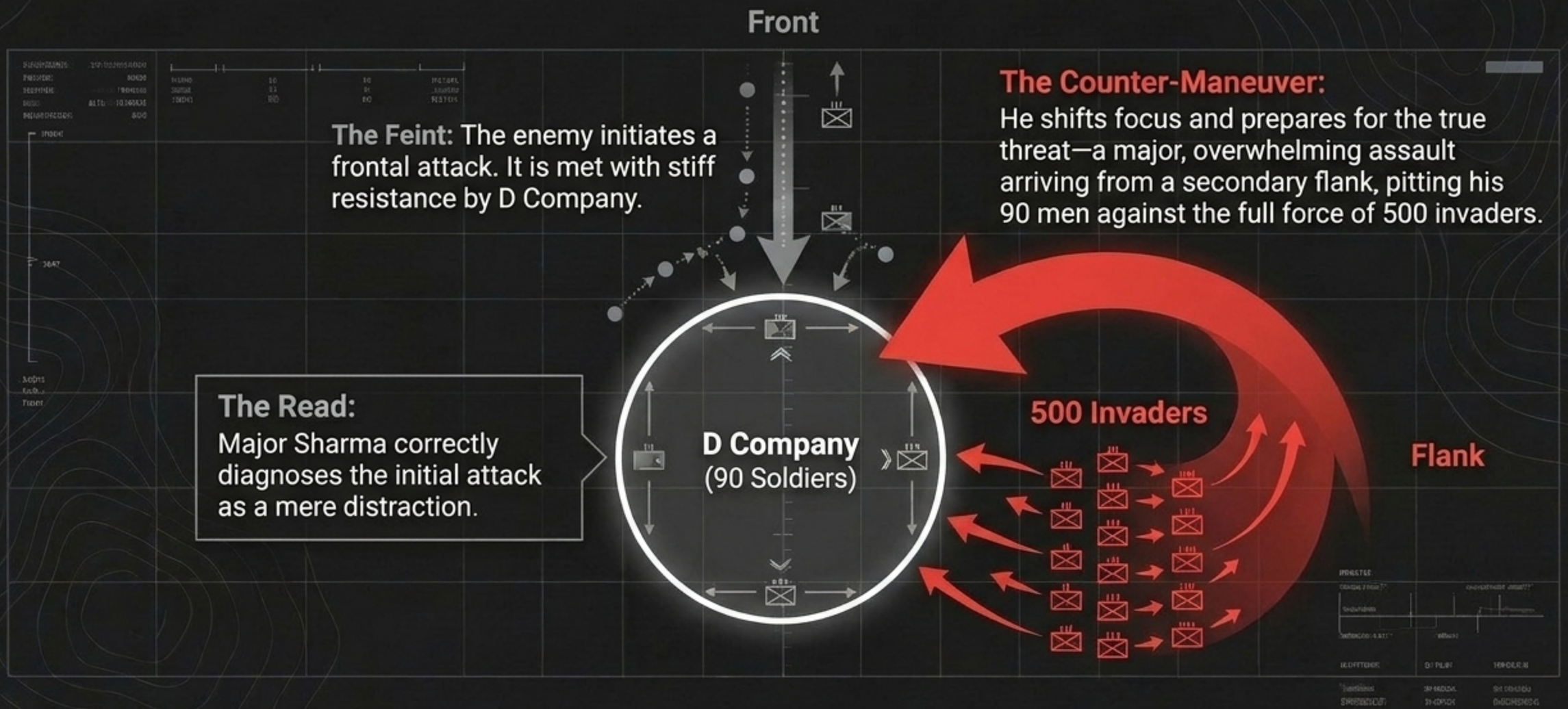
Anticipating the Flank



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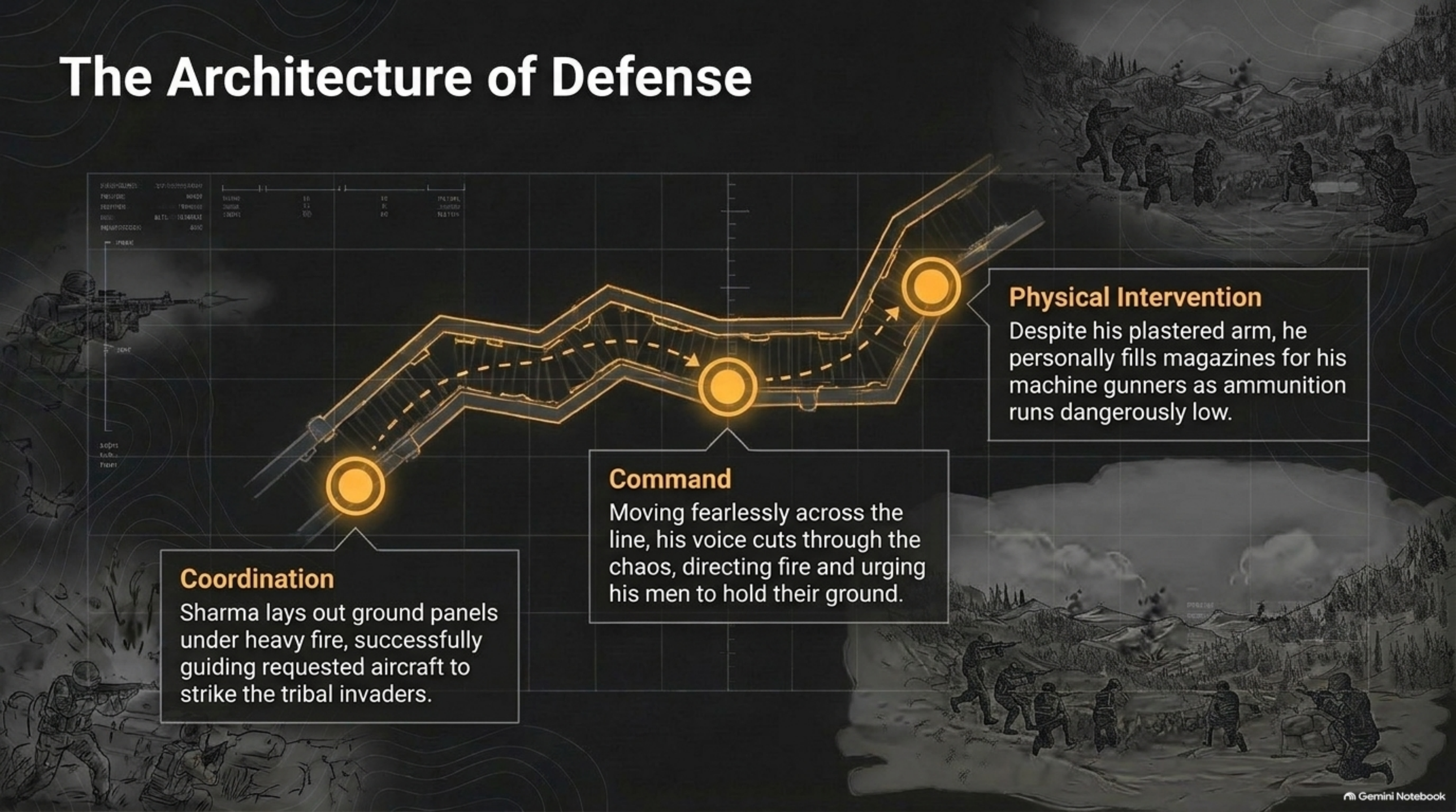
The Architecture of Defense



Coordination

Sharma lays out ground panels under heavy fire, successfully guiding requested aircraft to strike the tribal invaders.

Command

Moving fearlessly across the line, his voice cuts through the chaos, directing fire and urging his men to hold their ground.

Physical Intervention

Despite his plastered arm, he personally fills magazines for his machine gunners as ammunition runs dangerously low.

