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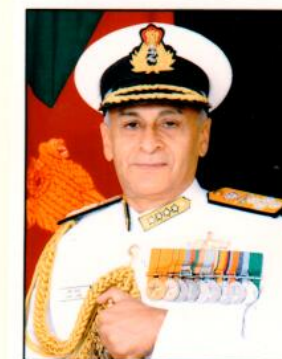
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नौसेनाध्यक्ष

Admiral Sunil Lanba

PVSM, AVSM, ADC

Chief of the Naval Staff



रक्षा मंत्रालय

एकीकृत मुख्यालय (नौसेना)

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Integrated Headquarters

Ministry of Defence (Navy)

New Delhi - 110011

MESSAGE

I feel privileged to share my thoughts through the Navy Foundation Magazine 'Quarterdeck', which over the years, has become a much sought after publication dedicated to our veterans who have shaped the modern Indian Navy, besides being a virtual walk down memory lane.

We are ever grateful to our veterans for the fine traditions and a congenial working environment which has painstakingly been cultivated by them over more than seven decades. The Indian Navy continues to benefit from the collective wisdom, experience and advice of its veterans even today.

The Indian Navy is a modern, multidimensional and balanced force today that is capable of undertaking full spectrum of maritime operations to address all threats and challenges in the maritime domain. Not only is our Navy equipped with state-of-the-art platforms and equipment, our men and women committed to the ethos of Duty, Honour, Courage are also second to none. The Navy is poised for substantial growth in future, in consonance with the rising importance of the Maritime Domain.

This edition of the magazine commemorates the Golden Jubilee Year of WNC, Diamond Jubilee of Signal School, Navika Sagar Parikrama and the decommissioning of INS Ganga. We also pay our homage to Late Admiral JG Nadkarni, PVSM AVSM NM VSM, Late Vice Admiral MP Awati, PVSM Vrc and other veterans who are no more amongst us.

As always, the Editorial Team of 'Quarterdeck' has been proactive and deserves felicitations for yet another interesting edition.

I wish the Naval family a very happy and prosperous 2019.

Śaṃ no Varuṇaḥ. Jai Hind.

(Sunil Lanba)
Admiral
Chief of the Naval Staff

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From the Editor's Desk

Different and yet same - this is how many veterans describe the service which keeps its traditions and foundations intact while embracing technological advances. An amalgam of news and views, reminiscences and thought provoking tributes, Quarterdeck 2019 is a composite unit that adheres to the Indian Navy's ethos of building on traditions while keeping pace with time.

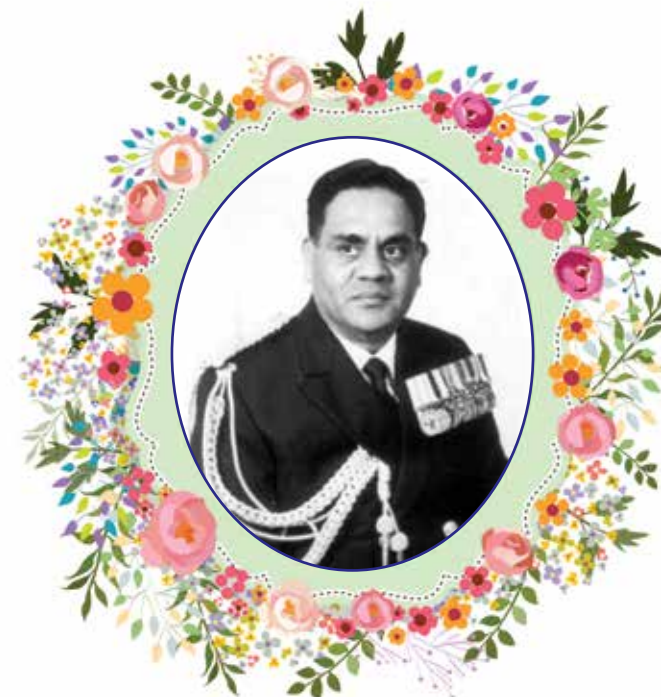
The Indian Naval Ship is a complete entity when it sets sail with personnel who are trained for resilience, endurance and problem solving while respecting nature and the laws of the seas. It requires vision and foresight as well as a spirit of inclusiveness for a tall mast boat like "Tarini" that epitomizes 'Made in India' to circumnavigate the globe with an all women crew. As Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff said on the occasion, "Today India is #TeamTarini. We are all sailors. And the Indian Flag and Naval Ensign flutter high and proud." Bridges of friendship built through such expeditions showcase the Indian Navy's grit and mettle as much as its diplomatic side while bringing the world closer!

"We may be out of the Navy but the Navy is never out of us," is an adage our respected veterans live by as they share memories full of josh and camaraderie to give us a peep into a rich past. Their esprit de corps is evident in the activities of the various chapters making them the true ambassadors of the Navy's traditions of courage and compassion.

This edition of QD 2019 opens with tributes and outpourings from the Naval fraternity to mark the passing away of two legends of the Navy – Admiral Nadkarni and Vice Admiral Awati. Subsequent pages explore various facets of Navy history and culture through articles that span the Diamond Saga of Signal School, the Golden Jubilee of WNC and the sun setting on the majestic INS Ganga.

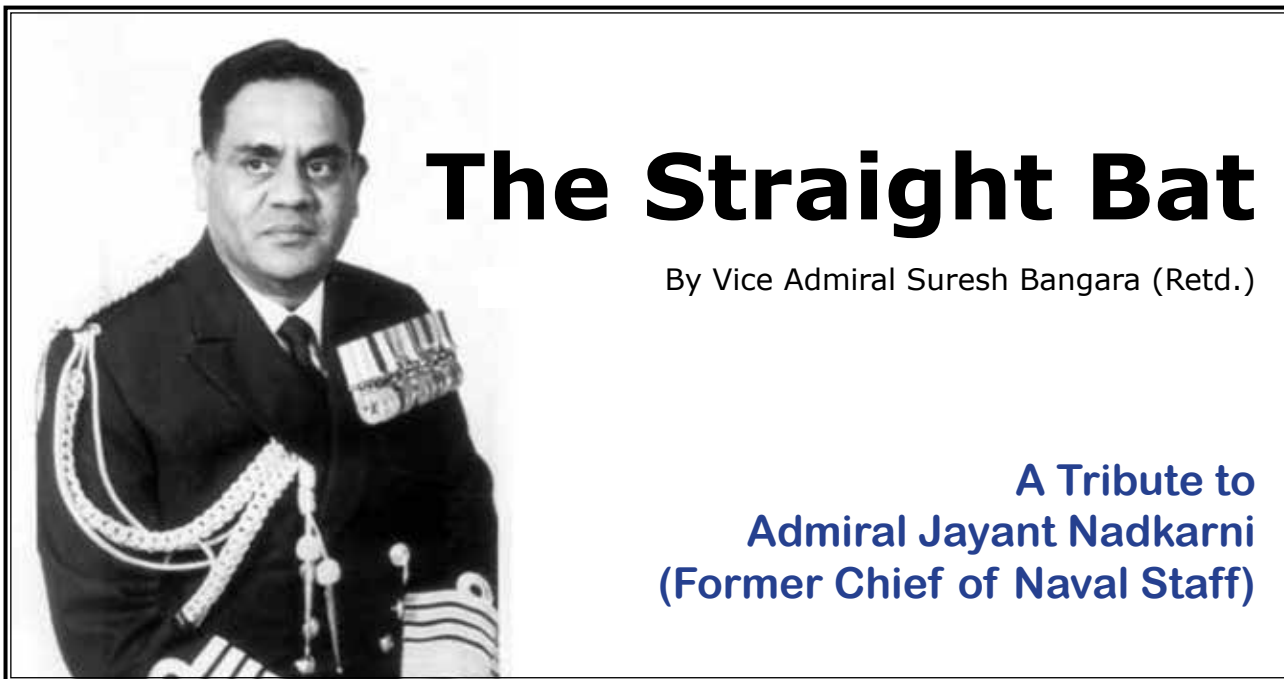
While humour in uniform inevitably adds that dash of pizzazz to QD, a deep look at our history and an eye on the future defines the spirit of Quarterdeck 2019. This magazine is about you and your stories so please continue sharing articles and suggestions and keep the flag flying high. Jai Hind

- Meenakshi Sharma



T R I B U T E





It would be puerile on my part to summarize the naval career of Adm. Nadkarni. I know that a number of us have served under him, perhaps none today has been his peer and surely no one senior to him is present today. Gen Patton had said; "It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather, we should thank God that such men lived".

Adm. Nadkarni certainly belonged to that category which exhorts or commends us to thank God that he lived and that his inherent intellect guided the Indian Navy during a very difficult phase of our growth, as 1987 to 1990 saw many ups and downs in our economy and the defence budget took a beating.

Much was achieved during his watch and no one needs me to elucidate those records. What I shall do now is to tell you a few stories that have perhaps never been told before. Let me at the outset state that I came to know more about him after I retired than while in service. After all, post retirement activities are truly reflective of one's ability to contribute to the society as a whole. Apart from being the founding member of CAAS, IMF and the Patron of MHS which he handed over to me, he was also sought after by academics and had even contributed to the print media with some incisive articles on maritime affairs.

That he was least flamboyant, unflappable and extremely observant is known to many. I will present a couple of anecdotes, which I

believe have not been recorded. But before that, this is what Adm. Awati said within hours of Adm. Nadkarni's departure. "Podgy was an accomplished navigator who had a special touch for the Haven-Finding art which I do not see since his days at sea in a ship or as the Commander of the Western Fleet. I hope my readers understand the point I have made in describing this officer in his heyday. I experienced it first-hand. None, to my knowledge, has matched him in the past fifty years or more. The quiet, self-effacing facade hid a steely determination to do right, always and every time, by his ships and men. He belongs to that immensely rare breed of men who display character. It was forged during his difficult teens and early adulthood when he had to struggle against adverse conditions at home, facing denials."

Having been the navigator of INS Delhi, he knew that ship pretty well. He made a name for himself and that has been recorded in the history of the Indian Navy titled, 'Blue Print to Blue Water'. When INS Delhi, which was under long refit had to be pulled out in 1961 for gun fire support to the Army off Diu, Captain Krishnan (later Vice Admiral and C-in-C East during the 1971 conflict) asked that his old crew and especially Podgy as the navigator should be brought back on board. The rest is history.

Years later while in command of INS Delhi which lay at anchor at Port Blair flying the

Flag of the then C-in-C East, he remained confident and unflappable. When the Captain was told by the Admiral that he should leave harbour in total darkness, he promptly saw the opportunity to go fishing during the remaining daylight hours with two of his ship mates. The Captain returned on board 15 minutes prior to weighing anchor and was on the bridge wings conning the ship out of Port Blair while casually chatting with his ship mates on the successful fishing expedition. This left the C-in-C speechless and rather neglected, perhaps.

The second anecdote is when he visited Moscow in the then powerful Soviet Union. He was to deliver a pre-dinner speech. The problem was that the carefully crafted and politically correct speech prepared by his staff and the Naval Attache was left behind at the hotel. The Admiral had merely glanced at it. When he was invited to speak and realised that the papers were not quite there, he merely waved his hand and whispered to the NA that he had glanced at the points and that was good enough.

Of the many other stories, here is a true story narrated by Professor Gautam Sen who lives in Pune. "In 1993, Podgy took her (Mrs Nadkarni) on a holiday to Europe. He was my house guest in Florence for seven days where I was a Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute. She had already lost more than 60% of her vision. Every single day he would take

her around Florence and give a continuous commentary explaining everything that came in the line of sight. But the most astounding thing was when he took her to the Da Vinci Museum and explained every Michael Angelo sculpture/painting for nearly six hours. If you closed your eyes and only heard the voice of Podgy, each item came to life. And there she was holding his arm listening and asking questions. Even some of the visitors trailed behind the two to listen to Podgy's narration - an unusual display of his knowledge about art and architecture of the renaissance period to perfection. Not many may have known his deep understanding, study and appreciation of European history, its legacy of culture and the role of the Catholic Church. But what stood out was his devotion to her to ensure that she saw through his eyes exactly as you and I would see and remember Europe."

Let me conclude with the anecdote I have chosen from a plethora of anecdotes narrated to me during the last week when I contacted a number of officers who had served under him. His NA narrated this one. Just prior to his retirement Admiral Nadkarni noticed that the Indian Navy had begun to pursue a new penchant for pre-retirement activities. Traditional activities such as wining out, dining out and pulling out had expanded to 'golfing out', in some cases 'tennis out' and 'riding out' too. Hence, he enquired tongue in cheek whether he could be 'Kabbadeed' out as that was the only sport suitable for his podginess!



Goodbye Podgy

By Capt S Prabhala (Retd.)

He specialized in navigation and direction and soon gained reputation as an ace navigator who distinguished himself in many important assignments before rising to the topmost position in December 1987.

I first met Admiral Nadkarni (Podgy to friends) in 1967 when he was a Lieutenant Commander on the staff of Secretary Defence Production, Ministry of Defence. Mazagon Docks had started construction of Leander Class Frigates and Department of Defence Production needed a Naval Officer to liaise with the Navy and the shipyard. I was on deputation to Mazdocks from the Navy and was heading the Frigate Section.

There were four entities in the Leander Project to be coordinated with: Indian Navy, the buyer; Mazdocks, the builder; Admiralty, the Leander Designer and Vickers & Yarrow, the Technology Transferor. We hit off well from the start. We were on the same page whether it was indigenization of equipment or interpretation of Technology Transfer agreement or design details from Admiralty. HC Sarin ICS, Secretary (DP) and VC Pandey IAS, Deputy Secretary had great faith in Podgy which made for smooth progress in the construction of the frigates.

Navy opted for Dutch Radars and Digital Fire Control Systems for the second and later frigates in preference to analogue British equipment. The willingness of Hollandse Signaal Apparaten to transfer technology for manufacture of the radars and fire control equipment to Bharat Electronics, Bangalore was an added incentive to switch from British equipment. However, the switch involved some design changes in the ship and the Dutch design bureau Nevesbu had to be brought in. Podgy played a major role in the negotiations and the speedy conclusion of necessary agreements. We became fast friends and remained so to his last day although our careers took different paths.

Nadkarni joined the Navy in 1949 after completing training in TS Dufferin and went to England like all Naval Cadets did in those days. As to how he was a teetotaler all his life, he told

me that he was made to promise to keep off cigarettes, wine and women when his extended family came to see him off at Ballard Pier. He just kept his promise.

Like his unique cursive handwriting where every letter stood separate from the next, his qualities of head and heart stood him apart from his contemporaries. He was a loving husband and when his wife Vimal's eyesight began failing and later when she was bent in half, he took great care of her and would lovingly escort her in unfamiliar surroundings. Vimal's death two years before Podgy died left a deep void in his life and in my view, hastened his own death. Podgy has two sons. Vijay, the eldest, is a serial entrepreneur settled in America and Ravi, the younger, followed his father's footsteps and is now a Rear Admiral in the Navy.

Podgy was fond of golf. Even as CNS, he would use his own old Fiat car to go to Dhaulta Kuan golf course even though he had an official car at his disposal. He was meticulous about such matters. Golf was for pleasure, not official business.

Of his professional achievements and strategic thinking and unflappability I can add very little to what has already been said. One incident I remember was when the creation of Coast Guard was discussed in a meeting presided by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Ministry of Home Affairs made a strong pitch for having it under their control. Podgy convinced the PM with cogent reasons why it should be under the Navy. The Navy Foundation was the brain child of Admiral Tahlani, but few know that the ground work was done by Podgy and that didn't stop him from writing a witty tale on the Pune chapter of the Naval Foundation.

Podgy was an intellectual and widely read in history and maritime strategy. He was very good

at solving crosswords and could complete the Times of India crossword in less than half hour. He had a fund of jokes about golf, Banta Singh and Santa Singh which endeared him to my family. Not only did he remember good many jokes, but he also knew how to deliver the punch line.

He put his knowledge of history and strategy to good use after retirement. He was one of the founding members of the Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies, a think tank in Pune, and served as its first Director for three years. He was a patron of Maritime History Society and participated in Track II dialogues between India and Pakistan. He wrote on defence subjects frequently in newspapers. He was a critic of the purchase of Russian Aircraft carrier Gorshkov at a huge cost and wrote a cautionary tale in Asian Age.

Contrasting how a grateful England honoured Lord Nelson with a statue in Trafalgar square with how quickly India forgot Sam Manekshaw and Charles Nanda after 1971 war in a newspaper article, Podgy felicitously quoted Cato the Elder's immortal words: "When I die I would rather have people say why there is no monument to me than why there is."

When the Indian Navy decided to haul down the old ensigns with St George's cross ending a 250 year old tradition and redesigned personal flags of flag officers, Podgy wrote a wryly humorous piece full of nostalgia.

"The redesigning of the Admiral's personal flags will put an end to the numerous jokes on Admirals and their flags which permeate through the Navy. Most of them are lewd but taken in good humour. 'What is the vice of the Vice-Admiral?' goes one. 'The rear of the Rear Admiral is the answer. The red balls in the quadrants of flags denoted the Admiral's rank. 'The Admiral has lost one of his balls' was a common way of announcing a promotion. A Chief of Naval Staff was commonly



referred to as 'the Admiral with no balls.'

Alas, no more. Now the balls have been replaced by stars and instead of losing them you gain them as you are promoted. Two, three and four stars will henceforth, denote a Rear, Vice and full Admiral. And one can hardly joke about that. Of course, not many were impressed with Royal Navy traditions. Winston Churchill was one. 'Naval tradition? I'll tell you what naval tradition is. Rum, bum and bacci.' He was referring to the naval preference for drink, tobacco and buggery.

To end with Podgy's words would be appropriate.... "On completion of my command of the Western Fleet, my flag, the one with the two red balls, was presented to me and is encased in a glass and wooden box. It sits proudly on the mantelpiece. Let the new Navy have its new flags. I will always cherish my balls."

Goodbye Podgy, we will all miss you.



Modest to a Fault

Remembering Admiral Nadkarni

By Rear Admiral Sushil Ramsay (Retd.)

Jayant Ganpat Nadkarni was born on December 05, 1931 at Pune, Maharashtra. On completion of Cadets' training at TS Dufferin at erstwhile Bombay he joined the Royal Indian Navy in March 1949. As was common in those days, he was deputed to United Kingdom (UK) to undergo basic training at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. On completion he was drafted for sea training on board the Training Cruiser HNS Devonshire and at other training establishments of the Royal Navy. During his initial training period itself he excelled in every aspect of naval training through sheer dint, hard work and determination and came to be recognized as a gifted trainee.

There is a popular anecdote that when he was undergoing his initial training in UK, a Royal Navy Training Officer once called him, "Come here, you podgy little man!" From that time on "Podgy" became his fond nickname. His special acumen was soon recognised, and he was selected to undergo a prestigious specialisation course in Navigation and Direction in UK. During the specialization course his outstanding talent in navigation was acknowledged and he came to be recognized as an Ace Navigator. On his return to India he was the most sought-after Navigator. During Liberation of Goa operations, he was the Navigating Officer of Cruiser INS Delhi which was commanded by highly professional and hard task master Captain N Krishnan (later Vice Admiral). Then Lt Nadkarni, through his outstanding talent and the art of navigation endeared himself to his Commanding Officer and for ever remained a favourite of his Commanding Officer.

Late Vice Admiral MP Awati (Retired) had this to say in tribute, "He (Podgy) was an accomplished Navigator, who had a special touch for the Haven-Finding art, which skill I do not see since his (Nadkarni's) days at sea as a captain in a ship or as the Commander, Western Fleet. No one, to my knowledge, has matched him in

the past 50 years or more. Podgy's quiet, self-effacing facade hid a steely determination to do right, always and every time, by his ships and men. He belongs to that immensely rare breed of men who display character and was looked up to by all his subordinates, equals and superiors for his almost puritanical professionalism."

As a Commander, he commanded old INS Talwar during 1968 with such distinction that his ship handling skills, command and operations capabilities are still viewed with great admiration and awe. As a Captain he commanded old INS Delhi during 1976. The ship was sent to Naval Dockyard, Bombay for routine refit. Suddenly, Captain Nadkarni was ordered to sail INS Delhi with despatch to Cochin to embark essential equipment and proceed post haste to Maldives to oversee salvage of grounded Destroyer INS Godavari. That mission was called Operation Godavari Salvage; viz GODSAL. The operation was very complex, and safety of Godavari was in grave danger, since the ship was deeply embedded on the coral reef off Maldives and because of shallow depth pulling her out became a nightmare. The main concern of then Captain Nadkarni was that a naval warship could not be abandoned or allowed to sink in international waters. Prestige of the country was at peril. He steered GODSAL most deftly and adroitly to keep the nation's pride intact. He was awarded Naosena Medal for his spectacular achievement.

While he was Flag Officer Commanding, Western Fleet his prime focus was operational readiness of the Fleet ships. He was all for the traditional ways of charting the course, speed and position at sea by depending on astronomy and encouraged young officers to go back to basics of taking star-sights using Sextants. When embarked on Fleet Ships he would order Magnavox and such like modern navigation aides to be put away. He always encouraged his Captains to be bold and act with professional pragmatism.

As he moved higher up the ladder his focus was on training, inculcating professionalism, human resource development, etc. As Chief Instructor (Navy) at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, he along with his core team revolutionised the Staff Duties paradigm. As Chief of Personnel he single-handedly introduced and operationalised several unique and modern models for operational and strategic studies concepts. Many of the concepts introduced towards human resource development are still going strong and delivering benefits.

As the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command he infused novel doctrines to revitalise the Command to inch forward to its prima donna position as the second most important operational command of the Indian Navy.

Within a short span of time as the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff his contributions towards growth of the Indian Navy as a strategic Blue Water Navy were noteworthy like obtaining sanction for acquisition of Viraat from UK in double quick time, sanction for leasing of Chakra, the first nuclear submarine from former USSR, obtaining Govt. sanctions for Project Seabird, Naval Academy at Ezhimala, etc.

He assumed the helm of Indian Navy on December 01, 1987 as the 14th Chief of the Naval Staff. Even when he had reached the pinnacle he remained simple, straight-forward. It was common to be surprised with the visit of the Chief of the Naval Staff in your office in South Block whistling and unannounced. Even his personal staff would wonder of his whereabouts in the South Block. Sometimes the search party

would be launched, if some important calls for CNS were to be responded to.

During his watch as CNS a spectacular feat was accomplished with perfection through military intervention by all three services and the Indian Naval Ship diverted with alacrity to thwart the attempt by the mercenary's coup in the Maldives during 1988. This singular intervention propelled the image of India as the emerging power, globally recognised and resultantly occupying the prime position on the cover of the Time Magazine.

In his tribute to Late Admiral Nadkarni, Admiral Arun Prakash, former CNS said, "This doughty Maratha Admiral, surely had the blood of Shivaji and Angre coursing through his veins; it showed in his principles, professionalism and a clear vision for the Indian Navy. Un-flamboyant and modest to a fault, he earned the Navy's genuine respect and affection."

Cmde C Uday Bhaskar (Veteran) remarked in his tribute, "Admiral Nadkarni was an able, down-to-earth Chief, who was never carried away by his rank or the number of stars on his car. One recalls him as a young Commander, then Captain of the INS Talwar in 1968 and till the end he remained what he was - professional to the core, well-read, frugal, a dead-pan wit and fair but firm in his conduct with subordinates; traits that are becoming an exception in the contemporary military milieu."

Admiral Jayant Nadkarni was the proud recipient of Presidential awards of PVSM, AVSM, NM, VSM.





The Magnificent Mariner Sails Over the Horizon

By Cdr Yogesh V Athawale

He could easily be counted in the top names of not just the 'Makers of modern Indian Navy', but also among the 'Most Inspiring Modern Indians'. He leaves behind a rich legacy and a void which will be hard to fill says this heartfelt obituary to V Adm M P Awati, PVSM, VrC

Vice Admiral Manohar Prahlaad Awati, former Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, passed away on 03 November 2018 at his retirement abode at Vinchurni, near Phaltan, Dist Satara. He was 91 and left behind Mrs Sandhya Awati, his life partner of 63 years, and their two sons, Kedar and Kailas, with their respective families.

Manohar Awati belonged to the generation of military officers who witnessed the transition of Indian Armed Forces from pre-independence to post-independence era and had the unique opportunity to contribute to the foundational efforts, even as their careers progressed in tandem with the growth of the service.

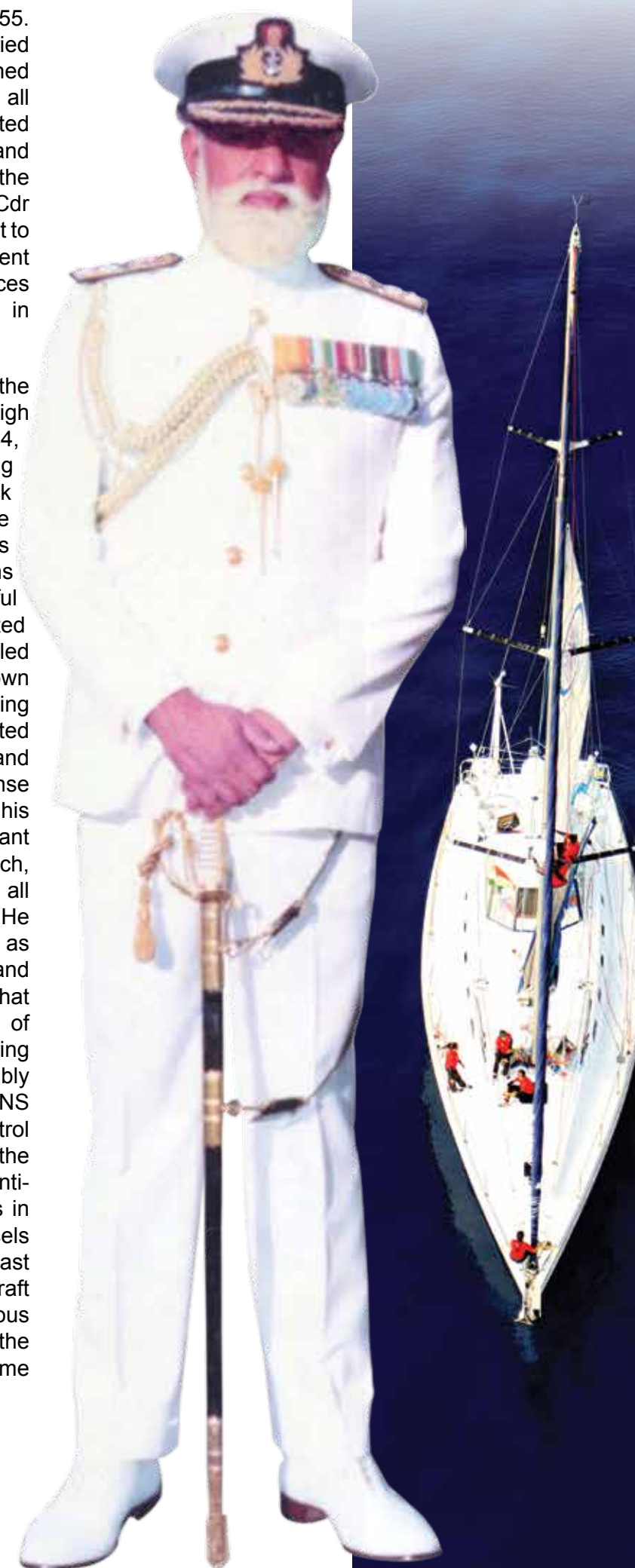
Admiral Awati was an institution builder and a mentor par excellence. He inspired officers and sailors by the sheer power of his persona, commanding presence, commitment to the task at hand, meticulousness, respect for traditions and considerate approach. He was gifted with a booming, baritone voice, which lent weight to his words. An avid reader, writer, rider, traveller, fitness enthusiast, environmentalist and a prolific public speaker, his life touched thousands in the Navy and beyond. Promoted to Vice Admiral in 1979, he served as Chief of Personnel, at Naval Headquarters in New Delhi, where he steered far reaching reforms such as the Cadre Review, Stabilised Operational Manning Cycle, and improvements to the Group Insurance Scheme. He was appointed the Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Naval Command, from 1981-83 and was awarded the Param Vishitha Seva Medal for his stellar contributions to the service.

Born in 1927, in a family with strong cultural and academic moorings, Manohar was a bright student who did his early schooling from various schools at Wardha, Nagpur, and later from King George's Primary School, Mumbai. In January 1943, he topped the Federal Public Service Commission examination and was selected for training at Training Ship Dufferin at Bombay, which prepared Indian candidates for service in the Merchant Marine and the Royal Indian Navy. After successfully completing the course at Dufferin in 1945, he opted to join the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) and went as a Special Entry Cadet to the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth for five years. Since his early days, Awati was noted for his remarkable professional acumen and prolific, multi-talented personality. He excelled as a trainee seaman, and learnt sailing, spending time with his seniors in yachting. On his return in 1950, he was promoted to Lieutenant and was posted to INS Ranjit as the ship's Gunnery Officer. On 27 May 1951, the Indian Navy, being the senior service then, was the first among the Services to receive the Presidents Colours at Brabourne Stadium, Bombay and Lieutenant Manohar Awati was chosen to receive them from India's first President, 'Babu' Rajendra Prasad.

In 1951-52, he shouldered key responsibilities at the Officer Training School at INS Venduruthy, Kochi, and thereafter went to England for a specialist course in Signal Communications at HMS Mercury, Portsmouth. On return to India in 1954, Awati served as a Specialist Signal Communication Officer (SCO) onboard the old INS Delhi. In this period he had the opportunity to accompany Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia as his

ADC during his tour of India in 1954-55. On 16 October 1955, he was married to Sandhya Karmarkar, who remained his 'better half' and a 'sheet anchor' all through his life. Later he was appointed as the Cadets Training Officer and Executive Officer of Kistna. It was the era of 'Hindi Chini bhai bhai', and Lt Cdr Manohar Awati was deputed for a visit to China in 1958. Next year, he underwent the Staff Course at Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington, in 1959-60, which he topped.

Following a three-year stint as the Deputy Naval Adviser in the Indian High Commission at London, from 1961-64, he returned to command the training ships INS Betwa and INS Tir, in quick succession, where he nurtured future naval leaders. A generation of officers in the Navy imbibed their early lessons and impressions under the watchful eyes of a Captain who expected nothing but the best from them and led his officers by example. He was known for his fair and firm approach, according due indulgence to those who exhibited talent. It was during the command tenures that he gained immense popularity across the Service for his unique style of leadership, penchant for perfection and humane approach, which left a lasting impression on all those who worked alongside him. He earned a formidable reputation as someone who 'walked the talk' and lived by the standards and ethics that he espoused. The crowning glory of Awati's commands at sea was during the 1971 Indo-Pak War, when he ably led his submarine-hunter corvette INS Kamorta and other ships of the 31 Patrol Vessel Squadron, of which he was the commander. His ship undertook anti-submarine and blockade operations in the Bay of Bengal, intercepted vessels carrying contraband to ports of East Pakistan, and escorted the aircraft carrier, Vikrant. For his courageous actions he was decorated with the Vir Chakra, the third highest wartime gallantry award.





Following a course at Royal College of Defence Studies, London, he was appointed as the Commandant, National Defence Academy in 1976. Hundreds of cadets and officers, who trained and served in this institution under his supervision, remember him as an inspiring icon, a towering figure, always well dressed and a person who enjoyed a larger than life image in the Academy. He had a style that was remarkably different from others, was known as a disciplinarian with a golden heart and bore an affable personality that indulged in numerous hobbies and interests. In 1977, he was appointed as the Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet. His tenure of two years is remembered for higher training standards and noteworthy achievements of the Fleet ships, including embarking the then Prime Minister, Shri Morarji Desai, for a round passage from Mumbai to Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands.

After retirement, he undertook varied responsibilities, notably as a Director on the board of the Tolani Shipping Company, as the military correspondent for Blitz, a reputed magazine, and held key positions at World Wildlife Fund, and Ecological Society of India. For a while, in 1992-93, he also modelled for the apparel brand, 'Digjam'!

He helped the Government of Maharashtra create the Services Preparatory Institute, at Aurangabad, and served as the institution's mentor for many years. His interests went beyond the military and the Navy. He was a keen ornithologist, ecologist and a naturalist taking special efforts towards wildlife conservation and



environmental protection. He was a recipient of the Maharashtra Rajya Puraskar and Sivananda Eminent Citizen Award, 2010. He had founded the Maritime History Society (MHS) in 1978, when he was the Fleet Commander. After retirement, he steadily nurtured the Society as its Founder Chairman and Patron, making it a niche institution of repute, which continues to grow stronger. The activities of MHS helped him stay in regular touch with the Navy. He actively corresponded on email and remained in touch with many of his shipmates and admirers till the very last.

Vice Admiral Manohar Awati was a 'People's Admiral' as it were and a legend in his own times. His most recent, and significant contribution at the national level was the conception and mentoring of the three 'Sagar Parikrama' circumnavigation ocean sailing voyages, undertaken by pioneering Indians, including the all-women 'Navika Sagar Parikrama' team.

His last public appearance with the Navy was at Mumbai on 1 October 2018, when he consented to be the Chief Guest to flag-off the voyage of Navy's sailing vessel Bulbul, to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Western Naval Command. Turned out wearing a yacht captain's hat and a coat, in his usual dapper style, the crisp 'flag-off' and his boy-like desire to sail in the boat, despite his age, symbolised the joi de vivre of the man and his 'never-say-die' spirit. For Manohar Awati, there was always a new aspiration and a new mission in the offing.

Rest in Peace Admiral, you ran a true course.

THE WINDS RUSH TO BE FAIR & SEAS GRANDLY FOLLOW

By Rupali Ramdas

*I met him for the first time when he was ninety plus,
Tall and majestic, he walked to the podium without a fuss.*

*While fathoming his immense source of knowledge I was all at sea;
Friends, I am referring to Vice Admiral Manohar Awati, you see!*

*After receiving an intense training during the 1940s abroad;
In 1950, he joined the Indian Navy's active service board.*

*Awarded a Vir Chakra for gallantry during the Bangladesh Liberation War 1971;
Not to forget the crucial shore appointments held with strategic vision!*

*A nature lovers association with Dr. Salim Ali helped
in the conservation of marine life and animals in the wild;
'Sagarparikrama' the first Indian solo circumnavigation by
Capt Dilip Donde was his brainchild!*

*He was the founder of Maritime History Society of India in 1978;
With immense sorrow, I salute a life well lived, now called "Late".*

*When a stately sailor leaves the earth to occupy a celestial glow,
The winds rush to be fair and seas grandly follow.*

RIP Admiral MP Awati PVSM VrC!

Rupali Ramdas did her Graduation in Statistics & Computer programming from Mumbai University and has specialised in Mass Communication and IT.

She has worked as an editor and as a Principal of a school run by ex-students of Sainik School Korukonda and is a freelance consultant & writer for web portal companies.

Cdr Yogesh V Athawale is a recipient of several prizes including the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition and the IONS Open Essay Competition. He is currently appointed at Headquarters, Western Naval Command.

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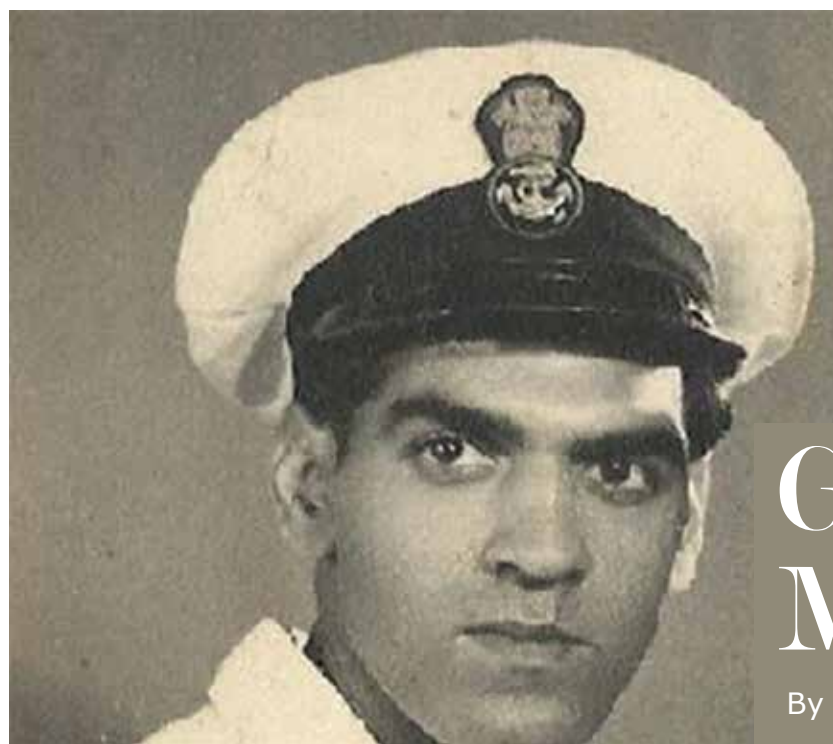
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Golden Jubilee of
WNC





GOLDEN MUSINGS

By Meena Bakhshi Dutta

Established 01 Mar 1968, Western Naval Command, if blessed with a vocal cord, would proudly recount life's glimpses on the eve of Golden Jubilee thus....."Still an infant under 4, I was called upon by Mother India to vanquish the enemy in 1971. The missile boats of my fleet launched an unprecedented attack on Karachi on 4th Dec to destroy its harbor along with its patrolling warships. This in turn helped my twin sister ENC to affect a complete blockade of the Bay of Bengal and deploy my Aircraft Carrier's Sea-Hawks on East Pakistan's Airfields and Garrisons. I was thus instrumental in scripting the surrender of 94 K Pakistani soldiers on 16th Dec 1971, ensuring the Birth of Bangladesh. I was thus christened 'The Sword Arm of Indian Navy'."

"The fleet of ships just kept growing and by the turn of the century, like an emotional bridesmaid, I played host on 17 Feb 2001 for the maiden IFR (International Fleet Review) where 86 Warships from 19 nations saluted the then President KR Narayanan in a sail-past onboard INS Sukanya."

"My heart bleeds during unfortunate incidents like the Sindhurakshak explosion on 14 Aug 2013 that took away 18 bravehearts and heals only while witnessing the global reach of fleet ships ever ready for any eventuality. Continuously deployed to thwart piracy attempts in the Arabian Sea while ensuring the SLOCs remain open, I can dexterously thwart the designs on Mother India of any evil eye with the help of a plethora of Ships, Submarines and Aircrafts under my umbrella."

The Western Fleet which has grown into a formidable force in the world in the past 50 yrs, celebrated its Golden Jubilee on 01 Mar 2018. To commemorate the mega event, Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, took salute at ceremonial divisions onboard INS Vikramaditya on 08 March 2018. Apart from making a presence on the world stage during the 1971

War, the Fleet of the Western Naval Command has participated in important operations like Op Cactus, Pawan, Rahat, Sukoon and Madad. The Indian Navy's Sword Arm has thus carved an enduring pedestal in the hearts of every Indian.

I have grown in the cradle of Western Naval Command since my infancy in 1971, when my father Lt Cdr VP Bakhshi was posted to CCDT

(Mumbai) and was appointed CDO at the time of the outbreak of hostilities.

He recalls, "I was privileged to be involved in the building of our fine Navy from its inception. Having joined HMS Himalaya, Karachi as a boy in 1945, even before the ashes of the Little Boy and Fat Man had cooled, I opted for the Diving Branch post partition. I vividly remember that I was barely 17 when we were deputed to UK for undergoing Deep Sea Diver's course as Indian Navy's first batch of 6 divers. Indeed the diving training makes one tough but even thereafter, life in the Navy was challenging with various emergency assignments coming our way from all over the country. We also set up our own Diving School in Cochin and Naval divers were often called upon to fish out bodies from disaster sites and water-bodies. One technical assignment cropped up in May 1961 when there were heavy rains in Sonbhadra district of UP and water levels at Rihand Dam started to rise alarmingly while the dam gates



A gallant #IndianBrave Veteran departs. Cdr VP Bakhshi #NaoSenaMedal, a pioneer diver of the @indiannavy passed away at the age of 90 earlier today (5th January) at the INHS Asvini, Mumbai. He leaves behind a rich legacy for the Nation and Navy!

became inoperative, requiring immediate diving assistance for underwater repairs. Four of us were urgently airlifted from Mumbai and worked in buddy pairs under trying conditions to successfully repair the gates by late evening thus averting the submerging of nearby villages. I was honoured with NM (Gallantry) on Republic Day the following year and was commissioned as an Officer in the Special Duty (Diving) cadre in 1964. But before that in 1958 I got married to Urmila, the only lady who used to drive a Lambretta in NOFRAs at Cochin and Colaba in the 1960s and 70s.

Our assistance was also sought for by the Bombay Film Industry, before the term Bollywood was coined, although I was never fond of

movies. In 1976, a gentleman having sought HQs approval, walked into CCDT where I was the officiating OIC. He said he wanted to shoot some underwater scenes. I asked him, "Who are you?" and he replied, "Sanjay Khan, actor. You didn't recognize me, Sir?" I said, "No. I have not seen a movie for the last 15 years." We then chalked out the schedule for the shoot in the Command Swimming Pool. When I went home I matter-of-factly asked my kids whether they knew who this man was. My kids jumped, "OMG! Sanjay Khan! Don't you know him, the hero of Hindi films". During the shoot at the Command Pool, a lot of naval personnel, ladies and kids came to interact with the cast of the movie, 'Chandi-Sona'.





We divers are a very close knit family. I had been a little strict with my sailors as far as their leave forecast was concerned, but on festivals, I used to call them over for drinks to my house. In the late 70s, I received a telegram stating my 'Mother-in-Law expired. Come soon'. In a depressed state, I drove to Pune with my sobbing wife. On reaching, we found my hale and hearty mother-in-law opening the door. We were in for a cheerful shock. I left my wife there and drove back the same night. On investigation, it turned out that a disgruntled sailor who was asked to postpone his leave due ops commitments, had played this prank. At the defaulters table, I excused him with a light warning that brought a smile to his gloomy face.

All my children have done me proud. Meena made me proud by winning two Silvers in Nationals Masters Swimming championship in Rajkot five years ago. Quite some time ago when she had applied for the post of Ladies Swimming instructor, she was interviewed by the HQs panel. All the members questioned her on various aspects of life saving, but when Lt Shirgaonkar, the sports member requested Cdr Tugnait, the CDO to question her, all he said was, "What can you ever ask the daughter of



the senior most Diver of Indian Navy!" When she narrated this to me, I thought that I was a blessed person and my life in the Navy had been worth it. Now at the fag end of this wonderful life when Alzheimer's has set in, I can proudly claim to have thoroughly enjoyed my Naval Life."

Well that's my father's recall of his days in the WNC. I have been nurtured and groomed in Western Naval Command Colaba in my formative years till I graduated. Destiny brought a Naval Aviator into my life to be my life partner. I have seen the demography of Navy Nagar change, albeit slowly, in the past 50 years from a few buildings in a jungle that we used to playfully venture inside, to a fully walled and secured Naval Base (Navy Nagar and NOFRA).

I owe the fulfillment of my life's years to the Navy and dedicated both my Master's National Swimming Silvers (2013) to the Sword Arm Command. I wish the Western Naval Command a brilliant Golden Jubilee 2018 and bright operational years ahead.

Meena Bakhshi Dutta, Wife of Cdr Rajinder Dutta has been a teacher at KV, NCS and LSA (Lakshmipat Singhania Academy) for 15 yrs. An avid sports-person who has also been a swimming instructor, she has many achievements to her credit

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TRI-NATION TOUR BY VETERANS

By Commander Rajinder Dutta (Retd.)

To commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Western Naval Command, veterans of the Indian Navy visited Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

This tour was the result of three months of detailed planning by See World Destinations. It saw 20 veteran naval couples come together from Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar to arrive at Singapore in the early hours of 25th Aug 2018.

The couples included leading pillars R Adm SVS Chary, Cmde SS Tarate, Capt SS Sethi and Surg Capt SC Patra among others who arrived with their ladies at the airport arrival lounge which was abuzz with activity as Naval veterans, some of who met after decades, hugged each other warmly.

They say people come into our lives either for a season, a reason or a lifetime. We had R/V'ed for the third one even as we all wished Mrs Padma Chary and Cdr Joseph Sukumar, whose birthdays were celebrated on the very first day later in the evening in Singapore with cake cutting, a sing song session and a compatibility quiz for the Birthday Boy and Girl along with their better halves.

