

Quarterdeck

NAVY FOUNDATION MAGAZINE 2020

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Production

Pinakee Office Solutions

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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in Quarterdeck Magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of IHQ MoD (Navy), Navy Foundation or the Editor.

From the Editor's Desk

Quarterdeck is a tradition, a family heirloom which the naval fraternity treasures and has a duty to nurture. In its 33 years of existence, it has come to represent quality and excellence embellished by in-house talent pool of writers and cartoonists. Every year, not just the veteran community but the serving personnel too, look forward to it. It has always been a wonderful mix of chronicles, first-person accounts, lore and anecdotes that make it a rich repository of archival information. For someone who has been a regular reader of the periodical and a frequent contributor herself, it is a privilege to be on the other side of the pages. Though I have been in the field of Print Journalism for more than two decades, the responsibility of bringing out a magazine of this nature is a first. Given that it has seen some senior stalwarts as editors in the past, I have big shoes to fill! It's an honour I shall cherish.

The 2020 Edition is a blend of both – the contemporary and the illustrious legacy of Navy's many institutions. The Indian Navy is a rapidly growing force that has come a long way since independence. The lead article highlights this transformation while rightfully acknowledging the contribution of the veterans in making it what it is today. Year 2019 also saw platinum jubilees of INS Shivaji, INS Venduruthy and Naval Armament Depot, Visakhapatnam, even as it marked the golden jubilee of Indian Naval Academy. Through assorted articles you will get a sneak peek into what these milestones meant for the navy and its personnel.

Naval way of life is unique and it is the desire of every retiree that he continues to experience the same lifestyle and environment outside the Service. The 'Living and Lifestyle' section, one of the proposed themes, puts together an eclectic bunch of essays by serving and veteran officers - some contributed, some 'commissioned'.

'Veteran Speak' brings in nostalgia and reminiscences revealing interesting dimensions of naval life and vocation. Since Quarterdeck largely relies on contributions, the articles while being varied in content, context or events, tend to be asymmetric. As the number of veterans increase and sharing of news and views gets easier, thanks to social media, there is a deluge of contributions. The Editor, therefore, has an unenviable task of ensuring an even spread, having heterogeneity of approach and including a wide range of articles in a limited space. Thus, it is possible that some readers may find the palette of features published uneven in comparison to something that might have been left out. You'll appreciate that, in a magazine of this nature, it is inevitable. But suggestions and constructive feedback are welcome and we look forward to your letters and comments.

The year gone by saw the bell toll for many luminaries – Admiral Sushil Kumar, Vice Admiral SP Govil, Captain MNR Samant – Maha Vir Chakra of 1971 War, Cdr Noel Kelman – the hero of the Goa liberation operation and few others; our tribute pages celebrate their lives and deeds.

There is more to round off a rich bill of fare. Hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did putting it together.

Padmaja Parulkar-Kesnur

CHANGE OF COMMAND



Admiral Karambir Singh PVSM AVSM ADC took over as Chief of the Naval Staff from Admiral Sunil Lanba PVSM, AVSM, ADC on 31 May 2019.

INTERVIEW WITH CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF



All hands on the Quarterdeck join together in congratulating you on assuming the helm of the Indian Navy. For the benefit of the veterans, we would appreciate a brief introductory message from you.

It is indeed a singular honour for me to have got the opportunity to take over the helm of our very fine service.

There is growing recognition that the seas are central to India's well-being and prosperity. India's target to emerge as a \$5 trillion economy by 2024 is closely linked to commerce and trade plying through the seas. In this dynamic seascape, the Indian Navy has a prominent role in ensuring an enabling environment that supports nation-building and progress. Security and stability of the maritime domain is crucial to unhindered flow of maritime trade. As the primary manifestation of India's maritime power, our

endeavour remains to rapidly translate opportunities into outcomes, while offering efficient and effective response options across the entire gamut of threats and challenges.

The success and growth of the Indian Navy has been possible due to the foresight and dedication, of our veterans and my predecessors, from whom we have inherited this fine Navy. It was their vision, ingenuity, courage and will to surmount the most challenging circumstances, that the Indian Navy can today pride itself on being a multifarious networked force, fully capable of not only safeguarding and promoting India's security and national interests in the maritime domain, but also enhancing security in our areas of maritime interest. On behalf of the Navy and our nation, I convey sincere gratitude to our veterans for their leadership and contributions whilst in service, and for their unwavering support and guidance after having swallowed the anchor.

What are the influences which made you choose a naval career, and make you the person, you are?

I am a second-generation Armed Force Officer. My father served in the Indian Air Force and both, my brother and I, joined the Army and Navy, respectively.

My father was a strong influence on me. While I was growing up, he stood by strong principles of honesty, fair play and courage of conviction. This had a very strong impact on me and inspired me to join the Armed Forces. I always had a fascination for the sea; perhaps my 'sun-sign' (Scorpio - a water sign) lured me to the seas. I was thrilled by the adventures and saga of the seas. Navy was accordingly always my first choice while joining NDA.

Later, I joined the flying branch in the Navy and managed to have the best of both the worlds – flying and sailing.

Being an Air Force progeny, please share some memories of growing up, your formative years, schooling etc.?

Life as an Air Force kid was exciting and full of wonderful experiences. My father's frequent transfers to various stations, accustomed us to relocate and adapt to new environments in a short span of time.

I started my schooling in Moscow where my father was posted as the Deputy Air Attaché. My further studies were at Air Force Bal Bharti School at New Delhi. I eventually finished my schooling from Barnes School, Deolali.

Please share with us your vision of the growth and development of our Navy and Indian Navy's growing eminence as an instrument of state policy.

Given the evolving geo-economic and geo-strategic scenario, Indian Navy's roles and responsibilities have expanded significantly over the years. Whereas preventing war and conflict remain our *raison d'être*, we remain committed to be a 'Navy' for

'National Development'. Be it providing a secure environment for trade and commerce to prosper, or shaping the dynamics to ensure a Free, Open & Inclusive region, the Navy remains at the forefront of the national effort to safeguard our interests. Through large scale Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations like Op *Sukoon* and Op *Rahat*, we have demonstrated resolve to bring our citizens to safety, even from war-zones/ contested areas.

We have also been steadfast in our commitment towards curbing the menace of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden since 2008. In addition to the anti-piracy deployment, Indian Navy was also one of the first maritime forces to respond to the security situation in the Gulf region last year. Ever since, we have maintained presence, as part of Op *Sankalp*, demonstrating our intent to ensure security far from Indian shores, while providing reassurance to our merchantmen.

Also considering the intertwined transnational nature of security threats and challenges in the maritime domain, the Indian Navy has prioritised a cooperative approach to meet some of attendant security priorities. Our capacity building and capability enhancement initiatives cover an array of activities, including defence exports maritime exercises, training, technical support, information sharing and hydrographic cooperation. The tempo of our overseas deployments and maritime exercises is at an all-time high with close to 30 exercises with friendly, foreign countries being conducted last year. Another visible demonstration of our commitment towards achieving collective maritime security in the IOR has been the commissioning of Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC – IOR), which would significantly enhance Maritime Domain Awareness in the IOR.

Today, the Indian Navy forms an integral element of India's foreign policy. Furthering our national principles and priorities of a peaceful and stable neighbourhood, the Indian Navy actively interacts with like-minded navies in the region and beyond, employing maritime security engagements as a cornerstone of the country's foreign policy initiatives.

With the increasing maritime security challenge

in our country's area of interest, how would you like to describe the capabilities of the Indian Navy as the preferred maritime security provider of the region?

As we approach the third decade of the 21st century, the attention of the world is focused on the Indian Ocean Region, where our Navy is increasingly seen as a 'preferred maritime security partner'. The maritime dimension of India's security and its importance to national development and economic prosperity is well recognised today and has been articulated at the highest levels by our leadership. Accordingly, our maritime security strategy is aimed at providing a maritime environment that is free from all forms of traditional and non-traditional threats.

As the principal manifestation of India's maritime power, the Indian Navy plays a central role in safeguarding and promoting the nation's security and national interests in the maritime domain. In keeping with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of SAGAR, Neighbourhood First, and Act East Policies, the Navy is also playing a central role in strengthening and enhancing maritime security in the region.

As regards our capability development programme, the Navy's plans are based on the twin pillars of Indigenisation and Self-Reliance. These plans are closely aligned to the 'Make in India' initiative so as to harness the immense potential of our indigenous resources, and play a more significant role in the nation building efforts of the Government of India. Our commitment to this pursuit is the fact that out of the 50 ships and submarines, currently under construction, 48 are being built in Indian shipyards.

At the same time, our shore infrastructure across mainland and island territories is also receiving focus. Therefore, in the coming years, the Navy

remains well poised for significant capability upgrade, both, on the operational as well as on the maintenance and support front.

What message would you like to convey to the veterans through the medium of this annual Navy Foundation magazine?

At the outset, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to our veterans for their leadership and contributions whilst in service, and for their unswerving support and guidance even after swallowing the anchor. I also take this opportunity to wish all our veterans good health, happiness and success in every endeavour.

It is my firm belief that growing stature of the Indian Navy as the region's foremost maritime security force, is largely credited to the untiring initiatives of our veterans. The strong foundation, which they laid for the Service has enabled the Navy to emerge as a truly multi-dimensional force, with state-of-the-art platforms to cover the entire spectrum of maritime operations. As I see it, our veterans continue to be our 'compass', helping us to be 'on-course' at all times. Their wisdom and course-corrections are always a source of guidance and encouragement for us.

I would like to assure the veterans that the Navy is fully committed towards ensuring their well-being and welfare. Hanging up the uniform does not sever a veteran's relationship with the Services. This bond is eternal. I request you all to never hesitate in approaching the Services - be it a problem, a suggestion, a recommendation or even a course correction. We will listen with respect and sincerity. I would be more than glad to receive valuable feedback and suggestions from our veterans, to further enhance our support to the community.

TRANSFORMATION OF INDIAN NAVY - TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING AND TRADITION

A TRIBUTE TO VETERANS



The third decade of the second millennium was ushered in on the New Year's Day of 2020. The year 2020, somehow, has a positive ring about it, for several reasons. Firstly, when pronounced as 'Twenty Twenty' it gives a sense of balance and control, and that indicates all is fine around us. It also rhymes with the shortest format of international cricket, which often provides a 'result' and wholesome entertainment to the viewers. More importantly, on 26 January 2020, India will complete seven decades as a Republic; which also means that the 'Indian Navy' as an entity would have been in existence for 70 years, although it has a long history prior to that which has been chronicled elsewhere.

Thus, Indian Navy is still a growing service charting its course whilst being fully aware about where it wants to reach. From our modest beginnings, it is fascinating to see where we have reached to become a multi-dimensional force capable of operating in any part of the globe. The professional competence of its personnel and capability of the navy as a 'Force for Good' has been acknowledged worldwide; it has also added to the overall goodwill for the country and

enhanced its image amongst the comity of nations.

This hasn't happened overnight and it hasn't happened on its own! A large number of officers, men and defence civilian workforce worked tirelessly and with a clear vision to ensure that our navy remains on track to achieve capabilities that are required to safeguard the maritime interests of the country. My attempt in this piece, therefore, is to acknowledge the visionary leadership and perseverance of many that enabled the navy to maintain its 'course to steer'. This is a tribute to our predecessors and veterans who have facilitated the growth of the Navy in these 70 years. The challenge for us, the serving fraternity, is to make it the navy that our nation deserves. My endeavour is to present the growth of our navy during the last 35 years of my service, through the three filters of technology, training and tradition.

1980s

Let me begin with the Indian Navy of mid-1980s. Only a decade plus earlier our navy had given an excellent account of herself in the 1971 War with Pakistan

largely due to the (newly acquired) missile capability, and the carrier air wing. Due to close relations with the then Soviet Union, the 1970s resulted in induction of many capable assets in all four domains - surface, sub-surface, air, and on land (MMCBs!). This continued through the 1980s by which time the Cold War was in its last phase (viewed in hind sight); no one was talking about the impending breaking up of the Soviet Block and, certainly, there was no existing Chinese threat from or at sea. In sum, 1980s was a decade of growth for the navy, with induction of SNFs, Godavari class (first ships with a CAAIO system), Viraat, Chakra (leased), acquisition/construction of submarines (both Russian and German), enhancement of air surveillance and air ASW (IL38, TU 42M, Kamov 25 & 28, Seaking 42 A, B & C), and demonstrated the extended reach of our navy.

Not without reason, the Time Magazine titled its cover of Asian edition (April 1989 issue) as “Super-power Rising: Propelled by an Arms buildup, India asserts its place on the world stage”. End 1980s were indeed halcyon days for the navy. That apart, we witnessed infusion of newer technologies. These included guided missiles, torpedoes, indigenous sonars and EW systems, multi-role helicopters (indeed force-multipliers), and the introduction to network centric operations. Readers will recall that this became the buzzword after the first Gulf War of 1990-91, when the United States introduced concepts such as ‘system of systems’ Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), and Network Centric Operations.

Along with technology, the navy also transformed its training. Some illustrative examples are - organisational structure, (beginning with making the SNC as the Training Command), training methodologies (the concept of Pre-Commissioning Training or PCTs, and On Job training or OJT) and manning philosophy (concept of fixed commission which had its merit, but could not be sustained). In my view, 1980s was a defining decade for naval training, forced by induction of state-of-the-art platforms and newer technologies. This brought in greater professionalism, elements of safety and security, and the need for the operators and maintainers of highly complex equipment to upgrade their skills. Arguably, the five SNF’s led the way, complemented by the three Godavari

class which themselves had some of the latest equipment/ capabilities.

This was also the decade when we took the seminal decision of building a world class naval academy for ab-initio training of all officer entries. After much deliberation within, many visits (by senior naval and MoD officials), and ‘persistent insistence’ by the Kerala Government, Ezhimala was selected as the site for the future Indian Naval Academy. The vision and hard work put in by many through the years, from land survey, land allotment, land acquisition, formulation of the Master plan, and construction of the academy, leading to its inauguration by the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in January 2009, reflects on their grit, determination and vision. But the end result has been well worth the effort and wait, wherein we have a world-class military training institution of which the navy and the nation can be proud of! We also started our quest to construct a modern harbour at Karwar (Project Seabird) in phases, and when completed in the next few years, would be the first ‘smart’ naval station.

Despite the influx of technologically complex infrastructure and consequent alignment of our training methodologies, the navy did not waiver from its traditions. Empowerment, delegation and mentoring continued to ensure that young officers were provided ample opportunities to hone their leadership skills. This composite exposure facilitated development of all-round personality of naval personnel which is highly critical in leadership positions.

The turn of the 1980s witnessed several cataclysmic events around the globe. The Cold War came to an end with consequent breaking up of USSR, reunification of Germany, and the supposed ‘End of History’ (courtesy Francis Fukuyama) with visions of a peaceful decade of 1990s, absence of inter-state conflicts/violence, and a unipolar world. We would soon realize how short-lived these hopes were!

1990s

The 1990s began with Iraq annexing Kuwait leading to the First Gulf War. This was followed by break-up of (and consequent violence in) a number of countries along religious and ethnic lines in Europe. The severe economic crisis in India in early 1990s had its

effect on a number of ongoing naval projects, which were delayed or deferred. In a sense, the high of 1980s seemed a distant dream qua the rather austere 1990s. Nonetheless, we continued to persist and plans were updated for eventual growth of the Service. We started inducting the indigenously constructed Delhi class multi-purpose destroyers in late 1990s and embodied the transition from a Buyer's Navy to a Builder's Navy. Successful construction of these ships paved the way for greater and more significant shipbuilding projects to follow in the next decade including the aircraft carrier (IAC-1). The Navy played its part well in the Kargil war of 1999. Towards the end of 1990s, we began our first experiments in using digital communication at sea. Hardly anyone was aware about the magnitude of Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Information, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4I2SR) technologies and concepts about to explode in the new Millennium.

Due to economic slowdown, the navy was forced to do with what was available. This brought more focus on important aspects of damage control and firefighting, NBC issues (which became a clear and present danger), and use of simulators to the extent feasible. It also brought in fiscal discipline in our system. It is to the credit of our organisation that the navy was the first service to be given the delegated financial powers (also called 'Inherent Powers'.) when the New Management Strategy (NMS) was introduced as a concept for the Armed forces.

2000s

We always prided ourselves in being a Blue Water Navy, and ships occasionally made port calls in foreign waters. However, seen from the perspective of other countries, the Indian Navy was still a regional force, limited in operational reach and, more importantly, strategic vision (Op Cactus of 1988, notwithstanding). It was highly amusing (but illustrative) to be quizzed by a foreign man-of-war (extra-regional force deployed after '9/11') in late 2001, whilst the Western Fleet (I was the FCO) was operating off the Gulf of Oman, as to "what are you doing 700 nm from your coast?" Obviously, the Fleet Commander took offence to this unfriendly query and promptly directed our response as "we are operating in our area of operations. What are you doing 7000 nm

away from your shores?" There was total silence on the other end, and the message was conveyed clearly and unambiguously. This came in handy during our deployment for 'Op Parakram', later in the year. Our navy started participating in and deploying our units in various 'classical roles' more overtly and explicitly in the 2000s. Some of these include the post-December 2004 Tsunami deployment, Op Sukoon (2006) to evacuate Indian and foreign nationals from war-torn Lebanon, and anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden since 2008. Our units also started operating for longer durations away from the base ports - both in the Pacific as well as the Atlantic oceans. This was partially facilitated by the quantum jump in communications that also augmented security through use of digital equipment with crypto cards.

The navy also conducted its first International Fleet Review (IFR) in February 2001 at Mumbai which was appreciated globally and acknowledged by the citizens of Mumbai, in particular, and the nation, in general. This decade facilitated progress of many stalled projects and we inducted a large number of platforms, got newer capabilities (indigenous Sonar, EW and CMS systems), augmented our NBCD training facilities, and focussed on rear-area/perimeter security of our bases. Our training philosophies and methodologies gained much through enhanced interaction with foreign and advanced navies. The FOST organisation matured to the desired level with additional focus on safety, accountability and training.

'26/11' was a grim reminder, especially to our countrymen, about the threat from the sea and the need for augmented coastal and maritime security. The navy was rightfully made responsible for the overall maritime security of the country including offshore security and coastal security. We also maintained our tradition of cooperative working and played a leading role in the establishment of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), a grouping of 24-member (and 8 observers) navies of IOR.

During the decade, the navy continued its tradition of being a silent service and focused on augmenting its capabilities including in the space and cyber domains. Remember, this decade witnessed the maximum growth in the field of ICT and the effects

were felt loud and clear at sea too. It was a huge change graduating to voiceless communication, both ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore, which was a huge enhancement in effectiveness and efficiency of communicators! (The good old ANSB lost its importance and centrality in intra-fleet communication). We continued to focus on cutting down on infructuous processes and procedures and concentrated on core functions of the service. I would stick my neck out and say that this was probably the defining decade for the Service, as both our countrymen (to some extent) and the world, at large, took notice of the capability and professional competence of Indian Navy. Further, the increasing presence of extra-regional forces in the IOR necessitated enhancement of our surveillance and maritime domain awareness capabilities.

2010 onwards

The second decade of the 21st Century witnessed significant capability enhancement [Vikramaditya, Kolkata class with MRSAMs, Shivalik Class, P8I, Rukmani (GSAT 7) etc.] and growth of our navy. We also commenced construction of new submarines under P75 at MDL. There was an acceptance of the Indian Navy as the 'Net Security Provider' in the region and as an enabling instrument for a large number of GoI initiatives such as SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and Look East Policy. In this decade, our units increased their reach and sustenance, and their ability to operate away from base ports for longer duration at extended ranges. Improvement in communications (courtesy Rukmani) and Op logistics support facilitated this endeavour significantly. The conduct of second IFR off Visakhapatnam in February 2016, despite the destruction caused by super cyclone Hudhud in October 2014, both to the naval facilities, and to the city of Visakhapatnam, demonstrated our resolve to

rise from tough situations.

As we approached the end of this decade, we introduced two significant policy initiatives that will augment core functions of our navy, viz. combat readiness and war fighting. These are the Maintenance-Training-Operations cycle that has institutionalised the progress of a ship from refit to becoming deployment/combat ready; and the Mission Based Deployment (MBD) concept where our units are deployed at various critical locations in our area of operation ready to respond to any eventuality.

Summing Up

It was a proud feeling for me, as Fleet Commander Eastern Fleet, when during various overseas deployments and bilateral exercises in 2018-19, foreign navy personnel provided highly positive feedback about the professional competence and blue water capability of our navy. As a midshipman on INS Rajput in 1985, if I were to crystal gaze the contour and shape of our navy in 2020, it would have been difficult for me to visualize anything close to what we are today. Obviously, there were men of vision and honour who were shaping the destiny of the silent service in these last three-and-a-half decades. I have been fortunate and honoured to have served under and been shipmates with many of them. It is courtesy them (most are veterans now) that we have become a world-class navy. I want to say a big 'Thank you' to them. I am certain that your legacy will continue and your efforts will take our navy to greater heights as we continue on our trajectory to be 'Combat ready, Credible, and Cohesive' Navy that is ready to meet the challenges in the maritime domain - today and tomorrow.

Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi AVSM NM, an alumnus of NDA Khadakwasla, was commissioned in the Navy on 1 July 1985. A Communication and Electronic Warfare specialist, he has served on various frontline warships of the Navy. He has commanded IN Ships Vinash, Kirch and Trishul. He is a graduate of DSSC, Wellington and US NWC, Newport, Rhode Island. He was FOCEF from 15 January 2018 to 30 March 2019. He is presently Commandant, Indian Naval Academy.

INS SHIVAJI TURNS 75



The role of INS Shivaji in handling the 'move' factor in 'float, move and fight' matrix for the Indian Navy is undeniable. Through customised training on engineering aspects for all officers, and most sailors, across the cadres, for seven and a half decades, this establishment has directly or indirectly ensured that the propellers are kept churning for our 'men of war' to reach the right coordinates at the right time to deliver the required payload. However, this seemingly straightforward mandate has required this alma mater of naval engineers to constantly evolve, upgrade, adopt, adapt and exert.

Thirty-six Commanding Officers and respective commissions have toiled hard to get INS Shivaji to its present status of prominence as a Category 'A' Premier Training Establishment of the IN and a Marine Engineering Training institute of international repute. Needless to say, that these commissions include scores of Oi/Cs, ExOs and HsOD, hundreds of officers and thousands of senior sailors, trainee officers, sailors, defence civilians, contractors, shop-owners, vendors, contract workers and several others. Jubilees, by design, provide us with such periodic opportunities to remember our predeces-

sors, trace our journeys and chart the course to steer.

Website Launched

INS Shivaji entered her 75th year on 15 February 2019. The then Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sunil Lanba kicked off the celebrations by releasing the platinum jubilee logo and the theme, 'Propelling the Indian Navy since 1945'. On this special occasion, a dynamic website was launched. This website, while providing a peek into Shivaji's Infrastructure and Training, also highlights aspects like flora, fauna,



NWWA activities and, of course, the platinum jubilee related events. One of the primary reasons of hosting a dedicated website on the Internet was to institute an easy and contemporary mechanism for the veterans and alumni to connect with INS Shivaji. The website can be accessed at: <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/insshivaji>.

Reaching Out: On Wheels

With an intention of reaching out to the nation's youth as well as the personnel from the Navy and sister services, a Motor Car Expedition, 'Propellers and Wheels: Steering to Shape the Future' was flagged off on 26 March. The expedition, spanning 45 days, covered a distance of about 12,000 kms across the length and breadth of the country. The expedition comprised four legs – Lonavla to New Delhi, New Delhi to Visakhapatnam, Visakhapatnam to Kochi and from Kochi, back to Lonavla. Words can do no justice to the rich experiences, breathtaking scenes, heightened emotions and candid interactions witnessed during the expedition.

NBCD Seminar

A few days later, the Station hosted the NBCD Seminar on 'Preparedness: Course to Steer', on 20 - 21 May, 2019. The seminar was chaired by Rear Admiral PK Bahl, VSM, CSO Training, SNC. The event was attended by 33 delegates with a healthy representation from the three Armed Forces, reputed Government agencies like BARC and the civil industry. A total of 13 papers were presented. A 20-stall exhibition was also organised as a part of this event, which showcased the latest equipment in



the domain of NBC, Fire Fighting and Damage Control.



Distinguished Chair for Centre of Excellence (ME)

In order to benefit from the rich experience of our predecessors in a variety of domains, a mechanism to institutionalise mentorship for the development of Shivaji in general and, the relatively nascent, Centre of Excellence (Marine Engineering) in particular, was envisaged by instituting the position of 'Distinguished Chair'. VAdm IC Rao (Retd) was appointed as the maiden Distinguished Chair on 27 May 2019 in the presence of Chief of Materiel and esteemed veteran senior officers of the Engineering Branch.

The charter of the Distinguished Chair is quite comprehensive and includes development of conceptual aspects such as critical thinking, analytical ability, strategic vision and proficiency among Marine Engineers. It also includes overtures into the industry and academia to enable absorption of latest technology and facilitate research activities through IITs, with focus on application potential in the IN. The Chair's expertise would also be utilised to fine tune and improve the training curricula of various courses being conducted at Shivaji.

Alumni Meet

This two-day event (30 November - 1 December 2019) was meant to be a trip down memory lane for the esteemed alumni. Under the stewardship of the Chief Patron, COM, the base played host to a large



number of veterans who visited. This special week-end in Shivaji saw a host of activities such as organised visits, a photo and painting exhibition, an audio-visual display at the 'Jubilee Pavilion' and a cultural program. Perhaps, the most vital take-away afforded to us 'youngsters' by this event was interaction with the veterans and delving into their vast and enriching experience and wisdom.

The Best is Yet to Come

President's Colour: On the occasion of her 75th anniversary, Shivaji is to be awarded the prestigious 'President's Colour'. This beautiful naval station is

Cdr Shashwat Srivastava is an alumnus of the 103rd NDA and 93rd BEC courses and was commissioned on 1 January 2004. He is presently serving as the Training Commander, PCT at INS Shivaji.

gearing up to host the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces in February 2020.

International Engineers Seminar and Tech-Expo - INEST-INDIA 2020: The INEST-India 2020, themed 'Futuristic Technologies in Naval Engineering-Challenges of Induction, Training and Maintenance', will be held at Shivaji on the 12-13 March 2020. The event would see international uniformed and civilian experts in the domain of Marine Engineering presenting papers and exchanging ideas. An event of this magnitude has not been conducted in recent times.

Shivaji is unique in more ways than one. This is the only military base which was named by the British after an arch foe, given the latter's exemplary military leadership. INS Shivaji, both consciously and otherwise, continues to draw inspiration from this great Indian legend. This base, through its geographical blessedness, incessant monsoons, picturesque topography and intellectual rigour (footfall of over 8000 trainees annually) imprints is treasured by all. It is undoubtedly one the prized possessions of the IN that has reached a major milestone.



Capt Anshuman Chatterjee (Retd)

SHIVAJI THROUGH JUBILEES

INS Shivaji celebrated her silver jubilee on 15 February 1970. The Hon'ble Defence Minister Sardar Swaran Singh was the Chief Guest and Captain Rajinder Tandon, commissioned in 1941, was the Commanding Officer. A ceremonial parade and *Bada Khana* marked the occasion, but visitors were few. The golden jubilee in 1995 was a grand affair with the Governor of Maharashtra, Mr PC Alexander as the Chief Guest. The highlight was the historic sea battle between the Maratha Navy and the British garrison, enacted by Shri Purandare's famed theatre group from Pune. The strength of the veterans' group had increased in the intervening years and the guests included a host of former COs, Directors of Marine Engineering, Flag Officers and Chiefs of Materiel—all staying in the newly built cadets' quarters. The diamond jubilee in 2005 was celebrated with pomp too, but the best was held over for the stupendous list of alumni activities for the platinum jubilee celebrations which commenced from March 2019 and will culminate with the presentation of the President's Colours to INS Shivaji on 15 February 2020. There can be no greater honour for a naval establishment.

Over the years, Shivaji has grown from the original MTE (Mechanical Training Establishment) for artificers and stokers, to a Naval College of Engineering, a virtual academy for naval technical cadets and subsequently to a Centre of Excellence for Marine Engineering. All these developments, which have evolved over 75 years, pale before the grandeur of Duke's Nose, Tiger's Leap, Lion Point and Korigad Fort which bring an aura of permanence, and humility to all those who serve on this small plateau between Khandala and Lonavla.

The platinum jubilee year witnessed the institution of a "Distinguished Chair" for Marine Engineering at the Centre of Excellence at INS Shivaji. This became an opportunity for veterans, spanning 25 years of post-retirement experience, to be recruited back into the naval fold, contributing towards development of engineering in the Navy. The outcome was a workshop on 16 November where leading practitioners discussed nano technology, composites, 3D printing and remote sensors for machinery parameters in warships.

My generation had the fortune of being able to celebrate jubilees marking completion of 25, 50, 60 and 75 years of the glorious achievements of INS Shivaji. The centenary celebrations will belong to the next generation.

Vice Admiral IC Rao (Retd), 7th Course NDA, served as Engineer Officer of IN Ships Cauvery, Trishul and Vikrant and CO INS Shivaji. He retired as CoM in 1993. He is currently appointed as 'Distinguished Chair' at Centre of Excellence (Marine Engineering) at INS Shivaji. For the last 5 years, he has been working as an activist, striving to promote the redevelopment of Mumbai's port lands. He is the founder President of APLI Mumbai, a citizens forum.



My Tryst With Shivaji

Just a few days back, my Commanding Officer, Cmde K. Srinivas placed a copy of Quarterdeck '95 on his table and urged me to write an article for the 2019 edition within the next week. Not that I haven't written in the past, I have, for the 2007 edition; but then, that was a long while ago and I remember writing leisurely during a visit to Bangalore having been deputed to witness 'Aero India - 2007'. I started leafing through the copy that the CO handed me and realised that my writings skills definitely do not hold a candle to the articles authored by some very distinguished senior officers. Quarterdeck '95, in a manner of speaking was dedicated to the 'Golden Jubilee of INS Shivaji'. Having received a personal copy from a veteran officer, my CO had realised that we hadn't done enough to feature the platinum jubilee in the forthcoming edition and hence the directive and the deadline of one week. So I finally got down to writing a non-technical article after long and this is where my thoughts led me to....

Well, there are some Engineer Officers who eat, breathe, and sleep INS Shivaji and, literally have Shivaji running in their veins. Not me! Though I trained here for close to six years from 1989-1995 (as part of Vth NEC and then MESC60.038) and was also on staff from January 2001 to June 2003. I used to always wonder as to what was so special about Shivaji that made these gentlemen feel the way they did. Well now I know, and it has finally dawned on me (after 27 years of commissioned service) as to what makes Shivaji so special.

As I put pen to paper, I began recounting my days as a cadet here, with nostalgia - the course

spirit that helped us to get through those difficult 'ragda' sessions; the sleep-deprived souls for whom an 'Applied Mechanics' or 'Engineering Graphics' class was bliss as it allowed for some deep meditation; the never-ending cross country runs and PT sessions; the joy of belting out some peppy numbers on stage (in the auditorium Menaka) by our band called the 'Fiddlers', quite famous in the early 90s (we had even tried our luck – with music and girls – at the 'Insynch', the annual fest of Fergusson College, Pune); the Intra-Command Sports Championships, so on and so forth. The stint at Shivaji ended with the graduation ceremony followed by the Specialisation Course. But while all this was happening, Shivaji was gradually undergoing a metamorphosis. Water supply was regular now with the second dam being in operation (an irony, earlier it would be pouring outside, but taps would run dry), the new wardroom had a large mess (which meant no more queuing up for lunch) and comfortable cabins, the new squash and badminton courts were a popular destination in the evenings.

My second tenure commencing January 2001 was focused on teaching, and building on the infrastructure of the fledgling 'Instrumentation and Controls' Wing. This, in a way, laid the foundation for the

ongoing transition of responsibility of Engineering Machinery Controls to the Engineering Department. As a 'family man', there were of course the harsh monsoons to deal with and 'Hyundai' had never prescribed maintenance for my new car. No other establishment or group of people has ever patronised the 'filament bulb' as we have. Incidentally, my

Cdr Shashwat Srivastava



A sight only seen in Shivaji

first car is of the same make, model and colour as of the protagonist in the very popular, recent Amazon Prime series – 'The Family Man'. A fine compact car, which sort of lends a soul to the story of the man who tries valiantly (sometimes, in vain) to maintain a balance between his job and his family.

Many years later, when our cadre controller at Naval Headquarters, Assistant Chief of Materiel (Dockyard & Refits) mentioned that he was appointing me as OiC CMET (Centre of Marine Engineering Technology) at INS Shivaji, primarily, to assist in seeing through the much-awaited platinum jubilee celebrations, I wouldn't say I was overjoyed, but by and by I started looking forward to it.

The platinum jubilee year has seen a whirlwind of events. It is while putting up a cultural show for the 'Curtain Raiser' that we interacted with some very talented and budding stage actors of Lonavla and Pune who put up a wonderful 25-minute play on Chhatrapati Shivaji's life, his creation of an effective fleet of Maratha ships and his victory over Mughal General Kartalab Khan's strong army. The Marine Engineering Specialisation Course Officers also put up an impressive skit on the growth of INS Shivaji since its commissioning and an energetic well-choreographed dance that could challenge the best in the field. It is during this association that I proudly conceived the phrase – 'He Inspires, We Deliver' and a banner was accordingly set up facing the entrance to the impressive venue.

The Commanding Officer took a liking to the phrase and one more banner was promptly put up in the wardroom for the next event in May 2019, viz, 'Institution of the Distinguished Chair' at the Centre of

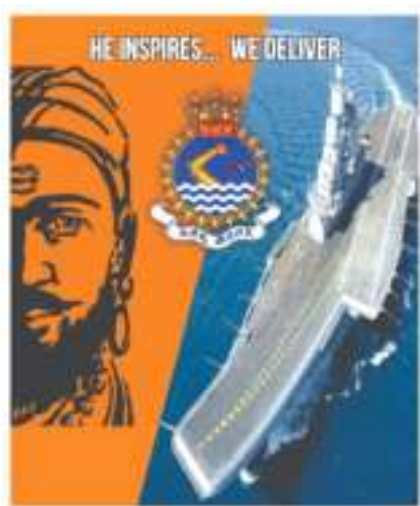
Excellence. Interacting with the veteran officers during this event, in itself has been a learning such that no history book or technical manual can bring about. It's been a lifetime opportunity that the present Shivaji family has been fortunate to have got and the smart and sensible ones have grabbed it with both hands. A team of talented staff and trainee officers are also working on the platinum jubilee coffee-table book and the Jubilee Pavilion. Every day, some new information or photograph is unearthed and reminds us as to how little we know.

The jubilee celebrations were not only about events, the base too earned accolades for some stupendous achievements during the platinum jubilee year – winning the coveted SNC instituted 'Gyan

Pravin', 'Best Green Practices', and 'Hindi Rajbhasha' Trophies (all in one year); inauguration of the Vikramaditya Training Complex and the ONEGA (Talwar Class Auxiliary System) Simulator by the Chief of Materiel; inauguration of the NBC Training Facility, 'Abhedya' by the Chief of Naval Staff and receiving two on-the-spot CNS commendations for operationalising a long defective Gas Turbine Generator, to name a few.

After all these years of association, it is only now I realise how rich the legacy of INS Shivaji is, and there is

so much yet to be discovered. My indoctrination into the select, but ever-growing breed of Engineer Officers who swear by Shivaji is now complete. I know for sure that Shivaji runs in my veins, arteries, throughout my being, as it forges ahead to assume its position as an 'institution of national importance' envisioned by the Governor of Bombay during her commissioning as HMIS Shivaji.



Cmde Arup Kumar Chakrabarti is an alumnus of the 5th Naval Engineering Course and was Officer-in-Charge, Centre of Marine Engineering Technology at INS Shivaji during the platinum jubilee year.

AN OCTOGENARIAN ENGINEER RECALLS

“Indian Navy is my Dharma and being a Marine Engineer is my Karma”, says the ever smiling octogenarian Cmde SK Bhalla. On the occasion of the platinum jubilee of INS Shivaji, it is my pleasure to bring to you the life and times of a Senior Naval Officer, who has devoted his heart and soul to our fine Indian Navy and its Marine Engineering Branch.



It was a rainy morning on 20 September (2019) when I, with my wife Meena, met Cmde Bhalla at his Andheri residence where he stays alone. First, he showed us his bluish grey blazer adorned with service awards and badges, including a miniature golden lapel for maximum ships served (more than six), a record in that era. He then took out a bulky file containing the memories of his tenures in the Navy and began his recollection.

He joined the first NDA course at Joint Services Wing (JSW), Dehradun comprising 25 cadets. He recalls the first cadet enrolled was DK Ghosh (0001), while he (Cmde Bhalla) was PNo-0014. Other prominent cadets were Admiral L Ramdas (later CNS) and

VAdm JN Sukul. After two years at JSW, the naval cadets went for further training to Dartmouth. He got his watchkeeping on INS Delhi before being deputed to Liverpool for the NBCDO Course. In 1953, as a young officer he was transferred to NCE, INS Shivaji as Divisional Officer.



In 1957, he was deputed as commissioning crew of INS Mysore. They cruised from UK to Indian Ocean to Calcutta, Vizag and Madras for 18 months. Next year, before the ship was to proceed on a cruise to China, he was transferred to Godavari as Senior Engineer before heading back to NEC INS Shivaji in 1959. He has the unique distinction of serving in maximum number of ships - Delhi, Mysore, Godavari, Ganga, Rana and Rajput. In 1972, he was transferred as EXO and Base Commander, INS Shivaji. In May the same year, during the Annual Inspection by C-in-C, VAdm SN Kohli, Shivaji's Commanding Officer Capt A Rattan collapsed and, unfortunately, expired in Base Cdr's lap. The C-in-C appointed Cdr SK Bhalla as the Officiating CO, till Capt N Bhalla took over in July 1972. Couple of years later, in May 1974, he was transferred as EO Mysore. In 1975, as a Commander he was instrumental in firefighting onboard Scindia Cargo ship 'Jaladhari' in trying conditions at Bombay anchorage, for which he was awarded Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry).

He also had fruitful tenures in Naval Dockyard Bombay initially as PPMC and later as DGMPR (March 1976 onwards). He attended NDC course in 1978 and his performance was graded outstanding;

further, the next year, the US Chief of Naval Operations rewarded him with Honorary Life membership of United States Naval Institute, Annapolis – a fine distinction indeed. After the course, he was appointed MS (Navy) during which time his health deteriorated due to the Tuberculosis, effect of Jaladhari fire-fighting and he was transferred as OSD in Command Mess. In 1981, when VAdm MP Awati (his CO onboard Mysore earlier) took over as C-in-C, he appointed him as CEO and CSO (Tech) which he tenanted till 1984. When the modernization of Trishul and construction of the new Tir was getting unduly delayed he was transferred as Warship Production



Superintendent (WPS) to expedite the two ships, besides the launch of indigenous Godavari alongwith her designer Capt Mohan Ram.

As may be seen, Cmde Bhalla had many tenures in Shivaji, two on Mysore and several other in higher technical positions where he served with distinction. In fact, such was his love for INS Mysore, that he joined IN with its commissioning in UK (1955) and retired with its decommissioning in 1987. People like him have seen the Navy grow from incipient stages to its current formidable strength. It is due to the whole-hearted dedication of officers like him that we can boast of a fine Indian Navy today and a highly professional technical branch.

Commander Rajinder Dutta (Retd) has been a Naval Pilot and a Qualified Flying Instructor with about 3000 hours of flying on various fixed-wing aircraft of Indian Navy. He is an avid blogger and this vignette is an extract of the same. The full article can be accessed on - <http://rajdutta26.blogspot.com/>
Photographs courtesy: **Mrs Meena Dutta**



Capt Anshuman Chatterjee (Retd)

FROM KOCHI TO EZHIMALA

INA COMES A LONG WAY

The creation of a world class Indian Naval Academy (INA) at Ezhimala in Kerala can appropriately be termed as the end of an eventful journey which got underway in January 1970 at Cochin (now Kochi) when some 40 cadets of executive branch joined the newly-commissioned Naval Academy under the Revised Special Entry Scheme. The Naval Academy (NAVAC), due to various constraints, had to transit through Goa (INS Mandovi) before reaching its final destination at Ezhimala.



It was not a coincidence that the officer who was selected to helm the newly commissioned NAVAC, then Commander L Ramdas belonged to 1st Course of National Defence Academy (Joint Services Wing) and later rose to become the Chief of Naval Staff. In addition, the entire training staff was also hand-picked and all of them reached senior ranks in time to come.

Naval Academy at Kochi was a transitory location with borrowed resources – class rooms from the then Gunnery School, accommodation from the Command Mess, local swimming pool, watermanship and sports facilities from Base Depot Ship. It was a big challenge for the staff to plan the year-long training to groom the cadets to a level at par with the NDA pass-outs since both ex-NDA and ex-NAVAC courses were to be conjoined to form the 1st Integrated Course on the ship. While the 1st course of the cadets were scheduled to arrive at Cochin only in January 1970, the groundwork had started much earlier to ensure that the desired resources and infrastructure were either created or modified for cadets' training.

Since NDA had been functioning for almost 16 years by then, the curriculum there could provide a vital starting point for NAVAC. However, it was not easy since resources and finances available were not only limited but also shared, which added an extra angle of dovetailing training activities with other station requirements. Another peculiarity was that the entire training had to be imparted in typical naval style unlike NDA where influence of Indian Army procedures is predominant. Be it the parade drill or the salute, it had to be the Navy way. This was a blessing in disguise for the ex-NAVAC cadets on joining the sea training ships since, unlike their ex-NDA counterparts, they did not require to change the style of drill from Army to the naval.

The Battalion and Squadron system followed at NDA was not found suitable since the entire strength of the Naval Academy was expected to be much lesser than the strength of one Squadron. Hence, a more nautical arrangement namely the Division system was considered. Four Divisions denoting the parts of ship—Foxle, Fore Top, Main Top and Quarter Deck—were formed under the charge of a Divisional Officer each. The second-in-command after the OiC

was designated as the Training Officer or an equivalent of the Squadron Commander of NDA.