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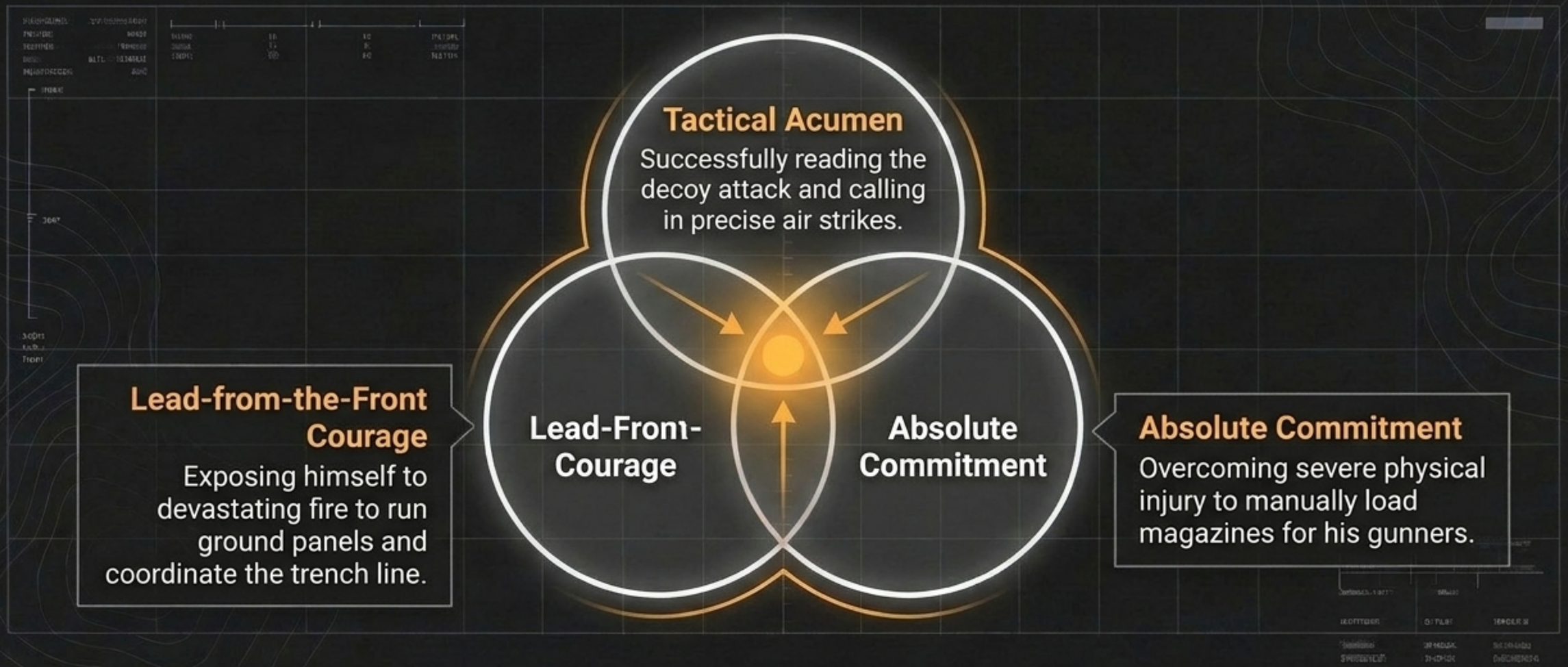
Leadership Forged in the Crucible



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The Final Transmission

Out of ammunition, Brigade headquarters orders D Company to pull back. Major Sharma responds:

The enemy is only 50 yards from us.
We are heavily outnumbered.
We are under devastating fire.
I shall not withdraw an inch but will fight to the last man and the last round.

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A Supreme Sacrifice, An Unbroken Line



The Fall

Minutes after his final transmission, while crouched in a trench loading a machine gun, Major Sharma's position is struck by a mortar shell. He is killed instantly.

The Ripple Effect

Faced with an overwhelming 7-to-1 numerical superiority, the loss of their commander does not break D Company. Inspired by his unmatched bravery, the remaining men hold their ground for over six more hours.

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The Currency of Time

The Insight: 90 men could not defeat 500 indefinitely. But Major Sharma's refusal to retreat transformed his company into a temporal force multiplier.



The Result:

The 6-hour delay they purchased with their lives provided the exact window required to airlift Punjab Regiment reinforcements into Srinagar.
Badgam fell, but the valley was saved.

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The Macro Impact and Legacy



The Toll

Over 300 enemy casualties inflicted, completely demotivating the invading force.

Unit Honor

The 4th Kumaon Battalion is awarded the Battle Honour, Srinagar.

