

Tele 21410482

Dte of Ex-Servicemen Affairs
IHQ MoD (Navy)
Room No 004
Talkatora Stadium Annex
New Delhi 110004

DX/900/AGM-2023

19 Jul 23

**MINUTES OF 30TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF NAVY FOUNDATION HELD AT
NEW DELHI ON 18 JUN 23**

1. Admiral R Hari Kumar PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, Chief of the Naval Staff and President, Navy Foundation (NF) chaired the 30th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the NF held at New Delhi on 18 Jun 23. The following were present: -

(a) **Invitees.**

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| (i) | Adm RK Dhowan (Retd) PVSM, AVSM, YSM | |
| (ii) | VAdm Suraj Berry, AVSM, NM, VSM | COP |
| (iii) | Shri Satish Pendarkar | PCDA (N) |
| (iv) | Cmde Satish Shenai, NM | CO, INS India |

(b) **Members.**

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (i) | VAdm Krishna Swaminathan AVSM, VSM, | VP, NF |
| (ii) | RAdm Sandeep Pradhan, VSM | VP, RGC (East) |
| (iii) | RAdm Rajat Kapoor, NM | VP, RGC (West) |
| (iv) | Cmde Viresh Das | Cmde (ESM Affairs) |
| (v) | Cmde AP Shaji Kutty | Treasurer NF |
| (vi) | Cmde Alok Ananda, YSM | Cmde (ESM Affairs) Desig
& Secy NF |
| (vii) | Cmde Viju Samuel | VP, RGC (South) |
| (viii) | Capt Varun Singh | Legal member |
| (ix) | Cdr T Dutta | Jt Secy, NF |

(c) **In Attendance.**

- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------|----------------|
| (i) | Cmde Sandeep Verma | Cmde (P&A) |
| (ii) | Cmde Dhiraj Sareen | Cmde(ECHS)Navy |
| (iii) | Cmde Supradeepan Sankaran | LOIC NAVPEN |

(iv)	Capt Sunil D Dogra, VSM	OIC SPCIS, Navy
(v)	Capt Satish Kumar	Rep, KSB
(vi)	Cdr Vijay Kumar	Secy INCCB
(vii)	Cdr Harsha Ghatnatti	Rep, DPS
(viii)	Lt Cdr A Shekhawat	NAV PEN
(ix)	Lt Cdr Akash Anand	Lt Cdr(ECHS)
(x)	Lt Cdr D Padhi	Lt Cdr (PA)
(xi)	Smt Pama Johnson, AO	PCDA(N)
(xii)	Shri Mohit Sahu, Asst AO	PCDA (N)
(xiii)	Shri Jayant Kumar, AO	PCDA (Pen)
(xiv)	Shri RK Singh, AO	PCDA (Pen)

(d) **Chapter Representatives (Retd Officers).**

(i)	VAdm BK Verma, AVSM	Pres NF Bhopal
(ii)	VAdm M P Muralidharan, AVSM*, NM	Pres, NF Kerala
(iii)	VAdm AG Thapliyal, AVSM*	Pres NF Dehradun
(iv)	VAdm Jaywant Korde, PVSM, AVSM, VSM	Pres, NF Pune
(v)	RAdm Sampath Gopal, AVSM, NM	Pres, NF Bangalore
(vi)	RAdm PS Byce, AVSM	Pres, NF Jaipur
(vii)	RAdm S Ramsay, YSM	Pres, NF Delhi
(viii)	RAdm T Sudhakar, AVSM, NM	Rep, NF Vizag
(ix)	RAdm Amit Bose, VSM	Pres, NF Kolkata
(x)	RAdm Philipose, G Pynumootil, AVSM, NM	Pres, NF Goa
(xi)	Cmde Sudheer Parakala	Pres, NF Hyderabad
(xii)	Cmde Dinabandhu Jena, NM, VSM	Pres, NF Odisha
(xiii)	Cmde VK Gautam, NM	Pres, NF C'garh
(xiv)	Cdr LM Krishnan	VP, NF Chennai
(xv)	Cdr Vijay Vadhera, NM	Pres, NF Mumbai
(xvi)	Cdr RP Singh	Secy, NF Lucknow
(xvii)	Cdr S Sriramakrishnan	Pres, NF Coimbatore