Our charming host gave an exhaustive briefing at the airport that continued in our bus ride to the Copthorne Hotel, even as we were wonderstruck at the spic and span surroundings of the entire

city as viewed from the luxury bus. After the morning shopping at Square City Mall and Mustafa, we went to Sentosa Island for the Deep Sea Aquarium and the laser show - a once in a life time opportunity. The evening was reserved for birthday celebrations at the hotel.

During the city tour, we stopped at the Lake view point at Esplanade famous for the IFFA awards. Veterans blessed with grandchildren had no choice but to buy loads of chocolates at the next halt 'Chocolate Gallery'.

We proceeded to Changi Harbor Cruise Terminal to board the Dream Genting, a huge cruise liner with 19 accommodation decks, about one and half times the length of our aircraft carrier. All 40 of us had been accommodated on the 9th deck balcony state rooms. The huge Quarter-Deck Restaurant-Lido was our R/V point for all meals for the next 3 days. The Genting's programme was to sail out in the evening and touch Penang on 27th, Langkawi on 28th afternoon and drop us off at Phuket on 29th. As the Genting cast off at 5 pm, we ran to the Quarter Deck top for a fantastic view of leaving harbor. Some ladies even tried their hands at basket ball, table tennis and the obstacle course before the evening show 'China's got Talent' at the Zodiac. The



The excitement builds further as the second lot checks-in too

auditorium was huge with a seating capacity of over a thousand, where we also relished 'Rhythm Divine' the next day. Cdr Vadhera had arranged for a get-together with Genting's Captain Magnus, a Swedish Marine master in the Officers ante-room. The Captain individually shook hands with all the members and was kind enough to pose for all the couples in turns. Capt Sethi then presented a Naval Veteran's Cap to the Captain amid a huge round of applause especially as he immediately donned the Navy blue veterans cap to become one of us even as he readily agreed for our Bridge visit at 2 pm.



RAdm & Mrs SVS Chary at Santosa Deep Sea Aquarium

Cmde Tarate and 8 other members opted for the Penang excursion, even as the rest of us went for an elaborate educative Bridge visit where the Captain personally briefed us. We were escorted to the Foyle for a group photo on the Helo Deck in the afternoon sun after which all couples got themselves snapped in the famous Titanic pose.



The fabulous five (Mrs Batra, Mrs Vadhera, Mrs Sarita, Raj & Meena) set the dance floor on fire when the DJ plays during the cast-off at 5pm



In the evenings most of us enjoyed the swimming pool and the jacuzzi on top deck while after dinner we gathered at the Zouk to set the dance floor on fire, followed by another session at '360 degrees' dance floor for fun and games.

Day 4 turned out to be the most rewarding day for us with participation of Meena Dutta in the 60 sec challenge and Mrs Nina Sethi bagging the Bingo House during day time and Cdr Vadhera and Surg Capt SC Patra winning the skill honours on the dance floor in the evening, on the eve of departure from the Dream Genting cruise, after a thrilling outdoor excursion when the ship came along side at Langkawi.

Day 5 was the day when the Dream cruise disembarked us at Phuket. We were greeted and welcomed by Neena and Mac - our tour guides, who briefed us on the history of the Island and its rulers. We were accommodated in the Hotel 'Sleep with me', which sounded even funnier when pronounced sensuously. The Bazaar adjoining our hotel is famous for massage parlors and Neena gave a rundown of different types of massages and how we are to avoid the naughty indecent masseurs of the Banga street. Some of us did stroll the streets abuzz with open night clubs.

Day 6 was dedicated to snorkeling by the 15 enthusiasts of our group and a beach picnic at Phi-Phi Island for all. The 45 mins speed boat ride was thrilling as the boat sped at over 30kn with pronounced pitching. Snorkeling was a treat, particularly as the four girls Binti, Preeti, Amitha and Shruti. Meena shot some excellent videos underwater with her GoPro camera. The view of the school of fish in crystal clear waters underneath shall remain in our memory for a very long time. The evening celebration for Mrs Kanaga Chermakani's Birthday was a grand affair with entertainment galore.

Day 7 we flew down from Phuket to Bangkok. The flight was uneventful and we were received by a Lady Guide named Naughty. She explained to us the events of the day. A visit to Nong Nooch Botanical Gardens, enroute to Pataya for the cultural and elephants show. Dinner was organized at a Punjabi tadka restaurant, followed by the famous Alcazar show. The stage was set afire when the beautiful artists performed on the famous song 'Shakira'. The 45 mins show was exceptionally well choreographed with soul stirring musical beats.



Day 8 was the day of transit from Pataya to Bangkok, with an enroute visit to the Sriracha Tiger Zoo, which turned out to be the most challenging one. Our bus experienced a tyre burst, which was expeditiously changed at the next garage. By the time we reached the Zoo, the bus had a clutch problem. However, we decided to move on the same bus to Bangkok, albeit cautiously for the Royal River cruise. The bus came to a halt on the outskirts but the timely transfer of men and material to 6 luxury vans saved the day for us and we not only made it to the 'Royal Chao Phyras Princess' but also had a chance meeting with a group of NDC officers on short leave after their foreign visit. We set the dance floor on fire until the last song, before retiring to our suites in Hotel Montain.

Day 9 was the penultimate day of the tour which was reserved for a visit to the Grand Palace and the Reclining Buddha in the forenoon and shopping trip in the afternoon that the ladies were eagerly looking forward to. After lunch we had about 4 hours of shopping time for which we were dropped at Watergate Mall. There were a number of malls around including the Palladium Mall.

Day 10 was the check out and we left for the Airport at 0900h. A plan for a Europe tour during the same time next year was discussed. Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore/Hyderabad groups shook hands and hugged each other before proceeding to their respective departure terminals. Cdr Vadhera mentioned that the NFMC picnic abroad shall continue as usual with members wishing each other on birthdays and anniversaries referring to the database that had been promulgated. It was quite emotional to bid goodbye having been close together.

A maiden herculean effort to get a group of Naval Veterans together on a foreign tour on the Golden Jubilee of WNC was a success. The coming together of Senior Leading Pillars Capt SS Sethi (SOPA), RAdm SVS Chary, Cmde SS Tarate & Surg Capt SC Patra was so very encouraging for the rest of us that success was assured during the planning stage itself. The accomplishment of this tour could well be attributed to the ethos and values ingrained in us by the Indian Navy.

Cdr Rajinder Dutta (Retd.) has been a Naval Pilot and a Qualified Flying Instructor with about 3000 hrs of flying on HT-2, HPT-32, Kirans, Islander, Super Connie, Fokker F-27 and IL-38. Post-retirement he has settled in Borivali, Mumbai.

रक्षा इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स से कहीं आगे



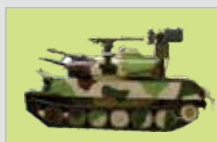
भारत इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स लि. (बीईएल), भारत की अग्रणी रक्षा इलेक्ट्रॉनिक कंपनी ने उत्पादों और प्रणालियों की व्यापक श्रृंखला के साथ देश के सशस्त्र बलों को सुसज्जित करने और सैनिकों को अपने निर्णायक मिशनों में सशक्त बनाने का लक्ष्य तय किया है। बहु-उत्पाद, बहु-यूनिट वाली कंपनी, बीईएल में अपनी सभी प्रक्रियाओं में विश्व-स्तरीय गुणता बनाए रखते हुए आद्योपांत, आवश्यकता के अनुरूप समाधान प्रदान करने की विशेषज्ञता है।



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DIAMOND JUBILEE

By Lt Cdr (SDC) Kolluru Nageswara Rao (Retd.)



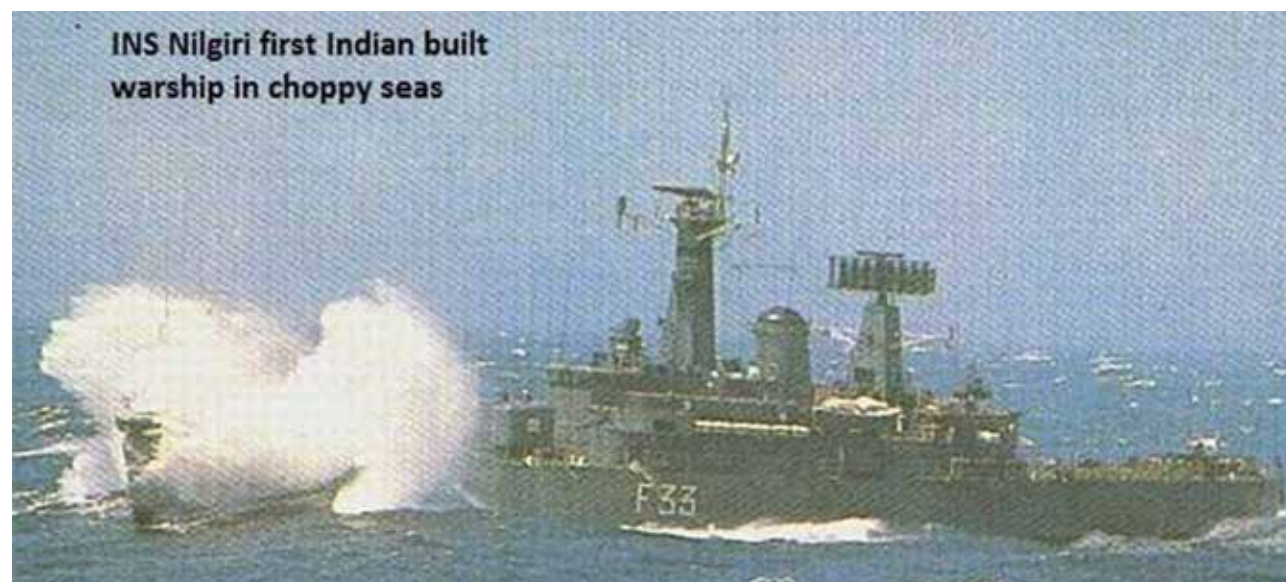
I joined the Indian Navy as a young boy in July 1962 and retired as a Lt Cdr (SDC) on 31st Dec 1997. It is a privilege to write about some of the most important developments in the Indian Naval Communications that include Integrated Communication systems fitted on Board Leander Class, Sanchar in shore communication centers, VLF Station at INS Kattabomman and Satellite Communication.

Integrated Communication System (ICS)

The induction of Leander class ships during early 70s, with ICS fit had revolutionized communication in all the frequency spectrums. The fleet ships till early 70s had British and Russian Origin Communication fit. Though they were robust in nature, they were not user friendly. In the ICS fit, the receivers and transmitters are positioned in Lower Receiving Room (LRR). A number of receivers can be tuned on the designated frequencies and remote them to Main Communication Office (MCO) through aerial exchange. MCO can connect them to the required operator bay. As far as transmitters are concerned, they can be tuned from a single console without standing in front of each transmitter for tuning. The tuned transmitter can also be remotely to the MCO, who can connect to the required operator bay. This was possible through Common Aerial Working system (CAW) and aerial exchange (EY/EZ). This type of facility didn't exist on any of the fleet ships, prior to the induction of Leanders.

Similarly, V/UHF trans receivers could also be tuned to the designated frequencies at a time and remote them to where ever they are needed like bridge, ops-room etc. The Electronic Warfare (EW) communication fit of Leanders were far superior to all the other EW systems that prevailed in the fleet ships those days. The EW fit of Leanders, have capability of receiving radar transmissions in 'S' and 'X' bands and also have the ability to 'Jam' these frequencies. I was a PO Tel on board INS Nilgiri during the period end 73 to May 75 under the command of Capt. OS Dawson. Lt Ajit Tewari was SCO and Lt (SDC) VP Nair was ASCO.

During peace time tactical exercises, our ship had the advantage of the latest communication and EW equipment and the CO used to exploit them to the best tactical advantage. The ship used to monitor the opponent's transmissions on MF, HF, V/UHF and SHF and provide much needed information to the command for planning tactics. Here, I must mention that, the EW Fit was so accurate and reliable that all 'S' and 'X' band radar transmissions were monitored and the operators used to analyze the intercept with the parameters and identify the type of ship, submarine, seaking, other aircrafts etc, and report to the command. This information was of great advantage to the command for taking remedial measures for the best advantage of own forces.



INS Nilgiri

INS Nilgiri was once tasked in 1974 to monitor the communications of a large number of war ships exercising with our neighbouring country. The ship had exploited all available communication equipment with all communication sailors and in addition, all under trainee officers were also tasked in monitoring V/UHF transmissions in recording / logging. Naval Headquarters conveyed high appreciation for the professional competence displayed and for giving information needed by NHQ.

The CO of INS Nilgiri congratulated all the communication sailors in front of the whole ships company. He highlighted that the communication department rose to the need of the hour by displaying dedication, loyalty and high professionalism to accomplish the assigned task. Monitoring effort by a single ship without the required communication fit was not possible. This credit goes to the ICS fit of Leander class ship.



Signal School Emblem

Sanchar

All Naval Communication Centres have point to point (station to station) Tele-printer (TP) Net work system for clearing signals. This TP Net work was using dedicated post and telegraph (P&T) underground keying lines. Should any keying line become defective, the TP Net work, between those two stations were not possible till the defect was rectified by the P & T Department.

SANCHAR system developed by M/s.KELTRON Pvt. Ltd, Thiruvanthapuram, was introduced in mid 1980s and had the following advantages:

- Personal computer (PC) replaced Tele-printers.
- Reduced the number of operators.
- Produced auto acknowledgement on delivery of the message to the intended station.
- Selected underground alternate keying line in the event of a defect, in one of the U/G keying lines.
- Routed the messages through less utilized U/G keying lines to clear the density of signal traffic meant for other stations.
- Sanchar also made a revolution in communications by introducing encryption and decryption of a cipher system.

INS Kattabomman

For the first time, in the history of Naval Communications, a VLF station was established at INS Kattabomman, near Tirunelveli, Tamil

Nadu in the early 1990s to cater to the much needed submarine broadcast for our submarines. This provided a quantum jump in Naval Communications.

A Communication Satellite

The introduction of Satellite Communication systems commenced in 1990, and slowly spread to all the front line ships. Satellite communications have revolutionized communications with the exchange of information happening in a matter of seconds. Satellite systems were not only useful for communications but were also of great help to the ships navigation. The Indian Navy now possesses superior digitized communication



systems with advanced technical know-how which are user friendly as well as provide reliable and accurate communication.

Lt Cdr Kolluru Nageswara Rao (Retd.) was commissioned on 01 Oct 83 and was Staff Officer Communications, HQENC, Executive Officer 7A, Naval Unit NCC and DSO, HQ 32 WEU. After a memorable innings, he is Treasurer, Navy Foundation, Visakhapatnam Chapter.

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Breaking Records, Winning Hearts

By Lt Sneha

“You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore”. These words depict the strength required for a first of its kind journey of circumnavigation by an all women crew with an agenda to promote ocean sailing activities in the Indian Navy

A voyage qualifies as a circumnavigation if it starts and finishes at the same port, does not go through a canal or strait, all meridians are crossed at least once, and the distance covered is at least 21,600 nautical miles.

Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Tarini, a product of the 'Make in India' initiative, is a 55 foot sailing vessel with a mast of 25 meters, custom built for extreme sea conditions extending the usage of renewable energy resources. The significance of Navika Sagar Parikrama is in consonance with the national policy for women empowerment to showcase India's Nari Shakti on world platform and revolutionize attitudes and mindset towards women by raising the visibility of their participation in challenging environment.

INSV Tarini, set sail along the coast of Goa on 10 September 2017 flagged off by Defence Minister Nirmala Seetharaman, cutting across the latitudes by covering five legs, touching only four ports for replenishment of essential commodities. The journey which was flagged off at INS Mandovi covered ports of Fremantle (Australia), Lyttelton (New Zealand), Port Stanley (Falklands) and Cape Town (South Africa), finally dropping the anchor back at INS Mandovi, Goa, on 21 May 2018. The total distance covered was 21,600 Nautical Miles, thereby successfully qualifying as a circumnavigation.

The first leg of the journey was completed on Oct 23, 2017 and the crew was put in Fremantle in Western Australia for two weeks and visited Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre at University of Western Australia (UWA), UNESCO's Inter Governmental Oceanographic Commission office and Bureau of Meteorology in Perth.

The second leg, towards Lyttelton port in New Zealand was achieved on 29 November 2017. The vessel had covered over 7800 nautical miles from its starting point in Goa, crossing the Equator on September 17, 2017 and Cape Leeuwin on November 9 to reach there. On December 12, 2017 the crew set sail for the third leg of its journey towards Falkland Islands. On its last leg before home stretch to Goa, INSV Tarini reached the fourth stop of Cape Town on March 2, 2018 covering over 17,500 nautical miles from its start in Goa since September 2017. During the stay at various ports, the crew members interacted with various diaspora promoting the spirit of adventure in ocean sailing.

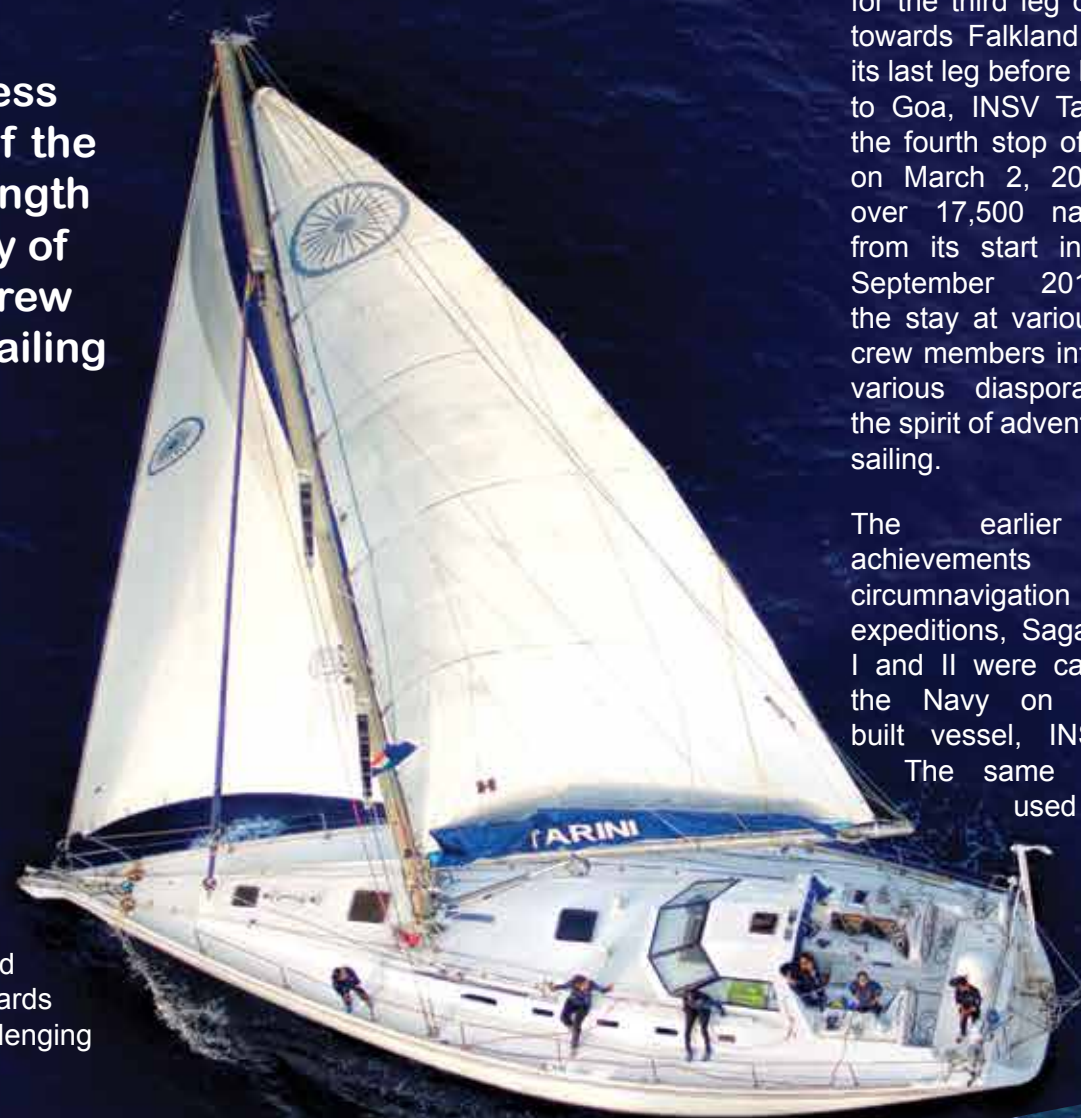
The earlier scalable achievements of solo-circumnavigation sailing expeditions, Sagar Parikrama I and II were carried out by the Navy on indigenously built vessel, INSV Mhadei. The same vessel was used for training

They sailed approximately 20,000 nm onboard INSV Mhadei and Tarini as part of training, which included two expeditions to Mauritius (in 2016 and 2017) and a voyage from Goa to Cape Town in Dec 16

of the “all women crew” for a period of three years before undertaking the expedition onboard INSV Tarini. They sailed approximately 20,000 nm onboard INSV Mhadei and Tarini as part of training, which included two expeditions to Mauritius (in 2016 and 2017) and a voyage from Goa to Cape Town in Dec 16. The team was trained under India's first solo circumnavigator Capt Dilip Donde who successfully carried out Sagar Parikrama I on INSV Mhadei covering the same route as Navika Sagar Parikrama.

The crew along with the agenda of circumnavigation in challenging environment had the additional task of monitoring the marine pollution levels and also to collate meteorological and ocean wave data for the improvement of weather forecast by the Meteorological Department. To enable the vessel to undertake the arduous journey she was equipped with an RO Plant with 30 Litre capacity per hour, 130hp Volvo Penta D5 engine with Auxiliary power, INMARSAT network system, Superwind wind generator, Raymarine electronic autopilot and one-wind driven auto pilot, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and a HF/VHF radio with digital selective calling.

The Navika Sagar Parikrama, a first of its kind circumnavigation, has challenged operational and technological capabilities along with the spirit of adventure, thus proving that the Indian Navy is capable of achieving and maintaining the true spirits of sailing.



THE TARINI ADVENTURE

A LESSON FOR US ALL

By Malika D'Cunha

In completing this voyage in a small sailing boat named Tarini, the six women officers have brought much glory to our country and have motivated young people to undertake such arduous challenges in the face of grave danger.

It all started on the 10th of September 2017 when the six girls cast off from INS Mandovi in Goa. The Hon'ble Defence Minister, Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman flagged off the boat. In the course of their voyage, the girls stopped over at Australia, New Zealand, crossed the Pacific Ocean to arrive at Falkland Islands, and then across the Atlantic Ocean to Cape Town. Thereafter, they crossed the Indian Ocean to enter Goa harbour on 21 May 2018, 254 days after they cast off.

Prior to setting sail on this momentous voyage, the six girls undertook strenuous training, and numerous short sea sorties off Goa. During one such sortie of about six hours, I had the opportunity to sail with them.... and what a hair-raising experience it was!

Life in this 56 foot long boat is not easy, and I was getting to know first-hand. Even when the sea was calm the boat was tossed around violently and I felt

terribly sea-sick. But the crew were very kind and told me that they too felt the same way on their first sea sortie. There were six bunk beds in a very cramped lower deck, and I wondered how they would live in such a small space, cook their own food and use the available water sparingly, so that it would last for the complete voyage.

What is it that made these young girls, all of them in their early 20s, undertake such a risky mission. The sea was rough, it was very cold, wind speeds were over 150kmph and the wave height occasionally exceeded 10 metres. When they were crossing Cape Horn, which is the tip of South America, they experienced the roughest weather and thought they would not be able to come out of the storm. At that time they were closer to Antarctica than any other place and it was freezing cold. They longed to be home, in the comforting arms of their mother, eat nice home cooked food and have fun with their family and friends. Instead the only other company that they had besides themselves was the oceanic life including some beautiful fish, dolphins, whales and sometimes even ferocious looking sharks! But they soldiered on, never

once doubting their ability to make it through the storms and tribulations. And they finally achieved what no military women team has ever done by circumnavigating the globe in a sailing craft thus bringing glory to themselves, the Indian Navy and above all the country.

Their story is one that dreams are made of. The only difference being that they transformed that dream to reality with their hard work, courage and passion. My Dad, being the Commanding Officer of INS Mandovi, I was privileged to meet them when the boat cast off from INS Mandovi last year, and again when the boat arrived back in Goa in May. They are now my close friends and they share many of their challenging stories with me! I feel inspired when I hear these stories and that is why I am sharing this with all of you. Each of us have so many talents and capabilities. But we fail to achieve our full potential because we either fail to dream, or we fail to convert that dream to reality by our hard work.

The Tarini girls have just turned the Nike catch phrase on its head from 'Just do it' to 'Just did it'. We can do the same!

Malika D'Cunha is a 13 year old student of Class 8 of the Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai. Proficient on the piano, she has performed at several concerts at the NCPA Mumbai and is also a student of the Trinity college of Speech and Drama London. She is the daughter of Cmde Sanjay D'Cunha.



Four continents

Six Women Naval Officers

Three great capes

Three oceans

Five countries

21600 nautical miles

Two equator crossings

ONE BOAT

"Six women Naval officers, five countries, four continents, three oceans, three great capes, two equator crossings, 21600 nautical miles, one boat." This sums up the historic voyage by the all women crew of the Indian Navy who undertook a global circumnavigation voyage

NAVIKA SAGAR PARIKRAMA

By Cdr K Srinivasan & Lt Ashutosh Mahapatra

"If you want something said, ask a man; If you want something done, ask a woman," said Margaret Thatcher and this quote aptly describes the new milestone set by INSV Tarini on 21 May 18 upon its arrival in Goa, after a successful maiden circumnavigation.

The vessel was skippered by Lieutenant Commander Vartika Joshi with Lieutenant Commanders Pratibha Jamwal, P Swathi, B Aishwarya, S Vijaya Devi and Lieutenant Payal Gupta as crew members. The very essence of this expedition lay in showcasing the determination and perseverance of women and was a message to all those who take women for granted and see them on the lighter side of the strength balance.

The visit of INSV Tarini's crew to INS Valsura and Jamnagar from 30 Jul to 02 Sep 18 was undertaken with the objective of sharing their experiences with young minds, especially the girl children at various institutions located at Jamnagar, Gujarat. Over a period of three days, the Officers visited five schools and delivered over nine lectures. On 30 Jul 18, the crew

visited three private schools, namely Delhi Public School, Shree Satya Sai Vidyalaya and Nand Vidya Niketan School where the children of Gujarat interacted with the Tarini crew. The question and answer sessions were never ending as the young minds had so much to ask and the organisers could sense that the usually introvert Gujarati girl child had just started to dream about her future aspirations.

On the evening of 30 Jul 18, it was the turn of ladies of the Naval Community at INS Valsura to witness the lecture of Tarini crew and be spell bound with pictures, videos and experiences of the all women crew. The major event of the visit of Tarini crew was the one conducted at Town Hall of Jamnagar. Under the aegis of the Jamnagar Municipal Corporation, the Municipal Education Board proactively organised this event for various schools under its administrative control. The children of the schools had heard very little of the Navy or INSV Tarini. However, post the lecture, the children realised that Gujarat is also part of the rich Maritime Heritage of India and also learnt what the Indian Navy was all about. The seeds for future Sea Warriors were sown

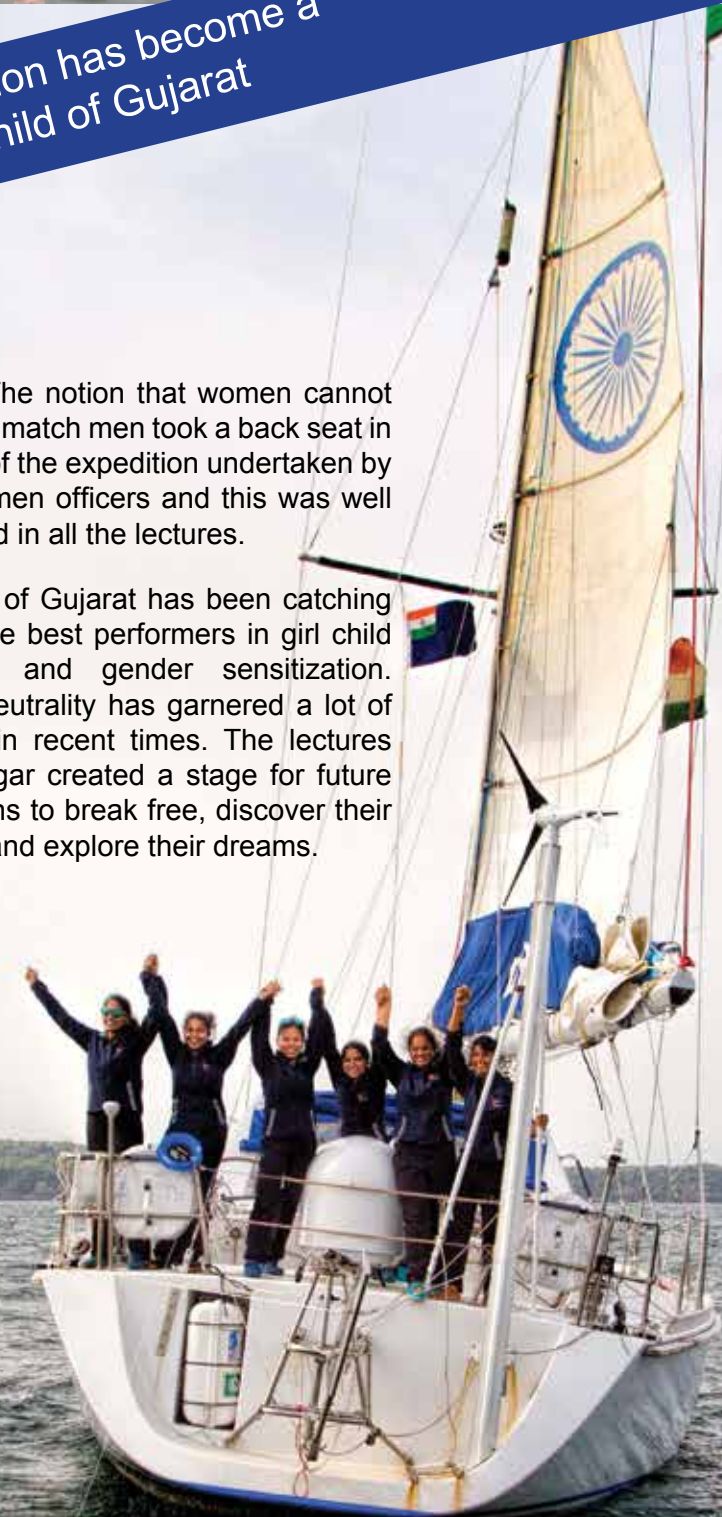
The unique INSV Tarini circumnavigation has become a symbol of empowerment for the girl child of Gujarat

at the Interactive session conducted at Town Hall. The visit of the crew to Sainik School Balachadi and Air Force School, Jamnagar gave the sister service a glimpse of what the Navy is all about. The girls of Air Force School were super thrilled and were busy taking autographs of the Tarini crew.

The interactions not only shared experiences, but also instilled a positive attitude among the girl children of Gujarat towards their future vision. The strands of experiences delivered about the voyage were motivational as they showcased a woman's inherent powers of endurance and patience. It was also helpful in promoting a zeal for sailing and adventures among the audience. They called out to the shy and under-confident, igniting their fire of self-

esteem. The notion that women cannot physically match men took a back seat in the case of the expedition undertaken by these women officers and this was well highlighted in all the lectures.

The state of Gujarat has been catching up with the best performers in girl child education and gender sensitization. Gender neutrality has garnered a lot of attention in recent times. The lectures at Jamnagar created a stage for future generations to break free, discover their potential and explore their dreams.



My Sojourn Onboard INSV MHADEI

Those thirty three glorious days at sea
were replete with an ocean of opportunities

The moment I saw the IG asking for volunteers for the Trans-Atlantic Cape to Rio Race 2017, I knew I had to go for it. My vibrant life bears testimony to my love for exploring and sailing was something I genuinely wanted to learn and experience.

Throughout my school and college life, I was involved in anchoring, classical dancing (Bharatnatyam being my forte) or studying to get good grades in exams. A career in the Armed Forces never occurred to me until a team from the Indian Navy came to my University for canvassing University Entry Scheme selections. My Service Selection Board (SSB) experience was an unforgettable one and life in an organization with an entrance assessment so enthralling appeared to be more promising than a normal nine to five desk job in any MNC!

When I reported to the Indian Naval Academy, I was mesmerized by the natural beauty and tranquility at Ezhimala, blissfully unaware of the

tough training routine I would have to go through in days to follow. Once the initial formalities were done, the training began. Physical training, classes, parades, punishments - the routine pushed us to our limits and made us realize our true potential.

As a Sub Lieutenant, I was nominated for the Republic Day Parade in 2013 from HQENC. That was the beginning of my association with swords and boots. On 29 January 2013, I was at Vijay Chowk, surrounded by the highest dignitaries of the country, live on TV, unfurling the national flag and then marching with it in my hands as part of the concluding ceremony of the 64th Republic Day celebrations. The following year, on 26 January 2014, I marched on Rajpath once again, this time leading the Naval Contingent. In 2015, I once again got the opportunity to lead the first all-women Naval Contingent. After three consecutive years of Republic Day marching experience, I was chosen to be the 'Officer of the Guard' and led the International City Parade consisting of naval contingents from various countries as part of the International Fleet Review 2016 at Visakhapatnam.

It was in August 2016, while I was flipping through the signals of the day that I saw this IG asking for volunteers for the Cape to Rio Race 2017 and my eyes lit up! This was the perfect opportunity to learn and experience something new. I decided to discuss it with my family first. My husband, who himself is an adventure lover, was extremely supportive. I got a confident 'go-ahead' from him right away. My parents, however, were sceptical! My father, though a tough Army man had no clue as to what life at sea would be and the thought of their only child sailing in a

small boat in a huge ocean was difficult to digest for my mother, but I managed to convince them both. Deep within, even I was not very sure as I had not tried sailing since my days at the Academy. All I knew was that I wanted to sail and know how life at sea feels.

After my initial training on the nuances of ocean sailing, I was selected as a crew member for the six member return leg crew of INSV Mhadei from Cape Town to Goa. It was a mixed crew with four male officers and two lady officers. We covered the distance of 4800 nautical miles in 33 days of non-stop sailing. Facing the wrath of nature with a smile and respecting the power of the oceans as you see it in its barest forms taught me to be persevering and calm even in the worst moments. As we were a crew of six, two of us were 'grouped' as the 'watch keepers' at any given time. Usually watches are done on rotational basis but our Skipper decided to allocate fixed watches to everyone according to their interests. My watch partner was the Skipper himself and we did the 1200-1600hrs and 0001-0400hrs watch every day! While most of the crew used to be up and awake during the 1200-1600hrs watch, the 0001- 0400hrs one was different. I could hear the waves roar in the dark when the sea was rough, when calm, it was extremely quiet and peaceful! There were nights when I was absolutely ecstatic after witnessing the bioluminescence effect in the waters and have to admit that it was even more beautiful than that shown in the movie 'Life of Pi'!

One particular phase that I can never forget is when we were hit by a storm while going around the Cape of Good Hope, just a few days after we had started our voyage. Continuous wind speeds in excess of 40 knots and huge waves of over five meters kept all six of us on our toes those few days. The nights were freezing and despite our 'Gill' suits, we were wet and cold

the whole time! From being a novice sailor to learning how to steer the boat with tacking and gybing techniques, I had come a long way.

The best part of my voyage was my team and we had excellent coordination and camaraderie amongst ourselves. Despite all the hardships, I had fallen for the vast blue. Miles away from the external chaos, my heart and soul experienced peace like never before. I had baked a fruit and nut cake onboard on the occasion of the 16th crossing the equator ceremony of Mhadei. We celebrated the crossing by taking a dip in the Indian Ocean. Swimming in the Indian Ocean was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me. We all had gleaming smiles as we took a photo with the ECDIS indicating Latitude 00 00 N at Longitude 65 00 E.

Those thirty three days at sea have been one of the most enriching periods of my life. I stand with and uphold the Navy's objective of providing an ocean of opportunities for one who is looking to move outside their comfort zone. I look forward to many more such activities in future. Maybe the best is yet to be!

Lt Cdr Bidisha Pandey is a Logistics Officer currently posted in Mumbai. She has led the Naval Marching Contingent twice on as part of the Republic Day Parade 2014 and 2015 and was 'Officer of the Guard' for International City Parade 2016 at Visakhapatnam. She also participated in the iconic Trans-Atlantic Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro Ocean Sailing Race 2017





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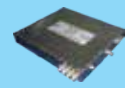
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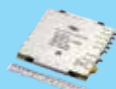
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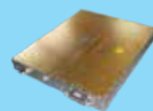
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Sailing
into the
SUNSET

A MAGNIFICENT SUNSET

Lt SK Awasthi



Indian Military history was made on the 22nd day of March with the decommissioning of INS Ganga - one of India's most successful warships. Commissioned on December 30, 1985, this Godavari-Class guided-missile frigate of the Indian Navy also proved the ship building capability of the Mazagon Dock Ltd.

The first incarnation of INS Ganga (D94) was a Type II Hunt-class destroyer, acquired from the Royal Navy where she served in World War II as HMS Chiddingfold, and was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1953. The ship served the Indian Navy for 22 years and was decommissioned in 1975.

Thereafter the second ship of Godavari-Class frigate was named as Ganga (F22) which was built indigenously at Mazagon Docks. The commissioning date was fixed as 30 Dec 1985, and she was to be commissioned by the then Prime Minister of India Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The ship was berthed on the South Breakwater, Bombay Naval Dockyard ready for her commissioning ceremony. On the cloudless sunny day of Dec 30, Captain Kailash Kohli {now VAdm KK Kohli (Retd.)} read out the Commissioning Warrant as per Naval traditions in the presence of the Prime Minister and the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral RH Tahiliani. Colours were hoisted along with the Commissioning Pennant. She was now "Indian Naval Ship Ganga".

Post Commissioning trials are an extended process, where all the weapons, electronic warfare systems, other systems like RADARs and SONARs, and missiles are tested under

battle conditions. All these systems have to be proved before a ship is allowed to join the Fleet. Most newly commissioned ships like Ganga's sister ship Godavari had taken almost one year to complete their Post Commissioning Trials, before joining the Fleet. However, under the able command of Captain Kohli, the ship completed the trials in a record time of three months and joined the Western Fleet in mid April 1986.

"Ganga", a guided missile frigate was a state-of-the-art ship, the most advanced in our Navy in 1985. Her armament consisted of surface to surface as well as surface to air missiles, multi-role guns, the latest SONAR to detect submarines and the most modern Electronic Warfare equipments. The 126m long ship with 3600 ton displacement was majestic in all aspects. With the steam propelled engines the ship could attain a soaring speed of 30 knots which was one of the best during her times. The ship was a master in the firing of huge P-20 SSM. However, Ganga is generally noted for her remarkable anti-submarine warfare capabilities. Particularly notable was their SONAR, detecting a submarine target at over extended ranges while steaming at high speeds. She was equipped with Bharat APSOH hull mounted sonar and Fathoms Oceanic VDS. Also the new

technology of towed-array sonar was introduced on it. Low Frequency Array (LOFAR) which was a newly developed underwater sound detection technique was introduced on this ship. LOFAR could detect sound signals hundreds of kilometer from the target or enemy unlike the SONAR which is effective only for short distances. These innovations and technologies made this ship a submarine-killer. Nothing underwater could escape her ears which were constantly on the listening watch hearing for slightest traces of the enemy. She had the capability to embark two Sea King helicopters which carried advanced dunking SONAR sets and anti submarine armaments. At that point in history, she was the pride of the Indian Navy.

During the course of her service, Ganga had been an important part of innumerable missions and exercises. She had undertaken myriad maritime patrols, gulf region patrol, exercises with foreign navies and numerous fleet exercises. During a UN Peace-keeping mission, the UN Security Council, extended the UN mandate for UNOSOM-II in Somalia to March 1995 in order to control the unlawful situations there. However, due to the extreme unrest and the out-of-hand conditions, the United States and other NATO members of the mission abandoned the peacekeeping effort and withdrew from Somalia over a year earlier. As the mission approached its scheduled end, the situation on the ground continued to deteriorate. With no other international support forthcoming, INS Ganga along with INS Godavari and INS Shakti were deployed to Mogadishu in December 1994 to support the withdrawal of the Indian Army's 66 Brigade, including the 2nd Battalion, Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry (2 JAKLI) which were deployed there as a part of UN peacekeeping force. Post this operation the JAKLI regiment of the Indian Army was affiliated to INS Ganga in a gesture of thankfulness and brotherhood.

Whilst on her last operational phase, Ganga was deployed in Porbandar for FORDEP where she had her share of operational "fun". The ship was involved in overseeing the recovery of marooned PMSA personnel during a standoff at sea between India and Pakistan. The ship also did extensive PTAS operations while looking for a Chinese submarine in the area. In one incident, the ship was looking out for a Chinese submarine, while tracking a Pakistani P3C Orion and a US Warship - three dimensional indeed.

The joke of the time was that Ganga was exercising with foreign Navies more than with ships of the Indian Navy!!

During her very last voyage (from Porbandar to Mumbai) she took a detour and effected R/V with the Fleet ships returning from OSD. The Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet embarked Ganga for an overnight WEFDEP. It was nostalgic when Ganga sailed under her own power one last time on May 27, 2017 as she entered Mumbai as a Flag Ship. Despite the long service, she still retained her capabilities in all the three dimensions of Naval warfare. She had returned from a 45-day active patrol in the Northern Arabian Sea, guarding the nation's maritime borders till her last operational day. The shore liaison team had arranged for an excellent welcome of the ship with all the families waiting on the jetty and the Naval Band playing martial music. With this setting in the background the Commanding Officer, Captain NP Pradeep personally gave the "finished with both main engines" order on the con.

On May 28, Ganga was placed in the non-operational category and was finally decommissioned on March 22, 2018 leaving us all awestruck. The ship represented a big step forward in the nation's warship building capability. The ceremony was attended by several officers and men, many now retired, who had served on board the ship. The poignant and impressive ceremony, which saw the Naval Ensign hauled down for the last time at sunset, was conducted by the last Commanding Officer of the ship, Captain NP Pradeep. The chief guest for the ceremony was Vice Admiral A K Bahl, himself a former crew member of the ship from 1989 to 1991. The special guest of honour for the ceremony was Vice Admiral (Retd) K K Kohli, the first Commanding Officer of INS Ganga.

INS Ganga was a mighty ship. She served her motherland with utmost dedication and loyalty. She was a death machine for the enemies when it came to operations and a nurturing mother for the men who served with her. Though she is gone, she has left behind beautiful memories and a glorious golden past which every Indian shall always be proud of. She will always be the very embodiment of a "Soul and spirit of a Ship".

Samno Varunah

NAMAMI GANGE

By Cmde Hari Anant Gokhale (Retd.)

A momentary time warp is the first reaction on hearing about the decommissioning of INS Ganga until realization dawns that this is the New Ganga calling quits



The Ganga was already over 20 years old when I joined her for getting my watch-keeping ticket in 1971 which meant it would now be 68 years old! I then got out of time warp and realized this was the new Ganga!

The name INS Ganga will always be dear to me. The old INS Ganga had to be lived in and worked in to understand why she will always have a special place in the hearts of all who served on her. She was one of the three Gs, Godavari, Ganga and Gomati of the 22nd Destroyer Squadron (22 DS). I will first recount her equipment which will give some of us goose pimples because of sheer nostalgia. Ganga had Twin screw, Steam Turbine with open front boilers making steam for 20,000 HP output. Such power was way ahead of all the front line ships like Khukri, Brahmaputra and Trishul class. Only Rajput Class (40,000HP), two venerable cruisers Mysore and Delhi and Vikrant were the others amongst the high-power elite. How we bragged about powerful Ganga when we met up with our course mates on the Ks, Bs and the Ts. Direct current flowed in her wirings (no fancy AC for her - Alternate current as well as Air Conditioning). The steering wheel was befitting Obelix of Asterix fame.

The main armament was a 4" twin barrel mounting on the foxle. During the 1971 war, BRO(C) had got it going along with its Fire Control System which was, hold your breath, an electro-mechanical computer. I could see the gear wheels moving while calculating fire control solution. Being the GO of the ship, I had really worked up my crew. Those distinct reports "Layer ON" and "Trainer ON" still ring in my ears. Secondary armament was Bofors 40/60. How exhilarating it was to see the tracers at night! There were Depth Charges (DC) throwers and DC rails. Let me reveal a long held secret. Once after a DC firing, the EO came running to bridge and begged Captain not to fire a DC again because as the DC exploded, a leak had sprung in the engine room.