In the curriculum, a 'Camp Pongo' was scheduled in the first term to give an insight into the camping procedures as laid down by the Army including tent pitching. 'Camp Sea Legs' (an equivalent of the Water Baby at NDA) was included in the second term for senior cadets to consolidate the theoretical naval knowledge acquired by them. Further, an instructional visit to NDA was also planned during this trip.

Since there were no senior cadets when the training commenced in January 1970, the officers on the staff assumed the task of the naval orientation of newly arrived cadets both during working hours and off working hours. Similarly, before arrival of the 2nd course cadets, the 1st course cadets were suitably tutored to take charge of the 2nd course cadets for speedy and overnight orientation. Besides, 1st course cadets were also appointed as Divisional Petty Officer and Divisional Leading, one for each Division.



Cochin (Kochi) is famous for rains that arrive any time suddenly and hence everyone carries an umbrella all the time. But the rain God was extra kind since HE ensured that in my entire 12 months at the Naval Academy, while it rained throughout the night, it always suddenly vanished (except in monsoons) at 6 AM when our Physical Training (PT) started even though there was a back-up shed for PT during rains.

Academic classes were held post breakfast on the heels of morning PT and swimming. Morning Muster and inspection preceded the class room instructions. Post-lunch activities included watermanship and

parade training. In addition, in typical naval style, visual communication practical training - semaphore and flashing - was held daily since they were extensively used by ships at sea.

The fact that all ex-NAVAC cadets, after passing out, performed as well as their NDA counterparts on board the cadets training ship and, thereafter, in Service, speaks highly of the training imparted at the Naval Academy despite the limited resources and other constraints. It is heartening to note that both the Flag Officers (1 Vice Admiral and 1 Rear Admiral) produced by our course (2nd Integrated Course) were ex-NAVAC.

Within few years of commissioning, NAVAC was entrusted with the conduct of initial training, orientation and miscellaneous courses for officers besides basic courses for cadets which substantially increased the number of trainees resulting in acute shortage of accommodation and other training facilities. Under the circumstances, it became necessary to identify an alternative location for NAVAC till the

Indian Naval Academy at Ezhimala was ready. Consequently, NAVAC was shifted from Kochi to Goa and was co-located with INS Mandovi in 1986. I was fortunate to be appointed as a Training Coordinator there a year later. Though this was also a temporary location, it had better infrastructure and dedicated facilities conducive to the conduct of efficient training. However, it was still not at par with the facilities desirable for a world class Indian National Naval Academy which could only be ensured by creation of a base from the scratch.

INS Mandovi, the base depot ship, provided all

administrative and logistic support. Having been a sailors' training establishment, it had plenty of accommodation for sailor trainees which was modified suitably for the cadets. It had its own swimming pool, standard parade ground, playgrounds, an auditorium, dedicated sailing club, besides other general facilities.

The original "Revised Special Entry Scheme" (RSES) had made way for the "Graduate Special Entry Scheme" (GSES) for cadets of Executive Branch, which was of 6 months duration. In addition, basic courses for acting Sub Lieutenants (Technical), Coast Guard Assistant Commandants, 10+2 (Tech) were the major courses being conducted at the Naval Academy, Goa.

The year 1987 also marked the beginning of 10+2 (X) Course for the cadets of the Executive Branch. It was the first course of three years duration run at NAVAC and the curriculum included both service and academic subjects in addition to other indoor and outdoor activities. The long duration, akin to NDA, was instrumental in ensuring that no shortcuts or compromises were required to ensure that only the best passed out from the Academy. The 10+2 (X) course was assigned to the best among the

appointed officers and the course was accorded the topmost priority to match their counterparts being trained at the NDA. Needless to say, all 10+2 cadets did exceptionally well at cadets' training ship and, subsequently, in Service.

An important part of the final milestone was reached when INS Zamorin was commissioned on 6 April 2005 at Ezhimala in North Kerala, as part of the Phase 1 of the Naval Academy Project. It commenced conduct of a few training courses for officers and cadets to begin with. Thereafter, Indian Naval Academy (INA) assumed full charge of all assigned training commitments in 2009. INS Zamorin continues to provide administrative and logistic support to the Indian Naval Academy.

The journey of the Indian Naval Academy that commenced at Kochi in 1969-70 with small borrowed resources found its final destination at Ezhimala in Kerala in 2005 with a transit halt at Goa en route. It is undoubtedly a proud moment for the Indian Navy, in general, and Indian Naval Academy, in particular, to celebrate 50 years of training at the Naval Academy in January 2020. It is a matter of immense pride that we now have a truly world-class Academy.

Cdr Anil Sharma (Retd) is an alumnus of Naval Academy, 2nd Course. A Naval Communications and Electronic Warfare Specialist, he held a variety of appointments before seeking premature retirement in 1997 after 24 years of service. Thereafter, he served as a Harbour Pilot (later Master Pilot) with Mumbai. (anilsharma1951@gmail.com)



At The Gates Of Indian Navy



Capt Anshuman Chatterjee (Retd)

A wet morning in June 1984. My uncle and I arrived at the ‘main gate’ of the Indian Navy at Kochi. Me, struggling with a heavy suitcase and he, looking important, in his white khadi *mundu* and *jubbah*. He walked up to the Defence Security Corps sentry at the large iron grilled gate and waited imperiously for me to catch up.

“I have come to drop him”, said he, pointing at me, when the sentry sought his intentions. “He is a big Officer”, he continued, helpfully. I cringed. Having passed out of the National Defence Academy just a month ago, I was a full year away from becoming a Naval Officer.

The sentry knew his beans. He verified my identity and waved me in, opening the iron grill gate just a crack. The thin crack wasn’t wide enough to let my uncle in. In any case the gate had not been opened to let him in. “PM Indira Gandhi is visiting. So, no guests are allowed,” said the sentry, shutting the grills on my uncle.

At 56, he could recognise when his game was up. But he wasn’t going to be defeated so easily. He had to throw a challenge. “I will come back another day. Let him grow a bit more senior. That day I will see you,” said he to the sentry, with wasted fury.

That three kilometre walk from the Main Gate to my ship in the First Training squadron along a bare single-lane tarred road seems to have been just the other day.

34 years later, on 23 June 2018, on another wet day, I had the fortune of being the Commanding Officer of INS Venduruthy, as INS Venduruthy turned 75. Effectively, the Indian Navy at Kochi too turned 75 that day. It was on 23 June 1943 that His Majesty’s Indian Naval Ship Venduruthy was commissioned. The reference to his majesty was dropped after his majesty ceased to matter for India after independence and the Indian Navy’s largest shore unit came to be called INS Venduruthy. The British, while expanding the Kochi port for military purposes

in the 1930s had used the dredged dirt to expand the Venduruthy Island. After Independence, INS Venduruthy steadily expanded to create a large number of Training Establishments, which had been lost to Pakistan as they were located at Karachi.

Almost everyone in the Indian Navy would have been borne on the books of INS Venduruthy some time or the other during their career. Memories abound for all of them. It was a strange world for any new comer. Secure meant pack up. A hitch was not a problem but a solution. A bridge didn't connect two places. Instead, it was the seat of power on a warship. The bosun's pipe was not meant to be smoked, but was to be used to control the lives of those around. In the Navy, you could have a Sunday on any day from Monday to Saturday. And there was no surety that Sunday would be a Sunday! You could tell the day of the week by the menu in the galley. Tuesday meant vegetarian food and fish had to be had on Friday. The galley didn't have chained slaves straining at their oars, and instead, had diners asking for more. And heads were places, that bottoms sought.

Kochi was virtually a gateway to a new horizon for all. It was Kochi, where young Seamen and Aviation sailors first saw the real Navy, as the shock of the Boot Camp at Chilka slowly wore off. It was Kochi, where many a future Officer at the Naval Academy that functioned here for several decades learnt the art of conducting warfare at any level, with a Chart, a Parallel Ruler and a Divider. It was Kochi, where young Naval Cadets from the NDA unlearnt the Army and learnt the Navy. It was Kochi, from where the newly 'Integrated' Sea Cadets got their first taste of the sea and also set out to get the first sight of a foreign shore. With that, they would begin to trust the Navy, for, they would see that 'Join the Navy, See the World', wasn't an empty slogan, unlike most slogans in the world outside the iron grill at the Main Gate. It was at Kochi, where most Executive Branch Officers grew up from boys to men in the service, getting their status as 'Specialists', in Surface and Air Warfare as well as young Engineers qualified in maintaining modern aircraft. It was also at Kochi, where future Executive Officers and Commanding Officers of ships, submarines and air units were prepared for the ultimate gift from the Navy, Command appointments.

40 years into its life, the Naval Base at Kochi came to house the Headquarters of the newly born Training Command of the Navy, and today, at 75 years of age, the Navy at Kochi stands greatly transformed. It is now a world that has almost two dozen ships, a large number of aircraft, modern training schools teeming with technology and their visible manifestation, an array of weapons, sensors and simulators. In a sublime mix, Kochi also presides over the Navy's studies on Leadership, Ethics, Education, Maritime Law, Principles of War and Operational Planning.

Today, INS Venduruthy has grown up to be Indian Navy's largest shore establishment. The community at Kochi has grown from a miniscule 20 Officers and 130 sailors in 1946, to over 1000 Officers, 10,000 sailors, 2000 Naval civilians and over 15,000 family members, which, when combined with the Naval veterans and their families in and around Kochi, forms a homogenous community of over 40,000. Providing leadership and support to all this, is a much-expanded Headquarters under FOC-in-C South, a much expanded Naval Hospital, several schools, housing communities, galleys, messes, sporting and entertainment facilities, shopping complexes, security infrastructure, a communication setup and well-established mechanisms for interaction and coordination with the civil society and the state administration.

Sterling work done during natural disasters in Kerala, sustained support to civil society in sundry mishaps, events showcasing the Navy's strength for the people of the Kerala to see and the regular press reports about the Navy's achievements in its military and diplomatic roles, has found the Navy a special place in Kerala's heart.

None of the myriad activities that find mention above would have been possible without INS Venduruthy pulling more than its weight, one way or the other. In its platinum jubilee year, INS Venduruthy continues to stand rock solid behind all this, with unstinted logistic and administrative support, worth its weight, in platinum.

The old iron grilled main gate has been replaced by an elaborate structure that combines artistry and

strength, where hundreds of people and vehicles can gain access or transact their business, unmolested by rain or sunshine, and watched by hawk-eyed security systems.

I will be at the main gate again, on 31 December 2019. Unlike the wet summer morning in 1984 when I had come to the gate to enter, this time, I will exit. For the last time in uniform. After 35 years in the Navy. My uncle is still around. He is over 92. He was 56 when

he had thrown a challenge at the DSC sentry. Today, I am 56 and having been the Station Commander, I will have no challenge to throw at the DSC sentry as I leave. Instead, I will leave the sentry with a fond smile and a lingering salute.

I must also hurry home and get my uncle for a visit, before he and I get too old.

Cmde G Prakash NM was CO INS Venduruthy from April 2016 to August 2019. He has also commanded IN Ships Ajay, Taragiri, Tir, Mandovi, and INS Dega and the Maritime Warfare Centre at Kochi. In the last 15 years, he has delivered lectures at the NDC, NWC, CDM, CAW, DSSC, Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi, the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies at HQIDS and at various national and international seminars.



ELMOT
POWERING THE ELECTRIC

EMPOWERING OUR DEFENDERS

Elmot was built with the vision to power up society, and those who defend it. We do this by developing new machines, designing & building special purpose equipment, and supplying high performance equipment.

Our primary focus is super specialised power generating products for the navy and other defence forces.

Our empowering product range includes:

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NAD (V) CELEBRATES PLATINUM

Naval Armament Depot (NAD) Visakhapatnam is an important and vital establishment under administrative control of Eastern Naval Command. The depot is responsible for the storage, repair, maintenance and issue or receipt of all naval armaments and ammunition including guided weapons viz torpedoes, missiles, mines, decoys, targets etc. The depot was established in August 1944 during WWII. It started functioning from an existing OETD (Ordnance Export Transit Depot). Before independence it was Royal Naval Armament Depot and was headed by Admiralty officers. It was only in October 1950 that the first Indian officer Shri NK Chakrabarty became the Officer-in-Charge.

The depot has its own engineering workshop wherein important and critical components of armaments are manufactured. Besides there is a rubber gasket manufacturing facility to meet the critical rubber spares requirement of guided weapons division. At present the Chief General Manager is Shri P Upadhyay, INAS who is from 1987 batch of Combined Engineering Service Examination, NAD celebrated its Platinum Jubilee from 21 to 24 September 2019.

As part of platinum jubilee celebrations, various events were organised:

- ❖ Blood Donation Camp on 22 July 2019, where around 121 employees donated blood.
- ❖ Cleanship drive in the super speciality ward of King George Government Hospital; nearly 100 employees participated in the *swachhta* drive.

❖ A free Medical Camp for the public was organised in Thikkarvari Palem village, near NTPC Simhadri on 8 September in association with KIMS-ICON Hospital, and Raghvendra Eye Hospital. The camp was inaugurated by Shri P Upadhyay, in presence of Shri Divakar Jayant – General Manager, Shri Ranjan Biswas – AGM, Office Bearers of Unions and Members of NAD Works Committee. Nearly 186 patients were examined by a team of doctors led by Dr Arindam Roy, CMO of NAD. Free medicines were also distributed to the patients.

❖ A 5-km walk was organised on 14 September under the theme, 'Make your feet your friend'.

❖ A technical exhibition on Naval Armament and Ammunition was held on 21 and 22 October. The exhibition was inaugurated by Vice Admiral SN Ghormade AVSM, NM COS, ENC. The exhibition evoked good response from public.

The main function of platinum jubilee was held on 24 September. Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain AVSM, VSM, FOC-in-C, ENC was the Chief Guest. During the celebrations, a cultural programme, classical dance, patriotic songs and a skit on a social theme was presented. On this occasion, Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Visakhapatnam released a Special Cover. The Chief Guest released the platinum jubilee edition of 'Smritika' magazine and also unveiled a souvenir, a mural depicting NAD's multifarious activities. The function was attended by Shri KK Prasad, DGONA, RAdm Sanjay Misra, DGNAl, Flag Officers of ENC, Chief General Managers of NADs, COs of various establishments of ENC, Director NSTL, retired DGs, retired CGMs, JCM members and large number of retired officers.

and employees. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest acknowledged that NAD (V) was the oldest naval establishment as it even predated the Eastern Naval Command. He mentioned that being a gun-

nery officer he had a long-term and direct association with the unit. He lauded the role played by NAD in meeting the operational requirements of Navy.



NAD technical expo evokes good response

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE, VISAKHAPATNAM

THE two-day technical exhibition of naval armament and ammunition organised by the Naval Armament Depot (NAD) under the aegis of Eastern Naval Command to mark its platinum jubilee celebrations concluded here on Sunday. A large number of people visited the exhibition, which was inaugurated by Vice Admiral SN Ghorade, Chief of Staff, ENC.

The children who went round various stalls at the exhibition were curious to know about the functioning of sub-

marines, missiles, and torpedoes. They were literally awed by the naval might which was put on display. The armaments on display included 7.62 mm caliber submachine guns, rocket launcher mounted on ships, cluster bombs, APR-122 torpedo, signal pistol, sniper guns, cannon gun, missiles, rocket bombs, hand guns, grenades and batteries used in submarines.

"So many armaments and ammunition at one place is a visual treat and I am very much thrilled," said Nithin, a class seven student of Keystone School. He said it was like an educational tour.

NAD Vizag organises walkathon

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of its Platinum Jubilee celebrations, a walkathon was organised by the Naval Armament Depot (NAD) of Visakhapatnam on Saturday. Over 250 personnel, including officers and staff of NAD Vizag, along with their family members and DSC

personnel participated in the 5km walkathon with the theme 'Make your feet your friend' to encourage physical fitness among employees.

The walkathon was flagged off by the CGM NAD from the NAD Main Gate in the presence of members of works committee and office bearers from the unions.

NAD HOLDS MEDICAL CAMP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE, VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of Platinum Jubilee celebrations, Naval Armament Depot (NAD) Visakhapatnam under Eastern Naval Command (ENC) conducted a two-day medical camp at Thykottu police station, near the IITTC (Kharabali), Visakhapatnam.

The camp organised in association with AIIMS-ECHO New Delhi, took patients from the depot and its dependents to the NAD. It also provided medical assistance to the personnel.

Naval armament & ammo seminar held at NAD

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE, VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of Platinum Jubilee celebrations of Naval Armament Depot (NAD) Visakhapatnam, a seminar on Latest trends in development of naval armament and ammunition was held at NAD here on Monday.

The seminar was inaugurated by Vice Admiral SN Ghorade, Chief of Staff, ENC. He said the seminar was a platform for the exchange of views and experiences among the naval armament and ammunition experts.

THE TIGER SHARK RETURNETH

Author's Note: This article was written on 14 December 2017 on the occasion of commissioning of INS Kalvari for, a largely, non-naval audience of Mumbai city. The original flavour has been retained to convey the correct tone and authenticity.

A few days ago, (on 8 December 2017) the Indian Navy celebrated the golden jubilee of our Submarine Arm. It was on 8 December 1967 that INS Kalvari, the first Indian submarine, was commissioned. India entered the submarine era on that day. On 8 December 2017, the President of India presented his Colour to the Submarine Arm in recognition of its distinguished service to the nation. Submariners, past and present, congregated in Visakhapatnam, which can be called the submarine city of India, to commemorate the occasion.

As many are aware, submariners lead the toughest life among seafarers and those in profession of arms. It is a different world out there. 'Be Superior, Be a Submariner' used to be their tagline for long and certainly they are a different breed. But this piece is not so much about submariners' life since I do not have a Dolphin on my uniform. It is more about a significant development in our ship- and submarine-building and how this is a momentous step forward.

On the other coast of India, thousands of kilometres away, in Mumbai, a city that never sleeps, 14 December 2017 heralded a new dawn as the new INS Kalvari was commissioned and entered naval service. And unlike its earlier avatar, which was a Russian buy, this one had been built in India in our very own Mazagon Dock in Mumbai. It is true that this is a French Scorpene design and most of its components, but the mere fact of building a boat (as submarines are called) in India is bound to unleash several energies that would aid our manufacturing and entrepreneurship. Involving 'Transfer of Technology' from the French collaborator M/s Naval Group (formerly M/s DCNS) and the association of numerous Indian companies, it is a true representation of

the "Make in India" vision. Interestingly, she is the first Indian naval vessel to be built using a modular approach whereby five separate sections were welded into one or booted together.

A bit of history first. As many are aware, the Indian Navy is a pioneer in making in India. We have designed and built the most powerful ships and are now building an aircraft carrier. Building submarines will be the final frontier to conquer in our indigenous programme. Ironically, we had started building conventional submarines thirty years ago, in the 80s with the SSK programme. Built to German HDW design, the last two boats were constructed in Mazagon Dock with the fond hope that this would ultimately lead to our own fully indigenous submarine-building line. Alas, it was not to be and the lost decade of 90s dissipated our entrepreneurial energies. All the technical competence that we had built withered away and the envisioned assembly line vanished.

So, it was heartening that nearly a quarter century after INS Shankul was commissioned in May 1994, we have the new INS Kalvari taking birth. It has been a long wait but it promises a new beginning. Coming as it does, exactly 50 years after its namesake forebearer was commissioned, Kalvari, (meaning tiger shark in Malayalam) is a big leap forward. It has been fitted with modern missiles, torpedoes, underwater decoys and has state-of-the-art sonars, radars and EW systems. Indeed, it can be said that she is a potent 'Man o' War' capable of undertaking offensive operations spanning across the entire spectrum of maritime warfare. She embodies cutting-edge technology and compares favourably with the best in the world.

The submarine's crew has given to themselves the motto of "Ever Onward" to be imbibed and to inspire future crews and all those who sail in her. For inspiration, they need look no further than the first INS Kalvari, which epitomised the submariner's zeal and indomitable spirit. Commissioned in Riga, erstwhile Soviet Union, she sailed nearly 20,000 miles on her maiden passage to India and served the nation for three decades thereafter. While the old Kalvari's fin has been displayed at Beach Road, Visakhapatnam as part of the city's Maritime Museum, her original bell as well as the Officers' Commissioning Plaque are priceless artefacts that will adorn the successor.

INS Kalvari is commanded by Captain Shreekrishna Dileep Mehendale, a second-generation submariner, doubly proud, due to his father Cdr DG Mehendale (Retd), having been Engineer Officer of the erstwhile Kalvari.

Of course, there is also a very small personal connect. More symbolic than substantive, but something to revel in and marvel about. The erstwhile Kalvari team began their training in the then Soviet Union, on 21 June 1966, the day that I was born. My father-in-law served in the Mazagon Dock for three decades retiring as the Chief General Manager of Quality Control Department. His tenure began with the Nilgiri class, our first big warship indigenous programme and he retired around the time that the Delhi class, our world-class combat indigenous platforms, were inducted into the Navy. My wife, as a journalist, covered the commissioning of Shankul, the last indigenously built boat, for her paper, 'The Sunday Observer'. My ship INS Ganga was the coordinating ship on that occasion; we organised the grand lunch that day on board our ship. My skipper Captain Vijay

(Snitch) Shanker, later Vice Admiral and C-in-C, was on the same table with my wife and remarked to her how lucky she was that she could attend a function that her hubby (then a lowly Lt) could not. And above all, Captain Mehendale, the Commissioning CO has been my cadet in NDA. I was Divisional Officer in the same Hunter squadron and the relationship between a naval divo and naval cadets, who make a small number there, is always special.

In the Indian Navy's scheme of things, old ships, unlike old soldiers, do not die or fade away. They are reborn in new and more powerful avatars. Each incarnation endeavours to preserve the legacy of the past while adding further lustre to the name. And in that time-space continuum is writ the story and glory of the service. So, on 14 December, on a barely-there mild Mumbai winter morning, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi commissioned the Indian Navy's newest submarine, it was, to restate a cliché, the beginning of a new era. The minus 17 degrees freezing cold that accompanied Cdr Subra-Manian and his ship's company, in Riga, seemed such a long time ago, literally and metaphorically. Incidentally, my cherished moment at the commissioning was a few minutes conversation and a photograph with the first Kalvari's skipper, then Cdr (later Cmde) KS Subra-Manian. He is, literally, India's first submariner and a pioneer.

The Tiger Shark has returned. As many seafarers will tell you, the Tiger Shark is among the most fearsome predators in the marine world. As a man o' war, we hope it strikes the same kind of terror in the hearts of our antagonists even as it assures us of a long and illustrious service. For Mehendale and his men, their work has just begun.

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A GRAB BAG OF MEMORIES

HOW THE SNFs WERE BUILT

INS Ranjit was commissioned in erstwhile USSR on 15 September 1983 and decommissioned in Visakhapatnam on 6 May 2019.

The five-volume “History of Indigenous Warship Construction in Russia and the Soviet Union” 1996, published under the editorship of ID Spassky has this to say:

“An Indian Naval Delegation visited Moscow in 1974, on a search for an inexpensive option for the screening vessels for its aircraft carrier. The team was impressed by the capabilities of the ‘Large Antisubmarine Vessel’ Project 61, then in the inventory of the Soviet Navy. However, the Indian Navy wanted the Gunnery and Missile weapons on board augmented, and an ASW Helicopter included.

What came out from Chief Designer A.A. Shishkin of the Northern Design Bureau, Leningrad was not a version upgrade but a totally new design – redesignated as Project 61ME. It was also officially reclassified by the Indian Navy as a ‘Destroyer’. Three ships were ordered initially, which were then

augmented by two more. All of these ships are currently in service”.

The construction of the ships was entrusted to the ‘61 Communards’ Shipyard in the town of Nikolaev in the present-day Republic of Ukraine. The Yard had been first established in 1788 as part of Czarina Catherine’s thrust against the Ottoman Empire. It is now spread over 11.5 square kilometers and is located about 88 kilometers upstream from where River Ingul joins the Black Sea. It was one of the key shipyards serving the Soviet Navy, and had delivered the Kronstadt Class battle cruisers, the Kara and the Slava class cruisers and the Shchuka class submarines.

Across the river on the North bank, incidentally, is the even more celebrated ‘Black Sea Shipyard’ – which was the main ‘Large Ship’ yard of the Soviet Navy and had built the Moskva Class Helicopter Carriers,

Kiev Class VTOL Carriers (including the Gorshkov) and aircraft carriers Kuznetsov and Varyag.

A small training establishment located in the town of Poti on the Black Sea, in the Republic of Georgia was made ready to impart pre-commissioning training to the main body of the Indian crews. The VOLNA SAM teams would, however, be trained at the Caspian Higher Naval College at Baku, Azerbaijan and Helicopter Crews would be trained at Kacha, located on the outskirts of Sevastopol in the Crimea.



Back to the USSR

I chanced upon a visit to the '61 Communards' Yard recently. I was in Ukraine in 2017 on an invitation from their Government. One of the places of my visit was the city of Kherson on the Black Sea coast, and we were to drive there from Kiev. A glance at the road map revealed that Nikolaev was just a 20 km detour from the expressway, and I managed to persuade my hosts to include it in my visit.

Some frantic internet searching got me on a mobile connection to an elderly lady who said: "Yes, my brother Viktor Mikhailovich Stavitsky is alive and kicking, and will be glad to receive you here." Mr. Stavitsky had been the Head of the Handing Over and Guarantee teams for both Rajput and Ranjit, and many an interesting hour have I spent with him at work and at play in Mumbai (including taking him and his team to RK Studios to meet Raj Kapoor and Smita Patil). Viktor Mikhailovich rounded up four or

five of his old Ranjit team members and laid out a zastolye – a classic Russian banquet table for me – champagne, caviar and all. He then took me on a



grand tour of this sad and decrepit Yard that had seen great glories in not too distant a past. One amusing upshot of the visit was the Finance Director of the Yard who was tailing me all the while and trying to sell me an old Slava Class destroyer – going cheap Meister! It reminded me of the guys in Sarojini Nagar Market in New Delhi who tail you and try to sell you handkerchiefs and belts.

I had another pleasant surprise. My sculptor's eye had noticed a lovely set of bronze statues on a street not far from the Yard – those of Mowgli and Bagheera – from Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book.



"You want to meet the sculptor"? Evidently, Mrs Inna Makushina, all of 70 years, was a neighbour; she graciously joined us at luncheon and made my day!

RANJIT

Coming back to the commissioning of Ranjit. The core components of the crew arrived at their respective training establishments by 1 September 1982. The weapon and electronic systems of the ship had been replicated in their entirety inside classrooms, and theoretical and practical training were of a high standard. Sonar MGK 335 had been a major area of interest in the Indian Navy, and the Ranjit crew had the additional benefit of a training session conducted by the designers and repair specialists of the equipment.



Coming Alongside for her Commissioning
(Photo courtesy: Cmde Ashok Sawhney)

The ship was moved from Nikolaev to Poti by a Soviet Handing-Over Crew on 1 September 1983, flying the Soviet ensign and bearing the name of “Lovkiy” (meaning Agile). The ship, in effect, had two commissioning ceremonies. The first one took place on 15 September 1983, immediately after we were satisfied with the performance of the ship at Handing-Over Trials. It was felt that there would be greater benefit in conducting Work-Up independently, with the Soviet Crew disembarked. The ship herein after flew the Indian ensign and bore the name of Ranjit.

Before proceeding for trials, the ship docked for 13 days on a floating dry-dock at the port of Novorossiysk on 12 October 1983 for underwater hull work.

The Black Sea Fleet Headquarters agreed to lend

their operational and administrative might for the Crew Work-Up phase, and the ship was moved to Sevastopol in Crimea for the purpose. A second, more formal commissioning ceremony was held on 24 November 1983 in the Grand Harbour of Sevastopol in the presence of the Ambassador of India Shri Nurul Hasan.

After this, the ship embarked stores for its maiden passage home, and set course for India on 22 November 1983. The ship made port calls at Varna in Bulgaria; Split in Yugoslavia; Alexandria and Port Suez in Egypt and Aden in South Yemen.

The ship entered Mumbai to a rousing welcome by the Western Fleet on 28th of December 1983. The ship was handed over to the Second Commission in December 1985.

Vice Admiral Ganesh Mahadevan PVSM AVSM VSM (Retd), *Commissioning DLO of INS Ranjit. He had an illustrious career tenantry important assignments in the Electrical branch and Technical stream before retiring as the Chief of Materiel. A delightful raconteur and a prize-winning cartoonist, he was associated with Quarterdeck for 25 years since its inception.*

OUR LIFE AND TIMES OUT THERE

We were the third of the SNFs, and that gave us quite an advantage.

INS Rajput had already joined the Indian Navy after its commissioning, and the crew had tested the waters at Poti. The reports they gave us about living in Poti were dire, to say the least. Poti was a shabby little hell-hole, located on the swampy mouth of the River Rioni, we were told. The local population was Migrelian, and decidedly unpleasant. The accommodation was terrible. Truth to say, they bore the brunt of the first foray that the Indian Navy had made into Georgia. Poti was far from ready to receive such a large contingent.

By the time we had got there, however, things had changed. New accommodation blocks had been built, everyone had got better geared up and the Rana Crew had further conditioned the staff and local populace.

I personally had one more advantage. I was fluent in Russian and had read extensively about Russia and Georgia. I found doors open to me that seem to have been shut to many. I was exempted from the first two months of Russian language training that the rest of the crew underwent. In these two months I was footloose, fancy-free and everywhere - at official meetings with the local naval management, in the kitchens of our sailors' hostel, in the hospital taking families to the doctors, at the local school to get our children admissions, at the Customs to negotiate the clearance of the crates of rum and whisky we had brought for our wardroom, or at the markets helping our folks with their shopping! By the time this phase over, I knew everyone. Georgia turned out to be a revelation. Once the initial strangeness was overcome, I found myself welcomed by local people and families.

Our Table Loves Your Table

My first introduction to Georgia was a bit hair-raising. Soon after we arrived at Poti, I and Lt Rakhra – my bachelor flat-mate took off one evening to the sea-

front restaurant nearby called MorVokzal. We had barely taken our seats when the waitress walked up to us with a smile and placed a bottle of champagne before us. We were flummoxed, "Was this complimentary or what? We haven't ordered anything yet"! She pointed to two burly, fierce looking locals in leather jackets sitting at the far end. "They sent this over for you"! Wow! We poured ourselves a glass each and raised them in their direction in gratitude, and they gave us a silent and gracious wave in acknowledgement. I suddenly remembered I was carrying a bottle of rum in my bag – a sure-shot lifesaver in tight situations in Russia. We called the waitress and asked her to present the bottle to the 'batonos' which was the local word for such fat cats. We followed her movement from the corner of our eyes. One of them opened the bottle, sniffed at it skeptically, stood up and strode towards us in an ominous manner, the bottle dangling from his hand like a weapon. He stood before us, stared into our eyes and spoke in a deliberate manner in that unmistakable Georgian accent: "Friends from India. You obviously don't know us Georgian people. We never ever drink spirits. We only drink fine wines. However, because Our Table loves Your Table, I will drink what you have offered us." He then proceeded to empty the entire bottle of rum, neat, into his throat, wiped his mouth with his sleeve and staggered off! Whew!

This was our first lesson on Georgia and its people. Georgia is the original 'God's own' wine country and Georgians had connoisseurs and sommeliers centuries before the French and Italians had even heard about wines. Every family has its home brewed brand of wines like Goan families have family



brewed Feni or Kerala families have pickles.

The Georgian people were a revelation. They were as different from Russians as anyone could imagine. They considered themselves as swank, slick and classical, in a grand 19th century manner, whereas the Russians considered them boors. Being able to communicate with both these people, I became privy to some fascinating bits of daily Soviet life.

Rynok Days

Sundays were Rynok days, the word 'Rynok' standing for a farmer's market. Going around shopping with the officers and their families would be a great pleasure.



Until everyone got the hang of the Russian language I would be around to help. The malapropisms and spoonerisms we all acquire as part of the learning process are great fun sorting out. I remember when LCdr BGK Swamy, our Supply Officer had gone to a sports shop to buy a couple of footballs for our sports officer— some plain and simple footballs. The shopkeeper mama was most amused. "Young Man! How you can buy futbol"? It took him some time figuring out that futbol is a game – field, goalposts, teams, referee, yellow cards, crowds, shouting, kicking – all of it, and you don't buy futbol. That spherical object our Supply Office was looking for was a 'futbolniy myach' or a 'ball for futbol'. They are simply two different things. Another time, a shopkeeper at the rynok wouldn't stop giggling at him was because instead of asking for kilogram of 'Kartofyel' which means potatoes' he had asked her for a 'Kilogram of Portfyel' which means a kilogram of bags.

There was good-natured merriment all around. We were introduced to the flamboyant salesmanship of vegetable vendors. They would show us how to judge the quality of a watermelon by giving it a great squeeze between their palms and see if the creaking noise that comes out of its innards is correct. Each melon makes a characteristic sound when squeezed. It takes an expert to know what is the sound that makes the melon taste nice.



One day I was called quietly to a corner of the Rynok by a Georgian with a wide grin, who poured me a clear liquid in a glass and urged me to drink it. Throwing caution to the winds I did so, and my eyes popped out of their sockets, I was in a stunned daze for a few minutes. It was a bootleg brew called 'Chacha' that could beat the best paint remover in the market. Goa's Feni is nothing in comparison. I asked a Georgian friend later - "How come? I thought Georgians only drink the finest of wines"? He winked at me and whispered – "This is our weapon. We are doing to the Russians what the British did to the Chinese with Opium".

The Indira Effect

As part of our pre-commissioning training at the Naval Training Centre in Poti, we were all entitled to 15 days of leave in different batches. I and Lt Bhupesh Rakhra being the only two Poti bachelors were grouped together with 8 artificers and we decided to spend our vacation at Leningrad (now St Petersburg). We caught an overnight train to the capital of Georgia – Tbilisi, to try our luck on direct flights to Leningrad. We were all on a group military warrant printed on a single piece of paper. It was tourist season and we just could not find ten seats free on a single flight. While our team just sauntered about waiting for a decision, Bhupesh Rakhra and I popped into the lounge-bar to contemplate our next course of action.

We got talking to a smart and friendly girl who was from a tourist agency and among the sweet nothings that we exchanged, we casually mentioned our plight to her. After some time, she excused herself. She soon returned with ten boarding passes and asked me how quickly I could get my team and our baggage together. She bundled us into a minibus, and we were rushed down a taxiway, where an aircraft was about to take off. It had been stopped, a gangway was trundled up, about half a dozen cursing local passengers were off-loaded, and we were pushed in!

We came back again via Tbilisi after a great holiday. I popped into the same lounge bar and ran into the same girl! I thanked her profusely and showered a hamper of gifts on her from our Leningrad purchases. I, however, couldn't help admitting to her how uncomfortable I felt seeing those people kicked out for us.

She told me that she was born in 1955 on the same day when Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter visited Tbilisi. "My name is Indira. I was named Indira in memory of that visit! I simply had to do it for the first Indians I have ever actually met face-to-face!!!"



Speaking in two tongues

My services as interpreter were called upon frequently. An interpreter's job is often a hungry one, especially when it happens on a dinner table. You have no time to eat. All you can do is keep tracking the morsels of food moving from plates to mouths, while you are talking all the while. Being an interpreter has its hazards too. On a visit to the C-in-C



Black Sea Fleet, the Captain and I were treated to a flurry of toasts in premium vodka. The Steward would refill glasses in a trice. Captain Bhagwat has always been a teetotaler and would surreptitiously pour the contents of his glass into mine. I would, therefore, be downing twice that of everyone else. This happened to me much later at Mumbai too, when the C-in-C Admiral Johnson was hosting a visiting Russian Udaloy Class Destroyer Admiral Vinogradov, and I was interpreter at the banquet on board.

Wah Wah! Mukarrar!

The formal commissioning ceremony of Ranjit was held on 24 November 1983 at Sevastopol in the presence of the Indian Ambassador to the USSR Professor Nurul Hasan. Captain Vishnu Bhagwat always made it a point of delivering his formal speeches in the national language – Hindi, which would go down very well with Russian audiences. I, of course, would have the benefit of the script beforehand so that I could render it correctly in the Russian.

It is possible the Captain's speech gave fresh ideas to the Ambassador. When it came to his turn to speak, he decided to go extempore, in flowery Aligarh Muslim University Urdu. I had never even heard of most of the words he used. I had to, therefore, to make up a speech in Russian, on-the-fly, that I felt any Ambassador would be proud of. The next day's newspapers of course splashed this fine bit of oratory on their front pages as truly cementing the friendship between the two countries and their people.



Beware the Translator

Translations can get you into trouble too. A large consignment of our unaccompanied luggage had got stuck at Moscow customs on account of unorthodox packing. Sailors' baggage was mostly in the form of kitbags. Winter was rapidly approaching, and the crew needed their woolens. I was sent to Moscow to sort out the problem. I had made out a formal letter to the Head of Customs at Sheremetyevo Airport, with a request that these items be cleared 'as soon as possible'. For some reason I got an ice-cold reception. It was when I was shown the translated copy of my letter that I figured out what might have gone wrong. Their translator had used the word 'Nemedlenno'for my 'asap'. 'Nemedlenno' meant FORTHWITH.... THIS VERY MOMENT.... INSTANTANTO..., a word that was known to be used only by Stalin and was meant to curdle your blood instantaneously. This of course riled everyone. Well, all was well that ended well. Some Rum and a bit of Raj Kapoor eventually brought Indo-Soviet Relations back on even keel. I managed to get

the baggage shifted to Domodedovo Airport as a first step. Lt HC Pant contributed in tying up the Customs at this airport to get the baggage trans-shipped to Poti. The crew had a warm winter eventually.

The Romani People

Some of our more interesting experiences were our occasional brushes with people of Romani origin— or Gypsies, on the streets of Poti, or at the Rynok. Flamboyantly dressed, Romani women would walk on the street with an attitude, and how! The might of the entire police state of the USSR couldn't subdue these people into a 9-to-5 work style. They were all from India – descendants of the nomadic Banjara people from Rajasthan who left India between the 6 AD and 10 AD. They were intrinsic wanderers, with a freewheeling lifestyle, and nary a care in the world— mostly blacksmiths and tinkers on the move. To most people in Europe they were pilferers and were subject to continuous harassment.



Where they really shone was in their vivid style of music and dance that is a rich mixture of melancholy and joy. Their music and rhythms have become an intimate part of Russian culture and have been celebrated in their poetry and literature. Joseph Stalin got it right when he created a theater for the Romani People in Moscow called 'Romen', which operates successfully to this day.

I was once walking past the electric substation of the training establishment in Poti when my eyes caught an electrician working there who simply had to have had Indian roots. Our eyeballs met in almost atavistic bonding. He looked around to see no one was watching, smiled, and said 'Ya Romale – I am Romani'. We became furtive friends – aware of the constant paranoia in Russian organizations of

needless fraternization. He called me home, and I went. He and his family were a rare case of the gentrified Romany. I was a dream visitor for his family. His father would look into my eyes and keep asking me questions about India. Their language still has strong vestiges of Hindi. Ek, Dui, Tin, Shtar is their way of counting. My fleeting encounters with these people were of the uplifting kind that I cherish until now.

A little postscript – the rootless Romani people of the world organized a World Congress under the auspices of the United Nations, which the Indian Government under Indira Gandhi generously financed. A national anthem was commissioned by these people to bond the community together, with the opening words of Djelem Djelem.

Text and illustrations by Vice Admiral Ganesh Mahadevan PVSM AVSM VSM (Retd)



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BABUSHKA POWER

There are many theories about why the Germans lost the second world war on the eastern front – on account of the Russian winter, thanks to lend-lease, because of the ruthless command and control exerted by Stalin, owing to the fighting spirit of the Russian soldier, etc.

I think it had a lot to do with the Babushka. This word is generically used to describe the rustic, ruddy-faced, well-built Russian woman wearing a characteristic head scarf, though its literal meaning is grandmother.

With the country depleted of able-bodied men, it was the babushka who kept the war-economy going, held Russian society together, tilled the fields, manned the lathes in tank factories, and even took to arms. During our stay in the Soviet Union, we were witness to an incident that brought out Babushka Power in full force.

On completion of our first semester at the Caspian Higher Naval War College, Baku, we were given a 15-day break when we could visit Moscow or Leningrad with our families. We were under severe budgetary constraints, and the Head of the Foreign Trainees Faculty Captain Oleg Kagra manov went out of his way to arrange accommodation for us in a military institute in Moscow, where charges were minimal.

We had a most memorable visit to this great city and experienced its bone-chilling weather for the first time. Our accommodation was in the outskirts of the city, and after a hectic day of sightseeing and shopping we had to take an underground metro back. Rush hours in the evening meant crowded trains, and we managed to clamber into a compartment with difficulty. My wife was holding on to our 3-year-old daughter in her arm and could barely maintain her balance in the overcrowded compartment. I was hanging onto our shopping bags and couldn't be of



much help. A seat not far from where we were standing was occupied by a young, uniformed soldier, perhaps on his compulsory military tenure. Seeing my wife and daughter being jostled from all sides, a Babushka seated opposite, yelled out to the youngster in a stentorian voice to give his seat to the foreigner lady with the child. The young soldier was in no mood to pay heed, made a face, and looked the other way. Madame Babushka hadn't lived through the war for nothing. She got up from her seat, made her way to the boorish young man, caught him by his collar and yanked him off his seat. "You obviously have no regard for women. We women didn't fight for and built this country for no-gooders like you". She turned to my wife and asked her to take the seat she had got vacated. There was pin-drop silence in the compartment, and everybody shuffled aside to make way for my wife and daughter. The shamed soldier slunk off at the next halt to stares from all around. Her action stunned us and left a deep impression on our minds. That was Russia in the nineteen eighties when the contribution of the Babushka to the country hadn't yet faded from memory, and the respect she commanded was still monumental.