Item I - Welcome Address by Vice President, NF

2. The Vice President, NF extended a warm welcome to the esteemed office bearers of NF Chapters, members, serving officers and PCDA (N). He thanked the out-station members of the NF, who had taken efforts to travel to New Delhi for attending the Annual General Body meeting (AGM). He also placed on record his sincere thanks to members of NF Delhi Chapter for their presence in the AGM. He stated that the *IN* is progressing steadily along an impressive growth trajectory, facilitated by the strong foundation inherited from personnel who are now part of the veteran community, and conveyed gratitude to them for their role.

3. He brought out several initiatives that the *IN* has pursued in the last year. He mentioned that the scope of Pre-Retirement Capsule conducted for the retiring officers has been enhanced. The number of courses and vacancies for the *IN* has seen a steady increase in the Pre-Release courses undertaken by DGR. He briefed the gathering on various MoUs that have been instrumentalised for providing employment opportunities, including the MoU between *IN* and DG Shipping, enabling smooth transition into the Merchant Navy, which has once again been made possible after a gap of 36 years.

4. He mentioned about the Single Window Helpdesk, planned to be set up at NAVPEN, Mumbai, which is likely to resolve majority of the issues being faced by ESM and their NoK. He further briefed them about the major digital initiatives being taken up by the *IN*, in terms of Human Resource Common Data Framework (HRCDF) and Veteran Common Data Framework (VetCDF).

Item II - Presentation by ECHS (Navy)

5. ECHS (Navy) covered the following aspects in his presentation: -

- (a) Introduction to ECHS.
- (b) Procedure to enrol.
- (c) Benefits and facilities available.
- (d) Online processing of bills.
- (e) Recent developments pertaining to ECHS.
- (f) Channel of grievances.

6. During the presentation, members raised their concerns over availability of medicines in various polyclinics, and compared CGHS with ECHS. Cmde (ECHS) informed the members that the issue was specific to only a few locations, where vendors were not able to supply medicines within 24 hrs. He further stated that the policies & procedures wrt CGHS & ECHS are exactly the same. During the discussion on setting up of ECHS hospitals in vicinity of Military Hospitals, Cmde (ECHS) brought out that a study was undertaken by CDM in 2018, wherein it was brought out that the cost incurred on setting up of a hospital is more than ₹7,000 crores, which is unlikely to fructify. To

conclude the discussion, Vice President, NF advised the members to shift to Naval polyclinics, wherever feasible, to gain maximum benefit from the scheme.

Item III - Presentation by DPA

7. Prior to commencement of presentation by DPA, Cdr RM Soni (Retd) and Capt Satish Chawla (Retd) raised issues regarding transition of pension accounts to SPARSH. A statement received from RAdm Pradeep Joshi (Retd), pertaining to SPARSH was also read out by RAdm S Ramsay (Retd), and recorded (placed at **Appendix 'C'**).

8. Thereafter, DPA continued with the presentation and briefed the NF members on the following: -

- (a) System for Pension Administration (Raksha) - SPARSH.
- (b) Transition to e-PPO.
- (c) *IN* efforts towards SPARSH Migration.
- (d) NAVPEN as a Single Window for Naval ESM.
- (e) Centralised pension disbursement.

9. Vice President, NF informed the gathering that the migration to SPARSH, as part of the digital transformation being ushered in nation-wide, is irreversible. The system, once fully implemented, would prove to be an important step towards alleviating problems faced by pensioners in the past as well as accrue host of attendant benefits such as making the entire process transparent and real-time. Cmde (P&A) assured the NF members that the *IN* has put in all out efforts towards seamless migration of naval pensioners to SPARSH, and that all remaining issues are being resolved. Vice President, NF told the members that a help desk at PCDA(P) has been set up to resolve all SPARSH issues pertaining to naval ESM, and concluded by assuring members that all necessary efforts are being progressed for a smooth transition.