We had an open bridge. Yes, open to elements and ideal to listen out for sound signals made by ships in vicinity in restricted visibility (Only Executive branch readers will understand this precise language of the ROR). Monsoons were especially bad with all those rains and sea waters cascading on the bridge. At the end of a watch, an OOW would be soaking wet. More bothersome was the smell of Copper Sulphate (CuSO₄) on our hands. Remember the copper in the brass of the azimuth circle? There was only

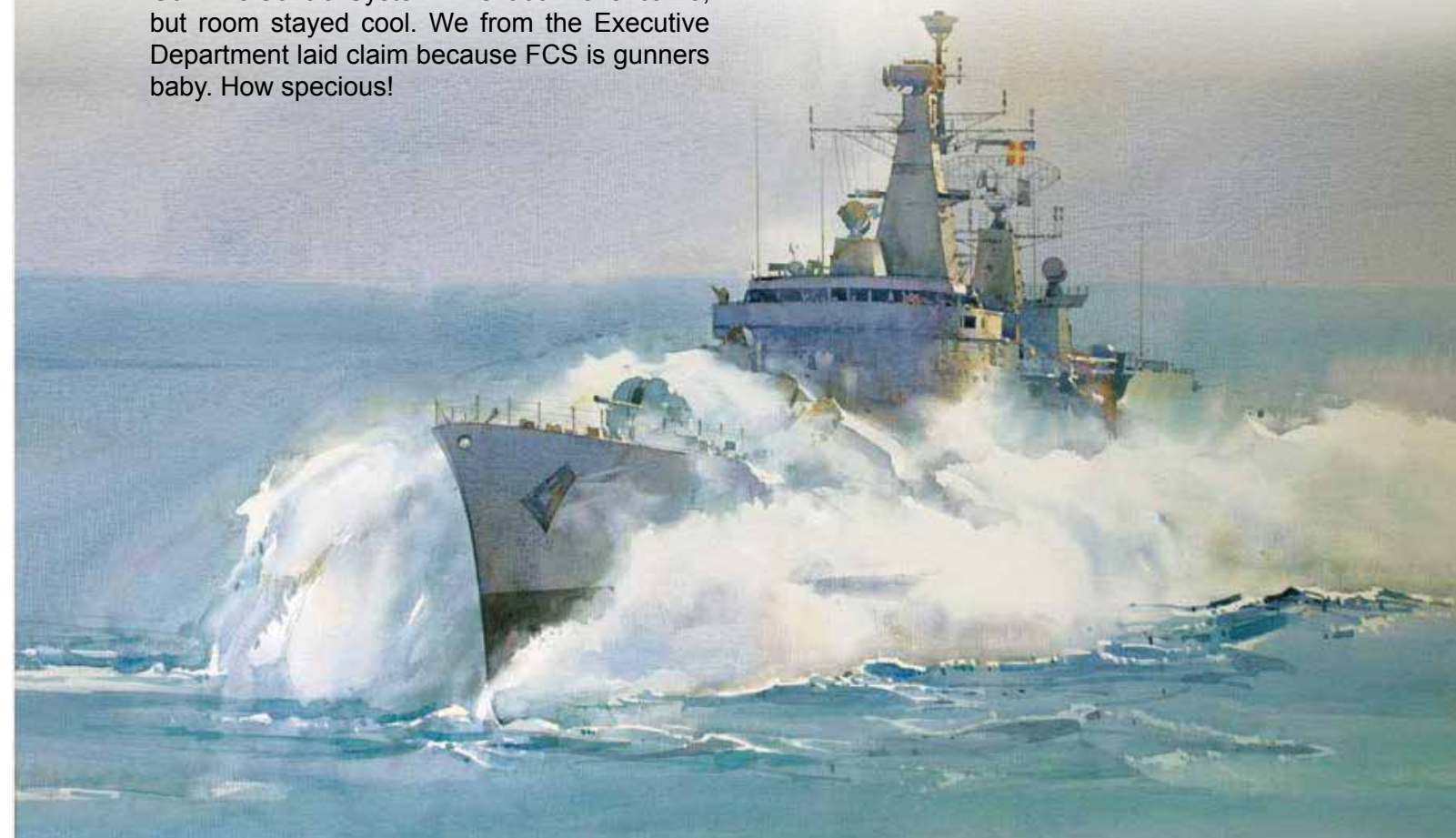
one radar in the Ops room located directly under the bridge. The OOW could see the radar picture through a special viewing port on the bridge. During rainy season, the viewing port leaked with water falling on the ARL plotting table. ARL stood for a quaint full form - Admiralty Research Laboratory. A high tech item called "Radar Reflection Plotter" had entered the service but only for modern sisters like the Ks, Bs and Ts.

Living spaces? Just one memory will suffice. Next to the ward room which was just below the main deck, there was a cabin where everything was "some sort of". The bunks, the lockers, the fan and every other fitting in the room was of "some sort" and not the actual item as commonly known. Six to seven of us lived (better term would be existed) there. I still don't know why it was called "Arab Quarters". There was a pipe running through this Arab quarters which carried water from the officers' heads located one deck above. One day during rough seas, the pipe gave way. Rest I leave to the reader's imagination.

The ship was an oven in Cochin summers. The steel of the ship could not be touched at noon and all that heat just piled layer upon layers inside! At sea, there was some relief when port holes allowed air to flow in, with occasional shower of salt water from a naughty wave. In the entire ship, there was just one compartment which was air-conditioned. It was for Radar 273 which was supposed to have been fitted to improve ships Gun Fire Control System. The radar never came, but room stayed cool. We from the Executive Department laid claim because FCS is gunners baby. How specious!

All this was eminently bearable because of the officers and men of 22 DS. They were pure gold. We all knew that we were serving on an old ship with difficult living conditions. We youngsters did not realize then, but for ships senior officers, posting on these ships was not the best career news. But they never let this dampen the frontier spirit of the ship. We called ourselves the 7th fleet. As luck would have it, towards the end of 1971 war, we looked forward to meeting the pretender 7th fleet of US Navy.

A few names ought to be mentioned. My first 'Old Man' was Late Cdr Surinder Singh (Long G), with a big beard and a bigger laugh. He was succeeded by Late Kulshreshtha (Long ND). I still have the watch-keeping certificate awarded by him. Ship's XO Cdr Bhandoola (Long ND) was always amused by us young aspirants for watch keeping. Cdr Antu (Air Engineer, never needed to know his actual name) was the EO of sister ship Godavari. He and his able deputy Jai Chacko were more executive in spirit than us 'X' People. It's here on INS Ganga, I became a serious aficionado of Clarinet because of Chacko's music magic. Gomati had the irreplaceable Lt. Unnithan who spoke alternately in English, Malayalam and Hindi and did not make sense in any. Other watch keepers were Vijay Shankar, Late James Padom, Late Kurien, Late MA Raihan, Late Bishu Roy (Long ND), MV Raghavan (Rags), Murali Krishnan (Long G) and T Hari (Aviator). I could continue but for



the limitation of 1500 words. Lots of these name would not mean much to many readers, but then I am essentially writing this article for myself and other Gangaites. So please bear with me.

The centre of our cultural existence was the wardroom. In early 70s, we had very little disposable income and not too many places to go to. High end culture was Cabaret at Hotel Malabar near the harbor mouth and Sea Lord on Ernakulum, both too pricey for us. Cochin was too conservative then to have jam sessions or crooners. There were few single screen theaters which did not change movies for weeks. So only two watering holes were available to us, The Naval Club and ships wardroom, the latter being preferable because it was more congenial and served imported booze. "Make and Mend" were regularly used to make old friendships stronger and mend wobbling friendships. We had a pure silver cocktail shaker where recipes for cocktails were engraved on the surface. The wine secretary ensured that each of the esoteric wine and liquor was ordered so that we could do justice to the entire engraved list. Small eats were always luncheon meat and cashew nuts. We looked down upon plebian oily wafers. Often sunday morning breakfast was eggs cooked in brandy with champagne to wash it all down.

Lynchpin of Ganga's wardroom was Leading Cook Fernandez with his able counterpart Leading Steward Masquita. Fernandez was small and Masquita was huge. They spoke in

Konkani with each other. Both were not MLRs and therefore cooked and served all three meals. They loved their jobs. That is where I cut my teeth as a mess secretary and became so involved in the job that I was an automatic choice as a mess secretary on every ship I served thereafter. Both these guys would take out their Hamla notes and discuss the menu with me. I have never eaten better food and never drank better cocktails in my life. Fernandez was with us during the 1971 war and war rations were plenty. We probably ate better than Yahya Khan. But Masquita was unemployed because bar was closed at sea. He used his huge physique and energy as a supply number for the 4" gun.

In 1972, old Ganga developed a major crack on her hull and was decommissioned. There was no internet those days nor too many veterans to have a glittering decommissioning ceremony which is the norm today. One fine morning, she was quietly towed to Darukhana breakup yard.

Dear New Ganga, I did not serve on you so have little to write about you except those four days when I had embarked to carry out towed array trials with Captain Vinay Singh at your helm. In comfort and sophistication, you were a world away from your earlier avatar. But the spirit was the same.

Namami Gange. I am sure you will soon come in a new Avatar and be even more powerful. Ganga has always been special for us Indians.



*Tiranga always fluttering high, INS Ganga we proudly hailed
"Fight to vanquish the enemy", with this motto, she sailed*

*Glorious past, bright future, so inspiring was its wake
She led from the front always, the enemies used to shake*

*The ship held her head high, right from her commissioning date
Leading by example, always an anti-submarine warfare frigate,*

*Not once, nor twice, but three times they chose this charismatic name,
Everyone knew that victory was hers, as soon as she entered the game*

*You need to have it in you, for this magnificent platform to woo
Apart from conquering the high seas, she had mesmerizing qualities too*

*She tracked she stalked and she had the capabilities to kill
These are very few adjectives for her never ending skill*

*Beauty in name and appearance with displacement of three thousand tons
P21, BARAK, torpedoes, chaffs and unforgettable three blazing guns*

*She challenged the foes if they dared, with list of records she could hold
Queen of the fleet with years of experience, some said she was getting a tad old,*

*She had achievements of the past, she had a history to boast
A jewel in the crown of the Indian Navy, silent, mighty guardian of the coast*

*Right from the helm, to the smallest link of the chain,
She was a power house of strength, she nurtured the smartest brain*

*She won with flying colours, be it an impossible task or challenging tests
With masters in their fields she cradled, she constituted a team of the best*

*Team Ganga were always a bunch of enthusiasts, a team bubbling with zeal
They had enough calmness in the mind; their nerves were made of steel*

*A ship with a soul of an angel, rare species of its kind
INS Ganga - the name was enough, to create ripples in any mind*

*People looked at it with awe; she brought a relief to their sigh
She fought to vanquish the enemy, with the Tiranga fluttering high.*

Lt Cdr Pranav Joshi is an alumnus of 07th Naval Orientation Course, Indian Naval Academy and is presently serving as Logistics Officer, INS Kadamba.

35 years and 27 commissions' later Ranjit stands at the cusp of 'Sailing into the Sunset' thus beginning the end of the era of SNFs in the Indian Navy. The ship commenced her Extended Refit and Dry Docking (ERDD) on 31 May 18 and is likely to be decommissioned soon.



JEET-JEET RANJIT

The beginning of the end of an Era

By Lt Cdr Venkata Phani



INS Ranjit the third ship of the Rajput class destroyers was commissioned on 15 Sep 1983 in the erstwhile USSR with then Captain Vishnu Bhagwat in command. The commissioning crew set the tone for the following commissions and true to its name, Ranjit was always victorious everywhere and every time whilst being the torch bearer of the Indian Navy's reach, spirit and potency.



Operational History

INS Ranjit post commissioning and trials set sail from Poti in USSR on 14 Nov 1983 and entered Mumbai on 22 Dec 1983. During its passage to India the ship visited ports in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Egypt.

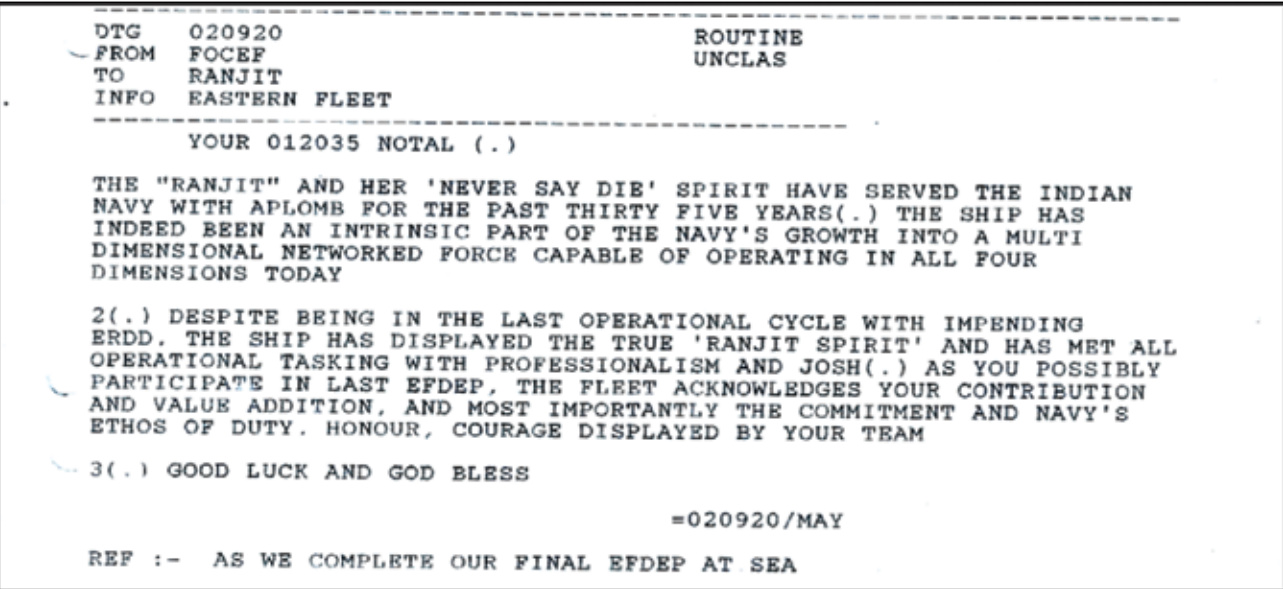
INS Ranjit- Passage from USSR to India

The ship during its 35 years of commission has served under the Flags of both FOCWF and FOCEF and has had the proud privilege of being the Flagship of both fleets a number of

times. Post commissioning the ship joined the Western Fleet and operated under the Flag of FOCWF till April 1999 when under the command of then Captain RK Dhowan, the ship shifted to Vishakhapatnam to become a part of the Eastern Fleet. INS Ranjit's first fleet deployment program was WFXP 01/84 from 02-06 Jan 1984 while her last outing with the Eastern Fleet was EFDEP 06/18 from 29 Apr-02 May 2018. In the case of INS Ranjit the "Sun Rose in the West but would set in the East".

FOCEF Signal on Completion of Last Fleet Deployment Program

Over the years, the ship and the 27 commissions who manned her have contributed to her firepower, potency and reach to the many endeavors' of the Indian Navy. Ranjit has sailed the seas with pride and has left her footprints on the far reaches of the Indo-Pacific as it boldly rode the waves in pursuance of Indian Navy's mission of keeping the seas secure. The ship was at the forefront of crucial Naval operations right from the start and took part in Brass tacks and OP Pawan, OP Cactus, OP Falcon, OP Vijay, OP Farishta, OP Sirius and OP Madad to name a few. INS Ranjit has been an integral part of fleet deployments and tactical exercises in addition to Overseas deployments. In 2007 the ship took part in SIMBEX, Ex Indra and Ex Malabar. INS Ranjit's last major OSD was OSD 12-SPICA wherein she visited eight ports including Singapore, Subic Bay, Pusan, Naha,



Manila, Makassar, Surabaya and Port Kelang. Ranjit received the Unit Citation for the year 2010-11 for consistently achieving operational objectives and excellence in every facet of operational assignments. She is one of the few ships of the Indian Navy to have been bestowed this prestigious honour twice, the earlier being in 2003-04. In 2013 and 2015, the ship was adjudged the “Best Ship” during the Fleet Awards Function and also won the prestigious “Cock Ship” trophy during the pulling regatta.



Affiliation

In 1997, Ranjit became the seventh Indian Naval Ship to be affiliated with a Regiment of the Indian Army. INS Ranjit was affiliated to the Punjab Regiment on 04 Nov 1997 at a colourful and impressive ceremony held onboard the ship at Naval Dockyard Mumbai. The ship was then commanded by Capt Rajiv Dhamdhare and the Chief guest for the function was the then Colonel of the Punjab Regiment Lt General GS Brar, PVSM, AVSM,VSM. The Punjab Regiment was the first infantry regiment of the Indian Army which sailed overseas by the sea to fight various battles and campaigns. It is in recognition that the regiment has a crest that prominently symbolises a ‘Galley’ which is unique for an infantry regiment not only in the Indian Army, but also across the world. The regiment aptly has the motto – ‘Sthal-Wa-Jal’.

The Last Commission

Over a career spanning 35 years, the ship has been manned by 27 commissions. The last and the 27th commission took over the ship on 06 Jun 17 when Capt Vikram C Mehra took over command of the ship. Challenged by vintage and BER systems and maintenance intensive equipment, but buoyed by the Ranjit Spirit and inspired by the deeds of their predecessors the 27th commission was determined that Ranjit would sail into the sunset in a “Blaze of Glory”, thus ensuring that the ship was one of the most operationally deployed units of the Eastern Fleet during the year 2017-18. The ship sustained a long range forty day deployment to A&N islands in Sep-Oct 17 and completed it by towing Ex-Mahish over a distance of 720 nm from Port Blair



to Visakhapatnam – a challenge that the 35 year old ship achieved with élan. This was just the beginning of the many milestones achieved over the year. During ENCORE -18 the ship achieved a rare double by taking part in two PMFs and successfully firing a SAM and SSM on the same day, demonstrating that her ageing systems still packed a powerful punch. The ship fired seven torpedoes, which was the maximum number of heavy weight torpedo firings by a single unit in the Indian Navy in 2017-18. This included two successful salvo firings making Ranjit one of the few ships to have fired two salvos in a single firing season. In addition, the ship was at the forefront of all ASW activities in the fleet and took part in a number of torpedo recoveries, ASW exercises and SUBDEPs. In pursuance of the Indian Navy’s strategy of building maritime bridges of friendship, the ship also undertook PASSEX with the Bangladesh Navy and Japanese Navy off Chennai and Vishakhapatnam respectively. The 27th commission proved that as far as Ranjit was concerned, age was only a number and when it came to ordnance delivery, the ship made sure that every shot counted. No wonder the Fleet Commander signaled to Ranjit at sea “Iss Jahaz Mei Jaan Hai”. INS Ranjit finally ‘finished with both main engines’ after its last sea sortie on 16-17 May 18 which fittingly was also a successful torpedo firing.



Now and Forever

Despite nearing the fag end of its illustrious career, the ship’s achievements in the last year are what many other platforms can only aspire to emulate. The various commissions of this mighty warship stand testimony to the belief that it’s not just the machine, but the men behind it that make the difference. INS Ranjit has been crewed by some of the finest professionals in the Indian Navy and the achievements of the ship over the years stand testimony to the professionalism, perseverance, grit and resolve of the various teams of Sea Warriors who have upheld the ethos of the service – Duty, Honour and Courage. The achievements of the ship over a span of 35 years is the stuff of legends and her contributions to the Indian Navy’s mission of keeping the country secure are permanently etched in the annals of Naval History. INS Ranjit in her current avatar may be sailing into the sunset, but her spirit lives on in the hearts and minds of the crew who manned her and it will be this spirit which would transfer to a new and more modern Ranjit sometime in the future and the battle cry of ‘Jeet Jeet Ranjit’ would once again echo in the premises of the Naval Dockyard and at sea as her successors take forward her legacy of “Ever Victorious in Battle”.

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SHIP OF THESEUS

By Lt Cdr Vrat Baghel

Bowing to the relentless onslaught of time, INS Ganga's ensign is ready to rest in a wooden box in the archives section of a building whose existence is known by very few!

The same ensign which, as it went down for the last time with the Last Post on the sunset of 22 Mar 18 churned up a sea of memories and also reduced the toughest of men into a pulp of emotion.

So is she history? Or is she just falling victim to Theseus's Paradox. She was, after all, the future when she burst on to the scene more than thirty two years ago. Inheriting a fabled pennant number and motto equaled only by the mystique of her name, she attracted the best of men much like her previous iteration. And when (it is surely a no-brainer) the fifth iteration sees the light of the day, she will also be INS Ganga – Pennant No. 22, promising to "Fight to Vanquish the Enemy". But she will be more modern, be manned by a different generation and breed of men and will be the guiding light to the fleet of the future. But then again, so was the fourth avatar as compared to the third, the third as compared to second and so on. The King is Dead, Long live the King. So is Ganga history? Or is she the future? Or is she, with several of her components keeping so many things alive on other ships, the Ship of Theseus floating through time?

I am not a particularly emotional type of a person. In my own sister's words, I have the

"emotional quotient of a carrot". But something about ships being reborn as a new entity with an existing identity is a concept that almost blurs the distinction between the thespian and the philosophical. When I say (with a lot of pride) that I am the last Gunnery Officer of INS Ganga, I am inevitably reminded of Vice Admiral MS Pawar. An absolute enigma of an Officer, the Admiral was commanding INS Talwar when I was appointed there for my watchkeeping in 2008. With a voice that was inspiring but perennially bordering on the menacing, he waved my watchkeeping ticket in my face and boomed, "This is not a release pass. It is the authority for you to be court martialled for your own mistakes. Never forget the ship". Later that year, when he was relinquishing command, I saw a never before seen side of him. He had a lump in his throat and was extremely emotional. That night, he told us that he was the last Watchkeeping Officer of the old INS Talwar. "Aah!!" I thought. Re-incarnation, re-iteration, sense of belonging, new wine-old bottle... it is a pot-pourri of so many things. But it all somehow makes sense to me now.

For a better understanding of it all, I tried to look for parallels in the other services. Soon enough, however, I realized that the definition of the

problem lies in the very structure of the different services. I know of several examples of a son serving in the same regiment as his father's – needless to say with a lot of pride. But the spirit is not derived from one tank, one AD gun, one platoon, one piece of equipment. Similarly, one aircraft will never be the pride of an entire squadron in the Airforce. It is the squadron as a whole that will seek and bring laurels.

But the naval ship is different. Surely, it needs other ships of the fleet to put forth a formidable front in the presence of an adversary. But that one ship will always have a character - shaped by her own past - so inherently different from every other, that she is a story unto herself. With all due respect to the entire military machinery, there is no single unit/equipment in the armed forces that delivers so many tangibles while being driven by so many intangibles as a warship. Take my ship for example. She was a 32 year old piece of Indian equipment propelled by British machinery. For air defence, she had an Israeli system which was operated by a sailor from UP who lost his father while he was still young. Her Gunnery Officer, the son of a high ranking Government Official and the grandson

of a freedom fighter, was the senior most Gunner in both the fleets combined. The maintenance of the system was looked after by a sailor from Punjab. The Weapons Maintenance Officer is the son of a retired Colonel from Madhya Pradesh. I could go on, but my wife reined me in as she read this!

The more you delve into stories of individuals that have manned this fine ship, the more myriad the canvas of her history becomes. As the news of Ganga's impending decommissioning gathered reach, more and more ex-crewmen started paying a parting visit.

"I got married while posted here"

"I got promoted twice on this ship"

"This was the first ship in the Navy to be fitted with Barak. And I was the first one to fire it"

"My daughter was born when I was posted onboard"

"She looks as good as new"

And, perhaps, none as spectacular as this – The last Commanding Officer of the ship was a midshipman on this very ship. In other words, the last ship of his naval career was also his first!

So many stories with so many sub plots, yet my ship is no more. She was not a tabloid grabbing rockstar like a carrier or a destroyer and will thus not be turned into a museum. She was not a small ship and will therefore, not grace a shoreline or a parade ground. Her ending will be sad. She will be undone by a homing head that did its job. She will remain in folklores, but those folklores would do circles within a closed and progressively depleting group of men who served on her. Yet those folklores of Ganga would centre around two mystical intangibles that cannot be defined – the soul and spirit of a ship. Like a phoenix, Ganga will surely rise again and when the white ensign will rise on the fifth avatar, many onlookers would not understand why a small group of oldies are getting overtly excited. I will be in that small group, grey with age but full of gumption.

So go in peace Ganga into the sunset, till called yet again by the Indian Navy to fly the Naval Ensign.

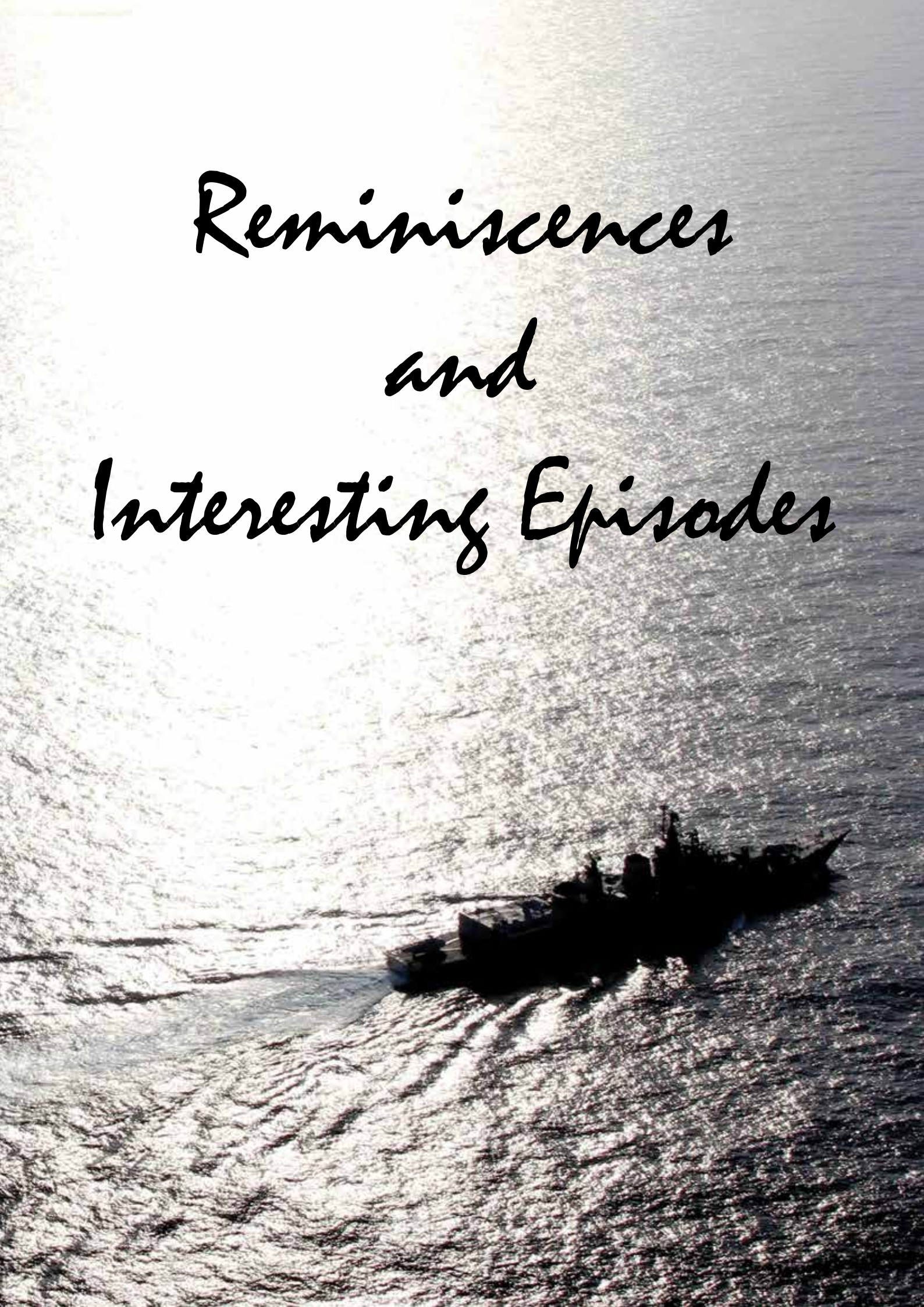
Au Revoir Ganga – you were named after a river but left behind an ocean of memories.

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Reminiscences and Interesting Episodes

World Masters Athletics Championships 2018

By Cdr. V. Sriramulu (Retd.)

In the XXIII World Masters Athletics Championships held at Malaga, Spain from 4th to 16th September 2018, I won a Silver Medal in the 10km Road Race. I missed participation in my favorite 5km event owing to the very late receipt of Visa, along with two other contestants from Visakhapatnam. In fact a total of 41 other Indian athletes missed their complete participation owing to their non-receipt of Visa. This mishap occurred due to the inordinate delay in submission of our Visa applications by the National Athletics Federation, Bengaluru and prolonged processing by the Spanish Consulates at Hyderabad and their senior office at Mumbai, resulting in considerable disappointment and financial loss to the contestants, the major payments for flight and hotel charges especially being non-refundable.

In a Race Walk, 3 conditions need to be fulfilled. Firstly the heels should hit the ground at every step. Secondly both the feet should not be up at the same time as it amounts to run. The third requirement, known as “Knee-Lock” (Bringing the leg perfectly straight at each step) is the most demanding. I, a shortie to start with, have an age handicap also. Though I completed 95 years, on 18 July 18 and am eligible to participate in the top age group of 95-99 yrs, being one year younger officially, I had to compete with the younger group of 90-94 yrs. Still I did my best in the 10km Race, scoring a Silver. But the added strain in the longer 20km event and that with younger competitors resulted in my missing out the “Knee-Lock” requirement in three steps at different stages and I was disqualified. M. Tamminer of Finland, the second contestant, too similarly left, leaving the field vacant in this senior age category.

At an advanced age of 90 years and above, the flexibility of the body especially at the waist and knees will not be upto the mark and merits consideration. Application of the same

yard-stick with severity over the very wide range of 35-95 years seems very demanding. Perhaps a re-look on this count by the world body seems justified, if only to encourage participation of the super-senior athletes.

World Masters Athletics Championships are conducted every two years for veterans over 35 years in all field and track events, for each 5-year age – group, men and women separately. The other alternate years, each continent holds its own Championships. The next Asian event is scheduled in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in September 2019 and the world event in Toronto, Canada in July 2020.

This year at Malaga, a total of 5495 Men and 2692 Women athletes took part from over 100 countries. The Indian contingent consisted of 122 men and women athletes, the smallest contingent on record. In the very keen competition this time, our Indian athletes’ performance was not up to the mark. But I am very glad to say that four Gold Medals were won by our oldest woman contestant, Man Kaur (102), scoring in 100 and 200m running races and Javelin and Shot-put throws. A HILARIOUS BRAVO to our grand Grandma! The oldest male athlete was Ottaviani also 102 from Italy who won Long Jump and Triple Jump events.

To recall, at the previous world meet at Perth, Australia in October 2016, I won all the three Race walk events, scoring 3 gold Medals, in fact a Grand-Slam Achievement. I keenly wish to regain my earlier record at Toronto. My medal tally presently stands at 5 Gold and 3 Silver medals in the World Championships and 7 Gold, 3 Silver and 2 Bronze Medals in the Asian events.

I am now keenly looking forward to the forthcoming world event at Toronto in July 2020. I would then be past 97. The spring in my step may reduce but practice is everything. “Life is a game and play it to the full”.



Snippets from the Sea

By Cdr Samir Roy Choudhury (Retd.)

Navy life and its sea sojourns make for some great memories that are replete with interesting episodes

Action at sea

In the 1970's I was the Electrical Officer of a Petya based in Vishakhapatnam while the CO was an understanding officer and a rising star. The Fleet Commander (FOCEF – Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet) was a swashbuckling and debonair old school officer who would come to see off every ship before it went for a sortie or any other exercise.

Before any sailing the Petyas had a routine called "Sea and Action" where all ship systems were switched on and operated to check that they were functioning properly. Started one hour before sailing, this 45 minutes drill is generally conducted by the NO (Navigating Officer).

Petyas had small encased propellers at the stern on the Port and Starboard side called POVROTs (Active Rudders) which aided the ship in taking

short, tight turns. One of the last items to check in Sea and Action was the starting of the Povrots. These were started 90 degrees outwards from fore-and-aft line. The start sequence of these was that the one on the outer side of the jetty was started first so that the stern swung towards the jetty and the inner one was started thereafter and it balanced out. Also to note is that during 'sea and action' the gangway is removed and gangplank is put (generally at the quarterdeck) for last minute traffic between ship and jetty. On this particular occasion, just before the Povrots were to start, FOCEF came to the jetty and as the CO was informed, he came out to meet him. As he was crossing the gangplank, the wrong side Povrot got started and the ship's stern swung out. As a result the gangplank and the CO (in Number 8's and Peak cap) went straight into the oily water between the ship and the jetty right in front of FOCEF. Luckily the gangplank did not touch the CO and he was not physically hurt. A Jacob's ladder was put down and the CO came up and within three and a half minutes had a shower, changed and went to meet FOCEF again who took it all in a very sporting manner. After taking leave of FOCEF he came back on board and we sailed for Port Blair for our mission. Both I and the NO were waiting for the CO's call – a call we did get but the CO was a great man who took it in the right spirit and noted the incident as an experience gained. I revere the CO and we are still in touch.

Car Over Board

In Vishakhapatnam there are Finger Jetties where Submarines and Petyas berth. During one of my tenures our Petya and another Petya were berthed on adjacent Finger jetties opposite the EB/TPW (Energy Block/ Torpedo Preparation Workshop). The CO of the adjacent ship had just come back from a foreign posting and had a bright coloured foreign car, which everyone knew in Vizag. One day I was taking both watches (held at 1415h) in the afternoon and both these watches were on the Foxle (Foc'sle). While taking both watches I saw the bright coloured car turning around the Energy Block towards the jetty and then going parallel to it – the CO of the adjacent ship was coming back to his ship probably after lunch. Suddenly I saw the car swerve 90 degrees port and go straight into the water. Since it is warm in Vizag the CO was driving with window screens down which helped him come out of the submerged car and swim to the nearest ladder and come up

to the jetty with his white uniform (No 8's) full of oil muck. Later on we learned that the steering wheel had suddenly turned and got stuck. A dockyard crane with the help of a diver brought up the car later, which was covered with oil slick and quite a sight to see.

All's Well That Ends Well

In 1976-77, whilst I was SLO on the staff of FOC-in-C East, I was sent by the CLO to accompany FOC-in-C for inspection of INS Jarawa and other establishments in Port Blair. A VIP aircraft was called from the Comm Squadron of IAF (ostensibly from Allahabad) for C-in-C's movement and we were all going in the VIP aircraft which was a converted Avro. I and the CCO were sitting across one table in the main cabin along with other officers around other tables while the C-in-C was in his cabin. Vizag to Port Blair flight time was three hours. After one and a half hours of flying, exactly midway, the cabin started filling with such thick smoke that the CCO and I couldn't see each other, leave aside seeing other tables. Everybody fell silent, not knowing what had happened and whether the aircraft was about to catch fire or ditch. In about ten minutes the smoke cleared and everybody heaved a sigh of relief. The flight commander announced that the bearing lubrication of one of the air conditioning motors of the aircraft had stopped, leading to the jamming of the bearing which resulted in the smoke getting sucked into the cabin.

Those were probably the longest ten minutes of my life (may be everybody's life who were on the aircraft) and we lived another day to tell the tale. The flight commander decided to return to Vizag to repair the fault with spares being flown in from Allahabad. On return to Vizag we learnt that as a precaution SAR (Search and Rescue) ships were made to sail, which would have taken two days to reach anyway. Families of personnel on board were also informed and there was complete panic in Vizag for a few hours. Two days later, after the repair of the aircraft, we left again for the inspection at Port Blair.

Candle in the Wind

Once when our ship was SAR ship we received a signal that a merchant vessel has lost control and was floundering about 100 nm north east of Chennai (then Madras). There was a weather report of a hurricane forming on the course. Notwithstanding, we set course to the merchant

vessel to render assistance. After about four hours of sailing, the hurricane caught us or maybe we sailed into its way and sea state 1 & 2 immediately changed to 5 to 6 and sometimes 7. Petyas are small ships of 1000 tons but are pretty stable. However, since the rolling was becoming very uncomfortable for the ship's safety the Captain decided to face the wind so that the rolling reduces but pitching increases a bit. Head-on the ship gives a very small cross section than when abeam and hence the effect of wind reduces. This continued for about 34 hours when we came to a lull. Ninety per cent of the crew were very sea sick and couldn't move with some even lying in their own vomit. Galleys were not working.

The few of us who didn't feel sea sick (which included the CO, XO and most of the HODs, a few senior sailors and fewer junior sailors) were

trying to handle all jobs whilst sustaining on tinned and frozen food. We were relieved to hit a lull when the crew started moving but in about five hours we hit the other side of the hurricane. For the next thirty hours we were pitching like mad and every time the foxle went down it felt as if our stomach was coming to the mouth. Thanks to our seasoned crew the ship's main propulsion, power plants and steering were all operational and we finally came out of the hurricane after about two and a half days of being tossed about like a ragged doll in a wild sea. Instead of rendering assistance to the stricken merchant vessel we ourselves landed up about 30 nm east of Chennai. We went to Chennai port for some repairs before sailing for Vizag with these three days of hurricane becoming a lifetime experience.

Cdr Samir Roy Choudhury joined the electrical branch and did a Special Weapons course from DIAT, Pune in 1971 and has contributed to the design specifications of CAIO system for P-16A class of ships. After premature retirement in 1989, he joined BEL.


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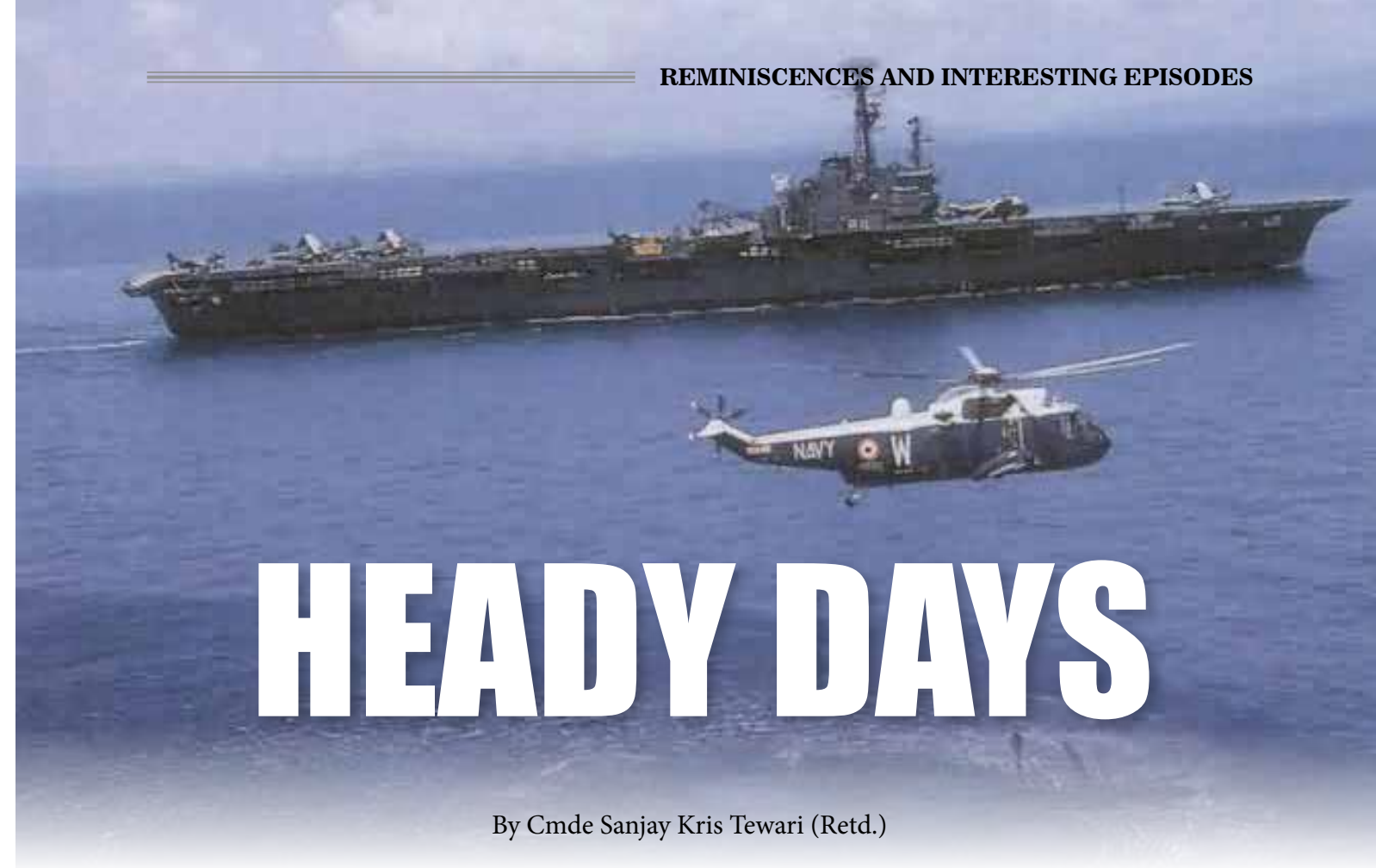
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In Pursuit of Excellence & Quality in Shipbuilding



By Cmde Sanjay Kris Tewari (Retd.)

Presenting some hazy accounts of the heady times spent in Headquarters Western Naval Command!

"Go to Headquarters and find out about the sanction for this case", snapped the DLO, thrusting a sheet of paper at me. I was on Vikrant for my Competency Training, and the DLO, Lt Cdr Malvinder Singh's word was law. However, I had no idea where Headquarters was or what sanction meant. Apart from my suitcase, the only other case I knew was me - often described as a 'lost case'.

Accompanied by a sailor, ostensibly to guide me, but actually to keep me from wandering off, I trudged across from Cruiser Wharf to the HQ building on SBS Road. I stared in dismay at the drab, non-descript building with an ensign hanging wearily from a pole and a signboard, which needed some 'brassoing', proclaiming its status as the nerve center of India's maritime power on the west coast. At the same time, a childhood memory of another Command HQ flashed through my mind – the Army's HQ Southern Command in Pune with its shining gates, carefully tended flowers and ample 'geru-chuna' as it announced its presence to the world.

The inside was even drearier. A surly RPO regarded me suspiciously as he slowly raised his

hand in a reluctant salute that seemed to drop even before it reached its destination. Clearly, he disapproved of junior officers entering his domain. I used the stairs in order to avoid a couple of nasty looking Commanders waiting for the lift. Chaperoned by the sailor, I reached the Electrical Section, which was easily the most dismal corner of that building. I had been warned not to be seen by the Staff Electrical Officer I (SLO I), who was reputed to eat young Lieutenants for snacks. I was glad to leave, least suspecting what fate held in store for me.

I had to visit the HQs often as I was assigned tasks on a regular basis. Each time I took care to avoid the two topmost floors, despite the fact that my course mate was the Flag Lt to the C in C, and had often invited me to visit his office, with the tempting offer of coffee and the use of his STD phone. Frankly I was too terrified to venture beyond known territory. One day he spotted me and dragged me along to his office on the top floor. I was awestruck! What a change there was. Leading the way was a plush red carpet, held down by shining brass fittings, elegant curtains, polished wooden wall paneling, polite staff that actually wished me, while coffee was served in a

neat china cup and saucer – in short, the whole nine yards!

The wheels of the Navy turned and I moved on. A few years later, it had turned a full circle.

I was completing a satisfying sea time on board Ranvijay and received my transfer orders to HQWNC. Thankfully, Headquarters had also moved along since, and was now inside Angre, housed in what had once been the Manor House of Garcia de Orta, the first Portuguese occupant of Bombay. Being deeply interested in history and heritage, I was fascinated with the building. Besides, after an intense sea time, I was looking forward to the five day HQ routine. Having done a full tenure in NHQ, I reckoned I knew enough about staff work to handle the next assignment confidently. I didn't know what I was in for as I found myself in the same post as that officer I had taken pains to avoid so many years ago – the SLO I.

