

Dte of Ex-Servicemen Affairs
 Naval Headquarters
 Ministry of Defence
 Room No 004
 Talkatora Stadium Annex
 New Delhi 110004

DX/900/Samanvay – 01/2023

26 Oct 23

MINUTES OF 'SAMANVAY' HELD AT KOLKATA ON 02 OCT 23

1. Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, AVSM, VSM, Controller Personnel Services and ex-officio Chairman, 'Samanvay' presided over the maiden meeting of 'Samanvay' held at Kolkata on 02 Oct 23. The following were present: -

<u>Ser</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Desig</u>
(a)	RAdm Sandeep Pradhan	CSO (P&A), ENC
(b)	RAdm Manish Chadha, VSM	ACOP(AC)
(c)	RAdm Rajat Kapoor	CSO (P&A), WNC
(d)	Cmde RS Beniwal	Cmde (ECHS) N
(e)	Cmde VI Hoti	Reg Dir, ECHS Vizag
(f)	Cmde Sandeep Verma	Cmde (PA)
(g)	Cmde AP Shaji Kuttii	Cmde (NPF)
(h)	Cmde Alok Ananda, YSM	Cmde (ESM Affairs) & Secy, 'Samanvay'
(j)	Cmde Viju Samuel	CSO (P&A), SNC
(k)	Cmde Supradeepan Sankaran	LOIC NAVPEN
(l)	Cmde P Sasi Kumar	Station Commander
(m)	Capt Varun Singh	JAG (N)
(p)	Capt T Ranjith Sundaran	Secy, VSF Kochi
(q)	Capt Sanjay Kumar	Capt (NPF) - INBA
(r)	Capt R K Saini	Secy, VSF Mumbai
(s)	Capt TG Kumar	Secy, VSF Kolkata
(t)	Capt Ankur Kulshreshtha	RM INCS Delhi
(u)	Cdr Sarup Banerjee	Secy, VSF Vizag
(v)	Cdr Vijay Kumar	MS INCCB
(w)	Cdr T Dutta	Jt Secy NF & 'Samanvay' and Secy, VSF
(x)	Cdr N Kattaboomman	Secy, VSF Chennai
(y)	Cdr Prakadeeswaran	Secy, VSF Zamorin
(z)	Lt Manish Kumar Mishra	Secy, VSF Odisha

<u>Ser</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Desig</u>
(aa)	SLt Sharmila	Secy, VSF Goa
<u>NF and VSF Representatives (Retd)</u>		
(ab)	VAdm Bimalendu Guha	Kolkata
(ac)	VAdm A G Thapliyal, AVSM*	Dehradun
(ad)	VAdm MP Muralidharan, AVSM*, NM	Kerala
(ae)	VAdm J Korde, PVSM, AVSM, VSM	Pune
(af)	VAdm KO Thakare, AVSM NM	Nagpur
(ag)	RAdm T Sudhakar, AVSM, NM	Visakhapatnam
(ah)	RAdm Nikunj Kishore Mishra, NM	Bangalore
(aj)	RAdm PG Pynumootil, AVSM, NM	Goa
(ak)	Cmde AJ Singh	Delhi
(al)	Cmde RS Vasan	Chennai
(am)	Cmde Suprohbo K Dey, NM	Kolkata
(an)	Cmde VK Gautam, NM	Chandigarh
(ap)	Cmde Pravin Rajpal	Hyderabad
(aq)	Capt SK Singhdeo	Odisha
(ar)	Capt Bhupendra Joshi	Bhopal
(as)	Capt A Banerjee	Kolkata
(at)	Cdr Vijay Vadhera, NM	Mumbai
(au)	Cdr S Sri Ramakrishnan	Coimbatore
(av)	Cdr Rajesh Pratap Singh	Lucknow
(aw)	M Manganathan, CPOR (Spl)	Chennai
(ax)	D Rama Rao, POMA	Karwar
(ay)	Shashi Kant Mishra, MCERA I	Mumbai
(az)	Smiju KA, POR (TEL)	Kochi
(ba)	MP Shaju, Ex POR (TAC)	Ezhimala
(bb)	Bidyadhar Nayak, POR(Spl)	Odisha
(bc)	Ajay Pal Singh, Hon. Lt	Delhi
(bd)	Rahul Dev Mahato, POWTR	Vizag
(be)	Ajay Kumar Singh, CPOR (Tac)	Kolkata
(bf)	Bir Singh, LME	Jabalpur
(bg)	Ramesh Chandra, MCELR	Mumbai