Vice Admiral DK Dewan (Retd) G2, *Commissioning Crew*. Illustration: **Vice Admiral Ganesh Mahadevan (Retd)**

FOLLOW THE “PAVLOVICH” BLISS

A Peek into Pre-Commissioning Events

Circa 1983. D 53 destroyer was undergoing pre-commissioning trials in the Black Sea, en-route for underwater inspection of ship's hull and appendages on a floating dry dock in Novorossiysk, Russia, located east of Crimea. During this work up phase, the Engineering crew of “Ranjit-to-be” was trying to get to grips with the mysteries of the vibration signatures of the Aft Gas Turbine Generator 1250 E (GTG) – a gas turbine still new to the Indian Navy - compact, noiseless but powerful. Appropriate and adequate tools to analyze and diagnose the vibration patterns of single spool turbines were unavailable. The diagnosis was limited to simple and fundamental senses of touch and hearing through sound tubes, unlike the technological tools and high-level sensors available today.

With these medieval but dependable tools, the crew was certain that vibrations of the aft GTG were beyond satisfactory limits and pointed this out to the Russian guarantee specialists. We insisted that defects be rectified before the ship's commissioning. Deliberations and discussions at various levels followed. The Russian team Leader was in denial mode and convincing him turned out to be an arduous task. Luckily for us, Mr Nikolaev Pavlovich, the Russian mechanic in charge of the engine room turned out to be our archangel. He took the position that any doubts in the customer's mind had to be respected and attended to. He took a one-man stand and convinced the Russian Guarantee Team (RGT) leader to accept the Indian contention and advised him to get a new Turbo Compressor delivered to Novorossiysk where the ship was expected to dock in next 10 days. The dry-docking time planned was 12 days, which limited the time available for replacement of the aft GTG turbo compressor to 10 days. Mr Pavlovich took it upon himself to meet the schedule. Voluminous work was involved – dismantling of exhaust and intake trunkings, top half casing removal, shipping in and out the new & old turbo compressors through TCR and down/up three ladders, buttoning up of systems, positioning of TC in the existing casing, measurement of various clear-



ances, alignment etc. Special Ship staff teams to assist Pavlovich was formed to work under his supervision round the clock. End of the day meetings in the "Spirit Room" (always kept under lock and key of the Russian guarantee team in view of the precious commodity kept there) chaired by Mr Pavlovich, successfully enabled task scheduling and planning for the next day. Despite all our apprehensions and to the relief of the ship's Captain, the beautiful moment arrived. The aft GTG with a new TC was given a "Cold Start" in the dry dock and was successfully run with excellent vibrations levels post undocking. It was an experience of amazing magnitude for our ERAs and officers. The technological processes, precautions to be observed while shipping in a new TC through narrow passages and ladder spaces, checking of run outs of Compressor/turbine stages within the confines of the engine room etc. were internalized and recorded for posterity. This GTG, thereafter successfully ran throughout the First Commission and gave the AER crew no headaches.

Months passed by. Guarantee dry docking was done in Hughes Dry Dock of Mumbai Port Trust, Mr. Nikolaev and his colleagues were ready to depart for Russia. They willingly parted with a lot of spares, but at the same time chided us about the time taken in India to undertake routine dry-docking jobs. In Novorossiysk dry dock, the ship's bottom was cleaned in 4 days whereas the same task took 4 weeks, in MBT's Hughes dry dock. Instances of such

vast gaps in execution and planning were glaring and we tried to convey to RGT the essentials of our labour friendly processes, prevalent culture and democratic norms of work execution.

Later, after more than two years of sailing, it was time for undertaking a major overhaul of the forward GTG, warranting the replacement/repair of the Turbo Compressor. Feverish discussions ensued between the ship, Command HQ and the Dockyard to establish minimum AMP time frame where ship could be laid off for TC replacement. Quoting the first two ships' experience, ND (Mb) submitted EDC of four weeks to complete the task. The ship staff contention that a similar job was undertaken in nine days flat at Novorossiysk dry dock was set aside. Knowing very well the work potential, professional strength and culture of Naval Dockyards, we embarked on a modest approach and decided to accept a fait accompli. A time frame of 3-4 weeks for replacement of GTG Turbo Compressor has willy-nilly become the norm.

Having subsequently served at different levels of the Navy's Technical hierarchy in later years, my mind often goes back to this event. Why should the GTG

replacement rob three weeks of ship's operational time, when small team of 6-8 technicians could successfully complete the job in 9-10 days? Keeping in mind the functioning environment, political climate, work ethics and culture pervasive in our repair organisations as well as in our country, the answers are not difficult to be found. But what drove Mr Pavlovich to undertake this challenging task despite other departmental obligations and take a stand contrary to that of the leader of the Guarantee team? Here, answers are difficult to be found, except for his professional integrity, pride in his work and unflinching commitment. Our dockyard officers and workers are also proficient, technically sound and dexterous. They do rise to the occasion when the situation demands. But their self-belief, professional pride and the passion to overcome challenges are firewalled by local industrial environment and culture prevalent across the country. If a part of "Pavlovich" is present in all of us, then our repair organisations would indeed be the "Temples of Work".

Those "Golden Hands" of N Pavlovich will always be etched in my memory. I will also thank him for one of the rewarding lessons in my marine engineering journey.

Rear Admiral KC Sekhar (Retd), Commissioning SEO

THE FALL GUY

From times immemorial, seafarers have always looked up with respect to their ship's second-in-command or the Mate who was the bridge between the Captain and the lower decks. In the modern merchant marine, he is called the First Officer, and in the war-fighting navies of the world, he is called the Executive Officer or the No. 1. Basically, he performs multifarious duties responsible for anything and

everything and is the sole trouble-shooter onboard. This tradition lives on in most navies of the world even today; of course, with added responsibilities of war-fighting. The role of the Mate or the second-in-command is aptly brought out in an ancient poem titled, "The Fall Guy", written sometime in the 1940s. (Reference: The Doghouse Tale by Bert Oldenhuis, Author House UK Ltd, 2014)



*If the ship begins to roll, call the Mate,
If the cook runs out of coal, call the Mate.
If the Old Man goes to bed, if you see a squall ahead,
If you need the sounding lead, call the Mate.*

*If the running lights are out, call the Mate,
If your latitude's in doubt, call the Mate.
If the wind begins to howl, if the sailors start to growl,
If the whistle chord gets foul, call the Mate,*

*If you're coming into port, call the Mate,
If the midnight lunch runs short, call the Mate.
If the cargo starts to shift, if the workboat goes adrift,
If the fog begins to lift, call the Mate.*

*If you want to drop the hook, call the Mate,
If you're looking for the cook, call the Mate.
If you run a light abeam, if the Chief can't give you steam,
If the mess boy has no cream, call the Mate.*

*If you need the crew on deck, call the Mate,
If the gangplank is a wreck, call the Mate.
If the Captain's on the blink, if a drunk falls in the drink,
If you don't have time to think, call the Mate.*

*If the boxes won't defrost, call the Mate,
If the Chartroom key is lost, call the Mate.
If the thermostats won't work, and the reefer's gone berserk,
If the night mate's got a quirk, call the Mate.*

*Yes, that's who the fall guy is;
All the petty griefs are his.
That poor old bird never gets a pleasant word,
that's why I thank the Lord I'm just the Third.*

- Anonymous Kings Point Alumnus

The Executive Officer on a naval platform is all this and much more. He is the key to success onboard. The performance of a ship is directly indicative of the spirit of the second-in-command. He is also popularly known as the No.1. Naturally, being the only person onboard apart from the Captain who wields the stick he has the distinction of being only One in Number. His job is unenviable as anything that happens on a ship can be attributed to him. Frequently, Captains have been heard to admit that, "he runs the ship, I am just the Captain". He is generally responsible for the fighting efficiency, battle preparedness, morale of the crew, upkeep of the hull, the fire-fighting organisation onboard and is required to be current with all issues so that he can assume command in case the Captain is injured or away for any reason. He is expected to be everywhere at all times of the day or night and is supposed to know everything that happens onboard. Not a whisper in the mess decks nor a joke in the ward-room shall go unnoticed. This dependence on the No.1 by the Captain and the reverence of the crew to his position is an ethos of all seafarers inculcated since time immemorial. His ingenuity on the battlefield or the sports field is expected to win the battle or game, as the case may be, with that extra decisive edge. The crew must respect him and care for him, ready even to give their lives if asked to do so, yet fear him for his service-mindedness and strict discipline. Naturally, the human being appointed as the No.1 will make all the difference to the crew and of course the ship. His psyche, maturity level, behavioral characteristics, experience, personality, professional skills and, lastly, the ability to manage human resources made available to him make the man. Most importantly, the exposure afforded to him by his Captain plays the most vital role in making him an effective leader and manager.

The No.1 in a submarine is expected to be all this and much more. On a submarine his managerial skills have to be much more honed as he is residing in very close proximity to the crew. The men are observing every action of his and he is permanently being watched for weaknesses that can be exploited. Moreover, his professional competence is always being measured so that the crew is able to come to a decision whether they can risk their lives in his hands. All this happens on a submarine, as the No. 1

is the officer in the Control Room at Action Stations who controls all the evolutions and emergencies. His role as the Principal Warfare Officer could make the difference between life and death during combat. The rapport between him and the men has to be built up and maintained continuously. Some of the drawbacks of this close proximity are that the men and the No.1 are mutually aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses. His relationship with the other officers is the most keenly watched attribute by the crew as this decides their level of co-operation with him. The common saying that "a close-knit ward-room keeps troubles at bay" couldn't be truer if the No.1 wasn't the primary binding factor. The faith demonstrated by the Captain in delegating various tasks to him, his working relationship, the opportunities given for undertaking delicate, dangerous and challenging tasks do not go unnoticed by the crew. A good XO can make all the difference in keeping the morale of the crew high.

Now comes the question as to how does an officer appointed as the No.1 become conversant with all these attributes that are expected of him? He has to naturally count on the experience that he has personally gained during the course of his various tenures and his observation of the various seniors that he has encountered in the past. Most importantly, he tends to hero worship all the Commanding Officers that he has served with right from his induction in the Service. Captains, unknowingly, make a very prominent impact on the officers serving under them. There is also a flip side to this and that is, as one matures in service and observes some undesirable attributes in his superior, he tends to become anti that particular attribute, for life. Therefore, Captains have a mammoth responsibility of developing their second-in-command such that one day in the near future his No.1 would be fully equipped to assume the ultimate responsibility of assuming command of a warship or submarine, wherein, the buck would stop at his table. The most important role a Captain plays is in succession planning. Though in the normal course of events the No.1 does not become the Captain after he relinquishes command as the system positions another suitable individual, he needs to be trained such that when the time comes the No.1 is fully trained to perform the duties. For overall development, he must be empowered,

assigned responsibilities and made accountable for the position. At the same time the Captain constantly monitors the progress made by the No.1. Job rotation is an important part of succession planning. This can run smoothly when the No.1 is fully competent to take up the responsibilities of the Captain's post as only this approach can maximise human capital. The importance is that the pool of knowledge available with the Captain should remain within the ship even after his exit.

Captains, therefore, create an indelible impression –

good or bad - on their subordinates. Wardrooms are abundant with stories of "my Captain did this ..." and "my first captain did that ...", etc. Hence, their actions should always be proper as they are under the watchful eye of the crew. Their interest to see that the XO's are given adequate opportunity to develop themselves for assuming higher responsibility permeates down to all levels. The No.1 is one of the most important cogs in the wheel of a ship's organisation.

Remember, there is only One in Number, No.1.

Commodore Aspi Cawasji (Retd) has held important command and staff assignments. He is a recipient of the *Nau Sena Medal (1996)* and *Vishisht Seva Medal (2013)* and has jointly authored a book titled, "*Strategic Vision 2030: Security and Development of Andaman & Nicobar Islands*".



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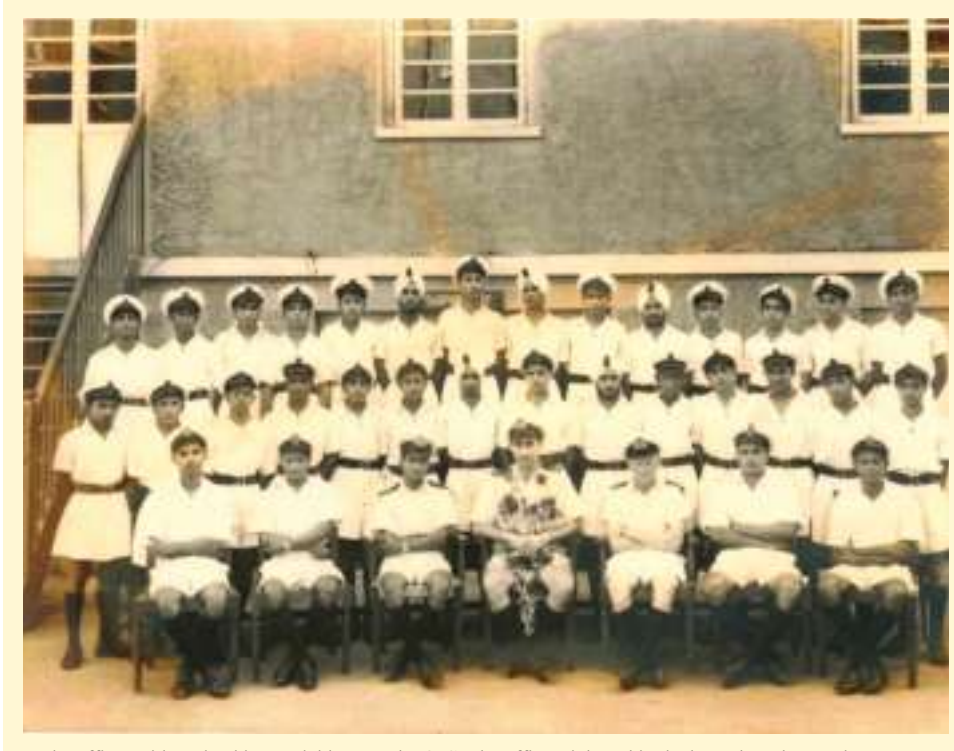
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The Navy At Bombay After Partition



The officer with garland is Lt. Fielder RN, the OIC. The officer right to him is the author, then senior warrant officer V Sriramulu and the officer on left is senior warrant officer Watson RN at the shipwright training school

I came to know that Western Naval Command was celebrating its Golden Jubilee in 2018 and the events would continue till next year. Though 50 years have elapsed for WNC in that status, there existed Flag Officer Bombay for many years under the Royal Indian Navy before independence.

A little prior to the day of independence, I happened to start my tenure at one of the units in Bombay and it also happened that my application for a change of branch was forwarded to the Senior Officer - Bombay, Commodore Indigo Jones.

Initially, I was not able to recall rightly the designation of Cmde Indigo Jones. Later I found a clear mention of him in the book, 'Blueprint to Bluewater, the Indian Navy 1951–1965' written by RAdm Satyindra Singh. It reads: "On August 15, 1947 RAdm JTS Hall (RN) was selected by Government of India to Command and reconstitute independent India's Royal Indian

Navy (RIN) and was designated the Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy (FOCRIN). Cmde MH St.L Nott was appointed the Chief of Staff at Naval Headquarters. The appointment of Flag Officer Bombay was abolished and Cmde HR Indigo Jones assumed the duties of Commodore-in-charge Bombay in lieu. Commodore HB Ellison was appointed Commodore-in-Charge, Cochin".

It is easy to guess that 'Commodore Nott essay' was named after Cmde MH St. Nott and Ellison Avenue at Kochi Naval Base was named after Commodore HB Ellison.

Before the declaration of independence, I was serving in HMIS Dilawar at Karachi. For almost a year before 15 August 1947, there were rumours of independence and we were all excited about the great event. The Indian officers and sailors of RIN serving at Karachi requested for a transfer to India,



Admiral Lord Mountbatten shaking hand with the author, while Commodore Indigo Jones looks on

so that they would not get subjected to the embarrassment of saluting the Pakistani flag. So, they all were transferred on three ships to Bombay. Since the Boys Training Establishment had started in HMIS Hamla, I reported there in the rank of Senior Warrant Officer (a single thick striper) on 6th August 1947. Commander Karmarkar was the CO Hamla then.

Those days it so happened that most of the weapon department sailors on the naval ships were of Pakistan origin where as those of navigation and communication departments were of Indian origin. It appeared to us that it was so by design by RIN's British senior officers. Added to this were many known incidents in the operations during Goa action and off Gujarat coast, that at the nick of time ships magazines were getting flooded or the wires snapped in the firing circuits. Some of us were very upset with these events. It culminated in my putting up an application to the CO for a transfer to the Gunnery Branch.

The CO put me through a test as the Parade Commander for a period of one month in order to judge my suitability. Having been satisfied with my performance he forwarded my application to the

Commodore-in-charge Bombay, Cmde HR Indigo Jones. He, however, opined that since I did not come up from ranks in that branch and was not groomed for long enough to get hands-on experience on gunnery equipment, I could not be allowed to change into that branch. Thus my application was turned down by him. Given the unwritten policy of senior RIN officers, this decision was hardly surprising.

After a couple of years at Hamla, I was transferred to the Shipwright Training School which was located



inside the Naval Barracks, near the WNC HQ premises. Lt Fielder was the Officer-in-Charge there. During my tenure there, two very important VIP visits took place. One was that of Admiral Lord Mountbatten and the other that of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the then Home Minister of independent India. I fortunately have the photographs of both the events.

I took Sardar Patel's photographs during the inspection of ceremonial parade at Gateway of India. I was a little shocked when suddenly, somebody in civvies, held my shoulder from behind and strongly admonished me not to do so. But Sardar Patel just waved him off and that's how I got this photograph.

Cdr V Sriramulu (Retd) kickstarted his naval career as officer in RIN during the WWII. He took part in sailing expeditions and post retirement he picked a mountaineering and race walking. He has won Gold Medals in 5, 10 and 20 kms Race Walk events in the age group of 90-95 years at World Masters Athletics Championships 2016 at Perth, Australia. He was declared the 'Athlete of Asia' for this performance.

DAREDEVIL ANGEL WITH WINGS



I had joined the 41st course at NDA in “Kilo” squadron. Being a naval cadet, very soon I became aware of Lt Mohan Varghese who was Divisional Officer (Divo) of “Charlie” squadron and was popularly known as “Charlie Varghese” because he was omni-present in any squadron activity and was instrumental in making Charlie the champion squadron. It was said that despite having a plastered leg due to fracture, he would be everywhere cheering and motivating his squadron. Mrs Veera Varghese, his wife, was the most popular lady in NDA, particularly in Charlie squadron as she too would be seen everywhere cheering the cadets of the squadron. All in all, Lt Mohan Varghese was a role model for most of the cadets and, specially, the naval cadets, in the Academy.

Years later, after completing my Marine Engineering

Specialization followed by Aeronautical Engineering Course, I joined INAS 315 squadron for Competency Certificate. And it was a pleasant surprise to see that Lt Cdr Mohan Varghese was there in the squadron as a pilot. He was fully trained in Russia and had flown one of the aircraft from there to Goa. There were lots of stories about him - that he was quick to learn the Russian Language and most of the times got 5 out of 5 in the pilot’s tests. He was one of the few pilots, who passed the blindfold test, where in on ‘emergency command’ the pilot is supposed to correctly switch on /off the emergency CB out of hundreds of CB in the cockpit, while being blindfolded. The Russian Trainer Crew were apparently very fond of him.

During my time as a trainee in the squadron, I wanted to clarify many things. I found that he was not only

approachable but also knowledgeable on all aircraft systems; he knew things on his fingertips and would clarify the doubts fully. He was a daredevil pilot too. Once, for reasons of understanding some defect, I too had gone into the cockpit for flying. Generally, while starting the engine, it is normal practice to keep bypassing the fuel to the engine by pressing the 'bypass fuel' button to avoid uncontrollable temperature rise in the engine turbine. But to my surprise I observed that he did not press the button even once while starting. Later I asked him the reason and he promptly replied that Russian system in the aircraft is designed to take care of temperature rise and he had full faith in that and in any case, he was monitoring the temperature.

On one occasion, we had divisions accompanied by flypast for the visit of CNS Admiral RL Perriera. Generally, it is the fighters like Sea Harriers or Kirans that come overhead the dais and pull up steeply at the end. Big aircraft like IL 38 just fly level to avoid surge due to sudden acceleration of engines. On that day, it was seen that IL 38 suddenly pulled up almost vertically. This resulted in a loud bang and everyone including CNS Admiral RL Perriera could not help but look aghast at the steeply climbing IL 38. It is said that CNS commented: "it must be that bugger Mohan". (Admiral Perriera, as Commodore, was Deputy Commandant in NDA when Lt Mohan Varghese was Divo there). Later it was evident that it was indeed Mohan Varghese and it was his way of

conveying to the CNS that he was flying. He was one of the pilots who exploited the capabilities of IL 38 to the fullest.

Later, when I moved to BMF, Cdr Mohan Varghese was appointed as CO of the squadron. He always looked after all his subordinates, be it officers, sailors or their families. He knew everyone by their first names and was aware of their background. Not just him, Mrs Veera Varghese too was very open and always helpful to all the ladies of the squadron. She would make sure to visit the houses of sailors' and officers' families whenever the squadron was on detachment. Most of the time she would go driving her own vehicle. Cdr Varghese always kept the squadron personnel engaged even if it meant playing volleyball during working hours – whenever there was no flying - with him taking the lead. He was a go-getter and a leader who led by example.

I always felt proud of my association with him and learnt a lot from his many unique qualities like positive attitude, ease of approach, open mindedness, inclusivity, and above all, respect that he accorded to every individual. Unfortunately, he died in an accident at a young age. He was a Commodore posted in Chennai when the chopper he was taking passage in met with an accident. He will always be remembered for the wonderful human being that he was.

Cdr RRTyagi (Retd), an alumnus of NDA (41st Course) has the unique distinction of being Air Engineer Officer of two squadrons - INAS 315 and INAS 330. He was Engineer Officer INS Tir and later, OiC, Naval Aircraft Servicing Development Organisation.

DIWALI AT SEA



Practice Missile Firings (PMFs) are high-octane exercises and reminds one of Diwali. PMFs are characterised by an agonising hiatus over an extended period of time followed by an intense ephemeral action lasting only a few minutes. The entire scenario was succinctly described by a now-retired Commander-in-Chief, after being a silent observer during a missile launch, as a classic case of “Wham, Bam, thank you Ma’am... left unsatisfied”. The C-in-C being a navigator obviously did not share the undisguised exuberance of the Gunner after hitting a Battle Practice Target (BPT) about 70 km away. The “left unsatisfied” addendum by the C-in-C was perhaps due to the missile flying past the target after tearing a hole through the fragile fishnet tied across the BPT (maybe the NA forgot to brief the C-in-C).

Most gunners would easily recall participating in many a missile firing exercise during their tenures onboard ships. The PMF fever on the ship would usually kick-start when the Commanding Officer would get a whiff of an intended PMF during the Fleet

Commander’s briefing. Most aspiring captains would vociferously bid to be the SAM firing ships during the PMF exercises. The canvassing for nomination would begin with a mandatory stopover in the FGOs cubicle on the way back after the briefing. Some back thumping and friendly hugs would be followed by a gentle nudge to remind the FGO about the operational efficacy of the ship’s systems during the last campaign. The Captain would then direct the GO to pay obeisance to the FGO and edify him about the ship’s system. A mandatory articulation about the omissions and commissions by other worthies in the race for the primary firing ship would not be out of place during these professional discussions. The campaign has begun in true earnest. Back onboard, the GO infuses a vigorous dose of energy into his team with the zeal of super magnets in a cyclotron to ratchet up their performance. The ship is now a cauldron of activity with intense crew drills, missile emergencies, mis-launch drills and system checks.

The action onboard starts to build up many days before the scheduled event. The Crew Inspection

Team lands up a few days before the event to examine the system crew, check system performance and clear the ship for firing. With this hurdle cleared the atmosphere on the ship is supercharged with anticipation. It is drills, drills and drills until the D-Day. On the day of the firing, it is a mandatory ritual to invoke the blessing of the divine lord to propel the missile on the precise celestial trajectory towards the target. As H hour approaches, the tension is visible in the missile control post and the operations room, while a few bystanders (Medical officer, Logistics officer, EO) jostle to take up vantage positions for a “Kodak shot of the day” to capture the missile launch on camera. In the ops room there is pin drop silence and one can almost hear the racing heartbeat of the GO. At H Hour, the Flag orders the SSM firing ship to launch when ready. On the SSM firing ship, after a final check, the GO presses the launch button and soon enough, the night sky is lit up with the jet flame of the SSM booster as the missile takes off from the launcher. Their job done, the SSM team relaxes and begins celebrations. The GO quietly inspects the launcher and collects the “chikka mechanism” as a souvenir.

Now the scene of action shifts to the packed column down the firing line. The ships are busy adjusting their position and aspect to be able to keep the firing arcs open. On the primary firing ship, all eyes are on the SCO eagerly waiting for him decipher the code word “*****” and call out missile launched. In the ops room the gunnery team now wait anxiously for detecting the incoming target on the radar. The agonising short wait seem like hours and with each passing second the palpable tension in the ops room starts to increase exponentially. All eyes are focussed on the radar operator as he watches the radar display in rapt attention to pick the blip. As seconds go by, the radar operator can feel a hole being burnt into his back due to the laser-like focussed gaze of the entire Command team. The seasoned radar operator, who has seen many a PMF, manages to retain his focus and swiftly identifies the tiny fast moving blip on the screen as the missile. It is a well-rehearsed drill after this; a well-oiled juggernaut thundering through the countryside. The operator rattles out “missile target range --- bearing ---” and designates the target to the SAM systems that have been impatiently waiting to

receive the target cue. The radar operator continuously starts to report the target which resonates in the ops room. After the target has been designated to the weapon systems, the locus of action now shifts to the SAMCO and his team in the SAM control post.

The SAMCO, like the conductor of a symphony orchestra, synchronises his well-rehearsed operators to quickly acquire the target. There is a steady stream of reports from the control post to the ops room and final preparations commence for engaging the target. The count down for SAM launch has begun. With the Command giving permission to engage, the SAMCO with a silent prayer on his lips presses the launch button. The night sky is again lit up, this time with the tell-tale glow of the SAM’s rocket motor as it streaks like a banshee towards the incoming missile. The SAM is captured by the tracking radar and is guided on an interception course towards the target. All eyes in the Ops Room are again glued to the radar screen waiting for impact and the target to disappear.

As soon as the target disappears, a loud cheer erupts in the SAM control post followed by an equally boisterous uproar in the Ops Room. Not to be left far behind, the bridge team also adds to the cacophony in the Ops Room by reporting “incoming missile ditched after SAM impact”. The bystanders on the bridge rejoice in capturing the event on celluloid for posterity. The Ops Room has turned into a cacophony of voices accompanied by a lot of back thumping, even as the initial engagement report is transmitted to the OTC. One can feel the instantaneous dissipation of the long built up tension in the Ops Room, equivalent to the opening the flood gates of bursting dam. The congratulatory message from the Fleet Cdr further elevates the jubilant mood in the ship and the gunnery team lines up in the Ops Room to celebrate the moment.

If, for some transcendent reason, the prayers of the SAMCO are not answered or for some extraordinary rationale the incoming missile does manage to evade the SAMs, the operator in the Ops Room calls out “target not destroyed”. Maybe a TTB (Technical Target Burst) can be claimed later from the analysis unit. Now there is very little time left for engagement

as the incoming missile thunders along its trajectory. It would soon go past the ship and the opportunity would be lost forever. The MRGO and CRGO who have till now been waiting patiently for their turn to take a shot at the incoming missile are suddenly gung-ho. The guns are swiftly directed at the missile and the medium range guns, followed by the short range guns open up. The air is filled with thick smoke of burnt cordite and the sky is raked with the tracer fire of the 76 mm/30 mm guns. The missile is engulfed with flak from the exploding shells. Many a

missile has been brought down by the MR guns and if lady luck is smiling on the ship the missile would be brought down; else the missile would glide past the ship to be engaged by other ships down the firing line.

The Firing Run is over and the ships start to form up for the next serial. The Navigator and the Communicator take over while the Gunnery Officer plans the painting of the missile icon on the launcher to display a successful engagement.

Cmde BR Prakash VSM (Retd) is an alumnus of TS Rajendra and joined the Indian Navy in 1986. He is a Missile and Gunnery specialist and has served as Gunnery officer on INS Rajput. He commanded INS Vidyut, INS Ganga and was the commissioning CO of INS Sardar Patel.



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Empowering the Nation's Defence Forces



INS Valsura, the electrical training establishment doesn't have a seafront, yet has access to sea. The southern coast of the Gulf of Kutch is just a stone's throw away. Rozi Matha temple, Rozi Lighthouse and Rozibunder, a tidal port, are in close proximity, yet Valsura did not have a sailing club till 1992. I reported to Valsura in August 1990 and the Golden Jubilee year started on 15 December 1991. Commodore S Mohapatra was the Commanding Officer. He loved to try things which were never tried earlier. To make Valsura a sailing establishment by setting up a sailing club was his aim and dream.

Some informal discussions were held at various fora. I had my first experience of sailing in Circars in 1974. My four-year tenure in Chilka gave me more opportunity to learn the ropes. I was part of the team that sailed in two whalers to the Chilka lake mouth in 1990, first time in the history of that establishment. When these experiences were narrated to Cmde Mohapatra, his aim became an obsession.

The first step was to get sailing boats. We got five Enterprises, two Cadet class and four Optimist boats by mid-1992. Our sailing arena was the salt pans in front of Valsura. The depth available was less than four feet and the arena was slightly bigger than a football court. However, many more were itching for something beyond. We leaped in to the Gulf of Kutch at Rozi. Transporting boats by a three tonner, physically lifting the boats, pushing them into the sea, sailing and transporting the boats back to Valsura was more of a cumbersome task than sailing fun. Nevertheless we gained valuable experience.

Cdr Ramachandran and I did some homework and approached our CO to permit us to take up an expedition. The plan was to sail in five Enterprises to Mundra a small tidal port – 28 nautical miles across the Gulf of Kutch on the northern coast. One Motor Cutter, an antique from the ship breaking yard of Alang was our escort. Seeing our background, no seasoned Executive branch officer would have given approval. But Commodore Mohapatra did. Many more times he took such bold decisions with full faith in us and of course spent many sleepless nights. Subsequently, we were flagged off in the early hours of a wintry morning from Rozi. Strong north easterly breeze and a foggy day set an exciting backdrop for the adventure. Our enterprise boat, Cdr RD Ogale at helm and I as crew got lost for twelve hours. Finally, we made it to Mundra by midnight, earning our sea legs.

Our request for a more stable sea boat was fulfilled with a Whaler, a rundown Gemini and OBM. A brilliant MTech in Mechanical Engineering Lt GB Varadaraju took up on himself to operationalize the OBM. After lot of ingenious applications, the OBM started coughing. Basin trials were carried out in a 45 gallon drum. Finally, the Gemini was launched. Pirotan Island, Balachadi, Sachana – all about eight to twelve nautical miles away – were our learning grounds.

Cmde Mohapatra realized our travails in sailing from the rocky coast. Erecting a Sailing Club building in the tide prone zone was taken up. Lt Cdr PK Sudhakaran, our First Lieutenant was the contractor.

Construction work progressed only during low tide. One had to run for life as the tide advanced and restart from whatever was not washed away. Finally, the building took shape and a 200-foot footbridge was built to connect the shore to the Watermanship Training Complex.

With knowledge and experience gained about currents, tides, corals, communication and so on, we went on more expeditions in Whaler and Enterprise class from Rozi to Kanda, Wadinar, Mandvi, Okha, Balachadi etc. covering distances of 25 to 40 nautical miles per expedition. We took part in the Bombay - Goa Whaler Sailing rally in 1993. I had Lt Cdr Suresh, Lt Kaushal Jadia, SLTs Khurana and Shaw as my crew. We finished the race in the last position. However, the rally gave us an opportunity to meet sailing stalwarts: Homi Motiwala, Tarapore, Cmde Mongia, Mongia brothers and many more. We could rub shoulders with them during our stay at Bombay, stopover at Vijaydurg/Malwa and Goa. We learnt a great deal from this.

The local 33 Wing of Air Force requested for assistance on one occasion. A MiG 21 had crashed off Sarmat bombing practice range. The pilot was picked up by a chopper but the Board of Inquiry team headed by a Group Captain wanted to visit the crash site which was in a tidal zone. My sailing coterie and I jumped in with our *khatara* motor cutter. The onward journey was very pleasant—calm seas, cool breeze—and with a soft drink in hand, the BOI President quipped, “Life in the Navy is a bloody picnic”. We landed at the sight of the crash, debris strewn over a wide area. My crew member SLT Nelson D’Souza sans emotion, chopped off the pointed head of the crashed MiG to carry as a memento. I think it is still there in the Valsura sailing club. I gave a deadline to the fly boys to reach the boat lest they should be caught in the rising tide. The Group Captain didn’t pay heed to my warning. Finally, he was 25 meters away from the boat when the tide reached up to his waist. We threw a rope and hauled him in. The return journey after sunset was more exciting. The tide ebbed at 3 knots. Our boat chugged five knots at its peak performance. Pirotan

lighthouse was the only direction finder. We managed to reach home and as the tide ran away, diverted the boat to Bedi port nearby. The poor old Group Captain climbed 15 feet up a rusty rickety ladder with some rungs missing in it. As he climbed up, he kissed the floor and said with a smart salute, “I withdraw my morning comments, Sir. I salute the Navy!”

Cmde Mohapatra was transferred out in 1994. We gave him a sailing out from Rozi to Balachadi. The next CO, Cmde Bajwa, though not as enthusiastic as his predecessor, continued to encourage the spirit of sailing. We took part in one more Bombay - Goa sailing race and this time came fifth among 25 whalers; at last some achievement to boast of!

1994 was also the year when Gujarat was hit by a severe cyclone; the Southern coast of the Gulf of Kutch was the worst hit. Jodiya, a minor port and taluka headquarters was submerged in water as a river nearby was in full spate and breached its banks. The best available naval team viz. my caucus was pressed in to service to assist the civil administration. The Tehsildar of Jodiya was in Jamnagar and badly wanted to reach his taluka headquarters to take charge of the situation. There was only one way to go, by crossing the furious river. A 133 KV high tension wire fell on our boat en route; thankfully the wire was not live but the experience was spine chilling. For two days we worked relentlessly in Jodiya ferrying people to safety, supplying food to marooned areas and earned accolades for the Navy. The Tehsildar got promoted to Deputy Collector, in recognition of his service!

During my three decades in the Navy, I realized that though sailing is a sporting activity that inculcates and nurtures seaman-like qualities, the patronage it receives is less than desirable. Rarely, one sees officers of the rank of Captain and above in a sailing club. Big yachts like Samudra and Tarini launch us in to big leagues and global canvas. But it is the age-old, abundantly available, proven sea boat like the Whaler that grooms seamen and develops love for the sea.

Commander Durga Prasad Kothuri (Retd) was commissioned in 1973 into the Education Branch and retired in 2003. He lives in Hyderabad with his wife and two daughters. (durgapkothuri@gmail.com)

Of Vintage Tales and Car Rallies

Come early spring and lovers of old cars look forward to the vintage and classic car rally. With its golden anniversary behind us it continues to be a hardy annual – a pilgrimage for loving owners of old cars and for others to admire the beauties which are carefully preserved for the big day. In the 1980s, I took part in a friend's 1935 Adler Cabriolet. At the pre-event cocktail party in Mr CR Irani's house on Tughlak Road, everyone agreed that German cars were a rarity. Our Adler went on to win the prize for the car coming from the furthest point of travel - from Nagpur. My friend and owner, bachelor 'Dada' Adhikari was overwhelmed because the front page of the 'Statesman' carried a photograph of him with his dear possession. He went on to become an instant celebrity in the 'Orange City'.

I too once had a vintage sports car in Delhi in 1961 – a 1947 MG TC. There was no rally then but I have a vintage memory to tell. I was Flag Lieutenant to the Naval Chief. One day, the Defence Minister called on RAX because he wanted to see the Admiral at short notice. The official car was not immediately at hand. So I drove Admiral Katari in my open car along the Sunken road of Rashtrapati Bhavan, then Dalhousie Road (recently named Dara Shikoh), South Avenue



Commodore Mukund B Kunte AVSM (Retd) was formerly Head of the Military Wing & Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat. He joined the Indian Navy in 1951 and was commissioned in 1954. A Navigator by profession, he was commissioning crew of the old INS Kiltan.

past Teen Murti House where Panditji was in residence, and into 19, Teen Murti Road. Those were not days of security concerns and Mr VK Krishna Menon was waiting in the verandah of his bungalow. Famous for his sangfroid, VKKM did not show the least bit of surprise on seeing one of his Chiefs emerging from my 'old jalopy'.

I now own a Standard Herald convertible – 1961 model. Thanks to Steve Preston, an old colleague from my Royal Naval College days in Dartmouth, I acquired a steel frame for a folding roof of a Triumph Herald (it cost fifty pounds). The rest was easy with Quadir's Garage in Malviya Nagar fixing it all up, making our possession the only one of her kind 'East of Suez'. In 2008, when I went for the rally, I was told that my car qualified for the classic category and they hurriedly issued me the papers. So, I participated with my wife – she figures with her sister in the MG (photo below) – in the convertible, in a creation which almost defied time and description.

But let me get back to 1958 when I had bought my MG in Visakhapatnam from the Raja of Daspalla, a Princely State in Orissa, for 4500 rupees and had to sadly part with it in 1963 for 5200 rupees when we were expecting our first child. It became inevitable because in that condition my wife had difficulty in negotiating the long reach of the clutch and brake pedals. When I put an ad, to dispose off that beauty, in a national newspaper with the words "owner of an MG sports car, after many years of delightful driving, reluctantly offers it for sale because of a nagging wife", it was politely returned by the Editor for deletion of the last two offending words!

'MEET AND GREET'

Grooming Young Officers

A commissioned officer, by virtue of his rank, is bestowed with nobility and prestige, and is expected to meet the obligations of the rank in all spheres of the naval career. The authority an officer commands and the privileges he is accorded with, are accompanied with humongous responsibilities. He is thus expected to be a true embodiment of naval core values and exemplify moral and ethical code of conduct, physical and mental robustness, integrity and self-discipline, to emerge as a proficient leader.

However, with changing times, it has been observed that there is a concurrent dip or deterioration in the values or ethos, even in the Services, forcing a relook and introspection. Many, within the Indian Navy, feel that there is a need to preserve the higher values and nobility associated with Armed Forces. Towards this, focused and proactive efforts are made towards 'Grooming and Mentoring' of young officers.

One of the foremost pre-requisites in this direction is to foster an environment conducive for mentoring and grooming. This mandates the creation of more avenues for enhanced interaction of young officers with seniors to pave the way for greater involvement and personalised attention.

INS Valsura, a premier training establishment has devised a methodical roadmap, titled 'Meet and Greet' to groom and mentor trainee officers. This involves an informal gathering comprising five to six staff officers and eight student officers, conducted on a fortnightly basis.

Accordingly, the staff officers of the establishment

have been divided into five to six pre-defined 'Directing Staff' groups with each group comprising 2-3 Cdrs, 3-4 Lt Cdrs and 3-4 Lts. Similarly, the student officers have also been divided into syndicates, with each syndicate comprising 8-10 officers. The methodology involves a group of DS interacting with a trainee officers' syndicate over cocktails or a cup of coffee. The DS and the student officers' groups are optimally rotated to maximise interaction of all syndicates with different DS groups. Thus, the trainees get an opportunity to interact with senior officers and ladies providing a platform to discuss topics of interest, informally and intimately.

This informal interaction essentially helps 'break the ice' between the trainee officers and the staff officers and their families and vice-versa. It helps the young officers overcome their hesitation in social interactions, if any. Ladies, too, share their experiences as naval wives offering guidance and advice to young officers to better equip them to face personal and professional challenges. Interactive game sessions such as Taboo, Pictionary, Dumb charades etc. and casual discussions on contemporary topics of generic nature, are also conducted.

'Meet and Greet' has indeed been a welcome initiative, especially appreciated by the young officers, many of who vouch that it has made them more socially affable. They feel that more such avenues for social interactions should be provided. This would enable them to understand service etiquettes, traditions and norms better and help acclimatize them to the naval way of life.

Cdr Amit Ahuja was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 1 January 2007. His tenures at sea include Weapons Maintenance Officer, INS Godavari; Electrical Officer, INS Abhay, and Assistant Electrical Officer (Missiles), INS Teg. His staff appointment includes Deputy Director Weapon Equipment at IHQ, MoD (Navy). He is currently posted as Chief Instructor, Electrical Technology School at INS Valsura.

All Fighting Is Not Always In The Battlefield

After a long inning in active service, you are about to retire. You have feelings of pride mixed with a huge relief. Pride is not hard to understand as you have always been aware that you successfully completed serving the best service in the world. Relief is due to the promise of relaxed hours and an end to separation from the family.

However, what you haven't reckoned is a series of challenges. The first one is that you are now almost on your own as in comparison to when you were in active service. There is no MES to attend to your house defects and the ECHS ensures you stay fit by making you run around in circles. But these are still minor hiccups; other significant things await, such as children's marriages, death of parents and serious ailments.

I went through all three. My elder son got married four years after I retired. The younger one is still undecided. With my father having died early (in 1984) in a jeep accident my battle off the battlefield had started much before retirement. Subsequently, I looked after my mother to the best of my ability for 32 years until she too left me in August 2016.

I didn't let my own ailment of psoriasis and psoriatic arthropathy that had hit me in the year 1993 overwhelm me. There was never an occasion when I let my work suffer because of it. There were, of course, occasions when I was admitted in the hospital critically ill because of it. I took to writing humour rather than making myself sicker than I was (one of my most-read humorous blogposts was born when I was in the hospital in great pain and suffering). And then came my wife's serious ailment - fibromyalgia. She had pain all over her body, at all

times. Fortunately, it was diagnosed in end-February 2010 after I had retired from the Navy. Since there was no Rheumatologist in INHS Asvini, I had to go all the way to AFMC, Pune to have her seen by one there, periodically.

Irrespective of the branch that a naval person belongs to, he or she is essentially a problem solver. Yes, there are some problems that elude solution (for example, we are still not rid of the problem on our Western border). However, the training undergone by a navy man or woman enables him or her to find the best course of action.