Item IV - New Agenda Points (Part I)

10. Seven new agenda points were discussed under the chairmanship of VAdm Krishna Swaminathan, CPS and Vice President, NF. Details of deliberations and decisions arrived at are placed at **Appendix 'A'**.

Item V - Address by President, NF

11. Adm R Harikumar PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, President, NF extended a warm welcome to all present and stated that it was a great honour to be amongst the members of NF. He appreciated the sterling role played by the NF over the last three decades, and mentioned that the AGM provides an opportunity to reiterate and reaffirm our gratitude to

the veterans. Thereafter, he requested all present to rise and pay respect to 58 veteran officers who, since the last AGM, have left for their heavenly abode. He stated that welfare of veterans has been a focus area at the Naval Headquarters, and the support organisations dealing with veterans are being reorganised into a 'Single Window' system. He informed the gathering that active steps, including HR restructuring, have been undertaken towards changing the outlook of the organisations/ directorates dealing with ESM. Quoting words of Senior Officers of the past, the President acknowledged that every person serving today would be a veteran in future and it is, therefore, imperative that focussed efforts be dedicated towards improving the quality of life of veterans. He also emphasised that our treatment of veterans, to a great extent, is visible to the society at large and a well-looked after veterans community serves as a powerful message to attract the right talent towards Services.

12. He briefed the gathering about latest inductions, developments, initiatives, and future plans of the *IN* to sustain a high tempo of operations. He spoke of various operations undertaken by *IN*, namely, 'Operation Kaveri' - evacuation operations in Sudan; 'Operation Karuna' - assistance to Myanmar after 'Cyclone Mocha'; assistance to Chinese fishing vessel which capsized around 900 Nm from Indian coast; and interdiction of drugs worth thousands of crores by naval ships. He asserted that the sustained proactive posture as well as conduct of a string of high-profile, successful operations have established Navy as a Combat Ready, Credible, Cohesive and Future Proof Force that is steaming ahead on the course of '*Aatmanirbhar Bharat*'. He also spoke about the '*Agniveers*', and briefed the gathering about their induction, training, and motivation levels.

13. The President highlighted several significant steps that have been taken to empower ESM, including conclusion of MoUs with multinational corporations and PSUs towards second career opportunities, conduct of entrepreneurship courses at National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), and Pre-retirement capsules. He also mentioned about the MoU signed between the *IN* and DG Shipping to enable smooth transition of *IN* personnel to Merchant Navy.

14. He encouraged all ESM to follow the digital way, and utilise the applications – '*Handshake*' and '*Samuha*' for networking with serving and retired community. He further mentioned that all shore establishments have been directed to open Twitter accounts for seamless dissemination of information on activities undertaken by them. He requested all NF Chapters to operate their own Twitter handles, and follow the Twitter handles of *IN* and DESA.

15. Towards increasing the naval presence in televised media debates, he briefed the gathering that a 2 to 3 weeks capsules will be conducted at Kota House by MPIC for the retired officers, where each branch will provide update on latest developments and policies in the *IN*. Post completion of capsule, a 'Currency Card' will be issued to the retired officers, and their names will be forwarded to the media houses.

16. He stated that NF, because of its inherent strengths, can evolve further into a multifunctional, multipurpose entity, which within the parameters specified in the MoA can undertake several activities that would provide employment opportunities to the veterans

as also generate resources, which can then be further utilised for welfare activities. He cited example of Veteran Organisations in countries such as USA and UK and emphasised that there is a need to redefine the NF towards making it fruitful for the ESM community and the nation.

17. He emphasised on the positive aspects of real-time, instantaneous communication that is afforded now to every citizen because of the advent of Social Media and the resultant changes in erstwhile practices and procedures. He also cautioned on the associated disadvantages of this medium, and advised the members to guard against misuse of Social Media platforms to portray Armed Forces in poor light. He concluded by thanking everyone present and accorded approval to commence the proceedings.

Item VI - Confirmation of 29th AGM Minutes

18. The Secretary, NF confirmed that the minutes of 29th AGM were forwarded to all Chapters. RAdm Philipose G Pynumootil (Retd), President, NF Goa Chapter proposed confirmation of the minutes of 29th AGM. The proposal was seconded by Cdr LM Krishnan (Retd), Vice President, NF Chennai Chapter.