Welcome Address by Chairman

2. VAdm Krishna Swaminathan, CPS and ex-officio Chairman 'Samanvay' extended a warm welcome to all members present for the *maiden* meeting and thanked the out-station members and representatives, who had taken efforts to travel to Kolkata. He mentioned that Navy Foundation (NF) and Veteran Sailors' Forum (VSF) are vibrant organisations, and therefore, the intent of 'Samanvay' is

to share the best practices and provide a platform for interaction on common issues amongst the reps of NF and VSF.

3. He urged the veterans to interact with *IN* and provide their valuable feedback and suggestions. He also urged the NF Chapters and VSF Charters office bearers to have regular interactions with their members, so that the issues faced by ESM can be taken to their logical conclusion. He also requested the office bearers to encourage naval ESM to register for NF/ VSF, and brought out that the membership fees for NF and VSF is being paid by the *IN*. He stated that the increased membership of NF and VSF will help in moulding the welfare policies initiated by the Government in their favour.

4. He encouraged the veterans to follow the digital way, and utilise the naval applications - 'Handshake' and 'Samuha' for networking with retired and serving naval community. He urged the members to follow the social media handles of *IN*, including 'X' (formerly Twitter) handle of DESA, as all important and relevant issues are regularly updated on these handles. He appreciated the efforts of DESA towards preparation of DESA E-Newsletter, published every quarter, which contains updates wrt ESM policies and other developments that concern ESM.

5. He briefed the gathering regarding new initiatives, viz. Veterans' CDF, digitisation of records, NAVPEN as the 'Single Window' for resolution of grievances, and development of Indian Naval Grievances Redressal Management System (INGRAMS). He informed the members that the Naval Headquarters is aware of the difficulties being faced by few pensioners during transition to SPARSH, and reaffirmed that these issues are being monitored, addressed and resolved on priority.

6. He mentioned that the 8th Armed Forces Veterans' Day scheduled on 14 Jan 24 is being coordinated by *IN*, and ESM rallies would be conducted at multiple locations across the country by the three Services. *IN* will conduct ESM rallies at New Delhi, Mumbai and Kochi.

7. He concluded by reiterating the importance of 'Samanvay' and requested members to focus and deliberate on issues that are important for the welfare of ESM. He also put forth certain ideas for due consideration of ESM, viz. measures to make NF/ VSF self-sustained, means to increase membership of NF/ VSF, and tapping CSR funds from corporates.

Agenda Points

8. Cmde (ESM Affairs), as Secy 'Samanvay', continued thereafter with the proceedings, and a total of six agenda points were discussed. Details of deliberations and decisions arrived upon in respect of the agenda points are placed at **Appendix 'A'**.

Discussions: 'Samanvay'

9. During discussions, the Chairman informed the members regarding various initiatives undertaken by IN for welfare of the ESM, as enumerated below: -

- (a) **Armed Forces Secure Access Card (AFSAC)**. The changeover of I-Cards to AFSAC is under progress, which will incorporate 17 categories of identity cards being used in Navy. Trials of the same have been completed at Mumbai.
- (b) **MoUs by Indian Navy**. Various MoUs have been concluded with corporates as well as educational institutions and Universities for increasing opportunity for veterans and their families.
- (c) **Wreath Laying Ceremony at National War Memorial**. Wreath Laying Ceremony is being undertaken on the 01st of every month by NoK of naval battle casualties at National War Memorial, New Delhi.
- (d) **Retirement Ceremony**. Farewell ceremonies for retiring officers and sailors respectively have been institutionalised in the Navy. The CNS interacts with retiring Commodores and above from all Commands at New Delhi, whereas the FOC-in-C and COP interact with the retiring Captains and below in their respective AoR/ Delhi area. In addition, the sailors' farewell ceremony, named 'Aabhar', has been institutionalised, where the retiring sailors along with their families are hosted over dinner.
- (e) **Insurance Cover**. DNPF is progressing a proposal for providing additional insurance cover for naval veterans, post retirement.