And then, one day, God called me aside (He does so very frequently these days now that I am free to listen to Him after the Gods in the Navy have decided to leave me alone!) and said, "Sunbyanyname (my pen-name), now I have decided to give you a real challenge."

While I had not yet retired from my second innings (I was a Senior VP in Reliance Industries), I noticed that my wife, Lyn (short for Marilyn) had started forgetting things. After various tests, doctors at Asvini started treating her for early Parkinson's. Later, two consecutive MRIs done (in 2016 and 2017) confirmed cerebral atrophy.

Early this year, a visit to NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences in Bangalore) confirmed that she was suffering from dementia (probably Alzheimer's). It is an 'irreversible, degenerative, terminal disease.' Adversities such as these make one more philosophical than ever. One of the beliefs that sees me through is that God is always thinking kindly of me. I strongly believe that there is no situation so bad that cannot be made worse by negativity.

So, today, I am in a position whence my role as a 'caretaker' has become 24/7 simply because Lyn is not in a position to look after herself. It started off by my administering her medicines, but gradually, she required my assistance to bathe, get dressed, eat, drink, travel, and walk; in short, to do anything and everything. She cannot be left alone even for short duration of time lest she should do something risky because of disorientation and forgetfulness and cause herself serious injury. Her increasing incontinence necessitates that she and the spaces around her be cleaned up every now and then.

Gradually, she lost the power to write. Being lexically deficit (part of the disease process) means that she can hardly express herself orally too. Among other things, it means that just in case she is lost, she will not even be able to tell anyone anything about herself. Moreover, after my parents' demise, I have to divide time between Kandaghat (my parents' place) and Mumbai, adding to the complications. Now, of course, I have found different ways to keep track of her and put a card around her neck about her particulars. However, there have been at least two occasions, in the past, when we missed our flights when she went to the toilet and couldn't find her way back. In short, she is at the same stage as an infant except that the infant, as it becomes older, has increasing curiosity and learning acumen whereas the nature of her disease implies just the opposite with every passing day.

After studying all the available literature on AD and Dementia, I have tried to tackle it in various ways. First and foremost, is to keep her happy, cheerful and hopeful at all times. Then there are: medicines (sadly, always a battle to obtain them), exercises - both physical and mental (I have a speech and cognitive skills therapist for her), eating the right and

healthy foods, adequate and healthy sleep, engaging her with reading and social interactions, prayers and faith-healing, music and humour (reputed to be two of the best tools to tackle AD), alternative treatments and making her as independent as possible.

Let me recount some positives even in a situation such as this:

- ❖ My own ailment has become insignificant. Keeping myself fit and healthy is not an option anymore; it is a must. God is always kind. I am reminded of a joke: "How can you get rid of your severe headache? The answer is hit yourself on the toe with a hammer!"
- ❖ There is tremendous love and togetherness. There is no question of going out alone even for short duration.
- ❖ Having accepted the situation, there is a resurgence of resolve. Most of you who are reading this would vouch for it that there is nothing like resolve to keep you in the correct frame of mind. For example, this summer, when I decided to take her on a trip to Europe (not with the Navy group as it would have been impossible for us to meet deadlines of a fast-paced itinerary) most friends couldn't believe that I could pull it off, with her being on the wheel-chair (her fibromyalgia limits her walking to short distances). We still managed to see all places as the pictures here would testify.

Last, but not least, your faith only becomes stronger. There are forces beyond your control but faith helps you walk the right path. Here is what Clausewitz had to say (though not in my context): "Two qualities are indispensable: first, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and secondly, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead."



Cmde RPS Ravi VSM (Retd) retired in end-February 2010 as Director of College of Naval Warfare after 35 years of active service. He was Senior VP in RIL for six years. He blogs at: www.sunbyanynname.com his email: rpsravi@gmail.com

‘HEALING TOUCH’

This article has been sent by Captain Suryakant Redekar's batchmates from Naval Foundation Bangalore Charter

This is the incredible story of an unusual naval officer who developed unique skills and put them to effective use. Captain Suryakant Redekar retired as a marine engineer by hanging his safety boots and started his second innings by stepping into a therapist's shoes to cure people suffering from chronic illnesses like cervical spondylitis, lumbar spondylitis, sciatica, tennis elbow and similar illnesses involving nerves, bones and muscles.

When Captain Sumit Singh was wheeled into Suryakant's bungalow in Bhopal on a wheelchair, his hopes were at the nadir. Little did he know at that time that he would walk back with confidence lifting his own suitcase within 14 days, with Suryakant's healing touch.

Mr Suresh Gupta, a senior officer with the Madhya Pradesh Government in Bhopal, was bedridden with severe back pain for many months, unable to sit or walk. He was admitted in the ICU of a renowned hospital for a spinal column surgery for his chronic illness. He was brought to Suryakant's 'Home Clinic' in an ambulance two days before the scheduled surgery as a last-ditch effort. He was in extreme pain. Looking at his pathetic condition, Suryakant stepped into the ambulance with a bowl of til (sesame) oil and started working on his legs below knees, touching him at specific locations, stimulating his nerves with his well-practised fingers and freeing up the muscles by applying precise pressure. Wonder of wonders, Gupta sat up on the stretcher after this very first session. His surgery was postponed by a day to have another round with the Captain. Gupta was usually accompanied by a group of people during every visit, but after the third session, Suryakant did not allow anyone to help Gupta when he attempted to walk for the first time in many months without any aid. The whole gathering broke into an applause when Gupta staggered back to the ambulance on his own. He

received regular 'healing-touch' by Suryakant for two weeks and his surgery was eventually cancelled. After 15 sittings, he drove down to the clinic and resumed his office in a fully fit condition (S1A1 in naval parlance).

In Suryakant's bungalow in Bhopal, one finds verandah filled with patients queued up to meet 'Captain Saab'. They wait patiently for their turn; his cheery face and assuring voice acts a balm to them too. Suryakant's healing treatment is without any medicines or any surgical intervention. He does not touch the spinal column or lower back of patient, not even the thighs. He works only below the knees and on feet, focusing on nerve ends. Similarly, for treating cases of cervical spondylitis, Suryakant does not touch the neck or shoulder region, but tickles the nerves below elbows. This way he does not interfere with the ongoing treatment by doctors or surgeons or their preparation for surgery.

Is he treating the root cause? In a literal sense, yes, as he treats the root end of nerves, not at the place where they might have gotten entangled or pressed between vertebrae. While surgical intervention on the relevant vertebra to free up the conflicting nerves is the allopathic approach, Suryakant's approach is to stimulate the nerves at their extreme lower ends and stir up their natural powers to react and straighten out, out from the grip of bones.

Imagine a snake caught between two stones at its mid-body length. To regain freedom, it has to either wait for someone to remove the stone or muster its own strength and wriggle out. The former is surgical intervention whereas the latter is Suryakant's therapy. Nerves realign themselves to their original position using their inner natural strength, freeing from the crushing bones, stimulating nerve-ends to an extent where their natural strength is evoked is a

traditional art, not a science. His dexterous fingers are at work to tickle nerves. Does it tickle one's funny bone too? No. On the contrary, Suryakant's clinic sounds like a torture chamber where patients cry out loud as he wrenches their nerves. Actually, they are encouraged to do so especially during few initial sessions when Suryakant identifies the affected nerves. The shouts indicate to him the degree of stimulation achieved and correctness of his treatment.

It's interesting to know how he learned this unique skill. During his engineering days in Goa in 1982-83, he had jumped from a tree while preparing to join Armed Forces and suffered a slip disc. He was advised to undergo a surgery. But he took massage treatment from Shri. Kashinath Naik in Goa, a 70-year old man, who cured him. Suryakant was immensely impressed by this and expressed his desire to learn the art. Naik gave him a time of 6 o' clock, assuming that the youngster would not turn up so early. But Suryakant was made of a sterner stuff. For the first five months, Naik asked Suryakant to observe his actions and did not explain anything, testing his commitment. Only after being convinced about his commitment, the old man took him under his tutelage. Suryakant took training for almost a year. He studied anatomy while taking lessons from Kashinath Naik and perfected his understanding of the spread of nerves in the body, and their functions.

Once in a while he gave this brand of treatment to the crew of INS Viraat during his first posting and continued with it wherever he was posted during his long naval career. Many naval officers and their families have benefitted from 'Suryakant Therapy'. VAdm KO Thakre, RAdm Satish Bajaj, Mrs Kokanthankar, Capt Sumit Singh, our batchmates Cdr Anup Keny, Capt Dinesh Kumar and Mrs. Karuna Singh vouch for it.

Many doctors too avail of his treatment who then refer their own patients to his clinic. Today, Suryakant gets patients from far-off places - Kanpur, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Delhi, Goa,

Bangalore, Vizag, Dubai, and Muscat. The Dhrupad exponent Gundecha Brothers - Umakant and Akhilesh Gundecha, figure in his list of illustrious patients.

He treats 30 - 40 patients every day of which he treats almost 10 patients, personally; others are treated by three trained staff under his close supervision. He charges Rs. 100 per sitting as charity money and uses it to pay salary to his staff and maintain his clinic. Treatment is free of cost to poor patients. He has treated more than 1500 patients in Bhopal so far. Surgery comes with associated complications, like heavy medication, uncertainty, tense moments, financial burden and so on. He has gone on record to say that more than 200 patients were saved from surgery after they were brought to him.

Suryakant's interest in therapy and treatment was kindled during his school days when he started reading out Marathi Ayurveda books to a Christian doctor's son. This doctor wanted his son to learn Ayurveda but was unable to read Marathi properly. The knowledge acquired at that tender age has stayed with Suryakant. His house is full of herbs and natural powders and he is happy to offer a potion, if you are so inclined.

Suryakant's naval career was illustrious. Our batchmate RAdm Kiran Deshmukh tells us that Suryakant had received 11 commendations that the DOP's database was not left with any blank fields to record it. Suryakant's other passions lie in the areas of environment, tree planting, crusade against plastic, motivational talks in various forums, culinary skills, growing butterfly garden etc., independent achievements in themselves.



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Out Of Uniform, Sailing Uncharted Waters

My nearly 27-years long naval career ended with the sunset ceremony on the lawns of Navy House at Goa on Navy Day, 2016. The 'At Home' function included the traditional beating retreat and flypast. As the function came to a close, I thanked my host, tongue-in-cheek, for the fantastic show he put up to celebrate my retirement and, walked away to begin a new chapter in my life.

One responsibility remained unfulfilled though, that of completing the all-women circumnavigation. I had no official role in the project anymore, but having worked with the team from its inception, I couldn't just walk away. I had also given my word to Admiral Awati. So I continued working with the team for the next ten months, till they set sail from Goa. That was followed with helping Abhilash (Tomy) prepare for the Golden Globe race. In between, I managed to take flying lessons at a private flying school and sail a Volvo 70 boat from Spain to the West Indies.

All the while I was acutely aware that I did not have a boat, which I could call my own, to sail on anymore. For the past eight years, I had gotten used to having Mhadei around to take me to sea; now I had to ask people even to visit her. It wasn't a nice feeling.

As usual I sought deliverance from Lord Varuna and my prayers were answered so quickly that my first reaction was disbelief. Ratnakar Dandekar, builder of Mhadei, Tarini and Thuriya informed me about a partially built 40-ft sail boat at his yard whose owner had a change of plans and didn't want her anymore. I fell for the offer hook, line and sinker and soon came to own a Van De Stadt designed 'Caribbean 40' sail

boat. She was still 'work in progress' and it would be another year before she would go to sea.

I soon left for Europe, first to help Abhilash with the Golden Globe race and then to sail with Sir Robin Knox-Johnston to the Arctic. On return, my partner, Sucheta, and I started working on the boat full-time. We christened her Antara, inspired by Indian classical music. So, if Mhadei is the first stanza or *Mukhda* that introduces a song, this second one is Antara. We registered her as an ocean-going yacht

with unlimited area of operation, allowing us to sail her anywhere in the world, for personal and commercial use. Not many yachts in the country are registered under this category and it took all our patience to push the process through.

We had our dream yacht that we could sail anywhere we wished to. Now what? We decided to use her for our own recreation and also share the experience with others. Often after listening to my talk on Sagar Parikrama, people ask me to suggest avenues to experience blue-water sailing in India. So far I didn't have a good answer as there isn't anything available outside the Navy. The few ocean-

going yachts in the country, at places like Mumbai and Chennai, are privately-owned and rarely venture out of harbour. So, if someone in India wants to experience blue-water sailing s/he has no option but to travel abroad and charter a yacht at considerable expense. It also means that there are almost no options to explore our long and beautiful coastline from the sea.

Admiral Awati was passionate about nurturing a maritime culture in India. The three



Sucheta Jadhav

circumnavigations in the past ten years were steps in that direction. Both of us agreed on the need to promote leisure sailing to get more people to sea in numbers such that it became as common as going for a leisurely trek. We also agreed on the need for private funding as it would be impractical to keep leaning on the Navy forever.

Antara seems to be the answer to making the Admiral's vision a reality. She is a seaworthy boat and I am used to sailing with novice crews, teaching them as we sail. We decided to offer the boat on charter to anyone who wishes to experience sailing a large boat. The charter can be personalised to suit budget and time constraints. Once on-board guests are welcome to participate in all activities like setting sails, steering, learning to navigate etc. making it an immersive experience.

Our maiden voyage was from Goa to Mumbai, with an overnight halt at Ratnagiri to catch up with friends. It turned out to be a wet and windy sail with Cyclone Kyarr on our tail. We spent three weeks at moorings off Gateway of India, often sailing with friends, and weathering two cyclones that brushed past Mumbai. The return leg was planned in a more leisurely fashion with stops at Murud – Janjira and Jaigarh. It was nice to stop at all these lovely bays fringed with forested hills, something I could never do while in the Navy.

We plan to continue sailing Antara along the coast



and beyond. If we are joined by guests keen to share the experiences, they are welcome. For those who want to enjoy the experiences vicariously from the comforts of their drawing rooms, there is always the blog (sailingwithantara.blogspot.com) and videos on YouTube. Like the three Sagar Parikramas, this too is a venture off the beaten path and into uncharted waters. I hope more will follow in our wake as they did for the Sagar Parikramas.

Capt Dilip Donde SC (Retd) served in the Indian Navy from 1 January 1990 to 4 December 2016. He is the first Indian to complete a solo circumnavigation under sail which was followed by mentoring the next seven Indian circumnavigators. Post retirement, he continues to indulge in his passion for sailing.

RETIREMENT AND BEYOND

I have something to share: at the age of 49, I have retired from full-time work.

A journalist for close to 30 years and a naval wife for 25, I feel it's time to smell the roses, to cherry-pick the projects that hold my interest, to go with the flow (and the husband), where life takes us.

Half my professional career has been spent understanding the concerns, aspirations and immense potential of elders—I prefer to call them silvers—as the editor of 'Harmony-Celebrate Age', India's only dedicated magazine for senior citizens. The magazine, unfortunately, is no more, but the learnings remain. In 15 years of writing about and advocating the cause of silvers, I have seen how Generation A has the expertise and aptitude to remain relevant and craft change across all spheres of society; retiring from work, but never from life.

That said, for many of us, the idea of retirement can be more than a little daunting. And the jury's still out on whether retirement is actually good or bad for health—a question that has been the subject of much global research.

Take, for instance, The Retirement Mortality Puzzle, a recent study by economist Matthias Giesecke, which estimates the effect of retirement on longevity. Following his examination of social security records of German pensioners, Giesecke argues that retiring from a job that makes you unhappy can actually improve your health while retiring from a job that you love, especially if it is prestigious and gives you a sense of purpose, can take a physical toll.

Another study conducted at the University of Edinburgh Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology analysed the health and retirement outcomes for a group of 742 individuals born in 1936, using data gathered over an astonishing eight decades, encompassing their life histories,

education, personal lives and financial means. The researchers argue that it is not about the

age of retirement but the circumstance behind it that leads to poor health. Thus, 'voluntary retirement' is correlated with better health than being forced to superannuate.

An American study titled, 'Is Retirement Good or Bad for Subjective Well-Being?' brings an interesting variable to the debate by considering couples conjointly rather than viewing individuals in isolation and examining marital quality as a determinant of a healthy retirement. And closer home, a national study of over 17,000 individuals in rural China, suggests that early retirement can increase the risk for cognitive decline, especially among women.

However, some studies contend that retirement can actually promote health and extend longevity. For instance, a Dutch study discovered that civil servants responding to an early retirement scheme increased their longevity. An American study, 'The Health Consequences of Retirement' suggests that after retirement, many people practice healthier habits (like kicking the butt and exercising more often) and experience lower stress levels, leading to better health. In fact, according to an article in The New York Times, positive health effects of retirement have also been reported in studies conducted in Israel, England and Germany.

You may well wonder where the India studies are. We have traditionally lacked data on the health, social support and economic security of India's silvers. But this is set to change with The Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI). A joint undertaking of the Harvard T H Chan School of



Public Health, the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) in Mumbai and the University of Southern California (USC), it aims to collect vital information on the physical, social and cognitive wellbeing of people over the age of 45 and provide data in key areas to bolster policy development, such as demographics, health status, healthcare, insurance, income and consumption, debt and assets, work, employment and pension. Data collection is well underway on the project and has already thrown up some interesting insights.

Undoubtedly, LASI will yield more pertinent information on the retirement-health connection in India. That apart, there is one key takeaway that cuts across countries and societies: It's not about when you retire but how you retire. And the X factor in that process is happiness—the most significant intangible in all our lives.

Many studies have established that negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, stress and frustration decrease steadily with age while positive emotions, such as excitement, pride, calm and elation, remain stable across the lifespan. With retirement we can engage in activities that please us, pursue an unfulfilled passion or even embark upon an exciting new

metier. Also, it's not just what you do but who you do it with—with retirement, we are likely to have more control over our environments and who we spend our time with, and minimise exposure to negativity.

Positivity, then, is the mantra as we navigate the timeline of our lives, the 'five stages of retirement', as categorised by American thought leader on ageing issues, Age Wave. The first is imagination, which could begin as early as 15 years before retirement; anticipation, a time of planning, excitement and hope in the years just prior to D-day; liberation, the short-lived 'honeymoon phase' just after you officially hang up your boots; reorientation, the toughest and most crucial phase where your choices can help determine your happiness, wellbeing and longevity; and finally, reconciliation, more than 15 years on, when you reach a level of acceptance and contentment with life.

For my part, I'm still at the liberation phase and hoping it lasts longer than predicted. Meanwhile, my husband Susheel is on the cusp between imagination and anticipation. I sometimes wonder what he'll do after retirement: take up a second career, perhaps, or finally use those golf clubs. Maybe, he'll choose to potter around at home—in that case, I think I'll go back to work!

Arati Rajan Menon worked for *India Today* and *Indian Express* before retiring as Executive Editor at *Harmony - Celebrate Age* (India's premier magazine for senior citizens). In 2016, she received an award for 'Promoting Qualitative Journalism in Ageing' from the International Longevity Centre. She is married to Cmde Susheel Menon, Commodore, SCT.

LIVING IN A BOAT AND FLYING PLANES

By the time I was off on my first circumnavigation in 2012, I had spent ten months living in the boat which was to take me around the world. A million dollar live-aboard yacht on Mandovi River in Goa puts an idyllic and romantic image in one's head, which it is too, but the real reason why I made that choice was neither that nor the fact that I was training to spend six months sailing around the earth alone. I detested sharing cabins in naval messes which were always short on accommodation. That is not to speak ill of the officers I have messed with, but when a doctor-roommate woke me up from my afternoon siesta asking me to name his newly-acquired pet – a baby snake in a bottle on the dressing table, I thought I had enough.

I said, “Dog”. Call it “Dog” and go and tell everyone to come and have a look at your new pet, “Dog”. There are enough roommate stories to fill a book; some other time, perhaps, but I digress. To come to the point, I passed orders to my Man Friday, Leading

Seaman Mohammed Alam to prepare the boat for my imminent move. Alam thought I was out of my mind but he cleaned up the boat which was undergoing repairs after long passages from Rio-de-Janeiro and Cape Town, nevertheless, and I moved in lock, stock and barrel. At the beginning, it was like setting up a new home as I had to figure out where the clothes would go, where the shoes and bags went, and how the kitchen should be stocked up. I had to decide what fresh supplies to get and how to store them without refrigeration and without attracting pests.

The bosun store was emptied of sails and lines as it became my meditation room, and I set up a hammock amidships where the boat was at its widest. By its swaying, the hammock would provide some relief in the hot summers of Goa. Nets were set up on portholes to keep the mosquitoes out but the companionway had no such option. Either I could leave it open and suffer the companionship of little

critters or completely board it up and suffer the heat. I chose the latter over pestilence, most of the time.

One might imagine that the rains would have brought relief but it only got worse because humidity rose and all the hatches and portholes leaked droplets into the boat leaving everything damp. The swell that came in from the Arabian Sea made its way through the bay and the harbour mouth, rocking the boat. It did little to help matters and I wondered if a roommate with pet snake was a better idea. One day, the valve below the black water tank gave way and 300 litres of sewage flowed into the bilges. It took an entire day to clean up and sanitise the boat. That evening when I attended a dinner at a senior officer's place after putting on copious amounts of perfume, I overheard his wife complaining how much their infant evacuated his bowels. Perhaps he was a sailor, I thought to myself. Two days later, I hosted friends onboard for dinner and their son composed a clever couplet on what had transpired a couple of days ago that I cannot repeat here. The incident of the black water tank besieged me with a yet-to-be named phobia and I started using the shore toilet often. One evening, I left the boat with a towel and soap for a shower but when I tried to cross over from the pontoon to the jetty they moved apart and I fell through the space in between them. I had to save myself, of course, but I wasn't ready to let go of the towel or the soap either. I swam under the pontoon in the darkness and made it to the transom of Mhadei where I put her swim ladder to use for the first time. That incident put in me the fear of boarding boats. Now, I have two yet-to-be named phobias.

Winter had a settling effect. The river flowed quiet, the north easterlies pushed humidity away and temperatures settled lower. I would often finish the day's work and sit with a drink to watch the catamarans decked out with shining lights and laden with tourists glide past. They would venture as far as the harbour mouth with loud music and a DJ whose job it would be to herd people on to the dance floor for which he would tell a joke. The retelling of the joke,

day in and day out, coincided with the catamaran crossing my boat in a ritual of sorts. At first, I found it funny but it eventually got on my nerves to such an extent that I wanted to petition the government! Instead, I started spending evenings and late nights in dysfunctional lighthouses and fort ramparts.

I stayed in the boat when we sailed to the President's Fleet Review at Mumbai. After rehearsals in the morning, I spent the rest of the day gazing at the Mumbai skyline, as lights appeared one after the other, appreciating how good it was not to be stuck in traffic. Those were a good ten days. When we anchored at Ettikkulam Bay at INA Ezhimala, I stayed onboard as the permanent anchor watch. My crew had found accommodation at INA but when they would report onboard in the mornings, I would organise diving and swimming competitions and a hearty meal onboard. There would be days when I would fly sorties with 310 squadron. While sailing to the South East, the marina manager at Phuket, impressed by an Indian flagged yacht, paid a visit. He talked of how the Cathay pilots lived on yachts and flew planes. Little did he know that I did too.

Barring isolated bragging rights, it was a spartan life of privation compared to one in a naval mess. There was no refrigeration, no air conditioning, no fans and no help for cooking and cleaning and no civilian bearer to fix my uniform. Electricity and water were rationed because the batteries had to be recharged and the water tanks had to be filled. Life wasn't easy but it was good. By the end of that year I had put considerable distance between myself and shore life. The boat offered a certain kind of peace that could be had only in the absence of office commutes and municipal decrees. After a long day when the workers would swarm out of the boat, I could hear a familiar silence which one feels when the engine is shut down after setting sails and pointing the boat towards an uncrowded horizon. It was during this period that I truly learnt how little a person needs for living.

Cdr Abhilash Tomy KC NM *is the first Indian to complete non-stop solo circumnavigation in 2013 on INSV Mhadei, for which he received the Kirti Chakra. Apart from being a yachtsman, he is also a reconnaissance pilot.*

HOW TO MAINTAIN NAVAL LIFESTYLE POST RETIREMENT

To have a comfortable, secure and thriving retirement, you need to build the financial cushion that will fund it all. Admittedly, planning how you'll get there can be boring, to some. Planning for retirement starts with thinking about your retirement goals and how long you have to meet them. Then you need to look at as how to build that corpus. As you save that money, you have to invest it to enable it to grow while minimising the retirement tax hit and not be surprised when you start your cash flows. Imagine a situation where you don't have adequate funds to meet your retirement needs!

But all this is only if you start planning your retirement early enough. So, all this would be passé for anyone who has retired already or is in the final stages of retirement. That would mean that you would not have enough time to build a corpus for retirement. Having said that, it's never too late to plan the retirement. But the focus of this article is retirees.

Let's begin with an assumption that there would be corpus (retirement benefits) with the retiring/retired defence personnel, in addition to the pension. I would say that there is a reasonable cash flow generation possible in addition to the pension. In the succeeding paragraphs, I will bring out some germane points which every retiree should look at, especially defence personnel who invariably neglect this while in service.

Asset Allocation: Planning retirement can be stressful due to the challenges of protecting one's savings, maintaining growth on investments, and generating sufficient income that will last the rest of one's life... and doing all three of these at the same time. It's important that a robust retirement plan involves making right life expectancy assumptions (post-retirement period), estimating expenses, calculating required after-tax returns, assessing risk tolerance, and estate planning. Many retirees, and those approaching retirement, are investing (per-

haps even unknowingly) in a way that exposes them to too much risk, and does not best serve them well. While others become too defensive and land up not having adequate return generation to sustain the lifestyles. Though this would be unique to each individual, a thumb rule of 100 minus age in 'Equity' is great to begin with.

Post-Retirement Expenses: Lot of people expect sudden drop in expenses during retirement years. Such an assumption is often proved to be unrealistic, especially if you have mortgage to pay, unforeseen medical expenses occur, children's marriages and funding their education, or even philanthropy, in addition to the cost of leisure. Retirees also sometimes spend their first few years splurging on travel or other bucket-list goals. One of the factors—if not the largest—in the longevity of your retirement portfolio is your withdrawal rate. Having an accurate estimate of what your expenses will be in retirement is so important because it will affect how much you withdraw each year and how you invest. If you understate your expenses, you easily outlive your portfolio, or if you overstate your expenses, you can risk not living the type of lifestyle you want during retirement. It would be best to estimate and list each expense/period and not to forget to involve your spouse in this exercise.

Tax Efficiency: Depending on the type of investments you hold, returns are typically taxed. Therefore, the actual rate of return must be calculated on an after-tax basis. However, determining your tax status at the time you will begin to withdraw funds is a crucial component of the retirement-planning process.

Risk and Investment Goals: Arguably the most important step in retirement planning is that your portfolio allocation must balance your risk profile and return objectives. Simply put how much risk are you willing to take to meet your objectives? Should some

income be set aside in risk-free investments for required expenses? You need to make sure that you are comfortable with the risks being taken in your portfolio and know what is necessary and what is luxury. Understand volatility of various products in your portfolio. Your financial behaviour and temperament is what determines the returns. Going through a good risk profile (psychometric test) would surely help.

Succession: Estate Planning is another key step in a well-rounded retirement plan, and each aspect requires the expertise of different professionals, such as lawyers and accountants, in that specific field. Good succession planning and a Will ensures that your loved ones do not have conflicts after you are gone. It also aids in avoiding an expensive and often lengthy probate process.

Portfolio Construct: One of the most challenging aspects of creating a comprehensive retirement plan is striking a balance between realistic return expectations and a desired standard of living. The best solution is to focus on creating a flexible portfolio that can be tweaked to reflect changing market conditions and retirement objectives. Building a retirement portfolio with a mix of fixed income and market-linked investments remains a big challenge for many retirees. What to invest in and how much, are questions that many find difficult to answer. While you

must look at the traditional Senior Citizens Savings Scheme, Post Office Monthly Income Scheme (POMIS) Account, Bank fixed deposits (FDs), some investments should be made in Debt and Equity depending on your risk appetite. Spread the amount across different maturities through 'laddering'; it not only provides liquidity, but also manages the 're-investment risk'.

To summarise, your portfolio should be focused on income and the preservation of capital. This means a higher allocation to bonds; that won't give you the returns of equity but will be less volatile and provide income you can use to live on. But again there should be some risk exposure to ensure you do not run out of money. The right mix of products can help assured lifetime income, allow for increase in income over time, potentially re-grow principal, and help preserve assets. A multistage retirement plan must integrate various time horizons, along with the corresponding liquidity needs, to determine the optimal allocation strategy.

Last but not least, a qualified and professional advisor can always add huge value to your financial plan, managing biases and retirement. Your focus should be on maximising life goals and not returns. Finally, avoid being a 'helicopter investor' and over manage your portfolios; it's a sure recipe for failure.

Cdr Maxie Jose (Retd) worked in the shipping industry, post retirement, before he joined his wife's successful business in Wealth Management, in 2013. He is now a Certified Financial Planner and Financial Risk Manager (USA) and a Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) with SEBI. (maxiejose@affluenzwealth.com)

My Tour-de-fitness

Manali To Leh Cycling Expedition



The cycling route from Manali to Leh involves crossing six passes - Rohtang La (13,058 feet), Baralacha La (15,912 feet), Nakee La (15,547 feet), Lachung La (16,616 feet), Tanglang La (17,582 feet) and Khardung La (18,380 feet) including the infamous 21 Gata loops (15,302 feet).

My team comprised SLT Aarush Sharma, SLT Abhishek Kumar, Vedpal EAP3, Kuldeep STD II and Santosh Kumar, Foreman.

Indian Navy not only focuses on building professional, leadership and management capabilities but also provides a plethora of opportunities to all ranks in various sports and adventure activities. INS Valsura afforded me a lifetime's opportunity when it initiated a cycling expedition; I was to lead a terrific team of daredevils and experience Himalayas in all its glory. It was to be a nine-day arduous tour from Manali to Leh from 9 – 18 July 2019.

Day 1 – Arrival in Manali: We arrived at Manali, checked-in to hotel and after a briefing the team was handed over cycles and helmets. A 30-km ride was taken up in Manali for the cyclists to get acquainted with their cycles.

Day 2 - Manali to Marhi: In the morning, we ascended from Manali to Marhi, a stretch of 38 kms, the tough terrain ridden with hairpin bends preparing us for the trip ahead. If riding amidst pine and deodars wasn't thrilling enough, we had to contend with rains, making it tricky and treacherous. Marhi offers picturesque camping sites albeit giving a heads up on the muddy ascents of Rohtang Pass.

Day 3 - Marhi to Sissu via Rohtang La (50 kms): Taking in the lovely scenic views of snow-covered peaks and glaciers of Spiti Valley, we finished the 18-km ascent to Rohtang Pass (3980 m). After a

refreshing halt, a steady descent took us to Gramphu on the highway along the Chandra River. Thereafter, we encountered stretches of unmetalled road, followed by flat road we crossed the raging torrent of a river at Khoksar. All was not 'downhill' as we did have an short and easy ride to Sissu at the foothills of the Pir Panjal. Sissu (also known as Khangling) is a small town in the Lahaul valley located on the bank of Chandra river.

Day 4 - Sissu to Jispa (55 kms): We made a steady climb up to Gondla, 244m above Sissu, followed by a descent to Tandi, situated at the confluence of the Chandra and Bhaga River (which merge to form the Chandrabhaga River, later becoming the famed Chenab). We crossed Tandi and Keylong town riding on a low gradient all the way up to Jispa (a total of 55 kms). We camped on the banks of the Bhaga River.

Day 5 - Jispa to Zing Zang Bar (36 kms): From Jispa, we aimed to reach Zing Zang Bar, a distance of 36 kms. After a steady of nearly 10 kms up to Darcha, the terrain became arid and the road, dusty and rocky all the way to Patseo. The vast barren landscape with few sheep in sight resembled a no-man's land! This was the territory of the Lamas. By now fatigue was taking hold on us, but the spectacular sight of the Himalayan ranges was enough to rejuvenate us.

Day 6 - Zing Zing Bar to Sarchu via Baralacha La (50 kms): The day's goal was to reach Sarchu via Baralacha La (50 kms) pass. The team crossed Deepak Tal (14,000 feet) to a backdrop of snow-capped panoramic Mulkila peaks. The snow-laden roads were hostile. Baralacha La pass was arid with no vegetation, while the mountains looked more like a quarry covered with loose rocks and rubble. The route gradually descended to Sarchu plains.

Day 7 - Sarchu to Whisky Nala via Nakee La (47 kms): We began with some relatively easy cycling but soon had to negotiate the tortuous turns, '21 loops of Gata' all the way to summit, Nakee La at 5050m. The destination was - quite quirkily named - Whisky Nala. The roads were difficult to traverse due to snow and landslide; a team of BRO was at work making way for vehicles. Soon, we reached Whisky Nala.

Day 8 - Debring via Lachung La (81kms): This turned out to be the most challenging ride. A 7-km ascent to Taglang La (5150m) was followed by long descent along a steep gorge to reach Pang. We persevered through hailstorm and opposing headwinds of 30kph, onwards the 8-km switchback climb, up to the flat-top of the Moray Plains (4700m). This barren, desolate area is known for its extreme temperatures in the morning and evening, with fast winds and sandstorms. The only sign of life is the hardy nomadic tribe of Changpas, who can be seen

tending their yaks. We, finally, reached Debring (15,750ft) before sunset. Though inhospitable, we stayed overnight in the harshest conditions.

Day 9 - Debring to Lato via Taglang La (53 kms): With every passing day, the challenges only increased. We encountered snowfall yet again, making it a perilous ride, but the first sight of Lato – the patches of Ladakhi farms, the Gampas and the backdrop of mountains – was enchanting.

Day 10 - Onward to Leh (70 kms): Witnessing dramatic changes in landscape and terrain, we arrived at a fertile valley dotted with pretty villages and stupas. It was an easy ride to Leh as the road improved significantly, and we could enjoy the iconic Thiksey Monastery and Chorten Gardens.

The next day, just as the sun came up, we departed to Khardung La (80 kms). Cycling nearly 40 kms and gaining 2000 metres, this was the ultimate challenge of the expedition. The descent was relatively easy. We had completed a total of 580 kms

Cycling is a great sport for fitness - physical and mental, and for building endurance, apart from being environment-friendly. For the team, this expedition gave a taste of adventure and helped inculcate a spirit of team-building, camaraderie and esprit-de-corps.

Lt Cdr Aditya Sachdeva was commissioned in the Navy on 6 July 2019. He is an alumnus of 9th NOC, Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala. The Officer has completed his Electrical Specialisation Course from INS Valsura (O-155).



THE MYTH OF PABT

In early 1956, those of us, who were declared selected by the Services Selection Board at Bangalore, for the 16th NDA Course, were directed to proceed for our PABT (Pilot Aptitude Battery Test). Irrespective of the Service we had opted for, we were issued a railway warrant for Dehradun.

At Dehradun I failed in my PABT, but having opted for the Navy, this setback did not bother me much. In NDA, I encountered similar setbacks thanks to Maths and Science. I finally passed out with the 18th Course and owing to my academic record, much to my anguish and disappointment, was given the Supply Branch.

In 1961, while doing my Midshipman's time on INS Talwar, the ship received a signal from NHQ asking for volunteers for flying, from all branches. The ship's Supply Officer, Lt Cdr Ramachandran came to me very excitedly and insisted that I volunteer for the flying branch as this could be the only way I could move out of the Supply Branch. Why he insisted on this is a story by itself, to be narrated later. Suffice to say that he was keen to see me out of his branch. I read the signal with great enthusiasm but noticed an innocuous sentence at the end which read: "Those who have appeared for the PABT earlier and failed, need not apply". Seeing how keen he was that I should volunteer, I did not mention my earlier failure and assured him that I will think about it.

It seemed to be a godsend to get into the Executive Branch, but that last sentence "need not apply" was bothersome. That's when the Machiavelli in me surfaced. I realised that I had appeared for my PABT five years earlier in 1956 for the 16th NDA Course, but had passed out with the 18th Course. Chances of records being checked that far behind in the early 60s were remote. As regards the last three words, they did not read "will not apply" nor "cannot apply", it just said "need not apply", which I interpreted as

"could, if you want to". I discussed this with my colleagues, DK Sharma, Dibesh Banerjee and Akheel Shaikh, who were aware of my earlier PABT failure. They were very cooperative, though occasionally would blackmail me. That evening, I informed my HOD of my intention to volunteer for the flying branch. My Captain, Commander Dang was very pleased that one of his Midshipmen had volunteered for the flying branch. An appropriate signal was sent to NHQ and a few days later I was sent to Dehradun for my PABT along with a few other naval volunteers. Needless to say, I passed the test.

I got my Wings, albeit with a few hiccups, as was my wont. I qualified as a frontline pilot on the Seahawk aircraft for carrier operations, both by day and by night. Later I also became a qualified flying instructor at Bidar and Hakimpet, and also commanded air squadrons and air stations.

So much for the credibility of "--- failed in PABT, need not apply". I wonder if this is still in vogue.



Capt Anshuman Chatterjee (Retd)

Commodore Mediona Bhada (Retd), a fighter pilot by profession, participated in the 1971 Bangladesh Operations as a pilot in INAS 300 from INS Vikrant. He has commanded a naval air squadron and two naval air stations and was Director, Naval Air Staff at NHQ. He also commanded two warships.

THE RELEVANCE OF PASSING PABT

We get only one chance in a lifetime to pass Pilot Aptitude and Battery Test (PABT) to become eligible for flying training to become a pilot. After passing Combined Defence Services Examination followed by SSB interview and medicals in Bengaluru, I was in seventh heaven, as life seemed set on a steady course. I, hailing from a village in the hills of Uttarakhand, was destined to join Indian Navy and become a commissioned officer.

The sense of achievement was tremendous and congratulatory wishes were pouring in from all quarters. While I was awaiting instructions to join Naval Academy at Kochi for the July 1981 batch, I received a call to undergo PABT at AFSSB, Dehradun. Even if I didn't clear PABT, there was nothing to lose, as all expenses were all taken care of. On the contrary, it was an opportunity to meet friends attending selection process.

At AFSSB, I felt special as many asked my advice seeking to learn from my personal experience of passing the SSB. I passed PABT and after clearing aviation medical at CME Delhi, I joined as an aviation cadet. After an eventful and successful six months at Naval Academy, Kochi, we all – five – aviation cadets were dispatched to Elementary Flying School, Bidar. We quickly settled down in the Air Force environment.

All cadets were issued bicycles as the Officers' Mess was four kilometres from the training area. The drama started with commencement of training. As a hill resident, I had never ridden a cycle before! Therefore, on the first day, I walked 16 kms in

all—from mess to training area and back—in the morning and post-lunch. Alas! I was late by a few minutes, you can visualise the physical and mental *ragda* I might have had to go through! That evening I tried hard to learn cycling and the next morning, I managed to reach training area well in time.

As the flying training progressed, things did not go well for me and after few weeks, I, along with Cadet AD Mangutkar (later Captain) got grounded. There was no sense of dissatisfaction but both of us were eager to move to Mumbai to join the 23rd Integrated Course. NHQ blessed us and we joined our course. After meeting stipulated sea training requirements and passing final examinations, both of us passed out with our course mates. Not having to lose a term was a source of immense satisfaction and joy.

Life was adventurous at sea and there never was a dull moment. So, after obtaining my watch-keeping ticket and a short tenure onboard IN LCU L-33, with approval of the Chief of the Naval Staff, I joined Naval Armament Inspection Organisation in June 1985. Thereafter, it has been a wonderful and enjoyable journey of serving our fine Indian Navy.

In retrospect, getting grounded was never dissatisfying, but one question has always bothered me since; how could I have passed PABT without ever being behind a power vehicle—scooter or motorcycle or even a cycle? After 36 years of service, it remains a mystery. So, I concluded that I was destined to pass PABT only so I could learn cycling!

Rear Admiral Om Prakash Singh Rana AVSM VSM (Retd) retired as DG of Naval Armament Inspection in 2017. He joined BrahMos Aerospace on 1 November 2017 as General Manager, Pilani.

Watch-keeping Awarded In Wardroom

As a young Lieutenant in the Navy, my impression of Admiral Cursetji was that of a very soft-spoken, well-articulated officer and a gentleman.

My initial association with him was way back in 1967-1968, when he first visited our squadron INAS 300 at INS Hansa. Then Captain Cursetji had just assumed command of our aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant and wanted to meet the flier boys of his squadrons. I was nominated as his Liaison Officer for the duration of his short stay in Goa. No, it was not the Bawa-connection, though he did casually inquire if I wore my sudreh and kasti regularly.

Within a few weeks thereafter the squadron embarked on board the carrier for an operational work-up.

As an ex-supply officer who had been sent for flying as a midshipman, I had not done my Midshipman's Board nor had I done any Sub-lieutenant's courses at Cochin. Obviously, I had no watch-keeping certificate – which confirms a naval officer as an Executive Officer in the Indian Navy – either. Fortunately, at that time Shoni Mehra from 310 squadron too, for some reason, did not have his watch-keeping certificate. He, however, managed to convince the ship's Navigating Officer to allow him to keep watches on the bridge when he was not flying so that he could then get his watching-keeping certificate. Captain Cursetji promptly gave his approval. I took advantage of this and made a similar request which was also approved.

I immediately started keeping watches on the bridge after the day's flying was over. As a special dispensation, I was permitted to remain in my flying overalls during my watch – usually the Dog-Watch. While in harbour I had to do the OOD duties.

During the monsoon period, Vikrant would normally work up on the Eastern seaboard and 'Madras'

would be our main port of call. After the first work-up phase, off 'Madras', the carrier entered harbour and tied up alongside. I was the OOD that day.