The office was all that I could wish for – spacious and airy with an a/c, a large desk, a sofa, a battery of telephones and intercoms, staff that appeared when I whistled, a car to ferry me from home and best of all, an excellent library nearby. The CLO was one of the finest gentlemen I had ever known. His professional knowledge and experience were legendary. Most remarkable was his humility, despite being the senior most Commodore in the Command. At the same time, he knew when and how to tick off a person. I learned a great deal from him. He was always ready to talk 'tech' with anyone who visited him and would spend hours discussing the nuances of a new system with BEL engineers and ships' officers. This was a bit of a problem as we invariably found him engrossed in a discussion, when we needed his advice.

There was another problem, visiting Commodores and Captains, who were either overawed by the CLO or who simply didn't want to face him for their own reasons, would install themselves on my sofa or on the chairs across my desk and proceed to help themselves to the telephones, making it difficult for me to function. My responsibilities were simply described as – Delhi Class, SNFs, OPVs, new acquisitions, all shore establishments, airfield equipment, EMI/EMC, Manpower, taking flak for the entire section, keeping NHQ at bay, running the office

and sorting out internal bickering and quarrels and anything else the junior SLOs couldn't or didn't want to do.

Another task was added after the CLO went to Delhi on the first ty duty after I joined. I had assumed that his secretary would see to his ty duty formalities. Immediately as he returned, he summoned me and mincing no words informed me that I hadn't done my job, as there was no car to receive him at the airport when he landed and that he had to take an auto rickshaw to the Mess where he managed to get a room only after some discussion with the staff there. From then on, the CLO's Secy also came under my watch and that faux pas was not repeated.

I thought I knew staff work, having worked in NHQ, but there was a subtle difference between these two HQs – NHQ and HQWNC. For one, there was no question of working late in NHQ. The DSC sentry arrived promptly at 1800 and if you didn't have written clearance to work late, out you went. In HQWNC, there were no such restrictions – you worked as long there was work.

The other thing was, the time you could take to attend to files. In NHQ, you could safely tell the messenger, who brought the file, "*Agley haftey aana*" and the officer, who had sent the file would actually be grateful, if you could attend to it in a week. But here, things were different, the CSO (Tech) was just down the corridor and the C-in-C and COS one floor above. Besides, as a number of cases for sanction came from ships, if you didn't attend to the case within a day or two, you invariably had an officer from the ship visit you. However, unlike NHQ where one rarely had visitors, I found a stream of visitors throughout the day – officers from ships, engineers from BEL and ECIL, reps of private companies, officers on ty duty, sailors with jobs or personal requests and the lot. The SLO I was the 'Go To' man in the 'L' Division for the rest of the world. I began to understand why that SLO I in another building and another time, had operated on such a short fuse.

We slowly set a system in place – ships' officers were restricted to timings, a move that was initially viewed as cheekiness on my part but later understood. I began to personally filter BEL and ECIL engineers and messengers bringing



files were told to leave files with the OS, who would put them up twice a day. In those days, COTS navigational radars were gradually being added to ships, as the older Volga and ZW06 radars had lived their lives and were ineffective and problematic. Every ship wanted a COTS radar, and sent compelling cases that were hand delivered by officers, while their CO personally monitored their progress. The problem was that the C-in-C wasn't inclined to sanction, saying that they were way too expensive.

So, the task assigned to us was to find COTS radars that cost under two lakhs. Eventually, we identified one such product that cost just Rs 1.5 lakhs abroad. The problem was how to buy it and bring it to India. We left that part to the CLOGO and we didn't venture to ask how he did it. Suffice it to say, one day a couple of sailors entered my office carrying some packages. The radar had arrived. It was unpacked and duly arranged on my table. The C-in-C was promptly informed. Before I could tidy my office, the door opened and in walked the C-in-C, accompanied by the COS and CSO (Tech), followed by a train of Flag Lts and Staff Officers. While everyone admired the compact piece of engineering, I

glanced anxiously at the opened file on the shelf containing a page of 'green ink' noting that I had been struggling to address for a few days. Fortunately and sportingly, the Flag Officers chose to ignore everything else in the room and the C-in-C soon left beaming like a proud father at a wedding.

In those days, the Command IT Section was a tiny outfit comprising one 'L' officer and a couple of 'L' sailors that operated from a couple of rooms behind our offices. Since we had organized a tea party for some of our outgoing sailors I decided to include them as well. However, I thought it fit to seek the CLO's concurrence just the same. It was then that I received a gem for which he was widely known, "If by doing something it makes someone happy, you don't need to ask me. Just do it."

We had our fun moments too – once a month, we would organize the "SLOs' Lunch" where we'd order biryani from Trishna Restaurant, which would be laid out in one of the offices, with a peon in attendance. PLDs were held in the Angre Ward Room and were a welcome change from the daily routine, where we could meet senior officers informally. Occasionally, I'd

WHERE THERE IS A WILL

By Cmde Subrata Bose (Retd.)

Adversities and obstacles can be successfully overcome if they are faced head on whilst keeping the objective in view



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walk across to my friend Dhananjay Joshi's ship, and we'd have a few laughs.

The range of topics that came my way was phenomenal. Nearly every day, I'd get a call from a ship or an outlying unit with a problem and I was expected to give them a solution. FMU wanted me to intercede on their behalf to stop the transfer of a sailor out of the Command; MO(MB) would call up for advice on LCD projectors or TVs or whatever electronic they were thinking of procuring; some small ship's CO would call up desperately trying to get all his communication sets installed before he became operational again and sometimes Trata needed help with their MMCBs. The list went on. During Op Parakram, ships had to be sent for forward deployment at a remote port and a way had to be found for them to conserve generators. So we procured two mobile shore generators on priority and dispatched them ASAP.

We had our share of prickly issues too. An officer who had joined for a short duration began to make certain demands saying that he was senior to me. The matter was referred to the

CAPO, who ruled in his favour. But the CLO was quite clear and delivered the final verdict in no less a manner than a Supreme Court judge – "Seniority and authority are two different things. Authority comes with responsibility. We can give him a few papers to sign so that he feels good, but you will continue to handle things here."

I was fortunate to be cleared for Captain, while I was in HQWNC. That day, the one line on the HQ intercom that I had never dared use, began flashing, it was the C-in-C calling personally to congratulate me. Shortly after, the CLO went on long leave for his daughter's marriage, after which he went for a course. When he returned, he called for the other officers in my office and paid a great compliment. He said, "Not once during the three months that I have been away, did I receive a call from any senior officer at home for any official matter, which means there is a working system in place here."

My tenure was nearly over. I joined the Western Fleet as FLO, shortly after and that is a different story all together.

Against all Odds

It was March 1985 when the 1st Training Squadron consisting of the Indian Navy Ships, Delhi (Capt JG Nadkarni), Tir (Cdr H Johnson) and Cauvery (Cdr S Bose), based in Cochin, had come to Bombay for a 15-day repair and refit prior to sailing for a foreign cruise to Hodeida in North Yemen and Aden in South Yemen.

On the morning of the sailing, INS Cauvery was berthed on the Inner Breakwater and

was to cast off after INS Tir. Immediately after 'Colours', I went up on the bridge to see whether the lines were singled up and waited for my Heads of Departments to report that the ship was ready to sail. Looking around the ship I could see the happy faces of the under-training midshipmen and the ship's company ready to proceed on a foreign cruise, a first for many. It was also going to be my first foreign cruise as a Commanding Officer. It was then that I espied Lt Arya, my

young and usually cheerful Engineer Officer, coming up to the Bridge with a sombre face. He reported a defect that had cropped up in an important machinery which resulted in an inability to give me main engines now and that it would take some time to effect repairs.

I made the necessary signals to FOC-in-C West, Admiral Superintendent Naval Dockyard and TS1 that there would be delay in my sailing due to a breakdown of engine room machinery. After waiting for an hour, I was informed by the EO that there would be further delay in sailing. A further hour later, I could not get an assurance as to when the defective machinery would be repaired and was told that Naval Dockyard assistance might be required. All this time, the officers and men of the ship's company were closed up to cast off and leave harbour. It was then that I made the decision that I would try to have the necessary repairs effected on board by the ship's Engine Room staff and sail out earliest



and join up with the rest of the Squadron.

Accordingly, after having the springs and ropes doubled up and securing the men, I asked the Engineer Officer to gather the Engine Room Artificers and other Engine room sailors and meet me in the Engine Room. I told them how disappointed the ship's company was for not having sailed with the rest of the Squadron. I further told them that I was determined to sail and was confident that the highly trained ERAs by themselves were capable of effecting repairs better than anybody else. They had proved themselves in the last six months that I had been in command and I fully trusted their professional capability and felt no need to seek assistance from Naval Dockyard. I also made it clear that if we could sail latest by the next morning, we would be able to catch up with the rest of the Squadron in a couple of days and if the ship did not sail within the next 24 hours, we could well find ourselves sitting in Bombay awaiting repairs whilst the rest of the Squadron completed the cruise.

After finishing my talk I looked at each one present and there appeared to be a gleam of determination in each eye. I told them to get down to working and completing the repairs as early as possible. Next, I told my Executive Officer (Lt Cdr Burjor Vacha) to have the ship's brow taken in and that there was to be no shore leave. Nobody was to step out of the ship except for the ship's mailman for collecting mail. I also ordered the Supply Officer (Lt SS Rao) to provide tea and lime juice to the Engine room

continuously until repairs were completed.

Throughout that morning there were visits by staff from HQ Western Naval Command and Naval Dockyard Bombay to enquire whether any assistance was required. They did not (and could not) come on board when they saw that the brow had been removed. They were politely informed by me or the EXO that the ship's engine room staff was carrying out the necessary repairs.

Around 2200h that evening I was informed by a smiling Engineer Officer that the repairs had been completed and that the machinery had been tested successfully. I immediately went to the Engine room to compliment the men who looked tired but happy. The Senior ERA came up to me, saluted and said "Sir, Cauvery is ready to sail whenever you wish to do so." I told them that they had justified my faith in their professional ability.

Soon after Colours the next morning, I took INS Cauvery out to sea and, two days later, we caught up with the rest of the 1st Training Squadron.

The Night Challenge

At about 1100h one morning in 1982, I and the Admiral Superintendent Naval Dockyard (ASD) Vice Admiral NN Bhalla, along with CSO (Ops) of Headquarters Western Naval Command (HQWNC) were standing at the head of the Cruiser Graving Dock waiting for the dry dock to be flooded so that INS Vikrant could be undocked.

As Captain of the Yard (CY) it was my responsibility to

ensure that all arrangements necessary for the undocking operation had been made. This also involved getting two large tugs from the Bombay Port Trust to pull Vikrant out of the dry dock and cold-move her alongside her berth. Because of the length of the ship and the over-hang of the flight deck forward and aft and on either side of the dry dock, docking and undocking the ship was always a very delicate operation. Lt Cdr PP Singh, the Dy CY and an Asst CY boarded the ship to carry out the undocking. Other officers and personnel of my department were in position on either side of the dry dock to assist them as required. The riggers manning the lines and operating the capstans were in place. So were the tugs waiting outside the dry dock.

Flooding of the dry dock commenced but was soon stopped as some defect was found in one of the underwater machinery compartments of the ship. A little while later one of the Naval Dockyard engineers came up to the ASD and reported that the defect would take a few hours to repair and that undocking would have to be cancelled until repairs had been completed. Hearing this, I informed the ASD and the CSO (Ops) that the next high water suitable for undocking Vikrant would be after sunset and if the repairs were not completed in time, the ship would remain idle in the dry dock until the following month for suitable high water for undocking. I also informed them that an operation like undocking any ship after sunset had not been done in the past. The ASD asked me if I would undertake



the undocking after sunset during the next high water provided the repairs inside the ship had been completed. I discussed the matter with my staff and explained to them the serious consequences and the effect on the operations of the Western Fleet if Vikrant remained idle in dry dock for a long period of time. The unanimous answer was that they were ready to undock Vikrant even after sunset. I then informed the ASD and the CSO (Ops) that provided the repairs in Vikrant had been effected, I would have a go at undocking Vikrant during the next high-water which was after sunset.

The attending tugs of BPT were duly sent back. I called up the Harbour Master of Bombay Port Trust and informed him that the undocking had been delayed to later in the evening and that I would require the two tugs then.

Around 1600h, the ASD informed me that the repairs on Vikrant had been completed and that I should undock at the next high water. Once again the necessary arrangements

for undocking the ship were done including requisitioning the two Bombay Port Trust tugs and placing of a large number of flood-lights around the Cruiser Graving Dock.

If I recollect correctly, sunset was around 1830h and by about 1900h the dry dock had been flooded. Soon thereafter, when the Dy CY who was on board the ship reported to me that he was ready to undock the ship, I ordered the dock gates to be opened and the undocking operation began. The undocking operation went off smoothly, and by about 2000h, Vikrant was berthed on the inner side of Outer Breakwater, a rare feat in the

history of the Indian Navy.

As I waited below the gangway of Vikrant for my Dy CY and Asst CY to disembark so that I could congratulate them for a job well done, I saw the Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet (FOCWEF), then Rear Admiral JG Nadkarni standing on the quarterdeck of his flagship INS Mysore which was berthed on the outer side of the outer breakwater. He called me over to offer congratulations for the undocking of Vikrant at night.

The adage "Where there's a will, there's a way" had come true again.



LIFE ON MINESWEEPERS

By Cmde N Anil Jose Joseph

I was appointed Gunnery Officer onboard INS Karwar in April 89 after my PCT at Kochi. I recall the handing over being very elaborate and passionate with my predecessor covering a lot of nuances and fine detail. Incidentally I got my final spurs to drive a scooter during this PCT at Kochi with my Chief Instructor being my course mate (and also my birthday type). Poor Sharat suffered umpteen agony and scares all through the PCT with my less than tactful driving (not reckless but purely lack of knowledge on what my vehicle can or cannot do). I suspect I am responsible for a lot of his grey hair.

Life onboard the minesweeper at Vizag was distinctly different. The ships were new; onboard Karwar I was part of the third commission, while the other ships of 21 MCMS were all on First and Second Commission. The local flotilla had a unique standing and a growing reputation and as always the sports fields and extracurricular activities became the spirit that bonded the team. Professional competence was always a given with some of our T shirt mottos at that time being: "We tread where others fear to tread"; "The Fleet follows us out of harbour" Team spirit here was not just individual ship but the entire 21 MCMS.

I got appointed as GO and was actually the Squadron GO in spite of being the junior most Gunnery Officer in the Squadron. For one year in the period between the Lieutenants Hukum

Chand and KRS Tomar there was no MCMO borne. In effect I was the Squadron GO and Sqn MCMO. Further in that one year M21 undertook the Annual Inspection of all ships in the Sqn, with the NOIC inspecting M 21. And as the junior most it was a rare privilege and experience. The camaraderie and bonhomie both within the ship and the Sqn was unique. Standing in for each other was not even asked, it was assured. On Karwar I was the only bachelor officer and both NO (then Lts Ajay Saxena and Jitender Singh) and MCMO (Lt Hukam Chand and Lt KRS Tomar) were specialists and fairly senior. Whilst I held fort fairly regularly for all the married officers the reverse was also true. As I was actively involved in the sports field, many referred to me as a 'Sports quota entry'. I represented the local flotilla in every game sans Golf and my involvement in Command and Navy teams extended to games as diverse as Cross Country, Basketball, Football, Squash and Musketry. Needless to say this meant a lot of practice. All officers onboard including the XO (then Lt Cdr Kulkarni and Lt Cdr Harinder Singh); and on few occasions the CO (the Cdr Thayi Hari) as well stood in for me to go for my morning and evening practice. My first CO on Karwar then Cdr Kaushal, himself a keen sportsman was partly instrumental in my playing all games for the local flotilla.

Work never stood still for even after the morning practice one was available to the ship within half

an hour of the start of working hours. Being the only in-living officer on Karwar for a long time, one had a special connection with the men on board and with officers and men of sister ships as being M 21 there was always a lot of interaction and decision making. Further being the junior most on Karwar most of my peers were on sister ships. Add to all this the sports field brought a different connect with officers and men of 21 MCMS as playing together brings much bonding.

The affinity of the Cooks needs a special mention for they took special care of the only in living officer. As all minesweepers were berthed together, some of us ate together and the cuisine of each ship became a quiet competition, not to mention the special favour one enjoyed as a bachelor with all the ladies. As the only in living officer we bounced the seniors fairly often and the ladies enjoyed feeding the young gluttons of 21 MCMS.

There was an occasion when Karwar was the ready duty ship and I was involved in a football match. When I returned, I found my ship casting off without me with my course mate then Lt C Suresh from Cuddalore as my replacement. My night bag and kit were neatly packed and left on the jetty. Suresh waved at me (that was the handing over taking over) and I took his place on Cuddalore. As highlighted officers standing in for each other, team work across ships of 21

MCMS was a common occurrence. If one ship sailed out and an officer or sailor essential for the sortie was missing, another officer or sailor from a sister ship just took his place and things fell in place.

Ships were new as were the equipment onboard. Sailings were fairly regular and Minesweeping a common enough occurrence in every sailing. The first event on casting off used to be pinging on Ghazi (maybe a precursor to my turning PINGS). As young officers we handled ships freely. Among the officers despite the specializations and PCT training there was a lot of cross training / functioning. Each one taking on someone else's job was a common occurrence. And in matters of core competency like minesweeping it was fairly common to find the appointed GO or NO conducting minesweeping operations even with the MCMO present. Minesweeping being a long and time consuming process such an attitude helped. Such was the spirit that when INS Andaman sank, long after the fleet ships returned to harbour the minesweepers continued the search for survivors and bodies even in bad weather.

On the sports field, the local flotilla team was evolving. Sports field was the bastion of the Fleet and Virbahu those days and we were evolving as a force to reckon with. We were a very young team, eager and passionate on the field and our fervent participation attracted attention.

In my second year I recall a sizeable number of footballers getting selected as Command Probable's despite not being as skilful as others, our spirit displayed on the sports field won us the call. Musketry was another area with no volunteers and some of us who were 'made volunteers' went on to win medals.

Extracurricular activities were also not far behind. One highlight story is the Swarna Varsha, the Circars jubilee. This was handed over to 21 MCMS as those days Circars and NOIC were under one hat. Each ship was given a task covering subjects that included maritime history and marine life on the eastern seaboard; creating a maritime museum and aquarium and so on. As is wont, one Lt each was nominated by each ship for this herculean task. Eventually it became a team of six officers who did the entire thing (no names as it would be sacrilege for actually everyone helped us; both seniors and juniors and of course the men; but we were the legs and the engine). Seeing our passion to seek info and acquire knowledge, the enthusiasm of this team of SIX had everyone else involved and ideas were coming thick and fast.

We drove to old forts, dug libraries for research (there was no Google), travelled the length and breadth including sailing to Andaman for flora and fauna. We strived to create the aquariums and mind you both salt and fresh water ones in the Swarnajyoti museum. Yes it was our museum first created by officers and men of the 21 MCMS. Subsequently Swarnajyoti became the Conference Room (this was when I was NA to Adm Bansal) with all artifacts being shifted to

Visakha museum in town. The logic being that having a Naval Museum in the restricted Naval area was of little use as it would not be available for the public to view and relate to our great maritime history.

In all our delving of history there were plenty of stories that can be covered. Diving was undertaken on Ghazi wreck to have some items for display and amongst the stories that floated there was an interesting story that in the initial dives on the Ghazi wreck people had found daily Bazaar chits of Kakinada. Come to think of it maybe it is a remarkable possibility for how could people distinguish between an Indian and a Pakistani. In our quest for marine life we had an interesting character FREDDIE. This was the tree climbing crab from the Andaman also referred to as robber crab which climbs coconut trees and drop coconuts. He did survive at Vizag and was a huge attraction during our tenure.

Our quest and historical forays improved our knowledge of history and respect for our rich cultural diversity and maritime heritage. And physically moving through those areas and ruins had its own impact. It forced us to read more, research more and discuss to have a deeper understanding. Different versions and perspectives of history developed in us the need to verify and analyse. Ships also do have a spirit of their own. When I commissioned Shardul I often emphasized that whilst the dockyard and other agencies can build ships it's the crew that brings life to that steel and builds character for the ship.

Commodore Neriampampil Anil Jose Joseph is an alumnus of RIMC and NDA. An ASW specialist, he has commanded Vibhuti, Shardul (commissioning) and Ranjit. An all rounder, the officer was awarded VSM in Jan 2014. He is an avid reader and a good sportsman.



Beacons of Mariner

By Priyanka S Raj

This inspirational poem celebrates INSV Tarini while portraying the mission accomplishment mood of six women crew who faced the doldrums of the sea

Round the oceans hoisting our heroism
Diving into deep cold water, in the submarines
Sailing the valour, joy, sweat and shiver
Questioning, everyone around my life?
Oh! How long can you survive?

Oh! mysteries of seas and ships
Enough to respond the silly queries?
Dare not to light your wisdom torch
Tempt to cross the barriers of age
Beyond the boundaries of lighthouse!

Enduring and celebrating the true spirit
Fears never touch our skin nor blood
Oh! Conqueror thou decorated champions
For harder the seafarer; greater the mariner
Holding thy beacon of triumph and Naval Pride!



VICE PRESIDENT OF A DIFFERENT KIND

I wrote this piece when I moved out of the WNC Mess where I was the VPMC from Jul 16 to Jul 17. I am reproducing it as a tribute to one of Navy's most cherished places when the Western Naval Command celebrates its golden jubilee this year.

- Cmde Srikant B Kesnur

The term Vice President has many connotations. In the political domain, it could be the second most powerful person in a Presidential form of government or a senior statesman in a parliamentary form of government, such as what we in India have. In corporate circles, it implies senior management and a signal that you have arrived. But very few would know that the Navy also has some designated 'Vice Presidents' in the form of Vice President Mess Committee or VPMC for short.

Mind you, even in the Navy, not all Presidents have 'vices'. The President of a court of inquiry or an audit board or a study team has no VP. The Army uses the phrase Presiding Officer and not President for such sundry jobs. It is only in the mess, especially naval messes, that these impressive sounding designations are used. As Military messes are not merely dining halls or living quarters but hallowed institutions, they need a management committee headed by a President (usually ex officio, the head of the administrative unit running the Mess).

The Vice President is not the President's subordinate, in fact many times such as in my case, I was senior to the President. The VP is the seniormost officer residing (what the

Navy quaintly calls 'inliving' which must not be confused with living in!!!) in the mess and by virtue of that has some responsibilities and perks.

I had the wonderful privilege and honour of being the VPMC of the Western Naval Command Officers WNC(O) Mess for almost a year beginning last July. As I hand over, some wonderful memories of this 'job' 'designation' or whatever come to mind. When I reported last year to Mumbai sans family (my wife and son stayed back in Vizag to enable his continuity in the academic year as he was in the 12th standard), I was somewhat surprised to learn that I was the seniormost in the mess. Firstly, the prospect of a long enforced separation from the family was still playing on the mind. (BTW, the Navy calls such officers as geographical or enforced bachelors). Second, and more importantly, I was somewhat taken aback. My image of VPMC went back to my own young days in the Navy. The VEEPs were grey eminences, often balding, many times bearded, who sat on a high throne like chair and ate in splendid silence while stewards hovered attentively around them. They carried the burdens of the Navy on their many stripes and sometimes corpulent frames. They all looked and behaved aloof and dignified,

and woe betides anyone who was late or came to the Mess in wrong rig for the VPMC's ire was like Shiva's third eye. It threatened to reduce you to ashes.

And while the mirror may have told a different story, I did not believe I was greying or balding to be sufficiently senior. But the die was cast and there was no running away from it.

The first sensation was actually a big thrill accompanied by squirming pleasure.

That's because the WNCO Mess is like a jewel in the Navy's crown. Tucked away in the leafy bylanes of Navy Nagar in south Mumbai it stands at that magnificent piece of real estate where land meets sea. A spectacular seaside promenade, well manicured lawns and an elegant foyer make it a delightful home, watering hole, social hub, conference place and recreation zone. The WNC Mess, since my greenhorn days, was the Flagship mess of the Indian Navy where impressive receptions, formal dinner nights and glamorous Navy balls were held. Before the IMSC came up next door, in the early nineties, this was also the venue for anything from a ghazal concert to a talk on India's foreign policy. It provided, and still provides, cozy venues for informal parties and get-togethers. The unique aspect of the Mess is that despite many attractions in the immediate vicinity like the US Club and IMSC, and despite other messes having come up elsewhere (like Varuna and Kota house in Delhi), nothing can match its charm. It's the perennial favourite, in a manner of speaking.

The second aspect that made this mantle significant to me was that, like many officers, I have lived and dined in this mess as a young officer, in various ranks at various times. For bachelors or newly married officers, the WNC Mess was the coolest cul de sac. You could engage with the seductive allure and madness of Mumbai's many offerings and yet retreat to the cozy nest and the sylvan surroundings of the Mess. When you moved to other places, a whole lot of Mumbai nostalgia was about the mess days. And when one passed through Mumbai or came here on leave or duty or when you had no roof on your head or you had some friends/relatives, the transit complex of the Mess offered a ready shelter and succour.



In a way, busy messes are like airport lounges or hotel lobbies. You could bump into long lost friends or meet interesting strangers. I daresay that some of the most enduring friendships between navy officers and, indeed, their families may well have started during their mess sojourns. And WNC Mess is probably unique in this regard as well, as it has been the port of call for many of us at various times. In fact, one even develops more than a nodding acquaintance with the support staff. The mechanic who used to tend to my frequent scooter breakdowns has seen me graduate to cars. The barber has seen my hair thin and remembers that I always prefer scissors to machine, the tailor had seen my size grow, the dhobi good naturedly says no remarks "Saab has been wearing the same clothes for long". And the older civilian bearers always greet in recognition and reminiscence about old days.

So to be the VPMC of this Mess was a great feeling. It was like coming home to some great honour. But what do I make of the job itself. There is no doubt that the VPMC is a ceremonial appointment. It carries no real power. Is it like some of the vaguely 'acronymed' navy jobs that seem impressive from far, like SOPA, for example? Perhaps, I could quote what Shashi Tharoor said in a different context "Being a VPMC is like being in a cemetery. There are many people under you but nobody is listening".

I was myself clear that the job had no executive role and that was somebody else's mandate. I had to be careful not to tread into their domain. Yet, I could be a sort of 'senior statesman' who could advise and guide, emphasize tradition while keeping a keen ear to ground on the mess happenings, act as a bridge between the mess



officers and management, listen to those with cribs, push for implementable suggestions while also being sympathetic to the Mess Staff - the cooks, stewards, hygienists, civilian bearers, garden staff, housekeeping blokes, the accounts people and many others who make this place a well oiled machine.

I hope that I was able to do this, if not wholly then in substantial measure. I was somewhat strict with mess rig and appearance and exchange of courtesies, a wee bit more relaxed with timings in genuine cases and welcomed conversation and exchange of ideas.

My biggest takeaway was the outstanding discussions on a variety of topics at the 'Senior' table. This table frequented by Commanders and above, many in the same situation as me, had all sorts of characters with vast experience in different naval echelons and stations. Mess conversations are not meant to be philosophical exchanges, yet we managed to discuss many of our existential dilemmas and matters of interest. I daresay we all became wiser and closer after these chats.

I must end with a small anecdote. At dinner just two days before I left, in what was possibly

amongst my last meals in the mess, a young officer walked in with a couple of friends almost 20 minutes past closing time. I prepared myself to tell him to leave, unpleasant as the task was. I was also preparing a small harangue on respecting other people's time. He strode confidently and said "Sir, I am sorry I am late. I have just returned to Mumbai after summiting Mount Everest and was having a party with friends". I was more disarmed than deflated. And humbled. But that's the beauty of WNC experiences.

The Mess has spoilt me and my wife repeatedly tells me not to expect VPMC like treatment at home. But to her and my mess mates I will quote what a venerable Senior Officer once told me "Everybody returns to the WNC Mess at some time".

I pray that the WNC Mess always continues to be like this. My million thanks to my mess mates, the Mess Secretaries Staff and all those who have passed through or been in these precincts in the last one year. We still have miles to go and many promises to keep but I am confident that we will always fare forward. While India will have a new President later in the month, WNC Mess will have a new VP from tomorrow.

THREE MEN AND A SCHOOL

By Amarjit Singh Toor

This article was originally published in The Times of India, Tuesday, February 9, 1999



What's in a name, it is said! Quite a lot when the names are of the Navy's top brass and when all three have the same beginnings!

Dehra Dun has been home to many boys' schools like The Doon, Prince of Wales (now RIMC), Col Brown's, St Thomas, St Josephs etc.

It is also where the JSW (Joint Services Wing) and the IMA (Indian Military Academy) co-existed till the mid-fifties before the JSW (now NDA), shifted to Khadakvasla near Pune. Many a cadet of the JSW and IMA would visit their alma mater during the weekends and these cadets were looked upto as heroes by the impressionable school boys.

I was a boarder at St Joseph's and was one such lad in his early teens that got enamored by the smartly turned out cadets. My earlier ambition was to become a doctor, like my father, but the glamour of the uniform prevailed. I had never seen the sea nor had I been anywhere near it, but decided to join the Navy, like the typical 'fool of the family'. The decision was the result of an interesting episode.

One day, on school reopening after the summer vacation, I noticed my friend, Suryapal, wearing an unusual printed bush-shirt with exotic pictures of far-away places. On enquiry I was told that his brother, a Midshipman in the Navy had got this bush-shirt especially tailored for him in Singapore for it showed the places he had visited on his training ship. I bought the story for whatever it was worth.

The 'Middie' was none other than Vijay Pal (VP) Singh who had studied at St Joseph's a few years

earlier. I remembered him as a bright student, an elocutionist and an all round sportsman. I had a very close friend, Vishnu Kumar Sharma, who was a boarder like me and we used to sit at adjacent desks in the same class. Vishnu was a determined lad who had very clear ideas about his future plans. He left school in the fifth standard to join Sanawar in the Shimla hills sometime in the early '50s.

Two smart and well built brothers, Sudhir and Sushil Issacs, joined school as day scholars around this time. Their father was a professor of English language at the JSW. Sudhir was in my class and Sushil a year junior. While at school, both these lads were outstanding horsemen and polo players. They left school, when the JSW shifted to Khadakvasla and was renamed National Defence Academy. They continued to distinguish themselves, in the Navy, thereafter.

I narrate this story for a strange coincidence. The three chiefs of the Indian Navy were all from St Joseph's. Interestingly, all three had changed their names after joining the Navy. Vijay Pal Singh became Vijay Singh Shekhawat. Vishnu Kumar Sharma changed to Vishnu Bhagwat and the Sushil Kumar, was Sushil Issacs in school.

Imagine one little school, hundreds of miles from the sea, producing three successive Navy Chiefs- a great hat trick which the Irish Patrician brothers of St Joseph's, Dehra Dun, must be very proud of indeed; so would all the alumni. Bravo Zulu St. Joseph's.

The Magnificent Deeds of the Indian Army

By Captain Raj Mohindra (Retd.)

The glorious deeds of the Indian Armed Forces in World Wars I & II brings back memories of Taranto, Italy way back in 1967 when INS Brahmaputra was forced to divert to the port from Greece when there was a coup and King Constantine was overthrown.

Apart from the shore berthing party of a few men, there was no one there when the ship berthed alongside in Taranto in the early hours of Sunday. As time went by a large number of people, including several senior citizens started congregating near the ship. It was a mystery to us as to why such a crowd was building up till we were told that the news of the Indian ship's arrival was announced on the local radio. By the evening, the crowds had swelled and residents held placards welcoming Indians to Taranto and inviting us to dinners, lunches and picnics.

It was a coincidence that my hosts turned out to be the family and friends of the late Mrs. Ines Ghosh, the Italian wife of late Surgeon Rear Admiral JN Ghosh of the Indian Navy. Ghosh met Ines in Taranto where he was a Prisoner of War. They narrated heart-rending stories of World War II when the British 8th Army comprising British, Australian, Canadian, Indian and troops of other nationalities invaded Southern Italy in July, 1943 and barring the Indian Army, soldiers from all armies indulged in rape, molestation and plunder.

There were numerous stories of heroism including one where one of the ladies present told us how she was being chased by two Allied


soldiers when an Indian soldier intervened and told them not to harm her because she was his sister!

In another instance a posse of Indian soldiers voluntarily guarded an apartment building and prevented the soldiers of the Allied armies from entering it. These marvelous episodes bore testimony to the ethical standards and professionalism of the Indian Army.


The following day there was a special reception in the town hall in honour of the INS Brahmaputra personnel. Meanwhile, invitations from the citizenry continued to flow, so much so that the late Captain Erach Debu, Commanding Officer of the ship volunteered to keep harbour watch in the ship himself and let all his officers go ashore to attend the functions. Several shops of Taranto refused to accept money for the merchandise purchased by the ship's personnel. When the ship left port finally after four days, virtually the entire town was on the jetty with several bands in attendance to bid adieu. It was a very moving and emotional experience.

The officers and men of the Brahmaputra felt enormously proud of the glorious deeds of the Indian Army which were still etched in the memory of the people of Italy.


Capt Raj Mohindra has held appointments of Staff Officer to the Chief of Naval Staffs, Dy Naval Advisor, UK and Commander (S) INS Vikrant. After a stint with the Shipping Corporation of India and the Indian Express, Mumbai as its Chief Executive, he currently heads a Mumbai based educational consultancy.




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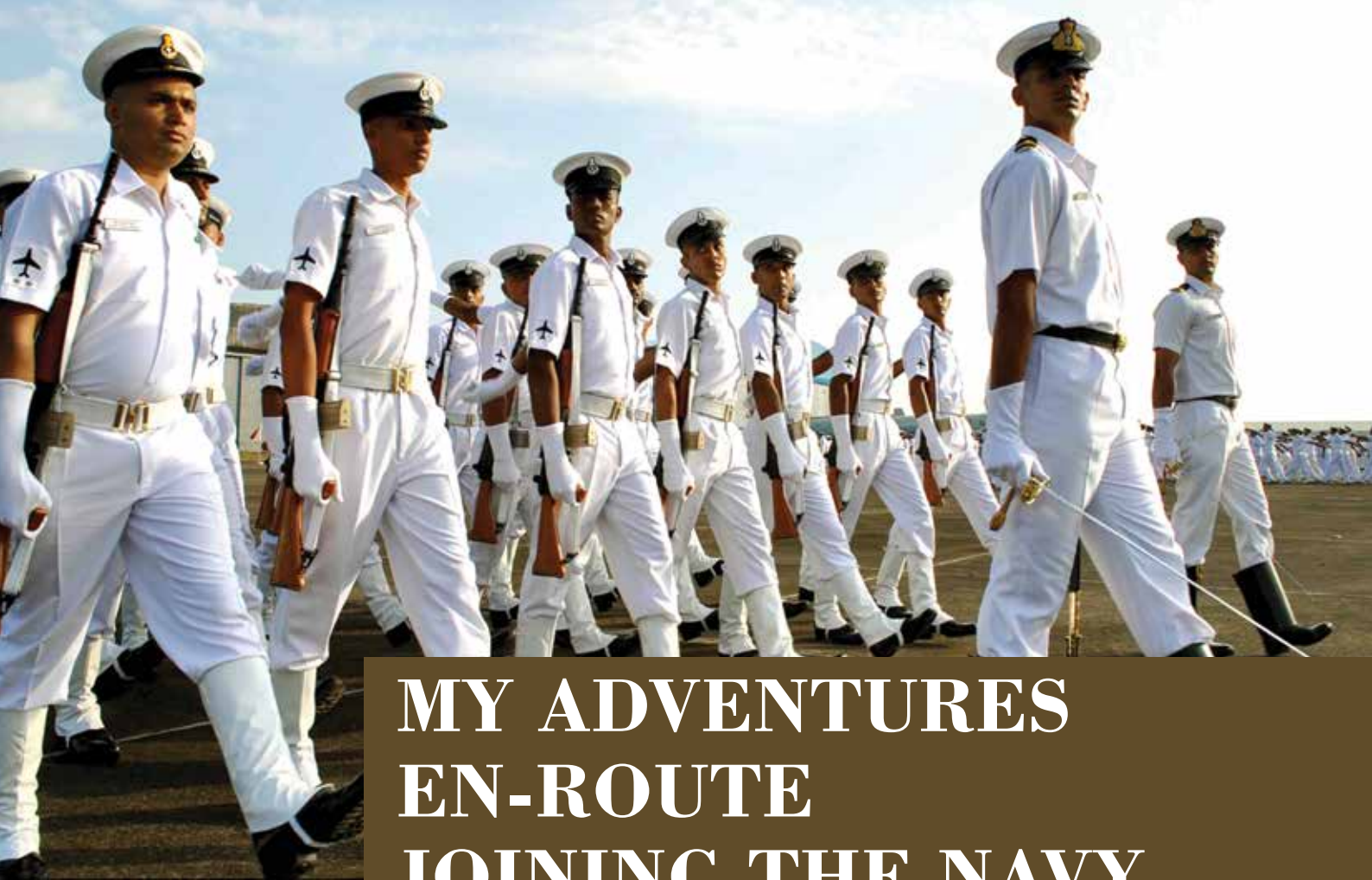
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MY ADVENTURES EN-ROUTE JOINING THE NAVY

By Cdr. C.T. Joseph (Retd.)

The highs and lows of finding your way around the Navy is quite an adventurous story

My humble story began exactly half a century ago when I joined St. Xaviers College, Trivandrum as a Mathematics lecturer; immediately after my M. Sc results were declared.

On the same day, I was introduced to an Air Force Veteran-Sqn Ldr. C Joseph (Retd), Professor and HOD, Physics Dept. who invited me to his house. In the evening, after meeting his family he asked me what I would like to have for a drink and I politely answered whatever available. Soon a tall glass filled with some brown liquid was placed in front of me. As he said "Cheers" I took my glass and gulped it in one go prompting him to coolly say that it was Rum - a hard drink that should only be sipped.

I asked his pardon as I had no experience of a hard drink except a glass or two of sweet Toddy occasionally which is usually gulped. In hindsight, I think, I was baptized into the service life with that very first glass of "XXX RUM" by a venerable veteran who was very soft spoken

and well disciplined. During the next 18 months, service customs and etiquette were slowly instilled in me. He guided me to imbibe, respect and appreciate the services and emulate myself to be worthy of a commission. Finally, in mid 1969 I applied for the short service commission and was directed to appear before the SSB at Meerut on 3rd Nov 1969.

My actual saga started here. Till then, I had crossed the borders of Kerala once when my father sent me packing to a relative's house in Madras to keep me away from a clannish skirmish that had erupted in my village.

However, I knew Meerut was somewhere near New Delhi so, I took leave from the college and set sail with all paraphernalia, visited my parents, collected some books on SSB, reached Madras Central Railway Station and boarded the second class compartment of GT Express to Delhi. A few army JCOs provided company and shared their experiences. At the New Delhi station, I met a

college mate who helped me board the train to Meerut. Finally, I reached SSB Meerut but they refused to take me inside as I had reported three days in advance!

So in the same cycle rickshaw, I returned to Meerut Railway station! After looking for a hotel or a lodge to no avail, I approached the Station Master for help but he advised me to go back to New Delhi as there was no accommodation either in the station or anywhere near. Since I was scared to go back, I requested his permission to sleep on the platform which he readily agreed.

The 'Duck Back' bed-holder I was carrying came to my rescue. I spread it on the platform and got inside. As it was a small station there was hardly any crowd or trains passing through but I could not rest or sleep. Suddenly, I observed a man in Army uniform with an arm badge 'MP' staring at me. I really got scared but managed an innocuous smile. He slowly approached me and asked "why are you sleeping here?" I told him my predicament and he was indeed God sent as he invited me to his military barracks. Initially, I refused as I was skeptical but finally accepted his invitation as I understood that he was Hav. Daniel from Military Police and a "Mallu"!

After thanking the station master, I went with Hav. Daniel to his barracks where he offered me a cot, brought food from his langar, brought a few books on SSB and provided all comforts at his command and asked me to relax and prepare. He allowed me only once to stand in queue at the langar, pay 25 paise and collect my dinner, which he had been doing for three days!

REMINISCENCES AND INTERESTING EPISODES

After three days Hav. Daniel took me to the SSB in a cycle rickshaw, waited for sometime and left. When I reported to the reception, to my horror, they again refused to take me in, since I had forgotten the photographs. I ran after him and told him the problem. He consoled me and took me straight to a studio and got the photos ready in one hour. After about 12 years, when I joined the DOP, NHQ, I could see the same photo winking at me, reminding me of the episode.

One year of teaching in St. Xaviers and my short but peaceful sabbatical in the Army Barracks stood in good stead in my various activities in the SSB. During the final interview the Board President asked me only one question; "What did you do last evening?" When I answered that I went for a movie, he asked which one I said "Sapnon Ka Saudagar", which was Hema Malini's first movie. Later, when the results were announced and my chest No.17 was called out I thought the Brigadier must have been a great fan of Hema Malini !!

My saga was at its culmination, with a funny twist but a happy ending as during the medical examination at the M.H. I was subjected to an ear test for the first time. A medical assistant kept a paper on my left ear and started scratching it, while another one, a little away; was saying something, to which I did not pay much attention. The process was repeated on my right ear. Since I did not repeat even a single word between them they decided that I was DEAF!! I overheard the word "deaf" and



confronted and told them that I was not deaf and I did not repeat the second man since no one told me to do so. Then they agreed to repeat the test. But I was under tension and requested for a smoke outside.

I had my cigarette pack with me but no lighter. I asked the first man, I met outside for a match box but he said 'No' and gave me a surprised look. There were a couple of them in pajamas sitting around. So, I went to the second one and repeated the request. He scornfully looked at me and said no. A third gentleman who was watching me called me to his side and asked me "Are you a Madras? Don't you know that Sardars don't smoke?" Except Sardar Khushwant Singh through "The Illustrated Weekly Of India" this was my first encounter with a sardar in flesh and blood!. I was flabbergasted and felt ashamed and feared that I was guilty of sacrilege and immediately apologized to both sardars who were patients admitted in the M.H.

My tensions vanished in thin air as I completed my tests successfully. The next day was 9th Nov 1969 which was Deepavali and which I celebrated with Hav. Daniel. Later, when we bid farewell at the railway station, I could see him beaming with pride. We were in communication for a couple of years but lost contact thereafter.

My misfortunes accompanied me on my return too. I broke the journey at Nagpur, visited my aunt, celebrated but kept some money for the remaining part of the journey. After I boarded the train bad luck struck me in the form of TTR who informed that the second class warrant issued by the SSB was valid only in passenger trains, though no such train exists even today connecting New Delhi and Chennai.

After paying the fine my cash reserve drastically fell to a single digit. The situation prompted me to start practicing survival techniques! I skipped meals though regularly went to the pantry car. The basket of oranges I had bought at Nagpur station, came to my rescue and I managed to survive till I reached home after three days.

My teaching in St. Xaviers lasted till I joined on 9th Mar 1970, at the Naval Base, Cochin. As I bid farewell, Sqn Ldr Joseph, who continued to be a father figure until his death, advised me to learn tennis and bridge in addition to keeping myself informed of important national and international affairs by listening to BBC/ AIR.

Towards the end of my Naval career, I did learn tennis under the guidance of my XO and became a partner to the C-IN-C, but could not learn Bridge. Before parting, he also gave me an introduction letter to one of the senior officers in the Naval Base who was blessed with a couple of girls, but not without the statutory warning "**Beware of the SODA, you may get hooked!**"

MEMORIES OF A NAVAL ENGINEER

By Cmde R. S. Huja (Retd.)

The Bangladesh War of 1971 provided the backdrop for some memorable reminiscences that are now a part of history

I joined INS Brahmaputra in 1970, when the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibar Rehman won by a thundering majority and staked claim to power but Pakistan refused to give them their due.