Item VII - Secretary's Report

19. The Secretary presented the report on the activities of the NF, since the last AGM held at Goa on 22 May 22.

20. The Secretary welcomed all the members, especially those who were attending the AGM for the first time. He emphasised that DESA has constantly endeavoured to be the bridge between the serving and retired personnel. He brought out that in the present digital age, DESA has been effectively harnessing technology to provide relevant information to all ESM through various measures, namely, e-News Letters, Social Media, digital applications, etc. He also informed the gathering about the conduct of Memorial Lectures and Centenary Celebrations to honour Late Adm RL Pereira.

21. The Secretary requested all members for contributions for the annual magazine of NF, The Quarterdeck, which is under compilation and will be released in Feb 24. While concluding his report, the Secretary highlighted various philanthropic and social awareness activities undertaken by different NF Chapters, towards nation building.

Item VIII - New Agenda Points (Part II)

22. The President, NF presided over the deliberations for the balance new agenda points. Details are placed at ***Appendix 'B'***.

Open House

23. During the Open House, members raised the issue regarding the NF membership fees. President, NF Mumbai Chapter raised the topic regarding transfer of funds, in case of 'Change of Chapter' for any individual. Secy, NF confirmed to the members that according to MoA, ₹500 is to be retained and ₹1500 to be transferred to the next Chapter. It was thereafter suggested by President, NF Mumbai Chapter that either the entire money, ie ₹2000 may be transferred to the next Chapter or no money may be transferred. The President, NF directed that the current practice of transferring part of membership fee be dispensed with to avoid infructuous work and henceforth, NF membership fees be paid to the concerned NF Chapter based on the permanent address of the retiring officer. He also emphasised on continuing with the efforts to have maximum enrolment of members into the NF Chapters.

Item IX - Concluding Remarks by President, NF

24. The President, NF thanked everyone for being part of the AGM. He conveyed his sincere gratitude to all the participants on behalf of IN and the nation for their contribution and leadership whilst in Service as well as after retirement. He assured that all possible help will be provided to the ESM by the Navy. He wished good health and success to everyone in all endeavours.

25. There being no other points, the meeting was adjourned.

26. These minutes are issued with the approval of President, Navy Foundation.



(Alok Ananda)
Commodore
Secretary, Navy Foundation

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AGM Part I (Chaired by CPS)

New Agenda Points

Agenda I – SPARSH Database

1. **Updating Database in SPARSH.** Migration of pre-2016 retirees to SPARSH has commenced. Messages are being received from DESA/ NAVPEN with regard to non-availability of PAN numbers, Aadhaar number, phone number and emails of the pensioners. The pensioners are being advised to populate their details on SPARSH website. The aged pensioners are facing issues in accessing SPARSH, since they have not received any user ID or password. Pensioners are unable to update the details, view inadequacies of the website.
2. DOP being the record office for officers should be in possession of most of the details being sought from the officers. Similarly, CABS would have the details of the retired sailors. It is recommended that suitable agency DESA/ DOP/ NAVPEN be authorised to update these details. In case of non-availability of data with DOP, all Chapters can collect the required details from the pensioners and forward to the nominated agency, which can then populate the database.

Deliberations. It was brought out that the processing of pension claims, i.e. naval officers has been entrusted to DOP, post Jul 21 with introduction of SPARSH. This aspect was earlier handled by NAVPEN. Whereas the Service particulars of pre-21 pensioners are available with DOP/ OPF; details pertaining to Aadhar Card, PAN Card, Email ID, PPO No, Bank A/c, etc are not held by OPF. In addition, the SPARSH module is designed in such a way that DOP cannot initiate *suo moto* action, and can only respond to the request raised by the pensioner on SPARSH module. In case, the pensioners are facing difficulty in generating request on SPARSH module, they may approach the nearest SPARSH facilitation centre. The data available with PCDA(P) for migration onto SPARSH have been obtained from the pensioners Bank CPPCs, and are in many cases incomplete/ discrepant. The matter had previously been taken up repeatedly with CGDA & PCDA(P). Thus, SPARSH has been enabled with additional features, wherein an ESM can **update his Aadhaar Card details and Mobile No, without Logging into (Pre-Login)** his SPARSH Portal Account. Further, this issue of non-availability of PAN Card, Aadhaar Card, Mobile Number and Email ID is unique to veteran pensioners, whose database available with Record Offices is incomplete/ discrepant in most cases, as Aadhar Card was introduced in 2010, and hence not updated. Thus, the onus of updating personal data on SPARSH lies with the ESM. Post updating, the same is validated by respective Record Offices. The members brought out various issues wrt migration, and were assured by Cmde (P&A) that *I/N* is aware of the