In keeping with naval tradition, the Captain hosted a cocktail party that evening, for the local civil and military dignitaries. At the appointed time, the Captain along with the DLC (Duty Lt Cdr) and OOD, was present at the gangway, to receive the guests as they arrived. As the Conservator of Ports stepped on board, he tells Capt Cursetji, "Captain your ship is fifteen feet out of position". Capt Cursetji, nonchalantly said: "Oh, is that so", and then turned to me and ordered: "OOD, kindly do the needful, please" and walked away with his guest. The DLC, quietly disappears and 'yours truly' is left, holding the baby, totally confused. Imagine moving an aircraft carrier, which is tied up alongside a jetty in harbour, by 15 feet.

Most of the ExOs were either attending the party or had gone ashore. I sent for the ship's Boatswain's Mate and explained the situation to him. Needless to say, he was totally aghast. However, we had to be seen to be doing something. I ordered the lower decks to be cleared and all-hands to assemble on the forecastle. I made sure this announcement, along with a few other orders, were heard on the ship's broadcast.

After about an hour, when the Captain's party was in full swing on the Quarter Deck, I waited for an opportune moment. When he was in an animated conversation with the Conservator of Ports, I walked up to him, gave him a smart salute and announced, loud enough for those around him to hear, "Ship in position, Sir". For a moment, he looked confused but soon found his composure and said: "Oh, well done, thank you, carry on please". I quickly saluted him again and left.

Needless to say, the ship had not moved an inch - nor were any questions asked.

Soon the work-up came to an end and the ship moved back to her home waters. It was time for the squadrons to disembark to their shore base at Dabolim. The Captain decided to meet all the squadron crew to bid them farewell, prior to the disembarkation. At the bar of Vikrant's wardroom, the Navigating Officer handed over watch-keeping certificates signed by Captain Jal Cursetji to Shoni Mehra and me! A very unusual procedure, indeed.

And that is how I, an ex-supply officer, having done no courses, got my full watching-keeping certificate and was transferred to INS Ranjit for my general service time as a full-fledged Executive Officer.

All thanks to a great 'Officer and Gentleman', Admiral Jal Cursetji.

Commodore Mediona Bhada (Retd) was commissioned in the Indian Navy in 1962. As a fighter pilot, he participated in the '71 Bangladesh Operations as a pilot in INAS 300 from INS Vikrant. He was a flying instructor at the Air Force Flying Academy and has commanded a Naval air squadron and two Naval Air Stations and was Director Naval Air Staff at NHQ. He has also commanded two IN warships.



THE AFFABLE ADMIRAL

I had the good fortune to interact with colorful senior officers during my naval career. These included Admiral SM Nanda, Vice Admiral RKS Ghandi, Vice Admiral KR Menon, Vice Admiral JTG Pereira, Cdr Pedro Khanna and Vice Admiral MP Awati, to mention a few. Of these, Vice Admiral MP Awati was, arguably, the most colorful and extremely affable.



Tall, impressive, and bearded Manohar Prahlad Awati looked every inch an Admiral, rather like the picture of the bearded sailor on the Wills Navy Cut Cigarette packets of yore. He was Deputy Naval Advisor in London in the early sixties when I was a trainee at Royal Naval College, Greenwich. His gracious wife Sandhya Awati used to invite trainee officers to their home for the 'much welcome' dinners. He never forgot a face and would slap you on the back and enquire about your welfare even if you met him after years. I cherished his hearty manner and awesome sense of humor.

As Flag Officer Western Naval Command, he was once inspecting a Giri-class frigate nearing completion in Mazagon Docks in the early eighties. I had the privilege of accompanying him when the CO-designate took him around the ship.

After completion of the rounds of operational spaces we reached the Captain's day and night cabins. Traditionally, in new construction ships, the decor of the captain's quarters are chosen by the CO-designate's wife. The cabin was done up garishly with crimson curtains, ornate carpet, and other knick-knacks. Awati recoiled in mock horror asking,

"What is this place, Madam Pompadour's boudoir?" The CO-designate thought it was a compliment and responded: "All the furnishings were personally chosen by my wife."

It was difficult for the rest of us to suppress our giggle!

I last met him, in person, at the commissioning party of the Coast Guard vessel INS Vikram, commanded by Captain (later, Vice Admiral Jacob) in December 1983. He was as friendly and gracious as ever, enquiring after my wife, Vijaya, and me. He told her that I was one of his bright trainee officers at UK. It was a real pleasure for him to get complimentary reports from the colleges about how well I was doing. Thirty-five years later, when forwarding him my recently-published memoirs, in a mail, I wrote:

"Dear Admiral Awati,

I hope you still remember me after all these years. I was a naval constructor officer under training at Royal Naval College, Greenwich, when you were Deputy NA (London) in the early sixties. S/Lt. SR Kamath and I were batch mates. I spent most of my naval career with DGND and was the project officer of INS Godavari and conceptualized the design. We last met at the commissioning party of Coast Guard Vessel CGV Vikram, at Mazagon Docks in 1983.

I left MDL a few months later and moved to the private sector. I worked as Vice President in Mukand Limited, late Mr. Viren Shah's company, and headed their steel plant at Kalwe. In 1989, I came to Bangalore and joined as President of TVS Suzuki Limited, the two-wheeler manufacturer. I am still associated with the company in an advisory capacity.

I have written a light-hearted memoir of my life in the Navy and MDL titled, "My ships sailed the seas but I stayed ashore". The book was reviewed in the latest issue of Quarterdeck by Commodore Franklin. I have sent a copy of the book to your address, which I received from Cdr. Abhilash Tomy. I hope you find it enjoyable and am looking forward to your feedback on the same.

I trust this finds you well. Kindly convey my regards to Mrs. Awati."

Promptly, I received a sweet reply from the Admiral,

"Thank you, Mohanram. I much appreciate your gesture and look forward to receiving your memoirs. Sandhya and I recall Kamath and you at Greenwich during 1961-63. You were followed by Damodaran. I had often wondered what had happened to you pioneer Naval Constructors. I do recall that Mrs. Mohanram belonged to the IRS.

Warm regards, Manohar"

After reading the book, he sent me this delightful mail on May 19, 2018.

"My Dear Captain Mohan Ram,

From Scary Dermatology to Madam Pompadour's Boudoir and beyond to page 212, the book is one long, unending guffaw. I could not put it down until your final eulogy to the navy with its innocence (sic) and playfulness.

Which reminds me of doubling up as Master of the Ootacamund Fox Hounds for three years during my years as Chief Instructor (Navy) in Wellington. I spent most of my days on the Wenlock Downs at the expense of educating three successive naval staff courses. Little wonder then that you found the staff requirements for your first guided missile frigate a little out of tune.

Ah well! I had a wonderful time in the navy, sailing yachts and riding horses, as you pioneered warship designs and thereafter put some much-needed sense into corporate management. Sandhya is now reading it. I cannot guarantee her comment!

Warm regards to Vijaya and you. You two have had a wonderful innings, like we two. May it continue until the Great Umpire calls it a day? Manohar"

He followed it up with another lovely letter a week later; "Sandhya wishes it known to you that she is reading your book a second time, so fascinated she is with it!"

I wrote to him on successful completion of Sagar Parikrama of INS Tarini.

"Dear Admiral Awati,

"Allow me to congratulate you on the wonderful achievement of your protégés in sailing around the world, Sagar Parikrama. The entire initiative was your baby. It must have been a truly proud moment for you when the six young lady officers secured alongside the jetty in Goa, last Monday. You and your protégés made the nation proud.

Incidentally two of the six including the CO were naval architects. That has made me inordinately proud. I enclose this light-hearted post I put on Facebook on the occasion. I hope you enjoy it. Bragging rights?

Bragging time for me now, folks. I am rapidly getting a swollen head. My biradiri, naval architects are hitting a purple patch. Two of the six intrepid lady officers who sailed around the world in INSV Tarini were naval architects, belonging to the constructors' cadre of the Indian Navy (my cadre!).

The leader of the group, LCdr Vartika Joshi who hails from a small village in Uttarakhand, led the women contingent at the Republic Day Parade in 2015. The officer has sailed from Rio De Janeiro to Cape Town in 2014, and Port Blair - Vizag - Chennai - Kochi on board Mhadei; skippered INSV Mhadei from Vizag to Goa in February 2016; Goa to Mauritius and back from May to July 2016; and from Goa to Cape Town in December '16. She also skippered INSV Tarini from Goa to Mauritius and back from May to July 2017.

The other member Lt. Aishwarya Bodapatti hails from Hyderabad, Telangana. She is expert in bungee-jumping, river-rafting and deep-sea diving. The officer has sailed on board Mhadei from Vizag to Goa in February 2016; Goa to Mauritius and back from May to July 2016; and from Goa to Cape Town in December 2016. She also sailed on board INSV Tarini from Goa to Mauritius and back from May to July 2017. Both superwomen naval architects hold a post graduate diploma in warship design from IIT Delhi.

One of my kind (sadly, not an Indian) batchmate at Greenwich, Nicholas Yalirakis became the Chief of the Greek Navy after the Generals surrendered power in Greece. He was a happy-go-lucky character cast in the mould of Zorba, the Greek who lived for the moment. He made it to the highest job in the Greek Navy because he was non-controversial and not tainted with politics.

Inspired by them, I am seriously mulling applying for lateral selection to the job of CNS, after the current chief Admiral Lanba retires. I am not over-age, 57 years and a few months (300 months to be precise!). I should be rewarded for not designing any more ships after 1984 - a sort of 'non practice allowance', which useless doctors get for not killing people!

There is one problem though. Rules for re-employment stipulate that pay plus pension cannot exceed last pay drawn. In my case, last pay drawn was rupees two thousand. I receive a naval captain's pension now. So, I guess I have to work for free. Food for thought!"

He replied on the same day - 25 May 2018:
"Sandhya is tickled by your Facebook entry and so am I!"

Admiral Manohar Prahlad Awati.

Six months later on 4 November 2018, the Great Umpire (to use his own words) called it a day for Vice

The world is a poorer place in the absence of this magnificent and affable sailor.

Captain NS Mohan Ram VSM (Retd) served the Navy from 1959 to 1979. He was the pioneer of Leander class ships' design and constructions. From designing India's first indigenous warship, INS Godavari (for which he was awarded the VSM) to designing the TVS Scooty, he has been responsible for the 'birth' of many an engineering 'vessel' throughout his illustrious career, naval and beyond.



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Primum Non Nocere

The practice of medicine revolves around the central ethos of “Primum Non Nocere” or ‘First, do no harm’. A physician’s efforts are directed towards beneficence in respect of the patient. The practice of medicine, in many ways, is not science but truly an art. It throws up many challenges, and at times, rather strange and unexpected results.

One always strives to do the very best for a patient. One also practices medicine with the belief that the patient is always right. One directs therapy and treatment with a particular goal in mind and the outcomes may be gratifying – for altogether different reasons.

I recently had a crusty old octogenarian, who was suffering from chronic constipation along with other myriad ailments. There was no organ from head to toe that he did not have issues about. After some persuasion, he consented to undergo a colonoscopy. He was certainly not enjoying the procedure and he let me know in no uncertain terms what he thought of me and the entire procedure. He bellowed, “Doc, you have the damn tube up my backside and you are telling me everything is fine and asking me to be normal and take it easy. You must be joking or you must be out of your mind!” Well, we got through the procedure and he got out of the endoscopy room muttering and cursing, conveying his displeasure most vocally. I knew we were not going to be friends ever. I was not looking forward to his OPD follow-up visit a fortnight later. I was amazed when the gent walked into my chamber with a huge grin and beaming from ear to ear. He actually gave me a bear hug and told me in his booming voice, “Doctor, I remain as constipated as before but the colonoscopy has completely cured my chronic sinusitis. Ever since you shoved that damn tube, I have not sneezed. I don’t have a headache and I have not taken any anti-histaminic. I have tried everything for my sinusitis but nothing has ever worked. I need a colonoscopy every month for my sinuses!” Well, that is certainly a new one and I am

trying to see if one can add this unexpected benefit to the list of indications for a colonoscopy!

Then I had this chirpy middle-aged lady who was under treatment for dyspepsia for several years. Her dyspepsia did not seem to be getting well but she would, nevertheless, faithfully report every month for her quota of antacids. She would also insist on a prescription of multi-vitamins and calcium and zinc for her ‘weakness’. After some months, she reported to me for her monthly renewal and said she was doing fine and needed only her vitamin supplements and nothing for her dyspepsia. I went along with it, happy that her dyspepsia was finally coming under control. The next month around she said, “No antacids but I need a double dose of vitamins and other supplements for weakness!” I did not think she had significantly ‘weakened’ and I asked her why she needed so many vitamin pills. Her answer stumped me, “My kitchen garden and my flowers are coming around excellently thanks to your multi-vitamin pills. I



Cdr Shashwat Srivastava

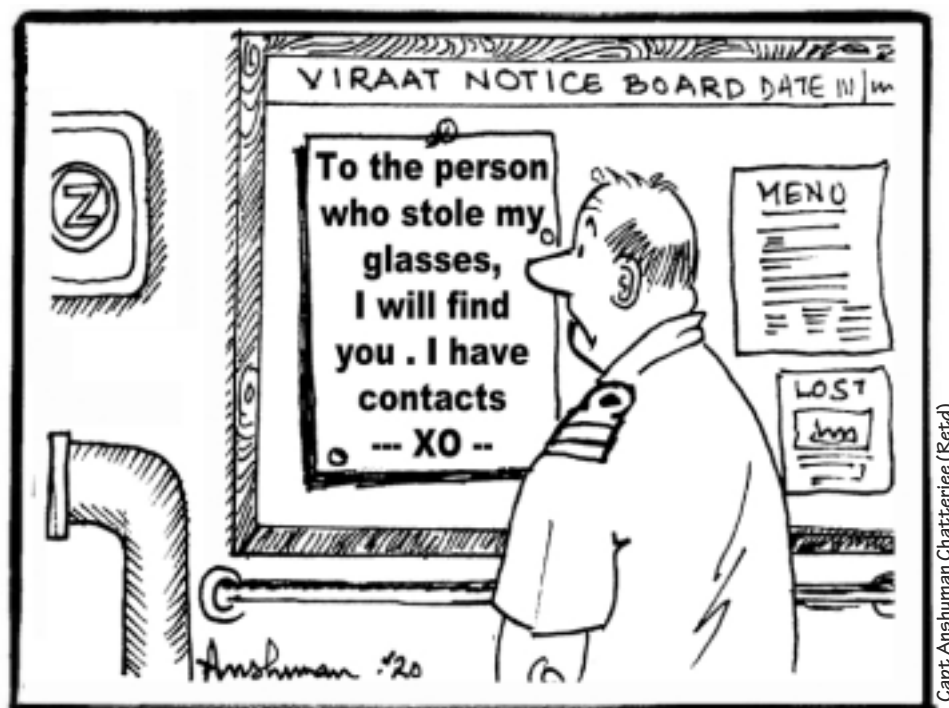
have been using them on my plants ever since; the last few months they are doing great. I work long with my plants and my digestion has improved and I don't need those silly antacids. Doctor, you have to keep my dyspepsia under control by helping my plants grow!" Convolved logic, but unexpected benefits of treatment, so to say!!

I had yet another patient, an ex-serviceman, who had many gastrointestinal complaints. He was on a regular follow-up and some months later told me that he had changed jobs and that was causing his eating habits and bio-rhythm to go a trifle haywire. He started developing many symptoms after the change of job and every month he had a fresh complaint. He complained of chronic headache, blurring of vision, recurrent coughs and colds, chest pain, lack of sleep and anxiety-related symptoms, itching of skin... an ongoing list of ailments. After unsuccessfully attempting to sort out his problems, I started referring him to the concerned specialist OPDs – ENT, Eye, Neurology, Chest, Psychiatry, and so on.

Six months down the line he came to my OPD and offered some sweets to my staff and me. I thought it was in sheer gratitude for sorting out his GI problems. He elaborated: "Sir, six months ago I changed my job and became an Insurance agent. It was very difficult to enlist new customers but, thanks to you, I met many doctors and their staff members and could sell many insurance policies in the last six months. Thanks to your clinical judgment, I have met the correct specialists and I got a huge bonus today. Sir, I have this new problem – my joints are paining at night and I think I need to see an Orthopedic surgeon. And I also have this itchy feeling on the soles of my feet; I think I need to see a Dermatologist as well. Could you please refer me?" I choked on my Barfi and pushed him out as gently as I could. Unexpected side-effects, I daresay?

Each day in practice teaches you something new and the results are at times baffling, unexpected, and quite out of the ordinary. I continue to learn.

Surgeon Commodore Vivek Hande VSM is an alumnus of the prestigious AFMC, Pune and the NDC, New Delhi. He is a Gastroenterologist of considerable experience with more than three decades of service. He blogs on matters close to his heart at www.senatorvivekhande.blogspot.com He is currently posted at INHS Asvini as Senior Registrar.



‘Bad Apples’, Not Bad After All

The question is not what a man can scorn, or disparage, or find fault with, but what he can love, and value, and appreciate. -John Ruskin

The sanctity of the ‘officer-man’ relationship is emphasized right from the first day in Academy and the Chetwode motto invoked that we place the honour, welfare and comfort of our men above that of ours. We have invested time, effort and money in human resources and spare no struggle in ensuring the best for our teams. In times of need, it’s our personnel who will make our technology work and deliver ordnance on target. Despite this, how do some ‘bad apples’ crop up in the system? Of course, human nature is fallible and tends to change depending on experiences and age but are there no lessons to be learnt in this respect? I have penned down two of my personal experiences through which I learnt some unforgettable man-management lessons.

Bhushan, PO QA I

I was a non-specialist watchkeeping officer onboard a LCU at Port Blair, in the late nineties, at a time when CINCAN was still FORTAN. Life on the LCUs in those days was simple – maintenance of ships in harbour and catch poachers when out sailing. In my ship’s company, I had Bhushan PO QA I, a short, scruffy, bearded and stocky sailor. Bhushan was the black demo of what a sailor ought to be, leave alone a senior sailor. He wore his uniform like it was pulled out of a kitbag and he barely knew, from which end the 40/60 shell would come out when fired. Junior

sailors rarely responded to his orders and he was rarely given responsibilities. The norm with such sailors was to call CABS, have him transferred out and get a ‘working’ sailor in lieu. But I was taught early on that one should not pass on his ‘headaches’ to others. I decided not to ‘write-off’ Bhushan. For all the ‘unprofessionalism’, he had one sterling quality – he was very resourceful. Any local purchase, marketing supplies, finding casual labour for work, you name it; he was a master at that. On one particular sortie in the Northern Group of Islands, we were tasked to round up poachers, as usual, and had a stopover at Diglipur prior to setting out in search the next day. I tasked Bhushan to see if he could ferret out some information regarding the location of the poachers. Bhushan looked at me incredulously why was he being tasked with a police or intelligence chore. I assured him that the job was no great shakes and that he could do it and packed him off. I was not expecting results.

A little after midnight, while I was sitting in the ward-room, I heard some commotion from the gangway. On reaching there, I saw the gangway staff trying to handle a roaring drunk Bhushan insistent on meeting me. Seeing me, he rushed towards me unable to contain his excitement and narrated his tale. He had taken my orders seriously and during liberty hit upon a grand plan to garner information on poachers

operating in the area. His resourcefulness intuitively took him to the local arrack (Toddy) shop to find someone. He hit jackpot. Downing a few tots, he made quick friends with two local fishermen who informed him of some suspicious boats at a desolate island close to Landfall Island. This was good.

Next day we set sail and made way to the said island and on launching a landing party, we found some poachers and their camp! The usual procedures of detaining them and handing over to police took place and Bhushan was declared the hero of one of the earliest catches of the season. His self-esteem rocketed and from then on, he was seen walking around with a wide grin. He was a changed man, accepting responsibility and supervising his juniors and soon became a key sailor onboard - a far cry from being a despondent and unwanted individual. Bhushan must have retired long ago and I pray wherever he is, he is walking confidently and being resourceful to the utmost. In our busy routines and hectic work schedules, it's easy to find fault and weaknesses in our team members but let's make time to find their strengths, whatever they may be and find use for it. Many of our so-called 'bad apples' will disappear.

A sailor gone astray

I shall not name the sailor, platform or time for reasons of privacy of the personnel involved. I was taking over command of a ship. The ship was on chocks and when I arrived for the change of command divisions, I was received by a sailor holding an open umbrella (it was July and in the thick of the south-west monsoons), at the gangway. On completion of the divisions and seeing off my predecessor, I called my ship's company for an address and as I was speaking to them, I noticed that the sailor who had received me was still standing there in No 2s. I enquired why he was not present for the clear lower decks and why he had not changed from his ceremonials. A long story ensued. The sailor, it seemed, was a 'troublemaker', 'insubordinate', 'delinquent' and 'suspected' of having thrown overboard a laptop resulting in an OMI and other proceedings. So he had been ordered by my predecessor not to step onboard the ship during working hours and remain at the gangway. I enquired whether he had been marched up to the table and awarded punishment for

any of the allegations and I got an answer in the negative. I wanted to know more.

On reading the sailor's Div Record Book and Service Document, I could not make out much – he just seemed another ordinary sailor except for passing mentions of 'needs to improve', 'needs to be more obedient' etc. He was a young sailor with just about five years of service. By the third day, I decided to have a chat with him. He seemed subdued and morose and when I asked him about the 'laptop incident', he said he had no idea about it, that he was innocent but people had insinuated his involvement. Not that I expected him to say anything else. I told the young sailor, that I just had a ship's company of 35 sailors, that every sailor counted in making the ship sail and was indispensable. I then enquired if he desired to continue on the ship and his response was affirmative. I told the sailor that I would give him a 'clean slate' starting from that day and 'all past would be forgotten' provided he made the best use of the opportunity I was throwing at him. He nodded, thanked, saluted and left. There was no instant transformation or immediate change of attitude but I did have a weather eye out on him.

Slowly but steadily, the sailor continued to partake in the ship's activities beyond his branch duties. He became adept at sail setting and was one of the fastest mast climbers – both sterling qualities required on the ship. On one particularly rough night, the OOW noticed the centre masthead light was not functioning. There were considerable wind and heavy seas; keeping personnel safety in mind, I decided that the problem could be addressed later since it was open sea with no traffic around. An hour later, my OOW reported that the young sailor had, on his own accord, fastened his harness and gone up the mast in darkness and rectified the problem. When enquired, he simply said it was his duty to ensure everything that was his responsibility was working. I knew then that I had a good sailor.

Six months later, during a ship's company picnic, my wife noticed this sailor, dancing with abandon and getting the others to enjoy the day and remarked that this must be your most *joshila* sailor and I could only smile and say, "yes". Despite previous reputations and antecedents, one should use gut feeling as a

I am convinced that such incidents and experiences are not confined to only few of us in Service; many would be the tales such as the ones above. We can choose our friends in the Navy but one's team is decided by the appointers and there is no choice in that matter. Working with what one has and produc-

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What's In A Name!

Prologue: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose..." William Shakespeare would have us believe that a person's name should have no bearing on his life or someone else's perception of him. But in the autumn (term) of 2005, a series of incidents proved otherwise.

It was one of those evening fall-ins in front of the Duty Training Officer's (DTO) cabin in NAVAC (Naval Academy, Mandovi; not to be confused with INA, Ezhimala). In this daily ritual, the Academy Cadet Captain (ACC) would muster the 300-cadet academy and prove its strength to the DTO. It was an occasion when cadets of all shapes and sizes mustered at one place at the same time; from 'firsties' who were in some or the other 'exotic' position (Maharaja, Murga, cartwheel etc.) to the sixth termers who used this time to stroll around the mustered cadets, hair gel in their microscopic spikes and a sarcastic smile pasted on their faces.

Fifth termers were generally in a state of 'superposition', they could talk amongst themselves freely but then they were also left at the mercy of their Gods (read sixth termers). As was customary, after making report to the DTO, the sixth termers used to break off and proceed for dinner and the Academy Divisional Cadet Adjutant (DCA) would call out the dreaded, 'One firstie...' call. The firsties were trained to acknowledge this call within a microsecond and the first cadet from the first row will literally fly out to the Academy DCA at a pace which could put Usain Bolt to shame. His job was to read out the Daily Order at the top of his voice to the entire academy barring the sixth termers, who had already left for dinner, remember? But then, the 'Academy Gods' knew everything, why bother them.

So that evening, a hapless firstie began reading out the daily order which also contained the week's Punishment List. His shrill voice rang out "Cadet RP Singh - Seven Restrictions". A shriller voice reacted from the fifth term class: "What?"

Cadet RP Singh's fate was sealed with those few words. He stood stunned amongst his course mates who gave a variety of looks of disbelief. Later that night, while that hapless firstie was doing 'star jumps' in 'penta packs' in front of RP Singh's dormitory window, few of his course mates were trying to calm him down. RP Singh was very sure that there was a mistake. His course mates suggested he go to the Adjutant to clarify his stance; what if indeed there was a mistake? But approaching the Adjutant's Office was no less than venturing into a serpent's lair; survival



Cdr Shashwat Srivastava

rate was anywhere between nil to scanty. However, RP Singh, a veteran in the 'Restriction Runs' was in no mood to take these seven 'restrictions' without any justifiable reason.

The next morning, he gathered all his courage and tread nervously towards the Adjutant's office. "Yea, what do you want?" questioned the authoritative, super slo-mo voice. "Sir, I think there has been a mistake," replied RP Singh. The Adjutant raised his left eyebrow which was his way of putting the question mark. "Sir, I think my name has been included in the punishment list by some mistake. There is definitely a misunderstanding." "It seems that the offence was committed during the Karwar sailing," said the Adjutant. "Karwar sailing? Sir, I was not even there for that sailing. I was practicing with the Academy cross-country team for the Goa University championships," RP Singh was relieved now that his punishment would be quashed.

"I know that..." quipped the Adjutant, "...I also know that there was a mistake. You were not supposed to get that punishment. It was awarded to someone else in your course, unfortunately, due to similar-sounding names, there was a mix-up and your name featured in the punishment list and not his." RP Singh now felt cheated, he thought one of his course mates must have set him up. "Who Sir?" enquired RP Singh. "It was Cadet Fulshe," replied the Adjutant. "Fulshe? How is Fulshe and RP Singh similar sounding, Sir?"

It so happened: While RP Singh was practicing for cross country, his course mates were despatched to Project Seabird, Karwar for the annual 'Karwar Sailing'. It was a training activity for the fifth and sixth termers wherein they sailed in the vintage DK Whaler to and from the Karwar Naval Base which wasn't commissioned yet. Divided into five boats they were to 'sail' from Karwar to INS Mandovi over the Arabian Sea with an overnight halt in between. Accompanying them was a motorised Command Boat with two Divisional Officers and other training staff. Each boat had 6-7 cadets with a senior sailor as boat in-charge. The aim of this evolution was to train the cadets in the fine art of sailing. As luck would have it, while half of the cadets were down with seasickness, the other half didn't even know the difference between fore, main and mizzen sails. It was more 'Karwar Pulling' and not sailing as the

depleted crew of the boats pulled in earnest to keep up with the rest of the 'fleet'. Cadet Fulshe was so sea-sick that he took shelter beneath the thwart of the boat and seemed to have been crystallised in that position. The boats, by then, had entered the Mandovi Channel and were to reach the Academy soon, where the Commandant along with other officers was waiting to receive the cadets.

The boat in-charge felt that it was time for Cadet Fulshe to come out of his hibernation; it would have been humiliating if CO *Saab* were to see one cadet down. The boat in-charge, a CPO with more salt than blood in his veins asked Cadet Fulshe to get up. Fulshe opened one eye and promptly closed it back in a gesture of disagreement. The boat in-charge, after many fruitless attempts to wake up the cadet, lost his cool and reported the uncalled defiance to the Command Boat. He, through his Motorola set, relayed that one of the cadets was not obeying his orders. One of the DOs in the Command Boat asked him to note down the name of the cadet. The CPO ranted out at Fulshe, "Cadet, tell me your name. I will ensure that you will get some punishment."

"So he told my name instead, Sir?" asked an over-anxious RP Singh. "No," replied the Adjutant.

The Adjutant continued his narration. When the CPO had asked his name, the only reply he got was 'Fulshe' in an uninterested, couldn't-care-less manner. The CPO admonished him again: 'Cadet Phool Singh, I am telling you one final time, please get up, or else, I will report you.' Fulshe was so unmoved that he didn't even bother to correct him. As is common in our Navy, even the shortest names are abbreviated. So, when the CPO forwarded the name of the defaulter, it became 'Cadet P Singh'. When the training staff were publishing the punishment list, they couldn't find any 'Cadet P Singh' in the fifth term course. However, there was one Cadet named RP Singh. So, assuming that the 'R' must have got omitted somewhere along the way, they awarded seven restrictions to Cadet RP Singh instead.

RP Singh couldn't believe what had transpired. At least now his seven restrictions would be quashed. "Sir, may I then request you to delete my name from

the punishment list.” “No,” said the Adjutant with a finality! “I am not going to delete your name from the list. However, I will put it on hold for sometime. If you stand first in the Goa University cross-country

championship, I will pardon you, else you will run those restrictions from the very next day.” RP Singh froze not knowing whether to carry out a ‘Kambal Parade’ on Fulshe or just laugh it off.

Epilogue: The silver lining was that, a month later, Cadet RP Singh stood first in the prestigious Goa University X-Country championship. He was given a hero’s welcome back in the Academy and his seven restrictions were waived off.

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Tsunami, PFR At Vizag And More

An Ode To Vice Admiral Bansal

The decision to conduct the 2006 President's Fleet Review at Visakhapatnam surprised everyone. Our Navy had seen all her PFRs and IFRs off Mumbai. Even in our parleys, Navy was always WNC and Western Fleet; ENC was the poor cousin – 'nautanki command', terms originating perhaps out of general inertia and past perceptions.

While ENC and Visakhapatnam were growing rapidly in wherewithal and mandate over the years, it was from 2003 onwards that saw a sea change, not just in infrastructure but also the mindset of people.

When Vice Admiral OP Bansal moved from CINCAN to Vizag as C-in-C East on 17 October 2003, the new HQ building at ENC was still waiting to be 'moved into' with umpteen excuses. He simply declared: "I am moving in on 1st November", and he did, and everything fell in place in less than a month. From then, everything moved in fast forward mode. VAdm Bansal hit ENC like a tsunami; many things hitherto pending were done with alacrity toting a number of firsts.

Hosting the Commanders Conference (CC) at Vizag in 2003 was another big step. To convince NHQ required all the persuasive skills and dynamism of the C-in-C. With its fruition came a renovated 'Swarnajyoti', the Conference Hall and shifting of the

museum artefacts to the Vishakha Museum in town. 'Kremlin', the Russian Hostel was renovated with superlative quality, the Sailors' Institute refurbished in splendid manner. The C-in-C overruled misgivings that housekeeping maybe sub-optimal believing that when assigned responsibility people will measure up to expectations. Inaugurations of buildings were done by its first occupant; he did not 'want plaques of acknowledgements'. VIP cabins were made available to everyone, when not booked for 3-star and above.

His pace of work was relentless and demanding, characterised by quick decision-making, achievable timelines, follow up and implementation that had the staff playing catch up. For his personal staff, the bigger challenge was of keeping track of the work in progress. To me as his NA, it was a revelation as to how much more could be done. To the HQ staff, his instruction was that to concur a lower level formation's request his 'go ahead' was not necessary, but a 'No' needed his approval with the reasons being explained. Replies had to be prompt – within 48 hours; a BZ needed no approval but a 'Negative BZ' did. From units and individuals, he desired that 'intend' rather than 'propose' should be the norm, thus encouraging decision-making and responsibility. He saw every file yet none remained 'on hover' and decisions were fast.



The transformation of the naval base and the accommodation at Dolphin Hill, the roads and viewpoints so impressed the civil authorities that they constantly requested the Admiral's help and guidance. I was privy to most interactions where he gave ideas, suggestions and critiques. The transformation of Vizag and the development of RK beach into a picturesque location bear his stamp as well.

The 2004 Tsunami showcased his dynamism. In its immediate aftermath, during the Emergency Op Meeting, the C-in-C had pertinent questions, 'What do we plan to do', 'What do people expect out of us'.

In the silence that followed, a voice uttered, 'we should not wait for directives, but be proactive and interact directly with the local administration'. He took the cue and what followed earned the Navy accolades and has been a template ever since.

VAdm Bansal was open to ideas and suggestions from young officers with whom he mingled freely. These voices guided the transformations, for he was quick to catch a good idea. When we moved from Port Blair to Vizag it was suggested that he take a Logistics Officer as his Staff Officer on the grounds that the C-in-C needed advice on logistics. In his view however, there was an entire P & A division for this and NA and SO were facilitators to aid the C-in-C. He chose a 'passed over' X Officer as his SO, just six months my junior in service and its many positives I can definitely write about separately.

VAdm Bansal was punctual; in fact he was requested by HQ to arrive at least 15 minutes late to office. He used to leave office half an hour before time and I never put up a file half an hour before that leaving him free to wind down. Every file was out first thing in the morning. Incidentally, as FORTAN he changed the routine at Fortress HQs to a daylight-saving routine that started at 0730; with an Intend signal to FOC-in-C East. I got a lesson in time management and understood the essence of the job on my very first day as NA. I was cajoled into taking a file to the Admiral by the CSO (Ops) and COS, after working hours. Before I even stepped into CINCAN house he asked if it could wait till the next morning. The file was cleared first thing in the morning and it actually made no difference.

While it may have been a collective decision to hold the PFR at Vizag by the then CNS Admiral Arun Prakash and the Cs-in-C of the time, Omi Bansal's drive and enthusiasm must have had a major say. Later, in the PFR cell, I faced constant finger pointing with "You and your C-in-C brought this to Vizag", during meetings in the build up to PFR 2006. The apprehension and fear of having stepped out of the

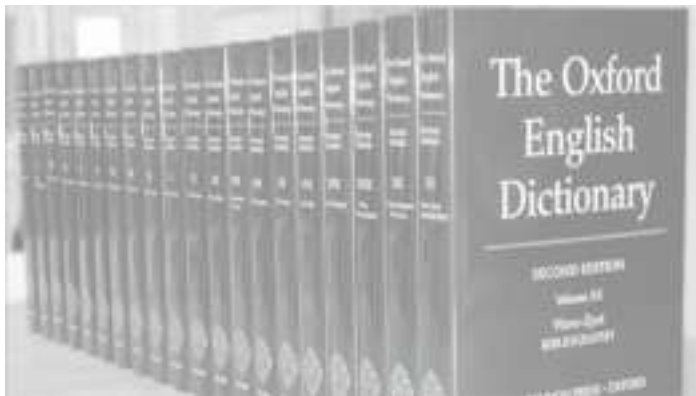
comfort zone of 'a PFR at Mumbai' was evident all along. Once the PFR was allotted to Vizag, there was a quick meeting and the Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral RP Suthan took over. The combination of Omi Bansal and Suthan must have been the best in a long time - camaraderie and a sense of understanding of what was important, relentless drive and yet enough time for leisure and recreation. Both of them were constantly on the move and decision making was at its fastest. The PFR team was picked up and activity began in right earnest.

Actions were initiated, plans and timelines drawn, approvals accorded with absolute clarity and where sanctions indicated inertia the dynamism of the C-in-C and COS came through. If a financial sanction was pending the IFA was present for the next meeting to decide the manner of 'doing'. Roles were clearly defined and sub delegated to various organisations and departments. Fleet, ASD and INS Circars had the lion's share. It was team work and the civil administration was also involved. Vizag already had a proven template of the annual Op Demo for the Operational display and the related shore arrangements but PFR was to be done at a much grander scale.

On 30 September 2005, VAdm Bansal retired having set in place a road map. VAdm Sureesh Mehta took over as C-in-C; and I moved to PFR cell as Coord and then became the monitoring and executing team with few other officers. A month later our CSO Ops Cmde Anil Chopra became COS and took charge of the PFR. While the new C-in-C and COS had the big picture clear, we at the PFR cell looked into the 'nitty-gritty'. The eventual successful conduct of the PFR owes much to VAdm Bansal's vision, sagacity and drive.

There are far too many anecdotes and incidents of VAdm Bansal's tenure, to recount here. I will limit this piece to acknowledge the man who scripted a transformation and gave a greater underlying message to step out of comfort zones.

Commodore Neriamparampil Anil Jose Joseph VSM is an alumnus of RIMC and NDA. An ASW specialist, he is a graduate of the prestigious DSSC, Wellington, AWC and NDC, Delhi. He has commanded IN Ships Vibhuti, Shardul (commissioning) and Ranjit. He is presently CO Venduruthy. (najjoseph@yahoo.com) & (joseph.anil@navy.gov.in)



If you know your funda well, you will remain chup. There is no point in a show of dadagiri for some timepass, because anna will make a keema out of you right away, even before didi manages to shriek aiyo.

The above paragraph is in pucca English, every word taken from the Oxford English Dictionary, which added the above desi words to its list in one of its recent revisions.

The British gave us the English language, and as Shashi Tharoor says, he gave it back to them. It isn't just Tharoor who gave it back, though; the English language has been so enriched with Indian words over the last 400 years, that sometimes we wonder which way the words moved, east to west, or west to east.

In 2018, the British Council celebrated its 70 years in India with a selection of 70 English words that are of Indian origin. The selection had some of the obvious words – gymkhana, loot, dungaree, dal, curry, pyjamas and jodhpurs. But there were many revelations. So many foreign (to us, Indians) sounding words, which we could easily assume to have walked into the language by association with the French and other Europeans, actually went into English straight from India. The French sounding shampoo comes from the Indian system of champi or a good head massage, something the angrez log never did before they entered our world. Patchouli, a strong perfume made from the patch or patchouli leaf comes from the Deccani paccai, which means a fragrant plant.

English *Vinglish*

One of my favourite discoveries was the Indian root for the bluish pink flower, lilac. No, it comes neither from lily, nor from some French root. Lilac travelled into the English language via Persian; its mother is nilak, or blue, which has an atavistic connection with the Sanskrit root, nila.

Then there is the history of mandarin, a word which immediately evokes the image of a long moustached official in the court of a Chinese emperor. Mandarin, which now refers to not just senior government officials but also the main Chinese language, was borrowed from Portuguese (mandarin) or an older Dutch (mandorijn), which itself was borrowed from the Malay menteri. And the root of all these terms is the Sanskrit mantri.

Another interesting word travel is that of the seersucker, that crimped comfy cotton fabric so favoured by the gora sahibs in the Indian summer. The term is an adaptation of the Persian sheer-o-shakar, literally, milk and sugar. Shakar, of course, comes from the Sanskrit sarkara.

While the etymological root of the cummerbund doesn't require explanation, the turban is only an Anglicised word for sir-bandh, or a cloth for the head. The oh so English cot is our good old khat.

The British fascination with compiling words of Indian and other colonial origins dates back to the colonial times itself. 'Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive' was first compiled by Sir Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell in 1886 and contained 2,000 words from various Indian languages that English adopted as its own. The book notes that "words of Indian origin have been insinuating themselves into the English ever since the end of the reign of Elizabeth and the beginning of King James when terms such as calico, chintz and gingham had already effected a lodgement in English warehouses and shops and were lying in wait for entrance into English literature."

To the uninitiated, calico is a cotton fabric that comes from Calicut, the port in Kerala. Chintz is a printed fabric; the origin of this term is the Indian 'cheent' which itself is derived from the Sanskrit 'chitra'. Chitra, incidentally is also the root word for cheetah, whose glossy hide has patterns or cheent.

Of course, not everything reached English directly. There is the Persian route, we've discussed. Even earlier, words went to Europe via the Greeks and Romans, who had thriving trade with this land. The rainbow flashing opal's Indian root, upal, is now long forgotten, as is verulia, the Prakrit parent of the green stone, beryl.

But let's not get too academic here. Let's look at the coarser loans to English, and to 'good ole Blighty',

the homeland for which soldiers overseas yearned. Blighty, as we know, comes from vilayati, as we referred to these Angrez log. Many English soldiers waiting to return to Blighty were stationed in Deolali cantonment, a wait that could stretch onto a long boring one. The boredom made them go doolally, a word that is not so much in use now. So bored was the soldier, that he didn't care a damn for anything. Now, before this became a cuss word that Rhett Butler used with rakish daring in *Gone with the Wind*, it only meant he didn't care a "damri" or a tiny copper coin.

And ahem, not all words found their way into the Oxford English Dictionary. Barnshoot, for instance. No, I'm not explaining that one.

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FALL OF THE SPARROW

Sparrows are unforgettable companions of my girlhood days. I can still see, in my mind's eye, a flock of hundreds—in suburban Mumbai—roosting on umbar (ficus racemosa) and feeding by the roadside next to a kirana store, their numbers competing with the tightly-lodged figs on the tree. Their sociable nature, non-stop natter and light footprint was an affirmation of life. As children, when death and sorrow did not touch us, the sparrows stood for all that was well with the world. They were not just a ubiquitous presence, but a strong metaphor for life in our yesteryear.

Long after they had disappeared from the firmament, they remained in our consciousness as Dr Salim Ali's biographical motif and through GaDiMa's Marathi song. Ga Di Madgulkar, the Marathi literary icon wrote of mother's love and concern for her brood through a haunting composition that was set to music by another icon, Sudhir Phadke. It went like this: "*Ya chimanyanno, parat phira ghara kade apulya, teenhi sanja jahalya...*" (Come, 'little sparrows', turn around towards your home now; the sun has set and darkness is descending...) Often as we stood in the balcony at dusk on summer holidays, or stood gazing at the rains that had us confined home during Mumbai's wet monsoons, Aai would hum this song, the memory of which still tugs at my heart strings. In my mind, the fall of the sparrow (its decline) is unshakeably linked to the sense of foreboding the song evoked.

I don't remember when they started fading away. The crows of childhood persisted; in fact, have exploded in numbers and the pigeons have invaded urban crannies like pests. In more than two decades of birding, I have come across the common house sparrow sparingly. The *Passer domesticus* has come to be a dying breed.

In all my years of naval itinerant life, I have been on a personal mission to lure them back, in my individual capacity. On World Sparrow Day, five years ago, I bought the Nature Forever Society's bird-feeder—designed exclusively to attract sparrows—from a naturalist-friend in Visakhapatnam. Friends in NORA boasted of sparrows, but in my neighbourhood of Dolphin Hill, there were hardly any.