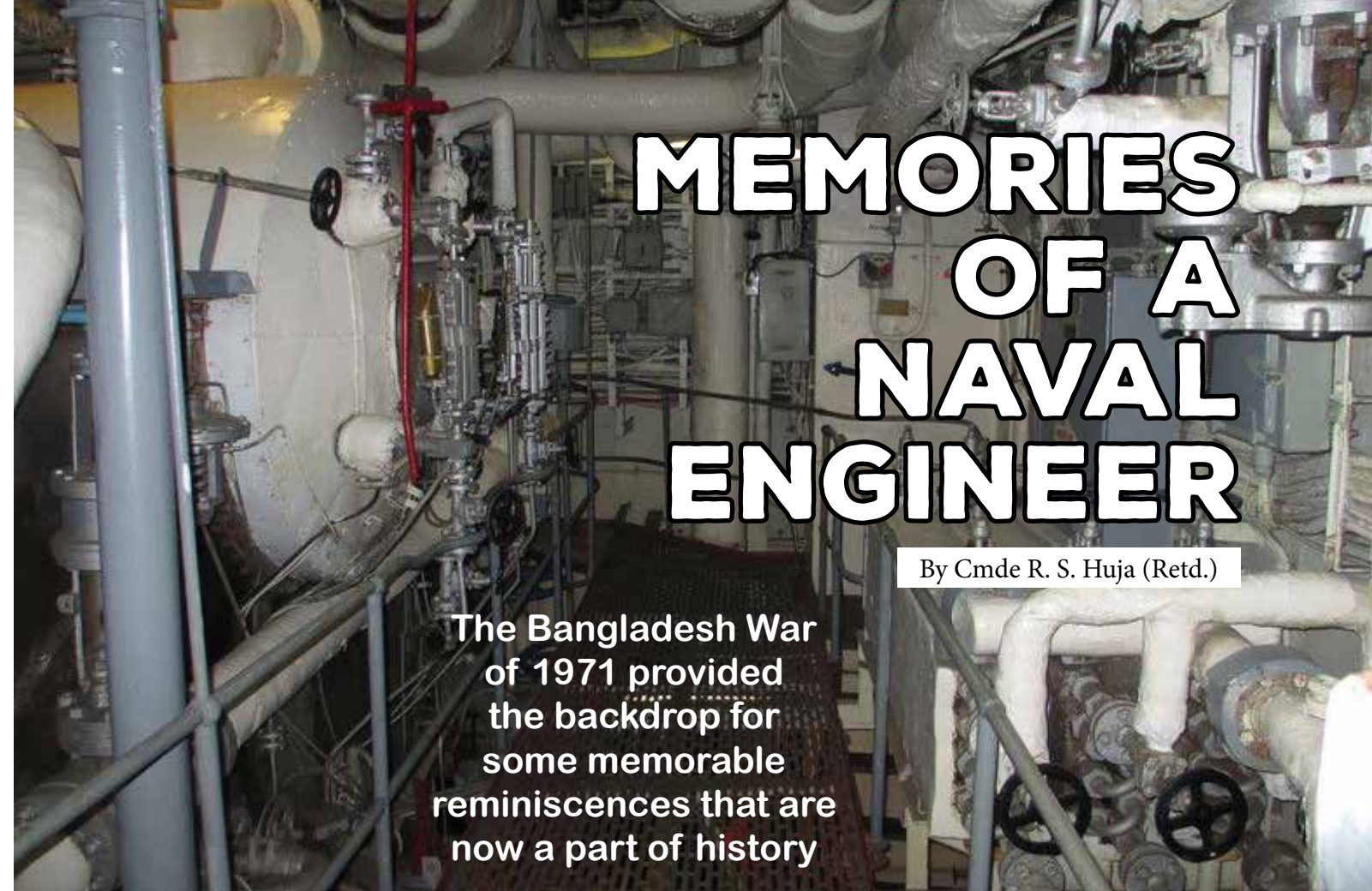
Immediately after joining the ship, I reported to the Commanding Officer who welcomed me aboard the ship and then added "I am amidst a major exercise going on and I would like you to take on the task of camouflaging the ship". I moved on to get on with the job. Luckily I had a very good friend in the Executive Officer Lt Cdr KASZ Raju, who said Rabi no problem, whole of Boatswain department will be at your disposal. They will do whatever you direct them to. With this support I put up awnings, applying some mixed colour schemes of paint and erected a third false funnel with empty 100 litre drums. My CO Captain MK Roy was apparently quite satisfied with the overall camouflaged look of his frigate done by his Engineer Officer.

The situation in East Pakistan deteriorated seriously in March 1971. During a mammoth rally at Dhaka, Sheikh Mujibar Rehman called on Bengali people to prepare for intensive struggle to achieve self rule. Pakistani Army constituted a special operation on 25th March

to start their atrocities, a virtual genocide. The Awami League proclaimed Independence and thus started the war of people led by Mukti Bahini. Mujibar Rehman was arrested from his home Dhonamandi on 26th March.

It was in end of March 1971 that Brahmaputra sailed with despatch to Vishakhapatnam. The ship proceeded with its full power around Sri Lanka. My doubts as to why we sailed at this time, were clarified with the events occurring in East Pakistan. I later came to know that the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi was keen to declare war on Pakistan, but the COAS General Manekshaw advised against it.

Mukti Bahini supported by India played a stellar role in East Pakistan till the declaration of war and thereafter too. Indian Army, Airforce and Navy were involved in many well coordinated covert operations to degrade the assets of the East Pakistan occupation forces. In these operations our DNI, Commodore MK Roy, at NHQ was deeply involved. In fact, he left INS Brahmaputra soon after the ship returned to Mumbai after ship's sortie to Vishakhapatnam in March 1971. As for the Air force, Air Commodore Chandan Singh, who was previously awarded Vir Chakra in 1962, was the Station Commander



at Jorhat training the Bangladesh Air force. Later on in Bangladesh war he was awarded the Mahavir Chakra for meticulous execution of landing heavy equipment, material and Army personnel for the capture of Dhaka by air. I had an opportunity to meet him in 1975 when he was the Air Attaché and I was Deputy Naval Adviser at the High Commission in London. Our Naval Mukti Bahini hero in Bangladesh was Captain MNR Samant Ex-Submariner, who operated in Bangladesh and did some great preparatory work before the start of war. He was also awarded the Mahavir Chakra for his exceptional services in Bangladesh.

INS Kavaratti was deployed for mining operations in November in Chalna and Khulna area. They sailed sometime in Mid November 1971, accompanied with two specially converted boats of Calcutta Port Trust for mine laying operations. Each of these boats was commanded by a Navy Lieutenant in Mufti. Mine laying was done successfully and it was reported that 8 vessels of the enemy were sunk in this operation.

Marshalling of Fleet for Eastern Front

The 1971 war was planned well in advance and most ships were in a state of readiness. In early November, additional ships from the Western Fleet were designated for the Eastern Fleet. In the middle of November these ships were ordered to

sail for the East Coast, and then proceed to the Andamans awaiting the declaration of hostilities. The hull of Brahmaputra was not in too good a state with 12 holes in the hull and which were closed with cement boxes at various locations to temporarily stop the leakages. As soon as Brahmaputra was ordered to sail, we requested for emergency docking to patch up the hull. The ship was docked and work was completed within 3 days with the ship heading for the East coast thereafter.

Just before the ship sailed, I saw Captain Mulla of "Khukri" fame walking from Lion gate to his ship in one of the far off jetties. I immediately requested him to come along with me on my scooter so that I drop him to his ship. That was the last I saw him as unfortunately "Khukri" was a major casualty soon after the start of the war.

In September 1971, Rear Admiral SH Sarma assumed command of the Eastern Fleet. Sometime in mid November all units of the Navy taking part in Eastern front assembled in Andaman and Nicobar awaiting formal declaration of hostilities. Units of the Eastern Fleet taking part in Bangladesh war consisted of INS Vikrant, Brahmaputra, Beas, Kavaratti, Magar, Gharial, Guldar and an auxiliary logistic merchant ship.



Declaration of war

Following some hostile action of Pakistan Airforce on Indian air bases in North India, Mrs. Gandhi addressed the nation and formal war was declared on 3rd Dec 1971.

The Eastern Fleet moved into the Bay of Bengal in the vicinity of Bangladesh to enforce blockade and carry out attacks on shore facilities at Chalna, Khulna, Cox Bazar and Chittagong. In fact, when the Naval aircraft from Vikrant were attacking Cox Bazar we were near enough to see the tower of the airfield collapsing. There was a lot of excitement whenever flights from Vikrant took off for bombardment of shore targets and thereafter returned safely. JG Gupta of Vikrant was mentioned repeatedly for leading the attacks successfully. Two gunships of the force Brahmaputra and Beas carried out intensive bombardment of shore installations.

The Sea Blockade of East Pakistan was quite successful except when one of the Pakistani Naval Ships, PNS Rajashahi escaped just as the war ended carrying Army and Naval personnel to Malaysia. One of the punishing effects of this blockade was on large and small fishing boats trying to get to the open sea. At times we saw badly injured fishermen and wherever possible and practical, the Navy provided emergency medical assistance. In short, the outcome on fishing boats trying to escape was devastating. There was also an interception of one big merchant ship, Anwar Baksh. Lt Cdr Bajaj of Beas led the boarding party to the ship and eventually the ship was disarmed and taken into custody. There were some casualties in this action.

Within a few days of the start of war, Naval ships had definite sonar contact, presumably showing presence of a Pakistani submarine. On this occasion, there was sustained mortar attack on the submarine for almost two days. In this action the attack ships were manoeuvring at high speeds with rapid alteration of the ship's course to get to the target. I went on deck to see this action and I personally could see the submarine periscope head traversing. In spite of a concentrated mortar attack, the enemy submarine seemed to have escaped. After the war, there were many theories on whether the enemy submarine was there and if so, what happened to it.

Almost immediately after the start of the war, there was great news of the sinking of Pakistani submarine Ghazi off Vishakhapatnam on 4th December. INS Rajput dropped its depth charges with accuracy at entrance to Vishakhapatnam harbour and succeeded in sinking the submarine. This was a big morale booster for the Navy.

On 9th Dec, about 1500 soldiers from Gurkha regiments aboard LST Gharial were planned to be landed on the beach in Cox Bazar area. The land force was commanded by Brigadier SS Rai. In this amphibious landing INS Gharial could not beach as it got grounded on a sea bar near the landing area in shallow waters. This resulted in damage to the hull in the steering gear compartment, leading to heavy flooding of the steering gear compartment. INS Beas was asked to approach Gharial immediately to organise pumping out of the flooded compartment. Unfortunately portable pumps of Beas could not get going due to defects and so one portable snorer and a two man manual hand pump were sent from Brahmaputra. As soon as flooding was brought under control, a damage control party consisting of Engineer Officer, Chief Shipwright, Chief ME and two sailors from Brahmaputra were sent aboard Gharial. The team worked overnight to stop ingress of water by normal damage control using cement boxes/shoring. Thereafter troops were offloaded. Unfortunately because of depth of water being just over 5 feet, few of the young Gurkha soldiers lost their lives. Soon after this offloading of the soldiers, two big hawsers were passed to Gharial by Brahmaputra and Beas and secured at aft end of the LST. At high tide, the ship was hauled off the sand bar. Thereafter, the ship sailed to Calcutta. Interestingly they had no portable pump for an emergency. As power supply of LST was different from that of western origin ships a very basic two man manual pump was given to ship. Nonetheless the ship reached Calcutta safely.

Just before cessation of hostilities, the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet shifted his flag to INS Brahmaputra. Smaller ships led by Brahmaputra moved closer to landfall and anchored awaiting the surrender. India declared unilateral ceasefire at 1500h on 15th Dec.

A close shave with death

By Cdr Pratap Singh Mehta (Retd.)

You may get back to normal life even after a terrifying brush with fate but the realization of the fragility of life can somewhat change one's world view!



*A flypast by Kamov 25s over Rajput class ship in Arabian Sea (1982).
Photo: Cdr PS Mehta*

An interesting episode occurred when one of the US aircraft carriers stationed in the Gulf of Tonkin entered Bay of Bengal on 10th Dec. One of the Commanding Officers asked for directions if the carrier arrives in operational area and what needed to be done. The Flag Officer suggested, you just exchange pleasantries if the carrier does arrive in the vicinity”.

Surrender of Pakistani forces

There was great euphoria in India and Bangladesh when the Pakistani forces were defeated and surrendered. A formal surrender ceremony was held at Dacca on 16th Dec. General Aurora from the Indian side and his counterpart on the Pakistani side General Niazi with other senior officers of the three services were present. A historic picture of that surrender is displayed in many Service Establishments.

Soon after ceasefire on 15th Dec, all units of the Navy except Vikrant moved into the waters closer to Chittagong and were anchored in a formation. I was asked by my Commanding Officer to make our cutter ready to take the Flag Officer and his staff to Chittagong on the morning of 16th Dec. Next morning our cutter flying the flag of the Flag Officer left for Chittagong and returned in the evening with a well marked chart with areas mined off Chittagong. All the units were immediately re-anchored so as to be well clear of the mined areas.

Lieutenant Commander Bimu Guha, the then Gunnery officer of Brahmaputra, who had accompanied the Flag Officer on 16th Dec, brought me a unique memento from the Pakistani Naval Base. It was a bullet holed flag of the Pakistani

Vice Admiral. This lay with me for many years before I decided to hand it over to INS Shivaji - the alma mater of engineers for display in their motivation hall. Another interesting episode of this flag is that it was displayed in the normal upright position. On one occasion when Vice Admiral MP Awati visited the Motivation Hall, he pointed out that the flag of the defeated enemy is always to be displayed upside down. Now the flag is placed in reversed mode and has been placed in a glass cabinet with a small historical note of its origin. The flag has now been shifted to the new museum at Shivaji.

To end this narration, I would like to say that, it was the Bengali Populace of East Pakistan, who rose up as one against the oppressor. They played a major role in this war of Independence for themselves. To them must go the ultimate accolade for victory. I would also acknowledge my Commanding Officer Captain J. C. Puri

Tribute to Captain JC Puri the Commanding Officer INS Brahmaputra in 1971 war

Late Captain JC Puri was from the Aviation cadre of the Navy and joined the ship in April 1971. I found him to be a great Commanding Officer extremely well versed in tactical and strategic matters of Naval warfare. Exceptionally intelligent, quick in decision making and very compassionate, I had the honour to yet again serve with him on INS Vikrant in 1979 as his Engineer Officer. He left the Indian Navy at a rather young age after INS Vikrant and became Merchant Navy sea farer.

I had a close shave with death on 8th September 1982. On that fateful day, Shail, my wife, was carrying our second child, Nakuul, whilst staying in Navy Nagar at Bombay. She had no inkling of what I had undergone at sea, till we returned to harbour couple of days later. The ship gave the flight crew couple of days casual leave to refresh and energise.

Shail recalls with pride and a grin, “I learned about the stories of his kiss with death from his bachelor shipmates and flight crew, who dropped in for dinner on the same night of his return to harbour. PS was more than keen to return to work as if nothing had happened”.

Perhaps the incident could have had a lasting impact on her as she was pregnant. Shail adds, “I don’t think I was

affected much by the incident as PS played very cool and not much was ever discussed in our home even later”.

The ships of the Western Fleet were exercising in Arabian Sea, 200 nautical miles (360 km) South-West of Mumbai. The Kamov 25 (IN 576) helicopter from INS Rajput was being flown by Lt Cdr Ajay Chitnis, Pilot in Command and me as Tactical Coordinator, Mission in Charge. We also had a junior Observer Lt SS Rathore, who was under conversion to operational flying.

The sun was about to set, and it was incumbent upon the twin engine, Ka-25 helicopter to break hover and climb to 200 metres to lay a pattern of ‘Sonobuoys’ and ensure that the submarine could be tracked continuously. An hour later, suddenly, the Pilot and I

noticed that the needle on the star board Engine Oil Pressure Gauge dropped to zero, indicating that there was a serious malfunction in the engine lubrication system. Pilot asked tactical team to terminate the exercise as he turned the helicopter towards the ship which was about 30 km away.

While approaching the ship and hoping that it was after all a false indication, a sudden whining sound was heard – something that the crew had never heard before. Imagine an explosion, as you turn around and climb to 300 metres (1000 ft). Imagine the helicopter cabin full of smoke. Imagine an engine going, clack, clack, clack, clack... It is scary!

The star board engine had seized - a very serious situation indeed. With alertness and instant action by both Ajay and self, the running engine was put to full throttle by me, as pilot's both hands were engaged with collective and cyclic controls. Ajay said three words, the most emotional three words, I've ever heard ... "Brace for deck-landing!"

He aligned the helicopter to land on the 10m x 10m moving deck of INS Rajput and conveyed this to the Captain of the Ship who trusted his aircrew wholeheartedly, although the SOPs totally disallow this kind of practice. Capt SW Lakhkar was in command.

The in-flight emergency and thought of landing on a small moving deck had become a matter of life and death. Flying a crippled chopper now, we fought to keep it steady on glide path for final 'mission impossible', with firm belief in our self that we can do it.

Now I want to share three things I learnt about



Helicopter landing on a small ship deck is a tricky affair as the pilot must coordinate with roll and pitch of the ship, whilst touching down. Photo: INS Rajput



The flying buddies - Lt Pratap Mehta and Lt Ajay Chitnis during flying training in USSR in sub-zero temperatures (1979). Photo: Cdr PS Mehta

myself that day. I learned that life changes in an instant. We all have a bucket list. We have things; we want to do in life. I thought of all the



The flying buddies - Lt Pratap Mehta and Lt Ajay Chitnis during flying training in USSR in sub-zero temperatures (1979). Photo: Cdr PS Mehta

people I wanted to reach out to that I didn't... all the experiences I wanted to have and never did. I no longer wanted to postpone anything in life. That urgency, that purpose changed my life.

The second thing that I learned that day as we commenced final descent was regret - about time wasted on things that did not matter vis-à-vis with people that matter. I thought about the relationship with my wife and daughter, with my friends, with people. As I reflected on it later, I decided to eliminate ego and negative energy from my life. It's not perfect, but it is lot better. I no longer try to be Mr Right but choose to be happy.

The cockpit communications were mostly by instinct and body language rather than verbal, enabling the pilot to concentrate totally on the landing. It was well known to all that there was only one attempt possible, as the Kamov 25 did not have the ability to either hover or climb on 'ONE' engine. It was a do-or-die situation, literally!

The third thing I learnt, and this is as your mental clock starts ticking, 30, 29, 28, 15, 14, 13, seconds to go, in that pitch-dark night I could see the water and deck coming up. Those last 30 seconds on final approach felt like the longest the crew had ever experienced as they waited for touchdown. The helicopter was descending at an alarming rate. As we were coming closer, I had a sense of wow, "Dying is not scary". It's almost like we've been preparing for it the whole

life. Yet I didn't want to go. I loved my life. I only wished for one thing, I wanted to see my unborn child, see the kids grow up. Almost a year later at Goa, I was at a performance by my daughter, a first grader, not much artistic talent then, yet I was sobbing with joy like a little kid in the hall. It made all the sense in the world to me to realise, that the only thing that matters in life is being a great Dad.

We were barely 150 feet above sea level and 150 feet away from the deck and less than 7 seconds from the impact, before we realised it. What followed was a perfect landing, in aviation parlance a 3-pointer touchdown, in the centre of the circle marked on the deck 10mx10m. Our plan had worked. History was created when a Kamov 25 helicopter on one engine was landed on a Kashin Class Destroyer, and that too on a pitch-dark night. Even to date, no twin engine helicopter in the world, with a failed engine, has landed on a small deck of a moving ship, either by day or night. As per Russian doctrine, it is mandatory to divert to land base or ditch in the sea. In this case nearest land was beyond the remaining endurance of the helicopter.

I was given the gift of a miracle, of not dying that day. I was given another gift, which was to be able to see into the future and come back and live differently. I challenge you guys that are flying today, imagine the same thing happens on your flight, hope not, but imagine if it does then how would it change your relationships? Are you being the best parent or best spouse?



CULINARY DIPLOMACY

Navies the world over are instruments of diplomacy with such visits becoming instruments of goodwill!

By Cmde P R Franklin (Retd.)

For the sake of the flag and the country, one would eat what one would not venture to eat as a tourist. One smiled, chewed (or swallowed!), made polite conversation and even complimented the food!

In one of the African countries, I and a few other officers were invited to a 'bachelor's evening party' – the last party thrown as a bachelor before getting married. We went there to find two of the groom's existing wives sitting next to him. He was getting married for the third time. The dance floor was jam-packed with glistening ebony bodies, dancing to the songs of James Brown. Every now and then someone would come to the mike and say things like "Now we all know that this is Bonnie's last day of freedom, for tomorrow he will be tying the knot". His two wives sat through these proclamations with stony faces. We watched from the sidelines till it was time for dinner, and then made our way to the dining tables laid out in two long parallel rows. At the far end of the tables, in a dimly-lit corner, I saw what looked like a buffalo strung up on a vertically standing charpoy-like wooden frame with a metal tray at its base. The stomach appeared to be cut open with raw flesh within easy access. Curious, I went closer only to

confirm what I have just described. Blood was dripping from the carcass onto the tray. I asked someone what the significance of this display was. I was told that after filling our plates with cooked food from the table, we were required to carve a piece of raw meat from the buffalo and eat it so that Bonnie has a long and happy married life!

There was no way I was going through this evolution. I conferred with my shipmates. One of them came out with a brilliant idea. We could walk up to Bonnie and tell him we were chaste Brahmins – pure vegetarians – and therefore could not partake of the delicacy at the far end of the tables. We did just that, and Bonnie was quite sympathetic. He had vaguely heard about vegetarians in India. With a sigh of relief, we went back to the dining tables. There was mish-mash yam in one dish, followed by roast meat in the next; then another yam dish was followed by a dish of roast chicken, and yet another differently prepared dish of yam had another attractive looking non-vegetarian dish next to it. These courses were repeated in the same sequence till the end of the table. We piled up our plates with helpings of yam in all its avatars, and found there was nothing else we could help

ourselves to. Gingerly stepping past the buffalo carcass and the queue leading up to it, we went to a corner and ate plain yam – washed down with glasses of the very popular local beer. An unforgettable night indeed!

Speaking of buffaloes, one buffalo was presented to the Flag ship of the local Navy as a Christmas present from their Chief of the Naval Staff. It was hacked to death on the jetty, near the gangway, and equal portions were divided and laid out. Lower decks were cleared and every man got his fair share without a murmur of dissent. We, on our submarine, tied up on the outer side of the Flagship, patiently waited till the whole evolution was completed and the jetty washed down, before stepping ashore. None of us claimed a share.

The Christmas Eve party, to which we were invited, was an unforgettable one. There were fun and games, and prizes galore to be won, followed by a grand Christmas dinner (this time the 'vegetarians' found a fair variety to select from). One competition required four teams to compete with each team consisting of four individuals. It was a relay race. The leading member had to run up to a row of beer tankards at some distance away, drink up one tankard full of the local beer, run back and touch his next team member who would repeat the same evolution. Whichever team finished their tankards first would be declared the winners. The four teams comprised of members from their Army, their Navy, their Airforce, and the Indian Navy (represented by one submarine's officers). The hosts had not taken one important factor into consideration when inviting our submarine team to participate - the submarine crew had hardened vodka drinking stalwarts who had just entered harbor after a very dry, long, spell at sea. Not only did we beat the local teams, our last member, after finishing his tankard, took the Airforce team's as yet unfinished tankard and drank that up too! We were awarded a crate full of their local, very nice and very popular beer.

Soon after winning that competition, I and a colleague of mine went back to the bar to continue our interrupted elbow bending. Fortuitously, we were one of the last to go in for dinner, only to find that most of the food had finished and only a spoonful of gravy was left in most dishes. We skipped the 'dinner' and went back to elbow bending, and from there to bed. Calamity of enormous proportions struck that

night. Everyone who had dinner had the 'Runs'. By nine o'clock the next morning the local Naval hospital was overflowing with inmates who had spilled over to the verandahs. The VIP among the patients was the local Naval Chief. I still remember his words "I was like a fire brigade hose all night"! Two elbow benders of the previous evening were hale and hearty and had to remain onboard the submarine on duty to be relieved only as and when a reliever was discharged from the hospital. That took awhile!

Vietnam Visits

I officially visited Vietnam on two different occasions. It has the distinction of having defeated most of the UN Security Council members in war at some stage or the other. On my first visit, I took my ship past Vũng Tàu and up the meandering Saigon River to what is now known as Ho Chi Minh City (erstwhile Saigon). Vietnam has always had a friendly disposition towards India and we were accorded a warm welcome. One of the many official calls I made was on the senior-most naval officer there – an officer of Admiral's rank. He did not speak English. That was alright as I did not speak Vietnamese. We conversed through an interpreter. One topic led to another and the formal discussions were proceeding very successfully when the Admiral happened to come out with a statement that he had made too many Indian Naval friends during his days in Vladivostok. My ears pricked. I gleaned some further details and discovered that we were there together at the same time, sharing the same accommodation and bathing places. From a deadpan face, his countenance changed to one of pure joy. His voice went into a higher pitch, and the hostesses who had served us tea at the beginning of the talks now scampered about, fetching wine glasses and wine bottles. I could make out that the wine was special as it was being handled with exaggerated reverence. Just how special became evident when the winsome hostess with



distractingly shapely legs began pouring it into the glass I held out. The cork appeared to have been pushed inside instead of being pulled out. At least that was what it appeared to me through the gaps above the wrapped around napkin. I whispered my observations to the hostess who recoiled in horror, removed the napkin altogether and showed me the bottle. There was a snake inside! Snake wine is served to special and honored guests in Vietnam as it is supposed to give them long life. Somehow, I could not match the Admiral's enthusiasm and speeches thereafter. The interpreter's voice seemed far away. I could not concentrate on what he was saying. There was a sudden lull and expectant faces looking in my direction suggested that it was now my turn to respond with matching warmth and affection. "For country and flag" said an inner voice. Despite the dead pan face that I have been born with, I stage-managed a weak smile and made a suitable reply – even lifting the glass and inviting the Admiral to join me in a return toast in which I wished him an even longer life. (It is a different matter that I didn't come across him on my second visit to that country, and enquiries about him invoked no positive response). I returned to the ship from that visit and decided to stay onboard for some hours, with the Medical Officer standing by for a stomach wash, if required. However, my stomach behaved alright and in due course the MO was allowed to proceed ashore. But that 'call' had its effect – the Admiral broke protocol and personally came to the jetty to see me off when we left. He even brought me a special gift – a colorfully wrapped bottle that was accepted on the Bridge with folded hands and a smart salute. Soon thereafter, the gift was sent down to my cabin and the ship cast off. Four hours later, when we had come out of the Saigon river and entered the South China Sea, I went down from the Bridge to my cabin to be greeted with the foulest smell of fish that I had ever come across, as I opened the door. The bottle was responsible. It was a bottle of the most expensive fish oil that is used in Vietnam for cooking choice dishes of their cuisine!.

My second visit to Vietnam was as part of the entourage of The Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee. The Chief of the Naval Staff, as the senior-most Service Chief was holding that office. We were state guests and a banquet was hosted by their Chief of Defence Staff. Protocol seating was observed and I was lucky to have an interpreter seated by my side. The first course was served and consumed without any excitement. The second course arrived – a serving of excellent Vietnamese boiled rice on the plate, and one coconut – husk and all – placed next to the glass of water. I decided to wait and see what was to be done with the coconut and follow the actions of the interpreter next to me. He removed the top of the coconut which was neatly sliced before-hand – so neatly sliced that the cut wasn't visible at first. Inside was a pigeon cooked in some sort of gravy – head, eyes, feathers, claws et al. My coconut had the same thing. The gravy was to be mixed with the rice, and the soft, bony, well-cooked pigeon pried out with chopsticks and eaten without fuss. I had never eaten a pigeon before, much less its feathers and talons in the way it was presented. For country and flag indeed!

In my formative years in the Navy, I spent quite some time in the former Soviet Union. I had strong guts, a lot of vodka with no ill-effects, and ate the local food without fuss. There were no compulsions of flag or country. We were young. One of the things I ate there and found quite tasty was the sardine-like fish with draught beer. This fish would be strung up in the raw till it no longer dripped oil. It would then be served. You took it, expertly severed the head and discarded it, and with your thumb scooped out the entrails. Then, you just ate it! Just like that. Uncooked!

For the sake of the flag and the country, one would eat what one would not venture to eat as a tourist. One smiled, chewed (or swallowed!), made polite conversation and even complimented the food!. In my retirement I don't have to do this anymore. Mercifully!

Cmde P R Franklin specialized in Submarine and Anti-submarine Warfare and saw active duty onboard during the 1965 and the 1971 Indo-Pak Wars. Awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal (1995) & the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2001), Cmde Franklin has taken to writing after serving for 36 years and has authored many books including "Submarine Operations" which was published by the National Maritime Foundation.

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GET-HOME-ITIS



By Cdr Dhanush Menon

A clouded judgment and the regular white fluffy suspended cotton balls that play a wicked game after a prolonged sailing make up the cast of this tale

It was the shrill annoying note of the boatswain's pipe that woke me that morning. Before I could even shift to the fifth gear on my brand new Audi A6, I was shaken out of my dream. Somewhere suspended in the air, I heard a croaky voice "Good Morning everybody" as that flashy red car was diffusing from my mental frame. Quarter master he is; I would've preferred to call him "monster", writ in big fat capitals!!! Why do we call it "hands call" anyway, when all that it does is to startle us from pristine sleep?

Anyhow, the saving grace was that the day is going to be good, for we were returning to our home port after a three month long survey and work up deployment. May be the Quarter Master was also feeling the elation of getting back home so was eager to wake us all. But my Audi A6!!! "What the heck? Let's get home".

Being on a survey deck, long sailings were not new to us. However, this being a three month departure and that too dovetailed with a vigorous work up schedule, it had ensured that everyone was looking forward to raising Grandi Light and then the entering harbour leg of Karwar; And for me, disembarkation to INS Hansa.

A little chat with the Navigating Officer on breakfast table enlightened me that the ship was running a little ahead of schedule. A wholesome conversation and hearty breakfast later, I was on weather deck for a whiff of fresh air. The familiar coast line features reminded

me of my conversation with the NO; we had reached much earlier than expected. The ship was already on home revolutions and there was an unspoken buzz moving around the whole ship. My lips traversed into an upward curve and the same smile was reflected on the face of my co-pilot standing beside me, probably for the same reason.

The sky was a stupendous sight. Careless fluffs of clouds lazed around on the skyline, some big and some small, sometimes kissing the small hills which lined the coastline. The blue of the sky, the white sandy beach line afar and the green vegetation gave an unparalleled beauty to the white pillows of cumulous clouds. "But...Hey, Aren't these clouds in the sector through which I have to fly back to Hansa?" (Distance from Karwar to Hansa is 35 miles and it was common practise for helicopters to embark/ disembark the ships off Karwar, from/ to INS Hansa at Goa)

The upward curve immediately gave way to a frown. The clouds did not look beautiful at all anymore. My co-pilot was still smiling. All he probably saw was the mirages on the beaches lining the coast. It was the quartermaster's croaky voice that shook me from my thoughts again: "Flight Commander, Bridge. Captain".

No sooner had I set my foot inside the bridge, I was greeted with a huge white smile from the captain. I don't know why I was seeing clouds on his teeth too. Come on, wake up!!! "Good morning Sir" I greeted him with the best smile

I could draw on my face. I knew within myself that only showing your teeth does not count as a smile.

Captain was as exuberant as I had ever seen him. "Good Morning. A pleasant morning, isn't it? Let's get back home" he said. That is one type of statement to which there is no right answer. For a while I was debating in my mind whether he was being sarcastic. My doubt was put to rest by his next statement: "You can comfortably be launched on this course right?"

It was then that I realised that the ship was already on long finals, (read entering harbour leg). It was only then that I also realised that the ambience in the bridge was set for the conduct of entering harbour briefing. My answer would mean that it would be pre flight briefing too. I mumbled out something which resulted in the next announcement: "Prepare for flying... Prepare for flying..."

"There are a few clouds there", the Captain said pointing to a small patch of clouds, "But I believe you guys are capable enough to comfortably negotiate it". Now, that was a killer punch. The question about our capability overtook my inner pulsations to recommend a launch further North of present position. If it is a further North launch, it would also mean that the ship would again have to alter course and travel 30 miles and then come back. Which would translate to another six more hours and by the time the ship secures after returning working gears, it would be evening.

I took a look outside and as an expert I said: "We will take off on time". I don't know where those clouds went away from my frame of thoughts when I said that. The phrase "Let's go back home" put me at ease and these were anyway not as monstrous a cloud phenomenon as I initially thought, but that could have been a biased thinking process!

The Navigating Officer went ahead with his chore of met. and flight briefing; and soon enough we were already engaging rotors for

disembarkation. My earlier inhibitions were wiped off as by now the clouds had all but vanished. Though for a moment I wondered where those white pillows disappeared, the tempo of disembarkation took over.

It was uneventful as we crossed coast and established a two way with Hansa. With no weather as per Hansa latest, we were happier. With a "Happy Landings" from the jubilant helo controller (that now he can get back to fixing his ship for entering harbour), we bid bye to mother and were cruising at One Thousand feet to our next nest, Hansa.

I could see that everyone onboard the helo had a gleam in their eyes and a pleasant, happy look on their faces. Sporting his best grin, my co-pilot gave R/T call: "Hansa approach, Navy 425, 20 miles inbound, maintaining 1000 ft".

He then went on to say: "Sir, we will soon be back home..." I was still thinking of those pillow clouds.

Visibility improved further as the sun rose to its higher destination. 17 miles short of Hansa is a linear range of hills that cut laterally across our track. We gently initiated the climb to pop above the hill range and lo behold - right ahead in front of us, staring through our face were the clouds that were nagging me since take off. We quickly crossed the hill range and scanned the expanse of the cloud. It had a rather wide base and nastily tall. Sitting in a humble Chetak with the barest minimum instrumentation, we were flying literally into a white wall of uncertainty.

The least we could do was to avoid the monster. A quick natter on R/T with Hansa saw us descending to 500 ft over coast line. The cloud line caressed us further to 300 feet. Hansa was quite perplexed as they insisted with their report of "no clouds over the airfield". However, I was sandwiched at 300 ft between overcast sky above and the beaches of Goa below!!



It looked like a wall ahead. All I could see aslant was the shore line which indeed was a great relief. It did not require a Newtonian brain to take a decision to turn towards our mother ship. We promptly turned around and that was when we realised that the state there was no better. The clouds that we had left behind in the past few minutes had moved in, closing the path we flew by. We continued the turn to further avoid getting into the wall of clouds. Soon, we were circling like a dog chasing its own tail. Wow!!! Someone was getting a taste of some really interesting stuff. It descended on us that the only area void of clouds was the small region where we seemed to be playing "ring-a-ring-a-roses. "Looks like we are in a Cloud Bowl", I told my co-pilot. All he did was a slight nod of his head. I could see no more of his "best grin".

We tried raising the ship on R/T in case we had to return. The ship was on a completely different spin altogether of entering harbour; and keeping the R/T set 'ON' would have been the last thing in their priority list.

The saving grace was that we could still see land and if required we could always go and land by the shore. Else, there was our established RRAL site of Hansa LFA in our vicinity. However, as a

last attempt, we opened out seawards in search of an opening to climb out of the cloud maze. We did not have to fly much and through a thin white veil, I saw the clear blue sky above. Not a moment was wasted. A bold turn, an increase of power to climb and a few wonderstruck seconds later, we were at 2000 ft, in clear weather.

Phew - what a relief! At a distance I could see Hansa Airfield Plateau without the veil of "Uncle Cloud". I looked down only to see those white fluffy clouds spread across like a soft bed which felt like I was skimming atop a sea of clouds. My first experience of flying in under cast conditions and I only wish it had been a bit sweeter and devoid of the bumps in between.



The remaining part of the sortie went uneventful and soon we landed safe and sound on terra firma. The "best grin" was back on my co-pilots face. I clearly remember him saying: "Sir, we have reached back home!" While I added "Safely", in my mind.

Cdr Dhanush Menon is posted at INAS 322 INS Garuda Naval Base Kochi. This article was first published in "Meat Ball", the Indian Naval Aviation Journal

FRACAS ON THE MV AKBAR

By Capt M Doraibabu



A trial by fire on the high seas from Chennai to Port Blair reinstated faith in officer – men relationships and on the onus of responsibility at sea!

On award of my Watch Keeping Ticket onboard INS Taragiri in 1998, I was to report to IN LCU L-39 stationed at Port Blair. One could reach the islands either by sea or air from Chennai, Kolkata (then Calcutta) and Visakhapatnam. I decided on a whim to make my passage to the islands by sea from Chennai onboard the SCI run MV Akbar. I was to ship my stripes to that of a Lieutenant during the voyage to Port Blair. Since I was metamorphosing to a Lieutenant during the voyage, I did not declare any rank to my name while booking my fare onboard the MV Akbar. For all practical purposes, to the crew of the Akbar, I was a civilian booked into a deluxe cabin.

The ship was to cast off at sunset on Day 1 and arrive at sunrise at Port Blair on Day 4 – a total of 60hrs at 12kn covering 720nm with calm seas and good weather. Then comes the announcement on the tannoy (public address system) that would lead to a cavalcade of events that are forever etched in memory.

The announcement was that the cast off would be delayed by an hour and immediately followed

with a rider that sailors and soldiers are to cooperate with the ship's crew in settling down in their accommodation quickly. On enquiry with a co-passenger, he said that the ticketing crew had 'snafued' allocation of accommodation and allotted bunks to a group of girl students travelling on a school trip in the same section as a bunch of young naval sailors which was leading to a lot of 'hanky-panky'. This was like walking into a cracker shop with a lit candle and praying that the crackers were well-behaved and wouldn't explode! The delay in cast off was due to the re-allocation of bunking spaces in the bunk class.

The ship cast off late evening on Day 1. Prior pipe down, there were a few more announcements warning Naval sailors to conduct themselves properly or they would be reported to the Provost on reaching Port Blair. I attributed it to the 'well-behaved crackers in the presence of a lit candle' story and bunked in for the night. The last announcement in a slightly stentorian voice came from the Chief Officer of the Akbar himself who implored service personnel not to inconvenience other passengers in the dining halls while waiting for their turn to be served food. I was not taking

the announcements seriously as I was still a Sub Lieutenant, supremely trained not to poke my nose into affairs that did not concern me.

Day 2 was a sunny day, azure seas and the gentle vibrations of the deck coupled with the hum of machinery lulled me into a sense of boredom. Late morning, the onerous announcements berating sailors' behaviour started afresh and multiple times for pulling back lifeboat covers and sitting in them to downing a few pegs of rum, playing cards on upper decks, not heeding to and running away from the Chief Officer when remonstrated, not standing in queues at meal-times, rebuking galley staff for not according preferential treatment and of course the 'hanky-panky' with the group of girl students (back to the crackers and candle story).

The sailors' behavior seemed to be really getting on the nerves of the ships' crew by evening. During the day, I had kept busy educating myself, discreetly, that the Master and the Chief Officer were both ex-Navy and there were about 800 odd passengers of which approximately 150 were service personnel. And yes, Day 2 was my date of promotion to a Lieutenant.

Cutting to the action part, on Day 3, shortly before sunset, I felt the ship list quite a bit to one side (starboard if I recollect correctly) and the engines had cut back on the revolutions, ominous signs at sea to say the least. I rushed out to the catwalk on my deck to join the commotion of a whole lot of passengers leaning over the railing and

looking into the sea. I caught hold of one excited passenger and asked what was happening, to which he said "two naval personnel had fallen overboard" and rushed back into the melee. Now here I was, a one-day old Lieutenant, no one on the ship knew I was an officer, there were two naval personnel in water with no sight of land in vicinity. The first question in my mind – what should I do? Should I get involved in the action or let the Akbar undertake man-overboard drills by themselves? And the other situational follow-up questions – the ship has not stopped engines, what was the bridge doing? Lookouts? Sunset time? Are these shark infested waters? It didn't take more than a few cursory seconds to arrive at my decision.

I rushed from the catwalk to the bridge. When I introduced myself as Lt so-and-so to the Master, he appeared taken aback – he said he didn't know there was an officer onboard to which I replied I didn't declare my rank. Then I immediately enquired about the two men in water and actions being taken to recover them. By now about ten minutes had passed since the man-overboard. There were no ECDIS, GPS MOB marker and I didn't know whether the personnel had lifejackets or had found the lifebuoys thrown at them. I requested the Master to turn the ship around and ready his life-boat crew. Either I sounded pompous or they were upset that I had hidden from them so well or they were looking for someone on whom they could hang the whole issue – the Master said I could direct the OOW to take whatever actions I felt necessary to recover

the men in water. I had the conn of Merchant Vessel Akbar.

My freshly 'WKC awarded' mind was inwardly trembling at the pace of events unfolding around me. But on the exterior, I took up the challenge and boldly announced that we would do a Williamson's Turn to retrace the wake of the ship. My rigorous watchkeeping training had kicked in and I wasn't about to let a merchantman's bridge get the better of me. The ship slowly turned around and there was renewed excitement in the passengers hanging around the sides and I knew I had a few hundred lookouts that evening, which was crucial. By now about 30 minutes had passed. Luck was really on our side that evening as a sharp-eyed passenger sighted the men treading water not very far from the ship's track. I quickly directed for the ship to be stopped and the life-boat be lowered. The Chief Officer himself got the boat lowered to recover the men. I rushed down to boat deck to receive the sailors when they were brought back onboard.

By now, there was a crowd of agitated sailors congregating around the boat davit. There were loud murmurs all around and the mood was a bit ugly, something about giving it back properly to the galley staff. They didn't know a Naval officer was standing there. The boat recovered the two men and approached the ship's side, one man was unconscious and the other had deep lacerations on his chest. They had been floating in water for about 45 minutes before being recovered. The crowd around me started jostling for a better look and repeatedly asking the returning sailors 'Tum theek ho? Kisne kiya yeh? (are you alright? Who did this to you?). Hearing this, the conscious sailor started responding. The boat was being hoisted up, the conscious sailor shouted back 'Tum log kya kar rahe the jab woh humko maar ke paani me pheka' (what were you all doing when they hit and threw us overboard?) Hit us? Threw us overboard? Things were just going to a new level of interest.

I was actually feeling very relieved to have recovered the two sailors and directed the nearest people to help escort the sailors to the sickbay. I accompanied the sailors to get to know the story behind the entire episode. While inside, the conscious sailor, a Leading Cook and the other a Seaman First Class, recounted the gist – they were having some altercations with the galley staff since the start of the journey leading

to heated arguments and further antagonism. On Day 3 i.e. that day, the two sailors had gone to the mess for tea, a little earlier than scheduled presumably to be the first in the queue. The galley staff, around five or six of them, seeing these two alone, got into an argument which soon escalated into a fisticuff and then the galley staff, allegedly, locked the doors of the mess and attacked the two sailors with sharp kitchen implements which had led to the lacerations. Realising the futility of fighting them, the sailors broke open the doors of the mess, rushed to the ship's side and jumped overboard.

At this moment, I heard loud shouting outside on the deck. When I went to have a look, I walked into a scene of utter chaos. There were groups of men thrashing individuals; there were other men and women running helter-skelter adding to the bedlam. It took me moments before I realized that naval personnel were taking out their angst against the ship's crew! The crew was roughly outnumbered one to ten. I rushed back to the bridge only to find it bolted from inside. After some thorough banging and of course identification, the door was opened and I marched up to the Master and asked him what he intended to do. He simply turned and queried what could he do, he had no arms nor men and condescendingly stated that 'MY' men were creating the fracas so I should do something. Appreciating that I was wasting time in the bridge, I sprinted to the deck, to the anarchy.

I simply dived into the groups of angry sailors thrashing the ship's galley staff, a bit recklessly I think in hindsight and shouted out to them 'I'm Lieutenant so-and-so, stop this immediately'. To give credence to training, service ethos and officer-man relationship, the men parted and I was immediately able to drag the galley staff into the superstructure, to safety. Like this there were five or six groups from whose clutches I pulled the galley staff and put them in a cabin which I locked, for their safety. But, the pride I felt at the men listening to my orders and recovering their senses was immeasurable. In a short while I was able to stop the pandemonium. The sailors were hanging around in sullen groups, the civilian passengers were ensconced in their bunk areas, the injured galley staff were being administered first aid and the Master found his voice to make some unrequited announcements on the tannoy. I went back to the bridge, requested for the microphone and announced for a muster of all



sailors on the weather deck. The sailors mustered for my address though I was clueless as to what I would tell them. I went in regardless, spoke to the men, listened to them mainly, warned them of the consequences and assured them of a fair hearing once we reached harbor early the next day. Three senior sailors were identified to keep tabs on the group which still had a few sullen faces. I went back to the bridge and requested the Master for radio contact with Port Blair. He said he didn't have any circuit with the Navy nor did the vessel have satellite communications. I entreated to be told when we were in MMB Ch 16 range to talk to Navy Control. Even as a one-day old Lieutenant, I knew that channel 16 of the MMB radio set was the answer to all communications at sea.