issues being discussed, and proactive steps are being taken to resolve these issues.

Decision. The Vice President, NF directed that the point be closed.

Agenda II – Online Procedure for Purchase of Cars through CSD

3. **Issue.** The online procedure for purchase of cars through CSD has become difficult that it takes many days and numerous attempts to get the application uploaded and approved. It is recommended that the procedure be simplified to make it user friendly. A facility should also be provisioned to upload the documents through the local CSDs, especially for the benefit of elderly veterans, widows, and others, who are not very familiar with online procedures.

Deliberations. Member Secretary, INCCB brought out that the process of online purchase is quite simple, and not as difficult, as being brought out. He mentioned that this issue was taken up with appropriate authorities, prior implementation, but, it was turned down. It was directed to go online, with similar procedure for serving and retired personnel. He further briefed the gathering that due to a policy requirement, the CSD website is down from 27th of every month to 2nd of next month.

Decision. The Vice President directed that the point be closed.

Agenda III – Provision of Associate Membership for all Officers Institutes and Messes on Pan-India Basis

4. **Issue.** It is suggested that veteran officers' membership of all Officers Institutes/ Messes of the IN, on a pan-India basis, based on their membership of one of the Institutes/ Messes be considered for approval, just as the Wellington Gymkhana Club provides associate membership (to its members) for most Services Clubs in the country.

Deliberations. At present, all retired officers, irrespective of NOI membership are allowed to use the facilities of the nearest Naval Officers' Institute (NOI) by using a Cash Card. This process is found to be satisfactory as the card is pre-paid, and bill is settled immediately. Even in the case of Wellington Gymkhana Club, associate members open a cash card to use the facilities in associated clubs, and a similar process is being followed in all the NOIs. Even, the room bookings are undertaken without seeking any associate membership details. Members brought out that this framework is acceptable, and there are no issues in the present system.

Decision. The Vice President, NF directed that the point be closed.

Agenda IV – Service Medals

5. **Issue.** Several Pensioners are yet to receive their Service Medals, viz., 20 and 30 years Long Service Medals, etc. despite reminders being sent to IHQ MoD(N)/ DPS. An efficient mechanism for distribution of these medals needs to be evolved by IHQ MoD(N)/ DPS.

Deliberations. Service Medals up to Dec 19 for *I/N ESM* have already been distributed. Service Medals for the period 2020-21 have been procured and are being engraved. The medals will be despatched on receipt post engraving. A case for procurement of 28,640 medals for the year 2022-23 is under progress. Individuals not in receipt of medals are requested to forward their details to DESA.

Decision. The Vice President, NF directed that the point be closed.

Agenda V – Helpdesk at Kharghar

6. **Issue.** Till date, no helpdesk has been set up in JVV, Kharghar by ZSWO, Raigad quoting shortage of manpower. Due to this, many ESM in Kharghar have not been able to register with ZSB & make their Identity cards. Officials of ZSB, Raigad were requested to come every Sunday to JVV Kharghar, where all ESM of Navi Mumbai can come and register with ZSB. JVV Kharghar has offered to provide a room and refreshments on every Sunday to ZSB Officials. This procedure needs to be continued till a permanent ZSWO is sanctioned for Navi Mumbai, which can only happen once the strength of registered ESM in Navi Mumbai increases to the required numbers.