The feeder had to be the first step in the reversal—that I was seeking—of the dismal trend, but there was no joy.

When I came to Mumbai, three years ago, I was thrilled to see a smattering of sparrows in the back gullies of buildings. The feeder—filled with foxtail millet—dangling in the balcony, overlooking the golf greens, drew a blank. I thought maybe the feeder was too exotic for the sparrows to fathom, so I left a trail of seeds on the railing. Instead of the desired customer, I had to contest with curious crows and pesky pigeons. For a while, I tried shooing them away, but I could see it wasn't working. I left seeds outside the window where I had a better chance at guarding them even as I tapped away on the laptop.





It took a year for the first inquisitive sparrow to appear! While the crows had plenty other distractions, the pigeons still refused to let go.

As a result, the sparrows quickly backed off. (Could these be one of the reasons why sparrows might have retreated from urban spaces, in the first place?) The population boom of corvids, mynas and rock pigeons leave them little space or chance for survival.

I had to look for solutions to keep sundry other intrusions at bay. I started laying the millet on the window sill inside the house. It was a perfect niche facing South—airy with sunlight streaming in—and the inside ledge, a safe and sheltered feeding ground. The diamond grill was just the right size to let the sparrows in and sieve the “predators” out even as it served as a perch.



Soon, a pair started visiting the niche, daily. With exuberant cheep-cheep, the cock and hen sparrow promptly get down to their job of pecking and nibbling at seeds by spitting out the husk. It does not bother me that they leave the husks behind littering the dining area. Satiated, they swing on the TV cable that runs outside the window, a picture of happiness. It is inter-

esting how they have monopolised the spot. By now, they know that the spread is laid out for them, exclusively. I replenish the millet several times during the day; just in case I forget, they are there to remind me with their persistent tweets. First thing in the morning, and at the end of the day, before sunset, the duo drops in to gobble its repast, and several times in between to check if it is still welcome.

At the pink hour, I fling open the doors and windows out of habit, but sometimes I am late. One such morning, I was surprised to see the pair already inside the house, flitting about. They had gotten inside through a hole in the window net. It is an endearing sight then to see these innocent little beings hopping around my living room—by the bookshelf, on the arm rest, under the table... Now that the food problem has been tackled, I am hoping they find my house comfortable enough to set up home. Of course, I have the onerous task of ensuring their safety considering the ceiling fan is spinning on and away.



One morning, I heard an urgent, high-pitched chitter that was unusual. I wondered if the ever-peaceful pair was fighting. A fight had ensued alright, but not between the male and female, but two cock sparrows. Two black throats were lunging at each other mid-air. It was evident that another male had chanced upon the loot. I had been wondering all along how and why other sparrows had not found the stash yet. The new male was chased away and the “rightful owner’s” territory protected from takeover, for the time being. Much as I have come to “adopt” the pair as “pet”, I would like more of them to join the chorus.



Padmaja Parulkar - Kesnur is a green blogger and nature photographer. Over the years, she has been exploring ‘doorstep diversity’, and naval bases are her favourite hunting grounds. She parks her creative work at: padmaja-earthletters.blogspot.in

SPITI SOJOURN

MOTORCYCLING EXPEDITION

The idea to go motorbiking to 'Kaza', the sub-divisional headquarters of Lahul-Spiti district in the state of Himachal Pradesh had germinated during my first official bike expedition to North-East (Meghalaya-Tripura-Mizoram), as team leader, from Visakhapatnam in 2016. In the middle of our ten-day bike ride, when we could cover only 70 kms due to bad roads, Surg Cdr Amitabh Mohan, an energetic member from Himachal, mentioned Kaza, which is one of the toughest and most challenging biker terrains in the country.

Three years after it had been conceptualized and immediately after my superannuation in May 2019,



the bike ride to Kaza finally materialized in September. Meanwhile, I was fortunate to have planned and executed yet another official bike expedition (Manali to Leh), in 2017.

The team was formed by an avid biker-friend Captain Manoj Choubey, who had also planned and coordinated our bike expedition to North-East in 2016. Apart from me, the final team comprised Lt Cdr Pavanpreet Singh Nagi, the officer who meticulously planned our itinerary to Spiti, Capt AK Mital, Cdr Yogesh Tyagi, Lt Cdr Alexander NG and Lt Cdr Bharat Kumar, the youngest rider from Visakhapatnam.

A short primer on Spiti Valley: It's a region in Himachal along Indo-Tibetan border, named after the river Spiti which flows through it. In the north, it meets Lahaul Valley (the start of Ladakh) and in the south, it merges with river Satluj, which starts from Mansarovar lake in Tibet. Spiti has a characteristic Tibetan Buddhist influence which is reflected in its



architecture, cuisine and culture. The terrain is mostly barren mountains with hardly any vegetation. The region is famous for Buddhist monasteries, Kinnauri apples, snow leopards, ibex (endangered blue sheep) and warm people.

The trip was scheduled for 7-15 September, starting from, and ending in Delhi. We flagged off, early morning, from the Naval Officers Mess, Varuna. The arduous first day ended at Kufri, a quiet hill-station beyond Shimla. This was to be the longest distance (approx 375 kms) to be covered in a single day.

Day 2 took us to Karcham where we stayed in the beautiful Army Mess located along Satluj river. On Day 3, we took a detour to Chitkul, the last village along the Indo-Tibet border. The villages of Chitkul and Rakcham in Kinnaur district with its pine trees, along the flowing waters of Baspa river, has just the right ambience for backpackers. We also visited Kalpa and Reckong Peo, famous for apple orchards and snow-capped mountain peaks. The day ended at Pooh, Brigade headquarters of Army in Spiti region. Our evening was special as we were the guests of Brigade Commander, who was a coursemate of Captain Choubey.

On Day 4, as we started our ride, we met Brigade Commander en route at Khab and had tea at a dhaba located near the bridge which was at the confluence of Spiti and Satluj; the bridge was the gateway to Spiti Valley. The temperature fell as the route climbed steep from 8000 ft to 12,000 ft. We visited the scenic lake and Nako Monastery. Night halt was at Sumdo, again an Army Mess. Since we had reached early in the afternoon, the Army was courteous enough to take us to the border post, Lepcha, from where we could see a Chinese village down

below. A dip in the hot water spring in Sumdo was very relaxing and an ideal way to end a tiring day.

On Day 5, we visited the Gue Monastery which had a 500-year-old 'Mummy' and after a break at Tabo, we finally reached Kaza. After some shopping and roaming around in the streets, we had dinner at a coffee shop, 'Sol Café', famous with travelers.

We started Day 6 with a visit to Key Monastery, the most important one in the region. This was followed by visit to the highest village with motorable road in the world – Kibber (13,800 ft), which was exhilarating. After a prolonged photo session and tea break, we started the descent to village Lossar, the last village before Kunzum Pass which separates Lahul and Spiti. By now the road had given way to boulders, rocks and mud slides! We wanted to reach Chandratul Lake – our camping site – before sunset, but a hearty lunch of rajma-chawal on the way delayed us by an hour.

This ended up being the most eventful day of the trip as, on the way, we also got embroiled in a spat with a local policeman! As if that was not enough, my Bajaj Avenger had a breakdown, less than a kilometer from Lossar village. The nearest repair shop was at least a day-long ride away. After unsuccessfully trying to fix the bike, Captain Choubey towed my bike behind his Avenger. The steep ascent and extremely bad road took a toll on his bike and now we had two defective bikes! Help came in form of another group of Royal Enfield riders who towed the bikes all the way across Kunzum Pass. Finally, it was decided to load the defective bikes on a loader (Mahindra Bolero) and take them to Manali next day. We spent the night in tents at the camp site near the lake in two groups as three riders had got separated the previous evening and there was no way to search and communicate in the absence of power supply and network coverage.



The sight of Chandratul Lake located at a height of 14,100 ft, next morning, was breathtaking with hues of green and blue.

Day 7 was another arduous ride through the villages of Batal, Chhatru and Gramphu. We had to cross numerous water streams over the non-existent roads which was tricky. By the time we crossed



Rohtang Pass, it was already dark and Manali was still two-and-a-half hours away. The descent was scary as dense fog, rainfall and darkness reduced visibility to a few meters! Somehow, everyone made it to the DRDO Mess (Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment) at Manali. The adventurous trip was almost over as we were back into the familiar territory. With the toughest ride behind us, by now everyone was beaming and brimming with a story to tell – about a trip of a lifetime – to family back home.

Day 8: The ride back to Delhi from Manali via Chandigarh was undertaken after defective bikes were repaired and on Day 9, we reached Delhi, thus officially completing our trip.

Post Script: As I'm writing about this sojourn of mine, the mind has started wandering again across the vast terrains of our beautiful country. The seed for the next trip is being sown. Do let me know if you wish to tag along.

Captain Ashok Sharma (Retd) recently superannuated after 33 years of service. A second-generation navy person, he is an outdoor enthusiast and a keen sportsman. His e-mail: ashokfauji@hotmail.com



VETERANS IN VIETNAM

A group of retired naval officers including yours truly, visited Vietnam and Cambodia in October 2019 with our families, a trip we were eagerly looking forward to.

VIETNAM

We decided to visit Vietnam, officially called the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, because of its history and natural beauty.

We landed at Ho Chi Minh city, erstwhile Saigon with the plan of availing of visa-on-arrival facility, but it turned out to be a harrowing experience! We were received at the counter by an uninformed immigration official with questionable communication skills who only delayed our visa process. Finally, of course, we did succeed in getting our visas but it seemed like an eternity before we were on our way to enjoy the country.

We visited many places in Ho Chi Minh. The historic Chu Chi tunnels are part of a massive war museum which offers visitors a sneak-peek at the

underground life of Vietnamese soldiers back in 1948. The site has over 120kms of underground tunnels, with trap-doors, living areas, kitchens, storage facilities, armoury, hospitals, and command centres. After the war against the French, the Vietnamese soldiers expanded the tunnels and included effective air filtration systems, which helped them survive the carpet-bombings by the Americans. It was fascinating to see and imagine how the wily guerilla Vietcong fighters must have made the superpower bite dust, a slice of history thus far only acquainted through history books.

In the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, we saw the Vietnamese revolutionary leader and first president, Ho Chi Minh's embalmed body that is kept with utmost care and guarded by 79 ceremonial soldiers round the clock.

The Central Post Office in Ho Chi Minh is a glorious example of French colonial architecture. The building still functions as the city's main post office and sending a letter or postcard home is highly recommended to get a taste of living history. This

building was designed by Gustave Eiffel, who also designed the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Next on our itinerary was the Saigon Notre Dame Cathedral built in the late 1880s by French colonists. It is one of the few remaining strongholds of Catholicism in, largely, Buddhist Vietnam.



Thereafter, we made a pitstop to Hanoi, a bright and lively city with friendly people. Here, we visited the Old Quarters, French colony's capital in Hanoi.

An unforgettable and surreal experience was a visit to Halong Bay, a UNESCO Heritage Site. In a nature's quirk, the bay is dotted with nearly 2000 limestone islands protruding out like towers. The tourist attraction here are the cruise boats, like our Kashmiri *shikaras*, for overnight stay to enjoy the natural beauty of the place. Visits to fishing villages and activities such as kayaking are organized for tourists; we made lovely memories on a lovely cruise boat, indeed.

CAMBODIA

From Hanoi, we went to Siem Reap, which is home to the world famous Angkor Wat. The temple complex in Cambodia is the largest religious monument in the world on a site measuring 402

acres. Originally constructed as a Hindu temple, dedicated to the God Vishnu, for the Khmer Empire, it was gradually converted into a Buddhist, towards the end of the 12th century. It was built by the Khmer King, Suryavarman, in the early 12th century as his state temple and eventually, a mausoleum. Breaking from the Shaiva tradition of previous kings, Angkor Wat was dedicated to Vishnu.

Everyone knows that the temple, synonymous with Cambodia is the country's prime attraction for tourists. A lesser-known fact though is this, that the Indian Government is involved in the maintenance of this grand structure.

While we enjoyed the sightseeing, when it came to food, we were sadly, unadventurous. None of us was keen to experience the diversity in Cambodian cuisine, the street food on vibrant display, even



more! Thankfully, Siem Reap had many Indian restaurants, much to our delight. However, those with an adventurous palate and a penchant to explore and an adventurous palate, will be spoilt for choices.

Cdr Dinesh Swain (Retd) is 69th Course NDA, commissioned in January 1987. He served on various ships and establishments and later joined the Logistic cadre. He took premature retirement in January 2010. He runs a Security Agency and is Secretary of Navy Foundation, Odisha Charter.

JOHN MCCAIN

A SAILOR'S TRIBUTE TO ANOTHER SAILOR

On August 25, 2018, four days shy of his 82nd birthday, John McCain died at his home in Sedona, Arizona. For just over a year, he had fought a particularly aggressive strain of malignant brain tumour. What was remarkable was, that not only had he continued to work at the Senate between rounds of chemotherapy but had performed his duties as the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee from home. This was typical of his feisty nature and a reflection of his inner resilience.

Born on August 29, 1936 at the Coco Solo Naval Air Station in Panama, to Roberta and John S McCain (Jr), who later became a four-star admiral, theirs was a typical navy family that moved like flotsam, living out of suitcases and making new friends as they followed their father in his tours of duty around the world. His grandfather had also been a four-star admiral in the US Navy. Although they were Southerners on both sides of the family, he regarded his heritage more military than Southern and chose to live by military values.

His mother was a great influence in his early life teaching him to find joys in everyday life. She also instilled a love for history and culture in young Johnny.

With so much of salt in his blood, it was not unexpected that John chose the Navy as a career. His performance at the academy was, however, below par on account of an indifference to rules and poor performance in academic subjects other than English Literature, History and Government Studies. Concerned at his wild ways and poor performance, his father was forced to visit the academy twice to reprimand young John.

He excelled in boxing, where he made up for technique with fearlessness and stubborn determination, traits for which he came to be well known. Although he finished near the bottom of his class, McCain

acknowledged that the Academy had taught him “to serve for something greater than his self-interest.”

McCain eventually became a navy pilot. Volunteering for combat duty he found himself on board the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal, where the first few missions were uneventful. One day, a missile accidentally self-ignited, took off and hit his parked aircraft on the deck, rupturing its fuel tanks. McCain crawled out of his aircraft, running through burning fuel, his flying suit on fire. After the flames on his clothes were doused, he ran back to help another pilot, when an explosion threw him back. Disregarding his injuries, he joined sailors in disengaging bombs and helping throw them overboard.

This first-hand brush with the effects of ordnance made him seriously question the morality of raining bombs on civilians.

Transferred to another carrier, McCain began flying combat missions in A4 Skyhawks, earning both a Navy Commendation Medal and the Air Medal within one month. On his 23rd mission over Hanoi, his aircraft was hit by a missile and he ejected over Truc Bach Lake, in the process fracturing his limbs. He was pulled out and set upon by locals who beat him, stripped him of his clothes and injured him further. It was in this state that he reached the ‘Hanoi Hilton’ Prison where too he was beaten repeatedly and denied medical attention unless he divulged military information. His refusal to give anything more than his name, rank, number and age did not amuse the Vietnamese.

Soon enough the Vietcong discovered that his father was a serving Admiral and assumed that they had snagged someone from ‘American aristocracy’. He was then given the barest of medical attention most of which was unsuccessful, all the while continuing his interrogation and beatings. Eventually the relentless pressure and merciless torture began to

tell and he revealed his ship's name, his squadron and their intended target, which was by then irrelevant as it was several days old. Further coerced to give future targets, he named cities that had already been bombed, and for names of his squadron's members, he supplied instead, the names of the Green Bay Packers' offensive line.

While still on a stretcher, McCain was transferred to a prison camp where he shared his cell with two other American flyers. It was the care and attention by these two men, who were themselves barely able to get by, that really helped him to survive. A few months later his cellmates moved out. Thus, began his solitary confinement. For the next two years, he was confined to a dimly-lit cell, day and night. In the absence of any form of communication, it was a struggle to stay sane. He forced his mind to work, memorizing the smallest of details and even writing books in his head. With time he managed to open a communication channel comprising taps, with the occupant of the next cell.

All the while, the Vietnamese used psychological methods to break him. On the day his father's appointment as C-in-C Pacific Forces was announced, they offered him a chance to go home early for treatment, in return for a statement denouncing his own crimes. They were hoping for a publicity coup. Knowing that his assent, however attractive the prospect, would provide them this victory, McCain stood his ground and refused early release as it would undermine the morale of other prisoners.

One day he was taken out of his cell and asked by the Camp Commander to confess for his crimes. When he refused, it was taken as a sign of defiance and he was beaten brutally. On the fourth day he reached the lowest point of his imprisonment. With his shattered arm and ribs, unable to get up off the floor he lay in his own dysentery. A beaten and battered wreck, he finally gave in. He learned that every man has his breaking point and he had reached his. He prayed for strength to get through each day and slowly began to improve.

McCain was eventually released in March 1972, after five and a half years as a POW. On return, he

received extensive corrective surgery for his injuries and recovered sufficiently to fly again. He was appointed as head of a combat squadron where he worked hard to improve its flight safety record, earning the squadron a unit commendation under his watch. In 1977, he was appointed to the Senate Armed Services Committee as a liaison officer, a job that most regarded as a glorified valet. But McCain turned it around into an apprenticeship for his later role as a politician.

His home life meanwhile took a downturn. The long separation had put his marriage under tremendous strain and he broke up with his wife, Carol. Later he remarried, this time to Cindy Hensley. He retired from the Navy in 1981 with a chest full of medals, and moved to Arizona. After working for his father-in-law's firm for a while, he entered politics, winning the North Arizona seat to the House of Representatives as a Republican candidate.

In 1986, McCain got elected to the Senate and continued to be reelected till the very end. He became a member of the Armed Services Committee, Commerce Committee and other high profile organisations. Along with the highs of visibility on the national stage, he had his share of lows, as he got embroiled in scandals and smear campaigns. His role in the Keating scandal earned him a mild rebuke but he continued to serve public office. McCain developed a reputation for independent and common-sense politics. He took pride in challenging party leadership and establishment forces, making him a 'Maverick Republican'.

He advocated restoration of normal relations with Vietnam maintaining that instead of seeking to isolate Vietnam from the rest of the world, America should use its influence to render the country more susceptible to their own values. He praised the Democrat President, Clinton for his efforts to reopen dialogue with Vietnam.

McCain was particularly aware of the problems of military veterans and in 1991, he worked successfully to introduce the Veterans Hospice Benefit Act that provided care to terminally-ill veterans, and, the Agent Orange Act, a legislation that affirmed certain diseases suffered by veterans could be the result of

harmful chemical exposure related to their service, making them eligible for compensation.

As a member of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, along with fellow Vietnam veteran John Kerry (Democrat), he investigated into the possibility of American POWs remaining in Vietnam. The committee could find no evidence and concluded that there were no more POWs, a finding that was opposed by some veterans' families.

In 1997, Time magazine counted McCain among the 25 most influential people in the US. Two years later, he announced his candidacy as the Republican nominee for President. In his opening speech, he downplayed his POW role stating: "I begin this campaign with no sense of entitlement; America doesn't owe me anything." He would eventually endorse President George Bush, though the two didn't see eye to eye on many issues.

McCain made it his mission to curb the corrupting influence of large political contributions likely to twist issues in favour of large corporations, labour unions, wealthy individuals and other influencers. Along with Democrat Sen Feingold, he attempted to introduce a bill to limit the power of financial contributors. Despite widespread media support, the proposed reforms didn't make it count for vote. He also took on the tobacco industry, seeking to raise taxes on cigarettes, aimed at discouraging teenage smokers, and providing more money for health care. Once again, despite support from the Clinton administration, it failed to become a law, primarily due to strong opposition from the moneyed tobacco lobby.

In 2008, he once again ran for President, choosing Alaska Governor Sarah Palin as his running mate, surprising many, as she was considered a political lightweight. Though it was a strategic error that eventually cost him the Presidency, he continued to defend Ms Palin's performance. He later admitted that he should have chosen Senator Joseph Lieberman, as he had been advised. He had not forgotten the lessons learned at the naval academy years ago, that it was important to stand up for your team while acknowledging your own mistakes.

He avoided getting personal and showed respect to

his opponents, just as he had refused to vilify the Vietnamese. During his 2008 election rallies when a woman passed disparaging remarks against President Elect Obama, he immediately cautioned her saying, "No ma'am, he's a decent family man, a citizen with whom I just happen to have disagreements on fundamental issues." It was a measure of his greatness that President Obama often consulted him in private, since neither doubted the other's sincerity and patriotism.

He avoided responding to provocative remarks. When President Trump, during one of his campaign speeches, tried to ridicule McCain's time as a prisoner and the torture he had endured, McCain remained silent, choosing instead to let the wave of public indignation do the speaking on his behalf.

McCain's insistence on doing what he believed to be the right thing was legendary. He had worked to introduce a bill to improve the lot of immigrants, while putting pressure on Mexico to strengthen their own measures to curb illegal migration. He had earlier even opposed US involvement in Lebanon and later Somalia, calling it a war without clear aims.

In 2017, he was diagnosed with brain cancer but came back to vote in the Senate on the Obama Health Care Bill, which had been opposed by President Trump. He voted against his own party on the move to dismantle the Bill, saying: "I believe that we (Republicans and Democrats) should learn to work together and we haven't really tried. Nor can I support (the motion) without knowing how much it would cost and how it would affect people."

McCain had no time for tyrants and perceived Vladimir Putin of Russia to be one. When in July 2018, President Trump met with Putin in private, later speaking favourably of him, overriding his own intelligence reports on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential elections, McCain scathingly declared: "No prior President has abased himself more abjectly before a tyrant."

A month later, he was gone. McCain chose his own pallbearers from both sides of the political divide. Leading his funeral procession were two ex-Presidents – George Bush and Barak Obama.

Among others was Vladimir Kara-Murza, a vocal critic of Putin.

Most of all, he was seen as a man of principle, someone happy to sit down with his political opponents if there was a compromise to be reached.

"I will work with anyone to get this country moving again," he once said. "I will listen to any idea that is offered in good faith and intended to help solve our problems."

Cmde Sanjay Kris Tewari (Retd) belongs to the 58th NDA Course. Commissioned as an Electrical Officer, he has served on old Brahmaputra, Rajput, Rana and Ranvijay and subsequently as the FLO, Western Fleet. He has written two books on Naval History, "In the Wake of the Swordfish - A history of INS Valsura and the Electrical Branch", and, "Through the Labyrinth of History - A Journey through 275 years of the Naval Dockyard at Bombay".



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Where
HEROES
RISE

In the monsoon of 2017, INS Dega was clearing some of the green foliage around the runway and the squadrons. In one such clearing, an aged and dilapidated wall emerged near INAS 551. The structure was quite solid and would have taken some effort to demolish. I had worked with then CO 551, Capt. Shivaji Yadav, before. We both figured, it might be a good idea to use the wall as a canvas instead and paint a motivational artwork on it. The idea was to have a recreational area created around the wall painting.

The canvas (workable) area of the wall was 13' x 25'. The surface was exposed brickwork with the bricks weathered over years. I decided against plastering the wall or priming the whole surface. I wanted the bricks and their age to peek out from the final artwork and bear testimony to the vintage nature of the wall.

I learnt so much while painting this wall. One: it is really hard to paint on a coarse surface and smooth lines and stroke require practiced dexterity. Two: if putting paint on a coarse wall is hard, removing it is worse. It is impossible to erase paint off coarse brick walls! The surface is not forgiving to mistakes and you have to know exactly what you are doing, beforehand. Three: I had to improvise to sustain my artwork through monsoons and ensure that rains didn't damage the wall or undo my work, entirely. I did a lot of experimentation—tests and hacks—before implementing the results on the wall so that the work would last a couple of years, in the least.

The wall has three sections - a hand lettered panel that reads - "Where heroes rise", a panel showing three aircraft technicians watching a Hawk sortie flypast, and profile of a sailor in full ceremonial uniform. The sun rays were to draw the eye from one panel to the next.

"Do you see me painting here? Do you see the writing in white chalk, on my left? Can you read what it says? Like, all days at work, this one too has a story.

A few days into painting it, I knew that I had underestimated the wall. There were quite a few challenges here, which I had never encountered before. One, I had to climb really high and stand on the railing of the rig, unsupported. This, while maintaining a nonchalant expression, because my need to look cool, is far greater than my foresight. Two, because of the scale

of the work, I had to keep climbing down the rig, walk 40 meters away and then judge the outcome of the brush strokes. The sight of me lowering myself, ass first, towards the ground would be the envy of any modern-day slow-motion camera. Three, there were bees in the wall. No. Not around the wall or on the wall; they were inside the goddamned wall. Sometimes, I'd hear them buzzing angrily and go running back to the squadron admitting defeat. But I'd be sent right back, with some brave comrade who would keep the bees at bay.



One afternoon, as I was painting under the baking sun, I realized I wanted a rag that was just a little farther from me. I'd be damned if I would have to climb down to get it. Perhaps, if I just leaned sideways and used my brush, I could pick it up. Carefully, I leaned down and reached out to the rag. I got it! And didn't even fall in the process. Brava! However, I did tip a can of black paint that I was holding in my hand on the freshly painted nose.

Perfect! Here I was, trying to finish an unfinishable project; I had barely finished the nose - a masterpiece - and then poured black paint on it! I climbed down and cursed myself and looked desperately for the Ctrl+Z button and kicked the rig and hurt my toe. I threw myself on the ground and started crying. Then I thought, "Probably no one can see me crying, down

here". So, I climbed up the rig and jacked it up to its full height and began crying again. After sobbing for ten minutes, I realized, it was New Year's Eve and I was the only jackass left in the squadron.

What is a hissy fit if there isn't even anyone who can console you? I picked myself off the rig, where I had lied down to cry and wiped my tears. Then I went down to the corner of the wall and wrote, "*Mushkil waqt, Commando sakht*". I looked at it for a while. Then I went to get clean water in order to start working on the nose afresh.

Later in the evening, I did go to a great party on the beach and met all my friends there. And the day wasn't all that bad. The year wasn't either. But the writing on the wall is probably still there."

Sonali Balaji is an illustrator and writer of comic books. A post-graduate in Animation Film Design, National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, she likes to use media that is non-traditional or repurposed. She has made graffiti, wall art and music videos for the Indian Navy. She loves capturing candid moments, telling stories that are behind the scenes and hidden from spotlight. She is married to Lt Cdr Karthik Balaji, an Air Engineering officer.



A BOUQUET OF TRIBUTES

Admiral Sushil Kumar Issacs passed away on 27 November 2019 at the age of 79. Rear Admiral Sushil Ramsay (Retd) recalls him fondly and brings together a bouquet of tributes from several officers who knew the erstwhile CNS, intimately.



Admiral Sushil Kumar Issacs
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, NM

From 16th NDA to 16th CNS

Admiral Sushil Kumar Issacs, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, NM was born in Neyyoor (Nagercoil), joined the 16th Course at the National Defence Academy as a Navy cadet in June 1950. In the Academy, among the plethora of outdoor training facilities, it was equestrian and polo that interested him most and he dreamt of becoming a Cavalry Officer. In his first term itself he earned the 'Spurs' for outstanding horsemanship which was presented to him by none other than General Thimayya, the then Chief of the Army Staff. Major General Habibullah spotted his equestrian talent boosting his aspiration to join the Army. However, the new Commandant, Vice Admiral BA Samson shattered his dream exhorting him to stick to his first choice of joining the Navy, and the rest is history. He was finally commissioned into Indian Navy on 1st January 1961 and later

specialized in Hydrography and Amphibious Warfare.

He participated in the 1961 Liberation of Goa and in both the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971. He was awarded the Nao Sena Medal for Gallantry while in command of INS Ghorpad.

Besides NDA, he is an alumnus of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington where he also served as the Directing Staff, and later the National Defence College. His training abroad included a deputation with the Royal Navy on board HMS Dampier in 1963 and a course in Amphibious Warfare with the US Navy at Coronado, California, in 1976.

His naval career spanned close to four decades

which included several prestigious appointments of Director Naval Operations, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operations), Flag Officer Maharashtra Area, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Policy & Plans), Fortress Commander, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chief of Personnel, Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command and finally, the Chief of the Naval Staff and Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee.

international circuit, for which he had an international rating of 4+ goals.

Admiral Sushil Kumar died on 27 November 2019 at the Indian Army Research and Referral Hospital, Delhi at the age of 79. His demise is a great loss to the Indian Navy and the Nation. A funeral with full military honours was held at Antim Niwas, Sector 94, Noida, at 1100 hours on 30 November 2019.

He was a keen yachtsman and played polo on the

Rear Admiral Sushil Ramsay YSM (Retd) had an illustrious career in the Navy handling several important assignments in logistics culminating in the billets of Assistant Controller of Logistics and Project Director (P&A) at ATV Headquarters, as a Flag Officer. He also did tours of duty in the Arun Singh Committee on Defence Expenditure, Cabinet Secretariat (Military Wing) and Naval Attaché, Moscow.



From Senior to Samdhi

The first time I got a glimpse of Cadet Sushil Kumar Isaacs was in the National Defence Academy in September 1958. He was representing George Squadron in the Inter-Squadron Boxing Championship. He was a striking figure, tall, handsome and lithe on his feet. He moved gracefully, parrying punches and striking his opponent in a flash on seeing an opening. He won his bout comfortably. I would see him often as I was posted to Able Squadron which was next to his. Our Battalion was built as a hollow square with open common area behind our Squadrons. We used to train for boxing in that area. I would see Sushil using the punching bag, do rope skipping and sparring. I would watch him and try to mimic his style. Sushil was of the 16th Course in his fifth term while I was in my first term of the 20th Course.

We cadets had to opt for hobby classes which were held every Wednesday afternoon. I was keen on

horse-riding and Sushil too had opted for it. I would see him on the wooden horse striking balls with his polo stick with great expertise. Towards the end of the term there was a Horse Show at the Polo Grounds chaired by Major General Habibullah, the Commandant NDA. Sushil represented our Battalion in polo and scored a brace helping us to win the title. A little later at the Tent Pegging competition Sushil displayed his expertise galloping along and piercing each peg with precision. He was the cynosure of all eyes.



When I reported for the second term, I found Sushil was appointed as the Squadron Cadet Captain of George Squadron. He had no airs about him and was always dignified and a gentleman. He set a fine example to his juniors. After he passed out, I lost track of him as our paths did not cross each other till I left the Army.

After my premature retirement, I worked as

Secretary of the United Services Club in Bombay. Sushil and his wife, Venita were posted there at the same time. My sister-in-law, Claire Dutta asked me to contact them being an old friend of Venita. Her husband, Shashi and Venita's deceased husband, Wing Commander Roy Massey served together in Kalaikunda during the '71 War. Sushil and Venita were gracious hosts making us very comfortable. That is when my wife and I met Anishya, Sushil's pretty daughter, who was studying in Lovedale. She had Sushil's gentle way of talking and attractive persona. Little did I realize that fate would bring her closer to us. We were fortunate that a little over a decade later she married our son.

When Sushil became Vice Chief of Naval Staff, I found, to my pleasant surprise, the same unassuming person I had known in the past. He and Venita were a hospitable couple and whenever I visited them, I would see a gaggle of dogs, cats, geese and ducks moving freely around the house and yard. This was another nice side I witnessed.

Sushil's daughter, Anishya and my son, Cary, decided to get married in December 2002. Sushil

was retiring at the end of that month. He and Venita took on the responsibility of all arrangements. They planned a registered marriage followed by a Church blessing ending in a Reception. I hesitatingly suggested a Coorg style wedding and Sushil promptly agreed and made all the arrangements that were required. All ceremonies were organized beautifully in a dignified and graceful way. He took immense trouble despite all his professional commitments as he was retiring just six days later. Our son and we consider ourselves fortunate to have met such a fine family and a loveable daughter-in-law.

This November, I came to know that Sushil was down with viral fever. He was treated at R&R Hospital and discharged, but subsequently, contracted pneumonia and was admitted again. Venita informed us that he was gaining strength and had started walking around a bit. Early morning on the 27th of November, Sushil had a heart attack and an hour later he was no more. Sushil was 79 years old and still seemed to be very fit. It is a loss that is very difficult to bear and accept.

Colonel Vivek Bopiah (Retd) *is the father-in-law of late Admiral Sushil Kumar's daughter.*



Adios Amigo!

July 1956 - we were 15 and 16 years old *chokras* from towns or villages that assembled as the 16th course at the magnificent National Defence Academy, Khadakvasla. General Habibullah was the Commandant. Transformation from our slovenly state to 'chest out, chin up, back straight and stomach in' was no easy task.

Along with us was a relatively suave cadet, Sushil Isaacs, a St. Joseph, Dehradun product. Poised, soft-spoken and well-mannered he impressed us rustics but not as much as his handsome brother

Sudhir Isaacs, the 007 type knock-out boxer did, who didn't need to ever box more than the first round. Sudhir was a term senior, 15th course. Six months senior made him look God-like.

As time and *patti* parades went by, Sushil too blossomed in the Academy, dominating the equestrian and Peacock Bay sailing domains and was soon as much of a hero as his brother.

We all passed out, joined the Navy. So did Sushil, but he was the true 'sailor' amongst us with a glad and

bold eye for pretty girls, charming them with his grace and etiquette. I was fortunate to have shared his many lovey-dovey escapades with the attractive ones when we went ashore on 'liberty' from INS Tir and Mysore.

It would be too laborious to recount his progress in the Navy, but mention must be made of his inner strength. In 1985, he lost his lovely wife Ayesha in a road accident and he too was badly injured. Then again, within four years in 1988, Sushil, now as Sushil Kumar and as a Commodore was not amongst those of us select listed for promotion to

Flag rank. He was dejected, no doubt, but there was no loss in our friendship, and no loss in his continuing to strive with dedication and elan. The very next year he was approved for promotion to Rear Admiral, with a little bit of luck and lot of motivation and inspiration from his new wife, Venita - a vibrant, charming and cheerful lady. The rest is history. How many of us could have weathered the storms he has been through?

What a man! The road we have travelled, has come to an end. Rest in peace, Ike.

Rear Admiral SK Das (Retd), *a close buddy and course-mate.*



Untold Stories

Based on my appointment as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Information Warfare & Operations) let me recall two of the many anecdotes related to Maritime Operations.

Capturing a pirated vessel was a rare occurrence, those days. But it happened with the Alondra Rainbow, the details of which can be googled. What is not known is that during the morning briefing at the Navy War Room, it was the CNS who foresaw that Mega Rama, which was the new name assigned to the pirated ship, could indeed be the Japanese merchant vessel Alondra Rainbow. The Coast Guard was unable to intercept Mega Rama to verify her credentials. CNS directed me to signal Western Naval Command to intercept Mega Rama and board her. Rest is history.

The Japanese Ambassador was in his office soon thereafter to express the gratitude of the Japanese Government. Admiral Sushil Kumar, then Chief of the Naval Staff had the uncanny ability to choreograph

operational scenarios and monitor their execution. The first ever International Fleet Review of the Indian Navy: "Bridges of Friendship" in 2001 was entirely his creation which was attained in a double-quick time.

During the Kargil conflict, he was quick to position the Eastern Fleet on the Western Seaboard to augment assets. That rapid action gave a clear message to Pakistan that we were ready for an all-out war. Decoys and deception plan along with Information Warfare were activated.

During my last meeting at the hospital just a month before he departed, while holding my hand and barely able to speak, he narrated to my son-in-law, a serving naval officer, on how many occasions he had to agree with my forcefully articulated arguments which were contrary to his views. That was Admiral Sushil Kumar at his best. He listened to his subordinates before he decided.

May his noble soul rest in eternal peace.

-Vice Admiral SCS Bangara (Retd)

“He would walk with Kings, yet not lose the Common Touch”

We commissioned INS Ghorpad together in Gdynia, Poland. It was 1974; Ike was my Commanding Officer, more importantly he was a friend, philosopher and shipmate. We shared many adventures; some serious, some light, some intense, some gruelling and yet all filled with the conviction that the team led by Ike would emerge triumphant and emerge as one. But what stood out was his equanimity towards that triumph; it was always the passage and the crew that mattered, never the outcome. Through much of my naval career he stayed every course that I set, indeed from afar; yet just below one's ken one knew there was that benign haven that he was.

Ike rose, as it was to be. He was a thoroughbred professional, a sportsman par excellence, a leader who dared and I for one could sally forth with him any

day. His delight of life and its colours was matched by his love of and need for the human. He was dealt his share of tempests and tragedies. He bore them with hardly a wince. There was that bleak chilly spring morning of '98, as he set off for Kochi, a solitary figure with just Jaggi and I to see him off; and now as you set sail on the lonely voyage to that other shore your words (Ulysses) in parting come back to me:

*“We are not now that strength which in old days
moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”.*

A salute then on the final trill of the Boatswain's call, farewell my Captain, farewell.

-Vice Admiral Vijay Shankar (Retd)



A Daughter Remembers

Today, I remember the greatness of my father who led his life with grace, dignity, discipline and integrity. In the services he was well known for being a master strategist and planner with impeccable oratory skills. As his daughter, I saw the force within him that empowered these facets. He was more- much more. He was a visionary with a passion to be the best

example to all he could contribute to the navy, his friends and his family. He set the bar high, indeed.

The honour and respect showered on him by the Armed Forces has elevated his last rites to another level. For that we will be eternally grateful. Jai Hind.

- Anishya Kumar

THE MENTOR

Vice Admiral Surendra Prakash Govil passed away on 17 August 2019. An old-timer friend and a colleague pen glowing tributes to him.

Suren, My Friend

Late Vice Admiral Surendra Prakash Govil, affectionately called Suren, was my close friend for nearly 70 years. We were cadets in the Joint Services Wing in 1951. Though two months younger, he was a term ahead of me. We were on the same training ship. Always affable, friendly, considerate and correct he set a perfect example for his juniors. Honest and forthright, I always valued his guidance and advice. I was often his target for “leg pulling” but he did it in a way that I enjoyed it just as much as others in a group.



While in the Fleet, sitting on his chair in the office or on-board ships brought back many nostalgic memories which I will always cherish.

I had briefly met his wife Jyotsna, sister of another close friend, Cdr Arun Rao. Attractive, friendly and charming the first thought I had was that he will be a very lucky man who won her affection and much to my delight, it was none other than my friend, Suren. In the Service and till the end she was his solid anchor.

Subsequently, we went our different ways in the Navy as he specialized in Signals and Communications and I, in Naval Aviation. As such there were very few occasions when we served in the same ship or station. Our paths crossed much later in service when I took over from him as Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet and few years later, he relieved me as Vice Chief of Naval Staff.

Always correct, fair, impartial and an outstanding mentor to those who had the good fortune of serving under him, he nurtured many officers and sailors who rose to higher ranks in the Service. I, along with many others, will miss him as he has left behind several pleasant memories which will be always cherished.

-Vice Admiral Heathwood Johnson (Retd)



Recipient of OBE

A relatively young Lieutenant, I joined HQWNC as Assistant Secretary to the then C-in-C Vice Admiral Jal Cursetji; Commander Ramen Sharma was the Secretary who acted as the buffer, whenever I faltered. While I was undergoing the 38th Staff Course at DSSC, Wellington I gave my preference for

an appointment to Bombay as my wife, Shirley, wanted to pursue a teaching career. I was appointed Commander (S), INS Angre and took up the assignment in end-November 1982.

Sometime in February 1985, I received a call to meet



the then Rear Admiral SP Govil, Chief of Staff, WNC. COS asked me if I would like to be his Staff Officer as he had recently been appointed the Flag Officer, Commanding Eastern Fleet. In early March 1985, I finally got a chance to serve with him.

The Fleet Commander and beyond

Admiral Govil energized his Fleet Team with his endearing leadership qualities. He spoke about professional pride, hard work, loyalty and the sincerity of purpose at all levels. With his humane approach, genuine concerns for well-being of the family support system and easy accessibility to all, he soon became a well-respected and popular Fleet Commander.

The high point for the Eastern Fleet was when the CNS decided to carry out the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) himself. The Fleet Commander had only a handful of Petyas to prove their mettle. CNS Admiral RH Tahiliani embarked the Flagship INS Anjadip, alongside Finger Jetties. There was no ship in the fleet operating a helicopter to embark CNS at sea for the ORI. The fleet was put through the paces and comprehensively tested in all disciplines out at sea. The Eastern Fleet excelled and was jubilant to receive a huge Bravo Zulu, which marked the high point of Admiral SP Govil's tenure as the FOCEF.

At this juncture, I would like to recognize Mrs Jyotsna Govil, a kindhearted soul, a devoted philanthropist, an eminent social worker, a person with brilliant communication and motivational skills, a highly

committed persona with many more admirable attributes. She always remained a strong pillar of strength to Admiral Govil in his journey. Her personal and selfless contributions to the naval fraternity and the community may remain hard to match.

Admiral Govil continued his onward journey successfully holding numerous important assignments such as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operations), Fortress Commander, Andaman & Nicobar, Commandant, NDC, FOC-in-C, SNC and finally as VCNS.



Achievements post retirement

Vice Admiral Govil was one of the pioneering Presidents of Navy Foundation, Delhi Charter. After his tenure, he became National Director and subsequently, Chairman of the Duke of Edinburgh Foundation in India. In recognition of his outstanding contributions, he was awarded Order of British Empire, a first to an Indian Naval Veteran. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, known as the International Award for Young People, India, was signed by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh during their visit to India in 1997. The quiet investiture was held at the residence of the then British High Commissioner, Sir David Gore-Booth.

We pray that the Good Soul of Vice Admiral Suren Govil, OBE, rest in Eternal Peace.

- Rear Admiral Sushil Ramsay YSM (Retd)

REMEMBERING JOHNNY D

Vice Admiral John Colin De Silva, PVSM, AVSM, former VCNS and FOC-in-C ENC passed away on 20 November 2019, in Mumbai. He was laid to rest, with military honours, in his home town, Panjim. This obituary has been reproduced from a tribute, on social media, penned by the author.