I retreated back to my deluxe cabin which no longer felt comfortable after the days' supplications. I wrote a report with timelines of the incident to the best of my knowledge knowing fully well, one way or the other, I would be questioned. The ship's ETA to Port Blair was 0600h on Day 4, a Sunday. I hit the bunk to catch a few winks before I could get on the radio with Naval authorities and was soon in deep slumber. The next thing I hear is the announcement on the broadcast that the gangway would soon be placed and passengers are to disembark in an orderly fashion! The Master hadn't stood to his word of informing me when in MMB range for communications. I rushed to the bridge and on enquiring with the Master, he remonstrated that he was under no obligation to provide me communications and that really raised my hackles. Further, on the jetty alongside I could see a posse of police personnel. There was no doubt in my mind that something not good for the sailors had construed between the Master

and the SCI authorities ashore during the night. In all haughtiness and in no uncertain terms I stated that if the gangway was to even touch the ship's side, I would tell 'MY' personnel that I was deliberately not given a chance to speak to Naval authorities and thereafter would not be held responsible to what happens to his ship's crew, penalties be damned. I think the Master got the point as he soon ordered gangway operations to stop.

I got my five minutes on the radio set with which I communicated to Navy Control. Soon enough, I saw the Naval Provost along with an officer and an ambulance on the jetty. The gangway was placed, all passengers disembarked, service personnel were segregated, ship's crew were detained separately and the day passed in answering authorities, police, SCI and the Navy. The FORTAN was away to mainland and the fort was held by the Chief Staff Officer, a Commodore. He came to his office and summoned me for the debrief. There was an Inquiry ordered to investigate into the incident and in about three odd days I sailed out onboard my ship for a patrol. By the time I returned to harbor after some ten days, there was hardly any talk of the fracas on the MV Akbar. The two sailors, I heard were further transferred to islands even more remote than Port Blair and in those days that was really remote. The SCI and the Navy had amicably settled the issue without fuss. And I enjoyed the next twenty months operating in the islands, intentionally 'grounding' (beaching) IN LCU L-39 whenever ordered.

In retrospect, I wonder, where are the two sailors now? What about the other personnel onboard? Would they remember this incident with as much ardor as I?

Capt M Doraibabu is presently appointed as the Additional Director (Studies) at MWC (MBI). He has done a specialisation in Long C&EW and been awarded the Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) in 2005 and the CNS Commendation in 2016. He has commanded INS Kakinada, INS Sudarshini and INS Sukanya and published a coffee table book on INS Sudarshini.



SDB's JARAWA & WHATEVER

By Cdr Prakash Swani (Retd.)

A lighter and more entertaining side of an appointment on the SDB's that operated extensively in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Some memorable times in the Navy were spent onboard the SDB's, Abhay and Ajay between December 1962 and July 1965. Based at Vizag along with Akshay, the third SDB, they were together called the SDB 323 Squadron and represented the Eastern Fleet, (if one may call it so) of that time! The Petyas and Submarines were to arrive later. The security of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands rested with the local police who had their own boats carrying out patrols. The overall administration rested with the Chief Commissioner, a practice inherited from the British. Both professionally and otherwise I had very interesting and unique experiences related to my operations in the Islands

INS Jarawa & the "Onge's" of Little Andaman

In 1964 the Indian Navy commissioned its first Naval establishment in Port Blair, the capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. I was directed

to bring six Onge couples in my ship from Little Andaman Island for the commissioning ceremony. Stark naked to the bone I accommodated them in my crew's mess with the crew disbursed to other cramped spaces. We arrived at Port Blair harbor at 8pm in the night to disembark the Onge's onto the Naval destroyer INS Ranjit. As the first Onge couple was disembarking, news flashed across the ship and in no time, the full crew of INS Ranjit was leaning over their shipside to witness the disembarkation of the naked couples - a rare sight for sex starved sailors! INS Ranjit started tilting dangerously to our side with the weight of the full crew making disembarkation hazardous. The situation was however quickly remedied by the ship's Captain who ordered the crew back to their stations.

The next morning the Onge's gave their tribal dance at the commissioning ceremony. The

only exception to their nakedness was, that all of the six women had a green coconut hanging below their navel. And as the dance progressed, they swayed to its beat whilst shaking their hips and torsos and lifted their coconuts high up (presumably for freedom of body movement) and then down, up and down, up and down. Totally engrossed in their tribal dance, they were not aware of the rather contrary reactions in the audience. The unease and discomfort of the "genteel ladies" and/but the full throated cheers from the other gender, especially the sailors, who went hoarse with each lift of the coconuts. Such is life!!

The Rani of Chunga

During the visit to one of the islands I was required to entertain the local queen known as the Rani of Chunga. She had been sent advance information of my visit by the local administration. Onboard my vessel (SDB) I also had two other Naval officers from INS Jarawa (Lieutenants Ranjit Chaudhary and Kailash Zadu) representing the establishment. After anchoring off the island, we found four local boats pulling towards us loaded with fruit. In the lead boat was the 'Rani' who boarded with her blind husband and two brothers. It was about 9 o'clock in the morning and I took her to the officer's wardroom. On being asked what refreshments she would like namely tea, coffee or a cold drink, she said she wanted whisky for herself, brandy



for her blind husband, gin for one brother and rum for the second. "And no tumblers please, a bottle for each," she added. So it was and they drank with good grace, finished the bottles to the last drop, engaged in lively conversation (the Rani also claimed she was invited by the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to New Delhi for the Republic Day), enjoyed the food we offered and left, to our utter amazement, as sober as when they arrived. What stamina, to put it mildly. Mar's Urdu couplet would best define the moment:

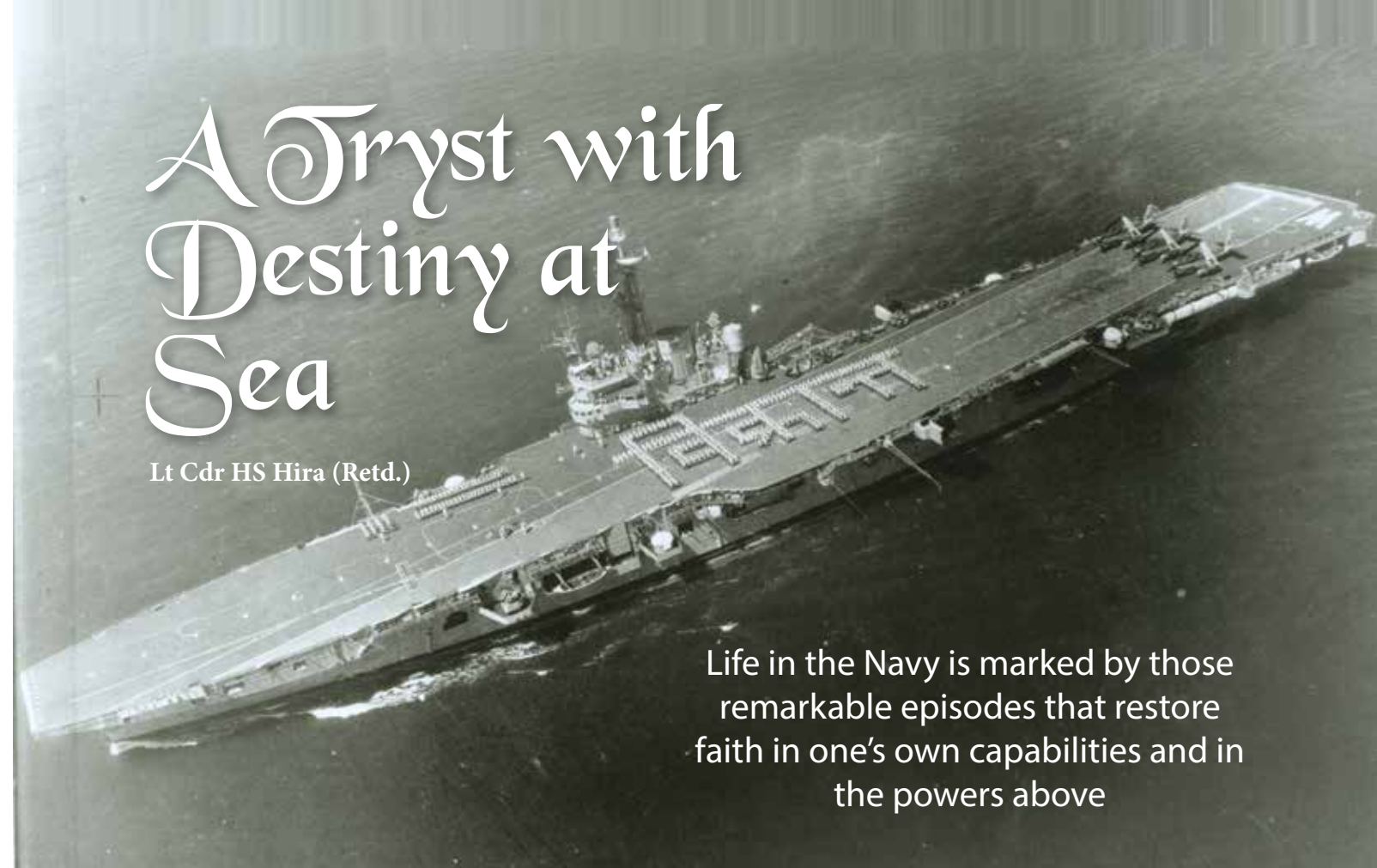
*"Peete hai apne maze ke liye,
Khaamkhaan badnaam gham hai,
Poori botal pee kar dekho,
Phir duniyaa kya jannat se kam hai"*

Cdr Prakash Swani completed his Long ND course and commanded SDB Ajay in 1964 and INS Kiltan in 1975-76. A recipient of the Andamans and Nicobar clasp, he served in the Merchant Navy and in various maritime jobs after retirement.



A Tryst with Destiny at Sea

Lt Cdr HS Hira (Retd.)



Life in the Navy is marked by those remarkable episodes that restore faith in one's own capabilities and in the powers above

After passing out of my initial training in Dec 1963 from INS Hamla, the alma-mater for the Supply and Secretariat branch, I got my first posting to INS Vikrant and joined the ship at Bombay after a month's leave. Joining India's pride - INS Vikrant which was a recently acquired Aircraft carrier was a great feeling for anyone in those days.

It took me a few days to get familiar with the ship's layout. It became a daily routine to go around, up and down the decks, to get to know the vast set of locations of a well knit, integrated and self-contained floating mini township at sea.

It was during sailing just a few days after joining when I was on a stroll on the flight deck after dinner and on returning found the flight deck main approach door closed. It was pitch dark and since I did not have prior knowledge about the ship being a fresh joinee, the whole dark night loomed ahead for me all alone on the flight deck at high seas. I had no one to call and that was not even the age of mobiles. What next?

I knew that on the starboard rear side there was a gun mounting so I thought of landing on that

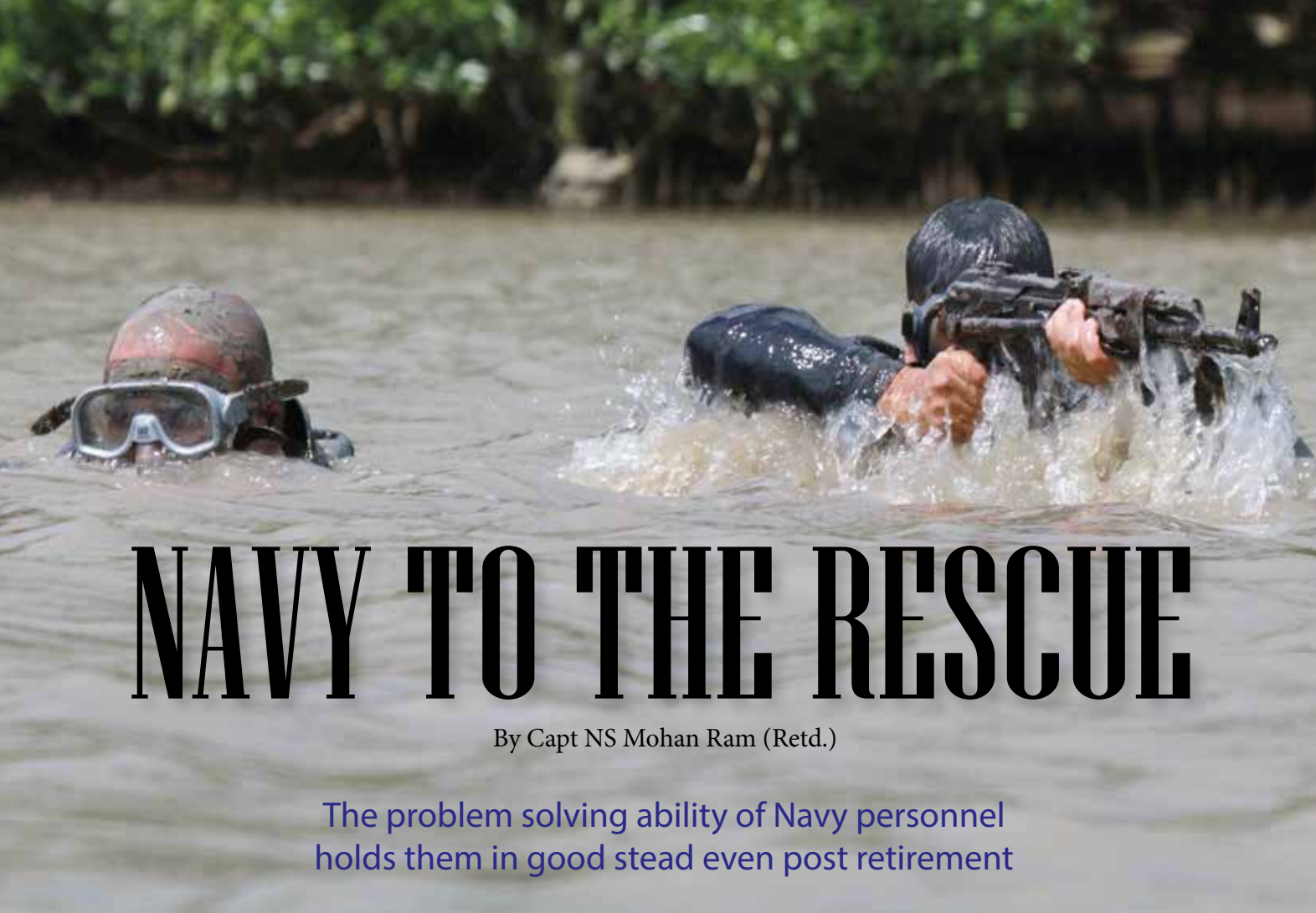
and after much thought ventured out ultimately. While hanging from the flight deck, my feet were not touching the deck and I struggled to sustain by flinging my legs and feet, to no avail. It was impossible to heave and climb back on to the flight deck without any support leaving me with no alternative except to trust destiny. I sent out a silent prayer, closed my eyes and left the flight deck grip. To my good fortune, I safely landed on the gun deck and heaved a sigh of relief.

Time is indeed a great leveler and one never knows what awaits us at every corner and juncture. I was fortunate to be lucky.

A soldier having donned the uniform is always ready to face the challenges upfront and sacrifice his life for the cause of the nation; The Mother India. In my case, if otherwise, it could have been a sorry tale of sorrow and remorse.

This incident was a life lasting experience in the prime of my service that gave me another lease of life to serve the nation for the entire length of my service career in whichever or whatever humble way.

"Jako Raakhe Saeyan, Maar Sake na Koye"



NAVY TO THE RESCUE

By Capt NS Mohan Ram (Retd.)

The problem solving ability of Navy personnel holds them in good stead even post retirement

It happened eight years after I had retired from the Navy. I was then the Vice President in charge of Mukand Limited Flagship Steel Plant at Kalwe, near Thane. Our plant suffered a major breakdown of the valve-based old control system of a wire rod mill. Each day's downtime was costing us lakhs of rupees. None of our experts could diagnose or repair the fault. In desperation, I turned to Lt Cdr Kashmira Singh IN (Retired) who was an expert in Vikrant's valve based equipment. Promoted from the ranks, Kashmira was a legend in his time. I knew him slightly and traced him with some difficulty. It was a desperate gamble to expect him to sort out a steel plant's control system problems. This is the story of the extraordinary skill and commitment of a retired naval officer who saved our bacon and fixed the problem.

Mukand's wire rod mill reduced 100 mm square heated Alloy steel billets to 6 mm diameter wire rods in stages. The wires came out faster after each stage and literally whizzed out of the stand at the end. It was then wound round as coils. The control system had to sense and adjust the speed of the next stage at each stage. It was extremely complicated.

The mill broke down due to sudden failure of the valve-based control system in May 1988. Our maintenance staff was not able to repair the systems. The original suppliers of the mill advised that the system had become obsolete and should be replaced by a solid state system. They had no expertise in repairing the system.

I contacted BHEL, ABB and other potential suppliers. They advised us to junk the system and go for a new and more robust transistor based system, which would take over ten months to procure and install. We were losing production and revenue, every hour the system was down.

My Chief Executive, Rajesh Shah was after me to find some way of getting the mill operational again. He felt that if anyone could find an answer to the problem, it was probably me, with my penchant for thinking out of the box.

In desperation, I thought of Lt Cdr Kashmira Singh, who was the last word in maintenance of INS Vikrant's valve-based control systems for weapons and communications. Kashmira had magic in his fingers. He worked by sheer

gut feel using the most basic tools. It was even believed that a judicious kick from him could bring Vikrant's equipment back to life!

After considerable search and desperate phone calls to all and sundry, I finally located him at a marine repair unit at Reay Road run by Retired Commander Satija, my old naval colleague. I explained to them our problem.

Kashmira told me, "Captain Mohan Ram, I know nothing about Steel plant equipment. Let me come there and see what I can do. I cannot give you any guarantees."

I drove him to our plant and explained our problem. He got to work with a vengeance. Using a soldering iron, megger and other basic tools, he went through each wire and solder of the system piece by piece, to locate items which had shorted or any component which had failed. It was laborious backbreaking work and he seemed fascinated by the sheer challenge of the job and worked non-stop.

By the end of the second day, he got the system back to work, though he had no clue of the logic of the control system. He also located soft spots where future failures could occur and made them robust. Trials showed the system was working faultlessly again.

Kashmir was beaming and told me happily, "After a long time, I am having fun playing around with real stuff!"

The plant was running smoothly like a sewing machine. The Mukand maintenance staff were awestruck at Kashmira's "haath ki safai" (magic touch). Rajesh Shah thanked him profusely for

helping us out. He asked me to compensate him suitably. I drove him back to his office. He had saved us lakhs of rupees.

I asked him "Please let me have your bill for your time and the repair."

He replied "Captain Mohan Ram Saab, I have not had such fun for a long while! You are an old naval colleague, it was a small favor. There will be no charge."

I told Commander Satija, "Satija, please give us a sensible quote. I will settle it immediately. Your partner is a nutcase, he wants to work for free because he had fun! No one can afford to run a business on this basis."

After considerable pressure from me and Satija, Kashmira came out with a ridiculous quote of twenty thousand rupees. I persuaded Satija to increase the quote tenfold and settled the bill on the spot.

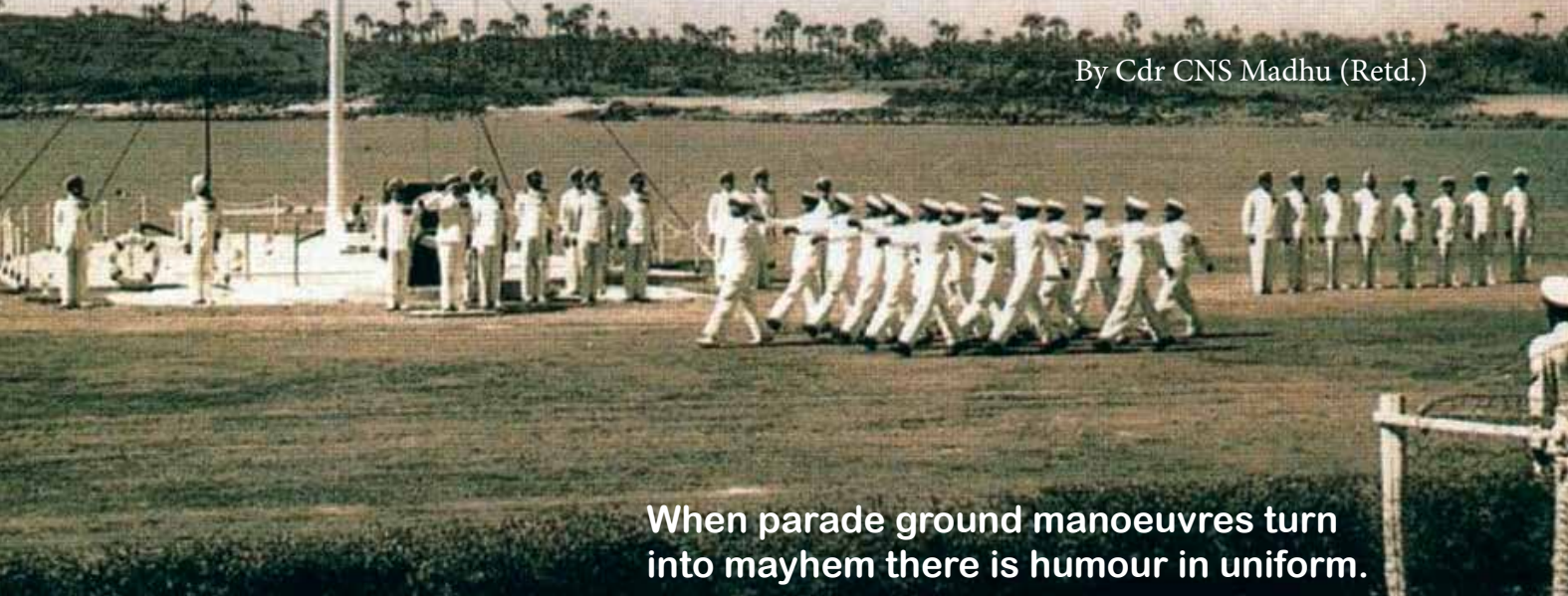
Mukand had a bargain at rupees two lakhs. Not only did he get the system working, he also rendered it more robust and averted future breakdown. He gave useful tips to our maintenance staff on how to monitor the system components. We never faced any trouble with the system for the rest of my tenure in Mukand. I initiated a proposal to replace the system with a modern transistorized microprocessor controlled system. I guess it must have been procured and installed later.

There are indeed so many heroes like Lt Cdr Kashmira Singh in our Armed Forces and it is thanks to the Navy that they hone their skills so perfectly!

After graduating from IIT Kharagpur, Capt Mohan Ram was commissioned in the Corps of Naval Constructors and led the projects of the design of INS Godavari and Coast Guard OPVs of Vikram Class. He joined Mazagon Docks as the Design Chief in 1979 and moved to the private sector in 1984. He has authored the book "Recycling of End of Life Vehicles – Focus on India and Developing Nations."

THE MARCH FROM THE PAST

By Cdr CNS Madhu (Retd.)



When parade ground manoeuvres turn into mayhem there is humour in uniform.

It was a bright sunny day way back in late 80's at the Southern Naval Command which is known for its excellence in training naval personnel. Here, young, inquisitive and handsome trainees of all ranks are engaged in skill development training programmes in a number of schools, units and organisations with their heart and soul. One such busy school was ND School where there were many courses undergoing training in the various specialties under its ambit.

A fresh batch of 10 Sub Lieutenants of the same NAVAC course joined ND school as part of their sub-courses. Another officer, which is me, joined them to complete my training and get my second stripe which was held up till the criterion of completion of sub-courses was fulfilled. That made us 11 jokers in the pack in the instructor's affectionate parlance.

The course is designed in such a way that each officer gets a chance to showcase his leadership for a week by way of being the class leader. The first reaction of the trainees is to avoid, delay and only if the heavens fall, accept this honour.

Once you join any naval training school, its schedule for the day inevitably starts with a march past. All courses and classes undergoing

training have to do march past in their parade ground making it a part of the training session. Our class enthusiastically formed an officer's platoon, of size 3 x 4, with the last but one row having an officer in single column, as being the standard practice with a ten man platoon. The leader of the class was a bit shaky because he was forced by the others to take on the responsibility. Additionally, the sudden information of the march past in the parade ground, 'for which he was not ready mentally' made him nervous as did the fact that some of his course mates continuously nagged and made fun. Confusion and nervousness slowly crept into him with barely any time to recover psychologically and face this situation.

When the Parade Commander thundered the order "Parade *saav...dhaan*", absolute seriousness loomed over the parade ground. The series of orders sequentially, giving the rules to follow with, "guard *pehale*" and finally "Parade *dahene mud*" saw the guard take lead and march ahead. Our officer's platoon also took a start with each individual showing their supremacy and skill to get a "*shabhash*".

However, some of them tried to help the class leader by trying their personal style of putting

REMINISCENCES AND INTERESTING EPISODES

words in the mouth of the leader after he marched off thus adding to the chaos. It began when "*Baaye ghoom*" instead of "*Line mein baayein mud*" was given at the end of the ground and the first row began turning while being a bit too much of an OG Fauji! This resulted in the lead file crossing the margin line and doing "*kadam taal*", waiting for further orders.

Now the class leader and the platoon too started doing "*kadam taal*". In that panicky situation "*Baaye ghoom*" order was given by the class leader and the entire platoon executed the manoeuvre meticulously and precariously. It was a remarkable situation least expected from an officer's platoon as now the class leader was on the port side of the platoon. Somebody prompted him to lead from the front. So he joined the class right in the front. Someone else suggested he join the platoon so pushing the right lead file officer to his rear, the class leader joined the main platoon and now there was no leader.

At this point there was confusion everywhere and the question that arose was eternal - Who will bell the cat? One man in the last row was pushed unceremoniously to the front alone with the entire cascading action being done rapidly and rather innocently.

The platoon leader gave a *kadak* salute to the Chief Guest on the dais from the first row

while the platoon followed in a sympathetic and coordinated manner with each one saluting the Chief Guest on the dais thus giving no chance for a blame game.

The Officer in Charge screamed "What Is this?", turning his head to the starboard towards the Training Commander who in turn moved his head to his starboard and echoed the same "What Is this?" And the heads continued turning till the junior most officer in the 'super numeri' officer's line. As a matter of fact even he turned right, found none, and could not pass it further. A nice way of passing the buck.

The rest is history as introductory classes were Drill and Parade Training which continued for the duration of the course.



Cdr CNS Madhu was commissioned on 06 Feb 1984 and served for three decades in the Indian Navy. A keen sportsman, he was college champion and represented Jodhpur University before joining the Navy. Post retirement, he is enjoying working with plants with an aim to get closer to nature.

Ode to the Navy

Cdr Shekhar Murthy (Retd.)

*Goodbye friends, it's curtains for me,
Do feel sorry indeed, yet, I have to go,
For every good story needs a good end.*

*And as those curtains draw across the stage
And I take my final bow,
There's a few things I surely must say.*

*Naval life, unique in its ways,
Forbearance and fortitude, always the main stay,
For the sea's been the great leveler years through.*

*Ahoy ! Sailing began at Naval Academy
Under-training period, grilling, yet satisfying,
For the 'spirits' remained high, and ambitions flying.*

*Sailing tenures always been tough,
Propulsion and auxiliaries, lay you on trough,
Testing professional acumen, on every rough.*

*Training and Machinery Trials, been my specialty for years
Managing Unbalances and Misalignment, sometimes with tears
Compulsive learning, allay all training fears*

*And now, I hope to sail off to sun soaked climes,
Just another reason, for these rhymes.
Yearning to have time, for many a horizon new.*

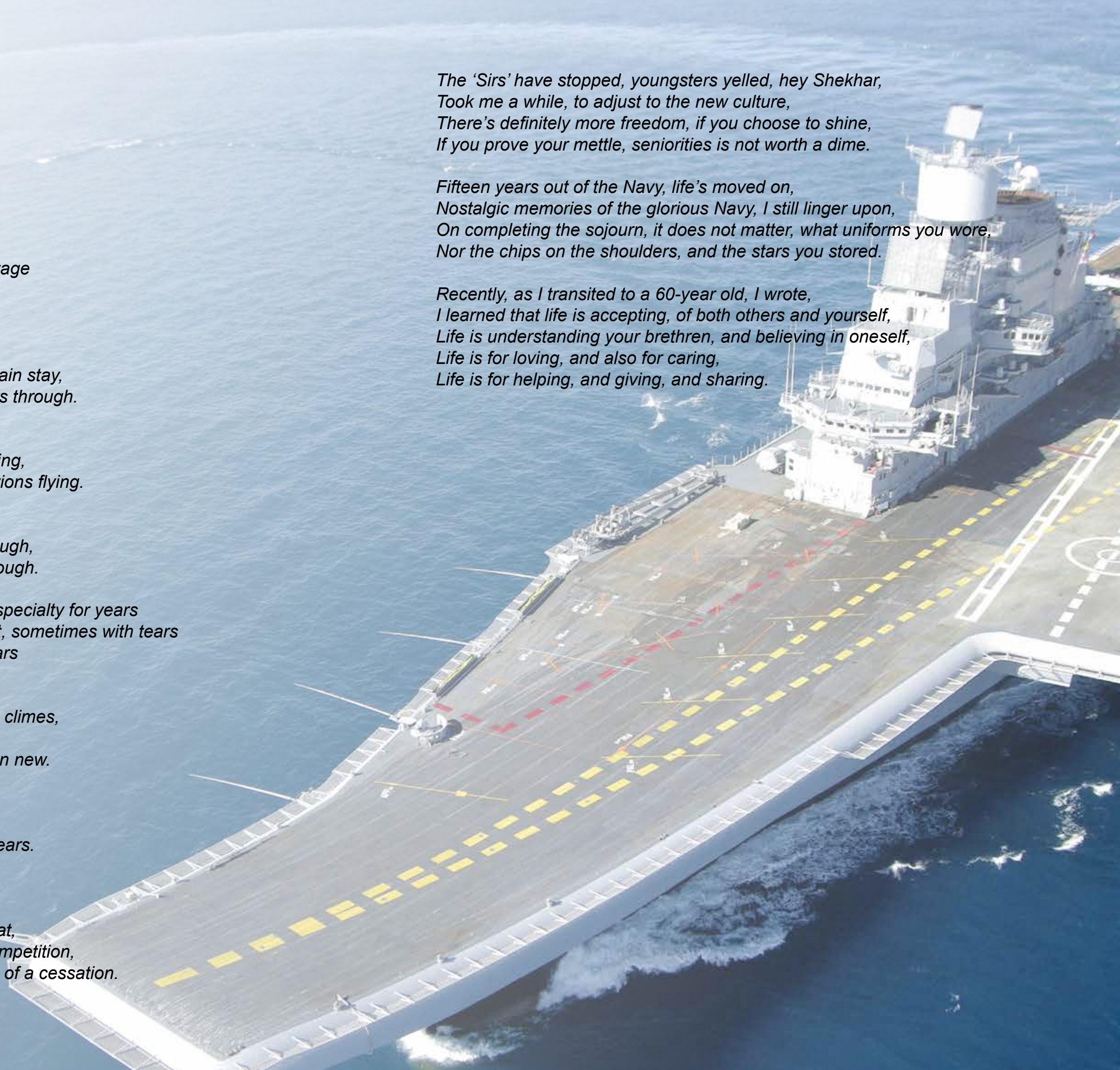
*As the sails draw so near,
I know, we shall miss you dear,
Let joy and happiness, abound you for years.
15 Years Later – The Saga Continues*

*Upon joining the civvy street,
I realized you need to sing a different beat,
Agility, thy name, keeps you ahead of competition,
Deadlines and pressures, show no signs of a cessation.*

*The 'Sirs' have stopped, youngsters yelled, hey Shekhar,
Took me a while, to adjust to the new culture,
There's definitely more freedom, if you choose to shine,
If you prove your mettle, seniorities is not worth a dime.*

*Fifteen years out of the Navy, life's moved on,
Nostalgic memories of the glorious Navy, I still linger upon,
On completing the sojourn, it does not matter, what uniforms you wore,
Nor the chips on the shoulders, and the stars you stored.*

*Recently, as I transited to a 60-year old, I wrote,
I learned that life is accepting, of both others and yourself,
Life is understanding your brethren, and believing in oneself,
Life is for loving, and also for caring,
Life is for helping, and giving, and sharing.*



GOD'S OWN COUNTRY

By Cmde RK Dass (Retd.)

The unprecedented rains and the deluge in God's own country were devastating.

The beauty and resilience of Kerala and its people will ensure that the state will regain its strength and glory very soon.

The scenes one saw on the television were shocking and brought tears in my eyes. The havoc was unbelievable. The deadly invasion of water was horrifying to say the least and water levels rising above the first floor of houses were intimidating.

It was heartening to see the rescue operations by the Armed forces and other agencies with the role of the Indian Navy being commendable. Some of the rescue operations by the Sea Kings, my old squadron, made me proud.

Kochi and Kerala have a very special place in my heart. I first arrived here in Jan 1966 as a Naval Aviation cadet. The journey from Ambala Cantt to Delhi and to Madras and then onwards by Island Express to CHTS is still fresh in my mind. I spent over 11 years of my Naval career in Kochi. All good things in life happened here. Except for my elevation to Commodore I had all my promotions in Kochi. As a Lt Cdr whilst in the Sea King squadron, I was transferred to Kochi as Cdr to take over as Officer In Charge FATS. I was back at Kochi after many years to be promoted to Capt as Command Aviation Officer. I got married here and my wife joined me up and she was lucky to have walked into a house straight away. We were blessed with our first child Amit at INHS Sanjivani.

All places in God's own country are scenic and beautiful. There are a large number of places for picnics like Alleppy Light house, Cochin Light house, the Monastery at Alwaye etc. I got to visit Munnar a number of times as a exchange visit with the High Range Club Munnar.

It was the year 1978 and I was posted at 330 Sqn at Kochi. One particular weekend some of the squadron mates expressed a desire for a picnic as an outing for the ladies since we had just come back from a longish detachment. After due consultations it was decided to go to the dam on Chalakudy river since this place had a beautiful garden also.

On a bright Sunday morning, we got together at Katari Bagh. The group consisting of GS Gill and his wife with Hoshiar Singh and wife in Gills Standard Herald, PS Dhupia and wife (Parents of famous Bollywood star Neha Dhupia) on a motor cycle, Ajay Sareen and Vijay Bhansali on another bike, Sandy Sharma and wife in my car along with Sarika, my few months old son and my mother. Hampers for the picnic were in the two cars as per the menu decided by the ladies.

Around 0930h we set course for our venue.

Just about 15 minutes after we set course even before we could reach Jose Junction, the motor cycles waved us to a stop. It emerged that Dhupia's had forgotten something and wanted to go back to sort it out and rejoin. Instead of waiting, the cars chugged along slowly to be joined by the bikes later. Somewhere along the way, contact with Gill's was lost and I chugged along to the destination. There was no sight of the bikes also. A little distance short of the Dam we spotted a Government Rest house. We decided to stop here and wait for the others. The car being parked in such a manner that it could be easily spotted by the following group.

We waited and waited but there were no signs of our friends and it was almost 1400h. We were feeling hungry and when the picnic box was opened it was realized that it contained only the vegetables and salad since the rice and Parantha's were in Gill's car. Notwithstanding the same we ate what was available. Having waited long around 1600h we decided to move to the garden a short distance away. As we drove around in the garden area Gills car was spotted. It emerged that his car was giving problem and he had taken a wrong turn and that is how we missed each other. He had just reached the place and missed spotting us at the rest house. The motor cycles also joined up in the meantime. For the way back we decided that Gill's car will move ahead and stop only, in case of a problem or at Alwaye crossing.

We followed the lot and on reaching Alwaye crossing did not find Gill's, assuming that he must have continued back home reaching around 2000h. We were unhappy with Gill for his casual approach of not having stopped at the Alwaye crossing. Next day in the morning when we met, we learnt that Gill had again taken a wrong turn and had a flat tyre. Since his spare tyre was also flat they had a lot of difficulty in setting things right. They had reached home only past midnight. I learnt a lesson for life "Whilst travelling in company always move together and keep each other in sight."

With all the memories down the lane about Kochi and Kerala I look forward to visiting God's own country in the near future and see it in its old glory. Till then, my prayers are with Kerala and it's people.

FROM THE PAGES OF MY FLYING LOGBOOK

By Cmde SC Dewan (Retd.)

Whilst participating in and witnessing a range of activities and exercises held onboard INS Vikrant from the first week of Aug 1971 till the start of the war in Dec 1971, history was made and memorable moments recorded

It was towards the end of Jul 1971 when the aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, was being made operational to visit the East Coast, as per practice over the years, for continuation of flying during monsoons and fleet exercises. By then, the air elements had already embarked in full strength. I was onboard the ship as part of the 310 Squadron. Increasing skirmishes between Mukti Vahini and Pakistan forces in erstwhile East Pakistan provided compelling reason to get the ship positioned on the East Coast. Flying trials for flight deck operations were conducted on 23 Jul 71 between Bombay and Goa by an Alize aircraft flown by then Lt Cdr S. Ramsagar and Lt SC Dewan. By 02 Aug, the ship was off Madras and had embarked both the air squadrons – INAS 300 (Sea Hawks White Tigers) commanded by then Lt Cdr SK Gupta and INAS 310 (Alizes-Cobras) commanded by then Lt Cdr RD Dhir.

Instructions from Naval Headquarters were very clear that the air squadrons were to embark with augmented aircraft holding. As such 19 Sea Hawks and 6 Alizes embarked. Additional air crew and maintenance personnel were

consequently appointed to increase strength to undertake continuous day and night flying operations in case the requirement arose. 15 pilots was the crew strength for the Sea Hawks while 8 pilots and 10 observers were allocated for the Alizes. Maintenance personnel were increased to ensure high aircraft serviceability while under training aircrew were disembarked.

Meanwhile Mukti Bahini had intensified its hostilities further making a full-fledged conflict between India and Pakistan a distinct possibility. A daily Vikrant News bulletin was issued by the Communication Department to keep the personnel updated.

Onboard the ship, flying operations were planned and tailor-made to re-familiarize recently drafted-in aircrew and enable them to achieve their active flying status and bring them to combat readiness. When not flying, lectures and discussions were organized on relevant subjects like recognition and capabilities of the enemy Naval units and aircraft, topography of the hostile coast and its salient features, location of strategic assets on the coast, ground defenses envisaged, prevailing climatic conditions in the likely area of operations and weather outlook. High aircraft serviceability was maintained and every possible opportunity was availed to further sharpen aircrew combat readiness and to integrate them into well knit fighting units.

The ship's crew as a whole exercised more on fire fighting and damage control, NBCD control, casualty evacuation, first aid, man overboard,



abandon ship, lowering and hoisting of boats, action stations, refueling and transfer of stores at sea, steering gear break-down, aircraft firefighting, aircraft crash on flight deck etc. This phase of vigorous training continued till 17 Sep 71 when the Fleet departed for Port Blair.

The air squadron continued the consolidation phase of work up off Port Blair / Car Nicobar till 05/06 Oct 71 and off Madras up to 11/12 Nov 71, within the constraints of available aircraft diversion facilities. On completion, the mighty ship returned to the waters off Port Blair and Port Cornwallis and remained in their vicinity awaiting further orders.

During this short visit to Madras port, liberty ashore was granted to the ship's company regularly. Most sought after was the mail bag received from Fleet Mail Office, Bombay which reconnected personnel onboard with their families. The prestigious Madras Gymkhana Club offered temporary membership to the officers. The ship greatly appreciated the gesture and her officers availed the hospitality to chill and unwind. Occasionally, when cruising at night, feature films were screened on the flight deck for recreation. I vividly remember one of these films was 'Mera Saya' which was screened the maximum number of times on popular demand. Its captivating song "Jhumka Gira Re Bareilly Ke Bazaar Mein," featuring Sadhana and sung by Asha Bhosle was a favorite of the crew members. I am sure it must be a joyful reminiscence of the veterans who were onboard.



Coming back to the track, the last port of call was Port Cornwallis in the northern part of islands, wherein the ship remained at anchorage for a few days. On 01/02 Dec, she sailed for area off approaches to the Hoogly River and Cox's Bazaar. On the passage, the air squadrons were apprised of the situation and repeat briefings on salient aspects of flying operations were held. The air crew of squadrons who never missed a chance to indulge in jokes and repartee due to their professional rivalry, now integrated into a skilled and intrepid fighting unit. That the impassioned air crew were ready to take on any task could be gauged from firing practice on streamed targets. Reports of American aircraft carrier USS Enterprise heading towards the area did not deter them a bit. On the contrary, it raised their curiosity to take her on as the Japanese did in World War II. The rallying point was the Air Crew Snack Bar where there was never a dull moment.

Whilst cruising in the designated area, air surveillance around the fleet was augmented. Seahawks took up Combat Air Patrol (CAP) stations during dawn and dusk. Weather in the area was calm with opulent sunshine and standing on the flight deck, I felt that many activities there could be related to the existing fully charged atmosphere onboard. I assimilated the imaginary narratives in my own way.

The whistling noise of the catapult steam exuded power and its readiness. Propellers of the ship churned water forcefully complementing each other, an assurance of speed and mobility. The fading outlines of the Ship's wake looked enchanting and prayed for the well-being and victory of the brave hearts onboard. Resetting noise of the aircraft arresting wires, the swirling

of the anti-aircraft guns and the urgent gait of the aircraft lifts with their cascading sound and ringing of warning bells aroused infectious enthusiasm of patriotism across the entire ship. This was evident from the glowing faces of the men and glint in their eyes.

On 01/02 Dec 1971, the Commanding Officer, Captain S Prakash, addressed the men on the current situation in an eloquent speech. In his firm voice he informed that war was imminent and asked them to be prepared for every contingency. On 03 Dec 1971, war broke out between India and Pakistan. With the expertise available onboard, the aircraft were modified to carry 500 lbs bombs, which further envenomed the sting of the Cobras. Thanks to the unrelenting and efficacious efforts put in by Lt CVS Naidu (AWI) and GD Singh CH AMW(3) of the squadron, two Alizes were launched in the intervening night of 6/7 Dec to bomb the runway of Cox's Bazaar airfield. It was the first strike from the ship against shore targets and caused heavy damage to the runway. The White Tigers also struck the target with great force in a pre-dawn attack rendering the runway unusable for air operations.

The outcome of the war is still very fresh in peoples mind. While the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force gave Pakistani forces a bloody nose over land, the Indian Navy stifled them with a naval blockade by cutting off their supply lines and escape routes. They pounded coastal strategic assets, captured merchant vessels and successfully carried out landing operations off Cox's Bazaar to land army troops and equipment ashore. This was definitely one of my most fruitful phases of flying and one of the memorable extracts from my flying logbook.

THE NAVAL SWORD



The Navy is the only branch of India's Armed Forces that continues to have a sword as part of an officer's uniform. Since the Indian Navy is closely linked to the British Royal Navy (RN) in so far as uniforms and ceremonial are concerned, one would have to delve into the RN's history to understand the evolution of the Naval Sword.

By Cmde Sanjay Kris Tewari

Swords seemed to have begun their time on board ships since the invention of the weapon. Naturally the higher in status a mariner was, the better weapon he would be expected to possess. In particular, the "mark of a gentleman" for many hundreds of years in British society was the sword, probably dating from the days of knightly vows where the knight's sword was his most prized and revered weapon. It was the sword that made him a knight, after all, in the ceremony in which he was "dubbed" by tapping him on both shoulders with the naked blade. His honour was therefore, attached to the sword.

Officers were first granted a uniform in 1748. However, no regulations regarding the wearing of swords was detailed. At this time officers wore their swords from a shoulder belt, something which can be seen in many portraits of officers of the time. A regulation sword was introduced in 1805 when it was ordered that the sword would be hung from a cavalry-type waist belt, which had two slings of different length, so that the

sword trailed on the ground. It was an elegant, if impractical design. It is perhaps relevant to note that at this time appearance was more important than serviceability in uniforms. A regulation of 1825 stated that sword belts in dress uniform were to be of silk, but that a black leather belt could be worn in undress uniform.

In 1827 a new pattern of sword was introduced and again the regulations for wear were amended, this time by reverting to a shoulder belt, worn under the waistcoat. Silk sword belts were restricted to wear in the drawing room only. A black leather belt with a frog to hold the sword was introduced for wear with great coats in 1829.

The regulations were amended again in 1832 with the sword to be worn on a waist belt, suspended from slings of unequal length again. This was further changed in 1847 when the slings were to be of equal length. This process went on and it was only in 1929 that the present straight, single

edged sword with slings of unequal length was finally adopted.

Notwithstanding the evolution, it is remarkable that the sword has survived the upheavals of the twentieth century. The sheathed officer's sword, however, owes its survival to a different reason. As the gentleman's weapon of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, it was only natural that it should be incorporated into the naval officer's uniform. The wearing of the sword thus, distinguished the well-born "gentleman" from the lower classes, and the naval officer was able to wear a sword as a "gentleman."