10. Few pertinent issues that were also discussed on the side-lines of 'Samanvay' are as follows: -

- (a) **Utility of Family Log Book**. Members brought out that the 'Family Log Book' is a very good initiative and naval personnel, whether serving or retired, should fill it diligently. Chairman informed that the Log Book has

been made available to every naval personnel and each individual is expected to fill and maintain it.

(b) **Geriatric Specialist**. Members brought out that ECHS Polyclinics should have a Geriatric specialist and a Lady Doctor. Cmde (ECHS) brought out that the polyclinics are suitably empowered, and can hire any specialist based on their requirement. There is no restriction that defines the speciality or gender of the doctor required to be hired.

(c) **Charter of CRSO**. Members indicated that as CRSOs are looking after affairs of NRS and VSF, the NF may also be placed under CRSOs. Chairman stated that any increase in charter of CRSO would require adequate empowerment, in terms of resources and manpower. He requested respective CSO (P&A) to coordinate the requirements at local level.

(d) **Assured Decent Last Rights Scheme (ADLRS)**. Members indicated that *IN* should follow similar actions of ADLRS, as being followed by Army and Air Force. Chairman directed that 'Status Quo' be maintained, as adequate deliberation has been carried out on the subject, and *IN* is providing maximum financial support, viz. Rs 40,000, as Demise Grant.

Closing Remarks

11. Chairman during his closing remarks reiterated that 'Samanvay' is not a merger of NF and VSF, and has been institutionalised only to share the best practices. He further stated that *IN* only recognises NF and VSF as the ESM organisation, and accordingly, in order to increase their membership, the fees is now being paid by *IN*. He concluded by thanking members for their presence for 'Samanvay' and making it a success.

12. There being no other points for discussion, the meeting was adjourned. These minutes are issued with the approval of Chairman.



(Alok Ananda)
Commodore
Cmde (ESM Affairs)

Appendix - Discussions on Agenda Points

Distribution. Normal.

Appendix 'A'
 (Refers to Para 8)

DISCUSSIONS ON AGENDA POINTS – ‘SAMANVAY’

Agenda I - Format of the Meeting

1. **Issue.** As this is the *maiden edition* of ‘Samanvay’, which is supposed to be a forum for formal deliberations between office-bearers/ reps of NF Chapters and VSF Charters, the format for the future meetings needs to be approved.

Proposal. ‘Samanvay’ has been established vide NHQ Policy Letter PP-18/2023/PB/DX/SAMANVAY dated 25 Aug 23 and is intended to provide a platform for interaction between the office-bearers/ representatives of NF Chapters and VSF Charters. As spelt out in the policy letter *ibid*, the scope of the interaction would be limited to sharing best practices and discussing Service-related common issues only. Accordingly, the proposed format for ‘Samanvay’ is as follows: -

- (a) **Item I** - Opening address by CPS, Chairman ‘Samanvay’
- (b) **Item II** - Presentation by DESA on Best Practices.
- (c) **Item III** - Discussions on Best Practices and Agenda Points.
- (d) **Item IV** - Closing remarks by Chairman.

Discussions. Secy informed the members that the AGM and GCM of NF and VSF, which are conducted annually, address the individual requirements of these organisations respectively. Accordingly, discussions in ‘Samanvay’ should be limited to issues common to both the organisations. Members agreed to the proposed format of the meeting. Chairman also recommended that besides utilising the opportunity offered by bi-annual meetings of ‘Samanvay’, discussion on issues of common interest could also be organised at regional/ local levels as and when required.

Decision. Chairman approved the format for ‘Samanvay’ and directed the point to be closed.

Agenda II - Sharing of Best Practices

2. Issue. Sharing of best practices between NF and VSF.

Proposal. DESA would make a presentation reflecting the best practices being followed by various NF Chapters and VSF Charters in their respective areas since the last 'Samanvay' meeting. Accordingly, all NF Chapters and VSF Charters would be required to forward details of activities undertaken every quarter to DESA by 31 Mar, 30 Jun, 30 Sep and 31 Dec every year. These could include, but not be limited to, the following: -

- (a) Activities/ initiatives undertaken to reach out/ support to the naval community and towards image building of the I/N.
- (b) Assistance during Last Rites.
- (c) Honouring achievers.
- (d) Dissemination of information.
- (e) Interactions with organisations dealing with ESM Affairs.
- (f) Charitable, Social, Philanthropic, Cultural, Educational and other activities being undertaken.
- (g) Lectures, seminars, talks, visits to schools and colleges to promote interest in Defence studies with particular reference to naval developments and maritime activities.
- (h) Generating funds.