This morning, we were shocked to learn of the sudden demise, of a respected member of our naval community, who stood tall in all that he did and accomplished in his nearly 38 years of service. I first met 'Johnny D', as he was known in the Service, in August 1973, as both of us comprised the second commission of INS Nilgiri, then under the command of the gentlemanly, Captain (later, Rear Admiral) Daljit Singh Paintal. Perhaps the Lord had given us some time to acclimatise to the ship before all hell was to break loose with the arrival of Captain (later, Admiral) Oscar Stanley Dawson who took over command after completing his tenure as DNO at Naval Headquarters.

Our tenure, thereafter, could be best described as a period of intense training for war, in no matter what job was assigned to us. Captain Stan Dawson was a rough and ready Sea Dog, who expected nothing but the best. Being the Captain's Secretary, I was generally on the firing line together with Johnny D and Lt (later, Commodore) Kandathil Paul Mathews, the TAS Officer. In my mind's eye, I can still see the erect and stately figure of Johnny D, standing on the Fox'le, while entering and leaving harbour. At sea, I had nothing much to do, which was noticed by Johnny D, so he told me that I needed to learn something about ops, so I should keep him company in the middle watch, which I did. It was then perhaps, that I came close to this otherwise formidable officer.

Johnny D was commissioned on 1 July 1965 and after his courses and a couple of sea tenures, opted for the Long 'G' course. On completion, he did a



tenure on board INS Beas as the Gunnery Officer. The ship, at that time was a part of the Eastern Fleet that participated in the landings at Cox Bazaar and liberation of Bangladesh. In due course, he was selected and graduated from the prestigious Royal Military College of Science, at Shrivenham, in UK. Later, Johnny was given command of INS Sindhudurg, INS Vijaydurg and then as CO of INS Ranvijay that he commissioned and brought back from the erstwhile USSR. On

promotion to Flag rank he was given command of the prestigious Western Fleet, between 1995-96.

As a Vice Admiral he was appointed as the Chief of Personnel and thereafter as the Director General of the Coast Guard. During this tenure India made history by capturing the Japanese pirate vessel, 'Alondra Rainbow' at sea, with the pirates. Subsequently, the tracking and arrest of the 'Kobe Queen 1', a South American drug runner was another feather in his cap. As C-in-C, he commanded the Eastern Command and on completion of that tenure he took over as the Vice Chief of Naval Staff and retired from this post in September 2003.

Johnny and his wife settled down in Goa, his home town and lived happily in the Defence Colony there, keeping an eye on ailing retired ESM. It was just a few months ago when we exchanged pleasantries that he asked me to pray for Cdr Noel Kelman who was very sick and ailing. Johnny made it a point to meet him to the very end, until just a few months ago. While talking to him I realised that his voice had changed and he did have a problem with breathing.



He ascribed it to COPD. Notwithstanding his ailment, he was fully involved in Governmental initiatives to provide the youth with some form of technical/ other training so that they could be shown some direction in life. He told me that he was proud of his achievements in this field for which he did not receive any pecuniary benefits. What he did was for God and

country.

As a person, he showed sterling qualities of mind and heart. He often regaled those around him with stories and jokes. He was a great singer, even though some of his songs were a mite naughty. I remember, when he was the COP, we all attended the usual cocktails in the residence of the Chief on the occasion of Navy Day. Many invitees did not seem to mind throwing napkins or plates in corners. Viewing this with distaste Johnny started picking these up and putting them into the baskets provided for the purpose. For awhile everyone was stunned. Then like a crack of the whip all officers immediately cleared their surroundings.

In your passing Sir, you have left a void, but looking back you have left fragrant memories that time cannot erase. I pray that, your good lady and the family will find the courage to withstand the shock of your sudden demise. Au revoir.

Rear Admiral Alan O'Leary (Retd) *had a distinguished career spanning appointments in logistics, administration, personnel management billets and handling Armed Forces pay commission related issues. He retired in July 2010. His email: oleary_alan@yahoo.com*



THE ADMIRAL FATHER

Meher Cursetji Rafaat and Rashida Cursetji Mendu pay a personal tribute to their father, the legendary Admiral Jal Cursetji, on his birth centenary, last year.

On May 20, 2019, my father, Admiral Jal Cursetji, would have turned 100 and the occasion of his birth centenary has made my sister, Rashida, and I pause and reflect more than usual, on the huge positive impact he had on our lives. Even though he has been gone for many years now, he continues to be a constant presence in our lives because of the strong values and ethics we imbibed from him.

I can definitely say that our father was the most honorable man we've ever known. The words that immediately come to mind when we think of him are honesty and integrity. He was also humorous, witty, extremely fair, erudite and high-minded. However, he wore his virtues lightly—they were an innate part of his nature and actions. He was a man who lived by his principles and his conscience, and this imbued him with a serenity and peace of mind which were truly enviable.

His honesty could, at times, be funny as well as infuriating. My mother recounts how when they came back to India from his posting as Naval Attaché to Washington DC, my father tried to declare every single thing he had brought with him to the customs officer, down to the last bottle of after shave, so much so that the customs officer finally had to beg him to close his bag and move on! When my sister returned from her study abroad program, Dad, who was Chief of Naval Staff at that time, came to pick her up at the airport. When the customs officer realized this was the Navy chief's daughter, he was ready to wave her through, but my father insisted he check her bags saying, "She knows she's not supposed to bring in more than the official allowance, so if she did, she can pay the duty"!

One of the greatest gifts he gave us, as his children, was the ability to think for ourselves. From a



very early age, we were taught to examine an issue from all sides and then make a decision. Mental laziness was not tolerated. He was more than willing to help us to see the different sides of an issue, or the implications of making one decision or the other. Indeed, he would even let us know what his own opinion was, but in the end, we were encouraged to formulate and traverse our own path. Of course, our decisions were not always right, and in that case, we learned another valuable lesson: once you make a decision, you have to own it: you either live with the consequences or find a way to rectify the situation.

One of his great skills was the ability to interact with people of all ages, young and old. From the time that I was young, I remember seeing little old ladies light up when he entered the room and he always took the time to speak to them and make them feel special. He always enjoyed spending time with the younger generation and connected well with our



friends, so much so, that many of them were quite happy to spend time with him even when we were not around!

He kept in touch, through letters, with a surprising number of people from his past. He corresponded with one of his school teachers, Mr. Sullivan, for over 30 years. During his official visit to the UK as Chief, he was able to invite some of his old commanding officers from the RIN, and in a couple of cases, the widows of his old commanding officers to his official reception because he had kept in touch with them over the years. A couple of the widows told me how much they enjoyed receiving his letters and how they had been looking forward to meeting him again after so many years. Dad's letters were always beautifully written and well thought out. Today, when

letter writing is a lost art, we feel fortunate to have a trove of letters from him, which we can re-read at will. Even his thank you notes were personal and thoughtful. He, himself, never used a printed or generic thank you letter, and he never let us do so either – even for our wedding gifts – where, trust me, writing hundreds of personalized thank you notes was no fun.

One thing our father was always very particular about was never abusing his power or privilege and never allowing us to do so either. We were never allowed to use his name to get something done or to cut through red tape. He always told us that we had not done anything to earn that privilege and that just being his progeny was not enough. He was very strict about this, even in small matters. Neither our mother nor we were ever allowed to use the staff car for personal reasons. When our mother complained that she was the only flag officer's wife who still had to drive her own car, my father just said: "Well, you should be happy – that's probably why you're such a good driver"! There were times, in Delhi, when my sister and I would be walking home from the school bus stop in the blazing heat of summer and my Dad would pass by in his staff car. Instead of stopping and giving us a lift, he would just wave to us from the window and carry on.



Dad was extremely well read and erudite. Growing up, we always had an eclectic collection of books and music in the house, which engendered a love of reading and music in both of us.

Probably one of the greatest lessons we learned from our father was that real wealth meant being happy with what you had. He was never envious or jealous of anyone. Nor did we ever see him compromise his principles for any sort of material gain.

In addition to all these great qualities he also had a very good, dry sense of humor and was a lot of fun to be around. He was an excellent raconteur and always appreciated a good joke even if it was at his expense. He used to get a great kick out of the caricatures of him in profile showcasing his prominent nose of which he was very proud!

Some of you may have heard that my father's nick name in his early days in the Navy was 'Five To'. This was a somewhat racist reference to his skin color. My father and Admiral Krishnan joined the RIN at the same time; Admiral Krishnan was called 'Midnight' and my father being lighter skinned was 'Five To' as in 'five shades to midnight'. Once, when they were both assigned to the same ship in England as midshipmen, they were out drinking one evening, when they met an older distinguished gentleman at the bar. Trying to impress him, they boasted about how they were posted aboard a Royal Navy destroyer and grandiosely threw out an invitation to come on board the next evening for a drink. When the gentleman expressed some skepticism, they insisted that they were very well known, and that all he had to do was come to the ship and

ask for Midnight and Five to, and he would be allowed on board. Now, the next day, as it turned out, there was commotion on board the ship because of a surprise visit by the Admiral. All hands were called on deck as the Admiral was piped on board. After the Admiral had been welcomed on board, they heard a familiar voice say "Well Captain, I believe you have a couple of young officers on board called Midnight and Five To; where are they? They promised to buy me a drink last night and I've come to collect"!



In both his private and personal life as well as professional and public life, my

Father had the ability to make people feel that their opinions mattered and were valued. He was one of those people who brought out the best in you by virtue of making you believe in yourself and aspire to be the best possible version of yourself. When faced with a difficult situation or moral conundrum, my sister and I still stop and ask ourselves: "what would Dad have done?" and this often helps light our way in the right direction.



SAILOR, SUBMARINER, COVERT WARRIOR

Sandeep Unnithan (*Executive Editor, India Today*), author of *‘Operation X- The Untold Story of India’s Covert Naval War in East Pakistan’* pays a tribute to Captain MNR Samant MVC who died on March 20, 2019 after a brief illness.



Captain MNR Samant MVC
(1930-2019)

To say Captain Samant led an interesting life would be a terrible understatement. He was a sailor, submariner, covert warrior and in his later years, a merchant navy officer. Like the GIs and Soviet soldiers who liberated Europe from the Nazi yoke, Captain Samant belonged to the rare breed of military heroes to be hailed in two countries – India, who he fought for and Bangladesh, which he helped liberate.

Captain Samant could never imagine a life away from the sea. He was born at his mother’s home in Vasai in 1930, did his early schooling in his father’s native village in Parula—a breathtakingly beautiful hilltop village in Sindhudurg district of the erstwhile Bombay Province. He was the oldest of five children—seemingly aloof and serious but concealed a wicked sense of humour. Samant was only 11 when word came that his father, Subedar Major Narayan Ramchandra Samant, fighting in North Africa, had been captured by the German Army in Africa and shipped to a POW camp in France. The family spent the next four years anxiously awaiting news of the patriarch’s return.

Captain Samant had wanted to be a doctor but gave up the dream when he realised his family wouldn’t be able to afford it. Instead, he opted for a childhood dream—to join the Armed Forces. He cleared the federal public services examination in 1949 and was selected to the Royal Navy College in Dartmouth. As a midshipman, he had several stints in British warships—the cruiser HMS Devonshire, the submarine depot ship HMS Maidstone, the cruiser HMS Sheffield and the frigate HMS Tintagel. He was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1952-- the last batch of Indian Navy executive branch officers to be commissioned in the UK. He stayed behind in the UK to complete his Lieutenant’s war course at the Royal Navy College in Greenwich. His roommate in the UK for all five years was Lt Zameer Ahmed of the Pakistan Navy. Fate, as it turned out, would put both officers on opposing sides of the 1971 War.

When he returned to India in 1953, he obtained his watchkeeping certificate after an eight-month stint on the R class destroyer INS Rana. The training frigate, INS Tir, where he spent exactly 24 months as Watchkeeping Officer and Officer-in-Charge of the

cadets. Those were the days when the fledgling Indian Navy was still establishing its training facilities. So Samant headed back to the UK in August 1956 for a nine-month specialist course in Navigation and Direction. He returned as the squadron ND officer in the 22nd Destroyer Squadron onboard the INS Godavari.

This was the time when, on a visit to Mumbai, he met and proposed marriage to the lovely Nirmala Samant nee Nevrekar, the daughter of a renowned Vile Parle based doctor. Nirmala would be his companion for close to six decades and the mother of three children—Ujwala, Natasha and Meghana.

In 1961, two years after his marriage, then Lieutenant, Samant had a short stint as the carrier, INS Vikrant's aircraft direction officer. The carrier was part of the fleet that had moved off Goa as part of Operation Vijay, the liberation of the territory from the Portugese. Samant was then senior directing staff at the Indian Navy Tactical School, Cochin.

In 1963, the young Lt Cdr volunteered for the Indian Navy's submarine arm. He returned to the UK for a 12-month submarine specialisation course at the HMS Dolphin, home of the Royal Navy's submarine arm. Here, he was trained on board two submarines, the WWII veteran HMS Tiptoe and the brand-new HMS Porpoise. On his return, he was posted in Naval Headquarters until 1966. During the 1965 War he drew up plans for blockading Karachi port using anti-ship mines dropped by IAF Canberra aircraft. The plan was never implemented. The Indian Navy was kept out of the war despite extreme provocation—a Pakistani surface action group comprising destroyers and frigates that shelled the temple town of Dwarka. The shelling resulted in no casualties but left behind a seething Indian Navy.

The mid-1960s signalled a tectonic shift in India's foreign policy. It had moved away from its western

arms suppliers towards the Soviet Union. While the Royal Navy refused to sell its frontline submarines to India, the USSR happily stepped in with top-of-the-line Foxtrot class patrol submarines, as they did with other hardware like MiG-21 fighter jets and T-55 tanks.

In May 1966, as a Commander, Samant was selected to proceed to the USSR as Commissioning Commanding Officer of the second Foxtrot class submarine, INS Karanj. The Karanj brought him recognition within the navy. It also caused him some anxiety when, in 1970, the submarine collided with the destroyer INS Rana. The accident occurred



when the tired skipper had handed the control over to his junior.

Samant bore full responsibility and subsequent repercussion for the accident. He was ashore in Visakhapatnam in May 1971 when he was selected by Captain (later Vice Admiral) MK Roy from a list of senior commanders. The Director Naval Intelligence wanted him to be his pointsman in Fort William, Calcutta. The naval spymaster could not have chosen a better candidate for the job. Samant embraced his role as G1 (Nav Ops) (X) with gusto. He was embedded in the army's Eastern Command in Fort William—sans a uniform and with a fake

name - Bhaskar Soman. It was a delicious twist—Admiral Soman had been the fourth Chief of Naval Staff.

Naval Commando Operations (X) aimed to field a battalion-sized force of naval saboteurs to attack merchant shipping inside East Pakistan. This irregular unit comprised clearance diving specialists from the navy's diving branch—Lieutenant Cdr George Martis, Lieutenants Vijai Kapil and Samir Das and six naval diving instructors. They trained over 400 Bengali college youth to become surface swimmer - saboteurs carrying magnetised time bombs called limpet mines which they stuck on the sides of merchant ships.

In their first mass attack, “Operation Jackpot” on the night of 15 August 1971, 176 combat swimmers simultaneously struck at four different ports across East Pakistan. The commandos sank 44,500 tons of shipping and damaged 14,000 tons, the single largest attack by naval saboteurs since the Second World War. The operation was extremely risky. If it failed, it risked severely embarrassing a force that had not been combat tested.

It succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of its planners. The meticulously planned and executed operation remains one of the most successful special forces raids carried out by any Indian Armed Force, even if it was one, they did not participate in directly. Operation Jackpot marked the beginning of the navy's plan of *guerre de course* or commerce destruction. They targetted merchant shipping that brought in the arms, ammunition and food that sustained the Pakistan Army in its eastern province. The covert operations were in support of the Mukti Bahini government in exile. In October, Cdr Samant's force expanded with the addition of two gunboats, Padma and Palash—Calcutta Port Trust harbour utility craft converted into mine-layers and armed with L-60 anti-aircraft guns.

Operation Hot Pants, personally supervised by Cdr Samant on the night of November 8, 1971, the boats mined the mouths of the Pussur River—East Pakistan's second largest maritime gateway.

The wave of saboteur attacks prompted apoplectic

rage in the White House. In one exchange captured on tape on November 5, 1971, President Richard Nixon's Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger wondered aloud, rhetorically: “One thing that really struck me, the blown up (ships) and that takes a lot of technical training. I wonder where they got that...” The Nixon administration was overtly backing Pakistan and had turned a blind eye to its genocide in its eastern province, most of it, as US diplomats pointed out in their cables, carried out using US-supplied weaponry. When the covert campaign ended with the declaration of war on December 3, 1971, NCO(X) had toted up over 100,000 tonnes of shipping either disabled or destroyed. It was one of the finest examples of inter-service cooperation to achieve national military objectives.

The outbreak of war turned Samant's unit into an overt one. Ever the risk-taker, Cdr Samant was tasked by the Eastern Command to carry out a gunboat raid against the Chalna-Mongla port complex up the Khulna river. The port complex was East Pakistan's second largest access to the sea. Force Alfa reported two darkened merchant ships fleeing down the Khulna river. The Pakistani merchant ships MV Anwar Baksh and the MV Baqir were intercepted by a boarding party from the INS Brahmaputra. They were found to have hundreds of Pakistani soldiers and their families fleeing defeat. The ships were escorted to Sandheads, Calcutta and taken over as war prizes.

Force Alfa, meanwhile, continued its dangerous mission up the Rupsha towards PNS Titumir, the site of a Pakistani naval base. They were unfortunately spotted by IAF aircraft which did not recognise the yellow bunting—identification marks on the ships. Two of the patrol boats, MV Padma and MV Palash were destroyed. Cdr Samant continued the mission with the last remaining patrol boat, INS Panvel. They fired at the shore installations and picked up survivors from Padma and Palash and headed back. Force Alfa was the only riverine gunboat raid. And on his return, both Cdr Samant and the Panvel's skipper, Lt Cdr JPA Noronha were awarded Maha Vir Chakras, India's second-highest gallantry award ‘for conspicuous gallantry, dedication and leadership’ during the raid. At the end of the war, Cdr Samant's covert team was awarded three Maha Vir Chakras,

six Vir Chakras and 10 Nao Sena Medals – one of the highest ratios of gallantry awards to personnel in independent India's history.

His post-operation report submitted to the navy in 1972 recommended the creation of a specialist branch of Indian Navy special forces. This vision was realised 14 years later with the creation of the Marine Commando Force or MARCOS. His association with newly-liberated Bangladesh continued. Between March 1972 and May 1973, he served as Naval Adviser to Bangladesh, and for a brief period was the first acting chief of the Bangladesh Navy and interacted with its Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. (Nearly four decades later, Sheikh Mujib's daughter, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would award him the friends of Bangladesh award in Dhaka.)

He picked up his coveted fourth stripe after the war in 1973 and briefly commanded the submarine base INS Virbahu in Visakhapatnam before hanging up his uniform on July 22, 1974. Captain Samant dipped out of sight, like a submarine. He joined the merchant marine and continued to sail for close to four decades and was well into his early 80s when he retired, a few years ago.

I first saw Captain Samant in a grainy official photograph in the 1990s—an officer with a broad forehead, a receding hairline, staring into the camera, with a self-assured pout, the dolphin badge gleaming above his left pocket. His photograph was in one of the earliest books I read about the Indian Navy - "War in the Indian Ocean" by Vice Admiral MK Roy - a superb anthology of maritime power in the Indian Ocean released in 1995 ahead of the silver jubilee celebrations of the Bangladesh war. I got to meet him only in 2017 when I received a call from a friend in the navy in New Delhi. Would I like to meet Captain MNR Samant? He needed some help with an untitled book he was writing. His book draft took me into the dark world of Naval Commando Operations (X) pithily summed up by Cdr Vijai Kapil— "No one spoke the truth."

"Operation X" as we called the book, was a deniable operation. Once 'mission accomplished' had been pronounced, the navy would retreat into the shadows never breathing a word of what they had done. Two key Operation X personnel - Admiral SM Nanda and Captain (later, Vice Admiral) MK Roy - never mentioned the navy's role in planning the entire operation. Hence, in writing his book, Captain Samant took the enormous call. Without the book which relied almost entirely on his notes through the war and accounts of his comrades, his story would have been dismissed as a grizzled veteran's bar tale. In writing the only detailed account of one of the 20th century's largest covert naval campaigns, he bequeathed a rich legacy to Indian military history.

Captain Samant passed away on March 20, 2019 after a brief illness, just four months away from the release of his book. His ashes were immersed in the Arabian Sea that had nurtured him and watched his rise as a naval legend.



Captain Samant handing over as the first chief of the Bangladesh Navy in 1972 to his successor Captain Nurul Haq in the presence of Bangladesh's first Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman

A PROFILE IN COURAGE

NOEL KELMAN

(10-06-1927 to 23-08-2019)

On August 23, 2019, one of the last surviving veterans who saw action in the Second World War, a naval hero, and a living legend of the IN passed on into eternity having fought his last battle on earth.

This is not an obituary or a eulogy but a celebration of life of an unsung hero whose exploits are the stuff of legend which, unfortunately, are not known even to his contemporaries. His life story is an inspirational one and he should be held up as a role model for youngsters – a tale worth telling to the cadets at the Naval Academy and the Sailors' Training Establishment – with so many leadership qualities worth emulating. His naval life story should be displayed in the 'motivational hall' or a 'wall of fame' in these two institutions, as well as in NDA.

Noel Kelman was born on 10 June 1927 in KGF (Kolar Gold Fields) in Karnataka. He joined the Royal Indian Navy in June 1942 as a 'Boy' at the tender age of 15. On completion of his training, he was posted to the sloop HMIS Sutlej, where he gained his sea legs as an Ordinary Seaman. At that time, the Sutlej was assigned to carry out patrolling duties off the coast of Africa and to escort merchant ship convoys across the Bay of Bengal. She also took part in the Burma operations in 1944-45. After the surrender of the Japanese, HMIS Sutlej as part of the Occupation Force, was deployed in Tokyo Bay, Japan. One of the duties assigned to the ship was to tow small, damaged Japanese submarines and sink them out at sea. On one such occasion, on 8 May 1946, the Sutlej had six submarines in tow when Tokyo Bay was struck by a

cyclone and all hell broke loose. Five of the submarines were cast off or broke their moorings and drifted off; but one submarine remained fast hampering the movement of the ship which was rolling wildly. Kelman, now a Leading Seaman, and two other sailors jumped into a boat, boarded the submarine and cut her adrift in pitch dark condition. However, they themselves were unable to get off the



submarine and clung on for dear life as the submarine was rolling so violently that the conning tower touched the water on either side. As the submarine drifted out to sea, the three sailors crawled along the casing to the conning tower from the bow, an evolution that took two hours in pitch darkness, with Kelman doing everything to maintain morale.

The cyclone raged the whole night but by next morning they were sighted by a RN tug that had been sent out to look for them and they were safely taken off the stricken submarine. Four or five minutes after boarding the tug, they watched in horror as the submarine rolled over and sank – a providential escape! For this act of bravery, he was awarded the King's Commendation which was published in a supplement to the London Gazette on 30 May 1947.

He received his commission as an officer when he was a PO(GI) and became a Commissioned Gunner in 1952. Kelman's finest moment though was in 1961, during the liberation of Goa, when he proved that the Japanese episode was not a flash in the pan. On 18 December 1961, he was the Officer-in-Charge of a landing party, comprising two boats, launched from INS Trishul, tasked with capturing the island of Anjadiv, which was occupied by the Portuguese. The first wave under the command of Lt. Arun Audito landed undetected safely under the cover of darkness and so did the first boat of Kelman's party. However, the second boat in which he was, came under fire from the entrenched Portuguese soldiers, killing four of the party while Kelman himself was wounded in both thighs. Many a lesser person would have withdrawn to "re-appreciate the situation", but not Kelman. Maintaining discipline in the boat, despite the blood gushing all over he kept going and with skilful maneuvering beached the boat under heavy fire. He then led his men in support of the first assault party, was later joined by a third wave, and together they flushed out the enemy so that by dusk the island had been captured. It was only on conclusion of the operations that he proceeded to receive medical attention and spent the next 2 – 3 months in hospital.

Lt. Arun Audito, the Officer-in-Charge of the landing party who lead the first assault recalls in the book, "Blueprint to Bluewater" (The Indian Navy, 1951-65,

by Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh): "I took charge of the first wave of the assault party from Trishul and we went peacefully towards the beach and I began to believe that 'surrender business' was indeed true. We landed at the beach, took position around the beach and the boats were sent back to bring the second wave. Fifteen minutes later, the second wave, under the command of Senior Commissioned Gunner N. Kelman set course to approach the beach at about 0745 hours. Suddenly, all hell broke loose as sprays of machine-gun bullets opened up on the boat from Portuguese gun-post near a pill-box on the South hill top. Kelman, with great presence of mind, continued towards the beach, zigzagging the boat to counter the accuracy of the machine-gun fire. A few minutes later, by the time the boat beached, it had been riddled with bullets. Kelman had been wounded on both his thighs – fortunately only flesh wounds - but all the same, seriously."

"After regrouping the force, I left Kelman in charge to attend to the wounded and to ensure their return to the ship as soon as feasible. Both boats had been holed and were shipping water but he managed to return to the ship with the dead and the wounded".

Former CNS Admiral Madhvendra Singh, who was a Midshipman at that time, in a message recalls: "He and I were on the Mysore during the assault on Anjadiv Island and I saw him coming up the accommodation ladder of Mysore with blood oozing from both his legs. A brave man and a thorough gentleman. May he rest in peace."

This then is the story of Kelman's role in Operation Vijay. The leadership and courage displayed by him contributed immensely to the success of the landing. For his leadership and courage under fire, Kelman was awarded the Ashoka Chakra, Second Class, now called the Kirti Chakra, thus becoming the first naval officer to win a gallantry award in post-independence India.

A remarkable man indeed, Kelman has been a part of history and not just an onlooker. He was a legend in his lifetime and over time he rose to the rank of Commander; a person who had joined the Service as a boy retired as a brass hat indicating his commitment, zeal and devotion to the service. His various

assignments include Gunnery Officer, INS Talwar; Squadron Gunnery Officer, 22nd Destroyer Squadron; Officer-in-Charge of two Naval Coast Batteries; Officer Commanding Naval Garrison in the Andamans; 1st Lieutenant INS Vikrant (1968-70); Executive Officer, INS Garuda (1970-73). He took over as the Commanding Officer of INS Gomantak in April 1973, which he said was his most memorable appointment. He retired from service on 30 June 1977 after a long and illustrious service of 35 years and chose to settle in Goa (Defence Colony, Porvorim). It was only fitting then that he settled in the same place in whose liberation he had played a leading role. He was a founder member of the Goa Branch of the All India Anglo-Indian Association.

His final resting place is a plot in the serene premises of the Holy Family Church, Alto Porvorim, Goa. He

was interred with full military honours on 26 August 2019. It would be wrong to look at him through the prism of the Navy alone; it would be appropriate to call him a national hero.

(Note: Noel Kelman was not a member of the ship's company of INS Trishul or INS Mysore. He was in fact doing a course in Gunnery School, Cochin when there was a call for volunteers for a "special assignment", which turned out to be the assault on Anjadip Island. The selected team rehearsed day and night in different locations that resembled Anjadip Island. The training included live firing and capturing a body of men and taking them prisoner. Lt. Arun Auditto, retired as a Rear Admiral. He too sustained bullet injuries in the operation and for his valour and leadership in the liberation of Anjadip, he was awarded the Nao Sena Medal in April 1964).

Cdr Carl H. Gomes (Retd), *commissioned into IN in 1967, is a specialist in Naval Telecommunications and Electronic Warfare. His notable appointments include: CI, Naval Signal School; Fleet Communications & EWO, Eastern Fleet; Joint Director Naval Signals at MOD (Navy) and CO of INS Beas, among others. He writes under the nom de plume Naughtilus and can be contacted at: naughtilus2000@gmail.com*



AN UNFORGETTABLE LESSON IN GRACE AND HUMILITY

In 1991, I was the EXO of INS Mandovi which at the time functioned as the interim site of the Naval Academy (while the current Indian Naval Academy was as yet in its planning stages). The CO of Mandovi was Captain (later Commodore) KP Mathew who on joining, embarked on a vigorous modernisation and capital-building programme to make the base into a credible 'interim' Naval Academy'.

The required sanctions for various capital projects eventually came through after the usual 'argy bargy' between the base and the powers-that-be, and building began in earnest, shortly thereafter. Over

the next few weeks and months, the base was a hub of activity with the Garrison Engineer inaugurating one construction work after the other. A great number of foundation stones were laid. The CO generously asked us - as heads of departments - to lay some of these foundation stones for some of the projects we had championed, as he wanted posterity to know that this was a herculean task undertaken by a dedicated team of officers, and not just himself.

In due course, it was my turn to lay a foundation stone. The GE marched across to my office and formally asked me (as EXO) if I would consent to lay the foundation stone of the new Petrol Pump of the

base. I thanked him, fetched up at the appointed time and place, and was duly garlanded by the staff press-ganged into attendance at the site. I made a speech of sorts, walked up to a rather garishly decorated curtain and pulled it back to reveal a foundation stone that would have gladdened the heart of the great Michelangelo himself. The stone was one square metre of polished black granite beautifully laid in brickwork with my name, rank, and designation etched in large letters of embossed gold leaf, carved for posterity.

And that was that... Since the stone was no different from any of the others I had seen all across the navy at the time, I didn't give it much thought. As it happens, a number of retired officers who lived in the naval housing colony at Porvorim nearby, used the facilities of the base for canteen supplies, rations and to fill up their vehicles at our petrol pump.

A couple of days later, Cdr. Noel Kelman, a decorated war hero and a legend in the navy, stopped by the pump and was (I suspect), 'dazzled' by my foundation stone which must have hit him squarely between the eyes while he was filling his vehicle. He asked the staff on duty if he might be able to speak to me. We then had this rather nice, innocuous conversation about 'this, that, and the other' in the course of which he casually mentioned that years ago, in 1954, he had been the project officer for the building of the then 'School of Maritime Warfare and Tactics' (SMWT) which he said had an equally impressive foundation stone that I might like to look at when I next visit Cochin.

As it happens, I was due for sea time as a commander and sent to SMWT a few months later for the CO's course. At some stage during the course, I remembered my conversation with Cdr Kelman and asked around whether anyone had seen the founda-

tion stone of SMWT. It turns out no one knew where it was.

Eventually, after a diligent search, a sailor finally located the stone at the back of the building... and there it was, a small stone (about the size of two small bricks) hidden at the back of the building in cheap off-white faded marble with what must have started out as simple black lettering, battered with age and time. The inscription however made me catch my breath. If I remember rightly all that it said was '

'Foundation Stone,
School of Maritime Warfare and Tactics
laid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of
India 1954'

And then it hit me that I had finally understood what Cdr Kelman had been subtly trying to tell me all along; that true greatness does not come from the size of a monument or on how much coin one spends on it (or on its foundation stone, for that matter), but in ensuring that the leadership, management, the people who worked there would be inspired to achieve what the institution or building was designed to do and more.

The SMWT over the years produced some of the finest Commanding Officers and tacticians of the Indian Navy (and a few foreign navies as well). In the hearts and minds of Cdr Noel Kelman (and Pandit Nehru, I suspect) that was the true monument to a building's achievement. In the grand scheme of things, my ostentatious foundation stone at a petrol pump at the back of a base in the middle of nowhere, was at best a vanity exercise the navy could well do without. A lesson in humility, I have carried with me to this day.

Commander Allan Rodrigues (Retd), 42 NDA course, retired from the Indian Navy in 1994. He is a Sword of Honour and Lentaighe medal winner at DSSC Wellington and has commanded IN Ships Nipat, Himagiri and Subhadra and was EXO INS Mandovi (Naval Academy). He migrated to New Zealand in 1995, where he currently lives.

AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

LUNCHEON WITH LATE ARUN JAITLEY

The late Shri Arun Jaitley was one of India's most articulate leaders and urbane politicians. He was also the Raksha Mantri (RM) for two separate stints, an assignment he combined with several other roles reflecting his versatility. My recollection of him, however, goes back to a long and leisurely luncheon held on board INS Jalashwa, the ship I commanded, on his visit to Visakhapatnam in August 2014.



Sometime in June 2014, I was called for a meeting at the Headquarters, Eastern Naval Command (HQENC); as the Fleet Commander, Rear Admiral AK Jain was on deployment to the Far East, I represented him as the SOPA (Senior Officer Present Afloat). The meeting was about the commissioning of INS Kamorta on 23 August, with the RM as the Chief Guest. Just as the meeting was winding up, Vice Admiral Satish Soni, the C-in-C dropped a bombshell. Looking at me, he said "Kamorta will be busy with her events... she is a small ship, so you host the lunch for the RM". Having been the Fleet Commander earlier he was aware of Jalashwa's capacious VVIP cabins. In any case, Jalashwa functioned like the 'Carrier of the East' and was

usually the first choice for ceremonial, protocol and hospitality related events.

Thus, organising the lunch, per se, was not a big thing given that we had a 'practised ease' about undertaking such activities. The real challenge was elsewhere. I had heard of Jaitley's reputation as a foodie with extremely picky taste about what he relished. Thus, the spit and polish of service or cutlery alone would not do. The food was the real deal here.

I sought an early meeting with the C-in-C to discuss the fine print. With a smile he added to the pressure with his opening remarks, "You know that 'Robin' (Admiral RK Dhowan, the CNS) has a keen eye for detail... he wants a flawless event". "We will be up to the challenge, Sir", I replied with a weak smile. While I was open to collaboration or some sort of conjoined efforts, I felt that the option of outsourcing the event to some Hotel group, as suggested by some, was not kosher. I felt that in true naval tradition, (the bulk of) the cooking and serving ought to be done by the ship's cooks. It was not simply about using the space or having the feel of the ship but to represent the full range of naval hospitality. And I felt that my staff were quite up to the challenge.

However, his stature as a food connoisseur and the reputation of CNS as being fastidious added to the apprehensions. Various menu options were discussed and discarded. North Indian or Punjabi variants were a strict no – after all, the RM was renowned for having popularised Amritsari kulcha at Delhi and this was his home territory. Gujarati food was mostly vegetarian and a range of international cuisines - Thai, Mexican, Chinese, and Lebanese - might have been sampled by him on his international travels. Plus, 'intelligence' indicated that he was more inclined towards Indian khaana. At this stage, I

made bold to suggest that we should go in for 'South Indian food'. I had to fight the impression that Southie food was mostly 'veg' or limited to idli-vada-dosa. There was also the novelty factor, maybe it would be a new experience for him. Tentatively, the C-in-C gave the go-ahead, but with some degree of doubt.

While being thankful for his backing, I wondered if we were biting more than what we could chew (no pun intended). How would we serve several courses South Indian style? What would be the appropriate décor, crockery and cutlery to keep the correct protocol and maintain the sanctity of it being a formal event? It was at this time that one hit upon the proverbial lucky turn. It transpired that a few months earlier the top management of the local ITC hotel Grand Bay had been on our ship on the Families Day. They had apparently been very impressed by the way we handled more than thousand guests and by our hospitality, they had extended an open invitation to visit them. And by a wonderful coincidence, the Grand Bay apparently had the best South Indian hotel in town called Dakshin.

So, an 'expert group' of few officers and wives of varied food choices went to Dakshin (anonymously and with bills fully paid) and the unanimous opinion was that the food and service were top class. In fact, some North Indians confessed 'they never knew South had so much variety'. So, that did it. We approached Grand Bay formally. However, our idea was not to outsource the whole event. I wanted my cooks to learn from the Chefs at Dakshin and to borrow their silver cutlery and crockery while cooking and serving on board. After lot of deliberation, it was decided to be a collaborative effort but with Jalashwa and Navy as the front end. An elaborate multicourse menu representing the best of South Indian cuisine from all parts of South India – Chettinad, Malabar, Hyderabad, interior Karnataka – was prepared with due emphasis on décor and service. Seating was another issue that needed resolution. The Captain's Cabin dining table had space just for 12. The RM, CNS, C-in-C, Defence Secretary, CWPA, Fleet Commander and their respective spouses formed the main table automatically. The wardroom would seat the rest.

Cometh the day, everything went smoothly. The RM

had a good *chukker* of the ship's well deck and took keen interest in the capabilities. He had a busy schedule since morning – commissioning, harbour trip, various briefings, but his mind was sharp and perceptive. As I went to escort the head honchos to the table, there was sudden realisation that the CWPA was sans spouse and there would be one chair vacant. With a quick half nod, RAdm Jain beckoned me to take that place and thus I found myself on the high table. I was tense, more bothered if the event was being choreographed properly with this unexpected turn of events. Soon I realised that there was nothing much to do but sit back and enjoy.

And enjoy I did as I got a ringside view to a virtual tour de force. The reputation of Mr Jaitley as a scintillating speaker and a sparkling conversationalist was evident that afternoon as he held court on one subject after another sallying back and forth with ease and authority. Through all this it was evident that he was enjoying his food—pausing to sample the flavours, acquiescing to a refill, nodding his head in appreciation—and letting that mingle with the conversation. There were other eminences and seniors on the table so I happily took on the role of an interested observer but a couple of hesitant interjections by me seem to have won his instant approval. I was delighted when he turned to me many times to make his point without worrying too much about protocol. Tales from the legal, political and cricketing world flowed fast and thick, with anecdotal relish. That afternoon revealed why he was very popular across the political spectrum. He was unfailingly warm and generous about everyone he spoke including his political opponents. He expressed his admiration for Mr LK Advani and his discipline, he brought out the untiring energy and 24x7 involvement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but he also had much to say, in admiration, about Sharad Pawar's political savvy, Nitish Kumar's political commitment and Mamata Banerjee's spartan lifestyle. It was a model lesson of how one may differ ideologically but keep relationships going.

I was so enraptured by the discussion that I did not notice that the cooks and stewards had done a splendid job. But I realised that food was no longer the main issue, it was the memory of a long afternoon spent listening (with occasional interjections) to one

of our finest legal and political minds. While leaving, the RM turned to me, praised the ship and said “thank you for an excellent lunch; have not had something like this for long”. I was later told that praise like that coming from Arun Jaitley is the ultimate compliment. As he left the ship the Fleet Commander, who had returned just couple of days before the event, thanked me for the show and gave a BZ to the ship. In turn, I told him, “Sir, I must thank you for one of the loveliest and most educative days of my life. Not everybody gets lunch with the RM,

over such a long leisurely afternoon”. The Fleet Commander just smiled in return.

VAdm Jain is now the C-in-C of the same ENC. I hope he too recollects that afternoon. This experience will remain etched in my mind and I will cherish it forever. Mr Jaitley passed away on 24 August 2019, almost exactly five years later to the day he had visited Vizag. RIP Mr Jaitley. You went away too soon.

Cmde Srikant Kesnur, *Director Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai* is a regular contributor to *Quarterdeck*. He can be contacted at (wncmwc@navy.gov.in) and (srikant-kesnur@navy.gov.in)

Remembering My Husband

Surg VAdm Hara Prasad Mukherjee

(1.10.1941 – 17.3.2019)



Is this the Law of Nature,

One or other must leave,

One or the other must stay.

Is this the way for ever?

One or the other must grieve.

What happened to the seven vows that were sworn?

Braving what has to be borne, widening the ache in the heart

One how so ever adored, first must be summoned away.

That is the will of God – One or the other must stay.

My husband, Vice Admiral Mukherjee, whom I affectionately called 'Baku' because he talked too much, leaves behind a legacy of love and integrity. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

He was born in a village called Maluti in Santhal Parganas, West Bengal on 1 October 1941 and walked into the sunset of his life on 17 March 2019 at INHS Asvini, a place dear to his heart.

As a child, he excelled in St. John's, Ranchi before completing his MBBS from Prince of Wales Medical College, Patna. He was blessed with a calligraphic hand and skill at painting. His paintings adorn the walls of his school even today. He had mastery over languages - English, Hindi, Sanskrit, besides Bengali, his mother tongue.

He joined the Navy in February 1964 and did his specialisation in Aviation and Space Medicine at the Institute of Aviation Medicine, Bangalore. It was during this period that we met each other at Air Force Officers' Mess as I was posted as a dental officer at Command Dental Centre. After one and a half year of courtship, we decided to tie the knot. Our group of friends and I were mesmerised with his singing talent and ability to play a number of musical instruments. For all his sundry interests, he was a pure-bred naval officer and his first love was the Service. With his dedication, determination and relentless work, he progressively ascended the promotional ladder to become Director General Medical Services. He played a pivotal role in NIDS and Asvini Modernisation Project starting from the blueprint stage (when he was a Captain) to Instrumentation, when he was DGMS, Navy.

After he hung up his uniform in August 2002, he worked for Bhatia General Hospital as the medical director and we finally settled at Anchorage, Versova, enjoying and engaging in the activities of our grandchildren. Besides working as a consulting physician – for free - he enjoyed being a tinsmith, carpenter and a full-time house-keeper.

A man full of life, he enjoyed helping everyone. He was an angel and a star in his own right. He will always be in our hearts and our love for him will never die. We are grateful for all the sacrifices he made to make his family comfortable. We are grateful for each and every day that we got to see his glowing smile and for his jovial nature that had us in splits with his treasury of jokes. Finally: I would just like to say to him: Don't forget ours is an association of seven births which will remain for ever.

Dr Kanta Mukherjee, a dentist by profession and a social worker by choice, remembers 'Baku', an angel of a husband dedicated to the Service. She works towards protecting the environment of Versova. Her work in saving the mangroves and promoting solid waste management through vermicomposting has won her laurels under the Swachh Bharat Scheme.

WNC NEWS

CHANGE OF COMMAND

Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC took over as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command on 31 January 2019 at Mumbai. He succeeded Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC who retires upon superannuation, after an illustrious career spanning nearly four decades in the Indian Navy. At an impressive ceremonial parade at the Naval Air Station Shikra, the outgoing and incoming Cs-in-C were accorded a Guard of Honour after which they proceeded to the Headquarters, Western Naval Command for a formal handing-taking over. On completion, Vice Admiral Luthra was “pulled out” in true Naval tradition.