National Recognition

At age 24, Major Somnath Sharma becomes the first-ever recipient of India's highest military decoration, the Param Vir Chakra (PVC), awarded posthumously for conspicuous gallantry.

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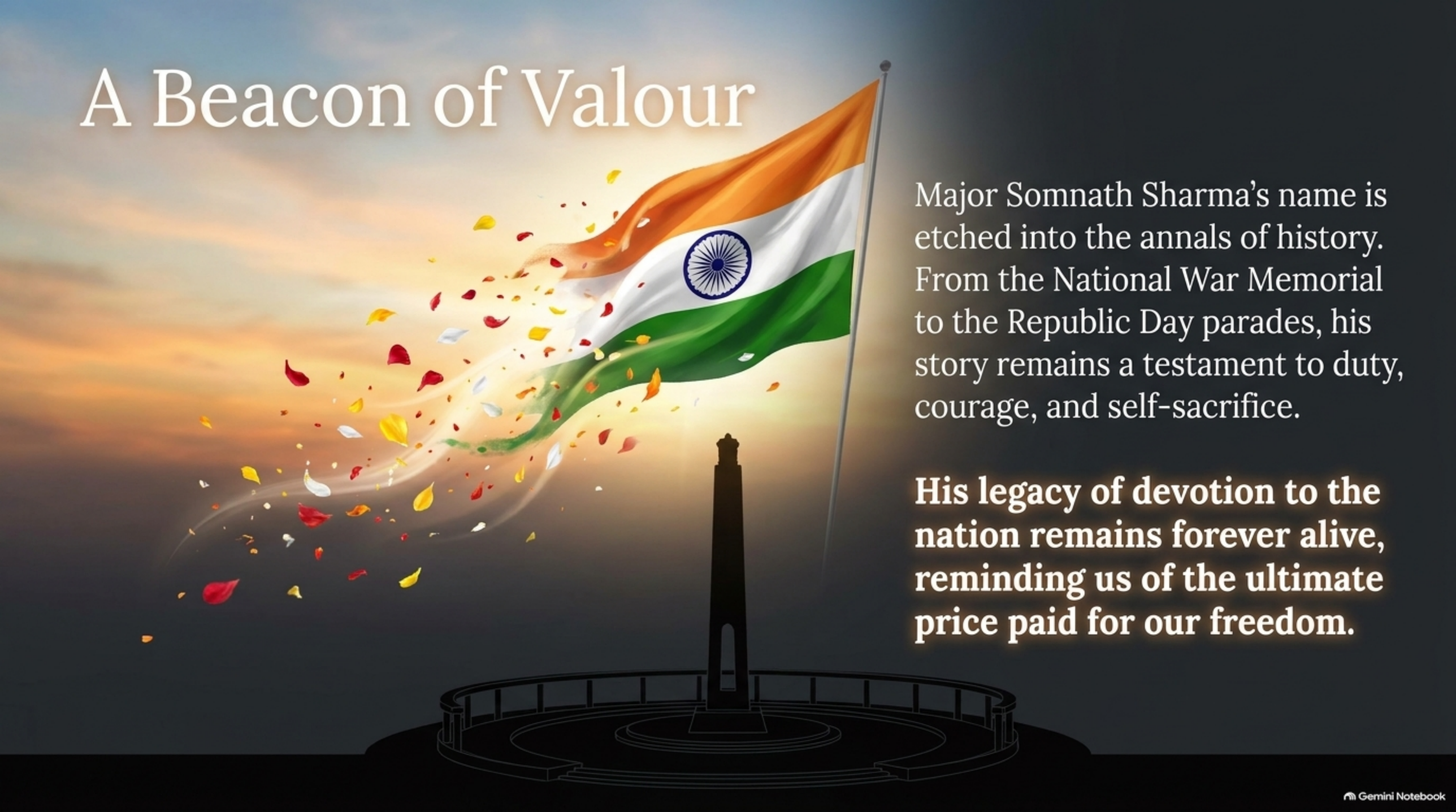
A Beacon of Valour



Major Somnath Sharma's name is etched into the annals of history. From the National War Memorial to the Republic Day parades, his story remains a testament to duty, courage, and self-sacrifice.

His legacy of devotion to the nation remains forever alive, reminding us of the ultimate price paid for our freedom.

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