Deliberations. The point was earlier discussed during the 29th AGM and the proposal was accepted in principle. However, KSB has indicated that the current manpower state of *Zila Sainik Office* at Raigad is only about 40% of the authorised strength. A recruitment drive is planned to be held shortly to improve manpower state of DSW/ ZSWO in Maharashtra. Once manpower status improves, which is likely to happen by 15 Aug 2023, monthly visit at JVV Kharghar will be organised. President, NF Mumbai Chapter brought out that this activity was happening prior to COVID and ZSWO Raigad used to set up a helpdesk at Navi Mumbai. However, this was discontinued during COVID and has not resumed. KSB rep reiterated that there was a shortage of manpower and assured that this activity would recommence, post recruitment of requisite staff.

Decision. The Vice President, NF directed that the point be monitored by HQWNC/ CSO(P&A).

Agenda VI – Income Tax on NF Chapters Accounts/ Interest

7. **Issue.** Most of the NF Chapters have opened accounts in banks using the PAN Card of NF. The Chapters have also been sending Audited Balance Sheets to IHQ MoD(N) every year. IHQ MoD(N) may arrange to collect the TDS Certificates from NF Chapters, and file income tax return collectively on behalf of NF Chapters.

Deliberations. In accordance with the IT regulations, in case of Saving Accounts, only the signatory of the PAN Card is authorised to carry out financial transactions for all accounts linked to that PAN Card. If IHQ MoD(N) has to file consolidated ITR for all Chapters, the Chapters will not be able to authorise any transactions, and the same would have to be done centrally from IHQ MoD(N). Thus, the corpus held with the Chapters will have to be returned to IHQ MoD(N), and money transferred as per actuals. During the 28th AGM, as part of Agenda Points, the Chapters had been requested to apply for individual PAN Cards. Few members brought out that their Chapters have individual PAN cards, and the procedure to apply for the same is simple. Members also brought out that bank accounts can be operated without PAN cards under the 'Jan Dhan Yojna'. Cmde (NPF), Treasurer NF clarified the issue and brought out that PAN card is a must for operating individual account.

Decision. The Vice President, NF directed all Chapters to be in possession of independent PAN Card, and closed the point.

Agenda VII – Review of Nomenclature

8. **Issue.** NF Delhi Chapter has raised the question: 'Should NF branches be called Chapters or Charters'??

Deliberations. NF is a **Society** registered with the Registrar of Societies, since 1988. The Memorandum of Association (MoA) has been approved by the Registrar of Societies. The term '**Chapter**' is iaw the MoA of NF. Oxford Dictionary defines both words as follows: -

- Charter.**
1. A written grant by a sovereign or legislature, by which a body such as a university is created or its rights and privileges defined.
 2. A written constitution or description of an organisations function.
 3. (In the UK) a written statement of rights of a specified group of people.
 4. The hiring of an aircraft, ship or motor vehicle.

- Chapter.**
1. A main division of a book. An Act of Parliament numbered as part of a session's proceedings.

2. A distinctive period in history or in a person's life.
3. The governing body of a cathedral or other religious community or of a Knightly order.
4. **A local branch of a society.**

From the above definitions, it is clear that '**Chapter**' is more apt to address the local branches of the Society ie NF. Further, all Chapters were sent a hard copy by post, as well as the soft copy over e-mail, of the draft copy of MoA prior to the 23rd AGM of NF held on 28 Sep 14. During the 23rd AGM of NF, the draft MoA was accepted unanimously by all the Chapters and the MoA amended accordingly following due process. The issue was also discussed in the NF groups, wherein majority of the office bearers accepted and agreed to the word 'Chapter' rather than 'Charter',

Decision. The Vice President, NF directed that the term 'Chapter' will be retained, as it has been accepted by majority of the members, and closed the point.

AGM Part II (Chaired by the CNS)

Agenda VIII – Pension for EC/ SSC War Veterans

1. **Issue.** Lt T Kalyanpur (01318 W) (Retd), a veteran of the 1971 war has brought out that a letter had been written to the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, Shri Rajnath Singh by a Member of Parliament (MP) in Feb 22, requesting the Hon'ble RM to take up a case for pension of war veterans. Hon'ble RM had replied to the MP that the matter will be discussed in the Parliament Finance Committee for further action, as applicable. The officer has requested if the CNS could please take up the matter with the Hon'ble RM to get the case for grant of pension to war veterans approved/ implemented.