Even today, at the commencement of a court martial, an officer's sword is taken from the accused, and at the end of the trial it signifies whether the officer is guilty or not, by being presented on a table when the person is brought back into court after the presiding board's deliberations. If found not guilty, the sword hilt is towards the officer, signifying that one's honour and duty can be taken up again. If guilty, the point is presented. In that case he does not carry the sword when he leaves.

If the officer is acquitted, the sword is returned to him ie his "honour is restored".

Construction of the Naval Sword

The naval sword has a blade length of 31" and width at the hilt of 7/8". The sword has a gold plated brass hilt and hand-guard, with a pommel in the shape of a lion. The grip is white, with fish skin being used in the original versions along with gold wire to secure the grip. The unique feature of the naval sword is the small hinged lip of the guard which can be folded down to engage with a pin on the scabbard. This feature proved most useful to prevent the scabbard falling off when climbing over a shipside, or in stormy weather.



The material chosen for the blade was high carbon steel, which had greater tensile strength than stainless steel, meaning there were lesser chances of the blade chipping or breaking during engagements. The material currently being used is AISI 1055.

Scabbard -The scabbard was made of rawhide with gold plated brass mounts. Swords used by Flag Officers were similar, but were more ornate with engraving on the brass mounts of the scabbard.

The Naval Knot - The "Knot" was in fact originally a loop of leather or other material secured to the sword hilt. Before an engagement, the swordsman wrapped the loop around his wrist to prevent loss of his weapon, should he need to relax his grip or if the sword were struck from his grasp. From these basic origins, the sword knot has evolved into its present ceremonial and ornamental form.

Swords for Warrant Officers - In 1832, a new pattern with black grips was introduced for Master-At-Arms and Warrant Officers. The other difference was that these ranks "wore" their swords, while officers "carried" their swords.

Carrying or Wearing of Swords

There was a story circulated at some stage in the early part of the 20th century, relating to the reason why Naval Officers carried their swords as opposed to Army officers who wore their swords on their belts at their waists. The story was that following some disgrace within the RN, perhaps a mutiny, an order was once given that Naval officers could not wear their swords, as they were not gentlemen. Instead, they would have to carry them. It was also rumoured that the order had come from Queen Victoria herself. Eventually, it was firmly stamped as nothing more than a fairy tale and a rumour.

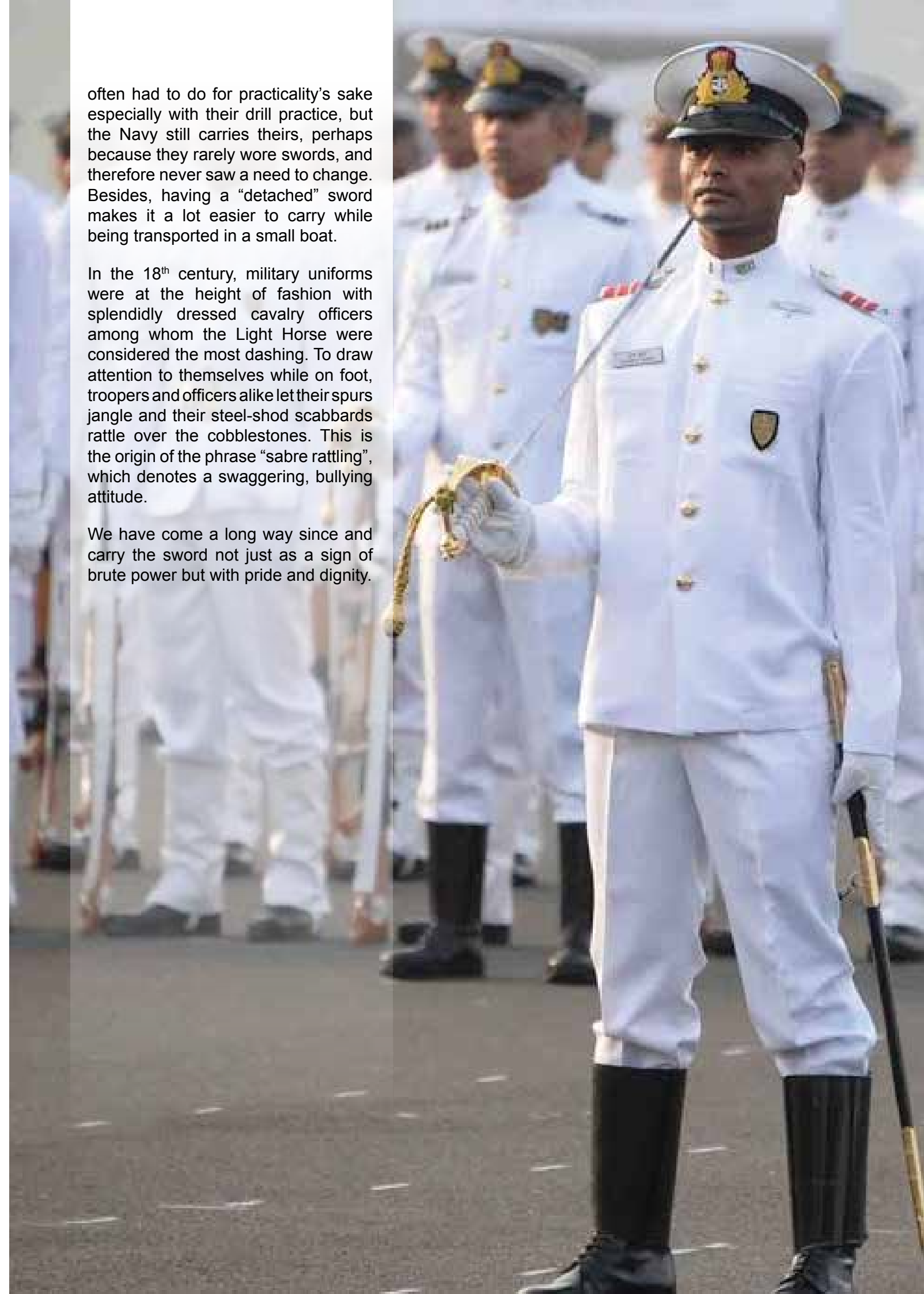
In any case, even the most doubting sceptic would agree that the monarch could scarcely be expected to do something that would affect the morale of her Navy.

Everyone wore trailing swords, which had to be carried. So it is the case, perhaps, that all military personnel once wore their swords in a hanging fashion, with the slings as long as possible, so as to draw attention to the wearer. The army personnel of the world have now lifted their swords to their belts, as no doubt soldiers

often had to do for practicality's sake especially with their drill practice, but the Navy still carries theirs, perhaps because they rarely wore swords, and therefore never saw a need to change. Besides, having a "detached" sword makes it a lot easier to carry while being transported in a small boat.

In the 18th century, military uniforms were at the height of fashion with splendidly dressed cavalry officers among whom the Light Horse were considered the most dashing. To draw attention to themselves while on foot, troopers and officers alike let their spurs jangle and their steel-shod scabbards rattle over the cobblestones. This is the origin of the phrase "sabre rattling", which denotes a swaggering, bullying attitude.

We have come a long way since and carry the sword not just as a sign of brute power but with pride and dignity.



Scientists, Ships, Strategists & Samosas

By Cmde Aspi Cawasji (Retd.)

The common factor between scientists, ships and strategists is the indigenous, handmade, earthy, culinary delight called the 'Samosa'.

From the inner sanctum-sanctorum of any defence research laboratory to the cramped ship wardroom to the Submarine Training School to the conference halls of the various think-tanks strewn around the capital, the sumptuous, crunchy and superlatively delightful Samosa is omni-present as a universal snack to please the hungry palate. However, the figurative Samosa has not evolved much over the centuries.

Military leaders are always confronted with the conflict between use of lessons learnt from previous campaigns and employment of new technology and strategies. The relationship of the harmony between "Science & Strategy" requires one to obtain a deep insight into how scientific developments have led to military capabilities in the past and what can be done in the present to improve the future. With the likely extinction of "Poories, Pakoras & Brigadiers" in the Army, the very existence of the Samosa in the Navy also is in question. On the lighter side, this seems to be a very alarming event which has the potential to send ripples within the Naval, scientific and strategic communities and indeed will be of deep concern to all as these are intertwined.



Human nature tends to resist change, always wanting to stay with the familiar. Hence traditional and institutional thinking often makes one don mental blinkers which reinforces proclivity. We have read in history and practically seen that despite realistic experience on ships, submarines or aircraft, leaders tend to have fixed ideas about operational strategy learned at various institutions: as put across very lucidly by an Admiral recently, that, "Senior officers only have opinions, whereas, the real ideas germinate from the junior officer". Therefore, the need of the hour is to have open minds, good research skills, scientific know-how and a willingness to work despite the institutional resistance of senior leadership. In this case, we need to quickly evaluate strategies and search for an alternative to the revered Samosa, as banishing it figuratively from the Navy, may be an idea that has germinated from the higher echelons, but is not likely to be cherished by the lower echelons.

Events bear testimony to the fact that technology has been thrust upon India repeatedly in the past, whether it was in the form of ageing frigates of the Royal Navy, or other ships and submarines of Russian origin. Even in the case of the Samosa,

it actually originated in Central Asia in the 10th century in its original form called the Sambosa. It was only in the late 13th or the 14th centuries that it found its way into India through traders and merchants involved in trade. Sambosas are a popular entrée, appetizer, or snack in the local cuisines of the Arabian Peninsula, Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia, the Mediterranean, Indian sub-continent, the Horn of Africa, East Africa, North Africa, and South Africa even today. The Indian Samosa largely remains the same even today since the time it was introduced in the 13th century, the only addition from the original being that it is accompanied with mint chutney.

Rather than banning the figurative Samosa just to keep up with the current trend, it would be more fruitful to jointly evolve an alternative and advanced evolved form of the technologically superior Samosa suitable to our very own needs and requirements. It is our attitude that requires changing, it took nearly six centuries to merely add just an accompaniment of mint chutney to the proverbial Samosa. We require to constantly push ourselves to continuously evolve both in technological innovation and strategic thought. Three questions need to be answered, firstly, how did scientists and strategists contribute to develop new military capabilities in the past? Second, what factors aided this process and how did we use this expertise to further evolve? Third, how did the inventions influence the operational capability?

On similar line, our approach to developing new strategy in the Navy must be through the existing technology or the technological level that we leapfrog to every few years and not of the earlier period. What steps have we taken in the recent past to overcome the institutional forces resisting change within our echelons? Have we adapted these new technological advancements that lie in our inventory into our overall strategy? Have we derived new strategies of our very own catering to our indigenous capabilities and threat perception of our surroundings? Have we taken the help of the scientific community to evolve new tactics? Why do we always want to do things with limited in-house expertise, why don't we employ scientists, specialists, strategists,

mathematicians or physicists to do the job? These are the questions that we need to ask ourselves. These mental blinders need to be decimated by dynamic leaders with a vision and openness to receive criticism. The attitudes of our research coordinating agencies need to be upgraded from the existing high handed bureaucratic approach to a more humble and tolerant developmental approach towards dealing with the scientific and strategic communities. Rather than only relying on multi-national defence companies to provide Transfer of Technology (TOT), we require to quickly absorb this technology and leapfrog from thereon to evolve new and advanced strategies. Of what use is the TOT if there is only replication and no advancement?

The answer lies in acknowledging the need for change and possibly resorting to identifying a central, multifarious agency including non-military elements for development of tactics and strategy for the Navy. Scientists have felt strongly that they should contribute their talent to military applications so long as victory lay in doubt as seen by their selective enthusiastic participation in our nuclear program. Hence we need to integrate these scientists and strategists into our military domain so that we can depend on their cooperation when the chips are down. There is a dire need to identify individuals and organisations so that their talent can be tapped in normal conditions and times of national crises.

The point to take home is that lessons of the past can serve us well, but it is the constant evolution of doctrine and advancement in technology integrating the available scientific and strategic talent that will bring about the downfall of even the most infallible of all adversaries. The Navy requires learning lessons by carefully choosing its officers who have to coordinate work by civilian outsiders, military planning staff and operational commanders towards the use of technological advances to provide new military capabilities. Instead of being high handed, it must be clearly understood that science and strategy are mutually inclusive.

Tradition and innovation should not be seen as opposite ends of the same rope.

Cmde Aspi Cawasji has held important command assignments and staff assignments. He has been awarded the Nao Sena Medal (1996) and the Vishisht Seva Medal (2013) and has jointly authored a book "Strategic Vision 2030: Security and Development of Andaman & Nicobar Islands".

THE ULTIMATE POSTING

By Cmde K V S Prakasa Rao (Retd.)

A life full of postings may not prepare us for the ultimate posting where there will be no notice, no preparation time, no transfer grant and no packing of any sort!

A transfer, an appointment or a posting is a very familiar experience for every 'fauji' and their spouse and children. Some transfers are welcome and some are not. Some are anticipated and some are not. Some are exciting and some are not! But one thing is common - generally in every transfer some time is given to prepare, pack up, book reservations and leave for the new place. This goes on till retirement, in which ever form it comes. After this, one looks for a job or tries to do something meaningful which could also augment the pension.

At an unspecified time during this phase comes the final posting or the ultimate posting as I call it, where there will be no notice, no preparation time, no transfer grant and no packing of any sort 'One' just leaves whether one likes it or not. This transfer order is issued by an unknown but highly powerful authority, generally called God or the Almighty.

In some cases, some preparation time is given, but it is rarely utilized properly. In any case, this ultimate posting called end of life would be painful for others - the close members of the family and friends, who are left behind.

It is common knowledge that one cannot expect to live on. In every country, there is an official life expectancy which keeps getting updated at intervals of time. Latest WHO data published in 2015 shows 66.9 yrs (67) for males and 69.9 yrs (70) for females in India. Many men and women are crossing these thresholds and are living much longer, nowadays.

Is it good or bad for these people to think of the end of life? This aspect has been engaging

my attention for quite some time. Recently, I happened to read a beautiful and very useful book on this topic called, "At Peace—Choosing A Good Death After A Long Life" by Dr. Samuel Harrington MD, published by Grand Central Life & Style, Hachette Book Group New York. Dr. Oliver Sacks says, "When people die, they cannot be replaced. They leave holes that cannot be filled, for it is the fate - the genetic and neural fate - of every human being to be unique individual to find his own path, to live his own life, to die his own death".

At the beginning of this book the author quotes the famous late Steve Jobs ex CEO of Apple Inc., "Death is very likely the single best invention of life. Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I have encountered to help me make big decisions in life".

The author says that his book is meant for all those who cross the age of 65 years. Obviously there should be an awareness of the inevitable because the day of final departure would come sooner or later. Generally, the later it comes, the sicker one would be. Further, it is necessary for each one of that group to have a clear idea of how much treatment one should agree to undergo in case of illness and also have an exit strategy in place. There is a lot of research world-wide, particularly in USA, on whether it is necessary to subject oneself to aggressive treatments simply because they are available.

It applies more to us because we are covered by a good scheme called ECHS. However good the medical facilities in corporate hospital might be, one has to weigh carefully if the aggressive treatment, though and if suggested, is worth

going through. We have been regularly seeing that the hospitals though modern, are basically commercial. In fact, the more modern they are, the more commercial they are. Many new procedures recommended are of dubious value for the patient. Sometimes, they make matters worse.

As age advances one would do well to carefully analyze and work out a suitable risk-reward perspective and an exit strategy. I am not at all suggesting that, after crossing the age of 65 yrs, one should give up an attempt to get treated for any ailment and await death. No, not in the least!! What I am suggesting is that one should always exercise a wise choice depending on the type of illness and the prognosis. I explain this aspect with the help of two examples.

First is the example of a person (60 yrs old) who suffers from IV grade osteoarthritis of both knees and has been suffering for the last two years. This person is otherwise healthy and is leading a normal life. The orthopedic surgeon, after the normal examinations, suggests a TKR (Total Knee Replacement) surgery. He also assures that after the surgery there will be freedom to walk and the joint would hold for at least 15 years. In this case one should undergo surgery without delay.

The second example is that of a person of the same age suffering from terminal lung cancer. The oncologist suggests aggressive chemotherapy without any specific assurance of quality life after undergoing it. The doctor also says that the therapy may extend life span by about 6 months to one year. In this case the patient may decline the advice and opt for palliative care and wait for the inevitable instead of undergoing a painful course of treatment. If the patient were 15 years younger it would be worth taking the risk.

Dr. Harrington in his book listed six important things to consider which would help in creating one's own exit strategy. I quote four of them :

- Remember you are not immortal.
- With age, the risk of treatment increases and the benefit decreases.
- Consider a combination of disease, debility and functional status beyond which you will not seek aggressive treatment .



(d) Do not look for potential problems with screening tests, address active illness purposely.

In our country it is not usual to discuss an end of life situation either at home or in hospital unless the situation forces one to do so. In fact, it is carefully avoided. I always wondered if writing a will is not resisted, why discussing an end of life situation is. Whatever be the reasons for such an aversion, it would do well for every person who crosses the age of 65 years to voluntarily discuss with close family members his or her considerations in case of own hospitalization with a requirement of aggressive medication or difficult surgery. One may even leave a written document which is called a 'living will'.

This aspect acquires even more importance in the present scenario where parents live in India and the children live abroad. As parents get older, anxiety grows in both parties. And yet many parents do not want to discuss end of life situation. It is important for older people to get convinced that out-dated feelings about children having to personally look after them in old age are futile. The more one insists on such an arrangement, the more likely are rifts.

A very painful situation of parents feeling dissatisfied and children feeling guilty can be avoided by a well conducted discussion on 'end of life' situation and a well documented or well articulated 'exit strategy'.

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

By Cmde SC Dewan (Retd.)

*Tree groves dressed with branches lush green,
Entire biodiversity, the sublime, so wondrous, so benign,
Monsoon migratory birds flock in early feed rest and bread,
Usher in new avian season indeed.*

*Aviafauna from different regions arrive,
Nature bestowed avigational art ordinary miracle to believe,
Trek miles over farmland, hills, vales, dales flying high in the sky,
Unique V formation they opt to fly.*

*No boundaries, no frontiers, no religion or language barriers,
Bear up against and come safely through weather or war,
Cruise over vast terrestrial area for destination,
True messengers of freedom, peace and natural adoration.*

*Some iconic, some endangered, some threatened species,
Each one of pompano so different, so mesmerizing, so beauteous,
Some on tree, some in water and some in swamp land,
Peaceful co-existence enlivens their life and even beyond.*

*Early morning chirping welcomes day's dawn,
Calls praise nature in verse and song,
Day's off beat activities, frolics and frowns,
Birds have flings in winter, make nest in spring.
Limnetic birds aquacade, so beautiful, so natural,
No impressario, no conductor still water ballet so blissful,
Surround sound of others creates songfest music and play their part,
Verdurous surroundings wallowed in picturesque habitat.*

*Thousands of people throng bird sanctuaries from and away,
Enjoy panoramic scenic beauty on display,
Gleeful children ask questions with squeal,
Seniors explain in manners that appeal.*

*Birders with camera slung around neck, binoculars in hand,
Strive, hike long distances, observe species and record,
Their hands magically move for photo-shoot,
Hearts moves with that snap captivating beaut.*

*Alas! successive records show declining trends,
Arrest such trends call of the day,
Rejuvenating dying water bodies call of the day,
Earnest entreaty, collective crusade to rescue such treasures.*

*Human interference disturbed ecological expression,
Nature world lakes shrinking size some in oblivion,
Water catching areas, swamp land invaded by human estate,
Under puzzling quest of development deceit.*

*Invigorate sense of care and compassion,
Protect environ, generate awareness passion,
Healthy water bodies slow down climate change,
Check dipping water table for veritable charge.*

*Every piece of life has right to live, flourish, thrive,
Equality and mutualism we must all believe,
Want future generations connect with nature and wild life,
Whole heartedly support that intent and strive.*

*Spring arrives bye-bye winter,
Birds of passage say au revoir,
Fly away to their destinations to breed,
Leaving exquisite waterside desolate and decamped.*

A successful 'Cobra Maneuver' ensured victory during the Commonwealth Naval Exercises in the mid sixties.

Victorious Vikrant

By Rear Admiral S Ramsagar (Retd.)

Yours truly was the junior most pilot in the carrier borne Anti-submarine Cobra Squadron INAS 310. The squadrons total aircraft complement was six aircraft and the pilots call signs were 31 to 36. I being the junior most had 36 as my call sign.

In those days it was a regular affair every year to have the commonwealth exercises along with other commonwealth Navies. That year too, as usual, the exercises were conducted off Trincomalee (Sri Lanka). During this exercise Royal Naval Aircraft Carrier HMS Victorious was pitted against INS Vikrant in two opposite forces, fighting a naval battle with aircraft carriers in each force. All the commonwealth naval forces were divided into two task forces with the carriers giving air cover to the striking forces. The main purpose was to train the task forces on the effective use of carriers in such a scenario. The carriers were also to seek, intercept, strike and destroy the enemy carrier air elements, thereby gaining the advantage to strike the enemy forces from beyond their weapon ranges with air power. The British Task Force Commander on board the HMS Victorious planned his operation in such a manner that his task force would remain beyond the reach of INS Vikrant's reconnaissance and anti-submarine aircraft, the Alizes, whereas his Gannett aircraft which were inferior to the Alizes in range would not attempt to close INS Vikrant's task force till the available flying hours in Alizes were exhausted and they would become due for their next Service Inspection. At that time, with his Sea Vixen and Sea Venom fighters which had longer strike range than INS Vikrant's Seahawks, he would be able to strike our carrier without endangering HMS Victorious by keeping his Carrier outside Seahawks range.

This was a well planned operation utilizing Vikrant's air element weaknesses. As planned and expected by the British, we flew our Alizes right up to our endurance and ranges, but for two days we could not locate the enemy task force. Cdr Air and the 'Ops' team of Vikrant launched the Seahawks on sector flights all-round to their extreme ranges, but again we were not able to locate the enemy as they had to do visual searches and were not night capable. By the evening of the third day, only one Alize

was available with flying hours and yours truly the junior most pilot of the squadron call sign 36, who had not flown all this time had to be catapulted along with the squadron's Senior Observer Lt Cdr OP Laul (fondly called 'Ohmi') and the junior most Radar Observer Late Lt Jayakumar. We had to search the area sector which was not covered by the hawks and it was vital that we detect the enemy task force before dark as the Seahawks were not cleared for night strikes. Also we would have very little air search capability thereafter for some time till all the aircraft were turned round after their scheduled inspections.

We carried out the search pattern till our endurance, but failed to pick up the Victorious task force. Just when we were wondering in despair, young Radar Observer Jayakumar picked up a radar transmission on the ARRAR equipment of an unknown ship and gave us the bearing of the transmissions. As Vikrants' team was well versed in flying below the lobe of any radar transmission, so that the enemy is unable to detect our aircraft on its radars, we closed the carrier force at deck level under the enemy radars detection lobe and faintly but clearly discerned the carrier force with its frigate escorts. The radar operator confidently established that the radar transmissions were from an unidentified frequency and so we could confidently inform Vikrant of our detection of the enemy carrier force.

Vikrant had only two Hawks acting as air defense at that time and so they had to be launched for the strike. The Senior Pilot of the Seahawk squadron Lt Cdr SC Chopra (who later retired as the Vice Chief of Naval Staff) along with young Lt Ashok Sinha (fondly called ASH) as his wing man took off in the direction of the position passed by our Senior Observer using the 'CROUZET' the automatic plotting system of the Alize aircraft.

All our Seahawks were provided with a homing device called the "Green Salad" which helped the Seahawk pilot to home on to VHF transmissions on any VHF channel selected. All carrier crew of the Seahawk 300 Squadron and the Alize crew of the 310 Cobra Squadron were

fully trained in this homing and directing the strike force on to a designated target. As such, we transmitted on the homing frequency and informed Lt Cdr Chopra to home on. Normally, if the Hawks followed the homing accurately, they would come in visual contact with the homing aircraft directing the strike. It so happened that the leader failed to detect the VHF transmission on his Green Salad, but his wingman Ash picked up the homing and directed his leader on to the direction of the transmissions.

We in our aircraft were waiting to see the Seahawks pass close to our aircraft, but we had no such luck. As we were coming to the end of our endurance we were on pins and needles awaiting the Hawks to pick up the enemy carrier force. Just when we and our strike force were losing heart, we heard the wonderful call of the leader "TALLY HO" which meant that the Seahawks had sighted the enemy force and they carried out a well directed surprise strike on HMS Victorious. The carrier was literally caught with her pants down, as she was fuelling all her aircraft on deck and her escort force completely failed to detect our strike force.

Our erstwhile "Lt Cdr Flying" the wily Cdr Raj Anderson (the first Senior Pilot of the Cobra squadron who brought the squadron from France in the Carrier and who later retired as Commodore after a distinguished service in aviation) decided to prove to the British carrier force that we outwitted their planning by launching three strikes of two Seahawks each. This he achieved by directing Lt Cdr Chopra to open out at deck level beyond their radar range and go back in another direction each time and carry out two more strikes in this fashion.

At this time my aircraft was short of fuel, so I had to turn back towards our mother Vikrant. To help the radar operator detect our force I climbed up a little. We then saw that the carrier force we were directing the Hawk strike against was all the time our own carrier force. Sr 'O' Ohmi realized that his CROUZET had completely gone bonkers and his position fixing of the aircraft was miles out, where as we were practically back on to our own forces after the fantastic sector search. Our young radar operator Lt Jayakumar had never

seen the radar transmissions of a Canadian Frigate which was providing air early warning protection to our own forces by transmitting her radar. This was the transmission he detected and indicated to us as that of an unknown radar transmission belonging to the enemy.

Good old 'Ash' picked up our homing transmissions in reciprocal and directed his leader to follow him. They picked up the enemy and struck it three times at their extreme range. We called mother for a direct landing as we were very short of fuel and within minutes we could call four greens and landed safely to heroes welcome, except for our very bright senior 'Pilot' Lt Cdr Grewal, who wanted to know how I made it so fast from that long distance. As directed by my senior 'O', I left all the explanations to him, who told me and young Lt Jayakumar to keep our loud mouths shut. His philosophy was that "ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR". Our Forces defeating the enemy forces, was the need of the hour and what counts is winning the war rather than worrying by what means it was achieved.

Vikrant Succeeded in Knocking out Victorious. During the debrief of the exercises in Singapore, our fleet commander was praised for the way Indian forces handled themselves and defeated the British in the Exercises effectively. All those who took part in this exercise served the Navy well and retired with honors.

THE RIGHT ANSWER FOR KAUN BANEGA MAHA CROREPATI!

A hard working Officer is the best! Find out for yourself in this hilarious and introspective account

Cdr Anand Kumar

My excitement was unnerving; the rush of adrenaline was phenomenal. It seemed that the volcano of joy may erupt even before the announcement, “you have won Rs 10 Crore Jackpot, Sir,”—because the answer was so obvious. In true Naval spirit - I straightened up-cleared my throat and spoke loud & clear- **“Hard Working Officer option Ko Lock Kiya Jaye”**.

I remember the “Kaun Banega Maha Crorepati” host asking me, “Kya aap sure hain”? I thought, may be the honourable host is playing a trick on me or maybe it's my brain playing some trick. Nevertheless, I stayed on my course and said with an overlay of nervous smile, “Yes, yes, ‘Hard Working Officer’, option ko lock kiya jaye”.

The host thundered, “Yeh wrong choice hai, you’ve just missed the Jackpot”. I was dumbfounded - how can this be a wrong choice? The question was - “Which among the following is the best choice for Navy?”

**An efficient officer.
An effective officer.
A hard working officer
None of the above.**



To my surprise (and to most of the readers’ surprise) the correct answer was, “None of the above”. I was convinced that the host as well as the ‘Computer Jee’ were terribly wrong. I decided to prove my host wrong, so as to claim my Jackpot (after all; Rs.10 Crore is not a small amount).

Back home, I discussed the question with many seniors, most of my colleagues and even conducted a survey among a large sample population. However, the more I tried, the more I got confused, because there seems to be no

consensus. In fact, till date no one has seconded the “none of the above” option.

At last, I decided to follow the time tested method of our ancient thinkers. One fine Sunday, armed with a thick Oxford Dictionary, I sat under a large Banyan tree inside Naval Base, Kochi. Eureka!! I got the Gyaan/ key to the jackpot (perhaps, many of you may not agree with me). After all, India is a free country and everyone has the right to have independent opinion. Let me share the Gyaan with you -

Efficiency:

It is about doing things in an optimal way or performing/ functioning in the best possible manner with least waste of time and effort. For example, doing it the fastest or in the least man hour time. It may be the unethical way of doing the thing, but it was done optimally.

Effectiveness:

It is about doing the right thing. The right way of completing activities and achieving goals.

Hard Work:

Tending to work with energy and commitment. The art of mulling over and over again till one finds the right/ more or less right answer.

However, the term “efficient” is often confused and misused with the term “effective”. Both these words express approval of the way in which someone or something works; but their meanings are different. Efficient, applies

to someone or something able to produce results with minimum expense or effort, without reference to morality viz making the best use of available resources. Effective on the other hand, describes someone who successfully produces an intended result, ie doing the right thing, economy of effort or resourceful use of resources.

To my mind, we treat efficiency and effectiveness as more or less similar or synonymous to each other. Also, to add to the confusion, many of us think, “there is no substitute to hard work” so, we come to the conclusion that efficiency/ effectiveness is OK but the most important factor is hard work. After all, even the first line of the Cadet’s Prayer is, “O God, give us this day hard work to do”. Now, where’s the doubt that ‘hard working Officer’ is the obvious choice. Nevertheless, in order to get some more clarity, let us consider three scenarios.



Scenario I

There's an efficient officer, who is able to finish his task or desk job well before the scheduled time frame. There is nothing pending in his part of ship/ desk by end of the day, but not necessarily all his actions/ decisions bear fruit. One day his Boss walks in and sees that he is relatively free with no task at hand. The boss makes a mental note, "it seems this guy is not sincere and has very less jobs to do." (A very bad impression from the ACR point of view).

Scenario II

The officer is very effective in his job. He pursues the right goals, goes by the book and the decisions are bang on target. At the end of the day, he is satisfied with his effort and always secures on time, at times leaving some jobs for tomorrow and irrespective whether 'the BOSS' has secured or is still in office. One day Boss walks in, sees the guy has secured, calls him up and directs him to get back to office so as to finish some pending jobs. The boss makes a mental note, "this guy is a shammer" (for sure, he is written off).

Scenario III

The officer is very hard working. He reaches onboard ship/ office on time and continues to work well beyond the scheduled working hours. In fact a large portion of the day is invested in going through various files/ procedures in the quest of finding the right answers/ reply, which is in conformity to the requirements of the organisation or at least in consonance with the Boss's point of view (this may not always be the case). The Boss walks in at around 2000h, observes the individual, struggling amongst the pile of files/ books, feels sympathetic towards him. The Boss takes a mental note, "Poor guy is working so hard, Let me ease his burden by

offloading some of his job to other officers. (Very good impression, likely to get brownie points).

The above mentioned scenarios sound so familiar. Knowingly or unknowingly, we all tend to sympathise with Scenario III and like to push them up the ladder.

More often than not, the hard worker is the preferred choice over the efficient or effective worker. This has resulted in the vicious cycle – My Boss stays till late, so let me also stay till late and hence my sub-ordinates have to follow the same routine. Result - we all become hardworking officers (efficiency/effectiveness preferable but not very essential). Many a times oneself is staying late because the old man is still on board the ship (few among the readers may not agree to this). This has given rise to the acronym LBDN - Look Busy, Do Nothing. It was too difficult to swallow this bitter pill.

Often, we hear people say that an efficient and effective individual need not necessarily be hard working and good for the organisation but the contrary is also true.

Now, I understood the significance of the choice, "none of the above". In fact, the best choice is an individual who is efficient and effective and not necessarily a hard working one. Even human endurance has a limit, sooner than later, the hard working guy will feel the heat and will experience burn out. On the other hand the efficient and effective individual is like a Marathon runner who will be the winner in the long run. Today's lean and mean Navy needs out of the box ideas. Efficiency and effectiveness is the key to success. We have a choice to make between efficient & effective vis-à-vis hard working individuals.

So let's groom and mentor an efficient and effective leader rather than prop up a hard working conformist follower. This needs to be propagated up the ladder as well as percolated downwards.

This brings me to the logical conclusion – my choice was indeed wrong and that's why I lost the Jack pot. Never mind, that was a personal loss, but the question is can we afford to fail collectively? Take some time and think about it!

Jai Hind

STUNNING Andaman & Nicobar

A unique perspective on the Islands that offer lessons in Indian history since the Indus Valley Civilization until the advent of the British

By Lt Cdr Parv Kaushik

A posting in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands is either deeply detested or dearly desired depending on the pre-existing knowledge of the individual. There is hardly someone who has moderate views on the subject like Binary 0 or 1. However, once you receive the transfer order to Andaman you embark on a brand-new journey the Navy and the country has to offer. The piece below is a rendition of my tenure in the islands giving my perspective on the place, its culture, geography and importance in the naval thinker's mind.

The islands in recent history have passed through the hands of Danish East India Company, British Empire and Japanese control during World War II with a nominal period under the INA of Subhash Chandra Bose before becoming an integral part of India.

Stretching the time line further, one realizes that

for most indigenous tribes, a linear time line is of little consequence as the Jarawans and the Sentinelese in particular, maintain steadfast independence and refuse most attempts at contact. To know the existence of such tribes who have abhorred the developments of modern society is an experience which only these islands can offer. The past is still alive in the present as time stopped still for a very long time for these tribes.

The Japanese bunkers, the Cellular Jail and the opulent remains of Ross Island tell a story from which the history of these islands and consequently, our country is woven together. The Andamans presents an opportunity not only to live through this curated history, but also to learn about the freedom struggle from a unique perspective. The Cellular Jail story brings us closer to the inhuman sufferings of our

freedom fighters who were incarcerated here while fighting for our freedom. The Cellular Jail itself is also a piece of British engineering skill and ingenuity.

The islands present an unmatched treasure house of natural wonders from crystal blue waters with pristine white sand beaches to a large plateau of colorful corals to the only volcano of India, Barren Island. The bouquet of activities these islands offer are endless and include water sports and adventure tourism including trekking, island camping, snorkeling and scuba diving. Some other activities include sea aquarium, wave surfing, marina yacht, health resorts, sanctuaries, national park and inter-island cruise liners among others.

What is not offered on the plate for general tourism is the unexplored and untouched beauty of the virgin beaches which are known only to the

local or the personnel serving in the islands. The immense beauty of the islands has an enchanting effect on Navy personnel turning many of them into avid photographers, poets, bird watchers, divers or just plain nature lovers.

As every sunset splashes a riot of colors on the canvas of the sky, it is juxtaposed with beautiful green hills and clean blue water. The islands offer nature's basket for all your senses which has a soul soothing effect that lasts years after you have left the islands.

Culturally, the Andaman & Nicobar Islands are a mini-India with a healthy mix of people of almost all ethnicities and religions. The values of secularism, tolerance, unity in diversity can be seen in the daily life of the local populace when festivals of all religions are celebrated with equal fervor. They refer to India as 'mainland', recount stories of the horrors of Tsunami of 2004 and offer a helping hand without expecting anything in return. The spirit of community and ownership of public property and nature is both heartening and delightful as this is one place where regional, lingual and religious identities take a backseat and people become purely Indian.

The post of the Lieutenant Governor of the Islands has mostly been occupied by retired top military brass and as a consequence, the administration of the Andaman Islands is pro-active, efficient and largely corruption free. The Islands display the best that India can be if civil authorities carry out their duties diligently. The roads are clean, the police are efficient and the crime

rate is negligible while the civil infrastructure is maintained remarkably well making it a perfect illustration of how competent leadership can transform the country whilst engaging prevailing facilities.

The islands are endowed with abundant marine wealth and hydrocarbon reserves and have the potential to contribute to India's economic growth substantially through eco-tourism. The geostrategic location of the island group allows India to project its power and influence in consonance with its emerging status and role in the region with these islands acting as an effective and responsive mechanism against conventional and non-conventional threats emerging from the East.

Andamans have the potential to become a powerful tool in India's foreign policy, primarily the Act East Policy of the government. They should move from the periphery to the center of India's engagement with littoral nations in the East. These islands contain a plethora of wealth and will play a key role in securing India's vital interests.

As a serving officer posted in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands one becomes aware of the strategic location of the Strait of Malacca, offering control of a so-called choke point that is one of China's greatest maritime vulnerabilities. In the present scenario, ocean islands are not only economic assets valued for their EEZs and seabed resources, but are also military assets with strategic value. Further, being posted at the first tri-services command of the Indian Armed Forces one learns about the



culture and ethos of sister services. One gains insight from Army and Airforce officers over joint exercises, mess tables, official get-togethers, squash courts and golf courses. Friendships forged here last beyond the tenure. Not only do the islands provide an excellent opportunity for personal growth in all aspects of life, but they also forge extra-ordinary camaraderie between fellow personnel. The Andaman & Nicobar Islands are a Binary 1 and anyone who has served there will concur.



COMMAND NEWS

Eastern Naval Command

COMMAND REGIMENTAL SYSTEM OFFICE (EAST)

Over 550 Veterans attended the Navy Day Celebrations on 05 Nov 17 at Sailors Institute (Tarang). This was followed by the GBM of Veteran Sailors and concluded with a grand lunch.

The 152nd Defence Pension Adalat was held on 11 and 12 Dec 17 at Samudrika Auditorium for all Ex-Servicemen and Defence Civilians of Andhra Pradesh and adjoining areas. The CGDA Delhi, PCDA's Allahabad, Mumbai & Bangalore attended the Defence Pension Adalat. There was an enthusiastic attendance of Veterans at the Pension Adalat on both the days. Grievances submitted by the Veterans were processed by the staff of PCDA, Allahabad on the spot using four laptop points with Suvigya software.

Interaction of C-in-C with Veterans was organized during the Republic Day Parade on 26 Jan 18. The Veterans at Vizag celebrated the Republic Day with full josh & enthusiasm and interacted with serving personnel of the naval community.

The Annual Sahara Ladies Milan was conducted at Community Hall, NSB on 21 Mar 18. The event witnessed pro-active interaction of widows with senior officials of CRSO, NWWA, ECHS, INCS and RSU's.

This was followed by games, presentation of gifts to Sahara ladies and a high tea. All suggestions and complaints of the ladies were compiled for further action by officials present at the meeting.

The Naval Regimental System Management Committee (NRSMC) meeting under the Chairmanship of CSO (P&A) was held on 02 Aug 18 at CSO (P&A) Conference Hall, Visakhapatnam. Senior officers of HQENC, CRSO(NE) and Officers-in-Charge of all ten RSU's of Hyderabad, Chilka, Circars, Satavahana, Kalinga, Adyar, Rajali, Katabomman, Agrani and Parandu attended the meeting. Latest guidelines promulgated by IHQ and NAVPEN for processing of documents for family pension cases were disseminated to the audience by Secretary, NGSMC. A presentation on various aspects of NRS (Eastern Region) was screened for the benefit of all participants.

Maximum support under various schemes of the Navy/ DGR has been extended to ESM and Sahara ladies. Widows have been assisted in over 220 cases including allotment of shops, receipt of PRDIES insurance amount, Merit Scholarships from INBA, Tipper Truck Scheme from DGR, Self Employment, Special Financial Assistance and receipt of Demise Grant.

Western Naval Command

Golden Globe Race 2018

The Golden Globe Race was conducted by Sir Robin Knox Johnston of the UK to commemorate 50 years since the world's first solo non-stop circumnavigation was undertaken by him in 1968 onboard the Indian built boat, Suhaili.

Commander Abhilash Tomy represented India, sailing on the indigenously built sailing vessel 'Thuriya', a replica of Suhaili. Unfortunately the race could not be completed by him due to severe weather conditions, personal injuries and damage to the boat.



INS Sahyadri visits Suva, Fiji 13th - 16th August 2018

INS Sahyadri visited Suva, Fiji in Aug 18 to further strengthen our bilateral relations with Fiji. A medical camp and sandalwood plantation activities were organised during the visit in co-ordination with the Fijian Government.



First 'Monsoon Maritime Lectures cum Conversations

The first 'Monsoon Maritime Lectures Cum Conversations' of 2018, which also marked the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the series since 1993, was presented by Cdr Mohan Narayan (Veteran) at the Captain Mahendranath Mulla



Auditorium on 14 Jun 2018. The theme of the lecture was 'The Bombay Dock Explosions'.

Standing Committee on Defence visits Western Naval Command at Mumbai

The Standing Committee on Defence (SCOD) led by Maj Gen BC Khanduri, AVSM (Veteran) visited the Western Naval Command at Mumbai on 21 Apr 18. The delegation was received at the Headquarters Command Post by Vice Admiral AB Singh, AVSM, VSM, Chief of Staff, WNC. On arrival, the committee was apprised on the operational role, responsibilities and preparedness of the Western Naval Command. They also interacted with Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command and other Flag Officers.

Later, the Parliamentary Committee also visited the new Dry Dock at the Naval Dockyard as well as some of the Indian Navy's newest inductions like the first of the Scorpene class submarine, INS Kalvari and the stealth destroyer INS Kochi.



Interaction with SCOD team at WNC

Mumbai to Leh Indian Navy Outreach Car Rally

The "Surf to Snow" car rally comprising participants from Naval Dockyard was flagged off on 03 May 18 by Vice Admiral AB Singh,

AVSM Chief of Staff, Western Naval Command from the historic premises of Dockyard Mumbai. This outreach programme involved personnel of Naval Dockyard taking a road trip from Mumbai to Leh and back to Mumbai in 10 SUVs traversing a total distance of over 6000 miles. A total of 30 personnel from the Yard, comprising officers, sailors and civilians, participated in four different legs of the rally and completed the rally in 30 days.



Western Fleet celebrates Golden Jubilee

The Sword Arm of the Navy, the Western Fleet, is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year, having been formally constituted on 01 Mar 1968. With modest beginnings in its nascent years, the Fleet has, over the last 50 years, grown into a



Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command writing his message on the occasion of Western Fleet celebrating its Golden Jubilee

formidable surface force and has been at the forefront of almost all operations executed by the Navy during this period. With a multitude of assets, ranging from the aircraft carrier to destroyers to tankers to patrol vessels, the Fleet has the flexibility to deploy in any role across the full spectrum of missions.

To commemorate the event, Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC the Flag Officer

Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command, took salute at ceremonial divisions onboard INS Vikramaditya. Simultaneous divisions were also held onboard all Western Fleet ships at anchorage off Mumbai.

The Western Fleet is celebrating its journey over the last five decades that have witnessed its rise towards a professional and potent blue water force. Some important operations that the Western Fleet has participated include the Indo-Pak war of 1971, Op Cactus, Op Pawan, Op Rahat, Op Sukoon and Op Madad. On the occasion of its Golden Jubilee, the men and women of the 'Sword Arm' renewed their pledge to the nation to be exemplary in peace and victorious in war.

Raksha Mantri visits Goa Naval Area

The Raksha Mantri, Mrs Nirmala Sitharaman, visited Goa Naval Area on 08 and 09 Jan 18. She was accompanied by Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff. She was received by Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, Flag



Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command and Rear Admiral Puneet K Bahl, Flag Officer Commanding, Goa Naval Area. The Raksha Mantri then boarded Indian Naval Ships operating off Goa for 'Raksha Mantri Day at Sea'.

Navy Symphonic Band at NCPA, Mumbai

The Indian Navy Symphonic Band in Concert captured the hearts and minds of Mumbai's music connoisseurs during a Symphonic musical extravaganza held at the Jamshed Bhabha Auditorium, NCPA, Mumbai on 12 Nov 17. The world famous band regaled an eclectic audience with a wide repertoire of stirring Martial Music, arrangements of Western Classical, Indian Classical and other forms of contemporary popular and folk music. The Honorable Governor



Performance by Naval Band at NCPA, Mumbai

of Maharashtra, Mr. Vidyasagar Rao, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

During the course of the evening, the band enthralled the audience with a varied repertoire comprising fanfare, overture, symphony, waltz, fusion and patriotic music under the baton of Commander VC D'Cruz, Director of Music, who is an alumnus of Pilar Music School, Goa and Trinity College of Music, London.

Renowned music director, Mr Raghav Sachar also gave a special performance.

MHS seminar on Indian Maritime Wisdom

The Maritime History Society (MHS) under the aegis of the Western Naval Command, organised an intellectually stimulating two day seminar on the theme, "Indian Maritime Wisdom" on 05 & 06 October 2018. This seminar is the Thirty Eighth edition of a long running series that began in 1980 and the inaugural session was held at the INHS Asvini Auditorium.