Discussions. Secy brought out that the Charter of 'Samanvay' and the scope of 'Best Practices' need to be clearly defined. Some of the practices, which could be followed were covered for the members. Thereafter, he requested members to provide suggestions on the subject, if any. President, NF Mumbai Chapter discussed the conduct of Veterans' Day Parade at Mumbai, and brought out that similar parades could also be conducted by other Chapters with adequate ESM presence with support of State Administration. He also brought out the usage of WhatsApp, instead of e-mail as an official channel to disseminate policy letters, etc. Secy brought out that e-mail is a permanent repository of all communication and should be maintained, as hitherto. Members agreed that e-mail is to be retained as

the official channel of communication. The Chairman reiterated Chapters and Charters to maintain official e-mail ids and communicate with each other more frequently.

Decision. Chairman requested all NF Chapters and VSF Charters to apprise DESA of the various activities/ initiatives undertaken by them every quarter by the dates indicated and directed to close the point.

Agenda III - Increase Last Mile Connectivity

3. **Issue.** As iterated in Para 14 of NO 10/2023-NRS, the CRSOs are the nodal agency to maintain database iro ESM, widows and NoK residing within their area of jurisdiction. Provisioning of details (Name, Rank, PNo, Mobile, Address) would exponentially increase last mile connectivity and enhance effective functioning of NF, VSF and NRS.

Discussions. Secy informed members that 'Geographical Mapping of ESM', a positive and futuristic step towards enabling better communique with the veterans is being undertaken at NHQ. As a short-term measure, access of *limited database* iro naval veterans will be provided to the CRSOs by DOP and NAVPEN. CRSO (South) brought out that NPO may have the most accurate data iro naval personnel and that the same needs to be utilised. Chairman brought out that Veterans' Common Data Framework (**Vet CDF**) is under development, and once developed, personal particulars/ data will be available in a **read only** format to all Command HQs/ CRSOs. He further mentioned that the data for Vet CDF has been sourced from DOP, NAVPEN, NPO and PCDA. President, Coimbatore Chapter informed the gathering that data can be sourced from the local CSD and ECHS also. Secy brought out that the solution also lies in successful two-way communication and data sharing between NHQ and the CRSOs.

Decision. Chairman brought out that CRSOs along with Regimental State Units need to proactively maintain and update their database, and share the same with NHQ every quarter. He directed NAVPEN to share the limited database with CRSOs and closed the point.

Agenda IV - ESM Component in Common Service Centre (CSC)

4. **Issue.** A number of CSCs have been created where a veteran/ widow is supposed to seek help on various aspects of SPARSH, including Annual Life Certificate (ALC). These CSCs are normally manned by civilians, who do not

accord due respect to the veterans. It is therefore recommended, that at least one ESM be permanently employed in each CSC to take care of ESM and families. If this suggestion is accepted, the names of ESM employed be displayed in each CSC office.

Discussions. Secy brought out that CSCs are a strategic cornerstone of the National e-Governance plan to reduce citizens' effort in visiting Govt offices, and managed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. He informed the members that during the 31st meeting of the Kendriya Sainik Board held on 11 Apr 23 at New Delhi under the chairmanship of Hon'ble RM, the issue of integrating RSB/ ZSB with CSCs was discussed. Hon'ble RM directed the State/ UT Govts to liaise with the CSC network, and set up access facilities in ZSBs.

Decision. Chairman informed the members that CGDA has been directed to provide necessary support/ training to ZSB staff towards integration with CSCs and closed the point.

Agenda V

5. **ESM I-Card.** Identity cards issued by ZSWOs are supposed to be the official identity for ESM for availing various benefits given by the Central/ State Government, including, exemption of Property Tax, etc. It is noticed that post retirement, a large number of ESM, especially officers do not get their ESM I-Cards made, which finally results in non-establishment of Zilla Sainik Offices and ECHS Polyclinics, as minimum numbers of ESM is not met.