Deliberations. The members were informed that pension and other pensionary benefits as applicable to EC & SSC officers, who have rendered service during the 1965 & 1971 wars under the '*Yudh Samman Yojna*' has been taken up by Tri-Services Pay Staff (TRIPAS), and the case is *presently under deliberation at MoD*.

Decision. The President, NF directed that the point be closed.

Agenda IX – Grant from INBA

2. **Issue.** Army Officers who complete 75 yrs of age are entitled to ₹50,000/- Platinum Jubilee grant from Army Officers Benevolent Fund (AOBF). At present, only a Memento is given to Naval Officers by IHQMoD (N), when they attain the age of 80 years. Consideration may be given for a similar grant to the naval officers, on attaining the age of 75 years.

Deliberations. The Octogenarian grant in the IN was started in the year 1998 and remained in force till Apr 2000. A decision was taken in INBA Council meeting on 19 Apr 2000 to terminate it. During the 23rd AGM of NF held on 28 Sep 14, based on the inputs of veterans, it was deliberated that pensioners and non-pensioners veterans who attain the age of 80 years from 01 Jul 15 onwards may be presented with a Silver Salver (06-inch diameter) on behalf of the CNS (officers dismissed from Service would not be eligible). However, based on deliberations on file at IHQ MoD(N), a memento instead of Silver Salver, for retired officers crossing the age of 80 years was approved. The scope was further expanded in 2021 to include Nonagenarians and Centenarians. With regard to Platinum Jubilee Grant from AOBF on attaining the age of 75 years, the AOBF has discontinued the grant since 2018. President, NF stated that in addition to gifting mementos on attaining 100 years of age, CNS interacts over VC with the ESM and felicitates him with a grant of ₹51,000.00.

Decision. The President directed that the point be closed.

STATEMENT ON SPARSH BY RADM PRADEEP JOSHI (RETD) – MEMBER NFDC

1. SPARSH as a system is fine like any other web-based system. However, the success of such a system requires a great deal of work on the feedback received and acting on it with honesty.
2. In this case, the CGDA is the headmaster and PCDA (Pension), Prayagraj the implementer. However, the accountability for responding in time and fine-tuning the system in a transparent and prompt manner is missing in this case. Veterans are asked to operate through web-based systems without being entirely conversant with no feedback mechanism has led to a great deal of apprehension and heart burn! NAVPEN trying to assure veterans, without having any power/ authority to do the needful, does not help. **So, what do we need to do?**
3. I propose we have an Overseeing Team, comprising representatives of Veterans, ESW and CGDA need to be there. This team can examine the efficacy of the system and its ability to address the challenges faced in a stipulated time frame. Secretary ESW can head this Committee as a major stakeholder. When I was LOIC NAVPAY, I used to take it upon myself to ensure that NPO responds to every Customer in a reasonable time frame. It kept us on our toes, and we were forced to innovate continuously to address the challenges thrown at us. I find that kind of ownership is essential for the top leadership. On their own, IDAS officers take no responsibility as a norm, as far as Customer Service is concerned. SPARSH is only a Customer Service providing system.

Summing Up – Rear Admiral Sushil Ramsay (Retd)

4. NFDC entirely endorse the views of one of our eminent members. A very vast majority of Veterans are unhappy with SPARSH in its form and structure, which is not Customer-friendly at all. As opposed to SPARSH the existing system of Pension Disbursal System through Banks is extremely sympathetic, discerning and helpful to Veterans and Family Pensioners. Pensioners and Family Pensioners are dealt with full courtesy and problems are solved sitting across the table in no time, be that filing of Life Certificates, Pension payment anomalies, etc.
5. Removal of the option to remain with the Legacy System is a regressive step. Data migration to SPARSH without verifying and validating Pensioners and Family Pensioners data is seen as **Coercive Migration to SPARSH**.
6. Therefore, we strongly recommend that **Legacy System for the Pensioners and Family should be our mission with PCDA (Navy) as Pension Sanctioning Authority and authorized Banks in the Public and Private Sectors should be designated as Defence Pension Disbursing Agencies.**