The Chairman of MHS, Vice Admiral Girish

Luthra, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, set the tone in his inaugural address by capturing the essence of India's Maritime Heritage as an essential knowledge scape for any mariner interested in the cause of National Maritime Resurgence. Admiral Arun Prakash (Veteran) in his keynote address raised critical questions of the research required into our maritime past towards acquiring a seafaring outlook.

The seminar covered its content in four working sessions anchored on the sub-themes of Shipbuilding, Navigational Techniques, Cartography & Hydrography and The Evolution of Maritime Law.

INSV Tarini – all woman crew sail around the globe

Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Tarini (INSV Tarini) entered Goa harbor and came alongside INS Mandovi jetty on completion of a historic global circumnavigation voyage on 21 May 18. The all-women crew of Tarini was received at the jetty by Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri who had also flagged them off on 10th Sep 2017. Admiral Sunil Lanba, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Chief of the Naval Staff; Vice Admiral AR Karve, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, Senior Officers and enthusiastic members from the naval community, both serving and retired, as well as civilians were present at the Naval Boat Pool to welcome INSV Tarini.

This was the first ever Indian circumnavigation



Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC FOC-in-C, West Chairman MHS with delegates of MHS Seminar



All women crew of INSV Tarini.

of the globe by an all women crew. The vessel was skippered by Lt Cdr Vartika Joshi and the crew comprised Lt Cdrs Pratibha Jamwal and P Swathi and Lieutenants S Vijaya Devi, B Aishwarya and Payal Gupta.

INS Nirbhik and Nirghat Decommissioned

Indian Naval Ships Nirbhik and Nirghat were decommissioned at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai after a glorious 30 and 28 years respectively in service of the nation. The solemn ceremony involved traditional lowering of the ensign and commissioning pendants with the 'Last Post' playing. The Chief Guest for the ceremony was Rear Admiral R B Pandit, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, who had commanded Nirghat earlier. Cdr V R Naphade, (Veteran) and Commodore S Mampully, (Veteran), the commissioning Commanding Officers of Nirbhik and Nirghat respectively were the Guests of Honour. These ships of Killer squadron are inheritors of a proud legacy as their original avatars were flag bearers of the naval offensive action on Karachi Harbour during Indo-Pak war in 1971.



Southern Naval Command

60 years of Signal School



Signal School is the Alma Mater of all Communicators of the Indian Navy and the Indian Coastguard. The School was inaugurated in its present location by VAdm Sir Stephen Carlill, then Chief of Naval Staff 08 Mar 1958. The School continues to remain at the forefront of professional training with renewed emphasis on practical aspects and ensuring that the training for communicators is in sync with the latest advancement.

On 08 Mar 2018 Signal School completed 60 glorious years at the present location. To commemorate this momentous occasion, team Signal School, conducted a mega event of two days on 13-14 Mar 18. The impressive celebrations were achieved through intricate planning and precise coordination of staff, trainees and families of the Signal School fraternity.

Vice Admiral Bimal Kumar Verma, AVSM, ADC, Commander-in-Chief Andaman and Nicobar Command, the senior-most serving communicator was the Chief Guest for the event. The senior most serving communicator from Indian Coast Guard IG KR Suresh, TM, COMCG (A&N) also graced the occasion. A large number of naval communicators serving

as well as retired from all around the country including families gathered to be a part of this prestigious milestone.

Diamond Jubilee Celebration commenced with a noble cause. A Blood Donation Camp in collaboration with Indian Medical Association (IMA) was organised on 27 Feb 18. The Camp witnessed active participation from the School fraternity and other units of SNC including RAdm K Swaminathan, CSO (Training). The blood collected from the 90 enthusiastic volunteer blood donors was handed over to IMA.

A Naval seminar on the theme "From Flags to Quantum Communication" was held at Sagarika on 14 Mar 18. During the seminar the Diamond Jubilee edition of Callsign, the professional journal of Signal School with the theme Evolution from Signaller to Space and Information Warrior was released by the Chief Guest VAdm BK Verma. A Special day postal cover was also released during the inaugural session of the seminar by Smt. Sumathi Ravichandran, IPoS, Post Master General (Central Region). The seminar witnessed presentation of papers by subject matter experts from the Indian Navy as well as Scientists from Defence PSUs. A tech expo showcasing the latest products developed

by CDAC Trivandrum, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and M/S Scientech, New Delhi were also put up at the seminar venue.

Befitting the occasion, a cultural evening filled with variety entertainment programme prepared in-house was organized on the theme **Sanchar Tarang – Sparkling Waves of Communication** at the School's Quadrangle on 13 Mar 18. The staff along with the long C officers, sailors, their ladies and children whole heartedly pitched in and came out with unparalleled display of music, drama, script writing and flawless back-stage management. The highlight of the event was an in-house Light and Sound show showcasing the evolution of the School and Communication Branch in the Indian Navy. Ten ex-OiCs and veteran sailors were felicitated. The entertainment programme was followed by dinner. Barakhana with serving and veteran



Diamond Jubilee - The Communicator Family



Blood Donation Camp



IN Seminar - From Flags to Quantum Communication

sailors was also organized on 14 Mar 18.

The jubilee celebration also provided an opportunity for the wives of serving and retired communicators to get along with each other. A lunch at the Naval Officer's Institute was coordinated to allow the ladies to refresh their memories and cherish the time they had spent as part of the Communicator fraternity. The celebration culminated with a station reception at the SNC (O) Mess on 14 Mar 18. A Coffee Table Book title "The Diamond Saga – 60 Glorious years in Naval Communication and EW Training" was released by the Chief Guest and Cmde MS Chandra Shekhar (Retd) OiC during the Golden Jubilee.

With excellent camaraderie amongst the entire team, the Diamond Jubilee celebrations were a splendid success and left nostalgic memories.



Coffee Table Book - The Diamond Saga



Release of Special Edition of Call Sign



Release of Special Day Cover

OPERATION MADAD

09 TO 22 AUG 18

Incessant rains in Kerala in August 2018 caused flooding of a majority of the 39 dams in Kerala, forcing the KSEB and the State Administration to open the shutters of these 39 dams. On 09 Aug 18, immediate rescue and relief operations by the Civil Administration were required. In view of the escalating situation and the challenges faced by the State Administration, Op Madad was initiated by the Southern Naval Command, which escalated on 09 Aug 18.

With the objective of seamless coordination with the State Administration and rescue assistance, continuous communication was maintained with the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority initially and thereafter with the ACS (Home). During the preparatory phase, the resources available with the Southern Naval Command were mustered and the Joint Operations Centre (JOC), Kochi became the nerve centre of conduct of Operation Madad. The preparatory actions prior deployment included, 'man columns' from INS Venduruthy, INS Garuda and INS Dronacharya readied for deployment, two diving teams with Gemini boats and OBMs, transport to mobilise rescue teams to affected areas, medical and community kitchen relief bricks for deployment at INHS Sanjivani and INS Venduruthy respectively.

The JOC was augmented with the setting up of a planning, coordination and briefing area within the Ops Room and the Rescue Coordination Cell as well as the setting up of a Team Muster and Kitting up point at the ground floor of the JOC building in order to quickly deploy teams as per requirement.

A Planning, Coordination and Briefing Section, consisting of a large map of Kerala and depicting the affected areas and deployments, briefing displays, rescue status displays, etc was set up in the Operations Room of JOC (Kochi). Based on inputs from the State Administration, as well as feedback from the teams on ground, careful planning of the scarce resources available with

the Command was carried out and teams were deployed in the general area of concentration of distress calls.



A Rescue Coordination Cell was also set up within the Operations Room of JOC Kochi and four phones including a mobile phone were provided as helplines. The distress messages were received primarily on WhatsApp, with locations. These locations were then mapped area wise. More than just being an entity relaying distress messages, the Cell also provided yeoman service to the callers by means of the much needed reassurance that their requests would be attended to. Whilst a feedback from the teams on ground as to how many of the messages had been attended to was not practical owing to the pressure and constraints of the rescue teams to continue whole hearted rescue efforts in the midst of adverse weather, a total number of personnel rescued in a particular area was available on a regular basis with the Rescue Coordination Cell.



Medical Camp - Thalapuzha



Deployment of Rescue Teams
(a) Rescue Teams ex-Zamorin: Three rescue/ relief teams with three Geminis ex-Zamorin, consisting of 04 officers and 16 sailors were moved by road from INA to Mananthawady in Wayanad

district on 09 Aug 18. Over a period of eight days, the team rescued a total of 236 personnel and provided medical aid to 310 personnel. The team was also involved in recovery of bodies and distribution of relief material to far flung areas.

(b) Diving Teams ex-SNC: One diving team ex-SNC, comprising one officer and five men, along with one Gemini were airlifted to Wayanad on PM09Aug 18. The team landed at Thiramvadi due to adverse weather conditions and moved by road to Kalpetta by 2300h on 09 Aug 18. Thereafter, the diving team was redeployed to Kurumbalakotta and was embedded with the Army rescue team. This team was reinforced with an additional Gemini and 05 sailors on 10 Aug 18 via an airlift by SC.

Air Effort from INS Garuda
Aircraft from INS Garuda were deployed in locations near Chalakudy, Thrissur to Ayroor, Pathanamthitta and airlifted survivors from the remote areas (inaccessible by road).

A total of 1173 survivors were rescued during the operation. Some of the survivors were relocated to safe sites and the rest were brought to Garuda. Details of sorties undertaken are depicted below:-

AIRCRAFT	SORTIES	HOURS FLOWN	SUMMARY
INDIAN NAVY			
DORNIER	29	101:55	218 SORTIES 450:05 HOURS TOTAL RESCUED 833
CHETAK	63	96:35	
SEAKING	59	121:15	
ALH	67	130:20	
INDIAN AIR FORCE			
ALH/MI 17/V5	220	157:24	TOTAL RESCUED 512
INDIAN ARMY			
ALH	05	13:10	
INDIAN COAST GUARD			
CHETAK	61	45:50	TOTAL RESCUED 28
GRAND TOTAL	503	669:29	TOTAL RESCUED 1173

Employment of Air Assets

Relief Camps
All survivors airlifted to Garuda were taken to Relief Camps set up at T2 Hangar and Naval KG School at Naval Base, Kochi. All were provided with food and bedding. A total of 553 survivors and 240 survivors were accommodated at T2 Hangar and Naval KG School respectively.



Relief Camps

Community Kitchen
A Community Kitchen was set up at CUSAT on 16 Aug 18 by INS Venduruthy, wherein four officers, 17 cooks and 15 men were deployed. The Community Kitchen has catered to over 10,000 people at Aluva, Kalamassery, Nedumbassery



Community Kitchen

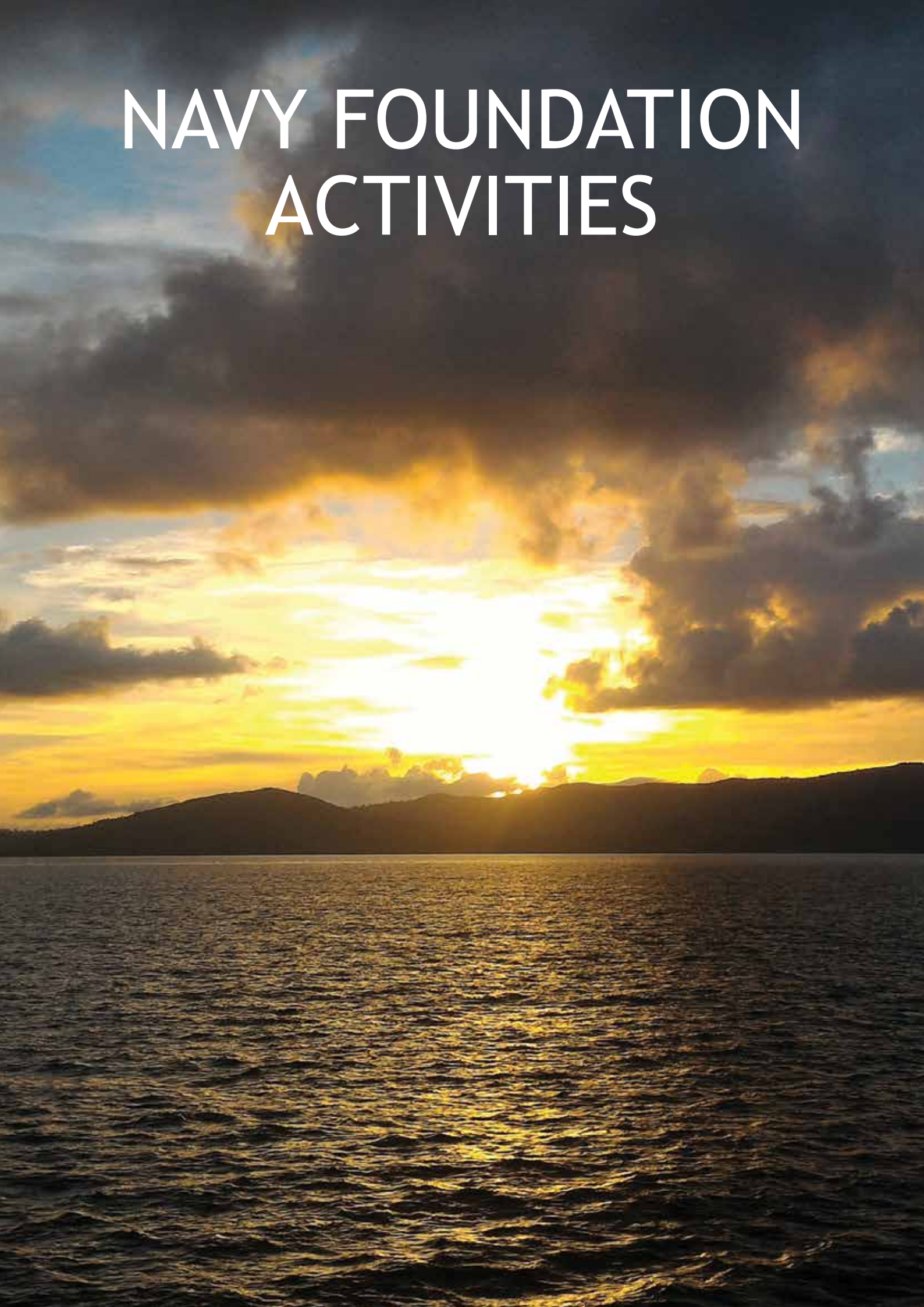
and adjoining areas. As per the request of the District Administration, the Community Kitchen is being continued till 25 Aug 18.



Medical Aid - Naval Base

Medical Aid
Medical aid was provided for upto 18 patients who were airlifted from various affected areas. This included the emergency delivery of a pregnant woman who was airlifted by Seaking and brought to Naval Base.

SUMMARY	
TEAMS DEPLOYED	92 max
NO OF DAYS DEPLOYED	13
PERSONNEL RESCUED	16843
RATION DISTRIBUTED	34250 Food Pkts 37640 water btls



NAVY FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

Navy Foundation Delhi Activities

New Management Committee: During the General Body Meeting held on 25 February 2018, the following members were elected as part of the management committee of Navy Foundation, Delhi Charter:

- President : Rear Admiral Sushil Ramsay (Retd.)
- Vice President: Commodore Samir Advani (Retd.)
- Secretary : Commander Sharan Ahuja (Retd.)
- Treasurer : Commander Shivdev Singh Narania (Retd.)

Admiral RD Katari Memorial Lecture

The Admiral RD Katari Memorial Lecture was conducted at Dr DS Kothari Auditorium, in DRDO Bhavan on 18 May 2018. Ambassador (Dr) Kanwal Sibal was the Guest Speaker who spoke on India's Maritime and other Challenges

in the Indo-Pacific Region in an event that was very attended by both serving and the retired officers. The response during the interactive session at the end of the lecture was proof of the interest generated within the audience. The lecture was followed by a Dinner at Naval Officers' Mess Annexe, Kota House, where the veterans' fraternity interacted with the serving officers and exchanged notes. Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff was the Chief Guest at the Admiral RD Katari Memorial Lecture as well as at the Dinner.

Regional Governing Council (North)

The first meeting of the Regional Governing Council (North) (RGC (North)) of Navy Foundation was held at Naval Officers' Mess Annexe, Kota House on 20 September 2018. The meeting of RGC (North) was presided over by Vice Admiral Biswajeet Dasgupta, AVSM, YSM, VSM, Controller Personnel Services and was attended by Rear Admiral Sushil Ramsay (Retd.), President, Navy Foundation, Delhi Charter, Commodore VK Gautam (Retd.), President, Navy Foundation, Chandigarh Charter and Commander SK



Pawnday (Retd.), Vice President, Navy Foundation, Lucknow Charter. In addition, Members/Invitees present at the meeting were; Commodore Vivek Karnavat, Secretary, Navy Foundation, Captain Subroto Mukherji, Joint Secretary, Navy Foundation, Commander Mahesh Bokil, Representative, ECHS (Navy), Commander SK Sharma, Representative, DPA and Commander Swanuj Harshavardhan, Representative, DESA.

Luncheon Meet

On 18 November 2018, the NFDC organised a Lunch at Naval Officers' Mess Annexe, Kota House which was attended by a large number of NFDC members. Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar, AVSM, NM, VSM, Chief of Personnel was the Chief Guest. Rear Admiral GK Garg, ACOP (A&C), PDESA, PDECHS, PDPS, CO INS India and few others were also invited. The occasion enabled the naval community scattered across Delhi, NCR to get-together and discuss old times, remiss over departed friends and do a good amount of elbow bending. The ladies present enjoyed the event and desired repeats of such lunches. Everyone, of course, enjoyed the great spread put out by the staff at NOMA, Kota House.

Honouring Octogenarians

At the Luncheon Meet on 18 November 2018, Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar, AVSM, NM, VSM, COP honoured the Octogenarians by presenting specially designed souvenirs to those present.



Navy Foundation Mumbai Activities



VAdm Girish Luthra, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC hosted lunch for about 480 Veterans in IMSC on 27 Nov 2017 as part of Navy Day celebrations. About 55 Veterans along with spouses took part in the Heritage Walk of ND(MB) which was conducted by Committee Member Cmde Sanjay Tewari.

Five Fleet ships including a submarine sailed out with almost 290 Veterans and their families for a thoroughly enjoyable Veterans Day at Sea on 28 Nov 2018.

Veterans Day was celebrated on 14 Jan 2018 by laying of wreaths by C-in-C, FOMA, local senior officers of Army & Airforce and President NFMFC at the Amar Jawan Jyoti, M & G Area followed by high tea for all the ESM at the Sailors Institute, Sagar.

The 15th Admiral Soman Memorial lecture was conducted in Asvini Auditorium on 15 April 2018 with well known actor Kabir Bedi as Guest Speaker. Bedi spoke on the topic, "Adapting to Change in a Fast Changing World." The talk was well appreciated by all the Veterans and their spouses. VAdm Girish Luthra PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC,

FOC-in-C (West) was the Chief Guest for the event.

The Foundation AGM was held in IMSC 15 April 2018. Minutes of the AGM-2017 as also the Balance sheet were adopted by the members. The Secy informed that as on date, there are 1082 members of the Foundation and since the last AGM, 211 new members have joined the Foundation. Around 265 members along with their spouses attended the AGM.

Veterans and their spouses also attended the Monsoon series of Lectures, organised by the Curator, MHS in the Mullah Hall from June 2018 to Aug 2018.

4th RGC (W) meeting was held in WNC(O) Mess on 13th Aug 2018 under the Chairmanship of C-in-C(W) where along with Presidents & Hon. Secy's of Mumbai, Bangalore, Goa and Pune Chapter and concerned Staff Officers of HQWNC also attended the meeting.

A Maiden foreign picnic by NFMFC members was organized for the first time by



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The Naval Maritime Academy (NAMAC), Mumbai was set up in 1998 to provide the required training to facilitate the transition of retired naval personnel opting for a second career in the Merchant Navy. Approved by the Director General of Shipping, NAMAC trains over 12000 naval, ex naval, dependents & civilian candidates each year. Using our quality infrastructure, an experienced merchant marine faculty supplemented by serving & retired naval personnel and the naval resources at Mumbai, NAMAC today conducts over 50 courses that include Basic and Advanced Modular STCW courses, Simulator and Offshore Safety courses as per the highest international standards and numerous value added courses. Recipient of the "Samudra Manthan Award" for the Best Offshore Training Institute, is a reiteration of our commitment to the highest quality of training. Courses can now be booked and payments made online.

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Hon. Secy, NFM. The 10 days tour to Singapore, Malaysia & Thailand including 4 days on the cruise ship 'Genting Dream' was a memorable outing for 40 Veterans including two Veer Naaris. Encouraged by the success of the tour, Hon. Secy announced that as a SOP every year in Aug / Sep, a foreign excursion for the members of NFM would be organized.



Navy Foundation Bangalore Activities



On 04 Dec 2017, Navy Day celebrations were organized by the Naval Detachment, Bengaluru. 150 NFBC members with ladies were invited by R Adm KJ Kumar, Flag Officer Commanding Karnataka Naval Area, Karwar at NOM, Bengaluru for cocktails and dinner. The FOCKNA gave a brief about current naval activities and measures taken to enhance welfare of veterans.

A get-together was organized on 18 Mar 2018 at NOM, Bengaluru for about 140 members where an interactive lecture was delivered by Brig AS Pinto (Veteran), OIC ECHS, Bengaluru covering various policies relevant to the veteran community. He also clarified queries of members.



The Annual General Body Meeting of Navy Foundation Bengaluru Chapter was held on 29 Jun 2018 at NOM, Bengaluru at 1100h. About 90 veterans with spouses were present for the AGM which was also attended by Cmde Vivek Karnavat, PDESA and Cdr Krishnan, NavPen. The current committee, approved by the House with majority voice vote, was elected for a period of one year.



In addition, during various functions of the NFBC, the President has been updating the gathering about implementation of OROP, ECHS and the future plans of IEMS.

Navy Foundation Vizag Activities

Navy Foundation, Visakhapatnam is a local chapter with about 95 members that operates out of a modest office in NCB(V). The chapter's activities include a monthly meeting of veterans with ladies every 2nd Saturday of the month followed by a get-together in the normal service way.

During the last one year, NF VC can be justifiably proud about conducting the following events prove the vibrancy of the chapter.

A farewell party was given to VAdm & Mrs HS Bisth, PVSM, AVSM, FOC-in-C East on 10 Oct 17. As the superannuation of the Admiral at the ripe age of 60 years coincided with the local tradition of 'Shasti Puri', it was celebrated much to the surprise of the couple who enjoyed it thoroughly.



ECHS is often criticized for shortage of medicines and we tend to forget the humble staff that put in maximum efforts to meet the requirements of veterans. As a token of appreciation of their services, sweets were distributed to ECHS staff on the eve of 'Sankranti'.



R Adm T Sudhakar, AVSM, N.M., I.N.(Retd)- Vice President, NF – VC distributing sweets.

AGM/GCM were held at HQENC on 10 Mar 18 chaired by the CNS was attended by veterans of NF Vizag as well as lady veterans.



All India Veterans March from NCB (V) to Victory-at- Sea on the beach road was held on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas (22 Jul 18). NF veterans including lady veterans participated.



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www.indiannavy.nic.in

IHQ MoD (Navy)/DESA

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New Delhi - 110 021

Tel/Fax : 011-24121068/26880943

Email : desa@navy.gov.in

Website : http://indiannavy.nic.in/DESA

Blog : www.desanavy.wordpress.com

**For Widows Welfare Issues Contact NRS -
Extn. 106**

For Navy Foundation Contact NF - Extn. 103

NGIF

For issues related to claims under PRDIES
(Post Retirement Death Insurance Extension Scheme)

E-mail : dnpf@navy.gov.in

IHQ MOD (NAVY)/DPA

Tel : 011-21410542

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NAVPEN

For all issues regarding pension
Address : Logistic Officer-in-Charge
Naval Pension Office (NAVPEN)
C/o INS Tanaji, SionTrombay Road
Mankhurd, Mumbai-400088

Tel : 022 – 25075608 (Officers Section)

Fax No. : 022-25075653/ 25564823/
25075621

Toll Free : 1800-220-560

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INBA

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ECHS (Navy)

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Website : www.dgrindia.com

Kendriya Sainik Board (KSB)

Tel. : 011-26188098

Fax No : 011-26192362

E-mail : secretaryksb@gmail.com

Website : www.ksb.gov.in

INDIAN NAVAL PLACEMENT AGENCY (INPA)

For second career post retirement

Tele/Fax : 011-24121687

Email : inpa@navy.gov.in

Website : www.indiannavy.nic.in/inpa

OBITUARY

S.N.	P No	Rank	Name	Next of Kin	Date	Address
1	60050-A	Cdr	Amar Singh	Mrs Savitri Devi (Wife) and three Children	17-Jan-18	Mrs Savitri Devi (Wife), 92 Sector-2 Panchkula-134151, Haryana Tel:- 0172-2561136, Mob: 9769205906 (son), Email:- pumraj22@yahoo.co.in
2	86309-F	Lt	Manuel Gananiah Pillai	Mrs Mary Gananiah (Wife), Mr Joseph Raja Pillai (Son)	28-Jan-18	Mrs Mary Gananiah (Wife), Flat 4C, Phase 1 Ultra Amar Avenue, 48/1 Tamilar Street Padmanabha Nagar Choolaimedu Chennai-600094, Tel: 044-23613559, Mob: 9677024541 (son), Email: josh_raja@yahoo.com(Son)
3	60069-W	Capt	SK Chatterjee	Col Ravinder Nath Chatterjee and Dr Deelip (both sons) and Kavita (daughter)	31-Jan-18	Col Ravinder Nath Chatterjee (son) House No.5, Bye Lane 1, Chachal Path, VIP Road, Gowahati-781022, Mob: 7896581611(son), Email: knightgolfer8@gmail.com
4	50192-Y	RAdm	S Mohapatra, VSM	Mrs Priti Lata Mohapatra (Wife), Mr Satya Swaroop Mohapatra & Mr Dibya Swaroop Mohapatra (both sons) and Miss Suchi Mohapatra (daughter)	10-Feb-18	Mrs Priti Lata Mohapatra (Wife), 17 Villa Spring, Kowkur, Secunderabad-500087 Tel: 040-2786680, Mob: 9440821999 (Wife), 9849018342 (Daughter) Email:suchismita1973@gmail.com
5	60136-Y	VAdm	Barine Ghose, AVSM, VSM	Mrs Anubha Ghose (Wife) and Two daughters	11-Feb-18	Mrs Anubha Ghose (Wife), A023 Trinity Tower DLF Phase 5 Gurgaon-122002, Tel: 0124-4044069, Mob: 9810645607 (Wife), Email: anubha1947@rediffmail. com
6	00164-W	Cdr	Ashok Kumar Sharma	Mrs Vibha (Wife), Bhavna Sharma and Namita Sharma (both Daughters)	25-Feb-18	Mrs Vibha Sharma (Wife), J-174 Sector-25, Jalvayu Vihar, Noida, UP-201301 Mob: 9650675603 (Mrs Vibha Sharma), 9811985768 (Bhavna Sharma), 9958544800 (Namita Sharma Email: vibhashah_bhali@yahoo. com
7	02299-Z	Cdr	CV Ratnakar	Mrs Deepa (Wife) and Three Daughters	1-Mar-18	Mrs Deepa Ratnakar (Wife), C-119, AWHO Colony, Vedvihar, Subhas Nagar, Tribulgherry, Secunderabad-500015 Tel: 040-27797536, Mob: 9392472348/9866119805 (Wife)

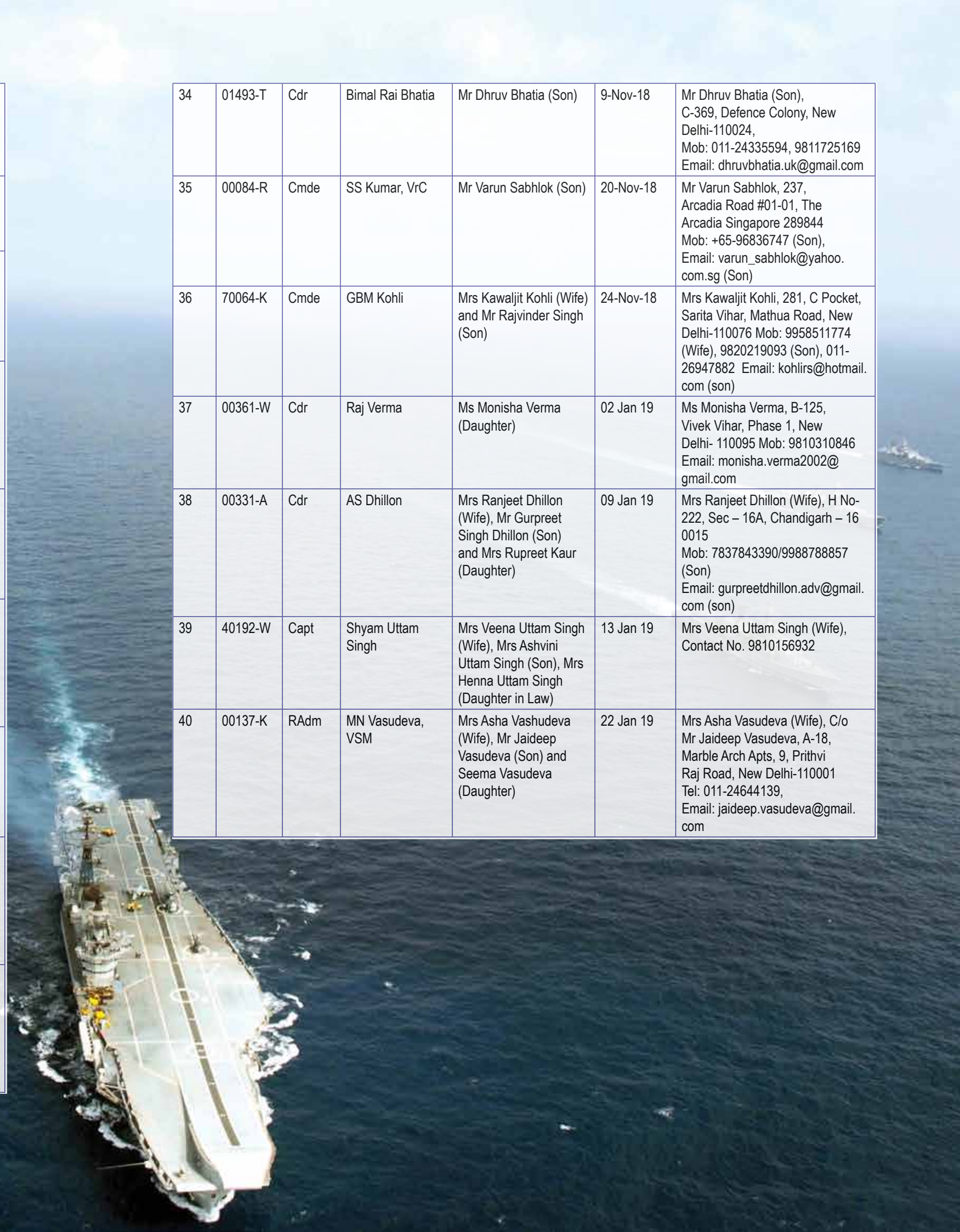
8	00131-Y	VAdm	Subhash Chopra, PVSM, AVSM, NM	Mrs Biba Chopra (Wife), Mrs Priya Berry (Daughter)	8-Mar-18	Mrs Biba Chopra (Wife), Flat NO. 503, Block 14, Heritage City, MG Road Gurgaon-122002 Mob: 9871239960 (Wife), 9910452707 (Daughter) Email: preeyah62@gmail.com
9	60079-T	Cmde	PK Jain, VSM	Mrs Poonam Jain (wife)	25-Mar-18	Mrs Poonam Jain (Wife), G-75, Jalvayu Vihar, Sector-25, Noida-201301 UP, Mob: 9810275713 (Wife), Email: jain.poonam21@gmail.com
10	00175-Y	Cdr	MS Rawat, VSM	Mr Suneel Rawat (Son)	3-Apr-18	Mr Suneel Rawat (Son), A-29/1, SFS Flats, Saket, New Delhi-110017, Tel: 011-26514323, Mob: 9971792717 (Son), Email: rawatsuneel@yahoo.com
11	00438-W	Cdr	KBS Wadhwa	Mrs Pamita Oberoi (Daughter)	9-Apr-18	Mrs Pamita Oberoi (Daughter), J-133, Jalvayu Vihar, Sector-25, Noida, UP-201301, Mob: 9873759888 (Mrs Pamita) Email: pamitakauroberoi@yahoo.in
12	00080-W	Cmde	MV Agarkar, VSM	Mrs Vijaya Agarkar (Wife), Mrs Aarti (Daughter)	24-Apr-18	Mrs Vijaya Agarkar, 152, Cloud 9 End of NIBM Road Mohammadwadi Taluka Haveli, Hadaspur, Pune-411060, Tel: 0202-26852153, Mob: 9866107150 (Daughter) Email: aratikodali@gmail.com
13	00027-K	Cmde	TJ Kunnenkeril, AVSM	Mrs Elizabeth Kunnenkeril (Wife), Cdr Jacob Kunnenkeril & Mr Cherial Kunnenkeril (both Sons) and Mrs Anna (Daughter)	7-May-18	Mrs Elizabeth Kunnenkeril Palathra Aymanam, Kottayam, Kerala 686015, Mob: 9400515746 (Wife), 8317375651/ 9480191905 (Cdr Jacob(Retd)) Email: jakes013@gmail.com
14	02517-W	Capt	Rajvir Rohilla	Mrs Billo Rani (Wife), Mr Kunal (Son) & Mrs Sangeeta (Daughter)	9-May-18	Mrs Billo Rani (Wife), H-20, Sector-25, Jalvayu Vihar, Noida-201301, Uttar Pradesh, Mob: 09958254533, Email: kunalrohilla@gmail.com
15	00848-A	Lt Cdr	MG Seshachalam	Mrs Shobha Seshachalam (Wife), Mrs Aarti (Daughter)	10-May-18	Mrs Shobha Seshachalam (Wife), 17, Prabhat Housing Society Bawdhan Khurd, NDA Road Pune-411021, Tel: 020-22951530, Mob: 9889602020 (Wife) 9822110376 (Daughter), Email: sobha.seshachalam@gmail.com
16	60062-B	Cmde	KK Malhotra, VSM	Mrs Vijay Laxmi Malhotra (Wife), Mr Sandeep (Son), Mrs Priya Parmar (Daughter), Capt Sarabjeet S Parmar (Son in Law)	22-May-18	Mrs Vijay Laxmi Malhotra (Wife), B-1002, Jalvayu Towers Rajar Haat, New Town, Kolkata-700156 Mob: 9163993230(Wife), 6592980232 (Son), 9999194702 (Son-in-law) Email: icsparmar@gmail.com (daughter)



17	00646-T	Cmde	TL Rattan, AVSM, VSM	Mrs Asha Rattan (wife), Mr Niraj & Mr Dheeraj (both Sons)	14-Jun-18	Mrs Asha Rattan, H-31, Jalvayu Vihar, Hiranandani Gardens, Powai, Mumbai-400076, Mob: 7409343392 (Wife), 9820101281 (Son) Email: nirajrattan@gmail.com (Son)
18	02491-K	Cdr	PPS Sodhi	Mrs Kiran Sodhi (Wife), Mr Karan Sodhi (Son) and Avantika Sodhi (Daughter)	21-Jun-18	Mrs Kiran Sodhi (Wife), 53/63, Ramjas Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005, Mob: 9582975681 (Wife), 8587893839 (Son), Email: kirandrano@gmail.com (Wife), Karansodhi93@gmail.com (Son)
19	00231-Z	Cdr	AL Sahni	Mrs Malvika Sinha & Monika (both Daughters), Monish Sahni (Son)	10-Jun-18	Mrs Malvika Sinha (Daughter), 104, Chitrakoot Altamount Road Mumbai-400026, Mob: 9820202491(Malvika) Email: monishahni@gmail.com (Son), malvikasinha@hotmail.com (Malvika)
20	NA	Lt Cdr	MT Jolly	Mrs Alice Jolly (Wife), Mr Thomas Manayathara & Mr Mathew Jolly (both sons) and Mrs Anna Panagada & Mrs Mary Mathew (both Daughters)	17-Jun-18	Mrs Alice Jolly (Wife), Manayathara House, Thuthiyur Road, Kakkannad, Kochi-682037, Tel: 0484-2422225 (Wife) Mob: 9895067797 (Son Mr Mathew), Email: mathewjolly@yahoo.com
21	00086-W	ADM	JG Nadkarni, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, NM	Mr Vijay & R Adm R J Nadkarni (Both Sons)	02-Jul-18	RAdm RJ Nadkarni (Son), Chief of Staff Headquarters Southern Naval Command Kochi, Mob: +14088775600 (Mr Vijay USA) 9833346255 (RAdm RJ Nadkarni) Email: rjnadkarni@gmail.com, vjnadkarni@gmail.com
22	00978-Y	Cdr	KS Pathania	Mrs Parvesh Pathania (Wife) and Ms Kanika Pathania (Daughter)	02-Jul-18	Mrs Parvesh Pathania (Wife), E-51, Jalvayu Vihar, Sector-21, Noida-201301, Mob: 9654337766 (Daughter) Email: kspathania@hotmail.com
23	02074-N	Cdr	John Jacob Puthur	Mrs Shobha and Ms Sharon and Ms Sheryl (both daughters)	17-Jul-18	Mrs Shobha, 'Jacob's Ladder' #95, Defence layout, Vidyanarayapura, Bangalore-560097 Mob: 9343175021 (Wife), 9620058702 (Ms Sharon) Email: sobhaputhur@gmail.com (Wife), sharon.jputhur@gmail.com (Ms Sharon)
24	02181-Y	Lt Cdr	Rajnish Kumar Gupta	Mrs Savita Gupta (Wife), Mr Saraj Gupta & Mr Rajat (both Sons)	26-Jul-18	Mrs Savita Gupta (Wife), H.No. 1358, Sector-12, Huda Phase-2, Panipat, Haryana-132103, Mob: 9802356464 (Wife), Email: savitagupta.pnp@gmail.com (Wife), sarajgupta@gmail.com (Son)

25	89722-N	Lt Cdr	EV Gangadharan	Mrs Devi Gangadharan (Wife), Rajesh Varrier (Son) & Mrs Rajsree Krishnan (Daughter)	03-Aug-18	Mrs Devi Gangadhara (Wife), Eddakunni Varriam Raganjali Po-Pozhuvil, Thrissur-680564, Tel: 0487-2271007, 9886002626, Email: rvarrier@gmail.com (Son)
26	01378-Y	Cdr	Vijay Dalal	Mrs Aruna Dalal (Wife), Mrs Avantika, Mrs Ishita & Ms Sia (Daughters)	14-Aug-18	Mrs Aruna Dalal, L-73, Sector-25, Noida UP-201301, Mob: 9811724784 (Mrs Avantika), Email: avantsin@gmail.com
27	40040-Z	Capt	CSN Raju	Gp Capt C Murali Raju (Son)	27-Aug-18	Gp Capt C Murali Raju (Son), #5-C, Moksha Apartments, Registration Colony, Yapral, Secunderabad-500087, Telangana State, India, Mob: 9652417692, Email: MRL_RAJU@yahoo.co.in
28	00887-R	Cmde	Sarvottam Handa, NM	Mrs Padmini Handa (Wife), Mr Akhil Handa (Son)	29-Aug-18	Mrs Padmini Handa, Flat No 9, Sterling Houose 55 Silver Street, Readintg, Berkshire London, UK, Mob: +44 7805954820, Email: kukuhanda@gmail.com (Wife), akhil.handa@intel.com (son)
29	60013-T	Cmde	JMS Sood	Mrs (Surg Cdr) Kusum J Sood (Retd) (Wife), Mr Sudarshan Singh Sood (Son), Dr Mrs Chandani Anand (Daughter)	07-Sep-18	Mrs (Surg Cdr) Kusum J Sood (Retd), Sanjwat Friends Estate, Sakit Colony, Naukuchiatal Road, Bhimtal, UK-263136, Mob: 9719328430 (Wife), Email: soodkjms11@gmail.com
30	50485-N	Cdr	Venkateswar Rao Nikkula	Mrs N Madhawi (Wife) and daughters Mrs N Gayatri (Wg Cdr Suresh (Son-in- Law) & Mrs Srikrishna Priya	11-Sep-18	Mrs N Madhawi, B-405, Jalwayu Towers, AFNHB Colony, Lower Tankund, Yelachiguda, Hyderabad-500080, Mob: 9989698667 (Wife), 9246290032 (Mrs N Gayatri) Email: pakalag3@gmail.com, siva.pusa@gmail.com
31	00054-Y	VAdm	KK Nayyar, PVSM, AVSM	Mrs Veena Nayyar (Wife), Mr Ashok Nayyar (Son) & Mrs Gita Nayyar (Daughter)	18-Sep-18	Mrs Veena Nayyar, F-9/8, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi, Delhi-110057, Mob: 011-26149384, 9312940663 Email:veenanayyar@policyfoundation.org, ashoknayyar1@gmail.com
32	00374-Z	Cdr	MV Jacob	Mrs Annamma (Wife), Mrs Anita and Mrs Mini (both Daughters)	14-Oct-18	Mrs Annamma, 13A, Skyline Cedar Park Thoppumukku, Vattiyoorkavu, Thiruvanamthapuram Kerala-695013 Mob: 0471-2360237, 9847900237, 7561045911 Email: laila@asianetindia.com
33	00037-H	VAdm	MP Awati, PVSM, AVSM, VrC	Mrs Sandhya Awati (Wife), Mr Kedar and Mr Kailash (both Sons)	4-Nov-18	Mrs Sandhya Awati ' Pavan Venchurani PO- Nirgudi Near Phaltan Dist- Satara Maharashtra-415523 Mob: 9850744205 (Son Mr Kedar Awati) Emal: awatikailash@gmail.com (Son Mr Kailash Awati)

34	01493-T	Cdr	Bimal Rai Bhatia	Mr Dhruv Bhatia (Son)	9-Nov-18	Mr Dhruv Bhatia (Son), C-369, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024, Mob: 011-24335594, 9811725169 Email: dhruvbhatia.uk@gmail.com
35	00084-R	Cmde	SS Kumar, VrC	Mr Varun Sabhlok (Son)	20-Nov-18	Mr Varun Sabhlok, 237, Arcadia Road #01-01, The Arcadia Singapore 289844 Mob: +65-96836747 (Son), Email: varun_sabhlok@yahoo.com.sg (Son)
36	70064-K	Cmde	GBM Kohli	Mrs Kawaljit Kohli (Wife) and Mr Rajvinder Singh (Son)	24-Nov-18	Mrs Kawaljit Kohli, 281, C Pocket, Sarita Vihar, Mathua Road, New Delhi-110076 Mob: 9958511774 (Wife), 9820219093 (Son), 011-26947882 Email: kohlirs@hotmail.com (son)
37	00361-W	Cdr	Raj Verma	Ms Monisha Verma (Daughter)	02 Jan 19	Ms Monisha Verma, B-125, Vivek Vihar, Phase 1, New Delhi- 110095 Mob: 9810310846 Email: monisha.verma2002@gmail.com
38	00331-A	Cdr	AS Dhillon	Mrs Ranjeet Dhillon (Wife), Mr Gurpreet Singh Dhillon (Son) and Mrs Rupreet Kaur (Daughter)	09 Jan 19	Mrs Ranjeet Dhillon (Wife), H No-222, Sec – 16A, Chandigarh – 16 0015 Mob: 7837843390/9988788857 (Son) Email: gurpreetdhillon.adv@gmail.com (son)
39	40192-W	Capt	Shyam Uttam Singh	Mrs Veena Uttam Singh (Wife), Mrs Ashvini Uttam Singh (Son), Mrs Henna Uttam Singh (Daughter in Law)	13 Jan 19	Mrs Veena Uttam Singh (Wife), Contact No. 9810156932
40	00137-K	RAdm	MN Vasudeva, VSM	Mrs Asha Vashudeva (Wife), Mr Jaideep Vasudeva (Son) and Seema Vasudeva (Daughter)	22 Jan 19	Mrs Asha Vasudeva (Wife), C/o Mr Jaideep Vasudeva, A-18, Marble Arch Apts, 9, Prithvi Raj Road, New Delhi-110001 Tel: 011-24644139, Email: jaideep.vasudeva@gmail.com





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