Rear Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, VSM assumed charge as Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area on 25 March 2019. He is an Anti-Submarine Warfare specialist. His notable sea appointments include EXO of INS Kirpan and INS Mysore and Command of INS Kora, INS Shivalik and INS Viraat. On promotion to the rank of Rear Admiral in February 2016, he was appointed as the Assistant Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Int-A) at HQ IDS, New Delhi, and subsequently as the CSO (Operations) at HQWNC.

Rear Admiral Mahesh Singh, NM assumed charge as Flag Officer Commanding Karnataka Naval Area at a ceremonial parade at Karwar on 30 March. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, he was commissioned into the Indian Navy in January 1987 and is a Navigation and Direction specialist. His notable sea appointments include commissioning crew of INS Akshay and Jyoti, ExO of INS Tabar and Commanding Officers of missile vessel INS Nirghat during Op Vijay, MCGS Vigilante whilst on deputation to Government of Mauritius and INS Jalashwa.



OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENT

IN Ships Kolkata and Shakti participated in International Fleet Review (IFR) at Qingdao, China as part of 70th anniversary celebrations of PLA (Navy) on 21 April 2019. Indian Navy's participation in PLA (N) IFR for third consecutive time (2009, 2014 and 2019), is a demonstration of the Nation's commitment to enhance maritime cooperation between the two navies and bolster bonds of friendship between the two countries. Prior to the visit to Qingdao, the ships had called at Port Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam for a good will visit. The ships visited Port Busan, South Korea and Singapore on their return journey as part of Eastern Fleet Overseas Deployment.



IN Ships being welcomed by Chinese officials and school children



INS Kolkata at Qingdao China



INS Tarkash visited Alexandria, Egypt on 28 June 2019 for a three-day visit, as a part of Western Fleet Overseas Deployment programme. The visit seeks to underscore India's peaceful presence and solidarity with friendly countries and to strengthen the existing bonds of friendship between India and Egypt. Calls on senior Government and military authorities, sporting, cultural interactions, exchange visit of ships personnel and sharing of best practices, aimed at strengthening ties and mutual understanding between the two Navies, were the highlights of the visit.

INS Tarkash arrived at Tangier, Morocco on 8 July 2019 for a three-day visit. The visit was part of an ongoing Overseas Deployment by the Indian Navy to the Mediterranean Sea, Africa and Europe. During the port call, various dignitaries and government officials of Morocco including senior naval officers visited the ships.



Naval Investiture Ceremony



The Naval Investiture Ceremony was held at WNC's naval air base INS Shikra in Mumbai on 10 April. CNS Admiral Sunil Lanba PVSM, AVSM, ADC, conferred gallantry and non-gallantry awards to meritorious personnel, on behalf of the President of India, announced on the Republic Day 2019. The CNS presented 45 medals which included 18 Nao Sena Medals for Gallantry, 9 Nao Sena Medals for Devotion to Duty, 16 Vishisht Seva Medals for distinguished service, Captain Ravi Dhir Memorial Gold Medal for Promoting Innovativeness in Flight Safety and Lt VK Jain Memorial Gold Medal for best applied research in Naval Technology. Naval Dockyard (Vizag) and INS Dwarka were awarded the 'CNS Trophy for Best Green Practices' for their environment-friendly initiatives.

The CNS also presented Unit Citations to four afloat units, viz. INS Trishul, INS Sahyadri, INAS 322 and INS Tarasa and four ashore units - NSRY (Kochi), INS Utkrosh, INHS Kalyani and Material Organisation (Mumbai) - for delivering exceptional performance over the past one year.

Naval Phase of Defence Correspondents Course, 2019 concludes at Mumbai



The Navy and Coast Guard leg of the 2019 edition of the Defence Correspondents Course (DCC) concluded at Mumbai on 31 August '19. The course was coordinated by the Maritime Warfare Centre (Mumbai) and aimed to enlighten journalists on nuances of naval operations and their significance. The naval leg culminated with a valedictory reception hosted by FOCWF, for the participants and the organisers. If the bonhomie between the teachers and the students was any indication the naval leg was successful in its primary objective.

International Yoga Day: All personnel of WNC including families and defence civilians participated whole-heartedly in International Yoga Day celebrations on 21 June 2019. Yoga camps were organised at all naval stations of the Command including Goa, Gujarat and Karwar. In Mumbai alone, 21 camp sites saw enthusiastic participation by the naval community. About 100 naval personnel joined Mumbaikars for Yoga at the iconic venue. IN ships at sea too began their day with Yoga, thereby truly taking the initiative across the high seas.



Rescue efforts in rain-hit Mumbai: With incessant rain flooding low-lying areas of Mumbai, Indian Navy received a request from BMC to provide assistance to stranded Mumbaikars in Kurla. Teams from INS Tanaji and Material Organisation were immediately activated and later joined by naval diving teams. The team from INS Tanaji encountered extreme waterlogging and had to abandon vehicles, preventing their own vehicles from reaching the site. The team moved on foot, carrying safety gear like lifebuoys and life-jackets and was able to help elderly women and children to safer areas. Nearly 1000 people were shifted to safety with the help of NDRF, fire brigade as well as local volunteers.

The Valedictory Function of the **31th Naval Higher Command Course (NHCC)** was held at the Naval War College, INS Mandovi, Goa on 9 May 2019. Her Excellency Smt Mridula Sinha, the Hon'ble Governor of Goa presided as Chief Guest at the function. She presented certificates to all participants and awards to the officers who excelled in the course.



Smt Mridula Sinha, the Hon'ble Governor of Goa releasing the 4th edition of the China Compendium

Indian Navy Runners sweep Podium in the 4th Himalayan running festival



Indian Naval Team consisting one officer, six sailors and one defence civilian participated in various running events from 15 to 23 June '19 including the Hell Race as part of Fourth Himalayan Running Festival. The high altitude running competition comprised grueling events such as vertical kilometer- elevation of 1000m, a one of its kind and first in India event and High 5S, where runners are expected to complete five full marathons in five consecutive days running at an average altitude of over 4000 meters. Runners from the Indian Navy swept the podium in the High 5s event with Sanjay Kumar, EA(P)3 setting a new record by clocking 28 hours, 45 mins and 12 secs, while Lt Cdr Yogesh Tiwari of INS Tabar and Kapil Kumar PO PTI of INS Trishul also broke the previous record and came second and third, respectively. The runners bravely crossed high altitude passes over a course of five days that include Rohtang Pass (13050 ft), Baralachala Pass (16085 ft), Nakela Pass (16175 ft), Lachungla Pass (16580 ft) and Tanglangla Pass (17500 ft) while braving sub-zero temperatures and freezing winds during this event, aptly named Hell Race.



The fourth edition of the **Indian Oil WNC Navy Half Marathon** was held on 17 November in Mumbai. The event, jointly organised by the Indian Navy and Indian Oil, is one of the many outreach activities conducted by the WNC as part of Navy Day celebrations. The event has grown since its inception to become the second largest running event in Mumbai and the fifth in India. The marquee event provided a golden opportunity for our civilian brethren to run shoulder to shoulder with the men and women in white, “matching stride-to-stride with pride”.

75th Annual Conference of Bombay Medical Congress:

INHS Asvini hosted the landmark 75th Annual Conference of the Bombay Medical Congress on 23 and 24 March 2019 at INHS Asvini, Mumbai. The Bombay Medical Congress has grown from strength to strength over the past seven decades. The conference was inaugurated by the Chief Guest VAdm P Ajit Kumar, FOC-in-C WNC. Lt Gen Bipin Puri, DGAFMS and Senior Colonel Commandant, Army Medical Corps, was the Guest of Honour.



Veterans Sailors Forum



Job Fair: A tri-Services Ex-Servicemen (ESM) job fair was organised at Goa on 15 March under the aegis of Headquarters, Goa Naval Area and Director General Resettlement (DGR) of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in co-ordination of Confederation of Indian Industries (CII). Representatives from about 25 corporate companies comprising Bharat Electronics Ltd., Goa Shipyard Ltd, Facebook and Magsons Supercenter attended the event. A total of 500 ESM participated.

11th AGM of Veteran Sailors Forum, Mumbai Charter was held at Indian Navy Sailors Institute 'Sagar' on 9 June. The meeting was chaired by RAdm LS Suriaraj, NM, CSO (P&A), President VSF, Mumbai Charter. A total of 148 veterans attended the AGM. NAVPEN, ECHS, Banks (SBI, PNB) and Angre (Dependent Card) help desk were set up to assist the veterans in resolving pending issues.

A new school building for Navy Children School was inaugurated at Naval Station, Karanja on 17 June by Smt. Meena Pandey, a senior teacher in presence of VAdm Ajit Kumar, FOC-in-C, WNC. The building consists of 22 classrooms, fully equipped labs, library, computer room, audio visual room, administrative facilities and utilities and will accommodate over 600 students.



KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the glorious victory in Kargil War, a series of activities were held in Mumbai on 26 July to honour the sacrifices of the gallant warriors of Indian Armed Forces. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Devendra Fadnavis, VAdm Ajit Kumar FOC-in-C WNC, Lt Gen SK Prashar, GOC Maharashtra, Gujarat & Goa Area and Air Vice Marshal Rajeev Hora, Air Officer Commanding Maritime Air Operations, laid wreaths on behalf of the State and the Armed Forces in a solemn wreath-laying ceremony held at Shaheed Smarak at Colaba.



NWWA ACTIVITIES



Inauguration of new NWWA Kendra



Tarsh products on sale at IMC exhibition in Worli



Inauguration of Vocational Centre at Sankalp

ENC NEWS



Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, AVSM, VSM took over the Command of Eastern Naval Command from Admiral Karambir Singh, PVSM, AVSM on 30 May 2019. The latter assumed charge as CNS on 1 April 2019.



The Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh, PVSM, AVSM, ADC commissioned the Indian Naval Air Squadron 313, on 23 July 2019 at Meenambakkam in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.



IN LCU L-56 was commissioned by the C-in-C, East on July 29, 2019. The ship has been built at GRSE, Kolkata.



INS Sindhudhvaj undertook her last sortie from 28 to 31 October 2019. On directives, the CO carried out 'Shut Off from Dive' of the boat for the last time at 1733h on 31 October 2019.



INS Kozhikode (R), the last of the SNMs was decommissioned at Visakhapatnam on 13 April 2019. INS Ranjit (L) was decommissioned on 6 May 2019 after 36 years of yeoman service to the Indian Navy.





Maiden Tri-lateral exercise (SITMEX-19) between Indian, Singapore and Thailand Navies was held off Port Blair from September 15 to 20. IN Ships Ranvir, Kora and Sukanya participated in the exercise.



The maiden India-US Joint Tri-services HADR exercise, 'Tiger Triumph' was conducted at Visakhapatnam and Kakinada from November 13 to 21. IN Ships Jalashwa, Airavat, Sandhayak, IA troops of 19 Madras, 7 Guards, IAF Mi-17 and Rapid Action Medical Team (RAMT) participated in the exercise.



On 12 August, INS Gaj was deployed off Vizag for rendering assistance to extinguish fire onboard MV Coastal Jaguar. The crew was rescued on to a VPT Pilot boat.



Teams from INS Karna and CCDT(V) were deployed extensively for several flood relief operations across the Eastern sea board including Op Madad, Kerala and floods at Kolhapur, Maharashtra.



Anubhavi Milan was hosted on 16 November 2019 at Navy House by President, NWWA Hyderabad. Senior ladies cherished the event and shared their experiences.



As part of Navy Week celebrations, special children were taken on a visit to INS Dega on 15 November. Nearly 225 children, representing seven schools of Visakhapatnam, were shown static display of various aircraft at Dega. They also witnessed SAR demo by Chetak, slithering Ops from UH3H and high-speed run by Hawk aircraft.



NWWA Outreach Programme at Global Aid Foundation: The 'Sparsh' team, which works with the motto 'Ability in Disability' to support those living with physical disabilities, visited the Global Aid Foundation at Visakhapatnam on 29 October 2019. Food provisions and items collected from the naval community were handed over to the organisation. Sparsh volunteers interacted with the members of the organisation.



A film show for special children was organised by NWWA (WB) as part of naval outreach programme at Albert Ekka Auditorium, Fort William on November 20.



'Navy Day' was the theme at Odisha International Sand Art Festival, Puri, organised in December by the Odisha State Tourism Department. Nearly 30 national and 10 international sand artists participated in the event.

EMPOWERMENT AND WELFARE OF WOMEN

NWWA (SR) saw a myriad of activities, initiatives and major renovations in 2019.



NO PLASTIC: NWWA is tackling environment sustainability by spreading the message of 'No Plastic'. Under the aegis of President NWWA (SR), the Prakriti, Jagriti and Sparsh groups reached out to the residents of Vathuruthy village on 5 September. Students of NCS, Kochi put up a program with catchy jingles, presentation and a street play stressing the importance of clean and green environment. President NWWA (SR) highlighted the Navy's efforts in joining hands with the village to clean and maintain the Vathuruthy Channel.



ANNUAL SAHARA LUNCH was conducted on 27 November. President NWWA (SR) and ladies of NWWA interacted with the Next of Kin (NOK) with an aim to address their concerns. A presentation was made on various schemes and measures for the welfare of NOK and their dependents by CRSO and ECHS representatives, followed by an entertainment programme.



PRAGATI: The Rameshwaram Kendra was revamped generating a lot of interest among the residents. As a result, a number of classes for dance, macramé work, **mehendi**, drawing, art and craft etc., were started. In order to empower the ladies and give them a platform to showcase their talent, President NWWA (SR) motivated the ladies to commercialize their products and start selling them at NWWA Shops (SAMUDRI).



ASHIRWAD: Team Ashirwad organized an event for the Senior Citizens on 28 September. Indoor games, meditation and laughter sessions were conducted, followed by a sumptuous lunch. A visit to IN Ships was also organized on 13 November.

REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES OF FLOOD - AFFECTED AREAS: In one of the worst flood - affected areas, Cheriya Kadamakudy of Ernakulam District, a 'Children Play Area' equipped with eight multi-stage play equipment was set up. Two garden benches and wheel-barrow, 56 single cots and medical equipment were also provided to the inhabitants. All the houses at Cheriya Kadamakudy were fitted with Solar Panels at a cost of Rs 13 lakhs.



STEEL ARCH BRIDGE: Foundation stone for the construction of a new Steel Arch Bridge at Cheriya Kadamakudy was laid by the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief on 28 March. The bridge was inaugurated by the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (South) on 23 September. The overall cost of the bridge is Rs. 40 lakhs.



PROVISION OF PREMIUM QUALITY DRINKING WATER: The Command has commissioned sophisticated premium quality drinking water Plants namely 'Jal Aadhar' at Sailors Married Accommodation (SMA) Vendhuruthy Naval Base(1000 LPH capacity), SMA Rameshwaram (5000 LPH), SMA Dronacharya (500 LPH), and at SMA INS Shivaji (2000 LPH).

The Plants provide purified drinking water in 20 litre containers at Rs 5/- per container for collection at the facility and Rs 10/- per container for home /office delivery. The initial cost has been paid by SNC, and the operating/ maintenance/ delivery cost will be borne by OEM from the income generated by sales.



CASH AWARDS TO WARDS OF NAVAL PERSONNEL: In order to recognize meritorious performance of children of naval personnel serving in Southern Naval Command and encourage them to excel in academics and sports, various 'cash award' were distributed to 120 students.



REFURBISHMENT OF RECREATIONAL ROOM AT INS DWEEPRAKSHAK: Indian Naval Ship Dweeprakshak is a non-family station located at Kavarathi. The sailors from NOIC (L&M), INS Dweeprakshak, SPB, NLC Agatti, ND Bitra and half platoon of DSC jawans are borne at INS Dweeprakshak. The personnel borne at these islands face additional hardship caused due to unpredictable environment, excessive humidity, unavailability of basic amenities available on the mainland. Kavartti island does not have any additional facilities/amenities like hotels, cinema halls, restaurant and other recreational avenues. Substantial amount of Grant was, therefore, allotted for refurbishment of Sailors' Recreation Room.

NAVY FOUNDATION BANGALORE CHAPTER



A get-together was organized on 7 April 2019 where around 110 members were present. Various policies covering ECHS and PPO were brought to the notice of members.



NFBC Vice President Cmde KM Nair attended Navy Foundation GCM/AGM held at Kochi on 5 May 2019. During the meeting, NFBC projected wide-ranging issues concerning welfare of naval veterans at Bangalore including continued difficulty of RSI membership. Suggestions were also submitted for utilisation of NOM infrastructure for casual visits by naval veterans for socialising purposes. Need for additional resources including office space and staff was also emphasized.



The AGM of the Chapter was held on 7 July 2019, attended by 115 members. The proposal for continuation of the existing committee for one more year was approved by voice vote. Various policies covering ECHS, OROP, PPO, property tax, dependent I-card etc. were brought to the notice of members. Capt N Mohan Ram was felicitated with an Octogenarian crest.



On 7 December, Navy Day Social Evening was organized by NFBC. The President and Management Committee invited veterans along with serving naval officers and dignitaries from Army and Air Force. Nearly 200 members with ladies were present for the function. During the function octogenarians were felicitated with crests.

NAVY FOUNDATION DEHRADUN CHAPTER

The Uttarakhand Veteran Naval Officers joined together for the first AGM of the newly formed NFDNC (Navy Foundation Dehradun Chapter) on 22 September 2019 at National Hydrographic Office (NHO), Naval Officers Mess (NOM), Dehradun.

NFDNC team visited Doon Global School on 25 October 2019 to support inclusive education for children.

Children's Day was celebrated with underprivileged children, and a donation was made by the naval fraternity/NFDNC team to Dhruv Foundation, a children's charity.

Distinguished NFDNC members, veterans and NoK attended the Navy Day At Home Function on 4 December 2019 at NHO.

Vijay Diwas was commemorated by NFDNC team on 16 December 2019 with an inspiring speech by Vice Admiral HCS Bisht PVSM, AVSM (Retd) on the role of Indian Navy during the 1971 Indo Pak War.



Uttarakhand Veteran Naval Officers joined together for first AGM of NFDNC on 22 Sept 2019



NFDNC members with students of Doon Global School, Dehradun



NFDNC Team on Navy Day At Home function on 4 Dec 2019 at NHO



Distinguished members of NFDNC Team at Sahid Samarak, Dehradun paying homage to martyrs on Vijay Diwas, 16 Dec 2019

NAVY FOUNDATION DELHI CHAPTER



On the Armed Forces Veterans' Day on 14 January 2019, wreaths were laid at Amar Jawan Jyoti by designated Senior serving officers from the Services Headquarters, Veteran Officers and JCOs/ORs Associations from the three Services. A wreath was laid by Rear Admiral S Ramsay (Retd), President NFDC on behalf of naval veterans.



28th Admiral RD Katari Memorial Lecture was held at on 22nd March 2019. Dr Bibek Debroy, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and Member, NITI Aayog was the Guest Speaker. He spoke on "A Vision for the Indian Economy", which was very well received.



A Farewell Lunch was hosted by NFDC at Naval Officers' Mess Annexe, Kota House on 22 May 2019 to bid farewell to Admiral Sunil Lanba and Mrs Reena Lanba on the eve of his relinquishing the office of Chief of the Naval Staff. The farewell event was conducted with an aura of nostalgia and in keeping with the naval traditions.



A get together of veterans was organised by the NFDC on 10 November 2019 at Kota House Rear Lawns. The occasion was also used to welcome Admiral Karambir Singh, PVSM, AVSM the Chief of the Naval Staff. Octogenarian Awards were presented by the CNS to octogenarians present at the event.

NAVY FOUNDATION HYDERABAD CHAPTER

Annual General Body Meeting was held at CDM Secunderabad on 14 April 2019. 122 members including ladies attended. The following are the salient features of the AGM:

❖ Vice Admiral KASZ Raju, PVSM, AVSM, NM and Commander G Eswara Reddy were elected unopposed as President and Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.

❖ Various matters regarding shortage of medicines, issue of revised PPOs, and articles for Quarterdeck were discussed and updated information on increase in DA, important things to know in case of demise of the pensioner etc. was disseminated.



As part of the celebration of Navy Week, the following events were organized by DMDE Secunderabad:

❖ Navy Golf Tournament was conducted on 1 December 2019 as part of the celebration of Navy Week. Sixteen veterans took part and won the Championship for the year 2019.

❖ Navy Day Reception and Band Concert was organized on 7 December 2019, followed by High Tea. Large number of members and their wives attended the function.

❖ On 15 December 2019, over Lunch, Navy Foundation members and their spouses had an opportunity to meet and interact.



14 new members joined NFHC during 1 April 2019 to 15 December 2019. Efforts continue to encourage retired naval officers to become members of Navy Foundation.

NAVY FOUNDATION KERALA CHAPTER

Annual General Body Meeting was held on 7 July 2019 at the SNC Officers Mess. The President, Management Committee, VAdm MP Muralidharan AVSM & Bar, NM (Retd), Vice President Cmde P Suresh, VSM (Retd) and the Treasurer Cdr PT John (Retd) were re-elected for another term and Cdr KB Jalesh (Retd) was elected as the new Secretary.



Anubhavi Meet: On 21 January 2019, a special 'Anubhavi' Lunch, for the spouses of the veteran officers, was arranged by the SNC NWWA at the Navy House Lawns.



Veterans Day - 2019: A combined Services Veterans Day wreath-laying ceremony was held at the War Memorial, Naval Base, Kochi on 14 January 2019, followed by breakfast at the Sailors' Institute. The President NFKC laid the wreath on behalf of the naval veterans.



Independence Day Celebration: Members assembled at the Durbar Hall ground for hoisting of National Flag and paying homage to martyrs. They then walked up to Hotel Bharath Tourist Home for a get-together over breakfast, after which they departed home, as part of the walk.



VFSS Area Coordinators' meeting: A meeting of all Area Coordinators of Veteran Family Support System (VFSS) from all over Kerala was held at Kochi on 4 September 2019. It was chaired by President, NFKC. In the meeting, various measures to strengthen the VFSS were discussed.



Onam Celebrations: Onam was celebrated with all its pomp and gaiety by a large gathering of members and invited guests from the serving officer community with C-in C as the Chief Guest. The guests were welcomed by a traditional Pancha Vadyam and Pookalam adorned at the entrance. An in-house entertainment program was put up by the members - Thirivathira Kali by ladies, boat song and a special effect skit depicting the visit of the great legendary King Mahabali to his old Kingdom (Kerala). This was followed by the traditional naval PLD and Kerala traditional Sadya on plantain leaf.



Navy Week Lunch by C-in-C: A lunch was hosted by the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief on 1 December 2019 at the SNC Officers' Mess, which was well attended. On this occasion, the C-in-C briefed the veterans on the status, activities and modernisation plans of the Indian Navy. On Navy Day, the invited members attended the 'At Home' function at Navy House.

NAVY FOUNDATION MUMBAI CHAPTER



The year 2019 for Mumbai Chapter kick-started with celebrations of the 3rd Veterans Day on 14 January. The festivities commenced with wreath-laying ceremony at Colaba War Memorial. It was attended by a number of serving and retired personnel, including Adm VS Shekhawat and senior officers of all three services. Wreaths were laid by veterans, FOMA, AOC MAO, GOC (M&G) Area and FOC-in-C (West). This was followed by a function at Sailors Institute, where veterans and serving personnel interacted over High Tea.



The 16th Soman Memorial lecture was held at INHS Asvini Auditorium on 28 April 2019. Bollywood star and Director Anant Mahadevan was the Guest Speaker, who spoke on the topic, 'Breaking the glass ceiling of nepotism - A common man's journey to success in Bollywood'. The talk was appreciated by the veterans and their spouses. V Adm Ajit Kumar P (PVSM, AVSM, VSM), ADC FOC-in-C (West) was the Chief Guest.



The Foundation AGM was held at IMSC on 28 April 2019. The Secretary informed that there were 1177 members as of date and 88 new members were added during the year. 240 members along with the spouses attended the AGM.



Consequent to RAdm RM Bhatia, President NFMC relocating to Gurugram, Cdr Vijay Vadhera was elected as the new President. Cdr Rajinder Dutta was nominated as interim Honorary Secretary pending election for the post in the next AGM scheduled for 24 May 2020.

The second round of foreign picnic was spearheaded by Cdr Vijay Vadhera (Retd), President NFMC, to Italy-Switzerland-France which was subscribed by 48 veterans and spouses, including three NoK. Encouraged by the response, Cdr Vadhera has organised a Costa Victoria cruise to Male and Sri Lanka for 90 veterans and spouses from 7-15 February 2020. Plans are afoot for the yet another foreign picnic to China in August, this year.



NAVY WEEK



One of the important and much-awaited naval tradition during the Navy Week celebrations is the veterans' lunch hosted by C-in-C. VAdm Ajit Kumar invited veterans from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka for lunch on 24 November 2019. About 800 veterans and spouses graced the gathering.



90 veterans and spouses were invited for the spectacular Beating Retreat and Tattoo ceremony held at the Gateway of India on Navy Day. The Chief Guest day was H.E. Shri Bhagat Singh Koshiyari. The distinguished guests were then hosted at Navy House for the 'At Home' function.

NAVY FOUNDATION ODISHA CHAPTER



Lt Cdr Debashish Jena, OIC RSU Chilka, visited Zila Sainik Board (ZSB) Cuttack, along with his team on 6 July 2019 to reach out to naval Ex-Servicemen (ESM) and widows. They were informed about the various welfare related activities and policies undertaken by the Navy for them. This meeting was presided over by Wg Cdr Pranay Kumar Bastia (Retd), ZSWO Cuttack.

Naval Veterans including office bearers of Navy Foundation, Odisha Charter, visited INS Chilka on 26 September 2019 for an interaction with the Station Commander. During the meeting various issues pertaining to ECHS scheme, problems faced by veterans and the plausible solutions were discussed.



NAVY FOUNDATION PUNE CHAPTER



- ❖ A lecture on “India’s Role in the Dynamic Indo-Pacific Scenario”, hosted by IMF, was delivered by Admiral Arun Prakash, former CNS at the Central Park Hotel on 13 January 2019.
- ❖ The AGM was conducted in the presence of CSO (P & A), Command Welfare Officer and CRSO (West) HQWNC at AFMC, Pune on 14 April 2019. Cmde P K Malhotra was unanimously elected as President NFPC for fourth term consecutively.
- ❖ An interaction of the members with the serving officers of HQWNC and HQSNC, hosted by C-in-C West was held at AFMC on 14 April 2019.
- ❖ Admiral Nadkarni Memorial Lecture “India’s response to Challenge of Traditional & Non- Traditional Maritime Threats”, hosted by CMD, MDL, was delivered by Admiral Arun Prakash at Central Park Hotel on 26 May 2019.
- ❖ Lt Cdr Rajeshwari Kori (Retd) was felicitated on 13 October 2019.
- ❖ A Coastal and River Banks Cleanup Drive was held on 22 September 2019.
- ❖ A dinner was hosted by Director and Commandant, AFMC for the veterans of Pune at AFMC house on 29 October 2019.
- ❖ A lecture-cum-presentation by Cdr Abhilash Tomy on his solo sea voyage was organised on 31 October 2019.

OBITUARY LIST

Ser	Rank	Name	Next of Kin	Date	Address
1.	Cdr	Preet Pal Singh	Mrs Jasvir Kaur (Wife)	01-02-2019	Add: H No 3076, Sectr 21 D, Chandigarh 160022 Mob: 9718164944 Email: jsvr.kaur@gmail.com
2.	Cmde	AS Mitra	Dr (Mrs) Monisha Mitra (Wife), Ms Anisha Mitra (Daughter)	14-02-2019	Dr (Mrs) Monisha Mitra (Wife) Add: C-311, Jalvayu Towers, Sector -56, Gurgaon, Haryana 122011, Mob: 9810085349 Email Id: drmitra29@gmail.com
3.	Cdr	Ninan Geeverghese AVSM	Mrs Rajamma Verghese (Wife) and Late Cdr PV John (Retd), Cdr PV Alexander (Retd) and Cdr PV George (Sons) and Susan Zachariah (Daughter)	13-02-2019	Mrs Rajamma Verghese (Wife) Add: 27/ 4021, Vadakethalalakal House, PK Devar Road, Perumanoor, Kochi 682015 Tel: 0484- 2665729 Mob: 8547416717 (Son) Email : pv-alexander@hotmail.com (Son)
4.	RAdm	YN Inamdar, AVSM	Mr Rajiv Inamdar (Son)	18-02-2019	Mr Rajiv Inamdar (Son) Add: 611-A, Beverly Park 1 DLF City 2, MG Road Gurgaon 122009 Haryana Mob: 9810203286 Email Id: inamdar207@yahoo.com
5.	Cmde	AK Sharma, PTM, NM	Miss Arpana (Daughter)	19-02-2019	Miss Arpana (Daughter), Add: A-1, Sector- 31, Noida - 201301 Uttar Pradesh, Mob: 9971322778 Email Id: arpanasharma@hotmail.com
6.	Cdr	SK Malhotra	Mrs Savita Malhotra (Wife), Mr Sumit Malhotra and Mr Suchit Malhotra	21-02-2019	Mrs Savita Malhotra (Wife), Add: B-201, Belvedere Towers DLF 2, Gurgaon 122002 Mob: 9810056249/9810063523 Email Id: savitamalhotra@hotmail.com
7.	RAdm	Subir Paul, VrC	Mrs Indrani Paul (Wife), Sumita Sen (Daughter)	21-02-2019	Mrs Indrani Paul Add: 10, Ballygunje Garden 2nd Floor, Gariahat Kolkata 700019 West Bengal Email Id: subirindrani2007@gmail.com Tel: 033-24407323 Mob: 9830249373/9830079682 (Wife)
8.	Surg VAdm	H P Mukherjee, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, PHS	Mrs Dr Kanta Mukherjee (Wife), Mrs Sonali (Daughter)	17-03-2019	Dr Kanta Mookerjee (Wife), Add: Flat No. 03, Anchorage Building, Nao Sena Society, Juhu Varsova Link Road, Near Rajiv Gandhi Technical Institute, Andheri (W),

Ser	Rank	Name	Next of Kin	Date	Address
9.	Capt	MN Samant, MVC	Mrs Nirmala Samant (Wife), Mrs Ujwala, Mrs Natasha and Mrs Meghana (Daughters)	20-03-2019	Mrs Nirmala Samant (Wife) 42, Crystal Housing 11, Gulmohar Cross Road JVPD Scheme, Mumbai 400049 Mob:9820287739/ 9930360319 Email Id: usamant1@yahoo.co.uk
10.	Cdr	H Pal	Mrs Tripta Pal (Wife), Cmde Sunil Kaushik (Son) and Mrs Sunita Gupta (Daughter)	26-03-2019	Mrs Tripta Pal Add: D 804, Bhardwaj Building Rushi Van, Borivali (East) Mumbai 400066 Mob: 9953579373/ 9969833077 Email: bobby67@yahoo.com
11.	Cdr	KS Seshasai	Mrs K Varalakshmi (Wife), Mrs Gayattre (Daughter)	04-04-2019	Mrs K Varalakshmi (Wife) Add: 402, Kings Court, Nawroji Road Maharani Peta, Beside OYO Gayatri Opposite Crown Balcony, Visakhapatnam -530002, Mob: 9866694330, Email: k.gayattre15@gmail.com
12.	Cmde	KN Dubash	Mr Raimond Dubash, Mr Navroz (Sons) and Tehrana C Meresh (Daughter)	08-04-2019	Mr Raimond Dubash (Son) Add: S-407, 1st Floor Greater Kailash II, New Delhi 110048, Mob: 9990246889 Email: tehrunam@gmail.com
13.	Cdr	K Santhanam	Mrs Kalyani (Wife), Kartik and Anand (Sons)	22-04-2019	Mrs Kalyani Santham (Wife), 22/57, 4th Street Padmanaba Nagar, Adyar, Chennai Tamil Nadu 600020 Mob: 9840452664 Email: kalyani161219542@gmail.com
14.	Cdr	Anil Wasson (NC)	Mrs Rashmi Wasson (Wife), Anmol (Son), Amrita (Daughter)	24-04-2019	Mob: +1 (508) 202-2644 Email: rushkadu@hotmail.com
15.	Surg Capt	Anil Ahuja	Mrs Suraksha Ahuja (Wife) and Mr Parikshit Ahuja (Son)	12-05-2019	Mrs Suraksha Ahuja (Wife), Add: J-96 Sector-25, Noida UP 201301 Mob: 9868344376 (Wife) Email: ahujaparikshit@gmail.com
16.	Cdr	Deepak Pati	Mrs Premanjali (Wife), Ms Prachi and Ms Pooja (Daughters)	15-05-2019	Mrs Premanjali Pati (Wife) Add: 002, Kumud Tower 101 Suryanagar Bhubaneshwar Odisha 751003 Mob: 8081188284 (Wife) Email Id: pati.prema@gmail.com
17.	Capt	GD Singh	Mr Rakesh Saxena & Colonel Atul Saxena (Retd) (both Sons) & Mrs Manisha Shankar (Daughter)	16-05-2019	Mr Rakesh Saxena (Retd), K-111, South City 1 Sector 41, Gurugram Haryana 122001 Mob: 9810276859 Email: rakeshsaxena13@yahoo.co.in
18.	Cmde	UC Tripathi	Surg Cdr Ashutosh Tripathi Mr Paritosh Tripathi and (Sons)	28-05-2019	Mr Shailesh Tripathi, Add: D 305, Mayfair Apartments, Plot No 96, IP Extension, Patparganj, Delhi 110092, Mob: 9650816112 Email: tripshailesh@gmail.com

Ser	Rank	Name	Next of Kin	Date	Address
19.	Lt Cdr	DR Ramesh	Mrs Anjali Nambisan (Wife)	02-06-2019	Mrs Anjali Nambisan (Wife) Add: No 17, IAS Layout Kasavanahalli Begalluru, Karnataka 560035 Mob: 9902646644 (Wife) Email: anjali.nambisan@gmail.com
20.	Cdr	Gurdeep Singh	Mrs Sujata Singh (Wife), Mr Mandeep Singh and Mr Baldeep Singh (Sons)	09-06-2019	Mrs Sujata Singh (Wife) Flat 102, Shrushti Sector 42, Mata Vaishno Cooperative Housing Society Nerul Seawood West Navi Mumbai Maharashtra 400706 Mob: 9819397825 (Wife) Email: manreet55singh2003@yahoo.co.in
21.	Cdr	MA Jailani	Mrs Ruxzana Jailani (Wife), Mr Abeed Jailani (Son)	26-06-2019	Mrs Ruxzana Jailani (Wife) Add: B-33, Jalvayu Vihar Panampilly Nagar Kochi 682036 Mob: 9446054901 Email: ruxzana@gmail.com
22.	Cdr	Nishit Ranjan Deb	Mrs Manashi Deb (Wife), Mr Nishanto Deb (Son)	17-07-2019	Mrs Manashi Deb (Wife), Add: 3D1(N) Diamond Tower 37A, Diamond Park Joka Kolkata 700014 Mob: 9830586761 Email: cdr.nrdeb@gmail.com
23.	Cdr	Siva Kumar	Mrs Sushma Kumar (Wife), Mr Aditya (Son)	09-08-2019	Mrs Sushma Kumar (Wife), Add: 397, Sector H, Chandra Nagar Extension Chandra Nagar Palakkad Kerala 678007, Mob: 9645314313 (Son) Email: sushmamenon25@gmail.com
24.	VAdm	SP Govil	Mrs Jyotsna Govil (Wife), Mr Sanjay Govil and Vivek Govil (Sons)	17-08-2019	Mrs Jyotsna Govil (Wife) Add: G-29, Saket New Delhi 17 Mob: 9811827549 (Wife) Email Id: jgovil@gmail.com
25.	Cdr	Noel Kelman	Mrs Patricia Kelman (Wife)	23-08-2019	Mrs Patricia Kelman, Add: 88, Defence Colony Phase I, Lane 4, Alto Porvorim Goa 403521 Mob: 8805250852
26.	Surg VAdm	JC Sharma, PVSM, VSM	Dr Bina Sharma (Wife), Ms Anumita, Ms Anuja and Ms Ambika (Daughters)	28-08-2019	Dr Bina Sharma (Wife), Add: C-329 Nirala Nagar Lucknow-226020 Mob: 9839126614 Email: anuja1sharma@gmail.com
27.	Cdr	Milap Chandra Dargan	Mrs Sarita Dargan (Wife), Mrs Ritu Dargan (Daughter)	08-09-2019	Mrs Sarita Dargan (Wife), Add: A-2, Sector 55, Noida Uttar Pradesh, Mob: 9922354646 Email Id: ritubarick@gmail.com
28.	Cmde	KC Chawla	Mrs Madhu (Wife), Ms Gitanjali Chawla and Ms Charu Chawla(Daughter)	17-09-2019	Mrs Madhu Chawla Add: 2, Kapashera Estate New Delhi 110037 Mob: 9810003201 (Wife)

Ser	Rank	Name	Next of Kin	Date	Address
29.	Capt	PM Pattanayak	Mrs Bobby Patnaik (Wife), Ms Monica Patnaik and Ms Rachna Patnaik (Daughters)	07-10-2019	Mrs Bobby Patnaik (Wife) Add: 364/2151/2698, Patia Near Infocity Road, Shishuvihar Near ODM School Bhubanswar Odisha 751024 Mob: 8826286807 (Wife)
30.	Cmde	Shridharan Shekhar	Mrs Malathi Shekhar (Wife), Anjanish (Son)	22-10-2019	Mrs Malathi Shekhar (Wife) Add: 403, Residency Towers 58-60, Sardar Patel Road Taramani Chennai Tamil Nadu 600020 Mob: 9840936730 Email Id: anjanishhandshefali@gmail.com
31.	Cdr	KTA Clement	Mrs Valsa Clement (Wife), Ms Emily Sonia Johnson and Ms Sandhya (Daughters)	03-11-2019	Mrs Valsa Clement (Wife) Add: 45/1692 Kurushinkal Pttakuzhi Pachalam Kochi 682012 Mob: 9633083708 Email Id: johnsonemilys@yahoo.com.uk (Daughter)
32.	Cmde	JP Syal, PVSM	Mrs Malti Syal (Wife), Ms Kavita Bhalla (Daughter)	16-11-2019	Mrs Malti Syal (Wife), Add: C-9/19, DLF Kutub Enclave -1 Gugrgram, Mob: 8800311158 Email Id: kavbhalla@yahoo.com
33.	VAdm	John Colin De Silva, PVSM, AVSM	Mrs Meena De Silva (Wife), Mr Julius (Son)	21-11-2019	Mrs Meena De Silva (Wife), Add: 210, Defence Colony Phase-2, Alto Porvorim Bardez Goa 403521 Mob: 9822140457 (wife), Email Id:- trakshak@yahoo.com
34.	Cdr	EDW Proudfoot	Mr Brian Donald Proudfoot (Son)	22-11-2019	Mr Brian Donald Proudfoot Add: 13 Henty Lookout Roleystone Western Australia 6111, Mob: 0407380752 Email Id: brianp1@iinet.net.au
35.	Cmde	PC Paulose	Smt Chinnamma Paulose (Wife), Mr Rajesh (Son) and Mrs Roshini (Daughter)	25-11-2019	Smt Chinnamma Paulose (Wife) Add; Ponodath House Airport Seaport Road Judge Mukku Next to Naipunya School Thrikkakkara, Kochi 682021 Mob: 9400333642/ 8547505096 (Mrs Roshini) Email Id: roshini.paulose@gmail.com
36.	Adm	Sushil Kumar, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, NM	Mrs Venita Kumar (Wife) Mrs Anisha Bobla (Daughter)	27-11-2019	Mrs Venita Kumari (Wife) Add: E-3, Sector 21, Jalvayu Vihar Noida 201301, Mob: 9810800576 Email Id: anishyakumar@gmail.com
37.	Cdr	LN Saggar	Mrs Jyoti Saggar (Wife), Ms Arti Saggar (Daughter) and Mr Pankaj Saggar (Son)	06-12-2019	Mrs Jyoti Saggar, Add: C-4/12, Kubera Colony NIBM Road, Kondhwa Pune 411048 Mob: 9960891621 (Wife) Email Id: jyotisaggar1953@gmail.com

Ser	Rank	Name	Next of Kin	Date	Address
38.	Lt Cdr	Gurdas Masand	Mrs Sushi Masand (Wife), Ms Ashita (Daughter) and Mr Somit (Son)	12-12-2019	Mrs Sushi Masand Add: 4-B, Valmiki Marg Lal Bagh Lucknow 226001, I Mob: 9839016294 Email: somitmasand@gmail.com
39.	Cdr	NR Rao	Mr Vishwanath Rao (Son)	10-12-2019	Mr Vishwanath Rao, Add: G1-G2, Parisara Appartment 4th Main, 15 Cross Malleswaram Bangalore 560055 Mob: 9880462719 Email: vishwarin@yahoo.co.in
40.	Cdr	KR Mohan	Mrs Jer Ram Mohan (Wife) Ms Karishma (Daughter)	27-12-2019	Mrs Jer Ram Mohan Add: 2210, 80 Feet Road (Opp) ISRO LPSC HAL Second Stage Post Office Bangalore 560008, Mob: 9606713505 Email: jerourammohan@hotmail.com
41.	Cmde	Viji Varghese	Mrs Bindu (Wife), Vishal and Vineeth (Sons)	06-01-2020	Mrs Bindu (Wife), Add: Palakkapilly House Chakola Jn. Perumanoor PO Thevara Kochi 682013, Mob: 9846942100
42.	Lt Cdr	AN Sudareswaran	Mrs Prabhavati (Wife)	10-01-2020	Mob: 9740083216



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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

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Tel : 011-21410542

Fax No. : 011-21410549

E-mail : dpa-navy@nic.in

NAVPEN

For all issues regarding pension

Address : Logistic Officer-in-Charge

Naval Pension Office (NAVPEN)

C/o INS Tanaji, Sion Trombay Road

Mankhurd, Mumbai 400088

Tel : 022-25075608 (Officers Section)

Fax No. : 022-25075653/25564823/ 25075621

Toll Free : 1800-220-560

E-mail : navpen-navy@nic.in

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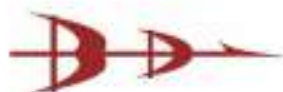
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