Discussions. President, NFMC brought out that large number of naval ESM, primarily officers, are not aware of the importance of the ESM I-Card issued by KSB, and thus are not applying for the same. It was further brought out that the procedure for issuing this ESM I-card is cumbersome. However, CRSO (NE) brought out that the process is simple, and required the presence of ESM only twice at the ZSB, and he had been facilitating the same for the local retirees. Secy informed the members that the importance of the ESM I-Card is being emphasised during the retiring interactions, including the Pre-Retirement Capsule conducted every quarter.

Decision. Chairman informed the members that the process is not as complicated as being perceived, and the onus lies on the individual for getting his/ her I-Card made.

Agenda VI

6. **Reorganise VSF iaw MoA and Authorise Associate Charters.** VSF has 13 Charters to-date and no Associate Charters. The retired sailors should be encouraged to set up new Associate Charters iaw Memorandum of Association (MoA) of the VSF. As a start point, Command Charters can authorise new Associate Charters in cities, where NF presence exists. The existing VSF set up, as per MoA is as follows:-

(a) **Organisation.** VSF is headquartered at NHQ with CPS being the ex-officio President, VSF. Command Charters are headed by the respective CSO (P&A) and the Regional Charters fall under their respective Command Charters. Command Charters can authorise formation of Associate Charters in cities with a minimum number of 50 retired sailors.

(b) **Office Bearers.**

(i) **Command and Regional Charters.** Management Committee/ Ex-Officio members of Command and Regional Charters are nominated by the Governing Council, and consist of serving officers (President, Secretary and Treasurer) and ESM reps (nominated by the Management Committee).

(ii) **Associate Charters.** Management Committee of Associate Charters is required to be elected by the members of the Charter.

Discussions. Secy explained the organisation of VSF to the members and brought out that a need was felt to reorganise VSF at par with NF, and establish VSF Associate Charters, in line with the NF Chapters (comprising only retired sailors in the Management Committee). He brought out that there are many organisations, registered locally by ex-sailors, who claim to be the representatives of naval ESM. However, these are not the officially recognised ESM bodies and hence have no real leverage in issues related to welfare of ESM. There is a need to strengthen VSF (recognised by IN), which would represent all ex-sailors. This will not only ensure that no parallel organisation exists, but will also ratify the setup of VSF as the organisation for ex-sailors. All members agreed to the proposal. Secy informed the members that as a start point, Associate Charters could be established at locations where a NF Chapter already exists, and the NF Chapters can accordingly provide the necessary guidance towards setting up a VSF Associate Charters. The members raised a query regarding

administration of VSF Associate Charter by the NF. Secy clarified that NF is not being tasked to administer VSF or take on any VSF tasks or vice-versa.

Decision. Chairman directed DESA to issue amplifying orders on creation of VSF Associate Charters, and closed the point.

Summary of Action Points – ‘Samanvay’

7. The summary of Action Points of the ‘Samanvay’ meeting is as tabulated below: -

Ser	Action Points	Action by
(a)	Future ‘Samanvay’ meetings to be conducted as per approved format.	NHQ/ DESA
(b)	All NF Chapters and VSF Charters to forward details of activities/ initiatives undertaken to DESA, quarter ending 31 Mar, 30 Jun, 30 Sep and 31 Dec every year.	NF Chapters and VSF Charters
(c)	DESA to compile the ‘Best Practises’ being followed by NF Chapters and VSF Charters and present the same during ‘Samanvay’.	NHQ/ DESA
(d)	Database of selected fields (excel format) iro retired officers and sailors from DOP and NAVPEN respectively to be shared with all CRSOs.	NHQ/ DOP and NAVPEN
(e)	CRSOs along with Regimental State Units to proactively maintain and update veteran database of their respective AoRs and share the same with NHQ/ DESA every quarter.	Command HQs/ CRSOs
(f)	Amplifying orders on creation of VSF Associate Charters to be issued.	NHQ/ DESA

Note. All concerned stakeholders are to forward update on the above-mentioned Action Points to NHQ/ DESA on quarterly basis.